

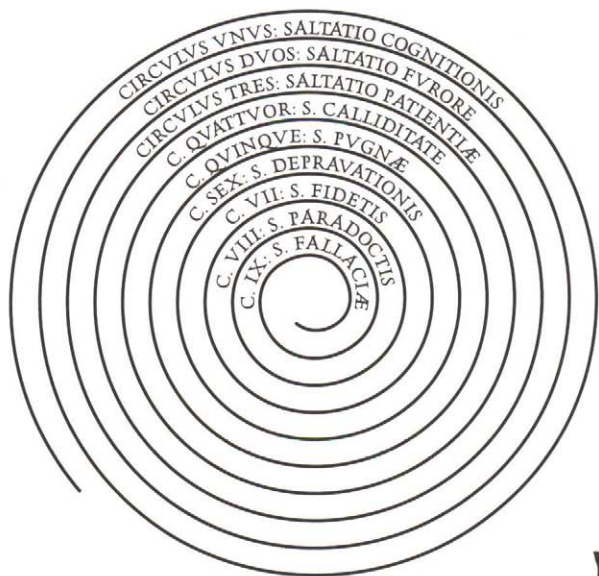
Chronicle of the

BLACK



LABYRINTH

Chronicle of the Black



Labyrinth

TM

A Forbidden Tome of Wyrnish Lore

being a compilation of narratives and documents from many sources in various times and lands, collected by divers hands and exhaustively annotated for the further enlightenment of neophytes and initiates.

Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth

Excavated, compiled and annotated by Frater I*I, Keeper of the Dark Orb and Gazer into the Abyss.

First edition: ©1970 by RedBletter Press, San Francisco

Original disclaimer: The Publisher assumes no liability for damages physical or spiritual resulting from unenlightened abuse of the awesome cosmic secrets revealed herein. The Truth will not be hidden.

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The Centurion's Letters quoted from "Nennius' History of the Britons with appendices," also called the British Historical Miscellany, British Museum Harleian ms 3859; reprinted courtesy of the British Museum.

Excerpts from *Fabulae et Cantae Scotti* derived from the original *Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth*, ©1735, by Lord Alfred Craven.

The Trial of the Black Monk procured from the Vatican Library and reprinted without permission.

"Ex Disputandem Re Supemibus Ab Probati Quaestori Adversarique" from *The Pilgrimage of Young Journeyman Quaestor*, derived from the original *Chronicle* by Lord Craven.

Professor Webley and the Strange Case of the Mysterious Oriental originally published in *Cloven Hoof Quarterly*, vol. iii, no. 5; Stanley Kirowan ed.; reprinted courtesy of the de Grandin literary estate.

The works of the Laird of Demborough reprinted from the personal collection of Frater I*I.

Chronicle of the BLACK LABYRINTH™

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Preface to the 1995 Edition

The book you now hold represents the final installment in this publisher's Classics of Magickal Literature reprint series, which has brought together the finest works of both religious and mystical arcana and esoterica and presented them in modern, authoritative and readable translations.

The greatest pleasure of working on this series is the appreciation it brings for the broad variety of mystical thought from all over the world, for the rich diversity of global tradition which finds much of its flowering and fulfillment in this century, generally regarded as the most spiritually impoverished of all ages. This publisher's aim has always been the ennoblement of the soul, which can be cultivated through meditation upon the diverse, and sometimes even conflicting, mythopoetic viewpoints of all the peoples of the earth.

This cannot be said for the present work.

What follows is, in this editor's opinion, one of the most repugnant examples of attempted justification for the excesses of what Aleister Crowley referred to as the Black Brotherhood, or the Left-Hand Path. Reading this work is not unlike an attempt to navigate the "labyrinth" it purports to describe. In its course, the compiler reveals himself to be of the most unconscionable character, devoid of simple human feeling and incapable of displaying even the most superficial literary merit. His knowledge of history is, at best, incomplete, and, at worst, apocryphal. His own views and tastes seem to vacillate throughout the work, showing us why serious work of a scholarly nature should never be attempted while under the influence of hallucinogenics. What little metaphysical truth there is, he presents only in a form so degraded as to invert all that it stands for. In short, this work constitutes nothing more than a type of arcane and esoteric pornography.

This reprint was issued only at the increasingly strident demand from what this editor must assume to be the disreputable fringe elements that inevitably infiltrate most serious occult subcultures.

The postscript deserves special attention. Its inclusion can only be considered a very sick joke, quite possibly played at the expense of the original publisher, who disappeared shortly after this volume was made available to the public. It cannot be taken at face value, for the activities and whereabouts of its principle actor, even during this chaotic period, are a matter of both public record and oral folklore. This person's prominence, one might even say deification, in the underground media is symptomatic of the delusional misapprehensions by which the public at large attempts to divorce itself from the responsibility inherent in genuine spiritual betterment. While there is undeniably great knowledge to be gained, and even a degree of enlightenment to be attained, from a wary and guarded "sympathy for the devil," this kind of blind adoration can lead only to mental illness and ruin.

We here at Llewballah Publications have never shirked from the duty of the mystic to know evil by staring it in the face. This the reader will do every time he or she opens this book. It seems superfluous at first to firmly caution the reader against attempting any of the ritual activities described herein, but the very existence of this book, coupled with the current demand for it, only stresses the need for such a warning.

Babaji Ashley Simes
Editor-in-Chief of Reprints
Llewballah Publications
Preface 1995

Preface to the 1970 Edition

My first meeting with the entity known as Frater I*I occurred during the Summer of Love in the now-famous L.A. nightspot, the Whiskey-a-Gogo. That night I heard the modern techno-shaman Jim Morrison and his group, the Doors, exercise their chosen craft, which, to the best of my recollection, consisted of systematically tearing down and blasting away all psychological barriers among the audience. Mr. Densmore's throbbing rhythms provided the spiritual impetus which propelled us from our bodies, from the club itself, launching us into an inner flight which Mr. Krieger sustained with bittersweet harmony; Mr. Manzarek enticed us into labyrinthine complexities of abstraction and left us, abandoned, until Mr. Morrison's powerful voice led us back to the here and now.

Their final number, a prolonged apocalyptic journey through the dark underworld of the post-modern unconscious, climaxed with a solemn prose-poem laying bare the Oedipal savagery of the primal libido. I must confess that this performance touched me so deeply that I would seem to have experienced what is known in the vernacular as a "freak-out;" overcome with emotion, I fell to the floor sobbing and convulsing, emitting an occasional howl of deep angst.

I suppose that I must have been ejected from the club; my next coherent recollection was that of lying in an alley across the street some time after closing, stinking of liquor and urine. I appeared to have been worked over by the local wildlife, for my wallet, as well as my fine fringed leather vest and snakeskin boots, were gone. As I was taking all this in, I became aware of someone watching me from the shadows across the alley. This person, short and slight with stooped shoulders, clad in black and sporting a strange oriental cast to his swarthy features, stepped forward and introduced himself as "Frater Eye Eye."

Taking pity upon me in my sorry state, he invited me back to his “pad,” a dingy basement efficiency, where he offered me chamomile and B vitamins. As my head cleared, I came to realize that I was sitting in the midst of what must be the most arcane occult library in this hemisphere; the entire apartment was stacked from floor to ceiling with ancient leatherbound tomes and crumbling parchment manuscripts.

We conversed upon all sorts of esoteric matters until well after sunrise. I found Frater I*I to be extremely well-read in all manner of arcana, from the conspiratorial infrastructures of Hermetic lore, to any number of obscure Asian cults, to the animal-dances of primitive shamans. As our discourse turned to this latter subject, he affixed me with his dark eyes and asked me very pointedly what I thought of Mr. Morrison’s performance earlier that evening. Embarrassment stung me as I realized that, if he had seen the Doors, then he had undoubtedly been witness to my hysterical breakdown as well. I stammered some unintelligible reply.

“Don’t be afraid to confront yourself, man,” he told me then. “The experience was just a few hours ago, but you’re still passing through a very tenuous state of initiation. Whether you intended it or not, you’ve looked inside tonight, you’ve seen your inner being for what it is. It’s the opening of the eye, man, the glimpse beyond, the entrance to the First Circle — you fuckin’ made it! But how you react here will determine how all your future initiations progress. You can’t turn away from this darkness — it’s all you anyway! Suppressing the shadow just gives it more power to eat away at the blind side of your soul! This is the pit at the center of everything, and you gotta dive in and fuckin’ stare it down, man, lest you fall to the clutches of Foebok and be made a slave to Fear.”

Though I had no conscious idea how to respond to this outburst, something deep in my bowels rumbled and twisted in response to Frater I*I’s rising tone of voice. I tasted bile in my throat, and then it was as though my brain ruptured, flooding my head with all the trauma of my previous breakdown, now crystal-clear and unclouded by intoxicants. I found myself reliving, in stark detail, all the secret shames and agonies inflicted upon me by my family, tortures so deep they have no verbal components; I saw them as an axis around which my soul had been twisted, a cancerous knot that threatened to swallow me in self-loathing.

I know that I could have died in that moment; all will to live and all sense of self drained from me, revealing bottomless chasms of despair. The only thing that kept me from departing then and there was Frater I*I himself, who led me out of that fearful psychodramatic fugue-maze with the sound of his voice; with his guidance I was able to wind my way through the knot of hatred and find the truth beyond the pain. I bathed in a new understanding.

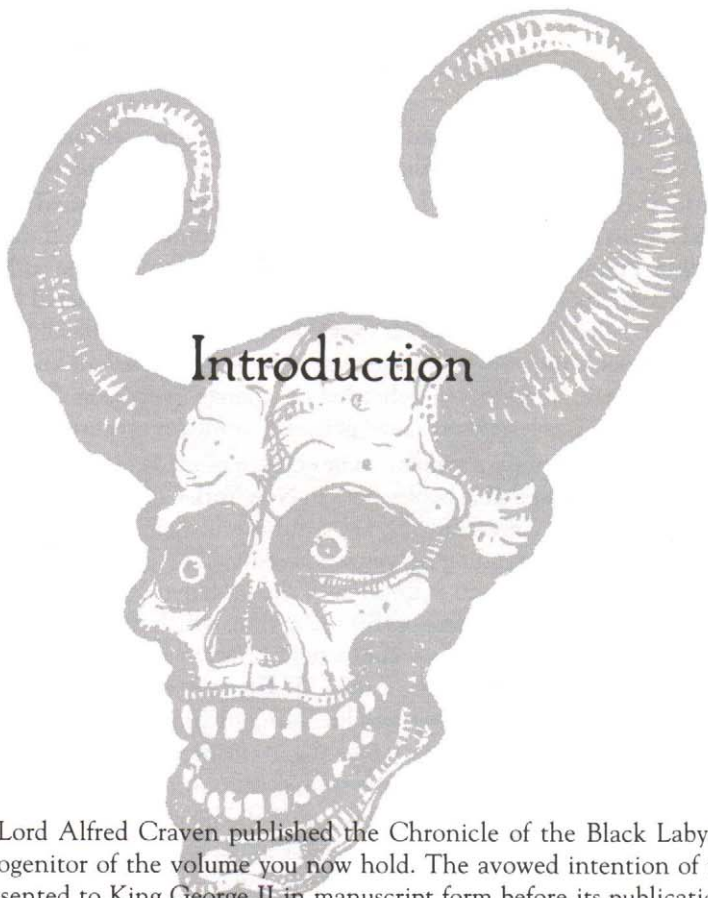
I had attained a state which I could not have even begun to reach after years of costly therapy. Over the next few weeks I visited Frater I*I frequently, subjecting him to intense interrogation regarding the techniques he used to guide me through this archetypally bad “trip,” and the arcane allusions which punctuated his speech. His explanations constitute the volume you now possess. Drawing from accounts throughout history, Frater I*I has traced the formation and development of a secret tradition of mystical activity, known by various names in various times but united by a common esoteric lore. Initiation into this tradition takes the form of experiences such as my own, wherein the dark shadow of the initiate’s subconscious is confronted and surpassed. Each grade of initiation is likened to

passage through one arm of a great spiral maze which is known as the Black Labyrinth, said to exist in the Temple Obscure beyond time and space. As one progresses along the spiral to the center, one is tested for those qualities and faculties which enable one to grasp the secret of secrets which awaits at the heart of the Labyrinth.

For the next few years, I received, at irregular intervals, manuscript fragments in which Frater I*I had traced a rough chronology of this secret tradition through a variety of historical documents which he had carefully analyzed and annotated. The information contained in this work can have a profound impact upon such diverse schools of thought as anthropology and metaphysics. Frater I*I has promised to deliver a postscript which brings the chronology up to the present day, but, as of this writing, I have not yet received it.

I came to the decision to publish at this particular time when, while watching the evening news, I realized that our country was in the process of confronting its own collective shadow. In the polar extremes of established social order and the liberation of the countercultural revolution, we have found civil strife, perpetuating, and perpetuated by, veritable Gordian Knots of self-hate. The state, grown top-heavy with overregulation, becomes an engine of destruction which cannot (or will not) distinguish between friend and foe. We take refuge in the ranks of the Revolution of Love, but even this militant innocence has not withstood the sight of its slogans scrawled in sacrificial blood across the television screen. As a planet, we live in a shadow of utter obliteration which eats away at hope; as a race, our passage through this era will depend on whether we can learn the harsh lessons of the Black Labyrinth — to which end I offer this volume as a guide through the maze of crises of our time.

Egbert Reeve, RedBletter Press
San Francisco, 1970



Introduction

In 1735, Lord Alfred Craven published the *Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth*, the eponymous progenitor of the volume you now hold. The avowed intention of this work, which was presented to King George II in manuscript form before its publication, was to expose a vast network of intrigue and conspiracy directed at the British royal line in particular and the cultural integrity of the English nation in general.

Lord Craven, a retired warhorse and self-styled scholar, had spent most of his career defending the crown against Charles Edward (the “Old Pretender” who sought to reclaim the throne for the Stuart line) and was grievously wounded in the first Jacobite uprising some twenty years before. The first half of Craven’s work is a masterpiece of circular reasoning which rivals many modern paranoiac tractates, interlaced with specific accusations against many members of the king’s court and the Parliamentary government, presented in the Grand Inquisitorial style. This conspiracy, which Craven calls the Black Labyrinth, stretched across the British Isles and beyond, implicating most of Europe as well as the American colonies, and was described in such a way as to render any response which might be made to it an admission of guilt. Pinpointing the source of the conspiracy in Scotland, he does not stop there; the second half of the *Chronicle* works its way backward through history, tracing the unbridled malice of the Scots and their co-conspirators to the actions of dark supernatural entities whose origins are lost in the mists of prehistory.

While he did not see it himself, Craven had, by virtue of his persistent and utterly thorough researches, uncovered a mystical tradition unparalleled in Western occult philosophy. To those schooled in the psychology of C. G. Jung, its central tenet is strikingly familiar; one must identify and confront one’s Shadow, the dark, rejected aspect of one’s personality, then embrace it and reconcile with it, thus obtaining inner balance and strength.

The Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth

Having done this, one may now perform the same operation within the world at large, reconciling the world with its own Shadow, personified as the Wyrn, the great Corrupter.

Unfortunately for Lord Craven, his own Shadow, his paranoid hatred of all things Scottish, blinded him to the inevitable consequences of his actions. George II was, via his grandmother Sophia, Princess of Hanover, descended from King James I, the authoritative biblical translator formerly known as James VI, King of Scotland. Infuriated by Craven's presumption and appalled by the Chronicle's vivid descriptions of medieval Scottish breeding habits and their resulting hereditary degeneracy, the king ordered all known copies of the book burned and had Lord Craven beheaded on charges of treason. The disgrace which then settled over the Craven family name persisted for nearly a century.

The compiler of the present volume came across a pirated copy of the Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth in a disreputable bookseller's in New York City around 1960. Certain family names implicated by Craven in the Labyrinthine intrigue proved elucidating to the compiler's marginal understanding of his own heredity. The ensuing fascination with the work culminated in the profound realization of the underlying principles of the Wyrnish mystical tradition. During the course of this realization, which the compiler considers to be his Dance of Insight, the compiler was contacted by certain spirit guides called Banes, who led him upstate to the ruined site of the former Phelegma Abbey. The result of that spiritual pilgrimage has since shaped the compiler's life, bringing him into his current identity, and constitutes Chapter Six of this work. It was the excavation of these documents that impressed upon him the need for a modern version of the Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth.

After a futile quest for academic validation of the compiler's discovery of the pirated Chronicle, he was most gratified to have engaged in correspondence with the Professor of Comparative Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh, W. Richard MacLish. Without Professor MacLish's wise and insightful guidance, the compilation and translation of the following documents could not have occurred.

Trying without success to establish a branch of the Pretanic Order (as the brotherhood of the Wyrn is known) in New York, the compiler turned his gaze westward, where keen minds were gathering in search of truth. In San Francisco he met Mr. Egbert Reeve, whose yearning for spiritual illumination and independent publication business have made the modern edition of the Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth a reality. Mr. Reeve is not only a good friend but a kinsman as well; his name is derived from the Gaelo-Pictish Redb, an ancient heritage he shares with the compiler. Without his keen interest and kind assistance, along with the generous resources of his RedBletter Press, this volume could not have been.

Frater I*I, Keeper of the Dark Orb and Gazer into the Abyss
San Francisco, 1968



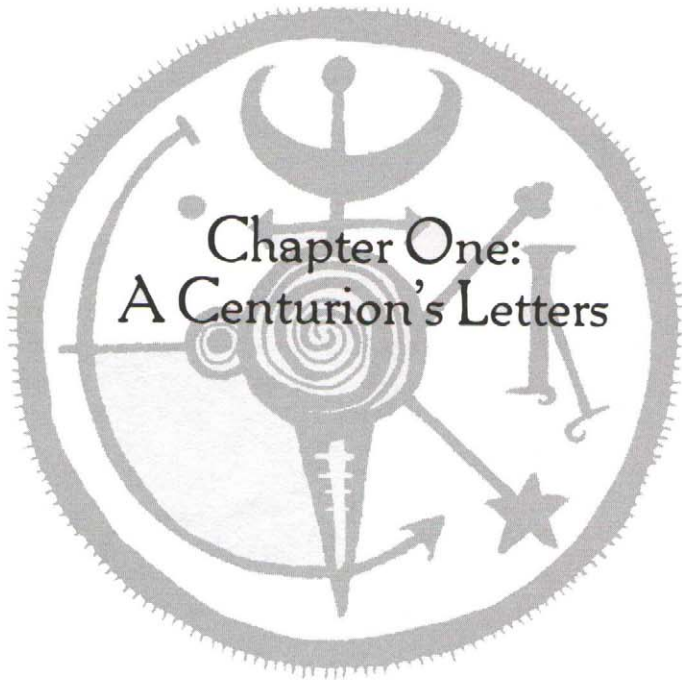
BOOK I:



ATIO COGNITIONIS
TATIO FVRORE
TATIO PATIENTIA
CALLIDITATE
PVGNÆ
AVATIONIS
IDETIS
ADOCTIS
LACIÆ



THE EPOCH OF CALAMITY



The contents of this chapter are taken from the British Museum Harleian MS 3859, sometimes referred to as "Nennius' History of the Britons with appendices," but commonly known to modern scholars as the British Historical Miscellany. The latter title is the most appropriate, for it is nothing more than a hodge-podge collection of documents with no attempt at inventory or categorization, and contains, among other things, Latin orations, part of a sermon by St. Augustine of Hippo, and an obscure Scythian geography. Acquired by the Harleian Library in 1729, it has been dated to the latter half of the tenth century and attributed to the scriptorium at St. David's.

*The original Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth ends with a very garbled version of the following account, which Lord Craven probably derived from second- and third-hand translations, having been denied access to the Harleian Library because of his impolitic vehemence. Frater I*I has endeavored to produce a readable modern translation, but the decayed and worm-eaten condition of much of the manuscript resulted only in the fragmentary text below.*

Our narrator, Titus Germanicus, was a centurion stationed at Corstopitum (modern Corbridge), along Hadrian's Wall sometime around 200 AD. His efforts to push the frontier farther north no doubt result from Emperor Septimius Severus' desire to see the Roman border surround the entirety of the British Isles.

The Germanic origin suggested by Titus' surname (and mentioned later in the document) is unusual, as citizenship was not extended to non-Latin freemen until the edict of Caracalla, some years later.

The Legate to whom these letters are addressed was Caius Estulitius Incitatus.

[S]alve Legate!

[A]s per your command, I commit to post this report of recent events along the frontier wall¹. The wall contains this branch of the Empire yet, but at no small price I fear. The savage tribes of Caledonia² still harry and raid the border, despite the outrageous sums which are paid regularly to their kings and chieftains. At the risk of challenging the wisdom of you and your ancestors, I would submit that the Imperium cease its payments to leaders who have no control of their subjects in the first place!

[I]nstead of this approach, I would recommend a more effective strategy based upon information I have collected in the years since I took up this post. I have learned a little of the tribal enmities and power struggles which exist in Caledonia and feel certain that such situations may eventually be exploited to keep this frontier intact.

[T]hrough some native informants I have learned that Caledonia is inhabited not only by the Goidelic tribes of the Celtæ, with which we are already familiar, but by another race, wholly separate and not necessarily friendly to the Celtæ.

[E]ver since divine Hadrian constructed the great wall which runs the length of the border, the Imperium has been plagued by reports of fierce and savage warriors, naked and covered from head to toe with blue tattoos, who seem to appear from nowhere and often succeed in dragging our valiant boys from the ramparts of the wall with grappling hooks, making a feast of their flesh before the horrified eyes of their comrades.³

[T]hese Picti, so named for their painted aspect, hold the northwestern regions of Caledonia, from which they send forth raiding parties to harry the Gaels (as the Goidelic tribes are called) as well as Roman strongholds. I propose to arm these Picti against the Gaels and cultivate an even greater hatred between these two peoples.

[T]o this end, I have invited Brennus, the Pictish high king, to parley at Eboracum⁴. There I will propose that he ally with Rome against the Gaels. If they can be kept at each others' throats, then they will have no men or energy to spare for costly engagements along the wall, and the rest of Britannia can remain secure within the Pax Romana.

[T]itus Germanicus, Centurion, CVIIIth Cohort

[S]alve, Legate!

[I] regret to report that the parley at Eboracum was inconclusive. King Brennus of the Picti⁵, though his manner was reserved and noncommittal (after the fashion of most barbarian rulers, or so I've found), nonetheless seemed to find favor with my proposal. Unfortunately I have completely underestimated the extent of the anarchy which prevails beyond the wall. Any deal which this savage can make with us is not likely to be honored by the Pictish tribes who supposedly owe him allegiance.

[S]trangely enough, I was to learn this from Brennus himself, who speaks with complete candor about the sorry state of his kingdom. The man is an interesting study; there is a quiet nobility even in the sloping brow, broad nostrils and heavy beardless jaw. He stands scarcely as high as my shoulder, weighing in at less than half my weight, but is as lithe and sinewy as a panther. Clad only in a breechcloth and those swirling blue tattoos, armed only with an unadorned iron-tipped short spear and a simple dagger of Celtic make, he strides among the assembled Roman might of Eboracum as if he had a century of his own at his heels.

[T]hough he carries himself with all the self-possession of a civilized monarch, he refers

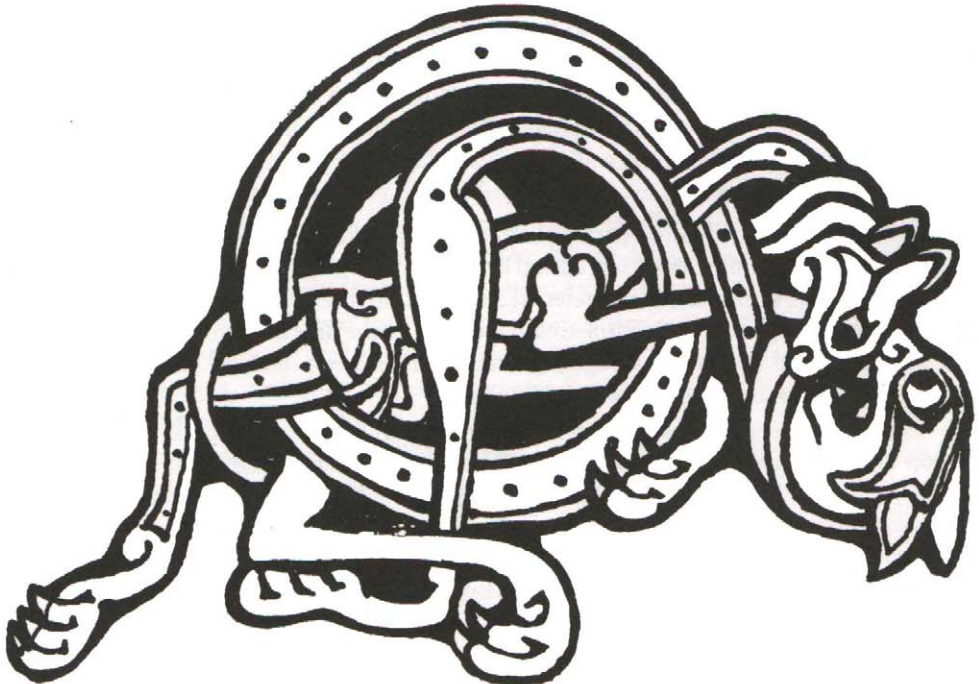
to his people only in a detached, sad sort of way; I surmised that the ruling families of Pictdom had held power for so long that they had become insulated, cut off from the rank and file of their subjects. I also suspect some degree of inbreeding among the rulers, also common with savage aristocracies.

[N]early all these preliminary speculations were overturned when I had time to observe Brennus interacting with his retinue. Some half-dozen Pictish warriors accompanied him to Eboracum as part of his personal guard. They are short, shorter even than Brennus himself, and covered with similar tattoos. Their most resemblance ends; while their king exudes a savage nobility, these are gross and debased specimens, their spines curved, their speech guttural, their skin unwholesome, scaly and diseased.

["Y]ou mark the sorry state of my people," Brennus told me, "but know this, Roman: These men are the finest that I have at hand. Their bodies are twisted by the evil that cloaks my land, but their spirits are as yet untainted. I know that their hearts are loyal to me, and the blood which flows within is that of the true White Howlers⁶, not—" and here Brennus stopped, seemingly consumed with a rage which was held in check only by his iron will. He made as if to leave, stopped, spoke to me with his back turned. "Would you court us as allies, Roman? Would you lend us your spears against the Gaels? Then select your closest men and have them mount up! You shall meet those whom you would fight beside! When you are ready, I shall take you to the heart of Pictdom!"

[A]nd there it is, Legate. This will of course be my last missive for some while, but my next communication should be of the best tidings; soon we shall drive the Celtæ into the sea and redraw the Roman border to encompass all of Caledonia!

[T]itus Germanicus, Centurion, CVIIIth Cohort



These are the only two complete letters of Germanicus. Though they were obviously never posted to Rome, it is unlikely that Germanicus would have carried them with him into the Pictlands. It is Frater I*I's belief that they were somehow preserved at Eboracum and later retrieved by Nennius or some unnamed compiler. This theory is corroborated by the difference in condition between them and the narrative that follows. While the two letters had been copied into the manuscript proper (the illuminated initial letter of each paragraph left unfinished), the following narrative is in Germanicus' own hand, and was folded into the back cover of the MS, probably for later inclusion as an "appendix."

What follows may have indeed begun as a series of letters to Incitatus, but their decayed and fragmentary state leaves this question unanswered. More likely, these fragments comprise Germanicus' own personal journal or notes, from which he intended to write his report back to Rome upon his triumphant return.

[...] Leaving Eboracum, we passed the ruins of the Tower of Trajan⁷. Strange glances passed between Brennus and his men, and there was furtive murmuring. Later, a Cymric scout in our party who knew a little of the Pictish tongue related that Brennus' men had told him accusatorily, "you have called them, and they shall remember."

[...]

The countryside is beautiful in its Spartan starkness. Vast rolling fields of heather stretch beneath the gray skies; the hills roll gently in some places, in others they jut at odd angles with treacherously bare rock. I asked Brennus [...] [...] but think not that the land was always as you see it now. When my people first came here, we walked, for the seas had not yet divided the land. The earth was pulling back her mantle of ice, and we hunted the reindeer, bison and mammoth across the plains. Gawk not, Roman! For mine is an old people, and our memories stretch back farther than you can even imagine!

"When the oceans rose, we were driven back into the hills, and lush forests covered much of the countryside. My own totem, the Lion, flourished here, as well as the red deer, wild boar, and many other animals, who became extinct as the wilderness died."

[...]

The squalor of these folk is deplorable. They have no proper dwellings, but live mostly in earthen mounds. I have



even been told that there are those in the highlands who make their homes in caves and burrows like common animals.

There are some wooden and stone forts where Brennus allows us to make camp and stable our horses. Within the forts one sees bronze and iron tools and weapons, most of them obviously of Goidelic origin. Some, however, I guess to be products of Pictish craft; they are crudely worked, and clumsily decorated with coiling images of fanciful beasts.

Away from the forts, even these pitiful items are nowhere to be seen; the majority of Brennus' subjects eke out their barren existence with nothing more than stone and wooden implements, living no better than troglodytes.

[...]

This next portion appears to have been written immediately after the event it describes, for the text, hastily scrawled in contracted 'graffiti-style' Latin, is almost hopelessly fragmented by burn marks, bloodstains and bloody fingerprints, and other, less identifiable, smudges.

[...] overturned, showering sparks and spilling embers onto the side of the tent, which became an instant sheet of flame. Swiftly grabbing my [...] “filthy little savages have played us for—” then was cut short with a wet tearing sound [...] flashing swords in the firelight, glistening faces of men crying out in pain and fear, growls of huge [...] blood and more blood as my gladius bit deeply [...] away with a handful of greasy matted fur, then turned [...] face out of a nightmare, tiny piglike eyes blazing sickly green with fury, surmounted by great batlike ears notched from many battles; but the mouth was the worst, opening at an awkward angle, almost sideways, splitting the face vertically, jaws which sprouted fangs not in natural rows but every which way [...] low and bubbling in the back of its throat, slavering a viscous drool which caused the ground to smoke where it dropped [...] see over its bent leathery shoulder, Brennus, oddly transformed [...] feral burning gaze



met mine at the same height [...] limbs now longer, more heavily muscled, broad blue chest crossed with bright red slashes. Growling, he lunged [...] not too stunned by the impact to witness an even more startling metamorphosis in the Pictish king: his flat face stretched into a doglike snout, fine white fur sprouted instantly all over his [...] slashing, rending, tearing into each other with a fury burning hotter than the sun itself, a fury which would cause even the gods to lose their [...] with one final desperate heave, wrenched free his prize and held it up, still beating, to the black smoke-filled sky. His howl of victory split the night, then he sank his great teeth into [...]

This next passage was obviously written later, under less turbulent conditions, making it much easier to read and translate.

[I said, "...you] may call me Roman, but know that I was born in the German forests, that my heart was forged in the icy cold flames of the northlands, and that I am kin to the berserkers, they that are kin to the Fenris-wolf! Long before I sat in Roman schools or took up a Roman sword, I had vitki-uncles and witch-wise aunts who taught me of the old ways, of rune-lore and the changing ways of the Fenris-kin. You'd have to do better than that to shock me, O King of the Picts."

Brennus' face remained impassive. His gaze did not leave the smoldering remains of the camp, with its pyres we had built for our fallen comrades. (I shuddered to recall that not all of my men were found among the slain.)

"As you will, then," he said at length. "Did your kinfolk teach you of the Di Triplecti — of the Magnis Vermis?"⁸

"Oh, aye! We know it as Jormungandr, the Midgard Serpent. Its awakening is said to herald Ragnarok, the end of all things."

"And so it has —" his eyes narrowed as he turned to me, " —for us, anyway."

"Explain yourself."

"Think not that you — you Romans, I mean — are the first to try to invade this land. Before you came the Celtae, there were waves of them, each more drunken and boisterous than the last. Do not misunderstand me — we Picts lived in peace with the Celtae, and none can match the songs we sang together! But the numbers of people were growing, and the amount of land shrinking. We made war with our brethren, and fought hard to hold our lands, but there were just too many, and we were driven into the higher lands.

"Mayhap there is justice of a kind in this. For you see, when we Picts first came here, pursuing the track of the woolly rhinoceros and mammoth, there were others before us, others whom we drove back just as we have been driven. Listen close, for you may find grim humor in this: these folk were smaller than us, with strange and alien faces, less than human, like lizards or serpents. They had been here even before the coming of the icewalls, and dwelt in underground burrows, just as my own folk have come to do. When the Celtae came, we allied ourselves with the serpent-folk against them; when the Roman legions marched upon us, we joined the Celtae in repelling them.

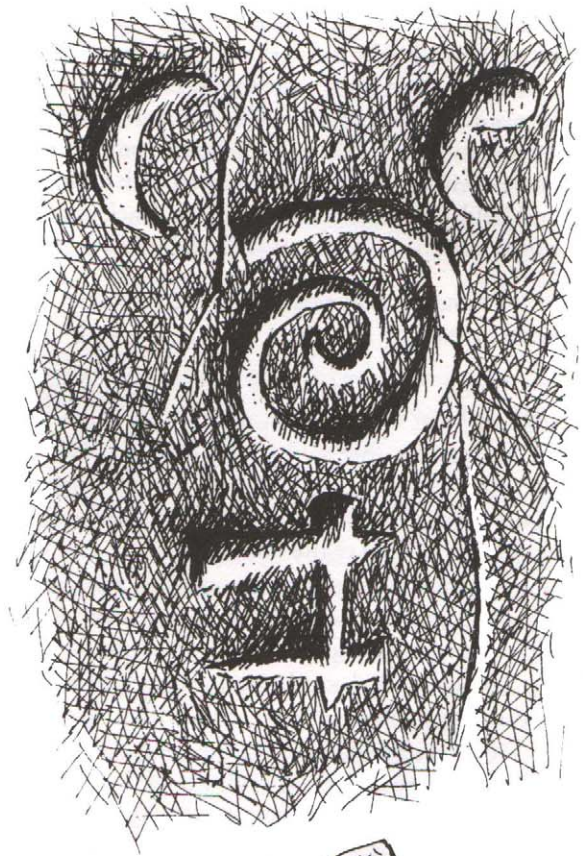
"You see? The world moves in circles, just as the Vermis swallows its own tail."

The Pict's talk of serpents beneath the earth awoke in me memories of some half-forgotten tales from my own youth. The comment made back at Trajan's Tower now filled me with unease. I imagined the very hills around us huddling closer, listening.

“These serpent-folk were wise in the ways of the Vermis, but they told us of the Vermis of old, before the madness came upon the Textor. It was the old Vermis who maintained the balance between Textor and Feritas, between order and chaos. Or so they taught us. The Vermis had ancient strongholds, Foveae, in this land, which were as sacred places to the serpent-folk, for I believe that they did not truly understand the madness of the Textor or the change it had wrought in the Vermis [...]

[“...] Now, recall from your histories the time of Agricola, your predecessor, who first sought to subdue the lands of Caledonia. Recall that, though his numbers, weapons and resources were vastly superior, yet did our small raiding parties of allied Picts and Celts eat away at his supply lines. Understand that this hatred and abhorrence, which your Empire so casually engenders, is such a great force that it can prove your own undoing, as well as the doom of those you seek to conquer. In my younger days, my hatred for Rome was such that even I myself was moved to call upon that dark force [...]

[“...] at least one centurion that we know of who was one of the walking dead, those that burn in the sun’s light and that slake their thirst with the blood of the living. Among his century were those that the Gaels name fomori, men who had been possessed by evil spirits and whose bodies had been warped into weapons for the Vermis. Many among my people believed that they had the aid of the serpent-folk in traversing the length of the Pictlands unseen, for such a feat is well-nigh impossible knowing the



vigilance of us Picts. In any case, they made their way over the Grampian mountains and beyond, into the far north where the Fovea lay. There they awakened the ancient power of the place, and opened the way for the Vermis to rear Its foul head over the earth.

"I have often thought that, in that dark hour, the Bestia Bello, which is to say, the rageful and violent face of the Vermis, reached out to claim the heart of Calgacus⁹ himself, already swollen with rage, as Its first trophy. For, had he held to his usual tactics of raiding and harrying, the legion would have spent itself utterly in endless wandering through the highland wilderness, and Rome might well have abandoned its intentions of subduing the wild peoples of Caledonia. But the rage which is both boon and bane to our kind propelled his host down the slopes of Mons Graupius and headlong into pitched battle with the fully armored might of Agricola's legion. Mark how subtle the Vermis is, pitting Textor against Feritas, Rome against Celt, to gather the victory-spoils of both! Fully a third of the assembled Celtae fell that day, and the Bestia Bello baptized Itself in their gore. Those who remained fled into the mountains, their hearts burnt black and hard with hatred.

"Yet such disaster was only the first of many terrible afflictions awaiting my people. The struggle of the Bestia Bello widened the gash It had torn in the fabric of the world, leaking forth the foul spirit-slaves that infest Its realm. These Pestes-spirits boiled forth from the Fovea where dwelt the Bestia Bello, and flew down out of the highlands to ravage the land.

"At first, their attacks were indirect, seeming to be little more than bad luck. We wintered hard, season after season, and what game there was to be found, was sickly, more often than not spoilt on the hoof. Plagues and pestilence spread among the lowlands, with famine hard upon their wake.

"Then, out of the lands of Damh Brugh, Crom Cruach and Moch Maugh¹⁰, came the reports — the omens. First, there were many stillbirths among the cattle, and the bodies of the calves were twisted and hideously undeveloped. Then, it was said, goats began to drop kids with three, five or seven legs, three eyes, or two heads. Things without faces which kicked once then suffocated. My grandfather, who was king at that time, sent men into those lands to investigate. What they told upon their return would shrivel the heart of all Pictdom.

"The people of that land had kept a terrible secret from the rest of us: it had not only been their livestock that had been accursed, but their own offspring as well. Children had been born twisted and monstrous. Of those who survived their birth, most were killed by



their parents, but many were abandoned to the barren places. That was a mistake. While any normal newborn would have died of exposure before the next sunrise, these monsters drew strength from the evil Pestes who presided over their birth. They survived, and grew into lean hard fomori, many of whom yet roam these lands. They found allies in the serpent-folk, and among those Picts whose hearts had already been eaten out by Pestes. As the forces of evil grew, the birth-plague spread from those lands to their neighbors', until there is not a village in all of Pictdom which has not suffered this horror.

"When we learned what had happened, a pack of our best warriors banded together and sought out this Fovea. We thought we could defeat the Bestia Bello by bringing the battle back to its source. Aiyah! How wrong we were! How foolish to think that the Bestia Bello could so easily be defeated! I think now that It expected us, that we played right into Its trap. The pack was dragged into the Fovea, all save one. The best and the bravest of the White Howlers were delivered into the very lair of the Vermis Itself¹, where their souls were twisted into evil and madness, their bodies given the naked shapes of monstrosity. Then they were vomited back into our world as insane mockeries of warriors, the face of all that we revile.

"It is only through the one that escaped that we even know of this. He was hunted down and devoured by his former comrades. His name was Cororuc, and his memory shall die with me, unless the Celtic bards are kind enough to sing our songs when we are no more...." And the King of the Picts fell silent.

I was silent also for a long while, my mind in turmoil. At length I asked, "Why, then, have you brought me this far? [...]"

[Brennus said] "[...] perhaps I had it in mind that only a Roman hand may undo what a Roman hand has done. I do not believe your empire can be corrupt through and through if men such as you yet ride in its ranks. Or perhaps," and here the sly grim grin he turned upon me echoed his wolf-mask glowering through last night's fire and blood, "in my desperation, I seek only to wound this evil empire by dragging its best men one by one into the very mouth of the hell it has opened in our midst!"

The circling carrion-crows scattered as our gallows-laughter rolled down out of the hills.

[...]

The final pages are almost entirely effaced, even more so than the portion describing the attack earlier. Only the few phrases which follow may be discerned.

[...] out of the hills, and the mists rising up into the heavens like a great gray wall at the end of the world. The path downward was steep, treacherous [...] slimy moss-covered boulders whose vast faces were graven with beasts coiling Pictish-style so that they seem to be swirling out of the mists themselves [...] down into the bowels of the earth. Slick stone walls pressed close on each side [...] a vast maze of tunnels and burrows, with many of its passages too tiny and narrow for any human form [...] lost sight of him around a bend [...] "Brennus!" I cried, but the only reply was an all-pervasive sibilant hissing [...] scaly sloping brow, over eyes shining yellow and green in the light from my fading torch [...] closing in around me [...] bound too tightly even to reach for my [...] know not where [...] flung into a tiny enclosed space, reeking with the stench of rotting meat [...] the boulder blocking the

entrance too massive to shift [...] only my sword had been taken from me, so, with flint and steel and the few dry scraps I could pull from the straw bedding [...] just make out a large mound of what seemed to be bodies [...] here, a broken Celtic sword, there, a fine leather breastplate, shredded like paper, and there the frayed crest of a legionary's helm. I stepped toward the mound, and something round slid and scraped beneath my bootheel [...] even with half his face sheared off, I recognized the cruel twist upon the greasy lips of Drusus, the Iberian sergeant. None shall mourn his passing [...] the heads of over a dozen Celtae, tied together by their hair like a rotting bunch of grapes [...] fingers, and segments of fingers, all lined up in neat rows by some idle hand (counting the days, perhaps?). Upon one freshly severed knuckle I saw a brass ring that my young adjutant had been so proud of. Gods above, what could I have been thinking, to bring him on a mission like this? Poor Quintillus. You died without ever even having a fat girl [...] rolled the great boulder carelessly aside,



and pushed its bulk through the entrance [...] not the sleek noble wolf-heads I once saw running through the trees where I grew up, but a twisted bat-eared monstrosity, like those that attacked us at the camp [...] through its slavering jaws, it barked something that sounded like "Come!" [...] down still more narrow slick-walled passages, resounding with a droning whining wail [...] into a hissing crowd of glowing eyes bobbing in the pitch blackness [...] now almost deafened by that wailing sound [...] with a touch as cold as ice. My [...] clenched tight with fear and [...] coiled about my heart, constricting until I felt sure it must burst [...] suddenly, a single tiny flame, no larger than a candle's [...] could see that the nerve-wracking wail was coming from a half-dozen hollowed thighbones, through which air was being forced from a large glistening bladder or stomach-sack [...]["HAAA-KAKAKAKAK-KENNNNGH! AHAAYII! FEEEEEBAK!" and still the hissing [...] [" ULLOOOOGH-MOOLLAGH! BAASH! BAAASH! BAASH-KAYEEEAAGH! [" [...] lighting up Brennus' face, battered and bruised almost beyond recognition, only inches from mine [...] inside my head, "AHAI BASHKAAI!" Then, in an oily, seemingly familiar tone, "Remember whose man you are, Titus Germanicus! Remember the mission that brought you here![" [...] streams of blood, rivers of blood, flowing into a vast wine-dark ocean of briny gore[...] days? Or only hours? I can scarcely see what I am writing, and I know not why I continue [...]

These are the last readable fragments of Germanicus' manuscript. Shortly after the above translation had been completed, the following document appeared, without address or postmark, in the mailbox of Peter [...]'s residence.

Salve, Legate:

It is my pleasure to report that the King of the Picts may be removed from the list of Rome's greatest enemies in Britannia! In the absence of their tribal leader, Pictish harassment along the wall can be expected to subside, allowing for more concentrated action against the remaining wild Celtae. Initial attempts to ally with the Picti proved unfeasible and unnecessary, especially when I was suddenly reminded of the conversations we had those nights at your villa high above the wine-dark Adriatic.

Expect in future post the salted trophy-head of King Brennus, the last of the fabled "White Howlers," for your patron's collection, and the end of the warring season hopes to find me once again at your villa, sharing that curiously thick and briny private vintage you keep.

Titus Germanicus, Eboracum¹²

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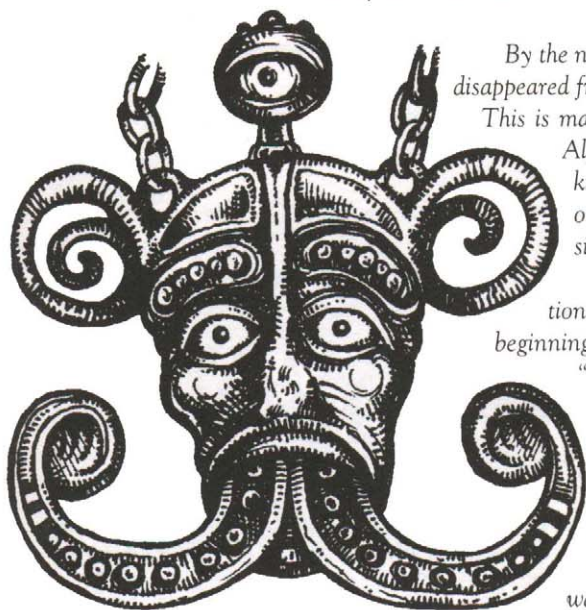
Chapter Two: Fabulae et Cantae Scotti

Lord Craven's original *Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth* made extensive use of Scottish lore and legend, as derived from the medieval compilation *Fabulae et Cantae Scotti*, which is believed to have been assembled some time in the twelfth century. Much of what Craven quotes is nothing more than common fairy tales which Frater I*1 has deemed of little relevance to the present volume. Also, any example of harshness and brutality among Scottish custom is cited as a means of furthering the blatantly inflammatory purpose of Craven's work. His tenacity in digging up any form of slander and insult against the Scots is to be admired, however. The following quote from the Roman poet Prosper adorns his original title page, and is especially interesting in light of the ophidian revelations of the previous chapter's document:

*In what black caverns was this snakeling bred
That from the dirt presumes to rear its head?*

Craven's primary aim was to show how, throughout medieval history, the Scots (specifically those of Pictish descent) persisted in insinuating themselves into the ruling class, first of non-Pictish Scotland, then of England itself. In the post-Roman and early medieval period, the Picts were a rapidly diminishing breed, and sought to propagate themselves with amazing alacrity and fecundity. One of Craven's assertions is that the wearing of kilts as a national custom was actually a Pictish institution, devised as a way of removing a common and cumbersome material hindrance to the first stage of the breeding process. In support of this argument he quotes a folk-song which was still sung in his own time:

*An ye gae doon to Damburrow toon
Yer breech-cuff cinch up ladde or lasse
For theyre sure to comme 'roon
Up frae under the groon
'Aslythin lyke snaykes thru the grasse...!*



By the ninth or tenth century, the Picts had virtually disappeared from the pages of history as a distinct people. This is mainly due to the ascension of Kenneth Mac Alpin, who united the Picts and Scots in a single kingdom. Craven takes great pains to point out that Mac Alpin was Pictish on his mother's side of the family.

According to Lord Craven, the corruption of the British royal line occurred near the beginning of the fourteenth century. King Edward "Longshanks," whose atrocities against the Scots are legendary, sent his son's French wife to Scotland as an expendable envoy to the rebelling Scottish tribes. During this mission she was raped (at least by Craven's account) by a Scottish rebel of Pictish descent, and, unknown to her husband, Edward II, conceived the child who succeeded him.

The corruption inherent in the Pictish bloodline did not manifest itself immediately, for the reign of Edward III is known to history as the "zenith of chivalry," but found its fullest expression over one hundred years later in the "twisted and malign form" of Richard III, as eloquently portrayed by William Shakespeare. (Perhaps Craven relied too much on the Bard's version of history, for Richard was not in actuality so infirm. Or perhaps the Bard was aware of this secret history of Craven's.)

Craven's *Chronicle* dwells at great length upon a descendent of Richard III's, one Edmund, Duke of Edinburgh, Laird of Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles (these latter holdings were eventually usurped from him by a malicious Scottish noble, presumably of a non-Pictish line). Apparently, upon assuming his title, Edmund quickly degenerated into a somewhat inept schemer and conspirator, a "horrid little manne, with a heart as blacke as his kettle." Craven refers to Edmund almost exclusively by the name with which he is known to history, Edmund the Black Adder. Though Craven states that Edmund was burned by the Witchfinder General without any legally acknowledged progeny, Frater I*I notes that the Blackadder family name recurs throughout British history, until the bloodline was finally terminated on the fields of Europe during the First World War.

Another portion of Craven's historical scholarship is worth noting, for it demonstrates the preternatural vitality and fortitude of the Pictish families that interbred with the serpent-folk Brennus described in the previous chapter's document. Responding to accusations that captured Scottish border reivers were being tortured and executed in inhumane ways, one John Carey writes to Lord Burghley in 1596:

"...and my good Lord, for your honors better satisfaction, that it was not so barbarouslie nor butcherlie don as you thinck it to be, it should seeme your honor hath been wrongfullie enformed, in sayinge he was cutt in manye peeeces, after his death — for if he had bene cutt in many peeeces, he could not a lived till the next, which themselves reported he did — which shewes he was not cut in verie many peeeces!"²

The two documents which comprise the remainder of this chapter were taken by Lord Craven directly from Fabulae et Cantae Scotti.

The first is an old folktale, and the mention of St. Ninian in the first sentence is significant, for the Venerable Bede tells us that stone buildings such as the one described were extremely uncommon in Scotland at this time.

The second document was translated by Lord Craven from an original parchment appended to the Harleian Museum's copy of the Fabulae. According to the curator, it had been put there in the late medieval period, and was supposed to have been taken from the mummified carcass of an early missionary who blindly wandered into a peat bog, and was engulfed and preserved.

The First Church at Damburrow

Long before Saint Columba came to lead the Picts out of idolatry, even before Saint Ninian built his Candida Casa³, a missionary came to the land called Damburrow in order to bring the light of the true faith to these savage folk. History has forgotten his name, but legend states that he came walking alone over the hills of Northumbria, clicking his rosary beads and muttering his Latin prayers.

"Pater noster, qui es in caelis," he muttered, "sanctificatur tuum nomen...."

In the village of Damburrow, he called all the people of the town together and commenced to preach God's Word to them. The villagers listened with sullen and listless faces, and, at the end of the sermon, the missionary, taken aback by this rather cool reaction, singled out the headman of the village.

"Does the Holy Word not inspire you?" he cried.

"Tis nice," replied the elder.

"Then what would you say if I told you I planned to build a church here, so that I may preach the Word of God and instruct your people in the ways of the Lord?"

"I say that it won't be allowed."

"You will not allow me to do so?"

"I didn't say that."

"Are you not the elder of this village?"

"I am."

"Do you forbid me to do as I have stated?"

"I do not."

"Very well, then."

And so the missionary sent for men from the south, an architect, and carpenters and stonemasons, and when they had arrived, they all set to work.

Within a week the foundations for the church had been laid. But when the missionary and his men awoke the next day, they found the foundations gone, with nothing in their place but a sunken patch of barren sod. Perplexed, the missionary summoned the elder of the village.

"Why didn't you tell me that we had begun building on the swampy bog?"

"Because you hadn't. 'Tis fine ground for building."



“Very well, then.”

The missionary consulted with his architect and masons, and all agreed upon the solidity of the ground, though none could explain the disappearance of the foundations. Work began anew, and in another fortnight the framework of the church had been erected. But before long more troubles were vexing the construction. The workmen became tired, their work sloppy, a fact many of them attributed to bad dreams, and some complained that they were completely unable to sleep on account of terrible rumblings from deep within the earth. Also, tools, materials and supplies had begun to disappear from the worksite overnight. Angrily, the missionary once again confronted the village elder.

“Do you wish to impede the Lord’s work here?”

“I do not.”

“Have you or your people been stealing things from our worksite?”

“We have not.”

The missionary narrowed his eyes and ran his gaze across the dark hills which huddled close about the area.

“Do any other people live in this region?” he asked.

“No,” the elder answered. “No people.”

“Very well, then.”

And so work continued, but slowly, for things still vanished from the site when darkness came, and some of the men left to return to the south, complaining of ill health. A few reported finding strange tracks on the ground nearby, prints which seemed to have been left by tiny misshapen hands and feet, but with a broad groove between them, as though a body had dragged along the ground. Superstitious whispers and murmurs arose among the men, but the missionary endeavored to put them at ease.

"Fear not, good men. It seems that the village children are having some cruel jest at our expense, but we cannot let this deter us! Remember above all, it is the Lord's work which we are doing!"

But in time, as the situation grew worse, all the men left, the stonemasons, the carpenters, and even the architect himself. Undaunted, the missionary set about to finishing the nearly completed church himself. For days he labored, and many of the villagers came out to watch. Some smirked coldly, and some marveled at the effort he put forth as he hammered in nails while keeping time with his Latin chants: "In nomine Patri (BAM!), et Filii (BAM!), et Spiritu Sancti (BAM!)."

Finally the building was completed, and the missionary bade all the village folk to come and attend the first services.

But the elder declined, telling the missionary, "It was forbidden long ago that such work as you have done should be done, and all your stone and wood must soon return to the land from whence it arose, for it is the land itself which will not allow such things. The Paradise and Salvation which you have offered to us are not for us to accept, though they do sound quite nice."

Furious, the missionary returned to the new church, there to pray for guidance and the strength to persevere. So loudly and vigorously did he pray that all the village could hear him and his clacking rosaries well until nightfall.

That night there were horrendous sounds which seemed to issue from the earth itself, and all in the village crouched close together by their hearths. Those brave few who ventured to peek outside of their hovels swore that they had seen the dark hills jostling one another in the gloom.

When morning came, all the folk banded together and marched out to the church, but all they found was a great dark sinkhole where the building had been erected. Even as they watched, it slowly filled with oily brackish water from somewhere deep below.

And so it remains to this day. It is now referred to as "Damburrow Pit," and legend states that any who dare to stay nearby as night falls might yet hear the Latin mutterings of that missionary, now somehow changed, burbling up through the foul murky waters: "Pater noster, qui es in Malfea, Vermis Magnis est tuum nomen...."⁴



A Missionary's Letter

Dearest Merciful Father,

I left the abbey at Iona several months ago with joy and courage in my heart, heading northwest into the Caledonian Highlands, bent upon the task of bringing the good news of the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ to the unenlightened savages dwelling therein.

The folk in the regions nearest to the abbey received me well, for they were already informed of our good work, and treated me to such generosity as their meager lives allowed. As I progressed beyond the lowlands, however, I found myself less welcome, and at times even my noble purpose was subjected to taunts and derision by the more degenerate inhabitants of these simple villages. But my faith was strong, keeping me in good cheer, and I was not deterred from my mission.

I will speak now of the events of yesterday: I was entering the region known as Damburrow, a place which my local informants described as being of evil repute. Therefore did I fortify myself with a three-fold repetition of my morning prayers and a doubling of my ablutions.

The greater part of my day upon the road passed without event, save for a pervasive ominous feeling which I attributed to the locality's aforementioned reputation. As the sun began to sink into the lowlands at my back, however, I found myself subjected to a puzzling, and then sickening, sight. Near the crest of the hill just ahead, a short way from the road itself, I could see a young lady — a mere slip of a girl, really — bending herself to a labor more suited to a strong grown man. My pity for her increased when she turned to one side and I could see, silhouetted against the twilight, her belly, which was heavy, almost unnaturally swollen, with



child. I quickened my pace, hoping to take up her task and spare her any further exertion in her delicate condition.

Equipped with only a short dull kitchen blade, she hacked away at one of the low twisted trees of the area. The lowest branch, some two and a half feet above the ground, she had removed at about a foot away from the trunk, a task which must surely have taken her the full day's work alone. Now she diligently worked to sharpen the remaining stump, pausing often to test the point with her already chafed and reddened thumb.

As I drew near, she seemed to find some satisfaction with the completion of her task, and tossed away the kitchen knife. Then she faced the tree with a look of firm resignation set into her cherubic features, and, grasping the trunk with white-knuckled hands, pulled herself onto the protruding limb with such sudden force that the sharpened point must have passed completely through her womb.

I imagine that some wordless cry must have passed my lips as I leapt forward. Grasping her around her chest, I tried to lift her up and back, off of that impaling branch. She swore at me in her strange highland tongue, and twisted in my arms. Angling herself anew, she clawed her hands into the bark of the tree and heaved once more, nearly dragging me off my feet. This time the wooden stake emerged from the transfixed fruit of her gender and pierced my own side as well.

There are no words for the horror which filled my breast and rose in my throat as her body slumped from my arms to dangle obscenely to one side, the jagged punctures in her belly spewing gouts of blood and strangely colored womb-essences, painting the tree and my robes a hideously bright olive-streaked crimson. And as the life flooded from her, I could have sworn that the harsh set of her face softened with peace and relief.

Some time passed before I was able to choke back my disgust and tend to her body. Whatever the evil that had infected her heart and brought her to this abominable end, she at least deserved to be beneath the ground by nightfall. To this end I scraped out a shallow





grave by the roadside, which I intended to cover with stones. But when the time came to carry her carcass to it, I felt something inside her mangled belly writhe and convulse, and I fled shrieking into the gathering gloom.

I awoke the next morning soaked with dew and chilled stiff from sleeping on the open ground. I had only strayed a little ways from the road, still within sight of that horrid hill-top tree. From my new vantage, I could see around the next bend in the road to where a cart or small wagon sat askew, one wheel lodged in the roadside ditch. The tattered cover was woven with the same colorful cross-stripped pattern as the girl's cloak. Since the daylight had somewhat dispelled my fear and revulsion of the events of the previous evening, I moved forward to investigate.

Within the wagon lay a figure frozen in a posture of violent death, face twisted in agony, hands clutching at empty space. Though obscured by shadow and swarming flies, this person was clearly the twin of the girl upon the hill, and, from what I could make out of the contours of her torso, she appeared to have been in the same advanced state of pregnancy as her sibling. I turned away to take a deep breath and steel myself against another vision of carnage, then leaned forward into the shaded interior of the wagon.

The poor girl's legs lay at sickeningly skewed angles in a pool of still-uncongealed gore. Despite the soaked skirts plastered across her hips, there was no mistaking that the lower half of her body had been pulled apart with such force that the pelvic girdle lay in two shattered pieces. My stomach twisted within me and my gorge rose, but it was not until I had begun to turn away to retch that the full horror of the scene struck me.

Benevolent Father, when I come to a land where young girls are forced into carnal relations before even the first flowerings

of womanhood are upon them, I know that it is nothing less than my sworn duty to bring the righteous moral teachings of our Lord and Savior unto such peoples and to teach them the proper way to live.

And, Gracious Father, when in such a land I find evidence of such an obscene practice as the slaughter of unwanted infants, yea, even to the point of prenatal infanticide, I know that my task shall be all the more difficult, and so even more imperative.

But, Merciful Father, I have seen a thing in this land which has shriveled my heart within my breast, and I can no longer feel the certainty and guidance of Your Love and Providence. There is in this land such an evil that even Your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, would turn his face away and weep with despair. I cannot bring Your sacred Word to these people, for that Word is now no more than a mockery to me, as it must surely be to them.

For, when I turned away from the grisly vision within the wagon, my eye fell upon a bloody track which meandered across the road and disappeared into a verminous bolthole beneath a rock beside the ditch. The source of this track was the wagon itself, as though something had pulled itself out of the wagon and along the ground, dragging its long and twisting body with tiny clawlike hands. And I know that it was no human force which tore this girl apart, but that she was rent asunder from within.

I shall not ask Your mercy for abandoning my mission, nor for taking my own life. I know that the deepest pits of Hell will be a welcome relief from the horror of this world.

(unsigned)





BOOK II:





THE EPOCH OF CONSUMPTION



Chapter Three: The Trial of the Black Monk

Legends of the Black Monk are to be found throughout Europe, and are ascribed to nearly every century of the Medieval era. In researching these legends, Frater I*I has come to the conclusion that the person described in this chapter's document has served as a role model for many clergymen throughout history, whose quest for truth led them beyond the fold of the decadent and hypocritical Christian faith.

The greatest accumulation of Black Monk legends occurs in England at the beginning of the fifteenth century; there are many place-names throughout the British Isles that echo with his impact. Prof. MacLish was of invaluable assistance in positively identifying the Black Monk as a Scotsman of Pictish descent, who around 1400 set out to spread his faith across England and Europe. The author is indebted as well to Prof. MacLish's anonymous source for obtaining a copy of the following document, which specifically links the Monk to Gilles de Rais, the historical source for the legend of Bluebeard, which parallels the legends of the Black Monk in many ways.

Our belief is that the Monk was a relative of the true Dancers of the Black Spiral Labyrinth. While he did not possess the ability to wear the form of Rage, it is clear from this document that he was endowed by Eater-of-Souls with an equally effective means of disseminating the will of the Wyrn.

Two things are to be noted with regard to the following account of the trial of the Black Monk. First, the consistent obliteration of the name of then-respected Gilles de Rais. It must be remembered that, at the time of this trial, de Rais was not only knight, lord and baron of the region of Rais, but had served for some time as Marshal of France and was best known as the companion-in-arms of Joan of Arc. Out of respect for his position and noble deeds, it was deemed that the Black Monk's insistence upon placing de Rais at the center of the crimes in question was but the malice of an evil mind, and de Rais' name was omitted from all court records.

Second, the reference to the so-called Phallum Vermiculum, an artifact of darkest and most ancient pagan manufacture. No such object was ever noted among le Fif's meager belongings, and, save for the mysterious "demonstration" noted in the articles of the trial, it is generally agreed by heresiologists that the Phallum was no more than another of the Black Monk's self-aggrandizing fantasies.



n the Name of the Lord, Amen.

May the Lord grant me the strength and fortitude to place with clarity and direction upon parchment these words which shall warn future readers, if indeed the Lord hath ordained such tribulation for any coming generation, of the unrepentant and barefaced Evil which stands exposed in the following pages.

Herein is contained the transcripts of the ecclesiastical trial of, and confessions extracted from, one Friar Louis le Fis', now known in the lore of good Christian folk as the Black Monk, who entered (or professed to enter) the service of the Lord in his twentieth year as a traveling monk of the Franciscan Order. For over twenty-five years he trod the byroads of Europe, from the mist-choked moors of Scotland to the desolate mountain peaks of Carpathia. As a lowly brother of no fixed abode, his exploits were unknown to our Holy Mother Church, but in very little time he had acquired an almost legendary status among the peasantry through whose villages he passed. In the beginning he was regarded as a healer and a most holy man, for he was seen to do no more than ease the suffering of the people by cleansing the diseased and comforting the troubled. In addition, he also offered care to orphans and the children of fallen parents, taking them with him and claiming to place them in monasteries or well-favored households.

In time, however, it came to be seen that his "miracles" were no more than the preludes of terrible curses; the diseased whom he had appeared to cure were later stricken with even worse afflictions, often spending years upon their deathbeds, and those whose troubles he dispelled were revisited with a tenfold host of misfortunes. Furthermore, not one of the children that he took from the villages were ever seen or heard of again.

One name which will be readily seen to have been expunged from the record, and which we now know to have been most wrongly done, is that of Gilles, Baron of Rais, whose diabolic crimes and ungodly atrocities continue to shock all of Christendom, and whose infamy has become the source of dark legend even in our own lifetime.

One final remark must be made regarding my omission of the names of all Inquisitorial officers and deputies involved in this trial. This was done at the behest of the Most Holy Dominican Order when it came to be known that all of the Inquisitors present at this trial had in subsequent years either met with some terrifying accidental death or suffered some abominable disgrace and were excommunicated. The true nature of the Evil disclosed herein is such that It eats away at the spirit of any who come into merest contact with It, and It shall swallow whole

the soul of any who dare look it in the face. For that very reason shall this, the only surviving transcript of the trial of Friar Louis le Fij, be placed in a triple-locked cask and sealed with the Papal Seal, which said cask is to be kept in the most secure vault deep within the Papal Library, and shall only ever be taken out to be studied, under the strictest conditions of prayer and penance, in the presence of at least three Most Holy Cardinals.

Let this thing now be done in accord with the will of Our Most Merciful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on this First day of the month of April in the year of Our Lord Fourteen hundred and Sixty-Four.

Archbishop
[signature obscured]

I Be hereby known that, for so long that there is no record to contradict it, there has stood, in the province of Tours, the church cathedral of Nantes, having as its head bishop the Reverend Father Jean de Malestroit, who did recently depute and ordain by Letters Apostolic Friar Guillaume M², bachelor of Holy Writ of the Order of Dominicans, to exercise





the office of Inquisitor of the faith and of heresy within the realm of the said bishopric, which he did commonly, publicly and famously; this is an attestable fact and known to all.

II. Item: that, upon the last day of June in the year of our lord Fourteen hundred and Thirty-Nine, at the hour of Matins³, in the forest near Tiffauges, there was apprehended one Friar Louis le Fif, a member of the ecclesiastical entourage of Marshal G- de R-; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

III. Item: that, at the time of his arrest, the said Friar had in his possession several articles of an ungodly nature, to wit: the bones and tanned flesh of many people, most of them children, threaded and with gold settings so as to be worn as garments or ornamentation; documents of instruction in rituals of a blasphemous and heretical nature; and the freshly severed head of Olivier Darel, a child of the parish of



Nantes, aged seven or eight; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

IV. Item: that the said Friar was held in the gaol at Tiffauges, and, in such time as court could be assembled, brought to trial at Nantes, there to stand before the administrators of Gods justice: the afore-said Friar M-, Friar Jean B-, Reverend Father Henri G-, Cardinal Serge de B-, representative of the Dominican Order, and Clerk of the Court Friar Antoine d'E-; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

V. Item: that the said Friar, when confronted with the evidence of his abominable crime, refused to speak or confess; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

VI. Item: that, in accordance with ecclesiastical jurisprudence, the said Friar was held in his cell for three days without counsel or visitors, and that upon the fourth day he was taken from his cell and shown the

instruments whereby confession may be extracted; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

VII. Item: that, upon being shown the Inquisitor's devices, fire arose in the eyes of Louis le Fif, and he made his lips to smile as if to show that he had no fear of them, and still did he refuse to speak or confess; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

VIII. Item: that upon the fifth day the Inquisitor's devices were applied to the body of Friar Louis le Fif, and, even though his moans could be heard out on the streets of Nantes, yet still did he refuse to speak or confess; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

IX. Item: that this said procedure was repeated upon him the next day, and the next, and for nearly a week thereafter, all without appreciable result, until it was decided by the officers of the court that this course of action be terminated as futile; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.



X. Item: that upon the following day le Fif agreed to speak to the court; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XI. Item: that, when interrogated by the court, Friar le Fif did confess, boldly and without sign of just repentance, that upon the evening in which he was arrested he had, in the company of Lord de R-, Jean de la Riviere, Antoine de Palerne, a Lombard, Etienne Corrillaut, who is also called Poitou, and an Italian heretic, diabolist and conjurer named Francois Prelati, traced such signs into the earth in a field one quarter of a league outside the castle of Tiffauges as might facilitate the calling forth of numerous devils and evil spirits, and performed there also many other superstitions and outrages, including the torture, sodomy and decapitation of children; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XII. Item: that le Fif told the court that Lord de R- presented him with the head of Olivier Darel as a token of his esteem and as reward for services rendered; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XIII. Item: that, having made this known, the said Friar hinted that many other atrocities had been performed in like manner by members of the aforesaid group at other times, then would say no more; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XIV. Item: that the court decided upon the necessity of further inducement to confession in order to disclose the details of these other aforementioned crimes, and the instruments of the Inquisitor were once again employed; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XV. Item: that this continued for several more days, during which time word was sent to Lord de R- informing him of these malicious accusations, and reply came in the form of his man, a certain Milord

Eustache Blanchet, a priest from the diocese of Saint Malo, who apologized on Lord de R-'s behalf for not answering the court personally, explaining that his liege had disembarked upon a journey to Bourges, there to attend the convention of the Estates General currently in session, and furthermore Milord Blanchet explained that Friar Louis le Fif had indeed been engaged in the retinue of Lord de R- for some while, but had been dismissed when it became clear that his offensive character was too great of a burden for the good men and women of the household to suffer, and offered to demand depositions from many of his men to attest to this fact, at which the court pronounced itself satisfied; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.⁴

XVI. Item: that, when the court concluded that no further confession was forthcoming and the process of extraction discontinued, Friar le Fif immediately presented himself once more and waxed voluble upon



the details of his hideous operations; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XVII. Item: that, when questioned as to the nature of his victims, le Fif told the court that they were both boys and girls, with ages ranging from the suckling babe to the very cusp of maturity, and furthermore he explained that, while he himself practiced his vile craft almost exclusively upon those of the feminine gender, de R- and Prelati seemed to prefer young boys, a preference he attributes to their being in a state of disharmony with their age⁵; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XVIII. Item: that, when asked about his own preference for females, the said Friar explained that his task upon the earth was to employ the "Phallum Vermiculum," an obscene pagan relic manufactured for use upon the fair sex in order that they might beget monstrosities; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XIX. Item: that, when questioned as to the precise nature, usage and possible current location of this hideous tool, the said Friar laughed disrespectfully and lifted up his habit, exposing himself rudely to the court and thereby attempting to make a mockery of the processes of the Lord's justice and mar the sanctity of the court with crude obscenity and sacrilege (and it shall be noted by the Clerk of the Court that the anatomy of this horrid personage was of a loathsome degree of development, greatly in excess of the right and just moderation with which the Creator wisely and routinely endows even men of good virtue like ourselves, and furthermore its grotesquerie was compounded by the presence along its length of scales, warts, spines and protuberances of dubious function); thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XX. Item: that, once order had been restored to the court, Cardinal Serge de B- demanded that the

question be answered clearly, directly and without dissembling, and stated in no uncertain terms that any further display of vulgarity would result in immediate corporal retribution of unflinching severity; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XXCI. Item: that Friar Louis le Fif responded with his own mocking demand that the Cardinals previous utterance be put in writing and signed with the seal of his sacred authority; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XXCII. Item: that the officers of the court decided, in light of the crude and vulgar nature of this testimony and of the recalcitrant behavior of the accused, that further discussion of the said pagan relic should take place in a safely sequestered environment, and to this end the officers and the accused removed themselves to the private offices of Reverend Father Henri G- which are adjacent to the courtroom, foras much as to contain the corrupting influence of the said Friars testimony, so that it should be prevented from spreading beyond the church cathedral and thus come to infect and enflame all of Christendom; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XXCIII. Item: that the Clerk of the Court was deemed of insufficient rank in holiness to withstand the uncouth and temptatious occasions to sin which would undoubtedly be divulged within the said Friars testimony; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XXCIV. Item: that, after some amount of time, Friar Jean B- did emerge from the offices to demand the procurement of a woman from the gaol, to be delivered to the said offices; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XXCV. Item: that the Clerk of the Court did deliver into the custody of the officers of the court one

Marie of Rouen, currently incarcerated under multiple accusations of witchcraft and malefice and of blighting her husband's crops and of having sold her children into the service of the devil; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.

XXXVI. Item: that, after intensive examination lasting well into the evening, there did emerge from the offices the said Friar le Fif in the company of the officers of the court, to wit, Friar Guillaume M-, bachelor of Holy Writ of the Order of Dominicans, Friar Jean B-, Reverend Father Henri G-, and Cardinal Serge de B-, representative of the Dominican Order,⁶ who proclaimed that le Fif had revealed the full enormity of his crimes and demonstrated in every detail the extent of his inhumanity, cruelty and abomination by which means he has afflicted the good peoples of Nantes and many other places, and that the court was completely satisfied with his testimony; thus it transpired, and this is a true rendering.



Conclusion: that, in consideration of the aforesaid crimes, sacrileges, blasphemies, excesses, enormities and misconduct⁷ in flagrant and unconscionable disregard of the propriety of humanity and Christian society, the said officers of this court, Friar Jean B-, Reverend Father Henri G-, and Cardinal Serge de B-, representative of the Dominican Order, with the presidency of Friar Guillaume M-, bachelor of Holy Writ of the Order of Dominicans, by deputation of the Reverend Father Jean de Malestroit, decree and declare that the said Friar Louis le Fif, the accused, is beyond all doubt a heretic and perfidious apostate, a sorcerer, a malefactor, murderer of men, women and children, blighter, blaster and eradicator of crops and perpetrator of the invocation and conversation of demons and evil spirits, causer of storms and catastrophes, seducer of lawful wives, defiler of the faith, slaughterer of dumb children and molester of inno-



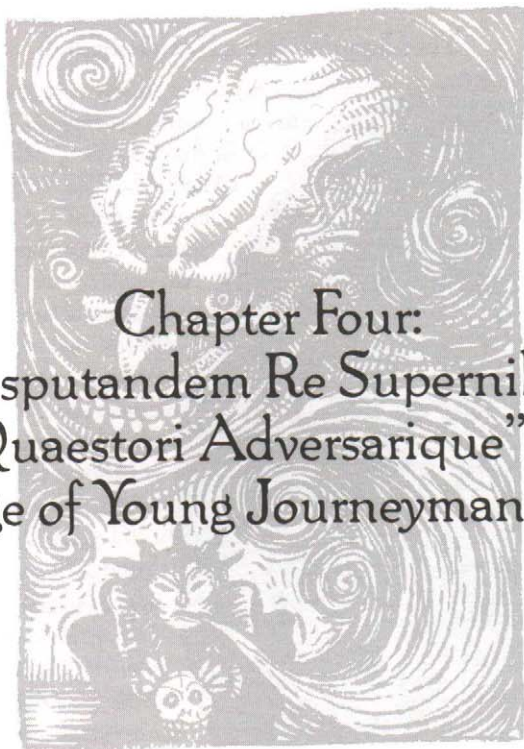
cent cattle^s, a conjurer, abettor, and adept of forbidden arts, that he lapsed and relapsed and continues in heresy, that he offended Divine majesty, that he committed the crime of Divine high treason against the Ten Commandments, against the rites and observances of our Holy Mother Church, that he damnably sowed the most flagrant of errors, which are noxious to Christian believers, and furthermore that he shamefully violated the jurisdiction of said Reverend Father, Lord Bishop of Nantes, for which degenerate behavior he has now incurred the sentence of this court, namely, that he shall be taken from this place to another place, where he shall be subject to every manner of punishment and purgative mortification, until he might repent of his sins, at which time he shall be publicly burned at the stake until nothing but ashes remain, which are to be scattered to the antipodes; thus the verdict of this court is rendered truly, notoriously and publicly.



Exposition of the Executioner

The undersigned sergeant of the army at Nantes, having been given custody of and authority over the execution of the infamous heretic and murderer Friar Louis le Fit, does hereby make account of said execution to the bishopric of Nantes. After several weeks of most ingenious tortures, no repentance seemed to be forthcoming from le Fit, and, after he was seen to be conversing with his torturer in a friendly and casual manner it was deemed by the court that execution should proceed forthwith. When led to the stake, le Fit was pelted from all sides with rotten eggs and decomposing fruit, offal and excrement, flung by the good Christian folk of the city. This treatment he received in manner not unlike graciousness, and I beheld him licking these substances from his cheek and savoring them as though they were sweet and pleasing to him. As he was being bound to the stake, he raised his gaze to the balcony of the cathedral, where the officers of the court watched. The faggots were lit beneath his feet, and he spoke, saying, "Behold my time with you is ended, and though I am no more, yet my crimes shall not cease. For the spirit which drives me is within you also and is fed with the power you accrue. *Ahiai, Angul Ahiai, Mastrad Lo* I am the worm, the great dragon of all life, beside which your God and your devil are but a bickering father and son, and I am come into your midst to reflect your true faces and remind you of your true nature. I consume your hearts using hatred as knife and desire as fork. *Ahiai, Aboral Ahiai, Carnalal* I am the eater of souls, swallowing your lives in my ever growing hunger and begetting monsters upon your wives and daughters. *Ahiai, Vorust Ahiai, Calibel* Scatter my ashes as you will to the ends of the earth; thus do I stretch forth my jaws to engulf the world!" He continued to cry out thus for some time, long after most witches would have suffocated from the smoke, hurling barbarous and evil names at his vanquishers until his body had been consumed to such degree that no more breath could be forced past his tongue. Thus do I set to record the event of his destruction, a matter of public and famous knowledge.

Sergeant Stephen de Guillaume,
Army of the Lord of Nantes



Chapter Four: “Ex Disputandem Re Supernibus Ab Probati Quaestori Adversarique” from The Pilgrimage of Young Journeyman Quaestor

The Pilgrimage of Young Journeyman Quaestor is a fascinatingly miserable example of what the early Renaissance called “drawing-room plays,” plays which were meant to be read but not performed (perhaps the most famous example of the form is Milton’s Samson Agonistes). First published in 1582, the Pilgrimage was printed in just about every Western European country, but the definitive version is considered to be Guy de Mer’s French edition. The compiler admits to taking some modernistic liberties with the present translation, as de Mer’s highly arcane and formulaic French would, if translated literally, make the whole text so obtuse as to be insurmountable by readers of this age.

The Pilgrimage tells the story of an insatiably curious and mystically inclined youth who leaves his small town to roam the world in search of enlightenment. Visiting a succession of holy men, monasteries, and esoteric orders, he manages to effectively destroy each by pointing out some flaw in their philosophy or planting doubt in their faithful hearts, purely by means of his inquisitive nature and unfettered reason. Gradually Quaestor’s quest escalates into a more blatantly supernatural type of high adventure, replete with pitched magickal combat, intrigue-riddled secret societies (many of which deftly anticipate the excesses of the Rosicrucian craze a few decades later), and a wild chase through a bewildering variety of exotic scenes on the astral plane, which are referred to collectively as the “Realms Invisible.”

Eventually his quest leads him to a subterranean chamber in a fictitious Eastern European city. There he sees, on one wall, a huge brass plaque engraved with a strange arrangement of letters upon a grid (the so-called Pretanic Keys), and on the opposite wall, an intricately etched spiral with nine concentric divisions. Here he is engaged in conversation with the Adversarius, a disembodied voice emanating from just over his left shoulder, which has already manifested itself briefly and mysteriously at crucial junctures throughout the preceding narrative.

The Chronicle of the Black Labyrinth



One secret society appears throughout the narrative as a ruthless enemy of Quaestor's, and, indeed, of all true seekers of enlightenment, named the Order of the Rose. In citing the Pilgrimage as a "modern proof" of the extent of his conspiracy, Craven hints obliquely that he himself made contact with this Order. Though they cannot be directly identified with the Order of the Rosy Cross, or Rosicrucians, it has been Frater I*I's experience that this group is quite real and to this day continues to act covertly and viciously against all true initiates.

Some mention must be made of the slight but notable parallels between this document and the more commonly known Rosicrucian manifestos. Of foremost importance is the revelation of the Supernal triad, spread via the Rosicrucians through virtually all of modern western occultism in a devolved and degraded form known as "Cabbalah."

Prof. MacLish was generous enough to share with Frater I*I his own commentary upon the late medieval text of one Flavio, a descendent of the Black Monk. The climax of Flavio's narrative anticipates the Adversarial Dispute almost point for point, but is reached after a symbolic series of labors and tests which

Prof. MacLish has revealed to be a somewhat clumsy allegory for the Dance of the Black Spiral Labyrinth itself. This is only indirectly echoed by de Mer, whose unnamed ultimate secret society uses a nine-grade hierarchical progression where the initiation of each grade corresponds to each circle of the Labyrinth. This is recapitulated by the Adversarius at the beginning of the Dispute, and elaborated by Quaestor at the climax.

Quaestor: Where am I?

Adversarius: Where thou hast always been, at the center of thine own being, in the heart of all Mysteries.

Quaes: Why am I here?

Adver: Thou, Quaestor, who art Master of the Pentangle, Wielder of Blade and Brandisher of Staff, Gazer into the Depths, thou hast scried unflinching into thy heart of hearts, thou hast roared with the gusto of Phrensy, thou hast persevered in the face of Defeat, unlocked the Riddle of Passage and Danced the Duet of Death; Thy soul has been Sundered and cast afar, yet the Union of thy true Will with the Will of the World has made thee whole and brought thee thus far.¹ Yet thou dost ever seek the Greater Understanding, the Secret of Secrets; do speak now of thy worthiness to enter into such mystery.

Quaes: I have traveled far and accumulated much in the way of lore; I mark the cycles of earth and heaven in my brow; my gaze penetrates the firmament and I have discerned the threefold way of the Supernal.

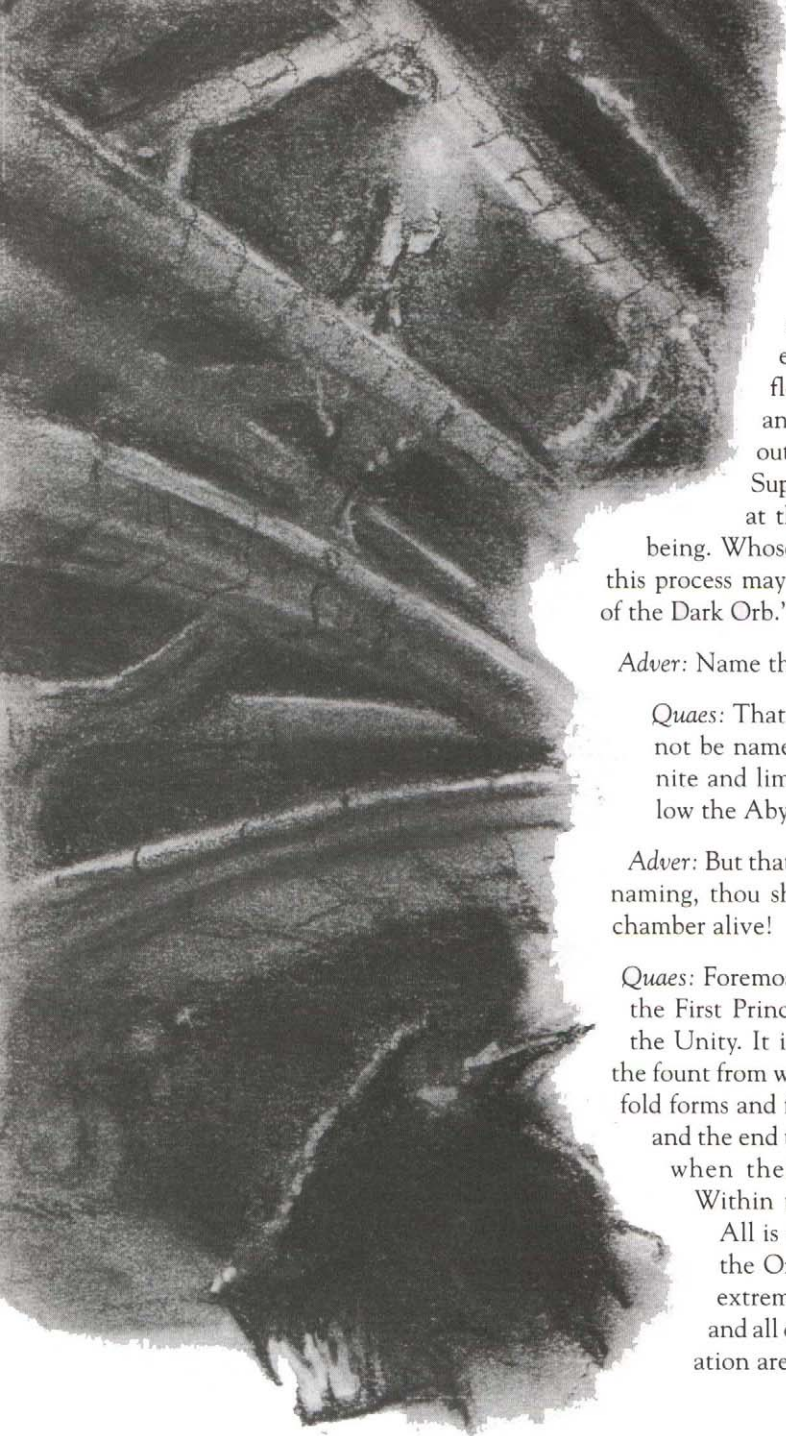
Adver: What is meant by "Supernal?"

Quaes: That word denotes that which is beyond the Abyss, the chasm across which one cannot be carried by reason nor intellection, for the minds of men are dark and dense, admitting of no subtleties. The Supernal is beyond knowing directly through any of the Realms Visible or Invisible², but is reflected in them all, as it is the source of them all.

Adver: How then can this be known?

Quaes: All teachings tell us that man is a microcosm, that all Realms are reflected in him, though but dimly, just as the Supernal is but dimly reflected in all the Realms of





the world. To know this microcosm is to, as I say it, "polish one's dark orb," making of one's mind a smooth reflective sphere, so that whatsoever is outside may be reflected upon the inside, and that which is furthest outside, which is to say, the Supernal, may then be seen at the center of one's own

being. Whosoever is able to perfect this process may take the title "Keeper of the Dark Orb."

Adver: Name the threefold way.

Quaes: That which is Supernal may not be named, for all names are finite and limiting, and are thus below the Abyss.

Adver: But that thou shalt perform the naming, thou shalt not pass from this chamber alive!

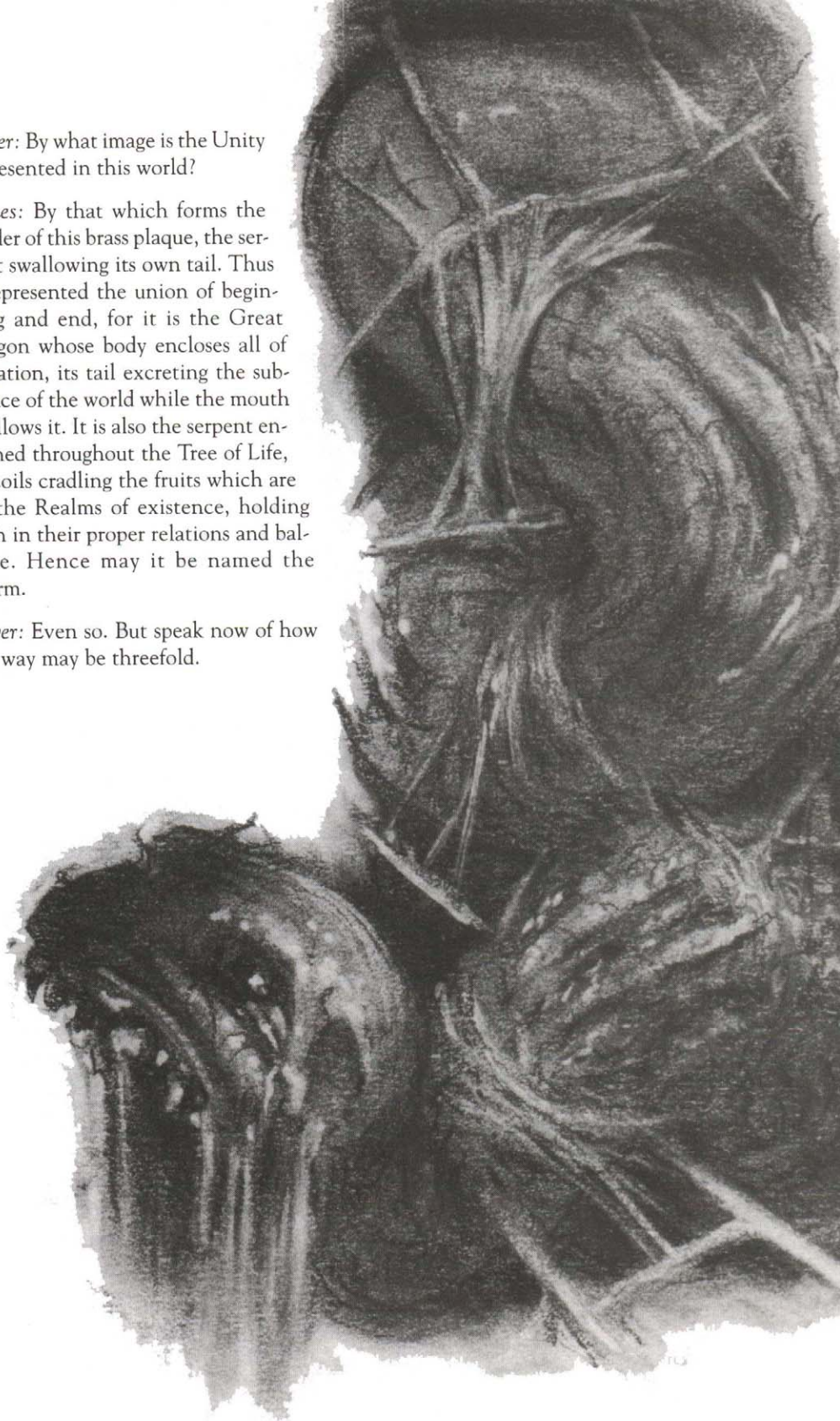
Quaes: Foremost among the Supernal, the First Principle of all Creation, is the Unity. It is the source all things, the fount from which flow all the manifold forms and forces of all the worlds, and the end to which they all return when their cycle is complete.

Within the Unity, All is One, All is within the One, just as the One is within All. Every extreme finds its complement, and all opposing aspects of Creation are reconciled.

Adver: By what image is the Unity represented in this world?

Quaes: By that which forms the border of this brass plaque, the serpent swallowing its own tail. Thus is represented the union of beginning and end, for it is the Great Dragon whose body encloses all of Creation, its tail excreting the substance of the world while the mouth swallows it. It is also the serpent entwined throughout the Tree of Life, its coils cradling the fruits which are all the Realms of existence, holding each in their proper relations and balance. Hence may it be named the Wyrn.

Adver: Even so. But speak now of how the way may be threefold.



Quaes: From the Unity emanates the Supernal Dyad, the opposed and yet interdependent twins of Force and Form, of Becoming and Being, of Time and Space. The first emanation is formed from the Urge of the One to know Itself, to reach out to all that is not Its Self whereby It may look back and regard Its Self as distinguished from what is not Its Self. It is this first action, the reaching out, but not the looking back, which is considered the first part of the Dyad. This action is the movement which initiates the beginning of time, and the force which drives all things to change through time.³

Adver: How is the first emanation reflected in this world?

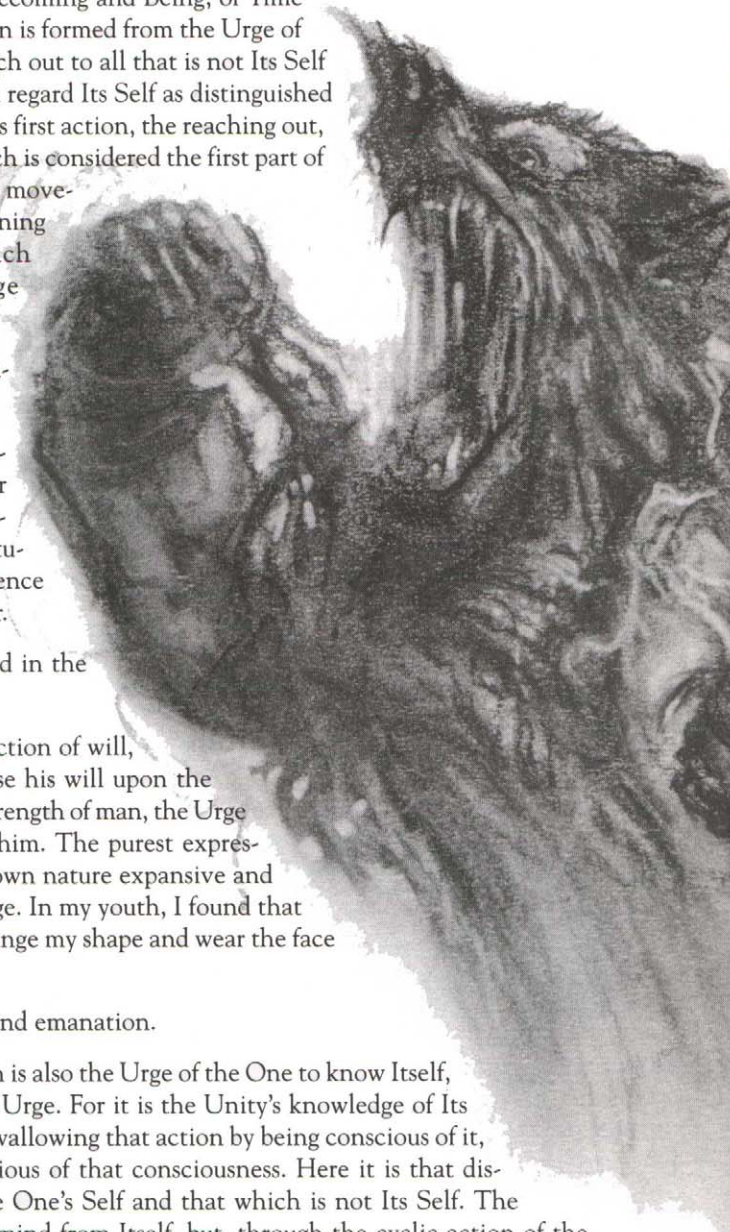
Quaes: It is reflected in the going forth of men and in their going to and fro, their interactions mounting, as is only natural, into conflict and strife. Hence may it be named Beast of War.

Adver: And how is it reflected in the individual?

Quaes: It is reflected in the action of will, in man's going forth to impose his will upon the world, for this is the greatest strength of man, the Urge of the Unity acting through him. The purest expression of this strength is by its own nature expansive and explosive, and so is called Rage. In my youth, I found that I could, through my Rage, change my shape and wear the face of Beast of War.⁴

Adver: Speak now of the second emanation.

Quaes: The second emanation is also the Urge of the One to know Itself, being the completion of that Urge. For it is the Unity's knowledge of Its own action, containing and swallowing that action by being conscious of it, and being furthermore conscious of that consciousness. Here it is that distinction is made between the One's Self and that which is not Its Self. The Unity has thus separated Its mind from Itself, but, through the cyclic action of the Urge, seeks to reunite.



Adver: How is the second emanation reflected in this world?

Quaes: It is reflected in the knowledge of all the actions and interactions of men, in accord with the first emanation. As it follows naturally from Beast of War, it can be seen in the women administering to the dead and wounded from battle, thus containing and dissipating the energies of conflict and strife, clearing the way for understanding, and the developing of culture. Thus may it best be seen in the writing of history, where the actions of men upon each other may be unfurled and laid out like a great net or Web.⁵

Adver: And how is it reflected in the individual?

Quaes: It is reflected in the contemplation of past actions, wherein the energies of Rage are grounded and dispersed. This tightens the cycle of self-awareness, for it is the hunger of the mind consuming itself. Hence may it be named Eater of Souls.

Adver: In all that you have said there is harmony and balance, and so must there be harmony and balance in the world.

Quaes: But in this world there is no harmony or balance.

Adver: So how then can this be?

Quaes: I know not, for it was none of my doing.

Adver: Answer me or die!⁶

Quaes: With the cycle of self-consciousness complete, the Unity has swallowed and consumed itself. Thus losing Its own identity, the Unity has become a Plurality, alienated from Its Self by the divisions and distinctions imposed by the Web of the second emanation. The single Urge to self-knowledge is divided, by passage through the Web, into the manifold conflicting Urges of the human heart. The serpent has lost its grip and now spirals out of control, but is nonetheless ensnared and trapped within the ever-tightening Web. The original Unity, now seen from afar, is perceived as alien, as Other than Self, despoiling the harmony of the original separation and distinction. Hence may it be named the Defiler.

Adver: Gaze ye then upon the walls of this chamber. What is the meaning of these images?

Quaes: Upon the one hand I see the Spiral Labyrinth, which may be considered a map of that portion of the Web wherein the unbalanced Wyrms are imprisoned. And upon the other hand, this plaque shows the divided mind of the captive Wyrms; in the left-hand column I discern the four signs of the elements, long used by the alchemists; across the top, these three glyphs represent the reflections of the Supernal. Here is Beast of War, head rampant for the attack. Here is Eater of Souls, devouring itself like the Wyrms of Unity and balance, but doubled over in separation. And here is the Defiler, burrowing ever inward to the Unity at the heart of all things. I take these subdivisions then to signify the divided Urges, rendered apart from one another by Supernal distinction above and worldly separation below. Herein is mapped the Rageful mind of the captive, yearning to escape.

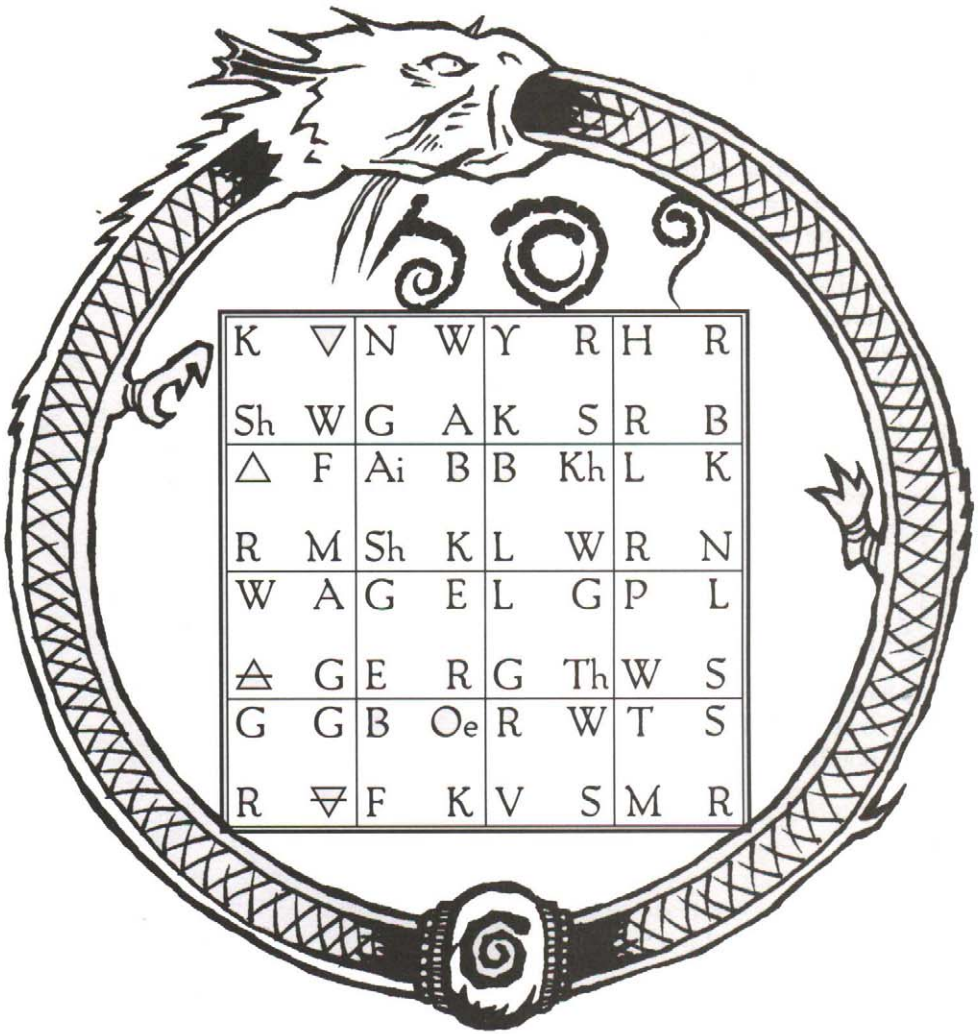
Adver: How then mayest one undertake to reunite the divided Self?

Quaes: One must know the "Dance of the Labyrinth," which is to say, one must navigate that portion of the Web in which the true Wurm is imprisoned. On this side is the map of the prison, and on this side is the key to unlocking the Mystery at its center. These show us the way of the return to Unity.

Adver: After what fashion?

Quaes: One must follow in backward fashion the spiral of unbalance, gathering up the strands of the Web of distinctions and separations, following one's own Urge back to the source of all Urges. All Urges are in this sense thoughts of Beast of War, not conscious thought but pure will to action. Union with one's Urge brings action without thought, tearing aside the Web by the use of Rage, freeing oneself from the Eater of Souls. By this way is the tail returned to the serpent's mouth, defiling the Defiler by restoring the true balance.





Adver: Gaze ye then upon the Spiral Labyrinth, and name for me its turnings.

Quaes: The turnings of the Spiral are ninefold, being three divisions of three subdivisions each. These are the expression of the soul's initiation into the Supernal Mysteries, with each emanation being reflected in and acting through the other. The outer three circles are the domain of the Beast of War: the first is the realization of the Unity within, which is the Defiler acting through the Beast of War; next is Rage, the Beast of War acting through Itself; third is the Eater of Souls reflected in the Beast of War, preparing one for entrance to Its own domain. The middle three are the Eater of Souls' domain, with the fourth circle being Its own influence in teaching one Its ways; fifth is organized battle, the Beast of War acting through the Eater of Souls; and sixth is the Defiler preparing the way for entrance into Its own domain. Finally there is the domain of the Defiler, with the reflection of the Beast of War demanding one's adherence to the way in the seventh circle; in the eighth

circle, the reflection of the Eater of Souls tests one's understanding of the Mysteries. In the ninth and final circle, the Defiler acts through Itself to dispel the deception of separateness. Thus is the soul of one reunited with the Soul of All.⁷

Adver: Thou hast spoken all the names truthfully and in earnest. Thou mayest now leave here with thy life.⁸

Quaes: I cannot leave, for there is nothing beyond this chamber. I have never been any place but here, in the center of all Mysteries.

Adver: Go forth now, I tell thee! Go forth and know thyself through thy actions, as is thy Urge!

Quaes: I have no more Urge. There is no action to be taken. I know nothing. Thus I am nothing.

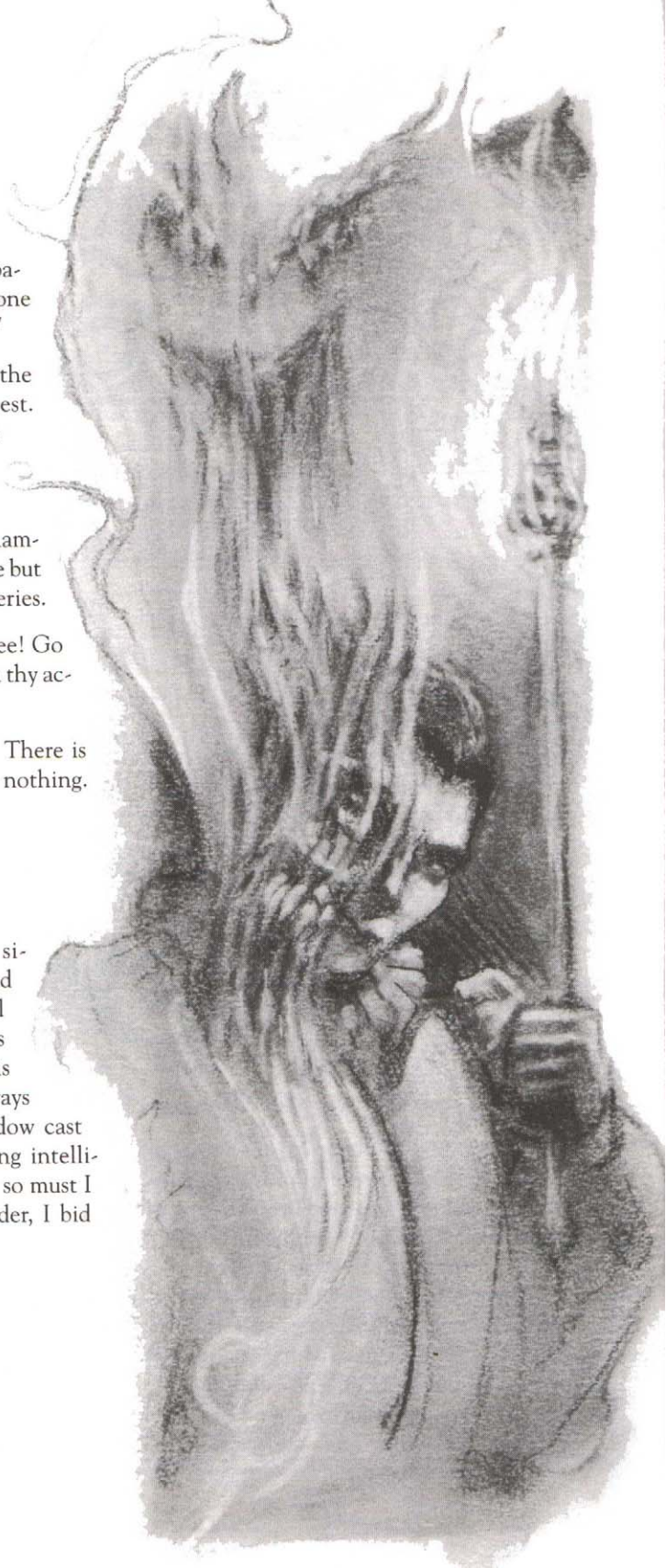
Adver: Quaestor?

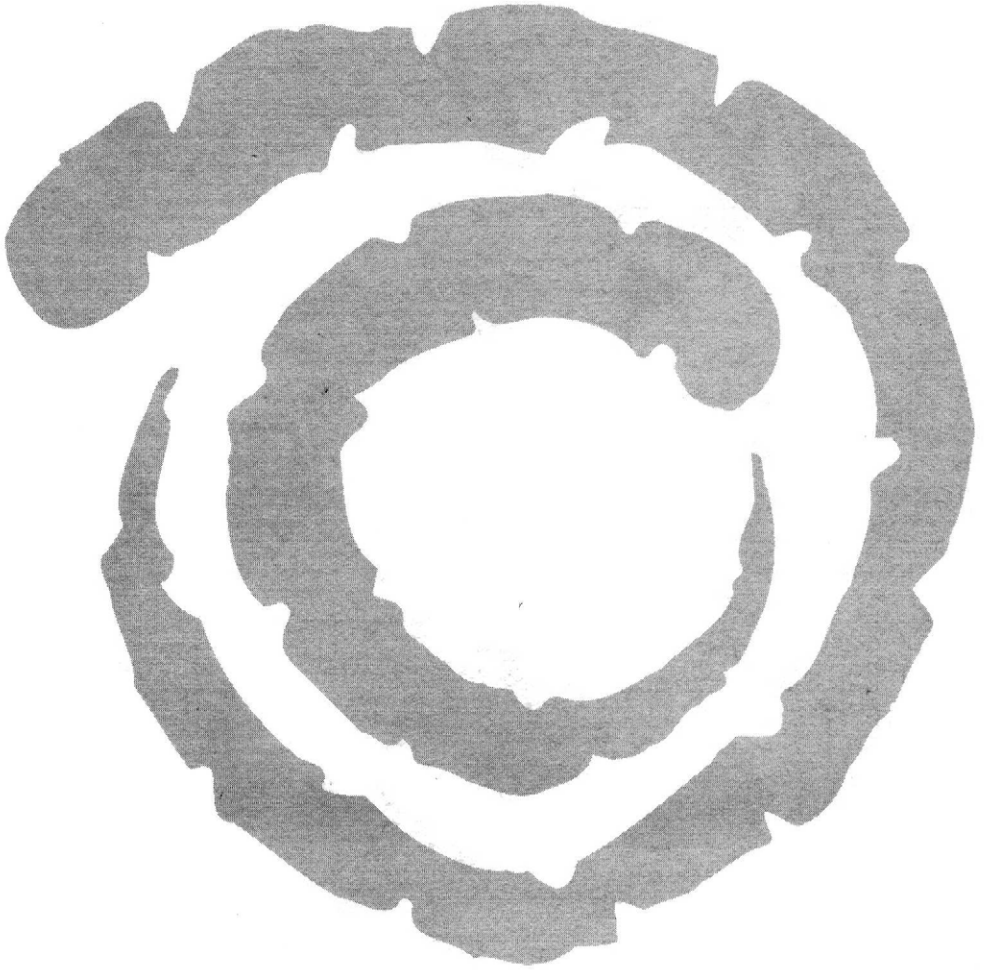
Quaes: ...

Adver: And so his voice is silenced, his mind consumed and his body dispersed. So too shall I pass from existence, for I was never anything other than his own need to know himself, always hidden from him in the shadow cast by the light of his scintillating intelligence. As he is now nothing, so must I be. And so to you Dear Reader, I bid farewell.

...

Adver: Yet still I hunger....





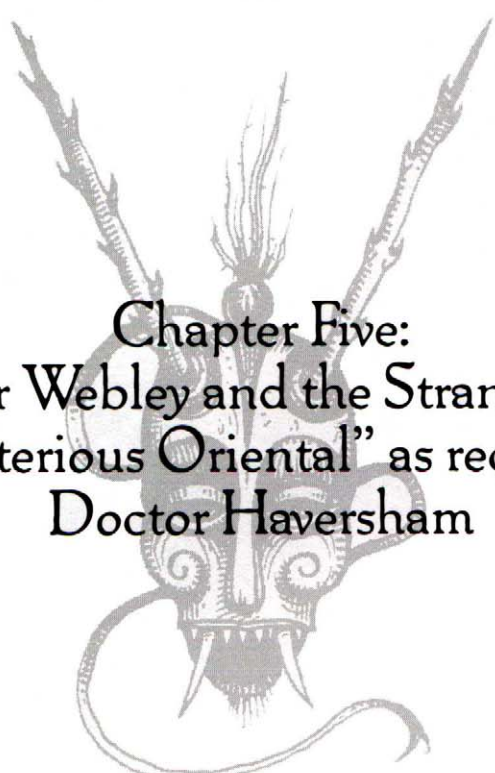
BOOK III:



TATIO COGNITIONIS
ALTATIO FVRORE
TATIO PATIENTIÆ
CALLIDITATE
S. PVGNÆ
RAVATIONIS
FIDETIS
RADOCTIS
LLACLÆ



THE EPOCH OF CORRUPTION



Chapter Five: “Professor Webley and the Strange Case of the Mysterious Oriental” as recorded by Doctor Haversham

Originally published in *Cloven Hoof* magazine (*Samhain*, 1897, vol. iii, no. 5), this story represents the last in the mildly popular “Professor Webley” series by Dr. Nigel Haversham. Ostensibly based upon a real person, Professor Wayland W. Webley was introduced in each episode as “the Empire’s premiere consulting spiritualist investigator.” The similarity to another, more famous, sleuth is immediately obvious, and Haversham takes every opportunity to sling a verbal dart at his literary rival. The series inevitably played upon the widespread interest in spiritualism which gripped late Victorian society, as well as the quantum leaps occurring at that time in the study of ritual magic. *Cloven Hoof* was often plagued with libel suits from prominent members of Victorian occult society who perceived unwholesome parodies of themselves in the Webley stories.

This particular story represents the genesis of Frater I*I’s scholastic partnership with Prof. MacLish, who sent back a copy of “The Mysterious Oriental” in response to queries regarding the identity of the Laird of Demborough. As it turns out, Prof. MacLish’s “guilty pleasure” is his near-complete collection of CH, whose editor, Stanley Kirowan, was something of an artistic and academic maverick for his day. While virtually none of the great Victorian “magi” deigned to submit anything for publication (not under their own names, anyway), Kirowan’s exotic blend of occultist fact and fiction, adorned almost exclusively with art by the clinically insane (in addition to, or including, Kirowan himself), make CH a much more enjoyable read than any other product of the period.

In addition to the series itself, Haversham published an autobiographical chronicle of his career with Webley up to 1894, entitled *Hermetic Guillaume and I*. But for the truly masochistic reader, Frater I*I highly recommends Dr. Haversham’s pathetic autobiography of his life after Webley’s disappearance, *Epimetheus on Parole*.

THE CLOVEN HOOF MAGAZINE.

SAMHAIN, 1897.

The Adventures of Prof. Wayland Webley.

BY DR. NIGEL HAVERSHAM.

PROFESSOR WEBLEY AND THE STRANGE CASE OF THE MYSTERIOUS ORIENTAL.



It was a disturbingly chill dusk in autumn as I shouldered my way through the thick English fog to finally emerge upon the doorstep of the deceptively humble Gravesend dwelling of my distinguished colleague and dear friend Professor Wayland Webley. To the experienced peruser of these arcane pages, Webley needs no introduction; to those neophytes as yet unversed in my previous chronicles of our adventures together, suffice me to explain that Professor Webley held the unique distinction of being the Empire's premiere consulting spiritualist investigator, a station which provided me, as his companion, assistant and biographer, with an unparalleled lifetime of opportunities to witness firsthand the bizarre and unaccountable machinations of the Invisible World.

I let myself in unannounced, the bond of our friendship being such that the usual formalities incumbent upon me as visitor and guest were no more than an encumbrance to our relationship. Pursuing my way down the well-appointed corridor, I noted the faint light which spilled out from under the door of that ample study in which so many of these adventures began. I grasped the knob and flung wide the portal.

Webley sat at his great oaken desk, and, as I entered, he slammed the top drawer shut with uncharacteristic violence, turning his head to glare at me over his shoulder.

"Good God, Haversham! What the devil are you doing here?" The sharp edge in his voice, in combination with his furtive demeanor, left me quite taken aback. His straight black hair fell in disarray about his temples, and his normally clear gray eyes were webbed with veins. I made some fumbling apology for my intrusion, explaining that I had come seeking his advice on a personal matter. As I spoke, he composed himself, smoothing his hair and adjusting his smoking-jacket as he crossed the study and commenced to thumb a sticky wad of shag into his ponderous meerschaum. While I spoke, I circumambulated nonchalantly around to the desk; when I judged that he was too far away to effectively hinder me, I pulled open the top drawer of the desk.

Within lay a rectangular piece of pasteboard approximately eighteen inches in length, cracked and yellow with age. Upon its face had been printed, in an elegant antique face, all the letters of the alphabet arranged in a kind of semicircle along with the ten integral digits, the smaller articles, pronouns and connectives, and an array of attendant fripperies. Atop this board sat a finely crafted silver planchette. Only consideration



for my friend's sensitivities kept me from bursting out in guffaws.

"Ouija!?! Really, Webley old man, I am shocked, I must say! I thought that we had thoroughly outgrown this sort of thing long ago.¹ What could possibly have brought you to this lowly station?"

Guilt stung me as my friend hung his head shamefully. I could see that there were dark circles beneath his eyes, and it was obvious that he had neglected to shave that morning. When he spoke, his voice quavered in an unmanly fashion. I confess that I shuddered somewhat.

"You have found me out, Nigel. But please allow me to make some case for myself. For the past few months, I have been plagued with dark spells. It began this summer with some vague, unwholesome visions whose source I have as yet

been unable to ascertain. Visions, I say, of some great slime-covered scaly beast, coiling and writhing in some foul pit simmering with noxious vapors. Though I have yet to see the vast creature's face, it is as real to me as you are now; I can smell the caustic stench of its exhalations — feel the clammy touch of its hide as it undulates across my flesh!

"As weeks passed, these visions grew in intensity, until I was virtually incapacitated. Then the night terrors began; the visions took on a horrifyingly premonitory tone. I know — I just know! — that it waits for me! Lurking there, in its squalid abyss beyond space and time as we now conceive them, anticipating the moment when it will be able to loop its fetid coils about me and tighten, crushing the very soul from my frame, tightening, tightening..."

"Now scarcely a single evening goes by that I do not awaken shrieking like a school-girl, drenched in perspiration, my hands trembling like the final leaves of autumn. I have diverted all of my resources — not to mention my own considerable psychic powers — into the penetration of this Gordian dilemma, but to no avail. The depths of my desperation are such that I have been reduced to this ludicrous parlor game. I fear that, had you arrived but an hour later, you would have found me tossing yarrow stalks like a common coolie!"

"There, there, old horse," I muttered, gripping his arm. Beneath the fine fabric of his smoking-jacket, I could feel that his biceps were flabby and withered; this, in conjunction with his uncharacteristically emotional outburst, caused my gorge to rise momentarily. Only the bonds of friendship and respect enabled me to choke back my disgust sufficiently to continue. "Buck up; there's a good man! When was the last time you applied your powers to a genuine case, eh? I've not spoken with you since circumstances forced me to abandon you in the midst of that ghastly affair in Sussex last summer."

"Sussex!" Webley hissed, an all-too-familiar venom in his voice. "Even in your absence, Haversham, I was nonetheless on the

verge of locating that vile creature's lair and driving an iron spike through its black heart, had not those dolts at Scotland Yard called in that blasted reductionist of theirs! His meddling proboscis so befouled the entire investigation that the undead beast was able to make a clean escape!"

With this utterance, all became clear as day to me. "And this so demoralized you that you've not done a lick of work since! Good Lord, Wayland, is it any wonder that this black mood has enveloped you? I can see now that Providence was well at work in bringing me here tonight."

"Eh? How's that, old man?"

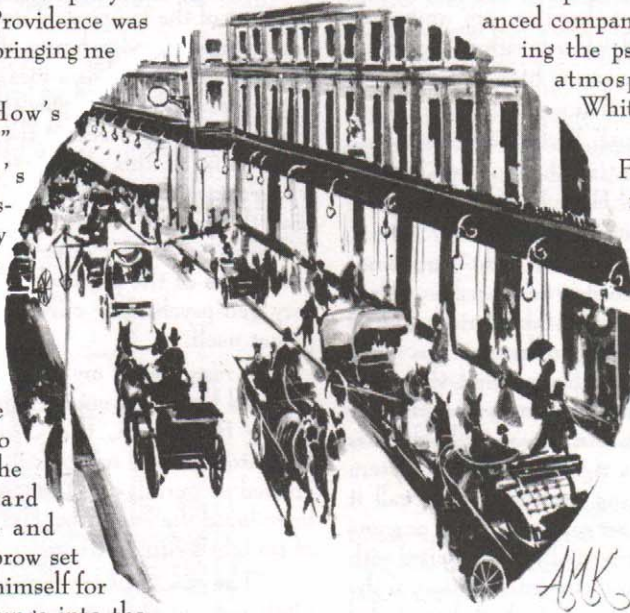
Webley's manner and aspect had already altered noticeably. With the mention of the "blasted reductionist," some of the old fire had returned to his eyes. Now he leaned forward with interest and zeal, jaw and brow set hard, steeling himself for yet another plunge into the dark and icy depths of the Unknown.

"I can see that you are game already so I won't waste time. Make your ablutions and don some fairly formal attire, while I flag down a hansom. I shall explain on the way into town!"

"It's nothing much, really," I commenced to explain as we were borne along the old Kent Road, "so don't set your hopes for adventure too terribly high. It merely concerns the Order of the Oriental Fellowship, in which, as I have no doubt mentioned to you upon many occasions, I hold the degree of Adeptus Minor."²

A derisive snort exploded from my companion.

"Now, I know your feelings regarding such societies, old man, but I would remind you that, without their assistance, you would never have had a chance in damnation of cracking the Case of the Hysterical Charwoman!" Through a series of discreet nudges with my cane, I instructed the driver to bypass the Tower and London Bridges, and instead cross the Thames at Blackfriar's, forasmuch as to spare my delicately balanced companion from breathing the psychically tainted atmosphere of Whitechapel.³



All the way up Farringdon Road I reminded Webley of the favor he owed the Order for their assistance in the aforementioned case, which had ended with his absently muttered pledge to serve them in kind at any future date. "That date is now!" I concluded triumphantly as we

turned west at St. Pancreas'.

"But really, old bean," the Professor ejaculated back at me, "the very thought of grown men — and grown British men at that! — prancing about in dresses and aprons mouthing guttural wog gibberish as they attempt to balance fairy wands upon tin swords, the very idea of it threatens to unhinge me with its absurdity! The true mystic cannot afford to distract himself with such empty pomp!" His tirade, of which this was the preamble, lasted the length of Euston and Marleybone; so impassioned was this venting of spleen that Webley scarcely noticed as we passed by the much-reviled Baker Street.

I managed to calm him after we had veered onto Sussex Gardens, reminding him of the great variety of local charitable work sponsored by the Fellowship⁴, and by the time we crossed Bayswater and entered Hyde Park, I was ready to make the necessary exposition. While our hansom cautiously wound its way along the Serpentine, I informed him of the steady influx, over the past year, of volunteer acolytes who had slowly changed the face of the Order.

"We have judged them all to be from the Limehouse district, for they are uniformly slope-browed and flat-faced, with dull jet-black eyes and smooth clammy hides."

"It's a wonder that you didn't turn them all away at the door!" Webley exclaimed.

From Serpentine Avenue, we caught Rotten Row out of Hyde Park and east onto Picadilly Street and Shaftesbury.

"So we did, at first," I said. "But somehow one of their leaders managed to gain a private audience with that doddering old fool Lord Craven, who, as you know, is our Magister Templi. Craven claims that this chap taught him a hitherto unknown method of 'bio-electric' excitation, if you will, which is induced through a rigidly controlled system of sibilant breathing exercises. They call it 'drawing up the inner serpent-power,' or some such rot. It has purportedly been applied with remarkable success to the enunciation of the Pretanic Keys, mastery of which has eluded our Adepts Major since time immemorial."

Rounding St. Giles' Circus, we headed north up Totleben Court Road.

"Of course, this new method has spread like wildfire though the higher ranks of the Order, and seems to have attracted a whole new wave of initiates. Wealthy, powerful men from both Europe and the colonies. Craven has been handing out Emeritus Magister grades like bloody door prizes, and the discontent this has caused among us honest hard-working neophytes and Adepts is threatening to topple the once-stable and proper hierarchy of the Order itself!"

"Well, certainly no good can come of that!"

"Bloody well right!" My fingertips trembled with ill-concealed rage as I raised my cane and urged the driver west on Mortimer. "I apologize for my profane language, old man, but you can see how this whole business sticks in my craw!" And with that, I sank into a disgruntled silence for the final leg of our journey.

Finally we disembarked before the stately old Lodge-house at Cavendish Square. Now, my astute readers will undoubtedly notice the tortuous circuit our hansom made through the Seat of the Empire.⁵ This method of approaching the Lodge-house of the Order was originally instituted as a means of disorienting probationary neophytes and confounding pursuers, thus protecting the secrecy of the Fellowship. In this particular case, however, it was merely an empty ritual, for I well knew that the great Professor Wayland Webley reckoned space and direction, not by mere landmarks of the physical plane, but by the very geo-psychic ley currents of the living planet itself.

In response to my coded rapping, there emerged the hoary countenance of good old Harry Brashman, the Order's Sentinel Emeritus. Seeing us upon the threshold, he greeted us warmly and bade us enter. After I introduced the Professor, Harry appraised us of tonight's situation.

"The vicious little yellow devils have definitely got some kind of coup in mind for tonight, doctor. Besides bringing in an even more stuffy lot of blue-blooded cronies, they've hired a band of mangy Scots thugs to form a human wall around them and, no doubt, to do a bit of strong-arming as well if we don't capitulate."

Webley's left eyebrow arched sharply. "The threat of outright violence? It would appear that you've greatly underestimated the severity of your problem, Haversham."

"Near as I can make out from listening through the door," Harry continued, "they've got it in mind to form some type of new circle within ours, what they're calling the 'Pretanic Order.'" It appears that they are expecting some bloke called the "Laird of Demborough"

to turn up tonight. Some kind of wise man who'll lead us all to a new awakening and untold glories and all the bally rubbish you care to think of!"

"I think," mused Webley, "that I see some sort of connection emerging here. You say that there's a band of Scotsmen with them, Brigadier-general?"

"Aye. A right hairy pack of bullyboys. No good can come of them, mark my words, Professor!"

"What are you thinking, old bean?" I asked.

"It's this term 'Pretanic,' Haversham. Originally applied by Julius Caesar to all the inhabitants of the British Isles; in fact, the very name of Britain is considered by some paleolinguists to be a corruption of it. In any case, as more and more of the Celtic tribes of this land came to be known by their own

names, the Gaels, the Cymri, and so forth, the word finally was only used to refer to that last, little-known people who had not named themselves in history's pages."

"The Picts?" ventured Harry.

"Of course!" I cried. "Hence the Scotch ruffians and this mysterious Laird, drawn to our Order because we are the only ones to have preserved their ancient lore, in the form of the Pretanic Keys!"

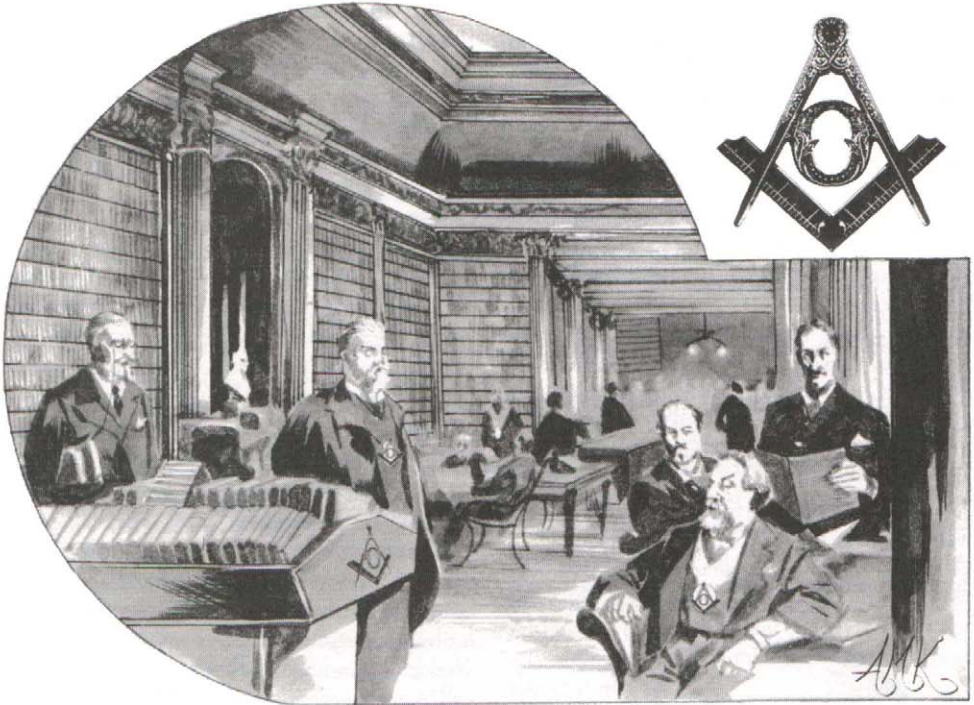
"It may go deeper than that, I fear," cautioned Webley. "Ever since stepping across the threshold just now, an incredible tension has grown within me. The hairs on the nape of my neck standing on end; the back of my throat tightening spasmodically; my digestive tract seems to have acquired a will of its own. There is a tremendous confluence of energies in this building, Haversham old fellow! I can feel those realms beyond the grasp of our common human senses fairly seething and boiling around this very nexus! The effects of any action which takes place here tonight will most assuredly and undoubtedly reverberate to the very ends of the earth—" here the Professor paused for well-considered dramatic effect "— and beyond."

The main meeting-hall of the Lodge-house was as crowded as I have ever seen it. A veritable ocean of faces — some merely unfamiliar, others downright alien — roared and shouted at each other in a tumultuous typhoon of infighting and politicking. A few overturned chairs and upset snifters showed us that at least one fistfight had already broken out, but the overall scene was just a few notches short of outright mayhem.

Webley, once again the very image of cool composure, muttered as we entered, "it strikes me as odd that a man of Brashman's character and credentials has no real rank in this Order of yours. Why is that?"

"Oh, the poor old chap is frightfully inept when it comes to matters of a spiritual nature," I confided. "Of course, his uncanny facility with Eastern languages has proven invaluable to many of the scholars within the Fellowship. And his splendid work with the





Wives' Auxiliary has made him absolutely indispensable."

As I spoke I scanned the room like a scout surveying the field of battle. The Limehouse contingent was clustered at one end of the Magister's Table which dominated the hall; behind them stood their dour and grim-faced highland regiment. At the head of the table, Sir Humphrey, our Chief Magus, was engaged in a characteristically passionate harangue against "unbalanced alien incursions" into the Fellowship. Coolly observing this from the Honored Guests' Table were representatives from some of the wealthiest families in the western world: the current scion of the Kromrich family of Switzerland, long-time friends of the Order much interested in the doctrines of familial reincarnation; Arbulent and Van Gelding from New York; and I was able to recognize another American amongst them, a Mr. Jeremiah Lassater, whose excellent business sense and firm control of Premium Oil had catapulted him to the enviable position of one of the

United States' captains of industry.⁶ (I don't mind saying that I was somewhat unnerved by what I perceived as knowing smiles which passed between these extremely powerful men and the crude members of the Scotch guard who seemed to be stationed at strategic positions throughout the hall.) Elsewhere I could make out Dr. Harold Zettler, a German physician who had become an increasingly frequent guest of the Order, and good old Pete Culliford, an ex-clergyman drawn to the Fellowship by his seemingly insatiable appetite for mental activity. Two other faces I discerned did fill me with some degree of hope that sanity might be restored to these proceedings after all: one was Dr. Gunther Draggerunter, a harsh critic of Sigmund Freud's, making him the only sane voice to come out of Vienna these days; the other was Dr. William W. Gull, a freemason and personal attendant to the Queen, whose reputation for wisdom and benevolence represented to our Fellowship a shining example of the triumph of reason and science in the modern era.

"And in conclusion," Sir Humphrey was expounding from the lectern, "if the activities which I have just divulged are characteristic of the direction which this Order is to take in the coming century, then I must therefore declare, as must all men of good conscience in this room here tonight, that I shall be having none of it!" So saying, he pulled off his ceremonial apron and tore open the front of his garment, disclosing the tattoo emblematic of his rank of Magus: the squared angles of the pincers and scissors framing the All-seeing Eye of the Creator, a most esoteric and holy symbol hitherto unseen by any man below the third degree of initiation until this very eve! Raising his hand to his chest, he traced two bright crimson slashes across the Eye, and another through the scrolled legend beneath proclaiming him a Fellow of the Oriental Order, then slammed his quill to the table and strode resolutely from the hall.

As if by way of rebuttal, one of those anonymous Asians took the lectern, scanning the assembly impassively through dark slitted eyes. Before he could speak, though, he was challenged by young Wiggins, an ambitious second-degree initiate.

"So what are you offering that could be worth all this row, eh?" Wiggins roared. "And where the bloody hell is this almighty 'Laird' of yours then?"

"Lo, he has already come among us, though we know him not," was the inscrutable yellow devil's enigmatic response.

As Sir Humphrey neared the exit, one of the Scotsmen intercepted him, grasping his arm insistently and whispering fiercely at him.

"My good man!" muttered Sir Humphrey through gritted teeth, "if you are not good enough to unhand me this very instant, I shall not hesitate to go straightaway to Scotland Yard with what I know! Good evening sir!" Their eyes locked in mutual antagonism, then, wrenching his arm clear, Sir Humphrey pushed his way out.

From our vantage point near the exit, Webley and I saw the ruffian command two

of his companions to follow with a sharp jerk of his great woolly head. Webley waited just long enough to allow them to believe that they had made their exit unnoticed.

"Come, Haversham!" he snapped, and we egressed in like fashion.

Finding the hallway unoccupied, we retraced our steps back to the entranceway, there to question Brashman. Harry told us that he had seen Sir Humphrey come out as if to depart, then, as an afterthought, turn down the corridor which leads to the Temple Chamber, mumbling that he had some things to collect before he left for good. We asked about the Scotsmen following him, but Brashman had not seen them.

"Most likely they took to the secret passage on the right," he opined. "That one leads right to the Temple Chamber. That would be just like them, profaning the sacred places and all, like that. Mangy kilted bastards!"

"I take it you have no love for the Scotch, then, Brigadier-general?" Webley ventured.

"I'm married to one, ain't I?" was Harry's only reply as we bolted toward the Temple Chamber.

* * *

Upon our arrival, we noted that the portal to the Chamber had been left carelessly ajar, allowing there to spill forth a strange glow which shimmered with sickly greens and purples, a glow which could not be accounted for by the ritual braziers. A queer chanting pervaded the air as well, combining the hissing mantræ taught by the Limehouse mystics with a more primal husky sort of animalistic grunting.

We advanced cautiously, with Brashman taking the lead, holding his ceremonial halberd at the ready; even for a man of over seventy, he was still the very picture of the British military hero, filling Webley and myself with certainty and fortitude.

As we drew abreast of the portal, Harry leapt through with a challenge upon his lips. From the Chamber there came a deep rumbling growl, such as the kind emitted by a very large beast, and the sound of splintering

wood. Then Harry staggered back out, loosely clutching his snapped halberd-shaft. Though his face was still flushed battle-red, I surmised from the spreading stain upon his thickly embroidered apron that he had been subjected to a sight of the type which the mind uninitiated to the mysteries of the supernatural is simply unable to comprehend or negotiate with a cool head.

That was all the cue that the Professor and I required. Whatever foul beast was being kept in the Temple, while it might swat away a decorative silver halberd-blade like a child's toy, it undoubtedly could not stand up to a hail of hot lead. Webley and I charged in, revolvers blazing, without a single moment's hesitation.

The swift barrage of events which ensued are still somewhat of a blur to me. I remember the grisly sight of Sir Humphrey, or, rather, his lifeless carcass, flung across the altar-cube like a broken doll, freshly eviscerated. There seemed to be a number of both Orientals and Scots in the Chamber, but I cannot be certain, for I was seized by the throes of a disorienting synesthetic delirium, such as I have not experienced since we tackled the Case of the Belligerent Irishman. I now realize that the ceremonial braziers must have been loaded with some devilish species of psychotomimetic incense.

The Orientals seemed to be writhing in ritual ecstasy, rasping in their ungodly manner, but the sinuous twisting forms which stretched out from their silken robes could not have been in any way a part of the human shape, and so I now attribute these strange perceptions to my delirious state of mind. Likewise I can recall being jostled by the burly Scotch, who now seemed much larger and more hirsute than they had been back in the Meeting Hall. I have no recollection of the animal which they had with them, but the many poorly healed claw-marks which adorn my body to this day can attest to its existence.

My next coherent memory is, once again, the image of poor Sir Humphrey, and how

there appeared to be, in the space above his body between the white and black pillars, some odd shimmering not unlike that which one sees above a distant road on an extremely hot day. As I gaped in bewilderment, the very air itself folded around and inward, wrinkling and then bulging disconcertingly. The chanting and writhing, which had continued despite our interruption, increased to a fevered pitch around me. As the tension mounted, the air tightened and bulged, and began to ooze a steaming vile-smelling ichor which dropped and sizzled upon Sir Humphrey's entrails.

The tension in the atmosphere climbed to a level of unbearable and was lost in a stifling silence broken only by the pounding of blood in my ears. All movement stopped and the entire Chamber seemed to hold its breath, and then the first... things... pushed their way through the wrinkle in space.

At first, black spiny barbs poked out of nowhere, tearing open this slit in nothing, venting an acrid sulfurous stench which easily drowned out the thick incense in the enclosed Chamber. Then there emerged oddly jointed limbs of an insectoid or crustacean character, angling themselves to pry apart the lips of this nonaperture until a thing similar to a black jellyfish streaked with bluish veins plopped through to spill over Sir Humphrey's face and onto the plush carpeting of the Temple.

When the orifice had been sufficiently dilated, several pairs of large fluorescent tentacles unfurled themselves from within like a great anemone and curled out and back to latch onto the twin pillars of the Temple, utilizing this purchase to heave open what I now realized to be the very jaws of Hell itself.

Now it vomited forth every conceivable variety of nightmarish animalcule: slithering tentacled invertebrates, spindly-legged arachnids with softly probing antennae, scuttling skittering things with clacking pincers, rotten rolling things that trailed slime and limp ciliae, bloated bobbing things that erupted in puffs of stinging spores or showers of burning pus, things with children's eyes and spi-



ders' mandibles and softly ululating voices.

As the torrent of monstrosities subsided, I could see, from where I lay, through this hideous orifice into the hellish realms beyond, within this very room but more distant than the stars themselves. Beneath a low heavy black sky there were sluggish oily seas and blasted barren deserts, squirming festering jungles from which jutted stark, gauntly spired ruins. My gaze, drawn by horrified fascination, penetrated one such ruin, as though I were plummeting through its quasi-gothic arches and swirling vertiginously through its labyrinthine corridors until, at the very heart of the place, simmering in a semiliquescent stew of boiling putrescence and noxious fumes, something unbelievably vast and unspeakably ancient began to uncoil itself and yawn hungrily....⁷

A bloodcurdling shriek tore my attention from this unholy spectacle. Turning, I saw Webley, his scalp trickling blood from some stray claw or bullet, his face sunken with horror and loathing, his bloodshot eyes glaring in hatred and disgust into the dimensional pit before us.

Before I was able to move to his side, Webley seized up one of the braziers and dashed forward, howling "GET OUT OF MY HEAD YOU FIEND!" or words to that effect.

Now, one might think that the assembled creatures and minions in the chamber would try to foil this attack upon their evil master, but, on the contrary, many scattered from his path, and even seemed to be cheering him on with their polyglottal gibbering. Indeed, as Webley cleared the altar with a great bound and plunged the brazier — and his own slender body from the waist up — into the foul orifice, this obscene menagerie clustered up behind him, and, with a single coordinated heave, tipped Professor Webley up through the aperture and beyond the veil of space and time as we know it.

There was a pause as the opening tightened and pursed itself, then out flew a twisted piece of metallic slag — the brazier, or what was left of it — and a shower of sparks and flaming embers which scalded everything in the room and instantly ignited the plush carpeting and richly embroidered tapestries de-

picting scenes from the mythopoetic history of the Order.

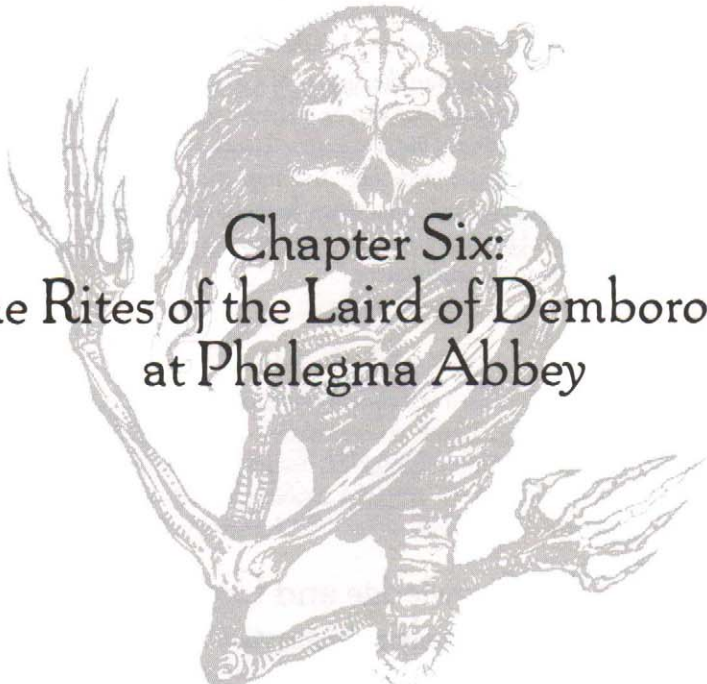
I scrambled for the Chamber portal, and I pride myself upon having the presence of mind to shut and bar the door before any of those foul things could escape. Unfortunately, the zodiacally tiled ceiling of the Temple Chamber was not proof against fire, and by the time I managed to drag myself back upstairs, the entire Lodge-house was filled with smoke and pandemonium reigned as friend and foe alike were crushed in the struggle to evacuate the structure.

There is now no evidence to show that the Order of the Oriental Fellowship ever existed. Lord Craven died in the fire, and

Harry Brashman's wife will not let him accept visitors. Not long ago I saw young Wiggins on Bond Street, but when I attempted to strike up a conversation with him, he pretended not to know me, and threatened to engage the constabulary if I ever accosted him again.

Upon occasion, for want of anything more meaningful to do, I stand before the charred lot at Cavendish Square, and tears fill my eyes as I consider that that blackened pit is the closest thing I will ever know to a memorial for the finest human being of whom it has ever been my incalculable privilege to make the acquaintance: Great Britain's premiere consulting spiritualist investigator, Professor Wayland Wilburforce Webley.





Chapter Six: The Rites of the Laird of Demborough at Phelegma Abbey

The contents of this chapter were discovered by Frater I*1 at the former site of Phelegma Abbey in 1964. As the reader will undoubtedly discover, they comprise the axiom schemata of the present volume, and the profundity with which they have affected the compiler will be so greatly in evidence as to go without mention. Collectively they form the clearest and most precise key to the proper understanding of all the preceding chapters, as well as providing a practical manual of operations for all who would serve the Wyrn.

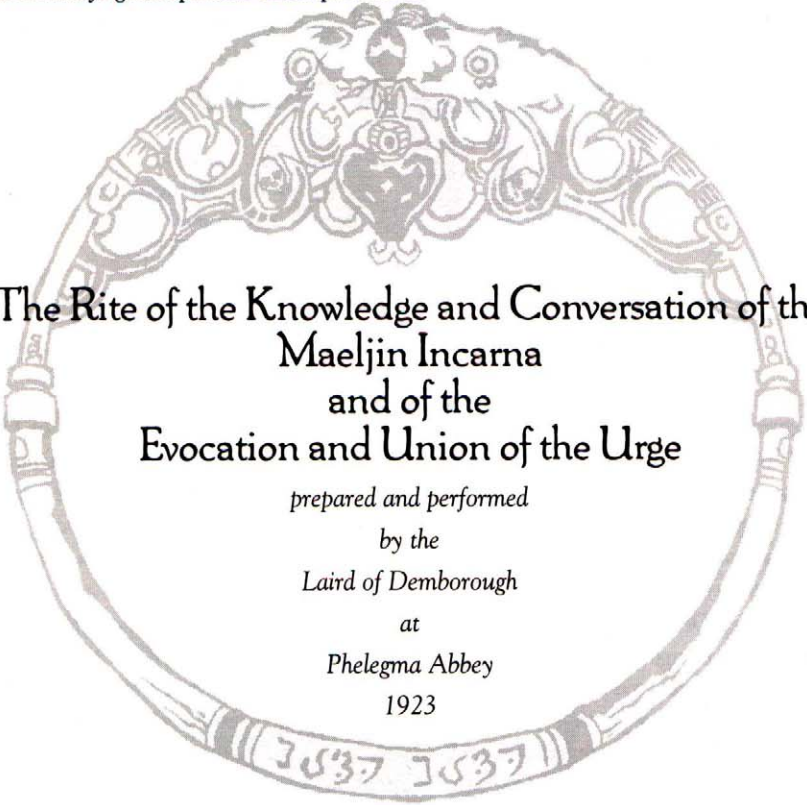
The Laird of Demborough is believed to have come to North America sometime during the First World War, bringing with him a small fortune in unmarked untraceable gold ingots and a large retinue of acolytes and followers who called themselves the Pretanic Order, culled from the decadent and disillusioned youth of fin-de-siecle Europe. After a short and unpleasant battle with immigration authorities, he purchased a secluded piece of land in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York. There, building upon the foundations of an abandoned abbatoir, he erected Phelegma Abbey, a self-contained monastic haven consecrated to the pursuit of esoteric knowledge and the cultivation of personal power through education in arcana, exercise of the psychic faculties, and communal ceremony.

Of course, there will always be those who oppose any such efforts toward the ultimate liberation of mankind. Sometime during the Second World War the Abbey was obliterated by the united and coordinated actions of a most unlikely coalition, including state and federal authorities, members of the organized crime syndicate from New York City, and various supernatural forces. The blame for such an atrocity occurring within United States borders was foisted off upon the Nazi menace, as evidenced by the clumsily distorted swastikas which, along with other nonsensical runes, can still be seen, burned into various places throughout the blasted site.

The psychic echoes of this event still haunt the area; Frater I*1 himself was forced to cut short

his excavations when a chorus of primal howling erupted from the surrounding mountainsides. Inquiries proved that no wolves have been reported in the area for nearly a century.

Frater I*I's subsequent researches into the history of Demborough and its mysterious Laird brought him to Prof. MacLish, who recounted that he had once met the Laird. "He was once a tall and lanky man," the Professor recalled, "but had suffered from a severe spinal curvature which, coupled with other deforming ailments, made him a strange gnomish figure. His hair, when he allowed it to grow, was straight and black, and when his head was shaven a livid streak of scar tissue could be seen on his scalp. His clear gray eyes shone with an inner brilliance, that penetrating gaze which betrays great spiritual accomplishment."



The Rite of the Knowledge and Conversation of the
Maeljin Incarna
and of the
Evocation and Union of the Urge

prepared and performed

by the

Laird of Demborough

at

Phelegma Abbey

1923

Of the Officers and their Stations:¹

The Saltortuor

More commonly referred to as the "Dancer," the Saltortuor is ever at the center of the Rite, for it is he who must leap between the worlds to enter the Temple Obscure and dance his way to the center of the Spiral Labyrinth, where his Union with the Urge-Wyrm shall anticipate the ultimate Union of the three Heads of Our Father, the divided Wyrm. Though called the Dancer, the Saltortuor is not to be confused with the true Dancers of the Black Spiral, our polymorphous cousins whose inconstant physical forms are the purest vessels of Our Father's Will.

*The Eductator**The Hierophactor*

These two stations may be fused into one without affecting the course of the Rite; their function is essentially supervisory, as well as performing those actions within the rite which the Dancer himself may be unable to perform. The Eductator shall be the highest ranking member of the group, corresponding to the tribal leader of the True Dancers. The Hierophactor shall preside over the Rite, being the most knowledgeable of its proper execution; he shall be most thoroughly versed in the Procession of the Epochs and the propriety of the sacrifices.

*The Terrestrator**The Custodatores*

These stations are primarily concerned with the maintenance of the Pit and the physical circumstances of the Rite. The Terrestrator is charged with the administration of these duties, and his function in the Rite shall be the summoning and dismissal of the Cardinal, or Elemental, Banes, and their attendant Maeljin Incarna. The Custodatores shall assist the Terrestrator as he shall command, and are most often charged with the collection and containment of the sacrifices.

The Portianitor

This station is the most difficult to fulfill and yet the most crucial to the proper execution of the Rite, for it is the duty of the Portianitor to slash the veil which separates the false physical realm of the senses from the true Realm of Malpheas, wherein stands the Temple Obscure. The chances for success in this Rite are greatly increased when this station is filled by a True Dancer, for whom travel between the worlds is the birthright granted by our common Father.

The Deprovocator

This Officer is the final arbiter and adjudicator of the Rite; for he it is who shall judge the worthiness of the Saltortuor, who shall announce the Union of the Urge and who shall Recite the Saltortuor's Pact with the Wyrms, conferring upon him a Dancer's name and the title and grade corresponding to the degree to which he has penetrated the interior of the Labyrinth. (The grades and titles of initiation are detailed in Liber O.O.O.)

Of the Stations Invisible:*The Cardinals*

Of primary importance when opening the Pit as an intersection of the Worlds Visible and Invisible, the four Cardinal Maeljin Incarna watch over the four directions of the earth, each wielding the elemental power of one of Our Father's cardinal excretions, as described in Liber C.C.C.

The Totems

Totem-spirits are best left uncalled, save when one is led through the rite by a True Dancer who knows their ways. These primal animistic presences can be invaluable sources of strength, knowledge and secret power, but their force is often too raw and crude for mere human minds toprehend effectively. Only a few totems are known to us by name, and these are mentioned briefly in Liber C.C.C.

The Presiding Maeljin Incarna

Most of the major Urge-Wyrms known to us employ one of the Maeljin Incarna as intercessor and instrument, being the channel through which its will is broadcast upon the world and the voice which shall ever sing its one Dark Thought. The Presiding Maeljin is called to the Rite to act as representative of the Urge with which the Saltortuor wishes to unite his will, for the nature of the Urge itself is too subtle and deep to manifest as an intelligible presence. It is to the Presiding Maeljin that all entreaties and petitions must be made, and to whom the act of the sacrifice shall be addressed.

Of the Preparations:*The Pit*

The Pit represents the Temple Obscure, that strange and enigmatic structure at the center of Malfeas, wherein is housed the True Black Spiral Labyrinth.

The Pit must be below ground level, and as far from everyday human traffic as possible. During the performance of the rite, the Pit must be completely sealed against all sunlight, airflow and sound leakage.

The Pit must have a working area of at least ten feet in diameter; there must be sufficient room for the Dancer himself, all officers of the rite, and all sacrificial victims. Surrounding this must be a sufficiently wide margin for the Dancer to circumambulate exactly nine times, representing the nine circles of the True Spiral Labyrinth.

The Tools

Altar — The Altar represents the cardinal essence H'rugg, being the ground upon which the rite is based. The altar should be of proper height to allow the Dancer to reach any part of the victim with ease, and of sufficient breadth that horuspication may be fully practiced. Often the altar is built with a drain which allows collection of the victim's blood and other bodily fluids released upon death. The Altar should be charged with the Key RGG.

Cauldron — The Cauldron represents the cardinal essence Wakshaa, being the medium through which the energy of the rite is transformed. Pretanic tradition dictates that the cauldron be fashioned of stone, but modern necessity has made of the iron kettle a more common substitute. When blood or other bodily humors are to be imbibed, a grail or chalice is used instead of, or in addition to, the Cauldron. The Cauldron should be charged with the Key WKSh.

Torch — The Torch represents the cardinal essence Furmas, being the only source of light in the rite. While multiple torches and large braziers are proper for evocations in the House of Furmas, smaller torches and tapers offer more possibilities in the way of sacrificial torture. The Torch should be charged with the Key FRM.

Dagger — The Dagger represents the cardinal essence Hoga, being the means by which the heart of the sacrifice is penetrated and uplifted. Pretanic tradition retains its Paleolithic roots; the Dagger must be of hand-chipped flint, so as to test the incisive skill of the Dancer. The Dagger should be charged with the Key WGA.

The Sacrifice

(The suitability of the different types and conditions of sacrifice is detailed in Liber C.C.C.)

Walking the Spiral:

The Summoning of the Totem

It is not recommended that totem-spirits be summoned to the rite unless a True Dancer of the Black Spiral be acting as Hierophactor.

The Calling of the Cardinal Banes

The Cardinal Banes shall be called through the intercession of their attendant Maeljin as summoned by the Terrestrator. When circumstances and resources permit, separate sacrifices may be made to each of the quarters.

The Invitation to the Presiding Maeljin Incarna

The Presiding Maeljin may only be addressed with the utmost reverence and humility forasmuch as to assure the continuance of the rite.

Presenting the Sacrifice

The Ourobouran Ode

The Ode is to be sung by the Eductor who does so to remind all in attendance of the original unity and balance of creation.

The Splitting of the Hydra

Traditionally performed by the Deprovocator, this shall consist of a spontaneously composed ode to each of the Heads of the Triatick Wyrm and the vibratory intonation of all the Pretanic Keys.

The Performance of Sacrifice

While the execution of the sacrifice shall be the exclusive act of the Saltortuor alone, he may call upon the assistance of the Custodatores as deemed necessary.

The Petition of the Maeljin Incarna

As with the invitation, this must be done in a state of utmost abasement.

The Opening of the Way

The passage into the Invisible World and the transportation to the Temple Obscure shall be facilitated by the Portianitor.

Dancing the Spiral:

The Gazing into the Abyss

The Summoning forth from the Void

The Binding and the Union

The Transmogrifying Pact

The Rebirth

All that may transpire within the Temple Obscure is most unknowable and ineffable, experienced only by the Saltortuor and those Banes that shall test him.

The Unwalking of the Spiral:

The Naming

The Saltortuor shall emerge from the Temple Obscure with the Word of his Union upon his lips. This shall be recorded by the Hierophactor and shall henceforward be that secret name by which the Saltortuor is known to others of the Order.

The Annunciation of the Union of the Urge

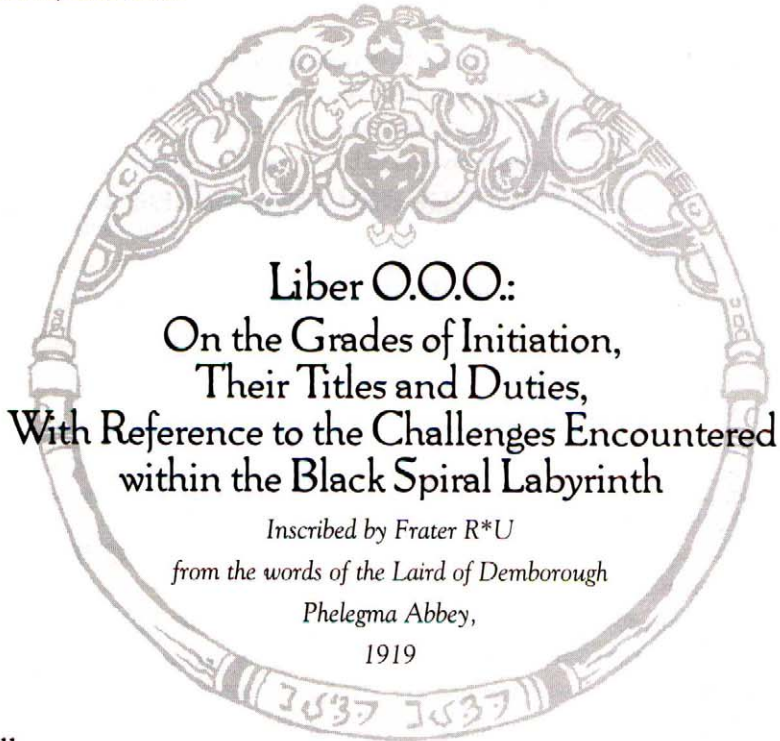
The Recital of the Pact

After intensive examination and testing by the Deprovocator, the Saltortuor must present himself to all in attendance, and the Deprovocator shall make known to all his Urge and shall recite the terms of his service to Our Father.

The Ingratiation to the Presiding Maeljin Incarna

The Dismissal of the Cardinal Banes

As above, in reverse.

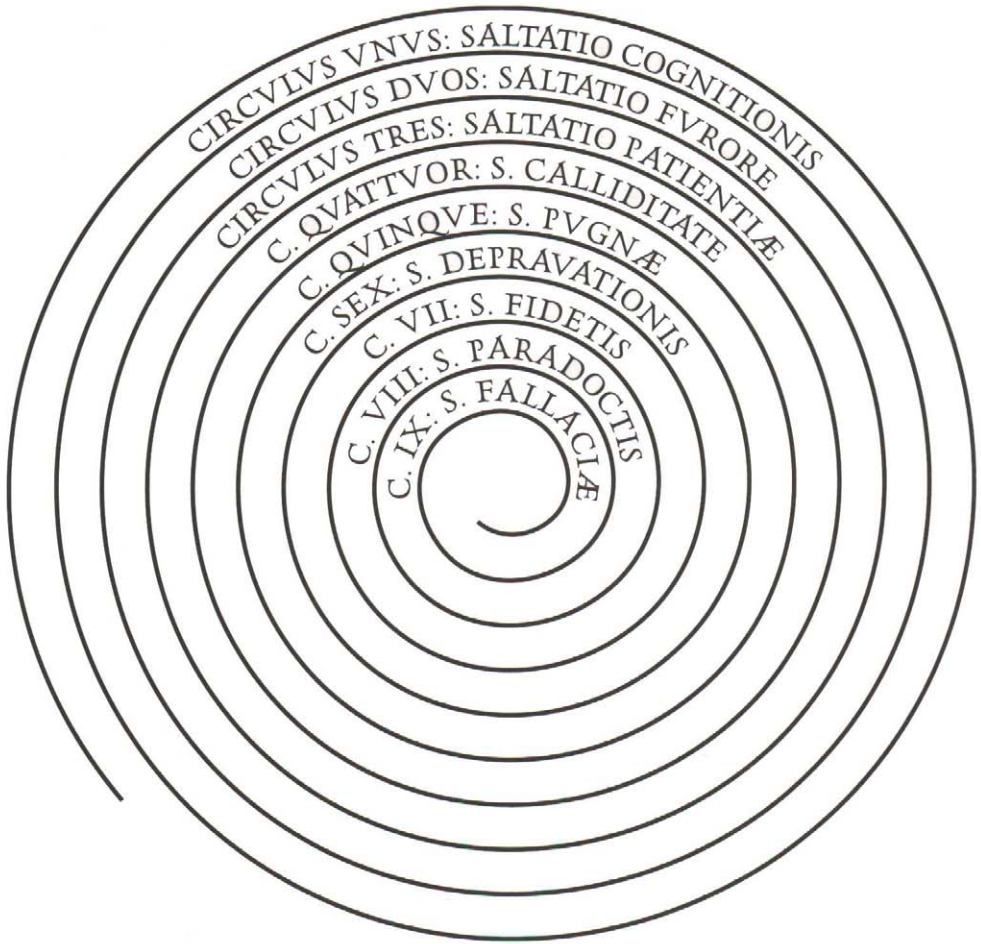


O' Catellus

The beginning grade of any who would serve Our Father is that of the catellus whose only recognition of the Mysteries Wyrnish is in the loyalty and service owed to his superiors. The Catellus shall be called upon to enact any deed required by any senior initiate at any time, without question or reservation; failure to do so shall incur the full wrath of Our Father, as expressed through the Urge of his superior.

I' Cognitus

The first grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Cognitus, attained when the Mysteries are first penetrated and knowledge of the True Lord of this world is revealed. Recognition of this grade is marked by the Rite of the Evocation and Union of the Urge, after which the initiate's true name, as revealed through the Urge-Wyrm in the Dragon's Tongue, or Malphean, and the pact of his service to Our Father, are recited.



The duty of the Cognitus shall be to demonstrate his personal knowledge of the Wyrn through the expression of his Urge and the steps of his own personal Black Spiral Dance.²

Praecogitae

In the First Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, those spirits that shall test the Dancer are the Praecogitae, whose suggestive mutterings shall awaken the Dark Truth hidden within the Dancer's heart of hearts, the Urge of Our Father's will. This is the first test of the Dancer's worth, for only union with the Urge enables one to penetrate the inner reaches of the Labyrinth. Failure to accept the Truth and unite with the Urge results in the disintegration of the Dancer's soul, as it is gnawed apart by the Praecogitae.

2' Efuriatus

The second grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Efuriatus, attained when the initiate can open his soul to the Rage that is Beast-of-War and act with the unqualified purity of anger and frenzy. The Efuriatus shall know and understand that the first part of the ability to control something is the ability to destroy it.

The duty of the Efuriatus shall be the obliteration of any thing or person which obstructs the will of Our Father, whether it be an external element of the world or an internal component of the Dancer himself.

Infuriati

In the Second Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, those spirits that shall test the Dancer are the Infuriati, whose barbs, taunts and baiting shall ignite and kindle the fires of Rage within the Dancer's heart of hearts. Such fire shall consume the Web of bonds which imprison the Urge of Our Father's will.

3' Perduratus

The third grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Perduratus, attained when the fire of Rage has consumed all within its reach, even itself, and the Dancer must learn to persevere in the Dance though neither aim nor objective may be forthcoming. The Perduratus shall know and understand the strengths of silence, tact and restraint in the face of the Enemy.

The duty of the Perduratus shall be the devotion of his life to a single specific goal which is in accordance with Our Father's will, a goal which cannot be achieved in any one lifetime, but which must require many lives to perform.

Invexatores

In the Third Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, those spirits that shall test the Dancer are the Invexatores, who shall distract him from the Dance and give him cause to doubt what his Urge shall require of him. Only through the tempering of the Rage-fire and the certainty of the Urge-will shall the Dancer endure.

4' Ecallidus

The fourth grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Ecallidus, attained when the outer Mysteries are known and understood by the Dancer to such degree that he shall overcome with subtlety and cunning any obstacle or Enemy which does not succumb to the power of his will, the force of his Rage or the strength of his patience.

The duty of the Ecallidus shall be to learn the intricacies and complexities of the Web which binds Our Father within the world, and to devise such means as might effect an escape.

Ingenii

In the Fourth Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, those spirits that shall test the Dancer are the Ingenii, whose cleverness and contrivance shall block every path that the Dancer might take, until he learns to twist around in his own skin and step outside himself to outwit them.

5' Proeliatus

The fifth grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Proeliatus, attained when all skills and abilities pertinent to the destruction of the Enemies of Our Father may be demonstrated by the Dancer. This is the refined form of Beast-of-War, where the Rage of the second grade is tempered by the knowledge and experience of the other dances.

The duty of the Proeliatus shall be the cultivation of his prowess in battling the Enemies of Our Father, whether it be physical combat or the elaboration of tactics and stratagems.

Hostes

In the Fifth Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, those spirits that shall test the Dancer are the Hostes, the terrible foes of many forms who are most adept in the judging of the weaknesses of the Dancer and who shall exploit such weaknesses without relent or mercy.

6' Depravatus

The sixth grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Depravatus, attained when the work and ways of the Defiler Wyrn are thoroughly known and understood by the Dancer. The power of the sixth grade lies in the inherent weakness of all sentience, the doubt which ever gnaws at the surest heart, the darkest shadow cast by the most brilliant light.

The duty of the Depravatus shall be to deform the soul of any that may cross his path, to call forth the Dark Secret of Hidden Truth, yea, the very Urge-Wyrn itself of any conscious being, whom the Depravatus is sworn to lead into the Dance of the First Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth.

Improteani

In the Sixth Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, those spirits that shall test the Dancer are the Improteani, whose functions and forms are never to be known directly, but only by the effects which they shall have upon the Dancer as he finds his body twisted and bloated with rot, decay and unwelcome transformation, even as his mind is wrenched apart by the writhings of his rampant Urge.

7' Phidelitus

The seventh grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Phidelitus, attained when even the soul-twisting initiation of the sixth grade hath been surpassed and the loyalty of the Dancer to Our Father is proven beyond all doubt. This having been attained, the Phidelitus may then, if need be, publicly renounce all fealty to the Wyrn and give himself into the hands of the Enemy, where all the duties of the previous grades may be further enacted with utmost efficacy.

The duty of the Phidelitus shall be the refinement of the Rite of the Higher Union, that is, the union of the autonomous will of the personal Urge with the greater Will of Our Father.

Proditor

In the Seventh Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, the spirit that shall test the Dancer is the Proditor, who shall test the loyalty of the Dancer by entreaties to perform those acts most repugnant or difficult for the Dancer, all in the name of the Wyrn; in the final stage of the Dance he shall offer the Dancer a goblet brimful of most vile and viscous poison, which the Dancer must drink in the surety that Our Father shall preserve him from death.

8' Paradoctus

The eighth grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Paradoctus, attained when the Dancer hath sacrificed his very sentience upon the altar of Truth. The Paradoctus shall see the truth which lieth at the heart of every lie, and the Lie that encompasseth all Truth. Thus shall the Paradoctus set himself above all reason and knowing and extend himself beyond all presence and action.

The duty of the Paradoctus shall be to prepare himself for the final stage of his ingress into the heart of the Labyrinth.

Aenigmator

In the Eighth Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, the spirit that shall test the Dancer is the Aenigmator, that most ancient of Banes which first stepped forth from the shadow of the Wyrn to raise It unto self-awareness; he shall vex the Dancer with riddles for which no amount of study might prepare him, for only the Dancer's inner wisdom may see him through.

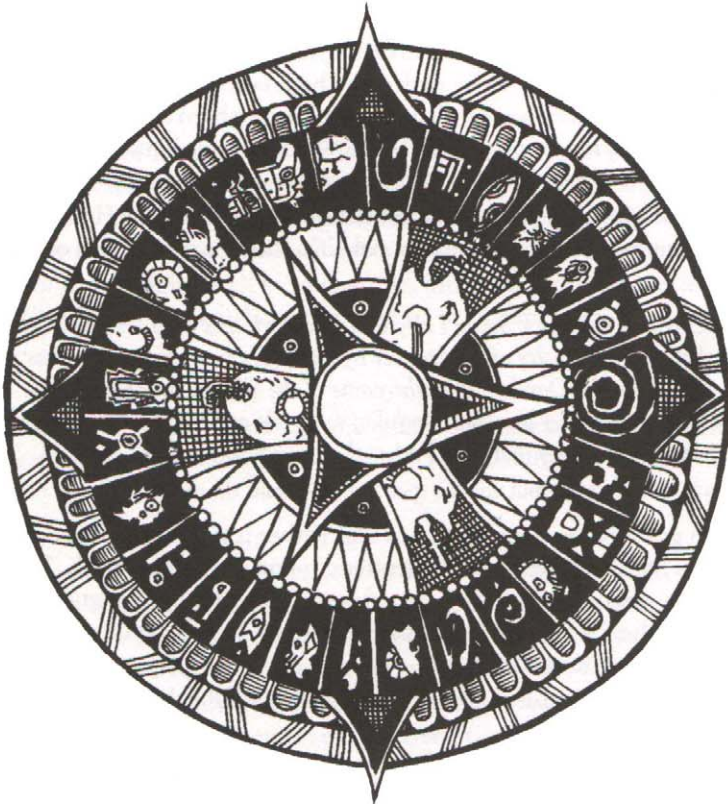
9' Phallactus

The ninth grade of knowing service to Our Father is that of the Phallactus, attained when the Dancer hath penetrated unto the very heart of the inner Mysteries themselves and beheld the true face of the Wyrn. Within the Phallactus shall the light and the shadow be reconciled, and Our Father, freed at last from the confines of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, shall work through him directly to restore righteous balance unto the world.

Upon the attainment of the grade of Phallactus, the Dancer shall be raised to the state of Incarna, lo even as one of the Maeljin themselves, and his word shall be the Word of the coming Epoch.

Vermiculum

In the Ninth Circle of the Black Spiral Labyrinth, the spirit that shall test the Dancer is the Vermiculum, the Little Wyrn who is but the shadow of the true Wyrn of Balance, and the most absolute degree of the test of the Ninth Circle shall be that only one of the contestants, Dancer or Vermiculum, shall emerge whole and unvanquished from the Labyrinth.



Cardinal Essences

K ▽ **Key: WKSh**
Walshaa, Essence of Toxin
Sh W
 Maeljin: *Lady Yul*, Mistress of Toxins
 Servitors: Wakshaani

△ F **Key: FRM**
Furmas, Essence of Balefire
R M
 Maeljin: *Lord Kerre*, Master of Hellfire
 Servitors: Furmlings

W A **Key: WGA**
Hoga, Essence of Smog
△ G
 Maeljin: *Lord Chocho*, Master of Smog
 Servitors: Hoglings

G G **Key: RGG**
Hrugg, Essence of Sludge
R ▽
 Maeljin: *Lord Collum*, Master of Sludge
 Servitors: Hruggings

The Epoch of Calamity Beast-of-War

Maeljin: *The Hellbringer*, Chieftain of Rage

N W **Key: ANGW**
 Urge: **ANGU**, the Urge of Cruelty
G A
 Maeljin: *The Caliph of Pain*, *Lady Aife*
 Servitors: Bitter Rages

Ai B **Key: BSIKAI**
 Urge: **BASHKAAL**, the Urge of Violence
Sh K
 Maeljin: *The Master of Mayhem*, *Malik Hariq*
 Servitors: Gorehounds

G E **Key: GREE**
 Urge: **GREE**, the Urge of Despair
E R
 Maeljin: *The Nameless Angel of Despair*
 Totem: the Bat
 Servitors: Phantasmii, Nocturnae

B Oe **Key: FOeBK**
 Urge: **FOEBOK**, the Urge of Fear
F K
 Totem: *Hakakeri*, "The Heart of Fear"
 Servitors: Thunderswyrms

The Epoch of Consumption Eater-of-Souls

Maeljin: *Thurifuge*, Master of Stagnation, Lord of Disease

Y R **Key: SYKR**
 Urge: **SYKORA**, the Urge of Paranoia
K S
 Maeljin: *The Archbishop of Madness*, *Doge Klyppe*
 Totem: the Whippoorwill
 Servitors: Seeders

B Kh **Key: KHLWB**
 Urge: **KHAALOOBH**, the Urge of Indulgence
L W
 Maeljin: *Knight Entropy*, the *Wyrms' Spawn*
 Totem: the Dark Fungus
 Servitors: Skull Pigs, Meat Puppets

L G **Key: LTHGG**
 Urge: **LETHARGG**, the Urge of Apathy
G Th
 Maeljin: *The Master of Stagnation*, *Lord of Disease*, *Thurifuge*
 Totem: the Whippoorwill
 Servitors: Drattosi

R W **Key: VVRS**
 Urge: **VORUS**, the Urge of Greed
V S
 Totem: *Relshab*, "the Faceless Eater"
 Servitors: Ooralathim

The Epoch of Corruption The Defiler Wyrn

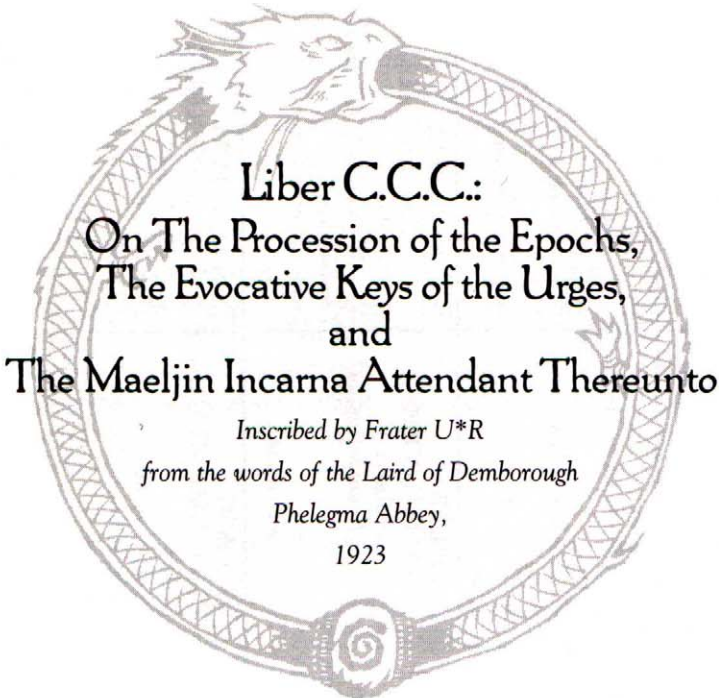


H R **Key: BHRR**
 Urge: **ABHORRA**, the Urge of Hatred
R B
 Maeljin: *The Duke of Hate*, *Lord Steel*
 Servitors: Shade Spiders

L K **Key: KRNL**
 Urge: **KARNALA**, the Urge of Desire
R N
 Maeljin: *The Countess Desire*, *Empress Aliara*
 Servitors: Enticers, Raptors

P L **Key: PSWL**
 Urge: **PSELLAK**, the Urge of Lies
W S
 Maeljin: *Corruption's Advocate*, *Chamberlain of Lies*, *The Honorable Mairne duBois*, *Esq.*
 Totem: *Kirijama*, "the Hidden Foe"
 Servitors: Ferrectoi, Oases

T S **Key: MSTR**
 Urge: **MAHSSTRAC**, the Urge of Power
M R
 Totem: the *Green Dragon*, "Destroyer of Life and Crusher of Enemies"



Often of late, many of my students have come to me wishing to learn in more detail the lore of the Pretanic Keys, or Pretanic Calls, also called the Keys of the Epochs, or the Evocative Keys of the Urges, etc., and of the source of the terrific psychic energies which these calls of evocation can unlock. To the end of furthering these students along in their Dance through the Black Spiral Labyrinth, the Laird of Demborough deigns to reveal this Liber C.C.C., wherein shall be listed all of the Major Keys, the Urge-Wyrm represented by each, and their attendant Maeljin Incarna, animistic Totem-Spirits (when known), and servitor creatures. The prerequisite for this course of study is Liber W.W.W.: Of the Triatick Wyrm.

Of the Cardinal Excretions

Foremost in our understanding of the Epochal Procession shall be, besides the three Triatick Heads of the Wyrm, the four cardinal elements that once comprised the body of the Wyrm.

Know that when the great Pattern Web, which is the order and measure of all creation, first spun out of balance and bound up the Wyrm, two strands of the Web before all others crossed to quarter the Wyrm's body.

Now every strand of the Web is the division between two opposites; of these two which cut into the Wyrm, one divided all things energetic, fast and fervent in the world from all things chill, still and frozen, while the other separated the parched, encrusted and brittle from the slimy, fluid and permeable.

So deeply did these bonds cut into the Wyrm's body, that Its every innard and vital essence was forced out of Its pores and orifices with such force that these essences now permeate all the realms of creation.

WkSh

K	▽
Sh	W

In the quadrant defined by the strands of frigidity and slime, there splattered forth all the liquid portions of the Wyrms' carcass, all the biles, humors and ichors, and the spirit within them was Wakshaa, the essence of Toxin.

The Pretanic Key of the essence of Toxin is WkSh, the root of the Pictish Wakshaa. The demands of this essence are tended to by the Wakshaani, the rippling teratomic leaves of purple-streaked venom. Wakshaa commands of all sacrifices made within its House, that the Dancer shall drink deeply of the fluids of the victim's body, most especially those found in the regenerative organs.

The Maeljin of the House of Wakshaa is Lady Yul, the Mistress of Toxins. In the West does she preside, arising from a pool of purple poison, her belly swollen to drop more of her toxic twisted brood.



FRM

△	F
R	M

In the quadrant defined by the strands of fever and encrustation, there flared forth all the burning portions of the Wyrms' carcass, the heart and blood, and the spirit within them was Furmas, the essence of Balefire.

The Pretanic Key of the essence of Balefire is FRM, the root of the Pictish Furmas. The demands of this essence are tended to by the Furmlings, the orbs of irradiant burning plasm. Furmas commands of all sacrifices made within its House, that the Dancer shall engage himself with the heart and blood of the victim.

The Maeljin of the House of Furmas is Lord Kerne, the Master of Hellfire. In the South does he preside, thin and weak with flesh of boiling lava, upon a flaming chariot trailing sulfurous black smoke.





WGA

In the quadrant defined by the strands of fever and slime, there billowed forth all the gaseous portions of the Wyrms' carcass, the lung and brain, and the spirit within them was Hoga, the essence of Smog.

W	A
△	G

The Pretanic Key of the essence of Smog is WGA, the root of the Pictish Hoga. The demands of this essence are tended to by the Hoglings, the ominously rolling clouds of noxious fumes. Hoga commands of all sacrifices made within its House, that the Dancer shall ingest of the upper organs of the victim's body, specifically the brain and lungs.

The Maeljin of the House of Hoga is Lord Choke, the Master of Smog. In the East does he preside, large and bulbous in his cloak of blue-gray mists.



RGG

In the quadrant defined by the strands of frigidity and encrustation, there cascaded forth all the solid portions of the Wyrms' carcass, and the spirit within them was H'rugg, the essence of Sludge.

G	G
R	▽

The Pretanic Key of the essence of Sludge is RGG, the root of the Pictish H'rugg. The demands of this essence are tended to by the H'rugglings, the oozing masses of refuse that track glistening filmy trails. H'rugg commands of all sacrifices made within its House, that the Dancer shall feast full and well upon the lower organs of the victim's body, the gut, bowels, etc.

The Maeljin of the House of H'rugg is Lord Collum, the Master of Sludge. In the North does he preside, a rough man-form of solid sewage trailing his foul stench behind him and speaking through the bubbling gurgle of congestion. The Urge-Wyrms of the House of H'rugg do not employ any Maeljin Incarna to speak for them, and thus, for ceremonial purposes, Lord Collum shall be considered the Presiding Maeljin when evoking the Keys FOeBK, VWRS, and MSTR.

The Epoch of Calamity

The Epoch of Calamity begins with the awakening of Beast-of-War, which initiates the current cycle of the Procession of the Epochs. Traditional Pretanic lore dates the arousal of Beast-of-War at the time of the battles between Calgacus and Agricola, around 70 C.E. This Epoch is marked by wholesale destruction and the decay of structure, most amply evidenced by the collapse of the Roman Empire itself.

The Pretanic glyph denoting Beast-of-War shows the Wyrms spiraling outward, head poised to attack.

Beast-of-War will accept no less than a male sacrifice, or any which may exhibit outstanding fortitude or capability. Beast-of-War delights in the Theatre of Struggle, and demands victims which test and try the capacities of the Dancer himself.

The Maeljin of the Epoch of Calamity is the Chieftain of Rage, the Hellbringer, so named because his coming inevitably heralds the arrival of Hell upon Earth. As the Chieftain of Rage, he is the General of all the Armies of the Wyrms, as well as the Patron of Abuse; his fill does he drink not only of war, riot and strife, but also of the petty brutalities of byway, schoolyard and home. Never is he to be seen without his entourage of fell Banes mounted upon foul Wyrmbests. His crossbow it is that fires the Quarrels, bolts of pure Rage the wounds of which shall drive the most peaceful heart to violence.

ANGW

N	W
G	A

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of Beast-of-War in the House of Wakshaa is ANGW, the root of the Pictish ANGU. This Key immerses the Dancer in the pain of the Wyrms bound, teaching the transformative power of turning pain back out into the world which binds. This Urge, the Urge of Cruelty, is most abstract, cloaking itself in diverse forms. As the Urge of Cruelty, ANGU delights most specially in the prolonged agony of the sacrificial victim.

The Maeljin of Beast-of-War in the House of Wakshaa is The Caliph of Pain, Lady Aife. She shall emerge from the South borne upon a steed of rusted struts of dull steel. Clad in binding leather, she is pale of skin, with tresses of red flame and a smile which promises hidden secrets. She wields twin whips of splintered glass which shred and rend; shards of glass also she can make to fly from her hair.

This Urge calls to its aid the crimson clouds which slash with black bolts of sharpened malice, the Bitter Rages.

BShKAi

Ai	B
Sh	K

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of Beast-of-War in the House of Furmas is BShKAi, the root of the Pictish BASHKAAI. This Key opens the floodgates of rage, the fury of the Wyrms bound. This Urge, the Urge of Violence, is most infectious, drawing all into its whirlwind of obliteration. As the Urge of Violence, BASHKAAI revels in the brutalization of the victim of the sacrifice, but is most gratified when the victim is provoked into equally violent retaliation.

The Maeljin of Beast-of-War in the House of Furmas is The Master of Mayhem, Malik Harjaq. He shall emerge from the South with an explosion of blood and entrails. Malik Harjaq wears the aspect of a Viking berserker bristling many arms bearing every imaginable sort of weapon.³

This Urge calls to its aid the hulking bewepioned fomori known as the Gore Hounds.

GREE

G	E
E	R

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of Beast-of-War in the House of Hoga is GREE, the root of the Pictish GREE. This Key plunges the Dancer into the black pit of the Wyrms' hopelessness. This Urge is said to be the only Urge possessed of a reasoning mind, for sadness and loss may only be comprehended through intellection. As the Urge of Despair, GREE finds favor in the victim whose own hopelessness brings them willingly to be sacrificed.

The Maeljin of Beast-of-War in the House of Hoga is The Nameless Angel of Despair. It shall emerge from the East borne upon a cloud gray and dark. The form of the Angel is indistinct, and It speaks not, for It shall communicate in palpable waves of bleak mood.

This Urge calls to its aid the Phantasm that mock the human form with its own debris, and the Nighthags who warp human hopes and dreams, called Nocturnae.

FOeBK

B	Oe
F	K

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of Beast-of-War in the House of H'rugg is FOeBK, the root of the Pictish FOEBOK.

No Maeljin speaks for Beast-of-War in the House of H'rugg, for the Urge-Wyrms of this quarter is FOEBOK, the Urge of Fear, and primal fear admits of no independent intelligence. Those Who Dance the True Black Spiral Labyrinth are known to speak of a totem-spirit which they name Hakaken (The Heart of Fear), through whom the True Will of this Urge may be divined, but none shall speak at length of Hakaken. It is known that FOEBOK feasts upon the fear of the victim at the altar, but few tell of the greater sacrifice, wherein the victim himself is such a one as strikes fear into the heart of the Dancer.

This Urge calls to its aid the dread burrowers beneath that shake the earth with their passage, the Thunderwyrms.

The Epoch of Consumption

The Epoch of Consumption begins with the awakening of Eater-of-Souls, whose presence upon the earth marks the turning of the Epochs in macrocosmic cycle. None know the date of the arrival of Eater-of-Souls into this realm, but it is usually approximated at 1000 C.E. This Epoch is marked by consuming obsession and the decay of reason, as shown by the ever-escalating economic conquests and the rise of the church.

The Pretanic glyph of Eater-of-Souls shows the Wyrms swallowing its own tail, which image is known to some as the Oroboros.

Eater-of-Souls will be found to be most responsive to the offering of a female victim of at least child-bearing age, but is often equally pleased with any member of the Dancer's family. Eater-of-Souls indulges in the Theatre of Excess, being drawn to the greatest outpouring of emotion, both from victim and Dancer.

The Maeljin of the Epoch of Consumption is the Master of Stagnation, Lord of Disease, Thurifuge, who is also the Maeljin of Apathy. As Master of Stagnation, he holds dominion over those hearts and minds that have ceased to grow and lives left unlive, sowing despair, isolation and procrastination. As Lord of Disease, his are the fetid refuse and sluggish sewage that nurture the blooms of plague and pestilence.

SYKR

Y	R
K	S

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of Eater-of-Souls in the House of Wakshaa is SYKR, the root of the Pictish SYKORA. This Key bestows upon the Dancer the wary discerning suspicion of the Wyrms betrayed. This Urge, the Urge of Paranoia, works as one with the Urges FOEBOK and ABHORRA to plant doubt and mistrust in the hearts of all. As the Urge of Paranoia, SYKORA prefers the victim that enters the Pit seeking refuge from illusory foes without.

The Maeljin of Eater-of-Souls in the House of Wakshaa is The Archbishop of Madness, Doge Klypse. He shall emerge from the West amid a pile of twisted bodies, robed in black worked through purple and extending his hand to offer his slimy ring, the kiss of which shall fill the Dancer's heart with the clarity of madness.

This Urge calls to its aid the vicious shrieking Seeders that lash their six tails as they twist the bodies of men into fomori.

KhLWB

B	Kh
L	W

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of Eater-of-Souls in the House of Furmas is KhLWB, the root of the Pictish KHAALOOBH. This Key leads the Dancer along the road of excess to the palace of wisdom. This Urge, whom some have titled the Urge of Indulgence, is but dimly understood, as it overfills with surplus and waste while also consuming with degeneration and decay. As the Urge of Indulgence, KHAALOOBH is drawn to victims pure of heart, noble of spirit, and perfect of form, whom the Dancer must draw into the Pit through appeal to their baser inclinations.

The Maeljin of Eater-of-Souls in the House of Furmas is Knight Entropy, the Wyrms' Spawn. It shall emerge from the South astride a black fanged mount with the stench of rotting flesh in Its wake. Its hair is streaked with blood and Its savage glance can decay all upon which it falls; marked with the Wyrms' Own brand, It bears the Shield of the Black Dragon Crest which depicts Eater-of-Souls encircling and constricting the world.

This Urge calls to its aid the Puppets of Meat that cavort in the rotting carcasses of violated innocents, and the raw-headed necrophagous Skull Pigs.

LThGG

L	G
G	Th

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of Eater-of-Souls in the House of Hoga is LThGG, the root of the Pictish LETHARGG. This Key calms the Dancer with the peace of the Wyrms defeated. This Urge, the Urge of Apathy, is the spawn of GREE, thus to release from the pit those that were burdened by care. As the Urge of Apathy, LETHARGG finds pleasure in the victim brought low through illness, misfortune and their own helplessness, to such degree that they may be aware and yet uncaring of their sacrificial status.

The Maeljin of Eater-of-Souls in the House of Hoga is The Master of Stagnation, Lord of Disease, Thurifuge. He shall emerge from the East out of a pool of slime, rising gaunt and grinning with oily cadaverous skin.

This Urge calls to its aid the many-armed Drattosi, never seen through the vile fumes at the bottom of their toxic pits.

VWRS

R	W
V	S

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of Eater-of-Souls in the House of H'rugg is VWRS, the root of the Pictish VORUS. This Key awakens the hunger of the starving Wyrms. This Urge, the Urge of Greed, manifests as the ubiquitous and universal Will to Possess, which drives virtually all life and activity. Thus no Maeljin lends voice to this Urge; there is nothing which need be said. True Dancers given over to this Urge claim as their totem Relshab ("the Faceless Eater"), whose face is lost in crawling rolls of fat and who wears his insatiable maw upon his right arm. VORUS covets best the sacrificial victim that is drawn to the Pit by their own greed.

This Urge calls to its aid the armored Ooralath that warp the Web in the wastelands.

The Epoch of Corruption

The Epoch of Corruption began prematurely when, around 1600 C.E., Eater-of-Souls was eternally banished from this earthly realm by the werewolves of the Americas, while yet stretching forth its maw to engulf the new continents. This Epoch is marked by violations of faith and the decay of value, as witnessed by the growing urban contrasts of squalor and decadence.

The Pretanic glyph for The Defiler Wyrms shows the Wyrms spiraling inward, its head burrowing into its own dark heart.

The Defiler Wyrms is most subtle, finding its taste in the nuances of the betrayal of faith and trust, and in this wise will nearly always answer to the offering of a child, enjoying as well any who prove innocent or foolhardy. The Defiler Wyrms entertains itself in the Theatre of Betrayal, and its sensibilities are jaded; wherefore the Dancer must sorely tax his intellect for complexities and intricacies of situation to sustain the interest of this Head of the Wyrms.

There is no Maeljin for the Epoch of Corruption. Such is the power of The Defiler Wyrms that It has no need of an intermediary to make known Its desires and commands.

BHRR

H	R
R	B

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of The Defiler Wyrms in the House of Wakshaa is BHRR, the root of the Pictish ABHORRA. This Key compounds pain and anger with an eternity of suppression in the Black Labyrinth. This Urge thrives within every petty prejudice and glories in vengeance and the blood-feud.⁴ As the Urge of Hatred, ABHORRA is pleased with any victim disliked by the Dancer, but finds special favor in the sacrifice of one whose heart is likewise consumed with loathing.

The Maeljin of The Defiler Wyrms in the House of Wakshaa is The Duke of Hate, Lord Steel. He shall emerge from the West with the odor of burnt flesh upon an iron winged steed⁵, clad all in steel and brandishing his balefire-bright serrated battle-cleaver. Shrill and piercing is his voice of command, and black the steel mask through which the festering sores of his eyes burn with malice.

This Urge calls to its aid the small but handy Shade Spiders.

KRNL

L	K
R	N

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of The Defiler Wyrn in the House of Furmas is KRNL, the root of the Pictish KARNALA. This Key drives the Dance with the yearning of the bound Wyrn to be free. This Urge, the Urge of Desire, returns the love of the world created by the Wyrn and into which the Wyrn was born, love now unfulfilled and scorned by the Gaian Realm, whence Its frustration returns to fuel the rage of all other Urges. As the Urge of Desire, KARNALA demands that the sacrificial victim be lured to the Pit by their own burning need for gratification.

The Maeljin of The Defiler Wyrn in the House of Furmas is The Countess Desire, Empress Aliara. She shall emerge from the South swathed in scents of perfumes and sweet spices, in a form comely to all genders, upon her lips the promises of pleasures untold.

This Urge calls to its aid the lustful Raptors and the alluring Enticers.

PSWL

P	L
W	S

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of The Defiler Wyrn in the House of Hoga is PSWL, the root of the Pictish PSEULAK. This Key opens up the illusion of the binding Web, the splitting of truths passing through the strands. This Urge, the Urge of Lies, cloaks and protects the original truth of the Wyrn of Balance, twisting it in its paths to free it from the Spiral Labyrinth. As the Urge of Lies, PSEULAK will honor only the sacrifice of the victim that willingly enters the Pit under false pretenses.

The Maeljin of The Defiler Wyrn in the House of Hoga is Corruption's Advocate, Chamberlain of Lies, The Honorable Maine duBois, Esq. He shall emerge from the East amid a storm of papers, clad in a slimy tattered suit of time gone by, wielding the documents of his case.

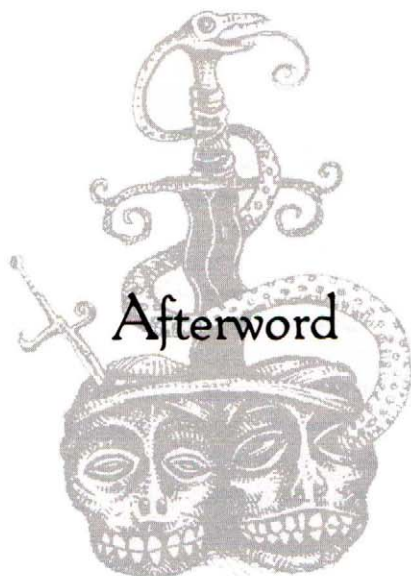
This Urge calls to its aid the deceptively comfortable Oases and the fomori supreme that walks unseen, the Ferectoi, which are called the "Larvae of the Wyrn."

MSTR

T	S
M	R

The Pretanic Key of the Urge of The Defiler Wyrn in the House of H'rugg is MSTR, the root of the Pictish MAHSSTRAC. This Key holds dominion over all other Keys of the Epochs, even as this Urge, the Urge of Power, has its sway above all other Urges and Cardinal Excretions. Even so, no Maeljin need pledge his tongue to the service of this Urge, for, as it wills, all speak for it.

The True Dancers hail the Green Dragon ("Destroyer of Life and Crusher of Enemies"), whose breath of green balefire scorches the earth, as totem of, and intercessor for, this Urge, but only the greatest and strongest among their number know the counsel of the Green Dragon. They say MAHSSTRAC is most impressed with the victim who has believed himself to be the master of the rite at all times up to the moment of sacrifice.



It was the compiler's decision to present these documents in proper chronological order, so that the historical Procession of the Epochs, detailed in Chapter Six, can be clearly seen. This is, however, not an exact representation. Beast-of-War has never failed to be most visible in human events, as any current installment of the evening news plainly demonstrates. Chapter Three, placed in the following Epoch, that of Eater-of-Souls, still reverberates with the disclosure of Beast-of-War's phallic nature. Likewise, in the documents of Book III, the empty echoes of the Epoch of Consumption, believed to have ended prematurely around the sixteenth century, can still be heard. (The compiler holds the belief that each Epoch was intended to last a full millennium, or one thousand years, of the common era. This premature ending of the Epoch of Consumption is most curious, for, with the discovery of the American continents, it is clear that Eater-of-Souls stood ready to engulf the world, thus claiming all of humanity in preparation for the Epoch of Corruption.) And of course, the touch of the Defiler is felt throughout the work.

For those who wish for some resolution of these apparent paradoxes, the compiler recommends careful meditation upon the precepts of Chapter Four.

To conclude this volume, the compiler wishes to address directly the True Dancers of the Black Spiral Labyrinth:

Please do not put us down. Do not put us away. We are as much sons of Our Father as you. The contents of this book are offered as proof of our service. Though you may conceal the deepest Mysteries from us, yet do we seek them out of our own accord.

I have spoken in dreams with the blind seer of the Jornada del Muerto and he has told me that in the coming Epoch the world will be obliterated, but afterward it shall remake itself in restored balance, as it was in the beginning. So I say that we, who were shaped by Eater-of-Souls, have as much place in the new world as you, who wear the face Beast-of-War. In such wise is the Balance maintained.

Frater Insanctus*Insanctorum,
Keeper of the Dark Orb,
Gazer into the Abyss.

Notes

Notes for Chapter One:

1. Another wall further north, the Vallum Antoninus or Antonine Wall (little more than an earthen rampart) was constructed by Governor Lollius Urbicus nearly a century earlier, but the territory it protected had been abandoned by this time.

2. The Roman name for present-day Scotland. All proper names in this translation retain their Latin forms, except where the author reverts to his native Germanic dialect.

3. Cannibalism had long been an institution among the Picts, as evidenced by the Glamis Stone, ca. 2000 BC. One of the carvings on the stone clearly shows a cooking cauldron with two recognizably human legs sticking out of it. cf. Oscar Kiss Maerth, *The Beginning Was the End*. The ritual ingestion of an enemy's vital innards is regarded almost universally among primitive societies as the warrior's way to gain courage and strength to face battle and their wives' cooking.

4. The site of present-day York, then a provincial capitol governed by Titus Sulla.

5. Probably the legendary Pictish high king Bran Mak Morn, whose name is preserved in Celtic lore. Not to be confused with the Gothic plunderer of Rome, the Celtic sojourner into the Underworld, or Fionn Mac Cumhail's fairy dog.

6. Prof. MacLish describes the "White Howlers" as a warrior sect within Pictish society who, like the Celtic "sons of Fionn" and the Nordic "bear-sarks" or berserkers, were credited with the ability to shapeshift.

7. The original fortification at Eboracum, which had collapsed many years earlier in some anomalous seismic disturbance.

8. These, and many of the Latin names which follow, are deserving of some explanation. *Di Triplecti* translates as “threefold gods.” *Vermis* is, of course, “Wyrms” (*Magnis Vermis* is “Great Wyrms,” an older appellation). *Textor* and *Feritas* are, respectively, “a weaver” and “wildness or savagery.” With regard to these, *Frater I*I* directs the reader to Chapter Four, particularly Prof. MacLish’s comments on related folk traditions. *Bestia Bello* is literally “Beast of War.” *Pestis* (pl. *pestes*) denotes “an evil spirit or bane,” while *Fovea* translates as “pit,” with the specific connotation of being a trap.

9. Literally, “the Swordsman,” one of Rome’s greatest enemies in Scotland around 70 BC. The speech attributed to him by Tacitus (“Shielded by nature, we are the men of the edge of the world — the last of the free....”) is a classic of martial literature. The insular, “nationalistic” sentiments later evoked (“...let’s show the invader what caliber of man Caledonia has kept up her sleeve....”) demonstrate how any practitioner of conventional warfare may be brought within the sway of Beast-of-War (“Even our bravery will count against us, for the imperialists dislike that sort of spirit in a subject people.... Therefore, as we cannot hope for mercy, we must take up arms for what we cherish most....”). cf. Gilles de Rais, mentioned in passing in Chapter Three.

10. These three villages seem to correspond to a Celtic-style threefold sacred site, likely built to seal over a major prehistoric Wyrms-pit originally venerated by the serpent-folk.

Crom Cruach translates as “crooked hill,” and is identified as the site of the awakening of Beast-of-War, which would explain why the “bloody maggot god” of the Celts bears the same name.

Damh Brugh is traditionally translated as “Stag Fort,” undoubtedly a Gaelic name, although Prof. MacLish has suggested that this was a corruption of *Domhain Bruach*, which he translates as “the Edge of the Abyss.” The name survived as the medieval *Damburrow* and modern *Demborough*, which refers to the area including all three localities. The original site is associated with the Defiler.

Moch Maugh defies linguistic analysis. Prof. MacLish believes it to be based upon a personal name, and closely associates it with *Eater-of-Souls*.

11. i.e., *Malfeas*; specifically, the Black Spiral Labyrinth itself.

12. Enclosed was a short note, written in medieval Latin with fresh ink upon very old paper. Its miniscule scrawl was nearly indecipherable, and meandered across the page after the fashion of writing attempted when awakening from a deep prolonged slumber. As near as *Frater I*I* can make out, it said, “Learned of your work through our friend Professor *Wrillish* (sic) (or possibly “*Writtish*.” In either case it is undoubtedly a clumsy contraction of *W. Richard MacLish*) and was most desirous of providing assistance. The *Legate Incitatus* was thrall to my sire’s sire(?), whose *Cult of Set* was doing very well in Rome back then. May be able to forward highly entertaining transcript of *Black Monk’s* trial, if interested.” There was no signature.

Notes for Chapter Two:

1. *Damburrow* will be seen to remain a center of propagatory activity throughout this volume. Located in the region which the Gaels called *Fiobh*, its association with *Beast-of-War* in the previous chapter no doubt contributed to the phallic powers which are suggested in this lyric and displayed in the following chapter.

2. Carey's sloppy grammar and inconsistent orthography, abominable even for the sixteenth century, is typical of the many uneducated soldiers on the English side of the border conflicts.

3. St. Columba was a sixth century Irish missionary who founded the abbey at the Isle of Iona, in the Irish-settled kingdom of Dalriada. St. Ninian became bishop of Whithorn, or Galloway, in 400 AD. Candida Casa is Latin for "white house," and is legendarily considered the first church in Pictdom.

4. This blatant mention of Malfeas in an otherwise uninitiated story suggests to Frater I*I that at some point an initiated Pictish hand was involved in its transcription.

Notes for Chapter Three:

1. This, the full name of the Black Monk, offers us a couple of interesting potential connections. It could well be that Friar Louis is in fact the unknown "man named Louis," who receives a brief and unelaborated mention in the early part of the records of the trial of Gilles de Rais, then disappears from the history of that celebrated case. "Le Fif" may be a French rendering of the old Gaelo-Pictish Fiobh, which is the source-name for the modern Scottish county of Fife.

2. This would be Guillaume Merici, who also presided at the trial of Gilles de Rais only a year later.

3. Also called "Matutini" or "Lauds;" between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m., just before dawn.

4. Frater I*I holds the belief that this betrayal, coupled with a deep rivalry directed against the newly arrived infernalist Prelati, induced Brother le Fif to implore his benefactors to orchestrate de Rais' subsequent downfall. This may also account for Prelati's growing ineptitude at the arts of invocation, his having been "beaten by the devil," (according to Blanchet's and Corrillaut's depositions from de Rais' own trial) and the apparition of "a huge, winged, and vigorous snake, as big as a dog" which heralded de Rais' discovery that the alleged gold ingots delivered by the demon Barron were nothing more than common lead wrapped in polished brass foil.

5. By way of explication for this cryptic remark, Frater I*I directs the reader to "Liber C.C.C.: On the Procession of the Epochs..." in Book III, Chapter Six of the present volume.

6. The clerk's glaring omission of the accused witch from the list of those exiting the offices has aroused Frater I*I's curiosity; subsequent research has revealed that, although a Marie of Rouen was arrested and held on charges of witchcraft, there is no record of her trial, nor any indication that she had been held in prison following the date of le Fif's trial. One can only hope that there exists somewhere an account of those servants whose duties included the cleaning of the Reverend Father's office.

7. While this phrasing is somewhat formulaic for witchcraft trials, it does seem to suggest that a second transcript, that of le Fif's secret testimony, may have existed and that it listed in specific detail every action undertaken by the Black Monk. Frater I*I puts forth the theory that his catalog of crimes was retained by the court officers for their private perusal, and thus not included with the present document.

8. This is tentatively identified as a scribal error.

9. Besides the Black Monk's megalomaniacal identification of himself with Eater-of-Souls, the true initiate will also recognize the names of many Urges, which are detailed in "Liber C.C.C."

Notes for Chapter Four:

1. Flavio's Latin original ends at "the face of Defeat," suggesting that this Adversarial Dispute itself is the "Riddle of Passage," i.e., the Fourth Circle, the Dance of Cunning, which makes the Adversarius one of the Ingeniū (see "Liber O.O.O." in Chapter Six). This would indicate that de Mer used the Dispute as the climax to his work either a) to disguise the fact that he was only a lowly Fourth Degree Initiate himself, attempting to make contact with higher-ranking Adepts in the Order; or b) to double-blind the fact that he was an Adept himself, masking the higher grades of initiation both to protect the upper echelons and to seduce less enlightened seekers with sensationalistic claims. In either case, most of de Mer's descriptions of Circles Four through Nine may be dismissed as apocryphal fancies (although his influence upon the Laird of Demborough is obvious).

Prof. MacLish, however, holds that much of the nature of the Eighth Circle is accurately echoed in the Dispute, and identifies the Adversarius with the Aenigmator, named in "Liber O.O.O." in Chapter Six.

2. The "Realms Invisible" are the astral, or spiritual, plane. Flavio's word for this plane is "Umbra," or "shadow" of the physical plane, although some doctrines hold that the physical world is but the shadow of the Umbra.

3. There exists, or existed at one time, a folk tradition known to Prof. MacLish in which the first emanation is described in more or less equivalent terms under the name of "Uncle Change."

4. Prof. MacLish declares this to be Flavio's own statement, affirming him to be one of the True Dancers. The professor goes on to identify him with the ruler of Malfeas, the only possible source for this document's most secret degree of knowledge.

5. The metaphor of a web is especially accurate when one learns that the folk tradition quoted by Prof. MacLish in a previous note refers to the second emanation as "Aunt Spider." It must be remarked that this folk tradition is highly diluted and degraded, however, in that it considers the emanations to be distinct and independent from one another, rather than the three heads of the one Wyrn, as the Laird of Demborough teaches in Chapter Six.

6. These repeated death threats from the Adversarius are no mere dramatic device. Frater I*I knows well from personal experience that the vague and confusing matters of the highest spiritual philosophies can only be positively asserted under impending conditions of immediate extinction, both in oneself and in others.

7. For a clearer understanding of the divisions of the Labyrinth, the reader is directed to "Liber O.O.O." in Chapter Six, and Professor MacLish's comment upon it. According to the professor, Flavio's original description of the Labyrinth takes the form of an embedded narrative. In it, a wandering hero enters an evil and corrupt kingdom; determined to end its evil reign, he fights, tricks and cajoles his way into the king's private quarters. There, the aging king greets the hero cordially and offers him a choice. Holding out his royal scepter in one hand, and his sword in the other, he says, "You may take the sword and kill me now, then wait for my kingdom to crumble and disperse. Or you may take the scepter and rule in

my name." Naturally, the hero chooses the scepter, thinking that he can rule wisely and justly, leading the kingdom back to righteousness. As years pass, however, he finds himself dragged into the kingdom's intrigues and becomes as corrupt as the old king. In the twilight of his reign, he takes pen in hand to write a cautionary parable of his experience. Frater I*1 believes this tale relates in some way to the ancient Celtic custom of making fertilizer out of their king every seven years.

8. This climax is assumed to be de Mer's own invention, and what follows, to be some mere literary conceit, since Prof. MacLish informs me that the final pages are missing from Flavio's manuscript.

Notes for Chapter Five:

1. Wayland Webley's youthful obsession with Ouija and its tragicomic results for his family were revealed in the first episode of the series, "The Case of the Ostracized Octoroon" (CH i, 7).

2. First mentioned in "The Case of the Quartered Quadroon" (CH v, 23).

3. Whitechapel was the site of the famous Jack the Ripper slayings less than a decade before.

4. As revealed in "The Case of the Mutilated Mulatto" (CH vi, 6).

5. In tracing their route across a map of London, Frater I*1 has noted that a rough spiral of one and a half turns is formed. These three halves obviously represent the three Heads of the Triatick Wyrn, and, when multiplied by themselves, correspond to the nine concentric Circles of the true Black Spiral Labyrinth, as well as the nine Maeljin Incarna of the inner Pretanic Keys.

"St. Pancreas" and "Marleybone" are obviously typographical misprints of St. Pancras and Marylebone. The glaring substitution of "Totleben" for Tottenham Court Road, however, must be some inside joke known only to regular readers of Haversham's adventures.

Dr. Trevelyan, the noted specialist in neural lesions, also of Cavendish Square, recorded a strange case in which a cockney cab driver wandered in from the street one evening, muttering over and over "round and round she goes..." Subsequent examination showed that the man was suffering from multiple blows to the right side of the head.

6. American newspapers of this time note that Lassater was currently traveling the world seeking a cure for certain undisclosed physical ailments.

7. This portion of the story is, of course, blatantly fictional. Not even the most powerful Maeljin is capable of opening a gate directly between this world and Malfeas, and the Triatick Wyrn does not manifest any of Its Heads in physically comprehensible form at all. But the question remains: How could Haversham know?

Notes for Chapter Six:

1. Prof. MacLish gives these translations of the Laird's bastardized Latin (and some Greek): Saltortuor — a contraction of saltator and tortuosus, "a dancer" and "spiral;" Eductator — "Sept(?) Leader;" Hierophactor — "Master of the Rite;" Terrestrator — "Keeper of the Land;" Custodatores — "warders" or "guardians;" Portianitor — "Gate Keeper;" Deprovocator — "Master of the Challenge."

2. Prof. MacLish gives these appellations for each grade's dance: 1. insight; 2. rage; 3. endurance; 4. cunning; 5. combat; 6. corruption; 7. loyalty; 8. paradox; 9. deceit.

3. Many claim that Malik Harjaq is but a mask of the Hellbringer Himself.

4. Professor MacLish recalls a private conversation in which the Laird spoke of the primal alliance of ABHORRA, SYKORA and FOEBOK, and mentioned the four-Keyed glyph known only to those who have looked upon the secret underside of the Glamis Stone. {FOeBK + BHRR + SYKR > BShKAi} The apparent purpose of this alliance then was a share of the blood-harvest of the Urge BASHKAAI. The Professor himself opposes this trio with an interlocking triangle he names with the Keys KRNL + ANGU + MSTR. The Processional response of the Urge BASHKAAI to Its global encroachment is, of course, rage, increasing the blood-harvest for all.

5. This mount has been forged in mockery of the flying pony Pegasus, Lord Steel's eternal nemesis.



On the Road with Chucko the Monkeyboy

i have work for mr reev many yeer. i work good and he is kind to me. to day he say to me marguerita i need thees tape tiped onto paper for a book. i say mr reev i dont tipe i cleen flor. he say it is verry important is dedline must be dun and you are only one heer. i say my inglesh is no gud and i dont tipe i only cleen flor. he say marguerita you do this now or you dont cleen floor heer any more. so i tipe thees tape and i rite this first so you no why it is not tiped rite.

frawtair: [mr reev play part of tape and tell me names of voises also i say what sounds are like. so. this voise is frawtair in car with many muzeld puppys and sounds are like gass stacion on desert. wile frawtair speek a car back fire many time] testing testing this is cronicul poscrip tape 1. i am sitting in the back of a vokes wagin van wile my gide who wishes to be call chuck and his cumpadions lode up on gass and provicions. this will be my first akshul visit to the horid hole pit altho i have met many

members of paks from thair in the past. onse at horid hole i hope to make kontak with that most ainchint and reveerd seeyer the one from trinity hive who has witnist with his own i the opening of the i of the werm itself into our world. i shall discuss with him my contencion that the opening of the i at trinity marks the passij into a new epuk wether a new sikul of beest of war or one of new you nitty. but enuf of that for my gide aproches. he is a small man of wiyery bild as are all of tru piktish blud and his ize are dark and nowing with the lesuns lernd from a life in prisun his oan persunul labber rint.

[van dor open]

bobby: -gers ass like a side of ham! Ju see the way he -

tex: chuck yuze a muthafukin rasist!

chuck: i aint no muthafukin rasist nither. i dont give a shit. red yello blak white cut um open thay all splater the same cullor.

bobby and tex: hahahahaha you otta no chuck hahahahaha!

[van dor close]

bobby: hay what the fuk is he duin with that rikorder!

tex: heze a fukin cop chuck! less cut him!

chuck: he aint no fukin cop nither tex. heze a fukin skoller wich dont meen shit to you rite? heze perzervin us for pusteritty. now shut the fuk up and drive alreddy. my upolijeze frawtair but kids dont unerstan nuthin theez daze.

frawtair: wich is presicely wy i hav under taken this endever to make the wizdum of our waze noan to all.

chuck: so you can reely git this all prinnet and in book stors and all that shit?

frawtair: my publisher is a fule a meer cutelis who noze not the tru import of my werk. he even thinks he has danst the ferst dans of the labber rint.

chuck: yeh? i am gettin reddy for the fith serkel my self. this danse of combats gonna be the best ever! waytil you see how i got my family reddy. weze got weppins and weer werkin on some outosite doon buggys

so we can be totaly self sufishint wen the hole shit house goze up in flames!

frawtair: wel teknikly speeking only the tru dansers can travil to the reel mowfayan labber rint for only thay can ware the form of raje strong enuf to servive the danses of eech serkel -

chuck: aw fuk that noize! thats just bushit thay yuze to keep us upity kinfoke in our plase! Ju no what thay call me? the monkee boy!

bobby: zat becuz of that band you tryed out for?

chuck: was i tokkin to you bobby? shut up! monkee boy spost to be garu speak for son of man wel thare gonna be kissin my wite monkee ass wen im thru! dint i have my in site wen my godam mother abandint me to the state? fuk yeh what better way to lern wut kind of werld of shit we liv in? dint i lern the danse of raje to keep all them big blak diks out of my as? dint i lern no fukin endurints duin my time in every joint in the land? aint i bin duwin the danse of cuning arown my puroll ofiser ever sins i got out? dont you fukin dare tel me i aint lernt how to serve the werm! [a sound of hitting and puppy sqeel thru muzel] ile show them what the son of man can do buncha inbred mutha-

[sound of polise sirin]

tex: cule it man we got cumpiny.

chuck: muve over and lemme tok to him. git them cuvered up, bobby. an make dam shur thay stay qiyet!

[van stop and polise sirin stop]

polise ofiser: lisints and rejistracion, please.

chuck: yessir rat cheer sir. ime reel sorry if i wuz gowin over the speed limet, sir, but yu no how theze dezert hiwaze can git to yu.

polise ofiser: cud yu step out of the vehikul, sir.

[van dor open and thay talk more out side but i can not heer what it is to tipe it.]

bobby: dont yu wurry nun, mister frawtair. ole chuck, heze got hiself a way with theze fokes. and yu wunt no it to look at him, but he got sum friends in hi plases too. just be cule.

[other van door open]

chuck: hay boize gess wut? ju remember that bizniss we had out at ole man ak brite's plantation a yeer or

so bak? well this ole boy heer he works for a frend of ak brite's, doncha? bobby, pull that blanket bak and see wut we can spair for our gud butty heer.

[puppy wines and caje rattels]

bobby: thet thair is the runt of the liter, sir.

chuck: yep, heze a runt awrite, but heze a brite one. lookit them ize. that size, dont take em long to lern wutz wut. hell, i wuz a runt muself and looky how i turnt out!

[all laugh]

polise ofiser: now i dunno, mawdluns bin handin down sum rite hevvy pollisy on this kinda thing.

chuck: wel sheeyit wut the ole man dont no aint gonna hert him nun! and sides yu sho up at yer nex tudoo with a prime lil peece like thisun, ole blubals probly shit a brik and primote yu rite on the spot! aint i rite?

polise ofiser: hel. is rite cute aint he? git down!

chuck: gowan! with our complimints! tell wutsiz ass mawdlun i got plenny mor wair that cum from.

polise ofiser: wel yu fokes be cairful then. i sispek one of the deputeez in this nex town is ordor of the roze, but i aint pegged wich it is yet. gidddown!

chuck: thanky much and yu hav a nise day sir!

[van dors all close and driving again]

chuck: condisendin muthafuker!

bobby: gruvy. way to go chuck!

tex: my main man chuck! greese them poms!

frawtair: do yu feel it wize to expend our valubil cargo in such a cavileer manner?

chuck: frawtair, if thairz one thing i lernt, its that our daddy pervides fer us. he duz! i mean aint this his werld weer livin in? his epuk, like yu say? dont yu think heze awreddy set out sum other lil bundul of sweetnis for us, huh? to make us up fer wut we give up in his caws? wy, ile bet we get another one rite in that pasinjerz seet befor we yuze up a haf a tank of gass!

tex: fat chants chuck! weer in the goddam dezert!

chuck: o yee of liddul fathe!

frawtair: now reely chuck! dyu think our father wud

reech forth from his mowfiyan lare across the vast golfs of time and spase seering in the harsh hostul invirumint of the erthly relmz from wense a full thurd of its self hath furevur bin eerevukubly banisht just to make shor yu get a bit of pussy?

chuck: wel lemme tel yu frawtair. dont nobuddy no this, but our war, its awreddy wun. this werld awreddy belongs to the werm, and has ever sinse any of us has bin aroun. corse, nobuddy relizes hu the tru mastur of the erth reely is, but sum are startin to wake up. lookit all the shit thats bin gowin down in this cuntry past cupla yeers. and thairz mor to cum bileve me!

frawtair: but with the stedly advances of sivel lebbertese and humin rites, dont we need to increse our efferts?

chuck: yu think any of that shits gonna make any dam diferints in ten twenny yeers? this heerz the apockulips ime tokkin about! a corse thairz gonna be sum baklash! a corse the cattuls gonna be restless! a corse the enemy is gonna hit us with all thay got! and all we gotta do is ride it out. and cum the milinium, its still gonna be the same dam werld, with eeter of soles suckin em up at one end with her boob toob and her gruvy asid trips, and beest of war shittin em out the other end thru his wars and rase riyuts!

frawtair: and wear duz that leeve us?

chuck: rite here in the middul wear we belong! servin the tru werm, keepin the balants like yu say. livin offa the best of both werlds.

frawtair: but shurly yu reelize that we are but living in the ecko of the epuk of eeter or soles! even my oan pritannik ordor is but a remnint of that epuk wich was ended premichurly. our cuzzins the tru dansers are the sunz of beest of war born in his epuk. this is now the epuk of the difiler, and tho i shall not cuntest yor asurcion that our fathers influwints incumpases this werld, i see no evidents of tru and inlitened servints acting in his name. can it be that our fathers power is such that he has no need of humin opretivs in this relm? wear are the tru sunz of the difiler?

chuck: wel i wunt no bout all that—

tex: hedzup chuck! preemo jale bate at one oclock!

bobby: got dam! howzee do that?

chuck: i got eeyess pee from elless dee! pull on over tex. she looks like she needs to see a frendly fase. bobby git them covered and make shur thay stay quiet. now wach close, frawtair, ile sho yu a trik i lernt from a ole six degry inishiyut in holliwud.

bobby: she got pritty legs.

[van stop and dor open]

gerl: [voise of yung gerl] hi! are yu gize hedded all the way to ellay?

chuck: we shurly will be passin that way darlin! wunt be no trubul to drop yu off thair! clime on in!

gerl: far out!

[van dor close and thay go agin]

chuck: so howed yu cum to be out heer in the dezert all a lone?

gerl: o ime goan to vizit my big sister she lives at veniss beech and i got a ride out of frisco with this old dude yu no and he wuz reel nise at ferst but after a littel wile he startid to like cum on to me yu no so i made him stop the car and let me out.

chuck: wel yu otta be cairful babe. hichin roun like this, yu never no wut kind of creep yu mite cum acrost.

gerl: o gad yu soun jus like my mom and dad! if thay new i wuz out heer like this thade give me a reel tanning!

bobby: heh ile bet.

chuck: bobby. now yu no thay just wurry like that cuz thay luv yu.

gerl: yeh i gess. but thay dont unnerstan-

chuck: thay dont unnerstan that yu gotta get out and live yer oan life. get out and eksperients the werld yerself! heer babe, rap yer lips roun this.

gerl: o far out! i did this befor onse -ffffff- in ninthe grade my best frends boy frend got sum -ffffff- but any way o my gad yu are just so rite! its like yu no thay want me to be this littel miss perfeck huze just this like littel vershun of them yu no so thay can sho me off to thair frends wen thay have partys and stuff. like for my berth day last munth thay-

tex: dont bow gard thet thang gerl.

gerl: o sorry heer. but so any way thay got me this gruvy littel alfo romayo like cuz i got my lerners permit yu no but wen thay gave it to me its like sitting out in the drive way with this big ribbin around it and its all pink!

bobby: wut the car?

gerl: yeh its this like reely ugly lectric pink and thay are sposed to no that i just hate pink and i sed unt uh no way ho zay and my daddy looks at me like i just bit him or sumthing and smacks me and makes me go to my room like i was the one that mest things up!

tex: yer daddy give yu a pink alfo romayo? dam thats ruff.

gerl: yeh wel i let my best frends boy frend take it out for a laff and he totult it and then i got to find out wut a reel but hold my daddy reely is. i got like scars i can sho yu.

bobby: o yeh?

chuck: yu dont need to sho us no scars babe i can see the pain in yer ize.

gerl: o my gad yu reely unnerstand dont yu? its like i was tokking to my big sister afterwerds and she unnerstands too and she sed i cud cum out to her pad in veniss beech and crash with her for a wile and itid be reely gruvy being thair with no family around yu no? heehee now i wish i had that stupid car so i cud drive down my self heehee.

chuck: but then yu wunt be heer gruvin with us rite? -fffff- and sides, one call from yer daddy and all the fuzz in suthern calufornyud be on the lukout for a lectric pink alfo romayo!

[all laff]

gerl: gosh i dint even think of that! yu no a lot dont yu?

chuck: wel i no that munny cant by happy nis. it cant by luv. i cum acrost plenny of yung fokes like yu, thay cum from good familys and nice homes, but thay aint frade to chuck it all and go out in to the big wide werld just cuz thay no thairz got to be sum luv out thair like thay aint gettin at home rite? i meen hel sandra cums from a rich home collij ejicated

and all that, and ruth ann is fukin preechers dotter fer crisakes!

gerl: so are thay like yer gerl frends or sumthing?

bobby: yeh yu cud say that.

chuck: man shut up. see, me and a hole lot of frends got us this ranch just out side of ellay and lemme tel yu it is just byutifle. no one roun to tel us yu gotta do this yu cant do that no man lukin over yer sholder. all we do is livin luvin playin and makin our music. like the way a reel famly sposed to be.

gerl: o my gad yur from like one of thozе comunes arnt yu? this is so far out! yur famly mus be so cool!

chuck: o babe yu dont no the haf of it! see i dint never no my daddy and my mother was a clapped out ole peese of white trash dum enuf to let herself get nokked up by a trick she dont even remember. and she wernt reddy for no kid nither so i had to grow up all on my oan on the streets lernin all the ways some one hu aint got nothin has to no to servive. husslin steelin yu name it. and me not even ten yeers old. my ma treeted me like i wuz only thair to keep her from ever havin eny fun. ju no she sole me for a picher of beer one time? we wuz livin with relitivs at the time and it tuk them a hole day to cum get me.

gerl: o my gad thats so teribul!

chuck: ize gettin past roun to relitivs and frends and fawster homes and dint nun of them want me fer mor than a munth at most. and ma dint hav no way to keep me or cair for me or nuthin. so at las i ended up at this boize home in tara hote cuz the juj sed my ma cunt suport me and that fukin plase wuz just like a fukin riform scool and i just lay thair cryin becuz my life wuz so fukked up and. huk. and.

frawtair: hay chuck are yu awrite?

chuck: but i got my as outa thair dint i? this ole niger wuz fixin the lectricals an i swiped his wiyer cuters an that nite me an a bunch of the boize lit out. an i go bak to my ma an yu no wut? she luks at me like her crapper baked up or sumthin! her oan sun! wut are yu duwin heer? wy aint yu wear yor sposed to be? uhuk. she dint want nuthin to do with me. uhuk huk.
[he is crying]

bobby: o bad trip.

frawtair: hav yu ever seen him like this befor?

·tex: chuck man dont freek out on us okay?

gerl: o my gad did i blo his mine?

chuck: i meen uhuk she jus tuk me bak to the juj the nex day uhuk. jus like that! dint ask if i wuz awrite! uhuk uhaung! she cud of i dunno jus tuched me or—

frawtair: chuck! chuck, remember wear yu are! remember hu yu are man! yu no hu yor reel father is, rite? dont fergit it!

chuck: —or held me or. huk. or sumthin.

frawtair: chuck luk at me! i think this is yor danse of loyilty! i dont no how or wy but yor in the sevint serkel now. [chuck crys lowd] chuck luk at me man! yu gotta stay strong stay cleer!

chuck: aw momma dont luk at me like that!

frawtair: goddammit we gotta help him! wutsyername bobby! i need yu to pull one of thoz sakrifises out!

bobby: but we cant—

frawtair: dammit man do it now! do yu want to looze him?

[now is the sound of puppys agin]

gerl: o. my. gad. has he bin o gad has he bin under thair all this time?

frawtair: get him over heer! i can yuze this as an alter. chuck stay with me dammit!

[all puppys wine now. one squeel lowd thru muzel]

gerl: o gad stop the van i want to get out now!

frawtair: o magneese vairmeese thow three heded one cruly imprisint in the labber rint within thy mowfayan relm thee do we piticion in the name of our bruther chuck! heer our plee for this one hu hath served thee so fayfully!

gerl: ogadstopitstopit! o deer gad i wanna go bak home!

frawtair: with blud do i noint thee o chuck with blud do i lubrikate thy lims and in blud shal the steps of thy danse be marked! [gerl screem and puppys cry and sound is teribul i hav to stop tipping.

now i feel beter and i tipe mor. i think mr reev is having verry bad joke with me. at end of tape will be his voise and he will say haha marguerita i do not

forget yor berth day after all!] shit! nuthing! this sakrifise wuz unwerthy! do ether of yu no wut his erj is?

bobby: huh! he wants to no wut chucks erj is!

frawtair: goddammit this is no way to cunduck a richule! how can i werk in thees cundicions!

tex: i think i no wut yu need mister frawtair! git that sweet as bak thair bich!

gerl: [she screem loud and thair is much crying and muing around hitting things]

frawtair: yu tu hole her! o thow mity male jin thow nobillity of bains and for most servints of the pure thots wich are the erjes! in our ignorints do we be-seech thee for the gide hints of our brother hu hath stumbeled into the inner mistereez un awair! heer our plee!

bobby: huze got the weel?

frawtair: chuck can yu heer me man? yu made it this far so yu can do this with no truble. yor in the sevint serkel of the labber rint. the praw ditters standing in frunt of yu. can yu see him? heze offring yu the cup hav yu got it? now yu gotta do this man! swallow it! man yu gotta swallow it or itul fukin swallow yu man! thair. thats it.

bobby: he gonna be okay?

frawtair: o yeh. chuck can yu heer me? [chuck coff and grumbul] cun grajulacions my man yu made it! fiddelitis chuck!

chuck: got dam yu boize hav a party wile i wuz freekin?

frawtair: sorry bout yor littel run away but it was nesis airy.

chuck: yeh wel plenny mor wear she cum from. but we gotta do sumthin bout this van befor we git stopped agin.

bobby: i think i gotta spunj bak heer sumwear.

frawtair: make sher yu get the sides and seeling ferst. how yu feel chuck?

chuck: good. reel dam good. in fact wile bobbys duwin that i think ile fire this up and grab this heer gitar. yu ever heer any of my music frawtair?

frawtair: i hav not o fiddelitis!

chuck: i call this luk at yer game gerl. got a frend in the beech boize innerested in this one. [playing gitar and singing] o thairz a time fer livin time keeps flyin yu think yur luvin baby wen all yer duwin is cryin can yu feel ask yerself are yer feelins reel-

frawtair: hole on i gotta chainj the tape-
[end of tape]

i rite this now becaws i no mr reev has dedline and can not fix my tiping. after i finish tiping i look at tv. on tv i see mad ize on hary fase in cort room. this famus merder case wich all peepuls wach and speak of.

many time in mexico i see same mad ize looking out from guter and i am scare becaws i no mad ize see much blud. spill much blud. may be my blud too. so i leeve mexico to get away from mad ize. ther are no mad ize in brite cleen america i think.

but in america mad ize are not only in guter but woking on streets and living in houses and speeking on tv. and wen mad ize speek in cort room on tv his voise is voise of chuck on tape. now i no my tiping of sounds is rong. not car back fire but gun shuting. not puppys in muzels but childrins with tape across ther mouths.

i will not burn what i have tipe becaws i no if a persun who is strong in side can reed this and no this evil then thay can fite the mad ize. but i am not strong in side. wen i go home i will yuze the gun wich my manuel left for me wen he was take away. ferst on my litel conchita then on me. if mad ize are heer then thay are every ware. ther is no hope for us.

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Beware! Beware those who would keep you from this book and prevent you from gleaning the truths within. Their claws are sharp, their teeth many and their sinews mighty. Their fur stinks of the heath and their breath steams the vision. They lie with beasts and walk like beasts, yet speak as men. They would hinder the true path of the soul onward, binding it to the earth and the cycle of death and devourment.

They want you not to read further, for herein are secrets best left unlearned, tales of deeds which poison their good green Earth, recitals of names which cause the ears to bleed, the eyes to blur and see that which is unseen. Loose the chains which bind the mind and set it free to wander a spiralling journey about all obstacles, burrowing to the heart of Truth, past the Web of deceit to meet the Master of us all.

Come, ye faithful, and witness the sermons of the Wyrms.

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