

# The Book Of Uncle Silas

## A Call Of Cthulhu Adventure

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### **Foreword**

This scenario is written for new players of Call of Cthulhu in mind assuming that no prior knowledge of H.P. Lovecraft or his mythos works is known. It is primarily suited to neophyte gamers, but certain elements may be extracted to add a twist to a well established character. Should investigators be old hands at whupping cultist arse then this scenario should be modified accordingly by the keeper. No special skills or knowledge is required for its successful conclusion and no time frame is set for the scenario, so events move according to the pace of the players. If they require a month or more to read a hefty tome then they can do so without problem. Although, because there is no timeframe the players should be discouraged from lounging around too long with no action. There is an impatient and psychotic uncle out there with an axe to grind who could be doing things... Also during character creation at least one character should be no older than 33.

The scenario is intended to be set in 1920's Arkham, Massachusetts but at the keepers discretion the year and location may be altered to fit in with something he/she is more familiar with - maybe his/her own home town - today in the year 2000. Other things like the day, date and month is left for the individual keeper to decide upon. The scenario sees one of the players inheriting a legacy from an unknown relative who has recently died. From this our character learns that he is the last of his line, and has just become a guardian of forbidden knowledge. Will he be able to carry out this daunting new task or will he succumb to its corrupting influence...

### **Keeper Information**

For almost 600 years four books of such terrible arcane knowledge and sorcery has been in the possession of one family. Passed from father to son, these books have been kept hidden from the world for if they were to be used they could spell doom for mankind and open the door for the return of the Old Ones. Nobody knows just how exactly these books came into their possession much less how they became their guardians. If the books are so bad as they say why didn't anybody destroy them. Is it because no one had the heart to destroy such old books; is it because it had become tradition to pass them on; can't they be destroyed - or is it because no one now believes in that hocus-pocus superstitious nonsense. Whatever the reason, the truth has been long forgotten.

Nobody cared much for them, that is, until 20-30 years ago in Wisconsin, when the true guardian's (character's father) position was challenged by his brother who wanted the books for himself. Trouble was brewing for some time and tensions were beginning to strain. Darcus had somehow learnt the secret of the books. In the ensuing trouble Darcus slaughtered everyone except for Silas and one other, a child (our character) who was given to a foster family for protection. Silas disappeared (to Arkham) along with the books, where he remained until his death (more later), and through ill health Silas became an eccentric recluse. Darcus, meanwhile, was soon captured after the killings by the authorities and interred in the Wisconsin State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Now, years later and still wracked by his mania, Darcus has escaped his confinement and began his search for Silas and the books. Evading the law he has successfully managed to track them to Arkham. (His statistics and a guide on how to use him can be found later.)

But, before his death, Silas had met bibliophile and book dealer (Jefferson Marsters - more later) and unfortunately let slip he had a small collection of books and a set of family heirlooms that are extremely old (the four mythos tomes). When Jefferson learnt of these books he knew he just had to see them, smell

them, feel them and of course buy them. Several negotiation attempts failed. Silas would not sell them nor even show them. Jefferson's soul became inflamed with each passing day and burned with such an unquenchable desire in obtaining the books he could not wait any longer and so resorted to hiring a thief to steal them for him. The thief waited for a time when Silas's house was empty before entering, but before he could locate the books he was surprised by Silas who returned home unexpectedly. A scuffle broke out which ended with Silas being pushed down stairs. The fall broke his neck killing him instantly. Scared, the thief ran off never to return. Poor Silas's body was found two days later by a postman who found the front door slightly ajar...

### **Player Introduction**

Play starts with the character living his normal life doing whatever he does to make ends meet; totally unaware that things are about to take a turn for the worse. Then, one day he gets a telephone call from one Peter Nichols (who represents the legal firm: Hicksley, Forder & Williams) who, as the executor, of one Silas McCrindle has the unpleasant task of informing the character of his untimely passing and that he, as sole beneficiary, should come to Arkham, Massachusetts to sort out the details. To this day the character has never heard of a Silas McCrindle, let alone knew he had an Uncle Silas... If the character disputes this Peter will say that there is no mistake and arrangements have been made for the character to travel as soon as he is able. It doesn't matter where the character is right now, be it Los Angeles, or London, England. (The trip to Massachusetts will take several weeks by boat from Britain, and any other characters will have to pay their own fare - which amounts to £250, or triple that for first-class accommodation. From LA or anywhere else in the US the trip will involve a small flight or bus ride - the cost being at keeper discretion.)

### **Arrival in Arkham**

Arkham is located in Essex County, Massachusetts on the Miskatonic River. It was founded in the latter 17th century by free-thinkers who found the area's religious communities too strict. From its humble beginnings through extensive farming and agriculture the town grew and prospered. In the witch-hunts of the 1690's, Arkham was discovered to harbour several witches who were hunted down and executed. Over the next 100 years Arkham prospered further with the construction of a seaport and college - which later (in 1861) became the Arkham University. In 1888 the town's greatness declined through flood and an outbreak of cholera. Today several factories offer Arkham sources of employment and revenue, though most revenue generated comes from the University.

By the time the characters arrive in Arkham it will be late in the afternoon the sky is overcast and looks as though its really going to pelt down later. Hicksley, Forder & Williams can be found easily enough by asking one of the natives. Since time is getting on it should be suggested that the players should find some kind of lodgings for the night. Either they can arrange this now in one of the hotels or B&Bs in Arkham or wait until they see to Silas's affairs after which they can spent the night in his house. A night's room rental will cost \$5.00 plus an extra \$1.50 for dinner plus a further 50 cents (each) for supper and breakfast.

### **Hicksley, Forder & Williams**

Found roughly in the centre of town, the big red-brick and windowed building sports the legend of the firm in big gold letters. A young 20-something receptionist looks up when the players enter. "Yes", she asks "how can I help you?" After explaining who they are she speaks on an intercom informing Peter that they are here. After a moment to two a door opens and Peter comes out gesturing for them to follow. Peter is in his late thirties, early forties and is a small weasel-faced guy with small beady eyes, long thin nose and pointy ears. After the formalities are taken care of he gets right down to business - the reading of the will:

This is the certified last will and testament of Silas M. McCrindle. I, Silas McCrindle, being of sound body and mind bequeath my entire estate, chattels, all holdings and a cash allotment of \$3,759.67 to my only surviving relative - my nephew (insert name here).

That was simple. 12 seconds to read - maybe less. Silas was never one for words. After the reading Peter gives the will to the appropriate character to look over if he is interested, before continuing with other legal procedures which must be dealt with. This will take a few hours and can be concluded tomorrow if the players decide. Peter will then give the character the key to his new house and will ask if he wants to be driven out there or will directions suffice.

### **Events in Arkham**

Over the next week or so these are a few things the keeper may wish to throw in to add some intrigue and mystery to the daily routine of reading non-interesting small-town news. The list is by no means complete so the keeper is free to throw in other news reports and occurrences which can astound, baffle and interest the players further - of which they may even wish to look in to. Certain events are targeted specifically at the characters and are dealt with first. Others are general events. If the players wish to investigate certain events then it is up to the keeper to ad-lib the outcome.

### **Day 1 & Night 1**

Day one comprises the reading of the will and a cursory check of the house and its contents. Regardless of where the player sleeps on this night - this happens. A storm brews around 8pm and continues for most of the night gaining in intensity around 3am. About this time the characters are rudely awoken with a blinding flash and a god-almighty crack of thunder from directly over head. The wind has jarred the storm shutters free (in a random character's room) and they clatter and bang. As the character tries to wrestle them closed again he must succeed a DEXx5 roll otherwise they are wrenched from his grip and during this time he is soaked from the rain. If this happens he must also succeed a LUCK roll otherwise the shutter whips back upon itself only to strike the head of the character inflicting 1d3 damage. In the morning after the characters awake to find sections of the house flooded with pools of water that seeped through the leaky roof.

### **Day 2 & Night 2**

Sometime today somebody will tour the grounds or just step outside for some fresh air. As he looks around he gains a SPOT HIDDEN roll to see, lurking in the bushes, a transient. He seems intent on watching the house. This is the first appearance of the uncle as mentioned before - Darcus. If it seems that he has been spotted or any attempts are made to attract his attention he will turn and flee into the bushes. He may later re-appear to continue his vigil. For the moment Darcus does nothing but watch and vanish if sighted. Those trying to follow his footprints will soon lose them (regardless of skill) after 30-40 yards. (The statistics for Uncle Darcus, and a guide on how to use him can be found after these event occurrences.) On this day the character may conclude his dealing with Peter Nichol, after which he may wish to know more about Uncle Silas and how he died and maybe visit his grave. To find out more all the character need do is go to the local police station, make enquires and speak to the investigating officer and/or coroner. The police will be very helpful and will say that Silas simply took a tumble at the top of the stairs and broke his neck in the fall. He was most likely killed instantly and there was no evidence found to suggest foul play. Suspicious characters may receive a PSYCHOLOGY roll to determine whether the officer is lying or holding something back. A successful roll determines that he is telling the truth (as far as he knows). Nothing occurs on this night.

### **Other Events**

Sea Monster washed up on banks of Miskatonic River.

A strange three ton, twenty-legged and fur-matted creature is discovered by two local boys when skipping school. The disgusting blob was taken to Arkham University for further study. Just what it is, is baffling experts. The blob causes 0/1 sanity loss for anyone looking at it.

### **Sewer Workers find a bloated rotting corpse...**

Further investigation and reports state that the body - which was naked and quite unidentifiable - was apparently killed sometime ago and dumped in the sewer. The cause of death is shooting. If they

characters can gain access to view the body - which can be done if the character can give a plausible reason why he/she wants to see it - and has any Cthulhu Mythos, he/she may be able to identify the corpse of that of a Deep One. Viewing the corpse causes 1/1d6 sanity loss due to its putrefying state.

### **Shafts of Light**

Anyone out and about at night will soon have his/her gaze drawn to the moon to see strange shafts of light projecting from it. This is unnatural phenomenon and is unexplainable - even on a successful ASTRONOMY roll.

### **30ft Serpent is seen in Miskatonic River.**

A news report with accompanying photograph states that the 30 ft snake was seen for approximately 12 minutes by at least a dozen people on West Street bridge before it submerged. The characters may be lucky enough to see this depending if they are in the vicinity at the time - whenever that is.

### **Using Uncle Darcus to effect**

Uncle Darcus has one thought in mind; to get his books and learn their contents - then use their power for whatever end he desires. To achieve his aim he will destroy anyone who gets in his way. His exact usage is left for the keeper to improvise. Remember, the man is insane (zero sanity; maybe less) so use dramatic licence and have as many and varied events as you want with him. These are a few things he can get up to:

- Watch the house or character intently, doing nothing else, but when his is sighted he mysteriously vanishes leaving no trace to be followed.
- Break into the residence of the characters and search their belongings stealing what he thinks could be useful such as a Saint Christopher medallion; a watch; a lock of hair or something to that effect, but not money. He'll certainly take any books they have left lying around.
- Scrawl threats and other messages on the walls in chalk, blood or whatever.
- Kill an animal (rabbit, bird or whatever) and leave it in the bed of a character. This may involve sanity loss.
- Maybe he summons another Star Vampire...
- A sudden attack by Darcus with an axe or cleaver on an unsuspecting character. This may be an attempt to abduct the solitary character and force him to reveal where the books are and then kill him/her anyway. If a character is taken captive he/she is taken out into a woodland clearing (about a mile from the mansion) where Darcus has built a shack - or may be he has killed the owner and buried him close by, or worse - eaten him (in which case parts of the deceased will be strung up to cure - sanity loss 1/1d4). The character will then be bound and gagged and tied securely to something so that escape is not possible. If the character seems resistant to his initial questions Darcus will soon find new persuasive techniques to force an answer. These tortures may involve sanity loss and physical damage. Either way the character will be kept alive for several days before Darcus decides what to finally do. However, during this time the keeper should allow the character a few chances of breaking free of his bonds and escaping. From here the character will return home and tell of his experience. This may enrage the characters enough to come out here and lay in wait for Darcus to return for a final confrontation.

## Statistics for Uncle Darcus, age 50-ish

| STR | CON | SIZ | DEX | INT | POW | MOV | HP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 14  | 10  | 9   | 14  | 17  | 14  | 8   | 10 |

Damage bonus: +0

| WEAPON    | ATTK % | DAMAGE     |
|-----------|--------|------------|
| Fist      | 670    | 1d3        |
| Kick      | 50     | 1d6        |
| Knife     | 65     | 1d4+2      |
| Club      | 50     | 1d6 or 1d8 |
| Head Butt | 40     | 1d4        |

SKILLS: Anthropology 21%, Bargain 35%, Climb 55%, Conceal 35%, Fast Talk 55%, First Aid 80%, Hide 35%, Jump 35%, Law 15%, Library Use 35%, Listen 45%, Locksmith 27%, Medicine 75%, Persuade 49%, Psychology 34%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 45%,

SPELLS: Create Elder sign, Contact Yog-Sothoth, Contact Azathoth, Voorith sign, Summon/bind Star Vampire, Fist of Yog-Sothoth and/or Grasp of Cthulhu (keepers choice)

NOTE: Darcus wouldn't last long if he went up against three or four characters in a melee fight. To help him out he will use the Fist of Yog-Sothoth or Grasp of Cthulhu to balance the field a little - especially if he is captured for interrogation. These spells won't help him if the characters set an ambush and mercilessly gun him down, however.

## UNCLE SILAS' HOUSE

Secluded in a woodland area, atop a hill just outside of town when taking the road North to Dunwich. Generally classed as a fixer upper, Silas's house is in need of a great deal of refurbishment. In actual fact it requires a wrecking ball and a few gallons of gasoline and a match to finish the job. However, due to the house's location - and if it was properly fixed up - it could maybe fetch 30,000 - 50,000 dollars on the market. Brickwork is cracking and crumbling, windows are broken and boarded up. Wet discolourations reveal a problem with rising damp, and inside is no better...mismatched carpets cover the floor where there is carpet. Other places are bare with nothing more than tufts of carpet and carpet tacks and the occasional rat dropping. Flaking paint peels from the ceiling and paper hangs loose from the walls. Dirty, unwashed, cack encrusted kitchen ware is piled in to - and over-spills - the kitchen sink. Empty food cans and wrapping paper are tossed to one side forming a pile. Cold pipes rattle, clank and bang as the furnace in the cellar forces hot water through them. At night, as the house shrinks from the day's warmth, the wooden joists eerily creak and groan. Cupboards are crammed from floor to ceiling with jam jars filled with; nuts, bolts, screws, keys - rusting keys for locks that no longer exist; shoe laces and other bits and bobs. Some rooms are just jam packed with wardrobes, beds or chairs. The attic is found to be filled with various rusty tools, several dozen empty paint cans and hundreds of dead batteries, boxes of photo albums, diaries, etc....why he never got rid of all this stuff is a mystery in itself.

The toilet is by far the worst place and words alone can't even begin to describe the state it's in nor the smell. A CONx5 roll is required to stay in here for any prolonged time; on a fumbled roll the character begins to gag and dryly wretch as the smell overpowers him/her. The linoleum is holed and torn showing the rotten floorboards beneath; the bathtub is filled with bricks and pieces of wood and the presence of a spider's web shows that it hasn't been used in quite some time. Beside the bath is a pile of newspapers which seems to have been used as toilet paper. Dashing to open the window (which is covered in yellowed grime, and, on the sill 14 dead flies are to be found) to air the room requires a successful STR 8 resistance roll to break the gooey hold.

Once the character has looked the house over from ground to roof (which takes three days), sorting out and deciding what he/she wants to keep, sell, or throw away he/she finds that there is no phone and 70% of its contents is literally junk. The other 30% of “not junk” consists of assorted paintings, books, plates and crockery, silverware, ornaments, etc.... Once all is sorted out it should be mentioned that it could be within the character’s best interest to open the house for a rummage sale to try and make a little extra money before carting it all off to the town’s dump.

### **The Sale**

About a dozen people - maybe more - drift in and look through what’s for sale over the day or so the house is open. When it is obvious that nothing more is going to be sold the house’s new owner should roll his/her BARGAIN skill to see how much cash was made. Success results in 1d100+50 dollars worth of sales otherwise its just 1d6x10+30 dollars. (An impale results in a further 50% gain in profit.) Amongst the items sold were books, paintings, old plates, the odd sideboard, cupboard and miscellaneous item...

A day after the sale ends Peter Nichols contacts the player at his new house and apologises for this embarrassing and most unprofessional error, but he has a letter (Player handout 1) for the player that was meant to be given to him at the will reading - but unfortunately it seemed to fall out its file and was only recently discovered. He hands it over and again apologises before leaving to attend to other affairs.

### **The Letter (Player handout 1)**

Dear Nephew,

For all these years since you were a boy I have protected you from the truth; but the time has now come that your only protection is the truth... So, without further procrastination I will get to the point.

About twenty or so years ago a tragedy occurred within your natural birth family - the McCrindles of Greenwood, Wisconsin. Your father, Owen was an extraordinary person, for he was the true guardian of the books, but his position did not go unchallenged for his brother Darcus - an evil, spiteful man - corrupted by diseased teachings planned to steal the books for himself. In his relentless pursuit for power he betrayed your father's trust and murdered your family. He would have destroyed you as he did them, had I not sent you away - far, far away; entrusting you to a foster family who would raise you as their own. But it wasn't you alone I sought to protect...it was the books. I took them and slid into obscurity here in Arkham becoming a hermit. A crazy old man I heard some say.

For 600 years our family have been the guardians of forbidden lore; four books of incredible arcane knowledge and power that can be the undoing of mankind. These books can be found in the attic.

#### **Book 1.**

The book’s cover is black leather and heavily moulded. The tome comprises several hundreds of un-numbered thick papyrus-like pages which can be fastened together with a tarnished bronze clasp and lock.

#### **Book 2.**

This green book of roughly 150 gages which has its name (Monstres and their Kynde) in gold leaf lettering has sustained quite a bit of damage. Mottled discolouration attest to water damage and significant portions have also been rat-gnawed. With that, the glue and binding has deteriorated so much that the book’s loose pages are tied together with string.

#### **Book 3.**

This book has a plain brown cover with no title, although the fly page names the book as Cthaaat Aqaudingén. The book comprises 200 pages and is dated but does not name the author or the printer.

#### **Book 4.**

Book four is the greatest mystery of all the four books as it is hand-written in a language totally unknown to any culture on earth - save for the author that is. The frenzied scrawls and half letters cannot be

translated, nor do they follow any recognisable pattern that would suggest a code.

Also, I met this guy called Jefferson Marsters in a pub and we got talking - that was a mistake... he's been harassing me for some weeks now, intent on just seeing those books since his attempts at buying them have failed. I will not sell them to him no matter how much he offers. Although he doesn't scare me I do fear he may try something rash in order to obtain them. That's why I am writing this letter, just in case he does go too far.

Now that you are the guardian you must never reveal that you have these books like I unfortunately did. Our enemy is a formidable one. Never ceasing. Never relenting... Be on your constant guard. For the safety of mankind I beg you from beyond the grave to keep these books safe and never ever sell them.

Intrigued by what Silas has to say the players may be interested in looking for the books mentioned in his letter. A SPOT HIDDEN and LIBRARY USE roll later, while searching the house and the remaining junk is required by the players to find that the books mentioned in the letter are not to be found - anywhere. An IDEA roll will allow a mindful character to remember that dozens of books were sold to a book dealer and self-confessed bibliophile called Jefferson Marsters. The missing books may have been sold to him. Fortunately he blabbed enough to mention that he had a store by the name of Ye Olde Booke Shoppe somewhere in town.

### **Researching the character's true past...**

Surprised to learn the character is not who he really is the player may initiate some kind genealogy research to discover who he really is. This can be done by following certain clues contained within the letter (eg: the McCrindles of Greenwood, Wisconsin). Information can be found by going to the city hall, the library and from newspaper reports (LIBRARY USE rolls). The genealogy process can take several hours to several days depending on how far and how much information the player wants to find; though this may necessitate a trip to Wisconsin to do. If the characters pack up and take a trip to Wisconsin the scenario does not end there. Just move the action there and continue as normal because uncle Darcus will surely follow... Alternately they can pay somebody in Wisconsin to do the research for them and have them send the results by post or wire.

Some information, however, can be learnt by looking through Silas' personal effects such as photo albums, the family bible, letters and other documents. Taking the time to look at the photos may allow observant characters to see a familiar face albeit much younger. The face belongs to the man they've seen watching the house. Uncle Darcus... A great deal of the following information will never be learnt by the players, so, just how much information can be learnt is for the keeper to decide.

### **Overview of the Family**

The McCrindles of Greenwood originally came from Kilmarnock, Scotland, having come over on the Mayflower in 1620. Beyond that, things start getting muddy and would require a trip to Kilmarnock to continue. Other than that it seems they moved to Wisconsin around 1710 and bought some land and built a farm, which later was turned into a cherry plantation which they used to make Cherry liqueur. The operation was small but profitable.

### **Who was Uncle Silas?**

There is nothing much that can be said for Silas other than he was the youngest of three brothers - the others being Darcus and Owen. Owen being the eldest. There is relevant information, however, contained in the keepers information at the beginning of this scenario that can be used to round off what can be learnt.

### **Who was Uncle Darcus?**

Highly intelligent, well educated, but immensely jealous of his elder brother for some unknown reason. Darcus was the black sheep of the family from an early age, always getting into some kind of trouble. At

22 he moved to Boston to open a medical consultation firm which didn't go as well as expected. Shunned by the medical establishment for his unorthodox methods he closed his offices after six months, but opened another practice in some dank back alleyway, performing his own brand of consultation service with the occasional abortion and surgical experiment. Things got worse for a while with a bout of tuberculosis. Then, he heard about an organisation one could join where men could openly discuss philosophy, politics, medical research and other important matters in a congenial atmosphere with no recourse for accusation or recriminations. The organisation was called the Hermetic order of the Silver Twilight. From here, Darcus was accepted and was soon indoctrinated with the teachings of occult lore and knowledge of other unearthly reality brimming with demented gods and fantastic monsters who roam the vastness of the universe. Remembering that his family are the guardians of such lore Darcus returned home to seize the books for himself.

### **Who was my father?**

The eldest of three brothers Owen was forthright, upstanding and logical. He was set to take over the cherry plantation from his father and had designs on expanding and buying new land. He was also the last guardian of the books as inherited from his father... This is as about much the player will learn. Anything else would have to come from somebody who knew him, but unfortunately the player won't know anybody who knew him - except for Darcus who won't discuss his weak and foolish brother.

### **What happened in Wisconsin**

The exact date of the massacre is based upon the age of the character. It should occur at a time when the character was a child of three or four years old, so the character won't remember any of it. From newspaper reports (see handouts 2a & 2b - see below) the player can pretty much learn what went on. Further information would require speaking to the Greenwood police department and Det. Lt. Gerber.

**MASSACRE AT HOMESTEAD WISCONSIN** — The town of Greenwood, today, was rocked by the news of an horrific massacre the the McCrindle homestead. Police were called to the disturbance but arrived too late only to discover, amongst the carnage the mutilated bodies of five family members spanning three generations. Later that day, while following a tip-off Detective Lieutenant Luke Gerber apprehended one Darcus McCrindle for the brutal murders. Det. Lt. Gerber was not available for comment.

**CULPRIT CONFIRMED WISCONSIN** — Following the harrowing account of yesterday's massacre at the McCrindle homestead, Detective Lieutenant Luke Gerber confirmed the identity of Darcus McCrindle as the sole perpetrator of the crime, adding: "In all my years, I have never witnessed such cruel sadistic barbarity. The estranged Mr McCrindle is indeed a twisted, resentful man. He is being sent to the Wisconsin State Hospital for psychoanalysis to determine whether he is insane or not. If he is found compos mentis he is sure to be executed and may God have mercy on his soul".

The five family members are: Owen McCrindle (character's father), Alyson McCrindle (character's mother), Stewart McCrindle (character's younger brother), Emily McCrindle (character's grandmother) and Joseph McCrindle (character's grandfather).

### **Ye Olde Booke Shoppe**

The bookshop is situated roughly in the centre of town on the corner of Marsh Street and Hyde, just across the road from a church. The once green and gold paint work on the window frames and sign are peeling, and the many small square windows are filthy. A bell rings as the players enter. The shop is quite large and has a smaller office at the back. Inside is no different than out; shelves are stacked high with dusty books of all kinds, more are in heaps on the bare floorboards or contained in cardboard boxes. The shop assistant deals with a customer. Both look over as the players enter but pay them no mind. The assistant bends down taking something from beneath the counter and puts it in a brown paper bag. The customer pays for it which is then shoved into the inside pocket of his overcoat before hurrying out. (The



guy is buying pornography). The assistant then returns to sitting on his stool behind the counter, bending over a large consignment of newly received books - taking each book from its box before inspecting it and placing it aside. He appears to be in his 60s and is still handsome in a ruggish way with his white hair slicked back. He is clean shaven and wears thin gold-rimmed spectacles attached to a chain around his neck. The rest of his attire seems to fit with the overall appearance of the shop - brown and drab. As the investigators approach he puts down his books and turns his attention towards them with a smile, asking if he can help in any way.

If anyone is suspicious and asks what was in the package the man who was previously here bought, the keeper should try to downplay its significance by saying it was merely something the man had previously ordered - a magazine on horticulture. A successful PSYCHOLOGY roll at this point will let characters know the man is lying. Pointing this out will cause him to continue to allege he is telling the truth but this time he winks, nods or says magazine differently - trying to get the message across without actually saying pornography. Talking to the old fellow the players soon realise he is easy going and is happy to talk, though he will not divulge where Jefferson lives if he is asked - though maybe if the players can PERSUADE him... An alternate way to find where he lives is to consult a phone book. Even though he will freely talk there is not much he knows and if asked where Jefferson is right now he'll be unable to give an answer saying: "He popped out a few hours ago on errands and might be back soon, or maybe not. If he isn't back by closing time" the keeper explains, "I'll just lock up as normal and go home".

Breaking into the shop is quite easy at night although forcing a door or window will set off the burglar alarm causing a nearby patrolman to arrive in 1d6 minutes. Successfully detecting and disarming the alarm can be accomplished with a successful SPOT HIDDEN and ELECTRICAL REPAIR or MECHANICAL REPAIR roll. It can take several hours of careful searching to realise that there is nothing of vital interest to investigators, however if they search the small office first the investigators can find two of the books mentioned in Silas' letter (monstres and their kynde and book 4) within 5-10 minutes. Other items that may be of interest are the pornography magazines and account ledgers. If anyone is interested in looking for cash he/she may have a SPOT HIDDEN roll. Success results in petty cash amounting to 1d20 dollars being found, otherwise there is nothing of value to be found.

### **The Bibliophile**

Jefferson Marsters loves books, he always had. They were his passion in life. He can remember the first book his parents had given him when he was a boy - 20,000 leagues under the sea by Jules Verne. He still has that book although, by now, it is has yellowed from age and is now fragile. From there his obsession grew and he began to collect other books - especially those by Verne. His compulsive disorder grew with each and every new book he bought, and by his twelfth birthday he had nearly 100 assorted books in his collection - all bought with the money he earned from mowing grass, white-washing fences and walls and other odd jobs. Those magnificent books with words and pictures could impart such a veritable amount of knowledge or whisk you away to another time; another place.... Upon his twenty-first birthday fortune certainly smiled upon him when he managed to purchase the original manuscript of Verne's 20,000 leagues under the sea which is now lovingly displayed within a glass-enclosed shelf in his study at home. It was only natural that he became a librarian and eventual book store owner.

Once Jefferson has bought his books from the rummage sale he will briefly return to his shop to take care of some business, before going home to look over his new acquisitions. There he will stay for the next few days secluded in his study reading, seldom going out for any reason. Although horrified at what he reads he cannot bear to stop reading, continuing morbidly fascinated, even though his eyes are red and sore. Burning.

### **Jefferson's House**

The house is located on River Street and dates back to the revolution or thereabouts making it one of the oldest houses in Arkham. It has been fitted with electricity, indoor plumbing and a toilet. Although it needs a good lick of paint and some patch-up jobs here and there the house is in excellent condition. The interior is no different to that of Ye Olde Booke Shoppe; drab and dusty. Although the house is comfortable to live in it is still sparsely furnished. Were it not in fact a place of residence you could easily

swear blind that it was the local library. Shelves are packed for as long as they are high with books of all kinds, more lay in heaps on the floor or contained in cardboard boxes. In short there are books in every single room of the house more or less. Anyone making an educated guess would not be far wrong from stating there are over 10,000 books here.

Knocking on the door and ringing the bell will go unanswered. Jefferson will sit in his study reading, ignoring the characters' presence. If they are persistent and refuse to go away, Jefferson, vexed at the noise will stuff some cotton wool in to his ears and resume his reading. Almost all the windows can be looked through, except for one small window to one side of the house. This is the window to Jefferson's study. All doors are locked. There appears to be only one way to get in, and that's by breaking in. Because Jefferson has plugs in his ears he will be totally oblivious if the character do decide to come in uninvited, although he will be very annoyed at their intrusion, and at the same time demanding to know what the bloody hell they are doing in his house...before demanding they leave or he'll phone the police.

Wherever the players meet Jefferson they will no doubt argue about various things. Jefferson will not relinquish his new books for any price. As the discussion heats up - but before any violence occurs - the window to the study suddenly shatters inwards, billowing the curtains in the process. A player is knocked across the room onto his arse from something unseen taking 1d4-1 damage in the process. Then, Jefferson is suddenly hoisted into the air where he is crushed then torn limb from limb as his body is messily devoured. After moments of agonising screams of terror his lifeless, bloody and half-eaten carcass is discarded onto the floor. (Seeing this costs 1d6 sanity loss on a failed roll, 1 point if the roll is made.) Then, in front of the investigators a shape slowly begins to take form. A blood-filled monstrosity, red and dripping - a bloated scarlet blob covered in writhing tentacles. On its apparent front is a slavering gaping mouth surrounded by dozens of ichor-dripping iron-like talons. This loathsome thing the characters see before them is a Star Vampire. It has been sent by Darcus...

### Statistics for a Star Vampire

| STR | CON | SIZ | DEX | INT | POW | MOV | HP |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 26  | 12  | 26  | 9   | 10  | 15  | 6/9 | 19 |

ARMOUR 4 point alien hide. As well as this all firearms do half damage, but knives and clubs do normal damage (plus the characters strength bonus).

SPELLS If the Star Vampire can roll its INTx3 or less on 1d100, it will have access to 1d3 spells of the keepers choosing.

SAN Seeing a Star Vampire in all its glory and failing a sanity roll costs 1d10 sanity points, otherwise the character only loses 1 point for a successful roll.

| WEAPON    | ATTK % | DAMAGE                |
|-----------|--------|-----------------------|
| Tentacles | 40%    | 1d6+2d6               |
| Bite      | 80%    | 1d6 STR (blood) drain |

During combat 1d4 tentacles can grasp a target at any one time, and once grabbed the victim is crushed in a bone-popping squeeze before being dragged towards its mouth for a satisfying crunchy bite and drained of blood. Once bitten the hapless victim automatically loses the STR drain per round as long as he/she is still within its grasp, but not all is lost... If the victim is still alive he/she can try to break free from the Vampire's clutch by successfully rolling a STR resistance roll.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** After feeding, the vampire remains visible for 1d6 rounds before becoming invisible

again as it metabolises the blood drained. If characters fight it in its invisible state their chance to hit is reduced by 50%.

Because the house is situated in a fairly busy part of town the players run the risk that the above ruckus is noticed and investigated by police who are called by a concerned neighbour or passer by. To avoid detection and a possible period of time down town trying to explain what happened to a not-so-friendly police man, the player with the lowest LUCK should roll. Success results in nothing being seen or heard (although later the crime scene will be discovered later); failure of the roll results in the police arriving within 1d6+4 minutes.

Presuming the characters survive the fight they are free to search the remainder of the house. As already described the house is wholly unremarkable. There is nothing here to interest the characters other than Jefferson's personal library of books. On Jefferson's study desk the players can easily find the Necronomicon and Cthaat Aquadingen. A SPOT HIDDEN roll (for each object) will allow perceptive characters to find: the original manuscript of Jules Verne's 20,000 leagues under the sea (which is very valuable indeed) locked in a glass case in the study and a total 2d100 dollars in a coffee can in the kitchen.

If anyone specifically goes into the cellar

A door in the grand hallway leads to the cellar. Hanging just inside the door is a pull-chain that switches on a solitary light bulb down below. Creaky wooden stairs leads the way down and one of the steps is loose and rotten. Any investigator larger than SIZ 14 runs the risk (LUCK roll) of stepping on it and falling partially through sustaining 1d4 damage as the rough splintered side shaves skin and hair away from the shin while a long needle-like shard of wood pierces the side of the leg which is pushed through to emerge red and glistening from just below the knee. For the next three weeks the character suffers from a bad limp which reduces his/her movement by 1.

The cellar below contains nothing to concern the players. Boxes contain ornaments, tools & decorating supplies, carpet off-cuts... this and that. However, one feature does provide interest. At the far end, once the investigators wind their way round the box constructed maze they find a hole - which is large enough to crawl through has been knocked into the wall, a sledgehammer and pile of broken bricks testify to someone being busy down here recently. The room beyond is dark and requires a candle or torch to illuminate. The stone walls appear to be carved but whatever they depicted has been long since obliterated. But from surviving remnants found here and there it appears that the stone relief was modelled upon Aztec masonry work - an ANTHROPOLOGY, or ARCHAEOLOGY roll to positively identify it as such. A niche in the far wall contains the small emaciated corpse of a cat wrapped in swaddling. Whatever the meaning of this is lost upon the players.

## **The Conclusion**

The end of this scenario comes about in two ways 1) Darcus is captured and handed over to the authorities or (or more likely) killed - dead, or 2) Darcus escapes with all four books in his possession.

If the keeper chooses to have Darcus escape with the books he will most likely go into hiding until he has read all the books and absorbed as much information as he is able. By then he will be all powerful. When he decides to resurface he'll use the spell Exchange Mind (from the Necronomicon) to full effect. By assuming the body of somebody else he can then walk free - never to be caught, while leaving his old body and the swapped mind to be captured and sent back to prison. If things begin to get too hot for him later he can always swap minds again... and again and so on. This way he is free to spread terror and fear wherever he goes. Even if Darcus is slain these events have radically changed the lives of the characters. Where will they go from here; What will they do? Reading the books will likely send them off the deep end. These loose ends provides the keeper with boundless opportunities upon which further scenarios can be written...

## **Sanity Gain**

For slaying the Star Vampire: +1d10

For each book regained for safe keeping: +1

For killing uncle Darcus: - +1d3

If Darcus remains alive and gets away with the books: -1d6

## **THE BOOKS**

### **Necronomicon**

The book's cover is black leather and heavily moulded. The tome comprises several hundreds of unnumbered thick papyrus-like pages which can be fastened together with a tarnished bronze clasp and lock. Looking at the embossed cover (IDEA roll) will allow an observant character to see that the book cover actually depicts a demonic face of some kind. A failed sanity roll results in 1 point being lost, other wise none is lost. Although written in 16th century English, reading this accursed book still takes 100/INT x 4 days to read and understand. Absorbing its contents adds +15 Cthulhu Mythos which results in 1d10/2d10 sanity loss. The volume also has a number of spells which can be learnt providing the character succeeds an INTx4 per spell being learnt. Each spell takes one week to learn. Just what and how many spells are contained within the book is for the keeper to decide upon. Amongst those than may be learnt are: Call Yog-Sothoth, part of the Hoy-Dhin chant (the rest of the procedure can be found in Cthaat Aquadingen), Create Elder Sign, the Vach-Viraj incantation, Call Nyogtha, Mind Exchange, Create Gate (this particular gate is only usable beneath the pyramids of Giza, which will send the person directly to Nyarlathotep), the Voorish Sign, Call Azathoth, Contact Deep Ones, Contact Cthulhu, Contact Nyarlathotep and Find Gate.

### **Monstres & Their Kynde**

This green book which has its name in gold leaf lettering has sustained quite a bit of damage. Mottled discolouration attest to water damage and significant portions have also been rat-gnawed. With that, the glue and binding has deteriorated so much that the book's loose pages are tied together with string. Reading this is no easy task since the pages are out of order and several dozen are missing... Going ahead and trying to make sense out the jumble takes 100/INT x 4 days to read and an INTx1 roll to successfully rearrange the pages in an order that makes sense to the reader. From what can be learnt is that the book has been extracted from several mythos texts. Printed in England sometime in the 16th century the anonymous author strove to complete a tome dedicated to the Dragon-Kings - a line of cannibalistic warlords who ruled Britain in prehistoric times. Because of the lack of content the book only imparts +2 Cthulhu Mythos which results in 1d3/1 sanity loss. There are no spells to be learnt.

### **Cthaat Aquadingen**

This book has a plain brown cover with no title. It is written in English sometime around the 14th century the majority of this tome focuses on rituals of Cthulhu and other oceanic dwelling member of the mythos such as Deep Ones, Shoggoths, Star Spawn of Cthulhu...etc, who dwell on the sunken city of R'lyeh. It also holds information regarding Nyarlathotep, a being called Yibb-Tstll, certain Tsathogguan rituals, the Sixth Sathlatta, a spell to dismiss bugg-shash and how to create the barrier of Naach-Tith.

Reading this wicked book still takes 100/INT x 4 days to read and understand. Absorbing its contents adds +13 Cthulhu Mythos which results in 1d8/2d8 sanity loss. The volume also has a number of spells which can be learnt providing the character succeeds an INTx3 per spell being learnt. Each spell takes one week to learn. Just what and how many spells are contained within the book is for the keeper to decide upon. Amongst those than may be learnt are: Contact Deep One, Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu, Contact Cthulhu, Command Shoggoth, Dismiss Bugg-Shash and Create Barrier of Naach-Tith

## **New Spell**

### **Command Shoggoth**

This spell grants the caster the ability to command a Shoggoth to do anything the caster asks for as long as

the caster has magic points remaining. The spell is only castable when a Shoggoth is in a visible line of sight. The spell is instantaneous and can affect more than one target. The caster must concentrate on the spell during this time. It costs 5mp to intone plus a further 2 mp per minute. Also the caster must succeed a POW resistance roll for the spell to work. For each additional target included in the spell the requires an additional 1d6 mp expenditure per minute.

### **The Sixth Sathlatta**

This incantation can be used in several ways: If inscribed upon a wafer of flour in its original Ptetholite characters and used in conjunction with the Hoy-Dhin chant found in the Necronomicon, it may be used to call the Black upon one's enemies. Saying it once before sleep will allow the character to contact Yibb-Tstll in dreams. If thirteen say the incantation on any "first day" of a calendar year, Yibb-Tstll himself will be summoned.

### **Book 4**

Book four is the greatest mystery of all four books as it is hand-written in a language totally unknown to any culture on earth - save for the author that is. The frenzied scrawls and half letters - an example of which is seen below - cannot be translated, nor do they follow any recognisable pattern that would suggest a code.

### **Player handout 1**

Dear Nephew,

For all these years since you were a boy I have protected you from the truth but the time has now come that your only protection is the truth... So, without further procrastination I will get to the point.

About twenty or so years ago a tragedy occurred within your natural birth family - the McCrindles of Greenwood, Wisconsin. Your father, Owen was an extraordinary person, for he was the true guardian of the books, but his position did not go unchallenged for his brother Darcus - an evil, spiteful man - corrupted by diseased teachings planned to steal the books for himself. In his relentless pursuit for power he betrayed your father's trust and murdered your family. He would have destroyed you as he did them, had I not sent you away - far, far away; entrusting you to a foster family who would raise you as their own. But it wasn't you alone I sought to protect...it was the books. I took them and slid into obscurity here in Arkham becoming a hermit. A crazy old man I heard some say.

For 600 years our family have been the guardians of forbidden lore; four books of incredible arcane knowledge and power that can be the undoing of mankind. These books can be found in the attic.

#### **Book 1.**

The book's cover is black leather and heavily moulded. The tome comprises several hundreds of un-numbered thick papyrus-like pages which can be fastened together with a tarnished bronze clasp and lock.

#### **Book 2.**

This green book of roughly 150 gages which has its name (Monstres and their Kynde) in gold leaf lettering has sustained quite a bit of damage. Mottled discolouration attest to water damage and significant portions have also been rat-gnawed. With that, the glue and binding has deteriorated so much that the book's loose pages are tied together with string.

#### **Book 3.**

This book has a plain brown cover with no title, although the fly page names the book as Cthaat Aqaudingen. The book comprises 200 pages and is dated but does not name the author or the printer.

#### **Book 4.**

Book four is the greatest mystery of all the four books as it is hand-written in a language totally unknown to any culture on earth - save for the author that is. The frenzied scrawls and half letters cannot be

translated, nor do they follow any recognisable pattern that would suggest a code.

Also, I met this guy called Jefferson Marsters in a pub and we got talking - that was a mistake... he's been harassing me for some weeks now, intent on just seeing those books since his attempts at buying them have failed. I will not sell them to him no matter how much he offers. Although he doesn't scare me I do fear he may try something rash in order to obtain them. That's why I am writing this letter, just in case he does go too far.

Now that you are the guardian you must never reveal that you have these books like I unfortunately did. Our enemy is a formidable one. Never ceasing. Never relenting... Be on your constant guard. For the safety of mankind I beg you from beyond the grave to keep these books safe and never ever sell them.

*Silas*

### **Handout 2a**

**MASSACRE AT HOMESTEAD WISCONSIN** — The town of Greenwood, today, was rocked by the news of an horrific massacre the the McCrindle homestead. Police were called to the disturbance but arrived too late only to discover, amongst the carnage the mutilated bodies of five family members spanning three generations. Later that day, while following a tip-off Detective Lieutenant Luke Gerber apprehended one Darcus McCrindle for the brutal murders. Det. Lt. Gerber was not available for comment.

### **Handout 2b**

**CULPRIT CONFIRMED WISCONSIN** — Following the harrowing account of yesterday's massacre at the McCrindle homestead, Detective Lieutenant Luke Gerber confirmed the identity of Darcus McCrindle as the sole perpetrator of the crime, adding: "In all my years, I have never witnessed such cruel sadistic barbarity. The estranged Mr McCrindle is indeed a twisted, resentful man. He is being sent to the Wisconsin State Hospital for psychoanalysis to determine whether he is insane or not. If he is found compos mentis he is sure to be executed and may God have mercy on his soul".