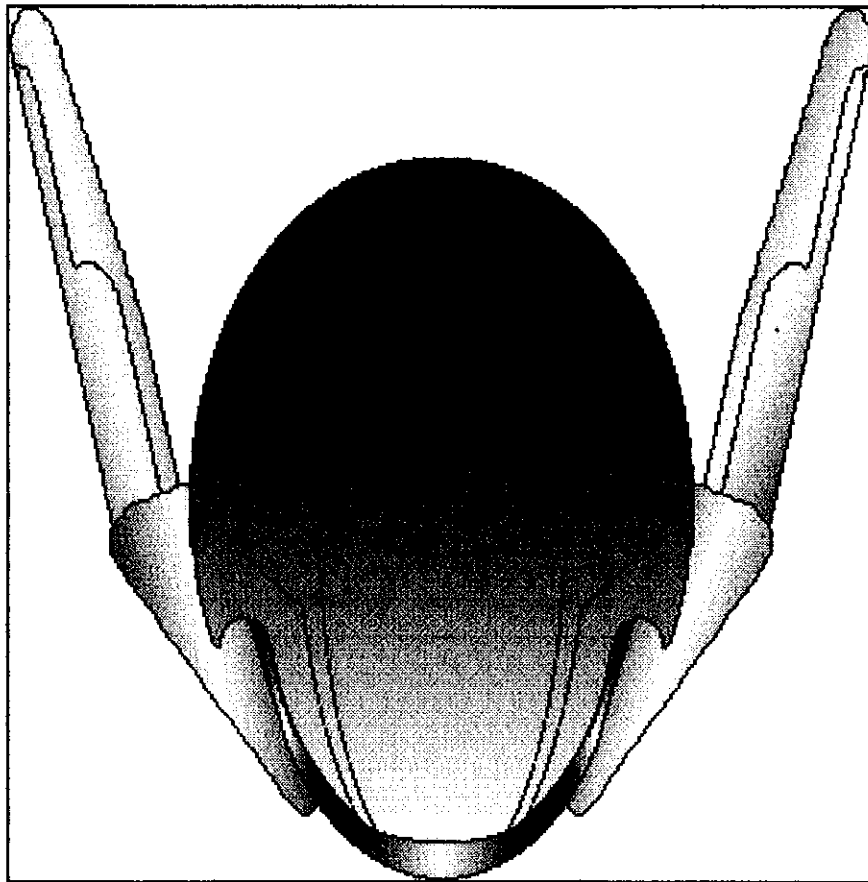


D I G I T A L O C C U R R E

OCTOBER 1996

Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Historical Fiction Fanzine
Published Monthly



First Issue!

The Life of an Adolescent Hacker: "Jacker"
The End of the World: "The Journal"
Fantasy Worlds: "The Crystal Lake"
Reviews: Dario Argento's Suspiria, Basil Poledouris' "Conan"
More...

DIGITAL OGRE

About The Cover: A diagram of Priscilla S. Asigiri's helmet from the anime series Bubblegum Crisis ©.

Letter From The Editor

Welcome to the first issue of Digital Ogre, the product of an insatiable desire to contribute something to the genres I love. After resurrecting the files on my hard drive, adding and rewriting submissions, and organizing the layout, I am thrilled to see the first issue in print. It has been a long, arduous task, but fulfilling. I am not claiming to have carried the burden entirely myself, however. There are many people that are responsible for this achievement as much if not more so than myself. Along that vein I want to especially thank Aaron Gilkison, my best friend, fellow gamer, and co producer of Digital Ogre.

You can expect Digital Ogre to change in the future as we try different formats, vehicles of presentation, and type faces. If you have any suggestions or comments please feel free to write us. Digital Ogre's address is located on page six. Furthermore, if you would like to submit a article, piece of fiction, or art, write us for our submission guidelines. I hope to make this magazine a diverse compilation of your work instead of constant ebb of my own. Finally, I want to thank you for giving Digital Ogre a try. I hope we can see more of each other in the future.



Dylan Hartwell
Editor

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No More Thief Character Classes

by Dylan Hartwell

It seems that role playing gamers have a poor reputation with the general population. There are religious rejections, social pressures against the hobby, and prejudices. We gamers have enough to deal with without generating more role-player misconceptions ourselves by stealing role playing books from our local library here in Oxford. These books provide gamers with an excellent opportunity to test a game before deciding to purchase it, or getting rules for a one-shot game. However, most of those books have fallen into the hands of apathetic people who only see these books as a free addition to their personal library. This is hurting the gamer community and must stop. We have enough prejudices to deal with as it is without having them validated by several poor and non-representative people.

Movie Review: **SUSPIRIA**

by Dylan Hartwell

Genre: Horror (1976)
Director: Dario Argento
Initial Response: Silence. Sound of light switch being flipped on.

Although it may be difficult, particularly if you live in a dorm, try to schedule your movie watching time when other people aren't likely to intrude. Unplug your phone, lock your door, and use the restroom. It is particularly necessary for the visual and auditory onslaught of *Suspiria*.

Italian Director/Cowriter Dario Argento's trademark pounding music and dramatic use of color and shadow are clearly evident in this first of his "Three Mothers" trilogy. *Suspiria* is an eerie and visceral film following American, Jessica Harper, who travels to Rome to attend Tanz Akademie dance school. Through frightening use of what the viewer does not see (which Hitchcock also used effectively) and murder scenes that pull the viewer into the victim's mind, Dario creates a truly frightening movie.

The acting is subdued and the characters are kept at a cold distance. This is done with lack of individuality and simple dialogue. The viewer often sees along with the actor as they progress through a nightmare world of terror and death. *Suspiria* is much like a mystery in that the viewer is given clues and attempts to put the pieces together along with the actor to understand what is happening. This gives the movie a feeling of completion particularly at the end when clues from the first ten minutes are revealed in full context in an explosive ending of flames and screams.

Overall, the lack of acting is compensated for

with a sound premise (though illogical characters) and an overpowering of the senses. At times, almost confusing, *Suspiria* may not be for everyone, but it offers a good scare for those who dare to watch it.

Rated: R
WARNING: *Suspiria* contains components that some people may find offensive: Explicit violence/depiction of death.

Music Review: **Conan The Barbarian® Movie Soundtrack**

by Dylan Hartwell

Genre: Fantasy (1981)
Composer: Basil Poledouris
Running Time: 67:55
Initial Response: "Perfect for Role Playing background music."

Conan The Barbarian® was rediscovered by a friend of mine some time ago. Since then it has easily become the most watched movie in our collection. (You don't want to know how many times we have sat down before the humming VCR, nervously anticipating the familiar thumping of drums and Mako's voice) I am surprised by how many people are unfamiliar or vague with CTB. The movie is incredibly inspiring with wonderful imagery, solid acting, and the music. I am resolved not to revert to a ratings systems because I believe they are not accurate over a wide range of people, but for myself, the CTB Movie Soundtrack easily scores a perfect.

Poledouris developed each song to accompany a specific scene in the movie, so watching the movie is necessary to fully appreciate Poledouris' talent. However, even apart from the movie Poledouris' skill can clearly be seen. Starting with the powerful and thunderous "Anvil of Crom" and containing the sweepingly beautiful "Theology/Civilization" to the accurately pensive "Orphans of Doom/The Awakening" the CTB Movie Soundtrack is beautiful, well rounded, and absolutely perfect for a RPG background.

The only gripe I can offer about the CTB Movie Soundtrack is that some of the music from the movie is not included. An example is the elegant piece played during the Temple of Set scene, for those who are familiar with the movie. Other than this, I have no negative observations of an epic and time accurate soundtrack.

Role Playing Game Review:

Cyberpunk 2020

by Dylan Hartwell

Genre: Science Fiction/Cyberpunk
Initial Response: "Straight up William Gibson"

Cyberpunk 2020, as the genre, is loaded with attitude. This is cleverly delivered through various quotes by fictional characters scattered throughout the description of a dark future. This also develops the book's sense of character and background that is missing in many RPG's. The writers have done a good job of establishing the cyberpunk mood.

All of the interior art is black and white. The styles are crisp, shadowing is done in a complex lattice of thin lines. However, there has been a more recent edition of Cyberpunk 2020 released in which European art has been added that is substantially worse.

The mechanics are fairly straightforward and very similar to the "attribute" system established by TSR and employed by the majority of other RPG's. (i.e., various character attributes such as strength and dexterity are represented by a dice generated number) Character generation can be enriching, particularly if one uses the "Lifepath" system where the player rolls his/her social background. The combat system can be intimidating with numerous tables and formulas. However, once these basics are grasped the system, although complicated (particularly with information from various sourcebooks such as Heavy Metal and Deep Space), run smoothly and somewhat logically.

Cyberpunk 2020 stands out from other science fiction RPG's for its developed background information, in-your-face character, and an extensive gadget selection. The combat is fierce and deadly, and the character classes are diverse and well envisioned. It presents an excellent opportunity for a good gamemaster to run characters in a dark and high tech future that even Phillip K. Dick and William Gibson would be proud of.

The Crystal Lake

by Aaron Gilkison

Before I delve into the elaborate history and politics surrounding the various settlements on the shores of The Crystal Lake, I first would like to enlighten all the readers as to what, exactly, this article is all about.

I created, in my mind, eight years ago, the idea of a fantasy world based upon the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons gaming system®. At that time I was totally green to the ways of role playing and began my adventurous world designing knowing very little about where I was going to begin. Now, eight years later, the enormous task of creation has still not yet been completed, but I have come to a realization. That is that the creation of entire worlds is not necessary for good role playing adventures. Sure some notes about the world and its history and whatnot are essential elements in the design and function of a campaign world, but detail need only be restricted to a

small area, in the beginning, and expanded upon later if the players and/or the GM see fit. And so, I have decided to write this ongoing article based, not upon exploring an entire fantasy world/universe, but more selectively, starting with a microcosm of that universe; a collection of tiny villages on the beaches of a lake known throughout Uralea for its superb freshwater fish and excellent shipbuilding. The region is called The Crystal Lake.

The Crystal Lake Region

The original inhabitants of The Crystal Lake were a fallen people known as the Gold Necronians, whose powerful Empire once spanned the whole of the lands between Elandriar in the West and The Blood Gulf in the East. Their main village in the region, Salporees-Hipshaen, modern-day Salice, was visited by Yuskadite explorers in The Year of the Sea. Because of the abundance of gold in this and adjacent regions, the Gold Necronians had built their tools and weapons out of gold, and their dwellings were adorned with the metal so precious to the Yuskadites. In time, hundreds of human miners and merchants were settling in the valley, having traveled from the far North to find their fortunes. Small villages grew up around the Lake and river to harvest the great abundance of gold. These towns were named by their original founders; Selve, Elber, and Hepeb. The villages began to grow in prosperity, as trade with the North increased as the large numbers of people began forging trails and eventually paved roads into the wilderness. This prosperity ended, however, with the discovery of hundreds of other Gold Necronian ruins and the consumer realization that gold was not as precious a commodity as it once was. Thus silver replaced gold as the coinage of choice throughout the human world.

It was soon after this that the towns of The Crystal Lake found themselves in the most dire of straits, until the humans actually recognized the Gold Necronians out in their fishing boats, pulling in the most delicious marine delicacies in Yuskad or in the new-founded Kingdom of Kanond. The towns made a rapid economic change and began to fish and build ships, and trade resumed with the outside world.

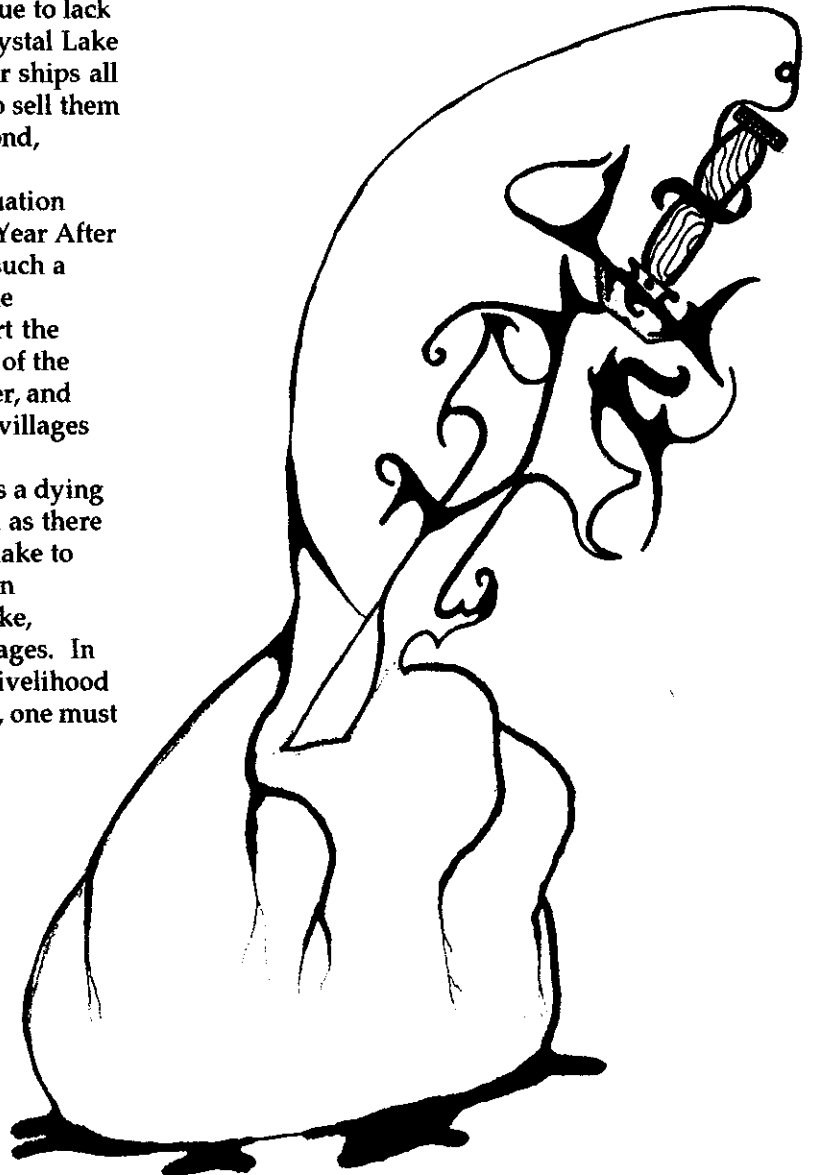
All was not good, however. The Gold Necronians claimed the rights to all of the fish in the Lake and began attempts to dictate to whom the fish would be sold and whether or not humans could even fish the lake at all. The humans would have nothing to do with the "inferior" race's demands and expelled the Necronians from the area entirely. The decree was met with a small attempt at resistance, but the insurrection was quickly crushed and the criminals hanged. Soon after the hangings, the first reports of kobold-necronian warbands and bandits reached the ears of the mayors of The Crystal Lake.

It wasn't until The Uralean Civil War that The Crystal Lake first got international recognition. It was during this war that the building of warships

for the Cardean Royal Fleet brought the region into the modern world. Their ships were swifter and more navigable than the Kanondite hulks and easily destroyed the enemy navy, enabling the Cardean Fleet to blockade Kanond itself and to bring the Kingdom to its knees. After the ensuing intervention by the mother-country Yuskad, the two countries, Cardea and Kanond, joined forces and broke free from their colonial parent, creating the autonomous state of Uralea, which included all of The Crystal Lake.

During The Year of Blood, in which Uralea fought the piratical fleets of Barataria, the ships of The Crystal Lake once again proved to be the best on the water and enabled Uralea to lay claim to all of The Blood Gulf. The shipbuilding was put on extreme halt, however, soon after the sailors returned home, as the numbers of kobolds in the region had reached its maximum capacity and an invasion was imminent. The theory was correct, and when the kobolds came it was in swarms. The invasion and pitched battles lasted only one year, but by the time that the year had expired, The Crystal Lake was in ruins; its fields were destroyed, its shipyards torched, half of the population dead, and the Lake poisoned. Due to lack of aid from the Cardean Princedom, The Crystal Lake held a council and determined to make their ships all but unaffordable for Cardea, and continue to sell them at the going prices to customers such as Kanond, Barataria, Balrek, and Salvage Shores.

That was ten years ago, and the situation pretty much stands today in The Unnamed Year After The Year of the Rose. Because Cardea was such a good customer to The Crystal Lake before the invasions, the hike in prices really only hurt the economies of the region, and a large portion of the production has gone back into fishing, lumber, and even some mining in Selve. Internally, the villages are constantly competing to win the largest government shipbuilding contract, but this is a dying trade. Fishing continues to proliferate. And as there are no definite borders in the waters of the lake to determine who gets to fish where, there is an increasingly tense air settling above The Lake, including acts of violence between rival villages. In desperate times such as these, where ones livelihood depends upon getting what the others do not, one must ask the question; will the kettle boil over?



OBNUBIL EVO./WINDBREAKER:

"JACKER"

by Dylan Hartwell

"In a race car world kids were a hang up, unneeded memory, a older model."

"So what's your problem?" Blai asked. Her small mouth of pink forming the words carefully, brilliant white teeth flashing against the fluorescent lights of the Brig. "Down in a blue one today?" She finished her FeelGood and let it drop to the floor among the others. It rained a small explosion of fireworks striking the concrete.

"Got any more?" I asked, hopeful for the first time that day. A Dark passed overhead, making the table we were standing next to shiver.

"Sorry Win, outa luck today," she said patting down her leather jacket. "Wanna go?" She asked, lifting her silent Power C that she held.

"Tack it." I said lifting my hands from the dark rumples of my sheen coat. I looked at my Caschiko 30M: 05:32:17. I glanced around the small room, the small table of ancient aluminum and the glare of the white walls with the occasional graffitti writing in adolescent scrawl. "Your HD" smeared over the antecedent.

I always preferred the term console. I liked the way it sounded, the way it made me feel. Not just for the bad pun. Mine was a console to me, it contributed to what I was and facing it: A parent to me. In a race car world kids were a hang up, unneeded memory, a older model. HD's were a ethical necessity.

"Win, I got it," Blai said, her dark hair framing a face painted in the glow from her HD. The soft rattling of her finger running the terminal tracked across the four walls. Her HD was tacked into a wall outlet, the school pooled source of information. The busy little wire that held everything a student could want and hold. With a couple of gigs to spare, Blai was no sweat.

I quickly stepped behind her to stare at her screen. Lines of text slid by, her fingernails of polished pink scrolling across her navigation keys. I noticed several long scratches in her terminal board and the tell-tale evidence of new mounters.

"What happened to your Board?" I asked. Another Dark passed over. Thunder rolled across the room.

"What?" Blai was jerked from the terminal. "Oh, those. Nothing, really. I was running for Pail the other day and ran into a couple of dogs. Here it is."

"Pail Jens?" I asked

"Yeah, he wanted a runoff of his - here you are." The scrolling stopped. "We've reached the first password border. Should be sim if my cover's right on

his mouth."

"Sim? He your cover?" She slid a slender diskette into her drive slot and initialized a installation.

"Sim, no. He got burnt three days ago. Chewed pretty bad, they traced him to his own house." I saw her reflection smirk in the screen as a init bar smoothly filled, "No RAM." A small rooster cried, load in the brig room. The thumbs up sign of "Successful Installation" filed onto Blai's screen. Her pink lips slid past white teeth.

"Who then?" I asked as she resumed her interface, but she ignored me. Her dark hair falling across her face as she passed lines of defense with graceful fingers.

"Passwords falling like dominoes," she said, and a small giggle poked her ribs. "We're in." She stood from the mainframe and turned to face me. "Just like I said, Win. No heat. What do you want now?" She moved closer and kissed me quickly on the lips.

I sat into the chair and she leaned over my shoulder, her dark hair annoying my ear.

"Access to anything that you could want, even Gibbon's profile." She stood and unlocked a jacket pocket. "Stim?" She asked, and I saw her brown eyes through the console. I heard her tongue churn as she took one. She slid her fingers between my lips. I felt the small hard pill and swallowed.

"I need to access my personal file first." I pulled a file up. "Then, we'll get into something more interesting. Are you sure about the loop?" I stopped mid stride to look at her.

"Sure. At least for the next ten minutes." She smirked and shed her jacket. Her arms were pale and slender, covered in fine brown hair.

30M: 05:34:09 and nine minutes in safe window. Running raggedly across my profile, I refilled the spreadsheet and triggered the store change. I notice a small clock counting backward in the upper corner. "That yours?" I asked pointing at the small time table as it ran backwards.

Another rooster crow filled the room. I had five minutes. "Let's run a check across Bileman."

"What for?" Blai asked, her face coming next to the screen in a pout. "He has one of the best block outs I know. Even Sim..." She slowed as she saw the look on my face. "No, Win. This is nothing to be messing around with. We get caught in here and we burn. I mean it."

"Oh yeah, I put it in for you." She was leaning over me again. The fluorescent sputtered as another Dark passed. "That was close."

"Yeah well-" I began, closing my personal file and satisfied to see the save complete. Another

rooster crow filled the room. I had five minutes.

"Let's run a check across Bileman."

"What for?" Blai asked, her face coming next to the screen in a pout. "He has one of the best block outs I know. Even Sim..." She slowed as she saw the look on my face. "No, Win. This is nothing to be messing around with. We get caught in here and we burn. I mean it." She caught my hand before it found the board and hit a command. The screen dimmed. She removed her tack. "Win, you are in a blue one. Let's hit Otaku and make some lights?" She was in her jacket again. The black leather creaking against her white tank top.

The stim was hitting me hard by the time we were at Otaku. My head was pounding against itself and my muscles were loose and tense at the same time. All movement flowed together making everything seem to be part of a dance. The floor was busy with the regulars. I picked out Kim and Kei, Fei and Sher. Their bodies mimicked in blue and red strobes. The music was all beat. Blai was leading me through a dense crowd of loners and WB's. Their dull glares and empty faces told me they were old comers to the business of losing. Blai and I found a table only half occupied and forced ourselves in. The music tearing at my ears and Blai asking me if I was alright.

"Yeah," I muttered through thick lips. I feel great, just a little down's all. I could use another stim."

"Sorry lover, that's it for tonight." She said, her face swimming in and out of focus in the dark smear of light. "Too much is a burn." She made a face and slid out of the seat, leaving me with myself and four strangers sipping cocktails of blue and orange.

She returned with two drinks I did not recognize. Her slender hands holding them skillfully as she made her way back to our table. Sliding in, I could feel her hot thighs against mine as my cold drink slid into an empty churning stomach. My face was flushed and my movements were slow.

We were sitting with three new strangers and laughing hysterically about a joke that I had already forgotten. Four empty glasses lay before us. Our eyes glistening like jewels. Blai was nearly on my lap, and I felt a fever coming on. Life was moving too quickly to acknowledge.



The Journal

By Mitchell Shelton

"With a pounding heart I raced past the man and down the street, finally into my house."

Oct. 3rd

I have arrived back in Willums Port, my hometown, two months into my second year of college. Looking out the train window coming into town, I was struck once again by its gray stagnation. The reason for my premature return was still a mystery even to me as I write this, for my father's letter was nothing if not brief. - My parents met me at the station, refusing to speak of the situation requiring my dropping out of college to come racing home. My father's bright and attentive eyes were tainted by an almost fearful tension that I, if I didn't know him better, would describe as paranoia. My mother was more withdrawn than usual, not to say that I cannot recognize the love under her distanced gaze and brisk manner. - I am in my room now. After dinner my parents sat me down in my father's large study and told me, matter of fact that the world was going to end. Needless to say I was shocked. There was some nervous laughter on my part which my father did not appreciate. They explained that an order of Pithu had been created to save the last of humanity and that they had been enlightened by this order. Forgive me if these lines read vague, they were, as far as I can remember, my father's words. They also said the church was very secretive and their followers had stringent rules. I returned to my room with troubled thoughts.

Oct 4th

Breakfast today was uneventful; no conversation at all. Afterwards, I went for a walk around our neighbor's orchard as I had done for years. Oddly, he asked me to stay off his land. I can't help thinking this has something to do with what my parents are going through. After lunch I brought up the subject of our neighbor, my father called him a heathen and started reciting out of a hand written journal. I noticed that the verses

named the exact day and time of the end. I listened and asked questions which my father promptly ignored. He also quoted lines about the way women should act and feel, which I must admit I did not understand in the least. - I went for a short walk up the road and couldn't help but feel as though I was being followed. I quickly stepped off the street behind the cover of thick bushes crouching down in the darkness of evening. Soon I saw a tall man walk off the street following my path into the shrubs, I must have left a trail. With a pounding heart I raced past the man and down the street, finally into my house. I described what happened to my father, but was met with an indifference that both frightened and angered me. All he said was that the church watches its own. After dinner that evening there was a visitor, although I'm not sure, I suspected that it was the same man I has seen earlier. My parents sent me to my room where as I write this I can hear a strange chanting in a language I do not recognize. - I have decided to leave this very night, this chanting is maddening almost as if there are many voice at once. - There are, I can see, candle lights outside my window; hundreds of people around my house. This must be my inception into the church. I can hear footfalls coming to my door. I will hide this journal so maybe someday someone will know the truth.

RESOURCES/RELATED

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Argento, Dario. Italian Filmmaker. Born 1943. Known for his dramatic and bloody movies. Directing Filmography: The Bird with the Crystal Plumage, The Cat O' Nine Tails, Four Flies On Grey Velvet, Five Days In Milan, Deep Red, Suspiria, Inferno, Tenebrae, Phenomena, Opera, Two Evil Eyes, Trauma.

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Fearmakers, The. John McCarty. 1994. St. Martin's Press.



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