

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

THE MANY DEATHS OF EDWARD BIGSBY

BY ADAM GAUNTLETT



Pelgrane Press

PZ 16

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The Many Deaths of Edward Bigsby

The Hook

Edward Bigsby pleads for help, but before he can say more he is brutally killed. It does not end there; dead Bigsbys are being found all over the city. Who is Bigsby, and what does he want?

The Awful Truth

Bigsby is an artist who shares rooms with an occult-minded graverobber, Norton Pickett, in Soho. Pickett has been experimenting with a new travel technique, by which he claims to be able to go wherever he wants, even to alternate dimensions and other worlds. Bigsby has become increasingly worried about Pickett, and a mutual friend told Bigsby that the PCs may be able to help. Pickett caught Bigsby sneaking around in Pickett's room, and Bigsby used Pickett's transportation device to get away.

Unbeknownst either to Bigsby or to Pickett, the device is not working exactly as designed. Rather than transport one person to one destination, the device sends one person to as many destinations as it currently has 'programmed' into it. Multiple copies can be made, each unaware that any other copy exists. The result: multiple Picketts are chasing multiple Bigsbys.

The end result could be even more terrible. The device is copying itself, and will start appearing all over London, and eventually all over the world. As the device is actually a portion of Yog-

Sothoth, if left unchecked this will mean that the Old One will permanently gain direct access to the earth.

The Spine

Bigsby pays a call, but dies before he can say what he needs. Soon afterward the police question the PCs, as another Bigsby has been found, dead, with their address in his coat pocket. The PCs will need to identify Bigsby and find out what he wants. They track Bigsby to Brilliant Chang's drug den (possibly annoying the triads), find out more from the researcher Charlie Danforth, and learn about the connection between Pickett, his Door, and Freidrich Wilhelm von Juntz: the Tantorisi Variant lock. Meanwhile Picketts are busy killing Bigsbys all over London, and a Pickett may decide to tackle the PCs directly. Green doors are appearing in very odd places. Inspector Howard hauls the PCs in for questioning when a brutal murder (committed by Pickett) gets one of his men killed. The finale sees the PCs track Pickett to an illegal basement drinking club and from there to the disused Underground station at Royston Road. If they've been diligent in previous scenes then all is well; if not, they may have an uncomfortable final encounter with Yog-Sothoth.

BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

The PCs will encounter Green Doors in more than one scene. This section explains their use.

This device appears to be an ordinary panelled door, probably (**Architecture**) from a Georgian townhouse, judging by the style. The doorknocker is in the shape of a mythological creature, most likely a faun or satyr, which holds the knocker in its mouth. There is no number on the door. The only unusual thing about the door is its lock, which superficially resembles a Yale or Bramah, but closer examination (**Locksmith, Evidence Collection**) shows this is not so. It is a unique design, made entirely of silver, and while the workmanship is not masterful, it is intricate and delicate. Rough handling may destroy it, as may an unsuccessful attempt to pick the lock. There are chalk marks on the door, most of which have been erased or partly so. The remaining mark is an address in London.

Locksmith (Core Clue) identifies the lock as a variation on the Chubb Detector, first invented in 1818 and supposed to be unpickable. The lock has a protective device built in; should someone try to gain access using anything other than the key, the lock jams shut and will not open again until the detector is re-set, using either the door's actual key or a special regulator key. This version also has a metal 'curtain' lock cover built in, preventing a lockpicker from seeing the tumblers clearly, thus making it even more difficult to pick it.

Keeper's Note: all this security makes it challenging for a character to pick the lock. 2 points of **Locksmith**

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will be needed, and is at least half an hour's work. Remember that this time a locked door is not preventing the plot moving forward; the lock itself, and not what's on the other side of the door, is the real clue.

When encountered, the door is always unlocked. It can be locked with the silver key found in **Cheap Rooms in Soho** (p. 16). It also locks itself automatically if someone tries to interfere with it.

The lock is the key to the door's power. Magical runes have been incised, which (**Occult**) seem to be an invocation to a God or demon. **Cthulhu Mythos** will know that it is actually a rite to catch the attention of Yog-Sothoth, and that, in effect, the lock is now a very small part of that Old One. **Occult** will know that there is a mention of something similar in a book at the British Library. See also *The Lure of the Lock* in **Bibliophilic** (p. 14).

The door is meant to be a transport device. The user goes in, and comes out wherever he pleases. The only restriction is that there has to be a door at the destination, and the user has to know that the destination door exists. So if, for example, the user knows there is such a place as Carcosa, the user can get there, but the trip is impossible if the user is unaware that Carcosa exists. The trip is one-way, so unless the user has an alternate means of transport, getting back from places like Carcosa may prove challenging. There is also no guarantee that the destination is safe, so the Titanic at the bottom of the ocean or the middle of a burning building (for example) are both reachable, but may not be survivable.

As the door is effectively a part of Yog-Sothoth, it connects directly with the

Old One. This can lead to unpleasant consequences for the user - see **Down the Rabbit Hole** (p. 17). This also means that the door has no restriction on its appearances; it can turn up multiple times. See also **Yog-Sothoth Awakes** (p. 20).

Pickett is 'programming' destinations by writing them directly onto the door with chalk. He thinks that so long as he erases a previous destination, the door 'forgets' its old instructions and obeys the new. This is not so. The door remembers every destination, so a user will now end up in each destination, at the same time, with no idea that something has gone wrong.

When a user is copied, everything he wears or carries is also copied. Keepers worried about introducing multiple copies of von Juntz's *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* to the game should bear in mind that, as per **On the Cutting Room Floor** (p. 16), once a copy dies, all the copy's possessions decay, and will be destroyed within twelve hours.

The PCs may believe that smashing a lock destroys a door. This is not entirely correct. Defacing it with an Elder Sign (*Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 115) would defuse it, but destroying the lock causes a very brief manifestation of Yog-Sothoth. This manifestation does destroy the door, but it also destroys everything else within 100 square yards. The Keeper should treat this as a gas main explosion (*Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 67) for damage purposes, with the added penalty of a 6-point **Stability** test for anyone nearby, as Yog-Sothoth makes its presence felt. Remember the additional 6 **Stability** and 4 **Sanity** loss for the manifestation, if any characters happen to see the event and survive. Anyone investigating the aftermath of such an event - assuming it took place

anywhere public, and most of London qualifies - will probably find half a dozen or so people wandering about in shock. These unfortunate souls were witnesses to the manifestation, and are now insane.

DEATH IN SOHO

This section is background, to give the Keeper a better idea of how to populate scenes set in Soho. Most of the information in this section should be available to PCs with **Streetwise**. Keepers should be aware that characters in this scenario are based on their real-life counterparts, who flourished in the 1920s Soho drug trade. Their bowdlerized history has been moved slightly in time to the 1930s, but Keepers wanting a Classic game could as easily use them then as now.

Geographically, Soho is in the West End of London, bounded by Oxford Street to the North, Regent Street to the West, Leicester Square to the South, and Charing Cross Road to the East. It's about one square mile in area. Traditionally it has been the city's entertainment district, home to vaudeville, cinemas and dance halls, and in the 1930s it became famous for the number of artists and writers who made it their haunt.

Soho is also famous for crime.

Drugs

If it's dope or hemp, then you want to speak to **Eddie Manning**, the Jamaican dealer, and his Greek Dope Queen, who operate out of a little cafe on Berwick Street. Try not to get on Eddie's bad side; he's a known gunman. Or you could try Brilliant Chang and

Death in Soho

his mob, but they're a bit particular about who they do business with. That said, if you happen to be pretty, young and female, Chang will probably try to sweet-talk you, hoping to get you to deal snow for him.

Card games

Try not to get into a Soho card game. The Australians have that, and most of the other con games, sewn up tight. Steer clear of Anzac Poker at all costs; it's just a quick way to empty suckers' pockets. Australian **Paddy O'Brian**'s the most notorious of the bunch, but there are plenty of others. One of their favourite scams is the Irishman's Will. A rich Irishman has passed away, and left £60,000 to be given to charitable causes, the money to be distributed by worthy citizens selected at random from the community by the trustees. The worthy citizens can distribute as much or as little of the £60,000 as they see fit. Of course, in order to claim the £60,000, they first have to hand over a security deposit to the trustees. Truly, Aussie cunning knows no bounds.

Pick-pocketing

Check your change carefully. **Owen Jennings**, aka **Jack Seymour**, aka **Three-Fingers Jack**, late of the Dorset Regiment (Military Medal and Bar), led a gang of twenty Soho forgers that, when Jack was sent down in 1928, was supposed to be responsible for ninety percent of the forgeries in Britain. On release he went back to his old trade, only to go down again in March 1935.

Gambling

Fancy a flutter on the ponies? Not a problem my son, there are touts

everywhere. Newbury, Epsom, Earl's Park and Kempton are all popular racecourses. Mind you don't get too close to the **Sabinis**, who run protection rackets against the track touts. The Italians use knives and aren't shy about it. Moreover they're on the outs with the Yiddishers at the moment, and open warfare could flare up at any time. The Battle of Lewes Racecourse in 1936 will see them finally reach an accommodation, but until then, be careful.

Fighting

In fact if you should see a street fight – and you probably will – keep to one side and don't mind the blood, for they're fond of razors in Soho, and it's not uncommon to see a man in the street all over scarlet swearing because *'the bastards would do it when I've got my new suit on!'* They call that kind of wound – long, deep, bloody – 'striping', and it's meant to be a punishment, but some bear the scars as a badge of honour.

Should you be so unlucky as to get into a fight, **Fleeing** might be your best option. Razors and knives are common, but Soho doesn't stop there; bottles, iron bars, knuckledusters, guns, all are readily available. Some of it may be concealed. It's a favourite Soho trick to secrete a razor blade in the peak of a cloth cap; invisible, but one swipe will lay your face open.

Glamorous Soho is exceptionally dangerous for the unwary, and anyone who ventures off of the beaten track should bear that in mind.

Typical Soho Thug

Abilities: Athletics 4, Firearms 3, Scuffling 6, Weapons 5

Weapons: -1 (kick with metal-

studded boots, knife, razor hidden in cap, knuckleduster; +0 (Light Firearm)

Racketeering

There's plenty of racketeering and protection mobs as well, plying their quiet trade. Before the Great War it would have been the suited and booted Titanics of Hoxton, the Elephant Boys from Elephant and Castle, or the Macausland gang out of King's Cross. The Elephant Boys, who allegedly bit the heads off of rats for fun, kept things going well into the 1930s, and were still a force to be reckoned with after World War Two. The other gangs faded, though some Titanics found their way into the Sabini racetrack gang, and so lasted into the 1930s.

Prostitution

If you like pliant female companionship you can either have one of the dollies off the street or one of the more genteel call girls who operate out of their own little flats. Or indeed if you like pliant companionship of any kind whatsoever; Soho caters for all tastes. The French run the high-class trade, and men like **Juan Antonio Castanar** do a fair line in 'dance academies', luring in women through promises of stardom to work in the basement clubs. **Micheletti**, aka the Algerian, aka the Assassin, savage knife-fighter, is his chief rival, but there are plenty of others. Sex can mean anything the customer likes; whips and handcuffs are known to have been on the menu ever since the 1923 expose, *Sex Slaves in a Piccadilly Flat*, and blue movies including *The Fall* (starring Cissie as The Goblin Queen) and *The Burglar's Surprise* were on offer as early as 1920. Violence always lurked behind the scenes, and in the mid-1930s a string of prostitute murders led to the

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police believing a ‘Jack the Strangler’ was on the prowl. This may have been connected to wars within the pimp fraternity, for few of the French leaders lived long enough to enjoy retirement. Certain customers need to be careful, as buggery is still a criminal offence that can get the offender sent down for several years. The blackmailers are well aware of this, and several gangs make good money from their unfortunate marks.

Drinking

There are plenty of illegal basement clubs open long after the official closing time, so it’s not difficult to get drunk. The customer can get whatever he pleases. If his tastes run to wild escapades, then the Falstaff in Oxford Street might be to his liking; women there have been known to walk naked from room to room on a ten shilling bet, and traders in stolen goods vend their wares openly. But there are all sorts: the Panton, Joker, Mandarin, Melton, Hell (for those who like their jazz hot), the Shim Sham, the Silver Slipper. **Kate Meyrick**, a determined Irishwoman and suffragette, runs the 43 Club on Gerrard Street; the daughter of a doctor, her children go to Harrow and Rodean, and two of her daughters married nobility, all on club profits. The 43 was not her only enterprise. She ran a succession of clubs: The Cat Burglar, the Bunch of Keys, the Manhattan, Proctor’s. Rumors persisted that Meyrick allowed cocaine to be sold at her clubs, and that she had police sergeant Goddard on her payroll as insurance against legal troubles. It’s rumoured that her daughters will take over the family business when she dies. There’s no shortage of colourful characters in the club trade: Iron Foot Jack

of the Caravan Club, phrenologist, escapologist and strongman; Freddy Ford of the Ham Club (aka New Avenue, Havinoo), who had the bearing and look of a Guards Colonel, complete with bushy moustache; James Kitten from Sierra Leone, former chef and owner of The Black Man’s Cafe, who sued Odham’s Press for libel and lost spectacularly.

Enter Bigsby

Scene Type: Introduction

Bigsby approaches the character at their home or place of business. Bigsby is young, earnest, and balding, with hair that’s slightly too long to be fashionable. He dresses in colourful Bohemian styles, and is never without his top hat, even indoors. He speaks very quickly, and **Medicine** suspects that he may be a cocaine addict; he is fizzing with energy, as though on a massive euphoric high.

He bursts into the room and demands to speak to the PCs. He does not know them by sight, and will be very relieved to discover he’s found the ones he’s looking for.

“Praise be to Her!” he says, “I didn’t think I’d reach you in time. Danforth said you’d be able to help me, but I think he’s close on my trail. You see –“

At that point his head bursts into flame. The fire is intense and will not be smothered (it is in fact a **Shrivelling**) and within moments, Bigsby is dead. His head is a small, charred cinder, while the rest of him, even his top hat, is intact. It’s a 5-point **Stability** test for witnessing the unnatural killing.

The following **core clues** can be had:

- **Occult or Streetwise:** ‘Praise be to Her’ is an unusual exclamation. There’s a small group of occultists and Bohemians who claim to worship what they call the Eternal Mother; it sounds like something they might say. They have several ‘temples’ - low class booze halls and coffee shops - out in Soho.

- **Biology or Medicine:** Whoever the dead man was, he was definitely a cocaine addict. The track marks on his arm are unmistakable. He has a small supply in his coat pocket, along with a fancy gold-trimmed syringe. The supply is wrapped up in a twist of coloured paper, with a red dragon printed on it. **Streetwise** used in combination with this clue and the **Occult** clue above will allow the PCs to narrow down the search, as there’s only one place in Soho that the Eternal Mother enthusiasts and the triad gang which uses that particular marking on their product packaging might meet: Brilliant Chang’s restaurant. If this connection isn’t immediately made, the PCs can still find their way to the Eternal Mother Club if they follow the above **Occult** clue; it will just take slightly longer.

- **Oral History or Evidence Collection:** Danforth; that name rings a bell. Danforth is a professional researcher you’ve used in the past. She specializes in pagan European studies, particularly witch cults and persecutions. It shouldn’t be difficult to track her down, as she can usually be found at the British Library. **Keeper’s Note:** feel free to replace Danforth with a more campaign-suitable NPC, if necessary.

Enter Bigsby

The dead man has no identity papers on him. His wallet contains a five pound note and some change. There is also a sketch book with several drawings in it, of middling (professional, but uninspired) quality. He has a business card; either the card is one belonging to one of the player characters, or, if this is unlikely, it is a locksmith's card with one of the characters' name and address scrawled on the back. The locksmith is unconnected with the scenario, but the PCs can chase this red herring if it pleases them. Bigsby approached him for advice about the lock, but the locksmith never saw it or understood what Bigsby wanted him to do.

- A 1-point **Art** spend notices that the only picture in the sketch book that is at all interesting shows a door set in a frame on its own in an otherwise featureless plain. The shadow thrown by the door is very odd, much larger than the door itself, and seems almost to be moving. As a subject, it's rather surrealist. (Anyone who later compares this sketch with the Green Door sees that the two are identical.)

A 1-point **Evidence Collection** spend notices that outside, with a clear view of the room through one of the windows, is a dark-suited man, staring intently. If the room happens to be one or more stories up, then he may be standing on a roof opposite; otherwise he's on the other side of the street. As soon as he is seen, the man runs away, dropping something as he flees. There's almost no hope of catching up with him. If a PC tries, treat it as a **Fleeing** contest (*Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 58) with Pickett having 2 extra dedicated pool points because of his head start. If it should happen that Pickett is somehow cornered, have him die spectacularly,



say by falling under an omnibus. After all, there are plenty more Picketts where he came from.

The item dropped was a comb with several strands of hair in it. **Biology** or **Evidence Collection** identifies the hairs as probably belonging to the dead man, as they match his colouring and hair length. **Occult** knows that items like hairs, fingernails and scraps of flesh are useful when casting curse spells. **Cthulhu Mythos** knows that the spell **Shrivelling** uses such items to weaken the target's resistance.

Norton Pickett

Abilities: Athletics 2, Disguise 1, Fleeing 6, Filch 4, Magic 8, Scuffling 4, Weapons 1, Health 6

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1 (nerves like a cat)

Stealth Modifier: +1 (practiced burglar)

Magic: Dominate (*RM* p.19), Dread Name of Azathoth (*ToC* p. 114), Runic Target (*RM* p. 20), Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler (*ToC* p.118), Shrivelling (*ToC* p. 116).

Weapon: -2 (knife). This is the knife Pickett will use to summon Dimensional Shamblers and is made of gold. As such, it isn't much use as a weapon, as the metal is soft.

Important Possessions: Each Pickett has a regulator key for the Green Door (p. 7). They also have notes written by each other to each other, co-ordinating their activities as best they can through a series of dead drops. Finally, each Pickett carries a copy of the 1839 edition *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*.

Three Things: Pickett never looks anyone in the face, and is always

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smiling, as though at a private joke. He wears gloves, and is phobic about touching other people. He can be a heavy drinker, and when drunk boasts about his arcane powers.

Chasing the Dragon

Scene Type: Core

The PCs may try to track Bigsby via his Eternal Mother connections. Thanks to clues in the previous scene they may go straight to Brilliant Chang's place; alternatively they may call on all the Eternal Mother hangouts they know about, eventually finding their way to Brilliant Chang's.

Refer to **The Eternal Mother** (p. 12) should the PCs try to visit all the Mother hangouts in Soho, and create scenes to suit.

Brilliant Chang's is a Chinese restaurant, very exotic with colourful silk hangings and food unfamiliar to English palates. The club is a private members' place with rooms above the restaurant. Access is by stair at the back of the restaurant, right next to the kitchen. Brilliant Chang's is a known triad meeting place (**Streetwise**) connected distantly with the Sung Yee On in Hong Kong, and is owned (on paper at least) by Philip Ong, a triad soldier, or 49. It's an open secret that the restaurant is actually owned by Chan Nan, aka Brilliant Chang, a high-ranking official of the Society. The Eternal Mother group has no real connection with the Sung Yee On; Chang uses them as a cover for other activities. A harmless bunch of Bohemian eccentrics can be handy to have around when you want to distract the police from your drug den.

This does mean that the meeting rooms will be watched by triad soldiers, and

The Eternal Mother

Some PCs may leap to the conclusion that the Eternal Mother group has some kind of Mythos connection.

This is not so. Though the group has unorthodox views, they have almost no Mythos knowledge, though they do have occult leanings. They believe in the eternal verity of the female principle. Everything springs from the Mother; the Mother is the only true guiding force, from birth to death. They organize under matriarchal lines, with each group having a woman as an unofficial leader. However the groups are so fragmented that, apart from their central belief in the Mother, they have surprisingly little in common. One group might have an Egyptian fetish, and spend all their time playing Enochian Chess. Another might go Celtic, and revere the Mother-as-Morrigan. Yet another might express themselves entirely in atonal music, and so on and on.

Aside from their Mother fixation, the groups have one other thing in common: a distrust of outsiders. Outsiders are mockers. Unless the characters are already on friendly terms with a group (a **Streetwise**, **The Knowledge** or **Occult** spend and perhaps a flashback scene could be useful) then inquiry is likely to be snubbed.

Unless the Keeper prefers otherwise, they have no magic, though some of them might pretend to have powers.

any PCs who cause trouble may find themselves in hot umami broth.

Triad 49's

Abilities: Athletics 9, Fleeing 6, Scuffling 8, Weapons 5, Health 7

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +0

Stealth Modifier: +1 (practiced street thieves)

Weapons: -1 (knife) +0 (large cleaver)

The Eternal Mother enthusiasts who meet here are involved in the Surrealist movement, correspond regularly with Andre Breton, conduct experiments in dream reading, automatic writing, and test the limitations of rationality. A collage of their artwork is pinned all over, along with a stuffed crocodile, a dummy dressed in a fireman's uniform with the face of a baboon, and menus

from imaginary restaurants pinned to the walls with forks.

This group know Bigsby well and can identify him from his description. They will be surprised and shocked if they are told he is dead.

Questioning the group will want either a **Reassurance** or a **Streetwise** spend to get past their initial distrust of strangers. However once this is done they may offer the following:

- Bigsby had been worried recently about his flatmate. At first he just wanted to move out, but found it difficult to get alternate accommodation as cheap. Then he got scared, and began asking if anyone knew anything about 'deep, mystical influences.'

Revenge of the Dragon

- Bigsby developed a strange fixation at about this time. He became afraid of doors. He disliked stepping through them, and would inspect them carefully, as though suspicious that they weren't what they seemed to be.
- Bigsby began asking if anyone knew anything about a book titled *The Lure of the Lock*, written by 'some American fellow.' Nobody did.

The group also know Bigsby's address, but will not give it out to strangers, even those who make the **Streetwise** spend.

- **Core clue - Evidence Collection.** The group's notebooks, carelessly left spread all over the place, hold contact details for all group members. **Filch** would be very useful in getting hold of one of these. If that is done, then the PCs will have Bigsby's address. See further **Cheap Rooms in Soho**.

Revenge of the Dragon

Scene Type: Alternate / Antagonist Reaction

Theoretically the players oughtn't get caught up in triad business. This section is for Keepers whose players can't stay away from Brilliant Chang.

Chang Nan, allegedly the son of a well-to-do businessman, came to England during the Great War either to pursue a commercial career or study medicine, depending on which account you believe. However he spurned those options and opened his first restaurant, running dope from his private apartment, thus starting his career as one of the leading traffickers in the West End.

Chang, short and stocky, dressed snappily in a fur-lined coat, and preferred patent leather shoes. He described himself as a general merchant and Admiralty contractor, both of which were polite fictions. The papers described him in scurrilous terms, using all the racial epithets they could think of, but the truth would seem to be that he was a cool customer who knew his market very well, and wasn't afraid to take risks.

The restaurant was raided so often that in the end Chang sold it and moved his base of operations. The Palm Court Club became his 'means of income', while the dope flowed freely from his home in Limehouse. Couriers, usually women, picked up the cocaine there and went to Soho to sell it. His Limehouse address looked almost derelict from the outside; the ground floor was an empty shop front, while the second was rented as a flophouse for Chinese sailors. Chang took the middle floor, and set it up as his personal silver-dragon decorated den of luxury, complete with massive bed.

This house was also raided, but it proved difficult to find any evidence; the entire building had to be taken apart before a small supply of cocaine was found in a hidden closet compartment. Chang claimed it had been planted by the police, but the jury did not believe him. He was sentenced to fourteen months imprisonment and recommended for deportation, which duly took place in April 1925. It's alleged that he made over £1 million during his career, most of which had been sent home to China. Accounts vary as to what happened next; he may have continued to sell dope on the Continent, or he may have retired.

There is no evidence that Chang was linked to any triad, let alone the Sung Yee On. That is the author's invention, for the sake of the narrative, as is the timeline relocation from the Twenties to the Thirties.

Chang wasn't the only famous Chinese criminal in Soho. His lieutenant Ah Wong succeeded him briefly in the trade, while Sui Fong, a former ship's steward, became notorious for his gambling dens, orgies, and his sideline as a marriage broker for Chinese men and English girls. However Chang was the most notorious, and for a time became emblematic of the kind of gutter press Chinese villain that Sax Rohmer made much of.

If Chang appears personally in the plot, it's a sign that the PCs are in trouble, as his only reason for so doing would be if the PCs annoyed the triad sufficiently to make it want revenge. He can be reasoned with, but will probably demand some kind of tribute as recompense for all the trouble caused.

Brilliant Chang, Triad Boss

Abilities: Athletics 8, Fleeing 8, Firearms 9, Filch 6, Scuffling 10, Weapons 7, Health 9

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1 (very cautious)

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapons: -1 (knife), +0 (small firearm)

Special: If Brilliant Chang becomes an ally, he acts as a free **Intimidation 2, Chemistry 1** pool.

Brilliant Chang's gang have no Mythos connection and no real plot significance. However it is possible, as a result of **Chasing the Dragon** (p. 12), that the PCs intrigued or annoyed the triad sufficiently that the triad decides

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to take revenge. Gangsters will trail the PCs to their hideouts or homes, steal from them, disrupt their place of business or attack them. While most triad gangsters prefer to get up-close-and-personal when they attack, in the Pulp tradition Chinese thugs are two-gun shootists whose preferred method is to shoot fast and often. Feel free to use these attackers as often as necessary.

Triad 49's, Improved Model

Abilities: Athletics 10, Fleeing 8, Firearms 10, Filch 4, Scuffling 10, Weapons 8, Health 9

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapons: -1 (knife), +0 (light firearm, large cleaver)

Bibliophilic

Scene Type: Core

Charlotte “Charlie” Danforth is a researcher by trade, and is well known at the British Library, the British Museum, and many of the other national archives. When not earning a crust, she spends her time writing earnest novels about Soviet Russia and the rise of Communism. *The Young Worker of Prague*, *The Berlin Revelation*, *The Young Woman of Petrograd*, are all hers; most are published through an obscure printer in Holborn. They make very little money, but are well regarded by those who care about such things.

Occult and Mythos researchers use Danforth because, in spite of everything, she seems to be unusually well equipped to handle outré revelations. So far, she hasn’t crumbled under the weight of strange knowledge. She’s particularly good on witch cults and necromancy, and is supposed to be an authority on

the life and times of Friedrich Wilhelm von Juntz. Unfortunately she has been unable to persuade her publisher to print her Mythos-tinged novels; *The Triumph of Trotsky Against The Flesh-Eaters* remains hidden in her sock drawer.

Danforth can be found at any of the major research institutions; it is up to the Keeper how difficult it is to track her down.

She usually refuses to say anything about another person’s research, as a matter of professional etiquette. **Reassurance** will get her to open up. She is more likely to talk if she knows Bigsby has been killed. She will say:

- Bigsby is someone she knows ‘through the trade.’ Bigsby is an artist who earns his keep by doing cover illustrations for novel dust jackets. While Danforth knew Bigsby had an interest in the occult, Danforth assumed it was all just talk.
- Bigsby asked Danforth to help him with some researches. He was particularly keen to know everything he could about locks and locksmithing. He even paid up front.
- Bigsby also wanted to know if Danforth knew anyone who might be able to help him with ‘a mystical problem.’ Bigsby refused to go into any detail. Danforth recommended the PCs. Danforth didn’t know there was any real danger involved.
- Danforth knows where Bigsby lives, and will tell the PCs. See also **Cheap Rooms in Soho** (p. 16).

Danforth has been researching at Bigsby’s request, and has gathered a



pile of material, including *The Lure of the Lock* by the American historian John M. Mossman. Studying this material will get the protagonist a dedicated **Locksmith** pool of **2 points** and will take **4 hours** worth of skimming, with no **Library Use** spend needed. If the PCs don’t approach Danforth, for whatever reason, they can still get a copy of Mossman’s book through any research library.

The Lure of the Lock is a fairly dry but comprehensive record of the history of locks, up to the date of printing (1928). It covers every imaginable variation on the theme.

- **Core clue – Library Use.** One of the illustrations shows an unusual looking lock, similar to a Chubb detector, with what appear to be symbols or runes incised on the faceplate. *The Tantorisi Variant* says

The Blue Lamp

the title, with a footnote *Illustration provided courtesy of the Horniman Museum, London*. There is no further mention of the Variant in the text. Anyone who has seen a Green Door will recognize this lock.

Charlie Danforth

Abilities: Fleeing 4, Health 5

Alertness Modifier: +0

Stealth Modifier: -1 (clumsy)

Weapons: None

Spells: either none, or use Idiosyncratic Magic (cf. *Trail of Cthulhu* p. 212 and *Rough Magicks*, p. 28)

Three Things: She wears cheap suits and chain smokes. She addresses her friends as ‘comrade.’ Though she denounces religion as the opiate of the masses, she is a lapsed Catholic, with all the guilt that this implies.

Special: If Danforth becomes an ally, she acts as a free **Occult 2** pool. At the Keeper’s discretion, if the characters have no Mythos knowledge, she can also act as a free **Cthulhu Mythos 1** pool.

The Blue Lamp

Scene Type: Core

The PCs are interrupted in their investigation by the police, who want to ask them some questions. This can happen at any time, but the Keeper is advised to use it at some point after the PCs have talked to Danforth, or discovered *The Lure of the Lock*.

The police are investigating the murder of Edward Bigsby. This may cause some initial confusion, as the PCs are also investigating Bigsby’s death. However the police are following the trail of a completely different Bigsby; this one was stabbed to death while riding an omnibus. The killer ran off, injuring the ticket collector during the confusion.

The police think Bigsby had something to do with the PCs, because they found a business card in Bigsby’s pocket with one of their addresses on it.

A great deal depends on whether or not the PCs reported the previous Bigsby slaying to the authorities. If not, then the scene is relatively straightforward, so long as the PCs keep quiet about the previous death. If they did report it, or mention it when questioned, then the police are totally confused. They think that the PCs must be up to no good, since it beggars belief that two such deaths should be connected to them in such bizarre circumstances.

Core Clues:

- **Cop Talk:** The killer probably wasn’t a professional. He attacked his victim in full view of several witnesses. However, he is extremely dangerous, and is suspected to be a vitriol (acid) thrower, as the ticket collector was grievously injured. (**Keeper’s Note:** not vitriol, but **Shrivelling**.)
- **Streetwise, The Knowledge:** The bus this Bigsby was on would have taken him straight past the character’s house or place of business. He may have been trying to get to the PC when he was killed.
- **Evidence Collection:** Judging by the description of the victim, the dead man and the man who burned to death in front of the PCs are blood relatives. There are too many similarities between them for it to merely be a close resemblance. Perhaps twins? Yet if so each man not only looked the same as the other, but wore the same clothes and carried the same possessions, right

down to the sketch book and wallet. They even had the same amount of money in their wallets. A 1-point **Evidence Collection** spend will notice uncanny similarities, such as banknotes with the same serial number, or coffee stains in exactly the same place on the victim’s shirt, or that the drawings in both sketchbooks are identical.

If the PCs somehow arouse the suspicions of the police, then for the next few days they’ll be followed by plainclothes detectives. Anything they do during this period may be watched. While this is going on, Detective Inspector Howard, who is in charge of the case, will be applying for a warrant to search their business premises or homes; depending on the PCs’ actions while under surveillance, he may get that warrant.

Plainclothes Detectives

Abilities: Athletics 8, Fleeing 6, Firearms 5, Scuffling 8, Weapon 4, Health 8

Hit Threshold 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapons: -1 (truncheon), +0 (light firearm)

Special: Though in plain clothes, they all wear the same police-issue boots, which may tip off the wary.

Detective Inspector Howard

Abilities: Athletics 9, Fleeing 8, Firearms 7, Scuffling 9, Weapon 6, Health 10

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapons: -1 (truncheon), +0 (light firearm)

Special: If Howard becomes an ally, he acts as a free **Cop Talk 2** pool.

The Many Deaths of Edward Bigsby

On the Cutting Room Floor

Scene Type: Alternate

It's possible, thanks to personal connections or judicious **Cop Talk** spends, that the PCs get to attend, or see the report on, a Bigsby autopsy. They may even attempt to carry one out, if they have the necessary **Medicine** and **Forensics** skills.

If the autopsy is carried out immediately after death - that is, within the first six hours - nothing out of the ordinary is discovered. The deceased is a well nourished adult Caucasian male in his early thirties. Judging by his musculature and physical condition, he probably wasn't a physical labourer. There is evidence that he was a habitual cocaine user and there are traces of the drug in his system. His last meal was Chinese food, probably bought at a cheap restaurant (Brilliant Chang's chop suey, actually).

After the sixth hour, and every hour thereafter, the body and internal organs start to decay at an alarming rate. A 1-point spend in **Forensics** or **Biology** can eliminate all natural causes for this decay; there is no reason for the body to rot like this. Moreover all the usual functions of rigor are superseded; there is no stiffening. The corpse simply turns to a black, sticky substance rather like tar, and does so very quickly. By the end of the twelfth hour, there is nothing left to identify the remains as human, not even the skeletal structure. All that is left is a puddle on the floor. Any specimens that were taken suffer the same fate, no matter how they were preserved. Clothes and all personal possessions decay at the same time, and at the same rate.

The Keeper should bear this in mind, particularly with regard to the first Bigsby. Should the PCs hide the body rather than report the death, they may find (should they come back to it) that there is very little remaining.

This will alarm the police, but they don't immediately connect it to the victim. They assume that something went wrong with their autopsy department, and no amount of denial from the medical professionals will persuade Detective Inspector Howard otherwise. Clearly the sawbones mucked it up.

Of course, if this happens more than once, D.I. Howard may have to change his tune.

Cheap Rooms in Soho

Scene Type: Core

Bigsby's place is little better than a flophouse. The building is a battered old Victorian that has seen better days. It has been cut up into two apartments downstairs, and two upstairs. The downstairs apartments belong to two women, Sarah Raikes and Melissa Gold. According to the sign on the mailbox, the upper rooms are shared by E. Bigsby and N. Pickett.

A 1-point spend of **Reassurance**, **Oral History** or **Flattery** used on the two women (who both work from home and enjoy regular custom) reveals that they both like Bigsby, who visits them often, and don't care for Pickett. Pickett is 'a nasty, sneaking sort, who won't ever look you in the eye.' He doesn't seem to have a job but always has a little money. He often gets packages in the post, and once was very upset when the package got delivered

to Sarah by mistake. 'I don't know what he was so fussy about. It was only a mouldy old book!' For an extra point - assuming the PCs are being followed either by triads or the law, and haven't noticed - the Keeper might allow the women to spot the shadowing party and alert the PCs.

The upper rooms are two large-ish one room apartments connected by an internal door. There is a hotplate in Bigsby's room and a shared toilet out in the corridor. There is no bath, but there is a bathhouse down the street.

Bigsby's room is wall-to-wall red velvet draperies, with several full-size mirrors. He has a large collection of clothes (in much the same style as he wears now), shoes and canes. His easel and drawing table are both set up near the room's only window. His address book contains no interesting information, but there's enough here and in his letters (scattered in a heap near the easel) to identify him as a working artist with contacts in the publishing trade.

Pickett's room is almost completely bare. He seems to need very few creature comforts. Compared to Bigsby he's remarkably neat; everything has a place on his shelf. He owns many interesting occult books, among them *Nameless Cults*, the Bridewell edition of von Juntz's famous text (see *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 109).

Standing on its own in a frame is the Green Door (p. 7).

Core clues:

- **Library Use:** a leaflet stuffed as a bookmark between the leaves of *Nameless Cults* is a brochure for the Horniman Museum.

Down the Rabbit Hole

- **Evidence Collection:** Judging by the empty space on the shelf, one of Pickett's books is missing.
- **Forensics:** There's a black bag under Pickett's bed containing what looks like housebreaking equipment and a small quantity of jewellery. While at first glance this seems to be evidence of burglary, the mould and dirt encrusting the tools, and the tarnish on the jewels, suggests that the items were actually looted from graves. There are also several pawnbroker's tickets here for items of jewellery. (**Keeper's Note:** this evidence, if presented to the police, will be enough to get them to follow Pickett rather than the PCs from this point on, assuming that the police were following the PCs at all.)
- **Locksmith:** A silver long-barrel key rests under Pickett's pillow. This key probably fits the lock on the Green Door. There's no sign of the regulator; perhaps Pickett kept that on him.

Miss Danforth, I Presume

Scene Type: Alternate

After the **Cheap Rooms in Soho** (p. 16) scene, the PCs may remember that they know someone who's supposed to be an expert on von Juntz – Charlie Danforth – and decide to ask her advice.

If they tell her everything, (spending 1 point of **Evidence Collection** if necessary), Charlie remembers von Juntz's obsession with keys. He used the word frequently and in many different contexts. However, when

taken in connection with the Green Door, the most likely reference is to something Charlie calls the Tantorisi Variant, a special kind of lock created by the Sicilian craftsman Valter Tantorisi sometime in the 1820s. According to von Juntz's private correspondence, Tantorisi asked von Juntz's advice on the "*peculiarities concerning the relation of lock and key, and moreover on the means by which one Key could open all doors.*" However von Juntz never explained further, though he did spend several months in Sicily.

Charlie knows that there are supposed to be von Juntz papers held at the Horniman Museum, but she's never been allowed to see them. She thinks they're related to the Tantorisi Variant in some way, but doesn't know any details.

Charlie doesn't think the Bridewell translation would have enough information to be really useful to an occultist. The original German, on the other hand, might.

The Keeper may want to combine this scene with **Curse You!** for added drama.

Down the Rabbit Hole

Scene Type: Alternate

It is possible that a PC may decide to step through the Green Door.

The experience is not unpleasant. It costs no **Stability** and there is no obvious noise, smell, or other phenomenon. One minute the character was in one room, now she is in another. However (though she does not realize it yet) there are now six of that character where there was only

one before, each of the 'new people' having emerged in a different pub, undertaker's, graveyard, library or wherever the Keeper thinks would be most interesting.

Those who watch this happen need to make a 2-point **Stability** test, as their companion vanishes from view.

So long as the 'new people' never meet, there is no problem. However if they do meet, then there is a reaction. The exact nature of the reaction varies, but may include:

- The new people can no longer move more than ten feet away from each other. If they do, then they are torn apart by unseen forces and instantly killed. 3-point **Stability** test for witnesses.
- The new people can no longer go through a door – any door, or doorway, or arch. If they do, then they vanish, and are never seen again. 2-point **Stability** test for witnesses. It's up to the Keeper whether this prohibition includes windows.
- The new people are drawn irresistibly towards each other, and collapse into a pile of black, amorphous ooze with occasional limbs. This ooze lives for perhaps ten minutes and then expires, prompting a 3-point **Stability** test.
- The new people become completely insubstantial. They still exist, and can be seen in misty outline. However they cannot touch or manipulate anything in the physical world, and a stiff breeze could blow them apart. It's a 3-point **Stability** test for both witnesses and participants.

The Many Deaths of Edward Bigsby

Curse You!

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

As a result of previous scenes, Norton Pickett may decide to take direct action. This means using a Runic Target and somehow giving it to one of the PCs. This Target may be slipped into a book held by the character, **Filched** into her pocket, given by a **Dominated** Charlie Danforth (p. 14), (“I was told to give this to you”, with no memory of who gave the order), found inside a brochure to the Horniman Museum (p. 20), or however the Keeper fancies. The Target looks like a torn page from Bigsby’s sketch book, with half a self-portrait on it. The runes that power the Target are inscribed on the back.

The Target is linked to a Dimensional Shambler, which will attack whoever holds it. Pickett will summon the Shambler shortly after the Target is delivered. The Target can only be destroyed by the recipient (which takes 10 rounds of concentrated effort with no interruptions) or somehow passed back to Pickett. It cannot be dealt with in any other way.

This is Pickett’s first direct attack against the PCs and he will want to see how things go. He’ll try to find an observation spot (e.g. outside a window), just as he did with Bigsby in the introductory scene, but this time, the success of the spell does not depend on him getting a good view of the target. If Pickett is chased, treat the chase scene the same way as in **Enter Bigsby** (p. 10). He can only try the Runic Target trick once, as he only had one prepared and it takes a week to make a new one.

Dimensional Shambler

Abilities: Athletics 7, Health 10, Scuffling 10

Hit Threshold: 4

Weapon: -1 (talons)

Armour: -3 vs. any (thick, rugose hide)

Stability Loss: +0

Special: **Dimensional Travel.**

The Shambler can travel between dimensions, possibly taking a victim with it. This costs 1 point of **Athletics**, or 2 points if a human-sized victim is being transported. The process takes 1 round either way, and the Shambler can be attacked in that round. To catch a target, the Shambler needs to win two consecutive **Scuffling** contests. In the first, he grabs the target; in the second, he wraps the target in a nightmarish bear hug, and fades away.

Investigation: Sense Trouble - The mirrors and windows in the room reflect a kind of shimmery light that you don’t see in the room itself.

Required Reading

Scene Type: Alternate

It is likely that the PCs will get hold of a copy of *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* either from Pickett (which probably means a Pickett was killed) or through some other means. If this is a Pickett copy, then the Keeper must remember that those will decay (see p. 17), so study time is limited.

Skimming will take **5 hours** and grants **1 pool point** of **Locksmith** or **Occult**, whichever ability the Keeper thinks will be more useful. **Poring** over it may not be possible, as that usually happens in between adventures. However if this can be done, then the reader gains **+2 Cthulhu Mythos**, with **Magic Potential 3**.

- **Core clue - Locksmith:** The book has this to say about locks: *For the Seeker should know that all Doors are but One, that all Locks seal away One truth only. Yog-Sothoth is both Key and Lock, and no Egress is permitted save through the grace of the Opener. Ware the False Prophet who boasts, Shall I not Go where I Please? For he is Damned most assuredly, save that he acts through the Opener, and even so, the gifts of the Opener are capricious indeed...*

This is von Juntz obliquely referring to an incident in his past when he tried to help Valter Tantorisi create the device now known as the Tantorisi Variant. The attempt did not go at all well, which is why Valter Tantorisi’s name is not remembered by Mythos scholars; the survivors of occult experiments get to write the history books.

If this is a Pickett copy, in the margin of the text is an ink sketch of something that looks very like a regulator key for a lock. The sketch probably isn’t contemporary with the book. (In fact, Pickett drew it.)

Bigsby’s Dilemma

Scene Type: Core

There were six Bigsbys, two of which are known to have died. What happened to the rest?

They kept on looking for the PCs, but were wary about being found by Pickett. One of them was decapitated (the body has yet to be discovered), while another is still on the run. In this scene, two Bigsbys manage to avoid being killed and find the PCs. However they both find the PCs at almost the same time.

Fools! I'll Show Them All!

The first Bigsby approaches the PCs warily. Pickett might ambush him at any moment; he has to be careful. He will do it somewhere quiet – their home, perhaps. As soon as he is sure it is safe, Bigsby will plead for help.

He has the following **core clues**:

- He can tell them, if they don't already know, who Pickett is and why Pickett is chasing him.
- According to Bigsby, Pickett first started work on the door months ago, soon after he received a mysterious book in the post. At first it was just a door, standing on its own. Bigsby thought it was some kind of concept art. It had no lock. Then Pickett became very interested in the Horniman Museum and visited it several times, but about a month ago he stopped going. Soon after this Pickett had a strange new lock, quite antique looking, which he carefully installed on his door. That was when things became really peculiar, according to Bigsby. Pickett began talking about his triumph, and how nothing could ever stand in his way now. He offered to show Bigsby 'great and terrible secrets', but Bigsby refused. However, Bigsby did sneak a peek through the door, just to see what was there. He saw something that frightened him terribly (in fact, he saw a portion of Yog-Sothoth). It was at that moment that Pickett caught him in the act, and Bigsby, startled, fell through the door and found himself in a completely different room. Bigsby already had one of the PCs' contact information from a previous visit to Danforth, and decided to ask for help. Bigsby knows Pickett is on his trail and will stop at nothing to get him, but he

doesn't know what to do.

Soon after this tale is complete, the second Bigsby bursts in. This Bigsby is terrified, because Pickett is right behind him. Unless the PCs take steps to stop it (possibly using **Scuffling**), the two Bigsbys will meet, and implode, as per **Down the Rabbit Hole** (p. 17). Their blackened remains mouth helplessly at the PCs, prompting a 3-point **Stability** test.

Pickett, who was right on the heels of the second Bigsby, stops short when he sees the PCs. If he thinks they're off-guard he might risk an attack. Otherwise he makes his getaway, possibly pausing long enough to **Shrivel** someone.

Fools! I'll Show Them All!

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

By this point, Pickett has been encountered more than once. He may even have died. However, the surviving Picketts will be able to work out what has gone wrong. They know that there is more than one of them, and they can guess what the consequences of their meeting will be. That said, they have a mutual problem to solve, and cooperation is the best way to go about solving it.

Therefore, they will work together to eliminate Bigsbys and the PCs. By now there is only one Bigsby left, and in any case, he's not as dangerous as the PCs may be. The PCs may therefore be Pickett's priority target, but he also wants to get his possessions back and his door, which he thinks is in his lodgings (**Cheap Rooms in Soho**, p. 16). Also, it's very difficult to cooperate when you can't ever meet face to face in the same room. All this

will slow Pickett down, all the more so if outsiders (e.g. the police) are involved.

Pickett can be used from this point on as a convenient way of making the plot move faster. If the PCs are slowing down, just throw another Pickett into the mix. Either have him attack the PCs directly or have news of his exploits reach their ears, (e.g. have the police tell the PCs that the Vitriol Killer (**The Blue Lamp**, p. 15) was seen sneaking around Pickett's Soho rooms.) Remember to save enough Picketts for the denouement!

Norton Pickett

Abilities: Athletics 2, Disguise 1, Fleeing 6, Filch 4, Magic 8, Scuffling 4, Weapons 1, Health 6

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1 (nerves like a cat)

Stealth Modifier: +1 (practiced burglar)

Magic: Dominate (**RM** p.19), Dread Name of Azathoth (**ToC** p. 114), Runic Target (**RM** p. 20), Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler (**ToC** p.118), Shrivelling (**ToC** p. 116).

Weapon: -2 (knife). This is the knife Pickett will use to summon Dimensional Shamblers and is made of gold. As such, it isn't much use as a weapon, as the metal is soft.

Important Possessions: Each Pickett has a regulator key for the Green Door (p. 7). They also have notes written by each other to each other, co-ordinating their activities as best they can through a series of dead drops. Finally, each Pickett carries a copy of the 1839 edition *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*.

Three Things: Pickett never looks anyone in the face, and is always smiling, as though at a private joke.

The Many Deaths of Edward Bigsby

He wears gloves, and is phobic about touching other people. He can be a heavy drinker, and when drunk boasts about his arcane powers.

Yog-Sothoth Awakes

Scene Type: Core

The door has an independent function. Once unlocked, it spreads itself. The original door may stay in **Cheap Rooms in Soho** (p. 16), or wherever Pickett decides to put it. Copies begin to appear elsewhere, and will continue to do so as long as the door is unlocked.

The first the PCs may become aware of this is when a Green Door (p. 7) appears in their location. This can be anywhere - the front door of someone's house, or a back room door, or in a library. It can even be found lying unattended on a builder's skip, as a nearby building is being torn apart and renovated.

Core Clues:

- **Evidence Collection:** The door found here is exactly the same, in every respect, as the door found in **Cheap Rooms in Soho**. This includes the chalk writing. However there is one addition: a new address, written in chalk on the front of the door. The address corresponds with the door's current location. The new writing seems to be in a different hand than the others, and very shaky; almost as if done by someone unfamiliar with the language.
- **Locksmith:** as before, the door is unlocked. If the lock is tampered with, the mechanism will kick in and the door will lock itself. Once

that happens only a regulator key will open it again. Pickett has such a key.

Should the Keeper need inspiration, consider using these possible destinations for a Green Door:

- An abandoned groundskeeper's cottage in a London cemetery.
- The men's room of a pub.
- The cellar of a townhouse. The owners aren't in, but several servants are on the premises.
- A police box in Soho.
- An open field on the outskirts of London. A train station can be seen off in the distance; it's part of the Metropolitan line.
- A changing room at Marshall Street public baths.
- Custom House, City of London, in the cellars, surrounded by kegs of wine and spirits.

So long as the Green Door stays where it is, it is a danger. Anyone might walk through it at any time. Moreover if they keep appearing then eventually every door, everywhere, will be a Green Door. Yog-Sothoth will have dominion over all.

The best way to deactivate a Green Door is to lock it with the silver key found in **Cheap Rooms in Soho**, and then disassemble the lock (**Craft** and **Locksmith** will be useful here). If the PCs try to deactivate the door while it is unlocked, then it will fly open, and for one brief moment the PCs will come face-to-face with Yog-Sothoth. Then the door will slam shut again. It's a 10-point **Stability** loss (including the extra +6) and 4-point **Sanity** loss for this

unwelcome encounter. Yog-Sothoth will not attack; the PCs will merely glimpse Its presence behind the veil of all things. Keepers may wish to allow as an optional rule that PCs who happen to be in the area at the time but are not working on the door can make an **Athletics** test to look away or cover their eyes at the strategic moment; those working on the door should not have that option.

There may be alternative methods, (e.g. creative use of an Elder Sign), at the Keeper's discretion. The Keeper might consider putting instructions for creating an Elder Sign in the *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, if the PCs are having difficulty.

Once the Green Door is disassembled it vanishes, taking the lock with it. It's up to the Keeper how often this happens. So long as enough Green Doors are shut down, the crisis is averted. However there will always be one Green Door and one Variant left, for the conclusion.

A Visit to the Museum

Scene Type: Core

The Horniman Museum in south London (Forest Hill) was built at the turn of the century to house Frederick John Horniman's extensive collection of curiosities, which he wanted to be available to the public. It's an imposing structure in the Arts and Crafts style, and includes a library and lecture hall, bandstand and ornamental garden, as well as the museum. The Hornimans are long dead by the time of the scenario, but their collection is being looked after, and added to, by the City of London. Its collection is very eclectic, and its most notorious item is an authentic torture chair once owned

A Visit to the Museum

by the Spanish Inquisition. There is no connecting theme in the collection. The museum is the life's work of a man with a great deal of money and odd tastes.

Core Clues:

- **Reassurance:** Museum staff and curators are agitated about something. They won't discuss it with outsiders, but under the facade of calm they are ruffled.
- **Evidence Collection:** One of the cases in the museum collection is empty. A hole in the glass front is patched with cardboard.

A 1-point **Reassurance** or **Oral History** spend will get one of the staff to open up. The museum was burgled a short while ago, and one of the items in the collection stolen. The item is listed as 'the Tantorisi Variant', and was a peculiar kind of detector lock made in Sicily by an unknown craftsman at about the same time Chubb was producing his first locks. (This fits with Bigsby's story in **Bigsby's Dilemma**, p. 18; Pickett scouted the Horniman carefully, then robbed the museum.) Nobody at the museum knows why this happened; the lock, though made of silver, wasn't particularly valuable. It was a curiosity, part of the original collection put together by Horniman. The museum staff aren't sure where he got it from, but there is something about it in the archives. The theft was reported to the police, but the thief is no closer to being caught.

PCs who have used **Reassurance**, or have **Bureaucracy** to spend, may be allowed to look at the museum's archives. A further 1-point **Library Use** spend gets the following

information: the Variant was purchased in 1892 from an Italian dealer. There was no provenance. Horniman took it on faith that the item was what the dealer said it was: the work of a Sicilian craftsman named Tantorisi, made sometime in the 1820s. Horniman liked its 'new pagan-ish' style enough not to worry about its lack of history. However, at the same time, and from the same dealer, Horniman also bought a packet of letters listed in the archive as 'the von Juntz correspondence.'

PCs will have to apply again to the museum's managers to get access to the von Juntz correspondence. It's not something that they like to talk about, as some very odd people have come calling about those letters (including, incidentally, Pickett, who eventually decided that the *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* would be enough). They will need to use their charm, or possibly **Credit Rating**, to get their hands on those letters.

If they do, then they find that the letters are all written (**Languages: Italian**) by Friedrich Wilhelm von Juntz to Valter Tantorisi, (von Juntz usually calls him 'my dear Valter'), and all concern the creation of something von Juntz describes as '*the Singular point around which all the world shall turn.*' They take 2 hours to skim, give 1 pool point of either **Locksmith** or **Occult**, and poring over them gets the reader 1 **Cthulhu Mythos** and 1 **Magic point**. It was a collaboration in which Tantorisi provided the craftsmanship and von Juntz the Mythos expertise.

At one point von Juntz tells Tantorisi: '*My dear Valter, this is a dangerous enterprise and I would not have either you or I run unnecessary Risk. Should we be incorrect in our reasoning then the only Sensible course*

of action would be to dismantle the Object. Destroying It would, I think, be far too dangerous to attempt, for our actions have linked It with the Opener, and I do Not like to contemplate what the All-In-One might do should It be roused . . .'

Howard of Dock Green

Scene Type: Core

By this point the PCs may feel they have exhausted all leads. They know who Bigsby is, they are aware of Pickett, they may have had encounters with triads and the police, they've seen **Cheap Rooms in Soho** (p. 16) and visited the Horniman Museum.

It is at this stage that Detective Inspector Howard hauls them all in for questioning.

A great deal depends on the PCs' previous relations with the police. If they are on reasonable or good terms, then Howard merely wants their advice. If on bad terms, then Howard suspects them of complicity in this latest crime, and given half a chance, he'll arrest them for it.

What happened was this: earlier that morning, a person or persons unknown ransacked Pickett's apartment and stole everything in it, including the door (if it was there). Both the other two inhabitants of the house, Sarah Raikes and Melissa Gold, were brutally murdered, as was a policeman who was watching the place. A second policeman was injured and is in the hospital, but his story makes little sense and Howard is ignoring it. (In fact, Pickett used a Dimensional Shambler to clear the way, and then went in with a few friends to get his belongings. See also **Basement Music**, p. 24). Howard is furious and

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wants answers. He isn't too particular how he gets them, and even PCs who are on his good side may feel the heat.

Depending on their relationship with Howard, the PCs can either get their core clues from him or in spite of him – for example, from information he carelessly lets slip, or from other more sympathetic policemen.

These **core clues** are available:

- **Cop Talk:** The surviving policeman was one of the toughest men going, a real brawler, and even he didn't stand much of a chance. He was cut all over, as though a gang armed with razors had attacked him. The assailant got away. The survivor said he was *'big, like a bull, with thick rubbery hide. Those eyes . . . He faded away, I tell you! Just walked into the shadows!'*
- **Streetwise:** Howard is off his nut, to put it mildly. He's going to nail someone to the wall and he doesn't much care who. Anyone who gets in his way is liable to catch it, and the due process of the law will probably take a back seat this time around.
- **Law:** When first seen, Howard will be clutching a sheaf of papers. Several of them are to do with a warrant to search a basement club called The Kiskadee (cf. **Basement Music**) which, according to the documentation, is somehow connected with the murders in Soho. Howard will hide these papers as soon as he realizes the PCs are taking an interest in them.

Depending on how the scene plays, Howard may order plainclothes detectives to shadow the PCs again, as per **The Blue Lamp**.

Detective Inspector Howard

Abilities: Athletics 9, Fleeing 8, Firearms 7, Scuffling 9, Weapon 6, Health 10

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapons: -1 (truncheon), +0 (light firearm)

Special: If Howard becomes an ally, he acts as a free **Cop Talk 2** pool.

Plainclothes Detectives

Abilities: Athletics 8, Fleeing 6, Firearms 5, Scuffling 8, Weapon 4, Health 8

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapons: -1 (truncheon), +0 (light firearm)

Special: Though in plain clothes, they all wear the same police-issue boots, which may tip off the wary.

The Scene of the Crime

Scene Type: Alternate

After **Howard of Dock Green**, the PCs may revisit Pickett's Soho digs to see if they can find any clues that the police missed. There are two burly constables guarding the door who will need to be dealt with. **Cop Talk** would be useful, or possibly **Credit Rating**. They're under strict instructions not to let anyone in, and they're well aware that Howard is on the warpath. They don't want to get on his bad side if they can help it. However, they only guard the front door; going around to the back allows PCs a chance to crawl in by an upper floor window.

If the PCs succeed and get inside then they find the place is a mess.

The ground floor apartments are awash with blood. Raikes and Gold were dismembered here; it's a 2-point **Stability** test unless the character has some reason to be hardened against the sight of human slaughter. Bigsby's apartment has been trashed, all his possessions destroyed. Pickett's rooms have been completely cleared out.

The following 1-point clues are available:

- **Evidence Collection:** Outlined in the pools of blood are several boot prints and at least one misshapen print that might be a claw mark. The boots are of different sizes, which suggests that Pickett, if it was he, isn't working alone any more.
- **Forensics:** There's a peculiar, sickly sweet smell in the air. It reminds you of hashish. One of the raiders must have been a regular dope smoker for the smell to linger like this. Given that Pickett lived in Soho, it's likely that his helpers come from Soho too, probably one of the dope gangs. They tend to operate out of cafes and illegal drinking dens scattered all over the district.
- **Streetwise:** Never mind the cops; there are others hanging around the building. Out of the corner of your eye you can see several disreputable characters loitering, keeping an eye on the place. Most of them are typical Soho street thugs, the sort that might be found in any basement den, but all of them are either Jamaican or West Indian. That narrows the field a bit; Eddie Manning, the Jamaican hemp peddler, is probably their boss.

A Night on the Tiles

A Night on the Tiles

Scene Type: Alternate

Pickett's new base of operations is The Kiskadee, a basement club in Soho run by a Bahamian named 'Nip' Tucker. See also **Basement Music** (p. 24), which the PCs were clued into in **Howard of Dock Green** (p. 21). However they may decide to gather their own information in Soho's drug dens, before going to The Kiskadee.

Use the information given in **Death in Soho** (p. 8) for this scene. In general, the drug trade is split between the Chinese, who deal in heroin and cocaine, and the West Indians, who deal in cocaine and reefer. The Chinese are more organized, and tend to deal only with people they know well. Many otherwise respectable Englishmen are Chang's friends, and customers. The West Indians are less organized, but have more of a hold on street level-crime, dealing through their basement drinking clubs and jazz dens. The police have been keeping an eye on all of them, but have been unable to gather enough evidence for arrests. The customers aren't talking, and without solid insider information the police can't seize the dope, which is the only way they'll get a conviction.

The PCs will need to be very careful. **Streetwise**, **Sense Trouble** and **Intimidation** will be useful skills. The places they're about to visit are dangerous in the extreme.irate customers might knife them. Dippers might strip their pockets clean. Unfriendly bartenders might **Filch** some dope into their drink, hoping to drug them insensible and rob them at leisure. (**Health** or **Athletics** checks at Difficulty 5 to avoid unconsciousness;

insensible characters may wake up naked in a dirty back street.)

They may also be trailed by the police (**Howard of Dock Green**, p. 21) which will complicate matters. The police will be very reluctant to get involved in any gang fight, but might arrest PCs for their own safety, or if they think they're involved in the dope trade somehow.

Available 1-point rumours include:

- **Streetwise:** Eddie Manning, the Jamaican drug dealer, is righteously angry. One of the places under his thumb, a basement jazz club called The Kiskadee, has stopped paying him tribute. The Kiskadee is owned by a Bahamian named 'Nip' Tucker, and Nip has been bringing some new blood on board. Maybe Nip thinks he can take over the trade. If so, he'll have a fight on his hands. Eddie is mustering troops, and it can't be long before there's a bust-up.
- **Oral History:** There's a story going around about a new dope connection. Nobody's seen him face-to-face, but the rumour is he can move product from the Continent to London faster than anyone's ever done it before, and without any kind of risk. That's why Nip Tucker's got so bold; he figures he can cut Eddie Manning out by bringing in more dope, more quickly, than the King ever could.



Long Live the King

Scene Type: Alternate

The PCs may try to contact Eddie Manning, the Dope King, to get his take on the situation.

This may be unwise, unless the PCs make **Streetwise** spends. At the moment, Manning is on edge; uninvited guests won't be welcome. Manning can normally be found at his cafe, where he holds court. All the addicts in Soho know where it is.

Manning is a tall, tough Jamaican who speaks with a cockney accent and always dresses snappily. He's not a professional gunman, but he has a reputation for being a lethal shot, and he's never backed down from a fight.

He and his Greek partner have, until now, controlled the street trade. Their stratagem has been simple: if the customer cuts up rough or refuses to pay, cut him off. A few weeks without the dope settles down even the toughest hoodlum. They've been able to do that because, up until now, they've been in sole command of the supply. Brilliant Chang, the only other game in town, doesn't deal with street level trade; he has his hook baited for bigger fish. That's what makes Nip Tucker such a threat to Manning. If Tucker has access to an alternate means of supply, then the addicts might start buying from Nip rather than Eddie.

The trouble is, Eddie isn't equipped for an out-and-out war. The trade up until now hasn't been that rough; Eddie has been able to rely on his reputation rather than his shootist skills, and he hasn't needed an army. Now, with Nip Tucker barricaded

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into The Kiskadee and threatening to flood Soho with cheaper dope than Eddie sells, things are looking bleak.

The one thing that puzzles Eddie is, where's the dope? If Nip had it on him, he'd be selling it by now. Yet Nip is certainly talking as though he has access to a new supply, and everyone on the street seems to agree with him. It's enough to drive Eddie round the bend.

1-point spends in **Streetwise** or **Reassurance** will be enough to get Eddie talking. He knows a lot about Nip Tucker and The Kiskadee, including the back door that leads to the Underground (**Mind the Gap**, p. 26) and the Mills bombs that Nip keeps in case of attack. Eddie thinks Nip is out-and-out crazy, but isn't about to back down from a fight. Eddie's problem is, he hasn't got the soldiers to back him up, so if the PCs look as though they might have a fighting chance, he'd be willing to help them as much as he can. This may include selling them equipment. Eddie is not about to lead the charge; far better to let the PCs get on with it, and pick up the pieces later. Keepers may choose to let PCs exchange either **Streetwise** or **Credit Rating** for **Preparedness**, on a 1 for 1 basis, if the PCs don't want specific equipment, but would like the option to have special items available for later use in the scenario.

Manning's real-world background is obscure. Originally McManning, the authorities, keen to deport him, claimed he was American. However, it seems clear that Manning was originally Jamaican, therefore a Commonwealth citizen, and could not be deported. Photographs show him as a smart dresser in high collar, tie and homburg hat, with a slim build.

He came to England during the Great War, and supported himself as a day labourer, with sidelines as a drummer in a band, and as a bit part stage actor. In addition to these tame pursuits, Manning also had a sideline in prostitution and cocaine dealing, which he ran from his flat. He sourced his supply from Alexander Iassonides, whose wife fell hard for Manning and who later became his Dope Queen, cutting her husband out of the operation. The authorities came to know him as one of the Big Four of the cocaine trade, a rival and possible successor to Brilliant Chang.

They sold cocaine injections at 10 shillings a dose from their Berwick Street cellar cafe, which included helpful seminars in how to take the drug, should instruction be needed. At the same time Manning had yet another sideline in prostitutes and roulette parties that culminated in dope orgies.

His problem was, people tended to end up dead. After three high profile drug overdoses, Manning's empire was broken up by the authorities, and his Dope Queen was deported. However, she only went as far as Paris, where she kept up a regular correspondence with her lover.

Meanwhile, Manning struggled on, keeping his dope deals running while at the same time going into business as a pawnbroker and receiver of stolen goods. He seems to have been one of those people who always had a sideline; he kept constantly busy, and always had two or three scams on the go. He eventually went to prison in 1929 for three years, and died there, apparently from syphilis.

As with Chang, Manning's activities have been moved slightly in the timeline from the Twenties to the Thirties.

Eddie Manning

Abilities: Athletics 8, Fleeing 6, Firearms 10, Scuffling 10, Weapon 6, Health 10

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapons: -1 (knife), +0 (light firearm)

Special: If Manning becomes an ally, he acts as a free **Intimidate 1, Chemistry 1** pool.

Basement Music

Scene Type: Core

Pickett now operates out of a basement drinking den in Soho called The Kiskadee. Before the events of the scenario, Pickett used to sell jewels robbed from graveyards to pawnbrokers and fences. Nip Tucker, owner of The Kiskadee, was one of the people Pickett sold to. When Pickett realized the extent of the mess he was in, he asked Tucker for help. Pickett's initial plan was to take over the gang himself, possibly using a Shambler as a persuader, but Tucker's people were a good deal more ruthless than lone wolf Pickett was prepared for. Overawed, Pickett offered Tucker use of the Green Door (p. 7) in exchange for a refuge.

Nip is keen to exploit this. He thinks the Green Door will make him a drug kingpin. Why go through Eddie Manning for supplies, when a courier could just step through a door and end up in Amsterdam, or Paris? He doesn't understand the Green Door's limitations yet, and Pickett, who fears for his life, is keeping quiet. Already accidents (and possibly the action of the PCs) have cut down on the number of Picketts available. Pickett is becoming

Basement Music

uncomfortably aware of his mortality. Besides, he is now terrified of his Green Door and is unwilling to use it.

The Kiskadee operates out of the basement of three crumbling Victorian terraced houses. Nip Tucker owns all three houses (though on paper they are held by other people) and has knocked through walls in the coal cellars to make his club. This means the whole terrace is standing on pretty shaky ground, as the supports have been fatally weakened. Keepers might hint to the PCs (e.g. with **Architecture**) that the buildings above could tumble down into the basement given enough encouragement. Anyone tossing explosives around, or just setting fire to the place, could be in for a nasty shock.

The Kiskadee started life as a cheap drinking den. Then Nip got leaned on by Eddie Manning, and soon after was dealing reefer and snow. The profits, even though Eddie took the lion's share, were enough for Nip to expand, and now the club includes a dance floor as well. Pride of place is given to a long, polished hardwood bar, from which Nip serves the best rum to be found in London, sourced from all over the West Indies. Most nights the band plays calypso, but recently Nip has been experimenting with the new American jazz sound. It packs in the punters, and Nip has become almost rich. He's been thinking for a while now that the time has come to make his move against Eddie Manning; Pickett's offer of the Green Door just sealed the deal.

Most of the regular patrons of The Kiskadee are West Indian or thrill-seeking white English. However, with the war against Manning, the place is overrun with Nip's thugs. Nip knows his place is a target, so he wants it well guarded. This has tended to depress the

crowds, so these days The Kiskadee is a bit emptier than usual.

In the event of a raid, Tucker has escape routes up into all three of his houses, and from there people can get to back streets or up to the rooftops. There's also a door in the back of the club that leads to an old half-built Underground station, closed down during the Great War. From here, people can either get up to street level or run further into the Underground tunnel network. Pickett has his hideaway here, (see **Mind the Gap**, p. 26), with his final Green Door. Tucker is the only one with a key to this back room door; he regards it as his private getaway route. He also has two grenades stashed in a box on the Underground side of the door, for use in case of grave emergency. Those Mills bombs will be more than enough to bring the whole club down. (Grenade +3 point blank, +1 close, -2 near).

Use the Typical Soho Thug template (p. 9) for Nip's gang. It's up to the Keeper to decide how many to use in any given encounter.

The Kiskadee is also haunted, in a sense, by Pickett. In all the rush of coordinating his copies, two Picketts accidentally came into close contact, and are now insubstantial. Their misty forms are usually at the bar, blending with the reefer smoke. The gangsters are spooked by this, but consider it a badge of honour not to let their fear show – it's a 3-point **Stability** test for encountering half-gone Picketts. They will drift around The Kiskadee, and may attempt to warn Tucker if they see PCs about to cause trouble. They can't warn Pickett, obviously, since that would bring them into contact with the sole surviving Pickett, with catastrophic results.

Core Clues:

- **Streetwise:** Everyone's on edge. There are armed men everywhere. This place is under siege; no doubt they expect to be attacked at any minute. You need to be very careful, or anything could happen.
- **Oral History/Occult:** People keep whispering about 'the duppies', though they won't say anything to you directly about it. Duppy: you've heard that word before. It's a slang some of the West Indians use; it means ghost.

The PCs will need to somehow get Nip Tucker's key from him and use it to get to **Mind the Gap**. **Filch** is an obvious means of doing this. The PCs may also try to cut some kind of deal; if the PCs show that they have powers like Pickett's, for example, Tucker might get them all together for a talk. Tucker doesn't like Pickett enough to protect him against his enemies. All Tucker wants is the Green Door, but he won't give that up no matter how persuasive the PCs are. **Streetwise**, **Bargain** and possibly **Reassurance** might be useful here. **Locksmith** might get them through to Royston Road, but they'll need to find some way to distract the gangsters to do this unobserved. **Intimidation** is unlikely to work, as Tucker is in his den with all his thugs around him. Unless the PCs can somehow muster more power than the entire gang combined, they're unlikely to be a real threat.

Nip Tucker

Abilities: Athletics 9, Firearms 4, Scuffling 12, Weapons 8, Health 9
Weapons: -1 (knife), +0 (light firearm)
Three Things: Always wears good suits and a canary-yellow tie. His

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face is heavily scarred on the right side, probably by a razor attack. He is superstitious and believes in lucky charms, the power of grave dirt and fortune tellers.

Special: Nip keeps two thugs with him at all times.

It's possible that the PCs get themselves in real trouble here. If they are incautious, the entire gang could turn on them. If the Keeper wishes, she might consider allowing the PCs to be 'rescued' by a timely raid from Detective Inspector Howard (as per **Howard of Dock Green**, p. 21). The coppers burst down into the cellar, armed to the teeth and ready for action. However, they weren't expecting quite as tough a resistance as the gang is prepared to give them, and the result is a messy bloodbath.

If that happens, Tucker will retreat through to his Underground hideaway. The PCs may attempt to follow him. If the situation really is dire, Tucker will use a Mills bomb he has prepared for emergencies such as this, bringing The Kiskadee down on everyone's heads. Damage, for those still inside, is at +5 (treat as gas main explosion at Close range). Consider using an **Athletics** check to allow a PC to dive for an escape hatch, or just under some kind of convenient cover, to ameliorate this if necessary, but bear in mind that anyone caught in the club is probably buried under rubble, and thus locked out of future scenes.



Mind the Gap

Scene Type: Denouement

The Underground station, Royston Road, was first proposed in 1890, and work started in 1912. The war intervened and, although the platforms were completed and the rail half laid, funding was cut for the project. The recession that followed the war put the final nail in the station's coffin. There wasn't the money or the enthusiasm for a new Underground station, so the half-built line was left to rot. However, its tunnel does connect with the Piccadilly Line, and anyone willing to scramble around in the dark might find their way there eventually. With any luck, they won't be run over by a train before they get to a platform. If they do meet a train, it's a Difficulty 5 **Athletics** test to avoid the consequences; otherwise suffer a +5 **damage** roll. Success means they managed to flatten themselves against the wall, and just endure a 2-point **Stability** test rather than a fatal accident.

Nip Tucker knew about Royston Road, as he's lived in Soho for many years. He had a shrewd idea that his club was close to the old Underground line, and a bit of investigation proved it. He dug a tunnel to the abandoned station, and sealed it off with a sturdy iron-reinforced door. Nip looks on Royston Road as his last line of defence in the event of calamity.

When Pickett begged for protection Tucker installed him and his Green Door on the station platform. Pickett gets infrequent meals, and has a bucket for a toilet. He's beginning to reconsider his plans of world domination; right now, he'd

probably settle for a warm bath and comfortable bed.

He's terrified of his Green Door and worries about what might happen if he left it in Tucker's hands, but he doesn't know what to do. He can't even bring himself to touch it now, so dismantling it isn't an option for him. He spends his days frantically re-reading his *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, in the hope of finding a solution for his dilemma.

That doesn't mean he'll be pleased to see the PCs. If anything, he'll be petrified about what they might plan to do to him.

When the PCs get to the Underground, the first thing they will see is an abandoned station. Builders' rubble and old junk choke the platform. A complete set of blueprints for the finished station are pinned up on a board that leans against the wall. There is a strong smell of urine, possible from rats. The tunnel stretches out into the dark, and every so often there is a low, groaning sound, as though a train was shifting tracks very far away. Pickett, who will have heard the PCs coming, is hiding, waiting for his chance.

In the middle of the chaos is the Green Door (p. 7), standing on its own. A great deal depends on how the PCs have been dealing with Green Doors up to this point. If they've been carefully eliminating them whenever found, then this Green Door is weak. It looks exactly the same as all the others, and can be dealt with in the same way. It will not react any differently than the other doors, and is currently unlocked.

If they have not been eliminating Green Doors then this task will be much harder. Each Green Door is

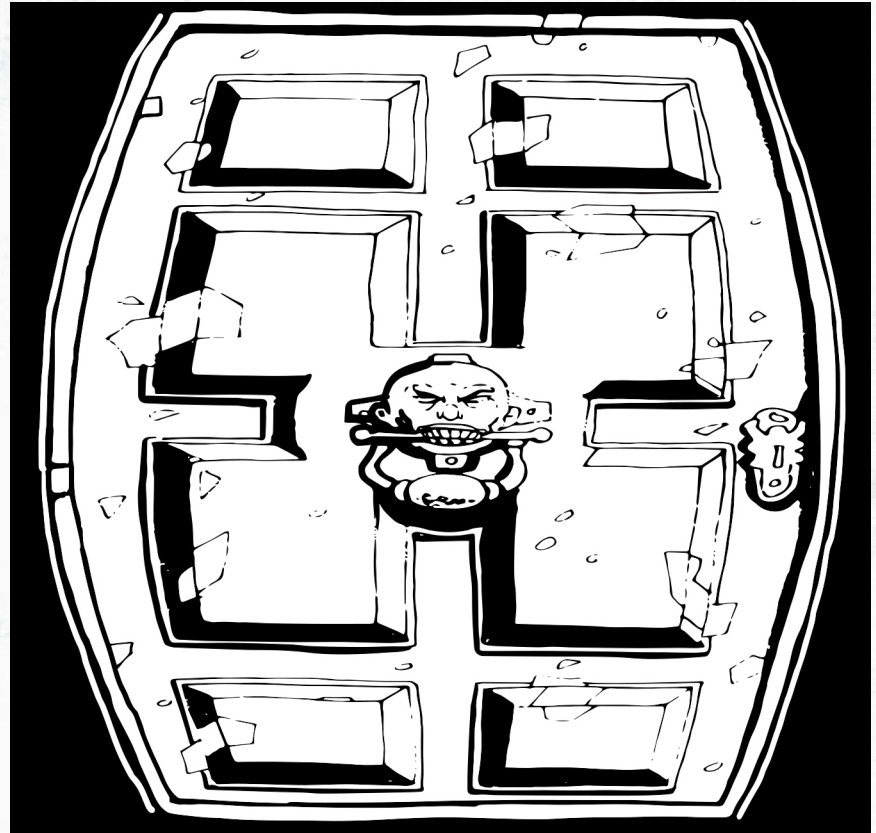
Mind the Gap

linked to Yog-Sothoth. While that entity has difficulty focusing on short-lived humanity, this sudden spike in apertures has attracted Its notice. It is not focusing on the world just yet. Much like a sleeping man who hears a fly buzzing in the room, Yog-Sothoth is dimly aware but otherwise unconcerned.

As Yog-Sothoth's interest has been captured, however fleetingly, the Green Door has changed.

It no longer looks as it did before. The paintwork is peeling off, revealing something very similar to green flesh underneath. The doorknocker no longer resembles a mythical creature, but a human, his face contorted in agony. There is a sound coming from the other side of the door, rather like a volcano breathing, and every so often the door bulges outward, as though under enormous pressure. It's a 4-point **Stability** test for this Mythos encounter.

This version of the Green Door is not so easily dealt with. As before, it will have to be locked and then dismantled. However this time the PC will have to make a **Locksmith** test (difficulty 6) to successfully lock the door. Failure means not only that the door is not locked; it also allows a small portion of Yog-Sothoth to cross over the threshold into the mortal world. Thankfully this tiny remnant (it might be bubbling liquid, a roving mass of tentacles, a cloud of choking gas, a light that bleeds colour from everything around it, a sound that warps solid objects) is short-lived, lasting no more than 3 combat rounds. However while it is in the room it attacks anything nearby at **Scuffling 8, +3 damage**, and has a 5-point **Stability** test.



Should anyone try to damage the lock, the door flings wide open, exposing the unfortunate character to the horror that is Yog-Sothoth for one brief moment. The one who attempted to do the damage is instantly drawn through the Green Door and destroyed, while anyone nearby needs to make an **Athletics 4** check to hide their faces, or suffer the consequences: a 10-point **Stability** test (including the extra +6) with a 4-point **Sanity** loss.

If Nip Tucker is here, he will need to be dealt with. He will react in horror if the Green Door is in its strengthened form, and will not take further action; his **Stability** is shaken by the encounter. If the Green Door is in its ordinary form, he won't realize that anything is wrong, and will react accordingly.

Pickett, meanwhile, is hiding behind the rubble, waiting for his chance. He knows that the PCs mean him no good, and thinks that if he can attack from ambush, possibly using a Shambler, he may yet win. One option would be for the Shambler to deal with Nip Tucker and then fade out, which would be a suitable means of getting rid of the gang leader should he be getting in the way of the narrative. After all, Pickett has no reason to want Tucker alive any more than Tucker really needs to keep Pickett.

Norton Pickett

Abilities: Athletics 2, Disguise 1, Fleeing 6, Filch 4, Magic 8, Scuffling 4, Weapons 1, Health 6

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1 (nerves like a cat)

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Stealth Modifier: +1 (practiced burglar)

Magic: Dominate (*RM* p.19), Dread Name of Azathoth (*ToC* p. 114), Runic Target (*RM* p. 20), Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler (*ToC* p.118), Shrivelling (*ToC* p. 116).

Weapon: -2 (knife). This is the knife Pickett will use to summon Dimensional Shamblers and is made of gold. As such, it isn't much use as a weapon, as the metal is soft.

Important Possessions: Each Pickett has a regulator key for the Green Door (p. 7). They also have notes written by each other to each other, co-ordinating their activities as best they can through a series of dead drops. Finally, each Pickett carries a copy of the 1839 edition *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*.

Three Things: Pickett never looks anyone in the face, and is always smiling, as though at a private joke. He wears gloves, and is phobic about touching other people. He can be a heavy drinker, and when drunk boasts about his arcane powers.

Dimensional Shambler

Abilities: Athletics 7, Health 10, Scuffling 10

Hit Threshold: 4

Weapon: -1 (talons)

Armour: -3 vs. Any (thick, rugose hide)

Stability Loss: +0

Special: Dimensional Travel.

The Shambler can travel between dimensions, possibly taking a victim with it. This costs 1 point of **Athletics**, or 2 points if a human-sized victim is being transported. The process takes 1 round either way, and the Shambler can be attacked in that round. To catch a target, the Shambler needs to win two consecutive **Scuffling** contests. In the first, he grabs the target; in the second, he wraps the target in a

nightmarish bear hug, and fades away.

Investigation: Sense Trouble - The mirrors and windows in the room reflect a kind of shimmery light that you don't see in the room itself.

If the Keeper chooses to allow it, then this copy of the *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* is the original, not a copy, and therefore will not melt into slime after Pickett's death. If this happens then the Keeper needs to pay attention to its fate; if the PCs don't take it, then a gangster (or possibly a policeman) will, which means it will turn up again at some point to bedevil the PCs.

The PCs also need to think about what to do with the Tantorisi Variant, since this time the lock will not fade away once the door is disabled. Simply destroying it is risky, as von Juntz surmised all those years ago, since it is linked to Yog-Sothoth. An **Elder Sign** might break the link with the Old One, allowing the Variant to be destroyed without danger. Alternatively it can be stored somewhere; after all, so long as the Variant isn't installed in a door, the crisis is delayed. Giving it back to the Horniman Museum (and its less-than-secure security system) is a possibility, and if this is done then the giver gains 2 dedicated pool points of **Credit Rating** whenever dealing with the Horniman Museum. This may prove useful later, since there are many odd things in their collection that might interest researchers.

There Can Be Only One

Scene Type: Epilogue

There is one Bigsby left, which the Keeper should use as a wild card. Whenever it might be useful to throw

a half-crazed Bohemian into the mix, add the remaining Bigsby. In theory, Bigsby could even be helpful, possibly by interposing himself between a PC and an antagonist – say, Nip Tucker. Or Bigsby could grapple a Pickett at a crucial moment, perhaps just as he was about to summon a Shambler, so now there's a Bigsby, a Pickett, and an unbound Shambler in the scene.

Keepers who enjoy a bit of irony in the end game might want to have Bigsby rush up to the PCs after the events of **Mind the Gap**, just as they're crawling out of the Underground station.

"Praise be to Her!" he says, "I didn't think I'd reach you in time. Danforth said you'd be able to help me, but I think he's close on my trail. You see –" And the Keeper can continue in a similar vein, unless the PCs stop her.

Edward Bigsby

Abilities: Fleeing 5, Scuffling 2, Health 4

Weapons: -1 (cane)

Three Things: Bigsby always dresses in colourful Bohemian fashions and is never without his top hat, even indoors. He's a Surrealist by conviction and at the drop of a hat will spend hours talking about Breton's poetry and the paintings of Dali. He's a cocaine addict, but thinks that his addiction is under control; he carries his personal injection kit everywhere he goes.



Bookhounds of London

BOOKHOUNDS OF LONDON

Cunning Keepers will already have realised that this adventure, while not written for *Bookhounds*, is compatible with that setting.

Most of the locations are within Soho, which is found on plates X and XI of the London map. Looking at it, you can see just how small Soho is; but that gives you little sense of how busy it can be, or how iconic a London location it is. Soho is within the West End, for Contacts and Rumours purposes. The Horniman Museum is in Forest Hill, SE 23, plate XXI, 19V. There's no such station as Royston Road, and never was. Though there is a Royston Road out in Richmond, it has nothing to do with this scenario. The closest equivalent to Royston Road is probably the two disused Holborn Station, Aldwych branch platforms.

In Need of a Poet

Scene Type: Optional, Narrative Auction

The players might start wondering where Pickett gets his books from, and if his book source has any useful information.

The Book Scout Allan Chessover (see *Bookhounds of London*, p 85) is the best person to ask, as he knows many odd and interesting people in the business. However Chessover's on a wander, and has been for several days; he's difficult to track down, but **The Knowledge, Occult, Oral History** or similar will help find out which of his usual haunts he's ended up in this time. When the PCs finally get to grips

with Chessover, he reveals that he was the one who found Pickett's books for him.

Chessover knows where Pickett lives, if the PCs haven't already tracked down his Soho lodgings. Chessover also knows of an upcoming auction, to be held at Spink in St James, which Pickett is very interested in.

"He's asked me to attend, and bid for him," says Chessover, "I don't know where he's hiding, but I could send word through the usual people that I'm ill, and can't go. I don't think he could find someone to replace me in time, which means he'd have to go himself."

Spink and Son Ltd, established in the year of the Great Fire, has its own rooms on the corner of King Street and Duke Street, (plate X, 12L). It's a very well regarded firm, and PCs whose personal, or Bookshop, Credit Rating is 1 or less may find it difficult to get in. However if this proves a problem, **Reassurance**, or a good **Disguise**, will be sufficient to fool Spink's staff.

It's a busy day at Spink, and there are several different auctions taking place. The one Pickett is interested in is being held in one of the smaller rooms on the first floor, with a view of a nearby busy street. The auctioneer is a nervous-looking young man with the smooth voice of an Oxford graduate; this is only his third auction, and he's worried he's going to make a hash of it. There are thirty or forty other bidders in the room, and the Ring is in attendance. This group, knowing that the auctioneer's still a bit green, hopes to run a Knock on some of the more valuable items.

The PCs may or may not choose to get involved in this sideline. Pickett's interested in one of the lesser lots, a collection of poems by the American poet Justin Geoffrey, published in a limited edition of 200 in 1915, before the events of Robert E. Howard's *The Black Stone*. It's attracted only mild interest – one or two occult-minded bidders, certainly no interest from the Ring – but Pickett wants it for his collection.

He will arrive in **Disguise** and it's up to the PCs to work out which one of the bidders he is. Penetrating his disguise is **Difficulty 5**, or the PCs could just wait to see who bids on the Geoffrey collection. For purposes of bidding, Pickett has **Auction 6** and none of the other interested bidders are prepared to go higher than 3.

If the PCs elect to ambush Pickett in Spink, and attract attention to themselves, the staff may get involved. Assume **Scuffling 4, Health 2** for any staff member caught in the melee, and while this won't hold the PCs up for long, it will get the police's attention. Detective Inspector Howard, if he ever hears about it, will not be at all impressed.

A dead Pickett deliquesces rapidly, but a live one could be pumped for information. A live Pickett knows where The Kiskadee is, and where the last Green Door is hidden. A live Pickett can also summon Dimensional Shamblers, so the PCs will have to be careful when dealing with him.

