



Shades of Terror by Trevor Lee

An Adventure for **Savage Worlds™**

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Shades of Terror

Or, Dungeon-crawl a la Lovecraft

By
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That's shades as in...well, let me first say that if you're intending to play this as a character, stop reading now. Your Game Master will show you what you need to see when the time comes. Now run along and dream nice dreams while you still can.

Another word of warning: some of the scenes in this adventure are fairly gruesome in nature, and not fit for the young. If any of the players are younger than 17, it may be advisable to consider leaving that player out, or toning down the imagery.

The Terror Begins

Greetings, Game Master.

To resume, that's shades as in "ghosts," spirits trapped here by pain and tragedy most horrid. Souls held in death, as they were in life, by a selfish evil whose thirst for suffering can't be satisfied.

This is a story about a haunted house, full of ghosts who can't rest until the evil that holds them is cast down. It's also the story of a zealous cult determined to raise the evil to power.

That's where the heroes come in. They are just the type of intrepid individuals who could free these poor spirits from their torment. Or they may join them...

A History Lesson

This story takes place in 1920's Massachusetts. The exact time and place doesn't really matter, but you'll need to do a little work to drastically alter the era if you want to change it.

In Massachusetts, a very real state, lays New Bethlehem, a very fictional little town. New Bethlehem is a sleepy little farming town with barely a hundred full time residents. It has a cozy inn to stay at, a modest general store to buy from, and friendly townfolk to keep company with.

Close to New Bethlehem is an old hospice called, appropriately, the New Bethlehem Hospice. It was built in 1818 by a league of churches, and served the sick and injured of Massachusetts. Unfortunately, the hospice quickly gained a reputation as a place prone to accidents and disappearances.

Every few years, a patient would die under mysterious circumstances, or a staff member would vanish, never to be seen or heard from again. In 1844 the hospice was sold to the state, which needed a new orphanage for wayward or parentless children.

The hospice continued to add to its ill repute despite the change. Nearly once a year a child or staff member would suffer a fatal accident, or perhaps disappear altogether. After a decade's time and one too many accidents, the state moved the children and staff to other orphanages or foster homes, and the hospice lay empty until 1862.

The Civil War was raging, and the Union needed a place to bring its seriously wounded but treatable officers and soldiers. Thus the hospice became a sanatorium for the Union's salvageable.

Yet again, the disappearances and deaths plagued the place. The majority of the deaths were apparently suicides by war-weary soldiers. The vanished, of course, left no explanation.

When the war ended, the federal government abandoned the building. An association of doctors and scientists bought the building in 1877 and turned it into an asylum for the mentally disturbed.

Again the tragedies cast their shadow over the hospice. Virtually all the deaths and disappearances were attributed to suicidal behavior or the recklessness of the unhinged mind. The asylum was closed in 1911. The hospice has stood empty since.

Thus, New Bethlehem Hospice is a place with a past wrought with tragedy, pain, and suffering. It's a well-known haunted house with a dark reputation, which might explain why the folk of New Bethlehem won't go near it.

There's Always a Few

Well, *most* won't go near it. Some enterprising chaps in the Massachusetts Historical Society noticed that the hospice drew a small but steady trickle of occultists, Theosophists, bored dilettantes, and the morbidly curious.

The Society members lobbied their patrons to buy and refurbish the place, and then hawk it as an attraction in all of New England's New Age journals. The Society agreed, and acquired the hospice for a pittance.

The Society finalized the purchase three months ago. A month later they found a trio of people willing to stay at the hospice and spruce it up; a clerk, Sebastian Sikes, to collect and organize the documents left there, and a married couple, Gerald and Regina Flatley, to repair and clean it, then dress it up to merely *look* run down.

The entrepreneurs had it all planned out. They'd charge a modest fee for a tour of the place at night, and a heftier one for those who'd dare sleep the night there. Easy money off the hands of the gullible, they thought. Up until a month ago, that is.

The entrepreneurs hadn't heard from the restoration staff in a week, and went to call on them at the hospice. What they found horrified them.

They found the housemaid first. She was on the second floor of the office, stabbed a dozen times. Her handyman husband was on the same floor, in one of the staff quarters,

similarly stabbed. The clerk was nowhere to be found.

The murders quickly made headlines in all the Massachusetts papers, and confirmed to the folk of New Bethlehem that the hospice was still a place of death and tragedy.

The subsequent police investigation brought a lot of scrutiny upon the Historical Society. People demanded an explanation for why the Historical Society is interested in profiting off the hospice's reputation when that very reputation should be a warning to leave it alone.

The Society, in turn, has demanded that the entrepreneurs within their group find the clerk, whom they are convinced is the couple's murderer.

Enter Ensemble

The entrepreneurs, two gentlemen by the names of Phineas Atterly and Samuel Hought, have used their connections to find suitable proxies to investigate the matter (they're planners you understand, not implementers).

The agents they've contacted are the player characters. Four pre-generated characters are provided at the end of this adventure for the convenience of you and your players. If scratch-built characters are preferred when the full Savage Worlds rules are available, there should be no problem, although skills in Guts, Investigation, Knowledge (Occult), and Notice will go a long way in this story.

Note that this is a Novice-level story. Higher-level characters will have a much easier time of it. A good way to raise the challenge would be to sprinkle in a few hostile ghosts amid the ones trying to give the heroes clues. And of course the cultists can easily be made more challenging with the addition of magic or monstrous allies.

Knowledge is Power

Smart investigators will want to research the building's history before visiting it. If they choose to, the New Bethlehem municipal building has the legal records pertaining to the ownership history of the hospice, and most of the related death certificates. The local paper, *The New Bethlehem Herald*, has a morgue of its clippings going back 75 years, and reported all of the known deaths and disappearances at the hospice.

Investigators can make an Investigation roll at each source. Each Investigation roll involves four hours of study.

Legal Records

A success finds the basic information given above regarding when, and to whom, the building changed ownership through its history. With a raise, they also find that each time the hospice was sold, it was practically given away at pennies on the acre, with each owner apparently elated to get rid of it.

With two raises, the investigators find that in 1855, the hospice had to undergo structural repairs on damage caused

by a shifting foundation. Records state a geologist found that the bedrock was not supporting the load as it should, for reasons unknown (the reason being that the bedrock is riddled with a network of caverns, where the cultists have dwelt for untold generations).

The Newspaper

At the newspaper morgue, investigators may look into obituaries and reports of vanishings from the hospice. The investigators get a grasp of the building's history as related previously with a success. With a raise, they find that aside from the deaths and disappearances, the hospice has a lesser-known reputation for seeing quite a few residents suffer mental breakdowns and lapses of sanity. Two raises rewards them with an article relating a strange phenomenon that occurred during the hospice's time as an insane asylum. Apparently, quite a few patients over the years periodically babbled fervently in what sounded like a coherent, if incomprehensible language. Many patients also complained frequently of nightmares involving scenes of rivers of blood and monstrous shapes cavorting amid the shadows.

The Townsfolk

The townsfolk may be able to provide tidbits per your discretion. Simply substitute Streetwise skill for Investigation. Talking to a person in this manner takes ten minutes, and should yield only one of the above paragraphs of the hospice's history told to the questioner.

Of Shades. . .

The ghosts trapped in the hospice are true disembodied spirits: the souls of those murdered in their moment of all-too-human frailty. They are condemned to relive again and again their torturous last moments, and only with great effort can they break this routine to touch the mortal realm.

The presence of benign beings gives these poor souls the hope of a mortal benefactor who may be able to free them. Thus, for a few precious moments, the ghosts can impart something important to their would-be saviors.

However, there is a vast expanse of thought and emotion separating the spiritual and mortal realms. Therefore, the ghosts cannot simply sit down with a person and disgorge its sad tale in the Queen's English. These specters communicate as much in action and pure emotion as they do in words, and often more so.

The first three times the investigators see a ghost, they must make a Guts check at -4. Subsequent checks in ghostly encounters should be made at -2 due to the gruesome vignettes the specters show the investigators.

Game statistics for ghosts appears in the appendix for easy reference. All ghosts have the same statistics unless in your discretion you tailor a specific shade's description.

. . .and of Terror

The cult beneath the hospice is old...very old. Its founders were centuries dead before the formation of the Union, and what they worship is beyond time itself.

The nameless entity the cultists revere exists in a realm where thoughts and emotions are as real and as fundamental as atoms and molecules. It is a predator in its realm that has discovered the mortal plane.

The entity feeds on terror and suffering; the insane are founts of nectar to it, and its thirst is insatiable. It wants more. And more. And still more. And it knows how to get it.

The entity wants *in*. It wants to rebirth itself into our realm, take shape in it so that it can reshape everything else to fit its needs.

To do that it must saturate an area in the rankest misery and torture. It has come to earth to do this, having found on it not only beings that are delectable sustenance, but actually produce the rare specimen that is willing to *help* it force its way in.

For centuries the progress was slow. The cultists had to hide on the fringes of society or risk discovery. Even with their caution, some of them were burned at Salem as witches.

Then the hospice was built, and filled with humans who were already suffering. It was easy for the cultists to enhance this torment. But they remained subtle, for now the risk of discovery was magnified.

Now the entity is on the verge of succeeding in its aim. It has trapped dozens of souls whose suffering was especially great, and who continue to endure torment.

If the entity invades the mortal realm it will reshape earth as it sees fit, and enslave humanity in order to gorge itself on mankind's suffering.

It will take an intrepid band of brave souls to defeat the cultists, keep the entity out of the mortal realm, and free the trapped souls so they may rest.

Statistics for the cultists appear in the appendix. As with the ghosts, if you wish to tailor statistics for specific cultists, feel free to do so. Most likely you'll do this by increasing their rank for a higher-level party.

The Heart of the Matter

The hospice was built a hundred years ago and has seen much repair and addition, especially in regard to indoor plumbing and electrical wiring. It is built in stone in a spare, Gothic style, and has three floors.

Indoors, the hospice has cozy wood paneling and a plethora of small cast iron stoves to keep the place warm. The windows are high, slender, and fitted with very old lead crystal panes.

The plumbing and wiring was installed carefully, and does not intrude upon the aesthetic of the hospice. It all works perfectly...at least when the ghosts don't play with it.

Nevertheless, the march of time spares no artifice. The hospice is old, and there have been many years between occupations when it was left empty and uncared for.

There are cracks in the stone here and there. Ivy climbs the walls in several places. The panes in the windows have loosened and rattle in the wind. Boards creak and even break. Many of the stoves have rusted almost to ruin. The sense of foreboding decay is nearly palpable.

Maps of each floor are provided, with numbered keys to the rooms for you to reference in the text. Each room the group visits deserves at least a cursory description in your narration.

The First Floor

1. Office

This is the reception area for what has always been the main office of the hospice. It has a collection of old and worn chairs, couches, end tables, coffee tables, small heating stoves, and coat racks. There is a modest desk before the hallway for the receptionist.

2. Office

This is a small office. It has a desk and chair, some bare shelves, and some guest chairs, all of it old but sturdy.

3. Office

This is an office much like #2, but with a wooden closet in the corner.

4. Office

This is another office like #2, but with the addition of a very modest lawyer's library on the shelves.

5. Clerk's Office

This is the last office on this floor. It is like #2 with one exception: it has a resident ghost. The spirit is that of a clerk from the building's early days, when it was a hospice in both name and function. The specter is a small man in a frock and spectacles. He is busily scratching away with quill and ink on parchment, with an increasingly shaky hand. A cup lies empty on its side next to the inkpot. If a brave hero chooses to look over the ghost's shoulder and read what he's writing, read the player the following:

I cannot bear my torment any longer. Long nights have I stayed awake and prayed sleep would not come, for fear of the terrors that plague me in my dreams. Those terrors, the shadowy, cackling things that whisper abominations to me, goading me to commit atrocities, have visited my dreams for a year and a month. I

had resisted for as long as I could. But when I awoke on Tuesday last with blood on my hands and gown, I knew I had succumbed to their possession. That same day I was told that young Joseph Harkin was found in the woods, horribly stabbed, my terrible crime was confirmed. My remaining hope is that God can forgive me my weakness. I can feel the hemlock seizing me now. Pray for me, my brothers, pray for me.

The ghost then lays the quill down and sits back in his chair. In moments his eyes close and his 'breathing' stops. He, his cup, inkpot, quill, and message then fade silently out of view. If the heroes re-enter the room after an hour's time, the ghost will reenact his heartbroken demise.

6. Infirmary

This large room last saw use as an infirmary. Ten hard cots line the west wall. Shelves and tables fill the rest of the room, full of bottles, herb tins, mortars and pestles, rotten bandages, and other old medical paraphernalia.

As the group enters the room, a chorus of tortured wailing arises as specters appear on the cots, moaning in pain and held by spectral straps. Three other ghosts dressed in Civil War-era medical coats administer to the ailing ghosts. An appropriate Smarts check clues the investigators into the era the ghosts lived in.

As the heroes watch, the wild-eyed doctors inject their victims with some sickly yellow substance. This goes on for some moments until another specter walks into the room, dressed in a Union officer's garb and armed with a revolver. The investigators watch as the officer's face becomes a mask of horror, then rage. *"Monsters! This ends now!"* screams the officer as he raises his pistol and guns down the crazed doctors. He then picks up a beaker of the yellow fluid, sniffs it, and grimaces. His face becomes an emotionless mask as he approaches the first cot. Looking down upon the agonized patient, he places the barrel of his pistol to the screaming man's heart and pulls the trigger. He repeats this with each patient, ending each man's life, tears streaming down his face. When all the ghostly patients have died once again, the officer turns to the investigators and addresses them. *"It was amonia. I...saved you from the worst, I think. My torment is that I did not act quickly enough to rescue them from those devils."* The officer then places the gun to his head and pulls the trigger for the last time. This grisly scene evokes a Guts check at -4.

7. Pharmacy

This room appears to be a small pharmacy. It is lined with shelves and cabinets. A table in the middle of the room has mixing and measuring tools. Jars, bottles, and tins are all over the room, many still containing the rotten remains of medicines and other chemicals.

8. Storage

This is a storage room. It still contains some old and mostly useless goods, including plaster powder, nails, tools, and so on.

9. Staircase

This is the staircase connecting all the floors. It is in good condition and poses no danger of crumbling.

10. Electrical Room

This is the electrical room, the nexus of all the wiring in the hospice. Beyond replacement light bulbs and spools of copper wire, the only things in the room are the bulky circuit boxes.

11. Library

This is a sizeable library, with a great many old books. This library has been here since the hospice's first days, and has a very eclectic selection of books. Investigators can find a variety of medical treatises from the past century, several sets of encyclopedias, and a good number of journals kept by Civil War soldiers and officers. Several tables and chairs sit in the center of the room.

12. Laboratory

This room appears to be some kind of very modest laboratory. It has a medical cot and a very crude electrotherapy machine. Two ghosts appear as the heroes enter the room, one in a fairly modern doctor's coat, and a woman on the cot, covered by a sheet. The woman is convulsing as the doctor operates the electrotherapy machine. The doctor appears to be rapidly increasing the output of the machine until finally the woman looses a bloodcurdling scream and goes limp.

Cackling madly, the doctor turns the machine off and disconnects the woman from it. He pulls the sheet off her, revealing her to be a nurse! Picking her up, the doctor walks around the investigators and makes for the door, vanishing just before it, his insane cackling echoing about the room. This scene requires the characters to make Guts tests at -2.

13. Men's Restroom

This is the men's bathroom, as indicated by a short row of urinals along the south wall. Several bathtubs and a shower stall line the east wall, all in working order.

14. Women's Restroom

This is the women's bathroom, exactly like the men's room; save that there are more toilets in place of the urinals. Everything is in working order.

15. Laundry Room

This is the laundry room. It has several old but serviceable manual washing machines, and shelves and racks for the clothes and linens that lie or hang, rotten and tattered, on them.

16. Dining Room

A number of long tables, with accompanying chairs, fill the room. Three pillars run along the long axis of the room, providing support for the ceiling. Plates, pots, platters, and eating utensils fairly cover the tables. Two doors to the kitchen can be seen on the south wall.

If the investigators walk halfway into the room, the angry spirits inhabiting it begin throwing the plates and utensils at them. The heroes must make a Guts check, then draw cards for initiative—a macabre and very one-sided combat has begun. On the ghosts' turn, roll three attack rolls on each character at Shooting d4. Successful hits inflict 1d6+1 brawling damage as dull utensils and fragile plates strike the hero. Characters rendered unconscious by these attacks are spared further assault. These attacks go on for three rounds, after which the ghosts have exhausted their anger for a day or so.

17. Kitchen

A large hearth sits at both east and west walls. Tables, shelves, and cabinets fill the rest of the room, full of cooking pots, pans, and implements, all dulled and rusted with age and neglect.

The Second Floor

1. Office

This is an open office. It contains eight small desks along the north, east, and west walls. A conference table sits in the middle of the room, and file cabinets sit on the south walls. A Notice roll reveals the room has been cleaned and used recently. The files in this room are mostly in regard to the running of the hospice when it was an asylum. The files are disturbing and reveal a history of electric shock therapy, mild torture, and long periods of forced isolation.

2. Small Office

This is a small office. A Notice roll shows that recent repair work has been done to the desk and shelves, but no further clues are available.

3. Small Office

This is another small office. It is clear the room has seen much use recently. It is clean if not orderly. Records lie in stacks on every available surface. An ashtray full of ashes lies on the desk, next to a meerscham pipe and matches.

A Notice roll at -4 reveals a large dark stain on the already-dark carpet. A Smarts roll at -4 or a Knowledge (Biology or Medicine) test confirms the stain is blood, and that it was quite likely a fatal wound or wounds by the amount of it. This is a real stain, not ghostly, and it's recent.

Once the group successfully deduces the stain's nature, Regina Flatley's ghost manifests. An agonized, soul-wrenching wailing fills the air as a ghostly wind whips up the papers in the room.

Along the north wall, letters, apparently written in blood, appear, leaving the message *Sebastian killed*. In just a few rounds, the wind becomes violent, and characters who do not leave are quickly covered in paper cuts and bruises as the papers and books fly into them.

Once all the investigators are outside the room, a single book flies out, either hitting the door across the hall or flying into room #2. The book is Sebastian's journal. A handout of the journal is included in the back of this adventure—give it to your players now.

4. Records Room

This room is full of filing cabinets, each one full of medical case histories for the asylum patients who stayed at the hospice, as well as files of the staff. An Investigation roll shows that an uncomfortably high number of patients died under mysterious circumstances; odd falls, carefully watched patients finding knives, closely monitored dispensing of medicines preceding overdoses, and other such incidents litter the patient files.

Several files also mention that a number of patients also periodically babbled in apparently structured but unknown language. An Investigation roll at -8 reveals that, incredibly, several *staff* members were struck with episodes of insanity and psychosis. An Investigation roll takes an hour of reading.

5. Records Room

This is another room which has not changed since the hospice's early days. It is another records room, although it appears to hold records dating back to the hospice's beginning. The party may make Investigation rolls here just as they did (or might have done) at New Bethlehem's municipal building or newspaper if they didn't think to do a little background work beforehand.

6. Lounge

This is a communal room, apparently for the staff. It holds nine comfortable-looking single beds, each one accompanied by a two-drawer nightstand, a footlocker, and a privacy curtain. When the heroes enter, they encounter the ghostly residents, nuns from the building's time as a church-run hospice. A Notice roll points out the folded habits laying on the footlockers. A Smarts roll at -4 places the habits in the early 1800s era by their material more than their style.

The ghostly women are all in bed, sleeping. As the heroes watch, ten wild-eyed men creep into the room. Nine of them go to each woman, and suddenly seize them and tie them down. Their screams fill the air and threaten to burst the characters' eardrums as a tenth man busily slops a viscous fluid about the room. The nine quickly file out of the room as the tenth lights a match and throws it to the floor. Flames immediately sprout up and spread quickly. The ghost's screams rise to a horrific pitch. Have each charac-

ter still in the room make a Vigor roll at -2 or suffer partial deafness (-2 to all hearing-oriented Notice rolls) for the remainder of the adventure.

As the tenth man leaves the room, the door slams close. It won't open again until a minute has passed, though a Strength roll at -8 can break it open. The ghostly nuns are burned alive as the heroes watch. This requires a Guts check at -4.

7. Staff Quarters

This room has been cleaned, repaired, and lived in, apparently by the Flatleys. It has a bloodstain like that in room #3, and is noticed and deduced by the same rolls.

Once the investigators realize a second death occurred here recently, the ghost of Gerald Flatley manifests. The lights flicker as a heart-rending moan fills the room. Then the nails in the furniture come out, causing all the furniture to collapse. Bloody writing on the wall appears, with the message: *I could not save her*. This scene requires a standard Guts test.

8. Storage

This is a storage room much like that on the first floor. It contains reams of old paper, bottles of ink, pens and pencils, and other office tools.

9. Staircase

The staircase is serviceable as always, but anyone running up or down it in a hurry should make an Agility roll. Failure means a tumble causing 2d4 damage.

10. Staff Quarters

This is a staff quarters like #7, but has a single bed. It is well appointed, and has been cleaned and repaired, but doesn't look lived in.

11. Communal Bedroom

This is another communal bedroom like #6. Luckily for the investigators' sanity, it has no resident ghosts...unless you put some there.

12. Staff Quarters

This is a staff quarters with another double bed. It has been cleaned and repaired, but does not look lived-in.

13. Men's Restroom

This bathroom is like the men's room downstairs.

14. Women's Restroom

This bathroom is like the women's room downstairs.

15. Staff Quarters

This is another single staff quarters. It has been cleaned, repaired, and lived in. There is a bed, chest of drawers, desk, two nightstands, and a table and two chairs. A ten-minute search of the room, and a Notice roll at -4 reveals several very old parchments inked in some kind of dark

sienna ink (blood), stuffed in a false bottom of a desk drawer. It looks like so much scribbling and twisted symbols to most, but a Knowledge (Occult) roll reveals it is a magical ritual of some sort. A raise on the roll reveals it is some sort of sacrificial rite involving a dual sacrifice of...something. Two raises reveals it's an initiation rite involving the sacrificial murder of two human beings!

16. Children's Bedroom

This large room has three supporting pillars down the middle length. It is full of single beds accompanied by two-drawer nightstands and privacy curtains. At the back of the room, two doors can be seen along the south wall.

As the party makes it to the middle of the room, the ghosts residing here become visible. Several dozen children appear, playing and laughing. Moments later, several men enter and walk purposefully toward the rear. The children fall silent; many crawl under their beds, others cover their eyes, while still more cry hysterically. The men enter the rear room. If the heroes follow, they enter room #17 (described below) and see the strange men stabbing a teenage girl to death. One of the men holds a struggling teenage boy who is clearly terrified. Once the deed is done, the men smear the girl's blood all over the boy, then drag him back out of the room with them.

The children become more terrified, then two of the men chase down as many of the children as they can and smear blood on them. *"Tell no one of this, or you will be next!"* they scream. Once the men reach the entrance to the hall, they dump the teen boy, who is glassy-eyed in utter shock, to the floor and place the bloody knife in his hand. The men leave. Moments later, a man in mid-1800's dress enters, sees the scene, looks to the teenage boy, and barely manages to whisper *"What have you done?"* This scene requires a Guts test at -2.

17. Bedrooms

This room has a handful of makeshift rooms separated by wooden partitions. The rooms consist of a bed, a nightstand, and footlocker.

The Third Floor

1. Terrace

This is an open terrace with beautifully carved railings. Old, weather-beaten recreational chairs and tables are also featured here. Once upon a time, this terrace would have been very relaxing, offering a nice view of the surrounding countryside. As the party walks onto it, they hear a high-pitched scream coming from inside the building. Almost immediately afterward, a ghostly teenage girl runs onto the terrace. She turns and looks back, then begins backing toward the north edge as three men in strange robes approach her, brandishing wicked-looking daggers and a

large bowl. The girl backs up against the railing, and as the cultists close in, looks directly at the heroes, “*The spilling of the sacrament frees us!*”

She then leaps onto the railing and jumps. The cultists look over the railing for a moment, then turn on the investigators. They let loose an unearthly howl and charge them, disappearing just as they reach their prey. This requires a Guts test at -2. You may want to play up the charge as if an actual combat is about to begin, perhaps shuffling the cards while the players roll their Guts tests. Of course, if the characters have the means to fight ethereal foes, you may wish to make it an *actual* combat.

2. Communal Bedroom

This is a communal bedroom like those on the second floor. It has been cleaned and repaired.

3. Staff Quarters

This is a staff quarters. It has been cleaned and repaired.

4. Storeroom

This is a storeroom. It has a lot of cleaning supplies, and old bars of soap and bottles of shampoo.

5. Staircase

This is still the staircase. As before, anyone running up or down the stairs in a hurry must make an Agility roll or suffer 2d4 damage.

6. Staff Quarters

This is another staff quarters. It has been cleaned and repaired like #3.

7. Communal Bedroom

This is another communal bedroom, like the others. It has been cleaned and repaired.

8. Staff Quarters

This is another staff quarters, cleaned and repaired like the others on this floor.

9. Men’s Restroom

This is a men’s bathroom, like the others. It is in full repair and spotlessly cleaned.

10. Women’s Restroom

This is a women’s bathroom, like the others. It is in full repair and spotlessly cleaned.

11. Staff Quarters

This is the last staff quarters on this floor. It is in good repair and is clean. It has a single bed, a nightstand, table and two chairs, and a desk. As the heroes enter, the ghost of a woman appears, dressed in mid-1800’s garb. She sits at the desk, shakily writing a letter. Investigators trying to read the letter must make a Smarts roll to make sense of the woman’s shaky script. If anyone succeeds, read them the following:

My Dear Sister Martha. I have seen terrible things here at the orphanage, and I truly fear for my life. There are strange men and women living in the woods south of the orphanage, and I cannot doubt that they are agents of the Devil.

I believe it is they who are behind all the terrible accidents that happen here, and they who are responsible for the madness that grips poor Neil Hatcher, one of the other tutors here. I followed him into the woods the last night, and saw him meet those terrible, strange men. They performed some awful rite in a horrid tongue, such that grated on my ears and set my innards to shiver.

When they completed their rite they went their separate ways. I think Neil caught site of me, for he stopped and looked straight in my direction. I bolted and ran all the way back to my room. Martha, you must tell the authorities that something terrible is afoot here! I have arranged for this letter to find you by the morning. Please help me and the children.

Your loving sister, Sarah.

Upon completing the letter she folds it and seals it in wax. A young woman walks in, and the ghost of Sarah hands her the letter, telling her to take it to the courier outside. The young woman takes the letter and puts it in her pocket. She then draws a dagger and attacks Sarah, stabbing her viciously many times. After the murder, the woman wipes the dagger on Sarah’s clothes, pockets it, and she and Sarah disappear.

12. Hallway

This hall is like the other two, including the three pillars down the middle and the two doors on the south wall. As the group enters, the ghosts inhabiting the room appear.

They all seem to be afflicted with varying degrees of insanity. Some walk in patterns, mumbling to themselves. Others babble and laugh at nothing or everything. Still others lay strapped to the bed, begging to be let go. A few lie catatonic, unaware of the madness surrounding them. A few moments later, robed men walk in and begin whispering to the patients, each of which immediately begins to wail and spasm madly. Soon the screams are a morbid, wracking cacophony. The robed men leave as the inmates start to tear into each other in a gibbering, wailing orgy of violence. Several moments pass before the grisly scene thankfully fades from view, the echoes seeming to reverberate in the characters’ ears for a long minute thereafter.

13. Makeshift Ward

This room contains more of the makeshift rooms like those directly below on the second floor. The beds here, however, have heavy leather straps attached, and feces and urine stains cover the mattresses.

The Evil Beneath

Armed with the clues, both physical and ghostly, the investigators should know to head for the south woods to find the cultists. An hour's walk takes them to the entrance mentioned in Sebastian's journal. Old but sturdy ropes and ladders aid the heroes' way down, which takes another half-hour.

Odd lichens grow on the cave walls throughout the caverns, glowing with a sickly light. Strange, eye-irritating symbols are carved in the walls here and there, and smears of old blood can be seen close to them.

By the time the group enters the caves, most if not all of the cultists are assembled in the main chamber, room #5. They have begun the rite that will bring their Master to the mortal realm.

Whether the heroes visit the side rooms or head straight for the chamber, their arrival is at the same moment: the cultists are just moments away from completing their ritual. If in six combat rounds the rite is not stopped, the adventure is over and the investigators are eaten by the entity.

After laughing at them be sure to thank them for playing.

1. Entrance

This is where the characters enter and...possibly...exit the caverns. It is just like the rest of the caverns, and otherwise unremarkable.

2. Storage

This is the cult's storage area. It is stocked to the roof with canned foods, clothes, tools, kerosene, bottles and jars, matches, and so forth. If the group gets the brilliant idea to make Molotov cocktails, they can do so. There is enough kerosene to make two per character. Each one takes five minutes to make.

3. Leader's Quarters

This is a well-appointed (for a cave) room, apparently for the cult's leader. It is decorated in human skulls, black candles, old tomes of lore, and a variety of wicked daggers, robes, and so on. The daggers could be handy in a fight, should the heroes think to pick them up. The daggers are big and have cruel blades, and do Str+2 damage with a successful Fighting roll.

4. Sleeping Chamber

This is the communal sleeping area for the other cultists. Three columns of rock support the cave. There are twenty beds here, although not all appear to be in regular use. Along with the beds are bundles, boxes, and chests containing the cultist's belongings. Altogether about \$100 in cash can be found. Nothing else of value is here.

5. Temple

This is the cultist's temple. It is a large cavern, supported by four large columns of rock. Small coves dug into the

walls hold a variety of cups and bowls, containing the blood of the cult's victims; the investigators notice these on a standard Notice roll. Once noticed, a Knowledge (Occult) roll tells the investigator that they contain the blood of the cult's victims. A raise reveals the blood is the cult's sacrament. If they encountered the ghost on the terrace, or deciphered the full meaning of the parchments, a Smarts roll clues them in that this blood is the cult's sacrament.

A large altar sits at the north end, behind which are three cultists leading the chanting, including the leader, and Sebastian! When Sebastian sees the characters, he steps from behind the altar and directs some of the cultists to attack. The leader, his second, and a half-dozen other cultists keep chanting. Anywhere from one to three cultists will attack each hero, depending on how charitable or merciless you're feeling.

Should the group figure out that the blood in the cups is the cult's sacrament and start tipping them over to spill it, the ghosts trapped in the hospice are freed and come to their savior's aid. A hero who does nothing but tip over bowls must roll Agility. Divide the result by two and round down. This is how many bowls he tips over that round. Every four bowls tipped frees enough ghosts to effectively remove one cultist from the combat. Once the combatant cultists are all gone, the ghosts turn on the leader and disrupt his ritual.

The ghosts attack by passing through the cultists, draining their life force. Each pass leaves the cultist paler and gaunter, until finally all that is left is a desiccated husk. The turn in which the last combatant cultist falls is that in which the leader and chanting cultists are attacked and disrupted. The heroes, if successful, watch the ghostly frenzy until it is over, and then see the ghosts brighten and fade away. The palpable dread of the place immediately lifts. The group is free to leave, having saved the world from what would have been an eternal nightmare.

Epilogue

When the heroes return, the Historical Society questions them extensively, then quietly decides it would be best if they came up with a more believable tale. The papers report that the remains of a cult of devil worshipers were found, but claim autopsies report the bodies were decades old. The investigators are made honorary patrons of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

In time, the tale spreads among the occult community, and the hospice becomes a popular attraction...for a while. With the ghosts gone, there is nothing to go bump in the night, and within a year's time Atterly and Hoight sell the building to a league of area churches, which refurbishes the building and makes it a hospice once again.

No strange accidents, incidents of insanity, or murder at The New Bethlehem Hospice are ever reported.

The Ensemble

Following are four pre-generated characters for players to use. Each one has skills and abilities suitable for this adventure.

Professor Jonathan Ewings

Steadfast Historian

Professor Ewings teaches at the state university and is a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society. He has been asked to look into the New Bethlehem Hospice as a favor to a friend in the Society.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Guts d6, Investigate d10, Knowledge (Civil War History) d10, Knowledge (Massachusetts History) d10, Notice d8

Pace 4 (run+d4); Parry 2; Toughness 5

Hindrances: Lame, Bad Eyes, Cautious

Edges: Alertness

Doctor Stephen Larkin

Astute Believer

Dr. Larkin is a young physician, and a member of a number of Theosophy and occult societies. He has long wanted to visit the hospice, and thinks it may be possible, and enlightening to communicate with the spirits there.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Guts d6, Healing d8, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Biology) d8, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d8

Pace 6; Parry 2; Toughness 5

Hindrances: Curious, Outsider (he believes heavily in the supernatural), Pacifist (Minor)

Edges: Alertness

Detective Thomas O'Rourke

Samaritan Skeptic

Detective O'Rourke works in Boston and has studied the New Bethlehem Hospice case for the past two years, intrigued that so much could happen there and never get explained. When he got word of the latest murders, he used his connections to get the assignment. He is determined to crack this case.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6.

Pace 6; Parry 6; Toughness 5

Hindrances: Heroic, Loyal, Doubting Thomas.

Edges: Luck (1 extra benny).

Mary Elizabeth Webster

Sharp-tongued Dilettante

Mary Elizabeth Webster is the chronically bored daughter of a Massachusetts landowner. An exuberant thrill-seeker, there is no experience she won't try at least once (more if it was fun). Mary has an acid tongue, and no compunctions against using it to make things interesting

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Notice d6, Ridicule d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6

Pace 6; Parry 5; Toughness 4

Hindrances: Overconfident, Small, Stubborn

Edges: Attractive, Rich

The Bestiary

Ghosts

The ghosts in this tale aren't out to suck the life force from the investigators—though they might do that if attacked or otherwise threatened. They're simply tormented souls who re-"live" their deaths endlessly, and seek vengeance on those who killed them—the cultists living in the caves below the house.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d12, Strength NA, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Occult) d4.

Pace 6; Parry 5; Toughness 5

Special Abilities:

- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds at a melee attack, it does its Spirit die in damage. The target gets no benefit from nonmagical armor.
- **Fear:** Some ghosts radiate fear, per your discretion. It is advisable only to use this power in hostile ghostly encounters you add in.
- **Ethereal:** Only magical attacks can affect the ghosts. Everything else just passes through them harmlessly.

Cultists

The cultists are deranged mortals bent on bringing their Master into this realm in exchange for immortality. If you choose to add magic to your adventure, it is suggested to have only the leader and his second wield it.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Occult) d6, Stealth d6

Pace 6; Parry 5; Toughness 5

Gear: Wicked Daggers (STR+2)

Cult Leader

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

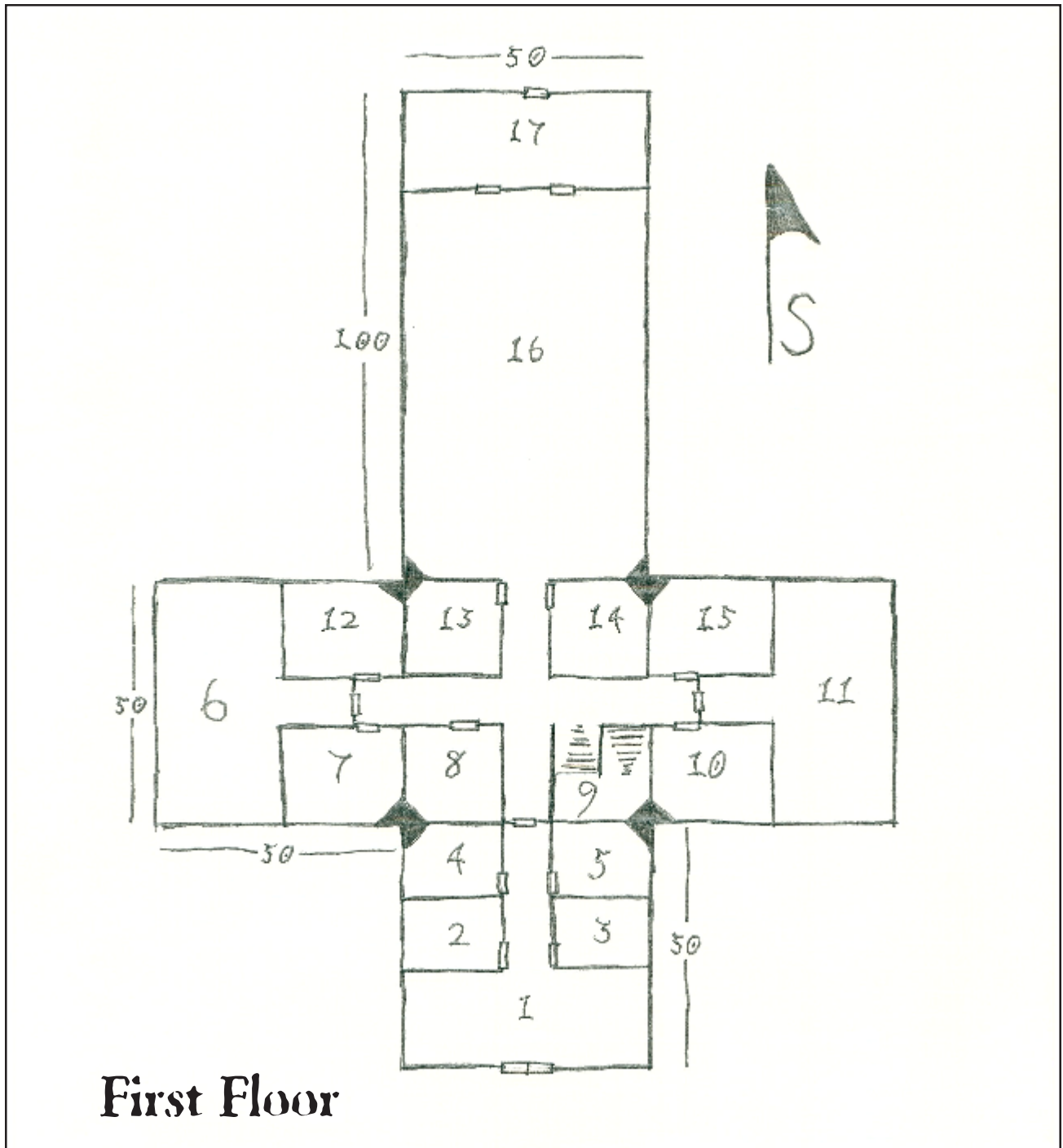
Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Occult) d10, Stealth d6

Pace 6; Parry 5; Toughness 5

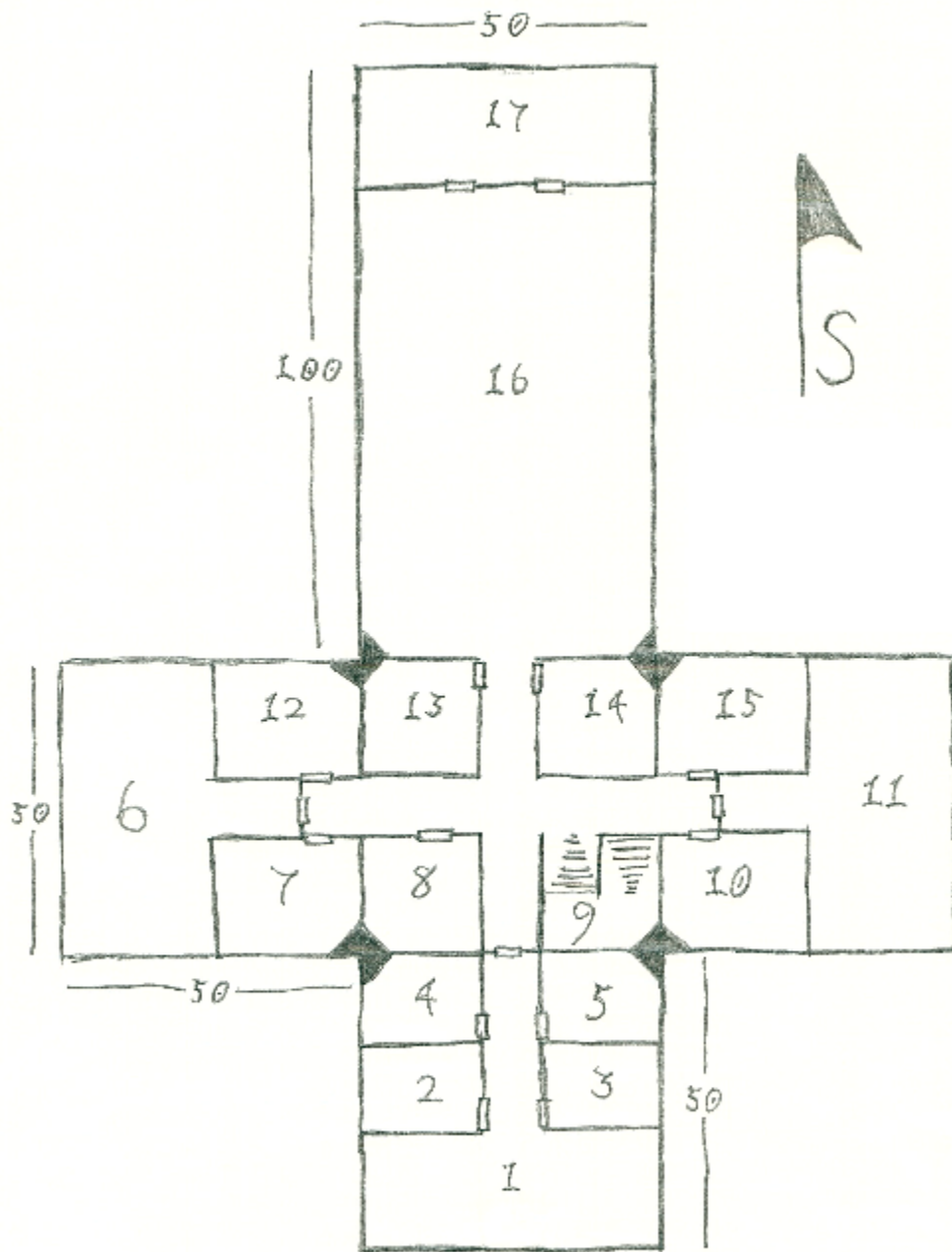
Gear: Wicked Dagger (STR+2)

Special Abilities:

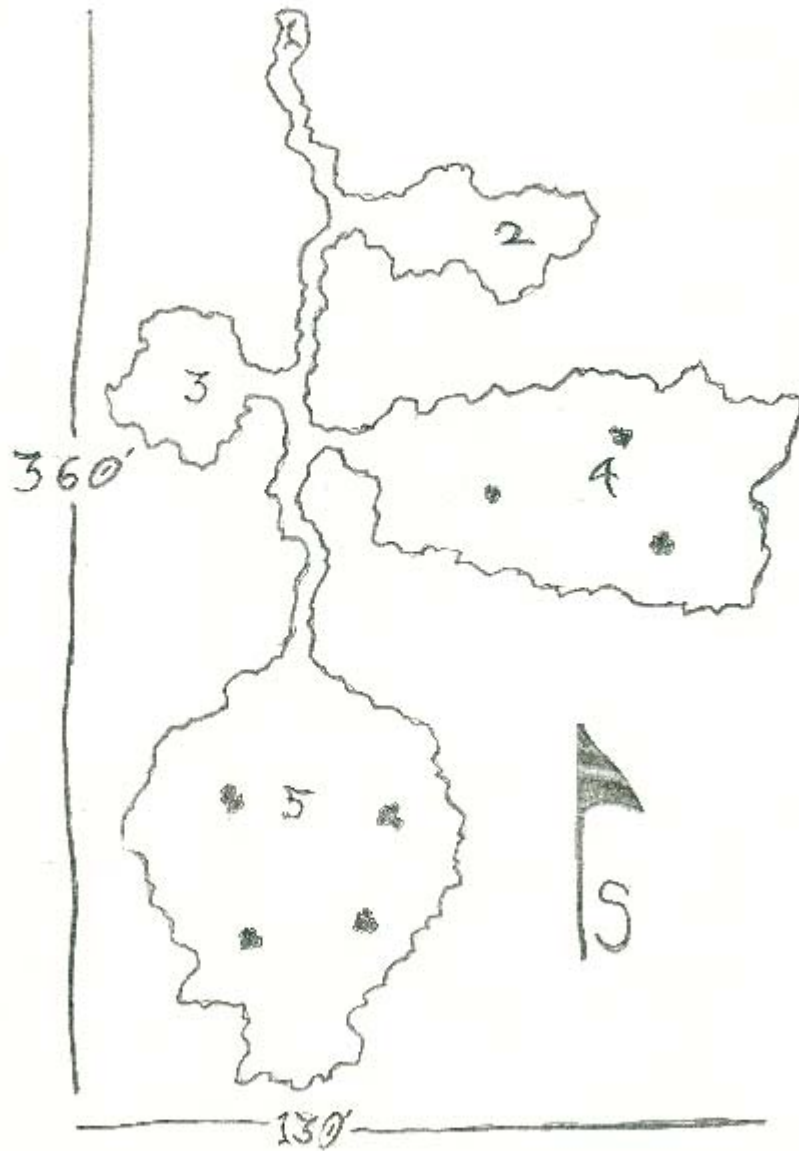
- **Black Magic:** If you decide to give the cult leader magical ability, he has Spellcasting at d10 and three powers (Armor, Bolt, Deflection, or Fear make good choices).



First Floor



Second Floor



The Temple

Sebastian's Journal

The journal is a thin, soft, leather-bound book of about a hundred paper pages. A small leather string wrapped around a button secures it closed. Inside the front cover is the name Sebastian Sikes. Sikes is, as you know, the clerk hired by the Massachusetts Historical Society to collate and organize the records here at the hospice. The handwriting inside is a delicate, well-formed script, no doubt the result of years of composing official documents and missives. You read on, and discover the descent of a man into madness and bloodlust.

The final line seems, at best, a phonetic spelling for a phrase in a language designed for the vocal abilities of something other than human, and at worst, the mangled final message of a horribly warped psyche.

September 3rd, 1920

I have arrived with the other two hired hands at the building. The Flatleys are simple rustics and quite genial. I surmise they shall be pleasant company during our time here. I wasted no time making myself familiar with the offices, and found that many of the records have remained quite orderly since it was last abandoned. I think my job shall be quite easy, even enjoyable.

September 23rd, 1920

These damnable nightmares continue to plague me. They haunt me by their images of flowing blood and lasciviously cavorting shadows. They hang on my conscience like a wreath of heavy chains. I am always tired, and have gotten quite terse with the Flatleys. I hope this shall pass soon. Thankfully the lovely couple is quite patient and forgiving.

October 13th, 1920

How cloying the Flatleys are! I'm surprised they get any work done, what with all the puerile affection they heap on each other. I avoid them as much as I can now and concentrate on the records. I have found the most intriguing parchments today. I don't recognize the language, but the symbols seem to be for purposes of magic, if I correctly recall what my gullible Theosophist friend used to talk about. I shall have to try and decipher this little puzzle. It will, at least, keep me entertained and away from the sickening Flatleys.

October 21st, 1920

I had the strangest visitor today. He would not tell me his name, and he had such a look about his eyes. He said he lived in the area and noticed the hospice was once more occupied. We spoke at length about many things. Eventually, though I cannot remember why, I showed him the strange parchments I found. He told me much about it, telling me he studied such things in passing. He taught me the rudiments of the language it is written in. He left, and I immediately set about translating the parchments. The records be damned. They are largely organized anyway; my talents are wasted on them. I KNOW these parchments are important. And I will know what secrets they hold.

November 10th, 1920

I have it! The parchments' secrets are mine! It is indeed a magical ritual, one that promises power and understanding to the invoker. It calls only for the blood of two people. Part of me shall regret what must be done. But to know all the truths of the universe! What a small price to pay for such an incredible gift!

November 14th, 1920

The deed is done! The ritual's effects are slow, but already so much is clear now! The truth was hidden to me for so long, so long! I am a greater being than the rest of humanity. I, and others like me, must work to cleanse the earth of the useless human pretensions infesting it. Only fear and pain are real, and I will bring it to this world, and they will be as ambrosia to my brothers and I!

November 15th, 1920

The stranger has returned, and told me that he is as I am now, my brother and my friend. It seems I am not the first to discover the parchment, and with each awakening the circle comes closer to completion. My very presence has awakened those who came before me. They wait for me even now, somewhere below—the stranger will show me where.

It seems I am the last that was needed. I go now to prepare for the final ritual. Let whoever finds my journal witness my last writing in the hand of man. For within a few short days, I will have become far, far more.

OhgH'sothA et'arlgLatgh bwqaVsa'at!!!