

Serene And Primal

A Call Of Cthulhu Adventure

There are those who travel through time, bodiless and undimensioned, inhabiting the corporeal forms of things of matter when it suits their purposes dark and unknown. The Great Race of Yith uses this method in pursuit of its great work.

In the sleep of death what dreams may come
-Shakespeare

History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awaken.
-Joyce

...among which there is no difference between those born of real things and those born of inward dreaming
-Lovecraft

I walked into your dream/and now I've forgotten/how to dream
-Tori Amos

There are those who travel through time, bodiless and undimensioned, inhabiting the corporeal forms of things of matter when it suits their purposes dark and unknown. The Great Race of Yith uses this method in pursuit of its great work. They are the only race who has conquered space and time so thoroughly.

But there are those who have forgotten if they were ever part of a race, if indeed they were ever anything other than what they are, incomprehensible mad destroyers and dark forces in the obscure and unknowable corners beyond reality.

There is a city on a dead world circling a burned-out star. Nothing lives there except a single mind. That mind does not name itself, and cannot remember its origins. The Yithians, who found it a danger and irritation, imprisoned it long ago. It seeks to escape. Sometimes, it manages to contact the tiny minds of other worlds. In the brief time it has before the weak bodies crumble into dust, it tries to escape, to follow the mind of its host back. It will one day return to where it ruled before...

Backstory: Ernest Smith is an English occultist and explorer of the Mythos. During experiments with astral projection back a few decades ago, he accidentally made contact with the mind. His attempts to free himself of the mind's clutches (involving a Satanic ritual) only partly succeeded, and he often loses control of his own actions. As part of the ritual, he sacrificed six children. Their minds were caught in the wake of the mind, and still exists. Smith currently lives in a house adjoining Dr. Junzt.

The house once belonged to an alchemist, Bektrict, who was also a host for the mind. The house contains a Gate which will allow access to the world of the mind. The mind is trapped in the ancient city, and needs a beacon, a living mind to follow back. Bektrict died before the mind could use him. Smith's sacrifice of the children saved him. Last night, the mind attempted to gain control of Smith. He tried to fight it off, and eventually blundered into Dr. Junzt's house (see the tape (handout 1), and your interpretation of it (handout 2)). The mind then got partial control, and Smith ran back to his house and activated the gate.

The gate opened a space-time vortex, and dragged the sleeping forms of Dr. Junzt, Anna, Constance and Macon, as well as Smith, to the world of the mind. The psychic trauma has created a form of group

telepathy between the five. They are dreaming, a dream created from the memories of all five. The mind has a presence here to, as do a few others, who I'll detail later.

Now, in the 7.12 train from Paris to Cologne are Constance's twin brother Jeremy and his psychic friend Theodore. Thanks to the psychic link between twins and Theodore's powers, the two are drawn into the dream. None of the characters know what happened to them, and (initially) do not suspect they are dreaming. The key to the scenario is the realisation that they are dreaming. Only by both groups (the sleepers who travelled through the gate, and Jeremy & Theo) awakening and working on the two sides of the gate can they hope to survive.

The Yithian Solution: The Yithians imprisoned the mind in the first place, and don't want to see it loose. Therefore, they bring Macon's mind back 250 million years into the past and train him to stop the mind. They return him an instant after they took him, although they train him for 300 years. On his return time-journey, Macon glimpses the psychic links between the characters, although he doesn't understand it.

The Yithians didn't send a Yithian because the mind would detect and destroy an equal mind.

The Characters:

Herr Doktor Erik Junzt: Dr. Junzt was a professor of Theology, and almost became a priest. He is a highly intelligent and optimistic man. He became fascinated with the theories of Jung and Freud, and threw himself into the developing field of psychology, losing his faith in God but gaining faith in humanity... He is now a respected alienist, although he tends towards the theoretical. Despite occasionally bursts of brilliant cynicism, he is a relentlessly optimistic and hopeful man. He loves his only daughter dearly, and wants the best for everyone.

Anna Junzt: Anna shares her father's positive outlook and taste for the mystic. However, while Erik tries to understand and deconstruct everything, Anna is humble and accepting. She knows there are things in the universe far beyond our understanding. The thought of this does not scare her, it excites her. She believes in angels and telepathy and astral forms and psychic powers and reincarnation and all the rest.

Macon, a Butler: Macon's a butler. While Dr. Junzt reads and analyses, and Anna dreams, Macon cleans, cooks, organises. He is the perfect servant. In his own way, he is intelligent as his master, and far more resourceful. As the scenario begins, something rather odd happens to Macon. Read on.

Ms Constance Avon: Cold. Hard. Silent. Constance Avon knows what makes people tick. She's read every theory of Freud and Jung. There is no soul, no mystery of humanity in her eyes. She sees the tribe-traditions and taboos, the sublimated sexuality, the base and the unconscious that lie beneath society and proper behaviour. Show her a cathedral and she doesn't see a monument to glory – she sees it as an ape's attempt to placate ancestral god-memories. To her, people are animal/robots who follow society's pre-programmed patterns.

Mr Jeremy Avon: Constance's twin, and her opposite. Constance believes in nothing, Jeremy believes in everything. For years he's been digging into the mystic past of the world. He's a member of the Golden Dawn, and fancies himself a minor sorcerer. He travels Europe with his friend and companion, Theodore Kelly.

Theodore Kelly: Kelly has a gift. He's a powerful psychic. Sometimes, in rare moments of lucidity, he wishes he were normal. Most of the time, he wishes he were dead. The psychic impressions of the dead, the thoughts of others, the invisible and the ethereal crowd his mind. And though they drive him to the brink of insanity, they are far more welcome than the other minds he sometimes touches.

Events in the Scenario:

The characters awaken in Dr. Junzt's house. The four who passed through the Gate (Dr. Junzt, Anna, Constance, and Macon) encounter Jeremy & Theodore.

The Yithians abduct Macon for a moment – or three hundred years depending on your perspective.

The characters explore their surroundings. They are in a dream, and the town of Almich is greatly changed. Every other person in the town has vanished.

The First Awakening

They encounter the strange entities that inhabit the dream. These are aspects of Smith's mind, the ghosts of six children he murdered in England etc

The Second Awakening

The characters realise they are dreaming. Jeremy and Theodore travel to Almich, while the other four explore the alien city.

Smith, finally falling prey to the mind, destroys the children and allows the mind back into the universe.

The state of the characters: After passing through the Gate, Smith found the unconscious bodies of the characters. He dragged them away from the Gate and left. Jeremy and Theodore fell asleep on the train to Cologne, and were drawn into the dream. The staff on the train tried to wake them, but it was impossible. The two are now in a hospital in Cologne.

Smith's movements in the scenario: Ernest Smith runs around a lot during the scenario. He is dragged through the gate with Dr Junzt, Anna, Macon & Constance, but he does not fall completely into the dream. The mind takes control of him, and makes him drag the four out of the great Hall and into another chamber in the city. Smith breaks free of the mind, and then he wanders around the alien City for a while, fading in and out of the dream. He broke his leg in the fall from Dr. Junzt's study, and eventually crawls back to the Gate and returns to Earth. He hides in the hidden vault in the Library until the mind finds him and possesses him. He then returns through the Gate (if the characters do not stop him) and destroys the remains of the girls, dissipating their essences and allowing the Mind to escape.

Smith's crimes: There is a newspaper article reporting Smith's murder of the children. This article is embedded in Smith's mind, and keep appearing in the dreamscape. This article, and Smith's book (Bram Stoker's Dracula) should keep appearing. They can find the article in any newspaper, or in the library. The book should crop up in Dr. Junzt's house, in Smith's ruin, in the library – anywhere. It is a dream.

Theodore's powers: Theodore's psychic abilities do not work on anyone in the dream apart from Jeremy (the others are billions of light years away). He can read minds and do basically "Jedi Mind tricks" (use POW vs POW if you feel the need to roll dice). He cannot affect Smith (Smith is a skilled sorcerer) although he can try to block Smith's magic.

Theo's power will be very handy when they wake up and need to escape the hospital. He can convince the doctors that two people who collapsed on a train and fell into a coma should be allowed walk out...

Part 1: The Dream

The Dream: The six characters are dreaming. The dreamscape they inhabit looks just like the town of Almich, as it drawn from their memories. This means that initially the players will believe that some horrible calamity has struck the town. Let them assume this for a while. The key to succeeding in the scenario is realising they are dreaming and using the dream as a method of communicating between the two groups of player characters.

The characters can affect the dream. If they go looking for, say, a shotgun, they can find one. If they expect Dracula to show up...well, unless they really believe it, he won't, but they'll notice a few more bats and coffins... The dream is intended to be surreal. Make the buildings of the town seem as normal and mundane as possible, and then fill them with all the weird images you half-remember at the moment of waking up.

The characters can awaken from the dream if they really believe they are dreaming, and fervently wish to wake up. Just saying, "I bet this is a dream" doesn't work.

Before we begin...

Read the character backgrounds, the tape handouts, and Macon's Yithian handout.

Remember that the Mythos is a darkness beyond human comprehension, and that a player squealing "I don't understand" is a good thing. The first section of the scenario should be as surreal, as twisted and as disturbing as you can make it.

And remember it's only a dream.

Dr. Junzt's house: A large well-maintained house, in a pleasant walled garden. The house is rather old-fashioned and crammed full of well-loved books. There are several "public" rooms – the dining room, drawing room, piano room etc. There is a study/office (complete with red leather couch), and a library. Dr. Junzt also has a private study, which is filled with mementoes of his late wife.

Anna's room is notable only for the sheer number of plush toys. She has a small and eclectic collection of books, and a small selection of crystals and charms.

Macon's room is utterly bare except for furniture. Similarly, Constance has a soul-less bedroom, with a shelf of textbooks and a single picture of her family.

The scenario starts here. The characters awaken. The Junzts, Constance, and Macon are in their rooms. Theodore and Jeremy awaken in the porch of the house.

While the characters are still in the house, Macon is contacted by the Yithians.

Next to the house lies...

The ruin: This ruin was once a house owned by an alchemist, Bektrict. He was a host for the mind, and created a Gate in his house. Most of the once-sprawling mansion has collapsed over the centuries. The whole building has a strange feeling to it, like walking through an abandoned building that was your childhood school, a sense of forgotten purpose. One section of the ruin has been repaired, and there are three rooms that are to some extent intact. Smith has been living here for four months.

The bedroom: All the furniture is second-hand. There is a copy of Bram Stoker's Dracula as well as a

few newspapers and hardbound books of poetry. If examined, the pillow bears traces of tears and blood.

The kitchen: There is a bloody iron knife, of 5th century design, lying on the table. This is the knife Smith used to sacrifice the girls. This knife becomes covered in warm blood in the presence of the dreamshades of the girls.

The study: Smith tried to kill himself by burning himself alive in this room. The mind took control of him, and he threw himself onto the fire he was trying to kindle, and extinguished it. There is a pile of notes and books on the floor, all of which have been partially burned. One of them is Smith's journal.

There is a trapdoor in the study leading to...

The chapel: This is a hideous mockery of a small Catholic chapel. The walls are covered in carvings depicting heinous acts – murder, rape, torture – in awful detail. The chapel is very dark, and the carvings cannot be understood just by looking at them – they must be felt, touched, rubbed. There is a cumulative horror to doing this (San loss 1/1d6).

There are two statues flanking the altar. In the dim light, they appear to angels, but they have horrible faces like beaked insects (byakhee).

The altar is...odd. It is gigantic, a towering thing that arches over the angels. It is a baroque masterpiece, but it is twisted and alien. It shifts as you look at it, and faces form in the loops and swirls. It is made of something that looks like brass but feels like stone. If the altar is examined in detail, a whole section of it is found to be hinged – a door. It can be opened by digging fingernails into the tiny crack between door and altar. This effort draws blood as the character cuts their fingers on the sharp edges. Inside, there is a swirling mist. Anyone stepping into the mists Awakens for a moment, then steps back out again (this is only a dream-reflection of the true Gate).

Macon, after his encounter with the Yithians, knows a ritual to collapse the Gate. He may try to perform this ritual – it will have no effect on the Gate.

The town: See the map of Almich. This is a dream-reflection of the town. It looks just like the character's memories of the town in every respect. As it is built from their memories, there is nothing here they do not know already. If they look at a newspaper, all the articles are familiar. As the human mind cannot access all its memories perfectly, they may not consciously know they have already read the article, but it will still feel oddly familiar. The only new article is the report on Smith's murder of the girls. If they don't ask for a newspaper, they can find it in the Library (see below) or with the girls (see even further below).

There is no sign of any humans in the town.

As the characters explore the empty town, they will notice things that are out of place. These things are bleeding in from the city where four of the characters are sleeping. Here are a few surreal features of the city:

A blue stone arch, about 15' tall, with a long conical bell suspended from the keystone of the arch. If the bell is rung, no sound can be heard...almost....

A heavy metal door, with geometric scratches on its surface. If opened, the characters see a reflection of themselves, but the background to the image is the character's real surroundings (the city for most, the hospital for Jeremy and Theo)

A section of wall that is utterly out of place. It is made of heavy bluish-grey stone blocks.

A window looking out over a storm-tossed sea. There is no sign of any life beneath the dark and gloomy clouds that hang brooding over the eerie empty waters. San loss 1/1d3

Make exploring Almich as surreal as possible. When the characters awaken, have the four in the alien City see some of the weird things above. Tie the dream and reality together.

Important Buildings:

The Church: The main Church in Almich was built in the 18th century, and is vaguely gothic in design. It is well maintained and well loved by the people. It has a warm, welcoming feel, and seems to glow with a golden light. It is the spiritual centre of the town.

Inside, the church is overflowing with blood. Rivers of gore flow down the aisles and cascade down the steps. The pews are drowned in a sea of warm blood. The altar is the source of the horror, as blood gushes from it. Writhing shapes can be seen on the altar. These are invisible impressions of the girls that Smith sacrificed. San loss is 2/1d6+1

The whole church is a reflection of Smith's guilt. The flow of blood cannot be stopped by the characters, but it serves to show them that the town may not be what it seems.

The railway station: While it's unlikely any of the characters visit Almich's small but modern railway station, it does contain an important clue as to their location. The departures board in the station reads:

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Time</i>
<i>Ulthar</i>	<i>13.42</i>
<i>Baharna</i>	<i>14.11</i>
<i>Celephais</i>	<i>20.00</i>

The names are places in the dreamlands. If the characters bother to wait, then a strange gust of wind, with screaming faces in the dust of its passage passes down the rails. Anyone in the path of this wind is awakened for a moment and loses 1/1d3 sanity.

City Hall: If the library here is searched properly, they can find records showing that a Herr Hans Bektrict owned the house next to Dr. Junzt's during the last century. Bektrict vanished on Walpurgisnacht in 1812. His assets were taken by the town as compensation for unpaid taxes.

The library: The library is a favoured haunt of Dr. Junzt, Anna...and Smith. As they explore, they may come to realise (if they examine the bookshelves) that they can find no books in the library that they have not read in years before. Every tome is one they have already looked at – except for a few books on the occult, and one or two works of fiction, like Stoker's Dracula, which appears in the library again.

If they've read Smith's diary, then they may know about the vault in the basement of the library. If they don't, a Listen roll reveals an odd gurgling laugh and shuffling coming from the basement. If they investigate the cellars of the library, they find an old complex of decaying books and newspapers, old and unwanted records. There is a half-working system of electric lighting, but the vaults are maze-like and confusing.

One vault, number 3, is hidden behind a cabinet full of old newspapers. The newspaper article about Smith is prominent on one paper. The vault behind the cabinet is bricked up. Breaking down the wall requires a tool like a crowbar and a combined strength of 20. Behind lies...

The revenant: Hans Bektrict died two hundred years ago. After building the gate under the influence of the mind, he went mad and travelled through the gate, which closed behind him. He wandered the city for a few days, then starved to death. His mind was caught in the wake of the other mind, and survives – to some extent – in the dream.

Bektrict has been given form in the dream by Smith. Smith found Bektrict's books (seized in 1812) in this vault in the library. In the dream, Bektrict is the physical manifestation of the knowledge found in those awful works coupled with the vestiges of Bektrict's mind.

He manifests as a hideous walking corpse, wearing rotting garments – or a prematurely aged man with piercing dark eyes wearing ceremonial robes – or anything in between. His appearance shifts as you look at him. His voice, - deep, otherworldly and horrible – stays constant. See Bektrict's history at the end of the scenario. Seeing him costs 2/1d8 sanity. Bektrict is a deeply evil and insane thing, but he has almost no power in the dream, being maintained solely by the characters' minds and Smith. If any player says anything that implies they want to destroy Bektrict (like I shoot him), Bektrict is blown away like fine sand in a hurricane. A heavy leather book falls to the floor where he was standing (san loss 0/1d4 if Bektrict was appearing human and had not yet looked undead). Part of the book is reproduced as a handout. Although the book is hundreds of pages long, this page is the only one the characters see, no matter on what page they open it. If any player wishes, Bektrict can reform unharmed. His appearance is completely at the beck and call of the players. He is just a thing in a dream after all.

He knows nothing that is not contained in the books found by Smith. He knows a lot of the occult, and certain rituals that open the soul to the astral plane. Here are a few of his likely answers to questions:

Who are you: I...was Hans Bektrict. I was an alchemist, a seeker after secrets...

What do you want: Want? Me? Surely it is evident to the mind's eye that I have no needs or desires... now.

Where is Smith: He is...between here and there. He is a quarry in a great hunt.

What happened to everyone in town: Nothing.

How did Jeremy & Theo get here: They did not.

What is Smith trying to do: He tried to escape our host...by bathing in blood. A temporary solution. Now he runs.

How can we get back to normality: There is a gate between...I made it long ago. Travel through it to reach the other side.

How do we open the gate: It is already open.

How do we stop what's happening: The dead are a bloodied wall between nothing and meaninglessness.

Bektrict will toy with the characters and mock them, but he is a thing of their dream. He has no power over them (though he may claim to), and will obey their commands. He has no physical or magical power whatsoever.

First Awakening (the city): Some time during their exploration of the city (preferable at a moment of horror or stress), the characters will awaken for a moment. They wake from the dream and return to their physical forms. They get a momentary glimpse of reality before the dream rises up around them again.

Dr. Junzt, Anna, Constance & Macon awaken in a dark, damp room. The sound of gentle waves can be

heard, and there is a bitter, acrid smell in the air. The walls are covered with a horrible whitish rubbery coating which rips and oozes clear liquid. The one exit from the room leads to an eerie gallery with gothic arched windows.

Jeremy & Theodore find themselves in two beds. There is a smell of disinfectant and the walls are pale green colour. They can here people moving around quietly in the room. If they look around, they get a glimpse of an ordinary hospital ward before they fall back into the dream.

The judge: The Judge is a manifestation of Smith's guilt. It takes the shape of the quintessential English judge, with black robes and long white wig and gavel. It is wraithly and ethereal, and floats. The area around it is icy cold, and front covers the ground it travels over. It speaks in a cackling voice.

The Judge adds an element of danger and evil to the scenario. Bring him in when the characters grow tired of running around the city. He can also appear to scare them if they're working the plot out too quickly, and you want to disrupt them for a few minutes in the hope they'll forget...

San loss for seeing the ghost is 1/1d6.

The judge will attack the characters if it sees them. It will fly towards them waving its gavel. Whenever it speaks the name of a character and bangs its gavel, the targeted character's heart is filled with icy stabbing pains, and he becomes icy cold. His pulse slows and icy forms on his skin and in his blood. Damage and crimes are as follows:

<i>Character</i>	<i>Crime</i>	<i>Damage</i>
<i>Dr. Junzt</i>	<i>Neglect of his wife, failed God he did</i>	<i>1d6+2</i>
<i>Anna Junzt</i>	<i>Murdered her mother!</i>	<i>2d6</i>
<i>Macon</i>	<i>Inhuman! Alien! Traitor!</i>	<i>2d6</i>
<i>Jeremy</i>	<i>Wasted his life! Fool!</i>	<i>1d4</i>
<i>Theodore Monster!</i>	<i>Ate his family he did</i>	<i>2d6</i>

Constance has no guilt, and is immune to the judge. Hit point loss is illusory within the dream, and vanishes in a few minutes.

The judge will stalk the characters through the city. It cannot be reasoned with, or placated. There is no defence against it.

If any character falls unconscious due to the judge's attacks, the judge will pick them up and carry them to the cathedral. The cathedral will then warp and shift like melting wax, become a dream-version of the Great Hall of the City. This hall is carved of blue-grey stone that seems to flow and writhe gently. The hall is a Giger-esque organo-gothic chamber, a birthing room for gargoyles and horrors. There are dozens of shadowed alcoves, spires like twisted claws, alien shapes in the corners that could be reliquaries, fonts, altars, machines, torture instruments. San loss is 1/1d4.

The judge will drop the captured characters on the uneven cold floor of the Hall, then it will vanish like Bektrict does.

Then the mind comes...

The gaze of the mind: The mind is made of whatever exists beyond dream. It warps the stuff of the dreamscape, twisting it until it tears and its awful radiance shines through. The air, the ceiling, the shapes of the Hall warp and melt, spinning into a whirlpool, a terrible wound in the dream. Something looks out from beyond that awful hole...

The mind reaches out. The characters get a vague impression of tentacles, hands, mouths, screaming eyes, a dark cornucopia of the horrors of dream...then a huddled group of six shining figures standing between them and the horror.

The second awakening: The second awakening is triggered by a close brush with the mind. The four characters in the city awaken in the strange room again, but this time they have a few moments to look around and talk to each other. If they leave the room and go out into the corridor, they see through the gothic arches the eerie spires and haggard domes of the city. As they look, they see the stars in the sky above the city are utterly unlike any they have seen before. They are closer to the heart of a galaxy, and the stars are tightly clustered, outshining the moons. There are great red and blue nebulae in the sky.

Across the city, they see a great plaza dominated by a statue of a strange octopus-headed bat-man. An unmistakably human figure, which they recognise as Smith, crawls across the plaza beneath the statue. His leg is broken, and he is staggering.

Jeremy and Theodore awaken in the hospital. A nurse is sitting on Jeremy's bed feeding him soup. When he opens his eyes, she is surprised, and lets out a little yelp. She then calls for a doctor. The two then fall back into the dream.

Six little girls: When the characters return to the dream, they are no longer in the Great Hall. They are in an English pub, vaguely similar to the Rover's Return in Coronation Street, but more old-fashioned. The décor is strange, with a lot more prams, dolls and pictures of ponies than most pubs have. The six characters are sitting around a large table with six near-identical policemen, with the classic woodentops and bright blue uniforms. Each policeman has a large bottle of ginger ale in front of them. One has a lollipop.

Ok, at this point the players should be looking at you like you've got utterly mad or else be giggling in a confused manner. What's going on is as follows: The minds of the six girls have blocked the mind from reaching the characters, and they've taken temporary control of part of the dream. They have created an environment in which they feel protected and can speak to the characters. The six policemen are the six girls.

The policemen speak in a childish and high voice. The one who will speak to the characters mostly is called Mary. She was the eldest and most responsible of the children. She will matter-of-factly tell the characters that "bad Mr. Smith killed us all with a big black knife". The girls have been waiting here in "the city that whispers for a very very long time".

The girls have been trapped in a dream for decades.

After a minute or two of conversation with the characters, Mary will announce that they have something very important to say. All six policeman will line up, and in high yet totally serious voices, begin to sing:

*"Row row row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily Merrily Merrily Merilly
Life is but..."*
(trails off, then begin again)

At this point, the pub melts away, to be replaced by the dream-streets of Almich. Smith stands nearby. There is an unholy fire in his eyes and he seems to be surrounded by a crackling aura of dark energies. He screams "STOP! SHUT UP! YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE! YOU'RE ALL DEAD!" Blasts of magical energy shoot from his hand. The policemen are obliterated, and six shadow figures scurry away, vanishing. San loss for this is 1/1d6.

Smith turns to the characters. He smiles a jackal's smile. "Sorry about that. You're real, so you're don't matter here, so I can kill you, because you aren't real here. Sorry about that too." He raises his hands, dark light coruscates around them. Then, behind him, the stuff of dreams collapses and warps. A tear in dream forms behind him. Smith is sucked through the rift in an instant. The rift closes.

This shock prompts the characters' third awakening.

The third awakening: The four characters in the city awaken. They are lying in the same place they were at the end of the second awakening. There is a storm coming to the city. Dark purple clouds with weird blue-violet lightning are gathering over the lake. There is a terrible smell like battery acid. This awakening lasts only a moment, just enough time to see the first bolts strike the city.

For Jeremy & Theodore, they awaken in the hospital. There are two doctors examining Theodore. When he awakens, they speak to him, trying to get him to stay awake, encouraging him to talk. It's no good though – the dream takes him after a few moments.

Part 2: The Waking World

Waking up: After the third awakening, all the characters return to the dream. There is no sign of Smith or the policemen. A newspaper with the article is here if they haven't found a copy already. By now, if they have any sense at all, they should have worked out they are dreaming. If they sincerely try to wake up, they do so. If they close their eyes, they return to the dream in a moment. The dream serves as a method of communication between the two groups of player characters.

At this point in the scenario, there are three possible ways it can go.

If they've managed to work out they're in a dream early on, then encourage them to keep in contact as much as possible, and run the dream events above as well as the waking world events described below.

If they work out they're dreaming at this point, you're on track. Depending on how much time you have, play up the confusion of the two groups, or else sprint to the finale.

If you have a table of idiots who won't realise they're dreaming until Dream from Neil Gaiman's Sandman turns up and waves at them, then let them wander around the scenario. Let the judge chase them around again...if they haven't made it to the library, he chases them there, otherwise he'll pursue them to the railway station. Have them find a book containing nothing but the words to Row row row your boat in the library, or have the public address in the station play it. If they don't work it out, hold up a sign saying "YOU ARE IN A DREAM". Then kill them all and go to the bar.

The hospital: Jeremy Avon and Theodore Kelly awaken in Our Lady of Mercies Hospital in Cologne. They were taken there when the porter on the 7.12 to Cologne found them sleeping on the train and was unable to awaken them by any means. The doctors will question them, asking if they have any illnesses, if they have smoked opium or cocaine. The doctor in charge of them is Dr. Alain Novell, an overworked young doctor who has no time for nonsense stories about dreams and aliens.

If the players have any sense, they'll get to Almich as soon as possible. Theodore can use his psychic gifts to get the two out of the hospital easily, otherwise they can roleplay their way out.

Almich is only a quarter-hour car journey from Cologne, an hours walk.

The city: Meanwhile, the other characters awaken in the city.

The city is unimaginably vast. It covers a third of the surface of the dead world that circles a burnt-out sun. It is so far from Earth that space and time are different here. The stars here in this universe scream and wail and hate. Great Cthulhu, eldest of his kind, once dwelt in this city an eternity ago. His starspawn worshipped him here for billions of millenia. In time, the stars changes, and he and his followers went into the abyss and ravaged a thousand galaxies. The city was left with only a few spawn to watch it, and they followed their lord into the abyss in time. The city lay abandoned for a long time. A dust cloud could have congealed into a solar system, a world formed, life arose, civilisation developed, space travel discovered, a thousand worlds colonised, an empire formed and fall to dust in the time that the city lay empty. Then the Yithians chose it as a suitable place to imprison a Rogue...

The city is incredibly alien and confusing. It was designed for creatures which were not human-sized, or humanoid, or even composed entirely of matter. It is utterly outside our comprehension. Rooms that seem to have no purpose, weird alien organic things on the surfaces of rooms, corridors that diverge then meet up without turning, and stranger things make up the city. As they wander the city, they'll find all the weird bits of the city that intruded on the dream, like the bell and the out-of-place wall.

Remind the players of Bektrict/the book, which still exist in the dream. It contains a description of the path the inhuman worshippers of Cthulhu took, from the statue of Cthulhu to the Great Hall.

The steps of the Path are:

The Plaza: This is the square where the Great Statue of Cthulhu stands. It is easy enough to find. If the characters examine the plaza, they find it's not a square, it's a pentagon...no a hexagon...it is no sane shape, and its sides cannot be counted.

The Steps of Penance: These steps lead down beneath the city from in front of the Statue. As a character walks down these steps, they feel heavier and heavier.

The Gallery of Voices: This long chamber is eerily quiet...but there is something at the edge of hearing they can't make out. If they contact Kelly through the dream in this room, his mind will be attacked by thousands of somethings...

The Chasm: Just what it says. A narrow bridge over a chasm that goes down...and down...and down... and down...you can see magma if you look hard enough, and it goes down further. If a character falls off the bridge, they're not dead, they'll be falling for such a long time they'll die of starvation before they hit anything. Lying in the middle of the bridge is a human body. It is the corpse of Hans Bektrict, who died of heart failure two hundred years ago. There are no bacteria on this world to eat the flesh, so the body is fairly well preserved.

The Ten Thousand Lesser Ways: Whatever Bektrict meant by this, it seems to be gone. A single wide passage leads from the chasm to...

The corridor of the soul: This corridor is filled with white mists. Figures seem to form and melt within the mists. The faces seem oddly familiar, yet terribly alien. Anyone touching the mist feels their soul being drawn out of their body. If they do not resist, they are killed by this effect and join the souls of the six little girls. As Dr. Junzt and Anna pass through this corridor, the mist temporarily forms the face of Elena Junzt...

Beyond the corridor lies the Great Hall...

If you need to slow the game down, then add strength checks to the steps of penance, or let the characters mess around with ways to slide down the steps or something. Make the bridge over the Chasm invisible (use the idea of throwing dust on it from Indiana Jones). Make the ten thousand ways a maze, with Smith's blood a trail through it.

Almich: Meanwhile back on Earth (always wanted to write that) Jeremy & Theodore should have made it to Almich. The town is utterly normal, though it seems strange to them after wandering around the dream-version. If they visit the library, they can find the hidden vault, and a copy of Bektrict's book. If they go to Dr. Junzt's house, they find the house is empty, and it looks like a hurricane blew through it.

If they have any sense, they'll hurry to Smith's house. It is just like the dream-reflection. Down in the chapel, they find the Gateway to the city. It is open.

The Great Hall: This is the vast alien chamber they encountered in the dream. It is even more horrific in reality. Smith, now totally possessed by the mind, is standing in the centre of the hall. Tendrils of white light coil around him. Near him stands the Gate, a swirl of grey mist in a freestanding baroque door. Above the gate is a... focus in the air, a point of awareness: the mind.

Smith will reach out to the Corridor of the soul. Six shapes are dragged screaming from the mists and torn apart by his magic. With the souls gone, the way is open. The mind passes through the Gate.

Ending: Well, what are the players supposed to do? The mind needs two things to escape – the removal of the girls' souls and the opening of the gate.

If any character enters the dream, they see a mirror of the Great Hall – dream and reality are identical.

Theodore can engage Smith in psychic combat. This will result in Theodore's mind being obliterated, but will give the rest time to get through the gate.

If any of the characters in the city try to run through the Gate, let them – but if they just ignore Smith and scamper back home, Smith kills the girls again and passes through the Gate before they can close it.

Macon can close the Gate, and he can teach the Yithian spell to any other character. If Jeremy or Theo use the ritual, they can shut the Gate down.

Once the girls have been torn from the Corridor, another character could allow his soul to be drawn into the mists. That character would then block the mind like the girls did.

The safest option is Jeremy and Theodore close the Gate on Earth, trapping the rest in the City. Alternatively, Theodore will have to face the possessed Smith while the rest run through and close the Gate, or someone sacrifices themselves to stop the mind, and the rest run through and close. If they mess up completely, the mind gets through. Smith collapses and dies when the mind leaves him.

Endings:

Utter failure: They never make it to the Gate. Smith escapes, freeing the Mind. The Junzts, Constance and Macon are trapped in the city.

Partial Success 1: they stopped the mind, but in the process got trapped.

Partial Success 2: they escape – but so does the mind.

Total Success: not bloody likely.

Epilogue:

1: The mind is stopped: *You stagger away from the cursed chapel and the alien gateway. Dr. Junzt's*

home lies just ahead. You are left with no sign of your experience except the window that was broken by Smith. Maybe it was all a dream...

Remove the epilogue for any characters that died:

Dr. Junzt uses his influence in Almich to have the ruin destroyed. The gate is buried deep under the rubble. Sometimes he wakes in the night, wondering if he truly saw his wife's face in the corridor of the soul.

Anna and Jeremy marry, and eventually write a book together.

Constance, shaken by her experience, changes her outlook on life. She finishes her studies and finds one of the first mental institutions that actively try to help the patients. Theodore is a patient there, but also uses his abilities to help her. He is never able to live with his psychic gift. He joins the army and is killed during the second world war.

Macon the butler dies in his sleep the night after you return from the Gate. He is found cold in the morning, a strange expression on his face.

2: The mind gets free: *Use the same result as above, but add:*

Over the years, you all read many reports of atrocities and serial killings. Sometimes you see photos of the perpetrators, and you notice they have the same look in their eyes that Smith did when he was possessed. Finally, in the sixties, only Jeremy, Constance and Anna are still alive out of the group. You're watching television during the height of the Cuban missile crisis. President Kennedy is making a speech – when his face changes expression and you see the same look in his eyes. Within a few hours, the human race is destroyed in a nuclear war.

The only thing left on Earth is a single alien mind...

APPENDIX 1: NPCS

Ernest Smith: there is someone

Looking over your shoulderinsideyourhead

You are not yourself anymore and there is bloodonyourhandsandamouthinyourheadandit's seating YOU

Either way you turn He'll be there

And you can't escape and can't stop him

Ernest Smith was an occultist and sorcerer. He is very like Jeremy Avon, and sought forbidden lore. He stumbled upon Oriental methods of opening his soul to the universe. He sent a call out into the abyss – and the abyss reached out and touched him. He contacted the alien mind. It tried to possess him. He panicked and tried to escape, eventually resorting to a ritual. He murdered six young girls brutally. Their souls made a sort of astral smokescreen hiding him from the mind.

He left England and continued his occult research. He became more and more interested in an obscure German named Hans Bektrict. Unknown to Smith, this interest was a direct result of his contact with the mind. Bektrict, another victim of possession, had crafted a Gateway to the world of the mind, but died before he could free the mind.

Now, Smith is once again being hunted by the mind. He has fallen into the weird dreamscape and is running from the mind.

Appearance: A tall, elegant Englishman. He dresses well and is unfailing polite. He has a Romantic temperament and vaguely resembles a poet like Keats or Shelley. As the mind pursues him, he becomes increasingly frantic. Blood appears on his hands from time to time.

Roleplaying: He is on the verge of insanity. He is terrified of losing his soul to the mind, and will do

anything to escape. He hates the girls for not dying and haunting him.

STR 12 CON 8 SIZ 11 INT 17 POW 17

DEX 15 APP 16 EDU 20 SAN 5 HP 10

Damage Bonus: 0

Weapons: none

Skills:

Occult 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%

Doctor Alain Novell: Overworked french Doctor

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 15 POW 10

DEX 14 APP 12 EDU 19 SAN 50 HP13

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: none

Skills:

Medicine 70%, Psychology 10%, First Aid 80%

Hans Bektrict: Bektrict was a deeply twisted and evil man who delighted in the suffering and pain of others. He uncovered ancient magics which allowed him to mentally time travel, and eventually encountered the Call of Cthulhu. He followed the trail back to Xoth, where the mind is trapped. The mind touched him, and inspired him to create the Gate.

Confident that he would free the mind and become a God, Bektrict travelled through the Gate. He saw the wondrous alien city – and died of a heart attack.

His mind was caught in the wake of the other mind. He is now nothing more than frozen bitterness and memories. He doesn't (and can't) care about anything. He remembers enjoying suffering, so he will aid the characters to hurt Smith or the mind, or trick them to they injure themselves. He can be created or destroyed in the dream with a thought by any of them.

“The truth of Malkhut, the only truth that shines in the night of the Sefirot, is that Wisdom is revealed naked in Malkhut, and its mystery lies not in existence but in the leaving of existence”

FOUCAULT'S PENDULUM – UMBERTO ECO

HOW TO RUN SERENE AND PRIMAL IN FIVE MINUTES

Basically, all the characters are dreaming. Four of them (Dr. Junzt, Anna, Constance and Macon) have been drawn through a Gate to an alien world. The other two are in the dream because one (Jeremy) is Constance's twin & the other one (Theodore) is psychic.

Two handouts are now given out - one is a tape of a conversation they had last night with the villain, one Ernest Smith. The other is for Macon - he gets mentally abducted by the Great Race of Yith (mind-swapping time travellers) and trained to defeat the major bad guy - an alien mind who inhabits the city. The mind wants to possess Smith and use him to get to Earth. It's prevented from doing this by the souls of six girls Smith murdered.

The first part of the scenario is the characters wandering around the dream, which looks just like their home town. They don't suspect it's a dream - yet. They encounter all sorts of weird stuff. The important places in the city are the ruin and the library. The ruin is Smith's house. It's got the dream version of the Gate, and a handout - the burned book.

The dream-library contains a remnant of the sorcerer who made the Gate, a long-dead man called Bektrict. He's the major NPC the characters interact with. He's a dream-reflection of a book he wrote (weird I know).

Anyway, they wander around the dream, finding odd things, including a newspaper about Smith's murder of the girls. They momentarily wake up twice, and get a glimpse of their real surroundings. Theo and Jeremy are in a hospital in Cologne (they were on a train when the others got sucked through the Gate,

and the two were caught in the dream and unable to wake up).The rest are in the alien city.

Back in the dream, they get mugged by the Judge (Smith's guilt), who drags them off. They are rescued by the spirits of the six girls (I can't summarise this scene, read the full version). This gives them a **BLATANT CLUE** they're dreaming.

If they wake up, the four in the city make their way to the gate, while the others go to Almich. Macon knows a Gate-collapsing spell thanks to the Yithians. They stop Smith and teleport home. The end.

It's full of vague clues, subtle references and pink herrings (like red ones, only not entirely false. It's mostly a dream anyway, so you can mess around with them. The characters are all designed to argue a lot anyway, so leave 'em at it.

Hand Out

WAX CYLINDER, 30/1/23

PRESENT: DR. JUNZT (J), ERNEST SMITH (S)

[As the cylinder starts, the two are already in conversation]

J: Sir, calm down, I pray you. Sit. Breathe.

S: [unintelligible]

J: Pardon?

S: Close the curtains! He'll see!

J: There's nothing out there, I assure you. Look, the garden, the wall, the ruins of a house, the countryside beyond.

S: Please....

[Sound of curtains being drawn]

J: What are you so afraid of?

S: Nothing. Nothing that speaks. Nothing that watches! Nothing that - one of them!

J: I cannot help you if you will not make yourself clear to me.

S: The damned books! Not in the spaces we know, but between! I am between!

J: Between what?

[Sound of a chair toppling]

S: Idiot priest! Blind idiot - no not that! [Unintelligible]

[A loud thump as S falls to the floor. He whimpers]

J: (soothingly) Listen to me. These horrors, they are all in your mind, they cannot ha-

S: [laughs hysterically while crying] I KNOW! [Unintelligible]

J: Calm down. Listen to my voice -

S: [stops laughing. His voice becomes calm]: It's Carfax and that hospital again. Renfield.[?] Four faces - like me! Crimes... they had shrill voices when they played! How did that fool Irishman know? Ah - the lodges! He was one of them too?

J: Sit back down. I'll help you.

S: They speak to unknown superiors there don't they? [Unintelligible] beyond space and time. Hosts! Thrones and dominions! [?]

J: Macon, get him a drink. My nightcap, eh?

Macon: I understand, sir.

S: [giggling] [unintelligible] Not the Almighty? But great indeed! Pressing at the inside of my skull. They haunt me, but I don't believe in ghosts. Cabala? The pentagram has an eye! What meanest thou by Enumeration 358? That two are one! Never! [Unintelligible]

J: Listen. We're getting you a drink. You'll have it and calm down, ja?

S: Not [?!] Not one! Not me! Not again! [Unintelligible]

J: Macon, the drink!

S: [Screaming] AS A FOULNESS SHALL YE KNOW THEM! R????[Unintelligible babbling] ?????? U-boat gentry??????

J: Here, drink this please!

[Thumps. Glass breaking, liquid splashing. Shouts and general alarm]

J: Stop him!

S: [unintelligible, possibly GET HURT or GET OUT]

[The window breaks. A hollow scream, then a shout of pain. Running and shouting]

[Unintelligible]

[Static]

[cylinder ends]

Characters

Doctor Erik Junzt

You are 67 years old. You live near the small town of Almich, a few miles outside Cologne. Early in your life, you believed very strongly you had a Calling, a mission, and studied for the priesthood. You hoped, perhaps, to dedicate your life to God. However, you fell in love with a woman named Elena, who you married when you were 23. You did not abandon your education though, and became a lecturer in Theology. After many happy years teaching, you became a professor. You were popular among both staff and students.

All this time though, you hoped for a child Elena became pregnant in the autumn of 1904, when you were 44 and she was 42. It was a very late and unexpected pregnancy, and proved to be difficult. As the year passed, Elena became weaker and weaker. Finally, on the eve of May Day - fateful Walpurgisnacht! - she died giving birth to your only daughter, Anna Junzt.

You love your daughter more than life itself, but the loss of your wife damaged your faith in a very deep way. While you have never lost a boundless optimism and belief that people and life is fundamentally good, you have lost your faith in the existence of God or any meaning to the universe. Life is what we make of it. You became fascinated with this new “psychology”, the scientific examination of the human condition. You worked and studied like a freshman, and have a second degree now, in psychology. You occasionally practise as an alienist (20’s term for psychiatrist).

You love Anna, but she is a delicate and flighty girl. She flits from fad to fad and fashion to fashion, never settling on one style or belief. She shares your basic optimism though. Also sharing your house is a student of yours from England, one Constance Avon. Constance has the potential to shape psychology as much as Jung - but she is utterly out of touch with her own emotions. She is so cold and analytically you sometimes despair of her ability to empathise with anyone.

Your faithful butler Macon runs the house for you.

For four months, a man named Ernest Smith has been your neighbour, having purchased a decaying ruin on land adjacent to your home. He seemed a rather odd, private sort of man. Last night, he burst into your home, babbling and shouting. You tried to reason with him (see the transcript of the taped conversation) but he leapt out a window. You have not seen him since.

Your last memory before falling asleep last night was a sensation of falling.

Roleplaying Notes: You are a, fundamentally, nice guy. You’ve suffered tragedy, you’ve lost your faith, but you still think life is worth living and people are worth caring about. Despite your age and vast learning, you’re naïve. You’ve never worried about money, never left the ivory tower of academia. Your beloved wife saw your fundament goodness as well as your absent-mindedness and occasional utter stupidity, and took care of you more than you realise.

Occasionally you lapse into cynicism, but such bouts are always very short, and you are embarrassed by your sharp tongue.

Anna Junzt

You are 23 years old. Your father is Doctor Erik Junzt, ex-professor of Theology and a pioneer in the field of psychology. Your mother, Elena, died giving birth to you. Your father speaks of her kindness often, and sometimes in the night, you wonder if he could possibly blame you for your mother’s death. You have grown up unsure of your place in the world. You were somewhat sheltered, never sure if you were intelligent or foolish, learned or ignorant, rich or poor, happy or sad. Your father is a relentlessly positive person, so you try to see the world in a warm rosy light.

You’ve never settled on anything. You’ve gone to university, but you’ve drifted from subject to subject. After six years there, you are starting on your fourth attempt at a degree, this time in Oriental History. You know you’re a bit flighty, but you’re sure this is the subject for you...although maybe that could change.

Similarly, your personal beliefs wander. You’ve gone from atheism to passionate belief in Christ to Oriental religions to your current one, which covers every esoteric teaching from reincarnation to psychic powers to space visitors. You have few friends. You form deep relationships with people, then drift apart. You are fundamentally confused about the universe, and it shows.

Your father is the one constant in your life - apart from maybe the family butler, Macon, who you can always rely on for anything. Currently, an English student of your father, Constance Avon, also lives in the house. Constance is the first person that you think you could actually hate. She's totally emotionless, and analyses everything and everyone. She scares you sometimes. Three days after she arrived, she told you exactly what she thought of you. She said you were flighty, flirtatious, undisciplined and other hurtful things. She said things about you that were...wrong, and private.

Last night, the Englishman who lives near you, Ernest Smith, came into your house shouting and raving. You were in bed, but you heard the poor man shouting, and your father trying to calm him down. (A transcript of the taped conversation is available). Mr Smith jumped out a window. The night upset you, and you fell asleep crying. You remember feeling as though you were falling.

Roleplaying notes: Poor little Anna. You come across to other people as a pretty blonde airhead spoiled by her rich daddy. You read a lot, and tend to believe passionately in things a while, then forget them. You fall in love very easily, but have a fairytale idea of it that never matches reality.

Deep within you, there's a core of strength that you've never had to use, but it's there. All your wandering and flights of fancy are your attempts to unlock it.

Or so you think.

Constance Avon

You are a very serious woman. You are (or try to be) utterly cerebral and intellectual. As a child, you'd prefer to read a book on science than a novel. You would have been a scientist, probably a chemist like Marie Curie (who's something of an inspiration for you), but you have found a bigger challenge - the human mind. You see people as existing in a half-awake state, following social rules that are vestiges of tribal behaviour or sexual rites. You see society as a consensual illusion, and are quite willing to say this.

You tend to scare people, because you speak the truth. You analyse everything, every aspect of the human psyche. Back in England, people began to avoid you because you would tell them things about themselves they wish others didn't know - or that they were hiding from yourself.

You were asked to leave university when your final thesis used your professor as its subject. Your theory that childhood traumas were the root of his often abusive and unjustifiable tantrums didn't amuse him. Currently, you are studying with Dr. Erik Junzt, a respected alienist. He was once a tribal witchdoctor's apprentice - or trained to be a priest, as most people would say. He is, in your judgement, naïve and often over-optimistic, deluding himself about the intention of others and trying to prove that the loss of his wife did not destroy his famed positive outlook. His daughter Anna believes he blames her for his wife's death. She is a flirt and a fool, unable to commit to anything. She wastes her intelligence, and compares men to an unattainable ideal. You told her all this to her face three days after meeting her. She hates you for being so honest. Her current fancy is lunatic mysticism.

She shares this fancy with your estranged twin brother Jeremy. The last you heard of him, he was digging up alchemists in Germany. Jeremy is on the border of clinical insanity. He believes in magical mummery and nonsense. It's his way of compensating for being unable to cope with life.

Since coming to Dr. Junzt's house, you have come to rely on the unflappable Macon, a butler.

Four months ago, you met Ernest Smith, an English male who lives nearby. He shows clear signs of paranoia, stress and schizophrenia. Such a mind is prone to hallucinations and erratic behaviour. He exhibited such behaviour last night when he came into Dr. Junzt's house raving. You observed him coldly, seeing him as an interesting case. You taped the conversation (see the transcript). Smith leapt out a window and has not been seen since.

You slept badly last night, no doubt due to a chemical stress reaction in your body to Smith's antics.

Roleplaying notes: You are a brilliant dissector of the human mind. It's a pity you don't understand your own. You have no inhibitions, no fear of the taboo. You are utterly cold and emotional. Nothing has any meaning for you - you analyse and you analyse and you refine it away to nothing. Nothing can ever hurt you because you understand everything.

Macon

You're a butler.

You're a servant.

Specifically, you serve Erik Junzt, ex-professor of Theology and alienist. You served his wife Elena until she died giving birth to their daughter Anna. You serve Dr. Junzt's guest Constance Avon. They rely on you for everything. You cook, you clean, you drive. You can fix an engine or sort a library. If called upon, you could shoot a rifle or bury a man. You are the perfect servant.

People tend not to notice you. You're quiet, unobtrusive. Don't make noise.

You serve because you don't know what else to do with your life.

Last night, a neighbour, Ernest Smith, came to the house, quite deranged. Dr. Junzt tried to reason with him (see transcript) but to no avail. Smith jumped through the drawing room window. You called the police, made sure Smith was gone, boarded up the window and swept up the glass.

After you checked the doors and ensured everyone else was asleep, you prepared to retire. You saw a sudden flash of light...

Roleplaying notes: Macon...he's a butler. He serves. Understand him yet? He doesn't. He's got no motivation. He could be a president or a millionaire if he tried. He doesn't. He's almost invisible.

The perfect servant.

Jeremy Avon

You have always known there is something more to life than the visible world. As a child, you read books of enchantment and mystery, and chased fleeting visions of faerie realms. At University, you read between the lines of the history books and saw the hidden truths of the mystical past. Centuries ago, magic and alchemy were real, valid powers. You wished to dedicate your life to exploring the wonderful and supernatural.

Your parents worried about your strange ways, but hoped you'd grow out of them. Your twin sister on the other hand, despises you - or would if she felt anything at all. Constance Avon is a strange woman, cold and hard. She is studying the newfangled psychology and alienism - the horrible attempts by twisted men to reduce the mysteries of the mind to half-remembered archetypes and base drives. You have never been close to your sister, but she is always in your thoughts. Sometimes, you wonder if your whole exploration of the mystical is an attempt to prove her wrong.

Since leaving college with a degree in history, you have travelled Europe seeking esoteric lore. You have read the terrible old books kept under lock and key in crumbling libraries. You have spoken with men whose eyes have seen forbidden things. You are in contact with several members of the Golden Dawn society, those heroic explorers of magic rites.

Your one friend is Theodore Kelly. He is a psychic of great ability, a descendant of Edward Kelly, John Dee's ally. Theodore sees the invisible world clearly. You rescued him from a lunatic asylum where he had been placed after the death of his family, and are his legal guardian (you faked documents proving you were his cousin). You take care of him and use him as your guide to the spirit world.

You are now in a train, heading for Cologne. You plan to visit the great libraries there, as well as your sister.

Roleplaying notes: Jeremy believes fervently in the existence and power of magic. He throws himself into the realm of the occult and hungers for forbidden lore. He will swear any oath to learn the secrets of ancient times. He is not interested in evil or suffering though, and looks down on petty Satanists and cultists. He seeks the high lore of Atlantis and Hyperborea. He is rather naïve though, and lacks the conspiratorial skills needed to attain high status in occult circles.

Theodore Kelly

You hear and see things. They burn your eyes, scream into your ears, and push at your brain. You can hear what other people think; you hear their whispering thoughts in the back of your mind. Mostly you can't make out words; you just feel their thoughts scratching at you. If you strain your mind, you can sometimes understand...doing this sickens you, you feel like your forcing your mind out of your body, and you're terrified you won't be able to get back in. Sometimes you see ghosts, spectres, the unquiet dead as some fool poet called them. They claw at your soul, begging you, cursing you, desiring your flesh, your physical form, so they can return to the world they half-remember. You have to fight them, those half-aware shades, or they will destroy your mind and steal your body.

All those horrors though, are welcome ones compared to other things you've glimpsed. Once, you felt a mind in an English graveyard, an animal mind deep in the muck, and the dead stared out at you. In the night, you look up at the stars, and hear alien songs that impale your soul on thin spires of icy beauty and dizzying distance. Once, you dreamed of a vast stormy grey ocean, and billions of fish-things dwelling in coral reefs that surround a terrible black dead city, a city that crawled into your heart and froze your blood and knew you were there watching it and ate you. In His Temple He watched you, a mote of mind compared to His Cosmic Glory and His Mind touched you and you screamed and screamed and screamed and screamed and screamed and screamed and sc -

You were in the asylum then, of course. If it weren't for the straitjacket, you'd have ripped your brain out with your own hands.

You were put in the asylum after your whole family died when you were six. You awoke one morning drenched in blood with a salty taste in your mouth and bits of your brother's throat caught in your teeth. You don't remember what you dreamed that night. The police put you in the asylum, and blamed the murders on thieves. No six-year-old child could have torn his family apart with his bare hands.

Jeremy Avon, an occultist, rescued you from the asylum. He forged documents that prove he's your cousin. Jeremy sees you as a guide to the spirit realm. He takes care of you, ties you down when the horrors call you. He's a good man in his own distracted way. He thinks you have a gift. If he walked for a minute in your skin, as you do in others, he'd know he was terribly terribly wrong.

Currently, you are with Jeremy in a train heading for Cologne. He wishes to meet his twin sister, Constance, who lives there.

Roleplaying notes: Theodore Kelly is not exactly normal now, is he? He is on the border of sanity, and every horrific psychic episode drives him closer and closer to madness. He fights it not because he wants to be sane, but because he's terrified of what would take control of him if he relinquished his hold on himself. If it weren't for his curse, he'd be a good and gentle man. His power tears his mind apart and keeps him from feeling even the slightest bit human.

Your curse: You do not control your ability. It is like a thrashing poisonous snake in your hands. Mostly, it twists and hurts you. You must wrestle with it, using all your strength to keep your powers from killing you. On occasion, you can force your powers to affect others. You can sometimes “read minds” - an euphemism for having the most intimate and horribly wrong thoughts of others pushing through your skull. You can also affect others, injuring or altering their minds, but this is very hard.

You start to cough. Suddenly, the room falls away from you as if the foundations had collapsed beneath it. For a moment, you are suspended in utter darkness, hanging in an infinite cold space, the void between universes. Then you are dragged, pulled, hurled. A sense of speed and distance beyond anything you can comprehend overwhelms you. You plummet a quarter-billion years and a trillion light-years in a heartbeat.

A heartbeat. A heartbeat. You don't hear your own heart. You can't breathe. You can't taste.

A room swims up around you out of the darkness. Stone, black stone. It aches in your sight; you can see its temperature and its mass and other things you don't understand. A creature rolls towards you, a leg-less cone-thing with tentacles and claws and a single staring eye. Its eye meets your eye, and you look down at your own hideous cone body.

You find the voice in this body, and scream. You scream for a very long time. At least a week. You spend three decades in a near-catatonic state, ignoring everything. That's ok. They're patient. They have Time.

After half a century, you learn their language. You are inhabiting the body of an alien, a Yithian, the Great Race of Yith. They travel through time by swapping bodies with other creatures. They are a noble and wise people, and know secrets of the universe undreamed of by humans. They tell you the secrets your mind can accept without shattering. You are currently 250 million years in the past as you knew it. Primitive proto-dinosaurs are the dominant native life form, although there are the crinoid spacefarers of the south and the Mi-Go of the mountains - the Yithians are strangely silent on these races, and on the vast black cyclopean tombs beneath the Yithian cities. They also tell you little of the vast super-continent named R'yleh, ruled of the Great Old One Cthulhu.. The Great Old Ones plunge from world to world when the Stars are Right. Now, the Stars have Changed, and Cthulhu sleeps and dreams. One day, he shall Awaken.

They tell you why you were chosen. There is a Mind, a Rogue. It is a... Hindrance to the Yithians. They imprisoned it aeons ago (or in the future...it's the same to them) by destroying its “ability to understand space”. It is eternally lost. If it comes to Earth in your home/time/period, it could interfere with the Yithians' plans to transfer their minds into the future and inhabit the bodies of the insect race who dominate Earth after the extinction of humanity. The Yithians suspect that the Rogue will destroy humanity, but that's irrelevant to them...and to you now. You care only for your new masters.

The Yithians will not approach the Rogue. They have chosen you as their servant, their tool. They train you for two hundred years. You learn secrets of science and magic (for they are the same thing). You learn a method for closing the gateway between the Prison of the Mind and Earth. You will be sent back to your starting place and seek out and destroy the gateway. The Yithians warn you that primates often serve superior intelligences, and the Mind may have allies. Revealing your powers and new knowledge should only be done when vital - but you may need help to stop It.

The Gateway will appear to be a swirling grey mist, and may warp spacetime around it. You have been taught a ritual which will create a powerful resonance within the gate, collapsing it. This ritual takes only a few moments to perform, and requires you to make certain mental and verbal actions.

After nearly three centuries in the company of your masters, they prepare to send you back. You leave your comfortable and sensible cone-body and walk the corridors of time again. You travel Up when a mere 250 million years. As you approach your body, you detect two other minds - astral travellers - joined to a

mind near yours. The astral travellers' bodies are a trillion light years away. You fall back into the half-remembered confines of your human brain. There is a moment of agony as your brain cells are twisted into an entirely new thought pattern.

You finish the cough. You've been gone from your body for less than a second.

THE YITHIAN RITUAL

Approach to within one metre of the gateway. Face into it, raise both hands to head height, palms facing the gate. Concentrate on the swirling mists of the gate, visualise the direction of swirl reversing. Speak the following words, rising in volume and emphasis as you continue. The final word should be repeated until the gate collapses.

***IA! VOCCE NYARLATHOTEP! M'YBRASE YITH!
I'AST YOG-SOTHOTH, NY M'YBRASE INMI XVRA
N'YIM YOG-SOTHOTH IES NY M'YBRASE.***