

BOOK THREE



PAPER CHASE AND OTHER ADVENTURES

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Clear Credit

Paper Chase originally written by John Sullivan and revised by Mike Mason. **Edge of Darkness** originally written by Keith Herber and revised by Dan Kramer with Mike Mason and Lynne Hardy. **Dead Man Stomp** originally written by Mark Morrison and revised by Mike Mason, with sections on Race and Racism in 1920s America and Harlem written by Chris Spivey. Rules elements based upon work by Paul Fricker and Mike Mason.

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INTRODUCTION

"The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be. Not in the spaces we know, but between them, They walk serene and primal, undimensioned and to us unseen. Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth."

—H. P. Lovecraft, *The Dunwich Horror*

These scenarios are designed for new Keepers and players. Keeper notes—advice for the Keeper on how and when to use dice and rules, as well as guidance on how to run the scenarios—are included within the text. Once you have read through a scenario and your players have each chosen a ready-made investigator character or created their own, you are ready to begin. We suggest you play through the adventures in the order presented, beginning with **Paper Chase**, which is suitable for a single player plus the Keeper, then moving onto **Edge of Darkness** (suitable for 2 to 5 players, plus the Keeper), and, finally, **Dead Man Stomp** (for 2 to 5 players, plus the Keeper).

PREPARING FOR PLAY

It's important to read through a scenario first before running it for your players, allowing you to understand what the mystery is, who is involved, and how the adventure is designed to play out. Pay attention to the sections marked "Keeper Information" or "Keeper note," as these contain advice on the rules or secrets the players do not know (but may discover during play).

At the start of each of the scenarios is a short premise, which is told to the players. For **Paper Chase**, it says:

You have been contacted by Thomas Kimball of Michigan. It seems his house has been burglarized and some of his uncle's favorite books have been stolen. The mystery is a little unusual, as the uncle inexplicably disappeared without trace a year ago. Mr. Kimball would like you to find out who stole the books, return them if possible, and discover the whereabouts of his uncle and whether he is still alive.

As **Paper Chase** is designed for just one player (although it can accommodate two players with a little bit of adjustment), ask your player to pick one of the ready-made characters or create a new one (perhaps a private detective or journalist). The short premise gives the player an idea about what the scenario will be about, allowing them to choose or create an appropriate investigator. For the other scenarios in this book, the person who played through **Paper Chase** might continue to play the same investigator and be joined in the new adventure by other players—perhaps they are all members of The Society for the Exploration of the Unexplained (**Ready-Made Investigators**, pages 4-5), or have created their own team of private detectives, amateur sleuths, and journalists.

If creating new characters, print or copy out enough investigator sheets and talk the players through the process step-by-step. Encourage them to chat with each other about their characters and have fun creating backstories and relationships. Keep it all reasonably brisk, and try to avoid getting bogged down with unnecessary details. The Keeper should note down each investigator's name, Appearance (APP), hit points (HP), Sanity (SAN), and any relevant aspects of their backstory for reference during play. Once you have read through the scenario, and the players have their investigators, you are ready to begin.

Note that the adventures have "player handouts"—information found during a scenario that is given to the players at certain points. Such handouts are shown in the adventures but also are duplicated in a separate "Handouts" book, allowing you to easily copy or cut them out, ready to hand to your players during the game.



READY-MADE INVESTIGATORS

Five ready-to-play investigators are provided in the *Call of Cthulhu Starter Set*. These characters can be used in any of the adventures in this book, or players can create and design their own investigators using the guide in **Book Two**. Often it helps to have a reason why all of the investigators know one another—some form of organization or fraternity, for example. Such organizations or connections are not only a basis for acquaintance; if an investigator is removed from the game due to injury, death, or insanity, an organization can also provide a logical way to bring in replacement investigators.

The five ready-made investigators are (nominally) all members of The Society for the Exploration of the Unexplained (SEU), an informal, extra-curricular society based at Miskatonic University

in Arkham. The society was founded in 1889 by a group of professors and students who had a mutual interest in unexplained phenomena. The SEU has gained some minor public notoriety through their assistance in a number of police investigations that came to the attention of the press. The members of the society are often sought out by the authorities, as well as private individuals, who are in need of help with all manner of strange mysteries.

Nowadays, the SEU meets once a month in a private reading room of the university's library, where tales of exploits are shared and current mysteries conjectured. When an interesting case is presented, the leaders of the SEU choose the most suitable investigators from among its members to tackle the mystery.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE EXPLORATION OF THE UNEXPLAINED

MEMBERSHIP CARD

NAME: Jessie Williams

AGE: 20

OCCUPATION: History Student



THE SOCIETY FOR THE EXPLORATION OF THE UNEXPLAINED

MEMBERSHIP CARD

NAME: Dr. Nevada Jones

AGE: 35

OCCUPATION: Archaeology Professor



INTRODUCTION

THE SOCIETY FOR THE EXPLORATION OF THE UNEXPLAINED

MEMBERSHIP CARD

NAME: Lois Russo

AGE: 19

OCCUPATION: Engineering Student



THE SOCIETY FOR THE EXPLORATION OF THE UNEXPLAINED

MEMBERSHIP CARD

NAME: Wentworth Avebury

AGE: 58

OCCUPATION: Languages Professor



THE SOCIETY FOR THE EXPLORATION OF THE UNEXPLAINED

MEMBERSHIP CARD

NAME: Keiko Cain

AGE: 21

OCCUPATION: Science Student





SCENARIO ONE: PAPER CHASE

"Searchers after horror haunt strange, far places"

— H. P. Lovecraft, *The Picture in the House*

For: 1 to 2 players, plus Keeper.

Approximate playtime: one session.

The investigator is asked to solve a simple burglary and missing person case while in town. This scenario is designed to be played with a Keeper and one player (investigator), although it can accommodate up to two investigators if required. The scenario takes place in 1922, and should take one session (between two to four hours) to play through.

KEEPER INFORMATION: BACKGROUND

Douglas Kimball lived in a small house at 218, Aylesbury Street in Arnoldsburg, Michigan, for most of his life. A solitary, middle-aged man, he lived only for his books and reading. He read in his study. He read in bed. He read the Bible in church. And, for reasons no one can quite explain, he took to reading in the graveyard near his home.

For hours at a time he would sit on one particular low tomb and read. One night, darkness caught him still reading. The bright, full moon rose and Douglas noticed a most singular occurrence. A doorway, built into a mausoleum, creaked open, and a strange entity stuck its head out and "meeped" softly.

A most bizarre friendship began; a friendship that lasted for five years until, one night, Douglas followed his new friend into the twilight world of the ghouls, where he has dwelt, quite contented, ever since.

A year passed, and Douglas Kimball acquired new living habits, a slightly altered appearance, and unusual dietary tastes. He began to do his reading at night. But one cannot read the same books forever. One evening, he broke into his old house, now owned by his nephew, and retrieved some of his beloved books.

Now, during the night, Douglas sits upon his small, low tomb and reads peacefully. But these books will last him just so long. Even now, he plans to retrieve more of them.

PLAYER INFORMATION

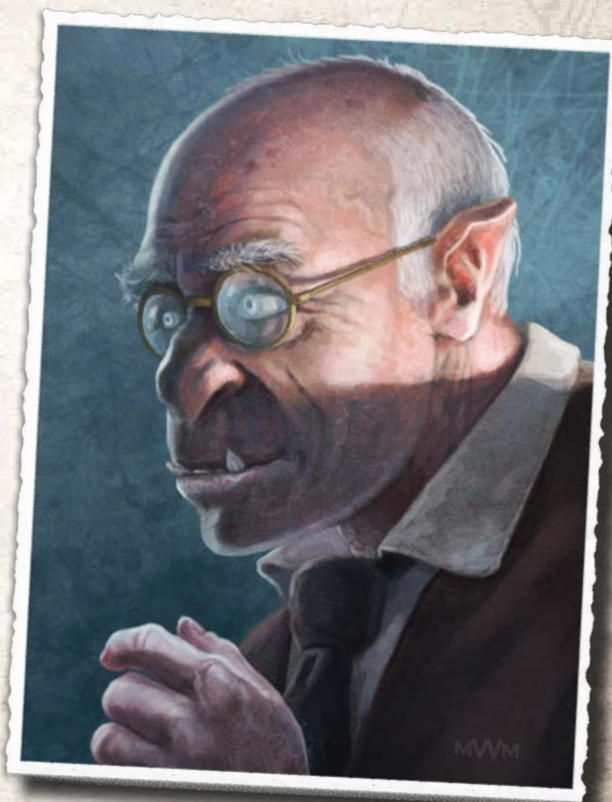
The investigator is visiting Michigan and has been contacted by a Thomas Kimball, who heard about the investigator through a mutual acquaintance. Alternatively, Kimball has

contacted The Society for the Exploration of the Unexplained (SEU), and an investigator has been sent to help. Read aloud or paraphrase the following text.

You have been contacted by Thomas Kimball of Michigan. It seems his house has been burglarized and some of his uncle's favorite books have been stolen. The mystery is a little unusual, as the uncle inexplicably disappeared without a trace a year ago. Mr. Kimball would like you to find out who stole the books, return them if possible, and discover the whereabouts of his uncle and whether he is still alive.

Thus, the investigator is being asked to look into the theft of the books and to see whether they can also shed any light on the disappearance of Uncle Douglas Kimball. For this little job, Kimball is prepared to pay expenses and the princely sum of \$10 (equivalent to around \$240 in today's money).

Mr. Kimball hasn't bothered to report the break-in to the police, as the theft of a few books is unlikely to garner their interest or resources. Mr. Kimball describes his uncle to the investigator as, "balding, with white hair, average height, and wearing round spectacles." The investigator is also invited to stay in one of Mr. Kimball's spare rooms in his house while investigating the case.



Opposite: Douglas Kimball enjoying a book
Left: Douglas Kimball, now part ghoul

START

With the task explained to the investigator, they are ready to dig into the mystery of the missing uncle and his stolen books. We can assume the investigator has arrived and settled into a spare bedroom in Thomas Kimball's house. Ask the player where they would like to start. There are a number of possible avenues for investigation—help them out by suggesting the following options:

- Asking around the neighborhood.
- Looking around the graveyard.
- Local research in the library.
- Talking to the police.
- Looking at back issues of the local newspaper, the *Arnoldsburg Advertiser*.
- Looking around the Kimball house.

All of these avenues are explored in the following sections. The investigator can tackle them in any order they like. Each section explains what clues the investigator might find and whether they must make certain skill rolls to reveal the information.

ASKING AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

There are not many houses near to the cemetery; in fact, only the Kimball house is close by. A five-minute walk around the area finds a few homes but the neighbors know little and haven't seen any suspicious behavior. If Douglas Kimball's name is mentioned, one neighbor remembers him as a kindly man.

While walking around, the investigator spots an elderly lady passing by. If the investigator can succeed with an **APP** (Appearance) or **Credit Rating** roll, the lady is happy to stop and talk; otherwise, she doesn't like the look of the investigator and hurries off, avoiding them.

Keeper note: the old lady (Mrs. Lila O'Dell) believes looks matter, so rolling against the investigator's Appearance (APP) or their Credit Rating determines whether they are presentable enough for the old lady. The player can choose whichever of the two rolls to make (whichever one they have the higher value in) but they only get to make one roll. Ask the player to roll percentage dice (1D100) and compare the result with their investigator's APP or Credit Rating, as appropriate. If the roll is equal to or lower than the skill, the investigator has succeeded in winning Mrs. O'Dell's attention.

If the roll is successful, Mrs. O'Dell says she has lived in the area for a long time and remembers seeing Douglas Kimball back

TWO INVESTIGATORS

While this adventure is designed to be played by one investigator, it can be played with two. In certain sections, the text calls for a skill or characteristic roll to be made. Normally, this means the player has one chance to succeed, but with two players, each player could get a chance to make the roll—effectively doubling the chances of success. This is not a problem. If both investigators are together, allow them both to attempt any required rolls.

Usually, each investigator in a scenario gets to decide where they go and what they do; so, two investigators could go and do two different things at the same time. This can make life a little difficult for the Keeper, who now has to run two scenes concurrently, rather than just one. You are advised to ask the players in this adventure to stay together, as it's a learning experience for you all. If they are determined to do different things rather than stick together, then the best advice is to conduct the first scene to its conclusion and then move onto the next—one player observing the scene and staying quiet (as their investigator is elsewhere for the time being). As you grow more experienced in running *Call of Cthulhu* you'll be able to switch between investigators and scenes, like in a TV drama or a film, but for now, keep it simple and focus on one scene at a time.

when he lived in the house by the cemetery. She recalls that most days he could be seen walking over to the cemetery with a book under his arm. "Forever reading he was." Mrs. O'Dell hasn't seen Mr. Kimball for some years. "Didn't he pass away?" She says, adding, "I believe his nephew inherited the house." After this brief conversation, Mrs. O'Dell bids them good day and wanders off.

LOOKING AROUND THE GRAVEYARD

The cemetery is reasonably well tended, although the vegetation is quite abundant, with lots of tall bushes and ancient trees dotting the spaces between the gravestones and tombs. It's clear the cemetery has been here for many years. As the investigator explores the grounds, they spot a gardener who is digging out weeds at the far side of the cemetery. When the gardener hears the investigator's approach, he turns and waves a hello.

PAPER CHASE

Melodias Jefferson is the caretaker of the cemetery; he has worked here for over 20 years. If he is approached, ask the investigator to make a **Charm** or **Persuade** roll to see if Jefferson is prepared to talk. If the roll is failed, the caretaker is unimpressed and says he is too busy to stand and chat.

Keeper note: if the player failed the Charm or Persuade roll, ask if they want to persist in their efforts to engage the caretaker in conversation. If they choose to do so, they may attempt a pushed roll by continuing to appeal to Jefferson in some way (they may change their approach and use an alternate method (skill) at this point). Roleplay the interaction between Jefferson and the investigator; based on the way the roleplay goes, choose one of the following options:

- If the investigator is trying to win Jefferson round with friendliness or compliments, use the **Charm** skill.
- If the investigator is using rational arguments—perhaps using some sort of authority—use the **Persuade** skill.
- If the investigator is being aggressive towards Jefferson, use the **Intimidate** skill.
- If the investigator is trying to con or fool Jefferson, use the **Fast Talk** skill.

As this is a pushed roll, depending on their course of action, you should decide on what could happen (a consequence) if they fail this second attempt. For example:

- If the investigator is using **Intimidate**, the consequence might be that Jefferson grows annoyed and storms off in a huff, or calls their bluff by waving a dangerous-looking shovel in their direction and asking them to leave.
- If the investigator is using **Charm** or **Persuade**, the consequence might be that Jefferson takes offence and loudly screams at them to leave the cemetery at once.
- If **Fast Talk** is used, the consequence of failure could be Jefferson picking up a fistful of soil and throwing it at the investigator with a “Get out of here, you scoundrel!”
- Whatever the consequence of failure, ensure that it escalates beyond Jefferson refusing to talk to them—running them out of the cemetery at rudely worded questions, for instance. If the situation escalates, Jefferson runs off shouting “Police! Police!” While no police officer is nearby, the investigator doesn’t know that, so the threat of arrest appears real. In any case, Jefferson has taken a dislike to the investigator and any attempt to engage him later in conversation is going to be more difficult, requiring a Hard level of success on any future skill rolls to communicate with him.



Investigating the graveyard

If the original or pushed roll is successful, Jefferson is happy to talk and recalls seeing Douglas Kimball regularly in the graveyard and that, nowadays, he misses seeing him about, as he would often spend time in conversation with him. The two would talk about all manner of topics, from the weather to politics, and Jefferson enjoyed hearing Kimball's stories about foreign lands. The caretaker also points out Kimball's favorite tombstone, the one that he used to always sit on while reading his books.

Jefferson talks for a few minutes but seems anxious to get back to his work. If asked about strange events in the graveyard or suspicious folk loitering about, he clams up and refuses to say more, saying he has lots to do and must depart. Ask the investigator to make a **Psychology** roll to judge the caretaker's state of mind. If successful, it appears that the caretaker is hiding something and knows more than he is saying. Otherwise, the investigator does not pick up on this insight.

While talking to Jefferson, ask the investigator to make a **Spot Hidden** roll. If successful, they notice a bottle peeking out of Jefferson's coat pocket. Assuming there is alcohol in the bottle (there is), the investigator may try to blackmail or bribe additional information out of the caretaker. Blackmailing Jefferson requires either a successful **Intimidate** or **Hard Persuade** roll (see note below). Or the investigator could keep quiet for now and, perhaps, try to bribe Jefferson with alcohol later—if they can obtain some booze from town.

In the 1920s, Prohibition was enforced across America, meaning that alcohol was illegal. To find and buy booze during Prohibition, a player must roll their investigator's **Know** value (which is equal to their Education (**EDU**) characteristic). If successful, a pint of liquor may be obtained for \$2 in town. If the roll is failed, ask the investigator to make a **Luck** roll to avoid arrest; a roll of 96–00 results in automatic arrest. If taken by the police, the investigator is kept in a cell overnight, given a stern talking to about mending their ways, and released without charge the following morning.

Keeper note: the Intimidate roll is set at Regular difficulty (the default for all rolls); however, using Persuade requires a Hard roll (half value) as, in this situation, it's harder to reason with Jefferson than just simply threatening him.

If blackmail (**Intimidate** or **Hard Persuade** roll) or bribery (no roll, just the gifting of some alcohol) succeeds, Jefferson admits to recently seeing a dark figure in the cemetery late at night near the same tombstone that Douglas Kimball used to sit on, but he was too afraid to investigate, believing it was Kimball's ghost. Such things are best left alone. He will say no more.

RESEARCH IN THE LIBRARY

On visiting the local library, a successful **Library Use** roll directs the investigator to the *Arnoldsburg Advertiser*. An article dated over ten years ago concerns the alleged sighting of a band of people, apparently unclothed, cavorting in the cemetery next to the Kimball house. The constable was summoned and the cemetery searched, but no sign of the strangers was ever found, though misshapen footprints gave mute evidence of their presence.

Keeper note: if the investigator fails the Library Use roll, they might push the roll by electing to spend longer in the library, or they might ask the librarian to assist them. Both actions serve as justification for a pushed roll. If the pushed roll is failed, the investigator still finds the information noted above but has spent so long in the library that they have stayed passed closing time and have been mistakenly locked in (the librarian didn't notice them or forgot they were there). Consequently, the investigator has to spend the night alone in the library until 8:00 a.m. the next morning when the librarian returns to open up. Of course, they might try to break out of the library, which calls for further skill rolls, like **Mechanical Repair** or **Locksmith** to open the lock on the front door, or they could use their **STR** to break through a door or window. Or, depending on what the investigator does, you might call for a **Luck** roll to determine if a wandering policeman hears the investigator's cries for help and comes to their rescue.

TALKING TO THE POLICE

Wandering over to the police station allows the investigator to ask if anyone else in the neighborhood has recently suffered a break-in, or whether any suspicious types have been spotted or arrested in the area. Finding out such information can depend on just who the investigator is, as someone like a private detective or journalist stands a far better chance of having a productive conversation with the desk officer than a drifter or bumbling professor unacquainted with the law. Thus, consider the investigator's occupation and whether they would have had previous "professional" dealings with the police. If the answer is yes, then the following information is free (no roll required); otherwise, the investigator must succeed in either a **Law**, **Charm**, or **Persuade** roll to get the busy desk officer to talk to them. (If the roll is failed, the officer is too busy and tries to brush them off, telling them to come back tomorrow.) Relate the following pieces of information, dependent on what the investigator is asking about:

About Burglaries in the Area

- There have been no reported break-ins for some time (the last burglary dates a year back, and the culprit was arrested for that crime).
- The man arrested (Jake “Six Fingers” Thompson) was a known cat burglar and remains in prison serving out his sentence.
- There have been no reports of any unusual or odd-looking people in recent days.

Asking About the Cemetery

The cemetery is in a quiet neighborhood and nothing out of the ordinary has recently been reported. Some time back, perhaps six or seven years ago, there were reports of some strange noises coming from the cemetery late at night. Patrols made a point of passing by for a few weeks but nothing was seen or heard. “It was as quiet as a grave!” the officer jokes.

About Thomas Kimball’s Missing Uncle Douglas

The desk officer remembers that a missing person report was filled out for Douglas Kimball, and his photograph was circulated far and wide, but the man was never found.

THE ARNOLDSBURG ADVERTISER

If the investigator is a journalist or author, the newspaper’s editor, Artie Malloy, is happy to let them look through the back issues (no roll needed); however, someone with a different occupation must attempt a **Charm**, **Persuade**, or **Fast Talk** roll (depending on the approach taken) to access the newspaper’s morgue. If they gain access, ask for a **Library** Use roll:

- If failed, they do not find the **Newspaper Information**, but may attempt a pushed roll (apply the same failure consequence as discussed in **Research in the Library**, or one of your own design).
- If a Regular success, they find the **Newspaper Information** after 3 hours of searching.
- If a Hard (half) success, they find the **Newspaper Information** after 1 hour of searching.
- If an Extreme (fifth) success, they chance upon the **Newspaper Information** within a few minutes.

Newspaper Information

The investigator discovers a journalist’s notes that contain a never-published statement concerning the cemetery. The statement, from Mrs. Hilda Ward, an insomniac neighbor (now aged 64), claimed that for over twenty years she had seen “Devil Spawn” stalking about the burial ground. Though

human in outline, she claimed they had canine features, hooved feet, and were covered with mold. The journalist who interviewed Mrs. Ward noted that, “Mrs. Ward has since moved to Detroit, and none of the other neighbors have ever seen, or will admit to having seen, the Devil Spawn.”

Keeper note: if the investigator did not find the information at the library, you can decide whether they find it here, as the newspaper is likely to have the story in a back issue. Perhaps a clipping of the story is found with the notes about Mrs. Ward.

THE KIMBALL HOUSE

Inside the house, Thomas Kimball has moved into all of the rooms except for the study, which is still cluttered and piled high with his uncle’s books. There are books of all shapes and sizes, and on all subjects, identical only in that they were all well cared for.

While the house is charming, the investigator must focus on the study if they wish to gain any insights into the missing uncle. Thomas is happy for the investigator to explore the place and to look through his uncle’s possessions.

If asked about which books the burglar stole, Thomas shrugs and says that he’s not sure exactly what titles were taken. A number of books (he thinks six) had been removed from the shelves in the study, leaving notable spaces. There is no sign of how the burglar gained access into the study, although a shrewd investigator who examines the study’s windows may note that the window locks are loose with age, and a determined effort could easily open them from the outside.

Searching the study takes at least one day. The investigator should attempt a **Spot Hidden** roll. If successful, a journal is found. The last entry is dated the day before Douglas Kimball vanished. This entry cryptically mentions “reaching a decision” and “joining with my friends below.” In addition, other, earlier journal entries seem to hint at a network of tunnels beneath the cemetery, inhabited by mysterious “creatures” that Douglas saw moving about the cemetery at night.

Keeper note: should the investigator fail to find the journal, a successful pushed roll attempt means they do find the information—perhaps they just take longer to find it, or Thomas Kimball wanders in and asks if they have found his uncle’s journal (“I know it’s here somewhere”) and helps to point it out. The consequence of a failed pushed roll might be the investigator finds the journal but, in doing so, knocks over a pile of books that spill over and cause a vase or other delicate item to be broken. Thomas Kimball is unhappy about the breakage and warns the investigator to be more careful, adding that he will dock \$5 from their fee for the damage!

NEXT STEPS

Presumably the investigator has attempted to find some, or all, of the clues as noted in the previous sections (library, newspaper, neighbors, etc.). They don't have to have visited every location, but should have enough information now to focus their attention on the Kimball house and the cemetery.

Ask the player what they would like to do next. If the investigator found the clue in Douglas Kimball's journal concerning the tunnels beneath the cemetery, they may wish to explore the cemetery again and see if they can find evidence of those tunnels. Or, having spoken to Jefferson the caretaker, they may wish to carefully examine Kimball's favorite tombstone for further clues.

There are only so many clues available, so eventually they will be faced with the logical conclusion to the situation: watch the house or cemetery to see if the culprit returns. If the player doesn't come this conclusion, perhaps Thomas Kimball asks for an update on what they have found so far and, during the conversation, suggests the investigator stakes out the house in the hope that the burglar returns to steal more things from the study, allowing the culprit to be caught red-handed.

Three steps are now possible:

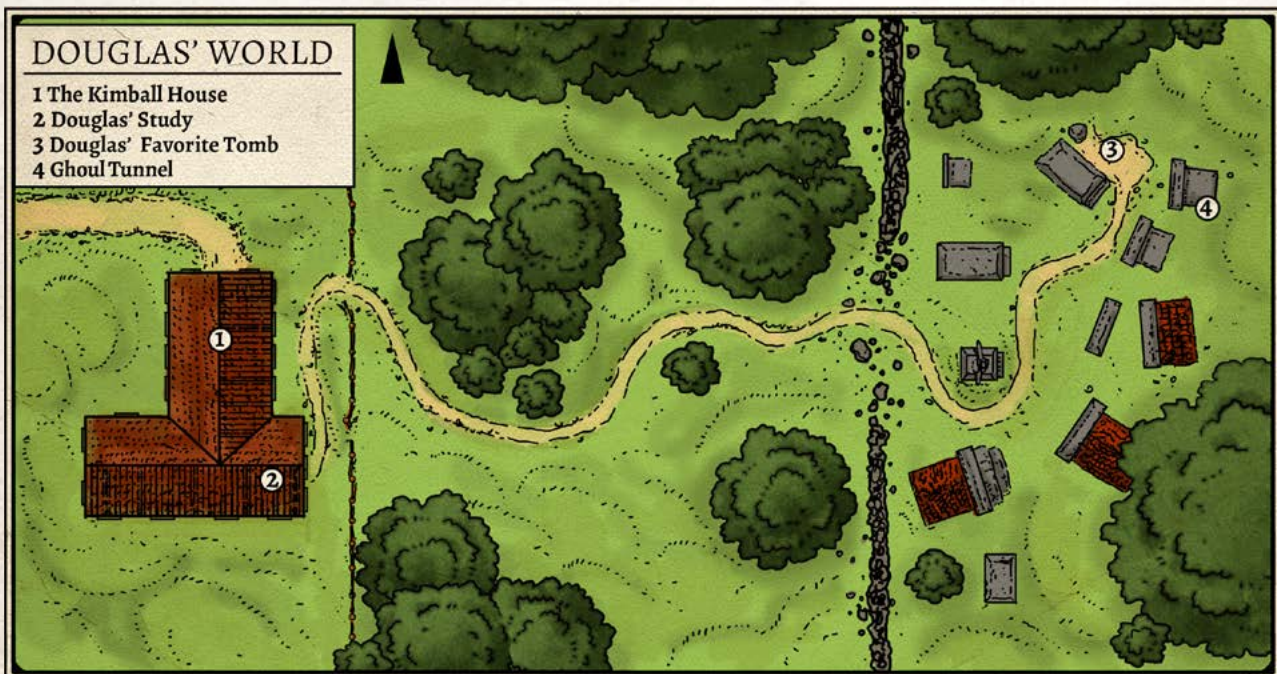
- Examine Douglas Kimball's favorite tombstone.
- Investigate the tunnels in the cemetery.
- Watch the house or the cemetery.

Keeper note: the following sections discuss these possibilities and how such actions lead to the scenario's climax. Note that certain courses of action effectively end the scenario without a clear resolution. This is fine, as such events leave the game with a mystery and also help inform the player as to what can sometimes happen in games of *Call of Cthulhu*! Not every mystery is solved and, sometimes, even investigators go missing!

EXAMINING DOUGLAS KIMBALL'S FAVORITE TOMBSTONE

The old tomb has been worn smooth by age and weather, making it a perfect spot to perch and read a book. It's impossible, due to the weathering, to work out who is buried beneath the tomb.

Looking around, ask the investigator to make a **Spot Hidden** or a **Track** roll. If successful, they notice strange tracks around the tombstone, which look to have been made by man-sized bare feet that end in cloven hooves rather than toes. If the investigator wishes to follow these tracks through the cemetery they can, finding they lead to the door of a mausoleum. If the investigator wants to open the door, they must make a successful **STR** roll; if failed, they can try again if they fetch a shovel or some other tool to help lever the door. If opened, a horrible stench is released from within. If the player did not specifically say that the investigator was holding their breath, they black out from the miasma. Otherwise, inside the mausoleum, they find a "hand dug" tunnel leading down below the earth. Do they wish to go down into the darkness?



Map of the Kimball house and graveyard

The Investigator Blacks Out

If the investigator blacked out, they awaken that night, with Douglas Kimball the ghoul crouching nearby.

Exploring the Tunnels

If the investigator decided to go down into the tunnel, the investigator wanders around a maze of earthen passages that seem to crisscross the cemetery; the whole escapade is somewhat scary in the darkness. Ask the investigator to make a **Navigate** roll to see if they get lost. If failed, they crawl and wander around the tunnels until they grow exhausted and must rest. In either case, time has passed and night is falling. As they try to find their way out of the tunnels, they unexpectedly meet Douglas Kimball on his way up to the surface.

Ignoring the Tunnels

If the investigator finds the tunnel but does not go down, that night Douglas comes up and enters the Kimball house. If the investigator is keeping a watch for the mysterious burglar, refer to **Watching the House or Cemetery** (next section); otherwise, if the investigator is asleep, Douglas makes his way to the investigator's room and prods them awake, as he wishes to speak to them—refer to **If the Investigator Tries to Speak to the Figure** (page 16) for details.

Meeting Douglas the Ghoul

Refer to **If the Investigator Tries to Speak to the Figure** (page 16) for details of what Douglas the ghoul says to the investigator, as well as for the Sanity loss that may result from the meeting.

Keeper note: the information provided in **If the Investigator Tries to Speak to the Figure** is written to assume a certain situation has arisen (namely, that the investigator has seen a figure entering and departing the house at night); the Keeper must adjust the information to the circumstances of their game. In this case, the investigator's actions in finding the tunnel have led to the meeting with Douglas; the information regarding what Douglas says remains the same, but the circumstances of how the scene is set up have changed. Also, note that if, at any time, the investigator attacks Douglas Kimball, refer to **If the Investigator Tries to Attack the Figure** (page 14).

A ghoul



CONCERNING GHOULS

These figures were seldom completely human, but often approached humanity in varying degree. Most of the bodies, while roughly bipedal, had a forward slumping, and a vaguely canine cast. The texture of the majority was a kind of unpleasant rubberiness.

—H. P. Lovecraft, *Pickman's Model*

Ghouls are loathsome humanoids with rubbery skin, hoof-like feet, canine features, and claws. They speak in what are described as “gibberings” and “meepings.” They are often encrusted with grave mold, collected as they feed on the corpses of the dead. They dwell in tunnel systems beneath many cities, often centered on graveyards and ancient catacombs. They are known to have commerce with witches and those seeking unspeakable pleasures. Dark lore suggests that it is possible for a human who lives among the creatures to transform into a ghoul over a prolonged period.

WATCHING THE HOUSE OR CEMETERY

If a watch of the house and/or cemetery is set up, then each night a **Luck** roll should be attempted for the investigator; the first night the roll is successful, a figure is seen leaving the cemetery grounds and heading towards the house, whereupon it enters through one of the study's windows.

Keeper note: if the investigator somehow bolstered the window locks in the study, the figure rams its shoulder against the window, smashing the wood and breaking the pane. Such a noise might alert the investigator if they are asleep in the house.

Presuming the investigator waits and watches, a few minutes later, the figure reemerges, laden with books, and heads back into the cemetery. If the investigator confronts the figure, chases it, or tries to attack it, it tries to flee into the cemetery, carrying the books. A number of outcomes or situations may now arise, dependent on what the investigator does. The following describes how some of the options might play out; the Keeper should use the most appropriate version of events (possibly using the information from one or more

of the following outcomes and adjusting it to suit what is happening in your game). In summary, the following sections cover:

- If the investigator tries to attack the figure.
- If the investigator manages to kill or incapacitate the figure.
- If the investigator tries to speak to the figure.

If the Investigator Tries to Attack the Figure

If the investigator tries to hit the figure (actually Douglas Kimball, but don't tell the player this yet), ask for a **Fighting (Brawl)** roll to see if the attack connects. The Keeper should roll for the figure's **Dodge** skill to see if it evades the attack. Douglas Kimball has Dodge 30% (15/6). Both the Keeper (rolling for Douglas) and the player roll percentage dice (1D100), comparing Douglas' Dodge result to the investigator's Brawl result.

- If the investigator gets a higher level of success than Douglas, they win the combat and the investigator's player gets to roll 1D3 to determine the attack's damage, which is deducted from Douglas Kimball's hit points. If struck in this manner, the books he is holding fall to the floor.



Douglas Kimball steals his books back

- If the investigator's result is a lower level of success or a failure, or equal to Douglas' result, the attack has failed and causes no damage. Douglas managed to evade the blow and makes a dash for the cemetery.

Of course, if the investigator is using a gun, the attack roll uses the **Firearms (Handgun)** skill instead; roll for Douglas Kimball's Dodge (Dive for Cover), but in this situation, if the Dodge roll is successful, the investigator suffers a penalty die to their Firearms skill roll (thus, roll for the Dodge before the player makes the investigator's attack roll). Note that the two rolls (Dodge and Firearms) are not compared—the Dodge is rolled first, and only if that roll is successful is a penalty die applied to the opponent's Firearms roll. If the investigator managed to shoot the figure, then work out the damage by rolling the appropriate die for the gun carried (1D10 for a handgun).

Keeper note: if you need to refresh your memory about the combat rules, refer to page 18 of **Book Two**. Note that in this scene we are ignoring the DEX ordering for who goes first in combat; we are assuming the investigator acts first this time.

If somehow unable to get away, the figure (Douglas Kimball) returns the attack after dropping the books. This time, Douglas Kimball is initiating the attack, rolling against his Claws skill of 50% (25/10); the investigator must choose to either attempt to Dodge or Fight Back against the attack.

Both Douglas and the investigator roll percentage dice (1D100) and compare their levels of success:

- If the investigator is Fighting Back, they roll against their **Fighting (Brawl)** skill and need to achieve a higher level of success than Douglas' result to avoid getting hurt.
- If the investigator is Dodging, they roll against their **Dodge** skill and succeed if they equal or achieve a higher level of success than Douglas' result.

If the investigator is hit, deduct 1D6 hit points of damage and tell the player that their investigator has been thrown to the floor, giving the figure time to gather up the dropped books and run into the cemetery.

Keeper note: Douglas Kimball only fights to drive off or knock down his assailant. He then flees with his precious burden into the cemetery. Note that Douglas Kimball has a total of 12 hit points. Any damage suffered is deducted from this total. If it falls to zero (say, from two hits from a handgun) then Douglas Kimball is dead (see next section). If the investigator is only using fisticuffs, then Kimball is knocked unconscious if he suffers the loss of half (6) his hit points (see next section).

If the Investigator Manages to Kill or Incapacitate the Figure

If the investigator manages to kill or incapacitate (knock unconscious) the figure, they get a closer look at its face; it turns out to be a foul-looking humanoid, naked but covered in caked mud and mold, whose face is bestial, with large canine teeth and a rudimentary canine-like snout in place of a human nose. The most chilling thing, however, is that its face has an uncanny resemblance to Douglas Kimball. Due to this shocking revelation, ask the player to make two **Sanity** rolls (rolling 1D100 twice and comparing both results to the investigator's Sanity value).

For the first roll: if successful (a roll equal to or below the investigator's Sanity value), they don't lose any Sanity points; if failed (a roll above the investigator's Sanity value), they lose 1D6 Sanity points and make one involuntary action of the Keeper's choice, perhaps dropping whatever they are holding (like a weapon or flashlight) or screaming. This first Sanity roll is for the shock and horror of meeting a ghoul.

For the second roll: if successful, they lose 1 Sanity point; if failed, they lose 1D4 Sanity points and also make one involuntary action, such as screaming. This second roll is for realizing the ghoul is the missing Douglas Kimball!

Keeper note: if an investigator loses 5 or more Sanity points in one instance, the player should make an **INT** roll. If the INT roll is passed, the investigator has understood the full implications of the situation and is driven temporarily insane—the Keeper would now normally refer to the **Bouts of Madness Table (Book Two, page 17)**; in this case, assume the investigator suffers a fit of screaming for 1D10 rounds. If the INT roll is failed, the character is shaken but remains sane.

As the investigator stands over the dead or unconscious form of Douglas Kimball, shuffling sounds can be heard coming from all round. Ask for another **Sanity** roll, as dozens of ghouls loom out of the darkness towards the investigator.

If the Sanity roll is failed: the investigator loses 6 points of Sanity. As this is more than 5 points lost in one instance, they must make an **INT** roll. If failed, they are shaken but fine; otherwise, they are temporarily insane and fall to the ground in a dead faint. Some time later, they wake up in the Arnoldsburg Sanitarium. There was no trace of a ghoul or Douglas Kimball when the investigator's unconscious body was found. Apparently, Thomas Kimball heard a scream and found the investigator, who was incoherent and ranting about monsters in the graveyard. Thus, an ambulance was

called and the investigator has enjoyed a week in the care of the Sanitarium. Fortunately, the investigator's efforts must have found success, as no one has returned to break into Mr. Kimball's home and all has been quiet ever since. With this, the scenario has ended. Thomas feels the investigator must have driven off the burglar and is happy to pay the fee for a job well done. It is up to the player whether Thomas is told the truth about his missing uncle. Refer to the **Conclusion** to bring the game to a close.

If the Sanity roll is successful: ask the player what they want to do—a pack of ghouls is advancing towards them. If they try to fight or shoot, the ghouls rapidly overpower the investigator—even if the investigator successfully hits some of the ghouls, there are just too many of them. The investigator is taken back to their burrows by the ghouls, never to be seen again. If the investigator flees, the ghouls do not follow and, instead, take Douglas Kimball (whether dead or unconscious) and return to the cemetery. Should the investigator come back the next morning to look for the ghouls and Douglas Kimball, all signs of them are gone. The ghouls have moved on and will not return. Thomas Kimball will not be bothered again. This also leads to the end of the scenario, with the same results as outlined above. Refer to the **Conclusion** to close the game.

If the Investigator Tries to Speak to the Figure

Simply calling out to the figure elicits little response; perhaps, at most, a momentary turn of the head towards the investigator. The figure continues to make its way into the cemetery. If the investigator thinks to call out “Douglas Kimball,” the figure stops for a brief moment but then heads slowly into the cemetery, as if it is expecting to be followed by the investigator. Once inside, it makes its way to Douglas Kimball's favorite tombstone and sits down. When the investigator approaches, the figure speaks and says, “Hello.”

The investigator, on seeing and realizing that the ghoul-like figure is actually Douglas Kimball must succeed in a **Sanity** roll or lose 1D4 Sanity points and let out a scream (involuntary action). Douglas Kimball the ghoul raises an eyebrow at the investigator and waits for them to gather themselves and calm down.

Unless the investigator does something to annoy Douglas (such as attempting to hit or shoot him; if so, refer to **If the Investigator Tries to Attack the Figure**), he will now answer any questions if asked in a civilized manner. Douglas says that he was just too tired of his mundane existence among humans. The only thing he wanted from life was to be left alone, able to read whenever he liked, but other humans kept making demands on him. Living as a ghoul, his

life is great. He does not need money. He does not have to dress for dinner. He does not have to meet people, except at mealtimes. He can read whenever he wants, day or night. But the other ghouls are shutting down this entrance, so he had one last night to try and get more of his books before he and they left for good. There is so much to see and experience in the world below that he is planning to write his own book about his experiences.

He asks the investigator not to reveal to his nephew that he is still alive (in a manner of speaking). He then creeps inside the mausoleum and descends into the tunnel. His final action is to pull a large stone slab over the entrance to seal it behind him. If the investigator has been beguiled by the wonders of life as a ghoul or, otherwise, wants to go with Douglas, it can happen, but the investigator will not be heard from again. If left alone to depart, Douglas Kimball and the ghouls close in the entrance to their tunnels and never return.

This conversation supplies the investigator with the truth about the situation, but it is an unpleasant truth, which causes the loss of 1D4 Sanity points to hear. On the bright side, the truth also increases the investigator's knowledge, so they gain +3 percentile points in the Cthulhu Mythos skill.

CONCLUSION

The player may come up with an original or different solution to this dilemma. Cementing the tomb closed will mean little to the ghouls, who were abandoning the graveyard anyway. It is the player's decision whether to tell Thomas Kimball the truth about his uncle or to leave the matter a mystery. Depending on the actions taken, the investigator (if they survive or have not also mysteriously disappeared) may get any or all of the following “rewards.”

- If the investigator went temporarily insane, they gain +5 percentile points in the Cthulhu Mythos skill.
- If the investigator got to talk with Douglas Kimball, they gain +1D6 Sanity points from the knowledge that there is one ghoul, at any rate, who is not planning to come back. Thus, Thomas Kimball can sleep soundly again without fear of further burglaries.
- Thomas Kimball willingly pays the investigator \$10 for carrying out the job (less \$5 if anything valuable was broken in the house).

Finally, the player may check to see if any of the skills used during the adventure increase through experience—see **Rewards of Success** on page 22 of **Book Two** for details. The adventure has ended, but there are more mysteries and secrets to be uncovered in the other scenarios in this book!

PAPER CHASE: CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Collected here are the profiles for all of the non-player characters and monsters in this scenario. You may need to refer to these profiles during the scenario. Each is a mini character sheet, detailing the key information—characteristics and skills (including combat skills)—that the Keeper may need during the game.

Melodias Jefferson, age 58, caretaker

STR 45 CON 65 SIZ 60 DEX 50 INT 70
APP 55 POW 60 EDU 65 SAN 60 HP 12
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (punch or shovel swipe)
Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Shovel 30% (15/6), damage 1D6
Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills

Art/Craft (Gardening) 80%, Credit Rating 32%, Intimidate 45%, Mechanical Repair 55%, Natural World 70%.

- **Description:** average height; he is rough around the edges and wears patched clothing.
- **Traits:** belligerent, rude.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** can show the investigators Douglas Kimball's favorite reading spot.

Douglas Kimball, the Ghoul

STR 55 CON 65 SIZ 60 DEX 40 INT 80
APP — POW 65 EDU 85 SAN — HP 12
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 5

Combat

Attacks per round: 1* (claws or bite)
Claws 50% (25/10), damage 1D6
Bite 50% (25/10), damage 1D6
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 85%, Stealth 70%, Jump 75%, Listen 70%, Spot Hidden 50%.

- **Description:** once human, Douglas is now changing into a rubbery-skinned creature, with hoof-like feet, canine features, and claws instead of fingers.
- **Traits:** friendly; he clings to the remnants of his humanity.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** is "stealing" his own books to build his library before the ghoul tunnel in the graveyard is closed forever.

Armor: now a ghoul, he takes only half damage from firearms wounds (round down any fractions).

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a ghoul.

**Normally, ghouls have 3 attacks per round, but for this introductory adventure we've kept things simple.*



Melodias Jefferson



SCENARIO TWO: EDGE OF DARKNESS

"West of Arkham the hills rise wild, and there are valleys with deep woods that no axe has ever cut. There are dark narrow glens where the trees slope fantastically, and where thin brooklets trickle without ever having caught the glint of sunlight. On the gentler slopes there are farms, ancient and rocky, with squat, moss-coated cottages brooding eternally over old New England secrets in the lee of great ledges; but these are all vacant now, the wide chimneys crumbling and the shingled sides bulging perilously beneath low gambrel roofs."

—H. P. Lovecraft, *The Colour Out of Space*

For: 2 to 5 players, plus Keeper.

Approximate playtime: one to three sessions.

This investigation takes a group of people who may not know one another, and makes them into a party of Mythos investigators. It begins with the death of a common friend of the investigators. Revelations from that friend lead them to a dark and secret event of his youth, culminating in a confrontation with an ancient evil lurking in rural Massachusetts.

Having played through **Paper Chase** with one or two players, **Edge of Darkness** allows more players to be introduced to *Call of Cthulhu*. Of course, the adventure can be played with just two players but works best with a group of around three to five people, plus the Keeper. Investigators previously used in **Paper Chase** (if still alive) can be used, or the players can either choose any of the ready-made investigators in this set or create new ones of their own devising. The game should take one to three sessions (of approximately three to four hours each) to play, depending on how quickly the players move through the various scenes, so be prepared to run **Edge of Darkness** over more than one session with the same players. The investigators are not required to know one another at the start, as the scenario provides an opportunity for them to make each other's acquaintance, and become friends and allies in the ongoing struggle against dark forces.

Where **Paper Chase** concerns a man in the process of changing into a ghoul, and is consequently still relatively human in outlook, this adventure concerns a true monstrous entity that acts in a monstrous fashion. The investigators will face a potentially deadly situation that can harm both their bodies and minds.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

The adventure begins in the fictional town of Arkham, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1923. It is assumed that the investigators are visiting or live in Arkham. If investigators are being created for this scenario, the Keeper should encourage the players to come up with a way in which their characters are associated with the non-player character of Rupert Merriweather, an elderly gentleman, whom the investigators have known for a significant time. The investigators may be friends, relatives, past students, or former colleagues of the man. The exact relationship of each investigator to Merriweather should be decided ahead of time by the player and Keeper, perhaps involving some close personal bond and a reason for trust. Ask the players to write down a short summary about how they know Merriweather and what they think of him in the **Significant People** section on the reverse side of their investigator sheets.

If the investigators are from The Society for the Exploration of the Unexplained (SEU), then it is assumed that Rupert Merriweather was once a member of that same society, but he and his friends formed their own splinter group to delve deeper into dark magic. The investigators are aware of Merriweather, and may even know him personally, but his request was made to the Society, which has sent along those it thinks best suited to dealing with its former alumnus. If this version is used, adjust the text of the adventure to fit this premise.

KEEPER INFORMATION: BACKGROUND

Rupert Merriweather is dying and the investigators have been called to his hospital bedside. Each investigator receives word of the man's plight either by telephone, telegraph, or by personal courier. They learn that Merriweather is confined to St. Mary's Teaching Hospital in Arkham and that he wishes them to visit him tomorrow afternoon—Thursday, at one o'clock.

The cause of Merriweather's subsequent death can be a story element for the Keeper to consider. He might be dying of a terminal illness, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, or diabetes. All of these conditions had a high mortality rate in the 1920s. As an option, if the Keeper wishes to coat Merriweather's illness in mystery, the symptoms he presents are exotic and puzzling to the experienced physicians attending him. He could be suffering effects that are unexplained by current medical science. A doctor might say, "I would swear this was scarlet fever, except for the black lesions weeping a fluid we can't identify." Make it as basic or as graphic as seems appropriate to your players' tastes. Merriweather's condition is not important to the plot, just that he is dying.

PLAYER INFORMATION

Having decided whether the investigators are visiting or live in Arkham, and also having determined how each of them knows Rupert Merriweather, read aloud or paraphrase the following information to the players:

You have recently each been contacted by Rupert Merriweather, an aging man you have known for some time. Merriweather is unwell and seems not long for this world. He has asked you to meet him at St. Mary's Teaching Hospital in Arkham at one o'clock on Thursday. You haven't seen the man for quite some time, so this urgent summons appears to be quite important. Perhaps he has something to tell you before he dies?

START

St. Mary's Teaching Hospital is located in downtown Arkham, adjacent to historic Miskatonic University. The hospital boasts the latest in "modern" equipment and techniques, as well as some of the best medical practitioners on the Eastern seaboard. The information desk in the main lobby provides directions to Merriweather's private, third-floor room.

It is assumed that all of the investigators make their way to the hospital at the requested time. Before they enter Merriweather's private room, ask each of the players to briefly describe their investigator and make introductions, just as if they were all meeting for the first time. Now they have all been introduced, they may proceed through the door.

As they enter, they see a bed-ridden Rupert Merriweather engaged with two other visitors, who appear to be his grieving, 62-year-old wife, Agnes, and his sneering, weasel-like son, 33-year-old Bertrand. In a rasping whisper, Merriweather introduces the investigators to his wife and son, and to one another. After pleasantries are exchanged, he asks his weeping wife and son to leave him alone for a moment with his friends. After making sure the door is shut, he reveals why he has called them all here.

A DARK SECRET

Read aloud or paraphrase the following information, said by Merriweather, to the investigators:

"In my youth, I and some fellow students became involved in what we believed to be an innocent exploration of the occult. Led by a slightly older man named Marion Allen, the six of us purchased an old farmhouse a few miles west of Arkham, near the village of Ross's Corners. There we could conduct séances and other psychical research in privacy.

"Alas, our work had unforeseen results. Our last experiment summoned an evil force into this world. Instead of attempting to expel the thing, we were afraid and abandoned the old house, confident that the magic that brought the evil to this world would also keep it confined in the vacant house, or send it back after a short time. However, I have since discovered that the spell that binds the entity to the house lasts only as long as the casters live.

"I am the last of the group and I fear that upon my death the thing will go free, and wreak havoc on the folks thereabouts. I am too old, too ill, and too much of a coward to go back to that house to try to banish the entity myself. I am guilty of many things, but my deepest sin was unleashing that horror that fateful night. I am convinced the entity will escape its confinement on my death."

"Take the box," he says, gesturing weakly towards an innocuous metal box on the nightstand beside the bed.

"All the aid I can offer you lies within. You must find the courage to send that thing back to where it came from. You must see that this is done. Do this for me. Please."

As soon as an investigator takes possession of the box, but before they can open it, the ailing Merriweather is choked by a sudden spasm. He doubles up, groans, and then coughs forth a huge gout of blood—spattering any investigator standing near the night stand—then falls into a coma. All of the investigators must make a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss—no loss if the roll is successful, but 1 Sanity point lost if failed).

Would the investigators like to call for a doctor? If they do, the room quickly fills with interns, nurses, and Merriweather's concerned wife and son. In the way, the investigators are asked to leave by a harried nurse. Despite the hospital's best efforts, Merriweather dies within the hour.

Keeper note: why didn't Merriweather just go back and banish the thing? It's been over 40 years! While it's true that he (or one of the other survivors) could have gone back to try and banish the creature trapped in the vacant house, this is an example of a long-term phobia effect on a character. Despite any guilt felt in knowing that it was still there, none of the survivors could bring themselves to go back to that house. Perhaps some of the people concerned actually convinced themselves that the events of that night were exaggerated by their youthful imaginations and locked the incident away in the recesses of their minds.

The Contents of the Box

The investigators are probably keen to examine the contents of Merriweather's box. Perhaps they leave the hospital and gather at a coffee shop nearby to collect their thoughts and open the mysterious container.

Inside the box is a recently written letter; a yellowed envelope containing the deed to a house and the key to its lock; a small, sarcophagus-shaped gold box of ancient design; and a slim journal bound in leather. Each item is detailed as follows:

The Deed and Key

The deed and key concern a farm property on Boone Road, near Ross's Corners, a village west of Arkham.

The Letter

The letter is from Rupert Merriweather to the investigators (give the players **Handout: Edge 1**). In it, he tries to explain his reasons for asking them to take on such a dangerous task. The letter only serves to confirm that he is terrified of the house and the creature trapped within it, and fears its release upon his death.

The Sarcophagus-Shaped Box

The lid comes off the ornate box easily; however, there is nothing inside. A successful **History** or **Archaeology** roll identifies the hieroglyphs decorating the outside of the box as Egyptian, of the Middle Kingdom, although those carved on the inside of the lid are distinctly different and not Egyptian at all. A successful **Occult** roll reveals that the odd carvings on the inside of the box lid resemble writings attributed by certain occultists to the lost Pacific continent of Mu.



The sarcophagus-shaped box

Handout: Edge 1

Dear Friends

In the years after the nightmarish events of that night in my youth, I have seen many strange things. Only now do I begin to grasp the truth of reality, and the scope of what is happening in the world. I've tried, in my small way, to combat the horrors and make amends for my part in bringing one to our plane of existence. What I have left to offer, what riches and wealth I have, I will put to good use in dealing with these abominations. It is the very least this old coward can do.

I could never make myself go back to that little farmhouse and put those events to rights. I too gravely feared that which my friends and I loosed upon this countryside. Nothing of consequence has yet taken place, but with my death I fear the bonds will be broken and that horror freed to come and go as it pleases. Lives not yet taken already weigh heavy on my conscience.

The method of delivering the thing out of this world is still in that accursed house—the translations made by Marion from the book, *De Vermis Mysteriis*. I was never strong enough to take on the task, but I have hope that you are. In ridding the world of this, perhaps you will save my soul from Hell. For I fear that my deeds have not been enough to release me from this heavy burden.

I do not expect your forgiveness for what I ask of you.

Rupert Merriweather

EDGE OF DARKNESS

Keeper note: the mysterious carvings on the inner lid of the box are a “red herring” and not important in this adventure, as the investigators have no way to decipher them. However, the box and its carvings are a potential plot point for a future adventure. One of the fun ways to enjoy *Call of Cthulhu* is to create your own adventures, and the box is left here so that you might devise a scenario focused on it and the hidden meaning of its carvings. Perhaps the box is an important occult artifact and the language is alien? Perhaps some evil group seeks the box and discovers the investigators now possess it? All of these are potential plots, but you can probably come up with your own ideas and look to turn it into a fun adventure for your players at some future point.

The Slim Journal

Bound in plain leather and held together by cords, the journal is obviously handmade. Its entries date from June 1876 to May 1881. While the ink has faded with age, a **Language (English)** roll is unnecessary to understand it. Reading through the entries requires approximately four hours' time.

Keeper note: the journal holds a record of the Dark Brotherhood's activities at an old farmhouse. When the investigators wish to read its contents, give them **Handout: Edge 2**. The entries were written by Rupert Merriweather,

while a final newspaper clipping, dated August 1882, is pasted next to the entry marking Marion Allen's grisly murder. Reading the volume costs the reader 1D2 Sanity points (deducted from current Sanity), but also adds 1 percentile to the reader's Cthulhu Mythos skill, as well as granting a skill check in Occult (ask the player concerned to tick the box next to the Occult skill on their sheet).

From reading the volume, the investigators find out about a group of friends, all students at Miskatonic University in Arkham, playfully calling themselves the “Dark Brotherhood.” They held their first meeting in the late spring of 1876. Rupert Merriweather was the group's recording secretary. The members numbered six, including Marion Allen, the founder and their nominal leader.

In June of 1876, Merriweather purchased a deserted farmhouse outside Ross's Corners. This was to be a place where they could conduct their experiments in privacy. Representing themselves as a student literary fraternity, they cleaned and furnished the place, while Marion Allen carved special warding (protective) signs over the wooden doors and windows. At the time, the others were amused at such precautions. A series of experiments, innocent and apparently ineffective attempts to contact the spirit world, are then detailed.

Handout: Edge 2 (part 1)

February 27th, 1877

*Marion Allen has acquired an artifact, purportedly Egyptian. It appears to be a small sarcophagus of gold. Inside is a large piece of amber, which entraps a specimen of some unknown species of arthropod. Allen is very excited, as the box corresponds to a description he found in an ordinary reference volume in the university's Orne Library. Allen says that, in another book—*De Vermis Mysteriis*—is an explanation of the powers of the box. The text says the small animal trapped in the amber is actually the host to a bound djinn, a guide to the spirit world. Allen says the tome mentions that originally, there were four such pieces of amber contained in the box. There is no mention what happened to the other three.*

We are agreed and a date has been set to conduct a ceremony intended to summon the djinn, which Allen assures us will be friendly. We have chosen the night of Saturday 18th March—the night before the New Moon.

March 19th, 1877

We began the ceremony as Allen instructed, according to that described in *De Vermis Mysteriis*. A fire is set in the fireplace and a pentagram chalked on the floor, marked with appropriate symbols and illuminated by two black tapers placed near the center, flanking the piece of amber with its entrapped spirit. The others sit in a circle while I, the designated "watcher" who guards for malevolent spirits, sit in the corner of the room. At least I get the comfort of a chair, while the others can look forward to sitting on the floor for hours.

Allen throws a handful of powder in the fire, producing an evil-smelling smoke and dampening the flames, which now burn a sputtering green and brown. Those seated on the floor begin the Latin chant Allen has transcribed from his book.

After nearly two hours I see a trail of smoke circling up from the piece of amber. Its surface seems to be bubbling and melting! Can this be? Have we finally achieved success? I can see a form...

March 20th, 1877

We have finished with our plans and have sworn a pact never to speak of what happened last night. We have satisfactorily explained the death of poor Robert, and in some manner the madness of Harold. The sheriff accepts the explanation of a carriage accident—we planned it well. Robert's neck was broken in the fall, we told him. Harold struck his head on a rock when the horse's leg broke and the carriage rolled. Would it be that it was only that. For the rest of us, we will be forever changed by what we experienced last night. I will write down the true events, so they are not lost completely.

The thing formed in the center of the pentagram, shapeless and nearly invisible. Its terrible voice should have given us a clue, but we were so foolish. It spoke, then Allen cast that damned powder on the djinn, the "Dust of Ibn-Ghazi" he calls it, and that's when we could all see it clearly.

Words cannot adequately describe the faceless thing with a thousand maws. It roiled and bubbled, never fully revealing itself at any one time. So terrifying was its aspect that I was frozen in place, my pen falling from my nerveless fingers. Cecil and Allen seemed as lifeless as myself, while a short, sharp cry issued from Crawford's mouth. Robert, however, rose to his feet, and before anyone could stop him, stepped forward as though to embrace our horrible guest.

With its arms, or those appendages that seemed most like arms, it took hold of poor Robert and twisted his head around as though he was a doll. The lifeless corpse was then thrown back in Harold's lap, and that's when he began that damnable shrieking—the shrieking that hasn't stopped since, even after we handed him over to the sheriff's men.

We still had a chance, apparently. Allen now believes that if we had kept our wits, we could have reversed the summoning and forced the creature back to wherever it came from. But Crawford panicked and, mistakenly believing that it would dispel the creature, reached forward and destroyed part of the pentagram, breaking the seal and ending its effectiveness. Released from that binding symbol, the thing, with a screech that could only have been unholy satisfaction, was ejected from the house—disappearing out the window as a roaring, screaming wind of boiling colors.

March 24th, 1877

Allen intends to leave Arkham and travel to find a solution to this crisis. He said that he intends to seek out occult scholars in New Orleans. I pray he is successful, but my hopes are not high at this point. He insisted that I be custodian of the gold sarcophagus, and not show it to anyone. What's even more odd is that he instructed me to not visit or even live in Boston. I can only guess as to why, as he will not tell me his reasoning, apart from his insistence that it is for my own safety.

Marion still thinks that the thing could yet be destroyed, or at least dispelled, but none of us who remain have the stomach for such an undertaking. I hope he can find a way to safely banish it without another of us falling to its malevolent grip.

March 26th, 1877

We now believe that the spell we cast to summon it inextricably bound the thing to the house. Allen went back this morning to retrieve some of our belongings, and store our ritual accouterments. He says that he heard it bumping around in the attic over his head, cursing him all the while. He said that it also told him that it only has to wait us out. When we who were present are all dead, it will roam the Earth freely, slaughtering and feasting. Thankfully, the warding signs carved by Allen during better times, times that seem so long ago now, apparently are effective and bar the thing entry except into the attic of the farm house. I might be able to sleep a few hours tonight knowing it is bound to the attic and cannot harm anyone else.

I am hopeful for the first time since we stupidly released it from the amber. If it told him the truth, then we have time to seek the answer. God be with you in your search, my friend.

The Last Entry

Note: the last entry is a list of names, supposedly those who belonged to the Dark Brotherhood, followed by a date—presumably the date of each of their deaths. The dates have been written in various inks, but all by the same hand, suggesting that Merriweather made an account of the deaths of his companions over several years.

NEXT STEPS

By late afternoon, Rupert Merriweather is dead. The investigators may do as they wish but certainly one of them will want to read Merriweather's journal; others may take it upon themselves to conduct research. Some possibilities are outlined below.

- Miskatonic University's Orne Library is open in the evenings during the week: for what can be done there, see **Avenues of Research** (nearby).
- If investigators speak with Merriweather's widow or son (at the hospital, or elsewhere), they quickly discern that neither knows anything about Merriweather's long-ago experiments, nor even of the existence of the farm property.
- Investigation into Merriweather's death reveals that the malady from which he suffered (as determined by the Keeper) caused his passing.

Keeper note: your players may be inclined to go straight to the farmhouse. This will not hinder a successful resolution to the situation, as the resources the investigators need are given to them by Merriweather at the hospital, or are to be found in the house itself. However, if the Keeper wishes to encourage some investigation before reaching the house, then perhaps remind the players that sometimes, being forewarned means being forearmed and better prepared to face what could be a difficult task. Perhaps they could start with looking into the events described in the journal?

AVENUES OF RESEARCH

Should the investigators wish to pursue research prior to venturing into the old farmhouse, a number of possibilities are described here:

- Finding out about Marion Allen's death.
- Studying the hieroglyphs on the golden box.
- Using the resources available at Miskatonic University's Orne Library.

Each avenue of research is detailed in the following sections:

October 14th, 1877

I just discovered that Marion Allen is dead, and has been dead for some months now. He was murdered in New Orleans this past August. I suspect that he spoke to the wrong sort of people about the things he has seen, and they killed him. The newspaper mentions the sarcophagus, so they may have been after the gold.

That is three of us gone now. I must do something. I've already begun ancient history classes at university, so I believe I will try to research the problem at the farmhouse in that manner. Perhaps I will uncover an ancient secret of how to rid our world of that beast in my own way.

August 14th, 1887

BRUTAL MURDER AT DOCKS

NEW ORLEANS. The body of Mr. Marion Allen, late of Arkham, Massachusetts, was discovered early this morning near the Gulf & Panama docks. A victim of foul play, the man was identified by local witnesses who said that Mr. Allen had been seen in the locale the evening before. Although robbery was the apparent motive, police report that the victim had gruesome marks carved into his forehead and his tongue had been cut out. Mr. Allen had reportedly gone to the police earlier this week claiming that he was being followed and that he feared for his life. He said his shadowy pursuers were after an Egyptian artifact, which he no longer possessed.

Robert Menkin, March 1877

Harold Copley, August 1877

Marion Allen, August 1877

Crawford Harris, January 1910

Cecil Jones, March 1919

Rupert Merriweather

ADDITIONAL MOTIVATION

While Merriweather's son and widow do not serve any significant role in the rest of the scenario, they are available should the Keeper wish to introduce new evidence or motivation later in the adventure—such information could be a clue the investigators have missed, or the actions of Merriweather's son could be used to cause a distraction or additional problem for the investigators. Here are two possibilities the Keeper can use or choose to ignore:

- Agnes Merriweather, while going through her deceased husband's papers, may come across a piece of evidence or vital clue that can get wayward investigators back on track. Agnes could personally deliver it to the farmhouse if required. Keep in mind that she has a

weak heart, and exposure to a sudden shock or horror might cost her life!

- Bertrand Merriweather may decide to demand the contents of the box given to the investigators by his father—or go even further and show up later at the farm property, estate lawyer in tow, demanding they vacate the premises as they have no legal right to be on the property. They may have to prove that Rupert Merriweather gave them special instructions and possession of the box before he died. It is likely, however, that the climax of the adventure takes place before the younger Merriweather can enlist the aid of an armed sheriff to evict the squatters from his newly acquired farm. Charges of trespassing are not serious, but there could be repercussions if the investigators refuse to vacate, attack, or threaten the rightful heir.

MARION ALLEN'S DEATH

Inquiries with the New Orleans authorities into Marion Allen's murder result in copies of the police and coroner's reports being sent to the investigators. The New Orleans' police also confirm that Marion Allen's body was cremated in New Orleans, following arrangements made with the family of the deceased. The ashes and personal effects were sent to Mr. Allen's uncle, in Boston, Mass. Give the player undertaking this research a copy of **Handout: Edge 3**.

Keeper note: while Marion Allen's personal effects (sent to his uncle in Boston) have no bearing on the rest of this scenario, the Keeper may wish to point the investigators to these in order to plant a seed for a future scenario. Perhaps Allen's belongings might pose further questions as to his dealings in New Orleans, as well as other locations across the U.S., all of which could lead the investigators into future adventures of the Keeper's own design.

STUDYING THE GOLDEN BOX'S HIEROGLYPHS

If an investigator makes a successful **Archaeology** or **Language (Egyptian Hieroglyphs)** roll, they are able to make a translation of the carvings found on the outside of the mysterious golden box. The amount of time taken to decipher the carvings is 1D4 days—spent using dictionaries

and source materials found in Miskatonic University's Orne Library. If the roll is failed and pushed, the investigator is able to work out what the carvings mean, but in so doing, they have spent much longer in the attempt, adding a further 1D4 days to the process. Alternatively, if the investigator thinks to ask for help, they could gain the assistance from one of the university's languages experts, such as Professor Warren Rice. In this case, they are allowed a pushed roll but gain a bonus die to the attempt (as they have the professor's help).

Keeper reminder: a bonus die adds an additional D10 die to the attempt (three dice are rolled, with two of them acting as the "tens" die) allowing the player to pick the best (lowest result); see **Bonus and Penalty Dice**, page 14, in **Book Two**.

If the investigators don't have the appropriate skills to translate the external carvings, they could seek out Prof. Rice's help and ask him to decipher the symbols. In this case, rather than make the **Archaeology** or **Language** roll, the investigator must make a **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Persuade** roll to convince the professor to undertake the work. If the roll is successful, Prof. Rice translates the box within 1D2 days but asks for a fee of \$2 to do so; if the roll is passed with a Hard or Extreme success, Prof. Rice is so intrigued by the carvings that he does the job for free!

NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Statement of Corman, Howard, Patrol Officer
Entered: Tuesday, August 14th, 1877

I was on my assigned route through the docks and warehouse quarter, nearing the Gulf & Panama docks at 5:47 a.m., when I saw sign of a person lying among some shipping crates. I first thought that it was a vagrant asleep. As I moved closer to rouse the subject, I then saw bloodstains. On closer inspection, the victim was dead. He was lying on his back, arms splayed. His chest was opened up, with the full contents visible, ribs opened. The head was thrown back, mouth open.

Since there was obviously nothing I could do to help the victim, I hurried to the nearest adjacent beat where I knew I would find Officer Wood. I told him what I found, and instructed him to get assistance. I would go back and secure the crime scene.

When I got back, some dockworkers had gathered around, and one was endeavoring to go through the victim's pockets. I stopped him and had the men move away from the body. I then inspected the man to make sure nothing was taken. At this time, it was light enough to see details more clearly, and I saw the mark on the victim's forehead. It was a symbol of unknown origin carved into his skin, as if with a sharp penknife or similar weapon. I found a tarpaulin nearby, which I carefully laid across the victim until detectives could arrive on the scene.

NEW ORLEANS POLICE DEPARTMENT

Statement of Warren, Harold, Detective
Entered: Tuesday, August 14th, 1877

I was assigned to the case and immediately went to the scene to gather information. Officer Corman was present, keeping the dockworkers back from the scene. He informed me that while he was getting assistance, one of the workers had started to rifle through the victim's pockets. He said that he searched the man but it appeared that no items were stolen. I found the victim's wallet still in his jacket pocket, identifying him as Marion Marcus Allen of Arkham, Mass. No money was found in the wallet or anywhere else about him.

The victim's head had characters carved into it. Bone was visible. The mouth was open and I could see no sign of his tongue, which looked to have been severed and removed. The man's rib cage had been torn open and the organs had been cut or mutilated in some manner. I request that the medical examiner verify the placement and count of all internal organs.

There were some footprints around the body, all on the side facing the opening in the pile of crates. There was some blood dried on the body and ground, but not enough to fit with the wounds. I surmise that the killing happened elsewhere, and the body was placed at the docks afterward.

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER FOR STATE OF LOUISIANA, CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

Report by Dr. Wilbur Lawrence

The victim [Marion Marcus Allen] had been killed by a single, powerful, blade thrust to the bottom of the rib cage, cutting upward so as to separate the ribs from the breastbone. Hands were then used to pry the rib cage apart. The tongue was cut out, likely while the victim was dying. There was a symbol of unknown origin carved into the skin of the forehead. The cuts were deep enough so that the symbol was etched into the skull.

The victim's liver and heart were missing. Both organs were removed with a sharp blade, although the procedure was crude. Police corroborate that no evidence of the missing organs was found at the scene.

Abrasions and bruises to the wrists and legs indicate that the victim was tied up and beaten before death.

Once the carvings are translated, give the player concerned **Handout: Edge 4**. Note that, unfortunately, no success can be had (by anyone) in deciphering the glyphs on the inside of the box, which require the **Language (Mu)** skill, something the investigators or any of the professors are very unlikely to have.

HANDOUT: EDGE 4 TRANSLATION

Seeker of Wisdom,
Servant (son) of Yugr (Yoag) Setheth,
Deliverer of the people (slaves) of the water,
Bearer of the spirits of Nar-Loth-Hotep,
Child of Thoth,
Seeker of Wisdom.

VISITING THE ORNE LIBRARY

Although the town of Arkham supports a small public library, the famed Orne Library at Miskatonic University is by far the better source. Only students and faculty are allowed to borrow books but the library is open and available to the public for reference purposes. Hours are: 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday. The Reference Room is open Sundays 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., but the stacks are closed and books cannot be withdrawn on that day. The library is large, containing over 400,000 volumes, and the investigators should state the topics they wish to research.

A search in the history section, coupled with a successful **Library Use** roll, turns up a copy of the "ordinary reference volume" mentioned by Marion Allen in Merriweather's journal. It contains a drawing and short description of the small box now in the investigators' possession. It notes that little is known about the box, although scholars believe it to have been the possession of the little-known Nophru-Ka, a would-be usurper of the Egyptian throne, who lived during the Third Dynasty of Ancient Egypt. The box was believed to have been given to Nophru-Ka by the gods, and was said to contain djinn that could be called upon to enact some form of service. The book states the golden box was owned by the Parkinby-Andersons, a British noble family; however, it was stolen in 1871 and has not been seen since.

A second successful **Library Use** roll (by the same investigator or another) turns up a book about the fabled civilization of Mu. A reproduction of sea-eroded carvings purported to be Muvian in origin closely resembles those found inside the lid of the golden box. The book offers nothing in the way of translation and the glyphs remain indecipherable.

De Vermis Mysteriis

The library catalog shows that a copy of *De Vermis Mysteriis* is held by the university, but that it is locked away in the Restricted Collection of the library. The librarian says that the old volume is on a special list compiled by the head of the library, the aging Dr. Henry Armitage, who's permission is required if they wish to look at the tome.

Further questioning establishes that Dr. Armitage is in his office on weekday mornings, and that he is presently preoccupied with special studies of those restricted books.

Keeper note: recently alerted to the threat of the Cthulhu Mythos (as told in the H. P. Lovecraft story "The Dunwich Horror") and having no clear understanding of it, Dr. Armitage actively discourages visitors from reading the restricted books. The investigators find Armitage impervious to bribes and skill rolls (such as Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade). Thus, the investigators cannot access the information to be found in *De Vermis Mysteriis*. While it can be frustrating for the players, they should be under no illusion that Armitage considers the book to be dangerous—sometimes, not all of the information is available to the investigators and they must go on knowing they may lack certain clues. But, in this case, all the information the investigators need to know can actually be found in the farmhouse.

WHERE NEXT?

Having, possibly, undertaken some research the investigators are left with one key avenue to explore—to visit the old farmhouse near Ross's Corners, used all those years ago by Rupert Merriweather and his associates to free the "djinn" from the piece of amber found in the gold box. When the players come to this conclusion, ask each of them to make a note of all of the key things they are taking with them to the farmhouse. Some may need to visit a local hardware store to outfit themselves with flashlights, shovels, rope, and the like—depending on what each player feels will be required. Note that cautious or bullish investigators may wish to purchase weapons of some sort, such as handguns or shotguns. Allow the players to get what they wish, within reason—refer to the **Weapons and Damage** box on page 19 of **Book Two**—and don't worry about the cost of such items, as we can assume all of the investigators can afford to buy a few pieces of equipment and a weapon, if desired.

ROSS'S CORNERS

To get to the farmhouse, the investigators must pass through Ross's Corners, a hamlet located a few miles west of Arkham. They can drive or take the bus that passes through the village (on a run from Arkham to Worcester and back each day); the bus stops at Ross's Corner shortly after 10:00 a.m. on the way out, and shortly before 2:00 p.m. on the way back.

Ross's Corners consists of a few tired buildings and homes. The prosperity of the local farms has long been in decline. No more than 40 people live here. A church, a combination general store, post office, and gas station, and a milk depot are the community's centers.

If the investigators stop to purchase supplies or gasoline, or to ask directions, they may try to open conversations with some of the locals. Residents are exceptionally dour, unsmiling, and suspicious. A successful **Psychology** roll tells an investigator that they are experiencing something besides proverbial Yankee reticence. If the investigators are dressed well and act respectably, the people may warm up to them. Ask the players to choose one among them as spokesperson. If the spokesperson can flatter the villagers with a successful **Charm** or **Fast Talk** roll, they can learn more.

- If asking about the old farmhouse, they learn that the locals say it is haunted. Ma Peters, who runs the general store, sniffs at those stories and states that the taxes are always paid on the place. She goes on to say that a Mr. Merriweather in Arkham has owned it for years and has done nothing with it, as nearly everybody knows. Country people make it their business to know who is responsible for local property.
- If the Keeper judges that any of the investigators have made a good impression on Ma Peters, she may confide that last night a local woman disappeared, a middle-aged farmer's wife, called Maggie McPhirter, who went out after dark to check on their horses and hasn't been seen since. She says, "Any suspicious looks you mighta got today are on account of that. Folks are a little shy about strangers right now. Don't think nothin' of it."
- If asking for directions to the farmhouse, they are told to take the Boone Road that runs north out of town, and then to turn left down path some 2 miles (3.2 km) hence. The path comes just after an old lightning damaged tree that stands by the roadside.
- If the investigators arrived by bus, they can try to hire a local to give them a lift in a truck or wagon, who will be astonished to receive payment for saving someone a stroll of a couple of miles. Otherwise, the investigators walk, carrying any equipment and supplies with them.

THE FARMHOUSE

The ancient farmhouse sits back away from Boone Road, down an overgrown path. The investigators note an old dead tree, blackened by a lightning strike in years' past, which marks the turn off for the path and farmhouse. The farmhouse becomes visible after traveling along the path through the trees. The road is a wide, weed-grown gravel track leading to the farmhouse and to the remains of a large barn.

The house is of 18th century saltbox design, with a high peaked roof and windows flanked by sagging shutters. While most of the windows are broken, the ones still intact are filthy and resemble frosted glass due to the years of dirt and dust. It's a single-story structure, comprising two rooms, with a windowless attic overhead. The roof is a little bowed, but all the shingles are intact. The whole place exudes a strange and unsettling atmosphere; there is no bird song in the trees, just the sound of the many branches swaying in the breeze. It's as if the house has been waiting for the investigators for many years.

Keeper note: use the description above to relay to the players what the farmhouse looks like but also to give them a sense of the eerie atmosphere. It's a strange, dark house—who knows what could be inside? Play up the sense of mystery and fear, which helps to set the mood for the forthcoming scenes.

The investigators may find the following points of interest as they search in and around the property—they may find some of these on their initial survey of the place, while others might be found later in the scenario if they missed things the first time round:

Looking Around Outside the House

It's assumed that the investigation takes place in spring or summer, so most of the open ground in the area is covered in wildflowers. There is a dense patch of these in front of the house where a flower and vegetable garden once grew. The flowers have spread across the area, but a successful **Spot Hidden** roll detects some well-grown vegetables can still be found in the garden plot.

Inspecting the tall grass and weeds around the house, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll finds a recently dead raccoon laying in the knee-high grass. If the thirty-pound (13.6 kg) carcass is turned over, the cause of death is easily determined. The animal's breast is stained with clotted blood, and a large hole has been bored into its chest. An investigator making a successful **Science (Biology)**, **Medicine**, or **Natural World** roll may determine that the animal's ribs were wrenched apart and then its heart was neatly scooped out. A fox could

have done it, but the investigator has an uneasy feeling after noticing the edges of the wound, which are just too smooth to suggest another animal did this.

A trail leads off from the house to a small privy, still standing and intact among the trees. A decaying barn stands behind the house, as well as a collapsed lean-to where bundles of firewood were once kept. There are still logs present, but these are damp and will need to be dried in the house before they will burn without excess smoke.

A water well, made from large stones, stands next to the house. The bucket and rope have long rotted away, so need to be replaced.

Keeper note: the water in the well is safe to drink, though there is forest litter floating on top. The monster lurking in the farmhouse's attic killed the raccoon.

Looking Further Afield

Investigators who take the time to wander around the grounds of the property and who enter the surrounding woodland may make a grisly discovery. About 200 yards (183 m) from the barn, within the trees, is the body of a middle-aged woman. The investigators may suddenly come upon the corpse if they are searching the area, which provokes a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 Sanity point loss).

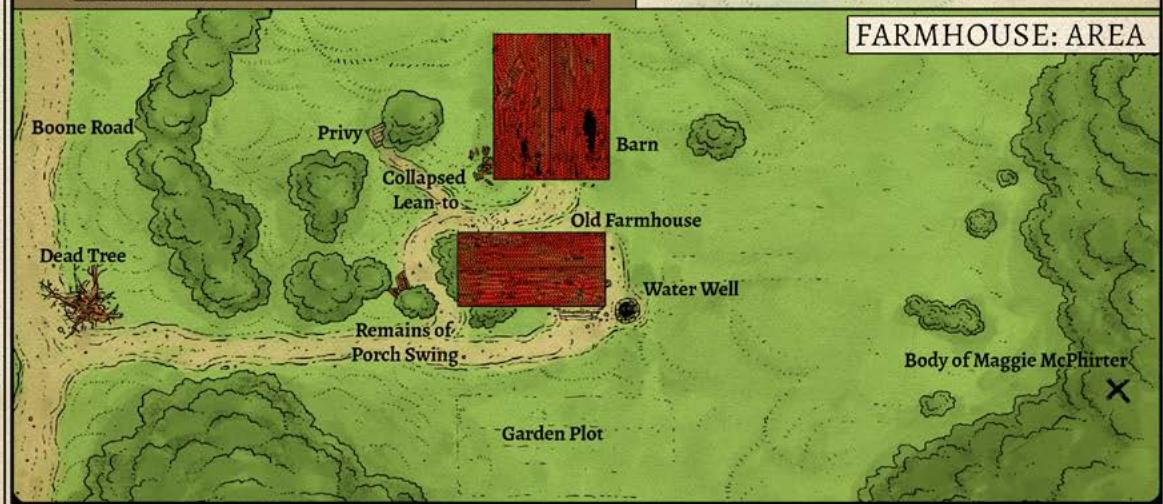
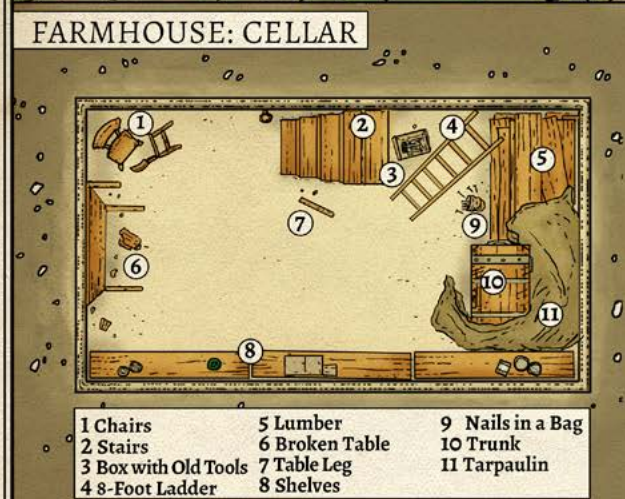
Examining the body, the investigators find that the woman's clothes are blood soaked and still wet. Closer examination finds a large hole in her chest. If the investigators already found the dead raccoon, the woman's wound is disconcertingly similar to that found on the animal: her rib cage has been torn apart. A successful **First Aid** or **Medicine** roll reveals that the woman's heart is missing.

Keeper note: the unfortunate woman is the missing Maggie McPhirter, who went out after dark to check on her horses and hasn't been seen since. Reporting Maggie's death to the police before they explore the rest of the property, or carry out the ritual, may affect some of the events detailed below; it may also make the investigators persons of interest to the local police, which could hamper their activities. The Keeper should adjust what happens accordingly.

Searching the Barn

If an investigator searches through the remains of the barn, request a **DEX** roll to traverse the debris without tripping. A failed roll results in a fall, causing 1D3 hit points damage from cutting a hand or leg on some broken glass. The remains of several rusted farm tools and horse tack are all there is to find here. There are no animals larger than a rat living in the barn or on the property.

Keeper note: the monster in the farmhouse's attic kills most of the animals that come into the area at night.



KEEPER INFORMATION: HISTORY OF THE FARMHOUSE

Bradley Washington, who purchased the land to start his own farm, built the farmhouse in 1816. With the assistance of family and friends, Washington established a healthy farm where he raised wheat, corn, and some livestock. After the building was complete, his wife Sarah joined him. She planted the flower and vegetable garden in front of the house. The bench swing was an anniversary gift Bradley made for her.

The couple tended their farm for several years, earning enough from their crops to have a good life. In time, Sarah contracted pneumonia, forcing Bradley to take her to Boston for treatment. He put the farm up as collateral for a loan from the bank to cover her medical bills, and this is how he eventually lost the property. The bank sold off the property to Rupert Merriweather, who needed a remote location for his group's occult experiments.

Approaching the Farmhouse

The remains of a porch swing rest at the edge of the trees that once supported it. The chains have long since broken; they swing lightly in the breeze, making a creaking, metallic sound when the wind picks up. The swing is on the ground, with weeds grown through its spaces, the wood rotting back to the earth.

On lintels over all the doors and windows are carved symbols of a strange nature. These can be identified with a successful **Occult** roll as symbols of power used to ward against otherworldly spirits; a good defense if left in place but if cut away from the house, they are useless. Marion Allen was the only member of the Brotherhood that had the knowledge of how to create such wards.

There is a single door in the front, with a small oil lamp hanging from the wall beside it (lighting the lamp requires oil and a new wick). The key that accompanied the deed unlocks the door without trouble. Rusty hinges squeal in protest after so many years of non-use. The back door, if checked, is unlocked.



THE FRONT ROOM

Stepping through the front door of the farmhouse, the front room is dirty and long untouched. A foul odor greets the visitors. Dust lies thickly on the furniture and empty shelves, while dead leaves and detritus cover the floor. An iron stove rests against a wall, the ventilation pipe still connected to the outside. There is a round table with chairs near the stove. The wooden floor is warped and stained—the result of water leaking through the roof and ceiling. Rot has eaten away at a table, an old couch, and matching wingchair—perhaps these moldering pieces of furniture are the source of the foul odor in the room.

Near the entrance to the second room is a narrow opening in the floor, revealing a steep flight of steps leading down to a cellar.

Keeper note: ask those inside the house to make a **Listen** roll. Success indicates an investigator hears a scuffling and scurrying noise under the floor. The source of the noise is Red Jake, who is hiding in the cellar (see nearby).

THE BACK ROOM

The back room has a comfortable armchair in one corner, while a table stands against a wall beneath the rear window. An old walking stick lies on top of the table. The fireplace is large and made of gray stone. An unlocked back door leads out in the direction of the barn and a collapsed lean-to.

A trapdoor, set in the middle of the ceiling overhead, leads to the attic space. The wooden frame surrounding the trapdoor it is decorated with the same occult carvings seen over the doors and windows of the house.

- Ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll if an investigator is looking around the back room. A success detects muddy boot prints on the floor, coming from the back door. The prints are evidence of recent occupation. (Red Jake made the boot prints when entering and exiting the property.) In addition, the fireplace contains the embers of a recent fire, possibly lit within the last day. A thick wool blanket has been tossed beside the fireplace, and an empty can of Campbell's pork-and-beans lies nearby. A dirty tin spoon—that looks like surplus from the Great War—sticks out of the can. Traces of the sauce are still liquid and look relatively fresh.
- Apart from the walking stick on the table, there is a large piece of worn and wrinkled fabric on which rests a half-full penny box of wooden matches, as well as small piece of soap, a tin cup, a screwdriver, a can opener, a jack knife, and the stub of a candle. Depending upon the investigators' backgrounds, the Keeper may or may not require an **INT** roll to conclude that this is an unwrapped bundle, meaning

that at least one hobo has stayed here within the last day. Where they are now is a mystery, as they appear to have left without taking their meager possessions.

- If investigators seek to open the trapdoor in the ceiling, see **Keeper Information: The Lurker in the Attic** (page 39). A very tall investigator (SIZ 90) might be able to reach the trapdoor when standing on tiptoes, but it would be much easier to access the attic if they find and stand on an old wooden box or use a chair.

Keeper note: if the investigators failed their **Listen** rolls in the Front Room, ask the players to make another **Listen** roll now to see if they detect the sound of movement from below them in the cellar. The source of the noise is Red Jake, a hobo by trade.

Red Jake

Red Jake is an amiable fellow who made the mistake of trying to bed down in the farmhouse last night, only to be driven off by the unseemly noises and smells coming from the attic above. Fleeing the house in a panic, leaving his meager belongings behind, he was chased down by the monster that inhabits the house.

His escape was narrow. He fled from the monster, which seemed about to catch and attack him, when it suddenly veered away into the woods behind the barn. Little does Red Jake know that the monster heard Maggie McPhirter and chose to attack her instead, carrying her away to where her body now lies (see *Looking Further Afield*, page 32). Not quite believing his luck in escaping the monster, Red Jake spent the night shivering and hiding under a tree.

Eventually building up the courage to reenter the house, Red Jake sneaked back inside to retrieve his belongings, only to be surprised by the arrival of the investigators. He now hides in the dark cellar. Paranoid and fearful, he is temporarily insane from last night's encounter with the horror.

A number of possibilities exist for what could happen with Red Jake, as follows:

If Red Jake is Left Undisturbed

If left alone, Red Jake waits until the time is right and then bolts upstairs, grabs what he can of his possessions left on the table, and darts out of the back door, heading for the woods. Unless the investigators can run him down, he does not return.

- **Chase:** if trying to catch Red Jake, ask the investigator chasing to make an opposed **DEX** roll. The Keeper rolls 1D100 for Red Jake's DEX of 60, while the player also rolls 1D100 and compares the result to their investigator's DEX value. Whoever gets the best result wins the opposed roll.




COMBAT

With Red Jake's surprise attack dealt with, any further combat now follows the standard procedure (see **Book Two: Combat**, page 18). Compare the **DEX** of any investigators involved in the scene with Red Jake's **DEX** of 60. The order of who gets to act first is decided in **DEX** order, highest first. On everyone's **DEX** turn, the character gets to do one thing: most likely to attack.

- Making an attack: roll 1D100 and compare this to the character's **Fighting** skill to judge if the attack was successful; if so, was it a Regular, Hard, or Extreme success? The defender gets to respond by announcing whether they are attempting to Dodge or Fight Back (**Book Two: Close Combat**, page 18). Usually, the attacker and defender roll their dice at the same time and then compare the results. Whoever wins the combat gets to deal damage.
- Remember, everyone involved in the combat gets to act on their **DEX** turn, as well as getting to react (Dodge or Fight Back) against each attack made on them.
- If two or more characters are attacking a single opponent, they Outnumber the opponent and may gain a bonus die to their attack roll (**Book Two: Outnumbered**, page 20).
- Rather than attack, an investigator could decide to tackle and hold the opponent, using a Fighting Maneuver (**Book Two**, page 19).
- Alternatively, an investigator might try to reason rather than attack at all. What skill is the investigator using? **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, **Persuade**, or **Intimidate**? Their manner and choice of delivery determines which of these skills is used. If the roll is successful, the Keeper must decide what happens next: the opponent stops their attack and listens, but what then? The opponent might surrender, turn tail and run away, or pause only to then resume attacking.

In the case of Red Jake, he surrenders if one of the investigators convinces him they mean him no harm; otherwise, he will defend himself if the investigators decide to attack him. Once Jake has taken 6 or more damage, he surrenders and drops the chair leg he has been using as a club.

Note that Red Jake's profile can be found on page 48.



If it's a tie or both rolls are failed, the chase continues with each of the participants matching their paces. If the player wishes, they can attempt another opposed roll until the chase is ended. If Red Jake wins two consecutive opposed rolls, he manages to get away, but if the investigator wins a single opposed roll then Red Jake has been caught—allowing the investigators to hear his story concerning his encounter with the monster. If you need a reminder about **Opposed Skill Rolls**, see page 14 in **Book Two**.

If the Investigators Enter the Cellar

If someone goes downstairs, perhaps investigating the strange noises, Red Jake jumps out of the shadows and makes a surprise attack with an old table leg. Ask the player concerned to attempt a **Spot Hidden** roll: if successful, Red Jake does not gain a bonus die to the surprise attack; otherwise, he does gain the bonus die.

- **Surprise attack:** the Keeper rolls 1D100 for Jake's attack, comparing the result to Jake's **Fighting (Brawl)** of 45% (22/9)—remember, the numbers in parentheses note the (half/fifth) values, allowing you to determine if the dice result is a Regular (below or equal to 45), Hard (below or equal to 22), or Extreme (below or equal to 9) success. If the investigator failed to spot Jake in the cellar, then add a bonus die to the roll, choosing the best (lowest) result. If Jake scores a Regular or Hard success, the investigator suffers 1D4 damage. If Jake gets an Extreme success, he hits hard and automatically causes 4 damage, no roll required!

Red Jake just wants to get away, so if his attack is successful, he makes a break for it up the stairs to the back room and out of the house. The investigators have a choice: do they let him leave, try to chase and capture him, or attempt to attack and capture him?

- If they leave him be or try to chase him: refer to **If Red Jake is Left Undisturbed** (see page 35).
- If they try to attack him: refer to the **Combat** section nearby.

Questioning Red Jake

If the investigators somehow subdue the hobo (either by a successful social skill roll or by inflicting 6 or more points of damage), they find him rambling, almost incoherent. A successful **Psychology** roll determines he is in shock, so if the investigators act to calm him down, they manage to get a few scraps of information from him. Alternatively, a successful **Psychoanalysis** roll works to calm Red Jake down enough for him to talk.



Red Jake describes how he found the house yesterday while traveling through the countryside, and how, during the night, he heard strange sounds and was then attacked by what he calls a “monster.” He says the monster made a piercing shriek as it hunted him in the woods, but that it also created a stench, like rotting meat. He was lucky to get away, as it seemed the monster heard something in the woods and left him alone to go investigate.

He has been aimlessly traveling up and down the Eastern seaboard since he returned from the Great War. He tells those who listen that he has family in California, who he’s trying to get back to. He’s an honest man by nature but is too undisciplined and impulsive to hold down a regular job. He makes what little money he can by doing handyman chores for those folks that will let him. If the investigators search Red Jake, they find his pockets contain a folded straight razor, a whetstone, a whistle, and 32 cents earned from his last odd job.

What Happens to Red Jake?

The investigators could take Red Jake to Ross’s Corners and turn him over to Pa Peters, the Justice of the Peace. With Maggie McPhirter missing (unless her body has been discovered), the police pin her “abduction” on Red Jake and

he is arrested to face trial. If the investigators play a role in bringing Maggie McPhirter’s death to the attention of the police, then they save Red Jake from a prison sentence, but may, inadvertently, cause complications for their own investigations.

If Red Jake runs away and escapes the investigators (or they simply let him go), he dies that night, the second victim of the monster in the attic. He may return after death to pay the investigators a surprise visit (see **Enacting the Ritual**, page 45). If the investigators kill Red Jake, have the investigators make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D3 loss) for causing the death of an innocent man.

THE CELLAR

After the investigators have dealt with Red Jake, they can look around the cellar. Some light filters through cracks in the floorboards of the rooms above, but not enough to see clearly by. They will need to use flashlights or lanterns. (If they didn’t think to pick up such items, there’s a lantern hanging by the front door, but also call for a **Luck** roll to see if they can find a pair of lanterns and some oil and wicks in the barn.) The only light source down in the cellar is a lantern sitting on a shelf across the room, which the investigators

may find with a successful **Spot Hidden** roll. The good news is that the lantern is full of oil and the wick is still useable.

The cellar is small and has a low ceiling, making the room feel claustrophobic. The floor is hard-packed earth. It's cooler than the house above and smells of dirt and dust. There is a pair of chairs against a wall at the base of the steps, and a table with a missing leg resting on its side. Shelves line one wall. Cans and boxes sit on the shelves, each holding the long-spoiled remains of foodstuffs. Several tins of tea leaves lurk among the cans, complete with silver tea set, now long tarnished. There are a few cast iron pots and pans for cooking, and sets of tableware for eating. Additionally, on the lowest shelf, is a row of bottles containing good liquor.

By the steps leading into the cellar is an old but still sturdy 8-foot (2.5 m) ladder. Behind the steps is a pile of lumber, a bag of rusted nails, and a wooden box with some old tools: hammer, hand saw, hand drill with 3 different bits, chisel, and rasp. In a corner near the shelves is a bundle under an oiled tarpaulin.

Keeper note: if the tarpaulin is removed, the investigators find an expensive looking travel trunk. The straps are fastened, and latches secured. See **The Trunk** (following). All of the supplies down here were brought by the Dark Brotherhood, who stocked up for the weekends they spent here.

The Trunk

If the trunk is opened, the investigators see a folded black cloth, with a handwritten letter resting on top. On the underside lid of the trunk are more warding sigils (carved by Marion Allen). Within the trunk are materials mentioned in Rupert Merriweather's journal (The Slim Journal, page 23)—listed below. If the investigators read the letter, give them **Handout: Edge 5**.

- Six folded black robes.
- Cigar box (see following).
- A sheaf of yellowed papers (see following).

Cigar Box

The box and brand of cigars date to the 1870s. Once opened, inside is a small metal canister containing a coarse and brownish powder, and a smaller wooden box with a sliding lid. Within the smaller box is a silvery, talcum powder-like substance.

- A successful **Science (Chemistry or Pharmacy)** roll identifies sulfur and oxide of copper as constituents of the brown powder.

POWDER OF IBN-GHAZI

The Powder of Ibn-Ghazi is a rare magical substance, created through specialist arcane knowledge. When thrown (or blown through a tube) over invisible things it makes them visible for a short while. In practice, the powder makes the invisible visible for “ten heartbeats,” which is to say a few seconds at most. Creating the powder is difficult and requires special ingredients not easily obtained.

Using the powder costs no Sanity points, but seeing what it exposes may cause a Sanity roll. In the case of the Lurker in the Attic, seeing its true form does provoke a **Sanity** roll, with a loss of 1/1D8 Sanity points. It takes one action to blow or throw the powder at the monster—no roll required for this action but the investigator must be within a few feet of the monster for the powder to cover it.

Keeper note: the brown powder is burned in a fire during the ritual to summon or dispel the monster.

- The silvery talcum powder defies identification—even if subjected to laboratory analysis. The powdery substance is somewhat like graphite and adheres to the skin, coating it and imparting a greasy feel, but washes off easily.
- Should an investigator make a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll (highly unlikely due to the fact that the investigators probably have little to zero ability in this special skill) they can identify the silvery talcum powder as the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi (see box nearby). Note that Dr. Armitage (Orne Library at Miskatonic University), if shown the powder, could identify its true name and purpose.

Keeper note: the investigators don't necessarily need to know what the powder is called or even what it actually is in order to use it against the monster in the attic. If necessary, ask for an **INT** roll to deduce that the powder might be useful against the monster; presumably, if thrown at the monster, it might have some effect.

Sheaf of Yellowed Papers

The papers are handwritten notes, all dated from 1877. All the sheets are in Marion Allen's handwriting. None of the writing mentions the silvery talcum-like powder (Powder of Ibn-Ghazi). Key information contained in the papers is described as follows:

- Six of the sheets of paper are all the same, all of them copies of the same Latin chant (these were prepared as separate copies for each of the members of the Dark Brotherhood)—**Handout: Edge 6**. The phrases are in Latin; a successful **Language (Latin)** roll can translate the text—**Handout: Edge 7**.
- One sheet identifies the Latin chant as having been derived from a book called *De Vermis Mysteriis*. It also states that, while the original chant detailed the ritual for “releasing the spirit trapped inside the ancient amber,” several words within the incantation have been replaced, changing the original summoning ritual to one of exorcism so that it may be used to dispel the vile spirit currently trapped in the attic.
- One sheet contains a description of a pentagram and says the symbol must be drawn as part of the ritual—**Handout: Edge 8**.
- Three sheets discuss the procedure of the ritual itself, which takes at least an hour to perform and must be started at midnight. While at least one person speaks aloud the ritual phrases, another person must draw the pentagram on the floor, while another burns a certain combination of chemicals in a fire nearby. Allen's notes mention that the chemicals resemble a brown powder, which he says he has prepared and stored with these papers in a metal canister ready for use. While one person may perform the ritual chant, the notes recommend that several people take part, allowing each individual to occasionally interrupt their chanting without disturbing the overall ritual or its potency. If the chant is continuous, with at least one person reciting the repeating phrases aloud, the “spirit” must succumb; however, it warns that even the slightest disruption of the chanting may result in failure, requiring another ritual to be performed on a following night. The notes suggest that during the ritual, “a watcher be posted, lest the sorcerers be disturbed by the nuisances and distractions of malevolent spirits.” Thus, these sheets confirm that a two-hour ritual using the chant provided, begun at midnight, will drive off unwanted spirits.

Keeper note: finding the yellowed papers and the old cigar box in the trunk is an important clue, which serves to provide the investigators with a means to dispel the monster lurking in the farmhouse. Without this important information, the investigators will fail in their task to banish the horror. It's okay if the investigators don't find the papers initially. Later on, once they realize they are in danger, the Keeper can remind the players that they did not search certain rooms or that they forgot to look in the trunk, and so on. Giving the players a nudge in the right direction without necessarily telling them what to do is fine. Remember, the Keeper provides the information but it's up to the players to use what they are told. If the Keeper has reminded the players about something they may have missed, but which they then choose to ignore, then on their own heads be it!

KEEPER INFORMATION: THE LURKER IN THE ATTIC

The Lurker in the Attic waits soundlessly, listening to the intruders below, judging their intent, and gauging their strength. Dwelling in this house for over 40 years, it has learned to observe and wait, and it will use its intelligence and cunning to stay here rather than be banished back from whence it came.

Although the monster is careful to make no sound, an investigator may wish to explore the trapdoor in the ceiling of the back room. The ladder from the basement is in good enough shape to use, or a shoulder-boost from another investigator can provide the lift necessary to reach the attic space.

The Lurker waits until an investigator pokes their head up through the opening. Then, with a growling rush, it makes a grab for its target. It is nearly invisible—even a flashlight beam reveals little more than a swirl of detritus moving towards the shocked observer, accompanied by a loud thumping along the boards forming the ceiling. With a successful **Dodge** roll, the investigator is able to fall backwards to the floor below, but in so doing, loses 1D3 hit points damage from the fall and impact with the floor below (but avoiding the talons of the fiend). After this initial attack, the trapdoor slams shut. A growling, panting sound is heard coming from the attic above. Witnesses to these events, including the target, should make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D2 Sanity points loss).

*Handout: Edge 5*25th March 1877

I don't know why I'm putting this down on paper. It's probably a bad idea, but I feel the need to leave some kind of explanation for my actions and intent.

When I took the sarcophagus from my uncle I did not think it would be missed. I expected to be able to research it and return it later. I was such a fool. Despite believing in the powers we tried to summon, I grossly misunderstood the consequences. Now Robert is dead, and Harold a madman.

I'm going back to the farmhouse to organize our things. I dread stepping foot again in that place, but I must make sure that our materials will be available again when we need them.

Since the others are too shaken to attempt a banishment of the creature, I can only hope that the thing hasn't the power to remain in our reality more than a few hours or days. At least it's bound to the house itself. I shall search for a means to destroy it before the last of us passes from this world and its release from the house, if it is still there. I believe I know where I can find the knowledge I need to drive the creature away without assistance from others. I hear tales of mystics in New Orleans that know much of the true magicks of the world.

I am leaving the gold box in Rupert's care. I told him not to sell it or have it appraised by anyone, but did not tell him why. He also seemed puzzled by my insistence not to live in Boston, but I believe he trusts my judgment not to go into danger unwittingly. My uncle does not know about our "Dark Brotherhood," so Rupert and the others will be safe from anyone looking for it. I'll be back to put things right again.

Marion Allen

P.S. I write this before I close the lid on the trunk. The thing is still in the attic of the house. It seemed to recognize me, and spoke foul curses at me. I will carve protective wards on the trunk to prevent any tampering with its contents, just in case.

O Spiritus, vos per Pontentiam Sapientiam Virtum exorcizo, per scientiam divinam inanemque tenebrosum, per nomen Veterum, per radicem, truncum, fontem, originem alium nominum divinorum omnium, unde vitam potentiamque suam traherunt.

Vos per Nomen Nyarlathotep exorcizo, sapientiam optime ferentem, cuius maiestas tam excelsa, clarior quam sidera inanis.

Vos per potentissimum Nomen Azathoth exorcizo, Omnipotentem, scelesti puniendum.

Te exorcizo, O daemon, omninoque impero, quacumque in parte sis Universi, per omnium horum nominum virtutem. Audi et pare me!

O Spirits, you I exorcise by the Power, Wisdom, and Virtue, by the Divine Knowledge, by the Dark Void, by the name of the Old Ones, the root, trunk, source, and origin of all the other Divine Names, whence they all draw their life and their power.

I exorcise you by the Name Nyarlathotep, signifying the most excellent bringer of wisdom. His majesty so high, and brighter than the stars of the void.

I exorcise you by the most powerful Name of Azathoth, the All Powerful, who shall punish the crimes.

I exorcise you, and I command you absolutely, O demon, in whatsoever part of the Universe you may be, by the virtue of all these Names. Hear you and obey!

Handout: Edge 8



If the Dodge roll fails, the investigator suffers 1D8+1D6 points of damage from the monster's attack (its invisible talons raking and tearing into their skin), and then the poor investigator falls and suffers the 1D3 additional points of impact damage. All present must make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D3 loss) to witness this horrifying attack. The victim, if surviving, suffers injuries to the head and face that will likely leave permanent scars. However, if the Lurker's attack kills the investigator outright (they lose all of their hit points from the attack and fall), it indicates that the talons have caught in the investigator's skull. With a scream, the Lurker hauls up the dangling corpse, rips out its heart, and then throws the carcass back down through the opening. Witnesses to this horror should make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss).

Keeper note: did you notice how each outcome described above provides a different Sanity point loss? As the severity and horror is increased for certain possible outcomes, the Sanity loss is also increased. Only one of the outcomes is possible (the investigator dodges and falls, the monster hits them, or the monster kills them), so only one set of Sanity losses is applied (ignore the outcomes that don't actually happen). Additionally, investigator death is common in *Call of Cthulhu* (it's a horror game after all). Should one of the investigators die, the player concerned can create a new investigator to jump back into the game after a reasonable pause. The new investigator could be another associate of the other players' investigators—perhaps they run from the house after the death of one of their own and then head back to Ross's Corners to use a telephone to call for help. Alternatively, the new investigator might be a local person, come by the house when searching for the missing Maggie McPhirter, who becomes embroiled in the adventure. Talk to the players about how the new investigator could arrive, as some of the players are likely to suggest good ideas. Agree the most appropriate, and introduce the new investigator accordingly, dropping them into the action when the time comes.

Another Keeper note: some players may, after the death of an investigator, think to call the police for help. As Keeper, you have a choice: do the police respond or do they ignore the plea? Ask yourself: are the police likely to believe crazy stories of monsters living in attics? Probably not. If the players use some other more believable tactic, a policeman might be sent to the farmhouse to check things out (depending on any previous interactions the investigators may have had with local law enforcement). On investigating, he looks in the attic but is immediately killed by the Lurker. Now, as the investigators have effectively sent an innocent man to his death, they must make another **Sanity** roll (1D4/1D6 loss) for comprehending their role in the death—plus they may

have some explaining to do! Another alternative is to have the policeman be the replacement investigator, which puts his actions into the hands of the player—ignore the advice above and don't automatically kill him off: let him join the investigators and attempt to solve the mystery.

ABOUT THE LURKER

This monster is a near invisible and barely material manifestation from another dimension. Although not bound to the house as the Dark Brotherhood believed, it regards the attic as its home and refuge. It is not physically harmed by light, but light does cause the creature pain. It prefers darkened shelter. It finds sustenance and pleasure in devouring the hearts of warm-blooded animals.

Physical weapons cannot normally harm the Lurker, and it suffers no damage from fire, electricity, or acid. It becomes visible and takes on a semi-solid form if dusted with the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, or when feeding. When visible, it takes half damage from physical (knives, bullets, etc.) or fire attacks.

If the investigators ever enter the attic when the Lurker is not there, they find it littered with the rotting corpses and skeletons of raccoons, possums, birds, and other small animals that have mistakenly explored here. When the Lurker feeds, it leaves some residue behind in the wounds. This connection to the victim is what allows it to control them after death. This ability is one of a number that the Lurker possesses.

The Lurker's Special Abilities

- Can animate and control the corpse of something it has killed, costing the Lurker a certain amount of magic points per creature: 5 magic points per large (human or bear-size) creature or 1 magic point for small animals (raccoon or bird). The Lurker only has a total of 18 magic points, which, once spent, do not regenerate for 24 hours. Reanimated corpses "live" for 3 hours and then fall to the ground, or may be destroyed. The animated corpses are not like movie zombies; a headshot will not stop them. Instead, they must be blown or cut to pieces, or somehow dragged or taken inside the house (past the wards). The Lurker loses control of animated corpses when they pass the wards over the threshold, with the living corpse falling to ground "dead."
- Can pass through unwarded material obstructions without effort.
- Generates odors and sounds to disturb or entice victims.
- Instead of attacking with its claws, the Lurker may shoot stinking acid, causing 1D2 damage if the target cannot Dodge the attack.

Refer to the Lurker's profile at the end of the scenario on page 48. Here you will find its hit points, combat skills, and so on.

Dispelling the Lurker

As already mentioned, the Lurker is impervious to most physical attacks, so dispelling the monster according to Marion Allen's notes is the only solution. Setting the house ablaze does not harm the creature, but rather encourages it to take up residence nearer to Ross's Corners!

Dispelling the monster takes around two hours of continual chanting, begun at midnight. A properly drawn pentagram and a fire burning some of the brown chemical compound found with Allen's notes are also required. These notes also suggest that at least one person stand back from the ceremony in order to watch for malevolent spirits that may be drawn to the rites, but the investigators may do as they wish.

To dispel the Lurker, several of the words in the chant have been changed; the altered ritual is in the documents found in the trunk in the cellar (page 38). Individual chanters may stop now and then to catch their breaths, but at least one person must be chanting at any given moment. Each investigator participating in the chant donates 2 magic points every half hour they join in the chant. A total of 8 magic points is required for the ritual to work; thus, if two investigators are chanting non-stop, they will generate enough magic points in one hour, shortening the ritual. If an investigator's magic points reach zero, deduct further magic point losses directly from their hit points (one for one); the damage this causes can be reflected by cuts opening on the investigator's skin, bleeding thick, red blood down their clothes and onto the floor. Note that the Lurker will try to prevent the chanting, so some investigators may need to break off to defend themselves or defend the other chanters; thus, it may also take longer than two hours for the investigators to generate the 8 required magic points.

Keeper note: for a reminder about magic points, see **Step Two: Secondary Attributes**, page 7, in **Book Two**.

Before the Ritual Begins

Once the investigators have figured out that they must perform the ritual to banish the monster, they must wait until midnight to begin. Depending on the time that the investigators reach this conclusion, the Lurker may depart the house to seek out food. At sunset, hours before the investigators can begin the ritual, the creature leaves the house. With an ear-piercing shriek, it screams out of the attic and across the fields towards the nearby woods. A Listen roll is unnecessary to hear it exit. Any investigators standing outside may partially see the thing leaving the house, which calls for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D3 points loss) at the sight of a faint, tangling vortex rolling through the air. Leaves are shaken from branches as the thing whirls by above them.

An attack on watching investigators would probably succeed, but the Lurker intends to track down and kill the

hobo who escaped its clutches the night before. In this endeavor, it is successful if Red Jake escaped from the house earlier, or if the investigators let him go; the hobo dies a horrible death at around ten o'clock that night. Investigators who make a successful **Listen** roll hear a distant scream, which ends too soon for them to take action. Otherwise, the Lurker hunts in the woods and returns before midnight to the attic. It wishes to "size up" the investigators and see what they do before taking action against them.

THE RITUAL

Once the investigators begin the ritual, the Lurker should return to the house (if it has not done so already), now horribly aware of the investigators' intent. Unable to enter the warded rooms, it plunges into the attic above and begins a campaign of terror calculated to disrupt the proceedings. During this time, it uses its special abilities: reanimating the animals and humans it has killed, squirting acid through the ceiling at the investigators, making strange noises to confuse or lure the investigators away, and so on.

Remember to call for **Sanity** rolls when horrific things happen, with minor horrors provoking the loss of 0/1D3 Sanity points, and major horrors (such as seeing reanimated human corpses) resulting in 1/1D6 Sanity points loss. Profiles for some different reanimated horrors can be found at the end of the scenario. The danger of temporary insanity exists, as well as the possibility of indefinite insanity due to quickly accumulating losses. Insane investigators may be unable to chant properly, but they can take over the "watcher" position if their insanity allows. Any investigator, sane or not, who flees the safety of the house is probably set upon by the Lurker and could be slain; such victims are likely to be reanimated and return under the sway of the Lurker. Of course, if things go badly and the investigators decide to run away, allow them to do so and return the next night better prepared.

Keeper note: the Keeper can throw a lot at the players during this climactic scene: the Lurker and its special abilities, reanimated creatures, Sanity rolls, and so on. As Keeper, you should be prepared to tone down or increase the threats facing the investigators, dependent on the number of players in the game. If you have just one or two players, then reduce the threats, perhaps only bringing in one reanimated horror, or just have the Lurker using its acid attack to try and stop the ritual. If you have four or five players, then two—or even three—reanimated creatures might turn up, one after the other, to distract and threaten the proceedings. The scene should be challenging but not impossible for the investigators to achieve success—if they use teamwork and initiative to deal with the situation. Reward creative thinking wherever you can.

ENACTING THE RITUAL

Use this section to guide you through the ritual. Sanity losses for certain events are noted in the text.

Starting the Ritual

The first 20 minutes of the ceremony go smoothly, allowing the investigators to mark out the pentagram and burn the brown powder in a fire. Then the monster makes its presence known: the investigators can hear it scratching and shuffling about above them.

Within moments, the creature sets up an awful howling, interspersed by grunts and foul curses spoken in a harsh, guttural voice. The old house sways and creaks, the sudden jolts shaking it to its foundations; objects fall from the shelves and roll across the floor (**Sanity** roll, 0/1D3 loss). This violence and noise continues for a while, and is then followed by a horrible smell creeping down from the attic. Suddenly, thick stinking goo oozes through the ceiling and drips down the walls. Call for a **Luck** roll. Those failing this roll are, at some point, spattered by this acid and suffer 1D2 damage as the acid burns through clothing and flesh.

While the investigators continue to chant, the Lurker seems to grow quiet. Call for a **Listen** roll to hear noises coming from outside—a faint call for help from a woman's

voice. An investigator looking outside sees something in the darkness, crawling slowly through the high grass towards the house. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll, or if a lantern or flashlight is used (no roll), reveals a middle-aged woman, obviously hurt, making her way to the house. She lifts her head and calls toward the house. Her face is streaked with blood. What do the investigators do?

Keeper note: this is the reanimated corpse of the missing Maggie McPhirter. She has been dead for 24 hours, her heart chewed out by the Lurker in the Attic. The monster has spent 5 magic points to animate the body and thereby disrupt the ceremony. If they didn't find her body during their preliminary searches of the property, then the investigators won't be aware of who she is (was) until they get a closer look at her, triggering a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss). However, if they do know who she is, they must make a **Sanity** roll as soon as they see her. Obviously, if the investigators have already reported Maggie's death to the police and her body has been removed, then the Lurker cannot use her in its attacks.

Anyone going outside is attacked, either by Maggie's animated corpse (if present) or, if the Keeper chooses cruelty, by the Lurker itself. The Lurker may also animate



Maggie McPhirter wants in!

the corpse of Red Jake if it managed to kill him, too, using it to attack any investigator attempting to help the woman. If the animated dead fail to lure the investigators out, the Lurker has its puppets assault the house, pushing on the doors or windows, screaming, shouting, hollering, and biting. The undead corpses cannot enter the house because of the wards, but they can throw rocks or branches through windows and at doors, and they can attempt to tear down the wood above windows and doors on which the wards are etched—if the investigators do not stop them from doing this, then the torn down ward is useless and the undead may enter the farmhouse to cause even more mayhem. They are fearsome, but not very difficult to destroy. The Sanity losses they provoke may be their most dangerous aspect.

The Lurker may also animate animals it has killed to attack the house, or any investigator outside it (costing it 5 magic points per large—bear-size—creature, or 1 magic point for small animals, such as a raccoon or bird). The reanimation lasts for up to 3 hours or until the reanimated corpse is destroyed. Profiles for the reanimated Maggie and Red Jake, as well as a reanimated raccoon and a brown bear can be found from page 49. These creatures are options for the Keeper to use, if so desired.

Keeper note: if the Keeper wishes to be really cruel, then the Lurker can adopt a particularly devious strategy. Although the reanimated dead cannot pass Allen's protective wards while they are intact, the Lurker can, nevertheless, throw the carcasses of those creatures left in the attic down through the hatch and into the house, only bringing them back to "life" once they are passed the wards that would otherwise stop them from gaining entry. This strategy is only recommended if there are four to five well-armed investigators able to deal with these undead furry nemeses. At the very least, it should encourage the investigators to get on with banishing the creature once and for all.

Able to generate all manner of odors, the Lurker can lure or disorientate the investigators. It can mimic anything it has experienced, so the smell of fresh baked bread or roasted meats are options to confuse investigators into acting rashly. Remember, the Lurker is able to interact with anything outside the two rooms that are warded in the farmhouse. If the investigators traveled in a car, it can cause the horn to go off, doors to slam, and create general mayhem. Alternatively, it can sit on the car and taunt from outside, and then proceed to tear the automobile apart. A nasty Keeper might have the Lurker leave invisible acidic slime all over the interior of the car—after banishing the monster, the investigators suffer acid damage when they go to leave! (Which can make for a fun scene the morning after.)

Keeper note: why doesn't the Lurker just go through the walls around the wards? This is a logical question regarding an illogical circumstance. Entities from outside our dimension are subject to magical wards. Sensing these protective energies, they are "put off" by them. While the wards are placed over windows and doors, they act to seal the entire room. While the Lurker is not powerful enough to cause the earth to tremble and cause the house's walls to fall down (destroying the wards), some other monsters from the Cthulhu Mythos are. Luckily, for the investigators, such horrors do not feature in this adventure!

An option: the investigators do not need to make skill rolls for performing the ritual, although the Keeper could—optionally, if wanting to add to the tension—decide that certain skill rolls are required. The following are suggestions: an **Art/Craft (Drawing, Art, etc.)** or **Occult** roll to correctly draw the pentagram on the floor; a **DEX** roll to correctly time the burning of the brown powder; and a **POW** or **CON** roll from those reciting the Latin phrases to ensure they maintain the chant. If incorporating these optional skill rolls, allow the investigators to push failed rolls, with the consequence of a pushed failure being that the Lurker's zombies break through the wards into the room, allowing the monsters to physically menace the proceedings.

The Lurker Appears

Nearing the last five minutes of the ritual, a wisp of oily smoke curls down from the ceiling, twisting towards the center of the pentagram on the floor. The creature from the attic is drawn through the wards before the investigators' eyes.

At this point, any animated corpses under the Lurker's control are released and fall lifeless to the ground. Any other effects the Lurker was creating also stop abruptly. Four more minutes of chanting is all that is required to drive it back to its place in the dimension it hails from. As it begins to condense in the pentagram, it becomes partially visible—appearing in the form of someone the investigators know.

Keeper note: when the Lurker appears, it takes the form of a familiar face—ideally, take inspiration from one of the investigators' **Significant People** in the Backstory section on the reverse of their investigator sheets. Alternatively, it could choose Red Jake, if it hasn't been able to use his corpse to attack them already. The Lurker appears like this to fool the investigators and tempt them into making a deal (see below). The Keeper has the option of allowing an investigator to make a **Psychology** roll to see through the disguise. Once an investigator dismisses the Lurker's disguise, it can change form again into another investigator's Significant Person, if the Keeper desires. Any that

dismiss the Lurker's disguise get to see its real form: a horrible twisting mass of talons and maws and long appendages, which provokes a **Sanity** roll (1/1D8 loss) —but subtract any points already lost when previously observing the Lurker leave the house at sunset. In addition, if any investigator goes insane, they now see the Lurker as a terrified and confused human child, rather than a horrible monster. As an involuntary action, an insane investigator steps forward to embrace and comfort the child. Unless stopped, they could die, as although the monster is confined within the pentagram, it can attack anyone who crosses the symbol's perimeter.

The Lurker, taking the form of someone known to an investigator, can attempt to make deals with the investigators at this point. It can offer information to things they personally seek: locating a missing relative, translation of a rare book, or even arcane lore (5 percentile points in the Cthulhu Mythos skill). These are only some of the things it can tempt or bargain with for its release—the Keeper is invited to create more temptations appropriate to the investigators. The Lurker may be able to grant some of these whispered bribes, but is unlikely to carry through with its promises. In this capacity, it does fit the classic role of djinn-like beings. Do the investigators listen and accept the bribes, or do they continue on and complete Merriweather's dying wish?

If an investigator breaks the pentagram on the floor (i.e. causes a break in the drawing), the Lurker is free of the binding and can attack anyone it likes. If the undead have broken in and some investigators are engaged in fighting, call for a **Luck** roll each round to determine if an investigator in combat has inadvertently stepped on and broken the pentagram.

If the investigators dismiss the Lurker's bargaining and finish the last few minutes of the chant, the monster is driven wailing from this world, vowing revenge on the investigators for their deeds. Banished, it leaves only a lingering, unearthly foulness behind.

CONCLUSION

Either the investigators successfully banished the Lurker and, more or less, survived the adventure, or they were driven from the farmhouse and fear to return. Perhaps they all died or went insane in the attempt? Grant the following rewards, dependent on the outcome of the scenario:

- If the Lurker was banished, each participating investigator receives a Sanity award of 1D10+1 Sanity points (add these to the investigators' current totals).
- If they failed to banish the creature, each investigator should make a **Sanity** roll, suffering the additional loss of

1/1D4 Sanity points. This loss results from the knowledge that the Lurker remains free. In the following week, newspapers report three murders in the vicinity of Ross's Corners—the investigators realize the deaths were caused by the Lurker and could have been prevented if they had been successful.

LOOSE ENDS?

The investigators' connection with this adventure may not be finished. You don't have to use any of the following ideas, and can end the scenario as described above. But, if your players want to continue the game, these ideas serve as possibilities, allowing you to extend the scenario a little, or you could use them to start a new investigation of your own design.

- Do the investigators leave the area without reporting any deaths or the discovery of Maggie McPhirter's body? Or do they satisfactorily explain to the sheriff what happened? The sheriff will not believe stories of monsters and zombies, so the investigators will need to think up plausible explanations if they do not want to become "persons of interest" in the sheriff's eyes.
- Do the investigators benefit from Rupert Merriweather's will? He considered them fine and trustworthy people; perhaps he rewarded them with a gift from his estate. Options for this include a car for the investigators to drive around in, a collection of books and artifacts, which have some dark connection to the Cthulhu Mythos, or just a key to a post office box that contains pages of mysterious writing and an equally mysterious map with a circled area on it. These last two could drive the investigators into a new scenario, where the artifact, book, or map lead them into another mystery and encounter with a dark cult or monster.
- Who or what murdered Marion Allen all those years ago in New Orleans? Were they cultists desperately searching for the sarcophagus of Nophru-Ka? Could such evil cultists learn that it is now in the investigators' possession and come looking for it? Looking into the background of Marion Allen, the investigators may find that Allen was briefly affiliated with the Chapel of Contemplation in Boston. Who was the uncle that Marion feared would look for him? The manner of Allen's death is not dissimilar from what the Lurker did to its victims, but on a much larger scale. The Keeper can decide if it was human agency that inflicted the wounds or if those seeking the gold sarcophagus sent a monster after him.
- And what about the investigators' jobs? They may have now missed several days of work and need a cover story for their bosses. What flimflam can they come with to pacify their bosses? Certainly, they can't tell the truth!

EDGE OF DARKNESS: CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Collected here are the profiles for all of the non-player characters and monsters in this scenario. You will need to refer to these profiles during the scenario. Each is a mini character sheet, detailing the key information—characteristics and skills (including combat skills)—that the Keeper may need during the game.

CHARACTERS

RUPERT MERRIWEATHER, *age 60, dying anthropologist*

STR 30 CON 30 SIZ 60 DEX 40 INT 80
APP 55 POW 60 EDU 85 SAN 35 HP 9
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 4

Combat

Attacks per Round: n/a (*no combat statistics as Merriweather is dying*).

Skills

Anthropology 75%, Archaeology 60%, Credit Rating 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, History 60%, Language (Egyptian Hieroglyphs) 50%, Language (English) 90%, Language (Latin) 20%, Library Use 50%, Listen 55%, Natural World 30%, Occult 40%, Psychology 30%.

- **Description:** frail, sickly, and on his deathbed.
- **Traits:** values friendship and believes people are good-hearted.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** needs the investigators to put an end to the horror he and his friends summoned in their youth.

BERTRAND MERRIWEATHER, *age 32, antagonistic lawyer*

STR 55 CON 40 SIZ 45 DEX 35 INT 80
APP 70 POW 50 EDU 80 SAN 50 HP 8
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (punch or kick)
Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Dodge 20% (10/4)

Skills

Accounting 60%, Antagonize Others 75%, Credit Rating 80%, Fast Talk 60%, Intimidate 70%, Law 80%, Lead Witness 50%, Library Use 70%, Psychology 65%.

- **Description:** clean cut and handsome, despite his weasel-like features.
- **Traits:** gives the impression that he would rather be somewhere else; likes to harass witnesses into confusion, making them doubt their own testimony.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** believes the investigators are a potential threat to his and his mother's financial wellbeing; suspicious of the investigators, he may challenge any legal right they have to anything his father gives them.

ROBERT "RED JAKE" BAKER, *age 36, hapless drifter*

STR 50 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 60 INT 70
APP 40 POW 50 EDU 45 SAN 37 HP 13
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (club or punch)
Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3
Table Leg (club) 45% (22/9), damage 1D4
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Carpentry) 35%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating 3%, Jump 45%, Language (English) 45%, Language (Hobo Cant) 55%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Repair 35%, Natural World 35%, Navigate 40%, Persuade 35%, Stealth 45%.

- **Description:** down at heel, scraggy hair and beard, weathered features.
- **Traits:** generally amiable, but recent events have made him fearful and distrustful.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** wants to retrieve his belongings and get away from the farmhouse and the monster.

MONSTERS

THE LURKER IN THE ATTIC, *nearly invisible monster*

STR 100 CON 90 SIZ 85 DEX 90 INT 60
APP — POW 90 EDU — SAN — HP 17
DB: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 12 MP: 18

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (claws or acid attack)

Fighting	70% (35/14), damage 1D8+1D6
Acid Attack	40% (20/8), damage 1D2, 10 feet (3m) range (target may Dodge)
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Armor: none, but cannot be affected by fire, electricity, or acid. It only suffers half damage from weapons or fire attacks if it becomes visible and takes on a semi-solid form (e.g. if dusted with the Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, or when feeding).

Special Abilities

- Can animate and control the corpse of something it has killed, costing 5 magic points per large (human or bear-size) creature or 1 magic point for small animals (raccoon or bird). The reanimation lasts for up to 3 hours or until the reanimated corpse is destroyed.
- Is able to pass through unwarded material obstructions.
- Able to shoot an acid attack up to 10 feet (3 m) away. Target may attempt to Dodge but, if unsuccessful, the attack causes 1D2 damage and covers the investigator in stinking acid.
- Generates odors and sounds to disturb or entice victims.

Sanity loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to see the Lurker in corporeal form.

Reanimated Dead Creatures

The only way to render these creatures harmless is to blow them to pieces, or to pull them past the wards into the house—the Lurker loses control of them when they pass the threshold, causing them to fall to the ground “dead.”

ZOMBIE MAGGIE MCPHIRTER, corpse, reanimated by the Lurker

STR 55	CON 20	SIZ 50	DEX 15	INT 00
APP —	POW 05	EDU —	SAN —	HP 7
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 6		

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (tear or bite)

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D4
Dodge	zombies do not dodge

Skills

Climb 40%, Stealth 50%.

Armor: none.

Sanity loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see the reanimated corpse of Margaret McPhirter.

ZOMBIE RED JAKE, corpse, reanimated by the Lurker

STR 75	CON 20	SIZ 75	DEX 25	INT 00
APP —	POW 05	EDU —	SAN —	HP 9
DB: +1D4	Build: 1	Move: 6		

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (punch or shovel swipe)

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D4+1D4
Dodge	zombies do not dodge

Skills

Climb 40%, Stealth 50%.

Armor: none.

Sanity loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see the reanimated corpse of Red Jake.

ZOMBIE DEAD RACCOON, corpse, reanimated by the Lurker

STR 25	CON 20	SIZ 20	DEX 40	INT —
APP —	POW 05	EDU —	SAN —	HP 4
DB: -2	Build: -2	Move: 7		

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (bite or claw)

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D3-2
Dodge	zombies do not dodge

Skills

Climb 85%, Stealth 70%.

Armor: none.

Sanity loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see the reanimated corpse of a raccoon.

ZOMBIE DEAD BROWN BEAR, corpse, reanimated by the Lurker

STR 100	CON 20	SIZ 100	DEX 50	INT —
APP —	POW 05	EDU —	SAN —	HP 12
DB: +1D6	Build: 2	Move: 6		

Combat

Attacks per Round: 2 (bite and claw)

Fighting	40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1D6
Dodge	zombies do not dodge

Skills

Climb 30%, Stealth 30%.

Armor: 3-point fur and gristle.

Sanity loss: 1/1D6 Sanity points to see the reanimated corpse of a bear.



SCENARIO THREE: DEAD MAN STOMP

"Nyarlathotep... the crawling chaos... I am the last... I will tell the audient void..."

— H. P. Lovecraft, *Nyarlathotep*

For: 2 to 5 players, plus Keeper.

Approximate playtime: one to two sessions.

Set in 1925 in the streets of Harlem, New York, **Dead Man Stomp** presents a complicated social backdrop, as well as the potential for simultaneous strands of investigation. It is advised that this adventure is run after **Paper Chase** and **Edge of Darkness** have been played, as it is a more complex scenario.

Dead Man Stomp can be played by 2 to 5 players plus the Keeper, and may take one to two sessions of play. While set in 1920s Harlem, the location could, with a little work, be moved to another large U.S. city, such as Boston or Chicago.

The portrayal of race and the ugly realities of racism are important themes in this adventure. If none of the players are currently playing African American investigators (who may have survived **Paper Chase** and **Edge of Darkness**), this is a perfect chance for them to create one. Playing a person of color investigator will bring different aspects to the challenges and encounters found in this scenario. Key to this decision is ensuring that all of the players are comfortable with the various real-world attitudes and social mores found in this scenario—advise players that the themes of race and 1920s-era racism are likely to be portrayed. The Keeper, dependent on the group's comfort level, has the ability to adjust how such issues are presented during the game. *Call of Cthulhu*, in whatever era an adventure takes place, is a game that can be used to explore social issues, such as race, poverty, inequality, and so on. Often such themes, when portrayed with a degree of historical accuracy, can be enlightening.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

There are a number of "moving parts" in this scenario, as different non-player character groups and individuals have differing agendas. The investigators may find themselves looking into all of these different entities, requiring the group to occasionally split up to cover more ground. The Keeper is advised to carefully read the scenario through with an eye to maintaining the players' participation, ensuring that no one investigator remains on the sidelines for too long. If you have a small player group

RACE AND RACISM IN 1920s AMERICA

What is racism? Racism involves legally- or socially-imposed systems by the dominant race to disadvantage another race they consider inferior, while granting themselves elevated privileges and status. Racism has been part of the United States almost since the first white man stepped onto her shores to oppress her indigenous peoples, and has become institutionalized with slavery, Jim Crow, separate-but-equal, and now regular assaults on civil rights.

Modern day racism is often subtler than that found in the 1920s. It entails endless micro-aggressions, highlighting a minority as "other," and characteristically supports a "two-tiered justice system" that sees anyone of color as a criminal until proven innocent, while a white person is innocent until proven guilty.

Racism of the 1920s was more brutal, deadly, and widely accepted by society. Southern politicians ran for office based on how many black people they lynched, the Ku Klux Klan burned down a black, Jewish, or Irish person's home with them inside because they weren't considered human, and white businessmen destroyed successful black businesses and killed people of color, only to be released by the police.

Jim Crow (1867–1950s) was a set of Southern laws that enforced racial segregation; they varied from state to state. A few examples of the laws include:

- Any marriage between a white and black person is prohibited.
- Displays of affections between black people are not allowed in public, as they are considered offensive to whites.
- Whites never use courtesy titles of respect when talking to blacks, while black people must always use them when talking to whites.
- Blacks must step to the side to allow whites to walk past them.

All of this led to the first Great Migration, with nearly 1.6 million African Americans fleeing the South, desperate to escape lynchings, poverty, lack of voting rights, and the deadly oppressive weight of the Jim Crow laws. They headed west and northward, hoping for better days.

Even in Harlem, racism was present and influenced every aspect of African Americans' lives, but unlike the South, Harlem also provided a hope for a better life, and a place to call home.

(two players, for example) then, perhaps, asking the players to keep their investigators together is one way to minimize the chances of them going off in different directions and spending long periods with little engagement with the plot.

While both **Paper Chase** and **Edge of Darkness** include Keeper advice concerning how to apply the game's rules, **Dead Man Stomp** has less of these asides. Having run the previous two adventures, the Keeper should, hopefully, be getting a handle on the mechanics of the game. Where a new or different rule comes up, advice is provided; however, if at any point you are unsure about a rule, just refer back to **Book Two** to refresh your memory.

With race being a key theme in this adventure, identifying the race of each investigator before play begins is useful. An investigator's race may determine the accessibility of certain information, and what the attitude of some of the non-player characters in the adventure will be towards them. If the investigators are not an integrated group, but rather all of one ethnicity, the Keeper may need to adjust some encounters to better reflect the racially charged 1920s era. It is for each group to decide how realistic they wish their game to be. It is recommended that the Keeper discuss such matters with the players before getting everyone prepared and comfortable, and for the Keeper to adjust such portrayals accordingly.

Jazz music is another theme, and the soundtrack to this scenario. The Keeper might consider seeking out some 1920s-era recordings as low-level background music, such as Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra (1925), Willie "The Lion" Smith (1920s), Bessie Smith (1921-ish), Duke Ellington (1920s), Chick Webb/Harlem Stompers (1925-ish), and The Mills Brothers (1929-ish). Such music establishes an upbeat mood, but be sure to turn it down when things become horrific.

Involving the Investigators

The scenario begins at night, downstairs in Small's Paradise in Harlem, at 2294 Seventh Avenue and 135th Street. The Keeper should determine why the investigators are present. They may be visiting the city and out for an evening on the town; they may be meeting someone to hear about a new investigation job; or searching for a clue as part of another adventure. The set up isn't important—the person they were due to meet never shows up, the clue they thought they would find isn't there, and so on. The important thing is that the investigators are in Small's Paradise when the adventure begins.

Optionally, if this scenario is being played after **Edge of Darkness** with the same investigator group, the investigators might be attempting to research the strange, sarcophagus-shaped gold box found in that adventure—perhaps they wish to decipher the hieroglyphs on the inside of the box. With this option, we assume the investigators have contacted one or more experts to help with the task. One of these, possibly a professor of languages from Cornell University, has agreed to meet them to discuss the work. Being a fan of jazz, the professor suggests the meeting take place at Small's Paradise in Harlem. The professor may or may not play any further part in the scenario, depending on the situation:

- The professor could be a replacement investigator, stepping in for one who died or went insane during **Edge of Darkness**. By meeting the other investigators in the club, they are drawn into the scenario and join the group.
- The professor never shows up. Perhaps something came up that meant he missed the appointment—"So sorry. Could we rearrange the appointment for another time?"
- They meet the professor in the club—he arrives just after they are seated at the table with Pete Manusco. Allow the meeting to start, but then have the events of the scenario take place. In the ensuing chaos, the professor departs, fearing for his life.



Leroy Turner

KEEPER INFORMATION: BACKGROUND

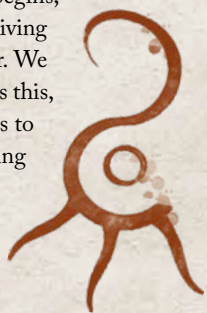
Leroy Turner is a jazzman. He has a broken heart, a drinking problem, and a curse. The last is in the form of an unusual trumpet, which he believes was given to him by Mr. Louis Armstrong. In fact, the instrument was handed to him by Nyarlathotep, a “god” of the Cthulhu Mythos who can take many forms (see **About Nyarlathotep**, following). When played by a gifted musician, this four-valve trumpet raises the dead within hearing and drives the resurrected to vengeance. When the scenario begins, Turner does not know of this magical capability; however, when he discovers it, he goes mad. A gangland kingpin, Archie “the Boss” Bonato, and his gang learn of Leroy Turner’s astonishing ability. While they at first treat it as a joke, their treachery provokes tragedy and disaster.

ABOUT NYARLATHOTEP

Nyarlathotep is the messenger, heart, and soul of the Mythos gods. He is the only one to have a true personality, and he claims to have a thousand different forms. To him, causing madness and insanity is more important and enjoyable than mere death or destruction.

Only a few of Nyarlathotep’s alleged 999 forms have been described. The Black Pharaoh is an Egyptian-looking human, while the Bloody Tongue is an enormous monster with clawed appendages and a single long, blood-red tentacle in place of a face. Yet another—the Haunter of the Dark—is black and winged, with a tri-lobed red eye, and cannot withstand light. The god has also been known to appear as a regular human, often to perform some trickery or deceit. In this scenario, he is “off stage” during the events, appearing before the scenario begins, disguised as Louis Armstrong and giving the magical trumpet to Leroy Turner. We cannot fathom why Nyarlathotep does this, but can guess that it somehow appeals to his sense of humor and bent for creating chaos wherever he goes.

sigil of Nyarlathotep



ABOUT HARLEM

Harlem of the 1920s may only have covered roughly two miles between 96th and 155th Streets in northern Manhattan, but it was the light of the world. Everyone wanted to be in vogue; to be part of the music, the words, and the movement. Harlem was jazz and a place where anyone could be royalty. Harlem became the African-American mecca, home of the New Negro movement and the Harlem Renaissance: a drive to change the world for the better through art, the written word, intellectualism, politics, and freedom of sexuality.

Originally, Harlem belonged to the Leni Lenape, then the Dutch, followed by the English, and lastly the United States. Many ethnicities have called Harlem home; by 1918, nearly 200,000 Jews and 170,000 Italians formed the most populous communities there. By 1930, 70,000 African Americans would more than triple in number due to the influx of the Great Migration and immigrants from the Caribbean islands, thus making up 70% of Central Harlem’s population. The increasing black population was not welcomed, and multiple attempts—financial, political, and violent—were used to try and run them off; all to no avail.

At one time a growing hub of elegance and leisure for the elite, elevated trains—“els”—were constructed in 1880 to allow easy access to the city, followed by the Lenox Avenue Subway in 1904. The wide, crowded streets bump against brick and brownstone buildings reaching skyward. Harlem has two primary roads—Lenox and Seventh Avenues—that run through the neighborhood.

Harlem is overrun with clubs, speakeasies, churches, and people struggling to make ends meet for one more day. Next door: music, lights, illegal booze, and a promise of tomorrow can be heard. Generally, the higher the street number in Harlem, the higher-class the homes, people, and buildings that will greet the investigators. The black elite live in northern Harlem and wealthier areas.

A few places of interest:

- IRT Lenox Avenue Subway Line (145th Street)
- Harlem Hospital (136th Street)
- New York Public Library Harlem Branch (135th Street)

START: PARADISE ON EARTH

Small's Paradise is a Harlem nightclub that illegally serves liquor (Prohibition is currently enforced). Patrons go there to enjoy the music, while partaking of food and alcohol and, consequently, break the law. The men wear tuxedos, while the ladies dazzle in evening dresses. Investigators without ties won't be admitted and must quickly find or purchase one from a passerby—no one would think of going out for the evening without a necktie! This high-class joint is also protected: police and criminals alike come down fast on disturbances in Small's Paradise.

The music is hot, the company is fine, and the hooch is genuine and imported. It's the swankiest speakeasy in town. Plenty of bribes go to keep Small's Paradise open, so food and drink are expensive (\$2 a drink). The first show starts about 8 o'clock, and the place is open every night until dawn.

Inside the unmarked blue door, two very large African-American men in tuxedos eye the passing customers: poor people and the casually dressed who somehow slip past the external doorman get caught and ejected here. Small's Paradise, unlike its contemporaries, admits everyone who can afford to be hip and wants to be entertained, whereas nearly all other clubs in Harlem abide by the racism of the times, having African-American serving staff and performers but a "whites only" door policy; only highly popular black celebrities are the exception to this rule. This fact is known to the characters and should not be lost on their players.

Keeper note: during the course of the scenario, if the investigators decide to go to other nightclubs in Harlem, investigators of color will be refused entry and may have to work around such obstacles. For example, they might slip inside via alternative means, stealthily entering through a stage door, pretending to be an employee to gain entrance, climbing in through a window, and so on. This provides the players with a sense of the 1920s, and adds an air of tension.

Beyond the guards, expensively-carpeted stairs lead down to the nightclub. The checkroom faces the stairs. The ladies' lounge is situated on the left, while to the right is the gentlemen's lounge and the entrance to the spacious ballroom proper. Both lounges are decorated with blue and white marble tiles. Mirrors abound, as do gleaming chrome faucets and fittings.

The ballroom is large. An opulent bar stretches out along one wall, the faces of the bartenders shadowed by lines of bottles. Opposite the bar is a large stage on which the band plays. Between the bar and stage are round tables—each

ED SMALLS AND THE CLUB LIFE

Edwin ("Ed") Smalls was descended from Captain Robert Smalls, a former slave who captained a Union Navy ship during the Civil War, and who later became a South Carolina congressman. Ed raised himself up from elevator operator to successful businessman with his first joint, The Sugar Cane Club, which ran for eight years. But he had a vision of a club that would serve locals and the New York white elite seated side-by-side. Thus, he went against the social conventions of the time and opened Small's Paradise in 1925, the only integrated nightclub in New York. Small's Paradise was one of the top three hot spots in Harlem, easily rivaling the Cotton Club and Connie's Inn, and would become the longest-lived Harlem nightclub.

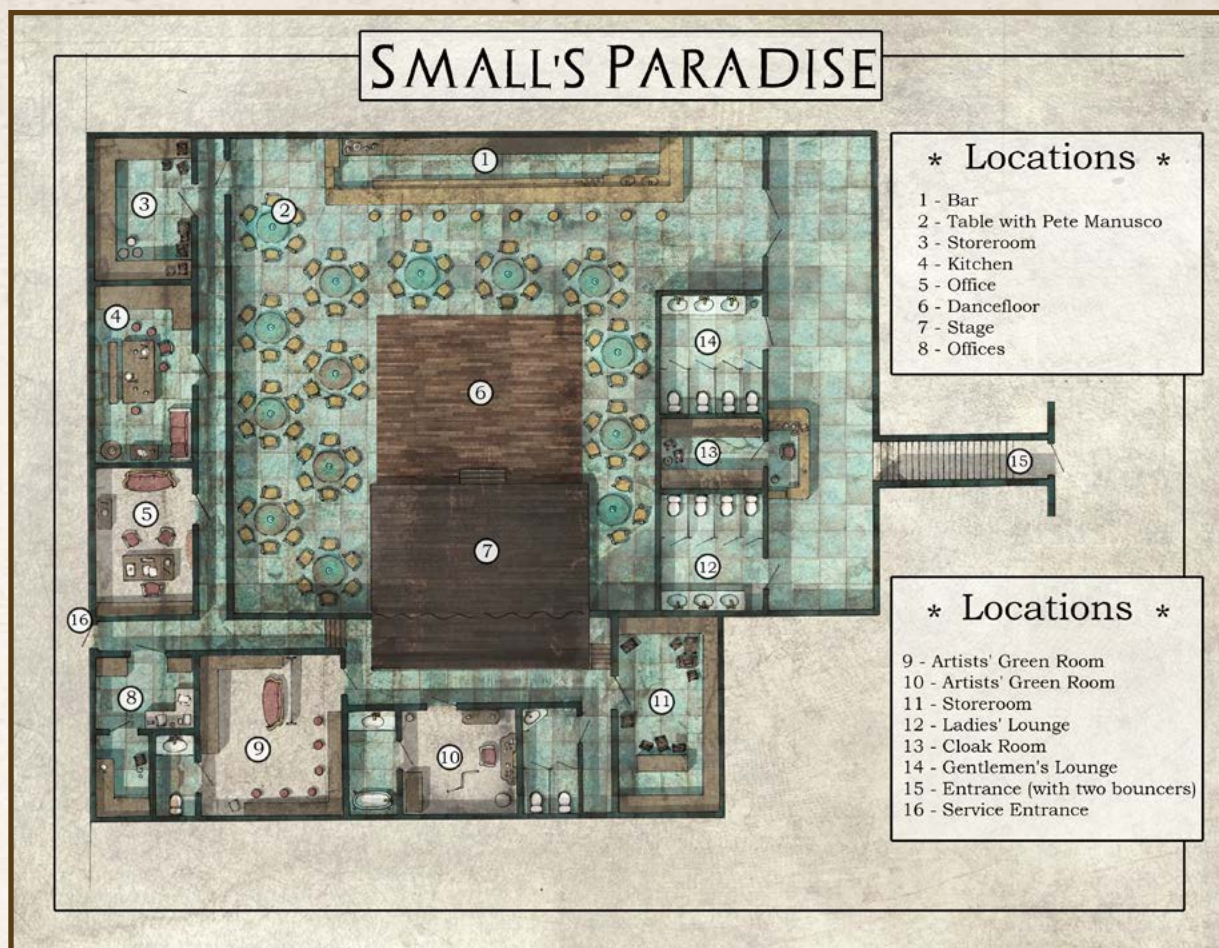
surrounded by plush armless chairs—and the dance floor. There is plenty of space between the tables for one of Small's Paradise's key attractions: even the serving staff is part of the action, as waiters dance the Charleston, entertaining tables of patrons, while holding trays full of illegal hooch. Each table has a small lamp for intimate lighting. Above, electric chandeliers cast subdued hues of blue and gold onto the faces of neat, pale-faced, portly men and the bleached hair of be-jeweled, ambitious young women. Waiters hover. Jazz and the buzz of conversation fill the room.

Small's Paradise is a famous hangout. New York money-men and stage stars, Hollywood movie stars, honest politicians and those on the take, Chicago businessmen and mobsters, Detroit auto moguls, shipping magnates and railroad scions from San Francisco, oil men from Texas and Oklahoma, the rich and the cunning, the butter-and-egg men from around the world all stop here when in town. Tonight, the Mayor of New York, John F. Haylan (1918–1925), is entertaining some guests in the club. The Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra provides the music. Not long open, the club brings in the hottest acts and is frequently the talk of the town.

Keeper note: use the description above to set the scene for the players before **Starting the Action** (following).

STARTING THE ACTION

The club is packed. Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra is in full swing, belting out a rousing version of "Doctor Jazz."



The investigators are shown to a table in a corner near the bar. A stranger is already sitting alone at the large table; he nods agreeably to let them sit, but puts one hand out to reserve the chair next to him—he is waiting for someone.

Keeper note: though the investigators don't know it, the man is Pete Manusco, a local accountant. He is waiting for Joey Larson, a minor mobster.

The stranger sat at their table does not talk. Though he directs his eyes at the band, avoiding the investigators, he doesn't seem to be listening to the music, as indicated by the nervous drumming of his fingertips on the table. He is of average build, with eyebrows so bushy that they appear to be a single black, furry line spanning his frowning forehead. Compared to the raucous crowd, his demeanor is prim and tense. Ask for a **Psychology** roll. If successful, the investigators realize the man is nervous. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll detects the fine sheen of sweat on his face.

An Incidental Incivility

The band finishes "Doctor Jazz" and launches into "Paradise Wobble." A door behind the table opens, and a tall, thin African-American man in a suit, carrying a shiny trumpet, slowly emerges. He looks around and blinks. His intention clearly is to get to the stage, but seated as they are around the table, Manusco and the investigators completely block his path.

The horn man hesitates, the effect of several drinks apparent as he gently sways where he stands. He studies the faces before him before choosing Manusco. "Sir, I got lost backstage. Uh, would you be so kind as to let me by? I really apologize for asking."

Manusco would have to stand up to let the man pass. Jittery nerves do not improve his manners, "Find some other way, boy, or I'll have you thrown out!" Manusco snaps.

Investigators familiar with the town's nightlife may recognize the man as Leroy Turner, an excellent young trumpeter who has fallen on hard times. Though Turner has

had some drinks, he is not feeling suicidal enough to press the issue among a crowd of thugs, racists, and politicians. He backs away awkwardly, half-bowing. "Sorry, sir. Sorry, sorry."

The investigators can intervene, if they wish, rising to let Turner pass, or they can pretend to ignore the matter and, by default, force Turner back through the door. If they do, he reappears a few minutes later on the stage.

If the investigators do let Turner pass, he thanks them sincerely, surprised to be treated decently. As he does, call for a **Spot Hidden** roll. A success notices that Turner's trumpet has four valves, not the usual three—if any of the investigators are musicians, they may find the crackled silver finish of the trumpet to be even more unusual.

At this moment, the bandleader makes an announcement: "Ladies and gentlemen, his honor the Mayor is with us tonight—it is always a pleasure to have your esteemed company and patronage! In honor of your visit we dedicate this next song to you!"

Now on stage, Leroy Turner's rumpled brown coat and pants contrast with the white jackets of the band, as does the extraordinary strength and rippling precision of his tones as he joins them in a heated version of a new number, "Dead Man Stomp." The rhythms are irresistible, the musicianship

top-notch, and soon most of the crowd is dancing enthusiastically—the new piece is a hit.

Their attention pulled to the stage, the investigators may not spot the entry of a small, rat-like man wearing a snappy brown suit, who looks over the crowd and then eases along the bar towards their table.

Keeper note: ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll to notice the newcomer make his way towards the investigators' table. At this stage, the players don't know if he is actually heading towards them or merely about to pass by.

The Guest Arrives

Midway through the bandleader's musical tribute to the mayor, the rat-like little man standing behind Pete Manusco moves forward. He is Joey Larson, a "gunsel" for Archie Bonato, the crime boss. Larson is the man for whom Manusco waits. As the music heats up, Larson pulls out a .45 revolver, almost as big as he is, and at point-blank range shoots Manusco once squarely in the back of the head.

Though the band is loud and the crowd is louder, at three feet (90 cm) nothing is louder than a .45's report. The investigator opposite Manusco is showered with brain



and bone blasted through the gaping hole in Manusco's forehead—ask the investigator sat opposite for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss), while the other investigators should also make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D3 loss).

Keeper note: as Manusco's body hits the table, the investigators turn and get a clear look at the gunman's face, meaning Larson gets to see theirs, too. He doesn't stay to chat, but slides the revolver beneath his coat and coolly walks very quickly across the room and exits via the main entrance.

Do some of the investigators pursue the gunman? If some choose to do so, by the time they run through the crowd to reach the exit and race pass the startled guards and doorman, Larson's on the street and in a gray automobile—a Packard—rolling away midway down the block. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll notices that the Packard's license plate has been removed.

Inside the Packard, "Little" Jimmy Foster hits the gas. If anyone gives serious pursuit, or attempts to fire on the vehicle, a mobster with a Tommy gun in the back seat leans out and squeezes off some aimless rounds, to discourage such behavior. The doorman flings himself to the ground, and so should investigators who want to avoid being shot. Those who stand or continue to pursue may get hit with a bullet if they fail a **Dodge** roll—given the circumstances, award each investigator a bonus die for the roll. If the roll is failed, the unfortunate investigator is hit for 1D6 points of damage.

Keeper note: normally, a bullet from a Thompson submachine gun inflicts 1D10+2 damage but, as the shots are essentially wild fire, the bullet grazes (half damage, near enough) rather than fully impacts.

By the time the investigators pick themselves up from the sidewalk, the Packard and Joey Larson have got away. Dusting themselves down, the investigators concerned may wish to return inside Small's Paradise to see what's happened.

Keeper note: if the investigators show no signs of immediately reentering Small's Paradise, then the sudden cessation of music, accompanied by the eruption of screams from below should grab their attention. If they still resist heading back down to see what's going on, let the action come to them as the club's patrons flee the scene.

A DEAD MAN STOMPS

Back in Small's Paradise, few people yet know about the shooting, but the news spreads quickly when "Dead Man Stomp" draws to a close. Manusco slumps across the table, face sideways in a sea of blood, brains, bone, and whiskey, giving everyone a look at the neat hole in the back of his head and the fleshy red funnel through his forehead. He's dead. But, as the band keeps swinging, the dead man's hands start to splat out time on the gore-covered table! Manusco pulls himself up to a sitting position. His eyes are rolled up. Blood courses from the exit wound in his forehead, but still he stands. A moan seeps from his lips—any investigator nearby making a successful **Listen** roll hears and understands the word "Joey" was spoken. Manusco turns and staggers towards the main doors, now watched by most of the appalled crowd. The band falls silent. The manager gasps and collapses. Pete Manusco staggers out the swinging doors. Then, from beyond the doors, muffled screams mark his progress up the stairs and into the night.

Keeper note: ask for a **Sanity** roll from investigators who witness this terrible resurrection (0/1D6 loss). Investigators who succeed (rolling equal to or lower than their current Sanity) believe that, although serious, Manusco's hit must have looked worse than it really was. Investigators who fail the roll know better.

News of the shooting brings shouts and screams, as people rush to leave the club to avoid scandal. Nearly everyone, from the mayor to the busboy, flees. Some keep their wits and leave through the back alley, but most take the front stairs, trying to push past the slow-moving Manusco, bowling him over. He rides the wave and falls to the ground at the top of the stairs, and the terrified patrons trample him in their panic. Moaning, he tries to get to his feet but they keep knocking him down, reducing him to a bloodier and bloodier ruin. Seeing the man die for a second time, the normally unflappable door guards leave and do not return.

When the final wave of customers has departed, the remains of Pete Manusco stir. It gets to its feet and staggers into the street, searching for its murderer. "Joey!" it moans, "Joey!" The call has about it a dark, terrible patience.

Investigators present see the driver of the first police squad car arriving on the scene. The driver sees the bloody pulp that Manusco has become, and loses control. The vehicle skids, pinning Manusco against a lamp pole, cutting him in half. Killed thrice now, Pete Manusco stirs no more.

Some Minor Help

If they are still in the club, then the Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra's leader, Charlie Johnson, notices the investigator who is covered with Manusco's brains. "You're hit! My god, my god, you're hit! Are you all right?" Once it is apparent that the investigator was missed, Johnson grabs his belongings and departs like everyone else.

Suddenly alone on the stage, Leroy Turner sits against a wall, wide-eyed, draining a half-pint bottle. When he hears sirens, he gets up and heads for the rear service entrance to escape into the back alley. If the investigators are still inside the club, and if earlier they let him pass, he is not too drunk to speak to them. "You'll be in trouble soon, you best get movin'. Come on, now—I know a way." He is as good as his word. Once they're outside, though, it's every man for himself. Despite the investigator's best efforts, Turner disappears amidst the confusion and chaos outside.

If escaping out of doors or windows, either Charlie Johnson or Leroy Turner drops a business card from a funeral parlor. If the investigators are following them out, or if they somehow search the club in the immediate aftermath of the scene, they easily spot the card on the floor—give the players **Handout: Stomp 1**. Apart from the business' address, someone has written, "11 am sharp—bring your horn. New Orleans style" on the card.

An Option: the Government Man

Roger Daniels is a Treasury Agent in the Prohibition Unit. At the Keeper's discretion, he is in Small's Paradise that night and can witness the crime. Daniels is part of a team documenting participation of elected officials in bootlegging. He is an honest man in his early thirties, tall with ginger hair. He carries a gun, but avoids gunplay. He dreams of commendations and fame, and intends someday to run for political office. He never takes a drink.

Handout: Stomp 1

Morgan and Dupuy CHRISTIAN FUNERAL HOME

Serving Families of African Descent Since 1851

West 145th Street
Harlem, New York City

11 am sharp—bring your horn. New Orleans style

Keeper note: Daniels is available to thicken the plot. This "dry agent" may decide that the investigators are involved with bootlegging, perhaps with a rival gang to Bonato's. He may follow them and provide opportune rescue. He might be an ally, an obstruction, or just comic relief. If needed, he can relate details of scenes or clues missed by the investigators. He is a resource for the Keeper to use as they see fit.

INVESTIGATIONS THAT NIGHT

A number of possibilities exist for the investigators to look deeper into the situation arising from the scene at Small's Paradise. Allow the players to take the lead, using the information provided in this section to highlight the clues. If the players miss anything, any of these clues could be related to the investigators by another source: the police, the club's management, local residents, and so on. Investigators who missed Manusco's walk (due to them leaving the club in pursuit of Larson) can be told all about it by any nearby drunk in the neighborhood or, if the investigators have an automobile, perhaps a respectable couple hails them when taxis become scarce, and relate the story to them on the way home.

An Important Clue

Presumably, if the investigators got split up during the evening's events, they now gather together to share their experiences. Such a scene might happen at the entrance to the club or in a nearby coffee shop or speakeasy. If needed, perhaps a journalist or another patron asks them to recount what happened in the club, providing the impetus for the players to relate the whole story and decide how much of it they are willing to tell. Do they mention that Manusco was shot dead in the head but then got up?

If necessary, call for an **INT** roll for an investigator to figure out that Manusco rose up after being shot while the band was playing "Dead Man Stomp." Alternatively, if they are relating the story to someone else, the listener could say, "It's almost as if the band's music brought Manusco back to life! What song were they playing?" Ask for an **Occult** roll—or a **Cthulhu Mythos** roll if any investigator has some points in the skill—success suggesting that Manusco was somehow "resurrected" by the music.

Keeper note: this scene acts in a similar way to the one following (**Staying at Small's Paradise**) in that it helps the players to get the facts of the evening's events in order. This is important as it allows the players to see the connection between Manusco's reanimation and "Dead Man Stomp" being played, and possibly Leroy Turner's trumpet playing. While they may not fully see the connection to Turner yet, it can be made evident later at the Fayette funeral (**The Fayette Funeral**, page 62).

DEAD MAN STOMP

Staying at Small's Paradise

If the investigators remain at Small's Paradise, the police wish to question them. As long as they tell the truth, their statements are taken and then they're allowed to go home. If the investigators previously drew guns and were shooting in the club (or on the street above), they need to convince the police that their actions were purely in self-defense, otherwise the police may think they were somehow involved with the assassination "attempt." Of course, police suspicions will come to naught and the investigators will be released—as long as they didn't kill any innocent bystanders. Investigators of color that flashed guns are still taken downtown and questioned for a few hours before being released; a successful **Persuade** or **Law** roll allows such individuals to keep their weapons (if any); otherwise, they are confiscated.

Keeper note: use such an encounter with the police to recap the events of the evening, using police questions to help highlight key clues. For example, "So, when Manusco got up from being shot, the band were still playing?" or "There's reports of some guy, a trumpeter, joining the band just before all this happened? Could he have been involved?" Such questions help to point out key characters and clues for the players in a semi-subtle way.

Seeking out the Band and Leroy Turner

If the investigators try to find members of the Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra, perhaps to ask about Leroy Turner, few of the African-American neighborhood residents admit to knowing anything to those of another race, even if they happen to be fellow musicians. Any attempt to pry such information requires a Hard (half) **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, **Persuade**, or **Intimidate** roll (depending on how the investigators frame and deliver their questions). If the investigators are African Americans, the roll is easier (at Regular difficulty).

One person, Ukrezia Borden, an older African-American woman, tells them: "Leave that band alone. They ain't done nothin'. Buster Bedson the drummer, he keeps a chicken foot inside his drum. Yessir! You know what that means."

Keeper note: the allusion to voodoo made by Ukrezia Borden is not true. It's a red herring for voodoo-wary investigators.

If the investigators are successful in their questioning, the person they are speaking with says Charlie Johnson, the band's leader, will be at Freddie Fayette's funeral tomorrow (**The Fayette Funeral**, page 62). Perhaps Leroy Turner will be there, too.

If the investigators fail a social skill roll in talking with the Harlemites, they may attempt to push the roll, but the outcome of a failed pushed roll means things turn distinctly frosty, with the person they are talking to shouting for help. The ruckus attracts the attention of some local toughs, who run the investigators from the area.

Keeper note: investigators questioning the locals might find themselves in hot water if they are disrespectful or use threatening behavior. Racial tension between resident African Americans and outsider white investigators could be inflamed if a failed push roll occurs. In such an event, if the players haven't picked up the signs, ask for a **Psychology** roll to confirm that the mood has turned nasty; if the investigators don't leave now, things could get violent. If they ignore such warnings, have a police patrol car pull over. The police, stirred up by the trouble at Small's Paradise, want to know what's going on. The interruption provides the chance for the investigators to quickly depart, but not before they see the harsh realities of life for African Americans in the 1920s, as the police brutally bundle some of the local men into the back of the patrol car. Witnessing this scene may provoke a **Sanity** roll (0/1 point loss).

Remembering the Shooter

The investigators got a good look at the shooter's face in Small's Paradise, and they may wish to identify the man who shot Pete Manusco. Figuring out who the shooter was can be achieved in a number of ways:

- If describing the man to the police, a detective says it sounds like Joey Larson, a hit man for the Bonato gang.
- If Roger Daniels, the Treasury Agent, has been introduced, he can confirm Larson as the shooter.
- If any of the investigators are journalists, ex-police officers, or have links to crime, a successful **Know** roll (EDU) allows them to remember Larson's face and his connections to Archie "the Boss" Bonato.

Summarizing the Evening

While several courses of action are available to the investigators, each of which provides important clues for their inquiries, it is essential that they are pointed in the direction of the Fayette funeral. This can be accomplished by having a Harlem resident, a member of staff from Small's Paradise, or the police mention that Charlie Johnson, the Paradise Orchestra's leader, will be attending the funeral.

THE MORNING PAPERS

The morning dailies carry Manusco's shooting and tell how the poor man, mortally wounded yet somehow indomitably willing himself to stay alive, tried to reach help only to be cut down, ironically by the very aid he sought. Various ruminations on life's meaning see print over the next few days.

Peter Manusco is identified as a self-employed accountant, a man with a spotless record who, in a moment of weakness, entered Small's Paradise. Police think he was mistaken for some criminal foe. The Mayor's office announces the padlocking of Small's Paradise, offering thanks that such a cesspool of vice and crime has been located. Government agent Roger Daniels testifies that Small's Paradise was selling alcohol. Daniels manages to get his picture in most of the dailies. His career has begun. The manager of the club, Mr. Roland Marlow, is arraigned on various petty charges and quietly released on bail.

There is also an African-American daily paper at the newsstand, *The Emancipator & Union Leader*. Compared to the other papers, the difference in tone and coverage is astonishing. None of its front-page stories overlap with the white newspapers, except for the mention of disturbances in what was known then as Anglo-Egyptian Soudan. A long story discusses a Mr. Marcus Garvey, an African-American nationalist, photographed in flamboyant military costume. Another, by-lined by a Mr. Du Bois of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), discusses the sharecropping system in the South and its implications for African-American health, education, and general livelihood. Other stories discuss black interests and personalities—Manusco is not mentioned in any of the stories.

Keeper note: it does not require a successful INT roll for the investigators to deduce that the mainstream dailies are as specifically white in *their* coverage. It's clear that African-American concerns are only reported about in African-American papers, which will not be a surprise to any investigators of color.

If the investigators found the business card in Small's Paradise after the shooting then, as they look over the various newspapers, perhaps over coffee, one of them (the Keeper should choose which player) notices an advertisement for the Morgan and Dupuy Funeral Home—the same company mentioned on the card. Alternatively, looking in the funeral announcements column, they see that a funeral and procession are scheduled for 11:00 a.m. today at Morgan and Dupuy, for Frederick Lincoln Fayette, brother-in-law of the Paradise Orchestra's leader Mr. Charles Johnson—the self-same funeral they'd learned about the day before.

NEXT STEPS

Hopefully, the investigators are intrigued enough by the fact that Manusco rose from the dead to get involved in the situation. They have possibly made the connection between the event and Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra's rendition of "Dead Man Stomp." The following morning, after reading the newspapers, the investigators may decide to conduct some research before heading to the Fayette funeral. This section looks at a small selection of research possibilities.

Keeper note: the scenario relies on the players being hooked by the situation they find themselves in. Some players may wonder why their investigator would get involved—what's their motivation? In such cases, the Keeper should first look at the investigator's backstory (reverse side of the investigator sheet) for inspiration. Does the backstory mention a deceased love one, an interest in magic or the occult, or a firm belief in science? These could all be reasons to investigate the situation. If a deceased love one, the investigator might wish to find out what's going on so they can bring the dearly departed back to life. If a belief in science, they may think the whole matter is a fraud and wish to expose whoever is behind it. An interest in the occult is self-evident: something strange, perhaps magical, is happening! Even if not written into a backstory, these same motivations can still be applied. Discuss some ideas with the player concerned and agree an angle that works for them. Remember, *Call of Cthulhu* is a game of mysteries and secrets—the player's investigator should want to get involved!

A Rumor from the Police

Visiting the police station, or talking to investigating officers, reveals that the coroner is to testify that Manusco's head wound was immediately fatal. More than half the volume of the victim's brain was shredded or blown away. Manusco could not have done what the investigators witnessed.

Keeper note: the police information might arise from the investigators actively seeking out the coroner's report or, alternatively, the information might be passed to them via a contact on the force, or in conversation with a journalist who perhaps seeks them out as witnesses to the event.

About Charlie Johnson

Johnson's name appears in the local telephone directory but, if his number is called, a lady answers and says that Mr. Johnson cannot come to the phone right now. If the address in Harlem is visited, the same young lady, Miss Walters, answers the door and relates that Mr. Johnson has left for the day, as he has a funeral to attend.

Map of Harlem - 1925

Locations

- 1 - Trinity Church Cemetery
- 2 - Funeral home of Morgan and Dupuy
- 3 - IRT Lenox Avenue Subway Line
- 4 - The Old Garage
- 5 - Small's Paradise
- 6 - Harlem Hospital
- 7 - Leroy Turner's apartment room
- 8 - New York Public Library Harlem Branch
- 9 - Columbia University
- 10 - St. John's Cathedral

Subway Line

Subway Station

0 Mile 1/4 1/2 3/4

THE BRONX

MAP OF HARLEM - 1925

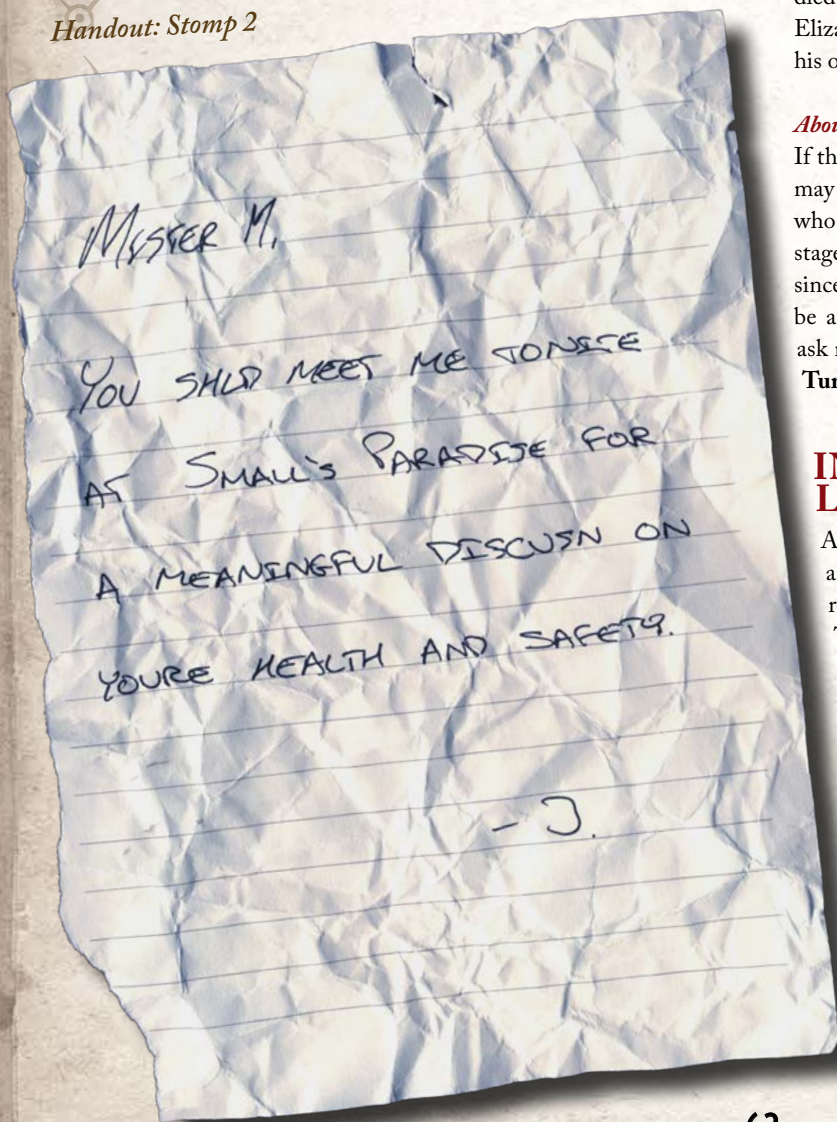
Keeper note: if the investigators haven't already found out who is being buried today, then Miss Walters can tell them it's Mr. Fayette, who died by accidental gunshot wound two days before. Mr. Johnson is playing with his band at the ceremony.

About Pete Manusco

Pete Manusco's office and home have listed telephone numbers. Investigators who act quickly can beat the police to both locations. At the office, they find that someone has already broken in; the door lock is broken. Looking through Manusco's filing, the investigators quickly find that all the files in the "B" section have been removed. While searching around, ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll to find a scrawled note in the wastepaper basket—if successful, give the players **Handout: Stomp 2**.

If the investigators head to Manusco's apartment, they find it undisturbed. A search of the premises and a

Handout: Stomp 2



successful **Spot Hidden** roll finds a scrapbook of clippings about Archie "the Boss" Bonato, dating back about a year and a half. Inspection of Manusco's savings passbook shows that monthly cash deposits of \$1,000 were made to his account over the same period.

Keeper note: "B" stands for Bonato, the crime lord. Bonato sent his goons to clear out Manusco's office for incriminating evidence; thus, everything filed under B has been removed. If the investigators know that Joey Larson shot Manusco, it is evident that "Boss" Bonato is clearing house. Manusco was on Bonato's payroll, but must have fallen from favor somehow.

Newspaper Research

Research at the offices of *The Emancipator & Union Leader* establishes, with a successful **Library Use** (if searching the back issues) or a **Charm, Fast Talk, or Persuade** roll (if talking to a journalist), that Mr. Frederick Lincoln Fayette died by accidental gunshot wound two days before. His wife, Elizabeth Johnson Fayette, survives him. Mr. Fayette owned his own truck and worked as a driver.

About Leroy Turner

If they have already made the connection, the investigators may wish to find or look into Leroy Turner, the horn man who joined the Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra on stage to play "Dead Man Stomp." No one has seen Turner since yesterday, but everyone suggests that he'll probably be at the funeral later today. If the investigators wish to ask more questions about Turner, see **Investigating Leroy Turner**, following.

INVESTIGATING LEROY TURNER

Asking around the neighborhood—using a little money and, possibly, a successful **Charm, Fast Talk, or Persuade** roll—the investigators can learn something about Leroy Turner over the next day or so, especially if they are polite and friendly. Such research might happen the morning after the events in Small's Paradise or after the Fayette funeral. Although the scene's framing is different depending on when the investigators begin to ask questions about Turner, the information they acquire is the same; presented as bullet points, each piece can come from a different person, or may be combined into one conversation at the Keeper's choosing.

Before the Layette Funeral

Gossip is spreading across the neighborhood about what took place at Small's Paradise. No one seems

to know exactly what happened, other than a man was shot. The investigators can relate their version of the event (withholding whatever information they like) in exchange for the information on Leroy Turner (bullet points, following).

After the Fayette Funeral

Rumors about the funeral and what actually occurred there are rampant in the community. Most people were not there and did not see what took place, and are eager to hear first-hand accounts. Thus, the investigators can offer to share their experiences in return for information about Turner. Alternatively, if the investigators talk with Charlie Johnson, the following information could come from him.

- Leroy Turner is not popular in the community, even among fellow musicians—he's too irresponsible. Whenever he gets a gig, a week later he goes on a bender and loses it. What he says he'll do, he don't.
- A few people have some sympathy for Turner, saying that his heart is broken. He and his lover, Marnie Smeaton, came up together from New Orleans two years ago to start a life in Harlem. But their plans were cut short some months' back when Marnie was run over and killed. "They say the gray car didn't stop." Folks think it was college boys.
- Turner lives in a tiny apartment room on West 131st Street, between Lennox and Fifth Avenue.

At Turner's Home

If the investigators visit Turner's address, they find he is not at home. Turner shares his room with four other individuals (a common practice for poorer residents). Gaining entry can be achieved by getting one of Turner's roommates to let the investigators inside, or by bribing to the landlord to do the same (requiring a successful **Fast Talk**, **Charm**, **Persuade**, or **Intimidate** roll). If the investigators watch and wait, ask for a **Luck** roll to determine if all of the room's tenants eventually leave, providing the chance to stealthily break in (a successful Regular **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll to open the door's lock, or a **STR** roll to break down the door).

Keeper note: using STR means making a noise. If the roll is successful, ask the investigator concerned to now make a **Luck** roll; if the roll is failed, that noise is loud enough to bring concerned residents out of the nearby apartments. Likewise, a failed push roll (for any skill) in attempting to break in could mean the investigators smash the lock but also cause enough of a racket to raise the alarm with other residents—the investigators will have to think on their feet if they are to avoid being chased out as a bunch of thieves. If allowed into the room by one of Turner's roommates, investigators will not be permitted to remove any of the musician's belongings without a good reason.

Once inside, the investigators find Turner's possessions are minimal. He owns two suits, three shirts, four boxes of sheet music, and a framed photograph of a smiling young woman. Written across the bottom of the image are the words, "To Leroy, the love of my life, Marnie Smeaton" (**Handout: Stomp 3**). Turner keeps his trumpet with him at all times, so unless he is in the apartment, the trumpet is nowhere to be seen.

THE FAYETTE FUNERAL

At the African-American family funeral home of Morgan and Dupuy, those of other races can find whatever welcome they deserve: curiosity-seekers are snubbed, rowdy gatecrashers are threatened and expelled, those extending genuine sympathies are appreciated, and the bereaved are consoled. Whenever they arrive, let the investigators find their own depth. At some point, someone may casually ask the investigators' relation to the deceased. It's a natural question. Whatever information the investigators give passes quickly through the crowd.

After the remembrance service is over, six pallbearers emerge from the hall, carrying a long pine coffin. Two African-American policemen on motorcycles lead the way and control traffic at intersections. Members of the Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra strike up "I'll See You on Judgment Day," and the mourners fall in behind.

Handout: Stomp 3



More people join in as the procession moves through the streets of Harlem towards the cemetery. The Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra plays slow and soulful renditions of hymn after hymn. The musicians walk in a line behind the coffin, with Charlie Johnson at their head and the drummer in the rear, his bass drum strapped to his chest. All maintain a serious and noble bearing.

Passing some storefronts, the investigators have an unnerving feeling of being watched. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll distinguishes Leroy Turner in a doorway across the street, smoking and watching the parade pass by, but identifying Turner does not extinguish the sense that someone else watches with ominous interest. Turner extinguishes his cigarette and steps out, lifting his trumpet as the band strikes up "Closer Walk With Thee." He comes up alongside Johnson, puts the horn to his lips, and starts to blow melancholy notes in fine counterpoint to Johnson's cornet. A rolling murmur through the crowd testifies to the music's beauty. But not twenty seconds after Turner's trumpet sounds, a successful **Listen** roll detects moaning coming from inside the coffin! Hearing this provokes a **Sanity** roll for the investigators (0/1D2 loss).

ANOTHER DEAD MAN STOMPS

The pallbearers lurch as the weight in the coffin shifts. Startled, they look at each other in confusion and alarm. The crowd gasps, and the music dies. Then, suddenly, the coffin lid smashes open. As the bearers drop their burden and pull back, the late Frederick Fayette emerges—gray, puffy, and bewildered. The horrific sight triggers shrieks, screams, and general cries of astonishment from onlookers. Call for another **Sanity** roll to witness this unfolding scene (1/1D6 loss).

Keeper note: the **Sanity** roll could cause an investigator to lose 5 or 6 points in one instance, enough to possibly tip them into temporary insanity. If so, ask for an **INT** roll. If failed, the investigator remains sane; but if successful, they fully comprehend the dead returning to life and go insane for 1D10 hours, provoking a bout of madness. Refer to the **Bouts of Madness Table** in **Book Two** (page 17) to determine what happens. In this instance, it is recommended that the bout take the form of fainting or physical hysterics/emotional outburst. Alternatively, the investigator concerned might develop a phobia, such as necrophobia, a fear of dead things—whenever the investigator is close to "dead things" they take a penalty die



Another dead man stomps

to all skill rolls, except if in combat or if they are running away. In addition, those suffering from temporary insanity may, at the Keeper's discretion, also suffer from delusions or hallucinations, such as believing they can see dead people where there are none. Refer to **Sanity**, page 16, in **Book Two** for further details.

Various hands reach out to try to help Frederick Fayette, who continues to move and look about wildly. If an investigator dives in to help calm Fayette down, they need to make a successful Extreme (fifth) **STR** roll to hold and contain him, otherwise they are thrown to the ground due to the inhuman strength of "zombie" Fayette.

Keeper note: if more than one investigator attempts to hold Fayette, decrease the difficulty of the STR roll to Hard; if three or more pile in, then it's a Regular STR roll—ask the investigator with the highest STR to make the roll (the other participants don't roll). Note that zombie Fayette's profile can be found at the end of the scenario.

Lizzie Fayette steps in front of her dead husband, and lifts her mourning veil. Her cheeks are wet with tears, and she whispers "Freddie, is that you?" Fayette stops and looks at her in shock and begins to realize his situation. He throws back his head and out pours a terrible scream. He collapses at the feet of his wife, trembling arms wrapped around her legs, then stops moving. He is dead again, and does not revive.

Clamor sweeps the crowd, and anger begins to spark against the mortician, Mr. Dupuy, and his two assistants who have accompanied the procession. The words most often heard are "Buried alive!" The investigators may be able to intervene to help sense prevail, using **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Persuade** skill rolls to achieve success. If the investigators don't intervene to help calm everyone down, some quick-thinking police officers pick up Mr. Dupuy and his assistants, driving them away to safety. Any good-faith effort gains the investigators favor among those present, while Charlie Johnson may recognize them from the night before.

During the disturbance, ask for another **Spot Hidden** roll. A success means that one of the investigators notices a short white man in a brown suit. He backs away and walks briskly to a waiting gray Packard. Investigators who were in Small's Paradise last night recognize the man as Pete Manusco's murderer.

The Watcher

If spotted during the scene, the investigators may wish to catch up with their diminutive watcher (Joey Larson), but before they can fight through the chaotic crowd to reach him, the gray Packard is gone.

Keeper note: Joey Larson has been tailing the investigators. They got a good look at his face last night, and now he's nervous and beginning to think maybe he ought to "take care" of them. Having witnessed Fayette's resurrection in the same fashion as that of Manusco, he scurries to tell Archie "the Boss" Bonato what he saw.

SPEAKING TO LEROY TURNER

If no one stops him, Turner slips away during the tumult at the funeral. Turner's trumpet playing has twice seemed to wake the dead—a very unusual talent. If an investigator acts quickly to get to Turner for a chat, Turner agrees, at the price of a drink. He leads the investigators away from the crowd to a neighborhood speakeasy.

Ensnconced in the bar, Turner sighs and shakes his head. He is bewildered by the events of the last day. "I played trumpet for ten years. Ain't nothin' happened like this before." Any sympathetic or perceptive remark gets him to start talking; use the investigators' questions to help frame the discussion. Key topics follow—ensure Turner imparts this information:

Where Did He Get the Trumpet?

Read aloud or paraphrase the following to the players:

"None other than Mr. Louis Armstrong gave this new trumpet to me. A few days before, I was playing with a scratch band and, when I went outside for a smoke, Mr. Armstrong approached me in the alley. 'You're such a good player, Leroy, that I want you to have one of my horns.' He gave me the trumpet on the spot. I couldn't quite believe my luck and I wasn't gonna say no to Mr. Armstrong!"

Keeper note: a successful **Psychology** roll agrees that the event took place as Turner relates it, but that he is holding something back. If pressed, Turner adds, "Mr. Armstrong's eyes, man, they looked like they was pools of blackness. Real strange!" Turner does not tell the investigators about what Armstrong also said to him: "You blow this horn, baby, you'll wake the dead!"

Looking at the Trumpet

Turner is happy to show the investigators his new horn. Instead of three valves, the trumpet has four. Its silver finish is crackled, like snake or alligator hide, while inside the bell of the trumpet, an encircling ring of strange symbols can be seen etched into the metal.

Keeper note: neither Occult nor Cthulhu Mythos rolls can decipher the strange etchings. Turner, likewise, hasn't a clue as to what they mean.

Can We Borrow or Buy the Horn?

Turner will not sell or lend the horn to anyone. No amount of persuasion or coercion changes his mind. "This horn is my living. It sews my body and soul together. I ain't found no trumpet good as this."

Ending the Conversation

Once the conversation is over, Turner bids the investigators good day, gets up, and walks out to the street.

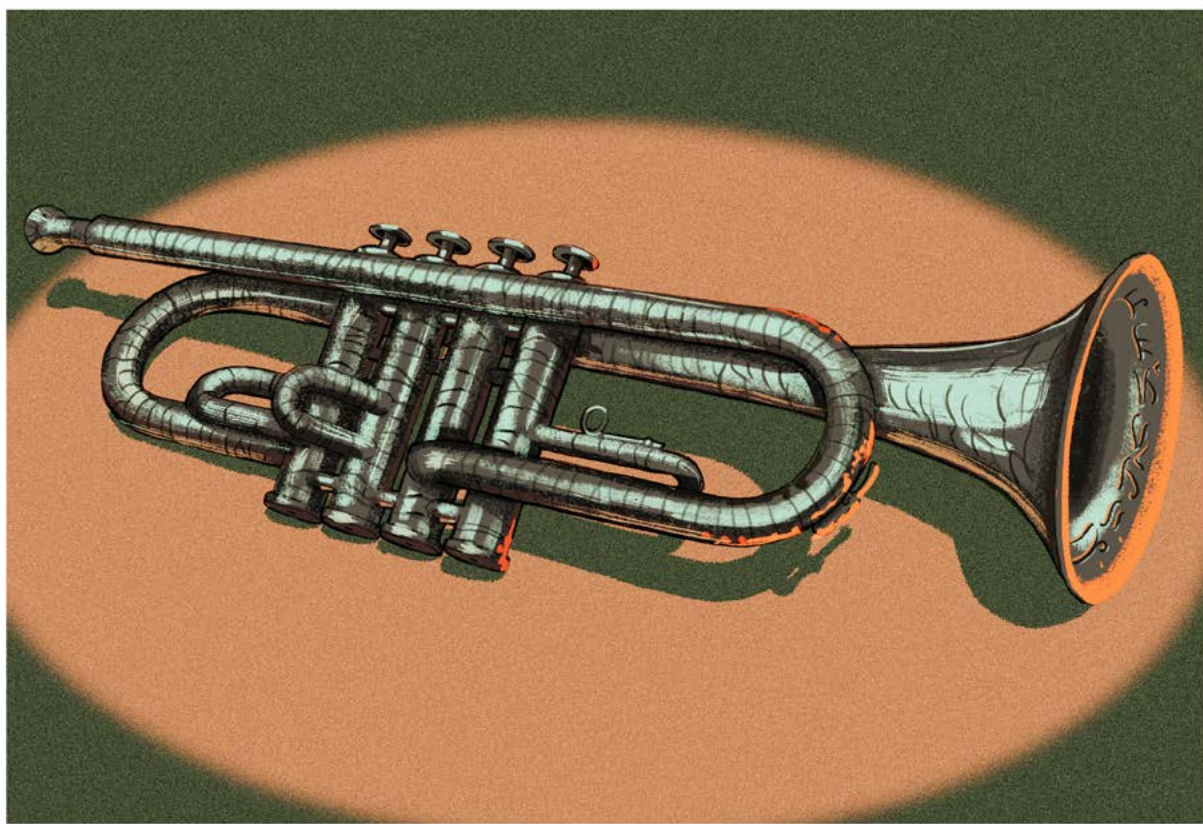
Keeper note: depending on the timing of this scene, the investigators could witness Joey Larson kidnapping Leroy Turner—as Turner steps outside, Larson's gray Packard suddenly pulls over and two white men—gangster types—bundle the horn player into the car, which then drives off at speed. See **A Kidnapping**, page 66, for details.

SPEAKING TO LOUIS ARMSTRONG

With the intercession of an African-American theatrical agency, the investigators can get through to Mr. Armstrong on the telephone. To complete the connection, they need a pocketful of quarters and a **Luck** roll to catch the man. At the time of this adventure (1925) Armstrong lived briefly in New York before moving to Chicago, so it is possible (if we allow a bit of latitude) for the investigators to find him in person.

About Louis Armstrong (1901–1971)

Known as "Satchmo," Armstrong was an influential African-American trumpeter, singer, actor, and composer. Born in New Orleans, his style of jazz-playing found fame, particularly when he moved to Chicago in 1922. A charismatic personality, Armstrong was among the first African-American entertainers to "cross over" into mainstream American popularity. Around the time of this scenario, Armstrong worked at the Roseland Ballroom, 1568 Broadway at 51st Street, Manhattan, as part of the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra.



What Armstrong Says

Armstrong is good-natured but has only a few moments to talk with the investigators, as he's due on stage soon. Asked about meeting Leroy Turner and gifting him a trumpet, Armstrong is baffled. He's heard of Turner, but never heard him play. He didn't give anyone a trumpet and doesn't know what the investigators are talking about. He ends the conversation by saying that Turner must have made the whole thing up. It doesn't require a Psychology roll to know that Armstrong is telling the truth.

A KIDNAPPING

Sometime after the Fayette funeral, Joey Larson kidnaps Leroy Turner. This action signals the beginning of the scenario's end, so the Keeper should stage it only when ready. The kidnapping can happen at any suitable point but it is important that the investigators witness Turner being bundled into Larson's gray Packard—the event should happen within eyeshot of the investigators but far enough away so that they do not have time to intercede. Some options for when the kidnapping might occur are:

- After speaking with Turner in a speakeasy—see **Speaking to Leroy Turner**, page 64.
- On arriving outside Turner's home, the investigators see him carried out to the gray Packard by two thuggish white men.
- One the street: the investigators spot Turner ahead and perhaps go to catch up with him, only to witness the Packard pull up next to him and for the thugs to pull him inside.

As stated, the investigators should witness the kidnapping firsthand. If, for some reason, this does not happen, the Keeper must ensure that the investigators quickly hear about it from another person. Perhaps Charlie Johnson finds the investigators, or another resident they had previously spoken to comes to them with the news.

Possible Kidnapping Scene

One option is to make the kidnapping scene even more memorable. Here is one possible suggestion of how to run the event:

Half a block away from the investigators, Leroy Turner is about to cross the street when a familiar gray Packard rolls around a corner. It pulls up alongside him, then two white men get out and together force Turner into the back. The car quickly drives away. The snatch is over in seconds.

If the investigators have a car, they can follow. The investigator driving must make a successful **Drive Auto** roll to tail the Packard without being spotted. If on foot, a taxi is idling at the corner. This is the perfect opportunity for the investigators

to jump inside and yell, "Follow the Packard!" This time, as the investigators are not actually driving, they must make a successful **Fast Talk**, **Persuade**, or **Intimidate** roll to convince the taxi driver to follow the Packard—if they throw a lot of money at the taxi driver, then grant a bonus die to the attempt.

If the investigators fail (whichever skill roll is used), they lose the Packard, although a successful **Luck** roll allows them to find it again in the heavy traffic. If successfully followed, the Packard drives west to the outskirts of Harlem, and parks up outside a large garage (close to 135th Street). It is a lonely spot, among weed-filled lots and tumbled-down buildings. Those in the Packard exit and head inside the garage.

What if the Investigators Lose the Packard?

If the investigators worked out that Joey Larson was the man who shot Pete Manusco, they may already know that Larson works for crime lord Archie "the Boss" Bonato. If they have not made this connection, then the following options exist to bring them up to speed:

- If Roger Daniels, the Treasury Agent, has been introduced, he could appear to say he has heard a rumor that "Boss" Bonato is looking for Leroy Turner. Assuming the investigators don't know where the kidnappers went, Daniels says he knows Bonato sometimes uses an old garage to question prisoners and he can take the investigators there.
- Charlie Johnson contacts the investigators, saying that he got a call from a friend saying they had seen Leroy Turner fighting with some white thugs in the back of a Packard. The friend followed the car to an old garage and then called Johnson, who can supply the garage's address to the investigators. Johnson wants the investigators to go there and save Turner from whatever fate is in store for him. Of course, Johnson is afraid to get involved himself, given the connection to the Bonato gang.
- Failing either of the previous options, a young boy named Marcus Green approaches the investigators. He says he has seen them asking questions on the street and talking to Leroy Turner. He knows something if the investigators are willing to pay him. For a dollar or two, the investigators can learn that Marcus saw Turner in the gray Packard with some white men. They were driving out on West 125th Street towards Riverside Drive. If the investigators get in their car or a taxi, they can take this route, allowing them to spot the gray Packard parked up outside the old garage near to the western end of 135th Street.

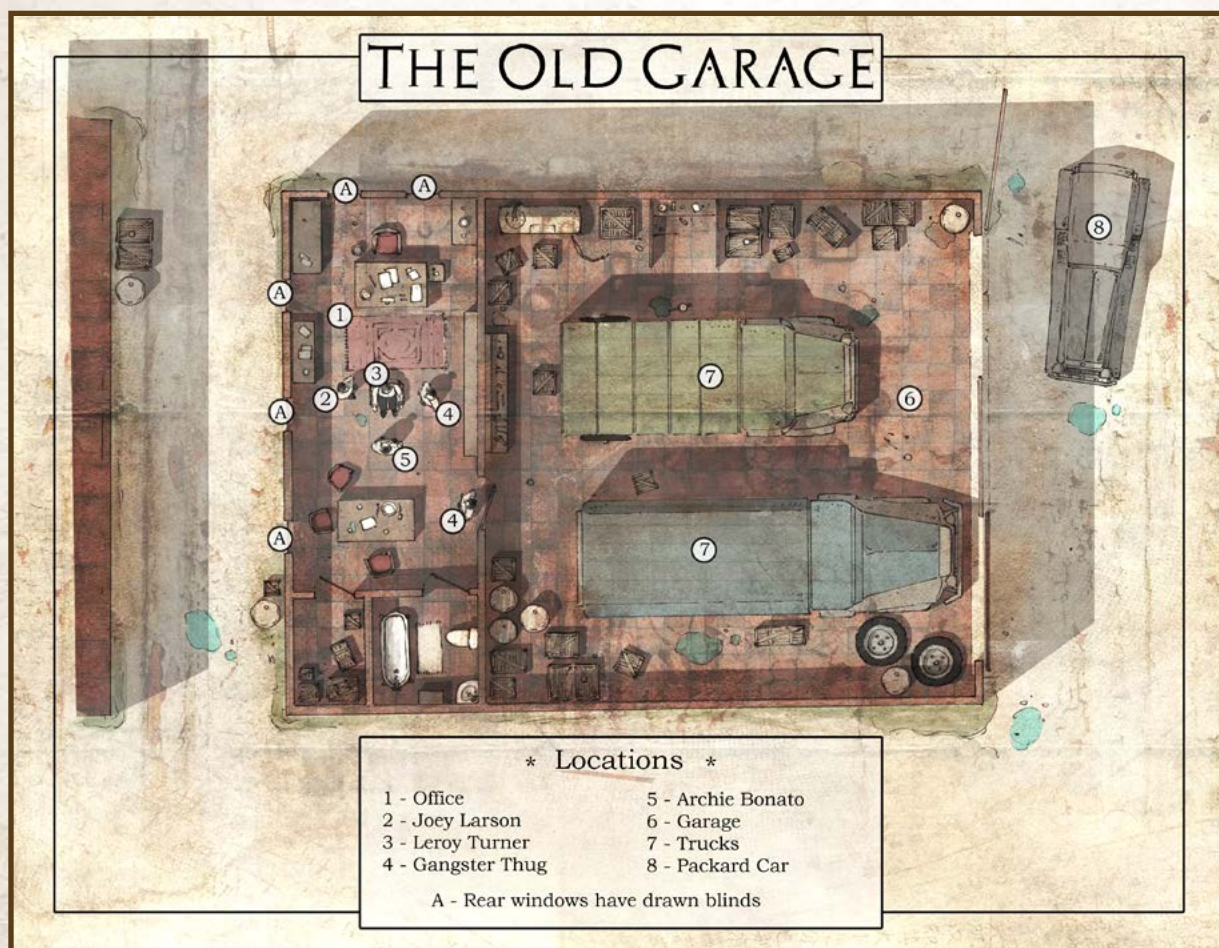
Timing the Climax

With the investigators on the trail of Turner's kidnappers, the scene is set for the scenario's climax. As stated, the kidnapping sparks the ending of the adventure, so consider the timing of your game. If your gaming session is drawing on and things are getting late, you may want to close the game with the investigators having arrived outside the garage, so that you can start the next session with them going inside. Breaking up the game in this manner means that you and the players will have ample time to play out the climax without feeling hurried. Of course, if the scenario has played out in a fairly swift fashion, you might have plenty of time left to conduct the climax. All will depend on how quickly the players have followed the course of events.

A SURPRISE FOR JOEY

Bonato's thugs use the old garage to unload shipments of liquor from out of town. Two heavy trucks wait inside to be unloaded, and they offer good cover to the investigators. The wide room at the rear of the garage has been converted into an office and gang hangout.

The garage backs up onto an alley; the blinds are drawn, but their paper is old and ragged, so investigators in the alley can see and hear what goes on inside. Alternatively, they can enter via the unguarded front door in order to overhear the interrogation. Give the players plenty of chances to interrupt what follows. The scene is presented as if the investigators are not there, so the Keeper will need to adapt the scene depending on when (or if) the investigators choose to make themselves known or act.



DEAD MAN STOMP

Keeper note: it is assumed that the investigators enter the garage in a stealthy manner, allowing them to sneak inside and overhear what is going on. Normally, the Keeper might ask for a Stealth roll to determine if such an approach is successful; however, as those inside are very focused on Turner, no Stealth roll is required this time.

The Scene Opens

Turner is brought in through the garage, into the office, and tied to a chair. His hands and arms are left free. Joey Larson hands him his trumpet and then stands to one side. Two other gangsters stand about, deferring to the fifth and last man in the building, Archie "the Boss" Bonato, a big man in rolled-up shirtsleeves, puffing a gigantic Havana cigar.

Boss Bonato asks Larson if this is the boy, and Larson replies with a yes. Bonato then asks Larson to repeat what he saw, with Larson describing the funeral and how dead Freddie Fayette got up and walked. Larson adds that Laurette, his African-American girlfriend, says that this power is voodoo, and that the gang can use it. Bonato hums and puffs for a while, then asks if Larson's sure. Larson replies that he is absolutely certain. The following conversation is provided verbatim, which the investigators can overhear (and possibly see)—the Keeper is encouraged to act out the conversation, using their best gangster-style voices.

Bonato: "No screw-ups, Joey, like you did with Manusco."

Joey: "No way, boss."

Bonato: "That was a dumb piece of work, Joey. Keeping Small's Paradise closed is costing me dough. All you had to do was to warn the guy, Joey. Now I gotta get a new accountant."

Boss Bonato hums a bit more, and a flicker of expression passes between him and the gunmen to either side of Joey Larson.

"Okay, Joey, I'll bite on what you say." Bonato looks at Joey's hands. "I want you to shoot yourself."

The room is silent. Joey Larson twitches, but doesn't move.

Bonato: "Look, Joey, if this here horn man can bring you back to life, like you say, what's the problem? Shoot yourself."

When Larson still doesn't act, Boss Bonato tells Little Jimmy to do it. In dire peril, Larson tries to pull out his long-barreled .45, but Bonato easily shoots first, and then puts a second shot through Joey's heart to be sure. Little Jimmy bends over the dripping corpse. "He's dead, Boss."



A surprise for Joey

Bonato shakes his head. "Joey, I always told you that gun was too big for a fast draw." He turns to Leroy Turner. "Okay, jazzman, blow."

Turner swallows hard and then starts up by playing "High Society." Seconds pass. Larson's body twitches and then slowly begins to rise. Everybody swears, including Turner, but Bonato tells him to keep playing.

Larson lurches toward Bonato, spitting blood. Little Jimmy opens up with his Tommy gun, emptying 20 rounds into Larson's corpse. Turner, driven insane by the power of the trumpet and its results, giggles and plays "Tiger Rag," while the walking corpse dances and jerks. The heavy slugs cut up Larson and rip him apart. Bullets whine around the room, and the air is thick with the smell of blood and cordite. The Tommy gun is empty. Larson is all over the floor and the walls. Silently, the boys cross themselves and pour drinks, while Bonato curses in disbelief.

Keeper note: if the investigators are watching these events, call for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss). If they are only listening, unable to see the mayhem, the Sanity loss is reduced to 0/1D3 points. If they intercede before Little Jimmy kills zombie Larson, the zombie may attack the investigators and they may have to kill the zombie themselves—Little Jimmy can always step in to finish the job if the investigators seem to be in too much danger. Profiles for Larson, alive and as a zombie, appear at the end of the scenario.

What Then?

Did the investigators do anything to distract the thugs? If not, perhaps the mobsters are so shaken that they cut Turner's ropes, push the sweating, shaking man out of the door, and try to forget about what they've just witnessed. Or maybe Bonato thinks Turner might be useful. He gives the giggling, unresisting jazzman to Little Jimmy, and tells him to lock Turner in the cellar of Mama Changelle's, a brothel in Harlem that Bonato owns. On the way, though, Turner jumps out of the car and disappears into the crowd, stopping now and then to play a few bars. Or maybe the investigators find some honest policemen who come on the scene before the mess is cleaned up. In that case, the gangsters are arrested. Among the evidence at the scene are the incriminating "B" files missing from Pete Manusco's office.

In any case, whether he escapes from Bonato, from the investigators, or from the police, the deranged Leroy Turner makes his way to Marnie Smeaton's tombstone in the Trinity Church Cemetery.

Following Turner

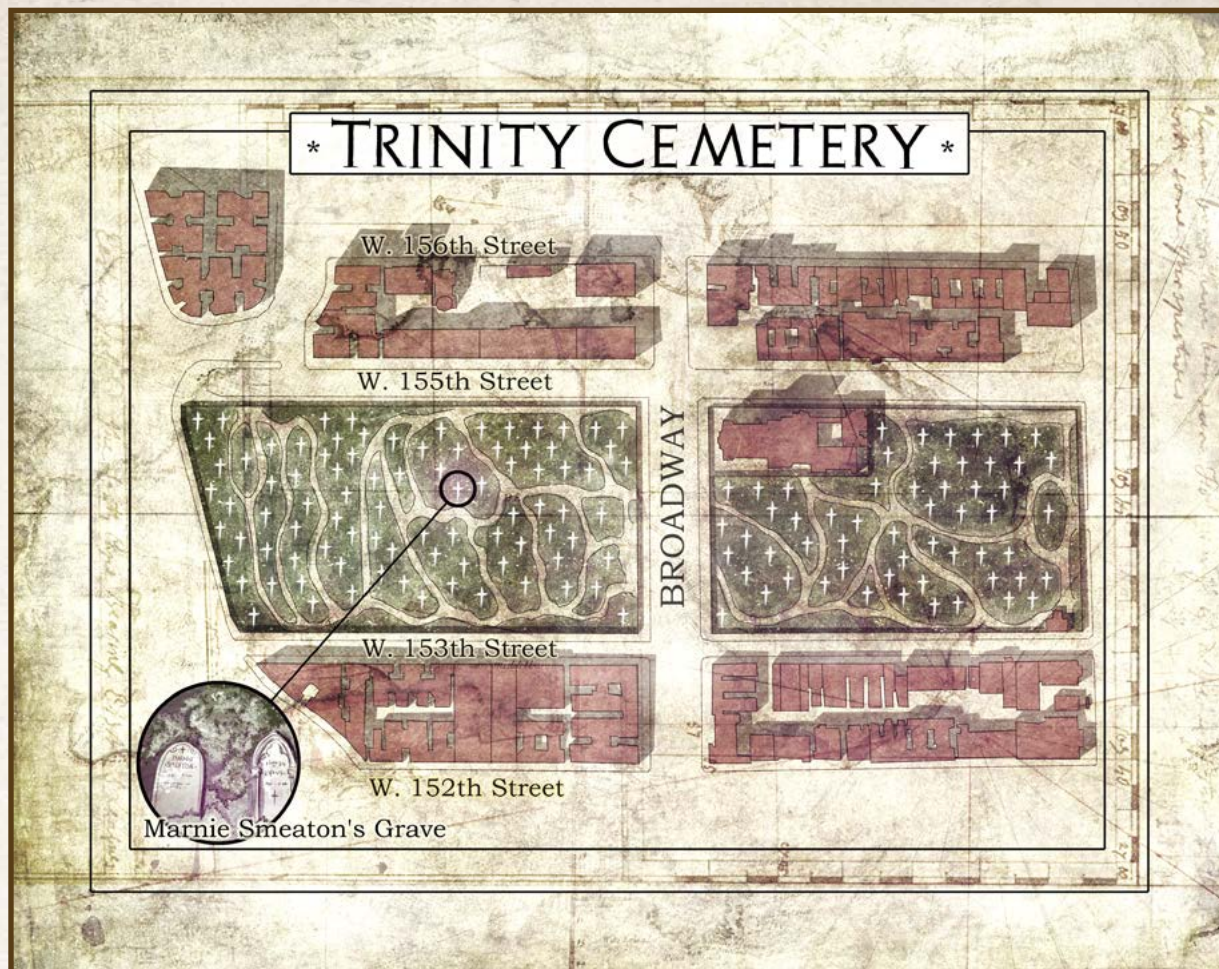
If they searched Turner's apartment or found out about his history (**Investigating Leroy Turner**, page 61), the investigators may know about Turner's lover Marnie Smeaton, who died in an accident. If they seek out Charlie Johnson to help find Turner, he says the most likely place for Turner to go when he's down is Marnie's final resting place.

Marnie Smeaton may be dead and in her grave, but her true love now knows he has the means to bring her back. Even after a couple of years there'll be something to animate. If necessary, an investigator could make an **INT** roll to figure this information out. If the rolled is failed, they are still inspired to go to Marnie's grave but take longer to do so; thus, the investigators arrive after Turner has reanimated his dead lover (see **Marnie's Grave**, following), although no matter how quickly the investigators figure this out, Leroy Turner always beats them to the cemetery.

MARNIE'S GRAVE

Trinity Church Cemetery lies between Broadway and Riverside Drive, on the northern edge of Harlem, and was created in 1838. Rushing through the grounds, the investigators spot a caretaker, who can point out Marnie's plot—or perhaps they see Turner's long, eager strides from hundreds of yards distant, heading in its direction. Ask each investigator to make a **DEX** roll to determine in what order they arrive at the grave, with the fastest ones getting there a minute or so before the rest.

When they get there, Turner is poised near Marnie Smeaton's grave, trumpet tipped, cheeks flexed, foot ready to mark time. "Folks, this next number is for Marnie," he mumbles, and starts to play. He plays for the waste of his life, for his love of booze, for the music he'll never make, for the loss of Marnie, for everything he's left undone or been cheated of. The trumpet notes have a sad sweetness, as light and as deft as life itself. The call is irresistible. The ground stirs; the wing of a marble angel cracks and falls away; a slate tombstone tilts and crumbles. Wherever the sound of Turner's trumpet reaches, the dead groan and remember. Marnie Smeaton hears her lover play, and struggles upward, a wrinkled, desiccated shape, neither living nor dead. In every direction come sounds of creaking and stirring, waking and shifting. The dead are rising. Call for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss) as the investigators realize it's not just Marnie rising but the entire cemetery!



A Moment of Clarity

Suddenly, Turner comes to his senses, and understands what is happening. If he can get away, he does, bounding over heaving graves and shuddering slabs, and past tombs grinding open. When he has space to play again, he does. What do the investigators do? As long as Turner continues to play, the dead will keep rising out of the earth.

Attacking Turner

Turner's profile can be found at the end of the scenario; refer to this if the investigators attack him, but note that he only dodges attacks made against him and does not fight back—if shot at, he doesn't even dive for cover.

If the investigators manage to cause 8 points of damage to Turner in a single attack (half his hit points) he suffers a major wound. Make a **CON** roll for Turner (CON 70) to see if he falls unconscious or continues playing. If he falls unconscious, the music stops and the dead return to the earth. The investigators have saved the day.

Reasoning with Turner

Rather than attacking, the investigators may try to reason with Turner. Unfortunately, reasoning with a madman is very difficult, requiring an investigator to make an Extreme success with a **Persuade** roll—any other result has no effect. If successful, Turner stops playing and looks around him: the rent earth, the shattered tombstones, the dead twisting and flailing about. He crumples to the ground, letting the trumpet drop from his fingers. At that moment, the dead fall lifeless back to the earth. The investigators have saved the day.

Killing Turner

If Turner is fatally shot or wounded (his hit points reduced to zero), he staggers back, puts the horn to his bloody lips, shuts his eyes, and blows. A harsh note peals forth, his life's breath. He dies, but the echo resurrects him—and he keeps on blowing. Dead now, he need spare no air for breathing, so that the terrible notes continue, growling, resonant, and infinite. The trumpet call grows stronger, until its force pulverizes headstones and shatters mausoleum doors. Witnessing Turner's undeath provokes a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss).

If the investigators do nothing to stop him, Turner plays on, until the whole cemetery struggles free and rises, each stumbling corpse remembering those that failed them, each dancing and staggering towards a separate nebulous revenge; in each, that notion of vengeance widening and expanding to encompass more and more of the living. In the chaos, call for the investigators to make another **Sanity** roll (1D6/1D20 loss). All of them now risk being attacked by the risen dead—profiles for a number of random zombies are provided at the end of the scenario.

Looking on from the void, Nyarlathotep howls with laughter. Right to the center of the cosmos, to the court of Azathoth, Turner's trumpet reaches, blending indissolubly with the blind and idiot chorus of squealing charnel flutes.

Keeper note: in the event of killing Turner, one or all of the investigators may go temporarily insane (5 or more Sanity points lost in one moment). In their insanity, perhaps they hear the cackling laughter of Nyarlathotep just before the madness takes control. The Keeper must choose whether the investigators survive the scenario, though it is highly unlikely that they do, as in their madness they are unable to avoid the lethal advances of the dead. Perhaps, when the dust settles, their bodies are found among the hundreds now littering the cemetery. Turner's body is found too, a wide grin etched on his face. As for the trumpet... it has vanished. Otherwise, with Turner now a zombie (see his "monster" profile), the investigators can find success if they manage to destroy Turner in his undead form. In this case, once Turner is reduced to zero hit points, he and all of the other zombies collapse and the threat is over. Note that taking zombie Turner down will not be an easy feat; investigators may die in the attempt. Not all *Call of Cthulhu* adventures end in success; just like many horror stories, they often do not end well for the protagonists. Having all of the investigators go insane or die can make for a suitably memorable climax.

CONCLUSION

If the corpses in the cemetery rise, the Keeper determines their disposition, and how the living perceive them. Tales of this awakening are counted as the ravings of lunatics by those who do not witness it. The authorities ascribe the disturbed graves to vandals. Depending on the actions taken, the investigators (if they survive) may get any or all of the following rewards:

- Stopping Turner without killing him, thus preventing a mass rising of the dead, awards each investigator with +2D6 Sanity points.
- Killing Turner costs the investigators -1D6 Sanity points.
- If the investigators managed to steal or secure the trumpet, award them +1 Sanity point.
- Turning in Boss Bonato at the murder scene gains +1D3 Sanity points and a \$1,000 reward from police to share; however, in the end, only Little Jimmy is convicted of manslaughter and possession of a concealed weapon. He gets out 11 months later.

In the aftermath, Small's Paradise re-opens in ten days, newly painted and carpeted, ready for business. If he survives, Leroy Turner spends a lifetime in an asylum, completely and irrevocably insane, silently playing for Nyarlathotep, waiting each night for his loving Marnie to come to call. If their relations have been good, a few weeks later Charlie Johnson sends the investigators a copy of the latest record by Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra, made days before Manusco's murder. One side, "Dead Man Stomp," features a solo by Leroy Turner on trumpet.

What about Turner's trumpet? Is it missing or now in the hands of the investigators? If the investigators possess the horn, it is a deadly magical artifact that will continue to bring horror and undeath. Rumors have already begun to circulate in Harlem about the instrument. It won't take long before others, dark of heart and with evil intent, hear of it and become determined to obtain it. The investigators may be forced to destroy the horn once they realize that mysterious dark figures are watching and hunting them. The Keeper is invited to use these ideas to develop their own follow-on adventure, with the investigators pursued by evil cultists who wish to own Turner's trumpet. Whenever the horn blows, death soon answers its call.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Note that both Leroy Turner and Joey Larson have a “character” and also a “monster” profile in the relevant sections, dependent on whether they are human or zombie when the investigators meet them. Pete Manusco and Freddie Fayette just have “monster” profiles.

CHARACTERS

Leroy Turner, age 28, alcoholic horn player

Note that a second profile for “Zombie Turner” can be found in the following **Monsters** section.

STR 60 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 80 **DEX** 90 **INT** 55
APP 50 **POW** 45 **EDU** 45 **SAN** 39 **HP** 15
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 8

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (punch)
 Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4
 Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills

Art/Craft (Jazz) 72%, Art/Craft (Trumpet) 92%, Climb 50%, Fast Talk 45%, Hold Liquor 65%, Psychology 35%, Stealth 45%, Throw 30%.

Special: Unholy Trumpet; when played, its music raises the dead.

- **Description:** a tall, thin African American; wears an old suit.
- **Traits:** a broken heart and a drinking problem.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** at first, he is not aware that playing his trumpet wakes the dead but, as events come to demonstrate, he realizes its power and seeks to bring back his lost love.

Joey Larson, age 24, gunsel

Note that a second profile for “Zombie Larson” can be found in the following **Monsters** section.

STR 60 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 40 **DEX** 80 **INT** 50
APP 35 **POW** 35 **EDU** 55 **SAN** 23 **HP** 9
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 9

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (punch, knife, or gun)
 Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4
 .45 long-barreled revolver 60% (30/12), damage 1D10+2
 Thompson submachine gun 40% (20/8), damage 1D10+2
 Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills

Climb 50%, Fast Talk 50%, Locksmith 30%, Psychology 45%, Stealth 65%, Throw 50%.

- **Description:** a rat-like little white man in a sharp suit.
- **Traits:** cunning and dangerous.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** hit man for Archie “the Boss” Bonato, and murderer of Pete Manusco.



Charlie Johnson

BOOK THREE

Charlie Johnson, age 39, band leader

STR 70 CON 70 SIZ 75 DEX 65 INT 75
APP 65 POW 85 EDU 50 SAN 85 HP 14
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (punch or knife)
Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4
or knife 1D4+1D4
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Art/Craft (Compose Music) 50%, Art/Craft (Cornet) 55%,
Art/Craft (Piano) 70%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 40%,
Persuade 65%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 52%, Stealth
40%, Throw 45%.

- **Description:** portly African American, wears a smart suit.
- **Traits:** friendly, genial.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** knows Leroy Turner.

Roger Daniels, age 31, federal agent

STR 65 CON 60 SIZ 75 DEX 60 INT 80
APP 55 POW 65 EDU 75 SAN 65 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (punch or gun)
Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4
.38 revolver 50%, (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Accounting 45%, Drive Auto 60%, Law 55%, Listen 65%,
Persuade 45%, Psychology 60%, Science (Pharmacy) 15%,
Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 50%, Track 20%, Throw 40%.

- **Description:** clean cut white man, well-pressed shirt and dark suit.
- **Traits:** by-the-book lawman.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** possible ally to the investigators and source of clues.

Archie "the Boss" Bonato, age 46, crime lord

STR 65 CON 65 SIZ 75 DEX 70 INT 65
APP 45 POW 65 EDU 60 SAN 65 HP 15
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 6

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (punch or gun)
Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4
.45 snub-nose revolver 60%, (30/12), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Fast Talk 70%, Intimidate 70%, Law 13%, Listen 45%,
Psychology 70%, Spot Hidden 51%, Stealth 35%, Throw 50%.

- **Description:** a big Italian American man in a suit, although he tends to roll up his shirtsleeves when "dealing" with business.
- **Traits:** merciless, cruel.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** when he hears about Turner's trumpet raising the dead, he wants to see it for himself.



SIX MOBSTERS, FUNERAL-GOERS, OR RESIDENTS

	Matt	Fraggle	Jennifer	Fergie	John	Reggie
STR	45	50	55	60	65	70
CON	50	50	75	60	70	70
SIZ	60	50	50	70	75	60
DEX	70	70	80	65	60	70
INT	55	60	70	65	55	70
APP	50	60	45	65	55	65
POW	50	60	45	50	55	70
EDU	50	60	65	75	55	60
SAN	00	00	00	00	00	00
HP	11	10	12	13	14	13
DB	0	0	0	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4
Build	0	0	0	1	1	1
Move	8	8	9	7	7	9

Mobsters

Attacks per round: 1 (punch or gun)

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+DB
 .38 revolver 35% (17/7), damage 1D10
 Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 35%, Drive Auto 35%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 30%,
 Locksmith 35%, Navigate 40%, Psychology 30%, Spot
 Hidden 30%, Stealth 35%, Throw 40%.

Funeral-goers and Residents

Attacks per round: 1 (punch or knife)

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3+DB
 Knife 35% (17/7), damage 1D4+DB
 Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 30%, Drive Auto 25%, First Aid 40%, Fast Talk
 35%, Jump 30%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Navigate 50%,
 Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 25%, Stealth 30%, Throw 30%.

"Little" Jimmy Foster, age 34, thug

STR 85 CON 85 SIZ 90 DEX 60 INT 50
 APP 40 POW 70 EDU 45 SAN 65 HP 17
 DB: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 7

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (punch, club, or gun)

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D6
 Baseball bat (club) 60% (30/12), damage 1D8+1D6
 Thompson submachine gun 40% (20/8), damage 1D10+2
 Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 40%, Fast Talk 70%, Intimidate 55%, Listen 45%,
 Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%.

- **Description:** thin, skull-like face, thin lips.
- **Traits:** cruel, violent.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** does what Boss Bonato tells him.

SIX POLICEMEN

	1	2	3	4	5	6
STR	80	75	85	60	65	55
CON	80	90	75	60	65	70
SIZ	80	85	75	80	60	60
DEX	70	70	75	65	60	70
INT	55	60	70	65	55	70
APP	50	55	60	65	70	65
POW	50	60	65	75	55	60
EDU	50	60	45	50	55	70
SAN	60	35	50	70	65	50
HP	16	17	15	14	12	13
DB	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	0
Build	1	1	1	1	1	0
Move	8	7	8	7	8	8

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (punch, club, or gun)

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3+DB
Nightstick (club)	40% (20/8), damage 1D6+DB
.38 revolver	40% (20/18), damage 1D10
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 60%, Drive Auto 25%, First Aid 40%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Law 20%, Mechanical Repair 25%, Navigate 55%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 45%, Track 20%, Throw 50%.

MONSTERS

Those raised from the dead are zombies. Each loses only 1 hit point from a bullet attack. All other attacks (such as with a knife) inflict half of the rolled damage. Each zombie continues to attack until hacked apart (at zero hit points)—ignore major wounds (**Book Two**, page 20) for zombies, as they continue to fight until completely destroyed.

Seeing a zombie usually provokes a **Sanity** roll, with the nominal cost of 0/1D8 Sanity points. Consider the actual condition of the corpse when deducting Sanity—some may be more “fresh” and so less horrific, reducing the loss to 0/1D4 points, at the Keeper’s discretion. Note that the maximum total number of Sanity points that can be lost for encountering lots of zombies in a short time period is 8 points, as once they’ve lost those 8 points (the maximum Sanity loss for seeing a zombie) the Keeper doesn’t need to ask the investigators to make any further Sanity rolls for seeing yet more zombies.

Zombie Pete Manusco

STR 85	CON 75	SIZ 55	DEX 30	INT 00
APP —	POW 05	EDU —	SAN —	HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 6				

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (tear or bite)

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D3+1D4
Dodge	zombies do not dodge

Zombie Freddie Fayette

STR 110	CON 135	SIZ 70	DEX 35	INT 00
APP —	POW 05	EDU —	SAN —	HP 20
DB: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 6				

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (tear or bite)

Fighting	35% (17/7), damage 1D3+1D6
Dodge	zombies do not dodge

DEAD MAN STOMP

SIX ZOMBIES

	Spencer	Nick	Donye	Solomon	Alex	Jordan
STR	60	75	70	70	85	85
CON	70	60	65	70	75	60
SIZ	60	50	55	60	65	70
DEX	35	35	35	35	35	35
INT	05	05	05	05	05	05
APP	—	—	—	—	—	—
POW	40	40	35	40	45	40
EDU	—	—	—	—	—	—
SAN	—	—	—	—	—	—
HP	13	11	12	13	14	13
DB	0	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4
Build	0	1	1	1	1	1
Move	6	6	6	6	6	6

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (punch or gun)

Fighting 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+DB

Dodge zombies do not dodge

Zombie Joey Larson

STR 90 CON 70 SIZ 40 DEX 40 INT 00
 APP — POW 05 EDU — SAN — HP 11
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 6

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (tear or bite)

Fighting 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+1D4

Dodge zombies do not dodge

Zombie Leroy Turner

STR 90 CON 105 SIZ 80 DEX 45 INT —
 APP — POW 05 EDU — SAN — HP 18
 DB: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 6

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (tear or bite)

Fighting 30% (15/6), damage 1D3+1D6

Dodge zombies do not dodge

"The strongest emotion is fear, and the oldest is fear of the unknown."—H.P. Lovecraft

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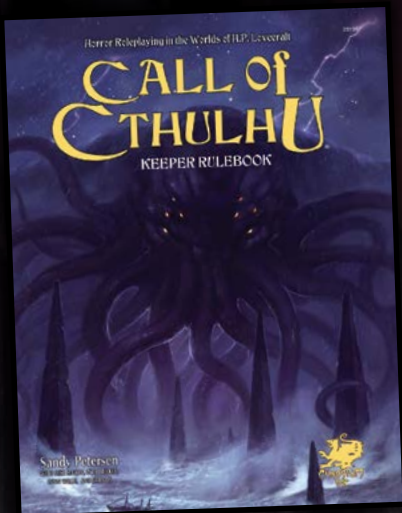
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