Call of Cthulhu®

D20 SYSTEM ROLEPLAYING



A MODERN-DAY HORROR CAMPAIGN

Nocturnum™

d20 system™

Credits

ORIGINAL STORY

Christian T. Petersen

WRITING*

Darrell Hardy

DEVELOPMENT and ADVENTURES

Darrell Hardy & Christian T. Petersen

d20 SYSTEM DEVELOPER

Greg Benage

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS

Toren "MacBin" Atkinson, Andy Brase, Michael Clarke, Earl Geier, Bill Heagy, Hive, Eric Lofgren, Brad McDevitt, Brian Schomburg, Christopher Shy, Tyler Walpole, Kenneth Waters

CARTOGRAPHY

Brent Ferguson
Christian T. Petersen

GRAPHIC & COVER DESIGN

Brian Schomburg

PLAYER HANDOUTS

Brian Wood

EDITING

Greg Benage

ART DIRECTION and LAYOUT

Wil Upchurch

PUBLISHER

Christian T. Petersen

PRINTING

Bang Printing

None of the rules content of this product is open content and is being utilized under specific permission from Wizards of the Coast, Inc.®

All rules in this product are taken from, or derived from, rules in Wizards of the Coast, Inc.'s® Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game©

'd20 System'® and the 'd20 System'® logo are Registered Trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.® and are used by permission.

Copyright © 1999, 2002 Fantasy Flight Publishing, Inc. Nocturnum™ is a trademark of Fantasy Flight Publishing, Inc. All rightsreserved. This work, or parts thereof, may not be copied without permission. The Call of Cthulhu game system is used under license from Chaosium, Inc. Call of Cthulhu is a registered trademark of Chaosium, Inc. All right reserved. Any similarities between people or institutions in this work and any actual persons or institutions is purely coincidental.

* *The Weaving of Three written by Christian T. Petersen*
Klaus the Shepherd written by Darrell Hardy

FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES
1975 W. County Rd. B2
Roseville, MN 55113
651.639.1905
www.fantasyflightgames.com



Contents

Introduction 4

PART I: LONG SHADES

Chapter 1: Snowflake Valley 35

Chapter 2: The Madness of the Twilight Queen 64

Chapter 3: Stillness 87

PART II: HOLLOW WINDS

Chapter 4: Wanted! 107

Chapter 5: A Dire Warning 111

Chapter 6: The Sky is Falling 113

Chapter 7: The Benefactor 117

Chapter 8: Visiting Hours 121

Chapter 9: A Family Affair 131

Chapter 10: Revelations 151

Chapter 11: Thor's Anvil 159

PART III: DEEP SECRETS

Chapter 12: The Copenhagen Connection 179

Chapter 13: The Weaving of Three 197

Chapter 14: Beyond the Sea 217

Chapter 15: Moscow Showdown 225

Chapter 16: Into the East 234

Chapter 17: The Turning of the Wheel 245

Chapter 18: The Tyrr Nemaii 256

Chapter 19: Armageddon Plain 263

Introduction

Fantasy Flight Games is pleased to present **Nocturnum**, a campaign for the *Call of Cthulhu* role-playing game. This edition of **Nocturnum** is designed for the d20 System™ version of the *Call of Cthulhu* rules. You need the *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook published by Wizards of the Coast® to use it.

There are a few different ways you can use this book. First, if you are not running a regular *Call of Cthulhu* campaign, you can use it for one-shot adventures and scenarios. In this case, most of the adventures-particularly the early ones-should be fairly self-contained. The extensive background material provided in **Nocturnum** is only relevant insofar as it relates directly to the adventure you wish to use.

Second, you can run the campaign exactly as it is presented, as a series of connected adventures that together form a cohesive campaign. This requires little or no outside preparation on your part-you simply run the adventures as written one after another for your players.

Finally, you can use **Nocturnum** as a campaign framework. This is probably the most rewarding way to use the book, but it requires a little more time and energy from the Gamemaster. If you choose this route, you use the adventures presented here as a kind of skeleton for your campaign-a basic structure around which you can hang additional adventures, subplots, and details of your own devising. You'll want to develop adventures and scenarios of your own to "fill in the gaps" and create NPCs of your own to act as allies and enemies of the investigators in your own story arcs and subplots.

Whichever approach you choose, you should find everything you need (except the core rulebook, paper and pencil, and dice) in this volume.

Maps of various locations are scattered throughout the book, and they use a standard 5-foot-square grid unless stated otherwise in the map key. You can photocopy and enlarge these maps for your personal use on the tabletop if you wish.

During the course of the campaign, the investigators will discover many clues in the form of written documents. The text of these papers are included where they occur in each adventure. Prop documents designed for use as player handouts are included at the back of the book and can be photocopied for your personal use.

Campaign Overview

Nocturnum is a complex campaign that plunges the investigators into a many-layered conspiracy with several factions and countless NPCs. This complexity can be daunting for novice Gamemasters, and the following will serve as a useful overview of the plot.

Needless to say, if you are not the Gamemaster, you should stop reading now!

* * *

Before the dawn of time, the entropic entity known in the Mythos as Azathoth roused itself and gave birth to a fleeting thought. This black seed manifested physically as a race of chaotic beings who knew themselves as shk'ryth. These formless spawn of chaos dwelt in the bowels of the Earth for millennia before finally waking into sentience.

Eons after the shk'ryth emerged from their strange dimension, colonists of a starfaring race known as ktchoma arrived on our world. They built a great machine that would eventually become known as the Tyrr Nemaii to pull their race's starships out of the depths of space toward their new world. Before they could truly establish their colony, however, a civil war broke out on among the ktchoma and all but four of them returned to their homeworld. The remaining four placed themselves in stasis, where they slumbered for long millennia until they were awakened by a Danish explorer in the 19th century.

While the ktchoma slept, the awareness and intelligence of the shk'ryth continued to grow. They all realized that they were trapped on the Earth, and they all dreamed of a way to break out of their dimension prison. Some of the most active shk'ryth organized themselves under the cover of a multinational corporation known as TemCo.

With the secret aid of one of the ktchoma, TemCo eventually discovered the Tyrr Nemaii beneath Mt. Makalu in the Himalayas and undertook a project to use the alien machine to break out of their prison. They focused the Tyrr Nemaii's power on a comet orbiting beyond Jupiter, drawing it onto a collision course with Earth. The shk'ryth's scientists believe they can use the impact of this comet-known to astronomers as SH-01-to punch a hole in time and space, freeing the shk'ryth from the bounds of life and energy.

The Tyrr Nemaii is powered by psychic energy, and TemCo and its agents have been conducting a secret campaign of abduction all over the world. Psychics are identified, kidnapped, and shipped to the Himalayas to power the alien machine.

The shk'ryth are unaware, however, that they are themselves being manipulated by an alien intelligence. One of the ktchoma shares their desire to return to his home. This alien being walks among them, subtly directing and guiding their efforts to his own ends.

As the investigators proceed through the Nocturnum campaign, they discover more and more of this tangled conspiracy. The first adventures are simply isolated encounters with shk'ryth, but they soon learn of SH-01 and eventually have a chance, however remote, to save the Earth from its catastrophic impact.

Alan Ekloff appears older than his chart would indicate: too many wrinkles, too much gray hair for a man of 29. He huddles at the foot of his bed with his back against the wall, watching the window.

Enormous snowflakes flash by outside, hurled past the window by howling arctic winds, each flake frozen for a heartbeat in the exterior spotlight. He glances over to the door as a woman in a *lab coat* steps into the room, then turns back to the window.

"Mr. Ekloff? My name is Dr. Hall. I'd like to ask you a few questions."

"I know why you're here, doctor."

Dr. Hall gives her patient a quizzical look, a combination of curiosity and amusement, as she sits on a chair across from his bed.

"So...why am I here, Mr. Ekloff?"

Ekloff turns once more to the doctor. He studies her with the manic eyes of one who has seen too much. She is a small woman, compact, with glasses and a clipboard. Too young for this, he thinks. Definitely new to the asylum.

"You are here, Dr. Hall, because you have an interest in delusional cases such as mine. Paranoia, hallucinations, memory lapses—these things fascinate you. People like me are the reason you got into the field in the first place. And now that you finally have me—a real, honest-to-goodness schizophrenic nutcase just like in the text books—you're going to make the most of this opportunity.

"Am I correct doctor?"

Dr. Hall meets her patient's gaze and a thin smile plays across her lips.

"Something like that," she nods.

"Then you're in luck," Ekloff grins. "Start taking notes, doctor, because I'm in a talkative mood. For one night only, I will bare my soul to your sensors and probes, answer your questions and confirm your suspicions that I'm the best case study you'll ever have."

Ekloff flashes Dr. Hall a manic smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes. "I suppose you'll want to start with my sister. You folks usually do."

"Yes. Let's start with your sister, shall we?"

"My sister—Karen—always had trouble fitting in. Refused to bother herself with social niceties. Always called things as she saw them—as they were. See, that was the weird part. No one could lie to Karen. She knew what they were thinking, and if it didn't match what they were saying, she called them on it."

Dr. Hall looks up from her clipboard. "Knew what they were thinking?"

"Yes." Ekloff spits the word.

"Mr. Ekloff, I'm afraid I don't under—"

"Don't understand?" Ekloff explodes. "Don't understand! Look, doctor. You got the file—read it. Yes, Karen knew what they were thinking, because she was psychic. Yes, psychic! Psychic, psychic, psychic! It's in the file," he yells, pointing at Hall's clipboard. "Read it!"

Dr. Hall watches Ekloff quietly. She says nothing, makes no notes. She simply waits for him to calm down. "Are you ready to go on?" she asks. Ekloff nods.

"Like I say, it's all in there. I'm sure you've read it, so I'll give you the short version."

Dr. Hall nods, encouraging him to continue.

"So anyway, about a year and a half ago, my sister goes missing. Now, I have some training in basic detective work, from my time with the military, so I knew where to start. But what I found surprised me: she was only one of several psychics in the area who were missing."

"Excuse me, Mr. Ekloff, but how did you find out about the other psychics?" Hall leans forward, pen at the ready. Ekloff shrugs.

"I just asked around. New Age book stores, hippie hangouts—birds of that particular feather not

only flock, but exchange news and gossip together more than any other subculture I've happened upon. And the word was out: these people were disappearing. I followed up on the rumors and found many of them to be facts."

Hall nods seriously and scrawls on her clipboard. Ekloff lets her finish writing before he continues. The room falls silent but for the scratching of Hall's pen and the incessant howl of the winter wind. Finally, Hall looks up.

"But you finally found your sister. Where was she?"

"Some guy's basement. Big old house miles out of town. Some of the others were there, too—the other psychics, I mean. Karen was tied up and maybe drugged. I tried to get her out of there, but..."

"Yes, Mr. Ekloff?"

Ekloff glowers at the doctor. "Do we really have to go into this? It's in the file. It's all there."

Dr. Hall smiles a professional smile. "It might be good for you."

"I don't think—"

"It might be good for you." Hall isn't smiling now.

Ekloff's eye twitches and beads of sweat appear on his brow, but he maintains control. "Okay," he says. "Okay, fine."



"The owner of the house discovered us before we made our escape. He chased us outside and we ran. In the chaos that ensued, Karen and I found ourselves in a moldy and forgotten place, some swamp near the house. It was there that we..."

"Yes?"

"We saw something. Coming out of the swamp. It was...I don't know what to call it. A monster."

"Can you describe it, Mr. Ekloff?"

"No."

Hall takes a few more notes.

"And what did this monster do?"

Ekloff falls silent for a long minute, staring at the snow failing outside. His hands are fists and he is sweating profusely.

"It...it took Karen. Into the swamp. There was nothing I could do."

"No. Of course not."

Dr. Hall jots down some more notes, then flips through her patient's file. She smiles to herself slightly and gives a small nod as if pleased with what she finds there.

"This monster...have you seen it, or any others like it, since that night?"

"Yes. I have seen others."

Dr. Hall nods.

"It is my belief, doctor, that these...things are somehow working together. That they have some sort of plan, some terrible project that they are undertaking. "

Hall nods again and smiles. "Really," she says. "Does anyone else feel this way?"

"I only confided in two close friends, and now one of them is dead because he helped me."

"And the other?"

Ekloff sighs. "My little brother in Philadelphia. He didn't believe me at first—wanted to lock me up, in fact, but when he saw.... Well, now he believes. "

"That would be your brother Timothy?"

"Yes. Is this important? Why do you need to know this?"

Hall smiles her professional smile and stands to her feet. She caps her pen and slips it into the breast pocket of her lab coat.

"I have one more question, Mr. Ekloff: Would you recognize one of these...monsters if you saw it?"

"Yes. I'm sure of it."

Dr. Hall leans in close to her patient. "Don't be so certain," she whispers. A primal uneasiness gnaws at Ekloff's gut when she smiles at him and heads for the door. There's something familiar about the doctor...the odor just beneath her perfume.

Dr. Hall is halfway down the hallway when Ekloff begins to scream. She smiles when she hears him, but no one else seems to notice his voice; there are always screams in the asylum.

Welcome to Nocturnum

Nocturnum is a campaign for the d20 System edition of the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game. At the beginning of the campaign, suitable investigators will be around 4th level. The Gamemaster can tailor the early adventures to be suitable for investigators who are a little higher or lower in level, though the GM should make sure that none of the investigators outshine the others.

The **Nocturnum** campaign introduces a new evil into the *Call of Cthulhu* game. Throughout the course of the campaign, investigators are plunged into a web of conspiracy that reaches the highest levels of international society, industry, and government. Underlying this conspiracy is an alien menace from strange dimensions that threatens not only the investigators but the whole of human civilization as well.

Nocturnum is divided into three parts: *Long Shades*, *Hollow Winds*, and *Deep Secrets*. Each part of the campaign presents three or more adventures that pose a progressively greater threat to the investigators' physical and mental health. Details of these three parts and the adventures they present are provided in the following section.

Following this synopsis is an overview of the major organizations and NPCs that play a role in the **Nocturnum** campaign. This source and background material is quite extensive, and the Gamemaster should not be concerned with digesting it all in the first read-through. This section will provide a handy reference source as the GM runs the adventures that make up the **Nocturnum** campaign.

The Campaign

The **Nocturnum** campaign focuses on the apocalyptic plans of TemCo, a corporation run by the alien shk'ryth, and their gradual discovery by the investigators. Over the course of the campaign, the investigators slowly realize that there is a pattern to the outbreaks and creatures of supernatural horror they are encountering. One by one the pieces fall into place, until a terrible conspiracy of ultimate destruction is revealed. Finally, as the investigators are the only ones aware of the looming danger, it is up to them to save humanity from the shk'ryth threat.

The adventures included in Part I: *Long Shades* deal only peripherally with TemCo's master plan. Instead, the first two adventures serve to introduce the shk'ryth to the investigators, while the third reveals

ominous signs that there is far more going on behind the scenes than the investigators realize. This is the introductory arc of the campaign; it is not until Part II: *Hollow Winds* that the investigators find any solid evidence of the shadowy schemes of the shk'ryth. Armed with this forbidden knowledge, the investigators have the opportunity to fight back against these creatures of darkness in Part III: *Deep Secrets*.

Part I: Long Shades

The first part of the **Nocturnum** campaign is designed to introduce investigators to the shk'ryth and the threat of SH-01.

Chapter One: Snowflake Valley is an adventure the GM can spring on the investigators when they are traveling through the Rocky Mountains. The adventure puts the investigators in the middle of a series of bizarre murders and brings them face to face with a wilder shk'ryth.

Chapter Two: The Madness of the Twilight Queen takes the investigators to a small college town thrown into chaos by a new streetdrug, pixie dust, that exhibits arcane properties. The investigators must follow the drug to its source and petitition a local deity, the slumbering Twilight Queen, to aid them in their confrontation with another wilder shk'ryth.

Chapter Three: Stillness leads the investigators to a remote mountain monastery where they encounter a civilized shk'ryth with ties to TemCo for the first time. When this adventure concludes, the investigators should have their first clues to the looming threat of SH-01.

Running Long Shades

Gamemasters have several options when running Part I: *Long Shades* for their players. There are at least three different ways to use the information and adventures in this part.

Most of the adventures are designed to be played in one or two sittings and are challenging enough to be played alone—that is, in any order and with no connection to each other or the **Nocturnum** campaign. Gamemasters who are so inclined can run them as they would any other one-shot *Call of Cthulhu* adventures. Most of the background material—the origin of the shk'ryth, TemCo, etc.—is not important in this case and can be ignored or modified as the Gamemaster wishes.

A second way to run the adventures in *Long Shades* is to insert them into the Gamemaster's regular *Call of Cthulhu* campaign. Each adventure is self-contained enough that the Gamemaster can slip it in between two episodes of his usual campaign without throwing off the continuity that he and the players have already established. This may be the best way to run *Long Shades*: The investigators are introduced to the shk'ryth slowly and may not realize what they are up against until it is too late.

Finally, the GM may decide to run the three adventures back-to-back as an introduction to a campaign in its own right and continue the campaign with Part II: *Hollow Winds* and Part III: *Deep Secrets*. This would be a true **Nocturnum** campaign, in which every adventure revolves around the shk'ryth in one way or another. One benefit of this approach is that the investigators quickly recognize the similarities between the horrors they encounter in each adventure and realize that this is more than a series of isolated outbreaks of evil.

If the Gamemaster intends to use the adventures as part of a campaign, whether by themselves or as part of his regular campaign, he is encouraged to run the adventures in the order they are presented, as each one reveals a little bit more about what is really going on. The final adventure, *Stillness*, is in many ways the climax of the story arc, as it hints toward cosmic doom and a larger plan at work.

Part II: Hollow Winds

Nocturnum does not end with *Long Shades*. The next part of this chilling campaign drags the investigators deeper into the unholy intrigue as they discover they have an unnerving ally: Nyarlathotep, who recognizes in the shk'ryth a threat to his position in the hierarchy of gods. In the final part of the **Nocturnum** campaign, the investigators must face the shk'ryth machination of horror to bring about the end of time—the Tyrr Nemaii.

These are dark days for the investigators. Where they were once merely spectators, thrown by fate into the path of danger, they have now become pawns in a struggle larger than they could possibly imagine. At the beginning of Part II: *Hollow Winds*, the confused, paranoid investigators find themselves hunted by TemCo and the FBI.

Chapter Four: Wanted explains how and why the investigators are being hunted by the FBI. When TemCo realized the investigators were a threat, it framed them for a crime they did not commit and sent the FBI to track them down. This chapter deals with how the FBI goes about doing this, and what happens if its agents finally locate the investigators.

Chapter Five: A Dire Warning presents the investigators' first encounter with Timothy Ekloff. This is a brief but important meeting, as it gives Ekloff a chance to inform the investigators about the danger they are in and foreshadows the terrible things to come.

Chapter Six: The Sky is Falling details what happens if the investigators try to warn the world about the comet SH-01. Several scenarios are given, depending on who the investigators speak to. The media, for example, react differently than an amateur astronomer

with a telescope in his backyard. The chapter also provides Project Pandora's strategy and tactics for interacting with the investigators.

Chapter Seven: The Benefactor introduces the investigators to the New Moon Temple. The cultists represent themselves as interested, if anonymous, third parties supportive of the investigators and their efforts. They provide the investigators with assistance in evading the FBI, and all they ask in return is that the investigators help them locate Timothy Ekloff.

Chapter Eight: Visiting Hours finds the investigators paying a visit to Timothy's brother, Alan Ekloff, who is locked up in the Gibson Mental Hospital. But there are unnatural forces at work at the asylum. The investigators are captured by inhuman hands and held to await judgment at the hands of the shk'ryth. If they are to live, they must find Alan and make good their escape before it is too late.

Chapter Nine: A Family Affair brings the investigators to the swamps of Georgia in their continuing effort to track down Timothy Ekloff. They may not find Ekloff here, but his hometown is full of secrets and the darkest of these lies in the murky heart of the swamp near Timothy's childhood home. Even if the investigators do find the answers they are looking for, they still have to deal with the FBI agents who have found them and are determined to bring them in.

Chapter Ten: Revelations is an adventure in which the investigators finally catch up with Timothy Ekloff. He is less than pleased to see them, however, and tries to elude them again. Unwittingly, the investigators lead him into a TemCo trap.

Chapter Eleven: Thor's Anvil opens with the investigators awakening on board a freighter in the middle of the Atlantic. They have been captured and soon find themselves on an offshore oil platform that comes under attack from a legion of sea creatures. Part II: *Hollow Winds* draws to a close as the investigators leave the oil platform for Denmark, the first leg in their journey to the Tyrr Nemaii.

Running Hollow Winds

In many ways, *Hollow Winds* is the most challenging part of the **Nocturnum** campaign. The first part was an introduction to the campaign, so the players had to do nothing but follow the Gamemaster's lead. By the time the players reach the final book, their investigators will be so deeply entrenched in the events of the campaign that they have little choice but to go forward. *Hollow Winds*, on the other hand, is largely transitional, as the investigators are drawn further into the conspiracy, learn more about the threat to Earth, and are introduced to new enemies and allies.

Throughout all of these adventures, the Gamemaster may use the background information presented in this intro to keep the investigators motivated and on track.

For the last three years, Morten Nyhuus has dedicated every waking moment to his search for the lost temple. To end it now—after he has come so close—is unthinkable.

"I'm sorry, sir, but the Sherpas refuse to climb the moutain any farther. They say there is a storm coming, with much snow and terrible winds."

"What? A storm? Why, those insufferable, primitive..." The Danish explorer's voice trails into angry, frustrated sputtering.

"Of course there's a storm coming! This is the beginning of the snowy season—which is why we have to make the ascent immediately. If we delay even one more day, we might be trapped on this cursed mountain for months. I have been waiting for this day since 1889 and refuse to put it off another day simply because some yak-herder thinks he smells snow when there isn't a cloud in the sky!"

"Might I recommend looking for replacement Sherpas, sir?" Always polite, Xiaojun is Morten's guide, translator, and voice of reason. Without him, the nobleman would have been lost here in the Himalayas a dozen times over.

Morten sighs and sips his brandy.

"Yes, yes. You're right, of course. Let's stay here tomorrow—we've already got the tents set up—and in the morning you can go to the village and pick up some new men."

Morten doesn't like the looks of the new Sherpas Xiaojun recruited from Khun Li. They are a surly and shifty-eyed lot. Several of them appear to be drunk. None of them speak anything but their mountain gibberish; even Xiaojun has difficulty communicating with them.

Nevertheless, Morten has no choice. If these men are the only ones willing to risk a little snowfall, then they are the only ones for the job. Not that Morten expects much snow. The sky is gray and overcast, but has none of the sullen threat of storm clouds.

There may be snow, Morten admits to himself, but if so, it shall be an inconvenience and nothing more.

* * *

The climbers have been making their way up the mountainside for the better part of the next day when the snow begins to fall in thick, lazy flakes. Morten notices, to his dismay, that the Sherpas are moving slower now, as if spooked by the snowfall. Though he longs to motivate them with a thorough tongue-lashing, he resists the desire to do so. It would serve no purpose, he knows, beyond venting his own frustrations and building up resentment in his guides. As long as they keep moving—no matter how slowly—he shall keep silent. There is still time for them to

reach the landmark called the Rock of the Three Fingers before nightfall.

As the wind picks up, the snow begins to fall in earnest, swirling and scouring around the mountaineers. Ahead of him, Morten's guides are mere shadows, thin patches of darkness in the tumultuous white. A sudden dread falls over him at the thought of falling behind. Morten picks up his pace—

—and steps out into nothing.

For an eternal moment Morten is suspended between earth and sky, one foot dangling over a drop to certain death. His heart is a drum. His limbs are lead. His breath catches in his lungs and holds, waiting.

Without thinking, Morten swings his pick. It bites into ice, giving him the leverage he needs to pull back, lean against the mountainside, and regain his footing.

"Hold up!" the explorer calls to his fellows. He slumps into a crouch, trying to catch his breath before the howling wind snatches it away. When he hears no response, Morten looks up toward the Sherpas...and sees only blinding snow.

"I say, hold up!" Morten tries to keep the panic from his voice as he calls out. He receives no response.

"Hold up!" He places his hands around his mouth and bellows again. Once more the wind tears the words from his throat and scatters them into the blizzard.

"Xiaojun!"

Morten squints against the snow but finds it doesn't help. The wind still stings his eyes and he still can't see the rest of his party. Clenching his eyes shut, he presses himself against the mountain face and inches blindly to where he hopes his friend and the Sherpas are waiting. For an hour or more he works his way by feel, stretching out, reaching for handholds with each shuffling step.

In a sudden lull of the wind, Nyhuus sees the Three Fingers dimly ahead. The stone spires stretch like giant demon claws into the storm. Then again they are obscured.

Suddenly the explorer's fingers find a patch of loose, crumbling snow on the mountain wall. He pushes against the patch and it falls inward. He has discovered a crack in the mountain.

Hoping for a respite from the storm, Morten squeezes himself into the narrow rocky gap. To his surprise, the crack grows larger, turning into a cave. He has room to sit and even lie down, free at last from the whistling wind. Grateful to Xiaojun for insisting that he bring firewood, the explorer lights a small fire. He warms himself, hoping that the fire's light will lead his companions to him.

* * *

Morten wakes the next morning, his joints stiff and his digits numb. The fire has long since burned out, but the storm still rages beyond the mouth of the cave. There is no sign of Xiaojun or the Sherpas. It surprises Morten somewhat to realize he is hungry. He pulls out a strip of jerky. As he absentmindedly chews his meager meal, his eyes wander to the back of the cave. It is shrouded in shadow; he can see no back wall.

Mostly out of bored curiosity, Morten walks to the shadowy rear of the cave...and finds that it continues on into the darkness. Returning to his pack near the campfire, he pulls out a lantern and lights it. In the flickering yellow glow, he sees that the cave grows larger, deeper in the mountain, and stretches farther than the lantern's illumination. This is no cave, he realizes with a start, but a tunnel.

After gathering his gear and leaving a note for Xiaojun at the mouth of the cave, Morten sets off down the tunnel. Over stalagmites, through narrow crevices, over rocky sediment, he walks for hours. Twice he has to stop and refill the oil in his lamp. With every mile he travels, his excitement builds. Morten has long dreamed of making a fantastic discovery, something that would ensure his place in history. The deeper he delves into the mountain, the more convinced he becomes that no human has set foot here before him.

At last, Morten's lantern reveals an end to the tunnel. It does not dwindle to a dead-end as the explorer had feared but opens up onto a cavern much larger than his meager lantern can reveal. The explorer carefully works his way down the cavern wall to its floor. He can barely make out the innumerable shapes rising from the floor toward the center of the cavern. As he draws closer, Morten's eyes open wide and his heart begins to race as he finally comprehends what he is seeing.

There is a city inside the moutain.

Morten gapes in awe at the ornate and towering structures, each fashioned from the moutain's stone itself. He recognizes the shapes as buildings, but their shapes are twisted and unearthly, their angles strange and unsettling. The highest points of the city are well beyond his lantern's glow, but he can sense their magnificent stature. Coverng the walls of the buildings are weird symbols and pictograms of figures that, while humanoid, are certainly not human.

"What manner of people could build this fantastic metropolis?" Morten wonders aloud.

And then looks again at the pictograms and knows: These halls and towers were built not by earthly hands but by messengers from a higher place. The city is the handiwork of angels.

"This...this is the City of God."

The GM may also find this information useful should the investigators ask tough logistical questions, like, "How does TemCo find and kidnap all the psychics it needs?"

Part III: Deep Secrets

As the curtain rises on the final act of the **Nocturnum** campaign, the investigators awaken bruised and disoriented in a Copenhagen hospital. After the ordeals of Part II: *Hollow Winds*, they now know the truth: If they do not reach Mt. Makalu and stop the shk'ryth, the Earth is doomed. They also know that TemCo is hunting them and will do anything to stop them.

Chapter 12: The Copenhagen Connection details how the investigators are chased through Copenhagen by TemCo while searching for clues about the history and location of the Tyrr Nemaii. They also meet a mysterious new ally who knows much more than he reveals, as well as agents of the New Moon Temple.

Chapter 13: The Weaving of Three picks up as the investigators visit an old Danish manor house in hopes of discovering a possible key to the Tyrr Nemaii. They find more than they bargained for, however, when they stumble upon a haunting and an old cult.

Chapter 14: Beyond the Sea describes the investigators' journey by boat and train from Copenhagen to Moscow. There is danger aplenty on the way, including a run-in with an old enemy—the shk'ryth known as Kage.

Chapter 15: Moscow Showdown features the investigators' occasional ally, Timothy Ekloff. He has uncovered a TemCo plot at a nearby tractor factory, but needs the investigators' help to get to the bottom of it before it is too late.

Chapter 16: Into the East details the remainder of the investigators' journey from Moscow to Mt. Makalu. They encounter a mysterious medium on the Trans-Siberian Railroad and risk a frozen death while trucking through the Himalayas.

Chapter 17: The Turning of the Wheel is an adventure at the foot of Mt. Makalu. As the investigators near the end of their journey, they come upon an occupied Tibetan village and a legacy that lies waiting in the deep mountain snow.

Chapter 18: The Tyrr Nemaii reveals the secrets of TemCo's monstrous machine. Here the investigators see for themselves the ancient, alien city hidden beneath Mt. Makalu. As time continues to slip away, they realize that the Tyrr Nemaii is only half of TemCo's plan. They may already be too late.

Chapter 19: The Armageddon Plain takes the investigators on a race against the comet SH-01 into the Gobi Desert, where a final showdown with the shk'ryth awaits them.

Millennia ago, at a time not long after the Beginning...that is, if such a thing as a Beginning can describe the vast eons when the strange matter of the universe was derived...Here, then, deep in the center of the time-space: Azathoth, Daemon Sultan, boundless, mad ruler of gods, awoke for a brief second and gave nauseous life to one singular cohesive thought.

The blasphemous music that surrounded Azathoth instantly quieted, the echo of the whining flutes drowned in the hideous, living thought that burst from the god...burst forth and hurtled between the stars until it struck the newborn firmament and stopped. Here it wavered and died, creating numerous hollow tumors in the dust. Azathoth dozed back to the tumultuous chaos that endlessly twists and gnaws in the very center of all. Around the Sultan, the maddening music resumed its eternal monotony.

In the infant Earth, something stirred.

— *Of Origins: Revelations of Night*, by various. (Excerpt from Chapter 6: The Obscure Dreams of Daniel Sejer Pedemen.)

Running Deep Secrets

Deep Secrets is nothing less than a desperate race against time. The comet SH-01 is on a collision course with Earth. It is only a matter of time before it strikes, wiping out all life on the planet. The more the investigators learn about the situation, the worse it appears. If they fail, the Earth is doomed.

While the investigators are rushing to learn all they can in hopes of stopping the comet, they are not afforded a moment's rest. Gerard Moore, an inhuman assassin working for TemCo, is always on their trail, breathing an inhuman stench down their necks.

Gamemasters should note that there is no concrete timeline or schedule of events in Part III: *Deep Secrets*. Rather, the specifics of when certain events take place are left up to the GM's sense of drama and suspense. This allows the GM to use the various adventures without worrying about whether the investigators will be able to explore them to their fullest before the impact of SH-01 ends the campaign. The comet is coming, but no one knows exactly how many days or weeks we have left.

The Shk'ryth

Origins

That sudden cohesive thought from unspeakable Azathoth gave life to a race of hideous offspring. These creatures took on a quasi-physical existence and



became trapped in the very rock and soil of a slowly growing world. While this world, eventually known as Earth, developed into a power in the universe, these bleak children waited. Deep within the bowels and hidden places of the planet, they half-slept, half-dreamt in their newborn ignorance.

With the first stirring of life, the entities slowly awoke.

With divine youthful minds, the evil beings keenly observed the life that began to grow around them. As life evolved, so did the consciousness of the beings that knew themselves as shk'ryth. As life on Earth grew more complex and intelligent, so did the minds of the shk'ryth, constantly gleaning and deducing cause and effect from the events unfolding around them. Ignorant of their origin, the Outer Gods, and even the existence of other shk'ryth entombed in the earth, the individual shk'ryth soon thought themselves to be gods. Yet with their growing intelligence, these spawn of chaos also became terribly aware of the prison around them: the bars of life, energy, and thought. When human life truly began to evolve, the shk'ryth found in mankind a welcome object for their undying hate.

As human history unfolded, a number of shk'ryth took human form and dwelled among us in this diminished shape. Some enslaved entire cities, while others bided their time, waiting for a chance to destroy the life and order they despised so completely. Convinced of their own divinity, the shk'ryth were blind to signs of the Mythos and the Outer Gods and suspected nothing of matters greater than themselves.

During the Industrial Age, a number of shk'ryth learned of the existence of other shk'ryth inhabiting the Earth. These "enlightened" shk'ryth formed small coalitions with two major goals: finding others of their kind, and—above all else—seeking release and the destruction of their prison. Several such organizations currently exist, independent of each other and ignorant of each other's existence.

Thousands of shk'ryth, both organized and independent, inhabit the deep, dark places of the Earth, growing stronger and more intelligent with each passing day. As they grow in power, they also grow more arrogant and impatient. They are bolder now than ever before and move with more authority than caution. The time of their release, they feel, is at hand.

Nyarlathotep

Beyond the veil, Nyarlathotep the Messenger, the crawling chaos, has recently become aware of this alien force among humankind. Shadowy and intelligent, this presence concerns Nyarlathotep—but he knows not its origins, identity, or true purpose. This, perhaps more than anything else, disturbs Nyarlathotep. Cautiously, the Black Man watches and waits as his agents carefully prod and investigate the mystery.

Shk'ryth, Greater Independent Race

An ancient and immortal race, the shk'ryth are as cunning as they are evil. They are the central foe of the **Nocturnum** campaign, though the investigators will probably not realize this until it is far too late. Born far beyond time and space, the shk'ryth now dwell in the secret caves and pockets of the Earth itself. For millennia they have waited, watching and learning from the safety of their subterranean lairs. But the time of waiting is over—their freedom is at hand.

Domains

Each shk'ryth has a center of its power, commonly referred to as its lair, which serves as its focal point of evil. The closer the creature is to its lair, the stronger it becomes. Shk'ryth who travel too far from their lair lose its power and risk their destruction. The region in which a shk'ryth can safely move is known as its domain.

In many ways, a shk'ryth and its domain are one and the same: The creature draws the entirety of its knowledge from what it can perceive of the domain and, due to this intimate knowledge, the shk'ryth can affect and manipulate the environment around it. A shk'ryth whose domain is in central Africa, for example, would be intimately familiar with the costumes, behavior, and wildlife of that area. This shk'ryth would most likely manifest itself as an Afiican human male or female and be ignorant of Western customs and culture. It would, on the other hand, be more skilled at the manipulation of the spiritual side of humans, and be able to understand and control the wild beasts that roam the plains of central Africa.

A shk'ryth domain normally stretches about 10 to 15 miles from the epicenter where it makes its dwelling beneath the earth. A shk'ryth's domain is often associated with a natural boundary, such as an island, valley, hill, forest, or mountain. The creatures' power is nearly limitless when it comes to the knowledge, manipulation, and control of their immediate environments. Beyond their domains, however, the shk'ryth are restricted to the abilities of their current forms.

Forms

The true form of the shk'ryth is an unthinkable, living darkness without mass or shape, formed of pure evil. This is the matter from which they were born, the substance of Azathoth's singular thought. In order to interact with the physical world around them, the shk'ryth force their sublime malevolence into one of the following physical forms:

Ooze: Resembling a large puddle of boiling tar, this stinking, malignant blot of acidic evil can slowly seep through the slightest crack and expand its own mass at will. This was the ancient race's first physical form with which they began to interact with Earth and the living things near their domains. Today, the shk'ryth use this form to slither through tiny spaces and vanish when it would be inconvenient to be seen in any other form. They also use it for defense, as it is their least vulnerable physical form. The form isn't much for offensive capabilities, however: The best the shk'ryth can manage as an ooze is to slowly engulf its victims, burning them with acid and waiting for them to suffocate.

Monstrous Beast: The second form mastered by the shk'ryth, their bestial forms are drawn from what they have learned by observing their individual domains. This shape is typically an obscene hybrid of the most savage, vicious beasts that a shk'ryth has observed. An African shk'ryth, for example, could be a huge, terrible being with the crushing legs of an elephant, the mauling claws of a lion, and the venomous, salivating head of a mamba. As this shape is determined by the creature's domain, the bestial form of each shk'ryth is different.

Human: Sooner or later, most shk'ryth find it useful to interact with the current rulers of Earth—humans. This species is known to the shk'ryth as weak, arrogant, and easily led to its own destruction. Unfortunately, the human shape is very complex and creating it requires an enormous amount of energy. The shk'ryth therefore create but one human form for themselves and retain it always. Again, the shape of this form is drawn from the creature's domain. As the investigators may learn in *Snowflake Valley* (see page 35), a shk'ryth who cannot change his face over time may find himself at a disadvantage.

Manifesting in a physical shape takes several minutes, during which time the half-formed being slowly emerges from the earth itself, as if from a cocoon. Once manifest, the shk'ryth can change physical shapes (say, from human form to monstrous beast) in about a minute.

As creatures of cavernous darkness, the shk'ryth dislike physically manifesting themselves during bright sunlight. They prefer the cool darkness of night, or the depressing, monochrome gray of a heavy thunderstorm—though they will settle for simply being indoors, out of the sun's wholesome rays. Of course, if a shk'ryth has matters to which it must attend during the day, it is a small matter for it to conjure up bitter, dark clouds or a dense fog. As masters of their domains, the weather there will always be in their favor.

One side effect of their physical forms is an overpowering stench that accompanies all but their human

forms. It is an unnerving stink that seems to change from one moment to the next but always retains the same unhealthy, alien essence. The lair of the shk'ryth reeks of this scent, and the odor tends to linger in places where they have been.

Defenses

While the shk'ryth are immortal, it is possible, though very difficult, to effectively banish them from the earth for a period of time.

The shk'ryth are somewhat vulnerable while manifest in their physical forms. While their bestial forms often have some form of natural armor, their human shapes never do. Physical attacks (shooting, stabbing, etc.) on these manifestations do damage as normal, but cause the creatures no pain or discomfort. As its flesh is torn, the shk'ryth's true form begins to "leak out," causing those watching to lose 1d6/1d10 Sanity points. If a shk'ryth is reduced to 0 hit points, it reverts to its natural, massless form and usually flees to its lair.

A shk'ryth's second point of vulnerability is the center of its power: its lair. If its lair is destroyed or rendered uninhabitable (flooded with sunlight, filled in with concrete, etc.), the creature can no longer feed from its supernatural energy source. The shk'ryth eventually weakens and fades into the earth, losing its hold on intelligence and power. It becomes nothing more than a dark memory of the earth. This process can be accelerated if the creature has already suffered much damage to its physical manifestation or is defeated so far from its lair that it has no chance to retreat there. The shk'ryth does not die when this happens, but it is reduced to what it once was: pure evil potential, sleeping and waiting.

Powers

As beings created from pure supernatural thought, the shk'ryth are inherently potent magicians. Their power does not manifest itself as spells, but as the creatures' near godlike control over their domains: Plants and animals are changed at their whim, the weather fits their desires, and even the attitudes of people nearby are shaped by the will of the shk'ryth. Even without conscious effort, a shk'ryth's domain subtly changes over time to reflect the mind and will of its master. Each shk'ryth has a preferred manner in which it uses its magical ability, often shaped by the creatures and beliefs of those who inhabit its domain.

Even in their domains, the shk'ryth are not completely omnipotent. While turning fluffy white clouds into a thunderstorm may take no effort at all, transforming a human being into a ravening monster is a long, tiring process. Using their innate power to perform great feats of magic wears these creatures out. In general, the more complex the system the shk'ryth is trying to affect, the more time and effort it takes to do so. Only by resting in their lairs can they regain their power.

Organized Shk'ryth

The "organized" shk'ryth are those who have encountered and continue to interact with others of their kind at some level. The organized shk'ryth typically form organizations dedicated to manipulating humanity in matters of business, society, and government. These organizations are kept intimately secret by the shk'ryth in order not to attract human interest. Though the shk'ryth despise the weak human species, they have observed the potential of humans and will not risk exposure or direct conflict with humankind. Ignorant pawns are by far the easiest to use.

The **Nocturnum** campaign specifically deals with a powerful corporation known as TemCo, which is secretly controlled by a large group of organized shk'ryth. The investigators first encounter a member of this organization in the adventure *Stillness* (see page 87), where they meet a shk'ryth by the name of Kage.

Wilders

"Wilders" is a term attached by the organized shk'ryth to their brethren who dwell alone and unaware of the others. The remaining wilders on Earth tend to inhabit strange and lonely places, where they have a minimal chance of encountering others of their kind. The demeanors of these independent creatures range from those that are very involved with the people and environments near their lairs, shk'ryth worshipped as gods or feared as devils, to the more impatient, irritable shk'ryth who destroy any intelligent life before it has a chance to take root near their lairs. These hostile shk'ryth tend not to take human form and often inhabit areas commonly shunned in local folklore (haunted forests, ancient burial grounds, etc.). The first two adventures in the **Nocturnum** campaign feature wilder shk'ryth: Maximillian Delaney in *Snowflake Valley* and Gary Augustine in *The Madness of The Twilight Queen*.

Shk'ryth

Medium-Size (human form) **or Large** (ooze and monstrous form) **Aberration** (Greater Independent Race)

Hit Dice: 10d8+30 (75 hp, 90 hp in ooze form)

Initiative: +2 (human form, Dex); –5 (ooze form, Dex); +5 (monstrous form, Dex)

Speed: 30 ft. (human form); 10 ft., climb 10 ft. (ooze form); 40 ft. (monstrous form)

Armor Class: 12 (human form, +2 Dex); 5 (ooze form, –5 Dex, –1 size); 20 (monstrous form, +5 Dex,

+6 natural, –1 size)

Attacks: 2 punches +10/+5 melee (human form); slam +10 melee (ooze form); 2 claws +10 melee, bite +5 melee (monstrous form)

Damage: Punch 1d3+3 (human form); slam 2d4+3 (ooze form); claw 1d4+5, bite 1d6+2 (monstrous form)

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft. (human form); 5 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft. (ooze form); 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft. (monstrous form)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, acid, constrict 2d4 and 1d6 acid, engulf, psychic attack, Domain powers, spells.

Special Qualities: Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (immune to critical hits, coup de grace, and death from massive damage; immune to acid, poison, and sonic attacks), damage reduction 10, regeneration 2, resistance (resistance to cold, electricity, and fire attacks; half damage from each), resistant to bludgeoning damage (30), amorphous physiology, blessed alteration

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +12 (human form); Fort +6, Ref –2, Will +12 (ooze form); Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +12 (monstrous form)

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 21 (human form); Str 17, Dex 1, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 1 (ooze form); Str 21, Dex 19, Con 21, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 13 (monstrous form)

Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +8, Innuendo +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +12, Psychic Focus +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting

Psychic Feats: Sensitive, Mind Reading, Mind Probe, Telepathy

CR: 16

Climate/Terrain: Any. Civilized shk'ryth are typically encountered in major cities, while wilder shk'ryth are found in the wilderness and remote areas, especially underground

Sanity Loss: None in human form; 1d4/1d10 in ooze or monstrous form; 1d6/1d10 to see transformation between forms.

Combat

Shk'ryth are cunning and prefer to avoid direct physical confrontation when possible. They are rarely concerned for their own well being, but they try to maintain a low profile and work their subtle machinations behind the scenes. If forced into a fight, a shk'ryth typically transforms into its monstrous beast form—this alone is often enough to send any would-be attackers running in terror. If a shk'ryth is seriously threatened, it transforms into its nearly indestructible ooze form and seeps into the earth.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the shk'ryth must hit with its slam attack in ooze form. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Acid (Ex): A shk'ryth excretes a corrosive acid in ooze form that disolves flesh and other organic matter. Any melee hit in ooze form deals acid damage.

Constrict (Ex): A shk'ryth deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check.

Engulf (Ex): Although it moves slowly, a shk'ryth in ooze form can simply flow over a Medium-size or smaller creature as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The shk'ryth merely has to move over opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make opportunity attacks against the creature, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt opportunity attacks must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 13) or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the shk'ryth moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the shk'ryth's acid and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body.

Amorphous Physiology (Ex): Because of their lack of normal organs, a shk'ryth in ooze form is very difficult to kill—any attack against it just gets absorbed into the mass of the whole. This makes a shk'ryth immune to critical hits, death from massive damage, or a coup de grace. Shk'ryth in ooze form are also highly resistant to bludgeoning damage (30) and gain damage reduction 10, which cannot be bypassed by any weapon. Their alien protoplasm is immune to earthly acids and poisons, resistant to cold, electricity, and fire (half damage from each), and regenerates all damage at the rate of 2 points per round.

Maintain Form (Ex): Each civilized shk'ryth has a favorite form in which it prefers to appear. For example, Gary Augustine appears as a young college student. Maintaining human form is taxing for a shk'ryth. If injured or under great stress, the alien creature must make a successful Will save (DC 15) to be able to maintain its human form. Failure means that the ooze form begins to manifest itself from within, "leaking" out through wounds and bodily orifices. Unless the shk'ryth succeeds at a second save the next round, it reverts to its natural ooze form. When it transforms into its ooze form, whether voluntarily or not, a shk'ryth immediately regains one hit point for each of its Hit Dice (two per HD if it is currently within its Domain).

Psychic Attack (Sp): This attack is directed at a single target within line of sight. Anyone affected by this attack must succeed at a Will save (DC 17) or suffer 1d10 points of damage and be stunned for 1d6 rounds. If the shk'ryth is touching the victim when it uses this attack, a failed save results in the target being permanently blinded in addition to the normal effects.

Domain Powers (Su): Shk'ryth have many abilities that only manifest when they are near the dark heart of

their power—their Domain. Within their Domains, shk'ryth gain the following spell-like abilities, usable at will as a caster of their total Hit Dice: *consume likeness, control weather, darkness, dominate animal, dominate person, locate creature, locate object, obscuring mist, raise night fog, suggestion*. The shk'ryth also gains the ability to control machines within its Domain. It can cause them to malfunction, activate or deactivate them, or otherwise alter their normal operation. For example, in Chapter 2: The Madness of the Twilight Queen, the shk'ryth Gary Augustine causes a parked vehicle to shift into neutral and roll into a lake.

Spells (Su): A shk'ryth knows as many spells as it has points of Intelligence. It prefers spells that aid it in manipulating its Domain, including the people and creatures that inhabit it. Many shk'ryth also learn offensive and defensive spells that assist them in combat against powerful foes.

Blessed Alteration (Su): Shk'ryth have the ability to alter humans both physically and psychologically. Using this ability, a shk'ryth can grant a human the blessed template (see page 20). This ability is typically used on privileged henchmen, such as agents of the Tribunal. It normally takes a shk'ryth one day per HD or level of the subject to complete these changes and grant the blessed template.

TemCo

It was during the gray and frozen winter solstice of 1891 that the shk'ryth calling itself Silas Templeton met with a dozen other members of his race in Boston to discuss a most ambitious venture. While they were each influential in their own way, he proposed that they combine their resources in order to more efficiently study their common dilemma: the prison of life and energy that bound them all to this miserable rock. The others agreed that his plan was sound, and together they founded the company Templeton and Associates.

More than a hundred years have passed since then, and TemCo—as the company is now known—has established itself as a profitable, low-profile power base for the dozens of organized shk'ryth who choose to include themselves in its efforts. The corporation controls dozens of smaller businesses throughout the world that are unwittingly fulfilling the foul creatures' dark desires. Through the use of strategic campaign contributions, the company also wields considerable political power—especially in countries where wealthy industrialists are a highly valued asset.

Amongst TemCo's thousands of employees, only a small percentage know that the company has a secret, supernatural agenda. Of course, these employees are also the ones promoted to executive management positions. They remain ignorant of their masters' true nature or purpose but worship and fear the power they have seen displayed. The actual theology to which the employees subscribe varies from company to company, but one theme remains constant: The secret masters are transforming the world in their image and, in this new world, they will reward those who serve them and destroy all who stand in their way.

Two TemCo subgroups, the Tribunal and Monarch Testing and Research, are described in detail below.

The Master Plan

From the beginning, TemCo's primary goal has always been to discover some way of breaking free from their hideous captivity. Numerous plans and theories have arisen over the last century, only to fail time and again. But now the shk'ryth have stumbled upon a scheme so horribly perfect, they look forward with confidence to the time when they will be free. The name of this project is the same as that of the device that spawned it: Tyrr Nemaii.

The Tyrr Nemaii is a massive, arcane machine that, through strange technologies far beyond human comprehension, is able to draw power from the living mind. This energy is then distilled, channeled, and redirected to whatever causes its masters dictate. While there are countless uses for such a device, the TemCo ruling council has decided on what it considers the most expedient use. They intend to use it to destroy Earth—and with it, their prison.

Just beyond Jupiter, there burns a comet—an obscure, continent-size chunk of ice and rock known to astronomical society as SH-01. For countless generations this wandering stone has raced across the sky in the same mindless, steady pattern. Steady, that is, until now. SH-01 has shifted in its course and is heading toward Earth, drawn by the blasphemous power of the Tyrr Nemaii.

The Tyrr Nemaii

As a part of its ongoing mission to find and recruit other members of the shk'ryth race, TemCo financed an "archeological expedition" to the Himalayas in 1982. In this land of treacherous crags and eternal winter, the team of dedicated cultists hoped to uncover a wilder shk'ryth. But when they followed the trail of rumors and folklore to a prehistoric fissure, what they found was far more than any of them could have expected.

Thousands of feet beneath the surface of the mountains, the expedition discovered the remains of a highly advanced civilization. An enormous city stretched for miles out into the darkness on all sides, its twisted geometry a mute testimony to the bizarre and brilliant minds of the ones who once dwelled there. Overshadowing all of this, however, was a gigantic

machine. It towered over the city and the cultists could not see its top, not even with their brightest light.

When the full TemCo research team arrived, they confirmed what the archeologists had suspected: There had been a shk'ryth here, thousands of years ago, but now it was gone. It might have been destroyed, they mused, or...it might have escaped. It was then that they turned their full attention to the machine their brother had left behind.

It took TemCo years to decipher the alien glyphs and symbols that described the Tyrr Nemaii and years more to bring it sparking and shuddering to life. The device was powered, they learned, by psychic energy. Experiments with a local village proved that using normal humans, even in quantity, was far too inefficient to be of any use. But further experimentation proved that a psychically gifted human releases a veritable flood of power.

TemCo has since begun a campaign of locating and "recruiting" psychics to power their terrible machine. Across the world, gifted people are beginning to disappear. Because these disappearances are uncommon and apparently unrelated, no one has yet realized what is happening, but it is only a matter of time before someone does.

Monarch Testing and Research

An integral part of TemCo's plan is the acquisition of human psychics to power the Tyrr Nemaii. To this end, the corporation has founded a subsidiary company called Monarch Testing and Research. It is Monarch's responsibility to locate psychics, capture them and transport them to the frozen peaks of the Himalayas. The investigators first encounter Monarch's agents in Part II: *Hollow Winds*, during the adventure *A Family Affair* (see page 131).

On its surface, Monarch Testing and Research is a firm that deals in psychological and academic testing. Its two main clients are schools that wish their students evaluated before and after enrolling and corporations that have a vested interest in the mental health and stability of their employees. Because it offers its services for free, Monarch is often chosen as the tester of choice for government offices as well. The company supports itself by selling the results of its research to other data processing firms.

The Program

The true mission of Monarch is simply referred to as "the Program." Through exhaustive trial and error, certain test questions have been developed that are virtually impossible to answer correctly without some sort of psychic insight. A thorough statistical analysis of each test group's answers reveals which, if any, participants might have psychic potential. Those participants then move onto the second phase of testing.

In the second phase, Monarch agents personally meet with the candidates for more in-depth questioning. Exactly how this meeting takes place depends on the client. A child may receive a visit at school from a "gifted student specialist," or an employee may find himself scheduled for a "random sample interview." A particularly uncooperative candidate may be abducted and questioned—but this is rare. The chances that a candidate actually is psychic are typically too slim to justify such drastic measures.

The Monarch agents who conduct these interviews are often "spotters"—limited psychics whose only paranormal ability is sensing other psychics (see below). By the end of the interview, they can usually tell whether or not the candidate is suitable for the Program. Unfortunately for Monarch, far less than one percent are deemed qualified.

Those chosen to participate in the Program are cataloged. Weeks or months later, they are abducted by hired thugs and taken to one of several relocation centers (in the United States, they are Seattle, Washington and Savannah, Georgia). Drugged and locked into coffinlike transport units, the psychics are finally shipped to Europe on cargo freighters. From there, they are taken to the hidden caverns of the Tyrr Nemaii. It is here that their journey ends...though their torment is only beginning.

Organization

At the head of Monarch Testing and Research is a wealthy, reclusive businesswoman, Agnes Lynch. Lynch is known in certain circles as "the old black widow," as she has outlived four rich husbands in as many decades. In other circles, she is known as a shk'ryth with a keen mind for business and administration. While she appears to be a 70-year-old woman, Agnes has been manifest in this form for almost 200 years. And though her manner is soft, her words and actions are cold, precise, and cruelly efficient.

From the Monarch world headquarters in Boston, Agnes Lynch sends her orders out to a dozen regional directors, four of whom are assigned to the United States. These directors are given broad authority over their regions. They are generally allowed to work as they see fit, free of all managerial restrictions save one: The directors have quotas to meet, and those who don't perform are demoted...or worse. The directors knowingly serve the shk'ryth in return for money and political influence. They don't know exactly what their masters are, but recognize them as powerful, inhuman creatures. They are aware of the Tyrr Nemaii project, and the importance of the Program to it, but do not know the machine's true purpose.



Most of the Monarch staff is oblivious to their employers' true goals. There are several employees at each level who, while unaware of the shk'ryth or the Tyrr Nemaii project, know that they are to locate, capture, and transport psychics. Most assume that Monarch Testing and Research is the cover for a secret government operation—probably sponsored by the CIA. Many agents who work in the field collecting data and administering tests fall into this category. Of the field agents, only the Spotters know about the shk'ryth and the Tyrr Nemaii (but even they have no idea of the true purpose or location of the ancient machine).

Spotters

When the shk'ryth realized that the Tyrr Nemaii was powered by psychic energy, they tried to create their own psychics through the use of their innate ability to transform humans into supernatural beasts. After many failed experiments, they conceded that the best they could produce were people who could sense psychic energy, but who were unable to use it themselves. These Spotters, as they came to be known, were pressed into service locating true psychics. A few Spotters have been assigned to individual projects but most are field agents of Monarch Testing and Research. When a candidate is scheduled for a second-phase interview, it is a Spotter who asks the questions. Only the most dedicated followers of the shk'ryth are transformed into Spotters. (The shk'ryth prefer to use volunteers, as they make the best Spotters.)

A handful of Spotters are not creations of the shk'ryth. They are true psychics, whose talents include the sensing of others of their kind. These "naturals" are typically the most powerful Spotters but the most difficult to control. They writhe on the horns of a terrible dilemma: They must help locate innocent people to die horribly for the Tyrr Nemaii, or they themselves will suffer that fate. Psychic Spotters may cooperate but never willingly. An example of one such Spotter, Geoffery Oman, is detailed below.

Geoffery Oman, Spotter, Monarch Testing and Research

Ever since he was a young child, Geoff has been unnaturally sensitive to the thoughts and emotions of those around him. For most of his life, this gift has been more of a curse than a blessing, as he found himself overwhelmed by people's feelings and desires. It wasn't until he got into "psychic consulting" in college

that he realized the possible benefits of his heightened perceptions.

Geoff took his consulting seriously. He genuinely wanted to help people and was hoping to be a counselor after he graduated. With his gift, he was able to give his clients exactly the advice they needed to hear. Five years after graduating, the consulting had completely paid for his degree, and Geoff had made it his career.

It was shortly thereafter that Geoff met a new client whose "aura" disturbed him. There was something odd, something unnatural about this person. Without knowing why, Geoff felt an awful fear grip his soul. The client, a Spotter, calmly informed Geoffrey that he was being chosen for a very special project. Filled with unreasoning terror, Geoff accepted the offer.

Geoffrey has been wracked with guilt since joining the Spotters. He knows that with every true psychic he identifies, he is staining his hands with blood. But he has no choice, he argues with himself. Still, he hates what he has become and is starting to subtly rebel. He leaves clues whenever he speaks with a psychic and urges his targets to be careful and watch themselves. He has also started collecting whatever hard evidence he can about Monarch and the Tyrr Nemaii. Almost unconsciously, Geoff realizes that his days as a Spotter are numbered. He only hopes that as a traitor, he will be killed quickly and not sacrificed to that hideous machine.

Geoffrey Oman: Male 3rd level; HD 3d6; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +1 melee (1d3, punch); SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +6, Innuendo +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (occult) +5, Knowledge (psychology) +5, Listen +6, Pyschic Focus +11, Psychoanalysis +7, Sense Motive +9, Spot +6.

Feats: Sensitive, Skill Emphasis (Psychic Focus).

Possessions: Wallet, $73 in cash.

Thugs

While Monarch Testing and Research oversees all operations, freelance specialists handle the actual abduction and transportation of psychics. These thugs and mercenaries are paid in cash and never given more than the absolute minimum information. If the freelancers prove reliable, they may be called on repeatedly for their services. Monarch pays well, and always on time, so its hired muscle is pleased to work for this mysterious benefactor. The company provides the freelancers with a list of names and personal information (address, phone number, etc.) and any other data it feels they might find useful. Whenever Monarch has exhausted all its leads in a geographic area, its agents kill the local freelancers lest they be tempted to talk.

The actual tactics used in the abductions vary depending on the specific freelancer's personal style, training, and experience. Some may set up elaborate traps, spending weeks gaining their targets' trust. Others may break into their victims' houses in the middle of the night and drag them out at gunpoint. One thing all thugs have in common, however, is an unwillingness to harm their targets any more than absolutely necessary. Their secret employers have made it clear that their payment is contingent upon the well being of their "merchandise" when it arrives. To this end, many freelancers prefer to keep their victims drugged. Unconscious psychics don't struggle, and those who don't struggle don't have to be beaten into submission.

Typical Thug: Male 4th level; HD 4d6+8; hp 24; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, knife) or +3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +5, Drive +6, Gather Information +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +7, Jump +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +4, Search +4, Spot +6, Swim +5.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1911 pistol, bullet-resistant vest. The freelance thugs never wear their vests unless they're expecting trouble. Its +4 armor bonus and –1 armor check penalty are not included in the thugs' statistics.

The Tribunal

A second TemCo subgroup, and one the investigators are likely to encounter, is a circle of assassins and enforcers called the Tribunal. Sometimes TemCo employees forget to keep their mouths shut. Sometimes reporters become over-ambitious and start poking around where they don't belong. It is the Tribunal's task to solve these problems. During the events of Part II: *Hollow Winds*, the Tribunal is trying to locate and capture the corporation's most dangerous turncoat, Timothy Ekloff.

Most TemCo employees have no idea who their masters are. Some of them know that their employers are weird, unworldly creatures, and serve them in exchange for power and wealth. But the Tribunal agents know exactly who and what the shk'ryth are, worshipping and fearing them as gods. They are true

zealots.

Organization

The Tribunal is not a separate business entity like Monarch Testing and Research, but a branch of TemCo itself based out of the TemCo offices in New York. At the head of the Tribunal is a shk'ryth calling herself Jasmine Faber. Faber rules the department with an iron fist and has no patience for failure. Being worshiped as a god does not faze her at all. She considers herself a god and deserving of all honor, glory, and obedience. Faber oversees all Tribunal operations personally and reports directly to the TemCo ruling council.

Under Faber are 50 Tribunal operatives of varying ranks. When they aren't on assignment in the field, these operatives are stationed throughout TemCo's corporate holdings to serve as secret police and spy on their fellow employees. Any signs of disloyalty are reported to Faber, who decides how to discipline the traitorous employee. In the field, Tribunal agents are dispatched to eliminate any external threats to TemCo security. This includes, but is not limited to, overly inquisitive reporters, industrial spies, and law enforcement officials who have heard rumors of ungodly things happening behind these corporate walls. Whether assigned to in-house or field security, the agents always work alone, reporting only to Faber.

Tribunal operatives who have served their masters well are "blessed" by Faber. Using her innate shk'ryth ability, the Tribunal chief warps the bodies of her most loyal followers, twisting them into unnatural, beastly shapes, the better to hunt and kill on her command. These monstrous forms are then hidden, internalized in the agents, to be invoked when needed. Without a medical exam, the only way to tell a blessed agent from a normal human is by their eyes, which are slitted like those of a cat or snake. Transformed agents are effectively immortal and cannot die of natural causes. (Ian MacGuire, the werewolf in the *Snowflake Valley* adventure in Part I: *Long Shades*, is the first of the blessed the investigators encounter.)

Blessed Template

"Blessed" is a template that can be added to any human, and perhaps to other humanoids. The template is only granted by the ministrations of a shk'ryth patron. The new character uses all the old character's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

Creature Type: Change to shapechanger.

Hit Dice: d8.

Speed: As the base character in human form; 40 ft. to 60 ft. in beast form.

Armor Class: As the base character in human form; +2 to +5 natural armor in beast form.

Attacks: As the base character in human form; natural weapon attacks based on creature type in beast form.

Damage: As the base character in human form; natural weapon damage based on creature size and attacks in beast form.

Special: Before gaining this template, a character must be an agent in good standing with the Tribunal.

Special Qualities: Most blessed have one or more paranormal abilities. The blessed agents in the **Nocturnum** campaign present several possibilities, and the Gamemaster should individually craft the beast form of the blessed agents he creates.

Saves: As the base character in human form. Many beast forms confer ability adjustments that also alter the blessed's saving throws.

Abilities: As the base character in human form. Many beast forms confer ability adjustments, typically to the physical abilities (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution).

Feats: The blessed character gains the Sensitive psychic feat. If the character already had the Sensitive feat, he gains an additional bonus psychic feat of his choice. Beast forms may also confer bonus feats, such as Scent and Track.

Challenge Rating: As the base character with a bonus ranging from +2 to +4, depending on the abilities of the beast form.

Advancement: As an investigator, but with the additional special qualities of the blessed.

Sanity Loss: None to see in human form, 0/1d3 to see in beast form (assuming the beast form is obviously unnatural, monstrous, or alien), 1/1d8 to see transform from human into beast form.

Typical Tribunal Agent: Male 4th-level Shapechanger; HD 4d8+8 or 4d8+24 in beast form; hp 26 or 42 in beast form; Init +1 (Dex) or +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative) in beast form; Spd 30 ft. or 50 ft. in beast form; AC 11 (+1 Dex) or 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural) in beast form; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +4 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol) in human form or +8 melee (1d8+5, bite) in beast form; SA Trip; SQ Shapeshift at will, damage reduction 10/+1, darkvision 60 ft., Scent; SV Fort +6 (+13), Ref +5 (+7), Will +4 (+6); Str 13 (21), Dex 12 (16), Con 15 (23), Int 11 (7), Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +7 (+11), Demolitions +2 (+0), Disable Device +2 (+0), Drive +2 (+4), Escape Artist +2 (+4), Hide +9 (+11), Jump +5 (+9), Listen +8 (+12), Move Silently +13 (+19), Repair +2 (+0), Search +8 (+6), Spot +8 (+12), Swim +5 (+9), Wilderness Lore +8 (+12).

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Stealthy. The Tribunal agent gains the Blind-Fight and Improved Initiative feats when in beast form.

Gerard Moore

A highly skilled assasin of superhuman ability, Moore is as mysterious as he is deadly. While he is technically a Tribunal agent, the killer answers not to Faber, but directly to the TemCo ruling council. Moore has not been blessed by Faber or any other shk'ryth but exudes a strange, inhuman presence that even his employers find unsettling.

Moore is destined to play an important part in the **Nocturnum** campaign. For more information on Moore, see the details of the kcthoma, below.

The Tribunal in Nocturnum

The top priority for Jasmine Faber and her Tribunal operatives is the capture of Timothy Ekloff. Never has a traitor been such a threat to TemCo, and never have they faced an opponent so elusive. While the investigators are helping the New Moon Temple track down Ekloff, the Tribunal is also doing its best to find and capture the rogue.

Timothy Ekloff



While working as an agent of the CIA, Timothy Ekloff was investigating a money laundering operation in the Caribbean when he first encountered the company known as TemCo. The deeper he dug into TemCo, the more suspicious he became. The company had operations throughout the world, but they were all connected to a secret project in the Himalayas. Ekloff infiltrated the site, where he discovered the Tyrr Nemaii. Now he is on the run, hunted by TemCo and trying to prevent the cataclysm of SH-01.

Ekloff becomes aware of the investigators through their involvement in the events described in Part I: *Long Shades*. He will seek to help them in their fight against TemCo but must be careful not to give out too much information, lest the Tribunal track him down. The investigators meet Ekloff briefly at the beginning of Part II: *Hollow Winds*, then spend the next two adventures trying to find him again.

As long as he can remember, Timothy Ekloff has been a wanderer, forever seeking challenge and adventure for their own sakes. When he was 12, he disappeared into the acres of swamp behind his family's home in Georgia. He emerged three days later, wet and filthy, but glowing with triumph. The summer he turned 16, Timothy packed a bag and hitchhiked across the country. When he decided to join the Army straight out of high school, no one was surprised.

After serving his time in the military, Timothy gravitated towards intelligence and eventually found his way into the Central Intelligence Agency. As a CIA operative, he was stationed in the most remote regions of the world. Honduras, Jordan, Sri Lanka—wherever there was a need for a subtle American presence, Timothy was sure to be close by. He loved every bit of it.

Though he does not know it, Timothy Ekloff is psychic. His talents give him a special insight into complex patterns. He clearly sees the causes and effects of events in the world around him.

Timothy Ekloff: Male 7th level; HD 7d6+14; hp 39; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 armor); Atk +7/+2 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +8/+3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Drive +7, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (geography) +11, Listen +7, Open Lock +7, Research +8, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +8.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Sensitive.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, cellular telephone, $125 in cash.

The Discovery

In 1995, Timothy Ekloff was investigating reports of a money laundering operation in the Caribbean. What he found was an intricate web of spending, loans, and losses that crisscrossed the globe. At the center of this web was TemCo, a New York-based multinational corporation. TemCo produced nothing itself but owned dozens of smaller companies around the world and took its profits from their operations. Timothy was already familiar with one of these companies, Strong Industries of Hong Kong. He knew Strong Industries to be a legitimate front used by those who wanted to hire mercenaries for clandestine military operations.

Much of Strong's resources were being directed towards a mysterious location in the Himalayas. Timothy posed as a mercenary looking for work and went undercover with Strong Industries. Working for Strong, he was able to infiltrate TemCo's operation at Mount Makalu. The locals called this region the "hollow mountain" and held it in superstitious awe. There was a giant, they whispered, who lived within the mountain, cold and cruel as the rock itself. But it had been many generations since the giant had stirred, and

it was widely believed that he slept.

Inside the hollow mountain, Timothy saw what he never could have imagined: a vast city, deserted for centuries, hidden beneath the mountain itself. At the center of this ancient stone metropolis was a massive machine of mind-boggling size and complexity. Timothy had discovered the home of the Tyrr Nemaii.

It was during his infiltration that Timothy learned the truth about TemCo and the Tyrr Nemaii. There was no grand revelation, but as a trained intelligence expert, Timothy was able to glean key pieces of information and extrapolate what was happening. He even caught sight of a shk'ryth in its natural form, seeping into the earth.

TemCo captured Timothy in the Tyrr Nemaii site, but did not kill the spy when they realized he was psychic. Fortunately, Ekloff escaped before he could be used to fuel the Tyrr Nemaii. TemCo gave chase, but was unable to locate him. In the process, their agents visited Ekloff's home in Bower County, Georgia. Here they found that half the population was psychic. Operations began immediately to kidnap as many of these people as possible.

Realizing that he can no longer go back to his old life, Timothy Ekloff is now on the run, waging a one-man guerrilla war against TemCo. He is putting his CIA training to use as he hacks TemCo computers, breaks into their offices and tries to gather intelligence against them. He has learned the truth about SH-01 and knows that the Tyrr Nemaii is the force responsible for the comet's collision course, but isn't sure how to stop it.

Timothy Ekloff in Nocturnum

While carrying out his ongoing campaign of surveillance and sabotage against TemCo, Timothy comes across the investigators' handiwork in Still Mountain (during the *Stillness* adventure in Part II: *Long Shades*, page 87) and keeps an eye on them thereafter. He meets with them at least once (in *A Dire Warning*, see page 111) in order to learn what they have found, who they are, and anonymously warn them against probing any further. The investigators encounter him again in the beginning of *Revelations* (see page 151). The GM may wish to bring Timothy back into the campaign before that point, perhaps to deliver an enigmatic warning or to rescue the investigators from a TemCo trap.

Timothy Ekloff's purpose in the **Nocturnum** campaign is twofold. First, he is a mysterious stranger dispensing cryptic words of wisdom—perfect for allowing the Gamemaster to nudge the investigators in the direction he wants them to go, without revealing too much information. Second, finding Timothy is the goal toward which the investigators are working for much of Part II: *Hollow Winds*. The investigators may find it bitterly ironic that the man they have been seeking for so long is the one who first approached them and warned them against crossing TemCo.

The New Moon Temple

The recent supernatural stirrings of the shk'ryth have not gone unnoticed. The baleful eye of Nyarlathotep has fallen upon these blasphemous spawn. The Outer God does not know where they came from or what their goals and motives may be. This disturbs him, for he is the Messenger of the Gods, and his authority on Earth is not to be questioned. In order to discover exactly what manner of beasts these shk'ryth may be, and what exactly they are doing, Nyarlathotep has chosen the New Moon Temple, one of his many cults, to investigate on his behalf. He has sent one of his servitor races, the utoruks, to assist the Temple and to act as his messengers. (For more information on the utoruks, see Part I: *Long Shades*, page 104.) The Temple has made the connection between the shk'ryth and TemCo, but has yet to learn of the Tyrr Nemaii.

History

Leonard Baird was a shiftless, homeless alcoholic who lived in San Francisco, California during the turn of the century. He drank, he said, to clear the demons from his head. "I have terrible visions," he groaned between bottles. "Terrible dreams show me things that no man should have to see. The Black Man, he comes to me, laughing, taking me places I don't want to go. Telling me things I don't want to hear."

Exactly why and how is unknown, but Nyarlathotep had his hand upon the soul of Leonard Baird. Baird was often an angry drunk and found himself in more fights than most. After a particularly intense bout of drinking, one of these fights ended with Baird triumphant, his opponent dead at his feet. It was then that Baird finally gave in to the incessant urgings of the Outer God. Muttering syllables that sounded alien even to his drunken ears, Baird cried out to the Crawling Chaos and set upon the body of his fallen foe. He ripped open the corpse with his teeth and nails. He tore chunks of flesh with his teeth, chewed and swallowed. He raised his bloodstained face toward the moon and howled in madness...and for the first time in his life, knew peace.

Baird's mind was now completely shattered but his alcoholism was gone. In its place was the serenity of the sociopath and the heightened awareness of one who has been enlightened. He took to proselytizing on street corners. A passionate and charismatic speaker, Baird preached a message of higher consciousness to any who would listen. "I was lost and without hope," he proclaimed, "until my eyes and mind were opened to the consciousness of the universe." Baird neglected to mention the specifics of how this enlightenment was to

take place (that is, through cannibalism). He was definitely mad, but he wasn't stupid.

Baird was "adopted" by a handful of dabblers in the occult—a circle of decadent rich friends full of unhealthy curiosity. Under Baird's instruction, the dabblers performed the madman's rituals on the fresh corpse of an elderly transient...and their lives were forever changed. The things they saw, the mysteries they understood, the hideous Truths laid bare before them—after this, there could be no turning back. Rather, the circle grew as its members initiated their friends—and their friends—into Baird's perverse rituals.

By 1924, Baird's followers were fully organized under the name New Moon Temple. The Temple counted dozens of members, mostly among the decadent rich. Beneath a cold, moonless November sky, Baird gathered his flock one last time. He was leaving, he told them, but would return to reward the faithful, with whom he would rule the nations of Earth. He encouraged them to recruit new members, especially among the rich and influential, the better to serve his will. Finally, Baird stressed the importance of maintaining the rituals he had taught them. "For not only do they bring enlightenment," he said, "but eternal life as well."

And when Baird was done speaking, the night sky split asunder and drew him into its abysmal depths, never to be seen again.

The Temple Today

The New Moon Temple now has nearly a hundred members throughout the western United States, most of whom are influential figures in their fields. They unknowingly serve Nyarlathotep, carrying out his mysterious missions of observation, madness, and death. Temple leaders receive their orders from the Black Man's dark angels, the utoroks, who act as his messengers and sometimes reveal their true forms to those they contact.

Baird was correct when he said that his rituals provide eternal life. The sect is still led by the man who took over when the mad prophet left: Darius van Horn, a decrepit lunatic who has not set foot outside his Atlanta penthouse in two decades. Van Horn's health is remarkable, but he is 124 years old and shows it. Baird promised eternal life—not eternal youth.

Van Horn's orders are spread, via utoroks and conventional means, to local temples throughout the region. Each temple has at its head a deacon who presides over the rituals and answers to van Horn. Individual members know only of their own temple; not until they become deacons themselves do they realize the full scope of the New Moon.

Members of the New Moon Temple find themselves ordered to do almost anything; while they are foremost the pawns of Nyarlathotep, they are also the pawns of



deacons, van Horn and, to a lesser extent, the utoroks. Power struggles between various temples are rare, but not unheard of. Members of the Temple are absolutely fanatical, fueled by the dual promise of eternal life and the Return of Baird. Furthermore, Baird's ritual of Ambrosia (see below) is so powerful, it gives new meaning to the cultists' lives, and they are willing to kill or die for the sect. Over time, the ritual drives its participants increasingly insane.

Roland Delmont, Deacon, New Moon Temple

A talented young surgeon, Delmont was a rising star of the medical profession. He was handsome and well spoken, with enough natural charm to compensate for his high-priced ego. He was on his way to the top...until a malpractice suit abruptly ended his career.

Delmont only made one mistake, one slip in an otherwise flawless surgery, but that was all it took. A young boy was dead and it was the doctor's fault. Delmont suddenly found himself alone. The hospital disassociated itself from him; its staff shunned him; his colleagues shook their heads and looked away. Even his long-time girlfriend—they were to be married that spring—tearfully said good-bye.

Despondent and unemployed, the doctor took to drinking and drugs. He eventually ended up on the street, sleeping under bridges and begging for change. It was here that the New Moon Temple found him. They had been watching Delmont, waiting for him to reach the bottom before recruiting him. When they offered him wealth and power in exchange for his obedience, the broken, homeless Delmont readily agreed.

Roland Delmont has never gone back on his word. Even when he realized the truth behind the Temple, he remained steadfast in his devotion to the Deliverer. His medical skills are much in demand in the cult; he has a gift for carving out pieces of flesh while maintaining the life of the revered. Under his guidance, other Deacons have learned this grisly art and spread his reputation as a master of the knife.

Delmont is now a Deacon with a temple of his own in Los Angeles but has been given an assignment that will take him and his followers around the world. Their task is to follow the investigators and report on their activities. Through his Ambrosia-induced communication with Nyarlathotep, Delmont knows that the investigators have been chosen as the Black Man's unwilling scouts in his cold war against the enemy.

Ambrosia

The heart of New Moon theology, the rite of Ambrosia is a ritualized form of cannibalism in which a victim is eaten alive over the course of several months. According to Baird, there is no preferred type of victim, though some claim that children or virgins are best. Traditionally, the victim is well treated while in captivity; undernourished or abused victims tend to die before they have been completely consumed.

The basic ritual is as follows: Under each new moon, a cultist (usually a deacon) performs a lengthy invocation of Nyarlathotep over the victim, calling upon their god to bless the flesh and imbue it with secret wisdom. A portion of the victim's flesh is then removed, divided among all those present, and devoured. This may be as much as an entire limb or as little as a hand or foot, depending on the number of cultists partaking. The wound is immediately tended; it is important that the victim lives to donate more flesh the following month. No anesthesia is used during the procedure, as it pollutes the flesh and weakens the spirit.

Those who partake of the flesh achieve a "higher consciousness" that allows them to sense the universe in all its mind-bending vastness. Their perceptions are tainted by Nyarlathotep, who they come to know as their god and the center of all. The experience is both exhilarating and terrifying. Like those who have survived brushes with death, cultists who taste the Ambrosia find their lives changed forever.

Victims of these rituals, commonly referred to as "the revered," are kept alive as long as possible, locked away in secret chambers as their bodies are carved away piece by piece, month by month. Different temples have different methods of obtaining the revered. Some kidnap strangers off the street, others sacrifice their friends and family members, while a few prefer to accept volunteers from within their own ranks.

The Enemy

Over the last year, one theme has reverberated throughout the Temple members' Ambrosia-induced visions: There is a threat in the world, a growing cancer that endangers not only the cult but perhaps even their god itself. Details are vague, so the members refer to this threat simply as "the enemy" and pledge themselves to defend their master in any way they can.

The enemy is the shk'ryth. Nyarlathotep has many followers under numerous banners, but he has decided that it is the New Moon Temple that he will use to investigate—and combat, if necessary—these mysterious beings of which he has recently become aware.

Neither Nyarlathotep nor his servants know the name "shk'ryth," but they are aware that there are intelligent, supernatural beings burrowing beneath the Earth and scurrying across its surface. Nyarlathotep feels one of these creatures stirring in California's Diablo mountain range and sends an utoruk agent to investigate (see *Stillness* in Part I: *Long Shades*). There, the agent will encounter a shk'ryth called Kage and learn of its connection to the corporate entity TemCo. Following the events of *Stillness*, the utorok

He hopes they take his eyes. Three times they have come to him, and three times they have taken a piece from him. First it was his right foot, removed from just above the ankle with a small, whining electric saw. The agony in his stump had dulled to a tired ache by the time they came back for the rest of the leg a month later.

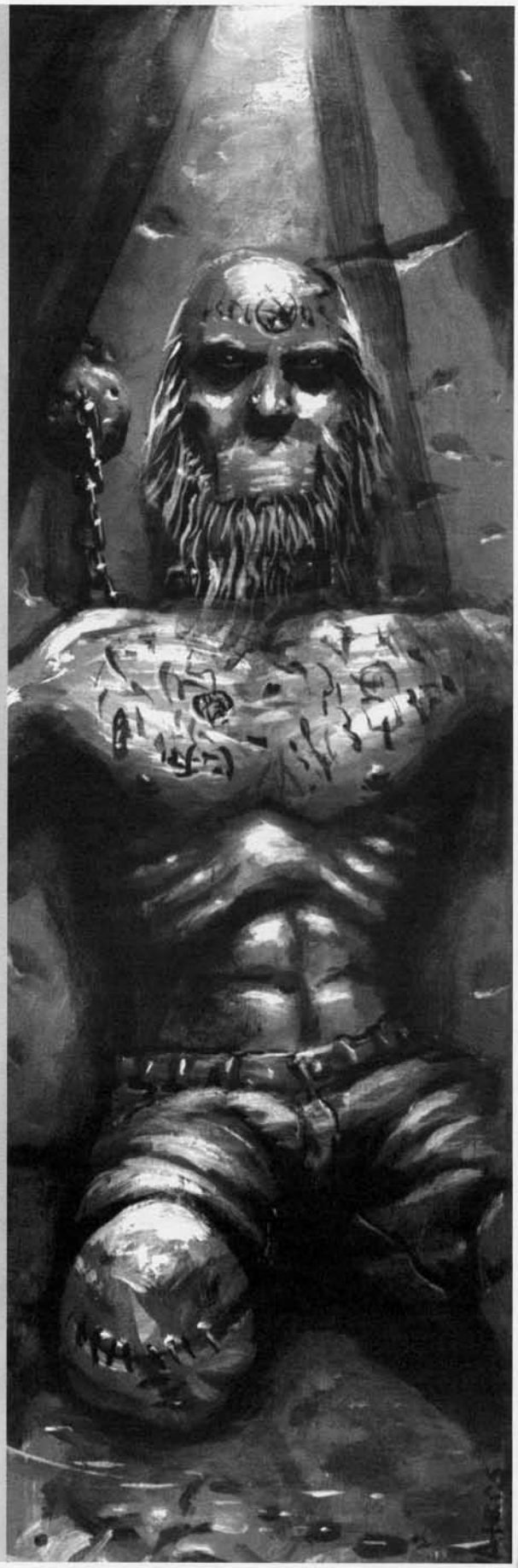
At least he thinks it was a month. There is no sun in here, no clock on these bare concrete walls. He hears no street sounds from outside; it could mean they are holding him out in the country—or that his cell is in the center of the building. Perhaps in a sub-basement, he thinks, and suddenly feels the crushing weight of the unknown above him pressing down.

The third time they came for him, he fought them the best he could. It was a short fight. Two of them held him down while a third slid the usual black cloth bag over his head. His right thigh struck the doorway as they half-carried, half-dragged him from his cell. He screamed as he felt the blood-encrusted stump crack open and begin to ooze.

They took his left leg. In the absolute darkness of his cell, he replays the amputation over and over again in his mind. He didn't want to watch them do it but couldn't help himself. Free from the cloth bag, his traitor eyes were drawn to the scene, voyeurs of his own mutilation. Even now, he sees them: cutting, blessing, eating. There is no mistaking the gratitude in their eyes as they consume his flesh.

He hears them coming for him now. It has been a month, and it is time once more. His legs are all but gone, and he suspects they will now begin working on his arms.

But he hopes they take his eyes.



will return to the Temple and report its discoveries.

When the Temple first meets the investigators, it knows little about its enigmatic enemy. By this time, it has researched TemCo and uncovered a partial list of its subsidiaries, but still has not identified the company's purpose. Nor does the Temple know precisely what the shk'ryth are, or what they can do. They only know (from the incident on Still Mountain) that these alien entities can assume human and monstrous forms.

The Temple in Nocturnum

After the investigators encounter Nyarlathotep's utorok servant during the *Stillness* adventure in Part I: *Long Shades*, the Outer God keeps an eye on them. He does not yet comprehend the shk'ryth and their plans, but does recognize the investigators as uniquely positioned to discover the truth about these alien, subterranean creatures. He therefore directs the New Moon Temple to monitor the investigators, watching over them until such time as he is ready to put them to good use.

Gamemasters may wish to use the Temple's agents to help the investigators out of tight spots, but are encouraged to keep the cultists' motives shrouded in secrecy. Wherever the investigators go, the Gamemaster can assume a member of the New Moon Temple is watching them.

Project Pandora

The comet SH-01 is on its way to Earth, and will impact the planet in less than two years. Project Pandora is an international group of scientists dedicated to stopping the comet and preventing news of the comet from leaking out and causing a worldwide panic. If the investigators do not already know about SH-01, they will by the end of Part II: *Hollow Winds*. If the investigators try to warn the world about the celestial danger, Project Pandora will be there to stop them.

The International Astronomical Union was founded in 1919 to promote astronomy and coordinate astronomical research throughout the world. When a new celestial body (such as a comet) is discovered, the IAU confirms that the discovery claim is valid, assigns the newfound object its official name, and spreads news of the discovery to astronomers around the world. Astronomers receive these updates from the IAU through irregular mailings and the Internet.

Unknown to most astronomers, the IAU has a secondary purpose: to watch and prepare for imminent peril from the heavens. Though scientists prefer to downplay the danger, they are very aware of the effect an asteroid impact would have on Earth. And though the odds are against such an event, the IAU Executive Committee has prepared a plan for just such an eventuality. The group in charge of that plan is called Project Pandora.

Porter's Comet

Fourteen months ago, Helen Porter, a summer intern at the Princeton University Observatory, was doing a routine telescope check when she noticed something odd. An unregistered astronomical body—a comet, she suspected—had come into view from behind Jupiter. She double-checked to make certain she was not looking at a previously discovered comet. The sky catalogs confirmed her suspicions; there was no comet on record at this location.

While awaiting confirmation from the IAU, Porter and her fellow astronomers at the university excitedly ran every test they could to analyze the comet. She considered herself fortunate to work at the university observatory. Few others who discover comets have access to the computers and specialized equipment that Porter did. It was after using the computers that the astronomers' joy turned to anxiety. Test after test verified an awful truth. The comet was going to impact with Earth.

Within an hour, the IAU confirmed these results. The comet, which they had named SH-01, was going to collide with Earth in less than two years. It had passed Jupiter and was actually increasing speed—a physical impossibility. According to IAU calculations, even in a best-case scenario, the impact would cause massive destruction to the surface of the planet.

"The potential for disaster has exceeded minimal acceptable levels," the report concluded. "You are to tell no one of your discovery until further notice."

Pandora Revealed

Over the following weeks, Helen Porter and a number of other astronomers from around the world gathered at the headquarters of the International Astronomical Union in Paris, where they formed Project Pandora. They realized that while SH-01 represented a real threat, an even greater threat was the social chaos that could result should word of the comet reach the masses. Thus Project Pandora initiated an international endeavor to both cover up the danger of SH-01 and prepare for its inevitable arrival.

Several impact contingency plans are currently under consideration. One plan calls for the construction of a "life boat," or a giant space station capable of supporting thousands of people in orbit until after the danger has passed (or indefinitely, depending on the extent of the impact damage). A similar plan suggests that humanity hide in reinforced subterranean caverns. A more aggressive plan—and one of the more popular—is the construction of a specialized nuclear rocket designed to meet the comet and divert it before it reaches the atmosphere.

Unfortunately, while these are all workable theories, their sheer size and scope makes them financially and

logistically challenging. While many national governments support one or more of the plans, it is difficult to arrange the massive funding necessary without raising suspicions. Progress is being made on all three fronts, but it is painfully slow progress. Pandora officials theorize that if substantial progress is not made in the next year, it may be better to simply inform the public in order to maximize support for the projects. The social upheaval would be unprecedented, but that is a small price to pay for the preservation of the human race.

Organization

Project Pandora is under the direct supervision of the International Astronomical Union, which has its headquarters in the IAU Secretariat, located at Institute d'Astrophysique in Paris, France. In each IAU member country, the Project has access to government resources. In North America and Western Europe, Pandora can request temporary assistance from military and intelligence agencies, including personnel, equipment, information, and other resources. Pandora realizes the importance of maintaining a low profile, however, and uses these assets sparingly—usually only for Silencer missions.

Silencers

It is impossible to cover up a comet. It is equally impossible to prevent the thousands of amateur and professional astronomers around the world from locating SH-01 and discovering for themselves the danger it poses to Earth. The best Project Pandora can hope to do is keep the comet out of the public eye and to give other astronomers no incentive to study it.

To this end, the first phase of Project Pandora was to register SH-01 and give Helen Porter credit for discovering it. By doing so, the IAU insured that no other astronomers would "discover" the comet for themselves. Astronomers around the world would no doubt still scan the skies for the comet, but there are many comets and the astronomers would have no reason to study Porter's Comet more than any of the rest.

Nevertheless, it is only a matter of time before one of the world's thousands of astronomers monitors the comet and realizes the danger it presents. According to scientific protocol, an astronomer making such a discovery is to immediately pass it along to the IAU for confirmation and dissemination. Pandora maintains four international five-person units called "Silencers." Made up of two astronomers and three military security specialists, the task of these teams is to meet with those individuals who have discovered the secret of SH-01 and persuade them to "forget" what they have learned about the comet.

According to Pandora procedures, the Silencers first try to convince the astronomer that her observations or

Introduction Papers #1

This is not a hoax.

I am an amateur astronomer, based out of Oxford, England, where I am working towards my graduate degree in astronomy. Three months ago, I was observing the comet SH-01 when I realized that its position was remaining constant night after night. I also realized that its speed was increasing. According to my calculations, these figures mean that the comet SH-01 is coming directly towards the Earth and will collide with the planet in less than a year and a half.

The prupose of this warning is not to cause panic. If that were my aim, I would have posted this message to every newsgroup and mailing list I could find. Instead I am sending this message only to the forums where I think it will do the most good. If you are reading this, you are a scientist with the capability of proving or disproving these claims. You are also capable of assisting in the preparations for the comet's arrival. Test my theories. See for yourself that they are true. Then contact the IAU and tell them that you know the truth. Tell tham that you want to help.

Yes, the IAU is aware of SH-01 and its collision course with Earth. They are aware, and they are working on the problem, but they do not want others to find out. I suspect they fear panic, which I can understand, but what price are they willing to pay to ensure secrecy? They have already visited me once, and I suspect that I am putting my life in danger even by typing these words.

To show that I am not simply yet another millennial madman with apocalyptic visions, I have attached a copy of the analysis that I performed on SH-01. Even if this does not convince you, it will at least give you a foundation for your own tests of the comet.

Thank you and good luck.

— An anonymous astronomer

Nicholas Mardell: A Martyr's Tale

Nick's Master's degree was in physics, but his true passion was astronomy. He had an expensive telescope and his own darkroom in Oxford, England, where he was studying for his doctorate. He could be found in the back garden every clear night, studying the skies.

Comets were Nick's specialty. It was his dream to have one named after him. When he heard about SH-01, he was surprised; he had been scouring that portion of the sky a week before, and had seen nothing. Pointing his telescope to that spot, he saw for himself the new shining dot. Out of habit, Nicholas snapped a photo of the comet.

Two weeks later, Nick took another photo for comparison. Based on an analysis of their relative positions, he realized that SH-01 must be coming directly toward Earth. This in itself was not particularly unnerving. The distance involved meant that "directly toward Earth" could mean passing nowhere near the planet. But when he did a more sophisticated analysis, Nicholas found something that did disturb him. The comet was moving faster than originally announced in the IAU update.

Nick examined SH-01 the next clear night and took a third photograph. Comparison to the previous two photos confirmed his suspicions. In violation of everything he knew about physics and astronomy, the comet was somehow speeding up. The IAU had to hear about this.

The next morning, Nicholas sent an e-mail message to the IAU describing what he had found. By afternoon, he had received a reply. "Tests for your results have proven negative," the reply stated. "Thank you for thinking of us."

Nick was going over his figures again the next day when a trio of gentlemen in suits appeared at the door of his small apartment. They introduced themselves as representatives of the IAU, and offered to double-check his analysis for him. They spoke with French accents. Nick was a little surprised, but allowed the gentlemen to read his notes and see for themselves how he came to his conclusions.

The Silencers studied Nick's work and seemed pleased with what he had done. They then explained to him in esoteric terms why he was wrong. But Nicholas was a canny young man, and this wasn't the first time that he had proven the experts wrong. He stood by his work and demanded to know what the IAU was trying to hide.

"Very well," sighed one of the Silencers, "but remember that you asked for this." He proceeded to inform the young astronomer of the grave danger that SH-01 presented Earth. The explanation was followed by the customary recruitment speech: "Tell anyone and we'll kill you." Of course Nicholas immediately agreed to secrecy.

But in the days and weeks that followed, Nicholas was troubled. He appreciated the IAU's fear of worldwide panic, but his conscience made it very difficult for him to carry the secret of humanity's greatest threat in silence. Finally, he could take it no longer. In the small hours of the morning, Nick fired up his computer and wrote a one-page summary of his findings. He included the comet's celestial coordinates and specific details of his analysis, in hopes of being taken seriously. The sun was just beginning to rise over Oxford as Nicholas uploaded his report and e-mailed it to as many astronomers and relevant astronomical forums as he could think of.

Releasing a sigh that was as much dread as relief, Nick grabbed his duffel bag and headed for his car. If he could make it to London before the IAU realized what he had done, he had a chance to elude them. He had his passport and a credit card with him. From London, he could fly anywhere in the world.

Of course, Nicholas did not know Project Pandora had a tap on his phone lines and was monitoring his Internet accounts. They knew what he had done within minutes. They intercepted the young astronomer's essay before it posted to newsgroups and astronomical e-mail lists, but a few copies addressed to individuals slipped through. Efforts to track down these individuals failed, as their e-mail addresses had been encrypted. Nicholas restricted his message to astronomers and those he felt might be able to do something about the approaching comet. It was not his intention to "warn the world" about SH-01. He knew that Project Pandora was right; it would only lead to panic and chaos.

Nicholas never made it to London. According to police reports, he fell asleep at the wheel and his car plowed into an embankment. He was killed on impact.

calculations are incorrect. It is impossible that SH-01 is increasing its speed, and while it may pass close by Earth, there is no chance it would affect our planet. When confronted by very convincing evidence presented by the IAU itself, many astronomers are quick to agree; their calculations were obviously in error.

Those astronomers who insist on the accuracy of their figures, however, are eventually told the truth. Yes, SH-01 is speeding up. It will strike the Earth in less than two years, creating a cataclysm eclipsing anything in human history. Furthermore, the importance of secrecy is impressed upon these astronomers (who usually appreciate the danger of worldwide panic). Now that they know the truth, the astronomers are to assist Project Pandora in any way requested of them and will be monitored for secrecy compliance.

If they breathe a word about SH-01, the Silencers warn them, they will die.

Project Pandora in Nocturnum

Over the course of the **Nocturnum** campaign, the investigators may try to convince others that SH-01 is on a collision course with Earth. This will inevitably bring them into conflict with Project Pandora. (For a detailed description of this conflict, see *The Sky is Falling*, page 113.) The purpose of Project Pandora in the campaign is to force the investigators to shoulder the responsibility of stopping the comet, and by extension, TemCo and the shk'ryth. This is a terrible responsibility, an awesome task that no one will take on willingly if there is any way to avoid it. Most simply prefer to let the proper authorities take care of it. The "proper authorities" don't know how to "take care of it," however, and have no interest in listening to the truth. Therefore, if someone is to stop the imminent destruction of the Earth, it is going to be the investigators.

Even if the investigators do not come into direct contact with the Project, they may still experience its indirect effects. Astronomers who know the truth about SH-01 disappear or "change their minds" before they can help the investigators. As the campaign progresses and the comet grows nearer, the number of astronomers who vanish begins to increase. Finally, after encountering failure time and again, the investigators may not know about Project Pandora, but they will know that someone out there is willing to go to great lengths to cover up the truth about SH-01.

The investigators first have a chance to learn about SH-01 and the danger it presents in the adventure *Stillness*. If for some reason they do not discover these disturbing facts during that adventure, the Gamemaster may allow them to receive or otherwise come across Nicholas Mardell's report. While it is possible for players to enjoy the **Nocturnum** campaign without knowledge of Earth's imminent peril, the looming danger does add a certain element of urgency to the campaign.

Dr. Lee Brownstein, a typical Silencer character, has been provided for the Gamemaster's convenience, along with statistics for a typical Project Pandora operative.

Dr. Lee Brownstein, Silencer, Project Pandora

Before SH-01, Brownstein was content. He had tenure at a major American university and nearly unlimited access to its observatory and astronomical resources. Finally situated at age 39, he was ready to settle down, maybe get married and have a few children.

But the comet ruined all of that. Brownstein was with Porter when she made her historic discovery and accompanied her to Paris for the Project Pandora briefing. He volunteered to join the Silencers, grimly willing to do his part for the Project. Since then, he has all but given up his astronomical studies and dedicated himself to his Silencer pursuits.

Though he would never admit it even to himself, Dr. Brownstein is terrified of the comet's arrival—and with good reason. It could be, after all, the end of the world. But rather than allow himself to be overwhelmed by the despair gnawing at his gut, the scientist has thrown himself into his work with Project Pandora. Only then does he feel at peace, if only for the moment.

As the months slip by and SH-01 hurtles closer to the Earth, an increasing number of astronomers are looking to the skies and pondering unthinkable theories. As his workload increases, Brownstein finds his task becoming more difficult: the closer the comet, the more accurate the other astronomers' figures, and the harder to convince them that they are wrong. The scientist is growing frustrated, bitter and angry. It is only a matter of time before he snaps and someone gets hurt.

Lee Brownstein: Male 4th level; HD 4d6; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +1 melee (1d3–1, punch) or +2 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +9, Computer Use +9, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (mathematics) +10, Knowledge (physics) +10, Listen +7, Research +9, Search +11, Sense Motive +10, Spot +7.

Feats: Persuasive, Sharp-Eyed, Trustworthy.

The Four Horsemen

As the investigators progress through the **Nocturnum** campaign, they will discover more and more information and evidence pointing to the shk'ryth at the center of the tangled web of conspiracy and alien menace. What no one knows, not even the shk'ry-

The Ktchoma

Little is known about this ancient race from the outer edge of the galaxy. They reached the height of their power during an expansionist period millions of years ago, during which time they colonized hundreds of planets across the cosmos. This period came to an end as civil war exploded on their home world, forcing them to abandon most of their colonies.

Ktchoma colonization was a peaceful process. They only settled on planets without sentient life. If primitive sentience was discovered on the planet, the colonists were to abandon the project. Overall, the ktchoma maintained a strict policy of non-interference with other intelligent life.

The natural form of the ktchoma is that of a six- to seven-foot-tall humanoid covered with short hair. Its eyes are dark, without pupils. Its forehead is bulbous and protruding. Those wishing to pass among other races were able to do so through the use of highly sophisticated "masking" technology.

Ktchoma do not require food or water (they may eat and drink for pleasure), instead drawing their sustenance from sunlight through a complex chemical process similar to photosynthesis. This way, they can live for many centuries, as humans measure time.

th, is that behind the scenes, the cold ambition of a very different interstellar visitor has set the stage for this conflict. It all begins with Gerard Moore (see page 32) and the building of the Tyrr Nemaii.

Millions of years ago, while humanity peered fearfully down from the trees and the shk'ryth were still formless and mindless patches of evil, alien eyes turned toward Earth.

In this distant time, the inhuman ktchoma were the masters of a tiny, frozen world on the far side of the galaxy. A mighty empire, they constantly sought out new planets to colonize. One of these planets was fledgling Earth. Rich in resources, this shimmering blue marble was too marvelous a discovery to ignore. Five thousand ktchoma were dispatched across the vast, black oceans of space to colonize this rich, new world.

Upon settling a planet, the first stage of colonization was to build a Tyrr Nemaii, the purpose of which was to act as a beacon to other colonist vessels, as well as a cosmic "magnet," drawing those vessels faster and more efficiently to their destination.

On Earth, the ktchoma constructed the Tyrr Nemaii inside a high Himalayan mountain. The altitude helped minimize atmospheric interference, while the mountain itself protected the machine from the environment. Around the Tyrr Nemaii they built a vast underground city in which the initial colonists were to live.

In the process of establishing the settlement, the colonists discovered that the area was inhabited by an insentient, non-terrestrial entity—a shk'ryth. Though they had not encountered any of its kind before, the ktchoma recognized the creature as similar to other, more highly evolved life forms that had caused them trouble in the past. Rather than face the prospect of an alien troublemaker in their midst, the ktchoma captured the shk'ryth, placed it in stasis, and sent it back to their homeworld for further study. Before the colonization effort could begin in earnest, civil war broke out on the ktchoma homeworld. The colonists were called back to assist in the war effort.

Only four members of the founding colony remained on Earth. It was their task to maintain the outpost in preparation for when the colonization effort began anew. The four put themselves into a dreamlike stasis inside the Tyrr Nemaii.

Millennia passed. Oceans receded. The Tyrr Nemaii and the ktchoma city remained hidden away from the sun and wind. Still the four guardians slept, waiting for a colony vessel that would never come.

Awakenings

In 1892, the Danish explorer Morten Nyhuus was part of an expedition in search of a lost Tibetan monastery on Mt. Makalu. When an impending blizzard forced him to separate from his party and seek refuge in a nearby cave, he discovered to his surprise that the cave was actually the entrance to a much larger cavern. He had stumbled upon the ktchoma underground city. Working by the flickering light of his oil lamp, Nyhuus explored the cavern. He had heard the local legends about a giant sleeping beneath the mountain but had disregarded them as superstitious myths. Now he was not so sure. He saw the alien glyphs and the weird pictograms on the walls and could not deny that something intelligent had once been living there. The strange architecture and the sheer size of the structures suggested that the builders of this great city were not necessarily human.

Approaching the center of the city, Nyhuus finally

Ktchoma Masking Field

Through the use of sophisticated technology far beyond human grasp, the ktchoma have developed a field that, when projected around their bodies, gives them an altered appearance. On Earth, they use the field to pass unnoticed among us.

This microcircuitry is embedded in the back of the right hand of each ktchoma. When activated, it superimposes a perfect, hologram-like illusion of a human body over the aliens' own. (Michael Graham has modified his masking circuitry to also serve as a cloaking device, hiding him completely from human eyes, as well as allowing him to appear as several different people.)

found himself at the base of the Tyrr Nemaii. He no longer doubted the legends he had heard. He was certain that no human hands had fashioned this monstrous machine. With trembling fingers, he reached out to touch its strangely ornate surface and unwittingly awakened the four aliens inside.

Four massive doors, each 20 feet tall, slid upwards into the machine. Stone ground on stone as ancient gears churned to life once more. A weird blue light flickered to life from inside the four chambers.

The ktchoma stepped slowly from their stasis chambers with mild confusion. It was clear that this life form before them was not a colonist, yet obviously sentient. They instinctively adapted their minds to his simple thought patterns. In this way they were able to communicate with the awestruck explorer.

Nyhuus described to the guardians a world crawling with humanity, which was at that time experiencing an industrial revolution. Unbalanced by the encounter, Nyhuus assumed that the four were precursors of a great exodus from beyond the heavens. He offered to take them back to Denmark with him, where they could "spread the word of the coming new world."

Having learned all they could from Nyhuus, the ktchoma placed the Dane into stasis while they discussed their situation. The four of them were bitterly divided. Two of them insisted that they return immediately to their stasis chambers, lest they interfere with humanity. The other two pointed out that the colony had been abandoned. With no other ktchoma about, there was no reason not to explore and enjoy this new world.

The discussion became heated. Several days passed with no resolution. The two who wished to explore the world became obsessed with the idea. Among the other ktchoma, they had been lowly laborers without rank or title. But here, they reasoned, they could rule as kings. The third night, as the other two were sleeping, they made a dreadful decision: If the other two would not allow them their share of glory, they would be killed.

On the fourth day, the argument continued to rage, but now the two would-be conquerors backed up their words with violence. They brutally slew one of their fellow guardians. Before they could turn to finish off the fourth ktchoma, it had fled out of the cavern and into the snow-covered world beyond.

Nyhuus awoke on the morning of the fifth day unaware of the time that had passed. He was alone in the cavern but for the body of the dead ktchoma. Taking the alien corpse to be a sign, Nyhuus dragged it through the snow back to base camp. From there, he transported it all the way to his ancestral home in Denmark, where it became the centerpiece of his new religion: the Sect of the Four Horsemen.

In his obsessed and imaginative mind, Nyhuus saw the four creatures as harbingers of a new age. The body of "the first horseman" (as he called the dead ktchoma) became the site of a shrine on his estate. Nyhuus attracted several followers to his new religion from among his friends and the local peasantry, but the sect all but vanished when he disappeared in 1908.

Rise of the Four Horsemen

The surviving three ktchoma spread out into the world, disguising their appearances with their alien technology (see above).

Michael Graham

Fearing for its life, a frightened ktchoma fled the cavern of the Tyrr Nemaii and started a new life for itself on Earth.

Taking the name Michael Graham, the ktchoma undertook a life of philosophy and scientific inquiry, exploring this strange new world in which he found himself. He observed humanity's rapid technological advances with a mixture of amusement and curiosity. With the advent of relativity and quantum physics, Graham began to take terrestrial physics somewhat seriously. If humans could master the atom and recognize the unity of time and space, he reasoned, the fledgling race might someday be able to find some way to transport the ktchoma back to their home planet. He moved to Denmark during this time, as it was the home of Niels Bohr, the father of quantum physics and the site of many theoretical breakthroughs.

Graham established himself as an eccentric philosopher and tutor, eventually creating for himself a legal identity. For decades, Graham has quietly pored over scientific journals, monitoring advances in physics and technology around the world. A number of keen investments decades ago have assured him a steady, comfortable income while he pursues his more important interests.

About five years ago, Graham discovered the work of Dr. Julian Levitz, a most remarkable physicist. Levitz put forth a radical new theory concerning the nature of time and space. Pushing the limits of a theoretical tradition that dated to Albert Einstein, Levitz claimed that it was possible to bend and fold the fabric of the universe itself with the application of sufficient energy.

Graham was thrilled to read the physicist's theories, for he knew them to be true. They were, in fact, the basis for the ktchoma space-travel technology. Unfortunately, the human scientific community was far less receptive to these ideas, which were generally considered unproductive and impractical. Levitz and his theories were frequently met with disdain and cruel laughter.

His funding cut, Levitz was about to give up this avenue of research when he received a package from Michael Graham. Inside was a letter encouraging the physicist to keep up his work; it was full of scientific merit, even if his peers thought otherwise. Attached to the letter was a check, providing enough money to continue working on his theories for another six months.

"In return for this investment," the ktchoma wrote, "I expect to be kept appraised of your work. If I am satisfied with your progress in six months, another check will be forthcoming."

Given enough time and financing, it is possible that Levitz would have eventually discovered a way to safely bend space, allowing the ktchoma to travel home. Unfortunately for both the physicist and his unworldly sponsor, Gerard Moore and TemCo had other plans.

Michael Graham: Male ktchoma 7th level; HD 7d6+7; hp 32; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +5 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +13; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 27, Wis 23, Cha 17.

Skills: Bluff +13, Computer Use +20, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +13, Gather Information +13, Knowledge (mathematics) +18, Knowledge (philosophy) +21, Knowledge (physics) +21, Listen +16, Repair +15, Research +18, Search +18, Sense Motive +16, Speak Other Language (Danish) +13, Speak Other Language (English) +13, Spot +16.

Feats: Gearhead, Iron Will, Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [philosophy]), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [physics]).

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, ktchoma cloaking device, $500 in cash.

Gerard Moore

TemCo's most effective agent and ruthless killer, Gerard Moore has a secret. He is neither human nor shk'ryth, but something else entirely. He is ktchoma, the third horseman.

After taking leave of his fellow colonists, Moore sought some way off Earth. Like Graham, he looked to human science and found it laughably primitive. But unlike Graham, Moore did not have the patience to wait for the necessary physics to be discovered—nor did he have the scientific expertise to do the work himself. He turned, instead, to the nonterrestrial. Remembering the shk'ryth the colonists had discovered millennia before, he set out to find if there were any more left on Earth.

Moore traversed the globe over the next century, taking what he needed (or wanted) without regard for the suffering he caused. He found several shk'ryth in his travels, but they were either mindless monsters or insufferable despots with delusions of godhood. These wilders were useless to him. It wasn't until 1922 that Moore met one of the organized shk'ryth, who in turn introduced him to Silas Templeton, the founder of TemCo.

Moore offered his services to TemCo as a roving agent. He rose quickly through the ranks and after a few years became one of Templeton's most valued associates. Later he was assigned to the Tribunal, but his strengths were so numerous that he became an agency unto himself, answering directly to the ruling council. Though Templeton suspected that Moore was more than he appeared, the agent was too great an asset to let slip through his fingers.

As the years passed and Moore seemed not to age, Templeton's suspicions grew. At this time, however, he has still to confront Moore about his seemingly superhuman qualities. Once Templeton tried to do a detailed investigation of Moore's background but found absolutely nothing. Still, Moore has served him flawlessly for decades, and Templeton has no reason not to trust him.

For decades, Moore worked closely with Templeton and the others of the ruling council as they explored every possibility for escaping Earth. Countless plans were formulated and discarded. Many projects were initiated, then aborted when they failed to produce results. Still they continued their search.

In 1981, Moore revealed to the TemCo ruling council the presence of the Tyrr Nemaii, in hopes that they would be able to use it. He believed that any progress the shk'ryth made toward escaping Earth would also help him get home. Moore sent a research team to the Himalayas, ostensibly in search of wilder shk'ryth.

The Himalayan expedition indeed "discovered" the Tyrr Nemaii and immediately set to work understand-

ing its monstrous complexities. Gerard Moore was of little help in this effort, however, as his specialty was security, not science. TemCo was on its own as far as figuring out the Tyrr Nemaii and putting it to good use.

Four years ago, Moore happened upon his fellow colonist, Michael Graham, while attending a scientific convention in New York. Realizing that Graham is the one ktchoma who could thwart him, he moved to eliminate his fellow colonist. Before he could make his move, Graham spotted him and fled once more.

The encounter was not completely wasted on Moore, as he learned of Graham's connection to the physicist Julian Levitz, and his hopes of causing a fold in the space-time continuum. Moore reported his findings to the TemCo ruling council, which decided to "buy away" Levitz from Graham.

Levitz soon received a lucrative employment offer from Parsec, Inc., a TemCo subsidiary specializing in space-travel technologies. Grateful for a chance to support himself and his family with science again, Levitz eagerly accepted the offer. If he had known what this contract would entail, he would have rejected the offer and given up physics altogether.

Gerard Moore: Male ktchoma 9th level; HD 9d6+27; hp 59; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+3 Dex); Atk +10/+5 melee (1d3+3, punch) or +10/+5 ranged (2d10, Desert Eagle .50 AE); SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 17.

Skills: Bluff +15, Computer Use +13, Demolitions +19, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +19, Gather Information +15, Hide +15, Listen +17, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +9, Research +19, Search +19, Sense Motive +17, Speak Other Language (English) +13, Spot +17.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Multishot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Desert Eagle .50 AE, ktchoma cloaking device, $1,200 in cash.

Julian Levitz

Dr. Julian Levitz is too brilliant for his own good. A quantum physicist, Levitz theorized that our universe is far more malleable than it seems. When enough energy is applied, it bends and warps, twisting time and space. If we could only generate and control this energy, he wrote in several scientific journals, we might be able to shape the cosmos to our will.

The physicist's work was ground-breaking and his theories were sound, but the scientific community was not prepared to accept what they called "science fiction and pipe dreams." Discouraged, the physicist would have given up had he not received financial and moral support from a new, mysterious benefactor, Michael Graham.

A year later, Levitz gave up Graham's sponsorship and went to work for Parsec, a subsidiary of TemCo. Graham suspected that his fellow ktchoma was behind the physicist's new employment. He warned Levitz against taking the job. Levitz politely ignored his benefactor's warning. The position at Parsec would be the perfect situation for the scientist to turn his theories into reality.

Working at Parsec, Dr. Levitz had everything he needed to refine and perfect his theories. After many months of work, he proved that the theoretical graviton field generated by all physical matter could be "stretched" into a new power field that he called a magnetron field. According to his theories, when a magnetron field is exposed to a sufficient amount of energy, it can be manipulated, shaping the very fabric of time and space. Unfortunately, the vast amounts of energy necessary for this process would be well beyond humanity's capacity to produce. Levitz could go no further.

Tyrr Nemaii Phase Two

Upon reviewing the scientist's findings, the TemCo ruling council was at a loss about how to proceed. It had been their hope to use the scientist's magnetron field to punch a hole through time and space, thus allowing the shk'ryth to escape from Earth's dimension. But the problem of insufficient energy was a frustrating obstacle.

Behind the scenes, Gerard Moore subtly manipulated the TemCo scientists. At his prodding, they discovered an inherent use for the Tyrr Nemaii: The ability to attract objects from space. At further prodding, one scientist realized that given the right mass, speed, and placement, a celestial body could be directed into a magnetron field, creating sufficient energy to activate the time-space reaction that Dr. Levitz predicted. The physics of this idea were tested and found accurate; the project known as Tyrr Nemaii was begun.

One obstacle to the project was the fact that the Tyrr Nemaii seemed to be fueled by psychic energy. A normal human would only provide a few seconds' worth of fuel. TemCo quickly realized the value of locating humans with latent psychic talent, who fueled the machine more efficiently. Unfortunately, after a few hours on the machine, very few subjects survived the process.

Levitz was not informed of the council's decision. He was merely instructed to continue his work, assuming in his calculations that a sufficiently powerful energy source would be found. The physicist had no reason to suspect anything was amiss and carried on as ordered. By the time he realized how Parsec intended

to actually put his theories to the test, it was too late.

The first phase of the Tyrr Nemaii project entailed locating psychics, transporting them to Mt. Makalu, then using their essence to bring the comet SH-01 crashing into a magnetron field on Earth. The second phase was initiated shortly after the first phase began, and required the construction of an enormous magnetron field at the site of the comet's impact. When SH-01 collides with this field, the energy of the impact will overload the field, effectively punching a hole through space and time. It is through this hole the shk'ryth hope to escape the Earth.

There are two side effects of the collision plan. The first and most obvious is the destruction of virtually all life on Earth. Even with months to prepare for this catastrophe, humanity can do little more than wait and pray. It is the second side effect, however, that truly worries Dr. Levitz. From his calculations, he fears that the uncontrolled collision will lead to a greater unraveling of the fabric of the universe. The destruction may not end on Earth but spread in a cosmic chain reaction, destroying all time and space.

Upon realizing that his employers planned to actually use his theories, Dr. Levitz refused to continue with his work. TemCo was prepared for this eventuality. Parsec faked the physicist's death, then kidnapped and transported him to a laboratory at the Tyrr Nemaii site. Levitz's wife and children have been placed under surveillance and threatened with harm if Levitz does not continue his work.

The Collision Site

The arid wastes of the Gobi Desert will soon be the womb of the world's destruction. Recognizing its usefulness as a clear and open land far from the eyes of the world and yet near the Tyrr Nemaii, TemCo has designated this desert to be the collision site of the comet SH-01.

Parsec, Inc. has set up a remote laboratory deep in the wind-swept plateaus of the Gobi. Ostensibly a base for experiments in crops and irrigation, the facility is actually outfitted with a powerful magnetron generator that was built based upon Dr. Levitz's theories. This generator, working in concert with a number of smaller satellite stations, produces a magnetron field that covers more than a hundred square miles of desert. SH-01 is to land in the center of this field, contributing its energy and breaking through time and space.

The shk'ryth of TemCo are converging on this site, their eyes turned skyward toward the salvation of SH-01. It is their dream that as the comet collides with the field, the resulting hole will allow them to pass through from our universe into the realm they instinctively know is their true home.

The Leak

While Levitz was working at the Tyrr Nemaii, one of the doomed psychics, Uri Bucayev, was assigned to work as his assistant. Bucayev was a physicist himself (though nowhere near the ability of Levitz) and a great boon to Levitz. He worked hard, spurred by the knowledge that the more irreplaceable he made himself, the longer he could forestall being used as fuel for the machine. During his time with Levitz, Bucayev came to understand TemCo's grand scheme.

Bucayev's psychic ability was powerful but limited. He was able to send telepathic images across the world but only to those people he knew. The one person he could most easily contact was his brother, Alexi, who lived in Riga, Latvia.

Night after night, Alexi was tormented by the dreams his missing brother sent him: A vast city, buried beneath a mountain. Countless victims led to their deaths. A smoldering stone falling to Earth, sealing the planet's doom.

Finally, Alexi had enough. His brother was in trouble, and it seemed the rest of the world was also in danger. If this was true, then he must do something to warn others. If this was madness...at least the activity might help relieve the symptoms. Alexi wrote letters to politicians and activists across the world in hopes that someone would believe him and check into this underground slaughterhouse.

Alexi's letters fell into the hands of both TemCo and the New Moon Temple. The Temple reaches him first. Francis Shepherd, one of the cult's agents, speaks with Alexi. He learns that the city beneath the mountain is only the first stage of the project; the second is in the desert of Mongolia, where the comet is destined to fall. Shepherd is killed by TemCo before he can relate his findings to his superiors. (See *Revelations*, page 151, for details.)

Some time later, Gerard Moore pays Alexi Bucayev a visit. The interrogation that follows is exhaustive and brutally effective. Alexi eventually gives up his brother's name. His cooperation is rewarded with a bullet to the base of the skull.

Gerard Moore, believing he has found the leak, immediately returns to the Tyrr Nemaii to exterminate Uri Bucayev and seal the leak forever. In a twist of fate, while trying to find Bucayev among the psychics awakened from stasis, Moore makes a terrible mistake. When he calls out Bucayev's name, another psychic, hoping for a quick death, volunteers that he is Uri Bucayev. Without another word, Moore executes the psychic on the spot. He returns to Templeton's side in the Gobi Desert, unknowing of his great mistake. Uri is still alive.

Uri Bucayev is eventually removed from his position with Levitz and thrown in with the rest of the psychics waiting to die. There he remains until Part III: *Deep Secrets*, and it is there that the investigators may find him.



CHAPTER ONE

Snowflake Valley

The old man sniffs the northern wind, narrows his dark eyes, and frowns.

There is snow coming—lots of it—of this he is sure.

Snow, and a bad moon, for it is that time once again. The moon is nothing new, but this snow…He is an old man, and his bones are twigs in autumn; they ache already from the winter chill and no longer leap through the drifts like they used to.

Still, there is a bad moon coming and work to be done.

The old man licks his brown, cracked lips and squints at the eagle feather held aloft between his fingers. Knees popping, he kneels and traces a circle in the snow at his feet. He sings a song to himself softly, the song of futures not known, the song of things to come. He sings to the feather and to the snow circle. Raising his head, he sings to the mountains, to the sky.

He must know.

The ritual is simple: He sings the song twice

more, then holds his arm out straight before him and drops the feather. If it lands in the circle, the Beast is coming once more, to feast by the light of the bad moon. If not...it means that their prayers are being answered, and the Beast will pass them by once more.

The feather drifts slowly to the ground. The old man smells the smoke a moment before he can place the odor. By then the eagle feather is firmly planted in the center of the circle. It smolders another moment, then bursts into flame.

His eyes wide with surprise and fear, the old man jumps back from the burning feather. This omen is not good. Not good at all. He must go, he must warn the others. And he must hurry...

...For the snow is beginning to fall.

The investigators need no introduction to this adventure. It catches them unawares in the middle of a snow storm while they are en route somewhere else and find themselves stranded in the tiny mining town of Miner's Folly. That night, after acquainting themselves with their immediate surroundings, they discover that a fellow hotel guest has been rudely ejected out his window and into the chasm below.

Over the course of the next three days, the investigators must defend themselves against a sheriff who is convinced they are killing hotel guests, embark on a quest deep into the bowels of a mountain, and face not only a ferocious werewolf, but its master, a wilder shk'ryth.

Gamemaster's Introduction

There has never been peace in Snowflake Valley. For centuries, winter travelers have disappeared into the valley, lured by the prospect of its shelter from the wind, never to return. The Native Americans shunned this narrow gap in the mountain range, for their shamans warned them of "the Darkness sleeping in heart of the mountain." This darkness infested the land itself, spawning twisted trees and vegetation, deforming the local wildlife. But still it slept...until October 1885.

In 1885, a prospector named Wilbur Clemson discovered gold in the valley. According to Clemson, he had been ready to give up and move on when a lanky, weather-beaten old settler appeared and told him to try digging closer to the mountainside. Clemson figured he had nothing to lose, so he followed the old man's suggestion—and struck gold. A few hours later, the first snow of the season began to fall. Clemson took the snow as a good sign, and named the place Snowflake Valley for luck. In the years that followed, Clemson searched the area for the white-haired settler who had helped him, but never found his mysterious benefactor.

By 1890, a boomtown had sprung up in Snowflake Valley. Miner's Folly was as wild and untamed as any frontier town, though frontier justice was strictly enforced by Ennis Malone, the town's sheriff, judge, and mayor all rolled into one.

By the turn of the century, there was no more gold in Snowflake Valley, but a new discovery kept the area alive: The surrounding mountains contained a rich supply of copper. Miner's Folly was no longer a boomtown but a respectable community supported by the copper-mining industry. The Delaney Mining Company ran the copper mine, and its owner, Jasper Delaney, practically ran the town. His grandson, Maximilian Delaney, continues this tradition today.

Maximilian Delaney

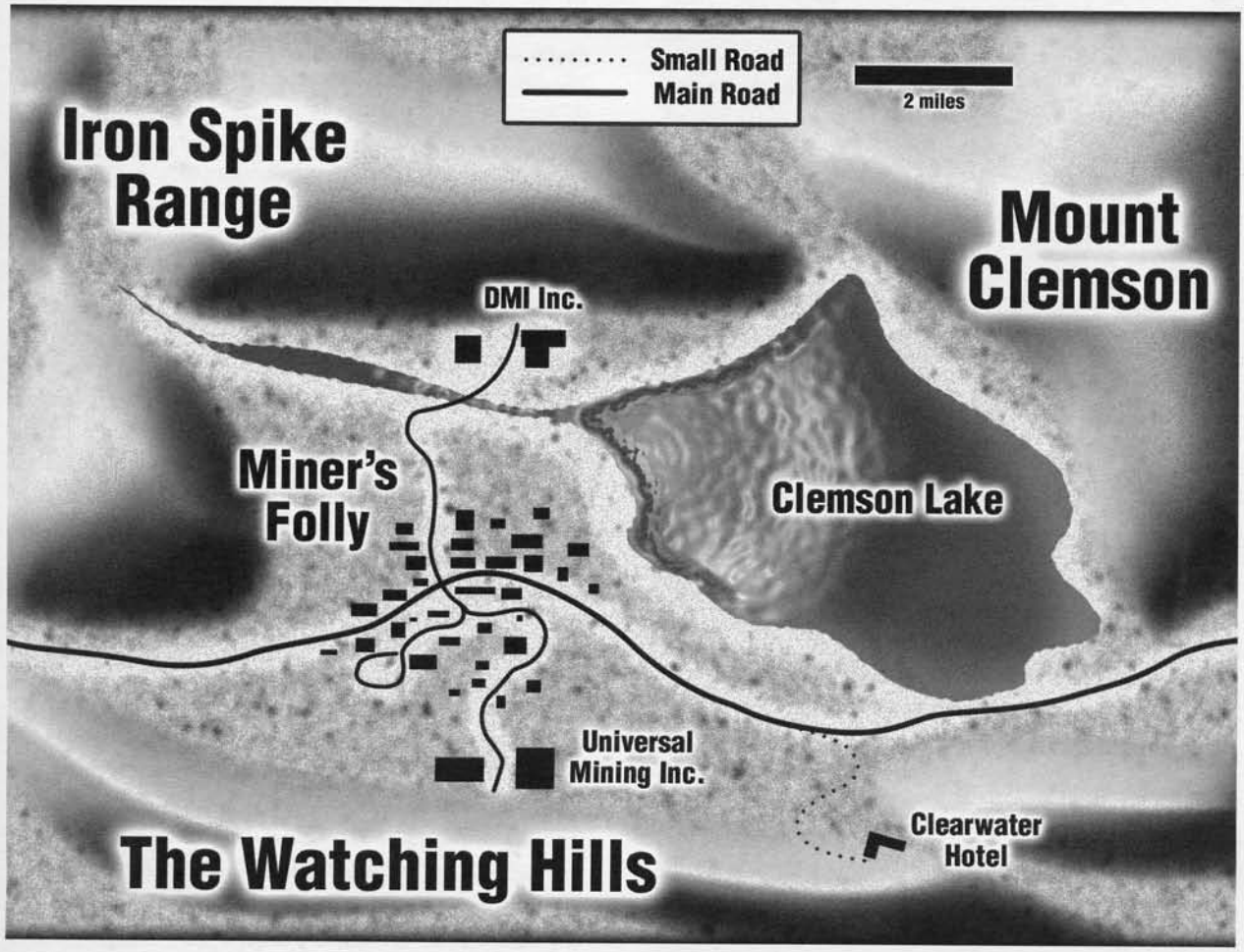
The Darkness in the heart of the mountain is no mere superstition. It is an alien, profoundly malignant force with nothing but loathing for humanity—it is a shk'ryth. But while the shk'ryth is powerful inside the valley, it is trapped there, incapable of leaving or acting directly beyond the circle of mountains that form its prison walls. Instead, it is forced to play a game of intimidation, conspiracy, and subtle influence.

The shk'ryth has formed for itself a human manifestation in order to better understand and manipulate the feeble and simple-minded creatures with whom it has been forced to share this world. Jasper Delaney was the first of its incarnations to wield power over the valley, and the shk'ryth has continued its corruption through the Delaney line—through Matthew Delaney and finally Maximilian Delaney, its current manifestation. Delaney rules the valley subtly, but absolutely, in an attempt to obtain more power in the human realm.

The form that Delaney wears is one the creature learned from a party of settlers who were snowbound in the valley several years before Clemson arrived. Driven mad by cold and hunger, the settlers turned to cannibalism and even more depraved acts before succumbing to the lethal elements. Their actions attracted the shk'ryth, who decided to adopt their features as its own.

While he has a deep hatred of all humanity, Delaney especially yearns for the destruction of the Native Americans in the area. It is because of them that the shk'ryth is trapped where it is.

Map of Snowflake Valley



Miner's Folly

Crammed into one end of Snowflake Valley, Miner's Folly is surrounded by snow-capped mountain peaks. It shares the valley with a decent-size lake that, were it deeper and its fish worth catching, might turn the town into a tourist attraction. As it is, Clemson Lake is shallow and surprisingly still, covered with a smelly, bright green sludge during the short, hot summers. The town and valley are starkly picturesque in the summer, but desolate and foreboding in the winter.

Miner's Folly is a tiny, decrepit shell of what was once a growing boomtown. The two mines that once employed thousands have been depleted and are becoming increasingly automated; they remain the town's lifeblood, but the blood is thin and the heart is weak.

The town itself has changed very little since it was founded in the late 1800s. The streets are unpaved, and in the winter are full of frozen, muddy ruts. Gray, weathered boardwalks still line the main street. Most of the buildings are old and made of wooden clapboards. Those that should have been torn down and replaced years ago have simply been patched and repatched. The only new building is the Clearwater Hotel (see page 40).



The Circle

More than three centuries ago, the local Native American shamans realized the nature of the evil slumbering beneath the mountain. Joining their mystic power together, they developed a ritual that would bind the shk'ryth. Once a year the circle of medicine men met beneath the bloated winter moon to perform the ritual. The ritual limited the creature's power, trapping it in the valley, preventing it from acting or communicating beyond its mountainous boundaries. When the shk'ryth awoke and took human form, the ritual also forced it to maintain its human body, lest it fall back into unconsciousness. The circle has acted directly many times to block Delaney's political moves.

But the circle is old and tired, and Delaney is growing in power. It won a round against the circle in the 1890s when it convinced miners and other settlers to come and live in Snowflake Valley, forcing the Native Americans out of the area. Now the circle and their followers—who act as spies and messengers for the shamans—are the only Native Americans left for hundreds of miles around. While there are a disproportionate number of Native Americans living in Miner's Folly, their numbers are still very small, and there are fewer each generation. The circle is currently made up of six very old shamans, and they rightfully fear that when they die, the ritual will die with them.

The Beast

Despite the circle's efforts, Delaney is not without power beyond the valley. He is able to exert some influence over the outside world through his minions, both mortal and supernatural. One of his supernatural minions is a loup-garou, once a poor gold miner, now warped into a bestial form of evil by Delaney's foul magic.

When Miner's Folly was little more than a handful of mining shacks, a young miner named Malcolm MacGuire arrived in the valley with his wife, Clarice. Delaney (then going by the name of Jasper) recognized something primal and powerful about Malcolm and decided to take him on as a servant. When the miner refused Delaney's offer, the creature used his wealth and dark powers to seduce Clarice away from her husband. Forestalling any retaliation, he threatened to kill Clarice if MacGuire ever moved against him. MacGuire agreed to become Delaney's enforcer. Pleased with his newfound servant, Delaney transformed MacGuire into a werewolf, thus insuring the miner's immortality.

MacGuire still returns to Snowflake Valley once a year to meet with his master and bargain once more for his wife's safe return. In truth, Delaney never intended to release Clarice: He grew bored with her and killed her many years ago. Her body is slowly rotting where he left it, at the bottom of the copper mine.

MacGuire hates being a werewolf and loathes carrying out Delaney's orders, but when the shk'ryth or the full moon beckons, he cannot resist the call for blood. During this adventure, he acts as Delaney's unwilling minion, at first trying to scare the investigators away, then trying to kill them.

Investigator's Introduction

This adventure takes place when the investigators are in the Rocky Mountains during the winter, whether for business or pleasure. Perhaps they are going on a skiing trip, or are en route to a business or academic conference in another city. Maybe they have no intention of stopping at all, and the mountain pass is simply the shortest route to their actual destination. In any case, the investigators have been driving through the mountains all day. As the last rays of sun fade into darkness, the light snowfall that has been powdering the road all evening turns into a full-blown blizzard. High winds rock the investigators' vehicle and blow steep drifts of snow across the road, making it difficult to stay on the road. Visibility is reduced to the narrow tunnel of light from their vehicle's headlights. As the drifts build up, the road becomes narrower and rougher; it is soon nearly impossible to tell whether or not the vehicle is actually on the road.

The further the investigators press on into the snowy night, the more treacherous the driving becomes. The drifts grow until the vehicle is driving in narrow ruts, then is plowing its own path; a semi truck nearly collides with the investigators' vehicle; their vehicle hits a patch of ice and slides momentarily out

of control. It should become very clear that to continue on would be a slow, dangerous proposition, and that the investigators should turn off and look for shelter. The first road they turn on leads to Snowflake Valley. If the investigators insist on pressing forward, they find that the pass is completely closed and must turn back to the valley.

A couple miles down the road to Miner's Folly, the investigators can make a Spot check (DC 15) to catch sight of a dark figure scuttling out of the woods and onto the road in front of the vehicle. If the driver of the vehicle is alerted to the danger, he can make a Drive check (DC 20) to avoid the figure. If the check succeeds, the vehicle spins out on the snow-covered road, striking the figure with its rear bumper. If the check fails, or if the driver had no warning at all, the figure is spotlighted in the headlights for a split second, then struck soundly by the right front bumper. The driver must make a Drive check (DC 20) to maintain control of the vehicle. If the check fails, the vehicle slides out of control and crashes head-on into a snow-covered embankment. The accident doesn't harm the investigators, but the impact does blow out one of their tires and damage both front wheels.

The injured man is bundled in blankets and an old leather jacket, a dark scarf wrapped around his face. The scarf came loose when the man was struck, and investigators see the wizened visage of a Native American. His cheeks and chin have been scraped raw by the snow, blood is seeping through his clothing, and his left leg is twisted into an unnatural position, the foot wrenched almost backwards. His dark eyes burn with a fire that belies his age, and his scowl holds nothing but bitter contempt for the people who just ran him down. Gray hair and snow fly about his face as he raises a trembling right hand towards the investigators, fingers splayed.

"Chee ka towanay," he mutters. "Chee kanah mo ka towanay!" This is a curse in his native tongue, which roughly translates to "You are in the territory of the Beast, and you are marked."

Before the investigators can reach him, the mysterious old man pulls himself to his feet and hobbles away, disappearing beyond the light of the headlights and into the snowy darkness.

The old man is Lucas Leaping Deer, one of the six remaining members of the circle. He was on his way to the circle's annual gathering outside of Miner's Folly when the investigators ran into him. His injuries are more severe than he lets on—he is bleeding internally and dies within the hour. The curse he throws at the investigators is designed as an empty threat meant only to add atmosphere, but devious GMs may wish to turn it into something more sinister.

Attempting to track the shaman through the blizzard is probably futile, but if they manage it, the old man says nothing to them, gritting his teeth and staring at

"You know, this is my favorite part of the job."

Tony grins at Patrick, blood spattered across his face. He reaches forward, gently caresses the face of the man before him. The man strains against the plastic strips that bind his wrists behind his back, and his swollen eye twitches from the effort.

"I mean it, Pat. You do beautiful work." Patrick grunts.

"You're right. A couple more rounds should do the trick."

Tony grabs the man's shoulders and pulls him upright, holds him firmly to receive Patrick's rhythmic beating. One, two three. One, two three. The bound man's face sounds like wet oatmeal beneath his skin. Now the torso: One, two three. One, two three. A rib or two goes and the man squeaks behind his gag.

"Hold up, Pat. I think our friend here has something he'd like to share with us." Tony jabs a forefinger into the man's mouth and hooks out the blood-soaked, wadded-up pillowcase.

"Now then. What's that you're saying?"

The man opens his mouth, closes it, opens it again and coughs blood.

"Sorry, I couldn't quite catch that. Could you speak up?"

"Go…to…hell...."

"Thanks. That's what I though you said. Patrick?"

On cue, Patrick reaches down, grabs the man's wrists with one hand and the man's belt with the other. The man hangs, suspended and dripping, four feet above the plush hotel carpet. Holding the man like a human battering ram, Patrick charges at the full-size double windows. Realizing too late what's about to happen, the man opens his mouth to scream and receives a mouthful of glass.

"On second thought, this is my favorite part of the job."

them with bright, black eyes. Eventually, they'll have little choice but to let him go. Regardless, his internal injuries are fatal and he inevitably succumbs, whether alone in the snow or in the investigators' care.

Welcome to Miner's Folly

Half a mile past the spot where they ran into the old man, the investigators catch their first glimpse of Miner's Folly. A half dozen streetlights glow like ghosts in the snowy night, giving the impression that the town is hanging in space. It is nearly midnight when the investigators arrive; the store and house windows are all unlit save those of the sheriff's office and the Clearwater Hotel. Because Snowflake Valley is partially blocked from the wind, the roads here are not as bad as those farther up the pass. Between the darkness and the blowing snow, investigators have difficulty making out their surroundings, but get the sense of mountains looming over them from every direction.

Once they reach Miner's Folly, the investigators have only two clear options: visit the sheriff's office or head up to the Clearwater Hotel.

The Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Willheim won't be on duty until morning, which means that Deputy Sean Dumont is in charge of the office. He smiles broadly at the investigators and acts concerned for their safety and comfort, but seems on edge and distracted. If they relate their run-in with the Native American, he dismisses their concerns.

"You say he walked away? Well, it's not your fault now, is it? You did what you could, but if the old loon wants to go running around after dark with a broken leg...Well, that's not our problem." Anxious to avoid any paperwork, he encourages the investigators not to worry. If there's a problem, he assures them the sheriff will come talk to them.

If the investigators have not decided to do so, Dumont recommends that they stay at the Clearwater Hotel for the night, and even offers to call ahead for them. (He gets a kickback from the hotel for every guest he sends over.)

Dumont knows quite a bit about the area, and can answer many of the investigators' questions, but after 10 minutes or so, it becomes clear that Dumont is anxious for the investigators to leave, though he denies this if they should mention it. (He has a poker game planned for tonight, and was just about to call the other players when the investigators arrived.)

The Clearwater Hotel

When the American Hospitality Corporation came in with plans to build a full-service hotel in the sleepy mining town of Miner's Folly, the townspeople were dubious. What they did not realize was the large number of tourists and vacationers who would come here to spend a night or two relaxing away from the frenzy of the ski resorts. Some visitors even consider it their own "secret spot," and refuse to tell other skiers about where they go at night. After the two mines, the Clearwater is the largest employer in town.

Built in a modern pseudo art-deco style, the Clearwater Hotel radiates the charm and elegance of a hotel several times its age. The two-story building is built in two long wings overlooking a sheer mountain cliff. The north wing of the first floor houses the lobby, reception desk, and 10 guestrooms. An elegant restaurant is in the northwest corner, and the kitchen, offices, and storage are in the west wing. The second floor houses the remainder of the guestrooms, and each has a balcony with a sliding-glass door.

The main entrance to the hotel is across a large, open porch (a popular place for mingling in the summer) and through an oversized set of wooden doors. Inside is a high-ceilinged lobby, its marble floor reflecting the chandelier above. A long oak reception desk runs the length of the room, and at least one staff member is on duty at the desk at all times.

An ornate double staircase sweeps upward from the lobby behind the reception desk, leading to the second floor of hotel rooms. The first floor of rooms is accessible by a wide hallway, which opens from the lobby. On the west side of the lobby is an entrance to the Valley View, the hotel's four-star restaurant and bar. The staff members often refer to the restaurant as "the greenhouse" because of its mostly glass walls, through which its patrons have a great view of the town and lake below. Out the back windows, diners can see over the edge of a sheer cliff, into a dark abyss.

The hotel's hallways are painted an immaculate white, their floors covered with thick red carpeting. The rooms themselves range from comfortable to luxurious. The best rooms have their own fireplaces and are ensconced in velvet.

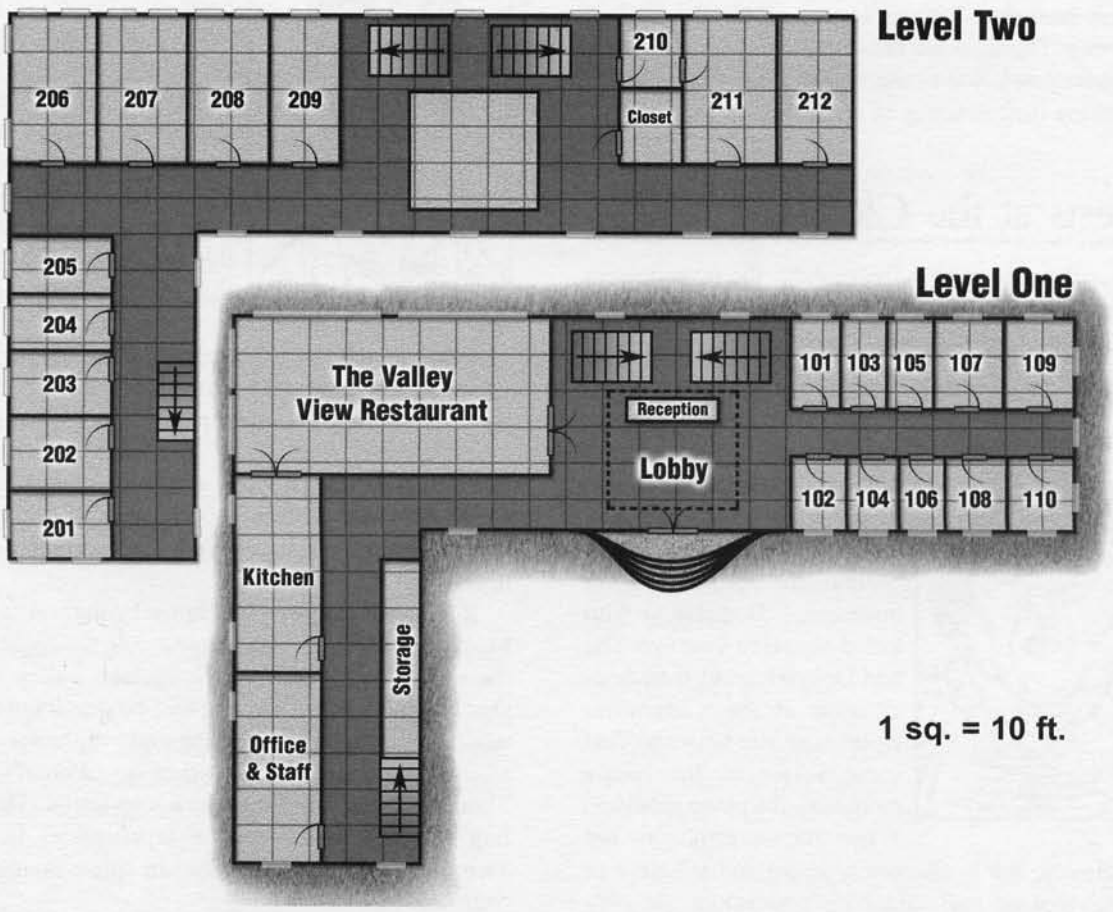
The basement is humid and poorly lit. A large laundry facility takes up most of the space beneath the lobby. What little space remains has been taken over by discarded boxes, crates, and broken furniture. Hotel management has a problem with rats in this area during the summer, but the rodents vanish with the first snowfall.

The administrative offices of the Clearwater Hotel have a tiny conference room in the southwest corner.

Checking in at the Clearwater

The Clearwater Hotel is ablaze with light, shining like an ornate beacon through the blowing snow. Inside, the skeleton overnight staff is courteous and understanding in the extreme, even going so far as to

The Clearwater Hotel



offer the investigators an "emergency weather discount" if they can't afford a room. As the investigators get settled into their rooms, they are encouraged to visit the Valley View restaurant for appetizers and drinks (the restaurant has been kept open late to accommodate stranded travelers). They also learn over the course of the evening that Miner's Folly has been completely snowed in. Phone lines are down and the pass won't be cleared for four days.

"It's the county plows," explains one of the helpful hotel staff. "We're right on the county line, and they work their way out from the middle, so the road out of here is the last to get plowed."

The investigators are assigned room 211, a double room on the second floor. If they need a second room, room 210 is also available; the two rooms are adjoining. Room 211 is a typical hotel room: two full-sized beds, a small bathroom, a writing desk, and a long dresser with a television on top of it. (There's no cable service in Snowflake Valley, and the television receives nothing but static during the storm.) Behind a heavy red velvet curtain, a large double window overlooks the chasm below.

Investigators are discouraged from leaving the hotel for the rest of the night because of the snowstorm. To make up for keeping their guests cooped up, the hotel management offers a 25% discount on all food and drinks and keeps the Valley View open all night. Because it is so late, most of the other guests have already gone to bed; the only non-staff person still around is Dr. Cynthia Carmichael (see page 44), who has set up camp at the bar and appears to have no intention of leaving any time soon.

While the investigators have the run of the place, they should be terribly bored. The staff is polite and helpful, but they have work to do and prefer not to sit around making idle chatter with the guests. Dr. Carmichael is only slightly more helpful: She is willing to chat with the investigators, but tends to dominate the conversation with her complaints about how her vacation is ruined. She is a talkative drunk, saying the first thing that pops into her head no matter how rude, embarrassing, or obnoxious. Dr. Carmichael is a mean drunk, but the GM should take care not to play her too vicious, or the investigators won't care much when she turns up dead in the morning.

The investigators may poke around the hotel if they wish but find little of interest. If they hang out in the first-floor hallway, they see two stocky men in dark blue parkas walk past them and out the side exit. A moment later they hear an engine start and a vehicle pull away. The men are two of Delaney's hired guns. They have just killed a man upstairs (see page 44) and are making their getaway in an SUV.

Guests at the Clearwater

Over the course of the adventure, the investigators have ample opportunity to mingle and chat with the other guests at the Clearwater Hotel.

Mamie Hesley



A heavy-set woman in her 40s, Mrs. Hesley has come to Miner's Folly on her 20th wedding anniversary to observe the memory of her husband, Douglas, who killed himself a year ago. She and Douglas spent their honeymoon at the Clearwater Hotel, and she hopes to find some solace in the happy memories the place provides. When the investigators see Mrs. Hesley, she is alternately jovial and talkative or sobbing, morose, and talkative. Furthermore, she only has two topics of conversation: her late husband, and their only child, Timmy. "Isn't he just darling?" she coos. "I swear, he makes my life worth living."

Timmy Hesley



An obnoxious nine-year-old boy, Timmy is predisposed to temper tantrums, practical jokes, and general rowdiness—though in front of his mother, he is nothing less than angelic. An investigator who interacts with Timmy for a period of time and makes a Psychoanalysis check (DC 10) immediately recognizes that the boy is hurting, lashing out in anger at the world that took his father away. Everyone else just sees a spoiled brat who needs a good spanking. If one of the investigators reacts particularly well to one of Timmy's practical jokes, he will take it upon himself to torment this poor soul every chance he gets.

Reginald Thompson



A tall, thin stick of a man, Thompson is a writer by trade, and prefers to keep to himself. He says little, and when he does speak, it's in a soft, bored voice. The investigators may learn that he's here to work on his next novel (a testosterone-soaked action-adventure epic). If they press him, he admits that he's also recovering from a traumatic accident but refuses to go into details. (Thompson and his wife were recently in a house fire. He made it out without her and, while she survived, her body was burned beyond repair.)

Thompson owns a small white poodle named Thor, which he carries with him wherever he goes. It is an irritating beast, forever yapping and growling at the investigators. It also seems to have a special animosity toward Ian MacGuire.

Reginald Thompson was bitten by the werewolf, Ian MacGuire, during a nighttime stroll the night before the investigators arrive in Snowflake Valley. He has shut himself in his room and told no one about the bite wound on his shoulder. On the night of the second day after the investigators arrive in Miner's Folly, Thompson will transform into a loup-garou. The fledgling werewolf confronts the investigators in Round Two, the second-to-last scene in this adventure (see page 60).

Ian MacGuire



When Ian speaks the whole room listens, and when he laughs the room shakes. MacGuire is a tall, broad-shouldered man in his early 40s, dressed in casual business attire that's always a tiny bit too small for his giant frame. A thick red beard frames his wide Scottish grin.

MacGuire is a sales representative for ConDor Mining Materials, an international industrial supply company. He visits Miner's Folly about once a year, for a week or so at a time, selling specialized equipment to both mining companies, so he's familiar with the area. If the investigators seem lost or bored, he may even volunteer to serve as a tour guide. Ian is very outgoing and radiates self-confidence. This is the same MacGuire who lost his wife to Delaney a hundred years ago (see page 54).

Reginald Thompson's head is throbbing, and the poodle's constant yapping is only making it worse.

He sits alone in his hotel room with his head in his hands, staring down at a blank journal page. The page stares back at him. You call yourself a writer, it sneers at him. So go on, write something.

Thor, the poodle, growls from the far corner of the room, then resumes yapping.

Thompson winces and grits his teeth as the pressure on his temples suddenly sends a white streak of agony across his vision. His back feels sticky. Craning his head around, he sees that the wound on his shoulder has opened up again and is oozing pus and blood.

Great, now his last clean shirt is ruined, too.

Thor stands up and continues to yap. Yap, yap, yap—

Thompson knows he needs to see a doctor. Whatever attacked him two nights ago knocked him down and tore a chunk out of him—probably could have killed him right there, if it had wanted to. But the wolf—or bear or something—turned and ran off, like it heard something that scared it.

"Shut up, Thor! I'm trying to work here."

If anything, the little white dog barks louder: Yap, yap, yap.

Another flash of pain: this time Thompson cries out. He holds his head with both hands, as if trying to keep his skull from flying apart. His shoulder is infected—that's the problem—but there's no doctor in town and no way to get out until the pass clears.

Yap, yap, yap.

If you were a real writer, you wouldn't be so easily distracted.

Glowering first at his dog and then at the journal page, Thompson picks up his pen and begins to write.

The mountain men of Binghai were known as fierce warriors, skilled with sword and bow. The greatest of these men was the one known in the valleys as...

Yap, yap, yap.

"Dammit, Thor! Shut! Up!"

Thompson turns back to the page and tries to think of a name. That's the hardest part of writing fantasy novels, he muses bitterly. Coming up with names. That wouldn't be a problem if you could write legitimate fiction. To hell with it.

...Frodo. He'll go back later and change it. Now he just has to figure out how to get this guy out of the mountains and laid twice before killing the wizard king. He'll start with a village in the valley…a village...a village...a vil—

Yap, yap, yap.

"That's it!" Thompson stands and whirls around, his eyes burning into the poodle in the corner. Thor wets himself but never stops barking.

"That is it," Thompson growls. He crosses the room in two strides and scoops the dog up in one hand. He holds it over his head, poodle urine running down his arm, and begins to squeeze. Tiny canine ribs crack, their broken ends forced through the dog's skin and curly white coat. Thor whimpers once. Thompson slams the dog's head down on the wooden hotel nightstand and the night falls silent.

The writer is panting and there is blood on his hands. He drops the dog's body on the floor. He stares at his hands, amazed that they would do such a thing. The wound on his shoulder bleeds freely now—he can feel the blood running down his back.

But his headache is gone.

Dr Cynthia Carmichael



Dr. Carmichael had never even heard of Miner's Folly until today, but now she's stuck here—and she is not happy about it. Like the investigators, she was on her way to a nearby ski resort when the blizzard forced her to stop in the mining town for the night. As she is quick to tell anyone who cares to listen, Cindy only has a week of vacation and half of it's going to be wasted here. After that, she has to head back to Mandrake University in Eastfield, Montana, where she teaches astronomy and introductory physics.

A very attractive woman with long blond hair and glasses, Cindy has kept herself in great shape for someone pushing 40 years of age. She tends to dress in loose, casual clothing in subdued shades of gray and brown.

Dr. Carmichael has decided that if she's going to waste her vacation in the middle of nowhere, she might as well do it drunk. She spends most of her time in the Valley View bar, chatting bitterly with the bartender and anyone else who makes eye contact, brushing off the passes that male guests often make at her.

Knock Knock

As the investigators return to their room that night, they hear rustling and banging sounds coming from their window. Upon investigating, however, they discover that their window is tightly latched shut. The banging becomes more rhythmic, and the investigators realize that the sound is coming from next door, in room 212. Looking out the window, the investigators see that the window next to theirs is closed, but the glass has been broken out and a dark trail of blood trickles down the wall.

The door to room 212 is unlocked and ajar, opening at the slightest touch and slowly revealing the scene within. Signs of a struggle are everywhere: a heavy desk is tipped over, a lamp is broken, a piece of "modern" artwork has been knocked off the wall. The most telling sign, of course, is the broken window. A gaping black hole framed with jagged teeth of broken glass, the window is framed by two deep red curtains flapping in the winter wind. The room is silent but for the wind's whistle and moan. A thin dusting of snow covers the scene—stained red with blood on the window sill, white everywhere else.

If the investigators search the room (and make a successful Search check, DC 10), they find two items of interest. One is a thin suitcase, packed tightly, with an airline tag identifying it as the property of Damien Carson. The other is Damien's briefcase, which is partly hidden under the bed, as if concealed there in a hurry.

Inside the suitcase, the investigators find a letter from Universal Mineral addressed to Carson, inviting him to come work for them (see the Snowflake Papers #1). The briefcase is locked shut with a combination lock. Investigators can defeat the lock mechanism with an Open Lock check (DC 25). However, doing so triggers a simple trap designed to protect the contents of the briefcase. When the lock is tampered with, thin, greasy smoke begins to seep out of the case as an acidic gas is released. If the investigator makes a successful Search check (DC 25) before beginning to work on the lock, he discovers the tiny trigger mechanism and deduces that it activates some kind of booby trap. The investigator can make a Disable Device check (DC 20) to disarm the trigger mechanism and allow the briefcase to be opened safely.

If the investigators fail to disarm the trap, the briefcase flops open, revealing a blackened, foul-smelling mess, some of which the investigators will recognize as paper. Whatever Carson had inside the briefcase, he obviously didn't want anyone else to discover it.

If the investigators do manage to bypass the trap, they discover a file folder containing a detailed analysis of DMI and a personal dossier on Maximilian Delaney. Carson's employers at Universal Mineral, of course, know nothing of the shk'ryth, and there is no indication in the file that Delaney is anything but a ruthless businessman.

Perceptive investigators notice that the bed is still made, the drawers are all neatly closed, and the briefcase was still in its half-hearted hiding place when they arrived in the room. While Carson's room is in disarray, it clearly wasn't searched.

Within a minute of the investigators' arrival, Mamie Hesley appears on the scene. If the investigators are engrossed in their work, they may not even notice her approach. She is barefoot and wandering the halls in her pajamas, suffering from a bout of insomnia. She takes in the situation, sees the blood, and lets out a terrible scream guaranteed to wake the guests and bring the hotel staff running—which it does. If the investigators haven't already called the police, one of the staff does so immediately.

Damien Carson was an industrial spy hired by Universal Minerals to break into the DMI offices and steal some essential documents. A DMI mole inside Universal caught wind of the plot and reported it to his superiors, who ordered their enforcers to neutralize Carson when he arrived in town. The two enforcers caught up with Carson in his room tonight, tied him up, and interrogated him. (They cut off one of his ears in the process, which explains why there is so much blood in the room.) Satisfied that the spy had no information

of value to impart, they beat him mercilessly and threw him through the window. The killers were less than subtle in their methods, but feel secure in the knowledge that their boss—and his regular payments to Deputy Sean Dumont—will protect them from any legal repercussions.

When Dumont and Sheriff Willheim do show up, they eject everyone from the room. Willheim has just been woken up and is in no mood to play games. He pulls the investigators aside one by one and takes their statements. Judging by his demeanor (Sense Motive check, DC 10), the sheriff seems to consider the investigators prime suspects in the case. If they try to show him any evidence gathered from Carson's briefcase or suitcase, Willheim seizes it and berates them severely for "interfering with the investigation, tampering with evidence, and contaminating a crime scene." He won't charge them with anything, yet, but he makes it clear that he'll have his eye on them.

Day One: Snow

Mauled in the Morning

Some time that night, Dr. Cynthia Carmichael is torn to pieces: her first-floor room is drenched in blood, and viscera are strewn about with almost playful abandon. Early the next morning, Julia, one of the hotel maids, stumbles onto this gruesome tableau; when she reports it, the day manager calls in the sheriff. While the hotel staff would prefer to keep the incident under wraps, the maid has been traumatized and can't stop talking about what she's seen. "Her head, her head was...and I could see her lung—I think it was a—I almost slipped in it. The carpet squelched and I almost slipped in it. Her head…staring at me with the one eye left—it was under the bed, staring at me." Word of the murder circulates quickly among the staff and guests, and should quickly bring the investigators to the scene.

The investigators can easily gain access to the grisly scene before the sheriff gets there. Julia unlocked the door to deliver some fresh towels, but didn't have the presence of mind to lock the door when she staggered into the hallway and ran away. The door is closed most of the way, but not far enough to lock.

Carmichael's Room

Room 107 is a double-size room dominated by a king-size bed in the middle of the room. Like all the rooms, it features a large window overlooking the chasm. This window has been broken in, and glass lies on the carpet and windowsill. The frame is also broken and splintered, as if something very large came in through the window.

Dr. Carmichael's remains are mostly on the floor between the window and the door and appear to have been partially eaten. Her head is missing large chunks of tissue from its left side and has rolled under the bed. The lower half of her right leg is also under the bed. The upper half of the leg is nowhere to be found. Blood is spattered across the walls and has soaked through the carpeting all the way into the floor. There's even some blood on the ceiling. Investigators who get a good look at the chilling scene lose 1d4/1d8 points of Sanity. If any of the investigators were especially close to Carmichael, they lose an additional 1d4 Sanity points if they fail the check.

Investigators making a successful Spot or Search check (DC 15) notice cuts that might be claw marks on the windowsill. Close examination reveals matching marks on Carmichael's body. If the investigators ask about the marks, the sheriff, when he arrives, admits that they might be the claw marks of a bear. "We don't often get bear attacks around these parts," he says.

Snowflake Papers #1

Dear Mr. Carson:

We have reviewed your terms and found your fees to be within acceptable budgetary guidelines. Therefore we are pleased to inform you that we accept the terms of your agreement, and will be contacting you with the details of your assignment within the next 24 hours.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that, as an independent contractor, you cannot hold Universal Mineral liable should any misfortune overtake you during your time in Miner's Folly, nor can we be held responsible for your actions. We can discuss any other contract issues upon your arrival.

Enclosed, please find one round-trip airline ticket. At the airport, a rental car will be waiting for you, as per your instructions.

If you have any questions or problems, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Raymond Gurney
Director of Resource Development



Cynthia can't remember the last time she was this drunk.

No, she isn't being responsible or sensible or anything else that she usually prides herself on being. But this is her vacation, dammit. A chance to get away from the pressure and responsibility of academia, a chance to relax, a chance to...To what? No skiing here, thank you very much. And no one worth talking to (though that one bellhop, Edward, had...potential).

A chance to drink, then.

Cynthia toasts herself in the hotel room mirror. "Let's drink, " she tells herself, "to drinking," and tosses back the last of her now-warm cocktail.

Someone is tapping at her window.

It takes several seconds for this information to seep into Cynthia's gin-soaked consciousness. Someone. Is tapping. At her window. She looks to the heavy velvet curtains that drape the window, shut tight against the howling wind.

But the tapping is irregular; there is no pattern to it. It's probably the wind or...something. There. Now it's gone. Just the wind—a loose shutter, probably.

"Or maybe...maybe it's Edward." Cynthia smiles to herself. She knows she's being silly—if the boy was interested, he would knock on her door, not her window—but she really is too drunk to care. Besides, she reasons, I'm on vacation. And he seems like such a sweet kid, and coming through the window is such a romantic gesture...

She stands a little too quickly and totters for a moment on bare feet. She giggles and takes a step toward the window to take a look. Just in case.

Tap. Tap.

Cynthia takes three steps backward, almost losing her balance. So much for the loose shutter theory, she thinks. The tapping grows louder, then changes to scratching and she can hear the defined crunch of snow just below the windows, just behind the curtain.

"Edward? Is that you?"

The light. She can't see out the window with the light on. Concentrating with the effort, Cynthia walks to the light switch. Her finger on the switch, she glances over to the hotel room door. She could leave right now. She could put a two-inch wooden door between herself and whoever is scratching at her window.

She could lock herself out of her room at four in the morning wearing nothing but an oversized T-shirt.

"Yeah. Right."

Cynthia takes a deep breath and sets her mouth in a tight line. "I'm not that drunk," she tells the mirror, then turns out the light and walks toward the window in darkness.

"I hope you're ready for me, Edward. Because I'm ready for you."

And then the window breaks and the curtains explode inward, driven by the wind and snow and something that isn't Edward, isn't even human—something with hot breath that smells of fresh blood against her skin. It's something heavy and furry and sharp and Cynthia know that it will kill her.

"Edward," she whispers. "Is that you?"

"But it's been a tough winter, and when they get hungry, there's no telling what they'll do."

If the investigators take the time to do a thorough examination of the scene, they are still there when the sheriff arrives. He is not pleased to see them and tells them so on no uncertain terms.

As the first victim of the werewolf, Dr. Carmichael is also a victim of fate. Her death was a random act of violence. Forced by his bloodthirsty, moon-fevered nature, the werewolf arbitrarily chose a victim on the first floor.

The attack took place in the small hours of the morning while the investigators were asleep or otherwise nowhere near room 107. In the unlikely event that the investigators camped outside Carmichael's door or otherwise maintained a presence near her throughout the night, they undoubtedly came into contact with the werewolf. If this is the case, there is a good chance that Julia found two or more bodies in room 107 this morning. For complete game statistics for the loup-garou, see page 54.

Taking the Heat

Even if the investigators are nowhere near the macabre scene in room 107, Sheriff Willheim makes a point of tracking them down. Together with his deputy, Sean Dumont, he insists that the characters meet with him in an empty hotel conference room to discuss their activities of the last two days.

"You been here, what, a day? And we got, what, two deaths? In your hotel? It might be a coincidence...but I really doubt it."

Sheriff Willheim interrogates the investigators aggressively and at great length but in the end has to let them go. If any of them refuse to cooperate, or—worse—tries to give the sheriff any lip, the perpetrator is threatened with arrest. Further antagonism results in the investigator being arrested and spending the night in jail.

There should be no doubt that the investigators are Sheriff Willheim's prime suspects. Nevertheless, he doesn't have enough evidence to book them, so instead he snarls a warning. "Stick around until we get this sorted out. You take off, I'll assume you're guilty and making a break for it. I'll have every law enforcement agent in the state hounding you—and they'll know what you did here. They catch you, they might not be so forgiving as me."

Word of the sheriff's suspicions drifts out to the population at large, and the investigators soon find the townspeople looking at them strangely and hurrying out of their path. This is even true of the hotel staff, and though they maintain their professional demeanor, their smiles are plastic and forced. The only folks who don't seem to mind the investigators' sudden notoriety are the other hotel guests.

Investigation

The investigators have the rest of the day free to do whatever snooping around they see fit. By late morning, the wind and snow have died down, leaving four- to seven-foot drifts across the landscape. The streets are passable—just barely—by afternoon, mostly due to the efforts of a few locals with plows on their pickup trucks. Because they are used to blizzards and snow, most stores and government offices in town are still open. Below are descriptions of several locations and people the investigators might visit.

Delaney Mining, Incorporated

Easily the largest building in town, the offices of DMI take up a full city block on the east end of Miner's Folly. The squat two-story brick building may have once filled its owners with pride, but it is now mostly unused. As the company's profits began to shrink, the resulting layoffs gradually whittled away at the office personnel until only a skeleton crew remains. The entire second floor has been sealed off in an effort to make the place more energy-efficient. Delaney Mining, Inc. operates the copper mine just northeast of town. Maximilian Delaney owns the company and virtually runs the town of Miner's Folly.

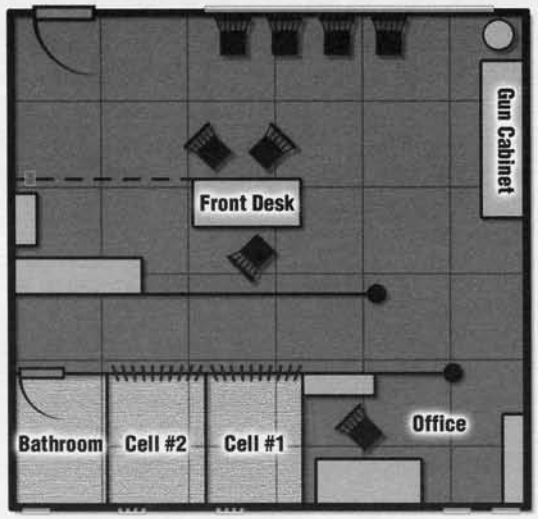
A flattering photograph of Maximilian Delaney hangs in a gilded frame in the DMI lobby. Perceptive investigators who have seen both portraits and make a Spot check (DC 20) realize the picture is virtually identical to the portrait of Jasper Delaney in the town hall (see page 49).

Universal Mineral

Universal Mineral rents its office space in the second floor of the only office complex in Miner's Folly. Founded only 20 years ago, Universal Mineral hasn't been around as long as DMI, but has a leaner, more efficient business approach that has allowed it to chip away at the older company's copper-mining monopoly. Universal Mineral has its own copper mine half an hour south of Miner's Folly. The mine is highly automated and needs only a minimal number of workers to keep it going day and night, seven days a week. When the night air is especially cold and still, investigators can hear the hum and rattle of the mine from outside the hotel.

It is no secret in town that the two mining companies are bitter rivals. Rumors are constantly circulating about how Universal is tunneling into Delaney Mining's copper lode, or how DMI is hiring professionals to sabotage its competitor's equipment. While most of the rumors are untrue, there is an unusual level of professional animosity in the local mining market. People have disappeared on both sides and, while the

The Sheriff's Office



authorities have never been able to prove it, foul play is strongly suspected.

Markham's General Store

The largest retail outlet in town, Markham's has been a fixture in Miner's Folly for more than 80 years. It started out selling provisions and mining supplies to prospectors; today, its main products are gasoline (it has the only pump in town) and alcohol. The business also carries a large assortment of household goods, camping supplies, automotive products, and various other odds and ends. Unfortunately for investigators trying to find a much-needed item, there is no order to the shelves and displays in Markham's. A person who doesn't know where an item is will be a long time searching without help from its owner and manager, Winona Markham. Investigators hoping to pick up a firearm and some ammunition will be disappointed: Markham's doesn't carry any. "It's a family tradition," Winona snaps, and refuses to explain further.

Winona Markham is the only child of Jim Markham, whose father founded the store. She is tall, broad-shouldered, and thin-lipped. An angry, bitter woman of 40, Winona has never married, never lived outside of Miner's Folly, and never done anything but work in the store since she was 16. When Jim Markham died nine years ago, the rest of the townspeople assumed Winona would shut down the old place and leave town, and for a while, it looked like she would. But literally overnight, Winona changed her mind and has been minding the family store ever since.

The investigators should be able to find a replacement tire at Markham's, if they need one. There's even a small salvage yard out back where the investigators can find replacement wheels in servicable condition if their vehicle was damaged on the road to Miner's Folly.

The Sheriff's Office

Remodeled in 1968, the sheriff's office is still laid out much the same as it was a hundred years ago. The front door opens into a reception area. There is a short hallway leading to the sheriff's office and a lavatory. In the back of the building is a classic jail set-up: two cells, concrete walls on three sides, steel bars forming the fourth, a door in the bars that locks on the outside. Keys to the cells hang on the wall.

The Sheriff



Marcus Willheim is one tough customer. The 50-year-old sheriff of Miner's Folly has been in law enforcement since he was 18 and has seen everything the frontier has to throw at a man. Due to long years on the force, he has a cynical streak a mile wide and refuses to take "lip" from anyone. He is a bald, lanky African American with a perpetual scowl carved into his weathered brow.

Sheriff Marcus Willheim: Male 4th level; HD 4d6+8; hp 24; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, nightstick) or +3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Drive +4, Gather Information +6, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (law) +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Search +6, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Sharp-Eyed.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1877 revolver, bullet-resistant vest. Willheim never wears the vest unless he's expecting trouble. Its +4 armor bonus and –1 armor check penalty are not included in the sheriff's statistics.

The Deputy



If Sean Dumont ever had an ounce of integrity in him, he lost it years back in one of his late-night poker games down at the sheriff's office. Most everyone in Miner's Folly knows that Sean is a liar and a weasel, always looking to pull a fast one over on some sucker in order

to make a buck or get out of doing some work. He knows more than he lets on about the covert war between Delaney and Universal Mineral, but as long as the checks keep coming, he'll keep pretending not to notice.

Dumont is in his mid-30s but tries to look and act 10 years younger, cutting his hair in the popular style and dropping the names of popular musical acts. He smiles too much and smokes whenever he's outdoors.

Deputy Sean Dumont: Male 2nd level; HD 2d6+2; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d4, nightstick) or +2 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will –1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +6, Drive +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (law) +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Search +3, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3.

Feats: Persuasive, Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1877 revolver, bullet-resistant vest. Dumont never wears the vest unless he's expecting trouble. Its +4 armor bonus and –1 armor check penalty are not included in the deputy's statistics.

Town Hall

Miner's Folly's town hall looks like a converted schoolhouse, which is what it is. It contains the mayor's office, city and county records (including mine claims), the courtroom, and the town council chamber. The insides are decorated with garish murals depicting sweating men ripping chunks of unrecognizable minerals out of the ground and loading them onto trains.

Just inside the door is an enormous portait of a dour-looking middle-aged man in a suit. A plate at the bottom of the frame reads, "Jasper Delaney, Founder of Delaney Mining and Patriarch of our Glorious City." The painting is dated 1908 and bears a striking resemblance to the portrait of Maximilian hanging in the DMI office (see page 47).

The Valley Voice Newspaper

The Valley Voice is published once every two weeks and is distributed for free throughout Miner's Folly and all the other nearby towns. It's mostly a tourist newspaper, full of skiing reports and coupons for free beer at local taverns, but also has the current gossip pages.

There are two sections to the building. The front is the newsroom, with a front desk, several smaller desks, and a paste-up board. The back is the printing facility, where they also print graduation announcements and wedding invitations to make ends meet. In the basement are the old newspaper archives.

Justin Miller, the editor of the paper, is young and idealistic. He sees this position as the first step to something greater. Those working at the paper for the last 20 years know the truth, but they aren't going to burst his bubble. He actually left town for a few years, got a degree, and came back to run the paper. He's looking for something to boost his reputation, something to which he'll be proud to put his byline. He may be an asset to the investigators during their stay in Miner's Folly.

A few hours digging through the newspaper archives may reveal much to investigators who make Research checks. Of particular interest is an article from 1923 (Research check, DC 15) describing how a group of Native Americans tried to break into Matthew Delaney's mansion (see the Snowflake Papers #2).

Snowflake Papers #2

Valley Voice, July 17, 1923

Indians Raid Magnate's Mansion

Matthew Delaney, son of Jasper Delaney and heir to the Delaney copper mine fortune, arrived home from a business trip yesterday to find his home in shambles and his servant nearly dead.

In the middle of the night, a group of Indians broke into Delaney's mansion and proceeded to destroy or steal hundreds of dollars' worth of furniture and ornaments, then paint primitive pictures all over the walls. Thaddeus Moore, Delaney's servant who was alone in the house, attempted to stop the Indians, but was savagely attacked and almost died from his numerous cuts and stab wounds.

"I just don't understand it," said Delaney. "What do these savages want with me? They hit every room in my house. There's no telling how much damage they have caused, or how much they have stolen."

According to Sheriff Parker, the Indians were searching the mansion for something, though neither he nor Delaney has any idea what they would be looking for. Asked about the pictures and symbols painted on virtually every wall in the house, Parker could only say, "Those Indians are a queer bunch. Who's to say what they're up to?"

While Parker plans to search the area for the Indians, he admits that he is not very optimistic about finding them.

Snowflake Papers #3

Valley Voice, February 21, 1934

Miner Found Dead

Sherman Costello, 34, was found dead in a field three miles outside of town yesterday evening. Costello disappeared two days ago on his way home from the Delaney Copper Mine, where he worked as a shift foreman. Since then, his family and Sheriff Parker have been searching the area. Parker found the body two miles from the road, an apparent victim of an animal attack.

Costello's son Jesse, 19, doesn't believe that an animal is responsible for his father's death. "He's all chewed up sure enough, and they say it was a bear, but those weren't no bear tracks. And what bear is out hunting in the middle of winter? It doesn't make sense."

Sheriff Parker has also suggested that Costello could have been attacked by a wolf or a cougar. He doubts that foul play was involved, pointing out that Costello was a popular man, well liked and respected by all who knew him. Jesse Costello has his own theory: "It was Indians. I'm sure of it."

A funeral service will be held this Saturday at 10:00 am in the Costello home.

Another successful Research check (DC 12) reveals an article from 1934 telling of a miner's gruesome death—maybe murder, maybe an animal attack not unlike the death of Cynthia Carmichael (see Snowflake Papers #3). Finally, an investigator making a Research check (DC 25) discovers that there have been similar deaths every 10 years or so since the paper began in 1905 and that they are happening more often in recent years than ever before.

John Stonehill



Investigators catch glimpses of this mysterious Native American watching them from a distance. He comes and goes without a sound and seems to vanish when they take their eyes off him. He is, in fact, the leader of the shamans who keep the Shk'ryth in the heart of the mountain at bay. Because the investigators killed one of his circle, he is watching them to see if they can be trusted to atone for their crime.

Stonehill's face is pitted, cracked, and leathery, and his hair is long and white. He appears to be at least 80 years old, though he is in fact much older. He is stronger and faster than his age would suggest and retains a bright spark of intelligence and wit.

John Stonehill: Male 6th level; HD 6d6+12; hp 34; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +6 melee (1d4+1, hunting knife); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 17, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +8, Cthulhu Mythos +2, Diplomacy +5, Hide +8, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (occult) +6, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +6, Spot +12, Wilderness Lore +10.

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Second Sight, Sensitive.

Possessions: Hunting knife.

The Miners

The typical miner is a 25- to 50-year-old man, quiet and suspicious of outsiders. He is intimately familiar with the mine's daily operations, knows a little about its business operations, and next to nothing about its long-term goals. He knows that DMI and Universal Mineral are bitter rivals and believes his company is better. While he doesn't necessarily trust miners from the competition, he won't go out of his way to start any trouble with them.

The Native Americans

The locals find it strange (and so will the investigators, if they find out) that a disproportionate number of the miners are Native American, while the nearest reservation is hundreds of miles away. The Native American miners aren't liked by the townspeople, who suspect them of everything from auto theft to sabotaging the mine. The other miners are more tolerant (they have to be, as their lives sometimes depend on trusting each other), but rarely defend their Native American coworkers.

The Native Americans are in Snowflake Valley to help their shamans keep an eye on Delaney. Working in the mines puts them in close proximity to the shk'ryth at the true heart of the mountain. Some of them are sensitive to the ebb and flow of the heart's malignant energy and report their findings back to Stonehill and the rest of the circle. They know the investigators are responsible for the death of one of their number, and unless the investigators have spoken with Stonehill, the rest of them are sullen and aloof.

DMI Enforcers

Maximilian Delaney has enlisted the aid of five "independent consultants" in his cold war against Universal Mineral. Though the details change, they are generally tall, beefy men with short-cropped hair. They wear dark suits with suspicious bulges in their jackets and say very little. The enforcers get around in two late-model SUVs with tinted windows.

Enforcers: Male 3rd level; HD 3d6+6; hp 16; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, combat knife) or +4 ranged (1d10, Glock Model 17); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +4, Demolitions +2, Drive +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Intimidate +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +4, Spot +3, Swim +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Combat knife, Glock Model 17.

Contact

That evening, if the investigators eat supper in the Valley View restaurant, one of them (the GM can choose or pick one randomly) happens to make eye contact with Maximilian Delaney, who is dining alone a few tables away and staring at them intently. Delaney appears to be about 70 years old, mostly bald, and dressed in a dark gray business suit. He is tall and lanky, with piercing blue eyes—which lock onto the investigator who sees him.



The room falls suddenly silent as Delaney and the investigator lock gazes. A moment later, the investigator realizes that time has stopped around him: The other investigators and guests are frozen mid-bite, their food and utensils suspended in front of their faces. Only Delaney and the investigator are moving. Delaney breaks off eye contact, then ignores the investigator as he sips his soup. His voice, however, echoes inside the investigator's head.

"You did well to come here," the voice says calmly. "You have done all that I have commanded, and I am well pleased. But now you must leave. You cannot begin to fathom the secrets of this valley, and nothing good can come from your interference."

Julia's skin is slick with terror as she wakes, her mouth open in a soundless scream.

"Julia! Julia, it's okay, it's just a nightmare."

She catches her breath on the third try and begins to sob. "Of course it's a nightmare—it's all a nightmare! I wish I'd never taken this stupid job!" Julia pounds her fist on the bed for emphasis.

"It's okay, there's no way that…"

"It's not okay, Eddie, can't you see that? Every time I close my eyes I see her lying on the floor with no skin—no skin, Eddie—and blood…everywhere. I think I'm going crazy."

She breaks down again and the bellhop moves to comfort her. He sits in a hotel chair next to the bed and holds the sobbing maid until the trembling stops. Eddie has been a big help since...since the guest in room 107 was killed. He even pulled some strings with management to get Julia set up in one of the empty rooms—only until the pass was cleared, of course. "We grunts in the hospitality industry have to stick together," he had said, and smiled.

Julia feels safe in the bellhop's arms. She's done crying now and feels almost embarrassed about it, but doesn't want to let go. Eddie doesn't seem to mind. He rocks her gently and kisses the top of her head.

"You have to let it go, Julia. There's nothing you could have done—it's a bad moon, that's all.

"Bad moon?" Julia is too exhausted to think.

"Yup, a bad moon shining evil on the Valley. The Darkness grows and blood runs like snow melting into rivers in the spring."

"What are you talking about?" Julia pulls away from Eddie and he lets her go. He smiles affectionately down at her.

"He's right," says a female voice beside her. "There's nothing you could have done."

Julia turns to see Cynthia Carmichael, the guest from room 107, lying in bed next to her, staining the sheets red and drooling blood from the remaining half of her face. She smiles.

"You have to let it go."

Snowflake Papers #4

June 14, 1892
My Dearest Clarice,

It's been three months now and still no gold. I have been panning and digging, chipping away at the most promising rock, but day after day I come up with nothing. Each morning I wake with the hope that this will be the day I find gold, that I may stake my claim and come deliver you from that horrible valley. But each night I realize this is not to be.

Even in sleep, there is no rest for my weary body. I have terrible, troubling dreams, and my heart grows anxious for your welfare. I know that there is a darkness that fills that valley, threatening to swallow you up. The people there are queer and ungodly; trust none of them, for their ways are not our ways. I am so sorry to have left you alone with them for so long.

If another month goes by and still I find no gold, I shall give up the search and return home. One way or another, once we are together, we will leave this cursed land and seek our fortune elsewhere.

Love,

Malcolm

July 2, 1892
Dear Malcolm,

You silly man, oh, how you worry needlessly so. I miss you horribly, too, but please don't fear for me, for I am quite safe here in the valley. The neighbors are friendly, peaceful folks, and were most helpful when I needed supplies from out of town.

The town is still boisterous and growing, though it seems to have quieted down since you were here. The new sheriff has run off all the real troublemakers and keeps a watchful eye on everyone else. The mines, which had been feuding something fierce, are being bought by a single owner. His name is Delaney, and he is quite charming. I think he's from California. At dinner last night, he explained that he wishes to bring stability to the area. Of course, he plans to become rich in the process.

But we can discuss these things when you return. It makes me glad to hear you say that you'll be back in a month. And while I don't mind the valley or its people, I will eagerly move away, if it means being with you again.

Love,

Clarice

Before the investigator can act, the scene returns to normal and time flows as usual once more. The table where Delaney was sitting is now empty, though his soup bowl and wine glass are still there.

From his mortal connections and supernatural attunement to the valley, Delaney has learned that the investigators have been snooping around. He also knows that they hit the shaman on their way in to town; it is only out of a twisted sense of gratitude that he bothers to give them this warning before having them killed outright. This is Delaney's first and only attempt at scaring the investigators away.

As none of them have met him yet, the investigators probably won't recognize Delaney for who he is, but if they describe the man they saw, any local is able to identify him. The investigators also recognize Delaney if they have seen his portrait at the DMI office (see page 47).

A Rude Awakening

The investigators are awakened that night by the sound of banging and scratching outside their hotel room window. They might be able to dismiss this as the wind rattling the windows, but when they hear the crunch of snow and a solid thump against the wall, it's impossible to deny that something is out there.

If the investigators are brave enough to open the drapes and look down to the ground below, they see a hunched, humanoid shape lurking in the shadow of the hotel, shuffling along the thin ledge between the Clearwater and the chasm. It crouches back into a leaping stance, raising its head toward the investigators' window. Seeing the investigators there, the creature suddenly turns and shambles off, out of sight of the window. Its tracks, however, show up plainly in the



snow, highlighted by the bright moonlight.

Delaney has commanded the werewolf to kill the investigators. The beast attempts to recreate the success of its attack on Cynthia Carmichael by crashing in through the investigators' window in the middle of the night. Fortunately for the investigators, their second-story room is too high for the werewolf to reach. It was the creature's failed attempt to leap up and through the window that woke them.

Once MacGuire realizes he has been spotted, he decides to forego the attack for now. He figures it is better to wait and strike when he once again has the element of surprise. He retreats back up into the mountains, to the remains of the cabin where he and his wife lived in the late 1800s.

If the investigators don't recognize the creature as a threat or feel that they have frightened it off, they may decide to follow it (see below). If not, they have seen the last of the werewolf for the night.

Wolf Tracks

Tracking the creature is not difficult. The night is clear and crisp; the moon and stars shine brightly enough that the investigators can make their way up the snow-covered mountainside without flashlights or other light sources. The tracks are easy to spot: They are roughly 18 inches long and six inches wide—enormous human tracks, by the looks of them. Even investigators without the Track feat or Wilderness Lore skill can follow the tracks. An investigator with the Track feat who makes a Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) notices that the toes have claws—this is difficult because the snow doesn't take prints well enough to reveal a lot of detail.

The tracks lead the investigators northeast along the edge of the chasm, away from town and up into the mountains. After 10 minutes, they lose sight of the hotel. The trail heads into a wooded area dotted with pine trees. It becomes increasingly difficult to make out as the woods grow denser and the trees closer together, blotting out the moonlight. Just as the woods become so dense that the investigators can't see anything, the trees end abruptly and the investigators emerge into a snow-covered clearing.

Lit by the twilight of the full moon, the clearing lies still and gray, its blanket of snow broken only by the humanoid tracks—and a black structure jutting up near the center of the clearing. The tracks lead toward the structure, mill around the area, then wander off toward the far side of the clearing, where they disappear over the edge of a hill.

As the investigators draw closer, they realize that the black shape is the collapsed remnants of a small

building, long abandoned and half-covered by snow. When they are actually at the building, they can determine that it was once a wooden cabin with a stone fireplace and chimney. The wood is rotten: most of two walls have already crumbled to dirt, and a third of the roof collapsed into the cabin long ago. Weighed down by snow, the other two thirds have collapsed this winter, though one edge got caught on the ruined chimney, forming a tiny snowless area of shelter.

There is little of note inside the cabin, and what there is dilapidated and covered with snow. Investigators who make appropriate Craft (carpentry), Knowledge (architecture), or Knowledge (history) checks (DC 10) realize that the cabin and its contents are about 150 years old. The remnants of a broken rocking chair rot in one corner, along with bits of broken glass that may have been an oil lamp. A mass of twigs and dried grass in another corner suggests that there might be an animal nest. Investigators making a successful Search check (DC 20) discover that as the last of the roof gave way, it knocked loose some stones in the chimney, revealing a hollow space.

Inside this hidden area is a tin container, about the size and shape of a cigar box. The box is secured with an old-fashioned lock set into the front of the lid and is covered with rust. Investigators can easily force the box open or pick the lock with a successful Open Lock check (DC 10).

Inside the box are two pieces of thick, old-fashioned paper, both yellowed and tattered with age: a letter from Malcolm MacGuire to his wife, Clarice, and a letter from Clarice to her husband. Her letter, it appears, was never sent. They are both dated 1892.

While the investigators are busy in the ruins of the cabin, those who make a successful Listen check (DC 10) hear a low growl. Looking up, the investigators see a man-wolf crouched atop the ruined chimney above the group, silhouetted against the full moon. Any investigator who witnesses this sight loses 1/1d3 points of Sanity. With a snarl, the creature leaps down and attacks the investigators.

The beast attacks wildly, tearing at the investigators with its claws and fangs. Though they may not notice it immediately, it is trying to drive them away from the cabin. If one of the investigators is still holding the box, or any of the items from inside the box, the creature singles this one out and won't stop attacking until it wounds him or her. If no one is holding the box, the creature will attack the investigator with the highest Charisma score. Once the investigators have left the cabin and the beast has at least wounded one of them, the creature disappears back into the woods.

Up until now, MacGuire has been simply following orders when he attacked the investigators. But now they are violating the one place he truly feels at home, the only place he has ever been truly happy. They are disturbing his precious memories, dragging them out of the past and into his loathsome present. MacGuire is angry, but is more concerned with driving the investigators away than actually killing them.

Unlike traditional loup-garou, the werewolf's bite does not infect a victim with lycanthropy unless Delaney wills it so—but the investigators need not know this. The GM should feel free to torment the players whose investigators are wounded: ask for a Fort save when an investigator is bitten and Will saves when the character is under stress or a full moon hangs in the night sky. If the action slows down, afflict them with psychosomatic symptoms like itching and sweating.

Ian MacGuire: Male 4th-level Shapechanger; HD 4d8+8 or 4d8+24 in wolf or hybrid form; hp 26 or 42 in wolf or hybrid form; Init +1 (Dex) or +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative) in wolf or hybrid form; Spd 30 ft. or 45 ft. in hybrid form or 60 ft. in wolf form; AC 11 (+1 Dex) or 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural) in wolf or hybrid form; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, punch) in human form or +8 melee (1d8+5, bite) in wolf or hybrid form; SA Lycanthropy, trip; SQ Damage reduction 15/silver, darkvision 60 ft., Scent, wolf empathy; SV Fort +6 (+13), Ref +5 (+7), Will +4 (+6); Str 13 (21), Dex 12 (16), Con 15 (23), Int 11 (7), Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +7 (+11), Demolitions +2 (+0), Disable Device +2 (+0), Drive +2 (+4), Escape Artist +2 (+4), Hide +9 (+11), Jump +5 (+9), Listen +8 (+12), Move Silently +13 (+19), Repair +2 (+0), Search +8 (+6), Spot +8 (+12), Swim +5 (+9), Wilderness Lore +8 (+12).

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Stealthy. MacGuire gains the Blind-Fight and Improved Initiative feats when in wolf or hybrid form.

Bringing in the Law

Once they are out of immediate danger, it is very likely that the investigators will pay a visit to the sheriff's office, either to report their run-in with the beast or in an attempt to obtain weapons for defense against the creature. If they simply go back to the hotel, or choose some other course of action, see below for what goes on at the sheriff's office in their absence.

How Sheriff Willheim and Deputy Dumont react to the investigators depends largely on what they tell them. If the investigators give some sort of rational explanation ("it was a bear, probably rabid—maybe a mother looking for her cubs"), the two lawmen are skeptical but grudgingly agree to look into the matter. Remember, however unjustly, the investigators are prime suspects in a gruesome murder investigation, and their word isn't to be taken at face value.

On the other hand, if the investigators tell the truth, Deputy Dumont laughs in their faces. Sheriff Willheim is not so amused. His face contorts, his knuckles

whiten, and his eyes narrow as he stands to his feet and bellows at the group about wasting his time and how he should arrest them all on principle.

If the sheriff sees the investigators' werewolf-inflicted wounds, however, he calms down a bit. In any case, once it becomes evident that the investigators need medical attention, Sheriff Willheim sends the deputy to get the first aid kit from the trunk of his squad car. Deputy Dumont opens the door and steps out into the night. The door hangs open for a moment and an icy breeze blows into the office.

A moment later, Dumont's bloody, lifeless body flies back in through the front window.

Deputy Sean Dumont has been torn open from throat to abdomen, and broken ribs jut from his shattered chest like bleached fingers. All those in the room have one round in which to react. Sheriff Willheim spends this time staggering to his feet and gaping at his deputy's body. On the following round, the werewolf—in its hybrid form—crashes through the office's front window and latches its jaws onto the sheriff, who dies with a gurgle. Once it is done with Willheim, the werewolf turns its attention to the investigators.

Trapped in the small office, the investigators are in a tight spot. Some of them might escape past the werewolf out the front if the others distract it, but there are no other routes out of the office. They can try to get their hands on some firearms: both the sheriff and the deputy are armed with loaded revolvers, and a cabinet on the east wall contains three shotguns. (They are unloaded, but two boxes of shells are also inside the cabinet.) Of course, the werewolf is mostly immune to gunfire, and these weapons are unlikely to even slow it down.

Since escape is risky, and fighting is less than effective, the investigators' best bet for survival is to lock themselves into one or more of the jail cells. While the bars are far enough apart that the werewolf can reach a clawed hand inside, they are strong enough to keep the creature out, and the cells are deep enough that investigators can avoid the monster's reach. Once the werewolf realizes that it cannot reach them, it howls in frustration and leaves.

Concerned by how much attention the two murder cases are receiving from Willheim, Delaney has ordered the loup-garou to dispose of the sheriff and his deputy. While he would normally avoid such drastic and obvious tactics, Delaney is growing in power and confidence. With the circle short one member, Delaney knows that they will be unable to contain him much longer and he will soon be free to roam the Earth. At this point, he is willing to burn a few bridges to get what he wants.

Going It Alone

The werewolf attacks the sheriff's office that night whether the investigators are there or not. If they choose not to report their run-in with the beast to the lawmen, they hear reports the next day that the office was broken into and both Sheriff Willheim and Deputy Dumont were brutally slain.

Day Two: Stone

The Dark Truth

The next day dawns bright and cloudless, with temperatures never rising above –30° F. Snow still covers the town, blindingly white in the brilliant winter sun. Word of the massacre at the sheriff's office flashes through town; frightened townsfolk raid the office for any remaining firearms and some lock themselves in their homes. The staff at the Clearwater Hotel tries to maintain operations as usual, but tensions are running high. Mamie Hesley is jumping at shadows and refuses to be alone. Julia, the hotel maid who discovered the second body, is having a nervous breakdown. Even the ever-polite staff, exhausted and frazzled from too many sleepless nights, are snapping and growling at guests. Everyone in town, even the other guests, whisper and point at the investigators and refuse to look them in the eye.

Sometime during the morning, the investigators are approached by John Stonehill, the mysterious Native American who has been following them around since they arrived in Miner's Folly. The old man's face betrays a nervous desperation that he somehow keeps out of his voice.

"I must speak with you," he says softly. "For the Beast has marked you, and the Darkness grows stronger every night."

The old man's paranoia is at once unnerving and contagious: He refuses to explain himself further until the investigators take him to some place private. He is constantly looking over his shoulder and narrows his eyes suspiciously at anyone who comes near the investigators. "Hurry," he insists. "There isn't much time, and his eyes are everywhere."

Once he is convinced that no one can overhear their conversation (the investigators' hotel room will suffice), Stonehill continues.

"This," he says, gesturing toward the snow and the sky, "this is the time of the Beast. When the snow is deep and the moon is full, the Beast returns to this valley to quench its thirst for blood. But the Beast...the Beast is not the problem."

Stonehill goes on to explain about the Darkness in

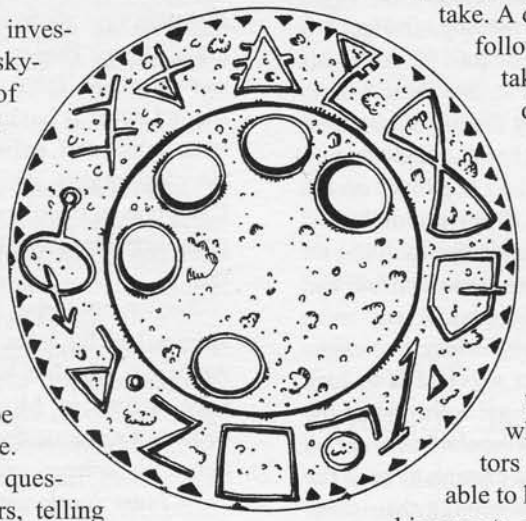
the valley, and tells the investigators that his people have warred against it for many generations. But now the Darkness is growing stronger with each day.

Soon, his people's medicine will not be enough to keep it at bay. Furthermore, he says, the werewolf is only a servant of the Darkness. It is an ill omen that the Beast grows bolder, but it means that the Darkness is also growing stronger.

Before the werewolf first arrived more than a hundred years ago, Stonehill says, the Native Americans prayed and were granted by the Sky Father a circle of metal that weakened the Darkness. Later, their warriors used the disc in battle and badly wounded the werewolf, but it ran away before they could kill it. The next night, they sent their best warrior to find and kill the beast. He never returned, and the disc was lost with him.

"Through our medicine, we have found where the sky-metal lies. But we are old now, too weak to carry spears, too weak to war against the Beast. We are old, and now one of our number is dead—run down in the road like a dog." Stonehill gives the investigators a sharp, meaningful look.

He goes on to say that it is the investigators' duty to retrieve the sky-metal disc from the bottom of Delaney's copper mine where it has waited all these years. They have one day to complete this task. Any longer than that and the shk'ryth will be too powerful for the circle's ritual. One way or another, the circle is performing the ritual tomorrow, though without the sky-metal to protect them, he fears they will be killed before the ritual is complete.



Stonehill answers whatever questions he can for the investigators, telling them all he knows of the Darkness, the valley, and the Beast.

Of the shk'ryth, he knows only that it was in the mountain long before his people settled the valley many centuries ago. The shk'ryth is a malignant force without shape but restricted to one location. It is currently trapped in the valley by the circle's magic but will soon be able to overpower them. He acknowledges that Delaney is the physical manifestation of the Darkness: "This is its form, yes, for we have trapped it in human flesh with our medicine."

If the investigators ask Stonehill about the Beast itself, he tells them that spears and guns seem to have little effect against it, that only the disc seemed to truly cause it pain and injury. Furthermore, it is difficult to hunt the Beast because it "wears the skin of man by day, but kills in fur and fang by night. It can change and attack at any time, but it is strongest beneath a full moon."

As for sneaking into Delaney's mine, Stonehill informs the investigators that there is a secret entrance into the heart of the Darkness. The original mine used by Jasper Delaney a hundred years ago still exists. If the investigators are willing to brave the dangers inherent in an abandoned mine, they can find the entrance between two large boulders half a mile east of the mining complex itself. Stonehill warns them that no one has explored this mineshaft in 50 years. On the other hand, it probably is not being guarded. (See The Abandoned Mine, page 57).

When the investigators are through asking questions, Stonehill turns to leave. "I will be back tomorrow," he says, "and will contact you before we begin the ritual. You will have the disc by then, yes? You better."

Visiting DMI

The investigators are now faced with the task of gaining access to the Delaney mine. There are several ways of going about this; what happens next depends largely upon the approach the investigators take. A description of the mining complex follows. If the investigators decide to take their chances with the abandoned mine, see below.

The mine is located two miles northeast of town, built on a plateau of sorts three miles wide. Getting to the mine is no problem, as the company has its own snowplow and keeps the access road clear. Any local can point the investigators toward the mine and tell them which road to take. If the investigators don't have a vehicle, they may be able to hitchhike with one of the locals on his way to work or bribe a local into taking them.

On the surface, the mine isn't much to look at. A brick-shaped two-story steel building stands alone on the snowy plain, creaking and moaning in the mountain wind, surrounded by parked cars and pickups. The outside of the building is well lit by high-powered security lights that illuminate both the building and its parking lot at night. Note that there is little difference between visiting the mine by day or by night, as it is operational around the clock.

Getting into the mine building is relatively easy. There are entry doors on each side, two full-size garage doors on the south wall, and a huge overhead door on the east side of the building that allows enormous dump trucks inside. The trucks stand 40 feet tall at their highest point and are loaded with copper ore before they pull out. An empty truck sits on the northeast cor-

ner of the parking lot, covered in snow.

Inside, the building is dark, noisy, and filthy. Men covered in dirt and grease yell at each other over the roar of enormous machines, the purpose of which is lost on most investigators. The place is a maze of catwalks, stairways, and dead-ends.

The investigators must make their way to the main elevator shaft in the center of the building without alerting anyone to their mission. One way of doing this is to obtain hard hats and coveralls like the miners wear—in these outfits, everyone looks the same and no one gives the investigators a second glance. A dozen such coveralls are hanging on hooks in the locker room on the second floor and some off-duty miners leave their hard hats in their lockers. Investigators can "borrow" whatever they need—though they run the risk of a miner realizing that his work clothes are missing.

Another, more direct method is to approach the foreman's office and ask for a tour of the mine. While the winter is an unusual time for tourists to visit the mine, the foreman, a rotund bull of a man named Jacob Baxter, is grudgingly accommodating if the investigators have a good story. ("We're stuck in town until the pass clears, so we're bored and curious about copper mining," would probably work.) He is willing to bring the investigators down to the second-lowest level of the mine (claiming it is the bottom) and show them around, though no amount of cajoling or bribery will convince him to take the elevator any lower. Observant investigators who make a Spot check (DC 12) notice that the elevator controls certainly seem to indicate another level below the one the foreman takes them to.

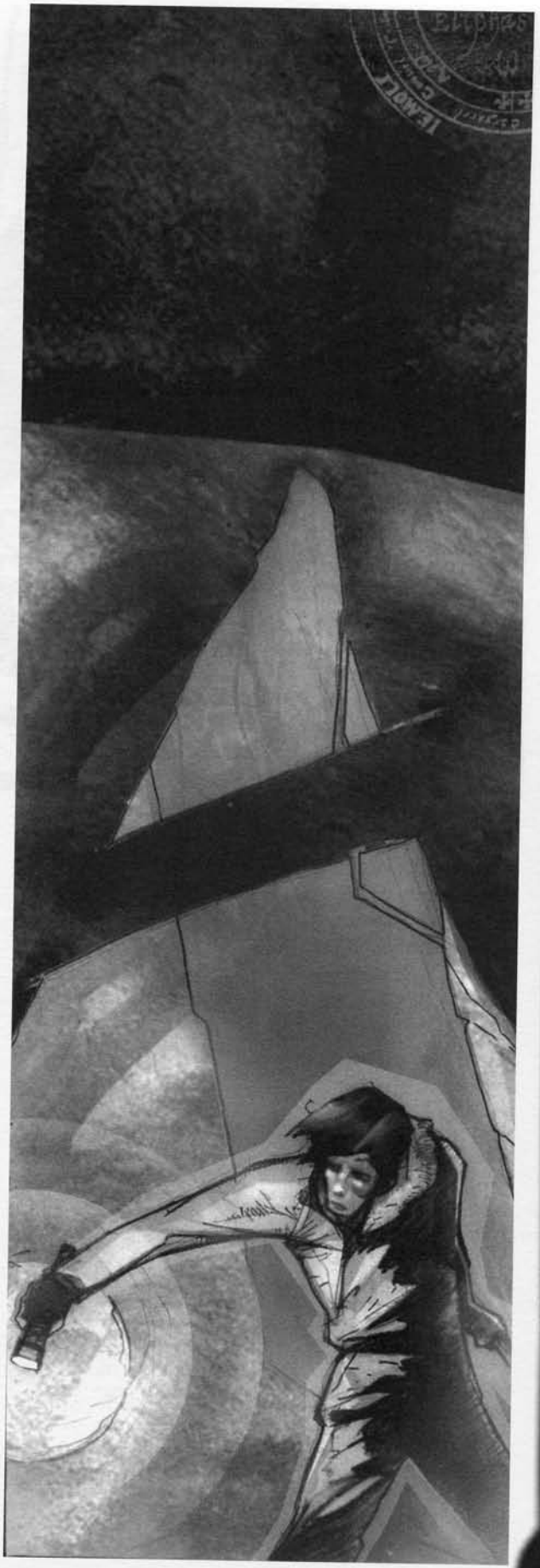
Finally, if the investigators approach any of the numerous Native American miners in the area and mention the name of John Stonehill, the miner does everything he can to help the investigators, though he will not accompany them into the lowest level of the mine shaft.

If the investigators are caught snooping around by the miners, they are brought to Baxter's office for questioning. Baxter in turn calls Delaney, who sends out a squad of enforcers to eliminate the problem (see Thugs, page 59).

Gamemasters should feel free to add to the suspense of the scene in the mine by calling for unnecessary Listen and Spot checks. Or have one of the miners challenge the investigators, forcing them to talk their way out of the situation or risk alerting others to their unauthorized presence.

The Abandoned Mine

Just as Stonehill said, the investigators find two boulders half a mile east of the Delaney mining complex. The boarded-up entrance to the abandoned mineshaft is between the boulders and beneath a heavy snowdrift. Unfortunately, the site is also two miles





from the nearest road, and the investigators must navigate through snow three to five feet deep in order to reach it.

The boards have been exposed to the elements for more than two decades; removing them is not difficult. Inside the mineshaft, the investigators are overcome with the strong, dank odor of rot, stagnant water, and dirt. The air is full of dust. The dirt walls and ceiling are propped up with wide timbers that creak loudly in the wind. It is cold and dark in the mine.

Twenty feet into the darkness is an open elevator shaft that leads all the way down to the bottom of the mine—60 feet, straight into the heart of the darkness. The only way down the investigators can see is a series of wooden ladders fastened to the shaft walls. The elevator car is at the bottom of the shaft, but anyone making a successful Repair check (DC 5) notes that the ropes and pulleys needed to operate the elevator are broken beyond repair.

Climbing down the ladders is a treacherous task, though not impossible. If the investigators move slowly and make successful Climb checks (DC 5), they make it to the bottom with no problems—unless they are too heavy for the ladders. Investigators weighing 250 pounds or more feel the rotten ladders creaking and heaving beneath them and must make their Climb checks against DC 10. If an investigator fails the check, he neglects to evenly distribute his weight and the ladder breaks. The investigator can make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to grab on to a sturdy section of ladder or other handhold. If the save fails, the investigator falls. Resolve falling damage from the point at which the investigator falls.

The Heart of Darkness

When the investigators step out of the elevator shaft at the bottom of the mine, they are immersed in darkness so complete it is more than a lack of light. It is dense and seeps into the investigators' skins; they feel like they are inhaling darkness with every breath they take. If the investigators neglected to bring their own flashlights or some other light source, they are absolutely unable to see anything. Even with flashlights, the darkness presses closely in on them, reducing the lights' effective range to a few feet.

The temperature here is well below freezing, and the investigators' bones ache with a cold that penetrates even the thickest of winter clothing. After a few minutes in this environment, the investigators shiver uncontrollably and their teeth begin to chatter. Treat this condition as cold weather and have the investigators make Fortitude saving throws if they remain in the mine for an hour or more (*Call of Cthulhu*, page 87).

Due to the alien darkness, the investigators lose 1d3/1d6 points of Sanity for every 10 minutes they spend at the bottom of the mine. A bizarre stench also fills the tunnel: rotting eggs soaked in a heavy musk, like the inside of some animal.

Two hundred yards down the mine tunnel from both elevator shafts, in the heart of the darkness, the investigators find two bodies, decomposed to little more than skeletons in the hundred years they have laid here beneath the rock. One of the skeletons is wearing the faded and rotted remnants of a dress, which disintegrates if the investigators touch it. Around the corpse's neck is a gold chain with a locket on it. The other body has a little more flesh on its dusty bones, suggesting that it has not been here as long, but has little clothing left.

One of the two bodies is that of Clarice MacGuire, who Delaney killed many years ago. Inside the locket is a yellowed photograph of a bearded man the investigators may recognize as their fellow guest, her husband. The other, of course, is the Native American warrior sent with the disc to destroy the Beast. He followed the Beast into a cave, which led to this place of darkness and insanity. The warrior froze to death trying to follow the Beast deeper into the cave; his body has been here ever since.

Near the right hand of the second body is a metal disc, two feet in diameter and covered in arcane runes and symbols. There are four oddly shaped holes through the object, which can be used as finger holes to grasp the disc. The edge of the disc is sharp enough to cut the flesh of anyone who touches or brushes against it carelessly. The metal is much lighter than it appears.

This place is the true heart of the shk'ryth. Its power is strongest here and has a tangible presence. Delaney, as the physical manifestation of the shk'ryth, is aware of everything that happens in this place and senses both the investigators and their purpose the moment they arrive. He hopes that his lair will drive them insane and eliminate them, but just in case, he immediately dispatches a trio of hired guns to dispose of them (see below). Delaney kept the disc here, for while it is the one thing that can weaken him even more than the circle's ritual, he felt that it would be safe from his enemies here in the bowels of the mountain.

Thugs

Delaney has sent three of his enforcers to retrieve the disc and stop the investigators. They arrive at the mineshaft about 10 minutes after the investigators enter. They wait for five minutes at the top of the elevator in the mining complex, hoping to capture the investigators as they come up. If the investigators don't appear in that time, the gunmen go down into the heart of the Darkness themselves to flush them out. The enforcers do not know about the abandoned mine, making it that much easier for the investigators to escape through it.

The enforcers' strategy is to immobilize the investigators, either by grappling them or by knocking them out altogether. The investigators may be able to evade their attackers, but defeating these well-trained thugs in combat is difficult and reasoning with them is simply not an option. The investigators' best bet may be to make a break for it; the enforcers are strong but not unusually fast. If the thugs cannot subdue the investigators, they draw their guns and shoot to kill.

If the investigators are being soundly beaten by the enforcers, the Native American miners may show up and help the investigators fight back. If the investigators are captured, they are dragged outside to where the enforcers' black SUV is waiting with its engine running. They are thrown roughly into the back of the truck, their wrists secured with plastic zip-cuffs.

The enforcers will follow the investigators out of the mine and even chase them down the road in their vehicle if necessary. Once they are clear of the mine building, if it looks like an investigator is actually getting away, the enforcers pull out guns and start shooting. They stop shooting if they come into sight of town or the Clearwater Hotel. They give up the chase altogether if the investigators make it to the Clearwater or some other public place; the enforcers are under orders to keep this operation quiet.

Though they don't realize it, the investigators are incredibly lucky: Delaney considers the copper mine essential enough that he isn't willing to risk agitating the miners by having his enforcers immediately open fire on the investigators. Rather, their orders are to recover the disc, then capture the investigators and take them some place remote, where their throats can be cut quietly and discreetly, their bodies dumped into the chasm.

Enforcers (3): Male 3rd level; HD 3d6+6; hp 16; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, combat knife) or +4 ranged (1d10, Glock Model 17); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +4, Demolitions +2, Drive +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Intimidate +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +4, Spot +3, Swim +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Combat knife, Glock Model 17.

The investigators may find that as a weapon, the disc is unwieldy but usable. It is typically wielded like a knife in combat, but it can also be thrown and allows for surprising accuracy.

Sky-Metal Disc

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Sky-Metal Disc	1d6	19–20/x2	10 ft.	4 lb.	Slashing

Day Three: Blood

Werewolf Attack

The skies over Miner's Folly are bright and cloudless on the morning of the third day, but grow gradually darker as the day wears on. By afternoon, thick gray clouds overshadow the valley, threatening and pregnant with snow. The wind picks up towards evening and the roads begin to slowly drift over once more.

Inside the Clearwater Hotel, the atmosphere is tense: The guests are milling about in the lobby and restaurant, murmuring their conversations, glancing cautiously at each other and out the windows. There is a killer on the loose and they all know it; they're just waiting for the next shoe to drop. The investigators are free to wander about town and snoop around as they wish. Now that the sheriff and deputy are gone, the guests and townspeople tend to give the investigators a wide berth and don't get in the way of their investigation.

The werewolf begins tracking the investigators down at 7:00 pm that night when the moon rises over the mountains. If the investigators are hiding or have taken other precautions against being found, it takes the Beast a full hour to sniff them out. But if the investigators have simply barricaded themselves in the hotel—or worse, are just wandering around town—the werewolf is on them within 15 minutes.

The creature's tactics are determined by where the attack takes place, but he prefers to use the element of surprise. In the hotel, the werewolf waits until one of the investigators is near a window, then leaps in, hoping to kill his victim quickly and efficiently. In the open, the werewolf lies in wait, hidden by a snowbank or the side of a building, before attacking. Once the moment of surprise has passed, however, the creature becomes purely feral, attacking with an inhuman savagery.

Investigators using the sky-metal disc against the beast find it to be surprisingly effective. Specifically designed to counter the effects of the shk'ryth, it is extremely effective against creations of shk'ryth such as the werewolf. Against the loup-garou, the weapon deals 3d6 points of damage with no damage reduction and its threat range is doubled (to 17–20). The werewolf yelps in pain when the metal first strikes its flesh, and a glimmer of fear appears in its eyes. After its second contact with the metal, the beast draws back, recoiling from the disc and the investigator wielding it—but it does not turn and run. Armed with the disc, the investigators are able to dispatch the beast much more easily than they might have imagined.

Once he realizes what he is up against, MacGuire resigns himself to his fate—not out of any suicidal loyalty to Delaney, but because he has no choice. His love for Clarice will not let him disobey Delaney, even though he knows that continuing to fight means death. If this last act of loyalty will convince Delaney to release Clarice, then his death will be worth it. MacGuire is also tired, very tired of his wretched, immortal existence, and no longer fears the quiet embrace of death.

If the investigators manage to mortally wound the Beast, the werewolf returns to its human shape, that of Ian MacGuire. He stares straight ahead, but sees nothing. "Clarice," he whispers, and dies.

If the investigators have obtained Clarice MacGuire's locket from the bottom of the mine, they may show it to Ian MacGuire, either in his human form or hybrid werewolf form. If they do so, he realizes that his wife is dead and either breaks off his attack (howling with anguish as he runs into the woods) or does not attack them at all. Instead, he sides with the investigators against Delaney and Thompson during the final battle.

Round Two

Just as the investigators are relaxing after their encounter with MacGuire, they find themselves attacked by a second werewolf. This werewolf is Reginald Thompson, who was bitten and infected by MacGuire two nights ago. Thompson is also under Delaney's power, and has been commanded to kill the investigators. Delaney was keeping Thompson as a back-up plan should MacGuire fail, and hopes to use the element of surprise—the investigators should not be expecting this attack—to give the monster a better chance of success than his predecessor.

If the investigators are near Reginald Thompson at the end of their battle with MacGuire, those making a

successful Listen or Spot check (DC 10) may actually observe the writer going through his transformation. His skull creaks as it shifts on its seams and stretches into a snout; coarse brown hair sprouts from every follicle, ripping flesh in its haste to break through the skin; muscles swell and twist like enormous subdermal tumors, reducing his clothing to ribbons. The entire transformation takes about 30 seconds and those witnessing it lose 1/1d6 points of Sanity.

On the other hand, if the investigators do not see Reginald Thompson's transformation, they only know that another werewolf is attacking them. They cannot tell who the beast is unless they kill it, at which time it reverts to Thompson's human form.

Again, the specifics of Thompson's attack are determined by the investigators' location and situation. Delaney warned his servant of the disc, and the beast will try to avoid contact with the sky-metal, but because it is one "generation" removed from the shk'ryth, the metal only deals 2d6 points of damage to this werewolf.

Reginald Thompson: Male 3rd-level Shapechanger; HD 3d8 or 4d8+12 in wolf or hybrid form; hp 13 or 30 in wolf or hybrid form; Init +0 or +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative) in wolf or hybrid form; Spd 30 ft. or 45 ft. in hybrid form or 60 ft. in wolf form; AC 10 or 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural) in hybrid or wolf form; Atk +3 melee (1d3, punch) in human form or +7 melee (1d8+4, bite) in hybrid or wolf form; SA Lycanthropy, trip; SQ Damage reduction 15/silver, darkvision 60 ft., Scent, wolf empathy; SV Fort +3 (+9), Ref +4 (+6), Will +3 (+5); Str 11 (19), Dex 12 (16), Con 10 (18), Int 13 (9), Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +4 (+8), Computer Use +7 (+5), Craft (writing) +10 (+8), Drive +5 (+7), Gather Information +4 (+4), Jump +4 (+8), Knowledge (art) +5 (+3), Knowledge (history) +5 (+3), Listen +8 (+12), Research +7 (+5), Spot +8 (+12), Swim +4 (+8). As a fledgling werewolf, Thompson has not yet had a chance to develop his newfound senses. Nevertheless, he gains a racial bonus on untrained Move Silently, Search, and Wilderness Lore checks. The bonus is +4 when he is in human form and +8 when he is in wolf or hybrid form.

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Skill Emphasis (Craft [writing]). Thompson gains the Blind-Fight and Improved Initiative feats when in wolf or hybrid form.

Closing the Circle

While the investigators are in the midst of their battle with Thompson, two black SUVs pull up to the scene, their headlights spearing through the swirling



snow. Maximilian Delaney steps out of one, his face a stone mask of displeasure. Five DMI enforcers emerge from the other vehicle, pistols drawn. If the investigators have taken care of one or more of the enforcers, reduce the number appearing in this scene accordingly.

"You have slain my servants, delayed my plans, and caused me great distress," Delaney says sternly. "For that, you must be destroyed."

He raises his hand threateningly at the investigators, and they can feel the dark chill of the mine pass through them once more. But before Delaney can make good on his threats, he is distracted by the sound of drums.

Five ancient Native Americans emerge from the surrounding forests, dressed in ceremonial feathers and beads beneath their winter coats. The investigators recognize John Stonehill, who is carrying and beating a drum, though they've never seen the other shamans of the circle. The shamans stand in a semicircle facing Delaney and chant their ancient song while Stonehill keeps the beat with his drum. As the shamans sing, the investigators can feel the mystic energy gathering in the air, sending shivers down their spines.

Delaney turns his hand toward the circle, and the shamans' singing falters. They recover quickly, however, and he takes a step backward, surprised at the strength of their magic. Investigators soon realize that they are witnessing a duel between two mystical forces...but the Native Americans are losing ground.

Realizing the investigators are more resourceful



than he had anticipated, Delaney has decided to take matters into his own hands. He has ordered his enforcers not to shoot the investigators except in defense, since he wants to avoid more outsiders snooping around his valley. Even with the werewolves and his magical attacks, Delaney figures the investigators' deaths will still appear much less suspicious than if their bodies were discovered riddled with bullets.

One thing Delaney didn't count on, however, was the circle. He had assumed that because they were missing one of their number, the shamans were out of the picture for good. Because of his assumptions, the circle initially has the upper hand when they begin the ritual, but Delaney gradually overpowers them. Once he has eliminated the circle, he will destroy the investigators.

Unless the investigators intervene, Delaney and the circle are deadlocked for five rounds. After the fifth round, one shaman dies each round until they are all dead.

And Then There Were None

The outcome of the mystical battle is entirely up to the investigators. If they flee or do nothing but watch, the shamans slowly lose the fight: one by one, they begin to tremble, then shake violently as they fall to their knees in the snow. Blood streams from their eyes, ears, and noses. One by one, the shamans die of massive brain hemorrhages.

If the investigators remain in the area long enough to witness the shamans' deaths, they become Delaney's next targets. Delaney attacks the investigators one at a time, starting with the one closest to him. His mental attack feels as if a white-hot sliver of metal has been driven through the back of the investigators' skulls, turning their brains to mush and steam. When an investigator is targeted by this attack, he must make a Will saving throw (DC 12). Every subsequent round in which this investigator is attacked, he must make a new saving throw and the DC increases by 1. If the investigator fails the saving throw, he takes 1d10 points of damage and begins to bleed, first from the nose, then from the eyes and ears. (If the investigators have convinced MacGuire that his wife is dead, this would be a dramatically appropriate moment for him to turn against his master and save them.)

If the investigators flee the scene before the last shaman dies, they have a chance of escaping Delaney's wrath (see the Aftermath section for details).

The investigators can attempt to assist their shaman allies by distracting Delaney. Note that the enforcers are there to protect his life and will shoot at any investigators who attack or otherwise interfere with the shk'ryth.

Shooting Delaney, while dramatic, is less than effective. Bullets and the like easily penetrate the flesh of his human form, but he ignores the damage, remaining focused on the battle at hand. As Delaney's skin is broken and pierced, beams of darkness shine out, as if he is "lit" from the inside with the same terrible blackness that pervades the bottom of the mine. If the investigators inflict enough damage to destroy his human shell, Delaney manifests in his true form—a writhing, shapeless black ooze. Characters witnessing this transformation lose 1/1d3 points of Sanity. Those who fail their Sanity checks automatically suffer temporary insanity. The most likely outcome is that the investigator is forced to immediately flee the area.

Attempts to bodily attack or move Delaney are actually more effective than shooting at him. While the investigators have to dodge the enforcers' bullets to do so, they can break Delaney's concentration by grabbing his hands, grappling him, knocking him down, or otherwise physically distracting him. Once Delaney drops his defense, however, he is free to unleash a magical attack on whoever disturbed him—with lethal results.

Investigators touching the sky-metal disc gain a +4 morale bonus on their saving throws to resist Delaney's attacks. Multiple investigators can touch the disc and gain this advantage. A successful touch attack against Delaney with the disc is a sure way to break his concentration; each touch causes him extreme pain and imposes a –1 penalty on the damage rolls for his psychic attacks. If the shk'ryth suffers 10 such attacks (thereby reducing his maximum damage to 0), it seeps

into the earth and returns to its lair to recover its power. The disc does no extra damage, however, if used as a weapon against the creature.

Enforcers: Male 3rd level; HD 3d6+6; hp 16; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, combat knife) or +4 ranged (1d10, Glock Model 17); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +4, Demolitions +2, Drive +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Intimidate +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +4, Spot +3, Swim +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Combat knife, Glock Model 17.

Maximilian Delaney, Wilder Shk'ryth: Medium-Size (human form) or Large (ooze and monstrous form) Aberration; HD 10d8+30; hp75 (human or monstrous form) hp 90 (ooze form); Init +2 (human form, Dex), –5 (ooze form, Dex), +5 (monstrous form, Dex); Spd 30 ft. (human form), 10 ft., climb 10 ft. (ooze form), 40 ft. (monstrous form); AC 12 (human form, +2 Dex), 5 (ooze form, –5 Dex), 20 (monstrous form, +5 Dex, +6 natural, –1 size); Atk +10/+5 melee (2 punches, 1d3+3, human form) or +10 melee (slam, 2d4+3, ooze form) or +10 melee (2 claws, 1d4+3, bite, 1d6+2, monstrous form); SA Improved grab, acid 1d6, constrict 2d4+3 and 1d6 acid, engulf, psychic attack, Domain powers, spells; SQ Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., shk'ryth immunities, DR 10 (30 vs. bludgeoning attacks), regeneration 2, shk'ryth resistances, amorphous physiology, blessed alteration; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +12 (human form); Fort +6, Ref –2, Will +12 (ooze form); Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +12 (monstrous form); Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 21 (human form); Str 17, Dex 1, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 1 (ooze form); Str 21, Dex 19, Con 21, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 13 (monstrous form).

Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +8, Innuendo +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +12, Psychic Focus +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting.

Spells: *augury, bind enemy, bind loup-garou, black binding, bring pestilence, cause fear, circle of nausea, cloud memory, contact human, death by flames, deflect harm, detect magic, evil eye, fist of Yog-Sothoth, grasp of Cthulhu, healing touch, insect plague, levitate, message, mindblast, nightmare, pose mundane, power drain, shriveling, steal life*

Aftermath

One way or another, the showdown with Delaney is over. Exactly how the situation is resolved depends on who wins the final battle and how.

Darkness Victorious

If the investigators try to escape when they see the circle begin to fall, they have a chance to survive their encounter with the shk'ryth. Now that the circle is dead, Delaney doesn't consider the investigators enough of a threat to justify tracking them down himself, but he does order his minions to find and kill them.

Unless the investigators leave town immediately, they run into a group of four enforcers armed with pistols within a couple of hours. Delaney will continue bringing in additional enforcers, and the investigators will suffer these attacks every day they remain in town. Driving conditions are still poor and the roads are nearly impassable. Neither Delaney nor his enforcers will follow the investigators outside of the valley.

Darkness Overcome

If Delaney is defeated by the circle while his physical body is still intact, he drops to his knees, pale and drained from the exertion. An old man before the battle, he is visibly older afterwards and is too weak to stand. Coughing blood, he croaks an order to the gunmen around him: "Kill them." As one, the enforcers draw their pistols and open fire, first on the ancient shamans, then on the investigators.

If Delaney's body is destroyed when the circle defeats him, the black blob dissipates into the ground, slowly growing more translucent and less viscous until it disappears from view. Frightened and confused, the enforcers think better of attacking the only people to ever beat Delaney at his own game. After a moment of shock, they pile into one of the SUVs and drive away.

In either case, this valley has seen the last of Maximilian Delaney and will spend the rest of the winter recovering from the traumatic events that led up to his disappearance. By spring, it is assumed that Delaney is dead, though a cursory search for his body comes up empty. Late the next summer, control of Delaney Mining, Inc. is officially passed to Delaney's sole heir, his nephew Jeremiah from Denver. Middle-aged Jeremiah is new to the mining industry but catches on very quickly. He has apparently inherited not only his uncle's mine, but the old man's head for business as well.

"Definitely a Delaney," the townspeople say. "He's got the eyes."



CHAPTER TWO

The Madness of the Twilight Queen

The room is dark, lit only by a Bunsen burner. An acrid chemical tang drifts amidst the odor of unwashed flesh. For six days now the young man has worked here alone, without sleeping or eating. For six days he has been working, and now the experiment is complete.

All that's left...is to test it.

"Scott," he calls softly. "Are you ready?"

Scott emerges bleary-eyed from the bedroom where he has been waiting. "Sorry, man. Fell asleep. Yeah, I'm ready."

"Good."

Scott could drink the concoction, the young man thinks. Or put it on a blotter strip, wait 24 hours for it to dry, and then let it dissolve on his tongue. For a moment he even considers having Scott smoke the new substance, but he has known all along that injection is the only way to go.

The young man finds the syringe by instinct in the dark and attaches a new needle to it. One must take precautions, after all.

He fills the syringe and holds it up to the light: The liquid inside is thick and dark, almost black in the light of the Bunsen burner. A stained Army surplus sleeping bag lies piled in the corner with a leaking bean bag pillow. Scott sits on the floor and leans back into the cushions. He lets his breath out slowly, feels his body relax.

Finding a vein is easy. No fumbling and bruising—the young man is a professional. A quick stab of pain, the needle strikes home, and the young man presses the plunger on the syringe...

And the drug goes to work.

Scott's body goes rigid, then begins to twitch. Sweat oozes and pools in his palms, his chest. His eyelids flutter open, but his staring eyes don't see the darkened room around him. Breathing slowly, shallowly, he forces a whisper past his drying lips:

"Oh God."

The young man smiles into the darkness.

At the desperate request of a friend, the investigators find themselves in the small college town of Eastfield, where an epidemic of sorts is underway. Hundreds of young people here are addicted to a powerful new drug—a hallucinogen that turns them into the unwitting pawns of an alien intelligence. As they get caught up in a web of supernatural intrigue, the investigators may have to form alliances they never would have imagined before.

While the usual range of investigative skills come into play over the course of this adventure, scientific skills, especially Chemistry, are especially handy. There is also a good chance that the investigators will encounter violent opposition and find that the shortest distance between two points is a fight. Though they may never use them, it never hurts the investigators to have combat skills.

Gamemaster's Introduction

The town of Eastfield is not alone. Occupying the same location in space, but existing on a higher dimensional plane, there lies the Twilight Land. This was once a great city populated by fabulous creatures, but now it lies in silent desolation. The few who know of this shadowy realm consider that the limits of the Twilight Land parallel the borders of Eastfield, and wonder: Which city was here first? There are several theories, but no one knows for sure.

The Twilight Land is not completely deserted. Its queen remains, sleeping in her ebony tower and dreaming the hideous fever dreams of the completely mad. She awakens from time to time, gibbering and thrashing, then lapses once more into her dreams.

The Shk'ryth

Just north of Eastfield, beneath the murky bottom of Lake Mebidji, lies a malignant mass of incarnate chaos, a shk'ryth. When the beast first became aware of itself and its surroundings more than a hundred years ago, it sensed the presence of the Twilight Queen nearby—though just outside the physical realm. Recognizing its own captive state, the shk'ryth lusted after the Queen's power. Its alien mind considered that if it could make the Queen's power its own, it would be able to escape the bounds of Earth.

Acting beyond the physical plane, the shk'ryth reached out and attacked the mind of the Twilight Queen—and the madness it found there almost destroyed it. The chaotic patterns, the strange geometry, the logic of ten thousand dimensions: It was almost enough to drive off the foul thing at the bottom of the lake, but not quite...and then the Queen awoke.

The Twilight Queen moved and shuddered and sent wave after wave of supernatural force against her lake-dwelling adversary. The great power the shk'ryth had coveted was being multiplied a hundred-fold and used against it. For the first time, the beast felt what could only be called fear, and fled deep into the cool, soothing earth. There, it healed and plotted and waited for another opportunity to usurp the Queen.

Two years ago, that opportunity arrived. Its name was Gary Augustine.

Gary Augustine

Gary Augustine arrived as a freshman at Mandrake University full of pride and promise. He was a gifted chemist, destined for greatness. He knew it, and wanted everyone else to know it too.

On a warm October evening, Augustine took Audra Preston on a date to Lake Mebidji. After watching the sunset, they went out on the lake in a small rowboat and proceeded to talk and become intimate, but when Augustine was only getting started, Audra was ready to stop. The arrogant young scientist was used to getting what he wanted. When Audra refused his advances beneath that baleful moon, he decided to take her by force.

The rape that followed was violent and rough, and Augustine reveled in every moment of it, right up until the boat capsized and both of them sank into the murky depths. Audra drowned within minutes, but Augustine, through his actions, had reawakened the shk'ryth at the

bottom of the lake, and its plans for him did not include a watery grave. He sank all the way to the muddy lake bottom...and kept sinking.

Four hours later, a naked form rose from the depths of Lake Mebidji and stalked ashore. The body was of Gary Augustine, but the mind was not. While the cold, original intellect was still there, it was now driven by the consciousness of the shk'ryth.

Pixie Dust

Upon returning to the university, Augustine took to chemistry filled with a dark, passionate fire to fulfill his new plan. The shk'ryth was previously defeated by the mad Queen because it did not have enough power. In order to obtain the power that he needed, Augustine devised a drug that robs its user's soul of its essence and channels that psychic energy to the shk'ryth. Using this power, the shk'ryth would mount another attack on the Queen.

A year and a half ago, he discovered the formula for just such a drug. He called it "pixie dust," and began to sell it in small, controlled doses. The drug was such a hit that six months later, he abandoned all other narcotics and began producing pixie dust exclusively.

Pixie dust, a reddish-orange hallucinogen, is a peyote extract mixed with the tainted blood of Augustine himself. It is usually taken orally (like blotter acid), but can be injected or dried and snorted. One hit lasts for an hour, and sells for about five dollars. While just one hit won't necessarily addict a person, two probably will, and three hits in the same day will hook most anyone. Addicts are called "pixie heads" or more commonly "pixies."

Those under the influence of the drug experience an intense euphoria, an almost transcendent feeling of bliss and connection with the universe. No matter who uses the drug, the hallucinations are always the same: an ancient, unearthly city of stone, lit by a swollen, reddish yellow moon. Pixies have taken to calling this place the Twilight Land. This is a shared hallucination; those who take the drug at the same time can and often do see each other in the Twilight Land. They are immobile in the Twilight Land, simply standing in awe.

These visions of the Twilight Land are merely a side effect of the drug's soul-draining properties. Another side effect is that, since Augustine holds pieces of their souls, he is in constant psychic contact with his army of pixie heads and can control their minds with a thought. Mind-controlled pixies move slowly and awkwardly.

Investigators on Pixie Dust

It is possible that over the course of the adventure, the investigators may wish to try a hit of pixie dust. They can find some easily enough by asking around the college student community, or they can purchase the drugs directly from Augustine at his duplex.

Investigators using pixie dust experience the Twilight Land and a sense of euphoria for about an hour. The area of the Twilight Land that they see roughly corresponds to where the investigators are in Eastfield. While tripping on dust, the investigators are completely oblivious to the real world around them and have no control over their bodies. Each hit of pixie dust permanently reduces an investigator's Wisdom ability score by one point.

While the investigators are on pixie dust, Augustine can attempt to control their minds, turning them into zombies. This is a limited form of the *dominate person* spell. A targeted investigator must make a Will saving throw (DC 22) or fall under Augustine's control for the next 5d10 minutes. The investigator is completely unaware of his actions while in this state.

The Order of the Ebon Tower

As long as there have been humans living in the shadow of the Twilight Land, there have been a chosen few who are gifted with visions of the ancient city and the tower of its insane ruler. In the late 1800s, these sensitive souls banded together secretly to worship the Twilight Queen and ask her favor in their undertakings. Sometimes she helped them, sometimes she harmed them, but mostly the Queen ignored the babblings of the fleshly realm.

The Order of the Ebon Tower, as the group came to call itself, reached the height of its power in the 1930s under the leadership of its high priestess, Marion Switzman. Considered mad by some, Marion had a special connection to the Twilight Land and its Queen. The Order grew in occult wisdom and mundane influence until the winter of 1939, when the police raided one of their ceremonies and arrested the lot of them. While most of the cultists escaped punishment for their bizarre rituals, Marion Switzman was committed to an insane asylum, where she lived out the rest of her years. The Order broke up shortly after the raid.

The Order Today

There has not been a meeting of the Order of the Ebon Tower since a half-hearted attempt at recreating one of Marion's rituals in 1952. Most of its members have died of old age, and few Eastfield citizens even remember the cult. Three of the original members have continued to live in Eastfield, but have all died in the last few weeks as they fell victim to Augustine's psychic attacks. This might be considered a mysterious coincidence to those of a paranoid nature—but they were all old people, and old people die.

One of those who considers these deaths more than a mysterious coincidence is Elizabeth Switzman, the daughter and only living descendent of Marion Switzman. Elizabeth has inherited her mother's gift for seeing into the Twilight Land. She shares a bizarre empathic link with the Twilight Queen, which gives her insights and visions that she finds at once breathtaking and uniquely unnerving. She tries to keep these empathic flashes hidden, lest she wind up in the asylum like her mother, but it has become very difficult recently.

Elizabeth feels that something terrible is happening, some threat to the Queen is growing, though she cannot know for certain what it is. She suspects that it may have something to do with this new drug that seems to be everywhere. She has heard the stories the pixies tell of the things they see while tripping, and it can be no coincidence that she and they are having the same visions. It is also no coincidence that, as the drug spreads through town, the Queen's power is waning by the day. While Elizabeth has no special love for her mother's goddess, she fears that her link to the Queen means that if the Queen is destroyed, she too will die. She must find some way to save the Queen from the darkness that she knows still festers beneath the lake. Elizabeth doesn't know why she hasn't been attacked like the former members of the order, but suspects it is because the Queen herself is shielding her from harm.

The Queen has led Elizabeth to Jason Burke, a graduate chemistry student who has discovered an antidote to pixie dust. Elizabeth is not sure what to do with this knowledge, but has taken to following Jason around to see that no harm befalls him. Once the investigators come into contact with Jason, she follows them as well.

Investigators' Introduction

One or more of the investigators receives a letter (either electronically or through the conventional postal system) from Jason Burke, a brilliant graduate student in chemistry (see the Twilight Papers #1). Jason could have attended university with one of the investigators or might be a favorite nephew. In any event, it is assumed that at least one of the investigators has an interest in the young man—either for his own sake, or for the sake of the chemistry work that he has been doing.

Jason's Distress

Jason's mysterious project is an analysis of the new drug pixie dust, which is taking Eastfield by storm. He first heard of pixie dust from his brothers in the Omega Pi fraternity (they love the stuff), but didn't trip on the dust until a girl he was dating convinced him to try it three months ago. He enjoyed the experience but didn't like the hold the drug seemed to have over his friends.

Twilight Papers #1

From: Burkeja@mallard.mandrake.edu
Subject: Please help

Look, I'm sorry to bug you like this, but I don't know who else to turn to and my life is in danger.

No. Scrap that. Sorry, I'm a little hysterical. I should say my life may be in danger. You know that project I've been working on, the one I couldn't tell you about? Well, I think someone wants to kill me for it. Or something. Or maybe it has nothing to do with the project. I don't know. And that's why I can't go to the police with this.

I've got this thing on my arm. I don't know what it is, like a big tattoo or something, but people have been dying from it. The tattoo, I mean.

And I've started seeing things out of the corner of my eye. Things that shouldn't be there, places I should never see.

Again, I'm sorry to lay this on you, but you're the first I could think of who might be able to help me. Please come to Eastfield soon. You can find me in the lab, third floor of Strothers Hall. I don't like to go home any more.

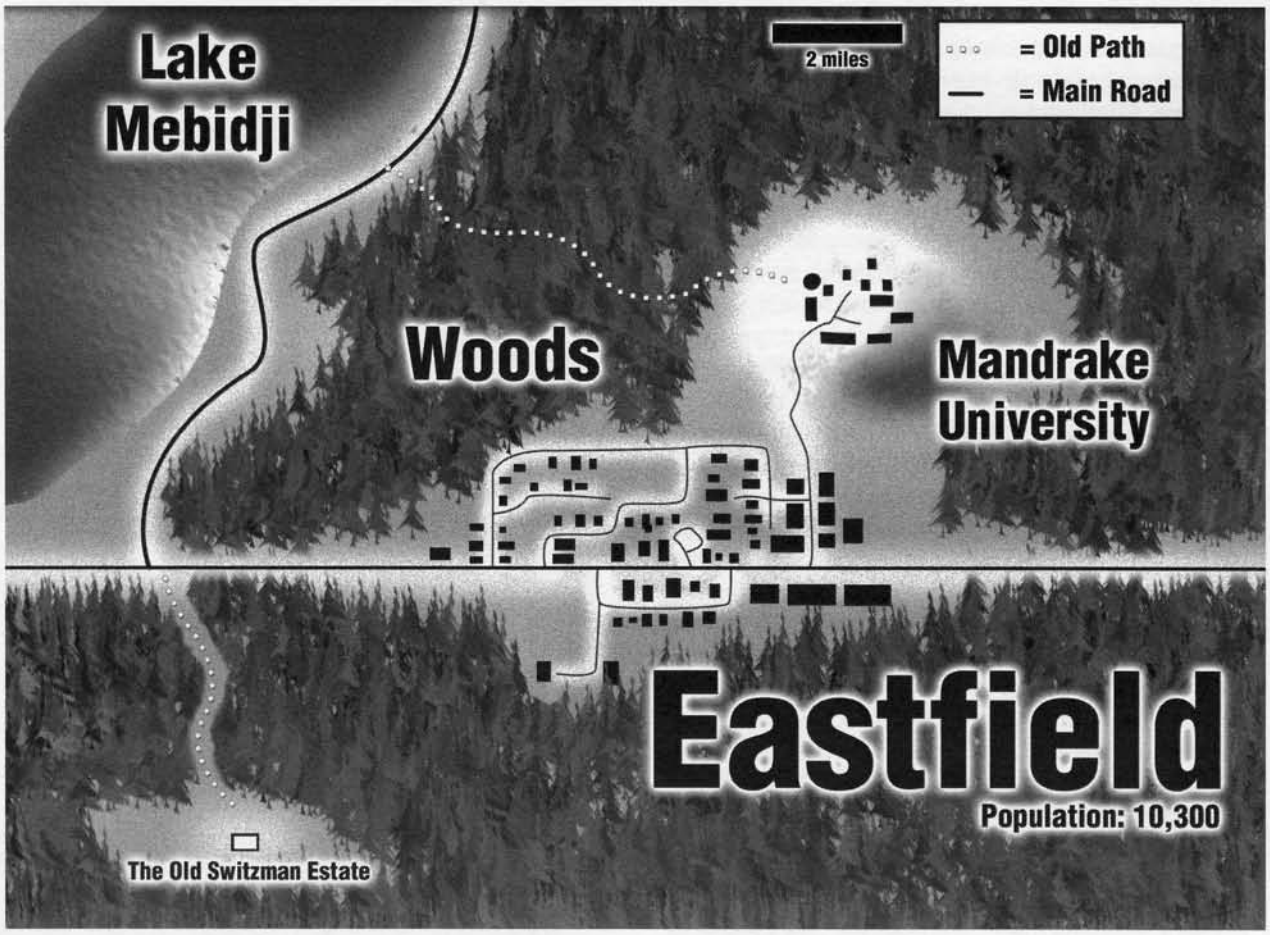
Please hurry!

Jason



Jason obtained another batch of pixie dust and broke it down into its chemical elements, analyzing how it worked. The results of his research were twofold: He discovered how, on a chemical level, the drug affected the brain's center of perception; he also developed a counteragent that would cancel out the effects of pixie dust—but not cure any addiction. A week ago, Jason tested his experimental elixir on one of his fraternity brothers and found that it worked.

The next morning, Jason woke up with a bizarre brownish-red mark on the inside of his left forearm. It didn't hurt or itch, and he probably would have simply ignored the mark as a strange rash if the third original member of the Order of the Ebon Tower had not been reported dead that day. The old man's body reportedly had on it a mark identical to one Jason now has emblazoned on his arm. Since then, Jason has become sickly, weak, and subject to frequent hallucinations of the Twilight Land. Though he has no way of knowing it,



Jason is under psychic attack from Augustine, who does not want him to continue his work on the pixie dust antidote.

Welcome to Eastfield

Eastfield is a small college town with a population of 10,000—2,000 of which are students at the local Mandrake University. In the summer, the town becomes a haven for tourists and vacationers drawn to its deep woods and the nearby Lake Mebidji ("Best fishing in three counties!"). A number of resorts dot the lake's shore, and new private cabins are being built all the time.

Mandrake University is on the eastern edge of town, its dormitories and student housing sprawling westward, taking up a third of the town. To the south is the downtown shopping area where investigators can find most stores and services they would in a larger town, only smaller and closer together. Finally, the northwestern third of Eastfield is residential and hosts both elementary schools and the recently constructed Eastfield High School.

The people of Eastfield are tight-lipped and suspicious. Any college students the investigators talk to are defensive or openly hostile if they suspect that the investigators are actually locals. The townspeople are not quite as outspoken but are still uncooperative if they think the investigators are college students or representatives of the college. Investigators have their pick of accommodations.

Since they are in town during the off-season, the resorts are all closed and all four hotels have cut their prices. Some hotels have even rented out their rooms to college students for the semester.

As they pass the sign that delineates the Eastfield city limits, the investigators witness an odd and unnerving sight: Standing on the shoulder of the road is a middle-aged woman, her face and bare arms smeared with blood. She stands before a large canvas and easel with a bloody paintbrush in her hand. Across the easel are scrawled the words "Welcome to the Twilight Land." The woman stares at the investigator as they pass, her eyes haunted and hollow.

Upon closer inspection, the investigators realize that their eyes were playing tricks on them. The woman is covered in paint not blood, and there are no words on the easel at all. It is merely a series of abstract red shapes that, seen from the proper angle, appear to be words. If asked, the middle-aged woman introduces herself as Elizabeth Switzman. She likes to paint outdoors, she explains, and finds the evening light near the road perfect for her purposes.

Eastfield is overcast and quiet when the investiga-

tors pull into town just as the sun slips below the horizon. There is an almost tangible tension in the air, as if the whole city is holding its breath. There are few people on the streets, and traffic is light.

Powder Keg Eastfield

Supernatural machinations aside, the town of Eastfield is at this moment ready to tear itself apart from the inside. Tensions are running at an all-time high between the Mandrake University community and the rest of the population. While there is always some tension between the locals and the students in any college town, the situation in Eastfield is approaching the boiling point. Three months ago, four young men from Mandrake raped a local high school student; the townspeople were incensed, and the newspaper was full of venomous rants against the university and how its faculty and students were ripping away at the moral fiber of the town (see the Twilight Papers #2).

Two weeks ago, six college students were brutally beaten and arrested by Eastfield police who were breaking up a party. The university community was in an uproar, but city hall defended the officers, claiming that they were acting in self-defense (see the Twilight Papers #3). Now students march in protest around the city hall, shouting angrily for justice for the "Eastfield Six." Eastfield citizens have begun their own counter-demonstration, yelling at the students: "Go home! Get back to your suburbs and ghettos!" Almost daily the two groups clash on the front lawn of city hall, throwing insults and occasional clumps of grass and dirt at each other.

While the political and social strife are not essential to the plot, they do provide an inherent element of tension and suspense to the setting, as well as lots of red herrings for the investigators to chase. Furthermore, the trouble brewing in the street is a wonderful rationalization for questions like, "Why don't the police help stop Augustine and the zombies?" The police are busy, of course, keeping a riot from breaking out at city hall.

Mandrake University

Mandrake University was founded more than a century ago as a private religious seminary for some obscure, now-defunct branch of Christianity, and its central administration building—a towering, five-story affair of black stone—retains a certain bleak piety about it. Even today, frescoes and stained-glass windows can be seen in the college, the meaning of their strange imagery lost when the sect suddenly disappeared in 1902. Since then, it has been operated as a private, secular university.

The university has grown much since 1902 and now has no fewer than 15 buildings, sprawling out from the central administration building like a mad spider web.

Twilight Papers #2

From the Eastfield Tribune, three months ago

Mandrake Students Charged in Rape

Four Mandrake University students were charged yesterday in the rape of a 16-year-old Eastfield High School student at a fraternity party last week. The students, all members of the TriDelta fraternity, were released on bond after being charged. A court date has not yet been set.

"It's a classic case of drunken frat boys going too far," said City Attorney Cheryl Parker. The alleged rape took place at a TriDelta party where the victim and her assailants had been drinking heavily, according to the official police complaint. "She was too drunk to defend herself," said Parker. "But she was sober enough to know what was happening."

Eastfield citizens are outraged by the alleged attack. Brian Cobb, head of the Mandrake Neighborhood Coalition, was not surprised, however. "It was only a matter of time," he said.

"Those fraternities are going at it every weekend, all weekend, with their parties. If it's not one, it's another with their loud music and drinking and yelling and drugs on the front lawns. And there are high school kids going to these parties—we've seen them. Even reported them to the cops, but they didn't do anything. So yes, it's sad, but no surprise."

No two buildings were built at right angles to each other, and it seems the crooked streets were laid around the buildings.

The newest building on campus is the Randolph P. Strothers Hall of Science, an unimaginative three-story modern glass and concrete block built in 1983. The third floor is home to the chemistry department and Jason's lab and office.

When the investigators arrive at Mandrake, they find that there are relatively few students on campus. Classrooms are half-empty; even between classes, the halls are strangely quiet—a hush has fallen over the school. Students and faculty scurry from one building to another, huddled together as if for protection. Messages have been spray-painted on the walls: "Get out of Eastfield!" one blares. "Rapists go home!" declares another. A few windows are broken out; some have been patched up, others haven't.

But apparently not everyone is taking this persecution lying down, for the investigators also notice fliers and posters, printed in neon colors, tacked to every

Twilight Papers #3

From the Eastfield Tribune, two weeks ago

Six Arrested, Police Brutality Alleged

Eastfield police arrested six Mandrake University students at a party last night, but other students who were there say that the officers hit and kicked the arrested students, even after they were handcuffed.

"I don't care what the police say, these kids were not resisting arrest," said Carol Schock, a Mandrake student who witnessed the incident.

According to witnesses, the police arrived at a party at 1730 7th Street around 11:15 pm last night for the purpose of breaking up the college party being held there. The four officers then confronted the three college students who were renting the house. The tenants agreed to keep the noise down and to exclude any minors from the festivities.

One of the officers then allegedly struck one of the tenants across the face. The other tenants and three other students defended the man who had been struck, and all six were beaten and arrested by the police.

"Their faces were bleeding and bruised," said Schock. "They weren't looking for a fight, they just wanted the cops to leave Bill alone. They weren't resisting at all."

It was unclear what caused the incident to become violent in the first place. Sarah Hanson, another Mandrake student and witness, suggested it was because McDonald did not show his ID as quickly as the officers wanted him to.

"He was digging around for his wallet and I guess the guy just thought he was stalling. So he hit him. I wasn't surprised. This isn't the first time something like this has happened."

All six students were arrested and booked but are scheduled to be released today.

Eastfield police have made no comment regarding the allegations of police brutality.

available surface. "Mandrake Unite!" they cry in large letters. "Rally to defend your school, your community, and yourselves! Don't let rural prejudice destroy your chances at education! Join the protest Tuesday, 2:00 pm, at City Hall."

Late Night in the Lab

The sun has been down for hours and the science building is all but deserted when the investigators first find Jason, hard at work in his laboratory. It is a classroom laboratory with numerous tables, a blackboard, a long counter, and several large fans for ventilation. As a graduate assistant, Jason shares a tiny, windowless office that opens off from one end of the lab.

Jason looks like hell. His eyes are deep sleepless pits, his skin pallid and clammy. Unconsciously, the young man glances over his shoulder every few seconds as if expecting some terrible thing to be lurking there. His hands shake with tremors and he smells like he has not bathed in several days. An almost visible wave of relief washes over him when he sees the investigators; as irrational as it seems, he has pinned all his hopes on them being able to help him.

"Thank you for coming," he says. "I just hope you're not too late." In a slow, halting voice he goes on to tell them about his research into pixie dust and how he found the mark on his arm. He isn't sure how, but he is convinced the mark and the drug are somehow linked: it wasn't until the morning after he perfected his pixie dust antidote that the mark showed up on his arm. The mark, he knows, is a mark of death. He shows the investigators the newspaper clipping that filled him with dread when he discovered it last week (see the Twilight Papers #4). For more information on the mark, see the section "Marked for Death," page 73.

Dealing with Jason should be something of a challenge for the investigators. While still relatively sane, he has slept very little in the last week and is regularly assailed by visions of the Twilight Land. He is also convinced that unless the investigators can find some way to save him, he will be dead in a few days. This conviction makes him hysterical, desperate, and more than a little paranoid. He mentions a middle-aged "crazy woman" following him when he goes outside; he's also seen her wandering the halls of the science building. (This is Elizabeth Switzman, who is keeping an eye on the chemistry student.) Jason also has a tendency to break down at the most inopportune moments and sob for minutes at a time (though a successful Psychoanalysis check, DC 15, snaps him out of it).

Once the investigators have questioned him to their immediate satisfaction, Jason has a favor to ask of them: When he last left his house four days ago, he left his chemistry notebooks on his desk, including all his notes on the pixie dust antidote. Paralyzed by fear, he

has not left the Strothers building since then. He asks the investigators to go to the Omega Pi fraternity house where he lives and retrieve his notes. They can refuse, of course, but Jason insists that he cannot make any more of the antidote without the notes. "I only had one dose," he says, "and I used that on one of my fraternity brothers—my test subject."

Omega Pi House

The home of the Omega Pi fraternity for the last 50 years, this frat house has seen better days. The three-story structure needs a coat of paint, and one of the Greek letters has fallen off, leaving only a three-foot wooden "omega" hanging over the door. The front porch is littered with empty beer cans, cigarette butts, and (with a successful Spot check, DC 10) used tabs of pixie dust. Loud rock music booms from inside the house, its bass echoing down the street and shaking the investigators' innards. The front door is unlocked and slightly ajar, but it is too dark inside to see anything on the ground floor—though there are lights on upstairs.

Inside the frat house, the music is deafening and the stench is terrible. Sour milk, moldy food, and the sickly sweet smell of old alcohol mix with the acrid odor of unwashed bodies. A greasy carpet of bottles and microwave food wrappers (and pixie dust tabs) covers the floor. As the investigators' eyes adjust, they can make out a half dozen figures scattered around the front living room, lying on the floor and sprawled across dilapidated furniture. These are the Omega Pi brothers, and they all share the same open-mouthed, glazed-eyed look of the dead; flies walk across their faces. Once they take it all in, the investigators lose 1/1d2 points of Sanity.

Just as the investigators come to grips with being surrounded by corpses, one of the frat boys—emaciated, wearing only a pair of loose-fitting sweat pants—begins to twitch and moan. He blinks rapidly, moistening his dry and scratchy eyeballs. Like the rest of the brothers in the room, he is not dead, but merely in a deep catatonic state, tripping on pixie dust.

The conscious frat boy ignores the investigators and starts reaching around him blindly, pathetically searching for another tab of dust. If the investigators don't talk to him or otherwise distract him, he eventually finds a pink tab of cardboard, which he slips into his mouth. Satisfied, he returns to his stupor.

If the investigators ask the frat boy about Jason's room in the house, he points straight up. "All the way up," he says. "Top floor. Attic. Chemistry geek." He then gestures toward a broad hallway, at the end of which the investigators can see a staircase, lit only by a dim, bare bulb at the foot of the stairs.

The rest of the house is almost as disgusting as the front room; no one has tried to maintain the place for at least two weeks. As they make their way to Jason's room, the investigators walk by other members of the fraternity who are tripping on pixie dust. They all have the eerie look of corpses.



Halfway up the narrow staircase, one of these pixies lurches out of the shadows, blocking the investigators. He slurs something unintelligible, then his eyes suddenly snap into focus. He cocks his head strangely, like a curious animal. Studying the investigators, he speaks clearly: "What is it that you seek?" No matter the investigators' reply, the tripping frat boy nods intelligently once, then zones out again and staggers past them down the stairs.

The question, "What is it that you seek?" comes not from the frat boy, but from Augustine. The drug lord knows what Jason is working on and is curious as to who has become concerned with his work.

Jason's Room

The door to Jason's room is closed and locked. Flickering light seeps out from beneath the door. The lock can be easily picked (Open Lock, DC 20) or an investigator could break down the simple wooden door (Break DC 13).

Inside, the room is in complete disarray. An old single bed is dumped on its side, and a tall bookshelf has been knocked down, its books scattered and torn. An antique wooden desk lies on its back, its drawers splintered open, their contents strewn about the room. A

Twilight Papers #4

From the Eastfield Tribune, dated a week ago

Local Man Found Dead, Tattoo Connection Coincidental

Jeremiah Standish, age 82, was found dead yesterday evening in his home when a neighbor noticed that his mail had been stacking up outside his door for several days and called the police. Police sources confirmed that Standish had been dead for more than a day but would not say how much more. Officials have attributed the man's death to natural causes.

An unusual twist on this story is that Standish was the third person to die in the last month with an unusual tattoo on his left arm. The tattoo, which features an abstract symbol, was also found on the bodies of Horace Kotter and Jacob Lancaster, two elderly Eastfield residents who died several weeks ago, also of natural causes. Police sources have noted the connection but dismiss it as a coincidence.

Anton Wallace, a professor of sociology at Mandrake University, recognized the tattoo as the emblem of a long-defunct Eastfield fraternal organization, the Order of the Tower.

"They were very influential in the 1930s," said Wallace, an avid scholar of local history. "But they disbanded after only a few years. The police raided one of their meetings and a scandal ensued. No one wanted to be associated with them after that."

A funeral for Standish has been scheduled for early next week.

cheap pressboard dresser has been literally torn apart, clothing from inside piled against the wall behind it.

Papers, chemistry textbooks and notebooks are everywhere in the room. Some are torn violently in half, while others have had every page torn out of their bindings. Going through the mess, the investigators find a series of thick red spiral notebooks labeled "Graduate Research." These are Jason's notes from every project he's worked on for the last school year. Jason filled these notebooks with theories and brainstorms, not just chemical formulas and lab results.

Each entry is dated. Every page but the first has been torn out of the most recent notebook. A successful Search check (DC 25) reveals that the missing pages were apparently shredded into tiny bits and strewn around the room and mixed in with the rest of the debris. The first page has two entries on it, the first dated three months ago, the second a week later (see the Twilight Papers #5).

In order to put a stop to Jason's research, Augustine controlled the minds of the grad student's roommates and put them to work destroying everything in his room. They were very thorough, as evidenced by the mess the investigators encounter. Even though the investigators can find some notes, they are incomplete and sketchy and will not help Jason.

Zombie Attack

Up until now, Augustine has subtly used his psychic attack to eliminate his opposition: first the three remaining members of the Order of the Ebon Tower, and now Jason. But now that Jason has called in allies, the Shk'ryth feels he has no choice but to take a more direct approach. Controlling the minds of a group of pixie heads, he forces them into a physical confrontation with Jason and the investigators.

The following assumes that the pixies attack while Jason and the investigators are in the lab on the third floor of the Strothers building, but the pixies can attack when and whereever the Gamemaster feels it to be dramatically appropriate.

While the investigators are talking with Jason in his lab on the first night (and after they return from the Omega Pi house, if they agree to go), a group of pixie head zombies attack. They move slowly but noiselessly, and there are two of them for every investigator. Two of them are carrying fire axes they found out in the hallway. Their orders are to kill Jason and anyone with him, then destroy his work.

The investigators may wish to barricade themselves in Jason's office or lock both doors on the lab and keep the zombies out. Either of these options will work for a while, but the longer they wait, the more zombies gather to batter at the doors. The doors to the lab are good wooden doors with hardness 5, 15 hit points, and Break DC 18.

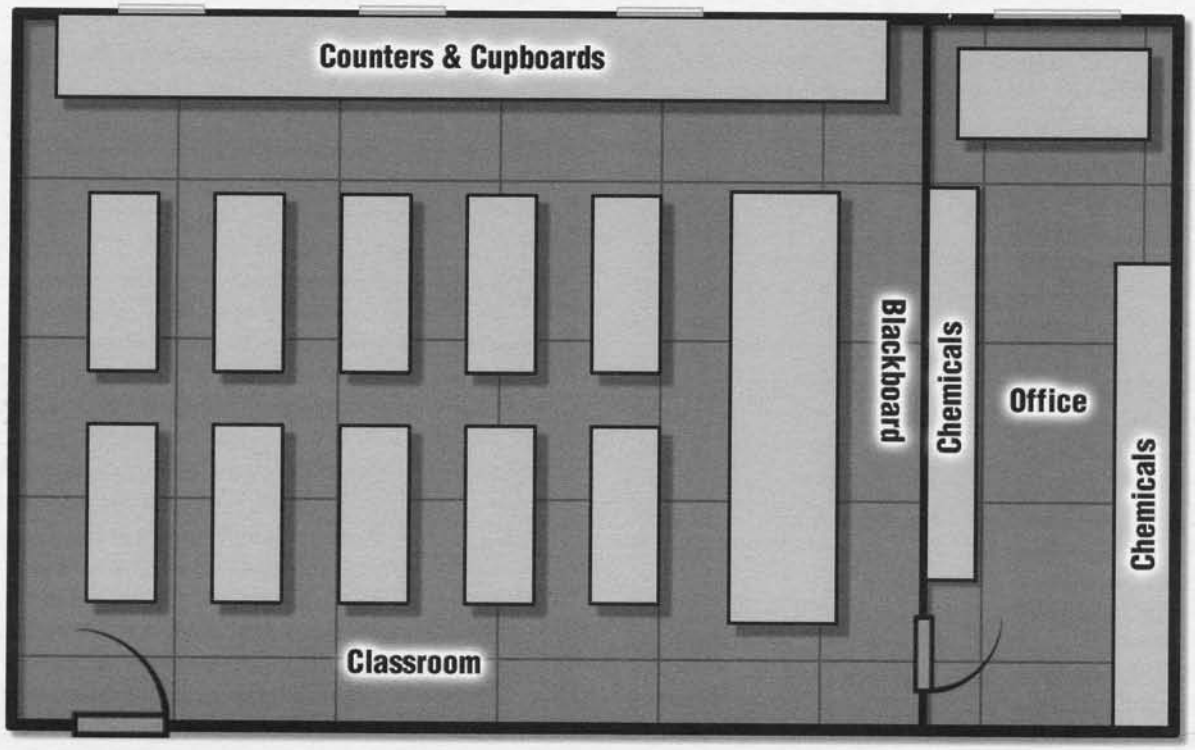
Alternately, the investigators may try to go out the windows. There is a thin ledge outside the window from which, with a successful Climb check (DC 10), an investigator can slide to the next classroom. Scaling down the side of the building requires a more difficult Climb check (DC 15).

The investigators' best chance is probably to make a break through the pixies, then outrun the lumbering zombies.

Pixie Heads: Male 2nd level; HD 2d6+2; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +1 melee (1d3, punch) or +1 melee (1d8, fireaxe); SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will –2; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 7, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2.

Jason's Lab



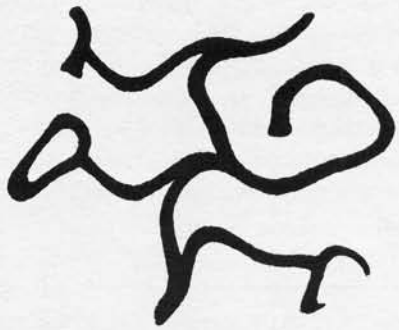
Marked for Death

The next morning, the investigators realize that they all bear the same mark as Jason on the insides of their left forearms. This discovery costs them 0/1 points of Sanity. The mark appears to be naturally occurring—that is, not ink or some other applied coloration, but a part of the skin itself. No burning, itching, or other sensation accompanies the mark, nor is it discernible by touch. Medical tests reveal that the mark is composed of melanin—it is nothing more than a very odd birthmark.

Though the investigators have no way of knowing it yet, they have brought the mark upon themselves. For the symbol is that of the Twilight Queen, who has marked them as her children, her chosen ones in the world of flesh, because they helped Jason the night before. Jason is also one of her children, though he does not know it, because his pixie dust antidote has the potential to throw Augustine's plans into chaos. Indeed, the three members of the Order of the Ebon Tower who were recently killed were also her children; she marked them when they first joined Marion Switzman in the 1930s, and they bore her sign ever since.

A side effect of bearing the Queen's sign is a limited, uncontrollable ability to perceive the Twilight Land. For the rest of their stay in Eastfield, the investigators catch glimpses of the abandoned city and hear whispers of the Queen's ravings echoing on the wind. When they look at pixie heads, they may see a bubbling black pillar of chaos instead—but only for a moment. If the investigators look away or rub their eyes, they lose touch with the Twilight Land once more. (For a more complete description of the Twilight Land, see page 82.)

Unfortunately, bearing the sign of the Queen also makes the investigators targets for Augustine's psychic attacks. Through his foul magic, the shk'ryth inflicts a terrible sickness on his victims, causing them to weaken and waste away until they die. The attack feels like the onset of a grievous illness: chills, sweats, upset



Twilight Papers #5

From the notebook of Jason Burke, dated three months ago

So this is pixie dust. I feel strangely embarrassed that this is my first experience with hallucinogens—indeed, my first experience with any illegal drug. Ironic, I suppose, considering how chemicals and chemistry dominate every other aspect of my life.

The euphoric effect of the dust is no surprise. I suppose it comes from a stimulation of the mind's pleasure centers. What I find intriguing, however, are the hallucinations. The drug somehow overrides the brain's perception center, causing the user to receive false input with all five senses. How does this work? It's possible that the drug affects each sense, feeding the false info at the primary receptors. Possible, but unlikely. Makes more sense that it affects the perception center itself. But more than other hallucinogens, which merely create random hallucinations, the dust always gives the same or a similar hallucination. Which means that it's affecting the center in a very specific way—the same way each time for each person. If we could figure this out, and learn to manipulate the message being sent to the center, we could custom create hallucinations. Tie this in with computers and we could have William Gibson's wet dream.

Or maybe...maybe the hallucination is a sort of collective unconscious type thing. That would explain why everyone sees the same place. Some people—okay, some pixie heads—say that they see each other when they're tripping. I don't know about that. Doesn't make sense. But if this is the case, it would lend support to the collective unconscious theory.

What do I know? I'm a chemist, not a philosopher.

A week later

This is seriously weird.

I ran the tests myself—twice—so I know they're accurate. Still, this is weird. Near as I can tell, the dust is composed of some sort of peyote extract, mixed with a biological secretion. It might be blood, but it's not like any blood I've ever seen. Maybe it's from a rare animal, or some mutant strain.

But that's not the important thing right now. The important part is the peyote extract; that seems to be the active ingredient. If I can find some way to shut down the euphoric effects, maybe those who use it will be a little less likely to do so. Of course, this won't stop the addiction—that's more psychology and sociology than chemistry. Or if I can figure out exactly how the extract affects the brain and perception, then I can develop some way to counteract the chemicals, perhaps blocking them altogether.

To counter the effects of the drug, I have used a compound designed to cancel the euphoric effect of the THC, and a large dose of a secondary drug to "reset" the primary sensory center and block out the hallucinations. It should block the drug at the point where it does the most damage: the brain itself

stomach, etc. Augustine attacks each of the investigators once per day in this manner, as long as they remain in Eastfield. The attack subjects the character to a random disease (*Call of Cthulhu*, page 83). The investigator makes a Fortitude saving throw against the disease's DC as normal, but there is no incubation time—the disease takes effect immediately.

Investigators cannot help but notice that Jason looks markedly worse the next morning than he did the night before. His skin hangs off his bones, his face is sunken, he is having trouble breathing, and he spends his first 15 minutes awake vomiting. Jason's sickness is meant to be an ominous warning of what the investigators can expect, now that they have been marked.

Investigation

What happens next depends on how the investigators decide to proceed. Jason encourages them, with all the strength he can muster, to find some way to remove the mark and the sickness it brings. Because they are also "marked for death," this may seem like a good idea to the investigators. Or perhaps the investigators decide to search for answers in the origins of pixie dust. The Gamemaster should have no problem convincing the investigators to do something, as they are growing weaker by the day.

Anton Wallace

The newspaper article Jason showed the investigators featured a quote from Anton Wallace, a sociologist and local historian at Mandrake University who knows about the sign of the Queen. Wallace is the acknowledged expert in this field. If the investigators ask anywhere else about such things (the newspaper, the library, etc.), they are invariably referred to him.

Wallace has an office on campus at Mandrake. He is actually rather easy to find, as he not only posts his office hours but also makes it a point to be in his office

when his schedule says he should be. A recently hired professor, Wallace is only 35 years old, but because of his Harvard education, acts as if he has seen and done everything possible in his field. If the investigators can put up with the professor's ego and condescending manner, they find that he is a fount of knowledge about the local history and the Order of the Ebon Tower.

Wallace tells them how the Order appeared on the scene around 1935, first as a rumor and then as a conspiracy. He takes great pleasure in expounding on the awesome power the cult was said to wield: conjuring up storms, foretelling the future, increasing fertility in both people and soil, healing the sick, and giving its enemies polio. Their bizarre religion, he explains, was based on their belief in a "Queen in a tower—an ebon tower, of course." This was nothing more than a modernization of ancient worship of regional fertility gods, according to the professor.

From a scrapbook on local history, Wallace produces a yellowed newspaper clipping from 1939, describing the police raid that effectively shut down the cult (see the Twilight Papers #6). Accompanying the article is a photograph of the cultists being escorted to jail. At the lead is a woman that Jason (and perhaps one or more of the investigators) recognizes as Elizabeth Switzman. If asked, Wallace identifies the woman as Marion Switzman. He denies any suggestion that Marion might be the woman following Jason, as she died in 1959. Marion did, however, have a child while inside the asylum: Elizabeth was born in 1948, and still lives in Eastfield. No one knows who her father was.

The professor obviously does not believe in the Twilight Queen or that the Order of the Ebon Tower ever had any real power. He is very interested if the investigators show him their marks, but refuses to believe that the marks simply appeared overnight. If asked, he can give the investigators directions to both Elizabeth Switzman's home and the old Switzman estate. Wallace cannot join them, however, as he is leaving town for a conference and must prepare his materials.

Elizabeth Switzman

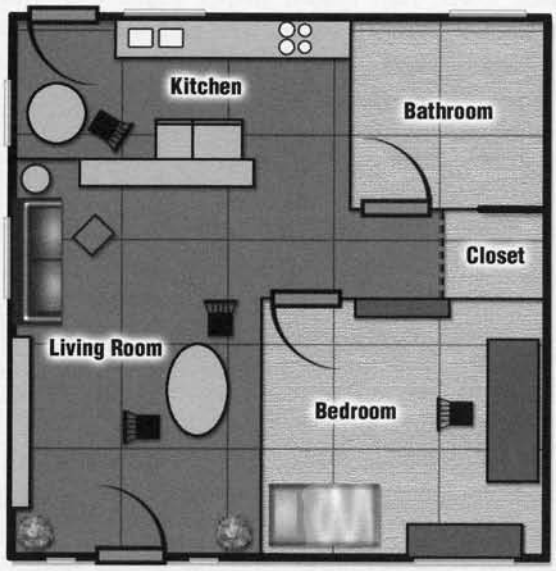


The only daughter of infamous cult leader Marion Switzman, Elizabeth tries to keep to herself as much as possible. Fortunately for her, Marion was a wealthy woman and left a large enough trust account for her daughter that Elizabeth does not have to work. She spends most of her time alone in her house, where she paints and writes, trying to make sense of the bizarre thoughts and images that flash through her mind. Like her mother before her, Elizabeth bears the sign of the Twilight Queen. Unlike her mother, she was born with it.

The investigators may come into contact with Elizabeth in several different ways: After talking with Anton Wallace, they may decide to pay Ms. Switzman a visit; or perhaps they simply confront the strange woman who has been following them around. If they so choose, the investigators can easily track Elizabeth down and follow her around or spy on her without the woman noticing. Every night, Elizabeth goes out to her mother's old mansion in the woods, leaving her tiny house unattended. If they do not wish to confront the woman, the investigators may choose to follow her into the woods or may take this opportunity to explore her house.

If the investigators engage Elizabeth in conversation, they find her to be rather odd and easily distracted—not unlike Jason, though far worse. Her relationship with reality appears strained, though not particularly dangerous. She claims to hear the voice of the Twilight Queen as she sleeps in her black tower. The Queen is growing weaker, she says, and will soon be devoured by the Darkness that resides in the bottom of Lake Mebidji. Elizabeth is searching her mother's old mansion in hopes of rediscovering the secrets of the Order of the Ebon Tower. She recognizes the sign of the Queen on the investigators' arms and invites them to help her find her mother's secrets. "We have to help the Queen," she says, "or the Darkness will win and we will all be destroyed."

Switzman's House



Twilight Papers #6

From the Eastfield Tribune, dated 1939

Pagan Rites at Switzman Estate

Acting on an anonymous tip, the police raided the Switzman estate on the outskirts of town last night and discovered a shocking display of depravity and witchcraft. No less than 14 prominent citizens were found dancing around the carcass of a slaughtered calf, bathing in its blood and singing hymns to their "queen."

Marion Switzman, the so-called high priestess of the self-proclaimed "Order of the Ebon Tower," swore vengeance against Eastfield and all its people as she was being carried away by police, according to eye-witness accounts. The woman was reportedly naked and covered with blood, shouting over and over, "Worship the queen or perish! Her realm is all around us!"

Switzman's House

Elizabeth Switzman lives in a small, one-story house on the edge of town. Investigators who want to check out the house while its owner is away have their chance every night, just after nightfall, when Elizabeth slips out and walks off into the woods for several hours. An investigator can pick the lock on the front or back door (Open Lock, DC 25). Both doors have hardness 5, 15 hit points, and Break DC 18.

Inside the house, Elizabeth's living room is dominated by a number of large, disturbing oil paintings. Each painting shows a cracked, alien landscape shrouded in fog. Rising from the fog is an enormous black tower. Half hidden shapes slither and writhe between the broken stones. The paintings depict the Twilight Land, of course, which the investigators may recognize from their own fevered hallucinations.

Tacked to one wall in Elizabeth's kitchen are a number of newspaper clippings, including the obituaries for the three members of the Ebon Tower who just died. She has scrawled across them in ink, "Who's next?" Another newspaper clipping is a feature on the rise of pixie dust, with a quote from an anonymous pixie head highlighted: "When I'm high, it's like I'm in a city, but it's really old. There's no one here, but it's not really empty, either." Investigators making a successful Search check (DC 25) notice several unused tabs of pixie dust tacked to the wall under the newspaper clippings.

Elizabeth's tiny bedroom is a little unnerving. One entire wall is covered with a mural depicting the Twilight Land and the black tower. Poking around in here and making a successful Search check (DC 15) reveals a diary tossed beneath the woman's unmade bed (see the Twilight Papers #7).

The Old Switzman Estate

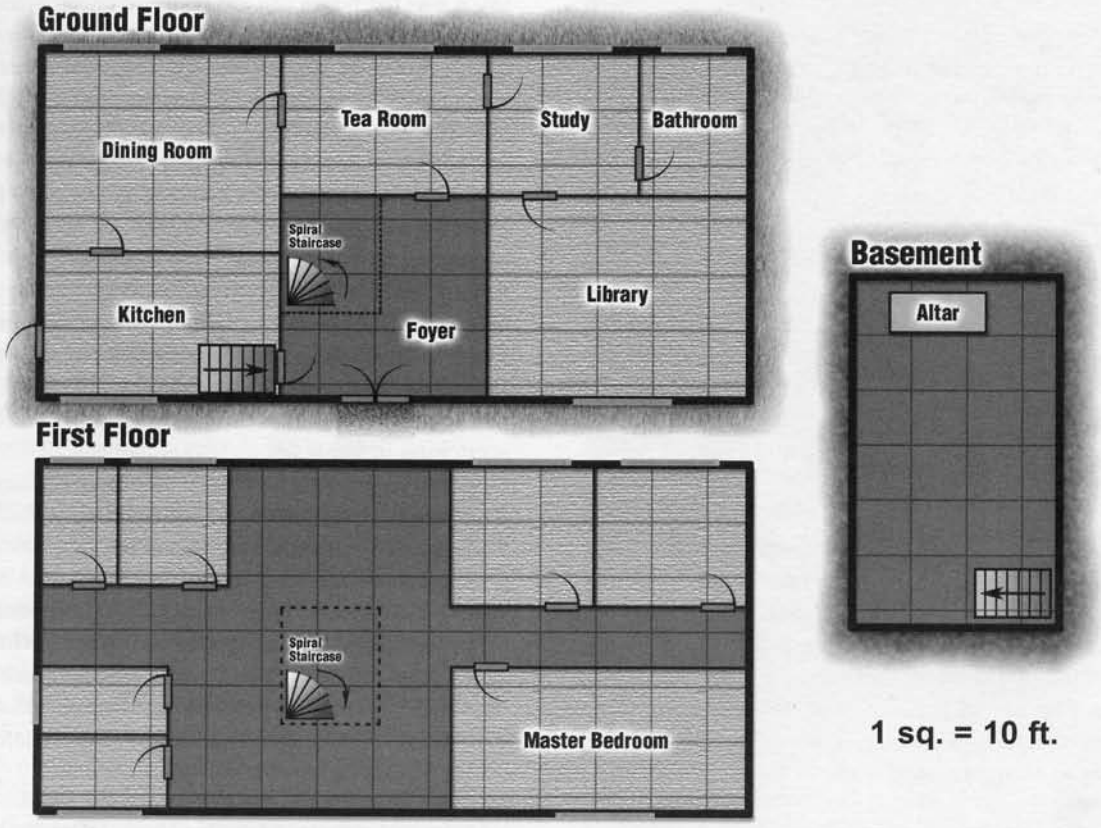
Hidden in the woods a mile outside of Eastfield, at the end of a road so old and overgrown that no vehicle could ever navigate it, is the dilapidated mansion where Marion Switzman once ruled the Order of the Ebon Tower. The two-story manor house is rotted and falling apart, its outside surface blackened and crawling with vines. Much of the foliage surrounding the old house has taken on a disturbing, reddish-orange tint.

If anything, the mansion is in worse condition on the inside than on the outside. The walls and floor are made mostly of wood that is rotten and worm-eaten. No one has lived in the house since Marion was arrested in 1939, and the place has gone completely wild. Rats and bats have infested the house, covering the floors in their droppings and filling the air with their stench. Perceptive investigators note that someone has been here recently: the dust has been disturbed and a faint trail in the unsalvageable carpeting suggests a person has been wandering throughout the house. An investigator can make a Search or Wilderness Lore check (DC 10) to discover this trail. As the investigators explore the house, they hear ominous creaking and scratching sounds and feel as if something is watching them from outside the windows. At times it sounds like something is skittering along the ceiling or outside wall. There are four locations that should catch the investigators' interest:

Foyer: This is the main entrance area of the mansion, and has seen the most traffic over the years. It was once a great receiving hall but is now just another rat-infested room. A large staircase sweeps upward from the chamber. A door opens into the area beneath the staircase, leading into what looks like it could be a closet. In fact, it is actually a staircase leading into the basement, where the Order of the Ebon Tower performed their rituals. A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) by a character with the Track feat reveals that this is where the most recent tracks have gone. A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) reveals a second, less recent path leading upstairs.

Library: This large room was once a fabulous library, full of antique tomes from all around the world. Now it is merely a soggy graveyard of books. Shortly after Marion Switzman was arrested, vandals broke into the library and used the books to make a bonfire in the middle of the room. Exposed to the elements for the last five decades, the room has turned into a fungus farm. The soggy pile of burnt pages is now four feet high and covered with orange and red mushrooms.

The Old Switzman Estate



Master Bedroom: This is the largest room upstairs, and the stink of the place reeks throughout the second floor. (Indeed, the investigators may be led here by its horrible smell.) One corner of this room has been turned into a nest: Moldy blankets, stained sheets, and tattered remnants of clothing are piled against the wall with a still-warm hollow space on top for sleeping. The rest of the room is filled with human waste and the rotting, half-eaten corpses of rats and bats. Investigators who look closely at the filthy mess and make a successful Search check (DC 10) discover fresh apple cores and junk food wrappers amongst the more biological refuse. The window here is open but does little to ventilate the room.

Basement: The basement was once ornately decorated with icons and symbols of the Queen and the Twilight Land. Now, it is a dank and smelly dark hole with crumbling stone walls and a floor that turns to mud when it rains. The only evidence that there was ever a mystic temple here is an oversized version of the mark of the Queen carved into one wall and a black stone altar that resembles a miniature version of the Ebon Tower.

Fresh candles have spilled their wax recently across the front and top of the altar. Elizabeth Switzman has visited the altar recently (and if the Gamemaster so wishes, may still be there now), praying to the Queen out of desperation and fear.

A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals that the altar is sitting at an angle: It is actually resting on a hidden door to a secret room. Moving the altar (Strength check, DC 20) uncovers a stone door with a hole in its center. Beneath the stone door is a secret room.

The Secret Room: This is what Elizabeth has been searching for—her mother's secret library. The room is cramped, with an ancient oak desk against one concrete wall taking up most of the space. A moldy, untitled tome lies atop the desk. Inside is Marion Switzman's personal journal of her life with the Ebon Tower. Investigators who read the book learn that the Queen has come under attack from the thing in the lake once before, and she was able to defeat it. She can do so again if the proper ritual is performed. Included is a ritual for binding the thing in the lake, which Marion writes she hopes she never has to use (see the Twilight Papers #8). Referred to as the "Ritual of Binding," the spell is assumed to summon the Twilight Queen from her black tower into the physical realm in order to bind her enemies.

Twilight Papers #7

Excerpts from the diary of Elizabeth Switzman

...I've spent my life trying to live down my mother's reputation, trying to live quietly and peacefully and hope that no one notices I'm here. Not that I want to be here, but if I sell the house, the money stops coming. I don't think I'm ready for that. I just want a normal life, same as anyone else, but I guess that's too much to ask.

I don't want to be the Queen's child. Hell, up until three weeks ago, I didn't even believe in her. She was just another figment of my mother's imagination—like the father who would rescue me from all of this. I didn't ask for this, but there is some link that I cannot break. Some destiny that I cannot deny. It's in the blood...

...She's getting weaker. She sleeps in her tower, but even in her dreams, she knows she's getting weaker. The one in the lake is doing it. He's getting power from us somehow, sucking it out of the town. The more powerful he becomes, the weaker she grows. That scares me. We're so closely connected, the Queen and I—I scarcely know where I end and she begins anymore. And if she is dying, then surely I too must die

...Today she showed me a boy. His name is Jason and he is special to her—chosen, like me. I don't know why. But if I don't soon find a way to wake her, to bring her full glory to the light once more, it won't matter. We'll both be dead and probably her precious Jason along with us.

Casting the spell requires that the caster hold aloft a black stone as close as possible to the target of the spell. The caster must then chant, "Twilight Queen, mother of shadows, mother of stone, we call upon you. Oshndra ktika ooloa! Come to us that your enemies might be broken. Come to use that we may serve your will. Oshndra ktika ooloa! Come to us, your children!" The spell does work, but not like Marion Switzman assumed. Instead of summoning the queen into the casters' presence, it transports the casters into the Twilight Land for a number of minutes equal to the number of Sanity points lost by the caster. The spell has a casting time of one action and costs the caster 2 Wis damage and 2d6 points of Sanity. For how this spell affects the game, see the "Resolution" section.

Billy Schwandt

No one knows why Billy was born the twisted, misshapen thing of limited intelligence that he was. Some say it was the wrath of God on those pagan Schwandts. Others claim it is the result of a long history of inbreeding. A few even suggest his appearance is the result of his parents spending too much time swimming in Lake Mebidji. But regardless of its cause, the effect on Billy has been a lifetime of taunting and ridicule.

Sick of being the town freak, Billy ran away into the woods three months ago, where he found the old Switzman manor and has been living ever since. The nest in the master bedroom is where he sleeps, and the older set of tracks in the dust are his. He has mastered a bizarre technique of scaling the sides of the house by finding and making handholds in the rotting wood; it is this scaling that the investigators hear when they hear scratching in the walls.

If the investigators happen to run into Billy, he is frightened and confused. He resents their intrusion into his home, but is too scared to try to drive them off. If asked, he can tell them of another person, a woman, who comes here at night and goes into the basement. Communicating with Billy is something of a challenge, as his limited intellect and facial defects make speaking difficult for him. Bumping into this deformed, gibbering, stinking figure costs the investigators 0/1 points of Sanity.

Billy Schwandt: Male 1st level; HD 1d6+1; hp 5; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +0 melee (1d4, hunting knife) or +2 ranged (1d3, rock); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 5.

Skills: Balance +6, Climb +9, Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Jump +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +6, Spot +2, Swim +3, Tumble +3.

Feats: Athletic, Skill Emphasis (Climb).

Possessions: Hunting knife.

Tracking the Dust

Investigators looking into the source of pixie dust do not have far to go. Any pixie head, most Mandrake students, and several mundane Eastfield citizens know where the dust comes from: Scott Garrick's house. Garrick, Augustine's lieutenant, rules his narcotic kingdom from this house, safe in the center of his web. A Gather Information check (DC 15) should be sufficient to learn about Garrick and locate his house.

While this need not be a difficult task, it can be used as an obstacle for investigators who are going through the adventure much more quickly than planned.

Instead of simply asking the nearest junkie, perhaps the investigators have to go through a line of dealers and suppliers, working their way up the distribution chain with bribes and opposed Diplomacy checks.

Garrick's Barracks

From the outside, the duplex that Garrick has set up as his headquarters looks like nothing more than an old two-story house that's been left unattended for the last six months—which is exactly what it is. Grass grows high around the building, though a path has been worn from the backyard to the front door. Used pixie dust tabs can be glimpsed sticking out of the grass, and broken beer bottles lie in wait for the unwary foot. The windows on the first floor have been crudely boarded up from the inside and heavy drapes cover the windows on the upper floors. At night, only a feeble red glow escapes through cracks in the boards.

The brown house was built as a single-family dwelling a century ago but was converted into a duplex in the 1950s. The front door is unlocked and opens into the ground-floor apartment. The second-floor apartment is accessible from the backyard via an enclosed exterior staircase. There are doors at either end of this staircase, both of which are locked and nailed shut. Picking the sturdy locks requires an Open Lock check (DC 25). Breaking through the doors requires a Strength check (DC 22).

Garrick has further sabotaged the stairs so that one step collapses if anyone steps on it. An investigator who makes a successful Search check (DC 20) discovers the makeshift snare. Otherwise, each investigator must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid the trapped step. A failure means the character has stepped on the snare and suffers 1d4 points of damage as his foot and leg plunge through the splintered wood. Once the trap has been triggered, investigators can easily step over it and avoid further danger.

The duplex is owned by Bernard and Nancy Perkins, who lived downstairs and rented the top half of the house to Augustine until recently. Two months ago, the couple had enough of Garrick's visitors coming and going at all hours of the night, usually high on pixie dust. They evicted him in the morning and by evening they were both dead.

First Floor: Investigators can gain entry to the first floor without difficulty. The front door sticks and creaks loudly as it opens but is unlocked. If the investigators have already visited the Omega Pi frat house, they may be expecting to find a similar sight inside the duplex. In fact, the frat house is a spotless dream-home compared to the interior of the duplex. Furniture and other household items are tossed about in disarray as if from a great struggle. The floor is slick in places, sticky in others, covered with vomit and human waste.

From the attic, holding his breath against the decades of dust and mold, the boy watches through a knothole.

Below, the woman slowly works her way from room to musty room. She shines her flashlight at each wall in turn, rapping the cracked plaster with her knuckles and cocking her head to listen. She moves cautiously across the floor—the boy can see the hole in the hallway where once before she broke through the rotted boards. He has been here a lot longer than the woman, and he has never broken through. This fact makes him proud, and he smiles.

The boards creak beneath the boy's stomach and he doesn't have time to close his eyes before the woman shines her flashlight at the ceiling, through the hole, into his face. He cries out in surprise and rocks to his feet, blinking. Another creak, then a crack under his left foot, he jerks away before breaking through. He has never broken through. He is good.

Carefully now, the boy leans down once again and peers through the knothole. But the woman is nowhere to be seen.

Dozens upon dozens of pixies slowly waste away, heaped atop each other in careless piles of bony flesh, their eyes dried-out and shriveled in their sockets. Closer examination reveals chafing and bedsores all over the pixies' flesh—evidence that they haven't moved in weeks. The rank odor is overpowering, and investigators must make successful Fortitude saves (DC 10) or become nauseated for 1d3 minutes.

As the investigators pick their way among the comatose drug addicts, the one in the lead must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or step on the abdomen of a body lying on the ground. The corpse's legs are crushed beneath a heavy wooden China cabinet and its head twisted all the way around. If the investigator fails the saving throw, he loses 1/1d4 points of Sanity. The body is that of a middle-aged woman in a nightgown. Her name is Nancy Perkins, the investigators may later discover, and she lived on the first floor of the duplex, along with her husband Bernard. Bernard Perkins is also dead, and slumped in the kitchen, his body pierced and sliced by innumerable knives that still protrude from his bloated flesh; the floor is coated black with his blood.

A heavy stillness hangs over the dimly lit scene. The only sounds are the slow, rhythmic breathing of the unconscious pixies and a faint mechanical whirring from somewhere upstairs. Many of the pixies, the investigators notice, have thin, clear plastic tubes



slipped down their throats or beneath the skin of their arms. These tubes lead to larger tubes, which are bundled together into a thick plastic cable that snakes its way out through a partially closed door. Beyond the door, a staircase leads upstairs. While Bernard and Nancy Perkins were alive, they kept the door locked from both sides. It is currently unlocked.

Upstairs: The second floor is actually a bit cleaner than the first. There are only a dozen pixies lying about, and the furniture is still intact. The pixies on the second floor are more recent "recruits." Most of them are Mandrake students, and none have been here for more than a week. Garrick spends most of his time on the second floor.

The stairs open into a dingy living room, dominated by table after table of Garrick's drug apparatus. A large tank rests on the wood floor, an electric pump wheezing next to it, pumping thick orange sludge—liquid pixie dust—into a network of plastic tubing. Beyond the tank, a large picture window overlooks the town. The shades are drawn. Three unlit rooms open out from the living room: a kitchen, a bathroom, and a tiny bedroom. A locked door in the kitchen leads to the exterior staircase.

The pixies here are Augustine's main "battery" of power. With each dose of dust that drips into their veins, he grows a little bit stronger as they lose more of their souls. Of course, the junkies also serve as watchdogs and bodyguards. If anyone tries to come inside without Garrick's permission, the pixies rouse themselves and stagger to his defense.

Scott Garrick



Realizing that he could not maintain the vulnerable and highly visible role of local drug lord, Augustine appointed his assistant, Scott Garrick, to that position. Garrick is the consummate professional: Cold and heartless, he makes no move that isn't motivated by profit. Recognizing the enormous potential of pixie dust, he eagerly accepted Agustine's offer. Unlike most pixie heads, however, Garrick is no brainwashed zombie. If the investigators seriously threaten him with arrest or grievous bodily harm, he readily tells all he knows of Augustine and the pixie dust.

Unfortunately for the investigators, Augustine has kept his lieutenant in the dark. All Garrick knows is that Gary Augustine, who disappeared a year and a half ago, occasionally meets with him on the shores of Lake Mebidji. He knows nothing about the chemical composition of pixie dust, as Augustine comes to the duplex himself and replenishes the supply whenever it gets low. Garrick has taken pixie dust, though he is not an addict, and is thus not susceptible to Augustine's mind control.

Garrick spends most of his time on the second floor of the duplex, minding the machinery and reading newspapers from around the world. It is here that the investigators most likely encounter him. He carries a gun but prefers not to use it. The police are ignoring his operation for now, but would probably make it a priority if gunfire and bullet-ridden bodies were added to the mix.

Scott Garrick: Male 3rd level; HD 3d6+3; hp 13; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, knife) or +2 ranged (1d10, Beretta M92); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Appraise +2, Bluff +6, Craft (chemistry) +9, Diplomacy +4, Drive +4, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (accounting) +4, Knowledge (chemistry) +6, Knowledge (medicine) +2, Knowledge (streetwise) +5, Sense Motive +4.

Feats: Persuasive, Point Blank Shot, Skill Emphasis (Craft [chemistry]).

Possessions: Hunting knife, Beretta M92, $1,500 (15 $100 bills) in wallet.



Gary Augustine

Investigators digging into Augustine's background find only a report card from his first quarter at Mandrake (a 4.0 grade point average) and the story of his encounter on Lake Mebidji (see the Twilight Papers #9). Those who knew him remember him as strangely obsessed after the boating accident. He focused all his attention on chemistry to the exclusion of other classes. Even when he didn't have a chemistry class, he spent all his time in the laboratory, developing strange and noxious new substances. Without warning or explanation, the promising young freshman dropped out of school a year and a half ago and simply disappeared.

The truth of the matter is that Gary Augustine died that fateful night on Lake Mebidji; his body lies preserved, encased in mud at the bottom of the lake. It was the shk'ryth who took his form and memories as its own and drifted ashore. Once the shk'ryth had accomplished what it set out to do—creating pixie dust—it dissolved its Augustine form and sank back into the cool, protective lake. The shk'ryth still manifests as Augustine whenever it requires a human presence (such as when it meets with Scott Garrick).

Lake Mebidji

As the investigators dig deeper into the mysteries of Eastfield, it becomes clear that Lake Mebidji is somehow central to the supernatural struggle rumbling through this small town. Those who go out to the lake expecting to find a festering cesspool of evil, however, are bound to be disappointed. Lake Mebidji is an ordinary-looking lake. Tourists and college students can rent cabins by the week or rowboats by the hour.

Investigators visiting the lake have the distinct feeling that something is watching them. Augustine is keeping an eye on them, and there is a good chance that they catch a glimpse of him spying on them from the trees (see Augustine's Agenda). Trying to keep a low profile, the Shk'ryth does not attack the investigators directly. Instead he turns the weather against them and causes bizarre, dangerous accidents. If they go boating, for example, the wind suddenly picks up and the boat begins to take on water. Or if the investigators have a vehicle, it shifts into gear when unoccupied and rolls into the lake.

Augustine's Agenda

While he doesn't make his presence known throughout the adventure, Augustine is nevertheless shaping events in Eastfield to his ends.

His primary goal, and one that he has almost completed, is to eliminate every one of the Queen's mortal worshippers. Without her worshippers, the Queen will weaken, making it that much easier for the Shk'ryth to defeat her. As the Queen customarily marks her children, it is this mark that Augustine looks for when choosing victims for his psychic attacks. (See Marked for Death, page 73, for details.)

Augustine wants to eliminate Jason because not only did the chemist develop a pixie dust antidote, but he is also now (apparently) a follower of the Queen.

Finally, Augustine is genuinely curious as to what the investigators are up to. From time to time he assumes his human form and follows the investigators around town—not unlike Elizabeth Switzman. Thus, the investigators may realize they are being followed by two different people, though they find it nigh impossible to confront Augustine before he disappears.

Twilight Papers #8

Excerpts ftom the journal of Marion Switzman

...She shows me things during meditation, visions of darkness lurking beneath the water of Mebidji. She shows me how this darkness once rose up, trying to drown her in its evil and power, how she fought back and defeated it...

...There is a traitor amongst us. I know this, for she has shown me. Our time of glory is at an end, and our Queen must return to the sleep we roused her from. I fear, though, that without us the darkness may try once more to conquer our mother and god. I sense its presence, and I am afraid...

...The mother heard my fears and has given me a ritual of binding and waking, should we need it once more. I hope I need never use it, but I fear more that I may not be able to do so. For tonight the traitor strikes, and all is lost. My only hope is that if the time of darkness should come upon us, someone might go to the lake and do what need be done for our Queen. Someone...

My daughter?

But my Queen, I have no daughter. Not yet.



The Twilight Land

A strange parallel dimension, the Twilight Land is only accessible via drugs (such as pixie dust) and certain spells (such as the Ritual of Binding). The geography of the Twilight Land is very similar to that of Eastfield, but the details are all wrong. The hills are in the same places and the streets follow the same crooked routes, but the buildings along those streets are unlike anything seen in Eastfield. Made of rough, greasy stone, the building walls rise two and three stories up from the pavement in seamless blocks, broken only by holes that serve as windows and doors. Chalky dust covers these ancient structures, and many of them lie in ruins. The streets themselves are cracked, broken into great slabs of stone, jutting up at odd and sometimes dangerous angles. A heavy mustiness permeates the air, giving the abandoned city an aura of great age.

One element present in the Twilight Land the investigators will not find in Eastfield is a great black tower, rising from near the center of the town. Soaring at least 10 stories into the air, the dark form looms ominously over the other buildings. It has no doors or windows, and if it has any exterior features, they are invisible against its light-absorbing walls. If the investigators get close enough to the tower, they see that it seems to have literally erupted up through the ground. Chunks of pavement and broken buildings lie piled in a rough circle around the tower's base. The walls of the tower are smooth and warm to the touch, as if the building itself were alive. This is the palace of the Twilight Queen, and it corresponds in the real world to the old Switzman manor. There is no visible way in or out of the black tower.

A mist hangs over all of the Twilight Land. An impenetrable fog in some places, a thin low-lying haze in others, the mist is shot through with streaks of yellow and sickly green and reeks of things long dead. The mist also hides living things: scaly, slithering things scuttling behind walls; oozing, bubbling things slipping between the stones; growling things with long lizard-like tails that make trails in the fog. Investigators never get a good look at any of these creatures, but know that they are always nearby.

Resolution

Lake Mebidji

To put an end to Gary Augustine and pixie dust and resolve the adventure, the investigators must eventually go to Lake Mebidji and perform the Ritual of Binding on the shk'ryth. Named for a small Indian tribe that has long since died out, Lake Mebidji is the source of Eastfield's tourist trade. People come here from all over the state to fish, swim, and water-ski; the lake is lined with resorts and private cabins. A deep

pine forest surrounds the lake and separates the resorts from each other. There is a public beach on the other side where the investigators have the easiest access to the lake.

The beach is accessible by a gravel road, which turns off the main highway out of town. At the end of the road is a small parking lot, beyond which is a hundred yards of patchy grass and the beach itself. Towering pine trees flank the road and beach, forming a dark green wall from which investigators may feel they're being watched. The tops of the trees sway silently as if blown by a stiff breeze that the investigators cannot feel. The lake is still and dark.

Augustine Ascending

Slowly at first, Lake Mebidji begins to bubble, then boil and froth at a point some 50 yards from shore. A pale figure rises ominously from the depths, water dripping from its smooth surface. As the figure comes to a rest, standing atop the water, the investigators may recognize it as the naked form of Gary Agustine. The young man glows with an unholy inner light. He gives the investigators a thin, confident smile. Watching this bizarre violation of physical laws costs the investigators 0/1d4 points of Sanity.

Augustine says nothing but slowly walks toward the investigators. One by one, he launches psychic attacks at each of the investigators. He knows they have the Ritual of Binding and hopes to kill them before they can cast the spell. Once he reaches the shore, he assumes his bestial form and physically attacks the investigators. More than six feet long, this form resembles a long-legged crocodile with red eyes. It has a long, tooth-filled snout and a powerful, whip-like tail. Its claws are retractable and capable of cutting soft stone.

Gary Augustine, Wilder Shk'ryth: Medium-Size (human form) or Large (ooze and monstrous form) Aberration; HD 10d8+30; hp75 (human or monstrous form) hp 90 (ooze form); Init +2 (human form, Dex), –5 (ooze form, Dex), +5 (monstrous form, Dex); Spd 30 ft. (human form), 10 ft., climb 10 ft. (ooze form), 40 ft. (monstrous form); AC 12 (human form, +2 Dex), 5 (ooze form, –5 Dex), 20 (monstrous form, +5 Dex, +6 natural, –1 size); Atk +10/+5 melee (2 punches, 1d3+3, human form) or +10 melee (slam, 2d4+3, ooze form) or +10 melee (2 claws, 1d4+3, bite, 1d6+2, monstrous form); SA Improved grab, acid 1d6, constrict 2d4+3 and 1d6 acid, engulf, psychic attack, Domain powers, spells; SQ Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., shk'ryth immunities, DR 10 (30 vs. bludgeoning attacks), regeneration 2, shk'ryth resistances, amorphous physiology, blessed alteration; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +12 (human form); Fort +6, Ref –2, Will +12 (ooze form); Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +12 (monstrous form); Str 17, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 21 (human form); Str 17, Dex 1, Con 17, Int 24, Wis 20, Cha 1 (ooze form); Str 21, Dex 19, Con 21, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 13 (monstrous form).

Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +13, Innuendo +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (medicine) +10, Listen +12, Psychic Focus +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting.

Spells: *augury, bind enemy, bind loup-garou, black binding, bring pestilence, cause fear, circle of nausea, cloud memory, contact human, death by flames, deflect harm, detect magic, evil eye, fist of Yog-Sothoth, grasp of Cthulhu, healing touch, insect plague, levitate, message, mindblast, nightmare, pose mundane, power drain, shriveling, steal life*

Twilight Papers #9

From the Eastfield Tribune, dated two years ago

Date ends in tragedy. Student dies in boating accident

One Mandrake University student died and another was in critical condition after their rowboat tipped over in the middle of Lake Mebidji last night.

According to Gary Augustine, the surviving student, he and Audra Preston went boating last night on a date at about 11:00 pm. When one of the oars fell into the water, he tried to retrieve it, but "only made it worse."

"I reached too far over and the boat tipped," he said.

Officials have accepted Augustine's story and are calling the incident an accident. "These things happen," said Sheriff Bill Kallestad. "Kids rent a boat, don't really know what they're doing, and never wear their life jackets. It's tragic, but it happens every couple of years, usually in the fall."

A memorial service for Audra Preston will be held on the campus of Mandrake University tomorrow at 10:00 am.

Garrick shivers as the damp midnight chill seeps through his jacket. He hates the lake—especially at night—and hates meeting Gary out here. He's a city boy; he can admit that. Never learned to swim, never even saw a lake until he left home.

Think about the money, he tells himself, and smiles.

"Thinking about the money, Scott?" Augustine stands naked, pale and unmoving in the dim moonlight.

Garrick forces himself not to start at Gary's sudden appearance. He won't give the freak the satisfaction. What kind of lunatic runs around nude in the woods, anyway? The same kind of lunatic that comes up with the ultimate drug—and lets someone else rake in all the cash.

"Gary, we might be having problems."

"Tell me." Augustine's lips barely move.

"Some people from out of town have been sniffing around. Asking questions. Asking about you."

"I know."

"Then you also know that I didn't tell them anything. Just what you told me to say."

"Yes."

Augustine's calmness is beginning to irritate Garrick.

"Look, what are you going to do? I'm out there taking the heat, working the street for you while you're playing nature boy out here at the lake." He turns and gestures toward the water. "What you see in this, I'll never know."

"On the matter of the interlopers," says Augustine softly. "I am resolving that situation."

"Resolving?" Garrick snaps, and turns to face Gary…but he is no longer there. Garrick sighs and starts back to where he left his car on the road.

Think about the money, he tells himself. Just think about the money.

Calling on the Queen

As the investigators perform the Ritual of Binding, Eastfield undergoes a dimensional shift. All those present (including Augustine) find themselves in the Twilight Land at the foot of the black tower. A low, ominous rumble echoes from the tower, slowly growing louder by the moment. As the sound becomes deafening, a massive crack appears near the top of the tower and spreads downward, shattering stone and splitting the structure in half. The walls of the tower fall away, revealing an enormous yellowish-white, larvae-like creature glistening and writhing within. From its vast being, a thousand eyes mock the universe. This is the Twilight Queen. Everyone viewing this shocking spectacle loses 1d6/1d10 points of Sanity.

Augustine, realizing that he has lost, unleashes his anger and frustration on the only targets available—the investigators. Still in his beast form, he attacks them, chasing them through the bizarre landscape of the Twilight Land until the spell wears off.

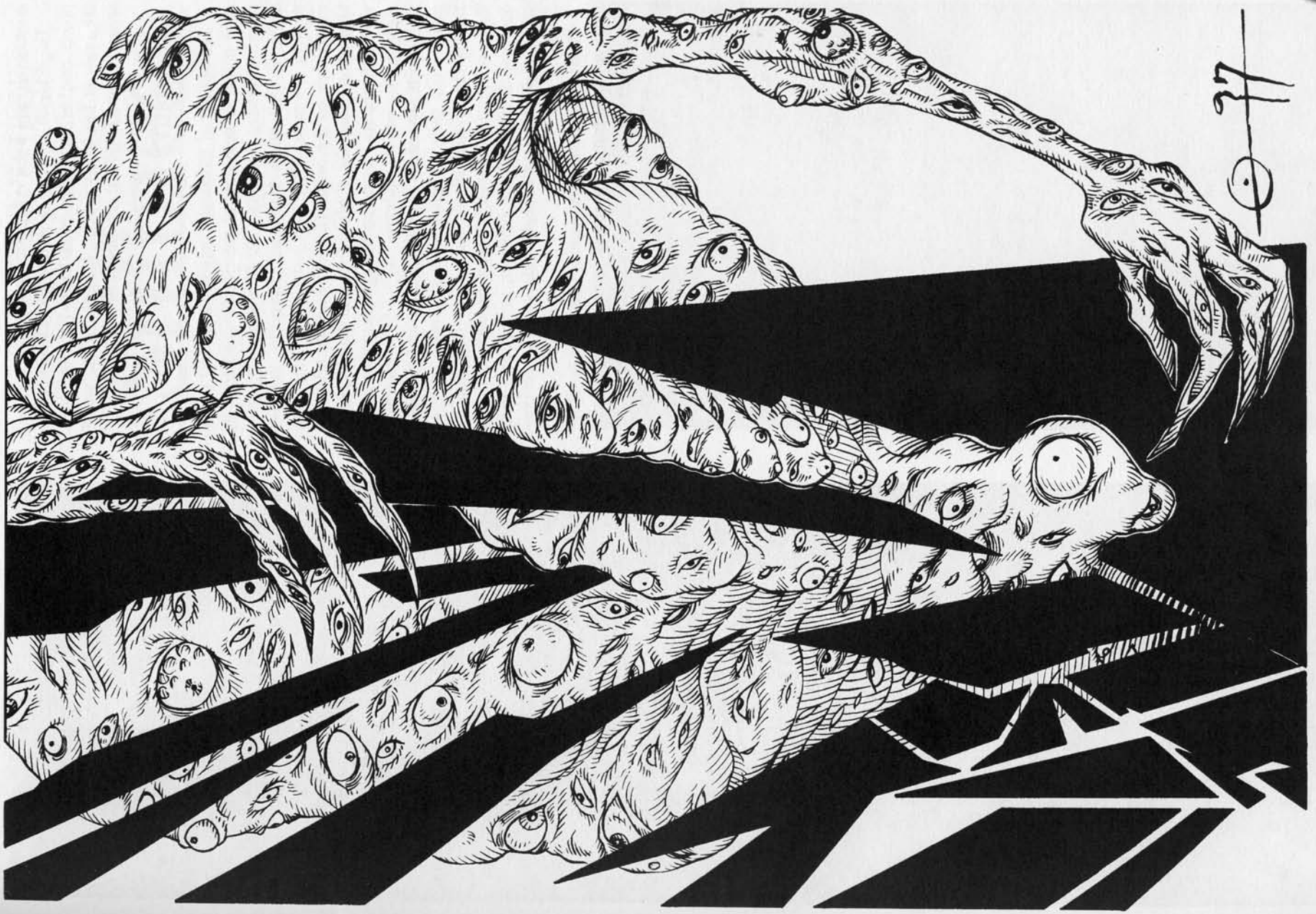
When the spell finally ends, an eye-searing blast of white light bursts from the segmented form, inflicting 1d6 points of damage on all those present. In addition, victims must make Reflex saving throws (DC 18) or be blinded for one minute. When that minute is over, the investigators and anyone who accompanied them are back in their home dimension—but without Augustine. The shk'ryth is now trapped in the Twilight Land, where it must pay eternal homage to the Queen. Characters who make the saving throw see the Twilight Land slowly fade out, as Eastfield gradually gains solidity and form.

With Augustine gone, any mind-controlled pixies revert back to normal. Many addicts, however, have lost too much of their souls and will never recover from their dust-induced torpor. It is a cold comfort that the power of their souls is no longer fueling the shk'ryth but has been consumed by the Twilight Queen. Elizabeth Switzman confirms that the Queen is back to full strength.

An hour later, Gary Augustine's mud-streaked body floats to the surface of Lake Mebidji.

Failure

If, after three days, the investigators have not stopped Augustine, the shk'ryth finally overpowers the Twilight Queen and usurps her power for itself. Jason and Elizabeth Switzman cry out in pain and terror as they witness the destruction of the Queen and an inky shadow wash over the Twilight Land, corrupting all that it touches. In the physical realm, the investigators feel a chill, as a palpable sense of foreboding falls across the town. Elizabeth falls into a coma from which she will never awaken. Soon, Eastfield will know what



it means to have a shk'ryth in residence.

The shk'ryth, reveling in its newfound freedom and power, reaches out with its mind. Vistas long forbidden are open at last to its senses. It explores the world around it...and finds that it is not alone.

Aftermath

The last act of Eastfield's mayor was to call in the state police to help control the riotous conditions in town. Thursday morning, 50 well-armed troopers arrive to shut down Mandrake University and sort through the mess. They stop just short of imposing martial law on the town. The deaths in the town are blamed on overdoses of pixie dust, and the obviously violent deaths are blamed on rioting. The police make many arrests, mostly students.

If the investigators are still in town and the state police find them somewhere suspicious, such as Jason's demolished lab or the corpse-filled duplex, they are arrested. Avoiding arrest or even awkward questions is not difficult, however, as the town is in chaos, making it easy enough to slip away in the confusion.

Three months later, a mineral research and development company buys the mineral rights to Lake Mebidji for an outrageous amount of money. Convinced that there are minerals in the region, the company begins extensive digging and exploration on the lake bottom. The mineral company is Harrison Mining, a division of Tiberius Research, which is a subsidiary of TemCo.





CHAPTER THREE

Stillness

The door chimes tinkle, breaking the silence of the tiny antique store. Hito pays no mind to the shelves of expensive Asian goods, some of them centuries old, on either side of him. Instead he walks directly to the shop's proprietor.

"Ukiko," he says quickly. "I'm here to see Ukiko. I have an appointment."

The old man behind the counter regards his customer silently. Hito is dripping water on the floor, soaked from the storm outside. He doesn't seem to notice. Without speaking, the proprietor points to a curtained doorway at the back of the store.

Hito mutters his thanks and walks quickly to the doorway. He stops at the curtain—which is heavier than it looks—then pushes it aside and steps into a darkened room. A single fat candle illuminates a small round table before him. The wizened face of a woman peers at him from across the table. Flickering shadows play across her wrinkled features, making her seem not entirely physical.

"Mr. Hito," she greets him in Japanese. "Please sit down. You have the photograph?"

"Yes. And the hundred dollars, too." He reaches for his wallet, but Ukiko stops him with a wave of her hand.

"The photograph, Mr. Hito."

Hito slides a Polaroid picture across the table. An attractive young woman frowns up from the picture, *but there is laughter in her eyes. Ukiko holds the picture* close to her face. She squints at it, then closes her eyes and sniffs at it.

"What is your daughter's name, Mr. Hito?"

"Kay."

"And when did you take this picture?"

"Just before she left. She's just bought the camera."

Hito's voice trails off as he realizes that something is happening. Ukiko has not opened her eyes, but they are twitching furiously behind their lids. Her knuckles are white as she clutches the photograph in trembling fists. A look of pain and horror washes over her dimly lit face.

"No," she whispers.

The candle's flame flares up. Ukiko shakes her head vigorously. Tears seep from her eyes. She cries out and the tears leave red trails down her cheeks.

"What is it? Is Kay in danger? Tell me. I must know."

"No!"

The old woman throws the photograph down and lurches to her feet.

"Go now, Mr. Hito. Go now and never come back."

"But what about Kay? What did you see?"

"Go, Mr. Hito. Go home."

Hito resists the urge to grab the old woman and shake her. "Dammit! What did you see?"

Ukiko bites her trembling lip and shakes her head. "You daughter belongs to the demon, Mr. Hito. And now, so do you."

Starshine baby
sleep tonight.
Mama watches you.
When you wake with sunshine warming
your cherub smile
tell Mama all your dreams:
the stunning alien worlds
you form,
the fantastic lives
you live.
When you cry in the night,
when your worlds grow too dark,
Mama will be there
to chase away
that fear.
The fear I gave you.

— Naomi Hito

The adventure begins in San Francisco, then takes the investigators into the mountain peaks of California. An ancient evil awaits them there, lurking in the ruins of an old monastery and preying on the fears of a dying village. It is assumed that the investigators have made a reputation for themselves as paranormal researchers.

Investigator's Introduction

One of the investigators receives a letter, written in the tight, neat script of Ken Hito, a Japanese-American painter in San Francisco. Mr. Hito's daughter is missing, and he suspects supernatural foul play. He has heard of the investigators' experience in such matters, and requests their help in finding Kay, his only child (see the Stillness Papers #1).

If the investigators wish, they can contact Mr. Hito by phone. He is very gracious and answers any questions that he can, but is insistent that, if they are going to help him, they must do so very soon. He feels that Kay is in great danger, and that there is little time left to save her.

Investigators who look into Mr. Hito's background find that he is a moderately successful painter, specializing in modem art. All of his showings have been in California, and all but one in San Francisco, but his work receives consistently positive reviews and some pieces have sold for impressive amounts. Digging into the artist's personal life reveals that he is 56 years old, his daughter is 23, and his wife Naomi, a published poet, died of cancer nine years ago. He has no criminal record.

Gamemaster's Introduction

Two weeks ago, a shk'ryth manifestation and one of the few remaining monks at the Still Mountain monastery, kidnapped Kay. What Kay's father neglected to mention in his letter is that Kay is a very powerful psychic, capable of not only perceiving the world beyond her senses, but also actually changing and transforming it. As a high-ranking member of the organized shk'ryth, the creature who calls himself Kage abducted the girl when he sensed her power and has been conducting experiments on her in an effort to understand and improve human psychic potential. If he can find a way to increase a psychic's power, he can upgrade the Tyrr Nemaii and bring about the end that much sooner.

History of Still Valley

In 1918, a young Japanese Buddhist monk named Taki left his family in the San Francisco area and ventured out into the mountains. He was searching for a less crowded place, a place of solitude where he could perfect his meditations. It was on the slopes of Mount Handemo, a few miles from the present-day town of Yreka, that Taki found what he was looking for: a still glen of stark, alien beauty, its surface broken only by a single sycamore tree. The spot called to the young monk, and he meditated there beneath the sycamore for three days straight, achieving an unprecedented state of calm.

Unbeknownst to Taki, this calm resulted not from enlightenment, but from contact with a dark intelligence contained within the rock of the glen itself. Its alien mind, stirred by the monk's meditations, gave him a detachment that he mistook for inner peace. The calm was actually nothing more than a by-product of the shk'ryth reading Taki's thoughts and draining his sentience in an effort to understand humanity.

Taki found the barren mountain serene and dedicated the rest of his life to meditation and prayer in the still glen. Driven thoroughly mad by his years of mental contact with the shk'ryth, Taki committed suicide by stepping off the side of the mountain in 1924, but not before a fledgling Japanese-American community sprang up around the still glen. A tiny, makeshift monastery was built on the mountain slope just below the glen itself, and a small village of Japanese-Americans grew up in the gloomy valley below the monastery.

During the Second World War, many of the villagers were forced to leave the valley for relocation camps. None of them returned, feeling strangely relieved to leave their homes—and the bizarre, disturbing nightmares—far behind. In the 1960s and 1970s, the mountain's population shrank further as most of the young people left the valley to pursue their dreams outside the mountain town. In 1993, an earthquake all but destroyed the monastery, forcing most of the monks to leave the mountain as well. Today, only a few elderly villagers and a handful of monks still call Still Mountain their home.

Stillness Papers #1

Dear Friend,

While I have never had the pleasure of meeting you in person, certain mutual acquaintances of ours have assured me that you and your associates are experienced and capable in the matters of which I am writing. If this is indeed not the case, I offer my humble apologies for disturbing you, and wish that you trouble yourselves no further on my behalf.

My daughter, Kay, is missing. Five weeks ago, she left San Francisco for the village of Still Mountain, where she was to stay with my brother, Nakamura, who is a beekeeper there. I have just received word from my brother that Kay has not been seen for three weeks. He did not mention it before, assuming that she merely had returned home.

But what truly troubles me is that two weeks ago, a man called me from Still Mountain, asking personal questions about Kay's childhood, her fears and her mother. When I refused to answer these questions, he grew angry and a chill came over me. I have never known true evil before, but somehow I knew I was hearing the voice of a demon. He never told me his name. It was then that I contacted my brother.

I spoke to a wise woman about these things, and she confirmed that there are dark forces at work, threatening my daughter. I am no longer a young man, and in no condition to climb mountains and fight demons. Yet I fear for Kay's life, and in desperation I turn to you.

I am not a wealthy man, but I am willing and able to pay for your travel expenses. Time is short, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ken Hito

Kage

In 1947, the shk'ryth that Taki originally contacted physically manifested in Still Mountain. An old man

even then, he called himself Kage and assumed the role of a monk in the monastery in order to have access to the still glen, which is the center of his power.

Over the next four decades, Kage made contact with the other civilized shk'ryth and was an integral figure in the implementation of the Tyrr Nemaii project. His most recent contribution to the cause was the building of a small but powerful observatory dedicated to locating and tracking the comet SH-01. Funded by TemCo, the observatory was built "in the interests of pure science" just outside the village in 1993. When an earthquake destroyed half the monastery and cut off his route to the still glen, Kage made a last minute change to the observatory blueprints: He added a secret passage leading from the building to the glen. This is currently the only reliable path into the glen (see the section on Still Mountain for details).

Arthur Wix, the English astronomer hired to man the observatory, has recently located the comet SH-01, and theorized that its path will bring it dangerously close to the Earth. Unfortunately for Kage, the scientist is threatening to leak this information to the world, even though his exclusive contract with TemCo explicitly prohibits him from doing so. Kage has revealed to Wix his identity as a TemCo representative and threatened to kill him if he continues to "spread irresponsible rumors." Now that the comet's approach has been confirmed, Kage feels that Wix may be outliving his usefulness.

Kay Hito



As the only child of two starving artists, Kay knew nothing but poverty for the first part of her life. Growing up in the poorest, most dilapidated tenements that the inner city had to offer, she developed a terrible fear of rats and cockroaches that haunts her to this day. (When she was three, she was accidentally locked in the basement for two hours. By the time her parents found her, she was covered with bloody rat bites.)

Even as her parents' income improved, growing up was difficult for Kay. As she entered adolescence, her psychic abilities began to manifest as erratic, uncontrollable episodes of ESP, telepathy, and psychokinesis—and the other children avoided her like the freak she was. All these problems grew worse as Kay watched her mother lose a long, painful battle with cancer.

More out of desperation than anything else, Kay's father tried to use hypnosis on her when she turned 19, in an effort to help her control her psychic abilities. He created a "block" on her powers, burying them deep within her subconscious mind, so that she could not use them even if she tried. The experiment was a success, and Kay's psychic problems virtualy disappeared. She remained an otherwise troubled girl, however, dabbling in drugs and petty crime.

Searching for Stillness

A year ago, Ken Hito received a letter from his brother, Nakamura, who still lived in Still Mountain. Hito had moved away from the village as a teenager and never returned; this was the first he had heard from his brother in decades. After several months of correspondence, Nakamura agreed to let Kay stay with him, and to teach the girl his profession of beekeeping. Hito jumped at the chance to remove his daughter from the clutch of the city and felt that putting her in touch with her ethnic roots could only help her. Kay didn't care for the idea of keeping bees but liked the idea of leaving her father and his rules far behind.

When Kay arrived at Still Mountain, Kage sensed her presence as if it was a flare on a moonless night. Though blocked out of her conscious mind, the girl's psychic potential radiated off her in waves, washing over the monk, drenching him in her raw, unchanneled power. She was easily the most powerful psychic he had ever met. If he could unlock the secret of this power, Kage realized, he could use it to enhance the psychics working on the Tyrr Nemaii project, more than doubling their output.

Kage made it a point to befriend the young woman. He soon discovered that while Kay recognized that she once had a power beyond her understanding or control, it had disappeared some time ago—and she was grateful for it. Undaunted, the monk kidnapped the girl while she was out hiking three weeks ago. He took her to his hidden laboratory beneath the still glen, where he performed obscene experiments on her body and mind. The experiments were a complete failure. The block that Kay's father put on her remained in place, stymieing the monk's efforts to activate and study the girl's psychic abilities. When she fell into a coma, it only made the situation worse.

In frustration, Kage called Ken Hito on the village's only telephone. He knew there was a block on the girl, but had no idea what had caused it. The monk questioned Hito about any traumatic incidents in Kay's past, but the father refused to answer. Desperate for answers, Kage paid Hito a visit a day before the investigators arrived and tortured the truth out of him.

Triumphant, the evil monk has returned to Still Mountain to finish his experiment. He has no idea that Hito has called the investigators in to help.

An Unexpected Complication

Kage's visit to San Francisco did not go unnoticed. The Shk'ryth's arrival sent out a ripple through the ether connecting all those attuned to such things; when the monk arrived at Hito's building, a shadowy figure was following him. The mysterious shadow observed Kage's handiwork in Hito's apartment and reported these findings to its hidden, unholy high priest. The priest, in turn, communed with his god...and his god, Nyarlathotep, was not pleased.

San Francisco

The trip to Ken Hito's apartment building in San Francisco is without incident, though the investigators may find it unnerving that, as of 24 hours before their meeting with him, Mr. Hito is not answering his phone.

Hito's apartment is a converted loft on the fifth floor of an apartment building, accessible by a freight elevator and a wide, concrete staircase. While the building is more utilitarian than luxurious (lots of bricks and concrete, no carpeting, bright industrial-style lighting), it is nothing like the squalor that the Hitos once knew. There is only one other apartment on this floor.

The door to the apartment is unlatched and swings open if anyone knocks on it. Inside, the investigators see a spacious living room/studio area: the furniture set, bookshelves, and entertainment center seem out of place among the many canvases and easels. To the right is a smaller kitchen area, and the studio is to the left. The entire area is well lit by skylights and a massive row of windows running along the back wall.

Four cats greet the investigators at the door, mewing loudly. They are very friendly and obviously (to anyone who has lived with a cat) very hungry. If the investigators let them, the cats lead them to the kitchen, where they whine and scratch at the refrigerator. When the refrigerator is opened, the skinless, broken body of Ken Hito slips out and flops onto the floor. The investigator opening the fridge must make a Reflex save (DC 12) to avoid the toppling corpse. If the investigator fails the saving throw, he loses 1d4/1d6 points of Sanity. Any investigators who see the corpse fall out of the refrigerator—including the one opening the door—also lose 1/1d3 points of Sanity.

A heavy scent rolls out of the fridge and permeates the apartment, a smell similar to rotting eggs mixed with some exotic perfume. Investigators who have encountered the shk'ryth before may identify the smell (on a successful Spot check, DC 15) as a sign that one of that race has been here recently. If the investigators have not met Hito in person before, they cannot confirm that the skinless body before them is indeed him, though it is a reasonable assumption. A successful Knowledge (biology) or (medicine) check (DC 20) reveals that the body is that of an Asian male.

Stillness Papers #2

From Last Writes by Naomi Hito, Copyright 1986

Other Books of Poetry by Naomi Hito
Published by Nephew House:

Secrets of the Void, 1978
Beauty in Nothing, 1980
Freefalling, Falling Free, 1983
The Book of Whispers, 1984

Unless the investigators stop them, the four cats greedily begin to devour the bloody carcass.

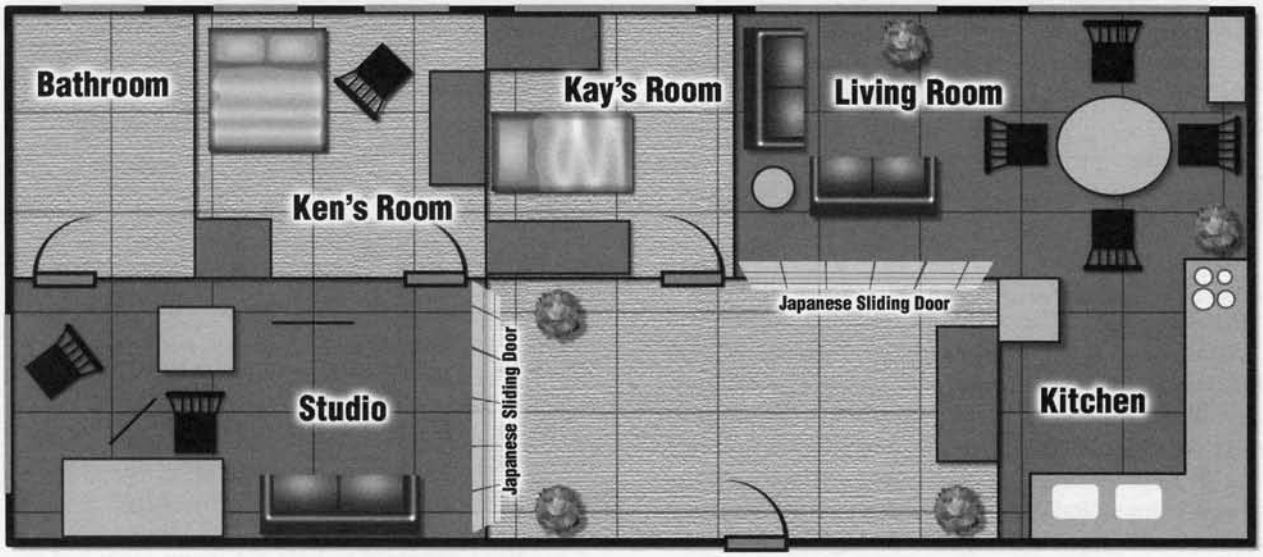
No one else is in the apartment, and the investigators can take as much time as they need to search the rest of the rooms.

Studio: Connected to both the living room and the kitchen, the studio stretches the length of the apartment. There are seven easels erected here with canvases on them and numerous canvases stretched over frames leaning against the walls. Most of the paintings are abstract combinations of colors and shapes, seemingly without form or definition. One of the blank canvases, stretched across a frame and propped up on an easel, seems strangely unlike the others: long strips of canvas hang from the edges of the frame, and it smells like slightly spoiled meat. A Search check (DC 10) confirms what the investigators may have already suspected—it is not a canvas at all, but the skin of Ken Hito stretched across the frame. Investigators who make this discovery lose 1/1d4 points of Sanity.

Living Room: In a bookcase full of high-brow literary works, one section of one shelf is dedicated to the collected published works of Naomi Hito, Ken's late wife. There are four paperback books here, though a successful Search check (DC 10) reveals an empty space where another should have been, between the third and fifth books. On the opening page of the fifth book there is a list of other books of poetry by Naomi Hito (see the Stillness Papers #2). The missing tome is entitled The Book of Whispers. The key phrase for unlocking Kay's psychic potential is contained in this book, which Kage took with him. Unfortunately for Kage, Ken only revealed the name of the book and not the poem with the key phrase in it.

Kay's Bedroom: The girl's bedroom is neat but is otherwise like that of most 23 year olds (her father cleaned it up after she left). Posters on her wall suggest that Kay has a great love for cats and horses, and the litter box and bag of cat food at the foot of her bed sug-

The Hitos' Apartment



gest that the love goes beyond mere pictures. One prominent poster features a magnificent white horse with a red heart on its flank drinking from a pool in a fantasy forest. Hanging over the girl's bed are a pair of noh-style porcelain masks.

Perceptive investigators who make successful Search checks (DC 15) notice a hardbound diary in a bookshelf full of paperback romance novels. The diary has a clasp, which has been broken open, and all but its first few pages have been torn out (see the Stillness Papers #3). Dried bloodstains cover the pages—Ken's blood, though the investigators have no way of knowing this immediately. Kage started to read the diary while he was here, in an effort to trace Kay's block, but decided to simply take the unread pages with him instead.

Ken's Bedroom: This room is as neat as Kay's, except the bed is unmade. The only items of interest are a dog-eared paperback, *Living Better Through Hypnosis*, and a sketchbook with some of Ken's preliminary designs in it. Both books are beneath the bed and can be discovered with a routine Search check (DC 10).

The Neighbor

During their investigation, the characters may think to knock on the door of the only other apartment on the floor, in hopes that its occupant may have heard or seen something. If not, it is possible that the neighbor comes out of his own accord, to see what all the ruckus is across the hall.

Nabu Atmahahdi moved to San Francisco from India in 1970 and still has a thick Indian accent. He also loves to tell a good story and keep his audience in suspense, so his tale is much more dramatic than it needs to be. About 24 hours ago, he saw a small, old Asian man knocking on Ken Hito's door. Ken seemed suspicious at first, and wasn't going to let the man in, until the old man mentioned "Still Mountain." Two hours later, the old man left, carrying a small book in his hand.

Nabu is only casually acquainted with Ken and Kay and can tell the investigators very little about them. "Artists, they are. Rich, they are not." He knows that Kay is something of a troublemaker and has been brought home by the police on more than one occasion. He can also tell the investigators about Naomi's poetry. "I've read all five books, though I haven't bought them."

The Agent

Nyarlathotep finds it unacceptable that an unknown entity is affecting the mortal realm. The Crawling Chaos desires to know who or what is causing this disturbance and why. To this end, he has dispatched an agent to look into the matter. A supernatural creature from beyond our reality, the agent has cloaked itself—as well as it is able—with the form of a human male for this assignment.

The agent has been keeping an eye on the Hito residence since it arrived. It spies on the investigators while they are in the apartment, and follows them when they leave. They may feel that an alien intelligence is watching them, but under no circumstances should they actually see the agent. If the investigators do not take the diary from Kay's room, the agent does so.

The Book of Whispers

Despite its ominous-sounding title, this book is exactly what it claims to be—a collection of poetry by Naomi Hito—and investigators looking for arcane lore will have to look elsewhere.

Once they have its title and author, the investigators may try to track down a copy of the book for themselves. This is no easy task. Nephew House was a small publishing company that closed up shop in 1990. Based out of Northfield, Minnesota, the company only published a thousand copies of Naomi's book and sold them to small, independent bookstores across North America. Very few university libaries and even fewer public libraries have copies of the book.

The investigators' best chance at finding the book is to have it special ordered through a used or rare bookstore that specializes in such things. Even then, the process is expensive and takes at least two days.

The Book of Whispers is important only in that it contains the poem that Ken Hito used as the key to Kay's hypnotic block. The problem is, there are more than 200 poems in the book, some of them quite lengthy, and no one knows which poem is the key.

Still Mountain

Built into a saddle near a mountain peak in the Diablo Range, the village is an orderly huddle of modest houses and shops. The architecture mixes traditional thatch with California adobe, though many of the buildings have fallen into disrepair and those on the outskirts of the village have collapsed into ruin. The town supports itself by farming, and terrace farms have been built into the slopes of the mountain. Perceptive investigators who make a Knowledge (archaeology) or (geography) check (DC 12) may notice that many of the terraces have not been used in years. There is one dirt road running through the town; at one end is the Still Mountain monastery, and at the other is the beginning of the Way, a narrow, treacherous road that snakes its way up the mountain. The Way is the only road in and out of Still Mountain.

Gamemaster's Information

Hidden within the still glen, Kay has fallen into a deep coma—partly due to Kage's ministrations and partly as a defense mechanism. Behind her tightly closed eyes, Kay is writhing in the grip of terrible nightmares. Deep-rooted fears wash over her in a tidal wave of terror; nauseating memories long buried are ripped from their graves to haunt her once more; images she once held dear are transfigured into mocking, horrific parodies of what they once were. And through it all, the shapeless demon slithers through her brain, stabbing her with needles and demanding answers to questions she cannot comprehend.

While Kay does not have conscious access to her psychic abilities, they are still capable of reacting on an unconscious level to outside stimuli—such as Kage's probes. As the twisted monk dredges up the girl's memories and fears through an unholy combination of drugs and magic, they are warped by her fevered mind and given substance by her innate power (often accompanied by the words of Kage, which penetrate even her dreams). These manifestations are not illusions, but they are not real either. Rather, they are psychic essence given temporary physical form. For example, a herd of Kay's rats can bite an investigator, drawing blood, but when the rat vanishes a moment after, the wound remains.

Kay's psychic manifestations have been terrorizing the village of Still Mountain for several days when the investigators arrive. Most of the villagers don't realize that anything unusual is going on, but those who do are full of superstitious theories as to what is causing the disturbance, and suggest various sacrifices and the like to placate the gods. The investigators encounter two of these manifestations immediately upon arriving at Still Mountain (see below) and will likely encounter more as they search the area for Kay. The young psychic's tortured dreams take on many forms; for more descriptions of these phantasms, see the next page.

Stillness Papers #3

From the diary of Kay Hito, dated five years ago

The headaches are okay, I guess, but the worst part, the part that totally sucks, is how they make everyone around me all pissed off at me. I mean, like it's my fault. Yeah, their heads hurt, but so does mine, and I don't go psycho over it.

Sometimes, I know what they're thinking. If they're really pissed, or concentrating, it's like they're talking right to me, only their lips aren't moving. I know what they're thinking, and it scares me. I never knew these people—my friends, kinda—were capable of this stuff. Of even thinking it. And it scares me that maybe someday they'll go beyond just thinking it. Then what?

Daddy says he has an idea, something that might help, but I don't know. The old man's only got so many good ideas in him, and they all go into his paintings.

Kay's Psychic Manifestations

Below are a few descriptions of Kay's nightmares and how they can affect the investigators. There is no set timetable for when the investigators encounter these manifestations, but the GM should feel free to use them when dramatically appropriate, while being careful not to overuse them. This list is by no means exhaustive. If inspired, the GM should create phantasms specifically designed with the investigators in mind. Unless otherwise noted, all of these encounters cost the investigators who witness them 1/1d3 points of Sanity.

Vermin

Ever since she was bitten as a little girl living in the projects, Kay has had a terrible fear of rats. Sure enough, the village and monastery are now crawling with filthy, glowing-eyed vermin. Rats appear in the most impossible places: inside locked cupboards, under the covers of a neatly made bed, inside a closed suitcase. And they are never alone—if there is one rat, there is a writhing, squeaking horde of them, stinking of sewage and baring their teeth threateningly. The rats prefer to flee when exposed but will attack to defend themselves or escape.

A second manifestation is a giant black rat. Standing two feet tall at the shoulder and measuring over two feet long from nose to tail, the beast is ravenous and without fear, it stalks audaciously into the kitchen of the Gentle Rest and helps itself to whatever food it finds. Guests at the hospice may find dead, half-eaten birds and cats littering the ground, mute evidence of the giant rat's omnivorous nature. Like its smaller brethren, the giant rat would rather flee than fight but is vicious when cornered.

Creepy-Crawlies

More times than she cares to remember, Kay has turned on the kitchen lights at night and seen dozens of cockroaches scurrying for cover. More horrible yet were the times they didn't scurry, but defiantly stood their ground, antennae wriggling above their glistening carapaces. Like the rats, the roaches always appear in great numbers, usually completely filling whatever space they occupy. They especially like crawling on investigators while they sleep.

The White Mask

A slender figure dressed in a black body stocking and a white porcelain mask is stalking Still Mountain. Its features are painted on but change from one moment to the next: At first it seems to be smiling, then frowning, then exposing a row of razor sharp teeth. The figure is never close enough to attack or be attacked by the investigators but prefers to play a deadly game of hide-and-seek, luring them to the edge of a cliff or some other hazardous location. The figure never speaks, and even moving, makes no sound whatsoever.

Skin Deep

Like many young women, Kay is very insecure about her physical appearance. While many people have told her that she is attractive, deep down she has never been truly convinced and lives in fear that people will someday notice how ugly she really is.

One investigator may lose his hair at dramatically appropriate moments. The loss is painless but costs its victim 0/1 points of Sanity. (Once the victim leaves the area, the hair eventually grows back.) Another manifestation of Kay's fear of ugliness is a case of swollen red sores that appear across the investigator's face and down her arms. The sores start out as pinpricks but grow to blisters the size of nickels in an hour. These blisters then burst, spewing blood and thick yellow pus, then disappear completely, leaving not even a pockmark on the skin.

Welcoming Committee

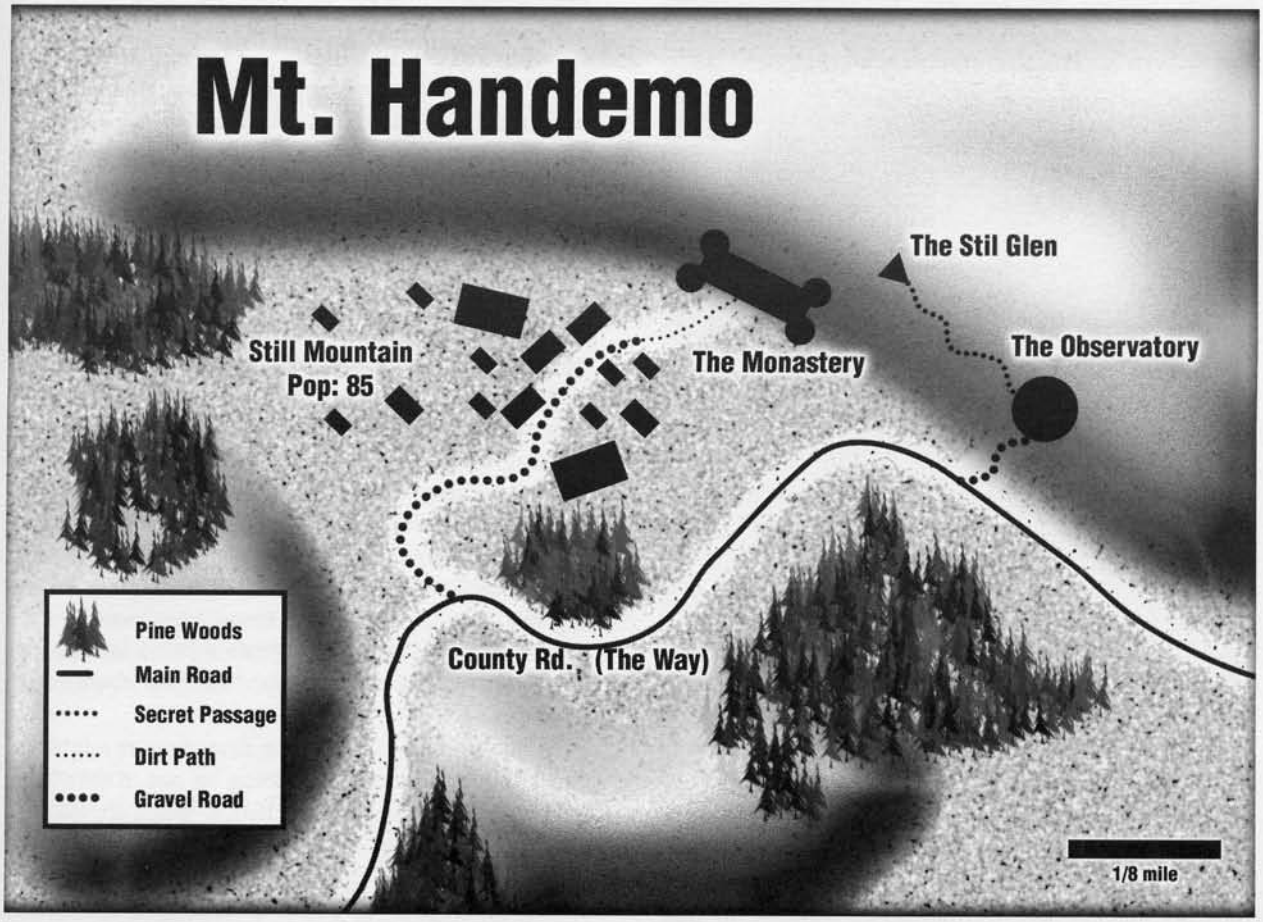
The road to Still Mountain is challenging under the best of conditions and downright dangerous when the investigators finally approach the villiage, well after dark. A thick fog covers the valley, the mountain peak, and the road itself. The headlights of the investigators' vehicle help but penetrate the gloom just far enough to keep them on the road.

Out of the fog before them, a large, dark form suddenly takes shape and hurtles directly towards them. The form is running on four spindly legs, its body outlined in flame. It isn't until the beast is practically on top of them that the investigators recognize the figure: a jet-black horse with a heart-shaped chunk torn from its side. The horse's ribs are visible, and it is bleeding liquid fire. A grating, not-quite human voice fills the air: "Your secrets are mine!" The voice seems to be coming from the horse, but the investigators cannot be sure.

Moments before the flaming beast is about to collide with the investigators' vehicle, it leaps into the air and over the roof of the vehicle...and disappears in midair. Those witnessing this bizarre apparition lose 0/1d2 points of Sanity.

Just as the investigators' breathing returns to nor-

Map of Still Mountain



mal, one or two of them feel something crawling on them. Turning on a light reveals hundreds of cockroaches spilling into the vehicle through its air vents, scurrying beneath the seats and burrowing into the investigators' clothing as if seeking warmth—or food. Less than a minute later, the roaches have disappeared. (Investigators may suspect that the insects are merely hiding in the vehicle or in their clothing. Sadistic gamemasters may wish to encourage this suspicion.)

The investigators' final encounter on the road begins when one of them notices a small, dim light approaching them from below. A minute passes, and they can discern the form of a man on an old bicycle traveling along the road towards the village. As he gets closer, they see that he is a middle-aged oriental man dressed in simple clothing, a round, wide-brimmed straw hat, and a long red scarf. He is completely oblivious to the investigators and will ignore them unless they call out or otherwise stop him.

If the investigators stop the bicyclist, he greets them with a wide, idiotic smile and a half-bow. "Takashi," he says. "Takashi likes tea. Tea is good." No matter what the investigators say or do, this harmless moron does nothing more than smile, nod, and comment on his love for tea. Once allowed to do so, Takashi continues on his way to Still Mountain and the monastery. (For more information on Takashi, see the Investigation section, page 96.)

The Gentle Rest

In the early 1980s, Still Mountain saw a shortlived boom of tourism. Hoping to capitalize on what they thought was a new trend, Hideki and Amika Saito refurbished their home and its outbuildings, turning their property into a bed and breakfast establishment. Unfortunately, the tourist boom lasted only two seasons, not nearly long enough to pay for the renovations the Saitos had purchased. Now all but one of the cottages are run down and infested, barely inhabitable. The Saitos are equally run down in their own way, infested with a deep bitterness that taints their attitude towards outsiders—even their guests.

Nevertheless, their lights are the only ones on when the investigators arrive in the village, and a faded wooden vacancy sign beckons them with promises of warm, soft beds. After Mr. Saito leads them brusquely through the check-in process, the investigators are assigned to cottage number four. Though Spartan, the

Mrs. Saito hums a song to herself as she washes dishes at the sink. It is a new song, though similar to one her mother used to hum. Mrs. Saito would like to sing the song out loud—she has the house to herself for the next hour—but she hasn't given it words. I shall have to make some up, she thinks, and opens her mouth, waiting for the words to come. Instead she hears the light tinkle of glass on glass from the cupboard near the sink, and panic seizes her heart.

"Quake," she gasps involuntarily and lurches toward the kitchen doorway. She is getting used to it, growing attuned to the tiny warning signals a moment before a quake: the sense of vertigo, the subsonic rumble she feels in her gut, and the sound of glasses rattling. After six years of living in California, she is finally getting used to it, but still she closes her eyes and holds her breath waiting for the inevitable.

But it never comes.

Opening her eyes, Mrs. Saito lets out a sigh. She is as embarrassed as she is relieved and glad that no one was here to see her panic. She shakes her head, giggles to herself, and freezes as the glasses rattle in the cupboard once more.

Behind the wooden cupboard doors, they clank and clatter as if jumping around under their own power. She hears two of them break against each other.

Frowning, Mrs. Saito wills her heart to stop racing. "This is not an earthquake, " she whispers to herself sternly. "I can handle this." With determined steps she crosses the kitchen and opens the cupboard doors, gagging on the methane stench of raw eggs.

Rats. Dozens—no, hundreds of them—scurrying between the stemware and the juice glasses, crawling over plates, bowls, and each other. Light reflects off the rodents' black eyes as they turn as one to look at Mrs. Saito.

She doesn't scream when the rats burst from the cupboard and crash down on her in a writhing, stinking wall of fur. She doesn't scream when they burrow into her hair, her sweater. She doesn't scream when one of them pokes its head into her still gagging mouth, but pushes it away with her tongue and clamps her jaws and eyes shut tight.

Mrs. Saito doesn't scream until it's over. And then the vomiting begins.

cottage is a converted stable, thus larger than the others and roomy enough for all the investigators to sleep comfortably.

For the remainder of their stay at Still Mountain, the investigators can find meals and lodging at the Gentle Rest. Breakfast is complimentary though sparse, but other meals are bland and overpriced. The Gentle Rest also has the only telephone in town. It is not a pay phone, though Mrs. Saito charges everyone a dollar a call to use it—plus any long distance charges.

Cottage #4

During the night, one of the investigators may be awakened by the sound of someone in the darkened cottage singing quietly in Japanese. When the lights are turned on, the investigators are alone in the room and the singing stops.

The singing is actually that of Kuratagi, a young Japanese-American refugee who was to be relocated by the U.S. government during the 1940s. When he refused to leave Still Mountain, the Army came looking for him. The soldiers found him hiding in the Saitos' barn and shot him to death on the spot. His spirit still haunts the place, trapped here by its own deep sorrow.

Aside from the singing, the investigators might also see a young Japanese man sitting on one of their beds, sobbing with his head in his hands. When approached, he looks up at them, revealing a bloody, pulpy mass of bullet holes where his face should be (investigators seeing this lose 1/1d4 points of Sanity). If the investigators try to communicate with the ghost, all he says is, "I will not go, you must understand—this is my home."

Investigation

Beginning the next morning, the investigators are free to explore the area and ask the villagers about Kay Hito's disappearance. Those with whom the investigators speak are polite but aloof and would obviously prefer not to deal with outsiders, instead referring all their questions to Nakamura, Kay's uncle. "He is family," they say. "We know nothing more than he does." Nevertheless, the investigators get the impression that Kay's disappearance was no surprise to anyone. She was no happier here than she was at home. The villagers assumed that she had either returned home or fallen off the edge of the cliff. Either way, it didn't concern them.

The village is a dreary, dismal place by the light of day—a patch of collapsed and rundown buildings bordered on two sides by treacherous cliffs and a sheer mountain face on a third.

Nightmares

As long as there have been people on this mountain, there have been people tormented by terrible dreams. Even Taki, who founded the Still Mountain settlement, would have been driven away by the nightmares had he not found what he thought to be true enlightenment here.

Those who grew up on the mountain have known precious few restful, dreamless nights of sleep. Not knowing any different, they merely accept this psychological torture as their lot. The end results of this phenomenon are twofold: First, those who spend their lives on the mountain are much closer to insanity, and prone to anger and violence and a dark outlook on life. Second, those who leave the mountain and experience life without nightmares almost never come back. This is Still Mountain's legacy.

While they are visiting Still Mountain, the investigators will also have nightmares. While the actual dreams should be designed by the GM to prey on the investigators' weaknesses, the shk'ryth-induced nightmares often have themes of darkness, claustrophobia, and dirt, of horrible, mind-shattering truths held just out of reach, and of destruction raining down from the stars.

Nakamura

The investigators will more than likely wish to speak with Nakamura, Kay's uncle, as the elderly beekeeper was the last person to see her alive. They can find the old man behind his small house on the outskirts of the village, where he maintains a dozen box-like hives. He is surprised to see the investigators. He had expected Hito, his brother, to come looking for Kay himself. If the investigators tell him that Hito is dead, he accepts it with the sad resignation of a man used to being stung.



Kay spent two weeks with Nakamura, so he knows a little bit about the girl. He knows that she spent her early childhood in poverty and that she has a terrible fear of vermin. ("She saw a field mouse in the yard once. She screamed until she was hoarse and refused to leave the house for the rest of the day. Very sad.") He also knows that Kay is psychic, though he does not put it in those terms. Before she arrived, Kay's father warned his brother that the girl used to suffer from "hearing the thoughts of others, and accidentally making her own thoughts heard—or felt." (For a copy of the last letter Hito sent to his brother, see the Stillness Papers #4.)

Nakamura answers the investigators' questions to the best of his ability. If the investigators do not think to ask, he offers to show them the small room where Kay was staying. "She took very little with her when she disappeared," says Nakamura. Kay's room is long and narrow, barely wide enough for the cot inside, with a door at one end and a window at the other. Under the cot is a cardboard box full of clothing—some of it clean, some of it not—a diary, and a shoebox of old photographs from her childhood.

The diary is the same style as the investigators found in Kay's room in San Francisco, and they will have to break the clasp or pick the lock (Open Lock, DC 10) to open it. Inside the cover of the diary is a candid photograph of a Caucasian woman in her 30s. She is smiling down at a little girl in a blue dress. On the back of the photograph, the words "To my little book of whispers" are written in green ink. Investigators making Spot checks (DC 15) realize that the picture is of Naomi, Kay's mother, taken when Kay was still young. Those who see the pictures of Kay (see below) realize she has her mother's eyes. For information on the diary itself, see the Stillness Papers #5.

There are 23 photographs in the box: pictures of the scenery around Still Mountain, mostly, though some of them feature the villagers outside their homes. In six of the photos, Kay herself is pictured posing with villagers and the local architecture. She is smiling and looks relaxed, though dressed warmly against the chill mountain wind in a thick sweater and a long red scarf. Perceptive investigators recognize the scarf as eerily similar to the one that Takashi was wearing. If asked about the scarf, Nakamura says that he never noticed it before. But now that the investigators mention it, he remembers that Kay always wore it when she went outside.

If the investigators put off visiting Nakamura until after their second day in town, they are too late. As of the morning of the third day, the old man is dead (see the Joseph Fowler section, below, for details). The investigators can still search the house, however, and find the diary and photographs just the same.

Still Mountain Observatory

The TemCo-sponsored observatory lies on the eastern edge of town, some 200 yards from the side of the mountain. It is a two-story building topped by the great dome typical of observatories everywhere. Upstairs is the large open area of the observatory, complete with a decent-size telescope and a state-of-the-art computer system. Downstairs is the astronomer's living area, which he keeps fastidiously clean and well stocked with food and wine.

One of the kitchen walls in Wix's home is made up of large wooden panels, one of which is actually a

Stillness Papers #4

Letter ftom Ken Hito, dated six weeks ago

My Dear Brother,

I must thank you for allowing Kay to stay with you. While I love my daughter very much, she is no longer a child, and I can no longer protect her from the seductive and dangerous world she seems so intent on exploring. I can only stand by as she spends night after wasted night searching until dawn for hollow thrills and empty, temporary highs. I can only watch, and it makes me sad.

Of course, Kay's life has never been easy. Even before her mother died, she suffered from a peculiar sensitivity that, in a different time and place, might have been a tremendous gift. Instead, it made her an outcast among the other children. Even strangers—even adults—could feel her strangeness and power and turn away from her. For Kay could often hear the thoughts of others and accidentally make her own thoughts heard—or felt. She is a wildfire, bright and hot but without direction.

I tell you these things not only to help you understand my daughter, but also as a warning. Some years ago, I took it upon myself to work with Kay, to subdue her wild talents and corral them into a forgotten corner of her mind. She is no longer the vortex of power and turmoil she once was, but be careful, brother. The chaos has not been removed from my daughter; it has merely been lulled to sleep.

But I grow dramatic in my old age! The important thing is that Kay is coming to stay with you, away from the corrupting influence of the city—and that pack of hoodlums she calls friends. She has expressed a sincere interest in learning of our family's history and heritage. I hope that you can help her in these studies.

Once again, I thank you for your generosity and kindness.

Humbly yours,

Ken

secret door. To open the door, a person must step on a pressure plate hidden beneath the floor while pressing the upper right corner of the panel, which conceals another pressure switch. Finding the pressure switches requires a successful Search check (DC 15). Knocking on the panel reveals, on a successful Listen check (DC 10), that the wall is hollow. If a loud noise is coming from behind the wall, no Listen check is needed.

The panel swings outward, into an unlit secret tunnel. The tunnel burrows through 200 yards of rock into the side of the mountain and opens out into a cavern beneath the still glen. It is in this cavern that Kage is holding Kay and here that the shk'ryth is most powerful. (See the Resolution section for more details regarding the cavern.)

Investigators looking for information on Wix's work here at the observatory have their work cut out for them. If Wix is still alive (see below) and present, he does not allow anyone access to his notes or computer files, and says that he is doing a "sector-by-sector stellar inventory." If Wix is not around, the investigators find that most of his work has been encrypted and stored on a large mainframe computer. The best they can do is grab his working log, which is buried beneath a stack of star chart printouts. A successful Search check (DC 15) is needed to find the log.

The log is written in a scientific shorthand and takes several hours to decipher. An investigator must make a successful Knowledge (astronomy) check (DC 15) in order to figure out the log. Once the investigators decipher the log, they realize what Wix has discovered: a new comet, the trajectory of which will bring it dangerously close to Earth sometime within the next year and a half. He calls this comet SH-01.

Wix



Arthur Wix is a professional astronomer, though he has labored long enough in obscurity that he's developed a bit of defensiveness about his chosen profession. Furthermore, he knows that his current position is the end of his career. After declaring one amazing new discovery too many, he is considered something of a crackpot in his field. Not that Wix is a fraud; he merely tends to jump to conclusions and that makes him an unreliable scientist.

Wix is an old man, but his gray hair has not thinned. His dress is formal, always appearing to belong in an office rather than a mountain village. The British astronomer observes the forms of polite society but generally acts as if he is above those around him. He

Stillness Papers #5

From the diary of Kay Hito, dated three weeks ago

This place doesn't suck, but I'm starting to wonder what I'm going to do after the novelty wears off—like, tomorrow. I mean, I've been here for two days and I've already met everyone in town and seen most of the sights. Yeah, it's great scenery, but come on! You can only check out so many treacherous cliffs before even deadly gorges get boring.

Nakamura's okay, but he's a little too old to get where I'm coming from. What am I saying? No one here is under 60! Compared to the monks, Nak's a punk kid. But at least he tries.

Speaking of monks, I should check out the monastery tomorrow, or what's left of it. If I'm looking for cultural heritage and all that crap, it's probably the best place to look. Maybe check out their sunrise meditation. Not like I'll be sleeping at five in the morning—with these stupid nightmares, I'm waking up cold and sweaty every two hours.

Dated two weeks ago

Yeah, it's been a week since I wrote. Sue me. I've been busy.

Well, not really busy, just hanging with the monks and stuff. I've even started meditating with them in the morning and sometimes at night if I'm in the mood. It's actually pretty relaxing. When I do, I can feel my old friend sitting in the back of my head. Not sure if that's good or bad, but if it's gonna come back, I guess this is the best place for it. Somehow, I don't think these folks would turn on me and start blaming me for all their problems. And if they did, screw 'em. I'll just go home—or maybe L.A., go hang with David for a while.

The monks are pretty cool, though a couple of them are starting to get on my nerves. Takashi, for one, won't leave me alone. If he sees me in the village, he comes up and starts babbling away, grinning that idiot grin of his. Never makes any sense, of course, speaking half Japanese and half English. No idea what the moron is saying. I'm afraid he's got some sort of crush on me. Shudder.

And then there's Soko. I'm sorry, but the guy just creeps me out. He keeps staring at me like something he scraped off the bottom of his shoe, and barks at me in Japanese even though he knows I don't speak a word of it. Don't know what I did to make him so mad at me. Yesterday he started yelling at me again and looked like he was gonna slap me or something, but Kage stopped him. Kage's the only one who can keep the old psycho in line.

Tomorrow, I think I'll skip out on the monastery and go climbing the cliffs, maybe try to find this glen they keep talking about. Or maybe stop by the observatory again. If I don't find something to do, I'm going to go crazy.

spends most of his time in the observatory but occasionally stops by the Gentle Rest for tea if there are interesting guests in town.

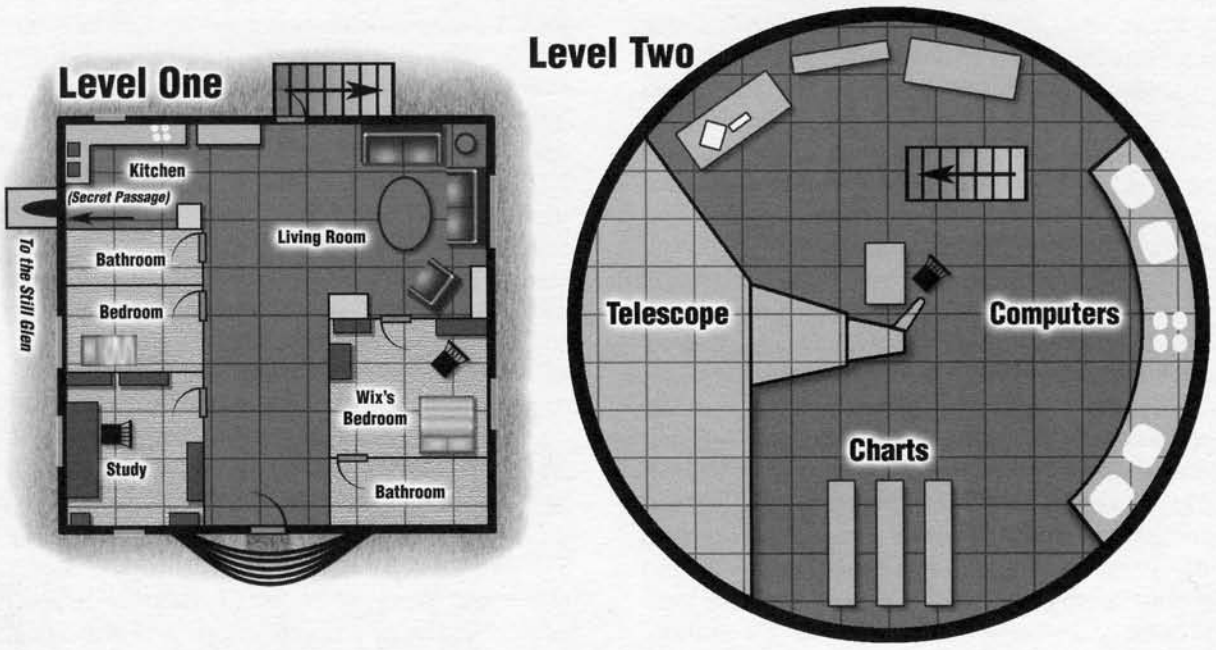
When the investigators first meet Wix, he has no idea that Kay is missing. Like most of the villagers, he assumed that she had gone home. If he discovers this is not the case, he appears quite upset. "I was rather fond of the girl," he admits. "She was the only one here with whom I could hold a decent conversation."

Wix is afraid for his life. He knows that the comet SH-01 is coming but dares not tell anyone, lest Kage and TemCo kill him. There is only one telephone in the village, at the Gentle Rest, and Wix suspects that Mrs. Saito is Kage's spy (she isn't). Even if Wix was able to contact one of his colleagues about his shocking discovery, he has no credibility. On several occasions, he has walked downstairs in the middle of the night, only to find Kage standing over his bed. He has no doubt that, if the old monk wants him dead, he will die. Still, this word of Kay's disappearance troubles him greatly. He has been hearing screams in the night, female screams that he has been dismissing as a byproduct of the terrible nightmares that have plagued him since he took this cursed assignment. But if the screams belong to Kay...

Perceptive investigators making successful Sense Motive checks opposed by Wix's Bluff check (Bluff +0) recognize that the astronomer knows more than he is letting on. Depending on how persuasive they are, he may tell the investigators about the screams in the night. If they are able to completely win his trust (a very difficult thing to do), he confides that he has found something very disturbing during his research but refuses to discuss it with them. Knowing that his cataclysmic warnings will be received as nothing but mad scientist drivel without the facts to back them up, he invites the investigators to visit the observatory that night.

The second night the investigators are in town, Arthur Wix is killed. Rather than tolerate this insolent security risk any longer, Kage kills him shortly after nightfall. The murder is slow and painful: One by one, Kage inserts hundreds of acupuncture needles into the astronomer's flesh, demanding with each thrust and

Still Mountain Observatory



twist a full disclosure as to whom the astronomer related his findings. Whatever information Wix and the investigators may have exchanged now belongs to Kage as well. Anyone viewing the bloody pincushion that is the body of Arthur Wix loses 1/1d3 points of Sanity.

The Monastery

The monastery rests at the far end of the town, up against the slope of Mount Handemo. It is a traditional Buddhist monastery, though much in need of repair. The monastery is built in an octagonal motif, and eight wooden pillars once supported its structure; since the earthquake of 1993, only four of the eight remain. A crudely carved stone statue of Buddha, nine feet tall, guards the large double doors that serve as the main entrance.

Inside, the doors open into a large open room decorated with worn rugs and a small, gilt Buddha statue with offerings scattered around it. Three doors open out the back of the temple; one leads to a row of individual meditation cells, another to the central garden (now just a patch of dirt and weeds), and the third has been sealed shut. It used to lead to the east wing and the entrance to the still glen, but the wing and the entrance were both destroyed in the quake.

Kage



The unofficial head of the monastery, Kage is an influential man in the community.

Seemingly pushing 80 years old, he nevertheless takes the time to help the investigators in any capacity he can. "I know Kay," he says. "She a very troubled girl. Meditation help her much. Too bad she left before finding true peace." He feigns shock and concern when he learns that Kay is missing. A Sense Motive check opposed by his Bluff check is necessary to perceive that he is insincere.

If the investigators suggest that Takashi may have had something to do with Kay's disappearance, Kage encourages them to pursue this lead. He says that Takashi had something of an obsession with Kay, especially because she came from beyond the simpleton's tiny mountain world. While he says that Takashi is kind and gentle, he acknowledges that there is no telling what goes on in the other monk's mind.

Soko is another possible suspect. If the investigators bring him up as a potential kidnapper, Kage acts surprised, as if the idea had never occurred to him. He acknowledges that Soko has no love for the the girl but does not think the monk would try to harm her—even though Soko has a temper that on rare occasions does

flare up into violence. Again, an opposed Sense Motive check suggests that Kage is lying. The investigators may suspect that the old monk is covering for Soko, and this is just fine with Kage.

If the investigators accuse Kage of causing Kay's disappearance, he is surprised and amused, but offended if they maintain their accusations. He demands proof of their allegations and refuses to cooperate with them any further. If it looks like the investigators may be able to back up their claims, he sends Soko to kill them during the night. While Soko probably fails in the attempt, it shifts suspicion onto him.

On the off chance the investigators attack Kage, he reacts in one of two ways: If the attack occurs in public, the monk appeals to the villagers and other monks to help him, which they do. If there are no other people around, the Shk'ryth reverts to his bestial form and fights back.

Takashi



A middle-aged monk, Takashi was born with brain damage and was raised in the monastery. He has a simple, child-like mentality and a very limited English vocabulary. His favorite topic is, of course, tea. If approached about Kay and her disappearance, Takashi's face lights up. "Kay nice. Kay nice as tea," he says, smiling broadly. He has no idea that she is gone, much less where she is now.

If the investigators ask Takashi about his scarf, he suddenly becomes very quiet and defensive. He no longer wishes to talk and immediately tries to leave. If the investigators press the issue, he becomes extremely agitated and begins to moan and rock back and forth. A successful Psychoanalysis check (DC 20) is necessary to calm him down and convince him to talk. "Scarf nice as tea. Takashi like Kay, like scarf. Takashi find scarf in bushes, by sky-watcher house." Takashi eventually relates that he found the scarf in the bushes by the observatory about two weeks ago, but he is not supposed to say where he found it. "He hurt Takashi. Needles for Takashi." Under no circumstances will Takashi reveal who "he" is.

The truth of the matter is this: While carrying Kay to the observatory and the secret entrance to the still glen, Kage accidentally dropped the girl's trademark red scarf. By the time he came back for it, Takashi had already found it and was wearing it in public. Fearing the villagers' questions, Kage threatened to kill Takashi if the younger monk ever told anyone where he found the scarf. Luckily for both Kage and Takashi, no one has yet asked where the scarf came from. Many of



the villagers assume it was a gift from Kay, on her way out of town.

If Takashi is asked about the scarf, he remains highly unstable for some time afterwards. Half an hour later, he peddles his bike as fast as he can...right over the edge of a cliff, the red scarf trailing behind him. Now without fear of contradiction, Kage openly accuses the dim-witted monk of killing Kay, stealing he scarf, and hiding her body.

Soko



Soko does not like to have his daily schedule of meditation disturbed. He explains this, in a threatening Japanese growl, to the investigators if they try to question him. If they do not immediately leave, he fixes them with a stony glare of righteous anger and snarls repeatedly at them in Japanese to go away, that he knows nothing. If the investigators refuse to take the hint, Soko eventually howls in rage and may even attack them. Only a successful Psychoanalysis check (DC 20) calms him down enough to even talk to the investigators.

Soko is pushing 70 years old, but has the solid, muscular body of man who has worked hard all his life. Just

from looking at him, the investigators see that he has a strength surprising for his age. The monk can understand English, but refuses to speak it. If they wish to speak with him, the investigators need a translator (Kage volunteers if necessary), assuming none of them speak Japanese. If the investigators are able to convince Soko to speak with them, he claims to hear Kay screaming in the middle of the night in the sealed-off east wing. Of course, he also claims to hear giant beetles in the ground, plotting when to set off the next earthquake. He did not like Kay, he says, because she did not belong in the monastery, and he is glad she is gone. If Kage is translating Soko's words, he twists them so that they seem to incriminate the angry monk. He does not translate the part about hearing Kay's screams.

The Monks

There are seven other monks residing at the monastery, all suffering from different stages of insanity. While they go through the motions of Buddhism, in truth they are quite mad and only the daily ritual of their religion keeps them stable. Talking with the monks is very difficult, as they speak little English and their minds keep wandering. They all remember Kay fondly but none of them have any idea what happened to her.

The Still Glen

Everyone in the village knows about the still glen, and anyone can point the investigators toward it—though they do not recommend going there. The glen itself lurks in a hollowed out portion of Mount Handemo, another 100 yards almost straight up from the monastery. Since Kage arrived at the monastery, the glen has been covered over with a thick fog that never dissipates. The fog discourages people from trying to climb to the glen; many who have tried have fallen to their deaths. The investigators may attempt to scale the mountain, of course. It is difficult, however, and becomes even more so as the fog thickens and makes it impossible to see more than a few inches. It is not until the fog is so thick as to muffle even sound that Kage appears and begins attacking the investigators.

Kage, Civilized Shk'ryth: Medium-Size (human form) or Large (ooze and monstrous form) Aberration; HD 10d8+30; hp 75 (human or monstrous form) hp 90 (ooze form); Init +3 (human form, Dex), –5 (ooze form, Dex), +5 (monstrous form, Dex); Spd 30 ft. (human form), 10 ft., climb 10 ft. (ooze form), 40 ft. (monstrous form); AC 13 (human form, +3 Dex), 5 (ooze form, –5 Dex), 20 (monstrous form, +5 Dex, +6 natural, –1 size); Atk +11/+6 melee (2 punches, 1d3+4, human form) or +11 melee (slam, 2d4+4, ooze form) or +12 melee (2 claws, 1d4+5, sting, 1d6+2, monstrous form); SA Improved grab, poison (Fort save DC 17, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con), acid 1d6, constrict 2d4+4 and 1d6 acid, engulf, psychic attack, Domain powers, spells; SQ Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., shk'ryth immunities, DR 10 (30 vs. bludgeoning attacks), regeneration 2, shk'ryth resistances, amorphous physiology, blessed alteration; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +12 (human form); Fort +6, Ref –2, Will +12 (ooze form); Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +12 (monstrous form); Str 19, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 21 (human form); Str 19, Dex 1, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 1 (ooze form); Str 21, Dex 19, Con 21, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 13 (monstrous form).

Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +8, Innuendo +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (astronomy) +12, Listen +12, Psychic Focus +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting.

Spells: *augury, bind enemy, bind loup-garou, black binding, bring pestilence, cause fear, circle of nausea, cloud memory, contact human, death by flames, deflect harm, detect magic, evil eye, fist of Yog-Sothoth, grasp of Cthulhu, healing touch, insect plague, levitate, message, mindblast, nightmare, pose mundane, power drain, shriveling, steal life.*

Before the east wing collapsed, there was a path leading from the east wing up the side of the mountain to the glen. Since 1993, however, the only open path is from the observatory, and only Kage knows about it.

Joseph Fowler

In the middle of the second night the investigators spend in Still Mountain, a chill, foreboding wind blows through the village. Dogs howl and buildings creak. The temperature drops 10 degrees in as many minutes. Investigators making a successful Listen check (DC 15) may hear a slow, rhythmic thump carried on the wind, as if from a distant drum or the flapping of enormous wings. A few minutes after it begins, the thumping stops. Soon, the wind dies down and the mountain returns to normal.

The next morning, the investigators might discover that Mrs. Saito has a new guest: Joseph Fowler, a police detective from San Francisco. When she awoke this morning, he was outside the front door, looking for a place to stay. Unused to having multiple guests, Mrs. Saito is putting Fowler up in the spare bedroom on the second story of her house.

Fowler is a tall, beefy male of indeterminate age and race. He is wearing jeans, work boots, and a long-sleeved shirt. A .45 pistol is holstered in the small of his back. Investigators who stare rudely at the detective realize that he never blinks. On a successful Sense Motive check (DC 20), they get the feeling that there is nothing behind his eyes, as if he is blind.

The truth of the matter is that Fowler is an utoruk, a servant of Nyarlathotep who has taken on the form of a human for the purpose of his assignment: find out what obscene power has taken root in Still Mountain and, if possible, conquer or destroy it. Fowler's cover story is that he is also looking for Kay Hito. Her father, he claims, filed a missing person's report shortly before he died. The detective is very interested in hearing what the investigators have found and is eager to speak with Nakamura. Once he has questioned Nakamura concerning Kay and the strangeness in the village, Fowler kills the beekeeper because he knows too much. Using his god's arcane powers, Fowler causes the bees to angrily swarm into the old man's house and sting him to death.

When it comes to actual detective work, Fowler lets the investigators do most of the work, preferring to simply follow them and see where their questioning takes them. (If the GM feels the investigators need a nudge in the right direction, Fowler may drop them a hint—see the Resolution section for details.)

Joseph Fowler, Utoruk 1st Level: Huge Aberration; HD 8d8+32; hp 70; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 17 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural, utoruk form) 15 (+1 Dex, +4 armor, human form); Atk +14 melee (1d6+7, 8 tentacles) or +8 ranged (2d8, M1911 pistol); Reach 10 ft.; SA Paralysis; SQ Blindsight, damage reduction 15/+1, shapechange; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 25, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +6, Cthulhu Mythos +4, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +5, Search +4, Sense Motive +6, Spot +11.

Feats: Cleave, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, bullet-resistant vest.

Fowler's Credentials

If anyone asks, Fowler pulls out a badge and a picture ID that identifies him as a sergeant with the San Francisco police department. These documents are legitimate—the monster killed the detective three days ago to get them.

Anyone who contacts the San Francisco police department discovers that sergeant Fowler has not reported to work in three days, and the chief is furious with him. Unfortunately, no one can discuss what case the detective was working on, as "that investigation is still in progress."



Finding Kay

There are several clues that may lead the investigators to the hidden cavern where Kay is being held captive. Both Wix and the monk Soko have been hearing female screams in the middle of the night. Following up on these leads may lead the investigators to the secret passage running from the observatory to the cavern. When they realize that the east wing route is a dead end, they might surmise that there must be some other entrance to the glen. That the glen is a key to all of this is not much of a mystery: its legendary status and mysterious inaccessibility should be enough to convince any seasoned investigator that something unworldly is going on there.

Talking with Takashi, the investigators may learn that he found the scarf by the observatory. Again, this may lead them into the astronomer's home and into the secret tunnel. If the investigators are completely convinced that Takashi is to blame, the GM may wish to put them back on track by having one of the monks comment that Kage was angry at Takashi because of the scarf. He may have even been jealous.

Once the investigators have reason to suspect Kage, they may try to follow him. This plan actually has a good chance of success, as the old monk is too arrogant and caught up in his project to take precautions. It isn't easy to track him back to the cavern, but it isn't impossible either.



Finally, if the investigators have exhausted all other possibilities, the GM may throw them a clue. Perhaps the Noh-mask phantasm appears, allows the investigators to talk with it, and communicates—non-verbally, of course—where Kay is being held. As a manifestation of her subconscious mind, the spidery figure wants her rescued as much as her father. Alternately, Joseph Fowler may tell the investigators that he suspects Wix is hiding something behind his living room wall.

In any event, in order to successfully complete the adventure, the investigators must go into the cavern beneath the still glen to rescue Kay—and face Kage.

Utoruks, Greater Servitor Race

This ancient and immortal race once populated a planet orbiting our sun while Earth was still cooling. That world is now long gone, but due to an unholy pact between that race and Nyarlathotep, utoruks live on as powerful, loyal servants of the Outer God.

An utoruk's true form stands over 10 feet tall and features a thick, muscular trunk suspended on two massive, pillar-like legs. From its top and sides sprout dozens of long strips of wet, flailing meat that serve as its sense organs; from its back stretch two enormous membranous wings. Utoruks have no skin.

When these highly intelligent beasts move among humans, they wrap the tendrils into rough shapes of a head and two arms, then contract their great mass and perfect the illusion through a combination of magic and muscle control. In their human form, utoruks have no hair at all on their bodies.

Utoruk

Huge Aberration	
Hit Dice:	8d8+32 (70 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (Dex, Improved Initiative)
Speed:	30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
AC:	17 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural)
Attacks:	8 tentacles +13 melee
Damage:	Tentacle 1d6+7
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Paralysis
Special Qualities:	Blindsight, damage reduction 15/+1, shapechange
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +8
Abilities:	Str 25, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12
Skills:	Hide +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Spot +11
Feats:	Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack
CR:	7
Climate/Terrain:	Any
Advancement:	9–12 HD (Huge)
Sanity Loss:	1d4/1d10; 1d6/1d10 to see transformation

Combat

In combat, utoruks attack with their meaty tendrils, which sting and paralyze all that they touch. Once its victims can no longer move, it pulls them tight up against its trunk and tears them apart.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by an utoruk's tentacle attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 17) or be paralyzed for 2d6 minutes.

Shapchange (Su): An utoruk can assume human form at will. The transformation is a standard action. The utoruk retains its blindsight, damage reduction, and ability scores when in human form, but not its natural armor.

Skills: Utoruks gain a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

The Cavern

Beneath the still glen lies an ancient grotto filled with an eternal darkness that has never been broken. A

terrible stench fills the cavern—the odor of a shk'ryth in its pure, unwholesome state—and the investigators must make successful Fortitude saving throws (DC 15) or become staggered as long as they remain. The walls are worn smooth by millennia of water, covered with alien symbols and icons of obscenity that, up until now, only Kage could sense. Stalactites tremble, dangling dangerously from the ceiling above, threatening to fall at any moment. Stalagmites rise from the floor, twisted into shapes that, if they are natural, call into question nature itself.

It is atop one such stalagmite that Kay is suspended, precariously balanced at eye level, with the point of the giant stone dagger poking into her back; the power of Kage's magic is all that keeps her from being impaled. The girl is alive, though in a severe state of shock. Her naked body is pierced with multiple acupuncture needles that have paralyzed her from the neck down. Kay's hair has been hacked away and indecipherable symbols sketched on her scalp, punctuated with acupuncture needles, Three small holes have been drilled into her skull. Two of them are filled with clotted blood, while the third is sporting another acupuncture needle and is bleeding profusely. When Kay realizes that there are people other than Kage nearby, she whispers hoarsely, "Help me." Witnessing Kay's distress costs the investigators 0/1d4 points of Sanity.

Since before the Shk'ryth was truly sentient, long before it took on the persona of Kage, this cavern has been its home and center of power. Even now, Kage has a psychic connection to this place so strong, he has an instinctual awareness of all that transpires here. Thus, while the investigators may be able to sneak into the cavern without alerting the shk'ryth, there is no way they are sneaking out without facing the beast.

A Brief Timeline

Unless the investigators interfere with their plans, this is how Kage and Fowler are spending their time:

• A day before the investigators arrive at Ken Hito's apartment, Kage pays the painter a visit. He leaves Hito dead but takes with him a copy of *The Book of Whispers*.

• The night the investigators arrive at Still Mountain, Kage reads from the book while experimenting on Kay. Her screams echo through the cavern and are heard by Wix and the mad monk, Soko.

• On the next day, Kage remains accessible to the investigators.

• That night, Kage kills Wix. If the investigators have given him a reason to want them eliminated, he



sends either Soko or some other monk to kill them at this time.

• Also on the second night, Joseph Fowler arrives on Still Mountain.

• The second day the investigators are at Still Mountain, Kage is nowhere to be seen. He spends the day beneath the still glen, reading aloud from the book and experimenting. At nightfall, he finds what he needs to know, but continues to experiment so as to perfect his technique.

• By the end of the second day, Fowler has had a chance to interrogate Nakamura. An hour later, the beekeeper is found stung to death.

• On the third night, Kage finally kills Kay and consumes her body. Satisfied, he dissolves his manifested human body and leaves Still Mountain to commune with the other shk'ryth and share what he has learned.

Showdown

When confronting the investigators, Kage wastes no time on dramatic speeches or threats. Rather, his eyes blaze with fury at their intrusion and he bellows in Japanese, "You will all perish!" On the following round, he transforms into his bestial form and attacks. Kage's beast form is that of an enormous beetle-like thing with a translucent carapace, six legs, two massive pincers in the front, and a scorpion-like stinger at the rear. (This is one of the monsters that haunts Soko's dreams.)

Though they may not know it, the investigators are not alone in their fight against the shk'ryth. After Kage's second round of combat, Joseph Fowler steps out of the shadows to face the horror that used to be a monk. (If the investigators did not invite Fowler along into the cavern, he followed them in secret.) He just stands there for a moment...and then his skin begins to ripple. First his head and then his arms seem to unwind into countless bloody strips of flesh until his shirt bursts open, revealing masses of these meaty tendrils. And then he begins to grow.

Fowler abandons his assumed form for his true, mind-shattering utoruk body and begins to fight with the obviously startled Kage. The few moments that both monsters are distracted is the investigators' only chance to escape—hopefully grabbing Kay in the process. Once the shk'ryth is defeated or has escaped, Fowler turns his attention to the investigators (if they are still present).

"You have seen too much," he rumbles, and proceeds to attack.

In his true form, Fowler is too large to fit through the secret passage, but it only takes him two minutes to shrink down to human size. If the investigators can escape out the other end of the tunnel by then, he gives up on them; they are not his primary targets.

Rescuing Kay

Assuming the investigators rescue Kay from the clutches of the Shk'ryth, she is suffering from exhaustion, shock, and any number of psychological maladies. It is days before she is even able to talk again. When she does, she explains, slowly and painfully, that Kage kidnapped her and performed bizarre experiments on her that she did not understand. "He said I was special. He said I had a secret he wanted. He wanted my power. The power to end time, he said." Each investigator gains 1d6 points of Sanity for rescuing Kay.

If the investigators do not rescue Kay, she dies horribly as the shk'ryth or the utoruk kills her.

Aftermath

When the surviving investigators are clear of the cavern and out of any immediate danger, they hear a whirring from higher up on the mountain, seemingly from the still glen itself. The whirring quickly turns into a roar as a small, sleek helicopter shoots up from the mists of the still glen and rockets toward the east. The investigators cannot see who is at the aircraft's controls. TemCo's corporate logo is emblazoned on the side of the helicopter, visible to anyone who makes a successful Spot check (DC 20).

Before the TemCo chopper disappears over the mountains, perceptive investigators making a successful Listen check (DC 15) hear a muffled explosion from the area of the Still Mountain Observatory. A thin, greasy column of smoke snakes its way into the sky a moment later; the observatory is on fire. Arthur Wix's notebooks are already ash and his computers are turned to plastic slag before anyone can try to stop the fire from spreading. If the fire goes unchecked, it continues to burn and eventually consumes the entire building.

A week later, the investigators receive the news that Still Mountain was just hit with a major earthquake. The village, the monastery, the still glen—all have been destroyed and buried beneath tons of rock. Like the destruction of the observatory, this is an effort by TemCo and the organized shk'ryth to cover up the work they were doing on the mountain—as well as any evidence of the approaching comet.



CHAPTER FOUR

Wanted

"Sheriff Morton?"

"Yup."

"I'm Special Agent Casey Henderson, from the FBI. We spoke on the phone yesterday. I understand you've had a sighting of my favorite fugitives."

Morton doesn't move from his seat, his boots propped on his desk. He glances up from a small black and white television and gives Henderson a nod.

"Yup."

Henderson narrows her eyes at the lawman. "And where are they now?"

"Don't know. Seen them down at the motel yesterday morning."

The television crackles with canned, tinny laughter and the sheriff's eyes turn back to the set. He chuckles under his breath. Henderson's mouth goes tight and anger flashes in her eyes. If Morton notices, he shows no sign.

"I see. At the motel. So tell me, Sheriff. Have you checked the motel since yesterday?"

Morton sighs heavily and gives the FBI agent a tired look, as if he can't believe she's still here.

"Agent Henderson, I don't go looking for trouble—"

"Well maybe you should, Sheriff. It is your job. In case you've forgotten, the people we're talking about here are killers, responsible for the murder of at least one person, probably more. And now they're in your town. You don't want trouble? Fine. Then get on the radio and call in your deputies. I'm going to need backup."

Sheriff Morton opens his mouth for a moment, frowning. Then he closes it, nods grimly, and reaches for the radio. He glares at Henderson as he leans into the microphone.

"Frank. Lou. Why don't you boys come on in. There's someone here I want you to meet. And um...boys? Bring your shotguns."

TemCo does not forgive. As the investigators destroyed his work at Still Mountain, the shk'ryth called Kage fled the mountain. He was greatly weakened due to the discovery and almost total destruction of his lair but was able to scramble into a helicopter and report the setback to his TemCo partners. The ruling council considered the situation and decided that the investigators knew too much. Furthermore, the council is very concerned about the new evidence of alien interference (specifically, the utoruk who attacked Kage at the end of *Stillness*). The shk'ryth know they are no longer the only non-human entities on Earth, and they find the idea very disturbing.

Because the investigators and the utoruk confronted Kage at roughly the same time, TemCo assumes that the investigators are working with the other creatures or at least know something about them. Therefore it has become imperative that the investigators be captured so that they may be interrogated, both about the utoruk and their own interference with TemCo's plans. If they cannot be captured, the investigators are simply to be killed.

The TemCo ruling council decided the most efficient way to locate and apprehend the investigators was to make them criminals and let the various law enforcement agencies do the work for them. Through a highly placed pawn in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, TemCo has learned of the investigators' actions in Eastfield (see *The Madness of the Twilight Queen*) and had them charged with the drowning death of Gary Augustine. TemCo's FBI pawn has assigned the case to one of his most persistent agents, Casey Henderson. Warrants have been issued for the investigators' arrests and wanted posters, complete with names and photos, have been distributed to every law enforcement office in the land.

Casey Henderson



The FBI agent assigned the task of apprehending the investigators is an experienced agent named Casey Henderson. At 29 years old, Casey is ambitious and looking to make her mark with the Bureau. She considers it a challenge that she has been assigned this dead-end case with no leads, no motive, and more suspects than any one murder should have. Just the same, this isn't her only case. Augustine was scum, she figures, and he got what he deserved. She is in no real hurry to bring his killers to justice. The agency's efforts to capture the investigators seem a bit extreme to Henderson, but she is unaware of the pressure being applied to TemCo's FBI pawn.

Casey isn't out scouring the back roads of America trying to find the investigators, but when someone reports seeing them, she flies to their last known location as soon as possible. Once in the area, she digs around for at least three days—talking to witnesses, looking for clues, dusting for fingerprints—before giving up. If she finds a lead during that time, she follows up on it for another three days and the cycle continues.

A highly trained detective with a keen mind, Casey proves to be a dogged pursuer. If the investigators leave clues to what they are doing or where they are going, there is a good chance that Casey picks up on them. If the investigators are following a pattern, Casey probably discovers the pattern and plans for their next move. Once she has their scent, the FBI agent is not about to give up her quarry.

Hunted

Casey Henderson moves in for the arrest the moment the investigators let down their guard. It is therefore impossible to know exactly when or how the investigators first encounter the FBI agent. Nevertheless, it may happen something like this:

Anxious to arrest the investigators and underestimating their abilities, Casey bursts in on them with

only one local police officer to back her up. Both she and the officer have their guns drawn. Casey fixes the investigators with a steely gaze and orders them down on their stomachs, hands on their heads. If the investigators comply, they are arrested and taken to the local police department for booking (see Captured, below). The agent and the officer are willing to shoot the investigators if sufficiently threatened (i.e., feel their lives are in danger), but also have other ways to take down the fugitives. Both are carrying aerosol cans of pepper spray, and the police officer is also armed with a collapsible metal baton.

Assuming that the investigators escape their first brush with the FBI, they would be well advised to change their habits and stop leaving clues behind. Assuming that Casey survives her first brush with the investigators, she now makes their capture her top priority. The next time she tries to arrest them (if she finds them again), her tactics are very different from her first attempt.

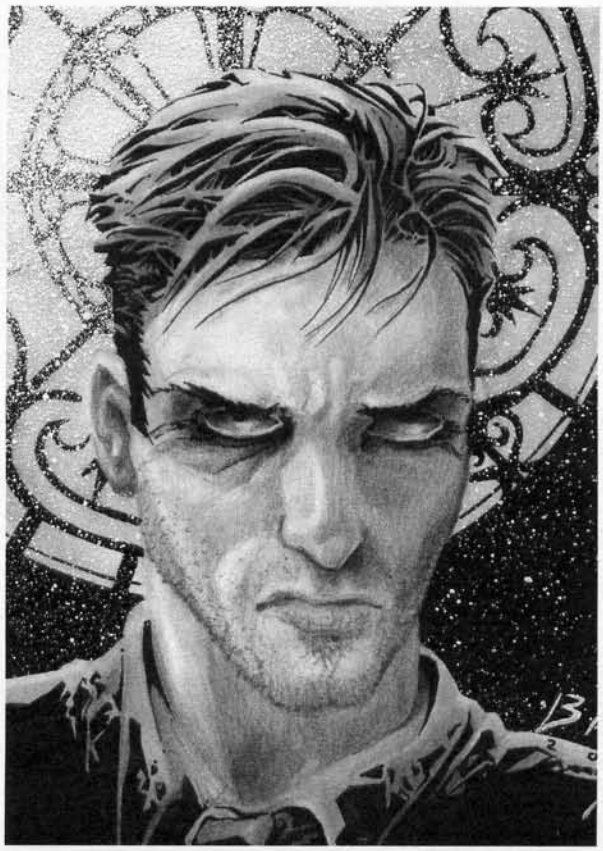
This time, Casey doesn't mess around. She sends in an armored assault team (one agent for each investigator) armed with automatic weapons, tear gas, and night-vision goggles. Casey herself remains clear of the scene, supervising from some place where she can see the action but is out of the line of fire. It takes some fast-talking on the part of the investigators to escape this mess, since shooting it out with the federal agents is a terrible idea. Because it takes a few minutes to prepare for this type of all-out assault, observant or paranoid investigators may notice that something odd is going on and slip away before the agents move in.

Captured

If the investigators are arrested, they are booked at the local jail and held without bail. Here they are placed into a single large cell, then (after being read their rights) individually questioned by Casey. They are each allowed the traditional single phone call. After the interrogation, U.S. Marshals transport the investigators via prison bus to a federal prison to await trial.

While in prison, the investigators receive a visit from Gerard Moore. He is allowed to spend several hours alone with each of them in the sub-basement of the prison. The killer interrogates the investigators about their knowledge concerning the shk'ryth, TemCo, and the events in the Diablo Range (see *Stillness* for details).

The investigators' adventures behind bars are beyond the scope of this campaign. If they make no mention of TemCo or the shk'ryth, they are merely convicted of murder and sentenced to years in prison. But if they begin ranting about supernatural conspiracies and the like, agents of that conspiracy arrange "prison accidents" to take the lives of the investigators.



Either way, the investigators are effectively removed from play. Players whose investigators are arrested are encouraged to introduce new investigators into the adventure at that point.

Escape is possible, though very difficult. Gamemasters are encouraged to use their best judgment when dealing with escape plans.

Benevolent GMs may wish to engineer a prison break. If the investigators are working for the New Moon Temple, they may be able to contact Roland Delmont. Depending on how successful the investigators have been thus far, he and the Temple may be convinced to help them escape. It is also possible that the Temple breaks the investigators out without being asked, but Delmont will demand a hefty favor of them in return.

The FBI in Nocturnum

The purpose behind the Wanted! subplot is to keep the investigators motivated. Now that they are fugitives, going home is no longer an option. They cannot simply ignore all that they have seen and pretend it never happened. The mundane lives they left behind are no longer waiting for them.

A corollary to this is that the investigators do not have the luxury of turning over their discoveries and problems to the "proper authorities." The first time they go to file a police report, they see their faces star-

ing out of wanted posters on the walls. If they try to report what they know about the deadly course of comet SH-01, they only find themselves on the run once more (see Project Pandora, page 26).

Gamemasters are encouraged to use Casey and the FBI to maintain pressure on the investigators. Even if they never have to face a full team of armored, gun-toting SWAT officers, the mere threat of such should be enough to instill the proper sense of paranoia. Likewise, if the GM feels the investigators are wasting their time or chasing dead ends, the FBI is a good tool for pushing them back into action—and in the right direction.

Casey Henderson: Female 7th level; HD 7d6+14; hp 39; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 armor); Atk +6/+1 melee (1d3, punch) or +8/+3 ranged (2d6, Colt Python Revolver); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Drive +7, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (law) +11, Listen +7, Open Lock +7, Research +8, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +8.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Colt Python revolver, pepper spray, bullet-resistant vest, $72.

Local Sheriff: Male 4th level; HD 4d6+8; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 armor); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, nightstick) or +3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Drive +4, Gather Information +6, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (law) +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Search +6, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Sharp-Eyed.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1877 revolver, pepper spray, bullet-resistant vest.

Local Deputy: Male 2nd level; HD 2d6+2; hp 10; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 armor); Atk +1 melee (1d4, nightstick) or +2 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will –1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +6, Drive +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (law) +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Search +3, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3.

Feats: Persuasive, Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1877 revolver, bullet-resistant vest.

SWAT Officer: Male 3rd level; HD 3d6+6; hp 16; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+7 armor); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, nightstick) or +4 ranged (2d8, Colt M1911) or +4 ranged (1d10, H&K MP5); SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Drive +5, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (law) +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Search +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1911, Heckler & Koch MP5 submachine gun, body armor.

Pepper Spray

This is a nonlethal chemical weapon designed to incapacitate a target. To use pepper spray, the attacker makes a ranged touch attack (CoC 63) against the target. The range can be no more than 10 ft., and there are no range penalties on the attack roll. If the attack succeeds, the victim must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20). Failure indicates that the victim is stunned for one round and is blinded for 1d6 rounds. A standard aerosol can sells for $15 and contains 10 doses of the chemical.



CHAPTER FIVE

A Dire Warning

The two men on the park bench look nothing alike. One is wearing an expensive suit and a pair of designer sunglasses. He speaks quietly into his cell phone. The other man, Timothy Ekloff, is slightly older, his shoulders slumped beneath the heavy burdens of the soul. His clothes are shabby. He feeds the pigeons from a small bag of birdseed and mutters words to them that only he and his bench companion can hear.

"This is very short notice," says Ekloff. "Dangerous, too. This had better be important."

"It is." The suited man talks into his deactivated phone, his back to the older man.

"The Still Mountain project has suffered a severe setback. It will probably be terminated."

"What happened?"

"They don't know yet. Some newcomers interfered."

"I thought they had taken precautions," Ekloff murmurs to the birds. They look back at him blankly.

"They did, but it wasn't enough. The newcomers had...help."

Birdseed spills to the ground. A moment of silence passes between the men, heavy with unspoken meaning.

"So it's finally happened. Another player has joined the game."

This chapter describes the investigators' first encounter with Timothy Ekloff. The former CIA agent has been looking forward to meeting them since the events of *Stillness*, and now he finally gets his chance.

Gamemaster's Introduction

Timothy Ekloff has been keeping in touch with his mole inside TemCo. Through his mole, he learned that a group of interlopers (the investigators) has compromised the corporation's observatory in California's Diablo Range. The group is considered a possible threat, in that they were assisted by some kind of supernatural creature and actually threatened the shk'ryth in charge of the project.

Ekloff was not looking for allies in his secret campaign against TemCo but was very curious about these troublemakers. He wondered what they knew about TemCo, the shk'ryth, and SH-01. Moreover, who were these people? What did they want? He decided to locate the group and obtain answers to his questions.

Using his mole's information and his intelligence training, Ekloff has found the investigators. He follows them until the opportunity arises for him to meet with them in relative privacy. This could be when the investigators are eating lunch in a tiny roadside diner, stopping for gas at a small country store, or any other such public yet secluded setting. Gamemasters are encouraged to use their best judgment as to the time and place for this encounter.

Questions and Advice

The investigators notice a man slowly approaching them. He appears to be about 40 years old, with a trim build and short blondish hair. Wary blue eyes peer at them from behind a pair of wire-rimmed glasses. The man is wearing a dusty leather jacket that has seen better days. A successful Sense Motive opposed by Ekloff's Bluff check reveals that while he is trying to appear nonchalant, the stranger is actually excited and nervous.

"Excuse me," he says. "I'd like to talk to you for a few minutes...about the observatory."

Ekloff introduces himself as Thomas Engell, a reporter working for the San Diego Post. If the investigators ask, he shows them a driver's license and a picture ID card from the Post. He says that he has heard stories of strange happenings around the Still Mountain Observatory, and that the investigators have just come from that area. He is gentle but persistent in his questioning. If necessary, Ekloff hints that he knows more than he is telling, in hopes of loosening the investigators' tongues. Under no circumstances does he actually reveal his forbidden knowledge of TemCo.

If Timothy learns that the investigators are aware of the comet SH-01 or Wix's observations (as described in *Stillness*), he encourages them to forget the information and not reveal it to anyone. He is very aware of the danger that the Tyrr Nemaii poses. He also knows that the investigators will do nothing but cause panic if they publicize news of the comet's imminent arrival. They can do nothing further to help him, he feels, in his mission against TemCo.

Upon taking his leave, Ekloff is certain the investigators are about to meet untimely deaths. Nevertheless, he gives them a warning: "Your lives are in great danger. You are meddling with powers and institutions whose nature and motivations you could not possibly comprehend! My advice is that you leave your names, faces, and lives behind. Leave the country. Forget everything you know, and never come back."

Timothy drives away in a red Porsche. He does not contact the investigators after this but tries to keep tabs on their whereabouts and doings. Timothy plays an important role in the **Nocturnum** campaign and the investigators would do well to remember this remarkable individual. The next time they meet him is during the adventure *Revelations* (see page 151).

Timothy Ekloff: Male 7th level; HD 7d6+14; hp 39; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 armor); Atk +7/+2 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +8/+3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Drive +7, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (geography) +11, Listen +7, Open Lock +7, Research +8, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +8.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Sensitive.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, cellular telephone, $125 in cash.



CHAPTER SIX

The Sky is Falling

Shannon steels herself before entering her editor's office. She wishes she had a cigarette. No matter how many times she does this, her stomach still churns itself into taffy at the prospect of editorial rejection. Frowning, she mentally scolds herself. She's been at this game far too long to be bothered by a little criticism. Shannon fingers the cigarette lighter in her pocket and marches through the door.

"Morning, Meg. Heard you wanted to see me." Shannon grabs a worn swivel chair facing the editor's desk.

"Yeah." Meg looks up and glances at Shannon over her glasses. "Don't bother sitting. About this piece you did—you know, with the comets and conspiracies and all that...?"

Shannon nods but says nothing.

"It's crap. It's interesting—fascinating, even—but crap nonetheless. This isn't the first time you've played spin-doctor for some group of crazies. You should know better. Now I know it's a slow week, but you got to do better than this. Okay?"

"Okay. Is that it?"

"Yeah. That's it." Meg's back is already to the door, and she has gone back to her reading.

As Shannon leaves Meg's office, one of the interns yells to her. "Shannon! You've got a call on line three!"

Shannon waves off the call and grabs her purse from her desk. "Take a message. I'm taking a smoke break."

"It's the FBI."

Shannon's eyes light up, her cigarettes momentarily forgotten. "Thanks. Transfer it to my desk."

This chapter describes what happens if the investigators try to warn others about SH-01. In Part I: *Long Shades*, the investigators probably learned that a comet is on a collision course with Earth. When it arrives in a year and a half, the destruction it brings will be cataclysmic. When they are out of immediate danger, the investigators may try to spread word of their discovery to the world in general and the scientific community in particular.

It is impossible to predict exactly how the investigators will go about such a task, but the results of the most likely scenarios—talking to the media, talking to scientists, and meeting with amateur astronomers—are presented below. Finally, the last section details what happens if the investigators draw the attention of the Silencers. These agents have no intentions of allowing the investigators to spread the word about SH-01.

The Media

Investigators looking for reporters to tell their story won't have far to look. Unfortunately, the moment a reporter tries to confirm their tale with actual astronomers, the story of SH-01 loses all credibility. No one, it seems, is willing to go on record saying the world is in danger of being destroyed by a comet.

Without scientific backing, no news editor will print or air such a story. If it were a hoax, the media would appear stupid and gullible. And if it were true, the chaos the story would cause would be unconscionable.

If the investigators have not already established media contacts, they might end up talking with Shannon Brooks, a newspaper reporter who is always willing to listen—no matter how crazy the story. The reporter is provided for the Gamemaster as a media NPC and may be placed as the GM sees fit (working at the local paper, an investigator's acquaintance, etc.).

Shannon Brooks

In her 30 years as a newspaper reporter, there is very little that Shannon Brooks hasn't already heard. If the investigators hope to shock her with the truth about SH-01, they are disappointed when she just smiles and lights another cigarette. This is the fifth apocalypse scenario she has heard this year, the second to involve "flaming death from above." Nevertheless, she listens to what the investigators have to say. While she doesn't necessarily believe them, she does take them seriously. If there is a scrap of truth in what they are saying, she figures she can use the scoop.

Brooks looks and acts the part of the cynical newspaper veteran. She's been divorced three times and has little time for fools and fanatics. The truth is, she's just bored. If the investigators make their case intriguing enough, she agrees to help them uncover the truth and make it public. (Of course, her editor may have other ideas, but she doesn't know that yet.)

Shannon Brooks: Female 3rd level; HD 3d6; hp 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +0 melee (1d3–1, punch); SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +6, Computer Use +7, Craft (writing) +8, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +13, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (streetwise) +7, Listen +6, Research +8, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +6.

Feats: Sharp-Eyed, Skill Emphasis (Gather Information), Trustworthy.

Possessions: Cell phone, palmtop PC, ball-point pen, writing tablet, 35mm camera, $38.

Ivory Towers

If the investigators approach professional or academic astronomers (anyone associated with a university or NASA, for example), they are blown off the moment they begin to sound the least bit weird. Astronomers tend to attract their own peculiar types of groupies—eccentrics, New Age pseudo-scientists, and UFO lunatics, just to name to few—and have no interest in listening to yet another crackpot theory. Even if the investigators have some sort of hard evidence (which should be very difficult to obtain), convincing the astronomers to listen is an exercise in sheer persistence. Unfortunately, persistence takes time that the investigators cannot afford.

All astronomers are familiar with SH-01. They have received their updates from the International Astronomical Union and can locate the comet with their telescopes if they desire. Of course, those with

high-powered telescopes and other equipment are busy using their machines for purposes other than studying SH-01. They refuse to waste their valuable time on these expensive facilities to "look at some comet."

If the investigators somehow convince or coerce a major-league astronomer to take them seriously, it is only a temporary victory. The day after that astronomer reports her findings to the IAU—or even to her colleagues—she receives the usual misinformation from Project Pandora. She is satisfied with Pandora's explanation of the "facts" and rejects the investigators' theories altogether. She has more important work to worry about and doesn't have any more time for such foolishness.

A sample NPC university astronomer, Dr. Conrad Hopper, is provided for the Gamemaster's convenience. He can be found at the first university the investigators visit. GMs are encouraged to modify Dr. Hopper as required to fit a specific campaign.

Dr. Conrad Hopper

Since gaining tenure at the university three years ago, Dr. Hopper has spent most of his allotted observatory time watching over the fleet of satellites owned by his unofficial "corporate sponsor," Myotoki International. Some might call it "selling out," but Hopper sees it as insurance. Even with tenure, academia is a fickle, treacherous mistress. At least with Myotoki, Hopper knows that he has a good job with good income, should the unthinkable happen.

Dr. Hopper is the senior astronomer at the university and head of the department. No one undertakes any astronomical project—especially any that require the school's expensive telescope—without his approval. If the investigators are polite and willing to make an appointment, the professor meets with them for a few minutes in his office. When they tell him about SH-01, he laughs heartily and shows them the door. If he sees them on campus or at the observatory after that he first calls campus security, then the police.

The astronomer is 62 years old and wears an obvious brown toupee that his students secretly call the "Hopper Topper." He frowns a lot and shakes his head, looking at his watch. It isn't that he is busy; he just thinks it makes him look important.

Dr. Conrad Hopper: Male 3rd level; HD 3d6–3; hp 8; Init –1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 9 (–1 Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d3, punch); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 8, Con 9, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Computer Use +9, Craft (electronics) +9, Craft (writing) +8, Knowledge (astronomy) +12, Knowledge (electronics) +8, Knowledge (mathematics) +12, Knowledge (physics) +9, Repair +8, Research +9, Search +8, Speak Other Language (German) +8, Spot +5.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [astronomy]), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [mathematics]), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [physics]).

Possessions: Cell phone, palmtop PC, $185.

Backyards

The investigators have much better luck if they go to an amateur astronomer with their SH-01 data. While amateurs have nowhere near the equipment of their professional counterparts, they have a deeper passion for discovery. They also have more time to listen to bizarre theories. Serious amateurs have the SH-01 update from the IAU and may have already been studying it themselves. If it does something unexpected like change course or fragment into pieces, they want to be the first ones to report it.

But again, as soon as the astronomer reports his findings, he receives the IAU's official explanation and rejects the investigators' theories. Depending on the investigators' relations with the amateur astronomer, he may or may not offer to help them anyway—perhaps by referring them to a professional with better equipment.

Investigators asking around for an amateur astronomer are directed to Dale Biggs, an NPC provided for the Gamemaster's convenience. Biggs has no further relevance in the **Nocturnum** campaign, and may be changed however the GM deems appropriate.

Dale Biggs

Biggs fell in love with astronomy as a teenager and would have pursued it as a career if he had been accepted into graduate school. Instead, he now teaches high school astronomy and general science with an enthusiasm that students find infectious. He works as a volunteer at the local planetarium and encourages interested students to join him as he studies the skies with his telescope every weekend. Around the community, Biggs is known as the man to talk to whenever someone has an astronomy question. Because of this, he shows up in the newspaper from time to time as a local science expert. The 44-year-old bachelor wears glasses, a thick beard, and a wide grin whenever talking about his favorite subject.

Since he received the update on SH-01, Dale Biggs has been planning to set an evening aside to observe the comet but hasn't had a chance as of yet. He would be more than willing to aid the investigators in any way he can. All they have to do is ask.

Dale Biggs: Male 1st level; HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +0 melee (1d3, punch); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 13.



Skills: Computer Use +5, Drive +3, Knowledge (astronomy) +10, Knowledge (biology) +5, Knowledge (chemistry) +5, Knowledge (electronics) +5, Knowledge (mathematics) +10, Knowledge (physics) +5, Repair +5, Research +5, Search +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [astronomy]), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [mathematics]).

Possessions: Cell phone, palmtop PC, $75.

Retaliation

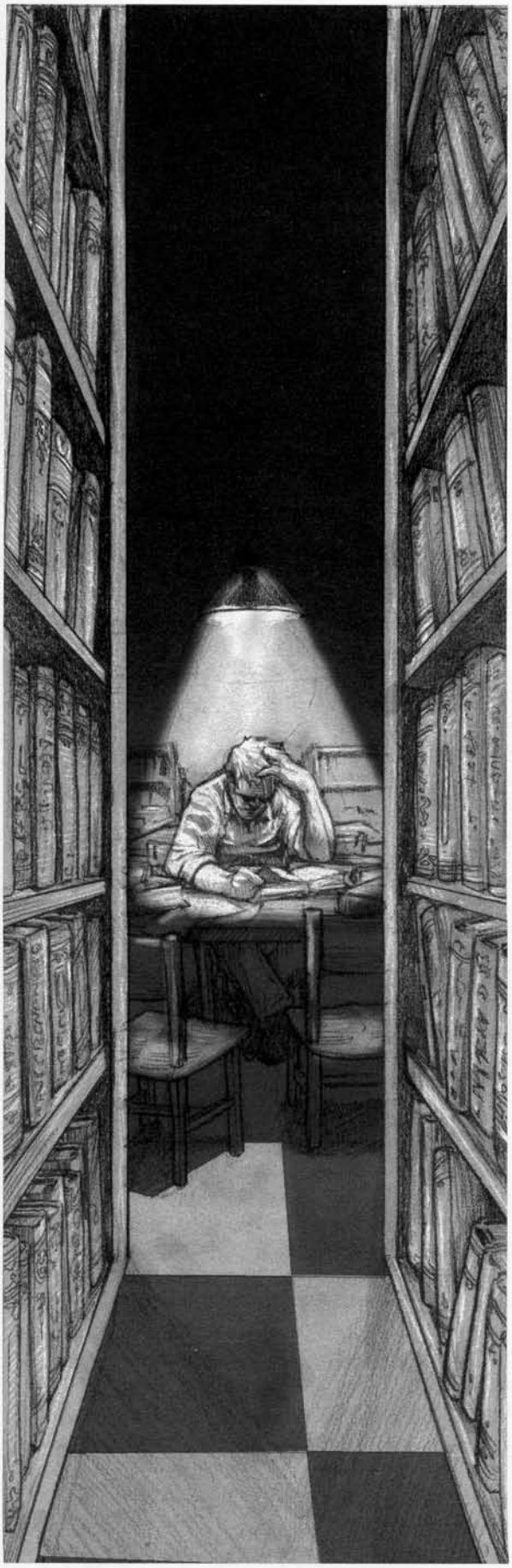
If the investigators make pests of themselves in the astronomical community or keep hounding the media with stories of doom from the sky, it is only a matter of time before Project Pandora pays them a visit. (It takes a bit longer if the investigators are in hiding; the Silencers have to find them first.)

The visit from Project Pandora seems harmless. A Silencer named Dr. Brownstein introduces himself to the investigators, saying how he has heard through the astronomical grapevine that they have some intriguing new information regarding SH-01. He expresses a very sincere interest in what they know and how they know it. He does not mention Pandora or the International Astronomical Union, but if pressed, admits that he is doing fieldwork for the IAU.

The Silencers' mission is to discover who the investigators are, what they know, how they came by this information, and who else they have told. If Brownstein can gain all of this information by simply speaking with the investigators, so much the better. If the Silencers have to ransack the investigators' rooms to find their answers, this is also acceptable. If they have to detain an investigator and question him under duress...well, the Silencers would prefer not to do this, but if all other options have been exhausted, they have no choice. They cannot afford to have the investigators spreading rumors in this time of crisis.

While astronomers who know too much are given a chance to help the IAU in exchange for their silence, the Silencers offer the investigators no such deal. Unless one of the investigators is an established astronomer or scientist, Project Pandora assumes that the investigators can be of no use and has them killed.

If the conflict between Project Pandora and the investigators turns to open violence, the Silencers will fight a defensive battle and flee the scene. The unit is lead by scientists not soldiers, and the soldiers in the unit are under orders to protect the scientists—not to get into gunfights. For details on Project Pandora and statistics for its agents, see the Introduction, page 26.



CHAPTER SEVEN

The Benefactor

The library is more than a century old and rumored to be haunted. On a cold and blustery night like this, half an hour before closing time, Isaac can believe it. There are only a dozen people in the building, scattered among four floors of books and periodicals, wandering the maze of tables and shelves, their footsteps and whispers echoing like ghosts. Isaac sits alone at a wooden table in the basement, pretending to read yesterday's newspaper. He pulls his coat tight against the damp chill and waits.

Footsteps. Isaac looks up, hoping to see his mysterious contact, but it is only one of the librarians. His name badge reads "Carl" and his arms are full of magazines.

"Sir, we'll be closing in 15 minutes," Carl says softly. He pauses to readjust his disorderly stack of magazines. "If you have any materials to check out, please do so at this time."

"Thanks." Isaac nods dismissively to Carl and turns back to his paper. He is beginning to feel a little foolish, even irritated that the Deacon would send him on this wild goose chase. Here he is, freezing his fingers at a quarter to midnight—all on the strength of an anonymous phone call.

"Forget it," Isaac mutters to himself. He folds the newspaper and stands up to put it away—then notices the magazine sitting on his table. Carl must have left it, he figures, but he doubts that a librarian would carelessly forget such a thing.

Isaac resumes his seat and picks up the magazine. Sure enough, a thick white envelope slips out from between its pages. The envelope is sealed, but is marked "D"—the message is no doubt intended for Delmont. Satisfied, Isaac drops the envelope into an inside coat pocket and moves toward the exit. He momentarily considers stopping by the front desk, but he already knows the answer. There is no one named "Carl" working at the library tonight.

The New Moon Temple has been researching and watching the investigators since the incident with Kage and the utoruk "Joseph Fowler" at Still Mountain. The time has now come for the cult to step out of the shadows. Nyarlathotep has spoken to Roland Delmont through a messenger utorok and directed him to contact the investigators. He is to provide them assistance and give them a direction in which to begin looking for answers.

The investigators are now wanted by the FBI for a murder they did not commit. They might be looking for a way out of their predicament, and Roland Delmont is here to provide it. This adventure can be place in any city the investigators are visiting.

Contact

At some point, one of the investigators is jostled by a shabbily dressed man on the street. A successful Spot check (DC 10) reveals that the bum slipped a plain white office envelope into the investigator's pocket. By the time the investigators look for him, the stranger is gone. (He was just a homeless drunk who Delmont paid to deliver his letter, and knows nothing of its value.)

Inside the sealed envelope is a letter from Roland Delmont requesting that the investigators meet with him tonight at the Alcott Hotel (see the Benefactor Papers #1). The letter is written on stationery from the Alcott Hotel. If the investigators decide against meeting with Delmont, he calls them on the telephone and tries to explain his position. If the investigators absolutely refuse to listen to what he has to say, he gives up on them; if they don't want his assistance, he certainly won't force it on them.

At the Alcott

The Alcott Hotel is modern and upscale, conveniently located in the heart of downtown. On the ground floor, the lobby is spacious and full of greenery. A fountain gurgles at its center. Off to one side, almost hidden behind a row of potted ferns, is the entrance to the Alcott Lounge. The lounge opens at 4:00 pm and closes at 1:00 am but gets most of its business between 10:00 pm and midnight.

Inside, the lounge is all glass and neon curves, decorated in a neo-art deco style that teeters between cool and gaudy. Roland Delmont arrives at the lounge at 7:30 and takes up his post at the large table in the back, facing the door. There are a dozen or so other people in the lounge, sitting at the bar or gathered around small glass tables. Two of these—a man and a woman in business suits—are actually Delmont's bodyguards. They keep a stealthy eye on the deacon and any investigators who meet him here. When Delmont leaves at 8:30, they follow at a discrete distance, but are prepared to handle any threat.

Roland Delmont is dressed in a sharp charcoal suit. He makes eye contact with the investigators as they arrive, and subtly nods, gesturing that they should join him. Once everyone is seated, he leans forward and narrows his eyes.

"I have with me everything you need to disappear," he says. "Driver's license, credit card, passport—it's all here, one for each of you."

Delmont introduces himself simply as "Roland" and goes on to explain that "his people" are intimately familiar with the investigators' involvement in the incident at Still Mountain. (The Temple received a full report on these events from the utoruk calling himself Joseph Fowler.) For reasons he chooses not to go into, those who Delmont is representing have a deep interest in TemCo, the corporate sponsor of the Still Mountain observatory. Delmont questions the investigators at some length about their knowledge of TemCo and those behind it; he seems pleased to hear whatever they have to say, even if they merely admit ignorance.

When the investigators are done, Delmont tells them what he knows about TemCo. It is an international holding company and maintains itself by owning many smaller businesses and simply drawing its profits from them. These other businesses are scattered throughout the world and include everything from transportation to heavy industry and manufacturing consumer goods. There seems to be no reason or theme to these companies, other than very high profits. TemCo also invests in its own projects, such as the observatory on Still Mountain. The corporation tries to keeps its presence to a minimum but does maintain a small office complex outside New York City as its headquarters. TemCo is not publicly traded and there-

fore has not revealed its assets, profits, or losses.

Finally, Delmont hands the investigators a packet. Inside are various IDs (see below) and a memorandum leaked from a TemCo office (see the Benefactor Papers #2). The memo mentions that TemCo is looking for a Timothy Ekloff, who it considers to be a terrible threat. As part of this effort, TemCo has secured Timothy's brother, Alan, in a New Hampshire mental hospital. Attached to the memo is Alan's admission notes from the asylum (see the Benefactor Papers #3). These notes explain that Alan was admitted after being accused of murdering his sister Karen. He was acquitted, but the delusions he continued to exhibit prompted his family to leave him in the care of mental health professionals. (Though Delmont does not mention it, the memo and admission notes are two of several hundred documents—mostly useless—that were leaked to the Temple by an anonymous source inside TemCo headquarters.)

Throughout the conversation, Delmont is vague and evasive about who he works for. He has no intention of giving away any more information than that which is in the packet.

"I believe the answers we both seek," says Delmont, "can be found with this Timothy Ekloff. And Timothy, apparently, can be found through Alan." He then proposes that the investigators go to the asylum where Alan is being kept and talk with him about his brother's whereabouts. While Delmont's proposal is presented as a suggestion, there is no doubt that he fully expects the investigators to comply with his wishes. After all, has he not provided them with new identities and a lead on TemCo? They owe him a little cooperation.

Cover Stories

Delmont provides each investigator with a California driver's license, a Social Security card, and a passport. All of these documents feature accurate photographs and false names. (GMs may allow players to choose their own aliases or may wish to simply assign them.) The cultist explains that those he represents are well connected and accessed the investigators' real driver's licenses to obtain the photos.

"If anyone asks, you are insurance investigators," Delmont says. "You are employed by Eastern Mutual Insurance, which is based out of San Francisco." Eastern Mutual has a sizable life insurance policy in the name of Karen Ekloff, he explains, and the company is investigating the circumstances surrounding her death before paying out. Delmont goes on to say that Eastern Mutual is merely a front organization for those he represents. While the company exists and does have the paperwork necessary to support the investigators' cover stories, Karen Ekloff had nothing to do with setting up the policy.

Benefactor Papers #1

Friends,

I understand that your curiosity and inquiries into a rather delicate matter have left you with problems. As a representative of an organization whose interests parallel yours, I would like to offer my assistance in this matter.

I would appreciate a chance to speak with you in person. While in town, I have taken rooms at the Alcott Hotel. If you are interested in my offer, I would like to meet in the Alcott Lounge tonight at 8:00. You can find me sitting alone at the largest table, near the back.

Hoping to see you tonight,

R.

"It's all a ruse, of course," he says with a thin smile. "But one that makes it much easier for you to approach those to whom you must speak."

The investigators are also issued credit cards. These are corporate cards, with the name "Eastern Mutual Insurance" emblazoned across their fronts. Delmont warns the investigators that the cards each have a $500 monthly limit, so they should "use them wisely." Printed on the backs of the cards is a phone number for Eastern Mutual. This, Delmont states, is how the investigators are to get in touch with him. (Should they call the number, the investigators reach a voice-mail system and may leave a message for Delmont. He may or may not call them back immediately, at the GM's discretion.) He provides the group with a portable telephone for this purpose. "This is company property," he warns them. "Don't lose it." (For details on the portable phone, see below.)

Finally, the investigators each receive a one-way airline ticket to New Hampshire, where a rental car has been reserved in the name of Eastern Mutual.

Satellite Phone

The telephone Delmont gives the investigators is no ordinary cellular phone. It is equipped with a high-power transceiver that uses a direct satellite link to establish a connection. The telephone can be used with perfect clarity anywhere in North America.

Physically, the phone is slightly larger than average, with an oversize antenna and large lithium battery. It is made of durable black plastic designed to be impact-resistant (hardness 10, 5 hit points).

Benefactor Papers #2

To: Stephen Lanyk
From: Allison Hodges
Subject: Timothy Ekloff

Per your request, I have summarized the history and current situation of Timothy Ekloff, a.k.a. Rogue 01. Forgive the vagueness of the following, but standard security procedure dictates that certain protocols must be followed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

We first encountered Rogue 01 in 1995 when we captured him prowling around the central site of the Project. It was determined that the subject possessed the required Asset. He escaped the site through unknown means (those responsible for this negligence have been reprimanded), but in the process of searching for him, we located a large number of other subjects with the required Asset, which led to the founding of Acquisition Site Beta. (For a detailed report, see file 9503432.)

We have had little success in locating Rogue 01 since then but have requested that our allies in law enforcement keep watch for him. Due to Rogue 01's intimate knowledge of the Project, his capture is of the highest importance.

We have secured the brother of Rogue 01, who was institutionalized following the events at Acquisition Site Beta. (For a detailed report, see file 9600017.) He is being transferred to our facility in New Hampshire, where he can be kept under observation and questioned regarding the whereabouts of his brother.

Benefactor Papers #3

Gibson Mental Hospital Admission Notes

Name: Alan J. Ekloff
DOB: 5/23/66
History: Committed, with family's consent, by court after being acquitted of his sister's murder.

Profile: Patient suffers from advanced delusional psychosis. He maintains an intricate fantasy pattern revolving around the existence of "monsters." He holds these monsters responsible for his sister's disappearance months before being committed. (She is assumed drowned.) This psychosis was most likely brought about by the patient's inability to save his sister from drowning. Patient experiences mood swings and exhibits extreme paranoia. As he may be a danger to himself and others, he will be kept for treatment for 24 months. At that time, he may be recommitted for another 24 months pending review.

The battery offers 24 hours of standby time and two hours of talk time. It can be recharged with a small electrical cord that plugs into any wall socket. Delmont tells the investigators all of this if they ask, but what he doesn't mention is that the phone emits a signal allowing the Temple to track it via the network of communication satellites. The phone also keeps a log of all incoming and outgoing phone numbers, and transmits all communications to New Moon headquarters in San Francisco.

Complications

The investigators may very well reject Delmont's offer of assistance—or simply take his false ID cards and run. If they immediately refuse, Delmont asks them why they are not interested in his group's assistance, and if there is anything he can offer them to help change their minds. If the investigators' demands are reasonable (in the GM's opinion), Delmont makes what arrangements he can in order to please them in return for their cooperation.

If the investigators demand information about the people Delmont represents, he refuses to tell them anything more about the New Moon Temple. While he would love to induct them into the Temple, he does not know them well enough to trust them with the truth.

The investigators are free to quit working for the Temple, either at this point or at any other time during the campaign (unless they have actually joined the cult). The key purpose of the New Moon Temple in **Nocturnum** is to provide the investigators with a direction (talk to Alan to find Timothy to find out what's going on) and a motivation (do these things and we will protect you from TemCo and the FBI).

Without the Temple to provide these things, the Gamemaster still has several other tools he can use to immerse the investigators more deeply in the campaign. The FBI is pursuing the investigators, ensuring that they cannot simply go back to their previous lives. Perhaps Timothy Ekloff encounters the investigators again, giving them some key information and nudging them in the proper direction. A far less gentle push could come in the form of an utoruk demanding the investigators' obedience.



CHAPTER EIGHT

Visiting Hours

When the spirit moves Clyde Darrow, there is nothing he can do but speak. It doesn't matter if he is on a street corner, on the bus, or locked in here with all the crazy people—there are some things that just need to be said...and he's the one to say them.

"Behold! I saw a great fire in the heavens. And it smelled of death, of boiling seas, and—"

"Shut up, Darrow. I'm not in the mood."

Darrow whirls and glares at the new patient. He has a message for this one, a message from God. But...he doesn't want to say it. He doesn't want to tell him.

"What? Quit staring at me, you old coot."

"Behold," the old man says sadly, "I have seen the wrath of the unholy beast, the one who crawls beneath the earth. I see a cold metal death for you, my friend. And I see it coming for you tonight."

Gamemaster's Introduction

After escaping capture at the hands of the shk'ryth, Timothy Ekloff returned home briefly to his family's estate in Bower County, Georgia. TemCo's agents arrived just after he left and were unable to pick up his trail, but they made an astounding discovery: For some unknown reason, a large percentage of the people living in the area exhibited some psychic ability. TemCo immediately set about "acquiring" as many psychics as it could—starting with Timothy's sister, Karen. (For details on the Ekloffs, Bower County, and TemCo's operation, see *A Family Affair*, page 131.)

With Timothy gone, it was up to Alan Ekloff, his younger brother, to find Karen. He was eventually successful in locating his sister, but in the process of rescuing her she drowned in the Georgia swamp. This was no regular drowning, however: She was pulled beneath the murky waters by a monstrous entity that makes the swamp its home.

Alan was arrested shortly afterward for Karen's murder. When Alan maintained that his sister had been dragged down into the swamp by some sort of "monster," he was committed to the state mental hospital. Six months ago, at the request of Dr. Jarvis Nash, he was transferred to the Gibson Mental Hospital in New Hampshire.

Unbeknownst to Alan, Dr. Nash is a minion of the shk'ryth calling herself Carmen Hall, and the transfer was merely a ploy to draw Alan into her clutches. Since the transfer, Hall and Nash have been trying without success to force Alan to give up his brother's location. Alan does not know where Timothy is, but even if Hall and Nash cannot pry Timothy's whereabouts from him, the fact that they hold Alan gives them an edge against Timothy should he resurface.

Alan, for his part, is simply trying to stay alive from one day to the next. He is not insane, though another six months in Gibson may eventually make him snap. But Alan is strong; he has so far resisted the doctors' every question, every needle, every probe.

Three months ago, the New Moon Temple intercepted a TemCo memo (see the Benefactor Papers #2). The memo not only identified Timothy Ekloff as a threat, but also stated that his brother Alan might be useful in contacting him and that he was being held at the Gibson Mental Hospital. Following up on the lead, the Temple sent in two agents, posing as reporters, to speak with Alan Ekloff. Neither of them returned. According to Gibson officials, they never even arrived—but the Temple suspects the truth: TemCo realized the agents' true agenda and killed them.

Realizing that their enemy is dedicated to keeping Ekloff imprisoned, Temple leaders have decided to move more cautiously. Following a vision from their god, they are sending the investigators, their newly acquired pawns, to speak with the madman. The investigators have been given false identities as employees of Eastern Mutual Insurance. The Temple knows that their enemy may suspect who the investigators are really working for, which makes this a very dangerous mission.

Gibson Mental Hospital

Twenty miles west of Cranston, New Hampshire, a small tourist town overlooking the Atlantic, Gibson Mental Hospital is a sprawling, drab, one-story brick building. The hospital was built more than a hundred years ago to support the controversial psychological experiments of Dr. Amos Gibson. Since then, it has gone from an upscale private treatment center to an understaffed revenue sink run by the county. The locals hate the old place and wish the county would shut it down, but the hospital has powerful friends in the state legislature. As long as TemCo keeps making campaign contributions the state will keep funding the mental hospital.

Carmen Hall

For centuries, the dreadful thing now known as Carmen Hall existed as little more than a pulsating mass of evil crouched and waiting at the Atlantic shore. A system of caves along the New Hampshire coastline was its shk'ryth domain, and the locals knew that if they ventured too far into that labyrinth of darkness and stone, they would not return.

But there were those in the region who accepted the shk'ryth. They worshiped it as a god, offering it deplorable sacrifices and committing unspeakable atrocities in its name. This pleased the shk'ryth, and it blessed these followers by shaping the land to their needs. The cult was at its peak between 1850 and 1865, when it maintained a reign of terror over the rest of the populace. But in the decades that followed, the cult's numbers grew smaller while its enemies became bolder and more numerous. In 1915, the cult was finally wiped out by an angry mob and its last member hanged from a tree.

Isolated once again, the shk'ryth took for itself the name and shape of a tourist, Carmen Hall, who had gone exploring into the caves and never returned. As Hall, the shk'ryth insinuated itself as well as it could into human society, analyzing humanity with cold, cruel eyes. She studied the fledgling sciences of psychology and sociology in order to better understand the world of humans.

Part of Hall's study included conducting experiments on humans. After determining basic parameters such as pain threshold and the limits of human tissue, she learned to shape the minds and bodies of her subject to her liking.

Hall's use of this innate shk'ryth ability shone like a beacon of power and brought her to the attention of TemCo. Thrilled at finding a wilder shk'ryth of such power, the corporation asked Hall to join in their efforts. She readily agreed and since then has quickly increased her influence within the TemCo ruling council. It was her idea that TemCo should take over the Gibson Mental Hospital and her idea to develop their own hybrid psychic Spotters.

Carmen Hall is the assistant director and head administrator at the hospital, but her real power comes from being a shk'ryth. Gibson has become her laboratory in which she works her arcane magic, transforming the inmates into creatures less than human. Hall enjoys her work. Not that she is particularly sadistic—the constant screams do become annoying—but nothing compares to the sheer joy of creating.

In human form, Hall is a short, petite female with short blonde hair. She doesn't need glasses, but often wears them along with a lab coat in order to appear more "like a doctor." Hall isn't a doctor of any kind but often claims to be a psychiatrist. She does, in fact, know quite a bit about psychiatry and uses this knowledge in her experiments. Hall's monstrous form is a hideous amalgam of crab and squid: an enormous mass of writhing black tentacles sprouting from between a pair of terrible pincers, supported by a chitonous shell and eight spiky, articulated legs.

The shk'ryth called Hall is very active in the TemCo organization. It was her efforts that led to the creation of the hybrid Spotters used by Monarch Testing and Research. As the investigators arrive at Gibson, she is on her way back to the hospital from New York, where she was meeting with the TemCo council.

Dr. Jarvis Nash



Nash once cared about his work, but that was a long, sad time ago, and he no longer has time for such things. Now he has but one goal, one joy in his drab gray life: to serve Carmen Hall.

When Hall arrived at Gibson six years ago, she reshaped Nash into a tool for her own purposes. She looked into his soul and saw the broken marriages, the depression, and the secret alcoholism. She saw everything that was wrong with Nash, cut it away like a cancer, and gave him a new life with no higher purpose than to carry out her will. For this act of redemption, Nash loves Hall. He has killed for her in the past and will gladly do so again. Blood on his hands is a small price to pay for this sense of peace.

Jarvis Nash is a balding, gray-haired gentleman in his late 60s. His mustache and remaining hair are longer than fashion should allow. This, combined with a ratty sweater and a pair of wire-framed spectacles, give him the look of the harried academic. He has a cheerful, upbeat disposition that seems at odds with Hall's detached curiosity. Even when trying to kill someone, he may smile and laugh and perhaps even make a joke. Hall has made him that happy.

Hall has also turned Jarvis Nash into a monster. He was one of her first experiments with the magical manipulation of human beings at Gibson, and she is proud of what she was able to create out of this weak, diseased mass of flesh. Drawing from the fears and hallucinations of the lunatics around her, Hall chose for Nash a form perfect for protecting the hospital in her absence. Nash was less enthusiastic about the proposition of his body being twisted and shaped at his mistress's whim, but realized he had no choice. Since then, he has grown accustomed to the idea.

When he so chooses, Nash can transform into a large, ratlike beast with elongated jaws and enormous claws. He remains roughly humanoid, but his legs twist, pushing him down on all fours and giving him a great capacity for leaping. Changing into this hideous form takes about a minute and floods Nash's body and mind with unspeakable pain; changing back to human form takes another five minutes and leaves the doctor physically exhausted. He prefers to retain his human form and will only change to his monstrous shape if he absolutely has to.

Investigators' Introduction

At the urging of Roland Delmont, their mysterious benefactor from the New Moon Temple, the investigators set out to meet with Alan Ekloff in the Gibson Mental Hospital. Their mission is to learn from Alan the whereabouts of his brother Timothy, then report their findings to Roland Delmont of the New Moon Temple. Their cover story is that they are investigators for Eastern Mutual Insurance and wish to interview Alan concerning the death of his sister Karen two years ago. The adventure assumes that the investigators have made an appointment with the hospital. If they have not, Eastern Mutual calls and makes an appointment on their behalf.

Arrival

The late afternoon sky is unusually dark, the clouds bruised and seeping rain, when the investigators turn off the highway towards the mental hospital. A long gravel driveway winds for a mile through dense woods. An overgrown 13-foot-tall brick wall surrounds the hospital grounds, broken at the driveway by a rusted

steel gate. The gate is open and unguarded when the investigators arrive; they can pull into the tiny parking lot in front of the hospital building. There is only one other vehicle in the lot.

It is raining in earnest by the time the front door opens. The investigators are let inside by Dr. Nash, who greets them warmly then apologizes while he searches them. Between a pat-search and a handheld metal detector, the doctor finds all but the best-hidden weapons the investigators may have on their persons and locks them away in a lock-box built into the foyer wall. "For your own protection," he smiles. If anyone asks, Dr. Nash explains that Gibson is a state of the art system that requires minimal security personnel; the guard scheduled for tonight called in sick and Nash hasn't bothered to replace her.

"But we have plenty of time to discuss these things. Please. Come with me." Under no circumstances will Nash allow investigators to enter the facility unless they surrender any weapons they are carrying.

Dr. Nash leads the investigators down a musty, poorly lit hallway whose high ceiling is lost in the gloom. The investigators hear muffled shouts and insane murmurs echoing around them but cannot make out what any of them are saying.

The investigators reach Nash's office. It is large but feels cramped due to the countless books, plaques, file cabinets, and other knickknacks he has accumulated over two decades in this position. The doctor's cluttered desk dominates a third of the room, but there are chairs aplenty for the investigators. Nash welcomes the investigators, offering them coffee, and seems genuinely happy to have visitors. He is friendly and laughs easily; his cheerful disposition is a bright spot in the gloomy atmosphere of the asylum.

Dr. Nash speaks freely with the investigators about Alan Ekloff. He explains how Alan's sister Karen disappeared two years ago and her brother went on a mad quest to find her. Alan claimed to have found her tied up in some old house, which the police later looked for but could not find. After the two of them supposedly fled the house, Alan claims his sister was carried off by some sort of "swamp monster." Nash believes that Alan watched his sister drown in the swamp when she first disappeared, weeks before Alan claimed to have "rescued" her.

The doctor is equally open on any other subject the investigators care to bring up. He mentions that he is the only staff member on duty tonight because there are only a handful of patients and the hospital's budget has been cut again this year. "Besides," he chuckles, "the security system is top-notch and fully electronic. It only takes one person to control it."

Surprise!

Dr. Nash gives the investigators Alan's room number and gives them directions to help them find it. He leads them to a heavy door leading into the secure ward. He then returns to his office to "buzz" them through: The remote lock can only be activated from Nash's office. He instructs them to alert him over the hospital intercom system (there are several call stations on the ward) when they get to Alan's room and he'll unlock it for them. "He's probably sleeping," Nash says, "but go right on in—he'll be happy to have visitors."

Once through the gate, the investigators must turn the corner, go through an unlocked door, and descend in an elevator into the basement. At the bottom, they find themselves at one end of a long corridor; dim bulbs cast a feeble light on its bare concrete walls and floor. Security cameras in the corridor allow Nash and Hall to monitor the patients from their offices. Unmarked doors line the walls two connected wings. Nash's directions indicate a nearby room, and when they contact him over the intercom, the door unlocks with a buzz and click.

It is completely dark inside and the dim light from the corridor does little to illuminate the room. If the investigators actually go into the room, Nash locks it down immediately. The room is empty. Water-stained walls lie bare against the dust-covered concrete floor, and it appears that no one has been in the room for quite some time. If Nash has managed to trap the investigators in the room, he calls them over the intercom system.

"I apologize for the inconvenience," he says through the tinny speaker outside in the corridor. "But I'm afraid you're just going to have to wait until my mistress arrives. She'll be here in an hour or so, and she'll know what to do with you."

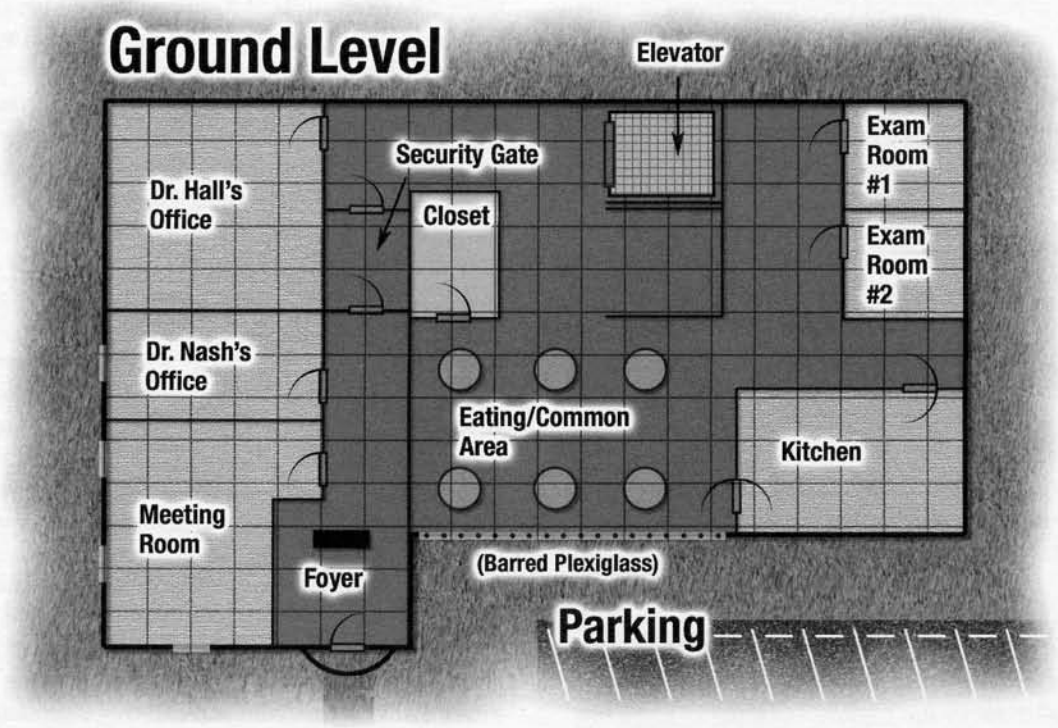
Entombed

Whether or not the investigators actually entered the room, they are trapped in the secure ward. Nash remotely locks the secure gate, and even if some of them stayed upstairs in the common area, the only access to the ward is locked.

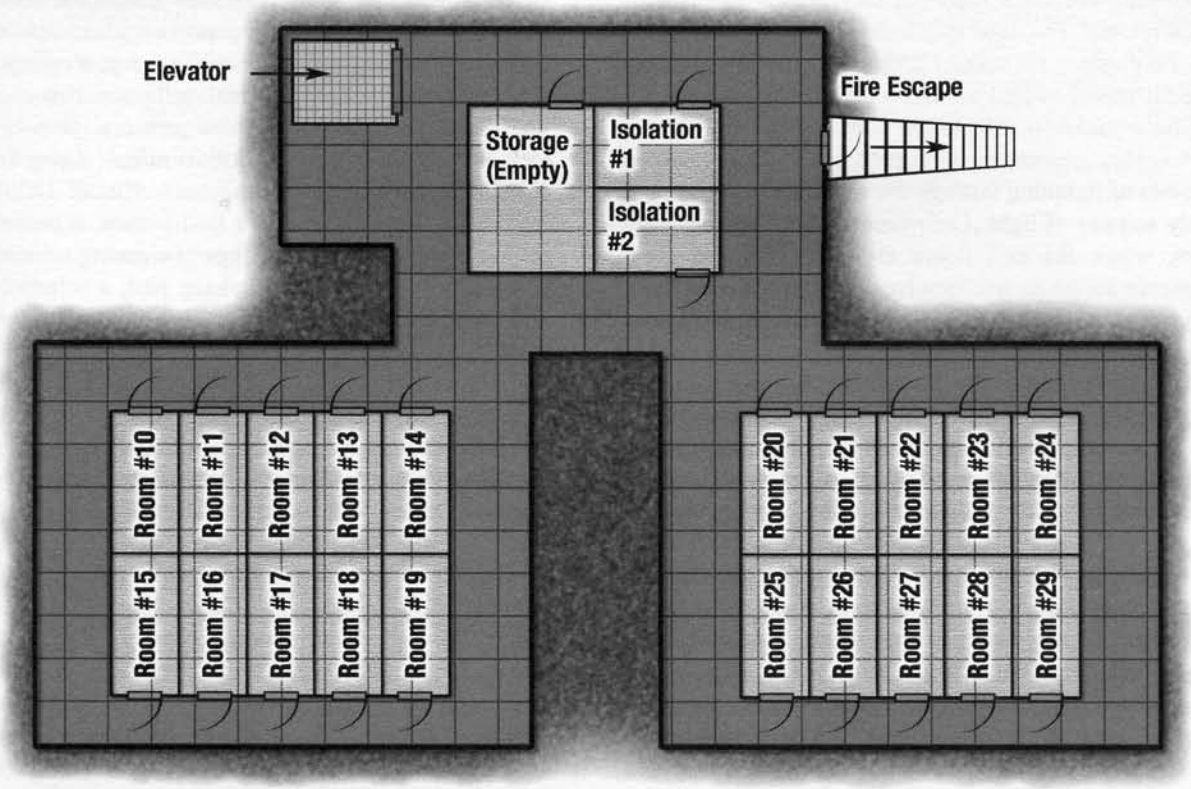
The room itself is roughly 15 by 10 feet and 12 feet high. There are no windows. A recessed light fixture gives the room a sickly yellow glow from the center of the ceiling—the light flickers to life automatically when the door is locked. Thunder booms outside and the walls shiver slightly.

Escape from the cell is almost impossible. The door is firmly bolted shut (Open Lock check, DC 40) and the door is reinforced steel (hardness 15, hp 250, Break DC 38). There is no place to hide in the room, as it is

Gibson Mental Hospital



Basement Level



completely empty. Even the door opens outwards, so no one can hide behind it.

The investigators' best bet for escape is to short-circuit the room's wiring via the overhead light, shorting out the electronic lock in the process. There is nothing covering the bulb in the light fixture, so if the investigators can only reach it with something metal, shorting it out is not difficult. The task requires a successful Disable Device check (DC 20), and investigators with 5 or more ranks in Craft (electronics) or Knowledge (electronics) gain a +2 synergy bonus on the check. A character who fails the check by more than 10 fails to properly ground himself and must make a Reflex save (DC 20) or suffer 1d6 points of electricity damage.

If they manage to short out the system, the investigators are rewarded with an audible "click" as the door unlatches and swings open half an inch.

If the investigators are not trapped in the room, they are free to wander the ward. However, all of the patients' rooms are locked down, as are the doors to the storage room and emergency exit. These doors (and their locks) are identical in all respects to those in the patients' rooms.

Lightning Strike

Ten minutes after the investigators enter the secure ward, thunder rocks the asylum. The lights glow too brightly for a moment, then go out altogether as the building loses all power. If the investigators are still in their cell when this happens, they hear the electronic lock release. The door is unlocked and they are free.

Throughout the mental hospital, the patients' doors are all unlocked and the lights have gone out. Specks of light flicker to life at the ends of the hallways as emergency generators kick in. Aside from occasional flashes of lightning through the windows, these are the only sources of light. Unfortunately for the investigators, while the cell doors are unlocked, the main entrance to the secure area has a manual backup lock. This lock needs a key, and Dr. Nash is the only one who has the key.

Dr. Nash is very displeased. He had hoped to surprise his mistress with captured spies, but this lightning strike changes everything. Now the spies are out there wandering around, talking with the others and no doubt wreaking all kinds of havoc with the patients' fragile psyches. Dr. Hall has stressed to him time and again that the hospital is a controlled environment for her experiments. If the investigators contaminate the experiments, there is no telling what his mistress will do to him.

The investigators must be stopped before they cause further harm. Still in his office, Nash quickly strips naked, then goes to the main entrance of the secure area. He watches through the window there to make sure no one is near the door when he opens the manual lock with his key. Inside the secure area, he locks the door behind him, slips his keys onto a cord around his neck, and begins to change.

Nash's guttural groan echoes down the dark hallways. His flesh shifts and slithers around his skeleton, forming a new, shocking body. His eyes gleam yellow. His teeth lengthen and sharpen, and his jaw juts forward and out. Over the course of a minute, Nash transforms into his hideous beast form, the better to stalk and kill the investigators. For as a beast, the darkness means little to him. His sense of smell is keen, and he can track the investigators by scent alone. He doesn't need light for this hunt.

The Chase is On

Free from their cell, the investigators have to locate Alan Ekloff before Nash finds them, then escape from the asylum before Hall returns. The easy part of this is finding Ekloff. There are room directories by the elevator and on a clipboard hanging on the door of Hall's office. Alan Ekloff is in room 23.

While making their mad dash through the hospital, the investigators may go into the rooms, either looking to arm themselves or looking for a place to hide.

Patient's Room: The patients' rooms were, up until a few minutes ago, all secured with electronic locks. Now they are all unlocked. Unoccupied rooms each include a metal cot with a bare mattress, a single plastic chair, and a window with bars across the outside. Occupied rooms may have paper, crayons, and other soft, personal items that would make poor weapons. Each room also contains a small toilet and sink.

Broom Closet: These small janitors' closets are locked but can be opened with a simple Open Lock check (DC 20) or Strength check (Break DC 13). Inside, the investigators can find a mop, a broom, a rolling mop bucket, several jugs of cleaning solution, a jug of floor wax, a large garbage pail, a selection of cleaning rags, and whatever other janitorial supplies the GM deems appropriate. Emergency flashlights can also be found in the closets. They are large enough to be used as clubs if necessary.

Hall's Office: At her own insistence, Carmen Hall's office is located just inside the secure area (allowing her easier access to her subjects). The electronic lock is open, but the mechanical lock on the door is still secure. Nash is carrying the keys around his neck. The door can also be opened with a successful Open Lock check (DC 25) or a Strength check (Break DC 18). Inside, the office is sparse, with naked walls and a desk empty but for a name plate reading "Carmen Hall." There is a locked file cabinet in the corner. Both the desk and the cabinet can be opened with a successful Open Lock check (DC 25) or torn open with a suc-

cessful Strength check (DC 15). Inside the cabinet is Ekloff's file, which is useless except for one important document (see Visiting Papers #1). Carmen Hall has no windows in her office.

Other rooms, such as the eating hall, exam rooms, and kitchen, contain nothing particularly interesting to the investigators.

The Patients

Freed by the power failure, the patients wander into the darkened hallways, driven by their madness and the storm raging outside. Some of the more dangerous patients have armed themselves with makeshift weapons and are looking for someone to hurt. Aside from Alan Ekloff and Gideon Holland (see Ekloff's Room, below), there are 10 patients in the hospital. All of the patients are wearing hospital gowns and plastic wristbands with their names printed on them. Below is a list of the patients the investigators may encounter and a brief profile of each.

As the night wears on, the patients become increasingly agitated. "She's coming," they moan and scream. "She's coming!" Investigators questioning one of the more lucid patients (and making a successful Psychoanalysis check, DC 15) are informed that the patients are referring to Dr. Hall. She hurts them and puts bad things in them. Dr. Hall is changing them, making them monsters through needles, chains, and words that no human mouth could ever utter. The patients are clearly terrified of Dr. Hall and are very emphatic that the investigators are going to suffer at her hand when she arrives. The longer the investigators remain in the asylum, the more frantic the patients' cries become, adding an urgency to the scene and the investigators' efforts to escape.

Game statistics have not been provided for the patients who are unlikely to interact with the investigators on more than a superficial level.

Albert Burns: When he was eight, Albert's mother took him to see a psychiatrist because he had tortured his new puppy to death within a day of receiving it for his birthday. When he was 12, he was locked up for skinning a classmate alive, just "to see what it felt like." He was released by accident when he was 18 and killed 11 people before he was captured six months later. Now almost 30 years old, Burns is highly intelligent and well educated; he loves to discuss philosophy and ancient history with his victims while killing them. Of course, these are deep topics, so he has to take his time with the killing.

Fortunately for the investigators, Burns is more concerned with escape that anything else—though that could change at any moment. He is unarmed but is more than capable of disabling or killing someone with his bare hands.

Visiting Papers #1

Dated one week ago

Progress Report, personal supplemental:

The purpose of the treatment is the extraction of certain elements of information, namely the subject's role in the Bower County incident, how he came to be aware of the Project, the extent of his knowledge of the Project, and most importantly, the location of his brother, Rogue 01.

We have achieved modest success in retrieving the above data from the subject. On the matter of Rogue 01's location, however, the subject's information is incomplete. However, the truly fascinating aspect of the subject arose coincidentally over the course of our questioning.

We discovered that the subject has the Asset, which means that all three siblings are so endowed. This may be a matter of genetics, but it also lends credence to the theory of the so-called "Bowersville Effect" in that all three grew up in the same geographic region. There must be something in the area causing the locals to manifest the Asset, and if we could determine what it is, the benefit to the Project would be enormous.

It is unfortunate that we have made this breakthrough this late in the Project. At this point, it would be of questionable value to pursue this line of research. The Project will soon reach completion, rendering these findings moot.

Clyde Darrow: An old man with a long white beard and hair, Darrow has the fire and appearance of a mad street preacher. He was committed by the state after one too many incidents of walking into a business and prophesying the end of the world. He avoids physical confrontation, but bellows at those passing by, "Don't you see? It's all falling apart! I'm doing this for you!" Darrow has a psychic connection to Dr. Hall. Given half a chance, he warns the investigators that she is "the one from underground, the one who lives to hate and kill. She will come. You will all die!" Gamemasters who wish to motivate the investigators can have Darrow provide them with constant updates: "In 20 minutes, the queen of darkness arrives to devour your souls!"

Earnest Foley: Foley was a football player in the arena league who threw away a very promising career when he overdosed on drugs and fried most of his brain. When Foley's family could no longer take care of him, they sent him to Gibson for drug treatment and rehabilitation. A month later, his family was wiped out in a bizarre car accident and Earnest Foley became a ward of the state. He has been in the institution ever since.

Foley looks like a monster. He stands almost seven feet tall and weighs over 350 pounds—all of it muscle—and a thundering bass voice completes the monstrous effect. But the truth is that Foley is scared and lonely. He has the mind of a child; if the investigators treat him kindly, he will be their friend. If they abuse or threaten him, he may become dangerous.

Gilbert Hammar: When Gilbert watched his parents die in a subway accident at age 14, it was too much for him to take. He retreated into his skull and has only come out twice in the 10 years since then. If the investigators find Gilbert, it is in his room, where he is lying in a fetal position on his bed, rocking back and forth and whispering "mind the gap" over and over again.

Ilsa Jenkins: A sad-looking teenager, Ilsa was committed two months ago by her parents, who were fed up with her compulsive lying. Ilsa is desperate for people to like her and will say anything it takes to keep the investigators with her. Yes, she knows the way out. Yes, she knows where Alan Ekloff is. No, she doesn't really belong here. Ilsa lies about everything but tries to keep her lies from being too outrageous.

Julie Kangas: Julie showed up at the county hospital suicide unit with more than two dozen slash marks up and down her arms. But she wasn't trying to kill herself. She was trying to hurt herself, to reshape her body into a form that she can control. If the investigators run into her, she is in a straitjacket and calmly asking people to untie her. The moment anyone does, she immediately begins to tear at her hands and arms with her teeth, ripping bloody swaths of skin and flesh. There is no mistaking the look of ecstasy on her face as she does so. Watching this ghastly display costs an investigator 0/1d2 points of Sanity.

Laurie Mengola: Full of paranoid delusions, Laurie has spent most of her 33 years convinced that "they" were out to get her. She doesn't know who "they" are but remains convinced nevertheless. When she first encounters the investigators, she implores them to help her because "they" are right behind her and want to hurt her. A minute later, she stares with horror at the investigators, then runs away screaming as she realizes that they are "them."

Nancy Owens: Nancy can't remember what she saw in the back of her uncle's van when she was 13, but it turned her hair white. Six years later, she never speaks above a whisper because "the monsters might hear." Nancy lives in fear of "monsters"—they hide under beds and in closets and in deep underground caverns where they bubble like hot tar. She has left her room at the asylum only because she fears the monsters in the halls less than the beast beneath her cot. Investigators bumping into Nancy find her quiet and jumpy—though prone to fly into a violent rage at the sight or mention of blood.

Peter Quinn: A middle-aged veteran, Peter has been waiting for this moment for years. He was damaged when he came back from the war and prone to flashbacks. His last flashback started seven years ago and has never stopped. Peter sees the asylum as a prisoner of war camp, and has been planning his escape for just such an opportunity. If the investigators encounter Peter and play along with his delusion, he may very well show them the way out.

Renae Stewart: Renae turned 60 today and celebrated with her three invisible friends: Moppy, Poppy, and Tooti. The four have been inseparable for more than 20 years now, and Renae always consults her friends for advice. Moppy thinks the investigators are nice people and need Renae's help. Poppy thinks the investigators' heads would make nice hats, if only Renae had a good sharp knife. And Tooti tells Renae the investigators' real names and says she should avoid them, for they serve the Black Man. Renae is confused; her friends have never disagreed before. What should she do?

Ekloff's Room

Alan Ekloff's room is essentially the same as all the others: a window, a cot, and a single plastic chair. The door is open when the investigators arrive. Inside, a tall, middle-aged man with short brown hair is sitting on the bed. He turns and looks at them in surprise. He answers that he is Ekloff if the investigators ask but is reluctant to leave the room. He will answer any questions they might have but would like the door closed first: "So they don't hear," he says.

While the investigators are in the room, a Spot check (DC 15) reveals blood trickling out from under the cot. A Spot check (DC 20) allows an investigator to notice that the name on the man's wristband is not Alan Ekloff. It is Gideon Holland.

Holland likes to think of himself as a big game hunter, a pure Darwinist who is doing humanity a favor by thinning the herd. But the truth is that he is just a sadistic psychopath who gets off on the power rush of killing others. By all rights, he should have been exe-



cuted when convicted for stalking and killing a dozen campers in a state park, but he pleaded insanity. The judge and jury agreed and sent him to Gibson for the rest of his life.

When his door unlocked, Gideon grabbed his shiv—a crude makeshift knife he made from a piece of scrap metal—and literally ran out into the hallway looking for someone to kill. The person he found was Alan Ekloff. Alan was stepping out into the hall when Gideon turned the corner and stabbed him, forcing him back into his room. Again and again Gideon stabbed his victim, grinning and giggling while Ekloff gasped for air. When Alan stopped moving, the killer stuffed his victim under the cot. He sat down on the cot for a moment to think (and clean his shiv). It was at this moment that the investigators stepped into the room.

Holland plays along with the investigators as long as he can. He has no idea what they are talking about—he never met Ekloff and knows nothing of his life—but if they keep asking questions, he keeps giving answers. If the investigators call Holland's bluff (or if he grows bored with the game—whichever comes first), the killer attacks the nearest investigator with his shiv. Holland is no fool. If he thinks he is going to lose the fight, he breaks for the door.

Under the bed, Alan Ekloff is still alive...barely. His chest and abdomen are a red sponge; blood seeps from the corners of his mouth. When the investigators find him, he only has the strength to answer a couple questions and appears to be delirious. If asked about Timothy's whereabouts, Alan says that he does not know where his brother is but points to a drawing hanging on his wall.

The drawing portrays Timothy Ekloff sitting in a sports car overlooking the ocean. A closer inspection of the picture reveals that it was done in crayon, but the realistic detail is beyond incredible. The investigators should recognize the car and its occupant from their first meeting with Ekloff in *A Dire Warning* (see page 111). Scrawled across the bottom corner in a childish hand is the name "Samuel Ekloff." If asked, Alan wheezes and says that Sam is his nephew, Karen's nine-year-old son.

There are four other crayon drawings tacked to Alan's wall, all in the same realistic style and all signed "Samuel." The first is a picture of a priest in 19th century garb standing in front of a large plantation house. The second shows a woman in a white dress floating over what might be a forest or a swamp, hints of angel wings around her shoulders. The third drawing is a still life of an old cemetery, its headstones cracked and worn. The final picture is a shocking tableau: in it, the investigators are shown gathered around the dead, bloody body of Alan Ekloff—exactly as they are now. Looking at this picture costs the investigators 0/1 points of Sanity. (The other drawings are of Father Muller, Karen Ekloff, and the cemetery behind the Ekloff estate. While the pictures themselves are unim-

portant, their subjects are fully explained in the next chapter, *A Family Affair*.)

Alan can tell the investigators where to find Samuel. His nephew is living on the Ekloff estate in Bower County, Georgia. As his last words escape his bloodied lips, Alan Ekloff shudders and dies.

Gideon Holland, Male 3rd level: HD 3d6+6; hp 16; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, shiv); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +4, Demolitions +2, Drive +4, Hide +5, Intimidate +6, Jump +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +4, Spot +3, Swim +4.

Feats: Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Confronting Nash

Snuffling through the hallways like some obscene giant predator rat, Nash prowls the hospital in search of the investigators. He moves quietly on padded feet, his terrible claws retracted until he needs them, and melts seamlessly into the shadows. Investigators must make a successful Listen check opposed by his Move Silently check to hear him stalking them, and a successful Spot check opposed by his Hide check to see the beast if it is more than 10 feet away. Before Nash strikes, the investigators' only warning is often a flash of his yellow eyes.

The investigators can evade Nash by staying close to the patients so that he cannot pick out their scent from the others'. If the investigators can find some way to cover up their scents altogether, they can walk by Nash without fear of being attacked. He is tracking them only by smell; his vision and hearing are actually slightly worse than most humans' are.

Engaging Nash in a direct physical confrontation is a very bad idea. The monstrosity is faster and stronger than any human being and armed with razor-sharp teeth and talons. Nevertheless, Nash does have the keys to the asylum around his neck. If the investigators can subdue him, they can unlock and walk out the front door. Investigators pursuing this course of action would be well advised to assemble as many people as possible, arm them with whatever they can, then trap the creature in one of the cells and attack it en masse. Even with these preparations, someone is probably going to die during the attempt.

Dr. Jarvis Nash: Male 3rd-level Shapechanger; HD 3d8 or 4d8+12 in beast form; hp 13 or 30 in beast form; Init +0 or +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative) in beast form; Spd 30 ft. or 60 ft. in beast form; AC 10 or 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural) in beast form; Atk +3 melee (1d3, punch) in human form or +7 melee (1d8+4, bite) in beast form; SA Jaw lock; SQ Damage reduction 15/silver, darkvision 60 ft., Scent; SV Fort +3 (+9), Ref +4 (+6), Will +3 (+5); Str 11 (19), Dex 12 (16), Con 10 (18), Int 15 (11), Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Forgery +7, Heal +5, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (medicine) +7, Knowledge (psychology) +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Psychoanalysis +7, Spot +7. Nash gains a +4 competence bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks when in his ratlike beast form.

Feats: Alertness, Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [psychoanalysis]), Stealthy. Nash gains the Blind-Fight and Improved Initiative feats when in beast form.

Escape from Gibson

Gibson Mental Hospital is an old building and riddled with disused hallways and forgotten doors. Behind a locked fire door is a dusty passage that leads to an unused emergency exit leading into the woods surrounding the facility. Peter Quinn, the deranged veteran, is the only patient who knows about the passage, and is trying to find some way to get the door open. Albert Burns is also trying to escape and suspects that there is a back door out of the building. If the investigators play their cards right (and make some successful Psychoanalysis checks), they can convince these two to help them escape. Other patients, while without plans themselves, might also be willing to help. The old fire door is locked and rusted shut. If it is unlocked (Open Lock, DC 25), it still takes a successful Strength check (Break DC 23) to open it. If the door cannot be unlocked, the Break DC increases to 28.

Aftermath

The investigators have 50 minutes between the lightning strike and Dr. Hall's arrival. If they have not escaped or been killed by that time, the shk'ryth uses her innate unearthly power to supernaturally seal all the exits, then tracks the investigators down one by one. The investigators must defeat Hall or face capture. As prisoners of the powerful shk'ryth, the investigators have nothing before them but madness, pain, and eternal servitude. Gamemasters who wish to play out this scenario to the bitter end are welcome to do so, but it is beyond the scope of this adventure. (An interesting twist might be allowing the New Moon Temple to break the investigators free after they have been altered by the shk'ryth.)

Assuming the investigators survive the adventure and escape the asylum, they now have clues pointing them towards Bower County, Georgia. If they are still unsure of where to go from the asylum, they may contact Eastern Mutual for advice. If they do so, Roland Delmont suggests that they check out the Ekloff family home for information about Timothy.



CHAPTER NINE

A Family Affair

The priest's private study is warm and comfortable. It smells of old wood, worn leather furniture, and incense. Father Cartier has lovingly held court here for more than 30 years. Rocky marriages, troubled youths, mid-life crises of faith—the aged cleric has seen it all in this room.

For Father Cartier, his study is a haven of scholarship and meditation. For his parishoners, it is a refuge from the pain of the world, a place they can unburden their souls beneath the priest's compassionate eyes. Which is why he was only a little surprised when Tanya Gilmore, a graduate student from out of town, asked to meet with him in private.

The young woman sits down in the leather chair across from the priest's desk. She sets her bag down next to her.

"Now, Tanya, you're not Catholic, are you?"

"No. But I've heard that you're good to talk to about...personal problems."

The priest smiles slightly at the young woman's words. "Yes, I suppose I am," he says gently. "I'm an old man, but I'd like to think that I still have a spe-

cial connection with today's young people."

"Actually, it's that connection that I wanted to talk about."

"Oh?"

"I think you'll want to take a look at this." Tanya pulls out a folder from her bag and hands it to the priest. Blood drains from Cartier's face as he opens the folder and sees what's inside. His hands tremble. He pushes the folder away as if it were poisonous. Beads of sweat appear on his ashen brow.

"What...what do you want?" he gasps.

"Timothy Ekloff," Tanya says smugly. "And I think you'll do everything in your power to help me find him."

The investigators have come to the home of Alan and Timothy Ekloff in hopes of discovering Timothy's current whereabouts. They learn that the answers they seek lie hidden in the depths of a swamp with a long and deadly history. Before they can find Timothy, they will have to find a way to stop the hideous menace festering in the center of what the locals call Hell Swamp.

Cover Stories

If the investigators are having trouble explaining why they are poking around the Ekloff estate, they may use their cover identities as insurance investigators for Eastern Mutual. If they contact Roland Delmont, he can assist them by arranging for Karen a sizable life insurance policy through Eastern Mutual—more than $50,000. It is the investigators' supposed task to confirm that she is actually dead, and that this mysterious kidnapping and "swamp monster" story isn't just a case of insurance fraud. No one knows why or how Karen would have such a policy and not tell anyone, but the investigators can be issued a copy of the policy. The policy appears totally legitimate, right down to Karen's counterfeit signature on the bottom.

Gamemaster's Introduction

The retired dry-goods merchant Irving Helzer moved from Atlanta to Bower County, Georgia when his wife Mary died in 1823. He built a small cabin overlooking a marsh and hoped to grow enough crops to put food on his table. Helzer had little to do with the locals, and they avoided him. They were superstitious folk and didn't trust the swamp or anyone living near it. This was fine with Helzer, who had his fill of socializing in Atlanta. He was an old man now, and his wife was gone. He cared little that the local children called him crazy and a worker of dark magic.

The only one in Bower County who considered Irving Helzer a friend was Father Vance Muller. Muller had a small church west of Bowersville and made it a point to visit Helzer once a week. The old man was not crazy, he knew, and certainly no wizard, but only a sad man who wanted to live out his days in peace. The priest always invited him to attend the church services, but Helzer always declined.

"I saw God's grace and mercy when my Mary came down with the fever," Helzer said sadly. "And I reckon I'm better off without it."

A year after moving to Bower County, Helzer received a package from his brother Edmund, who was managing a sugar plantation in the Caribbean. Inside the package was a belated birthday gift: a heavy, eight-sided stone box inscribed with curious symbols. A letter accompanying the gift described how Edmund had found the box washed up on shore. Despite its beauty, the natives wanted nothing to do with the item and said it was cursed. Helzer's brother was more than happy to take it off their superstitious hands.

When Helzer heard something rattling inside the box, he tried to look between its stone seams, but they were too tightly crafted together for him to see inside. Frustrated, he finally pried the box open with a knife. Before he could peer inside, however, a pea-size object slipped out and fell between the floorboards of his house. In the single instant that he saw it, he thought the object was giving off a strange green glow. Helzer dismissed the sight as a trick of light and shadow and placed the box on the mantle for display.

In the weeks and months that followed, terrible things began to happen in the vicinity of the swamp. Helzer's neighbors' cow drowned in the marsh, then another farmer lost half a dozen pigs the same way. In both incidents, the bodies of the livestock somehow floated down near Helzer's cabin, where they were discovered. The animals had been kept penned up nowhere near the swamp. When they were found, the carcasses were tangled in weeds as if they had been dragged beneath the murky water. The farmers and plantation owners began to share their children's distrust of the "crazy old swamp man." When Stuart Nobel's eight-year-old daughter Maggie wound up dead and floating behind Helzer's cabin, it was the last straw.

Stuart Nobel and his neighbors stormed Helzer's cabin in the middle of the night with ropes and torches. They planned to lynch the old man, then burn his "house of evil" into the swamp. But Father Muller was not going to stand for any of it.

"Stop this madness," he cried as the mob turned the cabin's roof beam into a gallows. "This man is no wiz-

ard, he just wants to be left alone. I know Irving Helzer. He is a good man."

The crowd turned deaf ears to the priest's words. They had blood on their minds and vengeance in their hearts. Irving Helzer was dead within the hour. The group waited until he stopped twitching, then cut him down and threw his body into the swamp. His home was next to be destroyed. By the time the sun came up, only the foundation of his cabin remained.

With the death of Irving Helzer, the people of Bower County thought their problems with the swamp would be over. They were wrong.

The Seed

What Helzer could not have known was that the natives were right about the box his brother sent him. It was a cursed object, spawned by the dark young of Shub-Niggurath and designed to contain a seed of that Outer God's polluting essence. I was this seed that Helzer saw when he first opened the box. Free at last from its stony prison, the seed rolled from beneath Helzer's house into the swamp. In the weeks that followed, the seed slowly drifted on the muddy current to the heart of the swamp. Here it permeated the water, plants, and animals, bringing them under its corrupting control.

The seed's purpose, as ordained by Shub-Niggurath, is to prepare a garden for when the outer god walks the Earth once more: a sullen garden of still, moldy waters and dilpidated growth; a place that will please her twisted aesthetic. Thus the seed spreads its essence like a cancer, possessing the cells of all it touches. As the seed's influence spreads, it devours all that stands before it, remaking even people and animals to please its god. When the same slow current nudged Helzer's body into the heart of the swamp, the dark seed expressed its perveted gratitude to the dead man by making his chest cavity its lair. Helzer's body still lies in the murky center of the swamp, half-preserved by the blasphemous energy of the seed.

Over the next two years, the swamp doubled its size, spreading into the surrounding region. Everything it touched turned to stinking rot. Occasionally, people and animals that came too close to the swamp were attacked by leafy tendrils and dragged into the marshy water, never to be seen again. The locals were frightened by the turn of events and many moved away.

Father Muller knew that something had to be done. He wrote to his fellow clergy in the north about the unholy spirit that possessed the swamp, in hopes that one of them might have experience in such matters. Months passed, and the priest had all but given up hope when he received a curious letter in the mail.

"I dare not give you my name, lest I be cast out for heresy or worse," the letter began, "but I may have a solution to your problem." The letter contained a transcription of an ancient spell whose name translated to "the Great Seal."

The priest studied the anonymous letter for several days. He prayed and meditated and asked for divine guidance in this matter. But it was after presiding over his fifth funeral in as many weeks that Father Muller decided to perform the ritual of the Great Seal.

There was no moon to light his path to the swamp that night. Father Muller held aloft a lantern with one hand and held the translation of the ritual in the other. He forced the harsh, alien sounds past his lips. And though his blasphemy filled him with guilty dread, the priest's desperation and love for his parish kept him going.

A putrid wind picked up, a breath of death and decay from the swamp. Still the priest chanted. Swamp water lapped at his shoes, then washed over his ankles, burning his flesh. Muller did his best to block out the pain. In the end, the dark seed of the swamp killed him, dragging his body beneath the water. But it was too late. The priest had won.

The Seal

The spell that Father Muller reluctantly cast had a unique and unusual effect upon the region. The spell touched all those of Muller's parish, opening the floodgates of their minds and unleashing torrents of psychic energy. This energy repulsed the alien life force of the dark seed, forcing it into a dormant state. The descendants of these original parishioners (and others born in the region) still manifest psychic abilities, and it is their continued presence that keeps the seed from spreading its leafy terror once more.

In the decades that followed, the population of Bower County grew. The story of the swamp monster and its origins was twisted with the passing of time. As memories faded, all that most folks remembered was that Helzer was the focus of the marshy evil. The place came to be known as Helzer Swamp. A generation later, the nickname was shortened to Hell Swamp. People continued to avoid the murky interior of the swamp, which was supposedly haunted by Helzer's ghost.

Bower County fell into hard times after the Civil War and never fully recovered. Sprawling cotton plantations that had been passed down from father to son for generations were divided up and sold to newcomers. The soil of the cotton fields was mostly dead and those who still had money and hope for a better life moved away to Savannah. By the turn of the century, most of those living in the area were sharecroppers and poor farmers, not plantation owners, making just enough to get by and little more.

Today, half of those born in the swamp region



exhibit some kind of psychic ability. The closer they live to the swamp, the stronger their ability. Most locals think nothing of it and don't even mention their supernatural gifts in conversation. Generations have grown up psychic. Strangers to the area are often unnerved by the locals' ability to communicate with each other without words and know what visitors are about to say before they say it.

The Ekloffs

Stephen Ekloff moved from Savannah to Bower County with his wife Clarice in 1965. They bought what was left of the old LaSalle estate for a pittance, then set about turning the dilapidated plantation into a profitable tobacco farm. While neither of them knew much about raising crops, Stephen was a keen businessman and hired an experienced foreman to handle the actual farming. Over the next few years, the LaSalle estate slowly regained a little of its former glory. Under the watchful eye of the foreman, the fields came back to life.

While living in Bower County, Clarice had three children: Timothy, Alan, and Karen. All three were bright, active children with some limited psychic ability. One of their favorite places to play was the swamp that bordered their property. Despite their parents' warnings, the children spent many long hours romping through the mud, water, and vegetation.

Timothy joined the Army right out of high school. Alan followed his brother's footsteps but didn't like the military life and came back to Savannah to start a family. Karen never left Bower County. She seemed perfectly content to spend her time on the estate writing poetry, sketching whatever caught her eye, and pounding out short stories on her mother's old electric typewriter. Even after growing up, the three remained close and made it a point to stay in contact with each other.

TemCo Takes Notice

In 1995, while working as an agent for the CIA, Timothy Ekloff stumbled across TemCo and its plot to destroy the world with the Tyrr Nemaii. TemCo captured the spy and realized his psychic potential, but he escaped before they could use him to fuel their foul machine. When TemCo's agents arrived in Bower County looking for Timothy, they were astounded to discover that half the population was psychic. They contracted with a local criminal, Ollie Tucker, to begin kidnapping psychics.

Two years ago, Tucker and his boys kidnapped Karen Ekloff. Alan tracked his sister down and rescued her from the old house where Tucker was holding the psychics captive. They tried to elude the kidnapper by running through the swamp, but strayed too close to the alien seed at its center. Karen was dragged beneath the water by the swamp monster and killed. Alan survived, but no one believed his story of kidnapping and monsters. He was declared insane and committed to a mental health facility (see *Visiting Hours* for details).

Timothy has only been home once since his ordeal at the Tyrr Nemaii. He stopped by for less than a day and dropped off his journal and other personal items for safekeeping in his childhood playhouse in the swamp. He instinctively feels that the strange presence that haunts the swamp will keep even the shk'ryth away. The former spy knows that TemCo is trying to find him and plans never to return to Bower County. He does not want to endanger his family with his presence.

Side Effects

TemCo does not know about Hell Swamp, the monster, or the Great Seal. Its agents do not realize that with each psychic they remove from the area, the spell keeping the dark seed of Shub-Niggurath at bay is weakened. Already the swamp has crept beyond its former borders and is seeping across the land. Where the muddy water was once just barely visible from the Ekloff estate, it is now lapping at the back yard. A handful of farm animals have fallen prey to Hell Swamp's leafy tendrils. Unfortunately, it has been too long since the last such incident for the locals to make the connection between the rising swamp waters and

the disappearing animals.

There is another sign that the dark seed is taking root once more. Near the swamp, people have spotted strange spiderlike creatures that seem to be composed of plant material. These swamp spawn (see page 147) are venturing farther out every day.

The dark seed is still constrained by the Great Seal. The Seal is embodied in everyone who lives near the swamp but is by far the strongest in the mind and soul of Samuel Ekloff, Karen's son. The six-year-old boy is autistic but a brilliant artist. He is also the reincarnation of Father Vance Muller.

Samuel is the most powerful psychic in Bower County. Though he does not consciously know it, he is critical to maintaining the Great Seal. If he and his psychic energy were to be removed from the area, there would not be enough power left to sustain the priest's spell. The Seal would fail and the dark seed would once more spread its vile influence throughout the region.

Investigators' Introduction

The Georgia air is thick with humidity and the hazy sun is punishing when the investigators arrive at the Ekloff estate. There are over a dozen cars in the circular driveway and a large group of people, many dressed in black, are gathered behind the house. Closer inspection shows the group circled around a gravesite in a small family cemetary adjacent to the house. An aged priest is finishing his blessing just as the investigators arrive. As the group disperses, the investigators can see that there is a new stone grave marker—with no grave nearby—with the name "Karen Ekloff" carved into it. The people slowly shuffle toward the house. Some of them are crying.

A white-haired woman in a black dress approaches the investigators. She identifies herself as Clarice Ekloff, Karen's mother, and asks what she can do to help the investigators. Clarice expects them to say that they are friends of Karen visiting to pay their respects, but as long as the investigators' response is polite and believable (such as claiming to be friends of Timothy), she invites them into the house.

Clarice leads the investigators into the house where the other guests are gathered. A large dining room table is laid out with refreshments. Though there are about 20 people standing around, there is an eerie quiet as the locals communicate with a minimal amount of words.

The investigators' goal is to find out where Timothy Ekloff is. When they ask around, they learn that no one has seen him since before Karen disappeared. He was in Bowersville for only a day then, and only his mother and nephew saw him at all.

Clarice Ekloff



Clarice Ekloff says that Timothy seemed anxious when he stopped by the estate. He acted like he was being followed and was in a hurry to get going again. He didn't explain what he was doing but gathered all his old journals and other personal items from the house, then disappeared into the swamp for over an hour. When he returned to the house, his arms were empty.

Clarice knows that Timothy and his brother Alan made a "fort" in the swamp when they were children. It was a crude but sturdy playhouse constructed of scrap lumber. Since high school, the shack in the swamp had been Timothy's sanctuary where he went to be alone. His mother suspects that this was Timothy's destination when he went hiking into the swamp.

Two men in suits arrived at the estate a couple days after Timothy left. They said they worked for the government and had an important message for Timothy. They asked where he was, then asked if he had left anything on the estate when he left. Clarice thought about mentioning her son's visit to the swamp but thought better of it. She had a bad feeling about the two men and could see that Samuel didn't trust them either. She told them nothing and unknowingly saved Timothy's life. The men did not work for the government but were TemCo agents trying to recapture the rogue spy.

Unless the investigators are exceptionally rude, Clarice tells them everything she knows and suggests that they might find the answers they seek in Timothy's old playhouse. Though she wouldn't recognize her feelings on the matter as psychic (they are), she trusts that the investigators do not want to harm her son. She has neither seen nor heard from him in about a year, and she is worried about his safety.

Samuel Ekloff



Talking to Samuel is less productive than speaking with his grandmother. Because of his mental difficulties, the boy has trouble communicating with others. He usually just stares blankly at the investigators, then turns away without answering. He is rarely without his most treasured possession, a

tattered copy of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. When he does speak, Samuel's voice is soft and solemn, as if delivering bad news. Patient investigators might be able to talk with Samuel by making a successful Psychoanalysis check (DC 20) and waiting long enough for him to get around to answering their questions.

Samuel often receives psychic visions. Some of these are related to his past life as Father Muller (which explains the picture of the priest hanging in Alan Ekloff's cell in *Visiting Hours*) and contain clues as to what is happening with the swamp and the dark seed of Shub-Niggurath. Other visions are of people he knows, such as his Uncle Timothy, even if he doesn't know where they are. Occasionally, these visions are of future events or even glimpses into the spirit world (the other two drawings on Alan's wall). Samuel cannot control the visions or even understand that other people do not have them.

Either through painstaking conversation or creative interpretation of Samuel's drawings, the investigators may eventually learn that the young boy has the following information:

- He does not know where Timothy is.
- The swamp is dangerous and evil and continues to grow ever moreso.
- There is a connection between the swamp's evil and an abandoned church outside of Bowersville.

Samuel's Drawings

While they are visiting the Ekloff estate, the investigators have several opportunities to see the pictures that Samuel has drawn. Some of the drawings are hanging on walls, others are simply lying around the house where the young boy left them when he lost interest. Each picture is an exquisite study in realism, rendered in crayon. Samuel is an artist with talent well beyond his years.

The Church

A white chapel gleams magnificently in this picture, sunlight glinting off the cross on its steeple. The church rests atop a small hill, and a dirt road winds up the hill toward it. Behind the church, the woods are dark and ominous, with unnatural green creepers snaking toward the peaceful house of worship. If asked about the picture, Samuel says that the church is "St. Mary's." It is, in fact, an accurate illustration of what the old church west of town used to look like back when it was first built in the 1800s. Samuel has never seen the now-ruined chapel but is drawing upon the memories of Father Muller.

The Box

At first glance, the picture seems to be the only abstract piece in the boy's portfolio. Upon closer inspection, however, the investigators see that it is actually a closeup drawing of an oddly shaped box covered with seashells, apparently floating in a pool of green liquid. Investigators who make a successful Will save (DC 15) experience a cold feeling of dread upon recognizing the box as a physical object. This is the box that contained the dark seed of Shub-Niggurath and matches the description given in Father Muller's journal. If the investigators ask Samuel where he saw the box, he just shrugs and mutters, "dark and wet and stinky." He has seen the box in his psychic visions but has no idea where it is located.

Helzer

A recurring theme in Samuel's drawings is a bearded old man, often pictured standing in or near the swamp. The man is Irving Helzer, who lived and died in the area more than a hundred years ago. If asked about the picture, Samuel states, "Irving is a good man. It wasn't his fault," but refuses to explain himself. He is remembering fragments from his past life as Helzer's friend, Father Vance Muller.

Muller

Father Muller appears in a couple of Samuel's drawings. The priest is middle-aged and bald, a tired smile across his face. In one picture he is standing in front of the swamp; in another, he is in front of the new-looking St. Mary's church. The investigators may recognize the figure as the same one they saw in Alan Ekloff's cell at the Gibson Mental Hospital. If they can convince Samuel to discuss the picture, he merely says, "It's me."

Timothy

There are several pictures featuring the image of Timothy Ekloff. One shows him standing near a snowy mountain peak (the Himalayas), and another portrays him driving down a lonely highway in a sports car. The most relevant drawing is of Timothy sitting in a small, dilapidated wooden hut in the middle of the swamp. There is no mistaking the look of weariness and sorrow in his eyes, the look of a man who has been on the run for too long.

Personalized

The Gamemaster may wish to make up new drawings specifically designed to frighten the investigators. One of the drawings may show the investigators suffering horrible deaths. Another might illustrate the subject of an investigator's phobia.

Father Cartier



The local Roman Catholic priest, Father Cartier is a tall, gaunt man with a thin patch of black hair on the top of his head and a black strip of beard fringing his jaw. Cartier is pushing 70 and wears bifocals most of the time. Though he appears quite severe, the priest is actually rather jovial and loves to swap stories with anyone who is willing. He has been serving Bower County for more than 45 years and knows all the local gossip and folklore. Investigators asking about the swamp's dark reputation are probably referred to the priest. He also knows the history of St. Mary's church and how Vance Muller tragically died in the swamp.

Father Cartier has sold his soul. When Monarch realized that Timothy was maintaining some contact with his family in Bower County, they blackmailed the priest into monitoring the Ekloffs. If he learns of Timothy's whereabouts, he is to report them immediately. If he fails to cooperate, the whole parish—as well as his superiors in the Church—will learn about his indiscretions in Atlanta during the summer of 1991.

Cartier greets the investigators most cordially and offers to help them in any way he can. He can often be found at the Ekloff estate and offers his assistance at every turn. He gladly serves as guide to the area and answers all the investigators' questions. The priest asks them if they have had any contact with Timothy Ekloff; he misses the man and wishes he could speak with him again. He encourages the investigators to find the former spy, even if they do not mention any intention of doing so.

If the investigators grow suspicious of the priest's motives, he feigns innocence at first, then haltingly confides his own dreadful suspicions. He explains that when Timothy last visited Bower County, he had tried to share with Father Cartier some terrible secret he had uncovered while working for the CIA. Unfortunately, Timothy had to leave before revealing the whole of the truth, but the priest was able to gather it had something to do with a secret cabal within the United States government. This cell of powerful men was working to undermine the federal government in preparation for a foreign invasion.

"There have been federal agents out here looking for Timothy," the old priest says quietly. "But I've seen them watching me as well."

The entire story is nothing but a ruse, of course, concocted by the priest in order to win the investigators' trust. Cartier is an intelligent man and a convincing liar. It requires a successful Sense Motive check opposed by his Bluff check to discern his duplicity.

Father Cartier: Male 1st level; HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk –1 melee (1d3–1, punch) or +0 ranged (1d4 + drug, tranquilizer gun); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +3, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (philosophy) +5, Knowledge (psychology) +5, Listen +3, Psychoanalysis +5, Research +5, Sense Motive +3, Speak Other Language (Latin) +6, Spot +3.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Bluff), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [religion]).

Possessions: $65.

Hell Swamp

After talking with Clarice and Samuel, the investigators should have an idea that their best clues as to Timothy's whereabouts are his journals, hidden away in his childhood playhouse in the middle of the swamp. Unfortunately, no one knows exactly where to find the playhouse. Even Clarice can only point the investigators toward the middle of the swamp and say, "Try to stay on the path."

The investigators are further hindered by the locals' fear of the swamp. No one wants to act as a guide, and everyone but Clarice and Samuel discourage them from venturing into the overgrown marsh. Hell Swamp has an evil and well-deserved reputation. Those who go in too deep tend never to return...just like Karen Ekloff.

Green, hot, wet and sticky, the swamp comes within 200 yards of the Ekloff house and extends for acres in all directions. Large tracts of it are nothing but stinking, scum-covered water. Other areas are rich black mud or slippery quicksand. Thick trees jut out of the ground and water at strange angles, covered with slimy moss and blocking out the sunlight. Mosquitoes and other insects fill the air—as well as the eyes, ears, and nostrils of all those who invade the secluded marsh. Frogs, snakes, salamanders, and other creatures make the swamp their home and fill the air with their eerie cries. An overwhelming stench of decay permeates the atmosphere.

Hell Swamp is crisscrossed with innumerable trails; they're narrow, but they are on solid ground. As long as the investigators stay on the trails, they can avoid the worst of the swamp's natural dangers. The swamp's supernatural dangers, however, are another matter entirely.

The Vanishing

In the process of looking for Timothy Ekloff, TemCo discovered that Bower County is swarming with psychics. Monarch Testing and Research sent a Spotter, Tanya Gilmore, to the region more than two years ago. Her assignment was to locate psychics and keep an eye open for Timothy Ekloff. Gilmore made arrangements with Ollie Tucker, a local criminal with a side interest in white slavery, to kidnap those whom they deemed most suitable. Karen Ekloff was their first victim.

The sheriff eventually discovered what happened to Karen (she drowned in Hell Swamp), but now there are more than a dozen people missing from Bower County. Folks around the community are a little nervous, and some of them even went over the sheriff's head and called in the FBI. There's an agent staying in Bowersville right now, and he's been poking around asking questions. He has yet to produce real results, but his mere presence is making people feel better.

The subplot concerning Monarch and Tucker kidnapping psychics is tangential to the swamp monster plot, and the investigators can achieve their goals in Bower County without ever encountering it. It is important to the background, however, for two reasons: First, it fleshes out the logistics of Karen's kidnapping (which is an important part of Alan and Timothy's history). Second, it provides clues that psychics are being kidnapped as part of a larger evil scheme. If the investigators follow up on these clues, they will be one step ahead in their battle against TemCo.

The further the investigators penetrate the swamp, the stronger become their feelings of being watched. Gas bubbles and animals slipping through the muck make the marsh sound as if it were breathing; those who listen closely might imagine they hear a heartbeat. Perceptive investigators who make successful Listen checks (DC 15) notice the foliage rustling when there is no wind.

The Hell Swamp waits to attack the investigators until they are well out of sight of dry land. First, claw-like roots and tree branches subtly shift, partially blocking the path behind the investigators. Then the swamp water begins to slowly rise and cover the trail. Finally, vines and weeds reach for the investigators, choking them and dragging them under the black water.

These polluted plant tendrils are imbued with surprising supernatural strength. They grapple with a melee attack bonus of +10 and have an effective Strength of 18. There is one tendril per investigator at the onset of the attack, and 1d6 more join the battle every round after the first. Each tendril has 4 hit points. Fighting the plants costs the investigators 1/1d4 points of Sanity. If a tendril successfully grapples an investigator, it pulls him into the water on the following round. Apply the normal drowning rules if an investigator is not rescued.

After a few rounds of combat, it should be clear that the investigators are fighting a losing battle. The best way to survive their encounter with the Hell Swamp is to retreat back to dry land. Though their path is now flooded and full of foliage, the investigators can force their way through with a Strength check (DC 10, or DC 5 if they have a machete or other implement for cutting through the undergrowth). The characters take 1d3 points of subdual damage from thorns and branches as they fight their way back out.

The GM is encouraged to allow the investigators to come within sight of Timothy's old fort in the middle of the swamp before being attacked. This helps convey the message that his childhood playhouse is key to their success, but that they will have to defeat the swamp before they can reach it.

Bowersville

While the investigators are in the area, they may wish to explore the tiny town of Bowersville, Georgia and speak with those who live there.

Bowersville is a small, slow-moving farming community where not much has changed in the last 50 years. The buildings are all old and sagging; even the people of Bowersville seem worn-out and old beyond their years. A solemn stillness hangs over the area, as if the town itself were holding its breath.

Though the investigators would be hard-pressed to put their fingers on it, a general uneasiness seeps into them when they are in town. One element of this anxiety is that the locals rarely speak unless spoken to. Because of the Great Seal, the citizens of Bowersville have a psychic connection that makes telepathic communication possible and common. Investigators may be surprised and unnerved when the locals answer their questions before being asked or otherwise demonstrate knowledge of the investigators' thoughts. If anyone asks them how they know what others are thinking, they shrug and say, "We just do."

The other element putting the town on edge is the recent rash of disappearances. First was Karen Ekloff, about two years ago. Her parents woke up one morning and she wasn't in bed, wasn't anywhere they looked. Then three months later, old man Langley's good-for-nothing son went out for his evening walk and never came back. Langley went out looking but only found

the young man's boot. Since then, more than two dozen people have disappeared. Some of them undoubtedly drowned in the swamp like Karen Ekloff (the swamp has claimed more lives in the last year than in the two decades previous) but not all of them.

Most of these disappearances are the result of Ollie Tucker kidnapping psychics for TemCo (see the Vanishing sidebar for details), but the community does not suspect him. Instead, they suspect those from out of town who stick around for a few days asking strange *questions*...like the investigators.

Below are described some of the places in town the investigators may visit, and the people they might find there.

Bower Cafe

The only restaurant in town, the Bower Cafe features a large dining room decorated with stuffed deer heads, superior customer service, and a daily breakfast special that can't be beat. Harvey Foster owns the place. He works in the kitchen while his wife, daughter, and son wait on tables.

If the investigators stop by the cafe for food, they may be surprised when no one takes their order. Instead, once they decide what they want to eat, one of the Foster clan appears at their table carrying the meal they were about to order. If they ask the waitress how she knew what they wanted, she just smiles and says, "I got a knack for these things."

Sheriff's Office

Located in the east wing of the old brick town hall, the Bower County Sheriff's Office is cramped and cluttered. Papers are stacked everywhere on desks and tables, stuffed into over-filled filing cabinets and threatening to bury the unwary visitor. A personal computer and a police band radio compete for space among the paperwork on the sheriff's desk, which is hidden near the back of the office. There is a heavy wooden door leading into the basement, where three jail cells have been empty for months.

Sheriff Waylon Bach



A blank-faced man of 43, the sheriff is charming but distant. He smiles a lot beneath his shaggy blonde hair, but his eyes are sad and tired. When Bach's wife died five years ago, he slipped into alcoholism and depression. While it has been a year since his last drink, he has yet to completely recover his emotional stability.

Furthermore, the sheriff can't seem to keep any quality help in the office. He has gone through three deputies in six years, and none of them want to stay. They were all too unnerved by the weird psychic atmosphere of Bower County and left as soon as they could. Now Sheriff Bach is all alone in his law-enforcement duties—which wouldn't be so bad, except that the paperwork keeps piling up. And he sure could use some help with all these disappearances.

The sheriff knows nothing about Timothy Ekloff. He does know that going into the swamp is a bad idea and recommends against the investigators doing so. "A lot of folks have gone missing in the last two years," he says. "And a lot of them were last seen heading into the swamp."

Off the record, he suspects that something is happening to make the swamp more dangerous than it has ever been. "Maybe it's quicksand. Or maybe it's a wild animal. Whatever it is, it's not leaving bodies for us to find."

Sheriff Bach is courteous and helpful towards the investigators but is unwilling to assist them very much in their research, nor will he show them any confidential files. Unlike others in town, he does not suspect the investigators of having anything to do with the vanishing locals, but he is bound to be curious if their questions turn towards the bizarre. If they make him too curious, he runs their names through the FBI computer...and may discover their outstanding warrants.

Sheriff Waylon Bach: Male 4th level; HD 4d6+4; hp 20; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, nightstick) or +3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills: Diplomacy +4, Drive +4, Gather Information +6, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (law) +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Search +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +3.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Sharp-Eyed.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1877 revolver.

Bower County Library

In 1954, the second floor of the Bowersville town hall was converted into a community library. While it has all the usual features of a public library, the facility also serves as a depository of area records and lore. Locked away in the back office are a number of original documents dating back to the first settlers in the region. Not many people use the library, however, and it has taken on a dank and dusty atmosphere, like an old house long deserted.

Family Papers #1

From Echoes of Angels, by Teresa Stansbury, 1934

...From the mud and water green and brown there came a million fingers on a million hands of vine, reaching for life, stretching for sustenance and dragging into its maw all it could reach. Feeding, it grew stronger until one by one the farms succumbed, and then the outer houses. And it would have grown stronger still had not a single man of God stood fast against its muddy march.

...I saw a priest, a noble bald figure of holiness, speaking ancient words of power, and the unworldly intelligence obeyed. He forced the swamp back, back into its core, where its evil would hurt only itself. A Great Seal he constructed then, woven from eldritch power and cosmic rites, which stands to this day.

...But I have seen the end of the Great Seal, the second rise of the green and evil force that gives life to the swamp and takes life from all those around it. First the water rises and spreads, oozing oily around the ankles of the farmers. Then the swamp lifts its roots and hunts like an animal. And in the end, the swamp rises from below and drowns Bower and her people...

...The priest who died and yet will live again knew this and knows this still. He has hidden the key in a secret place, between the wings of the cherubim.

Dwight Lang



This aged librarian is known throughout the county as the foremost authority on local history. If there is any detail that he does not know (which is unlikely), he can find it within minutes somewhere in the stacks of the county library. A life-long resident of Bowersville, Lang has been the county librarian and unofficial historian since the library's founding in 1954.

Lang is the only person still alive who knows the truth about Father Vance Muller, Irving Helzer, and the origins of Hell Swamp. In the course of his studies, he pieced together the events that led up to Helzer's death. The swamp spreading into town is nothing new, he knows, for it happened before more than a hundred years ago. He doesn't know what Father Muller did to stop the evil before, but he realizes that the priest is not here to stop it again.

If the investigators ask Lang about Timothy Ekloff, he can tell them very little. He knew Timothy as a child growing up but has not seen him since. The librarian knows the location of Timothy's play fort, as he suspects that it is built on the remnants of Helzer's old house (which it is). Lang can provide the investigators a rough map pointing them to where he thinks the fort should be.

Much of Lang's information about the cursed swamp comes from a rambling book-length poem called *Echoes of Angels* published in 1934 by Teresa Stansbury. Ms. Stansbury was a Bower County resident with a psychic gift of prophecy. Most of her verse was inspired by her precognitive insights. Only 50 copies of her book were ever published, and Lang has four of them. The rest were lost when Stansbury's house burned down in 1939. It was rumored that the fire was the woman's suicidal release from her supernatural intuition.

According to *Echoes of Angels*, the swamp is possessed of an evil intelligence that once rose up and threatened to drown the region under corrupt and stinking muck. A priest stepped forward and stopped the scourge, sacrificing his life in the process. The evil was not destroyed, however, but merely confined to the center of swamp. When the time is right, the priest's Seal will fail and the swamp will rise up once more to devour those who live in the area (see the Family Papers #1). Lang shares all he knows with the investigators. He does not expect them to believe him but feels it is necessary to warn others of Bower County's impending doom.

St. Mary's Church

The only Catholic church in the area, St. Mary's was built in 1820 under the supervision of Father Vance Muller. Father Muller pastored the church until his disappearance three years later, when it was passed on to a replacement from Atlanta. The church was totally remodeled in 1870, then abandoned when the parish built a new house of worship closer to town in 1902 (which some of the old timers still call "the new St. Mary's").

The remains of the old church can be found some five miles west of Bowersville, a mile off the highway. There isn't much left: the roof is gone, the windows and doors are mis-shapen holes, only three walls are still standing and they are rotted through. The ruins are overgrown with vines and weeds and rodents, as if they formed some bizarre greenhouse. A hush falls over the site as the investigators arrive. Though they may not realize it, the investigators are being watched by the spawn of the swamp monster, who squat immobile in

the shadows, biding their time (see below).

All that remains to signify that the building was once a church is a decomposing pile of hymnals, a life-size wooden cross, and a crudely ornate pulpit. The hymnals are typical of those used at the turn of the century, covered with mold and all but illegible. The cross is also moldy and stuck fast to the muddy ground just outside the front wall. Slugs and worms have made the old wood their home. Perceptive investigators may notice carvings on the cross. Those who make successful Search checks (DC 10) realize the carvings are graffiti, some of it quite old.

The heavy wooden pulpit at the front of the building is covered with vines and moss. Stripping the foliage away reveals an image carved into the front of the pulpit. It is crudely done, obviously with more love than skill, but surprisingly well preserved considering its age. The image shows a pair of angels bowing toward a chalice between them, their outstretched wings touching overhead. Below the angels is an open book (presumably a Bible), and below that a vague four-legged thing that the artist probably thought looked like a lamb.

Investigators making a successful Search check (DC 15) note that while the rest of the image is carved from a solid block of wood, the cup appears to be on a separate piece that is fitted snugly between the angels. Removing the piece is challenging (the wood has warped tight with age and moisture) but not overly difficult (it is also rotten). Behind the block of wood, the investigators find a small black book and an odd, fist-size object inside a hidden compartment.

The book is Father Vance Muller's diary from 1823. It has been somewhat protected from the elements by its hiding place but is still mostly illegible. When the investigators have a chance to go through the black book, they are able to piece together the story of Irving Helzer and the dark seed of Shub-Niggurath. The diary also makes note of "Helzer's box," which was pried open and released the seed. Father Muller writes that the box, were it repaired, could bind the seed once more. He laments that he does not have time to understand and master the box (see the Family Papers #2).

The second object is what Father Muller refers to as "Helzer's box." It was once an eight-sided polygon made of what appears to be stone, bound together with leather. The box has been broken open and one of the sides has come loose. It is barely attached to the rest of the object by a dry flap of leather. (For details on repairing the box, see the Helzer's Box section, below.)

As the investigators remove the antique items from their hiding place in the pulpit, those making successful Listen or Spot checks (DC 15) realize that they are not alone. Suspended from the skeletal rafters above them and scuttling up through the rotted floorboards are a number of predator swamp spawn. There are two spawn for every investigator present, their sphincter-like mouths opening and closing obscenely, revealing cruel rings of teeth.



The swamp spawn are here to guard Helzer's box. They attack whoever has the box by leaping onto the investigator, latching on with their clawed, branchlike legs, and biting viciously. If the investigator lets go of the box, several of the swamp spawn immediately drop down, scoop up the box, and scurry off into the woods. If unstopped, they carry the box to the center of Hell Swamp.

The Homestead

When the Tuckers kidnap their targets, they take them to what they refer to as "the homestead"—the ramshackle house where Ollie's father grew up. It is technically on the Tuckers' property but miles away from where they currently live. No road or trail connects the two houses. No one has lived in the old homestead for 30 years, and the only road leading to it is nothing more than a set of ruts zigzagging through the trees. The Tuckers' captives are held in a dirt basement beneath the wooden floor of the ancient house.

Currently, the only captive the Tuckers have is Tessa Jergins, a psychic from Savannah who came back to her hometown to pay her respects at Karen Ekloff's memorial service. She was taken by Leonard and Maynard at 5:00 am the morning after the service. Alone in the basement, Tessa is gagged and blindfolded, her arms and legs tied securely. She has been

Family Papers #2

Vance Muller's Diary, dated 1823

Irving Helzer is a good man, no matter what the wags may say. I know this, but I cannot convince the good folk of Bower, for they seek an answer to their lost stock and lost children. 'Tis not a simple drowning—I'll give them that—but if there be evil in the swamp, it is not in Irving Helzer.

...Spoke with Irving again today and again he declined my invitation to Mass. But he is afraid. He told me he hears things slithering and whispering through the dark outside his house at night and fears that there is truth to the stories of a curse upon the swamp. I tried to disuade him of this ridiculous thought, but he then brought forth a most curious object.

A strange box it was, with eight sides and covered with carvings. It was a gift from his brother in the Caribbean, he said, washed up on the beach. When I commented that the box was broken, Irving shook his head sadly and explained that he himself had broken it out of curiosity. There had been something inside it and he wanted to see what it was. He never did see it, for it slid through his fingers and between the floorboards, leaving a greasy green trail. An unreasoning shudder went through me then as I saw the stain still bright upon the boards.

Irving said the drownings began shortly thereafter. He holds himself not a little responsible. I tried to tell him he was being foolish, but I fear I was not entirely convincing.

...Little Maggie Nobel is dead, and they seek to blame poor Irving. He is beside himself with fear and guilt. When I warned him of angry murmurs of lynching, he seemed resigned to his fate. He merely handed me the broken box and instructed me find some way to "fix it" and contain the evil he had released.

...Irving Helzer is dead. They hanged him and burned his house. He didn't even fight.

...Lost another farm to the swamp this week. It grows daily, lapping at the edges of civilization and reaching for us with its vines and branches. Four more have died since the lynching. I know now that Irving was right about the box and the root of this new evil. I hold the box and study it, trying to see how the pieces go together, but to no avail. For such a primitive item, it is curiously intricate. If I had time, perhaps I could comprehend it. But I do not, and so I seek a more unorthodox solution to the unholy presence in the swamp.

...Tonight I risk my soul in hopes of saving the lives of those around me. I also risk my life, for I doubt the thing in the swamp will go quietly.

If I succeed, I hope God has mercy on my soul.

If I fail...we will all need His mercy.

drugged into unconsciousness.

Getting into the old house isn't too difficult. The windows and back door are boarded up, but the boards can be pulled away with a successful Strength check (DC 13). A new lock graces the front door, but it can be picked with a successful Open Lock check (DC 20). The hard part is doing so without getting shot.

Ollie Tucker prefers to take personal responsibility for his property, which is why he maintains watch over the captives that his boys bring in. Not that he's expecting trouble. The only trouble Tucker's ever had was the first local victim, Karen Ekloff. She was certainly more trouble than she was worth.

Tucker's not worried about trouble. He just likes to be sure. That's why he sits in the front room of the old homestead with a porn magazine in one hand and a loaded shotgun in the other.

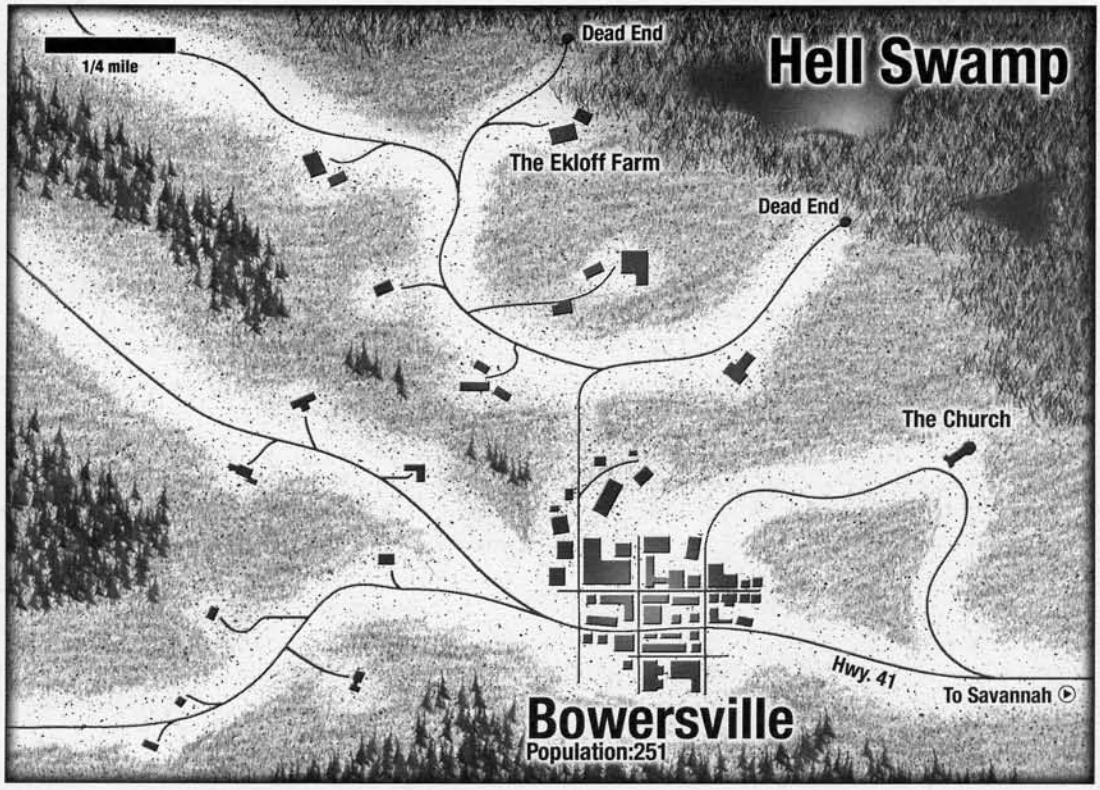
Investigators keeping surveillance on the old house see Ollie Tucker leaving once every few hours to relieve himself in the grass, locking the door behind himself when he does so. At least one of the Tucker boys stops by in a pickup around 11:00 am and again at 7:00 pm to make sure their old man has all the food and drink he needs.

Once inside the house, the investigators can clearly see a trapdoor in the middle of the living room floor leading into the basement. It is a hinged wooden square with a padlock holding it closed. Opening the padlock requires a successful Open Lock check (DC 25). The wood is old and brittle, however, and the door can also be broken open with a successful Strength check (Break DC 13).

Tucker is willing to shoot at the first sign of trouble. He is also willing to chase the investigators into the swamp if necessary—after the Ekloff fiasco, he isn't going to let stupid superstition keep him from making sure the meddlers are dead.

Ollie Tucker: Male 4th level; HD 4d6+8; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, knife)

Bowersville



or +3 ranged (3d6/2d6/1d6, 12-gauge shotgun); SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +6, Drive +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (pro wrestling) +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Search +6, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Sharp-Eyed.

Possessions: Hunting knife, Winchester Model 24 shotgun, $342 cash.

Bowersville Motor Inn

This one-story motel has seen better days but has never seen much business. Chips of pink paint are flaking off the motel's walls, and half the letters are burned out in its neon sign. Nevertheless, it is the only motel in the area. If the investigators do not stay with the Ekloffs, they may have to stay here. It's no palace, but it's relatively clean and the plumbing works—even if none of the 10 rooms get cable.

Mrs. Nesbitt, the proprietor of the Motor Inn, is a nosy middle-aged widow who makes it a point to know the names and personal business of everyone in town. If the investigators stay at her motel, she may grill them about their lives and careers. If they partake in what appear to be criminal or occult activities, she does not hesitate to call the sheriff. If she thinks she can get away with it, Mrs. Nesbitt may even sneak into their room, looking for "evidence" she can turn over to Sheriff Bach.

Helzer's Box

This strange eight-sided vessel of evil is the key to the swamp monster. With it, the investigators may be able to defeat the dark seed of Shub-Niggurath once and for all...if they are not destroyed in the process.

A generation before Irving Helzer's brother discovered the oddly shaped box washed ashore, a Caribbean witch doctor was faced with a terrible new evil—a seed of Shub-Niggurath. The forests and streams of his island home were infested by a warm, laughing malignancy that preyed on living flesh. One by one, the natives disappeared, as the alien essence grew stronger and spread throughout the island. The witch doctor fasted and prayed until the spirits finally gave him a vision of what needed to be done.

Working feverishly beneath a moonless night sky, the witch doctor tore up eight flat, smooth black stones from a field chosen by the spirits. These he bound together with leather and prayer, forming an eight-

Ollie Tucker

Oliver "Ollie" Tucker and his three sons—Leonard, Clayton, and Milt—would be considered nothing more than stereotypical Southern rednecks if they didn't have so much money. They certainly fit the profile in every other way: narrow minded, sexist, racist, none too bright, and prone to violent outbursts. On the other hand, they live in a luxurious new three-story house overlooking Bower Lake, and each one buys a new pickup truck every year.

Tucker claims his family's money comes from investing shrewdly in the stock market, but the truth is that they are all criminals. They've dabbled in everything from gambling to blackmail but found the easiest money in drug running. Every month, Ollie sends the boys into Savannah to pick up a shipment of cocaine and marijuana, which they then split up and sell throughout the rest of the state.

But the best money, Tucker found, was in white slavery. Three years ago, he ran into some unsavory fellows from Florida who offered him $3,000 a head for a pair of young boys. After a moment of considering the risks, Tucker agreed. He sent his sons into Savannah to "recruit some volunteers" from off the streets. As the months went by, the Tuckers' operation slowly expanded as their reputation grew in certain circles. Two years ago, Ollie Tucker was anonymously contacted by Monarch Testing and Research. Monarch offered to give Tucker a list of locals they wished to "interview." At $10,000 apiece, he was to abduct these locals, no questions asked, and hold them until Monarch disclosed where to transport them. It was a short list, but it would grow as time went by. Furthermore, Tucker was to cease all other trafficking in human flesh; this was an exclusive contract. Tucker gladly agreed to the deal and has been honoring it ever since.

Tucker receives his orders through anonymous notes and an electronically filtered voice on the telephone. He has no idea that Tanya Gilmore is the one behind these orders, or why she wants these people kidnapped. Nor does he care as long as the briefcases of money keep coming in.

Ollie Tucker is a sweaty, overweight balding man of 65. He dresses nicely, as he thinks someone of his means should dress, but often neglects to shave or bathe, so instead looks like a well-dressed slob. His boys, ages 18, 23, and 24, forego their father's attempts at a respectable image. They prefer the honesty of their long, greasy hair and sweat-soaked t-shirts.

sided box, then inscribed it with symbols of the spirits. Armed with his blessed relic, the witch doctor went into the forest to confront the black heart of corruption.

The dark seed was drawn into the box. It was helpless against the witch doctor's magic and thus imprisoned, seething with inhuman rage but unable to escape the eight-sided trap. The witch doctor, exhausted but triumphant, thanked the spirits and threw the box into the ocean. The tides, he knew, would wash the cursed seed far from these shores.

Decades later, those same tides brought the box ashore for Helzer's brother to find.

Repairing the Box

The eight stones that make up Helzer's box are intricately connected, like some maddeningly three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. The rotting leather straps are more decorative than useful in holding the box together. Investigators who work at it diligently for two hours and make a successful Repair check (DC 25) are able to wedge the final piece of stone into place.

An alternate solution is to give the box to Samuel Ekloff. As the reincarnation of Father Vance Muller, he has the secret of the box etched into his soul. When he sees the black stone vessel, the boy's face goes blank for a moment and a faraway look comes to his eyes. He turns the box over in his hands, examining its every surface. He mutters something about how "it's been a long time," then slips the final piece into place with an audible click.

"Of course," he says, wearily channeling Muller. "I should have seen it before."

Once Helzer's box has been repaired, the investigators can use it to bind the dark seed of Shub-Niggurath (see the Uprooting the Seed section for details). Before then, they can use the box to repel the servants of the seed. When a swamp spawn (or other corrupted entity) is touched with the box, it receives a painful blast of spiritual energy and loses 1d8 hit points. This requires a melee touch attack against the targeted creature. Wielding the box in this way does not require any proficiency with weapons. This is certain to come in handy when the investigators try to reach Timothy's journals in the middle of the swamp.

Mitchell Davis



Davis is the FBI agent sent to Bower County to look into the rash of disappearances over the last two years. He is in town for a week, staying at the Bowersville Motor Inn (room 100) and talking with the locals. So far the only useful information he has discovered is that some of those who vanished were nowhere near the swamp. Davis suspects that Ollie Tucker might have something to do with the situation (as he is known to be affiliated with all kinds of criminal schemes), but no one has actually witnessed him or his boys doing anything wrong.

During the second day the investigators are in town, Agent Davis approaches them, requesting to ask a few questions. If he cannot find them, he later has Clarice Ekloff introduce them to him. Davis is a clean-cut African-American man in his late 30s wearing a neat gray suit that may as well be labeled "FBI." In a friendly, professional tone, the agent asks the investigators what they are doing in Bower County and what they have found in their investigation. As for his own research into the recent odd events, Davis only reveals that he suspects foul play.

"Maybe they just got bored and left," he chuckles. "God knows I would, if I had to live in this dead-end mud hole."

As Agent Davis exchanges pleasantries with the investigators, a successful Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that the agent is distracted while talking to them, as if trying to remember something. A few minutes later, Davis excuses himself and leaves.

Unless the investigators seek out Davis, they do not see him again until the end of the adventure. But now that he has seen the investigators, it is only a matter of time before he recognizes them from the wanted posters. It takes him at least a day to recall that the investigators are wanted for the Eastfield murder. If the investigators spend more time with Davis, he remembers that much more quickly.

Once Davis realizes who the investigators are, he and Sheriff Bach round up as many law enforcement officials as they can and prepare to confront them. For details, see the Into the Fire section below.)

Midnight Visitor

The first night the investigators spend in Bower County, one of them awakens with the sense of a presence nearby. As the investigator slowly regains consciousness, he or she realizes that there is something on



the bed. Squatting on the foot of the bed, shimmering slightly in the filtered moonlight, is a mass roughly the size and shape of a human head, two legs on each side. A successful Spot check (DC 10) reveals a single black eye glistening in the center of the mass, staring at the investigator. That investigator loses 1/1d4 points of Sanity.

The moment the investigator makes a sudden move, the thing at the foot of the bed springs to the floor and scuttles toward the door with a sickening wet clicking sound. At the door, the creature contracts its body and seemingly oozes out into the hallway, leaving a noxious, swampy odor in its wake.

Checking outside the door reveals a wet, greenish streak on the ground leading from the investigator's room to a spot roughly three yards away. The wet spot reeks of swamp water and indeed has some swamp grass fibers in it. An analysis of the investigator's bedclothes reveals the same material and wet spot in evidence there.

Though the investigators have no way of knowing this yet, they have just been visited by one of the swamp spawn. It was dispatched to spy on the investigators and see what they were doing. If the investigators have Helzer's box at this time, the creature was also to find and retrieve the box and escape with it out the window. Due to its elastic nature, the spawn could easily slip beneath the door. Outside the room, it regrew its legs and scurried away.

If the investigators report this bizarre incident, a few of the locals nod knowingly while others shake their heads scornfully. Dwight Lang is not surprised by their

Tanya Gilmore

A 28-year-old graduate student of history from Atlanta University, Tanya is a short, round-faced young woman with curly red hair and freckles. A pair of glasses helps make her look a little more intellectual. Tanya moved to Bower County shortly before Karen disappeared, living on a grant and interviewing locals for her thesis on the history of the American South. She and Karen Ekloff became close in the few months they were together, and she has remained on speaking terms with the family ever since.

Tanya is a Spotter, an artificial psychic shaped by the unholy hands of TemCo. She is unaware of her true nature, but knows that her employer, Monarch Testing and Research, used an experimental treatment on her to augment her psychic potential. Since the treatment, Tanya can sense other psychics just by being near them. It isn't a foolproof ability, however. She often has to engage the suspected psychics in conversation, or otherwise force them to focus their attention on her. Physical contact also helps.

Monarch dispatched Tanya to Bowersville with two objectives in mind: First, she is to locate psychics and make arrangements for them to be kidnapped by Tucker. Second, she is to keep an eye out for any new information regarding the whereabouts of Timothy Ekloff. Tanya carries out her first task while interviewing the people of Bower County, ostensibly for the thesis paper she is writing. She has delegated the second task, however, to Father Cartier. She has blackmailed the priest, a long-time friend of the Ekloff family, into spying on them on her behalf.

Tanya is suspicious of the investigators and their reasons for being in Bower County. She thinks they may also be interested in the significant number of psychics in the region. On Tanya's orders, Father Cartier is very friendly towards the investigators and full of questions about who they are and what they want in Bower County.

After the fiasco surrounding the abduction of Karen Ekloff, Tanya has been reluctant to recruit another member of that family for the Program. Nevertheless, she senses that Samuel is a powerful psychic—too powerful to ignore. She is making arrangements for Tucker and his boys to kidnap the child in the couple of days.

story, as he has heard similar reports of such creatures from others in the area. He also recalls reading similar reports from the original manifestation of the dark seed in 1823. Clarice Ekloff and Sheriff Bach, on the other hand, suspect that people are seeing stray cats or wild animals, then letting their imaginations add the rest.

The Swamp Strikes Back

Once the investigators have Helzer's box in their possession, the dark seed of Shub-Niggurath knows the time for subtlety is over. If it is to escape the Great Seal, it must act before the investigators have a chance to use the box. Thus the swamp sends its spawn to eliminate the single greatest obstacle to its freedom: Samuel Ekloff.

As the reincarnation of Father Vance Muller, Samuel is the cornerstone of the Great Seal. If he dies or leaves the area, the Seal will be broken and the swamp monster will be free. This wasn't originally the case, of course, but since TemCo has stolen away most of the other psychics, Samuel's psychic energy is now all that keeps the swamp at bay.

The exact time and place of the swamp spawn attack is up to the GM. The spawn wait until Samuel is out of the investigators' sight, though not necessarily beyond their range of hearing. The attackers would prefer the boy were close to the swamp but are willing to take any opportunity that presents itself.

Twenty swamp spawn swarm Samuel, overwhelming the child and knocking him to the ground. The boy is able to choke out half a scream before his mouth is stuffed with soggy leaves. Four of the spawn shape themselves around Samuel's form, effectively holding him aloft as they scurry away. A fifth spawn squats grotesquely on the child's throat and face, slowly suffocating him with its pulpy body (he loses one hit point each minute and has 4 hp). The strange cluster scuttles toward the heart of the swamp as quickly as possible.

The remaining swamp spawn surround their fleeing brethren, forming a perimeter between their prey and any who would try to stop them. If the investigators do try to interfere, these spawn hold their ground; it is clear the investigators will have to go through them to reach Samuel. Before the investigators get a chance to engage the spawn, however, the creatures undergo a peculiar transformation: One by one, the spawn physically meld into each other, each adding its mass to the ones before it, until there is but one shockingly large and malformed spawn standing between the investigators and Samuel.

The greater spawn stands a full 14 feet high and somewhat resembles the trunk of a rotting tree, its roots pulled loose and forming three thick legs, its surface crawling with writhing vines and horribly fluid limbs. The creature's body gives off a powerful stench of wet decay. It only takes one round for the spawn to take on this form. Once done, the greater spawn attacks the investigators. Witnesses to the transformation and attack lose 1/1d2 points of Sanity.

Facing the greater spawn is difficult but not suicidal. While it has more attacks than a typical swamp spawn, it is nowhere near as fast (see the Swamp

Spawn section). Lucky investigators might be able to dodge the thing's viny tendrils and outrun it. Likewise, those with slashing weapons can cut their way through the creature's vines and branches. Finally, if the investigators touch the beast with (a fully repaired) Helzer's box, it breaks down into its component swamp spawn, which then retreat into the swamp.

If the investigators reach Samuel before his captors drag him into the swamp, they can try to pry him free of the swamp spawn carrying him. Doing so requires either a successful Strength check (DC 10) for each spawn or touching the creatures with Helzer's box. Even with the spawn out of the way, Samuel's throat is still full of plant material that has to be removed. He may also need a Heal check (DC 15) to help him resume breathing.

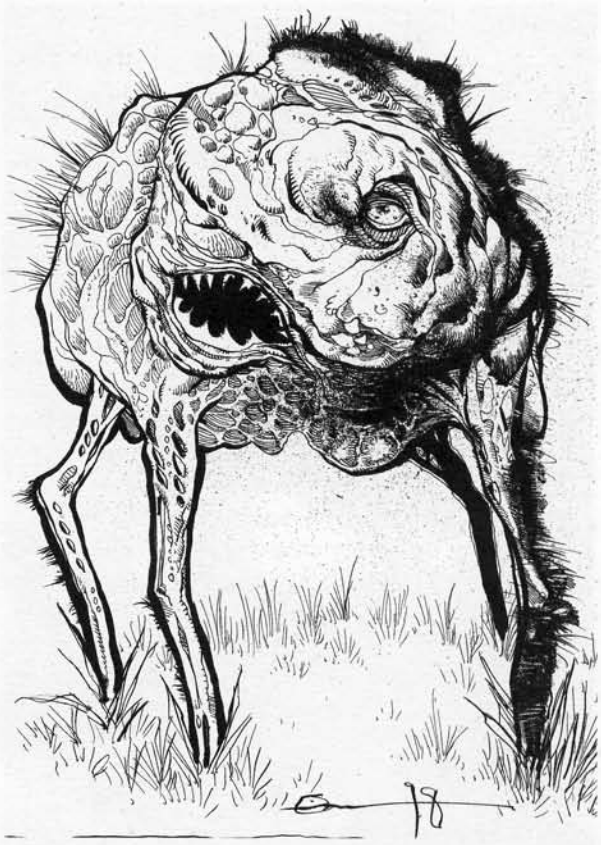
If the investigators do not rescue Samuel, the Great Seal is broken and the swamp monster is free. In three days, the swamp begins to flood the region, dragging people, property, and livestock into its murky vortex. In three days, it is impossible to reach the heart of the swamp, even with Helzer's box. If Samuel dies, the investigators must act quickly lest they lose their window of opportunity to reach the heart of Hell Swamp.

Swamp Spawn

The dark seed of Shub-Niggurath has possessed Hell Swamp, giving it a cruel intelligence. In order to expand its senses beyond the swamp itself, the seed has formed for itself a number of hybrid plant-animal creatures. These horrible creations are sent outside the swamp to monitor the region and carry out the seed's dark and alien will.

The swamp spawn is a blasphemous combination of plant and animal, capable of changing its shape as needed. The most common shape is a pulsating, lumpy round green mass of flesh and leaves with a single humanlike eyeball near its center, supported on four stalklike legs, which give it an almost spiderlike appearance when moving. The "predator" variation of this form also has a round mouth ringed with bony, thornlike teeth. When the spawn needs to move unnoticed (or squeeze through a small space), it can reshape its mass into a smelly, pasty substance and back again. When killed, the spawn reverts to organic goo with leaves and twigs protruding from it.

Due to their malleable nature, several swamp spawn can meld together to form a single, larger spawn. The greater spawn resembles an uprooted tree trunk, 10 to 15 feet tall, with two tentaclelike vines and branches. It has three large roots it can use as legs for walking. Those who see the creature may, with a successful Cthulhu Mythos check (DC 20), recognize it as somewhat similar to the dark young of Shub-Niggurath.



Swamp Spawn

Swamp Spawn: Tiny Plant; HD 2d8+4; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); SQ Plant, electricity immunity, fire resistance 5, amorphous form; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Hide +4*, Listen +4, Move Silently +4.

Plant: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. Not subject to critical hits.

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Swamp spawn take no damage from electricity. Instead, any electrical attack used against a swamp spawn (lesser or greater) grants it 1d4 points of temporary Constitution. The spawn loses these points at the rate of 1 per hour.

Amorphous Form (Ex): Swamp spawn are able to change their size and general shape at will. They can increase their size by one category or decrease it by up to two categories. This alteration requires a full action.

Skills: Swamp spawn gain a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Listen, and Move Silently checks. They gain a +12 bonus to Hide checks when in a swampy area.

Greater Spawn

Greater Spawn: Large Plant; HD 8d8+24; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (–1 size, +11 natural); Atk +10 melee (2d6+5, 2 slams); Face 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SA Improved grab, constrict 2d6+7; SQ Plant, electricity immunity, fire resistance 30; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Hide +4*, Listen +4, Move Silently +4.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the greater spawn must hit an opponent of up to Large size with both slam attacks. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A greater spawn deals 2d6+7 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Large or smaller creatures. The greater spawn can still move but cannot take any attack actions when constricting.

Plant: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. Not subject to critical hits.

Electricity Immunity (Ex): Swamp spawn take no damage from electricity. Instead, any electrical attack used against a swamp spawn (lesser or greater) grants it 1d4 points of temporary Constitution. The spawn loses these points at the rate of 1 per hour.

Skills: Swamp spawn gain a +4 racial bonus to Hide, Listen, and Move Silently checks. They gain a +12 bonus to Hide checks when in a swampy area.

Uprooting the Seed

The investigators may have already ventured into the swamp in search of Timothy's journals (see the Hell Swamp section, above), but once they repair Helzer's box, doing so becomes much easier. The swamp still tries to stop them as described previously, but the investigators can drive off the attacks by touching the vicious foliage with Helzer's box. In this manner they can reach Timothy's childhood fort in less than an hour.

Timothy's old fort is a crude collection of boards built on a dry spot in the middle of the swamp. The walls were made by nailing boards to three trees, giving the playhouse a crooked triangular shape. The floor is surprisingly smooth, as if the boards were nailed to a previously existing structure. A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals that the floor is indeed attached to a much older foundation, which, though mostly rotted away, visibly extends far beyond the small playhouse. As the investigators may guess, this is the foundation of Irving Helzer's house.

The fort is almost completely overgrown and shows no sign of being disturbed recently. There is nothing in the fort. Investigators who poke around under the foliage and make a successful Search check (DC 20) find that one of the floorboards is loose. Pulling it up reveals a space between the floor and the ground—the hole goes completely through Helzer's old foundation. At the bottom of the hole is a locked briefcase wrapped in a plastic garbage bag. The briefcase contains Timothy Ekloff's journals (see the Family Papers #3) and a business card for Tommy Zane in Savannah, Georgia.

When one of the investigators reaches down into the hole, a sinewy vine wraps itself around his or her arm and tries to jerk the trapped investigator down to floorboards. The tendril grapples with a melee attack bonus of +10 and has an effective Strength of 18. It has 8 hit points.

If the investigators manage to worm Helzer's box into the hole and touch the tendril, they find it has no effect. The investigators are now at the heart of the swamp, where the dark seed of Shub-Niggurath is at its strongest. Helzer's box is useless here, unless they capture within it the seed itself.

While the investigators deal with the attack from below, a successful Listen check (DC 15) reveals something bubbling up from the swamp, breaking through the foliage behind them.

They smell it before they see it: the half-rotten corpse of Irving Helzer is dragged to the surface by thick vines like some loathsome marionette. Worms and centipedes writhe in Helzer's empty eye sockets, dripping from his slack-jawed mouth. What's left of the old man's skin has turned a sickly brown. His fingertips have been gnawed to the bone, leaving wet white claws protruding. A putrid green glow seeps out from the corpse's chest and abdomen. Investigators lose 1d4/1d8 points of Sanity from the grisly sight.

The corpse sways drunkenly. Its mouth flops open and closed awkwardly, its head lolling from side to side. A dark, wet sound comes out that might be speech...or laughter.

Empowered by the proximity of the dark seed, the trees and vines around the investigators spring to life a moment later, attacking them en masse. As before, the foliage has a melee attack bonus of +10 and an effective Strength of 18. There are two tendrils per investigator, trying to pull them into the water and drown them. Another 2d6 join the battle every round after the first.

The investigators' only chance for victory lies in capturing the dark seed. It is buried within the chest cavity of Helzer's corpse, where it gives off an unhealthy, telltale greenish glow. In order to capture the seed, an investigator must force Helzer's box through his corpse's algae- and insect-encrusted ribs, pressing against the dark seed itself. Doing so requires a melee

touch attack against the corpse (AC 12).

When the investigators touch Helzer's box to the dark seed, both box and seed glow brightly for an instant, then "melt" together. The box becomes warm to the touch and twice as heavy with the seed rattling inside it. The corpse of Irving Helzer slumps lifelessly to the ground and disintegrates into myriad rotting chunks.

Once the seed is contained in the box, the swamp reverts to its natural state. Over the next few days, the water levels drop to the point they were at two years ago. Bereft of their life force, the swamp spawn collapse into inanimate puddles of goo.

It is up to the investigators to decide what to do with Helzer's box and the dark seed. If they take it with them, they run the risk of breaking it again—not to mention all the other assorted hazards of traveling with two powerful artifacts. If they leave it—perhaps throwing it into the swamp—they run the risk of someone else finding it. Their best bet would probably be to give the box to Dwight Lang, the librarian, for safekeeping.

Out of the Frying Pan

When the investigators return from the swamp, they encounter Father Cartier. The old man is disheveled and appears quite anxious.

"Thank heavens I found you," he says breathlessly, "before they did."

The priest goes on to explain that the Ekloff farm is swarming with law enforcement personnel, and several FBI agents are searching town for the investigators. If he has not yet told the investigators his story about Timothy and the "secret government cabal," Father Cartier does so at this time.

Cartier's story is bogus, but his panic is genuine. He knows that if the FBI captures the investigators, his best hope of finding Timothy (and ridding himself of his blackmailers) will go to prison with them. Spurred on by this desperate knowledge, the priest encourages the investigators to leave town immediately and look for Timothy. He further insists that he go with them.

"They have already been to my house looking for me," he explains. "They think I know something about the conspiracy and want to kill me."

If the investigators are unable or unwilling to access their vehicle, Father Cartier offers the use of his car. It is a 20-year-old station wagon covered with dirt and rust, but the engine runs well.

As long as they follow the priest's advice and avoid being seen, the investigators escape Bowersville without further incident.

Into the Fire

In the time since he met the investigators, Special



Family Papers #3

From the journals of Timothy Ekloff

...When I began investigating this TemCo, I had no idea what I would find. I have seen all kinds of crime and cruelty in my time with the CIA but nothing that compares to the apocalyptic conspiracy that I have recently discovered.

It was the money laundering that first caught my attention. But then I saw that many of the funds were going to the same place—some mystery project in Tibet. Why Tibet? There is nothing in Tibet. No corporations, little organized crime, nothing but simple villagers and Chinese oppression. What could they possibly be working on in the Himalayas? I had to find out.

I could never report what I found, even if I dared show my face in public. I could never go on record ranting about underground cities or a machine as big as a house. If I told about the...people?...I saw there, I would be locked up. And if I said that their plan would kill us all, I would be branded a paranoid of phenomenal proportions.

No, if I'm going to stop them, I'll have to do it myself.

I'll track down Zane. He'll know where I can get some hardware and support personnel.

Agent Davis has finally remembered where he had seen their faces before: the arrest bulletin posted on his office wall. He hurriedly called in a few more field agents and contacted the local sheriff about helping him arrest these murdering fugitives. Four deputies and three additional FBI agents are actively looking for the investigators, hoping to take them into custody.

Sheriff Bach, a deputy, and two FBI agents have staked out the site where the investigators have been staying. The remaining law enforcement personnel are searching the places the investigators were last seen and asking the locals for any additional information they might provide. At the Ekloff farm, Clarice and Samuel have been instructed to contact the authorities should they see the investigators. No one is looking for Father Cartier.

If the investigators ignore Father Cartier's advice, they may find themselves placed under arrest at gunpoint. The FBI agents do not shoot at them unless they feel threatened, though the sheriff and his deputies are more willing to shoot first and worry about the consequences later. If the investigators are arrested, see Wanted! for details on what happens to them next.

FBI Agents: Male 4th level; HD 4d6+8; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 armor); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, nightstick) or +3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Diplomacy +5, Drive +5, Gather Information +6, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (law) +9, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Search +6, Sense Motive +9, Spot +5.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Sharp-Eyed.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1877 revolver, pepper spray, bullet-resistant vest.

Typical Deputy: Male 2nd level; HD 2d6+2; hp 10; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 armor); Atk +1 melee (1d4, nightstick) or +2 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will –1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +6, Drive +3, Gather Information +3, Hide +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (law) +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +4, Search +3, Sense Motive +4, Spot +3.

Feats: Persuasive, Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: Nightstick, Colt M1877 revolver, bullet-resistant vest.



CHAPTER TEN

Revelations

It's been a year since he graduated from college, and Verne is still cursing his English degree as he takes out the garbage. Oh, sure, he could have studied computers, but he didn't want to take all those math classes. He even seriously considered changing majors once as a sophomore, but no, he forged ahead with his literary curriculum instead. And look where it got him: He is now the best-educated waiter at the Legacy.

Verne doesn't mind the job so much. The tips are always generous—it is a classy restaurant, after all—and he secretly enjoys wearing the suit and tie. He feels a little like James Bond in the fancy white coat...

James Bond taking out the garbage, that is.

He lugs the rank plastic bags across the darkened alley to an industrial trash container. Lifting the metal lid with one hand, Verne swings a bag of garbage up into the Dumpster with the other. Reaching back for another bag, he sees that he is not alone.

The man behind him steps soundlessly from the shadows. There is a gun with a silencer in his hand

and a blank look on his face that Verne somehow finds more unnerving than any angry, violent snarl. He raises the gun level with the waiter's face.

"Take off your coat," he says flatly. "And give it to me."

Verne doesn't know guns, but he knows he doesn't like the ominous click of the stranger's pistol. He takes off his white suit coat (so much for James Bond, he thinks) and throws it to the gunman.

"Get inside." The stranger gestures towards the Dumpster with his gun. Verne opens his mouth to argue, then thinks better of it and scrambles up into the garbage. He knows his best chance of survival is obedience. The bags at the bottom have broken open. Rotted food and other cold, wet restaurant trash spills over Verne's feet and legs. As he looks down at the mess, he feels cold steel at the base of his neck.

"Thank you for the coat," the stranger says, then pulls the trigger.

Gamemaster's Introduction

This scenario begins as the investigators set out from the Ekloff estate in hopes of meeting Timothy Ekloff in Savannah. They have the name and phone number of one Tommy Zane, Timothy's mercenary contact, who they hope can put them in touch with the renegade spy. Father Cartier, an aged priest who used to know Timothy as a boy, is likely accompanying the investigators and may be providing their transportation. He claims that Timothy knows something about a conspiracy against the federal government, but is actually a TemCo double agent, spying on the investigators.

Ekloff's Plan

Timothy is in Savannah assembling a small strike force to help him conduct a raid on the Tyrr Nemaii. The city beneath the mountain is now a fortified stronghold of the shk'ryth, well defended by both conventional and supernatural means. Timothy knows that if he hopes to reach the machine, it will take more tactics and firepower than he can provide by himself.

From his time in both the military and the CIA, Timothy knows of mercenaries in the Georgia region. Some of these are soldiers he knows personally. Others, he knows only by reputation and referral. He has contacted several of them through his old friend Tommy Zane, a retired Marine with whom he used to work while employed by the CIA. A number of mercenaries have been instructed to meet Timothy at a trendy Savannah nightclub, where he is to brief them on the mission.

TemCo's Plan

Father Cartier is not the Good Samaritan he appears to be. The priest has sold out for the sake of his reputation and is pumping the investigators for all the information he can about their employer or patron and the reasons behind their interest in Timothy Ekloff.

TemCo has assigned a Tribunal agent to follow the investigators and the priest. The agent makes contact with Father Cartier at the first opportunity and maintains contact from then on. He gives the priest two items: a small, five-shot tranquilizer gun, and a powerful bugging and tracking device disguised as a pen. From this point on, the agent hears everything the priest hears, and knows everywhere he goes. It is the agent's task to use Cartier and the investigators to locate Timothy Ekloff, then capture him and eliminate the priest.

The agent's secondary object is to gather intelligence on the investigators' benefactors (i.e., New Moon Temple). TemCo knows next to nothing about this organization and hopes that by monitoring the investigators, its agents will learn more about it. Therefore, the investigators are not to be harmed—not yet—and their contacts are to be captured alive if possible.

The New Moon Temple

The Temple wants to know what the investigators have learned and to share with the investigators the information that its other agents have gleaned concerning Timothy Ekloff. Roland Delmont calls the investigators on their Temple-issued cellular telephone to hear their report. Once he has their location, he sends one of his followers, Francis Shepherd, to Savannah to meet with the investigators. Shepherd flies out of San Francisco immediately and arrives in Savannah by evening.

Investigators' Introduction

On the way to meet Timothy, Father Cartier helps the investigators in any way he can. He expresses a sincere desire to see his former parishioner again, as well as a paranoid tendency to wonder aloud about how the FBI fit into the grand conspiracy. The priest is full of stories about when Timothy was a boy and all the trouble he used to get into while looking for adventure in the swamps and woods around his home. Cartier loves to talk, and it doesn't take much to get him started.

The priest also loves to listen. He asks the investi-

gators about themselves, their work, and their personal lives. Father Cartier's true purpose is to discover who the investigators are working for. The priest is subtle but persistent in his questioning.

New Moon Calling

En route to Savannah, the investigators receive a call on the cellular phone issued to them by the New Moon Temple. Roland Delmont is on the line, and he asks them for an update: Did they find Ekloff? What did they learn of his whereabouts? Where are they now and where are they going?

Delmont responds to their report with, "Very good," and tells the investigators to expect another phone call in a day or so. "We may have found more information about our elusive Mr. Ekloff," he says, "and we will wish to meet with you to discuss it." With that, the cultist bids the investigators goodbye and disconnects.

Some time later, the investigators receive a second call on the cellular phone. A husky, unfamiliar voice on the other end tells them that their benefactors have indeed found new information about Timothy Ekloff.

"We would like to meet with you when you arrive in Savannah and compare notes," the voice continues. Dinner reservations have been made for 8:00 pm at the Legacy, an elegant Savannah restaurant. The investigators are to meet their Eastern Mutual contact there at that time. The reservations have been made under the name "Moon."

If Father Cartier learns any of this, he reports it as soon as he can to the Tribunal agent who is following him. Cartier first requests, then insists that he accompany the investigators to the meeting. He maintains that since his life has been ruined by the government cabal, it is that much more important to him to find out what happened to his former Sunday school student. In reality, the priest hopes that the more information about Ekloff he can gather for TemCo, the sooner he can go back to living in peace.

Dinner with Reservations

The Legacy restaurant is located near downtown Savannah and attracts a very well heeled clientele. Valet parking is available and actually quite practical, since there is no parking lot near the shimmering three-story restaurant.

Inside, the investigators are greeted by a tuxedo-clad host, who asks for their reservations through a thin, tight-lipped smile. If the investigators are dressed informally (T-shirts and jeans or shorts), the host offers them the use of a "house jacket" while they are guests in the restaurant. He then presents them with a number of sports coats the restaurant keeps for just this purpose.

The host leads the investigators through a dazzling display of wealth and taste. Fine art hangs on the walls and modern sculptures accentuate the elaborate architecture. A string quartet is performing on a small stage to one side, and its music is filtered in perfect stereo throughout the dining area. The investigators eventually reach their table, which is a plush circular booth near the back. A distinguished-looking gentleman in an expensive suit stands to one side and greets them as they approach.

"Francis Shepherd," he introduces himself with a smile. "Eastern Mutual Insurance, regional director. I'm glad you could make it." The investigators easily recognize Shepherd's voice as the one they heard earlier on the telephone. He gestures for them to sit in the booth, then joins them.

Shepherd insists on ordering before discussing business. The menu is as exhaustive as it is expensive; if the investigators can think of a dish, it is either listed on the menu or well within the chef's abilities to create.

"Eat up," Shepherd encourages them. "It's being billed to the company."

Once food has been ordered, Shepherd reveals that other agents have discovered what the investigators may already know. Timothy Ekloff worked for the CIA from 1985 to 1996. His last assignment was a money-laundering case in the Caribbean, which led him to Tibet in 1995. The Temple suspects that it was in the Himalayas that he stumbled across what TemCo enigmatically refers to simply as "the Project." The CIA lost track of Timothy after that and harbors suspicions that he has taken up with a Third World crime syndicate (see the Revelations Papers #1).

Shepherd is friendly and is quite interested in what the investigators have been doing. He answers their questions the best he can. If they present any compelling evidence that Eastern Mutual is not simply a legitimate insurance company, he admits that it is a front for a group bound by philosophy and goals, but reveals no details about the New Moon Temple. If the investigators insist, he laughs it off, saying, "When you're ready to know more, we would love to initiate you. But now is not the time."

As the meal draws to a close, Shepherd grows serious. He leans in toward the investigators and quietly tells them that his organization has recently received a breakthrough piece of intelligence concerning TemCo.

"The mountains of Tibet are only the beginning. The real danger lies in the desert," he says, then stops quickly. He glances at an approaching waiter.

"In a minute," Shepherd mutters. He smiles, and in normal tones, continues, "But now it's time for dessert!"

Death by Dessert

A white-suited waiter approaches the table, pushing a dessert cart heaped with sugary delicacies. Reaching into his coat, he pulls out a silenced automatic pistol and points it at Shepherd's chest. At this point, the players should make Spot checks (DC 20). Investigators who fail the check are surprised—Shepherd is automatically surprised. The GM should then resolve the surprise round for the assassin and any investigators who are aware of the danger.

The assassin's objective is to kill Shepherd—the investigators are of no concern to him unless they get in the way. On the surprise round, he fires one shot at Shepherd (AC 10, hp 4). On the following round, he uses a full attack to pump four more hollow points into his victim, just to be sure (multifire weapon, Rapid Shot, Multishot). The Temple cultist's body jerks with each shot, then slumps lifelessly onto the table. "Your false idols will not protect you now," declares the waiter, and bolts for the kitchen.

The waiter is, of course, the Tribunal operative sent to follow the investigators. He has been monitoring their conversation and decided to cut it short before Shepherd could reveal too much information. He would have prefered to have taken the cultist captive for questioning, but felt the need for secrecy superceded interrogation.

The killer is a highly trained assassin and catching him is nearly impossible. When he wheels the dessert tray to the table, he situates it so that it blocks the investigators' exit from the booth in order to slow them down. Furthermore, he is running for the kitchen, where he simply slows his pace to the same professional bustle of the other waiters and suddenly becomes difficult to pick out from the other white-suited employees (Spot check, DC 25).

If the investigators are able to confront the killer before he reaches the back door, he does not hesitate to shoot at them. There are two more bullets in his clip, and he has another 7-round magazine ready in case he needs it. Once the Tribunal operative slips out the back, he flees the scene in a car he left running in the alley behind the restaurant. If the operative is about to be apprehended by the investigators or police, he takes his own life rather than face capture.

Tribunal Operative: Male 9th level; HD 9d6+18; hp 50; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4+2, punch) or +11/+6 ranged (2d8/crit x4, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +8, Demolitions +8, Disable Device +8, Disguise +8, Drive +12, Gather Information +8, Hide +12, Listen +8, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Search +8, Spot +8.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Martial Artist, Multishot, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, laser gunsight, silencer, 2 magazines hollow point .45 ACP.

Searching Shepherd's body reveals a satellite cellular phone similar to the one the investigators have been issued, as well as the keys and keyless-entry remote to a van parked outside. Inside his wallet is his California drivers' license, $200 cash, and an Eastern Mutual Insurance credit card.

In the parking lot, the investigators can find Shepherd's van with little difficulty. The investigators can activate the van's lights and horn with the remote, so matching the keys with the vehicle they belong to should be fairly simple. The utility van is not new but is in good condition. A curtain separates the rear from the driver's compartment.

There is an alarm system on the van, which can be deactivated by the remote on Shepherd's key chain. Alternately, an investigator may crawl beneath the vehicle and disarm the alarm manually with a successful Disable Device check, DC 25.

There is a loaded Walther PPK in the glove compartment, along with the usual insurance and registration documents. The van is registered to and insured by Eastern Mutual Insurance.

The cargo area of the van's interior is painted black, and a strong odor of incense almost covers up an unpleasant organic scent that the investigators might recognize as old blood. Disturbing symbols are scrawled in red around the walls. Investigators who make a successful Cthulhu Mythos check, DC 15, recognize the symbols as being related to Nyarlathotep. A hinged wooden box sits in one corner. Opening the box reveals a hacksaw, a scalpel, and large serrated-edged knife gleaming against a black velvet liner.

A thumping sound suddenly emanates from a large, rectangular shape that the investigators may have mistaken for an altar. The shape is actually a large, locked trunk, and the thumping is coming from inside it. The trunk can be opened with a successful Open Lock check (DC 20). The trunk has hardness 5, 15 hit points, and Break DC 18.

The hideous form of a mutilated man stares up at the investigators from inside the trunk. He is naked and his arms and legs have been surgically removed, leaving only red-tipped stumps. His jaw is also missing and his tongue hangs and waggles obscenely. The pathetic creature is obviously quite mad. He whimpers and gibbers wordlessly but cannot communicate beyond the rolling of his eyes. This horrible sight costs the investigators 1/1d6 points of Sanity.

As they may come to realize, the investigators have stumbled upon a "mobile temple" of the New Moon Temple. The van and its sacrifice are designed to allow cultists to partake of the monthly ritual even when far away from the rest of the Temple. More importantly for the campaign, this unnerving encounter strongly suggests that the New Moon Temple does not have the best interests of humanity in mind, and the investigators must think twice about trusting them.

The investigators can drive off in the dead man's van if they so wish, but since the vehicle's license plates have been marked as connected to a homicide, they are pulled over by the police and questioned within 24 hours.

Tommy Zane

The investigators have a business card for one Tommy Zane, which Timothy Ekloff left among his journals in the middle of Hell Swamp. The card has only Zane's name and a Savannah-area phone number.

If the investigators call the number printed on the card before noon, there is no answer. Otherwise, the phone is picked up after three rings and a surly male voice answers, "Jack's Corner Bar." In the background, the investigators can hear the crack of billiard balls and the tinny whine of a jukebox.

Asking for "Tommy Zane" prompts the surly voiced man to ask who is calling and why. Almost any answer short of "the police" is satisfactory; dropping the name "Ekloff" is a guaranteed success. There is an audible click as the phone hangs up for a moment. When it picks up again, there is no background noise.

"This is Zane," says a male voice. "What can I do for you?"

What happens next is up to the investigators and how they deal with Zane. If they just say that they are looking for Timothy Ekloff, he assumes that they are mercenaries (see below) and tells them that "Timmy will explain at the Shelter tomorrow night" (see the Shelter section). If they are more subtle, perhaps pretending to be friends of Timothy's, Zane agrees to meet with them tonight at Jack's Corner Bar.

Zane's Story

Tommy Zane served his country as a Marine in countless dirty little wars over the years. He wasn't always proud of what he did, but he did it nonetheless, because it needed to be done and it was his duty. Zane met Ekloff while providing support for a CIA mission in Asia, and the two became friends. The soldier liked the spy's enthusiasm and thirst for adventure. Ekloff looked up to the older Marine as something of a mentor, someone who had been on many dangerous missions and had gleaned his wisdom the hard way.

But that was years ago. Ekloff vanished in 1996, and Zane heard nothing more from him. Zane retired from the Marines in 1987 but remained semi-active in the dirty wars as a mercenary. He finally retired from the military life for good in 1993 and returned to the United States to live off his well-deserved wealth. But Zane still had his mercenary connections and found himself working as a middle man for those who needed to hire experienced "freelance specialists" and didn't know where to look.

For the last couple of years, Zane has been working out of his office in the basement of Jack's Corner Bar, locating and hiring mercenaries for interested third parties, and taking his cut off the top. He is half owner of the bar and maintains an apartment on the second floor of the building.

Six months ago, Timothy Ekloff appeared without warning, full of his usual excitement...and a little fear. He claimed that he had been held captive in the Himalayas and that a bunch of aliens were planning on destroying the world with a comet. Now he has to get back to the secret alien base to destroy their machine. It was going to be a dangerous mission, and he needed to recruit some help. That was why he came to Zane—to recruit a commando unit for a raid on the alien headquarters.

Zane believed almost none of this, of course, but

Revelations Papers #1

CIA Agent Leaving Service Form

Agent's Name: Ekloff, Timothy Stephen
Employee Number: 348821
Hire Date: May 1, 1976
Termination Date: February 9, 1996
Termination Reason: Missing in Action/Possible Treason

Supervisor Notes: My last contact with Ekloff was six months ago. He stated at that time that he had a strong lead on the money-laundering case he was working on (96-00346384) and that he was booking a flight to Tibet. He has not reported back since then. Due to the circumstances of his disappearance, I would ordinarily assume that he was killed or otherwise incapacitated in the course of his assignment. However, we have received reports from several channels that Ekloff has been seen working with a known criminal syndicate. This organization is known to operate in India and Tibet and is suspected to have several current and former intelligence agents in its ranks. It is possible that Ekloff has joined this syndicate. Therefore, I request that any contact with Ekloff be reported immediately, so that he might be apprehended and questioned.

humored Ekloff for the sake of their old friendship. He agreed to call around to see who would be interested in such an adventure and have them meet with Ekloff. The meeting spot Ekloff chose was the subbasement of the Shelter, a local nightclub. The meeting is to take place one night after the investigators arrive in town.

Jack's Corner Bar

The old saloon is as seedy and low class as the name would imply. Jack's Corner Bar is located in an unsavory part of town where there are more prostitutes and muggers than working streetlights. The streetlights that do work are weak and yellow. The streets themselves are riddled with potholes, and the sidewalks are crumbling into the gutter. This whole part of town seems to be falling apart, but no one cares.

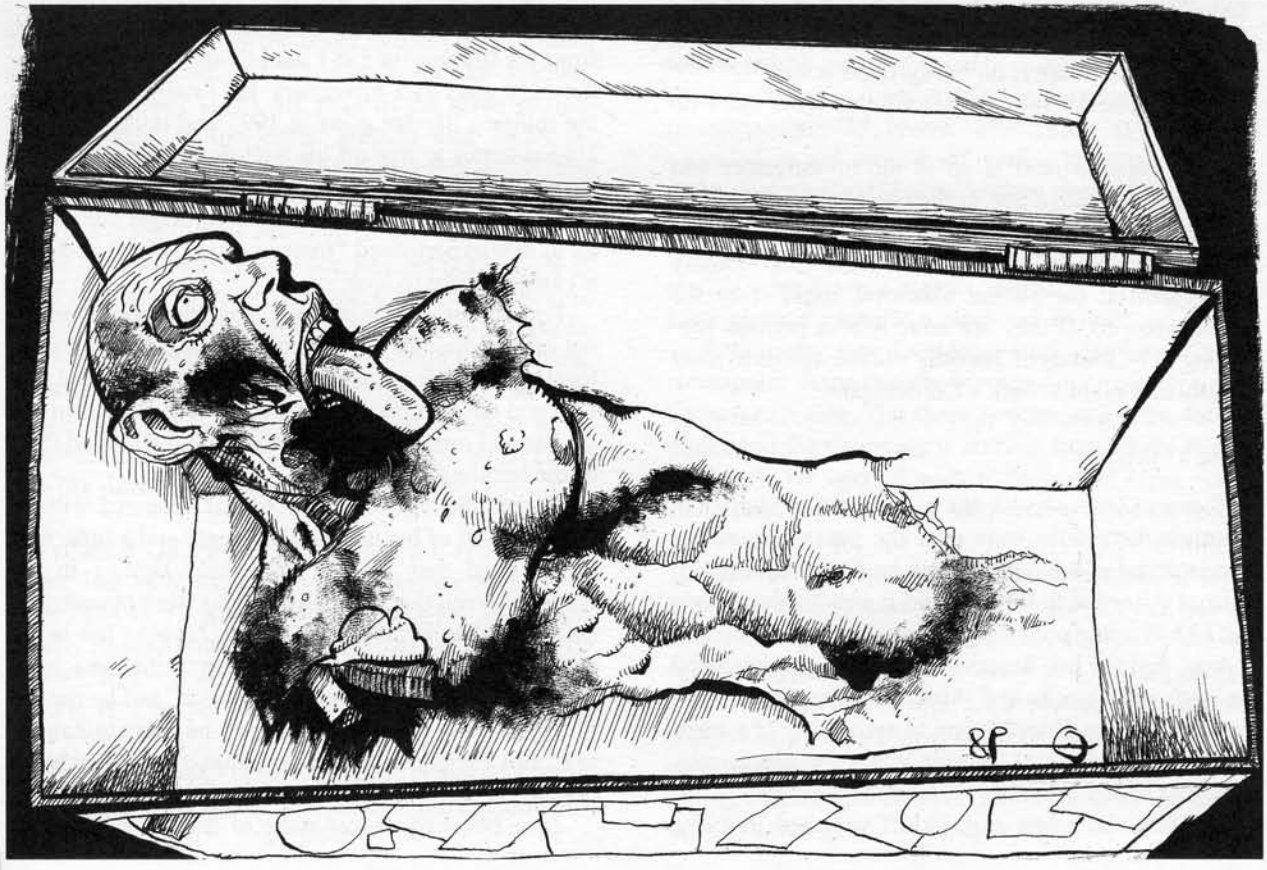
A buzzing neon sign reading "Jack's" is the only indication that the windowless brick building is a bar. Inside, the smoky darkness is broken only by the lights behind the bar and over the two pool tables, reducing the other customers to hazy forms standing on the periphery. The investigators' eyes eventually adjust to the gloom, but it still takes a successful Spot check (DC 15) to make out details across the room.

Tommy Zane meets the investigators near the entrance. He is a short, broad-shouldered man in his early 50s, his hair white and cut very short. His face is furrowed and features a long scar along his jaw on the left side of his face (a souvenir from his time in Nicaragua). The former mercenary leads the investigators to a booth on the wall opposite the main entrance and next to the emergency exit.

Again, what Zane tells the investigators depends on what exactly they ask him. As long as he feels they are not a threat to him, his operation, or Ekloff's life, Zane tells them whatever they want to know. If he does feel threatened, he has a semiautomatic pistol on him and a shotgun behind the bar. Zane isn't afraid to use either of them. While Ekloff used to be Zane's friend, the retired mercenary is not particularly sentimental about the former CIA agent. Ekloff vanished without even saying goodbye, only to reappear and demand Zane's help in his lunatic crusade. After more than a decade, even an old soldier's loyalty only goes so far.

Zane does not know where Ekloff is or how to contact him. All he knows is that Ekloff is meeting with potential recruits tomorrow night at 11:00 pm in the subbasement of the Shelter. He suggests that if the investigators want to talk with him, this would be their best opportunity.

Father Cartier insists not only that they go to this club, but that he come with them. He seems very excited at the prospect of seeing Timothy again. If anyone asks, he lies and says that he hopes Ekloff's recruits will help take out the secret government cabal.



The Shelter

A nightclub for those of industrial and electronic musical tastes, the Shelter is actually built into a 1950s-era bomb shelter just outside of downtown Savannah. From the outside, the building looks like little more than a single-story office complex, though there are several large signs proclaiming it to be "The Shelter." The main entrance is clearly marked and leads past a ticket window (the cover charge is $10.00), then down a metal staircase to the dance floor.

The dance floor of the Shelter is a chaotic mixture of deafening music, blinding lights, stifling heat, and the overpowering stench of alcohol mixed with cigarette smoke and human sweat. Two hundred people writhe and twist in bleary-eyed unison, nudging and touching, grasping and groping, forced together by the tight quarters of the club. A round bar squats in the midst of this sea of flesh, and three harried bartenders rush to fill the orders being shouted at them over the cacophony.

There is a door leading to the subbasement on the wall behind the stairs. It is not easy to find, and the investigators probably have to either walk along the walls searching for it (Search check, DC 20) or ask one of the bartenders. Alternately, if they make a successful Spot check (DC 20), they may notice someone open the door momentarily and slip through it. The door is marked "employees only" but is unlocked.

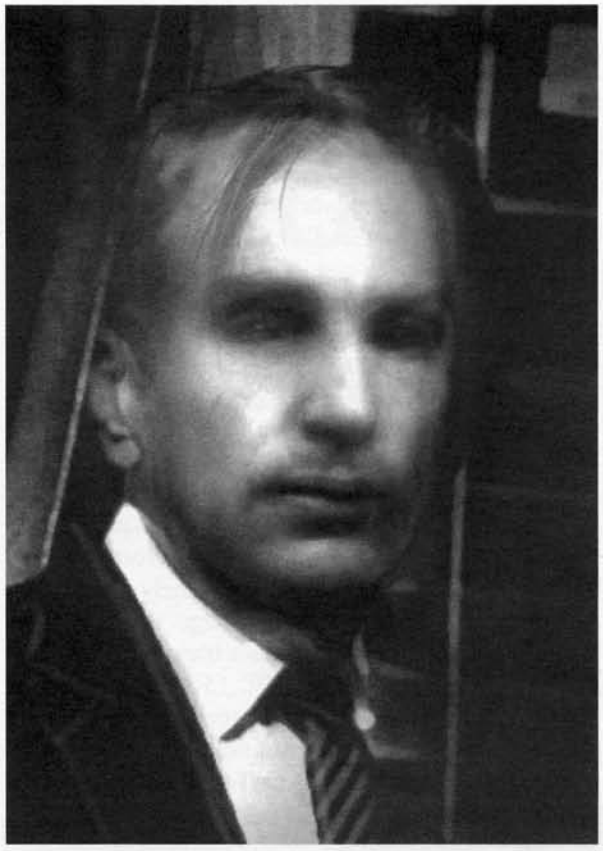
The Subbasement

Stepping through the doorway, the investigators find themselves in a dimly lit hallway running right to left. To their right is a door marked "emergency exit only." To their left are bright lights and voices. There are three rooms to the left, all on the right side of the hallway: The first is the kitchen, where two Shelter employees are washing glasses in an industrial dishwasher. The next is the nightclub office. The door is closed, but the manager is inside, talking on the telephone. Finally, the third room is the storage room. An employee is in here picking up two cases of beer. At the end of the hallway is a door marked "subbasement."

If the investigators hurry and make successful Move Silently checks (DC 15), they can make it to the end of the hallway without being discovered. If they hesitate for more than half a minute, the beer-toting employee steps out of the storage room, sees them, and tells them they aren't allowed in this area.

If the investigators pretend to be mercenaries with an appointment to meet Ekloff, the employees do not hassle them. While the nightclub does not officially sanction private meetings in the subbasement, the manager has been bribed into allowing them to happen.

At the bottom of a short staircase, a single bare bulb



lights the subbasement. It is a small, concrete room, 40 feet square, made smaller by the boxes of liquor and bar supplies lining the walls.

Timothy Ekloff is waiting at the foot of the stairs, two rough-looking mercenaries standing behind him. The investigators may be surprised to realize that the man they have been searching for is the same man who told them to forget about TemCo (in *A Dire Warning*, page 111). It takes the former spy a moment to place the investigators, but he recognizes Father Cartier immediately.

"What the hell are you doing here?" he demands angrily.

A tense confrontation follows. Ekloff is angry and shocked that the investigators have found him and confused that the priest is with them. If asked, he confirms that he is putting together a team for a mission to Tibet but refuses to say more.

"I'll explain it all when all my men are here," he snaps. "I'm not going to go over it twice."

"There is a comet," he says, "that will destroy the Earth in less than two years, and only I can stop it—but I need your help. Deep in the Himalayas, there are people making it happen, drawing the comet closer. I need your help to find them, fight our way in, and stop them."

Before Ekloff has a chance to go into details, four more mercenaries enter the room. The one in the lead looks vaguely familiar to the investigators. Though he has long blond hair braided down his back and a long

blond mustache, those who make a successful Spot check (DC 20) recognize him as the waiter from Legacy—the TemCo assassin! (This assumes, of course, that this operative managed to escape the scene alive. If not, this is a replacement the investigators have no chance to recognize.)

Those investigators who make the check have one partial action before the other three Tribunal operatives pull out their silenced pistols and begin killing Ekloff's two mercenaries. The head operative is holding an odd-shaped pistol that the investigators may recognize as a tranquilizer gun. While his companions unload on the mercenaries, the operative shoots tranquilizer darts first at Ekloff (who goes down in the first round) and then the investigators.

While the investigators are paying attention to the newcomers, Father Cartier draws the tranquilizer gun he was given earlier and shoots at the investigators.

The darts are dosed with an extremely potent tranquilizer designed to knock out large animals. If an investigator takes damage from a tranquilizer dart, he must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + 1 for each save made). If he fails the save, he is rendered unconscious for 72 hours minus his Constitution score. If he makes the save, the investigator is nauseated and must make another saving throw each round against a progressively higher DC.

The tranquilizer is strong enough to eventually render any investigator unconscious—the only question is how long it takes and what the investigator manages to accomplish before succumbing. Investigators who have not yet lost consciousness can take only a single move action each round. If they manage to escape the room, the operatives will pursue them and attempt to capture them.

After the investigators are betrayed by Father Cartier, the last thing they see and hear before falling unconscious is the priest begging for his life.

"I did everything you said. I gave you everything you asked for. All I ask is to have my life back."

The Tribunal operatives say nothing but shoot the priest in the head, killing him instantly.

Tribunal Operatives (4): Male 9th level; HD 9d6+18; hp 50; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4+2, punch) or +11/+6 ranged (2d8/crit x4, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +8, Demolitions +8, Disable Device +8, Disguise +8, Drive +12, Gather Information +8, Hide +12, Listen +8, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Search +8, Spot +8.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Martial Artist, Multishot, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Colt M11911 pistol, laser gunsight, silencer, 2 magazines hollow point .45 ACP, tranquilizer gun, 5 darts.

Father Cartier: Male 1st level; HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk –1 melee (1d3–1, punch) or +0 ranged (1d4 + drug, tranquilizer gun); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +3, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (philosophy) +5, Knowledge (psychology) +5, Listen +3, Psychoanalysis +5, Research +5, Sense Motive +3, Speak Other Language (Latin) +6, Spot +3.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Bluff), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [religion]).

Possessions: Tranquilizer gun, 5 darts.

Mercenaries (2): Male 5th level; HD 5d6+10; hp 28; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +6 melee (1d4+2, punch) or +6 ranged (2d8/crit x3, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Demolitions +5, Drive +7, Hide +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Ride +7, Spot +7, Swim +7, Wilderness Lore +6.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, 2 magazines .45 ACP.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

Thor's Anvil

His pain calls to me from above, and I must answer. A child of dirt and sun is he, knowing the ocean's embrace only in dreams. But those dreams carry such power! I feel its echoes even now. We are brothers beneath the skin, he and I, both servants of the Mighty One, the master of the currents and waves.

Our master is angry. His wrath rings like a bell in my skull, drawing me closer, filling me with holy anger. This is a call to battle: a cry for retribution and blood. I savor the thought of the warm frothing red. It has been too long for my brothers and me. Too long since we have broken the surface to hunt.

We circle impatiently, biding our time until the surface is as dark as the depths.

I smell them now. Hot and fleshy, soft and weak. They will rip like kelp before my talons. Their screams will fill me with cold joy.

Despair not, my brother, for I am coming, and vengeance with me.

At the beginning of *Thor's Anvil*, the investigators have most likely been captured by the shk'ryth. They awaken, bound and gagged, aboard the Revelation, an old freighter bound for the southern tip of Greenland. Here it is to rendezvous with a small exploratory oil platform, Torshammer, where its secret cargo of psychics is scheduled to be unloaded.

As the adventure unfolds, the investigators are caught in a bizarre series of events involving wicked corporate schemes, government agents, zealous eco-terrorists, and a deadly threat from the icy depths of the Atlantic Ocean. During the adventure, the investigators learn that Timothy Ekloff has again escaped. Unfortunately, TemCo has assigned its most notorious agent, Gerard Moore, to recapture the former spy—and to interrogate the still-captive investigators.

Thor's Anvil is the climax of Part II: *Hollow Winds* and sets the stage for *Deep Secrets*, the final installment of the **Nocturnum** campaign.

The adventure spans three days. The investigators awaken aboard the Revelation on the first day, then arrive at the broken, bloodstained husk of Torshammer on the second day. The adventure ends on the third day in a devastating industrial explosion and the appearance of Dagon himself.

Gamemaster's Introduction

Torshammer is a medium-size exploratory oil platform stationed just northeast of Cape Farewell, the southern tip of Greenland. The platform has been test drilling in the area for two years, much to the chagrin of certain environmental groups. What most people do not know, however, is that Torshammer is owned by Denmark Oil Company (Denoco)—a TemCo subsidiary—and serves as TemCo's main Atlantic hub for transporting psychics from the United States and South America.

Cargo vessels from the Americas dock regularly at Torshammer, ostensibly supplying the facility with food and other provisions. In reality, these freighters are delivering kidnapped psychics, who are then stored on the oil platform. About once a month, the large Russian freighter Rodina loads the psychics en masse (usually 100 to 200 in all) and transports them to Riga, where they are taken by train to Asia, then to the Himalayas and the Tyrr Nemaii. During the entire time of transit, the psychics are kept immobile and unconscious inside elaborate "stasis tubes" (see below).

Harold Marsh

In its effort to locate psychics, TemCo made the mistake of looking for candidates in the small New England town of Innsmouth. Here they found several psychics, but one in particular stood out as exceptionally powerful. This was Harold Marsh, a middle-aged bachelor and the owner of a small commercial fishing company. Unbeknownst to TemCo, Marsh is a highly developed deep one hybrid, almost ready to take to the sea and leave the surface world behind forever. He is also a high priest of Dagon.

Harold arrived on Torshammer from Washington, D.C. two days before the Revelation docks at the oil platform. Trapped and sleeping in his stasis tube, hidden away in the bowels of Torshammer, Harold has an inhuman awareness of his surroundings. Calling upon his hybrid nature, he is sending out a high-frequency scream, a sound amplified by the structure of the oil platform and reverberating out for hundreds of miles beneath the waves. This supernatural cry for help has reached several colonies of deep ones, who have rallied to the high priest's aid. Even mighty Dagon stirs, deep beneath the waves, moved by his child's primal howl of agony.

The night before the investigators arrive at Torshammer, hundreds of deep ones rose from the icy depths of the Atlantic and swarmed the oil platform in search of Harold Marsh. Dagon's children cut a bloody swath through the crew of Torshammer but were unable to access the storage chamber where Harold and the rest of the psychics are being held. Tonight, their numbers greater, they plan to make a second attempt.

Only a handful of people survived the deep one attack. They have barricaded themselves into two small buildings on the platform, armed with what weapons they could scrounge. Cold, hungry, and desperate, the survivors are too terrified to venture out from where they are holed up. For they know that this is the night the deep ones return to finish them off.

Green Warriors

Just before the Revelation reaches Torshammer, a smaller, faster ship arrives at the oil platform—and it is not there to deliver supplies. This is the Rainbow's Revenge, which is operated by a group of radical environmentalists ("eco-terrorists" to their adversaries) calling themselves the Green Warriors. Their mission here is to sabotage the exploratory drilling of Torshammer. They know that when a steady oil supply is found, the subsequent mass drilling will interfere with the feeding and spawn of the great humpback whales that migrate through this area. The Warriors are hoping to delay the exploratory drilling until they have a chance to raise public awareness about its environmental impact.

The Green Warriors are unaware of the key role Torshammer plays in TemCo's transportation of kidnapped psychics. They do not know of the carnage above them on the oil platform, nor that the sea beneath them is teeming with angry deep ones.

Vetle Rodskov



The final piece in this deadly game of chess is Vetle Rodskov, a secret agent for the Norwegian government working undercover aboard the Revelation as Frank Weller.

When Torshammer finishes its exploratory digging, a large drilling contract will be extended to StatOil, a Norwegian state/corporate conglomerate. The Norwegian government is aware of the Green Warriors' mission and has decided that this operation is too important—and too potentially lucrative—to be endangered by these environmental fanatics...which is where Rodskov comes into play.

Rodskov's mission is to sabotage the Green Warriors' efforts at peaceful protest, namely by planting a bomb aboard Torshammer and planting evidence pointing toward the environmentalists as the culprits. The agent's superiors believe that, between the loss of life on the oil platform and the subsequent oil spill, the Green Warriors will lose all credibility with the public. No one wants to support fanatics who plant bombs and blow up hard-working citizens, no matter what the cause.

The Revelation is commonly known to stop by Torshammer regularly to delivery food and supplies. Rodskov used his connections to obtain a position as a crewmember on the ship in order to sneak aboard the oil platform but does not know about the freighter's human cargo. A few days out to sea, however, he begins to suspect that the ship is carrying more than its usual contraband.

Captain Hattock

According to Captain Danforth Hattock, the grizzled pirate was born some 60 years ago on board a Cuban merchant vessel. His mother was a stowaway, too poor to book package on a passenger ship. She cried out while giving birth to baby Danforth, giving away her hiding place. Upon discovering the stowaway, the ship's captain ordered that she be thrown overboard and the baby brought to his quarters. He named the child Danforth and raised it as his own, teaching it the ways of the sea and the quickest ways to turn a profit. When Danforth was 18, the ship's captain sent him out into the world with only 100 dollars and a pistol.

None who hear this story completely believe it but neither are they willing to risk the captain's wrath by questioning it. There must be some truth to it, they figure, for that would explain the captain's superb nautical skills, questionable social graces, and complete lack of morals. Hattock is also known for his terrible temper.

And the Crew of the Revelation

Captain Hattock's first and second mates are Joshua and Brent Milbert, two brothers he picked up on a drug run out of California 12 years ago. The captain saved their lives when a drug deal went bad, and they have served him loyally ever since. Joshua is the elder of the two, with brains enough for both of them. Brent doesn't have his brother's intelligence but makes up for it with his enormous brawn. They are both experienced killers and are extremely dangerous.

The remaining four crewmembers rarely, if ever, come into contact with the investigators. These are sturdy seamen with shaky pasts and questionable motives, but they keep to themselves mostly and don't ask questions. They know that Hattock is transporting some sort of contraband in the secret hold. The captain has ordered them to stay out of there, however, which is fine by them—if the ship is stopped, they certainly cannot be held accountable for whatever Hattock is smuggling.

Day One

The Revelation

Owned and operated by Captain Danforth Hattock, the Revelation has been TemCo's primary transport out of Savannah for more than two years. Captain Hattock is a criminal, a smuggler and a pirate. The Revelation is his third ship, and he knows the waters of the Atlantic Ocean like the back of his hand. TemCo contacted Hattock about two years ago, and even though human cargo is against his liking, he decided to take the job after he realized how much money he could make. He was further convinced to accept the assignment when TemCo assured him that his unwilling passengers would be sleeping and immobile for the entirety of the trip. (Of course, he probably also suspected the truth: if he turned down this charter, he might turn up dead.)

The Revelation is a small freighter. Its typical itinerary entails picking up 20 to 30 psychics in their individual stasis tubes from a warehouse in Savannah, along with its legitimate cargo of cloth and pesticide. A fast ship, it usually arrives at Torshammer about four days later, where the psychics are secretly unloaded and placed into storage on the oil platform. A day later, it heads out for Edinburgh, which it reaches four days later. The Revelation often returns directly to Savannah



carrying only ballast, but Captain Hattock sometimes takes on legitimate freight—if only to throw off suspicion. The freighter makes this journey about once a month.

The ship usually runs with a crew of seven, but two of its crewmembers were killed in a drug-related shooting last week in Florida. Against his better judgment, Captain Hattock hired a stranger, Frank Weller, to help onboard the freighter. Hattock does not like the idea of taking on men with whom he has never sailed before, but an old friend recommended Weller. If the captain knew the truth—Weller is actually Vetle Rodskov, a secret agent for the Norwegian government—he would kill the man on principle, regardless of his mission.

The Stasis Tubes

At the beginning of the Tyrr Nemaii project, transporting the kidnapped psychics all the way to the Himalayas was a logistical nightmare. The prisoners had to be kept secret and restrained, while making provisions for food and bodily waste. Often, the psychics were malnourished or had to be drugged or beaten into submission. None of them arrived in optimum condition, and some of them never arrived at all. A year into the project, it was clear that TemCo needed a more efficient method of transporting its kidnapped psychics.

The solution was the stasis tube, a seven-foot-long container filled with an advanced liquid compound made up of oxygen, nutrients, and a strong sedative. Each tube has its own miniature heater and light source. The experimental stasis tube was originally developed by Parsec, Inc. for astronauts on long space flights (the company was hoping for a NASA contract) but was easily modified when TemCo bought out its original manufacturer.

When a kidnapped psychic is ready for transport, he is stripped and deposited into a stasis tube, which is then sealed shut. The tubes are extremely durable and protect their occupants against bumps and bruises. Furthermore, the tubes allow many subjects to be stored in small quarters, without worry of suffocation, anxiety, or stress. Finally, the nutrients in the tubes' liquid compound eliminate the need to feed the captives.

In the Brig

As the investigators slowly regain consciousness, they find themselves lying on the floor of a small, makeshift prison cell. It is a long, filthy room with a tiny, dirty toilet at one end and a door made up of welded steel bars at the other. There are screw holes and scratches in the walls suggesting that they once had bunks running their length (they did; this used to be crew quarters). By the dim light of a single dangling bulb, the investigators can make out ominous black spatter-marks on the floor that might be dried blood.

Between the deep droning that resonates through the cell, the rhythmic swinging of the light bulb, and the slight queasy feeling in their stomachs, the investigators may realize that they are at sea. When their eyes adjust to the grainy light, they see gray daylight glimmering from a small porthole down a long hallway, on the other side of the barred door.

In a corner of the cell there is a large case full of bottled mineral water. The investigators have no food, however, and are starving—they have gone without food for almost three days while unconscious from the tranquilizer. If the investigators make enough noise, Joshua or Brent come down to check on them. If bothered enough, they slide two boxes of corn flakes and some dirty plastic bowls between the bars. If the investigators do not like their cereal dry, they can use bottled mineral water to moisten it.

Though they have no way of knowing at first, the investigators are some 350 miles off the coast of Nova Scotia when they awaken, and about 32 hours away from Torshammer.

Escape

It is likely that the investigators will try to escape their cell. While escape is possible, it is both difficult and very dangerous. Neither Joshua nor Brent has a

key to the cell, but they both carry tranquilizer rifles when approaching the captive investigators and use them without hesitation if the investigators make too much noise or try to escape. The only person with a key to the investigators' cell is Captain Hattock, and he never goes near the brig. Investigators who feign sickness or otherwise try to trick the captain into opening the cell door are bound to be disappointed. Hattock is a hardened criminal; sick prisoners can die for all he cares. Physically breaking down the cell door is very difficult; the welded steel bars are simply too strong (hardness 10, 30 hit points, Break DC 25).

Even if the investigators can scheme their way out of the brig, their situation is still dire. They are trapped on a ship in the middle of the freezing Atlantic. It is a small ship, with only so many places to hide. It is only a matter of time before the crew, a group of armed and experienced brawlers, finds the investigators and drags them back into captivity.

A paranoid man, Captain Hattock removes the transmitter from the radio at the first sign of trouble on board. (This includes breakouts from the brig.) If he feels the ship's true smuggling mission is about to be compromised, he throws the transmitter into the sea. Hattock lost his first ship when an undercover agent from the Drug Enforcement Administration was able to radio the Coast Guard for help. Since then, the captain tends to keep an eye on the communications console.

If the investigators are counting on Vetle Rodskov (who they know as "Frank") to help them escape, they are probably less than pleased when he refuses to assist them in any way. The secret agent cares nothing for the investigators. Even if they somehow ingratiate themselves to him, he has no intention of jeopardizing his true mission before the Revelation can reach Torshammer. Once the ship arrives at the oil platform, however, his attitude changes (see below).

Rats

Due to its age and questionable inspection record, the Revelation is infested with rats. These slippery little vermin tend to congregate in the cell when the investigators are sleeping and love to gnaw on fingertips. This is unnerving, though the only real danger is that of infection. Though the rats skulk around in small packs, they can be easily scared off by loud noises, sudden movement, or being smacked hard with a shoe.

There is, however, one that is larger and seemingly more intelligent that the rest. The size of a house cat, the critter is frighteningly bold; the investigators have to strike at it repeatedly and physically shove it away—it refuses to be simply scared off. The investigators can eventually drive off the huge rat, but it stops just outside their cell, slowly turning to stare at them tauntingly with its cold black eyes.



Gamemasters are encouraged to use the rats to remind the investigators just how trapped and helpless they are, or to startle them if they grow complacent in their captivity.

Vile Rat: Small Animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d4 + disease, bite); SA Disease; SQ Scent; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6.

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite).

Disease (Ex): If the rat hits with its bite attack, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 12). If the saving throw succeeds, the disease has no effect on the investigator. If the save fails, the investigator takes 1d3 points of temporary Dexterity damage and 1d3 points of temporary Constitution damage. This damage takes effect after an incubation period of 1d3 days. Once per day afterward the investigator must make another Fortitude save to avoid repeated damage. Two successful saving throws in a row indicate that the investigator has fought off the disease and recovers.

Joshua used to love the sea, but now it seems cold and threatening, its rolling surface glistening maliciously like a colossal eyeball. He feels it staring at him, watching, waiting for him to lower his guard. All it needs is a moment...just one moment of weakness...

He shakes his head to clear it, angry at himself. The ship isn't even halfway to Edinburgh yet. He can't afford to be entertaining these morbid thoughts. But since the nightmares started getting worse, he's had a hard time sleeping. Even now, pacing the deck during his watch, the vague dream imagery seeps into his consciousness. If he closes his eyes (and he doesn't) he can see the dark shapes slithering through the ocean, teeming just beneath its surface with their webbed claws and bulging, inhuman eyes—

What's that?

Joshua grips his tranquilizer rifle and wishes, not for the first time, it carried a more lethal load. He strains to hear above the thumping of the waves and the beating of his heart. Maybe it was just the boat creaking, he tells himself. It was nothing—

There it is again, from down below. Someone is yelling down in the hold. Joshua is relieved—more than he should be—and he smiles a cruel smile.

The prisoners are making too much noise, he decides. He had better go down into the hold and remind them to be quiet.

A Killer Friend

From his contact, Vetle Rodskov is very aware of Captain Hattock's criminal history and that the Revelation is a smuggling ship. Hattock has only told him that the ship is dropping off supplies at the oil platform, then continuing on to Edinburgh. Rodskov does not know exactly what the ship is carrying, nor does he care; his only concern is reaching Torshammer to complete his mission. Nevertheless, the agent is curious by nature, and when he hears the investigators' voices in the secret hold, he decides to violate the captain's orders and see what is happening in the off-limits area. Five hours after the investigators awaken in their cell, they hear Rodskov enter the hold, then step up to the bars and look into the cell.

The spy is surprised to see the motley crew of prisoners. Anyone making a successful Sense Motive check (DC 15) notes that his surprise is genuine.

Trying to satisfy his curiosity, Rodskov asks the investigators who they are and why they are here. He may or may not believe their story, depending on how outlandish they make it sound. He reveals nothing about himself, other than that he is a member of the Revelation's crew. If the investigators ask, he tells them they are aboard the Revelation, headed for Edinburgh by way of the oilrig Torshammer.

A few minutes later, the door to the hold flies open and Joshua bursts in, armed with a tranquilizer rifle. He pushes Rodskov against the wall and yells in his face: "Didn't the captain tell ya that downstairs is off limits to you, Frank? You know what 'off limits' means, don't you, Frank? It means stay out!"

Rodskov tries to explain himself, but before he can get two words out, Joshua pounds him in the stomach with the butt of his tranquilizer rifle. The agent moans as a small high-tech transmitter keypad falls out of its secret compartment in his sweater. It lands on the metal floor with an audible clang. Joshua looks down at the device in confusion, then back at his shipmate, a dark cloud of suspicion across his face.

"Who the hell are you?"

The agent does not answer but crushes the sailor's larynx with a well-placed kick to the throat. Joshua drops to the floor, eyes wide open, air escaping his lungs in a thin whisper. Without missing a beat, Rodskov grabs Joshua's head and turns it 200 degrees with a loud snap. Investigators witnessing this brutal slaying lose 0/1d2 points of Sanity. If the investigators make any commotion after the killing, Rodskov immediately grabs the tranquilizer rifle and pacifies those making noise.

Turning his back to the investigators' cell, the agent takes Joshua's long-bladed knife and neatly cuts the dead body into five pieces. The procedure is shockingly quick and almost bloodless, as if performed by a master surgeon. Investigators watching Joshua being butchered lose 0/1d2 points of Sanity. Rodskov picks up the body parts and squeezes them out through the small porthole.

"Til fiskene med deg!" he mutters. Any investigators with ranks in Speak Other Language (Norwegian) can translate this as "to the fishes with you!" Those without the skill, but making successful Intelligence checks (DC 15), recognize the language as Norwegian.

Rodskov wipes up the remaining blood with Joshua's sweater, which he also stuffs through the porthole. He then turns to the investigators with a finger to his lips.

"Say nothing of this," he says. "For I am a friend, and I will help you."

With that, the spy disappears once more. The entire episode has taken less than five minutes.

An hour later, Brent comes into the secret hold looking for Joshua and asks the investigators about his whereabouts. He is not likely to believe any "crazy stories" about killer martial artists, but if they are visibly shaken by the event, Brent does become suspicious and informs Captain Hattock. Otherwise Brent simply

assumes that Joshua is drunk somewhere or on his bunk with his porn collection. When Joshua still doesn't show up, the Captain orders a search of the boat. After that, the crew sadly assumes that Joshua must have fallen overboard and that their shipmate is now food for the fish.

Vetle Rodskov: Male 3rd level; HD 3d6+6; hp 16; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, combat knife) or +4 ranged (2d8, Colt M1911) or +4 ranged (1d10, H&K MP5); SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Drive +5, Gather Information +6, Hide +5, Intimidate +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Search +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Martial Artist, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Combat knife, Colt M1911, MP5.

Gamemaster's Note: This first part of the adventure aboard the Revelation should instill in the investigators a silent sense of dread and near-despair. Their encounter with Vetle Rodskov is intended to give them false hope that they can trust the spy, so that he can betray them more effectively later in the adventure.

Day Two

Expendables on a Mission

On the afternoon of the second day, Brent and Captain Hattock visit the investigators. Brent is carrying his tranquilizer rifle while the captain casually carries a semiautomatic pistol. Hattock unlocks the cell door and motions with his gun for the investigators to get out.

"Come on," snarls Hattock. "We're going for a walk."

The investigators are led at gunpoint to the deck of the Revelation. The sky is gray and overcast but seems painfully bright to the investigators, who have been locked away from sunlight for days. It only takes them a moment to see that the freighter has docked at an oil platform, its massive bulk towering over them. Two of its legs have messages spray-painted on them: "Save the whales," "Love your Mother," and "Oil = Blood." Just beyond the oilrig, the investigators can see another ship anchored nearby. If they ask about it, Rodskov mutters, "Damned tree-huggers. Cluttering up the industry."

Kelly tries not to look at what's left of her leg. She tries not to think about what will happen when the sun goes down. She tries not to think at all, but all she can do is think.

The ironic thing, Kelly muses with a bitter smile, is that she wasn't supposed to even be on the oil platform this week. She was going on vacation: a quick tour of Germany and Spain, taking in the color and washing off the sea salt for a few days. But then Hans caught his stomach virus and had to be taken out by helicopter. Torshammer now was understaffed and without a spare chopper. The Director of Operations—that pompous git!—apologized for denying Kelly's vacation time.

"We'll make it up to you," he said, smiling his fake Norwegian smile. "I'm sure you understand."

Kelly wonders what happened to the Director. She wonders if he's dead, but that line of thought only leads back to the skin and muscle dangling uselessly from her leg. If it wasn't for the leg, she would be down in the crew quarters with the others and not left bleeding on deck. She is too exhausted to yell for help, too exhausted to drag herself down to the others.

Too exhausted to do anything but wait for nightfall and try not to think about what comes next.

"We've got a problem, people," Hattock says to the investigators, gesturing to the oil platform above their heads. "And you're just the ones to solve it."

The captain goes on to explain that the Revelation has been hailing Torshammer for half a day now and has not received a response. This could be a simple mechanical or electronic difficulty, or it could be something a little more dangerous—fumes from the oil making people sick, perhaps, or maybe a fire. When the ship docked half an hour ago, Hattock sent one of the crew over to Torshammer to check on the situation.

"Hey, Anders!" The captain motions to a nervous-looking fellow who keeps looking furtively about. "Anders! Tell them what you saw."

"They...they're all d-d-dead," Anders stutters, then looks away.

Hattock informs the investigators that they are being freed—on the condition that they find out what is happening on board the oil platform and report their findings back to those on the Revelation. If they are able, they are to contact Orin Lipson, the Director of Operations. They are expendable, he explains, but his own crew is not, which is why he is sending them. Though he doesn't mention it, the only reason the captain is even bothering to investigate Torshammer is that

Orin Lipson, a TemCo operative, owes him a substantial amount of money.

Gamemasters with a mean streak may have Captain Hattock force the investigators to leave one or more of their number behind as insurance. If they do not return within two hours, Hattock begins to kill the hostage investigators...slowly.

Whether the investigators return to the Revelation or not is inconsequential in the greater scheme of the adventure. If they do report their findings, the only difference is that the crew of the smuggling ship has some idea what is killing them once the sun goes down.

If the investigators have already escaped from their cell and have not been recaptured, the GM may wish to encourage them to sneak aboard the oil platform. Even if they can't find help there, at least it will be easier to hide inside its massive structure. They should also be encouraged to find out what role the facility plays in TemCo's conspiracy.

Aboard Torshammer

The Revelation is moored to a small dock jutting from one of the oil platform's legs. The investigators are led down a ramp to the dock, where a rusty steel-runged ladder waits to carry them up to the platform itself. Brent and the captain accompany the investigators to the ladder, their guns at the ready, then stand by as the elevator carries their former captives up into the unknown.

When the investigators reach the top of the oil platform, they discover a tableau of carnage and destruction. The bodies of dozens of workers are strewn across the deck, literally torn to pieces. Blood has coated the deck in some places, pooled in others, sometimes making it hard to walk without slipping. Near the investigators are the head, left arm, and torso of a man who almost made it to the elevator before meeting his gruesome fate. There is no mistaking the look of mortal terror forever frozen onto his face. Even the heartiest investigator loses 1d2/1d4 points of Sanity from seeing this terrible sight.

The destruction goes beyond the loss of human life. Everywhere the investigators look, equipment has been smashed, doors have been pulled off their hinges, and even the metal framework of the platform itself has been badly bent in places. An oil line has apparently snapped somewhere, because half the deck is slick with the black liquid.

There is no sign of who or what is responsible for the slaughter and damage (the deep ones dragged their dead and wounded away from the rig). Spent shell casings and a broken shotgun litter the deck, but it is impossible to tell if the gunfire did any good. The only clues left behind are found on the few doors that withstood the assault: They are scratched, as if with claws, and there are small patches of what appear (to those making successful Search checks, DC 25) to be fish scales on the deck and bulkheads nearby.

Torshammer is easily large enough for the investigators to hide from their captors if they so choose. There are also a number of areas for them to explore if they are so inclined.

Bridge

This is the oil platform's control center—at least, what's left of it. Every window has been broken and the room is full of broken glass. The control panels have been smashed and torn open with inhuman hands; they are covered in claw-marks and fishlike scales. All communication equipment has been damaged beyond repair.

There are six dead crewmembers here, looks of terror frozen on their bloody faces. From the arrangement of the bodies, it appears they were scrambling over each other trying to get out of the room when something set upon them from both the door and the window. Many of them also sport deep cuts from broken glass. The floor is sticky with day-old blood.

Crew Quarters

These are two wide rooms with two rows of narrow metal bunks along either wall. Another dozen dead crewmembers are in the cabin, their disfigured corpses stacked into a pile at the far end of the room. The smell of death hangs heavily in the air.

Investigators making a successful Search check (DC 15) notice the pile of bodies shift slightly. Those who make successful Listen checks (DC 15) can hear a rustle of clothing from beneath the pile. Digging through the bodies reveals that, buried at the bottom of the stack, one of the crewmembers is still alive.

The young man they find is covered with blood, and after spending countless hours buried in the corpses of his friends, is nearly incoherent. He identifies himself only as "Joey," and does little more than stare wide-eyed at the investigators and gibber wordlessly. Investigators who make a successful Psychoanalysis check (DC 20) can calm the young crewman down enough to answer some questions.

Joey haltingly explains that "fish with claws" attacked the oilrig last night. They burst into the crew quarters and began slaughtering those inside, some of whom were asleep in bed. He evaded the creatures' claws by pulling the bodies of his crewmates on top of him.

"I had to hide," he whimpers. "I had to..."

Unless the investigators use force, Joey refuses to leave the safety of his pile of bodies. As soon as they are done speaking with him, he crawls back below his ghastly shelter and hides.

Anvil Papers #1

Shipment #	Ship	# Delivered	# Received	Notes
1022	Revelation	12	0	shipment late
1023	Dona Donna	16	0	
1024	St. Maria	21	0	Tube failure, subject eliminated in transit
1025	Rodina	0	48	
1026	Dona Donna	15	0	
1027	St. Maria	19	0	
1028	Revelation	17	0	Hattock paid in full
1029	Rodina	0	51	
1030	St. Maria	11	0	
1031	Revelation	23	0	Hattock reports prisoners on board. Hold for interrogation.

Lipson's Office

The Director's private office is close to the central control room. Its door is clearly labeled and looks like it was once locked, but it has since been smashed open. Inside, the remains of Olin Lipson have been splattered across the room. Bits of flesh are draped over a large desk, a filing cabinet, and a fax machine. A fishy smell permeates the room and observant investigators may find patches of fishlike scales on the floor and broken door (Search check, DC 20). The scene is gruesome but no worse than what the investigators have already seen on deck.

Investigators rifling through Lipson's desk find, beneath his eviscerated torso, a drawer with a loaded SIG-Sauer P225 semiautomatic pistol inside. From the position of his body, it appears that the Director was going for the gun when he was killed. There is also a notebook computer on the desk, but its case is cracked and sticky with blood, and the machine does not work. The rest of the paperwork in and on the desk is mundane material relevant only to the daily operation of an oilrig and useless to the investigators.

The top two drawers of the filing cabinet are likewise meaningless, but the bottom drawer is locked. Investigators can pick the lock with a successful Open Lock check 20) or simply break it open with a successful Strenth check (Break DC 13). Alternately, they can pick the keys out of Lipson's pants pocket but doing so costs them 0/1 points of Sanity.

Inside the drawer are a number of file folders. One of them is labeled "TemCo Shipments" and has in it many pages of records of the psychics who have been transported via Torshammer (see the Anvil Papers #1). Also included is a copy of a memo from Lipson to the supply manager requesting the use of an extra cargo hold for "special corporate cargo" (see the Anvil Papers #2).

Miraculously, the fax machine is still operational. Along with a number of ordinary faxes is a special note faxed to Lipson early this morning from the TemCo office in Copenhagen (see the Anvil Papers #3). In it, the Director's superiors inform him that Timothy Ekloff has escaped them a second time, and that Gerard Moore, a Tribunal agent, is being dispatched to Torshammer to interrogate the investigators.

If the investigators show no interest in visiting Orin Lipson's private office, one of the survivors might offhandedly mention that the oilrig recently formed a joint venture with some multinational holding company—"Tempo, or something like that"—which then appointed Lipson, an unqualified Norwegian middle-manager, as Director of Operations.

Storage Unit B

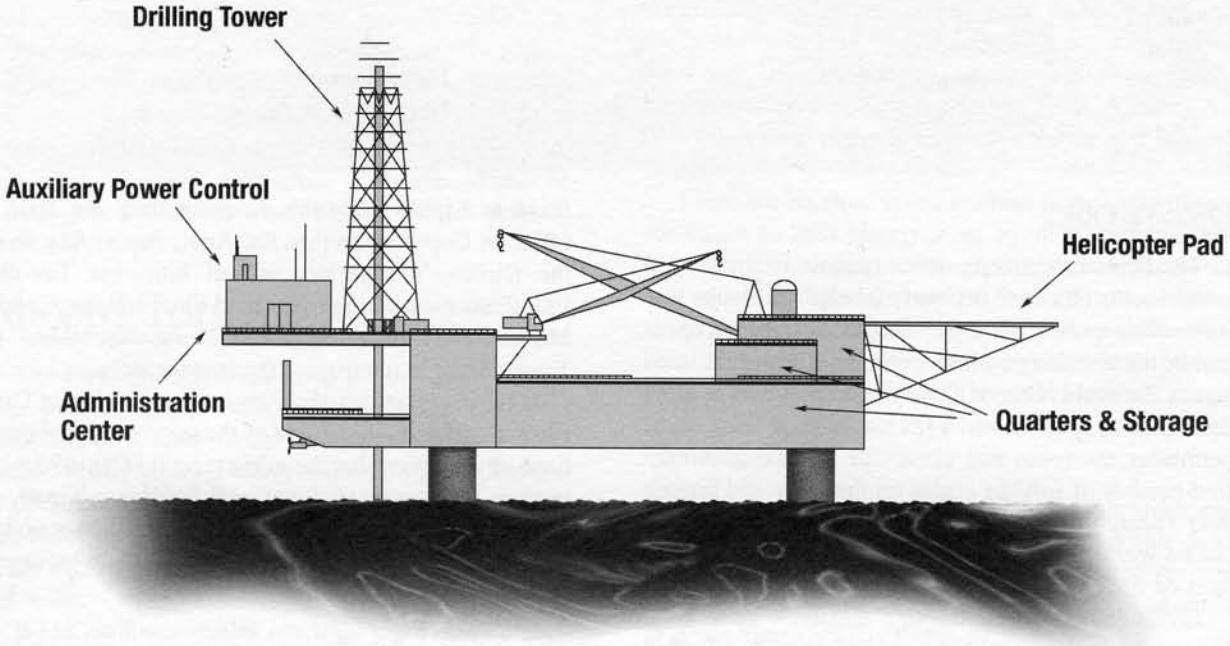
Locked below the deck of Torshammer, hidden away from the prying eyes of the oilrig's legitimate workers, is a steel-walled storage unit full of sleeping psychics. The Director of Operations has been receiving the psychics from the Revelation and storing them here for his TemCo masters. From the oil platform, the psychics are transported aboard the Rodina to Riga. The deep ones are trying to break into Storage Unit B to free Harold Marsh, one of the psychics, who is also a high priest of Dagon.

The main entrance to Storage Unit B is a large loading door on the deck. The door is opened mechanically by a nearby motor. The switch to activate the motor has been locked closed, however, and only the Director of Operations has the key. It might be possible to break the heavy lock with a sledgehammer, power tools, or a well-placed gunshot, but with a hardness of 10, 15 hit points, and a Break DC of 26, the lock is mostly impervious to bare-handed attacks. As the deep ones are finding out, the door itself is equally solid, with a hardness of 10, 60 hit points, and a Break DC of 28.

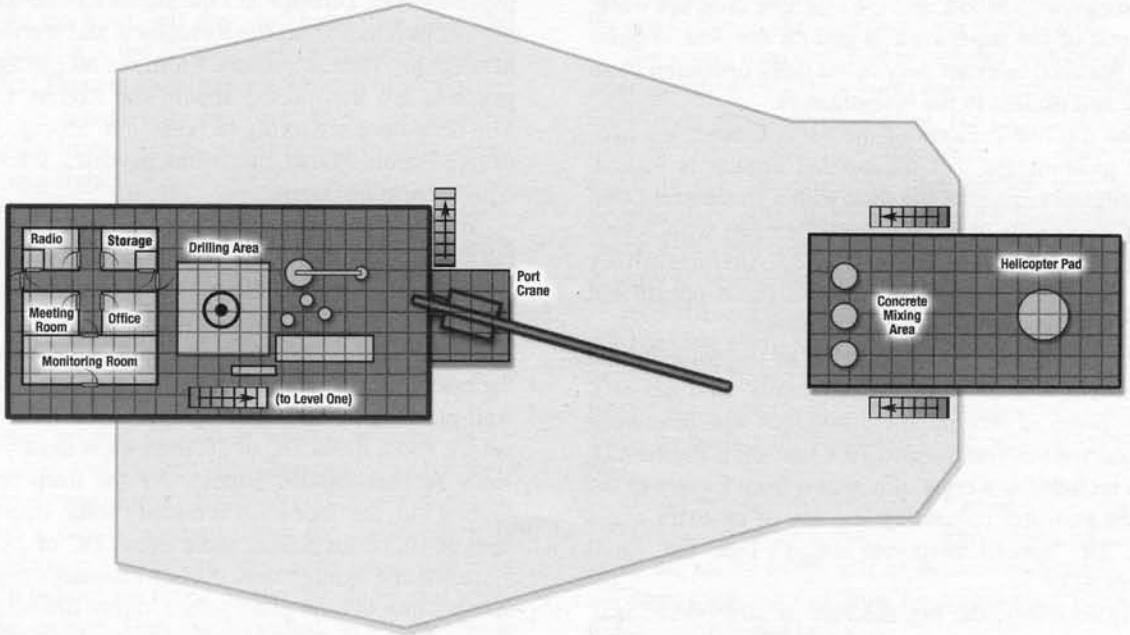
Inside the storage unit, dozens of stasis tubes stand in rows like solemn glass pillars, dimly illuminated by their own internal sickly yellow glow. Each tube con-

The Torshammer

Side View

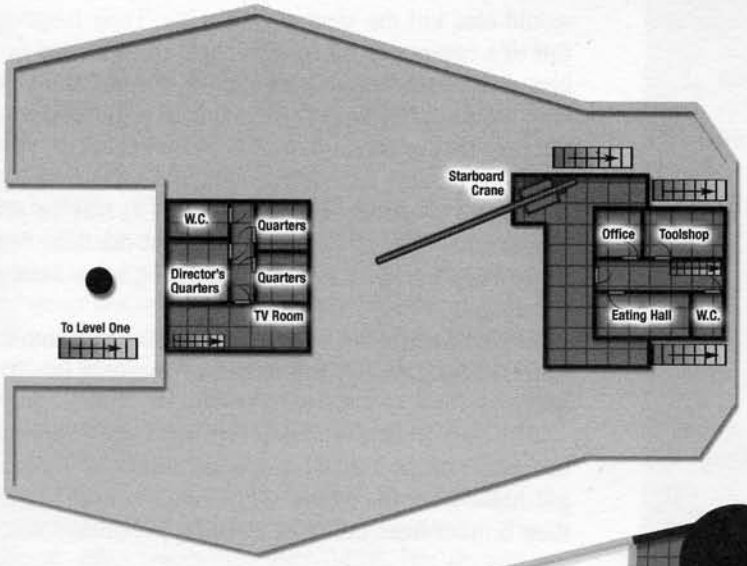


Level Four

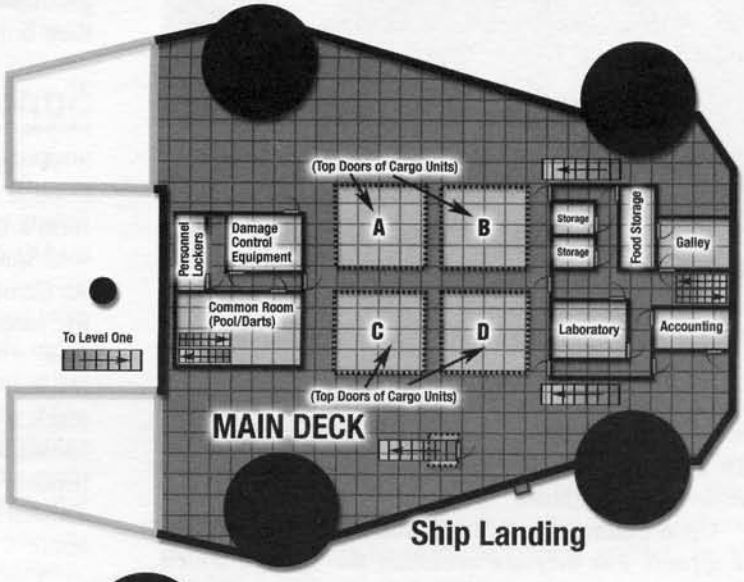


The Torshammer (cont.)

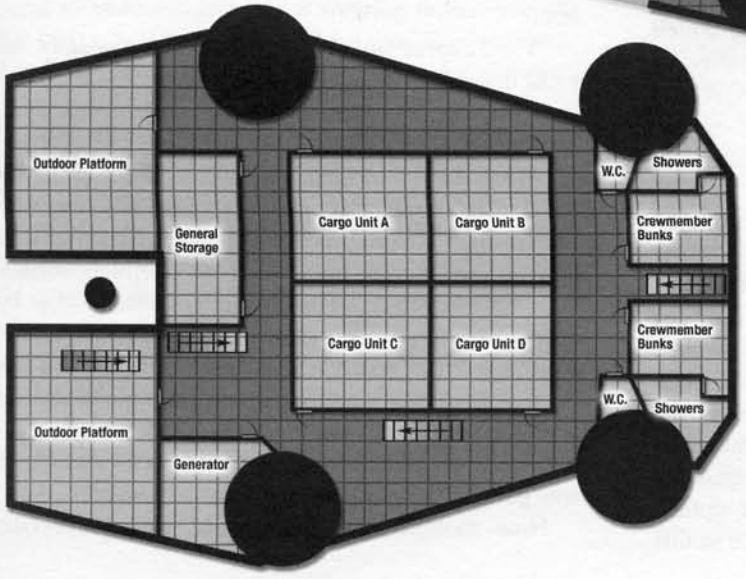
Level Three



Level Two



Level One



Anvil Papers #2

Dated two weeks ago

To: Harvey Kemp, Supply Manager
From: Orin Lipson, Director of Operations
Subject: Corporate cargo space

As you know, we have been receiving special corporate shipments for the parent company on a regular basis for over a year now. During this time, we have used Cargo Unit D because it is close to the dock, yet far enough out of the way to not interfere with the day-to-day operations. However, it has come to my attention that we have been receiving more supplies per shipment in recent weeks. At this rate, we are soon going to run out of space in Cargo Unit D.

Therefore, I am moving the special corporate operation to Cargo Unit B, which is large enough to meet our needs. I need you to remove whatever supplies are currently in Unit B to some other Cargo Unit before the Revelation arrives next week. The crew of the Revelation and I will handle the transfer of corporate supplies from Unit D to Unit B at that time.

OL

tains the naked, floating form of a sleeping psychic. Thin wires connect the sleeper to the sides of the tube. On the side of the tube is an electronic console that provides a readout of the subject's vital signs and the status of the tube itself. Each tube gives off a slight electric buzz; full of tubes, the storage unit resonates with an ominous low hum.

Upon examination of the psychics inside the tubes, it appears that they are breathing the fluid in which they are floating. Looking at a tube's control console and making a successful Computer Use check (DC 15) reveals that this is indeed the case; there is an oxygen compound in the fluid that keeps the psychics from drowning.

The stasis tubes can be opened from the control console, but the process is neither quick nor easy—especially for untrained operators. First, the investigator must make a successful Computer Use check (DC 20) to figure out how to properly initiate the stasis tube shutdown sequence. Next, a successful Knowledge (medicine) check (DC 15) is needed to interpret the subject's vital signs during the sequence. If the signs drop below safe levels, the operator has to adjust the tube's fluid mix (another Computer Use check against DC 20). The subject's vital signs may fluctuate in this manner several times during the shutdown process. Shutting down a tube takes approximately 30 minutes.

An obvious way to release the psychics from their glass-lidded coffins would be to simply break the tubes open. This is challenging (they have hardness 5, 30 hit points, and a Break DC of 23), but not impossible for those with the proper tools. Unfortunately, this method would also kill the sleeping psychics. Their lungs are full of a compound that allows them to exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide through a viscous fluid. As they are removed from the fluid, they begin to drown. Because they are unconscious, they do not cough, sputter, or give any other sign of distress. Investigators making a successful Heal check (DC 15) may be able to resuscitate the subjects and evacuate the fluid from their lungs, but there is still a danger of brain damage if they go too long without oxygen.

Stasis tubes do not float. If one of them falls into the water, it sinks quickly but remains functional for 2d10 hours.

The stasis tube containing Harold Marsh is towards the corner of the storage unit and completely indistinguishable from the others. Only the deep ones can tell their brother from the other sleeping psychics.

Sune Hofflund, Snake-Man

A year and a half ago, Torshammer management hired a wiry old mechanic to maintain the oil platform's infrastructure and support systems. His name was Sune Hofflund, and he quickly made a reputation for himself—both as a brilliant mechanic and an eccentric loner. The mechanic earned the nickname "snake-man" after his coworkers watched him nimbly slither his way through a dense tangle of pipes in order to reach a valve that needed tightening. Hofflund was known to disappear into the girding, pipe, and conduits beneath the oil platform for up to a week. When he showed up again, he acted as if it was completely normal.

"I had a lot of work to do," he said nonchalantly, "so I just decided to sleep down there too."

When asked what he ate for the week he was working, Hofflund just smiled.

While the rest of the crew were a bit put off by the snake-man's odd behavior, they could not deny that Torshammer was running much more efficiently with him on the job. As time went by, Hofflund became more and more reclusive. Sometimes weeks went by before he would surface from his labyrinthine world of pipes and ducts. When he needed parts, he slipped into the supply manager's office through the vents at night and put in a request. The cook made it a habit of leaving food out at night for the snake-man. Sometimes it was gone in the morning; sometimes it wasn't.

Nine months ago, Director of Operations Olin

Lipson decided to put a stop to Hofflund's slithering ways when he found the mechanic had sneaked into Cargo Unit D, where the slumbering psychics were kept. Lipson fired Hofflund and ordered him off the oil platform on the next flight out. Rather than leave his new life, however, the snake-man simply disappeared into the bowels of Torshammer once more, never to return.

Needless to say, Hofflund is quite mad. Before going to work on Torshammer, he suffered from mild paranoia and acute agoraphobia, which he controlled with medication. Aboard the oilrig, however, the mechanic stopped taking his medicine and grew much, much worse. The snake-man is happy, though, in his own way. He still works to maintain Torshammer (his crewmates secretly supply him with any needed parts) and never has to interact directly with other people. He has a comfortable "nest" to sleep in, lined with blankets and pillows, hidden away inside an empty section of pipe. For food, the snake-man either takes what the cook leaves out or dives into the ocean to snag a fish.

Hofflund has recently taken on a very specific obsession: the end of the world. He considers the things he sees and wonders how they fit into the greater scheme, what prophecies they fulfill. His dreams are full of horrible visions, things he knows are about to come to pass. Though Hofflund does not know it, this obsession is the result of "seepage" from the sleeping psychics into his already-addled mind.

The investigators probably do not meet the snake-man until late in the adventure, if at all. They may hear something scurrying through the pipes, however, or running along the ceiling. Occasionally, they may even hear a rhythmic banging, as Hofflund pounds out a tune on a nest of pipes. If they find small items missing, the crewmembers of Torshammer explain, "The snake-man probably took it. He likes to borrow things when you aren't looking." If they do run into the madman, he appears as a wide-eyed lunatic with a full beard and a manic grin. He is wearing faded coveralls that stink of oil and fish. Hofflund may laugh at them, then disappear down a hatch that should, by all rights, be too small for him to fit through.

Hofflund can be used a couple different ways in the adventure. The easiest, of course, is to add suspense—the investigators hear something inside the walls or see eyes watching them from an air vent. The snake-man can also be used to drop hints for those who need them: He has seen the kidnapped psychics, sleeping in their tubes in Cargo Unit B. He has watched the ships come and go, picking up and dropping off stasis tubes. He even watched the deep ones attack (for about a minute) before hiding in his nest. Hofflund can tell the investigators about any of these things—though he prefers not to and speaks in short, cryptic sentences.



The Survivors

Out of the 52 people who work on Torshammer, only 17 are still alive after the previous night's deep one attack, and they have holed up inside the platform's crew quarters, two decks down. Badly hurt and half-mad from the attack, the survivors are afraid to return to the top deck, even though they have heard ships motoring around nearby. Investigators who make a successful Listen check (DC 13) notice a rhythmic tapping coming from some of the pipes. Those who know Morse code or make a successful Intelligence check (DC 15) can translate the tapping as "Help us. In quarters," over and over again.

The investigators can reach the crew quarters by following the signs and a trail of dismembered bodies down several hallways and two sets of stairs. The door is locked tight and barricaded from within; the investigators have to shout to be heard by those inside. Frightened beyond reason, the workers demand the investigators identify themselves before they open the door.

Inside, the survivors are a mess. Most of them are wounded and some of them are missing limbs. They are covered in smoke, blood, and oil, their eyes still wide with panic. Some have armed themselves with three shotguns (12 shells between them), a spear gun, two welding torches, and a handful of long, heavy wrenches. They are incredibly relieved to see the

"The seas will turn to blood and the moon to ash. Oil turns to fire when these things come to pass."

Hofflund freezes for a moment, considering this thing he has just said. He doesn't know what it means or where it came from, but it fills him with a terrible weight that seeps out his eyes in filthy tears.

"Work to do," he mutters and wipes away the tears with a greasy rag.

Hofflund does the best he can, but he needs parts. He could ask Kemp to leave them out for him tonight, after Lipson goes to sleep, but Kemp is dead in seven pieces (he counted carefully) and can't leave anything out anymore. His mind wanders (burning oil, bloody moon, the sun swallowed up) and he wonders what will happen without Kemp.

If he can't get parts, he can't keep the oilrig running. And if he can't keep it running, the magic machine will fall apart. The others will lose their jobs and he will lose his home. He sees the dilapidated, rusted-out carcass crumpled at the ocean floor, fish swimming through its halls and pipes. It's all too much for the snake-man. It's all too much...

"Work to do," he sobs. "Work to do."

investigators. All day they have been hoping and praying for a ship to come along and rescue them from this offshore abattoir.

Virginia Sanborg is the highest-ranking survivor. As such, she is something of a spokesperson for the group. If the investigators ask what happened on the oilrig, she does her best to describe what she saw: hundreds of glistening black figures swarming up the legs of the oil platform at sunset, then washing over the deck in a tidal wave of claws. They appeared to be looking for something, but she has no idea what it could have been. No one got a good look at the things attacking them. Sanborg says they were about eight feet tall, with four arms; others say they were smaller or larger, or with two arms, walking like humans or scurrying like animals. The only elements consistent in each survivor's story are that the black things were not human...and they reeked of the sea.

If the investigators ask about Orin Lipson, the survivors tell them they last saw the Director of Operations headed toward his private office, down another two levels into the rig. No one offers to take them there. Sanborg says that Lipson has always been secretive and paranoid, never letting anyone into his private office. She goes on to say that, while others found his behavior suspicious, she just thought the Director to be a corporate snob who hated dealing with his blue-collar coworkers. Neither Sanborg nor the other survivors know about the sleeping psychics stored on the oilrig.

The survivors are an unstable group. Many of them did not escape the incident with their minds intact, and some are suffering from various stages of shock and paranoia. If the GM feels the investigators are having too easy a time of the adventure, one or more of the survivors can snap and attack them, screaming, "Can't you see? It's them! They've come back, but they're wearing human skin!" Such a crewman won't be any serious physical threat to the investigators and will be quickly restrained by his mates.

Of course, Captain Hattock has no intention of turning his freighter into a floating refugee camp. If he learns the truth of what happened on Torshammer, he turns away all survivors but those who offer him large amounts of cash. He claims it is because there is no more room on board, but the truth is that he fears that an official inquiry into the strange incident might reveal his part in the smuggling operation.

The survivors might be able to convince the Green Warriors to transport them away from the oilrig, especially if the investigators take an active hand in the negotiations. Regardless, Hjalmar Frodenar, the leader of the Warriors, insists on remaining anchored in the area overnight. "We do have a schedule to keep," he reminds his crew.

The Green War

While the investigators are exploring Torshammer and the crew of the Revelation are waiting for their report, the Green Warriors are keeping themselves busy.

Under the direction of Hjalmar Frodenar, the Rainbow's Revenge launches two small, inflatable motorboats to disrupt the oil drilling operation. Four people are aboard the first dingy, which slowly circles the platform's legs. They take turns spray-painting environmental and anti-corporate slogans on the rig: first in English, then in Danish and Norwegian. Those who aren't painting are shouting insults, slogans, and warnings of doom at the crew of Torshammer through a megaphone. "You reap what you sow!" they chant. "Rape mother Earth and down you'll go!" They have no idea that the people they are shouting at are already dead, having reaped a whirlwind of bloodthirsty deep ones.

While the first boat provides a loud, colorful distraction, the three-person crew of the second discretely produces a number of steel fishing nets. They throw the nets into the current upstream from the oilrig, in hopes of entangling its drill. Unbeknownst to them, one of their nets gets tangled up in the propeller of the

Revelation.

No one aboard the freighter realizes that anything is wrong until the ship tries to leave. The propeller begins to turn, then grinds to a halt with the sickening scream of tortured metal. The Revelation is stranded at Torshammer until the necessary repairs can be made—three days, if replacement parts are flown in from Greenland.

Seed of Destruction

At the first opportunity, Vetle Rodskov sneaks away from the Revelation and boards Torshammer with his briefcase bomb. He plants the bomb when no one is looking near the base of the derrick tower, wedged between two pieces of heavy equipment.

There is a possibility that the investigators run into Rodskov while he is scurrying about Torshammer. If they do, the spy pretends to be relieved to see them and says that he was sent to check on their safety. He questions them at length as to what is going on aboard the oil platform and fills them in on events aboard the Revelation, specifically the damage done to the ship's propeller. Rodskov says nothing about the bomb.

The Bomb

Encased in a locked, metal briefcase, the bomb contains enough explosives to destroy a quarter of the oil platform in an enormous ball of flame. While it isn't obviously a bomb, the case is suspiciously heavy and nothing rattles around inside of it. Furthermore, those making a successful Listen check (DC 20) can hear it giving off a very faint electric hum.

In an effort to put suspicion on the Green Warriors, Rodskov slapped one of the group's bumper stickers on the bomb. The sticker reads, "Green Warriors: Protecting the Earth at Any Cost." The agent also constructed the bomb out of explosives made by a Danish manufacturer. When the authorities do a chemical analysis of the debris after the fact, they will discover the manufacturer, as well as false records indicating that the explosives were sold to a Green Warrior. Rodskov has also placed a wetsuit, decorated with Green Warrior patches, near the bomb.

Rodskov is the only person with a key to the briefcase and the only one who knows the disarm code. Others may be able to open the case by making a successful Open Lock check (DC 30) or physically breaking it open (hardness 10, 30 hit points, Break DC 25). Inside the case are four explosive charges and an electronic timing device with a 10-digit numeric keypad, all connected by thick wires and packed tightly in foam. A green light is blinking ominously on the electronic device. (It turns off when the bomb is deactivated.)

Disarming the bomb is very difficult. It requires the proper tools (two screwdrivers of different sizes and a pair of wire-cutters), a successful Demolitions check (DC 20), and at least 15 minutes. Any attempt that results in a failure causes the bomb to go off (Rodskov strenuously argues against any tampering with the device). If anyone simply cuts the wires connecting the explosives to the timer, the bomb detonates. Anyone studying the unit and making a successful Demolitions check (DC 12) realizes that this is the case.

If the bomb is dumped into the ocean, Hofflund swims out and retrieves it. He finds the activity surrounding the bomb fascinating. He is willing to go to great lengths to keep the activity going. His task is made easier by the fact that the briefcase floats.

The bomb is currently set to go off the evening of the third day.

Anvil Papers #3

Dated the morning of the second day

OL:

The subject known as Rogue 01, captured five days ago in Savannah, has escaped once more. He was last seen inside the Moscow facility. Several of our people were killed during his escape.

As you should already be aware, there were a number of interlopers captured with Rogue 01 in Savannah. It was decided to transport them with the other subjects to your location for interrogation and elimination. We trust you will have no difficulty in accommodating the prisoners.

We have dispatched Gerard Moore to process the prisoners. Moore comes highly recommended by Faber herself, and has a very impressive record. We have no doubt that your prisoners will be no match for his advanced Tribunal interrogation techniques. Moore will be arriving by helicopter tomorrow night. Be prepared to meet him. He does not like to wait.

Once he is done at Torshammer, Moore is to continue on to Copenhagen to find and eliminate Rogue 01. The Project is too close to completion to allow this threat to continue.

RJ

Death from Below

As the evening sun melts into the horizon, the survivors of the previous night's attack begin to grow agitated. They mutter among themselves and hold their weapons close. Most of them retreat to the crew quar-



ters once more and encourage the investigators to join them. A few of the unstable ones refuse to go below. They pace the deck, their weapons at the ready, prepared to take some deep ones with them when they go.

The deep ones begin their ascent from beneath the waves as the last rays of sunlight disappear. Hundreds of them swarm up the legs and rigging of the oil platform, silent but for the scrape of claws on metal. When they reach the deck, they attack anything that moves. Many of them head for the crew quarters and begin pounding and scratching at the steel doors. The doors are dented, but stay in place. The deep ones cannot get inside.

Investigators observing the attack never get a clear look at the slimy, dark, humanoid shapes racing along the deck like roaches caught in the light. They may notice, however, that while the amphibious beasts are all over the deck, a large number of them seem to be congregating by the locked hatch of Cargo Unit B. It appears the things are trying to get inside, but it is difficult to tell without getting into range of those webbed talons.

In fact, the deep ones are trying to break into Cargo Unit B, because this is where Harold Marsh, high priest of their father Dagon, is being held captive. Unfortunately for the deep ones, the cargo unit is constructed of steel plates, and its door (and its lock) have been reinforced by the orders of Olin Lipson. Dagon's children are unable to reach Marsh, though they leave horrendous scratches on the walls and door of Cargo Unit B. They also leave patches of fish-like scales.

About 15 minutes after the attack begins, the deep ones realize that they are unable to rescue Marsh and disappear once more over the sides of Torshammer.

A minute later, screams from the Revelation and Rainbow's Revenge can be heard. The frustrated servitors are out for blood and vengeance. They swarm through both ships and brutally massacre everyone they find on board.

During the attack, the investigators would be well advised to stay in the crew quarters or at least retreat there as quickly as possible. While they may be able to slow the vicious beasts for a few moments, there are just too many deep ones for them to make any real difference—even if armed with every firearm in the vicinity. If the investigators have gone aboard one of the ships, they may survive if they barricade themselves in a locked room.

If the investigators ask, the survivors of the first attack mention that the attack tonight appeared to involve more creatures than last night's.

Deep Ones (200): Medium-Size Aberration; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +5/+5 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +0 melee (2d4+2, bite) (on land); +5/+5 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +5/+5 melee (2d4+4, 2 rakes) and +0 melee (2d4+2, bite) (in water); SQ Low-light vision; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +7.

Feats: Alertness.

Sanity Loss: 0/1d6.

Day Three

Dark clouds are gathering overhead, enveloping the area in a dim, hazy light. It seems as if the sun never truly rises on the third day.

Both the Revelation and the Rainbow's Revenge are lying dead in the water, their decks strewn with corpses. Captain Hattock went down fighting: His headless body can be seen near the prow of the ship, a pistol still in his hand. The only survivor from the smuggler's ship is Frank Weller (Vetle Rodskov).

Toward the middle of the day, the elevator whirs to life. When it reaches the deck of Torshammer, there are two blood-soaked Green Warriors inside. "It was horrible," they gasp. "The things...sea creatures...killed almost everyone..."

The two survivors, Otto and Riechia, reached the oil

platform from the Rainbow's Revenge using the ship's motorboat. There are only three others still alive on the boat, and they are in no condition to be moving. Otto and Riechia have come to Torshammer in hopes of finding out what happened during the night. They suspect that the oilrig or its crew has something to do with inciting the attacks, and they are demanding answers. Over the course of the day, tempers flare and accusations fly as exhaustion and desperation wear at everyone's nerves. The weather does not help the situation either. The sky continues to grow darker throughout the day, and the wind picks up as the temperature drops. Lightning flickers in the early afternoon. There is no doubt that a major storm is on its way.

A Deadly Discovery

If the investigators have not yet found the bomb, one of the Torshammer survivors does so on day three, after the Green Warriors have arrived.

Otto and Riechia deny all knowledge of the bomb if asked, and are very offended if anyone suggests the environmentalists planted it. Otto is especially defensive. He answers any accusations with accusations of his own: "The bomb was probably meant for our ship, but you fascists never got a chance to plant it! Or maybe you're blowing up your own operation, to make us look bad!"

In any case, Rodskov says nothing to indicate that he knows anything about the bomb. If asked, he denies all knowledge of the device or how it got aboard Torshammer. He does not appear at all nervous, however, about when the bomb is scheduled to explode or how to stop it. He may feign concern, but a successful Sense Motive check opposed by his Bluff check reveals that these are the least of his worries.

Bomb? What Bomb?

Once discovered, if the bomb is left unattended for any length of time, it disappears.

Sune Hofflund, the crazy "snake-man" who lives in the bowels of Torshammer, steals the bomb. He was intrigued by its design and all the attention being paid to it, so he took it back to his nest to examine more closely. Unfortunately, he does not have the equipment necessary to pick the locks.

When word of the bomb's disappearance gets out, Rodskov becomes visibly agitated. He insists that the others on board help him find it before it goes off. As he realizes that the bomb is nowhere to be found, he begins to look around for a way off the oil platform and out of the area. He could be calm before, since he had the bomb and could turn it off whenever he wanted to. But now that the bomb has vanished, he is close to panicking. Observant investigators may notice the spy's change in attitude. If questioned, Rodskov still denies knowing anything about the bomb.



In her 14 years as a helicopter pilot, Libby has transported thousands of passengers from one place to another, but none have filled her with the sinking dread that her current passenger does.

It's nothing she can put her finger on, of course. He is polite, and seems friendly enough, if a bit quiet. Maybe it's his large black bag that makes him seem so ominous. Or maybe it's the way his face changes expression for no reason, as if he were reacting to a conversation only he could hear. Perhaps it is his voice that puts Libby on edge. There is something unwholesome and wet about it, like bubbling tar.

Coming in to the oilrig, Libby has to fight the wind. Rain lances across the chopper's canopy, making it difficult to see. She grits her teeth and mentally curses her passenger for insisting they fly out, even though a storm was brewing.

The pilot looks down to judge the distance to the deck, but the deck seems to be moving...No, there are things on the deck moving. But what —

"Pull up!" Libby's passenger barks in her ear. "Pull up now!"

Startled, the pilot does as she's told. She hears a metallic click from behind her and turns to look.

Her passenger has opened his black bag and is extracting what appears to be an automatic rifle. He glances up, then looks Libby in the eye.

"If you want to live, listen to me very closely."

Rodskov knows the bomb is set to go off tonight. When it becomes clear that he cannot leave Torshammer by either ship, he commandeers one of the Green Warriors' inflatable motorboats and accelerates away. He is perfectly willing to kill anyone who gets in his way.

Resolution

As the sun sets on the third day, the situation aboard Torshammer is about to get much worse. The storm that has been brewing all day finally breaks. Cold rain falls in fat, hard drops, slowly at first, then in thick sheets. Lightning explodes across the sky, followed by a peal of thunder. All those without shelter are quickly soaked as the wind and rain pound at the oil platform. Unfortunately for the investigators, the weather is the least of their problems.

The Snake-Man Cometh

As the storm begins to rage in earnest, observant investigators making successful Spot or Listen checks (DC 15) realize that there is a person outside climbing the oil derrick, shouting. The figure appears to be carrying something. It appears to be a briefcase.

Hofflund has returned from his nest with the bomb. He knows now what it is and knows what he must do.

"This is how it ends," he bellows into the wind. "This is it. Doom time. Boom time. The end of the world, the end of us."

The snake-man is approximately 25 feet above the deck, wrapped around the rigging of the derrick. He holds the bomb in one hand and hangs onto the derrick with the other. He continues to rant incoherently about the apocalypse and visions he has seen ("A million locusts for a million days!") until the bomb goes off.

Investigators may wish to talk with Hofflund and try to reason with him. Unless they can make a Psychoanalysis check (DC 20), it is impossible to have any real communication with the madman. He is simply too deep into his psychoses for the investigators to reach him.

Climbing up after the snake-man is difficult, but not entirely impossible. It requires a successful Climb check (DC 20), as the derrick is cold and slippery. Once the investigator reaches Hofflund, the lunatic fights off any attempts to take the bomb away from him and climbs up higher if given the opportunity.

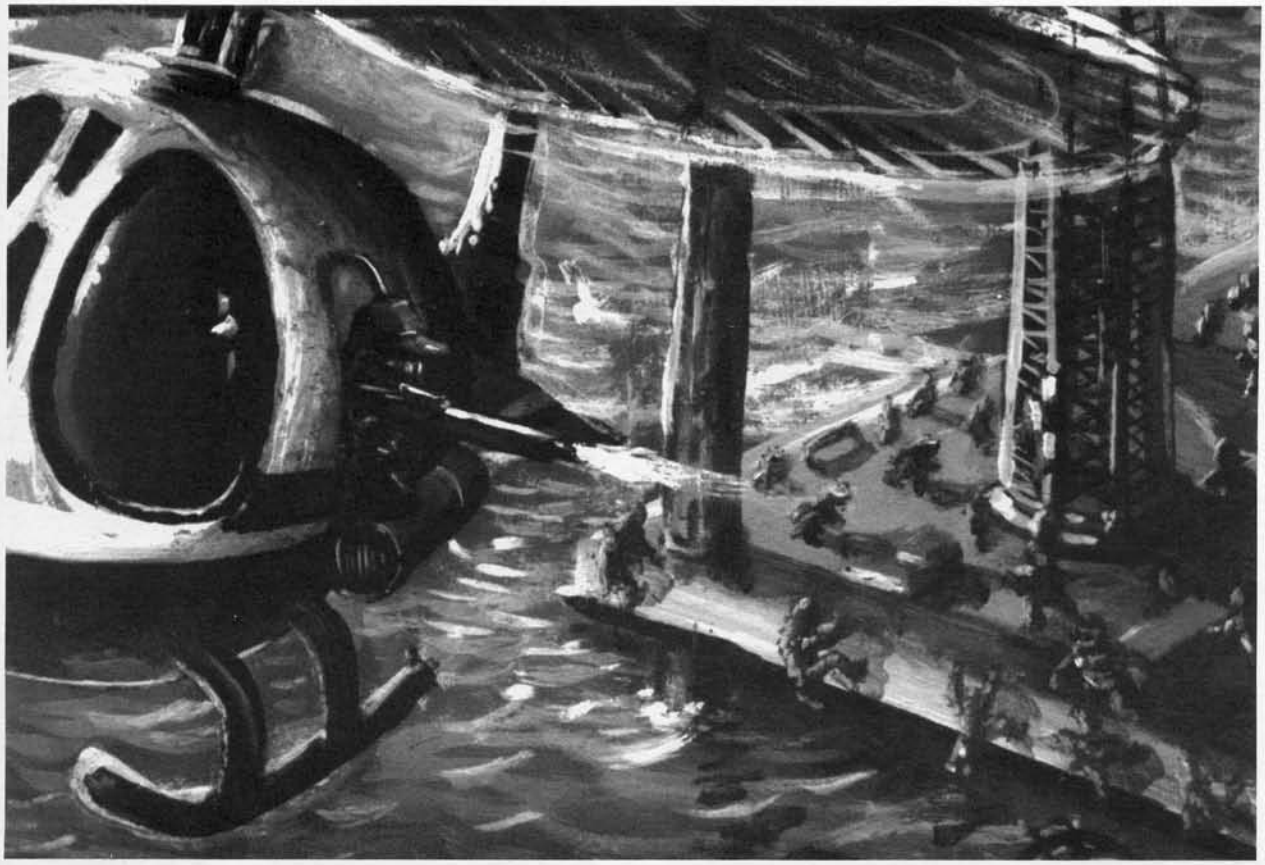
Invasion from Below

In the midst of the storm and the commotion surrounding Hofflund, the deep ones return to Torshammer for the last time.

The legs of the oilrig are crawling with deep ones. They surge onto the deck by the dozens; there are more than a thousand in the attack. Hundreds go directly to Cargo Unit B, where they hope to free Dagon's high priest. The rest spread out and try to kill as many humans as possible.

If only by the sheer weight of numbers, the sea creatures finally break their way into Cargo Unit B. They find their brother and break him free of his tube, then carry him back into the water with them. If Harold Marsh is no longer in the storage unit, the deep ones proceed to wherever he is, killing everyone in their way.

Down in the crew quarters, the situation is grim. By the hundreds, the deep ones are pressing in. It is only a matter of time before the doors give way. If the investigators are trapped in the crew quarters, their best hope for escape is an air duct near the ceiling, which leads up to the top deck. It requires a Strength check (DC 13) to pull off the vent and successful Jump and Climb



checks (DC 15) to get inside. Once they reach the other end, the investigators need another Strength check (DC 13) to get out of the air duct.

Deep Ones (1,200): Medium-Size Aberration; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +5/+5 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +0 melee (2d4+2, bite) (on land); +5/+5 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws) and +5/+5 melee (2d4+4, 2 rakes) and +0 melee (2d4+2, bite) (in water); SQ Low-light vision; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +10, Hide +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +7.

Feats: Alertness.

Sanity Loss: 0/1d6.

Air Support

While the deep ones run rampant on Torshammer, a white light appears in the sky to the north. It quickly grows larger, and as it does a mechanical whirring sound can be heard above the wind.

The light belongs to a helicopter bearing the Tribunal operative Gerard Moore. It pulls in toward the helipad as if to land, then flies up again, circling the area and playing its searchlight over the chaos erupting on the deck. After a minute or so of this, Moore has seen enough.

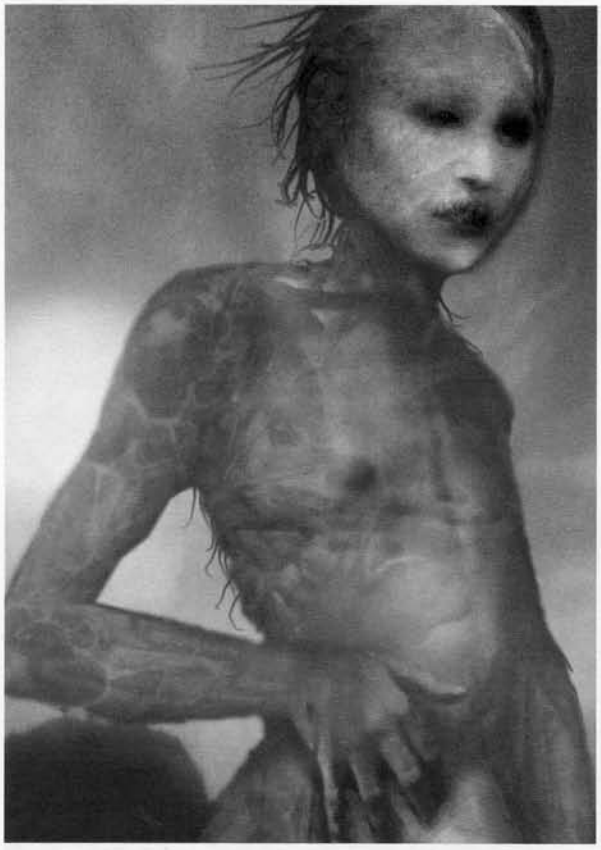
Sliding open the side door of the hovering chopper, the agent pulls out an automatic rifle and begins to fire on the deep ones. One by one, the creatures fall in a hail of bullets. It appears this mysterious gunman might actually save the oilrig, but he soon runs out of ammunition while the deep ones continue to surge up out of the sea. In minutes, the dead deep ones have completely vanished.

For the sake of added drama, Moore might take out a pocket of deep ones just as they are about to overrun the investigators. In any event, the deck is thick with sea creatures. Moore cannot possibly miss if he shoots into their midst.

Sundown Blowup

Unless the investigators have found some way to prevent it, the bomb goes off. The following assumes the bomb is still on Torshammer. If it has been thrown overboard or onto one of the ships, the resulting explosion is still damaging but not as spectacular.

The entire oil platform rocks from the force of the explosion. All those present must make Reflex saves (DC 15) or fall prone on the deck. Dozens of deep ones are killed instantly and dozens more are sent burning into the water. If the explosion took place on the der-



rick where the snake-man was holding the bomb, the top portions of the derrick come crashing down to deck, inflicting 3d6 points of damage to anyone it lands on. Investigators standing in the area when the bomb explodes can make Reflex saving throws (DC 17) for half damage.

Entire sections of the deck are torn up and burning. One of the oil pipes has burst and caught fire; burning oil is squirting onto the deck at random intervals. The oil platform shifts suddenly as one of its supporting legs begins to crumple. The deck is listing slightly, and the burning oil on its surface is running toward that corner.

Above the fiery chaos, Moore's helicopter has been sent out of control for a moment by the blast. As the pilot recovers, the Tribunal operative orders her to pull up and away from the devastated oil platform. He has no doubt that the prisoners he is here to collect have already been killed. The helicopter returns directly to Greenland.

Triumph of the Deep

Just as it appears the situation could not get any worse, a successful Spot check (DC 18) reveals a vast shadow ascending from beneath the waves. Enraged at the loss of so many of his children, Dagon is rising from the depths with vengeance in his heart. The water grows choppy, then begins to churn as he approaches the surface. The turbulent water causes Torshammer to lurch drunkenly, then groan as its wounded support leg finally gives way. The deck tips dangerously and anything that is not secured begins to slide toward the burning sea.

Suddenly, the sea itself breaks open. A massive glistening black shape breaks through the surface with an unearthly roar. This is Dagon, god of the deep ones. Illuminated by the flickering flames, the investigators may be able to make out a vaguely humanoid shape coming out of the water (and lose 1/1d10 points of Sanity) before it begins smashing Torshammer into the ocean. Dagon rips at the oilrig's weakened supports with its terrible claws and summons several waterspouts to smash the structure into debris.

As the oilrig slips beneath the waves around them, the investigators can only delay the inevitable. Allow them to climb to high points to stay out of the water's grasp as long as they can. Eventually, though, the shattered remnants of the oilrig completely sink into the ocean.

Once they are in the water, the terrible cold begins to work on the investigators almost immediately. Have them make Fortitude saving throws (DC 15 + 1 for each save made) every minute to maintain consciousness in the burning, freezing waters of the North Atlantic. Inevitably, exhaustion and hypothermia overtake them and they lose consciousness.

Aftermath

A rushing noise and a jumble of voices greet the investigators as they awaken. They are on a Danish army helicopter, surrounded by emergency medical personnel. If the investigators ask, they are told that they are suffering from severe hypothermia—they are lucky to be alive. The helicopter is taking them to the Faroe Islands. From there, they will be flown to the Danish National Hospital in Copenhagen.

"Just relax," the medics tell them with a smile. "You're safe now. We'll take good care of you, and you'll have absolutely nothing to worry about."



CHAPTER TWELVE

The Copenhagen Connection

Harold cowers beneath his desk, praying for the gunshots to stop while his coworkers beg for mercy all around him.

"Please! No! Think about my family!"

Harold recognizes Lisa's voice. Lisa tried to warn him yesterday, saying how old man Soren was getting worse. She said he was unreasonable, angry, and paranoid. She said he was even muttering about his father's gun, but Harold hadn't believed her. It was just too crazy.

"Your family? Your family is here. We are your family. Where are you going?"

From his hiding place, Harold sees Lisa's feet. She is running between the cubicles in his direction. He sees her stagger before he hears the shotgun's blast. Seemingly in slow motion, Lisa's feet fly up as she falls forward. Her body crumples to the floor directly in front of Harold, splashing him with red. Lisa's eyes are already blank and empty, but their silent accusation freezes Howard's blood.

Unbidden, unwanted, a groan of primal revulsion escapes Howard's lips.

"Howard? Is that you?"

Soren's face drops into view beneath Howard's desk. His eyes are wide and bloodshot, his cheeks streaked with crimson. A thin wisp of smoke curls from the barrel of his gun.

"Here you are. I'm very disappointed in you, Howard. I thought you were one of my best workers, but here you are, shirking your responsibilities. I'm afraid you must be reprimanded."

A World in Chaos

For the past 14 months, the world's governments have known that a comet, SH-01, is about to collide with Earth. They have conspired to keep people ignorant of their own imminent doom. Astronomers have been bribed or threatened into silence. For the past 14 months, world leaders have struggled to maintain the terrible secret while working feverishly to find some way of stopping the comet.

One week ago, the walls of secrecy came crashing down.

The Swiss government was the first to crack. Bowing to internal political pressure, its prime minister publicly acknowledged the danger of SH-01. To forestall any outbreaks of panic and violence, the country was placed under martial law. The prime minister encouraged other nations to do likewise.

Word of the comet flashed around the globe. Disbelief turned to terror as scientists confirmed the story. Within 24 hours of the Swiss dispatch, the world was on the brink of turmoil.

World leaders addressed their nations, admonishing them not to panic. They explained about the International Astronomical Union and its Project Pandora, a global coalition of astronomers and physicists dedicated to stopping SH-01. The situation, they said, was under control.

The initial surge of fear has waned since the Swiss dispatch a week ago. Desperate for any words of comfort, most people cling to their leaders' messages of salvation. A stillness has fallen over the world, a calm before the storm, stretched tight and full of dread.

While many people try their best to live their lives as before, society is already beginning to unravel. Employees are refusing to go to work, preferring to spend what might be their last few weeks with their families. This has virtually halted production and distribution of necessities for modern life. Many people have taken to hoarding food and other supplies, leading to severe shortages in most areas of the world. The system is beginning to crumble and will completely fall apart by the time SH-01 arrives.

Doomsday cults and fringe religions boom in popularity after the Swiss dispatch. People are desperate and willing to believe in anything (no matter how bizarre) that will give them comfort or hope. Most of these are peaceful groups following a charismatic cult figure, though violently radical organizations have also seen their ranks swell. The most popular of these is the US-based militant New American Army, which preaches that sin is acting as an "unholy magnet" to SH-01. To save the Earth, those who have sin in their hearts must repent or be killed before their evil kills us all. As the time of the comet's impact draws nearer, these groups become more prevalent and more extreme in their beliefs.

There are theories as to what the comet's collision will mean, but no one knows for certain what exactly will happen. SH-01 has already proven itself contrary to accepted physics by actually speeding up over the course of its journey to Earth. Even the IAU finds it difficult to predict the effects of the impact. Furthermore, because the comet's acceleration is not constant, it is impossible to tell precisely where SH-01 will land.

Since our world is covered mostly with water, the comet will most likely fall into the ocean, creating vast tidal waves. Across the world, there is a mass migration away from the ocean shores. Those who can afford to do so are fleeing the coasts in droves, leaving entire towns deserted in their wake. In North America, survivalists are abandoning the cities altogether and taking to the wilderness in search of higher ground.

Another possible effect is that the comet's impact might blast enough dust, debris, and water vapor into the atmosphere to block out the sun's rays, leading to freezing temperatures and crop failure, eventually destroying all life on Earth. Though the authorities try to downplay these possibilities, people are stockpiling vast quantities of food.

Riots are a daily occurrence in most major cities. Most people acknowledge the futility of such wanton violence. Those who enjoy the chaos, however, are in their element. They are soldiers of anarchy, trying to destroy their world before the comet does.

The world is holding its breath. The violence and pandemonium of a full worldwide panic are barely held in check, boiling closer to the surface with each passing day.

TemCo

Whereas the government scientists are in disagreement as to the time and location of the comet's impact, TemCo has it calculated to the second and is in complete control of the comet's trajectory.

These are the last days of Earth, and TemCo is not wasting even one of them. It has little time left to accomplish its remaining goal: to complete and prepare the impact site in the Gobi Desert.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins as the investigators awaken in a Copenhagen hospital. The ktchoma Michael Graham (see page 31) warns them that TemCo is looking for them. He gives them the name and address of one of Timothy Ekloff's contacts, as well as an article on Dr. Julian Levitz. Finally, he provides the investigators with a reference number for a library book.

After leaving the hospital, the investigators have several choices. They may go directly to Curtis Franklin's apartment or to the library in search of Graham's book. They might also take this opportunity to research the physicist Levitz.

Representatives of both TemCo and the New Moon Temple have arrived in Copenhagen looking for the investigators. Gerard Moore and his small team of Tribunal agents track them down at Franklin's apartment. Roland Delmont, a deacon with the New Moon Temple, also catches up with the investigators at some point. He interrogates them about the second phase of the Tyrr Nemaii project, then tries to kill them, believing they have betrayed his trust.

A trip to the library reveals that the book hinted at by Graham is a biography of Morten Nyhuus. The biography tells of an unpublished manuscript written by Nyhuus concerning his journey to Mt. Makalu in the 1800s.

Searching for the manuscript brings the investigators to the abandoned offices of Gunn Publishing, where the company president has gone a little mad. The lunatic is roving the building, still carrying the shotgun he used to gun down his employees. If the investigators can calm him down, he tells them how the Nyhuus manuscript was sent back to the estate of its author.

As the investigators are beginning to wrap up their time in Copenhagen, a comet-inspired doomsday cult sets the city ablaze. Dozens of fires are set in the old section of town, quickly spreading out of control.

Gamemaster's Introduction

The events aboard the oilrig Torshammer did not go unnoticed. The collapse of a drilling platform makes for great video footage; television news media from all over the world are covering the story. By the time the investigators get back on their feet, it is common knowledge that some terrible disaster caused the Torshammer to sink into the ocean—and that the investigators are among the only survivors. Both the media and the Danish authorities would like to question the investigators about what happened during that night of fire and blood.

Gerard Moore would also like to meet with the investigators. Together with three blessed Tribunal agents, Moore has come to Copenhagen to interrogate, then eliminate this group of troublemakers. Thus he plans to complete the assignment that was interrupted by the Torshammer fiasco. The investigators are suspected of knowing about the second phase of the Tyrr

Six hours before he dies in agony, Alexi Bucayev walks home from the grocery store with a carton of milk and a head of lettuce.

The price for fresh produce has gone up dramatically, and it worries him. It suggests that the comet rumors are true: a mass of ice and rock is indeed headed for Earth. If this is so, then his nightmares must also be true.

For a moment, he can still hear his brother screaming in the dark beneath the mountain.

Alexi's hand shakes as he unlocks his back door. He steps inside, sets down his bag of groceries, and hangs his coat on a hook by the door before he notices a man standing in his kitchen.

"Good evening, Alexi. I want to speak with you about your brother, Uri."

"How did—"

"Your door was unlocked."

No it wasn't, Alexi wants to say, but for some unknowable reason he is afraid. The dark-clad stranger has the aura of someone unused to being questioned.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Gerard Moore. I work for the…United Nations. I received your letter concerning your brother and a…labor camp…in the Himalayas. I came to make certain you received the attention you deserve."

Relief washes over Alexi. After all this time, after all the letters, someone finally believes him. Someone—other than that weirdo from the American insurance company—has come to help him.

"I'm glad you came, Mr. Moore. I was about to make some coffee. Would you like some?"

"Yes, I would." Moore's smile is strangely unnerving. "It's going to be a long night."

Copenhagen Papers #1

From the London Times, dated five years ago
Physicist's theories might aid in space travel

Dr. Julian Levitz, an American physicist, raised eyebrows on both side of the Atlantic while speaking at the International Space Science Symposium today about his controversial new theories. Dr. Levitz's studies have led him to believe that the particles that make up our physical universe are not stable but merely held together by what he called "magnetron fields." If sufficient energy were used to affect these fields, he said, we might be able to control the very shape of the universe, making space travel much easier.

Other scientists are skeptical about the physicist's ideas.

"I was serving on the editorial board at the Journal of Space Sciences when he first submitted this theory," said Dr. Harold Fletcher, one of the attendees at today's symposium. "I rejected it then, and I reject it now. Levitz's reasoning is badly flawed."

Another scientist, Dr. Deborah Klochman, was not as harsh but remained unconvinced. "I'd have to take another look at his numbers to say for sure," she said, "but off the top of my head I'd have to say that Levitz needs to double-check his math before presenting at a symposium. This is going to hurt his reputation in the space science community."

Dr. Levitz was unavailable for comment.

Tomorrow is the last day of the International Space Science Symposium. Scheduled speakers include Dr. Henry Clark from NASA and Dr. Margaret Fischer from Germany.

[Printed in the margin]

Curtis Franklin
11023 C Dulus Bvld.
E46. 1925.43

Nemaii project in the Gobi Desert. Moore is to find out how much they know, who else they have told, and then kill them.

Finally, the ktchoma known as Michael Graham intends to have a word with the investigators. He knows that Gerard Moore is after them, but doesn't know why. He assumes they have information that Moore wants, possibly some important detail about the Tyrr Nemaii project. In any case, Graham wants to help the investigators in their attempt to thwart TemCo's plan, lest the corporation destroy not only the Earth, but time itself. He does not dare directly confront Moore himself, for he knows the other ktchoma could easily kill him.

Investigators' Introduction

After being airlifted from the wreckage of Torshammer, the investigators drift in and out of consciousness. Kindly, authoritative faces hover above them, speak reassuringly in Danish, and float away. More faces appear, speaking English this time:

"You're in the Danish National Hospital in Copenhagen. You're going to be all right. We'll take care of you now."

When the investigators next awaken, they are wearing hospital gowns. The sun is disappearing behind the Copenhagen skyline, bathing their hospital room in a hellish red glow. It is a large room with over a dozen beds, but the investigators are the only patients in the room. The overhead lights are turned off. The setting sun fills the room with long, oddly shaped shadows.

One of the shadows leans forward and hisses, "What do you know of Gerard Moore? Why does he hunt you so? What do you know? What does he fear?"

As their eyes adjust to the gloom, the investigators make out the figure sitting against the far wall. He is an older man, perhaps in his 60s, dressed in a rumpled tweed jacket and resting on a simple wooden cane. His face remains in shadow, but they get the impression of a furrowed brow and two watery, deep-set eyes below a disheveled mass of gray hair. The back of his right hand is scarred or tattooed with a strange symbol. Though he does not identify himself to the patients, his name is Michael Graham.

"Moore is an inhuman monster," he says, "who will stop at nothing to get what he wants. He appears to be working for TemCo, a corrupt international corporation, but I suspect that in truth they are serving him. If he is after you, you must be very dangerous indeed."

After assuring them that he is here to help, Graham asks the investigators how much they know about Gerard Moore and why he is chasing them. He hopes to learn whatever information they have, in order to use it against Moore. Unfortunately for Graham, he is already aware of most of what the investigators know. One thing he doesn't know, however, is that Timothy Ekloff has escaped his captors in Moscow.

Finally, Graham hands the investigators a photocopy of an article about the physicist Dr. Julian Levitz. In the margin he has written the name "Curtis Franklin" and an address, along with an alphanumeric code. (See the Copenhagen Papers #1.)

"Franklin is Ekloff's contact here in Copenhagen," Graham says. "I'd recommend that you speak with him—before Gerard Moore arrives to speak with you. You should get going. He will be here in minutes."

Before the investigators can ask the mysterious stranger any further questions, the door bangs open as a nurse pushes a cart of sheets into the room, switching on the light as she enters. The room is blinding white beneath the fluorescent tubes. Graham is gone, leaving only the paper with Franklin's name and address.

Hospital of the Damned

"Finally! You're awake," the nurse says flatly. She seems harried and deprived of sleep.

"There are some men from the oil company waiting here to see you. They'll have to wait their turn, of course, but they'll be glad to hear that you are back among the living."

The nurse answers as many of the investigators' questions as she can while putting sheets away. If they ask a question that she cannot answer (or the GM does not wish to answer), she simply tells them that Dr. Andersen will be able to help them more than she can. When she is done with her linen rounds, she wheels the cart back out into the hallway.

The investigators probably do not know that the arrival of SH-01 is now public knowledge. If they ask the nurse about the chaos outside or her own frazzled appearance, she explains how desperate the world has become since the Swiss dispatch.

The investigators' room is on the fifth floor of the hospital. Looking out, they can see the Copenhagen nightscape laid out below them, the city's streets packed with people and jammed with traffic. Even from this height, it seems a terrible panic has gripped the citizens of Copenhagen. Scarlet fingers of flame lick at the horizon, a testimony to the chaos on the rise.

The windows are closed and cannot be opened. There are two walk-in linen closets in the room, one on either side of the door. Each of the dozen beds has a small dresser and a wastebasket beside it. The dressers nearest the investigators contain their clothes. Other than these things, the room is empty.

Bloody Halls of Medicine

Gerard Moore is coming. The investigators have to get out of the hospital before he arrives. A week ago, this would be no problem at all. The investigators could simply follow one of the many maps that dot the walls to the nearest elevator, ride to the ground floor, and walk out the front door. It's not that simple any more.

When word of SH-01 reached Denmark, it sparked off a panic that has snowballed into a full-fledged social and economic breakdown. Employees are abandoning their jobs, preventing much-needed goods and services from being delivered. Thousands of Danes have left their lives behind, scrambling for the mountains of Norway in hopes of avoiding the tidal waves said to follow the comet's impact. Missing many necessary links in the economic chain, those who have stayed are unable to do their jobs properly or at all. People are frustrated, frightened and angry.



The situation is no better at the Danish National Hospital. After suffering through a 12-hour blackout, the staff has switched over to the facility's backup generators, and they are almost out of fuel. Throughout the complex, lights flicker, dim and go out at random intervals. Elevators and life-support systems are dangerous and unreliable.

The staff is less than a skeleton crew. They are running themselves ragged on minimal sleep and prescription stimulants. Medicine is in short supply and medical equipment cannot be relied upon. Unable to carry out their normal workload, the staff does its best to keep the patients comfortable. Nevertheless, low moans can be heard from patients' rooms, punctuated by occasional yelps and screams of pain.

The investigators' journey through the hospital is a nightmarish carnival amidst the flickering lights. Delirious, emaciated patients accost them in the halls, demanding in Danish to be killed. Corpses lie uncovered on gurneys, their eyes open and staring, their mouths agape at their own demise. Medical staff members roughly push their way past the investigators,



yelling at them in Danish to "either help or get the hell out of the way!"

With all the chaos of the hospital, the investigators can easily reach the street before Gerard Moore and the Tribunal agents find them. Only if they take their time do they run the risk of encountering the TemCo agents. Just the same, the 15-minute walk from the room to the front door is a tense, nerve-wracking ordeal. As far as the investigators know, every corner, every doorway, every slowly opening elevator door could be hiding a gun-toting servant of evil.

Out on the Street

It is only when they reach the streets of Copenhagen that the investigators realize the extent of the social turmoil that SH-01 is causing. The sidewalks are jammed with people scurrying from one store to the next trying to stock up on perishables. Tempers are hot. A fistfight breaks out over a can of beans. Vehicles driving by have to slow down to avoid running into crowds in the street. Most automobiles are loaded down with spare cans of gasoline.

Catching a view of Copenhagen harbor, the investigators see that it is packed with boats of every description. Fishing boats, canoes, yachts, and ferries are colliding with each other in their rush to leave the coast. Most of them are headed for Norway, where (they hope) that country's mountains will protect them from the imminent destruction. (Of course, when the Danish refugees arrive, they discover that Norwegian officials are allowing no one to enter the country.)

Total anarchy has not quite broken out, but the situation is clearly worsening by the day. Even while police and military personnel do their best to maintain order, the looting and hoarding has begun. As they turn the corner in the shopping district, the investigators see rows of broken windows, the stores' merchandise long since stolen. Unethical investigators may find this a convenient time to reequip themselves—at risk of being caught by the militia.

All this chaos works to the investigators' advantage. Gerard Moore and his Tribunal operatives are experts in hunting and trailing their targets, but their task is made much more difficult by the tumult in the streets. While in Denmark, the investigators should be safe from the Tribunal as long as they keep moving.

The Hunters

Gerard Moore is in Copenhagen to locate the investigators, interrogate them about the Tyrr Nemaii, and then kill them. He has with him three blessed agents of the Tribunal, pawns of the shk'ryth who have been twisted into something other than human. These agents are capable of shifting into the monstrous forms given them by the shk'ryth, forms that give them a distinct edge over TemCo's enemies.

The first of these is Conrad, the tracker, whose senses have been enhanced. When he assumes his monstrous form, Conrad's nose and ears elongate, increasing their sensitivity tenfold. His eyes grow silted and he can see in the dark.

Conrad: Male 4th-level Shapechanger; HD 4d8+8 or 4d8+24 in beast form; hp 26 or 42 in beast form; Init +1 (Dex) or +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative) in beast form; Spd 30 ft. or 50 ft. in beast form; AC 11 (+1 Dex) or 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural) in beast form; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +4 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol) in human form or +8 melee (1d8+5, bite) in beast form; SQ Shapeshift at will, damage reduction 10/+1, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, Scent; SV Fort +6 (+13), Ref +5 (+7), Will +6 (+8); Str 13 (21), Dex 12 (16), Con 15 (23), Int 11 (7), Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +7 (+11), Drive +2 (+4), Escape Artist +2 (+4), Gather Information +2, Hide +9 (+11), Jump +5 (+9), Listen +12 (+16), Move Silently +13 (+19), Search +8 (+6), Spot +12 (+16), Swim +5 (+9), Wilderness Lore +8 (+12).

Feats: Alertness, Stealthy, Track. Conrad gains the Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, and Scent feats when in beast form.

A second Tribunal operative is Emory, the scout. In his monstrous form, Emory's body mass slides to his arms and legs, making them half-again as along. Frighteningly dexterous, the agent can climb practically any surface and squeeze his inhumanly slim frame through even the smallest holes. Each of Emory's joints has been modified to move in any direction. He can turn his head all the way to the back then snap it around again without injury.

Emory: Male 4th-level Shapechanger; HD 4d8+8 or 4d8+24 in beast form; hp 26 or 42 in beast form; Init +1 (Dex) or +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative) in beast form; Spd 30 ft. or 60 ft. in beast form; AC 11 (+1 Dex) or 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural) in beast form; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +4 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol) in human form or +8 melee (1d8+5, bite) in beast form; Reach 10 ft. in beast form; SQ Shapeshift at will, damage reduction 10/+1, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, Scent; SV Fort +6 (+13), Ref +5 (+7), Will +5 (+7); Str 13 (21), Dex 12 (16), Con 15 (23), Int 11 (7), Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +8 (+12), Drive +2 (+4), Escape Artist +2 (+4), Hide +9 (+11), Jump +5 (+9), Listen +11 (+15), Move Silently +13 (+19), Search +8 (+6), Spot +11 (+15), Swim +5 (+9), Wilderness Lore +8 (+12).

Feats: Alertness, Stealthy, Track. Emory gains the Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, and Scent feats when in beast form.

Chaney is the third agent working for Moore and by far the hardest to kill. A tough chitinous shell surrounds his body in its monstrous form, protecting him from cuts and small-arms fire. The plates of this shell are covered with small spikes that secrete a fast-acting paralyzing poison.

Chaney: Male 4th-level Shapechanger; HD 4d8+16 or 4d8+32 in beast form; hp 34 or 50 in beast form; Init +1 (Dex) or +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative) in beast form; Spd 30 ft. or 50 ft. in beast form; AC 11 (+1 Dex) or 17 (+3 Dex, +4 natural) in beast form; Atk +7 melee (1d3+4, punch) or +4 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol) in human form or +11 melee (1d6+8, 2 slams) in beast form; SA Improved grab, constrict 2d6+8, poison; SQ Shapeshift at will, damage reduction 15/+1, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +6 (+13), Ref +5 (+7), Will +5 (+7); Str 18 (26), Dex 12 (16), Con 15 (23), Int 11 (7), Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +7 (+11), Escape Artist +2 (+4), Gather Information +2, Hide +9 (+11), Intimidate +5, Listen +11 (+15), Move Silently +13 (+19), Search +8 (+6), Spot +11 (+15), Swim +6 (+10), Wilderness Lore +8 (+12).



Copenhagen Papers #2

From the American Business News, dated three years ago

Parsec Hires Princeton Research Scientist

The Austin, Texas-based Parsec, Inc., known for its space technology products, recently scored a coup by hiring Julian Levitz, an astrophysicist from Princeton University, to head up its new think-tank. While the company has a policy against revealing employee's salaries, it is generally assumed that Parsec paid top dollar for the research scientist. The company is thought to be flush with new capital following its merger with the international holding corporation TemCo.

According to a press release, the scientist will be working in the company's propulsion division, "developing theoretical new solutions to age-old problems of space travel." Analysts speculate that this means Parsec has landed one of NASA's Mars contracts. The company has no comment on this issue.

Feats: Alertness, Stealthy, Track. Chaney gains Blind-Fight and Improved Initiative when in beast form.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Chaney must be in beast form and must hit a Medium-size or smaller opponent with both slam attacks. If he gets a hold, it can constrict, impaling the opponent on his poisoned spines.

Constrict (Ex): Chaney deals 2d6+8 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Medium-size or smaller creatures. Chaney can still move but cannot take any attack actions when constricting.

Poison (Ex): Creatures impaled on Chaney's spines must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 minutes.

All three Tribunal agents carry semiautomatic pistols in their human forms and wield terrible claws and teeth in their monstrous shapes. They have little of their own personalities left—what little remained after their hideous transformation has long since been replaced by a blind loyalty to TemCo and the Tribunal. This is fine with Moore, who is not interested in the agents' conversation, only their help in finding his lost quarry.

While in Copenhagen, Moore's basic tactics are as follows: He uses Conrad to track the investigators by scent. Once he knows the area in which they are hiding, he sends in Emory to search the vicinity for their targets—as well as any traps or other dangers that might be present. Finally, Moore and Chaney move on the location while the other two agents serve as backup.

Gerard Moore and his men are rarely more than one step behind the investigators. If the investigators stop for more than a few hours in any one place, the TemCo agents may find them and attack. While one of these attacks is "scheduled" to occur while the investigators are visiting Curtis Franklin, the agents may make other attempts at any time.

Going to the New Moon Temple

The investigators may try to contact their connection, Roland Delmont, or use their Temple-issued Eastern Mutual credit cards. The credit cards still work, as do the portable telephones given to them by the New Moon Temple. Both the cards and the phones are being traced by Temple agents and will be used to locate the investigators. If the investigators call Delmont, he instructs them to stay put until he can come speak with them in person (see the section "An Ominous Reunion," page 190).

If the investigators suspect the horrible truth about the cult (as shown in *Revelations* in Part II: *Hollow Winds*), they may go so far as to discard the satellite phones altogether. In this case, Delmont is forced to use his unholy magic to track them down.

Researching Levitz

After receiving the article from Graham about Dr. Levitz, the investigators may wish to look into who this scientist is and what he has to do with Gerard Moore. Below is a summary of what they might find.

Dr. Levitz was a professor of astrophysics at Princeton University until he was hired away by Parsec, Inc.—a TemCo-owned space technology company—three years ago. Two years ago, Levitz allegedly died in a helicopter accident over the Gulf of Mexico, though his body was never recovered. At the time of his death, Levitz was married and had two children. (See the Copenhagen Papers #2 through #4 for details.)

Curtis Franklin



Michael Graham has given the investigators the name and address of Curtis Franklin, Timothy Ekloff's contact in Copenhagen. Meeting with Franklin gives the investigators a chance to learn more about TemCo's plans, as well as obtain Ekloff's travel arrangements to Mt. Makalu. Meeting with Franklin also gives Gerard Moore a chance to catch up with the investigators.

Curtis Franklin is not a brave man. His greed, however, has forced him into the dangerous role of a part-time criminal, working as a middleman for ruthless mercenaries, spies, and other unsavory types. He is good at what he does, and well compensated, but spends most of his money on drugs. It was Franklin's ability to make discrete inquiries and arrangements that convinced Timothy Ekloff to hire him.

Ekloff dispatched Franklin to Copenhagen for two reasons. First, to seek out a book rumored to contain information about the Tyrr Nemaii (the Nyhuus manuscript). Second, Copenhagen is an international city with a mercantile tradition and an excellent place to make travel arrangements to Mt. Makalu.

The last Franklin heard from Ekloff was shortly before the former spy's capture in Georgia. When Ekloff failed to arrive in Copenhagen at the appointed time, Franklin assumed he had been captured. A few days later, strange men began following him through the streets. Fearing that Ekloff may have told his captors about him, he has gone into hiding. He is living in the basement of an all-but-abandoned tenement in the old part of town. Only Michael Graham knows where Franklin is hiding.

When the investigators arrive at the address they have been given, they find a crumbling stone building at least a century old. The windows are boarded up, and humid, dank air seeps from inside. The address belongs to an unmarked door in the basement. Looking through the keyhole, they can see a light on inside.

If the investigators knock on the door, Franklin immediately turns out the light. He refuses to answer the door or respond at all. If the investigators mention the name "Ekloff," Franklin cracks the door open and peers out at them. Seeing no one else behind them, he quickly ushers them into his tiny apartment and locks the door behind them.

It is apparent just from looking at him that it has been a while since Franklin's last fix. His features are drawn and gaunt, his eyes unnaturally wide as they dart around the room. A thin sheen of sweat glistens on his shaved head. His hands tremble slightly.

Franklin demands to know who the investigators are and how they found him. If anyone asks about his paranoia, he explains that after Ekloff was captured and word of the comet got out, he realized that Ekloff had been telling him the truth about the Tyrr Nemaii. Fearing the all-seeing eye of TemCo, he went into hiding and has been keeping a low profile ever since. If asked about the stranger who woke the investigators in the hospital, Franklin says he knows nothing.

Franklin does, however, have an exceptional grasp of the current situation.

"Yeah, Timothy told me all about it," he says, "the monsters, the machine, the psychics—the whole thing. Only I didn't believe it. It's just too crazy. But then I heard about the comet, just like he said, and I realized it's all real!"

Ekloff's paranoid middleman informs the investigators the best he can. Trembling and anxious, Franklin

Copenhagen Papers #3

From the Austin Daily Gazette, dated two years ago

Two Die in Helicopter Crash

A helicopter owned by Parsec, Inc. caught fire and crashed into the Gulf of Mexico early yesterday morning, killing the pilot and the only passenger. Dara Kale, 32, was flying the helicopter from Parsec's headquarters in Austin to a research vessel in the Gulf. Her passenger was Julian Levitz, 49, another Parsec employee.

"We are shocked and saddened by the loss of two great employees," said Charles Conophy, spokesperson for Parsec, Inc. "Dara and Julian were not just our employees, they were our friends. Our hearts go out to their families in this time of sorrow. We share their grief."

Officials were able to recover Kale's body but have not yet been able to locate the body of her passenger. They expect recovery efforts to continue today but hold out little hope., Francis Kramer, a spokesperson for the Coast Guard, noted that the water where the helicopter sank is turbulent. This is not the first such incident he has seen in the area, he said, and "after the first day, there's really not much hope."

Dara Kale is survived by her mother, Tonya, of Dallas. Julian Levitz is survived by his wife, Lynn, and two children, ages 10 and 13, of Austin.

Copenhagen Papers #4

From the American Business News, dated one year ago

The Year in Business: Who's Who and What's What—Parsec, Inc.

Parsec was founded in 1988 by Ronald and Arlene Walker, scientists at the University of Texas who developed a thin, lightweight insulation. They patented the material and landed a lucrative contract with NASA, which integrated the Walker's invention into a new generation of space suits. Five years ago, Parsec thought they had struck gold a second time with a new sleeping chamber they hoped NASA could use for manned space flight. Unfortunately for the company, NASA was not yet ready to invest in any long-range manned-flight technology.

Parsec's rescue arrived in the form of TemCo, a privately owned international holding company. In 1995, TemCo merged the company with its R&D holdings. Since then, the company has expanded away from space technology to other, more practical high-tech projects. Recent contracts have included designing satellites for the Chinese government and field-testing new agricultural techniques in the Gobi, Sahara, and Nevada deserts.

Ronald and Arlene Walker are enjoying an early retirement in Alaska. According to their former employees at Parsec (who still receive the Walkers' Christmas card every year), the couple lives in a house boat during the summer and spends their winters in a Fairbanks condominium.

explains about the "monsters" running TemCo, the machine in Mt. Makalu, and the psychics used to power it. He tells them about the comet SH-01 and the panic it is causing around the world.

"Timothy says they're going to smash the comet into the Earth. Don't know why, but it seems like they want to kill us all!"

Franklin mentions that Ekloff wanted him to find "some old book by a Nyhuus guy" while in Copenhagen, but he hasn't found it yet. Lately, he has been too busy hiding to search for the mysterious book.

The investigators' meeting with Franklin is an excellent opportunity to bring them up to speed with the campaign and show them the very high stakes involved. The investigators might already know or suspect most of what Franklin has to say. Nevertheless, his frantic confirmations should fill them with a cold dread as they realize exactly what they are up against.

Per Ekloff's instructions, Franklin has made travel arrangements from Copenhagen to a village in the vicinity of Mt. Makalu. Ekloff has already paid for the tickets for the failed mercenary team. Franklin offers the investigators the tickets, along with falsified passports, if they are interested in finishing Ekloff's mission. If the investigators ask him to, Franklin is more than willing to join them on their journey. He figures that with TemCo on his trail and SH-01 looming overhead, he has nothing to lose.

Franklin's apartment consists of a single living room/bedroom with a filthy kitchenette on one side and an equally filthy bathroom on the other. Secondhand furniture and cigarette butts litter the floor. A door leading to an interior staircase is half-hidden behind a rack of clothing.

Under Siege

About an hour after the investigators arrive at Franklin's apartment, Gerard Moore and his minions track them down and move in for the kill.

Franklin (and any investigator making a successful Listen check, DC 15) hears a snuffling, clawing sound from outside the door. Glancing outside reveals a feral-looking man crawling on the pavement, his nose to the ground. Above him stands a shadowy, imposing figure in a long black coat—Gerard Moore. Moore's lean, chiseled face is shrouded in darkness, then suddenly illuminated as he looks directly at the investigators. He raises a hand and points to the apartment's door. "Break it," he hisses, and the massive, monstrous form of Chaney saunters into view.

Moore's plan is this: Now that Conrad has located the investigators, he sends in Chaney to take down the door, then Emory to root out the targets. Chaney closes in, eliminating all resistance with his venomous spines and sheer brute force. Moore and Conrad are to follow at a distance, keeping an eye out for targets trying to sneak away. It is not a subtle plan, but there is little time left for subtlety.

When Franklin realizes that his apartment is under attack, he shoves a sofa in front of the front door and points the investigators toward the door leading to the staircase. "The stairs go all the way to the roof," he says. "Let's move it!"

Investigators who choose to stay and fight have their work cut out for them. They have less than a minute to prepare before Chaney comes bursting through the door. The apartment has little in the way of makeshift weapons, offering only broken furniture and cutlery. Franklin has a pistol, but he is heading for the roof and taking it with him.

Whenever the investigators catch sight of Gerard Moore, there is a chance that, with a successful Spot check (DC 20), they see he displays the same odd symbol on the back of his right hand that Michael Graham

does. Something about his imposing person fills the investigators with a strange sense of awe and fear.

Up on the Roof

The staircase leading to the roof is narrow, dank, and lit only by what light filters in through the narrow, boarded-up windows. It was originally intended to serve as a fire escape but has since fallen into disuse and disrepair. Franklin's apartment building is three stories tall and each story has a door opening onto the staircase. Like the basement door, these doors are unlocked but can be locked from outside the staircase.

At the top of the stairs, the door opening up onto the roof is unlocked. Franklin has prepared for this contingency. Not only does the door lock from the outside, but Franklin has also left on the roof several pieces of scrap lumber that can be propped against the door to help keep it closed. Locking the door does not stop the massive Chaney from breaking through, but it certainly slows him down.

There are three other buildings nearby, separated from the apartment building by varying gaps. The nearest one is close enough that no Jump check is required. The next closest is only five feet away, but its roof is half a story below the investigators' current perch, requiring a successful Jump check (DC 10) in order to land uninjured. Investigators who fail the check take 1d6 points of damage. Finally, the third building is at roughly the same height as the apartment building, but leaping investigators need to make a successful Jump check to clear the 12-foot gap. Alternately, the extra scrap lumber could be used as a makeshift bridge between the two roofs. According to Franklin, all three buildings have fire escapes that can take the investigators back down to the street.

As the investigators weigh their options, they hear a clear, cold voice rising up from below. It is Gerard Moore, standing in the middle of the street, calling up to them. "You have no idea what you are up against," he shouts. "You cannot begin to understand the magnitude of our power, much less your insignificance in the face of it. Well, I'm here to help you understand. My name is Gerard Moore! There is on only one escape, and that is death. So stop your running and face your destiny."

While Moore tries to distract the investigators with his threats, Emory scales the side of the apartment building, prying his spidery fingers into the brickwork and pulling himself up by his inhumanly long limbs. He avoids being seen the best he can by scurrying just below the edge of the roof and poking his head up occasionally to spy on the investigators. Nevertheless, those on the roof looking for trouble might catch a glimpse of him with a successful Spot check opposed by his Hide check. Others might hear him climbing with a successful Listen check opposed by his Move Silently check.

Emory attacks when the investigators have their backs to him (or when he is spotted). While not as tough as Chaney, the Tribunal agent is still more than a match for most humans. But his mission is not specifically to kill the investigators but merely to keep them occupied and on the roof until Chaney arrives. To this end, Emory quickly attacks then falls back, trying to herd the investigators away from the other rooftops and toward the street. If he thinks he has an opportunity to kill one of them, either directly or by pushing a target over the edge, Emory gives it his best shot.

When Chaney smashes through the door and onto the roof, he charges his prey with a bestial snort and bellow. The investigators' best bet for survival is to leap onto a nearby roof. Chaney is a clumsy brute and cannot follow them across any gap more than five feet wide. He enthusiastically tries to jump if he has to but falls short and plummets to the street. The fall does not kill him, but again, it slows him down.

Once the investigators manage to avoid Emory and Chaney, Moore decides it would be best to let them go for the moment. He knows it would be much easier to pick up their trail nearby once they reach the ground.

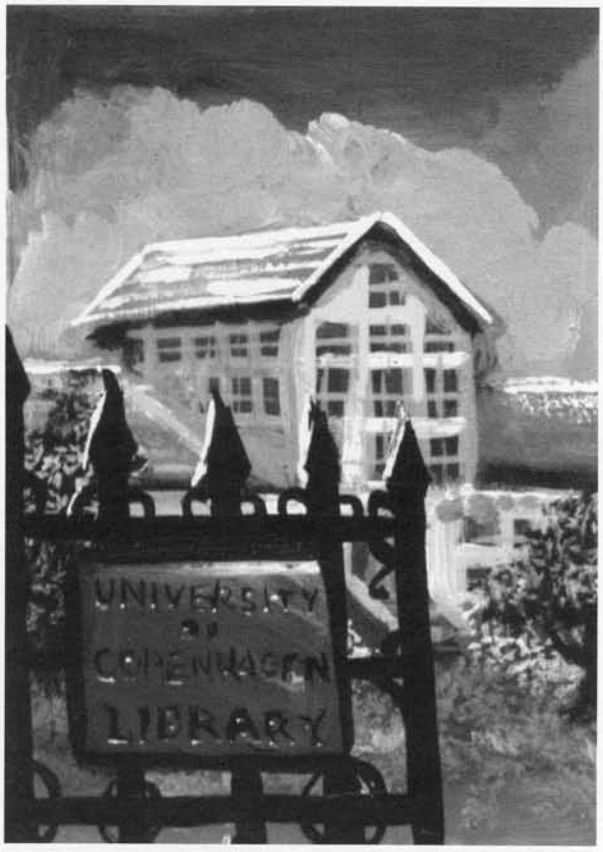
Travel Plans

Curtis Franklin has made arrangements for the investigators to be transported via private fishing boat from Copenhagen to Riga, Latvia. From there they are scheduled to travel by rail to Moscow, then take the Trans-Siberian railroad to Irkutsk. Another train is to take them south to Ulan Bator, the capitol of Mongolia, then southwest to Xining, China. From Xining, they can catch a train to Lhasa in Tibet. It is only two days by truck from there to Khun Li, the village at the foot of Mt. Makalu.

While paying bribes and confirming unofficial arrangements, Franklin discovered that TemCo has two of its own cars attached to the train from Riga to Moscow. One of them is a standard freight transport car. The other is a luxury private traveling car. Its only registered passenger is a man named Kage.

Franklin informs the investigators of what he has found. He warns them of TemCo's presence on the train and suggests that they may wish to disguise themselves, lest Kage recognize them.

As long as the investigators stick to Franklin's route, keeping the passports and travel papers he gave them, they have little trouble with border crossings, customs, or other bureaucracy. Franklin's contacts (and Timothy Ekloff's money) have greased the wheels of their journey.



Between the Stacks

At the bottom of the sheet of paper that Graham gave the investigators is a code. A successful Research check (DC 5) identifies this code as a library reference number.

There are more than a dozen public libraries in Copenhagen, understaffed and unused in this time of crisis. Several of the small ones have been abandoned altogether. A number have fallen to looters and rioters. Those that remain are forced to defend themselves against those who seek to steal and vandalize.

If the investigators speak to one of the harried librarians, they learn that the reference code is an old one, used only at the University Library of Copenhagen. "Do not expect to see the book," the librarian sighs wearily. "That is a restricted code, used for historical works."

The University Library of Copenhagen is a magnificent, 300-year-old building that dominates an entire city block of downtown Copenhagen. For centuries, it has stood as a monument to knowledge and wisdom. Today, it lies empty and robbed of its greatness.

Like the hospital and dozens of other public institutions, the library is woefully understaffed, its caretakers and librarians fleeing the city. There are only a few people left working. An aged janitor remains, along with a number of stubborn librarians who refuse to leave their post. While they try to maintain order, dozens of people rally outside with signs reading "The End is Here!" and "All Knowledge is Useless!" Inside, still more people irrationally loot the shelves in hopes of somehow preserving the information for future generations.

When the investigators arrive, they find the library in chaos. Tables, chairs, and shelves have been knocked over. Books lie scattered everywhere. A smudgy, foul-smelling black pile in the corner suggests that a frenzied lunatic started a bonfire of romance novels. A wide-eyed woman dashes past the investigators and out the door, her arms loaded with books.

"Get back here with those books!" a librarian shouts in Danish. She shakes an elderly fist at the looter, who never even looks back.

The reference code the investigators have been given corresponds to the reserved collection on the second floor. The collection is behind a long, low counter where, on an ordinary day, reference librarians would be waiting on patrons and retrieving reserved books. There is no one behind the counter today but a solitary looter. He glances up at the investigators warily, then turns back to loading a plastic garbage bag with 19th century erotica.

Once the investigators are among the reserved books, it is easy to find the code. The book in question is entitled *Explorer of the Bizarre: A Biography of Morten Nyhuus*.

Published in 1950, the book details the life and times of Morten Nyhuus, an eccentric Danish explorer of the late 1800s. Nyhuus was descended of nobility and had the wealth to support whatever schemes he developed to relieve his boredom. He loved to travel, especially to strange and exotic lands. It was on one of these journeys that Nyhuus claimed to have found an underground city in the Himalayas (see the Copenhagen Papers #5).

An Ominous Reunion

There is nowhere to hide from the insidious eyes of Nyarlathotep. Through mundane and unthinkable methods, the Outer God has tracked the investigators to Copenhagen. (One of these mundane methods may have been the Temple-issued portable telephone, which transmits a tracking signal.) He has sent Roland Delmont, a leader of the New Moon Temple, to confront the investigators.

The last Delmont knew of the investigators, they were to meet Francis Shepherd, one of his followers, who had some terrible new information to share (as detailed in *Revelations* in Part II: *Hollow Winds*). Now Shepherd is dead and the investigators have resurfaced in Europe. Delmont suspects that the investigators either had a hand in Shepherd's death or had a chance to learn his "terrible news" before he was killed. Either way, the cultist believes he has been betrayed and is

determined to find out the truth from the investigators.

Delmont is not alone. His companion on this mission is one of Nyarlathotep's dark angels, an utoruk. In fact, it was the creature's hideous wings that transported the cultist across the ocean and to this very site. The servitor has resumed its human form for the duration of the encounter. It is a form the investigators may recognize as Joseph Fowler (whom they met during *Stillness* in Part I: *Long Shades*).

The meeting with Delmont may happen at any time while the investigators are in Copenhagen. Gamemasters are encouraged to use this encounter whenever the action slows down or it is otherwise dramatically appropriate.

Delmont smiles thinly when he sees the investigators. "I had hoped to find you here," he says. "This is good. We have much to discuss."

The cultist proceeds to question the investigators at great length about their exploits and what they have learned since speaking with Francis Shepherd in Savannah. He appears interested, though distracted. He says little until they are done, merely encouraging them to elaborate when necessary.

Delmont shows the investigators a letter he retrieved from Shepherd's apartment shortly after the agent was killed (see the Copenhagen Papers #6). The letter is from one Alexi Bucayev, in Latvia, addressed to the Secretary of Human Rights at the United Nations. Bucayev writes of a terrible machine working beneath a mountain in the Himalayas, pulling down a piece of the sky. He also mentions that this is only the first part of "their" plan—though he never explains who "they" are or what the second part of the plan may be.

"Francis Shepherd, the man you met in Savannah, had this letter in his possession," Delmont says. "He also told us he had some new information, something that changed everything. Do you know what it was?"

Delmont has one final question. "What do you know of TemCo's Moscow facility? The Moscow Tractor Works?"

Regardless of the investigators' answer, Delmont makes to leave. "I have to go now, but my assistant would like a few words with you."

As Delmont steps away, the hulking utoruk shambles toward the investigators. Its human visage shifts and wavers; something twists beneath its skin. Its clothing tears open, revealing a mass of fleshy, waving tendrils where its head and arms once were. Translucent, membranous wings slowly unfurl, glistening and moist, from its back. The creature bears down on the investigators, growing larger with each step until it stands 12 feet tall.

The utoruk has been ordered by Nyarlathotep to destroy the investigators. They have served their purpose and the Outer God has no further use for these troublesome interlopers. The New Moon Temple has

Copenhagen Papers #5

From Explorer of the Bizarre: A Biography of Morten Nyhuus

The youngest son of a wealthy aristocrat, Morten spent years following his every whim, no matter how foolish or expensive. He lived in India for three months in 1868, trying unsuccessfully to master the art of snake charming. He spent the next year in London studying to be a doctor and the year after that in a Munich seminary in hopes of becoming a priest. Morten's strangest and longest-lasting notion, however, began with an expedition into the Himalayas in 1892.

Morten set out for Tibet in search of a long-lost Buddhist temple. According to legends, the temple had a shrine containing the world's last dragon egg. When the egg hatched, it would signal the end of this present world and the beginning of a new, enlightened age. Morten never found the temple. What he found instead was something—to him—even more amazing.

Upon returning from his journey, Morten told all who would listen of a great city beneath the mountains and the messengers from God he found there. These were, he said, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Morten claimed that the Horsemen spoke of their home in the heavens and how they were awaiting the time when their fellows would join them. Man and God would be reconciled and a new era would begin on Earth.

A circle of believers grew up around Morten, who supposedly interpreted and repeated his words. In an effort to spread the Fellowship's teachings beyond his immediate influence, Morten Nyhuus sought to have published a manuscript describing his discovery of the Four Horsemen. According to Gunn Publishing of Copenhagen, the memoir was a painstaking account of Morten's journey through the Himalayas that described, in excruciating detail, exactly how and where he found the alleged buried city.

The publisher not only rejected the manuscript but sent a scathing letter praising Morten for taking such outlandish material and making it unbearably monotonous to read. "It is a rare talent to reduce the ludicrous to the merely mundane," the editor wrote. Morten never submitted the manuscript to any other publishers. When asked why, he said that Gunn Publishing never returned his only copy. Those closest to him supported this story but no claims were ever made against the publisher.

enough information now to comprehend its enemy; the investigators are now more of a liability than an asset. (This is even truer if they discovered the partially eaten ritual victim in the back of Shepherd's van in Savannah.)

Fighting the utoruk is possible, though not particularly advised, especially if the investigators are not armed and must make do with makeshift weapons. The investigators are probably better off simply fleeing the creature.

If the investigators get away from the utoruk, it takes to the air to search for them. Any people nearby shriek at the mind-numbing sight of this hideous, flapping thing with its drooping tentacles of meat. The investigators' best chance for escape lies in disappearing into the throngs of people on the street.

Roland Delmont: Male 4th-level Cult Sorcerer; HD 4d6; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +1 melee (1d3–1, punch) or +2 ranged (1d10, Colt M1877 revolver); SQ Adept psychic, madman's intuition; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +11, Cthulhu Mythos +6, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (occult) +9, Listen +7, Research +9, Search +11, Sense Motive +10, Spot +7.

Feats: Iron Will, Persuasive, Sharp-Eyed, Trustworthy.

Psychic Feats: Biofeedback Trance, Pychokinesis, Second Sight, Sensitive.

Utoruk: Huge Aberration; HD 8d8+32; hp 70; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 17 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural); Atk +13 melee (1d6+7, 8 tentacles); Reach 10 ft.; SA Paralysis; SQ Blindsight, damage reduction 15/+1, shapechange; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 25, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Spot +11.

Feats: Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Under the Gunn

Once they have retrieved the biography of Nyhuus, intuitive investigators should realize that the stranger who woke them in the hospital meant for them to read about Nyhuus's unpublished journal. The journal is said to contain detailed instructions on how to find the underground city in the Himalayas—which is where the Tyrr Nemaii is hidden. If they can recover the manuscript, they will have a better understanding of what the shk'ryth are hiding and how to find it.

There are two clear options for recovering the manuscript. One is to visit the offices of Gunn Publishing in Copenhagen, and the other is to search for it at Nyhuus's estate. Attempts to contact either location by telephone results in failure. No one is answering the phones at the publisher, and the estate's phone line has been disconnected.

With a simple Research or Gather Information check (DC 10), the investigators can learn that the location of the Nyhuus estate is in the town of Sortsoe, approximately a two hour drive west of Copenhagen.

Soren Gunn's Bad Day



From the time he was born, Soren Gunn was told glowing stories of his family's greatness and accomplishments in the publishing field. He embraced the legacy and took it as his destiny. When he took over the business, however, his family was saddened to realize he was not the shrewd businessman and manager that he thought himself to be.

Gunn Publishing has been losing money for the last nine years. Bad debts, unpaid invoices, and a general downturn in the marketplace combined to make things tight for the Danish publisher. Soren Gunn was advised many times that unless he cut staff or sold more stock, the company would be forced into bankruptcy. He refused to listen, however, saying that none of his predecessors had gone to such lengths; he was not about to become the first Gunn to do so.

Nevertheless, Soren was seriously considering disolving the company six months ago. He was even discussing the possibility with his only confidant, his wife of seven years. She declined to give her opinion, however, in that the publishing house was no longer going to be her problem. She was leaving him for another man.

Soren threw himself into his work like never before. Having failed at marriage, he was not about to fail at business. Soren became a man obsessed. He rarely slept and almost never went home. Day and night he dedicated himself to his job and his employees. He sold his house (which he didn't use anyway) and used the money to finance the business. He cut his own salary in half, then in half again, to prevent laying off any of his employees. Still it wasn't enough. Gunn Publishing was bleeding red ink and everyone knew it.

And now this. The comet was the last straw. After

all he had done for them, his workers were threatening to leave—to abandon the ship, just when the shore was in sight. It was intolerable to Soren.

Soren released a memo telling his employees they could not leave. When one of the workers publicly defied his order, the company president retrieved his father's shotgun. Soren chased down the "ungrateful traitor" and shot him in the back, killing him, just as he reached the door.

Panicked and terrified, the rest of the employees bolted from the office, dodging Soren's gunshots the best they could. Most escaped with only scratches and bruises from the stampede. Others were not so lucky. Six employees fell that morning. Those who weren't killed immediately were soon "put out of their misery" by the crazed publisher.

"No one leaves," he told the bloody corpses. "Double overtime pay for everyone, but no one leaves."

A day later, there was a knock on the office door. It was Jeremiah Tvilde, here on behalf of the New Moon Temple. In the course of his research, he had discovered the connection between Morten Nyhuus and the Tyrr Nemaii. He was hoping to locate the journal of Morten Nyhuus when Soren Gunn shot him dead and dragged his body to the Dumpster out back.

Now Gunn is hiding out in the warehouse with a shotgun and a box of shells. He has considered taking his own life but considers that a cowardly act. He is beginning to suspect the truth...that he is quite mad.

The police have heard of Gunn's rampage but have their hands full with riots and mayhem in other parts of the city. A squad car has driven by the building, but no one has yet searched the office or warehouse.

Gunn Publishing

Gunn Publishing has been a fixture in the Copenhagen publishing business since Hans Gunn built his first press in 1802. For generations the publishing house has been passed from father to son. Soren Gunn is the current owner of the business. He will be the last.

Investigators looking for Gunn Publishing have little trouble finding the venerable business. Its offices and warehouse take up half a city block in an older section of Copenhagen. The warehouse is a monolithic square brick monstrosity, three stories high and nearly two centuries old, its stones blackened and cracked by the passing of time. An ugly modern office was attached to the front of the warehouse like some concrete prosthesis in the 1960s. A narrow strip of blacktop serves as the company's parking lot. It is deserted but for a single luxury car.

The main entrance into the office is unlocked. The doorway and ground just inside are spattered with a reddish-brown substance. Investigators testing it who make a successful Knowledge (medicine) check (DC 15) discover it to be blood, about a day old (DC 20). A successful Spot check (DC 10) reveals a thin trail of the stuff leading from the front door to an industrial garbage container alongside the building.

Inside the stinking metal box is the bloody corpse of Jeremiah Tvilde, a New Moon Temple cultist. Examination of the body indicates that Tvilde was shot at close range by a firearm; a successful Knowledge (medicine) check (DC 15) suggests it was a shotgun. The cultist is still carrying his wallet with ID, $240 cash, and credit cards. If he was carrying one of the Temple's portable phones when he was shot, he does not have it now.

Copenhagen Papers #6

Alexi Bucayev
8732 Batovich Street
Riga, Latvia

Secretary of Human Rights
United Nations
New York, NY
USA

Dear Sir:

I wish to report a gross violation of human rights in the mountains of Asia. I am not positive of the location, though I believe it to be in the Himalayas, probably in China or Nepal.

Inside one of these mountains is a labor camp in which hundreds or thousands of people from around the world are being worked to death. Against their wills, these men and women are operating and maintaining a giant machine for the mysterious organization that selected and brought them there.

This organization is carrying out a plan in two parts. The first is to use the machine to draw to Earth some celestial body, causing worldwide destruction. The second is yet unclear.

I realize that my words sound like the ravings of a lunatic. I wish I could reveal the source of my information or otherwise convince you of the truthfulness of what I write, but that cannot be so. Instead, I implore you to investigate the Himalayas for an installation such as I described, before it is too late.

Sincerely,

Alexi Bucayev

Copenhagen Papers #7

To: All employees of Gunn Publishing
From: Soren Gunn, President
Subject: Workplace attendance

It has come to my attention that many of you are considering taking an unpaid leave from your jobs in order to be with your families or otherwise relocate during this "comet crisis." This memo is to advise you that no such leaves of absence will be authorized or tolerated. We are quickly approaching our busiest season and are understaffed as it is. Our operation cannot afford to lose even a single one of you.

This company has seen some terrible circumstances in its time, and through it all we have never stopped publishing. While I understand that you are anxious about the current crisis, I hope you understand that we cannot allow any of you to leave. If you insist on doing so, you will be severely reprimanded.

The Office

The office of Gunn Publishing is in a shambles. Desks and chairs are overturned. Piles of paper lie scattered about. Computers are crashed on the floor, several with their monitors broken. There is blood as well, not as recent as the pool outside the door but more widespread, as if several people were shot. Spray patterns on the walls and furniture suggest that someone was shooting a shotgun in the office.

At the far end of the open office area is a private office. Its door, marked "Soren Gunn," is closed. Investigators can make out the silhouettes of several people inside through the frosted glass office windows. If the investigators open the door, they see that the people sitting in the office are dead. One is sitting behind a large wooden desk bearing the nameplate "Soren Gunn." Two others are slumped in chairs facing the desk. The other three bodies are lying awkwardly on a nearby leather sofa. The corpses' torsos are brown sponges, their faces frozen white with terror. They have recently begun to rot. This gruesome scene costs the investigators 0/1d4 points of Sanity.

Hundreds of copies of a memo are posted around the office: tacked to bulletin boards, taped to computer monitors, attached to the walls and doors. The memo is from Soren Gunn, instructing his employees that they are not to leave their jobs unattended during the comet crisis. Those who do so, the memo warns, will be severely reprimanded (see the Copenhagen Papers #7).

The Warehouse

The Gunn Publishing warehouse is cold and dimly lit. The power is out; thin columns of light stream in from tall, narrow windows. Boxes and crates are everywhere, most of them stacked on pallets. A forklift sits near a pallet of book cartons where its driver left it. It was left running and has long since run out of fuel.

Investigators making a successful Listen check (DC 15) hear a rustling from the darkness above them. A moment later, a gunshot rings out and a box next to the investigators explodes. Unless they dive for cover immediately, they run the risk of being hit by gunfire.

In his madness, Soren Gunn sees the investigators as traitorous employees, perhaps come back to loot the business that fed and clothed them for so long.

"Ingrates!" he bellows in Danish. "I give you everything and this is how you repay me?"

Gunn's voice echoes in the cavernous warehouse, making it difficult to pinpoint his position. If the investigators respond in English, he switches to English himself. Otherwise, he continues to rant in Danish.

"I was a good employer, you selfish pigs! I took care of you at great expense to myself! You were children to me—and now you abandon me, only to return and steal what I would have gladly given you. What loyalty is this? You're fired!"

As he raves at the investigators, Gunn stalks them from high up in the catwalks and rafters, firing down at them when he thinks he has a clear shot. He is using his father's hunting shotgun and is carrying 10 shells.

Investigators who try to attack Gunn have their work cut out for them. While he is middle-aged, slow, and out of shape, he has the advantage of height—and the shotgun. Investigators can try to sneak up on him, climbing the boxes with successful Climb checks (DC 10). If he is disarmed, Gunn settles down and is willing to talk.

Talking with Gunn is the investigators' best option. By adopting a soothing tone and making successful Psychoanalysis checks (DC 15), they can help the madman calm down. If they pretend that they are employees and express their appreciation for all his efforts, Gunn is more willing to listen to what they have to say. Even talking about their love of books and publishing helps win the lunatic's trust. Mentioning the comet, however, enrages Gunn once more.

If the investigators ask Gunn about Nyhuus's journal manuscript, he is confused by their questions. He has not thought about the manuscript for many years. Nevertheless, if they gently persist, Gunn eventually recalls Nyhuus's journal. There was an embarrassing mix-up concerning the manuscripts, he says.

"My grandfather thought he had returned the manuscript to Nyhuus but later discovered it after the author's death. He turned the journal over to the Nyhuus estate. It's probably still at his ancestral home."

Gunn has no intention of turning himself over to the police. Once he has a grip on his sanity, in fact, he considers turning the gun on himself.

"Get out, all of you," he barks at the investigators. "Before I change my mind and blow you away."

Soren Gunn: Male 1st level; HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk –1 melee (1d3–1, punch) or +0 ranged (3d6/2d6/1d6, 12-gauge shotgun); SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 15.

Skills: Computer Use +4, Craft (printing) +7, Diplomacy +6, Initimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Research +7, Sense Motive +2, Speak Other Language (English) +4.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Craft), Skill Emphasis (Research).

Possessions: Winchester M1912 12-gauge shotgun, $115.

Hot Time in the Old Town

When Anne Mogren went to trial for setting a string of arson fires, her only defense was, "God told me to do it." She was diagnosed with schizophrenia and sentenced to a Copenhagen mental health facility where she has spent the last seven years.

When word of the comet reached the asylum where Anne lived, most of the staff abandoned their posts and fled inland. The few that remained were unable to keep an eye on all the patients, and Anne slipped free during the confusion. She has been living on the streets for the past few weeks, preaching the destruction of "God's cleansing flame" to all those willing to listen.

According to Anne's twisted theology, the world we see is full of evil and corruption. It must be destroyed so that God can make a new, better world for the righteous. If we do not destroy what we can through holy fire, God will destroy the Earth himself with a glorious fire from the sky.

The logic of these teachings is flawed and the details vary from moment to moment depending on Anne's lucidity, but the escaped mental patient is nevertheless a persuasive, charismatic speaker who has recruited several people to her cause. They call themselves the Purifiers of Earth. The actual number of people in the group varies daily but ranges from five to 15. A few of them wholeheartedly believe Anne's teachings. Some are skeptical but would rather set fires than risk the wrath of God. Most of Anne's followers are merely vandals who delight in the sheer destruction of arson.

For the past few days, the Purifiers have been setting isolated fires in the now-abandoned buildings in the old town district of Copenhagen. Shortly after the investigators arrive in town, Anne and her followers begin a much larger campaign of arson, torching entire city blocks in the old town district. These fires are too large for the city's understaffed fire department to control and soon begin to spread.



Franklin's apartment building is in the path of the fire, as are all the buildings around it. In fact, the entire old town district is in serious danger of going up in flames. The newer parts of Copenhagen are not in quite as much danger, as the buildings there are made of newer, more fire-resistant designs.

Those who see Anne and her flock of arsonists should have no trouble distinguishing them from the crowd. Each of the so-called Purifiers is dressed in a makeshift hooded robe (usually made from a bed sheet) and carrying a flaming torch. Anne herself, a shorthaired woman in her 30s, usually leads the way. She exhorts her followers with shouts of, "This is the time of fire, the era of rebirth! Don't stop now! You're doing God's work!"

The investigators probably never come into direct contact with Anne or the other Purifiers. Rather, the group's fires are a useful tool for the GM who wishes to prod the investigators along on the adventure. There is no greater incentive to leave town, for example, than the town going up in flames.

Dieter is in love.

He is in love with Anne, God's holy messenger of purity. When she speaks, her words are golden sunshine, filling the air with warmth and light. When she looks at him, his heart melts like chocolate and oozes sweetness throughout his body. And when she hands him the torch, it is the kiss of an angel.

"It's time, Dieter. Burn it down."

It's an old house, full of old sins long past due. Dieter gladly sets the torch to the house's wooden siding. He glances over at Anne. She is watching him and smiling. He smiles back...then frowns as he realizes that the siding is not catching fire.

"What's wrong, Dieter? Burn it down."

"I...I'm sorry, Anne. They must have coated the siding with something. It...it's not catching."

Anne gives her follower a rueful look.

"You know what you have to do, Dieter."

Dieter nods bashfully.

"You have to burn it from the inside..."

"Yes, Anne."

"...And you mustn't leave until the job is done. Will you do this for me, Dieter?"

"Yes," he answers breathlessly.

"You'll need this," she says, handing him a can of gasoline. "God goes with you."

Dieter receives the can like a sacrament. He is very aware of Anne's fingers brushing his. He can no longer contain himself.

"I love you, Anne."

"Of course you do, Dieter. Now burn it down."

Farewell for Now

As the investigators are about to leave Copenhagen, Michael Graham mysteriously appears. "You should have no trouble with Gerard Moore for a few days," he says. "He has left for Moscow to deal with some other threat. Nevertheless, I urge you to take care on your journey. TemCo has pawns everywhere and they are sure to be looking for you."

Graham has little more to say to the investigators other than bidding them farewell. He assures them that they will meet again but remains enigmatic about what he knows and how. If the investigators ask for his help with, or otherwise mention the problems they have had with utoruks, Graham nods knowingly.

"I hoped it would not come to this," he says darkly, producing a slim black object about a foot long. "This is a Llan, a powerful artifact of protection."

The artifact is much heavier than it looks and composed of some alien crystal. There is a pressure stud at one end of the Llan that Graham says fires the device. "Just point the other end at your target and depress the stud," he explains. "Any living tissue caught in the beam will be destroyed. But be careful. The Llan can only be used once."

To use the Llan, a character must make a ranged touch attack against a target within 120 feet. If the attack hits, the affected living creature must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 23) or be disintegrated, leaving only a trace of fine dust. If the creature makes the save, it still takes 5d6 points of damage from the potent magical attack. When the Llan has been used once, whether the attack hit or missed, it crumbles into powder.

Aftermath

Upon completing their tasks in Copenhagen, the investigators have two clear options: going to the Nyhuus estate and searching for the manuscript or using Ekloff's tickets and travel itinerary to reach the Tyrr Nemaii.

If the investigators want to search for the manuscript at the Nyhuus estate, the adventure continues in The Weaving of Three. If they wish to go directly to the Tyrr Nemaii, the next adventure is Beyond the Sea. The investigators can avoid the Nyhuus estate, but in doing so they bypass an important clue that would make their task easier by guiding them to a "backdoor" to the Tyrr Nemaii.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Weaving of Three

Thunder and lightning rattle across the evening sky. The rain is falling lightly at the moment, but Jesper Moller knows it will soon be much worse.

In a flicker of lightning, Jesper sees his three cows grazing on the shore of Lake Sortsoe. They had wandered away hours ago but now he has found them. He hurries through the trees toward the shore. The sooner he gets these beasts in the barn, the sooner he can dry off in the warmth and light of his living room.

Another sudden flash explodes out of the sky, immediately followed by the terrible ripping roar of thunder. The lake is jet-black beneath the lightning. The old Nyhuus mansion stands starkly on the horizon, its silhouette burning itself onto Jesper's retinas. Rain falls harder, more insistently, as if driven by a wind intent on keeping the farmer away from the lake.

Jesper breaks through the trees and onto the grassy shore. He squints against the rain and tries to make out the shapes of his cows in the dim twilight. They should be here. He just saw them a moment ago, but now he sees something else...something…

Lightning flashes again and Jesper sees clearly an image he will take to his grave: Three old crones, wrapped in ragged black dresses, each holding the bleeding head of a cow high above her wind-torn white hair.

Jesper freezes. By the glory of the Wyrm, what is this?

More lightning. The crones are no longer holding the heads in the air but clutching them to their chests, looking at Jesper. They smile with rotten teeth, an unnatural glow in their eyes. Beneath the lightning, their shadows join as one. Rippling, the shadow forms the frothing sign of the Serpent.

Jesper falls to his knees, worshiping. The Power of the Wyrm is here. After centuries of keeping the faith, the servants of the Serpent are to be rewarded!

The day of reckoning is at hand.

The Tale of Olaf Orm

Many people are born into the world with a purpose: some fulfill dire prophecies while others create seeds of prophecy themselves. Olaf Orm was born in the year 766, three decades before our annals record the era of the Sea Lords. Olaf Orm was born in mid-June, somewhere close to the long and turbulent shore of the southern Jutland peninsula.

The child finally escaped his mother's womb in the early evening. Outside, a great summer storm was raging. It had been a long labor, and Olaf's mother had not survived the childbirth. The women who had assisted in the birth were greatly saddened by the loss of the mother but were too shocked by the visage of the child to yet acknowledge their grief.

Clearly visible upon the brow of the young boy was a powerful omen: a birthmark, the dull red sign of the great serpent, the Midgard Wyrm. The women immediately fled to their corner of the longhouse fearing that, by some chance, the terrible power of the child would enter their bodies. Clutching symbols of Frey and Sif, they mourned long into the night. Their songs melded the sorrow of losing a young mother with great fear of the powerful being she had brought into their midst.

Knud Lovman, the aging high priest of the clan, soon realized that something was not right in the house. Childbirth was the responsibility of women, and he wondered why they would leave a newborn unattended. Wearing the great cloak of the Bull, the old priest left the warmth of the chieftain's fire to investigate the dark area where the childbirth had taken place. What he saw there shook him greatly. A great power had entered the longhouse: the power of the sea, the bane of Thor himself.

The old shaman barely noticed the body of the young mother, nor did he heed the pulpy mess of placenta and blood. He lifted the child into the air and began a chant of power. Singing softly, he walked back to the chieftain's hearth, holding the child high.

A new leader had been born into the tribe, a powerful boy-child who carried in him the strength to defy the gods.

The clan chieftain was soon made aware of the new addition to the tribe, and rejoiced at the power awarded to the clan. Late that night, the men indulged in a great feast. In the silent shadows the body of the young woman remained, her eyes unseeing, her silent scream unheard.

Above the longhouse, the storming winds screamed as if the gods themselves were maddened by the blasphemy that now inhabited this house. A great scourge and powerful evil had been born into the world.

Olaf Orm grew quickly and soon became a man strong of arm and keen of eye. Yet in his heart there was a wicked shadow, and often he would hear the ancient gnarled voices of three old women. Motherless, the young Olaf secretly believed that the three crones inside his head were his mothers. Often he would heed their commands. When he did, life was easy.

Olaf proved himself to be a great warrior and a master of the sea. In his seventeenth year, Olaf called out Sigurd the chieftain, challenging him for leadership of the clan.

Sigurd had long known that this day would come, and on that pale autumn day when Olaf finally called out his name, Sigurd conceded without a fight. With the Wyrm great things would come, of that he was certain.

That stormy fall saw the beginning of the bloody reign of Olaf Orm, now called the Wyrm.

The Wyrm soon became a powerful warlord and drew his clan into constant war. The three crones inside his head called for blood. Insistently they demanded it! For three years, blood flowed like a river across southern Jutland.

The victories of the Wyrm were many. But the Wyrm had little regard for his own clan, driving them into battle after battle and demanding the glory for himself. Over the years, insanity grew in him and chaos thrived around him.

Victory after brutal victory, the Wyrm carved the blood eagle on captured enemy chieftains. With a long blade he would cut two deep gashes between their back ribs and pull out their living lungs with his bare hands. With the blasphemous wings stretched across their backs, the men would die in slow, soundless misery. Then Olaf ate their raw hearts, and the three voices in his head rejoiced.

The torture of his prisoners was atrocious. Yet, to the enemies of the Wyrm, most horrible of all was a disturbing dark rumor. Several holy men preached that those who fell in battle to the Wyrm would not go to their rightful place in Valhalla. They would instead be captured in the dark caverns below Ygdrasil, where they would eternally slave for the three shadows that wove the threads of fate: Urd, Verdandi, and terrible Skuld.

Great Sea Lords who had never feared anything in their lives were frightened to face the Wyrm. They feared not for their flesh, but for their souls. As the years passed by and the chaos of the Wyrm raged unchecked, many thought the days of Ragnarok were at hand.

It was a young Sea Lord chieftain, Holger of the Field, who finally defeated the Wyrm, ending his reign of blood.

In a stealthy surprise attack from the sea, the Clan of the Field attacked the Clan of the Wyrm in the small hours before dawn. The Wyrm, confident in his superiority, never expected the brash counterattack.

Most of the Wyrm's warriors were slaughtered in their sleep. Holger of the Field captured the Wyrm while he slumbered fitfully on his cot. Enraged and venomous, the Wyrm twisted against his captive ropes. For the first time in Olaf's life, the three voices inside his head were silent. The Wyrm had been defeated.

The Clan of the Field dared not slay the Wyrm. To slay a man blessed by the gods would bring bad luck on their clan. Instead they tied the Wyrm to a small boat and set him adrift in the eastern sea to find his fate in the archipelagos that lie east of Jutland.

Olaf Orm drifted for many days until his boat ran ashore somewhere on Zealand's west coast. When a small clan of gatherers found him, he was delirious and talking to phantoms that none could see. The tribesmen untied the Sea Lord and brought him to their small village in the nearby woods. The former chieftain recovered and soon plotted to return to southern Jutland to enact his revenge upon Holger of the Field.

At this point the story of Olaf Orm becomes muddled and unclear. It is known that the Wyrm came to dominate the small tribe that had found him, and that the tribe honored their new leader as a god. For unknown reasons, the Wyrm never returned to southern Jutland but died years later somewhere on Zealand, the object of a dark worship.

His followers buried the body of the Wyrm under an elaborate cairn on a small lake island. They continued to worship the Wyrm and soon abandoned their old gods entirely.

The Cult of the Wyrm

According to the lore of the Cult of the Wyrm, Olaf will return to the realms of the living and take his revenge against the world. As years passed, the Cult of the Wyrm became unpopular with its neighboring tribes. Battles were lost and the Cult was greatly diminished. Still, surviving Cult members continued to worship the Wyrm in secret. By maintaining its secrecy, the Cult of the Wyrm has managed to survive for more than 1,000 years. To hide their ceremonies and pilgrimages from their neighbors, they have over the years built a massive network of tunnels under Lake Sortsoe that holds the Cairn of the Wyrm.

The Mansion and the Lake

In 1793, the Danish king gave the lands surrounding Lake Sortsoe to the newly appointed Duke Ludvig Nyhuus. As a gift to the Duke, the king built a mansion on the lakeshore and bonded the local populace to the Duke.

The king was unwittingly sending the young Duke and his family into an area infested with black magic and ill will. There were several omens of the region's foul aura: Several royal construction workers working on the Sortsoe mansion were found drowned in the lake. The crew constructing the mansion's foundation seemed to be especially unlucky and fell to all sorts of unlikely accidents. There were constant reports of ghostly sightings in the area. Haunting tales of ghostly Sortsoe Lake can still be found in Danish literature to this day.

Upon taking residence in the mansion, the Nyhuus family was struck by great misfortune almost immediately. Karl, the youngest son of the Duke, was found drowned in the lake within a week of arriving at Sortsoe. The Duke was grief stricken, and life at Sortsoe soon became miserable. After three years, the Duchess refused to spend another day at the remote estate and left to live with her sisters in Copenhagen.

The Cult of the Wyrm, only remotely understanding the supernatural malignity of the area, was pleased by the chaos that engulfed the Nyhuus household. Most of the staff ran away or suffered violent and mysterious deaths. Local Cult members slowly replaced the staff, allowing the cult to continue its unholy rituals on the Sortsoe Isle virtually undisturbed.

A very important moment for the cult was the initiation of Peter Nyhuus, the oldest son of Ludvig and the heir to the Sortsoe estate. Peter was initiated on All Hallows Eve three years after the death of his younger brother. The young man soon became a zealous worshipper of the secret evil that lay on Sortsoe Isle.

Peter was the ripe age of 23 when his father was found drowned in the lake. Duke Ludvig Nyhuus had been taking his usual morning walk and had not

Sortsoe Hauntings

The Nyhuus mansion and the area surrounding Lake Sortsoe are teeming with malign supernatural energy, hauntings, and illusions that torment the investigators during their stay. A number of these phenomena are described below.

Cold Spots: A traditional sign of ghostly activity, cold spots appear at infrequent intervals around Sortsoe—especially inside the Nyhuus mansion. These columns of cold are usually about 12 feet in diameter. The air inside these columns is freezing. Though the Sortsoe villagers don't seem to notice the cold, the investigators are overcome with shivering and dread should they step into one of these ghostly patches.

Phantom Lights: At night, strange balls of luminescence drift along the roads and paths that crisscross the Sortsoe region. The glowing orbs vary from golf ball-size to as tall as a person and vanish if they are touched. If the investigators follow the ghostly lights, they find that while many simply wander randomly about, most seem to converge on the Nyhuus graveyard, where they seep into the ground.

Sign of the Serpent: When they least expect it, the investigators discover a huge nest of snakes. Hundreds of the glistening, writhing black creatures slither and hiss as they suddenly appear in an investigator's bed, closet, or suitcase. A moment later, the snakes vanish without a trace.

Klaus the Shepherd: A local legend has it that a young shepherd boy was wrongfully killed long ago. Since then, his ghost is known to wander the region, mournfully playing his flute (see the sidebar for details).

Battle Cry: The souls of some of the Wyrm's original worshippers of are trapped on this plane. When the wind is just right and the moon hangs low like Odin's eye, the investigators can hear these lost souls still waging a war they lost centuries before. The sounds of battle are quiet at first but gradually become deafening: the clang of sword on shield, the screams of the wounded, the cursing in an ancient language. At its peak, the battle sounds as if it is raging all around the investigators—yet they see nothing.

The Dead Travel Fast: A black carriage of the style used by nobility a century ago speeds along the road just after sunset. Though it is pulled by four black horses, neither the animals nor the carriage wheels make a sound. The driver of the carriage wears a long dark coat and a top hat that hides his face in shadow. If the investigators are on the road as the carriage speeds by, they can feel it passing through them like an icy fog. If they motion to the driver to stop the carriage, he does so immediately, swinging open the carriage door. Inside the carriage is absolute darkness. Those who step into the carriage are trapped as the door shuts behind them, sealing them inside as the carriage carries them off into the underworld, never to be seen again.

returned. The stable master later found the Duke face-down in the lake near an outgrowth of small bushes that stretched over the dark water.

During his reign as Duke, Peter Nyhuus was a harsh master. Of all his servants and bonded peasants, only members of the Cult received mercy or kindness from him. The Cult of the Wyrm flourished during his rule, as it had not in hundreds of years. The Cult actually managed to spread into neighboring estates and became secretly influential with many local authorities. Its brand, the black serpent, became a feared symbol signaling secret danger and blasphemous power.

In the winter of 1871, Duke Peter Nyhuus died after a brief battle with typhus. During the latter years of his life, the remnants of the Danish nobility had collapsed and the rise of democracy had rendered their institutions and traditions obsolete. Peter's oldest son, Karl, was a shrewd businessman who quickly learned to flourish in the new industrial world. Peter's other son, Morten, was a dedicated dilettante. He spent his time traveling and exploring the far reaches of the world, endlessly fascinated with the progress and expanse of imperialism.

Though Karl II and Morten Nyhuus were both initiates of the Cult of the Wyrm, they lacked the passion of their father. To the sons of Peter Nyhuus, the worship of the Wyrm was just an obscure, remotely interesting pastime. In the years following Peter's death, the power of the cult rapidly dwindled. Karl had become more interested in the matters of the world at hand, and Morten in the world abroad.

The cult received a terrible blow when Morten returned from a long expedition to Tibet with a strange body. During his travels in Asia, Morten had become obsessed with a new religion he called "The Fellowship of the Four Horsemen." He preached that he had been approached by divine creatures that had given him words of supernatural wisdom. Morten laid the mummified body of the holy messenger in the catacombs below Sortsoe and frowned upon any further worship of the Wyrm.

Only a few of the locals were converted to the religion of the Four Horsemen. Most agreed that the body Morten had brought back was quite impressive and certainly unusual, but to Morten's dismay, the cult maintained their worship of the Wyrm.

Morten wrote an exhaustive tome outlining the findings, conversations, and worship of the Four Horsemen. Karl Nyhuus, who had by now stopped attending any ceremonies, only tolerated the two obscure religions on his estate as long as they were kept quiet.

Morten Nyhuus disappeared in 1908 while on an expedition to the Caribbean, where he was searching for additional signs of the Four Horsemen. His body was never found, nor were the ruins of his vessel or the bodies of his fellow explorers. It is assumed that a tribe of South American savages butchered the expedition. Some members of the cult were convinced that Morten found what he was looking for and that his gods took him to enlightenment. Morten's vessel, the Makalu, was last spotted leaving the Danish colony of St. Croix en route to a Bermuda island.

In the years following the Great War, the Cult of the Wyrm regressed further. The emergence of modern industrial society was a severe blow. Close-knit groups of peasants and villagers were slowly dissolved as technology made the need for large-scale agricultural labor obsolete. The youth of Sortsoe began moving away from the area, and while the advances in education were damaging to most religions, they were catastrophic to more obscure worships. The Cult of the Wyrm soon became a society of old men and women. Only a handful of younger people stayed in the area.

Duke Karl Nyhuus, the last of his line, died in 1928. The mansion, which had fallen into disrepair, was abandoned. Occasionally, cultists would use the mansion entrance to the catacombs and Sortsoe Isle, but ceremonies became fewer and fewer. In the winter of 1962, the mansion suffered from a terrible fire and was soon forgotten by everyone but the local villagers.

For years, the malign power around Sortsoe slept, its secrets remembered only by a handful of locals. The backwater village in west Zealand was soon a mere shadow of the large rural community it once had been. Few visitors ever came to Sortsoe, and the occasional hunter that strayed near the lake never lingered long.

About three months ago, the town received three visitors from beyond.

As SH-01 races toward Earth, deep primordial energies have awakened, sending pulses of life into strange, forgotten matterstreams where gods go to die.

Weaving Papers #1

Dated three months ago

Master,

Come to the mansion tonight. Something has happened! The Three of legend have revealed themselves. I found them by the lake last night. They have taken residence in the mansion, and they wish to meet you. Master, they are his mothers.

The sign of him is in their shadow.

You can understand the dire importance of this note. I will meet you on the road after sunset.

J. Moller

Gamemaster's Introduction

The Coming of the Norns

On a stormy evening Jesper Mollar was searching for three of his cows. The beasts had escaped their pen and were walking about in the dark. Hoping to find them, Jesper searched the open areas around Sortsoe Lake.

Jesper never found the cows, but at the banks of the lake he found three old crones who spoke alluring and powerful words in his ear.

On this, the eve of time, three old goddesses have awakened from their deathlike sleep to revive their son. Rivers of blood will soon rage through Denmark again.

The Pact of the Norns

In the time of the old gods, the task of the Norns was to weave the fates of men. In the misty, dank caverns below Ygdrasil, the three dwelled and worked. For ages they wove the way of lives, yet they had no real power among the gods of Valhalla. The Norns secretly detested this existence.

The three spent long years plotting against the other gods until the strongest and bitterest of the three, Skuld, forged a plan to tear asunder the foundations of Valhalla. In her dark heart, Skuld decided to foster an evil that would tip the scales in favor of the chaos and winter that she loved.

One dark night the three secretly left their cave and traveled the long miles from Ygdrasil to the very edge of the world-sea. At the shores of the terrible ocean, they lifted their hands in unison and called a terrible summons. The sea boiled and blood-red mud rose from

Klaus the Shepherd

Oh, yes, I'll tell you the story of Klaus the shepherd boy.

It must have been, oh, 200 years ago or so—back when you could raise sheep on the hills out here—that there lived on one of the estates a rich old earl. Now the earl was a widower, but he had a single child, a daughter, whom he loved more than all the world. He loved her too much, in fact, and kept her hidden away from all but the household staff. No commoner could see her, the earl decreed, and no noble either until his daughter was of marrying age.

The earl's daughter did not mind. It's hard to be lonely if you don't know what it's like not to be alone. Her father bought her beautiful presents as well, to keep her mind from wandering over the walls and down the road. He bought her dresses and jewelry and toys, such that any other little girl would die of jealousy—if his daughter had known any other little girls.

Of all the earl's gifts, the one he treasured the most was a doll he had fashioned by an expert doll maker in Copenhagen. It was a most lifelike doll. It stood as tall as the earl's daughter, and its face, hands, and feet were made of finest porcelain. Those who saw the doll (and there were not many who did) swore its face was in the likeness of the girl's late mother.

It was towards late afternoon one summer's day when the earl's daughter was out in the garden, playing with her doll. She heard a snuffling and a whining coming from the other side of the tall stone wall. Now, the girl had been ordered by her father—very sternly, I might add—to never let anyone into the garden. All the same, she was as curious as any young girl would be, and determined to find out what the noise was. It sounded like a puppy. The girl loved puppies.

And so she unlatched the garden gate and poked her head outside. Sure enough, there was the cutest little puppy she had ever seen. She squealed with delight and knelt in the dirt, calling the puppy to her. The dog rushed to the girl and threw itself into her arms. Still laughing, she brought the little fellow into the garden with her. If she hadn't done that...well, it would have turned out better.

They played together for a time and I'm sure they both loved the attention. The play turned rough, as it will with puppies, and the little dog grabbed the girl's doll for a game of tug-of-war. The earl's daughter was not about to be bested by the puppy, so she took hold of the other end of the doll and pulled. Of course the doll ripped. Of course its precious porcelain face cracked and chipped. And of course the dog mauled the arm he had in his jaws.

The earl's daughter was still wondering how to explain this to her father (who would certainly not approve of strange dogs in the garden so she couldn't tell him of the puppy) when from far off over the hills there came a sweet fluting sound. The puppy's ears perked up and, before the girl could react, he bolted out the open garden gate with her doll's arm in his mouth. The poor girl probably cried as she watched the dog running away, growing smaller as he disappeared over the hills she was never allowed to explore alone.

If she'd just left it at that, just let the dog run off with the arm, Klaus might have lived to a ripe old age. But she didn't. Instead, the earl's daughter decided to risk her father's wrath in order to get the arm back from the dog.

Up the hill she ran, then back down, calling to the dog the whole time. But that puppy was following the sound of the flute and not listening to anything else. Coming down the far side of the third hill, the earl's daughter saw the puppy had stopped at the feet of a shepherd boy. The boy was playing a flute. The doll's arm was also at his feet.

Suddenly the girl got shy. She hadn't seen many children before, especially boys, and never this far from her father. She probably just smiled and pointed at her doll's arm.

Now the stories don't tell us what they talked about, but I can guess. Klaus the shepherd probably introduced himself and apologized for what his dog had done. The earl's daughter probably blushed and forgave the boy, then collected the chewed-up remains of her doll's arm. Maybe they played with the puppy for a while. Maybe they just talked. We don't know what they did, only that the sun was setting when the earl caught the two of them there, a mile or so from the estate.

I figure the earl was pretty worked up by then. Think about it: He came home, went out in the garden to give his beloved daughter a hug and a kiss, only to find the gate open, the garden a mess, and the doll broken and torn in the mud. He was frantic by the time he found his daughter. And when he found her, she was muddy and scratched up from chasing the dog, her dress torn and dirty.

But the earl didn't see the puppy. He saw Klaus.

Back in those days, the lord of the manor could do pretty much whatever he liked. The earl did a number of things to the shepherd boy. When Klaus was dumped on his family's doorstep, his back was crossed with blood from the lashing he had received. His face was all bruised up. There was probably a whole lot more, but Klaus couldn't tell anyone about it, seeing how his tongue had been cut out.

Why his tongue? Afraid I can't really say. Guess we just chalk it up to a father's rage.

A couple days later, Klaus died from his wounds. That night, the saint of the shepherd appeared in his mother's dreams and told her that her son's death would be avenged. At the end of time, the saint said, Klaus will come back and walk the earth again. He'll play for the earl and the earl's household, piping a dirge for their damned souls.

So that's the story of Klaus the shepherd boy. Don't know if I believe it, but if I'm out in the hills and hear a flute, I sure won't be kicking any dogs.

the depths of the waters. Like a mountain of slime he came, the Midgard Wyrm, vast and monstrous, his length spanning the earth itself.

At the lip of the world-sea, the wind whipping their moldy robes, rain lancing at their fragile bodies, the hideous head of the Wyrm far above them, the Norns made a terrible pact.

That night, as the wind swept the southern shore of Jutland, a child was born. On his brow was the blood-red mark of the Wyrm. The child's destiny was to destroy the realm of man, to tear Midgard asunder and to leave the gods of Valhalla abandoned by humanity.

Yet the son failed to bring about the destruction for which the Norns had hoped. The carelessness of the great Wyrm was in him, and a champion of Valhalla bested him. The Norns retreated back to their cave. The days of the old gods eventually faded and for centuries they slept.

Now, the webs of fate have spun the Norns to the shores of Sortsoe. In this realm the Norns are weak, their real power resting in the potential of their dead son. They have begun the soft song of his awakening, and the black bowels of Sortsoe are coursing with secret energy.

Enchanted Sortsoe

The three Norns have taken residence in the decrepit Nyhuus mansion and cast powerful spells of control and illusion around the Sortsoe area. The populace of Sortsoe is unknowingly and completely under the influence of the crones' magic. The Norns can see through the eyes of the inhabitants of Sortsoe, and the villagers do the bidding of the three crones.

An illusion has been cast on the mansion, and the once wind-torn and half-burned old house now appears in its prime. Inside, the decor is in splendid condition. A cozy, inviting light shines out of the clear windows. Restored to its former glory, the mansion now sits by the banks of Lake Sortsoe like a bulbous spider waiting for an unsuspecting insect to enter its web.

The power of the Norns does not extend much beyond the casting of these powerful spells. Their task here is to reanimate the remains of Olaf Orm, bringing the dark warrior back to the land of the living. To accomplish this, the Norns need the life force of mortals. They are loath to sacrifice the cultists, as their son will need their support and knowledge of the world when he awakens.

Instead, the Norns are attempting to draw innocent strangers to the mansion, trap them there, and slowly drain their life force. The crones have already trapped a few travelers and families that took a wrong turn to Sortsoe. The Norns welcome all visitors and bid them to stay in comfort in the mansion. Most visitors decline the offer, only to accept it later when they discover that they cannot leave Sortsoe.

To draw off human life force, the Norns steal small personal items from their victims, then weave them into a cursed knot. Soon, visitors begin to fade. Their energy slowly drains, black circles form under their eyes, and strange, blue blotches form on their skin. After about three days, cursed visitors die in their sleep. The crones then hide their bodies and wait for more visitors to drop into their trap. Their son needs more life force. Just a little more…

Each day they spend in the area of Sortsoe, cursed characters take 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage. A successful Fortitude save (DC 17) reduces this by half. This ability damage cannot be recovered as long as the character remains in the vicinity of Sortsoe.

The Leaving Spell

Once the visitors' personal items have been woven into the Norns' spell, they cannot leave Sortsoe. They might try to leave by the road, over the field, or through the forests, but Sortsoe always eventually appears in front of them.

If, after being entangled in the spell, the investigators try to bring up the "leaving problem" with the inhabitants of Sortsoe village, they find little understanding or sympathy. Villagers just shake their heads and point down the road.

"If you want to go," they say, "just leave by the road."

"But why would you want to leave Sortsoe?" a villager might jokingly continue. Observant investigators may see a hint of dark knowledge gleaming in his eye.

Spellbound investigators who try to leave Sortsoe lose 1/1d6 points of Sanity when they realize they cannot leave.

Investigators' Introduction

If investigators have been fortunate enough to locate gasoline, they may drive from Copenhagen to Sortsoe in about an hour and a half. If they have trouble locating gasoline, they can make the trip on bicycle (about eight hours) or horseback (10 hours). Lake Sortsoe is located about 125 miles east of Copenhagen and about seven miles inland from the southwest coast of Zealand. The village of Sortsoe is located a few hundred yards from the western end of the lake.

The trip from Copenhagen to Sortsoe is relatively uneventful. A fair number of cars have been carelessly abandoned at the side of the road after running out of gas. No airplanes seem to grace the skies, and a deep silence has fallen over the land. It is a radical change from the tumultuous, panicked streets of Copenhagen.

Investigators pass many small rural villages on their way. Most are now ghost towns abandoned by villagers seeking higher ground. Only the occasional stranger

Weaving Papers #2

From Roskilde Amt Tidende, dated January 7th, 1965

Old Nyhuus Mansion Burns

The old Nyhuus estate located near Lake Sortsoe burned halfway to the ground yesterday. The local villagers of Sortsoe dealt with the fire before the authorities arrived on the scene. The estate has been abandoned since Duke Karl Nyhuus II died in 1924. Community plans to turn the old mansion into a museum now seem unlikely.

walking to some unknown destination interrupts the landscape.

In several places, red graffiti proclaims "The End is Near! Repent!"

Near Sortsoe the landscape changes from almost completely rural farmland to countryside of thicker forests, lakes, and occasional fields. When a road sign leading to Sortsoe finally appears, a feeling of dread falls upon the investigators, but soon passes.

Sortsoe Village

Sortsoe village is about as remote as a village can be in modern Denmark. It is old and faded, most of its houses abandoned and in various stages of disrepair. The few houses that are inhabited are melancholy and uninviting. Farm equipment is parked along the narrow streets, making navigation by car very difficult. Flocks of geese walk freely about the village, and the occasional cry of a chicken can be heard from several of the farmhouses.

The largest open area in town is the central town square. A medium-size stone fountain dominates the cobblestone court. The fountain is dry (and always has been), but is well tended and a splendid work of stone. The fountain is actually a secret passageway that provides access to the network of catacombs beneath Sortsoe. (For more information about the fountain, see the "Catacombs" section, page 211.) With a successful Spot check (DC 20), the investigators notice the sign of the Horsemen carved into the fountain. The villagers know about the secret passage to the catacombs but have forgotten how to activate its sliding door.

Only eight families remain in Sortsoe, for a grand total of 53 people. These are the last remnants of the Cult of the Wyrm and Morten Nyhuus's Fellowship of the Four Horsemen. The villagers are all under the spell of the Norns. If addressed, the villagers provide no substantial information to the investigators, and will mostly point down the dirt road leading to the mansion.

"The ladies at the Nyhuus estate will be able to help you," they reply. Investigators who study the villagers closely and make a successful Sense Motive check (DC 15) may notice that the villagers all possess a distant look in their eyes and seem to go about their day as if they are in a haze.

Olsen's Super

The only retail operation in Sortsoe is the tiny general-purpose shop maintained by cult shaman Gert Olsen. The store is poorly organized but relatively clean and well supplied. Olsen also sells gas from a small pump behind the store but has not received supplies for more than two weeks, and the pump is dry. Investigators might wonder at the symbol of the store: a black serpent.

During the day, Olsen may always be found in the store, taking inventory or restocking the unstable shelves and small cooler section. He is remotely friendly to the investigators and happily sells them anything he can supply.

"The big one's coming," he says, pointing towards the ceiling and flashing an uncertain grin. "I'm just hoping that there will be enough potatoes."

Any investigator making a successful Spot check (DC 15) notices a small tattoo on Olsen's right wrist. It is the same symbol that graces his store: the black serpent.

If the investigators should search Olsen's store after hours, they find that the small shop houses a large basement. The basement is accessible through a narrow stairway located in the tiny back office, which is filled with inordinate amounts of retail paperwork.

The large basement mainly functions as the store's warehouse, and long shelves filled with goods line the whole room. Toward the back of the basement is a door leading into a small room. The door is locked, but the lock is old and can easily be circumvented with a successful Open Lock check (DC 20).

The small room contains Olsen's artifacts and ceremonial clothes. Investigators immediately notice that the wooden walls of the room are covered with black runes. A successful Knowledge (history) or (archeology) check (DC 20) reveals that these are authentic Viking era runes. An investigator with 5 or more ranks in a Scandinavian language can make a Knowledge (occult) check to decipher the runes.

The Wyrm Sleeps.
The Wyrm Sleeps, dreaming of red eagle justice.
The Wyrm Sleeps, his waking is at hand.
We wait.
The Wyrm Awakens.

The artifacts are fairly uninteresting (candles, brass scepters, and several sharp flint knives). The ceremo-

nial robes are unadorned and jet-black. Located under a pile of black cloth are a recent note and an old newspaper clipping (see the Weaving Papers #1 and #2).

Hanging on the wall is an old printed map of Tibet and Nepal. A red dash has been plotted through the mountains, terminating in an area circled and labeled on the map as "Mt. Makalu." A small note next to the circle reads "Four Horsemen" and another handwritten scribble reads, "Seek the Pinnacle of Three Fingers." The map is dated 1894.

Jesper Moller



Moller's farm is located halfway between town and the Nyhuus estate. The two-unit farmhouse is a dirty white with black crossbeams and a decaying thatch roof. The smaller of the two buildings is the home where Jesper Moller lives with his wife Kamilla. The larger building is the stable that holds about 50 cows and two bulls.

If the investigators approach the house, Jesper steps out of the stables carrying a bucket of dirty water. He stops briefly and studies the strangers. Then, without a word, he puts on a sour grimace and walks to the drain on the far side of the stable to dump out the dirty water. Only then does he address the investigators.

"What brings strangers in these unhappy times?" he asks somewhat impatiently.

Jesper Moller does not answer any detailed questions, instead referring the investigators to the "people in the mansion." He does not invite the investigators inside and soon excuses himself with the business of farm life. "The sky may be falling, but the cows will still complain if they're not cared for."

If asked about the note found in Olsen's store, Moller shrugs and denies the note being of his creation. A successful Sense Motive check opposed by Moller's Bluff check (Bluff +3) reveals the man's duplicity, but he is unwilling to say anything further on the subject. He immediately reports the problem to Olsen when given the chance.

As the investigators leave, they might catch a glimpse of Kamilla Moller studying them from a dark window. In her eyes is a slightly insane gleam, and her mouth is stretched in a dark smile. Kamilla moves away from the window if noticed or addressed. Under no circumstances does she talk to investigators.

The Nyhuus Mansion

About half a mile past Moller's farm, the road passes through an ill-kept stone wall. Past the wall, the dirt road is overhung by a line of tall, ancient elm trees. Soon the road widens out into a cobblestone courtyard, and the Nyhuus mansion looms before the visitors.

If approached by night, the house is bathed in a warm, welcoming glow from the tall and clear windows. If approached by day, the front door is wide open and the comforting smell of baking emanates from inside.

The Three Crones

When they approach the front door of the mansion, an unseen, rusty old voice greets the investigators from a nearby window.

"Who goes there by our door?" An amused cackle follows.

An old woman clad in a musty, black cotton dress, appears in the doorway a minute later. Her face is twisted and wrinkled with age, yet her eyes seem clear

Wrath of the Norns

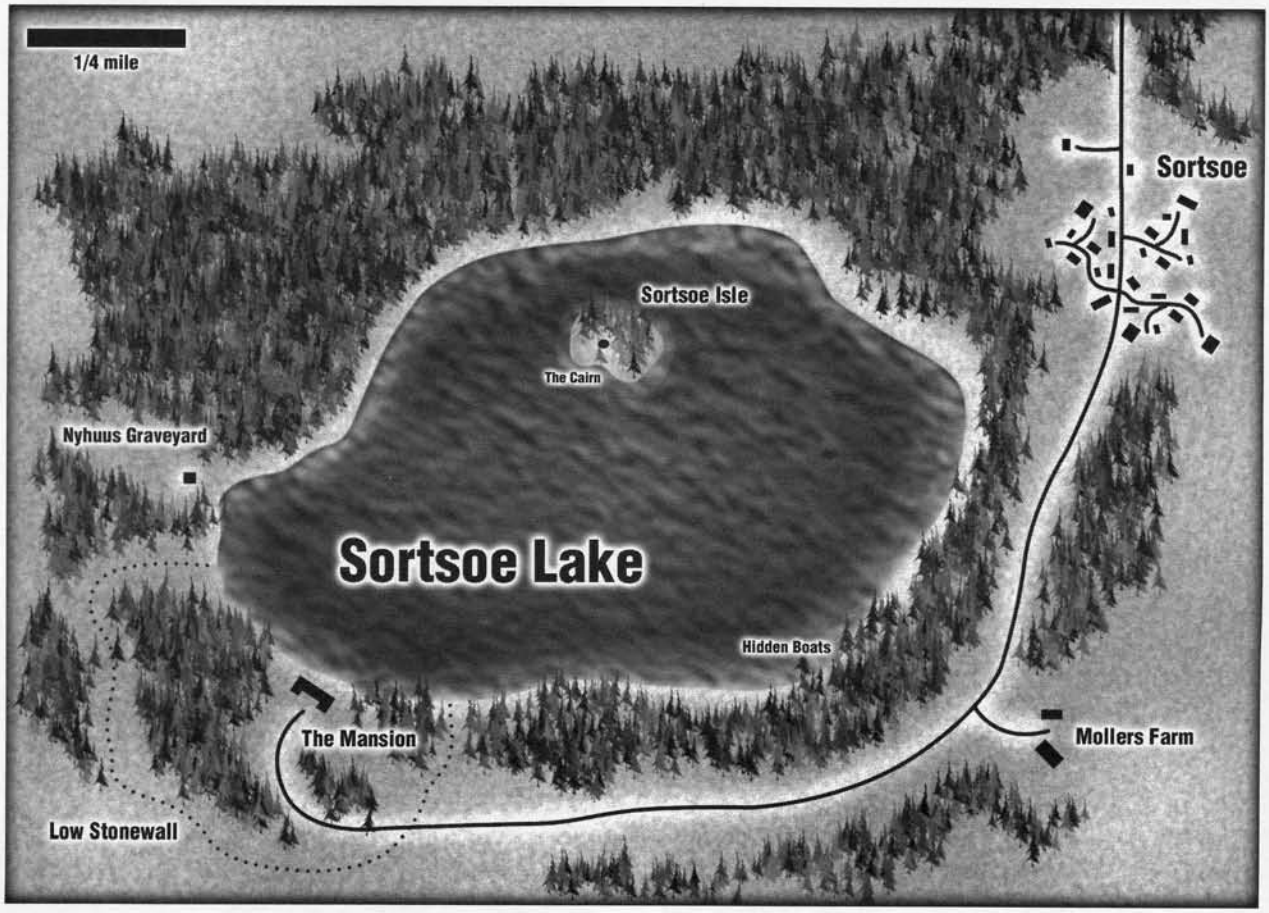
Though their powers are not what they used to be, the Norns are still more than capable of dealing with investigators who dare threaten their plan to resurrect their son. Below are three of the ways in which the sisters can strike at their enemies.

Black Wings of Death: Through their magic, the Norns can summon an enormous flock of crows to do their bidding. The sky fills with the crones' cawing, fluttering servants. The cloud descends upon the crones' enemy, which is then buffeted by wings, torn by claws, and pecked with beaks. A single crow may not be much of a threat, but when hundreds attack at once, the birds are deadly. This attack deals 1d2 points of damage per round until the victim takes cover inside or the Norns call off their servants.

Not Waving but Drowning: Those who cross the Norns risk drowning on dry land. Their lungs magically begin to fill with the black water of Lake Sortsoe. Gagging and sputtering, the drowning investigators may try to cough up the water, only to find it pours in an unending stream from their mouths. The spell lasts 1d6 minutes. Resolve this magical attack using the normal drowning rules.

Pitchforks and Torches: If all else fails, the three sisters can direct the Sortsoe locals to attack the investigators. Their unwitting servants gather into a rowdy mob, wielding farm implements, makeshift clubs, and the occasional shotgun. Chanting the song of the Wyrm, they converge on the investigators and do their best to eliminate the intruders.

Lake Sortsoe & Area



and she is even wearing a little lipstick. Smiling and clapping her old hands, the woman expresses her pleasure over visitors and insists that they come in and join her and her sisters for a cup of coffee and some fresh-baked cookies.

The woman introduces herself as Nina and her two sisters (who are dressed almost the same) as Usula and Bodil. In reality, the woman is Ord, and her sisters are Verdandi and Skuld, respectively.

As the two other Norns are entertaining the investigators in one of the sitting rooms, Bodil (Skuld) excuses herself to check on the baking.

Out of sight, Skuld searches the investigators' coats, vehicle, and luggage until she finds a personal item belonging to each of them. Then she quickly disappears into the catacombs to weave the items into the wicked spell-web in the sepulcher of Duke Ludvig. After accomplishing her task, she returns to socializing.

Immediately after Skuld has woven the items into the web, the investigators feel a pang of pain in their stomachs (as if their coffee is too strong). The two women, Nina and Usula, look at them with mock surprise and concern.

"Are you quite all right?" they ask.

The three Norns listen intently to the investigators' story and act like they believe any lie they are told. If asked, the three women profess ignorance of any book written by Morten Nyhuus, explaining that they bought the mansion a few years back and plan to die in happiness in the old house.

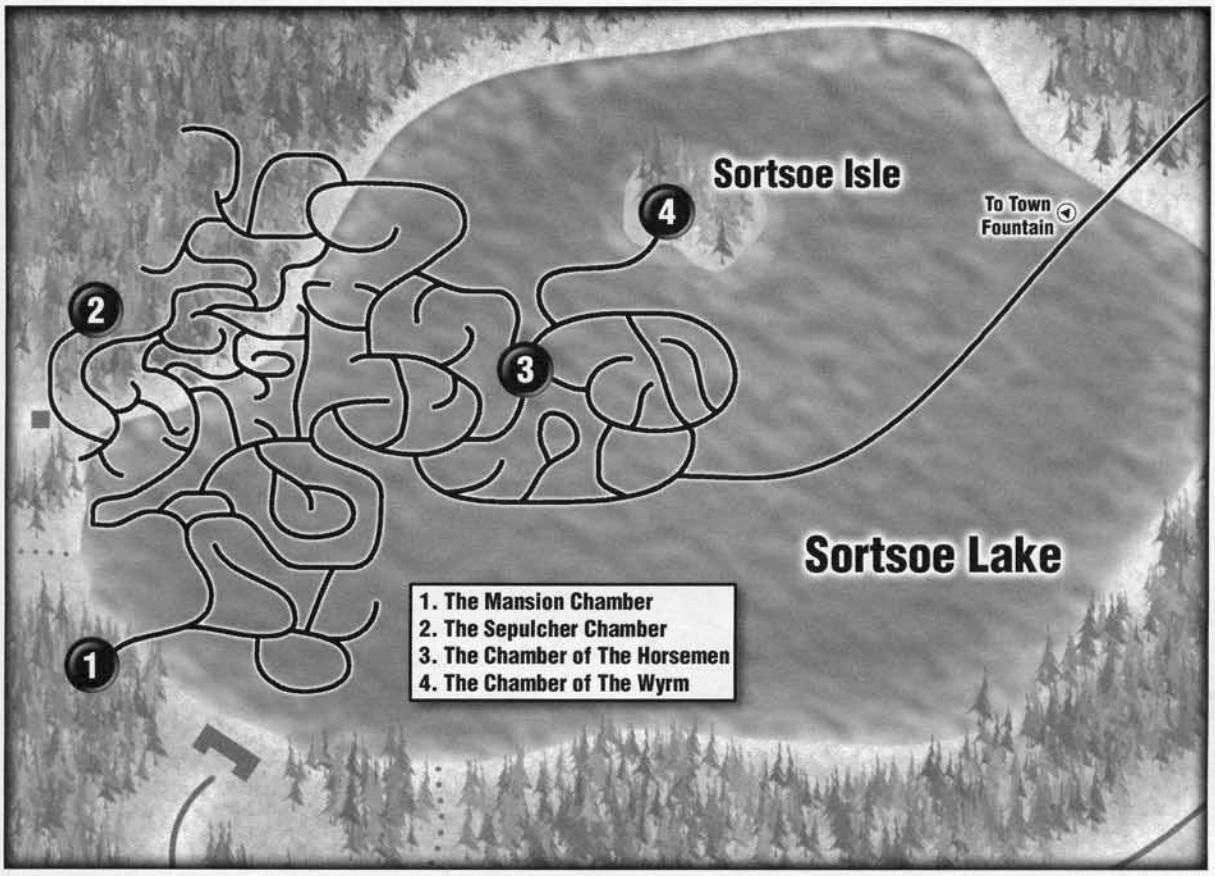
"Sortsoe is beautiful!" they chatter. "The lake is so wonderful, and the people here are really very kind. Just you wait and see—you will want to stay here forever as well."

The Norns offer the investigators a chance to stay in the mansion for a couple of days. They mention that, if searched, the house might very well contain the book they are looking for.

"There are many traces of the old Nyhuus family here," they say. "Your book may well be among all the old tomes in the various rooms of the house."

If the investigators accept the Norns' hospitality, each of them is shown a room upstairs. Investigators who initially turn down the offer might change their minds later when they discover that they cannot leave Sortsoe.

The Sortsoe Catacombs



If the investigators mention to the old ladies that they cannot leave town, the Norns merely shrug.

"Oh, really? Well, my…Why don't you all have a bite to eat then!"

The three act as if they don't understand the problem, and will conveniently feign senility.

Regardless of whether the investigators stay in the mansion or not, once the crones have succeeded in trapping them with their spell, they soon abandon their physical forms. By the second day investigators are unable to locate the three sisters. Nor can they find any food or drink in the house, or any other sign that it was occupied. The oven looks to have never been used.

Once investigators realize that they apparently have had coffee with three spectral beings, the understanding costs them 0/1d4 points of Sanity.

Investigators are free to investigate the house and village. If they openly attempt to foil the plan of the Norns, the three do their best to stop them (see sidebar).

The Norns have temporarily taken the shape of three large crows. In this shape they intend to wait until the investigators have been drained of life, then return to their human shape to hide the bodies and wait for more hapless travelers to find their way to Sortsoe.

The Estate Grounds

The estate is about 10 square miles and includes most of Lake Sortsoe and the surrounding woodland. The lands are wild and trails are, for the most part, overgrown and faded. The shore of the lake is a mere 20 to 25 yards from the rear of the mansion. A well-kept lawn runs from the side of the house to the banks of the lake. The lake is about a mile across and in its middle a small island is overgrown with elm, birch, and low bushes.

The Nyhuus Graveyards

Slightly to the west of the mansion, just inside the forest, is the Nyhuus family graveyard. A rusty old iron fence surrounds the small cemetary, but the gate collapsed many years ago and is slowly rusting on the overgrown path. Old leaves cover the quiet place and a two swallows have made their nest under the nook of the central sepulcher. The gravestones are few, but



opulent. By far the largest grave is the sepulcher of Duke Ludvig Nyhuus. The other gravestones read as follows:

Karl Nyhuus	1785–1793
Duke Ludvig Nyhuus I	1758–1806
Duchess Karina Nyhuus	1763–1814
Duchess Pauline Nyhuus	1791–1862
Duke Peter Nyhuus I	1782–1871
Morten Nyhuus	1854–1908
Duke Karl Nyhuus II	1848–1928

The only gravestone with an epitaph is that of young Karl Nyhuus. It reads (in Danish) "Our beloved son whom the waters took. Rest in paradise forever."

There is no actual grave for Morten Nyhuus—only a beautiful memorial marker. An ornate ship carved of marble tops the marker. A successful Search check (DC 25) reveals the sign of the Four Horsemen cleverly created from the pattern of different stones surrounding the ship.

The investigators might feel cold eyes watching them in the graveyard. One of the Norns is watching the cemetary in the form of a crow. If the investigators try to meddle with the door to the sepulcher, she and her sisters react harshly (see sidebar).

The sepulcher door is extremely difficult to open. The lock is rusted shut and moist muck has sealed the door. Opening the door requires a successful Open Lock check (DC 30) and a successful Strength check (DC 23). The door is too small for several people to try to open it at the same time.

As the investigators leave the graveyard, a large black crow suddenly caws in the trees over their heads and rises into the air with a bustling clatter of wings.

The Sepulcher of Duke Ludvig Nyhuus I

The Norns keep their life-draining web inside the sepulcher of the first Duke Nyhuus. They access the inside of the sepulcher from the catacombs below and not through the door. Should the investigators manage to enter the sepulcher, a disturbing sight greets them.

A massive entanglement of red rotting sinew stretches across the small musty room. The sinew seems to be attached to three decaying cow heads nailed to separate walls near the ceiling. Several artifacts, wrapped in thick cords of sinew, hang in the wild mesh. These are all modern artifacts, such as basketball shoes, a hairbrush, a red-haired doll dressed in a suit, and several other similar yet unlikely things. These artifacts belonged to the unfortunate families and travelers who were lured into the mansion during the last three months.

Seeing the web of the Norns costs the viewer 1/1d4 points of Sanity.

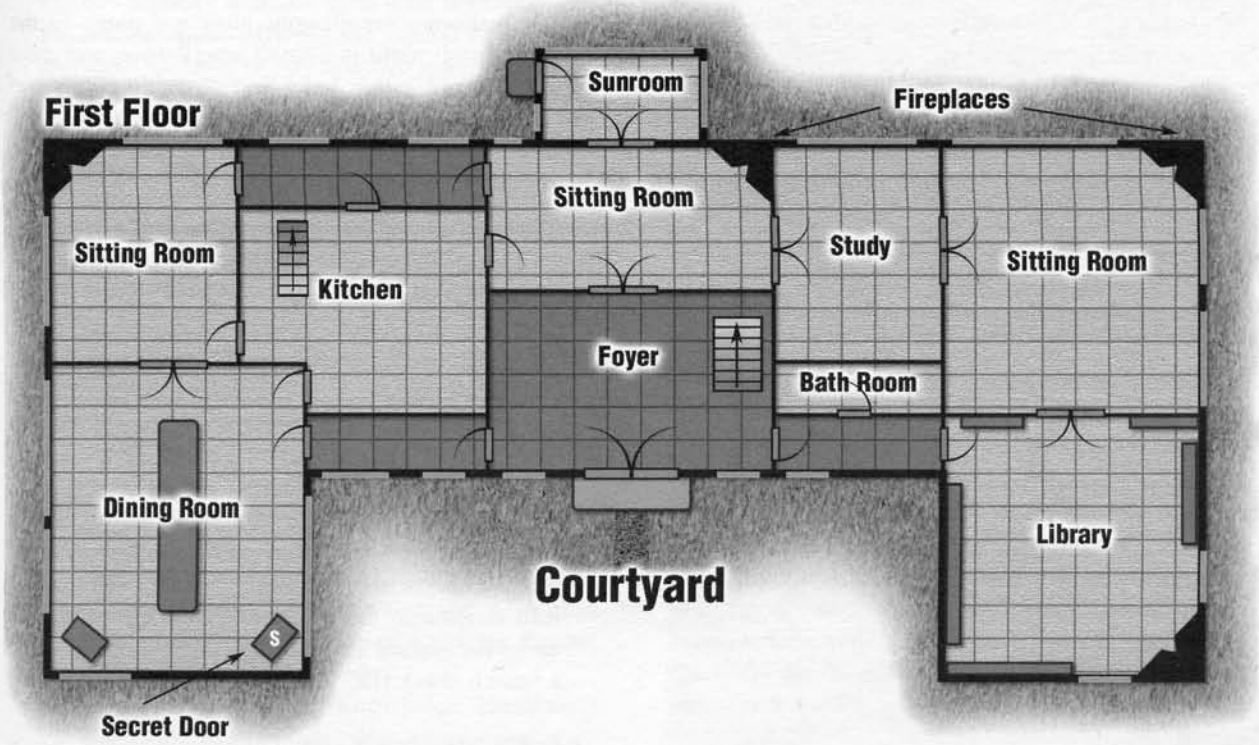
If the investigators are under the spell of the Norns, they can spot some of their own personal artifacts wrapped in the tangle of sinew. Removing the artifacts from the magical weave cancels the spell of draining and the spell of leaving. If the investigators remove their own artifacts, they find that they are now able to leave Sortsoe and the lethal drain of their life-energy has stopped. They immediately regain 1d4 points of lost Constitution and recover lost ability points normally afterwards. The Norns will instantly sense that their plan has been foiled and become enraged.

The Nyhuus Mansion

The two-story mansion seems to be in perfect condition due to the illusion of the Norns. Even the old cobblestone courtyard is in excellent shape. Investigators might wonder at the presence of four dust-covered cars in the parking lot. These cars belonged to two families and two traveling sales representatives who were unfortunate enough to visit the mansion since the Norns arrived. The visitors' life-drained bodies now lie hidden in the mansion's hollow places. The Norns are eagerly awaiting more visitors, as they need additional life-energy to finish the revival of their dark son.

If the cars are searched, the investigators find small clues indicating that these cars do not belong to the three old women in the mansion. Two of the cars are obviously family cars, one still full of luggage for two adults and two small girls. The two other cars have

The Nyhuus Mansion



Second Floor



Weaving Papers #3

Footnote from A Brief History of Sortsoe, 1921

Before the tribes moved into the area, a simple hunting and gathering culture dominated the Sortsoe region. These people earned the enmity of their neighbors through their strange beliefs, unnatural sacrifices, and blasphemous rituals. Unlike the animistic pagans around them, this unnamed tribe believed in a single "god-king," whose impending resurrection formed the cornerstone of their religion.

Weaving Papers #4

From Sortsoe Memories, 1880

And then there was the incident in which Ludvig's nine-year-old son Peter vanished. The duke searched the province frantically, vowing not to sleep until his son had been found. Three days after the boy's disappearance, two locals brought him home. He had gotten lost, they said, in the caverns beneath the manor house. This came as a surprise to the duke, who had not been aware of any caverns, and he ordered these caverns sealed up lest his son get lost again.

traces of paperwork and notepads. One car even has an inoperable CB radio attached to the dashboard.

The Norns do not acknowledge the cars. If asked, they claim the cars belong to people "camping in the woods" and use feigned senility to avert any further questions.

First Floor

The first floor of the mansion is full of large beautiful rooms. The foyer opens onto a wide staircase leading to the second floor and is decorated with elaborate paintings of the whole Nyhuus clan from Karl I to Karl II. The paintings are beautiful, yet the picture of Duke Peter Nyhuus might trouble the heart of anyone looks upon it in the dark.

The house is full of exotic artifacts brought back by the globetrotting Morten Nyhuus: large Chinese vases, ornate oriental rugs, elaborate African carvings, and large colorful drapes from Latin America.

The first floor also contains two large sitting rooms, a large dining room, and a well-maintained library/study. Several of the rooms contain large, elaborate, fireplaces.

One washing room is available on the first floor, completely refurbished with modern toilet facilities.

Second Floor

Bedrooms dominate the second floor of the mansion. Three modern washrooms are conveniently located on the second floor. There is also an elaborate tearoom facing the lake.

The bedrooms are all quite large and plush. In the corner of each room is a small wood stove, and most rooms overlook either Lake Sortsoe or the elm wood and courtyard in front of the mansion.

Hints and Clues

There are several clues and plot devices in the mansion that can be brought to light by inquisitive and searching investigators:

- The large central dining room contains two large wood-burning stoves. Investigators may notice that one of the stoves has no draft, and if they attempt to light it, smoke billows into the room. This stove is, in fact, a clever secret door. If the air-vent latch is firmly twisted clockwise, the whole stove can be slid aside, revealing an old set of stairs descending into the darkness beneath the mansion. These steps lead down into the catacombs that spread widely under the Sortsoe area. Finding the secret door takes a Search check (DC 20).

- Doing an extensive search of the downstairs library does not reveal Morten Nyhuus's *Book of the Four Horsemen*, but investigators are able to discover some clues to the history of the house (see the Weaving Papers #3 and #4).

- If the master bedroom upstairs is searched carefully (DC 25), the investigators may notice a small loose stone behind the bed. In a dark hollow behind the stone, the investigators find a small brass box. This box contains secret letters and a few old coins of Duke Peter's unhappy wife Pauline. The investigators may be surprised to find a great quantity of moist black soot in the hollow (the Norns' illusion does not cover this small hidden hole). Age and moisture have destroyed most of the letters contained in the box. Only a few phrases here and there can be deciphered (see the Weaving Papers #5).

- The fireplace in the southern sitting room on the first floor does not work. The chimney seems to be plugged. If the investigators prod inside the chimney, the bodies of the two traveling sales representatives abruptly come tumbling out of the fireplace. The bodies are still wearing clothes, their faces impossibly shriveled, almost mummified, and large, blue blotches appear in horrid frequency on their skin. Investigators standing by the fireplace when

the two bodies come dumping down lose 0/1d4 points of Sanity.

- Under the floorboards of an upstairs closet is another horrible collection of bodies. Here, the bodies of the two unlucky families have been crammed into the hollow space between the floors. Four adults and three children (a boy and two girls) have been crudely laid to rest beneath the floorboards. The bodies look to have suffered the same ravaging as the two bodies in the chimney.

Investigators might notice that one of the dead girls is clutching a single male doll. Knowledgeable investigators might recognize the doll as the "Fox Mulder" character from the television show *The X Files*. The female doll counterpart ("Dana Scully") can be found wrapped in cursed sinew inside the sepulcher of Duke Ludvig I.

The second day, investigators realize that something is very, very wrong. They are sick, tired, and somewhat dizzy. Several investigators have begun to develop bruised blue rashes on their skin. A successful Knowledge (medicine) check (DC 15) reveals that the investigators are suffering from some sort of poison that is exacerbating the symptoms of a wasting disease that has taken root in their bodies.

With another successful Knowledge (medicine) check (DC 20), a knowledgeable investigator may determine that the investigators have no more than two or three days to live if the disease goes unchecked. Should the investigators find the bodies of the other unfortunate guests, they might further realize the urgency of their situation.

There is no doctor in the village, and the villagers profess ignorance of their "unfortunate health problem." None of the villagers seem to have health problems, and they do not seem to worry about infection.

The Catacombs

Beneath the Nyhuus mansion lies the expansive network of tunnels and catacombs slowly built by the Cult of the Wyrm over the last ten centuries. The initial function of the first delvings was to provide a place to hide from mistrusting and warlike neighbors. As the Cult grew, the network of tunnels became more expansive, and eventually spun into an impressive web that stretches under most of Sortsoe.

The stairs leading down to the catacombs from the mansion dining room are of ancient, carved granite. They lead about 15 feet down into the first antechamber of the catacombs. This room held the first underground ceremonies of the Cult in the time before the end of the first millennium.

Most of the chambers and corridors of the catacombs have functioned as graves for cult members in countless decades. Everywhere the investigators look, there are shelves carved into the walls holding the mummified bodies of long-dead worshippers. More than 40 generations of cultists have been entombed along these walls (including the body of Duke Peter Nyhuus, whose grave at the family site is empty). When Olaf Orm awakens once more, the followers entombed within the crypts will awaken to his battle cry. With this deadly army, the Wyrm shall cut a swath of blood through the lands.

A large portion of the catacombs runs directly beneath Lake Sortsoe. Water constantly drips from the ceiling and runs in thin rivulets down the walls. The floor is covered in pools of water from one to six inches deep.

Weaving Papers #5

...chanting again from the island. I know not why I married him, for he is so cruel. His soul has been corrupted by the people of the snake...

...wake up screaming every night. Their nightmares are terrible. I hope to send them away for the summer to some place safe. Peter does not approve. I fear that...

It is a spirit, I am certain of it. I would flee but the for the children. I dare not leave them alone with Peter and his fellows from the village, lest they...

The Corridors

There are passages, turns, sub-corridors, chambers and side-corridors in the catacombs of Sortsoe. Investigators can easily get disoriented in this underground confusion. In fact, Gamemasters are encouraged to allow careless investigators to become lost. The darkness in the catacombs is complete, and probing investigators need a reliable light source to navigate the narrow passages. Candles and oil lamps are available in the mansion, but investigators are unable to find any battery-powered flashlights.

Several deadend corridors are actually traps, dropping away into pits 40 feet deep and covered by old canvas sacks. These trap corridors are marked by a small, serpent-shaped symbol on the wall of their parent corridor. These symbols are very difficult to notice (Spot check, DC 25) unless investigators know exactly what they are looking for.

Investigators bumbling carelessly around the catacombs are likely to abruptly encounter one of these traps. If the investigators miss the signs but are carefully searching the corridors as they proceed, they can

identify a pit with a successful Search check (DC 20). Once they have been detected, the pits can be bypassed or secured with a Disable Device check (DC 20). An investigator who steps on one of the canvas coverings must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) to avoid falling into the pit. Investigators who fall take 4d6 points of damage.

Almost all of the walls in the Sortsoe catacombs are covered with runes, which are indecipherable without extensive study. Depictions of Vikings with bloody wings and images of large serpents are common. With a successful Spot check (DC 15), an investigator might also notice a few ancient illustrations of three black-clad shadows sitting in a dark cave. These are early renderings of the Norns, a fact an investigator recognizes with a successful Knowledge (archaeology) check (DC 20).

Under the Duke's Sepulcher

Through a maze of corridors heading in a southward direction, the investigators run into a corridor that suddenly stops in a crumbling deadend. This corridor is slightly wider than the others and has no crypts or runes. Investigators have arrived at the small chamber immediately below the Nyhuus family graveyard and the Sepulcher of Duke Ludvig I.

High on a wall, almost under the roof, is the small symbol of a snake. Pressing the small icon releases a trapdoor in the roof of the tunnel. A small ladder can be reached within the dark hole above. A Search check (DC 20) is necessary to identify the snake and determine how to release the latch mechanism.

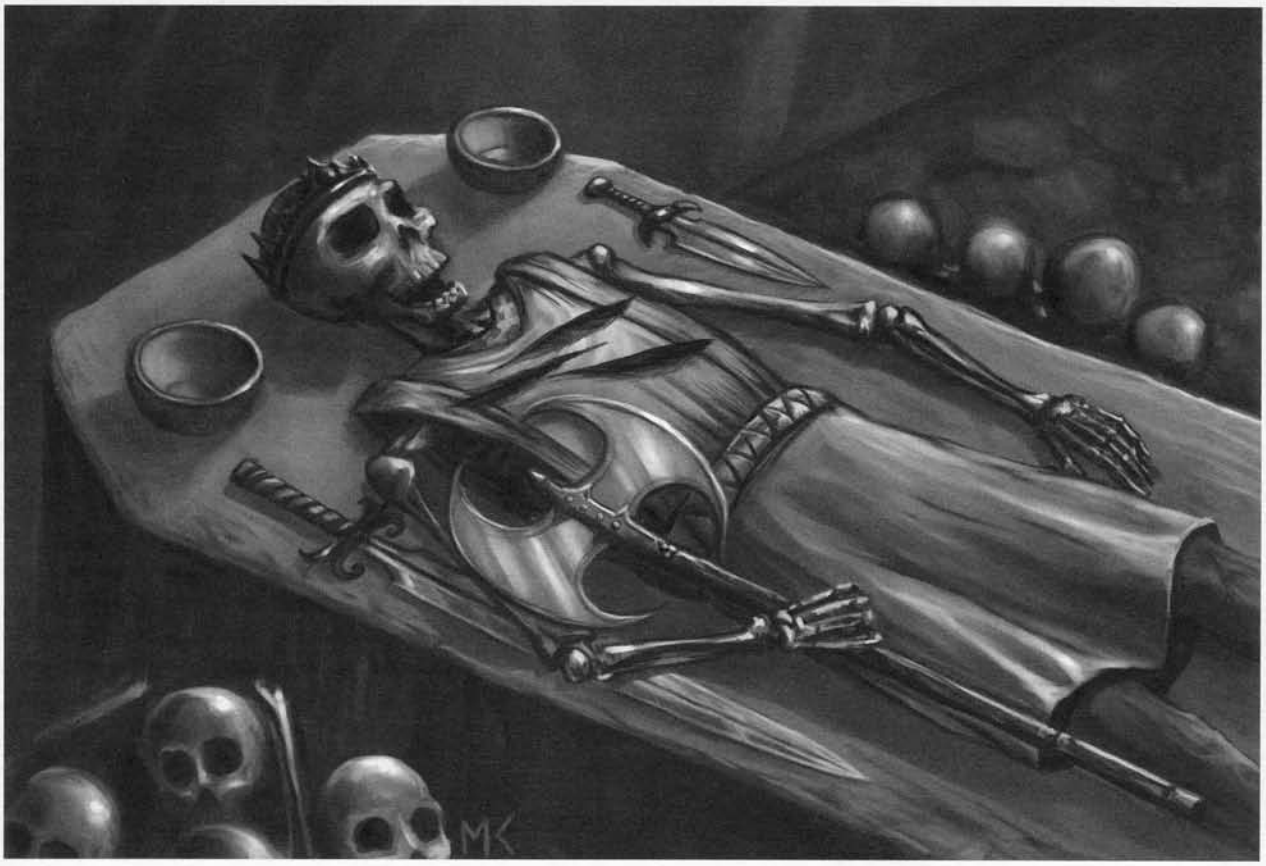
Up and through the trapdoor is the sepulcher of Duke Ludvig. The sinewy web of the spell-weave that has trapped the investigators and is draining their lives is stretched across the chamber.

The Chamber of the Horseman

The central chamber, the chamber of the Horseman, is located where the catacombs reach their deepest level, far below the surface of Sortsoe. The room smells of old smoke and cinnamon. The floor is covered with large candles.

In the burial chamber, more severely than anywhere else in the catacombs, the roof is leaking. Fast rivulets of water dribble down the wooden beams that hold up the ceiling. The floor is covered in almost a foot of water, and candles protrude from its surface like islands of wax. The ground is a bit higher and the floor is relatively dry alongside the central coffin. The symbol of the Four Horsemen covers the walls of this chamber.

This chamber used to be the Cult's central meeting chamber until Morten Nyhuus returned from Tibet. Morten promptly turned the room into a church for the Fellowship of the Four Horsemen. Cultists still come



here occasionally to worship the body of the Horseman.

A large stone coffin dominates the center of the room. Its huge lid is half-open and held up by a wooden log. Within the coffin lies the body of the first Horseman. The dry alien body is seven feet tall, with thick-boned and powerful limbs. The creature's cranium is huge. The brow and deep-set eye sockets put all doubts aside; the body that lies within the stone coffin is definitely not human. In the alien's arms rests the tome that the investigators are looking for: Morten's *Book of the Four Horsemen* (see the Weaving Papers #6).

If investigators attempt to recover the book from the arms of the first Horseman, the heavy stone lid slides off the coffin, striking an adjacent supporting pillar. The shaken pillar immediately begins to collapse, and the room begins to crumble as the lake pours in to flood the catacombs.

The Chamber of the Wyrm

The grave chamber of Olaf Orm can be accessed from either Sortsoe Isle or one of the many corridors that snake up and east from the central chamber of the Horseman.

As the investigators approach the chamber of the Wyrm, the air becomes unnaturally cold. Live candles and torches begin to flicker though no air is moving. Investigators who make a successful Listen check (DC 15) think they hear distant, ghostly voices moaning in a forgotten language. Investigators who concentrate further on this sound lose 1/1d2 points of Sanity.

The burial chamber of Olaf Orm is round, with ancient swords and axes lining the walls. The stone bier containing Olaf's body is lined against the north side of the chamber. A dozen skeletons of sacrificed slaves are scattered around the chamber.

At first glance, the investigators might mistake the walls of the tomb for enormous slimy scales as if they had entered the bowels of a gigantic snake. On second glance, the walls are of dirt reinforced with wooden beams.

Shadows flutter strangely in this room. If the investigators attempt to study the shadows closer, they are horrified to learn that there are more shadows in the room than there should be. Some of the shadows seem to be in agony and some wield large axes. The ghostly sounds from earlier grow stronger as the investigators watch the shadows play.

The skeletal body of Olaf Orm lies on a great stone bier. Several weapons and multiple ceramic bowls are laid at his sides. On his bony chest, just below his crossed arms, lie a number of jet-black feathers equal to the number of investigators. A successful Knowledge (biology) check (DC 10) reveals that they are crow feathers. The function of these feathers is to

Weaving Papers #6

Excerpts From the Journal of Morten Nyhuus, 1892

Mount Makalu is every bit as impressive as the guide said it would be. Gazing up at its peaks from this village at its foot fills me with an awe I have not known since my time in Africa. I feel the mountain calling me, speaking to my soul in some primal, inhuman language I cannot deny. Tomorrow we set out to conquer the eastern slope...

The natives are helpful and show us the proper paths to take. The footing can be treacherous, but the exotic locals have an instinct for the mountain that is simply uncanny. Our guide takes us on goat and animal paths I expect to find impassable but discover to be quite solid. Now, at the end of the first day, I find myself anxious and expectant, as though some great secret was about to be revealed. Sleep eludes me, for my heart races with this strange urgency. Nevertheless, if we are to arrive at "the three fingers" (a natural rock formation of three columns) before nightfall tomorrow, I must have my rest...

Damn this weather! We had almost reached the three fingers when a terrible wind began to blow, scraping our faces with snow and ice. The wind soon turned to blizzard and the world turned white. I could not see my hand before my face, much less the others in my party, and the gale turned my shouts to whispers. Despair was about to take my heart when my numb, scrambling fingers found purchase on the lip of a small cave. It was tight, but I was just able to burrow through—and found a larger cave inside. This cave shall be my shelter tonight, for it is out of the wind, allowing me my meager fire...

It is no cave, but a tunnel I have found. I followed the tunnel several hours, and it has led me to a magnificent city beneath the mountain itself! Oh, wonder of wonders! Words cannot describe this fabulous place, nor could human hands have fashioned these marvelous towers and palaces from the stone itself. My lantern cannot provide enough light for me to see the ceiling of this cavern, nor the roofs of the heavenly structures. Yes, heavenly, for surely this is the work of the Hand of God...

Alfred and Sofie have been driving around Sortsoe for three hours. Each time they pass through the tiny village, the locals look up solemnly as they go by. To Alfred, it seems they are silently mocking him.

"We're lost, Alfred. Why don't you stop and ask for directions?"

"I already did, Sofie, remember?" Alfred growls in frustration. "They said to go down the road and take a left. I did that. And we came right back here."

"Well, ask them again. Maybe you just misunder—"

"No. No, I did not misunderstand them. If anything, they were lying to us, trying to make me look like a fool."

Sofie sighs.

"Why would they do that, Alfred? That doesn't even make sense."

In the back seat, eight-year-old Sans sits up groggily, his hair messy from sleep.

"Are we at Grandma's house yet?"

"Not yet," says his mother, a smile forced across her face. "We just a got a little lost, that's all."

"We are not lost." Alfred spits each word through clenched teeth.

"We should go back there," says Sans. He points to an elegant mansion beside the dark lake. There are two cars parked outside it.

"I liked it there. It's got three grandmas."

Sofie glances over at her husband, then up at the sky.

"It is getting dark, Alfred. Maybe we should stop. They did offer, after all."

Alfred stares straight ahead down the road but loosens his white-knuckle grip on the steering wheel.

"Fine," he says at last. "We'll stop. But only because I don't want to be driving after dark. Not because we're lost."

distribute the life force drained from the Norns' spell to the soul of the Wyrm.

After the investigators have been in the room for several moments, a second glance at the body of Olaf Orm reveals that his bony arm has silently slipped off his chest. It is now gripping an old battle-axe lying beside the body.

Investigators suffering from the Norns' curse feel especially weak in this chamber. The draining of their life force increases to one point of temporary Constitution damage per minute.

There is a grim air about the body of Olaf Orm, and investigators must make a successful Will saving throw (DC 10) to gather the strength to touch the body. Should an investigator do so, a frigid wind sweeps through the room, extinguishing all lights (including flashlights), plunging the investigators into the darkness that dwells beneath the earth. Growing in that darkness is an awakening sense of evil. For every minute that the investigators stay in the Chamber of the Wyrm, they lose 1/1d6 points of Sanity. Lights refuse to ignite or activate in this chamber and cease to function until investigators have put a good distance between it and themselves.

The investigators instinctively know that to touch the black feathers is to invite death. Doing so dispels the draining spell, but the backlash is lethal to anyone touching the feathers. If the investigators remove the feathers from the Wyrm's chest without touching them, the spell continues to drain their life force, but it is not channeled into Olaf until the Norns replace the feathers.

The Fountain of Sortsoe

From the network of corridors near the central chamber of the Horseman, a long straight tunnel leads steeply up and in the direction of Sortsoe village. It is by far the longest tunnel in the catacombs. For almost two miles it goes on, leading to the center of Sortsoe village and directly to the Sortsoe Fountain.

The long corridor is a new addition to the catacombs. No graves are placed in the walls, and they are bare and free of runic inscriptions. The fountain passage has not been used for almost 60 years, and the townsfolk have forgotten how to use the mechanism in the fountain that reveals the small stairs leading into the ground.

Should the investigators arrive at the end of the corridor, they run into a spiral stairwell made of ancient stone. Should the catacombs be flooded, the water stops about halfway up this stairwell. At the deadend top of the stairwell is a heavy lever. Pulling this lever slides aside a large rock in the wall directly in front of the investigators, revealing that they are in the fountain of Sortsoe village. The fresh air rushes to greet them.

Sortsoe Lake and Isle

Sortsoe Lake is indeed black (as the name indicates in Danish). Almost entirely surrounded by forest, the lake dimly reflects the silent crowns of the tall trees. Due to its sheltered surroundings, the lake is seldom stirred by wind, and its cold surface usually lies still. There are no living fish in the lake, nor are there any fowl inhabiting its shores (something investigators might find strange). Along the western shore, hidden beneath a pile of fresh branches, are three large rowboats. The Cult of the Wyrm use these boats as transportation to Sortsoe Isle.

The small island, about fifty yards in radius, is covered with trees and light brush. A small, frequently used trail leads from a narrow beach to the center of the isle and the stone cairn of the Wyrm. A small glade surrounding the cairn is well trodden, and multiple spills of black candle wax cover the area. It is in this clearing that the Cult of the Wyrm holds its aboveground ceremonies.

A thin, flat stone covers a man-sized passage leading down into the earth. Moving the stone aside and following the passage down leads to the Chamber of the Wyrm.

Perceptive investigators might notice a large black crow watching their every move on the isle with great interest.

Ceremony in the Mist

Close to midnight on the second day, a heavy mist lies upon Lake Sortsoe. Deep in the night, three small rowboats are suddenly visible through the dense fog. A figure is standing in the prow of each boat, holding a lantern high in the air. The glow of the lanterns gives the mist an ethereal, gloomy glow. It is as though will-o-the-wisps are leading the boats toward the shores of the dark island in the center of the lake.

In the damp clearing on the isle, the villagers, dressed in black robes, hold a ceremony for the Wyrm. The shaman, Olsen, begins by chanting a strange guttural song with a deep voice. The congregation repeats certain parts of the song with their arms raised in the air. The chant is in ancient Nordic and is almost unintelligible. The words mostly repeat the mantra of the Wyrm that can be read on the runes in Olsen's secret basement room.

Three black crows witness the ceremony from branches overhead.

Should the ceremony be interrupted, the worshippers go mad. Most of them draw long sharp knives and selflessly throw themselves against any interloper. Those caught by this mob are pinned to the ground while Olsen carves the blood eagle on the victim. An investigator must remain pinned or helpless for one minute for Olsen to complete the procedure. If it is completed successfully, the investigator is killed.



The ceremony lasts for about 45 minutes, after which the villagers take to the boats and sail back to shore. No villagers admit to taking part in the ceremony, should they be asked the following day.

Gert Olsen: Male 7th level; HD 7d6+14; hp 39; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4+2, knife) or +6/+1 ranged (2d6, Colt Python revolver); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +10, Drive +7, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (occult) +11, Listen +7, Open Lock +7, Research +8, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +8.

Feats: Cleave, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack.

Possessions: Colt Python revolver, hunting knife, $38.

Cultists (24): Male or Female 1st level; HD 1d6; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +0 melee (1d4, knife); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Bluff +4, Craft (any) +7, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (occult) +7, Listen +4, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Craft), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [occult]).

Possessions: Hunting knife, $15.

Englund's Worship

An hour after the ceremony on the island has ended, the mansion is visited by old Jakob Englund. Sleeping investigators must make a Listen check (DC 20) to hear the careful opening of the front door and Englund's quiet feet as he sneaks across the lobby.

Though Englund participated in the earlier worship on the lake, he is an ardent follower of the cult of the Horseman. If undisturbed, Englund tiptoes to the large dining room and opens the secret door leading down to the catacombs. He lights a small lantern and finds his way to the chamber of the Horseman. He worships at the body of the first Horseman for about half an hour. During his private ceremony, Jakob lights several of the large candles in the chamber.

After his worship, Jakob blows out the ceremonial candles and returns to the mansion. He carefully shuts the secret door and leaves the mansion as quietly as he came.

Should the investigators surprise Jakob, he tries to flee into the network of catacombs. Panicked, losing his lantern, the poor man comes to a grim end in one of the catacomb pit traps.

Should the investigators surprise Englund while he is worshipping, he gives a start of surprise and accidentally knocks the heavy stone lid of the coffin. The lid falls onto the room's central support, cracking it. Almost immediately, large streams of water rush into the room. The roof soon collapses, and the lower catacombs begin to flood.

Quick investigators may be able to grab the Nyhuus manuscript from the arms of the Horseman before it is swept away and destroyed by the water. Englund panics and runs into the network of catacombs, where he soon finds himself trapped and drowning at the bottom of a 40-foot pit.

Should the catacombs flood, the situation turns into a chase scene with rapidly rising water, and the investigators might be lost in the confusing network of tunnels. The investigators can save themselves from drowning if they can make it to one of these four places:

- the antechamber below the mansion
- the stairwell below the town fountain
- the Chamber of the Wyrm
- the high deadend corridor just below the Sepulcher of Duke Ludvig Nyhuus I

The Final Day

Heavy rain is falling over the land. As the Norns become more assured of their triumph, the illusion of a splendid mansion begins to break apart. In flashes, some rooms are half burned away; wet soot and moldy wood are evident everywhere. The ceiling is gone and rain falls on the investigators.

Suddenly, like a flipped switch, the illusion returns, and everything seems "normal" and plush once more. Yet the investigators are still wet!

By the third day, the investigators are now deathly weak. If they do not break the curse of the Norns, they will be dead by the next morning. Great heavy shadows are under their eyes, and the blue spots are spreading rapidly. Some blue areas are bleeding a little, and a web of strained veins can be seen in the blue-black bruises.

Investigators must attempt to stop the curse by removing the personal artifacts woven into the spell-sinew at the tomb. As night falls, the Sortsoe hauntings are at their strongest intensity.

Occasionally the cackle of crows can be heard. The sound penetrates like evil laughter through the droning of the rain.

Aftermath

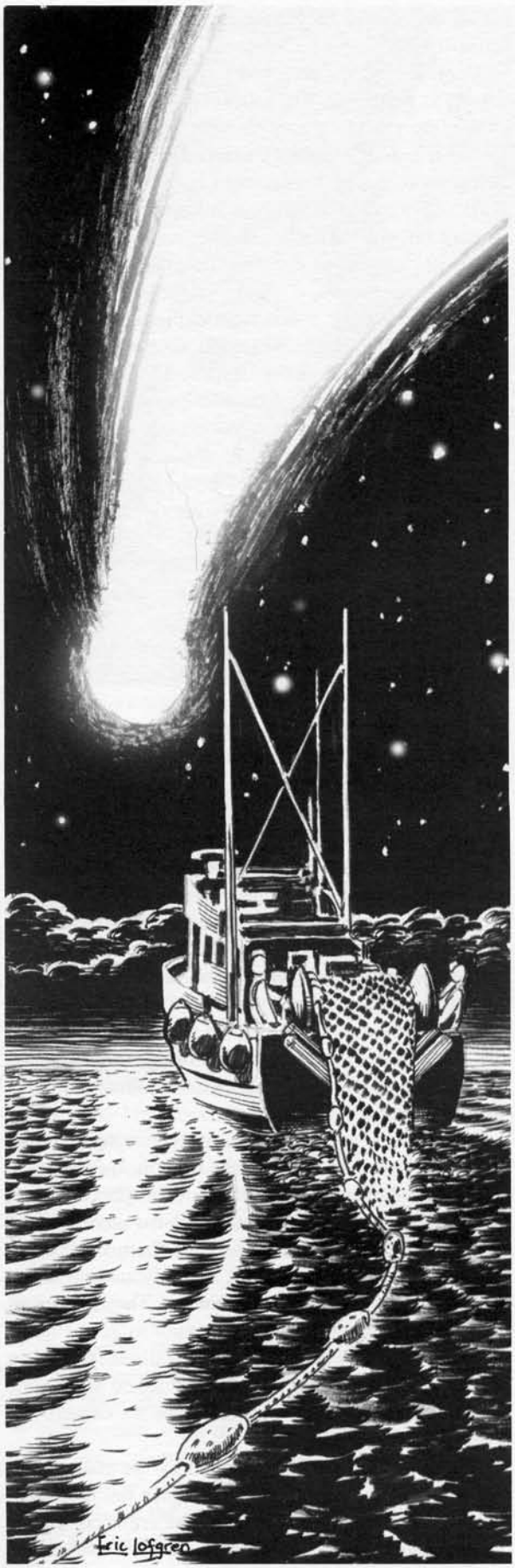
Should the investigators find the *Book of the Four Horsemen* and cancel the spell that holds them captive, they may leave Sortsoe. As soon as they cancel the spell, the mansion illusion disappears. The once-splendid house is, in fact, a half-burned ruin.

As the investigators depart Sortsoe, they may see three large crows sitting on the Sortsoe city limits sign watching them leave.

If the investigators do not stop the spell, they finally collapse and drift into a comalike sleep from which they never awaken. The three Norns hide their bodies in a hollow area under the kitchen stove, then wait by the windows for more poor travelers to come their way.

Olaf Orm does not awaken before SH-01 impacts with the Earth.

Should the Nyhuus manuscript be lost to the flooded catacombs, the investigators will have lost a valuable guide to the back door of the Tyrr Nemaii.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Beyond the Sea

The grizzled sailor is most insistent. "It's an omen, I tell ya! A sign! Only a fool would go on the seas with a comet hanging overhead."

"You're full of superstition, Cazaras," Ewald says, chuckling over his beer. "Keep talking like that and the bartender will cut you off."

"Yeah, I'm full of superstition. I'm a sailor. It's in my blood. It's in yours, too."

Ewald stares uncomfortably into his glass.

"Don't you try to deny it. You feel it too, don't you? It's an omen."

"Just shut up, Cazaras," Ewald says softly. "You're going to get my crew all worked up before we set out tonight."

The two sailors sit in silence. Cazaras orders another gin and tonic, and Ewald nurses his beer thoughtfully.

"Ewald, I ever tell you I got a girl?"

"Nope."

"Well, I do. A real looker, works an office job in South Hampton. I usually swing down there every couple of months, check in for a few days. You know how it goes. Ewald, I'm not going to see her again, am I?"

Ewald drains the last of his beer.

"Sure you will, Cazaras. Sure you will."

Curtis Franklin has made travel arrangements as far as the foot of Mt. Makalu. The investigators are to take a private fishing boat from Copenhagen to Riga, Latvia. From there they are scheduled to travel by rail to Moscow, then take the Trans-Siberian railroad to Irkutsk. While most trains are suffering major delays and breakdowns due to a lack of workers, the Trans-Siberian continues to run on schedule. As the investigators may learn later, this is because TemCo is subsidizing the railroad. The train is an integral link in its chain of psychic transportation and cannot be allowed to falter.

From Irkutsk, the investigators are to take a train south to Ulan Bator, the capitol of Mongolia, then southwest to Xining, China. From Xining, they can catch a train to Lhasa in Tibet. It is only two days by truck from there to Khun Li, the village at the foot of Mt. Makalu.

A Slow Boat to Riga

Curtis Franklin has arranged for the investigators to travel aboard the private fishing boat Bread Winner from Copenhagen to Riga, Latvia. The investigators are to meet the boat and its captain, Johan Ewald, at the harbor.

Copenhagen harbor is in a frenzy of activity. Hundreds of citizens are trying to leave the country by boat, hoping to find a place offering more shelter from the impending comet impact. Most are fleeing to Norway and its mountains. The harbor is full of boats packed to capacity with passengers. Ships' captains are charging exorbitant fees for passage and panic-stricken passengers are paying them.

The Bread Winner is moored at the end of a long pier, the only boat left at the dock. It is a small boat designed to be operated by one person and has definitely seen better days. There are several patches of rust on the ship's hull and a thin layer of barnacles below the water line. Several fishing nets hang limply from a crane mid-deck. They are dry and full of gaping holes, suggesting they have not been used for some time.

Captain Ewald's ship has not done any legitimate fishing in more than five years. The Bread Winner is a smuggling vessel, its captain a smuggler who specializes in transporting human cargo. He has made a nice living sneaking refugees out of Latvia (during the Cold War) and criminal fugitives into Latvia (since the Iron Curtain fell). Franklin has worked with Ewald before and trusts him to deliver the investigators safely to Riga.

Upon seeing the miserable-looking boat, the investigators may be expecting Ewald to be a surly pirate. They may be pleasantly surprised when a clean-shaven, ruddy-faced man greets them with a smile.

"Welcome," he beams. "Welcome to my home, my office, my taxi, and my wife. Welcome to the Bread Winner, and may your journey be a pleasant one."

Ewald is a genuinely friendly person. He has a contagious laugh and a great sense of humor. He considers himself the investigators' host while they are on board and does everything he can to make them feel comfortable and secure.

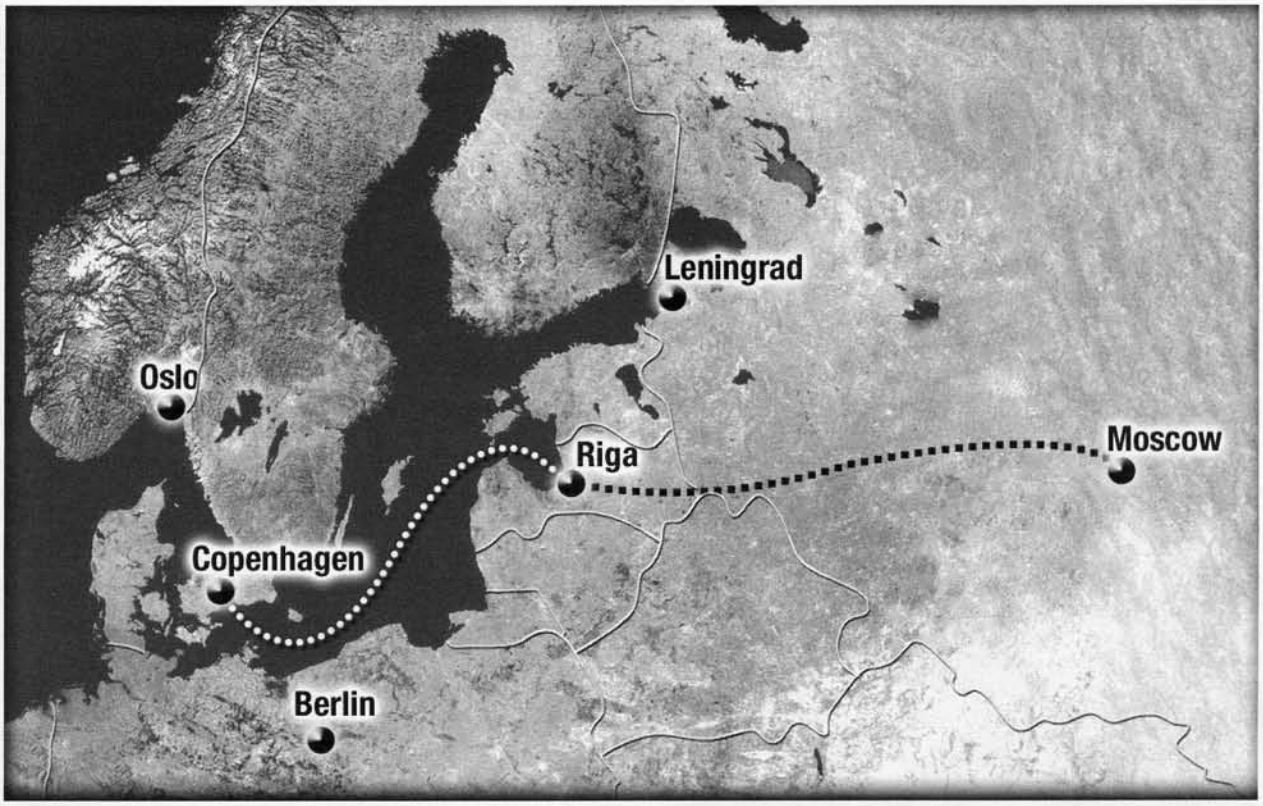
The captain loves to meet new people and find out about their lives. Over the course of the daylong voyage, Ewald politely asks the investigators where they are from, where they are going, and why. He readily shares his life: his time in the merchant marines, his time in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, his three short-lived marriages in France. While Ewald has a sincere interest in the investigators' lives, his questioning may cause them to suspect he is trying to extract information from them.

Angus, the boat's only other crewman, is nearly the opposite of his boss. A pinch-faced weasel of a man, the seaman is quiet and jumpy around the investigators, limiting his answers to "yes," "no," and ambiguous grunts. At some point during the voyage, Angus takes one of the investigators aside. He makes a show of seeing that the captain is nowhere around, then whispers:

"Ewald is not what he seems."

Angus says nothing more, only hinting that the investigators should not trust the captain. He also hints that if they slipped him some cash, he might be willing to tell more of what he knows. If the investigators agree to pay the crewman, he tells them that before they arrived, two men in dark suits showed up at the boat and spoke with Captain Ewald. They described the investigators and paid the captain to get as much information as he could from them while they were on board. The mysterious figures also asked where the ship was heading and the best place to capture the investigators in Riga.

Angus is lying. No one stopped by the boat and no one has paid the captain to interrogate the investigators; he is just naturally curious. The crewman knows this, however, and has decided to put the investigators'



paranoia to work for him. He continues to hint that he has more information. As long as the passengers pay him, he continues to feed them false information and increase their fears.

This isn't the first time Angus has done this. He and Ewald have transported dozens of fugitives and refugees over the years, and many of them have fallen for this trick. The captain doesn't approve, of course (it's bad for business), and beats Angus senseless whenever he finds out the crewman has been scamming passengers. If the investigators confront Captain Ewald, he explains all of this to them, then forces Angus to give them their money back.

As night falls across the waves, the investigators can see the luminous shape of SH-01 overhead. The comet is larger than any star and twice as bright, casting shadows onto the hearts of all who see it.

The trip from Copenhagen to Riga takes about 20 hours. A cold wind blows across the Baltic Sea, but the water is calm and the trip passes uneventfully.

Stowaway

Cloaked by ktchoma technology, Michael Graham has followed the investigators aboard the Bread Winner. Though he tries to keep his presence a secret, he occasionally slips up. While the investigators are below deck, they may hear the sounds of footsteps above them where neither Ewald nor Angus walk. If they check out the sounds, of course, they see nothing out of the ordinary.

Riga, Latvia

A major port since the middle ages, Riga's harbor is full of ships, their passengers fleeing the coast. The streets of Riga are even more chaotic than Copenhagen's. Not only are people trying to leave the city, many (like the investigators) have fled here from elsewhere. Unfamiliar with the city, these newcomers' confusion merely adds to the uproar.

Locating the train station is not difficult, nor is confirming passage aboard the only train bound for Moscow. Trains regularly make the 18-hour trip from Riga to Moscow, though trains leading elsewhere have been disrupted due to the comet crisis. If the investigators look into why this particular line is still running (Research check, DC 25), they discover that TemCo has paid a substantial sum of money to ensure that the train stays on schedule. The corporation is still using this route to transport the last of its psychics to the Tyrr Nemaii.

Bucayev's Fate

If the investigators wish to check on Alexi Bucayev while in Riga, they have time to do so before the train for Moscow pulls out of the station. (Bucayev and his address were listed on the letter that Roland Delmont showed the investigators in Copenhagen.)

At 8732 Batovich Street, the investigators find a small one-story house fringed with a tiny strip of grass.



Alexi's car, a 20-year-old Lada, is parked in the yard behind the house. Both the front and back doors of the house are locked, but peering through a window in the back reveals a disturbing, dimly lit image: The kitchen is in a shambles. Broken dishes litter the floor, covered with flour and some other, darker substance. With a successful Spot check (DC 15), an investigator notices Bucayev's hand lying on the floor. The rest of Bucayev's body cannot be seen from this angle.

Gaining entry to the house requires a successful Open Lock check (DC 25) or a successful Strength check (Break DC 18) to break a door open. Alternatively, investigators can simply break out a window with a rock or similar object, and no check is required.

The back door opens into a kitchen, the front into a slightly larger living room. There are two bedrooms (one that has been converted into an office) and a bathroom just off the living room. The air is filled with the buzzing of flies and the stench of rotting flesh. If the investigators turn on a light or open a curtain, they see countless cockroaches scurrying for cover.

Blood Evidence

Alexi Bucayev is dead in the kitchen, his legs and torso strapped into a wooden chair lying on its side on the floor. He has thin ropes looped tight around his wrists, the ends of which are nearby and soaked in blood. The dead man is in an advanced state of decomposition. A successful Knowledge (biology) or Knowledge (medicine) check (DC 15) suggests that Alexi died several weeks ago. Those taking a close look at the body can make out numerous cuts and lacerations on Alexi's face and hands. A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals that the man's fingernails have been removed. Taking a good look at the mutilated corpse costs 0/1d4 points of Sanity.

Clever investigators can deduce Alexi's last few hours of life by examining his environment. He was tied to a kitchen chair and pulled up to the table, his arms left free. His hands were then secured with rope and pulled tight across the table, where his tormentors were able to slice, gouge, and pry until they got whatever they wanted out of him. The kitchen became a makeshift torture chamber. The kitchen table is stained with blood, as are a number of utensils lying in the sink.

Alexi lost a lot of blood before his tormentors took their leave, presuming him dead. But he lived for a few minutes after Moore and his associates left—just long enough to scrawl a bloody message on the floor beneath the table. The message is not in words, but a copy of the strange mark Alexi observed on the hand of Gerard Moore. Alexi was naming his killer, the best he could, in blood.

The symbol implicating Moore is still on the floor beneath the table, though it has long turned to brown rust. It takes a successful Search check (DC 20) to find it.

Foraging

The rest of the house holds little of interest for the investigators. Those looking for clues in Alexi's office may be disappointed to find that nearly every piece of paperwork is written in Latvian. There is, however, a computer and printer set up in one corner of the office. Investigators making a successful Computer Use check (DC 10) may find on it a file that is not only useful but written in English as well (see the Beyond Papers #1).

This is a draft of a follow-up letter Alexi planned to send to the world's politicians, but he died before it could be finished. The letter explains that Alexi's brother Uri is being held captive beneath the mountain and that the comet SH-01 is destined to land in the desert. Alexi begins to go into more detail about the desert, but here his letter ends.

Also of note is a large photograph of Uri and Alexi Bucayev, standing in front of their parents' house, taken about two years ago. When seen from the corner of an investigator's eye, Uri's face contorts into an agonized grimace. Investigators who look at it directly see nothing out of the ordinary.

The first investigator to study the picture is overcome with the sensation of being smothered in darkness far beneath the earth, followed by flashes of

screaming faces and a strange machine. He or she must make a successful Will saving throw (DC 13) or faint for 1d6 rounds. If several investigators view the image at once, preference should be given to any who have the Sensitive psychic feat.

This investigator has been cursed with a psychic link to Uri Bucayev. Nowhere near as strong as Uri's connection with his brother, the link still fills the investigator's sleep with dreams of terror, pain, and the Tyrr Nemaii. Another recurring image is Uri's emaciated face, streaked with blood and dirt.

"Help me," he gasps. "Beneath the mountain...before it's too late."

The dreams and the psychic link can be used to foreshadow the horror of the Tyrr Nemaii, as well as to point the investigators back toward the plot if they get off-track.

All Aboard for Moscow

As the investigators board the train for Moscow, they catch sight of a wizened Asian man dressed in Western clothing also boarding, one car down in First Class. Two burly men in black suits accompany him. If the investigators stare too long, one of the black-suited men turns and glowers at them. As the investigators probably guess, the Asian man is Kage and his traveling companions are his Tribunal bodyguards.

The trip from Riga to Moscow takes 18 hours. During the journey, the investigators are free to wander the passenger compartments of the train. In front of the investigators' passenger car is the first class car, where Kage and his men are seated. The car behind the investigators' is a combination dining car and observation lounge, featuring a small menu and a large variety of overpriced drinks. Beyond the dining car are three more passenger cars, followed by the freight cars.

One of the many freight cars looks slightly more high-tech than the others—and the unobtrusive logo of TemCo is emblazoned on its sides. The corporation uses the car to transport sleeping psychics from Riga to Moscow, where the car is transported to the Tyrr Nemaii via cargo helicopter. There is no access to this or any of the freight cars from inside the train. Those wishing to investigate the car must wait until the train is stopped, then try to get into the car from the outside. The truly daring may wish to scuttle along the top or side of the train while it is moving, but this is extremely dangerous. Only TemCo employees have the key to the heavy-duty lock sealing the steel box shut (Open Lock check, DC 40). Inside the car are dozens of stasis tubes, each containing an unconscious psychic. For detailed information on the stasis tubes, see *Thor's Anvil* in Part II: *Hollow Winds*.

The passenger cars are comfortable and barely a quarter full. Due to the comet crisis, business travel and tourism have dropped off dramatically. Most of those traveling are going home to be with their families and friends during this time of turmoil and uncertainty. The investigators find the other passengers to be quiet and introspective, not given to small talk.

Beyond Papers #1

Dear Sir:

I am writing a second time to again implore you to investigate the labor camp in the Himalayan Mountains. As I wrote before, there are hundreds of people slaving to maintain a machine beneath one of the Himalayan peaks.

My information comes from my brother, Uri, who is one of the captives beneath the mountain. He was able to get word to me of the labor camp. He has recently contacted me again with new details.

I am mortally afraid that unless we respond immediately to this situation, something terrible is going to happen—not just in the Himalayas, but to all of us.

There is something else, though this part of Uri's message was very unclear. There is a desert, and it is a crucial element in this conspiracy against mankind.

I realize the madness of my words, but please investigate the Himalayas and you will find they are all true.

Sincerely,

Alexi Bucayev

Kage

Psychics are a cargo too precious to trust to mere underlings, but none of the important shk'ryth have time to accompany the sleepers all the way from Riga. Therefore the task has been assigned to Kage, a once-powerful shk'ryth who has since fallen out of favor with the TemCo ruling council.

The investigators last met Kage when he was in charge of developing psychic potential at Still Mountain. For details, see *Stillness* in Part I: *Long Shades*. Since that fiasco, in which TemCo's presence on the mountain was reduced to almost nothing, Kage has been forced to live far from his domain. His powers are weaker now than they have ever been. This is why, in part, he has been delegated the tedious task of keeping an eye on the sleeping psychics. Furthermore, the council also considers him responsible for the

Kage Who?

Due to the lethal and maddening nature of the **Nocturnum** campaign, it is possible that none of the investigators who encountered Kage in Stillness are still around. If this is the case, and none of the current investigators know who Kage is, the decrepit old shk'ryth probably senses nothing unusual about them. Only if the investigators tip their hands (perhaps by letting slip their previous exploits) does Kage take an interest in them. He is looking for an opportunity to redeem himself. If he can capture TemCo's most wanted, he is sure to regain at least some of his lost prestige.

events at Still Mountain and sees this duty as fit for a shk'ryth of his "obviously limited abilities."

Kage and his two bodyguards are seated in the first-class passenger car, one car in front of the one in which the investigators are seated. Kage prefers not to leave the car, instead sending his servants to retrieve his meals from the dining car or run any other errands he may have.

Exposed

Ever since boarding the train, Kage has sensed an irritating presence nearby, though he cannot quite place it. The presence he feels, of course, is that of the investigators. An hour or two into the journey, he sends one of his bodyguards out to check on the other passengers and see if they look familiar.

The Tribunal agent walks slowly through the passenger cars, trying to get a good look at everyone's faces. Like others in the Tribunal, he has seen pictures of the investigators. If they have done nothing to disguise their features and do nothing to hide their faces when he walks by, he recognizes them as the interlopers that Gerard Moore has been trying to capture. In any event, the agent walks through all the passenger cars and reports his findings to Kage.

If the investigators are spotted, the agent tries to hide his reaction behind a poker face, but an investigator making a successful Sense Motive check opposed by his Bluff check can tell than they have been found out. Furthermore, a successful Spot check (DC 20) confirms any suspicions that the bodyguard might be armed: He is carrying a semiautomatic pistol in a concealed holster on his belt.

Graham on Tracks

On board the train to Moscow, the investigators may catch a glimpse of movement from the corners of their eyes, only to see nothing when they look closer. This is Michael Graham walking by in his stealth field.

When he is not invisibly watching over the investigators, Graham sets his field to appear as a plain-looking middle-aged man in a business suit. In this guise he sits behind the investigators on the train and keeps an eye on them. If the investigators try to talk to the man, he mysteriously disappears before they can corner him.

Upon the train's arrival in Moscow, Graham sneaks into TemCo's staging area. Here he spies on Kage and his servants as they check on the sleeping psychics and transfer the freight car to a cargo helicopter.

Kage's Revenge

If he learns that the investigators are on board, Kage is surprised and curious at their presence but assumes they, too, are en route to the Tyrr Nemaii. He sets out to avenge himself upon those he holds responsible for his fall from grace.

Accompanied by his bodyguards, the old man strides into the investigators' car with an authority that belies his age. There is a fire in his eyes as he walks quickly toward the investigators.

"You!" he hisses. "You have caused me much pain. You have been a thorn in my side and the sides of my brothers. For this you will pay."

In his rage and desperation, Kage uses his innate shk'ryth attack, a blast of pure malevolent psychic energy. He focuses his attention on a single investigator within his line of sight. If the attack is successful, the target suffers 1d10 points of damage and begins to bleed from the nose and ears.

If Kage comes within reach of an investigator, he makes that one his target and tries to touch him. If he succeeds at a melee touch attack while using his psychic blast, the target is immediately knocked unconscious. The investigator not only takes 1d10 points of damage but must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 18) as well. If the target fails the save, he sustains physical damage and is permanently blinded from the attack.

During the conflict with Kage, the other passengers react very little. They see only an old man angrily glowering at a group of strangers. They see the bodyguards and assume the situation is under control.

For their part, the bodyguards only get involved if the investigators draw weapons or otherwise physically attack Kage. They shoot at anyone threatening their master. Otherwise, Kage is determined to eliminate the investigators on his own. If the shk'ryth is seriously threatened, he will assume his ooze form and escape.

Kage, Civilized Shk'ryth: Medium-Size (human form) or Large (ooze and monstrous form) Aberration; HD 10d8+30; hp 75 (human or monstrous form) hp 90 (ooze form); Init +3 (human form, Dex), –5 (ooze form, Dex), +5 (monstrous form, Dex); Spd 30 ft. (human form), 10 ft., climb 10 ft. (ooze form), 40 ft.

(monstrous form); AC 13 (human form, +3 Dex), 5 (ooze form, –5 Dex), 20 (monstrous form, +5 Dex, +6 natural, –1 size); Atk +11/+6 melee (2 punches, 1d3+4, human form) or +11 melee (slam, 2d4+4, ooze form) or +12 melee (2 claws, 1d4+5, bite, 1d6+2, monstrous form); SA Improved grab, acid 1d6, constrict 2d4+4 and 1d6 acid, engulf, psychic attack, Domain powers, spells; SQ Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., shk'ryth immunities, DR 10 (30 vs. bludgeoning attacks), regeneration 2, shk'ryth resistances, amorphous physiology, blessed alteration; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +12 (human form); Fort +6, Ref –2, Will +12 (ooze form); Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +12 (monstrous form); Str 19, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 21 (human form); Str 19, Dex 1, Con 17, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 1 (ooze form); Str 21, Dex 19, Con 21, Int 25, Wis 21, Cha 13 (monstrous form).

Skills: Bluff +13, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +8, Innuendo +10, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (astronomy) +12, Listen +12, Psychic Focus +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting.

Spells: *augury, bind enemy, bind loup-garou, black binding, bring pestilence, cause fear, circle of nausea, cloud memory, contact human, death by flames, deflect harm, detect magic, evil eye, fist of Yog-Sothoth, grasp of Cthulhu, healing touch, insect plague, levitate, message, mindblast, nightmare, pose mundane, power drain, shriveling, steal life.*

Tribunal Operatives (2): Male 6th level; HD 6d6+12; hp 33; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4+2, punch) or +10/+5 ranged (2d8/crit x4, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +7, Demolitions +5, Disable Device +5, Disguise +7, Drive +11, Gather Information +7, Hide +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +11, Search +7, Spot +7.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Martial Artist, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, laser gunsight, silencer, 2 magazines hollow point .45 ACP.

Utoruk Attack

The sun has set and the train is less than an hour from Moscow when there is a heavy thump from the roof. The thump is followed by half a minute of silence, then a series of lighter bumps...like giant footsteps. A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals rope-like things flapping outside the windows, glistening in the light from inside the car.

Just as Carolyn is falling asleep, she sees it again.

Out of the corner of her eye, Carolyn catches a glimmer of something in the seat across the aisle. It's gone now—if indeed it was ever there. The seat is empty.

Carolyn sighs and closes her eyes again.

It's the stupid comet, she thinks to herself. It's got me all tensed up. I haven't slept well all week, and now this. She has a hard time sleeping on trains anyway; the stress is just making it worse.

Just as Carolyn is falling asleep—again—she hears an explosion of shattering glass and muffled screams from the next passenger car.

"Oh, forget it," she mutters to herself while pulling out a paperback book. "I'm never going to get any sleep on this train."

Suddenly, the windows on one side of the car explode inward in a shower of glass. Meaty tendrils of flesh burst through the openings, flailing and groping. A sleeping passenger is caught by surprise and ripped out through the broken window. More tendrils appear, seeking more victims.

The train is being attacked by an utoruk. The New Moon Temple has dispatched the creature in a last-ditch attempt to eliminate the investigators. The beast wastes no time with subtlety—any collateral damage is considered an acceptable loss. Once it locates the investigators with its tentacle sensory organs, the utoruk proceeds to squeeze its bulk into the passenger car, bending the metal window frame in the process. It takes the utoruk five rounds to work its way inside the train.

The investigators have several choices for dealing with the utoruk. While it is looking for them and working its way inside, they have time to try to escape into another car or otherwise hide from the beast. If they are armed, this would also be an excellent opportunity for them to attack; the beast can neither retreat nor retaliate properly at this point.

Another option would be to use the Llan, given to them by Michael Graham (if they asked him for it in Copenhagen). Upon firing the alien weapon at the utoruk, a cone of crackling energy 10 ft. wide at the edge of its range projects from the tip of the weapon and encompasses most of the monster's body. For a



moment, the energy seems to tear through space, and everything around it appears strangely two-dimensional. When the cone disappears a second later, the portion of the utoruk's body that was inside the cone is simply gone (as are the body parts of anyone unfortunate enough to also be caught in the cone).

Finally, the investigators might consider it wise to lead the utoruk to the one group of people who can help them—Kage and his bodyguards. The Tribunal agents are quick to fire upon the utoruk and are very accurate with their guns. Kage is equally capable of holding his own in this bizarre conflict. Having fought an utoruk before, he knows what to do. He assumes his bestial form (a hideous beetle-like creature detailed in *Stillness*) and proceeds to attack with his innate psychic blast. His carapace protects him from the worst of the monster's flailing tentacles. Yet Kage is weak. He is far from his domain and is unable to defeat the utoruk without help from his agents (and perhaps the investigators).

Utoruk: Huge Aberration; HD 8d8+32; hp 70; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 17 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural); Atk +13 melee (1d6+7, 8 tentacles); Reach 10 ft.; SA Paralysis; SQ Blindsight, damage reduction 15/+1, shapechange; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 25, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +11, Move Silently +6, Spot +11.

Feats: Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

End of the Line

The train pulls into Moscow on time, no doubt a little worse for wear. If Kage knows of the investigators and has not killed them, he reports finding them to his superiors but has no time to pursue them now.

Investigators watching the TemCo freight car see it being removed from the train and wheeled into a large nearby courtyard surrounded by a high wall. Kage accompanies the car while Tribunal agents close the doors to the courtyard, hiding it away from prying eyes.

Some 20 minutes later, a cargo helicopter arrives overhead. It sinks down into the TemCo courtyard and rises a minute later with the freight car slung under its belly. The chopper flies off toward the southeast, its TemCo logo flashing in the sunlight. As the investigators might suspect, Kage is aboard the helicopter. He and his cargo are taking the shortest possible route to the Tyrr Nemaii. There is no longer time for trains, trucks, or winding mountain roads.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Moscow Showdown

Even as he steps off the airplane, Roland Delmont knows that he and his followers are going to have a tough time reaching the rendezvous point. It was only luck—and a substantial sum of money—that allowed them to book the flight here to Moscow during this so-called comet crisis. Finding transportation to the factory is certain to be a challenge.

"Mr. Delmont?"

Delmont says nothing but turns to see who called his name. A clean-cut young man who looks vaguely Egyptian is standing near the gate. His pale suit and tan overcoat set off his dark skin. In his hand is a cardboard sign with the words "Eastern Mutual" printed on it.

"Yes?" Delmont is cautious. His followers wordlessly spread out, keeping a wary eye on their surroundings.

The young man smiles, as if amused by a private joke. He holds out two sets of car keys.

"Mr. Dreier has made arrangements for your travel while in Moscow. Two automobiles have been provided for your convenience. You will find them

parked outside, full of petrol and ready to go."

Delmont takes the offered car keys.

"And where is Dreier?" he asks.

"Mr. Dreier will meet you at the factory. He apologizes for not meeting you in person but felt it best to secure the site."

Delmont nods. This makes sense. Dreier always was the efficient one, and he knows Moscow better than anyone. Walking toward the exit, he sees through the window a pair of plain sedans parked at the curb. Almost as an afterthought, Delmont reaches for his wallet. Dreier's errand boy certainly deserves a tip.

"Here's a little something for—"

The young man is gone. No one saw him leave, but he is gone. An involuntary shiver ripples down Delmont's spine.

"Come on," he says briskly. "We have an appointment to keep."

When the investigators arrive in Moscow, Timothy Ekloff meets them at the station. He explains that he has recently escaped from TemCo's nearby facility but now needs the investigators' help to sneak back inside. He hopes to uncover a piece of key information about the Tyrr Nemaii project but knows he has to act quickly, for the New Moon Temple is on its way to Moscow. Once the Temple is finished with the TemCo facility, there will be no information left to find.

What Ekloff does not know is that the New Moon Temple is stumbling into a trap. Gerard Moore and other Tribunal agents are lying in wait for the cult, hoping to eliminate one of the last threats to the project. What follows is a tense race against time as the investigators try to locate TemCo's files before the corporation's final showdown with the New Moon Temple.

This scenario deals with the extermination of the New Moon Temple and the possible death of Timothy Ekloff. While there is action aplenty, the investigators are not directly involved in most of it, instead acting as observers. With this in mind, the GM is encouraged to maintain a fast pace while running this series of encounters.

Layover in Moscow

Upon their arrival in Moscow, the investigators find they have a 12-hour layover before they can catch the Trans-Siberian railroad to Irkutsk. The Trans-Siberian is the last train out of Moscow. Already people are lining up to buy tickets in hopes of escaping the chaos in the city streets.

As the investigators make their way through the Moscow station, they may catch a glimpse of a stooped man with a white beard watching them. The elderly fellow hobbles on a cane, yet somehow keeps up with the investigators. He disappears from time to time, only to reappear further along their route.

If the investigators confront the old man, he smiles grimly beneath his beard.

"I thought you'd be dead," he mutters in perfect English, "but figured I'd try to find you here just in case. Figured Franklin would try to get you here." The voice belongs to none other than Timothy Ekloff.

If the investigators do not notice or confront the disguised former spy, he approaches them when they are alone and reveals his identity.

Ekloff's Story

Once he feels safely beyond suspicious ears, Timothy Ekloff relates his tale of capture, terror, and escape. He begins with the nightclub where the investigators saw him captured (see *Revelations* in Part II: *Hollow Winds* for details).

"I thought for sure they were going to kill me," he says. "But instead they just drugged me and flew me to an old tractor factory outside Moscow. They kept me drugged and asked me questions. I...I'm not sure how much I told them. I know they asked about you. And they asked about some 'new moon temple' and some American insurance company. I don't really remember most of it."

What he does remember is waking up a few days ago and finding the door to his cell unlocked and unguarded. He was able to sneak out of the base almost unnoticed but had to take out three TemCo operatives between his cell and freedom. On his way out, Ekloff grabbed a handful of papers in hopes of finding useful intelligence. Most of what he took was useless, but he did find a couple items of interest.

One is a letter written from a New Moon Temple agent to Roland Delmont, telling of an important new discovery in Moscow (see the Moscow Papers #1). The letter requests Delmont and the other leaders of the group to meet the agent at the TemCo factory.

The other item is a shipping receipt, indicating that parts were shipped to the Moscow factory from Parsec, Inc., a TemCo subsidiary in Austin, Texas (see the Moscow Papers #2). Ekloff explains that at first

glance, he thought the receipt named the location to where the factory's products were being shipped.

"I know they were moving a lot of machinery—none of it tractors—sending it off by truck and helicopter. From what I overheard, they were heading north and east, and not to the Himalayas. If we could find out where they're sending it, it would give us an important insight into TemCo's operation."

Ekloff intends to go back to the factory in search of the correct shipping information. The investigators are free to come with him if they wish, he tells them; otherwise he will meet them at the station when he's done. In either case, he plans on coming with them to Tibet. His experience and skills would certainly make him a valuable asset to the mission.

Moscow Tractor Works

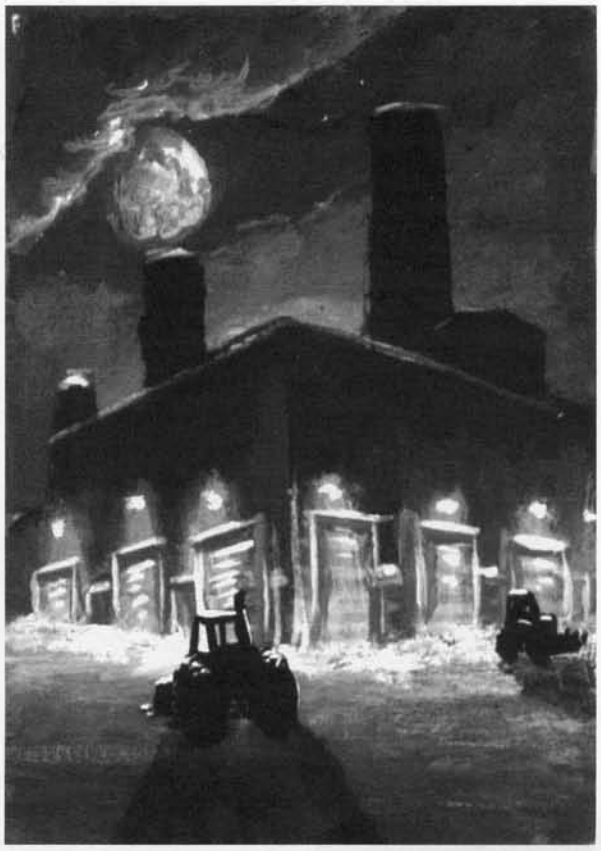
For centuries, the locals have avoided the deep forest just east of Moscow. Once it was said that malicious fairy folk ruled the woods and ate those who trespassed on their domain. Generations later, the forest was rumored to hide a secret KGB reeducation camp; those who stumbled across it never lived to tell the tale. Even today, the people who grew up in the area are nervous about passing through the forest at night.

In the darkest heart of the forest, where the sun barely seeps through the dense trees, lies a shk'ryth—the festering evil responsible for countless deaths and the source of countless folktales. Until contacted by TemCo, the creature lived as little more than an animal. It hunted humans in and around its Domain for food and sport, then slept for years at a time, dreaming of strange dimensions. In 1969, a TemCo representative approached the Russian shk'ryth and offered it a position in the organization, which it accepted.

Under TemCo's tutelage, the newly manifest Vladimer Kostov quickly worked his way up the ranks of the local bureaucracy. When the government announced that it needed a new tractor factory, Kostov was quick to volunteer his services. Per his instructions, the factory was constructed in the forest outside Moscow. He claimed the location was for the sake of the local people's welfare and convenience, but in reality it merely placed the factory squarely inside his Domain.

Kostov was lord and master of what became the Moscow Tractor Works. Not only employees but also those who lived and worked nearby came to respect and fear him. Those who sought his favor were rewarded. Those who displeased him vanished...or worse. One story had it that a rebellious young worker walked off the job in a rage one day and stormed into the woods. He was discovered the next morning torn to shreds, his body parts strung from the trees like streamers.

Kostov's power over the region solidified with the



collapse of the Soviet Union. As Russia staggered toward a free market economy, the factory took on many new, desperate workers willing to obey the commands of the shk'ryth. TemCo moved in during this time, officially buying out the factory and installing new, modern equipment.

Today, the Moscow Tractor Works is an integral part of the Tyrr Nemaii project. It is the link between Parsec, Inc. and the magnetron field in the Gobi Desert. The parts for the desert portion of the project are shipped from Parsec to the factory, where they are assembled and sent on to TemCo's Gobi facilities. There has not been a tractor shipped from the factory in more than two years.

The Tyrr Nemaii project is nearing completion. The Moscow Tractor Works is no longer needed, as the Gobi facilities are now fully operational. There is no more work to be done in Moscow. The assembly lines have fallen silent and the workers have all gone home for the last time. The factory has been reduced to a skeleton staff of mostly TemCo personnel.

The Trap

Several weeks ago, Kostov himself found Isaac Dreier, a New Moon Temple agent, prowling through the factory. The agent was reluctant to speak of his masters and mission at first, but under the Tribunal's persistent prodding, eventually told his captors everything about the Temple.

Moscow Papers #1

Dated four days ago

Roland Delmont
Eastern Mutual Insurance
San Francisco, CA 94111
USA

Mr. Delmont:

In the course of investigating TemCo's corporate holdings, I have made a most fascinating discovery in Russia. Moscow Tractor Works, a local farm implement manufacturer and a TemCo subsidiary, appears to have once been the company's true center of operations.

The factory is abandoned now, but many of TemCo's records remain. There are so many, in fact, that I have not had time to inventory them, much less read them all.

An even greater discovery, however, is a strange artifact not unlike the ones we have seen so many times during Ambrosia. I dare not touch it myself, lest I be destroyed in my unworthiness.

Therefore I humbly request that you and the other Deacons meet me here outside Moscow as soon as possible. Unfortunately, we have only a small window of opportunity for your visit. My reconnaissance has revealed that TemCo is returning to the Tractor Works in a matter of days in order to retrieve what they left behind. While I would ordinarily support a more cautious approach, I'm afraid the situation leaves us no alternative. We must strike now, before they move their records to a more secure location.

Enclosed are a map and directions to the Moscow Tractor Works.

Praise to the Deliverer,
Isaac Dreier

The TemCo ruling council decided to use this opportunity to rid itself of the New Moon Temple once and for all. Under the direction of Gerard Moore, letters were sent to the leaders of the Temple. Supposedly written by Isaac Dreier, the letter requests that the Temple masters meet him at the factory to go over TemCo records and investigate a "strange artifact."

Roland Delmont and his fellow Deacons have fallen for TemCo's trap. They are en route to the Moscow Tractor Works and will be arriving soon. When they do, they will find themselves up against a unit of blessed Tribunal agents. Without the aid of its lord Nyarlathotep, the New Moon Temple does not stand a chance.

The trap is to be sprung by none other than Gerard Moore. The Tribunal's top assassin is best qualified to oversee the operation and is looking forward to the slaughter.

Into the Works

Ekloff provides transportation from the train station to the Moscow Tractor Works in a stolen truck. The vehicle is old and runs poorly but staggers and sputters the 20 miles into the forest. As the investigators penetrate deeper into the woods, the trees grow closer together, twisted and malformed, choking out the light from the narrow, rutted road.

The road eventually opens out onto a clearing, at the center of which is the tractor factory. The Tractor Works is an ugly, rusted metal and brick building. There are eight large overhead doors around the factory, two on each side. Between each set of doors are smaller personnel doors illuminated with floodlights. An unpaved parking lot surrounds the factory, dotted with a handful of cars that haven't been moved in weeks.

Ekloff pulls off the road before coming into sight of the factory and hides the truck. He does not expect the investigators to come with him into the facility—they are too clumsy and inexperienced, he says. He can move more quickly and quietly by himself. After all, he is a professional spy. Instead, Ekloff wants the investigators to act as his lookouts. He gives them a handheld radio transceiver that he stole in Moscow; he carries a second transceiver on his belt.

"Find a place to hide and keep an eye on things," he says. "If it looks like trouble, call me on the radio and let me know."

"Wish me luck," he mutters and sneaks off towards the factory. A few minutes later, the investigators see him slip in through one of the personnel doors.

The investigators, of course, may be inclined to accompany Ekloff into the factory whether he wants them to or not. If some or all of them insist on accompanying Ekloff, skip to "Inside the Factory."

Standing Watch

The forest comes within a hundred yards of the factory grounds in all directions, providing the investigators with plenty of areas to conceal themselves in the foliage and still remain in sight of the clearing.

As the investigators monitor their post, a thin mist rises from the floor of the forest. The mist thickens over the next quarter hour, becoming a dense fog that obscures the ground and confuses the senses (see the sidebar).

Strange growls and snorts echo from inside the fog, their sources impossible to pinpoint. Weird, loping shapes scurry through the mists. Observant investigators who make a Spot check (DC 15) may recognize these shapes as the monstrous forms of Tribunal agents similar to those who accompanied Gerard Moore. Moore has dispatched his minions and four other blessed Tribunal agents into the area to await their guests. If the investigators managed to kill any of the agents in Copenhagen, the GM should simply reduce the numbers of Moore's henchmen accordingly.

As long as the investigators remain hidden, TemCo's servants continue to overlook them. The moment they draw attention to themselves, however, Moore's minions close in and attack.

If the investigators check in with Ekloff via radio, he confirms that everything is going as planned. He has seen no one else inside the factory and is attempting to locate the central offices. The building is large and unlit, however, which means that it's going to take some time.

Tatjana Rabcevich



As long as she can remember, Tatjana has been obsessed with Vladimer Kostov. Both her parents worked in the Moscow Tractor Works, so she grew up hearing about the plant's self-styled overlord. Even as a little girl, she was fascinated by how much fear and respect the man commanded in his employees.

When she turned 18, Tatjana went to work alongside her parents on the assembly line. Every day she looked forward to catching a glimpse of Kostov as he made his rounds. Every day she hoped to catch his eye, to gain the attention and maybe—just maybe—the approval of this great man. Tatjana's parents scoffed at her strange fixation, but only until Tatjana was promoted to the administrative office.

Tatjana was ecstatic to be working in such close proximity to Kostov. For months she toiled long hours

Moscow Papers #2

Receipt for Goods Received

Item	Quantity
T17 Generator	15
Phase Two Capacitor	10
Field Relay	25

Received from:

Parsec, Inc.
1934 East Parham Street
Austin, TX 78767
USA

Moscow Papers #3

From: Vladimer Kostov
To: Delivery Supervisors
Subject: Desert Deliveries

When delivering equipment to the desert facilities, there are certain procedures and protocols that must be followed. Failure to do so might result in equipment failure, rejected deliveries, and/or a severe reprimand. A summary of these procedures is detailed below. For full procedures, see your employee manual.

While the equipment is designed for windy desert conditions, it is essential that it remains tightly sealed in its delivery containers until ready to be assembled. These parts include highly sensitive and delicate electronics. If they are exposed to the elements or jostled unnecessarily before being assembled on-site, they may be easily damaged.

Secondly, the security measures at the desert facilities have been upgraded and now feature a full alphanumeric entry code. The current code is MAKALU99112. Those who fail to enter the proper code will not only be denied entrance to the facilities but will be apprehended by security as well.

Furthermore, it is important to be certain of your destination before you arrive. If the equipment is needed at Substation B, for example, bring it all the way to the substation. Do not deliver it to the primary generator facility. Employees on-site are busy preparing for SH-01 and have no time to finish your task for you.

Finally, there have been reports of personnel from this facility abusing the local Khalkha tribespeople. Our coworkers on-site are understaffed and rely on these people to handle their mundane tasks. The Khalkha are an invaluable resource and are to be treated as such. Those who do not will be disciplined.

Thank you for your cooperation on these matters.

The Fog

As the investigators might suspect, there is nothing natural about the thick white mist seeping up from the ground.

Kostov is creating the fog though his innate shk'ryth ability to affect the environment of his Domain. Its purpose is twofold: to hide the transformed Tribunal agents on the prowl and to confound anyone trespassing on the factory grounds—specifically the New Moon Temple.

The fog is magically enhanced to induce confusion and disorientation. The denser the fog, the easier it is to get turned around. Sounds seem to come from every direction, and a sense of vertigo sets in, making it difficult at times to even maintain one's balance. In game terms, in addition to half concealment, all movement-oriented ability and skill checks suffer a –4 circumstance penalty.

Unfortunately for TemCo, the fog is not selective. The Tribunal agents are also affected by it, as would be Gerard Moore if he were not perched above it.

The fog is at its thickest just before the New Moon Temple arrives. It thins out then (reducing the circumstance penalty to –2) around the site of the battle but remains dense around the edge of the clearing. Kostov does not want any of the cultists escaping into the woods. After the battle, the fog dissipates very quickly.

to show him how committed she was to the company. She took every opportunity to be near the factory manager and ingratiated herself to him. Kostov began to take notice of his young admirer, favoring her with an occasional smile.

Kostov became a recurring character in Tatjana's dark and forbidden fantasies. He filled her dreams at night and her thoughts during the day. Tatjana's conversation was full of Kostov; she could not go an hour without mentioning his name. Her parents began to worry about their daughter's obsession, but said nothing. It seemed harmless enough, and the money she brought in was better than what they made on the assembly line.

And so it went for almost a year, until one evening four months ago when Tatjana returned to the office after hours. She hoped to get a head start on some of the paperwork for the new desert project. Upon her arrival, Tatjana heard voices from Kostov's office. The door was ajar, so she peered inside. What she saw would shatter her sanity forever.

Kostov was yelling at one of his subordinates, one of the TemCo men, berating him for some security breach. As Kostov grew angrier, his voice shifted lower, his skin rougher and hairier. His shoulders broadened, tearing through his shirt. Tatjana could only stare in silent terror as her employer transformed into an enormous thing resembling a bear with warped wolf and bat features. When the beast tore the TemCo man to pieces, it was more than Tatjana's mind could withstand.

The horrible things she had seen melded with Tatjana's already near-psychotic obsession with Kostov, resulting in the strong conviction that the factory manager was a god. He had revealed his glory to her that night in the office, she told her parents, because she was Chosen. The TemCo man had died because he was not Chosen; Kostov's glory was too much for his fragile humanity to take.

Tatjana's parents assumed their daughter's madness was merely an extension of her fixation. It broke their hearts to do so, but they had to keep Tatjana confined to their home lest she run through the village declaring the glory and godhood of Kostov. Once she got away from them and went to the factory to worship her god.

During the chaos of the current comet crisis, Tatjana has slipped free of her parents once again and has come to the factory to worship. At least, she means to go to the factory, but she has become turned around in the fog and is now wandering the area aimlessly. The investigators may encounter Tatjana crashing through the woods behind them or staggering around in the fog. When they see her, she is covered with scratches and bruises from running through the trees. She is wearing regular Russian worker attire and her brown hair is sticking out, giving her a wild, unkempt look. There is a glimmer of madness in her eyes.

Tatjana speaks only Russian but is very friendly. She does her best to explain to the investigators that the god Kostov reigns from his throne in the tractor factory. She is going to worship him, and they should accompany her.

If the investigators are able to question Tatjana, she is willing to tell them everything she can about the factory: It hasn't been working on tractors for over a year but putting together something for TemCo, which is shipped out to some desert. It is difficult to get Tatjana to concentrate, however, as she often gets caught up in gushing over Kostov.

Isaac Dreier's Final Repose

When the New Moon Temple agent Isaac Dreier was captured, he was held for many days at the Moscow Tractor Works, where he was drugged, beaten, and interrogated. Once Gerard Moore was convinced that the cultist could tell him nothing more, he shot the man once, behind the ear. The spy's body was

unceremoniously dragged out into the forest and dumped.

There is a chance that the investigators may stumble over Dreier's body while they are sneaking around in the woods. Decomposition has already set in and animals have been eating away the corpse. A successful Knowledge (biology) or (medicine) check (DC 15) suggests that the cultist died several days ago.

Those searching the body find Dreier's passport, as well as a wallet containing his Eastern Mutual Insurance credit card.

New Moon Rising

Roughly half an hour after Ekloff vanishes into the factory, the investigators hear the muffled rumble of an automobile engine through the swirling fog. A moment later, two sets of headlights blaze down the road.

Two sedans emerge from the woods and pull into the factory parking lot. Their doors open and a handful of figures emerge. Their features are obscured at first by the heavy mist but slowly come into focus as the fog strangely dissipates in their immediate vicinity. Observant characters making a successful Spot check (DC 15) may recognize one of them as Roland Delmont of the New Moon Temple. A second Spot check (DC 20) reveals a form scuttling along on the roof of the Moscow Tractor Works, moving toward the sedans with a long object in his hands.

Moments later, the thunderous crack of a gunshot rings out across the clearing. Roland Delmont falls to the ground, dead. He has been shot by the sniper on the roof—none other than Gerard Moore. Moore's mocking voice echoes above the fog.

"My name is Gerard Moore. I killed your man Isaac Dreier...and your pathetic leak in Riga. And now I will eliminate your irritating interference once and for all. This is the end of the New Moon Temple."

At these words, the monstrous Tribunal agents spring from the surrounding fog. Several Deacons from the New Moon Temple try to seal themselves inside their automobiles, but this merely delays their inevitable deaths.

Simultaneously, six Tribunal agents appear on the roof next to Moore. Armed with automatic weapons, they rain death upon the New Moon Temple.

After the initial hail of gunfire, four of the Temple troops begin to grow and contort. Their mass seemingly doubles while their flesh appears to "unravel" into long flailing strips. As their hideous wings unfurl from their backs, the four reveal themselves to be utoruks.

The dark angels of Nyarlathotep waste no time but immediately set upon the transformed Tribunal agents with their poisoned tentacles. Through the fog, the investigators can make out the monstrous shapes battling each other around the sedans. It appears the utoruks are holding their own. Gerard Moore, meanwhile, maintains his sniping position and systematically riddles the cultists' automobiles with bullets.

"Take one more step and I will shoot you down like a dog."

Dimitri Rabcevich freezes and instinctively raises his hands. He should have listened to his wife, he reflects grimly. She had told him not to go into the forest alone. It is a bad place. It always has been.

"Turn around."

Dimitri does as he is told. The man holding a pistol on him looks vaguely familiar. He may have seen him at the factory before Kostov shut it down.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" The gunman frisks Dimitri with his free hand.

"My name is Dimitri Rabcevich. I am looking for my daughter, Tatjana."

"Right. And what is Tatjana doing out here?"

Dimitri pauses. He wonders how he can explain the situation without sounding as mad as his daughter.

"You have five seconds to answer my question." Dimitri's nameless captor cocks his pistol.

"My daughter is...unstable. She works at the factory. She may have come through here on her way there; it is the shortest route."

The gunman ponders Dimitri's words for a moment. He uncocks his gun. Dimitri sees a flash of...pity, perhaps…in the man's eyes.

"This is private property, Dimitri Rabcevich. You'd better get out of here right now—for your own sake. It soon will not be safe to be here."

"But my daughter—"

"Will be sent home if we see her. Now go. Before it's too late."

Investigators trying to contact Ekloff at this point find that their radio is malfunctioning. There is power running through the unit, but it refuses to make a sound. Not even static escapes its dead speakers. There is nothing mechanically or electronically wrong with the radio. Rather, it is merely the will of Nyarlathotep. It amuses the Outer God to disallow communication between Ekloff and the investigators.



A Close Encounter

Though the cultists of the New Moon Temple are unaware of it, they serve the will of Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos that thrives on madness and disorder. The Outer God has been watching his servants in their effort to discover the truth behind the shk'ryth. Between the efforts of the investigators and the New Moon Temple, Nyarlathotep has discovered all there is to know of the shk'ryth. He has no further need of these mortals. He has come to the factory, in person, to watch them die.

"Oh, my. Now this is interesting."

The voice, smooth and heavy with a Russian accent, comes from directly behind the investigators. Turning, the investigators see a swarthy, Egyptian man of average height dressed in common Russian clothing. A small, bemused smile plays across his lips.

"I'm sorry," he says. "I didn't mean to startle you."

The stranger casually engages the investigators in conversation, as if they were watching a football game and not spying on a battle between monstrous supernatural forces. If asked, he identifies himself simply as "oh, just a messenger."

The stranger asks the investigators who they are and how they have come to be here. He asks them other questions about themselves, but keeps it light and conversational. Through the entire chat, he remains amused, occasionally struggling to avoid laughing.

When he tires of conversing with the investigators, the stranger turns toward the battlefield and raises his arms.

"Enough of this," he says, and makes a rising gesture with his hands.

Suddenly, the four utoruks cease their fighting with the Tribunal agents and take to the air with a mighty flapping of wings. As they grow small in the sky, the remaining New Moon Temple cultists are savagely torn to pieces by TemCo's servants.

The Black Man walks into the fog and disappears.

Upon looking back on this encounter, the investigators are unable to recall the stranger's face. Instead, the image of a glistening red tongue is the only image that comes to mind.

Inside the Factory

If some or all of the investigators accompany Ekloff inside the Tractor Works, they find the factory completely deserted. Ekloff leads them across the factory floor, between rows of aging, industrial equipment and machinery, unfinished tractors, and crates of tractor parts and components. On the other side of the factory floor, he enters a suite of offices and begins searching them systematically. The only thing of interest in the offices is a memo referencing the Gobi facilities written by the shk'ryth Vladimer Kostov (see Moscow Papers #3).

With one or more investigators aiding him in the search, Ekloff discovers this document after about 15 minutes of searching (rather than the 30 minutes it would take him alone). Ekloff and the investigators are therefore able to escape the Tractor Works before the New Moon Temple cultists arrive. Moore, unwilling to spring the trap early and risk alerting the cultists, lets Ekloff and the investigators escape.

Ekloff's Last Stand?

Timothy Ekloff emerges at last from inside the Moscow Tractor Works. He carries with him a fistful of papers in one hand, his radio transceiver in the other. If the investigators call him on the radio or otherwise get his attention, Ekloff runs toward them. Otherwise, he simply starts running as fast as he can toward the closest patch of forest.

The GM should ask each of the investigators what they are doing as Ekloff makes his mad dash from the factory. They can tell he is under fire from the snipers on the roof. If one or more of the investigators provide covering fire or otherwise distract the shooters, Ekloff reaches safety without being injured. If they do not, he suffers a fatal gunshot wound (see below).

"Let's go!" he shouts as he reaches the investigators.

As the investigators run through the woods, they realize that Ekloff is lagging behind (unless they covered his escape). Minutes later, the former spy's breathing is ragged and his face is drained of color. He wearily leans against a tree and hands the paperwork to the investigators. They see a flower of blood blooming from his chest. Apparently, one of Moore's bullets found its target.

"It seems my journey ends here," he gurgles. "I implore you to continue."

He slides down the tree until resting at its base.

"Go...save the world."

The eyes of Timothy Ekloff close for the last time. As his mind retreats from the world, he mutters, "Karen? The snow isn't cold anymore...Karen..."

Timothy Ekloff, ex-CIA agent, TemCo's greatest threat, dies.

The papers that Ekloff died to retrieve are, unfortunately, mostly useless Russian bureaucratic busywork. Only one item, a memo written in Russian, German, and English, holds anything of interest. In it, Kostov writes of TemCo's "desert facilities" and actually gives one of the passwords needed to get inside (see the Moscow Papers #3).



A Narrow Escape

If the investigators were able to save Ekloff, he leads them quickly through the trees toward his vehicle. In any case, the Tribunal agents come after the investigators as soon as they are done with the New Moon Temple. If the investigators can make it to Ekloff's truck, they can speed down the narrow woodland road (perhaps with a Drive check or two), the beasts snapping at their tires. The TemCo monsters are no match for the truck's speed, however, and eventually fall behind.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Into the East

Neng Chao has lived a long, full life. By all rights, he should be ready to die. He knows this, and yet he is afraid.

As the train works its way east, every clack of the wheels sounds to Neng Chao like the ticking of a clock. The train is ticking off the seconds of his life, the seconds of all their lives. With every moment, the inevitable draws closer. They can see it now in the sky. At night it sometimes shines like a second moon.

Neng Chao tries to be brave. He thinks of his children and his grandchildren. He thinks of the joy on their faces, the love in their eyes. He thinks of them all gathered together with him in the garden on the world's final night, watching the last sunset, watching the sky fall.

Touching his cheek, he finds a tear.

"Hey, what's up?"

One of westerners, drunk as usual, flops into a seat next to Neng Chao. He finds them tiresome and shallow, their language crude and harsh on his tongue. Instead of trying to speak, he simply points

out the window.

"The comet? Yeah, it's a bummer. You should do like I do. Drown your sorrows, man."

The young westerner opens a second bottle of wine and offers it to Neng Chao. The older man hesitates, then accepts the liquor and takes a sip. It is warm and a little bitter but not altogether unpleasant. He takes another, longer sip.

"Yes," he nods slowly. "Drown sorrow."

The two sit and drink in silence, listening to the train ticking away the seconds.

Gamemaster's Introduction

The journey from Moscow to Mt. Makalu is a long one, necessitating more than a week of travel by train and automobile.

From Moscow, the investigators travel to Irkutsk on the Trans-Siberian railroad. Another train takes them from there to Ulan Bator, the capitol of Mongolia, then on to Xining and Lhasa. The final leg of the trip is a slow, painstaking crawl through the Himalayas as part of a truck convoy. The investigators encounter a number of unusual situations on their trek, including a haunting on the Trans-Siberian railroad and a gruesome, mysterious death in the Himalayas.

This journey is divided into two parts in this chapter: "Trans-Siberian Terror," detailing the trip on the Trans-Siberian railroad, and "On to Makalu," which covers the trains and trucks taking the investigators from Irkutsk to Mt. Makalu.

Trans-Siberian Terror

The journey from Moscow to Irkutsk on the Trans-Siberian railroad takes five long days, punctuated by a dozen or so short stops along the way. These stops are no more than an hour long and do little to relieve the boredom that comes from many, many hours of tedious Russian scenery.

Investigators' Introduction

In order to amuse themselves, the passengers on the Trans-Siberian railroad get to know each other over coffee, wine, or an international assortment of liquors. After a few days, the train turns into one big family. Even though the passengers are from all over the world, the close quarters and monotony of the trip bring them together. Every night, there is at least one party on the train. Everyone is invited, and there is plenty of alcohol to go around.

Under normal circumstances, this is a fun and exciting trip for those on board. But with SH-01 glowing like a second sun and looming like a second moon, no one is much in the mood to party. Instead, the atmosphere on the train is one of quiet desperation. The passengers go through the motions of optimism ("Oh, I'm sure the government will find some way out of this") but these efforts are hollow, a hope against hope. While there is just as much drinking as usual on the Trans-Siberian, it is mostly to drown sorrow. Likewise, the nightly parties tend to be quiet, almost somber affairs—at least until someone makes an effort to liven things up.

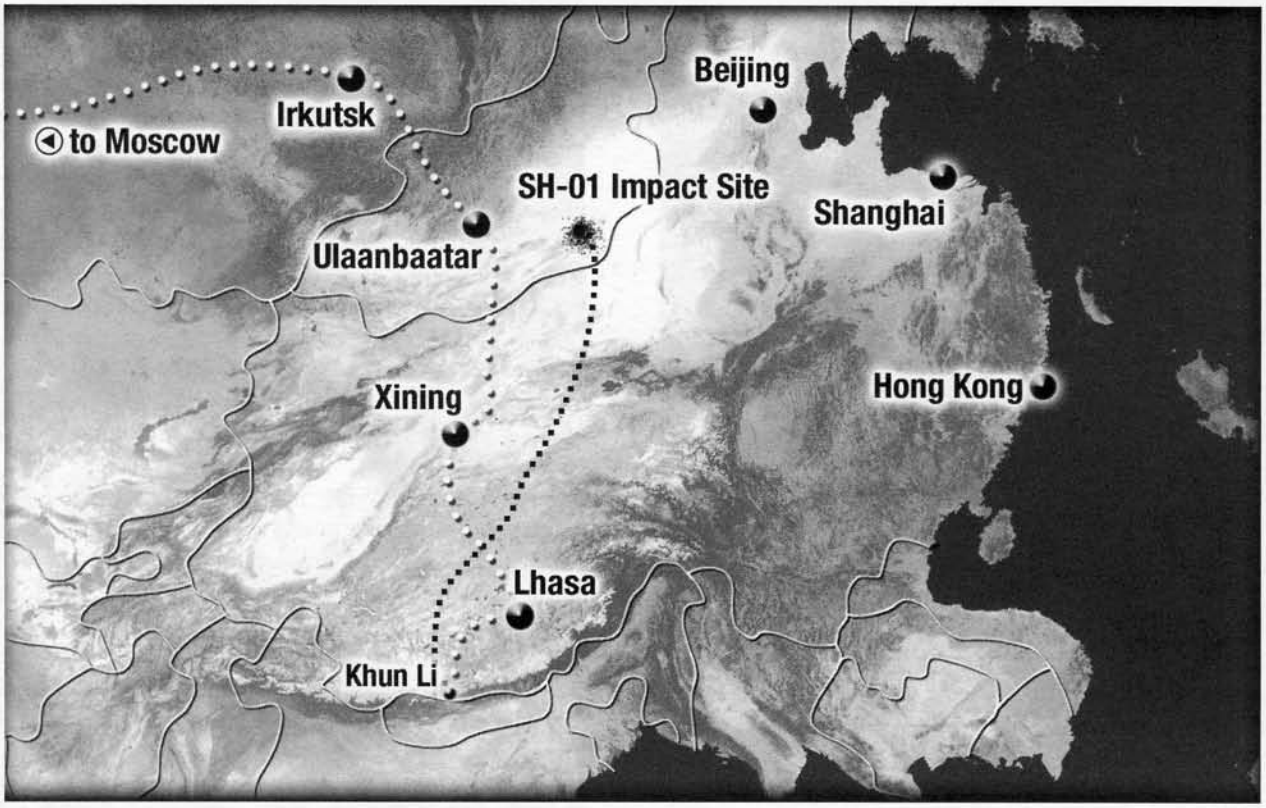
The train is carrying less than half its maximum number of passengers; travel is difficult and impractical during the comet crisis. Described below are a number of passengers the investigators have a chance to meet during the trip.

Mikal Kazistov: This 26-year-old Russian university student is going home to retrieve his fiancee and bring her back to Moscow with him. Mikal's English is good and he loves to talk. He is very outgoing, often inviting strangers into his compartment for a drink. He claims to have every confidence in the government's ability to resolve the comet crisis, but he looks frightened when talking about his fiancee. An amateur musician, Mikal has a guitar with him, on which he plays terrible renditions of Beatles songs.

Philip Dubois: A 32-year-old visual artist from Quebec, Philip is in the middle of a six-month world tour. He carries a video camera everywhere he goes and often stops in the middle of a conversation to get footage of a person or piece of scenery that catches his eye. His video, he says bleakly, may be a record of our civilization for those who come after the comet. Between his French style and his sensitive, artistic nature, Philip is quite the ladies' man—and he knows it. His constant compliments and flirtation may be irritating or flattering, depending on the subject of his attention.

Neng Chao: The unofficial spokesperson for a group of Chinese tourists, Neng is a 65-year-old history professor and the only one out of the group who can speak much English. He and his wife have arranged a tour of Russia for a group of retired university professionals, which they have cut short due to the comet crisis. Neng and the group are friendly, but communication is always a challenge.

Elayna Pasicznyk: As a businesswoman, Elayna explains to those who ask that she is too busy to "frolic around on the train." And she is busy—she can usu-



ally be found with a number of charts and reports spread on the table before her, busily crunching numbers on paper or into her laptop computer. If asked about the comet, she says she is also too busy to worry about such things. Nevertheless, the person who can convince her to take a night off from work will find the 40-year-old to be just as industrious in her drinking as she is in her bookkeeping. If work won't keep her mind of SH-01, alcohol will.

Marie Meinhardt: Though she seems to be just another young German tourist, Marie is actually an expert card shark. She uses her sweet smile and innocent eyes to lure her targets into poker games and other card scams, then turns the tables on them when they least expect it. Her execution is flawless: Her victims often never know when they've been fleeced. Marie is not a bad person, but she is addicted to the rush of "the game" that she has been playing since growing up on the streets of East Berlin. She is 27 years old and—in her mind—immortal. She refuses to even think about SH-01.

Steve and Alice Hughes: They aren't ugly, but these Americans are certainly obnoxious. They thought it would be romantic to spend their tenth anniversary touring Europe and Asia but have been sorely disappointed. Alice latches onto the first English-speaking investigators she finds, then spends the rest of the trip complaining about the food, the cramped compartments, the temperature, and a seemingly endless array of other inconveniences that, she says, "will be the death of me yet!" Steve doesn't complain, preferring to speak loudly and slowly to those who don't speak English, flaunting his money in hopes of impressing those around him. The couple often argues about whether or not they should cut their trip short and go home to wait for the comet. Alice wants to see her sister in Milwaukee "before the big one hits," while Steve thinks it makes more sense to see the world while it's still here.

Judith Vanderbosch: As a Mormon missionary to China, the 39-year-old Judith prefers not to imbibe too heavily but nevertheless spends much of her time socializing. The Dutch woman is as caring as she is outgoing, and does her best to help anyone who seems to be in need. Though she rarely mentions it, she is terrified at the prospect of the comet's impact and spends much of her day in prayer.

Gregory Selyukov: This friendly, smiling Russian always wears a suit, even when those around him on the train are reaching new lows of casual dress. He exudes an aura of wealth and taste, though he describes himself as "a simple businessman." The truth is that Gregory is a drug dealer on the run from the Moscow police. He killed one of their undercover officers last week and they have proven to be most persistent in their efforts to bring him to justice. Rather than face the

heat any longer, Gregory has chosen to take the money and run—in this case, to Vladivostok. In one of his suitcases is a loaded pistol with a silencer and an extra clip. In his other suitcase is a small fortune in cocaine. If the investigators seem like potential customers, Gregory may offer to sell them a small amount of drugs.

Graham on Board

As on the train to Moscow, the investigators may catch a glimpse of Michael Graham in his stealth field from the corners of their eyes, only to see nothing when they look closer. Again, the ktchoma assumes the form of a middle-aged man in a suit to watch the investigators, only to disappear if they try to talk with him.

Of course, invisible people prowling about the train might lend some credence to Anna's stories of ghosts.

The Train

Over the course of their journey, the investigators have ample time to explore the train. Most of their time is probably spent in the passenger cars, but there are other areas as well.

Passenger Cars: These cars are all connected by walkways, allowing passengers to easily move from one car to the next. Each passenger car is divided into 10 compartments. These compartments have doors opening onto cramped hallways on either side of the train and provide beds for four people. The beds are narrow bunks that fold up into the walls. When the beds are folded up, benches and a table fold down, allowing the passengers to sit and eat, play cards, or just lounge in the compartment. It is worth noting that the compartment doors (made of thin metal and plastic) slide open on a track and do not lock. There are tiny toilet and washing facilities on each passenger car, though no showers.

Dining Car: In the middle of the passenger cars is the dining car. The long car serves as a restaurant and bar, with a couple dozen tables and plenty of chairs. The food is very inexpensive by Western standards but also very bland. Liquor is more costly but of a much higher quality.

Engine: The train's control center, the engine car, is at the front of the train. It is connected to the other cars via a walkway, but the walkway door is kept locked for security reasons (Open Lock check, DC 30). The train's engineers sleep and work in the engine car. They are occasionally seen in the dining car, sipping coffee and exchanging words with the kitchen help.

Ladislov Stachowski



One subject that travel agencies often neglect to mention about travel on the Trans-Siberian railroad is the large number of thefts that happen on board. The passenger compartments do not lock, and most passengers spend their time wandering the train, which means thieves have ample opportunity to rifle through luggage, making off with cash and valuables.

One of these thieves is Ladislov Stachowski, a professional criminal who has made something of a career out of robbing train passengers. He has contacts in every junction city of every major railroad ready to buy his ill-gotten goods. There is a fence in Vladivostok ready to purchase whatever he steals on the way from Moscow.

Ladislov keeps to himself and pretends not to know any languages other than Russian. (His English is excellent, and he knows a little German and French.) He hopes to maintain the image of the intellectual loner, but the 35-year-old mostly comes off as a creepy voyeur, always watching, never talking. If asked, Ladislov claims to be a university student at Moscow.

There are three tactics that Ladislov has found to work well for him. The first is to simply loiter on board the train when it makes one of its many stops, then dash through the empty passenger compartments snatching anything that catches his eye. The second tactic is to attend the various parties on board the train at night to make sure that his victims are out drinking and nowhere near their compartments, giving him enough time to thoroughly ransack their luggage. Finally, Ladislov has with him a small, pressurized canister of sleeping gas that, when released into a compartment, ensures that its sleeping occupants will not awaken, no matter how much noise he makes. The thief only has enough gas to use this tactic once, so he is saving it for a target he knows will be worth the risk.

Ladislov brought a full-size travel trunk with him on the train. Inside the trunk, beneath a layer of clothes and personal items, is where he keeps his stolen loot. The thief is a coward. If he feels he is in physical danger, he gladly admits his thefts and points out the trunk in hopes of avoiding a beating. Otherwise, he hotly denies being involved in any illegal activities.

The thief tries to rob at least one compartment for each day of the journey, allowing the GM plenty of opportunities for him to harass the investigators.

Ladislov Stachowski: Male 2nd level; HD 2d6; hp



7; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d3, punch) or +3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +5, Drive +5, Hide +9, Knowledge (streetwise) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +3.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Sleight of Hand), Stealthy.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, $130 cash.

The Haunting

Anna and Valentin Sergachova are a man-and-wife team of Russian con artists and pickpockets who have found a fantastic new scam: haunting people for fun and profit. Just before news of SH-01 broke, they decided to take their show on the road—specifically, onto the Trans-Siberian railroad. After learning of the comet, they considered canceling their trip, but Anna decided against it.

"If the comet comes, we die," she told her husband. "Does it matter if we die in Moscow or on a train? No. And if they stop the comet, we live...with lots of suckers' money."

Anna and Valentin are staying in separate passenger compartments and under different assumed last names. When they have pulled the "haunting" scam before, they found it works best when Valentin assumes the role of the ringer. In order to avoid suspicion, the two pretend they don't know each other.

Valentin

On the first day of the trip, Valentin introduces himself to the investigators as Valentin Chetvergova, a public works commissioner from Irkutsk on his way home. He is looking forward to seeing his wife and children again, he says. He is worried about how they are holding up during this terrible crisis. A charming fellow, Valentin is friendly to all he meets.

Valentin occasionally complains of a minor stomachache. The pain seemingly gets worse over the next two days, though he bravely insists it's "not too bad" and refuses to seek treatment. On the third day, the con man collapses in a public place (ideally in front of the investigators), clutching at his stomach and groaning.

"My stomach!" he gasps through clenched teeth. "The pain is unbearable!"

While he asks for medical attention, Valentin makes it difficult for anyone to get close enough to find out what's wrong with him. He kicks and twitches, grabs at his stomach, and howls if anyone touches him.

If the investigators are actually able to use any med-

ical skills on Valentin, they find nothing wrong with him. However, it is likely that they do not get a chance to do so before Anna steps in.

Anna

A somber woman in a long, plain dark dress, Anna keeps to herself for the first few days of the journey, saying little. She is polite if spoken to and identifies herself as Anna Polylyack if asked. Her occupation, she says, is "personal consultant." If pressed, she sighs and admits that she is a medium and psychic advisor. She is going home to Irkutsk to die with her elderly mother.

For the next few days, Anna remains politely aloof from the other passengers. She can often be seen in the dining car, gazing solemnly into the distance. (Anna has spent hours practicing looking mysterious and pensive; she is very good at it.) Occasionally, other passengers may observe her apparently having quiet conversations with no one at all. She falls silent when another person enters the area.

It's Show Time!

Anna makes it a point to be nearby when Valentin is felled by his feigned stomach pain. Before he can receive any medical attention, she rises to her feet. Glaring at the air above her fallen husband, she yells:

"Get away from him! Get away! Leave him alone!"

"There is a malicious spirit here," she explains. "One of the restless dead tormenting this poor man."

On cue, Valentin begins to groan and writhe with renewed vigor.

Anna continues to berate the "spirit," first demanding that it leave, then demanding to know why it is attacking Valentin. Ostensibly receiving a reply, she turns to Valentin.

"You have a pocket watch. Very old, very ornate. In your right breast pocket. Give it to me."

"How did you—?"

"There's no time. Just give it to me!"

Valentin begins to protest, then digs out the watch and hands it to his accomplice. Anna holds up the watch as if showing it to the air.

"This? This is what you want? Cease your torments and you shall have it!"

With that, Valentin begins to cough violently. He rolls onto his knees, clutching at his throat and stomach. A thin ribbon of saliva and bile drips from his mouth onto the floor.

There is a metallic "plink" as a sewing needle falls from his mouth. Another needle follows, and another. One after another, Valentin apparently vomits up needles from inside his stomach. By the time he falls back, heaving, more than a dozen slivers of metal lie on the floor before him.



Haunting Techniques

Intelligence gathering is at the heart of Anna and Valentin's haunting scam. They search through their targets' luggage and quarters when given the opportunity and eavesdrop on their conversations looking for interesting bits of personal information. Anna then uses this information to convince them that the spirits are talking to her, telling her things about the targets that she has no other way of knowing...like details about a priceless antique a target may be transporting.

To supplement Anna's knowledge and theatrics, the con artists have a small repertoire of special effects they use to help convince someone that he or she is being haunted.

Maggots: Through sleight of hand, the couple sprinkles or inserts a handful of maggots into the food of their target. Valentine has a jar of maggots in his suitcase that he brought for just this purpose. It is a crude effect, and one they never use more than once.

Poltergeist: A common theme in many hauntings is the seemingly random rearranging of a haunting victim's possessions. When the couple is done searching their target's compartment, they often rearrange the possessions into strange patterns. Anna can later identify the patterns as "spiritual vortices" or somesuch.

Black Reverie: Six months ago, Valentin scored a vial of the drug known as "black reverie," which is rumored to have been developed as an interrogation drug by the KGB. A few drops in the victim's food make him or her very susceptible to suggestion. These suggestions are manifest in the form of hallucinations, which last 1d4 hours. Valentin only has enough for a few doses, so he is using it sparingly. The drug is perfect for achieving those difficult haunting effects like bleeding walls and ghostly apparitions.

Poison: More directly effective than the black reverie, the hoaxters occasionally slip a small dose of poison into their victims' food. This poison causes stomach cramps and convulsions approximately 30 minutes after ingestion. Thirty minutes after that, the symptoms vanish. Anna times her mystical intervention so that she may take credit for the symptoms' disappearance.

"This watch," Anna explains, "once belonged to a wicked man from Vladivostok. Because he loved it in life, he coveted it in death. He came here to claim it and take his revenge on the one he thought stole it...this man here. The spirit is with the watch now. When the train next stops, I will bury it with the proper ceremony, so that the restless spirit can go on to its reward."

The Scam

Valentin's role in the scam is to spread the word of how a ghost put needles in his stomach, but Anna made him better again. He is her biggest advocate and staunchest defender.

"She knew I had the watch, but there's no way she could have," he says to any who will listen. "I had not taken the watch out since we left Moscow. Only the spirit could have told her I had it. It was a beautiful watch, but I'm glad it's gone. If it wasn't for Anna, I would probably be dead."

The truth of the matter is that the watch was a cheap piece of junk that Anna and her husband could well afford to bury in the hinterlands of Russia. As for the needles in Valentin's stomach, they were nothing more than a demonstration of the pickpocket's sleight of hand. He slipped the needles into his mouth while coughing, only to spit them out a moment later. Investigators may notice the deception with a Spot check opposed by his Sleight of Hand check.

Anna and Valentin's trick is a variation of the classic Gypsy "cursed money" routine. Targeting the wealthy and gullible, the couple try to convince the victims that they are being haunted. The "malevolent spirit," Anna tells them, is attached to some expensive possession they are carrying. In order to be free of the spirit's torment, the targets must bury the item in the ground "with the proper ceremony" at the next stop. Of course, if they hand it over to Anna immediately, she can keep the ghosts at bay until she has an opportunity to bury it. (For details of how the couple goes about "haunting" people, see the sidebar.)

The criminals try to scam as many people as they can. If the investigators appear at all wealthy, they themselves are targeted. If not, the investigators receive reports of others on the train being haunted.

Through it all, Anna remains aloof and weary. She seems to be saddened by her part in "all this mess" and shies away from the attention it garners her. She is reluctant to speak on matters supernatural, but if pressed, gives what she says is "one possible explanation" for the strange profusion of ghosts.

"There are certain circumstances that make it easier and more likely for the dead to reach the world of the living," Anna says hesitantly.

"All this anxiety about the comet. It builds up an emotional charge, which makes it easier for the dead to touch us. And these train rails...it is the longest railroad

in the world...the iron in them is a spirit magnet. But the worst part is me. I fear that I am part of the equation. The dead know that I can sense them, that I know their desires. And so they torment their victims, knowing that I will do what I can to send them on in peace."

Exposing the Ghosts

The investigators may be somewhat wary of Anna's claims and the "evidence" of the train's haunting. For one thing, it is suspicious that these restless spirits are only harassing those with valuable property. For another, with the glaring exception of Valentin's gruesome needle display, none of the hauntings leave solid evidence of the supernatural. This lack of evidence may be reassuring to the other passengers, but after all the investigators have seen and done over the course of the campaign, it might seem a bit odd.

Questioning Anna or Valentin about these strange occurrences yields little new information. They are both expert liars playing well-rehearsed roles. Anna plays the reluctant medium. Valentin is the gushing crusader singing the praises of the woman who saved his life. Only if presented with evidence of their duplicity will the couple admit to any wrongdoing.

The investigators have better luck getting to the bottom of the hauntings if they search Anna or Valentin's luggage. Both of them have multiple IDs—passports, driver's licenses, and the like—made out in several different names. One set of passports (which are actually legitimate) lists their real names and states that they are married.

Buried at the bottom of Valentin's trunk and wrapped in cloth are all the items that Anna demanded the "haunted" passengers turn over to her. She never did bury them when the train stopped, burying bundles of rags and rubbish instead.

If the investigators follow Anna or Valentin, there is a chance they overhear the two secretly greet each other with a kiss, then talk about how well the scam is (or is not) going. Valentin reports to Anna the passengers he thinks would make good targets and any additional information he has gleaned about them that she can use.

Confrontation

If the con artists are found out, they are not willing to put up a fight. Instead, they deny everything (if they can) and try to flee the train, absconding with their loot, at its next stop. If there is no chance for them to escape or evade the consequences of their actions, they offer to return the stolen items in exchange for leniency.

Anna Sergachova: Female 2nd level; HD 2d6; hp 7; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +0 melee (1d3–1, punch); SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str

After seeing the fingertip in his soup, Mikal has lost his appetite.

"Look at this!" He points at his bowl. The tapered white fingertip, floating with its perfectly painted nail, points back at him.

"Look at what?" asks Philip.

"There's a woman's finger in my soup!"

Philip arches an eyebrow and examines Mikal's bowl.

"All I see are beans."

Mikal takes a second look at his soup. Could Philip be right? Could he have mistaken a bean for a—no, that is no bean. Mikal reaches for the bowl, to show it to Philip again, then stops as the fingertip twitches.

While Mikal watches wordlessly, his eyes wide, the fingertip points straight up and slowly begins to rise, revealing more of the finger. A second finger joins it, and another. A woman's hand is coming up through Mikal's soup.

Mikal stumbles backwards. He clutches at Philip, gesturing wildly toward his bowl.

"Hey! Careful, you almost..." Philip follows Mikal's gaze to the soup bowl and frowns. "It is only a bean."

There is an entire arm reaching up from Mikal's soup bowl. It twists slightly, as if stuck at the shoulder. The arm is distinctly feminine, though unnaturally white, a bleached and deathly color. On its finger is a ring that Mikal recognizes at once. It is the engagement ring he gave to Katrina last summer.

"Katrina!"

Without thinking, Mikal reaches out with both hands, grabs onto the pale white arm and pulls. There is a moment of resistance, followed by a wet, tearing sound as the arm comes free from the soup. Bone, muscle, and tendon dangle from the meaty stump where the shoulder should be. Blood drains into the bowl and spatters across the table.

Half his face covered in Katrina's blood, Philip turns to Mikal. "What is wrong with you?" he asks sharply. "Just eat your soup."

Other Events

The investigators spend five days on the Trans-Siberian railroad, surrounded by strangers and hurtling through some of most desolate land in the world. Aside from the incidents described in this chapter, any number of other events might also befall them. Several of them are listed here for the convenience of the GM who wants to keep the investigators' lives interesting.

Séance: After establishing herself as a medium and spiritual advisor, Anna may agree to hold a seance one night. Everyone who is interested gathers in the dining car after dark, where Anna lights a candle and pretends to go into a trance. She proceeds to give her audience what they want to hear for an hour or so. Valentin must attend (his absence would be suspicious) but might pick some pockets while he is there. Ladislov Stachowski is not in attendance and takes this opportunity to ransack a few passenger compartments. While Anna is a fraud, devious GMs may wish to have a real spirit appear during her seance.

Russian Action Theater: When the drug dealer Gregory Selyukov catches the thief Ladislov Stachowski digging through his luggage, he pulls out his gun and tries to silence him. A chase results as Ladislov runs through the train, asking for help from others and mercy from Gregory. Ladislov saw nothing of Gregory's drugs. As far as he knows, the other passenger is merely very protective of his luggage.

Holdup: The train lumbers to a stop, miles from the nearest town, when a set of logs is found lying across the tracks. A dozen armed men (some with military weapons and insignia) board the train demanding food and valuables. These are desperate deserters from the Russian army foraging for their lives in a land where the economy has all but completely collapsed. If they are given what they want, the robbers leave without incident, but the train's passengers will have to go hungry for the rest of the trip.

Echoes of Moscow: When the investigators step into the dining room one day, they see three train engineers eating lunch. All of them are wearing T-shirts with "Moscow Tractor Works" emblazoned across them, in the same style as the factory of the same name. If asked, the workers state that some corporate sponsor gave the shirts to them and other railroad employees. They don't understand the relationship between the railroad and the "sponsor" but aren't about to question a free shirt.

9, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 18.

Skills: Bluff +12, Diplomacy +7, Drive +5, Hide +7, Knowledge (streetwise) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +3.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Bluff), Skill Emphasis (Sense Motive).

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, $450 cash.

Valentin Sergachova: Male 2nd level; HD 2d6; hp 7; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d3, punch) or +3 ranged (1d10, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +5, Drive +5, Hide +9, Knowledge (streetwise) +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +7, Spot +3.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Bluff), Stealthy.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, $65 cash.

On to Makalu

While the journey from Irkutsk to Mt. Makalu is a little shorter than the one on the Trans-Siberian railroad, it is much less comfortable. The trains that take them to Lhasa are increasingly old and rickety, and the last leg of the trip is via a slow truck route. There should be no doubt that the investigators are heading into the most remote areas of the Earth. They are entering the realm of the Tyrr Nemaii.

Irkutsk

On the afternoon of the fifth day, the train pulls into Irkutsk, the only major city in southern Siberia. From here the investigators are to transfer onto another train that will take them south through Mongolia down into China. Franklin has done his job well; their seats are already reserved and paid for through Ekloff's illicit funds.

Before the southbound train pulls out that evening, the investigators have a little time to explore Irkutsk. What they find is an old city that would be picturesque if it weren't falling apart and oppressed by severe air pollution. Founded in 1652, the city was once a prosperous industrial center in post-Soviet Russia. In the wake of the nation's recent economic troubles, however, many of its mills and factories have fallen silent, forcing its people into unemployment.

The 10-hour train from Irkutsk to Ulan Bator is far

less comfortable than the Trans-Siberian. For one thing, this train does not have passenger berths, but thinly padded seats with little legroom. For another, the few passengers on board are not as friendly. These are mostly business people and bureaucrats, their minds too occupied with the comet and other serious matters to chat with tourists and foreign travelers.

Ulan Bator

The capital and commercial center of Mongolia, Ulan Bator (also known as "Ulaanbaatar") is a thriving city. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Mongolia has exercised its financial freedom, making Ulan Bator an integral part of the trade route between Russia and China. Its transportation hub is a bustling axis of cargo, luggage, and passengers. While there is a two-hour layover in Ulan Bator, the investigators do not have to switch trains. The one they have taken from Irkutsk continues on to Xining and Lhasa.

It is a two-day journey to Xining, divided almost in half by the Chinese border crossing. The crossing is a tense ordeal. Rifle-wielding Chinese soldiers work their way slowly through the passenger cars, demanding to see each passenger's passport and visa. Stone-faced and humorless, the soldiers glare at everyone and seem as if they sincerely want to shoot someone.

Until now, the investigators have had no reason to suspect that Curtis Franklin's forged paperwork is anything less than perfect. But now the scowling soldiers are taking much longer looking at their visas than at any of the other passengers' documents.

"Visas wrong! Not sufficient!" the lead soldier snaps at the investigators.

The other soldiers rearrange their rifles, almost—but not quite—pointing them at the investigators.

"This train goes to Tibet! You do not have Tibet extension! You cannot go on without extension!"

The truth of the matter is that, while the investigators are indeed lacking the Tibetan visa extensions, the soldiers are more interested in making some cash than they are enforcing China's innumerable travel laws. If the investigators offer to "purchase an extension" or otherwise propose to give the soldiers money, the soldiers immediately jump at the opportunity. Investigators can deduce what the soldiers want with a successful Sense Motive check (DC 10).

If the investigators hint that they are working for TemCo, the soldiers look disappointed (they'll be making no cash from these passengers) but acknowledge that they were mistaken; the Tibetan extension seems to be in order.

Since the Chinese crackdown on Tibetan culture, the government has instituted an anti-tourist policy for Tibet. This is not so much to keep tourists out (tourism is a major source of income) but to keep them confused, off-balance, and clustered together in large, controllable groups. This means that foreigners in Tibet are targets of extortion and harassment by Chinese soldiers and bureaucrats. Throughout the investigators' time in Tibet, the GM may wish use these Chinese bullies to keep them on edge.

Xining

In the ancient city of Xining, the investigators must switch to another, smaller train for the trip to Lhasa.

The train to Xining was less than luxurious. The train to Lhasa is frightening. A cold wind whistles through cracks in windows and doors. The passenger cars are furnished with only hard wooden benches. As the train rattles through the mountains, it sounds like it is ready to fall apart at any moment. To make matters worse, the train stops sporadically for minutes or hours at a time, often in the middle of nowhere, only to lurch back into motion without explanation.

It takes 30 hours to reach Lhasa. The investigators might want to get some sleep while on the train, difficult as it may be to get comfortable.

Lhasa

Once the capital of Tibet, Lhasa remains the cultural and spiritual heart of this Buddhist nation. The streets are full of comet-panicked pilgrims and wary Chinese soldiers.

The investigators' best bet for getting to Khun Li (the village closest to Mt. Makalu) is to hitch a ride with one of the many cargo trucks driving through Lhasa. While hitching is strongly discouraged by the government, tourists and pilgrims have long found it to be an efficient way to get to the more remote regions of Tibet. Hitching a ride is not a cheap proposition, however. Truckers charge as much as they think their passengers can afford and always demand payment up front. (If Franklin or Ekloff are with the investigators, either can explain all of this to them.)

Trucks regularly pass through Lhasa carrying freight to Xining, Beijing, and even Nepal. They customarily travel in convoys of at least five trucks, as the mountain roads are hazardous and poorly maintained. If a lone truck were to break down between Lhasa and Nepal, its driver could easily freeze or starve to death before help arrived.

Truck drivers tend to congregate in Qing Square on the outskirts of Lhasa. Here they sleep in cheap hotels, eat a quick meal, and meet up with other truckers to form the convoys. This is also the best place for the investigators to find trucks heading to Khun Li.

There is one convoy passing through the village on its way to Nepal. The six trucks in the convoy are all owned by TransAsian Shipping, a Mongolian freight company. Only one of the six drivers speaks English. A squat, furrow-faced man, his name is Xun, and he dri-

ves a hard bargain. (While the actual cost of the price is up the GM, it should cost the investigators dearly.)

Keep on Trucking

The convoy is made up of aged panel trucks, most of which are carrying farming equipment. The driver's compartment of each truck has room for two, maybe three passengers. Travel is slow on the snowy, treacherous mountain roads. As the trucks gain altitude, the temperature drops and the air becomes thinner. The GM should use the rules for high altitude in the *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook (page 90). The truckers have oxygen tanks and masks they will share with the investigators for an additional fee.

The trip to Khun Li takes two days. Over the course of the journey, Xun proves to be a friendly, talkative fellow. He asks the investigators where they are going and why. Xun has been through Khun Li before and says the village has been overrun with foreigners in recent years, many of them with guns.

"The government, they don't like Tibet," he says. "They let anyone come here, do anything, if they get paid enough."

Xun knows that the foreigners are working on some project up in the mountains, but nothing more.

As the sun begins to slip behind the western peaks of the Himalayas, the convoy encounters a trio of trucks coming from the other direction. Traffic is rare in these frozen mountain passes, so both groups of trucks grind to a halt as the drivers stop to talk and compare notes. The drivers from the northbound convoy seem anxious, speaking quickly and excitedly in Chinese.

"They say there are terrible things happening in Khun Li," Xun reports to the investigators. "Some of the villagers have gone missing over the last few days, leaving only bloody trails in the snow."

He explains that the locals say the deaths are the work of a mountain demon—perhaps what the Western explorers call the "abominable snowman" or "yeti." The driver is skeptical, however, and suggests that the foreigners are probably killing off the villagers.

"I've seen it before. They come here with their guns and money, and if the people do not give them what they want, they take it by force. Once they have no more use for the people, they have no reason not to kill them."

Dead of Night

Night falls and the convoy continues on, albeit slower, through the darkness. Suddenly, one of the trucks goes out of control. It accelerates, colliding with the truck ahead of it, then veers into the mountainside with a groan of metal. A moment later the truck slides to a stop, its engine running.

The truck's windshield is smashed in and its hood is dented as if it ran into something large. There is blood all over the driver's compartment, but there is no sign of the driver. One of the truck's doors is swinging open, its window smashed and bloody. A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 5) reveals a bloody indentation in the snow leading away from the road. The trail leads into the woods, where it disappears. A second skill check (DC 10) reveals several sets of human footprints. To any tracker, it seems strange that the tracks seem to be made by bare feet.

The truckers are clearly unnerved. Many of them mutter prayers and glance over their shoulders into the darkness. Nevertheless, they have a job to do and no one suggests turning back. Upon inspection, they decide that the damaged truck is undrivable (or at least, no one wants to drive it), so its cargo is redistributed amongst the other trucks. The investigators are recruited to assist in this process.

"This is a bad sign," Xun mutters. "If this is what happened in the village...I fear what we will find in Khun Li."



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Turning of the Wheel

Aneese loves his knife. It has a cruel edge to it and a dull sheen that says it has tasted blood before. The knife is a souvenir from his time in Africa, fighting in some otherwise forgettable bush war. A 14-year-old "freedom fighter" had tried to stick it in his back. Despite himself, Aneese had admired the girl's courage. He couldn't bring himself to kill her, so he just took her knife and her innocence.

"You like my knife? It's very nice, isn't it?"

Of course, the knife is only as good as the fear it inspires. Right now, it is inspiring beads of terrified sweat on the face of some useless Tibetan villager. The guards who brought him in said he was a part of their pathetic little "resistance." They hoped Aneese could get some answers out of him. The mercenary was only too glad to help.

I think you'd like to see my knife up close, wouldn't you?" he waves the point directly at his prisoner's eye.

"N...no!"

"No? Then maybe you'd like to tell me about the strangers who came here last night?"

The sweating captive's eyes never leave the blade.

"They were tourists...hikers...here to climb the mountain. That is all."

Aneese smiles. He knows this man is lying. He likes it when they lie. His smile never wavers as he slashes across the villager's chest. It is a deep cut, the first of many.

"I don't believe you. Now, tell me why they are here or I cut you again."

The villager's face pales and blood begins to pool in his lap. There is a hint of defeat in his eyes.

"Don't cut me. I will tell you. They were here...they were here to find the egg of the last dragon."

The mercenary smiles again.

"Very good. That wasn't so hard, was it? Now you must tell me about this egg they were looking for."

Aneese loves his knife.

The last outpost of civilization on Mt. Makalu is Khun Li, a village suffering under the occupation of TemCo. Khun Li is the investigators' last stop before the Tyrr Nemaii, but their real journey is only beginning.

Gamemaster's Introduction

When TemCo determined to develop the Tyrr Nemaii project, the corporation arranged with the Chinese government to use Khun Li as its administrative and supply base. At first, the locals welcomed the foreign company; TemCo's money did wonders for the economy, and hundreds of locals were employed to build and maintain a road leading to the Tyrr Nemaii.

As the project progressed, however, TemCo strengthened its grip on the region into a strangle-hold in the interests of maintaining security. Mercenaries were brought in to oversee the locals, who were prohibited from leaving the village. Today, Khun Li is a village transformed by TemCo and infected by fear. This is a land twice occupied: first by the Chinese and now by TemCo.

Khun Li

Huddled against the lower slopes of Mt. Makalu, the village of Khun Li is made up of hundreds of traditional Tibetan huts, thin white streamers of smoke trailing up from their roofs. Toward the center of town are several larger brick buildings, none of which is more than two stories tall. Roughly a mile outside Khun Li, at the base of the northern mountainside, lies a cluster of modern buildings. This compound is TemCo's primary supply and administrative center for the Tyrr Nemaii project. It also secures access to the only road leading to the main entrance of the Tyrr Nemaii.

A cold wind sweeps through the streets of Khun Li, a city of about 7,000. The streets are relativly crowded. Most people are dressed in warm woolen robes and are wearing heavy fur hats. Outside many houses are ornate cans attached to metal coils. Many pedestrians slap their hands on these cans, making them spin around the coil. Knowledgeable investigators know these cans to be representatives of the Buddhist "wheel of life" and that rolling the ornate items is a sign of reverence believed to bring good luck.

There are almost no cars or trucks on the streets of Khun Li. Items are transported mostly by yak-drawn carts or carried on the backs of hired men. The streets smell like acrid smoke, distant incense, and yak droppings.

The town boasts one large general store and several smaller specialty shops. This area of the world used to be frequented by eager mountain climbers, but since TemCo's arrival the climbers have been directed to other sites by travel agents and Chinese officials. Nevertheless, the occasional mountain climber makes his way to Khun Li. TemCo frowns on these tourists but takes no action so long as they are not planning to scale Mt. Makalu.

The streets of Khun Li are continuously patroled by armed guards. Dressed in unmarked fatigues, the guards typically patrol the streets in pairs and stand watch from most of the larger streetcorners. The locals seem to fear them greatly and give the guards a wide berth when passing.

Fatigues aside, TemCo's guards are more akin to rogues and bandits than professional soldiers. They are all unkempt, many smoke, and their behavior is rude and cruel: They can often be seen kicking and harassing passersby just for entertainment. If there is any trouble, or if guards feel their power is questioned, they do not hesitate to shoot and kill any perpetrators—even "tourists" like the investigators.

TemCo has hired more than 250 mercenaries to maintain control over Khun Li. The town is a vital part of the Tyrr Nemaii project. The large crew of TemCo engineers, staff, and guards devoted to the project rely on Khun Li for supplies and labor. TemCo has an expensive agreement with the Chinese government ensuring its complete discretionary control over the region.

The inhabitants of Khun Li are suffering greatly under TemCo's custodianship. With complete disregard for human life, TemCo forced the population of the town to build and maintain the road that leads to the entrance of the Tyrr Nemaii. More than 150 people died from exposure, injury, and violence during the road's construction. Even now, more than 200 villagers work every day to keep the road open. The pay is pathetic; the workers hardly feed themselves, much less their families. Those who complain about the conditions are rewarded with a bullet, encouraging others to suffer in silence.

The TemCo Compound

A tall barbed wire fence surrounds TemCo's cluster of buildings. Two observation towers have been constructed on two perpendicular corners of the square encampment. Each tower is manned by two guardsmen and equipped with a heavy machinegun. At night, the mercenaries in each tower scan the perimeters with a high-powered spotlight. About a hundred military tents are spread around the central complex. The tents are the shelters and sleeping areas for the guardsmen of Khun Li.

In the middle of the camp are three more permanent buildings with aluminum siding. The central building is the communications hub and exhibits a large array of antennas and satellite dishes. The second building is the administration center for the Tyrr Nemaii project, and the third is the executive barracks where the higher level engineers and visiting shk'ryth have their quarters.

Located about 100 yards from the three central buildings is a three-platform helicopter landing pad. One large cargo helicopter and one smaller executive helicopter are currently on the platforms. If investigators are watching the encampment, they see the executive helicopter lift of and return several times a day and head for the west face of Mt. Makalu where it disappears into the distance.

A new and well maintained road leads from the north side of the compound up Mt. Makalu, spiraling around to the west face of the moutain. This is the road to the main entrance of the Tyrr Nemaii, and it is very well guarded. Parked near the beginning of the road, just inside the compound perimeter, are about 20 jeeps, trucks, and other vehicles.

The camp contains nothing of special value to the investigators, and trying to sneak into the camp is extremely dangerous.

The Khun Li Resistance

During the occupation of Khun Li, a secretive local known only as "Kai" has been organizing a resistance movement to rid the town of its occupiers. The time to strike is near at hand.

Currently, the movement has more than 200 members—villagers who Kai can call upon to attack when the time is right. Only the top members meet in person; messages and plans are relayed to the rest via word of mouth.

Up until now, the resistance has satisfied itself with minor acts of sabotage. It has been prevented from staging a full-scale uprising by its lack of weapons. Now that the investigators have arrived, Kai hopes they can help him overcome this obstacle.

Blood on the Snow

As if TemCo's oppression were not enough, the villagers of Khun Li must now fear deadly attacks by mysterious mountain beasts. In the past few weeks, a number of locals have been killed while walking alone at night, their bodies dragged into the wilderness and devoured. While these attacks seem to be the work of wild animals, when the tracks are studied, the killers seem to be human.

The village elders say that the people of Khun Li are being hunted by a mountain demon, or yeti, who is angry with them for allowing TemCo to disturb its rest. Heeding these words of wisdom, most villagers stay inside at night and move about in groups if required to leave their homes after sunset.

In reality, it is not a mountain demon that is harassing Khun Li, but a pack of TemCo-created monstrocities call sentinels. These hideous creatures were once human psychics but have since been reduced to animal savagery. Having escaped the Tyrr Nemaii and developed a taste for human flesh, the sentinels now prowl around outside Khun Li, waiting for a tasty Tibetan morsel to step out into the shadows. It was a stray sentinel that killed the truck driver on the road to Khun Li.

Investigators' Introduction

Approaching Mt. Makalu, the truck convoy with which the investigators have been traveling turns around a bend, revealing a stunning view of a broad valley. At the far end of the valley stands Mt. Makalu, half in shadow, half in blistering sunlight. The valley floor is covered with snow and patches of exposed gray rock. Near the base of the mountain lies the town of Khun Li.

The convoy spends just enough time in the village to deliver its cargo to the general store. The truckers can sense the heavy feeling of dread hanging over Khun Li. They have no wish to stay here any longer than they must. Less than an hour after arriving, Xun informs the investigators that the trucks are heading out.

"This is a bad place," the truck driver says. "We are pressing on into Nepal tonight. It would be bad luck for us to say here any longer."

Upon finally arriving at their long-sought destination, the investigators may be at odds as to how to proceed. In order to reach the Tyrr Nemaii, they have three choices:

- Travel up TemCo's road to the main entrance (a very dangerous proposition).
- Seek the pinnacle of the three fingers (also dangerous without extensive outdoor survival and mountaineering experience).
- Hire local Sherpas to guide them to the pinnacle of the three fingers.

Kai



A middle-aged bachelor, Kai is better educated than his fellow villagers. He can speak Russian and most Chinese dialects, though his English is not very good. A graduate of Beijing University, Kai is a canny businessman. He learned to fly and purchased his helicopter in hopes of flying tourists around the mountains for money. When TemCo arrived, however, he found himself pressed into service transporting the corporation's cargo and personnel up and down Mt. Makalu.

When Timothy Ekloff first escaped the Tyrr Nemaii, he staggered into Khun Li nearly dead from exposure and exhaustion. Kai, one of the villagers, took the spy into his home and not only nursed him back to health but hid him from the TemCo soldiers as well. Kai smuggled Ekloff to Nepal in his helicopter on one condition: The pilot made him swear to come back to Khun Li and help put an end to TemCo's oppression.

Since then, Kai has organized a growing resistance movement among the people of Khun Li. They have sabotaged several TemCo vehicles and orchestrated work slow-downs on the main road. The resistance has been unable to strike any greater blows, however, for lack of weapons and fear of retaliation against the other villagers.

Enemy of My Enemy

The way Kai approaches the investigators depends on whether or not Timothy Ekloff is with them. If the former spy does accompany the party, skip ahead to "Welcome Assistance." Otherwise, the adventure continues as follows.

Within an hour of arriving in Khun Li, the investigators notice they are being observed. A villager in a fur coat and a large hat is following them, his hat cloaking his face in shadow.

The investigators might plan some ruse to shake their stalker, but before they can take any such measures, the man simply walks up to them and begins to speak.

"Honored strangers, welcome to Khun Li!" The man is obviously looking the investigators up and down. After a brief second, he steps to the side of the street and begins to whirl one of the Buddhist wheels attached to the side of a nearby building.

"The wheel is always in motion," he says, smiling. "Death follows life, and night the day." He keeps spinning the wheel while he speaks.

"I once knew a stranger. He came here and understood the true nature of the wheel. He understood that it is the selfless actions of the spirit that keep the wheel spinning…sustains the cycle of life."

He stops fondling the wheel.

"That stranger was Timothy Ekloff."

The investigators may be surprised at this revelation. If they acknowledge their association with Ekloff, Kai smiles knowingly.

"Come with me!" he says abruptly. He leads the investigators through a network of small streets, always careful to avoid the curious glances of the guardsmen. At last, Kai leads the party into a small teashop at the south end of town.

The shop is dark, and only a few other customers are sitting by the collection of ankle-high tables. Kai seats himself and bids the investigators to do the same. A woman soon supplies them all with a little spiced bread and a flat cup of steaming tea.

Kai introduces himself and carefully asks the investigators about Ekloff and their mission. He knows nothing about the true nature of the Tyrr Nemaii or the shk'ryth. He does hate TemCo with all his heart, and Ekloff had promised him help when he returned. Kai does not entirely trust the investigators, especially if he learns that Ekloff is dead. He does not tell them of the resistance movement, though he does have an idea as to how the investigators can help in ridding the valley of TemCo.

Wecome Assistance

After exchanging information with the investigators, Kai eagerly offers his help.

"Friends of Ekloff are friends of mine!" he says. He tells them about the road leading to the main entrance of the Tyrr Nemaii, then tries to disuade them from choosing that dangerous route. If the investigators ask, he knows about the pinnacle of three fingers and agrees to organize a party of Sherpas to lead the investigators there.

"None of us are allowed to leave Khun Li," Kai mutters bitterly, "but sometimes Sherpas are allowed to travel with mountain climbers—though not to Makalu." He suggests that the investigators pretend

they are a group of mountain climbers looking to climb the wind-torn peaks beyond Mt. Makalu.

Kai knows nothing of SH-01 and does not reveal to the investigators that he is a helicopter pilot for TemCo (though Ekloff knows this, if he is present). Kai wants to use the investigators for his own goals and does not reveal anything he believes will cause the investigators to balk or get strange ideas.

If the investigators do not know about the secret cave entrance near the pinnacle of three fingers, Kai suggests that a couple of his Sherpas can guide them around the mountain to the main Tyrr Nemaii entrance from the east—thus avoiding the eyes of TemCo on the road. From there, Kai cannot help the investigators get into the Tyrr Nemaii.

If the investigators turn down Kai's offer of assistance, their most obvious choice is to take TemCo's road to the Tyrr Nemaii main entrance.

Road to Ruin

A seemingly new and well-maintained road leads from the north side of the compound about 10 miles up Mt. Makalu, sloping around the main entrance of the Tyrr Nemaii on the west face of the mountain.

The road is heavily patroled by guards in jeeps, and there are two manned checkpoints on two narrow areas about four and eight miles up the road. If the investigators do not have Morten Nyhuus's account of the backdoor, of if they refuse to help the Khun Li resistance movement, they will have to gain entrance to the Tyrr Nemaii through this route.

The Main Entrance

At the end of the road is an artificially flattened area that serves as a makeshift parking lot and helicopter pad. There is a TemCo freight helicopter on the pad (the one that carried the psychics from Moscow), with room enough for another chopper to land.

At the other end of the flat area is the mouth of a cavern. Built inside and around the cavern mouth are two massive steel doors, each roughly 40 feet tall and 50 feet long. The doors are open.

Surrounding the cavern entrance is an electrified chainlink fence 20 feet tall and topped with razor wire and spotlights. There is an electric gate on the fence secured by a keycard access system (Open Lock check, DC 40). This gate is guarded by a Tribunal agent who reports back to his superiors inside every 15 minutes via handheld radio. Several mercenaries (1d6) can be seen walking around the entrance at any given time.

Investigators trying to gain entry at the main entrance are in for a challenge. Due to the heavy security, it is nearly impossible to get in undetected. If they are spotted, two more Tribunal agents appear in 1d6 rounds with instructions to kill the investigators.

If the investigators wait outside the entrance for several days, they finally see Kage and the remaining Tribunal agents leave the cavern and board the helicopter. The giant steel doors slam closed with a deafening boom. A few minutes later, the helicopter takes off, leaving no TemCo personnel at the site.

Tribunal Agents: Male 6th level; HD 6d6+12; hp 33; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4+2, punch) or +10/+5 ranged (2d8/crit x4, Colt M1911 pistol); SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +7, Demolitions +5, Disable Device +5, Disguise +7, Drive +11, Gather Information +7, Hide +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +11, Search +7, Spot +7.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Martial Artist, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Colt M11911 pistol, laser gunsight, silencer, 2 magazines hollow point .45 ACP.

Mercenaries: Male 3rd level; HD 3d6+6; hp 16; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +4 melee (1d4+1, combat knife) or +4 ranged (1d10, Glock Model 17); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +3, Climb +4, Demolitions +2, Drive +4, Gather Information +4, Hide +5, Intimidate +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +4, Spot +3, Swim +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Combat knife, Glock Model 17.

The Ascent

If the investigators accept Kai's offer of assistance, he bids them follow him as he weaves his way once more through Khun Li's labyrinthine alleys. They end up in a small, boarded-up house on the edge of town. It has obviously suffered a terrible fire: Its walls are blackened with soot and the air is still heavy with smoke.

"This is our safehouse from TemCo," Kai explains. "You stay here. I will get what you need."

Half an hour later, Kai returns with minimal mountaineering gear for each of the investigators (including sleeping bags and appropriate clothing, if necessary). The gear is old and not of the highest quality, but Kai

dismisses any concerns the investigators may have.

"Sherpas are good, they will find the path for you. You just follow them, you don't need much equipment."

An hour later, two Sherpas arrive. They are a father and daughter team, ages 54 and 28, named Shu-Ching and Yee. Yee is the only one of the two who knows a little English. Shu-Ching seems apprehensive about the endeavor and eyes the invetigators suspiciously. His daughter, however, has no doubts.

"We help you," she tells the investigators seriously. "You beat TemCo."

The two Sherpas lead the investigators out of the village along a worn path that gently winds up the mountainside, presenting a breathtaking view of the valley below. Just as Khun Li is about to disappear over the horizon, the party is confronted by a pair of mercenary guards walking the opposite way on the path.

Shu-Ching and the guards exchange words. At first, the gunmen appear ready for an argument but relent when the guide points to a mountain peak beyond Makalu. If asked, Yee explains that her father told the guards they were just passing through on their way to another nearby mountain. This apparently satisfies the guards, as they allow the investigators to continue their journey.

Off the Beaten Path

After traveling for the better part of a day, the investigators may realize (with a successful Wilderness Lore check, DC 15) that they are no longer walking toward the Tyrr Nemaii. The Sherpas have actually been leading them away from Mt. Makalu.

If confronted with this observation, Yee confers with her father for a moment, then turns to the investigators.

"Yes, we go in different direction. We getting egg of the last dragon from hidden temple. Very powerful relic, very magical. Help us against TemCo."

Yee is very insistent that the investigators must go with her and her father to retrieve the "last dragon egg." She explains that the Sherpas will gladly bring the investigators to their destination once they have the egg. If asked specifics about the egg, Yee says only that it is "powerful," "magic," and very useful against TemCo. If pressed, she says that the egg can be found in "the lost temple." A successful Sense Motive check opposed by her Bluff check (Bluff +2) reveals that she knows more about the egg than she admits.

If the investigators absolutely refuse to accompany the Sherpas on their quest for the dragon's egg, Yee and Shu-Ching exchange a few words, shrug, and grudgingly lead the investigators back to Khun Li. They will not take the investigators to their destination unless they first retrieve the dragon's egg. If Ekloff is with the group, he privately explains the truth of the "relic" to the investigators (see below) and strongly advises that they help Kai and the Sherpas.

The True Egg

There is no dragon's egg. Kai is using the old legend to help convince the investigators to go with the Sherpas to the lost temple. While there are powerful weapons hidden in the lost temple, none of them are magical.

In the 1980s, the US government, with the secret assistance of China, sent many shipments of weapons to rebels in Afghanistan. During one such shipment, the cargo plane developed engine trouble and crashed in the Himalayas. The local Sherpas who found the weapons hid them in a remote and mostly forgotten Buddhist temple. It was their hope that the Tibetans could use them in an eventual uprising against the Chinese.

Since then, Kai and the resistance have tried to use the weapons but have found themselves up against a most frustrating obstacle: The complex and intricate firearms are completely disassembled. There are directions for assembling them, but they are written only in English and Dari (Afghan Persian).

Kai realizes the investigators can assist the resistance through their English (and perhaps technical) skills, but he also knows that they are probably not interested in risking their lives for Khun Li. Therefore he has made use of the legend of the last dragon egg and sent the Sherpas to guide the investigators to the lost temple. Kai intends to trick the investigators into helping him. By the time they understand what is going on, he figures, it will be too late for them to do anything but cooperate. If Ekloff is with the investigators or they secure Kai's trust, he will be far more straight with them. His goal is to get the weapons and defeat TemCo—he has no wish to deceive the investigators if he doesn't have to.

Seeking the Lost Temple

The journey from Khun Li to the lost temple takes a full three days. There are vistas of breathtaking beauty at every turn: wild mountain peaks, gigantic glaciers, and distant windswept valleys are the investigators' traveling companions.

Yee and Shu-Ching have no time for sightseeing. They hurriedly guide the investigators up narrow animal paths and rocky outcroppings. The two find handholds on seemingly unclimbable cliff faces and know exactly where each mountain crevice leads. Following the Sherpas, the investigators may find themselves in awe of their guides' skill.

At night, the Sherpas put together a modern collapsible tent just large enough for the whole party.

They produce a dry, spicy paste for supper and prepare a campfire. The investigators are expected to help set up camp. If they merely watch Yee and Shu-Ching do all the work, their guides become annoyed and make the next day's journey that much more unpleasant for them.

Shu-Ching and Yee wake the investigators at sunrise and the journey begins again.

Whiteout

On the afternoon of the second day, the Sherpas are leading the investigators along what they call "the tiger's back." It is a narrow ridge, five miles long and no more than 12 feet across, with chasms leading down to rock and ice on either side. Lines of dark stone run perpendicular to the ridge, lending it a tiger-striped appearance.

As the party slowly makes its way along the ridge, the wind begins to pick up while the clouds overhead darken. Yee looks concerned.

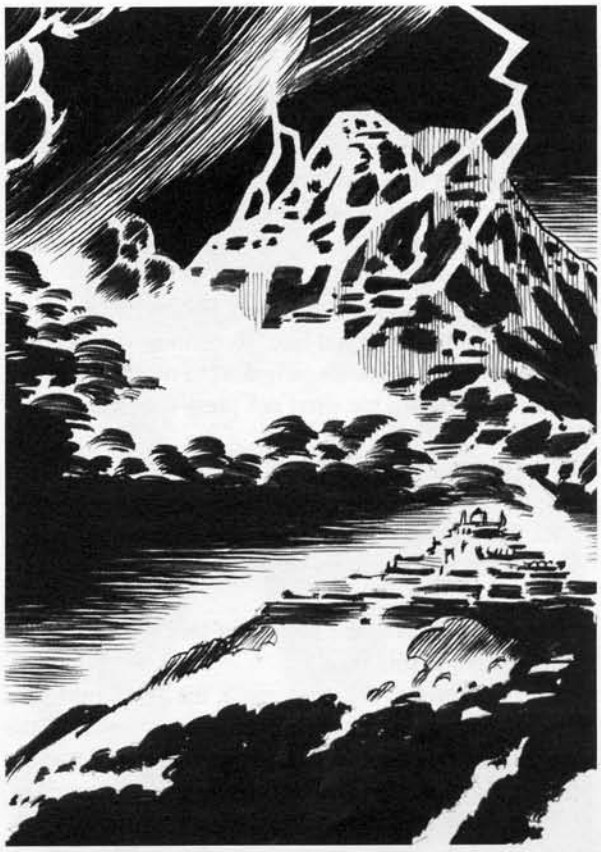
"Snow," she says, pointing to the clouds. "Might be bad."

Yee is right. The investigators are within a mile of the ridge's end when the snow begins to fall. Within minutes, the wind and snow have turned to a blizzard. Visibility is minimal and it is difficult to hear over the roaring wind.

The investigators have two clear options: They can either brace themselves against the storm on the ridge or make a break for it, trying to reach the relative safety at the other end of the tiger's back. The Sherpas have no opinion on the subject: They feel safe either way.

If the investigators stay on the ridge, they find it difficult after several minutes to maintain their balance in the face of the wind. The blustery gusts seem to be trying to knock them off the ridge and into the chasm below. The Sherpas recommend that they stay low and let the wind blow over. Each investigator should make a Reflex save (DC 12) to remain safely on the ridge. Nearby companions can also make Reflex saves (DC 18) to catch an investigator before he plummets into the darkness below. If the save succeeds, the investigator must make a Strength check (DC 12) to pull his companion to safety.

If the investigators break for the end of the ridge, they are able to avoid the worst of the wind. They do, however, run the risk of disorientation in the whiteout. If they are not roped together, they must make successful Wilderness Lore checks (DC 15) in order to stay on the proper path; failure results in slipping over the edge of the ridge. Investigators who slip must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 12) to avoid falling to their deaths in the chasm. If an investigator is falling from the ridge, his companions can make Reflex saves to catch him, as described above.



As the investigators reach the other end of the ridge, those who make Spot checks (DC 20) catch a glimpse of something very strange: A shambling figure, some 12 feet tall, appears to be climbing up the ridge toward them from the chasm. Through the blowing snow, it is impossible to make out any details, though the outline of the shadowy shape seems rough and shaggy, as if covered in fur.

The figure stops before reaching the top of the ridge. It stands there for a moment, then disappears back into the blizzard. When the wind and snow die down 20 minutes later, there are no tracks or other signs of the mysterious visitor.

Shu-Ching glances over at his daughter. "Yeti," he says, and she nods.

A Small Sacrifice

When the investigators awaken on the morning of the third day, they learn that their camp was visited during the night. There are tracks in the snow, possibly of a large animal with claws milling around the camp. A successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 15) suggests that the creature paused for some time directly outside the tent in the middle of the night. The tracks indicate that the beast sometimes walked on two feet, sometimes on six. Those trying to follow the tracks lose them in a patch of exposed rock a mile or so away from camp. Observant trackers note that these do not appear

the same as the sentinel tracks they saw earlier.

After studying the tracks, Shu-Ching walks a short distance away from camp and pulls out a packet of dried food. He says a prayer over the food and sets it down in the snow, then returns to camp. A few minutes later, Yee goes to her father's food and sets her flashlight next to it. When she returns, she explains to the investigators her father's belief that the tracks belong to a yeti.

"When the yeti visits, it is good luck to leave a small sacrifice—something you like, something you need."

Yee encourages the investigators to make small sacrifices of their own but does not press the issue.

Running Wild

As the sun dips toward the horizon on the third day, Yee informs the investigators that the end of their journey is near.

"Lost temple is at the bottom of this hill," she says. "We be there at sundown."

In order to reach the lost temple, the party must pass through a twisting canyon. The massive crack in the mountain is roughly 100 feet across. Its walls are about 50 feet high, though full of crags and outcroppings, making them possible to climb even without equipment. Deep shadows fall across the floor of the canyon.

From the moment they set foot inside the canyon, the investigators have a sense of being watched. There are flickers of movement along the walls and along the top of the canyon, though nothing they can see clearly.

If asked, Yee assures the investigators that the canyon is the shortest way to the temple. To go around would mean adding several hours to the trip—and traveling long after dark.

As the party makes its way into the canyon, investigators who make Listen checks (DC 20) can hear a low keening and growling from above. The animal sounds grow louder and more frequent the further into the canyon the group travels.

Suddenly, a sentinel springs out from a rock directly in front of the party. He stands there for a moment, a naked humanoid covered in matted fur and dried blood, his bare feet large and clawed, his mouth a feral snarl. A moment later, he launches himself at the nearest traveler. Growling, he tries to knock the victim down and tear out his throat.

This first sentinel is merely a distraction. Just as he attacks, the rest of the pack descends on the investigators from the canyon walls. There are six sentinels in all, and they do their best to overwhelm their prey with sheer weight of numbers.

If the investigators joined the Sherpas in sacrificing personal items to the yeti, they are rewarded by a surprise ally against the sentinels. If not, they are on their own.

Sentinels (6): Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 4d8+16; hp 34; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +9 melee (1d6+9, 2 claws); Reach 10 ft.; SA Improved grab, squeeze; SQ Cold subtype, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide +2 (+8 in snowy areas), Listen +11, Spot +11.

Feats: Power Attack.

Sentinel

Large Monstrous Humanoid (Cold)	
Hit Dice:	4d8+16 (34 hp)
Initiative:	+1 (Dex)
Speed:	30 ft
AC:	14 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural)
Attacks:	2 claws +9 melee
Damage:	Claw 1d6+9
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft
Special Attacks:	Improved grab, squeeze
Special Qualities:	Cold subtype, darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 23, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12
Skills:	Hide +2*, Listen +11, Spot +11
Feats:	Power Attack
Challenge Rating:	3
Climate/Terrain:	Sentinels are usually found only in the Himalayas, where they were created
Advancement:	5–7 HD (Large); 8–12 HD (Huge)
Sanity Loss:	0/1d4

Combat

Sentinels attack with their razor-sharp claws. If they hit, they can grab and crush their victims.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the sentinel must hit an opponent of Large size or smaller with both claw attacks. If it gets a hold, it can squeeze.

Squeeze (Ex): A sentinel deals 1d6+9 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Large or smaller creatures. The sentinel can still move but cannot take any attack actions when squeezing.

Cold Subtype (Ex): Cold immunity, double damage from fire, except on a successful save.

Skills: A sentinel receives a +4 racial bonus to all Listen and Spot checks. *Due to its coloration, the sentinel's Hide bonus increases to +8 when in snow-covered areas.

Return of the Yeti

The creature the Sherpas assumed to be a yeti is actually a gnoph-keh, a rare and mystical denizen of the frozen wastes. Curious about the humans venturing near its territory the gnoph-keh has been following the party for two days, trying to determine if the investigators and their guides are a threat. When the party laid down their sacrifices, the snow beast received the gesture as a sign of their respect and benign intent.

In the midst of the sentinel attack, a mighty roar suddenly echoes off the canyon walls, accompanied by a rush of icy wind and scouring snow. The sentinels pause, shivering with sudden fear.

At the same time, the investigators and their attackers catch a glimpse of the gnoph-keh: The great beast, tall as two men, is loping toward them, its shaggy white hair flying in the wind. Through the snow, the investigators only see flashes of claws and terrible, dagger-like teeth.

The sentinels begin to flee, but they are already too late. The gnoph-keh bounds into their midst, ripping at them with its vicious claws. Almost-human screams of pain and terror split the air as the sentinels are eviscerated and sent flying. The investigators should be relieved to notice that the gnoph-keh is seemingly ignoring them and their guides.

It is all over in less than a couple minutes. The sentinels have all been killed or sent fleeing. The canyon floor is slick with freezing blood. Without giving the investigators a second glance, the gnoph-keh scrambles up over the canyon wall and disappears. The moment it is gone, the snow and wind die down.

Once the chaos is over, the investigators realize the snow beast is the thing they saw in the blizzard, as well as the creature that left the tracks around their camp the previous night.

For the gnoph-keh's game statistics, see page 170 of the *Call of Cthulhu* core rulebook.

The Lost Temple

Though it has been known as "the lost temple" for centuries, the temple in question was never lost so much as it was hidden. Tucked away in a remote glacial crevice and built directly into the mountainside, the tiny temple is easy to overlook. Travelers have been known to pass within 100 yards of the temple and never know it.

Many people believe the temple is a myth. This is fine with the few monks who remain, since the Chinese



government has a history of tearing down Buddhist temples and sending their monks to labor camps. There are only four monks at the temple. They are all old men—too old to leave—and they are saddened by the knowledge they may be the last keepers of the temple.

A Warm Welcome

The investigators arrive at the temple at sundown. Ornate red and gold pillars stand outside the temple entrance, glinting in the last rays of the dying sunlight. Between the pillars is a heavy door, its dark wood carved into intricate patterns.

Shu-Ching approaches the door and gives it a firm knock. A moment later, the heavy wooden door swings slowly open, revealing the wizened face of an elderly monk. Incense wafts out through the doorway. The Sherpa and the monk exchange words. The older man looks over at the investigators and chuckles. He says something in his native tongue and retreats back into the temple.

"They have few visitors here," Yee tells the investigators. "Leng, the eldest of them, wants us to stay the night. In the morning we get the dragon's egg."

Inside the small temple, the investigators are led to a central chamber, where they are fed hot rice porridge and spiced tea. The walls are decorated with images of gods and ancient demons. Against one wall is a statue of the Buddha sitting atop a six-foot-tall wooden altar. Tall lampstands provide candlelight from each of the room's four corners.

There are several smaller rooms opening out from the central chamber, including the monks' quarters, a pantry, and a kitchen. Leng offers the investigators the use of one of these rooms as a place to sleep. On the floor of the room are several old blankets and cushions.

The four monks are cordial but obviously unused to having visitors. Leng is the only one who tries to speak to the investigators through Yee. He asks them about their journey and if their accommodations are satisfactory. Leng's eyes twinkle as he asks them if they feel they are "worthy" of the dragon's egg.

"You must be pure to touch dragon's egg," Yee translates. Leng struggles to keep a straight face.

Touching the Dragon's Egg

Leng is on to Kai's plot to trick the investigators into helping the resistance. He suggested that they wait until morning to pull out the dragon's egg in order to put off revealing the deception as long as possible. Once the weapons have been uncovered and assembled, he intends to signal Kai, who is to fly his helicopter to the temple to retrieve them.

The investigators awaken in the morning to the sounds of chanting. It is a low, slow chant that sounds like a deep, resonant hum. Upon entering the central chamber, they see the four monks sitting in the lotus



position with their eyes closed, levitating a foot off the floor while they meditate. A few minutes later, the monks end their morning ritual and gently float to the floor.

After breakfast, Yee announces, "We get dragon's egg now."

Leng leads the group to the large statue of the Buddha. Releasing a recessed switch, he swings open the front panel of the wooden altar, revealing a hidden stairwell leading down into the earth. The monk flashes the investigators a grin, grabs a candle, and heads down the stairs.

The secret room under the temple used to be a cellar for food storage. During the Chinese takeover, the monks turned it into a place where refugees and fugitives from oppression could hide for a few days. It has sat empty for the past few years, save for the six crates of automatic weapons.

With a great flourish, Leng walks to the nearest crate and throws it open. Inside, the investigators see oblong metal objects packed in sawdust. Experienced investigators immediately recognize them as components of disassembled firearms. The words "U.S. Army" are stenciled on the sides of the crates.

"Here is egg of dragon," Yee sighs. "Like the legend, the child of the dragon spits fire…but this child is made of metal."

She pulls components from the nearest crate.

"This magic will help defeat the oppression in our valley. With these, we will remind TemCo of the turning of the wheel."

Yee apologizes for the deception but expresses how important it is to the resistance that the investigators help them put the weapons together.

"Yes, they are guns," she says, "but here are instructions! We can't read!" She pulls out a booklet of assembly instructions written in English and Dari. "Please. You must help us!"

Working from the instruction manual, an investigator can assemble one of the weapons in 15 minutes with a successful Repair check (DC 10). Alternatively, an investigator with a military background can substitute his base attack bonus for his skill bonus (if any). Yee and Shu-Ching watch the investigators carefully so that they can repeat the process themselves on the other disassembled weapons. Yee occasionally asks the investigators questions or to read portions of the manual aloud.

There are 144 American-made M16 rifles and thousands of rounds of 5.56mm NATO ammunition in the crates. The Sherpas offer the investigators one (though they'll negotiate as high as five) of the rifles in exchange for their help. If the investigators absolutely refuse to help, the Sherpas threaten to leave them stranded in the mountains. If they still refuse their assistance, the GM is encouraged to make their journey back to Mt. Makalu as difficult as possible.

While the investigators and Sherpas busy themselves assembling M16s, Leng slips away to his private quarters and radios Kai from a small World War II-era unit that is the monks' only method of communication with the outside world. Kai arranges for a yak caravan to transport the assembled weapons to a location a couple days away where his helicopter can land.

Pinnacle of Three Fingers

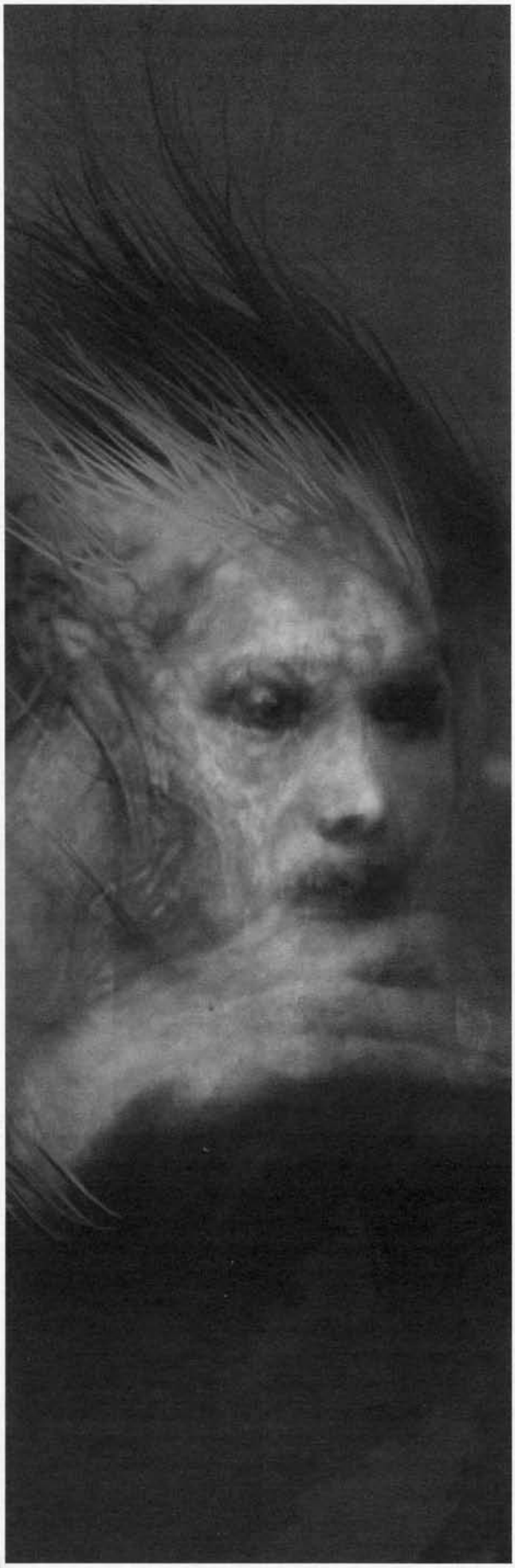
The morning after the weapons have been assembled, Yee and Shu-Ching lead the investigators on the two-day journey to the pinnacle of three fingers.

After his 1892 expedition to the Himalayas, Morten Nyhuus reported discovering a massive cavern inside Mt. Makalu. He wrote that he discovered the entrance by accident while trekking near a rock formation known as the pinnacle of three fingers. Finding the rock formation is not difficult—the Sherpas are familiar with the formation of three narrow, black stones rising strangely from the snow-covered mountain.

Locating the actual tunnel that Nyhuus used would be nearly impossible without knowing the general area in which to look. As it is, the investigators must make a successful Search check (DC 30) to find the narrow crack in the mountainside. Investigators with 5 or more ranks in Wilderness Lore or Knowledge (geology) gain a +2 synergy bonus on this check.

Just as Nyhuus described, the tunnel begins tight and then opens out into a broad natural tunnel. The tunnel smells stale and earthy, but beneath that there is a singularly alien stench similar to rotten eggs soaked in some strange musk. It is the weird scent of the shk'ryth in its natural form, which the investigators may recall from previous encounters. The deeper into the tunnel the investigators proceed, the stronger the smell becomes.

Twisting and turning, the tunnel goes on for what seems like miles beneath the mountain, sometimes rising, sometimes dropping alarmingly. It narrows to a thin crevice in some area, then widens into a broad avenue in others. For three hours the journey continues until at last the investigators emerge high up on the wall in the cavern of the Tyrr Nemaii.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Tyrr Nemaii

Uri Bucayev has never considered himself a religious man, but he feels closer to Jesus now than ever before. He feels crucified.

There is no cross, but an alien machine that pokes and prods his body, suspending him far above the ground. He wears no crown of thorns, but his scalp has been split open and a nest of wires driven into his skull. Blood seeps from the wound, painting his face and stinging his eyes. His chest hurts and it's hard to breath.

"Hell...hello? Is there...is anyone there?"

The weak whisper is coming from somewhere to the right of Uri. Here in the silent cavern, the words are a shout.

"Yes," Uri wheezes in return. "I am here."

"Why are we...are we still alive?"

"I'm not sure. Sometimes a few survive."

Uri wonders about this himself. The machine feeds on human psychic essence. Whatever last-minute adjustments the monsters were making must

not have required as much energy as usual.

The psychic suspects that if he were to receive medical attention right now, he might live through this ordeal. That isn't going to happen, of course. Uri and his fellow survivor are hundreds of feet beneath the surface, and hundreds of miles from the nearest hospital. They are alone here. Even the monsters have left. They are going to die completely…

…Uri feels a pressure in the back of his mind. It's a strange familiarity. Almost like Alexi.

"Help is coming!" Uri cries. "I can feel them getting closer!"

He receives no reply.

"Hey!" he strains his aching lungs to shout. Still there is no answer.

Uri's heart sinks and he feels a chill come over him. Help is coming too late for his companion. He just hopes it is not too late for him as well.

Gamemaster's Introduction

The investigators have arrived at the Tyrr Nemaii. They have reached the cavern either through the Nyhuus tunnel by the pinnacle of three fingers, or by sneaking in through the front door. In either case, their journey to the Tyrr Nemaii has come to an end.

The investigators have a spectacular view of a sprawling stone metropolis. Towers and strange edifices reach up from the cavern floor as if molded from the rock itself, twisted to inhuman angles and covered with strange hieroglyphics. The cavern is crisscrossed with electrical wires and lights that don't quite illuminate the city but serve only to accentuate its awesome size. The other side of the cavern and the other side of the city are too far away to be seen. A resonant thrumming fills the air, permeating the investigators' stomachs and tickling their scalps. It seems to be originating from a massive machine in the center of the city—the Tyrr Nemaii.

The walls of the cavern are lined with outcroppings, cracks, and plenty of other handholds. The investigators can reach the cavern floor from the tunnel's mouth with little difficulty (Climb check, DC 10). Because TemCo does not know of the Nyhuus tunnel, the entrance is not guarded. The investigators can slip in unnoticed.

Kage Behind the Scenes

Kage has been busy. After bringing the last batch of psychics, he had to hook them up to the Tyrr Nemaii and calibrate all the instruments himself—a tedious and time-consuming task. This was not a completely necessary operation, however, as the course of SH-01 has been set for some time. Kage's calibrations merely confirm the inevitable.

Kage's primary purpose at the Tyrr Nemaii is to destroy the site and oversee the termination of the entire Himalayan project. His Tribunal agents busied themselves planting explosives throughout the cavern complex. After much deliberation, TemCo decided to destroy the Tyrr Nemaii and all evidence of the company's operation here. Recent administrative changes in China's foreign policy have made it difficult for the corporation to maintain its current arrangement. In other words, TemCo is wearing out its welcome with the Chinese government.

In theory, this all becomes moot when SH-01 collides with the Earth. Nevertheless, the TemCo ruling council has decided to eliminate the Tyrr Nemaii project, thus protecting itself from any potential repercussions should the project fail.

Investigators' Introduction

Within minutes of stepping inside the cavern, the investigators hear Kage's voice, broadcast over loudspeakers and echoing across the entire city:

"Attention, all project personnel! You have 10 minutes to prepare for departure."

Eight minutes later, the loudspeakers crackle and Kage's voice rings out once more.

"Attention, all project personnel! Two minutes until departure. This project is terminated. This is your last warning."

The charges have all been placed. The timer has been set. Kage and his men are evacuating the mountain, never to return.

A great mechanical whine reverberates from the main entrance. Two massive steel doors, each more than 40 feet tall and 50 feet long, slowly swing shut. For a moment, Kage's form is silhouetted between them against a field of Himalayan snow. The moment is gone as the doors seal shut with a thunderous clang.

In two hours, the ancient city will be nothing but rubble.

City of the Tyrr Nemaii

Hundreds of buildings, some of them dozens of stories tall, are spread throughout the cavern in no discernible pattern. Constructed of a smooth, obsidian-like stone, the walls of the buildings are broken with what might be considered windows or doors, though of

such strange shapes and arrangements as to render them useless as such. Nearly every surface is decorated with strange symbols and hieroglyphics. Some of these seem to be painted on, while others are carved into or raised from the stone itself.

A few of the figures in the glyphs appear humanoid, but are definitely not human. They are, in fact, ktchoma. Investigators may recognize the figures as resembling the corpse of the horseman from the home of Morten Nyhuus. Another recurring theme in the decorations is the strange symbol found on the backs of Michael Graham's and Gerard Moore's hands.

If the investigator's visited the home of Alexi Bucayev in Riga, and one of them developed a psychic link with Alexi's brother Uri, the cavern of the Tyrr Nemaii seems eerily familiar, like some terrible deja vu. At the GM's discretion, the affected investigator may even know his or her way through some parts of the city.

The buildings near the Tyrr Nemaii have been commandeered by TemCo and put to new, more practical uses. Those without serviceable doorways have had holes punched through their walls allowing entry. Everywhere the investigators go, they see signs that these weird streets were recently bustling with activity: Papers, bottles, and cans litter the ground; makeshift street signs point to the main entrance and control center. Now the city is all but deserted, its occupants leaving little more than trash behind them.

The Tyrr Nemaii

The Tyrr Nemaii is the center of the city and the obvious center of TemCo's activity. This massive, roughly cone-shaped machine rises at least 25 stories into the air, dwarfing all else. Strange gears, switches, buttons, grooves, and glyphs sprout from its flanks at unusual angles.

Directly above the entire city is an enormous half-sphere, its base covering the entire roof of the cavern. The apex of the sphere reaches mere inches away from the tallest point of the Tyrr Nemaii.

But the portion of the Tyrr Nemaii most likely to catch the investigators' interest is what TemCo euphemistically refers to as the "energy core." Nearly two dozen people are dressed in identical jumpsuits, strapped into slots around the edge of the machine, suspended some 20 feet above the ground. These are the psychics whose thought energy powers the Tyrr Nemaii. Their heads have been shaved and their scalps torn open and bloody. Wires have been thrust through their skulls, running from their heads in a jungle of cords and cables into the machine's structure. The psychics are ashen and drained. Some of them are unconscious, most are dead, but there is no mistaking the expressions of agony on their faces. They are in torment. Blood runs from their heads and drips onto the cavern floor. Witnessing this inhuman cruelty costs the investigators 1/1d4 points of Sanity.

Among the still-living psychics is Uri Bucayev, the "leak" who caused his brother Alexi to warn the United Nations about a "labor camp" beneath the Himalayas.

Barracks

This long, narrow tube of a building was obviously used as some sort of sleeping quarters. There are three dozen cots lining the walls, each with a mattress, pillow, and blanket. Judging from the smell of stale sweat, it seems the bedclothes have never been washed. There are posters on the walls and a random assortment of personal items (toothpaste, magazines, cigarettes, etc.) scattered across the floor. The investigators might recognize some of these items as being available from the general store in Khun Li.

Two smaller chambers off the main room have obviously been used as a kitchen and a bathroom.

Administrative Offices

The makeshift administrative heart of the Tyrr Nemaii project was once a hive of activity. Now it is merely room after silent room of portable tables, folding chairs, and abandoned office supplies. Reams of sensitive documents have been shredded into a carpet of confetti covering the floor. Over the scent of shk'ryth there is the distinct smell of strong coffee—lifeblood to the TemCo administrators working underground.

Garage

Just inside the main entrance is a large building that has been converted into a vehicle maintenance bay. Oil has stained the floor and the smell of gasoline soaks the air. Automotive tools line a makeshift workbench. Under the bench is a jack and a set of welding equipment. A dozen tires lean against the walls next to cans of gasoline.

There are three trucks in various stages of disrepair with their hoods up and components missing. One of them has all its parts but has a blown tire. Industrious investigators can get the truck running with a spare tire and a little effort. By the time they realize that the distributor does not work on the truck, it may be too late. However, it can be fixed with a Repair check (DC 20).

Generators

The project's electrical generators are housed in a nearly Gothic building with spindly buttresses that seem more ornamental than supportive. A steady chugging sound and hazy blue smoke roll out from the building's windows. Inside, the investigators find no less than 10 large gasoline-powered electrical genera-

tors. Only six of them are working now, since the project is nearly complete and needs less power. There are four cans full of gasoline that were obviously purchased in Khun Li. Thick electrical cords run from the generators and out the windows to where they supply power to the rest of the city.

Thick padlocks prevent the generators from being turned off. Investigators with the proper skills and equipment might be able to pick the locks (Open Lock check, DC 20). Shooting the locks is a possibility, but there is a real danger of penetrating the gas tank and starting a fire. The key to the locks is hanging in the control center.

Shutting off the generators plunges the cavern into stifling, claustrophobic darkness as the lights go out. Turning off the power does nothing to affect the explosives that have been set around the cavern. The bombs' detonators have their own batteries. The control room computers, on the other hand, are rendered inoperable without electricity.

Holding Cell

When psychics are brought to the Tyrr Nemaii, they are kept in their stasis tubes until needed. In this way TemCo avoids the logistical problem of keeping dozens of people imprisoned, yet healthy and well fed, deep beneath the earth. In the short period of time between the stasis tube and the Tyrr Nemaii, the drugged and disoriented psychics are brought to this small, windowless building. Here they are dressed in a jumpsuit and their heads are shaved in preparation for the procedure.

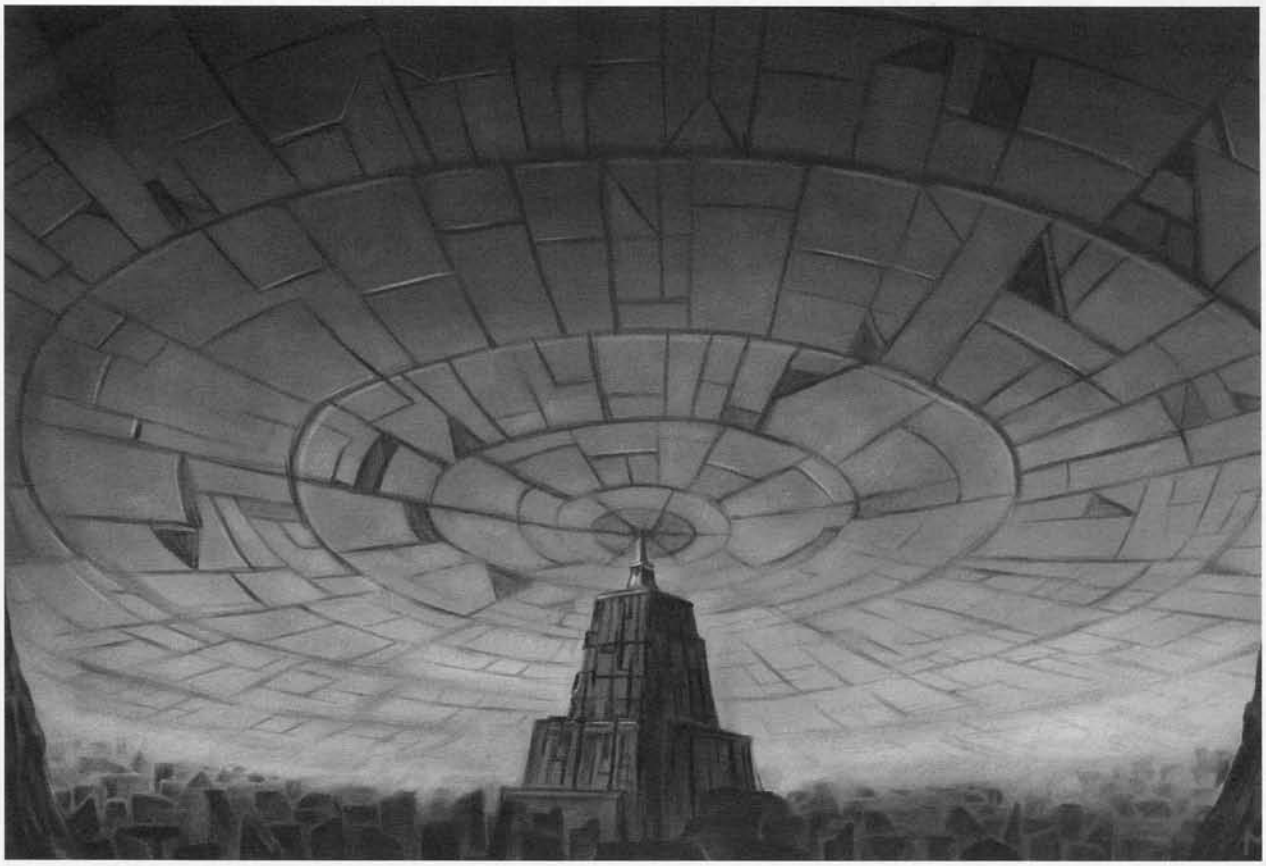
Abandoned now, the one-room building is empty but for a pile of jumpsuits in one corner and a mound of human hair in another. A sign on the wall, written in several languages, reads, "Cooperation will be rewarded. If you cooperate, you will not be harmed." A Search check (DC 15) reveals spots of dry blood on the floor, presumably left by psychics who did not believe the sign.

Tube Storage

Once the psychics are removed from their stasis tubes, the tubes themselves are put into this ornate hall for storage until they are shipped out for reuse. There are hundreds of empty tubes here, stored upright, standing like monolithic pillars—or sarcophagi waiting for corpses. A salty chemical smell emanates from the used tubes.

Mass Grave

Near the edge of the cavern, there is a natural chasm about 40 feet across and 100 feet deep. The bottom of the chasm cannot be seen without a flashlight or other illumination, but there is no mistaking the stench of rotting flesh that wafts up from the bottom. This is a



Tyrr Nemaii Papers #1

43' 22" N, 108' 52" E
SH-01 Ground Zero

mass grave, the final resting place of those psychics unfortunate enough to fall into TemCo's hands.

The floor of the chasm is buried in the dead. The corpses rot naked, their jumpsuits passed on to other doomed souls. There seem to be hundreds of bodies, though it is difficult to be certain. There are simply too many and the decomposition is too far advanced. Taking a good hard look at this carnage costs the viewer 1d4/1d6 points of Sanity.

Sentinel Kennel

Sometimes the psychics used to power the Tyrr Nemaii do not die from the ordeal. Sometimes their bodies live on long after their minds and souls have gone blank. After receiving a subtle creative twist from sadistic shk'ryth, these wretches are transformed into bloodthirsty beasts.

The term "sentinel" is actually ironic, since these creatures were originally used as "guard dogs," but proved to be uncontrollable. A number of them escaped and now run wild around Mt. Makalu, tormenting the locals and hunting for flesh. TemCo's guards shoot them on sight but are really quite amused by the fear they cause in Khun Li.

After the sentinel escape, TemCo has kept the creatures penned up in the cavern of the Tyrr Nemaii. Employees and Khun Li villagers who disobey the corporation are dropped into the pen and devoured as an example to others.

The sentinels are kept in a one-story stone building with no roof and only one hinged door. Made of metal and latched from the outside, the locked door is obviously designed to keep something inside locked up. The investigators can look down into the kennel and see the sentinels: A dozen shaggy, blood-caked savages snarl and pace their prison, their hairy skulls still raw where the wires have been ripped. Cannibalized remains of another dozen sentinels litter the floor. Those who still live are eyeing each other (and possibly the investigators) hungrily.

Since the project is being shut down, the sentinels have not been released for some time and are growing quite hungry. A low keening can be heard from the makeshift kennel, as well as growling and scratching at stone. (A successful Listen check, DC 10, confirms that these are the same sounds as the investigators heard from the creature that was stalking Khun Li.) The sentinels throw themselves at the door when they smell human flesh outside the kennel.

Levitz's Laboratory

One of the smaller buildings near the Tyrr Nemaii has a nametag near its door that reads "Julian Levitz." The investigators may recognize the name from the article given them by Michael Graham in Copenhagen. Like the kennel for the sentinels, this building has but one door and it latches closed from the outside. The door is open when the investigators find it.

For the last few months, this has been the laboratory and prison cell of Julian Levitz, the brilliant physicist whose theories are the basis for the Tyrr Nemaii project. During his time of captivity, Levitz has been coerced into designing the magnetron field that even now is being activated in the Gobi Desert. Levitz was taken to the desert along with the TemCo personnel in order to oversee the technical details of the operation.

Inside the building is a small cot against one wall, a folding table and chair against another. A large chalkboard, wiped clean since Levitz last used it, is fastened to the third wall. Like the administrative offices, the floor is covered in shredded paper.

If the investigators dig through the papers on the floor (Search check, DC 15), they find an unshredded scrap of paper with the comet impact coordinates written on it (see the Tyrr Nemaii Papers #1). Levitz hid this note in hopes that someone would find it and be able to put the information to good use.

Control Center

The first facility to be completed and the last to be abandoned, the control center is the key to the Tyrr Nemaii project. The center is housed in a three-story building overlooking the Tyrr Nemaii itself. It has only one entrance on the ground floor, several odd-shaped windows in the walls of the other two stories, and a recently added metal staircase connecting all three. A metal door has been bolted to the building's entrance. It has a heavy latch for locking out intruders.

Inside the first two floors of the control center are a number of abandoned tables and chairs, along with a large amount of rubbish (broken bottles, useless scratch paper, shredded documents, coffee filters, etc.). Hanging on hooks near the stairway on the second floor are keys to practically every lock in the city. There are keys to the trucks, as well as the generators.

The third floor is the only place in the city that has not been completely abandoned. There is a bank of computers that has only recently been shut down; the monitors and CPUs are still warm. Kage turned them off as he left the control center for the last time.

Investigators can turn the computers back on, but they are protected with passwords and arcane encryp-

tion programs. While a seasoned hacker could eventually penetrate this protection, it would take far longer than two hours.

An Explosive Discovery

At each of the major locations the investigators visit, they come across a small cylinder roughly four feet tall and two feet across. These cylinders are made of metal and heavy black plastic, plastered with stickers warning of explosives in five languages. Fixed to the top of each cylinder is a steel box with an LED indicator and a 10-digit keypad. The LED is counting the minutes and seconds backward from two hours. It shouldn't take a Demolitions check to realize that these cylinders are bombs.

There are 55 bombs in all, spread throughout the city in a rough circle around the Tyrr Nemaii. The black boxes atop the bombs are detonators, programmed to go off when their clocks run out of time.

Those hoping to disarm the bombs must first guess the password for each detonator (it is "8888"), then make a successful Demolitions check (DC 25) in order to shut it down. Shutting down all the bombs is not an attractive option, as there are 55 bombs and it takes at least 15 minutes to disarm each of them. At least the investigators do not have to worry about accidentally detonating the bombs. The Tribunal does not expect interference; it has no reason to booby-trap its own explosives.

Uri Bucayev

One of the surviving psychics is Uri Bucayev. Until recently, Uri was assisting Dr. Levitz on the magnetron field. When Gerard Moore discovered that Uri was psychically leaking news of the Tyrr Nemaii to his brother Alexi in Riga, he killed Alexi and threw Uri back in with the other psychics to be killed.

If the investigators manage to detach Uri from the Tyrr Nemaii, he manages a weak smile.

"Alexi...told others...before they killed him. You came to save me. You're too late."

The dying psychic explains that the course of the comet can no longer be changed. TemCo has no further use for the Tyrr Nemaii and Kage set the bombs to destroy it. Even if the investigators wanted to change the comet's course, they would be unable to do so. At its current speed and distance, it would take a tremendous amount of energy to adjust its course—requiring more psychics than the investigators could possibly gather in the time remaining.

There is only one chance for stopping TemCo's plan, Uri says. The investigators must get to the Gobi Desert facility. They have to find Dr. Levitz.

"Levitz said...there is a way. Find him...before it's too late."



Though Uri does not know exactly where in the Gobi Desert TemCo has its facility, he does know that Dr. Levitz probably has the comet impact coordinates somewhere in his office. The main magnetron field generator must be near those coordinates, Uri says. He assumes that Dr. Levitz is being held near there as well.

"I heard...them say...taking Levitz...to 'B' station," he says.

Uri grows weaker with every passing minute. His voice fades as he finishes speaking and he slumps unconscious from exhaustion. Ten minutes later, the psychic stops breathing. He dies quietly, peacefully, knowing he has taken steps to halt TemCo's plan.

If one of the investigators has a psychic connection to Uri, he or she is filled with a strong, strange feeling of familiarity at actually meeting him. Uri, too, looks at the investigator with surprise and awe in his eyes when he says, "You...I know you..."

Bringing Down the Machine

Unless the investigators interfere with the explosives, all 55 bombs go off simultaneously about two hours after Kage closes the main doors. Fire and ancient stone rip through the massive cavern, destroying everything in their path. The ground shakes and cracks beneath the city. Buildings collapse onto each other like monstrous dominoes. The electric lights spark and flicker out as the power lines are severed. Huge slabs of rock fall from the walls and ceiling of the cavern, torn loose by the concussion. Even after the initial blast is over, large fragments continue to fall, smashing buildings and crushing anyone below.

Each bomb deals 20d6 damage in a 150-foot blast radius. (See the *Call of Cthulhu* rules for the specifics of damage from explosives.) Even if the investigators are outside the range of the bombs, they still run the risk of being struck by falling debris while inside the cavern. The falling rocks deal 4d6 points of damage, half if the investigators make Reflex saves (DC 17). The investigators are safest, of course, if they are outside the cavern during the explosion.

It takes only 15 minutes for the city of the Tyrr Nemaii to be completely destroyed. Any parts not wiped out in the explosion are crushed and buried beneath tons of rock. The main entrance is completely blocked with fallen stone. Only the Nyhuus tunnel remains open to the surface.

If the investigators do not know of the Nyhuus tunnel, they may have a chance to find it while exploring the outer edges of the cavern. After the bombing of the Tyrr Nemaii, the GM may wish to turn the investigators' quest for daylight into a small, desperate adventure. For extra effect, a few of the sentinels could have survived the blast and are now roaming about the ruinous darkness, hungering for blood.

Sentinels: Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 4d8+16; hp 34; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +9 melee (1d6+9, 2 claws); Reach 10 ft.; SA Improved grab, squeeze; SQ Cold subtype, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide +2 (+8 in snowy areas), Listen +11, Spot +11.

Feats: Power Attack.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

Armageddon Plain

For a thousand human lifetimes, Silas Templeton has been waiting for this moment. The time of release is at hand.

As he gazes out into the desert, the founder and CEO of TemCo sees the gateway forming in his mind. It is a glorious, shining thing, a portal into destiny and the reclamation of divinity. Templeton is proud of what he has done—and what he is about to do. The project has been delicate at the best of times and a colossal burden at worst. But in a matter of hours, it will all be worth it.

A gentle rapping at the door interrupts Templeton's reverie.

"Excuse me, sir, but the last of the council are here."

"Thank you. I will join them momentarily."

Templeton curses his frail human shell as he shuffles toward the door, leaning heavily on his cane.

The shk'ryth of TemCo have gathered here from around the world. They look to Templeton as he steps out of his office, their faces full of anxiety and hope. The old man walks slowly to a podium. He leans forward and speaks into a microphone.

"My brothers and sisters," Templeton begins, "it is time for us to go home!"

All of TemCo's pieces are clicking into place. The comet is on its way and heading directly toward the predetermined impact site. The magnetron field is functioning as planned. Shk'ryth from all corners of the globe have converged on the site to witness this awesome event. All that remains is to wait...for the end of time.

Getting to the Gobi

Compared to the distance they have already come, traveling from Mt. Makalu to the Gobi is no great feat. One new challenge, however, is that the investigators have to find their own way to Mongolia. From Copenhagen to Tibet, they have been able to rely on Franklin's arrangements and reservations. Now, when time is truly of the essence, they no longer have that luxury. If Ekloff is with them, his contacts and experience may prove invaluable.

The investigators are faced with an arduous trek back through Tibet and China into Mongolia. Generous GMs may wish to skim over this portion of the adventure, assuming the investigators are resourceful enough to hitch rides, bribe officials, and find camping sites when necessary. Other GMs may wish to play out the grand adventure of traveling through these exotic, dangerous lands during a time of crisis.

In either case, the investigators find that there are few vehicles to take them to the coordinates. Instead, they probably need to obtain horses, which are the preferred mode for traveling in the Mongolian wilderness.

The investigators slowly work their way into the blasted rock and cracked earth of the desert. Mongolian nomads occasionally appear on the horizon, riding horses in small groups or herding goats as they have for centuries. By day, the sun beats down on the parched plain and makes SH-01 appear as a ghostly moon in the azure sky. At night, temperatures drop to near freezing. The comet shines like a small sun in the darkness and almost seems close enough to touch.

As the investigators get closer to the coordinates, they see more and more strange antennas and sensor arrays sticking out of the ground like weird lightning rods. If they inspect some of these unusual devices, they find insignia on them stating that they were manufactured by Parsec, Inc. These signs of TemCo activity are ironically reassuring, as they tell the investigators they are on the right path.

TemCo's Gobi Facilities

Under the guise of agricultural research, TemCo has leased an enormous swath of the Gobi Desert from the Mongolian government. The corporation has constructed many buildings and electronic arrays on this land. This construction is grouped in four clusters.

The first cluster is centered around the primary magnetron field generator and includes administrative buildings, barracks, and other support structures.

Two 100-foot-tall magnetron field relays make up the second two clusters, officially known as Substations A and B, approximately 50 miles from the primary generator and 50 miles from each other. These three outposts form a perfect triangle in the middle of the desert.

In the geometric center of this triangle stands the last cluster: the core magnetron relay. This largely unmanned installation is situated at the exact center of the comet's planned impact location.

Stretched between all the stations, in even five-mile increments, stand smaller magnetron boosters. The surrounding area is also crisscrossed with power lines, sensors, and cameras. TemCo has been conducting intensive tests of the region in preparation for the comet's arrival. Nothing happens inside the triangle without TemCo's knowledge.

Dr. Levitz is being held in Substation B. TemCo thought it best to keep him nearby and alive—just in case something goes wrong—but far enough from the primary generator to forestall any thoughts of sabotage of the magnetron core.

The Primary Generator

The primary generator facility is two stories tall and resembles a military outpost. A chainlink fence topped with razor wire surrounds its grounds. An array of antennas and dishes poke up from the bunker's flat roof.

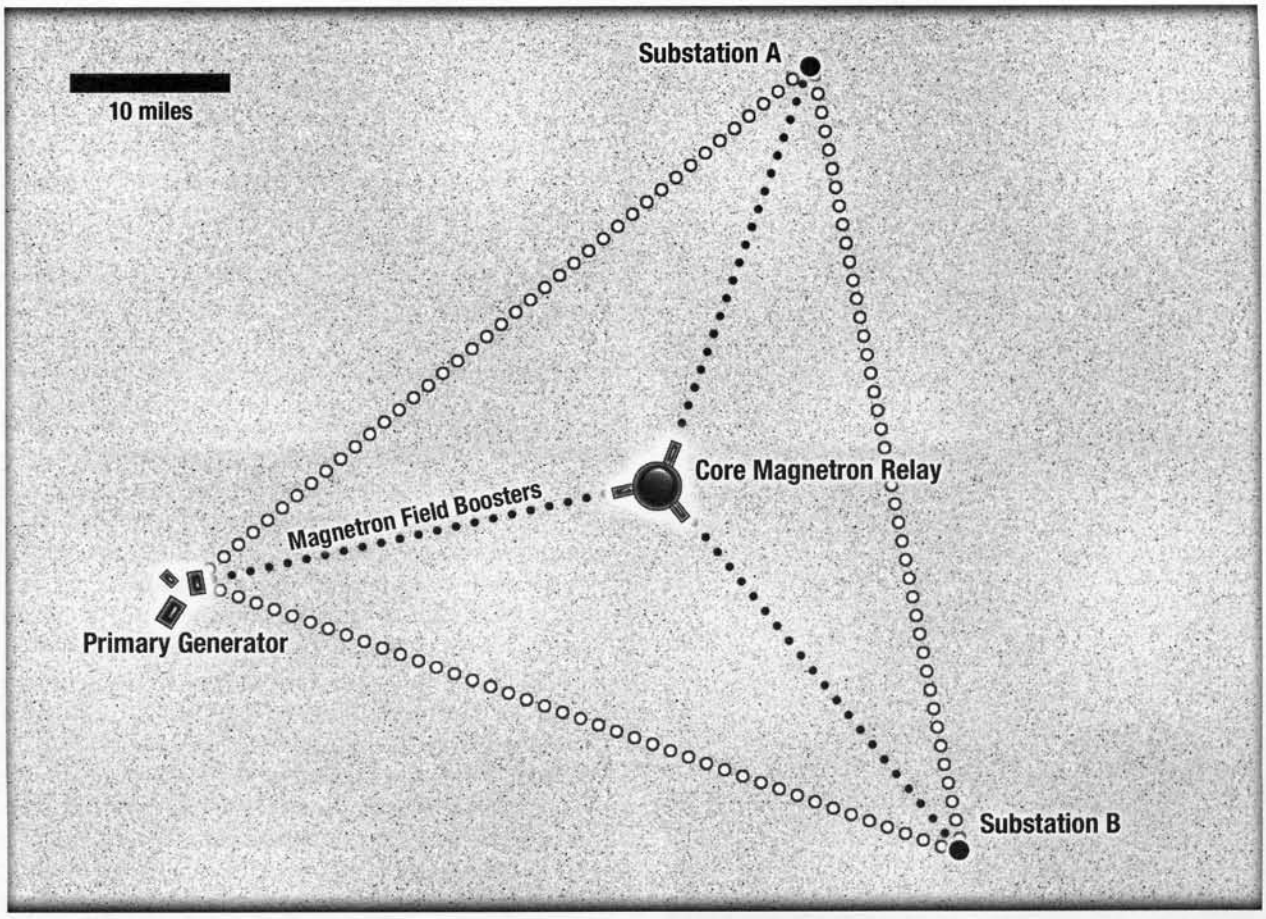
Surrounding the primary generator are a number of administrative and support buildings.

There are four helicopter pads near the building, two of which are occupied. Two dozen vehicles are parked near the facility. Armed Tribunal agents patrol the perimeter, keeping a sharp eye out for trouble. The highest-ranking members of TemCo have gathered inside the facility to observe what they hope will be their greatest achievement.

Near the generator building but outside its fence are 14 large, domed tents made of animal skins. These are yurts, the homes of the Khalkha, a tribe of Mongolians hired by TemCo to serve as guides and provide other assistance. These Khalkha have chosen to "temporarily" give up their nomadic ways in return for hard cash. A number of Mongolians can be seen outside their tents watching the comet burn in the sky.

The Generator Substations

The magnetron field relays are housed in two concrete bunkers. These buildings do not have fences but are locked with an electronic alphanumeric keypad and guarded by an armed Tribunal agent.



While the substations are only a single story tall, they are each capped with a monstrously tall tower that reaches nearly 100 feet into the air. These towers bristle with strange dishes and antennas, amplifiers and transmitters for the magnetron field. There are ladders running three quarters of the way to the tops of the towers. These lead to a number of platforms with strange control panels used for fine manipulation of the magnetron field.

Dr. Levitz is being held captive in Substation B.

Rescuing Dr. Levitz

In order to stop TemCo's plan, the investigators must invert the magnetron field so that the comet passes directly from our universe into the next without creating a lethal tear in our space-time. By inverting the magnetron field, the generators will compress mass-energy rather than stretch it—causing the field to swallow the impact energy instead of being split apart by it. To do this, they need the help of Dr. Julian Levitz, the man whose theories led to the creation of the magnetron field.

Locating Dr. Levitz

Upon their arrival at the primary generator, the investigators have several options for finding out where exactly Dr. Levitz is being held. (While Uri Bucayev told them "B," the question of the substation's location remains.)

One option would be to approach the TemCo employees outside the facility. Unfortunately, these are mostly Tribunal agents on guard duty who react very suspiciously to strangers. The investigators might be able to pull it off with successful opposed Bluff checks if they pretend to be shk'ryth or other TemCo employees here for the occasion. Violently interrogating Tribunal agents is unlikely to work, as the guards are fanatically loyal to their cause.

Another, more viable option would be to speak with the Khalkha. The Mongolians know their way around the desert and can easily tell the investigators where they need to go—or even take them there, if given proper incentive. Again, the investigators' best chance of success lies in claiming to be associated with TemCo. The Khalkha are open to bribes, but as their employers are nearby and the world may be ending in a matter of hours, the bribes had better be impressive indeed.

Note that the humans working for TemCo are doing so under the lie that the magnetron field will actually protect them from the comet's impact. They have been told that the field will act as a "comet cushion" and will save the planet. They are sorely mistaken but gladly serve the cause.

Dr. Levitz is not, by nature, a passionate man. Strong emotion does not come easily to him. But he has tried to reason with these monsters and failed. Perhaps vehemence will succeed where logic has not.

"You've got to stop the countdown! You hear me? If you go through with this, we're all going to die!"

No response. Not that he really expected one. There are no scientists out here at the substation, just mindless drones following orders. The one outside the door has been ordered to keep him here. Anything beyond that—like reporting to his superiors any new breakthroughs in magnetron theory—is beyond his capabilities.

Dr. Levitz stands directly in front of the sealed door and yells.

"You fool! Call Dr. Wessler, tell him that I've double-checked the figures and found something new. Tell him that the impact will cause a chain-reaction, tearing the field apart. We're not opening a door, we're knocking down the wall!"

No response.

Dr. Levitz is not, by nature, a passionate man. But as he slumps to the floor, his eye catches the timer on the monitor counting down the hours to Armageddon, and he begins to sob.

Finally, the investigators may wish to infiltrate the primary generator itself. (If they have the code for the electronic lock, it would come in handy here.) Lying about their identities can help in this case, but a better idea might be to dress up as Khalkha tribespeople and sneak in as one of the "servants."

As the security doors slide open with a hiss, the investigators enter TemCo's den of destruction. The stench of shk'ryth washes over them as they come upon a group of approximately 75 people milling about in a large lounge area overlooking the impact site. When they recognize one of these people as Kage, it should become clear to them that this is a congregation of shk'ryth gathered to witness the end of the world.

The investigators have placed themselves squarely in the middle of the most dangerous place on Earth.

There are a number of monitors in the observation lounge showing video of the area of the magnetron field. One monitor counts down the hours and minutes until the comet arrives.

Upstairs above the observation lounge is a control room brimming with computers, video monitors, and 20 TemCo technicians. One of the largest monitors displays a map of the area, pointing out where the substations are in relation to the primary generator.

Once the investigators know where Dr. Levitz is being held, they still have to find a way to get there. They may wish to steal one of the vehicles parked outside the primary generator or one of the horses from the Khalkha. Of course, if they speak kindly to the Mongolians, the tribespeople might even take them there by horseback.

Freeing Dr. Levitz

Dr. Levitz is being held in Substation B, a small one-story concrete bunker with a 100-foot tower attached to it. A lone, bored Tribunal agent alternates between standing outside the bunker door and keeping an eye on his prisoner inside. The guard checks in with the primary generator facility every half-hour by radio. Stationed here without a vehicle, the guard is just as trapped in the middle of the desert as Dr. Levitz.

The Tribunal agent is the investigators' biggest challenge to freeing Dr. Levitz. He is willing to talk but unless the investigators are extremely convincing, he calls back to the primary generator facility for permission to let them see the physicist. The investigators may have to overcome this particular obstacle with force.

Once the guard is down, all that remains is to overcome the electronic security system. If the investigators are lucky, they already have the password (see the Moscow Papers #3). If not, they can override the system with the right tools and an Open Lock or Disable Device check (DC 35). The heavy steel door beeps when the lock unlatches.

Inside Substation B, the interior is broken into a control room and a small break room/sleeping area. Dr. Levitz is sitting in the control room, watching several monitors displaying video of the region and computer readouts of the magentron field components.

The shocked scientist doesn't know what to make of his rescuers. He is confused and, until the investigators mention Uri Bucayev, has no idea why these strange people are bursting into the substation. When the investigators finally get through to the flustered scientist, he realizes that a remnant of hope might still exist.

"There isn't much time!" he exclaims. "When SH-01 strikes the field in approximately 30 minutes, the field is going to overload and cause a rupture in time and space. We have to invert the field. I've tried to do it from inside here, but they have locked the controls from the main generator. I'll have to do it manually—and I'll need your help!"

Tribunal Agents: Male 6th level; HD 6d6+12; hp 33; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); Atk +8/+3 melee (1d4+2, punch) or +10/+5 ranged (2d8/crit x4, Colt M1911 pistol); SV

Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Bluff +7, Demolitions +5, Disable Device +5, Disguise +7, Drive +11, Gather Information +7, Hide +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +11, Search +7, Spot +7.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Martial Artist, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot.

Possessions: Colt M1911 pistol, laser gunsight, silencer, 2 magazines hollow point .45 ACP.

Graham in the Desert

Now that the investigators are close to the end of their journey, Michael Graham follows them much closer than before, relying a little too heavily, perhaps, on his cloaking field. The investigators often catch glimpses of his movement from the corners of their eyes and occasionally see light refracting improperly where he is standing. They sometimes hear him walking nearby and may even bump into him once.

Graham is also much more active in his assistance now. He steps in where he can without being overly obvious—subtly moving items, distracting guards, and other actions that could easily be explained away.

One thing that cannot be explained away is the potential death of the guard watching Dr. Levitz. If it appears the investigators need the help, Graham takes advantage of his invisibility and backstabs the Tribunal agent. For no apparent reason, the guard simply collapses and dies, blood spreading across his clothing.

The Magnetron Field

Half an hour before the comet's determined time of impact, an electric hum fills the air. It grows louder, deeper, penetrating and resonant. The air fills with static, raising the hair on the necks and arms of those nearby.

A blue bolt of electricity suddenly arcs from the primary generator to one of the boosters. A minute later, a brighter, larger bolt flashes from the first booster to the second. A third bolt, stronger still, returns from the second booster back to the generator. The cycle begins again, faster, the blue bolt growing ever larger. By the fifth cycle, there seems to be a steady crackling ribbon of energy connecting the three points.

The hum is deafening now. Arcs of blue fire dance from the ribbons, touching and leaping, forming an almost solid triangle of energy some 100 feet from the ground. Those near the triangle are overcome with a strange, nauseous sense of vertigo as gravity lurches and shifts beneath them. The magnetron field is now complete.

When fully active, the magnetron field forms an equilateral triangle with roughly 50 miles on each side. Touching the field inflicts 1d6 points of electricity damage and permanently scrambles electrical or electronic equipment.

Incoming!

The sun goes dim. A dirty gray cloud obscures its face, casting a shadow for miles. The cloud grows darker, nearly blotting out all light. It condenses into a solid black form, a pupil in the eye of the sun. Minutes later, the black shape eclipses the sun, casting the region into a red-tinted twilight. SH-01 has arrived.

It takes the comet about 10 minutes to reach the surface of the Earth from the upper edges of the atmosphere. During this time, most of it evaporates or burns up. What remains is a solid mass of metals and minerals roughly 10 miles in diameter. The smoldering core leaves a cloudy contrail behind it as it plummets toward the ground.

Inverting the Field

In order to manually configure the magnetron field, Dr. Levitz and the investigators must climb to a narrow platform some 30 feet above the substation. Under normal circumstances, climbing the ladder would not require a Climb check. But brilliant blue energy is flashing just overhead on the tower, and there is a sense of vertigo that increases with proximity to the field. The DC for the Climb check is 10.

Once they reach the platform, Dr. Levitz instructs the investigators in what to do. He has to yell in order to be heard over the deafening hum of the magnetron field.

"Find all the yellow switches! Reverse the switches from positive to negative! Then do the opposite with the reds!"

Dr. Levitz, meanwhile, busies himself at a small computer keyboard, typing frantically as the comet looms closer every moment.

Moore's Last Stand

TemCo is closely monitoring the area of the magnetron field with cameras, radar, and arcane scientific devices; there is no way the investigators can enter the site undetected. Once Gerard Moore realizes there are intruders near the impact zone, he races to the site to eliminate the problem quickly, before the comet arrives.

By keeping a ridge between him and the substation, Gerard Moore is able to speed toward the investigators in his jeep without them seeing him. Because they are so close to the magnetron field, Moore's targets cannot even hear him pull up while they are reconfiguring the

field. Only if one of the investigators makes a successful Spot check (DC 20) do they realize that something is amiss: A TemCo jeep is parked at the back of the substation, but its driver is nowhere to be found.

Moore climbs the ladder up to the platform where Dr. Levitz and the investigators are working. (If they are engrossed in their work, it is possible that they don't see Moore until he has joined them on the platform.) He draws his pistol and smiles mirthlessly at the investigators.

"I never expected you to get this far. No matter. Now I finish what I started in Copenhagen."

Before Moore can pull the trigger, his gun mysteriously flies out of his hand and crashes to the earth. A look of confusion crosses his face, only to be replaced a moment later with an expression of rage and agony. The point of a long, thin knife blade pops out from his stomach with a dribble of greenish blood.

"You!" he hisses. "I should have realized you were helping them!"

Moore lashes out behind him and connects solidly with Michael Graham. Sparks fly across the ktchoma's cloaking field as it reveals his human form.

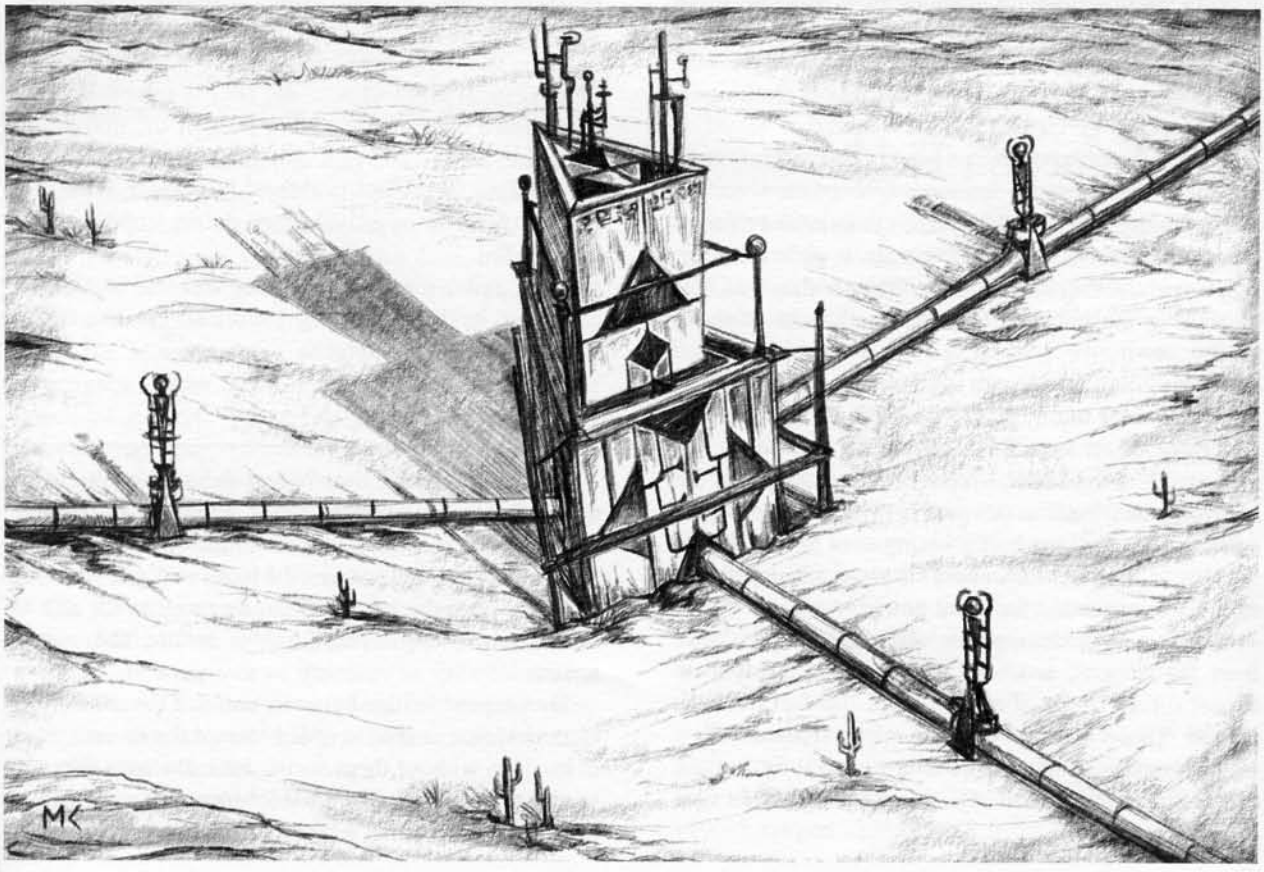
"Finish it!" Graham barks at Dr. Levitz and the investigators. "Finish it now! I will handle this one."

Graham tackles Moore, knocking the larger man off-balance. Again Graham's field flickers, this time revealing the form of the man who was watching the investigators on the trains. Moore recovers easily and begins to pound mercilessly at his nemesis, cursing him in an alien tongue. Now Moore's field is sparking as well, giving the investigators a glimpse of the inhuman creature beneath.

With a roar embodying a century of frustration and rage, Graham seizes onto Moore and pushes with all his might. The two ktchoma go over the edge of the platform in a shower of sparks. Between the sparks, the investigators can make out two humanoid forms resembling the figure buried beneath the Nyhuus estate.

As the two fall, the world around the impact site is engulfed in a blinding white light and scorching blasts of heat. The comet has arrived, blistering the sky as it plunges to earth.

This burning wind causes the tower to shake violently, and investigators feel every inch of exposed skin begin to blister. The investigators must make Reflex saving throws (DC 12) every round to avoid being thrown from the oscillating tower. Those who fail their saves fall 30 feet to the ground below, taking 3d6 points of damage. Reaching the final controls takes an almost superhuman effort.



Resolution

One way or another, the **Nocturnum** campaign comes crashing to an end as the comet SH-01 smashes into the Gobi Desert.

Down in Flames

What remains of the comet plunges into the magnetron field. The field explodes with blue sparks and fireballs where the comet fragments touch it and vanish. It glows ever brighter as it swallows up the superheated core of SH-01.

After a minute of this rain of fire, a terrible silence falls across the desert. Comet particles continue to fall and disappear into the azure field, but neither they nor the field make any noise. A moment later, all sound in the area falls silent. Words, engines, and gunshots continue to function but simply cannot be heard. Somehow the field is nullifying all sound.

A darkness begins to glimmer at the center of the brightly glowing blue field. It seeps out into the triangle, slowly at first, then faster, like some malicious cancer. There are shapes inside the darkness. They are indeterminate at first, but become larger and more distinct as the darkness spreads.

The investigators may notice on one of the video monitors that the shk'ryth are leaving the primary generator building, walking toward the growing darkness with rapture on their upturned faces. One by one they burst free from their human shells. Oozing and slithering in their stinking, tarlike natural forms, the creatures continue toward the gate, ignoring everything else around them.

A long minute after the silence begins, the darkness envelopes the magnetron field, leaving only a crackling blue line around its edge. Those beneath it see not the terrestrial sky but alien constellations that writhe and seethe with lives of their own. Blotting out the stars are wriggling shapes that, while distinct, defy all description. The shk'ryth themselves are unnerved by the sight and begin to back away.

Suddenly, the blue ribbon of energy at the edge of the darkness bulges outward, strains and snaps, dissipating into the air. The darkness rushes out from where its boundaries once were, racing across the sky. At the same time, it begins to expand both upward and downward, pressing down onto those beneath it. Just as our universe begins to collapse into the void, the sound of hideous fluting wells up from the abyss, drowning out the Earth's final screams.

Dr. Levitz's theory has been proven correct. TemCo's hole through time and space has caused a cosmic unraveling. The wall between our dimension and those of the Outer Gods has crumbled. A split-second passes and humanity is no more.

Shutting it Down

There is a possibility that the investigators are able to shut down the primary magnetron field before the comet's impact. Doing so prevents the doomsday scenario presented above, though the investigators, if still in the area, end up no less dead.

If the magnetron field is inactive when SH-01 plummets to the earth, the desert, most of Mongolia, and parts of Russia and China are immediately and completely destroyed from the intense heat and pressure.

A massive cloud of dust, rock, and rubble is thrown miles into the air. The heavier pieces rain destruction across Asia as they crash back to the ground. The lighter debris stays in the atmosphere, causing heavy cloud cover and a drop in temperatures worldwide.

In the months to come, the cold and lack of sunlight lead to total crop failure across the globe. A terrible famine follows, leading to panic and chaos worse than any seen during the comet crisis. Starving and desperate, society tears itself apart in a mad attempt to stave off the inevitable.

This is how it ends: Civilization falls and humanity teeters on the brink of extinction.

Victory in the Desert

If Dr. Levitz and the investigators successfully reconfigure the magnetron field generator in time, the shimmering blue triangle catches the comet before it strikes the earth. As it collides with the field, it disappears, the field sparking and spraying blue lightning into the air. The field glows brighter with each particle of dust and rock it receives from the sky.

A pocket of darkness appears in the center of the field. The darkness grows over the next minute, filling a 100-foot hole with its swirling stars and blasphemous alien forms. All who gaze into the darkness lose 1d6/1d10 points of Sanity. The hole of darkness then recedes into a mere pinprick and fades from existence altogether.

Dr. Levitz's theory has been proven correct. By reconfiguring the magnetron field, the investigators were able to prevent the "unraveling" of TemCo's hole through time and space. SH-01 passed through our universe and into the realm of the Outer Gods.

Twelve cycles in each week,
One in nine block the eye.
The golden orb, an ebon hand.
Ashothero, the hour draws near.

night falls

Xian considers himself a generous, kind-hearted man. Among his people of the Khalkha tribes, he is known for taking care of those less fortunate than himself. Having no family of his own, Xian sees it as his duty to watch over those who also travel the world alone. It surprised no one when Xian took in the strangers he found wandering in the desert after the comet scorched the sky.

He had been traveling by horseback to his uncle's yurt when he saw the strangers. Burned by sun and wind, their clothing in tatters, the staggering figures were definitely not Mongolian. Judging from their white hair, Xian first thought them to be old, but as he drew closer, he saw their features were haggard but relatively young.

When he saw their eyes, he knew what had happened. These poor souls must have been out here in the desert, he reasoned, when the comet struck. No one knew what strange magic kept the stones from falling, but the strangers must have seen it all—and been driven mad by what they witnessed.

Xian tried to talk with the strangers, but their eyes were vacant and unfocused. Their limbs trembled from fatigue. The Mongol knew that if he did not help them, they would soon perish.

Back at his uncle's yurt, Xian made up beds for the strangers and watched over them for days while they slept. When they finally woke, he fed them and bandaged their wounds. Still, they did not speak. Their eyes remained glazed, as if whatever sights they had seen remained burned into their vision.

After almost two weeks, Xian finally decided that while he could tend to the strangers' bodies, their minds were far beyond his reach. He was sad but took comfort in knowing he had done all that he could.

Xian, like most of the Khalkha, was familiar with the Parsec buildings and the people who worked there. Unlike many of his tribespeople, Xian declined to work for the company with all the strange towers and antennas. He preferred the open steppe to the routine of a regular paycheck. Nevertheless, he had often visited the Parsec buildings to speak with his people and deliver goat milk for his uncle. Not knowing where else to take the strangers, Xian brought them to the Parsec buildings. He hoped that the people there would either have a doctor or access to one elsewhere.

He was right.

The Parsec people were very gracious. They listened intently to Xian's story of finding the strangers in the desert, and thanked him for taking care of their "precious employees." The doctor on site, Dr. Wessler, was more than willing to take charge of the strangers.

"We cannot thank you enough," he said. "Now it is up to us to see that these unfortunate people receive the treatment they need."

That was over three months ago now. Life has returned to normal on the steppe, though there are far fewer people working in the Parsec buildings. Because so few of his people still work there, it has taken Xian this long to return to the buildings with the antennas.

As he is preparing to leave, Xian catches sight of Dr. Wessler. He waves and smiles. The doctor frowns for a moment, then smiles as he recognizes the Mongolian.

"Have you brought us more stragglers, Xian?"

"No. But I was wondering about the ones I brought you before. What happened to them? How are they doing?"

Dr. Wessler's face brightens.

"They're coming along just fine," he says. "We flew them to America, where they are receiving the best psychiatric care available."

"So they are at a good hospital?"

"Most certainly. The Gibson Mental Hospital is known for its excellent treatment. Dr. Hall, who runs the hospital, is one of the finest mental health professionals in the field—and I hear that she is personally overseeing the patients' treatment."

Xian is relieved. As much as he considers it his duty to take care of people, it bothers him when he has to turn that duty over to someone else.

"Good, good," he says. "I am glad to hear they are in capable hands."

"Oh, yes. Very capable hands indeed."

Snowflake Papers #1

Universal Mineral
23 Main Street
Miner's Folly, CO., 80207

Damien Carson
1123 Montgomery Avenue
Suite 164
San Marco, CA 93702

Dear Mr. Carson:

We have reviewed your terms and found your fees to be within acceptable budgetary guidelines. Therefore we are pleased to inform you that we accept the terms of your agreement, and will be contacting you with the details of your assignment within the next 24 hours.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that, as an independent contractor, you cannot hold Universal Mineral liable should any misfortune overtake you during your time in Miner's Folly, nor can we be held responsible for your actions. We can discuss any other contract issues upon your arrival.

Enclosed, please find one round-trip airline ticket. At the airport, a rental car will be waiting for you, as per your instructions.

If you have any questions or problems, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Raymond Gurney

Raymond Gurney
Director of Resource Development

Snowflake Papers #2

(Valley Voice, July 1 7, 1923)

ph W. Connegy and wife to Isaac Noble, hearing date the 20th day of March, 1878, and duly recorded in. Libor J. W.T., No. , folio 86, one of the lend record hooks for the county. Both of the above tracts being the sams land devised by said Isaac L. Noble, late of Caroline county, deceased, to he sold and the thereof divided upon the death of his widow, Mary E. Noble, who departed this life on the 13th dayof May.

INDIANS RAID MAGNATE'S MANSION

Matthew Delaney, son of Jasper Delaney and heir to the Delaney copper mine fortune, arrived home from a business trip yesterday to find his home in shambles and his servant nearly dead.

In the middle of the night, a group of Indians broke into Delaney's mansion and proceeded to destroy or steal hundreds of dollars' worth of furniture and ornaments, then paint primitive pictures all over the walls. Thaddeus Moore, Delaney's servant who was alone in the house, attempted to stop the Indians, but was savagely attacked and almost died from his numerous cuts and stab wounds.

"I just don't understand it," said Delaney. "What do these savages want with me? They hit every room in my house. There's no telling how much damage they have caused, or how much they have stolen."

According to Sheriff Parker, the Indians were searching the mansion for something, though neither he nor Delaney has any idea what they would be looking for. Asked about the pictures and symbols painted on virtually every wall in the house, Parker could only say, "Those Indians are a queer bunch. Who's to say what they're up to?"

While Parker plans to search the area for the Indians, he admits that he is not very optimistic about finding them.

Snowflake Papers #3

(Valley Voice, February 21, 1934)

MINER FOUND DEAD

Sherman Costello, 34, was found dead in a field three miles outside of town yesterday evening. Costello disappeared two days ago on his way home from the Delaney Copper Mine, where he worked as a shift foreman. Since then, his family and Sheriff Parker have been searching the area. Parker found the body two miles from the road, an apparent victim of an animal attack.

Costello's son Jesse, 19, doesn't believe that an animal is responsible for his father's death. "He's all chewed up sure enough, and they say it was a bear, but those weren't no bear tracks. And what bear is out hunting in the middle of winter? It doesn't make sense."

Sheriff Parker has also suggested that Costello could have been attacked by a wolf or a cougar. He doubts that foul play was involved, pointing out that Costello was a popular man, well liked and respected by all who knew him. Jesse Costello has his own theory: "It was Indians. I'm sure of it."

A funeral service will be held this Saturday at 10:00 am in the Costello home.

Snowflake Papers #4-1

June 14, 1892

My Dearest Clarice,

It's been three months now and still no gold. I have been panning and digging, chipping away at the most promising rock, but day after day I come up with nothing. Each morning I wake with the hope that this will be the day I find gold, that I may stake my claim and come deliver you from that horrible valley. But each night I realize this is not to be.

Even in sleep, there is no rest for my weary body. I have terrible, troubling dreams, and my heart grows anxious for your welfare. I know that there is a darkness that fills that valley, threatening to swallow you up. The people there are queer and ungodly; trust none of them, for their ways are not our ways. I am so sorry to have left you alone with them for so long.

If another month goes by and still I find no gold, I shall give up the search and return home. One way or another, once we are together, we will leave this cursed land and seek our fortune elsewhere.

Love,

Malcolm

Snowflake Papers #4-2

July 2, 1892

Dear Malcolm,

You silly man, oh, how you worry needlessly so. I miss you horribly, too, but please don't fear for me, for I am quite safe here in the valley. The neighbors are friendly, peaceful folks, and were most helpful when I needed supplies from out of town.

The town is still boisterous and growing, though it seems to have quieted down since you were here. The new sheriff has run off all the real troublemakers and keeps a watchful eye on everyone else. The mines, which had been feuding something fierce, are being bought by a single owner. His name is Delaney, and he is quite charming. I think he's from California. At dinner last night, he explained that he wishes to bring stability to the area. Of course, he plans to become rich in the process.

But we can discuss these things when you return. It makes me glad to hear you say that you'll be back in a month. And while I don't mind the valley or its people, I will eagerly move away, if it means being with you again.

Love,

Clarice

Twilight Papers #1

Please Help

File Edit View Tools Message Help

From: Jason Burke
Date: (Today's Date)
Subject: Please Help

From: "Jason Burke" <Burkeja@mallard.mandrake.edu>
Subject: Please help

Look, I'm sorry to bug you like this, but I don't know who else to turn to and my life is in danger.

No. Scrap that. Sorry, I'm a little hysterical. I should say my life *may* be in danger. You know that project I've been working on, the one I couldn't tell you about? Well, I think someone wants to kill me for it. Or something. Or maybe it has nothing to do with the project. I don't know. And that's why I can't go to the police with this.

I've got this thing on my arm. I don't know what it is, like a big tattoo or something, but people have been dying from it. The tattoo, I mean.

And I've started seeing things out of the corner of my eye. Things that shouldn't be there, places I should never see.

Again, I'm sorry to lay this on you, but you're the first I could think of who might be able to help me. Please come to Eastfield soon. You can find me in the lab, third floor of Strothers Hall. I don't like to go home any more.

Please hurry!

Jason

Twilight Papers #2

EASTFIELD • TRIBUNE

Wednesday
(3 months ago)

Weather:
Partly Cloudy
67 High
52 Low

Forecast, 8B

INSIDE:

Movies

Staff reviewer Alan Lok takes a look at this Friday's releases and makes predictions for the Academy Awards.

Sports

WWW.EASTFIELDTRIB.COM

Mandrake Students Charged in Rape

High school student allegedly attacked at fraternity party

Four Mandrake University students were charged yesterday in the rape of a 16-year-old Eastfield High School student at a fraternity party last week. The students, all members of the TriDelta fraternity, were released on bond after being charged. A court date has not yet been set.

"It's a classic case of drunken frat boys going too far," said City Attorney Cheryl Parker.

The alleged rape took place at a TriDelta party where the victim and her assailants had been drinking heavily, according to the official police complaint. "She was too drunk to defend herself," said Parker. "But she was sober enough to know what was happening."

Eastfield citizens are outraged by the alleged attack. Brian Cobb, head of the Mandrake Neighborhood Coalition, was not surprised, however. "It was only a matter of time," he said.

"Those fraternities are going at it every weekend, all weekend, with their parties. If it's not one, it's another with their loud music and drinking and yelling and drugs on the front lawns. And there are high school kids going to these parties—we've seen them. Even reported them to the cops, but they didn't do anything. So yes, it's sad, but no surprise."

Twilight Papers #3

(*Eastfield Tribune, Two Weeks Ago*)

Six Arrested, Police Brutality Alleged

Eastfield police arrested six Mandrake University students at a party last night, but other students who were there say that the officers hit and kicked the arrested students, even after they were handcuffed.

"I don't care what the police say, these kids were not resisting arrest," said Carol Schock, a Mandrake student who witnessed the incident.

According to witnesses, the police arrived at a party at 1730 7th Street around 11:15 pm last night for the purpose of breaking up the college party being held there. The four officers then confronted the three college students who were renting the house. The tenants agreed to keep the noise down and to exclude any minors from the festivities.

One of the officers then allegedly struck one of the tenants across the face. The other tenants and three other students defended the man who had been struck, and all six were beaten and arrested by the police.

"Their faces were bleeding and bruised," said Schock. "They weren't looking for a fight, they just wanted the cops to leave Bill alone. They weren't resisting at all."

It was unclear what caused the incident to become violent in the first place. Sarah Hanson, another Mandrake student and witness, suggested it was because a tenant did not show his ID as quickly as the officers wanted him to.

"He was digging around for his wallet and I guess the guy just thought he was stalling. So he hit him. I wasn't surprised. This isn't the first time something like this has happened."

All six students were arrested and booked but are scheduled to be released today.

Eastfield police have made no comment regarding the allegations of police brutality.

Twilight Papers #4

...most affected countries in Africa.

The Chinese government rejected the report.

Worldwide, 15-to 24-year-olds account for half of all new infections. Almost 12 million young people now have HIV, and an additional 6,000 young adults become infected every day.

The number of children orphaned by AIDS continues to increase sharply. About 14 million children living today have lost one or both parents to AIDS. The number will continue to grow rapidly, as up to one-half of today's new mothers are likely to die of AIDS in the worst affected countries.

Piot said that although many countries, including some of the world's poorest, have significantly increased their AIDS budgets, they still fall far short of the $9 billion needed annually to combat the epidemic in heavily infected countries "But so far, these countries are the exception, and not the rule," Piot said.

– The Associated Press contributed to this report.

(*Eastfield Tribune, One Week Ago*)

Local Man Found Dead

Tattoo connection coincidental

Jeremiah Standish, age 82, was found dead yesterday evening in his home when a neighbor noticed that his mail had been stacking up outside his door for several days and called the police. Police sources confirmed that Standish had been dead for more than a day but would not say how much more. Officials have attributed the man's death to natural causes.

An unusual twist on this story is that Standish was the third person to die in the last month with an unusual tattoo on his left arm. The tattoo, which features an abstract symbol, was also found on the bodies of Horace Kotter and Jacob Lancaster, two elderly Eastfield residents who died several weeks ago, also of natural causes. Police sources have noted the connection but dismiss it as a coincidence.

Anton Wallace, a professor of sociology at Mandrake University, recognized the tattoo as the emblem of a long-defunct Eastfield fraternal organization, the Order of the Tower.

"They were very influential in the 1930s," said Wallace, an avid scholar of local history. "But they disbanded after only a few years. The police raided one of their meetings and a scandal ensued. No one wanted to be associated with them after that."

A funeral for Standish has been scheduled for early next week.

Twilight Papers #5

(From the notebook of Jason Burke, dated three months ago)

So this is pixie dust. I feel strangely embarrassed that this is my first experience with hallucinogens—indeed, my first experience with any illegal drug. Ironic, I suppose, considering how chemicals and chemistry dominate every other aspect of my life.

The euphoric effect of the dust is no surprise. I suppose it comes from a stimulation of the mind's pleasure centers. What I find intriguing, however, are the hallucinations. The drug somehow overrides the brain's perception center, causing the user to receive false input with all five senses. How does this work? It's possible that the drug affects each sense, feeding the false info at the primary receptors. Possible, but unlikely. Makes more sense that it affects the perception center itself. But more than other hallucinogens, which merely create random hallucinations, the dust always gives the same or a similar hallucination. Which means that it's affecting the center in a very specific way—the same way each time for each person. If we could figure this out, and learn to manipulate the message being sent to the center, we could custom create hallucinations. Tie this in with computers and we could have William Gibson's wet dream.

Or maybe...maybe the hallucination is a sort of collective unconscious type thing. That would explain why everyone sees the same place. Some people—okay, some pixie heads—say that they see each other when they're tripping. I don't know about that. Doesn't make sense. But if this is the case, it would lend support to the collective unconscious theory.

What do I know? I'm a chemist, not a philosopher.

(A week later)

This is seriously weird.

I ran the tests myself—twice—so I know they're accurate. Still, this is weird. Near as I can tell, the dust is composed of some sort of peyote extract, mixed with a biological secretion. It might be blood, but it's not like any blood I've ever seen. Maybe it's from a rare animal, or some mutant strain.

But that's not the important thing right now. The important part is the peyote extract; that seems to be the active ingredient. If I can find some way to shut down the euphoric effects, maybe those who use it will be a little less likely to do so. Of course, this won't stop the addiction—that's more psychology and sociology than chemistry. Or if I can figure out exactly how the extract affects the brain and perception, then I can develop some way to counteract the chemicals, perhaps blocking them altogether.

To counter the effects of the drug, I have used a compound designed to cancel the euphoric effect of the THC, and a large dose of a secondary drug to "reset" the primary sensory center and block out the hallucinations. It should block the drug at the point where it does the most damage: the brain itself.

Twilight Papers #6

(From the Eastfield Tribune, dated 1939)

PAGAN RITES AT SWITZMAN ESTATE

Acting on an anonymous tip, the police raided the Switzman estate on the outskirts of town last night and discovered a shocking display of depravity and witchcraft. No less than 14 prominent citizens were found dancing around the carcass of a slaughtered calf, bathing in its blood and singing hymns to their 'queen.'

Marion Switzman, the so-called high priestess of the self proclaimed 'Order of the Ebon Tower,' swore vengeance against Eastfield and all its people as she was being carried away by police, according to eye-witness accounts. The woman was reportedly naked and covered with blood, shouting over and over, "Worship the queen or perish! Her realm is all around us!"

Twilight Papers #7

(Excerpts from the diary of Elizabeth Switzman)

...I've spent my life trying to live down my mother's reputation, trying to live quietly and peacefully and hope that no one notices I'm here. Not that I want to be here, but if I sell the house, the money stops coming. I don't think I'm ready for that. I just want a normal life, same as anyone else, but I guess that's too much to ask.

I don't want to be the Queen's child. Hell, up until three weeks ago, I didn't even believe in her. She was just another figment of my mother's imagination—like the father who would rescue me from all of this. I didn't ask for this, but there is some link that I cannot break. Some destiny that I cannot deny. It's in the blood...

...She's getting weaker. She sleeps in her tower, but even in her dreams, she knows she's getting weaker. The one in the lake is doing it. He's getting power from us somehow, sucking it out of the town. The more powerful he becomes, the weaker she grows. That scares me. We're so closely connected, the Queen and I—I scarcely know where I end and she begins anymore. And if she is dying, then surely I too must die

...Today she showed me a boy. His name is Jason and he is special to her—chosen, like me. I don't know why. But if I don't soon find a way to wake her, to bring her full glory to the light once more, it won't matter. We'll both be dead and probably her precious Jason along with us.

Twilight Papers #8

Excerpts from the journal of Marion Switzman

...She shows me things during meditation, visions of darkness lurking beneath the water of Mebidji. She shows me how this darkness once rose up, trying to drown her in its evil and power, how she fought back and defeated it...

...There is a traitor amongst us. I know this, for she has shown me. Our time of glory is at an end, and our Queen must return to the sleep we roused her from. I fear, though, that without us the darkness may try once more to conquer our mother and god. I sense its presence, and I am afraid...

...The mother heard my fears and has given me a ritual of binding and waking, should we need it once more. I hope I need never use it, but I fear more that I may not be able to do so. For tonight the traitor strikes, and all is lost. My only hope is that if the time of darkness should come upon us, someone might go to the lake and do what need be done for our Queen. Someone...

My daughter?

But my Queen, I have no daughter. Not yet.

Twilight Papers #9

(From the Eastfield Tribune, dated two years ago)

Date Ends in Tragedy

Student dies in boating accident

One Mandrake University student died and another was in critical condition after their rowboat tipped over in the middle of Lake Mebidji last night.

According to Gary Augustine, the surviving student, he and Audra Preston went boating last night on a date at about 11:00 pm. When one of the oars fell into the water, he tried to retrieve it, but "only made it worse."

"I reached too far over and the boat tipped," he said.

Officials have accepted Augustine's story and are calling the incident an accident. "These things happen," said Sheriff Bill Kallestad. "Kids rent a boat, don't really know what they're doing, and never wear their life jackets. It's tragic, but it happens every couple of years, usually in the fall."

A memorial service for Audra Preston will be held on the campus of Mandrake University tomorrow at 10:00 am.

Stillness Papers #1

Dear Friend,

While I have never had the pleasure of meeting you in person, certain mutual acquaintances of ours have assured me that you and your associates are experienced and capable in the matters of which I am writing. If this is indeed not the case, I offer my humble apologies for disturbing you, and wish that you trouble yourselves no further on my behalf.

My daughter, Kay, is missing. Five weeks ago, she left San Francisco for the village of Still Mountain, where she was to stay with my brother, Nakamura, who is a beekeeper there. I have just received word from my brother that Kay has not been seen for three weeks. He did not mention it before, assuming that she merely had returned home.

But what truly troubles me is that two weeks ago, a man called me from Still Mountain, asking personal questions about Kay's childhood, her fears and her mother. When I refused to answer these questions, he grew angry and a chill came over me. I have never known true evil before, but somehow I knew I was hearing the voice of a demon. He never told me his name. It was then that I contacted my brother.

I spoke to a wise woman about these things, and she confirmed that there are dark forces at work, threatening my daughter. I am no longer a young man, and in no condition to climb mountains and fight demons. Yet I fear for Kay's life, and in desperation I turn to you.

I am not a wealthy man, but I am willing and able to pay for your travel expenses. Time is short, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Ken Hito

Stillness Papers #2

(From *Last Writes* by Naomi Hito, Copyright 1986)

Other Books of Poetry by Naomi Hito Published by Nephew House:

Secrets of the Void, 1978
Beauty in Nothing, 1980
Freefalling, Falling Free, 1983
The Book of Whispers, 1984

Stillness Papers #3

(From the diary of Kay Hito, dated five years ago)

The headaches are okay, I guess, but the worst part, the part that totally sucks, is how they make everyone around me all pissed off at me. I mean, like it's my fault. Yeah, their heads hurt, but so does mine, and I don't go psycho over it.

Sometimes, I know what they're thinking. If they're really pissed, or concentrating, it's like they're talking right to me, only their lips aren't moving. I know what they're thinking, and it scares me. I never knew these people—my friends, kinda—were capable of this stuff. Of even thinking it. And it scares me that maybe someday they'll go beyond just thinking it. Then what?

Daddy says he has an idea, something that might help, but I don't know. The old man's only got so many good ideas in him, and they all go into his paintings.

Stillness Papers #4

(Letter from Ken Hito, dated six weeks ago)

My Dear Brother,

I must thank you for allowing Kay to stay with you. While I love my daughter very much, she is no longer a child, and I can no longer protect her from the seductive and dangerous world she seems so intent on exploring. I can only stand by as she spends night after wasted night searching until dawn for hollow thrills and empty, temporary highs. I can only watch, and it makes me sad.

Of course, Kay's life has never been easy. Even before her mother died, she suffered from a peculiar sensitivity that, in a different time and place, might have been a tremendous gift. Instead, it made her an outcast among the other children. Even strangers—even adults—could feel her strangeness and power and turn away from her. For Kay could often hear the thoughts of others and accidentally make her own thoughts heard—or felt. She is a wildfire, bright and hot but without direction.

I tell you these things not only to help you understand my daughter, but also as a warning. Some years ago, I took it upon myself to work with Kay, to subdue her wild talents and corral them into a forgotten corner of her mind. She is no longer the vortex of power and turmoil she once was, but be careful, brother. The chaos has not been removed from my daughter; it has merely been lulled to sleep.

But I grow dramatic in my old age! The important thing is that Kay is coming to stay with you, away from the corrupting influence of the city—and that pack of hoodlums she calls friends. She has expressed a sincere interest in learning of our family's history and heritage. I hope that you can help her in these studies.

Once again, I thank you for your generosity and kindness.

Humbly yours,

Ken

Stillness Papers #5

(From the diary of Kay Hito, dated three weeks ago)

This place doesn't suck, but I'm starting to wonder what I'm going to do after the novelty wears off—like, tomorrow. I mean, I've been here for two days and I've already met everyone in town and seen most of the sights. Yeah, it's great scenery, but come on! You can only check out so many treacherous cliffs before even deadly gorges get boring.

Nakamura's okay, but he's a little too old to get where I'm coming from. What am I saying? No one here is under 60! Compared to the monks, Nak's a punk kid. But at least he tries.

Speaking of monks, I should check out the monastery tomorrow, or what's left of it. If I'm looking for cultural heritage and all that crap, it's probably the best place to look. Maybe check out their sunrise meditation. Not like I'll be sleeping at five in the morning—with these stupid nightmares. I'm waking up cold and sweaty every two hours.

(Dated two weeks ago)

Yeah, it's been a week since I wrote. Sue me. I've been busy.

Well, not really busy, just hanging with the monks and stuff. I've even started meditating with them in the morning and sometimes at night if I'm in the mood. It's actually pretty relaxing. When I do, I can feel my old friend sitting in the back of my head. Not sure if that's good or bad, but if it's gonna come back, I guess this is the best place for it. Somehow, I don't think these folks would turn on me and start blaming me for all their problems. And if they did, screw 'em. I'll just go home—or maybe L.A., go hang with David for a while.

The monks are pretty cool, though a couple of them are starting to get on my nerves. Takashi, for one, won't leave me alone. If he sees me in the village, he comes up and starts babbling away, grinning that idiot grin of his. Never makes any sense, of course, speaking half Japanese and half English. No idea what the moron is saying. I'm afraid he's got some sort of crush on me. Shudder.

And then there's Soko. I'm sorry, but the guy just creeps me out. He keeps staring at me like something he scraped off the bottom of his shoe, and barks at me in Japanese even though he knows I don't speak a word of it. Don't know what I did to make him so mad at me. Yesterday he started yelling at me again and looked like he was gonna slap me or something, but Kage stopped him. Kage's the only one who can keep the old psycho in line.

Tomorrow, I think I'll skip out on the monastery and go climbing the cliffs, maybe try to find this glen they keep talking about. Or maybe stop by the observatory again. If I don't find something to do, I'm going to go crazy.

Benefactor Papers #1

Alcott Hotel
2348 Bennett Avenue

Friends,

I understand that your curiosity and inquiries into a rather delicate matter have left you with problems. As a representative of an organization whose interests parallel yours, I would like to offer my assistance in this matter.

I would appreciate a chance to speak with you in person. While in town, I have taken rooms at the Alcott Hotel. If you are interested in my offer, I would like to meet in the Alcott Lounge tonight at 8:00. You can find me sitting alone at the largest table, near the back.

Hoping to see you tonight,

R.

Benefactor Papers #2

TEMCO®

To: Stephen Lanyk
From: Allison Hodges
Subject: Timothy Ekloff

Per your request, I have summarized the history and current situation of Timothy Ekloff, a.k.a. Rogue 01. Forgive the vagueness of the following, but standard security procedure dictates that certain protocols must be followed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

We first encountered Rogue 01 in 1995 when we captured him prowling around the central site of the Project. It was determined that the subject possessed the required Asset. He escaped the site through unknown means (those responsible for this negligence have been reprimanded), but in the process of searching for him, we located a large number of other subjects with the required Asset, which led to the founding of Acquisition Site Beta. (For a detailed report, see file 9503432.)

We have had little success in locating Rogue 01 since then but have requested that our allies in law enforcement keep watch for him. Due to Rogue 01's intimate knowledge of the Project, his capture is of the highest importance.

We have secured the brother of Rogue 01, who was institutionalized following the events at Acquisition Site Beta. (For a detailed report, see file 9600017.) He is being transferred to our facility in New Hampshire, where he can be kept under observation and questioned regarding the whereabouts of his brother.

Benefactor Papers #3

GIBSON MENTAL HOSPITAL

Admission Notes

Name:	Alan J. Ekloff
DOB:	5/23/66
Profile:	Committed, with family's consent, by court after being acquitted of his sister's murder.
History:	Patient suffers from advanced delusional psychosis. He maintains an intricate fantasy pattern revolving around the existence of "monsters." He holds these monsters responsible for his sister's disappearance months before being committed. (She is assumed drowned.) This psychosis was most likely brought about by the patient's inability to save his sister from drowning. Patient experiences mood swings and exhibits extreme paranoia. As he may be a danger to himself and others, he will be kept for treatment for 24 months. At that time, he may be recommitted for another 24 months pending review.

Visiting Papers #1

GIBSON MENTAL HOSPITAL

Progress Report *(Dated one week ago)*

PERSONAL SUPPLEMENTAL:

THE PURPOSE OF THE TREATMENT IS THE EXTRACTION OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF INFORMATION, NAMELY THE SUBJECT'S ROLE IN THE BOWER COUNTY INCIDENT, HOW HE CAME TO BE AWARE OF THE PROJECT, THE EXTENT OF HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROJECT, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE LOCATION OF HIS BROTHER, ROGUE 01.

WE HAVE ACHIEVED MODEST SUCCESS IN RETRIEVING THE ABOVE DATA FROM THE SUBJECT. ON THE MATTER OF ROGUE 01'S LOCATION, HOWEVER, THE SUBJECT'S INFORMATION IS INCOMPLETE. HOWEVER, THE TRULY FASCINATING ASPECT OF THE SUBJECT AROSE COINCIDENTALLY OVER THE COURSE OF OUR QUESTIONING.

WE DISCOVERED THAT THE SUBJECT HAS THE ASSET, WHICH MEANS THAT ALL THREE SIBLINGS ARE SO ENDOWED. THIS MAY BE A MATTER OF GENETICS, BUT IT ALSO LENDS CREDENCE TO THE THEORY OF THE SO-CALLED "BOWERSVILLE EFFECT" IN THAT ALL THREE GREW UP IN THE SAME GEOGRAPHIC REGION. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE AREA CAUSING THE LOCALS TO MANIFEST THE ASSET, AND IF WE COULD DETERMINE WHAT IT IS, THE BENEFIT TO THE PROJECT WOULD BE ENORMOUS.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT WE HAVE MADE THIS BREAKTHROUGH THIS LATE IN THE PROJECT. AT THIS POINT, IT WOULD BE OF QUESTIONABLE VALUE TO PURSUE THIS LINE OF RESEARCH. THE PROJECT WILL SOON REACH COMPLETION, RENDERING THESE FINDINGS MOOT.

Family Papers #1

(From Echoes of Angels, by Teresa Stansbury, 1934)

...From the mud and water green and brown there came a million fingers on a million hands of vine, reaching for life, stretching for sustenance and dragging into its maw all it could reach. Feeding, it grew stronger until one by one the farms succumbed, and then the outer houses. And it would have grown stronger still had not a single man of God stood fast against its its muddy march.

...I saw a priest, a noble bald figure of holiness, speaking ancient words of power, and the unworldly intelligence obeyed. He forced the swamp back, back into its core, where its evil would hurt only itself. A Great Seal he constructed then, woven from eldritch power and cosmic rites, which stands to this day.

...But I have seen the end of the Great Seal, the second rise of the green and evil force that gives life to the swamp and takes life from all those around it. First the water rises and spreads, oozing oily around the ankles of the farmers. Then the swamp lifts its roots and hunts like an animal. And in the end, the swamp rises from below and drowns Bower and her people...

...The priest who died and yet will live again knew this and knows this still. He has hidden the key in a secret place, between the wings of the cherubim.

Family Papers #3

(From the journals of Timothy Ekloff)

...When I began investigating this TemCo, I had no idea what I would find. I have seen all kinds of crime and cruelty in my time with the CIA but nothing that compares to the apocalyptic conspiracy I have discovered.

It was the money laundering that first caught my attention. But then I saw that many of the funds were going to the same place—some mystery project in Tibet. Why Tibet? There is nothing in Tibet. No corporations, little organized crime, nothing but simple villagers and Chinese oppression. What could they possibly be working on in the Himalayas? I had to find out.

I could never report what I found, even if I dared show my face in public. I could never go on record ranting about underground cities or a machine as big as a house. If I told about the...people?...I saw there, I would be locked up. And if I said that their plan would kill us all, I would be branded a paranoid of phenomenal proportions.

No, if I'm going to stop them, I'll have to do it myself.

I'll track down Jane. He'll know where I can get some hardware and support personnel.

Family Papers #2

(Vance Muller's Diary, dated 1823)

Irving Helzer is a good man, no matter what the wags may say. I know this, but I cannot convince the good folk of Bower, for they seek an answer to their lost stock and lost children. 'Tis not a simple drowning—I'll give them that—but if there be evil in the swamp, it is not in Irving Helzer.

...Spoke with Irving again today and again he declined my invitation to Mass. But he is afraid. He told me he hears things slithering and whispering through the dark outside his house at night and fears that there is truth to the stories of a curse upon the swamp. I tried to disuade him of this ridiculous thought, but he then brought forth a most curious object.

A strange box it was, with eight sides and covered with carvings. It was a gift from his brother in the Caribbean, he said, washed up on the beach. When I commented that the box was broken, Irving shook his head sadly and explained that he himself had broken it out of curiosity. There had been something inside it and he wanted to see what it was. He never did see it, for it slid through his fingers and between the floorboards, leaving a greasy green trail. An unreasoning shudder went through me then as I saw the stain still bright upon the boards.

Irving said the drownings began shortly thereafter. He holds himself not a little responsible. I tried to tell him he was being foolish, but I fear I was not entirely convincing.

...Little Maggie Nobel is dead, and they seek to blame poor Irving. He is beside himself with fear and guilt. When I warned him of angry murmurs of lynching, he seemed resigned to his fate. He merely handed me the broken box and instructed me find some way to "fix it" and contain the evil he had released.

...Irving Helzer is dead. They hanged him and burned his house. He didn't even fight.

...Lost another farm to the swamp this week. It grows daily, lapping at the edges of civilization and reaching for us with its vines and branches. Four more have died since the lynching. I know now that Irving was right about the box and the root of this new evil. I hold the box and study it, trying to see how the pieces go together, but to no avail. For such a primitive item, it is curiously intricate. If I had time, perhaps I could comprehend it. But I do not, and so I seek a more unorthodox solution to the unholy presence in the swamp.

...Tonight I risk my soul in hopes of saving the lives of those around me. I also risk my life, for I doubt the thing in the swamp will go quietly.

If I succeed, I hope God has mercy on my soul.

If I fail...we will all need His mercy.

Anvil Papers #1

TORSHAMMER

037 | RVL | 1975 037-1523 55113

Shipper's Name	Shipper's Account Number	Supplemental Shipping Report RE
TemCo		**Internal Use Only** Special corporate shipments summary

Copies 1, 2, and 3 of this document are originals and have the same validity

Consignee's Name	Consignee's Account Number
Torshammer	

It is agreed that the goods described herein are accepted in apparent good order and condition (except as noted) for carriage subject to the conditions of contract on the reverse hereof, all goods may NOT be carried by any other means including road or any other carrier unless specific contrary instructions are given hereon by the shipper and shipper agrees that the shipment may be carried via intermediary stopping places which the carrier deems appropriate, the shipper's attention is drawn to the notice concerning carrier's limitation of liability. Shipper may increase such limitation of liability by declaring a higher value for carriage and paying a supplemental charge if required.

Handling Information

Special Projects Shipment
Non-customs goods ECD 231 ZKDV O

Shipment Number	Ship	No. of Pieces RCP	No. of Pieces DEL	Gross Weight	kg / lb	Rate Class	Total	Additional Notes
1022	Revelation	0	12	NA		X	NA	Shipment late
1023	Dona Donna	0	16	NA		X	NA	
1024	St. Maria	0	21	NA		X	NA	Tube failure, subject eliminated in transit
1025	Rodina	48	0	NA		X	NA	
1026	Dona Donna	0	15	NA		X	NA	
1027	St. Maria	0	19	NA		X	NA	
1028	Revelation	0	17	NA		X	NA	Hattock paid in full
1029	Rodina	51	0	NA		X	NA	
1030	St. Maria	0	11	NA		X	NA	
1031	Revelation	0	23	NA		X	NA	Hattock reports prisoners on board. Hold for interrogation.

Prepaid	Weight Charge	Collect	Fuel Charges	Security
	Valuation Charge			
	Tax			
	Total Other Charges Due Agent		Shipper certifies that the particulars on the face hereof are correct and that insofar as any part of the consignment contains dangerous goods, such part is properly descirbed by name and is in proper condition for carriage by air according to the applicable Dangerous Goods Regulations.	
	Total Other Charges Due Carrier			

Signature of Shipper or Agent

Anvil Papers #2

TORSHAMMER
MEMO

To: Harvey Kemp, Supply Manager
From: Orin Lipson, Director of Operations
Date: *(Two weeks ago)*
Subject: Corporate cargo space

As you know, we have been receiving special corporate shipments for the parent company on a regular basis for over a year now. During this time, we have used Cargo Unit D because it is close to the dock, yet far enough out of the way to not interfere with the day-to-day operations. However, it has come to my attention that we have been receiving more supplies per shipment in recent weeks. At this rate, we are soon going to run out of space in Cargo Unit D.

Therefore, I am moving the special corporate operation to Cargo Unit B, which is large enough to meet our needs. I need you to remove whatever supplies are currently in Unit B to some other Cargo Unit before the Revelation arrives next week. The crew of the Revelation and I will handle the transfer of corporate supplies from Unit D to Unit B at that time.

OL

Anvil Papers #3

(Dated the morning of the second day)

TEMCO®

OL:

The subject known as Rogue 01, captured five days ago in Savannah, has escaped once more. He was last seen inside the Moscow facility. Several of our people were killed during his escape.

As you should already be aware, there were a number of interlopers captured with Rogue 01 in Savannah. It was decided to transport them with the other subjects to your location for interrogation and elimination. We trust you will have no difficulty in accommodating the prisoners.

We have dispatched Gerard Moore to process the prisoners. Moore comes highly recommended by Faber herself, and has a very impressive record. We have no doubt that your prisoners will be no match for his advanced Tribunal interrogation techniques. Moore will be arriving by helicopter tomorrow night. Be prepared to meet him. He does not like to wait.

Once he is done at Torshammer, Moore is to continue on to Copenhagen to find and eliminate Rogue 01. The Project is too close to completion to allow this threat to continue.

RJ

Copenhagen Papers #1

Curtis Franklin
11023 C Dulus Blvd.
EAG. 1925.43

(From the London Times, dated five years ago)

Physicist's theories might aid in space travel

Dr. Julian Levitz, an American physicist, raised eyebrows on both side of the Atlantic while speaking at the International Space Science Symposium today about his controversial new theories. Dr. Levitz's studies have led him to believe that the particles that make up our physical universe are not stable but merely held together by what he called "magnetron fields." If sufficient energy were used to affect these fields, he said, we might be able to control the very shape of the universe, making space travel much easier.

Other scientists are skeptical about the physicist's ideas.

"I was serving on the editorial board at the Journal of Space Sciences when he first submitted this theory," said Dr. Harold Fletcher, one of the attendees at today's symposium. "I rejected it then, and I reject it now. Levitz's reasoning is badly flawed."

Another scientist, Dr. Deborah Klochman, was not as harsh but remained unconvinced.
"I'd have to take another look at his numbers to say for sure," she said, "but off the top of my head I'd have to say that Levitz needs to double-check his math before presenting at a symposium. This is going to hurt his reputation in the space science community."

Dr. Levitz was unavailable for comment.

Tomorrow is the last day of the International Space Science Symposium. Scheduled speakers include Dr. Henry Clark from NASA and Dr. Margaret Fischer from Germany.

Copenhagen Papers #2

(From the American Business News, dated three years ago)

Parsec hires Princeton research scientist

The Austin, Texas-based Parsec, Inc., known for its space technology products, recently scored a coup by hiring Julian Levitz, an astrophysicist from Princeton University, to head up its new think-tank. While the company has a policy against revealing employee's salaries, it is generally assumed that Parsec paid top dollar for the research scientist. The company is thought to be flush with new capital following its merger with the international holding corporation TemCo.

According to a press release, the scientist will be working in the company's propulsion division, "developing theoretical new solutions to age-old problems of space travel." Analysts speculate that this means Parsec has landed one of NASA's Mars contracts. The company has no comment on this issue.

Copenhagen Papers #3

(From the *Austin Daily Gazette*, dated two years ago)

Two die in helicopter crash

A helicopter owned by Parsec, Inc. caught fire and crashed into the Gulf of Mexico early yesterday morning, killing the pilot and the only passenger. Dara Kale, 32, was flying the helicopter from Parsec's headquarters in Austin to a research vessel in the Gulf. Her passenger was Julian Levitz, 49, another Parsec employee.

"We are shocked and saddened by the loss of two great employees," said Charles Conophy, spokesperson for Parsec, Inc. "Dara and Julian were not just our employees, they were our friends. Our hearts go out to their families in this time of sorrow. We share their grief."

Officials were able to recover Kale's body but have not yet been able to locate the body of her passenger. They expect recovery efforts to continue today but hold out little hope., Francis Kramer, a spokesperson for the Coast Guard, noted that the water where the helicopter sank is turbulent. This is not the first such incident he has seen in the area, he said, and "after the first day, there's really not much hope."

Dara Kale is survived by her mother, Tonya, of Dallas. Julian Levitz is survived by his wife, Lynn, and two children, ages 10 and 13, of Austin.

Copenhagen Papers #4

(From the American Business News, dated one year ago)

The year in business: Who's who and what's what—Parsec, Inc.

Parsec was founded in 1988 by Ronald and Arlene Walker, scientists at the University of Texas who developed a thin, lightweight insulation. They patented the material and landed a lucrative contract with NASA, which integrated the Walker's invention into a new generation of space suits. Five years ago, Parsec thought they had struck gold a second time with a new sleeping chamber they hoped NASA could use for manned space flight. Unfortunately for the company, NASA was not yet ready to invest in any long-range manned-flight technology.

Parsec's rescue arrived in the form of TemCo, a privately owned international holding company. In 1995, TemCo merged the company with its R&D holdings. Since then, the company has expanded away from space technology to other, more practical high-tech projects. Recent contracts have included designing satellites for the Chinese government and field-testing new agricultural techniques in the Gobi, Sahara, and Nevada deserts.

Ronald and Arlene Walker are enjoying an early retirement in Alaska. According to their former employees at Parsec (who still receive the Walkers' Christmas card every year), the couple lives in a house boat during the summer and spends their winters in a Fairbanks condominium.

EXPLORER OF THE BIZARRE: A BIOGRAPHY OF MORTEN NYHUUS

The youngest son of a wealthy aristocrat, Morten spent years following his every whim, no matter how foolish or expensive. He lived in India for three months in 1868, trying unsuccessfully to master the art of snake charming. He spent the next year in London studying to be a doctor and the year after that in a Munich seminary in hopes of becoming a priest. Morten's strangest and longest-lasting notion, however, began with an expedition into the Himalayas in 1892.

Morten set out for Tibet in search of a long-lost Buddhist temple. According to legends, the temple had a shrine containing the world's last dragon egg. When the egg hatched, it would signal the end of this present world and the beginning of a new, enlightened age. Morten never found the temple. What he found instead was something—to him—even more amazing.

Upon returning from his journey, Morten told all who would listen of a great city beneath the mountains and the messengers from God he found there. These were, he said, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Morten claimed that the Horsemen spoke of their home in the heavens and how they were awaiting the time when their fellows would join them. Man and God would be reconciled and a new era would begin on Earth.

A circle of believers grew up around Morten, who supposedly interpreted and repeated his words. In an effort to spread the Fellowship's teachings beyond his immediate influence, Morten Nyhuus sought to have published a manuscript describing his discovery of the Four Horsemen. According to Gunn Publishing of Copenhagen, the memoir was a painstaking account of Morten's journey through the Himalayas that described, in excruciating detail, exactly how and where he found the alleged buried city.

The publisher not only rejected the manuscript but sent a scathing letter praising Morten for taking such outlandish material and making it unbearably monotonous to read. "It is a rare talent to reduce the ludicrous to the merely mundane," the editor wrote. Morten never submitted the manuscript to any other publishers. When asked why, he said that Gunn Publishing never returned his only copy. Those closest to him supported this story but no claims were ever made against the publisher.

Copenhagen Papers #6

Alexi Bucayev
8732 Batovich Street
Riga, Latvia

Secretary of Human Rights
United Nations
New York, NY
USA

Dear Sir:
I wish to report a gross violation of human rights in the mountains of Asia. I am not positive of the location, though I believe it to be in the Himalayas, probably in China or Nepal.

Inside one of these mountains is a labor camp in which hundreds or thousands of people from around the world are being worked to death. Against their wills, these men and women are operating and maintaining a giant machine for the mysterious organization that selected and brought them there.

This organization is carrying out a plan in two parts. The first is to use the machine to draw to Earth some celestial body, causing worldwide destruction. The second is yet unclear.

I realize that my words sound like the ravings of a lunatic. I wish I could reveal the source of my information or otherwise convince you of the truthfulness of what I write, but that cannot be so. Instead, I implore you to investigate the Himalayas for an installation such as I described, before it is too late.

Sincerely,
Alexi Bucayev

Copenhagen Papers #7

Gunn
Publishing

To: All employees of Gunn Publishing
From: Soren Gunn, President
Subject: Workplace attendance

It has come to my attention that many of you are considering taking an unpaid leave from your jobs in order to be with your families or otherwise relocate during this "comet crisis." This memo is to advise you that no such leaves of absence will be authorized or tolerated. We are quickly approaching our busiest season and are understaffed as it is. Our operation cannot afford to lose even a single one of you.

This company has seen some terrible circumstances in its time, and through it all we have never stopped publishing. While I understand that you are anxious about this current crisis, I hope you will understand that we cannot allow any of you to leave. If you insist on doing so, you will be severely reprimanded.

Weaving Papers #1

(Dated three months ago)

Master,

Come to the mansion tonight. Something has happened! The Three of legend have revealed themselves. I found them by the lake last night. They have taken residence in the mansion, and they wish to meet you. Master, they are his mothers.

The sign of him is in their shadow.

You can understand the dire importance of this note. I will meet you on the road after sunset.

J. Moller

Weaving Papers #2

(From Roskilde Amt Tidende, dated January 7th, 1965)

Old Nyhuus Mansion Burns

The old Nyhuus estate located near Lake Sortsoe burned halfway to the ground yesterday. The local villagers of Sortsoe dealt with the fire before the authorities arrived on the scene. The estate has been abandoned since Duke Karl Nyhuus II died in 1924. Community plans to turn the old mansion into a museum now seem unlikely.

Weaving Papers #3

(Footnote from A Brief History of Sortsoe, 1921)

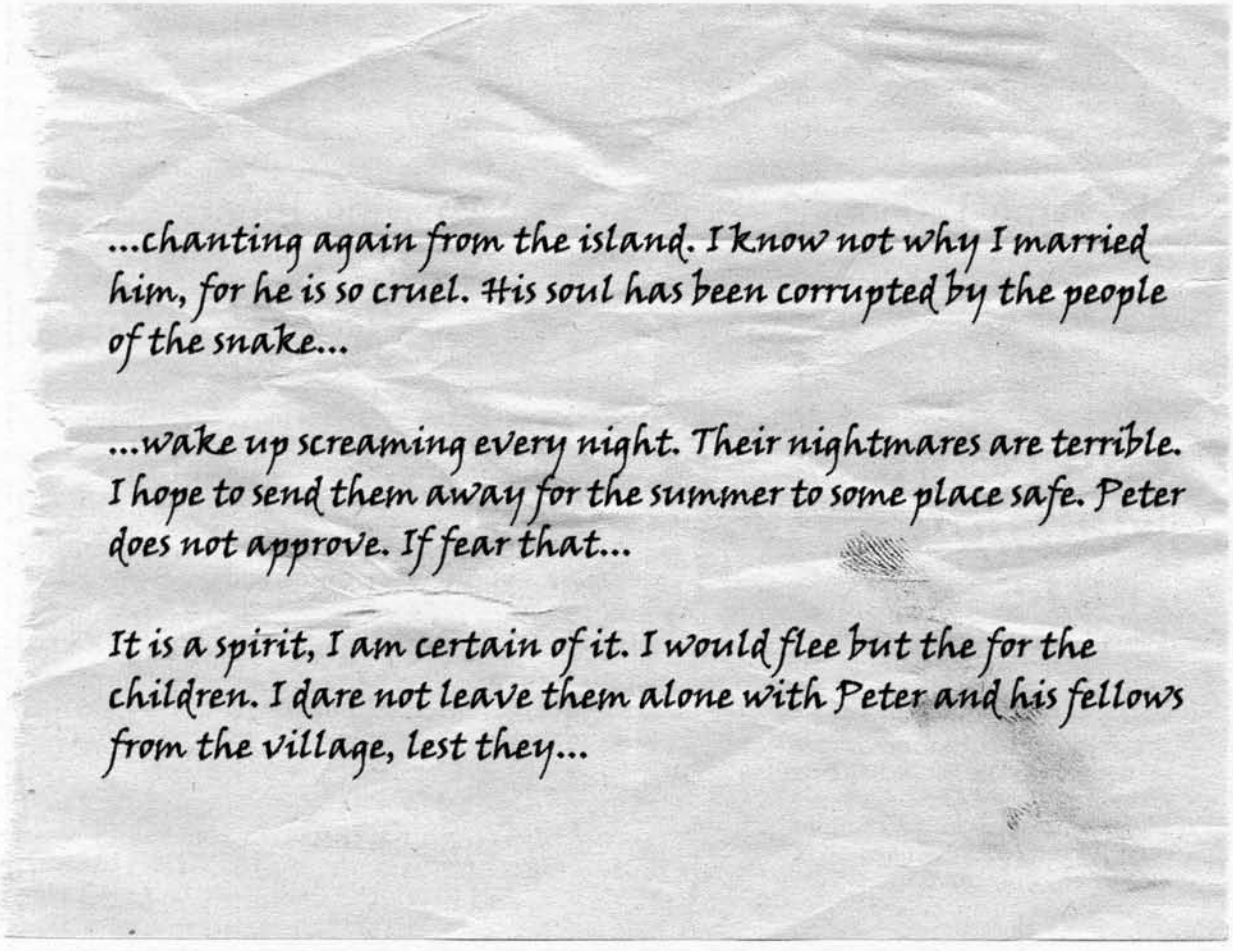
* Before the tribes moved into the area, a simple hunting and gathering culture dominated the Sortsoe region. These people earned the enmity of their neighbors through their strange beliefs, unnatural sacrifices, and blasphemous rituals. Unlike the animistic pagans around them, this unnamed tribe believed in a single "god-king," whose impending resurrection formed the cornerstone of their religion.

Weaving Papers #4

(From Sortsoe Memories, 1880)

And then there was the incident in which Ludvig's nine-year-old son Peter vanished. The duke searched the province frantically, vowing not to sleep until his son had been found. Three days after the boy's disappearance, two locals brought him home. He had gottenlost, they said, in the caverns beneath the manor house. This came as a surprise to the duke, who had not been aware of any caverns, and he ordered these caverns sealed up lest his son get lost again.

Weaving Papers #5



Weaving Papers #6

(Excerpts From the Journal of Morten Nyhuus, 1892)

Mount Makalu is every bit as impressive as the guide said it would be. Gazing up at its peaks from this village at its foot fills me with an awe I have not known since my time in Africa. I feel the mountain calling me, speaking to my soul in some primal, inhuman language I cannot deny. Tomorrow we set out to conquer the eastern slope...

The natives are helpful and show us the proper paths to take. The footing can be treacherous, but the exotic locals have an instinct for the mountain that is simply uncanny. Our guide takes us on goat and animal paths I expect to find impassable but discover to be quite solid. Now, at the end of the first day, I find myself anxious and expectant, as though some great secret was about to be revealed. Sleep eludes me, for my heart races with this strange urgency. Nevertheless, if we are to arrive at "the three fingers" (a natural rock formation of three columns) before nightfall tomorrow, I must have my rest...

Damn this weather! We had almost reached the three fingers when a terrible wind began to blow, scraping our faces with snow and ice. The wind soon turned to blizzard and the world turned white. I could not see my hand before my face, much less the others in my party, and the gale turned my shouts to whispers. Despair was about to take my heart when my numb, scrambling fingers found purchase on the lip of a small cave. It was tight, but I was just able to burrow through—and found a larger cave inside. This cave shall be my shelter tonight, for it is out of the wind, allowing me my meager fire...

It is no cave, but a tunnel I have found. I followed the tunnel several hours, and it has led me to a magnificent city beneath the mountain itself! Oh, wonder of wonders! Words cannot describe this fabulous place, nor could human hands have fashioned these marvelous towers and palaces from the stone itself. My lantern cannot provide enough light for me to see the ceiling of this cavern, nor the roofs of the heavenly structures. Yes, heavenly, for surely this is the work of the Hand of God...

Beyond Papers #1

Alexi Bucayev
8732 Batovich Street
Riga, Lativa

Secretary of Human Rights
United Nations
New York, NY
USA

Dear Sir:

I am writing a second time to again implore you to investigate the labor camp in the Himalayan Mountains. As I wrote before, there are hundreds of people slaving to maintain a machine beneath one of the Himalayan peaks.

My information comes from my brother, Uri, who is one of the captives beneath the mountain. He was able to get word to me of the labor camp. He has recently contacted me again with new details.

I am mortally afraid that unless we respond immediately to this situation, something terrible is going to happen—not just in the Himalayas, but to all of us.

There is something else, though this part of Uri's message was very unclear. There is a desert, and it is a crucial element in this conspiracy against mankind.

I realize the madness of my words, but please investigate the Himalayas and you will find they are all true.

Sincerely,
Alexi Bucayev

Moscow Papers #1

(Dated four days ago)

Roland Delmont
Eastern Mutual Insurance
San Francisco, CA 94111
USA

Mr. Delmont:

In the course of investigating TemCo's corporate holdings, I have made a most fascinating discovery in Russia. Moscow Tractor Works, a local farm implement manufacturer and a TemCo subsidiary, appears to have once been the company's true center of operations.

The factory is abandoned now, but many of TemCo's records remain. There are so many, in fact, that I have not had time to inventory them, much less read them all.

An even greater discovery, however, is a strange artifact not unlike the ones we have seen so many times during Ambrosia. I dare not touch it myself, lest I be destroyed in my unworthiness.

Therefore I humbly request that you and the other Deacons meet me here outside Moscow as soon as possible. Unfortunately, we have only a small window of opportunity for your visit. My reconnaissance has revealed that TemCo is returning to the Tractor Works in a matter of days in order to retrieve what they left behind. While I would ordinarily support a more cautious approach, I'm afraid the situation leaves us no alternative. We must strike now, before they move their records to a more secure location.

Enclosed are a map and directions to the Moscow Factory Works.

Praise to the Deliverer,
Isaac Dreier

Moscow Papers #2

Moscow Tractor Works™

Receipt for Goods Received

Received from:

Parsec, Inc.
1934 East Parham Street
Austin, TX 78767
USA

Moscow Tractor Works certifies the following goods received in good order (except as noted) from carrier noted below. This document and any copies not modified from the original are considered proof of receipt for all items and only those items listed hereunder.

Receiving Notes

Received by JR-0557 JR 078 Z3 W8T033

Item Received	Qty	Condition	Additional Notes
T-17 Generator	15	Good	
Phase Two Capacitor	10	Good	
Field Relay	25	Good	

Moscow Papers #3

From: Vladimer Kostov
To: Delivery Supervisors
Subject: Desert Deliveries

Moscow Tractor Works™

When delivering equipment to the desert facilities, there are certain procedures and protocols that must be followed. Failure to do so might result in equipment failure, rejected deliveries, and/or a severe reprimand. A summary of these procedures is detailed below. For full procedures, see your employee manual.

While the equipment is designed for windy desert conditions, it is essential that it remains tightly sealed in its delivery containers until ready to be assembled. These parts include highly sensitive and delicate electronics. If they are exposed to the elements or jostled unnecessarily before being assembled on-site, they may be easily damaged.

Secondly, the security measures at the desert facilities have been upgraded and now feature a full alphanumeric entry code. The current code is MAKALU99112. Those who fail to enter the proper code will not only be denied entrance to the facilities but will be apprehended by security as well.

Furthermore, it is important to be certain of your destination before you arrive. If the equipment is needed at Substation B, for example, bring it all the way to the substation. Do not deliver it to the primary generator facility. Employees on-site are busy preparing for SH-01 and have no time to finish your task for you.

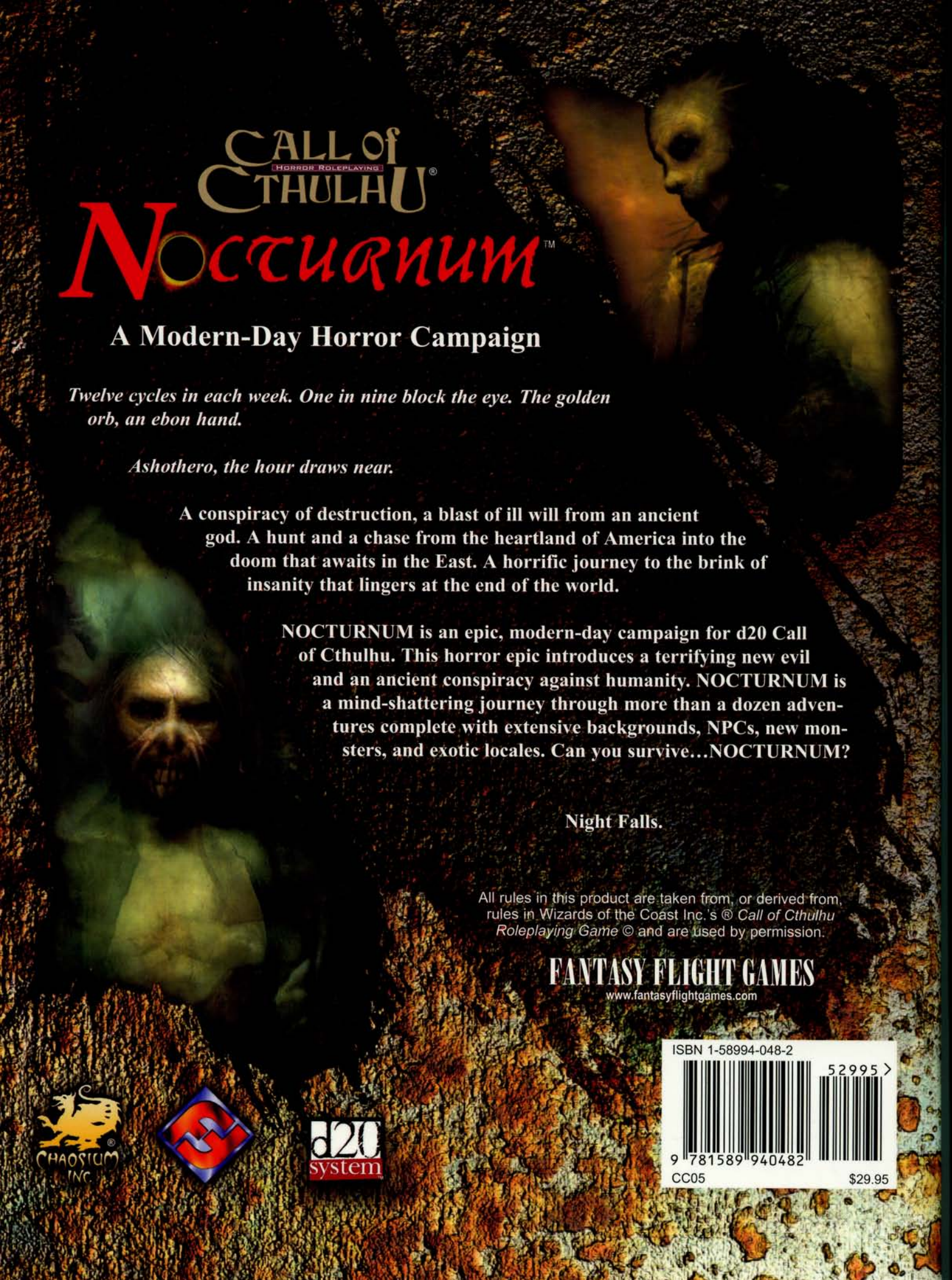
Finally, there have been reports of personnel from this facility abusing the local Khalkha tribespeople. Our coworkers on-site are understaffed and rely on these people to handle their mundane tasks. The Khalkha are an invaluable resource and are to be treated as such. Those who do not will be disciplined.

Thank you for your cooperation on these matters.

Tyrr Nemaii Papers #1

43' 22" N, 108' 52" E
SH-01 GROUND ZERO

Notes


CALL of CTHULHU®
HORROR ROLEPLAYING
NOCTURNUM™
A Modern-Day Horror Campaign
Twelve cycles in each week. One in nine block the eye. The golden orb, an ebon hand.
Ashothero, the hour draws near.
A conspiracy of destruction, a blast of ill will from an ancient god. A hunt and a chase from the heartland of America into the doom that awaits in the East. A horrific journey to the brink of insanity that lingers at the end of the world.
NOCTURNUM is an epic, modern-day campaign for d20 Call of Cthulhu. This horror epic introduces a terrifying new evil and an ancient conspiracy against humanity. NOCTURNUM is a mind-shattering journey through more than a dozen adventures complete with extensive backgrounds, NPCs, new monsters, and exotic locales. Can you survive...NOCTURNUM?
Night Falls.
All rules in this product are taken from, or derived from, rules in Wizards of the Coast Inc.'s ® Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game © and are used by permission.
FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES
www.fantasyflightgames.com
ISBN 1-58994-048-2
52995
9 781589 940482
CC05
$29.95
CHAOSIUM INC.
d20 system