September 2017, and Edinburgh Zoo's giant panda is about to give birth. The zoo has flown in four experts to assist Tian Tian, whose cub is due any day. But mischief is afoot as a mad cultist stalks the pathways in

AN EXPECTANT TERROR!

By Matt Ryan and Noah Lloyd

The Location: Just south of Scotland's capital city, Edinburgh Zoo is a sprawling complex of paths, pens, and exhibit houses, spread across an 80-acre area. The zoo is renowned for being the first zoo to breed penguins, and now they try their luck with giant pandas leased from a breeding company in China. The zoo is active during the day and patrolled by a small team of security guards during the night. The investigators have been flown in from a foreign country and stay in a caravan (RV) temporarily parked next to the panda's exhibit house. The penguin complex is next to the panda's exhibit. The Barbary macaque, Chinese goat, pelican, and meercat areas are all closed for construction. Those creatures have been relocated while heavy road construction machinery repaves the asphalt walkways. Equipment, including a steamroller, are parked near those enclosures overnight.

The PCs: It doesn't really matter where the two veterinaries, the anesthesiologist, and the videographer are from, as long as it's the same country, they speak the same language, and are culturally removed from the Scots. They have worked together before and are a well-knit team. They have birthed panda cubs before and intend to do so again.
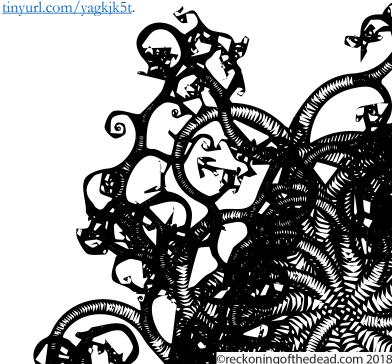
The NPCs: Zoo director **Henry MacGregor** regularly checks in on the investigators and asks if they'd like a drink. **Susan Gillies**, head of Zoo PR, points out the improvements the zoo is making, including re-routing the walkways near the pelican house. **Stuart McCullough**, head of security, ensures that the investigators are comfortable in their caravan, and have plenty of snacks and energy food in case Tian Tian births in the night. Head custodian, **Duncan McFadden**, has cleaned Tian Tian's and her male consort Yang Guang's exhibit since the pandas arrived in 2011. **Helen MacKenzie**, reporter for the Edinburgh Evening News, asks the investigators how things are going, and if they are concerned about the zoo's history of missing animals. She's covered events at the zoo for years and suggests a quick search of Wikipedia, which lists animals that have gone missing or run amok over the last few years: a missing gelada, escaped red river hogs, a scarlet ibis, and a heck bull that terrorized trapped zoo visitors five years past. Staff veterinarian, **Archie McClure**, says several animals are expecting litters. The penguins next door have a clutch of eggs ready to hatch.

The Night it all Unfolds: Tian Tian is close, and Yang Guang paces the cage nervously. Labor can last several hours, and as it begins McCullough comes by to say that the cameras caught a small gang of teenagers sneaking into the zoo. Likely they are here to smoke weed by the koalas' pen, and he's off to stop them. MacKenzie, secret cultist, moves to the parked construction vehicles. She has a spell that raises arcane symbols from the steel roller on the steamroller. Driving the steamroller, she makes looping pathways through the zebra and antelope pens, casting a second spell that converts the panda cub into a Mythos beast. This drives the zoo animals wild. A second side-effect, several of the eggs hatch into **albino penguins** (**SAN** 1/1D3), and some adults transform into giant albino penguins, mad with blood lust. A **Listen** roll indicates excessive squealing from the Monkey House, only a few yards away. Investigators find two dead security guards flung into the cage, heads cracked open and monkeys throwing their mashed brains at the investigators (**SAN** 1/1D6). A second **Listen** roll notices the steamroller on the far side of the zoo. At some point, the teenagers run screaming into the panda exhibit, or encounter the investigators exploring the grounds, chased by escaped rhino.

Pour on the Madness: The remaining NPCs appear, having either stayed on the grounds in hopes of seeing Tian Tian's cub or arriving in their cars. Half go insane, and any visible mental breakdown causes a **SAN** check for an investigator for 0/1D2 points. The other half are rent limb from limb by various beasts. They plead for help as they are devoured. Spell complete, MacKenzie drives the steamroller into the penguin paddock, releasing the albino penguins who tear into any survivors. She rams the panda house, hoping to crash through and see the new Mythos bundle of joy. And as the scenario reaches its climax, Tian Tian gives birth to a tiny, blind, pink panda cub weighing a mere two pounds, with 2 tentacles sprouting from its shoulders. Call for **Sanity** checks (1D3/1D6).

Helpful links: a map to the Edinburgh Zoo, http://ontheworldmap.com/uk/city/edinburgh/edinburgh-zoo-map.jpg, and a search to practice your Scottish accent, https://tinyurl.com/yagkjk5t.

RECKONING OF THE DEAD CHARACTER SHEET

Name: _____ Gender: _____
Occupation: _____ Age: _____

CHARACTERISTICS

STR [ ] DEX [ ] INT [ ] HP [ ]
CON [ ] APP [ ] POW [ ] MP [ ]
SIZ [ ] EDU [ ] Luck [ ] Sanity [ ]

SKILLS

_____ [ ]   _____ [ ]
_____ [ ]   _____ [ ]
_____ [ ]   _____ [ ]
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BACKGROUND & EQUIPMENT

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