



# AS GOOD AS A FEAST

A CTHULHU DARK MYSTERY IN THE 1930S DUST BOWL

BY MO HOLKAR

Escaping the Dust Bowl, a group of hungry Okie travellers have made their way westwards, heading for California and the hope of work.

When they stop at a relative's farmstead in the Arizona hills, they find abundant crops. Yet, while the crops are delicious, they never satisfy the travellers' hunger.

As the travellers explore, they discover a corrupting spirit under the land, which turns human needs to dark ends.

*As Good as a Feast* is a mystery about hunger, failure of faith, corruption of the spirit and the lengths to which desperation drives people. Its backdrop is the turmoil of America's Great Depression, in which hopes and dreams are broken like straws by forces that people have no way of understanding. This is a mystery about the dark underbelly of the capitalist dream.



# THE HOOK

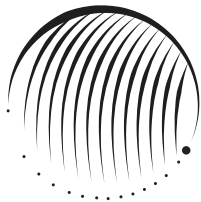
The Investigators are offered food, housing, land and work, with no strings attached.

They had expected to go as far as Orange County to find a place to settle, but up here in the hills the air is clear, and hard-working people can make the life they deserve.

# THE FINAL HORROR

The land is corrupted by the presence of Edom, an entity that brings suffering to those who come into contact with it.

As long as Edom can find victims to tempt, its influence will spread and grow, sucking true satisfaction from life and replacing it with glossy, false attraction.



# THE STORY

The investigators are farmers and small-townners whose livelihoods were destroyed by the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. They are heading West towards California, looking for work and food.

While on the road, they receive a letter from a trusted relative who headed West earlier, Uncle Jack Bradley. Jack invites the Investigators to join him on promising farmland in the hills of northern Arizona, near the mining town of Plenty.

Arriving at the farm around sunset, the investigators find it deserted. There are crops in the fields and vegetables in the garden, which look delicious but do not satisfy the Investigators' hunger. There are signs that Jack went into Plenty.

On the road to Plenty, the Investigators pass abandoned and overgrown houses. By exploring the town buildings, they discover that, when the gold seam started to run thin, Plenty's inhabitants abandoned the ways of God and began to worship a thing called Edom. Edom fed their desire for gold, in return for sacrifices, first of coins, then plants and animals, and finally of humans. The Investigators also understand that, in the gold mine itself, they will find everything they need to satisfy their wildest cravings.

Near the mine shaft, the Investigators find the Spool House, where they meet Jennifer Mary Kane, a survivor from Plenty's gold-rush days. She explains that the other townsfolk descended into the mine back in 1852 and never returned. She also mentions that, a few days ago, Jack entered the mine.

Deep in the mine, the Investigators find Uncle Jack, in a vast storeroom of sickly and corrupted food. They also encounter Edom itself. They must decide whether they can resist Edom's temptations and bring themselves to leave.

# THE INVESTIGATORS

The investigators are a group of “Okies”: travellers fleeing the drought and famine of the Great Plains. Most should be family members, with perhaps one or two friends and neighbours sharing the journey. Most should be of working age.

All come from the same farm or at least the same small town. Ask the players to think about this place. Where was it? What did they grow? How long did they try to wrench a living from the soil, before accepting that there was no more life in it?

Choose occupations to suit this small town background. The Investigators might, for example, be farm hands, small traders, craftspeople, teachers and horse-doctors. Ensure that none of them had an alternative plan other than travelling to California: no rich relatives back East, no professional skills that could be taken elsewhere, no business that could survive the disappearance of their clientele.

Ensure, too, that everyone has a connection to Uncle Jack Bradley. He may be a member of the family, a former business partner or a dear drinking buddy. The relationship should be strong enough for the Investigators to heed his call to join him at his farm in Arizona, rather than continuing to Orange County.

Ask what vehicle the Investigators are travelling in. Who’s sitting next to whom? How old is it and how often does it break down? What valued possessions did they have to leave behind, because there wasn’t room to take them?

Finally, ask what’s driving each Investigator onwards. What are they seeking, apart from food and survival? What is the positive aspect of their dream? What might California hold for them?

Here are some example Investigators. The Hubbard family are from the small town of Kenton, in the Oklahoma panhandle. During the course of 1933–35, the topsoil of their wheat farm blew away.

Now, they are travelling in their 1925 Ford farm truck, with a canopy over the pickup bed. The engine goes well enough, but the suspension needs frequent attention, with this heavy load.

## ALFRED HUBBARD

A wiry middle-aged farmer, Alfred came to Oklahoma from the East in his youth, to pick up a land grant under the Homestead Act. He rarely talks of his early days back in Pennsylvania. Some believe that a scandal drove him away.

Alfred is a hard worker, but intolerant of the faults of others, especially what he sees as ‘slacking’. He felt bitterly cheated when the farm he’d shed blood for disintegrated into dust. He feels that fate has swindled him and that the rich men of Wall Street are in some way to blame.

Uncle Jack Bradley originally mistrusted Alfred, but, over time, they developed a mutual respect. Still, it is unlikely that Alfred would seek Uncle Jack out, were it not for Sarah.

## SARAH HUBBARD, NÉE BRADLEY

An Oklahoma native, Sarah met Alfred when he was serving as a hand on the Bradley farm, while waiting for his own grant to come through. She thought his Eastern manners courteous and elegant.

Time and privation have hardened Sarah. As the one responsible for the farm’s financial affairs, she saw their comfortable life drifting away on the prairie wind. Her daughters see her as tough and strict, but she hopes that this terrible journey will ensure they have a better life than she has had.

After her parents died of diphtheria, Sarah was raised by Uncle Jack Bradley and his late wife Hannah. She is quietly fond of him and could not turn down the chance to join him.

## ANNIE HUBBARD

Annie, in her late teenage years, is Alfred and Sarah’s elder daughter. She has a limp in her left leg, after a horse kicked her when she was a child.

Annie feels as though everyone expects her and Will to marry. Her parents are enthusiastic about the idea and Will seems set on it.

For herself, though, Annie dreams of escape, freedom and the power to do as she wishes. Although the collapse of the farm has been

disastrous for the family, she hopes a new life in California will give her new opportunities.

As a child, she adored the stories that Uncle Jack Bradley told of his youth in the pioneer days. She looks forward to seeing him again.

### **WILL JENKINSON**

Born in the wild streets of Boise City, Will's background is dirt-poor. When he found work as a hand on the Hubbard farm, it probably saved him from becoming a criminal. Later, when he received Alfred's permission to become engaged to Annie, he felt as though his dream was coming true. He would finally be a landowner and financially secure.

Now, with the loss of the farm, Will's dream has been snatched away. All that remains is Annie herself. Will hopes they can build a new life together in California.

### **LAURA-JANE HUBBARD**

Laura, in her middle teens, is the family's younger daughter. Given to strong swings of temperament, her cheeriness can lift the family mood as surely as her darkness can depress it.

Her only possessions of value are her beloved A-scale banjo and her scrap album. In this album, there are photographs of Hollywood stars, lovingly cut from magazines: Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, and the dangerous Jean Harlow.

The thought of living in the golden wonderland of California is unbearably exciting. One day, when she has better dresses, maybe when she is working in a diner, a studio talent-spotter will pass by.

Laura-Jane is eager to see great-uncle Jack again. However, she hopes that it will be a brief detour, not the end of their journey. After all, there won't be any Hollywood scouts in the hills of Arizona.

### **JAMES TURNBULL**

James, the former minister of Kenton's Baptist church, lost his faith when he saw how the town suffered.

Giving up the title of "Reverend", he joined the Hubbard family on their exodus. He hopes to start a new life, where he can wrestle with his conscience in anonymity.

Jack Bradley, when he still lived in Kenton, was one of James's dearest friends, a man of wisdom and insight. James is looking forward to unburdening to him.

## **ON A 5, ON A 6**

When a player rolls a 5 when investigating, their Investigator gets everything they wanted, plus something extra.

Here are some things that might happen on a 5. Use these or invent your own.

- ▶ The Investigator remembers folktales of mischievous creatures living in mineshafts — kobolds, knockers, bwca — which steal items and harm miners.
- ▶ They remember how Uncle Jack often spoke of his dream of resting, feasting, and enjoying the good things in life.

When a player rolls a 6 when investigating, their Investigator may glimpse beyond human knowledge. Here are some things that might happen on a 6.

- ▶ They realise that the shafts of the mine resemble the bones and sinews of a huge corpse.
- ▶ They get a sense of a horribly alien and incomprehensible presence.
- ▶ They feel there is something unnatural, even ungodly, about the food at the farm.

Alternatively, a 6 might make an Investigator aware of one of the Creeping Horrors.

# CREEPING HORRORS

- ▶ **Hunger.** Hunger has been a familiar, grinding sensation for the travellers on their journey. But here in Plenty, it feels vivid, active, as though a gnawing beast is in their vitals. It is temporarily satisfied by eating the bounteous crops, but soon returns, sharper than before.
- ▶ **Flourishing, mutated plants.** The closer the Investigators get to the mine head and Edom's lair, the more vegetation they see and the more twisted it is. Plants that normally grow small and shrubby are huge and strong, bursting through and pushing aside the old buildings as they grow.
- ▶ **Psychic intrusions.** As the Investigators get closer to Edom, its 'thoughts' seep into their brains. These take the form of fleeting impressions of colour and vastness, which become blinding and disorienting.

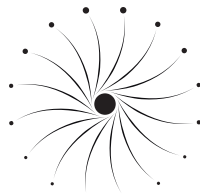
Try inventing your own Creeping Horrors too: for example, the Investigators might catch ghostly snippets of old conversations while exploring the abandoned buildings of Plenty.

When an Investigator rolls a 6, they may notice one of these Creeping Horrors, then remain aware of it. For example, they may suddenly feel a flash of intrusion from Edom, which they then experience repeatedly as the mystery goes on.

# THEMES

There are three main themes in this mystery.

- ▶ **Hunger and desperation.** The miners of Plenty were desperate for gold. The Investigators are desperate for food, shelter and land. Hunger, of one kind or another, is behind all their decisions, and desperation forces their actions.
- ▶ **Failure of faith.** At this time, rural Americans turn instinctively to God in times of need. Has he let them down? Have they offended him? Is this all a trial? Keep thoughts of the divine plan, of sin and punishment, and of the oppressive weight of religious tradition, in the forefront of the Investigators' minds. Try using Biblical language and metaphors.
- ▶ **Corruption and decay.** Describe the surroundings as bleak, hollow and dehumanized. The buildings of Plenty are tattered and twisted, as the souls of its citizens were. Moral corruption is mirrored in physical decay.



# PROLOGUE

The journey from Oklahoma has been long and hot. But it is coming to an end — at least, to a temporary one — because the Investigators are half a day away from Uncle Jack's farm.

Ask which Investigator has the letter from Uncle Jack. Dated three weeks ago, it reached the travellers as they stopped in Flagstaff.

In the letter, Jack recalls how he left Oklahoma, not wanting to sit around and wait to starve. Fortunately, God was smiling on him: near the town of Plenty, in northern Arizona, he found untenanted land and set up a smallholding. At first, it was hard to make the land work for him, but now yields are good.

If the Investigators joined him, he suggests, the farm and the family could prosper, in the clean air of the hills. And, even if the Investigators are unsure whether they want to settle on the farm, it seems sensible to break their journey, enjoy Jack's hospitality and sample his produce.

Describe the heat, dust and the bumpiness of the road. There is little traffic, but when a motor or horse-cart passes, it kicks up dust and makes everyone cough. If you want to give the Investigators a chance to talk, have the van suffer a minor breakdown, which they can quickly repair.

Tell the Investigators that supplies are running low. Money, too, is short, not that there are stores in this wild and rocky terrain. As the sun dips behind the western peaks, everyone feels the familiar pangs of hunger.

## THE FARMSTEAD

In the cool evening air, Uncle Jack's farmstead is quiet and still. Crops grow in small fields, carved out of the red, rocky soil.

Even from a distance, it is clear that the plants are thriving. In the fields, cereal grains stand tall. In a vegetable patch, squashes, beans, tomatoes, potatoes and berries look glossy and appealing.

Yet, as the Investigators enter, they quickly realise the farm buildings are deserted. Uncle Jack has gone, although, judging by the state of the dishes in the sink, *he can't have left more than two days ago*.

As night draws in, the Investigators must eat. Ask which items of Jack's produce appeal to them. Whatever they eat, it is delicious and goes down well. Ask for a roll, rolling the Failure Die, to see whether they notice anything wrong: if they succeed, the food seems strange, and if they get a 6, they find it both compelling and repulsive.

If the Investigators search the house, they mostly find the simple possessions of a middle-aged bachelor. However, in a barn, *they find digging equipment alongside the familiar farming tools*, including picks, mattocks, and shovels. There is even gelignite and blasting caps. Inexplicably, Uncle Jack has equipped himself for mining.

Additionally, there is a rough hand-drawn map of the area. Judging from the marks on the map, *Uncle Jack has shown a particular interest in Plenty*, an old mining town about ten miles away, over a rocky ridge.

That night, the tired Investigators sleep soundly. Yet, on the edge of wakefulness, they sense the jagged, colourful patterns of Edom's mind. And, in the early hours, the pangs of hunger return.

## IN THE MORNING

When the sun rises, everyone is hungry, even those who ate well the night before. Yet this seems natural, since they ate poorly on their journey. And there is always more of Jack's produce to eat.

Let the Investigators describe their morning routine. Ask who gets up first and what they do. Describe the weather, which is hot and dry, and the crops, which look even more healthy and delicious than the night before. Ask what they have for breakfast. Remind the Investigators — or let them discover — that *Jack has disappeared, apparently in the direction of Plenty*.

Later in the morning, the Investigators feel unbearably hungry. If they are not already heading to Plenty, suggest that the town may have better supplies.



# PLENTY

From a distance, Plenty looks small, quiet and untidy. As the Investigators draw closer, it becomes apparent that the town has been deserted for decades.

Trees, shrubs and unkempt weeds have pushed their way through the ramshackle buildings, which appear to be slowly bursting apart. On closer inspection, the plants *all appear native to the area, but are hideously misshapen and overgrown.*

There are various mining shacks around Plenty. There is also a civic hall, a church, a hotel and a large residential house, any of which the Investigators might explore.

## A MINING SHACK

Inside each shack, the Investigators find the home of a gold miner from nearly a hundred years before. Some lived alone, while others lived with their families, all crowded into one room.

Although the timbers and shingles have been preserved by Plenty's dry air, the intruding vegetation has pushed the joints awry, heaved the floorboards and crazed the angles.

The occupants' possessions — clothing, mining tools, cooking equipment — are all still present. Were it not for the obvious passage of time, *one might think they had just stepped out.*

In one corner, the Investigators find a pick and a hammer, set upright so that they cross at right angles. Where they cross, a gold quarter-eagle coin with a hole punched through it hangs from a leather thong. A tendril of canyon grape vine has entwined itself around the coin. *It looks like a shrine, but not to any religion that the Investigators know.*

If the Investigators explore the other shacks, they find similar shrines in each, with other things in place of the gold coin. Some have a half- or quarter-dollar, while some just have a lump of fool's gold.

## THE CIVIC HALL

Unlike the other buildings, the four-square, one-story Civic Hall is largely intact. It has escaped the surging vegetation: or, as the Investigators may suspect, *the vegetation has deliberately avoided the hall.*

The hall appears to have been used as *a trading exchange and space for civic functions and public meetings.* The space is eerily quiet: *the Investigators' footsteps and voices seem muffled.*

Curiously, the furniture has been cleared away to the sides. At the centre are five heaps of stones in a rough circle. Each heap consists of angular rocks, balanced on one another to form an approximate pillar. There is something in these pillars that draws the eye but simultaneously repels it: *the rocks are improbably balanced, veins of ore gleam too brightly and the angles seem both appealing and disturbing.*

On close examination, *each pillar is spattered with a flaking, reddish-brown substance. It is animal blood.* Investigators with farming backgrounds will remember the way that blood spatters when a hog's throat is slit at slaughtering time. They also recall the terrified squealing that accompanies the death.

If an Investigator has suffered the intrusions of Edom, they feel them again now, as though their mind has been pried open and jarring, impossible imagery has been thrust within. Alternatively, if anyone rolls a 6, they experience the same effects.

These Investigators may realise that *the rock pillars are an imperfect attempt to represent these visions.* If they focus, they may sense that *the pillars were an attempt to placate some being, which the townsfolk hoped would bring them more gold.* They also understand that *the sacrifices were insufficient.*



## THE FIRST REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

This sun-bleached building was thrown up in a mood of optimism and enthusiasm, during Plenty's boom years. Now, the windows gaze vacantly, the roof has fallen in and rampant sagebrush thrusts through the gaping doorway.

Inside, the church, which was always spare and undecorated, is now derelict. The benches on which the congregation sat have been heaped in the middle of the floor and set on fire, although they didn't burn very well.

*On the lectern, an old Bible stands open, its pages fused together with age.* The text highlighted with a brass clip is Proverbs 11:28, "He who trusts in his riches will fall / But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf."

*There is a small heap of coins on the altar, which is simply pocket change, totalling about a dollar and a half.*

Next to them is fresh produce, curiously arranged: four ears of wheat in a hollow square, with a pyramid of tomatoes in the centre. The tomatoes are still glossy and the wheat green and fresh.

As the Investigators may realise, *the produce was left by Uncle Jack.* It appears that *he was imitating the miners' rituals, in the hope of gaining the favour of the being they worshipped.*

If the Investigators touch or interfere with these offerings, they experience a hallucinatory blast of jagged light, as Edom intrudes into their minds.

## MORTENSEN'S TRAVELLERS HOTEL

Formerly a proud place of entertainment for miners and visitors, the hotel now presents a sad picture. The back of the building has collapsed, its timbers thrust aside by a giant barberry bush. The bush's leaves are glossy and spiny, each the size of a man's hand, and its purple-blue berries look succulent and refreshing. If the Investigators eat them, they are sour and ultimately unsatisfying.

At the front of the hotel, two rooms remain mostly intact. One is a saloon, which, as the broken balustrades and crushed mahogany tables suggest, *was once luxuriously appointed.* Behind what

remains of the bar are two intact bottles of rye whisky, unaffected by Edom's presence and as good to drink as they ever were.

The other intact room is the lobby. Here, a sooty fungus has devoured a curved inlaid counter. Twisted roots thrust themselves through the floor's decorative tilework.

Under the countertop, still intact enough to be readable, is the hotel register. From this, the Investigators can deduce the history of the hotel.

The hotel opened in 1850, set up by Mrs. Agnetha Mortensen. *Business was brisk:* the register lists visitors ranging from traders to lawyers.

However, *by 1851, business was growing slower,* as indicated by gaps between entries in the register. Investigators may also sense that *the clerk's handwriting seems progressively more tired.* The last entry is for 23rd March 1852, when Mr. Wm. Smith of Pennsylvania, a buyer of scrap iron, stayed for two days.

## THE KANE RESIDENCE

This two-storey villa must have been the grandest residence in town. Around it runs a verandah, which has been overtaken by a brilliant red Virginia creeper, twisting thickly in at the windows and rustling unnervingly beneath the rotting boards.

By pushing back the creeper, the Investigators can enter through the main door or a window. Inside, the house is a vision of decayed magnificence, with brocaded and beaded furnishings from the East Coast and even Europe. The rooms and furniture are covered with giant grey lichens and fungal blooms.

In a heap of lichenous ridges at the back of the hallway, under what must once have been a beautiful longcase clock, lies *a brass-cased daguerreotype.* It shows a stiff-backed couple from the mid-nineteenth century, formally dressed. The gentleman has a splendid moustache, and his hand is on the shoulder of a dark-haired young girl, dressed in sprigged muslin. At the foot of the frame is a caption: "Mr Edward B Kane, Mrs Sophia Walters Kane & Miss Jennifer Mary Kane".

*Through the gritty dust of the house run a trail of footprints, which seem recent. These are not Uncle Jack's footprints: the feet are small and bare, with wide-splayed toes. They were, in fact, left by Jennifer Mary Kane (see The Spool House below), who occasionally returns to her childhood home.*

The footprints lead to and from a back bedroom, overrun with the red creeper. Here is an ancient truckle bed, with a large oak chest at its foot.

Evidently, *the chest has been recently opened*, since there is no dust on top of it. Inside are clothes, dolls and pencils and other items appropriate to a young girl of the last century. There is also enough space for a small child to hide.



## THE SPOOL HOUSE

On a small bluff, which is split by a ravine, stand the mine workings. This is where the seam of gold that briefly made the town's fortune was first spotted.

Today, the mine buildings have met the same fate as rest of Plenty, with brush, cactus and agave shouldering the wooden structures aside as though they were toys. The mine's winding gear has collapsed into the shaft, one wheel pointing crazily to the hot blue sky.

Only one building still stands. It is the spool house, where great lengths of rope and wire were stored, carefully wound onto gigantic reels. This is where Jennifer May Kane lives.

Jennifer Mary Kane was seven years old in 1852, when Plenty collapsed. Now in her late eighties, she is spry and mobile, slender as a bird, dressed in ill-assorted and ancient clothes, with a mop of black-streaked white hair.

Typically, Jennifer Mary lurks inside the spool house, but if the investigators don't seem dangerous, she will come out and try to warn them of the danger that they're placing themselves in by being here.

By talking to Jennifer Mary, the Investigators can discover her recollections, both of the last days of Plenty and more recent times (see "Jennifer Mary's recollections"). She talks in an anecdotal, disconnected way, skipping between memories. Don't portray her as a stereotypical "crazy old lady", though: she is an elderly woman remembering childhood memories, but her mind is fully intact.

Throughout their conversation with Jennifer Mary, prod the Investigators with pangs of hunger and intrusions of Edom's consciousness, especially if they roll a 6.

From talking to Jennifer Mary, it becomes clear that *Uncle Jack went down the mine, in pursuit of Edom and riches*. Jennifer May neither encourages nor discourages the Investigators to look for him, although, if they have been particularly kind to her, she may wish them luck in the world to come.

# JENNIFER MARY'S RECOLLECTIONS

"It was in the late fall that Pa got powerful desperate. He had such a fine mustache, and boy, he fairly tore it out by the roots, he was worryin' so. And Ma was cryin' fit to beat the band, more or less all of the time. They said there weren't goin' to be no Christmas presents that year. Well! You can believe I was mighty upset about that! But Pa said that it wasn't just me — none of the children would be visited by old Santa Claus this year, because the seam had run out, and that was the start and end of it. Well, I fairly wept buckets, I can tell you."

"Old Reverend Musgrove was the minister back then, of course. He surely prayed up a fair storm, you may believe it. Asking for God's mercy on us poor sinners, and the like. Folk gave little gifts — pieces of treasure that they'd laid aside — Reverend said if we made sacrifices, God might show pity to us. Like an old-time harvest festival, Ma said it was. But it didn't do no good. God had turned his back on us, for certain sure."

"Down in a crack it was, deep under. They said something had shifted, and opened it up, like a soap-bubble in the rock. Imagine! And then all the men was hollerin' and hootin' like wild things. More gold for everybody, that's what they said. Pa went down there and he came back, kinda sick and head-achey. He never was quite the same after."

"Now I reckon that old Edom hadn't never intended to give no-one no gold — eh? Just to lead 'em on, and make 'em sweat. Well, I saw them statues in the Hall, and I knew right smart that I didn't want none of it. That's why old Edom puts up with me, see? We don't pay each other any mind."

"First it was folks' dogs, and horses. No use keepin' em if you don't have gold, for sure. Then, well. Things that shouldn't be spoken of. I do recall Reverend Musgrove was the first to be taken. His God was false, do you see, that's what they said. Pa was certain sure of it. Said his blood would... well, anyways, that was just the start of it."

"Pa and Ma dressed up special, like for a Sunday. And I was to put my best dress on. We're going visiting, Ma said. She had the prettiest gentle voice! But I knew where they were going, sure enough. I ran and hid in my oak chest, tucked down in the clothes and linen — how I thought Edom couldn't see me there, I don't know. But Pa and Ma couldn't find me in time, anyways, and that's how I'm here today talkin' to you. And not down there with all the others of 'em."

"There was a young feller, yes, I do recall. Came by this way and said howdy, mebbe two days since? I didn't eat none of the food he brought, though, I ain't no fool. I catch my own critters to eat, that's the only safe way. Old Edom knows a thing or two, you see? First it was gold, to catch 'em. Now it's food. That feller — mighty smart and polite he was — but he had the same look in his eyes as my Pa had. He was gone, gone, gone, gone down to Edom, in the dark. I don't know if he was a God-fearing soul, but it's too late now, anyway. All the prayers on Earth won't save him. Don't I know it? No, he ain't come back out, and he never will, by my reckoning. You can go down and look: but I wouldn't exactly advise it."

# INSIDE THE MINE

The mineshaft descends at an angle into the rock. When the mine was operational, the miners would ride down in the same baskets that brought ore up, but these are broken now.

Nevertheless, the Investigators can clamber down, holding onto the old steel rails. Ask: what do they have for a light source? Do they use ropes? Do any of them have any climbing or mining experience?

As they descend, the air becomes warm and quiet. The echo of boots, striking against rails and rock, is muted and dull. The outside world — that shrinking speck of light above — feels far away.

One hundred feet below the surface, the shaft turns, and daylight is no longer visible. Side-seam tunnels curl off into the gloom.

Now, the Investigators have the disturbing sensation of moving through a giant corpse, its bones and sinews exposed, its soft parts glistening, oozing and pulsing weakly. If an Investigator has experienced Edom's intrusions, they see bewildering lights flowing along the walls, like a giant nervous system around them.

After descending for two hours, the investigators reach the end of the original mine. To one side, they find a stone bubble.

## EDOM'S BUBBLE

How or why Edom was ever contained within this stone bubble – or if that is even true – is impossible for the investigators to imagine. But they may know that *similar bubbles have been found before in deep mines like this*.

The bubble, which is about four feet across, is spherical, except where the tunnel has broken it. In the base of the bubble are peaches, strawberries and a melon, all of which look fresh and ripe.

If any Investigators are hungry, ask for a roll to resist eating, rolling the Failure Die against them. If they fail, they devour the fruit, although these Investigators will later claim that they chose to eat it. The fruit does not, of course, satisfy their hunger.

## BEYOND THE BUBBLE

As the mine workings go on, *they seem to have been hacked out roughly, frantically*, in a series of connected chambers.

Now, the glowing and pulsing of the walls is irresistible and unignorable. It feels as though the disjointed presence of whatever has been intruding into the Investigator's minds is terribly close.

The first chamber appears to be a storehouse, although it is unclear why it was needed so deep underground. Here are great piles of fruit, vegetables and grains, there for the taking.

Ask for a roll to resist eating, as before. Any who fail enter a debauched state, plunging into the piles to eat the food, then rolling around to crush the tender fruit and cover themselves in the juices.

*At the end of the chamber is Uncle Jack Bradley*. He lies prone, arms outstretched in a position of supplication, barely alive. Jack is naked, the stains on his body suggesting that he flung himself into the fruit and vegetables with abandon. He is thin, his ribs like a xylophone. Juice is mixed with blood, where he has cut himself against the rock.

## THE BONE CASTLE

Looking through the gap towards which Uncle Jack was facing, investigators see a massive structure of bone. Differently shaped and sized bones are balanced or nailed together, forming a bewildering arrangement of vertices, shelves, buttresses and recesses.

Most bones are human, both from adults and children, although animal bones are mixed in with them. *In all, there are about two hundred skeletons here*, disassembled and reassembled according to some opaque, alien plan.

As the Investigators move towards the Bone Castle, Edom forces itself more vigorously into their minds. It promises to satisfy the Investigators' hunger for food, gold and everything else. It begins to take over the Investigators' minds fully. They know that, if they hesitate, they will be lost. Their only hope of survival is flight.



Ask how the Investigators feel about returning to the hungry world outside. Is there any hope there? Are they tempted by the false satisfaction Edom provides?

Ask each Investigator, in turn, whether they give themselves to Edom or flee. Give everyone an ending, then move to epilogues.

## EPILOGUE

If any Investigators gave themselves to Edom, ask them to describe the fantasy world they have entered. How are their dreams realised? What does this look like?

If any Investigators fled, ask them to describe their departure from Plenty. They cannot take Uncle Jack, who is close to death, nor Jennifer Mary, who is content to stay. Neither can they destroy Edom, although they might conceivably find a way to block the mine.

Finally, ask where they go next. How do they feel, next time they are hungry? Do they ever regret turning their back on Edom, who might have fulfilled their dreams?

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