



CALL of
CHAOSIUM LICENSED
CTHULHU

THE DOOM
FROM BELOW

BY
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CALL of CHAOSIUM LICENSED CTHULHU

The Doom from Below

A 1920s CALL OF CTHULHU® Adventure

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We like to think of the ground beneath our feet as a known and reliable quantity—something we count on as we move through the world. How can we make even the slightest move if we cannot rely on *terra firma* to hold up and literally support each step we take?

The truth, however, is that the earth is anything but solid, even in our mundane world. The ground is riddled with caverns, chasms, underground lakes, pockets of natural gas, and all manner of subterranean excavation and construction perpetrated by man. Nor are these formations necessarily permanent. Earthquakes leave rifts, erosion creates sinkholes, and man-made structures eventually give way to decay and collapse. The earth sometimes does open up and swallow things whole.

In a world where the stars just happen to be right, sometimes the earth will instead open up and release unspeakable evil.

Background

In *The Doom from Below* the investigators explore a mysterious chasm that drops straight down into the bowels of the earth. The chasm is located in a remote section of forest in the White Mountains of New England. It appears on no maps and, as far as the investigators can tell, they may well be the first living souls ever to explore its depths.

Technically speaking, the chasm would be described by geologists as a “collapse pit”—a nearly vertical, almost perfectly circular hole. Generally, these are found in volcanically active regions when lava hardens around and over columns of escaping gas. What seems to be a solid part of the lava plain can, in fact, be merely a few feet of rock covering a yawning circular ravine hundreds of feet deep.

Despite the fact that the hills of New England have not been home to any active volcanoes for several million years, and as unlikely as a newly opened collapse pit is, most would probably agree upon that classification. After all, what else could make a cylindrical hole fifteen feet across and hundreds of feet deep in the side of a mountain?

150 Million Years Ago

As continental drift slowly began pulling Pangaea apart and forming what are recognizably the continents we know today, Earth saw the arrival of three new species. Two of them—amphibians and birds—were the ongoing result of growth from the original, naturally occurring primordial soup, but the third originated on a planet known as Yuggoth.



The Mi-Go came to Earth in order to pillage the young planet for rare minerals and ores. The fungi set up colonies throughout the mountains of the northern hemisphere, including one in what would later be the White Mountains of New Hampshire. They piloted their spacecraft to the heart of the mountains then drilled their way through the rock and earth, settling at the bottom of a smooth, vertical shaft hundreds of feet below the surface.

Although the rock in this region was not especially plentiful in substances valued by the Mi-Go, with time and a complicated fungoid processing technique, sufficient quantities could be leached from the atomic bonds of the local ore. This process would take at least a million years before it would show any results, but the Mi-Go were patient, and they had nothing but time.

11,000 Years Ago

Over the millennia, ore processing proceeded apace, occasionally having to stop as a glacier crept over the land. A minor inconvenience, to be sure, but one that stopped the mining entirely as the Mi-Go entered artificial hibernation for thousands of years at a time waiting for the ice to recede.

When the fungi awoke from their last delay, they found something very different about the lands around their mining colony. A new species had joined the ecosystem—humans, having traveled from the lands to the north and west, now had a small but thriving presence in these woods. Never ones to overlook a potential resource, the Mi-Go begin using these Paleo-Indians as slave labor.

However, the process being as automated as it was, there really was very little physical labor for the humans to do. With the machinery's fungoid efficiency, the Mi-Go found themselves with more and more free time—free time that they used to perform experiments on the human slaves, often removing their brains and placing them in either mechanical cylinders or the bodies of local fauna.

Not surprisingly, the Paleo-Indians took objection to these practices and began fighting back. Normally, the Mi-Go would have easily quashed this rebellion, most likely exterminating the humans in the process. However, one of their experiments—a brain cylinder designated Xydroth, that contained a local specimen—had been used as the central processing hub for the colony's automated machinery. The Paleo-Indian side of Xydroth, although quite insane, was torn by conflicting loyalties. Should it assist the Mi-Go in slaughtering its former family or should it join the primitive humans in fighting their technologically superior foes?

The Historical Record

As far as we know, there are no alien mining colonies in New Hampshire's White Mountains. However, certain other pieces of the background are historically correct.

The timeline for human entry into the region is reasonably accurate. Approximately 11,000 years ago Paleo-Indians arrived in the region but, without leaving a clear explanation for why, they disappeared approximately a thousand years later. The modern Native American tribes settled in the area approximately 5,000 years ago and developed their culture in relative isolation until the arrival of the Europeans in the early seventeenth century. Unfortunately, the "Great Dying" is also a matter of historical record as a series of pandemics decimated the native population from 1616 to 1619.

The town of Bethlehem, NH, is a real place but, as explained in the adventure *Murder of Crows*, it is neither a lumber town nor has it ever been the victim of a fungoid alien curse.

In the end, Xydroth decided that the best way to quell its own seething madness was to eliminate both sides. Neither group ever knew how it happened, but in less than a thousand years the Paleo-Indians were wiped out by bio-engineered illness and the Mi-Go were back in their hibernation chambers, having been duped into believing that a new ice age was beginning.

The hills were once again filled with a peace and quiet they had not known since the alien colony first arrived in primordial days.

5,000 Years Ago

A new wave of human migration brought the Abenaki tribe of Native Americans into the White Mountains. They lived in relatively peaceful co-existence with the other tribes and made a place for themselves in what seemed like idyllic woods. Then the tribe discovered the shaft leading to the Mi-Go mining colony.

Although the colony was completely inactive, Xydroth was still awake and fully functional. The thousands of years it had spent without any interaction of any kind had only served to drive it even more insane.

At first, Xydroth was content to watch the Abenaki treat the chasm with awe and respect. It was amused when they developed folklore and a mythology around the site, saying that this was the place where the gods blew life into the earth. But as it became a sacred site—a place that even members of other tribes made pilgrimages to visit—Xydroth grew uneasy.

Having humans becoming more numerous and active around the chasm made it feel as if the humans had won that ancient battle. This bothered the part of the





brain cylinder that was still loyal to the Mi-Go. In order to maintain the balance it knew that it would have to either release the hibernating fungus creatures or drive the humans away. It chose the latter.

Using its ability (designed by the Mi-Go) to communicate with and influence humans nearby, Xydroth began implanting horrible visions into the minds of anyone who visited the site—terrible shapes and alien sounds of the sort that haunted one’s dreams. Soon rather than sacred, the land was considered cursed. Demons, it was said, lived in the pit, and it was considered taboo for anyone to go within a mile of the site.

To increase the dread of the area, Xydroth obliged the superstitious by using the Mi-Go technology to create artifacts that would fill the head of anyone who touched them with nightmare images. The Abenaki called these totems Spirit Stones, and finding one was considered an omen so evil that the finder’s entire family was often banished from their village. Before long, it was considered bad luck to even talk about that region of the forest, let alone visit it.

Soon the hills were quiet again.

Changing the Locale

The chasm and Mi-Go mining colony as described in *The Doom from Below* are presumed to be located in the mountains of H.P. Lovecraft’s beloved New England. However, with only a few adjustments, a Keeper can set this adventure in almost any part of the world in which the investigators find themselves. The following are the issues that the Keeper will have to consider when relocating the action.

- **Mountainous Woods**—According to the Mythos, Mi-Go tend to set up colonies in mountainous regions. For the purpose of this adventure, it would be best if the mountains were relatively near some small human development yet still covered in a thick forest. The chasm site is supposed to be accessible on foot, but difficult or impossible to spot from the air (or a higher mountaintop). In as much as the Keeper changes these parameters, some of the background details will have to be likewise modified.
- **Natural History**—The background as described here is very much linked to the history (and pre-history) of the northeast U.S. If the Keeper relocates the action, it will also be necessary to change the timing and details of the background to match the anthropological and geographic history of the new location. Any new background should be formed around these key points: the Mi-Go arrive; they use local humans as slaves; a rebellion neutralizes both sides; a natural disaster causes a loss of detailed folk knowledge regarding the site and incident.

400 Years Ago

In the early 1600s, European colonies began spreading through the New England hills. The colonists met the Abenaki tribe and found them to be friendly, welcoming neighbors willing to live in peace and harmony. The Native Americans shared their knowledge of local plant and animal life, helped the colonists adapt to their new home, and taught them all the secrets of the New World. Among these lessons were tales of the haunted woods surrounding the Demon’s Mouth—a pit through which evil first entered the world. The legends said that the pit still spewed forth a never-ending stream of poisonous snakes and spiders. No one, the Abenaki told the colonists, could visit the site and survive.

The colonists were skeptical, to say the least. But since the land was so remote and the Abenaki took the subject so seriously, they never bothered to see for themselves. It was simply accepted that, for the sake of neighborly relations, it was best to swear never to visit those particular hills. That promise made, connections between the Abenaki and the colonists grew ever closer.

Unfortunately, that very closeness was a contributing factor to what New England tribes came to call the “Great Dying”—a simultaneous pandemic of diseases such as measles, whooping cough, and smallpox that ravaged the native population. In just three years, as many as 95% of the coastal and near-inland tribes died off or moved away.

Along with the horrific loss of life, the tribes lost much of their cultural memory. The true history of the “Demon’s Mouth” became a vague folktale about the hills being haunted. Since the site itself remained so obscure that even trappers and hunters rarely went that way, the legends themselves eventually began to fade from memory.

Last Month

Even with growth of the colonies, the fight for independence, and the explosive growth of a new country that soon stretched from sea to shining sea, the newcomers to this land never rediscovered the Mi-Go mining colony. Individual hunters or campers found the spot from time to time, but they all left quickly—chased away by horrific visions and inexplicable feelings of dread. None of them reported their experiences to the local authorities or cartographers.

The nearest settlement was Bethlehem, New Hampshire. And though it was a lumber town, the people of Bethlehem always brought their axes and saws to other, more conveniently located hills. Still, logging was not the only reason that the residents entered the woods, and from time to time one of





them would inadvertently hike into the land near the chasm. Like the Native Americans centuries before them, these people found their minds plagued by evil bodings and the unshakable sensation that the forest itself meant them harm.

A few weeks ago, one such man came into the woods and succumbed to the creeping fear. However, in his panic to escape, he tripped and fell just at the spot of a half-buried Abenaki Spirit Stone. He brought it back to town with him and misfortune followed close in his wake. (One possible version of these events is described in the adventure *Murder of Crows*. Keepers who do not wish to use that scenario should invent a different tale of mythos-inspired woe that has befallen Bethlehem, NH.)

The unfortunate man's journal clearly spelled out in what section of forest he found the Spirit Stone. Anyone reading it should be able to determine the general location of those supposedly haunted woods. Once that is accomplished and news has spread, those seeking other artifacts like the Spirit Stone will likely be the first to officially "discover" the Demon's Mouth.

Synopsis

The adventure begins when the investigators arrive at the chasm. Depending on how the Keeper wants the action to flow, the investigators may be following in the footsteps of a previous expedition and know roughly what they're looking for or be the first modern people ever to stumble upon the site. If the latter is the case, it is unlikely that the investigators will have the equipment they need to immediately begin rappelling down the shaft (and even more unlikely that they'll want to). The Keeper will have to prepare scenes that allow the investigators to gather enough information and equipment to feel comfortable with that course of action. It is never a good idea to railroad your players, but even less so when the action you're pushing them toward is jumping into a gaping pit in the earth.

The Doom from Below is broken into three acts, each of which describes a distinct portion of the exploration. It is not necessary for the investigators to finish one section before moving on to the next, though it will be difficult for them to skip any section of Act I, which unfolds as the investigators lower themselves deeper and deeper into the chasm. Much as the earth itself reveals different strata, the descent is fraught with different perils at different depths. The further the investigators get from the surface, the stranger the challenges become. As might seem fitting, Act I ends when the group reaches the chasm's bottom.

Act II follows the team as they explore the cave floor. Some of the problems from Act I may still be around, but they should seem much less threatening now that the investigators have firm ground beneath their feet. A major discovery and a vague threat mark the highlights of this act. The discovery is a set of pictographs unlike any seen before. The threat comes from more denizens of the pit and a growing feeling that someone is watching the group. Act II ends when the investigators discover that one of the stones in the cave is hollow and can be pried open.

Act III takes place behind the hollow stone. There, the investigators discover the control room from which Xydroth managed both the Mi-Go mining operations and the manipulation of the humans on the nearby surface. But while the alien technology in the room may seem inert, it is all fully functional and under the control of Xydroth. The brain cylinder knows that the investigators have it at something of a disadvantage since they are fully mobile and may be armed. To make matters worse, Xydroth has no comprehension of modern language or technology, so it might not even recognize threatening items the humans are carrying. However, it will make full use of the Mi-Go equipment and its ability to influence human minds. If it can successfully capture one or more of the investigators, it might try to use the Mi-Go technology to swap its brain with one of the humans, allowing Xydroth to walk free in the modern world. Alternatively, it might just take the humans



as slaves (being too insane to recognize the irony in that action) and have them help keep the site in good repair.

In order to consider themselves truly victorious, the investigators will have to disable, if not destroy, Xydroth. Once they do that, though, the Mi-Go machinery becomes completely inoperative, leaving them with only some odd blocks of metal and a few strange rock formations.

Starting the Investigation

As Keeper, you know best how to involve your players and their investigators in an adventure. *The Doom from Below* is not designed with any specific sort of characters in mind, so adapting it to the investigators your players bring to the table should be relatively easy.

Changing Eras

The Doom from Below is presented as a 1920s adventure, the era of "Classic Cthulhu." But with only a few minor adjustments a clever Keeper can use it in practically any era. Below are suggestions for how to make this adventure suitable for two of the more popular settings for tales of the Mythos.

Gaslight

Very little needs to be changed to make *The Doom from Below* work in a campaign set in the 1890s. In fact, the only changes that need to be made are in the equipment the investigators may bring with them (which may, in turn, increase the likelihood for accidents during the descent in Act I) and the relative difficulty of getting any heavy items into the hills without the aid of motor vehicles. All the other details, having occurred hundreds or thousands of years in the past, remain unchanged.

Modern

The Doom from Below can be transformed into a modern day adventure with only a few minor adjustments. Mostly, the investigators will be much better equipped and prepared. The availability of high-tech equipment like range-finders, handheld GPS devices, and satellite imaging coupled with the popularity of extreme sports like caving and rock climbing makes it much more unlikely that this site would remain completely unknown. The New Hampshire mountains attract both amateur geologists and climbers, and they are always seeking new discoveries and challenges. The Keeper may have to create a plausible explanation for no one having ever been here before despite the horrible visions. Perhaps Xydroth has used Mi-Go technology to shield it from detection. Such equipment would also be helpful in disabling any cell or satellite phones or other communications equipment the investigators bring with them into the chasm.

The exploration does require a certain amount of physical prowess and athletic skill—a person can't just walk up to an open chasm and begin rappelling down the side without some training. However, this is the sort of adventure that ordinary tourists take in many parts of the world with only a quick bit of training and the help of a skilled guide. If none of the investigators is up to the task of leading this endeavor, it might be wise to add a non-player character to fill that role. (One possible character is provided in the New Allies section at the back of the adventure.)

If the investigators went through the events in the adventure *Murder of Crows*, then there will be little difficulty giving them a reason to continue their inquiry into the matter. (See "From Crows to the Chasm," in the sidebar.) If such an obvious motivation is not apparent, you can use the following adventure hooks to spur your imagination, modifying them as necessary so that they suit the particular investigators and the tenor of your campaign.

- The investigators are students and faculty members from the geology and anthropology departments of a regional college. The discovery of this unusual and unexplored cavern in their figurative backyard has pushed them to examine the site before some larger school or institution can get there first. Geologic formations such as this are almost unheard of in this part of the world, and it sits in the heart of land that used to be home to several relatively unstudied native tribes. This is a chance to get their school international acclaim and make discoveries that will set themselves up for prestigious careers.
- After a hiker discovered this chasm, the investigators have been sent in by the Department of the Interior to determine if it is safe for recreational climbing or if something must be done to prevent accidents in and around the site. Alternatively, based on a previous assessment, the investigators may be tasked with setting up warning signs, guardrails, and emergency safety equipment.
- The investigators are mountaineers doing field training for an upcoming trip to Kilimanjaro. They are in the hills doing endurance and survival training, but they are carrying all of their climbing gear (though they didn't actually expect to get a chance to use it). This is a rare opportunity to make a descent that no one has ever made before.



- A privately-owned research facility has discovered the chasm and hired the investigators to literally look into it. They believe that, rather than a naturally occurring geologic event, the pit was caused by the impact of a large meteor. But not just any meteor—they think that this was an especially massive, unstable rock that could have exploded (like the 1908 Tunguska Blast), but instead funneled its energy directly into the earth.

Prologue

The Doom from Below is a site-based investigation where all the action takes place during the exploration of a mysterious sinkhole in the mountains of New Hampshire.

While it is possible that the investigators will simply stumble across the site and begin climbing down, the scenario assumes that they have at least taken the time to get proper equipment. Caving has become a popular outdoor hobby in recent years, but it was not especially so during the 1920s. Since there would be no way to call for help in case of emergency, adventurers of that era would always be certain to bring enough survival equipment to give them the time and opportunity to rescue themselves should anything go wrong.

Prior Knowledge

Exactly how the investigators come by their information about the woods and chasm can vary widely depending on the Keeper and the campaign. If they have just finished playing *Murder of Crows*, they may go looking for the site based on information gained in Bethlehem, NH. If a government or private agency is sending them there, then they will almost certainly be provided with basic details about the chasm (not to mention a significant amount of spelunking equipment).

In either case, the Keeper may wish to give them a copy of Player Handout #1 or a similar document. It provides a basic physical description of the site, but not much more. Only if the investigators are stumbling upon the site out of the blue, or if keeping them uninformed is important to the campaign, should this information be purposely withheld. Mysteries enough lurk in the dark of the chasm floor, there's no need to make the investigators unduly nervous about the shaft itself.

Haunted Woods

The main adventure begins when the investigators start their descent into the chasm. However, some Keepers may wish to add atmosphere by chronicling what happens on the group's trek to the site.

Most of the trip is as pleasant as one might expect. The White Mountains are quite

popular with hikers and campers because they are particularly picturesque and peaceful. The slopes are not especially steep and there are relatively few dangers—no sheer cliffs, very few falling rock zones, and only a handful of brown bears or other potentially dangerous animals.

When the investigators get within a mile or so of the site, though, things begin to get strange. This is the area that the Abenaki described as haunted and which was considered off limits to members of any tribe. There are no markings to designate the area, but Xydroth still employs the Mi-Go technology to make this a terrifying place to visit.

From Crows to the Chasm

Although *The Doom from Below* is designed to be a stand-alone adventure, it has also been crafted to make a fitting follow-up adventure for investigators who have just completed *Murder of Crows*. Keepers may wish to tie the two adventures together into a single investigation that unfolds over two or more game sessions. Alternatively, with only a little modification, the events of this adventure can occur some number of months (or even years) after the previous case, prompting an unexpected return to a familiar—if not especially friendly—locale.

The presumed setting for *The Doom from Below* is the White Mountains just a few miles from Bethlehem, New Hampshire. More specifically, the chasm is located in the stretch of woods where Prescott Walker found the Abenaki Spirit Stone.

To make a smooth transition from *Murder of Crows* to this adventure, the Keeper can place added emphasis on the details in Prescott Walker's journal that describe the strange patch of woods, fanning the investigators' natural curiosity about the site. If that does not sufficiently whet the investigators' curiosity, the Keeper may wish to supply the notion that there might be other powerful artifacts lying on the forest floor just waiting for someone to accidentally discover them.

If a more direct approach is required, Mayor McPhee could come to the investigators asking for assistance. It seems that Prescott had some important item (perhaps a key to a safe deposit box or the passbook for the town's bank account) that has gone missing since his infirmity. The only thing he can think of is that the poor man lost it in the woods during his "incident," and he says that the town would pay a fair daily rate if the group is willing to try, and a substantial reward if they return the lost item. Other townsfolk—particularly Maude Devereux or Sheriff Ballard—could be helpful in identifying the specific area Prescott was writing about on a map and advising them how to find that particular stretch of countryside themselves.



Player Handout #1 - Keeper's Copy

United States Dept. of the Interior
Geological Records

Re: NHGA734821G—Unnamed
Initial Review: September 17, 1919
Type: Cave/Chasm
Location: lat. 44.876, long. -72.391
Width: approx. 90 ft.
Depth: approx. 200 ft. (unconfirmed)
Age: undetermined
Municipality: Unincorporated Town of Bethlehem
Land: State-owned
Hazard: moderate
Notes: Could be dangerous. Local officials should post "No Trespassing" signs or other warnings. No other similar features found, but if it is natural then there may be more.

When the investigators enter this zone, the Keeper should roll 1d10 and use the descriptions from the chart below to flavor the how these woods are described. A single roll may be made for the entire group, or the Keeper may make separate rolls for some or all of the investigators. Remember, though, that these are all purely psychological effects. Nothing untoward is actually happening, but it may be difficult for the investigators to determine that with absolute certainty.

1d10 Result

- 1-2 You feel as though someone is watching you—as if someone hidden in the trees is following your every move.
- 3-4 The ground seems too soft and yielding, like it's about to give way beneath you and drop you into a chasm below.
- 5-6 The plants seem to be grabbing you—reaching out and grasping your clothing, tangling around your feet and legs.
- 7-8 The forest seems to be closing in around you, trees cutting off your movement and forcing you in a particular direction.
- 9 Two of the above results at once. Lose 1d2 point of SAN.
- 10 All of the above results at once. Lose 1d3 points of SAN.

While these feelings linger throughout the investigators' trip through the area, they do not get worse or in any way actually impede their travel.

Welcome to the Demon's Mouth

When the investigators reach the clearing that holds the chasm, have the investigators each make a **SPOT HIDDEN** check. Those who succeed have the following experience.

Stepping out from the trees, you enter a small glen still mostly covered by the canopy of fir, elm, and oak trees. The grassy expanse would be calming if not for the fact that its center drops away in a pit so perfectly circular that it seems as though something scooped the earth away the way a child plays with a tin can in a sandbox.

Those that fail the **SPOT HIDDEN** check are certainly capable of seeing the chasm once it is pointed out to them. Without that assistance, they do not actually notice the opening until they get within twenty or so paces of its edge.

Having arrived at the chasm, allow the investigators time to look around. There is nothing uncommon or unnatural about the surrounding grass, trees, or rocks. Indeed, except for its circular shape (which is not easy to notice due to the plants growing around its edge), there is nothing especially unusual about the pit itself.

After they've been in the area for a few minutes, have all of the investigators make **LISTEN** and **SPOT HIDDEN** checks. Those who succeed realize that this little patch of woods is unusually quiet. In fact, they cannot hear or see any birds or other forest creatures. Even the sound of the breeze blowing through the trees seems hushed and muted.

Peering over the edge, the investigators will only be able to see down twenty feet or so before the chasm is swallowed in darkness. Anyone who succeeds at an **IDEA** or **GEOLOGY** check realizes that this is unusual given the size of the chasm mouth. However, this may be due to a subtle incline of the hill on which they're standing. The walls of the shaft are not especially smooth, having all the sorts of nooks, crannies, and handholds that one would expect in a natural rock wall.

Allow the investigators to make whatever measurements and preparatory efforts they like. There is no rush for them to go down into the pit and the Keeper should make them feel as though they have all the time in the world. Of course, the minor misgivings described above in "Haunted Woods" still persist. The investigators may choose to put themselves under some kind of self-imposed time constraints in order to avoid having to stay in this stretch of woods overnight.

If they like, they can camp in the glen overnight in and start their descent as early during daylight hours as possible. Just after sunset, a colony of



bats will fly out of the chasm (see the “100 Feet Down” section of Act I for details) and flutter throughout the woods for most of the night. Other than that, the investigators will not be disturbed by wild animals or other hikers. In fact, the most unusual thing about a night spent camping in the glen is the absolute silence that pervades the area.

In addition, the Keeper may want sleeping investigators to have vivid dreams showing scenes from the locale’s past—inexplicable visions of alien creatures, war between aliens and their Paleo-Indian slaves, and a human brain floating in some kind of glass and metal container. For the sake of effect, the dreams should be more intense and more graphic for the investigators with the lowest SAN scores.

When the team is ready to start their descent into the chasm, the real meat of the adventure has begun.

Act I: Dangling By A Thread

A lot can happen when an investigator shimmies down a rope into the dark of a chasm more than a hundred feet deep. Although Act I describes specific events that are meant to occur whenever any group undertakes this adventure, individual Keepers are encouraged to add other obstacles if they believe it will improve the experience for their play groups. Some broad categories of possible complications are listed below.

Feelings of Dread: To begin with, any investigators who were particularly bothered by the paranoia or visions inspired by Xydroth (see “Haunted Woods” above) may continue to find fear and doubt plague them during their descent. The details of this are left to the Keeper, but should be related somehow to the previous incidents. Once the investigators reach the cavern floor, Xydroth ceases using this tactic.

Falling Equipment: The investigators will very likely be carrying as many pieces of equipment as they can safely strap to their bodies. In addition, they may have larger bundles of equipment lowered down on ropes of their own. Both of these methods involve lots of bumps, bangs, and jolts that could cause any poorly secured items to dislodge and fall to the cavern floor. This would present immediate danger to anyone already below, and an ongoing inconvenience to the group if the fall broke an item that was at all crucial.

Insufficient Rope: It would be a very mean trick, but some Keepers may want to consider having one or more of the investigators’ climbing ropes be cut a little shorter than expected. The afflicted investigator would be left hanging at the rope’s end, ten or so feet above the cavern floor. This would be especially inconvenient if it is the rope belonging to the person who is leading the descent as that investigator might

The Abenaki Spirit Stone

If the investigators have played through *Murder of Crows*, they will know that the Haunted Woods is where Prescott Walker found the Abenaki Spirit Stone. They may, in fact, be carrying the stone themselves (though hopefully, based on the conclusion of that adventure, the stone would be wrapped in some kind of protective cloth). Bringing the stone here, however, would be a very bad idea.

When it is within one mile of the Mi-Go mining colony, the Spirit Stone acts as an amplifier for the negative psychic energy Xydroth sends out. Any characters in close proximity to the stone suffer temporary reductions to some of their statistics.

Proximity	Result
20 feet	All SAN checks are made as though the SAN score was 10% lower than it actually is.
10 feet	As above, plus all INT checks are made as though the INT score was 10% lower than it actually is. Also, all IDEA checks are made as though the Idea score was 30% lower than it actually is.
5 feet	As above, plus all skill checks are made as though the skill score was 10% lower than it actually is (to a minimum of 0%).

not be able to determine how far above the floor he or she actually is.

Distractions Above: In most cases, while an investigator is climbing down the rope there will be one or more other investigators at the top of the chasm providing support—keeping the line taut, shining lights on potential hazards, shouting encouragement. If something unexpected or untoward were to distract the investigators above, the poor person on the rope would be all alone in the darkness. Unless the lone investigator panicked, there wouldn’t really be any danger, but it certainly would be hard on his or her nerves.

Down The Rope

Depending on what equipment they’ve brought and their individual skills and temperaments, the investigators may descend into the chasm one at a time down a single rope or drop several ropes and go down in groups. Either way, the first thing they will have to do is ensure that the gear is securely fastened at the top.

This should not be a difficult task, however to underscore the dangerous nature of this activity the Keeper may want to have the investigators make **KNOW** or **IDEA** checks while tying the knots or **LUCK** checks while testing their stability. There should be no negative repercussions to these checks, except to make the investigators nervous. If a check fails, pretend to jot a note on a piece of paper, but



tell the player reassuringly that nothing's wrong. Only if one of the investigators rolls a fumble on the check should anything untoward happen. In that case, the knot slips or the rope breaks but only *before* the investigators have begun the descent. The adventure is in the chasm, so it makes no sense to have the mundane act of getting there be too dangerous.

As the first investigators begin their descent, read aloud or paraphrase the following.

Leaning over the edge, your feet still on solid ground, you see the pit yawning below you—huge, empty, and with no bottom in sight. It looks disturbingly like the open maw of a hungry predator. Suddenly the rope supporting you feels thin and fragile in your hands.

If this is the first time that an investigator has done and caving or rappelling, he or she must make a SAN check upon stepping off into the chasm. Failure results in a loss of 1 SAN point. Anyone who has done this before is presumed to have gone through the very same thing his or her first time. Investigators with phobias or other conditions that would make this activity more traumatic may have to attempt the SAN check at the start of every descent, and may be subject to greater SAN loss, as the Keeper deems appropriate.



Who Stays Above?

The chances are good that the investigators will not want to send everyone down the rope into the chasm, leaving their equipment and, more importantly, their only means of escape from the pit unguarded. This may prove to be the most challenging aspect of the adventure for the Keeper because anyone who does not descend into the chasm will not be able to participate in the meat of the adventure.

It is the Keeper's job to find a way to either communicate this information to the players or to provide them with sufficiently reliable secondary or Keeper characters who can be left to stand guard while the investigators themselves get about the business of exploration. A suitable character can be found in the New Allies section at the end of the adventure.

It may be that some of the investigators will not want to descend during Act I at all. They may want to wait for the more experienced investigators to reach the bottom and confirm that all is as it should be. This is acceptable, as long as all of the investigators have made the journey down the rope by the end of Act II.

On The Way Down

As the investigators lower themselves into the chasm, different challenges will present themselves. Not every investigator need face every challenge. Indeed, some challenges, once revealed, will no longer be applicable or hold any fear for subsequent adventurers.

Depending on the group and preferred play style, the Keeper may not want to handle the descent in a strictly linear way. It may be preferable instead to determine in what order the investigators will descend, assure them that barring catastrophic complications they will reach the bottom safely, and then go in order through the encounters below, randomly determining which investigators face which situations.

If using random determination, be sure to include the possibility that none of them face the problem. Sometimes just rolling the dice is enough to give the players a good scare.



50 Feet Down

After the investigators are forty or fifty feet below ground, the Keeper may want to read aloud or paraphrase the following.

You know that you've only come down a few dozen feet, but when you look up the shaft, the chasm's opening—which once seemed to loom so huge—is now just a plate-sized bright spot at the end of a rocky tunnel. How small will it seem by the time you reach the bottom?

Any investigators who suffer from acrophobia (fear of heights) may find their phobia triggered by the odd situation of being at the bottom of a great height. Those with other applicable conditions may likewise find themselves in an emotional crisis.

Psychological problems aside, there are also a few mundane obstacles that the investigators could encounter at this height.

Rope Troubles

Even with a solid, sturdy rope secured by a tight, stable knot, a lot can happen when the rope is extended over such a long distance and asked to support the weight of a human being and all his or her investigating equipment. The cord could get caught in between two outcroppings of rock, making it difficult to perform any lateral movements. There is also the possibility that through sweat, contact with water seeping through the stones, or some other factor, the rope becomes wet and difficult to manage. Plus, not all ropes in this pre-mass-production era will be of uniform thickness and consistency. It is possible that the line will be fatter or thinner at various points, which may cause problems for inexperienced climbers.

Depending on the trouble, the affected investigator may need to make a **STR** or **DEX** or **CLIMB** check to handle a physical problem, an **INT** or **IDEA** check to solve a practical issue, or simply a **LUCK** or **CLIMB** check to see how well he or she reacts to an unexpected difficulty. No matter what the problem is, these should not end up being life-threatening situations (though the investigators will likely not realize that at first). The worst punishment that an investigator should suffer for failing one of these checks is 1d3 points of physical or SAN damage, and perhaps the embarrassment of needing another investigator to assist in getting everything back in working order.

Although rope troubles are listed as something that happens at the fifty-foot level, the fact is that they can crop up at any time during the descent. The Keeper may choose to use this obstacle at other depths as well.

Roots

At this depth, the investigators are still close enough to the surface and the sunlight that there may be plants growing out of the chasm wall. In addition, roots from trees at the edge of the glen may have worked their way through the earth right up to or through the surface the investigators are climbing down.

Either of these problems could cause the climber's rope to get tangled or blocked from falling the rest of the way to the cavern floor. Likewise, a small plant could hook onto an investigator's sleeve, pants cuff, belt, or backpack halting progress or throwing him or her off balance. In addition, any roots or plants just below the surface may cause the rocks and earth to become loose such that they become dislodged when the investigator steps on that spot. (This would send a small shower of dirt and small stones down on anyone below.)

Resolving these issues should only be a matter of a **CLIMB** or **DEX** check, and the worst punishment that the investigator should suffer is 1d2 points of physical or SAN damage.

Insects

For a more gut-wrenching event, the investigator might have the misfortune to step right on an area of the chasm wall that has been compromised by some insects, arachnids, arthropods, or other crawling creatures. When his or her foot comes down on the spot, the earth will give way beneath the pressure and suddenly the investigator will be ankle-deep in the wall and feel hundreds of tiny legs or writhing, tentacle-like bodies squirming all around. If the foot isn't extricated quickly, which may at the Keeper's discretion require a successful **STR** or **DEX** check, the insects may become a greater nuisance—getting into the investigator's boot or pant leg, biting or stinging the investigator, or otherwise becoming a lingering distraction.

Hardly any poisonous insects are native to New England, so that isn't really a concern. However, sticking one's foot into a nest of insects can be a traumatic event. Have the investigator make a **SAN** check, with failure causing 1 point of SAN loss.

For a more painful version of this encounter, rather than worms and spiders, the nest could be filled with bees, wasps, or hornets. This could result in a swarm of insects that would either fill the chasm with a cloud of enraged insects (making further descents more difficult and dangerous) or fly up and out of the chasm (menacing those on the surface). Such a swarm would be completely distracting and uncomfortable in the extreme, but probably not life threatening unless the victim is allergic to the stings.



100 Feet Down

The next set of possible complications crop up once the investigators get about 100 feet below the surface. When they reach this point, the Keeper may read aloud or paraphrase the following.

Looking up, you find that the chasm's mouth, your only route back to the surface, now appears to be the size of a silver dollar. The light it admits is so diffuse at this depth that you can barely see more than a few inches in front of you.

At this point, the investigators will need some artificial light source in order to see anything at all. Without a torch or electric light, it is now impossible to make **SPOT HIDDEN** checks. However, if a light is not available, investigators get a +10% bonus on **LISTEN** checks until such time as they find a light source or exit the chasm.

Beginning at this depth, investigators with nyctophobia (fear of the dark), monophobia (fear of being alone), and claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces) may find themselves facing increased anxiety. This, of course, depends on the situation. Having a light source and climbing companions may counter these effects altogether.

There still remain purely external obstacles to face. During this portion of the descent, the investigators may face one or more of the following encounters. They may also still face Rope Troubles, as described above.

Bats

This far from the surface, there are no longer large numbers of insects crawling through the earth, nor are there many roots or plants coming through the walls. However, that doesn't mean the cave is devoid of life. A colony of bats has made the chasm their roost, and if the investigators are making a daytime descent, they will have to pass through a dozen feet or more of sleeping bats.

The first hint that trouble is coming may be gleaned when the investigators are about ten or fifteen feet above the bats. At that stage they should be allowed to attempt **LISTEN** checks to hear the occasional telltale squeaks the creatures make even while resting. If the check is successful, the investigator may then attempt an **IDEA** or **NATURAL HISTORY** check to correctly identify the source.

If the investigators know the bats are there, they can attempt to avoid disturbing the creatures by making that part of the descent in one lengthy rappelling motion, vaulting over and past the sleeping bats. This requires a successful **CLIMB** or **STR** check. Success means that they have managed to get past the colony without waking more than one or two individual bats and may continue their descent unmolested. Failure has the same results as entering the colony unaware.

Investigators who descend into the midst of the bat colony without any warning (or fail the **CLIMB** check to

avoid them) will waken some or all of the sleeping creatures. Determine how many bats are awakened by the following series of checks.

First, the investigator must make a **LUCK** check. If that succeeds, only 5% of the bats wake up and begin flying around the investigator; if it fails, the number is instead 10%; if the failure is a fumble, make it 15%.

Next, the investigator must make a **CLIMB** check to keep from making any movements that disturb more of the bats. If the check succeeds, only a few bats are roused by the commotion—increase the number of wakened bats determined above by +2%; if the check fails, instead add +5%; and if the failure is a fumble, add +10%.

Finally, the investigator must make a check using the Resistance Table to get all the way through the area without awakening the rest of the colony. In this check, the active characteristic is the investigator's **STR** or **DEX** while the passive characteristic is the **TOTAL PERCENTAGE** of bats that have been awakened as determined by the checks above. If this last resisted check succeeds, the investigator has passed the bat colony and may continue descending without further interference. If the check fails, then the whole colony is roused and the investigator, caught in the swarm of bats, suffers 1d3 points of damage, and must make an additional **LUCK** check. If this check fails, then the investigator drops or breaks a piece of equipment in the confusion.

At the Keeper's discretion, the bats can settle back to sleep after a few minutes of flying around in a blind rage or, once disturbed, they can fly out of the chasm entirely, opting to find a quieter place in the woods to sleep the day away. If they settle down, then every investigator who follows must go through this encounter as well. Once the colony has been fully awakened twice, though, it will automatically leave the chasm in search of a more peaceful nest.

Guano

Even after the bats themselves have been dealt with, there still remains a related problem that may plague the investigators. The rocks immediately below the bat colony are covered with a thick layer of guano that is foul smelling and extremely slippery. Allow the investigators an **IDEA** check to realize that this foul hazard will naturally be there. Success grants the investigators a 25% bonus on the checks that follow.

If the investigators have a light source, they may make **SPOT HIDDEN** checks to notice the disgusting pale material coating the chasm walls below. Those who are aware of the guano may attempt a **CLIMB** check to avoid the hazard by stepping on clear or only lightly covered sections of the wall.



If the investigators are unaware of the danger or fail the CLIMB check, then they must make LUCK checks. Success means they have navigated the area safely. Failure, on the other hand, indicates that they have slipped and bumped into the wall with their bodies—they suffer 1 point of damage and their clothing is now smeared with the nauseous muck.

Lurkers Below

After dealing with the bats, the investigators may think that they have no worries about further creature encounters. If so, they are sadly mistaken. What's more, all the creatures from this point on are related to or have been affected by their close proximity to the Mi-Go mining station below.

Once the bats are all clearly above them, allow the investigators to make LISTEN checks. Anyone who succeeds hears more squeaks, but less piercing than those made by the bats. In fact, they sound more like tiny human screams of torment and pain. Clearly the screams originate somewhere in the darkness below.

If the investigators look down, allow them to make SPOT HIDDEN checks. Those that succeed notice tiny pricks of pale yellow luminescence flashing in the dark. At first, they look like stars twinkling and blinking in and out of existence, but if the investigators succeed at IDEA checks, they realize that these are in fact the eyes of creatures hiding in the depths of the chasm.

Torchlight will not reach far enough to reveal any further details, but if the heroes shine a lantern or electric light toward the eyes, have them attempt another SPOT HIDDEN check. If it succeeds, the investigators catch a brief glimpse of small dark bodies as they scurry out of the light and back into darkness. They move so quickly that it is impossible to track them, and it may appear that they have simply disappeared.

Those who heard or saw these omens of creatures below must make SAN checks. Failure causes the loss of 1 SAN point if the investigators only heard the screams, 1d2 SAN points if they also saw the twinkling lights, or 1d3 SAN points if they both saw the eyes and their IDEA check was successful.



150 Feet Down

As the investigators descend to the depth where no significant amount of light penetrates at all, it's almost like entering a new world. Even familiar things, like the feel of the rock under one's shoes or the rope in one's hands, begin to seem unnatural.

When they reach this level, the Keeper may read aloud or paraphrase the following.

Although you can still see the top of the chasm, it now appears to be about the size of a button. Its light seems cold and alien, and it does not provide any illumination of your surroundings.

Without a torch, lantern, or electric light, the investigators can no longer see anything. They are in a world of utter darkness. Shining a light down will not reveal anything clearly other than the receding chasm wall. Those with SPOT HIDDEN scores of 75% or higher will also notice that at the very edge of the light, the beam seems to be hitting the ground—or something else blocking the descent. Rather than the rough, relatively even gray color of the stones that make up the chasm walls, whatever appears to be at the bottom is a pale, sickly color and seems to have a softer, more yielding texture.

In fact, they are seeing the bottom of the shaft, where the ground and rocks are covered with more guano but it is impossible for them to determine that from this distance.

If the investigators spend too long trying to figure out what is below, the Keeper may want to have them make IDEA checks. Those who succeed realize that it's impossible to tell what is causing this effect without getting closer. Those that fail either make no conclusion or, if they are suffering from feelings of dread caused by Xydroth, realize that the material down there looks an awful lot like pale, anemic flesh.

Provided they have the courage to continue, the investigators still may encounter other problems before they can discover what is at the bottom of the chasm. The Keeper should bear in mind that in addition to these encounters, the investigators may still have Rope Troubles (as described above). However, anyone at this level who has rope trouble will automatically waken 25% of the bats (described above), which may cause difficulties for any investigators following them down the chasm.

Bat-Things

Living in the walls in tiny burrows are strange creatures unlike anything the investigators have likely ever seen—four bat-things (see "New Creatures" below for details). These are the reanimated and transformed remains of several Paleo-Indian servants the Mi-Go experimented on thousands of years ago. While they crave blood and flesh to eat, they have no need for such things in order to survive.

As the investigators descend past, the bat-things will hide in their burrows. Then, when the investigators are a few yards lower, they will come out and begin the attack.



As soon as one of the bat-things is killed, the others will break off the attack, return to their burrows, and remain there for 1d8 hours. After that, they will again attack any potential victim that passes their view.

BAT-THINGS, Transformed Paleo-Indians

STR 2 CON 7 SIZ 1 INT 11 POW 7 DEX 20

Move: 4/12 flying **HP:** 4

Weapon: Bite 35%, damage 1d3

Armor: None; -40% if bat-thing is flying; -20% if bat-thing is attached to a victim.

Spells: None

SAN Loss: 0/1d6

(See "New Creatures" below for full description.)

Finding the burrows requires a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** check made with a -40% penalty. If the investigators examine the burrows, the bat-things will immediately attack, unless they have already been defeated and have returned to hiding. In that case, the bat-things will simply huddle in their burrows and offer no defense, though they will wail piteously. Should the investigators try to destroy them, it will be a simple matter. But snuffing out the life of a tiny creature that isn't putting up even a token defense is a horrible act (even if the creatures are as horrific as the bat-things). Doing so requires an investigator to make a **SAN** check. Failure causes the loss of 1 SAN point.

Loose Rocks

All the burrowing of the bat-things, mixed with the falling guano and the water dripping down or leaking from between the stones, has loosened the earth along the chasm wall. As a result, the rocks in the lower sections of the chasm wall are unsteady and easily dislodged. Investigators can deduce this fact with a successful check in one of the following areas: **IDEA**, **CLIMB**, **GEOLOGY**, or **SPOT HIDDEN**.

Once that fact is determined, an investigator may try to move more carefully during the final segment of the descent in order to prevent dislodging any rocks and showering them down on the ground below (not to mention any investigators or other creatures who happen to be down there). To do this, the investigator simply has to take a voluntary -25% penalty on all **CLIMB** checks made while in this span of the shaft.

If the investigators do not notice the loose rocks or choose not to descend in a careful manner, they will invariably knock loose some sizable chunks that will fall to the cavern floor. If there is anyone standing in harm's way, have the climbers make a **LUCK** check for every 10 feet they travel down the shaft (50 feet in total for this section). Success indicates that the rock falls harmlessly, but failure indicates that injury may occur below. Randomly determine which of the possible victims the rock actually falls toward, and have that investigator attempt a **DODGE** check. If it is successful, he or she manages to avoid the danger. If it fails, the victim suffers 1d4 points of damage.

Touchdown

After an approximately two-hundred-foot descent, the investigators finally can see the bottom of the shaft clearly (provided they have a light source). If they are able to see the bottom, the Keeper may read aloud or paraphrase the following.

Below you, the chasm opens into a wider cavern. From the cavern ceiling there's about another dozen feet of vertical drop to the floor, which appears to be covered in a foul-smelling pale substance.

Getting down the remaining ten or so feet to the ground is actually the most technically difficult part of the descent. There is no wall on which the investigators can steady themselves—they just have to shimmy down the rope to the cave floor. This requires a successful **CLIMB** check. If the check fails, the investigator cannot manage the feat smoothly, and instead lands hard on the befouled floor. He or she suffers 1d3 points of damage and has pungent guano smeared on his or her outfit and gear.

Once on the ground, the investigators can stay at the bottom of the shaft to help allies finish their descents, or they can peer off to see what the outer cavern looks like.

Central Shaft

Looking up, the chasm mouth two hundred feet above looks about the size of the head of a nail. As a result, even with the maximum background light, it is nearly impossible to see descending climbers unless they or the person on the ground has a light source.

The central shaft is littered with guano (just a few inches at some points, but as much as two feet worth at others), making it slippery and occasionally treacherous. By finding secure footing and providing both verbal and physical assistance, an investigator on the ground can give those coming down the final, free-hanging section of the descent a bonus to their **CLIMB** checks equal to one-tenth of the assistant's **CLIMB** score (rounded up). Only one person can aid a climber at a time—multiple coaches simply confuse the issue and confer no bonus to the check.

However, anyone standing in the central shaft may also be targeted by anything that falls from above such as stones (see "Loose Rocks" above) or dropped equipment (see "Bats" above).

Outer Cavern

Beyond the central shaft, the floor of the chasm opens up into a larger space. From the edge of the shaft, it is impossible to make out exactly how deep the outer cavern is, but it seems to be at least



sixty feet in all directions and roughly circular. The ceiling is about ten feet high near the central shaft, but slopes lower as one moves deeper into the cavern. By estimation, it appears to be less than seven feet tall by the time it gets to the outer walls.

Individual investigators can begin exploring the outer cavern while others are still descending, but the details of that exploration are covered in Act II.

Act II: Voices from the Past

Act II begins when all the investigators taking part in the initial exploration have reached the bottom of the chasm. The action centers on the exploration of this space and the group's discovery of clues pointing to its origins and hidden secrets. The Keeper should remember that there are no light sources in the cavern (yet), and the entire space will be pitch dark until the investigators illuminate it with their torches, lanterns, or electric lights.

As the investigators begin to examine the larger cavern around them, read aloud or paraphrase the following.

With the exception of the mounds of guano under the central shaft, the roughly circular cavern has a surprisingly even floor, as though some ancient hand smoothed it over when the rock was still molten. The ceiling, however, features many stubby stalactites and slopes downward as it moves away from the central shaft..

The cavern at most junctures is approximately 120 feet across. Near the shaft to the surface its roof is about 10 feet high, but as it nears the walls it is closer to six feet and perhaps lower in places.

From the center of the room it is impossible to make out the details of the walls, even using electric torches or lanterns. It is clear that the walls are rougher and craggier than the chasm through which the investigators just passed. The rocks of the walls also seem to be covered in a host of different hues, indicating that they may be composed of a variety of ores and minerals.

The most immediately interesting feature of the cavern is a crater in the center of the guano-covered area beneath the central shaft and the trail that leads away from that spot in a long, faded smear. This can be immediately noticed by the investigators or, if the Keeper prefers, discovering it may require a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** or **TRACK** check (see "A Relatively Recent Arrival" below).

It is certainly not necessary for the group to stick together during their exploration. If the investigators split up, they may have two or more of the following encounters at the same time. The only limitation is any narrative structure the Keeper chooses to enforce. However, it should be noted that some of the write-

ups presume knowledge presented in the earlier encounters. If the party splits, the Keeper will have to be mindful of which group knows which facts and adjust the descriptions accordingly.

Denizens of the Pit

Despite the centuries since this site was in any way active, there yet remain signs of life and death in the outer cavern. With careful examination, the investigators can find remnants of creatures that have accidentally fallen down the chasm, artifacts that belonged to the Paleo-Indians who were enslaved by the Mi-Go, and the last apparently-living residents of the complex. Xydroth will cease provoking fear and paranoia, and begin tracking the investigators' progress. Should the opportunity present itself, it will begin testing the group to see if they would make worthy thralls.

A Relatively Recent Arrival

The first apparent sign of life (or, more correctly, death) in the outer cavern is the crater in the guano covering the area beneath the central shaft. Investigators who succeed at an **IDEA**, **TRACK**, or **ARCHAEOLOGY** check realize that the depression was caused by the impact of something falling from above. Especially good results may yield additional facts such as it was a single, solid object that weighed approximately 150 lbs., was probably an animal or large piece of vegetation (as opposed to a falling rock), and it did not move under its own power after the fall. Someone—or something—else dragged it away.

Following the smeared guano away from the shaft is an easy task in the light of any sort of torch. However, a successful **TRACK** or **ARCHAEOLOGY** check will also reveal that the smear was made somewhere between fifty and one hundred years ago.

The smear ends about 15 feet deep into the cavern, but if the investigators follow that same line toward the outer wall, they will easily notice the skeletal remains of a deer. If the Keeper prefers, finding the carcass may require a **SPOT HIDDEN** check, and correctly identifying it may not be automatic. In this case, the skeleton will look oddly misshapen (damaged by the fall and having been dragged). A successful **BIOLOGY**, **NATURAL HISTORY**, or **ANTHROPOLOGY** check will determine the true nature of the bones, but to the uninformed it will look like the remains of a seven-foot tall, barrel-chested humanoid that had cloven hooves for feet and large, multi-pronged horns growing from its forehead.

The greater mystery for the investigators will be trying to deduce who or what dragged the deer carcass away from the central shaft. No footprints can be found on the stone floor or in the soft guano (dragging the deer smeared them away). Indeed, there are no clues to be found that will help identify the culprits. (The Keeper should know that it's the rat-things described in "Rat-Things" below, but there is no way for the investigators to get that information yet.) However, a successful **BIOLOGY**, **NATURAL HISTORY**, or **ANTHROPOLOGY**, **ARCHAEOLOGY**, or **TRACK** check will reveal some or all of the following facts.





- The carcass was a male white-tailed deer, a common creature in these woods. It almost certainly fell down the chasm by accident and was killed on impact.
- It was about average for its species, weighing roughly 150lbs. and standing approximately 5 feet tall at the shoulders.
- Given the clues that point to this happening half a century or more ago, it is to be expected that no meat or flesh would remain on the carcass.
- Closer examination reveals gnaw marks on the bones.
- The marks indicate that whatever made them had a bite radius of no more than an inch-and-a-half.
- Based on the teeth marks, the bites were made by at least five or six separate creatures.
- Based on the size and depth of the bite marks, it seems likely the creatures were approximately 6 to 12 inches in length and weighed between 1 and 5 pounds.
- The shape of the bite marks are unlike any creature of which the investigators are aware (unless they are already aware of rat-things).
- The bite marks most closely resemble tiny human mouths with razor-sharp teeth.

After examining the deer carcass, if the investigators use their lights to scan deeper into the cavern they may notice more bones and other remains scattered along the same line from the central shaft to the wall. (This is the most direct route from the rat-things' burrows to any potential food that might fall down the chasm.) At the Keeper's discretion, this discovery can be automatic or require a **SPOT HIDDEN** check.

Leftovers

By continuing along the line from the central shaft to the deer carcass, or through more random exploration, the investigators will eventually come across remains of other creatures that lived and died in this subterranean space.

Although there aren't any more full skeletons in the cavern, the closer the investigators get to the wall, the more loose, gnawed-upon bones and other items they will find. The Keeper should give them the feeling that over the years a good many creatures have tumbled down the shaft and wound up as meals for the mysterious creatures that must have lived in the cavern—and perhaps still do.

Among the growing collection of unidentifiable bones, the investigators will find three items of note.

Bear Claw: The skeletal remains of a bear's front paw. This may not seem unusual at first, but a successful **NATURAL HISTORY** or **BIOLOGY** check will reveal that this paw did not fall off the skeleton due to either natural decay or gnawing teeth. It was severed by a sharp object such as a stone knife. A successful **ANTHROPOLOGY** or **ARCHAEOLOGY** check will further reveal that local Native American tribes valued bear claws as symbols of bravery and strength. The way the paw was cut would make it perfect for making such a talisman.

In fact, the claw used to be a bravery fetish. Over the millennia, the feathers, meat, and braided hair decomposed and fell away, leaving only the skeletal paw behind.

At the Keeper's discretion there could be some lingering magical potency in the claw. It might provide the investigator carrying it with a minor bonus on **STR**, **FIST**, or **GRAPPLE** checks.

Wolf Skull: A whole wolf's skull (minus the lower jaw). Careful examination or a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** or **LUCK** check will reveal to the investigators that the ancient bones have been engraved with a series of symbols. Anyone who is familiar with the ancient history and artifacts of this region will recognize the etchings as being similar to those found on artifacts left behind by the Paleo-Indian people who lived here thousands of years ago. A successful **ANTHROPOLOGY** or **ARCHAEOLOGY** check allows the investigators to determine that these carvings are most likely a prayer for wisdom and inner strength since these are the two qualities that local Native American tribes generally ascribe the wolf).

The skull is a totem carved by the Paleo-Indian slaves that used toil in the Mi-Go mines. At the Keeper's discretion, it may contain some residual magical power and grant the bearer minor bonuses on **IDEA** and **SAN** checks.

Leather Headband: The final, and most amazing, discovery is a strip of ancient leather that has braided strings tied to its ends and crude figures and symbols scratched into its surface. The leather is thousands of years old—dried, stiff, and slightly gnawed upon—but the markings are still clear. The central image is an insect, something like a cross between a wasp, a locust, and a moth or butterfly. On either side of the insect are prostrate human figures.

A successful **ANTHROPOLOGY** or **ARCHAEOLOGY** check will reveal that the arrangement of the symbols gives a context of fear or subjugation. Likewise, these checks confirm that no other relic of this sort has ever been discovered. While the local tribes venerated and worshiped nature and animals, there is no record of them expressing such negative attitudes





toward them. And there are no previous examples of such a hideous insect figure. A successful **BIOLOGY** or **NATURAL HISTORY** check will confirm that no creature fitting that description has ever been cataloged in this region. Indeed, it does not fit the profile of any known insect at all.

Perhaps the strangest things, though, are the strings. Closer examination reveals that they are not string at all, but rather some kind of synthetic material that is light-weight, durable, and apparently does not decompose. (If this scenario is set in the modern day, the investigators will identify it as being some kind of plastic-like substance that they have never encountered before.)

This item was a headband worn by one of the ancient Paleo-Indian slaves. The insectoid creature represents a Mi-Go that is subjugating the humans. It was made with stolen materials, but the Mi-Go used those synthetic twines as foci to help communicate psychically with the wearer. And now that the investigators have found it, Xydroth can use it in that way, too. Merely picking up the headband has a chance of drawing Xydroth's attention—allow it a **SPOT HIDDEN** check to notice the “psychic chatter” that the investigator generates while holding the headband.

Once Xydroth is aware of the investigator, it can read the emotional essence of his or her surface thoughts, monitor what he or she sees and hears, and use that information to begin planning what to do about these newcomers. (See “Act III” for details on Xydroth.) Unless there is a compelling reason for immediate action, it is likely to wait a while before doing anything overt. However, it may use the headband's powers as described below, just as a way to test the abilities and reactions of modern humans.

An investigator who has the headband on his or her person may periodically be the target of bizarre psychic phenomena. At its discretion, Xydroth can activate one of the following effects once every half hour. Any of the following checks, or checks made to resist Xydroth's other psychic attacks, receives a -10% penalty if the investigator wears the headband (as opposed to just carrying it).

- **Fainting**—The investigator must make a successful **POW x2** check or immediately fall unconscious. This condition lasts for 1d10 minutes.

- **Visual Hallucinations**—The investigator must make a successful **POW x2** check or be subject to a detailed visual hallucination of Xydroth's choice. It usually chooses to make the other investigators appear to transform into Mi-Go, or make it appear that a Mi-Go is lurking nearby spying on the group. However, the Keeper may choose to inflict any purely visual hallucination that seems appropriate. These hallucinations last for 1d3 minutes and may call for the afflicted investigator to make a successful **SAN** check or suffer an appropriate **SAN** loss.

- **Audio Hallucinations**—The investigator must make a successful **POW x2** check or be subject to a detailed audio hallucination of Xydroth's choice. It usually chooses to make all speech heard by the victim sound like insectoid chittering, or create a sound similar to hundreds of enraged Paleo-Indians shouting and preparing to attack. However, the Keeper may choose to inflict any purely audio hallucination that seems appropriate. These hallucinations last for 1d6 minutes and may call for the afflicted investigator to make a successful **SAN** check or suffer an appropriate **SAN** loss.

- **Domination**—The investigator must make a successful **POW x3** check or find him- or herself under Xydroth's direct control. While in this state, Xydroth can command the investigator to do anything, though actions that will bring direct harm to the investigator may allow a second check, this time at **POW x4**. Usually, Xydroth will use this power to have the investigator perform a subtle physical task (such as taking or dropping an item or interposing him- or herself between the group and Xydroth). It is impossible for Xydroth to use the investigator to speak or act normally because it is not familiar with the English language or 20th century customs. The domination lasts for up to 1d10 minutes, but Xydroth can end it at any time it chooses.

Rat-Things

Either by following a trail of bones or simply through more general exploration, the investigators may eventually find themselves at the cavern's outer wall near a collection of rat-thing warrens. At that juncture, the Keeper may read aloud or paraphrase the following.

As you approach this section of wall, the cavern roof is less than six feet high and still covered in stubby stalactites, making it difficult to stand. The wall in front of you is pockmarked with dozens of tiny indentations.

Because of the low ceiling, any investigator who is **SIZ 12** or larger must hunch or bend over while in this section of the cave. This confers a -5% penalty on all physical activities, including checks made to fight or **DODGE** an opponent. However, it does make it easier for the investigators to notice and examine the indentations, which are mostly on the lower half of the wall (+5% bonus on these activities).

If the investigators examine the indentations, have them attempt **SPOT HIDDEN** checks. Success reveals that these are not geologic formations but small tunnels dug out by some tiny hand. A successful **NATURAL HISTORY** or **BIOLOGY** check will further reveal that the tunnels are similar to those made by moles, gophers, rats, and other burrowing mammals. However, the walls of the tunnels seem smoother and more carefully constructed than most (due to the precision capable with the rat-things' human-like hands).





Unless the investigators immediately move away, the rat-things in the walls begin to become agitated. Any investigators who succeed at a **LISTEN** check at first hear a high-pitched whining, like that of a sad child. The longer they stay, the louder and more agitated the sound grows until it is clearly audible to anyone within 20 feet of this area. At that point, the rat-things no longer sound like they're whining. Instead, the investigators hear rhythmic, guttural grunts that rise and fall in pitch, sounding like a primitive chant. If the investigators do not immediately back away from the wall, the rat-things will attack.

There are ten rat-things living in the wall, each in its own burrow. The extra tunnels represent abandoned burrows—the rat-things have no natural enemies in the cavern and, being creatures created through sorcery, they are effectively immortal, but they do occasionally have the urge to dig a new den.

RAT-THINGS, Transformed Paleo-Indians

STR 2 CON 7 SIZ 1 INT 10 POW 7 DEX 20

Move: 9 **HP:** 4

Weapon: Bite 35%, damage 1d3

Armor: None; -40% if rat-thing is running; -20% if rat-thing is attached to a victim.

Spells: None

SAN Loss: 0/1d6

(See the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook for full description.)

Once enraged, the rat-things will attack until half of their number are killed. Then any remaining rat-things that are not currently attached to victims will flee back to their warrens. Those that are attached will continue to bite until they are either pried off or killed.

Back in their dens, the rat-things will dig in deep and try to avoid the investigators. If given no other choice, a rat-thing will once again attack its tormentor, but the creatures will not attack en masse again.

Player Handout #2 - Keeper's Copy

Sample Pictographs



Primitive Eyes

Along another section of the outer cavern walls are a series of cave paintings, made by the Paleo-Indian slaves before they were transformed into rat- and bat-things. The cavern roof is a little more than six feet high at this point, so any investigator who is SIZ 13 or smaller can stand normally. Those who are larger must hunch or bend over, and incur a -5% penalty on all physical activities, including checks made to fight or DODGE an opponent.

At the Keeper's discretion, there may be similar tiny paintings in and around the rat-thing warrens (described above), though the investigators would have to make an extraordinary examination of the tunnels to discover them.

Looking

Looking at the cave painting, the investigators will see a series of images focusing on humans and what appear to be giant insects similar to the one found on the leather headband described above. At this point, the Keeper should present the group with Player Handout #2.

The Keeper may leave the investigators to draw their own conclusions, or allow them to make **IDEA**, **ANTHROPOLOGY**, **NATURAL HISTORY**, **LIBRARY USE**, or **OCCULT** checks to gain one or more of the following insights.

- These paintings are similar to others from the period when a Paleo-Indian people lived in this part of the continent—approximately 10,000 years ago.
- No other known paintings feature insect creatures like those shown here.
- There is no fossil record to indicate insects of this type ever thrived in this part of the continent, let alone in such recent times.
- The comparative size between the humans and the insects is constant throughout the paintings. It appears as though the relative scale is intended to be an accurate representation.
- The iconography is similar to other paintings that scholars believe represent violent conflicts. If that is accurate, then the humans and insects appear to have been at war.
- The relative placement and postures of the figures indicate that the insects were dominant over the humans. In fact, there is strong evidence that the humans are in servile positions.

Touching

Looking at the cave paintings provides some insight into the history of this locale, but if an investigator touches the paintings, he or she may get a much different sort of insight. The investigator should attempt a **POW x2** check.

If it is successful, there is no further effect. If the check fails, however, the investigator loses 1d6 SAN and is immediately subject to a psychic flashback.

When a psychic flashback is triggered, the Keeper should allow that investigator's player to read the following passage. Alternatively, the Keeper may read aloud or paraphrase it for the whole group to hear.

The cavern around you transmogrifies—suddenly there are glowing balls of light hanging near the ceiling, filling the space with a cold, pale yellow light. Your friends are gone, but the floor of the cavern is covered practically end to end with dark-haired, ruddy-skinned humans sleeping in long orderly rows.

You watch passively as you see your own hand, scratched and calloused from hard labor, digs a hole in the cavern wall, places a smooth, dull metal sphere into the space, then packs earth and stone over it. Quickly, you then pick up a shallow bowl with a dark pigment in it. Dipping your fingers into the bowl you begin painting over the spot—painting figures of you and your oppressed brothers ... and of your oppressors.

There is a sound from across the cavern. You turn and see a section of the wall slide open. Light streams into the cavern, and in that light hovers the silhouette of something horrible.

Before the horrible shape can be clearly identified, the psychic flashback ends. Once one investigator has experienced this phenomenon, it will not occur again for anyone else.

For the next day, no matter how hard he or she might try to forget them, the images remain fresh in the investigator's mind. Once per hour, the investigator must make a **POW** check which, if it fails, results in the flashback recurring in its entirety. Additionally, at any point he or she chooses, the investigator can replay the flashback in full detail (allow the player to re-read the text above as often as is necessary). The flashbacks will stop after a day (though the investigator does not know this), or they will likewise cease if the investigator digs the sphere out of the wall and keeps it on his or her person. (See "New Artifacts" for a full description of the fetish sphere and its qualities.)

If the investigator to whom the fetish sphere becomes attached is also holding the Paleo-Indian headband (see "Leftovers" above), then Xydroth must make a successful check on the Resistance Table (with it's POW as the active characteristic, and the investigator's POW as the passive characteristic) in order to activate any of the headband's effects.

If the investigator wants to examine the section of the cavern where the wall slid open during the psychic flashback, proceed to the "Etched In Stone" encounter below.

Etched in Stone

As exciting as the Paleo-Indian cave paintings may be, the most amazing find in the cavern is a set of carvings that are ten thousand times older—the control panel laser-etched into the wall when the Mi-Go first built their mine.

Investigators may find the panel simply by thoroughly searching the outer cavern—it is nearly impossible to miss if one passes within ten feet while carrying any light source. The cavern roof is a little more than six feet high at this point, so any investigator who is SIZ 13 or smaller can stand normally. Those who are larger must hunch or bend over, and incur a -5% penalty on all physical activities, including checks made to fight or DODGE an opponent.

The investigators may also be pointed in its direction by the psychic flashback induced by touching the cave painting. (See “Primitive Dyes” above.)

The control panel is more than just a carving, though—it is an actual, working bit of alien technology tied into the central systems of the mining colony. It has been dormant for tens of thousands of years, but it remains fully functional, so if the investigators touch it there will be very real reactions and repercussions.

Looking

When the investigators first make a visual examination of the carvings, the Keeper may read aloud or paraphrase the following.

The rough surface of the cave wall suddenly evens out and becomes unnaturally smooth. After less than a foot, this smooth surface is interrupted by absolutely straight, impossibly precise grooves cut into the stone to form segments, each about a foot square. The squares line up in a perfect grid five across by ten tall. Each square contains a strange, disturbingly abstract glyph.

This grid is actually a keypad of sorts that controls some minor functions of the mining complex and communicates with the main control room and, through that, with Xydroth. The glyphs are in the ancient written language of the Mi-Go, and indicate briefly what function or connection is tied to that particular grid square/button.

The Keeper may allow investigators to attempt any skill check that seems appropriate during the examination, but unless someone in the group is conversant in the ancient language of Yuggoth, they will have no way to decipher the meanings. A successful **CTHULHU MYTHOS** check, though, will allow the investigators to determine that these markings are similar to others associated with a race of creatures called “Mi-Go” that are supposedly intelligent fungi from a planet called Yuggoth. Unless the investigators already have prior knowledge of Mi-Go, that is all they can glean.

If the investigators make a detailed examination of the grid, they are absolutely astounded by the precision and uniformity of the carving. All the cuts are equally smooth

and deep. The investigators may also attempt **SPOT HIDDEN** checks which, if successful, reveal that the grooves go down deeper than first apparent. Indeed, they seem to widen out after an inch or so and extend below the grid squares.

This may give the investigators the notion that it is possible to depress the squares like keys on a typewriter. If they do not come to this conclusion on their own, allow them to attempt **IDEA** checks to put that information together.

Touching

The control panel is still active and connected directly to the machinery that Xydroth controls and of which he is in fact a part. If the investigators press even one square, Xydroth becomes fully aware of their presence (if it was not previously). Exactly what actions it takes at this juncture are up to the Keeper (see “Act III” for details on Xydroth), but unless there is a strong reason to take immediate action, it will likely wait and observe the group a while longer.

There are fifty squares carved into the cavern wall, and all of them activate or deactivate some portion or function of the Mi-Go mining operation. If the investigators begin pressing buttons, determine the results randomly using the table below. Note that the point of this encounter is to help the investigators discover the Hollow Stone and move on to that encounter. At any point, the Keeper may by fiat decide that pressing a button causes the light behind that stone to come on.

1d10

Result Effect

1	Electric Shock
2	Strange Noise
3-4	Lights in Cavern
5-6	Mi-Go Announcement
7-9	Psychic Flashback
10	Hollow Stone Light

Electric Shock: A moderate jolt of electricity runs through the investigator, knocking him or her to the floor and inflicting 1d3 points of damage. This is part of a defense mechanism built in to keep the Paleo-Indian slaves from fiddling with the control panel.

Strange Noise: From deep within the bowels of the earth comes a great, rumbling noise so deep that the ground seems to shake and the investigators’ insides quiver. They have just activated part of the mining technology that has been dormant for centuries.



Lights in Cavern: Strange balls of pale yellow light begin to glow near the roof all around the cavern. The space is now lit by a cold, eerie glow. Torches are no longer necessary. If this result is rolled more than once, the lights can be turned on and off as many times as the Keeper likes. (If one of the investigators is attuned to the fetish sphere, he or she will notice that these are exactly the same as the lights in the psychic flashback it caused.)

Mi-Go Announcement: An eerie, disembodied voice fills the cavern chattering in an insectoid, alien language. This is some kind of pre-recorded message the Mi-Go built into the system. If this result is rolled more than once, a different announcement will play, perhaps spoken by a different Mi-Go (though it requires a successful **LISTEN** check to tell the difference).

Psychic Flashback: The investigator must make a successful **POW x2** check or be overcome by a psychic flashback. These are bits of stored data about the mining colony, how it works, and other details that may be helpful or confusing, as the Keeper prefers. Subjects for psychic flashbacks include.

- Images of individual Mi-Go (as if from a personnel file)
- Images of Paleo-Indian slaves (as if from a manifest)
- Scenes of the mine during its heyday
- Scenes of Mi-Go performing medical experiments on the slaves
- A scene of a slave's brain being removed and placed in a brain case
- A scene of Xydroth managing the control center (as it is described in "Act III")
- A scene of the Mi-Go spaceship originally arriving at this site
- Anything else the Keeper feels is appropriate

Hollow Stone Light: A light comes on directly behind the hollow stone (see below). The seams around the stone are tight enough that the light does not stream through into the cavern, but it does cause the stone to glow slightly. If the cavern is lit only by the investigators' equipment, they automatically notice this immediately. If the Mi-Go light balls are active, though, the effect is more like the stone changing color slightly, which requires a successful **SPOT HIDDEN** check to notice.

If the investigators' skill checks fail to let them notice the hollow stone light, the Keeper may wish to simply provide them with that observation. The adventure cannot proceed until the investigators have a reason to examine the hollow stone, as described below.



The Hollow Stone

A protruding stone along a section of the cavern wall near the Mi-Go control panel is actually a well-constructed and even more well-hidden doorway into the mining complex. There are several ways for the investigators to discover this.

First and foremost, they may simply come across this section of the wall while exploring the cavern. A successful **SPOT HIDDEN** or **GEOLOGY** check will reveal that there is something unusual about this particular stone. It is different than the others around it, though not out of place in this general stratum of the earth—something just feels odd about it.

Alternatively, the investigators may be drawn to this spot by information gleaned from a psychic flashback encountered while dealing with the Paleo-Indian cave painting or the Mi-Go control panel. It is also possible that pressing a button on the control panel caused the stone to change color and glow slightly, attracting the investigators' attention.

Once they are specifically examining the hollow stone, the investigators may attempt a **SPOT HIDDEN**, **GEOLOGY**, or **ARCHAEOLOGY** check to determine that there is a hollow space behind it. (Again, this is a crucial step in the adventure, so the Keeper should provide the investigators with this information if their skill checks all go badly.)





At the Keeper's discretion, this discovery may be accompanied with an understanding of how to open or activate the door, or that discovery may require additional investigation. Getting past the door does not need to be a puzzle, but it certainly can be if the players would enjoy that type of encounter. If it doesn't make any other difference to the campaign or the Keeper, then opening the door is as easy as a successful **MECHANICAL REPAIR**, **LOCKSMITH**, or **LUCK** check.

When the investigators manage to get the hollow stone to open, a blindingly white light washes out into the cavern. This causes anyone looking directly at it momentary blindness and bedazzlement, even if the control panel activated the lights throughout the cavern. Nothing will happen to the investigators during this effect, but they cannot be certain of that on their own.

Once their vision clears, they see a door leading through into a white and metal-gray room beyond. When they enter the room, continue the adventure with Act III.

Act III: Beyond the Hollow Stone

Act III begins when the investigators enter the room beyond the hollow stone. This is the nerve center for the mining colony, and home to Xydroth, the 10,000 year-old Paleo-Indian brain that is still functioning inside a Mi-Go brain canister. The action begins with exploring this room full of alien technology, but quickly focuses on escaping from Xydroth's psychic clutches.

Much of the information here is for the Keeper only. The investigators have no real way to decipher the Mi-Go language, while Xydroth knows only that and the language of its former tribe. Although this room is part of a tremendous mining colony, the investigators have no way to travel deeper into the complex where the mining takes place and the Mi-Go themselves are kept in artificial hibernation.

However, it is important for the Keeper to understand the larger truths of the situation so that Xydroth's motivations and the possible repercussions of unexpected actions by the investigators can be adjudicated fairly.

When all is said and done, the investigators either should be able to escape back to the surface with wildly unbelievable tales, or they will be mental zombies under the thrall of Xydroth, working to keep the Mi-Go mining colony operational for the rest of their natural lives—and perhaps longer.



The Nerve Center

As the investigators step past the hollow stone, they are entering a room filled with ultra-advanced alien technology. The Keeper may read aloud or paraphrase the following.

The room you walk into is small compared to the cavern outside, but its fifteen-foot ceiling makes it feel like a larger space. Every surface is covered by a single, seamless expanse of impossibly smooth metal that, somehow, changes colors from white to gray to dun without any clear reason.

The walls and ceiling are covered with strange, blocky protrusions that stick several feet out from the wall. Although these are part of the same seamless metal, they have lights blinking on their surfaces. These protrusions are irregular in shape and seem to twist and bend at odd, almost impossible angles.

The floor space is mostly open except for a single, large, roughly fifteen-foot square mass that rises from the middle of the room to a height of nearly eight feet. Depending on one's point of view, it seems like a sculpture of a strange city skyline or a surreal and random collection of non-Euclidean building blocks topped with a central column or tower.

No map has been provided for the Nerve Center because tactical positioning will not be important or helpful in this encounter. If the Keeper and players prefer to use such detailed resources in their games, the Keeper should sketch out a room that is 50'x50' with irregular protrusions coming out of the walls at odd angles and extending between 1 and 8 feet away from the wall's surface. The center 15'x15' section of the room is filled with a single solid mass that rises to a central height of approximately 8'. Along one section of the wall, roughly opposite from the entrance, is an area with no protrusions—what the investigators may come to know as the Blank Spot.

Each of the protrusions is a workstation that the Mi-Go used when running the mining colony. The arrangement of the room is based on the fact that the Mi-Go were able to fly and hover while their human slaves were not. The more important a component was, the farther from the ground it was placed, so that the most important stations are in the central section of the ceiling. The one exception to this is the central mass—the Core from which all automatic functions were handled. The column atop the Core contains Xydroth's brain case (see below).

The workstations all function through a combination of advanced technology and psionic communications. There are no view screens or





print outs—everything is shown directly into the user’s brain, and all that user’s thoughts during the process are captured in the database for others to read and make use of later. As the investigators explore the Nerve Center, anything they touch may involve them in a psychic incident.

It is up to the Keeper to interpret the relevant information and present it to the player in a way that describes what the investigator “sees” in his or her mind, and leave that person to draw conclusions as to the actual meaning of these visions. If either the Keeper or the players are having too much difficulty with this system, the Keeper should allow the investigators to attempt **IDEA** checks to figure out easily understood data, and **INT** checks if the concepts are more abstract or alien. Throughout the process, it may be that occasionally a **SAN** check (and appropriate **SAN** loss) is required for being showed particularly inhuman facts or ideas.

As the investigators explore the room, they will encounter workstations relating to three different areas: general data, mining controls, and environmental controls. These are not arranged in groups, and each protrusion will be associated with a specific area. The Keeper can determine the area each protrusion covers at random or assign them by fiat.

Touching the Core will cause different reactions than activating the workstations did (see below). Additionally, it is possible for the investigators to make limited use of the workstations to affect the Nerve Center and fight against Xydroth. Details on this can be found in the “Brain vs. Brawn” section below.

If the investigators stand back and study the room as a whole, looking for patterns or a logical arrangement, allow them to attempt **SPOT HIDDEN** or **CTHULHU MYTHOS** checks. If successful, these checks reveal that there is a five-foot, roughly rectangular space along the back wall that seems strangely devoid of workstations. This is the so-called “Blank Spot” (see below). However, this realization comes at a price. Investigators who succeed at a **SPOT HIDDEN** or **CTHULHU MYTHOS** check must immediately make **SAN** checks. Success indicates the investigator loses only 1d2 **SAN** and gains 1 point in **CTHULHU MYTHOS**, while failure results in 3d2 **SAN** loss and gaining 1d3 points of **CTHULHU MYTHOS** for internalizing the alien geometric concepts used in the room’s design.

What About the Rest of the Colony?

The climactic scenes of *The Doom from Below* all play out in the Nerve Center without any opportunity for the investigators to explore or even really learn much about the greater mining colony.

The antagonist in this adventure is Xydroth, not the Mi-Go. *The Doom from Below* was created as an adventure of discovery, not one of conquest and, as relatively inexperienced investigators, the group could not be expected to have the kind of insights and expertise to come through such a larger adventure whole in either body or mind.

From the point of view of the investigators, this is a whole and complete adventure. They do not know about the history or contents of the Mi-Go mining colony—they only know that they have met and interacted with (and hopefully overcome) the eternal caretaker of a defunct outpost. They leave the site with more information about and understanding of the world beyond what mortal man knows.

If ever they come back, they will certainly be better equipped both physically and mentally to handle an ancient spacecraft full of scientific marvels and frozen alien menaces.

So why, then, include so much extra information for the Keeper? Why present situations and details that never come up in play? The answer is twofold.

First, the background is what makes Xydroth an interesting antagonist rather than just an unmotivated murderous automaton. It may be a 10,000-year-old brain in a jar, but hopefully the background gives it enough personality, conflict, and motivation to allow the Keeper to adjudicate its decisions logically and in a way that heightens the terror.

Second, the extra details can be considered an “Easter egg” for the Keeper. If this background is interesting or inspirational enough, then it can be expanded and used as the basis for future adventures. Indeed, the game industry being what it is, if *The Doom from Below* is popular enough, Super Genius Games might even consider publishing a follow-up “Return To...” adventure. But our goal was to create a self-contained single evening of horrific adventure. Everything else is just gravy.



General Data

The general data workstations deal with information about the Mi-Go, the Paleo-Indian slaves, the facilities, and other broad general topics that the Mi-Go might have kept in their central archives. Images that an investigator may see when touching a general data workstation include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Images of individual Mi-Go assigned to the mining colony, including biographical information (in the Mi-Go's insectoid language).
- Images of individual Paleo-Indian slaves belonging to the colony, including what tasks the slave was trained in and his disciplinary record (in the Mi-Go's insectoid language).
- Scenes of daily events in the mine—machines digging, slaves carrying ore, Mi-Go supervising or merely torturing the slaves.
- A scene of a Paleo-Indian corpse being transformed into a rat-thing or bat-thing.
- A scene of a Paleo-Indian slave having his brain removed and placed in a glass and metal cylinder. (This is Xydroth's creation.)
- A scene of a brain in a glass case being installed atop the Core and the protective sheath of metal being placed over its cylinder. (This is Xydroth being placed in control of the Nerve Center.)
- A scene of Xydroth controlling the mine's operations from the Nerve Center, and showing the fact that the Mi-Go were pleased by this.
- A scene of an errant slave being punished by blasts of energy that originate from the Core, and showing the fact that the Mi-Go were pleased by this.

Mining Controls

The mining control workstations deal with the operation of the mine and ore refining processes. Images that an investigator may see when touching a mining control workstation include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Graphics representing the efficiency of the mining operations or data on the amount of ore currently in the storage holds.
- Schematics for various pieces of mining equipment and scenes of them at work.
- Schematics of the Nerve Center, including Xydroth and its brain cylinder and the protective sheath that surrounds it.
- Comparisons of mining efficiency before and after the inclusion of the Paleo-Indian slaves.
- Comparisons of mining efficiency before and after the addition of Xydroth to the process.
- A map of Pangaea showing the location of various Mi-Go mines, with this site highlighted.
- Scenes of the method used to process the local ores into the rare minerals the Mi-Go require.

Environmental Controls

The environmental control workstations deal with regulating the air quality, temperature, and general environment within the mining colony so that it suits the needs both of the Mi-Go masters and the Paleo-Indian slaves. Images that an investigator may see when touching an environmental control workstation include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Graphics comparing the atmospheric needs of Mi-Go and humans.
- Scenes of Paleo-Indian slaves being exposed to Mi-Go standard environment and dying painfully.
- Cut-away graphic of the whole base with different environmental zones marked with color codes.
- Schematic of the Core showing the location of Xydroth's brain cylinder.
- The procedure to disconnect the Core from the system and run the environmental controls manually.
- Scene of the Mi-Go ship traveling through space overlaid with graphics about the environmental conditions.
- Scene of the Mi-Go ship as it arrives on Earth and settles underground overlaid with graphics about the environmental conditions.
- Scene of Mi-Go in hibernation chambers.

The Core

Unlike the other workstations, the Core is not a simple data storage and recovery unit. Rather, it is the central processing hub for all automated functions in the mining colony and the repository of the living brain that controls it all—Xydroth.

Touching the Core does not cause any automatic transfer of data, but it does supply a more direct link to Xydroth. Exactly what Xydroth does with this connection depends on how the adventure has unfolded to that point (see "Brain vs. Brawn" below for details). While investigators are in contact with the core, they have their skill and characteristic scores halved for the purpose of resisting psychic assaults from Xydroth.

In addition, while touching the Core investigators can initiate psychic communication with Xydroth (as opposed to waiting for it to contact them). Conversation does not get any easier, though, as the language and cultural barriers remain as daunting as before.

Xydroth's brain cylinder is roughly eighteen inches wide and two feet tall. It is housed within the column at the top of the Core, surrounded by a sheath of solid metal to protect it. Some of the

psychic flashbacks should reveal this and other facts in order to give context to who and what Xydroth is (see the information revealed at the workstations for examples).

The Blank Spot

At the back of the Nerve Center, roughly opposite the entrance through the hollow stone, is an approximately five-foot patch of wall that has no protrusions, discolorations, or workstations. It does, however, have the only recess into the metal surface to be found anywhere in the room. The recess is a roughly half-inch deep divot in the shape of a semi-circle joined with the top half of an octagon.

There are no other markings on the area, and no indication of what it is for. Touching it or the wall around it has no discernable effects. It is impossible to intuit the significance of the blank space or the divot through simple examination, though the investigators are free to make whatever guesses and surmises they like. In the end, these features will turn out to be just another unguessable mystery of Mi-Go design.

Noticing the existence of the Blank Spot may cause the investigators some discomfort, as mentioned in the broader description of the Nerve Center above. Even if this is the case, the investigators are unable to identify the reason it is so disturbing—it is not a quality of the Blank Spot itself as much as it is the quantitative effect of the room as a whole when that dissonance is added.

The Keeper, on the other hand, may learn more about the Blank Spot in the “What About the Rest of the Colony?” sidebar.

Xydroth

At the top of the Core sits what looks like a column or tower but is, in fact, a case containing a Mi-Go brain cylinder. The column is approximately two-foot wide and three feet tall. Inside is Xydroth, a brain taken from a Paleo-Indian slave more than 10,000 years ago and serving as the central processor for the mining colony ever since.

Xydroth long ago stopped thinking of itself as human, but it likewise never fully accepted that it was nothing more than a piece of Mi-Go machinery. Since the incident millennia ago where it sent its Mi-Go masters into artificial hibernation and killed the remaining human slaves, Xydroth has been alone in the Nerve Center, unable to do anything. It vaguely remembers a life before the cylinder, and it harbors a deep longing to be free once more.

The arrival of the investigators—the first humans in centuries to find the chasm and the complex beneath, let alone make their way into the Nerve Center—has given Xydroth the final impetus it



needed to take action again.

While the investigators examined the outer cavern, there were several opportunities for Xydroth to follow their progress, test their abilities, and read some of their thoughts. Based on what it found out, Xydroth will enact a plan to subdue the investigators and then bind their minds the way the Paleo-Indians were enslaved so long ago. When that is accomplished, it will attempt to use the Mi-Go technology to switch its brain with that of one of the investigators, giving Xydroth a new body and a chance to escape into the world above for the first time in millennia.

XYDROTH, 10,000 Year-Old Brain

STR — CON — SIZ 3 INT 11 POW 17 DEX —

Move: 0 HP: 4

Weapon: See “Brain vs. Brawn” below

Armor: Brain Cylinder, 19 HP (The brain cylinder protects Xydroth completely; it must be opened or destroyed before any damage can be done to the brain inside.)

Spells: None

SAN Loss: 1d2/1d6. Simply seeing the Xydroth in its cylinder does not necessarily require a SAN check. However, realizing that this disembodied brain is alive, running the complex, and attacking the investigators does.

In some ways, being a living brain in a canister makes Xydroth more resilient than the investigators. It does not have a body to be injured or killed, it is already thousands of years old, it has an impressive repertoire of physical and psychic attacks it can perform, its container is protected by alien-forged metal, and it understands the humans much better than they understand it.

However, Xydroth is completely immobile, it cannot defend itself if the investigators manage to disable the Mi-Go technology or remove the brain cylinder from the Core, and even in the cylinder it is vulnerable to extreme environmental conditions such as freezing or boiling. Tactics for fighting Xydroth can be found in the "Brain vs. Brawn" section below.

Brain vs. Brawn

By the time the investigators enter the Nerve Center, Xydroth will have decided on a course of action. Either it will want to subdue and subjugate them (turning them into slaves like the Paleo-Indians were) or it will believe that the investigators are too unpredictably dangerous to let live and will do its utmost to kill them all.

The first thing that Xydroth will do, no matter which course of action it is following, will be to wait until all of the investigators are in the Nerve Center, then close and lock the door out through the hollow stone. The door can be forced open by doing 30 points of physical damage to it. However, if an investigator can figure out how to tap into and use one of the environmental control workstations, he or she can override Xydroth and open the door electronically.

In order to open the door using the Mi-Go technology, an investigator must first be touching an environmental control workstation (which leaves the investigator especially vulnerable to mental attacks from Xydroth, see below). First the investigator must sort through the data to find the appropriate system, which requires a successful **INT x2** check. Once that is accomplished, the investigator must make a successful **POW x2** check to properly activate it and open the door. Of course, if Xydroth is still plugged into the system, it can always shut the door again.

Live Capture

If Xydroth's plan is to subdue and enslave the investigators, it will be make its attacks carefully. After all, it knows firsthand how fragile human shells can be.

It will first endeavor to keep its existence and location a secret for as long as possible, and will likely not communicate directly with any investigator who is not mentally dominated. Then, when the investigators are trapped in the Nerve Center, it will use a combination of the following tactics to bring them down. (If this succeeds, conclude the adventure using the "Xydroth Triumphant" epilogue.)

Environmental Controls: Xydroth has direct control over the environmental controls for the entire mining

colony. It can use this access in a number of ways, including turning off the lights and plunging the Nerve Center into utter darkness, or making the lights so bright that it is difficult for the investigators to keep their eyes open for extended periods. Either action will make it difficult for the investigators to move through the irregularly shaped room. The Keeper may ask investigators to attempt an appropriate check (possibilities include **SPOT HIDDEN**, **NAVIGATE**, and **LUCK**). Failure indicates that the investigator has bumped into a workstation or the Core.

Additionally, Xydroth can use the environmental controls to affect the temperature or air quality as long as the room is sealed. It can raise or lower the temperature to a point that is distracting or even dangerous. It can also change the mixture of the air the investigators breath, reducing the amount of oxygen and replacing it with other gases like carbon monoxide or nitrous oxide. Making significant changes to the atmosphere takes a minimum of fifteen minutes (longer if the Keeper wishes to give the investigators a better chance of noticing and reacting to the changes).

Any change to the breathability of the air makes it difficult for the investigators to catch their breath and leads to dizziness, disorientation, and eventually unconsciousness. This will be nearly unnoticeable at first, but once symptoms begin to manifest, a successful **IDEA**, **MEDICINE**, **CHEMISTRY** or **FIRST AID** check will give the investigators at least a general idea of what is happening. Overcoming it will require that they either use the environmental controls themselves to change the air mixture back to something healthier or find a way to open the door back to the outer cavern.

Electric Shocks: Xydroth can use its control of the workstations to inflict minor electrical damage to any investigator who is using or even just inadvertently touching one. These shocks come without warning, and unless the investigator has taken some effective physical precaution against electrocution, are unavoidable.

Xydroth has such precise control of the system that it can deliver as small or large a shock as it wishes, and while trying to subdue the investigators will inflict no more than 1d6 points of damage with a single shock.

Psychic Shocks: Xydroth's control of the workstations also allows it to use the mental browsing system to deliver shocks to the investigators' psyches. These are like psychic flashbacks except that the investigator is forced to witness raw chaos and images that the human mind was never meant to see. The Keeper can be as specific or general about this as he or she prefers.



Investigators targeted by psychic shocks must first attempt a **POW x2** check. If it is successful, the investigator resists the attack entirely. If it fails, though, he or she must make a successful **SAN** check or lose 1d6 SAN. If the total SAN loss from psychic shocks exceeds 5% of the investigator's current SAN score, the investigator must also attempt a **CON** check. Failure of the **CON** check means that the investigator falls unconscious for 1d4 minutes.

Mental Domination: Using the workstations, the Core, or the leather headband (see the "Leftovers" section of Act II), if Xydroth has the ability to deliver a psychic shock, it can instead attempt to mentally dominate an investigator.

The investigator must make a successful **POW x3** check or find him- or herself under Xydroth's direct control. While in this state, Xydroth can command the investigator to do anything, though he or she may make another check (this time at **POW x4**) to resist following any instruction that will bring direct harm to the investigator. Xydroth will likely use this ability to have the investigator attack, subdue, or interfere with one of his or her allies. It is impossible for Xydroth to speak to or through the investigator because it is not familiar with the English language or 20th century customs. However, the investigator cannot communicate on his or her own behalf, either, and must simply act as Xydroth's mute puppet. The domination lasts for up to 1d10 minutes, but Xydroth can end it at any time it chooses.

Extermination

If Xydroth's plan is to kill the investigators, it uses the same arsenal as discussed above with the following modifications.

- When Xydroth uses the environmental control system, investigators automatically notice any deathly dangerous changes to the temperature or air quality.
- Electric shocks may be delivered for a maximum of 2d6 points of damage.
- Psychic shocks now cause 1d6 +3 points of SAN loss.
- When under mental domination, an investigator may attempt a **POW x4** check to resist performing an action that will cause grievous harm to any investigator (not just him- or herself).

If Xydroth is successful in this plan, the adventure will end with the investigators' deaths. But that does not have to be the end of their utility. See the "Xydroth Triumphant" section of the Epilogue below.

Xydroth's Weak Spots

As much as it is important for the Keeper to know what Xydroth will do during the climactic encounter, it is just as important to know what tactics will and won't help the investigators (and to make sure that the players are clear on that information, as well).

Locating Xydroth: The most basic issue for the investigators will be identifying and locating Xydroth. In point of fact, this is actually one of Xydroth's strengths because it is so wildly unlikely that the investigators will simply deduce or intuit the answer.

There are several ways that the investigators may discover clues or outright revelations about Xydroth by interacting with the workstations (see "The Nerve Center" above). The Keeper may want to give preference to those facts as the investigators sort through the data and make that information automatically understood (rather than requiring an Idea check to deduce it).

Alternatively, the Keeper may choose to allow the investigators to make **SPOT HIDDEN** or **CTHULHU MYTHOS** checks to realize that the column on top of the Core is a key piece of the Nerve Center and should be investigated. However, this understanding comes at a price.

Investigators who succeed at a **SPOT HIDDEN** or **CTHULHU MYTHOS** check must immediately make **SAN** checks. Success indicates the investigator loses only 1d2 SAN and gains 1 point in **CTHULHU MYTHOS**, while failure results in 3d2 SAN loss and gaining 1d3 points of **CTHULHU MYTHOS** for internalizing the alien geometric concepts used in the room's design.

Removing the Sheath: Once the investigators discover where Xydroth is or, at the very least, that the column atop the Core is an important juncture in the Nerve Center, the first thing they have to do is get past the protective sheath covering the brain cylinder. The two most likely ways to do this are to carefully remove the sheath or to do enough physical damage to destroy it.

In order to examine the sheath, an investigator must climb on the Core. This is not difficult, but touching the structure incurs penalties to resist Xydroth's mental attacks (see "The Core" above). Once an investigator has climbed the Core, though, a successful **MECHANICAL REPAIR**, **LOCKSMITH**, **SPOT HIDDEN** or **INT** check reveals the fact that the this column is merely an outer shell, presumably protecting some relatively fragile mechanism within. If Xydroth is in mental contact with the investigator, it knows when this discovery gets made and will begin defending itself more actively.

Removing the sheath requires 3 successful checks. The checks can be made by separate individuals over any period of time, and can be made against **MECHANICAL REPAIR**, **LOCKSMITH**, or **DEX**. Once 3 successful checks have been made, the sheath may be easily removed by sliding it up and over the brain cylinder underneath.



Breaking the sheath off requires the investigators to do a total of 30 points of damage to it. This damage can be cumulative over time—the sheath, when damaged, will not repair itself. Once enough damage has been done, the sheath can be easily torn free, revealing the brain cylinder beneath.

Removing the Brain Cylinder: After the protective sheath has been removed or destroyed, the investigators may attempt to unplug the brain cylinder from the Core. This is a fairly simple action and requires only 2 rounds of physically working on the cylinder and a successful **MECHANICAL REPAIR, LOCKSMITH, or IDEA** check.

However, Xydroth is capable of directly attacking anyone who touches the cylinder, even after it is unplugged from the Core. Merely the momentary connection of a physical blow is enough to allow Xydroth to launch a psychic or electric shock or attempt to mentally dominate the attacker.

Once the brain cylinder has been removed from the Core, Xydroth is no longer able to control any of the systems in the Nerve Center or the larger mining colony. Everything will continue on in its current state as long as there is power in the system (which, given the advanced Mi-Go technology, will be for at least another thousand years). The investigators can still get information from the workstations and, indeed, can use them to make some small adjustments to the system (see “Locking Xydroth Out of the System” below). But without the processing power of Xydroth, the more complicated functions of the mining colony will not work.

Damaging the Brain Cylinder: Once the sheath has been removed or destroyed, the investigators may target the brain cylinder directly—once they get over the sight of a human brain floating and twitching inside a container of viscous liquid.

The brain cylinder is sturdily built and should be treated at all times as though it has Armor providing 5 HP worth of protection. Once the cylinder has taken 20 points of damage, it is broken and no longer functions. Xydroth will twitch violently, splashing about inside the container for another minute or so as its life-support systems fail. During this time, it will still be capable of delivering electric or psychic shocks to anyone who touches the cylinder, but it loses the ability to mentally dominate and any investigators currently dominated suddenly find their minds freed. Also, when the brain cylinder breaks Xydroth loses its ability to interact with the workstations and other systems connected to the Core.

Once Xydroth stops twitching, its unnaturally long life has finally been brought to an end.

Damaging Xydroth: It is not necessary to break the brain cylinder to harm Xydroth, though it is the easiest way. Even though it is a disembodied brain, it still has physical weaknesses. In particular, it is highly sensitive to extremes in temperature. If the liquid inside the brain cylinder goes too high, it will boil Xydroth. On the other hand, if the temperature drops too low, the brain tissue will begin to suffer hypothermia. Either way, it will cause physical damage to and eventually kill Xydroth.

The Keeper can make discovering this information and acting on it as easy or difficult as seems appropriate for the group.

Locking Xydroth Out of the System: Besides damaging the brain cylinder or physically removing it from the Core, the investigators can also use the workstations to isolate Xydroth and lock it out of the system. This is a difficult task, and requires using the workstations more precisely than previously described.

First, the investigator must be touching one of the mining control workstations. Then the investigator must succeed at a **POW x2** check in order to actively engage the system. When that is accomplished, the investigator must succeed at an **IDEA** check to get a sense for how the system is ordered and functions. Unfortunately, gaining this understanding automatically costs the investigator 1d4 SAN and causes him or her to gain 2 ranks in **CTHULHU MYTHOS**. Finally, the investigator must make a successful **POW** check resisted by Xydroth’s POW score.

If this entire process is successful, the investigator can isolate Xydroth from the rest of the Mi-Go technology. It will still be alive in the brain cylinder, but it can no longer perform any actions using any of the equipment in the Nerve Center or the mining colony. It can, however, still attack or interact with anyone who physically touches the brain cylinder.

When Xydroth is isolated from the system, the technology will behave as described in “Removing the Brain Cylinder” above.

Epilogue

When the confrontation with Xydroth is done, so is *The Doom from Below* adventure. However, for every possible outcome in that final encounter, a different ending is required. The most likely epilogues fall into four categories.

Xydroth Destroyed

If the investigators managed to destroy the brain cylinder or otherwise kill Xydroth, the resolution is fairly straightforward. The group can explore the Nerve Center for as long as they like, and the Keeper can grant them as much or as little of the information contained in the workstations as seems appropriate. Since none of this information is in physical format, there is no way to take it back to prove anything to the outside world. But the investigators can gain a great deal of knowledge about the Mi-Go and their operations—and lose an appropriate amount of SAN in the process.



Once the investigators leave the Nerve Center, they can leave the cavern the same way they got in—by climbing. Nothing untoward will happen during the ascent (unless the Keeper wishes to have them encounter any remaining rat-things or bat-things). Once on the surface again, the investigators can decide what they want to do about the site. Should they tell others about what they've seen and experienced? Should they get more equipment and return? Should they try to collapse the cavern so that no one else stumbles upon it? The decision is ultimately in their hands.

After the investigators are gone, the mining colony will remain in the same state of relative activity for the next 24 hours. After that time, it will automatically begin to power itself down again—shutting off mining equipment, extinguishing lights, and going back into the “stand-by mode” it has been in for thousands of years.

What's more, the next time someone visits the site, it will be much more difficult to discover and infiltrate the Nerve Center. Without Xydroth linking and managing the systems, the control pad carved into the wall of the outer cavern no longer works, and even using the workstations inside the Nerve Center is much more difficult.

Xydroth Defeated

If the investigators defeated Xydroth by locking it out of the system or removing the brain cylinder from the Core, but didn't actually destroy the creature, the situation will be similar to what is described above, but slightly different.

Physically, the site will be just the same as if Xydroth had been destroyed. Without its input, the complex will go into a “stand-by” mode, and restarting the system will be a difficult task.

However, with Xydroth still alive, there remains the possibility that it will somehow manage to become reconnected to the system. Perhaps the Mi-Go technology automatically reboots itself periodically. Perhaps another group of climbers discover the site and inadvertently undo all the efforts made by the investigators. Perhaps the rat-things have been trained to replace the brain cylinder should it become dislodged.

Any scenario that appeals to the Keeper could, in essence, re-set the entire locale making it so that the next visitors to the site will have to face the same situation again. If those visitors are, in fact, the same investigators, they will have to contend with a very angry Xydroth that is looking for revenge. For that matter, given Xydroth's tenuous grip on reality, it may mistake any group of climbers for the investigators and make them the mistaken focus for its wrath.

Additionally, if the investigators unplugged the brain canister from the Core, they may want to take it back to the surface with them as proof of their wild adventure. Such a course of action is extraordinarily dangerous and could have terrible repercussions on both the group and the world. Although Xydroth no longer has access to the Mi-Go equipment, it still is a malevolent intelligence with knowledge of advanced technology. It also remains capable of psychically attacking, and even mentally dominating, anyone who touches the canister with his or her bare skin.

If Xydroth manages to get a human thrall, it will have itself taken to a place of safety, then have the thrall begin assembling the equipment necessary to begin building a robotic body—something that will be challenging in the 1920s, but not an impossibility. It will use the human until it achieves independent movement or it finds a more capable slave, at which point it will either kill the thrall or completely wipe his or her mind (effectively the same thing). Xydroth does not have immediate plans beyond insuring its own safety, but given the background described in this adventure, the Keeper should be able to come up with some that fit the campaign.

Stalemate

If the investigators fail to deal conclusively with Xydroth but still manage to effect their escape, the woods surrounding the chasm entrance will become even more unsettling than before. Xydroth will use the Mi-Go technology to reach out and touch the minds of any and all humans or other creatures passing through the area. Should the investigators return, or when the next group discovers and decides to explore the chasm, Xydroth will have a more refined plan for capturing new slaves and procuring its own freedom.

At the Keeper's discretion, Xydroth might even begin making improvements to the Mi-Go technology and spreading the reach of its influence. Imagine the chaos it would sow if it was able to affect the dreams of the people in Bethlehem, NH! Or, worse, what if it could do more than haunt the dreams of those on the surface and actually use its more powerful abilities on them—causing hallucinations or even mentally dominating them? This could be the start of an even more challenging investigation.

Xydroth Triumphant

In games where Xydroth actually triumphs over the investigators, its long-term plans may be similar to those described above. Of more immediate concern, though, is the group's fate in the short term, the details of which depend on whether or not they survived their initial encounter.

Investigators Captured

If Xydroth successfully subdues and captures the investigators, they will waken to find themselves lying on the floor of the outer cavern. A quick inspection will



reveal that all their previous injuries have been healed, but each investigator has been fitted with a collar made of the same seamless metal seen in the Nerve Center's construction.

Any attempt to remove the collar results in a painful and debilitating psychic shock, as does any attempt to begin climbing the ropes back to freedom.

Soon, they begin getting mental messages from Xydroth. It wants them to perform various maintenance tasks and manipulate the workstations to make the mining colony fully active again. This, the investigators realize, is their fate—to be mentally shackled slaves in an ancient alien mine.

If the Keeper prefers to continue the adventure and give the group a chance to escape, one final wrinkle should be added. Xydroth is preparing the Mi-Go machinery to allow it to swap places with one of the slaves—placing the investigator's brain in the cylinder and putting Xydroth in the investigator's body.

Investigators Killed

It may seem as though the investigators' deaths provide an absolute end to the adventure. However, some frightening possibilities still remain.

In the past, the Mi-Go turned some deceased slaves into rat-things and bat-things. Since the investigators are likely to have killed some or all of the remaining specimens, Xydroth may opt to inflict this fate on their corpses and release them into the cavern. Without the direct control of a slave collar, it is possible that the transformed investigators could escape into the world above in their newly mutated forms—but what would they do then?

Alternatively, the adventure could continue when a new group of investigators arrive and the now transformed original group must try to interact with them somehow.

Aftermath

As at the completion of any *CALL OF CTHULHU* adventure, surviving investigators may attempt Experience Rolls for any skills they used successfully during the course of play.

In addition, if the adventure ended successfully, the investigators all gain 1d4 +3 SAN. They gain an additional +1 SAN for each of the following conditions that are met at the time the adventure concludes:

- All of the investigators survived.
- The investigators killed all of the bat-things.
- The investigators killed all of the rat-things.
- Xydroth was disconnected from the Core.
- Xydroth was killed or destroyed.

Precious Goods

The investigators may be able to improve their standings in the academic community (or make a few dollars in the antiquities markets, depending on their proclivity) by bringing back some of the objects they encountered during the adventure.

Items like the bear claw, wolf skull, and leather headband are all rare artifacts of the Paleo-Indian culture that thrived in the northeastern U.S., and in uncommonly good condition. Scholars, museums, and private collectors would pay good money for them (exact amounts are left for the Keeper to decide).

In addition, if the investigators bring back any photographic evidence of the paintings and carvings from the cave walls, they may be able to sell them to scientific journals, universities, or privately funded scholars. Hand drawn reproductions of these items, though, will have significantly less value as they seem too outlandish to be true.

For that matter, if the investigators spend too much time talking about the details of their exploration—brains living in jars, psychic phenomena, insectoid aliens, advanced technology, etc.—they will quickly be labeled as crackpots and dismissed out of hand. At that point, they will be unable to garner interest in any of their artifacts or tales.

Continuing the Horror

The mysterious chasm has been explored and Xydroth has been dealt with, one way or another. *The Doom from Below* is complete, but that does not have to mean that these incidents will never trouble the investigators again. There are any number of ways a clever Keeper can use the events, creatures, and artifacts from *The Doom from Below* as the basis for future adventures.

Lecture Circuit

If the investigators share the information they gleaned in the cavern—even just photos of the cave paintings and the Paleo-Indian artifacts—they may be offered a series of speaking engagements at colleges and universities whose departments of archaeology focus on pre-historical North American cultures. The investigators will be paid well for the lectures, travel around the country (or perhaps around the world) in first class accommodations, and get to meet some of the greatest archaeologists in the field. This can be used as segue to any number of different scenarios and adventures.

They Know Too Much

Cultists associated with the Mi-Go—or even the alien fungi themselves—may get wind of what the investigators have seen and done, particularly if the investigators are trying to share the details of their adventure with the rest of the world. These forces have a vested interest in the public remaining unaware of the truth, and may feel that the investigators need to be silenced one way or another. If bribes and coercion do not work, then threats and violence may.



Other Caves, Other Paintings

Discovering the Paleo-Indian cave paintings may instantly get the investigators cited as being among the world's leading authorities on such things. Simply discovering an item is sometimes confused with deeper knowledge or experience (if members of the group actually have such expertise, so much the better).

The investigators may be invited to go on other explorations in search of cave paintings, or called on to consult on recently discovered sites. This can be a bridge to a wide range of adventures and scenarios that take place all across the globe.

Returning to the Site

The investigators may find it necessary to return to the chasm for further exploration. This could be for any of the reasons listed in the epilogues, because a benefactor hires the group to take him there, or simply because the investigators want to go back with some TNT and close the cavern permanently. Alternatively, a situation or clue encountered in a different exploration may stir memories deposited in the investigators' brains by Xydroth or the Mi-Go workstations—memories that can only be resolved by accessing the mining colony again.

Upon their return, they may find the site exactly as they left it or there may be changes. Perhaps a group of cultists have used the site to perform some unspeakable rituals. Perhaps Mi-Go elsewhere in the region detected the investigators' tampering and have come to examine or reclaim the site.

New Artifacts

The Doom from Below introduces a new piece of Mi-Go technology that has been modified to be a Paleo-Indian item of power—the Fetish Sphere.

Fetish Sphere

The fetish sphere is a small piece of Mi-Go technology that was taken by one of the Paleo-Indian slaves and fashioned into a piece of religious regalia. It may be described as follows.

A sphere of utterly smooth, dull gray metal about an inch in diameter. A barely perceptible groove has been scratched once around the sphere bisecting it evenly. On one side is a human thumbprint made in blood.

It is unclear what the original intention of this item was, but it was used by its original owner as a way to protect himself from the mind-control devices employed by his Mi-Go masters. When he sensed that his life was near an end he buried the fetish sphere and left it to be found by another.

The sphere will try to make a connection with anyone who touches the area above where it was buried. Those contacted by the sphere may make a **POW x2** check to resist the connection. If that check fails, a connection is made and the person loses 1d6 SAN. Once a connection is successfully made, the fetish sphere is attuned to that and only that person. No one else will receive its psychic emanations or benefit from its power.

As long as the attuned person keeps the fetish sphere with him or her (no further away than in a pocket), that person gets a +40% bonus on all checks made to resist psychic effects of any sort.

The only side effect is that the attuned person has an overwhelming compulsion to keep the fetish sphere with him or her at all times. It requires a successful SAN check to so much as put it on a nearby table. Being without the fetish sphere causes a reaction identical to withdrawal for someone with a strong substance addiction.

The only way to overcome this side effect is for the attuned person to bury the fetish sphere and leave it buried for 24 hours. At that point, the connection is broken—the person forgets where the sphere is buried and gains 1d6 SAN points. The fetish sphere immediately begins seeking a new person with which to attune itself.

New Allies

Depending on the skills and temperaments of the investigators, the group may require the services of two additional characters. The following characters may be useful to fill those roles, though the Keeper may wish to modify them to better suit the tone and background of the campaign.

Thorpe Ambergarde—Spelunker

It is entirely likely that the investigators will have no experience when it comes to climbing or spelunking, and professional assistance in that area will make them more comfortable with making a descent into the chasm.

Thorpe Ambergarde is an experienced climber who has led inexperienced groups of scientists on climbs both up Alpine peaks and down into limestone caverns across the Adriatic coast. He makes his living safely shuttling academics through extreme ascents and descents, and getting his picture taken at the highest and lowest points on the globe.

Thorpe is ruggedly handsome, brash, utterly self-confident, and thoroughly useless in a fight. In fact, the only things he's really good at are climbing and making passes at women who like climbers.

THORPE AMBERGARDE, Age 32, Alpinist
STR 17 CON 17 SIZ 16 INT 10 POW 9
DEX 18 APP 16 EDU 10 SAN 45 HP 17
IDEA 50 LUCK 45 KNOW 50

Damage Bonus: +1d6

Weapons: Climbing axe, 2d6+1



Key Skills: Climb 99%, Dodge 46%, Fast Talk 85%, First Aid 52%, Geology 25%, Jump 88%, Listen 64%, Speak (French) 70%, Speak (German) 89%, Speak (Italian) 44%, Spot Hidden 58%, Throw 77%, Track 61%

Red Barnsford—Assistant

It may be that the investigators are nervous about descending into the chasm and leaving their gear (not to mention the security of the ropes their climbing) unguarded. Since it is important that all the investigators join the exploration of the cavern, the Keeper may want to provide them with a trusted assistant to stand watch while they are below.

Red Barnsford is the sort of kid who reads too many adventure magazines and spends too many Saturdays at the theater watching matinees. He longs for a life of adventure, but doesn't have the experience, aptitude, or physical prowess to survive that kind of experience. He's working on that. In the meanwhile, he often volunteers to join any professor, explorer, or scholarly group that needs a reliable assistant.

Red has traveled throughout the U.S. and Mexico carrying packs, tending camps, cooking meals, and washing clothes for a handful of expeditions. He has impeccable credentials, glowing references, and may even know one or two of the investigators from past adventures. In other words, Red is someone the investigators can trust to guard their backs.

RED BARNSFORD, Age 17, Aspiring Adventurer

STR 11. CON 10 SIZ 8 INT 12 POW 5
DEX 13 APP 10 EDU 10 SAN 25 HP 11
IDEA 60 LUCK 25 KNOW 50

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: 16-gauge Shotgun, 2d6+2/1d6+1/1d4

Key Skills: Archaeology 18%, Conceal 42%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Dodge 38%, Drive Auto 67% First Aid 68%, History 35%, Listen 82%, Occult 42%, Shotgun 72%, Spot Hidden 75%

New Creatures

The Doom from Below introduces a new creature to plague investigators as they plumb the mysteries of things man was not meant to know.

Bat-Things

Lesser Servitor Race

Not quite a race of their own, bat-things are a variant of the more common rat-things and are likewise created by malign sorcery that transforms deceased cultists into a new form. They look almost identical to rat-things, with fur-covered bodies that at a distance could easily be mistaken for a mundane rat. Upon closer examination, one immediately notices that the creature's face seems like an evil caricature of a human being's and its paws are like tiny human hands. However, bat-things do not have tails.

Instead, they have a thin membrane of veiny flesh connecting their front and rear legs. Bat-things use this membrane to glide through the air—the way flying squirrels do. Unlike squirrels, the bat-things are highly maneuverable and completely vicious.

Bat-things prefer to stay in dark, secluded places like caves and abandoned buildings. When possible prey comes into view, a bat-thing attacks by flying in and biting its neck. Bat-things have sharp teeth and claws and once a bite attack succeeds they cling to the neck, trying to sever a major vein or artery so that the victim will die of blood loss. If any of the bat-things are killed in the attempt, the remaining bat-things will flee back to their burrows and not come out for several hours.

BAT-THINGS, Skulking Snoops and Flying Vermin

char.	rolls	averages
STR	1d3	2
CON	2d6	7
SIZ	1	1
INT	3d6	10–11
POW	2d6	7
DEX	4d6+4	20
Move	4/12 flying	HP 4

Av. Damage Bonus: -1d6

Weapon: Bite 35%, damage 1d3

Armor: None, but subtract 40% from the chance to hit a flying bat-thing, and subtract 20% from the chance to hit one that is attached to another person.

Spells: Those of INT 14 or higher know 1d3 spells of the Keeper's choice; those who knew spells in life retain that knowledge as bat-things.

Skills: Dodge 95%, Hide 80%, Sneak 65%

SAN Loss: 0/1d6 to see a bat-thing; if, however, the bat-thing was known to the observer in life, this increases to 1/1d8.

About the Author

Stan! is the award-winning author of 2 novels, 15 short stories, more than 50 gaming products, and innumerable cartoons and comics. In his time, he has been an Associate Art Director for West End Games, an Editor and Designer for TSR, Inc., a Senior Designer and Creative Director for Wizards of the Coast, and Creative Content Manager for Upper Deck Entertainment. Stan! is a founding member of both The Game Mechanics, Inc. and Super Genius Games.

Stan! lives in Vista, CA, where he hopes one day to be the owner of a Sony Aibo robot dog. Visit him online at stannex.com and see daily doses of his drawings at doodle-a-day.com.

Player Handout #1



United States
Department of the Interior
Geological Records
State of New Hampshire

Ref: RHS—32784

Re: NHGA734821G—Unnamed

Initial Review: September 17, 1919

Type: Cave/Chasm

Location: lat. 44.876, long. -72.391

Width: approx. 90 ft.

Depth: approx. 200 ft. (unconfirmed)

Age: undetermined

Municipality: Unincorporated Town of Bethlehem

Land: State-owned

Hazard: moderate

Notes: Could be dangerous. Local officials should post "No Trespassing" signs or other warnings. No other similar features found, but if it is natural then there may be more.

Player Handout #2

Sample Pictographs



Pregenerated Characters

Lester Fulcroft, PhD— Absentminded Professor

STR	9	Damage Bonus	+0
CON	11	Hit Points	11
SIZ	11	Magic Points	14
INT	18	Idea Roll	90%
POW	14	Luck Roll	70%
DEX	15		
APP	9		
EDU	20	Know Roll	99%
SAN	50		

Key Skills

Anthropology 40%, Arabic 38%, Archaeology 60%, Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Dodge 30%, First Aid 65%, German 50%, Greek 50%, Latin 80%, Library Use 65%, Natural History 45%, Occult 55%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 65%, Rifle 35%.

Gear

Tweed Jackets, briar-stem pipe, climbing gear, notebook, pencils, water color paints, book on the occult practices of New England native tribes, candle and matches, other items as appropriate.

Background

Dr. Fulcroft is a professor of anthropology and archaeology who focuses on pagan beliefs and rituals. His papers tend to be extremely controversial, so he rarely lasts long at any university. He's trying desperately to prove one or more of his theories, so that he can finally get tenure.



Gus Radovitch— Transportation Specialist

STR	16	Damage Bonus	+1d4
CON	15	Hit Points	15
SIZ	14	Magic Points	10
INT	13	Idea Roll	65%
POW	10	Luck Roll	50%
DEX	15		
APP	11		
EDU	13	Know Roll	70%
SAN	70		

Key Skills

Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Dodge 50%, Drive Auto 87%, Electrical Repair 40%, First Aid 44%, Fist/Punch 68%, Handgun 43%, Head Butt 53% Hide 30%, Mechanical Repair 73%, Navigate 42%, Operate Heavy Machinery 48%, Occult 24%, Pilot Aircraft 36%, Pilot Boat 57%, Sneak 39%, Spot Hidden 65%, Track 37%.

Gear

1922 Pierce-Arrow sedan, street clothes, climbing gear, .45 revolver, baseball bat, collection of traveler's road maps, electric torch, road flares, other items as appropriate.

Background

Gus began as a driver for a New York mobster. He's since made a legitimate living as an independent driver with a reputation for discretion. After driving for various Miskatonic University professors, he's developed an interest in the occult and now takes part in any expedition on which he's invited.



Pregenerated Characters

Eddie Sargent—Private Investigator

STR	14	Damage Bonus	+1d4
CON	17	Hit Points	16
SIZ	14	Magic Points	13
INT	13	Idea Roll	65%
POW	13	Luck Roll	65%
DEX	10		
APP	15		
EDU	14	Know Roll	70%
SAN	65		

Key Skills

Bargain 35%, Climb 54%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Dodge 70%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 73%, First Aid 45%, Fist/Punch 78%, Grapple 47%, Handgun 70%, Hide 50%, Knife 50%, Law 25%, Locksmith 33%, Occult 28%, Persuade 38%, Photography 40%, Rifle 50%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 72%, Submachine Gun 24%, Track 35%.

Gear

Trench coat, fedora, Colt .45 automatic, climbing gear, lockpick set, fighting knife, blackjack, other items as appropriate.

Background

Eddie was just an ordinary private dick. But after a missing person investigation busted up a human sacrifice, he decided to focus his work on the weird and strange cases that the cops and other P.I.s usually turn a blind eye to.



Doreen Hastings—Tenacious Reporter

STR	8	Damage Bonus	+0
CON	13	Hit Points	12
SIZ	11	Magic Points	12
INT	17	Idea Roll	85%
POW	12	Luck Roll	60%
DEX	12		
APP	16		
EDU	18	Know Roll	90%
SAN	60		

Key Skills

Art 10%, Bargain 55%, Credit Rating 38%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, Dodge 24%, Fast Talk 73%, Handgun 26%, History 40%, Law 45%, Library Use 64%, Listen 88%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 70%, Spot Hidden 82%.

Gear

Well-tailored but practical clothing, climbing equipment, notepad, many pencils and erasers, detailed notes on the history of this region (with particular emphasis on recent events), other items as appropriate.

Background

Doreen has made a name for herself as a tough-nosed reporter who can find stories that no one else can. She cut her teeth on society page scandals but has recently moved to more serious pieces about the mysteries of the modern world.



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