



STYGIAN FOX



The Idol of THOTH



A 1920'S Mystery Of Horror
Borne Out Of Ancient Egypt



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aimed at adults
games with themes of terror, traditional horror,
drama, light sexual content, or violence

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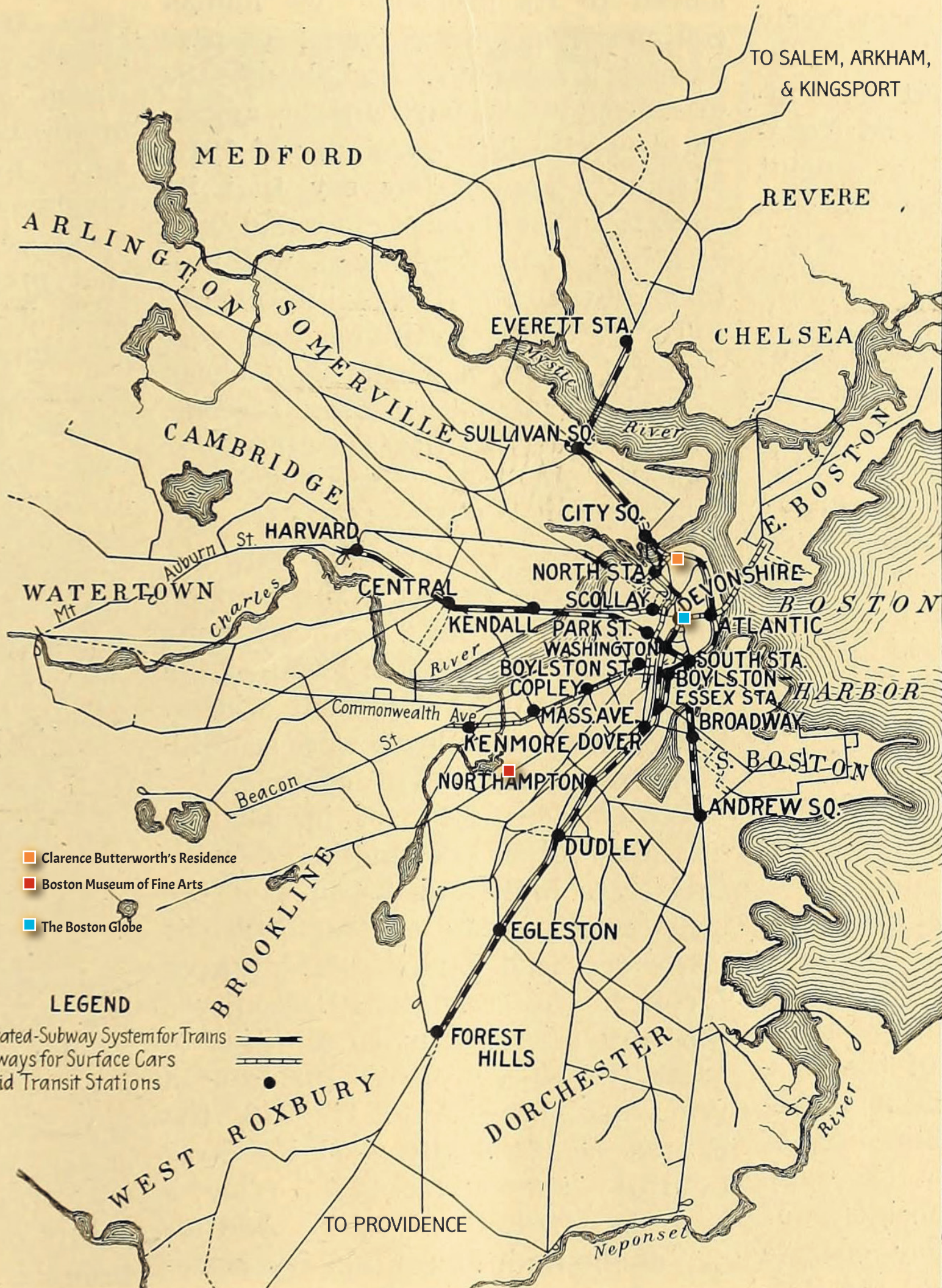
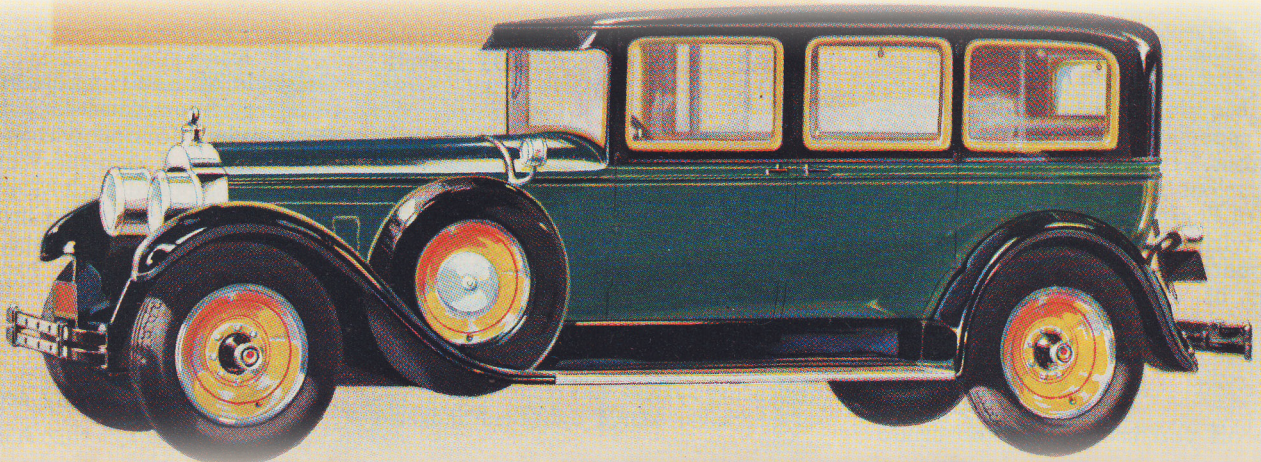


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THE IDOL OF THOTH

BY JOE TRIER

SCENARIO OVERVIEW

Investigators are hired the day of the exhibition to locate the missing Idol of Thoth, which was seemingly stolen from its stone sarcophagus the previous night. Clues will lead them to Arkham asylum, where the once great Arthur Ormond has been sectioned; and to the famed Miskatonic University, where the terrible history of the idol will be uncovered.

However, when their main suspect has a bullet proof alibi the intrepid investigators will have to look to their allies as potential suspects...and when the truth of the theft becomes apparent, there will be a race against time to stop countless innocents succumbing to a terrible fate.

This scenario is suitable for 2-6 beginner to experienced investigators and should be solvable in one session of between 4-6 hours. The scenario will run more smoothly if investigators have a reason why they would be hired to find the missing artefact and if they have a range of skills including social skills and research skills, as well as more direct skills such as stealth, lock picking and brawl. It's worth noting that this scenario can be solved without resorting to violence.

FOR THE KEEPER

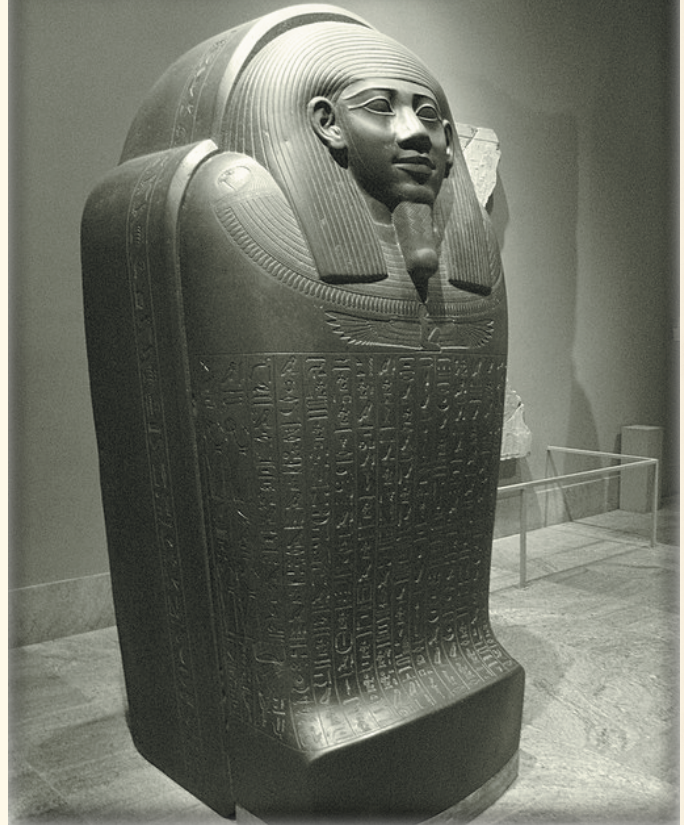
The noted explorer and Egyptologist, Arthur Ormond, returned from Egypt almost six weeks ago with his latest finds; one of them the legendary Idol of Thoth, housed in a sealed sarcophagus. However, when he began his examinations in earnest, he was hugely disappointed to find the casket impossible to open... or so he thought. For one moonlit evening two weeks later, Arthur was shocked to see the sarcophagus reacting to the moonlight and opening itself. Excitedly, he approached and was delighted to see a statue of ethereal and otherworldly beauty beginning to coalesce inside, forming from nothingness as the moonlight shone upon it.

Unfortunately, his excitement soon turned to horror as the malign and alien intelligence within the idol began to invade his psyche and attack his very being. Arthur resisted valiantly, but gradually his mind was ripped away, layer by layer, leaving only a primal urge to defeat this outlandish and horrendous attacker. Grabbing a nearby pair of scissors, he attempted to remove the invader physically; slashing and cutting his own face and eyes in a frenzied panic.

Realising Arthur was now useless as a vessel, the being inside the idol abandoned its attack and retreated back into the sarcophagus, to wait for another host.

Arthur was found in his study the next morning, mutilated and babbling; a shell of a man, his sanity almost totally destroyed by the experience. Presently, his opportunistic relatives sectioned him in Arkham Sanatorium and began to sell off his estate; many of the artefacts, including the idol were sold to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where an evening exhibition is planned to be held inside their newly constructed atrium.

An Example of the kind of artifacts coming out of Egypt and fuelling the ancient culture's fascination



Almost a month later, the night before the exhibition, a researcher named Clarence Butterfield, was attempting to translate the peculiar hieroglyphics on the sarcophagus. Moonlight began to shine through the glass roof, and as the casket opened the Idol once again began to coalesce in the silvery light.

At first, the poor man was entranced with its wraithlike and ethereal beauty, however, once it was fully formed, the intelligence trapped within the effigy attacked. Clarence's mind broke almost instantly and he screamed, knocking over one of the nearby artefacts and attracting the attention of the collection's curator, a Miss Ethel Browning, and she too fell under the artefact's influence.

The next morning, the owner and manager of the museum, Mr Warren Hollister, unlocked the atrium and found the sarcophagus open and empty. Understandably, he assumed that the sarcophagus had somehow been forcibly opened and the idol within stolen. Although Miss Browning, acting under the idol's influence attempted to stop him, he quickly contacted the investigators, offering them a substantial reward for finding and returning the artefact.

THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

The scenario starts as the players' characters arrive at the Museum of Fine Arts and are met by Mr Warren Hollister and Miss Ethel Browning. They will have only a short time to solve the mystery for if they don't, all the attendees of the exhibition will fall under the idol's malign influence.

TIMELINE LATE 1924- EARLY 1925

Date	Moon Phase	Events
Tuesday 23rd Dec.	Waning Crescent	Arthur returns from Egypt
Thursday 8th Jan.	Full Moon	The Sarcophagus opens and Arthur is attacked
Friday 9th Jan.	Full Moon	Arthur is found and admitted to Arkham Asylum
Monday 12th Jan.	Waning Gibbous	Arthur's relatives begin valuing Arthur's items for sale. One of them closes the seemingly empty sarcophagus but as the moon is no longer full, it seals shut again.
Monday 9th Feb.	Full Moon	Clarence Butterfield works late at the museum, attempting to translate the hieroglyphs on the sarcophagus. He and Ethel Browning fall under the idol's influence.
Tuesday 10th Feb.	Full Moon	The Sarcophagus is found open and seemingly empty. The investigators are contacted.

THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

It is 9am Tuesday 10th February 1925 and you have been called to the Boston Museum of Fine Art by the Manager and Owner, a Mr Warren Hollister, to help with a matter of utmost importance.



THE INVESTIGATORS ARRIVE

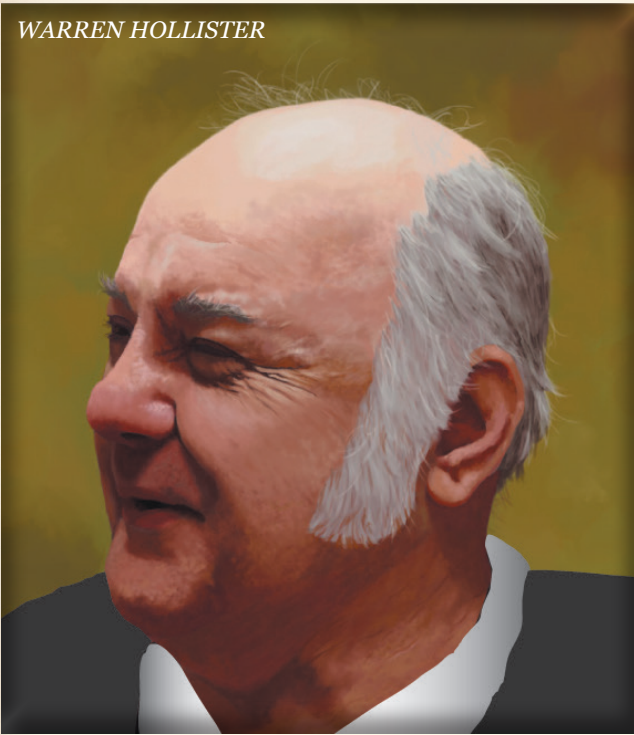
(Feel free to read aloud or paraphrase)

You stand in the impressive court in front of the large neo-classical building housing the Museum of Fine Art; its white stucco mimicking the stone work of ancient Greek and Roman construction. Palatial wings spread out around you on each side of the entrance building; huge windows dominating their facades, with no expense spared in their ostentatious frontage. Ahead, the central building rises higher, taking the shape of a Greek temple, fronted from the first floor by four ionic columns supporting an exquisitely sculpted entablature, detailed with elaborate characters of Gods and beasts; itself crowned by a typically triangular and ornamented pediment defining a two sloped pitched roof. Its braggadocian design invoking the ancients, as if to give itself more history than its mere construction would allow.

It is mid-morning, and in the distance you can hear the sounds of commuters going about their day; a steady thrum of traffic, audible above the icy gusts of wind that chill your extremities and hasten you toward the entranceway.

Inside is no less grand; an impressive gallery filled with beautiful statuary and striking works of art set in gilt frames. You are met by the owner of the museum, a portly gentleman named Warren Hollister, and the curator of the Ormond Exhibition, a striking woman named Miss Browning.

WARREN HOLLISTER



MR WARREN HOLLISTER, MUSEUM OWNER

Mr Hollister approaches the Investigators and speaks in a nervous fashion. Last night, thieves forced open an exceedingly rare sarcophagus and stole the priceless idol that had been held within for thousands of years. Tonight is the grand opening of the Ormond Exhibition, and the sarcophagus is one of the centrepieces. We will pay you \$30 a day plus a \$50 finder's fee to retrieve the idol and if you can return it before 5pm when the guests will be arriving I can offer you a \$100 bonus!

He is willing to negotiate up to an additional \$5 a day/\$20 bonus fee with a successful Social Skill Roll such as *Fast Talk/Charm* or a successful *Credit Rating* Roll.

Warren Hollister does not know a great deal about the idol or the collection itself and will defer any such questions to Miss Browning, the exhibition's curator. However, he will make allusion to the previous owner's unfortunate illness. If asked he will say that the previous owner is currently a guest at Arkham Asylum, but either does not know or refuses to say anymore on the subject.

MISS ETHEL BROWNING

Although fully under the influence of the idol's alien power, Miss Browning has not lost her mind. Through a combination of her intelligence, force of will and sheer ambition, rather than becoming a gibbering wreck or mindless automaton, she has retained much of herself. That saying, her goals are now those of the idol, and she will do anything to ensure as many people as possible see it under the moonlight, during tonight's opening.

She will answer any questions, in fact she will be forthright with information; talking while leading the investigators to the atrium where the exhibition is being displayed.

WHAT SHE SHARES WITH THE INVESTIGATORS

- All of the artefacts in the exhibition, including the Sarcophagus, which held the Statue of Thoth, were acquired at great expense from the estate of a Mr Arthur Ormond after he became ill.

If pushed she will admit that he has been committed to treatment in Arkham Sanatorium but doesn't know the details.

A successful *History*, *Archaeology* or a (*hard*) *Intelligence* roll will reveal that he was a reasonably famous adventurer and Egyptologist who has been notorious for both finding and acquiring priceless antiquities often using unscrupulous means.

- The collection itself is considered extremely valuable, containing a multitude of relics from Egypt's Ptolemaic period right back to the Middle Kingdom. There is no academic relationship between the artefacts, rather he has focused on objects of outstanding artistic beauty.
- The history of the Sarcophagus and the Idol it contained is more myth than fact but legend has it that the Sarcophagus was a gift from Thoth himself and contained an idol of pure diamond.
- Until last night, it is believed that no one had ever managed to open the sarcophagus, so how the thieves managed, (she claims) she doesn't know. (A successful *Psychology* check will reveal that this is not the whole truth; but also that she is keen that the investigators leave the museum to follow up their leads as soon as possible so maybe she doesn't want to bother them with useless information...).



ETHEL BROWNING

- She will share that since acquiring the collection, the museum has had almost daily phone calls, telegrams and even visits, from an unpleasant man who wanted to buy the Sarcophagus and the Idol of Thoth contained inside. He even made threats both to herself and to her research assistant, Clarence Butterfield.

She does not remember the visitor's name, but will retrieve his business card from her office, which identifies him as Professor Vincent Grey of the Miskatonic University's Occult and Archaeology Faculty.

Says that they would not have split the collection for any price, however the amounts he was offering worked out than less than the value they paid to the Ormond Estate. She hasn't heard from him for a few days.

- She won't volunteer that Clarence Butterfield is missing (as she knows exactly where he is) but when asked she will admit that he didn't show up for work this morning. She will describe him as a brilliant researcher and an expert Egyptologist, however, she will also describe him as slovenly and indolent suggesting he may just have slept in.
- She suggests that the theft is a locked room mystery. No windows were broken, the only door was still locked when Mr Hollister arrived in the morning and shows no sign of being forced. There are only two keys, one in her possession and one still in Mr Hollister's. How the thieves got in and out is a complete mystery, or so she says.

THE EXHIBITION

(Feel free to read aloud or paraphrase)

The newly constructed atrium contrasts boldly to the rest of the building's more traditional neo-classical design.

Opening the large set of double doors, you enter brightly lit atrium large enough to serve as a ballroom.

The room is rectangular with rounded corners and is two floors high. Each of the levels are lined with horseshoe arches and balustrades and overlook the central space; reminding you of a church's ambulatory.

While sober in style, the arches and columns supporting them are richly detailed in a style carelessly mixing Hindu and Islamic designs. The white facing and multi-tiered construction gives the space an almost wedding cake like character.

The room is dominated and generously lit by an impressive glass canopy held up with sleekly engineered metalwork. The room is further illuminated by a huge set of windows on the opposite side of the room, which look out onto a beautifully landscaped lawn sloping down to a partially frozen decorative lake.

A short flight of stairs leads down to the main floor, and from this vantage point you have an enviable view of the Ormond Exhibition. Hundreds of Egyptian artefacts, each especially chosen for their rare aesthetic and exceptional beauty have been expertly arranged to both catch the eye and best use the space.

At the far end of the room, on a strikingly carved stone pedestal, itself on a raised platform, sits the open Sarcophagus that until recently, contained the Idol of Thoth.

THE SARCOPHAGUS

It is about 18 inches tall and about half as wide. It is covered in elaborate designs and detailed patterns, that even to your untrained eyes, seem dissimilar to those found on the other Egyptian artefacts.

A *Science: Egyptology* Roll or a *Hard History* Roll reveals that- Much of the design and iconography is similar to those found on artefacts from the 18th Dynasty (around 1350 BC). Strangely, there are a number of irregularities with the hieroglyphics, it would take further study to be sure, but the use of Hieratic (priestly) script is unusual; furthermore the name within the large Cartouche, uses pictograms you have never seen before; and there are also a number of unknown and disturbing images which do not seem Egyptian in origin.

Words they do recognise include: *Thoth, Gift, Gods, Moon, Theft,* and *Curse.*

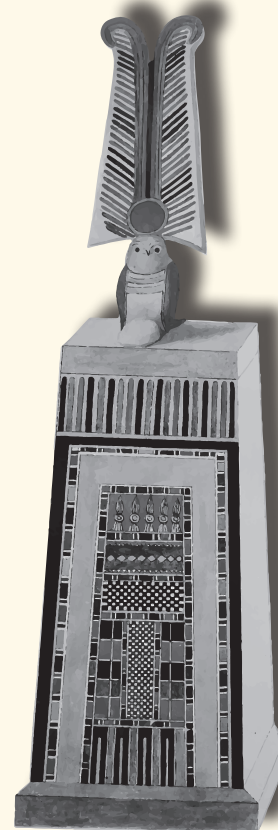
A *Science: Geology* or *Natural World* Roll reveals that the material the Sarcophagus is made from does not appear to be similar to any the investigator has seen before.

CLARENCE BUTTERFIELD'S TABLE

A small table sits before the platform, and seems grossly out of place beside the other objects in the room. It is cluttered and disorganised; chaotic notes in an untidy hand make up most of the papers, but you also see pens, ink, wax and two reference books as well as mouldering cups and half eaten food.

The two reference books are:

Volumes 1 & 2 of The Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary (1920) by Sir Ernest Alfred Wallace Budge.



ARKHAM ASYLUM

If used in conjunction with an *Science: Egyptology* or *History* Roll to which relate to hieroglyphs they add 10% to the chance of success (although will not help if the skill is already above 70%).

The papers are extremely disorganised and difficult to read. It will take a *Library Use* Roll and 30 minutes of time to glean anything.

- One of the most recent passages reads-

Even after weeks of study, a full translation of the sarcophagus still eludes me and may be beyond my skills to complete. The use of the hieratic script is bizarre to say the least, with strange formalities in word choice and grammatical structure that I have never observed before. The hieroglyphics themselves do not seem to follow the customary conventions; and many be unique to this artefact.

- Amongst the notes you also find a number of translated words and phrases, including-

Gift from Thoth?

Stolen by Thoth?

Contains a gift from God to the Pharaoh of the Blackest Night?

The Cartouche refers to a presently unknown Pharaoh. How does it open? There is no visible seam. Does it open or is that just part of the myth?

- The notes also refers to two texts-

The images remind me of something I saw in the recent translation of The Book of the Dead by Dr Thomas Williams. Could they relate to the creation myth re: Thoth, Nut and Khonsu?

The unknown hieroglyphics bear a resemblance to those I saw in The Akhenaten Fragments, I wonder if Prof Grey will grant us access?

(If asked, Miss Browning will say both texts can be found in the Library of the Miskatonic University)

THE PLINTH

Directly opposite the sarcophagus, behind the small table sits an empty plinth. A note on it reads-

4th Dynasty Fertility Statue, depicting Isis and carved from soapstone.

This was knocked over and broken by Clarence in a panic when he first saw the Idol coalescing in the moonlight.

THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES

Investigators have a number of choices from here –

- *Arkham Sanatorium*
- *The Miskatonic University*
- *Clarence Butterworth's Residence*
- They may also wish to conduct research on Arthur Ormond at the *Boston Globe*

Both the university and the sanatorium are located in Arkham. Traveling to either location by automobile will take two hours. Although using a *Drive* or *Navigation* Skill Roll can cut that time by up to an hour at the Keeper's discretion.

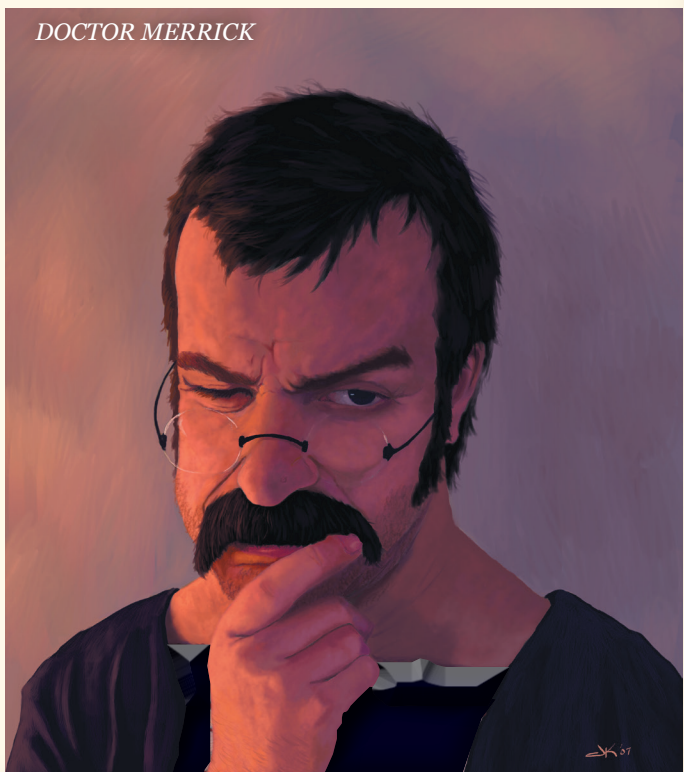
ARKHAM SANATORIUM

When the intelligence within the statue tried to overpower Arthur Ormond's mind, he resisted with all of his quite considerable will power and mental fortitude. However, when, on a primal level he realised that the battle for his freewill was lost, he fought back physically; attacking his face and eyes with a nearby pair of scissors.

He was found the next day, mutilated and babbling about monsters and a creature from the moon. His embarrassed and acquisitive relatives quickly had him committed to Arkham Asylum.

DOCTOR MERRICK

When they arrive they will be greeted by a young and chipper receptionist named William Merrick, actually the son of the hospital's lead physician, a Dr Chester Merrick.





A successful *Social type Skill*, *Credit Rating* Roll, being a Doctor, or even a small bribe will allow the investigators to meet Doctor Merrick, who will willingly pass on this information-

- *When Mr Ormond arrived he was incoherent, constantly screaming and shouting gibberish that we could make no sense of. He was also badly injured from self-inflicted wounds to his eyes, head and face. We gave him a room but he was so agitated and even violent that we had to restrain him.*
- *On Monday 9th January (no longer full moon), he went silent and has been catatonic ever since.*

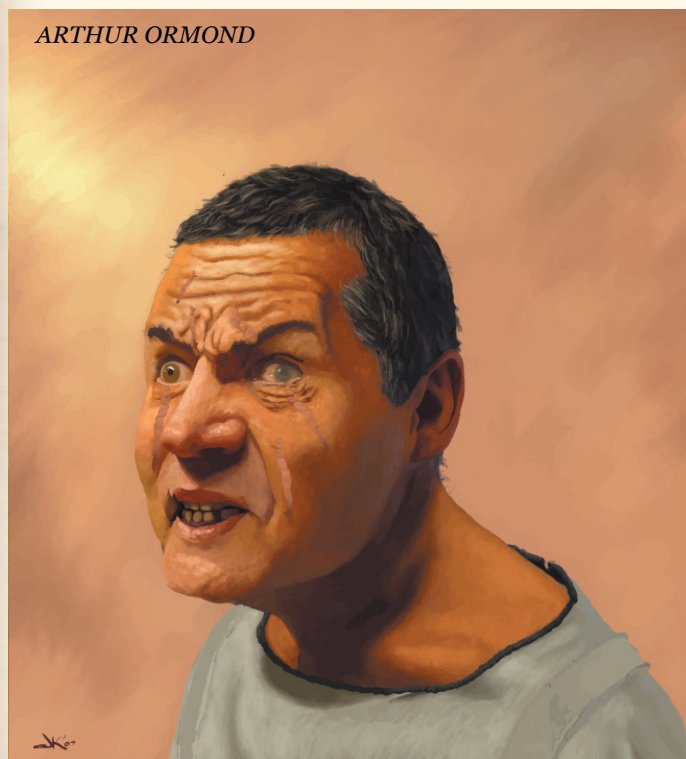
Dr Merrick is hesitant to allow the investigators to see Mr Ormond. However, if they succeed in a Hard Social skill roll like *Persuade* or *Charm* or *Hard Credit Rating* Roll or give a very generous bribe, he will acquiesce.

OUTSIDE THE SANATORIUM

If they have been unable or unwilling to persuade Dr Merrick to allow them to see Mr Ormond, upon leaving the building, they will find a large orderly outside the main doors smoking a cigarette. He is an ex-patient of the asylum, and has continued working there ever since. He has limited intelligence/education but will introduce himself as James. With a successful *Fast Talk* Roll, he can be fooled into taking the investigators to Mr Ormond.

MR ARTHUR ORMOND

If the investigators approach Mr Ormond's cell, they hear frantic screaming and are overtaken by a number of large orderlies who run ahead and disappear inside. Before he is forcibly subdued investigators will hear him shouting-



"It's in me! It's in me! It's in me! Pleaaaaaaase! Cut it out!"

Once he is restrained, the investigators may be allowed to question him (depending how they gained access). However, he will be agitated and mostly incoherent, the only thing he says that makes any sense is:

"The moon is looking at me, like and eye! It wants it back!"

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY IN ARKHAM

Investigators will almost certainly wish to enquire about the "unpleasant man" who wished to acquire the sarcophagus. They may also wish to search for the two texts mentioned in Clarence Butterworth's notes.

THE LIBRARY

The three story building, known as the Orne Library, contains over 400,000 books, including volumes of such rarity, that the collection has become famous worldwide and not even the libraries of Cambridge or Boston can rival it.

Public admittance is granted (provided a suitable donation has been made) and the library staff will be more than agreeable to help the investigators with their searches. This support adds 10% to *Library Use* Rolls (although will not help if the skill is already above 70%). Each search will take 30 minutes.

The Book of the Dead: an analysis for the 20th Century (1921)
by Dr Thomas Williams

Finding this volume will reveal that the myth Clarence was referring to seems to be a little known story about how the Egyptian calendar came to be formed-

In the early stages of creation, the Sky Goddess Nut was seduced by Earth God Geb and she fell pregnant. Furious with her infidelity and also worried that her offspring might dispose him from power, the Supreme Sun God Ra cast a curse upon her. From that moment on, Nut would not be able to give birth on any of the 360 days of the year.

Thoth, the Great Intermediary, came to the aid of Nut, and devised a plan to outmanoeuvre Ra. Thoth approached the Moon Deity Khonsu, who was a great lover of the game Senet, and challenged him to a contest. Thoth proposed that if he won, his prize would be a measure of the moon's light. Khonsu was so confident in his abilities that he accepted.

However, Thoth thoroughly outplayed him and won. In claiming his prize, Thoth took the light that he had won from the moon and gave it to Nut. This transfer caused the earth orbit to shift and increase its length from 360 days per year to some 365. Nut was thus able to give birth on the extra days as they were not part of the 'true' Earth year.

The Idol of Thoth/The Pharaoh of Blackest Night

Both appear fleetingly in a small number of texts, all of which cite them as apocryphal, and link them with a mythical city known only as Nyarlath.

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY

Nyarlat was an ancient trading hub which was said to have been troubled by civil unrest leading to cataclysmic rioting and destruction.

The Akhenaten Fragments (18th Dynasty - 1340BC)
– Author Unknown

If the investigators ask about this text, they will find that the book has been indefinitely sequestered by a Professor Vincent Grey of the Occult and Archaeology Faculty and they will be directed to his office, room 366, on the third floor of the west University building.

OFFICE 366

Professor Grey's office is found on a little visited corridor high up on the third floor in the isolated west building that houses the Occult and Archaeology departments. The electric lighting has been damaged in the recent bad weather and has not yet been fixed.

When the investigators arrive at the office, they will find it locked and finding a member of staff to unlock the office will take 3d10 minutes of searching or a successful *Luck* Roll. Once found, a *Hard Social* Skill or *Hard Credit Rating* Roll is needed to persuade them to open the door (This roll is made with a *bonus dice* if the investigator has a relevant link with the Miskatonic University).

A successful *Locksmith* or *Strength* Roll will also open the door. Once through the door, they'll be faced with a small stack of correspondence that has been pushed under the door and is now piled up against it. Investigation of the letters will reveal that the professor has been away for at least five days and that a number of students and university staff are very keen to get in touch with him.

It takes 15 minutes of searching and a successful *Spot Hidden* Roll to find anything relevant. Relevant clues include:

- An old gas bill that contains the Professor's home address, located half an hour's drive outside Arkham.
- A calendar with the 8th to the 11th January; and the 7th to the 10th February all circled in blue. A successful *Idea* Roll link those dates with Arthur Ormond's being committed to Arkham Asylum and the disappearance of the Idol. A *Hard Idea* indicates that those dates coincide with those of the full moon.
- The bookcases that surround the room are of mundane subjects; psychology, dark-ages history, the Napoleonic wars, but also contain a large amount of books on the subject of Egyptology.



A half written letter addressed to Miss Browning at Boston Museum of Fine Arts-

*Dear Miss Browning,
I am writing once again I implore you not to add the Idol of Thoth to your exhibition. The artefact is highly dangerous of great archaeological significance and should be ~~confined~~ preserved at the Miskatonic...*

THE BOSTON GLOBE

Canny investigators may wish to learn more about Arthur Ormond by looking up Newspaper stories. The Boston Globe is a paper of good repute, even if it does lean toward the sensational, and unless one of the investigators has a connection with or relevant contact at the paper, a successful *Social Skill* or *Credit Rating* Roll will be needed to gain admittance.

Each successful search will take 30 minutes of time and will require a successful *Library Use* Roll. If they search for the Ormond Exhibition, they will find a flyer advertising the opening night and touting The Idol of Thoth as the main attraction.

A search for Arthur Ormond will reveal one article-

ECCENTRIC ADVENTURER TAKEN ILL

On Friday 9th January, noted Egyptologist Arthur Ormond was locked away in Arkham Asylum after allegedly attacking members of his staff with a pair of scissors.

Early Friday Morning, Mr Ormond's butler, Mr Henry Rhodes, was woken by sounds of distress coming from Mr Ormond's study. Assuming that a burglary was in progress, the plucky manservant contacted the police before picking up his service revolver and hastening toward the disturbance.

"I couldn't believe what I saw," Mr Rhodes told the Globe, "Mr Ormond was covered in blood and raving about monsters from the stars."

The brave butler managed to restrain his master before the police arrived, but not without sustaining a number of vicious wounds to his hands and body.

Could Mr Ormond have been cursed?

Mr Ormond had recently returned from an archaeological dig near Cairo, Egypt where he is believed to have found a number of rare artefacts, including a legendary statue known as the Idol of Thoth. Rumour has it that the statue is made of pure diamond and a curse will befall anyone who lays eyes upon it. Is it possible that he fell victim to the Idol's magic?

Mr Ormond has been committed to the celebrated Arkham Asylum where he has been diagnosed with extreme stress due to overwork during his extensive travels. Dr Chester Merrick, the facility's lead physician, denied that there was any evidence of a curse but also seemed surprised by the swiftness and severity of Mr Ormond condition.

We have also learned that Mr Ormond's entire collection, including the infamous Idol of Thoth, has been purchased by the Museum of Fine Art here in Boston, and will be on display from 5pm on Tuesday February 10th.

CLARENCE BUTTERWORTH'S RESIDENCE

Clarence rents a room in a small tenement building in one of the more run down areas of Boston. For a price, his landlady will tell investigators that Mr Butterworth did not return after work last night. She will also describe him a huge man of stout statue, who is unusually quiet and reserved for a man of his obvious size and strength. She will also describe his car - a shabby, dark blue 1917 Abbott-Detroit. His lodgings are in good order and have no further clues but point to a man who's largely given up on life and without his landlady's nagging would never tidy up.

PROFESSOR VINCENT GREY'S RESIDENCE

Professor Vincent Grey is a frail and elderly gentleman, who has always had a curiosity in the esoteric and the occult. Yet it is only recently that he has become cognisant that the world is not as it seems and that there are in existence, outlandish and malevolent beings that inhabit the shadows and the very cracks in reality; posing a very real danger to humanity...

His academic specialty is Ancient Egypt and he first stumbled upon the 'Mythos' when he happened upon a little known and badly damaged set of 18th Dynasty Egyptian Scrolls known as The Akhenaten Fragments found deep in the Miskatonic University's Archive. Study of the grotesque imagery and aberrant hieroglyphics depicted within, sent him down distressing and disturbing paths of research that he never knew existed. He learned of many things, including the history of the lost city of Nyarlat and its destruction effected by the Idol of Thoth.

When he read that the ruins of Nyarlat had been uncovered near Cairo he knew that great danger was at hand. He contacted Arthur Ormond, a famed archaeologist, with the intension of hiring him to retrieve the Idol. Unfortunately, when Arthur arrived in Egypt and heard the legend that the Idol was made of pure diamond, he decided to keep it for himself.

Since then, Professor Grey has been in a state of panic. His inability to acquire the idol, his failure in preventing the attack on Arthur and now his ineptness in purchasing the artefact from the museum has affected his health, and on Sunday February 1st he suffered a massive heart attack. Luckily, he survived but is now an invalid and has been bed ridden ever since.

TRAVELLING TO THE GREY MANSION

Those who have played the excellent '*Dead Lights*' by Chaosium may shudder a little here. A *Hard Spot Hidden* Roll reveals that the investigators are being followed, and a *Hard Drive* Roll is needed to completely lose their pursuer. On their tail is Clarence Butterworth, who plans to stop them from returning to the exhibition.

THE GREY MANSION

ARRIVING AT THE HOUSE

(Feel free to read aloud or paraphrase)

It takes half an hour to drive to the Grey residence, travelling along little used winding roads through the backwaters of Arkham. Around you the weather has turned, and as you squint through the torrential rain, the car's pale lamplights barely revealing the road ahead, you wonder what you are driving into and if this may be the last journey you'll ever make.

Eventually, you arrive at the Grey Manor; a rundown mottled manse of mouldering wood that sits like a broken tooth on the sodden landscape. The carelessly aligned timber planks forming three floors which are themselves crowned by wooden shingles, which are warped and discoloured with neglect. The crumbling façade is broken by murky lead-lined windows, black and uninviting, like hollow eyes staring out into the night. Yet, through the trees whose tangled branches encroach like grasping fingers on the dilapidated building, you just make out a single light shining out of a top floor window, providing a tiny amount of flickering illumination. Your car crunches over the bemired driveway, wheels skidding on the heavy, black mud, before coming to a halt before the shadow filled entrance.

The investigators will be greeted by an ancient manservant who will offer them refreshments before checking with his master if they are to be received. If they mention the idol, the Akhenaten Fragments or aspects of their investigation that links to his worries, then Professor Grey will agree to see them.

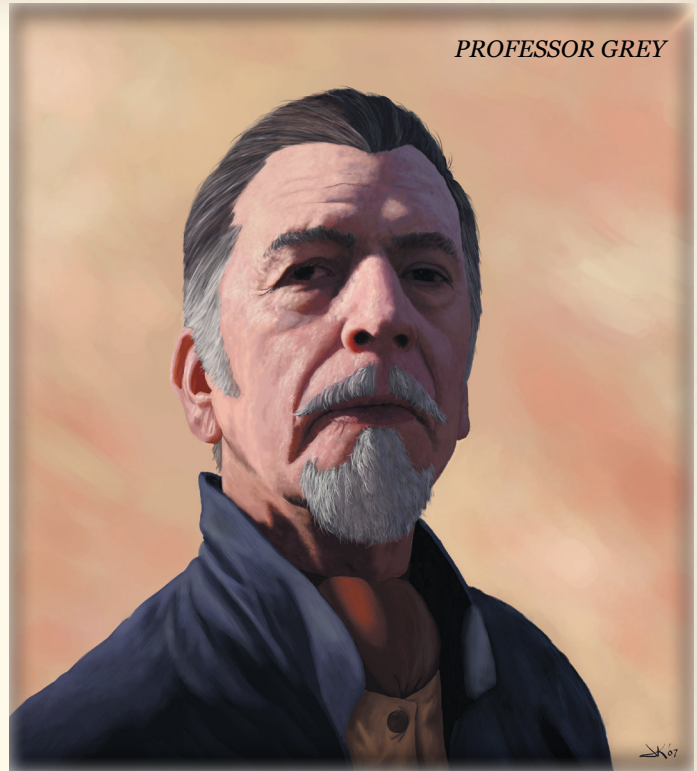
PROFESSOR VINCENT GREY

The investigators will be taken to his bedchamber, where the ancient invalid lies emaciated amongst his yellowing pillows. A sickening smell fills the damp and heavy air and you feel more than slightly nauseous as you approach the obviously dying gentleman.



THE GREY RESIDENCE

PROFESSOR GREY



Professor Grey is desperate to thwart the Idol of Thoth and will tell the investigators what he has learned-

- He will show them the Akhenaten Fragments and explain that they were written soon after the purportedly apocryphal city of Nyarlat was lost to the sands. The writer was one of the few survivors, and he writes of terrible riots, which followed the arrival of an artefact known as of the Idol of Thoth.
- The writer denies that the Sarcophagus was idol were stolen from the Moon God Khonsu by Thoth as part of an elaborate game. Instead he claims that the Idol was a gift from the Pharaoh of the Blackest Night to his high Priest.
- When the light of Khonsu (the moon) shone upon it, the sarcophagus opened to reveal the Idol, believed by the writer to be fashioned from the very moonlight Thoth stole from Khonsu.
- All who laid eyes upon the idol were driven insane and under the power of the Idol; their only remaining wish was to force others to view it and fall under its power.
- When he learns that the exhibition will open tonight, he implores the investigators to return to Boston before 5pm when the moon will rise and the idol will appear.

CLARENCE BUTTERWORTH ATTACKS

If the investigators failed to evade his pursuit, then he will arrive at the Grey Manor shortly after they do. He will first disable their car and when they don't appear he will set fire to the house and wait for them to come running out.

THE BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

He is a large man and has armed himself with a stout length of wood. If restrained he will taunt the players, claiming in frenzied ecstasy that they are too late to stop "God from returning".

If they managed to evade his pursuit then he will be waiting for them on the road, where he will attempt to run them off the road. This can be managed by using *Opposed Drive* Rolls or the Chase Mechanics found in Chapter Seven of the *Call of Cthulhu Keeper Rulebook*.

BACK TO THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

The Grey Residence is located South West of Arkham, however, with the poor weather, it will take two hours to return to the Museum of Fine Arts. Although using a *Drive* or *Navigation Skill* Roll can cut that time by up to an hour at the Keeper's discretion.

ARRIVAL

(Feel free to read aloud or paraphrase)

The edifice glares down on you in the deepening dusk. Wings of stone encircle you to left and right, drawing you in towards a gaping maw of columns and shadow. What was officious and regal during the day has become hunched and sinister in the early evening light. What terrors await you inside?

BEFORE 5PM

If the investigators arrive before the moon has risen, they will be greeted by Mr Hollister and Miss Browning. The manager will be furious that they have returned empty handed whereas Miss Browning will feign anger but really just wants to keep the investigators from entering the exhibition and thwarting her plans. If they persist in getting to the Idol, she will lead them toward the atrium and when they are alone, draw a gun and attempt to lock them in a nearby storage room. If she fails to overpower them she will retreat to the atrium where she will try to ensure the sarcophagus is not interfered with.



THE IDOL OF THOTH

AFTER 5PM

Once the moon rises, the Idol will coalesce inside the sarcophagus in full view of the 20 exhibition guests. Most will become temporarily insane before falling under its influence.

When the investigators arrive they will find the museum eerily silent and devoid of life. Making their way to the atrium, they will be accosted by the Idol's new servants, who will attempt to retrain the investigators and carry them to the atrium, unless of course, they can be fooled to believe that the investigators are already under the Idol's power. They will do anything to protect the idol, including throwing themselves in the way of bullets.

DESTROYING THE IDOL.

If the investigators allow themselves to see the idol, they will almost certainly be driven insane or fall under its influence; most likely both, so they will need to attempt other means. Avoiding looking at it directly is not easy, but a clever use of mirrors; attempts to cover the artefact; or even approaching from behind the sarcophagus could work. Remembering of course that there will be at least 20 fanatical guests, who will try to defend it. Finally, the idol itself is extremely delicate and will easily break if hit by a bullet or even if it falls from the pedestal it sits upon. Once destroyed the pieces will no longer disappear once out of the moonlight and will resemble broken glass.

EPILOGUE

Successfully destroying the Idol will release everyone from its influence, with everyone possessed having only vague recollections of what has happened to them.

Someone will also need to explain how the Idol came to be returned to the museum and more importantly, how it came to be broken or criminal charges may be pursued!

For destroying the idol or making it safe (such as putting it into a chest and dropping it to the bottom of Boston Harbour), the Investigators should receive *1d8 Sanity Points*.

For resolving the scenario without killing anyone, they should receive *1d4 sanity Points*.

All Investigators should receive *1% Cthulhu Mythos*, and skill checks in *Occult* and *Science: Egyptology*.

If they had to kill enthralled citizens to destroy the idol then no sanity reward is given but the skill rewards still apply.

If the idol is still at large then each player loses a further *1d6 Sanity Points*.

APPENDIX

THE AKHENATEN FRAGMENTS

Ancient Egyptian, by an unknown author, in 17th Dynasty, 1340 BC?

APPENDIX

Written on damaged papyrus using unconventional and in some cases unique hieratic (priestly) script and hieroglyphics. It details the fall of the Lost City of Nyarlath caused by madness and riots due to the influence of the Idol of Thoth as scribed by one of the survivors. It also details Mythos elements relating to an unknown king described in the text as the Pharoah of Blackest Night

Sanity Loss: 1d8
Cthulhu Mythos: +3/+7 percentiles
Mythos Rating: 35
Study: 40 weeks
Suggested Spells: Contact Deity/Nyarlatheptep, Chant of Thoth, Dominate, Dust of Suleiman, Enthral Victim, Mental Suggestion, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Words of Power

THE IDOL OF THOTH

The malign entity within the idol, is utterly malevolent and alien; its sentience and motives are incomprehensible to any earthly understanding.

It arrived here over three thousand years ago, and although its true origins are unknown, legend has it that was part of the very essence of Khonsu the God of the Moon, which was stolen from Thoth. However, some say that it was actually a gift from The Pharaoh of the Blackest Night to his High Priest.

It is heled in a sealed Sarcophagus but when the light of the full moon shines upon it, the casing opens to reveal the entity held within. All who see it are driven mad and forced to do its bidding.

It purportedly and fell to earth in a fiery conflagration where found encased within a dense stone shell.

Not knowing what it was, the Egyptians carved it into a beautiful sarcophagus of strange and peculiar design. However, when the light of the full moon shone upon it, the shell opened to reveal the entity held within. All who see it are driven mad and were forced to do its bidding.

The entity resembles a bipedal figure composed of wraithlike, translucent material. It possesses an unearthly beauty.

STR Na Con Na SIZ 15 DEX Na
INT 200
POW 150 HP 5

Damage Bonus Na Build -2 Move 0

Magic Points 30

Attacks per round 0

Ethereal Beauty: Anyone who lays eyes upon the Idol of Thoth becomes entranced by its otherworldly magnificence and find themselves unable to look away. The target must succeed in a *Sanity* Roll or lose a further *1d8/1d12 SAN* as their very being is subject to visions the human mind is not meant to endure.

Dominate: Any who fail their SAN Roll when viewing the Idol are subject to its alien will. The target must success in an opposed *Power* Contest or be subject to the Idol's power for one month or until the Idol is destroyed.

Spells: Two of the Keeper's choosing
Sanity Loss 1d8/1d12

MISS ETHEL BROWNING

A striking woman in her mid-thirties with long dark hair, fashionable dress and an air of confidence and intelligence.

STR 50 Con 55 SIZ 45 DEX 60
INT 70
POW 70 HP 10

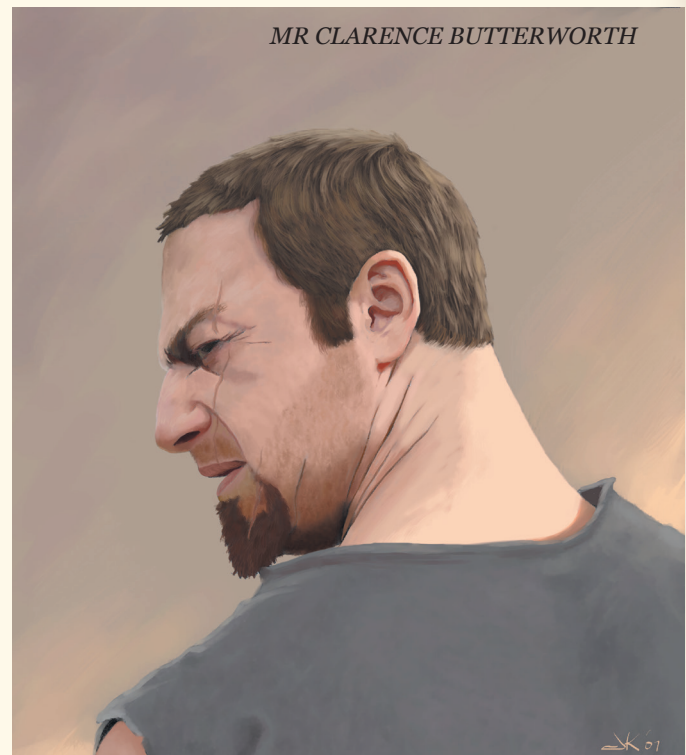
Damage Bonus Na Build 0 Move 9

Magic Points 14

Fighting (Brawl) 40% (20/8), damage 1d3
Firearms (.22 Auto) 40% (20/8) damage 1d6
Dodge 30%
History 80% Intimidate 60% Library Use 70%
Listen 50% Persuade 60% Psychology 60%
Stealth 40% Spot Hidden 50%

MR CLARENCE BUTTERWORTH

A huge man in both height and girth; sweat and food stains mar his cheap grey vest and his small beady eyes stare out intensely from beneath his permanently furrowed brow. He seems permanently angry and is driven, violent, and cannot be reasoned with.



STR 70 Con65 SIZ 70 DEX 30
 INT 20
 POW 40 HP 13

Damage Bonus +1d4 Build 1 Move 8

Magic Points 8

Fighting (Brawl) 65% (20/8), damage 1d3+Db

Firearms (.22 Auto) 40% (20/8) damage 1d6

Dodge 15%

History 70% Intimidate 60% Library Use 60%

Listen 40% Persuade 30% Psychology 30%

Stealth 30% Spot Hidden 50%

MINIONS OF THOTH

The guests of the exhibition will be of various ages and genders. All will be in their finest attire and may or may not be armed with improvised weapons. Below are possible statistics for you to use.

STR 50 Con60 SIZ 45 DEX 50
 INT 50
 POW 50 HP 10

Damage Bonus 0 Build 0 Move 9

Magic Points 8

Fighting (Brawl) 40% (20/8), damage 1d3+Db

Dodge 25% Listen 40% Psychology 30%

Stealth 30% Spot Hidden 50%

KEEPER'S TIPS

REGARDING ROLEPLAYING

Not everyone is comfortable roleplaying their characters, speaking as them in the 1st person or attempting a character voice. However, one effective way to encourage players to make these leaps, is to lead the way, by roleplaying the NPCs yourself. This first scene is an opportunity to both set up the scenario, but also get into character. Use your voice to differentiate and add personality traits to the two NPCs. Ask the players' characters questions about themselves, their journey, their experiences, and so on, before jumping right in with explaining the plot.

REGARDING MISS ETHEL BROWNING

For the scenario's finale to have maximum impact, Miss Browning should be seen as an ally at the start. Roleplay her as helpful and obliging (remember she is more than happy for them to spend all day on a wild goose chase, looking for an artefact which has actually never left the museum).

Successful *Insight* Rolls, reveal she is anxious about the opening and nervous about the investigators skills.

REGARDING CLARENCE BUTTERWORTH

Clarence Butterworth's will was broken by the Idol and he is completely insane; now blindly taking orders from Miss Browning and the Idol itself.

When the scenario starts he is hiding in the museum's basement storage. As Keeper, use Clarence as a tool to increase tension and pace during play.

Possible ideas could include-

LOW TO HIGH LEVEL THREAT

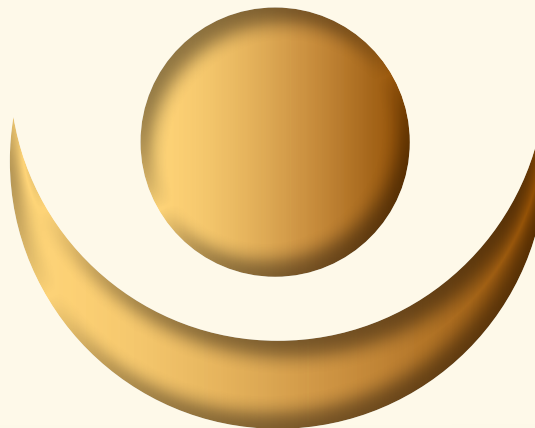
- Leaving incompressible/threatening messages, maybe in blood?
- Slashing their tyres
- Attacking and/or mugging lone investigators
- Running their car off the road
- Setting fire to a building they are in

If the investigators are struggling to understand the clues and arrive at the finale, having Clarence attack and becoming caught can get them back on track. Having him madly boast that they are too late to prevent the Idol's plan could help build a very tense lead up to the final scene.

REGARDING THE CRIME SCENE AT THE MUSEUM

Allow the players to feel like investigators as they analyse the crime scene. There are three obvious areas to examine, but refrain from discouraging other logical avenues of enquiry, such as the doors/lock and windows. Adding additional, although innocuous details to areas of exploration, such as 'strange patterns of ice on the glass pane' or 'a faint smell of cigarette smoke' can really add to the mystery and make players feel that their ideas are valued.

That saying, beware of frustrating your players with irrelevant details or red herrings, particularly if they are new to *Call of Cthulhu*.



REGARDING THE INVESTIGATION

"Don't Split the Party" seems to be a common adage, however this scenario is written with the expectation that groups with 4 or more players will separate into two or more groups during this phase in the investigation.

Splitting the party will allow the players to cover more ground, which is potentially important in a time sensitive scenario such as this.

It also allows the keeper to create more tension; in this case, Clarence is going to be significantly more dangerous to a small group. It also gives quieter/less experienced players a chance to take the spotlight.

Be careful not to lose pace or to focus on one group for too long. Aim to swap between them every 10-15 minutes; ideally leaving each group on a cliff hanger or just about to make a difficult decision.

REGARDING ARTHUR ORMOND

Pulp vs Pure:

The meeting with Arthur Ormond can be handled in a number of ways depending on your goals as a keeper and what your players enjoy.

If you prefer a more pulpy game, consider having Arthur escape and having the investigators having to fight, catch and/or restrain him.

If you/they prefer a more classic game, then consider focusing on building tension. Use descriptions of the asylum itself, its tragic inmates and have more of a slow build up to revealing Arthur's disfigurements.

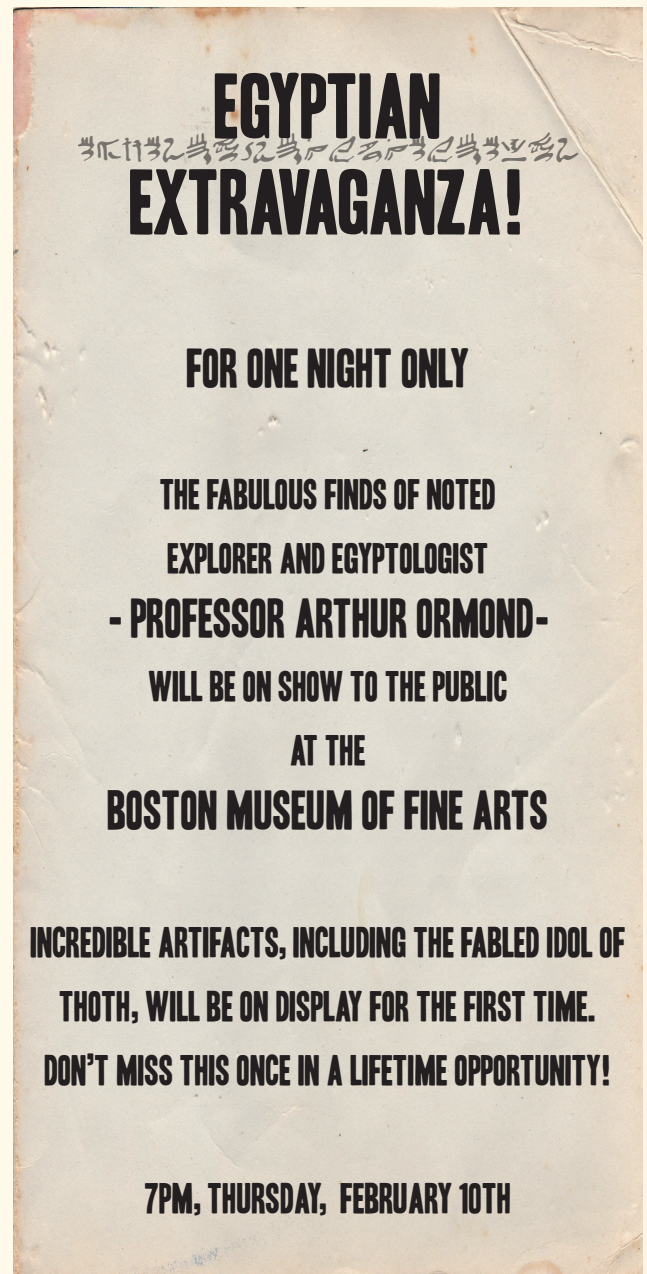
For example, you could have the room in silence, and when the players enter, he could be facing the wall. Invite the players to approach, building suspense by allowing them to imagine what might happen.

REGARDING PROFESSOR GREY

Until the investigators meet Professor Grey, they will probably consider him to be the primary antagonist.

You can reinforce this belief by having NPCs describe his frail and wizened form; his hateful and misanthropic disposition; and his degenerating sanity, possibly due to his study of strange texts.

If the party has split up to conduct their investigations, it is recommended that they meet up before journeying to the Professor's home.



**EGYPTIAN
EXTRAVAGANZA!**

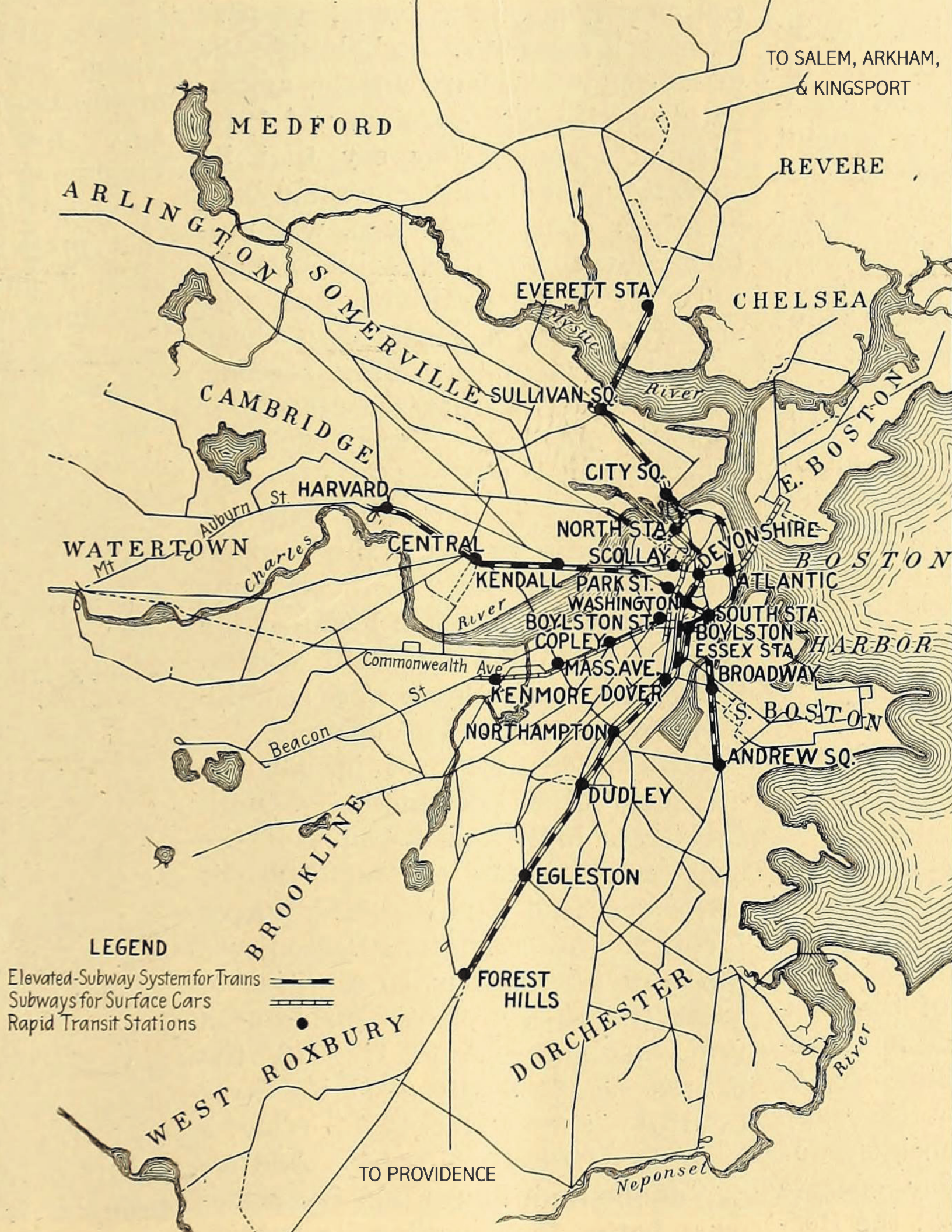
FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

**THE FABULOUS FINDS OF NOTED
EXPLORER AND EGYPTOLOGIST
- PROFESSOR ARTHUR ORMOND -
WILL BE ON SHOW TO THE PUBLIC
AT THE
BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS**

**INCREDIBLE ARTIFACTS, INCLUDING THE FABLED IDOL OF
THOTH, WILL BE ON DISPLAY FOR THE FIRST TIME.
DON'T MISS THIS ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY!**

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The Idol of THOTH

A 1920'S Mystery Of Horror
Borne Out Of Ancient Egypt

A missing idol leads intrepid investigators
on the trail of madness through Boston
and Arkham.

Is there a curse?
Is the dark god Thoth watching from afar?

'The Idol of Thoth' by Joe Trier (Fear's Sharp Little Needles,
How We Roll Podcast) is an adventure for the Call of
Cthulhu roleplaying game from Chaosium Inc set in the
classic era of the 1920s and is suitable as an
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<http://www.howwerollpodcast.com/>
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for

CALL of CTHULHU
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