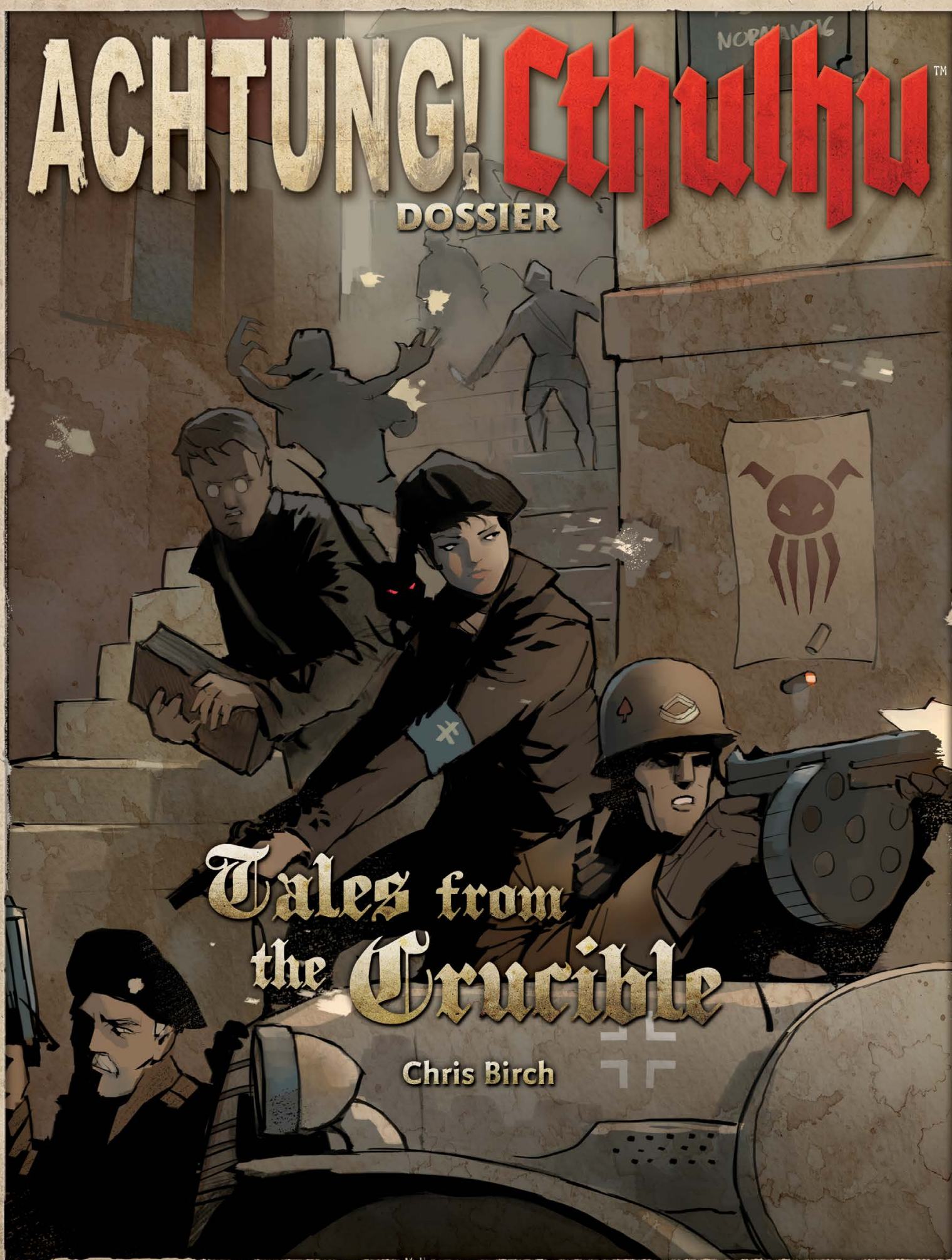


ACHTUNG! Cthulhu

DOSSIER

Tales from the Crucible

Chris Birch





Credits

Written by

CHRIS BIRCH

Proofread & Edited by

LYNNE HARDY

Interior Artwork by

DIM MARTIN

Graphic Design & Layout by

MICHAEL E. CROSS

Produced & Art Directed by

CHRIS BIRCH & LYNNE HARDY

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MODIPHIOUS ENTERTAINMENT LTD.
37A Chesson Road, London, W14 9QR
info@modiphious.com

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DOSSIER

Tales from the Crucible

*"The most powerful weapon on earth is the human soul on fire."
- Ferdinand Foch*

The history of mankind is littered with the stories of heroes: those whose lives intersected at some defining moment—some event that triggered a deep determination, steely courage or fearless action. These precious few souls are often badly equipped, poorly trained or just in the wrong place at the wrong time but some higher force, some act of fate, has given their star a chance to burn brightly, to achieve the things we mere mortals can only dream of.

But do not so readily desire the burning fire—the terrible price these mortals pay to be ranked amongst the heroes—for they rarely emerge unscathed, carrying with them forever mental scars, physical wounds or memories... memories of such terrible things...

As Cthulhu's minions work to undermine all of humanity, these few inspire a host of courageous souls to rise up in defiance.

Achtung! Cthulhu is packed full of heroes, but there are six individuals who have well and truly seized their moment; six drawn in to the chaos of the Secret War, whose very actions are instrumental in giving Section M, Majestic and the Allies a fighting chance against the insidious power of The Order of the Black Sun and *Nachtwölfe*. As the Third Reich's war machine prepares to conquer the world and Cthulhu's minions work to undermine all of humanity, these few inspire a host of other courageous souls to rise up in defiance!

The iconic heroes of **Achtung! Cthulhu** detailed herein—Professor Richard Deadman, Captain Eric "Badger" Harris, Ariane Dubois, Natalya Petrova and Corporal Akhee "The Eye" Singh—are the subject of many of the pictures, comments and short stories found throughout the books,

games and miniatures. This dossier presents a more formal introduction to these notable characters. In 2014 we'll be launching the official Secret War Campaign that will let you take these heroes (or those of your own invention) from their very human roots right through the most famous missions of Section M and Majestic, to a climatic finale in the **Achtung! Cthulhu** universe. The Secret War Campaign will also include new rules and suggestions for running truly epic adventures against the worst the Third Reich and Cthulhu can muster.



Natalya Petrova

A brave Soviet tank driver turned fearsome partisan, Natalya Petrova has discovered awful secrets in the ancient forests of her homeland that she has turned against the Nazi war machine. Woe betide anyone who gets in the way of her Motherland's vengeance. The Nazis on the Eastern Front have come to fear her as "die weisse Rächerin", the White Vengeance.

Natalya stumbled through the thorns and undergrowth deep into the Belarussian forest, the wound in her side sapping her strength. Behind her, those she had been fortunate to call her comrades lay sprawled amongst the burning debris of the wrecked tank column, as the Nazis executed the wounded where they had fallen. Each shot made her shake and almost cry out, tears streaking down her face. Finally she succumbed to the pain, slithering down a slope to land unconscious in the bushes below.

Later, lying there in the undergrowth, she felt sure she must be dead, so quiet were her surroundings. Cold stone greeted her scratched, questing hands and she opened her eyes slowly, fearing the worst. It was almost dawn, and a weak light filtered through the treetops. She knew, instinctively, that something was quite wrong; no forest was naturally so quiet. There was no wind; not even a single bird or animal cry. She wiped the dirt and leaves from her face, climbed unsteadily to her feet, and looked around apprehensively.

She stood in the middle of an old ruin, its broken arches rising amongst the trees. As she moved, she noticed that even her own sounds seemed oddly muffled, almost as if they feared drawing any attention towards her. Clutching her side, she moved tentatively through the overgrown archway.

The pool of water she found amongst the fallen columns was so inviting. Lapping thirstily, cupping the spring-like water and splashing it over her face, she did not see the shadowy figure rising slowly above her...

A few days later, Natalya Petrova walked calmly along the forest road in her battered uniform, intent on some unknown destination. Despite the appearance of a German patrol on the horizon, she continued walking until it pulled to a halt beside her. Silently, expectantly, she permitted herself to be taken in for questioning.

The headquarters camp was bustling with activity; tanks noisily firing up their engines and leaving for a distant battlefield, whilst troops mustered to join the frontline. Natalya did not react as she was roughly forced into a chair in the interrogator's tent, instead watching calmly as several figures entered. One she recognized from the ambush, seen briefly as she fled. Now, oddly, she smiled.

Outside, a pair of guards exchanged a rare cigarette. Their enjoyment was short-lived; the glowing butt dropped

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in horror; the trembling hand that once held it pointed at the tent. Outlined by the light was the shadow of the prisoner, but rising from her silhouette was the unmistakable shape of a pair of gigantic, clawed hands.

The screaming did not stop for a long time.

Hours later, Nachtwölfe Specialist Richter walked amongst the wreckage. "Partisans don't take out a regiment's HQ, not like this. Keep an eye on the treeline!" He looked up at the towering Stalker, who slowly scanned the forest through his strangely augmented helmet sight before striding purposefully into the trees.

"He has the trail!" Richter shouted to his Wehrmacht soldiers. "Time to move!"

TOUGH NUT THAT NATALYA, BUT EVEN WE RUN WHEN
SHE.. CHANGES. SHE LEFT ONE HELLUVA TRAIL OF
DEVASTATION THROUGH THE EASTERN FRONT
BEFORE SHE LEARNT TO CONTROL IT.

— SGT. CARTER

Professor Richard Deadman

"Pasty" Deadman, as he is also known (much to his chagrin), is your classic American professor caught up in the action who just might have the knowledge to defeat the Nazis' command of Mythos magic. Instrumental in the establishment of both Section M and Majestic, he is a great asset to the Allied war effort.

Deadman plunged headlong down the stairs, racing ahead of Corporal Singh. "It's in here somewhere. Just hold them as long as you can!"

In this vast chamber was the book he needed, and if he wasn't in such a rush this would be the wonder of a lifetime: the lost library of Alexandria, no less! But how to find THAT spellbook before Singh realised that even his powers had limits. Until the day the Eye opened for good, of course; but that was a problem for another day...

At the entrance, Singh chanted and sprang about, fighting the creatures' slashing claws like a hero of legend. His Kirpan gleamed in the light as several of the beasts tried to squeeze past each other, allowing Singh to dash and cut, jump and sever, until body parts and purple ichor littered the portal.

"If you please, Sir!" Singh shouted with almost hysterical politeness. "Now would be a good time to find your book!"

Screeching sounds came from further down the tunnel and the wounded creatures withdrew, clacking and scuttling, whilst something bigger and more terrible pushed past,

the unmistakable metal plates armouring its body grinding against the stone walls. The strange sigil stencilled on its side told Singh all he needed to know—things were about to get much, much worse.

Over the whine of motors spinning up to speed, Singh sighed and spoke just a few words. His body arced like he'd been struck by lightning and the Eye on his pendant began to open. Uttering an unearthly howl, his body began to dance and twist like a madman's puppet, smashing into the armoured creature with a force few men could comprehend. The two thrashed around in the confines of the corridor; Singh's Kirpan scything; the devastating weapon firing off a mass of explosive projectiles across the room, blasting books and scrolls into burning fragments.

Deadman groaned inwardly. "Come on. Focus. Forget them—find the book and we can get out of here."

Suddenly a blast smashed the vast bookcase he was searching and Deadman cried out as hundreds of books fell around him. He slipped and fell on the debris, collapsing to the ground under a heap of scorched parchment as the terrible fight gathered pace. He was vaguely aware that several of the creatures had managed to force their way into the room while Corporal Singh was otherwise engaged. This wasn't looking good...

And then, out of nowhere, there it was—well, a page at least, right where he'd somewhat unceremoniously landed flat on his face; not much, but it was a start. Grabbing the torn paper, he pushed away the surrounding books, hoping beyond hope that the whole script was close at hand, otherwise they were all done for. It was all he could do to stop himself from crying with joy when he finally found the rest of the sheaf. Righting himself, he started to read, striding purposefully forward towards the fight, along the way picking up one of the creatures' decapitated heads. Lifting it high, he began to shout the words louder and louder...



Professor Pasty's a funny chap - he loves those books of his so much.

- Cpl. Akhee Singh

Captain Eric "Badger" Harris

The commander of his own unit, Captain Harris and his men are attached to a secret department within British Intelligence known only as Section M. Affectionately nicknamed "Badger's Commandos", this experimental group is given all manner of odd devices with which to combat the menace of the Mythos and their Nazi allies.

Lieutenant Eric Harris crept forward through the snow with his troops, Sten guns and knives at the ready. Whilst the Brass spoke of "commandos" as a means of putting the wind up the Germans, his chaps were one of the first groups to actually test out Dudley Clarke's ideas. Raiding a supply depot near the Norwegian coast was someone's bright idea of a field trial, so they'd better get some bloody good results or there'd be hell to pay, especially as it was some High-up's master plan.

It was almost too easy; the guards seemed overly confident that no-one would be bold (or stupid) enough to try an assault and their patrols were decidedly lax but all the same, Harris and his men made their way into the service tunnels below the warehouse as planned and came out amongst a pile of wooden shipping crates. A glow em-

anated from behind some nearby trucks, and he could hear the harsh rasp of German voices. Harris quietly organized the unit, set the charges and prepared to attack, but as they drew closer to their targets, his keen eye spotted unfamiliar uniforms in the strange glow and he caught a glimpse of their weapons.

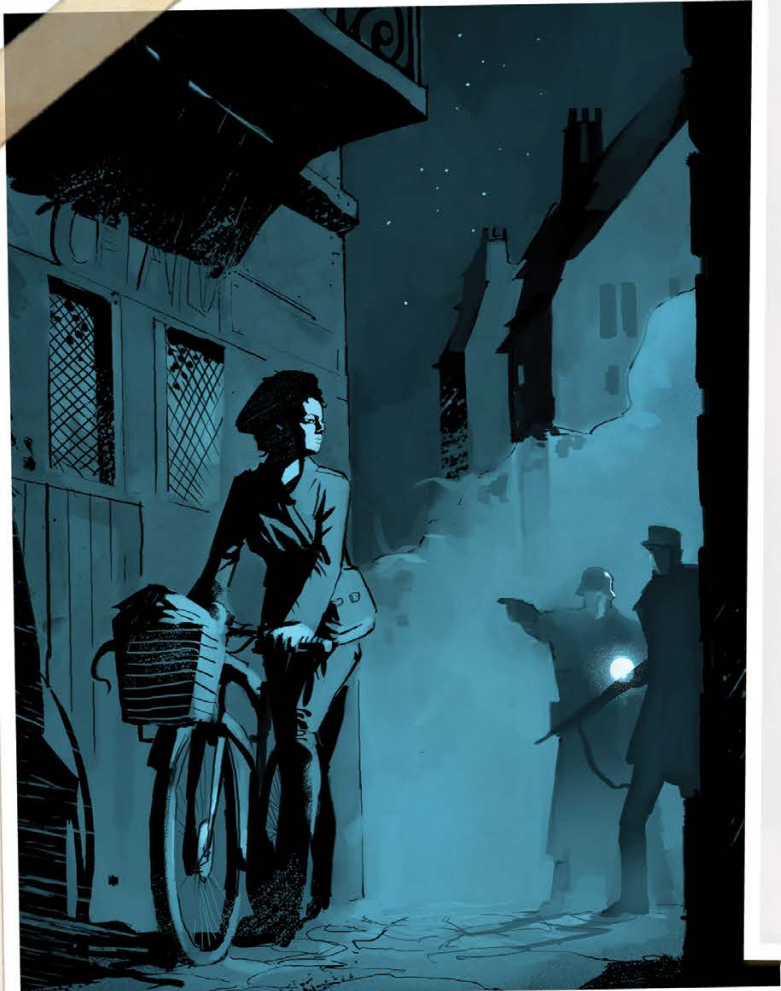
That one glimpse was all Harris needed. Suddenly he knew they had to get out of there—HQ had to know about this. But then there were shouts and blasts, tearing up the air all around him; the volume of fire coming from those soldiers was inconceivable. He stumbled back into the tunnels, dragging a couple of survivors with him and, with one last look, triggered the explosives far too soon. The concussive blast smashed the warehouse above ground, and yet somehow they managed to crawl from the wreckage, out in to the night and away, just making it to the rendezvous with the submarine by dawn.

His reward for jumping the gun was a promotion to Captain and a new assignment to some mysterious "Section M". He still didn't quite understand until he met others who had experienced the impossible at some place in the country called Clemens Park. And the next time he faces those soldiers, he'll be ready!



Harris and his "commandos" are very brave - they have been to hell and back with him. I just hope they learn to run when I let go.

- Natalya Petrova



Ariane Dubois

A stalwart member of the French Resistance, Ariane has been the bane of Wehrmacht officers across occupied France for months. She is seen sprinting forward with her trusty Luger whilst the terrifying creature that bonded with her during Operation Pandemonium prepares to devour the spirit of another Nazi. She tries not to dwell on what will happen when there are no Nazis left to kill.

The elfin girl on the bicycle raced across the old bridge and down the lane as fast as her legs could peddle, accompanied by the sounds of distant explosions and alarms. Dark shadows burst from the trees, forcing her to brake hard and swerve; it was sheer luck that prevented her from ending up in a heap on the ground.

It took her a moment to recognize her friends. "I nearly missed you," she hissed. "Hurry—they're coming!"

Grabbing her precious supplies, she joined the other Resistance members as they sprinted for the old abbey.

visible only as a dim silhouette through the twilight and mist.

"Everything is prepared, Ariane—your parents will be avenged tonight!" Francois barked over his shoulder. The grim determination in his voice was clear for all to hear.

The girl clutched her basket of grenades and stolen Luger ever more tightly as she ran, vowing over and over again that she would make the Germans pay for the horrors they had inflicted on her family.

As the small group reached the towering ruins, they met the others. Already much of the abbey and its blasted walls were cast into darkness as the last of the light began to fade.

"Listen well—the Germans will be here soon. You know the plan. Stick to it and we'll all be drinking wine tomorrow, eh?"

Of course, they all knew the truth: Operation Pandemonium was vital to the Allies and most would be

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lucky to die well tonight. The rest... Well, what was the point in thinking about that?

Ariane carefully picked her way through the tumble of stones and found her spot—a particularly shattered stub of a tower—from where she could hurl grenades down on the Germans as they wandered blindly into the Resistance's trap.

It wasn't long before the shooting started, although it was by a much larger force of Germans than they had expected. She was attempting to throw her last grenade when a blast threw her backwards, knocking the grenade from her hand; she watched helplessly as it fell through a hole in the rubble. There was a loud "WHUMP!" noise, and suddenly she found herself falling in a cascade of rocks and rotten timbers into the pitch darkness below.

She could still make out the sounds of fighting far above her as she lay, battered and bruised, in the wrecked basement of the tower. In the darkness, framed by the dim moonlight, she could just make out a large, black metal cage, its bars covered in a silvery script. The explosion had obviously smashed it against the tower wall, yet it remained

oddly intact; apart from the bars facing her, which had been caved in by the force of the blast.

Something... black... stirred inside. Whatever it was flowed slowly and sinuously out through the twisted steel, its small, red eyes fixed on her as it paced across the floor on clawed feet. A sense of incalculable evil emanated from the creature but she found herself pinned in place by her fear. She felt so cold...

Up above, Francois cried out: a shrill scream of pain. The creature's spell broken by her companion's agony, Ariane's eyes flicked upwards, and the deep, deep longing to be up there fighting, killing, forced its way into her mind, her hatred for the soldiers who had slaughtered her family burning away her terror until there was nothing of it left behind.

A noise closer to hand made her look back at the creature and the wave of bitter cold engulfed her once more. The eyes, those teeth—so close... But then it paused, and somehow she knew that it was intrigued by her re-awakened malice, savouring it like a good Frenchman does wine. Hooking her up with one claw, it pulled her from the rubble and in that moment, the fatigue and bruises momentarily forgotten, she understood—she would be spared... for a price.



Those sleepless eyes fill me with fear. I pray the little French girl is in there still, somewhere.

—Capt. Harris

Corporal Akhee “The Eye” Singh

As feared by the Allies as he is by the Axis powers, Corporal Singh became somewhat infamous in his homeland after the Black Mist Incident. Singh is only just beginning to learn to control his terrifying powers, but he fears what will happen if “The Eye” ever truly awakens.

You wouldn't recognize Corporal Singh these days: once a chirpy, talkative chap, forever making jokes, telling tall tales, and “acquiring” things he shouldn't, his new, painfully quiet demeanor cannot fully conceal the simmering fire in his eyes.

His unit was officially on R&R, stationed in a rural area well away from the frontline. Walled in by the jungle on all sides, he had heard tales of a temple not far from the village where they were billeted. Warned off by the locals, he still walked the vine covered walls surrounding it,

speculating what “treasures” might lie inside, just waiting for a better home.

It wasn't long before he was clambering into the ancient courtyard, wondering how it could have been left untouched for so long. Everywhere he could see the glint of elaborate decorations hidden amongst the vines, and ahead the temple doors stood invitingly ajar. Pulling his trusty Kirpan loose from its scabbard, he advanced into the depths of the sanctuary.

Vast pillars seemed to stab upwards towards a distant roof of almost unimaginable proportions. Ahead of him stood a magnificent statue. It was the pendant around its neck that first caught his attention—it must have been made of solid gold. And those giant eyes? Were they diamonds? If they were, he'd never seen any that size before. Well, there was only one way he was going to find out for certain...

It hadn't looked that big an effigy when he'd been standing in front of it, but now it felt like he'd been climbing the thing forever. And then, when he looked down... He almost cried out—the ground looked much further below him than was possible; further than the temple was high, that was for sure. Focus, he told himself, this will be worth it!

As he turned to reach for the pendant, a flash of movement caught his attention and he found himself bathed in a terrible light from those awful eyes. Something serpentine coiled around him, and a pinprick of pain exploded inside his brain like a constellation of stars. And then, he was back on the ground; the pendant around his neck, his Kirpan gripped in his hand. He knew what he must do next...

A few days later his unit reported him Absent Without Leave. And then he appeared at the frontline, simply walking through the machine gun posts towards the enemy positions, a large golden medallion emblazoned with a glowing eye resting on his chest. As he walked, a dense, black haze seemed to spread around him, growing with every step he took. A whole company was lost that day, their bodies drained of life; but the Japanese lost an entire regiment, and few will speak of the “Black Mist”.

Singh returned to his commanding officer a week later, who promptly sent him up the chain of command until finally he found himself on a series of long flights to London, at the request of some “Section M”. Whenever he slept, he dreamed of the strange Eye on his pendant opening, and what would happen when the time came for it to remain open forever. But until then he knew he could help—he just needed to know how, and where...





At the end of the day, "The Eye" must not be allowed
to open. If it does, I fear we're all doomed - Nazis
and Allies alike - and all of our hard won victories
will have been for nothing.

-R.D.



Sergeant Brandon Carter

On secondment from the US Army, Carter is one of the few people to survive the "Stratford Affair". Since that day he is never without an Elder Sign medallion that seems to cause his Thompson SMG to take on a life of its own, spitting out Mythos-fuelled bullets.

Brandon followed his squad to the temporary billets at RAF Stratford, not too far from the sleepy English town where that poet guy came from. There was, of course, zero chance of a good cup of coffee. The Brass'd said something hazy about an escort detail but he had no idea what that meant, except that his guys got some easy rack time without being crushed in with the rest of the regiment at camp. A large transport plane was landing as they arrived; he watched it disinterestedly as it taxied into a heavily guarded hangar.

They were settling in nicely, trading chocolate and cigarettes with the British flyboys, when he heard a friendly American voice. "Sergeant Carter?" He was on the verge of coming to attention when he realised it was a civilian.

"Can I help you, Sir?"

"Professor Deadman—I believe you're my escort detail. I'm afraid things are ...um, well... a little out of hand, so if you'll come this way—quickly. And bring your weapons!"

Gathering up the squad, Carter grabbed his Thompson and ran to catch up with the Professor, who was making for one of hangars; strange sounds emanated from it, causing the hairs on the back of the Sergeant's neck to bristle with

unease. RAF ground crew and pilots were starting to gather outside the other buildings, curious as to what was causing all the hullabaloo. A phone rang off to one side and hurried shouts followed them as they finally caught up with the Professor, who peered intently into the gloom of the hangar's interior. Whilst it was broad daylight outside they could barely make out the transport plane inside; but someone—or something—was thrashing around in there, splintering wood and glass in the darkness.

Deadman turned to look at the Sergeant and held something out to him: a burnished silver medallion. "Don't ask, just wear it. Now follow me, and whatever you see—shoot first, you understand?" The Professor didn't wait for an answer and set off in to the hangar's shadows, whispering something that seemed to scratch against the inside of Carter's skull.

It didn't take long. A blur of grey. Thrashing... arms—no, tentacles—like a giant squid, angry as hell. First one then another of his guys was torn in two, while he and the rest fired into the thing; kept firing as Deadman advanced on it, shouting those words that ripped open raw wounds in his mind and raked at his eyes from the inside. But still he kept firing as the medallion burned white hot against his chest; his trigger-finger stiff with agonizing pain, the Thompson kicking like a horse as each bullet fled its fiery maw.

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Suddenly it was over, and everyone in the squad except him and Deadman were gone. All that remained of the... abomination... was the single tentacle clutching at his leg in its death throws, its purple suckers gnawing on his bloody thigh. That, and the grisly appendage clasped in his hand, ripped from the beast as it reached for Deadman, moments before the Thompson had severed it completely.

The Professor walked over and patted him on the shoulder. "I think we should have a talk, Sergeant. Follow me, and we'll see to those wounds while we're at it." In a daze, Carter looked around at the now sunlit hangar and the quivering remains of whatever the hell that thing had been.

Other, normal, sounds began to crowd in on him, including that of running boots. Shadowy figures armed to the teeth stood silhouetted in the sunlight, ready for action.

"Ah, Captain Harris—a little late I'm afraid." Deadman seemed remarkably unperturbed as he addressed the newcomers. "Perhaps you could keep the RAF boys busy 'til this is all cleared up, okay? Oh, and say hello to our new friend, Sgt. Carter—I think he could do with a good cup of coffee!"



Have you ever watched Carter in the thick of it? It is as if his gun takes on a life of its own. Whenever it fires, there is this roaring in my skull and it - my "companion" - it... smiles...

-A. Dubois

ACHTUNG! Cthulhu



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