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# MACABRE Tales



## The Secret of the Dead Man's Satchel

A TERRIFYING TALE BY DANIEL ROBICHAUD



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**The Lovecraftian Horror Role-Playing Game**

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# **MACABRE**

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## **The Secret of the Dead Man's Satchel**

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# Introduction

## Things to Know Before You Delve Deeper

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*Wherein the post holds a mysterious package, which draws an unsuspecting character into perilous encounters with forces both mundane and monstrous . . .*

The Secret of the Dead Man's Satchel is an exciting adventure for a single primary character, though it can easily be adjusted to accommodate a few more.

This scenario can work in most locations across the United States. This is done for convenience. This Tale requires a city and a nearby rural community. The narrator and player can therefore set the piece in Providence, Detroit, New York or other locations with few alterations.

If you are going to participate as a player, you should stop reading at this point, as continuing will certainly ruin the surprises that lay ahead.





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# The Synopsis

## A Summary of Things to Come

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This section details the events leading up to the adventure itself. Rigorous investigation can bring this information to light.

The character contends with four major antagonists in this adventure. However, the story is set into motion by someone never encountered in the subsequent adventure, a prosaic accountant named Silas Arthur Penwright.

In 1919, Silas Penwright suffered an automobile accident. Afterward, he received a trauma-induced cancer diagnosis. Early twentieth century medicine assumed cancer to result from injury. When treatments proved ineffective, the diagnosis equated to a death sentence. Terrors at his dwindling mortality drove Silas from reason and logic. He first turned to prayer. When that failed, Silas explored occultism.

A chance encounter with actual witchcraft slowed the cancer's spread, and drew Silas down darker avenues. He pursued sorcerers and alchemists and stumbled upon the Temple of Flesh, a local cult dedicated to blending biological science and arcane experimentation. A weak stomach prevented Silas participating in the group's monstrous rituals. Instead, he observed them from secret, hoping to locate their power source and take it for himself.

Discovering the cult relied upon the *Librum Vita et Mort*, Silas stole the book and removed himself to his rural farmhouse to study it. Deciphering the book's secrets led to frustrations aplenty as well as a successful resurrection of Thackeray Holmes Penwright, an ancestor capable of performing the gruesome deeds Silas could not. Thackeray had been an actual witch hanged during the seventeenth century witchcraft hysteria and a stranger to neither debased deeds nor cannibalism.

When Silas needed more revenue to pursue his interests, he returned to the city and found employ with local gangster Joseph Giuseppe. While working as bagman and bookkeeper,

Silas discovered the Temple of Flesh's search for their stolen book was drawing them closer to him. Three weeks before the adventure begins, Silas used Giuseppe's influence to have police raid the Temple. This resulted in several cultists arrested and their ritual site destroyed. However, the cult's inner circle remains active and eager for vengeance.

One week before the adventure begins, the Penwright relationship disintegrated. Disappointed with his descendant's lack of grit, Thackeray sacrificed Silas as part of his personal goal to break the barriers between this world and the outer spheres. Thackeray seeks nothing less than living godhood.

Much to his surprise, Thackeray found himself hounded by inconsequential nuisances. Without Silas serving as his barrier, Thackeray became the target for an angry mobster, a corrupt cop and the Temple of Flesh's remaining inner circle. These menaces were too distracting. Thackeray's efforts require care and attention, for his plans neared fruition. He decided to enact a quick, though temporary, solution.

The witch's sorcery employed a trickster aspect of the outer god Nyarlathotep to determine the best way and means to distract these powers. The solution came in two steps: first, he would direct both unwanted parties to a single object; second, he would send this object to a patsy. The misdirection won't last forever, but Thackeray is not interested in a permanent solution. After achieving his goal, he will be beyond mortal enemies.

Thackeray employed his dead descendant's paperwork satchel to lure his enemies. The patsy he left to the outer god's discretion. The unwitting character receives a mysterious parcel, and the simple act of touching it alters his fate.

The year is 1931.



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# The Three Acts

## A Breakdown of the Tale's Structure

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For convenience, this Tale of Terror has been divided into the three act structure outlined in *Macabre Tales*.

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### Act One

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#### **An Unexpected Delivery**

The brown paper wrapped parcel appears on the character's doorstep in the hours before dawn. It is battered, but has appropriate looking (though smudged) postmarks and return address. The package is addressed to the character.

The parcel contains a battered brown leather satchel, stuffed with papers. Examining these reveals numerous coded entries and a cover page (HANDOUT 1). These pages can be decoded in Act II.

The satchel contains another secret, however. An easy Mind (Perception) check reveals the lining has been restitched, using different thread. Something is hidden within. Cutting the threads reveals four pages taken from the *Librum Vita et Mort*. The pages feature numerous notes. In one margin reads:

*By her will is our Temple consecrated  
By her seed is our Temple venerated  
Ia. Shub-Niggurath! All praise to her  
Ia! Ia! Shub-Niggurath!  
The black goat of the woods with a thousand young  
Bless this, our Temple of Flesh  
And strengthen we, your disciples  
For the approaching storm,  
When your inky ichor shall write us anew*

The pages and annotations detail the initial steps to a lengthy ritual, which has something to do with exchanging flesh and vitality between multiple bodies. This is the ritual the Finnegans seek, though they won't be content with these pages alone.





## The Unspoken Price

As soon as the player touches the parcel, he receives it and accepts both the physical contents and their arcane ties. The moment the character takes possession of the parcel, several things happen, leading to the triggered events in Act II.

A letter materializes on Detective Lieutenant Sean Milligan's desk, reading "Your secrets are mine to reveal at my whim. They remain secret so long as you deliver \$250 per week. First payment is due by noon today at the envelope's return address. Greet me with a smile, or I might reveal your secrets for spite's sake." The indicated address is the character's home.

A letter materializes in the passenger seat of Joseph Giuseppe's Packard. This letter reads, "I've decided the generous wage you supplied me for keeping your books wasn't enough. I want \$1000 more today, or I'm dumping the books on the lap of the city's dirtiest gendarme. I believe we both know who! Bring it to my friend's home at 1:00 sharp. He won't tell you where I am, no matter what you do." The address is the character's home.

In addition to avoiding the police, The Temple of Flesh's inner circle has eagerly sought their stolen tome and its thief. However, Thackeray's sorcery has managed to conceal the book's presence. When the character takes possession of the parcel, Thackeray Penwright's protection no longer applies to the pages hidden inside. The cultists learn this after nightfall.



## Act Two

This Act contains both time-specific encounters and an open-ended investigation. This adds convenience. The triggered events reveal the many threats in a manageable order, instead of bombarding the character with multiple antagonists. The free form investigation path gives the narrator and player access to information without railroading them into a singular path.

### Triggered Events

These events are linked to specific triggers. The first two events include suggestions for follow-up encounters, should the character miss the particular event.

### Mulligan's Visit

Detective Lieutenant Mulligan arrives at the character's home at noon and introduces himself, adding "But I need no introduction. Mind if I come inside?" No matter how the character answers, he pushes his way in.

Mulligan's goal for this meeting is simple: determine how best to remove the character as a threat. Once inside, he attempts to intimidate the character into revealing both his source and the information he possesses. Mulligan is canny at getting information from close-mouthed suspects. His concern for the character's blackmail materials prevent him from resorting to physical violence, for now.

When the meeting concludes, Mulligan tosses an envelope onto the floor, suggests "Don't get too comfortable spending my money," and departs. The envelope holds \$250 in small bills.

Should the character miss this meeting, Mulligan breaks into the character's home to search for information on his would be blackmailer and wait for the character to return. If the satchel's corruption materials are here, Mulligan takes them. The detective might also track the character down for a later encounter.



## Giuseppe's Visit

Joseph Giuseppe arrives at 12:50. If Detective Lieutenant Mulligan is present or leaving, then a moderate Mind (Perception) check reveals they know one another.

Giuseppe keeps the money in his pocket, greeting the character with a smirk and probes for ways to manipulate the situation. If needs be, he gives the character the cash.

Giuseppe's goal for this encounter is to learn how the character figures into the blackmail scheme. Also, he wants to discern Silas Penwright's location, and uses the name to judge the character's response.

Should the character miss this meeting, Giuseppe contacts Mulligan for some background. He might break into the character's home, if Mulligan has not already. He might wait and tail the character, appearing when least wanted.

## Bathsheba's Visit

Tension Scene: 10-Point Momentum Threshold

After nightfall, the Finnegans dispatch Bathsheba to retrieve the *Librum* and its thief. Bathsheba waits until the character is alone or in limited company before striking. The byakhee prefers an outdoor attack, but is not above luring the character to a window and then smashing through it.

If the character succeeds in the tension scene, they elude Bathsheba, who returns to the Finnegans. If the character fails this scene, Bathsheba delivers them to the Finnegans for interrogation (See Facing the Finnegans, below).

## Open Investigation

This section details avenues in investigating the satchel. These items aren't linked to specific triggers, and not all items need occur for the character to navigate this scenario.

## Deciphering the Pages

Decoding the pages requires at least six hours as well as a moderate Mind (Languages or

## Free Agents

After these triggered events, Mulligan, Giuseppe and the Finnegans can reappear in the Tale, either during the investigation or in Act III as distractions or further complications.

Mulligan is the belligerent voice of authority. He shadows the character, appearing at unwanted moments with a knowing smirk and none-too-subtle threats. He wants to protect himself and will do so through violence.

Giuseppe is the sleazy manipulator. He observes the character or seeks out the character's friends and relatives, trying to work any angles to enslave the character through blackmail or other nefarious means. He is not above physical threats or violence, should he deem them necessary. He relies on Mulligan for actual dirty work, however. This might prove Giuseppe's downfall if Mulligan is frustrated enough.

The Temple of Flesh takes infrequent but direct action through sorcerous means. Should Bathsheba be unsuccessful, the Temple monitors the character's activities from afar, until they see a chance to reclaim their tome. Then, they use any and all means at their disposal to recover the book.

Ingenuity) check. Success reveals numerous entries detailing the flow of large cash sums between Joseph Giuseppe and three dozen city officials.

Detective Lieutenant Sean Mulligan's name is often repeated, receiving several large payments for unspecified "Off the Record Assistance."

Hidden in these names, the character learns Silas Penwright's identity, as well.



## **In the News**

A trip to the newspaper or the library can reveal the following information with an easy Mind (Research) check for each subject:

**Detective Lieutenant Mulligan:** Several articles paint this police detective in a golden light. Mulligan has received several decorations from the mayor's office and citizen groups for his successful efforts to stop criminal activities in the city.

**Joseph Giuseppe:** A single article identifies Giuseppe as a benefactor attending a city councilman's fundraiser. Giuseppe is caught in a picture raising a glass with the councilman, looking irritated at having been photographed. He otherwise has no public life.

**The Temple of Flesh:** An article from three weeks ago details the raid on Crown Hill Sanitarium. (HANDOUT 2)

## **Silas Penwright**

A moderate Mind (Research) check reveals Penwright's accident, his cancer diagnosis as well as his subsequent seclusion and occult fascination.

A hard Mind (Research) check reveals Penwright owns a farmhouse near Hadley's Corner.

A very hard Mind (Research) check reveals Penwright's recent connection to Joseph Giuseppe.

## **Mulligan's House**

If the character breaks into Detective Lieutenant Mulligan's home, face a challenging task. The place has sturdy locks on both doors and windows, requiring a moderate Body (Coordination) check.

The house's main floor features expensive if bland furnishings. An address for Joseph Giuseppe and several incriminating photos/mementos fill the office safe.

The basement holds darker secrets. A locked

steel door set into a concrete wall requires either a very hard Body (Coordination) check or the key to open. Mulligan carries the key around his neck at all times. Behind this door waits a macabre play room.

The play room has no electricity, earthen floors and concrete walls. It is illuminated by two candelabras. Iron staples are set into the walls and a cot is leaned against a corner. Stainless steel trays hold impeccably cleaned surgical tools, well-used patient restraints, iron shackles, steel chains and other unsavory implements. Three-day old bloodstains mar the floor and wall, but the room is otherwise clean.

If Mulligan tires of Giuseppe's partnership, the gangster's dismembered corpse awaits disposal here. Likewise, the character might find himself here, should Mulligan become too frustrated to continue playing cat and mouse.

## **Inquiring About the Parcel**

A moderate Mind (Research) check at the local post office reveals the parcel is unrecorded in any manifest and therefore not delivered by any local postal worker. Someone went to the trouble to have it stamped and then delivered it themselves.

The postmark may be indecipherable, but it is genuine. Close study reveals the parcel came from Hadley's Corner, a rural community about three hours outside the city limits.

## **Crown Hill Sanitarium Basement**

The sanitarium has been closed, the area has been searched by police and the cult's ritual site has been burned. However, a living clue can be encountered here. That living clue is a man named Darin Bradley.

### DARIN BRADLEY

Darin Bradley lost his left leg during the Great War. Subsequent ennui led him to the Temple. In months prior to the raid, his leg started regrowing, though the replacement is nothing like the original. Darin now



possesses a monstrous tentacle imitation, which he keeps wrapped in filthy bandages. He still relies upon his crutch while learning to control this new monstrous limb. Darin managed to escape apprehension.

He longs for the rituals, returning to the sanitarium with hopes of encountering other cultists. If persuaded with a moderate Soul (Guile or Persuasion), he can fill in details about the cult's activities, the Finnegan's, and whatever else the Narrator desires. A hard Mind (Knowledge: Psychology) check can unlock a hypnotic suggestion or memory regression about the Temple's current location. Darin joins the character, as this might lead him back to the Temple. He also betrays the character should doing so result in the Finnegan's' blessings.

**Body 5:** Athletics 1, Fighting 1, Reflexes 1, Stealth 1, Strength 1, Toughness 1

**Mind 6:** Knowledge (Forbidden Truths) 1, Knowledge (Occult Lore) 2, Perception 1

**Soul 6:** Guile 1, Resolve 1

**Possessions:** Ragged clothing, crutch, bedroll, trench knife.

**Special:** When revealed, Darin's tentacle limb grants him Innate Attack: 1 (crush) and Unspeakable Visage: 2.

### Facing the Finnegan's

Tension Scene: 9 or 12 Momentum Requirement, (see below)

The Finnegan's are laired in the condemned Midway Hotel in an immigrant ghetto.

Interacting with the Finnegan's provokes a Tension Scene. If the character comes to them willingly, he can attempt to negotiate. The Momentum requirement is 9. If Bathsheba brings the character, then the Momentum Requirement is 12.

The Finnegan's seek their book returned and revenge for its theft. They are insane but far from stupid. Facing them is quite dangerous, as their combined sorcery and their byakhee make them an incredible threat. A character can convince them of his innocence, after a

fashion. However, the Finnegan's don't want their secrets shared and eventually seek the character's demise to protect themselves.

A failed tension scene results in the character's destruction. A successful tension scene removes the Finnegan's as an immediate threat. Also, during the tension scene, Mycroft might divulge the following information:

1. Some months ago, a shadowy but unthreatening figure observed the Temple's activities. He seemed a potential recruit but never approached the Temple.

2. Two months ago, someone stole the *Librum Vita et Mort*. The pages in the character's possession come from this book.

3. Until tonight, their attempts to locate the *Librum* have been blocked. Tonight, however, the barrier dropped and they located the character. However, they assumed the character's name was Penwright, which their scrying efforts divulged prior to the raid.

### Hadley's Corner

Hadley's Corner is a postage stamp sized rural community a few miles outside the city. The town has one main street, with a town hall, general store, town library, train station, single restaurant (a greasy spoon called Donovan's) and post office.

If the character proves his trustworthiness with a moderate Soul (Persuade) check, the post office's octogenarian owner, Brandon Russell, identifies the parcel's handwriting as belonging to Silas Penwright and reveals the location of the Penwright estate.

Russell has little love for the Penwrights. If asked, he admits "Silas and his uncle, or whomever it is lives with him, are some queer folks . . . Don't see much of the uncle, but Silas comes here regularly, smelling of sour milk and worse. It's a shame how such a good man can fall so low."

Venturing out to the Penwright Estate leads to Act III.



## Act Three

### The Penwright Estate

The Penwright estate is a remote, overgrown and untended bit of land, twenty minutes' walk or seven minutes' drive outside Hadley's Corner. A dirt road leads from the main road to the property's stone fence, winds amongst some scrubby trees and alongside a weed choked fountain, passes the two-story farmhouse proper as well as several animal pens and ends at the barn. Few lights or activity signs are evident at any given hour.

### The Grounds

The Woods are filled with strange flora, things that appear normal but upon closer inspection aren't. Strange carnivorous plants otherwise unknown on earth. Leaves move against the wind. A walk through this terrain should call for a Sanity Check (4).

The Fountain features a crumbling Grecian statue standing amidst scummy water. The fountain water has been corrupted by the Thackeray's weird experiments. Half visible

things slither through the muck, flitting between dimensions and impossible to catch. Seeing them can lead to a Sanity Check (4).

Flies swarm in the Animal Pens. The earth in them is littered with bones, feathers and other signs of animal related carnage.

The Barn holds Silas Penwright's car and the one living animal on the farm--a hideous 1000-pound hog called Braun. The beast is incapable of movement, and is not long for this world. Braun is Thackeray's corpse disposal system, and bits from several sacrifices can be found in the animal's spoor, including Silas Penwright's remains. A few of Silas' personal effects litter Braun's pen.

### Where is Thackeray?

Simple answer: Wherever the Narrator wants him.

Although he is a resurrected being, Thackeray Penwright has fallen into a schedule for his activities. The sorcerer sleeps between 8:00 am and 3:00 pm. He wakes and ventures onto the grounds to procure sustenance and sacrifices until 6:00pm. Then, he performs his arcane efforts in either the cellar or the living room until 6:00 am.

Over the next two hours, he feeds remains to Braun in the barn (or eats them himself) and then readies himself for sleep.





## The Farmhouse

All the Living Room's furniture has been shoved aside or stacked against the walls. The floor features odd chemical burns. Thackeray uses this as his main above ground spell casting area. He can sometimes be found here, working on aspects for his multidimensional gate spells. This area sometimes features strange, alien activity. Fish-like things swim through the air or strange, buzzing laughter come from no discernible source. These can be cause for Sanity Checks (6).

The Kitchen is filthy and fragrant. The room has doubled as an abattoir, blood coats the floor. A platter heaped with week-old chitlins sits on the counter, forgotten. The icebox

has long thawed, its perishable contents rotting.

The WC is the least threatening room in the house. The bathtub's mildew and fungus are unsanitary but not soul-destroying.

The Sun Room has been turned into a greenhouse, filled with foul smelling exotic plants, which Thackeray crushes, burns and utilizes in his sorcery. Many of these plants are either unknown on earth or they have not grown for centuries.

The upstairs Bedroom has been converted for two men's use. A sheet hangs between two beds as a dividing wall.

The Cellar has an earthen floor and several tables for experiments. The remnants of sacrifices and spells litter any surfaces. When not using it, Thackeray keeps the *Librum Vita et Mort* in a locked cabinet. The barrier between worlds is thin. Monstrous things and alien vista visions briefly appear. This gives narrators free reign to invoke any weirdness they wish. Remaining here results in regular Sanity checks, with challenge ratings between 4 and 9.

## Thackeray Penwright: Tension Scene

Tension Scene: 13 Momentum Threshold

When the Tale begins, Thackeray is still three days or so away from his goal. As the Tale progresses, this value can alter to best suit the player's speed. As Act III begins, Thackeray's plans are nearly complete. He requires one more major blood sacrifice for his gate to open. The player will do, as will any other characters unlucky enough to follow the character to the farm.

Failing this tension scene can result in the gate opening, the player's sacrifice or a similar nasty end.





## What if the Gate Opens?

The gate leads to a dead city on the unnamed third planet circling Aldebaran. The city was dedicated to Great Azathoth, itself, and holds a throne of power, which channels god-like power into whoever sits in it. What this means in game terms is up to the Narrator. Power never comes for free.

The price for this is the destruction of everything human in the recipient. Mind and body shatter. Human bodies are remolded into an uncontrolled, formless approximation of Azathoth itself. Only the most potent sorcerers can relearn to control their bodies, enabling them to use the power they have been granted.

# Wrapping Up

## The Repercussions of the Tale's Outcome

### Failure

With failure, the character faces physical, mental and/or spiritual destruction. Further, Giuseppe and/or Mulligan gain access to blackmail materials to control the city's officials, and make life in the city challenging for a while. The Finnegan twins possibly die. Mycroft rebuilds the Temple. As well, Thackeray opens a gate to beyond and gains godlike powers. When he returns to the world, he ushers it toward destruction.

### Success

A character who manages to escape with mind, body and sanity intact is successful. Their overall fate is entwined with the tale's many antagonists.

If Thackeray is killed, then his plans to break the barriers between worlds are put on indefinite hold. His gate still poses a problem, as it allows other worlds/influences to leak

into this one. If Thackeray survives but his plans are ruined, he seeks revenge before pursuing godhood.

Detective Lieutenant Sean Mulligan poses a significant problem whether or not he survives. A decorated law officer's death results in a statewide manhunt, unless Mulligan's secret life is revealed. If he survives, Mulligan seeks to remove any and all threats, including Giuseppe and the character.

Should Giuseppe survive, he tries to recover the life he had; his increasing paranoia makes this almost impossible. His death leaves a power vacuum, which several city officials and gangsters try to fill.

Unless The Temple of Flesh's inner circle is destroyed, it seeks the character's destruction and might continue Thackeray's research. Mycroft is the sort to pursue living godhood, though he places his siblings on the throne first as a tribute to his father.



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# Characters

## Wherein Most of the Dramatis Personæ are Described

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### Mundane Threats

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#### Joseph Giuseppe

Joseph Giuseppe was not born to a life of crime, but he never avoided it either. The child of an Italian immigrant father and a Jewish mother, his childhood was fraught with intolerance and prejudices both from strangers and relatives. He developed a tough skin and a hard heart, invaluable assets.

Over the last five years, Giuseppe developed a network of bribed authorities, including beat cops, judges, city councilmen and more. The secret to this success was on-time payments, regular bonuses and plentiful blackmail material. At his core, Giuseppe is a people person: he knows the best ways to motivate others to serve his whims.

**Body 5:** Athletics 2, Fighting 3, Marksmanship 2, Reflexes 2, Stealth 2, Strength 2, Toughness 2, Vehicles (Automobiles) 2

**Mind 5:** Ingenuity 2, Knowledge (Criminal Activities) 3, Perception 1

**Soul 5:** Guile 3, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 1, Resolve 1

#### Detective Lieutenant Sean Mulligan

Detective Lieutenant Sean Mulligan is the most decorated officer on the force. Mulligan relishes the honors the city has bestowed upon him and leads a somewhat glamorous lifestyle. However, Mulligan has a secret delight in perversion and cruelty, which Joseph Giuseppe uses to manipulate the detective.

Mulligan is a bully who loathes anyone ordering him around. For now, Mulligan is content with finding an outlet for his depraved interests. As time passes, he's

grown resentful, and seeks to end Giuseppe in a way, which won't reveal his ugly side.

**Body 6:** Athletics 3, Fighting 3, Reflexes 2, Stealth 3, Strength 3, Toughness 2, Vehicles (Automobiles) 2

**Mind 4:** Ingenuity 1, Perception 4, Research 3

**Soul 6:** Guile 2, Intimidation 2, Persuasion 2, Resolve 2

### The Finnegan

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#### Mycroft Finnegan

Mycroft Finnegan is the thirty-six-year old leader of the Temple of Flesh, a familial role. Mycroft learned the secrets from his father, Morrison Finnegan. Though he has never viewed himself even close to be his father's equal, Mycroft has become the most ambitious Temple leader yet, using Crown Hill Sanitarium's basement as the site for several rituals until the raid.

He is an enigma, monstrous when needed, yet capable of compassion for his twin siblings, Sera and Ares (see below). Mycroft views recovering the *Librum* as vital both for his siblings' welfare and his plans for the future. He longs to rebuild the Temple and sacrifice the tome's thief in the twins' next healing rite.

**Body 5:** Athletics 2, Fighting 1, Reflexes 2, Strength 1, Toughness 3, Vehicles (Automobiles) 2

**Mind 6:** Ingenuity 2, Knowledge (Forbidden Truths) 3, Knowledge (Occult Lore) 3, Languages (French) 1, Perception 2

**Soul 6:** Guile 2, Intimidation 1, Performance (Oration) 3, Persuasion 2, Resolve 2

**Special:** Mycroft has access to incantations,



which allow him to perceive from afar, summon and bind servitor creatures, and anything more the narrator wishes. Most of his magical might is connected to the Librum, so reducing these incantations' effectiveness is recommended.

### **Sera and Ares Finnegan**

Sera and Ares Finnegan are thoracopagus Siamese twins in their mid-twenties. They were born conjoined from the thorax to the lower belly and would have died in their infancy had their father not prophesized them to be the progenitors of a supreme being and utilized incantations to prolong their lives.

After Morrison Finnegan's death, the twins' care has fallen to Mycroft. The longevity rite's sorcery requires an annual sacrifice and lengthy ritual, and the all too real deadline is approaching. Without the book's rites, the Finnegan twins' bodies tear themselves apart.

**Body 5:** Athletics 1, Fighting 1, Reflexes 1, Stealth 2, Strength 1, Toughness 1, Vehicles (Automobiles) 2

**Mind 6:** Knowledge (Forbidden Truths) 1, Knowledge (Occult Lore) 2, Perception 1

**Soul 6:** Guile 1, Persuasion 1, Resolve 1

### **Bathsheba**

Bathsheba is the name Mycroft gave the Temple's byakhee servitor. It responds to this name ostensibly because Mycroft bears the leadership mark; he could call it anything at all, and it would heed him. That it also responds to this name when used by others is a mystery.

Narrators can decide if the sounds are the equivalent of a trained response or if the creature's generations of exposure to humankind has resulted in a perverse pleasure in having a "human" name.

**Body 9:** Athletics 1, Fighting 2, Strength 2, Toughness 1

**Mind 6:** Perception 2

**Soul 6:** Resolve 1

**Special Rules:** Flight, Innate Attack 2 (claws), Innate Attack 1 (bite), Drain (Innate Attack – Bite; Body), Interstellar Travel, Physical Protection 2 (rough skin and fur), Unspeakable Visage 6

## **Thackeray Penwright**

Over his 40 years of life, Thackeray Homes Penwright discovered the incredible power witchcraft could bestow. Further, he learned cosmic forces could be mastered by a strong enough will. He signed the Black Man's book, drank liquors from Leng and other distant worlds, and sought to become a living god. This ambition has driven him to perform hundreds of monstrous deeds.

He has bestowed his devotion to numerous occult powers, great old ones and outer gods. However, his loyalty always remains constant to one being, himself. He is quite mad, yet calculating, capable of casual savagery and cunning tricks. Over the next few days, he hopes to complete his life's work.

**Body 5:** Athletics 2, Fighting 1, Reflexes 1, Stealth 2, Strength 1, Toughness 1

**Mind 9:** Ingenuity 3, Knowledge (Forbidden Truths) 5, Knowledge (Occult Lore) 5, Languages (Latin) 3, Languages (French) 4, Perception 4

**Soul 6:** Guile 3, Intimidation 2, Performance (Oration) 3, Persuasion 2, Resolve 2

**Special:** As with the Finnegans, Thackeray known numerous incantations, granting him what powers the narrator wishes.

### ***Librum Vita et Mort***

This anonymous French medical text first appeared in 1772. The *Librum Vita et Mort*, (or Book of Life and Death) contained horrifying secrets about anatomy and physiology, which derive from cosmic truth. Seven hundred copies of this book were created. By the twentieth century, less than fifty copies survive in various collections.



## Handout 1

If you are receiving this, then I am dead. The pages inside may be your one chance to avoid a similar fate. I apologize for their condition, but I have faith you will be able to decipher them.

Prepare yourself as well for three visitors. Look for the first at midday, the next an hour after, and the final after sunset.

I apologize for placing this burden upon you, but the ax must fall somewhere.

## Handout 2

### MIDNIGHT RAID REVEALS HUMAN SACRIFICE!

#### AUTHORITIES SAY THEY HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS GRUESOME SCENE!

Police raided the Crown Hill Sanitarium last night, disturbing a debased ritual. Sources in the department claim a cult calling itself The Temple of Flesh has practiced nocturnal ceremonies in the asylum's basement for five years. These rites included animal sacrifices. The raid resulted in over one dozen arrests and several deaths.

"Several tips from trusted sources, which led us to investigatethisorganization," said Lieutenant Sean

Mulligan, the detective in charge of the investigation. Mulligan determined the threat in short order, and coordinated with federal agencies to put a stop the group's activities. "This group was dangerous."

Police identified the cult's leader as one Mycroft Finnegan, son of deceased steel magnate Morrison Finnegan. Finnegan titled himself the cult's High Wizard and led the group through midnight debaucheries and blasphemous rites. Members claim to have drunk animal blood, consumed illegal narcotics during their rituals.