

Alone Against the Tide

A Solo Adventure for Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition

Written by Nicholas Johnson



Credits and Acknowledgements

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Introduction

This is a solo adventure for the Call of Cthulhu, 7th Edition roleplaying game. You are the main character of this story, and your choices will decide the fate of yourself and others. While most adventures for Call of Cthulhu are designed for multiple players, this story is intended for only a single player.

Before you begin play, you will need a set of roleplaying dice, a pencil and eraser, a copy of the Call of Cthulhu Seventh Edition Quick-Start rules and a blank investigator sheet. Both the Quick-Start rules and the investigator sheet are available at www.chaosium.com. While you are encouraged to read the Quick-Start rules and create your investigator prior to starting the adventure, this is not strictly necessary. You may equip your character as you see fit, though you should refrain from bringing any weapons. This adventure is designed to lead you through the basic rules of character creation in Call of Cthulhu as you play. If you'd prefer to simply start right away, a pre-generated character is included at the end of this scenario.

Our story begins in the 1920's in the lakeside resort town of Esbury, Massachusetts. When you are ready to begin, go to number **1**.

1

The sun sinks low along the horizon as you board the ferry headed across the lake to Esbury. As you step foot on the boat, the ferryman greets you with a wide smile and a halfhearted wave. He stands by the gangplank as you pass, welcoming the other passengers as he removes his cap to scratch at his balding head. His pudgy figure fills his well-worn suit awkwardly, but he seems a rather pleasant sort. Leaving the man behind you, you take a seat towards the prow, eyes fixed on your destination.

Go to **12**.

2

You position yourself close to the men and tune your ears to their conversation. "Between you and me, I heard that most of these items are fakes. Outright hoaxes and counterfeits, most of them. Harris was a doddering old nut. He claimed that his findings predate the earliest known records of Ancient India, but that's impossible. They're completely inconsistent with all of the other findings. And besides, there's a reason why he left the Miskatonic, if you catch my meaning." The other man nods his approval. "You aren't wrong. His findings aren't properly supported by evidence, yet he kept trying to publish his hogwash. I

imagine that's why they had him resign. Still, at least a few of the items might be authentic, so hopefully this won't be a total waste of time." The first man shifts his stance and lowers his volume slightly again, to where it is just perceptible. "Maybe. And that monk over there does seem to lend some sort of validity to your claim. If an actual Indian wants them, perhaps something is valuable here."

Go to **17**.

3

You take your first steps onto the pier with the rest of the passengers of the ferry, trying to get your land legs once again. The passengers are still chatting casually as they walk off to their destinations. You note one last little flirty wink from the full figured woman as she struts along confidently behind the women accompanying her, and you feel the two dark-suited men push past you at a brisk pace, nudging you out of their way. Lance gives you one last wave and a smile as he begins tending to the old rust-stained boat that is his pride and joy.

The last light of the sun is fading fast over you, and the fog is growing thick on the water now. The night is still young, but you would rather not be wandering around in the dark and fog of a town you are unfamiliar with. Taking in your surroundings, you see a sizable crowd jockeying for entrance into a lavish, modern-looking building along the lakeside. A folding sign sits out front, illuminated by a lantern. The words "ESTATE SALE TONIGHT" are written in large, bold letters.

While this seems to be a main attraction, you could also seek out somewhere to stay for the night and set about your work in the morning.

If you have not done so already, calculate your secondary attributes as per page 8 of the Quick-Start rules.

To visit to the Estate Sale, go to **15**.

To find somewhere to stay for the night, go to **26**.

4

You choose your words carefully before replying, not wanting to give out sensitive information. "I'm working a case here. I'm with the Police Department over in Boston." The ferryman scratches his head. "Boston, huh? And they sent you all the way out here? I imagine this has to do with Professor Harris's death, but Officer Powell has that handled I think." The man shrugs and flashes another smile. "Ah, but I suppose it's not my place to pry." He extends his hand to you "I'm Lance

Sanford, by the way, I think we skipped the introduction.”

To inquire about Professor Harris, go to **27**.

To inquire about Officer Powell, go to **36**.

To ask Lance Sanford about himself, go to **42**.

To pass the time waiting to arrive in Esbury, go to **56**.

5

You call out to Joshua to explain himself, half expecting that he will simply brush you off. Surprisingly, he turns back to face you and steps towards you.

As he moves closer to you, you can once again make out his features despite the fog. You can see now that the man is visibly red and his eyes are bloodshot. The man is clearly livid, and his hand launches beneath his coat and produces a Colt M1911 and points it directly at you while speaking in an agitated manner.

“What the hell is your problem?! I threaten you and you come back for more?! Do you have a death wish?! Leave Amelia alone! I’ve been about this far too long for you to wander into town and ruin this for me!”

He shoves you back and levels the gun at your face, looking you dead in the eyes with sweat on his brow. He grits his teeth, panting and huffing for a second before holstering the gun and bracing himself against a nearby building.

“Get the hell out of my sight. If I have to look at that goddam face for one more second I’ll put another hole in it.”

You see no reason to further provoke the man, and you hurriedly leave him where he was.

To press on to the Harris house, go to **55**.

If you feel that this investigation is not worth the risk and want to return to the motel, go to **122**.

6

You feel that the information in the journal is essential to your interests, and you cannot help but make a bid. You place your paper with the others and hope that Mr. Warren calls your name when the amounts are compared.

Make a **Credit Rating** roll, if you succeed, go to **100**. If you fail, go to **14**.

7

With no immediate threat to yourself, you are free to explore the Harris household, though you do so quickly in case someone is to come looking. Glancing about the sitting room you are in, you find it to be a bit of a mess from the earlier scuffle.

Glancing towards the entrance, you note the foyer, filled with boxes and crates, many of which are covered. You poke your head into the next room and find a kitchen and adjacent dining room, both spotlessly maintained, though sparsely furnished.

Peeking beneath the fabric in the entryway, you find various furniture and décor, as well as stacks and stacks of books. Many of them are historical texts and reference materials, some of which are written by Professor Harris himself. There is also a large number of general works of science and literature, as befits any well-educated man.

You place the cover back down, sensing that you will find nothing of value here. You turn your attention to the set of stairs that are positioned opposite to the entrance. You ascend the staircase and see two doors, one on either side of you. The door to your left is slightly ajar, and is no doubt the bedroom. By process of elimination, the door to your right must be the study. The door seems to be locked, and your earlier search of the house did not yield a key. With enough time, you might be able to get the door open, but it would probably be unwise to be at it for long, since it’s entirely possible that Amelia or one of those close to her may return.

To enter the bedroom, go to **123**.

To enter the study, make a **Locksmith** roll. If you succeed, go to **108**. If you fail, go to **75**. You may **push** this roll (If you fail the initial roll, you may attempt again, but if you fail, there will be greater consequences.) If you fail the pushed roll, go to **87**.

8

You look the idol over. It is made of a sea-green stone and chiseled in the likeness of a water lizard. The sculpture is grotesque and hideous, and the very depiction of the serpentine creature unnerves you. Still, the work is extremely well preserved and unquestionably ancient.

You feel uncomfortable staring at the alien looking thing for long, and you stow it away under the bed and out of sight.

Go to **32**.

9

You awake in the morning, grateful for the rest. You rise from your bed and take in the modest surroundings that make up your room. The furnishings are sparse, a bad and small dresser, with a cramped and dusty writing desk tucked in the corner. Sitting atop the desk is a plate of eggs with toast, apparently set out for you by the owner of the motel. The walls are plain and unadorned, save for a single window which faces towards the lake. However, this view is currently blocked by the incredibly thick fog, which has taken on a pale green hue. Your vision is obscured entirely, and you cannot see into the depths of that outlandish green mist.

You also notice your personal belongings placed across the room, exactly as you had left them the night before.

Go to **106**.

10

You slip silently out of your cell and press low to the ground. Powell is reading over his documents and puffing away contentedly at his cigar, and he doesn't notice your escape.

After several tense minutes, you manage to inch your way towards the entrance of the building. You crack the door just enough to escape, and close it behind you as you exit.

You are now standing amidst the darkness of the fog. You note the last of the sun's rays illuminating the mist above you, but your vision is largely obscured by the haze and the growing darkness.

Given your recent escape, it would not be wise to linger here. You weigh your options. You could address the problem head on by returning to the Harris house to look for clues. You might also consider returning to the motel to gather your thoughts. Or you could simply put this all behind you and skip town. It is too late and too foggy for the ferry to be operational, but you know there are smaller side roads that wind around the lake. You'd have to make the journey on foot and in the dark, but an unpleasant option is still an option.

To investigate the Harris house, go to **147**.

To visit the motel, go to **122**.

To abandon your investigation and leave town, go to **124**.

11

You step out into the greenish mist. You feel it clinging tightly to you as you make your way outdoors and down the short distance to the police station.

You enter the small brick building with a sense of claustrophobia. The walls here are very close together and space is tight. Cramped into the tiny one-room structure was a large desk, several filing cabinets, a few chairs, and a closet-sized holding cell with iron bars in the back of the room. Behind the large desk was Officer Powell, smoking a cigar with his feet propped up. His coat was unbuttoned and his hat lie on top of a stack of papers, next to a battered old revolver.

He opens one eye at you and frowns, sighing through his cigar as he straightens himself up to look presentable. "If you're bothering me right now, I'm going to assume this is important. You mention that you would like to see the police report for Professor William Harris's death, to which he replies with a snort. "You have no business dealing with that, and even if you did, this is my jurisdiction. Shove off and leave me in peace."

He does not seem cooperative, but perhaps you could convince him that you have some special circumstance that warrants you looking through his files.

Make **Fast Talk** roll, if you succeed, go to **46**. If you fail, go to **101**.

12

You settle into you seat with your thin briefcase resting on your lap, and you notice that the rest of the passengers are likewise getting comfortable for the short trip across. Glancing around, you catch sight of the ferryman entering the cabin. As you sit patiently and wait for the engine to come to life, you listen to the sounds of idle chatter around you. You look out across the water and notice a thin fog beginning to form over the surface of the water as the temperature drops with the approach of night.

After a few minutes, you hear the engine sputter into action and feel the ferry lurch forward to make its journey. The conversations around you continue on as the ferryman joins you all on deck. You can't but overhear most of the talk, though it is surprisingly banal. There are almost a dozen passengers on the ferry, and most of them are simply looking to spend their money during the weekend in Esbury to enjoy the various shops and leisure activities of the lakeside town. Many of the passengers seem to come from money, as is common in Esbury.

You notice a strange look from one of the women in the group. She has brown hair and eyes, and

a full figure and she seems to be looking you over, admiring your features.

At the top of your investigator sheet, you will find spaces for eight characteristics: Strength (STR), Constitution (CON), Power (POW), Dexterity (DEX), Appearance (APP), Size (SIZ), Intelligence (INT), and Education (Edu). If you have not done so already, use the following values to allocate among your characteristics: 40, 50, 50, 50, 60, 60, 70, 80. When you have chosen which values to associate with each characteristic, write the value in the large square beside each characteristic. In the smaller boxes next to this, write an amount equal to half of the characteristic value and an amount equal to one fifth of the characteristic value. If you need more information about what these characteristics mean, consult page 6 of the Quick-Start rules.

When you have done this, go to **80**.

13

Banyu, the Buddhist monk, chats casually with you as you walk through the fog. You both note that the light is beginning to dim through the mists, and this becomes the topic of conversation for a few minutes. "It will be even harder to see soon. I would not like to be about any longer than we must. This fog is most unusual. Is this hue common here?"

You respond that the greenish color of the mists is highly unusual, and he seems mildly perturbed. "I have seen nothing like it at my temple in India."

The conversation continues like this for some time, until finally you arrive at your destination. The place in question is a small house located on the edge of town, near the church.

Banyu informs you that he has no intention of going inside, as he knows it may result in violence, and he is opposed to physical conflict. He shoots you a quick glance and then goes to stand by the church.

You try the door and find it unlocked. You have no doubt that the men inside will be armed, so you slip in quietly, hoping to avoid notice.

Make a **Stealth** roll. If you succeed, go to **165**. If you fail, go to **144**.

Later, you may be prompted to visit Banyu if you know the correct entry. At that time, you may go to **215**.

14

You placed a modest bid on the journal, thinking its unremarkable nature would prevent anyone from paying anything resembling a large sum. Clearly, you were mistaken, as another name was called, and a bright eyed and blonde haired youth goes to claim the book for a price that is noticeably more than your offer.

Go to **81**.

15

You make your way toward the estate sale, pushing into the crowd. Judging by the number of people packing into the dance hall, this seems to be quite the event.

Most of the people here are well dressed, and there is lots of jewelry and designer clothing to be seen on the guests. You see a broad shouldered man in a policeman's uniform standing by the door. He has a nightstick at his side and a scarred yet clean-shaven face. His brow is furrowed in a serious expression and he watches the commotion through narrow eyes.

As you mingle through the crowd of academics and collectors, you notice a few other faces that stand out in the crowd.

Most immediately, you spot a man in orange flowing robes with dusky skin. He seems more than a little out of place, and has garnered some odd looks from the other guests.

Glancing around further, you happen to notice the two dark-suited gentlemen from earlier, standing in a corner toward the front of the room talking to young and dark-haired man in a dated yet elegant longcoat. His face has rather sharp features, and he is of a slight build, with a thin wisp of a mustache hanging beneath his nose.

And most prominently, there is a rather attractive young woman standing on a stage at the front of the room with a bespectacled old man. Long black hair cascades down her shoulders, accentuating her pale features and complementing her black formal dress. Occasionally, she and the older gentleman peek at objects that are beneath white sheets, waiting to be displayed.

To mingle with the crowd of guests, go to **34**.

To speak to the officer at the back of the room, go to **88**.

To approach the man in orange, go to **102**.

To introduce yourself to the dark-suited men, go to **60**.

To make your way towards the stage and the woman, go to **22**.

To leave the hall and go find a place to stay for the night, go to **26**.

16

Your business here is completed. You see the crowd staring covetously at the newly acquired items and you happen to spot Amelia looking smug and satisfied with a leather bag full of cash. Mr. Warren is beginning to clear away the tables and Officer Powell stands by the door and directs people out of the building and into the ever-thickening fog.

Though some seem content to stay and socialize, you feel that it would be best to bed down for the night.

Go to **26**.

17

You have begun gathering information in Esbury. Would you like to interact some more?

You may now select another option from those listed. Do not repeat a choice already selected. Once you have chosen three options (or before, if you are ready to move on,) go to **35**. Note that selecting to leave the hall will make you ineligible to make further selections on this list.

To mingle with the crowd of guests, go to **34**.

To speak to the officer at the back of the room, go to **88**.

To approach the man in orange, go to **102**.

To introduce yourself to the dark-suited men, go to **60**.

To make your way towards the stage and the woman, go to **22**.

To leave the hall and go find a place to stay for the night, go to **26**.

18

You state that you're an author working on a new novel that you've been researching for some time. You mention how you were planning to consult with Professor Harris here in Esbury about some of the historical background information for your writing.

The ferryman looks at you quizzically. "Professor Harris? Didn't you hear? He's dead. About a week ago. Officer Powell could tell you more. Or his widow, Amelia. She'll be hosting an estate sale for some of the Professor's things tonight. Poor thing, she really needs the windfall, especially in a town like Esbury.

Might be you could pick up some of his notes for cheap and do the research yourself." The man shrugs, clearly not wanting to dwell on buying the items of a dead man. He extends his hand in a friendly gesture, trying to change the subject. "I'm Lance Sanford by the way. Pleasure to meet you."

To inquire about Professor Harris, go to **27**.

To inquire about Officer Powell, go to **36**.

To ask Lance Sanford about himself, go to **42**.

To ask about the Estate Sale, go to **66**.

To ask about the widow Amelia, go to **89**.

To pass the time waiting to arrive in Esbury, go to **56**.

19

Finally, you hear your name called, and your bid for the Altar was found to be highest. You are now saddled with a large and bulky item, easily the size of a traveler's trunk. Not unmanageable, but definitely more than you'd prefer to lug around. Still, it is surprisingly light considering the amount of gemstones worked into the ancient wood. Naturally, those will make it quite valuable, and the strange painted scrawlings provoke your interest.

Reduce your **Credit Rating** by five. Go to **81**.

20

Your instincts get the better of you and you feel compelled to make your escape. You rise from your seat, looking for suitable exits. The only way that does not lead towards the entrance is to go through the kitchen. You don't know if there's an exit that way, but you think it's worth a shot.

Unfortunately, you never get to take that shot. As you rise and make it into the doorway of the kitchen, Officer Powell bursts into the room, shouting. "Freeze! Police!" You glance over your shoulder and see his revolver leveled at you, and you go stiff. "You're under arrest for trespassing! You're going to come with me. Now."

He has you dead in his sights, and talking would do you little good as you were already caught trying to flee the scene. You should probably do what he says. On the other hand, you could try to run. The odds don't look good, staring down the barrel of a gun, but maybe you like your chances better with the gun than with the prison cell.

To go quietly, go to **65**.

To make a run for it, go to **82**.

21

As Joshua towers over you, fists raised in rage, an idea crosses your mind. You pull up both of your feet and drive them up into his chest, kicking him back with full force. And sending him tumbling down the stairs.

You hear several thumps and thuds as Joshua rolls down the stairs. When he reaches the bottom he is sprawled out and clearly injured. His groans betray his semiconscious state, and you walk over to him confidently and with one final kick, send him over the edge into unconsciousness.

Amelia is mortified at the sight, and she runs out into the street, fleeing the scene. You quickly search Joshua's pockets and find his wallet, including his ID, with an address. A search of his other pocket reveals a house key.

Several options are immediately apparent. You can continue searching the house, leave in pursuit of Amelia, or make your way to Joshua's home.

To search the Harris house, go to **179**.

To chase Amelia, go to **136**.

To search Joshua's house, go to **151**.

22

You make your way to the stage, navigating the dance hall and around the many guests. Your eyes lock firmly on the woman, and hers rise to meet yours as she looks up from peeking at one of the objects on the stage. She stops what she is doing as you approach. A smile appears on her lips as she notices that she has caught your eye.

Her left hand rests on her hip as you come to stand at the foot of the stage. The old man behind her continues his inspections, unaware or uncaring that you have come to distract them. The woman leans over the edge of the stage and down to you. You can see her makeup has been painstakingly applied, despite her status as a recent widow.

You clear your throat as you meet her gaze, and promptly introduce yourself. She extends her hand to you formally. "Well aren't you a new face in town?" She teases playfully. "We get those quite a bit here. No doubt you plan to bid on some of my late husband's things. Good for both of us, I say. Just be sure to give a good price for little old me, alright?" She winks slyly at you.

You realize now would be a good time to get some more information from the woman who might be

the most well informed regarding your interests. She certainly seems like the flirty sort, and would probably respond well to the same.

Make a **Charm** roll, if you succeed, go to **43**. If you fail, go to **57**.

23

You mention the passing of distant colleague in Esbury and how you've been sent by Miskatonic to recover his work and bring it back to the university.

The man sighs and nods slowly. "You mean Professor Harris. Real shame what happened to him. Always seemed like such a nice man. Officer Powell says they're still cleaning up the mess at the professor's place. But some of the more valuable bits will probably be at the estate sale tonight, if you're really wanting at it." The man looks down at his hands for a moment, and then back at you as he extends one your way. "Anyway, I'm Lance. Lance Sanford. Pleased to meet you, but I wish it were under better circumstances, eh?"

To inquire about Professor Harris, go to **27**.

To inquire about Officer Powell, go to **36**.

To ask Lance Sanford about himself, go to **42**.

To ask about the Estate Sale, go to **66**.

To pass the time waiting to arrive in Esbury, go to **56**.

24

You write a reasonable bid for the pair of brick cylinders and place it in the box. Shortly after you do so, Mr. Warren clears the box and begins checking the bids.

Make **Credit Rating** roll at **Hard** difficulty (success only at or below half of value). If you succeed, go to **38**. If you go to fail, go to **73**.

25

The man dives at you and you attempt to throw yourself out of his way, but you are not quick enough. The full weight of his body slams down on you as you are thrown out of the doorway and onto the brick of the street.

You struggle and squirm for a minute before the man chokes you out, and you slip into the black depths of unconsciousness.

Go to **138**.

26

While the estate sale still seems interesting, you would feel more secure with a roof over your head for the night. You pull someone out of the crowd and inquire where you can find a room for the night. You are directed a few blocks into town to find a modestly priced motel a few buildings down from what is apparently the police station.

As you enter in out of the cool night air, you are greeted by the warmth of a burning fireplace. The small front room feels stuffy and cramped. The bulk of the space is dominated by the large service counter, behind which sits a wiry looking wisp of a woman. She turns her wide eyes to you and asks your name, and then quotes you a price that's more than fair. With the transaction complete, you haul your thin briefcase up the stairs, unpack it and settle into your room for the night.

Go to 9.

27

The ferryman raises a questioning eyebrow at you. "Professor Harris? I can't say much really. I didn't know him all that well, but he seemed like a nice guy. I was sad to hear that he died."

You gently press for more information about his death. Lance frowns, but answers your line of inquiry. "Officer Powell says its suicide. I'm inclined to believe him, but Professor Harris seemed happy enough to me. More than content to relax in Esbury like anyone else. In between his studies of course. Ancient Indian history I think it was. I had coffee with the professor a few weeks ago and he talked my ear off about it. I couldn't understand half of what the man said, but he was quite excited by whatever it was."

You exchange a few more pleasantries with Lance before he goes off to finish guiding the boat into port. You pass the time in casual conversation with the other passengers and in observing the scenery. You note the tall pines and the sloping hills on the lakeside towards Esbury. These features and the small town are just visible through the growing mist, but you squint enough to make them out to your satisfaction.

In time, you arrive on the pier at Esbury, grateful to be off the water.

Go to 3.

28

You are well traveled enough to know that the two men are concealing handguns at their waists. What they could possibly need them for is beyond you, but their concealed weapons and shady nature make you think it isn't good.

Before you turn to go, you think you catch a glint of metal from beneath the folds of the young man's coat as well. This man might be likewise armed.

Go to 17.

29

The officer seems rather alert and vigilant. It would probably be best not to bother him and let him do his job. He clearly does not need or want your help in any way.

Go to 17.

30

The ceremonial robe catches your eye, and you settle on placing a bid. You sign your name on a paper with a realistic price, and put your submission in with the rest. You wait for Mr. Warren to call out the winner of the robe.

Make a **Credit Rating** roll, if you succeed, go to 52. If you fail, go to 48.

31

You nod sympathetically. This woman is clearly uncomfortable talking about her deceased husband, and anyone would want to put that behind them. You pause for a moment trying to frame your next question with a measure of sensitivity.

You open your mouth to speak, but you are interrupted by a loud knock at the door. Amelia jumps up startled and stands there for a moment in confusion, and the pounding on the door resumes. "Police! Open the door!" Amelia's face drains white as she goes to the door.

Your gut is telling you something is wrong here. You feel uneasy about the officer at the door. You tell yourself that you're being irrational and on edge, but you have some trouble fighting that feeling. You have a few precious moments to react.

To ignore your instincts and wait, go to 47.

To take this chance to hide, make a **Stealth** roll. If you succeed, go to 98. If you fail, go to 20.

32

A cursory inspection of your personal belongings reveal that nothing is amiss. All of your possessions are just as you left them.

While you are here looking things over, you can take this opportunity to more closely scrutinize certain items bought at the estate sale.

Alternatively, you may leave and go explore elsewhere if your curiosity is satisfied.

After examining each item, you will be redirected to this entry or given the option to proceed as appropriate. If you have none of the items or are done looking over your items, choose to investigate elsewhere.

If you bought the Journal from the estate sale and want to look it over, go to **74**.

If you bought the Clay Cylinders from the estate sale and want to look them over, go to **62**.

If you bought the Altar from the estate sale and want to look it over, go to **128**.

If you bought the Idol from the estate sale and want to look it over, go to **8**.

To go to the police station, go to **11**.

To go to the ferry, go to **153**.

33

You tell the man that you are a doctor, sent by the coroner to look into the death of Professor Harris. The man nods slowly, mournfully. "Ah, that's a bad business. I liked the old man. Can't say I know much about his death though. You'll want to talk to Officer Powell about that. Or maybe his widow, Amelia. They'll probably be at that estate sale tonight. Without Professor Harris around, she'll need the extra windfall if she plans to stay in Esbury. This place ain't cheap." The man brushes his hand against his shirt and then extends it to you. "My name's Lance, by the way. Lance Sanford. Good to meet you, but I wish it was under happier circumstances."

To inquire about Professor Harris, go to **27**.

To inquire about Officer Powell, go to **36**.

To ask Lance Sanford about himself, go to **42**.

To ask about the Estate Sale, go to **66**.

To ask about the widow Amelia, go to **89**.

To pass the time waiting to arrive in Esbury, go to **56**.

34

Rather than single anyone or anything in particular out, you feel it would be best to use your time to get a

general impression of things and speak to multiple people to get their points of view.

Hearing the talk around the room, you come to understand that most of the people who have gathered here are merely using this as a social gathering. However, there are a fair number of academics and collectors here. Judging by the relative wealth of the townsfolk, you imagine that there will be a fair number of bids being placed on the items.

While walking amongst the guests, you happen to notice a pair of men conversing in hushed tones. They seem to be trying to avoid being overheard, but a keen ear might be able to catch what is being said.

Make **Listen** roll, if you succeed, go to **2**. If you fail, go to **44**.

35

The murmuring of the crowd dies down and people begin to crowd around the stage as Amelia and the older gentleman on stage call everyone to attention.

The widow strides confidently to the front of the stage where the lights are centered. She flashes a broad smile for the crowd and begins to speak. "Good evening everyone! I'm so glad you all could make it tonight. As you all know, my husband recently passed and...well..." At this point, Amelia begins to tear up theatrically on stage, so much so that her makeup begins to smear and she produces a handkerchief to dry her eyes before continuing. "Well...I'm very upset. I miss my poor William very much, and I don't know what I'll do without him. And that's why I've brought you all here tonight. I hope you all can find some use for his collection, and I know that he would be happy to see his things go to those who value them highly. I hope that you show this poor widow a kindness by finding something you like. But now, let us begin. I'll leave the auctioning to Mr. Warren."

With her opening statement made, she moves to stage left and allows a bespectacled old man, presumably Mr. Warren, to take center stage. He clears his throat before speaking. "Tonight, we have six very ancient and very valuable items for sale from the estate of Professor William Harris. Though exceedingly strange, I have deemed the items to be authentic to the best of my ability. On each table, I have placed a ballot box next to the item for sale. If you wish to bid on an item, simply write your name and the amount you are willing to pay for it, and then place the slip in the box. The item will be sold to the highest bidder. All of the proceeds will go to the wife of the deceased." With that, Mr. Warren moves to the gathered items.

Go to **70**.

36

You ask about Officer Powell, and Lance seems to give you a guarded response. “He’s the law in Esbury. Certainly knows what he’s doing, since he handles the town on his own. Truth be told though, he can be a little intimidating. He’s a big man, and not somebody you’d want to find yourself on the wrong side of. I think he gets it from his days in the War. I don’t have cause to talk to him much though.”

You exchange a few more pleasantries with Lance before he goes off to finish guiding the boat into port. You pass the time in casual conversation with the other passengers and in observing the scenery. You note the tall pines and the sloping hills on the lakeside towards Esbury. These features and the small town are just visible through the growing mist, but you squint enough to make them out to your satisfaction.

In time, you arrive on the pier at Esbury, grateful to be off the water.

Go to **3**.

37

You blurt out a greeting, trying to make the stranger feel welcome. His face contorts into a look of disdain, and the man turns his back on you. You have clearly upset him somehow, and he wants nothing more to do with you.

Go to **17**.

38

You muster together your patience and wait for Mr. Warren to finish counting out the proposed sums to be paid for the strange clay cylinders. Thankfully, your patience pays off, and you soon find them in your possession.

Reduce your **Credit Rating** by five. Go to **81**.

39

You attempt to speak kindly to Amelia, trying to soothe her from the frightening events that had just occurred. Despite your best efforts, she appears inconsolable. Between her sobs, she tries to offer a feeble explanation. “It was Josh...h-he was only trying to h-help...” She continues crying, and seems to be lost in her fear.

It does not seem that she will be much use to you at the moment.

To search the premises go to **7**.

To tie up Officer Powell in case he wakes up, go to **68**.

To tie up Amelia, go to **125**.

To simply make good on your escape, go to **111**.

40

You take the hint and decide to leave them before they get truly angry. You turn back to the crowd and search for another distraction.

Go to **17**.

41

You choose your words carefully before replying, not wanting to give out sensitive information. “I’m working a case here. I’m with an investigative service in Boston.” The ferryman scratches his head. “Boston, huh? And they sent you all the way out here? I imagine this has to do with Professor Harris’s death, but Officer Powell has that handled I think.” The man shrugs and flashes another smile. “Ah, but I suppose it’s not my place to pry.” He extends his hand to you “I’m Lance Sanford, by the way, I think we skipped the introduction.”

To inquire about Professor Harris, go to **27**.

To inquire about Officer Powell, go to **36**.

To ask Lance Sanford about himself, go to **42**.

To pass the time waiting to arrive in Esbury, go to **56**.

42

You ask Lance about himself and he beams a bright big smile your way. “I’ve lived in Esbury for years, since back before all the rich folk found the place and turned it into their little vacation spot. My father owned the ferry to and from the town, and he passed it on to me when he got too old to do it himself anymore. I love it here. I can’t imagine living anywhere else. The lake is so clear and clean. I guess that’s why we get so many visitors here. This place has definitely grown since I was younger. Sometimes I miss the way things were before, but I love Esbury all the same even now. You’ll like it here too.” Lance winks at you.

You exchange a few more pleasantries with Lance before he goes off to finish guiding the boat into port. You pass the time in casual conversation with the other passengers and in observing the scenery. You note the tall pines and the sloping hills on the lakeside towards Esbury. These features and the small town are

just visible through the growing mist, but you squint enough to make them out to your satisfaction.

In time, you arrive on the pier at Esbury, grateful to be off the water.

Go to [3](#).

43

You take her hand in yours and bring it to your lips, keeping eye contact with her as you do so. She giggles lightly and her smile grows wider as she regards you with interest. “My, aren’t you the charmer? If I weren’t a widow, I’d be thrilled. But I still must mourn my husband, you understand. He was a stuffy old goat and obsessed with his studies. I have no problem selling his things, mind you, but that’s because I need the money, you understand. A girl like me gets used to a certain standard of living, after all. But I can’t very well go tramping after the first suitor who comes to replace him. No matter how fetching.” She winks at you again and rests her hand on your arm and lowers her voice to a whisper. “But perhaps you could join me for a drink later. I have a little bit set aside for good company. I won’t tell if you don’t.” She seals the conversation with a final wink and breaks off her touch, turning back to the stage and the artifacts.

Go to [17](#).

44

You strain your ears trying to overhear the words of the huddled pair, but the noise of the conversations around the room drowns out what is said.

Go to [17](#).

45

You examine the items with a trained eye. The crown and ceremonial robe are obviously authentic, and seem fairly typical of what you would expect. They were in great condition and would certainly fetch a good price, though they were no rarer than any other antiquity. Likewise, Professor Harris’s journal seems like it would be of value to a scholar, though a few delicate cursory page turns show that it contains personal accounts and travelogues as well as historically relevant information. This is likely a good source of information on Professor Harris himself.

However, the other items present are noticeably different. The altar and clay cylinders bear a similar script, and the signs of wear and aging present on them. Given this, they are unlikely to be fabrications, but they do appear unlike more traditional findings from ancient India. A close inspection of the lizard idol leads you to believe it is

likewise verifiably authentic. Though the workmanship is strange and unnatural and clearly unlike anything you’ve seen from ancient India or anywhere else, it does not bear any signs of work from modern tools or styles either.

Go to [81](#).

46

You imply that you know the right sort of people that might ask the wrong sort of questions if you didn’t get access to that report.

You aren’t certain whether or not he believes you, but you can tell it’s more trouble than he’s willing to risk. With a look of irritation, he thumbs through the stack of papers on his desk before handing you the file you asked after.

According to the report, Professor Harris’s death is officially a suicide. His death occurred at his home address. He was up late one night in his study, and he stuck a gun into his mouth and painted the room red. His body was found the following afternoon by his wife, Amelia Harris. There was no note left, and no prior criminal history of the deceased, though the gun found was unregistered. Overall, the report is dry and minimalist. All requisite information is present, but only to the barest standard of diligence.

Satisfied, you hand the file back to the officer, who grumbles and tucks it away before clearing his throat loudly and propping his feet back up.

You feel that you have been given a cue to leave, and that Officer Powell will not likely be of much further help.

To go to the Harris household, go to [90](#).

To return to the motel, go to [122](#).

47

You hear a muffled exchange of words in the other room and within moments Officer Powell emerges into the room with Amelia in tow. Powell’s thick brow knits together in anger, and his voice conveys a serious weight. His eyes bore into you. You glance down and notice his revolver is drawn and aimed at you. “You’re under arrest for trespassing. You’ve no business being here. You’re going to come with me. Now.”

He doesn’t seem to be in a talking mood. It would be unwise to refuse, given the firearm aimed directly at you. Still, it might be better to take your chances now than to rot in a cell.

To go quietly, go to [65](#).

To attempt an escape, make a **Fighting (Brawl)** roll at **Hard** difficulty (success only at or below half of value). If you succeed, go to 76. If you fail, go to 82.

48

It would seem one of the other collectors here wants this particular item more than you. The robe is sold for a higher price than you expected, and to someone other than yourself.

Go to 81.

49

You take a step towards Amelia and cock the hammer on the revolver and level it towards her, adopting the angriest expression you can muster. She shrieks and cowers, falling to her knees.

“Please don’t hurt me! I’ll tell you what ever it is you want! I’m sorry. I never meant for any of this. Joshua sent that policeman after you. He has the law in his pocket. Josh runs the bootlegging in Esbury, and he cuts Powell in on the profits in exchange for looking the other way and helping keep everything secure.”

She produces a handkerchief and dries her eyes. “Josh protects me. He loves me. He has for quite some time...”

You press further, inquiring about the nature of their relationship, and how this relates to her husband’s death. She stares back at you blankly and takes a deep breath. “Josh and I have been intimate for a few years. My husband was a good man, when he wasn’t obsessing over his work. But he was sometimes away for so long, and paid so much attention to his books...I have needs. A woman my age shouldn’t be neglected. I met Josh over the whiskey. He bootlegs for the whole town. One thing led to another and...” She smiles, dabbing at the last of the tears in her eyes.

“We were happy, even with William around. Recently though, Josh had been insistent that we get him out of the picture so that we could be together. I didn’t like it, but I agreed. I let Josh take care of it. I just wanted it to be behind us and for us to be together. I told him I wanted to sell everything and leave town. Just the two of us. I think that was the first time I saw him angry. He never said why.”

She looks down at her hands, trying to avoid your gaze. “You don’t have to worry about anything. We’ll leave town just as soon as you can. I suggest you do the same.” She looks at Powell’s unconscious body lying on the floor.

To search the premises go to 7.

To tie up Officer Powell in case he wakes up, go to 68.

To tie up Amelia, go to 125.

To simply make good on your escape, go to 111.

50

Despite the uneven terrain, you manage to keep your footing. You fly over rock and root as fast as your legs will carry you, and you cover much ground in a short amount of time.

Unfortunately, this reckless speed at which you are travelling, combined with the fog and cover of night, prevents you from noticing the ground giving way to a cliff edge beneath your feet. As your momentum carries you forward over the edge, you see a tree several feet out from the cliff face. It is too late to stop the fall, but perhaps you can control the landing.

Make a **Jump** roll. If you succeed, go to 167. If you fail, go to 232.

51

You pick a path and head down it, figuring that your odds are equally as good to be right or wrong here. As you continue walking in the mists, you notice the haze becomes even more obscuring, that the light fading and the hint of darkness is compounding the lack of visibility.

You notice the trail take a winding way at this point, and rises steeply in elevation. You take this as a good sign, since it means you are farther from the shore of the lake. While you are smiling at your good fortune, you fail to spot the muddy patch of ground that causes you to slip and go tumbling towards the edge of a cliff.

Make a **Climb** roll. If you succeed, go to 174. If you fail, take 1d6 damage and go to 139. If this damage kills you, you have fallen to your death and this is **The End**.

52

The Brahmin’s robe is yours. Mr. Warren spent more than a few minutes looking over the offers, but ultimately, it was your name that he called. You claim your prize and fold it away into your briefcase for safety.

Reduce your **Credit Rating** by two. Go to 81.

53

The vase hits you squarely in the chest, shattering on impact. The broken shards fly around you, some cutting into you. You are sent off balance and tumble to the floor for just a moment.

Seizing this opportunity, Amelia runs out the door as fast as her legs will carry her, calling for help as she does so.

You could chase after her, or you can take this chance to explore the empty house. The choice is yours.

To explore the house, go to **7**.

To chase after Amelia, go to **141**.

54

You ask about Professor Harris's death, and how it came to happen, fearing that you already know the answer to your inquiries. Amelia takes a deep breath before answering "Joshua killed him."

You press further, inquiring about the nature of their relationship, and how this relates to her husband's death. She stares back at you blankly and takes a deep breath. "Josh and I have been intimate for a few years. My husband was a good man, when he wasn't obsessing over his work. But he was sometimes away for so long, and paid so much attention to his books...I have needs. A woman my age shouldn't be neglected. I met Josh over the whiskey. He bootlegs for the whole town. One thing led to another and..." She smiles, looking lost in thought.

"We were happy, even with William around. Recently though, Josh had been insistent that we get him out of the picture so that we could be together. I didn't like it, but I agreed. I let Josh take care of it. I just wanted it to be behind us and for us to be together. I told him I wanted to sell everything and leave town. Just the two of us. I think that was the first time I saw him angry. He never said why."

She looks down at her hands, trying to avoid your gaze. "You don't have to worry about anything. We'll leave town just as soon as you can. I suggest you do the same."

She looks at you one last time and frowns. "I may not have loved him especially, but I don't want to discuss my late husband's death any further. If you simply must dig into it further, feel free to search my home. I left the door unlocked, so it shouldn't give you any trouble. Now leave me alone." She stands and walks over to the altar to pray, kneeling and forgetting your presence. You take your cue to leave.

To continue on to the Harris house **7**.

To visit the motel, go to **122**.

To abandon your investigation and leave town, go to **158**.

55

Despite Joshua's urgings, you feel compelled to speak to Amelia yourself. You approach the front of the house and note your surroundings.

The exterior of the place hints at the wealth of the occupants, but then again, so do most of the houses in town. Directly across from the building is a small church, and the religious iconography of the building seems to have inspired Harrises in the design of their own home. A bronze cross hangs over the front door, and decorative columns line the outside walls of the two-story house. All in all, the architectural style is somewhat baroque, complete with a pair of carved angels lounging beneath the roof that are just visible through the strange haze.

You knock on the door and wait in the mist for a few moments, hoping for someone to hear your knocking. Eventually, you are relieved to find the widow Amelia answering the door. She is wearing a bright red dress, which accents her deeply crimson lipstick. She appears to have taken great care of her appearance, and had abandoned the more modest look of the night prior. She flashes you a smile and invites you inside. The house opens into a large foyer, and you see various crates and bundles stacked high along the walls. "Just selling off a few of the more common things. Mind the mess, the porter hasn't come for it yet." She takes you by the hand to lead you over the stacks of items, helping you to pick your way through the assembled possessions of the deceased Professor Harris. She takes you into a small drawing room with antique furniture and offers you some coffee.

After settling in, and exchanging a few well-mannered pleasantries, you ask in more detail about the late Professor Harris.

Amelia sighs theatrically and looks down at her hands. "I can't imagine what you want to know about William. I found him in his study with the gun still in his mouth. What more could you want to know?"

Make a **Psychology** roll, if you succeed, go to **126**. If you fail, go to **31**.

56

You exchange a few more pleasantries with Lance before he goes off to finish guiding the boat into port. You pass the time in casual conversation with the other passengers and in observing the scenery. You note the tall pines and the sloping hills on the lakeside towards Esbury. These features and the small town are just

visible through the growing mist, but you squint enough to make them out to your satisfaction.

In time, you arrive on the pier at Esbury, grateful to be off the water.

Go to **3**.

57

You manage a smile and stumble through a compliment, and the woman laughs. “Oh my, well aren’t you the nervous sort? Don’t know what to say to a pretty woman like me? That’s quite alright. I wouldn’t have you anyway. You’re welcome to stay for the sale though. I might like you better as a buyer.” She winks and turns around, walking back to her place on the stage.

Go to **17**.

58

You decide to place a bid on the crown, and affix your name and a suitable price to a slip of paper, which finds its way into the box. You wait patiently for Mr. Warren to announce the highest bidder.

Make a **Credit Rating** roll, if you succeed, go to **64**. If you fail, go to **94**.

59

Mr. Warren takes his time mulling over the names and figures before calling out the name of a “Dexter James.” One of the dark-suited men from earlier comes forward to claim the altar.

Go to **81**.

60

You approach the huddled group and introduce yourself to them, stating that you recognize them from the ferry. The two men from earlier appear annoyed at your presence, and are visibly irritated. “Scram man, we don’t know you. You got nothing to do with us.” The third man with them seems likewise bothered, and frowns at your intrusion.

They certainly make you feel unwelcome. Ignoring you in the hopes that you will leave, the two men in suits turn their backs to you. You see the jacket of their suits shift oddly, as if ill fitting.

Make a **Spot Hidden** roll, if succeed, go to **28**. If you fail, go to **40**.

61

You glance over the items, but you do not have an eye for antiquities. As near as you can tell, everything is as it appears to be and as Mr. Warren claimed.

Still, as you look over the notebook, you notice that it contains personal accounts as well as academic findings. It would likely be a good source of information regarding Professor Harris.

Go to **81**.

62

You turn the hardened clay cylinders over in your hands, your eyes falling on the large cracks running through the pair of items. The solid construction of these things has led to the survival of the objects throughout the ages, despite damages to them.

The next most obvious quality is the strange writing that is plastered across the side of these artifacts. It is quite remarkable in that they do not resemble any language known to you. Unfortunately, you have no way of translating them.

Go to **32**.

63

“I’m a reporter with the Boston Gazette, some professor died out here recently, and I’m supposed to gather details for the obituary.” The man nods solemnly. “You mean Professor Harris. Real shame what happened to him. Always seemed like such a nice man. Officer Powell says they’re still cleaning up the mess at the professor’s place. Can’t say I know much about his death though. You’ll want to talk to Officer Powell about that. Or maybe his widow, Amelia. They’ll probably be at that estate sale tonight.” The ferryman looks down at his hands and then extends one towards you. “My name’s Lance Sanford, by the way. Let’s just put that grisly business behind us for now and enjoy the water, eh?”

To inquire about Professor Harris, go to **27**.

To inquire about Officer Powell, go to **36**.

To ask Lance Sanford about himself, go to **42**.

To ask about the Estate Sale, go to **66**.

To ask about the widow Amelia, go to **89**.

To pass the time waiting to arrive in Esbury, go to **56**.

64

You pay a considerable sum, but the Indian crown is now yours. You smile with satisfaction as you tuck the ring bronze headpiece within your briefcase.

Reduce your **Credit Rating** by two. Go to **81**.

65

The officer is armed and angry, so you decide it is probably best not to resist. You are escorted out of the house at gunpoint and into the sickly green fog. Amelia neither says nor does anything as you pass. She simply stares at you as you go.

On the street, just outside of the Harris property, you spot Joshua, grinning madly. His eyes meet yours and his smile gets just a bit wider. He put Officer Powell up to this. He's not even trying to hide it. That still doesn't explain why, but at least you can know for a certainty that Joshua is not friendly to you, and that he has Powell in his pocket.

You mull this over as you are marched through the misty streets and taken to the police station. You are ushered into the dim and dingy room, and shoved into a closet-sized cell on the far wall. Officer Powell turns the key in the lock, and you are sealed in the cell. The officer settles into his seat and pays you no further mind, as he begins puffing on a cigar.

He seems to have no intention of letting you go any time soon.

To wait the night in the cell, go to **84**.

To attempt an escape, make a **Locksmith** roll. If you succeed, go to **107**. If you fail, go to **84**.

To try to convince him to let you out, make a **Fast Talk** roll. If you succeed, go to **127**. If you fail, go to **84**.

66

The mention of an estate sale grabs your interest and you ask for some more information, and Lance obliges. "Amelia Harris is selling off some of her late husband's collection. She's could use the money and doesn't really have an interest in that ancient Indian stuff that the professor studied. But some folks do. Collectors, academics, that sort of thing. She put the word out for it a few days after her husband died. People have been trickling in for it the past few days. If you're looking to get your hands on something, it's going on tonight at the dance hall by the pier."

You exchange a few more pleasantries with Lance before he goes off to finish guiding the boat into port. You pass the time in casual conversation with the

other passengers and in observing the scenery. You note the tall pines and the sloping hills on the lakeside towards Esbury. These features and the small town are just visible through the growing mist, but you squint enough to make them out to your satisfaction.

In time, you arrive on the pier at Esbury, grateful to be off the water.

Go to **3**.

67

Not wanting to take any chances with your freedom, you slip quietly out into the mist. As you step out onto the stone pavement outside, you turn your collar up, hoping it might provide you some semblance of anonymity. You begin walking down the street at a brisk pace, hoping to put some distance between yourself and the Harris house.

You continue on the path for a short distance when you hear the sound of heavy footsteps approach you. Thanks to the thick fog, you do not think you have been spotted. You quickly duck into a nearby alley to let the traveler pass. The man passes by you at a quick jog, cursing under his breath. You recognize the voice of Joshua, and you feel certain that he is connected to your attempted arrest.

Still, you realize that you don't have many options to deal with that right now. With the law after you and this damnable fog keeping you from leaving on the ferry, the best thing you can do is head back to the motel and either lie low there or figure out what your next move is.

Go to **122**.

68

You consider that the officer is merely unconscious, and not restrained, and that should be remedied before he comes to. You pull down a curtain from the window, letting the sickly green light of the sunlit fog into the room. You take the length of fabric and bind Officer Powell's hands. It is crude, but it will have to suffice.

As you are finish securing the knots, Amelia suddenly lunges for a vase sitting next to her and hurls it at you.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **91**. If you fail, take 1d4 damage and go to **53**.

69

Joshua removes the blade from your face, and walks across the room. He lifts the hideous idol from its spot amidst the dusty relics and places it on the floor before

you as you struggle in vain against the thick ropes that bind you.

You glance at the grotesque statue, and then fix your gaze on Joshua as you squirm and twist beneath the ropes. He smiles with wicked glee as he places the blade against your flesh once more. The cold metal rests against your throat, and Joshua locks eyes with you.

His eyes seem to glaze over as speaks, and he begins speaking in strange tongue. “Grah'n y'hah ngnw ronog Bokrug stell'bsna, phlegeth ep throd ron.” He speaks each syllable with a slow and monotonous tone, as if he is focusing on the sound of the words very carefully.

As the last sound passes his lips, Joshua takes the knife and presses it sharply into your neck. With a single, smooth motion, Joshua slits your throat as you struggle helplessly.

As you are swiftly bleeding out, your eyes perceive impossible visions. The world before you melts away and you are replaced by a shining city of marble, onyx, and lustrous gems. You see this magnificent city in all its splendor, sitting next to a placid lake. And then it is gone in an instant. The water rises up to swallow it and from the water rises the serpent of the idol, given life and power. The being eyes you with malicious sentience as the waters rise and consumes you.

Your story is over. You have been offered up as a sacrifice to one of the Great Old Ones. **The End.**

70

Mr. Warren approaches the first table and removes the cloth covering to reveal an odd pair of clay cylinders with strange etchings on their sides. They are small and seem quite fragile, with large cracks running down the sides.

Mr. Warren proceeds to the next table and likewise uncovers the item in question. This item is significantly larger and more ornate. It appears to be some sort of altar or reliquary, decorated heavily with yellow-green gemstones. However, there was one similarity with the first item, and it was the presence of the strange written characters, though the ones on this altar seemed to have been painted on.

The old scholar turns to the next item in question and displays it for all to see. A heavily decorated crown of solid bronze, wrought in the image of a Hindu god.

The next item is certainly the most mundane. A large, thick, leather-bound journal that appeared

well worn and beaten, with several loose papers jammed between the pages. Mr. Warren senses the confusion of some of the assembled, and he clarifies that the notebook is the assembled personal works and studies of Professor Harris.

What follows is a well preserved ceremonial robe of a Brahmin priest. The cloth is a pure white.

The last item is perhaps the strangest of all. It is a small statue or idol, presumably of one of the infinite many deities of ancient India. It is made from blue-green stone in the shape of a rather grotesque lizard or serpent, and the craftsmanship is crude and gaudy, so much so that it appears fake.

People begin moving among the items, looking them over and conversing quietly.

Make either an **Appraise** or **Archeology** roll, if you succeed, go to **45**. If you fail, go to **61**.

71

“I’m here on pleasure, not business.” You smile at the man and he smiles back. “Like so many others then, eh? Can’t say I blame you, Esbury is a nice little place. Lots to do here on the lake. Boating, fishing, swimming. And there’s some camping to be had on the other side of town. There’s also a nice dance hall close to the pier. But that will be closed for the night, what with that estate sale of Professor Harris’s things going on. That might interest you too, if you have a little extra money you’re looking to spend.” The man pauses for a moment, as if unsure of what to say, then finally extends his hand and smiles warmly. “I’m Lance Sanford, by the way. It’s a pleasure.”

To inquire about Professor Harris, go to **27**.

To ask Lance Sanford about himself, go to **42**.

To ask about the Estate Sale, go to **66**.

To pass the time waiting to arrive in Esbury, go to **56**.

72

You recognize the man’s style of dress to be that of a Buddhist monk. You stop yourself from speaking and bow a customary greeting, to which the monk smiles and returns the gesture before speaking in heavily accented, but fluent English. “It is good to see one here with such respect for our customs. I am Banyu.” His expression turns to a frown as he makes a sweeping gesture to the rest of the room. “The rest here seem to only seek to profit from my culture. Selling the items of my ancestors is most shameful.” You respectfully question why he would come such a long way to witness

such a thing, and he sighs before turning back to you. “I have come with what money my temple can gather so that I might save a certain few of the artifacts. Ones that your Professor Harris stole from my temple in Sarnath when he came to visit some years ago.” The monk seems troubled, and becomes silent. He bows a farewell, and you take the cue to leave.

Go to [17](#).

73

Though you wished to buy the curious clay cylinders, it would appear someone placed a higher bid. You hear Mr. Warren announce the name of an “Arthur Duncan” and see one of the dark suited pair approach to take the item from him.

Go to [81](#).

74

Though you glanced at the notebook during the estate sale, you have not had time to look it over in length until now.

Looking through the book, you become deeply engrossed and spend the next few hours in study. Your time spent yields valuable information. Professor Harris made several trips to India, starting about 12 years ago. During this time, he went to multiple sites to make observations and recover artifacts. His longest and most profitable trip appears to be ten years ago during an excursion to Sarnath, India, where he writes about lifting several items from an active Buddhist shrine. Apparently, Professor Harris had some regret about this theft, but he could not resist having the artifacts for his personal studies. The description of the items that he came across in Sarnath match some of the items at the estate sale last night. The clay cylinders, gemstone altar, and the serpentine idol are all described in detail in the entries related to his trip to Sarnath.

These items appear again throughout his journal after that. Apparently he has been studying these items the past ten years, and developed something of a fixated obsession with them. The idol was something that initially caught his eye, and the depiction of the great and grotesque water lizard matches no description of any known Hindu deity. Hoping to find clues to this, Professor Harris set about trying to translate the mysterious script on the cylinders and the altar. In doing so, he met with significant difficulty, as the text was only barely recognizable as an archaic dialect of a pre-Sanskrit language. The process was slow and painstaking until about a year ago.

At this time, Professor Harris writes of having a strange and enlightening dream. He reports walking among the ancient world from whence these items originated. A grand city of marble walls and onyx streets, of bronze gates and marvelous palaces and gardens. He writes of visiting the seventeen tower temples of this ancient city and meeting the bearded gods who dwelled here and sat upon their ivory thrones. In his writing, he calls the strange place Sarnath, despite the sheer impossibility of this. He claims that among the temples he learned the secrets of the ancient writing.

His next entry goes on to describe the odd cylinders of clay as the “Brick Cylinders of Kadatheron,” though he still had not yet identified the other objects. The next few pages are torn from the journal.

The entries resume with more mundane matters, though there are still references to the artifacts from time to time. The more recent entries in the journal speak of Professor Harris’s daily studies and living with Amelia. It is clear that he cares about her deeply from the way he writes about her, but he laments that his studies keep him from spending the time with her that he would like. Instead, he has been lavishing her with gifts and money, which she was all too happy to accept. He notes that Amelia had never been happier despite the distance between them.

The last entry to catch your eye is dated a little over a week ago. Apparently, the pages torn from his journal went missing only recently. Professor Harris expresses deep concern at this as there were no signs of forced entry to his study and only he and Amelia had access to it, though he was sure he had not removed them from the journal himself.

You finish your reading by glossing over the last week of the Professor’s life, which is rather uneventful and peaceful beyond his continued obsession with the artifacts and his occasional worries about Amelia.

Go to [32](#).

75

Try as you might, you are unable to get the door open. No manner of fiddling with the lock will get it to budge. You even resort to force by attempting to throw your weight against the door.

With a sigh of resignation, you abandon your task.

Go to [140](#).

76

Officer Powell is a large man, and armed. He is experienced in dealing with people resisting arrest, and the scars on his face hint that he has seen his fair of fights.

Still, you're not willing to be arrested. It's dangerous and desperate, but all you need is one good hit. One solid blow to lay him out.

You tense up and swing, throwing all of your weight into the blow. The gun goes off, blowing a hole in the wall behind you as he reflexively tries to block the blow with his hands. He is not quick enough to stop you. A heavy thump on the side of the head sends crashing to the floor.

Amelia shrieks in fright and surprise as the lawman collapses. You quickly scoop up his revolver and arm yourself with it. You turn your gaze on her as she cowers in the corner, her face drained of all color.

With the threat of arrest removed for the moment, you have ample opportunity to continue your investigation. Being suitably armed opens up a few more options as well.

To solicit information from Amelia at gunpoint, make an **Intimidation** roll. If you succeed, go to 49. If you fail, go to 99.

To attempt to calm Amelia down, make a **Persuade** roll. If you succeed, go to 85. If you fail, go to 39.

To search the premises go to 7.

To tie up Officer Powell in case he wakes up, go to 68.

To simply make good on your escape, go to 111.

77

You take a knee and begin twisting the combination lock slowly, listening for the sound of the clicks and feeling for the slight stopping of the dial with a successful guess of the number. You repeat this process a few times, and the door of the safe swings open with a barely perceptible creak of metal.

The contents of the safe are fairly sparse. There are a stack of documents on the bottom. Passports, birth certificates, identification and financial papers. They're tied to both Amelia and William Harris, so it appears as if this safe hasn't been opened since his death. There is also a solitary gold bar sitting off to one side. Considering the trouble you went through to get to this point, you place the gold bar in your pocket as compensation.

At least now you wouldn't be leaving empty handed. Satisfied, and with nothing more to see in the room, you leave it behind and move on.

Go to 140.

78

You don't want to take any chances with a man like this. You draw your handgun and fire a round off into the man's back. It tears through him, and blood begins to ooze from his wound. He looks down at his wound and then up at you as the blood loss gets to him, and he sinks to the ground in a puddle of his own blood.

The monk before you looks mortified, and his orange robed are splattered with a noticeable amount of blood. He immediately reaches into the folds of his robes and begins fingering his meditation beads for comfort from the sight of such brutal violence.

He calmly but sternly speaks to you, with his eyes closed. "The man was misguided, but he did not deserve to die. Go. Leave from here."

This isn't necessarily the reaction you expected, but his tone seems to give no room for discussion. You holster your weapon and exit into the lobby of the motel. The woman who owns the establishment takes your hand and shakes it. "I guess you did what had to be done. It's not pleasant, but I doubt you were left with any other choice." She pauses for a moment, running a hand through her graying hair. "If you're looking for the other one, I think I heard him say something about going down to Joshua's place by the church. He might be involved in some way, so be careful. I might start there."

With no other leads, you take her advice and step out into the haze, walking briskly towards the far end of town.

Go to 160.

79

You rush outside, hoping to catch a trace of thief. As you exit the motel, you are immediately struck by the lack of visibility. The fog seems to have grown thicker, and although you aren't certain, it seems as if the sun might be sinking lower toward the horizon. In the green and dusky haze, you pause a moment to listen, knowing that your sight will prove useless here.

The town is still and quiet. There is nobody out and about near you. No footsteps, no automobiles, no voices. You strain your ears and focus, entering a near meditative state, focusing only on the sounds of your surroundings.

Make a **Listen** roll. If you succeed, go to **114**. If you fail, go to **131**.

80

Clearly she finds something in you that she likes. Perhaps it is your looks, or a glint of intelligence in your eyes. She gives you a sly wink before turning back to her companions. You likewise turn your attention back to the rest of the passengers.

Sitting apart from the general crowd are two men in dark, well-tailored suits. They whisper quietly to each other and have unamused expressions on their faces, as if they don't seem pleased to be here. Perhaps they are on business. Noticing that you are sitting alone, the ferryman approaches you and stands over you with his characteristic smile, and you notice he is missing a tooth in the upper left corner of his mouth. His eyes are bright and they light upon you.

"Good afternoon! You look a bit lonely there, friend. What brings you to Esbury?"

If you have not already chosen an occupation, now is the time to do so. This list of occupations can be found on page 9 of the Quick-Start rules. Be sure to choose your occupation and personal skills, making certain that you add the base modifiers listed on the investigator sheet, noting half and fifth values as well.

If you are an Antiquarian, go to **104**.

If you are an Author, go to **18**.

If you are a Dilettante, go to **71**.

If you are a Doctor of Medicine, go to **33**.

If you are a Journalist, go to **63**.

If you are a Police Detective, go to **4**.

If you are a Private Investigator, go to **41**.

If you are a Professor, go to **23**.

81

You notice that you are not the only one looking over the items with such interest. The monk appears to be closely scrutinizing the stranger items as well, and the dark suited gentlemen from earlier appear to have taken a liking to the curious idol. Apart from this, various other guests wander amidst the items, occasionally fixating on one in particular. There are many guests, and a fair number of bids being placed.

If you would like to bid on any of the items, now is the time. You will be redirected to this entry after each choice, and you may choose to bid on any number of items. Please make each choice only once,

and please note that each successful bid will lower your Credit Rating for future bids.

To bid on the Clay Cylinders, go to **24**.

To bid on the Altar, go to **103**.

To bid on the Crown, go to **58**.

To bid on the Journal, go to **6**.

To bid on the Ceremonial Robe, go to **30**.

To bid on the Strange Idol, go to **92**.

If you are unable or do not wish to bid on any further items, go to **16**.

82

You eye the barrel of the gun, weighing your chances. It doesn't look good, but you decide it beats the alternative. Your muscles tense, waiting to spring into action. You take a breath and chance it.

You miscalculated just how slim your chances were. You take one step before the loud crack of the revolver is heard and you feel a round slam into your chest, and then another. You stumble back, clutching at your wounds, doubling over in agony. You look up just in time to see Powell looming over you, smashing the butt of the handle over your head.

In a daze, you look down at the pool of blood forming around you. As you feel your limbs start to go numb and the pain starts to recede, you feel yourself going cold. You know that you are going to die. The last thing you see is the glint of murder in the policeman's eyes.

The End.

83

The hideous thing takes a swipe at you, lumbering lazily in your general direction. Whatever this creature is, you are mercifully faster than it.

You run as swiftly as your feet will carry you, and you dare not look back. Instinctually, you rush into the motel and slam the door behind you, retreating to the closest thing to a safe space that you can find.

You rest a moment, bracing yourself against the door and catching your breath. You have no idea what is out there or where it came from. Perhaps you do not want to know.

Your instincts lead you to believe that it is somehow connected to the circumstances of Dr. Harris's death and his possessions. Why else would this be happening now, of all times?

You do not wish to dwell on it at the present moment, and you have little to go on. You weigh your options with as much rationality as you can muster.

You could very well simply remain here. Seal the entrances and wait out the night, hoping that it will not find you and that it will leave with the coming of day. Or even prepare to hold out here and fight back, should it come at you again. Another option is to flee this impossibility. Run into the fog as fast as you can and make for the trees, hoping to leave this unnatural thing behind you in Esbury with the rest of your fruitless endeavors here. Or if you are feeling particularly brave of heart, you may steel yourself against the horror and press on with your investigation, hoping to unravel the goings on in Esbury and perhaps the origin of this horrid thing. And maybe even find a way to get rid of it.

To remain in the safety of the motel, go to **173**.

To flee everything, go to **166**.

To continue the investigation, go to **200**.

84

Officer Powell glowers at your every little action. Despite his laziness, he is keeping a close eye on you, and you won't be slipping away. No matter what words you utter, he ignores your pleas for release. The hours drag on. As the two of you sit alone in the room, the air becomes warm and stifling. Powell opens a window to let the room air out.

You stare out into the green fog and feel a great sense of unease. As if something is staring back at you. You shake off this irrational fear and busy your mind with thoughts of how to obtain your freedom.

You do not ponder this long. Your sense of unease grows greater until it is all consuming. You know that something is coming. You hear the shouting first. From outside the windows. The people panicking in the streets. Officer Powell jerks out of his silent vigil when they begin, and he rushes outside to restore order.

He is gone for quite some time, and the shouting continues. And then the water rises. Seeping through the doorway and into the small building that you are stuck in. At first it merely wets the floor, but soon, you are up to your ankles in it. Then your knees. Then your waist. In the course of a few hours, it rises with little sign of stopping. Between the bars, the fog, and the waters, you feel thoroughly trapped.

And this is when the real madness overtakes you. Within the swirling mists, you swear that you can make out strange and alien shapes. Horrible, flabby

things with slender limbs and sagging features. They are decidedly unhuman. When these hallucinations-for the must surely be hallucinations- begin, you hear the shouts turn to full-fledged screams, and then die out in the night, choked by the mists.

Through the window, you see the light of fire glowing within the city, illuminating and consuming everything, even as the water rises to swallow up the town. You smell the smoke mingling with the fog.

You try to convince yourself that you are having a panic attack, that this is all a dream, that this isn't real. You don't know what is happening, or why. You have no idea how these cruel and unnaturally horrific things came to be. You have no idea why they emerged from that eerie fog. You don't know any of the reasons for this.

And you never will. The water rises, and you float to the top, gasping for air with inches between you and the ceiling. As the water rises over your head, your lungs fill, and you drown. You have died.

The End. If you wish, you may begin again and try for a better outcome, or at least one that explains the goings on here further. As it stands, your character died ignorant of the nature of these unholy horrors. Perhaps that is for the best.

85

You lower your weapon and adopt a soft tone of voice, reassuring her that you mean no harm, that you were simply startled by the attempted arrest. You promise not to hurt her.

She cries throughout your speech, but eventually the waterworks slow to a snuffle. Finally she nods and accepts your explanation, and even apologizes to you.

"I'm sorry. I never meant for any of this. Joshua sent that policeman after you. He has the law in his pocket. Josh runs the bootlegging in Esbury, and he cuts Powell in on the profits in exchange for looking the other way and helping keep everything secure."

She produces a handkerchief and dries her eyes. "Josh protects me. He loves me. He has for quite some time..."

You press further, inquiring about the nature of their relationship, and how this relates to her husband's death. She stares back at you blankly and takes a deep breath. "Josh and I have been intimate for a few years. My husband was a good man, when he wasn't obsessing over his work. But he was sometimes away for so long, and paid so much attention to his books...I have needs. A woman my age shouldn't be

neglected. I met Josh over the whiskey. He bootlegs for the whole town. One thing led to another and..." She smiles, dabbing at the last of the tears in her eyes.

"We were happy, even with William around. Recently though, Josh has been insistent that we get him out of the picture so that we could be together. I didn't like it, but I agreed. I let Josh take care of it. I just wanted it to be behind us and for us to be together. I told him I wanted to sell everything and leave town. Just the two of us. I think that was the first time I saw him angry. He never said why."

She looks down at her hands, trying to avoid your gaze. "You don't have to worry about anything. We'll leave town just as soon as we can. I suggest you do the same." She looks at Powell's unconscious body lying on the floor.

To search the premises go to **7**.

To tie up Officer Powell in case he wakes up, go to **68**.

To tie up Amelia, go to **125**.

To simply make good on your escape, go to **111**.

86

Clearly none of the others expected anyone to pay such a ludicrous price for the crude idol. You still can't believe how much money you offered for it, but the grotesque and misshapen thing is now yours. The monk and the men in the dark suits seem to be staring daggers at you, but nobody else seems to mind or take much notice beyond a few raised eyebrows that anyone would pay such an excessive amount for such a trifling and outlandish thing. Still, when you look Amelia's way, you can tell she is quite pleased.

Reduce your **Credit Rating** by ten. Go to **81**.

87

You carry a bobby pin on you for just such an occasion. You fumble with the lock for quite some time, trying to force the tumblers into place. Despite your best efforts, the lock is stubborn, and it seems unwilling to move. As you are beginning contemplating giving up on the lock and trying to break the door down, the front door of the house flies open, rattling on its hinges.

Go to **140**.

88

You turn around and backtrack towards the entrance of the ballroom. Something about the officer by the

door catches your attention and holds it. He gives off a commanding presence, and his eyes bore into you intensely as you make your way towards him.

As you move within earshot, he rests his hand on his nightstick and clears his throat. "I really hope there isn't any sort of problem citizen. I wouldn't want to see anyone getting hurt tonight." His hand does not move from his nightstick.

Make a **Psychology** roll, if you succeed, go to **105**. If you fail, go to **29**.

89

You ask after Professor Harris's widow, Amelia, and Mr. Sanford is only too happy to give you the gossip.

"Amelia Harris. She moved here with Professor Harris a few years back. Pretty young broad. Seems to be holding it together after her husband's death though. She's got some pluck, I'll tell ya that. She seems like the type who comes from old money, just like most of the newcomers to Esbury. But she's selling off some of her late husband's things tonight, so I guess she needs the money. I can't say much beyond that. I don't know her all that well." Lance shrugs and smiles.

You exchange a few more pleasantries with Lance before he goes off to finish guiding the boat into port. You pass the time in casual conversation with the other passengers and in observing the scenery. You note the tall pines and the sloping hills on the lakeside towards Esbury. These features and the small town are just visible through the growing mist, but you squint enough to make them out to your satisfaction.

In time, you arrive on the pier at Esbury, grateful to be off the water.

Go to **3**.

90

You walk into town, towards the Harris address. Even knowing the location, it is difficult for you to find your way due to the unfamiliarity of the town and the density of the peculiar green mist. It is some time before you arrive at the Harris house.

As you approach the house, a man steps out of the fog, blocking your path. The man is young and thin, with rather angular features and the faint hint of a mustache atop his lip. He is dressed in a dark suit and he stares at you from beneath a flat cap.

"You're an unwelcome surprise. I don't know what you're looking for, but you won't find it here." Your eyes betray you as you glance at the Harris house. The man scowls visibly. "Why don't you leave the poor

widow alone, you creep? If you want to bother her, you're going to have to go through old Joshua here, capiche?" His hand rests on his waist, brushing beneath his coat as if searching for something, but then he stops himself. He pauses for a moment, looking you over once more before spitting on the ground at your feet and turning away.

To call out to Joshua, go to **5**.

To make your way to the Harris house, go to **55**.

To heed his warning and return to the motel, go to **122**.

91

The vase flies past you and into the wall, shattering on impact. The broken shards fly around you, narrowly missing you. You are startled and flinch reflexively.

Seizing this opportunity, Amelia runs out the door as fast as her legs will carry her, calling for help as she does so.

You could chase after her, or you can take this chance to explore the empty house. The choice is yours.

To explore the house, go to **7**.

To chase after Amelia, go to **141**.

92

Something draws you to the curious idol, and you feel compelled to make a bid. You notice that you are not alone in this, as the monk and one of the dark suited men both place bids in the box. You hope that yours was high enough.

Make a **Credit Rating** roll at **Extreme** difficulty (success only at or below one fifth of value.) If you succeed, go to **86**. If you fail, go to **154**.

93

As before, you sense Joshua's frustration and note that patience is the better course of action. You wait for him to swing. He throws his full weight behind the blow and you easily move aside and shove him forward, using his momentum against him.

You send him crashing into the wall and he quickly goes still, thoroughly disabled by the force of the impact.

You hurry to the front door and barricade it with a chair, buying you time to move about the house freely. Glancing about the area, you see a small living room and kitchen, and two doors at opposite ends of

the common area. The door on your left is left wide open, and you can see that a set of stairs leading down. The door on your right is closed, and you assume it to be the bedroom.

To head down the stairs, go to **156**.

To head into the bedroom, go to **202**.

94

You underbid on the item, thinking you would be able to score a good deal. Another bidder offered a fairer price, and walked away with the Indian crown.

Go to **81**.

95

You fire blindly at the thing before you, unnerved by its presence. You want nothing more to pull the trigger of your weapon and send this thing into oblivion.

Unfortunately, you have no such luck. You fire shot after shot, and they all fly harmlessly wide of the monstrosity and the bullets are lost to the mist.

You panic and scream as the thing falls on you, pinning you to the ground while it digs at your face with its slender and misshapen fingers. The nails of the abomination rake across your face, drawing blood. You helplessly bash against the thing with the butt of your gun, and you feel yourself doing considerable harm to the flimsy flesh of its swollen body.

In the end, it is not enough. Over the course of several minutes, you remain trapped beneath its weight, and it lays atop you, slowly stripping the flesh from your face with its bony fingers. You fight against it and scream in agony with every rake of its blunted nails. But it is not enough, and you are gradually mauled by the unholy thing.

You are dead, and this is **The End**. You may try again and hope for a more favorable outcome, but for now, you have been claimed by whatever horrors are lurking in Esbury.

96

Joshua aims the gun at you and you freeze in shock. The weapon goes off in his hand and the bullet whizzes through the air, tearing open your left shoulder and throwing you back against the wall.

You collapse in a heap, blood oozing from your wound. You know it isn't fatal, but that does not make you feel the pain any less. As you struggle to fight through the pain, you find Joshua standing over you.

The look on his face is one of pure rage. It is the last thing you see as you are clubbed into unconsciousness.

Go to **138**.

97

You rush the man, and swing for his head. Your blow lands, and carries him into the wall of the room. With a sickening crack, the man is rendered unconscious and collapses in a heap on the floor.

You are now standing over a wide eyed monk. He seems battered and bruised, and is no doubt in some amount of pain. Still, he manages to rise to his feet and extends his hand in thanks.

He offers words of gratitude in heavily accented English. "I am glad that you came when you did. That one was rather violent. It is regrettable that you had to hurt him so, but he will live."

You inquire about the reason for the brawl, and the monk nods slowly. "His friend robbed me of some of the relics of my temple. This one wished to stay behind and inflict harm on me for his own vile amusement." You remark about the robbery in your room and express common cause with him.

The Indian smiles at you and shakes your hand more vigorously. "Then we shall go after our things together. I heard them discuss where they would be meeting up later after that one" he points to the unconscious thug in the suit "was done with me."

Wondering at your good fortune, and not willing to turn down any aid, you accept the monk's offer. You doubt the suited man will be waking anytime soon, and you will both be gone by then. You simply leave him and exit the motel, as the orange-robed Buddhist leads you through the mist.

Go to **13**.

98

Your hunches are never wrong. Whatever that officer is here for, you don't want any part of it. Glancing around, you weigh your options. You decide to creep towards Amelia and Officer Powell, positioning yourself behind a stack of the items that are waiting for the porter. Neither of them seems to notice you as they rush past your hiding place, giving you a clear line to the door.

Alternatively, now might be a good time to explore the house. While there is the risk of discovery, it's not as if you have anything to lose by snooping around somewhere you weren't supposed to be.

For a brief moment, your gaze wanders to the staircase opposite the entryway. The bedrooms and

study are likely up there, and you might be able to find some valuable information.

To make your escape, go to **67**.

To explore upstairs, go to **110**.

99

You turn your weapon in the general direction of Amelia and demand that she explain the meaning everything.

She is crying, the tears smearing the makeup on her face. She tries to speak and ends up stuttering and stammering until you take a step in her direction menacingly. She cowers once more and begins blurting out the first thing that comes to mind.

"It was Joshua! He put the policeman up to it! H-he protects me. He loves me..." She trails off and falls to the floor in a weeping mess.

Clearly she is too upset to be of any further use to you at the moment.

To attempt to calm Amelia down, make a **Persuade** roll. If you succeed, go to **85**. If you fail, go to **39**.

To search the premises go to **7**.

To tie up Officer Powell in case he wakes up, go to **68**.

To tie up Amelia in case she does anything irrational, go to **125**.

To simply make good on your escape, go to **111**.

100

You feel that the knowledge in these pages could very well prove essential to you, so you offer a price that is a bit more than fair. Sure enough, Mr. Warren calls your name and presses the leather-bound tome into your eager hands.

Reduce your **Credit Rating** by two. Go to **81**.

101

You try to convince the officer that you have a very good reason for needing access to the file, but he simply doesn't care. "Scram, stranger, you're ruining my smoke. If you want to dig at the dead guy, go bother his widow. Her place is over on the north side of town, right next to the church. Can't fucking miss it."

Officer Powell will clearly be of no more help at this time.

To go find the Harris house, go to **90**.

To return to the motel, go to **122**.

102

You approach the strange man. His orange robes are a stark contrast to the fine suits and dresses of the New England financial elite. This man seems well traveled and weary, and his clothes are clearly a carryover from a distant land. His skin is dark, which further causes him to stand out.

You open your mouth as if to speak, and find him staring intensely at you.

Make an **Anthropology** roll, if you succeed, go to **72**. If you fail, go to **37**.

103

You decide on a fair bid for the gemstone studded altar and submit your ballot. Not long after, Mr. Warren empties the ballot box and begins sifting through the entries for the highest bid.

Make **Credit Rating** roll at **Hard** difficulty (success only at or below half of value). If you succeed, go to **19**. If you go to fail, go to **59**.

104

"I'm a collector of antiquities. I hear there's going to be an estate sale of some items of interest here?" The ferryman nods slowly. "You heard right, friend. Professor Harris's things are being sold off by his widow, Amelia, at an estate sale tonight. Shame what happened to him, but his loss is your gain I suppose." The ferryman hesitates a moment before extending a hand towards you in greeting. "I'm Lance Sanford by the way, pleased to make your acquaintance."

To inquire about Professor Harris, go to **27**.

To ask Lance Sanford about himself, go to **42**.

To ask about the Estate Sale, go to **66**.

To ask about the widow Amelia, go to **89**.

To pass the time waiting to arrive in Esbury, go to **56**.

105

For an officer of the law, this man possesses a rather thuggish disposition. He seems to be looking for a fight, and from the scars on his face, you can tell he's been in

many. With his size, he does cut a rather intimidating figure. Still, the use of thinly veiled threats as an introduction is somewhat unnerving, and certainly not proper behavior for a moral and ethical man. It is probably best not to provoke this man, and it would be wise to avoid him as much as possible.

Go to **17**.

106

After getting dressed and eating the modest breakfast set out for you, you are ready to begin your day. You take a moment to consider what that means for you.

Your mind turns to Professor Harris and his death. If you are so inclined, you might be able to investigate the circumstances of his death further. Considering that you don't have the address for the home of his widow, Amelia, you would have to start your search with the official report filed with Officer Powell at the police station.

Alternatively, you could take this free time to look through your belongings and examine any items you might have. Clearly the motel owner has been in your room, so a check of your things might be in order. Or perhaps you have some other reason to look over your possessions.

Finally, if you feel that your business in Esbury is concluded, you could always try to find Lance Sanford at the ferry.

To go to the police station, go to **11**.

To look over your items, go to **32**.

To go to the ferry, go to **153**.

107

Lying just outside the bars of your cell, you spot a paperclip. No doubt it fell off of one of the stacks of documents binding together the documents on Officer Powell's desk. You slip your hand between the bars and reach out to grab it, sighing in relief at your good fortune. You bend the paperclip a bit to serve as an improvised lockpick, and glance up to see that Officer Powell is still turned away from you, puffing absently at his cigar.

You set to work trying to get the lock to come undone. The lock is strong, and is meant to keep criminals safely behind bars. But it is no match for your skills. It takes you some time before you finally get it open, but eventually you feel it give way.

You check up on Officer Powell one more time. He seems to be paying you no attention. If your

luck still holds, you may be able to sneak out of the prison cell without his notice.

Make a Stealth roll. If you succeed, go to **10**. If you fail, go to **146**.

108

You reach into your pocket and produce a bobby pin that you carry on your person for just such an occasion. You insert it into the lock and fumble with it for a few minutes. It sticks and strains, and for a few terrible seconds you fear that it will break in the lock. And then the tumblers give, and the door clicks open.

You push your way into the small study and find the room much as you would have expected it. The door opens across from a window, which lets in the pale, greenish light of the sun on the mist. This illuminates the room, which is adorned primarily with mostly-empty book cases on either side. There are also several glass display cases throughout the room, but these are similarly empty. At the far end of the room, just beneath the window is a desk, still littered with blood soaked papers.

Searching through the drawers of the desk, you find stacks of notes and various personal items. Buried in the bottom drawer, you find an impossibly old scrap of papyrus pressed into a glass frame. All across the ancient papyrus are strange and unusual scrawlings. As you pick it up to inspect it, you notice a sheet of paper clipped to the back of the frame, bearing the same scrawling as the papyrus, but with annotations in the margins. Presumably, this is a translation of the papyrus's text.

As you read it over, you marvel at the impossibility of the content. The writing purports to be written by a priest of an unknown city by the name of "llarne." In this account, the priest records observations of an odd and ugly race of beings who once lived upon a lake long ago in the forgotten land of Mnar. This record goes into great lengths about the fire rituals of these strange creatures, and speaks of the haunting dances they would perform in the light of the flames beneath the gibbous moon. And always under the watchful gaze of a sea-green stone idol, chiseled in the likeness of great lizard.

They go on to mention rituals used to ward off the influence of that detestable creature. Rituals performed by man. The text for it in the annotation is untranslated, and simply rendered in standard characters, but the ritual chant recorded here is "Y'hahyar nog nglui ah, Bokrug." The phrase sticks in your mind saliently.

You pause for a moment, and consider the implications. You take the translation and fold it up in your pocket as evidence, and exit the study.

You have learned a ritual chant. When prompted, you may choose to use the chant. If you do so, go to **235** at the appropriate time.

Go to **140**.

109

You hear the clattering and banging in the next room, and pointedly ignore it. Whatever may be going on there, it does not involve you. You finish setting things straight and take a deep breath, pondering your options.

You find them to be preciously few. You could see if the motel owner saw anyone coming and going. The establishment is small, and they would likely have noticed something going on. But maybe that way you could set about recovering your lost belongings.

Another option is to continue your investigation surrounding the late Dr. Harris and his artifacts. You could go out into town to gather more information.

Alternatively, you can always just cut your losses and leave. The ferry won't be running with the fog being as dense as it is, but you could set out into the woods and try to circle the lake. This would take several hours of walking through the wilderness in the mist, but with a little luck, you might be able to make it back to the road by nightfall.

To search for your belongings, go to **134**.

To continue your investigation, go to **148**.

To leave town, go to **124**.

110

You turn your attention to the set of stairs that are positioned opposite to the entrance. You ascend the staircase and see two doors, one on either side of you. The door to your left is slightly ajar, and is no doubt the bedroom. By process of elimination, the door to your right must be the study. The door seems to be locked, and you don't have a key. With enough time, you may be able to get the door open, but it would probably be unwise to be at it for long, since it's entirely possible that someone may come to investigate.

To enter the bedroom, go to **123**.

To enter the study, make a **Locksmith** roll. If you succeed, go to **108**. If you fail, go to **75**. You may **push** this roll (If you fail the initial roll, you may

attempt again, but if you fail, there will be greater consequences.) If you fail the pushed roll, go to **87**.

111

You leave the scuffle behind you, happy to put that business out of mind. You begin walking down the street at a brisk pace, hoping to put some distance between yourself and the Harris house.

You continue on the path for a short distance when you hear the sound of heavy footsteps approach you. Thanks to the thick fog, you do not think you have been spotted. You quickly duck into a nearby alley to let the traveler pass. The man passes by you at a quick jog, cursing under his breath. You recognize the voice of Joshua, and you feel certain that he is connected to your attempted arrest.

Still, you realize that you don't have many options to deal with that right now. With this damnable fog keeping you from leaving on the ferry, the best thing you can do is head back to the motel and figure out what your next move is.

Go to **122**.

112

You roll to the side and press yourself up against the door frame, hastily dodging from the spot Joshua had intended to shoot. He curses under his breath as he levels the gun at you yet again. However, the slight pause between shots is all you need. Your instincts take over, and you lunge at him, attempting to wrestle the weapon from him.

You throw him over with the force of your tackle, and your hands fight with his, clutching desperately for the gun.

Make a **Brawl** roll. If you succeed, go to **143**. If you fail, go to **152**.

113

You let out a frightened scream as the creature lumbers towards you. You panic and go to run, but your legs fail you. You stumble and fall, tripping over yourself in your haste to escape.

As you tumble to the group, the abominable being throws itself atop you, and its long-fingered hands wrap around your throat and begin choking the life out of you. The creature shakes you violently, throttling you to completion.

As you black out, the last sight you see are those horrible, lifeless eyes staring into your soul.

You have been killed by a being from another world. Though you are uncertain how this creature came to be here, it matters little now, with your lifeless body adorning the streets of Esbury. Though you are free to start the adventure over and try again, for now, this is **The End**.

114

You direct your attention away from any distractions and hone in on the sounds around you. You hear the crash of the waves on the pier nearby, and very little else. The stillness is somewhat unsettling. No birds are chirping, no people in the streets.

Except distantly, you hear the faint echo of footsteps. They sound quite far off, and it would have been easy to miss them if you weren't listening for it. Still, given how far they must be, the footfalls must be heavy, and they are reverberating in quick succession, as if in a hurry. You set off in their direction.

You rush through the empty streets, pausing occasionally to continue listening for the footfalls of the man you are pursuing. After some time, you come upon a small plaza adjacent to the town's church. Unfortunately, by this point, the man has reached his destination, and is no doubt within one of the houses along the plaza, but you have no way of knowing which one.

You take a deep breath and decide to roll the dice. There are only a handful of houses here, so you feel you have good odds of finding what you are looking for.

Make a **Luck** roll. If you succeed, go to **165**. If you fail, go to **149**.

115

You struggle against your bonds as you begin to panic. Mercifully, the ropes give way. Joshua is in shock as the sound of snapping rope echoes off the walls, and he jumps away from you on pure reflex.

You act on instinct. Without thinking, you rush towards him, attempting to wrestle the knife from his grasp. You know that you need to be the one in control of the weapon if you're going to survive this, especially with another armed man just outside the door.

You grasp Joshua's forearm, preventing him from attacking you with the knife, and then try to pry it from his hands even as you jab and strike at him with knees and elbows, hoping desperately that you can seize the blade from his grip.

Make a **Brawl** roll. If you succeed, go to **133**. If you fail, go to **180**.

116

You look over the characters scrawled across the side in blood. You note them to be an obscure dialect of ancient Indian origin, and although you cannot translate them properly, you can pronounce them characters phonetically. “Y’hahyar nog nglui ah, Bokrug.” You recite the words and the stranger looks at you as if you’re completely mad.

That is, until the mist around you begins to swiftly dissipate and the waters stop rising. The man looks at you with wide eyes, like you’re some kind of miracle worker, and perhaps you are. Though you do not fully understand what it is that you have done, you have somehow put a stop to the things going on here.

The stranger probes you for questions for a while, but you assure him you are just as surprised as he is, and eventually he parts ways with you.

Over the next few days, the waters subside in Esbury, and eventually the ferry begins operation again. You take the first ride out, eager to leave this place and the strange occurrences behind you.

Our story is over, and this is **The End**. Though you did not solve the mystery of the events in Esbury, you did put a stop to it, at least partially. The man with the artifacts will eventually sell them off for quick cash, and the tragedy will soon repeat itself somewhere else, and this time, there will be no one to prevent it from fully taking shape. But you will never know this, and it is not your concern. You only have to live with what happened in Esbury, and you will carry that memory with you. You have survived, and may use this character in future adventures.

117

You attempt to roll out of the way of the lumbering monstrosity, but you are too slow. It throws itself on top of you, and its long, slender fingers wrap themselves around your throat. The thing chokes the life from your body, and you slip away into the blackness of death.

You have died, and this is **The End**. If you like, you may attempt the adventure again and try for a different outcome.

118

You fall to your knees press your ear to the door of the safe and begin twisting the combination dial, hoping to listen for the clicks of the tumblers falling into place on

the right numbers. Unfortunately, you can’t quite manage to get an ear for it, despite your best efforts.

Defeated, you rise and dust yourself off. With nothing else to keep your attention, you leave the room.

Go to **140**.

119

Judging by the direction you have been travelling, the path on the right seems like it should be the correct one. You leave the crossroads behind and put one foot in front of the other, plodding silently down the foggy path.

You feel the elevation begin to change beneath your feet. You are sloping downward now, presumably following a trail that winds along the length of the lake.

Your suspicions are confirmed abruptly, as the ground beneath your feet becomes increasingly waterlogged. It is not long before your feet are covered in mud, and water begins to build up around your feet as you slog through the marshy ground of the trail.

Suddenly, the water level rises sharply. You feel it rise up your calf, and then your knee. As you wade blindly through the muck, you find yourself hoping that the water level will recede as you move forward.

This does not happen. As you slosh onward, the water rises to your waist, and shows no sign of getting any shallower.

You feel confident that the road ahead is the correct one, and that the area is flooded. You will have to swim forward into the fog and hope to reach the other edge of the water if you are to make your way out of here.

Make a **Swim** roll. If you succeed, go to **175**. If you fail, lose 1 hp and go to **187**. If this reduces you to 0, your leg gets caught on a branch hidden in the water and you drown, and this is **The End**.

120

You aim your weapon at Joshua and pull the trigger. You watch with a detached sense of self as you gun him down. Two shots to the chest in quick succession, the first one intentional, the second a product of recoil and reflex to make sure that he is no longer a threat.

Both of the bullets hit him square in the chest, and he is knocked against the wall behind him. He slumps to the ground, smearing blood on the wall as he lands in a seated position.

His eyes glaze over as he begins to bleed out and die. His cold, lifeless eyes stare into you as his mouth forms his last words. Unutterable alien syllables spew from his mouth with his dying breath. “Bokrug ron 'bthnk n'ghft, 'ai.”

You shudder as his body stiffens and dies. You check his pockets and find identification and address for him, as well as a key to his home. That might be worth investigating.

Amelia is crying silently where you left her, inconsolable for having witnessed Joshua die so violently. At least this gives you the opportunity to search the house over.

Make a **Sanity** roll. If you succeed, lose 1 sanity. If you fail, lose 1d3 sanity.

To search the Harris house, go to **179**.

To leave and go search Joshua’s house, go to **151**.

121

You wait for Joshua to strike, timing your reaction just right. He drives forward with the point of the blade and you roll to the side. The force of his lunge carries his blow through, and he embeds the knife in the wall behind you, cursing as he does so.

He lets go of the handle of the blade and turns to face you, balling up his fists and adopting a readied stance. He takes a few experimental swings at you, which you handily dodge.

Still, you cannot simply keep avoiding him, you’ll have to subdue him if you want to make it out of here, and judging by the banging on the front door, you’ll have to do so quickly.

Make a **Brawl** roll. If you succeed, go to **93**. If you fail, take 1d3 damage and go to **168**. If this reduces you to 0 HP, you have been beaten to death and this is **The End**.

122

Feeling that it is the best course of action right now, you return to your room at the motel. You turn the key in the lock and your door swings open to reveal a startling scene.

Your room has been ransacked. The bed is overturned and the covers are strewn about, the drawers of the dresser have all been pulled out and emptied. Your briefcase lies open on the floor. Anything of value you had is gone. Anything you may have gained from the Estate Sale is longer in your

possession, and anything you brought with you beyond the basic essentials is likewise missing.

The window hangs open, letting the greenish mist into the room. You close it to keep out the chill and begin to set things straight while you overcome the shock of what has happened. As you consider your options, the sounds of a loud and violent commotion is heard in the next room.

To ignore the scuffle, go to **109**.

To investigate, go to **142**.

123

You push aside the door and enter the bedroom. The room is lavishly decorated and feminine. Large, soft pillows sit atop the bed, and a tangle of blankets is strewn across the mattress.

Judging by the state of the room, this space belonged more to Amelia than it did Dr. Harris, even before his death. Now though, the room is dominated by her personal affects. A case of makeup sits on the dresser, and a hand mirror lies next to it. The door to the closet is open and the racks are overflowing with various dresses and fashionable outfits. The clothes belonging to the late Dr. Harris take up a small and innocuous corner of the closet, pushed far to the side so as to not get in the way of Amelia’s things.

The most surprising find you stumble upon is a small pile of discarded men’s clothing next to the bed. They seem to have been left there recently, and given the difference in style and size with the men’s clothes in the closet, it is clear they do not belong to Dr. Harris.

Your suspicion is confirmed when you see a photograph of Joshua on the nightstand. There is also a half-empty bottle of whiskey there, and two glasses sitting next to it.

You also happen to notice a safe built into the wall, just behind the nightstand. A combination lock keeps it sealed, though if you were so inclined, you may be able to decipher it.

There is little else of interest in the room.

To attempt to open the safe, make a **Locksmith** roll. If you succeed, go to **77**. If you fail, go to **118**.

To leave the room, go to **140**.

124

You pack what remains of your belongings into your thin briefcase and leave your room behind. You descend the staircase, ignoring the sound of the other

guests in their room. When you reach the doorway of the establishment, you peer out the nearby window and into the sickly mists.

Go to **158**.

125

Amelia is too much of a liability to leave alone at the present moment. You resolve to restrain her. You pull a sheet from atop some of the furniture in the entryway and use it to bind her to an armchair in the room. She struggles for a moment, but in her distraught state, she quickly sinks into resignation and ceases to resist.

As you are finishing securing the knots, the front door of the house flies open, rattling on its hinges. Dominating the doorway is Joshua, red faced and furious. He has a gun in his right hand, and aims it hastily in your direction.

You have just a second to hit the ground before he pulls the trigger. Perhaps your reflexes are quick enough.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **145**. If you fail take 1d10+2 damage. If you survive this, go to **96**. If you have no remaining HP, you are dead, and this is **The End**.

126

You don't know why you hadn't realized it before. Selling all of his things, wearing makeup, adopting such a flirty demeanor, dismissing questions about her husband's death. She doesn't seem too broken up about her husband passing. She's hiding something. You'd bet your career on it. You suspect she is involved in Professor Harris's death in some form or another.

You open your mouth, prepared to call her bluff and press her for more information, but you are interrupted by a loud knock at the door. Amelia jumps up startled and stands there for a moment in confusion, and the pounding on the door resumes. "Police! Open the door!" Amelia's face drains white as she goes to the door.

Your gut is telling you something is wrong here. You feel uneasy about the officer at the door. You tell yourself that you're being irrational and on edge, but you have some trouble fighting that feeling. You have a few precious moments to react.

To ignore your instincts and wait, go to **47**.

To take this chance to hide, make a **Stealth** roll. If you succeed, go to **98**. If you fail, go to **20**.

127

You turn your attention to Officer Powell and plead with him to release you. Initially, he pays you no mind. Eventually, however you mention that you'll leave town if he releases you, and that seems to seal the deal.

"Having you out of the way makes my life a bit easier. Get the hell out of here before I change my mind. If I see you again, you're getting a bullet." You do not hesitate to leave the cell as he unlocks it.

Go to **122**.

128

You examine the extraordinary altar. The most readily apparent features beyond its size are the many gemstones set into this piece. They are of a greenish yellow color, and shine even in the half light of the room.

You also notice strange writing in broad strokes along the side of the object, smeared sloppily along it with haste. What you had originally taken for paint is found to be dried blood, upon closer examination.

While you cannot be certain, it would appear that this item has been involved in some tragedy.

Go to **32**.

129

You take a step towards the man, and he hears your approach. He rounds on you, swinging wildly with a shout of surprise.

His fist catches you in the chest and sends you sprawling backwards. He throws himself on top of you, landing blow after blow with his fists. You raise your arms to fend off the worst of the damage as he works you over. Amidst the confusion you glance up to see the monk running out of the room.

Finally, the man in the suit grabs you by the collar and begins slamming you violently against the floor. It takes only a few such hits before you lose consciousness.

Go to **138**.

130

You ask her about Joshua, his relationship to her, and why he would have you arrested. "Josh and I have been intimate for a few years. My husband was a good man, when he wasn't obsessing over his work. But he was sometimes away for so long, and paid so much attention to his books...I have needs. A woman my age shouldn't be neglected. I met Josh over the whiskey.

He bootlegs for the whole town. One thing led to another and..." She smiles, looking lost in thought.

"We were happy, even with William around. Recently though, Josh had been insistent that we get him out of the picture so that we could be together. I didn't like it, but I agreed. I let Josh take care of it. I just wanted it to be behind us and for us to be together. I told him I wanted to sell everything and leave town. Just the two of us. I think that was the first time I saw him angry. He never said why."

She looks down at her hands, trying to avoid your gaze. "You don't have to worry about anything. We'll leave town just as soon as you can. I suggest you do the same."

She rises to leave, and then hesitates a moment. "I don't know if this helps, but I think he might have been angry because I wanted to sell my husband's things. The day after he died, I found Josh in the study. He never went in there until after William was dead. I caught him in there multiple times these past few days. I can't imagine what he would want with them though." She pauses and then continues. "It scares me, you know. The way he's been acting. I-if you need to find him, his house is across the street over there, right outside and to the left. He won't be alone. He brought some friends in from out of town. I wouldn't recommend going though. He doesn't like you." She looks away from you and walks out of the room at a brisk pace, leaving you alone in the chapel.

To continue on to the Harris house **7**.

To go to Joshua's house, go to **160**.

To visit the motel, go to **122**.

To abandon your investigation and leave town, go to **158**.

131

You pause outside the doorway of the motel, listening for the sounds of footsteps. The streets are eerily still, and nearly silent.

You fancy you hear something and set off in the general direction of the sounds. You wander the streets for what feels to be hours. Your suspicions are seemingly confirmed as it gets harder and harder to see, as the lack of visibility from the mists is compounded by the fading of the light. Dusk falls hard and fast upon you, and you are left roaming the streets in the darkness.

As you are contemplating abandoning your task, you tense up and freeze as you hear a nauseating squelching sound suddenly begin behind you.

A sense of terror washes over you as the unexpected sound breaks the silence of the streets. You are ruled by a sense of unease, and are driven to run, though you don't know why. You do not wish to find out.

Make a **Dexterity** roll. If you succeed, go to **171**. If you fail, go to **162**.

132

You throw yourself to the floor with haste, trying to get out of the way of the shot. You hear the loud sound of the gunshot as it embeds itself in the wall behind you.

You hear a squeal as Amelia comes running after him, begging him to stop shooting and to put the gun away. He curses and shoves her aside, but he does holster his weapon.

He rushes past her and up the stairs, just as you manage to stumble to your feet. He comes at you, swinging a fist towards you. It's not ideal, but at least with the gun put away, you have a fighting chance.

Make a **Brawl** roll. If you succeed, go to **21**. If you fail, take 1d3 damage and go to **153**.

133

You throw a punch at Joshua's face and send him rolling backwards, stunned. You manage to rip the knife from his grasp as he is regaining his footing, and you take the blade and swiftly plunge it into his chest.

His face takes on a pained and shocked expression, as if offended that you would dare to kill him. Still, Joshua slumps to his knees and looks up at you as he begins to die. His eyes glaze over and stare at you with a smoldering malevolence. Strange words pass from his lips the last of his life fades from his mortal form. "Bokrug ron 'bthnk n'ghft, 'ai." A last shuddering breath rattles his form, and he collapses.

You feel greatly disturbed by this, but you attempt to shake it off and move on. You survey the room. The table at the far end of the room is covered in the curious artifacts, as well as a large stack of papers. There is little else here save for the flickering bulb above you, the empty chair, and the corpse at your feet.

You might consider leaving this place, as sitting in a dank basement with a fresh corpse is not entirely a pleasant experience.

To look over the items, go to **210**.

To leave this place, go to **181**.

134

You exit your room and make your way to the front desk of the motel. The wiry looking old woman stands next to the fireplace, stocking the coals to keep out the chill of the mist. As you approach her, she raises her eyebrows at you inquisitively and says nothing.

You clear your throat and ask her if she saw anyone entering or leaving your room, or even just anyone unusual at the motel. She bites her lip for a minute before nodding quickly. She grasps your wrist with a fierceness you would not have expected of her tiny frame. "The men had guns, I had to give them the keys. One of them just left, but the other is still upstairs. I think he's beating that Indian man." She looks at you nervously, almost pleading for you to do something.

To deal with the man upstairs, go to **142**.

To pursue the man who left, go to **79**.

135

You make your way through the empty streets of Esbury, stumbling blindly in the dense fog. As you set out from the Harris household, you note a twilight tinge beginning to form over the green mist. Thankfully, you know your destination, and you point yourself towards the motel where you are staying, despite the threat of coming darkness.

The trip takes some time though, and the darkness does descend before you arrive at your destination. As you are nearing the motel, you freeze in response to a frightening noise. A strange squelching sound echoes among the silent streets.

At first you linger from shock and surprise, but then out of curiosity, as you question what would make such a noise.

And then, to your dismay, your question is answered. Out of the mist emerges a frighteningly odd thing. A misshapen mass of sagging green flesh. Its belly horribly distended and bloated, with limbs that are long and spindly. Its face is ruled by large, bulbous eyes and pouting, flabby lips, and its head is adorned with strange ears.

You take in all of these strange features as it lunges towards you silently, save for the unnerving squelching sound.

Make a Dexterity roll. If you succeed, go to **171**. If you fail, go to **162**.

136

You chase after Amelia Harris. She has become lost in the mist, but you are determined to find her.

But determination alone is not enough to track down the wayward woman. After wandering through the fog for what feels like hours, you are certain that you are lost.

After trying to get your bearings for some time you find yourself outside of the motel, frustrated that Amelia has managed to escape you.

Go to **131**.

137

You decide to put your misgivings aside and simply get some rest so that you can try again in the morning. You put away your things and head off to bed. You lock the door of your room, just to be safe.

You toss and turn, gaining an hour or two of uneasy sleep. But in the middle of the night, you are awakened by the round of screams.

Somewhere in the fog, shrouded town, people are screaming. A frightened, terrified, bloodcurdling scream of abject terror. Instinctively, you rush to the window to try to puzzle out what the cause might be, so that you can be prepared for it. You stare out and see only blackness and mist,

You nervously turn back to the room, assuring yourself that you are safe in here, and that whatever is causing the screams is elsewhere. You are only able to force this lie off on yourself for a moment, because as you're anxiously pacing your room, you see water begin to seep in beneath the crack in the door. The implications of this are not lost on you. Your room is on the second floor of the building, and Esbury must be thoroughly flooded by now.

With the first floor flooded and the water level in your room swiftly rising, you find yourself thoroughly trapped. Your only method of egress is the window, which leads out only into the flooded, dark, and hazy streets. You very much dislike the prospect of venturing out blindly into the sunken city, but you find little choice.

You turn again to the window. You undo the latch with shaky hands. You are about to lift the window open when a green, three-fingered, webbed hand smacks against the pane. You jump back with a start, overcome by panic. This is nothing natural, of that you are sure. As you stare in horror at the sight, more of the unnatural form comes into view. A second hand, trying to force the window open alongside the first. And a terrible face, dominated by pouting, flabby lips and bulbous dead eyes. These eyes stare at you, taking you in as another mere fixture among your surroundings.

You stare back at the creature as the water rises around your ankles. It is pounding against the window, and you see cracks beginning to form. You freeze in terror, knowing it will soon be upon you.

Surprisingly, the glass holds out as the water fills the room. It does not give out until the water is at your chest. With a sharp crash, the glass breaks and this bloated and misshapen thing squeezes into the room with you. Try as you might, you cannot fight it. It is slow and lumbering, and you land a blow or two against its soft flesh. But your horror overcomes your senses. It lays hands on you, and shoves you down into the rising water. It holds you there until your breathing stops.

This is **The End**. If you wish, you may attempt the story again and hope for a better outcome.

138

You awake, stripped of any weapons and tied to a chair in a dusty basement. The first thing you notice is the pain from your wounds. They are still fresh, and have not been tended to in any way.

The second thing you notice is the table across from you with its strange collection of items. A pair of cracked clay cylinders, a gemstone studded altar with curious scrawling, a stack of papers, and an unnatural looking idol of sea-green stone fashioned in the shape of a serpent. Standing next to the table is a man that you can't quite make out in the dimness of the room. He puffs absently at a cigar as he stares at you. Behind the table is a still and other bootlegging equipment. You turn your head about the room and find one of the suited men from before leaning against the door while sipping from a flask.

When you begin to move, the unknown man walks over to you. He is grinning widely, and you spot a glint of madness in his eyes as he rests on the edge of the illuminated area of the room. He produces a knife from his pocket, and the blade catches the glimmer of the dim bulb flickering above. The stranger shoots a glance at the man by the door, and the suited man leaves.

He comes into the light and presses the knife against your cheek, and it digs into your flesh, nicking you and drawing a drop of blood on the tip. "Thought you could cause trouble for Josh, eh? I'm going to enjoy this. Getting rid of my little problem. Everything was fine until you started snooping around. You're putting me and Amelia both at danger here, and you're getting in the way of my plans. So I'm going to enjoy tearing open your throat and offering up your life to the idol. Perhaps it will please him. And then I will get what I want. I'll finally make my way to that beautiful place

that I've seen in my dreams. It will be over soon, but I will bleed you slow. Because I want to enjoy this..."

He takes the knife and presses it in deeper, and reflexively you struggle against your bonds, trying to escape the pain. Perhaps if you struggle hard enough, you can break free.

Make a **Strength** roll. If you succeed, go to **115**. If you fail, go to **69**.

139

You skid down the side of the cliff, and are slammed against the cold and unforgiving stone several times as you do so. You are in no control of your descent, entirely at the mercy of gravity and cruel fate.

You fall for what must be fifty or sixty feet, bouncing against the face of the cliff and eventually being deposited forcefully against the side of a tree at the base of the rock.

You are certain that you must have some serious injuries, perhaps even a few broken bones. Your left leg is particularly painful and unresponsive, and you can feel your foot swelling in your shoe as you struggle to your feet.

You look around you, taking stock of the situation. There is no visible trail at this elevation, and there is no easy way back up, especially in your current condition. Cursing your misfortune, you limp forward into the woods, trying to find some way to orient yourself and make your way back to the trail.

Make a **Navigate** roll at. If you succeed, go to **229**. If you fail, go to **170**.

140

You turn around and leave the door closed behind you. Looking down the stairs, you realize that you are not alone. Dominating the entryway of the house is Joshua, red faced and furious. He has a gun in his right hand, and aims it hastily in your direction.

You have just a second to hit the ground before he pulls the trigger. Perhaps your reflexes are quick enough.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **132**. If you fail take 1d10+2 damage. If you survive this, go to **96**. If you have no remaining HP, you are dead, and this is **The End**.

141

It's too risky to let Amelia go right now, so you decide to pursue her into the street. You do not go more than

5 steps from the door when you find yourself staring down Joshua from just out of the mist. He raises a gun at you, and the look on his face shows that he clearly intends to use it. You have only a moment to react.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **112**. If you fail take 1d10+2 damage. If you survive this, go to **155**. If you have no remaining HP, you are dead, and this is **The End**.

142

Fearing that someone might be in danger, or perhaps that this commotion is somehow related to the theft in your room, you rush to investigate.

You find the door to the room adjacent to yours open, and inside you find a large and familiar looking man in a dark suit. He is looming over the prone body of a dark-skinned Buddhist monk. The monk is beaten and bloodied. The man in the suit has clearly worked him over.

The suited man has his back to you, and you doubt if you've been noticed yet. With a little luck, you might be able to get the drop on him and subdue him quickly.

Alternatively, if you have come into possession of a firearm during your stay in Esbury, you could always resort to lethal force.

To subdue the man, make a **Brawl** roll. If you succeed, go to **97**. If you fail, take 1d3 damage and go to **129**. If this reduces you to 0, you are beaten to death and this is **The End**.

To discharge your firearm, make a **Firearms (handgun)** roll. If you succeed, go to **78**. If you fail, take 1d3 damage and go to **129**. If this reduces you to 0, you are beaten to death and this is **The End**.

143

You roll over one another, punching and kicking and kneeling and elbowing. You slam your head into his, smashing your forehead against his nose, clearly breaking it. He reflexively grabs at his face, and drops the gun.

Without hesitation, you seize the weapon and fire into him, knowing that he would do the same if circumstances were reversed. The look on Joshua's face is utter shock as the bullet pierces his chest.

The color drains from his face, and his hand weakly grips your clothes, grasping out at you as if offended that you would dare to kill him. He looks you in the eyes as he dies, and utters strange sounds, the likes of which not even a dying man should make. You

fancy that you almost hear words, though sure it is only your mind playing tricks on you. With his last breath, he utters the phrase "Bokrug ron 'bthnk n'ghft, 'ai."

His hand goes limp and you push the corpse off of you, shuddering as you do so. Mustering your courage, you check his pockets for keys and ID, locating his place of residence. You could make your way to his house to search for clues, or you could continue off in search of Amelia.

Make a **Sanity** roll. If you succeed, lose 1 sanity. If you fail, lose 1d3 sanity.

To go to Joshua's house, go to **151**.

To search for Amelia, go to **136**.

144

You open the door, and it catches a draft, slamming against the wall as you attempt to slip inside. The door rattles on its hinges and you hear the sound of footsteps pounding against the floor in another room.

Your attempts to conceal yourself prove too slow as a pair of men burst into the living room, and lock their attention on you.

They rush forward, and the larger of the two tries to tackle you.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **157**. If you fail, go to **25**.

145

Reflexively, you drop to the ground behind the couch as he aims the gun your way. Thankfully, the shot goes off over your head. You breathe with relief for a brief moment, thankful for your safety.

And then the reality of the situation dawns on you, and you clamber after Officer Powell's gun, which has fallen to the ground nearby. You scoop it up quickly, and act purely on instinct. You grip the gun in your hands and prepare to return fire. You take a deep breath and aim the gun at Joshua.

Make a **Firearms (handguns)** roll. If you succeed, go to **120**. If you fail, take 1d10+2 damage. If this reduces you to 0, then you have died of your wounds and this is **The End**. If you survive this, go to **96**.

146

You creep out of your cell as quietly as you can muster. You make it nearly halfway to the door before it is proven that your best is not good enough.

Powell hurriedly rises to his feet and raises his gun at you. He has no intention of letting his prisoner escape. Your fight or flight response takes over, and you act solely on instinct when faced with your probable demise.

Go to **82**.

147

You make your way through the foggy streets of Esbury, heading once more to the Harris house. As your feet fall against the flagstones of the road, you hear the sound of your footsteps echo emptily along the walls of the buildings, which remain quiet and sleepy all throughout town.

The lighting is very dim and growing darker by the second. By the time you find yourself once more at the home of Amelia Harris, night has fallen.

As you approach the building, you freeze dead in your tracks as a woman in a red dress passes mere feet from you. It is Amelia Harris, and she does not seem to notice you for all the fog and her own thoughts. You watch her move hurriedly through the haze and see her enter the nearby church.

You could choose to enter inside and search the premises, or you could simply pursue Amelia for questioning.

To enter the Harris House, go to **7**.

To follow Amelia, go to **164**.

148

You step out into the fog, hoping to find someone in town who can give you a little more information.

Unfortunately, the town seems to be largely deserted, as people prefer to remain inside with the thick haze obscuring sight. You wander for a little more than an hour before you find someone, moving quickly home from the town's grocery. You stop the gentleman and press him for questions.

He appears nervous, and says he doesn't want to be out in the "Damn scary fog" any longer than he has to. You assure him that it will only take a few moments, and the man relents to answering your questions.

You ask about Dr. Harris, and the man nods somberly. "Dead. Suicide they say. I don't really know if I buy it. The professor was a good man. And happy too, so long as he had his things. Between you and me, I think his widow had something to do with it. She was a bit young for him, and didn't seem to be too fond of him. Her eyes tended to wander, if you catch my

meaning. And she goes and sells all his things when he dies, so that's sort of telling, ain't it?" You take in the new information silently, weighing the credibility of it in your head as you inquire further.

You ask about Professor Harris's things, and the gentleman scratches his head. "Old stuff from India. I don't know much about it. I heard him talk about it from time to time, said it was mostly religious things. Every once in a while he'd get a visitor wanting to look at them. They usually left upset, can't say why."

At this, the man begins shifting uncomfortably, and asks if he can go. You decide that he has no more to offer you, and you allow him to leave.

Armed with new information, you set out to find Amelia, assuming her to be at her home. You wander through the streets for a while and the sun sinks low. The darkness exacerbates the lack of visibility, and you are soon lost among the buildings of Esbury. Eventually, you find yourself in front of the motel. You stop and use this landmark to orient yourself, until your thoughts are disturbed by what sound like footsteps.

Go to **131**.

149

You try a door and find it locked. You move down the line of buildings and repeat this process several times, finding them all similarly secured.

Defeated, you decide to head back to the motel to regroup and gather your thoughts.

Go to **131**.

151

You make your way through the streets of Esbury, confirming your location every so often by approaching a building to check the address against the location you're searching for.

After some time, you arrive at Joshua's house, and insert the key in the lock, opening the door into a small living area.

Glancing about the area, you see a small living room and kitchen, and two doors at opposite ends of the common area. The door on your left is left wide open, and you can see that a set of stairs leading down. The door on your right is closed, and you assume it to be the bedroom.

To head down the stairs, go to **156**.

To head into the bedroom, go to **202**.

150

You resolve to simply wait it out. You have a wonderful view for the spectacle that unfolds. The waters of the lake rise continually and rapidly. It was now to the point that it must be over some of the buildings in Esbury, though you cannot see into the thick fog below. You wonder at the loss of life and property.

Though the water continues to rise, seemingly without end and without source, this is the least of the oddities that transpire. Amidst the mist, you spot scattered flames illuminating sections of the city. You find this especially strange, since there seems to be no discernable pattern or reason for it, especially in a city that must be half sunken by now. Perhaps the fires are set on the roofs of the taller buildings, but what could the purpose of that possibly be.

All the while there is the screaming. The screams of people afraid of the waters. The desperate cries of the lost and blind. The startled shouts of those woken from sleep to find danger. And more primal screams of abject fright.

You glance back over towards the lake itself, wanting to turn your attention away from the horrible suffering of the town. You find the waters rising high is great rippling waves, all emanating from a single central point. You try to find the exact spot of origin, but the spot seems to correspond with the reflection of the moon, and you are unable to make out any details as to what might be causing the waves.

You absently direct your gaze toward the gibbous moon hanging overhead, and note yet another baffling sight. Great clouds of mist seem to be rising toward the moon from the ground, extending in long, wispy columns up towards the heavens. Or perhaps streaming down from above. You are uncertain of which, or if it even matters. You do not think it does.

Looking back at the town, you find it all beneath the water now, save your little island in the waves. They crest a mere foot beneath your feet now, and you know there is no escaping the rising tide.

Even resigned to the waters, you are not prepared for what happens next. The waves stop suddenly, and all once more falls silent and still. Then, rising from the water, a long serpentine head emerges. It is scaled, and colored like the sea. The mouth of the detestable serpent opens, revealing rows of needlelike teeth as it emits a hissing sound that pierces the night and your very soul. And then its eyes open. Orbs of pure malevolence fix themselves on you. It sits and watches you for a second, a minute, an eternity.

And then the stonework beneath your feet shifts, and you fall into the water. You know it is the

serpent's doing, though it has not moved since it broke from the water. As you sink beneath the surface, you look upward and see the horrible lizard darting toward you in the light of the gibbous moon. You pray that you drown before it takes you, but fate is not so kind.

Your demise serves only to feed the horrible, detestable water lizard that is Bokrug, Great Old One, and doom of the cities of Sarnath and Esbury.

You have died and this is **The End**. Thank you for playing, and I hope you enjoyed this adventure.

152

You are locked in a desperate struggle with Joshua. The both of you are fighting for your life, scrambling to make use of the handgun that could so quickly put an end to the conflict.

Despite your best attempt, it is you who loses this battle. Joshua clutches the gun tightly and rams it into your chest, pulling the trigger several times and ending your life.

At least your death was mercifully quick, for those who remain in Esbury will not be so lucky.

This is **The End**. You have met a swift death, though you may always attempt the story again.

153

You pause to consider the strange green coloration of the fog and its incredible thickness. You wonder if it is even safe to be out on the water with visibility so limited. You decide to head to the docks first to see if the ferry is still running before hauling all of your possessions down to the water.

You walk out into the cloying green mist and walk briskly towards the docks. You arrive to find Lance pacing the deck of his boat with a small flask in hand. He stares out into the mist, lost in thought before you rouse him to inquire about passage.

He confirms your fears. "Sorry, I can't take her out like this. I can barely see three feet in front of me. The lake is fairly tame, but I'd have no way of telling where the shore is or if any other boats might be out on the water. I like you, but it's too dangerous. I just can't risk it. I've rarely seen a fog this thick. And this green...never seen anything like it. I'm staying put."

You know that nothing you say could possibly convince him. Resigned to your fate, you head back towards the rest of town.

To visit the police station, go to **11**.

To return to the motel, go to **122**.

154

Though you put a sizeable bid in for the idol, a truly outrageous sum is called, easily twice what you had offered. Mr. Warren squints hard at the paper before calling out a staggering price and a rather foreign sounding name, “Banyu.” Whispers of confusion break out as the orange-robed monk collects the statue with a look of excitement on his face.

Go to **81**.

155

Instinctively, you retreat to the cover of the house. You turn to run, but you are not quick enough. As you enter the doorway, Joshua fires his gun, and you take a bullet to the back. You feel it tear through you and see the projectile pass out the other end, emerging bloody on the other side. You collapse to the floor.

You reach down to clutch your wound, staring at your bloody hand in disbelief. You look up to find Joshua standing over you. He raises his gun at you, and for a brief and terrible moment you anticipate the end of your life. But Amelia shrieks and Joshua curses under his breath. He kicks you in the face, and you slip into unconsciousness.

Go to **138**.

156

You descend the stairs, and they creak beneath your feet. When you reach the bottom, you find yourself in a dank and dusty basement, illuminated by a single dim and flickering bulb that dangles precariously from the ceiling. The room smells faintly of cigar smoke.

You notice an old table across from you, and sitting atop it is a strange collection of items. A pair of cracked clay cylinders, a gemstone studded altar with curious scrawling, a stack of papers, and an unnatural looking idol of sea-green stone fashioned in the shape of a serpent. Behind the table is a still and other bootlegging equipment.

You might consider looking over the items you have found here, or simply you could simply leave the basement alone.

To look over the items, go to **210**.

To leave this place, go to **181**.

157

You duck the blow and doge out of the way of the man’s body as it flies towards you. He stumbles into the wall

and you quickly throw your weight against him and knock the wind out of your assailant.

As the large man is stunned behind you, you take the chance to enter the building and slam the door behind you, blocking him from attacking you again when he recovers. You are now staring face to face with the other man, and he scowls at you menacingly and brandishes a knife.

“You bastard! Think you can cause trouble for old Josh? I’ll get you good and gut you like a fish. I think we could use a little bit of blood for what’s coming next.”

He shouts something incomprehensible at you and lunges forward with the blade, and his eyes betray his murderous intention.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **121**. If you fail, go to **176**.

158

This trip would be unpleasant on a good day, but your gut tells you that the journey will be particularly arduous.

Still, you feel it is in your best interest to leave this business behind you, and a walk through the woods is the most expedient route with the ferry out of commission. You strike out for the edge of town and make your way to the tree line.

The trail here is fairly well kept, as it is frequented by the citizens of Esbury who engage in leisure activities such as hunting and camping. As you march into the mists silently, you are even able to make out occasional signage denoting campgrounds or tail names. The markers peek out at you from the fog, going unnoticed until you are almost atop them. Curious as to the visibility that this haze affords, you stick your arm out in front of you, and note with slight discomfort that you are unable to make out the detail of your nails in the murk.

You take up a quicker pace, hoping that the more ground you cover, the sooner you will be free of the fog. Despite your best efforts, the greenish glow of the mist is your constant companion.

You walk on for what must be a little more than an hour, and come to a fork in the path. Given the density of the mist, you aren’t quite able to make out which direction you should be going. Thankfully, you spot the silhouette of a signpost in the gap between the trail, and you make your way towards it.

The paint on the signs are worn here, and are entirely indistinguishable. Perhaps on a good day, you might be able to make out the traces of the words, but

in this fog, that task is completely impossible. If you want to make your way out of here, you'll have to rely on your own skill and knowledge.

Make a **Navigate** roll. If you succeed, go to 119. If you fail, go to 51.

159

You throw yourself out of the way of the careening automobile as it swerves back and forth in the middle of the road. You let it pass before you finally rise and brush off the worst of the mud.

As annoyed and frightened as you are by what just occurred, it dawns on you that this was a good thing. It confirms the direction you should be going. You follow after in the direction of the car, and march on silently and purposefully.

Make a **Constitution** roll. If you succeed, go to 184. If you fail, go to 233.

160

You set off to follow the directions to Joshua's house, and you make your way through the streets of Esbury and that unnerving fog. A few hours have passed since you first set out, and the sky is now dark, but you finally find it. The place in question is a small house located on the edge of town, near the church.

You try the door and find it unlocked. You have no doubt that the men inside will be armed, so you slip in quietly, hoping to avoid notice.

Make a **Stealth** roll. If you succeed, go to 165. If you fail, go to 144.

161

Try as you might, you are unable to get the door open. No manner of fiddling with the lock will get it to budge. You even resort to force by attempting to throw your weight against the door.

With a sigh of resignation, you abandon your task.

Go to 222.

162

You turn to run, somewhere, anywhere. Just away from the sickening sound. You do not get far.

You take a few hurried steps and feel something throw itself against your back, sending you tumbling forward. It is slick and large, easily your size. You can feel the moisture through your clothes as it

wraps its long, flabby arms around you. You look down at the limbs with horror as you realize they are decidedly not human. You struggle a bit, and quickly elbow the thing that had grabbed you. Its hold slackens, and you are released

Free of its grasp, you spin to confront the thing. To your horror, you stare long into its misshapen face. It has bulbous, lifeless eyes that stare back at you like those of a dead fish. Its mouth is closed off by sagging, flabby lips, and curious fin-like flaps of ears hang from the side of its head. The body of the thing is distended and round, with long spindly limbs trailing forth from the bloated torso.

You stare long at the thing and terror begins to sink in. It opens its mouth as if to speak, but no sound is heard. It takes a stumbling step towards you, and your instincts take over.

Make a **Sanity** roll. If you succeed, lose 1 point of sanity. If you fail, lose 1d6 points of sanity.

If you are armed, you may make a **Firearms (handgun)** roll. If you succeed, go to 177. If you fail go to 95.

You may choose to flee. If you do so, make a **Dexterity** roll. If you succeed, go to 83. If you fail, go to 113.

163

You steel yourself against the pain in your leg. Whatever it is that is behind you, you don't want to find out. Pain shoots through your leg, but you manage to carry on, for a while at least.

Eventually, the splashing behind you stops. You don't know if your pursuer has given up the chase, or if they are simply waiting for you to stop. You pause a moment to catch your breath, but only a moment.

You peer through the mists and stare out at the ground before you. Or rather, lack thereof. The water here has risen, and you cannot see the ground beneath. From what little visibility you have, it seems as if this is more than a mere puddle. Your pursuer might yet be behind you, and there are no other paths available within your limited sight. You will have to swim through it if you wish to progress. And with your injured leg, this is a rather grim prospect.

Make **Swim** roll at **Hard** difficulty (success at half of skill value or less.) If you succeed, go to 185. If you fail, go to 209.

164

You step through the shrouded streets and take refuge in the church. The door creaks abominably as you enter, so there is no chance of slipping in unnoticed.

You find yourself in a large chapel hall, with hand-carved pews flanking you on either side. This continues on for several rows, until it culminates in a pulpit where the priest would conduct service during the proper hours. Still, with the last of the fog-filtered daylight can be seen fading through the stained glass windows, you are aware that these are not the hours of typical service. As it stands, the place is open to the public during off-times, but the sole occupants are yourself and Amelia, who has taken a seat in the front row and is praying with her head bowed.

She does not lift her gaze as you take a seat next to her, and you sit a minute and allow her time to finish her prayers. You need information from her, but you are that respectful, at least.

Finally, she opens her eyes and looks at you, sighing softly as she does so. She looks somewhat nervous, and the color drains from her face. “W-what is it you want? You’re not supposed to be here.”

To press for more information about Professor Harris’s Death, go to **54**.

To ask about Joshua, go to **130**.

165

You approach the house and place your hand on the knob of the door. You hear voices inside, and so you stop, waiting for them to stop. You press your ear to the door and the conversation eventually fades, and you hear footsteps walking away from the main area and vanishing into the confines of the building. Feeling satisfied that you will not be immediately spotted, you turn the knob and creep inside.

Glancing about the area, you see a small living room and kitchen, and two doors at opposite ends of the common area. The door on your left is left wide open, and you can see that a set of stairs leading down. The door on your right is closed, and you assume it to be the bedroom.

To head down the stairs, go to **156**.

To head into the bedroom, go to **202**.

166

You give in to your panic and let it wash over you. That thing was trying to kill you. It’s still out there, waiting for you. It will find you here if you try to hide. That unnatural and unholy thing. You cannot stay here.

You do not even bother to warn anyone else or grab your things. You simply take a deep breath and rush blindly into the mist with all haste that you can muster. The darkness and fog make it so you can see absolutely nothing, but still, you desperately run as fast as your legs can carry you.

Make a **Dexterity** roll. If you succeed, go to **186**. If you fail, go to **208**.

167

Just before your feet leave ground, you throw your momentum into a jump, sending you flying forward into the protective boughs of the tree.

Branches snap and break as they give under the impact of your body, but those below hold and catch you. You are not entirely without injury, but the damage is reduced to cuts and bruises rather than broken bones.

You begin making your way down the tree, dropping carefully from limb to limb beneath you. When you finally make it to the bottom and appraise the distance you traveled downward, you are certain that you just avoided a lethal fall.

Winded and battered, you trudge on through the night, hoping to continue putting distance between yourself and that Esbury.

Make a **Constitution** roll. If you succeed, go to **184**. If you fail, go to **198**.

168

You swing at Joshua, and manage to land a few solid blows. But you get as good as you give. He hits you several times as well, and it seems like this brawl could go on some time before a winner is decided.

Unfortunately for you, time is not on your side. As you continue to strike out against Joshua, the door of the house bursts open, and the other man charges you. Together, he and Joshua beat you into unconsciousness and subdue you.

Go to **138**.

169

You wander for quite some time, unable to find anything. As you are beginning to feel frustrated and hopeless, your worries are compounded. The ground beneath you begins to become damp. At first, you simply tell yourself it is the fog. But as it rises over the tops of your toes, and then up past your ankles, you cannot deny that Esbury is quickly flooding.

You splash about in the city streets for a bit, contemplating giving up, when you suddenly hear a horrid squelching sound to your right.

You turn in terror as something distended and misshapen lunges out at you from the mist. You have only a moment to react.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **228**. If you fail, take 1 damage and go to **214**. If this reduces you to 0, you are tackled and killed by a mysterious creature, and this is **The End**.

170

You stumble through the woods, leaning heavily on your bad leg in the rough terrain. The ground is uneven, and slippery beneath your feet. You must be close to the lake, but despite your best efforts you are unable to find the shore.

The shore does, however, find you. As you are staggering through the darkness and mist, the water level of the lake begins to rise, and the ground you are on swiftly becomes waterlogged. At first, it is only a minor inconvenience, but it does not take long before the water rises to your ankles, calves, and on up to your knees. It shows no sign of stopping.

You are dragging your wounded leg behind you, and the pain is growing to be unbearable. Yet you keep sloshing through the swamp that has formed around you. You will yourself onward.

Until you hear the splashing behind you. Something stomping through the muck, a few feet back. You quickly glance over your shoulder, trying to catch a glimpse of it, but it is obscured by the shadows and shrouded by the fog. Whatever it is, it seems to be in no hurry. It is keeping pace with you, not chasing you. But if your leg gives out...

Make a **Constitution** roll. If you succeed, go to **163**. If you fail, go to **193**.

171

You quickly duck into the motel, avoiding whoever or whatever else is out there. You pause a few moments to gather your thoughts.

Darkness has come and your job is not yet done. With perseverance, you may yet finish your task. The most obvious choice is to resume the investigation.

Another potential course of action is to simply cut your losses and leave. You could try to abandon Esbury on foot, and you must admit that the idea is tempting despite being wholly impractical. This place has not been good to you.

Of course, you could always simply sleep on it. Stay another night in the motel and hope to either continue your work or move on in the morning. You aren't certain why, but you feel a vague sense of unease at the thought of spending another night here. You try to push the thought from your mind as you come to a firm decision.

To stay the night in the motel, go to **137**.

To attempt to leave in the dead of night, go to **194**.

To continue the investigation, go to **200**.

172

You fall to your knees press your ear to the door of the safe and begin twisting the combination dial, hoping to listen for the clicks of the tumblers falling into place on the right numbers. Unfortunately, you can't quite manage to get an ear for it, despite your best efforts.

Defeated, you rise and dust yourself off. With nothing else to keep your attention, you leave the room.

Go to **222**.

173

You cannot gather the courage to leave the safety that you have found. Still, you will not sit completely helpless. You pull a chair from the common area of the motel and barricade the door. You close the shutters on the windows. You gather what weapons you have on hand, and you wait, hypervigilant against what is to come.

For nearly an hour, you pace the common area of the motel nervously. You almost begin to talk yourself into believing that your earlier experience was a hallucination. Until the water begins to seep in beneath the door. Esbury is flooding. You seriously begin to question your decision to remain, but you realize that it is too late to choose any alternatives at this point. You grit your teeth and prepare for what is to come.

You are about to head upstairs when you hear the pounding at the door. Something is trying to force its way inside. You tighten your grip on your weapon and prepare to stand and fight.

If you have a gun, make a **Firearm (handguns)** roll. If you succeed, go to **217**. If you fail, go to **192**.

If you do not have a firearm go to **225**.

174

You fall over the ledge and skid a few feet down, but quickly manage to catch yourself. You grab onto a rocky outcrop and halt your fall. You take a few deep breaths and make sure not to look down as you scan the cliff face for handholds. In the fog, it is difficult to find them, but you manage, and slowly pick your way up the face of the cliff.

Finally, you make it back up to the muddy trail above and throw yourself onto the path, gasping for air. You lie there and recover for a moment before gathering your strength and continuing on down the path.

You march on, despite a growing weariness. Your feet are sore, and you are nearly blind in this darkness. But you are resolved to this course of action, and you will not abandon it now.

You carry on for well over an hour, and the obscurity becomes a major problem. You are tripping over rocks and fallen branches. You almost go over a ledge once more before you decide that this plan is untenable without the ability to see. You decide that you must start a fire of some kind to carry a torch with you. It may not solve the problem of the fog, but it may at least alleviate the darkness.

Make a **Survival** roll (specialization does not matter, as making a fire is among the most basic of survival skills.) If you succeed, go to **189**. If you fail, go to **201**.

175

You wade forward into the water, and feel the ground slope down beneath you and out of reach of your feet. You then kick off the ground and swim forward in broad, simple strokes, trying to maximize your distance with the least amount of effort.

You are all but blind in the fog, and so you keep your course as much of a straight line as possible, hoping that there are no twists or curves in the path. You glide through the water for several minutes, and eventually you reach the opposite end and spot the path emerging from the water.

You climb from the water and shake off the worst of the wetness. You are covered in filth and soaking wet, but at least you are on the path once more.

However, you are cold and wet, and the darkness and fog makes navigating that much harder, despite the trail beneath your feet. You resolve to make a fire, so that you may dry yourself and carry it with you to keep back the darkness so that you might find your way.

Make a **Survival** roll (specialization does not matter, as making a fire is among the most basic of survival skills.) If you succeed, go to **206**. If you fail, go to **224**.

176

You are too slow, and he plunges the blade into your chest as he pins you against the wall. His face is lit up with joy as he watches you struggle in agony. Joshua's eyes are the very picture of sadistic madness, and he is practically drinking in your pain.

He leans in close as you feel your strength fade, and he whispers to you in a strange tongue that sends chills through your remaining blood. "Grah'n y'hah ngnw ronog Bokrug stell'bsna, phlegeth ep throd ron." He cackles madly and pulls the knife from your chest as you desperately grasp at your wound to slow the blood loss. "I have seen this in my dreams. Your blood will lead the way to that magnificent city. It is pleased..."

He then takes the bloody knife and quickly draws it across your throat, finishing his sacrifice to something unspeakable.

You have died, and this is **The End**. If you like, you may attempt the story again and hope for a better outcome.

177

You hurriedly draw your firearm and fire into the creature. Once. Twice. Three times. Each bullet slams into the thing and sends it reeling back. You note that all of the bullets go straight through the thing and emerge the other side, hardly slowed by the flimsy flesh of the creature. The wounds from the gunshots quickly begin leaking clear fluid at an alarming rate. It appears as if the creature is being deflated of whatever it is that has caused it to be so bloated and misshapen. It takes a few more stumbling steps toward you, and for a single horrific second you fear that it will collapse atop you. Thankfully, it crumples to the ground at your feet and ceases to move as it silently dies.

You shudder at your victory over the otherworldly thing. However, you do not have long to relish your success from nearby, you hear the squelching sound again. In multiple directions. You reload your weapon quickly in case they should chance upon you, and you make a snap decision of how to proceed.

Make a **Sanity** roll. If you succeed, lose 1 sanity. If you fail, lose 1d6 sanity.

To seek the safety of the nearby motel, go to **223**.

To flee from this place as fast as you can, go to **166**.

To muster your courage and attempt to get to the bottom of this, go to **200**.

178

You fix your eyes first on the strange altar, and then on the stack of notes. Rifling through them, you are able to piece together the character's written in dried blood across the side. They say simply "Bokrug brings DOOM to Sarnath." As you look over the altar, you also note smaller text in ink, located just beneath the large blood-written print. The smaller text appears to be some sort of chant "Y'hahyar nog nglui ah, Bokrug." The words stick in your mind saliently.

As you begin stuffing the religious icon into your sack, you note a similar script on the other side. Written in fresh blood. Most of the characters are the same, and you once again consult the notes to finish the translation. You decode the missing words and the whole of the text to read "Bokrug brings DOOM to Esbury."

Somewhat unnerved, you shove the altar into your bag, knowing that this is evidence of some sort of cult practice or deranged religious belief.

The thought does not sit well with you.

You have learned a ritual chant. When prompted, you may choose to use the chant. If you do so, go to **235** at the appropriate time.

Go to **210**.

179

With no immediate threat to yourself, you are free to explore the Harris household, though you do so quickly in case someone is to come looking. Glancing about the sitting room you are in, you find it to be a bit of a mess from the earlier scuffle.

Glancing towards the entrance, you note the foyer, filled with boxes and crates, many of which are covered. You poke your head into the next room and find a kitchen and adjacent dining room, both spotlessly maintained, though sparsely furnished.

Peeking beneath the fabric in the entryway, you find various furniture and décor, as well as stacks and stacks of books. Many of them are historical texts and reference materials, some of which are written by Professor Harris himself. There is also a large number of general works of science and literature, as befits any well-educated man.

You place the cover back down, sensing that you will find nothing of value here. You turn your attention to the set of stairs that are positioned opposite to the entrance. You ascend the staircase and see two doors, one on either side of you. The door to your left is slightly ajar, and is no doubt the bedroom. By process of elimination, the door to your right must be the study. The door seems to be locked, and your earlier search of the house did not yield a key. With enough time, you might be able to get the door open, but it would probably be unwise to be at it for long, since it's entirely possible that Amelia or one of those close to her may return.

To enter the bedroom, go to **207**.

To enter the study, make a **Locksmith** roll. If you succeed, go to **188**. If you fail, go to **161**.

180

Try as you might, you are unable to pry the blade from his grasp. Joshua manages to land a single, solid strike against your face that sends you reeling and sprawling backwards. In a moment he is on top of you.

He smiles with wicked glee as he places the blade against your flesh once more. The cold metal rests against your throat, and Joshua locks eyes with you.

His eyes seem to glaze over as speaks, and he begins speaking in strange tongue. "Grah'n y'hah ngnw ronog Bokrug stell'bsna, phlegeth ep throd ron." He speaks each syllable with a slow and monotonous tone, as if he is focusing on the sound of the words very carefully.

As the last sound passes his lips, Joshua takes the knife and presses it sharply into your neck. With a single, smooth motion, Joshua slits your throat as you struggle helplessly.

As you are swiftly bleeding out, your eyes perceive impossible visions. The world before you melts away and you and is replaced by a shining city of marble, onyx, and lustrous gems. You see this magnificent city in all its splendor, sitting next to a placid lake. And then it is gone in an instant. The water rises up to swallow it and from the water rises the serpent of the idol, given life and power. The being eyes you with malicious sentience as the waters rise and consumes you.

Your story is over. You have been offered up as a sacrifice to one of the Great Old Ones. **The End**.

181

You decide that you have seen enough of Joshua's house, and that you have no reason to linger here. You exit the building and close the door behind you.

You look out into the fog, and find it thicker than you had remembered. You can see almost nothing. Compounding this problem is the darkness, which has completely fallen while you were inside.

Armed with new knowledge, you feel prepared to confront what lies ahead of you. You take a few steps out into the street and are shocked to find the cobblestones of the city to be waterlogged. The tide has risen, and the city is beginning to flood.

Given earlier events, you are inclined to believe that this may not be entirely natural, but even if it is, the rapidly rising water is a serious threat in itself. You feel a twinge of fear, but overcome it as you spur yourself into action. You know that you must escape the flood, and that you must act quickly.

If you know where to meet with Banyu, now is the time that you may choose to do so.

To search for higher ground and hope to avoid the rising waters, go to **211**.

To try to outrun the rising tide, go to **194**.

182

You are a minute too late. You scramble to get out of the way of the vehicle, but it is accelerating rapidly, and makes no attempt to avoid you, as the driver cannot see you in the fog.

It strikes you at full speed, and your bones shatter on impact, killing you instantly.

You have died and this is **The End**. Though you nearly escaped, you unfortunately did not survive your visit to Esbury.

183

You yank your hand free of the cold and clammy grasp and withdraw it to find it moist and covered in mucous. You shake the worst of the disgusting substance off of your arm as you rush to get away from whatever it was that grabbed you. Thankfully, the exact form and features of the thing were concealed by the fog and the darkness, but this does not stop your imagination from running wild.

Thankfully, your feet are also running wild. You move as fast as your legs can carry you. You press on through shrouded streets and see more hazy, hideous things peering out at you from the merciful mask of the mist. You rush past them, not wanting to find out what they are, but knowing full well that they

are not human. Finally, you make your way to the edge of town.

You do not even bother with the trail. Navigating in this level of obscurity would be a near impossibility, even if you weren't being actively chased by otherworldly horrors. You simply rush into the forest, stumbling around branches and over roots and rocks. If you can keep your footing, you may just be able to put enough distance between yourself and the cursed city that lies at your back.

Make a **Dexterity** roll. If you succeed, go to **50**. If you fail, go to **197**.

184

You march through the night, moving more slowly and more carefully, but never stopping. You keep a brisk pace for several hours, before you finally force yourself to stop and catch a brief nap against a tree.

Your sleep is light and restless, and you dream of horrific things. Of rising waters and hideous beings with strange faces. Of crumbling towers built of marble and gemstones, and of burning fires and the screams of the dying amidst an unknown city of unknowable antiquity. You wake with a start as a terrifying, grotesque lizard rises from the water and hisses malevolently at you.

Jolted from your sleep, and thoroughly unnerved. You glance about quickly and note that the sun is shining brightly and the fog has dissipated. You quickly gather yourself and begin walking at a much calmer pace.

It is several more hours before you find the road. You follow it for some time before a car passes and offers you a ride to Boston.

For the next few days, you settle in at Boston, recovering from your experiences in Esbury and the long walk home. You had been trying to put it all behind you, until you find a rather disturbing newspaper article in the morning paper a few days later. The resort town of Esbury was reported to have mysteriously flooded in the middle of the night, claiming the lives of all of its residents while they slept. No source is cited for the cause of the flooding, and no survivors, bodies, or debris are reported to have been found.

This is **The End** of our tale. You have survived by abandoning the town of Esbury to its fate. You do not fully comprehend what went on there, but you are relieved to have avoided your own demise. Still, the scars of that night and the eventual outcome will haunt you for quite some time. You lose 1d8 sanity, but you may use this character in future adventures.

Congratulations on surviving Call of Cthulhu.

185

Your fear spurs you on. You are practically dragging your injured leg behind you as you wade through the waters and finally kick off the ground and begin properly swimming.

You splash through the murky waters for a fair distance before making it to a patch of drier ground. Mercifully, you do not hear the sounds of pursuit.

You do not wait around for your pursuer to reappear. Though thoroughly pained, you limp along, trying to get some semblance of your bearings. Ultimately, you decide to trust your gut and pick a direction and start walking. You come upon a trail and you feel relatively confident that you have made the correct choice.

You could not be more wrong. Having taken a wrong turn earlier, and without any sort of reference point, you have gotten completely turned around. You now find yourself once more facing the town of Esbury.

You have little time to express your frustration. As you are standing in the middle of the road, an automobile comes barreling out of the mist directly at you.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **191**. If you fail, go to **221**.

186

You sprint through the foggy streets of Esbury, breathing heavily in the green mists as you try to abandon this God-forsaken place. You move in no particular direction, simply running away.

You follow twisting and turning alleys, and open streets. In the fog, you can discern little difference. As you are running, you encounter that same horrible, distended monstrosity. It lumbers towards you, but you are much too quick for it.

But then you round a bend in the road and find another. You quickly change your heading and find another one of the things again blocking your path. You see them shambling towards you. A whole multitude of the horrendous, vile things. You panic and quickly look for an escape route.

Luckily, you find a narrow alley between two buildings, and you dive towards it with all due haste. Thankfully, there are none of the creatures on the other side.

You run for a while longer, and you notice something else peculiar. The town is beginning to flood. The water is rising at an alarming rate. You are already splashing through ankle-deep water by the time you reach the edge of town.

But you do make it to the edge of town, and you run blindly into the forest, knowing full well that it is a hopeless task to find the trail in this darkness and fog. You move as fast as your legs will carry you through the woods.

Go to **50**.

187

You are all but blind in the fog, and so you keep your course as much of a straight line as possible, hoping that there are no twists or curves in the path. You wade further into the muck and begin swimming. You splash through the water for several minutes, and run into some trouble while you are immersed in the water. Something cuts your leg, presumably a fallen branch or log. It is splintered and broken, and digs deep enough to open a wound. But eventually you reach the opposite end and spot the path emerging from the water.

You climb from the water and are thoroughly disgusting for your time there. You are covered in filth and soaking wet, but at least you are on the path once more.

However, you are cold and wet, and the darkness and fog makes navigating that much harder, despite the trail beneath your feet. You resolve to make a fire, so that you may dry yourself and carry it with you to keep back the darkness so that you might find your way.

Make a **Survival** roll (specialization does not matter, as making a fire is among the most basic of survival skills.) If you succeed, go to **206**. If you fail, go to **224**.

188

You reach into your pocket and produce a bobby pin that you carry on your person for just such an occasion. You insert it into the lock and fumble with it for a few minutes. It sticks and strains, and for a few terrible seconds you fear that it will break in the lock. And then the tumblers give, and the door clicks open.

You push your way into the small study and find the room much as you would have expected it. The door opens across from a window, which lets in the pale, greenish light of the sun on the mist. This illuminates the room, which is adorned primarily with mostly-empty book cases on either side. There are also

several glass display cases throughout the room, but these are similarly empty. At the far end of the room, just beneath the window is a desk, still littered with blood soaked papers.

Searching through the drawers of the desk, you find stacks of notes and various personal items. Buried in the bottom drawer, you find an impossibly old scrap of papyrus pressed into a glass frame. All across the ancient papyrus are strange and unusual scrawlings. As you pick it up to inspect it, you notice a sheet of paper clipped to the back of the frame, bearing the same scrawling as the papyrus, but with annotations in the margins. Presumably, this is a translation of the papyrus's text.

As you read it over, you marvel at the impossibility of the content. The writing purports to be written by a priest of an unknown city by the name of "Ilarnek." In this account, the priest records observations of an odd and ugly race of beings who once lived upon a lake long ago in the forgotten land of Mnar. This record goes into great lengths about the fire rituals of these strange creatures, and speaks of the haunting dances they would perform in the light of the flames beneath the gibbous moon. And always under the watchful gaze of a sea-green stone idol, chiseled in the likeness of great lizard.

You pause for a moment, and consider the implications. You take the translation and fold it up in your pocket as evidence, and exit the study.

Go to **222**.

189

You gather some suitably dry wood, and reach into your pocket for the small book of matches that you always carry on your person, just for situations like this.

You fumble around for quite some time, keeping to the road as best as you can. As you are walking along, your torch illuminates a signpost along the trail. Investigating it more closely, you find that the trail splits off ahead, and by keeping to the road as you had intended, you would have looped back to Esbury. Instead, you take a smaller trail that branches off to the side and begin to follow it. Marching along into the night.

Make a **Constitution** roll. If you succeed, go to **184**. If you fail, go to **198**.

190

You hear a sound growing louder in the distance. The unmistakable rumble of an automobile thundering

down the path. You move off the side of the road, keeping the edge just in view.

You hear a loud splash as the vehicle forces its way through the flooded section of trail, and you shout at the passing car as it speeds towards and then away from you. You doubt the driver heard you, and if they did, they certainly did not stop to investigate.

With a resigned sigh you make your way back onto the trail and continue walking. It is a long, arduous journey throughout the night. You follow the trail for hours on end through the darkness and fog. Your feet blister and ache, and your eyes droop from weariness. All the while, you fight against a gnawing, looming terror growing in the back of your mind.

But despite this, you press on, and eventually stagger towards the dock on the far side of the lake, and make it into your car. Half asleep, you throw yourself behind the wheel and drive home in the night. You steer almost automatically, exhausted and unthinking as you are. But you note that the fog is absent once you have left the lake, and the darkness becomes your sole companion.

For the next few days, you settle in at Boston, recovering from your experiences in Esbury and the long walk home. You had been trying to put it all behind you, until you find a rather disturbing newspaper article in the morning paper a few days later. The resort town of Esbury was reported to have mysteriously flooded in the middle of the night, claiming the lives of all of its residents while they slept. No source is cited for the cause of the flooding, and no survivors, bodies, or debris are reported to have been found.

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Congratulations on surviving Call of Cthulhu.

191

You throw yourself on the ground, making sure you avoid the oncoming car. You land face first in water that is already several inches deep. You quickly roll over as the car speeds past you, and you rise from the ground thoroughly wet.

You once again look in dismay towards the town of Esbury, which is flooding fast. You can make out little through the fog, but amidst the darkness, you can see flames burning bright, the colors muted by the

mist, but significantly brighter than the surrounding shadows.

You can think of no reason why a sinking city would be on fire, but whatever excuses your head can conjure are not comforting. You do not stand to ponder on it long. As you are despairing over your circumstance, the mist closes in tighter around you as does something more unsavory. A green, flabby, fleshy hand seizes your arm and begins pulling you violently towards the town. You struggle against the grasp as best you can, but you find you will not be easily able to slip away, and a more intentioned application of force is needed.

If you have a firearm, make a **Firearms (Handgun)** roll. If you succeed, go to **213**. If you fail, go to **226**.

If you are unarmed, go to **231**.

192

The door falls inward, rattling on its hinges. The bulbous, misshapen thing lumbers into the room with its lifeless and bulging eyes fixed on you and its putrid mouth gashing open and closed silently.

Your hands shake abominably as you come face to face with the alien thing. Your eyes dart back and forth staring first at it and then at the multitude of others like it that are beginning to clog the doorway behind it. You cannot bring yourself to stare at it any longer, so you close your eyes and fire blindly.

When you open them again, you see the bullet hole in the wall behind the creature and know that you missed. You do not have time to collect your nerves for another shot. The monstrous thing throws itself at you and pins you to the ground.

With its cracked and broken nails, it claws open your throat as it silently mouths praises to its dark god.

You have died. This is **The End**.

193

You splash through the rising tide as best as you can, knowing what it means to fail. Unfortunately, the flesh is weak and your leg gives out.

You never see what it is that has been chasing you. You turn towards it, hearing it come towards you, but it is shrouded in the mist. You can just make out the outline, something almost human, but decidedly not. You blink and it is upon you. You tumble downward face first into the muck. The moist and

disgusting thing lies atop you as you gasp for air desperately. But you find none, and soon drown.

You have died and this is **The End**. If you like, you may start again and hope to progress further by means of another path.

194

You are through with this place. You want nothing more to do with Esbury, and whatever business you had intended to carry out here is no longer worth your time. You gather your things and set out into the fog.

You keep a brisk pace as you stride through the darkness and mist. You are moving with all due haste, making for the edge of town. You wind your way down streets and through alleys.

But as you are moving, something reaches out at you and grabs your arm, wrapping it tightly in a vicelike grip. You panic and try to pull away.

Make a **Strength** roll. If you succeed, go to **183**. If you fail, go to **199**.

195

You look the idol over. It is made of a sea-green stone and chiseled in the likeness of a water lizard. The sculpture is grotesque and hideous, and the very depiction of the serpentine creature unnerves you. Still, the work is extremely well preserved and unquestionably ancient.

You feel uncomfortable staring at the alien looking thing for long, and you stow it away in the sack and out of sight.

Go to **210**.

196

You emerge into the belfry at the top of the stairs, and you find yourself looking down on the fog-shrouded town that is no doubt flooding fast. You glance out to the lake, which is not itself covered by the fog. You see the surface swaying strangely beneath massive waves, and you see the stars and gibbous moon reflected in the water.

With a moment of relative safety, you have a minute to pause and reflect. You take a deep breath, bowing your head in thought, or perhaps prayer. Your mind is a whirl, but eventually, a single thought breaks through, determining your course of action.

If you know a ritual chant, now is the time you may choose to use it. If you do so, go to the appropriate entry.

Otherwise, go to **150**.

197

You run on for some distance, dashing between the tress of the forests around Esbury. You are stumbling blindly through the darkness and fog, half-tripping over roots and rocks. Eventually, you lose your footing and come crashing down against a boulder.

Your head slams against the rock, and you pass into unconsciousness. You will never know what happens, but you do not wake up.

You have died, and this is **The End**. You don't know if it was the fall, or the rising tide, or the strange monsters that took your life, but you have passed away. Better luck next time.

198

You begin marching on as best you can, putting one foot in front of the other. You are bruised and tired, and you are unable to go on for very long. Within a short time, you pause to lean against a tree to catch your breath, and slip quietly into sleep.

Yours is a deep, dreamful sleep. The waking world melts away and is replaced by a shining city of marble, onyx, and lustrous gems. You see this magnificent city in all its splendor, sitting next to a placid lake. And then it is gone in an instant. The water rises up to swallow it and from the water rises the serpent of the idol, given life and power. The being eyes you with malicious sentience as the waters rise and consumes you. You do not wake from your slumber.

You have died, claimed in the night by the unnatural powers of the Great Old One who was manifesting at Esbury. This is **The End**.

199

Try as you might, you are unable to break the grasp of the thing clutching at your arm. It pull you closer towards itself, and you can now see the horrible inhuman form of the thing. Its body is bulging and misshapen, with long slender limbs and a hideous face, all of which are bound by skin of the same sickly green color as the unnatural mist.

The thing pulls you to the ground, and you hear the squelching steps of many more like it. You struggle to rise as they surround you, but there is no escape. You fight back as best you can, but eventually they crash upon you like a wave, and they scratch and squeeze the life from your body.

You have died and this is **The End**. Your life has been claimed by strange things in service to their horrible god.

200

You collect yourself and step out into the fog, determined to get to the bottom of this. The fog is thick and the night has fallen. At this stage, you have few, if any leads to investigate on. While this is far from ideal, your best option seems to be to patrol the streets looking for something out of the ordinary. Moreso than what you have already seen.

You begin cautiously walking down the streets, making sure to keep a brisk pace and open ear for anything that might be lurking in the mist. The streets are eerily silent except for your own footsteps.

You pass houses and places of business, and little seems to stand out at first. With a bit of persistence and luck however, you may just find something.

Make a **luck** roll. If you succeed, go to **238**. If you fail, go to **169**.

201

You gather up a pair of sticks and try to rub them together to make fire, as you have heard of others doing. Whether this is simple myth or if the secret merely eludes you is irrelevant, as you start no fire.

You eventually abandon the task and trudge on blindly, following to the trail as best you can in the thick fog. The elevation begins to decline beneath your feet. You assume you must be coming down from the hills and nearing your destination, and you are pleased with your progress.

You could not be more wrong. Having taken a wrong turn earlier, and without a light to guide you through the darkness and fog, you have gotten completely turned around. You now find yourself once more facing the town of Esbury.

You have little time to express your frustration. As you are standing in the middle of the road, an automobile comes barreling out of the mist directly at you.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **191**. If you fail, go to **221**.

202

You open the door to find a bedroom, much as you had expected. The room clearly belongs to a bachelor, as the only feminine object in the space is a set of lace

sleepwear lying across the bed. You look to a nearby nightstand and find several framed photographs of Joshua and Amelia, so you assume those clothes to be hers. Peeking out of a drawer in the nightstand is an open box of bullets, as well as several bottles of bootleg whiskey.

You scan the rest of the room and the only other object of note is a dresser. You search it and find it to be full of men's clothing, the sort that Joshua would wear. However, as you are rifling through the things, you find an envelope. Turning it over, you find it to have already been unsealed, and judging by the crumpled state of it, the things looks to have been read over several times.

You turn it over and begin reading. "It appears to be a correspondence between Joshua and a Dr. Webber, based out of Arkham. Webber is apparently a psychotherapist that Joshua sees monthly. Apparently, the past few months have been quite difficult for Joshua, in addition to his criminal activities and his relationship with Amelia, it would seem that Joshua has been troubled by strange dreams. Dr. Webber labeled them as obsessive delusions. It would seem that Joshua has a fixation with a particular dream of a beautiful city in a far off land. He describes the city as made of marble and says that sometimes he wakes up crying because he has to leave it behind in his dreams. He also reports a seeing a frightening serpent in the waters off the shore of this strange city. Sometimes in the night it whispers that it knows the way to the city. Though the serpent scares him, he listens to the whispers and he professes a deep desire to go there, though he does not know where this city is or even if it is real. For his part, Dr. Webber assures him that these things are completely fictitious and that he must find a way to return to reality and leave the dreaming delusions behind.

You tuck the envelope back where you found it and think about how this affects the course of events here in Esbury. Silently, you return to the main area of the house. You may now investigate the basement, or leave the house.

To investigate the basement, go to **156**.

To leave the house, go to **181**.

203

You take a knee and begin twisting the combination lock slowly, listening for the sound of the clicks and feeling for the slight stopping of the dial with a successful guess of the number. You repeat this process a few times, and the door of the safe swings open with a barely perceptible creak of metal.

The contents of the safe are fairly sparse. There are a stack of documents on the bottom. Passports, birth certificates, identification and financial papers. They're tied to both Amelia and William Harris, so it appears as if this safe hasn't been opened since his death. There is also a solitary gold bar sitting off to one side. Considering the trouble you went through to get to this point, you place the gold bar in your pocket as compensation.

At least now you wouldn't be leaving empty handed. Satisfied, and with nothing more to see in the room, you leave it behind and move on.

Go to **222**.

204

You turn over the brick cylinders in your hand and squint to make out the tiny script pressed into their sides. Consulting the stacked notes to the side, you begin to work out a rough translation. The cylinders tell the story of the "lakemist green beings of Ib, with their bulging eyes, pouting, flabby lips, curious ears, and voiceless mouths." It speaks of the origins of these strange beings, how they "descended one night from the moon in a mist" and "gave praise to the chiseled sea-stone idol of Bokrug beneath the gibbous moon." It goes on to describe their strange city of stone and their ritual destruction of precious metals to appease this detestable water lizard.

The tale is perplexing and impossible, but if true, it is rather frightening. You recall the green mist outside, and note that the moon is gibbous tonight. As you place the brick cylinders in the sack. You glance over at the sea-green idol nearby and are further chilled by the portents of this.

Increase your **Cthulhu Mythos** skill by 2 points. Go to **210**.

205

The exhaustion overtakes you. You lean back, close your eyes, and drift into a deep slumber.

Your sleep is disturbed by strange and horrific dreams. You see a shining city of marble, onyx, and lustrous gems. You see this magnificent city in all its splendor, sitting next to a placid lake. And then it is gone in an instant. The water rises up to swallow it and from the water rises the serpent of the idol, given life and power. The being eyes you with malicious sentience as the waters rise and consumes you.

You exist in this state for what feel like an eternity, drifting in the sunken ruins alongside the horrible serpent. It eyes you closely, scrutinizing your every motion. But it never acts, merely watching you

with checked malevolence. You stare long into its eyes, and begin to wish it would simply consume you so you would not have to be under those watchful eyes. This becomes a maddening desire, and you find yourself swimming toward the thing willingly. It opens up its jaws to receive you, revealing row after row of needle-like teeth. As you are about to offer yourself to the thing, you finally wake.

You find yourself dangling over the edge of the belfry, threatening to roll into the flooded town below and lose yourself in the waters. You quickly pull back towards the center of the platform for safety. As you do so, a glimmer from the contents of your sack catches your eye. You reach inside to find the source, and extract the sea-stone serpent idol. It is shimmering with a blueish-white light of angry intensity, and to even look at the thing is painful.

You consider throwing the damnable thing into the waters below, but something stops you. A thought creeps into your mind, taking shape and driving your actions.

Make an **Intelligence** roll. If you succeed, go to **219**. If you fail, go to **234**.

206

You walk to the edge of the trail and gather some fallen branches. Like a good survivalist, you had presence of mind to conceal a match on your person, and though it is wet and it takes some time, you manage to kindle a small flame.

You spend some time around your tiny fire, taking in the warmth. You do not wish to linger long, and so you improvise a torch to carry with you as you continue along your journey.

It is a long, arduous journey throughout the night. You follow the trail for hours on end through the darkness and fog, pausing only occasionally to feed the flames of your torch. Your feet blister and ache, and your eyes droop from weariness. All the while, you fight against a gnawing, looming terror growing in the back of your mind.

But despite this, you press on, and eventually stagger towards the dock on the far side of the lake, and make it into your car. Half asleep, you throw yourself behind the wheel and drive home in the night. You steer almost automatically, exhausted and unthinking as you are. But you note that the fog is absent once you have left the lake, and the darkness becomes your sole companion.

For the next few days, you settle in at Boston, recovering from your experiences in Esbury and the long walk home. You had been trying to put it all

behind you, until you find a rather disturbing newspaper article in the morning paper a few days later. The resort town of Esbury was reported to have mysteriously flooded in the middle of the night, claiming the lives of all of its residents while they slept. No source is cited for the cause of the flooding, and no survivors, bodies, or debris are reported to have been found.

This is **The End** of our tale. You have survived by abandoning the town of Esbury to its fate. You do not fully comprehend what went on there, but you are relieved to have avoided your own demise. Still, the scars of that night and the eventual outcome will haunt you for quite some time. You lose 1d8 sanity, but you may use this character in future adventures.

Congratulations on surviving Call of Cthulhu.

207

You push aside the door and enter the bedroom. The room is lavishly decorated and feminine. Large, soft pillows sit atop the bed, and a tangle of blankets is strewn across the mattress.

Judging by the state of the room, this space belonged more to Amelia than it did Dr. Harris, even before his death. Now though, the room is dominated by her personal affects. A case of makeup sits on the dresser, and a hand mirror lies next to it. The door to the closet is open and the racks are overflowing with various dresses and fashionable outfits. The clothes belonging to the late Dr. Harris take up a small and innocuous corner of the closet, pushed far to the side so as to not get in the way of Amelia's things.

The most surprising find you stumble upon is a small pile of discarded men's clothing next to the bed. They seem to have been left there recently, and given the difference in style and size with the men's clothes in the closet, it is clear they do not belong to Dr. Harris.

Your suspicion is confirmed when you see a photograph of Joshua on the nightstand. There is also a half-empty bottle of whiskey there, and two glasses sitting next to it.

You also happen to notice a safe built into the wall, just behind the nightstand. A combination lock keeps it sealed, though if you were so inclined, you may be able to decipher it.

There is little else of interest in the room.

To attempt to open the safe, make a **Locksmith** roll. If you succeed, go to **203**. If you fail, go to **172**.

To leave the room, go to **222**.

208

You sprint through the foggy streets of Esbury, breathing heavily in the green mists as you try to abandon this God-forsaken place. You move in no particular direction, simply running away.

You follow twisting and turning alleys, and open streets. In the fog, you can discern little difference. As you are running, you encounter that same horrible, distended monstrosity. It lumbers towards you, but you are much too quick for it.

But then you round a bend in the road and find another. You quickly change your heading and find another one of the things again blocking your path. You see them shambling towards you. A whole multitude of the horrendous, vile things. You panic and quickly look for an escape route.

Unfortunately, none present themselves. The horrible creatures close in, and you are trapped. The soon lay arms upon you, and despite your protests, they begin raking their fingers into your skin and strangling you about the neck.

The last sight you see are the putrid, bulging eyes of one of the things as it squeezes the air and life from you.

You have died and this is **The End**. If you like, you may try again, but this story has come to a close.

209

You make your best attempt to swim through the waters and evade your pursuer, but your injured leg is dead weight, slowing you down and making it very hard to move. You struggle on for a short time, but the sounds of chase begin again soon, and they are close upon you, and gaining quickly.

Before it even happens, you know you cannot escape. Something grabs you from behind. It is almost like a human hand, but certainly not. It pushes you down into the water and hold you there. Despite your struggles, you swiftly drown.

You have drowned, and this is **The End**. Hopefully you will fare better at your next attempt.

210

You stand over the table of curious artifacts, confident that they have something to do with the strange events in Esbury. You decide it is best to look them over and glean what information you can from them.

You begin by leafing through the stack of notes off to the side, and realize them to have some of the same characters that are written on some of the ancient items. You may be able to use these notes for translation.

There is also an empty sack on the table that was used to bring these relics here, and you are free to load them back up and take them with you.

After examining each item, it will be added to your inventory and you will be redirected to this entry or given the option to proceed as appropriate. You should not select any option more than once. When you are ready, feel free to leave.

If you want to look over the journal, go to **240**.

If you want to look over the clay cylinders, go to **218**.

If you want to look over the gemstone altar, go to **230**.

If you want to look over the idol, go to **195**.

To check the bedroom upstairs, go to **202**.

To leave the house, go to **181**.

211

You try to find somewhere that you can wait out the flood. Somewhere at a high elevation, so that it will not be consumed by the rising tide.

With the darkness and the fog, you will not be able to scan the skyline of the town to look for such a place, and will instead have to rely on your memory.

The only place close that comes to mind would be the church nearby. If worst came to worst, you could climb up into the bell tower to wait out the water.

You rush towards the house of worship, and you see its large gray stonework peeking out at you from the fog, providing a sense of comfort and security. You push open the large double-doors of the church and quickly close them shut behind you, hoping that the sealed doors will at least buy you some time before the water begins to seep in. You quickly rush to the stairs leading up to the bell tower, and ascend them as quickly as you can. You soon find yourself overlooking Esbury. The town itself is shrouded in mist, but from this high vantage point, you can see over the fog into the lake beyond. Large undulating waves break the surface of the normally placid waters, and the stars and gibbous moon are reflecting brightly against the otherwise dark backdrop.

With a moment of relative safety, you have a minute to pause and reflect. You take a deep breath, bowing your head in thought, or perhaps prayer. Your mind is a whirl, but eventually, a single thought breaks through, determining your course of action.

If you know a ritual chant, now is the time you may choose to use it. If you do so, go to the appropriate entry.

Otherwise, go to 150.

212

You do not hear it until it is upon you. A loud splash a short distance back, and a struggling, backfiring engine trying to push through the water as an automobile accelerates at you. You can just make out the headlights through the fog as they wash over you, and you have only a moment to react.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to 159. If you fail, go to 182.

213

You quickly reach for the firearm at your side and point it in the general direction of the thing, pull the trigger, and fire. The sound of the gunshot overwhelms the silence of the night air, and presumably the bullet strikes the thing, as its grip slackens and distinct splash is heard as it tumbles to the ground.

You turn to flee, but find yourself face to face with the bulging eyes and flabby face of a strange, green, vaguely humanoid creature. On impulse you fire, and the thing goes tumbling backwards into the water as well.

No sooner does it splash into the rising flood than does another hand grip you, this time by the shoulder, and then another gropes for your leg. You empty two more rounds into the mist, and the hands go slack once more and you are freed for a brief moment.

You direct your attention about you once more, and in every direction, you can see a figure in the mist. You hastily reload your weapon and begin firing, hoping to carve out a path with your gunfire.

The opportunity never presents itself. You bring down several of the in a hail of gunfire, but the water rises rapidly. You spend your last bullet and try to make a run for it, using the gun as a makeshift club as you try to force you way out.

Unfortunately, they overwhelm. You are shoved and dragged down, held under the water, and claimed by the rising tide.

This is **The End**. You have died, and your story has come to a close. You fought valiantly, and took many of the strange horrors to the grave with you, but this was not enough to save yourself or Esbury.

214

The thing takes a swipe at you, and it connects with your body solidly. Thankfully, there is force behind the blow, and it throws you off balance. You are sent sprawling backwards a few feet into the middle of the road, and the thing continues to lumber towards you.

If you can rise to your feet and move quickly, you may yet be able to outrun it. If not, you shudder to think what fate may befall you.

Make a **Dexterity** roll. If you succeed, go to 237. If you fail, go to 117.

215

You rush across the street and into the church, all the while splashing through the ever-rising water. You slam the door behind you and make your way down the aisle, towards the Buddhist monk standing over the Christian altar.

As you approach him, you can see that the man looks shaken. His eyes are wide, and his hands are trembling as he holds onto one of the pews for support. He fixes his gaze upon you and starts speaking quickly in a language you don't understand, before he stops himself and begins speaking in his thickly accented English. "I did not think you would make it back! A-are you okay? D-did you see what is out there?" You mention the rising water and he shakes his head vigorously.

"No! The creatures! In the mist! The green monsters!" You raise a skeptical eyebrow, and he leads you to the door, cracking it open slightly.

You gaze out into the mists, and indeed you do see something strange. In the darkness and fog, you think that you see the silhouette of something shambling about in the mist, and the shape is not entirely human. Before you can get a better look, the monk yanks you back into the room and closes the door. But not before the thing has noticed, as a loud banging begins on the door mere seconds after it closes.

"You see it now, yes? They come for us!" He draws you closer, pulling you in so he can speak at normal volume, though still in a hurried manner. "That is why I came here, friend. My temple wanted me to bring the relics back, because they are cursed by evil things. My temple would pray over the relics to keep the curse away, but they are not safe elsewhere. It may

be too late, but I know the words. Come, join me. We will pray.” He takes your hand and drags you to the altar. You set down the sack of things, and the monk closes his eyes and begins to speak in a strange tongue. “Y’hahyar nog nglui ah, Bokrug.” He utters each syllable slowly and carefully, giving you the chance to join with him if you so choose.

If you have the strange idol, go to **227**. Otherwise go to **236**.

216

You manage to calm the man, assuring him that he has at least a moment to explain what is going on. He takes a couple of deep breaths before explaining. “Look, I don’t know what the hell is going on here. Joshua called us out here, but he didn’t say anything about this! Whatever is going on here, this isn’t natural! Once things started going south here, I grabbed the most valuable looking things I could find and I ran.” He gestures down to the gemstone altar that he is lugging around.

You stoop down to inspect it, and notice writing scrawled across the side. The writing is incredibly strange and unfamiliar, but you can attempt to translate it.

Make an **Archaeology** roll at **Hard** difficulty (success only at half skill value or below.) If you succeed, go to **116**. If you fail, go to **242**.

217

The door slams open, revealing a hideous green creature. The thing is a vaguely fish-frog like being, with lifeless eyes and flabby lips. Its body is horribly distended, and long, spindly limbs protrude from the torso. With these slender limbs, it grabs either side of the doorframe and launches itself inside.

You react quickly, aiming your gun at the creature’s face and firing a round into the cold, lifeless eyes of the thing. It drops to the ground immediately, unmoving and leaking ichor.

No sooner can you celebrate your victory than another, similar creature enters the building and again begins moving towards you. You take another breath and calmly fire, bringing the thing down.

This pattern repeats several times, with you occasionally pausing to reload as the water rises around you. The tide of water and unholy horrors does not end, and by the time it has risen to your waist, you realize that you will not be escaping this place. Still, you resolve yourself to take as many of the things down with you as you can.

You hold on for what seems like hours. You begin to hear screaming in other parts of the town, and through the widows you think you can make out flickering flames shrouded in the fog. You shudder at what could possibly be going on, but you hold firm and continue to fire at the creatures as they find their way inside. The stream of them slows, but does not stop. In the end, it is the rising tide that claims your life.

This is **The End**. You have died, drowned by the flooding of Esbury.

218

You turn the hardened clay cylinders over in your hands, your eyes falling on the large cracks running through the pair of items. The solid construction of these things has led to the survival of the objects throughout the ages, despite damages to them.

The next most obvious quality is the strange writing that is plastered across the side of these artifacts. It is quite remarkable in that they do not resemble any language known to you. Using the notes on the table, you attempt to translate them.

Make an **Archaeology** roll. If you succeed, go to **204**. If you fail, you are unable to translate them and should go back to **210**.

219

Your mind clouds over once more, as if dreaming again. You see the strange city again in your mind’s eye. Your vision passes over precious metals changing hands between exotic merchants. Disks of silver and gold move from buyer to seller and disappear into bags and boxes. You glide formlessly over the city and out into the surrounding lands, where you see the citizens marching in lines carrying precious metals to the city from the mines. You float above it all and look out to the lake, and sense a brooding hatred and disgust.

Your awareness snaps back to reality as you stare into the light of the idol. You make the connection between those precious metals and the disdain of this grotesque serpent.

If you have a gold bar, go to **239**. Otherwise, go to **234**.

220

The exhaustion overtakes you. You lean back, close your eyes, and drift into a deep slumber.

Your sleep is disturbed by strange and horrific dreams. You see a shining city of marble, onyx, and lustrous gems. You see this magnificent city in all its splendor, sitting next to a placid lake. And then it is

gone in an instant. The water rises up to swallow it and from the water rises the serpent of the idol, given life and power. The being eyes you with malicious sentience as the waters rise and consumes you.

You exist in this state for what feel like an eternity, drifting in the sunken ruins alongside the horrible serpent. It eyes you closely, scrutinizing your every motion. But it never acts, merely watching you with checked malevolence. You stare long into its eyes, and begin to wish it would simply consume you so you would not have to be under those watchful eyes. This becomes a maddening desire, and you find yourself swimming toward the thing willingly. It opens up its jaws to receive you, revealing row after row of needle-like teeth. As you are about to offer yourself to the thing, you finally wake.

You find yourself dangling over the edge of the belfry, threatening to roll into the flooded town below and lose yourself in the waters. You quickly pull back towards the center of the platform for safety. Glancing around you at the still, but flooded lake, you notice a small group of boats floating amidst the ruins, searching for survivors. You quickly call out to them, and it is not long before you are helped onto a boat.

As you are being taken to shore, the authorities question you about what happened here. You explain what you can, the believable bits at least. Once you make shore, you are quickly taken to Boston to recover. Over the next few days, you confer with the authorities a few more times, and find that you are the only survivor of the incident. You are relieved to have escaped with your life, but the memory of what happened there will forever haunt you.

Congratulations, you have survived the horrific events as Esbury. This is **The End**, but you may save this character for future use in another Call of Cthulhu game, though you do lose 1d6 sanity from the terrible things that occurred on this adventure.

221

The car flies forward, and you are caught in its headlights as they pierce through the fog. The driver does not appear to show any sign of slowing, and they are driving with reckless abandon, bounding along the road and swerving madly.

You are unable to predict the pattern of swaying that the vehicle takes. You try to throw yourself aside and avoid the automobile, but fail to accomplish this.

The car hits you head on, many of your bones shatter, and you die on impact.

You have met your demise and this is **The End**. You are welcome to try the story again in the hopes of a different outcome.

222

You make yourself ready to leave the Harris household, as you feel your business here is concluded. You pause at the door a moment to consider what your next step should be. You know that you spent a good bit of time at the Harris place, and though the fog prevents you from making out the time of day, you imagine there is not much daylight left.

To investigate Joshua's house, go to **151**.

To return to the motel, go to **135**.

223

You rush inside of the nearby motel, and throw the door closed behind you. You stay there a moment, catching your breath, trying to come to terms with what you just saw.

You killed one, but judging by the sounds, there are more of those disgusting, aberrant creatures out there. You do not relish the thought of dealing with them once more.

You weigh your options. You could always simply hole up here in the motel, where it seems to be relatively safe.

If you are feeling brave of heart, you could confront the issue and see if you can find what these things are and where they are coming from. Perhaps even stop them.

And if you're willing to take a larger risk for the chance at greater safety, you could flee into the woods. In the darkness and the fog, there is little chance that you would be able to make it out, but if you could manage it, you would be able to get far, far away from this godforsaken town. The choice is yours.

To remain in the motel, go to **173**.

To investigate further, go to **200**.

To flee the horrors of Esbury, go to **166**.

224

Try as you might, you cannot manage to find any way to start a fire. You have no matches or lighter on your person, and you know of no tricks that will help you. In the end, you give up and press on blindly.

You wander along the trail, unsure of where you are going, but keeping the dirt and gravel beneath

your feet, making that it does not give way to grass or water. You focus solely on the placement of your steps, confident that you will reach your goal by putting one foot in front of the other.

Unfortunately, this also distracts your attention from your surroundings.

Make a **Listen** roll. If you succeed, go to **190**. If you fail, go to **212**.

225

You arm yourself with whatever you find handy, which happens to be a knife left out next what was once the motel owner's dinner. You clutch the blade in trembling hands as the door buckles and quakes under great weight.

And then it gives. Water rushes into the room, spilling out across the floor. But more importantly are the forms filling the doorway. Emerging from the darkness and mist and into the light of the room are alien figures with lanky limb and bulbous body. The beings are green, of the same sickly color as the mists from which they emerge. They fix their bulging dead eyes on you and lurch forward clumsily.

With your blade, you carve them open, gutting them like large fishes, and succeeding in covering yourself in a mess of ichor. They stream through the door one by one, but they are seemingly endless.

You see your end coming slowly. A little less speed of the stroke. A little more soreness of the arm. A little more shortness of breath. You cannot keep them off for long. Eventually, you tire, and one of the creatures slips through and knocks you over. You are kicking, slashing, and thrashing beneath it as it traps you under its weight.

As the water fills your lungs, the last thing you see are the cold, lifeless eyes of the creature that brings about your demise.

You have died, and this is **The End**. Unfortunately, you have met with doom in Esbury, though you are welcome to begin the adventure again and attempt to reach a different outcome.

226

You reach for your gun, and manage to quickly draw it out, only to have it knocked from your hands by the large, bulging form of a hideous green creature. Your firearm falls into the rising water with a splash and then it is lost among the shuffle of further bodies of strange beings.

You struggle against them as best you can, but it is to no avail. Without a proper weapon, you are at the mercy of the unnatural and misshapen things.

They do not kill you right away. Instead, they carry you, kicking and screaming, towards a burning house. Sitting atop the smoldering piles of ashes are mounds of corpses that have already been burned here and are quickly being reduced to ash. You also find various bits of jewelry and gemstones strewn amongst the wreckage. Entire fistfuls of the stuff. The firelight reflects brilliantly off of the gold and gems.

You do not have time to admire it or to wonder at the presence of it, as you are swiftly fed to the flames. As you are burning alive in agonizing pain, the last sight you see is that of the creatures taking up a lurching, shuffling dance in the fog beneath the gibbous moon, giving praise to their strange and unimaginable god.

You have died, and this is **The End**. You have been offered up as a sacrifice to a Great Old One, and are doomed alongside Esbury.

227

You stare at Banyu as he completes his chant, and it is as if a great weight has fallen on his shoulders. You look at him curiously for a moment, and you notice that the pounding at the door fades and stops. Cautiously, you go to the door and crack it open, looking outside.

As the door swings open, a rush of water is let into the church, soaking your legs and the floor around you, pooling amidst the pews of the church. Looking out into the streets, it appears that all of Esbury is a slosh of waist-deep water, though the mists have faded now and the water does not appear to be rising further.

Banyu comes to join you in looking out at the city, and he breathes a sigh of relief. "It is done now. We will be safe for the moment. I will take the artifacts with me when I leave this place. We will prevent this from happening again."

With that, Banyu gathers up the sack of items left by the altar and wades out into the waters. You do not know where he is going, but you never see him again.

In time, Esbury is evacuated. Bodies of some residents are found, and the deaths are all labeled as the result of drowning. Some of the residents claim to have seen strange things in the mist, and the papers label it as an outbreak of mass hysteria brought on by the anomalous flooding. Some of the residents are committed to mental institutions, though many return to Esbury when the waters recede.

You are still not entirely sure what went on there, but you are fully aware that it was not entirely natural. You do your best to forget it, but the memory still lingers in the back of your mind, and you never return to Esbury.

This is **The End** of our story. You have survived this adventure, and you may save this character to use at a later time.

228

It swipes at you, but your reflexes are much too quick for it to connect with you. You manage to catch a glimpse of sickly green flesh and you quickly spin out of its reach.

You turn and run, not stopping to confirm the identity of your attacker. You cover as much distance as you can in as little time as you can. You run down streets and alleys, before eventually you feel comfortable enough to pause and reassess your situation.

By this point the water has risen up your calves, and is swiftly approach knee level depths. At the rate the water is rising, you do not have time to search the city any further, and you must look to your own self-preservation, especially with those strange things lurking in the fog.

You can just make out the silhouette of the church in the fog. With no other real options, and the prospect of rising above the tide in the church's belfry seems like a good idea. You rush inside of the quiet holy space and quickly begin to ascend the steps towards your hoped-for salvation.

Go to **196**.

229

Though you have fallen, you realize that you are not completely without landmarks. If you follow the cliff above you, you may just be able to find the point where the elevation changes, and in doing so find your way back to the path. You limp forward in pain, but making sure to keep the cliff face on your left.

You follow the wall of the cliff despite the fog, at points navigating by keeping your hand along the cliff wall and even occasionally stopping to lean against it for support in your broken state. Eventually, you manage to find the trail again, and you cry aloud in relief at your apparent turn of good fortune.

You move along the path for what must be an hour, and you start to see distant light poking through the fog. You rush towards it, not caring that you are

putting weight on your injured leg, and you find yourself staring face to face with a brick wall.

Peering through the fog, you find that you have somehow gotten turned around and are back in Esbury. You cry out in frustration, but you do not have long to despair.

You hear the revving sound of an engine, and a car comes hurtling towards you as you are standing in the middle of the road.

Make a **Dodge** roll. If you succeed, go to **191**. If you fail, go to **221**.

230

You examine the extraordinary altar. The most readily apparent features beyond its size are the many gemstones set into this piece. They are of a greenish yellow color, and shine even in the half light of the room.

You also notice strange writing in broad strokes along the side of the object, smeared sloppily along it with haste. What you had originally taken for paint is found to be dried blood, upon closer examination.

While you cannot be certain, it would appear that this item has been involved in some tragedy.

Using the notes on the table, you may be able to piece together a translation of the text written in blood.

Make an **Archaeology** roll. If you succeed, go to **178**. If you fail, you are unable to translate the scrawling on the altar and should go to **210**.

231

You find yourself woefully unprepared to deal with the otherworldly horrors that are in front of you. You are unarmed, and unable to effectively fight back. You nearly escape the grasp of the first creature through sheer tenacity, but more quickly emerge from the mist, and it is not long before you are subdued by sheer number.

You struggle against them as best you can, but it is to no avail. Without a proper weapon, you are at the mercy of the unnatural and misshapen things.

They do not kill you right away. Instead, they carry you, kicking and screaming, towards a burning house. Sitting atop the smoldering piles of ashes are mounds of corpses that have already been burned here and are quickly being reduced to ash. You also find various bits of jewelry and gemstones strewn amongst

the wreckage. Entire fistfuls of the stuff. The firelight reflects brilliantly off of the gold and gems.

You do not have time to admire it or to wonder at the presence of it, as you are swiftly fed to the flames. As you are burning alive in agonizing pain, the last sight you see is that of the creatures taking up a lurching, shuffling dance in the fog beneath the gibbous moon, giving praise to their strange and unimaginable god.

You have died, and this is **The End**. You have been offered up as a sacrifice to a Great Old One, and are doomed alongside Esbury.

232

Your weight carries you forward, and you go tumbling over the edge of the cliff. You do your best to catch yourself, but it is too late. As you are falling, you do what you can to slow your descent, but you have precious little control over it at this point. It is a short fall to your swift and sudden death.

You have died and this is **The End**. Unfortunately you could not escape the horrors of Esbury alive, though perhaps you will do better on your next attempt.

233

You point yourself along the path and begin moving automatically, slowly but surely covering ground towards your escape.

However, the journey proves to be longer than you had anticipated. You march on for hours with no sign of light and no sign of reaching the main road. You quickly grow weary, and after the day's events, you are thoroughly exhausted.

You fight sleep for some time, and you aren't entirely sure when your eyes finally close, but you collapse along the road in exhaustion.

Perhaps the area around you flooded, or perhaps an animal found you, or you were struck by another car in your sleep. You do not know, but you never wake up to find out what causes your demise.

You have died, and this is **The End**. You may attempt the story again from the beginning, and hopefully you will achieve a better outcome.

234

A thought begins to fully take shape in your mind and clarity takes hold. But the thought is not your own. You see visions of the strange reptilian beast, that detestable water lizard. You stare into its eyes

hypnotically as it hisses at you, beckoning you forward. You heed its call.

Your feet move you forward, and carry you over the edge of the belfry, into the water below. You do not thrash about. You do not swim, or struggle, or resist. You simply sink, welcomed into the embrace of the risen tide.

You have died, and this is **The End**. You have been led to your demise at the will of Bokrug, the great water lizard. The Great Old One has ensured that Doom has come to Esbury, and that there are no survivors. And that eventually the idol will be found, and the process will begin again.

235

The words of the ritual chant force themselves into your mind. You stare blankly out at the reflection of the moon and stars upon the rising waters of the lake. Your lips move as if controlled by someone else, automatically uttering the strange syllables of the unknown words. "Y'hahyar nog nglui ah, Bokrug." You recite the words in a slow, monotone voice and you speak the phrase ten times before you stop.

You feel strangely tired after this, and so you sit on the stones of the belfry and look out onto the city. The water has risen high now, over the tops of many of the buildings in Esbury, and you are positioned on one of the few landmarks that breaks the water. You are certain that much damage has been done here.

Still, the water has become still and placid now, returning to its normally peaceful state. And the unnatural green mist is beginning to dissipate around the town. It still lingers, but by the light of the gibbous moon above, you can see the fog starting to thin out.

You take a deep breath, pondering what is to come next.

If you have the strange idol, go to **205**. Otherwise, go to **220**.

236

Banyu enters a state of hyper focus as he conducts his chant. You can see the look of desperate hope on his face, and you can sense the budding terror beneath his relatively calm exterior. As his chant ceases, he stares towards the door, holding his breath.

The banging at the door pauses for a moment, and then resumes, renewed in vigor. Banyu's face is one of shock and fear. "The chant did not work...we are doomed then." He drops to his knees in abject horror as the door splinters open. Bloated green creatures begin to squeeze themselves inside through the gap.

You do your best to fend them off, but as the waters rise around you and into the church itself, they eventually overtake you. They do not kill you right away. Instead, they seize you and Banyu and carry them off down the flooded streets of Esbury. Eventually, they stop before a building that has been set ablaze. They feed you to the flames and begin to dance about the fire, moving in strange, unearthly motions. While their silent lips sing praise to their detestable god, Bokrug, the great water lizard.

You have died, and this is **The End**. Your ultimate fate was as a sacrifice to one of the Great Old Ones. There are few worse ways to die.

237

You rise quickly and scurry out of the way of the horrible thing. Your feet pound against the flagstones of the street, carrying you far away from the thing. You cover as much distance as you can in as little time as you can. You run down streets and alleys, before eventually you feel comfortable enough to pause and reassess your situation.

By this point the water has risen up your calves, and is swiftly approach knee level depths. At the rate the water is rising, you do not have time to search the city any further, and you must look to your own self-preservation, especially with those strange things lurking in the fog.

You can just make out the silhouette of the church in the fog. With no other real options, and the prospect of rising above the tide in the church's belfry seems like a good idea. You rush inside of the quiet holy space and quickly begin to ascend the steps towards your hoped-for salvation.

Go to [196](#).

238

You prowl the town, hoping desperately to find some source or clue. The waters rise, and soon it is past your ankles. You splash through the streets, clinging to hope.

It would seem this faith was not misplaced. As you are moving through the mists, a man slams right into you. You recognize him to be one of the dark suited gentlemen from the ferry yesterday. He is carrying a gun in one hand, and dragging a sizable object beside him through the rising waters. You glance down and see it is an altarpiece, with bright jewels studded along the side. You also notice a sack tied about his waist, and it seems to be bulging with heavy goods. The man is wide eyed and pale, and he fixes his wild eyes upon you as you two meet in the middle of the mists. "What are

you doing!?! We have to run! They're coming for us! For everyone! We have to go!"

The man seems ready to panic, but perhaps you can calm him.

Make a **Persuade** roll. If you succeed, go to [216](#). If you fail, go to [241](#).

239

You reach into your pocket and pull out the gold bar. As you walk toward the statue with intent, you hear a reptilian hiss in your mind, all-consuming and oppressive, shaking you to your core. Instinctively, you grab your head in your off hand and try to hold back the growing headache as you find yourself standing over the idol.

You raise the ingot high above your head and bring it crashing down onto the stone idol. As soon as the gold touches the stone, the idol shatters into several fragments. As the stone splits apart, the hissing roar in your head subsides, though your brain is still throbbing. The mental strain has worn you down, and you swiftly drift off into a deep and dreamless slumber.

When you finally awake, you are being pulled into a boat by the authorities who came to investigate the flooding of Esbury. You do not know how long you have been there, but you are taken to the far shore of the lake, and eventually on to Boston, where you send several days in much needed rest.

While there, the story of what happened in Esbury hits the papers. According to the reports, the freak flooding caught the entire town off guard, and there were very few survivors. Still, the waters are beginning to subside now, and bodies and property are being recovered. Though Esbury was claimed by the rising tide, you were not. And with all that you had learned of the mysterious entity behind it, you were able to destroy the unholy idol that was the source of its connection to this world, and in doing so, you have prevented this horror from being unleashed on the world again.

You will forever remember your time in Esbury, and you will carry the horror of the place with you. But you can take solace in the fact that it has been put to rest.

Our story is over, and this is **The End**. Congratulations on surviving Call of Cthulhu and on thwarting the malign forces of the mythos that were at work in Esbury. You may use this character in future adventures.

240

Looking through the book, you become deeply engrossed and spend the next few hours in study. Your time spent yields valuable information. Professor Harris made several trips to India, starting about 12 years ago. During this time, he went to multiple sites to make observations and recover artifacts. His longest and most profitable trip appears to be ten years ago during an excursion to Sarnath, India, where he writes about lifting several items from an active Buddhist shrine. Apparently, Professor Harris had some regret about this theft, but he could not resist having the artifacts for his personal studies. The description of the items that he came across in Sarnath match some of the items at the estate sale last night. The clay cylinders, gemstone altar, and the serpentine idol are all described in detail in the entries related to his trip to Sarnath.

These items appear again throughout his journal after that. Apparently he has been studying these items the past ten years, and developed something of a fixated obsession with them. The idol was something that initially caught his eye, and the depiction of the great and grotesque water lizard matches no description of any known Hindu deity. Hoping to find clues to this, Professor Harris set about trying to translate the mysterious script on the cylinders and the altar. In doing so, he met with significant difficulty, as the text was only barely recognizable as an archaic dialect of a pre-Sanskrit language. The process was slow and painstaking until about a year ago.

At this time, Professor Harris writes of having a strange and enlightening dream. He reports walking among the ancient world from whence these items originated. A grand city of marble walls and onyx streets, of bronze gates and marvelous palaces and gardens. He writes of visiting the seventeen tower temples of this ancient city and meeting the bearded gods who dwelled here and sat upon their ivory thrones. In his writing, he calls the strange place Sarnath, despite the sheer impossibility of this. He claims that among the temples he learned the secrets of the ancient writing.

His next entry goes on to describe the odd cylinders of clay as the "Brick Cylinders of Kadatheron," though he still had not yet identified the other objects. The next few pages are torn from the journal.

The entries resume with more mundane matters, though there are still references to the artifacts from time to time. The more recent entries in the journal speak of Professor Harris's daily studies and living with Amelia. It is clear that he cares about her deeply from the way he writes about her, but he laments that his studies keep him from spending the

time with her that he would like. Instead, he has been lavishing her with gifts and money, which she was all too happy to accept. He notes that Amelia had never been happier despite the distance between them.

The last entry to catch your eye is dated a little over a week ago. Apparently, the pages torn from his journal went missing only recently. Professor Harris expresses deep concern at this as there were no signs of forced entry to his study and only he and Amelia had access to it, though he was sure he had not removed them from the journal himself.

You finish your reading by glossing over the last week of the Professor's life, which is rather uneventful and peaceful beyond his continued obsession with the artifacts and his occasional worries about Amelia.

Go to **210**.

241

You try to calm the man, who is deeply in a state of panic. You do your best to talk him down, but he gives you little pause. He will not slow down to listen to you. You hurry along, trying to get him to stop and talk with you for just a moment, but the fear has taken hold of him totally and completely.

You try to block his path physically, rushing out in front of him to cut him off. He does not take kindly to this, and you realize your mistake too late. There is madness in his eyes, and he raises his gun to fire at you for daring to be an obstacle to his escape.

At this range, there is no hope of getting out of the way in time. The man fires once into your chest and leaves you bleeding on the ground as he steps over you to continue his flight from this place. You are left there, lying on the flooding streets, bleeding heavily.

Mercifully, you pass out from the blood loss, and you do not know what it is that finally claims your life. Perhaps you bled out, perhaps the waters rose and you drowned, or perhaps a worse fate befell you. Whatever the case may be, you have died, and this is **The End**.

242

You simply have no idea what you are looking at. The characters are strange and unusual here, and they match no script known by you. Studying the rest of the object yields no other clues.

As you dally here in the darkness and mist, you do not notice the approach of otherworldly things. They surround you and strike together, nearly a dozen

of the unholy abominations with distended forms and lifeless eyes.

They fall upon you and your companion swiftly, and though he is armed, he only manages to bring down a few of them before they subdue him and strangle the life out of him. You fare little better, and soon find yourself being seized by the creatures, despite your best efforts.

Kicking and screaming, you are hauled bodily through the streets of Esbury. You are carried off to a

burning building, and fed to the flames by the horrid creatures. As you are being burnt alive, you see the abominable beings take up a shuffling dance of unnerving nature, and their pouting, flabby lips sing praises to their unknown god, to which your soul is sacrificed.

You have died, and this is **The End**. You have been burned alive as an offering to one of the Great Old Ones.

1920S ERA INVESTIGATOR

Name Elijah Woods
 Player _____
 Occupation Professor
 Age 40 Sex M
 Residence Boston, MA
 Birthplace Boston, MA

CHARACTERISTICS

STR 50 ²⁵/₁₀ DEX 60 ³⁰/₁₂ POW 50 ²⁵/₁₀
 CON 60 ³⁰/₁₂ APP 40 ²⁰/₈ EDU 80 ⁴⁰/₁₆
 SIZ 50 ²⁵/₁₀ INT 70 ³⁵/₁₄ Move Rate

Major Wound Max HP

Dying (02)	01	02
Inconcion	03	04
	06	07
	08	09
	10	11
	12	13
	14	15
	16	17
	18	19
	20	

Temp. Insanc	Indef. Insanc	Start	Max	Insane	01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	
54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	
77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88
89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	

HIT POINTS

08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53			
54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66
67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76			
77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99			

CALL of CTHULHU

Out of Luck

01	02	03	04	05	06	07
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
31	32	33	34	35	36	37
38	39	40	41	42	43	44
45	46	47	48	49	50	51
52	53					
54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67
68	69	70	71	72	73	74
75	76					
77	78	79	80	81	82	83
84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97
98	99					

Max MP

00	01	02	03	04
05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Law (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Science (01%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Anthropology (01%)	60 ³⁰ / ₁₂	<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting (Brawl) (25%)	20 ¹⁰ / ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Use (20%)	50 ²⁵ / ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Appraise (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Listen (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology (01%)	70 ³⁵ / ₁₄	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Locksmith (01%)	20 ¹⁰ / ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> Sleight of Hand (10%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art / Craft (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Handgun) (20%)	20 ¹⁰ / ₄	<input type="checkbox"/> Mech. Repair (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Spot Hidden (25%)	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) (25%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth (20%)	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Survival (10%)	40 ²⁰ / ₈
<input type="checkbox"/> Charm (15%)		<input type="checkbox"/> First Aid (50%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (10%)	60 ³⁰ / ₁₂	<input type="checkbox"/> Swim (20%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Climb (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/> History (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Occult (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Throw (20%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Rating (00%)	50 ²⁵ / ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidate (15%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Op. Hv. Machine (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cthulhu Myths (00%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Jump (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Other) (01%)	40 ²⁰ / ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> Pilot (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (half DEX)	50 ²⁵ / ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic		<input type="checkbox"/> Psychology (10%)	50 ²⁵ / ₁₀	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive Auto (20%)		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Psychoanalysis (01%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rec Repair (10%)		<input type="checkbox"/> Language (Cwn) (IDL)	40 ²⁰ / ₈	<input type="checkbox"/> Ride (05%)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/> English					

WEAPONS

Weapon	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Damage	Range	Attacks	Ammo	Mag.
Unarmed				1d3 + db	-	1	-	-

COMBAT

Damage Bonus
 Build
 Dodge

BACK STORY



Personal Description

Dark hair, Brown eyes, Heavily tanned skin, Short beard

Traits Inquisitive, Ambitious

Ideology/Beliefs Fortune favors the prepared mind.

Injuries & Scars

Significant People My old friends of the Boston Nine. I left my days of crime behind me when I got my education, but you never really leave the gang.

Phobias & Manias

Meaningful Locations

Boston, the town I call home

Arcane Tomes, Spells & Artifacts

Treasured Possessions

The research manuscript I've been working on for over a year will win me academic acclaim

Encounters with Strange Entities

GEAR & POSSESSIONS

Tailored 3 piece suit

Thin Briefcase

Research Manuscript

CASH & ASSETS

Spending level

Cash

Assets

QUICK REFERENCE RULES

Skill & Characteristic Rolls

Levels of Success:

Fumble	Fail	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Critical
100/96+	> 95%	≤ 95%	1/3 95%	1/3 95%	01

Pushing Rolls: Must justify reroll; Cannot Push Combat or Sanity Rolls

Wounds & Healing

First Aid heals 1HP; Medicine heals +1d3 HP

Major Wound = loss of $\geq 1/3$ max HP in one attack

Reach 0 HP without Major Wound = **Unconscious**

Reach 0 HP with Major Wound = **Dying**

Dying: First Aid = temp. stabilized; then require Medicine

Natural Heal rate (non Major Wound): recover 1HP per day

Natural Heal rate (Major Wound): weekly healing roll

FELLOW INVESTIGATORS

