LOOP

THE SET UP

LOOP is intended as a break in a longer story, giving the players a change of pace and potentially allowing them extra time on their main investigation, although that extra time will come at a price.

Ideally, the players should have reached a natural break. They've tangled with something they don't understand and they've come out on top, but they know there's more going on and they need to do some research. Whatever resource they're directed to for their research should be in a city and have time-limited access, for example, a museum archive that they can only get into for one day by calling in a favour. During their day of research they should get to hear of several bad things that happened in the city the previous night. For example, while taking the subway to the museum, there are delays due to a suicide the previous night. The idea is to set up a number of potential avenues of investigation for later in the scenario.

Towards the end of the day the team are contacted by someone known to them in Delta Green, (referred to as Agent Thaddeus for the rest of this scenario), who asks them to help him while they are in the area. They must go to a house on the outskirts of the city and retrieve a dangerous book, The Wisdom of One Thousand Lives, which belongs to a local academic. Thaddeus is on his way now and if they hand the book over to him as soon as he reaches them he'll be very grateful and owe them a favour.

The players should arrive at the house late at night. The house is in a formerly wealthy suburb and stands alone on a plot of land. Investigation will reveal that it belongs to a widower called Gerald Schleife. The house is dark and has minimal security. Inside, a cursory inspection will show that the occupant is a scholar of Tibetan history. Chanting will lead players to a basement room where Gerald is casting a spell.

In the basement an elderly man in dark robes stands behind an altar holding a book. On the altar is a bowl filled with dark liquid. The man will not stop chanting regardless of what the players say to him. Whether the players approach or attack from a distance, Gerald's spell is stopped and the players feel energy pulse through the room from the altar causing 1D6 damage. From here wrapping things up is straightforward: Gerald is unconscious and cannot be questioned, but his book is what the players were sent to find. The only other item of interest is the bowl on the altar. (The book and the bowl are described below.)

The players meet up with Thaddeus and hand over the book, (and possibly Gerald and the bowl as well), and then head home for a well-deserved sleep. Except that when they wake up, they're right back where they started the previous morning.

It should quickly become apparent to them that the previous day is repeating and they are the only ones aware of this. This does mean that they have another chance to access whatever time-sensitive resource brought them to the city in the first place… Except that with each loop they draw the attention of a Hound of Tindalos. The Hound is more likely to catch their scent the more they try to exploit the loop.

Any character who dies during the loop will be resurrected when it restarts. However, the memory of dying is a powerful one, causing 1/1D6 SAN loss. Any players not present during Gerald's spell will have no memory of the loop. Attempting to stay awake through the end of the loop won't work: the player will simply be conscious during the instantaneous transition to the start of the loop, causing

2/1D8 SAN loss. If the players seek out Gerald they will find that he has no memory of the time loop and is beside himself with grief…

WHAT'S GOING ON

Gerald Schleife had a 29 year old daughter called Catherine, who died the previous night.

Consumed by grief, Gerald cast a spell from The Wisdom of One Thousand Lives, which should have rewound time by one day, allowing him to save his daughter. The players' disrupted the spell casting and now the day is looping indefinitely. Gerald is unaware of this. He is now stuck repeating the worst day of his life: he wakes, learns of his daughter's death, casts the spell, goes to bed, and wakes at the start again, unaware of everything. No time-based spell, (other than the counter-spell), that Gerald casts in the loop has any effect, although it will serve to further attract the Hound. Gerald's death will not break the spell.

ENDING THE LOOP

The only way to end the loop is to cast a counter-spell. This spell is written in the same book and the players will need to persuade Gerald, who can read and speak Old Tibetan, to cast it, which he will be unwilling to do if Catherine is dead. The players can attempt to save Catherine – whether or not this is possible, (and the manner of her death), is up to the Keeper. Perhaps her death is a suicide that occurs before the players ever wake up; perhaps she is shot in a robbery and saving her negatively affects other events. If her death occurs before the players wake up they may still be able to use the bowl to communicate with her as outlined below.

If Catherine is saved Gerald will have no reason to believe in the loop and he may still be unwilling to help.

THE BOWL

The bowl is a shallow yellow-white dish, roughly oval in shape, but wider at one end than the other. The outside is intricately carved with a humanoid figure with both male and female sexual characteristics. The being wears a crown and has no eyes. Its mouth hangs open and it appears to be dancing. It has multiple limbs, both human and animal, and it holds many items, including a flute, a drum and multiple weapons. A fractal design borders the outer edge of the bowl. When viewed with magnifying equipment this design is infinite (1/1D4 SAN loss). The inside of the bowl shows the marks of veins and a successful Idea roll suggests that the bowl is made from the top of a human skull (0/1 SAN loss). A successful roll on a relevant skill reveals that the bowl is a kapala, a ritual object used in Buddhism for transcendental meditation. A successful Mythos roll suggests that the being carved on it is a Tibetan representation of Azathoth.

The bowl is also affected by the spell; a new version is generated by each loop, but the old versions continue to exist. For example, if the players take the bowl from Gerald the first time they encounter him, the bowl will still be in their possession when the loop resets, however, there will also be a bowl in Gerald's house. Any location containing a bowl at the end of a loop will still have a bowl when the loop restarts, and anything placed in a bowl will be similarly preserved. The players could use this to send messages back in time, perhaps allowing them to save Catherine. Realising that the bowls are proliferating costs 1D4/1D6 SAN.

THE BOOK

The Wisdom of One Thousand Lives by Thokmay (8th century Tibetan scholar)
Language: Old Tibetan
Mythos Gain: +7%
SAN Loss: -1D6/-1D10
Study Time: 20 weeks
Spells: In addition to the spells detailed below it is also possible to learn: Call/Dismiss Azathoth; Contact Hound of Tindalos; Find Gate; Look to the Future.

THE SPELLS
The Rebirth of One Day – Properly performed this spell rewinds time once by a single day, leaving only the caster aware of the change. The text prefacing the spell exhorts the reader to use the spell wisely as there are spirits sent to punish those who cheat the cycle of death and rebirth. The spell uses 10 magic points and costs 2D6 SAN.

The Wheel Turns – A counter-spell that will undo "The Rebirth of One Day". To cast it correctly requires all who are aware of the loop to participate and all of the bowls generated by the loop. It requires six hours of ritual meditation and prayer to prepare and one hour to cast, meaning the players will need to get to Gerald early in order to have sufficient time to cast it. It costs a minimum of 15 magic points and 1D3 SAN.

DR. GERALD SCHLEIFE

Tibetan scholar and devoted dad, age 64
Race: Caucasian
STR 10 CON 11 SIZ 8 INT 15 POW 18
DEX 10 APP 11 EDU 23 SAN 47 HP 9
Education: Ph.D. in Archaeology/Anthropology, Columbia University
Occupation: Historian
Skills: Anthropology 70%, Archaeology 64%, History 74%, Language (Old Tibetan) 64%, Library Use 57%