

Collecting Dust By Harris Burkhalter



Collecting Dust is a scenario for 1 to 4 investigators, ignorant of the Mythos, set in contemporary Arkham, Massachusetts. It is a sequel to “A Painted Smile” by Richard Watts and Keith Herber, from *Tales of the Miskatonic Valley*. Taking a loose, open-ended structure, it is designed to be easily adaptable to any modern campaign without being too structured. It attempts to showcase the randomness of the Mythos, where the most innocent activities can be corrupted and the hapless investigators find that no one is safe. Even the toys of children or the sanctity of old age can be twisted horribly through the uncaring power of Yog-Sothoth, the dark energy that touches every atom in the universe. While nominally set in the late summer, Collecting Dust would also be quite thematic set in the late autumn around Halloween, the Winter Solstice as the Holiday Season comes to Arkham or in the Spring, perhaps around Easter. While the scenario is written assuming the events of “A Painted Smile” took place in 1928, some eighty years before, it could be modified to take place any amount of time later; from the late 1920s on.

The scenario opens with one of the investigators incidentally coming into possession, in one way or another, of a singular antique; a handcrafted porcelain doll that they find is quite valuable; one of the few surviving creations of local Arkham craftswoman Hilda Francks. The dolls of Hilda Francks have become collector items around the country. There are believed to be around one hundred of Hilda’s hand made dolls in existence, an unknown number remain intact, mostly in the Miskatonic River valley. Each a work of art, the dolls of Arkham’s resident master doll maker have fetched thousands of dollars on the open market. Not much knowledge remains of the artist herself, however.

How the investigators come upon this unique toy is flexible, to draw in the backgrounds and interests of the investigators. Antique dealers, historians, or garage sale aficionados may purchase the doll, aiming to make a profit or to study local crafts, while others may have had the doll passed down to them by a relative. The scenario may even

work well for child or teen investigators. Meanwhile, a young child, a relative or acquaintance of the investigators, has developed a curious attachment to the antique toy. Vague and frightening things begin to happen, especially as they come to learn more about the doll and its creator, Hilda Francks.

Hilda Francks' life was a series of tragedies and, embittered in her old age, she subconsciously drew upon the power of her ancestor Goody Fowler, whose worship of Yog-Sothoth had altered her genetics, a curse that was passed down to Francks. The dolls she constructed had the potential to hold human emotional energy, and Francks' paranoid anger inadvertently caused her dolls to wreak havoc on those she blamed for her pathetic existence. After her death, her wrath was unleashed until she was put to rest by a determined group of everyday people who had come to be the focus of Hilda's rage. The victory was impermanent, however, and the dolls remain, awaiting the attention of an emotionally fraught human to awaken them once more.

Keeper Information

The life of Hilda Francks and her dolls is a sad story. By the 1920s, Hilda Franks was a sad, neglected old woman who had lived in Arkham all her life, the victim of a history of tragedy, hardship, and bad luck. An orphan who was spurned in love, she led a lonely, embittered existence. After her rich lover broke her heart and married "appropriate to his station," Hilda resigned herself to a life of loneliness. Taught the doll making trade by her grandmother Sally Fowler, she scraped by selling them throughout New England, watching bitterly as happy families who had everything that she lacked enjoyed her creations. As she grew older, arthritis and failing eyesight made it impossible for Hilda to continue her craft. Like so many of society's elderly, nearly invisible in their squalor, Hilda's last years were taken up in misery and despair, but unlike most she had ancestors who were witches. She was subject to a dark power, one she had no control over or even suspected that she possessed; she could subconsciously animate her dolls as weapons against those she deemed her tormentors. One of her ancestors, the legendary Goody Fowler or someone like her, had encountered the power of Yog-Sothoth and been changed, her genetic material contaminated with a bizarre influence. Upon Hilda's death in 1928, the rage and unhappiness of her life remained a physical force and attached itself to her dolls, which she used to wreak terror upon those who she felt were responsible for her pathetic condition. Boston architect Miles Truman found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time and suffered the full brunt of Franck's rage.

In 1928, Truman and his family came to Arkham to research the obscure but important nineteenth century architect Andrew Hathaway, who invented a peculiar fanlight design, found only in the Miskatonic Valley, for a book that Truman was writing. While visiting Hathaway's grandchildren Mildred and Margaret Hathaway, he and his family encountered the sisters' neighbor; angry old Hilda Francks and their lives were never the same. Hilda took an immediate dislike towards Truman's young son and

daughter Miles Jr. and Rebecca, physically threatening them while their parents were visiting the Hathaways. While complaining to the near blind Francks about frightening his children, Truman, a devout Catholic, felt sorry for her and began to attempt to offer her aid, bringing her groceries and other charity. He even offered to purchase some her dolls for his daughter Rebecca but Francks' paranoia and suspicion of strangers caused her to grow increasingly hostile to the Trumans. Finally, after Truman and his wife offered to accompany her to the nearby St. Stanislaus Church, Francks became so enraged, accusing the Trumans of all manner of treachery, that she had at a heart attack and died before help could arrive. Having no living relatives and no money, the old woman was buried in the Potters Field (with only a small headstone provided by Truman) and her remaining dolls sold at auction. Truman, though guilty at having had a role in the death of the old woman, continued with his research into Hathaway's contribution to local architecture. It was then that the Trumans' nightmare began.

Francks' unconscious connection to the strange energies of Yog-Sothoth, granted to her by her unknown ancestors who worshipped the Gate and the Key, allowed her wrathful spirit to linger in the world, attaching itself to her handcrafted dolls. Filled with anger and a desire to get revenge on those who had plagued her sad, neglected life she unfortunately focused her rage on the family who had been there at her death. Some hideous energy allowed the old woman's spirit to animate her dolls in a terrible and deadly parody of life. Truman's rented home on West Derby street soon became the epicenter of a terrible plague of attacks. His children Rebecca and Miles Junior soon found themselves stalked by terrifying events and complained of seeing small, childlike figures lurking around them throughout the day; even Elizabeth claimed to have seen a doll like the one's Hilda had made; she thought Miles had purchased one, but was unable to find it afterwards. Truman found it impossible to work upon his manuscript as the family fell under increasing stress. Finally, tragedy struck when Elizabeth witnessed the death of her son at the hands of an angry, strangling doll. Driven to desperation by this horrible tragedy, she attempted to burn down Hilda's home before being overpowered by neighbors. She blamed Hilda's dolls for the fire and returned to Boston with Rebecca before being institutionalized. Miles too was horrified as he was subject of an attack from another moving doll, but succeeding in capturing it, had his priest in Boston perform an exorcism upon it; the elderly man died of a stroke a few days later. the Truman family was broken; Miles lost his faith and died a broken man without finishing his manuscript and Elizabeth died in a sanitarium in 1932. Rebecca was taken in by distant relatives and has lived in quiet terror ever since, knowing in her gut that, in spite of the Christian exorcism, the horror that powered Hilda's spirit could never be put to rest.

She, unfortunately, is correct and while the exorcism did shock Hilda's mind into hibernation, the power of Yog-Sothoth never rests. As Hilda Francks herself crafted all of the dolls using her unknown ability, they rest in inactivity like batteries that only need to be charged. Lacking only emotional energy as fuel, the dolls await reactivation- all they need is to band together to reconstruct Hilda's emotional energy, and, if all goes

according to plan, pass themselves from one battery, the body of a doll, to another, a living human body, thus fulfilling Hilda Franck's long standing desire to have a second chance at life. That this would destroy the life of a young girl is inconsequential to the angry Yog-Sothoth empowered spirit.

Act 1: No Strings Attached

The scenario opens with the investigators coming into possession of one of Hilda's dolls, a very well preserved example of local folk art. How they respond to this may differ; they may decide to keep it as a family heirloom, or decide to appraise it to be sold as a valuable collectible. This could be aided through research of the dolls origins and creator, but in their studies, they may find out some odd things about its background. In any case, a young relative or acquaintance of the investigators, Shannon Burns, will come to be morbidly attached to it and will awaken dark energies within the seemingly mundane plaything. As ominous and frightening things begin to happen to Shannon and the investigators, they will be drawn into a story chock full of tragedy and terror.

Introduction: Antiques Horrorshow

This is intended only as one possible introduction to Collecting Dust, suited to interest a wide variety of investigators. It seems that a prominent PBS program will be in Arkham on a Wednesday in late July to appraise and televise some of the old "witch haunted" town's antiques. Tobey Fenner, one of the investigators great uncle is an avid fan of the show and asked the investigator and their friends to look through his wife Eunice's' old boxes in the attic. She passed away three years ago and Uncle Tobey is finally ready to begin going through her old possessions. Confined to a wheelchair, Mr. Fenner cannot manage this on his own and would greatly enjoy seeing one o Eunice's old antiques featured on his favorite show. Amongst the antiques collected by Eunice and Tobey is an old doll, in great condition its lacey dress pristine and its porcelain skin untouched. Dolls are a hot commodity on the antiques market, and this old toy seems to be perfect for appraisal. Also visiting Uncle Fenner is the investigator's cousin, nine-year-old Shannon Burns, who loves old things. It was she, in fact, who brought Tobey's attention back to the doll hidden away in a box. Already, Shannon has become very interested in the doll, despite everyone else's feelings of creepiness from it. Something about it, its age, its realism, the mystery of its creation, has made Shannon come to look at it as almost alive, so lonely after spending so much time in a box. It just needs a friend.

Old Mr. Tobey Fenner, age 82, lonely widower

Tobey is the brother of one of the investigator's grandmothers, an 82-year-old suffering from severe arthritis. His mind, however, remains keen, though he is still suffering deeply from the death of his wife Eunice, who was ten-years his senior. When the two married in 1946 they caused a bit of stir in Arkham but have remained prominent

citizens throughout their married life. A bit of a collector, Eunice passed her love of beautiful objects to her husband and the two spent much time and money amassing a wide variety of bric a brac. Without her, however, Tobey has become a bit stifled amongst it all, particularly now that he cannot move around as well as he used to. Now that his favorite public television show is visiting Arkham, he has been more cheerful than he has been for months and contacts the investigators to help him find good material to bring to the event. He is particularly fond of an old doll the investigators pull out of a crate of toys; he remembers when Eunice purchased the doll from an old woman just after their marriage. He cannot recall her name, but this was Mildred Hathaway, the former upstairs neighbor of Hilda Francks. If asked, Fenner thinks for awhile before guessing “Harrison? Harraway? It was a long time ago.”

A Fine Find

No matter how they came into possession of the doll, the investigators quickly realize that this doll is special and is potentially of some value. In wonderful condition for its age, the doll represents a young girl with blonde hair and blue eyes, dressed in a lacy white Victorian-style gown, only slightly yellowed. Weighing about three pounds, the doll stands at about one foot. With head and limbs constructed of unglazed porcelain (bisque) featuring no cracking or brittleness, the body is made of fabric filled with sawdust, all intact. The eyes stare cheerfully with a slight smile, giving it an innocent but mischievous appearance. Its long locks seem to be made out of horsehair and are attached to the scalp with glue. A small mold mark on the nape of the neck of the doll reads “Francks.”

A successful History or appropriate Art check, or a Knowledge check for Arkham natives will recognize the name Francks as a prominent early twentieth century craftswoman in Arkham well known in antiques circles for her well crafted porcelain dolls. Not many intact dolls made by Francks survive so they have become quite valuable. A successful appropriate Craft check will show the doll to be in excellent condition, and while made in an old fashioned style, materials date it to between 1910-1920, consistent with when Francks was working.

Researching the doll that they have acquired among personal papers, family members, or whoever gave the investigators the doll, they find that Mildred Hathaway, formerly Hilda Francks’ upstairs neighbor, originally owned it. With a successful Spot Hidden check while inspecting the dolls packaging, a yellowed Halloween Card with a scrawled note, from the dolls original crafter can be found (Dust Paper #1). Written by Hilda Francks in a fit of gratitude towards one of the few who showed her kindness before her fall into angry senility the note provides a few leads for the investigators to look into.

The Doll at Home

Depending on the backgrounds, goals and actions of the investigators, the beginning of the scenario may begin quietly, with only a hint of a growing supernatural menace. While the investigators may have varying amounts of interest in the doll, their young acquaintance Shannon Burns will quickly become slightly obsessed with it. After being introduced to the doll, probably at the same time the investigators are, she reacts very strongly to the antique, at first complaining about how creepy and it is. However, Shannon soon begins to think more and more about the doll in spite of never having much interest in such toys before, and will become upset should the investigators decide to sell, donate, or otherwise give away the doll. She will spend all the time that she can with it, and if forbidden from touching it, may even resort to stealing it, hiding it in her room. Shannon Burns will act as a catalyst for the creepy events of the scenario, and her actions will draw the investigators deeper into the horrors of Hilda Francks' life, horrors that she passed onto her dolls. Shannon provides a perfect opportunity for the restless emotionally energy that remains of Hilda Francks to again enter the human world, so that the tragically unfortunate woman can once again have a chance at youth and happiness. Sadly, this requires that destruction of Shannon Burns, and any others who stand in the way.

Shannon is a young girl who is finding it hard to fit into the Hubbard Public School in Arkham, having recently transferred there last spring from another school. Feeling even more cut off during Summer Vacation, Shannon is bored and looking for something to do before school starts up again in a couple of weeks. Living with her mother and father Erica and Ted Burns in a house in the French Hill neighborhood, she is uninterested in many of the things the average fourth grader would be interested. Her parents, both employees of Miskatonic University, are concerned about their daughter's emotional state, but wish to allow her to express herself in her own way. Still, they have been pressuring her to spend more time with children her own age. An avid reader with a bit of a dramatic side, she tends to relate more to adults than other children and looks for any opportunity to do things with grown ups. Shannon spends much of her free time riding her bike around Arkham, through the twisting back streets of the French Hill and Uptown neighborhoods, causing her parents great worry. A bit stubborn, she continues to stay out past dark in spite of repeated groundings. However, nothing ever goes her way, she feels, and she often feels ignored by teachers, other kids, and her family members; this feeling may grow if the investigators become more involved in their investigation and neglect her. In particular, she feels that people often don't tell her the full truth, because she's a kid, and she can be more than a little nosy.

Depending on her relationship to the investigators, Shannon should be present at the unveiling of the doll, in one way or another. As soon as she lays eyes upon it, Shannon Burns is morbidly intrigued. This, she feels, is the most interesting thing that has happened in months and she throws herself enthusiastically into the activities of the investigators, asking what she could do to help them, even to the point of annoyance.

Whenever she is not at school, she will call or email the investigators, eager for the latest news about the doll, and may even have suggestions about what they should do to find out more (she has taken a school trip to the Arkham Historical Society Museum recently, for instance, and may suggest the investigators check out it there).

Shannon at first thinks of the doll as really creepy, but she will be intrigued by its value and mysterious origin and will only grow more interested and attached to it the more that other people come to dislike it, or even fear it. She begins to think of it as almost alive, and so lonely after having spent so many years in a box up in the attic, that it needs a friend. Depending on the investigator's interest in the doll, Shannon may attempt to interfere with their goal of selling or otherwise getting rid of Francks' work of art.

Shannon Burns, age 9, lonely grade-schooler

STR 5 CON 12 SIZ 6 INT 13 POW 16

DEX 14 APP 14 EDU 3 SAN 80 (to begin with) HP 9

Art: Drawing 20%, Computer Use 15%, Fast Talk 40%, Listen 45%, Ride Bike 40%, Hide 55%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 45%

Behind the Glass Eyes

Unknown to the investigators, in obtaining Hilda's porcelain doll, they are inviting something very dangerous and terrifying into their homes, something with an agenda of its own hidden under the guise of a harmless toy, a fragile object d'art. A particularly fine example of Hilda Francks skills with porcelain firing, painting, and construction, the doll has spent the last eighty or so years on display, or hidden away in storage, kept isolated from the attentions of vulnerable people. By taking it out of seclusion and exposing it to the attentions of a variety of new people, people prodding and inspecting the doll to access its value and history, the investigators are inviting it to reawaken. Over the course of their investigation, the Keeper should subtract 1d4 Magic Points from investigators or other characters for each hour spent working with the doll. Those who have spent such time may feel drained or irritable. This magic points are then transferred to the doll.

If the doll should be the subject of strong attention, such as the energy a child puts into a toy during the rigors and dreams of play, it is equipped to drain even more magic points from its victim, thus awakening its consciousness once more. As possessed of only a small amount of Hilda's mental energy, it instinctually desires to reunite with more of her works of art; it can animate itself in order to accomplish this and may even pass along some magic points to animate others like it if need be. By assembling no less than seven of Hilda's dolls, the spirit of Hilda Francks may strong enough to attempt to possesses a human body, preferably that of a young girl. This would allow her lonely but demented

spirit to, thanks to the dark energy of Yog-Sothoth, have another chance at life, to avoid the tragedies and hard luck that turned her into her into a paranoid, hateful, and murderous monster after her death. Unfortunately for Shannon Burns, she is in the wrong place at the wrong time and will provide a perfect victim for the bitter spirit.

A curious and impressionable child, she quickly becomes trapped in the plans of the dolls. She comments quite negatively about the doll and its creepiness to begin with, but feeling sorry for it, she soon begins to play with it. If the investigators forbid her access to the doll, either fearing damage to the doll or simply being creeped out themselves, it might be able to harvest a few of their magic points to be able to move enough to put itself into Shannon's reach. This, of course, will probably lead to a confrontation between the girl and the adults.

Playing solitary little games with the doll, almost as if it were alive, Shannon begins to fall under the influence of Hilda, acting very different from her usual self, listlessly hanging around the house instead of going out to ride her bike around Arkham as per her routine. She may act to prevent investigators from damaging the dolls. Successful Psychology or Psychanalysis checks will allow investigators to calm Shannon down, at least temporarily and allow her to express some of the things she has seen and felt, including the impressions that the doll is lonely or that the doll just wants to be with her (a misinterpretation of the dolls desire to become or take over Shannon). As the scenario progresses, Shannon's sanity will begin to be effected by the odd things that begin to happen with some frequency, focusing upon her.

For each day of activity by the dolls, Shannon loses 1d6 points of Sanity. If she becomes temporarily insane, she may become abnormally destructive, angry, despairing, or otherwise display a strong, uncharacteristically negative emotion. At Indefinite insanity, the young girl becomes an unwilling participant of Hilda's plans, aiding and abetting the doll as it goes about its goals to collect more of its kind, strengthening its powers and hold over the girl. She may sabotage the investigators efforts, attempt to steal any other dolls that they acquire or tell her about, or attempt to set them on the wrong track. However, Shannon will never physically attack the investigators, though she may set them up to be attacked by dolls.

The Evil Doll (and friends)

STR 16 CON 7 SIZ 3 POW 3 (other dolls add to this when together)

DEX 18 APP 10 HP 5 Move 9

Weapons: Butcher Knife 45%, 1d6; Claw 50%, 1d4, Strangle 50% 1d3 per round (STR vs STR to dislodge), Magic Point Drain = for each hour spent working with the doll, investigators suffer a loss of 1d4 magic points, which are then passed onto the doll. It can then use these magic points to move or cast a spell. By spending 1 magic point, the doll can move for 1d100 minutes. It can also utilize its spells.

Spells: Mind Transfer: After decades of inactivity, Hilda's anger against the world has cooled and the dusty remnants of her self has become desperate to return to the world. Steeped in the magical energies of Yog-Sothoth Hilda's dolls have stored the mental strength of Hilda over the years, split among a number of them. As Hilda inadvertently transferred her subconscious hatreds and desires into her dolls after her death, empowered by genetic connection to Yog-Sothoth, so can the dolls transfer it back into a living body, using a variation of the Mind Transfer spell.

Something's Not Right

As soon some magic points are accidentally transferred to Hilda's doll, weird things begin to happen to the investigators who are in possession of it. Particularly as Shannon falls deeper under the spell of the dolls, dark and spooky occurrences begin to happen. Some may be coincidences caused by a heightened sense of fear, but others may be the direct influence of Yog-Sothoth upon reality as the dolls move about their dark business. An incomplete list of these spooky events are provided below. The Keeper can use as many of these as needed to create a feeling of dread around the investigators, one of which they are unable to pinpoint. Others may be added, limited only to events and the imagination of the Keeper; Sanity losses may be appropriate as well, usually around 1/1d4.

A child cries for help "Help meeee! Help meeee!" from under a nearby sewer grate. A successful Listen check pinpoints where the cries are coming from. Checking reveals an old, modern plastic doll with a broken voice box that should be saying "Mommy" It quickly breaks completely and cannot be repaired (in fact Mechanical/Electronic Repair check will show it should not be working at all). Other scary things may exist in the Arkham tunnels, of course.

A young child has a tantrum outside a toy store, crying out that they never get what they want, they wish that they had a different life A successful Spot Hidden check notices that some dolls displayed in the windows of the store begin to mimic the child's screaming and flailing.

The investigators notice a distraught looking young woman toss something into a dumpster then run away. A successful Listen check will note a shrieking cry, as of a newborn. Searching the reeking, maggot ridden dumpster will discover a dismembered life-like doll; if caught up with, the girl awakens as if out a trance and simply explains that it was broken, she was cleaning house.

An old man sings "White Face, Witch Face, Cannot see" in the park while glaring balefully at the investigators- two young girls stand with him. If confronted about this, he shakes his head, appears to compose himself and replies that he was just singing a song to his grandchildren.

Researching the Doll

To look into the origins and value Hilda Francks' doll, the investigators have many options. A wealth of information exists in Arkham and the surrounding area, some easily available and some hidden. How the investigators go about this research depends heavily on what they are hoping to find out, whether they are looking into its physical creation or, fearful of some dark background, the legends and mysteries that surround its background and creator. During the course of the investigation, spooky things may be occur in the home as well that might effect the direction the research takes as well.

The Internet

With a successful Library Use check, investigators may be able to find out some information about the dolls of Hilda Francks, including Hilda's basic information. One of Hilda's dolls is on display at the Arkham Historical Society Museum. Others may be found for sale on Ebay, Craigslist, Etsy or other online antique dealers (a Luck check for each day of searching). Roll 1d100 x 1d6 to determine distance. Prices are generally, depending on condition, 1d100 x 10 dollars or so, though they fetch higher prices in the Miskatonic Valley, being more sought after in the region.

Antique Shops

One of Arkham's many antique shops will be able to provide much of the common knowledge available about Hilda Francks and her creations. Any antique dealer, including Glenda McCallister, a toy expert in Arkham for the filming of a PBS television show, will be very pleased by the doll. They will be able to tell the investigators that the doll is in great condition for its age and date it to the early twentieth century, the heyday of Hilda's production period. It could easily be sold at auction for a considerable amount of money to the right collector. Most of Arkham's antique dealers will purchase the doll from the investigators for around \$5,000, or more following a successful Bargain check. However, many would suggest an auction. They are particularly pleased with the condition of the doll; no cracking or chipping, original clothing, expert craftsmanship.

Any antique dealer will inform the investigators about the history of Francks' dolls, though they know little of Hilda Francks' personal life. It is rather an unusual doll, which is what makes it so collectible, especially in the Miskatonic Valley. Hilda Francks was an extremely gifted hand crafter of dolls, resulting in a quality unsurpassed by even the great doll manufacturers of Germany and France. It is believed she learned the trade from a relative and her style is fairly conservative and old fashioned for the 1900s, using techniques more popular in the 1880s and continuing them to her death. Most American

dolls of the time were rag dolls, so having such an accomplished doll maker in an early twentieth century is also quite unique. This may also explain why she made so few of them. Many of the older, more established dealers in Arkham do not like “gossip,” but with a successful Persuade of Fast Talk check, one might mention off hand that someone had stolen quite a few of Hilda Francks’ dolls just after her death in 1928. There was a break in at one of Arkham’s foremost toy stores where several of Francks’ dolls were stolen. There remains no physical evidence of this event in archives or other records, unfortunately.

A bespectacled 30 something African-American woman with braids and a cardigan sweater, Glenda is a transplant from North Carolina. Holding a degree in Anthropology and Art History from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, she has come to be an expert on toys and games of the late nineteenth century and is visiting Arkham with a prominent PBS television show. She is particularly interested in local, handcrafted pieces crafted by American crafters like Hilda Francks, who manufactured their own fine works of art instead of importing them Germany or France.

Glenda McAllister, Antique Dealer and Toy Aficionado, Age 34

STR 9 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 8

DEX 11 APP 13 EDU 20 SAN 40 HP 11

Anthropology (Americana) 75%, Art (Sculpting) 50%, Art (Appraise Antique) 70%, Bargain 60%, Credit Rating 55%, French 50%, German 50%, History 70%, Law 40%, Library Use 75%, Listen 65%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Persuade 60%, Photography 60%, Psychology 75%, Spot Hidden 75%

Glenda will be particularly enthusiastic about the doll if the investigators go to her for her opinion, and their piece will even make it onto the show. Proclaiming the doll to be priceless, she mentions that they even have one on display at the Arkham Historical Society Museum. In the end, she appraises the doll as worth up to \$10,000 and urges them to donate it to a folk art museum or collection. If the investigators manage to shield Shannon Burns from contact with the doll, Glenda McAllister might be Hilda’s second choice for her victim.

Arkham Historical Society

Much background information can be found at the Arkham Historical Society. Many of Arkham’s antique dealers can point out investigators to this location, as will librarians at the Arkham Public Library.

While visiting the Arkham Historical Society Museum collections costs \$6 (\$3 for students, seniors, and members of the military), the archives are free to anyone interested

in perusing back issues of the *Arkham Advertiser* and the *Gazette* or other archival collections, though they do charge for photocopies. The archives are open Tuesday through Friday from 10:30 to 4:30.

The most obvious remnant of Hilda Francks' is in the exhibit on local arts and crafts. A porcelain doll, very similar to the one the investigator's have (though in a rather shabby, dusty condition) is included among other antique toys. A small placard records the information behind the display, (Dust Papers #2) as the doll stares balefully from among other, lesser rag dolls and Victorian toys, as if upset to be included among so much garbage.

Gladys Burroughs, a retiree who volunteers at the society, answering questions, may overhear the subject of the investigators' research; as a lifelong native of Arkham, she grew up in the French Hill neighborhood and remembers stories told about old Hilda Francks. Her older brother, in fact, was among the groups of children who often played tricks upon the old woman, at least until his best friend Mathias Wellington died in an accident, sometime in the late 1920s. While she shakes her head sadly, muttering about the cruelty of children, she mentions she was terrified of Francks, in spite of never having seen her. Giving the investigators a conspiratorial look, she whispers, "All the kids believed that she was a witch, you know." This may bring Gladys around to telling stories of Arkham's witches, mentioning Kaziah Mason and Goody Fowler, whose ghost still haunts the old hill in the Wooded Cemetery, where she was hung in 1704. Despite some embellishment, this is all Mrs. Burroughs can remember of Francks, however. There are none left alive in Arkham who remember the tragic past of Hilda Francks.

Researching Hilda Francks

With a successful Library Use check, the investigators find a yellowed article cut from the *Arkham Gazette* describing Francks' death. (Dust Papers #3).

Researching Miles Truman

Researching Miles Truman turns up; with a successful Library Use check another article from the *Arkham Gazette* that tells the story of the tragedy (Dust Papers #4); in the archives, a small journal describing Truman's research of Andrew Hathaway, and his fanlight design. A passing mention to Hilda Francks, the downstairs neighbor of the Hathaway Sisters, the granddaughters of the architect, and her marvelous dolls are mentioned. While stating in the beginning his writing a book about the history of New England architecture, the quality of the contents and writing begins to suffer soon after April 1928. No books by Miles Truman were ever published.

Researching Goody Fowler and the Arkham Witches

With a successful Library Use check, an interesting book can be found in the archival collection; *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New-England Canaan* by the Reverend Ward Phillips, published in 1801. The catalog mentions that it describes folklore and legends of witchcraft in New England, including Arkham. Among other stories, it describes the witchcraft scare in Arkham concluding with the hanging of Goody Fowler in the Old Wooded Graveyard after being dragged from her cottage south of town. The location of this home is described, and with a successful Idea check, it can be located on a modern map of Arkham. It also describes traditions regarding Yog-Sothoth. Scrawled on a piece of paper used as a bookmark is a garbled but serviceable version of Contact “Yogge Sothyothe.”

Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New-England Canaan: In English, Sanity Loss 1d3/1d6: Cthulhu Mythos +4%, average 8 weeks to study and comprehend.

Selling the Doll

After finding out that the doll is worth a considerable amount, or wanting to rid themselves of the creepy antique, the investigators may opt to sell it. Several options exist; they may sell it directly to a local antique shop or they may try to make more money by holding an auction, or even online. As another option, they might decide to donate or sell it to the Arkham Historical Society or other museum or collection that might be interested in such things.

If the investigators advertise their intention to sell the doll at auction, or even simply somehow make it public knowledge that they have the doll, they will receive a call from a Miskatonic University professor, Hiroshi Naito. Naito has a passion for American antiques and particularly enjoys dolls and other toys. He even owns a few other of Hilda Francks' pieces, but none are in as pristine condition as the one the investigators possess. He is eager to add it to his collection and will offer the investigators \$7000 for the doll, and any information that they have discovered in their investigation about it. A polite man, Naito will not press his desire if rebuffed; he will certainly appear at any auction the investigators hold and will also be around at the filming of the PBS television show, milling about, watching the appraisals. He will be very interested in the investigator's antique and may even offer to buy it right after they leave.

Hiroshi Naito, a middle aged instructor of Japanese language at Miskatonic University, Hiroshi is a bit grumpy but helpful with students who display the proper deference to instructors. He has lived in Arkham only for six months and has taught for just one previous semester but has spent several years in the United States. He is planning on returning to Japan after a year or two at Miskatonic, hopefully to teach English at Tokyo University. He has a not so secret hobby; always interested in Americana and

kitsch, he is an avid antique dealer and is particularly interested in dolls; having amassed quite a collection back home he spends his spare time driving around the small towns of the Miskatonic Valley, picking up interesting antiques.

Having no interest or belief in the supernatural, Naito will be horrified if directly affected by the spooky events of the dolls, and may perhaps become a victim of their wrath should he run afoul of their plan.

Hiroshi Naito, Japanese Instructor and Collector, 43

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 13

DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 20 SAN 65 HP 10

Anthropology 60%, Bargain 50%, Credit Rating 40%, English 75%, History 40%, Library Use 50%, Listen 65%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Persuade 60%, Photography 60%, Psychology 75%, Spanish 35%, Spot Hidden 65%

Act 2: I'm a Real Girl Now

Perilous Playmate

Hilda's dolls try, at least at first, to keep a low profile. While they may not be able to control the unnerving events that are a byproduct of their activities, they try not to attract too much attention to themselves as they go about their business. However, as time goes by they become increasingly desperate to reunite and pass on Hilda's spirit to Shannon Burns (or, if thwarted, another character, preferably young and female).

The dolls will act violently to prevent their plans from being upset, but will prefer to act through deception, slowly driving investigators mad; they are more likely to terrorize them mentally than physically, thumping around in an attic, moving themselves subtly when no adult is looking, and other creepy behavior. These antics provoke Sanity losses of 1/1d4.

The most important plan is to gather together as many of Hilda's dolls as possible before attempting to cast Mind Transfer, passing Hilda's full spirit from the dolls to a terrified Shannon Burns.

An Escape: Gathering Friends

There are currently 23 certified Francks dolls in the Arkham area; one in the Arkham Historical Society museum collections, four in Hiroshi Naito's collection, twelve in various personal collections around town, often in storage, forgotten in cellars or attics, and six in various antique shops in the region. The most likely purchasers are Naito, McAllister, or another antique shop, in which case the investigator's doll will pass on a

magic point or two to the others, animating them as well, after which they engage in an escape, returning to the investigators home. Broken glass or other evidence will link the investigators to the theft, particularly if Shannon Burns is coerced into aiding the escape. This may complicate the investigators' lives considerably, particularly if the dolls are discovered on their property. Hiroshi Naito in particular will be greatly angered by the theft and will summon the Arkham police at once.

Tragedy Repeats Itself

The investigators may decide to visit some of the locations at which took place various events in the history of Hilda Francks and her dolls as they try to piece together a way to save themselves from their evil attentions. While many contain only memories, the home of Hilda's ancestor, Goody Fowler, contains much knowledge that would aid them in their battle; but at a price.

Visiting 443 Walnut Avenue.

This duplex is currently a bed and breakfast, known as the French Hill Inn. Surrounded by well preserved colonial era architecture, it is in a rather touristy section of Arkham, attractive to visitors to town and locals of an artistic and fashionable bent. The rooms of the building are currently booked, but the proprietors are happy to chat; they claim the house to be haunted by the spirits of ghostly children, but have no concrete proof.

Visiting Goody Fowler's Cabin

While owned by the Arkham Historical Society, this ramshackle cottage appears very old and very lonely, nestled on the edge of a wooded suburban development on the outskirts of Arkham. A rusted No Trespassing sign languishes nearby and the cottage appears disturbingly free of graffiti, vandalism, and other signs of modern visitations. In fact, an air of menace and fear grips anyone who approaches. Local families have come to dislike the building and a few even tell of seeing strange lights in the sky nearby. None know the history behind it, but remain unnerved by the cottage, loath to step anywhere near it, without being able to say exactly why. If the investigators break into the house in broad daylight, it is likely a neighbor will call the police, disliking any meddling with this frightening reminder of darker days in Arkham.

At night, the tiny cottage is even worse, and it may take some willpower to approach. The door is locked with a modern padlock; it is at least twenty years old and apparently has not been touched for at least that long, rusty and covered with cobwebs. A successful Locksmith check can bypass the old lock. The key has long been lost. The Strength 10 door can also be forced, but this may attract more attention. A Size 9 or less character can squeeze through one of the windows, though they must make a Luck check

to avoid taking 1d4 points of damage from broken glass. A musty scent drifts through one of the broken windows.

Inside the cottage, little has changed in over two hundred years. Those making a Power x 5 roll while exploring the interior have a nearly tangible feeling of fear and horror. Those who search it can make a Spot Hidden check to discover a loose brick which contain's Goody Fowler's grimoire, their best bet at defeating the menace of the dolls. Sadly, the book comes with a curse from Goody Fowler herself. Studying the hand scrawled manuscript brings to light a few relevant passages (Dust Papers #5).

Goody Fowler's Grimoire. English check to comprehend. Sanity Loss 1/1d6, Cthulhu Mythos +5%. It takes an average of 12 or so hours to comprehend and contains the spells Summon/Bind Hunting Horror and Create Elder Sign. Unfortunately, it also comes with a curse. The person who removes the book from its place in the cottage begins to lose one APP per day, becoming progressively more drawn and evil looking. This continues until the book is returned or the reader is reduced to a hideous APP 1, in which case they cause shock and horror, even nausea, to all who see them, provoking a Sanity check of 1/1d4. It takes three full nights of work to copy the journal in its entirety.

Visiting the Potters Field

Even in the daylight, this lonely patch of ground is neglected and depressing. Over the years, it has been added to considerably and it will take some searching to locate Hilda Francks' grave. Her small, modest tombstone remains, reading Hilda Francks, 1859-1928. No other clues can be found here, though if the investigators were to dig up her grave, they would find nothing but a few errant pieces of rotting wood. Digging up even an unoccupied grave may have a modest Sanity loss (0/1d3).

Putting Down the Demon Doll

It will quickly become apparent that something is not right with the dolls and that something must be done about them. As hinted at in the research, there are some ways to deal with Hilda's remaining life force, some more desperate and effective than others.

Exorcism

Those of deep religious faith may suspect that the dolls are possessed by a demon or evil spirit of some sort and may attempt to organize an exorcism. It will take some doing to organize an exorcism from a Catholic priest or other more organized religion; a successful Credit Rating check from a committed parishioner coupled with a successful

Fast Talk or Persuade check at the very least. The response of a staid, everyday member of the clergy to a wild story about possessed dolls and Colonial era witches is best left to the Keeper. It may be easier to find a preacher or minister from among Evangelical or Charismatic Christians, though such groups are rare in the Arkham area. In any case, the exorcism will prove entirely ineffective, though the dolls may take advantage of it to lay low for a while if the heat was on.

Destroying All of Hilda's Dolls

This is a destructive and difficult route, but if successful, is more or less effective. It is not necessary to destroy all of the dolls made by Hilda in existence to save the investigators, only the majority. It will, of course, mandate the theft and destruction of valuable property throughout the Arkham area. If the investigators are caught, this will destroy their Credit Ratings, particularly in Arkham (dropped to 0), as they become known as mean spirited vandals.

Putting an Elder Sign on the Dolls

If the investigators manage to get a hold of Goody Fowler's spell book and learn Create Elder Sign, this is the most quick and effective method of putting a stop to the dolls' diabolical activities.

Summoning Yog-Sothoth

Some desperate, extremely unnerved investigators may resort to summoning Yog-Sothoth. This will drain the abilities out of the dolls as Yog-Sothoth takes back its wayward energies but of course will no doubt be greatly damaging to the sanities of the survivors. A suitable location for the ritual would be Split Rock, and one of the possessed dolls would suffice for the required sacrifice. However, as the rock is in a quite public place, the investigators would not be the only citizens of Arkham to be exposed to the eldritch visage of Yog-Sothoth and a mass outbreak of insanity might strike the town after this desperate act.

Visiting Split Rock

Split Rock is currently in a wooded area surrounded by strip malls and office park, a bit of surviving woods from before development swept the north of Arkham. The granite block, poking out of scrubby trees around a shabby walking path covered with litter, does not command the majesty that it once held.

Conclusion:

If the investigators succeed in banishing Hilda's angry Yog-Sothoth empowered spirit once and for all, they are rewarded by 1d10 sanity points. However, they lose 1d4 for each investigator or innocent Arkhamite to perish during the scenario, and 1d6 if their young friend Shannon Burns is killed, driven insane, or replaced by Hilda.

If Hilda's plans succeed, and her Mind Transference spell allows her to take control of Shannon Burns, in her madness she quickly drives the decades spent languishing in a collection of dusty toys and tries to fit into the modern world; she is awkward, strange, and perverse, a far cry from Shannon's previous personality. Her parents, depending on what investigators have told them, are mystified and it is not long before the child begins psychological treatment. What happens in the future as Hilda Francks tries to live out her dreams, now tainted by more than one lifetime of disappointment and madness is left for the future.

Handouts

Dust Paper #1

A thank you card found with the doll

To MS. Mildred Hathaway

Dear, dear Mildred
Thank you very much for your help
If I did not have you I would have no one
I no I am a bad naybor
I would like you to have one of my children
They are much nicer than a real one
Grandma Fowler shewed me how to make them
But I cant make no more now

10/23/1926

Dust Papers #2

Porcelain Doll, Arkham, Hilda Francks, 1919- donated by Miles Truman, 1928

Dust Papers #3

Arkham Gazette, April 10, 1928

Ms. Hilda Francks Dead at Age 70

Local woman Ms. Hilda Francks suffered a fatal heart attack yesterday evening; in spite of an ambulance being summoned quickly thanks to the efforts of Miles Truman, of Boston, who was visiting Ms. Francks, she was unable to recover from her attack and passed away at her home at 596 Walnut Street. Our thoughts and prayers go to Truman and other neighbors of Ms. Francks, who had no living relatives. She maybe known to

readers as the crafter of some of the finest porcelain toys to be found in the Miskatonic River Valley, and children of all ages will no doubt lament the passing of Ms. Francks. Services will be held tomorrow evening at the Potters Field, courtesy of Mildred and Margaret Hathaway.

Dust Papers #4

Arkham Gazette, April 14, 1928

Child Dies in Tragic Fire

Miles Truman, Junior, 6, of Boston, died in an accidental fire at his families rented home on West Derby Street. The lad is survived by his father Mr. Miles Truman, his mother, Elizabeth Truman, and sister Rebecca. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Trumans in their time of grief.

Dust Papers #5

Excerpts from Goody Fowler's Grimoire

“Worshippe of Yogge-Sothoythe shews much boones to those with sounde minde and powerful ambitions, but ones of weake characater beware. The Key and the Gate exists through all tyme and can keep a soule from dying in spite of the physickal bodies deckay. Manye are men and women of whom I be acqaunted whose soules were drawn from them into the form of the god; the envious, the melancolick, the petty pawltry ails of the animale emotion. If ye seeke the powers of Yog-Sothothe, behind ye leave wordley desires and keepe only thirst for power. Loste spirites of the unworthy be engulfed by the glories of the god. If the god be in residence these ghosties be drawn to the musick of the spheres as iron to the loadstone.”

“There be a symbol, used as of by the Elder Ones, to bind and control the Great Olde Ones and the spawn of Them; it be formed thus- it be of greate use to ye who have neede to tarry with them from outside”