

CHURCH OF CHIROPTERAN WISDOM



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THE CHURCH OF CHIROPTERAN WISDOM

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INTRODUCTION

The Church of Chiropteran Wisdom is intended to be easy for you to drop in to your existing game or campaign, and to function as either a side quest, red herring, or distraction. It consists of a secret space for cult members to worship, and a front that is a curiosities/pawn shop. The shop itself is a legitimate business as well, and trades in all manner of weird and exotic items (nothing magical or incriminating is included here for it).

Given that this module is intended to slot into an existing campaign, the Keeper is encouraged to change the information here freely.

The default setting is assumed to be 1920's, though with a small amount of work the module could easily be adapted for most time periods. The use of Egyptology, for example, could easily be swapped for the fashionable exploration of the setting.

The module uses a default location of a town called Tamworth in Surrey, England.

Getting the Investigators Involved

People have been going missing and locals are starting to talk.

The tabloid newspapers are spreading rumors, and local folk are warning each other against anyone they think is acting suspiciously or whom they have a grudge against.

The investigators could also be approached by a family member of one of the missing people, or by a police officer they have had previous contact with.

Alternatively, investigators seeking a specific tome or artifact could have been pointed at "the source of the disappearances in Tamworth".

THE CULT OF CHIROPTERAN WISDOM

In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;
Isaiah 2:20 (King James)

Edward R. Ayrton is an aspiring Egyptologist and spends much of his time in the region. To fund his expeditions, he sells the larger and rarer items to museums and collectors, but also owns "Ayrton's Emporium & Curiosities", a store of small curios and goods imported on his return.

Several months ago, whilst uncovering a tomb, he came across an artifact resembling a many-sided, dark crystal. Through the crystal, an being called V'aagh'thesz (potentially a name for Nyarlathop's mask the Father of All Bats) has been able to twist his mind to its own end. Ayrton soon returned home and established the Church of Chiropteran Wisdom, an exclusive and secretive group to which he would invite those he trusted. The church claims to teach "ancient Egyptian philosophies" that Ayrton had uncovered. They now practice human sacrifice more and more regularly.

Ayrton selects the people he invites to join the Church very carefully. He targets people who desire the power the change their lives, or the world around them, and are motivated enough to seek out ways to enact that change. This can range from people like recovering addicts, through to members of the Freemasons or other secret societies.

The groups interests are varied, and eclectic. They will do anything to get their hands on mythos tomes or artifacts. These they will jealously protect even within the Church.

INVESTIGATION

Police Station

On a successful **Fast Talk** check, a police officer reveals that the local disappearances have been centered around the poorer area of the town.

Local Newspaper

If the investigators ask to talk to the journalist investigating the disappearances, they are shown through to the desk of Lee Sanford. Sanford has heard rumors of a connection to the Church of Chiropteran Wisdom and is waiting for more before publishing. Investigators who can pass a Hard **Stealth** check can follow the reporter when he goes to meet his informant. If they then follow the informant, this will yield the informant's home address. They can then be followed to the Church's location.

Local Pubs

On a **Persuade** roll, or with a high enough **Credit Rating** to buy a few rounds, the investigators can get the locals amenable enough (or drunk enough) to talk freely about the disappearances. This will reveal that suspicion lies on a few different institutions:

- The mayor's election is coming up, and it will be the first time anyone can remember where he will be running against a credible opponent. Everyone already suspected him of being corrupt, how far would he go to secure his position of power? (Checking with the press or his secretary will show he has alibis for several of the disappearances)
- The travelling folk who pass through. They have strange customs and are secretive with outsiders. Who else could it be?! (checking with the police will confirm that the dates they were in town do not match up to all the disappearances).
- Mr. Ayrton never was the same since he returned from Egypt—who knows how his work affected him? And he sells “weird” stuff from that little shop.
- The workers in the storehouses just out of town. They always grumble about one thing or another, perhaps they decided to change things themselves?

APPROACHING THE CHURCH

Outside Ayrton's Emporium & Curiosities

The shop that operates as a front is located near a main street, though off one of the side streets from it. The front is a little dilapidated, the glass is dusty, and it's hard to see in. In the window are some faded curiosities: statues of old gods (not Old Gods), crystals, good luck charms, beaten up instruments, etc.

During the day there would be some foot traffic, though no cultists unless one happens to be walking past/making a delivery etc.

At night, a group of cultists hang around outside the shop, smoking, drinking, etc. They are not there necessarily as guards; they are the lower members of the cult, who may not even be fully aware of its true nature and its use of human sacrifice. They will not be armed unless the cult has been alerted that someone may be coming. They will, however, come rushing in if they hear any commotion in the shop.

Cultist

STR 50 CON 65 SIZ 65 DEX 55 INT 50
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 55 SAN 48 HP 13

Damage bonus: +1D4

Build: 1

Move: 8

Fighting (Brawl): 30% (20/8) damage 1D3 + damage bonus

Dodge: 31% (15/6)

Inside the Shop

Inside, the shop is cluttered and disorderly. An elderly attendant, Gerald Foley, sits behind a desk, and is quite chatty. This person is a cult member and is their “gatekeeper”. At some point, he will ask a call-response question, to ascertain whether the players are part of the cult. All members of the cult across the region know this, to ensure that visiting members have a place to pray, can get help etc.

Call: *Have you seen the bats this evening? So active at the moment.*

Response: *May they pass their secrets to us.*

How easy it would be for the players to get this information depends on how well the cult guards its secrets.

Behind the desk, there is a trap door covering a staircase leading down to the Ceremony Room.

Gerald Foley, the Gatekeeper

STR 40 CON 65 SIZ 65 DEX 62 INT 50
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 75 SAN 30 HP 13

Damage bonus: +1D4

Build: 1 **Move:** 8

Fighting (Brawl): 40% (20/8) damage 1D3 + damage bonus

Dodge: 31% (15/6)

Skills: Conceal 33%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Dodge 37%, Fast Talk 35%, Hide 62%, Listen 45%, Occult 23%, Sneak 57%, Speak Other Language: French 50%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Ceremony Room

The main Ceremony Room is large, and circular. At one end is the staircase leading up to the shop. At the other is a doorway with a curtain drawn across it, which leads to the Sacristy.

All around the underground walls are alcoves with statues of bat-like creatures. Mounted in the walls are candle holders with lit candles. Dominating the middle of the room is the object of worship. The obsidian altar is bare except for a dark multi-sided crystal that catches even the smallest rays of light.

The Crystal requires regular human sacrifices, and so depending on the time and day, there may or may not be a meeting in progress.

If a meeting is in progress

If the investigators are not careful, the cultists will attack. If Ayrton feels threatened, he will also summon V'aagh'thesz, the Chiropteran God.

If there is not a meeting in progress

The investigators have a 30% chance of alerting a Bat Demon.

Edward R. Ayrton, Head Cultist

STR 60 CON 65 SIZ 65 DEX 62 INT 50

APP 50 POW 50 EDU 55 SAN 48 HP 13

Damage bonus: +1D4

Build: 1 **Move:** 8

Sacrificial Dagger: 40% (20/8) damage 1D8 + damage bonus

Dodge: 31% (15/6)

Skills: Anthropology 71% Appraise 55% Charm 40% Climb 20% Cthulhu Mythos 40% Credit Rating 60% Dodge 31% Intimidate 70% Occult 90% Psychology 70% Sleight of Hand 70% Speak Other Language: French 60% Spot Hidden 80%

Spells known: Cause Blindness, Enchant Sacrificial Dagger, Summon Servant of V'aagh'thesz, Summon Avatar of V'aagh'thesz

Sacristy

This small room contains the cultist robes, a ritual dagger (unless Ayrton was fought, in which case he had it on him), and a notebook containing the spells that Ayrton knows. If you are using this module as a lead or a red herring, this is the ideal place to have your investigators find a clue to lead them onwards, or to reveal the nature of the misunderstanding.

BESTIARY

Servants of V'aagh'thesz, "Bat Demons"

STR 90 CON 50 SIZ 90

DEX 70 INT 50 POW 50

HP: 14 **Damage Bonus:** 1D6

Build: 2 **Magic Points:** 10

Move: 5/16 flying

Claws 55% (27/11), damage 1D6 + damage bonus

Bite and hold (mnvr) damage 1D6 + 3D10 STR (blood) drain (single victim)

If the bite strikes home the Bat Demon remains attached to the victim and begins to drain his or her blood. Each round the Bat Demon remains attached, including the first, the blood drain subtracts 3D10 points of STR from the victim, until death occurs (at STR 0). The Bat Demon characteristically remains attached with this attack until the victim is drained of blood, unless the victim can make a successful opposed STR roll. Escaping death, let the victim rest and regain blood (by transfusion as well), at up to 1D10+5 STR per day. A Bat Demon may hold only one victim at a time.

Dodge 35% (17/7)

Armor: 2 points of fur and tough hide.

Skills: Listen 80%

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see a Bat Demon

Avatar of V'aagh'thesz, the Chiropteran God

STR 140 CON 55 SIZ 180

DEX 60 INT 80 POW 120

HP: 40 **Damage Bonus:** 3D6

Build: 4 **Magic Points:** 21

Move: 7 / 11 flying

Attacks per round: 2

Bite 85% (42/21), damage 1D10 + damage bonus

Dodge 35% (17/7)

Armor: 10 (skin)

Sanity Points: 1D6/1D20 Sanity points to see the Chiropteran God

Spells Known: Cause Blindness, Summon Bat Demon