

God Wills It Thus

Background:

Black magic obsessed young Evelyn Waugh, and his dabblings (the basis for his 1924 novel, *The Temple at Thatch*) even sent him temporarily insane. Waugh completed the novel, but was so horrified at friend Harold Acton's critique that he burnt the unpublished manuscript, attempted suicide and blotted the novel's details from his memory.

Waugh, however, sent another draft to schoolfriend and journalist Dudley Carew. A handwritten notebook, *The Temple* relates the semi-autobiographical woes of student Ernest Vaughn, his occult explorations and subsequent madness. Other characters include unscrupulous Mr. Macassor (based on bookseller Arion Maccoby), various dilettantes (based, unflatteringly, on Waugh's companions), unwilling werewolf Billy Donne, and Vaughn's moral compass, the talking cat Ozymandias, who Vaughn sacrifices in a ritual gone awry. The novel ends as Vaughn walks into the sea, crushed with guilt at what he's become.

Carew also knew Maccoby, who received the manuscript in 1937. It passed to Maccoby's grandson Michael, a Belfast bookseller, who mistook it for *Carew's* juvenilia; Michael recently sold it to one Dylan Bestick, who was shopping for a gift for his librarian wife.

Bestick was CTO for Trantor Systems, which develops control software for heavy industrial equipment. It also has a lucrative contract to produce avionics systems for Severn Aerospace. Until recently, Severn's shan masters used Bestick to maintain their interests in Trantor.

Bestick's parasite despises its elders' procrastination, and decided to search for its own escape from Earth. Although unaware of *The Temple's* literary significance, the parasite instantly noticed the summoning ritual within. It coaxed Bestick to buy the manuscript and take leave to allow the shan to study its secrets.

However, Bestick's mind had begun to crumble. He staggered into his childhood school's church at St Uncumber's in Ballymurphy, confessed his sins to Fr Lavender, and finally slashed his own throat. As Bestick bled, the shan awoke and leaped into the horrified priest. Lavender disposed of Bestick's body and resumed the parasite's plans.

Setup:

God Wills It Thus takes place in Belfast in early July. The PCs' backgrounds determine where they begin and the route they take through the scenes below:

PISCES agents are informed that as a defense supplier, Trantor's data traffic is routinely monitored. Bestick's intercepts indicate a sudden interest in the occult shortly before his disappearance, but specifics aren't disclosed. The agents are ordered to find Bestick and terminate any supernatural threats they uncover.

Recent abductions have baffled the *Police Service of Northern Ireland*. At first, the young victims were taken at random, but recently, they hail from the Catholic stronghold of West Belfast. The police suspect the latter are copycat crimes.

Fourteen-year-old victim Rosemary O'Toole's father is "Diamond Jim" O'Toole, formerly a gun-runner for the IRA; her estranged mother lives in Liverpool. Jim tells the PCs that his daughter is being held hostage in return for weapons. He receives instructions by phone and has never seen the blackmailer; the two toughs he sent to recover his daughter disappeared without trace. Thus far, O'Toole has

delivered 60g of Semtex, some assault rifles and several pistols. O'Toole wasn't shy about putting profit before patriotism. He believes (erroneously) that the kidnapper knows him through the IRA, and fingers about a dozen suspects.

Although Rosemary is government educated, she irregularly attends church at St Uncumber's.

Other hooks are possible; for example, both **MI5** and the **Catholic Church** find Lavender's rhetoric alarming, and the **Army of the Third Eye** might consider Bestick a recruitment target.

Trantor

Trantor's staff are habitually close-lipped, stating only that Bestick liked a drink and was married, without children. Bestick's senior officers are both away, acquiring another software house, but HR can tell PCs that Bestick was due to return from three weeks leave. Trantor operates an apartment "safehouse" for its programmers, allowing them to seclude themselves for sensitive projects, but it hasn't seen official use for four months.

Bestick's computer is filled with uninteresting operational data; however, **Computer Use** yields cached Google searches for "Xiclotl, Lrogg, and Uranus," and the Wikipedia page for Evelyn Waugh. (At the Keeper's option, **Cthulhu Mythos** might reveal background on the first two.)

Bestick's Wife

Dylan told wife Sarah he'd be working at Trantor's safehouse for several weeks, as he'd done in the past. She knows about her husband's work in general terms, but he never discussed specifics.

Sarah noticed that Dylan seemed under enormous pressure, even forgetting her birthday last month. Unusually, Dylan discussed going to confession, but she doesn't think he actually did. Dylan grew up in "The Falls" (Catholic West Belfast), but Sarah doesn't know which church or school he attended.

A credit card statement at the house shows a £300 payment to Maccoby's Fine Books on June 8, and four monthly transactions to Connor Storage; Sarah is aware of neither. Several unopened envelopes each contain a monthly receipt for the hire of unit #17 at Connor Storage. **Spot Hidden** uncovers these.

Maccoby's Fine Books

If shown Bestick's photo, or *The Temple at Thatch*, Michael Maccoby remembers that Bestick came in early last month to find a present for his wife. He thought the notebook an odd gift, but lamented his own wife's contempt for books.

Bestick's name appears on merchant receipts both here and at Connor Storage; a warrant obtains Bestick's other details from his bank.

Connor Storage

Patrick Connor's compound is in poor condition. The only working camera is the webcam Connor uses to harass women on the Internet. Fortunately, Bestick's unit is directly across from the office; **Computer Use** uncovers footage of Lavender from the past week.

Any display of authority (or a **Locksmith** roll) will open unit #17. It's empty, save for a digital camera and a large cage. Strewn around the cage are the remains of several children (*SAN* loss 3/1D4+3) and a catatonic, but physically whole, Rosemary O'Toole. Rosemary is dehydrated, but oddly, not malnourished; **Medicine** reveals an early second-trimester pregnancy.

The camera is not stolen, but its serial number leads to St Uncumber's via insurance, warranty or Neighborhood Watch records. Its memory card is missing.

St Uncumber's

St Uncumber, once revered as patron saint of unhappy wives, was the daughter of a heathen king. Unwillingly betrothed to a pagan prince, Uncumber prayed to God to prevent the wedding. Miraculously, she awoke on the appointed day with a beard; her enraged father canceled the wedding, but promptly had Uncumber crucified.

The PCs' first daytime visit to St Uncumber's interrupts a funeral for the Radican family. Mourners speculate (beneath a shattered Sheela-na-gig) that the church is cursed: children disappeared from the school recently, a drunken idiot (matching Bestick's description) scared the wits out of poor Fr Lavender, and finally, the Radicans perished in a terrible house fire, not two days ago.

Its students holiday through July and August, and Lavender has ceased regular daytime services. After nightfall, however, the priest implores his congregation to punish Orange Marches through Catholic streets.

Spot Hidden in the parish office uncovers *The Temple at Thatch* (its receipt marks the summoning scene), a blood-encrusted gimlet (see Lavender's stats), and the memory card from the storage unit, which contains images of kidnapped children being tortured with the gimlet, kept for posterity.

The sacristy contains guns and a handful of detonators. There **was** a small quantity of Semtex, but the late Mark Radican's clumsiness sadly trumped his technical prowess...

Spot Hidden in the grounds yields Bestick's resting place: a shallow pit on the church's north side.

The shan lays low for the time being; only a madman would attack a church in Catholic heartland. While Lavender's enthralled flock uses O'Toole's guns to contain the crowd at the July 12 March, the shan summons a servitor of the Outer Gods, offering it everybody present. The shan commands the servitor to impart (*qv* Contact Servitor of the Outer Gods) the spell Create Gate, with which the shan hopes to reach L'gh'rx. Should the PCs attack before July 12, it'll try invading a PC; the parishioners have their orders, and the crowds will assemble regardless of Lavender's fate.

The plot has a hidden flaw, however: Waugh faithfully depicted a dysfunctional binding, the consequences of which sent him (and in *The Temple*, Vaughn) insane. For all its cunning, the shan fails to grasp that Waugh did this for dramatic effect. If the summoning succeeds, the servitor embarks on a killing spree, beginning with the shan's host.

Resolution and Consequences

Where the scenario ends depends largely on where it began, but the following outcomes are most significant:

Rosemary O'Toole is reunited with her father: **1D6 SAN award**. Sadistic Keepers may let Rosemary become a ghoul; her baby might not be human, but either way, abortion is **not** an option.

The PCs foil the parasite's plot, save the lives of marchers and protestors alike, and avert the resumption of sectarian bloodshed: **1D10+2 SAN award**.

Lastly, they might glimpse the alien horror whiteanting the UK's defense establishment. This could cost Sanity, but promises further adventures...

THE TEMPLE AT THATCH

Language: English; **Mythos Gain:** +2%; **SAN Loss:** 1D3/1D6; **Spell Multiplier:** x2; **Study Time:** 4 weeks, **Grants Skill Checks in:** History, Occult; **Spells:** Augur, Bind Loup-Garou, Bless Blade, Enchant Cane, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods (note that the binding portion doesn't work).

TYPICAL LAYMAN OF ST UNCUMBER'S

Agent of a Greater Power, ages variable

Race: Caucasian (Irish).

STR 12 CON 10 SIZ 11

INT 10 POW 12 DEX 12

APP 10 EDU 12 SAN 50

HP 12

Damage Bonus: None.

Education: Some high school.

Occupation: Dirt-poor and unemployed.

Skills: Block 35%, Dodge 40%, Follow Blindly into Danger 70%.

Languages: English 60%.

Attacks:

AK-47 assault rifle (A—2) 25%, 2D6.

H&K G3 assault rifle 25%, 2D6+4.

Taurus PT92 pistol (A—7) 25%, 1D10.

Assorted hand-to-hand weapons.

Fr EAMONN LAVENDER

Gloria Ab Intus, age 56

Race: Caucasian (Irish).

STR 12 CON 9 SIZ 10

INT 16 POW 7 DEX 10

APP 10 EDU 20 SAN 18

HP 10

Damage Bonus: None.

Education: St Joseph's Seminary, Belfast.

Occupation: Catholic Priest, St Uncumber's, Ballymurphy, Belfast.

Skills: Bargain 30%, Computer Use 15%, Credit Rating 65%, Occult 30%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 65%, Recite Tangential Anecdote 40%.

Languages: English 99%, Gaelic 40%, Greek 35%, Latin 80%.

Attacks: Gimlet 35%, 1D2. Note that it's been enchanted with both Bless Blade *and* Enchant Cane, and thus harms creatures as a magic weapon; if drilled into a victim (or grasped by anyone other than Lavender), the gimlet drains 1 POW point and accumulates a magic point. It currently contains 24 magic points. Lavender also carries a crude, unenchanted (human) bone flute.

THE SHAN

Impetuous, Adolescent Insect, age 186

STR 1 CON 2 SIZ 1

INT 14 POW 15 DEX 34

HP 2

Move:* 4/40 flying.

Attacks:

Meld 60%, damage is progressive control of target.

Nerve Whip 50%, damage special.

Armor: None.

Damage Bonus: None.

Spells: Bless Blade, Cloud Memory, Dominate, Enchant Cane, Power Drain, Sekhmenkenhep's Words, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods (again, the binding portion doesn't work), Wrack.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6.

THE SERVITOR

Waugh's Nightmare, older than the Emerald Isle

STR 19 CON 17 SIZ 22

INT 18 POW 17 DEX 13

HP 20

Move: 7.

Attacks: 2D6 Tentacles 45%, 4D6.

Armor: None, but normal weapons cannot harm it; magical weapons do full damage. Regenerates 3 hit points per round until dead.

Damage Bonus: 2D6.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Hastur, Create Gate, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Mindblast, Nightmare, Siren's Song, Spectral Razor, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Unspeakable Promise.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D10.

References and Resources:

Severn Aerospace and the Insects from Shaggai:

Diverse hands: *Delta Green: Countdown* (Pagan Publishing, Seattle, 1999).

Evelyn Waugh, The Temple at Thatch and related works:

Evelyn Waugh: "The Balance" and "Unacademic Exercise" from [The Complete Stories of Evelyn Waugh](#).

Whitechapel, Simon: *Adam and Evelyn: 'The Balance,' 'The Temple at Thatch', and '666'*.

Wikipedia: ["Evelyn Waugh"](#).

[The Temple at Thatch](#).

Orange Marches:

Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland: ["The Tradition of Parades"](#).

Wikipedia: ["Orange walk"](#).

St Uncumber:

Briggs, Katharine: *British Folktales* (Dorset Press, New York, 1988).

Ballymurphy:

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency: ["Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service \(NINIS\)"](#). (NB: Ballymurphy's postcode is BT127PD.)