

Dreams of a Memory

"Dreams are the eraser dust I blow off my page.
They fade into the emptiness, another dark gray day.
Dreams are only memories of the plans I had back then.
Dreams are eraser dust and now I use a pen"
-Edgar Allan Poe

Hook: An automated monitoring system employed by Delta Green has sent up a red flag warning of mythos activity. The red flag is the highest alert the system can give to a news item, meaning there is almost certainly a mythos threat connected to the news item.

The flagged item is a draft of an article submitted to a respected neuropsychology journal by a Dr. Nichole Boswell. An EEG pattern (a record of a person's electrical activity in the brain) in the article triggered the alert. The monitoring system has connected the EEG to a Delta Green operation from 1973 codenamed BLACK SAND.

Too bad the file on BLACK SAND is hard to access and no one in Delta Green can remember the operation. All of the agents involved in it are dead.

A Cell assigns the players to figure out what the mythos threat is and stop it. They must stop the article from becoming published. Ideally, if the cell can determine what the mythos vector is and disrupt it, they can sabotage the research and discredit the scientists without getting wiser to it.

They are given a Green Box location known to have files connected to BLACK SAND. The Green Box is in Juneau, Alaska.

The cell is told that if they can't find out any information on BLACK SAND, they must kill both Dr. Boswell and the test subject mentioned in the article, and destroy the research. A hacker employed by Delta Green will corrupt the data kept by the journal's reviewers so that it will not match up exactly.

A Cell estimates they have two months before the article is approved and published in the journal. The monitoring system caught the article at a late stage in the review process of the journal.

BLACK SAND

In 1973, an experimental psychologist researching into dreams stumbled upon the discovery of a lifetime - scientific observational data of two dreamers entering the Dreamlands. Dr. Alfred Preston, a respected psychologist, recruited two teenagers from the streets of New York City, Steven Hall and Mary Zimmerman, as part of his dream research.

Preston's research revealed that Steven and Mary generated unique brain waves while asleep. When awake, both described the same vivid dream world with exacting detail.

Further experimentation led to an astonishing breakthrough - Steven and Mary could exchange messages across great distances through their dreams! Dr. Preston took Steven to a remote cabin in upstate New York while an associate stayed with Mary in New York City. Dr. Preston gave Steven messages to give to Mary while the associate gave Mary messages to give to Steven. After a week of this, Dr. Preston returned and discovered the messages were identical. Somehow, they were able to communicate through their dreams.

Of course the two teens were skilled dreamers and explorers of the Dreamlands. They were cautious in their journeys but as they continued learning about the Dreamlands they fell into love.

Delta Green became involved because Steven and Mary ran afoul of the Fate. No one knows how they learned of the teens but an adept tried to intimidate Dr. Preston into ending his research and abandoning the teens. They were keenly interested in recruiting two skilled dreamers. By this time, A Cell was already watching the research, as Preston had inadvertently alerted Alphonse by requesting certain books from the Library of Congress as part of his research into the content of the shared dreams. Apparently, requesting the Book of Eibon through interlibrary loan raises certain flags.

BLACK SAND started as a mission to investigate Dr. Preston. Once DG learned of his findings, they realized he had discovered a means to scientifically detect when someone enters the Dreamlands by analyzing their brainwaves with an EEG. They also learned of the Fate's interest in the dreamers and decided to intervene.

In the end, one Delta Green agent and two acolytes of the Fate were dead and the dreamers fled into the night. The Fate dropped the matter and Delta Green never found Steven or Mary. Dr. Preston was recruited as a friendly and his research was incorporated into Delta Green methodology.

All of the agents and Dr. Preston are dead. Steven and Mary wandered for years but eventually found a physical portal to the Dreamlands. They still reside there, powerful and experienced dreamers.

The BLACK SAND files were moved to Alaska as part of a move to get all Fate-related materials away from New York City. It takes 60 hours to read the files and costs 1/1d3 SAN and +1% Cthulhu Mythos and +5% Dreamlands lore.

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The Current Threat: A new researcher has stumbled upon a dreamer. Dr. Nichole Boswell is studying a patient she believes has a unique form of schizophrenia and has recorded his EEG in her article. The patient, a John Doe with amnesia, is a powerful but insane dreamer who lost his memories from a misadventure in the Dreamlands. His vivid descriptions of the Dreamlands, where he is Johan the Red, and strange habits (from repeated SAN losses from mythos exposures in the Dreamlands) led Dr. Boswell to diagnose him incorrectly.

The brainwaves match Dr. Preston's research, which triggered the monitoring system alert. The article is extremely complex and only a difficult biology (-10%) check could make heads or tails out of it. In brief, Dr. Boswell's article describes a new form of schizophrenia that generates unusual brainwaves in its subjects. However, she ascribes 20 patients with this disease. Another biology check is required to identify which EEG pattern triggered the alert.

Investigators trying to identify the patient will have to get access to Dr. Boswell's private files and then spend days analyzing them to identify the real patient. Even then, John Doe is kept in a secure psychiatric facility and if interviewed will seem harmless to investigators. In 1d4 years, Doe will lose all of his remaining sanity, escape and become a dangerous cultist in the service of the Old Ones but there are few signs of this – unless the characters can somehow enter the Dreamlands and investigate Johan the Red's actions. If that is possible, they will learn he has associated with ghouls, ghosts and far darker creatures and sorcerers. It is only a matter of time before he embraces the Old Ones.

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The Monitoring System: A sophisticated datamining and analysis tool developed by several DG agents over the years. It covertly looks for mythos activity over corporate, academic and government databases and networks. However, due to the nature of Delta Green, it has become a poorly documented system and not without errors.

The alert only mentions a specific brainwave pattern/EEG result that is a definitive match for mythos activity in the article.

The significance of many of the keywords and search criteria it looks for is not explained when it sends out an alert to the DG leadership – agents get a cryptic note that may reference an operation or case file at best. A Cell's accumulated knowledge of the mythos and Delta Green operations is usually enough to assess the threat. If not, A Cell can contact any of its agents to analyze the threat. In this case, compartmentalization (need to know) destroyed any institutional memory of this particular threat. Everyone who needed to know about BLACK SAND died years ago.

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Resolving the Mission: This is a moral dilemma – Delta Green says Dr. Boswell is a threat but can't exactly explain why. The Keeper's goal is to throw in challenges to tax the investigators. The Green Box in Alaska could be trapped or guarded by dangerous opponents. Steven and Mary the dreamers may appear in the dreams of the investigators and try to prevent the players from hurting John Doe (or ask to kill him). The Fate could reappear, eager to recruit a new dreamer for their organization. But in the end, the threat is nebulous and uncertain, yet the order to eliminate is not. Can they kill two potentially innocent civilians on possibly incorrect data? Even if they read up on BLACK SAND, they may decide the Dreamlands are not dangerous or worth killing over. How could it affect the 'real' world?

These decisions are going to give the investigators some sleepless nights...