

Never Say Never

A Call of Cthulhu Scenario by Adam Gauntlett

A scenario set in the Sixties, following on the events of Horror on the Orient Express (Bradford Players audio game). While not absolutely necessary for running the game, a copy of Horror on the Orient Express (the RPG) would be useful.

Synopsis

The protagonists are tasked with recovering Betty Sunderland's diaries, stolen from her little shop in Chelsea. The thief apparently wanted to use them to discover what happened to Colonel Neville 'Never' Goodenough many years before, when he went missing on the Orient Express. Yet things are not as they appear; the cult of the Skinless One may have resurfaced to threaten the world once again!

The Truth

Betty Sunderland's diaries have become the holy texts for a new cult of Hastur, The Ladies Who Lunch. Though only a minor cult, they have achieved a small following by virtue of their youth-enhancing techniques, which they claim are the result of the latest surgical advances, developed by Swiss clinics.

The diaries were stolen by Dee Goodenough, a granddaughter of the Colonel, who wanted to use them to find out what happened to her beloved grandfather. She had no other motive, but her new Italian friends do. They want to revive the cult of the Skinless One, and think that if they can find out what happened to Never, they also

will discover what happened to the Duc d'Esseintes, the Jigsaw Prince, who vanished at the same time Never did. With the holy texts of their cult scattered or destroyed, their most powerful leaders dead, and the Similacrum broken, the Jigsaw Prince may be the only one left who truly understands the mysteries of the Skinless One.

To succeed, the protagonists will need to save Dee Goodenough, and recover (or destroy) the Sunderland diaries. Minor victory conditions include destruction of the Ladies Who Lunch cult and the Italian would-be cultists. However they will need to be careful; if they're unlucky, they might find out what really happened to Never Goodenough, all those years ago!

The Ladies Who Lunch: The Sunderland Cult

When Aunty Betty vanished, she left behind her some worried and devoted friends. Tommy Tiperton and Elvira Tinks, whom Tommy later married, were left in charge of the shop. This included all of Aunty Betty's occult material, her journals, and her shady merchandise, for Aunty Betty could occasionally be less than scrupulous. It takes seven years, under English law, for a person to be declared dead, and in that time the family had no objection to keeping the store open. In fact, after the official death notice they let the Tipertons buy it outright, which was just as well, since by that time they had succumbed to darker powers and would have been awkward customers to deal with.

The Tipertons wanted to find out what had happened to Betty, so they read and re-read her journals. They found out about Betty's less than savoury dealings with the Mythos, including her alliance with the Duc and her youth-restoring visits to 'Swiss

clinics.’ The Tipertons were keen to learn more, so they retraced Betty’s steps, and began accumulating their own Mythos knowledge.

Then they attempted to contact Betty directly, in a séance. This proved more successful than they hoped; soon ‘Betty’ was talking to them, directing their actions, and advising them on the best means of establishing their own power base. By now they were hopelessly in the thrall of Mythos entities, and began setting up a new branch of the Hastur cult in London, all the while reasoning ‘it’s what Betty would have wanted.’

The diaries were the holy journals of this new cult. They were artefacts that Betty herself had touched, created, so it was all the more galling when Dee stole some of them.

Tommy and Elvira are the co-founders of the cult. Other members include Penny Goodbody, a model; Felicity Dunmoore, an influential arts critic; and Sara Morris, a designer. These are the core members, and the only ones who can use spells. There may be other hangers-on who are willing to help the cult, but few of these really understand what it is they are getting involved with.

Normally the Ladies are very low-key. They don’t want to extend their influence too far, in case they attract the wrong kind of attention. However recent events have forced them to action. Tommy Tiperton is dead, killed during the raid on Betty’s shop, and soon Hastur will reanimate his body. Meanwhile the holy texts, Betty’s diaries, could be anywhere. They must be recovered if the cult is to continue.

The cult will hire the protagonists primarily in order to provide a cover for their own activities. They have enough on their plate containing Tommy, and they don't want Dee to know they're on to her. However to the cult the protagonists are disposable; as soon as they locate Dee and get the diaries back, they're as good as dead.

The Sixties

England exploded, didn't it? I don't know when . . . Paul McCartney, London Life 4 dec 65

I expect I'll be dead by the time I'm thirty. We all will. It's the strain, you know. A typical teenager in the Sixties, Queen magazine 17apr62

The world changed overnight, yet again. After the War, there was a very brief period of complacency. Hitler and Hirohito had been defeated and the Empire was secure; time for business as usual. Except business as usual was stony broke. Food rationing and electricity blackouts continued well into the Fifties, and the economy as a whole was deeply indebted to the Americans, who bailed out their ally with a \$3.5 billion loan in 1948. The Empire was falling apart; the bits of it that weren't engulfed in turmoil were undergoing relatively peaceful secession – relative, at any rate, to open warfare and terrorist acts. Moreover the economy didn't show any real signs of improvement until the 1980s; all through the Sixties the United Kingdom went from Start to Stop and back again, each positive economic sign being met with at least two negatives. Socially things were at an impasse; the old order was deeply conservative, entrenched in pre-war thinking, but their time had passed. If you were twenty-five in 1960, the War itself was a childhood memory, not something

you might have fought in. Anything before the War was as ancient as the Pyramids. The old days were done. It was time for change.

It was time for the classless society. If you were of the Sixties, you were young, quick, impatient, impulsive, nervous, energetic, polished, tough, energetic, ruthless, aggressive. Your hero was James Bond, the man with the License to Kill who went on impossible adventures, a complete volte-face from the gritty and realistic War heroes who'd dominated the silver screen in the Fifties. Or, even more iconic, the Prisoner: the man who rebelled against the straight-jacket that society forced him into, and, like Samson, threw down the old order rather than submit. Both Bond and Number Six had their gadgets; this was a science-obsessed decade, where technology solved all problems. The Brutalist architectural style was built on that premise: any faults created by the design would be remedied by Technology. If you were of your time you believed in the consumer society that produced an endless supply of goods for you to aspire to, or better yet, buy on credit. You lived in London, if at all possible; anything north of the Thames was by definition boring and provincial, completely out of touch with the zeitgeist. Your playwrights were Pinter and Beckett, not Shakespeare; your comedians were the likes of Sellers, not George Formby; Michael Caine was the film star who defined style; you watched *That Was the Week that Was* on the telly (the telly!) and loved every satirical minute.

Are you being Served?

The protagonists are asked to meet Elvira at Sunderlands Antiquarian Emporium, her Chelsea shop.

Sunderlands is a rather neat establishment, for an Antiquarian store. There's not a speck of dust to be seen, and the stock is very carefully arranged and catalogued. However when the protagonists get there the door is shut and locked. There's a message pinned to the door for them, asking them to ring the upstairs apartment.

Elvira is there, with her three devoted friends. She's obviously suffered a severe shock, and throughout the interview will be on the verge of tears.

She explains that there was a robbery the night before, and the villains murdered her poor husband Tommy. The police say they have few leads, and it may be that they'll never find the cruel men who did it. Fortunately very little was taken, but among the items stolen were some books of great sentimental value to Elvira. She wants them back, and she also wants the killers brought to justice. She'll pay any price, if only the protagonists will agree to help her.

Psychology may notice that Elvira seems more interested in the recovery of the books than bringing her husband's killers to justice.

The books, Elvira says, are plain leather-bound diaries, written by her dear old friend Betty Sunderland, the previous owner of the Emporium. Not all the diaries were taken, just the ones that concerned her life in the Twenties and a trip she took on the Orient Express. She offers to show the protagonists where the diaries were kept, and the scene of the crime.

According to Elvira's version, the diaries were kept in the main shop area, locked in a cabinet with other antiquarian volumes. This may not seem reasonable to Spot

Hidden, since there's only enough space on the shelf for those diaries, which, if the collection included the rest of Betty's journals, seems unlikely. They'd never fit.

Tommy was shot dead. His body was found near the front door, which was how the burglars got away. They got in by breaking a window. Spot Hidden notices that, for burglars, they were remarkably focused: they didn't touch the cash box or go near the counter, nor did they disarrange the stock. It's as if they knew what they were looking for. The police have already come and gone, and the only dust in the place is left over from their fingerprint powder.

Elvira says that the policeman in charge of the case is Detective Inspector Reg Gifford, and she gives the protagonists his contact details.

Elvira also says that someone did express an interest in the Sunderland diaries only a short while ago, but Elvira told her they were not for sale. The young woman did leave an address, care of the Ritz Hotel, and her name, Dee Goodenough.

The protagonists may think it worth their while to come back to the Emporium after hours, when Elvira isn't there, and search for further clues. Breaking in is relatively easy; going through a window requires a Sneak but nothing else. While there are no more clues to be had in the shop, there is a concealed back room (Spot Hidden and possibly also Mechanical Repair, to open the electric push-button operated door without damaging it – or they could just push the button, that's what it's for) where the cult keeps all of Betty's diaries, as well as their own sacrificial paraphernalia, transcripts of their séances with Betty, and enough incriminating evidence (bricks of cocaine) to get them arrested on drugs charges. However if the protagonists go this

route the Keeper may wish to bring Tommy's return a bit forward, so he can catch them in the act.

Tommy Tiperton: it's because Tommy got shot that his dear wife and her colleagues aren't taking care of this themselves. They know Tommy's due to return any moment, and are preparing rituals to keep him at bay. For the early part of the scenario they'll be making sure Tommy doesn't cause too much of a fuss. However it's possible the protagonists may encounter him. If they do, this mindless husk, now an Unspeakable Possessor, attacks them without mercy or fear. Tommy is still dressed in full Mod attire, but otherwise is a gelid heap of near-boneless flesh, who has only shadowy memories of his past life. His memories are why he revisits the shop, but soon Hastur will reclaim him, and he will vanish into the dark recesses of London - though not before giving his wife Elvira and her friends some trouble.

HP 36, DB: +2d6 Attacks: Touch 75% (1d10+DB initial hit, then 1d10 hit points per round unless the Possessor is killed or the target makes a STR v 18 roll to break free), Armour: 6 point scales and rubbery flesh, Skills: Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 50%, SAN: 1/1d6.

New Scotland Yard

The protagonists may talk to Detective Inspector Reg 'Dandy' Gifford.

Gifford, as his nickname suggests, is very fond of keeping up appearances. He spends a good third of his salary on suits, shirts, ties and the like, and considers himself a sartorial expert. However he's also a thorough investigator, and thinks

there's something very funny going on at Sunderlands.

If the protagonists approach him politely he doesn't mind sharing a little of what he knows, but he doesn't go much further than Elvira did: the robbery was carried out by persons unknown, Tommy was shot by the burglars when he caught them in the act. Reg thinks that it was the work of a gang, but he's confident he'll be able to round them up quickly. They were clearly amateurs.

Reg doesn't take the protagonists into his confidence because he thinks they're working for Elvira, and he doesn't trust Elvira. However if they come to him as if they're not Elvira's friends, or have evidence against her, it's a different story.

Reg thinks the robbery was the work of a gang of Italian criminals who don't often work in England. He's cooperating with his Italian colleagues to track them down. The criminals, also known as the Brotherhood, are known to be vicious gangsters who usually operate within Italy, where their protection rackets are based. He doesn't know why they picked Sunderlands to rob nor why they stole those diaries. However he does know, thanks to her worried family who have been ringing his phone non-stop, that Dee Goodenough is involved somehow. He knows that she left England the day after the robbery, and is probably on the Continent, but doesn't know where. In fact, he's making arrangements to leave the country himself soon, hot on the trail of the thieves. He'll say all this if the protagonists aren't friends of Elvira but are respectable (Credit Rating).

Puttin' on the Ritz

The Ritz Hotel in London is one of the most prestigious establishments in the West End. It's close to Green Park, (one of the Royal parks), to Burlington Arcade (shopping mecca) and the Royal Academy (arts & sciences haven). It's right next door to Fortnum & Mason's, source of quality food hampers.

The Ritz front of house staff (doormen, desk clerks) are well trained and determined not to let the riff-raff in. Anyone trying to bluff their way past will need to make a Credit Rating check, with failure meaning they are ejected from the establishment.

Those who ask after Dee Goodenough are politely requested to leave their details at the front desk. Miss Goodenough will call them back directly (she doesn't). However anyone who gets as far as the front desk may Spot Hidden Dee's room number in the hotel register.

Anyone who manages to get past the front desk and find their way to Dee's room discovers that she isn't in. However she left most of her belongings behind. It's clear she packed in a hurry, taking only a few clothes and essentials; the rest she left, and the room is disordered. Idea may realize that she left quickly, and may not have paid her bill. Spot Hidden or a search of her rooms discovers several brochures for Milan, a Cook's guide for Milan, and an itinerary for the Orient Express. Also here is an Italian newspaper, La Stampa, with an article on the fourth page circled in red. The article is a short piece about a recent political assassination in Milan, attributed to a group known as the Brotherhood. Of course, the article is written in Italian, and so will need an Other Language check. This search also

discovers several unfinished letters written to 'Uncle Neville'. In them, Dee tries to explain that she's on the trail of 'the Colonel' and asks her uncle to 'take care of things in England for me.' Psychology used on these letters shows that the writer was in a high state of anxiety and possibly panic.

At this point the protagonists may Listen and hear footsteps and conversation, as though a group of people, some of them hotel staff, were on their way to Dee's room. The hotel staff sound apologetic. Whoever the other person is, he's English and sounds as if he's used to authority.

Climbing to safety is a possibility. There are balconies overlooking Green Park; protagonists could go out on Dee's balcony and climb down to the room below. Failing the Climb roll means the protagonist is stuck, and must be helped to safety; no further Climb rolls can be made by that protagonist (who has panicked), but other protagonists can use Climb to help the stuck one to safety.

Another option is just to rush past the approaching group and hope for the best. This will mean a chase scene with the hotel staff, and if caught the protagonists will be handed over to the police. The Englishman they heard looks like a military man, possibly an officer (and in fact is Uncle Neville Goodenough). He won't join in the chase. Treat hotel staff as having DEX 12, Grapple 45% and 10HP; they will back off if the protagonists seem willing to use lethal force.

Finally, protagonists can Hide, but if found will need to run away as in the chase scene above. If they Hide, then five hotel staff, including a manager, and Uncle Neville come into the room. The protagonists won't need Listen rolls to hear Uncle

Neville, who's barking orders like a sergeant-major and is determined to find out what happened to his niece Dee. The staff are nervous and apologetic, and will help Uncle Neville search the room, discovering the brochures and letters as above unless the protagonists took them. Then they will leave.

Uncle Neville

From this point in the scenario onwards Uncle Neville will dog the protagonists' footsteps. He may try to recruit them as allies, if he can be convinced they are reliable. Otherwise he will treat them as potential opponents.

Uncle Neville is a typical Goodenough: career military, bloodthirsty, and determined to get his own way. He has a small group of supporters and allies he will call on after the Ritz scene, and on all subsequent encounters should never be found without them.

The Keeper should use Uncle Neville as encouragement for the protagonists. Are they going the right way, investigating the right things? Then Uncle Neville is not far behind. Was Uncle Neville seen in a particular place, perhaps reported on in a local paper? Then that place is plot-relevant. Uncle Neville may also be a useful replacement employer, if the protagonists stop trusting Elvira; he could hire them to help him find Dee. He can also be a source of dream-drug, assuming that the protagonists don't pick up on either of the other two sources; he has a small supply left after the original Orient Express adventure.

Uncle Neville is willing to use violence to achieve his ends, particularly if he thinks

his opponents are cultists.

See Appendix for further details of Uncle Neville and his supporters.

The Orient Express

Protagonists may try to track Dee by enquiring at the Orient Express offices, either in London or in Paris. They will need a plausible story and good Credit Rating to get any information from the staff, but even so all the staff are willing to reveal is that Dee, along with some Italian friends, boarded the train in Paris intending to go to Milan. This happened the day after the robbery at Sunderlands. Psychology may notice that the staff seem worried. This is because they know that Dee and her friends never left the train. All her belongings stayed on board, and were discovered by the train staff, but she vanished, as did her Italian friends. It's a puzzler for them, and they handed the case over to the Italian authorities, since it seemed likely she went missing after the train reached Italy.

Inquiries at Milan

The protagonists can attempt to track Dee by inquiring at Milan, perhaps using the information found in the brochures and travel guide as a hint to her itinerary.

Milan was heavily damaged during the War, mostly by aerial bombardment, but at the time of this scenario the city is undergoing a massive economic revival: Il boom, as they say. This is powered by a huge influx of immigrant labour, particularly from Southern Italy. The city is like a roiling anthill, with new buildings and factories springing up every day. At the same time, there is great political frustration. Young

Communists and idealists dream of a new Italy, and if they can't get it by fair means, they'll use foul. While this scenario is a little early for Red Brigade terrorism and bombings, the tension is obvious even to tourists.

At several points in the scenario Other Language checks are called for, as the protagonists are assumed to not be Italian speakers. The Keeper may ignore these checks if the protagonist has an Other Language skill of 60 or better.

Dee was supposed to stay at the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, a magnificent 19th century glass-roofed arcade that houses the finest shops in Milan, as well as the hotel and excellent restaurants. The hotel staff are as vigilant as those at the Ritz; Credit Rating will be needed to get information from the desk staff. According to them, Dee Goodenough was supposed to check in the day before the protagonists arrive in Milan, but never showed. They have no idea where she is.

Spot Hidden notices a package held behind the counter, with Dee's name on the label. The staff will not give this package to anyone other than Dee; some scheme will be needed to obtain it. If the protagonists get the package, they find it contains four vials of green liquid, carefully wrapped in tissue paper. There is a note with the package that reads, In case you need a resupply - M.

Spot Hidden may also notice that one of the hotel staff (a doorman) keeps a covert watch on the protagonists. This man is a member of the Brothers of the Skin cult. His features are slightly asymmetrical and far too smooth, as though they have been ironed out. He is incapable of facial expression. The cult is not what it was; its members are not nearly as skilled surgeons as their forbears. This cultist has been

detailed to keep an eye on the hotel, and report back if anyone asks after Dee. If challenged he will try to escape: Grapple 35, Fist 60, HP10, and if caught he will refuse to say a word, even under interrogation or torture.

If the protagonists try to track the Brotherhood, perhaps by talking to the local police or news reporters, they will need to Persuade these contacts that the protagonists are trustworthy. If they succeed, then their contact says the terrorist group known as the Brotherhood is one of the minor political neo-fascist organizations, a holdover from before the war. They're not very popular either with the authorities or the communists, and informed opinion has it that the Brotherhood will probably fade out in a few years. However they have shown willingness to use force in the past, and are not to be underestimated. They don't seem to have an organized leadership, but their most vocal spokesman is Mario Faccia, the son and heir of a prominent pre-war industrialist.

Protagonists who try to learn more about Mario Faccia will need either to trawl newspaper archives, (Library Use and Other Language) or talk with whatever shady contacts or youth groups the Keeper cares to invent (Persuade and Other Language). If they do that, then they learn that Mario is considered a blow-hard, out of touch with reality. He campaigns vigorously on an anti-immigrant platform, which at the moment is as good as saying he's against Milan's economic revival. He's called for violent resistance against the Communists and what he describes as 'the decayed bourgeois', and champions a return to Fascism. While his father was extremely rich, the war took its toll on the Faccia fortune, and nowadays Mario has

little money. He lives in the family villa on the outskirts of Milan.

An Armed Response

It's likely that the protagonists will do something to upset the Brotherhood while they are in Milan. Should this happen, then a hit team will be sent after them.

The hit team consists of two people, a man and a woman, riding a Vespa scooter.

The man has Drive 80, HP 12, and the woman has SMG 60, HP 10. The Keeper should apply penalties to the SMG fire equivalent to the driving penalty imposed on the driver: so, eg., a high speed turn (-10) the round after a fishtail (-15) means a total -25 penalty on the SMG fire as well as the driving. This penalty should be applied in addition to any range modifiers for combat while driving. The SMG has a 20 round magazine, fires 3 shots/round or burst, and does 1d8 damage per hit.

The Vespa has 12HP, handling 8, and max speed 8. Keepers who want to encourage high-speed chases on Vespas through the streets of Milan (perhaps even through the glass-vaulted mall of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele) should let the protagonists spot several other Vespas standing by the side of the road with keys in the ignition, left there by frightened bystanders. The hit team, if caught, will refuse to speak even under interrogation, though they will spout neo-fascist slogans at the drop of a hat.

Their tactics are simple: drive slowly past the protagonists (perhaps while they enjoy a break at a roadside cafe), open up with the SMG, and then quickly drive off. They don't care if innocent bystanders get caught in the crossfire. Spot Hidden or Listen might alert the protagonists before the shooting starts, giving them precious

seconds to react. Dodge would get them under cover, perhaps adding to their armour resistance (eg. give them 3 points armour if under or behind a table, 1 point (for 1 round only) if hidden under an umbrella or behind a bush, 2 points if lying in the gutter, and so on). They can shoot back, but this makes them an obvious target for the hit team.

The Italian police will immediately jail any protagonist known to have been firing guns on the streets of Milan (assuming that they catch them), unless a Credit Rating check is made with a -50 penalty. This penalty may be reduced to -25 if a protagonist makes a Law and Other Language check, to persuade the police that they were fired on first, and even if this is successful all weapons will be confiscated and the protagonists encouraged to leave Milan as soon as possible. If the protagonists don't fire back, this won't happen.

The Villa

Mario Faccia has a family villa on the outskirts of Milan.

This villa is a decayed 18th century building, with a central courtyard and small garden, surrounded on all sides by high iron gates topped with spikes. There is only one way in or out, and at that point there is a guard house that is always manned. Armed men and dogs patrol the grounds. Mario takes his security very seriously. There are eight guards in total, Spot Hidden 45, SMG 45, HP 10, with the SMG stats being: 20 round magazine, fires 3 shots/round or burst, and 1d8 damage per hit. The dogs have Scent Stranger 80, Bite 60 (1d4+1), HP 7.

Mario refuses to talk to anyone he doesn't know. He doesn't give interviews to the press (unless it's the Italian press) and he will not talk to non-Italians.

Mario is a tall, barrel-chested man with thinning black hair. He always wears tailored suits and has excellent deportment, the result of expensive private education. He is one of the few members of the Brotherhood to have received pre-war surgery; his hands and legs are not his own, nor are his expressive, almost feminine brown eyes. However his Brotherhood lacks most of the knowledge of the old Brothers of the Skin, and surgery of this skill is no longer available to the cult. He spends his nights at the villa, but during the day he goes out (in his chauffeured limousine) to the factories, as he manages the few businesses left from his father's empire. Cthulhu Mythos 30, Occult 70, Persuade 80, MP 15, HP 14, but only one spell: Wrack. All the old magics of the cult have been forgotten, which is why Mario is so keen to get his hands on the Sunderland diaries.

If the protagonists somehow get in and search his private study, Other Language and Accounting will discover enough financial paperwork to link Faccia to several shell companies which in turn provide funding for terrorist groups. The police would very much like to get their hands on this evidence. Spot Hidden and possibly Mechanical Repair will also notice a secret safe hidden behind an electronically operated door. Locksmith or Demolitions would get the safe open. Inside are all the cult papers (see below), a supply of the dreaming drug, and Mario's correspondence with Dee.

Mario needed Dee as a front; he didn't think the people at Sunderlands would

cooperate with his organization, but hoped that the charming Ms. Goodenough would succeed. When that played out, he decided to lure Dee to Milan, the better to deal with her quietly, preferably by assassinating her in the dream-version of Milan. However Dee and her Brotherhood escort vanished aboard the Orient Express. Now Mario is a very worried man.

Cult Papers: Cthulhu Mythos +8, 1d4/1d10 SAN. These unbound and ill-organized journals describe the activities of the modern Brotherhood cult, from just before the War to the current day. The journals tell the story of a decaying organization; some great disaster that took place before the War apparently destroyed the cult's effectiveness. However this did not dim their enthusiasm, and some of the ritual activities they carried out are truly depraved. They offer up prayers for forgiveness and implore their God, the Skinless One, to look with favour on them once more.

The Dee Letters: These are written in English. Mario tells Dee he knows about her grandfather's activities in Italy and suggests that he never left. Mario asks Dee to help him acquire the Sunderland diaries, 'for they contain information that will be vital to your search - but of course, once you are done with them, we will need them for our own studies.' He also says 'you will need to search in dreams as assiduously as you do in the waking world. Yes, this may seem foolish at first, but believe me: there is truth in dreams. I enclose a small supply of a drug which you will find useful. Take one dose before going to sleep, and you will see the truth of what I say.' Mario's last letter advises Dee to catch the Orient Express - 'it must be that train, and no other,' - and to take the drug while travelling to Milan. 'Great

truths will be revealed.’ [Keeper’s Note: Mario was hoping Dee would get lost on the Dream Express. He wasn’t expecting her to take the Sunderland Diaries in with her, and when his cultists realized what went wrong they followed her in too – with unfortunate results. Of course, they never had time to tell their leader what had happened, so he doesn’t realize that his prize is lost on the Dream Express. In theory, if the Keeper wants further antagonists and Mario is still active when the protagonists get on the train, Mario can follow the protagonists with half a dozen cultists in support.]

Sweet Dreams

By this point the protagonists will have searched Milan, possibly uncovered some of the Brotherhood’s activities, and realized that although Dee got on the Orient Express, she never left the train.

What happened was this: Dee followed Mario’s advice and took some of the dreaming drug while on the train. Unbeknownst either to Mario or to Dee, the Dream Express is a trap that sprang years ago; the original investigators, including Colonel Goodenough and Mrs Sunderland, were briefly detained in it on their way back to England. However the trap is still active, and when Dee and her companions took the drug, they were pulled bodily through into a dream version of the Orient Express.

While in Milan, the Keeper should plague the protagonists with strange, half-remembered dreams. Each dream sequence should cost 0/1d3 SAN, and should feature motifs relating to trains and Dee Goodenough. Use these examples to

create dream sequences:

- The protagonist stands next to a train track. The tracks are shaking as though a train is on its way, but there is no sound at all. Then, with a sudden rush, a great black locomotive rushes past; again, without sound, though the very air shakes. Its long black coaches stretch into the night. A young woman – Dee Goodenough? – leans out of one window, screaming, but soundlessly. A grand cathedral, complete with bell tower, speeds past, and its dolorous bell sounds – and the protagonist suddenly awakens, the peal of bells in his ears.
- The protagonist sits in an elegant train dining car. An attentive waiter bends forward, offering a bottle of wine for inspection. A note sent with the bottle reads, 'With the compliments of Dee Goodenough.' Though the waiter says something, not a word can be heard. Just as the protagonist takes an action, a hand grasps his arm. He turns his head to see a burnt, featureless corpse grinning into his own face.
- The protagonist is walking down a train corridor. It sways back and forth, making walking difficult. Up ahead is a strange, pale figure. At first glance it seems to be some kind of marionette, with jointed torso, legs, arms and so on, but the head is that of Dee Goodenough. The one holding the marionette's strings is clinging to the roof – a hideous, twisted mockery of a man, with fangs like misshapen razor blades.
- The protagonist is sitting in a private train compartment with three other

marionettes, except that unlike the previous dream these puppets have blank faces. Dee Goodenough is here, and she is pouring out doses of dream drug into coffee cups. She speaks, but the protagonist cannot hear what she says. Then a long, black arm snakes through the train window, grabs Dee, and drags her out into the darkness. The last thing the protagonist experiences before they wake is the sensation of the marionettes' cold, dead hands sinuously rubbing all over their bodies.

The intent of these sequences is to reinforce the idea of the train as the location, and the fact that Dee is in peril. So long as the protagonists take some of the dream drug while on the Orient Express, they'll be able to get to the next section and (hopefully) save Dee. The Keeper should emphasise (in dream sequences) those issues that the protagonists seem to have missed, so if (eg) they don't seem to have picked up on the dream drug yet, the drug should be a significant plot point in a dream sequence.

The Orient Express

The final scenes take place on board that famous train. Dee Goodenough is trapped here, in a dream version of the Express. Saving her, and possibly also recovering the Sunderland Diaries, are the victory conditions of the scenario.

In the 1960s, the Orient Express is a train without (apparently) a future. War service destroyed 845 Wagons-Lits carriages, and disrupted its service for several years. Moreover political concerns still blocked the route. Going through Communist Europe was very difficult, and occasionally impossible. Meanwhile the Turkish

border closed in the 1950s and attacks from Communist-inspired bandits made travelling via the Greek-Yugoslav border inadvisable at night. However the bigger problem was air travel. It was quick, efficient and relatively cheap. A generation that had grown used to taking the better part of a week to get to their destination were replaced by one that demanded the same journey take less than a day. The Sixties see the dawn of the Jet Set, and the doom of the Express which, after declining standards and near-empty carriages, seemed destined for obsolescence.

The Express in this scenario is a broken-down remnant. The locomotive is a local train; the Express is merely the carriages pulled by it, and there are only three of those. There is no restaurant service. Passengers must bring their own food, or scrounge at railway stations. The marquetry and carpets no longer have that sheen of luxury; scars and burns are more the rule, some of it being bomb damage from the war while others are the result of careless or malicious guests. The train does not run on time. It is more famous for being late. Even so, a ghost of its former self occasionally shines through; a touch of comfort, of careful attention to detail, to remind passengers of what the train used to be.

For the purpose of this scenario it does not matter whether the protagonists catch the train from Milan towards Paris, or from Paris towards Milan.

The protagonists may search the train, looking for clues. Were the Express its old, efficient self, anything left behind by Dee or her companions would have been gathered up, but this is the new, decayed Express. Spot Hidden may therefore find:

- A vial of dream-drug, half-full, that rolled under a seat.
- A handbag (Dee's) containing an English newspaper, some money, personal items, and a letter from Mario to Dee explaining what she should do with the dream-drug.
- A man's overcoat, Italian make, with a bundle of letters in the pocket. One of them is from Mario to an unnamed cultist, advising the cultist to be very careful and to watch Dee at all times. 'She may yet betray us. You know what to do if she does.'
- An expensive man's walking stick, well used, with an inscription. Uncle Neville can identify this as Colonel Goodenough's property.

Again, it doesn't matter which train the protagonists catch; if they search, they'll get this information. The Express routinely swaps out carriages and puts them on other trains; it just so happens that the protagonists got lucky this time and found themselves in the same carriages that Dee used.

Sweet Dreams Redux

If the protagonists take the dream drug while on board the Express, they will be transported bodily to the dream version of the Express.

This train is significantly larger and more luxurious than the knackered version the protagonists were travelling on. Every element of it is pristine and well-cared for. There are several sleeping cars, a dining car (capable of seating fifty-six guests at a

time, all of them attended to by expert staff and chefs), a salon car (including bar service), two fourgons (baggage cars, also crew sleeping quarters), and the Express' engine.

At the tail end of the train is a completely impossible car, shaped like a giant stone cathedral complete with bell tower. This car is blocked off to the protagonists at first, though if they put their heads out of a window they will see it. This car is a remnant of Dream Lausanne, (see further: Horror on the Orient Express), which, ever since the events of the original adventure, has been doomed to ride the Dream Express.

Travelling from car to car is easy enough until the protagonists get to the cathedral car. Unless the protagonists deliberately attract attention to themselves they won't be challenged, though if their clothing is unusual (eg. short skirts) it may cause problems.

The train is full of passengers, well-dressed men and women who are enjoying a pleasant luxury journey. To them, it is the Twenties, not the Sixties, and they will be very puzzled by these strangely-dressed intruders in their midst. If the intruders become too boisterous, the other passengers may call on the train staff to deal with these boors.

Tran staff: pleasant, urbane and master of two or three languages. Grapple 45, Fist 50 (1d3+0), Club 45 (wine bottle 1d4+1). If lethal force is used, the staff change into a monstrous, faceless form rather like a porcelain marionette, and attack without mercy. Claw 55 (1d6+2), HP 14, SAN 0/1d6, immune to firearms and

piercing damage but can be battered with blunt instruments until they break. Passengers will not notice if staff revert to their monstrous form. Imprisoned protagonists will be locked in the fourgon, which, as it is close to the Cathedral Car, is no very bad thing.

If the protagonists are to rescue Dee they will need to get through all the other carriages, both the fourgons, and somehow break into the Cathedral. In doing so they may interact with some of the 'normal' passengers, a few of whom are included here for Keeper's reference:

- An opera singer, Catarina Cavellaro, who will burst into song at the drop of a hat.
- Mrs. Herring, a dotty and distracted elderly woman who keeps asking if anyone has seen her husband.
- Lady Margaret Bramwell, aristocratic to her fingertips, and her two cats, Charlotte and Emily. Lady Margaret is, oddly, the very image of Mrs. Betty Sunderland.
- Dr. Vincenzo Gaspari, medical professional, a deeply worried man, though for some reason he can't remember what he ought to be worried about.

Protagonists who talk to these or any other passengers may be told the following:

- The train is travelling from . . . well, really, I'm not sure . . . and is going to . . . actually, I can't remember that either. It's all very odd.

- There was such a funny noise a moment ago, like an aircraft flying overhead!
- There are strange people in one of the carriages. Most of them are Italian, but one of them was an English girl. She seemed pleasant, though she had a shocking taste in clothing. Such skirts! Well, really! [males may dwell less on this than females, as they liked Dee's legs.]
- You must be careful not to talk to some of the . . . other people. They aren't quite nice. [the NPC refuses to elaborate.]
- When I last saw that nice English girl, she was going into the cathedral car. At least, that's what the page boy said.

The Others: In addition to the ordinary passengers there are several other people on board who classify as Other. Others don't talk and have no useful information. They may or may not attack. Passengers don't talk to an Other nor do they acknowledge their existence. They include:

- Doctor Winstanley, a pleasant medical man with a bullet hole in the centre of his forehead. 0/1d4 SAN loss for the encounter.
- Milosh, a hunched, crippled thing with a face that runs like liquid, barely contained under a bulging, misshapen balaclava. 1/1d8 SAN.
- Professor Moretti, a victim of severe burns who crawls along the floor,

searching for something. 1/1d8 SAN.

- Violet Davenport, a smiling young woman with a scarred face who has been taken to pieces. Her arms, legs, torso and so on are trying to rearrange themselves, but the bits just keep falling apart. 1/1d8 SAN.
- Fenalik, a twisted shadow that lurks on the edge of vision. All that can be seen are two glowing red eyes, and even those vanish if looked at directly. 0/1d4 SAN. If a protagonist shows Fenalik too much attention, he attacks Claw 80, 1d4+2d6 for one round only, after which he vanishes.

Searching the carriages: The protagonists may try to search for further clues concerning the missing Italians and Dee. If they do, Spot Hidden may notice:

- A modern Italian newspaper, La Stampa.
- A modern cosmetics case, with a letter written by Dee to Uncle Neville inside it. [the letter contains no relevant information.]
- A scalpel, covered in blood.
- An engraved invitation from someone called The Jigsaw Prince to Dee Goodenough, inviting her to attend him in the Cathedral Car. This invite can be used to bluff the cathedral guards into letting protagonists in.

Dead Brotherhood cultist: Protagonists who search carefully may find this corpse, left behind by his comrades. The dead man got on Fenalik's bad side, and had his throat torn out. The corpse has been bundled into [a lavatory/an empty sleeping

compartment/the fourgon] and is very amateurishly hidden. 1/1d6 SAN for discovering the corpse. The body, if searched, has:

- A very sharp scalpel.
- A wallet, with money and identity papers [fake] for a Milanese pastry chef.
- Letters from Dee to the cultist, explaining the layout of Sunderlands and describing what ought to be done when the cultists break in.
- An engraved invitation from the Jigsaw Prince, inviting the bearer to attend the Prince in his Cathedral Car. As with the previous invitation, this can be used to bluff the guards into letting the bearer into the Cathedral Car.

The Cathedral Car

This is accessed via the rear fourgon. The door, (which resembles a massive double-leaf wooden iron-framed door), is guarded by two marionettes. These dolls are made of what appears to be porcelain, the joints nonexistent. They are faceless and will not speak. They are dressed in uniforms similar to those worn by the Swiss Guards at the Papal City, and each carries a large halberd. They will prevent protagonists from going into the Cathedral Car. They can be bluffed with an invitation, or beaten into submission.

Guards: Halberd 60 (1d10), HP 14, SAN 0/1d6, immune to firearms and piercing damage but can be battered with blunt instruments until they break.

The cathedral car is as long as two ordinary sleeping cars. The walls are stone,

pierced here and there with elaborate stained glass windows, and there are doors here which lead out to open-air balconies. On either side of the long room are tables heaped high with expensive foods and wine. At the very far end of the room is a raised dais, on which sits a carved stone throne. Behind the throne is another door.

The Balconies: The outside world cannot be seen. It is cloaked by heavy mist. In theory, jumping out is suicide, given the speed the train is travelling at, but in fact it's the only way out: leaving the train allows the dreamer to wake up. Jumping off at any point would do the same, but the balconies are the only exit from the Cathedral Car apart from the tower. Anyone looking out over the balconies can make an Idea check to figure this out.

The Windows: Though the atmosphere is medieval, the subjects are modern. Colonel Goodenough, Mrs. Sunderland and her companions, fighting against the evils of the Skinless One's cult. One mural shows the Colonel tumbling from the Cathedral tower.

The Throne: The corpses of the remaining Italian cultists are heaped here, their throats cut and their entrails drawn out. [They have been sacrificed to Ithaqua by Colonel Goodenough.] SAN 1d3/1d10. Written in blood on the dais is: Where is my Medallion? In English. Searching through the bodies finds Mrs. Sunderland's Diaries.

When the protagonists examine the bodies, the door behind the throne opens, and the Jigsaw Prince steps out.

This is all that is left of the cultist Duc d'Esseintes, once a major figure in the Skinless One cult. Ever since he was defeated here, his dream lived on, imprisoned on the train. He is permanently in conflict with Colonel Goodenough, who lurks in the Cathedral Tower; neither can defeat the other. The Jigsaw Prince has lost most of his personality and all of his magical ability, but if he knew that the Brotherhood existed he would try to find a way to ally with them.

At the moment his hope is that he can persuade the protagonists to deal with Colonel Goodenough in the Tower. They can do it any way they like, so long as the Colonel is no longer a threat to the Prince.

Jigsaw Prince: a walking mound of stitched-together flesh, clad only in a silk loincloth. He carries a sharp dagger in his right hand. He is immune to most attacks, but if struck by an attack at 10% of the attacker's skill, takes normal damage. Knife 75 (1d6+1d4), HP 15, SAN 2/1d6+1. Special: Guards! Guards! At the Keeper's discretion, and once only, the Prince can call on 4 halberd-wielding guards, just like the ones on the door.

Mrs. Sunderland's Diaries: +6 Cthulhu Mythos, SAN 1d4/1d6+1, no spells. These detail the adventures of Betty Sunderland and her friends, as they battle the Skinless One cult. They also describe Colonel Goodenough's disappearance, after a battle with the Jigsaw Prince on the Orient Express. According to the diaries, 'my Medallion' might be a trinket that Mrs. Sunderland threw away in Trieste. 'The Colonel was very upset about it. I can't think why.'

The Tower

Dee Goodenough is kept here by the Colonel.

The Colonel knows, in a vague way, that Dee is related to him, but he doesn't understand how. Many of his memories have been blunted or blurred by the passage of time. In addition, thanks to events in Trieste, he has become a follower of Ithaqua, and consequently opposes the Prince, who worships a different God. From time to time the two engage in conflict, but since neither can defeat the other (for that is the nature of the Dream) the hot war has cooled to a simmering mutual hate. Usually the Colonel confines himself to the bell tower, occasionally going below for supplies, while the Prince keeps the lower level of the Cathedral Car.

The Colonel will confront any protagonist who comes up the Tower steps. The steps are narrow and it is impossible for two people to walk abreast, which makes it perfect for the Colonel's preferred attack: he uses a sword, stolen from the Prince.

The Colonel will release Dee, if he can be convinced that the protagonists will help her get back to the waking world, but to do that they'll have to do something for him: kill the Jigsaw Prince. Nothing else will do.

An alternative strategy would be to use his stick to distract him, assuming that the protagonists recovered it (see above, found when the protagonists searched the train in the waking world). This stick never strays too far from the Colonel, but is usually stuck in the waking world while he is in the dream. If the protagonists brought it with them, then he will want it back. He'll do almost anything to get it; if

it is flung off of the Tower, he might just jump after it.

If the protagonists make a deal with Colonel Never, he offers their spokesman his hand in friendship. Anyone who takes his cold, dead hand in theirs needs to make a POW v 16 Resistance check. Failure means that, just as happened to Never so many years ago, the protagonist has become infected with the desire to serve Ithaqua. The protagonist becomes immune to cold and cold effects, but will do everything possible to seek out means by which they can aid the Wind Walker. In the dream realm, this is represented by their eyes freezing into chips, but is not immediately obvious in the waking world.

Alternatively the protagonists may just try to kill him, but he's a tough old soldier.

Colonel Goodenough: retired Royal Engineer officer. His entire body is covered in frost, his eyes are two frozen chips and his face is an immobile mask. Sword 35 (1d8+1d4), Claw 50 (1d4+1d4), Dodge 28, HP 13, Armour 3 (frozen stiff), SAN 1/1d4+1.

Dee Goodenough is at the top of the tower. Her grandfather has been feeding her with scraps stolen from the banquet below. She's at her wits end, and if the protagonists kill Colonel Goodenough, the shock is enough to push her over the edge. This will reduce the SAN reward for rescuing her, as the protagonists will have driven her (temporarily) insane.

Escape!

The protagonists will need to get off of the train. They can do that by jumping off at

any point. The balconies and tower in the Cathedral Car are obvious leaping points, but they could jump from anywhere in the train. It is a harrowing experience; SAN 0/1d3 for the jump.

However if they are pushed rather than fall – if they tumble from the train by accident or because someone pushed them rather than in an effort to escape – they lose SAN for the experience, as they fully expect to be killed. SAN 1/1d8 for leaving the train this way.

Should the protagonists escape, preferably with Dee and possibly also the Sunderland Diaries, they will have completed the scenario. The following rewards are available:

- Rescuing Dee (sane): 1d8
- Rescuing Dee (insane): 1d3
- Recovering the Sunderland Diaries: 1d3
- Destroying the Sunderland Diaries: 1d8
- Eliminating the Brotherhood cult: 1d8
- Eliminating the Ladies Who Lunch cult: 1d8
- Killing the Jigsaw Prince: 1d10 (this cannot be combined with Killing Colonel Goodenough).
- Killing Colonel Goodenough: 1d6 (this cannot be combined with Killing the

Jigsaw Prince).

Or . . . is it?

The protagonists, having escaped the Express, may feel all is well. Have they forgotten the Ladies Who Lunch? Well, Elvira and her friends certainly haven't forgotten them.

Keeper's note: for maximum effect, it might be interesting to play this scene after SAN rewards are handed out. This mimics the classic sting: everyone thinks it's all over . . .

If the protagonists managed to get the Ladies arrested in a previous chapter, then most of them will be unavailable for the final encounters. Instead of the entire team, only Elvira will have escaped the police dragnet. If the protagonists weren't so lucky, then all of them will be after the protagonists. Their goal is to get the Sunderland Diaries back, kill the protagonists, and escape.

The setting for the final scene is up to the Keeper, and may depend on protagonist action. Possible locations include: Sunderlands in London, in the glass-ceilinged mall of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, aboard a private jet hired by [Neville? Elvira?] sent to take the protagonists back to London (imagine the Ladies disguised as stewardesses). The Keeper should think of this in the same way as a final Bond movie scene – eg. *Diamonds Are Forever*, *Goldfinger* – where all is apparently well, and then the villains strike one final time. The setting should therefore be Bond-appropriate and be played in Bond style. The villains should behave like Bond

villains, so, eg, they escape in expensive cars, bail out of the jet leaving it to crash into the sea, or however the Keeper feels the scene should play out.

The Keeper may be tempted to get Uncle Neville involved. This could lead to an interesting mass-combat, but NPCs shouldn't be allowed to succeed where PCs fail: only bring Uncle Neville in if he or his team fail in the first few rounds. Perhaps let them take down one of the Ladies, to make life easier for the protagonists.

Elvira Tiperton

STR 11 DEX 14 INT 16

CON 7 APP 12 (16) POW 11 (14)

SIZ 10 SAN 0 EDU 19

Idea 80 Luck 55 Know 90

HP 9 MP 14 DB 0

Skills: Anthropology 11, Writing Trashy Novels 50, Astronomy 10, Bargain 20, Cthulhu Mythos 25, Conceal 30, Dressmaking 30, Drive Auto 45, Electrical Repair 15, Fast Talk 50, First Aid 35, Handgun 45, Hide 15, History 35, Law 20, Library Use 70, Listen 50, Locksmith 5, Martial Arts 9, Mechanical Repair 30, Medicine 15, Navigate 25, Occult 60, Other Language (French) 40, Persuade 20, Pharmacy 6, Photography 25, Sneak 20, Spot Hidden 35, Swim 30, Throw 30, Track 25

Spells: Song of Hastur, Unspeakable Promise, Wither Limb

Weapon: .38 revolver with silencer, 1d10 damage, 2 shots/round, 6 shot capacity.

Notes: Elvira writes trashy horror novels under a pseudonym, D.B. Fletcher. She leads the Ladies, with Tommy her dedicated follower. The group's goals are to extend their own influence, make money, buy hampers from Fortnums, and maintain their own youth. One of the ways they do that is by persuading gullible souls to invest in their many youth-restoring schemes.

The Ladies: Penny Goodbody, Felicity Dunmoore, and Sara Morris

These devastatingly attractive cultists are Elvira's closest friends. They have all made the Unspeakable Promise but otherwise have no combat-specific spells. For purposes of this scenario the Keeper should assume that all Ladies have APP 16 or higher, HP 14, DB +1d4, and the following stats:

Penny Goodbody: Dodge 35, Fist 75, Grapple 40, Kick 60, Martial Arts 45

Felicity Dunmoore: Dodge 40, Sword 65 (katana 1d8+1+DB), Martial Arts 45,
Armour: 4 points (insubstantial, misty flesh, though a solid hit can affect her)

Sara Morris: Dodge 35, Grapple 45, Blowpipe 45 (1d2+ Poison POT 10) Knife 45
(1d4+2+DB)

Uncle Neville

Uncle Neville should be used as described previously. Uncle has gone on some harrowing adventures in the past, which have sapped his POW and STR (he walks with a cane) but not his devotion to his family.

STR 07 DEX 11 INT 16

CON 15 APP 13 POW 04

SIZ 14 SAN 20 EDU 18

Idea 80, Luck 20, Know 90

HP 15 DB 0

Skills: Bargain 60, Cthulhu Mythos 20, Credit Rating 60, Dodge 40, History 30, Handgun 60, Mechanical Repair 70, Physics 40, Persuade 60, Psychology 40, Shotgun 56, Sneak 50, Spot Hidden 75, Track 40

Weapons: .45 Revolver 60, 1d10+2 damage, 1 shot/round, 8 shot capacity

Uncle Neville has some support from his old Regiment that he can call on in times of need: Ginger, Chalky, and Fossington-Smythe. Assume all support characters have HP 14, 1d4 DB, and the following:

Ginger: Fist 75, Kick 75, Knife 50 (1d4+2 DB)

Chalky: Handgun 60 (1d10, 9mm automatic), SMG 60 (1d10 damage, 2 shots/round or burst, silenced Uzi 9mm), Sneak 45

Fossington-Smythe: Fast Talk 60, Dither in Times of Crisis 70, Fist 70, Kick 40, Martial Arts 40, Handgun 55 (1d10, 9mm automatic)

The Dream-Drug

This is a green-tinged liquid that smells slightly of violets. It tastes pleasant enough; a little like an herbal tea. Once drunk, the drinker becomes very tired and soon falls asleep. From that point until they awake they are plunged into a dream reality. This is not the Dreamlands but a dream reflection of the waking world, and in the larger cities (London, Paris) that have existed for many centuries the experience can be bewildering, if not fatal (to SAN if not the physical body). Even in smaller towns the dream is often exotic, the accumulation of the psyche and history of the area's inhabitants, possibly over centuries.

While the spirit wanders in dreams, the body usually remains in the real world. This isn't always true. There are parts of the world – and the Orient Express is one – where, if the drug is taken, the drinker is drawn body and soul into the dream. If that happens then anything which happens to the dreamer is effectively real, up to and including death.