

In Whom We Trust

a one-way trip of despair into the Amazon by Steve Hatherley

In Whom We Trust is an adventure for *Call of Cthulhu* for five or six characters. Concerning the fate of an expedition into the Amazon jungle, it is a trip that few are likely to survive.

First, the characters.

Captain Weber

You are the owner of the *Lady Rita*, a creaky diesel riverboat based in Manaus. Your present trip is a supply run to the Haswell Expedition. You also have a package for Haswell himself, which you intend to hand-deliver because he hasn't paid you for the last run of supplies yet. He owes you money (\$750) that you badly need.

Due to your unfortunate cash situation, the *Lady Rita* is poorly fitted out – it doesn't even have a radio! Your only weapon is an old rifle, with 10 rounds of ammunition, which you use to scare off the occasional animal. Well, that's not strictly true. You also have an old bundle of dynamite (six sticks), but you're not sure how reliable it is.

Goal: Get as much money as you can. Haswell owes you \$750 – you cannot afford to leave his camp without it.

Keeper's Notes: Weber's goal (in fact, all the characters' goals) is designed to keep him at the expedition camp even when everything is telling the players to flee for their lives. When Schultz opens Haswell's package, give him Handout #1.

Reading journals or books just requires the appropriate language – don't roll against a skill. If you do that there's a chance that the information won't be discovered, and the players will need all the help they can get.

(The original concept for the scenario involved sending players away from the gaming table for five minutes while they spent time trying to find the

pertinent information in the various handouts. This had two advantages – it meant that the other players could conspire against that player, and it also meant that they had time to get a drink for the Keeper. Feel free to reinstate that concept.)

Handout #1: Unausprechlichen Kulten

This is in German.

Someone has marked a passage in this otherwise impenetrable tome.

The passage describes the Cult of the Red Masque, and Amazonian cult that died out shortly after Portuguese explorers first encountered them. The cult worshipped a vast monstrosity called the Red Masque that took its sacrifices at random, a process the locals called "submitting." The cult came from surrounding villages, the tribal elders all being priests to the Red Masque.

The passage notes that the Temple of the Red Masque is difficult to reach, which is fortunate as the Bloat (the Red Masque's physical representation) has an insatiable appetite. The Bloat lives in the temple and is made from the remains of its sacrifices.

Roach

You have seen the signs. You have listened to the Voices, which are always clearest after you have taken a living creature. And they told you that the Evil is drawing near.

Unfortunately you have been chosen to fight the Evil. Not being one to ignore destiny's calling, you left your village. Guided by the Voices, you have arrived in Manaus. Further consultation (a dog) and you knew you must travel up river. The only boat

heading upstream is the Lady Rita, owned by a greedy German. You paid the fare: where you are going money is not important.

There are other passengers. They do not understand you, and you see revulsion in their faces when you eat the spiders and beetles. Your only items that are of any meaning are your sacrificial knife (an old bone saw you found on a corpse) which you use to listen to the Voices, and your Mystic Stick, which protects you from Evil.

Goal: Fight Evil.

Keeper's Notes: Roach has two important allies: the Voices and his Mystic Stick. To hear the Voices, he must sacrifice an animal. The more he offends other players, the clearer the message. What the Voices say is entirely up to the Keeper – but be warned that cryptic hints are often too cryptic.

As for his stick, Roach does not know what it will do except “protect him from Evil”. (Unfortunately, the stick has no effect. It's just a stick.)

Doctor Adams

It is 1938 and you are in Manaus. You've told everyone that you're on holiday, but the real reason you are here is to find out what Rosenberg is up to. Let's be blunt: you want to steal his research.

You and Rosenberg go back a long way. You were both involved in the “unnecessary medical procedures” scandal at Miskatonic University. Yet you went while he remained. Now you have learned that Rosenberg is on some kind of expedition. So you convinced a backer (the University of Manilla) to pay for your “holiday” while you find out what Rosenberg is really up to. And steal his files, if you can.

While you were looking for a patron, the German authorities approached you. You did not like the idea of spying for the Nazis, but it seems likely that they have a spy of their own in the camp itself.

Goal: Steal Rosenberg's files.

Doctor Schultz

You have travelled from Vienna to join the Haswell expedition as their resident expert on tropical diseases. (You were supposed to start earlier but have been unable to get away from

Vienna.) The expedition will explore three uncharted sinkholes and bring back flora and fauna samples. You are interested in new and unusual diseases, specifically those that might have military applications: you are a spy.

You know that Haswell has a chequered past, and you suspect that there may be more to the expedition than meets the eye. Your German masters have similar thoughts.

You have a pistol.

Goal: Join the expedition and report back to your German masters.

Keeper's Notes: Schultz cannot pick anything up other than static on his radio (that's sheer misfortune and nothing sinister).

Rosenburg

“I have arranged for you to visit me next month and require a couple of textbooks from my study: John Collier's *Beyond Life Sciences* and Baxter's *The Stone Jungle*. See you soon and send my love to your mother.”

So you found the books, flew out to Brazil and now you are in Manaus, aboard the Lady Rita, ready for the six-day journey to your father's camp.

The thing is, you have spotted Doctor Adams here, your father's rival. You never really learned what happened between the two of them, but Adams left the Miskatonic while your father remained. Perhaps Adams' presence here is coincidence.

Goal: Spend quality time with your father.

Keeper's Notes: Rosenberg starts with Handout #2, the two books for his father. Neither contains any useful information.

Handout #2: Beyond Life Sciences and The Stone Jungle

Beyond Life Sciences is a book about tropical diseases. It is amazing how many different types of tropical disease there are, and this book seems to catalogue them all!

The Stone Jungle concerns itself with the ruins of Central and Southern America, mainly Mayan and, Incan.

Kempfer

You are on assignment from National Geographic to document the Haswell Expedition. However, you are sure that there are other sides to this expedition that might make good stories for other markets.

You noticed a few anomalies as well. For example, what is Rosenberg doing on the expedition? He was at Arkham during the “unnecessary medical procedures” scandal and was associated with Adams (who was actually sacked). So how close are Rosenberg and Adams? And why is Adams aboard the *Lady Rita*?

You have also heard that the Nazis have spies in the camp. Why?

You have with you all you need: notebooks, a camera and plenty of film.

Goal: Find out as much as you can and sell your stories.

For five players

If you have only five players, then I suggest dropping Kempfer. You should not use the “A” handouts (12A and 21A)

Manaus

The game starts in March 1938 with the investigators aboard the *Lady Rita* in Manaus, Brazil. Do not give them an opportunity to re-equip themselves – they have all they need aboard and the boat is leaving.

Who do you trust?

Each player must now introduce themselves, giving as much background information as they want to.

Then, get each player to name one person (not themselves) aboard the *Lady Rita* that they trust. If they can explain why, that’s great. They should note the name of the character they trust on their character sheet.

Next, get each player to name the person they don’t trust aboard the *Lady Rita*. Again, they should note that on their character sheet.

Note that they won’t have much information to base this decision on at this point. That’s okay – it

has no mechanical impact on play during the scenario, but is designed to create interesting dynamics as events unfold.

You may find it useful to create a “trust diagram” for everyone to refer to.

The river

The river is slow, the heat oppressive, the journey dull. They have plenty of time to read Handout #3.

Time passes, and six days later they arrive at the camp.

Handout #3: The Haswell Expedition

The Miskatonic University’s Haswell Expedition will explore several sinkholes deep in the Amazon Basin in search of new flora and fauna. Expedition members are:

Professor Haswell: botanist and leader

Professor Rosenberg: zoologist

Doctor Schultz: tropical diseases

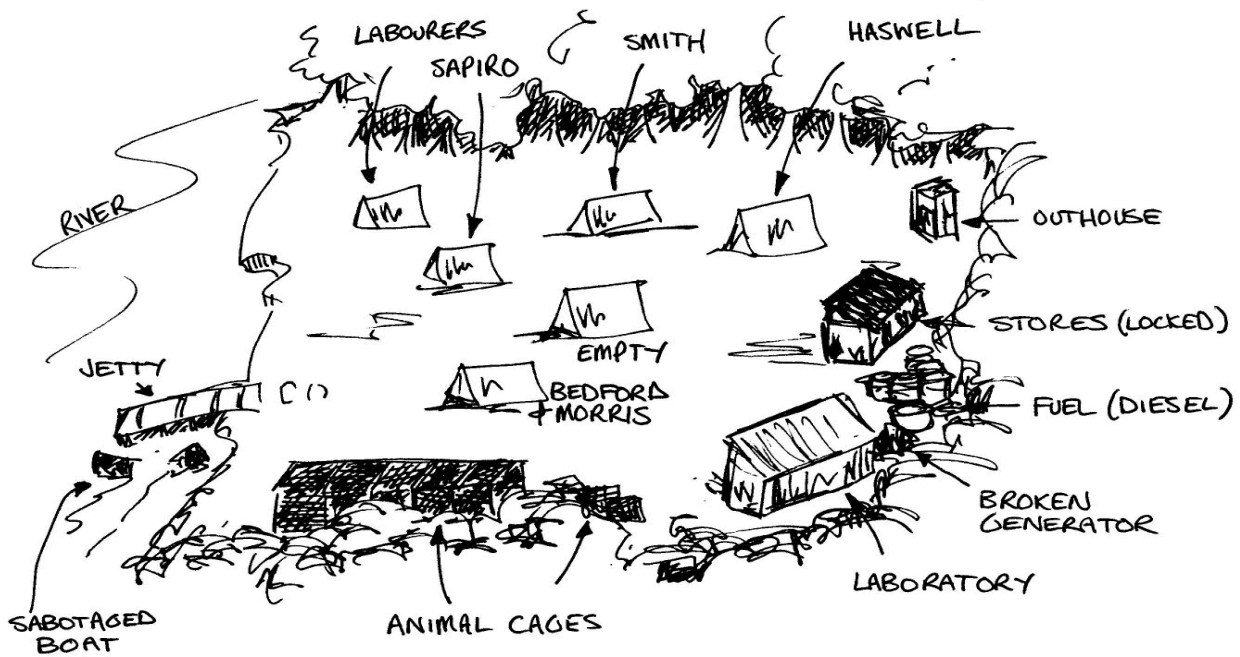
Nurse Wilson

Doctor Smith, vet

Packard, Bedford and Morris: undergraduates.

Trapper Peck: the best hunter and trapper in the Amazon Basin, and fluent in most of the native tongues.

Sapiro: guide. Sapiro is in charge of the three native labourers hired for manual work.



The Haswell Expedition: Keeper's Notes

To the outside world the Haswell Expedition was just another field trip into the jungle, but Haswell and Rosenberg had other plans. They were also secretly studying the effect of drugs on monkeys to test their effects before their use on humans. Dr Smith and Nurse Wilson were also briefed, as would Dr Schultz be when he arrived. However, Haswell and Rosenberg also planned to test promising drugs on the students and natives, ahead of other testing. Wilson knew about this, but nobody else did.

Things started going wrong when Camp Beta was set up and they discovered the Temple of the Red Masque. Prompted by the expedition's curiosity, the entity in the temple, the Bloat, sent its spidery allies in search of information. Events took a turn for the worse when Rosenberg became infected with madness, quickly followed by the rest of the expedition.

Basecamp

The camp is deserted, with no sign of human life anywhere.

The spiders: Spiders are everywhere – the camp is infested with them. The spiders are of a single, unidentifiable, species and are black with a yellow swirl on their abdomens. The spiders are aggressive and bite at the slightest provocation. Even careful investigators may be bitten as spiders crawl into

pockets and shoes. Although the spiders carry the Blood (see below), being bitten does not guarantee infection. Their bite is often painless.

The jetty and the boat: Sapiro and the labourers built the wooden jetty soon after the camp was set up. The expedition's small motorboat has been scuttled, its bottom ripped out.

The tents: All expedition tents are sturdy canvas tents with wooden poles and fine mosquito nets. They sleep three at most, on canvas camp-beds.

Labourers' Tent: This spider-infested tent is where three labourers were quartered. Someone has drawn what look like meaningless squiggles in charcoal around the tent. Someone with knowledge of the local occult recognises these as protective wards. They don't appear to have done much good.

The tent inside is a mess, but contains fragment of carved stone taken from the Temple of the Red Masque. (This was taken by Peck, as described in Handout #14.) There are several spiders on the fragment. If the fragment is taken then spiders gradually congregate towards whoever carries the fragment. This is not a good way to avoid being bitten.

Sapiro's Tent: Sapiro, the interpreter and guide had his own tent containing a double-barrelled shotgun with a handful of rotted (useless) shells and a locked trunk. Breaking open the trunk (there is no key to be found anywhere) reveals two more

shotgun shells, some spare clothes and Sapiro's handwritten journal (Handout #4).

Handout #4: Sapiro's Journal

This is written in Portuguese.

The journal concerns Sapiro's adventures in the Amazon Basin. He describes Haswell's delighted reaction to the sinkholes, but also notes that the natives are not so pleased. They have some superstitions about the place: "Submitting to the Red Mask."

Sapiro describes the death of a captured monkey with great relish: "dissolving innards oozing from every orifice like treacle." The natives become highly agitated and leave shortly after. Threatening them with the shotgun has no effect.

Sapiro's Journal includes directions to the three sinkholes, Alpha, Beta and Gamma. Alpha was explored and finished with. The expedition still has a camp at Beta.

Bedford and Morris's Tent: One of the two beds is stained with dried blood. The spiders prefer this bed to the other. Both students' journals are here, on a small table (Handouts #5 and #6).

Handout #5: Emma Bedford's Notebook

This is in English.

Bedford's notebook reads like a catalogue of scandal and vice rather than an academic journal.

Bedford helps Sara Morris with tending the animals, although only lip-service is paid to this in her notes. She notes that Morris is jealous because she (Bedford) went to sinkhole Alpha site to help set up the cages there. Bedford hates the jungle: there are too many spiders, mosquitoes and other bugs for comfort. The spiders are quite vicious, and bite. At least she hasn't been falling as ill as Sara has been. Bedford does not like bugs.

The notebook's last entry details her concern over the discovery that the sinkhole site is deserted. The boats have evidently been scuttled and the native porters have fled. Then Sara falls ill.

Handout #6: Sara Morris' Notebook

This is written in English.

Morris is in charge of the animals, feeding and cleaning their cages. Her studies show that the monkeys from Sinkhole Alpha differ from the basecamp monkeys. She suggests they have been separated for a long time, presumably by the geography of the sinkhole.

Later in the notebook she notes the peculiar interest that the spiders are taking in some animals. She notes that they bite. The bitten monkeys (two from Alpha, one from basecamp) fall ill shortly after, appearing irritable and refusing to eat. They start weeping blood soon after, and die within 48 hours. Their deaths are grotesque, vomiting their liquefied insides with considerable violence. One even tried to escape by squeezing through the wire mesh, slicing itself apart in the process.

Dr Smith's Tent: This tent contains a single bed, although another is ready to be assembled – this is where Dr Schultz was to be berthed. Smith has his personal effects here, along with a few veterinary journals that do not have any useful information in them.

Dr Haswell's Tent: Haswell's tent is a bloody, spider-infested mess and costs 0/1D3 SAN to see. Signs of a struggle are present – the bed is overturned and blood covers everything. The canvas is ragged and torn from a shotgun blast – the shotgun itself has been dropped. Two spent cartridges are still in the shotgun (there is no other ammunition around).

Haswell's blood-encrusted journal (Handout #7) is tucked under the bed here. A strong stomach is needed to recover it.

Stores: A small wooden shed bolted securely from the outside. Unbolting the door reveals a revolting smell and a swarm of fat flies. Inside the shed is a corpse, or at least the messy, blood-infected remains of one. Spiders and flies are everywhere and SAN loss is 1/1D6.

The contents of the stores are spoiled, and covered in crusty, bloody remains. Inside is a smashed radio, which may just be repairable (although it is not a pleasant job). If repaired, nobody can reach the camp in time to rescue them.

The corpse is the Blood-dissolved remains of Sarah Morris. She is only identifiable by her clothes.

Handout #7: Haswell's Journal

This is in English.

Haswell's journal is a list of subjects, treatments and results. He has injected monkeys with various chemical compounds and recorded changes in activity, intelligence, and problem-solving. He tests monkeys from the basecamp and sinkholes indiscriminately.

The journal's final entry makes a brief mention of a copy of *Unausprechlichen Kulten* that was due to arrive on the next supply trip.

Apparently Haswell is hoping it contains some information on the disease that has struck the expedition.

Animal Cages: Wood and mesh cages constructed by Sapiro and the natives. Most cages are empty, only two monkeys (both from Sinkhole Beta, as Bedford or Morris's journals detail) remain. The monkeys get quite excited at the investigators arrival. Both show signs of malnutrition and have been picking at the bloody mess in the cage between them. (The bloody mess is a monkey that tried to squeeze through the mesh after being infected.)

If the monkeys are released, they will disappear into the jungle. Both are from Sinkhole Beta carry the Blood, and will bite investigators who get too close.

Generator and Fuel: The generator has been sabotaged. It can be fixed and sufficient diesel remains to power it for a few days.

Laboratory: A large wooden building in good condition. Inside are two work tops, a desk, several cupboards, five animal cages, a refrigerator (filled with mould and spoiled chemicals – the stench is appalling), washing facilities – and spiders of course. The locked desk contains Dr Smith's Lab Book (Handout #8) and \$500.

On the wall is a map showing the three sinkholes. Dates on the map show that the expedition has finished with Sinkhole Alpha and now has a camp in Sinkhole Beta. The sinkholes are a short hike away, through the jungle.

On one work top the remains of a Blood-infected monkey lie where they have been dissected. It sits in a shallow tray, filled with coagulated blood. Next to it, in a jar, is a dead, preserved spider.

The cages contain two dead monkeys (subjects #14 and #18, caught near the camp), killed by the Blood. Another contains the corpse of a monkey that died by malnutrition. A tag refers this to subject #13, caught in the surrounding jungle.

(Subject #13 was immune to the Blood, due to the treatment it received from Haswell and Rosenberg. As Emma Bedford received the same treatment (Compound #13), she was also unaffected by the Blood.)

Handout #8: The Laboratory Journal (Dr Smith)

This is in English.

This journal describes in clinical detail the differences between those animals captured around the basecamp and those in the sinkholes. It refers frequently to Haswell's journals and various chemicals administered to the animals.

The book also describes the disease that is killing the monkeys and monkeys. From his autopsy, Smith notes that it dissolves its hosts insides, reducing it eventually to a soupy pulp. Symptoms include loss of appetite, passing blood in saliva or urine, bloody eyes and open sores on the skin. Shortly after infection the monkey seems to get better, but this is only a temporary reprieve.

Dr Smith notes that all infected animals have small bite marks – possibly from spiders. Smith is certain he has found the disease's transmission medium after he injects a healthy monkey with spider venom and it soon shows signs of illness. Smith also tried infecting some monkeys from Sinkhole Beta, but they appear to be immune.

Spider Bites

After the characters have been in the camp for about 20 minutes of real time, randomly distribute Handouts #9 to #13. Whoever receives Handout #11 has been infected with the Blood, and whoever receives Handout #13 is naturally immune. The recipient of Handout #13 recovers in

about an hour. Both investigators have received spider bites, although the handout doesn't mention it.

Handout #9: You spot something on the edge of the jungle – a pit filled with dead and decomposing animals. It appears to be where the expedition put its dead creatures. They had buried them, but a scavenger must have dug through to find the tasty morsels within.

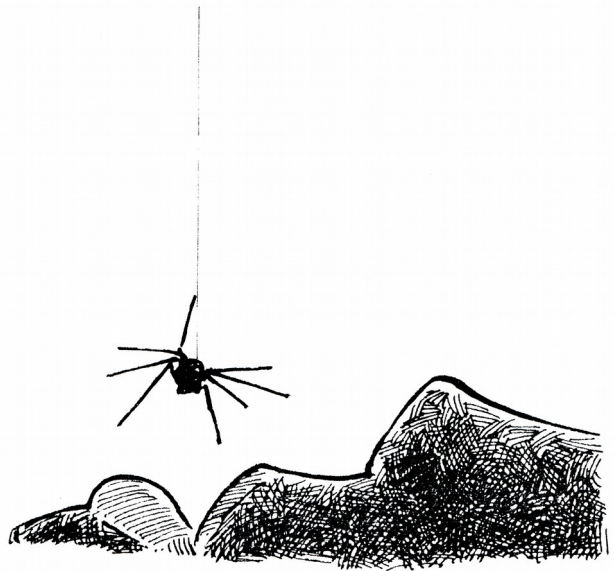
Handout #10: You put your hand on something and a spider bites you. The bite draws blood but is almost painless.

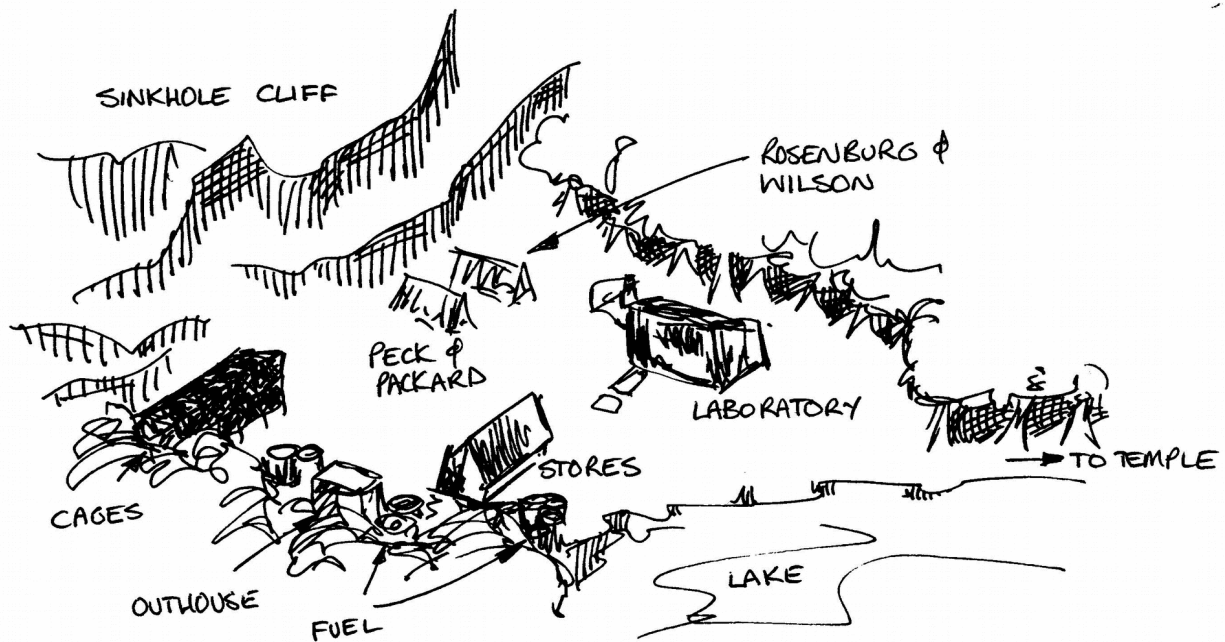
Handout #11: You suddenly have a bad headache and you have lost your appetite. You might be coming down with something, jungle fever or worse!

Handout #12: You note that the peculiar black spiders have managed to get aboard the *Lady Rita*. Great. So now the boat is infested as well.

Handout #12A: You note that the peculiar black spiders have managed to get aboard the *Lady Rita*. Great. So now the boat is infested as well.

Handout #13: You feel nauseous and are running a fever. You cannot do anything strenuous as you are feeling so weak.





The Sinkholes

The only sinkhole of any interest is Sinkhole Beta. Camp Alpha has been struck and the expedition never reached Gamma.

The sinkhole (think of the opening to *Arachnophobia*) is easily found by following directions in several journals or using the map in the laboratory. The sinkhole is about a mile across, and at least a quarter of a mile deep. Pegs mark the only safe way down. Camp Beta is at the base of the cliff, about three hours from the basecamp.

Camp Beta

Located at the edge of a small lake, Camp Beta is as deserted at the basecamp. Fewer spiders are around, but they are here.

Peck and Packard's Tent: Packard's journal (Handout #14) is by his bed. The bed is stained with blood.

Rosenburg's Tent and Wilson's Tent: Both are untidy, but contain nothing of interest.

Cages: These cages are all full of monkeys and other animals. All show signs of malnutrition but no signs of sickness. (They are all carriers, however.)

Generator: A small portable generator, fully functional.

Stores: Spoiled food and generator spares. Padlocked shut.

Handout #14: Alan Packard's Journal

This is in English.

Packard is suspicious of the expedition's real motives. He believes that the sinkholes, while fascinating isolated ecologies, are a cover for something else. He suspects that Haswell and Rosenburg are administering drugs via the daily malaria treatment. Packard has been skipping it whenever he can. He has sneaked a look at Rosenburg's journal and would like to compare it with Haswell's.

He also notes that a temple in Sinkhole Beta has a powerful hold on Rosenburg. Packard doesn't like the temple, it is infested with spiders and gives him the creeps. Peck had a fragment of carved stone that he took from the temple, intending to keep it as a souvenir. Someone has stolen it and Packard suspects it was one of the natives.

Laboratory: A smaller version of the basecamp laboratory, this was mainly used for studying the local fauna and injecting them with the test drugs. This laboratory is in good condition and the various compounds and chemicals are in excellent condition. Unfortunately, there is only enough of Compound #13 to treat three investigators.

Rosenburg's journal (#15) is in the laboratory.

Handout #15: Rosenburg's Journal

This is in English.

Rosenburg's journal is a list of the personnel in the expedition, along with various chemical compounds and results, if any. He is clearly conducting some kind of experiment on the people here. Although it isn't clear who else is in on his experiments, clearly Haswell and Wilson (at least) are also involved.

The chemical cocktails are administered with the daily malaria injections and are referred to only as compound numbers, such as Compound #5, #6 and so on.

Handout #16: Comparing Haswell and Rosenburg's Journals

Studying the two journals together reveals that Haswell and Rosenburg have been giving drugs to their human subjects (mainly the students and the natives). They are interested in anything that promotes intelligence and health.

Results have been good in Bedford (particularly good in her case – she had the same drugs as the monkey #13 in the laboratory, Compound #13) and Sapiro but Packard's results are very disappointing.

Handout #19: You note that one of your companions (see the Keeper) seems to be followed by the spiders. Odd, that.

Handout #20: Something under your shirt turns out to be a black spider. It has bitten you, but if you hadn't felt the creature you would never have known.

Handout #21: You discover a rash of insect bites on your ankle. Shouldn't they be itching?

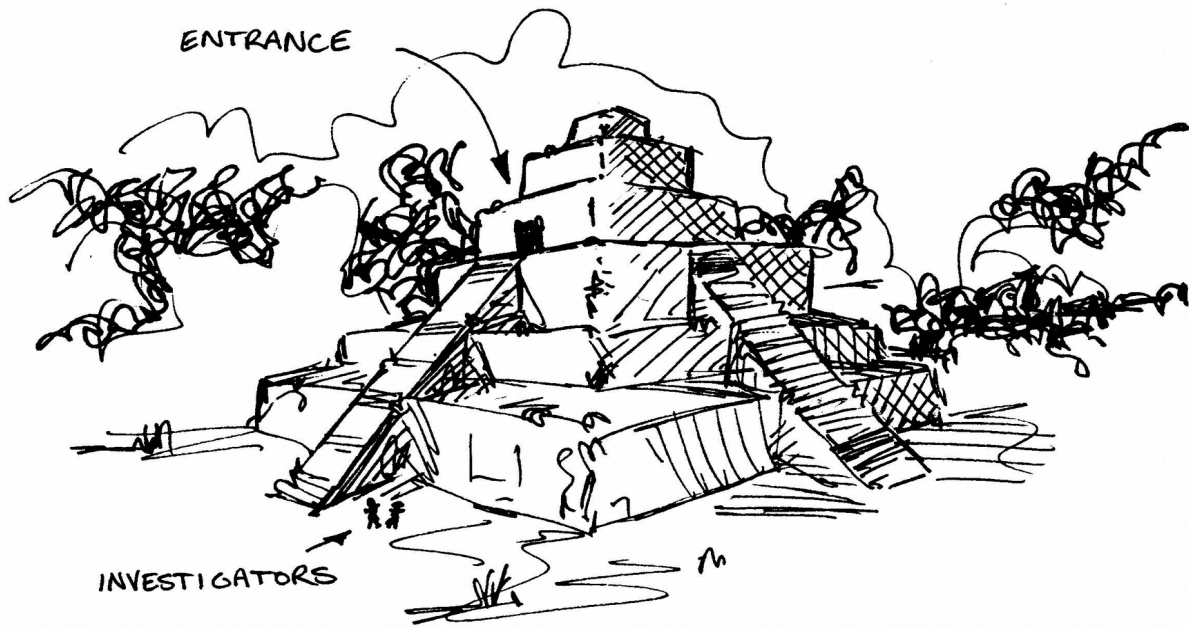
Handout #21A: You discover a rash of insect bites on your ankle. Shouldn't they be itching?

Spider Bite Handouts

Hand these out randomly when the first investigator reaches Camp Beta. Handout #17 is another infection handout – and has no effect if someone already infected or naturally immune receives it. Use Handout #19 to draw the investigator's attention to an infected character.

Handout #17: You suddenly have a splitting headache and have lost your appetite. Perhaps you should see a doctor.

Handout #18: You discover a rash of insect bites on your arms and legs. Some of them are strangely painless, others itch like crazy.



The Temple

Constructed from stone quarried from the sinkhole cliffs, the temple is easy to find and is about 30 minutes trek from Camp Beta.

The temple is an ugly six-step ziggurat with steps leading up to the third tier on each side. An entrance in the third tier leads to an interior chamber. It is dark and dingy inside, and spiders are everywhere. This interior chamber is dominated by a pit in which a swirling viscous mass broils and seethes relentlessly. The stench of blood is heavy in the air, although the stone walls and floors are spotless.

The thing in the pit is the Bloat, the physical manifestation of the Blood. It sloshes angrily at intruders, but unless anyone is infected with the Blood, it is powerless to act. (Give those who are infected Handout #22.) Around the edge of the pit are assorted clothes and belongings from the expedition – things that have fallen from the bodies and that the Bloat has expelled.

Around the edge of the chamber a spiral staircase leads up to the ceiling. There hang several flimsy shapes and the body of Emma Bedford. Bedford has been tied by her wrists to a hook in the ceiling, and appears to have several spider-bites. Despite this, the Blood has not infected her. SAN loss for just being here is 1/1D8.

The flimsy shapes are what remains of the expedition – skin and bones. Their liquefied remains have dribbled into the pit, sustaining the Bloat. Some are tied at the wrist, others around the neck. (When cultists manned the temple the sacrifices would have been hung here and then taken down later. Hanging sacrifices in this way was known as “Submitting to the Red Masque.”)

Handout #22: The Bloat and the Blood

The thing in the pit is the Bloat, a concentrated mass of Blood. If threatened, you must protect it at all costs – everything is second to the safety of the Bloat, including your own life.

If the Bloat is not in danger, you must subdue everyone here and hang them from the hooks in the ceiling. Then slit their wrists and mix your blood with theirs – the Blood will consume them quickly enough. Once you have done that, you must do the same to yourself. A rope or vine around your neck is probably sufficient.

The Blood

The Blood is an intelligent virus, a sort of hive mind. The virus is similar to Ebola, in that it is highly contagious and ‘dissolves’ its hosts’ insides. This is messy, but once it has started the Blood controls its host. Unfortunately, the host eventually liquefies beyond the capacity for movement, and dies. Before then the host is called back to the temple where it becomes one with the Bloat.

(Viruses had not been discovered in 1938 – the expedition’s notebooks describe the Blood as a disease instead.)

Some people are naturally immune to the Blood, although they can become carriers for it. The sinkhole creatures are immune to the Blood – otherwise they would have died long ago. They are all carriers, however. Luckily, the physical geography of the area has prevented the Blood from spreading.

The Blood has no desire other than to be left alone. It is fiercely territorial, and dislikes intruders. It will do everything to protect its isolation – including the destruction of all means of transportation and communication.

The Cult of the Red Masque

At one time the Cult of the Red Masque worshipped the Blood – they built the temple around the Bloat’s resting place. High Priests, immune to the Blood, were favoured cultists and it took sacrifices randomly from the villages nearby.

The Bloat paid the cult little attention, and eventually they all died out when the Portuguese came. It has remained hidden since.

The Spiders and the Blood

About the size of a house-spider, these aggressive critters are agents of the Bloat, although it has very crude control of them. They have sharp fangs and their bite is almost painless, which is unfortunate given that they are carriers of the Blood. There are many more spiders than the investigators could ever destroy.

Infecting Investigators

The investigators can get infected with the Blood three ways:

- i) They are bitten by spiders and receive either Handout #11 or #17.
- ii) A player deliberately infects another by injecting him with contaminated blood. (This is not suggested in the handouts, but the players may figure this out).
- iii) The Keeper infects a player to speed things up. After all, those spiders are yours to control!

About fifteen minutes after infection, a character has a bad headache and loses his appetite. This is the stage the characters are at when they receive Handout #11 or #17. After another ten minutes or so, the Blood is partly in control and the player should read Handout #23.

Some time after that (the timing of all this really depends on how the game is going but about 15 minutes is typical) he receives Handout #24. He is Blood. He will now start falling apart – bleeding from the eyes, sores on his skin, passing blood. Build this up slowly – the Blood takes time to wreck its host.

The character is now vulnerable – one solid hit will “kill” him. The Blood is dissolving his internal organs into a mushy red goo. If the character is wounded in combat, don’t bother with rolling for damage – simply describe how the club (or whatever) knocks the character’s head off in a messy spray of blood. The character is dead – although of course the Blood is still quite alive.

Finally the Blood destroys its host – give the player Handout #25, it is time for him to depart. Wait until the end of the game before using Handout #25 – it is a good way to prompt a showdown.

Handout #23: You have recovered from your headache but something has changed – your colleagues seem oddly suspicious. Perhaps one of them put something in your food!

Please return this handout to the Keeper.

Handout #24: You are Blood. You have infected this human form and are now in control with full access to its memories and knowledge. You are also vulnerable – people your host once considered friends could kill you. That would not kill the Blood (of course) as you are now a part of the greater whole, but if they kill you they might try to escape, and that would be bad.

You know what happened to the previous humans – they submitted to the Bloat at the temple in Sinkhole Beta. It would be best if these humans also submitted – and to do that you must get them to the temple. However it is best if this could be done quickly as this host will soon start to decay.

You now have a new goal: Get everyone to the temple in Sinkhole Beta and make them submit. Do not let anyone escape!

Please return this handout to the Keeper.

Handout #25: Your host is falling apart. You must leave for the temple immediately. Go.

Please return this handout to the Keeper.

Keeper's Notes

In Whom We Trust thrives on paranoia and distrust, feeds on quiet whispering and furtive glances. To help maintain this atmosphere, it may help if the players are more mobile than they might otherwise be in a normal round-the-table game. (If you can't arrange for this, don't worry about it. The game plays fine if the players refuse to move from their seats.)

The situation at the camp is static. Smart players may want to get straight back in the boat and return to Manaus, but there are enough greedy and unscrupulous characters to keep them at the camp long enough to be bitten by the spiders. Once bitten, the game starts playing itself . . .

A Happy Ending

This is a one-way trip of despair – horror stories should not always have happy endings. However,

lucky investigators may survive – a sufficient quantity of Compound #13 remains for three investigators. Also, Captain Weber has six sticks of unstable dynamite aboard his boat. It is enough to demolish the temple, but the Blood itself is virtually unkillable.

How the game ends is up to the players – although lone survivors have proven typical in playtest. However it works, aim for the dramatic!

About In Whom We Trust

In Whom We Trust was originally written for the *Call of Cthulhu* tournament at Convulsion '96. Since then it has been played a number of times and suffered a variety of edits.

In Whom We Trust was also used as the RPGA tournament scenario at GenconUK 2001.

Characters: *In Whom We Trust* plays best with six players, but if you only have five you will have to drop Kempfer, the reporter. You will also need to remove two handouts – 12A and 21A. (They are the only "A" numbered handouts.)

Other Systems: It would be a trivial task to run this game using a system other than *Call of Cthulhu*. Simply substitute the player character statistics with your favourite system – and just ignore all the references to SAN loss.

And finally: Have fun!

Keeper's Checklist

Time of arrival at basecamp:

	Handouts #9 to #13	Handouts #17 to #21A	Handout #23	Handout #24	Handout #25
When issued	20 minutes after entering basecamp	At Camp Beta	+10 minutes	+15 minutes	Climax
Actual time					
	Handout number	Handout number	Issued	Issued	Issued
Captain Weber					
Roach					
Dr Adams					
Dr Schultz					
Rosenburg					
Kemfer					

NB – 11 + 17 = infected. 13 = immune.

Captain Weber

You are the owner of the Lady Rita, a creaky diesel river boat based in Manaus. Your present trip is a supply run to the Haswell Expedition. You also have a package for Haswell himself, which you intend to hand-deliver because he hasn't paid you for the last run of supplies yet. He owes you money (\$750) that you badly need.

Due to your unfortunate cash situation, the Lady Rita is poorly fitted out – it doesn't even have a radio! Your only weapon is an old rifle, with 10 rounds of ammunition, which you use to scare off the occasional animal. Well, that's not strictly true. You also have an old bundle of dynamite (six sticks), but you're not sure how reliable it is.

Goal: Get as much money as you can. Haswell owes you \$750 – you cannot afford to leave his camp without it.

STR 14 CON 17 SIZ 14 INT 11

POW 9 DEX 7 APP 10 EDU 8

SAN 50 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3+db;
.303 Rifle 40%, damage 2D6+4

Skills: Boating 70%, Electrical Repair 66%, English 40%, Evaluate Valuable Item 45%, Mechanical Repair 72%, Operate Heavy Machinery 45%, Portuguese 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 41%.

Who do you trust?

Roach

You have seen the signs. You have listened to the Voices, which are always clearest after you have taken a living creature. And they told you that the Evil is drawing near.

Unfortunately you have been chosen to fight the Evil. Not being one to ignore destiny's calling, you left your village. Guided by the Voices, you have arrived in Manaus. Further consultation (a dog) and you knew you must travel up river. The only boat heading upstream is the Lady Rita, owned by a greedy German. You paid the fare: where you are going money is not important.

There are other passengers. They do not understand you, and you see revulsion in their faces when you eat the spiders and beetles. Your only items that are of any meaning are your sacrificial knife (an old bone saw you found on a corpse) which you use to listen to the Voices, and your Mystic Stick, which protects you from Evil.

Goal: Fight Evil.

STR 15 CON 16 SIZ 12 INT 15

POW 14 DEX 13 APP 11 EDU 4

SAN 70 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 55%, damage 1D3+db;
Mystic Stick 60%, damage 1D6+db;
Sacrificial knife 65%, damage
1D4+2+db

Skills: Catch Bug 75%, Conceal 40%,
Climb 67%, English 40%, Listen
62%, Mutter Incomprehensibly 80%,
Portuguese 40%, Spot Hidden 60%,
Swim 41%

Who do you trust?

Doctor Adams

It is 1938 and you are in Manaus. You've told everyone that you're on holiday, but the real reason you are here is to find out what Rosenberg is up to. Let's be blunt: you want to steal his research.

You and Rosenberg go back a long way. You were both involved in the "unnecessary medical procedures" scandal at Miskatonic University. Yet you went while he remained. Now you have learned that Rosenberg is on some kind of expedition. So you convinced a backer (the University of Manilla) to pay for your "holiday" while you find out what Rosenberg is really up to. And steal his files, if you can.

While you were looking for a patron, the German authorities approached you. You did not like the idea of spying for the Nazis, but it seems likely that they have a spy of their own in the camp itself.

Goal: Steal Rosenberg's files.

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 17 INT 17

POW 13 DEX 8 APP 11 EDU 18

SAN 65 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Fist 35%, damage 1D3+db

Skills: Biology 62%, Chemistry 50%, First Aid 75%, Library Use 67%, Listen 53%, Medicine 79%, Pharmacy 45%, Spot Hidden 46%, Swim 41%

Who do you trust?

Doctor Schultz

You have travelled from Vienna to join the Haswell expedition as their resident expert on tropical diseases. (You were supposed to start earlier but have been unable to get away from Vienna.) The expedition will explore three uncharted sinkholes and bring back flora and fauna samples. You are interested in new and unusual diseases, specifically those that might have military applications: you are a spy.

You know that Haswell has a chequered past, and you suspect that there may be more to the expedition than meets the eye. Your German masters have similar thoughts.

You have a pistol.

Goal: Join the expedition and report back to your German masters.

STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 10 INT 17

POW 12 DEX 7 APP 9 EDU 18

SAN 60 HP 10

Damage Bonus: none

Weapons: Fist 65%, damage 1D3+db;
9mm automatic 45%, damage 1D10

Skills: Biology 43%, Chemistry 65%,
Electrical Repair 34%, English 50%,
First Aid 84%, Library Use 59%,
Listen 74%, Medicine 77%, Pharmacy
65%, Poisons 40%, Spot Hidden
66%, Sneak 47%

Who do you trust?

Rosenburg

“I have arranged for you to visit me next month and require a couple of textbooks from my study: John Collier’s *Beyond Life Sciences* and Baxter’s *The Stone Jungle*. See you soon and send my love to your mother.”

So you found the books, flew out to Brazil and now you are in Manaus, aboard the *Lady Rita*, ready for the six-day journey to your father’s camp.

The thing is, you have spotted Doctor Adams here, your father’s rival. You never really learned what happened between the two of them, but Adams left the Miskatonic while your father remained. Perhaps Adams’ presence here is coincidence.

Goal: Spend quality time with your father.

STR 9 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 18

POW 16 DEX 12 APP 13 EDU 17

SAN 80 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none

Weapons: Fist 54%, damage 1D3+db

Skills: Biology 42%, Chemistry 63%, Dodge 46%, Jump 60%, Library Use 58%, Listen 53%, Spot Hidden 46%, Sneak 38%, Swim 41%

Who do you trust?

Kemfer

You are on assignment from National Geographic to document the Haswell Expedition. However, you are sure that there are other sides to this expedition that might make good stories for other markets.

You noticed a few anomalies as well. For example, what is Rosenberg doing on the expedition? He was at Arkham during the “unnecessary medical procedures” scandal and was associated with Adams (who was actually sacked). So how close are Rosenberg and Adams? And why is Adams aboard the Lady Rita?

You have also heard that the Nazis have spies in the camp. Why?

You have with you all you need: notebooks, a camera and plenty of film.

Goal: Find out as much as you can and sell your stories.

STR 9 CON 10 SIZ 11 INT 18

POW 16 DEX 12 APP 13 EDU 17

SAN 80 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none

Weapons: Fist 54%, damage 1D3+db

Skills: Dodge 46%, Jump 60%,
Library Use 58%, Listen 53%,
Photography 60% Spot Hidden 65%,
Sneak 45%, Swim 41%

Who do you trust?

Who don't you trust?

Handouts

Handout #1: Unausprechlichen Kulten

This is in German.

Someone has marked a passage in this otherwise impenetrable tome.

The passage describes the Cult of the Red Masque, and Amazonian cult that died out shortly after Portuguese explorers first encountered them. The cult worshipped a vast monstrosity called the Red Masque that took its sacrifices at random, a process the locals called “submitting.” The cult came from surrounding villages, the tribal elders all being priests to the Red Masque.

The passage notes that the Temple of the Red Masque is difficult to reach, which is fortunate as the Bloat (the Red Masque’s physical representation) has an insatiable appetite. The Bloat lives in the temple and is made from the remains of its sacrifices.

Handout #2: Beyond Life Sciences and The Stone Jungle

Beyond Life Sciences is a book about tropical diseases. It is amazing how many different types of tropical disease there are, and this book seems to catalogue them all!

The Stone Jungle concerns itself with the ruins of Central and Southern America, mainly Mayan and, Incan.

Handout #3: The Haswell Expedition

The Miskatonic University's Haswell Expedition will explore several sinkholes deep in the Amazon Basin in search of new flora and fauna. Expedition members are:

Professor Haswell: botanist and leader

Professor Rosenburg: zoologist

Doctor Schultz: tropical diseases

Nurse Wilson

Doctor Smith, vet

Packard, Bedford and Morris: undergraduates.

Trapper Peck: the best hunter and trapper in the Amazon Basin, and fluent in most of the native tongues.

Sapiro: guide. Sapiro is in charge of the three native laborers hired for manual work.

Handout #4: Sapiro's Journal

This is written in Portuguese.

The journal concerns Sapiro's adventures in the Amazon Basin. He describes Haswell's delighted reaction to the sinkholes, but also notes that the natives are not so pleased. They have some superstitions about the place: "Submitting to the Red Mask."

Sapiro describes the death of a captured monkey with great relish: "dissolving innards oozing from every orifice like treacle." The natives become highly agitated and leave shortly after. Threatening them with the shotgun has no effect.

Sapiro's Journal includes directions to the three sinkholes, Alpha, Beta and Gamma. Alpha was explored and finished with. The expedition still has a camp at Beta.

Handout #5: Emma Bedford's Notebook

This is in English.

Bedford's notebook reads like a catalogue of scandal and vice rather than an academic journal.

Bedford helps Sara Morris with tending the animals, although only lip-service is paid to this in her notes. She notes that Morris is jealous because she (Bedford) went to sinkhole Alpha site to help set up the cages there. Bedford hates the jungle: there are too many spiders, mosquitoes and other bugs for comfort. The spiders are quite vicious, and bite. At least she hasn't been falling as ill as Sara has been. Bedford does not like bugs.

The notebook's last entry details her concern over the discovery that the sinkhole site is deserted. The boats have evidently been scuttled and the native porters have fled. Then Sara falls ill.

Handout #6: Sara Morris' Notebook

This is written in English.

Morris is in charge of the animals, feedings and cleaning their cages. Her studies show that the monkeys from Sinkhole Alpha differ from the basecamp monkeys. She suggests they have been separated for a long time, presumably by the geography of the sinkhole.

Later in the notebook she notes the peculiar interest that the spiders are taking in some animals. She notes that they bite. The bitten monkeys (two from Alpha, one from basecamp) fall ill shortly after, appearing irritable and refusing to eat. They start weeping blood soon after, and die within 48 hours. Their deaths are grotesque, vomiting their liquefied insides with considerable violence. One even tried to escape by squeezing through the wire mesh, slicing itself apart in the process.

Handout #7: Haswell's Journal

This is in English.

Haswell's journal is a list of subjects, treatments and results. He has injected monkeys with various chemical compounds and recorded changes in activity, intelligence, and problem-solving. He tests monkeys from the basecamp and sinkholes indiscriminately.

The journal's final entry makes a brief mention of a copy of Unausprechlichen Kulturen that was due to arrive on the next supply trip. Apparently Haswell is hoping it contains some information on the disease that has struck the expedition.

Handout #8: The Laboratory Journal (Dr Smith)

This is in English.

This journal describes in clinical detail the differences between those animals captured around the basecamp and those in the sinkholes. It refers frequently to Haswell's journals and various chemicals administered to the animals.

The book also describes the disease that is killing the monkeys and monkeys. From his autopsy, Smith notes that it dissolves its hosts insides, reducing it eventually to a soupy pulp. Symptoms include loss of appetite, passing blood in saliva or urine, bloody eyes and open sores on the skin. Shortly after infection the monkey seems to get better, but this is only a temporary reprieve.

Dr Smith notes that all infected animals have small bite marks – possibly from spiders. Smith is certain he has found the disease's transmission medium after he injects a healthy monkey with spider venom and it soon shows signs of illness. Smith also tried infecting some monkeys from Sinkhole Beta, but they appear to be immune.

Handout #9: You spot something on the edge of the jungle – a pit filled with dead and decomposing animals. It appears to be where the expedition put its dead creatures. They had buried them, but a scavenger must have dug through to find the tasty morsels within.

Handout #10: You put your hand on something and a spider bites you. The bite draws blood but is almost painless.

Handout #11: You suddenly have a bad headache and you have lost your appetite. You might be coming down with something, jungle fever or worse!

Handout #12: You note that the peculiar black spiders have managed to get aboard the *Lady Rita*. Great. So now the boat is infested as well.

Handout #12A: You note that the peculiar black spiders have managed to get aboard the *Lady Rita*. Great. So now the boat is infested as well.

Handout #13: You feel nauseous and are running a fever. You cannot do anything strenuous as you are feeling so weak.

Handout #14: Alan Packard's Journal

This is in English.

Packard is suspicious of the expedition's real motives. He believes that the sinkholes, while fascinating isolated ecologies, are a cover for something else. He suspects that Haswell and Rosenberg are administering drugs via the daily malaria treatment. Packard has been skipping it whenever he can. He has sneaked a look at Rosenberg's journal and would like to compare it with Haswell's.

He also notes that a temple in Sinkhole Beta has a powerful hold on Rosenberg. Packard doesn't like the temple, it is infested with spiders and gives him the creeps. Peck had a fragment of carved stone that he took from the temple, intending to keep it as a souvenir. Someone has stolen it and Packard suspects it was one of the natives.

Handout #15: Rosenberg's Journal

This is in English.

Rosenberg's journal is a list of the personnel in the expedition, along with various chemical compounds and results, if any. He is clearly conducting some kind of experiment on the people here. Although it isn't clear who else is in on his experiments, clearly Haswell and Wilson (at least) are also involved.

The chemical cocktails are administered with the daily malaria injections and are referred to only as compound numbers, such as Compound #5, #6 and so on.

Handout #16: Comparing Haswell and Rosenberg's Journals

Studying the two journals together reveals that Haswell and Rosenberg have been giving drugs to their human subjects (mainly the students and the natives). They are interested in anything that promotes intelligence and health.

Results have been good in Bedford (particularly good in her case – she had the same drugs as the monkey #13 in the laboratory, Compound #13) and Sapiro but Packard's results are very disappointing.

Handout #22: The Bloat and the Blood

The thing in the pit is the Bloat, a concentrated mass of Blood. If threatened, you must protect it at all costs – everything is second to the safety of the Bloat, including your own life.

If the Bloat is not in danger, you must subdue everyone here and hang them from the hooks in the ceiling. Then slit their wrists and mix your blood with theirs – the Blood will consume them quickly enough. Once you have done that, you must do the same to yourself. A rope or vine around your neck is probably sufficient.

Handout #17: You suddenly have a splitting headache and have lost your appetite. Perhaps you should see a doctor.

Handout #18: You discover a rash of insect bites on your arms and legs. Some of them are strangely painless, others itch like crazy.

Handout #19: You note that one of your companions (see the Keeper) seems to be followed by the spiders. Odd, that.

Handout #20: Something under your shirt turns out to be a black spider. It has bitten you, but if you hadn't felt the creature you would never have known.

Handout #21: You discover a rash of insect bites on your ankle. Shouldn't they be itching?

Handout #21A: You discover a rash of insect bites on your ankle. Shouldn't they be itching?

Handout #23: You have recovered from your headache but something has changed – your colleagues seem oddly suspicious. Perhaps one of them put something in your food!

Please return this handout to the Keeper.

Handout #24: You are Blood. You have infected this human form and are now in control with full access to its memories and knowledge. You are also vulnerable – people your host once considered friends could kill you. That would not kill the Blood (of course) as you are now a part of the greater whole, but if they kill you they might try to escape, and that would be bad.

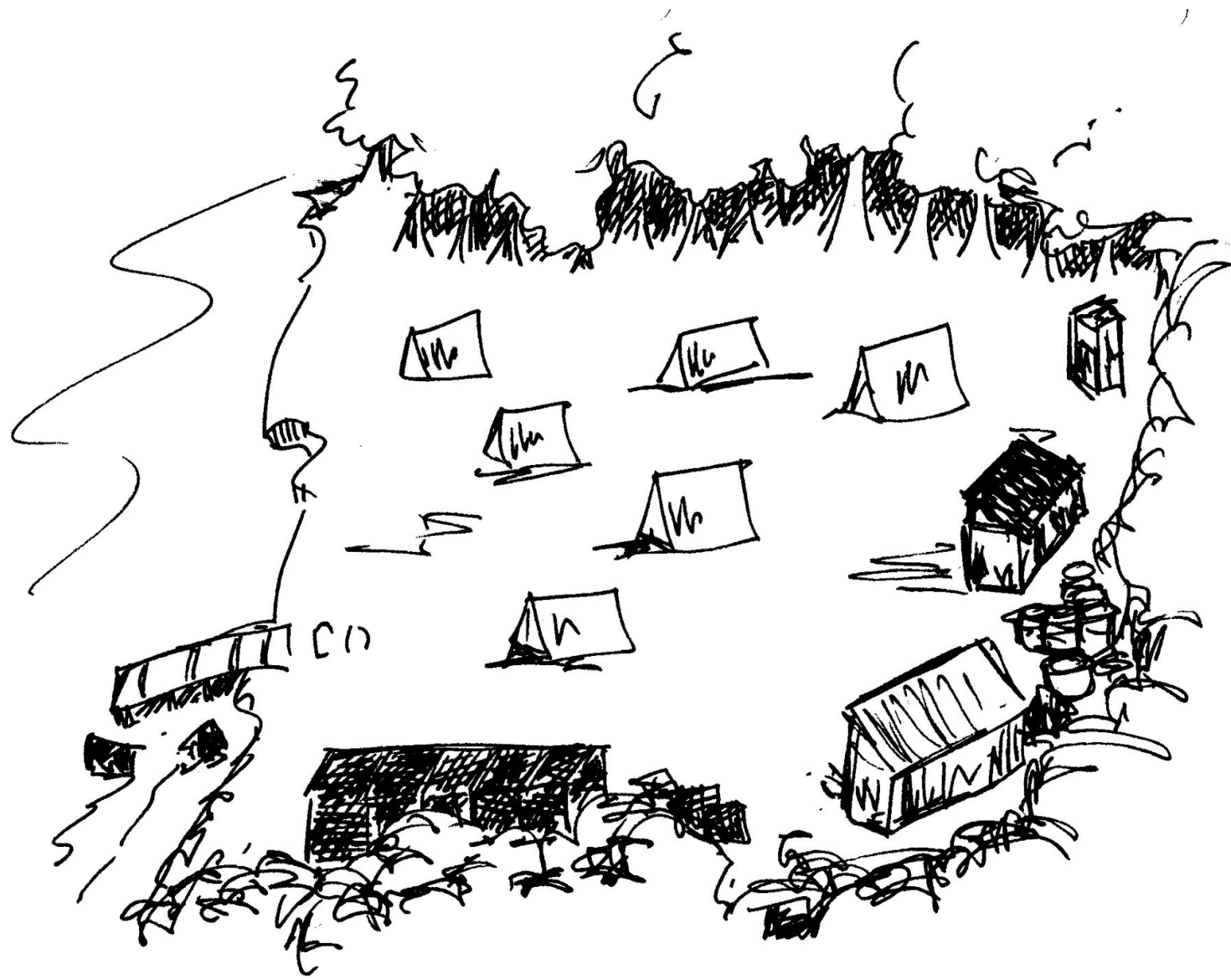
You know what happened to the previous humans – they submitted to the Bloat at the temple in Sinkhole Beta. It would be best if these humans also submitted – and to do that you must get them to the temple. However it is best if this could be done quickly as this host will soon start to decay.

You now have a new goal: Get everyone to the temple in Sinkhole Beta and make them submit. Do not let anyone escape!

Please return this handout to the Keeper.

Handout #25: Your host is falling apart. You must leave for the temple immediately. Go.

Please return this handout to the Keeper.







Keeper's Checklist

Time of arrival at basecamp:

	Handouts #9 to #13	Handouts #17 to #21A	Handout #23	Handout #24	Handout #25
When issued	20 minutes after entering basecamp	At Camp Beta	+10 minutes	+15 minutes	Climax
Actual time					
	Handout number	Handout number	Issued	Issued	Issued
Captain Weber					
Roach					
Dr Adams					
Dr Schultz					
Rosenburg					
Kemfer					

NB – 11 + 17 = infected. 13 = immune.