

# The Maze of Madness

A Gothic Horror Adventure  
Written by  
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# The Maze of Madness

## Introduction

This scenario is set in 1925 and has a general theme of Gothic Horror, originally intended for the “Call of Cthulhu” role playing game. Please note that this is intended for mature players, and that it is not my intention to encourage interest in anything pertaining to black magic. The game is for entertainment purposes only. If you think you may find the contents of this scenario disturbing, then stop reading now.

In order to increase the mood and feeling of player involvement, the scenario refers to some real events, people, and places. It is important to note that such references are purely for gaming purposes and were derived purely from my imagination. One should also note that liberties have been taken to develop the story. For example, it is not known as to whether or not the engineer who designed the Eiffel Tower actually had a daughter. Where historical inaccuracies may be present, it is down to the individual referee to remind players that this is only a game. Information known to be true has been italicised so that you can point it out to the players if you so wish. This can help add to the spooky atmosphere at times.

Statistics have deliberately been held back to make the scenario as generic as possible. As the scenario was originally intended for use with “Call of Cthulhu”, it makes reference to existing material written for the game. Such references are not essential however. A good referee should get by without them, although they will make your life easier.

The very nature of the scenario requires a good referee who can ad lib when necessary. It is highly recommended that the entire scenario be read before running the game. Notes on how I ran certain elements are provided to give an idea of game flow.

Here follows a basic outline of the plot, intended for the eyes of the referee only.



## Basic Plot

In 1921, a British psychiatrist by the name of Frederick Baiter performs experiments to investigate the psychological make up of the emotion of fear, in an attempt to understand various cases of phobia that he is dealing with. For a while he receives grants to aid in his studies, and uses the money to condition animals to experience fear when certain sounds or imagery are displayed.

By 1923, he notes that the programmed images and sounds induce fear regardless of whether or not the real reason for the fear exists. At the same time, when the associated imagery is not present, the animals appear better able to cope with the mistreatment he puts them through. He decides to transfer his experiments to one of his patients. For this purpose, he chooses one of his newest patients, a man by the name of Geoff Harrison, who is suffering from the worst case of claustrophobia Baiter has ever seen. At the same time, Baiter receives a new assistant in the form of Douglas Cole.

Unknown to Baiter, Cole is in fact a member of a secret sect that is responsible for making Harrison insane, and arrives at the Asylum with the intention of making sure Harrison remains insane, or, failing this, meet an untimely end.

Baiter creates a number of cubicles with moveable walls capable of shrinking, and only has the room shrink when Harrison is shown an image of a maze. Over a period of several months, Harrison associates his claustrophobia with the image implanted, and begins to show remarkable improvement once the shrinking room sessions have ceased. He no longer screams in his cell at night, and is considered cured of his claustrophobia.

When Cole discovers Baiters' fear experiments, he deliberately shows Harrison the image he has been programmed with, causing him to have a complete mental breakdown followed by a massive heart attack. When Baiter discovers the body, he confronts Cole, and Cole kills him, framing the now dead patient, claiming that Harrison went mad and suffered a heart attack after having murdered Dr Baiter. The Asylum is closed down shortly afterward.

Recognising the potential of Baiters' experiments, Cole informs his sect of the results, who decide to recreate the experiments for the purpose of brainwashing enemies of the cult so that they may be killed via "natural" means at a later date to avoid suspicion. To aid in this purpose, the Asylum is bought and set up as a health farm with Cole in charge.





At around this time the cult discovers something very interesting regarding the Eiffel Tower:

In 1882, Alexandre Gustav Eiffel, designer of the Eiffel Tower, stumbles across an ancient manuscript allegedly showing an area of Paris as it was before man roamed the Earth, back in the time of the "Old Ones".

The map reveals France to have been mountainous, and also reveals the location of a portal used by the "Old Ones" to travel from their world and populate the Earth. The portal was situated at a level of 900 feet (*the Eiffel Tower is 985ft 11 inches tall*). The manuscript went on to describe the fact that only a third of the "Old Ones" managed to get through, before being forced to retreat to Antarctica and abandon the gate.

The revelations that the Cthulhloid manuscript revealed to Alexandre duly made him insane, to the point that, when approached by the Parisian government and commissioned to create a landmark for Paris, he considered creating a tower in the estimated location of the old gateway, tall enough to reach the same height as the portal described within the manuscript.

Alexandre became more insane during the construction, and decided that the tower should be more significant for its' purpose. As it was known to him that only a third of the "Old Ones" had managed to use the ancient portal, and that their description implied that they were Devils, he decided to incorporate a third of the Devils' number (being 666) into the design. *The Eiffel Tower took 2 years, 2 months and 2 days to complete, and was finished by the 31st March, 1889 (It was this fact that provided me with the seed for this scenario).*

The cult is due to attempt opening the portal soon on top of the Eiffel Tower to allow the Earth to be re-populated by the "Old Ones". All members of society who are seen as a threat to the opening ceremony are given free invites to the health farm, where they are subjected to image implantation associated with the fear they are subjected to. This is done with a specially constructed maze in the cellar of the health farm, where a lesser Demon is housed to terrorise the occupants. Image association used is a simple line drawing of a maze. Health farm "patients" are then brainwashed to forget the experience and released, believing themselves to have enjoyed a normal health farm experience. Weight loss suffered due to stress experienced helps substantiate this.

By 1925 (present day), the cult begins to post the maze pictures to induce heart attacks in all health farm visitors in order that nothing stands in the way of the portal opening ceremony. One of the victims of the Maze is a friend of the players, which is where our adventure begins.



# Player Intro

The game starts in central Washington U.S.A. in 1925 and should suit almost any character. Player characters know one another through being at Dunbar High School together, and will meet again after one of their old school chums, Frank Walters, invites them all for a reunion, meeting them all outside their old school, then driving them in his car to his house in Virginia Avenue, pointing out his place of work along the way (The Washington Daily News), where he works as a photographer. Once home, he will treat the players to a grand meal, during which the players may reminisce and talk about their lives in general.

This is an excellent opportunity for the players to familiarise themselves with one another's characters. Have them role play talking about their old school days, and discuss how they've got on in the world, describing their jobs and interests - What do they do now? Are they single? Where do they work? What are their hobbies? Do they consider themselves good at what they do etc.

After the meal is over, Frank will give the players a guided tour of his house. It would appear that he is doing rather well for himself, and becomes evident that he is something of a ladies man. Eventually, the tour leads to the cellar where he has his own darkroom set up. Many pictures line the walls, consisting of the White House, the Eiffel Tower, a grand mansion,



and of course, women! If asked, he smiles and relates stories to them. The White House was taken as part of some story for the paper, and caused much difficulty in getting the exposure right. The women are mostly previous lovers. The picture of the Eiffel Tower was taken in 1921 when he went to France on holiday. While there he acquired some rare antique silver which he collects for investment purposes from an auction which took place at a police station, where unclaimed stolen goods were on offer. He gained many bargains while there, although (he laughs at this point) he was burgled roughly a month later. If inquires are made into what was stolen, he will state that apart from a few bits of silver, it was mainly just a pile of old illustrations that

came as part of a job lot which were of no interest to him anyway. As for the picture of the mansion, it is a health farm he attended in England, which, he recalls, was very successful in making him lose weight. He highly recommends the place. If asked, he recalls it being near Dover, and run by a Doctor Cole.





The stolen illustrations originally belonged to Alexandre Gustav Eiffel, containing the original manuscripts that made him go mad, along with concept drawings for the Eiffel Tower. They were originally stolen from him by the cult. Alexandre never reported the theft owing to his madness. The police later confiscated the goods when the cults' burglars were later caught (after them having discovered the significance of the Eiffel Tower). As the cult were unwilling to steal them back from a police station, they awaited the auction, only to be outbid by Frank Walters, so they merely set about discovering where he lived so that they could steal them back from him. They later arranged with Cole that he have a free visit to his health farm in order to receive the maze treatment, just in case he had read the manuscripts. Now that the cult are nearer to unlocking the portal, it is time for the maze to claim its first victims. Frank Walters must be silenced in case he is aware of the significance of the Eiffel Tower.

Now Frank Walters prepares his ultimate show-off, and reveals a hidden drinks cabinet behind a panel under the stairs (prohibition is still in effect). He pours everyone several drinks, eventually excusing himself so as to check his mail.

Eventually he returns and uses a letter opener on a small parcel, which he explains with eagerness must be the Polivit silver cleaner that he ordered from England. Upon opening it, he appears genuinely terrified. Beads of sweat appear on his forehead as his eyes widen with fear. At this point he will attack the player closest to him with the letter opener. He will appear to be in a mad frenzy and lash out at anyone who gets in his way. It will take three people to pin him down, whereupon, he will die of a massive heart attack.

Obviously at this point you don't want Frank killing the players in his frenzy, but don't be afraid to wound them.

The struggle should be epic, with furniture breakage's occurring in the process. Be sure to give the impression that he cannot be stopped unless they intervene, as this will encourage them to investigate after his death, and



On first examination nothing seems unusual about the cleaning kit, closer examination, however, reveals that the metal plate has been heavily marked with lines joining many of the holes. The pattern etched onto the plate resembles a maze.

The company that produces the kit is based in London and may be telephoned, but remember to take the time difference into consideration. Company employees will confirm that the lines should not be present, and will simply offer a refund should the goods be returned. They will deny that it could have been tampered with their end, and point out that they have had no other complaints.



make the situation a little awkward to report to the police.

It is up to the players as to whether or not they report his death to the authorities, but take into account that the police may be a little suspicious if it looks like a struggle took place, particularly if it is evident that drinking took place on the premises. I normally have the police ask them not to leave the city in case they are wanted for further questioning.

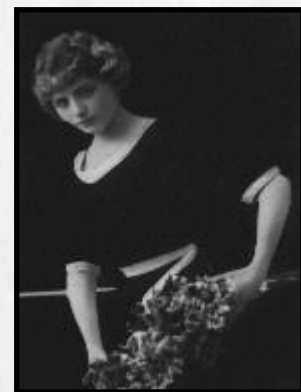
I often like to hand the players items that they can look at, and boot fairs can often be a good source for finding such things (which is where I managed to pick up the Polivit silver cleaner that served as a partial seed to this scenario). Old coins and stamps can be picked up quite cheaply to add some authenticity to your game, along with photographic postcards that can serve as portraits of characters or locations. Let the players see the picture of the Eiffel tower and Polivit silver cleaner, as well as the photographs below which can be found in his darkroom.



Players will immediately recognise Frank Walters as being the second person from the right. Others present are his work colleagues. If questioned, they will be surprised and even upset over his death. They will confirm that he had no known enemies, and that he was a bit of a ladies man. If shown the photograph of Anna Judson at the bottom of this page, they will point the players to her new place of work (The Evening Star), and some may even divulge that Frank flirted heavily with her. Reward good investigative roleplay with interesting characters. Perhaps the man on the far left was a jealous rival for the affections of Anna for example.

Players will only discover the identity of this person through talking to Anna Judson, who will refer to her as "that French tart!" She arrived on the scene shortly after his trip to France, after which, Anna chose to end their affair and sought work elsewhere.

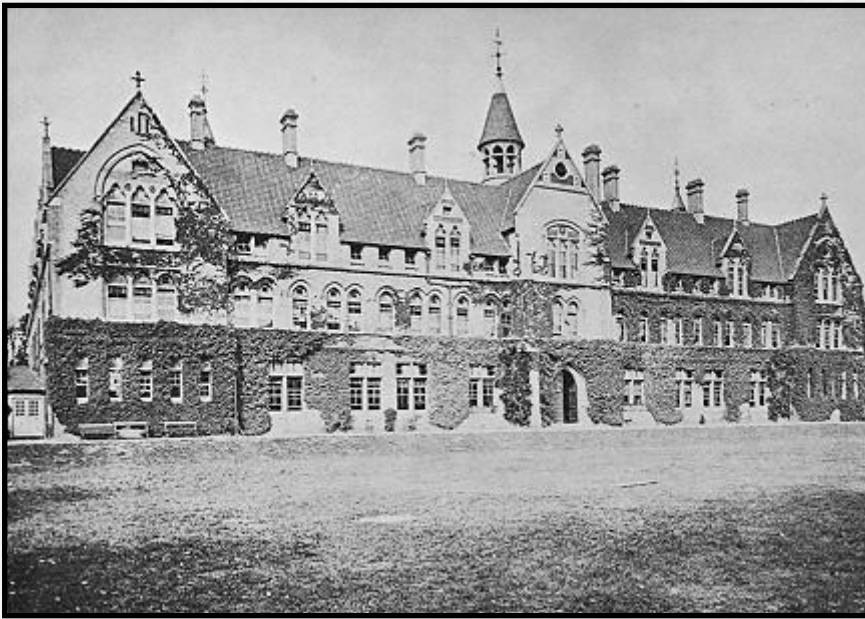
If the players have the means of doing so, you may enable them to discover that a Mr Gustell was present at the auction which Frank attended in France. It was he who got his wife to charm Frank for the purpose of discovering the documents whereabouts and stealing them from him.



Anna Judson used to work with Frank, but now works for the Evening Star. His work colleagues will recognise her and point out where she works.

She had an affair with Frank (which her husband is blissfully unaware of). She will not take kindly to questioning for the above reason, but clever role playing may have her divulging her thoughts on Simone Gustell.





Photograph of the McKinnley Health Farm in England where Frank received the Maze treatment. There is nothing remarkable about this picture.

## The Postman

The players should eventually deduce that Franks mail was obviously tampered with, and will eventually consider investigating the post office. A bribe among post office workers may reveal that one of their colleagues, a young man by the name of Stephen Witt, was sacked only yesterday for being caught pocketing some mail. The police were informed and sent to his house to arrest him, but as of yet, they have been unable to find him. The main office keeps records of employees addresses and phone numbers, and Stephen Witts may be found here. There is also a locker yet to be cleared of his belongings which the players may be able to investigate.

### Note:

Stephen Witt was a member of the Cthulhu cult, whose job it was to send mazes to selected victims in his district when a certain message was received. He would keep an eye out for letters addressed to the proposed victims, and on finding any, take them home, where he would carefully insert a picture of the maze to induce heart attack. He would recognise the signal to start inserting the maze pictures as it would arrive at the post office as an postcard with no forwarding address, thus leaving no address for would be investigators.

Should the players choose to visit his house (22 Fenton Place), it is in a busy street close to a market. Knocking on his door will obtain no answer, but players may hear noises from within the house and consider breaking in. The noises are in fact made by another cult member who has murdered Stephen Witt to prevent clues to the cults activities leaking to the police on his arrest (The cult is disappointed he was caught stealing mail). Characters who react fast enough will see the killer escaping via a

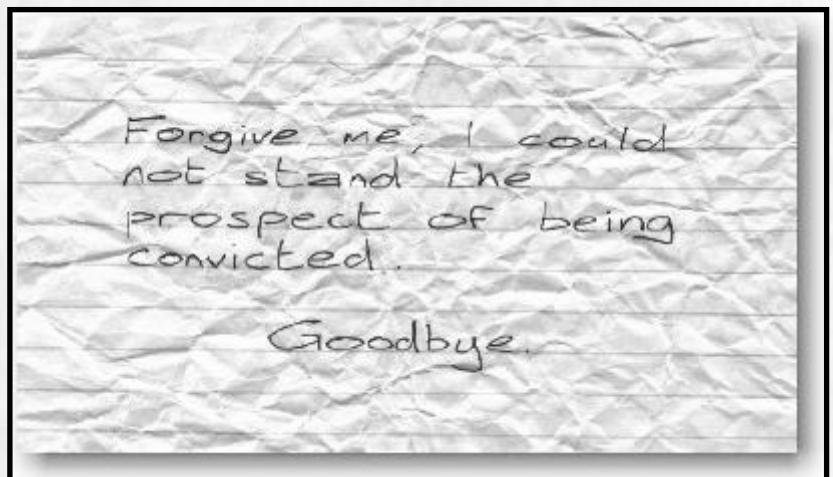




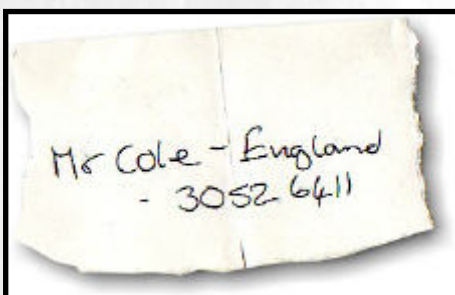
back window to run through the garden. His escape route will be down First Avenue to Union Station, where he will board a train after attempting to lose himself in the crowds.

Obviously, you don't want the characters catching the killer, but you don't have to let them know that. A nice chase scene can be developed here, involving toppling over vegetable stalls in the market and leaping over the bonnets of passing cars. The killer should be armed with blow darts coated in poison, but quickly applied first aid will enable the avoidance of death, although any victims will still be in no condition to continue with the pursuit. It is also good to have the murderer capable of mild spell usage that will have the players beginning to wonder what they are becoming involved with. When I have run the game, I usually have an innocent who gets in the way suddenly flare up in flames with no explanation. Keep it subtle to begin with. There is plenty of opportunity to really scare the players in later sessions!

Once the players are within Stephens house, they will find Stephen hanging by his neck from the banisters over the landing, where a chair lies on its side, indicating suicide. Also on the floor is the crumpled note shown here.



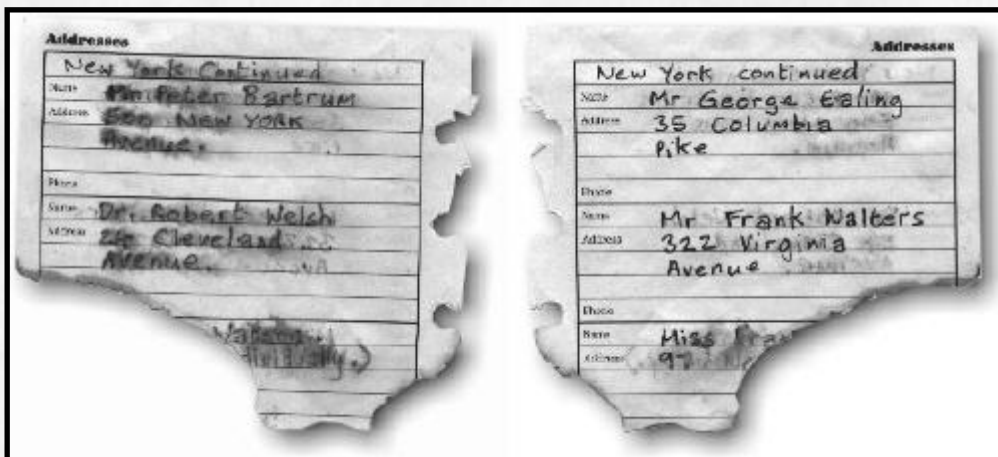
The suicide note is close to the chair. Further investigation will reveal that the handwriting is a poor approximation of that of Stephen Witt.



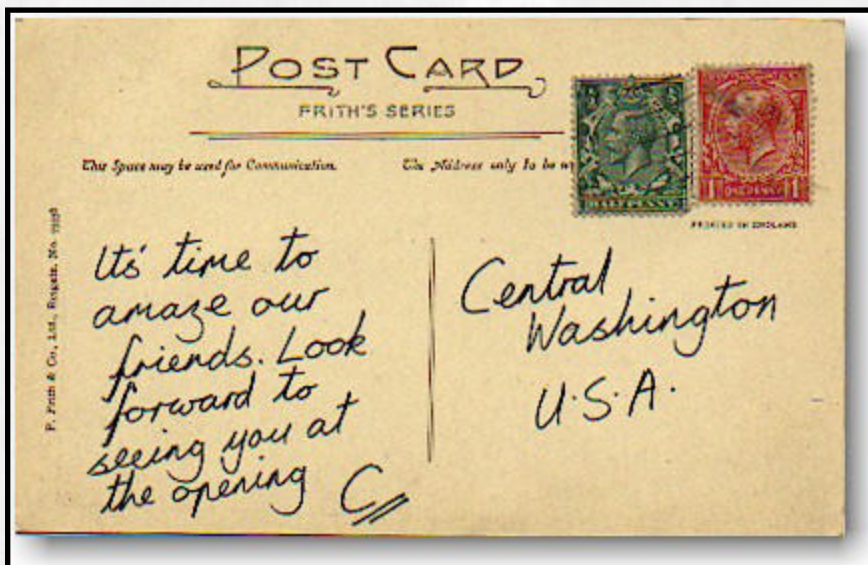
If the players phone this number, the response will be "McKinnley Health Farm, how may I help you?" Cole will be wary of telephone conversations, it should be noted that he is extremely cunning. If the players feign interest in booking an appointment with him, he will ask for their details so that he can forward a brochure, but will in fact send cultists to the address. Any correspondence with Cole will be met with cultist intimidation and threats to cease any investigation.

Anyone with first aid knowledge examining the body will find a small puncture mark hidden by the bruising on his neck. These are wounds from a blowdart, and contain traces of an unknown substance (poison - invent what ingredients you want should a player come up with an exceptional first aid roll).

As the murderer was caught on the scene, he left in a hurry and was thus unable to complete his job. The bedroom is a shambles with draws emptied all over the floor where the slip of paper shown to the left can be found. There is also an address book still smoldering in the waste paper basket. This contains addresses of those to whom a picture of the maze would be sent. Other than the address of Frank Walters, the surviving addresses are as shown overleaf:



As the players interrupted the task of the murderer, they will find an address book still burning in a waste paper basket in the bedroom. These are the only pages that can be salvaged, with only four addresses remaining visible, including that of Frank Walters. The players should deduce from this that it is the remains of a hit list, and that the other names mentioned here are in danger of receiving the maze.



Other items found on the premises include a small amount of French currency, and a postcard (shown left), the stamps on which seem to indicate England as the source.

**Mr Peter Bartrum**  
500 New York Avenue

If called upon, players will discover an overweight man dead in his armchair clutching a letter. A picture of the maze lays on the floor nearby. He lives in a squalid bedsit above a cafe, and has a collection of magazines regarding the occult. He was a friend of Geoff Harrison (The original guinea pig of the maze experiments).

**Dr Robert Welch**  
24 Cleveland Avenue

This retired doctor knew Frederick Baiter, and will be found dead in his hallway in similar circumstances to Peter Bartrum. Although there is enough evidence with this discovery to make a connection with England, should the police become involved, they will simply inform Scotland Yard and ask them to make their own inquiries, which will amount to nothing.

**Mr George Ealing**  
35 Columbia Pike

George has a nice family house. His wife will answer the door and explain that her husband is working abroad. He is a colonel in the army and





currently running training manoeuvres in France. If asked (and in a mood to answer), his wife will reveal that an ordinary letter arrived from their daughter, and within it was a picture of a maze that seemed out of place with the letters contents. Her husband isn't due back for three months and cannot be contacted. If questioned correctly, she will reveal that her husband went to the Mckinnley Health Farm about 6 months ago, having received a free invitation. She will be able to supply the players with the address.

Should the players decide to confiscate the picture of the maze, if using the "Call of Cthulhu" system, you may choose to reward the players with a small sanity bonus.

By this stage the players should have tied the Maze to the McKinnley Health farm and considering this as their next destination for investigation. Depending on the speed of the game, you may want to introduce some spooky goings on to further intimidate them. If they have attracted the attention of Cole, this should certainly be the case. When I ran this and the players phoned Cole, I put myself in Coles position to deal with the call, having him try to con contact details from the character making the phone call in as innocent a way as possible.

#### Example:

"I'm afraid we don't take bookings over the phone nor discuss prices, although I should warn you that we are considered VERY expensive by some. If you give me your address I can send a brochure to you that outlines all the available services here. It does the place far more justice than speaking to me. You need to see the photographs to appreciate what you're getting for your money."

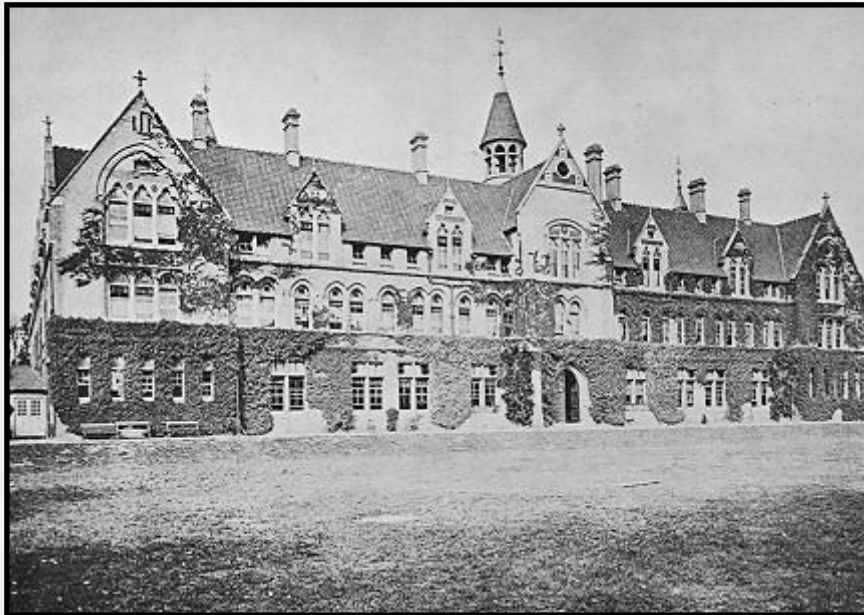
There is of course no such brochure. Once Cole has an address to work with, you have your excuse to start having cultists intimidate the players.

When I ran the game one of the player characters owned a mansion where they all retired to collect their thoughts. I had their phone ring, constantly, and if they picked up the receiver, all they could hear was arcane whisperings that would not respond to their questions or threats. As an added bonus, when the player in question announced that he was going to disconnect it, I told him that it already was. Later, many faces were seen pressed against a window peering in, and when the players ran to the door, I announced that it was bulging inwards while heavy chanting could be heard outside. This all lead to a very frightening atmosphere, without putting the characters in any immediate danger (I had the cultists flee as soon as the players were in a position to retaliate).

Such activity will of course demand San rolls when appropriate, and be openly laughed at by the police.



# The McKinnley Health Farm



As this scenario was originally intended for use with "Call of Cthulhu", there are a number of publications that would prove beneficial to the running of this adventure, in particular "Green and Pleasant Land" which is a sourcebook with information on England in the 1920s', and "Asylum", which contains floorplans suitable for the Mckinnley Health Farm, and details of the "Mauretania", an ocean liner which will add flavour to the players' trip to England when they decide to follow the leads so far obtained. Tickets cost \$400, with the journey taking 6 days. There are a number of ways in which the characters could finance the trip to England:

They may decide among themselves that it is worth financing the trip themselves to delve deeper into the matter.

Mrs Ealing may be persuaded that her husband is in mortal danger, and contribute tickets to aid the players in their investigation.

The Washington Daily News may decide to finance the trip if convinced that there may be a huge story here. Even so, they'd probably only pay for journalists within the party.

If you have had the cultists already intimidating the players, as indeed you should have done if Dr Cole is aware of their investigations, then they will undoubtedly consider smuggling firearms with them for their own protection, as it should be impossible for them to purchase any while in England. Have the players use appropriate skills to try and hide such weapons within their luggage or on their person. Generally speaking, the smaller the weapon they are trying to smuggle, the easier it should be. If a weapon is found when they board the ship, fast talking on the players







24th January 1923

## KILL OR CURE?

By Ron Aland

The local regional health authority have now released a public statement concerning the recent deaths of Doctor Baiter and one of his patients last week.

Doctor Edward Phillips, acting spokesman for the authority, seemed somewhat embarrassed about what he had to say:

"...Doctor Baiter was involved with controversial experiments thought to be a revolutionary approach for the cure of phobias, and was consequently funded by grants issued enthusiastically. Regretfully however, Mr Harrison was the first to undergo this new form of treatment, which proved to be only temporarily effective, later leading to a relapse that resulted in the attack on Doctor Baiter followed by a massive heart attack..."

Doctor Phillips went on to say

that in future, the issuing of grants for medical purposes would be closely monitored to avoid further mistakes of this kind from taking place. He refused to elaborate on what exactly was involved with the controversial 'cure' or even how it was administered.

"...All that matters is that the cure did not work and will no longer be used..."

Surely if the methods used were considered controversial the grants should not have been issued in the first place, and two deaths may have been avoided. What was the money spent on? Again, Doctor Phillips was elusive on the subject. It would appear that on this occasion the health authority has been very irresponsible, and that we should be grateful that the 'cured' lunatic Harrison was never released back into the public.

SAMUEL BROTHERS,

The newspaper cuttings found should arouse enough suspicion to warrant further investigation of the Health Farm, however, it should be noted that going straight to the police will create further problems for the players, as the cult has a member within its ranks in the form of Constable Hawkins.

If they should go to the police station, the desk will be attended by Constable Hawkins. If the constable is given any information regarding the Health Farm, he will insist on accompanying the characters to the farm for



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14th February 1923

## ASYLUM SOLD

By Ron Aland

Rumours that the McKinley Sanatorium is to close down were confirmed recently when an embarrassed health authority washed their hands of the scene of controversial phobia experiments which were to lead to the death of a doctor and one of his patients.

The Asylum was sold to French businessman of unknown identity for an undisclosed amount. What is to become of the building is as yet unknown.

SUPERIOR BRITISH MANUFACTURE.  
TO LADIES.  
Egerton's  
It's

GALVANIC



Plates  
Gauge  
15 inch and  
1/4  
2 1/2  
Other suitable  
steel railway  
and galvanic  
Constructors of  
Gates, P  
BAYLIS  
And a Good  
METEOR  
PA







the purpose of questioning Doctor Cole. On their arrival however, he will reveal his true nature, and assist Cole in attempting to dispose of the characters. Characters could of course insist on talking to the man in charge when they arrive at the police station, Chief Inspector Gerry Donavon, but Hawkins will openly try to discourage such a meeting.

I managed to turn Hawkins into a respected villain when running the game, despite the fact that he is only a minion of the cult. The players insisted on talking to the man in charge, to which Hawkins was reluctant to allow. While they argued in the reception area, I had Donavon wander in and reprimand Hawkins for his treatment of the players before agreeing to see them in private, resulting in the players announcing that they gave smug looks to the constable before being led to a private room. On showing Donavon the maze however, he does of course die of a heart attack. Other police rush in to give assistance, and the death is assumed to be natural, while Hawkins returns the smug look previously given by the players. From this point on, he proves to be a constant thorn in their side.

The Health Farm is situated out in the countryside on a large plot of land surrounded by tall hedges. The players can easily venture there for a closer look, whereupon they will stumble across a potential ally in the form of Jeremy Baiter, son of the murdered Doctor. Once the players have won his trust, he will tell them that he fell out with his father some years ago, but has since grown curious of the circumstances surrounding his death, and has been able to piece together the following information:

Douglas Cole appears to have no medical qualifications.

The Health Farm underwent modifications in 1923.

A French woman often visits the Farm ( Miss Simone Gustell ). Baiter would recognise her photograph if the players still have it in their possession. He has checked records at the harbour and discovered that she regularly travels from France, where she has a criminal record for burglary.

The players may also witness visitations from an accountant who travels by bicycle to the premises. If the players follow him, it may be possible to break into his office and investigate the book keeping for the Health Farm, where the following can be discovered:

A receipt from a local building firm that no longer exists (Graves Asslett Construction). Checking local records will reveal that the company was run by two partners and a son, all of whom died of heart attack on the same day, exactly one month after invoicing Cole for work carried out in the cellar.



Many repetitive receipts from Brown and Sons, a local butcher. (Strange for a Health Farm, but the monster in the maze sometimes requires feeding!)

Bills paid by various people, including:

Frank Walters; George Ealing; Gerry Donavon; Peter Bartrum; Doctor Robert Welsh; George Ealing; Sophia Eiffel.

Samples of Coles handwriting, which matches the postcard found in Stephen Witts house back in Washington.

## Inside The Health Farm

Doctor Cole will appear very friendly toward visitors to his Farm, particularly if he has been tipped off by Constable Hawkins. If this is the case, he may even give them free invites to the Farm so that he can administer the maze treatment to them. He will usually be reluctant to show people around (many of the rooms are obviously unused), and will quote extortionate prices to dissuade people from wanting to stay. Should characters insist that they can afford it, he will inform them that he is fully booked for several months (an obvious lie considering how empty and silent the farm is), and ask for their addresses so that he can forward details once he has vacancies. Any details given to him will be forwarded to Constable Hawkins who will then attempt to frame them for all manner of local crimes.

Cole appears to be the only person present, along with a rather vicious looking Alsatian that he sometimes lets loose around the grounds. He has a shotgun at his disposal should he require.

When I originally ran this game, the players chose to sneak upon the grounds, whereupon the dog was let loose upon them, wounding them in the process. Consequently, the dog was shot and killed by one of the players, who later returned to the Farm posing as a potential customer. I used the opportunity to help develop the feeling for an occult based storyline, and told him that the dog was present in the building and moving around, although somewhat sluggishly with a glazed look to its' eye. A sanity check was called for.

Eventually, the players cover, if any, will be blown, and Cole will do all in his power to kill the players, releasing the monster from the cellar in the process. The cellar contains a maze carefully constructed so that the walls can be adjusted to change the overall layout. It was here that visitors to the Health Farm would be dumped and drained of blood by the monster (hence their apparent weight loss). Note that as this game was originally designed for "Call of Cthulhu", the monster in the cellar was defined by the





stats for a "Byakhee", a black winged creature that can suck the blood from victims and reduce their strength in the process. Visitors were brainwashed to forget the experience, but being shown a picture of the maze (identical to the one given to them to tease them into believing there was an escape route from the monster), would trigger the heart attack as they recalled the forgotten terror they had been subjected to. Of the several occasions I have run this game, characters always end up burning the Health Farm to the ground, with the monster and Cole meeting their demise within the flames.

Coles' office is an important source of clues, and the characters should use their imagination with regard to breaking in to recover them. Within, players will find the following:

A package containing printed mazes (delivered from a local printer who is not in on the plot).



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Several letters addressed to various newspapers around the world. Each letter contains a print of the maze, along with instructions to print the maze in the first September issue. Destroying the letters may be rewarded with sanity points if you are running this game using the "Call of Cthulhu" system.

The desk within the room has a locked draw, within which can be found the letter shown here.



The stamps indicate that it was posted from France a week ago. The contents of the letter are shown overleaf in both original and typed format for your convenience. Anyone with skills in Astronomy should be allowed a slim chance of realising the significance of the planetary conjunction said to occur on October 16th. On that date, various stars will form a line pointing from Earth directly to the constellation of Taurus. The letter also refers to the imminent arrival of Mrs Simone Gustell, whom characters will easily recognise from a photograph originally obtained from Frank Walters house. It should be obvious from the letter that she will be arriving in Dover to silence Miss Sophia Eiffel, daughter of the architect who designed the Eiffel Tower.





26th July, 1925

Dr D Cole  
 C/O The Mckimley Health Farm  
 Love Lane  
 Capel-La-Ferne  
 Nr Dover

Dear Douglas

How is dear old England these days? We've had some pretty nice weather lately, and good news too.

We've examined the manuscript some more and are pleased to confirm that the gate was indeed built in the right place, and contains all the relevant symbols to conduct our psychic powers enough to open it. As you already know, the pagans implied that the gate could be opened only once every few thousand years owing to the added requirement of the proper planetary positions. We now know the next correct positioning will occur on October 16th, so it is important that we deal with our enemies as soon as possible so that we have no hindrance when





we come to open the gate. The old ones will reward us well when we bring them through, and their chaos will rule the world with terror with our brotherhood as its agents. No one must stand in our way so we want you to start delimiting the mazes near, and if possible get some published in newspapers to insure our intended victims see them.

By the way, you will next have to get one to Miss Sophia Eijfel, as we have discovered she is staying in Kent somewhere, so my wife will be coming over to see her personally. I realize it's short notice but I was hoping you could put her up for a few days, she'll be arriving in Dover sometime next week.

In the meantime I look forward to meeting you at the opening ceremony.

Yours sincerely

Francis Guskell



# The Letter

Dear Douglas,

How is dear old England these days? We've had some pretty nice weather lately, and good news too.

We've examined the manuscript some more and are pleased to confirm that the gate was indeed built in the right place, and contains all the relevant symbols to conduct our psychic power enough to open it. As you already know, the papyrus implied that the gate could be opened only once every few thousand years owing to the added requirement of the proper planetary positions. We now know that the next correct positioning will occur on October 16th, so it is important that we deal with our enemies as soon as possible so that we have no hindrance when we come to open the gate. The Old Ones will reward us well when we bring them through, and their chaos will rule the world with terror with our brotherhood as its' agents. No one must stand in our way, so we want you to start delivering the mazes now, and if possible, get some published in newspapers to insure our intended victims see them.

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In the meantime, I look forward to meeting you at the opening ceremony.

Yours Sincerely,

Francis Gustell.

A bookcase within the room contains various literature regarding psychology and other medical subjects. It is very dusty from misuse. Hidden among the books is a diary written by Doctor Baiter that Cole is unaware of. Relevant passages that provide clues as to what happened at the Health Farm are shown overleaf, and again the notes have been typed out for easy reading following the samples. Please also note that some may find the content of these notes disturbing due to the gothic horror of the game. I also need to apologise in advance for bad use of English here, but this was originally written many moons ago. A worthy referee should be capable of creating their own notes that would appear more worthy of an educated doctor.





November 1921

The first of my grants has come through, at last I can test my theory of sanity being related to fear and thus treatable if the fear is related through hypnosis or other forms of suggestion to an image that the victim is unlikely to encounter. I have bought twenty hens and twenty rabbits, all of which are labelled and will receive various forms of pain at the sound of a bell ringing after a light has been shone in their eyes. All heart rates are monitored at monthly intervals, along with perspiration, reflexes and food intake.

March 1922

Unfortunately the chickens have a low pain tolerance, I only have five surviving, but these are very jumpy and probably poor specimens to continue experimenting on. As for the rabbits their heart rates increase as soon as I enter the room. Already I need replacement cages.

My request for more grant money has been accepted. I am currently trying to obtain monkeys as I feel these will survive pain better and are nearer the intellectual par of man.

These are samples from the hidden notes of the murdered Doctor. Their existence is unknown to Doctor Cole. Anyone reading them risks losing 1-3 sanity points. There is sufficient evidence within the notes to have Cole arrested, remember however, that Constable Hawkins is one of Coles' minions.



May 1922

The last of the chickens went today. It really is quite intriguing the way the head continues to equate after ~~it~~ it has left the body.

The monkeys are jittery, but because of their higher pain tolerance they have failed to make the connection yet between pain and image, I am considering increasing the amount of torture they receive.

July 1922

All the animals physical wrecks. The monkeys now are continually nervous, especially when confronted with the image I have implanted within them. Heart rates and perspiration increase rapidly, fur stands on end and I have even noticed the pupils dilate. Unfortunately ~~the~~ my attention to the patients has dwindled lately due to the experiments. I think now is good time to cease torture and imagery for short periods, in order to help them associate pain with the image, then I can spend more time with my patients.





September 1922

I have now ceased torture, altogether, and though still jittery, the monkeys have shown a remarkable recovery, though their heart rates do rise when I approach the bell. I think now is the time to associate a human phobia to an image. Geoff Harrison would seem the obvious choice, as his ~~phobia~~ claustrophobia is the worst form I have ever come across. I think it will be easier to associate an image with him, and of course a greater result if I cure him. It is now easier to cope with the patients more as I recently acquired Cole, my new assistant. He believes my experiments will prove fruitful and will help me construct shrinking cubicles in the cellar, we will only make them shrink when there is a beheaded rabbit within, then hopefully Harrison will become non-fearful of his claustrophobia if there is no beheaded rabbit present.

November 1922

The monkeys are much more relaxed now that I have stopped the imagery, this looks hopeful for Harrison, I think I can cure him, though it is nerve racking hearing him scream when we lower the cubicle ceiling. I am worried about Cole. I caught him smiling yesterday as Harrison screamed himself unconscious. I have yet to check out his qualifications, as although he is helpful in the wards, his medical knowledge is surprisingly low.



4<sup>th</sup> December 1922

All of the monkeys are dead, but Cole admitted ringing the bell. He said he was curious. Idiot! They all died of heart attack. It would appear that the non torture period made them more prone to the image.

A valuable lesson has been learned here, and that is that although the cure would appear to work, it is important that the image unplantal to associate with the phobia should be one that the sufferer would be very unlikely to see again. ~~It~~ huckily I think the headless rabbit is a safe image for Harrison. Although still nervous, he already appears more relaxed when locked in a room without a rabbit. Given time he will no longer suffer from claustrophobia.

18<sup>th</sup> December 1922

Harrison now appears almost calm when left in a room on his own! A complete contrast to the babbling wreck he was when first admitted, it is quite remarkable. I cannot understand Cole however, he does not share my enthusiasm and says I am mad to recommend his release to the health authority.





January 1923  
 Dr. Edward Phillips interviewed Harrison today, and despite Coles objections is convinced that Harrison is cured. Before he can be released however we have yet to complete the hypnosis that will convince Harrison that he never had the phobia in the first place. We will also wipe his memory of his treatment and stay in the aegulum in order to help his

## The Doctors' Notes

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## The Doctors' Notes (cont.)

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I am worried about Cole. I caught him smiling yesterday as Harrison screamed himself unconscious. I have yet to check out his qualifications, as although he is helpful in the wards, his medical knowledge is surprisingly low.

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All of the monkeys are dead, but Cole admitted ringing the bell. He said he was curious. Idiot! They all died of heart attack. It would appear that the non torture period made them more prone to the image.

A valuable lesson has been learned here, and that is that although the cure would appear to work, it is important that the image implanted to associate with the phobia should be one that the sufferer would be very unlikely to see again. Luckily I think the headless rabbit is a safe image for Harrison. Although still nervous, he already appears more relaxed when locked in a room without a rabbit. Given time he will no longer suffer from claustrophobia.

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# The Werewolf Episode

By now the players should have fathomed that the Health Farm is just the tip of the iceberg, used to help in the elimination of any who threaten the opening of a strange gateway. Their strongest lead now would be the wife of Mr Francis Gustell, who is in fact the leader of the strange cult with Doctor Cole in their employment. In order to catch his wife, players can simply keep a watch on Dover docks for her arrival if they still possess the photograph of her from Frank Walters house. They can also inspect the registers of local hotels, or await her arrival at the Health Farm if Cole has been disposed of, but this would be the hardest of the suggestions to pull off without giving her warning that something was wrong. Ideally, the players should aim to get her into a position where they can question her, using violence if necessary.

When I originally ran this game, the players discovered the hotel where Ms Gustell was staying, and, after breaking into her room, began a vigorous search to look for clues. I asked the players to specify exactly how they were searching, as I wanted to know if they wished to be careful with the placement of anything they touched, or were simply emptying draw contents onto the bed. Asking for such information in advance helps clarify the scene, and helps to dream up consequent events relevant to the players actions. It is important to note that Ms Gustell should be easy to catch and even intimidate to the point of sobbing, as this helps to catch them of guard later.

Ms Gustell will bend easily to questioning, allowing the referee to clarify the plot uncovered so far. If questioned as to why she is so free with her information, she will smile smugly and inform them that her husband will see to it that they are all dead before they can act on the information given. The players should be able to obtain the fact that she has been sent to kill Sophia Eiffel, and will find information in her handbag that will indicate her location. Players will also discover a circled newspaper clipping concerning the unveiling of a new waxwork of the Prime Minister at Madame Tussauds in London in a few weeks time. If questioned regarding the article, she may reveal that the Prime Minister himself will be involved in the unveiling. Any attempts to warn the Prime Minister of this (especially in American accents) will be openly scoffed at. During her interrogation, be sure that at some point she demands pen and paper to draw/write some important clue. Should the players agree, she will secretly pen a spell that will curse whoever accepts the writing from her, giving her her cue to laugh manically and take great glee in informing the victim of their plight:

"Fools! Now you will learn what true fear is, for the Hound of Tindaloo will surely find you and rip your soul asunder!"



Accepting the writing results in the arcane symbol she has drawn burning the paper away and scarring the hand that held it with its mark. It does not matter what happens to Ms Gustell from here on.

Players should now seek out Sophia Eiffel to warn her of the danger she is in. Once encountered, she will reveal that her father was mad and that she believes his construction of the Eiffel tower had another motive other than being a landmark. She has in her possession a piece of parchment originally belonging to her father which she believes contains the answer, however, she is on her way to visit a scholar who will help her translate the manuscript she has, which looks Egyptian in origin. The person she seeks is a Mr Robert Grimshaw who lives in Edale in Derbyshire (England).

Should the players seek reference of the arcane symbol now burnt into the hand of the victim of the curse, you may allow a good library search to indicate that a book known as "True Magick" by Theophilus Wenn gives details on canceling the curse. Coincidentally, it may be possible to discover that Mr Grimshaw is listed as one of the few owners of this book.

The next stop-over for the players should be Mr Grimshaw, as there should be plenty of time to deal with the threat to the prime minister. If the players need a nudge, Sophia Eiffel is bright enough to point out that it stands to reason that a picture of the maze will be placed on the waxwork ready for the prime minister when he unveils it (someone tell me his name please!), and it therefore should simply be a matter of breaking into Madame Tussauds the night before to ensure the waxwork has not been tampered with.

On arriving to meet Robert Grimshaw, a short and rather plump bald man wearing spectacles who has a jolly disposition, Sophia will ask for a translation of her fathers' manuscript, while the players should consider asking for help with the curse (otherwise, the victim of the curse WILL die). He will at first appear helpful, but once he has consulted the proper tome, he will appear jumpy and ask the person with the curse to wait outside until preparations for his safety have been arranged. He will be most insistent with this, asking the other players to apprehend the victim if he thinks it is necessary. If asked to explain his decision, he will explain that "there simply isn't the time" and hand over some money, ordering the players to drive into town and purchase as much plaster of Paris or clay that they can lay their hands on, and some black paint. Anyone who remains will be asked to assist in removing all furniture from his living room.

This is an excellent opportunity to add some atmosphere to your game, so that the victim of the curse visibly squirms in their seat. Be sure to emphasise just how worried Mr Grimshaw is and build up the scene. Describe his room with lavish furniture; an extensive book case containing dusty tomes; original oil paintings in exquisite frames; china on the





mantelpiece etc. While hastily removing the furniture, he will laugh off accidental damage and continue regardless, hauling furniture through the door in such a rush that the door handle scratches them heavily. Pulling the ornate curtain rail from the wall without unscrewing it first. If asked where things should be placed, he will not care. If he becomes concerned over the time taken to clear the room, he would even consider throwing his ornaments.

When the players return from their shopping trip, they will be instructed to mix the plaster of paris/clay, and cover every corner of the room. Wherever wall meets ceiling must also be covered, along with the floor. Before he will be willing to answer any questions, he will insist that they start work as it must be finished by nightfall, and points out that the alcoves and windows will also require smoothing, along with the door panels. The windows must also be painted black. Eventually, he will offer the following as an explanation:

"The mark you bare is a curse, beckoning to a place beyond the comprehension of any mortal such as you or I. It signals to a dweller of this place, a creature known as a "Hound of Tindalos". It can smell your mark, in much the same manner that a twitching fish can be sensed across the ocean by a shark, only in this case, the ocean of which we speak is the cosmos. Ah...I know what you are thinking, "Surely if it is that far away I have plenty of time?" No my friend, for like I said, this creature which you attract is beyond comprehension, and as such, is able to travel through angles. Wherever there is an angle, the creature will seep through, gaseous at first, so as to gloat over the fear that drowns you when you see it take shape before you. If we leave one angle exposed within this room, it will find you, and it will tear every limb from your body and feast on your entrails..."

You get the picture.

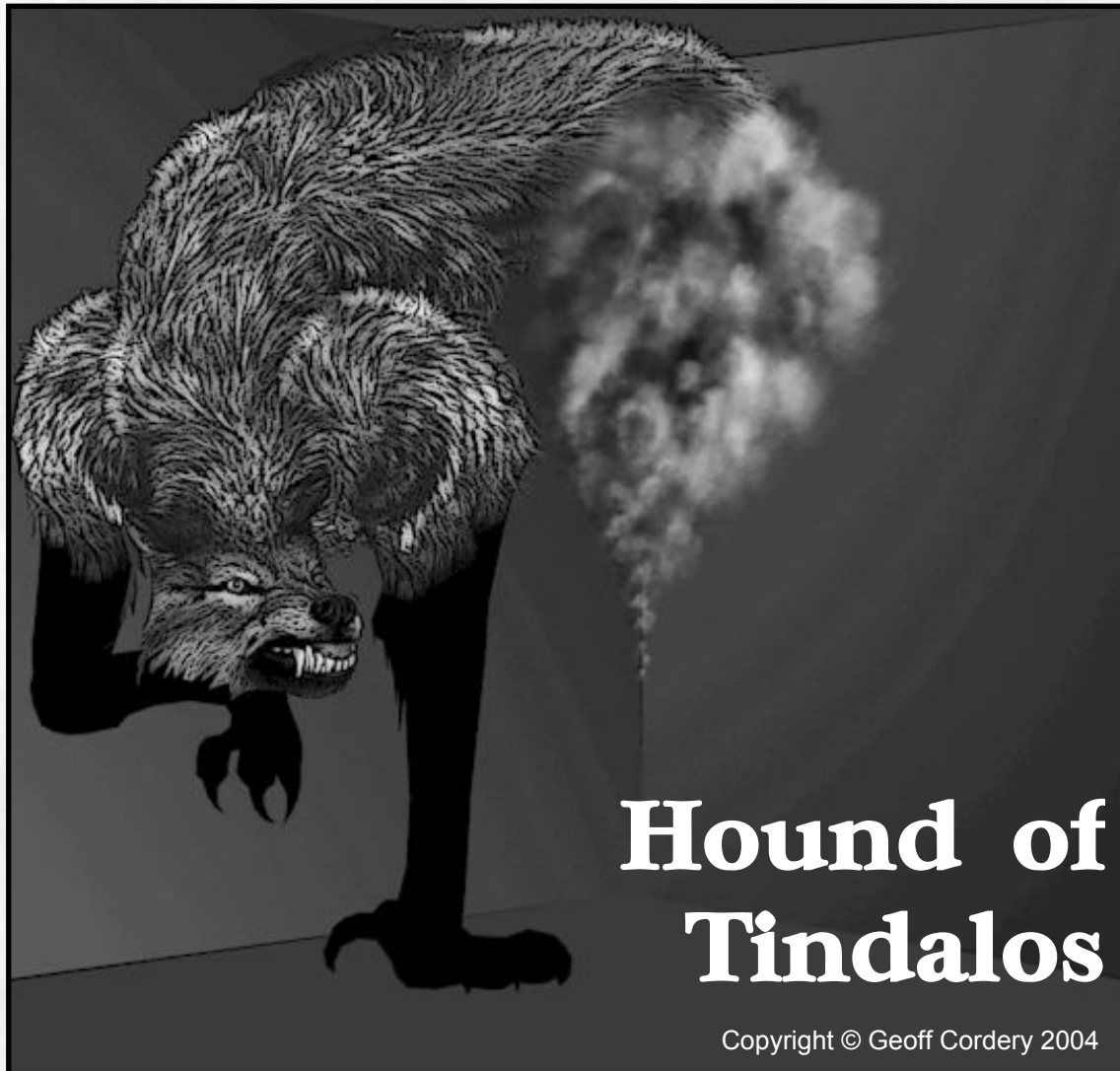
In order to clear the room of any angle that the Hound could seep through, Grimshaw will also insist that all articles are to be removed from pockets and placed outside the room along with belts, tie pins etc.

The players could of course end up believing that Mr Grimshaw is a loon, which would be rather unfortunate, considering that practically no amount of firepower will be able to help them, however, should someone role play their character in this style, you could perhaps award them with a temporary luck bonus to encourage good role playing.

Once all the work has been done, the players will be locked within the empty cornerless room along with Mr Grimshaw. Over the course of the next few nights, they will hear a large creature fumbling around outside and growling occasionally. For added effect, throw in the odd whispering of the afflicted characters' name. Be sure to



create lots of tension, with the sound of furniture being smashed outside the room, and the occasional raking sound at the door itself. This should take place over several nights and drive the players to the edge, perhaps even causing an argument when someone tries to leave the room because they want to visit the toilet. It is important to note that the mere sight of a Hound of Tindalos results in sanity loss regardless of saving throw (although the loss is greater if the save is failed). You may be able to entice one of the players to take a peep through the keyhole should you feel so inclined.



## Hound of Tindalos

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Once a night has passed Hound free, Mr Grimshaw will joyously announce that the curse has been lifted, and set to work on repairing his house and translating the manuscript given to him by Sophia Eiffel.

*Edale, in Derbyshire, England, was apparently terrorised by a Werewolf in 1925.*

The players can now set about saving the prime minister while Grimshaw consults his tomes.





# Madame Tussauds

This is a very short part of the campaign, favoured for the fact that it gives the referee an opportunity to tie another historical event to the actions of the players, the event in question being the *burning down of Madame Tussauds in London in 1925*.

It should prove easy enough for the players to enter the waxwork museum the night before the unveiling by the prime minister of himself. They can simply pay to enter and find a suitable place to hide when they're about to close for the night, perhaps even mingling with the exhibits, although this would require extraordinary concentration to remain still.

Again this is an excellent opportunity to build up the atmosphere for the game. Would you want to wander a waxworks alone in the dark with a potential killer hiding among the shadows? Nope, me neither, so use every opportunity to make the characters jumpy. Did that waxwork move?

The waxwork of the prime minister is easy to find, being segregated by brass railings that flank a red carpet, and covered by a red velvet veil that droops to the knees of a suited figure. Should the players lift the veil, there is indeed a picture of the maze stuck firmly to his forehead, having been planted there by the cult members present. You can alter the number to suit the encounter. Enough to encourage gunfire is a good idea, as it then gives you the opportunity to blame the resulting fire upon the actions of one of your players. If the players won't cause a fire, make sure that the cultists do so accidentally. I usually have those present capable of spells intended to ignite the players clothing, so they could easily target a waxwork by mistake. All cultists should die in the resulting fire as there are no further clues to be acquired. You may wish to award the players with sanity points for saving the life of the prime minister, but only if they have also destroyed the maze prints intended for the newspapers found at the McKinnley Health Farm

After they have dealt with the above Grimshaw will be able to confirm that the manuscript makes reference to an ancient gateway at the precise same height as the Eiffel Tower, and in the same location. Planetary alignments will allow the gateway to be opened on October the 16th. If this should be allowed to happen, it would mean the end of civilisation as we know it.



# The Eiffel Tower



Welcome to the Grande Finale of this mini campaign.

Obviously, this event occurs upon the Eiffel Tower, and, as any good referee of "Call of Cthulhu" will tell you, you'll need as much firepower as you can muster. By this stage of the game it should be impossible for our heroes to leave the country if Constable Hawkins has done his job properly, especially with any firearms, but aid is at hand in the form of some magical concoctions brewed by Grimshaw. At the request of Sophia Eiffel (who doesn't want her fathers name darkened by the Eiffel Tower





becoming a conduit to Hell!), Grimshaw has made some potions that will teleport the players to the destination of their desire. There is of course an element of risk involved, in that the players must concentrate hard on the destination they require, but Grimshaw should be able to persuade them that simply looking at a photograph of the Eiffel Tower should suffice. Grimshaw predicts that a ritual will be performed atop the Eiffel Tower on the night of the 16th October, and suggest that the players should attempt to disrupt the ritual for the good of humanity.

When I first run this game, an exceptional role player failed his required dice throw miserably when trying to use the above mentioned potion, and consequently lost enough sanity to do permanent damage. Rather than follow the rules, I let him live (quite a feat in any Call of Cthulhu game), although I did force him to sit out of the remainder of the game (being of little use anyway in his current state of mind). Once the battle was over, I gave a quick synopsis of what befell the surviving characters after saving the Earth. You should do this too, as it makes those that died feel happier in knowing they were involved with saving the planet. In the case of the player who failed to use his potion, I informed him that he completely lost his memory in transit as a result of his insanity, and was later found wandering the streets of Blackpool in England (having been attracted to the Blackpool Tower instead of the Eiffel Tower). Declared insane, he spent the rest of his life in a mental institution weaving baskets, blissfully unaware of his involvement in uncovering the plot against the Human Race.

Those that teleport successfully can take any weapons at their disposal as long as they can conceivably conceal them from any French Police wandering the scene. On their arrival, a great storm will be brewing, obscuring the top of the tower in clouds. It would appear that the ritual to open the gate is already in progress.

I normally have six cultists performing the ritual, all of whom are capable of casting spells at the players as long as two of them remain chanting the ritual to open the gate. Of course, should the players successfully cease the ritual, all the cultists will turn on the players. Alternatively, if the players have had too easy a time of this particular episode, you could always allow the gateway to open long enough for an "Old One" to come through. You can increase the tension of this situation by describing the appearance of a glimmering portal, through which can be heard the grunting and roaring of several beasts.

Before they can interrupt the ritual however, the players will need to ascend the tower, and this is where they should meet the main villain of the story...Mr Gustell, the leader of the cult. Being leader, he should of course prove to be a worthy adversary, as indeed he is, being in fact part Shoggoth, an immensely strong creature capable of changing shape in much the same manner as "The Thing" in the John Carpenter film by the



same name. He will save this ability however until he has exhausted the spells at his disposal, most of which will be cosmetic, such as levitation and Telekinesis, doing minimal harm to the players other than further scaring them (mild sanity saving throws perhaps?). I usually have him appear by peeling the roof from the lift that the players inhabit as if it were nothing but tin foil. When he changes to Shoggoth form, strong sanity saving throws will of course be required. If none of the players freak out as a result, you should consider Sophia Eiffel and even Grimshaw (if persuaded to accompany them) losing their marbles, either turning catatonic, or even worse, opening fire on their comrades. This combat situation can be as dramatic as required, further enhanced by people climbing the framework of the tower or clinging for their lives to lift cables etc. For dramatic effect, have Gustell gradually retreat to the top where the other cultists can supply him with assistance.

Well, that's pretty much it I'm afraid. Don't be afraid of killing characters at this point as long as you can successfully insure the players win in the end, as it makes the experience more rewarding for the survivors, although if you do kill anybody, make sure they go out in style so that they still have their own story to tell. Here are some examples of deaths that have occurred in my running of this section to give you an idea of what I'm driving at:

One player went completely insane and opened fire on anything that moved, including his comrades. Eventually he died in a hail of bullets from the French Police, having already killed several, along with several cultists gratefully noted by the other players.

The above example of the mad basket weaver of Blackpool deserves mention. Although he didn't die, he was forced into early retirement and therefore deserved a proper ending to his story. The fact that he was one of only two survivors added to the comedy value of his ending.

Someone fell off the Eiffel Tower, dragging a cultist with them. I had them land near a French Policeman who proceeded to blow his whistle and attract assistance for the other players.

My personal favourite had survived the entire game playing his character as a Historian who refused to believe in black magic. Having a very high sanity rating enabled him to survive many sanity rolls. There was one occasion, during the "Werewolf" section, that he failed a sanity roll having peered through the keyhole of the door (after already having mocked Grimshaw for his suggestion that he was cursed to be devoured by the Hound), and was due to lose between 1 and 20 sanity points. On rolling a rather jammy "1", he turned from the door and announced that it was clearly some maniac dressed up in some kind of dog suit, and that they should leave the room to take him on, whereupon he was of course, subdued by the other players. He played the role perfectly, offering logical





(and often ludicrous) explanations for every supernatural event which were often conveniently missed by himself, a perfect example being the players telling him they had dealt with a monster in the cellar of the Health Farm. As the body of the creature had been destroyed in a fire along with the building, they had no proof, and were constantly accused of being startled by bats.

On arriving at the Eiffel Tower, they proceeded up in the lift armed to the teeth, with the Historian begrudgingly accompanying them while trying to convince them all that they were perhaps reacting irrationally. Having then witnessed Gustell tear the roof from the lift and levitate into it, he lost valuable sanity points and dropped his weapon while comrades opened fire, forcing Gustell to assume Shoggoth form. Again, the Historian lost sanity points, this time indicating insanity in the form of great despair. In an exceptional display of role playing, he announced that as this was his first true encounter that defied logical explanation, he would just sink to his knees gawping at the creature. He simply had to die at this point, it was to perfect a comical ending to miss, and he was, after all, a sitting duck. I had him picked up by several tentacles and smashed him against the walls of the lift before having his head ripped from his body, which proceeded to roll across the floor to Sophia and stare at her with a look of astonishment still frozen on his face. This, in turn, led to Sophia going insane and curl up into a sobbing ball in the corner of the lift, and left the surviving players in no doubt that they had a fight on their hands.

This ends The Maze of Madness. I hope it has provided some inspiration for running a game.

This publication is a labour of love, offered freely to the gaming community in the hope that it encourages the hobby that has brought me so much joy for over 20 years. My only regret is that I'm not involved in the gaming industry, so, if you have enjoyed this offering, do me a favour and spread my name around!

As a final note, I'd like to extend a special thankyou to David Conyers for giving me permission to use his picture on page 17. You can view more of his work at [http://www.freewebs.com/david\\_conyers/](http://www.freewebs.com/david_conyers/)

If you'd like to make any comments, feel free to drop by my website and use the forum available there.

All the best

Quillmaster/Geoff Cordery  
<http://www.quillmaster.co.uk>

P.S. It is presumed there are no copyright issues with the old photographs within this manual. If you should know of any, please let me know and I will have them removed immediately.



# Further Tips on Preparing Gothic Horror Games

Gothic Horror can be a very entertaining genre when preparing a game, it is, however, possibly one of the most difficult to prepare an adventure for, at least, that's what I have found from personal experience.

One of the main problems with the genre is making your game believable. Throwing in supernatural events too early in the game allows little chance for players to slip into their roles, and if such events are too common, has the players nonchalantly dealing with the event as if it were an everyday occurrence, when in reality, they should be quivering in their boots. Too often have I played in a game where we are immediately confronted with something terrible, and wondered why my character would want to do anything other than run for the hills never to be seen again. If you have read the creature stats in games such as Call of Cthulhu, you'll realise that there is very little you can throw at the party and reasonably expect them to survive. While it is true that the very nature of Call of Cthulhu indicates a high mortality rate (As reading any of H.P. Lovecrafts' novels clearly indicates), you need to give the players an opportunity to survive, otherwise, what's the point in playing?

Having to gently introduce the players to the true horror that awaits them poses problems in itself however. To have them only see the tip of the iceberg with regard to plot, requires the scattering of clues which will gradually lead to an encounter that they need to be well prepared for. Early indications of the more macabre side of your plot need to be subtle.

Take The Maze of Madness as an example. Players are old school friends having a re-union, and witness the strange death of one of their colleagues. It would appear that he was literally scared to death despite the players seeing nothing out of the ordinary. Gradually, player investigations uncover the fact that their associate was on a hit list, and are able to pursue other potential victims. At this point supernatural involvement is only hinted at, but as the players uncover more, supernatural content is increased, much like in my science fiction scenario Mirramount. But how can you increase it to the point of scaring the players without throwing some terrible creature against them? Easy.

As the cult become more aware of player involvement, they will try to deter them from further investigation. One thing I find useful is not to rely on the stats in game books. They can force you to be too linear. Give the cultists powers that by themselves do nothing, other than perhaps require a small sanity check when witnessed. ;)





Another way of making your Gothic Horror game memorable is to make the storyline believable. This is of course difficult considering that you're asking the players to believe in monsters, but if you put some research into it, believability can be achieved. The sourcebook from the early Call Of Cthulhu is a good source of information. Look at the time period that your game is set, and see if you can tie in real events. For example, in The Maze of Madness, I deliberately have the players visit Madame Tussauds, with the resulting scuffle causing it to burn down. After running the session, I point out to the players that at that particular point in history Madame Tussauds really did burn down. The fact that the Eiffel Tower really did take two years, two months and two days to complete is also true. If the players feel that they are participating and even shaping real events, then the game will become all the more believable.

So, imagination and research are the key factors, but a certain amount of clue preparation doesn't go amiss either. Having said that, I was once put on the spot by a player, who decided to visit the house of Constable Hawkins. It was a move I had not anticipated, leaving me cursing my lack of preparation, as it seemed such an obvious location to be prepared, and worthy of a further clue for the players. I could think of nothing to reward the visit, which in itself seemed implausible, so I decided that the best course of action was to scare the player away from the house before they had chance to perform a full investigation, thus, relieving me of the burden of providing them with any more clues. Luckily, the player in question was an exceptional role player, and was easily co-erced into leaving the house, for which he was rewarded with extra points to spend on skills at the end of that particular session. Although the villain was not present at the scene, my description of his house did much to add to their intimidation value later in the game. If you're caught off guard, don't let on.

Well, it works for me. Happy Gaming!

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