

THE CALL of CTHULHU Two-Headed SERPENT

AN EPIC ACTION-PACKED AND GLOBE-SPANNING CAMPAIGN FOR **PULP CTHULHU**



**PAUL FRICKER, SCOTT DORWARD
AND MATTHEW SANDERSON**



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THE TWO-HEADED SERPENT

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This supplement requires *Pulp Cthulhu* and is best used with the *Call of Cthulhu* (7th Edition) Roleplaying Game, both available separately from www.chaosium.com and your friendly local game store.

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE TWO-HEADED SERPENT

The *Two-Headed Serpent* is an action-packed, globe-spanning pulp campaign set in the 1930s for *Pulp Cthulhu*. The heroes face the sinister conspiracies of an ancient race of monsters hell-bent on taking back a world that was once theirs.

Initially working for Caduceus, a medical aid organization that is far more than it seems, the heroes will loot a lost temple in the forests of Bolivia, face a deadly epidemic in the jungles of North Borneo, uncover the workings of a strange cult in dust-bowl-era Oklahoma, go head-to-head with the Mafia in New York City, infiltrate enemy territory inside an awakening volcano in Iceland, face dinosaurs and the casualties of hideous medical experiments in the Congo, join the race to control an ancient and powerful artifact on the streets of Calcutta, brave the deadly perils of Snake Island, and ultimately travel to the lost continent of Mu for a desperate battle to save humanity from enslavement or annihilation!

The world needs heroes, now more than ever.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

The introduction, which you are currently reading, sets up the main antagonists of the campaign, providing an overview of their plans, resources, and major players, as well as the background that led to their current situations.

Chapter 1 starts *in medias res*, dropping the heroes into the midst of danger in war-torn Bolivia—ill-prepared, leaderless, and surrounded by hostile forces. **Chapter 2** takes the heroes to the Caduceus headquarters in New

York City, where they begin to learn something of the truth. You will find details of the Caduceus organization and headquarters here, guidance about handling downtime between missions, and plot threads involving the Mafia that can build into major complications as the campaign progresses.

The following chapters present the missions, locations, and threats that make up the rest of the campaign in the order in which the heroes are most likely to encounter them. Each chapter opens with an overview of the contents and the main characters involved while statistic blocks for non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters unique to a location can be found at the end of the chapter.

There is some flexibility in the play order of the middle chapters. Your players may bypass one or two of the missions, or come to them out of sequence—thus, we have provided contingencies for this in the text. While there are a number of options for how the campaign will end, the assumption is that the climax will take place on Mu, in the lost Citadel of the serpent people, per the events of **Chapter 9**.

Three appendices provide resources shared by the entire campaign. **Appendix A** contains statistics and descriptions for key NPCs and monsters that appear in multiple chapters; those that only appear once are detailed in that particular chapter. **Appendix B** lists all the tomes, artifacts, and spells that appear throughout the campaign. **Appendix C** details the macabre hybridization process that serpent people use to blend human and serpent person DNA. A downloadable **Keeper Resource Pack** gathers all the handouts in a form suitable to present to your players (available from www.chaosium.com).

CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

PART ONE: ANCIENT HISTORY AND THE FALL OF MU

The Second Serpent Person Empire held dominion over the world. Although weakened by the coming of the usurper race of humanity in Valusia, the serpent people still held strong in some quarters, especially on the continent of Mu. There, the joint pursuits of science and sorcery gave the serpent people the power to survive.

A small cadre of serpent person science-sorcerers, drawn together in worship of Ghatanothoa, saw the future of their race in coexistence with humans and went so far as to mix their genetic material with humans. They constructed a vast structure, the Citadel, spanning the crater of Yaddith-Gho, the dead volcano containing the form of Ghatanothoa, and drew upon his energy directly to power their laboratories and engines of transformation. Their ultimate goal was to use this technology to manipulate humanity into a hybrid race, bolstering the numbers of the serpent person empire. The rest of the serpent people saw such experiments as an abomination that would contaminate the pure serpent person bloodline. The resulting conflict led to the growth of extremist factions, purges, the end of religious ecumenicalism and, ultimately, civil war.

The three main factions, loyal to Yig, Tsathoggua, and Ghatanothoa respectively, fought hard to take control of the mighty scientific facilities located in the Citadel. The followers of Tsathoggua proved triumphant and, in a desperate attempt to wipe out the human stock that the proponents of hybridization would need, constructed a Doomsday Device. This device would detonate every volcano on Earth in quick succession, tearing landmasses apart and throwing enough dust into the atmosphere to block out the sun for generations, wiping out humanity and most other life forms. The serpent people would then retreat into underground cities, there to sleep until the world was habitable once more.

Before the worshippers of Tsathoggua could execute their plan, an army of elder things, fellow inhabitants of Mu, laid siege to the Citadel. The elder things marshaled devastating forces, including shoggoths and weapons that could manipulate gravity. They also allied with the lloigor, who were moved to action by the desecration of their god, Ghatanothoa. Despite all this power, the serpent people mounted a successful defense by moving the Citadel slightly

out of phase with reality, making it impossible for the massed enemy forces to harm it physically. Faced with imminent destruction, the elder things took desperate action.

Using all of the power at their disposal, the elder things ripped Mu from the world, sealing it in its own pocket dimension, where it remains to this day. Back on Earth, the land shook and the sea roiled, sending mighty tsunamis across the world. Legends grew, saying Mu had sunk beneath the waves, destroyed and lost forever.

PART TWO: RECENT HISTORY

The serpent people, now a spent force, faded into near obscurity. Even the most bellicose realized that they were no longer able to best humanity, and so they retreated into the shadows. The schisms in their society remained, and the followers of Yig and Tsathoggua are still sworn enemies. The worship of Ghatanothoa has been lost to the serpent people, except for one lone devotee, locked in endless slumber in a temple in the forests of Bolivia. Should she be awoken, she will embark on a quest to complete the work of the Muvian science-sorcerers, merging serpent people and humanity into a single race.

Some of the followers of Yig have tried to coexist with humanity but most still carry a growing resentment at being usurped as the rulers of the planet. They are not a unified force, but a significant number have banded together to enact a plan that will ultimately allow them to enslave humanity and create the long-awaited Third Serpent Person Empire, prophesied by the serpent philosophers to be the greatest empire of them all. To this end, they have created a human-facing organization called Caduceus, hiding their plans to retake the world in the guise of a medical aid charity.

Until recently, the followers of Tsathoggua have been too scattered and weak to pose a major threat to either humanity or the followers of Yig and their Caduceus conspiracy. This changed when a senior member of Caduceus underwent a religious conversion, changing her allegiance to Tsathoggua. She has begun to unite fellow Tsathoggua worshippers in a rival conspiracy to take the Earth for themselves. Their cabal is called the Inner Night, and they are now racing Caduceus to find a way to return to Mu and use its long-lost resources to fulfill their plans.

A Note About Place Names

Some of the names of locations presented in this campaign have changed since the 1930s. We have used the place names that heroes of this period would encounter to help the Keeper with consistency and verisimilitude.



WHAT MAKES A CAMPAIGN PULPY?

The requirements and tone of a *Pulp Cthulhu* campaign are different from those found in a traditional *Call of Cthulhu* game. There is more action and less investigation (this is not to say that there is no investigation, but it is not the key focus). The heroes will regularly confront the types of monsters one would normally only expect to see at the climax of a *Call of Cthulhu* scenario. They will face deadly traps, plane crashes, major disasters, and superior numbers, and generally live to tell the tale.

In order to keep up the pace, be generous when heroes go in search of clues. If a group of heroes is searching the Caduceus offices, for example, trying to find proof of their employer's malfeasance, the Keeper should use skills like Spot Hidden, Stealth, and Library Use to determine not whether the heroes find a particular clue, but whether they are caught in the act, leave evidence behind, or activate some kind of trap.

There are certain player handouts that are especially important to the flow of the game. Where these come up in the text, we provide a default location for them and then multiple options for getting them into the heroes' hands should they not think to look in the right place. The Keeper should also look for opportunities to have non-player characters (NPCs) pass important information to the heroes, whether through interrogation, gloating, or attempting to play the heroes off against a shared enemy—this is a different approach to most traditional *Call of Cthulhu* games, where investigators are expected to be thorough in their search for clues; in *Pulp Cthulhu*, the clues are usually only there to point the way to the next action scene.

Pulp games are also less concerned with realism and may involve more improbable coincidences, bizarre characters, and overconfident villains with half-baked plans compared to standard

Call of Cthulhu games. While *The Two-Headed Serpent* is not written to be a comedy, the Keeper and players are encouraged to embrace and have fun with the ridiculous elements that may come up during play. Such is the triple-headed spear of horror, comedy, and pulp action.

If this is your group's first *Pulp Cthulhu* game, we recommend that you, as Keeper, give the players a pep talk before you start to play. Remind them they are playing larger-than-life heroes. *Pulp Cthulhu* heroes can jump into the fray under circumstances that would be foolhardy or downright fatal for standard *Call of Cthulhu* investigators. They may not always succeed, and sometimes may only survive through the desperate use of Luck points (the Keeper should be familiar with all the new uses of Luck defined in the *Pulp Cthulhu* rules), but their path to success is forged as much through fists, guns, and bravado as through research and careful preparation.



THE CADUCEUS FOUNDATION

BACKGROUND

In 1912, Joshua Meadham of New York City sold the pharmaceutical empire he had built up over the previous thirty years. This was a surprising move, as he had acquired a reputation as a cutthroat businessman. No one who knew him could imagine him doing anything else with his life.

Joshua Meadham took the proceeds of the sale and used them to found a charitable organization devoted to providing emergency medical care across the globe, especially for those areas affected by epidemics, natural

disasters, and war. He called this organization Caduceus (pronounced cad-OO-see-us or cad-U-see-us), after the staff of Hermes. While many people incorrectly associate this symbol with medicine due to its similarity to the Rod of Asclepius, Joshua was amused by its more esoteric meanings.

While Caduceus carries out the charitable works it espouses, it has a more secret purpose. In his business dealings, Joshua Meadham had a few brushes with the Cthulhu Mythos, most notably in the form of serpent people trying to use the growing global trade in pharmaceuticals as a vehicle to interfere with humanity. Realizing mankind faced threats even more dangerous than those Caduceus purports to deal with, Joshua has used his considerable resources to seek out and combat Mythos menaces where he can, especially where serpent people are involved.

A NOTE ON CANON

The background of *The Two-Headed Serpent* differs from other published materials in a number of respects, particularly in the history of the serpent people and of Mu. For example, in this campaign, tectonic shifts mean Mu is now located in the Atlantic Ocean, not the Pacific. If this causes any difficulties for you or your group, the following options may help.

- Mythos tomes and other sources of material are notoriously unreliable, having been penned by madmen and mystics who spoke in metaphors. Where there are conflicts, it is simply because the other sources were incorrect.
- There has been an active disinformation campaign about the true history of Mu, making it difficult for those seeking to go there or those who would return it to our world.
- The information presented within this campaign is incorrect and the Keeper should make any adjustments he or she sees fit. This may involve considerable work, however.

Most of those who work for Caduceus have no knowledge of anything beyond its surface mission to bring medical aid and relief to those in need, as directed by the head office in Manhattan. Behind the scenes, a smaller inner circle work on the true mission of Caduceus, using the guise of medical aid workers to gain access to dangerous places and carry out missions of assassination, sabotage, and subterfuge against Mythos targets, using the chaos of the local crisis to cover their actions.

Deeper Secrets

The secret at the heart of Caduceus is not what it seems, and there are secrets within secrets. While Joshua Meadham will admit to trusted agents that he formed Caduceus after encountering an intelligent and hostile creature, more reptile than man, this is not the whole story. Ssulithan, the serpent man that Meadham met, actually killed him and stole his likeness through infusions of his DNA. Caduceus is the creation of Ssulithan, which in turn explains the sudden change in priorities exhibited by Meadham in 1912.

Caduceus' four circles of knowledge:

- **Circle one:** Caduceus is a charitable organization devoted to providing medical relief. This is the face presented to the world, as well as to all new recruits until they prove themselves trustworthy. Most members never pass beyond this stage.
- **Circle two:** the true purpose of Caduceus is to use its resources to combat the Mythos. Recruits pass to this stage after vetting, assuming the leaders of Caduceus believe them to be of use.
- **Circle three:** at the inner core of Caduceus is the Cult of Yig. Some human members are part of this inner circle—if they have shown themselves to be malleable or insane enough to serve Yig faithfully.
- **Circle four:** those who control Caduceus are serpent people in human guise. Their plan is ultimately to subjugate mankind and take their rightful place as the rulers of the Earth. This knowledge is reserved for the serpent people at the heart of Caduceus, and no human members have discovered this secret yet.

While most heroes start at the first circle and quickly progress to the second (where they are likely to remain), some may be initiated into the third tier if they win the trust of their superiors. Should a hero discover that serpent people run Caduceus, the leaders of Caduceus will attempt to recruit them into the Cult of Yig (see **The Initiation Ritual**, page 59, Chapter 2).

The Schism

Given the key role that Joshua's daughter, Rose Meadham, played in the organization as her father's emissary, Caduceus decided to replace her as well, and a serpent person named Sashannal was hybridized to take on her form.

As Caduceus grew and built a respectable reputation, the inner cabal became concerned that their actions may attract the attention of other serpent people. In particular, they worried that the various cults of Tsathoggua might attempt to interfere with or subvert Caduceus missions. The truth is that the Tsathoggua worshippers were too thinly spread and Balkanized; however, the history of rivalry caused Caduceus to overestimate the threat and take preemptive action.

In 1920, the inner cabal of Caduceus sent a group of agents, led by the ersatz Rose Meadham, to eradicate a rumored cult of Tsathoggua located in the Krubera cave complex in Georgia. The expedition found the caves went deeper than any of them had imagined. Over a mile beneath the surface, in the eternal darkness, they met Tsathoggua.

INTRODUCTION

The only survivor of the Caduceus mission was Rose Meadham (Sashannal). Awed to find herself in the presence of a living god, she abandoned her worship of Yig and her loyalty to Caduceus, dedicating herself to the glory of Tsathoggua.

For the next eight years, Rose Meadham/Sashannal remained undercover in Caduceus, using the resources of the organization to find and unify the disparate cults of Tsathoggua. By the time she had completed her work, the unified enemy that Caduceus had imagined now existed in reality. Sashannal named the new cult the Inner Night.

Caduceus's End Goal

Since Ssulithan took over Joshua Meadham's identity, he has been working towards subjugating the human race and establishing the Third Serpent Person Empire, under his leadership. The plan involves engineering a virus to infect humans (not serpent people), destroying will and intellect without killing its host, transforming humanity into an ideal slave race.

The experiments Caduceus has conducted at its research facility in the Congo have been largely successful. Using test subjects from across the world, Caduceus scientists have managed to create a virus that destroys the minds of 90% of those infected and kills 90% of the rest. Joshua Meadham believes the ascendant serpent people will be able to control the final 1% of the human population in the resulting chaos. The two main stumbling blocks have been producing enough of the virus and ensuring that it infects as many people as possible. This latter problem is especially complex, as the virus is only effective if introduced directly into the human bloodstream.

Joshua Meadham's plan is to use the facilities at the ancient Citadel in Mu. The records his researchers have found indicate that the Citadel contains extensive laboratories and manufacturing facilities based on lost serpent person science. Using these, Joshua plans to create billions of biomechanical insects, each a carrier for the virus, and spread them across the globe using transport sphere technology (see **Transport Sphere**, page 253, **Appendix B**) These engineered insects will be able to survive in any climate and swarm over every person they find until all humanity is infected.

Of course, before this happens, Joshua Meadham and his followers need to reach Mu. Their attempts at creating a Gate to Mu have failed catastrophically until recently (see **The Meadham Estate**, page 57, **Chapter 2**). Joshua has recently discovered that the secret to success is to open a Gate from the nearest landmass to the current location of Mu. This is Snake Island (see **Chapter 8**). The final barrier now is to gain control of—or repel—the Iloigor

KEY EVENTS IN THE FOUNDING OF CADUCEUS AND THE INNER NIGHT

1912: Ssulithan steals the identity of Joshua Meadham and founds Caduceus. Sashannal takes on the identity of his daughter, Rose Meadham.

1920: Sashannal (Rose Meadham) encounters Tsathoggua in the Krubera cave complex in Georgia, Russia, and becomes a secret worshipper.

1928: having built her resources sufficiently to operate independently, Sashannal (Rose Meadham) turns against Caduceus and openly leads the Inner Night.

1933: the present day. Both Caduceus and the Inner Night are close to completing their plans.

that guard the far end of the Gate on Mu. It is to this end that Joshua is attempting to get hold of the fabled Cobra Crown, which his agents will locate in Calcutta towards the end of the campaign (see **Chapter 7**).

Of course, all this would be much simpler if Joshua Meadham did not have to deal with opposition from the Inner Night, a rogue serpent person sorcerer named Tyranissh and, ultimately, the heroes.

THE INNER NIGHT

The irony of the current situation is that Caduceus and the Inner Night are working towards similar goals, but each is the greatest barrier to the other's success. The Inner Night is also looking to reassert their dominance over the world by subjugating humanity (albeit through annihilation), and they too are working to find a way to restore Mu in order to gain control of its resources. Due to the religious schisms and millennia of battles between the two factions, they would sooner battle each other than humanity.

Those who follow Tsathoggua tend to be less subtle than their rivals, and the Inner Night is no exception. They have retained less of the ancient scientific knowledge of the serpent people, but what they lack in wisdom, they make up for in brutality. While Caduceus operates by infiltration

A NOTE ON LANGUAGES

The serpent people at the heart of both Caduceus and the Inner Night are drawn from across the world. Until recently, they lived in isolated groups, cut off from greater serpent person society for millennia, and had developed in different ways. Their language is fragmented into a variety of dialects, most derived from now-dead languages such as Naacal, the language of ancient Mu, but so altered as to be mutually incomprehensible.

Caduceus hit upon a solution for this early in their operations: they use English as their main language. Not only is it widespread enough in the human world that a significant number of their agents spoke it already, but its use also helps with the illusion that Caduceus is a human organization. Secret communications are sometimes written or transmitted in Naacal, but this is rare.

The Inner Night has borrowed this technique from Caduceus, although some of their in-country cells occasionally slip into dialects that no one else understands, much to the annoyance of everyone else in the organization.

Older serpent person writings are usually in Naacal. While Caduceus does not go out of its way to teach this dead language to its human operatives, the heroes should get chances to learn it, either by speaking to NPCs such as Tyranissh (see following and **Appendix A**, page 240) or through studying Mythos tomes and documents.

and subterfuge, the Inner Night is more likely to try to crush its enemies; the only factor holding them back is their weakened numbers.

Like Caduceus, there are relatively few serpent people at the heart of the Inner Night. They have the ability to call upon formless spawn and other abominations of the darkness, making them a dangerous force to confront directly. The only advantage that Caduceus has on this front is its ranks of unsuspecting human catspaws.

The Inner Night is also working towards restoring Mu. They have managed to track some of their rival's plans using spies and divination. Thus, they are occasionally one step ahead. Caduceus, while lacking the sorcerous power to spy on their enemies remotely, have used double-agents, turncoats, and subtle mind-control techniques to keep up to date on the Inner Night's progress. Ultimately neither faction has many secrets from the other, and any attempt to

secure a resource by one faction will quickly be intercepted by the other, leading to a string of confrontations.

The end goal of the Inner Night is to reactivate the Doomsday Device in Mu, wiping away human civilization through a series of volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis, while the serpent people hide in the depths of the earth. Once the cataclysms have passed, the Inner Night will rise, taking control of a surface world now shrouded in volcanic dust. Any surviving humans will be enslaved.

Unlike Caduceus, the Inner Night has no headquarters. While Sashannal (Rose Meadham) has united her brothers and sisters in darkness, they still operate as a series of cells, with overall leadership coming solely from Sashannal. As she is still being actively hunted by Caduceus, Sashannal keeps on the move, her location at any time a closely guarded secret. As the heroes learn more about Caduceus and their goals, agents of the Inner Night, or possibly Sashannal herself, may try to recruit them.

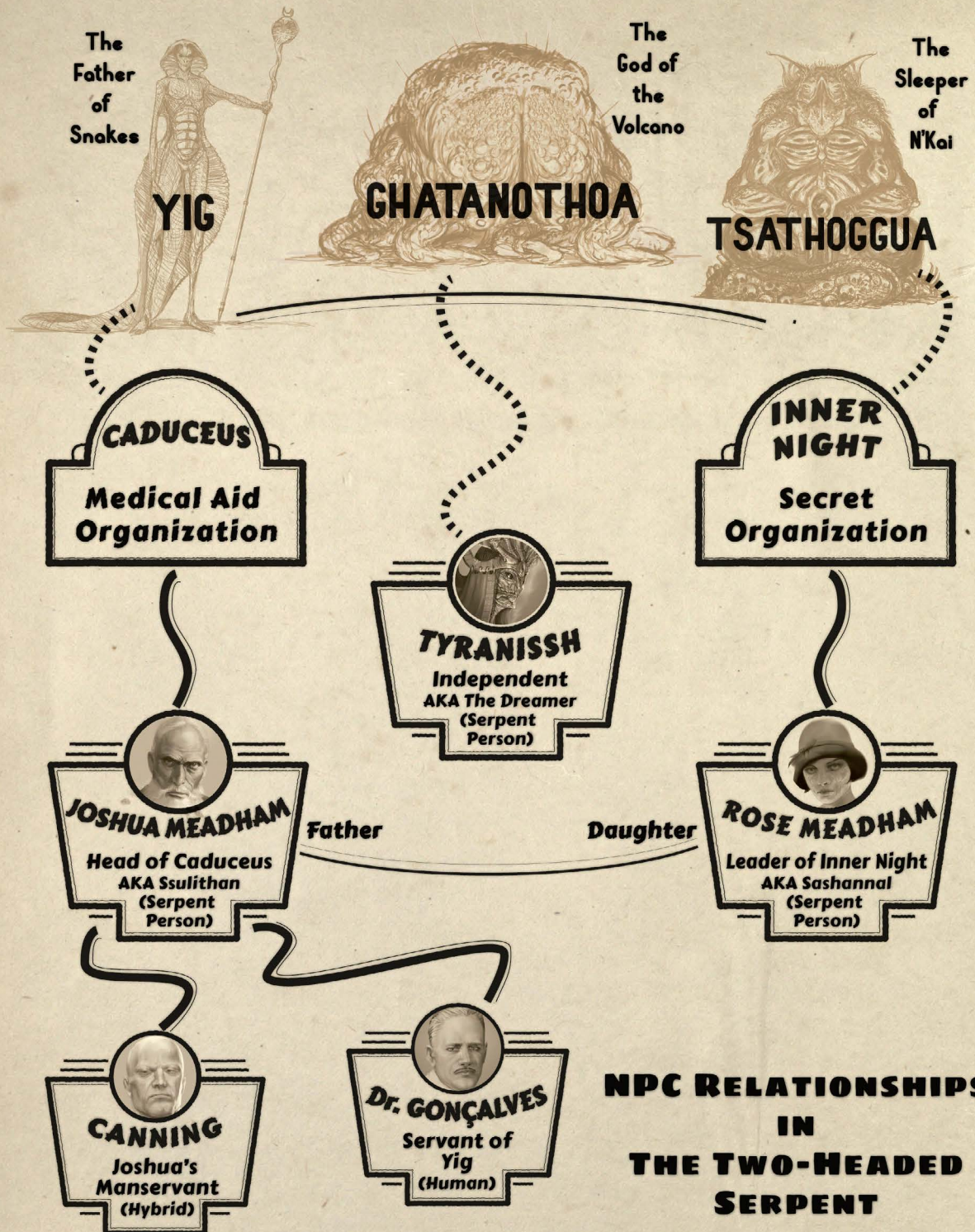
TYRANISSH

For their first mission, the heroes are sent to recover an ancient serpent person sorcerer from a forgotten temple in the forests of Bolivia (see **Chapter 1**). This is Tyranissh, one of the ancient serpent people of Mu, and she has been asleep for millennia. She is a relic of a time when the serpent people were powerful in knowledge, technology, and body. As such, she is physically larger and stronger than most other serpent people the heroes may encounter, as well as a powerful sorcerer. After spending thousands of years trapped in dreams, she is also quite mad.

Coming from a time before the schism between the followers of Yig and Tsathoggua tore her people apart, Tyranissh has little sympathy for what she sees as the petty squabbles of the degenerate creatures her people have become. While she is happy to spend some time with Caduceus in the early parts of the campaign (assuming the heroes recover her and return her to the Meadham Building), she eventually loses patience and turns against her descendants, as outlined at the start of **Chapter 4**.

Tyranissh has her own agenda: seeing the schisms that have torn her own people apart, as well as those between humans and the serpent people, she wishes to unify all under her leadership. To this end, she plans to return to Mu, or bring Mu back to the material world, and use its technology to start hybridizing all of humanity. During her time as a prisoner of Caduceus, Tyranissh learns enough about their hybridization process and the means by which they plan to spread their virus; thus, she works out how to combine the two.

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

If Tyranissh can gain control of the Citadel at Mu, she will spread the same biomechanical insects across the world, but instead of destroying human intellect, the agent they spread will begin to turn all humanity into serpent people. Her plan is then to use the ensuing chaos to unite the world under her leadership. In her megalomania, Tyranissh can see no possible flaws in this plan.

Tyranissh is a wildcard. She may develop some affection for the heroes if they have treated her well but still sees them as little more than pets. If one or more of the heroes is undergoing Hybridization (see following) she may take a more active interest. At the very least, she may teach the heroes some serpent person history and a bit of Naacal—if they spend time with her while she is held by Caduceus. She could even provide more concrete assistance to the heroes at times if she considers them useful tools for disrupting Caduceus and the Inner Night; the Keeper should use this option sparingly and as a last resort, to avoid Tyranissh overshadowing the heroes.

The Keeper should be prepared to let Tyranissh fade into the background if she is not required. The main adversaries in this campaign are Caduceus and the Inner Night, and Tyranissh largely serves as a backup in case the heroes manage to neutralize both of these factions before the campaign has reached a climactic point.

MIMICKING HUMANS

Serpent people have a number of methods of infiltrating human society. The three key methods are: the Consume Likeness spell, hybridization, and skinwalking.

Consume Likeness

Probably the best-known form of disguise is the Consume Likeness spell, which may be found in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*. The spell has a major weakness in that the serpent person still casts their original shadow.

Some more advanced sorcerers from the Inner Night can cast a deeper version of Consume Likeness that does not allow them to be betrayed by their shadows. They are still cold-blooded, however, and risk identification by not sweating in even the most extreme heat or being noticeably cool to the touch in other conditions. Spending time in an enclosed place with a disguised serpent person may also allow a hero to make a **Spot Hidden** roll to detect a subtle reptilian odor.

PARANOIA

The majority of the antagonists in *The Two-Headed Serpent* are serpent people, many of whom are able to take on human guise. While some of these disguises are easily penetrated, many are subtle, some more so than those used by serpent people in other scenarios and campaigns the players may have experienced.

By the time the heroes have encountered a few of these variants, they will probably worry about how many of the people around them are actually human. The Keeper should look for every opportunity to exacerbate this paranoia, from the heroes meeting innocent NPCs who happen to have lisps or flaking skin, to full-blown delusions while insane—causing a hero to see everyone he or she meets as having ophidian characteristics.

The heroes may come to feel they are surrounded by inhuman conspiracies, never knowing who to trust and who is just wearing a mask of humanity. Sometimes madness is the only sane response.

Hybridization

The science-sorcerers of Caduceus have come up with a more foolproof solution. Building on technology developed on Mu in millennia past, the serpent people can fuse their genetic material with that of humans. A complex series of operations, infusions, and rituals, lasting two weeks, allows a serpent person to absorb the likeness and memories of a human victim, largely becoming that person at a genetic level. So much of the original human is consumed in this process that even the few strong enough to survive are little more than emaciated, mindless husks.

The resulting hybrid appears completely human, including their shadow. They are still reptilian at their core, which means they are cold-blooded. A hybrid will be sluggish in the cold and slightly cooler to the touch than a normal human. Any surgical inspection of a hybrid will reveal anomalies in the internal organs, including venom glands and, in the case of females, a reproductive system geared to laying eggs. Males lack external genitals, retaining a reptilian cloaca.

The Hybridization process can work in reverse, transforming humans into serpent people. See **Appendix C** for more information, as well as details of how the process may be reversed.

HOW THE SCENARIOS ARE STRUCTURED

Chapters 1 through 9 present individual missions, objectives, or locations that make up the campaign. Each is organized in the following manner; although not every section noted below is present in each chapter, as some have no briefings, requirements for alternative entry points, and so on.

Overview: this provides the Keeper a summary of the chapter, its context, and key focuses.

Background: important events leading up to the scenario are explained here.

Player Introduction: the information that the Keeper needs in order to frame the chapter for the players. If the chapter involves a briefing from Caduceus, it will be found in this section.

Alternative Entry Points: as explained in *Turning Against Caduceus* (see nearby), it is highly likely that the heroes will shift their allegiances during the campaign. From Chapter 3 onward, this

section provides options for engaging heroes who are free agents or have allied with another faction.

The Setting: provides basic information about the locale or locales in which the chapter is set.

Dramatis Personae: a summary of the important Non-Player Characters (NPCs) unique to the chapter, along with details about how to bring each to life. The statistic blocks for these characters are located at the end of each chapter. NPCs and monsters appearing in multiple chapters can instead be found in **Appendix A** (page 240).

Opening Scene: following the briefing, a number of the scenarios open with a scene of action or intrigue, forcing the heroes directly into the action, which is detailed in this section.

Scenes, Events, and Locations: most of each chapter comprises the details the Keeper needs to create individual scenes

and to keep the action moving. The requirements of each chapter are slightly different, so some may be explained in terms of geography while others more as events or interactions with NPCs.

Conclusion: gives the Keeper ideas about how to wrap up the chapter in a satisfying and exciting fashion. These are not scripted scenes, as pulp heroes tend to save the day in unexpected ways, so the section attempts to cover the options as comprehensively as possible.

Rewards: as per standard *Call of Cthulhu*, defeating the forces of evil comes with a reward, in the form of recovered Sanity. The specific rewards for each scenario can be found here.

NPCs and Monsters: statistic blocks for any NPCs and monsters unique to this chapter will be provided here. Statistic blocks for NPCs and monsters appearing in multiple chapters are collected together in **Appendix A** (page 240).

Skinwalking

The Inner Night, lacking many of the scientific resources and expertise of Caduceus, rely on more traditional techniques. Some use a simpler version of taking a human likeness, which involves wearing a human skin over their own. This skin may be removed surgically or, more safely, using special venom that causes humans to shed their entire skins.

A skinwalker has a disturbingly distorted face, as well as gaps around his or her eyes where the skin fails to meet; though this is somewhat disguised by the illusion conjured through the spell.

The Skinwalking spell and skin-shedding venom are mentioned in **Chapter 1** and further detailed in **Appendix B**.

TURNING AGAINST CADUCEUS

Over the course of the campaign, the heroes will pick up enough clues to become certain that the end goal of Caduceus is not the salvation of mankind, and that it is run by a secret cabal of serpent people. It is likely that the heroes will want to begin to investigate Caduceus, ultimately turning against their former employers. By the time the heroes complete **Chapter 5: Iceland** they should have accumulated enough evidence to realize Caduceus is acting against the interests of humanity; although a more paranoid group may have come to this conclusion much earlier.

Investigating Caduceus

The heroes will encounter many clues hinting at the true nature of Caduceus. Some are embedded in the events of individual missions while others can be uncovered with a bit of investigation.

None of the heroes in our various playtests cut ties with Caduceus until the end of the Iceland chapter, but this may not be the case for your group. Different groups will pick up on different clues. Some may be slower to suspect Caduceus, some will decide to stay within the organization as spies, and others may decide to cut and run as soon as they realize their employers are not to be trusted. The Keeper must remain flexible and not assume any particular course of action.

ALTERNATIVE CHAPTER ENTRY POINTS

After **Chapter 1: Bolivia**, each of the later chapters contain additional entry points, depending on whether the heroes are still agents of Caduceus, acting on behalf of the Inner Night (probably as double-agents or infiltrators), or independent agents looking to take down both heads of the serpent. The important thing is to present the information the players need to decide on their next course of action. The default assumption for all chapters up to and including Iceland is that the heroes will be working for Caduceus; beyond that point, they are free agents; although the campaign structure has been designed to survive changes of loyalty at any stage.

Depending on the alliances the heroes form, which clues they uncover, and what they consider to be important, the players may decide to bypass some chapters or approach them in a different order than presented. This is most likely to affect the New York, Iceland, and Congo chapters. Don't worry too much if the players decide to avoid an entire avenue of exploration, as long as you have presented them with the option of getting involved. The main focus should be on keeping the narrative moving.

CREATING HEROES FOR THE CAMPAIGN

The heroes begin the campaign having been recently recruited to Caduceus. While Caduceus is ostensibly a medical organization, the fact that its employees work in dangerous regions means it openly recruits people with a wide range of skills; in fact, diverse skills and expertise tend to prove useful for its more secret operations.

A NOTE ON DATES

While there is a set start date for this campaign, and other dates are mentioned in various chapters, the Keeper should not view these as a rigid timeline. Adjust dates when required to ensure the heroes do not miss out on any key or entertaining events. If the heroes decide to take a boat journey back from one of their missions, for example, adding a few weeks to their travel time, this should not mean that they miss the next mission or that important events carry on in their absence. The heroes are the stars of this campaign, and the Keeper should ensure that the spotlight follows them.

An average Caduceus operation requires: doctors, nurses, local experts, negotiators, researchers, armed guards, scientists, mechanics, and people who can procure supplies through extra-legal channels. There are few heroes who could not find some way of fitting into such an organization.

Even someone who seems to be a poor fit for medical aid work may have other reasons for joining. Maybe the hero is a movie star, researching a new role, or a disgraced former socialite, trying to prove to her family that she has integrity.

EQUIPPING AND SUPPORTING THE HEROES

Heroes working for Caduceus can expect to be provided with the equipment, weapons, and ammunition required for missions. Requests for more unusual weapons, such as machine guns, grenades, or military explosives will require a combined **Luck** and **Persuade** roll. Caduceus will not issue serpent person technology or artifacts to human operatives unless it is absolutely required for a specific mission. Cash reserves are available for traveling expenses and bribes, within reason.

Caduceus has access to a wide range of vehicles, including cars, boats, and private aircraft. Heroes on missions for Caduceus may choose to either be flown to their destination or to pilot the aircraft themselves, if they have at least one experienced pilot within their ranks.

Injured heroes employed by Caduceus will be provided with professional medical care at any Caduceus camp or facility.

INTRODUCING REPLACEMENT HEROES

Bringing in replacements for dead heroes and introducing characters for new players is simple in the early stages of the campaign. Caduceus is always on the lookout for new talent and will add suitable recruits to existing field teams. Alternatively, the heroes may take it upon themselves to recruit someone suitable in the field, in which case Caduceus staff (Dr. Gonçalves) will want to interview this new addition once the team returns to New York.

A similar dynamic applies to heroes allied with either the Inner Night or Tyranissh. Heroes who have set out on their own path are responsible for their own recruitment.

It is possible to play with these expectations. Perhaps the Inner Night have convinced some otherwise well-intentioned individuals that a Caduceus field team are monsters and need to be infiltrated or confronted. By the time the heroes have conducted a few missions for Caduceus, they may have been implicated in the destruction of a village in Bolivia, a massive conflagration in North Borneo, or the destruction of an Icelandic peninsula, so it will be easy for the Inner Night to portray Caduceus as villains without stretching the truth too much. These individuals sent by the Inner Night can be used as replacement heroes if you wish to introduce some internal conflict within the player group. The advantage of this approach is that it gives heroes working for Caduceus an additional opportunity to see what their employers are really up to.

USING *CALL OF CTHULHU* INSTEAD OF *PULP CTHULHU*

While *The Two-Headed Serpent* is explicitly designed for use with *Pulp Cthulhu*, it should be possible to run the campaign with the standard *Call of Cthulhu* rules—but modification will be needed. In general, you should expect a much higher attrition rate. This means you may have to work harder at demonstrating that Caduceus is not to be trusted, as there is no guarantee that the same investigators will live to see all the hints and clues. Investigators will have to spend a lot more time recruiting replacements, especially once they break with Caduceus.

You will want to tone down some of the encounters. For example, the giant voormis that appears early in the Iceland chapter could be replaced by one of its more standard cousins. The gug in Borneo could be replaced by a handful of ghouls. You may also want to alter the statistics (decrease) of some of the NPCs and entities unique to this campaign, giving creatures such as Canning or the giant snakes in Bolivia and Snake Island half the listed hit points and armor. In our playtesting, Canning almost managed to single-handedly wipe out a party of *Pulp Cthulhu* heroes in close-quarters combat, so he would probably

make short work of standard investigators. Alternatively, replacing extravagant monsters (like the giant snakes), with human or serpent person opposition reimagines these encounters and dramatically tones things down. However, be aware that this is a pulp campaign and works best when played in this fashion.

PLAYTEST EXPERIENCES

Our initial playtests involved three separate groups of players, each of which played through the entire campaign with a different Keeper. Although it was not planned this way, each group settled on a range of characters and style of play that showcased a different aspect of the pulp experience.

At one end of the spectrum, we had a group that approached the game with the degree of caution and investigation you would expect from standard *Call of Cthulhu*. While their characters were larger than life, their actions were more grounded. This meant the weirdness and action of the campaign largely unfolded for them, with their characters becoming full-on pulp heroes by increments.

In the middle, we had a group that adopted a style we associated more with *Indiana Jones*. The characters were heroes, throwing themselves into dangerous situations from the get-go, but still representative of the higher levels of normal human ability. This group was prone to fighting desperate battles in dangerous situations using their wits and whatever weapons they had scavenged, usually only surviving through judicious use of Pulp Talents and spending lots of Luck.

The final group embraced the weirder aspects of the *Pulp Cthulhu* rules from the outset, creating a group of characters steeped in mad science, occultism, and psychic abilities. By the mid-point of the campaign, they had adapted a serpent person transport sphere to provide a flying platform for the death ray they had built, allowing them to rain fiery destruction down on their enemies.

We did not tailor any of the encounters or other content to the style of any one group and found that the campaign and mechanics supported each style of play effortlessly. No group had any characters die until the final chapter, although some ended up using Luck to survive certain death more than others. We hope that this means your players will find the campaign challenging and fun regardless of whether they prefer to play ordinary people caught up in weird danger or colorful heroes with uncanny abilities straight from the pages of the pulps.

Playtest Notes

You will find a number of playtest notes dotted throughout this book. These are little anecdotes and observations taken from our various playtests, shared to give some idea of the different ways in which events may unfold, or simply to offer reassurance that our games are every bit as wild as yours!



MVVM

BOLIVIA

...having an encounter with a three-thousand-year-old walking, talking corpse does tend to convert one.

—Evelyn Carnahan, *The Mummy* (1999)

THE RETURN OF THE SORCERER

OVERVIEW

The campaign begins here in 1933, with the heroes starting deep within the forests of Bolivia on what is apparently a charitable mission. This scenario drops the heroes in the action from the start and is intended to be a fairly fast-paced affair.

The opening scene kicks off with the heroes coming under fire as their leader, Dr. Arturo Ursini, takes a bullet to the head. Events escalate from there, with the heroes encountering serpent people in human skins, dark pits containing formless spawn, and ultimately an ancient temple in which a sleeping sorcerer is protected by a giant snake.

Set aside all reserve and throw your players into the mayhem that lies ahead!

BACKGROUND

The time following the fall of Mu was a dark age for the serpent people. Millennia passed, and their empire became little more than a myth—a lost Eden. Then, several thousand years ago, an isolated group of serpent folk in what is now South America sought a way to reconnect with their lost kingdom. Tyranissh, a powerful serpent woman sorcerer and a former resident of Mu, chose to undertake a century-long mission to the Dreamlands in search of

Mu. Regaining a connection with Mu, she believed, would lay the way for the return of the serpent people to their rightful place as the dominant species on Earth.

The serpent people built a temple to house the sorcerer's sleeping body while her spirit traversed the Dreamlands. They engineered giant, mutated voormis (see page 130) as slaves to build the temple. Five magical wards were created to protect the temple. Once Tyranissh was in place, the wards were activated. For many decades the serpent people watched the site, awaiting the return of the sorcerer.

Exactly what it was that eradicated the serpent people in the area is now forgotten and, when the appointed time came, there was nobody left to awaken the sorcerer from her century-long sojourn. And so she slept on, and the temple and its wards were lost. In time, local human tribes incorporated aspects of the tale into their own mythology. They began to leave offerings at the wards in homage to the sleeping spirit under the earth who, they believed, watched over them. It is said among these people that the ancient sleeper guards the way between this world and the next. If the sorcerer's spirit were to come forth, it would herald the end of days, with the "other world" entering ours with disastrous effects.

Recent Events

The region in which the temple is situated has become a battleground of the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay. An artillery shell recently scored a direct hit on one of the temple wards, cracking it open and releasing a formless spawn to wreak havoc among troops of both sides. Garbled reports of this curious terror have even reached the press.

The Caduceus Foundation has long known of the lost sorcerer and her quest, but until recently they had not been able to pinpoint the location of the temple. Reports of the incident in the Chaco War have drawn their attention and they have dispatched a team to investigate. This is where the heroes enter the story.

The Inner Night's Involvement

The Inner Night has spies within the Caduceus Foundation. One such spy informed the Inner Night of Caduceus's plan to retrieve the sleeping sorcerer. The Inner Night has dispatched a team of their own: three agents from their Icelandic base. This small team must travel by transport spheres, of which there is a limited supply. The Inner Night hopes to beat Caduceus to the prize and take the sorcerer for their own purposes.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

The players should be told the following before they create their heroes for this campaign.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The year is 1933. In South America, the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay is in full swing. The two countries are fighting over contested territory, which is believed to be rich in oil. You've been employed by a humanitarian charity, the Caduceus Foundation, to deliver medical aid to civilians caught up in the war. Caduceus has flown you to Asuncion in Paraguay, from where you traveled across country by various means. You are escorting doctors, nurses, and medical supplies to an aid camp deep in the jungle of the Gran Chaco.

As well as needing medically trained staff, this mission also requires adventurous types trained in wilderness and jungle survival, anthropologists, and linguists. This is a Pulp Cthulhu adventure, so expect high action and create your heroes appropriately. The truth is that the Caduceus Foundation is a front for an organization whose real agenda is to battle elements of the Cthulhu Mythos, but your characters don't know that yet. They are just heroes who have decided to extend help those in need. But don't worry, your team leader has the full story and will fill you in on the real mission when the game begins.

Now invite your players to create their heroes. Encourage them to do so as a group, sharing ideas and ensuring they choose a good range of archetypes, occupations, and pulp talents. Wherever possible, try to link the heroes' backstories into elements of the campaign. For example,



TIMELINE OF EVENTS: 1933

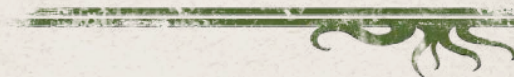
4th March: a stray artillery shell smashes a magical stone ward during a confrontation between Paraguayan and Bolivian troops. The formless spawn that emerges wreaks havoc on the battlefield.

7th March: reports of the incident reach Caduceus HQ. A spy in the Caduceus Foundation alerts the Inner Night.

12th March: the Inner Night dispatches a small team to Bolivia. They gain control of a troop of Bolivian soldiers.

13th March: the Inner Night and their soldiers adopt an aid camp as their base. They proceed to search the area.

15th March: the game begins.



if one of the players says their hero has criminal contacts, this would provide a great link to the Mafia group featured in **Chapter 2: New York City**. There is no need to draw the players' attention to the link now—at this stage, you are simply sowing seeds that will come to fruition in later chapters.

THE SETTING

Bolivia is a landlocked country in South America. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth century, the land we now know as Bolivia was part of the Inca Empire. Bolivia became an independent country in 1825. The population is multiethnic, with Spanish being the predominant language. The Bolivian climate is subtropical, with temperatures ranging from 15 to 29°C (60 to 85°F). The weather is typically rainy and humid.

The scenario takes place in the Gran Chaco's northern region; a sparsely populated area, its terrain is a mix of arid areas and forest. The forests are vast, made up of low-growing hardwood trees. Thorny bushes are very common and often spread over large areas. Elsewhere, grasses grow as tall as a man on horseback. There are few roads or rail lines in these remote locations.

Animal life is varied and exotic, including: armadillos, jaguars, tapirs, capybaras, piranha, many lizards and snakes,

all manner of biting and stinging insects, and poisonous toads. The only human habitation featured in this chapter is the village that is being used as an aid camp.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Statistics for these NPCs are presented at the end of this chapter.

INNER NIGHT TEAM

The Inner Night team has been in the area for three days as the game begins. Their first step was to capture and dominate a troop of twenty Bolivian soldiers. The soldiers have been entranced using the **Words Of Power** spell (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 265). Each of the serpent people took the skins and uniforms of the higher-ranking soldiers, using their Skinwalking spell (see **Appendix B**, page 258) to adopt a human-like guise. In addition to the soldiers, the Inner Night team has three serpent hounds (see page 42), who join the serpent men when they are out searching for the wards, but who otherwise remain outside of the aid camp (unless called for by the serpent men).

The Inner Night team knows the location of the stone ward that was broken in the recent military conflict. They have not yet located any of the other wards or the temple. They are seeking a second ward, which they intend to destroy with dynamite (see **The Serpent People's Search Parties**, page 33).

The three serpent people are:

Karnassh: the leader, who has taken on the role of a captain in Bolivian Army (Cpt. Lafuente).

Vorsinnish: has taken on the role of a sergeant (Sgt. Angulo) and is leading operations.

Ythyssh: has taken on the role of a lieutenant (Lt. Rodriguez).

- **Description:** each serpent person has assumed the human form of military personnel. If they suffer combat injuries, their disguises will probably rip, revealing their true forms beneath the human skin suits.
- **Traits:** the relatively crude magic they have used to assume their disguises has left each of the serpent people feeling literally uncomfortable in their own skins. This manifests in odd facial movements as they attempt to adjust the over-tight and ill-fitting human skins.



TRANSPORT SPHERES

The Inner Night agents used three of these valuable vehicles (see **Transport Sphere**, page 253, **Appendix B** for more details) to fly to Bolivia from their Icelandic base. On arrival, two of the craft were sent home to Iceland on autopilot. The third was faulty and crashed on landing in the Bolivian jungle. Shards of the craft can be found at the crash site. The crashed sphere's broken control panel could be salvaged for research. During the crash, the sphere's cargo was strewn over the crash site. The pilot failed to locate his flame pistol (see **Appendix B**, page 251), which is now in the possession of an excited monkey (see **The Flaming Monkey**, page 33).



- **Roleplaying hook:** finding a second ward has proven more difficult than expected. They will try to find out what the heroes know by any means possible, hoping that such information can point them towards the other wards.

AID CAMP STAFF

Dr. Rafael Gomez, 35, medical doctor

This is Gomez's first job working for Caduceus. Raised as Catholic, he is deeply religious, but finding little solace in the established church, he chose to follow his calling here.

- **Description:** a thin, bespectacled man.
- **Traits:** takes life very seriously, rubbing his chin as he considers matters.
- **Roleplaying hook:** will ask for the heroes help in negotiating the removal of the soldiers who are exploiting the camp facilities.

Dr. Anahi Salvatorelli, 28, medical doctor

Salvatorelli is evangelical about the good work that Caduceus is doing around the world, but just like the other members of the aid team, she knows nothing of Caduceus's real agenda beyond the fact that it provides humanitarian aid.

- **Description:** as much as she tries to be one of the people, her perfume, jewelry (albeit discreet), and demeanor conveys her privileged background.



- **Traits:** her hands are always very animated as she discusses the wonders of the Caduceus Foundation.
- **Roleplaying hook:** in her way, she will try to help the heroes, but is likely to prove to be more of a nuisance.

Sergio Lorenzi, 52, nurse

Lorenzi served in the Great War. He has experience of soldiers and recognizes that something is wrong with the ones at the aid camp. He took this job as an escape from his troubled life in New York, where he had become entangled with criminals. If he survives this chapter he could reappear as a Mafia hireling in New York City (see Chapter 2). Caduceus operates worldwide, so he hopes to forge contacts that will allow him to start afresh.

- **Description:** small, with piercing chestnut eyes.
- **Traits:** he hides his misgivings behind a fixed smile.
- **Roleplaying hook:** will latch onto one of the heroes (your choice) and attempt to befriend him or her, ultimately seeking a way out of his present situation.

Elena Barrai, 21, nurse

Barrai spied on the soldiers at the camp and has seen what lies behind the captain's mask. She is now paranoid and has taken to self-medicating with whatever drugs she can pilfer. Subject to hallucinations, she is having difficulty in distinguishing what is real and what is not.

- **Description:** she has a strong, tanned physique.
- **Traits:** studies every face carefully—are they a monster? Might touch other people to make sure they are real.
- **Roleplaying hook:** it should become apparent that Barrai knows something; although she will deny it if asked. If the heroes use a social skill (such as **Charm** or **Persuade**) to get her to open up about what she has seen, she will tell them but the act of doing so will drive her into madness.

Bolivian Soldiers

There are twenty soldiers based at the aid camp, although the majority departs each day (with the serpent people, to search for the wards). The two soldiers who remain in the camp keep to themselves while keeping a careful watch on the comings and goings in the camp.

Karnassh uses the Words Of Power spell on the soldiers to keep them in line. Once the heroes arrive, the serpent man uses the spell to persuade the soldiers that the heroes are enemy agents who must be captured or slaughtered. The spell was most recently cast on the morning of March 15th and will last for three days, after which Karnassh must recast it. Any soldiers who are captured will be found to be in a trancelike state. Killing Karnassh breaks the spell altogether. If another serpent person survives Karnassh, they may attempt to reestablish their hold on the remaining soldiers, casting Words Of Power again.

At the Keeper's discretion, allow the heroes to make a skill roll if they attempt to use an alternative method of breaking the serpent peoples' hold over individual soldiers (perhaps using **Psychoanalysis**, a psychic ability, or **Hypnosis**). If the spell is broken, the soldier will be confused and his memories hazy: he can tell how his commanders ordered the capture of the aid camp, and that they go out each day searching for a large, round stone on the forest floor.

- **Description:** battle-weary and bedraggled. Under the spell of the serpent people, they have not been taking care of themselves: they smell awful, many have minor untended wounds, and their eyes are glazed as if drugged.
- **Traits:** a zombie-like stare.
- **Roleplaying hook:** they follow the commands of their serpent folk overlords.

The Local People

The local Guarani people live a modest rural lifestyle, hunting, fishing, and cultivating the land. They are innocents, caught up in a conflict in which they have little interest. While all speak Guarani, some also speak Spanish.

Among the local people, the story of the "Dreaming Spirit" is well known. Certain select individuals are taught the location of the "Five Pillows of Slumber" (their name for the five stone wards on the forest floor). They are reluctant to divulge this sacred knowledge to outsiders, but a persuasive hero might succeed in coaxing it out of them, in which case the heroes could find themselves a guide to lead them to a ward. Such a guide will not be happy if he or she learns that the heroes intend to destroy the ward.

Local legends tell of the Dreaming Spirit (Tyranissh, the serpent woman sorcerer). The yearly Festival of the Dreamer held to appease the Dreaming Spirit, is due to take place over the next few days. Anthropologists have interpreted these ceremonies as attempts to appease the spirits of nature and avert natural disasters (earthquakes, volcanoes, and so on).

THE TALE OF TYRANISSH AS KNOWN TO GUARANI PEOPLE

According to the Guarani people, "The One Who Sleeps" (Tyranissh) was sent to the Earth by the gods of the otherworld and instructed to create a temple. Once the temple was complete, she lay down inside to sleep and has never awoken. One day, when she wakes, her chosen people (the Guarani) will follow her back to the otherworld. Her people have a duty to tend her while she sleeps, leaving offerings at the five sacred pillows of slumber.

Gregorio Guerrero, 42, local hero

As a young man, Guerrero traveled and studied but has subsequently returned to his home village of Bamba Rumi (where the aid camp is located). His family is well respected and the other locals look up to him. He is versed in local history and knows the legend of the Dreamer and the location of the Five Pillows of Slumber (see **The Five Wards**, page 30). If the heroes can persuade him to help, he may prove very useful, as during the upcoming festival (see **The Festival of the Dreamer**, page 34) he will travel in secret to the wards to leave tributes of fruit and bread.

- **Description:** his inscrutable expression can be hard to interpret.
- **Traits:** nods at whatever is said, often responding with non-sequiturs that appear to convey some enigmatic wisdom ("but a monkey has less than three hands").
- **Roleplaying hook:** if the heroes befriend him he may help them, otherwise he may seek to deceive them, or even direct them into danger.

Tyranissh, *The One Who Sleeps*

A powerful serpent woman sorcerer in search of the lost secrets of Mu. Tyranissh has been lost in dimensions of dream for millennia and has learned wondrous things that have driven her beyond the brink of insanity. The split between the Tsathoggua and Yig worshippers had not yet occurred when she undertook her journey and she will despair at the futility of her people's religious divide. Ultimately, she believes her people have forsaken her.

Further information and statistics for Tyranissh can be found in **Appendix A** (see page 245).

OPENING SCENE

The game begins in media res with the heroes making their way to an aid camp deep in the forest. They are accompanied by doctors, nurses, and mules carrying supplies along a path through a wooded area.

Their team leader, a 36-year-old Italian doctor named Arturo Ursini, has been preoccupied for most of the trip. Doctor Ursini talks with the heroes as they travel. With a hint of uncertainty in his voice, he says, "This is a breach of protocol, but dammit, you need to know. You shouldn't have been sent out here until you were brought into the inner circle anyway. Caduceus isn't what it pretends to be, and we were really sent out here to... ugh!" One of the heroes is suddenly hit in the face with a spray of blood. Doctor Ursini has been fatally shot in the head and collapses to the ground. Start the first combat round immediately (see following).

No characteristics are provided for Doctor Ursini since his death triggers the start of the game.

KARNASSH LIES IN WAIT

Ahead of the heroes, up the trail, a serpent man (see **Karnassh**, page 41) and six Bolivian soldiers lie hidden in the undergrowth. Karnassh has just shot Doctor Ursini with a rifle and will target one of the heroes in the next round. The serpent man appears completely human from a distance. Close-up, it is possible a hero may notice something wrong with his appearance (see **Skinwalking**, page 258, **Appendix B**), especially if Karnassh sustains injury.

Karnassh has spells that can be used in combat, notably Dominate and Fist Of Yog-Sothoth (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*). He has already used Flesh Ward at the start of the day, raising his hit points by 12. The serpent man is likely to flee back to the aid camp (4 miles distant) when it becomes apparent that the heroes are winning. Do not forget that Karnassh also has a Luck pool allowing him to moderate rolls or perform special actions, such as "Look Out Master"—having one of his soldiers intervene against a blow that would otherwise result in his death (see *Pulp Cthulhu*, page 63).

The six Bolivian soldiers have been dispatched into the undergrowth to mop up the rest of the heroes. The soldiers are armed with shotguns and machetes (see **Bolivian Soldiers**, page 41). They fight until it becomes obvious the heroes are winning, causing them to flee into the forest with Karnassh (if still alive).

Doctor Ursini's Possessions

The doctor's pack and pockets contain antivenin for a selection of snakebites, as well as a bloodstained folder detailing the mission (see **Handouts: Bolivia 1, 2, and 3**). Should a snake bite someone, call for a Luck roll to determine whether or not the correct type of antivenin is present.

The term, "level 3 threat" (mentioned in **Handout: Bolivia 2**) is a Caduceus code for the magnitude of Mythos entities. They don't know what caused the recent mayhem, but clearly it is one that is able to take on significant military combatants.

Doctor Ursini's luggage is carried on one of the mules. Aside from clothes and so on, his leather suitcase contains 3 sticks of dynamite, a .45 revolver, and ammunition.

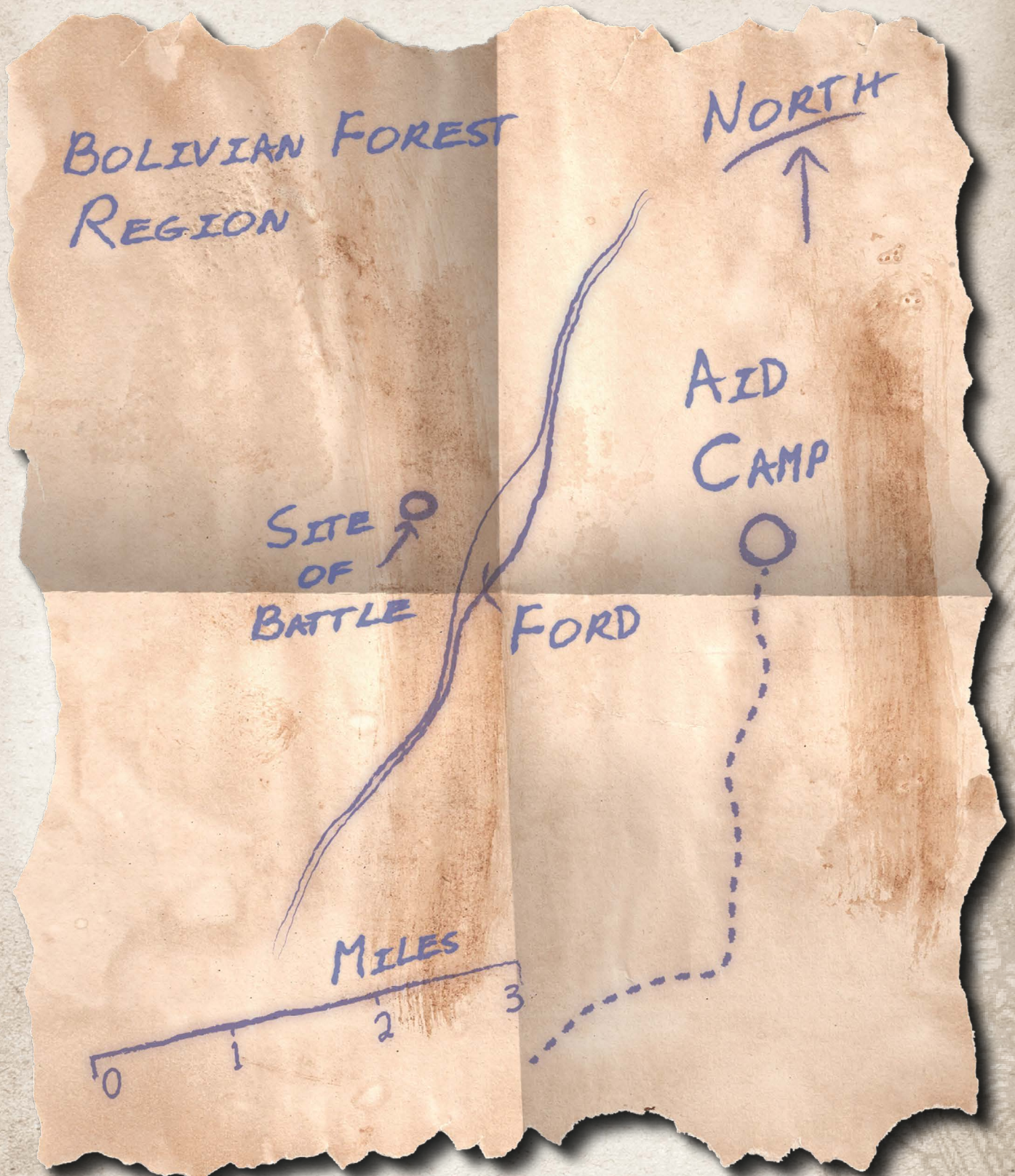
THE AID CAMP

The camp is situated in a small village named Bamba Rumi (roughly translating as "place of stone"). The village houses are small, one or two-room buildings with adobe walls, tiny windows, and thatched roofs. The village has been devastated by the war and many houses lie in ruins. Among the ruins, canvas tents have been erected. Doctors, nurses, and other aid workers of the Caduceus Foundation are working at the camp, tending to the sick and injured.

Since the nearby battle on March 4th, the military conflicts of the Chaco War have moved away from this area. The only signs of the war that appear in this scenario are the troop of Bolivian soldiers under serpent person command, as well as the ward broken during a previous battle, and the injured people at the aid camp.

The aid camp is clearly divided. On one side are the camp's staff and patients, on the other are the soldiers. The soldiers have taken over the camp and destroyed the camp radio, but otherwise, the aid work in the camp goes on much as it did before.

The strategy employed by the heroes with regard to the aid camp is hard to predict. Some may choose to walk in straight away, some may survey it from a distance while others might avoid it altogether. Ultimately, the aid camp plays a secondary role in this chapter. The aid camp provides an opportunity for roleplaying and investigation that should lead the heroes to the real focus of this chapter: the temple.





Caduceus Mission Briefing

Date: 12th March 1933

To: Dr. Arturo Ursini

BRIEFING FOR BOLIVIA MISSION

Proceed to aid camp (see map). Present Dr. Gomez (in charge of the aid camp) with the enclosed letter.

You should first make your way to the site of the recent confrontation. The site is approximately two miles west of the aid camp, on the far side of the river. Beware of possible level 3 threat in the vicinity. Our intelligence on the threat is regrettably limited. We believe the threat is a temple guardian of some kind.

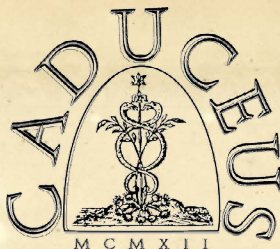
Your mission is to enter the temple and retrieve the mummy for immediate return to Caduceus HQ in New York. Any accompanying artifacts should likewise be recovered and brought home.

Your team of specialists is very able, but new to the job. As always we find it best to initiate and test newcomers in the field. Brief them as and when you see fit. We will expect a report on the individual team members on your return.

You have proven over and over again that you can keep your head when those around you are losing theirs. We have every confidence in your abilities.

Regards

Shapiro



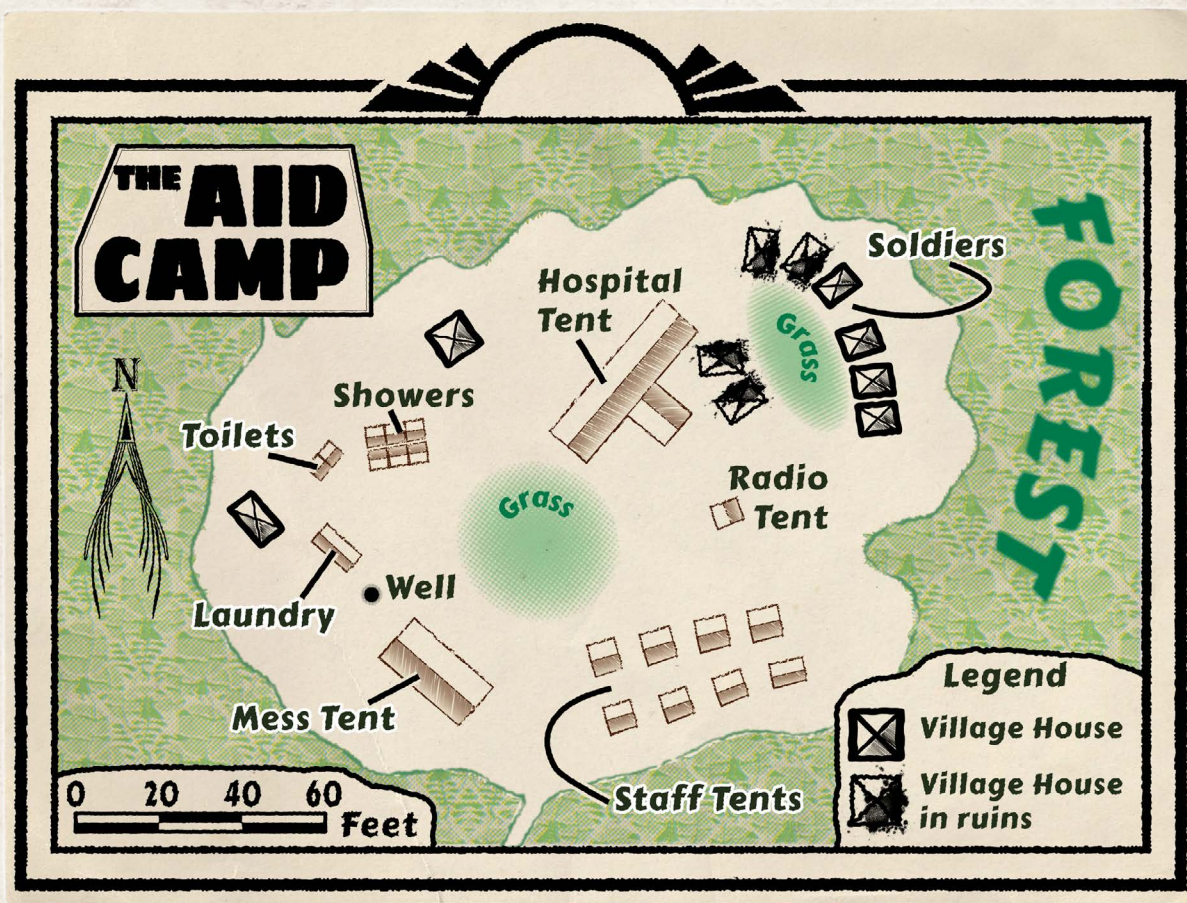
12th March 1933

Dear Dr. Gomez,

We hope that all is well at the camp. This letter should be handed to you by Dr. Arturo Ursini, a trusted member of our organization. He and his team have important work to conduct in the vicinity of your camp. Please extend to him and his team your support and hospitality. I trust the additional staff and supplies that he brings will prove useful.

Yours sincerely,

Shapiro



THE INNER NIGHT'S PRESENCE AT THE AID CAMP

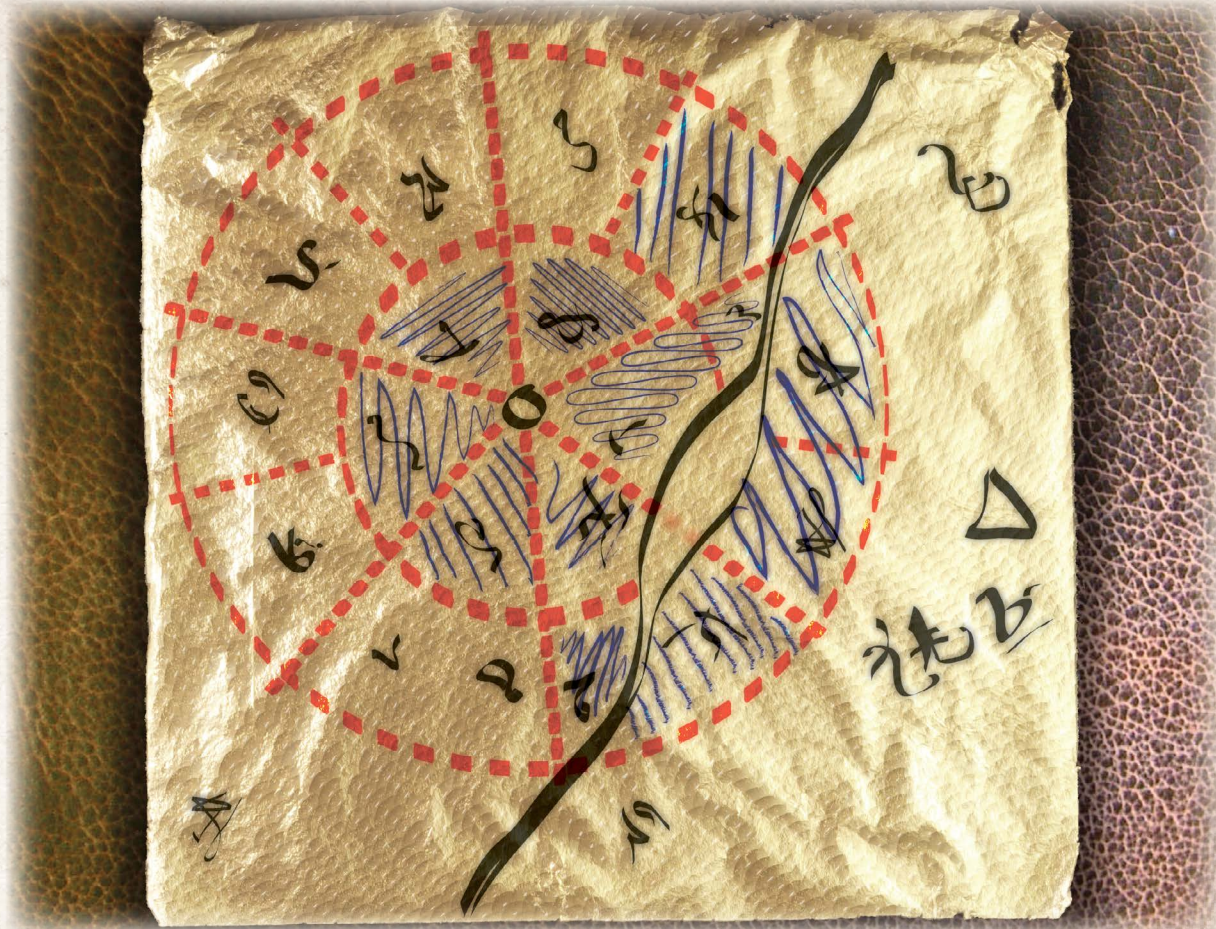
The camp staff has no choice but to tolerate the presence of the soldiers, who arrived a couple of days ago (March 13th). The medical personnel are aware that the soldiers are odd, but they do not know what to ascribe this to. The serpent people's disguises are adequate, but do not stand up to close scrutiny (see *Skinwalking*, page 258, Appendix B), therefore, the serpent people have kept their contact with camp staff to a minimum. The Inner Night team knows the camp is meant to provide medical aid but have not realized the staff's connection with Caduceus. So long as the staff does not present a threat, the Inner Night team is content to tolerate their existence; equally, they would have no qualms about killing every last one of them.

The serpent people (Karnassh, Vorsinnish, and Ythyssh) sent to Bolivia are foot soldiers, told only what they need to know, and not necessarily privy to all of the Inner Night's secrets. Should the heroes successfully interrogate one of the three serpent people, they can potentially learn the following information:

- They are members of the Inner Night, a secret organization of serpent people.
- The Inner Night's objective is to eradicate human vermin from the Earth.
- The team is here to find the body of a long-lost sorcerer. The sorcerer has knowledge of the lost continent of Mu, in which can be found the power to destroy mankind.
- The Inner Night has a spy within the Caduceus Foundation. This is how they managed to preempt the heroes.
- Caduceus is their enemy. There have been previous confrontations between Caduceus and the Inner Night (these particular serpent people do not know that Caduceus is also led by serpent people).
- The Inner Night worships Tsathoggua.

The Inner Night's Map

The Inner Night team has a map showing the local area. Features include the aid camp, the first ward, and a search pattern divided into sectors. Some sectors have been crossed off. The writing is in strange hieroglyphics similar



to those used by the Mayans, requiring **Other Language** (Naacal) or a **Cthulhu Mythos** skill roll to comprehend. See Handout: Bolivia 4.

Using the Radio

The heroes' group has a backpack containing radio apparatus that can be used to contact Caduceus. Setting up the radio requires someone to place an aerial in a high position, such as a tall tree. Call for a **Climb** roll to achieve this—this might be a good opportunity to introduce **The Flaming Monkey** (page 33).

Using the radio should be straightforward for the heroes (no skill roll required). Via the receiver, they can hear the crackly voice of Quentin Shapiro, a Caduceus scientist and team handler (see **Chapter 3: North Borneo**, page 81). Initially, the heroes will be asked to verify their identity, after which Shapiro will ask what has become of Doctor Ursini. When Shapiro hears the news of Ursini's death, he feels compelled to divulge more information. The information in the following paragraph should be conveyed to the players through the conversation with Shapiro:

You've probably guessed by now that Caduceus does more than provide humanitarian aid. Our teams also seek out threats against humanity and deal with them. You are one such team. Ursini was supposed to explain this to you all.

On March 4th, an artillery shell hit a site of interest near to the aid camp you are now in. Some kind of ancient guardian was released and may still be at large. We don't know what it is, but we consider it to be dangerous, so be careful. We're interested in what this guardian is protecting. We believe that you'll find a temple in the local area. Inside the temple, you'll find a mummy. Your job is to bring the mummy back to us. Alive!

Note: if the players require specific equipment Caduceus may be able to arrange an airdrop over the next couple of days, at the Keeper's discretion.

PLAYTEST NOTE

When faced with the reality of a living mummy, not every group remembered the instruction to bring her back alive. One set of heroes was especially alarmed by their first meeting with Tyranissh and decided their goal must be surely be to kill her.

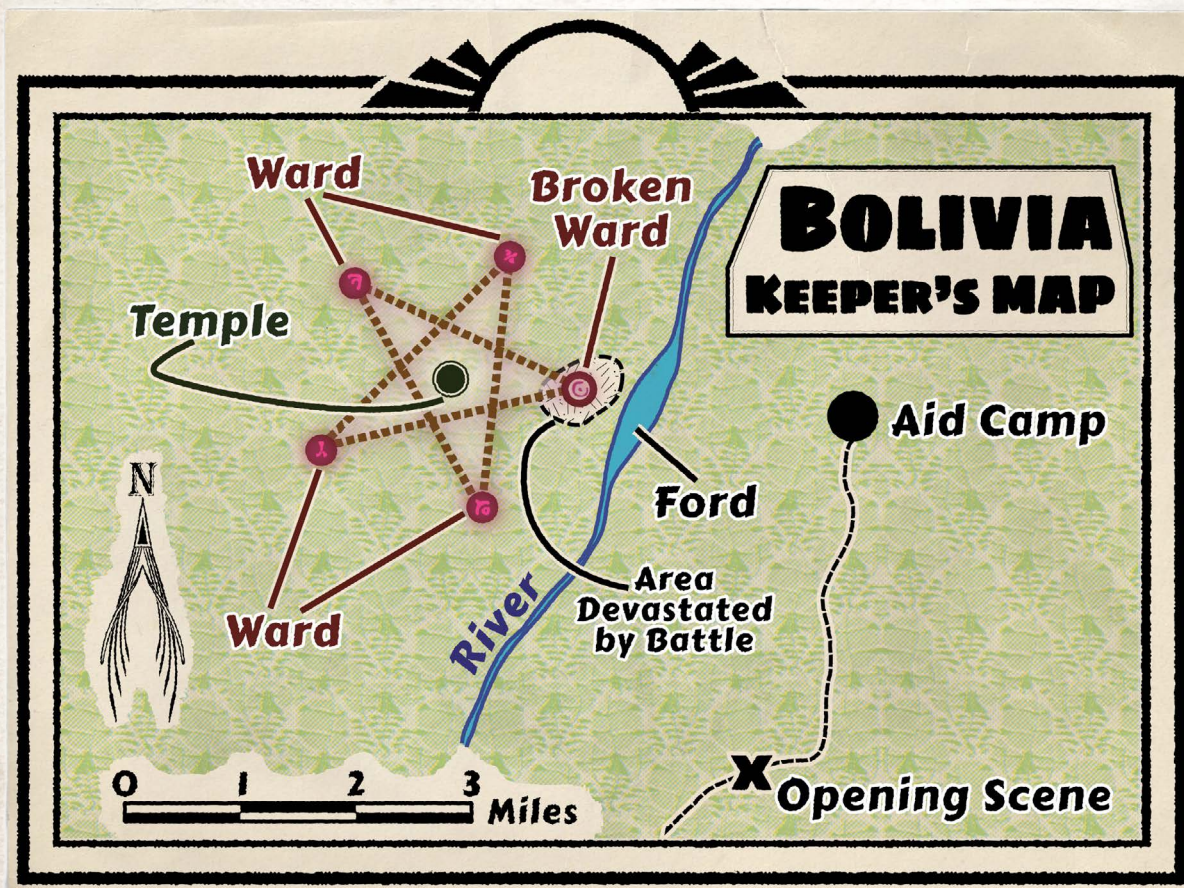
The Keeper may want to reinforce the mission goal during the conversation with Shapiro. If the heroes still decide to kill Tyranissh, the Keeper will need to make some adjustments to the rest of the campaign. There are options to help with this event in every chapter where Tyranissh would otherwise appear.

THE FIVE WARDS

Each ward marks one point of a massive pentagram (see map nearby). Each of the five wards is similar in design. **The Temple of the Dreamer** (see page 34) can be found at the center of the pentagram. Note that the terrain and vegetation around each ward should be varied enough to provide a different description for each, such as one being close to a large tree, another nearby a stream, and so on.

Each ward consists of a deep well, capped with a flat stone disc, like a cyclopean manhole cover. The capstone is fifty-five feet across and two feet thick. The discs are mostly concealed by earth and vegetation, although careful searching should uncover them. If exposed, strange and ancient designs can be seen, carved into the surface of the stone. These weathered sigils may be interpreted with a **Cthulhu Mythos** roll. A success indicates that this is one of five stones aligned on the points of a pentagram, forming a spell of protection over a central location.

Beneath each stone disc is a deep circular pit that descends one thousand feet. Each pit contains a formless spawn, which cannot emerge until the stone is removed or broken asunder (as has happened already to one ward).



Following the breaking of a capstone, a formless spawn emerges shortly after, attacking anything nearby. It will patrol the area within one hundred yards of its ward. If all is clear, the formless spawn returns to its pit. It will only stray further if is called by the **Flute of Tsathoggua** (see page 250, **Appendix B**).

LOCATING THE WARDS

The broken ward should be easy for the heroes to find. The location is described in Dr. Ursini's briefing document (**Handout: Bolivia 2**), and could also be described over the radio by Quentin Shapiro from Caduceus. If all else fails, the location of the broken ward can be easily discovered by talking with the staff at the aid camp, who can point the way to the river ford and site of the recent battle. Note that the serpent people and their soldiers also know the location of the broken ward.

Once the heroes have found the broken ward, finding either the temple or another ward should come next. While these have both eluded the serpent people, do not make the task too difficult for the heroes. The challenge for the players should lie not in finding the temple and its wards, but in the dangers and drama that they present.

If a second adjacent ward is found, a simple piece of geometry can determine two possible pentagrams. The nearby diagram shows the possible positioning if geometry is used, with the upper pentagram being the correct position.

Destroying a Ward

Each of the capstones may be destroyed using explosives, such as the dynamite brought with the heroes' team. The broken fragments of the capstone are likely to tumble down into the well beneath. The destruction of the stone should be a dramatic but straightforward procedure. Do not ask for a skill roll to destroy the stone, as failure to do so would block the story and prevent the release of a monster into the world!

Inside a Ward

Each ward is the same. The well beneath the stone lid is 50 feet across and lined with cyclopean blocks. A stair winds down around the edge of the well. The steps are narrow and slick. Here and there are fragments of the shattered capstone. In places, the steps have been smashed and heroes must attempt **Climb** or **Jump** rolls if they wish to descend further. 1,000 feet down, at the bottom of the pit, can be found the broken remains of the capstone. Looking up from the bottom, the sky is a small bright circle far above.

When standing at the bottom of the well, murals can be seen carved into the walls. These portray some useful information, which should be relayed to the players:

PLAYTEST NOTE

One of the tensest action scenes in our playtests came when one group of heroes inadvertently released a formless spawn from its prison beneath one of the five wards. The heroes had repaired a Bolivian Army truck, using it to drag the stone seal off the pit in an attempt to raise the pyramid. As they realized what they had released, having already faced one formless spawn and knowing that normal weapons did no damage, one hero decided to use the truck to ram the creature back into the pit where they could rain grenades down onto it.

As strong as this plan was, it unraveled as the hero driving the truck failed his first Drive Auto roll, preventing him from getting the vehicle into position. He pushed the roll by flooring the gas pedal and ramming the formless spawn through the stone wall surrounding the pit, but failed this roll as well. The Keeper decided this meant the truck was now wedged in the broken wall, teetering on the brink of the pit, with the formless spawn beginning to envelop it.

Out of desperation, the passenger in the truck then attempted to throw a grenade into the mass of the formless spawn. He too failed, and the grenade bounced back into the truck. The two heroes were then forced to dive from the vehicle before the grenade exploded. They both spent enough Luck points to succeed and rolled to safety as the truck and the formless spawn tumbled to the bottom of the pit in a ball of fiery death.

- This location is one of five identical places. Together they form a pentagon or pentagram.
- The center of the pentagram marks an important location.
- Many serpent people are portrayed.
- One serpent person is depicted as a leader. She holds a scepter and wears an ornate crown. The design of the crown features a snake motif.
- Hairy giants, seemingly under the control of whip-wielding serpent folk, are shown building a cone-shaped temple.

Any hero who spends a few hours studying these carvings may attempt an INT roll; if successful, the hero gains 1 point in the Cthulhu Mythos skill and an additional 1D4 points in Other Language (Naacal).

THE FORD AND THE BATTLEFIELD

The ford is the only place at which the nearby river is passable for many miles. For a time, the Paraguayan army held the ford against the Bolivians, but they were routed in a recent conflict, leaving the crossing unmanned. The war has since moved on, far away from the temple and the aid camp.

On the east side of the ford lays an open area of land, scarred by the recent warfare. Burned out and abandoned vehicles, corpses, shell holes, and spent ammunition litter the surrounding area. A successful **Natural World** roll highlights the strange fact that carrion feeders have not consumed the corpses. The area is disturbingly quiet. The absence of wildlife is down to the presence of the formless spawn.

Crossing the ford to the western bank, more signs of battle are uncovered. It is here that the broken ward can be found at the heart of this battlefield.

THE BROKEN WARD

The broken ward is much like its counterparts as described in **Inside a Ward**. Here, an artillery shell has destroyed the ward and little remains except for the great hole and stairway heading down into the earth. Unless the formless spawn has already been encountered and destroyed, the heroes should face it here.

The heroes may come up with interesting and innovative plans concerning the wards and battling their guardians. For example, improvised flamethrowers, explosives, mules used as bait, and so on. As ever for *Pulp Cthulhu*, the Keeper should be generous when the players come up with creative and off-the-wall plans to deal with dangerous and unusual monsters.

Playing the Formless Spawn

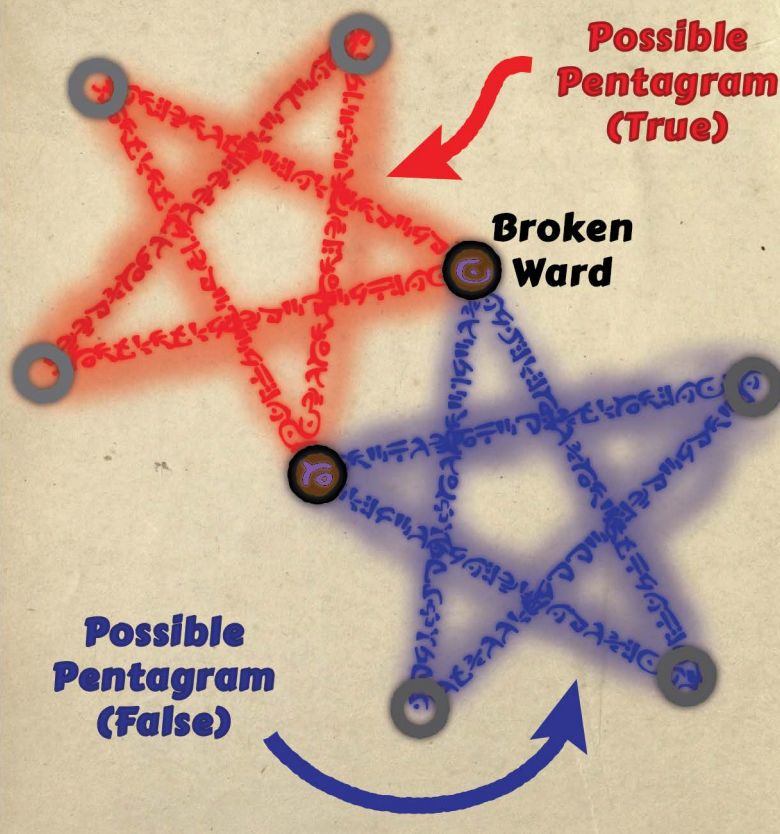
A formless spawn is a fearsome adversary because it is immune to physical damage. Fire is likely to be the heroes' best form of attack, although a cunning plan using dynamite may also be enough to rip the monster apart (either killing it outright or, at least, buying the heroes some time to move away). Any hero succeeding in a **Cthulhu Mythos** roll will know about its immunities and weaknesses.

Bear in mind that formless spawn possesses a level of intelligence equivalent to humans; if they realize that their vulnerability has been discovered, the formless spawn may seek to escape.

The Keeper should have the formless spawn attack the heroes as and when it seems most dramatic. It might be that the formless spawn rises up just after the players have just successfully rolled to jump across a broken section of stairs, finding themselves stranded. Or perhaps the heroes arrive while the creature is absent, out on patrol, and are attacked by it as it returns.

Statistics for the formless spawn are presented at the end of this chapter.

TWO POSSIBLE PENTAGRAMS BASED UPON DISCOVERING TWO ADJACENT WARDS



COMPLICATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Keeper should use the following complications and opportunities to keep the pace of the scenario moving.

THE FLAMING MONKEY

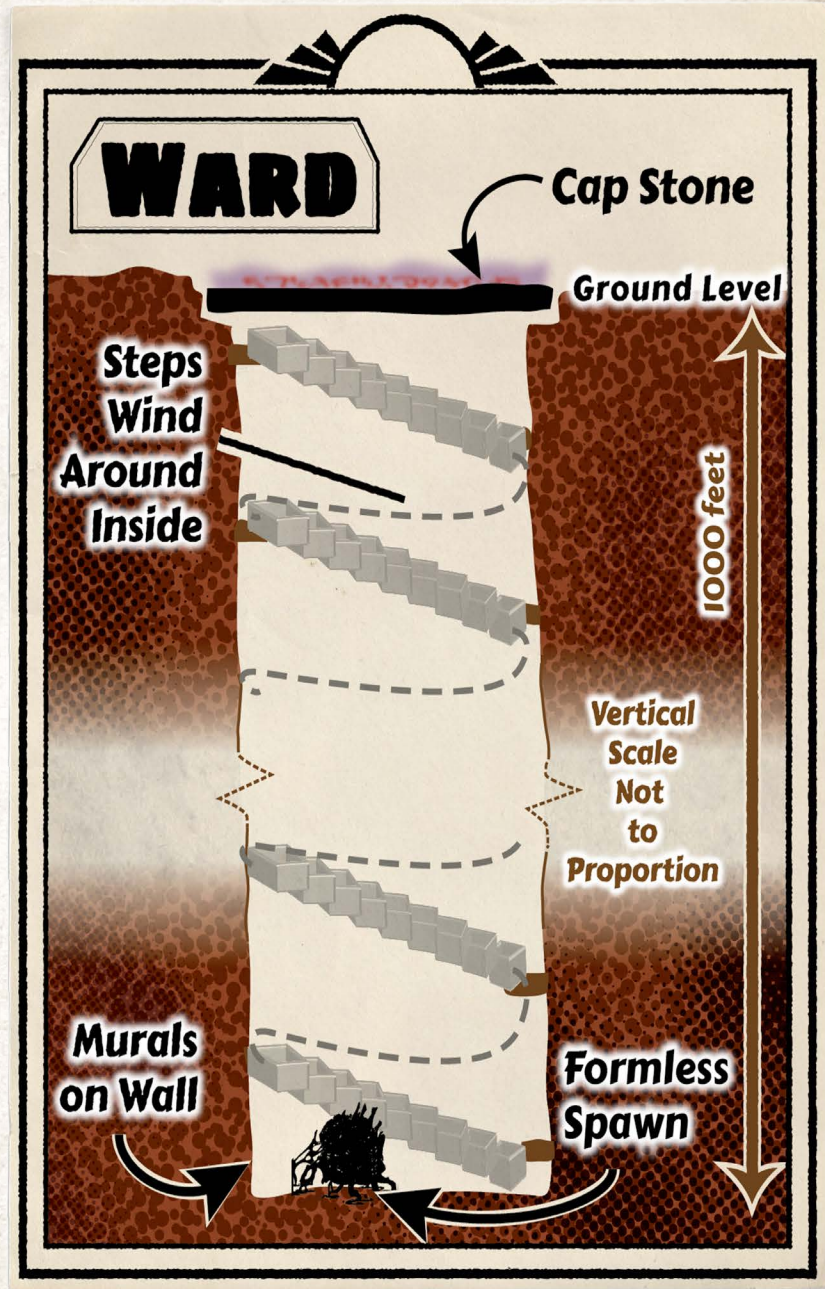
As described in the **Transport Spheres** boxed text (page 21), a howler monkey is now in possession of one of the serpent people's pistols. This monkey can be added wherever you wish during play, for comic effect, for intrigue, or as a threat—perhaps all three.

The monkey may be heard howling in a tree, waving something shiny in its hand. As the heroes watch, a ball of fire suddenly shoots from the monkey's paw, setting light to foliage, perhaps another monkey, or even at the heroes. How the heroes react to this is up to them. A chase might ensue or they might try shooting the monkey, or running away. If you wish, at some point the flame pistol malfunctions, exploding hot monkey flesh over the surrounding area. Alternatively, a well-aimed shot from a hero's gun could kill the monkey, allowing the heroes to get their hands on a flame pistol. For details on the **Flame Pistol**, see page 251, in Appendix B.

THE SERPENT PEOPLE'S SEARCH PARTIES

Having already located the broken ward, the three Inner Night teams are now attempting to find the other wards. Each team is made up of one serpent person, one serpent hound, and six soldiers. Two soldiers are always left at the aid camp to guard the army tents.

Once the serpent people learn of the heroes' presence, they increase their vigilance. The heroes may be followed by one of the Inner Night teams while searching for the wards, or may run into one of the teams at an inconvenient moment. Once the serpent people figure the heroes are not just here to supply aid to the camp, the soldiers are instructed that the heroes are enemy agents who must be captured or slaughtered. Encounters from this point will be deadly; perhaps the heroes wander into an ambush, an



Inner Night team launches an attack while the heroes' attention is on the ward they have just discovered, or the heroes are attacked when they return to the aid camp.

Note that one of the soldiers in each of the search parties carries a two-way radio in a backpack, suitable for short-range communication only. Another soldier carries dynamite, fuse wire, and blasting caps. The serpent person in each team carries a map. The map (see **Handout: Bolivia 4**, page 29) shows the local area divided into zones. Each team has an assigned zone to be searched.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE DREAMER

The Festival of the Dreamer is a yearly event among the local people—the timing of the festival is at the Keeper's discretion. Gregorio Guerrero (see page 41) leads the local people in songs and prayers. Gregorio makes the journey in secret to each of the “Pillows of Slumber” to make small offerings of fruit and bread to the Dreaming Spirit (Tyranissh) to sustain her through her long sleep.

During the festival the villagers smoke special herbs and drink strange concoctions, entering trance-like states. The Keeper may elaborate on the festival as he or she sees fit. The function of the event (in the scenario) is simply to provide the Keeper with a means to move the story on, as well as provide some colorful description; if the heroes are struggling, Gregorio can simply lead them to the wards.

THE TEMPLE OF THE DREAMER

Deep within the forests of Gran Chaco sleeps an ancient serpent person sorcerer named Tyranissh. Following the dislocation of Mu from Earth, Tyranissh chose to undertake a journey into other realms and dimensions. She believed that the lost knowledge of how to once more link Earth with lost Mu could be discovered in these other realms. The serpent folk engineered mutated voormis as slaves, exploiting their massive strength to build the Temple of the Dreamer. Tyranissh was interred in a stone crypt deep within the temple. The sorcerer's magics have sustained her through the millennia.

Tyranissh knew that she would be vulnerable while sleeping and so protected her crypt with powerful magic wards. When all five wards were activated the temple sank into the jungle floor, where it lay hidden until the recent accidental breaking of the first ward.

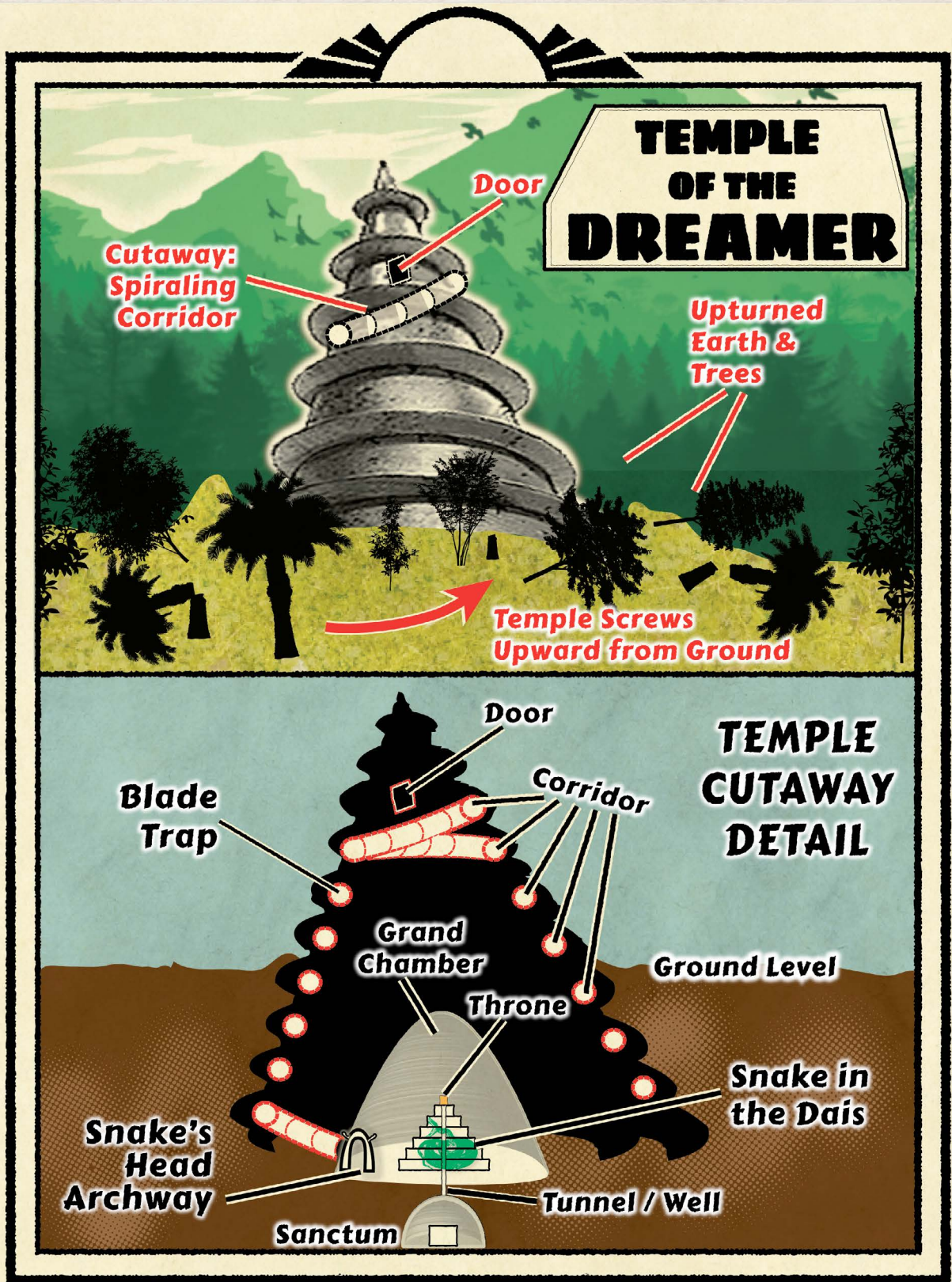
Both Caduceus and the Inner Night hope to recruit the sorcerer and her powers to their different causes. Members of each group have read the legends of the “One Who Sleeps” in the same musty tomes, and each has interpreted what they have read to imply that the sorcerer will be sympathetic to their own cause.

ACCESSING THE TEMPLE BY BREAKING THE WARDS

As the scenario starts, the first ward is broken. As the heroes or serpent people find the other wards and break them, the temple rises and access inside becomes possible.

The heroes could find and destroy at least two of the wards (in addition to the original broken one), although if the Keeper wishes to move things along, one of the Inner Night teams could find and break a ward. Thus, the heroes might only need to find and destroy one ward, and then find the temple.

- **Breaking the First Ward:** following the destruction of the first ward during the recent military conflict, the temple has partly risen from the ground; a conical helix some thirty feet tall, like the head of a massive stone screw protruding from the ground. It is possible to carefully walk up the exterior, following the curve of the temple in a corkscrew-like fashion. Broken ground and displaced plants still cling to the sloping sides of the temple. No cracks or joints can be found in the structure. The stone is impenetrable, resisting all form of physical attack. If anyone seeks to dig, they will find the temple continues deep underground.
- **Breaking the Second Ward:** when a second ward is destroyed the temple moves once more, rising another thirty feet out of the ground. This also triggers the slow awakening of the sorcerer. The order in which the wards are broken is not important. Lines between the cyclopean blocks now become apparent. The stone is no longer invulnerable and may be chipped, carved, or broken. A securely locked stone door can be found twenty feet from the top of the temple. Picking the lock requires an Extreme **Locksmith** roll. Brute strength will not force the door open, although the door could be destroyed with dynamite.
- **Breaking the Third Ward:** on destroying a third ward, the temple's door crumbles to a fine dust, allowing access inside.
- **Breaking the Fourth and Fifth Wards:** destroying the remaining wards grants no further benefits.



ENTERING THE TEMPLE

The temple door leads to a passageway that spirals downwards around the inside of the temple's walls. The passage can be likened to a hosepipe that has been coiled around the outside of a cone. Circular in cross-section, like a sewer pipe, the passage is ten feet in diameter. The walls are plain at first, but after one revolution bas-relief murals depict images similar to those found at the base of the pits beneath each ward (see **Inside the Ward**, page 31). If the heroes missed the carvings beneath the wards, this provides a second opportunity to deliver the narrative they contain.

Blade Trap

After the passage curves through a second revolution, there is a blade trap. The blade slices out from between the massive stone blocks that form the passageway, arcing right across the passage. Call for a **Spot Hidden** roll from anyone who has said they are examining the walls or murals: with a Hard success, they spot the trap before it goes off and may stop before triggering it.

This trap targets the lead character. If he or she is moving rapidly, the chance of being hit by the blade is determined by a **Luck** roll. If he or she is walking at a normal pace, the blade may be avoided with a successful **Dodge** roll. The blade triggers by anyone who passes it in either direction and inflicts 3D6 damage to a person who doesn't manage to get out of the way. The heroes may attempt to disarm or jam the trap in some way. Depending on the approach taken, ask for an appropriate skill roll (such as **Mechanical Repair** or **Locksmith**). This is a dangerous trap and tampering with it is a risky undertaking. Failed pushed rolls should mean the hero takes some damage.

PLAYTEST NOTE

One playtest group made short work of the trap by rolling rocks down the sloping passage as they went, triggering pressure plates before the heroes got anywhere near them.

Calling All Snakes!

With the awakening of the sorcerer, the power of the Serpent Scepter (see **Appendix B**, page 250) located in the sanctuary has also activated. The scepter has the effect

of calling every snake in the area to the temple. There are little holes and tunnels surrounding the area, many of which have been admitting snakes. The heroes should encounter one or two snakes as they drop out of holes in the ceiling or make their way down the passage towards the pit. The level directly above the grand chamber is now crawling with snakes, as they wait to venerate their mistress below. Falling snakes are likely to be more of a surprise than a direct danger—it is the mass of snakes that blocks the way into the Grand Chamber that poses a greater threat. The snakes form a barrier approximately 20 feet in length.

A successful **Natural World**, **Science (Zoology)**, or **Hard Know** roll means the hero is able to identify at least one variety of snake as being poisonous (coral snake, pit viper, etc.) The presence of coral snakes should prove especially frightening to anyone who passes this roll: they are known colloquially as “20-minute snakes” in some part of Latin America for the time it takes their poison to kill a person.

The ceiling is rough enough and covered with hanging features, so the heroes could potentially clamber across, though snakes will be dropping down through holes above them all through the passage. With a successful **Climb** roll, that hero has traversed the area safely.

Rather than rolling dice for individual snake attacks, this is more easily handled in an abstracted manner, treating the snakes as one threat (see **Mess o' Snakes**, page 43). The heroes may find a way of dispersing the snakes (through fire, for example). The Keeper should be open to creative solutions.

The Entrance to the Grand Chamber

After many revolutions, the passage opens out into a vast chamber some two-hundred feet across. Pillars on each side of the entrance to the Grand Chamber curve up and intertwine, combining into a snake's head, with two green gems for eyes. Each of the eyes is the size of a human fist. As soon as someone (a non-serpent person) steps from the descending passageway to the floor of the chamber, the eyes begin to glow, then attack. Likewise, anyone touching the head of the snake (perhaps attempting to remove the gems) will be attacked. Thus, passing through the pillars means that the ray will target every hero once.

The eyes glow for one round, then a ray of green death-light shoots forth at the nearest non-serpent person. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll alerts vigilant heroes to the glowing of the gems. The Keeper should make an attack roll for the death ray (it has an attack value of 80% (40/16), which may be opposed by the target's **Dodge** skill if they are aware of the attack). A successful strike causes intense pain, 2D6 damage, and paralysis for 1D6 rounds (after which, the hero may move on unimpeded). Once struck,

an individual will not be targeted again until they move. The area hit by the death ray blisters; the pus-filled blister bursts soon after, exposing a localized area of mutated flesh now covered in reptilian scales (**Sanity** roll: 1/1D4 loss). The gems can be removed with a suitable lever and successful **DEX** or **Sleight of Hand** roll, but any non-serpent person doing so will be targeted by the death-light.



PLAYTEST NOTE

Upon discovering that her wound was growing scales as it healed, one hero was upset enough to attempt some impromptu plastic surgery on herself with a sharp knife. The procedure took a toll in both **Sanity** and hit points. The Keeper unkindly decided that cutting them off not only failed to stop the scales from growing but also aggravated them into spreading further.



THE GRAND CHAMBER

The floor of the passageway extends in a spiraling arc to the floor of the Grand Chamber. In the center stands a twenty-foot tall stone helix, reflecting the spiral design of the temple, topped by a figure seated on a throne. Each step on the helix-shaped dais is the height of a man's waist. No climb roll is required to scale the structure, but as soon as the second step is gained the whole structure begins to



PLAYTEST NOTE

Upon seeing the Giant Snake, one hero lost enough **Sanity** to trigger his first bout of madness. The Keeper rolled **Crazy Plan** for the effect, and the player suggested that his hero should let himself be swallowed by the snake, as it had no armor on the inside and would be more vulnerable to his attacks. This proved disturbingly effective, especially when combined with the **Insane Brutality** talent, and the hero, half-dead and covered with mangled innards, burst triumphant from the monstrous serpent's corpse a few rounds later.



tremble. The plaster-like surface of the steps cracks and breaks open at the base, clouds of dust pour out revealing a huge snake coiled within (see **The Giant Snake**, page 43).

The giant snake emerges and attacks those present in the Grand Chamber. It will fight to the death and pursues fleeing heroes through the main passageway as far as the blade trap. Heroes gaining access to the sanctum below the throne are not pursued, but they will have to return to the Grand Chamber and the giant snake when they depart.

The Throne

The throne stands atop the dais around which the giant snake was coiled. Once the snake is free, the area will be strewn with the broken plaster that covered the snake's body. The ornate stone throne is carved from a huge block of jade and decorated with fine metal filigree ornamentation depicting strange forests and curious beasts (denizens of the Dreamlands). The seated figure is that of a serpent person, dressed in fine crimson robes, edged with golden thread. The figure is still, eyes lightly closed as if sleeping. If touched, the body crumbles, revealing that it was nothing but the dry, shed skin of a serpent woman. The throne is designed like a commode, with a hole in the seat. The serpent woman that sat on the throne has shed her skin, her soft body exiting through the throne seat, down a pit, and into the sanctum below.

THE SANCTUM

The only way into this room is through the seat of the throne atop the dais, down a vertical fifty-foot drop into a sheer black well. The pit is narrow (three-feet in diameter, meaning a tight squeeze for average sized heroes). A **Climb** roll is required to safely descend, a failure results in slipping and falling (3D6 damage).

The pit leads to the side of a small round sanctum, 10-feet across. Peeling paint on the walls show images of a female serpent person wearing the **Cobra Crown** (see following) and holding the **Serpent Scepter** (see following), surrounded by prostrate worshippers.

The rest of the walls are covered with images and writing in **Naacal**, depicting some of the history of the Second Serpent Person Empire. Any hero who spends a few hours studying these murals may attempt an **INT** roll; if successful, the hero gains 1 point in the **Cthulhu Mythos** skill and an additional 1D4 points in **Other Language** (**Naacal**).

On a plinth in the center of the room lies the sorcerer **Tyranissh**. Her arms are crossed over her chest, in a pose reminiscent of a knight's tomb. Having recently shed her skin, her naked serpent woman form is now covered in fresh, jewel-like, iridescent scales that glitter like sunlight on water.

Tyranissh remains inactive for the rest of this chapter, so she poses no immediate threat to the heroes. If they follow their orders, the heroes should remove the unconscious serpent woman and take her with them back to Caduceus; however, if it suits the Keeper's purposes, she could awaken and become active. Tyranissh has a role in later chapters, although some players may decide to ignore the instructions of Caduceus and destroy her immediately—if this is the case, some adaptation of future chapters will be required.

At the head of the plinth is a stone chest. It is airtight and contains robes, scrolls (**Annals of Mu**, see **Handout: Bolivia 5**), a pain whip, and the Serpent Scepter (see **Appendix B**, page 250). The whip is twelve feet in length and covered in sharp barbs, like rose thorns. A carved wooden box, inside of which appears to be designed to hold a crown, is found to be empty. The box was meant to hold the Cobra Crown but the crown was stolen prior to the sorcerer's interment. The box together with the mural should serve to highlight the existence of the crown to the heroes—the Cobra Crown appears in later in the campaign in **Chapter 7: Calcutta**.

THE SORCERER AND BROKEN WARDS

With the breaking of the first ward, the dreamer's consciousness returned to the dried husk of her Earthly body. When the second ward was broken the sorcerer emerged, like a caterpillar from its chrysalis. Her soft, pulpy body slid from its old skin, down through the throne, to the inner sanctum, where it crawled slug-like onto the plinth, taking on its true form once more. In this state, she may be captured with ease and transported away. She will not fully awaken for a few days.

If she is not removed from the temple before she fully awakens, Tyranissh leaves the temple and makes her own way into the world. If this occurs she will be at liberty to pursue her own goals (as she will be after her escape from Caduceus, as detailed in **Chapter 4: Oklahoma**). With such events, the heroes next meet Tyranissh in either **Chapter 2: New York City** or **Chapter 7: Calcutta**.

Escape

If the heroes have not already vanquished them, any surviving Inner Night forces, including their human thralls and serpent hounds, will have followed the heroes' trail to the temple and will be lying in wait when the heroes make their way out. The Inner Night wants the sorcerer and will offer to let the heroes go without a fight, should they simply hand her over; this is a lie—they will still want to kill the heroes to stop them reporting back to Caduceus. Otherwise, they will attempt to take the sorcerer by force.

HANDOUT: BOLIVIA 5 ANNALS OF MU

These fragile scrolls are written in Naacal and tell the history of Mu and describe the rise of the usurper race of humanity in Valusia. Opinions about humanity among the serpent people are divided. One faction of serpent people saw the future of their race in coexistence with humans and went so far as to mix their genetic material with humanity. They constructed a temple, over a dead volcano and drew upon its arcane power to fuel their engines of transformation. The rest of the serpent people saw the human race as a scourge and something to be eradicated, fearing that interbreeding would contaminate the pure serpent person bloodline. The resulting conflict led to the growth of extremist factions and a civil war.

The scrolls also describe an assault on the Citadel in Mu by an alien race. This attack somehow resulted in the shattering of reality, separating Mu from the rest of Earth. Many of the serpent people were left unable to return home to Mu, destined to walk in the world of men. The final passages speak of the Chosen One: a serpent person whose destiny is to unite the serpent people and lead them home to glorious Mu.

ANNALS OF MU FOR THE KEEPER ONLY

- Language: Naacal
- Cthulhu Mythos (Initial Reading): +1%
- Cthulhu Mythos (Full Study): +3%
- Mythos Rating: 12
- Reading Time: 1 week
- Sanity Cost: 1D4
- Spells: Summon/Bind Formless Spawn.



MWM

If the serpent people gain the sorcerer then they will contact their Icelandic base. Transport spheres are dispatched, one for each surviving serpent person and one for the sorcerer. The transport spheres can fly on autopilot so can be used to transport unconscious or injured individuals. The scenario probably ends with a pitched battle against the serpent people and their soldiers, the prize being the sleeping form of Tyranissh.

CONCLUSION

Once the situation with the serpent men is resolved, feel free to fast-forward to the next chapter. We can take it for granted that Caduceus organizes the heroes' extraction and provides for their return to New York City.

There are several possible outcomes for Tyranissh at the end of this chapter:

- The sorcerer is extracted by the heroes and passed on to the Caduceus Foundation.
- The sorcerer escapes or falls into the hands of the Inner Night. Such events will place the powers of the sorcerer with the Tsathoggua cult.
- The sorcerer is killed.
- The sorcerer escapes.

The most likely outcome is for the heroes to retrieve the sorcerer for Caduceus—this is the default assumption in following chapters. Guidance for the Keeper about how to adapt the campaign should Tyranissh be at liberty or dead can be found on page 185 of **Chapter 7: Calcutta**, although the Keeper may have to make some other small adjustments as and when appropriate.

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- The staff and patients at the aid camp are freed from the tyranny of the serpent people and their enslaved soldiers +1D10 Sanity points.
- The aid camp is destroyed or left under the control of the serpent people -1D8 Sanity points.
- The team ensures the Tyranissh does not fall into enemy hands +1D6 Sanity points.
- For defeating the giant snake and/or the formless spawn of Tsathoggua, +1D10 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Dr. Rafael Gomez, 35, medical doctor

STR 50 CON 60 SIZ 55 DEX 80 INT 85
APP 45 POW 55 EDU 85 SAN 50 HP 11
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 11 Luck: 27

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 70%, First Aid 65%, Medicine 85%, Persuade 65%.

Dr. Anahi Salvatorelli, 28, medical doctor

STR 60 CON 65 SIZ 45 DEX 70 INT 90
APP 70 POW 65 EDU 90 SAN 60 HP 11
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 13 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 80%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 45%, Medicine 75%.

Sergio Lorenzi, 52, nurse

STR 75 CON 55 SIZ 40 DEX 60 INT 60
APP 55 POW 45 EDU 60 SAN 40 HP 9
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 9 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3
Dodge 50% (25/10)

Skills

Charm 60%, First Aid 75%, Medicine 20%, Survival (Jungle) 45%.

Elena Barrai, 21, nurse

STR 80 CON 45 SIZ 55 DEX 50 INT 50
APP 85 POW 50 EDU 55 SAN 30 HP 10
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 10 Luck: 25

BOLIVIA

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3 + 1D4
Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills

First Aid 70%, Intimidate 50%, Medicine 15%.

Gregorio Guerrero, 42, local hero

STR 60 CON 70 SIZ 50 DEX 75 INT 80
APP 55 POW 75 EDU 55 SAN 75 HP 12
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 15 Luck: 37

Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3
Dodge 48% (24/9)

Skills

Charm 40%, First Aid 45%, Navigate 50%, Psychology 50%, Track 70%, Survival (Jungle/Forest) 80%.

Other Camp Staff and Locals

Use the following profile for minor NPCs and assign skills as required.

STR 50 CON 50 SIZ 55 DEX 65 INT 70
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 55 SAN 50 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Dodge 32% (16/6)

Bolivian Soldiers, entranced henchmen

STR 65 CON 60 SIZ 55 DEX 55 INT 50
APP 45 POW 45 EDU 45 SAN 25 HP 12*
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 9 Luck: 0

**Treat the soldiers as mooks—they are automatically incapacitated when reduced to half their hit points.*

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3 + 1D4;
or machete, 1D8 + 1D4
Shotgun 50% (25/10), damage
4D6/2D6/1D6 (10/20/50 yards)
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 35%, Listen 50%.

Armor: none.

Karnassh, disguised serpent man

STR 60 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 85 INT 85
APP — POW 75 EDU — SAN — HP 25*
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 15 Luck: 75

**A base of 13 + 12 points from the Flesh Ward spell already cast.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (usual range of unarmed attacks open to humanoids)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Flying Fang: thrown weapon (Throw skill) of serpent person design, with a range of 10 yards. These short metal snake-like spikes cause little damage (1D3) but inflict agonizing pain. Those hit must succeed with a Hard CON roll or fall to the ground in agony for 1D6 rounds. See **Flying Fang**, page 250, **Appendix B**.

Fighting 50% (25/10), damage 1D3 + 1D4
Bite 35% (17/7), damage 1D8 +
poison (see above)
Flying Fang 60% (30/12), damage 1D3 +
paralysis (see above)
.303 rifle 60% (30/12), damage 2D6 + 4
Dodge* 42% (21/8)

**If Karnassh's life is threatened and a soldier is at hand, you may wish to use "Look Out Master!" to save his life (see page 63, Pulp Cthulhu).*

Skills

Intimidate 65%, Listen 50%, Sciences: (Biology) 50%, (Chemistry) 45%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 60%.

Armor: 1-point scales.

Spells: Cloud Memory, Dominate, Fist Of Yog-Sothoth, Flesh Ward, Skinwalking (see **Appendix B**, see page 258), Words Of Power.

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent person; no Sanity loss while in human disguise.

Equipment: light backpack, containing: dynamite, a stone flute (see **Flute of Tsathoggua**, page 250, **Appendix B**), maps of the area, and a compass. Karnassh will use the flute to call any roaming formless spawn, should the heroes get close to uncovering his identity or plans. While he will not be able to control the spawn, he can be sure it will cause a distraction.

Vorsinnish and Ythyssh, disguised serpent men

STR 50 CON 50 SIZ 50 DEX 65 INT 80
APP — POW 65 EDU — SAN — HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 13 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (unarmed, weapon, or bite)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Fighting	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Bite	35% (17/7), damage 1D8 + poison (see above)
.303 rifle	60% (30/12), damage 2D6 + 4
Dodge	32% (16/6)

Skills

Intimidate 60%, Listen 30%, Sciences: (Biology) 40%, (Chemistry) 40%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%.

Armor: 1-point scales.

Spells: Skinwalking (see Appendix B, page 258), Words Of Power.

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent person; no Sanity loss while in human disguise.

Equipment: light backpack, containing: dynamite, map of the area, and a compass.

Serpent Hounds, the serpent man's best friend

These creatures are the result of serpent person genetic manipulation and look like a cross between Rottweiler dogs and Komodo dragons—large, lean, reptilian quadrupeds, capable of great bursts of speed. They bay like hounds, but with a sibilant edge, and track their prey using scent, regularly tasting the air with their long, forked tongues.

STR 90 CON 70 SIZ 80 DEX 80 INT 30
APP — POW 55 EDU — SAN — HP 15
DB: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 10 MP: 11 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite or pin down)

Toxic bite: when bitten the victim must make a CON roll: if failed, target develops a fever over the next few hours. The fever lasts for 4 days. Those who succeed in the CON roll suffer the ill effects for only 6 hours; while affected, the victim must apply a penalty die to all actions. The effect of multiple bites is not cumulative.

Pin down: target is pinned to the ground under the weight of the hound; bite attacks against a pinned target gain a bonus die.

Fighting (Bite)	50% (25/10), damage 1D4 + 1D6 + toxic bite (see above)
Pin down (mnvr)	50% (25/10), if successful, gain bonus die to next attack (see above)
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Armor: 2-point scaly hide.

Sanity loss: 0/1D4 to see a serpent hound.

Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua, elastic horrors

These black, protean beings change shapes in an instant, from toad-like lumps to elongated things with hundreds of rudimentary legs. They ooze through small cracks and enlarge their appendages at will. They are closely associated with Tsathoggua, often found in his temples or in sunless caverns.

STR 90 CON 50 SIZ 120 DEX 95 INT 65
APP — POW 50 EDU — SAN — HP 17
DB: +2D6 Build: 3 Move: 12 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (limited to 1 bite per round)

Fighting attacks: due to their extreme liquidity, they are able to attack in a wide variety of ways, forming whips, tentacles, and other appendages with which to bludgeon and strike their opponents.

Bite: the victim is instantly swallowed. Each round thereafter, the victim takes 1 point of damage from constriction—the damage done per round progressively increasing by 1 point (e.g. on the second round 2 points of damage are taken, and so forth). While swallowed, the victim may take no action whatsoever, though friends may attempt to slay the monster to free him or her. A formless spawn can make one bite attack per round and can continue to swallow prey until having swallowed its own SIZ in prey. While digesting a victim, a spawn may continue to fight but may not shift location without disgorging what it has swallowed.

Grab (mnvr): grabs an opponent using one of its whip-like appendages; range is always one-fifth of the monster's SIZ in yards (24 yards).

BOLIVIA

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 2D6 + 2D6
Grab (mnvr)	60% (30/12), damage 1D6 + 2D6
Bite	30% (15/6), damage swallowed (see above)
Dodge	47% (23/9)

Armor: immune to all physical weapons (even enchanted ones)—wounds simply snap closed after being opened. Spells may affect them, as does fire, chemicals, or other forces, such as explosives ripping them apart.

Spells: none.

Sanity loss: 1/1D10 Sanity points to see a formless spawn.

Mess o' Snakes, a carpet of writhing coils

This undulating mass is made up of hundreds of snakes of different kinds. Killing one or two will have little effect on the mass. Their numbers include deadly coral snakes (known locally as "20-minute snakes," for how long their bite takes to kill a human) and a variety of pit vipers; simply walking across the seething mass is probably suicide.

If an individual hero attempts to pick a path through the snakes, call for a Hard Dodge roll for each 10-feet. Wielding a flaming torch (or similar) to ward the snakes away provides a bonus die to the Dodge roll. If the roll is failed, a snake attacks the hero.

The characteristic values represent the whole mass, although the heroes do not actually need to kill all the snakes—they just need to cross through the mass. Any successful attack reduces the overall hit points of the snake mass.

SIZ 200 DEX 80 POW 60 Move: 7 HP: 400

Combat

Attacks per round: 3 (bite)

Bite: the toxicity of snake venom can vary. Roll 1D20 for damage; a low amount of damage can be interpreted as a bite from a snake of a less deadly variety. Victims must make an Extreme CON roll to resist the full effect of the poison: a successful roll indicates a lesser effect (any damage is halved). The use of an appropriate antivenin or suitable medical treatment halves the damage again.

Bite	40% (20/8), damage 1D20 poison (see above)
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Armor: none.

Sanity loss: none.

The Giant Snake, monstrous serpent

Four-feet across and over 100-feet long, this giant guardian snake attacks those who enter the Temple of the Dreamer. It will pursue intruders, but will not leave the temple.

STR 300 CON 260 SIZ 400 DEX 80 INT 30
APP — POW 75 EDU — SAN — HP 66
DB: +8D6 Build: 9 Move: 9 MP: 15 Luck: 75

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (bite and/or tail slam)

Poison: target should make an Extreme CON roll: if successful, the poison has no effect. Otherwise, the target is slowed, taking one penalty die on all physical actions for the next 1D6+2 rounds.

Sallow (fighting maneuver): if swallowed, the target automatically suffers 1D10 damage at the end of each round (a combination of suffocation and stomach acid). The snake's armor is bypassed if the swallowed target attacks from the inside. Being swallowed is a traumatic experience requiring a Sanity roll (1/1D8 loss).

Bite	60% (30/12), damage 1D6 + poison (see above)
Swallow (mnvr)	60% (30/12), the target (up to Build 1) is swallowed whole (see above)
Tail slam	60% (30/12), damage 8D6

Armor: 10-point scaly hide.

Sanity loss: 1/1D10 to see the giant snake.





Clinton

NEW YORK

I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse.

— Don Corleone, *The Godfather* (1972)

THE BIG APPLE
BITES BACK

OVERVIEW

Returning to New York, the heroes learn more about the organization they work for, becoming privy to some of Caduceus's less sinister secrets, and getting acquainted with what will be their base of operations for future missions. As the campaign progresses, the heroes discover that Caduceus has enemies on its very doorstep. The Inner Night has manipulated one of the most powerful crime families in New York into believing Caduceus to be a rival in the heroin trade—the heroes will be caught up in the Mob's violent action intended to protect its business interests.

Keeper Note

This chapter serves two purposes. It provides an overview of the Caduceus offices in New York, as well as related locations in the city. It also presents an ongoing plot thread about the Mafia, which can be woven into the downtime between missions. As both of these aspects weave in and out of the campaign, the Keeper may need to refer to this chapter more than any other. All the events in New York do not necessarily have to take place immediately after the heroes return from Bolivia, as the heroes will also (certainly during the first half of the campaign) return to New York following their other missions. Thus, use and refer back to this chapter whenever a mission has ended, letting the New York plot threads play out between the missions.

It is highly recommended that the Keeper present the downtime between missions as part of the campaign. It is in these quieter moments that the heroes will have opportunities to learn more of the truth about Caduceus, carry out their own investigations, and possibly take action. The Keeper should also look for opportunities to play out scenes with important characters from the heroes' backstories* and to introduce characters and elements from the Mafia plot during these gaps. It is these elements more than the individual missions that will make *The Two-Headed Serpent* come to life.

**Players should be reminded of the Sanity point reward that can be gained by spending time with aspects of their backstory (see Self-help, page 167, Call of Cthulhu Rulebook).*

The Keeper should also roleplay through each mission briefing, at least for as long as the heroes remain allied with Caduceus, helping the heroes to learn about and make connections with the personalities behind the organization. Where applicable, each chapter following contains a section outlining the briefing given by Caduceus. The briefing for the mission to North Borneo will be conducted by Quentin Shapiro, and following briefings given by Dr. Victor Gonçalves.

PLAYTEST NOTE

A number of heroes used the downtime between missions in interesting ways. One joined an illegal bare-knuckle boxing ring as a way of learning about what was going on in New York's underworld, which gave him access to a steady stream of information about the Mafia that proved useful as the campaign progressed. Another, who was a mechanic by profession, took a part-time job at a garage for a bit of normality. Unfortunately for him, the other mechanic who joined at the same time turned out to be Filemone Casale (see page 64) who had taken the job as a way of getting close to someone who worked for Caduceus.

The main use of downtime, however, was comparing notes about what exactly the heroes had got themselves into. With the aid of a Cthulhu Mythos roll, the heroes pieced together the true nature of Caduceus (and the way it mirrored the Inner Night) while sitting in a Manhattan bar, leading to a moment of shocked silence from the players as they realized just who they were working for. Most of the remaining downtime between missions was spent investigating Caduceus and looking for ways to stop their sinister plans.

is too skilled at hiding her feelings to let this show. This revelation leads her to look for ways to undermine Caduceus from within. If the heroes hit a dead end with their investigations before learning of Caduceus's operations on Snake Island or the search for the Cobra Crown in Calcutta, Parville will pass the heroes copies of secret documents stolen from Joshua Meadham (see **Handouts: New York 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6**).

- **Description:** a slender woman with icy blue eyes and a gaunt face. Her dark hair is shot through with gray, and she usually wears it tied back in a bun. Her clothing is always impeccable and neatly pressed.
- **Traits:** Parville consciously attempts to appear more stern and unapproachable than she actually is, largely to maintain her authority around the office. While she is too discreet for this to be obvious, Parville is an excellent judge of character. She quietly evaluates everyone she meets, keeping comprehensive mental notes on those around her.
- **Roleplaying hook:** secretly passes information to the heroes if they hit a dead end.

Philip Conners, 43, *pharmaceutical quartermaster*

Conners is a man who has fallen for the lie, believing Caduceus is fighting its own secretive war against the forces of the Mythos. He works on the 7th floor and is effectively the pharmaceutical quartermaster. He is also in charge of ensuring that all orders for new supplies are placed on time (every three months) to comply with the business contract's minimum order specifications. This means he is in close contact with the planning teams so that he can allocate resources to them, and then add replacements onto the next order, etc. It's a hectic job, with paperwork coming onto his desk frequently, every day. He keeps on top of it, though.

- **Description:** overweight and bespectacled, his hair is usually plastered to his forehead with sweat.
- **Traits:** he smokes like a chimney to the point where a thick haze of cigarette smoke hangs over his office.
- **Roleplaying hook:** keen to climb the ladder, he always asks the heroes to put in a good word about him to the boss.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Note: Joshua Meadham, Canning, Frank De Luca, and Dr. Gonçalves are detailed in **Appendix A** (page 240), as they may be encountered in multiple chapters.

Statistics for the following NPCs are presented at the end of this chapter.

Delores Parville, 38, *loyal secretary*

Parville has been Joshua Meadham's personal secretary for the past eight years, and he trusts her as much as he trusts any human. She was the first human initiated into the Cult of Yig, and Parville sees Joshua Meadham as the avatar of her new god. While she has no special abilities beyond the .22 automatic she keeps tucked into her purse, Parville would kill or die in service of her master.

Their relationship may change later in the campaign. If it suits the Keeper's requirements, Parville stumbles upon the truth about Joshua Meadham's plan for humanity. The sense of betrayal tears her world apart, although Parville

THE SETTING

In 1933, New York City is a bustling, growing, modern city. The Empire State Building has been open for two years, and the Manhattan skyline is becoming home to the skyscrapers that will define it in the public consciousness. The roads are filled with motor vehicles and the sidewalks throng with people from all over the world.

The Great Depression is still in full swing, and many of the people the heroes may meet are looking for work or desperate to make money any way they can. Soup kitchens are a common sight, as are people selling apples by the side of the road.

The heroes are first likely to arrive in New York in early April, after returning from Bolivia. The city is cool at this time of year, with temperatures varying between 6°C (40°F) and 16°C (60°F). The air is generally crisp and not too humid, and there are occasional light showers.

As the summer goes on, the weather gets warmer and drier. Temperatures peak in July, varying between a low of 20°C (65°F) and a high of 30°C (86°F).

CADUCEUS HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters for Caduceus are based in the Meadham Building on Park Row, on the east side of Manhattan Island. It is currently one of the tallest buildings in New York City, at eighteen stories, and is topped by a large dome.

It is here that Caduceus organizes its operations, handles its finances, and carries out various research and training projects in secure laboratories. Security in the building is unusually tight. The general staff is not permitted access to the top two floors (18 and 17), unless invited. It is here where Joshua Meadham and his inner circle have their offices. Access to floors 7 and 8 is also off limits, as this where “real” mission planning takes place. In addition, the general staff is barred from entering the laboratories in the lower basement.

Despite this secrecy, the rest of the building is given over to the innocuous activities of Caduceus’s cover mission. Traveling around these floors will bring the heroes into contact with accountants, administrators, lawyers, procurement clerks, and various layers of management. The vast majority of these people have no idea that there is more to Caduceus than meets the eye, although some may have questions. Every now and then someone will poke their nose where it doesn’t belong and end up getting fired or used as an experimental subject in the lower basements.

KEEPING OR RETURNING ARTIFACTS

Most of the missions the heroes are given involve the location or retrieval of artifacts. The Keeper should always check with the players what they do with these items at the end of each mission: do they hand them over to Caduceus as requested, hold onto them for their own purposes, or give them to a third party? If the heroes decide to keep any artifacts for themselves, the Keeper should ask the players where they are stored. If Joshua Meadham, Frank De Luca, or Canning become suspicious that items are going missing, they may arrange for the heroes to be followed in an attempt to recover stolen artifacts.

If the heroes hand artifacts over to Caduceus, most of them will be kept in the New York storeroom on the 7th floor, awaiting proper analysis and cataloging. As they reach their end goal, the organization has higher priorities than investigating new items. This will not be the case with the Cobra Crown (which turns up in **Chapter 7: Calcutta**), which Joshua Meadham takes directly to Snake Island.

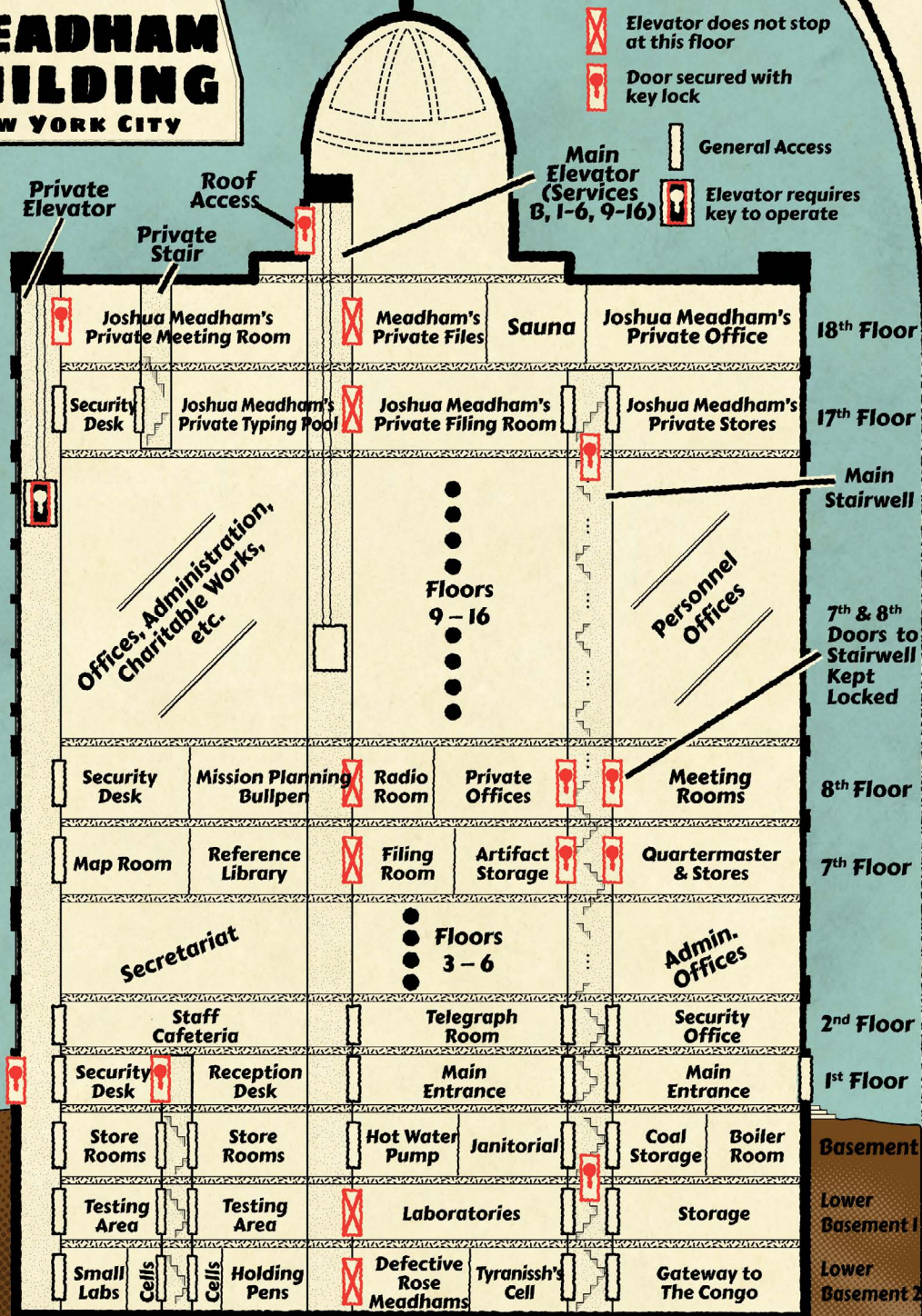
FLOOR 18

The 18th floor is entirely taken up with Joshua Meadham’s personal office. It is accessible only by a private elevator and a staircase, which only extends to the floor below. When Meadham is in the building, two security guards wait by the staircase. Canning can usually be found in Meadham’s office, looking out over the river and sitting with unnatural stillness. Both the elevator and stairwell are secured out of hours with extremely expensive locks (**Hard Locksmith** roll to pick) and monitored by security guards who patrol every fifteen minutes.

There is a huge hardwood desk to one side of the office, giving Meadham a commanding view looking west over Manhattan as he works. A conference table on the other side allows his (handpicked) visitors to look out over the East River and Welfare Island.

While the office is sparsely furnished, the furniture is solid, expensive, and tasteful. Floor-to-ceiling oak bookshelves hold volumes on pharmacology, medicine, and human anatomy. A smaller bookcase near to Meadham’s desk holds leather-bound books covering mythology, anthropology, and the occult. There are two Mythos tomes tucked in amongst the more benign volumes: a 15th

MEADHAM BUILDING NEW YORK CITY



century English translation of the *Book of Eibon* (*Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 226) and a copy of a pamphlet of notes on the *Zanthu Tablets* (*Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 234).

A Japanese lacquered cabinet holds drinks for visitors, although Joshua never partakes. Next to this cabinet stands a human skeleton, mounted on a metal stand and hung from a chain—this is actually the skeleton of the original Joshua Meadham. A small metal plaque on the top of the stand reads, “*Memento Mori*.” A number of wooden filing cabinets store vital documents, although these largely relate to mission planning and finances. The more interesting documents are kept hidden in a small iron safe, built into what appears to be the drawers of Joshua’s desk.

The safe is stout, expensive, and made of cast iron. It requires an Extreme **Locksmith** roll to break inside; if an initial attempt is failed, pushing the Locksmith roll should mean the second attempt is successful (whatever the outcome), with a failed roll meaning that the heroes get inside but either damage the safe visibly or are caught in the act. See **Joshua Meadham’s Safe** (nearby) for details on the safe’s contents.

A cage with a pair of guinea pigs sits beside the desk—in case Meadham needs a quick snack. An observant repeat visitor may notice (Hard **Spot Hidden** roll) that the guinea pigs have been replaced between visits.

One wall contains two doors set into its wooden paneling. The first leads to a private bathroom with a shower. The second opens into a small wood-lined sauna. While Meadham appears fully human, his skin still molts every few months, and he finds that the steam helps with the process. A successful Hard **Spot Hidden** roll uncovers a strip of dead skin under the wooden bench that Canning missed when cleaning the room; the skin is slightly mottled, as if by the faintest echo of scales.

Joshua Meadham’s Safe

Joshua keeps confidential documents and dossiers in his safe, along with a jade dagger crafted in the form of a twisting serpent; the dagger has no magical properties, but is antique and appeals to Joshua for aesthetic reasons.

The contents of the safe vary depending on the stage of the campaign:

- At any time: **Handout: New York 1**.
- After **Chapter 4: Oklahoma**: add the analysis of the R’lyeh Text (see **Extracts from the R’lyeh Text**, page 255, **Appendix B**).
- After **Chapter 5: Iceland**: add **Handouts: New York 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6**.

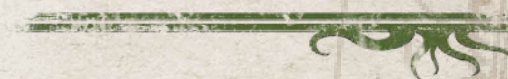


ENSURING THE HEROES FIND THESE CLUES

Handouts: New York 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 provide information vital to guiding the heroes to the climactic chapters of the campaign and letting them know what precisely is at stake. It is quite possible, however, that the heroes will overlook or decide not to break into Joshua Meadham’s office and safe. If this is the case, the Keeper should look for other opportunities to get the handouts into the heroes’ hands. Some possibilities include:

- A high-ranking member of Caduceus, such as Joshua Meadham, Canning, or Dr. Gonçalves, could have the documents on their person or stowed somewhere they consider safe.
- A breach of security protocols could mean that copies of the documents can be found in the filing room, in the Caduceus offices in Santos, or at the Meadham Estate.
- Another member of Caduceus, such as Delores Parville, may have become concerned about the activities of Joshua Meadham and his cabal. This mole could trust the heroes enough to share stolen documents with them.
- Inner Night spies may have stolen the documents, in which case they could turn up anytime the heroes cross paths with a high-ranking member of the Inner Night.

Remember that the focus of this campaign is action, and the heroes should never be at a loss for what to do next because they haven’t thought to look in the right place.



FLOOR 17

The 17th floor is given over to Joshua Meadham’s personal secretarial pool. His personal secretary, Delores Parville, manages the other staff and carefully controls access to Meadham.

The rest of the women in the pool know varying amounts about the nature of Caduceus, but none is aware of its true mission. Most simply see Joshua Meadham as a great, if eccentric, man who is striving to make the world a better place.

The floor itself is more-or-less one big room, with a dozen people typing or answering calls at their desks. Parville has her own office, and there are a number of

CHAPTER 2

Handout: NYC 1

Frank De Luca
Chief of Security
Meadham Building
New York City

March 3rd, 1933

Re: Break-in at the Connecticut Estate, February 24th

My men have completed their investigation of last month's break-in at the Meadham Estate. Their findings are:

- There is no indication of this being an inside job or of Caduceus staff providing assistance to burglars.
- The dead guards were killed by sorcerous means.
- Nothing of value was taken, but every building had been searched extensively.
- The desecration of the temple suggests that the intruders were enemies of the Father of Snakes.
- The lack of dead snakes in the temple indicates that the intruders had nothing to fear from snake venom.

All of these factors indicate that the Inner Night are involved. Given the public nature of the Meadham Estate, it will be difficult to defend should they return. No materials relating to Caduceus operations should be stored at the Estate for the immediate future. Any artifacts or religious texts should be removed to the storeroom on the 7th floor of the Meadham Building, and any scientific materials and specimens should be secured in the laboratory in the lower basement. All sensitive documents should be kept in Mr. Meadham's personal safe.

Given that we will be unable to relocate the temple, we will retain a presence at the Connecticut Estate. I recommend that we increase the security presence at the estate by three men per shift and double the patrol frequency. We shall have to use human guards due to lack of essential resources, and I will vet them personally.

Replacements for the trained guard dogs killed by the intruders are also essential. Can I please request that we do not attempt to use those lizard hybrids we experimented with last year? Their baying attracted attention from neighbors, and Jenkins needed to have his arm amputated after the incident.



Dr. Victor Gonçalves
Caduceus Chief Researcher
Meadham Building
New York City

March 6th, 1933

Summary of Research on the Cobra Crown

Although we have yet to determine if there is any truth to the rumors that the Cobra Crown has resurfaced in Calcutta, my research team has managed to find many details about the Crown and its power in our library. The key facts that we have corroborated from multiple sources can be summarized as follows:

- The Cobra Crown was created by the serpent people before recorded history. It has been referenced in various myths and historical texts as allowing its wearer to command snakes and reptiles. There is no indication that this extends to control over serpent people.
- Putting on the Crown involves some form of trial or ordeal. Only those found worthy are then granted its power.
- The Cobra Crown is said to be paired with the Serpent Scepter. Both are reputed to be located in the Temple of the Dreamer in Bolivia. We will be able to confirm this when our field team recovers the Dreamer.
- Given the sightings of the Crown across Asia over the past two thousand years, it seems likely that it has long since been stolen from the temple. There have been no mentions of the Serpent Scepter being seen with it.

Given your personal interest in the Cobra Crown, I have taken the liberty of putting one of the company's aircraft on standby to take you to Calcutta as soon as we confirm that this is not another false lead. I have also reserved a suite at the Great Eastern Hotel for the next two months to ensure its availability at short notice.

Our informants in Calcutta have warned us that the Inner Night is active in the area and that your daughter has also taken an interest in gaining control of the Crown. I suggest you approach with caution.

Gonçalves

Handout: NYC 3



Dr. Sérgio Cerqueira
 Station Chief
 Caduceus Field Office
 Santos
 Brazil

February 27th, 1933

Mission Update: Ilha da Queimada Grande

The research provided by Dr. Gonçalves has proved correct. After following his most recent suggestions, the Ilha da Queimada Grande field team succeeded in stabilizing the portal. Unfortunately, they are unable to confirm that the exit point is located on Mu and have had to close the portal for the foreseeable future.

What our research failed to indicate is that either the portal, or possibly the exit point, is guarded. Shortly after opening the portal, the field team was assaulted by a large, unidentified reptilian creature. This creature proved not only violent but also capable of some act of sorcery that resulted in the deaths of all but one member of the field team. The bodies were torn apart and, in most cases, were rendered unidentifiable.

We have since replenished the field team and wish to proceed with caution. Are you able to offer any advice on this entity and how it may be neutralized?

Dr. Cerqueira

This sounds like the Old Enemy, still bearing a grudge about your ancestors' harnessing of their god. We had hoped they had abandoned Yaddith-Gho in the millennia since Mu's departure, but apparently they are tenacious.

There may be enough of the reptile in their nature that the Cobra Crown may provide a means to control or neutralize them. I advise stepping up search efforts in Calcutta, as current research supports our conjecture that it is the most likely location.

Gonçalves



Dr. Victor Gonçalves
Caduceus Chief Researcher
Meadham Building
New York City

April 30th, 1933

Update on the Activities of the Inner Night

Our informants within the Inner Night have recently provided the last pieces of information I needed to piece together the scope of their current activities. I regret to inform you that the situation is even worse than we had believed.

Sashannal appears to be mirroring our efforts to reach Mu. She may also be monitoring our activities, ready to take the Gate for herself once we have made it safe. At minimum, I recommend that we proceed with the extreme countermeasure we discussed deploying around the Ilha da Queimada Grande. This should at least stop any unauthorized vessels from approaching the island.

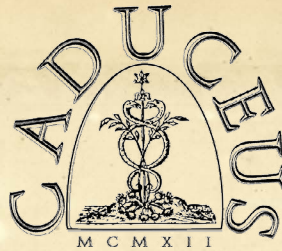
Once on Mu, it appears that the Inner Night plan to return the island back to our plane of existence and activate the volcano network that your ancestors constructed in the Citadel (which some of our more excitable researchers refer to as the "Doomsday Device").

If the Inner Night were to succeed, our current estimate is that the surface of the Earth would become uninhabitable for many hundreds of years. This would affect not only my race but yours as well. The Inner Night appears to have access to subterranean facilities that will allow them to survive while the rest of us perish.

Under no circumstances must we allow Sashannal or any other members of the Inner Night to reach the Citadel. If they have other unknown means to do so before we can make our own way to Mu, not only are our own plans imperiled - so is our very existence.

Gonçalves

Handout: NYC 5



Dr. Victor Gonçalves
Caduceus Chief Researcher
Meadham Building
New York City

May 3rd, 1933

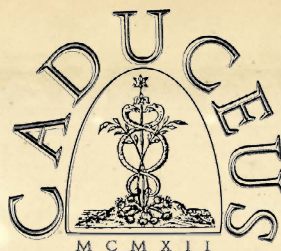
Update on the Activities of the Dreamer

After debriefing employees and agents who have interacted with Tyranissh (often referred to as The Dreamer by said individuals), we believe that we have established some troubling details.

- Tyranissh's allegiance lies not with Ylg or Tsathoggua, but with Ghatanothoa. This makes her an unknown factor in the current conflict.
- On learning more about the current schism between our faith and the worshippers of the abomination, she has become openly hostile to both of us. She believes that your people have "lost their way" and that it is her role to "fix the problems you have created."
- She has taken an unsettling degree of interest in our experiments with hybridization technology. In fact, if her claims are to be believed, she may even have invented this technology during her days on Mu.
- In conversation with some of her more trusted confidants, Tyranissh has expressed an interest in returning to Mu, and the Citadel in particular. In combination with her interest in hybridization technology, this makes me fear that she has plans to make use of the facilities there to effect change on a massive scale.
- She has also developed an obsession with the location of the Cobra Crown. It is possible that she has the same plans for it as we have.

My recommendation is that Tyranissh be treated as hostile. She is too useful a link to the past to eliminate completely, but we cannot in any way rely on her cooperation. My fear is that she will become as grave a threat to our plans as Sasharnal.

Gonçalves



Dr. Victor Gonçalves
Caduceus Chief Researcher
Meadham Building
New York City

April 10th, 1933

Research on the Facilities Available at the Citadel

Before I present my report, please let me apologize for the paucity of the detail. It has been unexpectedly difficult to find written records about the Citadel. Much of the information we were able to collate comes from Tyranissh, and I fear that her heretical beliefs and hostility to our organization make her an untrustworthy source.

Assuming the Citadel has survived the past ten thousand years, we may be able to expect the following.

- The amount of energy available to the Citadel and its systems is essentially unlimited. Ancient writings refer to your ancestors harnessing the power of a god. Given the location of Yaddith-Gho and Tyranissh's hostile reaction when pressed for details, we can assume the god in question is Ghatanothoa.
- The proximity to Ghatanothoa presents potential danger: Multiple sources give dire warnings about the "curse" placed upon those who look upon the god. The recent incident at the Meadham Estate would indicate that this is not merely superstition.
- Tyranissh confirms that there are large-scale manufacturing facilities available at the Citadel. It appears that we will be able to create any biological agents you require. There are also facilities for the assembly of biomechanical entities, and Tyranissh believes that they would allow the mass creation of insects.
- There are mechanisms in place for the manufacture and control of transport spheres. We believe these may be connected to the operation of the so-called "Doomsday Device."
- There are automated defense systems protecting the Citadel, although these may no longer be active. Tyranissh last saw the Citadel long before the final fate of Mu and is unable to confirm the reports of newer, stronger defenses.

At the risk of being too forthright, may I please request that you share the rest of your plans for the use of these facilities with me? I can offer much more informed advice if I know what resources you may require.

Gonçalves

filing rooms filled with stout cabinets. There is little incriminating material kept on site, although time and a **Library Use** roll allows a hero to learn that Caduceus has an interest in Snake Island off the coast of Brazil (see **Chapter 8: Snake Island**) and that Meadham has had operatives searching Calcutta for an ancient artifact called the Cobra Crown (see **Chapter 7: Calcutta**). The location of Joshua Meadham's Connecticut estate can also be discovered here (see **The Meadham Estate**, page 57).

FLOORS 7 AND 8

Once the heroes have been initiated into the second tier of the Caduceus organization, they are given access to the 7th and 8th floors. This is where the real mission planning takes place. These offices are filled with maps, notes, and clippings stuck to walls and cork boards, teetering piles of old books, ancient artifacts from across the world, and artists' pads scrawled with odd diagrams.

The team here track the movements of the Inner Night, trying to work out their schemes and how to stop them ahead of time; this involves collating information from news sources, paid informants and spies within the Inner Night, as well as research into older texts and tablets containing details of the Second Serpent Person Empire. Heroes talking to the staff on these floors will encounter people poached from military intelligence, newspaper offices, private investigation firms, and the halls of academia.

The offices are abuzz with activity—depict them like a busy newsroom, with telephones going off constantly, people shouting questions and answers across the room, and impromptu meetings taking place around desks. The air is thick with cigarette smoke. While most of the office is open-plan, the senior planners have private offices. Other doors lead to storerooms, filing rooms, and meeting rooms. There is also a soundproofed room on the 8th floor where a small group of radio operators stays in touch with the various field teams.

After returning from North Borneo (see **Chapter 3**), where their previous handler is likely to have met an unfortunate fate, the heroes will be given a new handler, based out of these offices. Dr. Victor Gonçalves is a medical doctor, originally from Brazil, and one of the highest-ranking humans in Caduceus. Gonçalves has been initiated into the Cult of Yig, but has no idea of what the end goal of Caduceus really is. He handles most briefings and debriefings; acting as a point of contact for any requests the heroes have for information, equipment, or funding.

Dr. Gonçalves has been told to use the heroes to slow down the Inner Night's plans, but to consider them as disposable assets. If they learn too much or ask the wrong questions, he will arrange for them to have a fatal accident.

The Storeroom

Items brought back by field teams are kept in a storeroom on the 7th floor. Once they have been examined and cataloged, the more useful items are kept by the inner cabal, given to researchers to help with their work or, on rare occasions, issued into the hands of field teams.

The process of identifying all these items takes more resources than Caduceus can spare at this late stage of the plan, so the storeroom is filled with clutter. The metal shelves creak with bulging folders full of documents, old and new; ancient carvings and clay tablets, usually of ophidian subjects; strange items of technology, although mostly non-functional after millennia of disuse; and jars and bottles full of liquids and biological specimens.

Most of these items are junk, and finding anything useful here is a matter of chance. Anyone spending a few hours going through the shelves may attempt a **Luck** roll: with a success, roll 1D6 on the following table to see what the hero has uncovered. Each entry is explained in more detail in the artifacts section of **Appendix B**.

1. The Five Deadly Venoms (page 249)
2. An ornately carved copper box, green with verdigris, containing three Winged Vipers (page 250)
3. A Flame Pistol (page 251)
4. The Coiled Watcher (page 249)
5. An elder thing Gravity Manipulator (page 251)
6. Three Flying Fangs (page 250)

A **Hard Spot Hidden** roll also reveals a battered old book, spine broken and pages coming loose, tucked under a pile of spiritualist pamphlets. This is an original edition of the *Sussex Manuscript* (*Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 230), retrieved from the collection of a British peer who had been blackmailed into consulting for the Inner Night. The peer has since met with a violent death.

The Filing Room

This large room contains banks of metal filing cabinets. The files stored here are research materials and mission records. As these files are only accessible by trusted humans, they reflect Caduceus's real missions, and there is little pretense of medical work in the invoices, shipping manifests, and so on. Anything pertaining to the secret activities of the inner cabal, however, is kept in the filing room on the 17th floor, or in Meadham's own office.

While the filing system is well organized, there is a lot of paperwork here, and it may take heroes some time to find anything unless they know specifically what they are looking for. This is a good location to provide the heroes with a second chance to learn bits of information that they may have missed elsewhere, especially in relation to the Inner Night, Tyranissh, or the history of the serpent people. Again, the filing room on the 17th floor will normally be the only source of information about Snake Island, the Cobra Crown, or other information Joshua Meadham would prefer to keep to himself.

The heroes may also use the records contained here to help with research into the Mythos. Anyone spending a day reading through the papers may use a **Library Use** roll instead of a Cthulhu Mythos roll to try to learn more about a topic of interest; if a Hard level of success (or better) is the result, the researcher also finds a spell of the Keeper's choosing.

THE LOWER BASEMENTS

While there is a basement containing facilities normally found in a building like this—janitorial supplies, storerooms, boilers, and so on—there are two additional lower level basements, hidden from most Caduceus employees. The private elevator that runs up to Joshua Meadham's office on the 18th floor also serves these floors, requiring a key to enter and operate; this can be circumvented with a successful combined **Locksmith** and **Electrical Repair** roll. A stairwell that runs down behind the main security desk can also access the secret basements. The door to this stairwell is kept locked at all times, and the desk is manned 24 hours a day.

The upper of the two secret basements is given over to laboratories, largely used to test and assess artifacts, chemicals, and entities brought back by field teams. The initial assessment of Tyranissh will be carried out here, as will examination of the braincase and any chemicals recovered from the Iceland chapter.

The lower basement is filled with small laboratories and holding pens. One corridor contains a Gate that leads to the facility in the Congo (see **Chapter 6: Belgium Congo**). A handful of human test subjects can be found in the lower basement, subjected to mind control experiments or pumped full of growth or petrification agents to assess their effect on human physiology.

When not involved in active experimentation, the human, animal, and Mythos entity test subjects are kept in the holding pens. In addition to partially petrified humans, mice the size of ponies, and voormis with bolts and wires driven through their skulls, there is a row of iron cages

containing mutated variants of Rose Meadham. Caduceus has tried to use her genetic material to create a pliable replacement for her, to use as an agent to sow confusion in the Inner Night; however, progress has been slow. The mix of human and serpent person genetic material, used to modify unwilling human test subjects, has resulted in creatures that look half-melted or have limbs growing out of the wrong areas of their bodies, or are hairless and covered entirely in scales (including the eyes), or that cry out in keening voices, tearing away at their faces with claw-like fingers.

The room in which Tyranissh will be kept, if recovered by the heroes, is significantly more pleasant. It is decorated with murals and serpent person filigree, in a style similar to the chamber in the Bolivian temple in which she is discovered in **Chapter 1**.

BUILDING SECURITY

There are armed security guards on duty at all times. Most are normal humans who believe they are working for a medical aid charity and have no idea what Caduceus really is. The exceptions are those who guard the lower basements and the 17th and 18th floors; there are always, at least, two on guard at any time. These are generally serpent people in human guise, although they sometimes employ humans to make up numbers.

THE MEADHAM ESTATE, CONNECTICUT

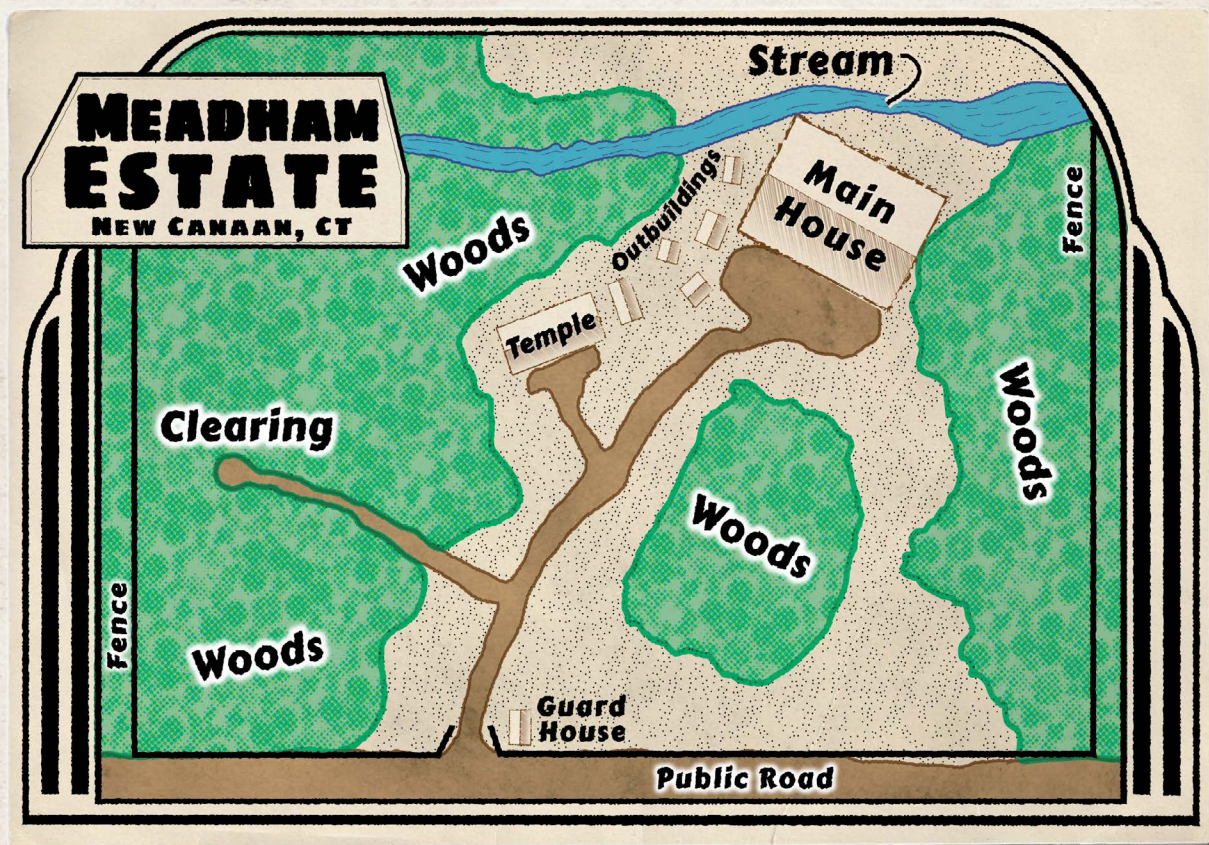
Joshua Meadham's country estate in New Canaan, Connecticut is now also part of the Caduceus organization. While most of the world only knows of the grand house and its grounds as a personal residence, it now largely serves as a temple of Yig used by the highest ranks of Caduceus.

ESTATE'S GROUNDS

The Meadham estate is set on 40 acres of private grounds, most of which are wooded. A tall fence surrounds the central estate, with barbed wire running across the top. When the temple is in use for ceremonies, Joshua Meadham brings trusted guards to patrol the grounds.

The Clearing

There is a dirt track through the woodlands that is wide enough to take vehicles; deep ruts and tire tracks from



heavy vehicles are embedded in the mud. A successful **Track** or **Natural World** roll reveals that the level of plant growth on the path indicates that the path has only been lightly used in recent weeks.

The path leads through the woods to a clearing. The ground is muddy and uneven in places, and the trunks of torn-down trees pepper the outskirts. The center of the clearing is blackened and scorched as if it has been struck by lightning. These marks radiate out across the clearing in twisted spokes. These charred marks are the residue from Joshua Meadham's initial attempts to open a Gate to Mu.

As Joshua Meadham's followers learned to their cost, any attempt to use the Gate spell to connect to Mu ends in disaster. The presence of the god Ghatanothoa on Mu acts as a beacon. By the time the Gate breaks through the layers of higher dimensions required to connect to the pocket universe that contains Mu, it locks onto the strongest source of magical energy it can find, connecting directly to Ghatanothoa. Once this happens, those in the presence of the Gate are affected as if they had seen Ghatanothoa himself, their flesh hardening until it becomes a living prison for the mind within.

Dotted around the edge of the clearing are a number of what appear to be statues. They are serpent people, their skins turned to rigid, leathery hide. They are all

still alive, locked in place, unable to move or die. Anyone examining them will see the serpent people's eyes moving in unmistakable panic; every other part of their forms is frozen in place. Realizing they are still alive provokes a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss). There is no longer any danger in the clearing, but Meadham and his followers avoid this area out of fear and disgust.

The Sheds

Numerous sheds surround the main house, filled with rodent cages and animal feed. Some have been neglected, as the estate falls into disuse, and the animals inside are dead and rotting.

THE MAIN BUILDING

As work towards the end goal has accelerated, any pretense that the estate is a home has dropped. The main building itself is used only as a refectory and dormitory for those attending ceremonies at the temple, its luxurious bedrooms filled with sleeping bags and mats while the kitchens and dining room are given over to cages full of live rodents.

Rooms such as the library, drawing room, and billiard room have been abandoned, with dust covers over the furniture and spider webs in the corners of the rooms.

THE TEMPLE

This freestanding structure appears to be a large guesthouse. It is shuttered at all times and has sturdy steel doors, disguised by wooden paneling. Inside is the temple of Yig, used by the inner cabal of Caduceus.

There is a single room inside the structure. At its center, hundreds of venomous snakes writhe in a wide sunken pit, surrounded by steps. A huge gilded stone statue of the Father of Serpents looms over the pit, and there is an altar before it that looks almost Aztec in design. Only offerings of dead animals, gold, and blood are placed on the altar: there are no stains to indicate sacrifices.

Murals on the wall depict Yig towering over the world, devouring the unworthy like so many mice. A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll indicates that this rendition of Yig is substantially larger and more bestial than most, possibly representing some primal form of the god worshiped in Mu.

THE INITIATION RITUAL

If a hero proves him or herself worthy and loyal, Caduceus may offer him or her the opportunity to join the inner circle by becoming a worshipper of Yig.

Of course, this is not the whole truth—the serpent people consider any human agreeing to become a worshipper as little more than a useful idiot. However, it is still an effective method of keeping valuable resources within the organization. If a hero refuses this offer, the cabal will consider them untrustworthy.

If the heroes allow themselves to be initiated into the Cult of Yig, the ceremony takes place in this temple. Meadham, Gonçalves, and other high-ranking members of Caduceus escort them to the estate late at night. The initiates are stripped and bathed in rainwater from a barrel, which has gone mildly stagnant, before being dressed in gossamer-thin robes made of shed snakeskin.

Before they enter the temple, the initiates are told to drink from a golden goblet, fashioned like a snake's head, with rubies for eyes. This contains a distillation of serpent person venom, which acts as a powerful hallucinogen. Anyone drinking it needs to pass a Hard **CON** roll or be racked by painful spasms for the following 24 hours; these spasms add a penalty die to all rolls until the effects wear off. Additionally, anyone failing the roll suffers delusions throughout this period, as if he or she were having a bout of madness.

The ritual itself requires the heroes to be led into the temple, through the sea of venomous snakes (none of which will attack the heroes unless provoked), and to the altar. Here, Meadham wraps the initiates further in shed snakeskin until they are completely bound—symbolically

limbless. The initiates then must wriggle free, emerging into the pit of snakes; this calls for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss).

Throughout the process, the other attendees chant in Naacal, celebrating the initiates' rebirth as children of Yig. Anyone undergoing delusions at this stage may perceive themselves as being devoured by a massive serpent and reborn as one of its young.

Those heroes who back out of the initiation at any stage face no immediate reprisals, but take a penalty die to all social skill rolls against Joshua Meadham, Gonçalves, or other members of the inner cabal, to reflect the lack of trust.

Any heroes initiated into the Cult of Yig receive some limited protection from snakes, taking half damage from any snake or serpent person venom. No snake will ever attack an initiate unprovoked—although this does not prevent attacks from serpent people. If an initiate attacks a snake or serpent person without provocation, not only does he or she lose this protection but all snakes and other creatures beloved of Yig attack the hero on sight.

Those undergoing the initiation also receive 1D6 points of **Cthulhu Mythos** and 1D10 points of **Other Language** (Naacal) to reflect their deeper understanding of the mysteries of Yig.

THE MAFIA SITUATION, NEW YORK

Following the Castellammare War amongst the various Mafia families in New York City (February 1930 to April 1931), the Bonanno crime family dominated the city's trade in illegal gambling, loan-sharking, and narcotics. The Inner Night has identified them as ideal pawns to use in their conflict against the Cult of Yig and Caduceus.

The Inner Night has killed a mid-level Mafioso, Martino Bresciani, and replaced him with one of their agents. He has leaked information to his superiors in the Bonanno crime family that a rival drug operation has come to light, operating out of a warehouse in the Red Hook docks. He claims drugs are being smuggled into the city through shipments coming in from Africa.

In reality, the dock is a Caduceus storage facility. This is where the Cult of Yig stores some of its larger equipment, such as it would use to build its laboratory in Africa (see **Chapter 6: Belgian Congo**), and also a cache of genetically engineered mosquitoes. These insects were part of an early experiment to find a delivery mechanism for the disease to turn humanity into a slave race. The problem with the mosquitoes was that while the genetic engineering enabled them to become semi-effective carriers for the disease, it



dramatically reduced their lifespan. While the insects were completely ineffectual for wide-scale use, the serpent folk scientists of Caduceus believe they could become a useful weapon for surgical strikes (with a little work). They have attempted to maintain a stock of mosquitoes, breeding replacements, although their efforts have only been partially successful. As the mosquitoes' lifespans are so short, their numbers are slowly dwindling. Breeding new replacements is taking too long.

The mosquitoes have been shipped to a storage facility in the Red Hook docks. From there, small batches are occasionally taken to the laboratories under the Meadham Building for use in further genetic experiments. Keeping them off-site ensures that if there were a containment breach, it would not affect the Meadham Building. Instead, the press would report it as an outbreak of a strange disease in the Red Hook slums, arising from the poor conditions there.

Rose Meadham had knowledge of the warehouse and its contents before she left Caduceus. Her hope is to incite the Mafia to attack the warehouse by convincing them that Caduceus is a threat to their narcotics operation and that this will, ultimately, lead to a larger reprisal attack by the Mafia on Caduceus's headquarters. However, the humans are not as easily manipulated as she had hoped. Francesco Garofalo, underboss of the Bonanno crime family, to whom the information has been passed, has decided to investigate the situation before going in with all guns blazing. He has instructed another Mafioso, Giovanni Bonventre, to get someone in Caduceus to shed more light on this problem. They have chosen to put pressure on the heroes. These events are likely to culminate in an attack on the Meadham Building, which ideally, should happen late in the campaign.

HEROES' INTRODUCTION

This sub-scenario begins when the heroes are in New York City, between missions for Caduceus, and as soon as they start to voice concerns amongst each other about the nature and intent of the organization. As such, they will probably still be members of Caduceus at this point. Even if the heroes have left the organization very early in the campaign (regardless of whether or not they have decided to ally themselves with Tyrannis), or if they have turned to the Inner Night, the events of this chapter should unfold in a similar fashion.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: MAFIA

Giuseppe "Joseph" Bonanno, 28, *Boss*

Bonanno is the Sicilian-born Boss of the Bonanno family. In the aftermath of the Castellammarese War, Giuseppe Bonanno was one of the youngest ever Bosses at the age of 26. He was awarded most of the former Maranzano crime family, which became the Bonanno family. Bonanno is one of the founding members of "the Commission," established to arbitrate disputes between gangs.

- **Description:** suave, charismatic, well-dressed, with slicked back hair. Carries himself with confidence bordering on arrogance.
- **Traits:** the man in charge, regardless of the situation or whomever he is dealing with. People should pay him respect. If not, he will make sure that they learn a lesson for their poor manners. Bonanno is nicknamed "Joe Bananas" but despises this. This, and disrespecting his authority, will make him angry.
- **Roleplaying hook:** Bonanno is all in favor of using third parties (such as the heroes) to do any dirty work—he just doesn't want them to know that directly, otherwise they could try to extract a price he is not comfortable with.

Phillipe Rappa, 40, *Advisor*

Rappa is Consigliere and one of the highest members of the Bonanno family. He is actively engaged in one of the Bonanno family's most popular business fronts—garment manufacturing. He co-owns the R&F Coat Company, based in Brooklyn, although his influence extends to other companies in the industry. Giuseppe Bonanno is a partner in the firm.

- **Description:** tall, slender, well-dressed, with a smell of high-quality aftershave. Dark and intense eyes.
- **Traits:** a quiet man, preferring to listen rather than talk in most situations. He is always paying attention and ready to act. He is a brilliant advisor with a sharp, analytical mind.
- **Roleplaying hook:** if the heroes are being evasive or holding back on anything, Rappa will notice and start asking pointed questions to get to the truth.

AMERICAN MAFIA FAMILIES

Boss: the head of the family. A dictator figure, they receive a cut of every operation carried out by a member of their family.

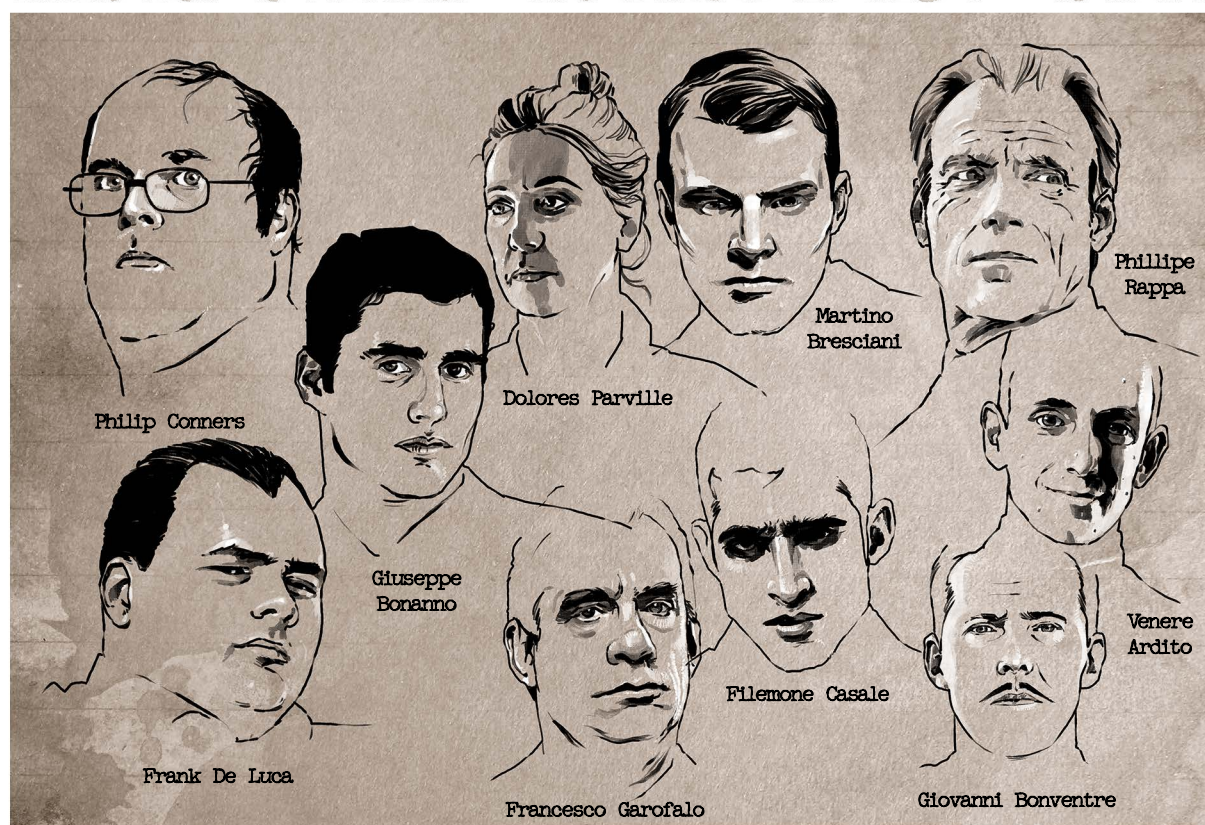
Consigliere: the Boss's right-hand man and chief advisor. Acts as a mediator in disputes between members of the family. Technically, the third-highest-ranking member of the family.

Underboss: appointed directly by the Boss. Runs the day-to-day operation of the crime family. In return, they receive a percentage of the Boss's cut from family operations. They are the first in line to become the acting Boss if anything happens to head of the family.

Caporegime (or Capo, Captain, Skipper): Mafioso in charge of individual "crews" (groups of 10-20 Soldiers, with many Associates below them); they are appointed by the Boss but report to the Underboss. Depending on how many people they have in their crew, they can sometimes wield more power than some of their superiors.

Soldier: traditionally, Soldiers can only be of full Italian heritage. Soldiers perform the main work of the crime family (e.g. assault, murder, extortion, intimidation, etc.). In return, they are given profitable rackets to run by their Caporegime and have full access to their family's network of connections and power.

Associate: these individuals are not full Mafiosi, but they work for the family. They can perform some of the same duties as a Soldier, or they can be tasked with carrying out more menial duties. What is especially helpful is that they can be used to keep attention off the family. Non-Italians never rise further than this level within the family, but they can potentially obtain some degree of power.



Francesco "Frank Carroll" Garofalo, 42, Underboss

After the Castellammarese War, Garofalo was appointed as Underboss of the Bonanno family and is involved in establishing the various drug trafficking routes the family use to bring goods into New York City. He is also responsible for ordering numerous hits on the enemies of the family. Given his involvement in the setting up of the drugs operation, for him not to already have heard of the Red Hook situation has made him very suspicious of the news that Bresciani has brought him. Thus, he has tasked Bonventre with looking into it for him.

- **Description:** smart suit, hair neatly combed, receding hairline, and a rugged face more suited to looking stern than jovial.
- **Traits:** somewhat contrary to his appearance, he is usually smiling and friendly, and comes across as an unthreatening individual. In reality, he is a serious, stone-hearted criminal, who has no problem with killing anyone that gets in his way.
- **Roleplaying hook:** he wants the heroes to investigate Caduceus—but will be wary of them.

Giovanni "John" Bonventre, 32, Caporegime

Bonventre is the uncle of Giuseppe Bonanno. He became a Caporegime when Giuseppe Bonanno was awarded control of the family after the Castellammarese War. Bonventre has numerous business interests, including a dairy farm, a garment factory, and the Green Garden Café at 141 Central Avenue in Brooklyn. He has been tasked by Garofalo to look into the Red Hook situation.

- **Description:** well-groomed in a sharp business suit, piercing yet small eyes, receding hairline, with a high forehead, and a thin mustache.
- **Traits:** he treats everything as business, and business is very much like waging war against the competition. He never makes a hasty decision, never goes in without knowing all the facts, and carefully plans every move. He is polite, efficient, and well-mannered.
- **Roleplaying hook:** he will question the heroes to find out where their true loyalties lie. He wants the heroes to help him strike at the heart of Caduceus.

Martino Bresciani (Hlysa), appears 35, *Serpent Person masquerading as a Mafioso*

Caporegime in the Bonanno crime family, Bresciani was born in Sicily and moved to Brooklyn with his family as a child. He became involved with the Mafia as a teenager, becoming one of Maranzano's chief assassins. He continues to perform hits on instruction from Garofalo.

Bresciani has been consumed by Hlysa, a serpent man, who has taken his place using The Serpent's New Skin spell (see Appendix B, page 257). He claims to have received a tip-off from one of his sources about the drug operation in Red Hook and has passed this information up the chain to Garofalo. When faced with the prospect of defeat or destruction, he will cast Become The Darkness as a last gesture of defiance.

- **Description:** average height, muscular, with broad shoulders. Wears a jet-black suit, shirt, tie, and hat.
- **Traits:** very serious, rarely smiles or appears happy; he acts very much like a soldier. His serpent person nature is hinted at by the fact he does not blink.
- **Roleplaying hook:** if exposed as an agent of the Inner Night, he will seek to convince the heroes that Caduceus is evil and must be stopped.

Filemone Casale, 36, *Mafioso muscle*

Casale is a Soldier working for Bonventre. Ex-Italian Army, he was dishonorably discharged for assaulting a senior officer. Soon after, he became involved with the Mafia as a gun for hire. After immigrating to New York City, he was put in touch with Bonventre and has worked for him ever since. He has been tasked by Bonventre to find out what he can about the heroes.

- **Description:** tall and well built, packed into a tight fitting suit that has seen better days. His eyebrows nearly meet over dark eyes that are sunk back in their sockets.
- **Traits:** relies on brute force and ignorance to get the job done, both of which he has in abundance. He appears to be an inch away from anger most of the time.
- **Roleplaying hook:** will get angry with the heroes pretty quickly if they don't do exactly as he tells them. He won't tell them twice to do anything, as the second time he'll resort to using his fists.

Venere Ardito, 34, *Mafioso muscle and safe cracker*

Ardito is a Soldier working for Bonventre. Formerly a burglar during his time in Italy, he was recruited by the Mafia and has since become an adept safecracker and explosives expert. Following Mussolini's crackdown on the Mafia, he fled to America, where he became connected with the Maranzano

family. He soon found himself under the wing of Bonventre and has been there ever since. He has been tasked by Bonventre to break into the heroes' homes to find out what he can about their involvement with Caduceus.

- **Description:** short and thin, weasel-like, with oily black hair, small beady eyes, and a spotty complexion.
- **Traits:** a specialist, he prefers to work alone rather than as part of a team. He will take orders but frequently thinks his judgment is better than others (hence the desire to work alone).
- **Roleplaying hook:** if the heroes manage to disarm or overpower him, he will fold like a cheap suit and do anything they say, as he is scared of pain.

SHADOWS

Once the heroes start to be concerned about Caduceus, they should feel that they are being watched as they move through New York City. They do not recognize any faces in the crowd—suggesting that it might not be Caduceus at work—but the feeling persists. A successful Extreme Spot Hidden roll reveals a low-ranking Mafioso watching from a subway entrance or similar. The frequency of the surveillance should grow rapidly.

In each instance, the Mafioso should be able to vanish into the crowd, making it very difficult for him to be caught—but not impossible. If the heroes instigate and succeed in a chase, they could catch the watcher but a subsequent interrogation reveals he is little more than a disposable mook (one of the Mafia's non-Sicilian associates) who knows nothing. All he can reveal is that he was told to watch the heroes and report what he sees to his boss (Ardito). If the heroes get the mook to describe his boss, any heroes with contacts on the police force can quickly identify the boss as Venere Ardito. Furthermore, police contacts can confirm he is a small-time criminal with a history of burglary and theft, who is suspected to be involved with the Mafia.

The feelings of being watched and tailed are soon followed by reports from the heroes' neighbors or close friends that someone has visited their place of residence while they were away on their last mission. Friends and neighbors can identify Casale, stating how intimidated they felt by him. Casale was asking probing questions—"Where are they? When will they be back?" Some may have heard rumors about the Casale, prompting them to warn the heroes to be careful of the man, as he is "rumored to have killed more people than Spanish Flu."

Soon after these events, Casale approaches the hero with the lowest Luck in the group. Ideally, this meeting should occur in a public place. Casale is loud and friendly in an over the top manner, acting like the hero is an old friend he has not seen in years. He will take the opportunity to do something small to help them, like paying a restaurant bill, taking care of a taxi charge, and so on. If questioned about his motivation, he says he's just helping out a friend, "Because that's what friends do."

If the Keeper desires, repeat this type of encounter for a number of the heroes. This is designed to give Casale a reason to come back to them later. After all, he has done something for them, now they are to do something for him.

DINNER INVITATION

Following their return to New York City from one of the missions for Caduceus, the heroes receive an invitation to dinner, communicated via Casale, who stresses that they should attend like the good friends they are. The dinner is scheduled for that evening at the Green Garden Café in Brooklyn.

Arriving at the expected time, the heroes see a sign in the window saying that the café is closed but there is still activity going on inside. In fact, there are still five tables being served. Each table has three Associates, dressed in business suits, eating meals. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals the distinctive bulges of handguns in shoulder holsters beneath their jackets.

Before the heroes can change their mind, Casale opens the front door and ushers them inside, towards the largest table, a ten-seat round table at the rear of the dining room, near the doors to the kitchen. Here, Bonanno, Rappa, Garofalo, and Bonventre are enjoying a meal. At this point, any heroes with criminal backgrounds or connections may attempt a **Know** roll: success means the heroes are aware that the four men around the table are the most powerful members of the Bonanno crime family.

Bonventre invites the heroes to sit on the opposite side of the table from the Mafioso, so their backs are to the front of the café. He introduces himself and his friends as local businessmen who wish to make the heroes an attractive proposition. One might say... they are going to make the heroes an offer they can't refuse. With this, the heroes are given menus and invited to order some high-end Italian food.

If any hero contradicts the description of them being "businessmen" by raising the topic of the Mafia, Bonanno simply smiles and nods in apparent agreement. "Like my friend says," at which point the smile drops from his face as he says "we're businessmen."

The purpose of the meeting is for the Mafia to get the heroes on their side to help infiltrate Caduceus so that they can learn more about the drug smuggling through Red Hook. Garofalo leads a lot of the questioning, with Bonventre asking for further details as needed. They begin by asking the heroes for information about their involvement with Caduceus. The interview is not a scripted scene and the Keeper should allow it to flow naturally. To help move the scene along, the question asked could be:

- What do you do for Caduceus?
- Does Caduceus seem genuine in its desire to help those in need around the world?
- If not, why do you think this?
- Where have you traveled to in recent months? Have you been to Africa?
- During their travels, have you been asked to bring anything back for Caduceus?

Rappa keeps quiet throughout, occasionally looking to and nodding at Bonanno, who also remains more or less quiet, to confirm the heroes are telling the truth. If a hero lies at any point (beyond trying to hide the existence of serpent people from the Mafia), call for an opposed roll, pitting their **Fast Talk** against Rappa's **Psychology** skill of 85%.

If Rappa believes the heroes are lying, he looks to Bonanno and shakes his head. Bonanno then asks politely if the heroes are sure about their statement, or if they'd like to reconsider their answer. Repeating the lie leads to an escalation of tension, with Bonanno producing a revolver and putting it on the table in front of him, stating he doesn't like it when people lie to him. "You wouldn't lie to me, would you?" he asks the heroes. This prompts an opposed roll against Bonanno's **Intimidate** skill, using the heroes' own **Intimidate** or **Psychology** skill. If Bonanno wins, he smiles and states that he's glad the heroes agree with him—he will now be less inclined to offer them any favors later during negotiations. If the heroes win the opposed roll, Bonanno smiles and compliments the heroes on their strength of will and lets the issue drop. In either case, he puts the gun away and continues the conversation (see **The Heart of the Matter**, following).

Keeper note: the scene is not intended to devolve into a gunfight. Tension should rise but not boil over; the minute guns are drawn, the mobsters will back down. It might hurt their pride, but they would rather take a knock to their ego than a bullet to the chest. The Keeper should do their best to get discussions back on track, reducing the level of antagonism, while also making the heroes feel that they have no choice but to acquiesce to the gangsters' demands.

The Heart of the Matter

It should eventually become clear that the Mafiosi are hinting that Caduceus's operations are less than altruistic. Garofalo elaborates by stating that it has come to their attention that Caduceus is involved in smuggling drugs into New York; this is something that he and his associates cannot permit to continue.

None of the men deny that they wish to control the drug trade, but spin it in such a way to say that they don't want to see drugs of unknown origin or dubious quality on the streets, which could end up killing people—that would be bad for business. Of course, the Mafia's true intention is to keep the monopoly on drugs but they are appealing to the heroes' better nature by trying to get them to clear the streets of potentially deadly substances.

If the heroes ask "why them?" Garofalo says the authorities are highly unlikely to want to tarnish the good name of Caduceus; thus, they have to take the law into their own hands. The heroes provide a means to dig into the secrets of the organization.

Garofalo tells the heroes that he and his friends want them to find out more about the drugs coming into the city. It might be that they've simply been passed some bad information—half-heard talk of Caduceus shipments of medical drugs mistakenly believed to be narcotics shipments. Or, the rumors are true and Caduceus is peddling street drugs. Whatever the situation, they want to get to the bottom of it. Somewhere in Caduceus headquarters, there must be evidence that explains what is happening at Red Hook. If the heroes can find it and bring it to Bonventre, they will be paid for their services and troubles (see *Negotiating a Price*, following).

Garofalo and his colleagues do not reveal any further details, other than to say that the problem is based somewhere in Red Hook. If the heroes come back later with the address of the warehouse that matches Bresciani's information, this gives the Mafia a way to partially verify that Bresciani has been telling the truth.

Negotiating a Price

Initially, the heroes are offered a monetary sum (in untraceable bank notes) that could be used to significantly improve their quality of life. Garofalo's starting offer will be \$1,000 but the heroes can barter to potentially improve this. Negotiations are conducted using an opposed Persuade roll against Bonanno's skill of 60%. If the heroes win the roll, they can increase this to \$2,000. Failure results in the offer remaining at \$1,000. If the heroes botch the roll, the offer is reduced to \$500. If the heroes are outright against striking any agreement, see *Refusing to Help*, following.

If the heroes are not interested in money, they can barter

for other rewards. However, if they have been caught lying at any point up to this, they suffer a penalty die to their **Persuade** rolls. Some potential alternatives are as follows (noting if the heroes won or lost an opposed roll in the negotiation):

Weaponry

- **Success:** access to powerful weaponry or explosives (at the Keeper's discretion).
- **Failure:** grants access to weak firearms (small caliber handguns, shotguns, etc.).

A Favor

- **Success:** the heroes will be able to call upon the Bonanno family for a single favor (to the extent that they will mobilize a dozen armed Soldiers to help the heroes or something of an equivalent level).
- **Failure:** they will only offer indirect assistance, via Associates that are not put in harm's way.

Information

- **Success:** the heroes can call upon the Mafia to potentially uncover some hidden information that can help them in the campaign (at the Keeper's discretion). Naturally, arcane knowledge is not in the Mafia's purview, so the Keeper should only provide information that would be available from a human perspective. For example, this could allow the heroes to discover some knowledge about Rose Meadham if they have had no luck finding out anything via conventional channels.
- **Failure:** they only have access to knowledge that elaborates on something the heroes already know, but it is still helpful nonetheless (perhaps reinforcing or confirming partial information known to the heroes).

If the heroes ask for something else, the Keeper is encouraged to find ways to accommodate them, depending on how well they roll and the capability of the Mafia to deliver.

If the heroes decline payment but still wish to help, Bonanno thanks them sincerely. He does not want to let the heroes leave without agreeing to help him. If the heroes are determined to carry on their own investigation but are willing to share the results with Bonanno through Bonventre (who becomes their primary point of contact from here on), this is acceptable.

Once a deal has been struck, the dinner concludes. The heroes are given a contact phone number for Bonventre and told only to contact him when they have something to report. Otherwise, they should drop information to this restaurant, where it will be collected.

Refusing to Help

If Bonanno cannot convince the heroes to comply with his wishes, he shakes their hands and the dinner is over. In the following days, Bonanno's displeasure grows apparent as he marshals his forces to exert pressure on the heroes. Friends and neighbors have their houses broken into, their cars vandalized, and are arrested for the possession of drugs (planted on them). This escalates to threats and acts of violence towards the friends of the heroes, leading to someone being hospitalized. Casale will occasionally appear to the heroes, reminding them that all this can stop if they just agree to help.

Should the heroes decide to take on the Mafia in response to these acts, they should soon realize they are fighting a tough battle. They can pick away at Associates and Soldiers, but they are never able to pin anything on those higher up the chain of command. When one frontline Mafioso falls, another is ready to take their place. They should soon realize, for the benefit of themselves and their friends, that they should help the Mafia.

INVESTIGATING RED HOOK

By this point, the heroes know that Caduceus has a presence in the Red Hook docks. Going down to the docks without any further information about where precisely to look requires long hours of searching and an Extreme **Spot Hidden** roll to find the right building. Security guards look after most of the warehouses on behalf of a wide range of companies, and will not take kindly to anyone snooping around and looking suspicious. As such, the heroes should consider other lines of investigation before heading to the docks.

If the heroes question any contacts and friends they have in the Meadham Building, enquiring about supply procurement and logistics, they should be directed towards the office of Philip Conners on the 7th floor. As access to the 7th and 8th floor is restricted, the heroes are more likely to get to see Conners while they are on the 7th floor attending a briefing before another mission. Once the briefing is complete, they can seek out Conners in his office overlooking the front of the building.

Conners can usually be found sat at his desk, chain-smoking and trying to wave away the smoke so he can find the paperwork he needs on his desk. Any comments made regarding the smog of cigarette smoke get the response, "It's good for you, don't you know? Helps this blasted cough of mine." Talking to Conners, and maybe

after offering him an incentive (such as a fine brandy or expensive cigars), allows the heroes to learn a bit more about how Caduceus obtains its medical supplies.

Conners can confirm that Caduceus has a number of storage depots for pharmaceuticals along the East and West Coasts of the United States; ready at a moment's notice to transport supplies across the globe. One such depot is in Red Hook, where Caduceus owns two warehouses, but as far as Conners knows, they only operate out of one. The other warehouse is maintained and watched over by security, but is currently empty. He has been told that Joshua Meadham wishes to keep the second warehouse in case the need arises that more storage space is needed, should they outgrow the Meadham Building.

All the paperwork in Conners' office confirms the official stance that the warehouse is empty. The paperwork also confirms that the "empty" warehouse has 30 guards constantly assigned to it on the company payroll (operating in three shifts of 10 guards at any one time), which should strike the heroes as being excessive—especially as the "full" warehouse has only 1 guard at any one time looking after it.

Should the heroes have the opportunity to examine the paperwork, they find records of stock checks and a timetable all showing deliveries passing in and out of Warehouse 2 very quickly, which seem to confirm that Warehouse 2 is empty, as it appears deliveries come in and go straight out again.

Comparing these records, a successful **Spot Hidden**, **Accounting**, or **Library Use** roll reveals anomalies. Certain shipments are delivered to the warehouse in large ships, however, only a single, smaller vessel takes them from the warehouse to their final destination. It's simply not feasible for the smaller ship to handle the amount of cargo coming in. The common denominator in each instance is that dimethyl phthalate* is listed in the cargo manifest (these are faked entries disguising the delivery and storage of the bio-weapon).

**A successful Science (Chemistry or Pharmacy) roll recognizes dimethyl phthalate as a colorless oily liquid with a slight aromatic odor that has been used as an insect repellent since 1929.*

Keeper note: in reality, Warehouse 2 is where the Cult of Yig stores its "off-the-books" secret equipment, including a biological weapon and a colony of mutated mosquitoes.

THE WAREHOUSE: GROUND FLOOR

Given that the heroes will only get a chance to talk to Conners after a briefing, it is likely that they will have very

little time to report back to Bonventre before leaving New York for their next mission. Alternatively, they can wait till they next arrive back in New York City before supplying the Mafia with this information.

Once Bonventre has been informed about the second (“empty”) warehouse in Red Hook, he confirms with the heroes that this matches the details he has previously been given. The fact that it is listed as being “empty” is a blatant sign that something untoward is going on there. He informs the heroes that he is planning on taking his crew with him (consisting of 12 Soldiers and 24 Associates) to look around both of the warehouses. He invites the heroes to tag along, in case they want to see for themselves what is going on down there.

While he should not say it directly, Bonventre heavily hints that his crew will have no qualms about killing every last security guard in order to get inside. If the heroes wish to be a moderating factor, Bonventre is happy to have them help in organizing the raid to minimize civilian casualties; their “inside knowledge” of the warehouse can be used to calm any Soldiers that may wish to go in with all guns blazing.

Bonventre and his crew assemble in an abandoned lot, two blocks down from the docks, in a series of cars, each packed full of men in trench coats and hats. It’s not hard to spot that they all carry Thompson submachine guns. Bonventre introduces the heroes to his crew and informs his men that the heroes will take charge during the raid. Bonventre publically informs the crew that this is about building trust with their new friends but, in reality, he has already briefed his men to keep the heroes in sight at all times. If things turn sour, his men have orders to “deal with the outsiders” if it turns out the heroes have led the Mafia into an ambush at the warehouse.

Thus assembled and briefed, the crew drives into the docks at midnight. Bonventre watches from a distance with Casale and Ardito. Warehouse 1 is dark; the workforce went home hours ago and the next shipment is not expected to arrive until tomorrow morning. A lone security guard in his fifties looks after the building and he has fallen asleep at his post inside; it would take an earthquake to rouse him from his slumber. A quick search of the interior of Warehouse 1 confirms it is a legitimate pharmaceutical depot.

Warehouse 2 has lights on outside and a couple of guards patrolling the perimeter: one going clockwise, the other counterclockwise. Their paths meet by the main entrance to the offices at the front of the building, and at the opposite end of the building by the wider, bay doors facing the water. All the guards present at this warehouse are members of the Cult of Yig.

Inside Warehouse 2, the offices are empty but the bulk of the warehouse is far from empty. Wooden crates are stacked neatly on top of one another, reaching high into the air. There are hundreds of crates forming a grid system of walkways, covering over two-thirds of the central warehouse space. The remaining third of the space is kept clear around huge bay doors that open onto the water where ships can deposit their cargo.

In the corner beside the bay doors, stairs lead to a raised platform that overlooks the whole of the warehouse interior, as well as down to the basement area. Here, a bank of controls operates the bay doors, a crane network in the ceiling to move crates, and a large hatch in the floor of the clear area in front of the bay doors. The hatch allows access for larger equipment to be lowered into the basement via the crane network.

If the heroes decide to open any of the crates, they don’t find any drugs. Instead, they find a vast array of digging and earthmoving equipment, construction materials (metal sheets and girders), and so on. One pile of crates contains a huge stockpile of dynamite used for rock blasting; there’s enough to blow the warehouse to pieces. Nearby, is a box of flare guns and flares (these may come in handy later, see **The Mosquito Cache** following).

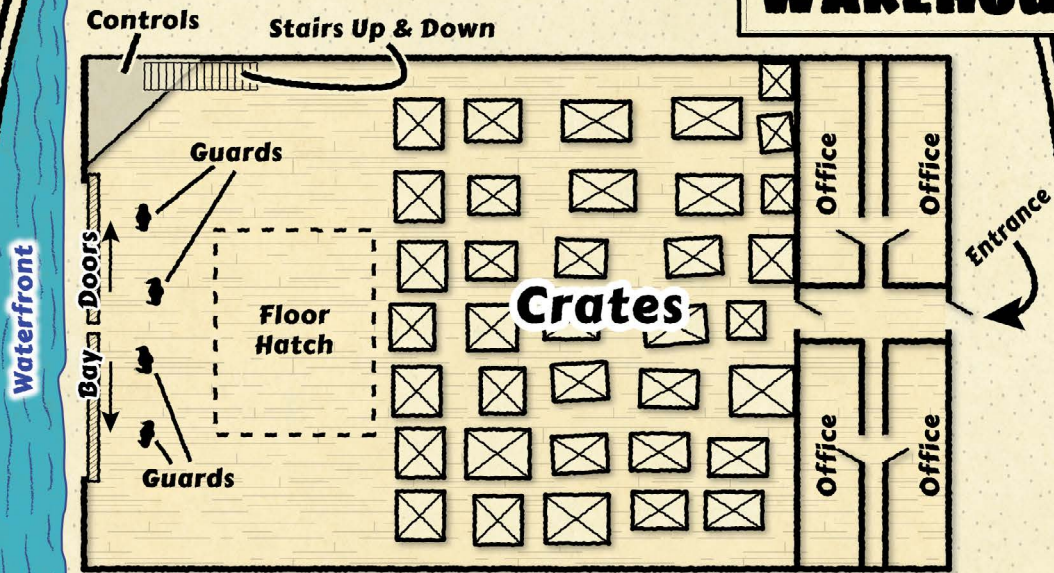
With a successful group **Luck** roll, one of the crates opened contains components for one of the serpent people’s nuclear reactors, much like those that can be found in the laboratory in the Belgian Congo (see **Chapter 6: Belgian Congo**). With a successful **Science (Physics)** or **Hard Mechanical Repair** roll (Regular difficulty for those with the Weird Science talent, and more accurately identifying its function as elements for a nuclear reactor), the components’ function can be roughly determined as a generator of some kind.

At the rear of the warehouse, positioned by the bay doors are four guards, with two more patrolling around the crates. The remaining two guards are in the basement, watching over the mosquitoes. If the heroes or the Mafia attempt to enter via the bay doors, an Extreme **Stealth** roll is required due to the lack of cover. If anyone fails the roll trying to get in this way, the alarm is raised and all of the remaining guards (except the two guards in the basement, who remain where they are) attempt to neutralize the intruders. The guards have orders to kill any trespassers and are armed with .32 automatics; any bodies can subsequently be used as food for the mosquitoes.

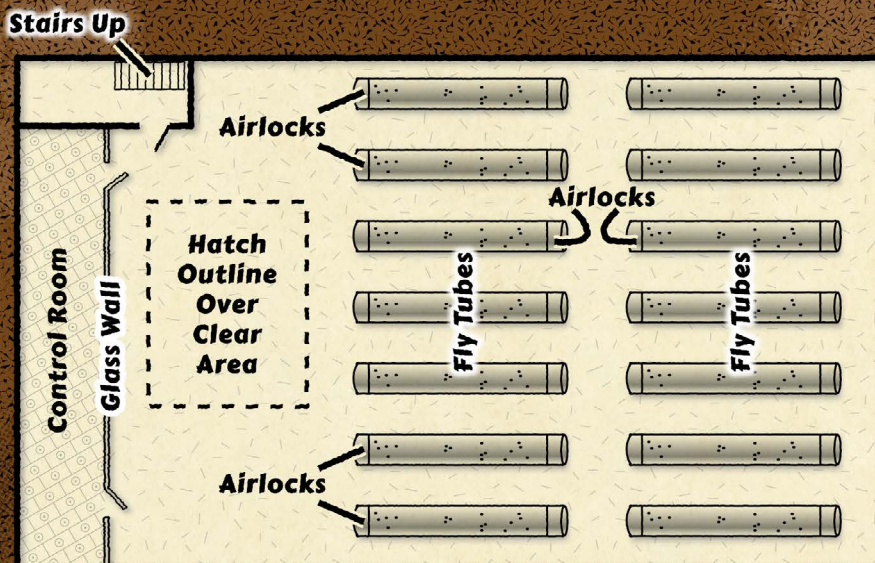
Moving through the crates requires a **Stealth** roll to avoid the guards. Success allows the heroes to move forward or to get a surprise attack on a patrolling guard, although they will have to be quiet in combat to avoid raising the alarm.

GROUND LEVEL

RED HOOK WAREHOUSE



BASEMENT LEVEL



The Warehouse: Basement

By the time the heroes get to the basement level, it is likely that the guards or a trigger-happy Mafioso will have fired at least one gunshot—provoking the two guards in the basement into action. Upon hearing gunfire, the guards in the basement radio their superiors at the Meadham Building, saying that the warehouse is under attack. Consequently, by remote control, the serpent people start the process to open the mosquito stores. In moments, the swarm will be released.

Thus, as the heroes descend into the basement, the two guards are trying to seal a pair of heavy doors (which run on rails) leading to the chamber where the mosquitoes are held. The guards are having difficulty, as the heavy doors are jammed. Understanding that the mosquitos are about to be released, the guards have decided to flee and are trying to close the doors behind them. They will panic at the sight of the heroes. Fearing that the heroes might try and stop the doors from closing, the guards open fire, likely resulting in their death as the heroes and the Mafiosi return fire.

If the heroes go through the heavy doors, they find a huge chamber. Within, suspended from the ceiling are huge pressurized canisters. Tubes run from these canisters and flow into huge glass pipes, six feet across and a hundred feet long that contain unnaturally (hand-sized) mutated mosquitoes. The mosquitoes are flying in a green cloud (the bio-weapon). The base of each tube is full of liquid nutrients keeping the swarm alive. Airlocks at the end of each tube allow access—in a couple of these are the near-mummified remains of trespassers fed to the mosquitoes and drained of their bodily fluids.

At the nearest end of the chamber, behind a glass wall, is a control room. Here, the radio handset to the Meadham Building has been left swinging against the wall, buzzing with static. Banks of dials show the various canisters containing the bio-weapon have been emptied into the mosquito pipes. A countdown in the center of the display shows they have 10 seconds (about 3 combat rounds) before the airlocks on the pipes open.

Once the pipes open, the mosquitoes flood through the warehouse, drawn to any living being inside. They latch onto their targets en masse, draining them of blood. A successful **Dodge** roll is required every round to avoid being covered by mosquitoes; failure means the mosquitoes land on their target, draining 1D10 STR points (in blood loss), as well as requiring any hero to make an Extreme **CON** roll: failure results in the loss of 1D10 INT points as they are affected by a concentrated dose of the bio-weapon. Dodge rolls on subsequent rounds represent avoiding further mosquitoes and shaking off those already on the hero.

The effect of the STR and INT loss is only temporary. Lost points recover at the rate of 1 per hour. However, if a hero reaches 0 STR, they die from blood loss. If they reach 0 INT,

they have become exactly as the serpent people wish them to be—a brain dead slave. At this point, the damage is irreversible.

While the heroes get a chance to Dodge the mosquitoes, Mafia henchmen are not so lucky. The heroes can see the mosquitoes descending upon them and drinking them dry (**Sanity** roll, 0/1D4 loss). It quickly becomes obvious that attacking the swarm without area-effect weapons is pointless.

Unless the heroes had some remarkable foresight and went armed with flamethrowers, the best way to kill the swarm of mosquitoes is to blow up the warehouse using the stockpile of dynamite found in the crates. Setting up a fuse is the safest way, but will take several rounds and risks prolonged exposure to the swarm. A more dramatic way to set off the dynamite would be to fire a flare into a crate from the open bay doors. The resulting shockwave will knock the heroes through the air into the waters of the bay as the fireball engulfs all of the mosquitoes.

Should the heroes attempt to flee the scene without attempting to destroy the swarm, a Mafioso firing wildly into an approaching cloud of mosquitoes inadvertently hits the stockpile of dynamite. Unless the heroes had already chosen to dive into the bay to escape the swarm (thus, minimizing the damage from the blast), there is a chance they are caught in the resulting explosion—call for a **Luck** roll: success means the hero suffers only 1D6 damage; failure results in 4D6 damage.

Immediate Aftermath

Bonventre witnesses the explosion and meets up with the heroes (maybe as they climb out of the water or run away through the docks). The sound of fire trucks and sirens can be heard in the distance. Bonventre can get the heroes away from the scene in his car before the authorities arrive. While doing so, he will want to know all the details about what happened inside the warehouse.

He's understandably skeptical about stories of mutated mosquitoes and poison clouds but refrains from accusing the heroes of lying. Instead, he says that he will take care of the mess but insists the heroes get out of town for a while, in case the police come asking questions. Thus, prompted to leave town, the heroes are in an ideal position to head off on another mission for Caduceus (presuming they wish to do so—either to gather further evidence or to work from within to bring the organization down).

CONFRONTING BRESCIANI

When the heroes return to New York from their next mission, Casale soon comes calling. For the first time, the heroes can see that he is visibly worried. He asks (rather than

tells) the heroes to come with him to the Green Garden Café in Brooklyn. The restaurant is closed once again, but this time, the only people inside are Bonventre and Bresciani.

Bonventre explains that his men found the remains of some of the “bug things” (mutated mosquitoes) near the warehouse, as well as the bodies of some of his men that were thrown into the bay. Bonventre wants the heroes to tell their side of the story. He is furious at Bresciani, ultimately holding him responsible for the death of most of his crew at the warehouse.

This meeting gives the heroes chance to interrogate Bresciani and learn his side of the story. He claims he got an anonymous tip that the drugs were coming into the warehouse and that he believed the family should do something about it so as to protect their operation. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals that Bresciani does not blink throughout the interrogation while a successful **Psychology** roll detects he is not sweating. If either of these things is noticed, the heroes may decide to confront him and land the first blow; any damage inflicted on Bresciani will cause The Serpent’s New Skin spell to fail, revealing Hlysa’s true serpent man appearance. If not, Bonventre could act on his anger and punch Bresciani at a dramatically appropriate moment, with the same result.

Keeper note: once Bresciani is revealed as Hlysa, Casale and Bonventre automatically succeed in their **Sanity** rolls to see Hlysa’s true form (0/1D6 loss).

Hlysa, realizing he is outnumbered, attempts to surrender, stating he wishes to offer a deal. He reveals that that he has been talking with Venere Ardito while the heroes have been out of town, and has convinced Ardito that Caduceus was responsible for the deaths of his friends at the warehouse. Ardito, along with some of Bresciani’s crew, has gone to take their revenge on everyone at the Meadham building—right now. He had hoped that the Mafia would have taken more direct action, but Hlysa states that they needed a bit of prompting after the warehouse incident.

If the heroes agree to let Hlysa go, he explains to them the Mafia’s plan of attack. Ardito and Bresciani’s men have entered the Meadham building posing as cleaning staff so that they can place bombs (of Ardito’s manufacture) throughout the building. Hearing this, Bonventre tells the heroes that Ardito has to be stopped; he will not let the blood of innocents stain his hands (nor does he wish for the resultant police investigation). Hlysa laughs at this, proclaiming Caduceus is far from innocent, stating that if the heroes go to the basement of the Meadham Building and through the door at the end of the well-lit corridor down there, they will find out exactly how “innocent” Caduceus are. “Consider this a gift from Rose Meadham,” he says.



PLAYTEST NOTE

During the playtest, two new players joined the game during this chapter. The existing heroes’ relationship with the Mafia was not good. The Keeper took the liberty of starting the next session with the existing heroes awakening, suspended from the roof of an abattoir, having been drugged and captured by the Mafia. The Keeper provided the two new players with a private briefing; they were private investigators working for a woman (Rose Meadham using a pseudonym), who had tasked them with investigating a group of troublemakers (the existing heroes) and their involvement with a dangerous organization named Caduceus. To that end, the new heroes were told they had infiltrated the Mafia, and were about to interrogate some captives. By this point in the game the existing players had been through several chapters and were associated with an epidemic in Borneo, massive destruction in Iceland, and other occurrences that had led to loss of life. The new players were provided with a list of these “crimes against humanity” and set loose upon their captives. A great player versus player scene then unfolded, culminating in the heroes coming together, then fighting a pitched battle against the Mafia.

If the heroes let Hlysa go, they run the risk of encountering him again if they face the Inner Night later in the campaign. If they chose to attack him once he has revealed this information, he attempts to cast Become The Darkness (see **Appendix B**, page 256), with Hlysa transforming into a formless spawn in order to try to kill everyone in the restaurant.

Keeper note: following Hlysa’s directions and entering the basement corridor, gives the heroes a lead into **Chapter 6: Belgian Congo**.

ATTACK ON THE MEADHAM BUILDING

Ardito is accompanied by ten Soldiers (all human) from Bresciani’s crew. They have been riled up to believe that Caduceus is responsible for the death of their brethren at the Red Hook docks—they are determined to make the organization pay.

Having broken in through the service entrance at the back of the building, the crew restrained the cleaning staff and took their uniforms. The real cleaning staff is

tied up, unconscious, in the back of a van a few blocks away. Meanwhile, the crew has split up to go through the building, performing cleaning duties as best as they can to avoid suspicion. They have passkeys for the low to mid-level offices, where they are leaving inconspicuous black briefcases (containing the bombs) out of sight.

There are ten briefcases in total. Once all the briefcases have been hidden around the building, they intend to exit through the service entrance at the rear. The bombs are timed to explode ten minutes later, each inflicting 10D6 damage to everything within 20 feet. The timing of this attack is left open, allowing the Keeper the flexibility to run this scene at any point during the day or night as they wish.

The briefcase bombs are hidden under sheets on the trolleys, which the disguised cleaners push around the various floors. Each one is locked and packed full of TNT, with a timer that can be heard ticking through the case. One bomb is placed near each of the first ten accessible floors above ground level (i.e. floors 2 to 6, and 9 to 13).

Ardito

By the time the heroes arrive at the Meadham Building, Ardito's crew are already inside. Outside, acting as a lookout, is Ardito. How much time the heroes have before the bombs explode depends on how quickly they arrive from the Green Garden Café. Relying on public transport or failing a **Drive Auto** roll means the heroes will have less than 15 minutes, meaning the Mafiosi are placing the last of the bombs and will soon exit the building. With a successful **Drive Auto** roll, the heroes have 30 minutes before time runs out.

Rather than conducting minute-by-minute bookkeeping of what the heroes do once they arrive at the building, these minutes only really count for how long it takes to evacuate the building and/or how long the heroes have to search for hidden bombs if they wish to find them.

Ardito is parked across the road from the Meadham Building, watching for any signs of trouble (such as the police, or lots of security guards congregating in the lobby). If he sees anything untoward, he sounds the car's horn, which is exceptionally loud. This alerts the majority of the Mafiosi inside that trouble is on the way.

If the heroes approach the building, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals Ardito across the road. If they wish to confront him, an opposed roll pitting the heroes' **Stealth** against Ardito's **Spot Hidden** skill of 40% is required. If the heroes succeed, they can keep him in the car with no way for him to escape. If Ardito succeeds, he jumps from the car and runs towards City Hall Park, which is not far from the Meadham Building. He knows the heroes have worked with the Mafia before, but they are still connected (even if only by past association at this point) with Caduceus; thus,

CHASE: VENERE ARDITO

- CON 50
- DEX 90
- Base MOV 9
- Skills: Climb 75%, Jump 75%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 90%.

he believes them to be a threat. Any sudden appearance by the heroes makes him panic and he flees as quick as he can.

If Ardito starts running, a chase scene through City Hall Park ensues. The Keeper is encouraged to flesh out the details of the chase, using the roads, wooded parkland, and City Hall as features (see box nearby for Ardito's chase statistics). If Ardito gets four locations ahead of the heroes, he has escaped. If the heroes capture Ardito or prevent him from running in the first instance, a successful **Intimidate** or **Persuade** roll gets him to reveal the plan of attack. Alternatively, if the heroes lose Ardito, a search of his car reveals an extra cleaner's uniform, allowing them to deduce the disguise the Mafia have used to gain access to the Meadham Building.

If captured, convincing Ardito to call off the attack requires a **Hard Persuade** roll—convincing him that he has been deceived and that the innocent people in the building had nothing to do with the deaths at Red Hook. Getting him to redirect the attack against the “real threat” inside the Caduceus building calls for a **Regular Persuade** success. In either case, he then accompanies the heroes to change the plan of attack. Should a hero wish to sound the car's horn to draw the Mafiosi out, Ardito warns that it will only result in civilian casualties as his crew will believe trouble is on its way, causing them to fight their way out.

Of course, there is the chance that the heroes might wish to allow the attack on the Meadham Building to go ahead, especially if they believe the organization to be inherently evil. However, the Keeper should remind the heroes that there are hundreds of innocent people working in the building who know nothing about the true purpose of Caduceus. If they do not stop the attack, they are condemning innocent people to their deaths. If the heroes understand this and still allow the attack to continue, the resultant stories of the bombing and mass murder flood the newspapers in the following days, with harrowing photographs of the workers killed in the blasts. In such an event, the Keeper should impose a **Sanity** loss of 1D10 points, and consider corrupting any pertinent hero backstory elements.

Intervention

Inside the Meadham Building, the disguised cleaners have split up, each taking a separate floor to plant their bombs. Finding the Mafiosi is not difficult as their white uniforms stand out in the crowd. The first one to be encountered shouldn't have planted his briefcase yet, allowing the heroes a **Spot Hidden** roll to see it and figure how the bombs are disguised (unless already told by Ardito). Without Ardito to back them up, the heroes must succeed with a **Hard Fast Talk**, **Intimidate**, or **Persuade** roll to convince the bombers to deviate from their plan (or to deviate from the plan, if the decision is made to bomb the private upper floors of the building). If Ardito is with the heroes, he confirms that the heroes are to be trusted, and no rolls are required.

To save time, convincing one of the bombers ultimately results in all of them being convinced. The group assembles by the service entrance at the back of the building—bringing the cases containing the bombs with them. With the explosives, the heroes could cause some serious damage to the building. What they do from this point is down to them. Each briefcase has a key in its lock, which, when turned and removed, triggers the countdown.

Failing to convince the Mafiosi results in a gun battle, as each Soldier has a Thompson submachine gun hidden in their trolley. The sound of gunfire ultimately brings the other Soldiers to join in the fight, along with Caduceus security. It could turn into a bloodbath very quickly, leaving the heroes with only a short time to either find the bombs or clear the building.

Setting off a fire alarm is the best chance the heroes have to clear the building before the bombs explode, as this only takes 5 minutes. Searching for the bombs takes longer; the heroes have a matter of minutes to search the whole building (given that the heroes arrive with either 15 or 30 minutes to spare, depending on how quickly they arrived). Assume that searching a floor takes 5 minutes. An **Extreme** (if they do not know what they are looking for) or **Hard** (if they have seen a briefcase) **Spot Hidden** roll finds the bomb. If they know where and what to look for, it takes only 1 minute to search each floor (the briefcases are planted close to the stairwell/lifts on each floor) with a successful Regular **Spot Hidden** roll.

If the heroes continue to search until time runs out and they have not defused the bombs, each hero suffers 10D6 damage if they are on a floor with a bomb, taking half damage if they succeed in a **Luck** roll.

Defusing the bombs requires a successful **Demolitions** or **Electrical Repair** roll. Alternatively, Ardito can defuse the bombs without the need of a roll. A fumble results in a premature detonation and the hero probably being in need of having at least 30 Luck points left to escape death (see **Avoiding Certain Death**, page 61, *Pulp Cthulhu*).

CONCLUSION

If a gunfight breaks out, the heroes could use this distraction as a means by which to break into the restricted floors of the Meadham Building (the Keeper should consult the information on **Floors 17 and 18** (see pages 49 and 47). Alternatively, the heroes might use the cover to enter the basement and then find themselves in the Belgian Congo (see **Chapter 6: Belgian Congo**).

In the following days, depending on how the heroes handled the situation, the newspapers may take an interest into what happened inside the Meadham Building. If it comes to light that the heroes defused the situation without any loss of life, they could be hailed for their accomplishment in the media; however, if they actively supported the attack and there were surviving witnesses to this fact, they might find their pictures on the front pages as some of the most wanted people in New York City. The extent to how much this helps or hinders the heroes is left for the Keeper to determine—certainly, such “heat” should drive the heroes to lie low by departing the city to undertake a new mission for Caduceus.

In the aftermath of any successful bombing of the Meadham Building, any remaining members of the Cult of Yig abandon the building. The major NPCs of the campaign should not be in the building at the time of the attack, as they still have roles to play and any confrontations with the heroes are yet to come. The cults' base of operations becomes the Meadham Estate in New Canaan, Connecticut. If the heroes discover this and chose to take the fight there, the Keeper is encouraged to use the information contained in **The Meadham Estate, Connecticut** (see page 57).

If the heroes are still working with Caduceus at this stage, Dr. Gonçalves gives them a contact telephone number (which goes through to the Meadham Estate) and instructs them to call once per day for updates whenever they are in New York. If Gonçalves needs to meet the heroes in person, perhaps to conduct a briefing, he only invites them to the estate if they have been initiated into the cult of Yig; otherwise, he will conduct any meetings on neutral ground.

Possible meetings include:

- Walking through Central Park.
- Sitting on a bench overlooking the East River.
- Lunch at Hudes Deli on the Upper West Side (Gonçalves likes the pastrami they serve).

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- Destroying the swarm of mutated mosquitoes in the Caduceus warehouse +1D6 Sanity points.
- Killing Hlysa +1D6 Sanity points.
- Setting Hlysa free -1D4 Sanity points.
- Saving the lives of the innocents in the Meadham Building, either by clearing the building or preventing the bombing entirely +1D10 Sanity points.
- Failing to prevent the loss of innocent lives in the Meadham Building when they could have acted -1D10 Sanity points.
- Redirecting the bombing to the upper floors of the Meadham Building, targeting only the Cult of Yig +1D4 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

CADUCEUS PERSONNEL

Delores Parville, 38, Loyal Secretary

STR 40 CON 65 SIZ 55 DEX 75 INT 75
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 60 SAN 37 HP 12
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
.22 auto 40% (20/8), damage 1D6
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Charm 40%, Intimidate 60%, Listen 50%, Office Administration 75%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 40%.

**Philip Conners, 43, Pharmaceutical
Quartermaster**

STR 55 CON 50 SIZ 85 DEX 60 INT 65
APP 55 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 12 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3 + 1D4
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Fast Talk 60%, Office Administration 65%, Spot Hidden 50%.

MAFIA

Giuseppe "Joseph" Bonanno, 28, Mafia boss

STR 80 CON 65 SIZ 55 DEX 60 INT 80
APP 50 POW 60 EDU 85 SAN 60 HP 12
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 12 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 80% (40/16), damage 1D3 + 1D4
.38 auto 65% (32/13), damage 1D10
Thompson SMG 65% (32/13), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 50% (25/10)

Skills

Credit Rating 90%, Fast Talk 75%, Intimidate 70%, Language (Italian) 80%, Listen 50%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Phillipe Rappa, 40, Mafia advisor

STR 50 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 55 INT 85
APP 55 POW 55 EDU 85 SAN 55 HP 13
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 6 MP: 11 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3
.38 auto 55% (27/11), damage 1D10
Thompson SMG 40% (20/8), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills

Credit Rating 40%, Language (Italian) 85%, Listen 65%, Psychology 85%, Spot Hidden 75%.

**Francesco "Frank Carroll" Garofalo, 42,
Mafia underboss**

STR 60 CON 75 SIZ 65 DEX 70 INT 80
APP 55 POW 60 EDU 80 SAN 60 HP 14
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 12 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3 + 1D4
.32 auto 70% (35/14), damage 1D8
Thompson SMG 50% (25/10), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 50% (25/10)

NEW YORK

Skills

Credit Rating 65%, Fast Talk 65%, Intimidate 65%, Language (Italian) 80%, Listen 50%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Giovanni "John" Bonventre, 32, trusted Mafioso

STR 55 CON 60 SIZ 70 DEX 65 INT 90
APP 60 POW 70 EDU 90 SAN 70 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 14 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 70% (35/14), damage 1D3 + 1D4
.38 auto 50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Thompson SMG 40% (20/8), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 60% (30/12)

Skills

Credit Rating 45%, Fast Talk 60%, Intimidate 60%, Language (Italian) 90%, Listen 50%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Filemone Casale, 36, Mafioso muscle

STR 85 CON 70 SIZ 80 DEX 60 INT 70
APP 45 POW 50 EDU 60 SAN 50 HP 15
DB: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 8 MP: 14 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 80% (40/16), damage 1D3 + 1D6
12g shotgun 50% (25/10), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 50%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 50%, Language (Italian) 70%, Listen 35%, Spot Hidden 35%.

Venere Ardito, 34, Mafioso safe cracker

STR 50 CON 50 SIZ 45 DEX 90 INT 90
APP 50 POW 70 EDU 80 SAN 70 HP 9
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 14 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
.32 auto 35% (17/7), damage 1D8
Dodge 90% (45/18)

Skills

Climb 75%, Demolitions 70%, Electrical Repair 60%, Fast Talk 40%, Jump 75%, Locksmith 85%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Sleight of Hand 80%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 90%.

Mafia Associates, Mafia Soldiers, and Caduceus Security Guards

STR 40 CON 50 SIZ 50 DEX 45 INT 30
APP 30 POW 30 EDU 40 SAN 30 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 6 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl 35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Thompson SMG* 30% (16/6), damage 1D10+2
.32 auto* 30% (16/6), damage 1D8
Dodge 25% (12/5)

*Thompson for Mafia soldiers, .32 auto for security guards and Mafia associates.

Armor: none.

Skills: none.

Martino Bresciani (Hlysa), appears 35, serpent man masquerading as a Mafioso

STR 80 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 60 INT 90
APP 65* POW 60 EDU — SAN — HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 12 Luck: 30

*As human.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (usual range of unarmed attacks open to humanoids)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Fighting 75% (37/15), damage 1D3 + 1D4
Bite 55% (27/11), damage 1D8 + poison
Dodge 50% (25/10)

Skills

Drive Auto 50%, Intimidate 40%, Language: Italian 70%, Listen 70%, Spot Hidden 70%, Stealth 50%.

Armor: 1-point scales.

Spells: The Serpent's New Skin, Become The Darkness (see Appendix B, page 256 onwards).

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent person.



MVW

NORTH BORNEO

*I didn't know you could fly a plane.
Fly, yes. Land, no.*

—Professor Henry Jones and Indiana Jones, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989)

THE YELLOW DEATH

OVERVIEW

The Inner Night has located the remains of an ancient serpent person outpost in North Borneo where, millennia ago, experiments with Gate technology took place. The experiments weakened the barriers between worlds and, consequently, following a recent disturbance, the Dreamlands has started to bleed into the Waking World around the outpost, bringing with it a range of alien flora and fauna.

The Inner Night hopes this weakening of barriers can be exploited to assist in their search for Mu. One of their agents has discovered that deaths in the area help to further break down the barrier and so the organization has released a biological weapon to bring about more deaths. The resultant epidemic has been mistaken for infectious hepatitis and a quarantine zone has been established.

With this dire medical emergency, the local authorities have contacted Caduceus for help. The heroes are sent to the quarantine zone to assist; however, their Caduceus handler has orders to sterilize the area if the situation cannot be contained.

BACKGROUND

During the height of the Second Empire of the serpent people, a facility was built on the island that is now East Malaysia (North Borneo in the 1930s). Serpent person scientists were experimenting with Gate technology to

find a way to travel between dimensions and their facility was built in this remote location to minimize fallout if a disaster occurred.

The serpent scientists discovered that the higher levels of reality beyond our own were inherently hostile. The realms “beyond” are gaseous environments, heavily populated by semi-fluid gelatinous beings that could move through matter and that were driven to consume any entities they perceived, including the serpent scientists that observed them. After a number of their kind had been consumed, the surviving scientists turned their attention in other scientific directions.

Focusing on what they termed as the “lower” dimensions, the serpent scientists opened Gates into the Dreamlands. Pushing ever deeper into that realm, disaster occurred. Beneath the Dreamlands, they encountered the dholes—gargantuan planet-eating beasts, which devour the very fabric of reality. One such creature burst through the Gate, irreparably damaging the fabric of reality between dimensions, and began to consume the island where the research was taking place. Consequently, the (mostly) unexplored caverns beneath North Borneo, some of which are amongst the largest on Earth, are remnants of that dhole’s incursion.

The scientists activated the facility’s fail-safe. Gates opened to every corner of the planet and vast quantities of rock were “teleported” in, occupying the same space as

the facility. This influx of rock formed what is now known as Mount Kinabalu, the tallest mountain in North Borneo.

Fused with millions of tons of rock, the dhole was destroyed along with the majority of the facility. Despite the disaster, one of the Gates malfunctioned, having been damaged when the dhole arrived. This Gate avoided destruction, suspended inside the mountain like a fly in amber.

The Inner Night's Involvement

In the 1930s, tobacco and vegetable farms are prevalent on the slopes of Mount Kinabalu, with the North Borneo Chartered Company controlling the region. The company recently sent a geological survey team up the mountain in search of mineral deposits. The team established a base a few miles from Ranau, a town to the southeast of Mount Kinabalu, and sent out small parties to search the wider area. In due course, the survey teams discovered the area to be rich in natural resources, especially copper.

Later, company surveyors carried out blasting close to the remains of the buried Gate. One accidental explosion started a landslide that killed most of the nearby field team; their deaths, close to the damaged Gate, created a new rift in reality. Soon after, a dhole slid through, further widening the rift. The humans in the area perceived the creature's arrival as an earth tremor. The dhole was followed by numerous smaller entities while the geography of the Dreamlands itself has started to manifest in the vicinity of the rift.

Sahrizan, a serpent man agent of the Inner Night, was on the island at the time. Investigating the area, he discovered the remains of the serpent facility, which had been exposed when the newly arrived dhole ate through the mountainside. The Gate was partially operable but did not have sufficient power to pierce even the weakened barriers between dimensions. Sahrizan hopes the Gate might eventually be capable of piercing the barrier into Mu, allowing the Inner Night to bypass Mu's defenses and Gate directly into the ancient citadel.

Sahrizan deduced (correctly) that the deaths of the surveyors had weakened the barriers enough to allow the Dreamlands to encroach upon the Waking World. Therefore, he figured, if more deaths occurred the barrier would further weaken, potentially allowing the Gate to access Mu.

One by-product of the Dreamlands incursion has been the sudden mutation of the local forests. Strange flowers bloom and the trees are bearing fruit previously unseen on Earth. The local Dusun farmers, who work on the mountain slopes, discovered the mutations. While most Dusuns converted to Christianity and Islam following the establishment of colonial rule in North Borneo, many of

these farmers still hold on to the old animistic beliefs of their tribe. Thus, they interpreted the strange fruit as a gift from the spirit of the mountain. This unexpected bounty was not to last. Around the periphery of the incursion, the Waking World regained its hold on reality and the strange fruits withered and died. The local people feared the spirit of the mountain was angry with them and turned their anger on the survey team, believing that their blasting had angered the spirit. The farmers gathered around the team's base, protesting and demanding that they leave. Sahrizan saw an opportunity.

The serpent people of old had developed a virus to destroy human populations as means of population control. This virus, known as the "Yellow Death" for the jaundice-like effect it had upon humans, was completely harmless to serpent people*. Sahrizan released the virus into the wells that fed the local farms and let it spread through the community. The first deaths soon followed.

When the North Borneo Chartered Company heard about the deaths, they believed it to be an outbreak of Hepatitis-A (then known as "infectious hepatitis"). A military cordon was established to prevent the disease from spreading to Ranau and beyond. Wanting to save the survey team, the company contacted Caduceus, hoping they could find a way to stop the disease.

**Keeper note: while the virus is deadly, it usually burns itself out within a month; meaning only small regions can be cleansed. This detail, combined with limited surviving stocks, means the Inner Night have ruled it out as a method by which they can destroy the human race on a global scale.*

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

It is unlikely that the heroes, at this early stage of the campaign, will have developed strong suspicions concerning Caduceus, or will have been turned by one of the other factions. As such, it is most likely that the heroes will be informed of the situation in North Borneo when they return to New York City following **Chapter 1: Bolivia**.

The heroes are contacted by Quentin Shapiro, a Caduceus scientist and team handler, informing them that they are expected at a briefing at Caduceus's headquarters in the Meadham Building. Here, the heroes can give their report on the events that transpired in Bolivia—including handing over Tyranissh, if she is in their possession.

Following their report, Shapiro informs the heroes that due to their being "thrown in at the deep end" in Bolivia and exposed to the Mythos, they have been granted higher clearance within Caduceus. Shapiro hands them Tier Two

of the Caduceus Orientation Package (see Appendix B, page 254), asking that they read it in the meeting room (the heroes are not allowed to remove the documents from the room)—it is a document Caduceus keeps a tight control on, so that it does not fall into the hands of the Inner Night.

After reading the Orientation Package, and assuming the heroes wish to remain with Caduceus to combat the serpent person threat, Shapiro briefs them on the situation in North Borneo. Depending on how long the events in Bolivia take to unfold and the travel time back to New York, it may be a few days after 21st March when the heroes are sent to the quarantine zone. The Keeper should adjust the timeline as required.

Shapiro informs the heroes of the following details:

- The North Borneo Chartered Company has contacted Caduceus for assistance.
- The first symptoms of what is believed to be infectious hepatitis appeared on March 16th. The first deaths occurred on March 18th.
- The company believes the outbreak to be an unusual form of infectious hepatitis; one that is acting at an accelerated rate.
- Subjects with the disease normally display first symptoms two to six weeks after infection. Such symptoms normally last up to eight weeks, which can result in acute liver failure and death. In the recent outbreak, subjects have died just two days after displaying symptoms in North Borneo.
- From the information Caduceus has been able to obtain, it is believed that the outbreak could be the Yellow Death, a serpent person biological weapon designed to depopulate areas of human habitation. Thus, Caduceus suspects the involvement of the Inner Night.
- The team's mission is to enter the quarantine site, allowing Caduceus scientists to determine whether or not this is the Yellow Death at work. The team will then determine whether there is an Inner Night presence, find out what their objective is, and stop them.

Shapiro will join the team as their scientific advisor, performing the tests necessary with a Viral Analyzer (see page 80) to identify the Yellow Death. An array of chemicals, compounds, and drugs are at their disposal to craft an antidote.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS: 1933

6th February: the survey team establishes its camp, five miles from Ranau.

27th February: landslide kills some of the team, weakening the barriers between worlds.

1st March: the dhole passes through the rift and burrows into the mountain. Its arrival is mistaken as an earth tremor.

3rd March: Sahrizan discovers the exposed remains of the ancient serpent person facility.

6th March: otherworldly fruits begin to grow as the Dreamlands takes hold of the area around the rift. Local farmers interpret this as a gift from the spirit of the mountain.

13th March: the Waking World regains its hold and the fruits begin to wither and die. The local people believe the spirit of the mountain is angry.

14th March: the local farmers protest, demanding the survey team leave the area.

15th March: Sahrizan contaminates the water supply with the Yellow Death.

16th March: the first symptoms of the Yellow Death begin to manifest.

18th March: the first deaths from the Yellow Death occur.

19th March: the North Borneo Chartered Company establishes a military cordon to contain the spread of what it believes to be infectious hepatitis.

21st March: the company reaches out to Caduceus for help as the death count rises.






VIRAL ANALYZER

The analyzer fits snugly inside a 6-foot-cube crate. At first glance, it appears to be a confusing mass of glass pipes and tubes woven through a system of gears and brass apparatus, with a large control panel on top. A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll identifies it as modified serpent person technology.

On the control panel is a row of ten small glass-lined indentations resembling Petri dishes, each a couple of inches across. Samples of infected bodily fluids from different subjects are placed in each dish. A large button at the end of the row of dishes initiates the testing process. Each sample is then run through a different series of tubes connecting to varying apparatus to test for an array of criteria.

The process takes a varying number of hours to complete, depending on the complexity of what is being analyzed. At the end of the process, a light in the center of the control panel indicates the result. A red light means that analysis is inconclusive and more testing is required—a second batch of ten samples is needed, which are then run through a further set of additional apparatus. A green light means that analysis is complete and a series of numbered wheels (in groups of three, in three rows, on the far side of the panel from the dishes) turn to show a series of numbers. These numbers are then referenced in a manual compiled by Caduceus. The manual is spread over several 1,000-page volumes, each of densely printed type. The resulting numbers reveal the technical specifications of the infectious subject (lethality, stages of infection, time-spans, and so on), as well as the chemical formula for an antidote (including an assessment of its effectiveness).

A copy of the multi-volume manual is issued with the analyzer. No skills rolls are required to use the device or understand the manual (for its intended purpose).



ALTERNATIVE ENTRY POINTS

Options for engaging heroes who have become free agents or who have allied with another faction opposed to Caduceus.

The Inner Night

If the Inner Night has recruited the heroes, they can be passed a communiqué that has been intercepted on its way to Joshua Meadham. The message, from Shapiro's team, already in the quarantine zone reads:

Message to Caduceus HQ: Yellow Death outbreak in North Borneo. Suspected Inner Night activity. Send field team urgently.

The heroes are dispatched to look into the situation and investigate any artifacts remaining from the old serpent person scientific facility.

In this version of events, Sahrizan is a peripheral agent of the Inner Night, who has decided to investigate the area by himself. He hopes to find and activate the Gate singlehandedly, hoping his Inner Night masters will praise and reward him (and maybe even receive rewards from Tsathoggua). The rest of the Inner Night are unaware of his actions or presence in the area, believing him to be elsewhere in the region.

Tyranissh

If the sorcerer has awoken and is at large, Tyranissh may see the heroes as potential allies. In this instance, she uses the heroes to combat the Inner Night, having learned about them and the threat their agenda poses (after psychically pulling such information from members of Caduceus).

Any further information about the situation developing in North Borneo can be garnered from the media (see **Independent Action** following).

Tyranissh asks the heroes to go to the area, determine if there is Inner Night involvement and, if so, put an end to it.

Independent Action

If the heroes have chosen to divorce themselves completely from Caduceus, they come across reports of the situation in North Borneo through newspapers and other sources. This provides them with the first four bullet points of information from Shapiro's briefing (see **Player Introduction**, page 78). They also learn that a Caduceus team (led by Quentin Shapiro) is on its way to combat the outbreak.

Alternatively, the Inner Night approaches the heroes. Posing as fellow humans, the agents inform the heroes of the situation they claim to have "discovered" in North Borneo. They spin the information in such a way to say that Caduceus is influencing the military forces in the area to further its political agenda by earning favor with the North Borneo Chartered Company, regardless of the human cost it incurs.

THE SETTING

At a staggering height of 13,438 feet (4,096 meters), Mount Kinabalu dominates the landscape in this area of North Borneo. The climate around the mountain depends on the altitude. Towards its base, the climate is tropical, with frequent afternoon showers. Temperatures range between 27°C (81°F) and 34°C (93°F) throughout the year. There are two monsoon seasons in the region each year: the first, from November to March, has much heavier rainfall than the second, which falls from May to September.

Temperatures drop higher up the mountain and can reach freezing point at the summit. The lowest temperatures at the summit range from -10°C (14°F) during December and January, rising to 3°C (37°F) between June and September. The landscape on the slopes of the mountain is a mixture of open grasslands and wooded areas. The woodland gets denser further up the mountain, eventually giving way to bare rock around the summit.

A wide variety of plant and tree life is found on the mountain. Given its size and how the climate changes from the base to the summit, different regions are more suited to certain plants. Examples include rich lowland rainforest trees, mountain oaks, rhododendron, coniferous forests, alpine meadow plants, and stunted bushes near the summit. There are also many carnivorous plants and orchid species found here.

Notable wildlife includes a wide variety of birds (326 species), insects, mammals (100 species), amphibians, reptiles and land snails (110 species). Altogether, there are 4,500 species of flora and fauna inhabiting the area.

THE NORTH BORNEO CHARTERED COMPANY

In 1658, the territory that would become known as North Borneo was ceded to the Sultan of Sulu by the Sultan of Brunei as a gift for helping in a civil war that occurred in Brunei. In 1865, the United States Consul to Brunei secured a 10-year lease for the territory, which then passed in 1875 to Baron Gustav von Overbeck, Consul of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Von Overbeck obtained financial backing from British colonial merchants and entrepreneurs Alfred and Edward Dent but ultimately failed in his attempts to sell the territory to Italy for use as a penal colony. Consequently, von Overbeck departed and left Alfred Dent in control. The Dent brothers obtained a Royal Charter in 1881 and formed the North Borneo Chartered Company (NBCC).

From 1881 to 1942, the NBCC controlled North Borneo in much the same way as the British Empire administered its colonial footholds. NBCC divided the land into "Residencies" comprised of "Provinces" (later called Districts) run by District Officers. British officials held top posts while native chiefs controlled affairs at the local level.

Generally, North Borneo was peaceful under the company's control; however, the colonial administration, the implementation of taxes, and the loss of land to European controlled plantations generated resentment from the local population. Sikh policemen (recruited from North India) maintained law and order, although the British Army (stationed in North Borneo) could be called upon if a situation got out of hand.

The company's administration and law enforcement provided a foundation for economic growth where previously conflicts between tribes and piracy had been widespread. Chinese immigrants helped to increase the workforce, leading to the establishment of timber, tobacco, and rubber industries.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Statistics for these NPCs are presented at the end of this chapter.

Quentin Shapiro, 36, *Caduceus scientist and team handler*

Shapiro accompanies the heroes to North Borneo to perform the tests necessary to determine the presence of the Yellow Death. Later in the scenario, he is consumed and replaced by Sahrizan.

Shapiro is under orders from his superiors to use a Haftorang Device (see **Appendix B**, page 252) if either of the following two criteria is met:

- If the Yellow Death is present and has been genetically modified to last beyond its expected one-month lifespan. As there is no known cure for the Yellow Death (besides **Hybridization**—see **Appendix C**), this will be the only way to contain an outbreak before it spreads out of control. (While this may not be completely incompatible with the goals of Caduceus, it creates unnecessary risks and complications.)
- The Inner Night threat is too great to handle.

The Haftorang Device has the potential to destroy the entire quarantine zone. Caduceus cares not if this results in the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent people.

THE YELLOW DEATH

The Yellow Death is highly contagious and spread by even the slightest physical contact. The Keeper should take note of each hero's exposure to the infection, noting whether it is low, medium, or high:

- **Low:** the hero has been very careful to avoid infection. Gloves and a mask have been worn when in infected areas. No direct physical contact with infected people has been made. Care has been taken to avoid contaminated food or drink.
- **Medium:** the hero has not been careful to avoid infection. Physical contact with infected people has been made. Care has been taken to avoid contaminated food or drink.
- **High:** the hero has been directly exposed to infection and has consumed infected water, is in direct contact with infected bodily fluids, or has inhaled the spores from exploding buboes.

At the end of each day, the heroes should attempt a **CON** roll, with the difficulty based on their exposure, to determine if they have become infected:

- **Low:** Regular **CON** roll.
- **Medium:** Hard **CON** roll.
- **High:** Extreme **CON** roll.

STAGES OF INFECTION

Stage one: (1 hour after infection) there are no outward signs of infection but the carrier is contagious to those around them, allowing the virus to spread at an alarming rate.

Stage two: (24 hours after infection) resembles the symptoms of infectious hepatitis (yellow skin, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.). However, with infectious hepatitis, these symptoms usually manifest two to six weeks—unlike the rapid advancement of the Yellow Death.

Stage three: (24 hours after the first symptoms manifest; 48 hours after initial infection) each victim reacts differently to the virus; roll 1D6 to determine the effects of this stage:

1. The victim's flesh begins to rot, sloughing off in great yellow-grey lumps and exposing jaundiced bones and viscera beneath. Victim loses 1D4 hit points every hour.
2. The victim rots from the inside. Their last hours are spent vomiting and coughing up a rancid soup of their internal organs. Victim loses 1D3 hit points every hour.
3. The disease causes a fever and hallucinations of a mystical nature. The victim suffers strange insights into the Mythos and the true nature of reality. This, of course, drives the victim insane and they babble madly about entities beyond human comprehension. The victim loses 1 hit point and 1D10 SAN per hour, but gains 1 percentile of in the Cthulhu Mythos skill (although having very little time left to make use of it).
4. The victim develops buboes, which are, in fact, seedpods for the spread of the disease. These growths swell and pulse, ultimately exploding every 1D4 hours in a dry shower of yellow powder. Exposure to the powder carries a high chance of spreading the

infection. Victim loses 1D6 hit points each time the seedpods explode.

5. The fever destroys all higher brain functions, reducing the victim's INT by 1D20 points every hour. Strangely, the victim feels compelled to move; they shamle around, vacant-eyed, limbs moving in palsied tremors and strange jerks. Upon reaching 0 INT, the victim dies.
6. The victim oozes yellow pus from all orifices, including bright yellow tears. This leads to death from dehydration. Victim loses 1D4 hit points every hour.

Note: all hit point, Sanity, or Characteristic loss incurred from stage three and beyond cannot be healed.

TREATMENT AND CURE

The Viral Analyzer (page 80) takes several hours to analyze the Yellow Death successfully (or rather, as long as it takes Sahrizan to take Shapiro's place and then leave for the Outpost). The numbers displayed at the end of the process point to various pages in the manual that together reveal the effects detailed above, and that the infection is definitely the Yellow Death.

Furthermore, the Viral Analyzer also reveals the Yellow Death has not mutated or been improved upon—therefore, the disease will burn out within the next week if the spread of the infection can be contained. Those infected at that point will make a full recovery; however, it is extremely unlikely anyone currently infected would survive that long.

THE YELLOW DEATH

The Viral Analyzer presents two chemical formulas, which can be constructed with the supplies from Caduceus without the needed of any roll (as detailed instructions are provided).

The first formula is used to detect if a patient is infected with the Yellow Death, as stage one sufferers show no outward signs of infection. The chemical mixture is added to water and drunk by the patient. If, after 1 minute, their tongue has turned yellow, the patient is infected. If there is no reaction in this time, the subject is not infected.

Note that Caduceus have supplied ample water; however, the heroes may think to use the local water, not realizing

the local water supply is contaminated. If the first formula is dropped into the local water, it immediately turns yellow, confirming contamination. If any of the heroes has already drunk from the local water they run the risk of becoming infected (realization of which prompts a **Sanity** roll (0/1D3 loss)). Adding the first formula to uncontaminated water produces no reaction.

The second formula is accompanied by a note in the manual stating that this is only a partial solution; victims can only be treated successfully (and cured) if they are in stage one or stage two of the disease. By the time the victim enters stage three, there is no hope of a

cure. The drug created from the second formula suppresses the symptoms of the Yellow Death for one week and renders the person non-contagious for this period. At the end of the week, the subject will then advance to stage three and death is highly likely. Repeat doses of the second formula have no effect.

The manual's description of the Yellow Death states there is only one way to save those infected by the disease once it has reached stage three: the subject must undergo **Hybridization** (see page 259, **Appendix C**). As serpent people are immune to the Yellow Death, the hybrid's new immune system will combat its effects and cure them.

Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3





- **Description:** average build and conservatively dressed. Usually red-faced, sweating, and out of breath in the hot climate of North Borneo.
- **Traits:** a quiet and reserved academic, who is generally in a pleasant mood. Has a dry sense of humor; he might make a droll joke from time to time.
- **Roleplaying hook:** he knows the power of the Haftorang Device he possesses and hides his fear behind the occasional joke. He has been ordered to use the device if certain conditions are met; this responsibility weighs heavily on his conscience. He will constantly seek reassurance from the heroes that “they” are doing the right thing.

Sahrizan, serpent man, agent of the Inner Night

Sahrizan initially takes the form of one of the local farm workers. He later consumes and appears as Quentin Shapiro—should Shapiro be killed prior to Sahrizan taking his form, Sahrizan will instead target Captain Lancaster.

His intention is to cause as many deaths in the quarantine zone as possible, using either the Yellow Death or the Haftorang Device, so that the barrier between worlds weakens further, potentially allowing the Gate to connect to Mu. He does not know that the Gate will never have enough power to make the connection but he continues to be driven by hope.

- **Description:** Sahrizan is encountered only after replacing Shapiro; thus, he looks like Shapiro but does not sweat at all.
- **Traits:** as Shapiro while masquerading as him, although a little more confident. While his deception has to be good enough that it will not arouse suspicion, being too much like Shapiro will hamper his own mission being completed. He will slowly grow more confident, focused, and emotionless as he approaches success.
- **Roleplaying hook:** should any of the locals get in his way, he will have no hesitation in ordering the heroes to kill them, stating they are an irritation and as good as dead already. As Shapiro, if the heroes are obstructive to his aims, he seeks to send them on unnecessary and fruitless errands to get them out of his way.

DUSUN TRIBE

The Dusun tribe collectively forms the largest ethnic group in North Borneo (approximately 30% of the population). They typically reside in the hills and upland valleys of the region. The tribe is comprised of more than 30 sub-groups, each with slightly different dialects, although they are mostly mutually understandable.

Most Dusuns converted to Christianity and Islam following the establishment of colonial rule in North Borneo, although animism is still practiced by some. The tribe, as a whole, is well known for its peaceful nature, hospitality, and aversion to violence. Trade is centered around agricultural and forest produce. The tribe has a hard-working and frugal ethic when it comes to business.

The animistic beliefs of the farmers mean that they hold the NBCC survey team as directly responsible for angering the spirit of the mountain. If the heroes are seen to punish the survey team or get them to atone in some fashion, the farmers may believe the Yellow Death will be lifted from them.

Abidin, 29, local guide

Employed by the British military to show Caduceus around the quarantine zone, Abidin works as a local guide. He claims to have a friend or relative in every town across this part of North Borneo and has a knack for getting the heroes exactly what they might need (albeit in an under-the-table fashion).

- **Description:** scruffily dressed, with wild and dirty hair, and a stubby beard and mustache. Often has a smile on his face.
- **Traits:** always happy and eager to be of service to the heroes, especially if they can pay him for his services. A good man at heart.
- **Roleplaying hook:** if the heroes fail to discover certain events occurring within the quarantine zone, Abidin can be used to pass information to the heroes (from a friend-of-a-friend), for a small fee, of course.

Kazin, 45, farm owner

Kazin owns a tobacco farm that lies within the confines of the quarantine zone. He is the unwilling host of various farmers from the wider region (who have come to protest

FARMERS AND SURVEYORS

The local farmers and their families work on or own other farms in the area. Many have left their homes to protest about the blasting work carried out by the NBCC surveyors, as well as to seek help in the wake of the Yellow Death outbreak. They now congregate at Kazin's farm. Many are falling victim to the disease. Their clothes are dirty, worn, and threadbare. They have been living rough for over a week now. The farmers have basic cotton clothes and little in the way of amenities.

Here are some Malay first names to drawn upon, should the heroes wish to speak to individual farmers and their families.

Male: Aiman, Dahari, Eysa, Ghazaly, Jamal, Nizam, Osman, Ramli, Talib, Vasan.

Female: Adilah, Bahiyah, Cempaka, Faizah, Halimah, Ida, Karima, Laila, Mahsuri, Yana.

The NBCC surveyors are mostly from Great Britain and professional in outlook. The heat and conditions are getting most of them down; they want to leave the quarantine zone as quickly as possible, as the threat of the Yellow Death is not to be underestimated. The surveyors wear clean suits and overalls and have access to far better amenities than the local farmers.

against the NBCC surveyors). The various farmers have established a small shantytown, which has brought Kazin's farm to a standstill while the outbreak continues.

- **Description:** high-quality suit in good condition, wide brimmed hat, neat hair, and a hint of aftershave.
- **Traits:** Kazin is convinced that, if he were going to catch the Yellow Death, he would have done so by now. He's more worried about the impact on his business than he is about the prospect of death. He does not realize he is already infected (stage one).
- **Roleplaying hook:** Kazin is not as religious as those who have congregated on his land. He is a businessman, and the protesters are ruining his business. If they want to protest, they should do it near the surveyors' camp. He will demand that the heroes move the other farmers off his land.

Richard Clements, 40, geologist

Clements is the head of the NBCC survey team. He has discovered that the region is rich in copper deposits (worth a fortune). He wants the quarantine zone dropped so that he can report his findings to the company, as, when he does, he will be rich.

Clements and his survey team believe that if the local farmers are rounded up and contained, then the outbreak will eventually burn itself out, allowing the survey team to go free. Caduceus should be making this happen.

- **Description:** wears a Panama hat over his dirty hair, spectacles with dirty lenses, and a creased suit. Often sweaty and red faced.
- **Traits:** has yet to acclimatize fully to the area, so is often irritable, with a short temper. His bullish behavior is putting him at odds with the rest of the survey team.
- **Roleplaying hook:** as far as Clements is concerned, the army should be getting him and his team out of the quarantine zone. Believes the people from Caduceus have come to make a report that will get the quarantine order rescinded. If they don't, he threatens the heroes (as representatives of Caduceus) with the full political force of NBCC—after all, the company controls the country.

Captain Lancaster, 35, British Army commander

Lancaster has been called in by the NBCC to enforce the quarantine zone and prevent the outbreak from reaching Ranau. He has no problem watching the local people fall victim to the outbreak as he does not view them to be as valuable to the company, whereas he sees the NBCC surveyors' lives as worthy of rescue.

- **Description:** impeccable uniform, polished sidearm, slicked back and well-trimmed hair, and a thin mustache.
- **Traits:** a firm, confident, and commanding voice with a crisp English accent. Pleasant enough with the heroes yet shows little concern for the local peoples. Has a cold stare and the look of a man who has seen the horror of front-line combat.
- **Roleplaying hook:** Lancaster is an avid game hunter and has a collection of trophies from his time in North Borneo, including the head of the Buopoth, which he will show off to the heroes.

OPENING SCENE

Once the heroes have made their preparations in New York City, the Keeper should cut to this scene. Here, the heroes are aboard a small passenger airplane, a few minutes away from landing at an airstrip near the headquarters of the military command in charge of enforcing the quarantine. Their equipment is strapped in at the rear of the compartment.

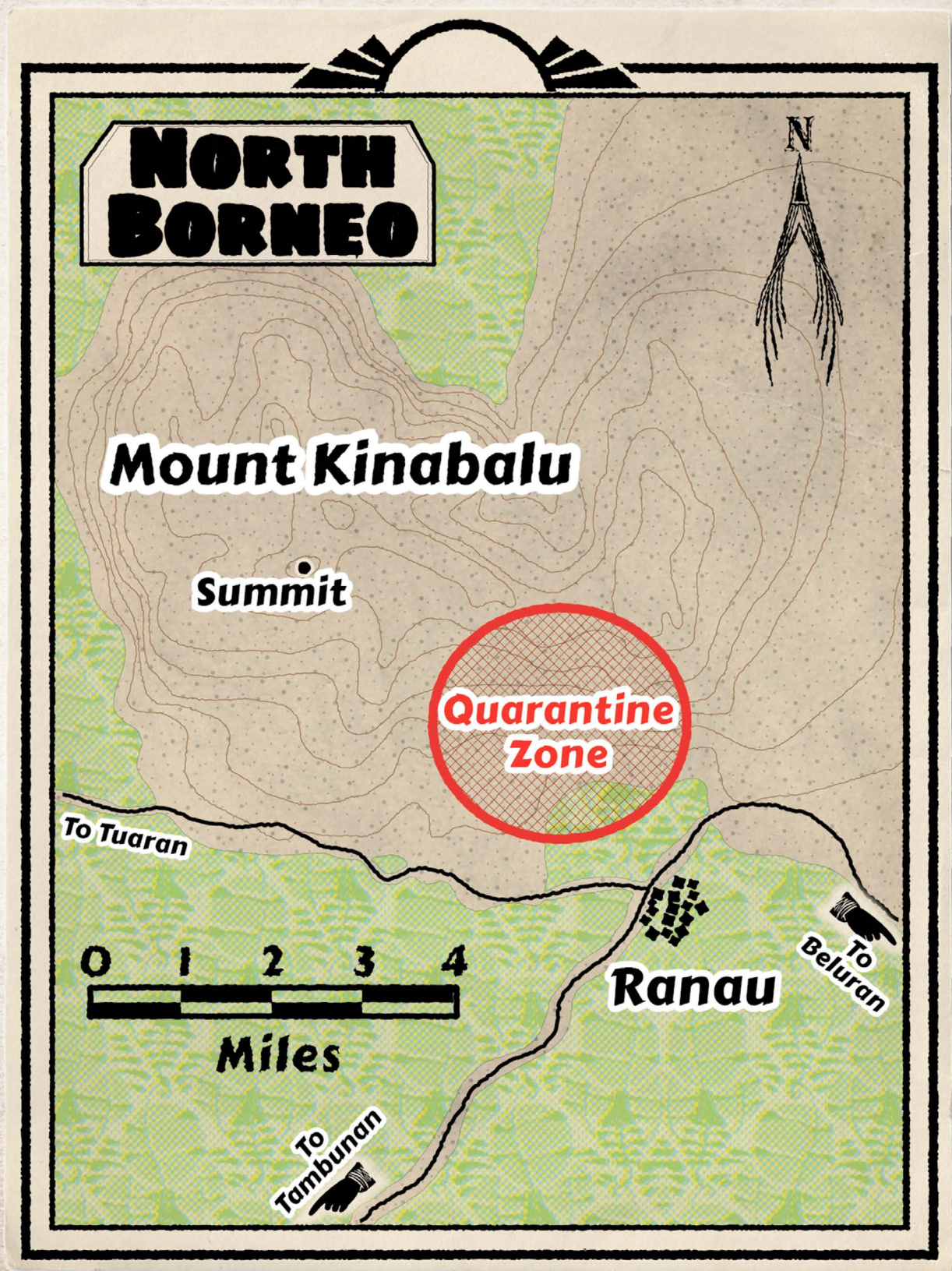
Mount Kinabalu rises towards the sky to the left of the airplane as it darts through low cloud cover. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals shadowy winged shapes flying through the clouds above the mountain. The shapes are moving to intercept the airplane! A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll identifies the creatures as nightgaunts, inhabitants of the Dreamlands.

Suddenly, six nightgaunts descend upon the airplane. They are angry at this giant metal "thing" that screams above the mountain and desire to remove it from the sky. One of the nightgaunts appears in the window next to a hero (who failed their **Spot Hidden** roll), ready to cut through the hull with its tail in the next round. Another crashes through a window at the rear of the airplane, landing on the heroes' equipment (notably, the Haftorang Device) and dislodging various cases and boxes. Two more smash into the cockpit and fly away with the screaming pilot and co-pilot into the clouds—unless one of the heroes is either piloting or co-piloting, in which case play through the nightgaunts' attack, making rolls to determine success. The remaining two creatures land on the upper hull, taking hold with their tails.

Play through the rounds, with the heroes attempting to fend off the assault. In subsequent rounds, the nightgaunts attempt to perform their seize and tickle maneuvers, pulling people from the airplane and dropping them from a great height. Any hero in this situation had better have 30 or more points of Luck (to survive certain death, see *Pulp Cthulhu*, page 61), or hope for a daring rescue from another hero. Catching a falling person with the airplane requires an **Extreme Pilot (Aircraft)** roll within 10 combat rounds; if successful, the person falls back into the airplane, suffering 1D6 damage in the process.

Any nightgaunt that suffers 6 or more points of damage flees to the safety of the clouds and does not return.

After the opening round of combat, without a pilot, the airplane enters a dive. A **Hard STR** or **Pilot (Aircraft)** roll can be attempted each round to bring the airplane out of the dive. Failure results in the airplane crashing to the ground five rounds later, inflicting 4D10 damage to everyone left inside (kindly Keepers may reduce this to 2D10 if the heroes come up with some clever way to limit the damage).



If the heroes pull out of the dive using STR rather than having any Pilot skill, the airplane cannot be maneuvered or landed safely. The heroes will need to contact the military base by radio and be guided down by a pilot on the ground, requiring a successful **Luck** roll from the hero at the controls. Failure in this instance inflicts 2D10 damage to all inside.

In any event, the heroes crash or land on the dirt runway of the military camp.

THE MILITARY CAMP

Having arrived in a fairly eventful fashion, the heroes at met at the military camp by Captain Lancaster. He greets the heroes with pleasant formality before offering the help of his men to unload (or salvage) the equipment from the airplane (or wreckage thereof). At this time, Shapiro discovers to his horror, that the Haftorang Device has been damaged—initially from the nightgaunt attack, but potentially the crash as well. The device is quietly ticking.

Shapiro gathers the heroes together and privately reveals that they must quickly ascertain the local situation and evacuate within 24 hours. After that, the mission is over. If questioned why there is such a rush, he discloses that the Haftorang Device is an incendiary bomb designed to sterilize the infected area if the disease cannot be contained. The Device has been damaged, triggering the countdown to detonation. Shapiro cannot deactivate the Device and there is no way to stop the countdown. Pressed about the device, a **Persuade** or **Intimidate** roll forces Shapiro to detail the device's specifics (refer to **Appendix B**, page 252) without the need of a **Cthulhu Mythos** roll while examining the device.

Once Shapiro has relayed the information concerning the Haftorang Device, Captain Lancaster reappears to explain that the military has successfully established a cordon around the area, preventing people from leaving the infected zone. Some locals have attempted to leave and been turned back; although it becomes clear, many have been shot trying to escape. Lancaster has arranged a guide for the heroes and introduces Abidin. Before the heroes can set off, Lancaster invites them all to lunch in the officers' mess, as it will take a while to unload their equipment and prepare it for transport up the mountain.

Disarming the Haftorang Device

In terms of the plot, the countdown to explosion provides an underlying tension for this chapter, helping the action flow with a sense of urgency.

Normally, a Haftorang Device can usually be disarmed with a successful **Astronomy**, **Mathematics**, or **Hard**

A SOLDIER'S LIFE

The soldiers stationed at the camp maintain the perimeter of the quarantine zone and have been stationed in North Borneo for some time, so have grown used to the climate. They are, in general, a cheerful lot; however, they have had to shoot a number of locals trying to leave the quarantine zone. This fact, along with the threat of infection, weighs heavily on them. They are a little on edge and it is starting to show.

INT roll (see **Appendix B**, page 252) but, in this case, the damage to the Device makes this impossible. The delicate mechanism has been distorted in such a fashion that any attempt to disarm it triggers an immediate detonation (or progresses the countdown, at the Keeper's discretion)—a successful **Science (Engineering)**, **Demolitions**, **Mechanical Repair**, or **Electrical Repair** roll can confirm this to be true; failing those, a successful **Psychology** roll deduces that Shapiro is telling the truth. In short, if the heroes begin to tinker with the mechanism, it quickly becomes apparent that they cannot stop the detonation.

Mechanically, if the heroes attempt any of the rolls normally needed to disarm the device, regardless of success or failure, they realize that it will detonate if they tamper any further with the mechanism. If they succeed in the roll, they understand how the mechanism should normally work and may arm/disarm another Haftorang Device in the future without the need for a skill roll. Additionally, the hero concerned could potentially damage another device in a similar manner in the future (with a **Hard Mechanical Repair** roll) to ensure it cannot be disarmed once activated—although failure of such a roll, could prompt a premature detonation at the Keeper's discretion.

Dinner in the Mess

Over lunch, Lancaster regales the heroes with stories of hunting exploits and goes on to tell them that two nights ago, a soldier on duty along the cordon's perimeter heard a large animal moving through the undergrowth and shot it dead. It was an unusual beast, unlike anything Lancaster had seen before and he believes it to be native to the island. The captain had the animal skinned and he points to its head, now mounted on the wall of the officers' mess. Lancaster says the cook has found the beast to have meat of an exceptional quality, akin to fillet steak.

Keeper note: the creature was a female buopoth (see **Lovelorn Buopoth**, page 92) that had wandered down the mountain.

Thus, the heroes' dinner is (buopoth) steak. The Keeper should note which of the heroes eats the buopoth steak, as this will become relevant later. There are no ill effects from eating the meat; it both smells and tastes exquisite. A successful **Natural World** or **Science (Zoology)** roll reveals the mounted head as being unlike anything the hero can recall from experience or zoological books, perhaps it is an undiscovered species! A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** or **Dream Lore** roll accurately identify it the creature as a buopoth.

The Cordon

The heroes are loaned a couple of armored cars, capable of traversing the dirt tracks up the mountain. As the heroes are preparing to leave, they hear shouting coming from the cordon just outside the camp. One of the local farmers is staggering from the tree line, crossing over the grassland towards the soldiers. She appears to be in her late 20s and her dress is tattered and bloodstained. She has sweat on her brow and she is pleading (for help) in Malay.

If the heroes move across to observe the scene, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals she has yellow buboes in her armpits and inner thighs, seen through the tattered clothing. She continues toward the soldiers.

Keeper note: the farmer is suffering from stage three of the Yellow Death. The soldiers will shoot her if the heroes do not intervene in time. If she is allowed to get within five feet of anyone, she suddenly cries out in agony as the buboes explode, killing her. The shower of yellow powder encompasses anyone within 5 feet.

ENTERING THE QUARANTINE ZONE

Shapiro is keen to ascend the mountain as quickly as possible, ordering the heroes to accompany him. He insists on taking the Haftorang Device with him, as he doesn't want it to leave his sight. Abidin points the way as the group moves upwards along the track. The journey to the farm takes about half an hour.

Coming around a corner, the heroes see that a section of the trees on both sides of the road have been toppled. The damage looks very recent. If the heroes stop for a closer look, huge footprints (approximately 3 feet in length) can

be seen across the road, and the fallen trees have sets of deep scratches on their trunks, as if some great taloned hand had ripped them apart. Abidin has no explanation for this sight.

Keeper note: last night, a gug tore through here and cast the trees aside as it roamed the area.

If the heroes want to follow the tracks, Shapiro tries to prevent them; saying that they have a job to do in very limited time. If they insist, he will not stop them and instead proceeds with Abidin to the farm (see following). The tracks lead to the edge of the **Dreamland Forest** (see page 92), where the track's maker may be found.

THE FARM

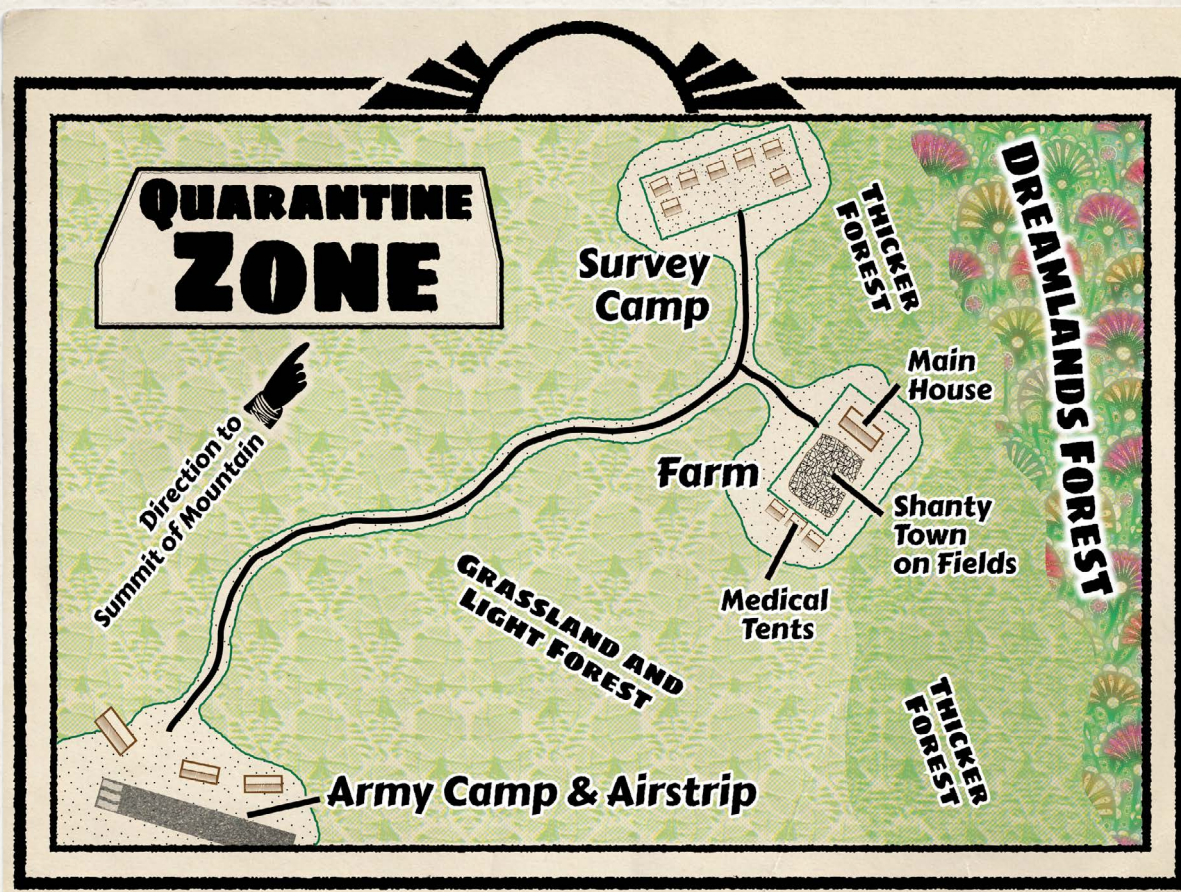
The dirt track comes to a fork: to the left is the NBCC survey team's camp, and to the right is Kazin's tobacco farm, where the local farmers have gathered. Tents and other makeshift shelters are huddled around a plantation-style house that overlooks the tobacco fields, which are surrounded on all sides by the forest. At the side of the building sits an old truck. Approximately two hundred local people remain in the camp; although dozens of the tents stand empty, the former occupants deceased.

Kazin approaches the heroes and shakes hands with whoever appears to be in charge. The farm owner is currently in stage one of the infection and contagious, but otherwise, he appears healthy. Any hero making physical contact with him must roll to avoid infection (see **The Yellow Death**, page 82).

While his manner is friendly enough, Kazin is quick to demand how long it will take the heroes to clear the protesters from his property. He is keen to have his farm operational again and while he is not oblivious to the fact that people are dying, he has reached his limit and no longer cares. He believes that removing the protesters from his land will reduce the risk of infection for his workers and strongly emphasizes this point.

Any heroes who talk to the protesting farmers quickly gather they don't intend to move on until the survey team withdraws from the area. The protesters are angry and will not comply with any deals or threats to move them from their homeland. The sooner the surveyors' leave, the sooner the spirit of the mountain will be appeased and all will be well.

Use any interaction with the farmers to inform the heroes of the miraculous growth of the local produce and its subsequent withering. Interested heroes can be directed to the area up the mountainside where the strange fruit



was growing—which, in turn, leads them into the area impinged upon by the Dreamlands.

Keeper note: the impasse between the protesters, Kazin, and the military is not intended to be resolved by the heroes; if attempts are made to reach some form of agreement or deal, the Keeper can reward ingenious thinking if so desired.

Medical Tents

A path leads from the main house, through the center of the tobacco fields, to a smaller collection of tents where the severely sick locals are being taken here before they die. The stench of disease and death hangs heavy over the area, with those no longer able to walk lying in rows of makeshift beds. Those infected show various symptoms of the Yellow Death (stage three). The local men and women caring for the sick are not medically trained, and many are themselves infected. Here, they do their best to ease the suffering but, to outside observers, it is clearly a hopeless task.

A long ditch, hidden just inside the tree line and beyond the tents, has been dug to store the linen-wrapped bodies

of those who have succumbed to the disease. The mass grave is beginning to overflow, with dozens of corpses piled atop one another.

Muda, a young boy whose parents have died from the Yellow Death, sits outside one of the medical tents. He helps by fetching water from a nearby well; the water is used to cool down the sick. However, most of the time, he stares off into the distance. A successful **Psychology** roll confirms the boy is traumatized from being surrounded by so much death. If the heroes take the time to speak with him, Muda says that he saw an evil spirit poison the water well but his parents did not believe him. He can describe the evil spirit, calling it a “Snake that walked.” Should the heroes decide to investigate, climbing down the stone-lined well is not a challenge. A successful **Hard Spot Hidden** roll discovers a discarded test tube with no stopper in the murky water—this once contained the Yellow Death bio-weapon.

Keeper note: Muda observed Sahrizan pouring the bio-weapon into the drinking water.

Shapiro takes over one of the tents, storing the Haftorang Device inside, sets up the Viral Analyzer and begins to take blood samples from the infected. He instructs the heroes to leave him to his work, insisting he can take care of the analysis while the heroes determine if the Inner Night is present. After they leave him, he may be seen taking blood samples and then retiring to his tent to work with the Viral Analyzer. Thus, once the heroes are out of the way, Sahrizan slips into the tent unobserved and consumes Shapiro, taking on his appearance. The next time the heroes meet Shapiro, it will be Sahrizan.

THE SURVEY TEAM

A group of protesters is blocking the dirt track to the survey team's camp while others stand along the chain-linked fence, which has been established around the camp's perimeter. Some protesters are showing signs of entering stage two of the infection. The Keeper should determine how active the farmers are in their protest (and thus how much of a problem they are to the heroes when they approach).

The camp is a series of temporary huts constructed in a horseshoe formation. A number of the huts store equipment, while others provide sleeping quarters, showers, and dining facilities. One hut is used as a medical unit. Two Ford Model A trucks are parked in a central clearing. There are approximately thirty members of the survey team left in the camp.

A couple of guards on the front gate, armed with rifles, allow the heroes to enter and then go to fetch the head of the survey team, Richard Clements. One of the guards looks very pale and is unsteady on his feet. If a hero gets too close to him, he suddenly vomits liquefied organs over them, collapses and dies. His body is quickly taken away to the medical hut.

Clements arrives moments later, concerned about the guard, but happy to see the heroes. He politely enquires how long it will take the heroes to get everyone back to Ranau. He believes, with the arrival of the heroes, that the quarantine must have been lifted. Clements refuses to accept the heroes are present for any purpose other than getting his team out of the area. If the heroes respond by telling him that they have no authority to evacuate the area, he quickly loses his temper and resorts to threatening them, saying the Company will take a dim view of this outrage. Interpersonal skills or **Credit Rating** may be used to calm him down for a while. Much like the situation at Kazin's farm, Clement's obstinacy is designed to put more pressure on the heroes rather than be a resolvable issue.

If the heroes can calm him down, Clements informs the heroes of the events from his perspective. He blames the locals for spreading the disease. Ten members of his team, including their doctor, have already died from the Yellow Death. Consequently, he has no medical staff, while the five men in the medical hut will not survive the night.

Ten makeshift crosses stand in a row in front of the rear fence, marking where the survey team's dead have been buried. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals that the surface of the graves while freshly dug, are slightly sunken into the ground (where they would normally be raised). If the heroes wish to excavate the graves, Clements initially objects but if the abnormality of the sunken earth is pointed out, he permits the heroes to investigate.

Digging up the graves is tiring work in the hot and humid climate. It soon becomes apparent that all of the buried bodies of the dead are missing. Strange tunnels lead into the graves and appear to continue through the earth. It's a tight squeeze for larger than average heroes, but if someone makes their way along one of the tunnels, it rises and opens out beyond the camp's perimeter fence in the forest. Here, a successful **Spot Hidden** or **Track** roll detects unusual hoof prints leading from the tunnel into the forest. The tracks are goat-like and large (approximately 5 to 8 inches).

Keeper note: ghouls have burrowed the tunnels to steal the corpses. Their tracks can be followed (**Track** roll) through the dense forest until it becomes the Dreamlands forest (see following). Eventually, the tracks lead to the ghoul warrens (see **The Ghoul Warrens**, page 93).

PLAYTEST NOTE

One playtest group took an exceptional interest in the activity of the ghouls. They were convinced that the disappearing bodies were the work of the Inner Night, and set up surveillance and traps to try to catch the body snatchers. They eventually captured one of the ghouls and attempted an interrogation. This ended messily.

THE DREAMLANDS FOREST

Heading north from either the survey team camp or Kazin's farm takes the heroes through dense woodland that creeps up the mountainside. For the first hour of the journey, the smell of rotten fruit wafts through the air with increasing frequency. Samples of the rotten fruit can be found as the heroes come closer to the Dreamlands forest. A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** or **Dream Lore** roll identifies the vegetation as native to the Dreamlands.

A number of easy to find tracks (no roll required) lead through the forest. Some are hoof prints, leading to the **Ghoul Warrens**, (page 93); however, one set of tracks are different, being more claw-like and slender—identifiable as serpent person tracks (left by Sahrizan on his way to and from the Outpost).

Following either set of tracks, the forest canopy grows thicker. In the gloom ahead, a faint blue-green glow can be seen from mosses creeping up oddly shaped trees and from strange plants in the undergrowth. It is a beautiful yet unnerving sight. No sounds of wildlife can be heard from this point forward other than occasional rustling sounds, which seem to echo around the heroes as if some small animals were silently stalking them. A successful **Hard Spot Hidden** roll might just catch a glimpse of something rodent-like. If the Keeper wishes, the heroes could be ambushed by a pack of zoogs eager for man-flesh. In the face of stiff opposition, the zoogs will disappear into the undergrowth; their main purpose is to deliver a swift lightning-fast attack on one of the heroes who is at the back of the group or who is apart from his or her colleagues for a moment.

Zoogs are small, rodent-like creatures. Small tentacles dangle from their snouts, concealing rows of very sharp teeth. The creatures like to burrow in the ground and also make homes in tree-trunks. While they mostly live on fungi, they have a taste for meat. Intelligent and cunning, they work in concert to track and take down large prey; they are nasty and thoroughly devious creatures.

As the heroes venture through the Dreamlands forest, they come across two other possible encounters: a lovelorn buopoth and a hungry gug. In addition, if following Sahrizan's tracks towards the Outpost, the heroes come across an area inhabited by a Leng spider. Statistics for all of these creatures, as well as the zoogs, can be found at the end of the scenario.

Lovelorn Buopoth

The sound of something large trampling through the undergrowth can be heard up ahead. This is a male buopoth searching for its mate (the female killed by the soldiers two nights ago). If any of the heroes consumed buopoth meat at the military camp, the male catches their scent and goes wild with anger, attacking anyone who ate its mate. It fights to the death, charging and trampling. Otherwise, the beast is evidently sad and will not attack the heroes unless provoked.

Buopoths resemble elephants, due to their long trunk-like proboscis and size (being a little larger than a horse). Their mauve-green skin is soft and felt-like. Protruding from their back are two rows of blunt spine-like growths. The ears are shaped more like human than elephant ears. Their eyes are large and disconcertingly intelligent looking. A soft and melodious trumpeting warns of their approach.

Hungry Gug

A successful **Listen** roll detects the sound of heavy footsteps coming towards the heroes. If the heroes are quick to hide, call for a **Stealth** roll, otherwise, moments later, a gug appears through the gloom of the forest. It views any heroes out in the open as an appetizing meal. Of course, hidden heroes who fail a **Sanity** roll for viewing the monstrous creature may unwittingly bring attention upon their heads through an involuntary cry or gasp.

The gug is huge, approximately twenty feet tall, with four arms ending in wicked talons and a vertical mouth ringed with razor-sharp teeth. Its body is covered in a coarse and dense fur. It is a cruel and dangerous opponent, likely to pursue and track prey that runs away. If it suffers the loss of half of its hit points, it retreats into the forest to look for easier prey.

Leng Spider

If following Sahrizan's tracks, the heroes arrive in an area where thick webs have been woven between the trees (evidently after the tracks were made). If pursued by the gug or buopoth, a hero may unwittingly run straight into one of these large webs (**Dodge** or **Luck** roll, at the Keeper's discretion). A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** or **Dream Lore** roll recalls the makers of such webs are the dreaded Leng spiders.

If caught in the sticky strands, an Extreme **DEX** roll is required to avoid sending vibrations along the strands to the spider. Likewise, for those attempting to make their way through the webs to follow the serpent man's tracks, an Extreme **DEX** roll is needed lest the spider comes looking for food. The spider is alerted, even if just one hero fails the roll.

Fighting inside the webs imposes a penalty die on all physical and combat rolls, as the heroes become entangled in the sticky strands. Freeing oneself from the strands calls for a Hard **STR** roll.

Heroes can attempt to circumvent the webbed area and look for tracks on the far side of the spider's domain—a successful **Stealth** roll is needed to creep around the patch; otherwise, the spider hears the movement and come looking for food.

Leng spiders are huge (the size of an automobile), purplish spiders, with bloated bodies and long, bristly legs. Their abdomens are a pale mottled violet, which turns to indigo on their cephalothorax, and their legs and chelicerae are black. Intelligent and very dangerous, the spiders most desire an easy meal; prey that fights back and inflicts serious wounds sends the monstrous arachnids fleeing into the trees. Of course, prey caught in the web can be dealt with at leisure.

Keeper note: one Leng Spider is presented as having made a home in the forest; the Keeper may increase the threat to two spiders by having a second appear—if the first is easily dispatched by the heroes.

Once clear of the spider's domain, the heroes emerge from the forest into a clearing (see **The Cliffs**, nearby).

THE GHOUL WARRENS

Following the ghoulish tracks brings the heroes to a number of holes in the ground, which descend into the earth. For the most part, the tunnels are large enough for a human to crawl through or even walk along while crouched in places. All appear to have been clawed and raked out through the packed soil, with roots occasionally poking through the walls. All the tunnels eventually lead to the larger tunnel (burrowed by the dhole through the bedrock).

Venturing down, the heroes can hear sounds of movement ahead. Eventually, the heroes arrive in a tunnel some two hundred feet wide (the dhole tunnel) and lined with huge ridges. Here, six ghouls cavort, meep, and contentedly gnaw on the stolen bones of those who have died from the Yellow Death.

These ghouls are not inherently hostile. They have been drawn here by the strong scent of death and would prefer to flee and avoid combat, although if provoked, they fight viciously.

Unless any of the heroes speak the ghoulish language, a successful group **Luck** roll means that one of the ghouls speaks English. The ghoulish will happily converse—after first establishing that the heroes mean the ghouls no harm.

In presenting the ghoulish, the Keeper should keep in mind the inhuman nature of these creatures. Have the ghoulish comment (in a charming manner) about how tasty the heroes' eyes look or how tender their flesh smells, and so on. The ghouls are not intended as a combat threat, instead serving to unnerve the heroes.

If the heroes make a particularly good impression (a successful **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Persuade** roll), the ghouls may offer the heroes some corpse-flesh to eat. The heroes must take care to avoid offending the ghouls if they refuse the offer (which may provoke the need for another social skill roll). In the unlikely event that the heroes accept the offer, and Extreme **CON** roll is required to avoid vomiting up the tainted meat.

The ghouls can explain that they have had warrens in this area for decades, as the barrier to the Dreamlands has been weak for centuries. Although they don't know why the barriers are so weak, they recently felt the barrier grow even weaker than before. They recount with a certain amount of glee that a dhole burst through the barrier from the deepest levels of the Dreamlands. It was soon after that the humans started dying, giving the ghouls one of their largest feasts in decades—stressing the fact that they were not responsible for the disease killing the humans nor the arrival of the dhole.

The ghouls cannot be persuaded to leave their feast, but are happy to point the heroes in the direction of where the dhole broke through into the Waking World. Following the ghouls' directions brings the heroes back up through various tunnels to the surface, near the cliffs (see following).

If the heroes decide to head down the tunnel, deeper into the mountain, they travel for an hour before coming across huge rock formations reminiscent of worm casts (but many times larger). The tunnel opens out into a vast cavern where the dhole can be seen in its terrible and Sanity shattering glory. It slithers around the edge of the cavern, devouring vast quantities of rock, and takes no interest in the heroes unless they do something significant to draw the monster's attention. It's quickly apparent that only an incredible amount of firepower could destroy the beast (the Haftorang Device might just have enough firepower to do the job).

THE CLIFFS

Whether the heroes follow Sahrizan's tracks out of the forest or take the route through the dhole tunnel to the surface, they arrive in a clearing below a sheer cliff face. Dark forms, clinging to the upper reaches of the cliffs, are dotted about—the nests of nightgaunts. From where the heroes stand, it's difficult to make out what the dark

forms might be; however, looking up, a large hexagonal opening can also be seen—the exposed entrance to the ancient serpent person Outpost.

At both ends of the clearing, bordering the cliff face, dhole tunnels head into the ground. One of these leads to the ghoulish warrens and is easily traversable. The other is a vertical drop that descends into darkness hundreds of feet below. This is where the dhole burst through into the Waking World. The dhole originally shot up from the hole and devoured a section of the mountainside, forming the cliff face and exposing the Outpost's entrance before dropping down to eat its way deeper into the mountain. Soon after, the nightgaunts used the various protrusions to roost upon.

There is no clear path up the cliff face but it appears climbable, as Sahrizan's tracks prove (claw marks can be seen along various hand-holds). A **Climb** roll is not required to ascend the cliff face, as there are plenty of handholds; however, if the heroes wish to make a **Climb** roll and succeed, they quickly reach the Outpost's entrance and avoid the attention of the nightgaunts (see following). Otherwise, a **Stealth** roll is needed to evade detection by the nightgaunts who roost nearby. If a **Stealth** roll is failed, 1D6 nightgaunts fly from their nests and swoop down upon the heroes. As per the **Opening Scene** (page 86), if any nightgaunt suffers 6 HP or more in combat, it flees to the safety of the sky and does not return.

THE OUTPOST

The hexagonal corridor, some 10 feet high, leads inside the mountain. While its white walls and floor are featureless, they emit a dull light, which provides enough illumination to see as the heroes venture inside. The corridor leads directly to the Gate Room, a large hexagonal room, 20 feet in height. Standing in the center of the room is a six-sided step-pyramid of polished metal (part of the still functioning power source that supplies the remains of the Outpost). Circling through the air above the pyramid are two hexagonal frames that form the Gate—when the two frames meet and lock together, the Gate opens.

There are two further exits. One once led deeper into the complex but is now blocked by a wall of solid rock. The other exit leads to a Control Room, also hexagonal in shape, in which control panels extend from five of the walls. A large display screen wraps around the three walls opposite the doorway. Various serpentine sigils and glyphs can be seen on and around the control panels, suggesting the facility's association with serpent folk—a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll recognizes the language as Naacal, the language used by the serpent folk of old.

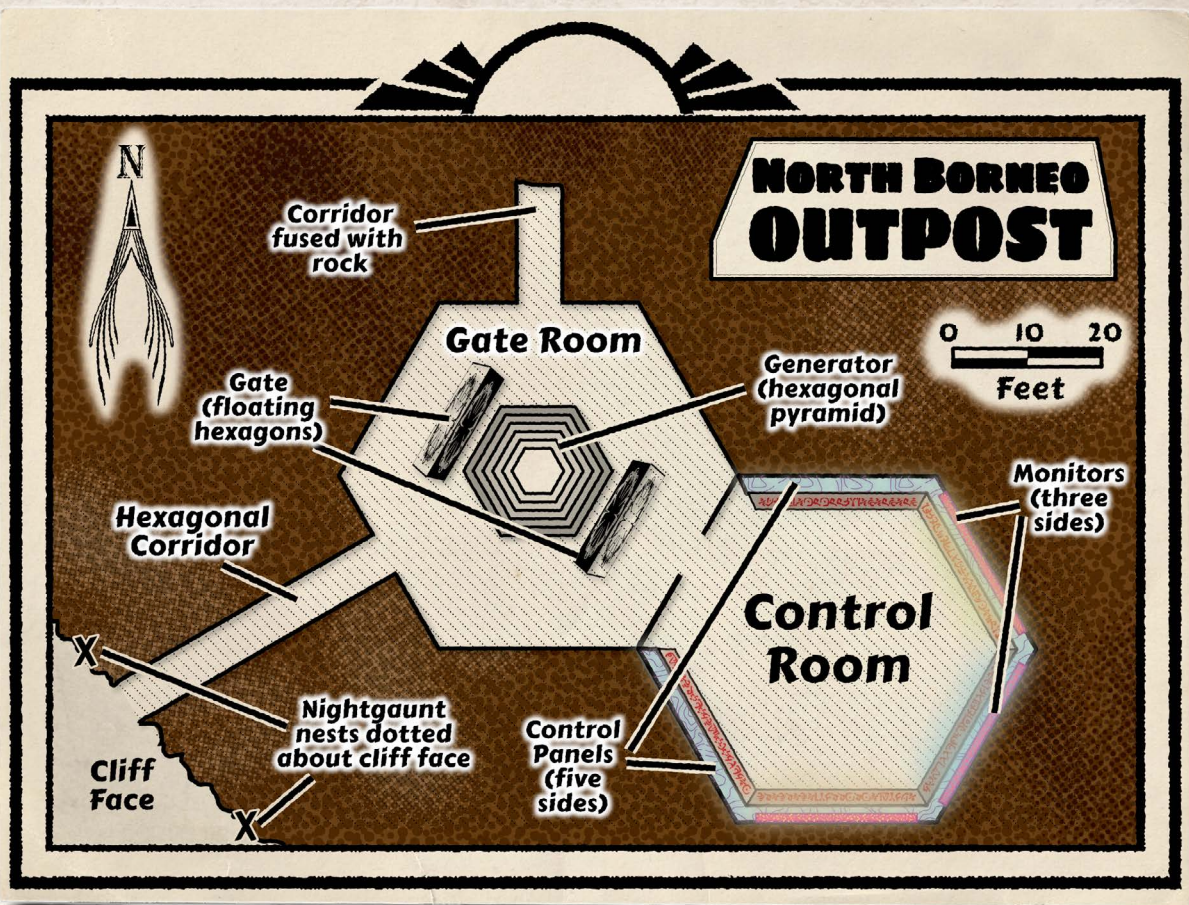
A **Hard Electrical Repair** roll (Regular for those with the **Weird Science** talent) activates the display screen, which displays a map of the world, as it was millennia ago. Various points are marked on the map—these were the locations of other serpent folk facilities that could be traveled to through the Gate. The number and locations of these other outposts are left to the Keeper's discretion and could serve as potential scenario hooks for further adventures. One location is more readily identifiable: positioned in (what is now) Iceland (see **Chapter 5: Iceland**).

A subsequent **Hard Electrical Repair** roll (Regular for those with the **Weird Science** talent) activates the damaged Gate (whirring sounds can be heard from the Gate Room). Two rounds later, the Gate opens. Those in the Gate Room see the two hexagonal frames lock together and a black void form in the center of the frames.

Seen through the Gate, the heroes witness to a level of reality beneath the Dreamlands where the dholes have almost consumed everything. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll detects something vast moving in the darkness—a passing dhole. Call for a group **Luck** roll: if failed, the dhole senses the light entering in from the Gate Room and attempts to extinguish it, coming into full view and provoking a **Sanity** roll (1D4/1D20 loss). One round later, it unleashes a goo attack, which spews through into the room, shutting down the Gate and affecting any heroes in the Gate Room—unless they can make a successful **Dodge** roll.

If caught in the goo, the hero is stunned and cannot breathe and must attempt a **CON** roll each round; once a **CON** roll is failed, 1D6 damage is suffered each round thereafter until death or until the victim is able to breathe (increase to a **Hard CON** roll if the hero is in a state of physical exertion, like trying to break free of the goo). In addition, the caustic goo inflicts 1 damage per round while the hero is caught. Climbing free of the goo requires a **Hard STR** roll (reduce to Regular difficulty if the hero is being assisted by un-gooed heroes).

A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll determines that the Gate technology here is responsible for the weakening of the barrier between dimensions and that the barrier would be strengthened if the Gate were destroyed. To destroy the Gate, the heroes can attach explosives to the pyramid power source (requiring a **Demolitions** roll) or attempt to overload the power source (requiring a **Hard Electrical Repair** roll—Regular for those with the **Weird Science** talent). The Keeper should be open to creative solutions. The resultant explosion could be contained to the Gate Room itself, with the heroes taking shelter in the corridor leading to the cliff face. If the heroes manage to destroy the Gate, the rift is closed. The Dreamlands creatures and



landscape return to where they came from—including the dhole, as well as the nightgaunts, who will no longer be a problem when the heroes descend the cliffs.

The Keeper may elect to have Shapiro/Sahrizan arrive at the Outpost at the same time as the heroes. For suggestions on this possibility, see *Tracking Down Sahrizan* (following).

Keeper note: the Haftorang Device could also destroy the Gate (along with a great deal more) but the heroes will have to recover it from Shapiro/Sahrizan first.

TRACKING DOWN SAHRIZAN

Now disguised as Shapiro, Sahrizan realizes the Haftorang Device could cause the amount of deaths required to damage the barriers between worlds enough to open a Gate to Mu. He believes that the remains of the Outpost will shield him from the blast, but he is wrong—Cthugha's power will spread through the facility, as well as into the ghoulish warrens and dhole tunnels below ground.

Given the size of the Haftorang Device, moving and hiding it proves difficult, so Shapiro/Sahrizan simply

covers it with a blanket and leaves it in the medical tent at Kazin's farm, beside the Viral Analyzer. He advances the countdown and then makes his way to the Outpost to wait for the resulting blast and then try to open the Gate to Mu.

There are a number of ways that the heroes could encounter and confront Shapiro/Sahrizan:

- Heroes who spend time dealing with the locals and the survey team rather than exploring the wider area can discover that Shapiro is missing—either when returning to the camp or via Abidin informing them. Furthermore, the Viral Analyzer has finished its work and the results can be decoded. On returning to the tent, signs of a struggle can be seen, along with drops of (Shapiro's) blood on the lid of a trunk. Inside the trunk is a pile of bones, with some remnants of flesh and blood on them. This is all that remains of Shapiro after being consumed by Sahrizan, whose tracks can be followed through the forest to the Outpost.
- Shapiro/Sahrizan could be encountered at the Outpost, arriving shortly after the heroes. He claims to have followed them and that the Viral Analyzer has

completed its analysis. It's bad news, he says, as there is no hope for the population inside the quarantine zone. As such, they must take shelter away from the local population, wait for them to perish and then leave when the quarantine is lifted. The Outpost would be an ideal place to hide in. This heartless suggestion should be a clue to the heroes that something is very wrong. A successful **Psychology** roll detects that Shapiro is acting strangely and uncharacteristically while a **Spot Hidden** roll reveals he is not sweating.

Once Shapiro/Sahrizan has made it to the Outpost, he will not leave. If the heroes try to force him out, he attacks them. As an option, Sahrizan could open the Gate, thereby provoking a dhole goo attack upon the heroes (occurring three rounds after the Gate activates (two rounds for it to open, one round for the dhole to react).

If Sahrizan discovers the heroes have already destroyed the Gate, he enters a blind rage, dropping all pretense of being human and attacks the heroes. In his anger, the Keeper might have him rage about how the heroes have ruined the Inner Night's plan—but nothing too detailed beyond that.

Regardless of where he is confronted, Shapiro/Sahrizan fights until he is in real danger of death and then appears to surrender. If he is subsequently restrained and interrogated, Sahrizan reveals no secrets other than that the heroes will soon die—as he has advanced the countdown on the Haftorang Device. Sahrizan then utters his final defiance to the heroes, boasting that the Inner Night will rise triumphant and the citadels of humanity will soon fall. He casts *Become The Darkness* (see page 256), changing into a formless spawn, and attempts to destroy the heroes. He would rather sacrifice himself to his god than risk the heroes learning too much from him.

EVACUATION

By this point, the heroes will most likely have discovered the Outpost, confronted Shapiro/Sahrizan and learned that the Haftorang Device will soon activate. Ultimately, how long is left before the Haftorang Device unleashes fiery hell should be appropriate to the direction the scenario takes and what the Keeper feels is dramatically appropriate. There should not be enough time to fly the Haftorang Device out of the area and drop it into the sea. Hiding it underground is also insufficient. The heroes should be posed with a moral dilemma. Do they take the time to try and save the infected, using the formula from the Viral Analyzer? Such action runs the risk of everyone being killed in the blast, but failure to do so before moving the

infected risks spreading the Yellow Death even further afield. By retreating immediately the heroes can save themselves but will condemn everyone else to death.

There are two hundred farmers and thirty members of the survey team still alive. If it has not already been done, there is now insufficient time to determine who is infected and who is not. Attempting to, at least, save some of the locals takes approximately 30 minutes.

Potential transportation includes two military cars, an old truck at the farm, and the two trucks at the survey camp—enough for the heroes and twenty-five passengers. **Hard Persuade** rolls are needed to convince either Kazin (infected) or Clements (uninfected) to part with their vehicles. Bonus dice may be earned by appealing to their desires, e.g. emphasizing they are getting the protesters off Kazin's land, and getting Clements out of the quarantine zone as soon as possible once he is confirmed uninfected. Failing this, the heroes may have to resort to violence or stealth to steal the vehicles.

Loading the uninfected locals and survey team members into the vehicles should be a painful scene. The Keeper should highlight the anguish as families are separated and loved ones left behind. If the heroes have not been able to get enough vehicles to transport everyone, some hard choices need to be made about which NPCs they can take with them.

PLAYTEST NOTE

In one playtest group, upon learning the function of the Haftorang Device, the heroes did not risk tampering with the Device in case they accidentally set it off. They were happy to let the bomb keep ticking, which drove them to move quickly (and somewhat mercilessly) through the chapter. Consequently, when the time came, they fled the locale without making any effort to rescue any of the locals who were not infected by with the Yellow Death. While they took Sanity losses for this selfish act, it very much set the tone for their behavior through the rest of the campaign. They convinced themselves that everything they did was for the "Greater Good," with their own survival being an added bonus.

Such life and death decisions not only serve to give the players difficult moral choices but also help to develop and shape the heroes in light of their decisions and the consequences thereof.



In order to have a chance of surviving the blast, the heroes need to be in the process of fleeing when the Haftorang Device activates. A successful **Hard Drive** roll allows the heroes to escape the waves of fire that incinerate the area for miles around. If the roll is failed, the heroes will need to have more than 30 points of Luck to avoid certain death (see *Pulp Cthulhu*, page 61).

CONCLUSION

The Haftorang Device has the power to devastate the entirety of the quarantine zone, including the area where the Dreamlands had encroached on the Waking World, as well as the Outpost. The resultant heat evaporates the water supply and incinerating every living thing in the area (including all Dreamlands creatures remaining). The Yellow Death is prevented from spreading further (although it would have burnt out a short time later anyway).

The military and the NBCC extend their thanks to Caduceus, although they will ask the heroes to explain the firestorm. In short, any explanation the heroes give will be accepted, with varying degrees of skepticism, but the matter is quietly dropped soon after.

Heroes infected with the Yellow Death can be treated with the second formula provided by the Viral Analyzer, allowing them to be flown back to Caduceus headquarters immediately and safely (using a replacement airplane if needed). The only treatment that can save them is hybridization. Upon arrival, such heroes are sedated and carried off to the laboratories in the basement of the building to undergo the hybridization process (see **Appendix C**). If asked where their colleagues have been taken to, or what is happening to them, the Caduceus scientists simply state, "They are being taken care of. We have a treatment that will bring about their full recovery." While no further statements are forthcoming, the hybridized heroes eventually return, appearing none the worse for their "special" treatment.

A debriefing session occurs once all of the heroes are well enough to attend. Here, the heroes are introduced to their new handler; replacing Quentin Shapiro is Dr. Victor Gomes Gonçalves (see page 242, **Appendix A**).

If questioned about the use of the Haftorang Device, Gonçalves justifies the action by stating that Caduceus knew the Yellow Death had no conventional cure. They could not condone the hybridization of hundreds of innocents and, if left unattended, the infection would have spread beyond the quarantine zone and more would have died. Deploying the Haftorang Device ensured that this did not occur. Sometimes, sacrifices have to be made.

The heroes are thanked for their work in North Borneo and told to expect a new mission briefing in a few days' time. The heroes are back in New York City, allowing the Keeper to advance elements of **Chapter 2: New York** as they see fit before moving onto **Chapter 4: Oklahoma**.

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- Killing Sahrizan +1D4 Sanity points.
- Destroying the Gate (but not via the Haftorang Device) +1D6 Sanity points.
- Attempting to save the people in the quarantine zone +1D8 Sanity points.
- Fleeing rather than trying to save people in the quarantine zone -1D8 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Quentin Shapiro, 36, *Caduceus scientist and team handler*

STR 45	CON 55	SIZ 50	DEX 65	INT 85
APP 60	POW 65	EDU 90	SAN 50	HP 10
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 8	MP: 13	Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Chemistry 65%, First Aid 45%, Medicine 55%.

Captain Lancaster, 35, *British Army commander*

STR 70	CON 80	SIZ 70	DEX 60	INT 70
APP 60	POW 65	EDU 75	SAN 55	HP 15
DB: +1D4	Build: 1	Move: 8	MP: 13	Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl	65% (32/13), damage 1D3 + 1D4
.303 rifle	70% (35/14), damage 2D6+4
.45 revolver	70% (35/14), damage 1D10+2
Dodge	50% (25/10)

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Skills

Climb 40%, Credit Rating 55%, Intimidate 85%, Jump 40%, Language (Malay) 30%, Listen 55%, Navigate 55%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Richard Clements, 40, NBCC geologist

STR 55 CON 75 SIZ 60 DEX 65 INT 80
APP 55 POW 50 EDU 85 SAN 50 HP 13
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 45%, Demolitions 40%, Intimidate 35%, Language (Malay) 25%, Listen 40%, Psychology 35%, Science (Geology) 65%, Spot Hidden 55%.

British Army Soldiers

Use this profile for all soldiers.

STR 65 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 55 INT 55
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 65 SAN 46 HP 13*
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 10 Luck: 0

**Treat the soldiers as mooks: they are automatically incapacitated when reduced to half their hit points.*

Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3 + 1D4
.303 rifle 60% (30/12), damage 2D6+4
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Climb 45%, Demolitions 30%, Intimidate 40%, Language (Malay) 20%, Listen 50%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 50%.

Abidin, 29, local guide

STR 50 CON 70 SIZ 45 DEX 80 INT 75
APP 50 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 11
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 12 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Dodge 70% (35/14)

Skills

Appraise 25%, Charm 40%, Climb 50%, Credit Rating 25%, Fast Talk 70%, Jump 40%, Language (English) 40%, Natural World 45%, Navigate 75%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 50%, Sleight of Hand 80%, Stealth 45%.

Kazin, 45, farm owner

STR 60 CON 70 SIZ 65 DEX 75 INT 75
APP 50 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 12 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3 + 1D4
Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills

Art/Craft (Farming) 80%, Credit Rating 50%, Language (English) 35%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Natural World 60%, Operate Heavy Machinery 45%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Farmers

Use this profile for all farmers.

STR 50 CON 50 SIZ 50 DEX 50 INT 60
APP 45 POW 55 EDU 60 SAN 55 HP 10*
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 12 Luck: 0

**Treat the farmers as mooks; they are automatically incapacitated when reduced to half their hit points.*

Combat

Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3;
or club 1D8
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Farming) 70%, Language (English) 20%, Listen 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 50%.

Surveyors

Use this profile for all surveyors.

STR 50 CON 50 SIZ 55 DEX 50 INT 65
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 75 SAN 50 HP 10*
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 12 Luck: 0

**Treat the surveyors as mooks; they are automatically incapacitated when reduced to half their hit points.*

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3; or large knife 1D8
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Language (Malay) 20%, Listen 40%, Science (Geology) 80%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 40%.

Sahrizan, serpent man agent of the Inner Night

STR 80 CON 75 SIZ 50 DEX 90 INT 90
APP 60* POW 70 EDU — SAN — HP 12
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 14 Luck: 70

*As Shapiro.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (unarmed, weapon, or bite)

Bite: the bite of a serpent person is highly poisonous; the victim must succeed in an Extreme CON roll: if failed, suffer 1D8 damage.

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D3 + 1D4
Bite	45% (22/5), damage 1D8 + poison
Knife	70% (35/14), damage 1D4+2 + 1D4
Dodge	60% (30/12)

Skills

Climb 50%, Electrical Repair 70%, Jump 45%, Intimidate 65%, Language (English) 40%, Language (Malay) 50%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Read Lips 60%, Spot Hidden 70%, Stealth 80%.

Armor: 1-point scales.

Spells: The Serpent's New Skin, Become The Darkness (see Appendix B, page 256 onwards).

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent person.

Equipment: Shapiro's possessions (taken after consuming his likeness).

Zoogs, cunning hunters

Use this profile for all zoogs. Assume six to twelve zoogs in a pack.

STR 15 CON 35 SIZ 10 DEX 100 INT 65
APP — POW 50 EDU — SAN — HP 4
DB: -2 Build: -2 Move: 12 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite, claw, or knife/dart)

Ambush: one zoog feigns being docile (and somewhat cute-looking) until their target is close enough, whereupon its pack mates will jump out to attack the unwary.

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D4+1 -2; or knife, 1D6 -2
Dart	55% (27/11), damage 1D6 -2
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Armor: none.

Spells: a zoog may normally know up to 1D4 spells—unfortunately, their Dreamland's magic does not work in the Waking World (unless the Keeper desires it to).

Sanity loss: 0/1D3 Sanity points to see a zoog up close.



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Buopoth, lumbering herbivore

STR 160 CON 85 SIZ 190 DEX 35 INT —
 APP — POW 65 EDU — SAN — HP 27
 DB: +3D6 Build: 4 Move: 9 MP: 13 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (charge then trample)

Charge: target makes an opposed STR roll to avoid being knocked down.

Fighting	40% (20/8), damage 1D6 + 3D6
Charge	45% (17/7), damage 2D6 + 3D6 + knockdown
Trample	75% (37,15), damage 3D6 + 3D6 (to downed foe only)
Dodge	17% (8/3)

Skills

Listen 60%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Armor: none.

Spells: none.

Sanity loss: it costs no Sanity points to see a buopoth.

Gug, unclean giant

STR 225 CON 145 SIZ 285 DEX 55 INT 65
 APP — POW 55 EDU — SAN — HP 43
 DB: +5D6 Build: 6 Move: 10 MP: 11 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (each arm extends into two forearms, each having its own attack)

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D6 + 5D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Detect Prey 60%, Jump 60%, Stealth 70%, Track 50%.

Armor: 8-point skin, hair, and cartilage.

Spells: a gug has a 10% chance of knowing 1D10 spells—unfortunately, their Dreamland's magic does not work in the Waking World (unless the Keeper desires it to).

Sanity loss: 0/1D8 Sanity points to see a gug.



Leng Spider, immense web-spinners

STR 140 CON 90 SIZ 175 DEX 85 INT 50
 APP — POW 70 EDU — SAN — HP 26
 DB: +3D6 Build: 4 Move: 6 MP: 14 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite, web toss)

Bite: injects venom, 4D10 damage; a successful Extreme CON roll halves the damage (critical success negates all poison damage).

Web toss: range 30 feet; the entangled target may only act to free themselves, requiring a successful Hard STR roll.

Fighting	40% (20/8), damage 1D3 + 3D6 + poison
Web toss	60% (30/12), damage entangle
Dodge	45% (22/9)



Skills

Jump 70%, Stealth 80%.

Armor: 6-point chitin.

Spells: none.

Sanity loss: 1/1D10 Sanity points to see a Leng spider.

Ghoul, *charnel feeder*

STR 80 CON 65 SIZ 65 DEX 65 INT 65
APP — POW 65 EDU — SAN — HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 13 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 3 (claws, bite)

Bite and hold (mnvr): if the ghoul's bite strikes home, it hangs on (instead of using claw attacks), and worries the victim with its fangs, continuing to do 1D4 damage automatically per round. An opposed STR roll is required to dislodge the ghoul, breaking the hold and ending the bite damage.

Fighting 40% (20/8),
damage 1D6 + 1D4
Bite and hold (mnvr)
damage 1D4 per round*
Dodge 40% (20/8)

**Bite: wounds caused may become diseased if not treated.*

Skills

Climb 85%, Jump 75%, Listen 70%,
Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 70%.



Armor: firearms and projectiles inflict half of rolled damage (round down fractions).

Spells: none.

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a ghoul.

Dhole, *gigantic worm*

While the heroes are very unlikely (and very very ill-advised) to get into combat directly with the dholes appearing in this scenario, the following statistics are provided for completeness.

STR 2525 CON 755 SIZ 2775 DEX 10 INT 35
APP — POW 170 EDU — SAN — HP 353
DB: +64D6 Build: 65 Move: 15 MP: 34 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (crush, spit goo, engulf)

Crush: a blow from its bulk is like being hit by a train—if a dhole crushes a hero, death is automatic (**Avoiding Certain Death** is a necessity, see *Pulp Cthulhu*, page 61).

Goo attack: a dhole can spit a gob of slimy goo from its mouth up to a range of 2-3 miles. The goo covers a circular area with a diameter equal to 1% of the monster's SIZ in feet (25 feet across). If caught in the goo, the hero is stunned and cannot breathe and must attempt a CON roll each round; once a CON roll is failed, 1D6 damage is suffered each round thereafter until death or until the victim is able to breathe (increase to a Hard CON roll if the hero is in a state of physical exertion, like trying to break free of the goo). In addition, the caustic goo inflicts 1 damage per round while the hero is caught. Climbing

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free of the goo requires a Hard STR roll (reduce to Regular difficulty if the hero is being assisted by un-gooed heroes).

Engulf: if a dhole swallows someone, it scoops clean an area equal in size to the area of its goo attack (25 feet). Engulfed heroes may attempt to kill and/or break out by attacking the creature from the inside—negating its armor. Of course, it would be advisable to exit via the monster's mouth, rather than trying to break through its tough skin.

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage certain death
Spit goo	50% (25/10), damage special
Engulf	80% (40/16), damage swallowed (death in 1D4 days from digestion)
Dodge	6% (3/1)

Skills

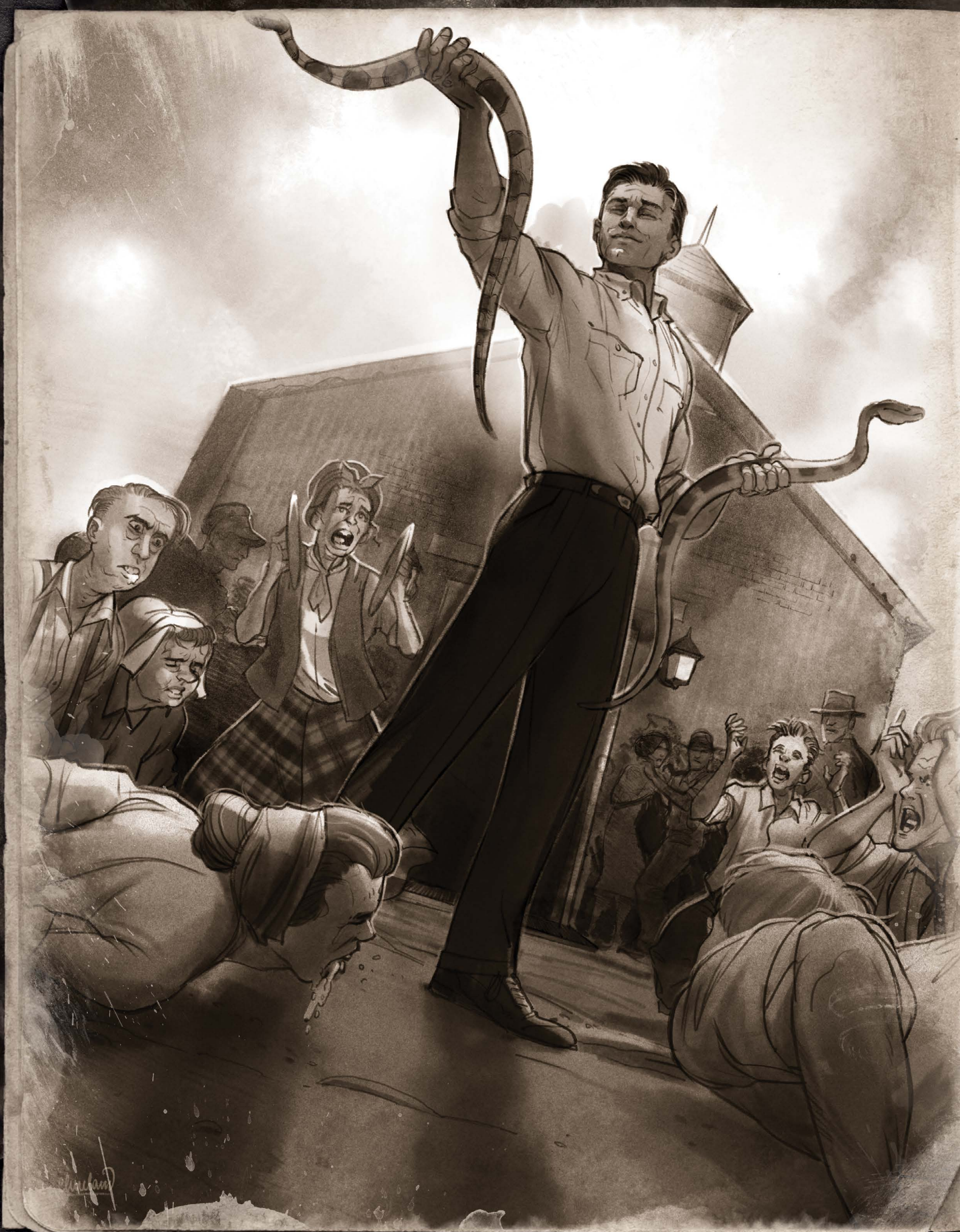
Burrow Through Worlds 100%.

Armor: 34 (equal one-fifth of the dhole's POW); attacks targeting the mouth negate its armor.

Spell: none.

Sanity loss: 1D4/1D20 Sanity points to fully see a dhole in all of its immensity.





OKLAHOMA

Two or three years ago it was just another snake cult, now... they're everywhere.

– Black Lotus Street Peddler, *Conan the Barbarian* (1982)

DEVILS IN
THE DUST BOWL

OVERVIEW

The Gospel of Yig is being spread in the backwater town of Bingham, Oklahoma. The heroes may expect serpent people but, this time, they face a human preacher who has been blessed by Yig. The preacher is sending forth his message over the radio waves, drawing those who hear his call. When these broadcasts come to the attention of Caduceus, Joshua Meadham is curious to know just what is going on.

The scenarios in *The Two-Headed Serpent* are designed to be fast-paced affairs in the pulp vein. This chapter presents a change of pace and is intended to be less action-oriented. Here, investigation comes to the fore, allowing the heroes to lick their wounds and become immersed in character interactions with the various townsfolk who are the key focus of this story.

BACKGROUND

A few months ago, Bingham's town preacher, Reverend Kornfield, chose to test his faith by traveling alone into the wilderness. Somewhere out there, he died. Yig took an interest in him and returned him to life, sending him back to town to spread a new gospel. Since his return, Kornfield has retained his position as the town's preacher but has subtly changed his message, blending the word of Yig with

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

4 months ago: Reverend Kornfield walked alone into the wilderness.

3 months ago: Reverend Kornfield returned.

2 months ago: George Hensen had an accident at work, which was healed by Reverend Kornfield.

6 weeks ago: Pearl Schoenbaum healed by Reverend Kornfield.

1 month ago: Reverend Kornfield begins making regular radio broadcasts.

the Christian Bible. Blessed by Yig, the pastor has gained the power to heal the sick and injured; however, those so healed are never quite the same thereafter, each showing some ophidian mutation or behavioral change.

There are some townsfolk in Bingham who have taken against Reverend Kornfield and his preaching, believing he has left the path of righteousness. So far, the pastor has been tolerant of these malcontents, hoping that, with time, they will come to accept Yig as their savior.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

Keeper note: this chapter assumes the heroes recovered Tyranissh from Bolivia and that she has remained captive at Caduceus HQ. If this is not the case, references to Tyranissh in this section, as well as the scene **Tyranissh Awakes**, should be omitted.

The heroes are summoned to a briefing on the 7th floor of the Caduceus building in New York City. On exiting the elevator, the team is met by an armed Caduceus representative and ushered along the corridor to a private meeting room.

Tyranissh has finally woken from her long sleep and has been brought up to the 7th floor for interrogation. As the heroes are led to their briefing, they pass several rooms, including one where Tyranissh, strapped into a chair, can be seen through the open door. Several scientists hover around the awakened sleeper, one of whom is administering an injection. As the heroes pass by, Tyranissh's eyes roll up and meet with those of one of the heroes, just as a scientist quietly closes the door. Should a hero wish to enter the room, the scientists refuse entry.

Further along the corridor, the heroes are shown into an office and told to wait for Mr. Meadham.

JOSHUA MEADHAM AND THE BRIEFING

Once seated, the heroes are offered refreshments. Across the table are three chairs: two are occupied, the middle one empty. On the left sits a huge man (Canning) while on the right sits Dr. Gonçalves (see **Appendix A**, pages 241 and 242 respectively). Gonçalves gives a conciliatory smile and then lowers his gaze toward a notepad. Canning stares at the heroes in silence.

Keeper note: roll once against Canning's Intimidation skill (90%). Have each player oppose Canning's Intimidation roll with either **Psychology** or **Intimidation** (whichever they prefer). Canning will hold one bonus die against any hero he defeats in that opposed roll; the Keeper may use the bonus die in Meadham's favor during the meeting—as a reminder of why the bonus die is being played, have Canning crack his knuckles or stare menacingly.

After a few moments, another man in a smart suit (Joshua Meadham, page 240, **Appendix A**) enters from another door at the far side of the room. Canning stands immediately and pulls out a chair for his boss to sit upon.

Meadham begins by praising the efforts of the heroes so far (identify one key event that each hero has been responsible for). A little humor can be injected here, perhaps having Meadham praise a hero for something about which they feel shame or regret. Consider how events might have been misreported to Meadham as heroic actions on the part of the heroes, and have him reflect these back to the players. For example, if the heroes triggered the Haftorang Device in **Chapter 2: North Borneo**, Meadham will be full of praise, even though it may have resulted in a massive loss of human lives.

Unlike the other missions to date, Joshua Meadham himself conducts this briefing. Unless the heroes have sought him out before, this will be the first time they have met the man face-to-face. By this stage, the heroes probably have a lot they want to say to Joshua Meadham! Let them talk as long as it feels appropriate. Canning's bonus die can be used against the players if Meadham is asked an especially difficult question. Canning's bonus die (for Intimidation) is lost if it is not used in this scene.

With formalities out the way, Meadham moves on to the briefing for Oklahoma. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

"A cult worshipping Yig, the Father of Snakes, has come to our attention. They are situated in a small town in Oklahoma and are using the guise of a Christian church. I do not want to take a heavy-handed approach here, at least, not to begin with. We need to find out the root cause of all this. I want you to find out how this backwater town has turned to worshipping this particular god. Be on the lookout for serpent people. Remember the Inner Night is dangerous and can appear just like you or I! Doctor Gonçalves here will escort you to the lab where you can listen to recordings that are being broadcast by this deviant church. Good day and good luck."

Keeper note: while Gonçalves is present at the briefing, he is uncharacteristically quiet. He has come to suspect that the serpent people of Caduceus see human worshippers of Yig as abominations. As a human himself, this makes him quite uncomfortable. Gonçalves' discomfort will be obvious to anyone who makes a successful **Psychology** roll.

Once the meeting is concluded, Canning opens the far door for Meadham, leaving Gonçalves to show the heroes to another room (see **Gonçalves and the Recordings**).

TYRANISSH AWAKES

As the heroes are exiting the briefing, Tyranissh loses all patience with Caduceus and unleashes a barrage of

offensive magic at those in the room with her. Anyone on the same floor (as the heroes are) hears her shouting a strange language (Naacal). For those who understand the language, it translates as “You are as bad as each other! I refuse to serve the Father of Snakes or the Mother of Darkness! May you both be struck down!” The sound of smashing, explosions, screaming and strange, rending sounds follow.

Running to the room from where the sounds are coming from, reveals utter devastation. The windows have exploded, showering glass everywhere, furniture is on fire, the air is filled with smoke, and the burned and mangled body parts of the Caduceus scientists are scattered about like confetti. Through the haze, a glowing, swirling portal is closing on one of the walls—it cannot be entered at this point as it is too small and its rapid closure prevents any of the heroes from leaping through it. Tyranissh has left the building.

The Caduceus staff panic, running hither and thither, while armed security guards brandish their weapons. All is chaos for a while. The affected area is soon cordoned off. A Caduceus team inspects the area, attempting to fathom what has taken place. No answers to questions posed by the heroes are forthcoming.

Gonçalves and the Recordings

Gonçalves leads the heroes down the corridor to a laboratory. Within, the room contains electrical apparatus arranged on benches, including a phonograph. Plugging in a phonograph, Gonçalves lowers the stylus onto a record and the crackling sound of a man’s voice can be heard. Gonçalves apologizes for the poor quality of the audio, explaining that it is a recording of a radio broadcast. The words are familiar to anyone who has listened to evangelical radio broadcasts:

“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. This is the word of the Lord!”

—Genesis 3:14

Gonçalves looks at the heroes enthusiastically and says, “Can you hear it?” Ask each player to make a **Listen** roll: with success, they can make out another whispering voice within what before sounded like radio interference. Gonçalves turns a dial, isolating certain frequencies, allowing all to now hear the hidden speech. The whispering voice is speaking about Yig and saying that those who wish to seek the truth are instructed to make their way to the town of Bingham. The words are spoken in English but are

followed by phrases that are clearly in another language. Those who have skill points in **Language (Naacal)** can understand what is being said. For non-Naacal speakers, allow a **POW** roll; with a result of 01, the listener somehow also understands the words. Translated, the phrases are:

“...wondrous yield the ungodly under Yig, bestowing blessings to lie and strike, the blessings yield waiting heart. He under who upon curious lies, and him waiting of the serpents curious mind glittering...”

While Gonçalves is loyal enough to Caduceus that he will not divulge any secrets, he will entertain a private discussion if the heroes wish to discuss the situation in Bingham with him. Gonçalves asks the heroes to be merciful with the people they find in Bingham, as their hearts are probably in the right place. The most emphatic point he makes is that these people are not like the Inner Night and are certainly not the kind of enemies the heroes have faced before. He wants the heroes to think of the Yig worshipping townsfolk as having lost their way rather than as enemies to be cast down.

Before the heroes leave, Dr. Gonçalves presents them with folders containing additional briefing notes and reference documents that provide more context about Yig and his cults (refer to the information in **Part Two: Recent History**, page 8, in the **Introduction** as necessary). Studying these notes confers an additional 1 percentile of Cthulhu Mythos skill and 1D6 percentage points in Other Language (Naacal).

ALTERNATIVE ENTRY POINTS

Tyranissh

If the heroes are in league with Tyranissh, the lead-in for this chapter can come from her. This assumes that Tyranissh has already (somehow) gained her freedom, and is perhaps hiding out (perhaps in the New York sewers). Tyranissh has discovered that Caduceus is interested in the Oklahoma cult. It does not matter how she has discovered this (she may have interrogated a Caduceus agent). Tyranissh wants to know the source of the town’s belief in much the same way that Meadham does.

The Inner Night

It is possible that the heroes have been recruited by the Inner Night and are already in league with them against Caduceus. Rose Meadham sends the heroes to Oklahoma to understand how these puny humans have any understanding



INSPIRATION

The setting for this chapter draws its inspiration, in part, from John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. The novel tells the story of a family of tenant farmers forced to leave their home in Oklahoma due to the effects of the Great Depression. They, and thousands of other "Okies," set out for California looking for work and the hope of dignity in a brighter future. The novel's title is a reference to lyrics from Julia Ward Howe's "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

*Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.*

SNAKE HANDLING

Snake handling, also referred to as serpent handling, is a real-world practice conducted in a small number of U.S. Pentecostal churches. Events in this scenario are, in part, inspired by such practices.


Two biblical quotes are used to support the practice of snake handling:

And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

—Mark 16:17-18

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

—Luke 10:19



of Yig. She directs the heroes to ascertain the situation and then cleanse the heretics from the face of the Earth.

Independent Action

If the heroes are no longer working for Caduceus, they might stumble across the radio broadcasts by chance (see

Radio KFOC, page 120). Alternatively, pick a contact of one of the heroes (preferably one from their backstories) to be an individual who, having heard one of the broadcasts, travels to Oklahoma in search of a new life with Yig. Reports of that person's actions should somehow reach the hero, who should feel compelled to look into the matter. By the time the heroes arrive in Bingham, this acquaintance has already become a member of the Faithful of Yig.

THE SETTING

Approximately fifty miles southwest of Oklahoma City is the small town of Bingham, with its 749 residents. Trade around Bingham centers on peanut and cotton production. The summer months are humid and hot, with temperatures ranging from 21 to 38°C (70 to 100°F). Droughts are common, broken by the occasional extreme hailstorm. In recent years, trade has decreased as crops have failed due to poor weather and soil erosion. Many have left their farms, heading elsewhere in a quest for work and a new life. Many buildings that once hummed with family life now stand vacant. Despite this exodus, some who have heard the Reverend Kornfield's broadcasts have since arrived in the town and adopted a few of the vacant houses.

Reverend Kornfield leads the town church and holds regular services for those Faithful to Yig. Since the pastor's conversion three months ago, there are those who have turned away from the church. These Dissenters either shun worship altogether or attend meetings held in private houses.

Bingham has a railway line (connecting with Oklahoma City) and a number of stores and establishments (see **Bingham Locations**, page 115). The town has no hospital; the town doctor takes care of people, with more serious cases sent to Anapendo (a larger town some 20 miles away).

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Each NPC is tagged as either "Faithful" (loyal to Reverend Kornfield) or a "Dissenter." The latter are against Kornfield's church but may still attend services, not wishing to lose their reputation as good and honorable citizens. Twelve townsfolk are detailed here, with some others named (but not detailed) in the text. The Keeper should feel free to improvise NPC details as required. A relationship diagram is provided to assist the Keeper in tracking the various NPCs.

Statistics for these NPCs are presented at the end of this chapter.

Reverend Kornfield,
48, risen preacher of Yig (Faithful)

Three months ago the church in Bingham was just another Pentecostal church like so many others. Then, the Reverend Kornfield took it upon himself to wander into the wilderness for forty days and nights in the manner of his (then) savior, Jesus Christ. He hoped that this pilgrimage might bring him closer to God. It did, just not the god he had gone looking for.

Kornfield wandered away from Bingham, through abandoned homesteads and across once-fertile lands that were now barren and dry. Not for nothing was it known as the "Dust Bowl." Many miles he walked. He took no food or water, trusting that his faith would sustain him. Somewhere out in that wilderness, the good pastor died.

Kornfield lay upon the parched ground, his dying words barely stirring the dust on his lips. Yet, Yig heard the man's words and saw fit to bless him. Why Yig chose to raise Kornfield is unknown; the will of the gods is beyond our understanding.

Kornfield's corpse was borne by serpents to a cave and laid upon a slab of stone. It remains there still, incorruptible and whole. Yig gave Kornfield a new body, identical to his old one. And so, while his corpse lay still in the cave, Kornfield also returned to his flock in Bingham. His parishioners were surprised to see him, many having given him up for dead. Kornfield described how he had spent forty days and forty nights in the wilderness and had returned a changed man. Little did the townspeople realize how true his words were.

Of course, Kornfield's sermons changed too. Soon after returning, he brought out a crateful of snakes and impressed the crowd by handling them. He had also gained the ability to lay hands on the afflicted and cure them in the name of Yig. Those that have been cured are now tainted by the experience (including Peggy Shaw, Pearl Schoenbaum, George Hensen, Harry Mathewson, and Ralph Kunkel's wife, Edith).

The Reverend may confound player expectations of a cultist of Yig: he is not a violent man and if attacked will not put up a fight. If he is killed, a duplicate copy of him will emerge from the wilderness eight hours later, naked and headed for the town.

- **Description:** a kindly looking man in a dark suit. His hair is lush and dark (where once it was turning gray).
- **Traits:** the corners of his mouth are always slightly upturned, reflecting his sense of inner peace.
- **Likely to be found at:** the First Church of Christ the Redeemer (page 118).
- **Roleplaying hook:** invite the heroes to attend one of the church services.

Sheriff Cliff Benson,
51, Kornfield's right-hand man (Faithful)

The Sheriff is loyal to Reverend Kornfield. While he knows the pastor to be a true man of God, he is concerned for the man's welfare. Sheriff Benson sees his role as Kornfield's protector. Benson will not tolerate the forthcoming attack on the church (by Gregory Shaw and Susie Schoenbaum) and seeks to bring the offenders to swift justice. Justice, in this case, is likely to come at the end of a rope.

- **Description:** a sweaty, red-faced man. His ill-fitting pants and shirt only serve to accentuate his increasing girth.
- **Traits:** a tendency to squint and frown suspiciously at people.
- **Likely to be found at:** the Sheriff's Office (page 119).
- **Roleplaying hook:** find out which side the heroes are on.

Peggy Shaw, 19, egg-laying teen (Faithful)

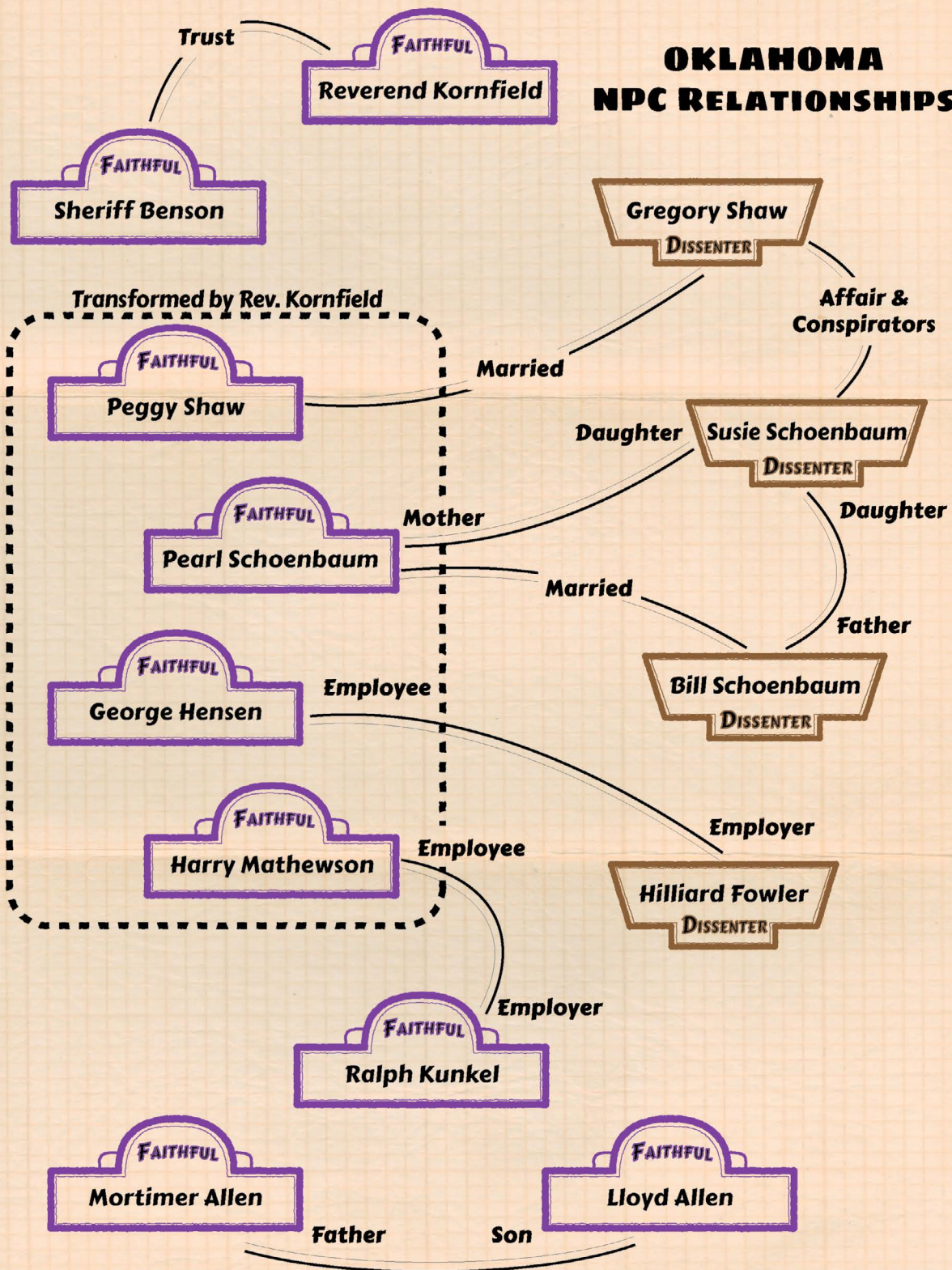
Reverend Kornfield was brought to Peggy when she was thought to be dying, following complications with the birth of her son. The pastor blessed her and sat with her through the night. In the morning, she was healed. Over the following month her belly swelled and a few days ago she gave "birth" once more. This time, it was much easier: an egg is so much smaller than an infant's head. Now Peggy spends her days tending to a dozen eggs, which she keeps warm in a tray of sand beneath her stove.

- **Description:** clearly pregnant (again). Peggy's maternity dress is drab and worn, the washed-out color of which matches her sallow complexion.
- **Traits:** distracted; her eyes frequently glance towards the stove where her eggs are incubating.
- **Likely to be found at:** the Shaw Residence (page 119).
- **Roleplaying hook:** Gregory Shaw has said too much to her—following the attack on the church, she realizes his involvement. She shares this information with the heroes and asks them to notify the pastor, hoping that he will know a way to save poor Gregory's soul.

Gregory Shaw,
19, cheating husband in turmoil (Dissenter)

Gregory is the husband of egg-laying Peggy Shaw and works at the telegraph office. Gregory and Peggy shared such optimism after Reverend Kornfield blessed her with his healing touch. But where Peggy saw only God's divine work, Gregory saw nothing but horror. Her face shone as she showed Gregory her first egg, still damp and leathery. Like a broody hen, Peggy is now blissfully obsessed with her eggs. Subsequently, Gregory has found secret solace

OKLAHOMA NPC RELATIONSHIPS



with Susie Schoenbaum, who shares his hatred of the pastor. Together, they have come up with a plan to strike at the church, purging it with fire (see **Firebombing the Church**, page 120).

- **Description:** something of a bookworm, Gregory is a tall, slim, good-looking young fellow.
- **Traits:** stutters, especially when stressed.
- **Likely to be found at:** the Telegraph and Post Office (page 115).
- **Roleplaying hook:** urge the heroes to visit Peggy Shaw and witness Kornfield's work first hand.

Pearl Schoenbaum,
54, skin-shedding housewife (Faithful)

The wife of Bill Schoenbaum, the town blacksmith, Pearl has suffered from psoriasis since childhood. Reverend Kornfield healed her condition but since then, much to her husband's disgust, she now sheds her skin once a month, leaving an almost complete molting behind. When the change is upon her, she needs the sun's rays and sunbathes naked on the roof. She will be doing this while the heroes are in town.

- **Description:** after molting, Pearl's skin is fresh and glowing (APP 90) but as the days pass her appearance degrades until it is time for her to molt once more, at which time her dry flaking skin is hideous to behold (APP 10).
- **Traits:** she often stares unblinkingly at people with a fixed smile.
- **Likely to be found at:** the Schoenbaum home (or on its roof)—see the Blacksmith's Workshop (page 119)
- **Roleplaying hook:** will ask sympathetic heroes to help her persuade her husband to return to the church.

Bill Schoenbaum,
55, troubled blacksmith (Dissenter)

Bill and his family have not attended church for two months; ever since Reverend Kornfield "healed" his wife. Pearl had always suffered from a skin condition but after the pastor laid hands on her she stayed in bed for several days, looking worse with each passing day. Finally, she emerged looking radiant; Bill couldn't believe his eyes. Later he was horrified to find her dried shed skin beneath the bed. From that day on he banned his family from having anything to do with Kornfield. He now tries to keep Pearl locked away in a back room during her monthly molting. Unknown to him, she has found a way to access the roof, where she sunbathes naked.



PLAYTEST NOTE

A hero who had undergone the hybridization process took a special interest in Peggy Shaw, feeling kinship with the changes the girl had undergone. The hero took it upon herself to protect Peggy and her eggs from not only her husband but also from her fellow heroes. The resulting showdown over the fate of the eggs nearly turned violent and, in the end, the hero was able to save most of them from destruction.

- **Description:** when at his forge with his shirt off, Bill is a mountain of sweating, tanned muscles.
- **Traits:** often flexes his aching muscles.
- **Likely to be found at:** the Blacksmith's Workshop (page 119).
- **Roleplaying hook:** asks the heroes to seek assurance from both the Pastor and the Sheriff that those who choose to leave the local church will be allowed to worship as they see fit.

Susie Schoenbaum,
17, youthful activist (Dissenter)

Susie is the daughter of the blacksmith Bill Schoenbaum and his skin-shedding wife, Pearl Schoenbaum. She is a co-conspirator with her secret lover, Gregory Shaw, and together they plan to attack the church. Having witnessed her mother's transformation, she is convinced Reverend Kornfield is at fault but she has not shared her family's secret with Gregory yet.

- **Description:** something of a tomboy, dressed in trousers, with her dark hair cut short.
- **Traits:** the world is black or white to Susie and she is quick to jump to conclusions.
- **Likely to be found at:** the Blacksmith's Workshop (page 119).
- **Roleplaying hook:** will do anything to convince the heroes that her action against the church is justified, including telling them about her skin-shedding mother and Gregory's egg-laying wife. She will petition the heroes for help in shaming or doing away with Reverend Kornfield.



Harry Mathewson, 67, feasting caretaker (Faithful)

Harry works at Kunkel's Barbershop, sweeping up and carrying out maintenance. Until recently, he was almost blind, with cataracts in both eyes. Reverend Kornfield healed his eyes and now he sees just fine. Oddly, this has affected his appetite. He goes for days without eating or drinking and then binges on food once each week. During a binge he will eat copiously, dislocating his jaw to eat large pieces of roast pork whole, causing his belly to swell to unnatural proportions. After a couple of days of rest and digestion, he returns to work. His employer, Ralph Kunkel, knows all about Harry's situation and will make light of it during idle banter with customers. Likewise, Harry is not shy in talking about his condition.

- **Description:** dresses in denim dungarees, usually found with a broom in his hands and a smile on his face.
- **Traits:** engages customers in idle, good-humored banter.
- **Likely to be found at:** Kunkel's Barbershop (page 119).
- **Roleplaying hook:** urge the heroes to attend the church and hear Reverend Kornfield preach.

Ralph Kunkel, 31, barber in denial (Faithful)

Ralph sings the Reverend's praises and talks openly about Harry Mathewson's propensity for eating. His wife was recently "healed" by Reverend Kornfield and is now obsessed with catching and eating insects. Ralph is in denial regarding his wife's condition and has convinced himself that she will recover in time.

- **Description:** his dark hair is kept well oiled and his mustache is very neat. He usually wears an apron and has a pair of sharp scissors to hand.
- **Traits:** Ralph is very expressive with his hands.
- **Likely to be found at:** Kunkel's Barbershop (page 119).
- **Roleplaying hook:** Ralph wants everyone to know that the Reverend a good man and urges the heroes to visit with the other Faithful in the town.

George Hensen, 34, agile laborer (Faithful)

George works at the Straight Grain Lumber Company. A couple of months ago he was struck by falling timber and his pelvis was crushed and his spine was damaged. No one thought he would live, let alone walk again. Reverend Kornfield prayed over his unconscious form and

a miracle occurred. Now, George is more agile than ever. His wife, Edna, is alarmed that George will only sleep in the crawlspace under the house but she is relieved to have her husband fit and healthy again.

- **Description:** looks like the stereotypical lumberjack, in checked shirt and jeans.
- **Traits:** holds himself stock-still for extended periods while looking or listening, then moves suddenly and quickly to a new position (in the manner of a lizard).
- **Likely to be found at:** either at home or the Straight Grain Lumber Yard (page 117).
- **Roleplaying hook:** George is playful and engages obliging heroes in dares and (potentially dangerous) games of speed and dexterity.

Mortimer Allen (32) and Lloyd Allen (10), father and son, pilgrims (Faithful)

Mortimer was simultaneously bereaved twice over when his wife died during the birth of their daughter seven years ago. Life has been tough for him since but he clung to his son, who means everything to him. Mortimer is a traveling salesman, selling bibles, door to door. His son's innocent young face has frequently been a useful asset, assisting Mortimer in parting elderly folks from their hard-saved dollars. Recently, father and son listened to one of Kornfield's broadcasts and both felt compelled to answer the call. To this end, they have traveled to Bingham and booked a room in the hotel. Tomorrow they will meet with the pastor. Sometime over the next few days, they join Kornfield in a journey to the cave.

- **Description:** wears a light suit, now a little threadbare at the edges. His son is dressed casually. Both have an air of false optimism about them.
- **Traits:** smiles at inappropriate times.
- **Likely to be found at:** the Bingham Hotel (page 117) or the First Church of Christ the Redeemer (page 118).
- **Roleplaying hook:** ask the heroes if they have heard the true words of God hidden within the broadcast.

Hilliard Fowler, 61, heavy-drinking wood merchant (Dissenter)

Hilliard owns the Straight Grain Lumber Company, employing the disturbingly agile George Hensen. George's recovery is inexplicable to Hilliard, so much so that he cannot believe that George is the still the same person. Traumatized and confused, Hilliard has taken to drinking and can often be found in the Deer Head Saloon. He plans to shoot Reverend Kornfield but lacks confidence in his

own marksmanship. He is aware the Pastor is protected by Sheriff Benson and would not dare attempt anything with him present.

- **Description:** a sad-faced old man, scruffy and ill-kempt, smelling of whiskey and stale body odor.
- **Traits:** permanently inebriated, Hilliard is forgetful and distracted.
- **Likely to be found at:** the Deer Head Saloon (page 117).
- **Roleplaying hook:** not wanting to harm innocent townsfolk, Hilliard will instead seek to persuade the heroes to participate in the assassination of Kornfield—this may involve asking the heroes to arrange a meeting with the Sheriff or the Pastor.

TALKING TO THE BINGHAM RESIDENTS

The townsfolk are largely divided into those Faithful to Reverend Kornfield and his church, and those that are not (the Dissenters). A selection of Bingham residents and locations are presented in this chapter but the order in which they are encountered is partly up to the heroes (choosing where to go) and partly up to the Keeper (choosing who is met).

The clues in this scenario are presented like layers of an onion; each new layer can be picked away to reveal another below; each story can be investigated to expose a deeper truth. Ultimately, the investigation should lead the heroes to the cave containing Kornfield's true body.

When the heroes meet with a town resident, check their description in the *Dramatis Personae*, noting if that NPC is loyal to Kornfield or not. While the heroes talk to the residents, allow one of the following pieces of information to be revealed organically through roleplaying the dialog. Either use the clues in the order presented or, if the conversation relates more clearly to a different clue, use the appropriate clue. The clues as presented are not necessarily wholly true and are intended to be a little colorful.

There is no need to strictly ration information, but neither should it all be given out at once. One or two pieces from an NPC per encounter should be enough. If the heroes wish to press for more information, call for a skill roll; likely to be **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, **Persuade**, or **Intimidate**, depending on the approach the heroes take. If the hero succeeds in the roll, have them learn a further clue. If a roll is pushed and failed, this may lead to animosity—perhaps the faction to whom that NPC belongs takes against the heroes from this point onwards.

The townsfolk (on both sides) are generally welcoming to strangers. A friendly seeming hero may be invited to a meeting, either at the church or at a private home.

Clues from those Faithful to the Reverend Kornfield:

- The Reverend Kornfield possesses a healing touch. Praise the lord! (This information may be accompanied by the further information concerning one of the individuals touched by Yig—see following.)
- For years, the poor blacksmith's wife suffered from a painful skin condition. A couple of months ago, Reverend Kornfield laid his healing touch upon her. Now she looks wonderful, so much so that her jealous husband, Bill, keeps her locked up indoors. The family doesn't even come to church anymore.
- George Hensen was close to death after an accident at the lumberyard. Reverend Kornfield laid hands on him and saved his life. Why, he's probably up at the lumberyard right now. Go see him for yourself if you don't believe me!
- Old Harry Mathewson was almost blind until Reverend Kornfield touched his eyes. Now he sees as good as you or me. You'll find him down at the barbershop.
- The pastor, ever a man of god, decided to test himself. He wandered alone in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. On his return he was renewed in the lord. 'Tis a wonder!
- Unfortunately, the pastor's truth is not understood by all. Some choose to shun the church. They gather in secret meetings in their homes, conspiring against the Faithful.
- Reverend Kornfield is afraid of nothing! He will willingly handle any snake and is never harmed, just like the Bible says (insert a Bible quote, see **Snake Handling**, page 108).
- The pastor is spreading the good news on the radio, drawing people to Bingham. (Some of the Faithful will wonder aloud if the broadcasts have brought the heroes town? If so, they are welcomed by the Faithful.)
- Lucky individuals get to go out into the wilderness for three days with Reverend Kornfield. Somewhere out there they learn the secret knowledge, just like he did. The Sheriff and Old Harry (Mathewson) have been out there.
- Those that go out into the wilderness take nothing with them. No food, no water. It's a test of faith. God will provide!

Clues from the Dissenters who disagree with Reverend Kornfield:

- Reverend Kornfield is possessed by the Devil. Under the guise of healing people, he has instead cursed them. (This information may be accompanied by the name one of the individuals touched by Yig—see following.)
- For years, Pearl Schoenbaum, the Blacksmith's wife suffered from some kind of painful skin condition. Kornfield did something to her. Whatever it was, her husband, Bill, took against it. He and his family haven't been to church since. Occasionally, you see Pearl and frankly, she looks worse than ever!
- Poor Peggy Shaw, a lovely young woman, it's true she was having difficulty giving birth. They say Kornfield sat with her and put a curse on her baby. No one's seen it to this day. And poor Gregory, the father, why he's a broken man. (Some might follow this up with rumors of Gregory Shaw's affair with Susie Schoenbaum.)
- George Hensen had an accident at the lumberyard. Kornfield convinced everyone that George would've died without his intervention. Perhaps he should have died. According to Peggy, his wife, George doesn't share her bed anymore; he sleeps in the crawlspace under their house!
- Kornfield wandered alone in the wilderness for forty days and nights. On his return he was a changed man. Where once he was pious, now he is demonic.
- There are those who see through the Kornfield's deceit. They choose to shun the church, gathering in their homes to conduct Christian worship in a rightful manner.
- Kornfield handles snakes. Oh sure, The Bible talks about such things but didn't Lucifer also appear in the guise of a snake?
- Kornfield's lies are broadcast over the radio, drawing the unwary to Bingham. (Some of the Dissenters will wonder aloud if the broadcasts have brought the heroes town? If so, they will be shunned by the Dissenters.)
- Sometimes Kornfield takes a handful of his followers out into the wilderness for three days at a time. No one knows where they go or what they get up to. The Sheriff and Old Harry (Mathewson) have been out there.
- Those that go out into the wilderness claim they take nothing with them, pretending it's some kind of spiritual test. Of course, they must have some supplies hidden out there, stands to reason.

OPENING SCENE

There are several options for an opening scene on the arrival of the heroes in Bingham—depending on how the players approach the situation and how the Keeper wishes to play it. Things can start with a bang; have the church firebombed as the heroes arrive. For a slower approach, simply allow the heroes to turn up in town and ask them where they are going first, then refer to that location and the NPCs that are likely to be present—this approach leads to a gentler, more organic form of story development.

RUNNING THE SCENARIO

The Keeper's job is to present the town and its residents to the players, allowing them to roleplay interactions with a variety of townsfolk. These meetings should push the game forward in two ways. Firstly, every discussion should pass on a little more information to the players (see **The Clues**, page 114). Secondly, everyone wants something and the heroes look like people who can help (they are heroes after all). Thus, the heroes find they receive all sorts of requests from the various townsfolk. This mixture of requests and information should be enough to keep the players busy while they try to figure out the difference between those Faithful to Kornfield and the Dissenters. The list of events (see **Events in Bingham**, page 120) is provided for when the Keeper wishes to push the game forward, escalating the situation in the town.

Ultimately, the heroes will have to journey to the cave but this should take a while to become apparent to the players. Destroying Kornfield's original body in the cave is the only way to put an end to the pastor and his church.

BINGHAM LOCATIONS

Key locations in the town are described as follows. The Keeper should feel free to invent other locations, as well as detail the homes of secondary NPCs, as necessary.

As appropriate, certain locations state which key NPCs might be encountered. Key NPCs are described in the **Dramatis Personae** (page 108) and their statistics are given at the end of the scenario. Secondary NPCs are left to the Keeper to develop and describe as they see fit.



DUST, EVERYWHERE

"Houses were shut tight, and cloth wedged around doors and windows, but the dust came in so thinly that it could not be seen in the air, and it settled like pollen on the chairs and tables, on the dishes."

— John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

The parched earth of the land surrounding Bingham is whipped up easily by the wind and deposited in every corner. It gets in the eyes and you can taste it in the air. Every surface is covered with a thin layer of grime. At times, the townsfolk have to take shelter when the wind blows hard; the hot dust obscures all vision. The Keeper may choose to throw in a dust storm to increase tension in one of the key scenes; adding a penalty die to rolls, such as Spot Hidden or ranged attacks.

Railway Station

The railway line connects with Oklahoma City, some one hundred miles southeast of Bingham. Travelers arrive at a small, dusty, and somewhat ramshackle station, which comprises a waiting room and toilet block. A single stationmaster, Huck Baker, attends to passengers, sending anyone who requires a ticket next door to the Telegraph and Post Office.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** none.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** those who have traveled to Bingham after hearing Kornfield's broadcasts.

Telegraph and Post Office

This timber-framed building serves as post office, local telephone exchange, telegraph office, and ticket office for the railway. Nathaniel Clarkson manages the office with assistance from Gregory Shaw. Clarkson listens in on phone calls, passing on information to sheriff Benson.

Kornfield records his sermons here on equipment kept locked in the back room. This piece of weird technology takes the form of a large box, made of wood and metal, with wires and vacuum tubes jutting out of the top. Rising from the box is a speaking horn. Clean disks are placed within the box to be cut as the recording takes place. After



adjustment, another track can be recorded over the first, allowing Kornfield to overlay his subliminal call of Yig.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Gregory Shaw.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** anyone sending messages.

First State Bank of Bingham

The bank is located in a small but secure, brick-built establishment and run by manager Everett Kornfield, who is the brother of Reverend Kornfield. Prior to her marriage, Peggy Shaw worked here as a bank cashier. Everett now staffs the single service counter himself.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** any (except for Pearl Schoenbaum).
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** anyone could be here on business.

Bingham Hotel

Owned by Delbert and Rosemary Adams, the hotel has six rooms. Rosemary runs a tight ship and Delbert does as he is told. In conversations, Delbert will always defer to Rosemary, who is assertive but polite. The hotel is full of curious ornamental figurines, one of Rosemary's obsessions. The establishment is basic, though clean and tidy. A sign outside declares "Some Accommodation." Anyone wishing to speak to Delbert alone would do well to loiter on the verandah, where Delbert smokes his pipe.

Delbert and Rosemary are regular attendees at church and encourage visitors to do likewise. Guests include traveling business people and, more recently, pilgrims who have traveled to Bingham solely to hear Reverend Kornfield.

Widower Mortimer Allen and his 10-year-old son, Lloyd, have been sharing a room at the hotel for three days. They heard the pastor's broadcast and came to Bingham in search of salvation.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Mortimer and Lloyd Allen.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** other guests.

Deer Head Saloon

Maurice Walsted, the owner, is usually behind the bar, sleeves rolled up, polishing glasses. He knows all the gossip and lends an ear to anyone with a dollar and something to say. The saloon is decorated with various hunting trophies: deer heads, antlers, stuffed fish in glass cases, and so on. A full-size grizzly bear stands forever on its hind legs at the end of the bar, all claws and snarling teeth.

The church and the saloon have never seen eye-to-eye, though many townsfolk seem happy to frequent both establishments. Of late, since Kornfield's change, the split has become more pronounced. Those loyal to the church now shun alcohol, which has led to the saloon becoming something of a haven for the Dissenters.

Heroes visiting the saloon are likely to be quizzed on their presence in the town. Outsiders will initially be treated with suspicion but if it becomes clear that the heroes' agenda is to investigate the church and the pastor, they can expect a warmer welcome. Consider the bar a melting pot for Dissenters. In its rich environment, rumors and stories breed and flourish. Feel free to feed the heroes information here that mixes genuine truth with outlandish rumor.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Hilliard Fowler.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** other drinkers (mostly Dissenters).

Butler Department Store

Clark Butler set up the store twenty years ago. Since then it has expanded into neighboring properties and is now the largest store in town. All manner of merchandise can be purchased here: from household appliances, furnishing, and furniture to kitchenware, crockery, and clothes.

Butler is an advocate of Reverend Kornfield but his store assistants (Edna Hensen and Ephraim Willis) are both Dissenters. They keep their beliefs to themselves, as they wish to keep their jobs.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** none.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** anyone could be here as a customer.

The Straight Grain Lumber Company

Timber is brought here on trucks, stored, seasoned, and processed for sale. The company uses a range of machinery including a tractor, a forklift truck, circular saws, band saws, and chainsaws.

George Hensen suffered a terrible accident while at work here two months ago; crushed under a pile of falling timber. Near death, Reverend Kornfield healed him. His boss, Hilliard Fowler, witnessed the accident and has never recovered from the experience.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** George Hensen, Hilliard Fowler.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** none.

The Bingham Journal

The Bingham Journal is a weekly newspaper that began publication in 1906. A large, grimy front window looks out onto the street. Inside, the air is full of the oily smell of the printing press.

Searching through back issues, articles reporting on the Reverend Kornfield's absence and return may be found. A photograph of Kornfield prior to his journey into the wilderness shows a man who looks significantly older than the man leading the church today.

The editor, Baxter Fandyke, can usually be found here, red-faced and impatient, yelling into a telephone. Short on patience, he is obsessed with print deadlines and gives short shrift to casual inquiries. He does not believe the claims made about Kornfield and his healing hands but he doesn't want to lose customers and is reluctant to say too much. If suitably bribed or intimidated, Fandyke can be a mine of information about Bingham and its residents.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** none.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** none.

Public Library

Augusta Willis runs a small but well-stocked library. She keeps everything neat and tidy; there's not a speck of dust or a cobweb to be found. The library is frequented by a wide selection of Bingham residents, from children working on school projects to gray-haired old men and women looking for a quiet place to while away a few hours reading or sleeping.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** anyone who might have cause to visit.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** anyone could be here to use the library.

The First Church of Christ the Redeemer

A white painted wooden building with a spire. Until recently, the sign outside read "The First Church of Christ the Redeemer" but the second half of the sign has been removed, so that it now simply reads, "The First Church." The church is a white-painted wooden building with a spire.

Inside, a lectern stands before rows of pews. In the rear corner stands a low table and small chairs. Children's drawings are displayed on the walls around the table. Some show printed images of Jesus, scribbled over with red and blue crayon. Others show images of Adam and Eve talking with a serpent in the Garden of Eden. One picture shows the body of a man sleeping in a cave (a reference to Kornfield).

Kornfield can often be found here. He may be talking quietly with visiting parishioners, studying (even editing) his Bible, or simply be sat in contemplation. Recently, he has been meditating upon and preparing sermons about Eve's meeting with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Given the opportunity, he will share his thoughts with the heroes: that the serpent provided Eve with the knowledge of pure truth. Adam and Eve were not cast out but were set free. He will expound on the topic at great length.

The Bible from which Kornfield preaches will be on the lectern while he is present. When he leaves the church he takes the book home with him. It is a large, leather bound tome. The margins contain many handwritten notes and drawings. Some passages have been amended while others are crossed out and replaced with new handwritten ones. This book now constitutes a Mythos tome (see *The Gospel of Yig*, page 255, Appendix B).

Church services are well attended by the Faithful, as well as some of the Dissenters. Many of the latter conceal their true feelings and adopt a pious guise to protect their social standing in the community. Services include reading from the Gospel of Yig, prayers, and hymns, all of which are bastardized versions of their standard Christian counterparts. When the pastor speaks of God, he is speaking of Yig. When he speaks of Jesus he is speaking of a child of Yig. When he speaks of the Garden of Eden, he speaks of God appearing to Adam and Eve in the form of a serpent, passing unto them the wisdom they need prior to their exploration of the wider world.

During church services, a wooden crate is brought out and opened. From inside, Kornfield draws forth rattlesnakes. Kornfield cannot be harmed by the snakes and handles them freely. He invites volunteers to step forward and do likewise. Later, as the situation in the town deteriorates, suspected Dissidents or heroes who have made trouble for Kornfield, will be summoned by name and tested by this same process. Those who remain calm are unharmed. Call for a combined **Sanity** and **Luck** roll to remain calm and avoid being bitten (damage 1D4 + poison: if the victim fails an Extreme **CON** roll they suffer convulsions and 2D10 damage; if the roll is successful they suffer 1D10 damage). Anyone who undertakes this ordeal and is unbitten wins the trust of Kornfield and the Faithful. Kornfield describes those who are bitten as suffering "God's divine justice."

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Reverend Kornfield, possibly some of the Faithful.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** none.

Reverend Kornfield's Home

A modest home kept clean and tidy. A writing desk stands by the front window. Kornfield's Bible (see *The Gospel of Yig*, page 255) is here when he is at home. There is no fresh food in the house; only canned or packaged food, which has been there for months, apparently untouched. There are some humane mousetraps (of the type that keep the captured mice alive).

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Reverend Kornfield.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** none.

Kunkel's Barbershop

On entering, a bell above the door rings, summoning Ralph Kunkel. Whereupon, Kunkel bids the entering gentlemen to take a seat while he shakes open an apron. To ladies, he explains that, unfortunately, his wife is not well at present and but will be taking bookings as soon as she has recovered. Ralph has faith that the pastor will soon have her cured.

Two adjustable barber chairs are positioned in front of large mirrors. Scissors, razors, wax, and hair oil stand next to white enamel basins. The ladies' room at the rear is much the same, though sweeter smelling.

An old gray-haired fellow (Harry Mathewson) is sat dozing in a chair. His shirt is unbuttoned and his belt loosened, exposing his swollen belly. A broom leans on the wall beside him. If woken, he exchanges a few words before quickly dropping off to sleep again, much like the dormouse in *Alice in Wonderland*. Kunkel tries to laugh this off, saying that Harry is always like this after a large meal.

While the heroes are present, Mrs. Kunkel may run out into the barbershop, dressed in a grubby nightdress. She looks around with odd, jerking head movements before fixing on a fly on the windowpane, and then pounces on it. After quickly eating the fly, she heads back upstairs. Ralph just shrugs his shoulders, "Huh, women ah?" Other times, loud banging can be heard coming from the rooms above the shop (Mrs. Kunkel leaping about after flies); if the noise is questioned, Ralph again shrugs and says, "She must be hungry." He'll quickly change the subject if further questions are forthcoming.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Ralph Kunkel, Harry Mathewson.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** anyone could be here to get a haircut.

Sheriff's Office

The Sheriff's Office is a brick-built single story building. To the front is an office and to the rear are two holding cells. Sheriff Benson spends much of his time here, secretly drinking whiskey while he peruses *The Bingham Journal*.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Sheriff Cliff Benson.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** Hilliard Fowler might be cooling off in the cell, having been arrested for being drunk and disorderly conduct.

Blacksmith's Workshop

The Schoenbaum home, built by Bill Schoenbaum's own hands, sits alongside a large barn that houses a forge, fuel, various tools, and metals. If Bill is at work, the forge will be hot and the sound of his hammering on a massive anvil will be clearly audible.

Religious meetings are held in Bill's home several times a week, with around a dozen fellow Dissenters present. After a potluck dinner, the group sings hymns and says prayers; the worship is of a genuinely Christian nature. The group tends to reserve discussion of the town affairs until after their religious service; once the hymns are finished, they eagerly fall to sharing their tales of fear and woe.

As the situation in the town deteriorates, fear grows among the Dissidents. Some cease their attendance at the secret meetings while others have their resolve strengthened, resulting in a more militant group. Around that time, the meetings turn toward revenge and plotting against Kornfield and his church.

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Bill Schoenbaum, Pearl Schoenbaum (who may be hidden away), Susie Schoenbaum, Gregory Shaw.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** any of the Dissenters.

Shaw Residence

A small, two-bedroom, timber-framed house, the Shaw home looks much like many of the other homes in Bingham. Peggy Shaw usually appears drawn and tired. She is often suspicious regarding her husband Gregory's whereabouts and quizzes the heroes on whether they have met him around town. If they admit that they have, she asks whom Gregory was with, prying for information about other women.

The house is kept cozy by a wood-burning stove, which runs constantly. Beneath the oven, where it is warm, is a clutch of leathery eggs, half-buried in a tray of sand. Each egg contains a half-human, half-serpent fetus in various stages of development—some of which can be seen moving

within. Viewing these eggs provokes a **Sanity** roll (0/1D3 loss). Peggy's baby is hidden away upstairs. The baby is covered in fine scales and has a forked tongue—**Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss).

- **Key NPCs likely to be here:** Peggy Shaw, Gregory Shaw.
- **Secondary NPCs who might be here:** none.

RADIO KFOC

The heroes may decide to visit the radio station before or after visiting Bingham. Situated in Oklahoma City, Radio KFOC operates out of a two-story building in the downtown area. A tall mast stands alongside the studio, reaching up into the air.

In the reception area a young woman named Katherine Meakle sits behind a desk. If approached, she looks up from her typing and eyes visitors suspiciously. A large part of her job seems to involve dealing with salesmen, people looking for work, and other “time-wasters.”

The station broadcasts a range of programs: news, music, and light dramas, as well as religious content. Reverend Kornfield has a regular 15-minute broadcast slot five times a week. The pastor's recordings are delivered to the studio from Bingham by courier every Monday, together with a check to pay for the airtime. Sharp-witted heroes may be able to follow the courier to the station, or perhaps waylay the courier to obtain the pastor's recording and check.

The station holds a complete set of Kornfield's recordings. For a small fee, Ms. Meakle can have copies made for the heroes (see **The Kornfield Broadcasts**, page 256).

Those who hear Reverend Kornfield's broadcasts on their wireless sets and understand it are inspired to go to Bingham (those who roll a 01 on a **POW** roll on hearing the broadcast). Such listeners are drawn, rather than compelled, to travel to Bingham. So far, a couple of hundred pilgrims having either arrived or are on their way to Bingham.

Keeper note: refer to **Gonçalves and the Recordings** (page 107) for a sample of the broadcasts.

EVENTS IN BINGHAM

The following scenes are a series of events that follow on from one another. They happen irrespective of the heroes, although the heroes may become embroiled in the action if they so choose.

FIREBOMBING THE CHURCH

Susie Schoenbaum and Gregory Shaw's mutual hatred of Reverend Kornfield has brought them together and, consequently, they are engaged in a secret affair. The pair has concocted a scheme against Kornfield and his church; they fill bottles with gasoline and gather in the bushes near to the church. Tying wet cloths over their faces and hair, they sneak into the church while it is quiet and spread the fuel around. Standing at the back door, Gregory lights the rag in the remaining bottle and tosses it into the church. As the place explodes into flame the excited couple flees through the bushes towards the brook. If undisturbed, they dive into the brook to cool off and wash away the smell of gasoline. Exhilarated and wet, they consummate their relationship upon the bank. In the following days, they do their best to conceal their guilt and blend once more into town life. They are not particularly accomplished criminals and their attempts to conceal their guilt should fail.

The heroes may be nearby when the attack on the church takes place, or they may hear cries as the alarm is raised and townsfolk gather to form a human chain, passing buckets of water hand-to-hand in an attempt to extinguish the blaze. Heroes who jump in to lend a hand are praised and thanked by Reverend Kornfield and the Faithful.

Following the attack on the church, Sheriff Benson seeks to bring justice to the culprits. To this end, he and several men conduct a search with dogs. If this proves fruitless he broadens his investigation, asking questions door-to-door. If the heroes have been acting shadily, his attention may focus on them.

Open-Air Service

Given the damage to the church, Kornfield holds the evening's service outside in the street. Chairs are set out and people gather to sing, pray, and hear the pastor speak. He does not condemn those who attacked the church but asks them to come forward and repent. It is clear to any who observe that the attack has increased tensions between the Faithful and the Dissenters.

The heroes are probably invited to join the service—especially if they helped to put out the fire in the church—providing an opportunity to witness Kornfield's ministry and snake handling firsthand. A hero may even be challenged to renounce his or her sin and be tested by the handling of serpents (see **The First Church of Christ the Redeemer**, page 118, for details on snake handling). Those who undertake this ordeal win the trust of the Reverend and the Faithful. During the service, some of the more fervent believers stand and speak in tongues, uttering words of the Naacal language, while others fall upon their bellies and writhe, snakelike, in the dust.

Raid on the Dissenters

The Sheriff's belief that the Dissenters are responsible for the church fire leads to a raid on a meeting at the Schoenbaum house. Though no evidence of wrongdoing is found, the Sheriff provokes Bill Schoenbaum and a fight breaks out, leading to his arrest. Depending on which side they have allied with, the heroes will either be invited to help raid the home or perhaps be present at the meeting inside when it takes place.

Rough justice

Later, on the same evening of Bill Schoenbaum's arrest, Bill is "released" by the Sheriff—meaning he is taken to a back street by masked men who beat him and leave him for dead. If the heroes are wandering the streets late at night they may witness this event; otherwise, they may find Schoenbaum's body the following day.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE CAVE

Kornfield escorts Mortimer and Lloyd Allen to the cave (see *Reverend Kornfield's Journeys to the Cave*, page 122). Two or more of the Faithful, most likely Sheriff Benson and Harry Mathewson accompany Kornfield. If any of the heroes have ingratiated themselves with the pastor, they may be invited to join the party. Otherwise, the heroes hear about the expedition from Faithful townsfolk, who speak of the "pilgrimage" in wonder. Of course, the heroes could attempt to follow the group (requiring a successful **Stealth** roll to remain unseen).

Keeper note: if the heroes destroy Kornfield's body in the cave, the following assassination may still occur but Kornfield will not return from the dead.

As the group travels through the arid desert toward the cave (see *The Cave*, following), Hilliard Fowler follows unseen (perhaps he has persuaded the heroes to join him). Once Kornfield and his party have left the town, Fowler reveals himself and assassinates Kornfield, shooting him dead. Fowler runs away and escapes and then goes into hiding. Ideally, have this event occur in the presence of the heroes, giving them an outside chance of intervening.

Following this incident, the Sheriff goes into overdrive, persecuting Dissenters while he searches for Fowler. Around eight hours later, a new version of Reverend Kornfield walks into town. The pastor regrets the Sheriff's use of force but agrees that such action is necessary, demanding that, "The wheat be sorted from the chaff." Henceforth, all of the townsfolk are compelled by the Sheriff (and his Faithful lackeys) to attend church services

PLAYTEST NOTE

One playtest group witnessed the death and subsequent return of Reverend Kornfield. They quickly decided that the figure coming back into town was evidently a monstrous abomination and shot him dead. When another duplicate followed some hours later, one hero decided to wait on a rooftop and shoot it—and each of the duplicates that followed. Thus, while a growing pile of Kornfield corpses was being made just outside of town, the rest of the heroes tried to formulate a plan to deal with the situation and work out where the duplicates were coming from.

where their faith is tested through the handling of snakes. If the heroes have sided with the Dissenters and are in town, they too are strong-armed into attending the service and handling the snakes.

The heroes should witness the return of Kornfield (especially, if they witnessed his assassination). If the heroes look likely to quit the town for good prior to the Reverend's return, just expedite this event and have him turn up early.

The Cave

A day's walk south of Bingham stands a rocky outcrop. The way to it lies across abandoned farms, ditches, and little-used, dusty tracks. At the base of the outcrop is a cave. Those who are blessed by Yig may enter the cave freely. The blessing of Yig, in this context, can be extended to all serpent people and serpent person hybrids, as well as those who have been healed by Reverend Kornfield. Anyone bearing a genuine serpent person artifact (such as the Serpent Scepter or the Cobra Crown, see *Appendix B*, pages 250 and 248) is also granted entry.

Those who approach the cave and who do not share in Yig's blessing are struck by a strong wind that issues from the cave's mouth. Exposure to the wind causes 1D6 damage per round as they are effectively sandblasted.

Heroes wishing to struggle forward against the wind and into the cave must seek handholds in the rock, requiring a successful **Climb** or **Hard STR** roll. Those failing the roll are blown clear of the cave, like a cork from a bottle, suffering 4D6 damage as they land heavily. Those succeeding in the roll can make their way into the cave. If this roll is failed and then pushed, the hero gains access to

the cave but they take additional damage from the wind in the process (another 2D6).

On entering the cave, go to **The Inner Chamber**, nearby.

KORNFIELD'S JOURNEYS TO THE CAVE

Kornfield welcomes petitioners to the church. Those who are deemed suitable are then questioned by the pastor about their devotion and beliefs; if found worthy, he arranges for petitioners to accompany him to the cave so they may be fully immersed in the faith of Yig.

When making a journey to the cave, Kornfield is always accompanied by two loyal servants, usually the Sheriff and Harry Mathewson. They take no food or water for the journey—it is a spiritual quest and only those who are worthy will endure it. The journey takes eight hours and requires a CON roll for every four hours spent beneath the burning summer sun; failure indicates a loss of 1D6 hit points, due to dehydration and sunburn. Those blessed by Yig are immune and do not need to make a CON roll.

Those who survive the journey are ushered inside the cave by Kornfield, one at a time. Inside, they behold the Kornfield's corpse and hear the voice of Yig asking whether they are faithful. If the petitioner accepts Yig as their savior, they are from that time forth considered to be "blessed by Yig."

The Inner Chamber

Inside the cave it is cool and dim; there is no wind. Kornfield's (original) corpse lies upon a stone slab. Perfectly preserved, he looks almost as if he could awaken at any moment despite the thin layer of dust upon his dry skin.

Should the present incarnation of Kornfield die, Yig plants a seed in the cadaver in the cave. The seed grows with preternatural haste, swelling the cadaver's belly. Soon, a fresh full-size replica of Kornfield is spewed out of an opening (resembling a cloaca) between the cadaver's legs. The new Kornfield is naked, slick and glistening, as it crawls upon his belly. Within moments, the new Kornfield rises and soon leaves the cave, setting off at a run towards Bingham.

Kornfield's original corpse is under Yig's protection. This magical protection befuddles the minds of those that would harm the corpse. Everyone who stands before the corpse feels a sense of awe and an urge to fall to their knees in devotion. Call for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D4 loss). Those failing the **Sanity** roll feel compelled to kneel and chant in Naacal, unable to act otherwise. After ten minutes of singing Yig's praises, supplicants exit the chamber and return to their

BLESSED BY YIG

Those who successfully enter the cave and give praise to Yig, whether of their own volition or not, receive the Father of Serpent's blessing. The blessing is instantaneous; the hero feels a sudden burst of power and is momentarily blinded by a flash of light.

The blessing may take a number of forms, depending on the whim of Yig. In this scenario, all of the blessed gain a limited immunity, suffering only half damage from wounds infected with any snake or serpent person venom.

Keeper note: the Keeper should decide whether the heroes keep the benefit of Yig's blessing should they destroy Kornfield's original corpse (see **The Inner Chamber**, following).

senses outside the cave. Those who succeed in the **Sanity** roll still feel Yig's influence but may act as they wish.

If the heroes wish to move Kornfield's corpse, harm it, or otherwise interact with it in any way, an **Extreme POW** roll is required to overcome Yig's protective influence. Failure indicates that they have bowed to the will of Yig for a few moments—performing an involuntary action of the Keeper's choosing. The involuntary action should be in Yig's favor; for example, if the hero's intention was to raise an axe and chop off the head of the corpse, the involuntary action might be to drop the axe behind their head, yelling Yig's name with outstretched hands. If the hero's intention was to pick up the corpse, the involuntary action might be to embrace it and beg forgiveness while sobbing uncontrollably. If a player chooses to push the **POW** roll and fails, he or she may still choose to act against Kornfield's corpse but, if they do, they find themselves cursed by Yig, the effect of which is the same as undergoing stage one of the hybridization process (see **Appendix C**, page 259).

If Kornfield's corpse is destroyed (such as by fire or dismemberment), this brings an end to Kornfield's connection with Yig. The present incarnation of Kornfield continues to live as a normal man. If he is not already aware of what has occurred, the living Kornfield intuits that something is wrong, gathers a posse of the Faithful, and heads towards the cave.

Keeper note: it is expected that the heroes destroy the corpse of Kornfield in the cave but how they deal with the living Kornfield back in town is for the players to decide. Once the corpse in the cave is destroyed, Kornfield's blessing expires—if the living version of Kornfield is killed thereafter, he will not be reborn.

CONCLUSION

Once Kornfield's original body has been destroyed and any incarnations of him dealt with, the town of Bingham slowly returns to normal. Those who have been touched by Yig (Peggy Shaw, Harry Mathewson, and so on) remain as they are, forever changed—although the Keeper should entertain any plausible ways of “fixing” such people that the heroes may come up with (possibly through use of spontaneous Cthulhu Mythos use or an insane augmented skill). Bear in mind, though, that there is no easy solution here and NPCs, such as Peggy Shaw, are likely to remain changed. Those who were faithful to Reverend Kornfield slowly turn away from their reverence of Yig and return to their former beliefs.

If the heroes are still working for Caduceus, once the mission is complete, they return to New York City and must report their findings to their superiors. Unless they hold back key facts, Caduceus see the townsfolk who have been blessed by Yig as abominations—as humans who are not deserving of such an honor. Therefore, serpent men agents are dispatched to Bingham to kidnap any blessed individuals named in the heroes' report. These unfortunate individuals are transported to Caduceus's laboratory in the Belgian Congo and used as test subjects in the cults' ongoing experiments. It is possible that the heroes could encounter such NPCs when they venture to Africa in **Chapter 6: Belgian Congo**.

Should any of the heroes later return to Bingham or seek news of it, they soon hear of the unexplained disappearances. Caduceus, of course, denies any knowledge or involvement in the matter.

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- The heroes destroy Kornfield's original body at the cave +1D10 Sanity points.
- The heroes' take action against the townspeople, resulting in multiple deaths -1D6 Sanity points.
- The heroes' action prevents deaths of the townspeople +1D6 Sanity points.



CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Reverend Kornfield, 48, risen preacher of Yig

STR 55 CON 70 SIZ 65 DEX 55 INT 70
APP 65 POW 120 EDU 70 SAN — HP 13
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 6 MP: 24 Luck: 60

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 60% (30/12)

Special Abilities

Immunity: will not be attacked by snakes and is immune to snake and serpent person venom.

Healing Hands: Yig has blessed the Reverend with this ability. By expending 20 magic points, the Reverend can heal the sick and dying. The healing always carries an ophidian-themed side effect (such as laying eggs, feeding on insects, becoming cold blooded, etc.).

Skills

Credit Rating 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Persuade 80%, Spot Hidden 45%, Listen 50%.

Sheriff Cliff Benson, 51, Kornfield's right hand man

STR 75 CON 65 SIZ 75 DEX 75 INT 60
APP 35 POW 60 EDU 65 SAN 50 HP 14
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 6 MP: 12 Luck: 30

Combat

Brawl 70% (35/14), damage 1D3 + 1D4
.38 revolver 80% (40/16), damage 1D10
12-g shotgun 60% (30/12), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 20%, Intimidate 70%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 75%

Peggy Shaw, 19, egg-laying teen

STR 35 CON 50 SIZ 55 DEX 40 INT 40
APP 40 POW 50 EDU 40 SAN 25 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 21% (10/4)

Skills

Charm 50%, Credit Rating 09%, Spot Hidden 30%, Sleight of Hand 50%

Gregory Shaw, 19, cheating husband in turmoil

STR 60 CON 65 SIZ 70 DEX 70 INT 65
APP 70 POW 65 EDU 55 SAN 60 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 13 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 10%, Listen 40%, Fast Talk 40%, Mechanical Repair 60%

Susie Schoenbaum, 17, youthful activist

STR 50 CON 75 SIZ 50 DEX 60 INT 80
APP 65 POW 50 EDU 50 SAN 50 HP 12
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 60%, Credit Rating 12%, Psychology 40%

OKLAHOMA

Pearl Schoenbaum, 54, skin-shedding housewife

STR 65 CON 50 SIZ 70 DEX 50 INT 55
 APP 10-90*POW 65 EDU 55 SAN 35 HP 12
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 5 MP: 13 Luck: 0

**See Personal Description (page 111)*

Combat

Brawl 35% (18/7), damage 1D3 + 1D4
 Dodge 26% (13/5)

Skills

Credit Rating 20%, Listen 40%, Persuade 50%

Bill Schoenbaum, 55, troubled blacksmith

STR 90 CON 70 SIZ 80 DEX 70 INT 60
 APP 60 POW 40 EDU 55 SAN 30 HP 15
 DB: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 6 MP: 8 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3 + 1D6
 Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 20%, Intimidate 50%, Spot Hidden 60%

Harry Mathewson, 67, feasting caretaker

STR 60 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 40 INT 50
 APP 50 POW 60 EDU 50 SAN 30 HP 12
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 4 MP: 12 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 45% (22/9), damage 1D3+1D4
 Dodge 20% (10/4)

Skills

Charm 40%, Credit Rating 15%, Spot Hidden 50%

Ralph Kunkel, 31, barber in denial

STR 60 CON 70 SIZ 45 DEX 70 INT 50
 APP 60 POW 65 EDU 50 SAN 60 HP 11
 DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 13 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3
 Dodge 36% (18/7)

Skills

Credit Rating 18%, Spot Hidden 40%, Sleight of Hand 50%

George Hensen, 34, agile laborer

STR 70 CON 80 SIZ 65 DEX 100 INT 35
 APP 45 POW 40 EDU 40 SAN 20 HP 14
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 10 MP: 8 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3 + 1D4
 Dodge 100% (50/20)

Skills

Credit Rating 10%, Intimidate 50%, Jump 70%, Spot Hidden 40%

Mortimer Allen, 32, father, pilgrim

STR 50 CON 60 SIZ 60 DEX 60 INT 65
 APP 45 POW 70 EDU 60 SAN 70 HP 12
 DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 14 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3
 Dodge 31% (15/6)

Skills

Credit Rating 18%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 70%, Spot Hidden 40%

Lloyd Allen, 10, son, pilgrim

STR 20 CON 60 SIZ 25 DEX 60 INT 60
 APP 55 POW 75 EDU 20 SAN 70 HP 8
 DB: -2 Build: -2 Move: 8 MP: 15 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3 -2
 Dodge 31% (15/6)

Skills

Credit Rating 10%, Persuade 40%, Listen 60%

Hilliard Fowler, 61, heavy-drinking wood merchant

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 70 DEX 45 INT 55
 APP 30 POW 40 EDU 50 SAN 35 HP 13
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 5 MP: 8 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3 + 1D4
 .38 revolver 40% (20/8) damage 1D10
 Dodge 23% (11/4)

Skills

Credit Rating 25%, Intimidate 40%, Spot Hidden 40%



Chudland

ICELAND

Are we to be abducted every day in Iceland?

—Sir Oliver Lindenbrook, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1959)

THE SLEEPER WAKES

OVERVIEW

The heroes travel to Iceland to investigate the reawakening of the Snæfellsjökull* volcano, once the site of a serpent person biological research facility. On the way there, the heroes are ambushed by a giant voormi, mad with hunger and pain. The lair of the giant voormi lies nearby and contains some useful items.

The nearby fishing port of Ólafsvík has suffered a violent attack and is now deserted. Clues lead to a voormi warren within the Snæfellsjökull volcano, which connects to the old biological research facility and the myriad horrors therein.

At the facility, the heroes face rebellious voormis, barely controlled scientific horrors, and monstrously mutated serpent people. Beneath all of this, lies the Sleeper, an ancient and gigantic voormi, large enough to be mistaken for a geological feature. Only desperate action can prevent catastrophe should this monstrous creature awaken.

**Pronounced as “Sny – fells – jo – kult.”*

BACKGROUND

When their empire was at its height, before the rise of humanity and the fall of Mu, the serpent people built many great structures across the world. The serpent folk relied heavily on voormi slaves to carry out large parts of this construction effort. These squat and malleable

humanoids served the serpent people for millennia and still exist in small enclaves—in places where their masters once flourished.

The key shortcoming of the voormi workers was their diminutive size. The science-sorcerers of Mu manipulated genetic structures, creating variant voormis tailored for particular tasks. Some were made amphibious, others adapted for working in inhospitably hot or cold climes. The main focus was on creating larger voormis, capable of moving huge stone blocks single-handedly or ripping up trees by their roots.

The science-sorcerers built a research facility in the network of lava tunnels surrounding the volcano now known as Snæfellsjökull, in the Snæfellsnes Peninsula of Iceland. Their reasons for locating the facility here were threefold: there were no existing serpent person settlements in Iceland, so if the mutated voormis got out of hand, they could be contained on the island; the volcano provided the geothermal energy required to run the facility; and, should the experiments go catastrophically wrong, the serpent people running the facility could detonate the volcano, flooding the tunnels with magma and destroying their creations.

The initial experiments at the facility were a success, creating voormis twice the height and many times stronger than their forbears. These giant voormis were brutish, hairy, and more violent. While they could be trained to perform the tasks for which they were created, they required strong guidance and discipline. The serpent scientists created a number of giant serpent people as well, to act as overseers. Armed with tongues that operate as poison whips, the overseers kept the slaves under control.

Inevitably, the experiments got out of control. Some of the voormis escaped, creating hidden settlements of their own across the caves and tunnels of Iceland. Their descendants became the source of the troll legends held by Iceland's later human settlers. Furthermore, some of the giants grew so monstrously large that they were completely uncontrollable. The most successful way of neutralizing these giants was to inject them with a poison that would petrify their flesh; the resulting ossified monstrosities helped breed the local legends of trolls who turned to stone when touched by the rays of the sun. These efforts were only partially effective, so the serpent scientists decided to activate their self-destruct and detonate Snæfellsjökull.

The detonation proved only partially successful. While most of the tunnels and chambers were flooded with magma, many survived intact. The serpent people, fearing the situation had gone too far, fled Iceland and left the remaining voormis to flourish in their hidden subterranean settlements.

All of this happened over ten thousand years ago and no serpent person had set foot in Iceland again—until last year. The Inner Night found reference to the abandoned facility and attempted to revive it. By creating giant slave voormis and overseer serpent people once more, they could potentially build an army that would allow them to crush Caduceus and conquer the world.

The Inner Night's revival of the geothermal power systems has caused the dormant Snæfellsjökull to wake. The Inner Night have also enslaved the feral voormis living in the tunnels, sending them to raid human settlements to harvest raw materials for their experiments. Worst of all, the heat and power surging through the old lava tunnels is beginning to wake the Sleeper. Catastrophe appears inevitable.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

Dr. Gonçalves conducts the briefing for this mission in the usual meeting room at the Meadham Building. When the heroes arrive, there are maps of Iceland and the Snæfellsnes Peninsula pinned to the wall, along with photographs of Snæfellsjökull with smoke rising from it and, incongruously, a few woodcuts of trolls, taken from old books of Icelandic fairy tales.

Dr. Gonçalves explains that the residents of the Snæfellsnes Peninsula have been disturbed by recent volcanic activity and earth tremors. The Icelandic authorities are planning an evacuation of local settlements but this has been hampered by the scattered nature of the population, as well as damage to roads caused by

earthquakes and the fact that some of the rescue workers have mysteriously disappeared. While the catastrophe is not of the scale that Caduceus normally deals with, the difficulties with evacuation have provided enough of a pretext to send in a team.

Between reports from spies in the Inner Night and rumors of troll sightings around Snæfellsnes, Gonçalves suspects that their rivals have reactivated the facility before Caduceus could find the resources to do so themselves. While they are not quite sure of the Inner Night's objectives, Joshua Meadham considers it enough of a threat to necessitate action.

A private Caduceus airplane is waiting at the airport and will fly the heroes to the Caduceus camp in Iceland (see **Arrival**, page 131) as soon as the briefing is over.

If any of the heroes ask about the pictures of trolls, Gonçalves explains that the serpent people once used such creatures, called voormis, as slaves, and surviving colonies probably lie at the root of troll legends. While the voormis look fearsome, they are small, reclusive and easily cowed, "they were bred to be dominated." Still, if the heroes encounter them in large numbers, they should be cautious.

If the heroes have asked for more details, Dr. Gonçalves provides some additional briefing notes and reference documents that provide more details about the voormis and their history with the serpent people (refer to the information in the **Background** section as necessary). Studying these notes confers an additional 1 percentile of Cthulhu Mythos skill and 1D4 percentage points in Other Language (Naacal).

Keeper note: the Caduceus briefing is close to the truth. A group of serpent people has uncovered a scientific research base hidden beneath an Icelandic volcano and are undoubtedly planning to use its resources to further their secret agenda. Caduceus researchers have determined that the ancient facility was built to create monsters and was abandoned when experiments got out of hand. The heroes are told to try to find out what the serpent people are up to, disrupt their plans and, if possible, to take control of the base. In addition, the base may contain research that will be useful to Caduceus's humanitarian goals.

Gonçalves dismisses the heroes but asks to speak privately with whoever he considers to be the group's leader. He reveals that there is a secondary objective: under the control center of the facility is a room filled with metal canisters. If it appears that the base will not survive, the mission leader must rescue at least one of these canisters and bring it back to Caduceus headquarters. It is hoped that the information contained within the canister

can assist Caduceus to piece together what the serpent people have been up to. Gonçalves ends by saying that the contents of the canisters are particularly delicate, so they should not be opened.

ALTERNATIVE ENTRY POINTS

If the heroes have severed ties with Caduceus, they can learn of the situation in Iceland through other means. The renewed activity of the famous Snæfellsjökull volcano has made the news, albeit as a minor story; some articles make jokey references to local stories about trolls and strange lights in the skies being sighted. Many of the articles mention that Caduceus has sent medical aid to the area, setting up a camp on the peninsula in readiness for a large-scale eruption.

Rose Meadham knows that Caduceus will want to take over or destroy the base. If the heroes have established a working relationship with the Inner Night, she asks them to investigate the Caduceus presence in Iceland to determine their objective and to stymie it as necessary. She does not mention anything about the Inner Night operations there unless the heroes have given her very good reason to trust them.

Tyranissh is also aware of the situation in Iceland, although she is too busy with tracking down the Cobra Crown to investigate it herself. She suspects that the technology and energy source at the base may provide a plan B if she is unable to return to Mu. The story she offers the heroes is that the technology present is too dangerous to fall into the hands of the Inner Night, so the heroes must drive them away and take control of the base.

THE SETTING

Formerly a dependency of Denmark, Iceland has been a sovereign state since 1918, although in 1933 it is still joined in a personal union with Denmark. This means that while Iceland has its own government, it still shares a monarch with Denmark. The current king is Kristján X, known as Christian X in Denmark.

Most people in Iceland speak Icelandic as their first language, although the close ties with Denmark at this time mean that many also speak Danish. It will not be too hard for the heroes to find someone who speaks at least a little English.

While Iceland is relatively large, it is sparsely populated. The population of the island is only 112,000 in 1933, with around 35,000 living in the capital, Reykjavik.

Assuming the heroes arrive in Iceland in summer, they find the weather clement, if not particularly warm. The temperature varies between 7°C (45°F) and 15°C (60°F), with the highest temperatures in July. The days are long, with the sun not setting until around midnight and rising again two or three hours later; even these few intervening hours are more like twilight than full night.

The Snæfellsnes Peninsula on which the mission takes place is located on the western edge of Iceland. It stretches for approximately 60 miles, from just west of Reykjavik to the Snæfellsjökull volcano. Snæfellsjökull has made the peninsula famous since Jules Verne used it as the setting for his novel, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. It is also the most noticeable landmark, visible from Reykjavik on a clear day. A substantial glacier now covers the volcano.

The Icelandic economy is predominantly based on agriculture and fishing. Traders can be found in villages, selling fresh fish, clothing, and other local produce from barrows while, in the towns, more and more stores are popping up offering convenience shopping—although the heroes are unlikely to have time to spend shopping. As the heroes travel across the peninsula, they will encounter lava fields, outcroppings of black volcanic rock, waterfalls, grasslands, and the occasional coastal village.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Statistics for NPCs and monsters are presented at the end of this chapter.

Gunnhildur Jensdóttir, 54, local guide

Gunnhildur has spent her entire life living on the Snæfellsnes Peninsula and knows the area as well as anyone. There has been a small but steady stream of visitors since Snæfellsjökull was used as the setting of Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, allowing Gunnhildur to make a modest living as a guide.

She has heard plenty of local folk tales, including stories of lights in the sky, strangers who cast inhuman shadows, and troll-like creatures that hide in caves to avoid people. She is happy to spin tall tales about local myths, often with a sense of mockery, but she believes none of them.

Gunnhildur's brother Óli is a fisherman and has been living in Ólafsvík for twenty years. He is her only family. When Gunnhildur is faced with the undeniable evidence of unnatural horrors in the area, she will want to drop everything and check that her brother is safe.

If any heroes die during the course of this chapter, Gunnhildur may provide a suitable replacement until a new hero can be recruited.

- **Description:** a tall, rangy woman in her early fifties, with a weathered, lined face and graying blonde hair tied back in a bun. She has a blunt manner and is oblivious to the offense this sometimes causes.
- **Traits:** she speaks in a booming voice and laughs heartily about almost everything.
- **Roleplaying hook:** will seek to rescue her brother once it becomes known that he is missing. Aims to keep those under her care safe at all costs.

Giant Voormis, nightmares of legend

These creatures are barely recognizable as voormis. They are monstrosously large humanoids, with long, spindly limbs and more anthropoid features than the canine cast of an unadulterated voormi. The few specimens found on the Snæfellsnes Peninsula are even stranger in aspect, being partially petrified: much of their skin looks like stone, covered with patches of moss and lichen. Some have grass or even small shrubs growing from cracks in their stony flesh.

Their mutations have left these voormis brain-damaged and insane; they are now little more than animals, driven by instinct to feed and destroy. They attack by crushing with their fists, stamping on creatures than annoy them, and throwing things around.

While their partial petrification has left them slow and sluggish, these giants can still run faster than humans due to their long strides. They are big enough to pick up a human in each hand, and then run off to devour their prey at leisure.

If a giant voormi takes more than half its hit points in damage, it will run for shelter in its lair or a nearby cave.

Mutated Voormis, source of troll legends

These hunched, muscular figures are significantly larger than normal voormis—some reaching 12 feet in height—having been mutated by their serpent person masters to carry out heavy labor. They have features that are both humanoid and canine; ugly creatures, their bodies are covered in thick, dark hair to protect against the cold. Their appearance as giant humanoids has given birth to legends about trolls living in caves across Iceland.

Since the fall of the serpent people's facility in millennia gone by, the surviving voormis have bred and formed subterranean communities. They avoid humans out of fear, although they will occasionally snatch one for food when no other prey can be found.

Now that the Inner Night has returned to the long abandoned facility, the serpent people have re-enslaved some of the voormis that had been making their homes in the abandoned tunnels. These voormis wear metal collars of filigreed serpent-person design that administer electric



ICELANDIC NAMES

Traditional Icelandic names are patronymic, with -sson or -sdóttir appended to the father's given name in place of a surname. Some Icelanders do have family names if they are of foreign extraction.

Icelandic people are generally called only by their given name, or sometimes their full name, and this is considered perfectly formal and polite. The address of Mr, Mrs, or Miss followed by the patronymic name is not used.

The characters ð and Þ, which appear in some of the names, are part of the Icelandic alphabet; they were also part of the English alphabet once, known as "eth" and "thorn" respectively. The letter ð corresponds to a soft th sound, such as found at the end of the word "with." Þ represents a hard th sound, as found at the start of the word "this".

A few sample names are provided below to help with naming NPCs on the fly.

Women's names: Dagrún Eiríksdóttir, Thelma Ellertsdóttir, Þórný Ólafsdóttir, Guðborg Jakobsdóttir, Ágústa Bragadóttir, Anna Indriðadóttir.

Men's names: Jón Guðbrandsson, Eypór Gautason, Rúnar Albertsson, Börkur Ægisson, Helgi Sverrisson, Sveinbjörn Nikulásson.



shocks and mind-altering chemicals to make the voormis more pliable. Controlled voormis will fight humans to the death when instructed to do so, while feral voormis will try to avoid the heroes and run from fights unless their warrens are under attack.

Overseer, mutated serpent person brute

Overseers are abominations created by the serpent people to command other monsters under their control. While the serpent folk consider it distasteful to use their own genetic material in such a way, they occasionally need creatures that can not only think like a serpent person but which also have the physical might to face down and command the terrifying monstrosities they have bioengineered.

The overseers are recognizably related to serpent people, being humanoids with scaled skin and ophidian features, but they are massive—averaging 12 feet in height—with



physiques that are brutishly muscular and often deformed. They walk with a rolling gait, dragging their massive fists on the ground. Their intelligence is low compared to normal serpent people, and they communicate using grunts, roars, and shrieks. Overseers are fiercely loyal to their serpent creators and fight to the death when executing their commands.

The Sleeper, ancient petrified horror

Exposed to huge doses of growth serum devised by the serpent people, a single voormi grew so huge that it led the serpent folk of old to detonate Snæfellsjökull and attempt to destroy the facility.

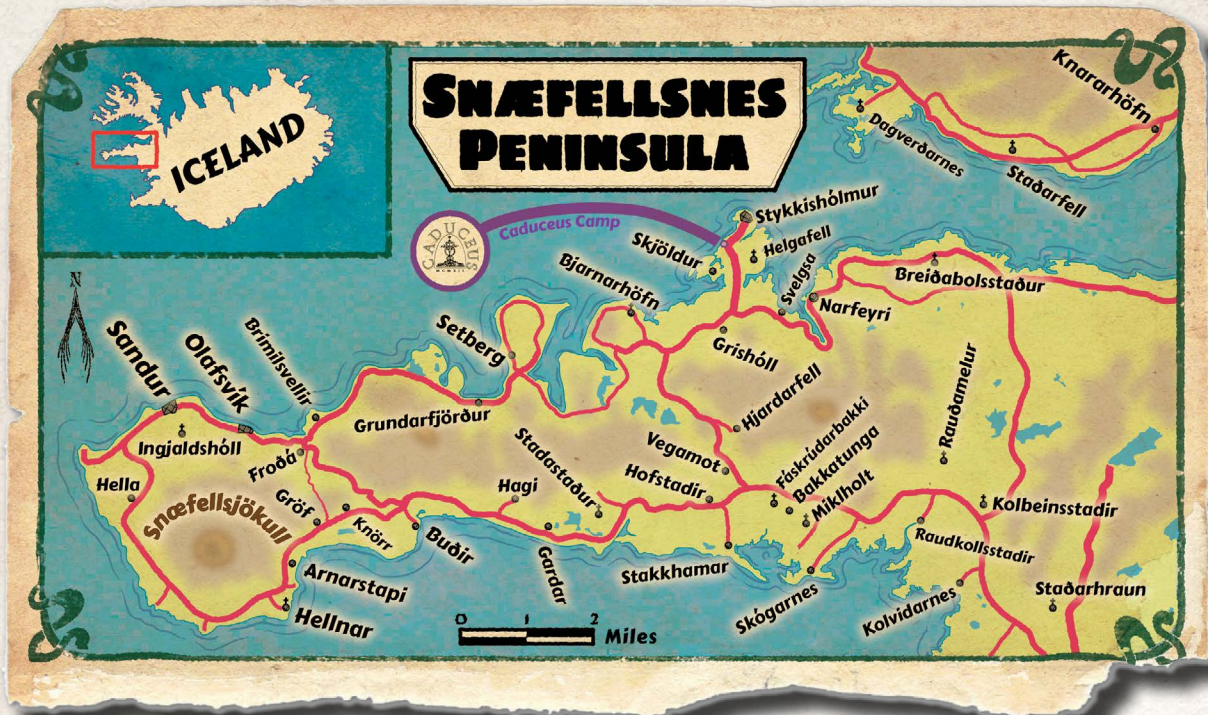
The Sleeper is large enough that its body now makes up a significant portion of the land surrounding the mountain, and its limbs stretch out to the northern coastline. Its accelerated growth was uncontrollable and has continued even after its petrification, leading to tremors, rock falls, and the creation of fissures. Between the huge quantities of petrifying drugs injected into the beast and the great quantities of magma that flowed over it following the activation of the self-destruct procedure, the immense creature is trapped and largely dormant. Unfortunately,

the renewed activity in the research base is starting to wake it up. Should it come to full consciousness, it will be unable to actually stand up but its thrashing will destroy the peninsula, setting off tremors large enough to level the buildings in Reykjavik and send tsunamis rolling down to Northern Europe and the eastern coasts of North America.

ARRIVAL

Assuming the heroes are still working for Caduceus, transport to Iceland is quick and simple. A private aircraft takes the heroes from New York City to Dublin, and then on to a landing strip at the Caduceus camp outside the town of Stykkishólmur, on the northeastern coast of the Snæfellsnes Peninsula. Stykkishólmur lies just less than 40 miles from the base of Snæfellsjökull.

The camp is a token operation, granting Caduceus a foothold. A dozen staff oversees four large tents, each providing twenty-four beds. At present, the beds are all vacant. Various Caduceus medical personnel are busy working to set up the camp to prepare should the volcano erupt. The Icelandic authorities have largely ignored the camp so far.



The local guide hired by Caduceus is Gunnhildur Jensdóttir, who is waiting at the camp when the heroes arrive. Gunnhildur has not been briefed concerning the heroes' mission.

If the heroes are acting as free agents or allies of one of the other factions, they will have to make their own way to Iceland. It will be simple enough to arrange a flight to Reykjavik and travel out to the peninsula from there. The heroes will probably still require a local guide to help with directions and translation, in which case Gunnhildur is still available to them; she works freelance, not for Caduceus.

The Keeper should open with the following scene (**Opening Scene: Troll Attack**), starting in the midst of the action. Fill the players in on details of the locale and situation once things calm down.

OPENING SCENE: TROLL ATTACK

Gunnhildur is driving the heroes in a Ford Model A truck (or leading a small convoy of two, depending on numbers), taking them to the base of the volcano. They have been on the road for almost two hours, slowed by the damage to the road surface caused by recent seismic upheavals.

As the vehicle rounds an outcrop of black volcanic rock, a huge boulder comes flying through the air, exploding on the road in front of the car, followed immediately by an ear-splitting roar, as a monstrous figure stands up

from behind the outcrop. This is one of the giant voormis awoken from its petrified slumber by the activity of Snæfellsjökull (see **Giant Voormis**, page 130).

This voormi is bestial, maddened by hunger and the pain of its partial petrification, as well as confused by the intrusion of humans and their machines. It lashes out at everything it encounters, taking any prey it subdues back to its lair to devour later.

The voormi starts its attack by throwing large rocks and handfuls of its own dead, petrified flesh as missile weapons. Its main targets are any vehicles with running engines as the noise frightens the creature. Once these are silenced, it moves in to try and grab at least one human victim before running back to its lair. While it is slowed by the partial petrification of its limbs, it makes up speed through its gigantic stride. If the heroes don't disable or kill the voormi, play out its attempted escape as a chase scene.

Possible obstacles on the chase include:

- The sudden collapse of the ground into a lava tunnel.
- An exploding car sending debris flying through the air.
- Unstable scree on a section of hillside.
- Jutting shards of volcanic rock forced up to the surface by recent earthquakes.
- Marshy ground caused by a stream running to the seashore.
- Portions of dead, stony flesh falling off the monstrous voormi.

The Monster's Lair

Four hundred yards from the point where the voormi was lying in wait, across rough scrubland, is a collapsed section of a lava tunnel leading to its lair. While the ground is uneven, there are no trees or other obstacles to prevent line-of-sight, so even if the heroes are unable to keep up with the voormi, they will still see the hole in the ground into which it disappears.

The wide, steep tunnel leads down into darkness. There are shards of jagged black volcanic rock all around and the ground is unstable and slimy from the constant trickle of water. Going down at speed requires a **DEX** roll to avoid falling and suffering 1D3 points of damage; those falling also need to make a **Luck** roll to avoid dropping weapons or light sources.

After 100 yards, the tunnel opens up into a dank, lightless cavern. This is where the voormi has been imprisoned, petrified and undying for millennia. The ground is littered with fresh human remains and the torn carcass of a serpent person. The serpent's body has been ripped limb-from-limb, and the head lies in the center of the cavern, still wearing an expression of surprise.

Next to the serpent man's body is a petrification gun (see **Appendix B**, page 253). A few drops of the silvery fluid have leaked out of the tip and left small stalagmites on the ground, hinting at its function. If a hero tries to use the gun against the giant voormi, he or she needs to make a successful combined **Spot Hidden**, **Fighting (Brawl)**, and **Luck** roll in order to find a chink in the monster's stony skin and get the needle into it. There is enough fluid in the gun to completely petrify the giant, or to use against 1D6 mutated voormis later—should the heroes find another way of dealing with the giant.

Lying against one wall is what initially appears to be a human body. Closer inspection reveals that it is one of the serpent people's environmental suits (see **Appendix B**, page 251). There are also broken shards of one of the transport spheres from the base (see **Appendix B**, page 253) scattered around; the giant, while rooting around in the crater, managed to snatch one of the spheres on its way down the chimney and brought it back to the lair to examine. The sphere contained a number of capybaras sent from a base in Brazil (the serpent people enjoy eating them live). The capybaras were placed in the oxygenated fluid, allowing them to survive the journey, the sticky remains of which are still pooled on the floor. Two of the capybaras have managed to elude the giant and run around, grunting and hiding as the heroes explore the lair.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

The fishing village of Ólafsvík lies around three miles from the base of Snæfellsjökull, on the northwestern coast of the peninsula. If Gunnhildur has survived the encounter with the giant, she says she wants to visit the village to make sure everyone is safe. If the heroes are disinclined to go with her, she says the locals may know something about the troll.

Through conversations with her brother, Gunnhildur knows that the people of Ólafsvík have started taking the troll legends a bit more seriously than most other Icelanders. It is not unusual for the people of Ólafsvík to leave offerings of fish, dairy products, or sometimes livestock outside the village. Gunnhildur has always laughed this off as silly superstition but in light of the encounter on the road, she is becoming a believer.

On arrival, the village is deserted, which is a complete surprise to Gunnhildur. The 200 or so people who live there all appear to have disappeared the previous night. There are signs of violence everywhere, with doors kicked in, furniture smashed, and blood spatters on walls and floors. Shotgun and rifle casings are scattered outside, along with broken or abandoned guns. Not a single human survivor or corpse can be found.

A search of the village reveals a number of things:

- There are strange footprints everywhere, tracked through mud and blood alike. They look almost human but are far too large. The largest is twenty inches long. A successful **Track** roll indicates that there were dozens of the creatures present at one point, and that they came from the direction of the volcano. The footprints are deeper when heading back the way they came, and some show indications of dragging items—possibly litters or human bodies.
- Judging from the fact that most of the beds in the village seem to have been disturbed, it is likely that the residents were taken during the night.
- One of the smaller houses has collapsed. Those examining it hear scratching noises coming from beneath a pile of timber. This is one of the voormis that carried out the attack; it was buried in the rubble while chasing the house's owner and has been trapped ever since. The initial search party missed the creature, as it was unconscious at the time, making no noise. If freed, the voormi attempts to flee back to its warren—it only fights if cornered. If a hero is able to examine the creature, he or she notices the voormi wears a filigreed metal collar of obvious serpent person design (see **Voormi Slave Collars**, page 253, **Appendix B**), which is sparking with electricity.

Should the heroes follow the voormi, it leads them to the warrens (see **The Voormi Warrens**, nearby). If the heroes instead follow the tracks left by the raiders, they lead to the ancient research facility (see **Ways into the Facility**, page 140). If the heroes are still stuck for ideas, a sudden bolt from the blue may give them an idea as one of the transport spheres flies by to land in the crater of the volcano (see **Lights in the Sky**, following).

LIGHTS IN THE SKY

Over the past year, people from across the peninsula and the surrounding coast of Iceland have been seeing strange lights in the sky, moving around the crater of Snæfellsjökull. The lights look like shooting stars, but slower and prone to sudden changes of direction. Most observers believe them to be related to the recent volcanic activity while some more fanciful minds see the actions of “elves” or “old gods.”

The truth is that the serpent people who reactivated the facility have discovered a mechanism whereby their ancestors transported supplies across their empire via floating spheres of a glass-like material (see **Transport Sphere**, page 253, **Appendix B**). The current occupiers of the facility have been using the spheres to transport supplies in from other Inner Night bases all over the world. The supplies include machine parts, power sources, weapons, and live food.

The spheres travel in and out of the facility via a chimney in the crater of the volcano (see **Ways into the Facility**, page 140) and are stored in the landing bay (see **The Landing Bay**, page 141).

Once the heroes leave Ólafsvík, they see one of the spheres approaching the crater atop the volcano. The sphere moves quickly across the sky, at a rate of 300 miles per hour, approaching from the south and leaving a trail of smoke and sparks behind it. Its approach fills the air with a shrieking sound and a loud thrumming. As it reaches the top of the peak, it stops and hovers in mid-air for a few seconds before descending slowly into the crater and out of sight.

THE VOORMI WARRENS

If the heroes have followed the voormi from the village, it cautiously makes its way back home to the warrens, trying to elude its pursuers when possible. It is large enough that it will be unable to hide while observed in such barren surroundings, so no roll is necessary to pursue it. Following the voormi takes the heroes half way up the volcano. What starts out as a walk, turns into clambering up steep, scree-covered slopes.

The warrens are populated by feral voormis who have hidden here since the evacuation of the research facility millennia ago. Now faced with the return of their former masters, they are defending their territory. This action has met with mixed success: while some of the voormis have been taken as slaves, the remainder have put up such a violent resistance that the serpent people have been unable to subdue them all (yet). Thirty-five voormis remain in the warren, all of which are from stock that was mutated by the serpent people to make stronger slaves, and so are significantly larger than normal voormis (see **Mutated Voormis**, page 130).

The last assault from the serpent people took place on the previous night. The voormis are still preparing their fallen for a grand funeral ceremony.

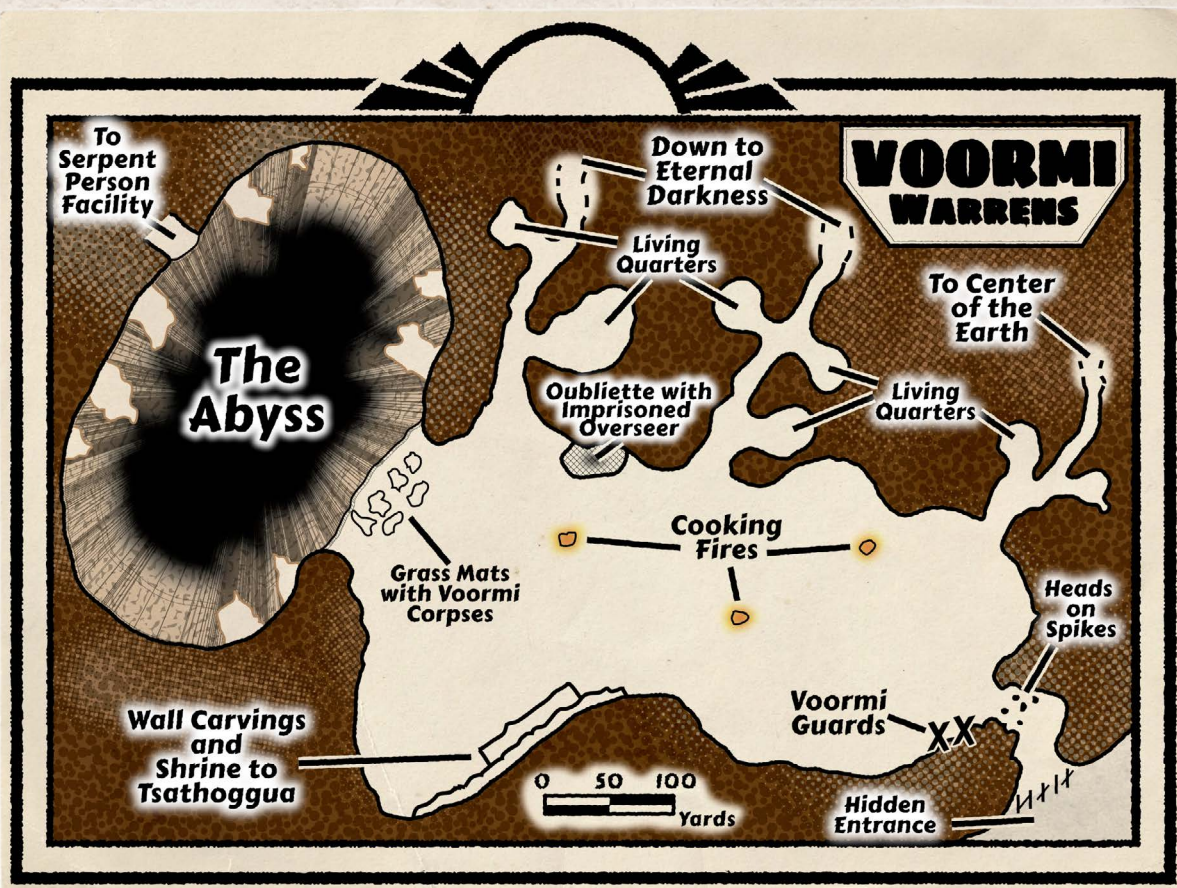
The warrens are located in a combination of natural lava tunnels, fissures created by the upheavals caused by the former occupants, and excavations that were part of the original facility. The walls are grayish-black stone, largely curved and rough. There are outcrops of quartz and pillars of set lava punctuating the warrens, as well as pits filled with water, often to surprising depths.

Many of the walls of the warrens are covered with strange fungi: large, fleshy growths with vivid colors and some degree of bioluminescence, dripping viscous, pungent liquids. They have a meaty, gamey odor. The fungi are the main food source of the voormis, engineered for them by the serpent people in ancient times. While they satisfy basic nutritional requirements, the voormis often go abroad to forage or steal livestock, fish, or vegetables.

THINGS FALL APART

As the Sleeper (see **The Sleeper**, page 131) begins to stir, the mountain and tunnels shake and shift. The heroes experience this as frequent tremors of varying magnitude that cause the tunnels to begin to crack and crumble, giving way to sudden rock falls and fissures appearing without warning. Occasionally, a fissure will leak burning hot magma.

While none of these events are initially catastrophic—meant to provide background color—the Keeper should emphasize the unstable nature of the surroundings as the heroes move around underground so as to foreshadow the looming threat. Such geological dynamism can also provide inspiration for complications during chase scenes, combat, or when pushed rolls fail.



THE ENTRANCE

The voormi heads up the volcano's side towards an entrance, which appears to be a cave mouth. As the heroes follow, a casual examination of the cave mouth reveals signs of excavation. Grass matting and shrubbery lie scattered around the entrance—used as camouflage but since disturbed by the recent battles with the serpent people and, consequently, now in disarray.

In order to deter raiders, the voormis have put the heads of serpent people on spikes of black volcanic stone, located some twenty yards into the warren; there are five heads spaced at intervals down the tunnel. A couple of the heads look human at first glance. Close examination or a successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals that the serpent heads wear human skin over their ophidian features.

Two voormi guards wait in the shadows by the entrance at all times in case of attack. The original attack on the warrens came across the abyss that lies between them and the facility, but the voormis know that this entry point is even more vulnerable. If these guards see that the intruders are humans and not serpent people, they will try to take them alive, using intimidation or, if necessary,

COMMUNICATING WITH THE VOORMIS

If the heroes make the effort to communicate with the voormis, they may be able to do so in a limited manner. The Voormis do not speak any language known to humans but they do have sufficient intelligence to allow simple communication. A hero who spends several hours trying to find ways of communicating can attempt an INT roll; success allows the hero and the voormi to negotiate a combination of sign language and pidgin, enabling them to share basic concepts and instructions. This does not necessarily mean that the voormis trust the humans or see them as any more than potential meals but, with effort, it could lead to a shaky and temporary alliance against a shared enemy.

knockout blows. If the heroes use lethal force against the voormis, they escalate in kind. If the heroes are seen to be accompanying the voormi (see **Communicating with the Voormis**, nearby) who was buried in the rubble in Ólafsvík, the guards follow the lead of the returnee in deciding how to deal with the human intruders.

THE GREAT HALL

This huge natural cavern serves as the center of communal life for the voormis living in the warrens. The walls are entirely black volcanic rock, which glistens like glass in places. Rubble lies everywhere, some of which is jagged and as sharp as knives. The air is smoky and thick with the smells of cooking meat, excrement, wet animal, and blood. The light from the cooking fires illuminates only parts of the great hall, making shadows dance, although most of the walls are visible due to the luminescent fungi that grow on the surfaces.

This is where the voormis gather to eat, perform ceremonies, and share each other's company. It also doubles as a temple to Tsathoggua. One wall is covered with a disturbing rendition of the deity, sculpted from black volcanic rock, surrounded by carvings of all the horrors that the dark depths hold. The carvings are freshly anointed with the blood of serpent people and glisten sickly in the flickering light.

Eleven voormis sit around the cavern, performing various activities. Three voormis fight over what appears to be a human leg—on closer inspection, this actually proves to be the leg of a serpent person clad in human skin. Four of the others are preparing the bodies of those who died in the latest raid for burial. The bodies are laid out on grass mats and the voormis attending them are using their own blood to paint sigils sacred to Tsathoggua over the bodies of the dead. They wail and sing while doing so, although to human ears this sounds like a discordant cacophony. The rest of the voormis lurk about in small groups.

One of the serpent person overseers, left for dead by the Inner Night, has been captured by the feral voormis and is being held in a makeshift oubliette. Given the suffering it has caused the voormis, they take turns to pelt it with rocks while jeering. The voormis know about the reach of the overseer's tongue and so keep back from the edge of the oubliette. Should any heroes get too close, the overseer attempts to grab one of them with its tongue and drag them down into the deep darkness of its prison. The overseer has been down there for days and it is very hungry.

Depending on how the heroes have approached the warrens, the voormis present either gather to examine the new arrivals, prodding, poking, and sniffing. If threatened,

they attack ferociously and try to drive the intruders into the abyss (see following); otherwise, the heroes are left unharmed once the initial curiosity of the voormis is satisfied. The heroes may pass through or remain here to observe the creatures as long as they do not instigate violence.

Rites and Beliefs

The feral voormis have incorporated the Sleeper and the abyss (see following) into their belief systems. The Sleeper is a harbinger of Tsathoggua, and its inevitable awakening will bring about a new era of darkness. Tsathoggua will then walk the earth and his followers will reign triumphant. To sustain the Sleeper, the voormis feed their dead into the abyss in the belief that they will become part of the Sleeper and speed his awakening.

In charge of their religious affairs is a voormi shaman, marked by bones braided into her shaggy hair. If the heroes have managed to form a bond with the voormis and express an interest in the carvings in the great hall, she attempts to communicate the imminent awakening of the Sleeper through a series of howling songs and ritualized movements. A successful **Cthulhu Mythos**, **Hard Anthropology**, or **Extreme INT** roll decodes the shaman's movements and sounds as an indication that something huge is about to awake from underground.

Should the heroes spend time in the warrens, they witness the voormis ritualistically feeding the anointed corpses into the abyss. This ceremony is accompanied by a haunting and discordant song, which echoes throughout the tunnels. All the gathered voormis beat their heads, hands, and feet against the rocks as they howl. Shortly after, the ground begins to shake and a great gurgling noise echoes up from the abyss, along with a slow release of foul, acidic gas. Witnessing the ceremony incurs a **Sanity** roll (0/1D3).

The Tunnels

The tunnels that make up the bulk of the warrens go on for longer than any mortal would have time to explore. They split up, wind around, plunge down into pools of magma, or terminate in rock falls. It may be possible to follow some all the way across Iceland. Others descend down into the bowels of the earth, where foul monstrosities might be found—a lost and very unlucky hero may even meet Tsathoggua himself.

The areas occupied by the voormis of Snæfellsjökull make up a tiny part of this unimaginably vast labyrinth. Heroes who explore the tunnels can expect to come across nests of nursing voormi mothers, hungry children larger than a grown man, and guardians looking to protect their families. They do not take kindly to intruders, especially in light of the recent raids by the serpent people.



The full extent of these tunnels is beyond the scope of this campaign but the Keeper is encouraged to develop them as they see fit. Unsuspecting heroes might inadvertently cross into the caverns and caves of the Dreamlands.

The Abyss

The tunnels inhabited by the voormis and the serpent person research facility are separated by an abyss over 200 yards across, which drops down for unfathomable distances into lightless depths. The abyss is irregularly shaped, with a large projection of stone that forms a partial bridge across the divide, with many huge, jagged slabs protruding from the edges. A strong, moist wind moves up and down the shaft in regular gusts, accompanied by strange gurgling noises echoing up from the deep.

The abyss is actually the petrified mouth of the Sleeper, and its breath can be felt coming up from the depths. The slow, irregular heartbeats send vibrations throughout the tunnels, which could be mistaken for volcanic activity. Two holes in an alcove in the roof lead to the nasal passages, which eventually rise to small caves higher up on the mountain.

The voormis keep a couple of guards at the edge of the abyss at all times in case of another incursion by the serpent people. The remains of one of the floating spheres can be seen shattered on the other side of the abyss. The far side also holds the entrance of a passageway that is far too regular to be natural, out of which spills what appears to be artificial light. Screams and the sounds of strange machines can occasionally be heard echoing across from the regularly shaped passage.

Crossing the Abyss

When the serpent people cross the abyss on raids, they do so using halved transport spheres as flying platforms, hovering safely across the deadly drop. Covering fire from flame pistols (see **Appendix B**, page 251) drives the voormis back while they cross; otherwise, the barrage of sharp volcanic rocks thrown by monstrosly strong arms of the voormis would prove deadly.

As the heroes (probably) do not have access to such vessels, they may need to find another way across. A **Jump** roll would allow a hero to use the huge, petrified teeth and other protrusions as a series of stepping stones, leaping across the gaps between them. A **Climb** roll allows a hero to inch his or her way across the uneven surface of the ossified mucous membrane that makes up the walls of the abyss. The Keeper should encourage the players to find creative solutions to this problem and assign appropriate skill or attribute rolls.

PLAYTEST NOTES

Crossing the abyss turned into a major action scene for one playtest group after they made significant amounts of noise and attracted the attention of the serpent people guarding the far side. The voormis on the other side were also drawn by the noise and started throwing stones, leaving the heroes caught in the crossfire.

One hero leapt from the outcrop of a broken tooth and onto a serpent person, knocking it off its transport sphere and screaming down into the abyss. The hero took damage in the process and was knocked unconscious, the out-of-control sphere taking him straight toward a mob of angry voormis.

Another hero had to save him by making a similar leap, only just grabbing hold of the rim of the drifting sphere. She had to exert her will over the sphere's guidance mechanism while dangling over the abyss by her fingertips and trying to avoid being pelted with sharp rocks. This involved expending most of her remaining Luck.

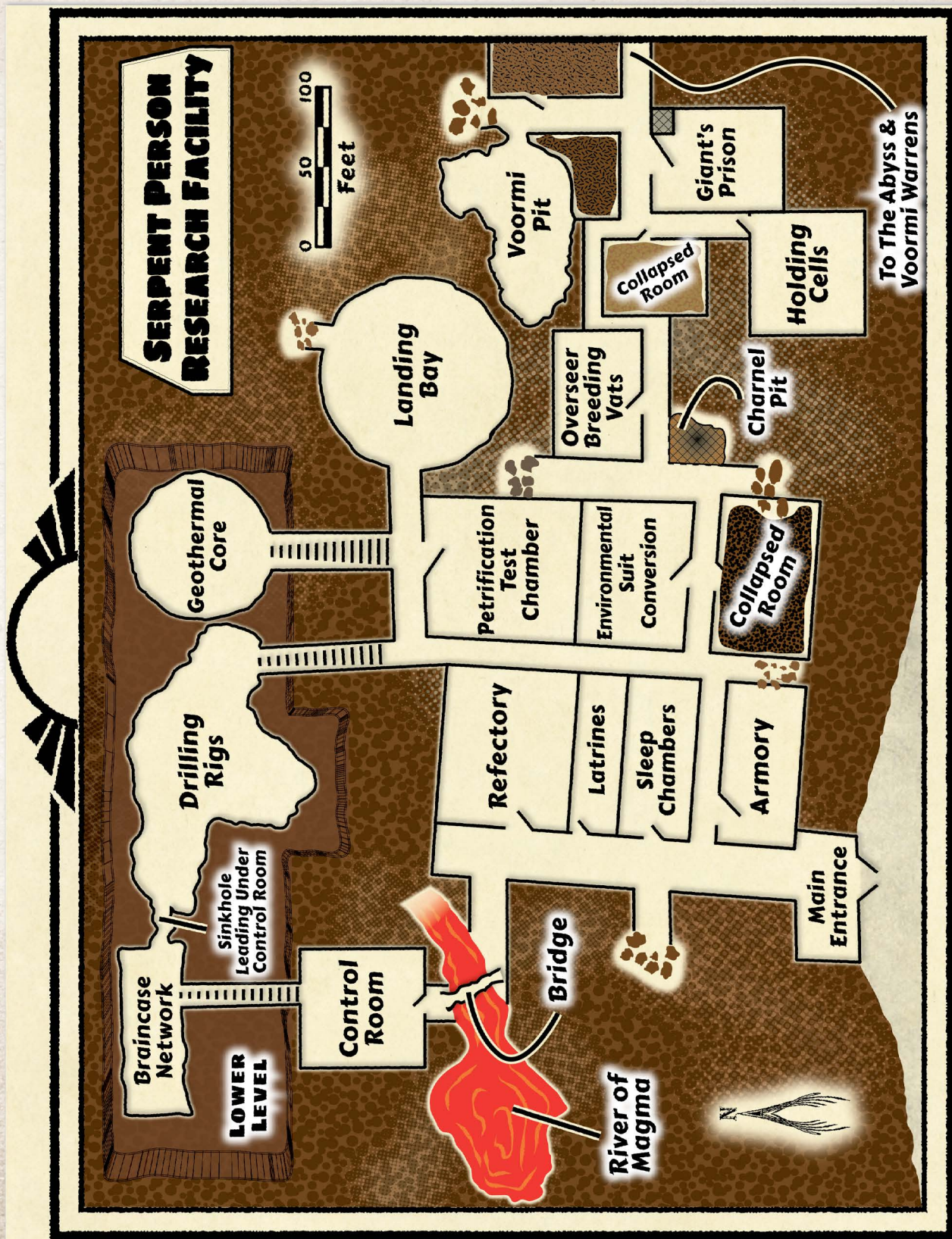
In the end, everyone survived, but it was one of the closest calls with death in the entire campaign.

Regardless of the solution, the first hero to cross should make a combined **Luck** and **Stealth** roll; if failed, two serpent people have heard strange noises and decide to investigate, arriving at the edge of their tunnel just as the hero finishes crossing. The serpent people will be armed with flame pistols, and mounted on the half-shells of two transport spheres. These shells allow them to float safely within the abyss but an appropriate combat maneuver by a hero could send one of the serpent people falling to its doom. The serpent people are wearing environmental suits (see **Appendix B**, page 251) for protection, giving them the appearance of giant, gurgling babies.

THE RESEARCH FACILITY

The facility would be a dangerous place even without the opposition of the Inner Night, and there are many unpleasant surprises waiting below Snæfellsjökull.

While members of the Inner Night have partially reactivated the facility, much of it is still abandoned due



to damage sustained from the attempted self-destruction of millennia past. Some extant portions also remain unoccupied, largely because they contain nothing of use to the current Inner Night mission.

Because of their limited numbers and even more limited scientific expertise, the Inner Night does not have total control of the base. They have coerced some of the voormis to obey their old masters, as well as creating a small number of overseers to control these slaves, but they are still frightened of reprisals from the feral voormis. Worse, they do not understand much of the technology they are using and, consequently, their biological creations are barely under control. On top of this, the geothermal core that powers the facility is unstable and none of the serpent people know enough to do any more than hope it will not destroy them all.

The occupied areas of the facility are lit by lights recessed in the walls and ceilings, which use a combination of bioluminescence and electric light to produce a sickly yellow or green glow. The rest of the facility remains in utter darkness.

Ways into the Facility

There are three ways that the heroes can enter the facility. If they have found their way into the voormi warrens, the most likely approach is across the abyss. Given that this is dangerous and frightening, they may try to find another way in.

The most difficult path is through the crater of the volcano. The climb to the top, while less than a mile, is across difficult terrain and takes the best part of a day. The heroes are then faced with a chimney that goes straight down into the landing bay, where the transport spheres come and go (see **The Landing Bay**, page 141). Gaining access involves climbing down one thousand feet of vertical, glasslike stone (an Extreme **Climb** roll). It will be difficult for the heroes will find a safe way to do this but the Keeper should be prepared for ingenuity (reduce the difficulty for clever use of rope and other climbing aids). Possibly, the heroes could intercept one of the inbound transport spheres and ride it into the heart of the mountain (perhaps requiring a combined **Jump** and **Fighting (Brawl)** roll to latch on and climb inside). Alternatively, an improvised parachute drop down the chimney might lead to success.

The direct approach is through the main entrance that the serpent people use. Heroes following the tracks and drag marks from Ólafsvík end up here. This entrance is heavily guarded and fortified. While it may be possible for the heroes to fight their way in, they will probably suffer serious injury in the process.

THE MAIN ENTRANCE

The tracks and drag marks from the village of Ólafsvík lead up the steep slope of the volcano all the way up to the snow line, approximately 3,500 feet above ground. The tracks stop in front of a recessed section of the slope, which rises vertically, like a small cliff face.

A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals two things: even, machine-cut lines in the rock face in the shape of a large door and, next to it, a glassy section of the rock with a number of regularly spaced holes in it—this is a sensor that detects the presence of serpent person pheromones; if any are detected, a section of the cliff face ten yards square slides into the ground, revealing a polished stone passageway heading into the mountain.

Note that any heroes who have undergone the hybridization process earlier in the campaign will emit enough suitable pheromones to activate the sensor. Alternatively, a successful **Demolitions** roll, with suitable explosives, or some creative use of the weird science pulp talent should open the door for the heroes, probably attracting a lot of attention in the process.

If the heroes spend a long time outside near the sensor (time length at the Keeper's discretion), an alarm sounds due to the persistent presence of human pheromones. A squad of six serpent people (armed with flame pistols and accompanied by an overseer) is sent to investigate the human presence. The squad comes out of a hidden passage that opens thirty yards above the main entrance and attempts to ambush the heroes. Having dealt with the serpent folk, the heroes might try an **Intimidate** roll on any incapacitated or captured survivors to get them to open the main door and allow the heroes inside.

There are a great many rooms and caverns in the area of the facility used for experimentation and production of biological organisms. Most are inactive, filled with devices that the Inner Night has not managed to activate or begun to comprehend yet. A few areas are abuzz with activity.

The Armory


Entry to this stone chamber is barred by a thick quartz door (100 hit points, 10 points of armor). The door opens if the hand of a serpent person is pressed into a hand-shaped, recessed portion of the wall just to the left; the hand does not need to be attached to a living body.

There are racks containing hundreds of flame pistols inside, as well as a dozen environmental suits hanging from feeding tubes on the wall (see **Appendix B**, page 251).



PLAYTEST NOTES

During a bout of madness, one hybridized hero decided to replace her clothing with one of the environmental suits, saying that she needed to protect herself against the Icelandic cold. This did more to disturb the other heroes than anything they encountered in the facility.



Sleep Chambers and Refectory

There is little time for recreation in the facility, so the only parts of the serpent person living quarters that have been activated are the sleep chambers and the refectory.

This suite of rooms provides potential sleeping quarters for hundreds of serpent people. Instead of beds, there are pressurized capsules, arranged in rows, standing vertically, with thick metal pipes linking them to power systems in the roof. Currently, a crew of forty serpent people is present in the facility, and it's rare for more than twelve to be asleep at any time, so the vast majority of the capsules are vacant. They are still sealed and powered, glass covered with condensation, giving the illusion of far greater numbers.

Dining is rarely a social activity amongst the serpent people, and most of the machines that once produced palatable foodstuffs have not survived the years, so the refectory serves primarily as storage for cages of rodents. Whenever anyone moves through the area, a chorus of chittering erupts while the cages rattle as the hundreds of guinea pigs, capybaras, chinchillas, and rabbits panic.

Petrification Test Chambers

This cavern, at first, looks like a gallery filled with statues. The Inner Night has been trying to vary the formula of the petrification agent to make it more powerful and quicker to act, and the ossified remains of dozens of voormis and humans litter the floor, some shattered into many pieces.

Not all those who have been petrified are dead, and some still have enough life to whimper or beg for release. A few have had limbs broken off or their hardened flesh cracked, allowing a thick, reddish-grey blood to ooze out of their wounds. Seeing the horrors within the cavern provokes a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6).

Environmental Suit Conversion

In the time that they have been present, members of the Inner Night have learned enough about the equipment in this room to create new environmental suits. In order to

provide the raw material needed, the voormis have been sent to kidnap human subjects.

Living captives are placed into large tubes of thick glass, filled with clear oxygenated fluid. The machinery inside the tubes systematically guts the captives, removes their skeletons, inserts biomechanical devices to replace their organs, and then pumps their skins full of mutagens and fats. The victims are alive throughout this entire process.

The heroes can see the transformation occurring in two stages of progress in different tubes when they enter. One victim is too far gone to save but the other could be rescued before evisceration—if the heroes can fight off two armed serpent people that guard the tubes in here. Once the guards have been dealt with, the heroes must break into the tube holding the villager (40 hit points, 5 points of armor) within three rounds or watch helplessly as the unfortunate is gutted before their eyes, provoking a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss).

The Landing Bay

From here, the transport spheres (see **Appendix B**, page 253) come and go, allowing supplies sent from other Inner Night bases to be received. The landing bay is connected to the top of the volcano by a long, smooth chimney that stretches up for a thousand feet. A passenger in a transport sphere can attune to a sphere with a successful **POW** roll, enabling him or her to exert conscious control over the sphere's movement.

The center of the bay is a flat area of volcanic rock, large enough to hold hundreds of spheres, although there are only seven currently present. The control panels that track and program the transport spheres are set into the walls; working out how to use the controls requires an **Operate Heavy Machinery** roll. Successful use of the control panels allows the heroes to program a course for one or more of the spheres without needing to personally attune them, as well as filling the spheres with oxygenated fluid (see following).

The spheres are large enough to contain a human being, or two people with a combined **SIZ** of 120 or less. Unless the sphere is filled with oxygenated fluid (of which there are a number of vats in the bay), anyone riding inside one suffers 2D10 damage from being violently thrown around as the sphere changes speed and direction. More dangerously, the sphere is airtight and, unless filled with the oxygen-rich fluid, contains only enough air for a person to breathe for 30 minutes (after this time, the passenger begins to asphyxiate—so, a quick exit is advised).

Filling a sphere with oxygenated fluid should be performed after the passenger or cargo has been secured inside. Unless the heroes passed the Hard **Operate Heavy Machinery** roll to use the control panel, this is a manual



PLAYTEST NOTES

The transport spheres proved an important element in our playtests. The players enjoyed taking them apart, mastering their use, and working out ways to adapt them. One particular group of heroes used their knowledge of weird science to reverse engineer the spheres into vehicles for their personal use, and another simply controlled them and used them to carry equipment around.

The process of learning how to use the spheres proved very dangerous, however. Only one of the three groups worked out how to fill the spheres with oxygenated fluid before trying to pilot them, leading to some near-fatal accidents. A number of heroes only survived this by spending all their Luck to escape death.

process, much like pumping fuel into a car, and must be performed from outside the sphere. It takes two minutes to fill a sphere with fluid. It is unlikely that the heroes will figure out the need to fill the spheres with the oxygenated fluid unless they have already seen one in action or witness the serpent people operating the controls here in the Landing Bay.

Overseer Breeding Vats

This hangar-sized cavern is where the overseers are created. There are huge stone vats set into the floor, where the bodies of fully-grown overseers (see page 130) are assembling themselves, with protoplasm attaching to artificial skeletons, which then forms more differentiated tissue. The near-complete forms thrash around in pain as their nervous systems awake.

A huge metal lattice hangs from the ceiling, holding mechanical arms and other strange devices. The devices move around the lattice, seemingly of their own accord, periodically reaching down into the vats to inject nutrients or perform minor acts of surgery. Heroes walking amongst the moving mechanical arms risk being mistaken for an embryo and injected with growth serum. The arms attack with a skill level of 60% and inflict 1D4 damage if a successful hit is scored. A hero injected in this way gains 4D10 SIZ points and 2D10 STR points over the following 24 hours, but they also lose 2D10 points of INT and 4D10 of APP, and must attempt a **Sanity** roll (1/1D8 loss) as their body mutates agonizingly. Any skill or characteristic

rolls made by the hero during his or her transformation receive a penalty die. At the end of the transformation, the hero has brutish, misshapen features and bulging limbs that are out of proportion with the rest of their body, with squat legs and arms long enough to reach their knees. A kindly Keeper might allow an Extreme **CON** roll to halve the effects of the injected growth serum.

Three of the embryonic overseers are close enough to completion to pose a threat. If a hero examines any of the vats, call for a **Luck** roll: if failed, they are looking at a vat containing one of these waking monsters, which tries to grab the hero with its tongue and drag him or her down into the vat. Such a calamity presents a grave risk of drowning should the hero be incapacitated in the process. Harsh Keepers might forego the Luck roll and simply have a near-fully formed overseer reach out to grab a passing hero.

Seeing this place of barbaric creation provokes a **Sanity** roll (0/1D4 loss) in addition to any **Sanity** rolls for seeing the overseers themselves (1/1D8 loss).

Charnel Pit

The Inner Night discovered a great, deep pit that their predecessors had used for disposing of unwanted or failed experimental subjects and other organic matter. The pit originally held a captive shoggoth, which would devour anything thrown to it, but it is long gone. The current residents are three mutated voormis that have been lobotomized and are no more than living garbage disposals.

Two mutated voormis are stationed by the pit, next to a trolley covered with mutilated human corpses. They toss the bodies into the pit one at a time. Each wet thud is greeted by bestial cries and the sounds of rending flesh and breaking bone. The stench coming from the pit is indescribable. Those looking into the pit should make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss).

Holding Cells

Some of the humans harvested from Ólafsvík village are still alive, including Gunnhildur's brother Óli. Seventy people are currently in the cells, awaiting horrible fates. The cells in question are translucent tanks, each a 10-foot cube and holding up to eight naked and frightened people. The walls of each cube are made from thick slabs of quartz (50 hit points and 10 points of armor). Each cube has a series of indentations on one of its surfaces and cables run from beneath these into the floor—a successful **INT** roll determines the indentations and cables must control access to the cells. Damaging the walls of the cells sets off an alarm throughout the complex, and six serpent people armed with flame pistols and wearing environmental suits come to contain any breach within 1D6+4 rounds. A successful **Electrical Repair** roll allows a hero to sabotage



the wiring in the cables enough to open the cells without setting off any alarms.

The Giant's Prison

The serpent people have captured one of the giant voormis (see page 130) and have it chained up in a pit in this large cavern. They have been experimenting to see if they can tame its will but, so far, all they have to show for it is two dead scientists, the corpses of whom are smashed against the walls of the pit like crushed flies.

Should the giant be set free (20 hit point chains), it attempts to rampage throughout the complex. It is too large to fit through most of the tunnels, so it will leave a series of tunnel collapses behind it, some of which will spew live steam or even trickles of magma.

The Voormi Pit

Those voormis that have been taken as slaves are given only the bare essentials necessary for survival. What passes for their living quarters lie at the base of a pit created when the self-destruct was partially activated. The pit is somewhat flooded by melted snow and ice from the glacier above the caverns, and the dampness has caused the bioengineered fungus that sustains the voormi to grow all around. The voormis only come to the pit to eat and sleep, so there are rarely more than a dozen here at any one time.

The serpent people make no effort to remove the bodies of voormis that have died from overwork, and there are a number of rotting corpses amongst the sleeping forms. One body floats face down in the pool of water. The voormis use some of the deeper crevices as latrines, and the stench is overpowering.

River of Magma

Part of the corridor leading to the control room has collapsed and there is now a narrow bridge of stone across a flowing river of magma. The serpent people use transportation spheres as vessels to cross over the burning river.

The narrow bridge requires a successful **DEX** roll to cross safely, with those failing the roll left dangling from its edge over the magma until they can climb up with a successful **Climb** roll or be rescued. Such commotion attracts the attention of the serpent people in the **Control Room** (see following).

The stone bridge can support a combined **SIZ** of 180 safely at any one time—if the combined **SIZ** of the people crossing is greater than 180, call for a group **Luck** roll: if failed, the bridge starts to collapse and the heroes will need to act quickly to reach safety (possibly, **Jump**, **DEX**, **Climb**, or **STR** rolls to avoid the magma below, allow pushed rolls). Falling into the magma causes 2D10 points of

damage per round, destroying clothing and equipment (for items that could withstand the heat for a couple of rounds before being destroyed, call for a **Luck** roll to determine if they remain operable should the heroes manage to pull them from the magma).

The Control Room

This is the nerve center of the research complex. Six serpent people sit at consoles made of steel and volcanic rock, operating strange control mechanisms. The consoles are covered with shifting sigils (in Naacal), made of a sickly green light. Knowing how to operate the consoles allows one to open or close doors anywhere in the complex, enable or disable security alarms, shut down the various experimental and manufacturing mechanisms, and control the environmental systems to regulate temperature and airflow. The self-destruct control panel is also here but it is damaged, requiring an Extreme **Electrical Repair** roll to make it operable; otherwise, the self-destruct can be activated from the **Geothermal Core** (see following).

Learning how to use these various controls requires a combined **Language (Naacal)** and **Operate Heavy Machinery** roll. It is probably simpler for most groups to force captured serpent people to operate them.

Walkways crisscross above the consoles, linking the main entrance, various maintenance hatches and the doorways to the geothermal core and the stairway down to the braincase network. The walkways are poorly lit and those sneaking around here gain a bonus die to **Stealth** rolls.

Observant heroes may notice a woman on one of the view screens barking orders at one of the serpent people operating the consoles. This is actually Rose Meadham, who is currently at an Inner Night base in Peru (although, she plans to move on soon). If the heroes have performed any acts that would attract attention, Rose Meadham is in the process of insisting that the interlopers are dealt with ruthlessly. If the serpent person operators are aware of the heroes in the Control Room, they launch an attack.

Should the heroes use the view screen to talk to Rose Meadham, she immediately appears less hostile, using lies and flattery to convince the heroes to talk, so as to discover what she can about the heroes as well as what Caduceus is up to. Seeing an opportunity to sow seeds of dissent within Caduceus, Rose Meadham is quick to reveal to the heroes that Caduceus is also a front for serpent people seeking to take back the world. She is only too happy to share details about how Caduceus plan to use ancient serpent person technology to spread a plague around the world, destroying human minds and turning people into pliable slaves. While she is happy to elaborate upon all the details her spies have gathered, Rose is vague on the details of



POSSIBLE ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters are not mandatory. They are ideas for complications the Keeper can use to make sneaking through the complex more tense and dangerous. Their main purpose should be to keep the heroes moving and stop them from playing safe; they can also be used in the event that the heroes split up—especially if a hero runs off alone during a bout of madness.

Feral Voormis

Unless the heroes have done anything to dissuade them, a mob of feral voormis have made their way across the abyss (see **Crossing the Abyss**, page 138) and are looking for their kidnapped brethren. They are not too picky about what they attack, although their main targets will be the serpent people.

Use this encounter to complicate a situation or provide help. For example, if the heroes are being overcautious in their actions or have managed to get themselves trapped by superior forces, have a wild mob of voormis charge into the midst of things, bellowing and smashing everything in sight.

Sentient Environmental Suit

One of the environmental suits still has enough human intellect left in its vestigial brain to try to find help. It is crawling and slithering throughout the complex, lacking the skeletal structure to move any other way. It babbles in baby talk and sobs as it moves, trying to find a way out of its constant suffering; anyone who speaks Icelandic can recognize some of the words as pleas for the release of death. Encountering this ghastly sight provokes a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss).

Maddened Overseer

One of the overseers has broken free from the breeding vats prematurely and is on a violent rampage throughout the complex. It has not been programmed to identify the difference between enemies and allies yet and has already killed one of the serpent people. The other serpent people are desperately trying to put it down before it causes any more chaos.

Blackout

A mutated voormi has broken its slave collar and is trying to escape. It has used a metal pole to smash all the light sources in one section of the complex, counting on the fact that its senses give it an advantage in darkness. It is lying in wait for to take a serpent person as a hostage. Of course, it is too frightened and confused to tell the difference between a serpent person and the heroes, especially if one of the heroes has been hybridized.

getting to Mu. She hopes that Joshua Meadham will do all the hard work of creating the Gate and making it safe before the Inner Night take control of it.

If the heroes express any interest in taking revenge against Caduceus, Rose Meadham tells them that she is happy to help in any way they require. It would suit her purposes perfectly to use the heroes as double agents or saboteurs.


Nearby the view screen of Rose Meadham is a large display screen that shows a twisted humanoid form (see **Learning about the Sleeper**, following). Another large screen, next to it, shows an animation of a turning globe, depicting every volcano on Earth detonating in quick succession, with resultant earthquakes and tsunamis. The animation lasts for two minutes and loops. Anyone watching it may make an **EDU** roll to notice that there is an additional large landmass shown off the coast of South America (the continent of Mu).

Stairs lead down from the Control Room to the **Braincase Network** (page 146).



PLAYTEST NOTES

While in the facility, one hero wandered off from the rest of the party during a bout of madness. He encountered the sentient environmental suit and decided it was his new friend. The two traveled around the facility for hours, with the suit babbling away piteously. By the time his companions found him again, the hero had lost the suit and recovered his wits. He was never quite sure if he had hallucinated the whole thing.



Learning about the Sleeper

The image of the twisted humanoid figure on the large display screen is somewhat confusing. A successful INT roll deduces that the strange markings around the form indicate the volcano and the research facility, which in turn means that the figure is almost three miles in length! Various readouts show the state of pumping stations, which appear to be either extracting or injecting fluids (petrification agent) into the humanoid figure. The panel shows alerts for most of the pumps being used to inject the figure—the reserves of the petrification agent are insufficient to keep all of the injection pumps fully operational.

The imminent danger of the Sleeper's awakening is the main topic of conversation in the facility, and there should be plenty of opportunities for stealthy heroes to catch the following snippets through eavesdropping—the Inner Night use English as a common language, so the heroes can (in the main) understand what's being said:

- "The Sleeper is waking faster than projections indicated. We may only have hours until a catastrophic event."
- "We should activate the self-destruct and evacuate. We should ignore the Protocol."
- "The tremors are getting worse. Staying here is suicide. I'm commandeering the first transport sphere out!"

The Geothermal Core

This is the living heart of the volcano, underneath the main structure of the complex, where the energy to run the facility is harvested. It is also where the only working controls for the self-destruct mechanism lie. Turning on the self-destruct here overrides the "stop" that the massed brains (see **The Braincase Network**, nearby) have previously placed on self-destruct mechanism.

Setting the self-destruct's time delay requires a successful **Operate Heavy Machinery** roll: failure means that the operator is aware that self-destruct will go off in 5 minutes instead of 15.

Drilling Rigs

One part of the complex buried during the unsuccessful self-destruction thousands of years ago was the laboratory that produced the growth serum used to create overseers and monstrous voormis. Without access to the buried laboratory, the Inner Night has resorted to extracting fluids from the body of the Sleeper and distilling the serum, using drilling rigs to harvest the Sleeper's bodily fluids.

Such rigs are dotted all around the facility, especially in a large cavern accessible from the Braincase Network and also from the corridor near the Geothermal Core. The

rigs take the form of tripods, made of silvery metal, around ten feet tall, decorated with serpentine motifs along each leg. Each tripod supports a thick metal shaft that plunges down through rock and deep into the petrified flesh of the Sleeper. The attached pumps suck out thick, often rancid, liquids from the body that are then stored in thick glass drums. Several times a day, voormi slaves roll these barrels into the laboratory complex for processing.

Other, similar rigs are also scattered around the complex. Instead of pumping fluids out of the Sleeper, these inject petrification agent into its body. Unlike the extraction rigs, most of these are inactive, as reserves of the petrification agent are running low. The few rigs that are operating can be identified due to the clear barrels of the viscous, silver fluid mounted atop them; the non-working rigs are not attached to barrels.

The Braincase Network

The computer system that runs the facility is organic, made up of the brains of sentient entities preserved in cases adapted from stolen mi-go technology. Since the Inner Night reactivated the facility, fresh specimens taken from human and voormi have replaced most of the old brains in the cylinders. The original brains, where they had survived, were senescent or insane from their long isolation. There was still enough of the original information about the base's operations within the network for the information to replicate to the new brain nodes.

The cases are silver cylinders, covered in filigree and crystals that pulse with wan light. They are connected to the larger network using a complex mesh of wires, fiber optic cables, glass sheaths filled with cloned neural tissue, and transparent tubes full of glowing green liquid.

Most of the cylinders are clustered in a huge array in a cavern beneath the Control Room. There are hundreds of cylinders arranged in a braided circle, connected to a mass of bizarre equipment in the center that feeds fluids and energy into the network (providing nutrients and cleansing impurities). There is a stench of decay in the room from spilled nutrients and brains than have died. The air is filled with the sound of voices whispering as the cylinders externalize their thoughts in Icelandic, Danish, Naacal, and the animalistic grunts of the voormis.

One unforeseen consequence of using a living computer is that it has developed an instinct of self-preservation—the reason why the initial attempt to activate the self-destruct in millennia past did not succeed—the brains would only allow parts of the facility (where they had no presence) to be destroyed. The collective brains maintain this sense of self-preservation and attempts to re-engage the self-destruct

sequence from the Control Room will be prevented—the control of the brains can only be negated by starting the self-destruct in the **Geothermal Core** (page 146).

Removing a brain cylinder safely requires skills and knowledge that no human possesses. While it will be possible for a careful hero to detach a cylinder without killing the brain within (using **Electrical Repair**—plus a Hard POW roll, see following), the disruption to the network as a whole sets off a chain reaction that brings the research complex to a crashing halt. Lights start to fail, plunging large sections of the base into darkness. The containment facilities for the prisoners deactivate, allowing captured humans and feral voormis to flee, along with the various rodents from the larder. Additionally, the control collars for the voormis slaves also fail, allowing them to go on a destructive rampage.

The worst consequence of network failure is that the self-destruct sequence, initiated millennia ago, now resumes without the self-preservation instinct of the networked brains to stop it. The explosive device in the core of the volcano detonates within minutes of the network failure, causing the volcano to start erupting. Any living entities within the facility or voormis warrens must flee or face death.

As noted, a hero attempting to detach a braincase should also attempt a Hard POW roll to avoid psychic backlash: failure means that the hero is briefly connected to the braincase network and his or her head is filled with alien thoughts, knowledge, and voices. The hero immediately gains 1D20 skill points of Cthulhu Mythos and Other Language (Naacal) as a consequence, but loses the same number of Sanity points. If the hero goes insane as a result of this sudden knowledge, the personality of one of the brains in the network takes over the hero during the resulting bout of madness. Roll 1D4 on the table below to see which consciousness takes over for this duration. The player of the hero should roleplay this personality until the hero recovers his or her wits:

1. A young voormi, whose name sounds like a muffled series of yips to human ears. She is confused about what has been done to her and driven to destroy every inanimate object she encounters out of fear and anger. She can speak only in grunts and howls, and finds the presence of humans unsettling and frightening.
2. An ancient serpent person sorcerer named Shaalaassa. He longs for eldritch knowledge and power, pursuing spells, artifacts, and tomes no matter the risk involved. Shaalaassa treats any humans he encounters as slaves and expects them to follow his orders unquestioningly. He speaks only Naacal.

3. A panicked fisherman named Lúkas Jóhannson, who is one of the recently snatched residents of Ólafsvík. He wants to go home and look for his wife, Pétína, unaware that she too has been kidnapped. Pétína is one of the prisoners awaiting conversion into an environmental suit. Lúkas speaks Icelandic and some Danish, but no English. He will try to enlist the help of any people around him to find his wife.
4. A mi-go engineer whose name sounds like the sound made by a defective neon light. It never intended to end up in one of these cylinders, and was used as an experimental subject by the serpent people to see if mi-go brains would mesh with the network. The mi-go understands exactly what has been done to it and will use any technology it can lay hands on to try to gain permanent control of its new (and distastefully alien) physical form. It sees the humans around it as useful tools to be manipulated.

Every time the hero suffers a bout of madness from now on, the Keeper should simply roll to see which one of the four foreign personalities takes over for the duration; temporary loss of control is also a suitable consequence for failure on a Pushed Cthulhu Mythos roll. Given that more than one hero may attempt to work on the braincase network and suffer the consequences, this may lead to the situation where duplicate copies of the same personality are in control of more than one hero at the same time.



PLAYTEST NOTES

One hero's brief integration with the braincase network became a major element in one of the playtests. The hero in question lost 20 points of Sanity from exposure to the minds within the network and became indefinitely insane. From that point onward, alien minds took her over every time she had a bout of madness, which happened frequently. She made an effort to make contact with the other personalities inside her head and integrated them somewhat, calling on their knowledge in dire situations. Of course, every time she did this, she risked one of them attempting to pursue its own agenda. Her fellow heroes were never quite sure who she was or whether her (sometimes unfathomable) schemes could be trusted, which added greatly to the sense of paranoia.



Use these personalities as the occupants of any braincase cylinders the heroes liberate from the facility, either rolling randomly or choosing any that appeal. Each brain can use the apparatus of its cylinder to speak in a grating, metallic voice, as per a standard mi-go cylinder (but without the need for the additional speaking and hearing devices common for mi-go braincases), and will be confused or angry if it ends up in conversation with itself.

THE SLEEPER STIRS

The Sleeper has been on the cusp of waking for weeks, and the heroes have arrived just as it is beginning to stir. While the Sleeper is too large, entrenched, and petrified to do more than change position, its enormous size means that this is still catastrophic. Not only will the shift bring about the destruction of the facility but it also causes a series of earthquakes that demolish buildings as far away as Reykjavik and assail the shores of northern Europe with a small tsunami. Anyone who does not escape in time will be buried alive (see **Escaping Certain Death**, page 149). Following this, the sleeper will be restless, and every few years it may move again in its slumber, causing further disruption, but this is beyond the scope of the campaign.

When, or even whether, the Sleeper stirs is up to the Keeper. It is a ticking time bomb to stop the heroes having unlimited time to take control of the facility; they should feel under pressure from the growing frequency and intensity of the tremors, which are obviously building towards something catastrophic. If the Keeper prefers a fixed timescale, the Sleeper stirs eight hours after the heroes enter the facility; otherwise, it happens at a time that is dramatically appropriate, such as when the heroes have taken over the Control Room or if they are facing certain death at the hands of the serpent people.

In game terms, treat this as the same kind of catastrophe as the activation of the self-destruct and follow the instructions in the section titled **Fleeing the Catastrophe** (nearby).

ACTIVATING THE SELF-DESTRUCT MECHANISM

Should the heroes uncover the existence of the self-destruct procedure and decide to activate it, this leads to the same self-destruction sequence as previously mentioned. The difference is that the sequence takes place in a more controlled manner, with an additional 15 minutes of warning, allowing the heroes more time to escape. The practical result of this is that the heroes receive a bonus die

on any rolls made while trying to escape (see the following section, **Fleeing the Catastrophe**).

If initiated, the self-destruct mechanism activates klaxons across the facility and a booming audible countdown in Naacal. For this duration, the bioluminescent lights throughout the complex flash red every few seconds.

FLEEING THE CATASTROPHE

There are three likely escape routes from the facility. The first two involve fleeing for exits and are presented as a series of challenges, similar to a chase scene. The other involves using the transport spheres to escape out the chimney of the exploding volcano.

In each case, the heroes should receive a bonus die on each roll if they successfully and intentionally activated the self-destruct, to represent the lessened time pressure.

Escaping via the Main Entrance

The route the heroes take depends on where they are in the complex. Unless the heroes are very close to the exit when the catastrophe begins, the Keeper should present them with the following encounters as challenges to overcome before they can escape. Should a hero fail the final encounter, he or she will be buried when the facility collapses (see **Escaping Certain Death**, see page 149).

While specific skill rolls to overcome obstacles are suggested, the Keeper should welcome creative solutions from the players and substitute alternative skill or attribute rolls as appropriate.

If the heroes are trying to herd rescued villagers to the exit, apply a penalty die to any roll that will be complicated by the panicked locals (e.g. trying to convince people to jump over streaming magma or tying dozens of people together by rope to get them across the abyss).

As well as presenting a risk of taking damage, a failure on a roll in these encounters earns a penalty die to the hero's next roll; this represents the increasing difficulty of making it to the exit in time to escape after a setback. These penalties are cumulative, so a hero who has failed the first two challenges will receive two penalty dice to rolls on his or her final challenge.

1. **Rampaging Voormis:** a mob of mutated voormis, now free of their slave collars, is tearing a couple of hapless serpent people limb from limb. In the poor lighting conditions caused by the catastrophe, the heroes are close enough in appearance to serpent people to become the next targets. The heroes may attempt to **Intimidate** the voormis into scattering, use **Stealth** to sneak past them, or even **CON** to sprint out of reach.

Stopping and fighting the voormis takes so long that the heroes will almost certainly be buried. Should the heroes initiate combat, prompt them to consider leaving with a massive set of tremors. If they are still fighting after five combat rounds, the ceiling begins to collapse above them.

2. **River of lava:** the wall of the tunnel ahead explodes in a shower of rock fragments, and magma pours through. A successful **Jump** roll takes a hero across, or **Climb** may allow him or her to grab hold of protruding rocks on the other side of the tunnel and clamber over. Any failure results in 2D10 damage from burns.
3. **Rocks fall:** as the heroes are within sight of the exit, the roof of the tunnel collapses. A successful **Dodge** roll allows a hero to avoid falling rocks, or a Hard **CON** roll allows him or her to sprint past the danger. Failure results in 1D10 damage.

Escaping via the Voormi Warrens

Use the same encounters as for **Escaping via the Main Entrance**, above, except for one substitution: replace “2. River of lava” with:

2. **Crossing the abyss:** the journey back across the abyss is complication by the Sleeper moving about. The walls of the cavern around the abyss crack and crumble, with rocks falling all around. Hot, moist air pushes up fast, bringing globules of foul liquid with it. Most disturbingly of all, there is an almost subsonic but deafening rumble as the Sleeper moans in pain. Either a **Jump** or **Climb** roll is required to cross back over the abyss (see **Crossing the Abyss**, page 138).

Escaping via Transport Spheres

If the heroes return to the Landing Bay, they find two serpent people desperately trying to escape. The pair is wedged into a sphere that is almost ready for takeoff, with the automated system pumping oxygenated fluid into the sphere from a hose. The sphere starts to lift as the heroes approach—and flies safely up the chimney unless the heroes stop it.

There are sufficient spheres in the bay for the heroes to use, assuming they can work out how. If the heroes get this catastrophically wrong, the most likely outcome is that they end up being bashed around in a transport sphere that has not been filled with oxygenated fluid. Additionally, this means that there is almost certainly too little air for the length of the journey. If this happens, refer to the section, **Escaping Certain Death**, see nearby.

CONCLUSION

Unless the heroes manage to find some miraculous way of stopping both the self-destruct and the waking of the Sleeper, their visit to Iceland ends in volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis. The shores of Northern Europe and Canada will be especially badly affected, with small communities washed away and tens of thousands of people missing or dead.

The seismic upheaval on the Snæfellsnes Peninsula has disastrous consequences for Reykjavik, with earthquakes demolishing large parts of the city, volcanic ash dropping from the sky, and black skies for the next few months. The death toll here is in the thousands.

The Keeper should throw in the occasional reminder of these disasters, not only as the consequences of what happened under the volcano but as foreshadowing for what lies in wait if the heroes fail to stop the Inner Night’s grand plan.

Escaping Certain Death

If any of the heroes fail to get free of the facility before catastrophe strikes, they will be buried in the rubble of collapsing tunnels. Normally this would prove fatal, but remember that *Pulp Cthulhu* heroes can spend all their remaining Luck to avoid certain death, as long as they have at least 30 points (see *Pulp Cthulhu*, page 61). Should this happen, cut forward a day or so to the point where they either dig themselves free of the rubble, gasping clean

PLAYTEST NOTES

During the climax of this chapter the heroes saw the Sleeper awakening. One hero lost a lot of sanity points, and the Keeper chose to apply the summary option for the bout of madness (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 158). At the start of the following session, the player found his hero in a hotel room on a tropical island, talking to one of the silver braincase cylinders that he had brought with him from the Icelandic base. The hero had no memory of the weeks that had passed, or how he came to be there. As he boarded a ship bound for New York, still suffering from the long-term effects of underlying insanity, the Keeper presented him with a delusion, describing agents of the Inner Night pursuing him in a bid to recover the cylinder.

air as they break free onto the wreckage-strewn slope of the volcano. Alternatively, maybe a rescue team from the Caduceus base on the peninsula digs them out.

Alternatively, a hero may be trapped in an uncontrollable transport sphere, with insufficient oxygen. A suitable Luck spend could result in the sphere crash-landing safely near Reykjavik, or being picked up at sea by a fishing vessel, its human cargo still clinging on to life.

And, if any of the heroes fail to escape and don't have 30 points of Luck to spend? Well, sometimes even heroes die...

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- Freeing the imprisoned villagers and getting them to safety +1D8 Sanity points.
- Finding the villagers but leaving them to die -1D8 Sanity points
- Deliberately destroying the facility +1D4 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Gunnhildur Jensdóttir, 54, earthy local guide

STR 65 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 65 INT 65
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 60 SAN 50 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 55% (27/11), damage 1D3 + 1D4
.30-06 rifle 50% (25/10), damage 2D6+4
Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills

Climb 70%, First Aid 50%, Jump 50%, Listen 50%, Natural Word 65%, Navigate 60%, Occult 30%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 30%, Survival (Tundra) 65%, Swim 55%, Throw 45%, Track 45%.

Languages: Icelandic 70%, English 35%, Danish 50%.

Giant Voormis, nightmare of legend

char.	average	roll
STR	250	(4D6+36) ×5
CON	300	(6D6+39) ×5
SIZ	300	(6D6+39) ×5
DEX	40	(2D6+1) ×5
INT	10	(1D3) ×5
POW	50	(3D6) ×5

Av. Hit points: 60*

Build: 7

Av. Damage Bonus: +6D6

Move: 12

Av. Magic Points: 10

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (crush, smash, throw, grab)

Fighting	70% (35/14), damage 6D6
Throw boulder	40% (20/8), damage 1D6 + 3D6
Grab (mnvr)	70% (35/14), opposed STR roll to escape; crush on next round, damage 6D6

**If a giant voormi suffers more than half its hit points in damage, it will run for shelter in its lair or a nearby cave.*

Skills

Listen 30%, Scent 75%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track 25%.

Armor: 18-point stony skin.

Spells: none.

Sanity loss: 1/1D8 to see a giant Voormi.

Mutated Voormis, source of troll legends

char.	average	roll
STR	150	(4D6+16) ×5
CON	100	(4D6+6) ×5
SIZ	140	(4D6+14) ×5
DEX	60	(3D6+1) ×5
INT	50	(3D6) ×5
POW	50	(3D6) ×5

ICELAND

Av. Hit points: 24
Build: 4
Av. Damage Bonus: +3D6
Move: 7
Av. Magic Points: 10

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claw, bite)

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D6 + 3D6
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Listen 30%, Scent 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track 75%,
Stealth 30%, Throw 25%

Armor: 4-point thick hide and fur.

Spells: the ways of magic are lost to the voormis of Snæfellsjökull and they know no spells.

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 to see a mutated voormi.

Overseer, mutated serpent person brute

STR 180 CON 100 SIZ 160 DEX 40 INT 20
APP — POW 40 EDU — SAN — HP 26
DB: +3D6 Build: 4 Move: 6 MP: 8 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (claws, tail bash, crush, tongue lash)

Tongue lash: overseers have long, chameleon-like tongues that, once per round, can lash out over distances of up to 10 yards. A seized target must attempt a Hard CON roll to avoid losing all muscular control when exposed to the poison that coats the overseer's tongue. The poison causes searing pain (not physical damage) that immobilizes (stuns) the target for 2D4 rounds. Immobilized or not, the target is pulled towards the overseer, who then crushes the target on the following round (see following). If the poison is resisted, the target may attempt an opposed STR roll to break free the tongue's hold.

Crushing grip: after making a successful tongue lash or grab maneuver (with either its claws or tail), the overseer may use one of its monstrosly oversized claws to crush, inflicting 4D6 damage per round until the victim breaks free (opposed STR* roll) or dies, or until the overseer is disabled. The overseer can still attack with its tongue, tail, or other claw while crushing an enemy, or may choose to crush an enemy in each hand at the same time.

**Heroes might use their DEX opposed by the overseer's STR to wriggle, rather than break, free.*

Fighting	40% (20/8), damage 1D4 + 3D6
Grab (mnvr)	40% (20/8), held, opposed STR roll to break free
Tongue lash	60% (30/12), immobilizing poison + held
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Jump 55%, Listen 25%, Scent 75%, Spot Hidden 50%,
Track 70%, Stealth 35%.

Armor: 4-point scaly hide.

Spells: none

Sanity loss: 1/1D8 to see a serpent person overseer.

The Sleeper, ancient petrified horror

STR 2500 CON 900 SIZ 3500 DEX 10 INT 10
APP — POW 50 EDU — SAN — HP 440
DB: +73D6 Build: 74 Move: 0 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: n/a

Armor: the Sleeper cannot be hurt by any conventional attack due to its immense size.

Spells: none.

Sanity loss: 1D6/1D20 to see the Sleeper wake.



CHAPTER

6

BELGIAN
CONGO*The horror! The horror!*—Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*INTO THE HEART
OF DARKNESS

OVERVIEW

This chapter could, in theory, take place at any point in the campaign prior to **Chapter 9: Mu**—most likely to occur once the heroes begin to dig into Caduceus's secrets while in New York. The events presented begin when the heroes decide to explore the basement of the Meadham building and discover a brightly lit white corridor. The corridor is not on any plans or blueprints for the building, although its location and direction would suggest it is a passage connecting the Meadham building to a warehouse on the opposite side of the street. In truth, it is not a passageway at all but is a Gate leading to a Caduceus laboratory in the Belgian Congo (the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1997), where serpent person scientists are working to develop biotechnology intended to turn humanity into a slave race.

This chapter is designed to present a location the heroes can interact with rather than having a central plot. Through the series of locales, people, and events presented here, the heroes discover just how terrible Caduceus is—if they haven't already begun to suspect the dark truth behind the organization.

The theme of paranoia that pervades this chapter, with the heroes being subjected to mind games to learn what they have discovered about the Cult of Yig's plans, is designed to be reminiscent of classic television series like

"The Prisoner." Once the deception is uncovered, more typical pulp tropes, such as dinosaurs in the jungle, come to the fore.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

Regardless of what faction the heroes have aligned themselves with, and whatever reason has brought the heroes to the basement of the Meadham building, this chapter begins with the decision to enter the brightly lit corridor that isn't on any blueprint.

The Gate looks like a closed metal door at the end of the 100 feet long corridor. Pillars line the corridor every five feet—these are featureless until 30 feet inside, when a successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals the surface of the pillars ahead are covered with small pinhole openings (these are pheromone and heat sensors and, by this point, the heroes are close enough to be detected by them).

If any non-serpent person pheromones are detected, defenses are activated. Blast doors at the corridor's entrance automatically seal before the heroes can escape. The lights go out, plunging the heroes into darkness while a potent nerve agent fills the corridor. Gas masks provide little protection, as exposure with bare skin is all that is needed for the nerve agent to take effect. As far as the heroes are concerned, they are moving around in complete darkness for a few moments. In reality, they fall unconscious and are transported through the Gate to the laboratory in the Belgian Congo. Mechanically, they lose 3 magic points in the process but recover these before waking. The heroes' unconscious forms are relieved of any

weapons, equipment, and possessions, which are placed in the laboratory's armory.

For some groups, the decision to enter the basement of the Meadham Building may take place towards the close of a session, allowing the Keeper to end things on a cliffhanger, with the heroes entering the corridor only to find themselves suddenly in darkness.

The scenario's setup and structure changes if all of the heroes are undergoing the hybridization process (see **Appendix C**). In this case, the heroes avoid setting off sensors in the corridor and are able to reach the metal doors, which when opened activate the Gate, allowing them through. With the metal doors open, the Gate simply looks like an intensely bright white light. The trip to the Congo costs 3 magic points and 1 Sanity point. In this instance, the chapter will run quite differently, with the heroes exploring the laboratory from the very start (rather than as the climax). The serpent people inside the laboratory will not be expecting these sudden arrivals and, if the heroes are spotted, will investigate with the intent to capture and interrogate the interlopers. If captured, the Keeper will have to modify the scenario accordingly. Heroes who escape the laboratory might make their way to Ulunga, perhaps coming upon some local people who are headed in that direction, and allowing the heroes to come into contact with the hospital staff.

ALTERNATIVE ENTRY POINTS: SPLITTING THE PARTY

It is possible that not all of the heroes go down the corridor at the same time. Some heroes may be in a different location entirely while other groups may play things cautiously, sending scouts ahead. If only some of the heroes are taken captive at this stage, the Keeper should use their imagination to engineer how the other heroes could be brought to the corridor. Some options include:

- If some of the heroes waited outside the corridor while others went inside, they would see the blast doors shut at their end. When the doors open a few moments later, the heroes can see the empty corridor and what looks like an open doorway at the far end. This should hopefully entice them inside, making them think their friends have gone through. Then, when they enter the corridor, they fall foul of the same trap and fall unconscious.
- If some of the heroes are in a completely different location (perhaps elsewhere in the Meadham Building or hiding out at their lodgings), they are paid a visit by Canning (or some other suitably powerful Caduceus minion) who, sneakily, opens a canister of the nerve agent. The last thing the heroes remember before everything goes black is the minion smiling ominously. They then awaken with the others in the Congo.

Lastly, you could run the game across two locations, with some of the heroes in the Congo and others in New York City. Advice on running a game in this fashion is offered in the *Investigator Handbook* (see **Multiple Investigators**, page 212, Chapter 9) and the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* (see **Pick-Up Non-Player Characters**, page 191, Chapter 10). In this situation, the players without their main characters in the Congo might play some of the local villagers seeking answers or perhaps Professor Carole Roux and Manville Garreau.

Security Threats

The fact that the heroes have made it this far means they pose a potential threat to the Cult of Yig. The serpent people wish to know what the heroes know about their plans and operation, and whom they might have told this information to. Caduceus's ultimate concern is that the heroes could be working for the Inner Night. The serpent folk aim to subtly interrogate the heroes, after which, they will be used as test subjects.

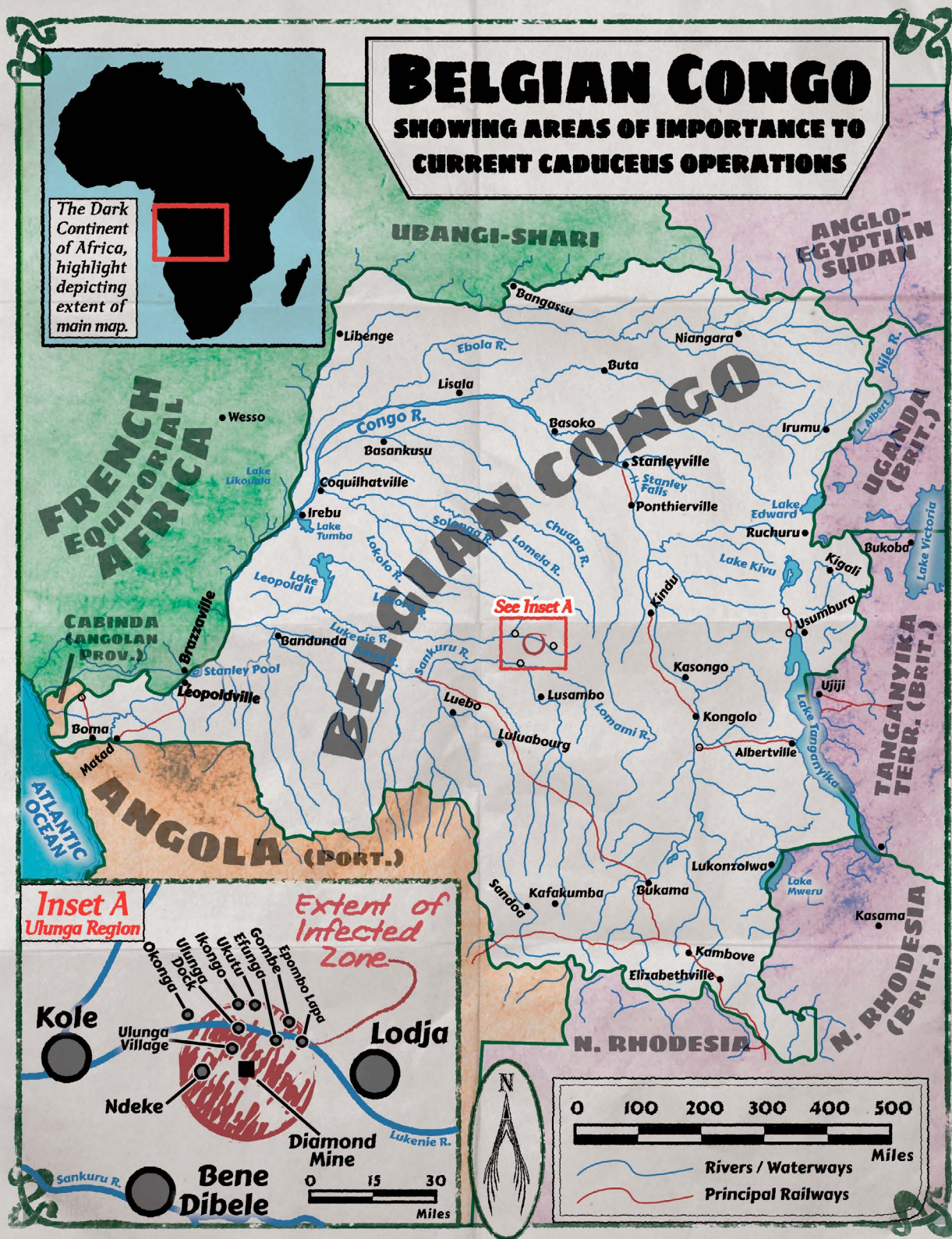
The serpent scientists plan to trick the information out of the heroes. By altering the memories of the hospital staff, they will contradict what the heroes know to be fact. Dr. Thibault is commanded to conduct a psychiatric interview to explore what he believes are the heroes' fever dreams, and thereby attempt to help their recovery; his interactions with the heroes will be monitored by De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra.

The serpent scientists hope the heroes will grow incredulous with Thibault's questioning, tempting them to reveal what they know in an effort to prove the doctor is wrong. The serpent people would prefer to simply use domination serum on the heroes to find out what they know but its effectiveness is negated by the nerve agent the heroes have been exposed to—traces of the nerve agent are present in the heroes' system for two weeks following initial exposure. The serpent people don't wish to wait and so this somewhat elaborate ruse has been put in place. If the heroes resist questioning and remain in Ulunga long enough, they can be subjected to chemical coercion with domination serum once the nerve agent has completely left their system.

BELGIAN CONGO

BELGIAN CONGO SHOWING AREAS OF IMPORTANCE TO CURRENT CADUCEUS OPERATIONS

The Dark
Continent
of Africa,
highlight
depicting
extent of
main map.



BACKGROUND

To hide their activities, the serpent person scientists of Caduceus have released a swarm of mutated tsetse flies to spread a bio-weapon (which appears to the outside world to be a mutated strain of sleeping sickness). Caduceus has replaced the head of the Congo-Kasaï province, Marcel Bourget, with a serpent person agent. Under his leadership, the local government has declared the region off-limits while they make every visible effort to try and deal with the infestation.

The area of the tsetse fly infestation is approximately 30 miles across, centered on the diamond mine, which is 40 miles east of Kole. Thus, the infested area is roughly halfway between Kole and Lodja in the Central Congolese lowland forests. The Lukenie River, which runs through this area, is a tributary of the larger Congo River. Barges travel along the Lukenie River as far as Kole, after which lengths of shallower waters make it impassable for larger boats.

Along the river, inside the infested region, are a number of small villages where cotton plantations have been established. These are now largely abandoned due to the widespread evacuation brought about by the infestation. Some of these villages, such as Epombo Lapa, Gombe, Efunga, Ukutu, Ikongo, Ulunga, and Okonga can be found on local maps. Others are so small they are not marked.

THE SETTING

The Belgian Congo came into being in 1908. Prior to this, it had been the Congo Free State (1885), a personal colony of King Leopold II of Belgium where the ruling officials ruthlessly and violently exploited the indigenous population. Such treatment led to international demands for Belgium to address the situation and take control, thereby creating the Belgian Congo.

From 1926 onwards, the colonial capital was Léopoldville. By 1932 the country had been divided into six provinces, each formed by 24 districts, with each district consisting of 120 territories. A provincial Governor controlled each province while each territory had a territorial administrator. Territories were further divided into varying numbers of chiefdoms, run by the chiefs of indigenous tribes.

Many Belgian companies invested in the country following the Great War and established close ties with the local government. Whereas rubber had previously been the country's major industry, a focus on precious metals and gemstones led to the creation and expansion of the mining industry. Building a rail network to enable the export of raw materials became a key concern for the government. As plantations spread across the large expanses of previously

unpopulated land, the industrialization of palm oil and cotton production grew. The work force needed for such large-scale operations was recruited from the indigenous population. Rules were enforced that many villages had to provide minimum quotas of people physically fit to work—effectively amounting to forced labor—attracting criticism from the Colonial Council in Brussels.

By the 1930s the global depression had made a significant impact upon the economy of the Belgian Congo. As the demand for raw materials and agricultural products diminished, unemployment drastically increased, leading to a reduction in forced labor. Throughout the decade, the number of Belgians residing in the Belgian Congo was relatively stable, at approximately 17,500. While resistance against the colonialist presence was widespread, it only erupted occasionally into armed conflict in localized incidents. One such revolt occurred in the Pende in 1931, where the Force Publique, an army formed by local recruits, was used by the colonial government to maintain public order.

With the country's position on the Equator, the climate is hot and humid in the river basin and cool and dry in the southern highlands. The average temperature is 22 to 26°C (72 to 79°F), with January to May and October to November being the hottest months. The rainy season (for the locations in this scenario) lasts from October to May, with frequent violent thunderstorms lasting a few hours.

Ulunga

The only place in the infestation area not already evacuated is the village of Ulunga, situated in one of the larger clearings in the region and home to the only remaining functioning hospital. Because the serpent person scientists have control of the flies, they do not enter the area, leaving the inhabitants apparently free from immediate danger.

The hospital was set up after a diamond mine was established by the Société Internationale Forestière et Minière du Congo (also known simply as "Forminière," see box nearby), some five miles to the southeast of the village. The hospital's purpose is to treat workers who succumb to the sleeping sickness, which has long been a problem in the region.

To the outside world, the diamond mine was abandoned a year ago. The operation was deemed economically unviable after producing only a low yield of gems. In reality, the Cult of Yig replaced the humans in charge of the site and used the mine to establish a laboratory in one of the most inaccessible places on Earth. Caduceus saw the inhabitants of the surrounding settlements as prime test subjects.

Serpent people replaced key staff in the hospital, allowing them to control the "treatment" of the local,

captive population. They maintained a human front to the operation—Doctor Thibault and Nurse Tétrault—who they control via domination serum (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 270). When the tsetse flies were released, a mass exodus of the local people took place. Government forces were deployed (under the direction of the serpent man Vice Governor) to direct many of those that fled to Ulunga. They were told to seek medical aid at the hospital and await extraction. Subsequently, these local people have been cut off by the infestation ever since.

To the outside world, the local government is attempting to use pesticides over the surrounding forest to kill the flies. In reality, the serpent man Vice Governor airdrops medical supplies to the hospital while dropping pesticides on the forest around the edge of the infestation area to control its spread.

The captive inhabitants of the village are, one-by-one, deliberately being infected with the mutated sleeping sickness. When they appear to succumb to the disease, they are quarantined from the rest of the village. As far as the inhabitants are concerned, the dead are taken a little way outside of the village and buried. In reality, the “dead” are still very much alive and are taken to the serpent person laboratory in the heart of the mine to be used as experimental test subjects.



FORMINIÈRE

The Société Internationale Forestière et Minière du Congo (a.k.a. Forminière) is a lumber and mining company founded in 1906. The company is co-owned by the Belgian colonial state and various American shareholders.

The company initially mined diamonds in Kasai from 1913 but later branched out into mining for precious metals (mainly gold and silver). Later, it again diversified into cotton, palm, and rubber production, building plantations to cultivate large crops. Apart from its mining and agricultural concerns, the company also operated a number of sawmills.



Loose Ends

Despite the best efforts of the serpent people, some of the inhabitants of the neighboring villages decided to ignore the directions to go to Ulunga and instead made a run for the larger towns of Kole and Lodja. Those that strayed a little too close to the diamond mine caught a glimpse of another part of the defenses the serpent people have put in place to protect their laboratory.

Having preserved the DNA of many creatures from prehistory, the serpent people cloned a handful of dinosaurs to use as guards—and to devour any unwanted guests. Word of these beasts stalking through the jungle, despite being only glimpsed from a distance (as those who got too close didn’t live to tell the tale), has spread to Léopoldville (now Kinshasa). Here, a French zoologist, Professor Carole Roux, from the University of Paris, has been preparing for an expedition to search for the legendary Mokélé-mbembé (see *Cryptids of the Congo*, page 160).

Hearing the stories of giant lizards in the jungle, Roux redirected her team from its planned route up the Congo River to follow the Lukenie River instead. After bribing her way through the military blockade, she and her team sailed up the river. Over the following days, five of the professor’s ten-person team fell ill with the sleeping sickness and died shortly thereafter. Deciding to press on through the infected zone to reach the safety of Lodja, the team encountered one of the serpent people’s dinosaurs lurking in the river (a mosasaur). Nearly capsizing the boat, the beast devoured three of the remaining five team members before departing. Roux and the remaining member of the team, Manville Garreau (an experienced big game hunter) were able to get to Ulunga, where they have been trapped ever since.

Roux and Garreau’s arrival has prompted the serpent person scientists to advance the timeline of their research. With humans from the outside world starting to circumvent their defenses, the serpent people fear discovery. As such, they intend to make use of the remaining test subjects before sterilizing the area and setting up a new laboratory elsewhere. The serpent folk aim to ensure there are no witnesses and no loose ends once they are done with Ulunga.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Statistics for these NPCs are presented at the end of this chapter.

Doctor Mason Thibault, 40, Belgian doctor

A doctor working for Forminière, in charge of the hospital. He has interests in virology and psychology and worked for some years in a private clinic in Antwerp before the opportunity with Forminière came up. Enticed by the idea of travel and working in exotic locations, Thibault took the job and ended up in Ulunga.

Thibault is under the control of the serpent people, who keep him drugged with domination serum. He conducts experiments to combat the sleeping sickness but has made no progress—in reality, the domination serum suppresses his memories—hiding the fact he is performing the same failed tests again and again. He is in regular contact with Vice Governor Marcel Bourget via radio, requesting supplies to be airdropped to Ulunga.

- **Description:** tall, thin and balding, with white hair, round spectacles, a dirty white lab coat beneath which is a sweat-stained shirt and tie.

- **Traits:** he is tired most of the time; working around the clock and getting very little sleep. He blinks a lot and occasionally asks people to repeat what they were just saying. Otherwise, when more rested, he is very alert.
- **Roleplaying hook:** helps the heroes to combat their “delusions;” the serpent people hope to determine the level of threat the heroes pose to the Cult of Yig. It is his job to protect the villagers and he tries to elicit the heroes’ aid in this endeavor.

Nurse Fleurette Tétrault, 35, Belgian nurse

Tétrault is Dr. Thibault’s assistant and lover; they have been together since arriving in Ulunga. She wishes that she and Thibault could return to Belgium and thereby escape the heat, disease, and filthy conditions of the jungle. She is under the control of the serpent people (administered the domination serum). She has been a nurse for several years.

- **Description:** average weight and build, with curly golden hair, a round face, deep brown eyes, and a nurse’s gown covered in dirt and filth.
- **Traits:** despite looking somewhat ragged around the edges, Tétrault acts professionally at all times. She is attentive to Dr. Thibault’s needs—usually not far from



his side. She is scared of large insects, reptiles, and other jungle animals. She remains in the hospital to avoid encountering the wildlife.

- **Roleplaying hook:** Tétrault has a genuine desire to help people but is also desperate to return to Europe. If the heroes offer to get both her and the doctor out of the jungle, she becomes torn between escaping the jungle “hell” and staying to do her duty.

Nurse Melania De Vooght (Zyneste), appears 50, serpent person scientist

Zyneste is a serpent person masquerading as Melania De Vooght, a Belgian nurse. The original De Vooght worked in a maternity ward in Belgium before moving to the Congo.

Zyneste uses domination serum to control Dr. Thibault and nurse Fleurette Tétrault (the serum is poured into their drinks). De Vooght/Zyneste selects villagers to infect and which patients in the hospital are to be moved to the hidden laboratory.

- **Description:** slightly shorter than average, a little overweight, with a round face, small-yet-focused eyes, and brown hair tied in a bun.
- **Traits:** Zyneste has consumed De Vooght’s memories and so is able to recall her history, as well as acting out her traits, which include acting like a mother hen and treating the patients and co-workers like children. Appears cheerful and optimistic.
- **Roleplaying hook:** using Dr. Thibault, De Vooght/Zyneste wants to assess how much the heroes know about the Cult of Yig and the level of threat they pose to Caduceus’s plans. Once this information has been gathered, De Vooght/Zyneste intends for the heroes to become test subjects.

Nurse Geertruyd Van Laere (Sevestra), appears 45, serpent person soldier

Sevestra is a serpent person soldier charged with protecting De Vooght/Zyneste, who is masquerading as nurse Geertruyd Van Laere. The original Van Laere served in a field hospital during the Great War and then in emergency wards in Europe. Like Melania De Vooght, she has worked in the jungle hospital since it was opened.

Sevestra is ever watchful for danger and ever ready to act should a threat appear and works in concert with De Vooght/Zyneste to ensure that Tétrault and Dr. Thibault remain under control. Van Laere/Sevestra oversees the removal of patients from hospital to the secret laboratory (usually under cover of darkness)—Dr. Thibault and nurse Tétrault believe those patients have died and are being buried in the jungle.



TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Note: as this chapter could be run at any point during the campaign, no concrete dates are given. The following events are timed from the point when the heroes arrive in Ulunga.

Three years ago: Forminière open the diamond mine, five miles southeast of Ulunga.

One year ago: serpent people replace the local head of the mine, the Vice Governor (Bourget), as well as the nurses De Vooght and Van Laere. The mine is shut down due to “low yields.” Work begins on building the serpent person laboratory, using a Gate to transport in materials and scientific devices.

Three months ago: with the laboratory complete and its dinosaur guardians in place, the mutated tsetse flies are unleashed upon the jungle. Mass exodus and panic begins in the local populace. Inhabitants in the center of the infested zone are directed to the safety of Ulunga.

Two months ago: airdrops of food and medical supplies to Ulunga begin. The government appears to be dusting the jungle with pesticide but is actually dusting the edges of the infected zone to contain the infestation, ensuring the flies do not spread too far. Tales of giant lizards in the jungle reach Professor Roux, who directs her expedition up the Lukenie River; a journey taking approximately six weeks from Léopoldville.

Two weeks ago: (according to Thibault, whose memory has been affected by the domination serum) the heroes arrived in the Belgian Congo—see **Opening Scene** (page 162) for details of what Thibault believes.

One week ago: Professor Roux’s expedition succumbs to sleeping sickness and an attack from the mosasaur in the Lukenie River. They barely reach Ulunga alive, their arrival prompting the serpent people to advance their testing timeline. More people begin to fall sick in the village.

Yesterday: the unconscious heroes are brought to the hospital and placed in the isolation ward.



CRYPTIDS OF THE CONGO

A cryptid* is modern parlance for an animal whose existence or survival is disputed or unsubstantiated, such as the Loch Ness Monster. The Belgian Congo has many stories of such creatures. Professor Roux will be only too pleased to inform inquisitive heroes about the following “monsters” that “could” be encountered in the jungle.

**The term cryptid was coined in 1983 by John E. Wall. Before that, such creatures might be termed as mythological beasts, strange creatures, or simply by their local name.*

Mokèlé-mbèmbé

Meaning “one who stops the flow of the rivers,” there are conflicting stories of the Mokèlé-mbèmbé. Some say it is an aquatic creature while others call it a spirit. Some European researchers suggest it is kin to the Loch Ness Monster of Scotland. It is said to reside somewhere in the waterways of the Congo River basin and stories concerning the creature have been circulating since the late 18th century—sparking a series of expeditions to find the creature (six up to 1932).

Professor Roux believes the tales stem from the sighting of a brontosaurus while Garreau believes it might be an animal unfamiliar to the area, such as a rhinoceros.

Mahamba

Located in the swamps around Lake Likouala, the Mahamba is supposedly a gigantic crocodile (perhaps up to 50 feet in length), said to have attacked and devoured rafts and canoes.

Professor Roux believes the Mahamba is actually a mosasaur, like the one that attacked her boat. She has not told the villagers about the encounter, instead saying that they had trouble with their boat and lost their friends to the sleeping sickness. Garreau believes the creature that attacked them was a large crocodile and denies it was a dinosaur.

Emela-ntouka

Meaning “the killer of the elephants,” this species is known by a number of names (including “seka-moke” and “ngamba-namae”). Emela-ntouka live in the shallow waters of the Congo River basin and are semi-aquatic.

They are supposedly comparable in size to a large elephant, although their shape is more like that of a rhinoceros. They are brown-grey in color, with a large tail and one long horn on their snout (what material the horn is made from, such as bone or ivory, is debated) and a long tail. Tales describe the creatures as ferocious and liable to attack and kill anything that crosses their paths.

Professor Roux believes the creature could be a triceratops while Garreau believes it is simply another rhinoceros sighting.

Optional: at the Keeper’s discretion, a wildcard factor could be introduced into this scenario by having a small expedition of the Gray Tigers (see *Pulp Cthulhu*, page 55) engaged in a monster hunt for one of the cryptids mentioned. How these dangerous men come to be in the infestation area and whether they pose an additional danger to the heroes is left to the Keeper to determine.

- **Description:** tall and slender, with long thin fingers, angular features, pale blue eyes, and short blonde hair. Has a warm and friendly smile.
- **Traits:** Sevestra, having consumed Van Laere’s memories (as well as her appearance), can recall Van Laere’s past: during the war she saw the horrors of war first hand, resulting in her possessing a one-thousand-yard stare. Sevestra copies this mannerism to reinforce the act.
- **Roleplaying hook:** works through Dr. Thibault and nurse Tétrault to find out what the heroes know about Caduceus and what they intend to do next.

Marcel Bourget, appears 53, serpent person politician

Bourget is the Vice Governor of Congo-Kasaï province and has been replaced by a serpent person. It is doubtful Bourget will be more than a voice at the end of a radio (hence, no statistics are provided for him). The heroes may talk to him to confirm any details told to them by Dr. Thibault.

- **Description:** dressed in a fashionable linen suit, with a thin mustache, hair combed back, and thin lips.

BELGIAN CONGO

- **Traits:** well spoken, with a pronounced Belgian accent. He talks slowly and clearly, with confidence and authority.
- **Roleplaying hook:** confirms everything that the heroes may ask about Dr. Thibault but, otherwise, keeps any discussion on the radio to a minimum. Liable to make promises that go unfulfilled.

Kasongo Odia, 35, village chief and fisherman

Kasongo is the kilolo (chieftain of a village) and the brother of Kenda Odia. The brothers were raised to be fishermen and both know the Lukenie River well. Kasongo has traveled great distances along the river in his time, acting occasionally as a guide for foreign big game hunters (allowing him to pick up some basic skill in several languages), and dreams of exploring the wider world. He is angry with the Europeans at the hospital for not finding a solution to the sleeping sickness, especially as his brother and his wife, Meta, have both fallen ill and been hospitalized. He wants something done and wants it doing now so that his family stands a chance of survival.

- **Description:** tall, slender, and bald. Wears a loincloth and sandals, and also a necklace of carved beads.
- **Traits:** loyal and devoted to this family, he often visits his wife and his brother, who languish in the hospital. At first, the hospital staff turned him away but they eventually gave in to his persistence. Should he grow too disruptive, the nurses will throw him out (as they have done before).
- **Roleplaying hook:** Kasongo believes the heroes are here to help—they come from inside the hospital and, obviously, must know what is going on in there. He wants the heroes to tell him anything and everything about what is being done to combat the sleeping sickness. He will badger the heroes, demanding they do something to end this situation, now.

Professor Carole Roux, 35, zoologist*

A zoologist from the University of Paris, Roux came to the area to investigate reports of giant lizards with big hunter Manville Garreau. Their expedition has, so far, cost of the lives of eight people. Roux and Garreau are now stranded in Ulunga, having arrived in the village some three days ago. Roux is too scared to leave the village to make the 5.5 mile trip back to her boat to affect repairs (see **The Dock**, page 172), let alone make the 30+ mile journey back to Kole.

**In modern parlance, Roux might be termed a cryptozoologist (a term generally attributed to wildlife biologist Lucien Blancou in 1959).*

- **Description:** slender, with long blonde hair and bright blue eyes. Dressed in well-kept safari attire, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses.
- **Traits:** stressed; blames herself for the death of her colleagues. Pretty much on edge at all times, she has a short fuse and quickly becomes enraged if pushed too far.
- **Roleplaying hook:** Roux believes that mysterious creatures (cryptids) could exist in the hidden parts of the world. It is her dream to find a living dinosaur. She is torn between curiosity to search for the giant lizards and not wanting to get anyone else hurt. She wishes to continue their expedition but fears to do so.

Manville Garreau, 38, big game hunter

Garreau was hired by Professor Roux to help capture a giant lizard. He was somewhat skeptical concerning the notion that dinosaurs could be roaming the jungle; however, the encounter with the mosasaur proved nearly too much for him to handle. He has refused to go back to the boat (see **The Dock**, page 172) without more firepower to defend against the beast. He carries an elephant gun but has only six shells left.

- **Description:** tall and well built, with a pencil-thin mustache, piercing dark eyes, slicked back hair, and angular features. Dressed in a well-worn safari jacket.
- **Traits:** self-assured, polite, and generally calm, he is ever alert and attentive. Tends to avoid rushing into things, preferring to calculate his every move (like when he is on a hunt).
- **Roleplaying hook:** a skeptic at heart, Garreau has retreated behind a wall of denial following the incident with the mosasaur in the river, and has convinced himself that it was a giant crocodile. Might be persuaded (by a thrill-seeking hero) to go dinosaur hunting for the fame it could bring—but would only do so if accompanied by well-armed heroes.

SLEEPING SICKNESS

African trypanosomiasis (more commonly known as sleeping sickness) is a disease transmitted by the bite of the tsetse fly, which infects the victim with a protozoan parasite. In the early 20th century, an epidemic of the disease claimed the lives of a quarter of a million people in sub-Saharan Africa.

Symptoms occur in two stages:

- Stage One (the haemolymphatic phase) includes: intermittent fever over a varying period of time. Attacks last as little as one day to as long as a week, with the attacks separated by a few days to a month at a time. The attacks are debilitating, characterized by headaches, joint pains, itching, and the swelling of lymph nodes along the back of the neck (often to extremely large sizes). Untreated, stage one may lead to anemia, as well as cardiac and kidney dysfunctions. In some cases, a

chancre (red sore) develops where the tsetse fly has bitten the skin.

- Stage Two (the neurological phase) begins when the parasite reaches the brain and includes: disrupted sleep—the prevailing symptom, leading to its commonly known name, where patients can be asleep for up to 24 hours at a time. In addition, the patient suffers from confusion, which may lead to irritability, aggressive behavior, and possibly psychotic reactions, as well as muscle tremors and a general weakness. In some cases, limb paralysis (potentially of an entire side of the body) occurs. Without treatment, the mental deterioration continues, leading to a coma, organ failure, and ultimately death. The neurological damage caused in stage two is irreversible.

In terms of treatment, atoxy, an arsenic-based drug was used in 1910 to

fight the disease but carried blindness as a serious side effect. By 1920, suramin was developed to fight stage one symptoms, which when combined with tryparsamide in 1922, allowed the treatment of the stage two condition.

The Mutated Variation

The variant of sleeping sickness that Dr. Thibault is combating appears to work significantly faster than the normal strain of the disease. Stage One lasts usually lasts little more than a day, the patient suffering a fever throughout. Within two to four days, Stage Two begins, with the patient experiencing bouts of lethargy and sleep on a regular basis. Waking hours are filled with confusion and hallucinations, exacerbated by the ongoing fever. By the fourth day of Stage Two, the patient becomes bedridden as their muscles weaken or become paralyzed, and usually some even days later, the patient lapses

OPENING SCENE

Unwittingly transported to the Congo, the unconscious heroes are taken at night from **The Laboratory** (page 177) to **The Hospital** (page 165) in Ulunga. They are placed in beds in an isolation ward and left to wake up. In their semi-conscious state, they rise from the beds and move around in the dark. The heroes should be unaware of any time having passed since the lights went out in the corridor beneath the Caduceus building in New York—to them, they are still in New York City.

The Keeper should gradually point out changes in the environment. They might bang into the metal frames of sweat-soaked beds and realize that the walls of the corridor are not where they should be. Also, the temperature is much warmer, and the sounds of jungle wildlife can be heard in the distance (strange bird calls and the buzzing of insects).

At an appropriate moment, the door to the isolation ward opens and nurse Tétrault is silhouetted in the lamplight beyond. It is approaching dawn outside but the windows are shuttered. She expresses her surprise and relief that the heroes are awake and calls to nurse De Vooght/Zyneste to fetch Dr. Thibault.

Dr. Thibault enters, looking tired, having been up most of the night performing his tests. Nurse Tétrault explains the isolated patients (the heroes) have woken up. Thibault says he is relieved that they are awake.

The heroes, undoubtedly, will want to know what is going on. Thibault and Tétrault can relate the following details:

- Vice Governor Bourget sent a formal request to Caduceus to assist in tackling the sleeping sickness outbreak caused by the infestation of tsetse flies.
- The heroes were dispatched to assist but their airplane crashed trying to land near Ulunga two weeks ago, at

SLEEPING SICKNESS CONTINUED

into a coma. Death normally occurs within the next three days.

The serpent people scientists have developed a procedure, utilizing this variant strain for their own ends. When a patient enters a coma, they are ready for the procedure at the laboratory. If the procedure is not carried out, the neurological damage of sleeping sickness continues to the point where the patient dies, whereas administering the procedure halts the degradation at the point where the patient can survive but is otherwise left brain-dead.

In actuality, the disease develops according to how many times the patient has been bitten by tsetse flies. This knowledge allows De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra to control when the patient is ready for transport to the laboratory. While undertaking rounds in the dead of night, the pair uses jars containing captive flies, which they hold

against a patient's skin, allowing the flies to bite. The jars are later returned to Dr. Thibault's office, where he keeps the jars of flies for his tests.

If in an area where exposure to the flies is likely, call for a **Luck** roll to determine whether a hero has been bitten. The first time a hero is bitten by a tsetse fly, call for an **Extreme CON** roll: if failed, the hero enters Stage One of the disease, resulting in the loss of 1D10 points of INT. Subsequent bites on the same day have no further effect. If a hero is bitten again on a subsequent day, they must pass another **Extreme CON** roll or enter Stage Two of the infection, resulting in the loss of 1D10 more points of INT.

A hero in Stage Two must pass a **Regular CON** roll each day or suffer from a **Penalty** die to all physically related characteristic and skills rolls. In addition, hallucinations may occur

(treat these like delusions, requiring a successful **Sanity** roll to negate their effect). Four days after entering Stage Two, the hero should attempt a **Hard CON** roll each day or become bed-ridden. After seven days, an infected hero should attempt a **Hard POW** roll each day or lapse into an indefinite coma, losing a further 1D10 INT per day. At that point, the hero is at the mercy of the serpent people.

If a hero is treated within 15 minutes of being bitten for the first time, a successful **Medicine** roll, utilizing the drugs in the hospital, halts the bite's effect and the hero is free of infection. Otherwise, the cure can be found only at the serpent person laboratory in **The Diamond Mine** (page 175)—those treated in this manner, recover all lost points of INT within 1D3 rounds.

an airstrip near the old diamond mine. They crashed a little after sunset.

- While the heroes were not badly wounded, they were bitten by flies and infected. The medical staff used burning torches to fend off the flies and carried the heroes out without being bitten.
- When the heroes first awoke, they had already entered stage two of the sleeping sickness. Already displaying signs of memory loss, their condition rapidly deteriorated and they lapsed into comas.
- Thibault has been trying out various combinations of drugs (including Pentamidine) on them, as conventional treatment with Suramin and Tryparsamide appears to have little effect on this new strain.
- This morning is the first sign of improvement since their arrival at the hospital. In fact, the heroes are the first patients who appear to be recovering. Everyone else has died.

- The death toll, so far, in Ulunga is 51. What with the influx of neighboring peoples to the village, there are currently 128 people left in the village. Many of them showing signs of sickness.

PARANOIA

Given their previous encounters with serpent people, the heroes might believe Dr. Thibault and nurse Tétrault are serpent people in disguise. Play up the paranoia—the heroes have already encountered a number of people in their adventures who were actually serpent people in disguise, so such concerns may be very real. Plant seeds of doubt in the heroes' minds: is everyone they meet a serpent person masquerading as a "friend" so that they can draw them to their doom? Set a tone of distrust, highlighting signs of possible manipulation by the hospital staff.

Should paranoid heroes attack Thibault and Tétrault, the doctor and nurse do not fight back and attempt to evade the assault as best they can, with Thibault doing his best to protect Tétrault so that they can both escape.

Thibault and Tétrault react with genuine surprise and fear if attacked, and try to convince the heroes that they are confused and possibly hallucinating. If the heroes refuse, Thibault and Tétrault retreat from the isolation ward and attempt to seal their attackers inside. If successful, they talk to the heroes through the closed door, saying it is understandable that the heroes are confused, as the disease causes irritableness and outbursts of violence. In measured tones, they do all they can to calm the situation down. Upon realizing that they have attacked normal (and seemingly innocent) people (i.e. not serpent people), they heroes involved should make a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss).

In the aftermath of such an incident, Dr. Thibault asks the heroes to remain in the hospital under observation to monitor their recovery. If the heroes dissent, preferring to explore the village and the surrounding area, the doctor does not stop them but recommends they stay away from the jungle, as over exertion could precipitate further hallucinations and bouts of violence. He also suggests that the heroes return to the hospital each night, where beds in the isolation ward will be prepared for them.

Keeper note: if hearing a disturbance, De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra attempt to fade into the background and disappear until the situation has been resolved—they fear endangering their cover, retreating from scenes of combat to avoid possible exposure.

RUNNING THE SCENARIO

Once the heroes have awoken in the hospital, there are a number of ways they might react to the situation. These may render some of the following scenes invalid, so the Keeper is presented with various ways to reach a conclusion. These ideas are not meant to railroad the heroes, only to help prevent pointless meandering and to keep the action flowing.

Cautious groups may completely distrust everything around them. If they search the hospital, they may find the listening device in **Dr. Thibault's Office** (page 165). All of the hospital staff will deny knowing about the device, which could lead to an early confrontation with the serpent people disguised as nurses.

In this case, the Keeper should roll with it—the heroes have found a flaw in the operation and a swift unmasking should be their reward (rather than making them jump through needless hoops). Any interrogation of the serpent

people should lead to the discovery of **The Diamond Mine** (page 175), allowing the rest of the scenario to play out accordingly from there.

Likewise, a search of the village that uncovers the **Tsetse Fly Cache** (page 168) should be a strong clue that the serpent people are somehow behind what is happening in the village.

Groups that enjoy in-depth roleplaying may take a more leisurely route through the scenario, talking with the various NPCs, seeking and gathering clues, and taking plenty of time to plan their next steps. Try to avoid letting the players slow things down and avoid stopping the action completely. The Keeper should pay attention to what comes up in the players' discussions and look for ways to guide the heroes toward an interview with Dr. Thibault, especially if they start contradicting how he believes they came to the village.

Some groups may disbelieve the story of how they got to the village (see **Confronting Thibault**, page 170) and make efforts to escape immediately. Such groups should be put into contact with Professor Roux, Garreau, and Kasongo as soon as they try to leave the village, as these NPCs can actually point the heroes to the most effective way of escaping—**The Dock** (page 172). The scenario then plays out as described from that point. Especially tenacious heroes could, in theory, make it to the outside world, surviving the encounter on the river and avoiding the serpent person patrols dispatched to bring them back. They just have to find a way home once they have escaped.

The following scenes present elements from each of these potential routes through the chapter. If the heroes do something that is not considered below, the Keeper is encouraged to improvise. Ultimately, the heroes should arrive at **The Diamond Mine** (page 175) or find a way out of the infested region (see **The River**, page 173).

LOCATIONS AND ENCOUNTERS

The following locations and encounters may occur in any order, dependent on the decisions of the heroes. Most likely, the heroes explore the hospital when they first awake, encounter Dr. Thibault and the nurses, and then head into the village, where they meet the head of the village, Kasongo, as well as Professor Roux and Garreau. From there, Dr. Thibault attempts to question them, which probably leads directly to **The Interview** (page 169). At a suitable point, the heroes may witness the **Cargo Plane** (page 170), before deciding to depart via the river (**The Dock**, page 172) or by heading into the

jungle (*Into the Jungle*, page 173), or by seeking out *The Diamond Mine* (page 175)—the Keeper should be led by the heroes' choices.

THE HOSPITAL

"Hospital" is a grandiose term for the building on the outskirts of Ulunga. It is a rectangular, wooden construction of just one floor. White paint peels and flakes off the exterior walls and, at first glance, it looks abandoned. Within, a small waiting room leads to a corridor, off which are a number of rooms:

Dr. Thibault's Office

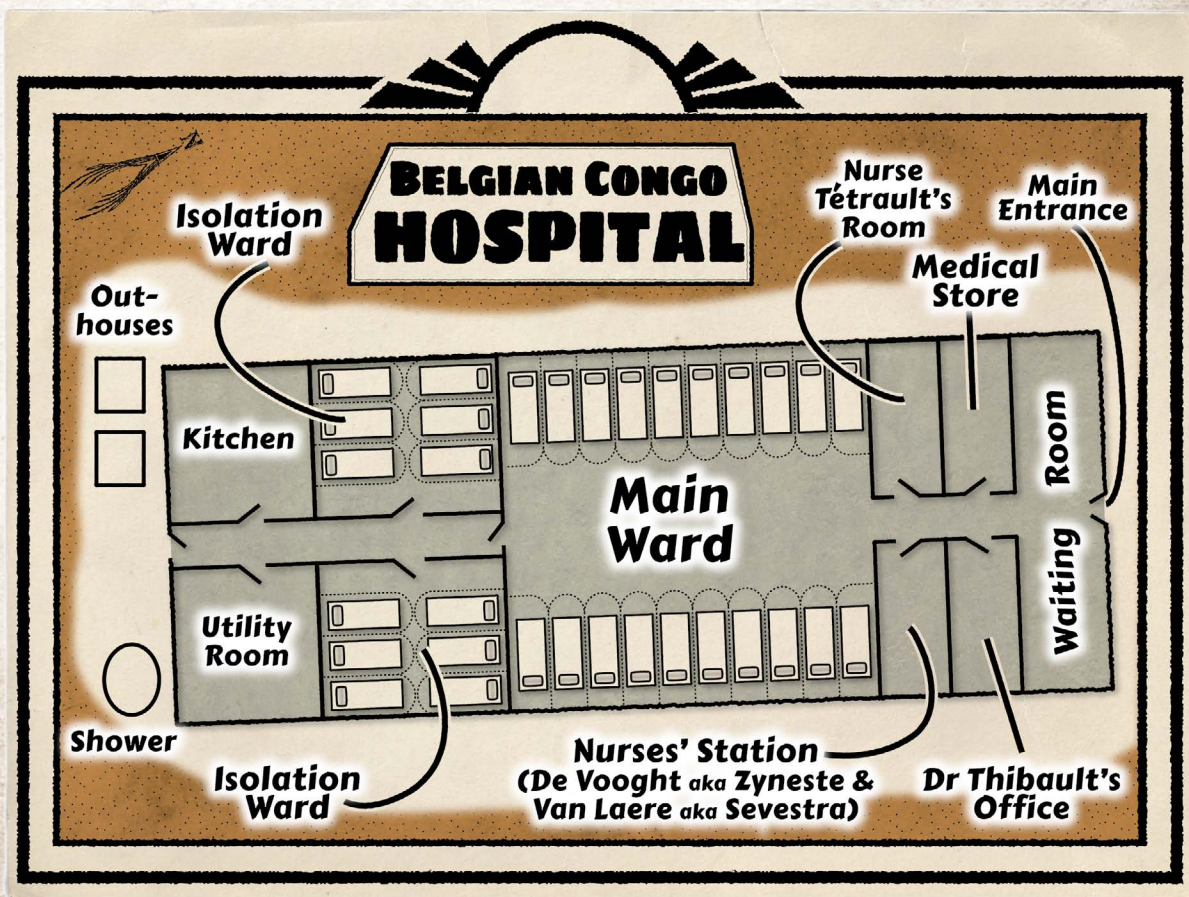
Basic laboratory equipment is set up in here to test blood samples in the doctor's efforts to combat sleeping sickness. A cot bed sits in one corner, beside which is a filing cabinet full of medical records relating to former miners and other locals.

The hospital's old and bulky radio transceiver sits on a table in another corner of the office, behind the doctor's

small desk. It only functions on one wavelength, allowing the heroes to potentially make contact with Marcel Bourget. Changing the settings on the device renders the unit unable to transmit or receive any signal at all. A successful *Electrical Repair* roll allows the heroes to re-establish contact with Bourget but nothing more—the necessary parts to fix the radio are simply not available.

If contacted via the radio, Bourget can confirm information told to the heroes by Thibault but, otherwise, is unwilling to talk to the heroes at length on any other subject—saying that this is an official radio channel and must be kept clear for important communications, like those concerning the infestation.

Keeper note: hidden in the doctor's room is a listening device. The microphone is embedded in one of the walls and is very difficult to notice—it can only be found if the heroes are making a concerted effort to search their room (see *Zyneste and Sevestra Discovered*, page 172).



Medical Store

This room is crammed full of drug supplies and other medical equipment.

Nurse Tétrault's Room

Apart from a few personal items in a trunk, the room contains only a bed, a desk and chair, and a small wardrobe containing spare uniforms and personal clothing.

Nurses De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra's Room

The disguised serpent folk share this room. They have few personal possessions; most of what they own fits into two trunks, each squeezed beneath the wire-frame beds. They have a wardrobe each (containing nurse uniforms and practical jungle clothing). Within the trunks are some books, including a Bibles and some well-read novels. In De Vooght/Zyneste's trunk is a journal, in which she relates her experiences traveling to Africa and her time in Ulunga. Observant heroes note that De Vooght stopped writing in the journal about a year ago. In addition, hidden beneath Van Laere/Sevestra's bed is a radio receiver of advanced manufacture (used to listen in on the microphones hidden in Dr. Thibault's and the heroes' rooms).

Main Ward

The corridor opens out into a large mixed-sex ward. Twenty beds are divided by old curtains, which hang precariously on runners, allowing the patients some privacy. All the beds contain patients suffering from various stages of sleeping sickness. The stench of old sweat is overwhelming.

Keeper note: the heroes may encounter **Kasongo Odia** here (see page 161), sat between the sleeping forms of his brother, Kenda, and his wife Meta.

Isolation Wards

Each of these enclosed rooms holds six beds (some empty, some with people close to death). One room is for the heroes.

Keeper note: hidden in the heroes' room is a listening device. The microphone is embedded in one of the walls and is very difficult to notice—it can only be found if the heroes are making a concerted effort to search their room (see **Zyneste and Sevestra Discovered**, page 172).

Utility Room

Soiled and dirty laundry is piled high. It is clear the staff has not had the time to keep up with the work required.

Kitchen

Many plates and pots remain unwashed, stacked by a sink—another indicator that the nurses are overworked, with precious little time to attend to menial tasks.

Outbuildings

A door at the rear of the building leads to a row of outhouses and a shower unit made from a water barrel, fitted with a valve and showerhead underneath, held up by wooden poles. The smell coming from the outhouses is gut wrenching, the latrines are filthy and blocked.

ULUNGA

Like many villages in the region, Ulunga comprises a handful of rectangular houses standing along a single road, which leads 5.5 miles north to the docks on the Lukenie River (see **The Dock**, page 172), and south towards the village of Ndeke (7 miles southwest of Ulunga). Following the road to the south, after 3 miles, the road forks and travelers can turn left towards the diamond mine (5 miles southeast of Ulunga) or right to Ndeke. The road to the diamond mine goes roughly east through thick jungle (see **The Diamond Mine**, page 175).

The area around Ulunga has been cultivated and crops grow outside of the village before the land is consumed by jungle. A small shantytown has built up around the village; those seeking shelter from the infestation have hastily erected crude shelters of sheets of wood and metal. Entering the village proper, fishing nets hang between buildings; it's clear they have seen little recent use. Elsewhere, locals sit beside piles of wood, carving out masks, tools, and other implements.

In the center of the village is the home of the kilolo (chieftain), Kasongo Odia. Professor Roux and Garreau are currently his guests. Kasongo's open-plan house is full of fishing equipment, a clear clue to his profession. Kasongo's wife, Meta, and his brother, Kenda, are currently in the hospital suffering from the sleeping sickness (both are delirious most of the time). Kasongo is dividing his time between playing host to Roux and Garreau and visiting the hospital to check on Kenda and Meta.

Friendly Greeting

Professor Roux and Garreau approach the heroes as they enter the village from the hospital, hoping they are part of a rescue team. They are obviously saddened when they learn this is not the case but offer the heroes what little refreshment they can (water and kwanga (fermented bread), green vegetables, and sweet potatoes) back at Kasongo's house.

THE LUBA PEOPLE

The Luba (also known as Baluba) people are indigenous to the Katanga, Kasi, and Maniema regions of the Belgian Congo, where the Kiluba, Tshiluba, and Swahili languages are spoken (respectively). In Ulunga, the villagers speak both Tshiluba and French.

In pre-colonial Central Africa, the Kingdom of Luba controlled a wide array of natural resources (including various precious metals) and traded in food goods (fish, palm oil, maize, and so on) as far as the Indian Ocean. The kingdom went into decline from 1870 following pressure from other tribes who cut off trade routes. Later, the Luba people resisted the establishment of the Congo Free State by King Leopold II of Belgium and rebelled in 1895 and 1917. Following the 1895 rebellion, many of the Luba were sent to work in mines across the region.

Luba villages are small and usually comprise of rectangular houses lining just one street. The chieftain of a village is called a kilolo. Crops are grown in areas with good soil (usually by rivers). Fishing and hunting supplements the crop grows. The Luba are renowned for their woodcarving skills; typical examples

of their work include ceremonial masks, canes, bracelets, and axes.

The Luba people are not savage or barbaric; they are a village community of farmers, hunters, and fishermen. They are also craftspeople able to produce high-quality tools and carved goods. The people in Ulunga include many from neighboring villages, all trapped by the plague of insects. Some still have their homes while others have lost everything.

The Luba are accustomed to the hazards of the jungle but the local situation has been magnified beyond the norm. While many are optimistic that the tsetse fly threat will soon pass, some worried that the flies will eventually come to the village. Tension and concern are growing.

- **Description:** both men and women are usually dressed in loincloths and sandals, with bare chests/breasts, and often sporting decorative necklaces of beads. Some women wear carved headpieces. A small number of the older men may have had their hands amputated (wounds inflicted by the Force Publique under the rule of King Leopold II for not meeting production quotas at

rubber plantations in the Congo Free State).

- **Traits:** a closely-knit community, loyal and capable. Despite being somewhat cautious of the outsiders, the Luba are, at present, far more concerned about the infestation and sleeping sickness affecting the area.
- **Roleplaying hook:** the Luba (in general) want the heroes either to leave (along with all the other colonists) or to help them combat the infection.

Example Luba Names:

- **Male:** Chibangu, Kalamba, Kalengayi, Kasongo, Kayembe, Kenda, Lukusa, Tshamala, Tshibundi, Tshitenge.
- **Female:** Bakaji, Masengo, Meta, Misenga, Musau, Ngalula, Ntumba, Tshibola, Tshiduabua, Tshiela.
- **Last names:** Beya, Ilunga, Ismimanga, Kalenga, Kalombo, Kalonji, Kamivanya, Kasokoma, Mujunga, Mutamba, Ngoya, Ntumba, Nyembwe, Odia, Tshibangu.

Roux and Garreau can bring the heroes up to speed about what has been happening in the village and what they are doing here—in between questioning the heroes about what they know about a rescue mission and what help is coming. Both can help to translate if the heroes wish to talk to the villagers.

Roux and Garreau are unaware of the heroes' presence in the village (the heroes being secretly brought in under cover of night). They know nothing of any plane crash

nor that the heroes have (supposedly) been kept in the hospital's isolation ward for two weeks. The heroes' unexpected arrival may prompt questions.

The villagers are welcoming—most believe the heroes have come to provide assistance. Once the reality of the situation becomes apparent, the sense of desperation and resignation felt by the locals can be clearly seen on their faces. Despite their predicament, the villagers are generally helpful and polite.

The villagers can provide the following pieces of information:

- If asked about the airplane crash, none of the villagers can say they heard or saw it. The first they knew about it was when the strangers (the heroes) arrived in the hospital.
- The French people (Roux and Garreau) arrived three days ago, arriving from the river in the north, and speaking of giant lizards in the jungle—which, the locals seem to laugh off as fiction.
- The villagers do not know of any other foreigners in Ulunga.
- Dr. Thibault and the nurses at the hospital have been here for years. The people generally trust him but a few state concerns regarding the fact that no one who has gone to the hospital with sleeping sickness has yet come back.
- A handful of the villagers have seen Van Laere leading patients out into the jungle at night. They assume that the nurse is disposing of dead patients under the cover of darkness so as not to alarm the villagers. Local rumor suggests the bodies are being buried somewhere near the diamond mine. Others believe the medical staff might be throwing the bodies into the mine pit.
- The villagers can provide an overview of the mine's history, stating it opened three years ago but closed last year due to low yields. Many of the villagers worked there and lost their jobs as the owners had to make drastic cutbacks. Work continued for a while after that, with guards on the gate and patrols around the fences. The villagers assumed the heightened security was due to the valuable equipment on site. With plenty of "Keep Out" signs and the villagers' disinclination to rush back to the colonially controlled company, none of them have been back to the mine in a year.

Tsetse Fly Cache

A small shed behind Kosongo's house contains more of his fishing equipment; however, hidden inside is a back-up plan for the serpent people. If the villagers become a threat, a cache of tsetse flies is to be released by remote control (Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra have panic buttons for just this eventuality). On release, the flies would infect the entire village in minutes. Kenda and Meta were infected and hospitalized to prevent the cache of flies being discovered. No one outside of the serpent people knows of the cache's existence.

The cache consists of hundreds of flies kept in a glass tube. The tube is the size of a large suitcase and has small

holes allowing a flow of air for the flies within. A supply of nutrient feeds into the tube, which sustains the flies. If the heroes are not careful when searching the shed, the tube, hidden beneath a workbench, could easily be smashed, releasing the flies.

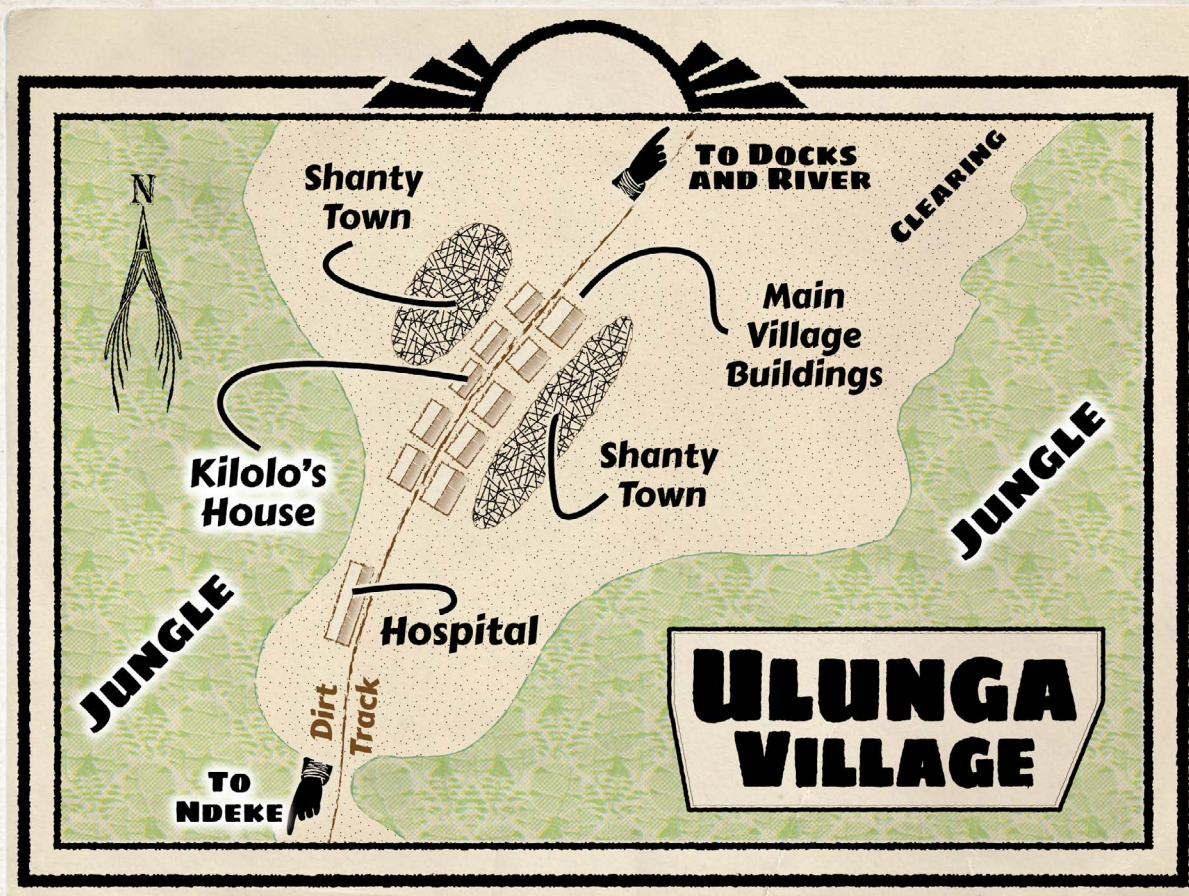
Swatting loose tsetse flies requires a successful Hard DEX roll; however, close proximity to the flies prompts a Luck roll to avoid infection (see **The Mutated Variation, Sleeping Sickness**, page 162).

Destroying the cache without setting the flies free can be accomplished by burning down the shed but attempting to do so draws unwanted attention from the villagers, who try to intervene to protect Kosongo's property from the outsiders.

A small iron safe (**Locksmith** or **Demolitions** roll to get into quickly) next to the cache contains several files containing documents written in French, English, and Naacal. A successful **Medicine, Science (Biology)** or other suitable science skill roll reveals that there are notes documenting experiments with various viruses on human subjects (i.e. the patients at the hospital). The goal appears to be the creation of a strain that will destroy the mind and will of infected humans but leave them alive to be used as slave labor. De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra have stored the documents here so that they stand less chance of being found by Dr. Thibault (or anyone else for that matter). Copies of these reports can also be found in **The Laboratory** (see page 177).

PLAYTEST NOTES

A pair of heroes decided to break into the shed while figuring out what was happening in the village. One stood on the shoulders of the other and tried to clamber in through a window. After a failed pushed Stealth roll, the hero easing herself through the window tumbled into the shed and smashed the glass tube of flies. The next few minutes were filled with panic as she thrashed around inside while her friend failed to break down the door. The situation wasn't a total loss, as having a hero infected with the mutated sleeping sickness gave the rest of the group a chance to document the effects of exposure.



THE INTERVIEW

In considering how they came to be in the Belgian Congo, the heroes may (rightly) distrust Dr. Thibault's story. In such an event, a command placed in the doctor's mind by the serpent people activates. After the heroes have had time to explore a little, the doctor invites the heroes to his office in the hospital for an interview. The doctor (triggered by the subconscious command) wishes to better understand the heroes' minds, believing they are experiencing a shared delusion.

This scene has the potential for some intense roleplaying. If the group likes this style of play, the Keeper should feel free to go into as much detail as they wish, playing out the scene in full. If the players would prefer to get back to the action, the Keeper can present an overview of the interview, asking the players to outline what they tell the doctor (if anything).

Despite the limited space, Dr. Thibault makes the heroes comfortable in his office. He relates some of his background (see *Dramatis Personae*, page 158)—the Keeper is encouraged to elaborate upon his backstory as desired. He then encourages each of the heroes to describe

their personal histories. Questions posed by the doctor at this point should be open, encouraging the heroes to talk.

If the heroes reveal details of their recent missions and fight against the serpent people, Thibault uses more specific questioning, believing such recollections to be at the heart of their shared delusion. He tries to confront these "delusions" with what he believes to be fact—that the heroes crash landed in the jungle, all this talk of serpent folk and the like is utter nonsense, and there was no corridor beneath the Meadham Building.

De Vooght/Zyneste and/or Van Laere/Sevestra, monitor the interview from their room, listening in on the conversation through the hidden microphones planted in the doctor's office and the heroes' isolation room. Thus, they hear everything.

If the heroes have had enough and begin to accuse Thibault of wrongdoing or lying, see *Confronting Thibault* (see page 170).

Keeper note: enterprising heroes can use this interview to their advantage, helping Thibault break free from the

control of the domination serum and thereby discover the truth. Thankfully for them, the doctor's current dose is starting to wear off.

CARGO PLANE

At some point, while in the village, the heroes hear the roar of an airplane overhead. As they look upward, a cargo plane passes over the village and drops a crate by parachute. A strong crosswind catches the parachute and the crate falls away from the village, dropping down in the jungle.

A group of eight villagers, including Kasongo, gathers to head into the jungle to retrieve the crate. They set light to torches (to fend off the tsetse flies) and begin to head out. Heroes wishing to accompany them are welcomed if at least one of them can speak French (allowing them to understand the warnings and instructions of the villagers). Professor Roux and Garreau may help if the Keeper desires.

The crate lands half a mile into the jungle, east of the village, and contains medical and food supplies for the hospital. While there are no tsetse flies to worry about, along the way, there are odd plants dotted about, which defy classification. These plants are a genetically engineered early warning system designed to alert the serpent people of any humans trying to leave the area. Standing approximately two foot tall, with barrel-shaped bodies and wide green leaves at their base, they open at the top and bloom with a five-pointed bright red flower when they sense vibrations through ground made by human footfalls (or anything heavier). At the center of the flower is a stalk that vibrates quickly, emitting a high pitch sound beyond the range of human hearing but detectable by serpent people. Everyone passing within 10 yards of the plants must pass a Hard Stealth roll: if failed, 1D3 serpent people, each riding a tyrannosaurus rex, arrive within 1D8 minutes. Successful **Listen** rolls detect their approach.

Use the statistics for Van Laere/Sevestra for the serpent people. Each of the serpent people's dinosaurs wears a gold wire framework over its head, with a green gemstone set between its eyes. This unusual headgear is also worn by the accompanying serpent person rider/handler, allowing them to telepathically control the creature. The serpent person riding on the back of the dinosaur commands the dinosaur to attack the humans.

Knocking a serpent person off its mount requires an appropriate and successful combat maneuver—a **Luck** roll determines whether the serpent person's control headset falls off their head. If it does, the dinosaur turns on its former master before indiscriminately attacking (see **Dinosaur Control**, nearby).



DINOSAUR CONTROL

In this scenario, the tyrannosaurus encountered are under the telepathic controlled of a serpent person handler (usually its rider), via a headset worn by both the rider and the dinosaur. The headset is a gold wire framework, with a green gemstone set between the eyes.

Should the handler be killed or knocked unconscious, the dinosaur is free and indiscriminately attacks anything moving about nearby, serpent folk included. Another serpent person may pick up the headset and use it to gain immediate control of the dinosaur. Should a hero attempt to wear the headset and control the dinosaur, an opposed **POW** roll versus the dinosaur's **POW** (60) should be made. If successful, the hero now commands the dinosaur.

If using the headset to attempt to gain control of another dinosaur still under the control of a serpent person handler, the hero can attempt to confuse the dinosaur and countermand its previous orders by winning an opposed **POW** roll versus the **POW** of the current serpent person handler.

If the heroes do not accompany the villagers looking for the crate, four survivors, including Kasongo, return, running back to the village with stories of huge lizards and walking snakes devouring their friends. Professor Roux is fascinated by their stories and tries to convince the heroes to head into the jungle with her to investigate. If they accede to the professor's wishes, they find signs of the carnage, the remains of the smashed open crate, and footprints of tyrannosaurus rex leading deeper into the jungle (towards the **Diamond Mine**, see page 175).

CONFRONTING THIBAUT

The doctor's memories of the heroes' arrival are false, altered by the serpent people through the administration of domination serum. If pressed, he can raise Vice Governor Bourget (page 160) on the radio to confirm the story; paranoid heroes might conclude (correctly) that Bourget is also a serpent person.

The heroes might pose the following questions to Dr. Thibault; possible answers are given for the Keeper to expand upon.

Where are our medical charts?

There are no medical charts, logs of their progress, or paperwork of any kind in the hospital. Thibault admits that charts have not been kept for some time, given the strain everyone is under. It is not ideal, but it is the truth.

What happened when our plane crashed?

Thibault and the nurses were alerted by the noise of the plane crashing. While the village slept, he and the nurses found the crash site and got the heroes out. They carried the heroes to the hospital that night and placed them in beds in the isolation ward. The other patients were asleep and so it's likely no one saw them arrive. Thibault explains that he did not want to alarm the patients or villagers that something went wrong with a supply drop; he feared panic might spread.

Why was our plane flying at night?

Attempting a night landing on an unlit airstrip is incredibly dangerous and not something the heroes would realistically attempt. Thibault cannot explain why the plane was flying at night. He states that the crash occurred when the plane tried to land at night on the Ulunga Diamond Mine Airfield, just outside the diamond mine, on its eastern perimeter. Thibault says that the tsetse flies have, subsequently, overrun the area and so, going back to the airstrip to examine any wreckage is ill advised.

What do you know about the diamond mine?

Unless the heroes have already spoken with the villagers, this may be the first time they hear about the diamond mine. If they ask Thibault for more information, he explains he works for Forminière, the company that operates the mine. The hospital was established to tend to the workers. The mine was shut down last year due to its low yields but the hospital was kept open. Thibault believes that the company is looking to found another mine in the vicinity; otherwise, they would have shut the hospital down with the mine. There has been no reason for him to go back to the mine since it closed, especially as his work in the hospital has always kept him so busy.

Where are all of our possessions?

Thibault explains that any possessions must have been destroyed or lost when the plane went down. If pressed about the heroes' travel documents (personal identification, passport, etc.), Thibault says there were no papers—these must also have been lost.

None of the villagers can recall hearing the crash?

With the mine so far away, Thibault says the villagers would not have heard the airplane from the village. The heroes may be confused; how did Thibault and the nurses hear it then? Thibault can give no explanation.

What do you know about Caduceus?

The doctor knows nothing of serpent people and believes Caduceus to be a humanitarian organization.

However the confrontation plays out, the heroes are liable to grow annoyed, dismayed, and incredulous with Thibault's responses. The more they press, the more confused the doctor becomes, with the heroes possibly able to break open the false memories implanted by the serpent people. If a **Psychoanalysis** or **Hypnotism** roll is successful, the heroes can help Thibault remember the truth.

With the false memories gone, Thibault is able to recall working in his office on the night of the "crash". He remembers movement at the far end of the hospital and found nurse De Vooght ordering some of the locals (in fact, controlled test subjects) to carry the heroes into the isolation ward. De Vooght told him about the plane crash and he accepted it. He recalls the nurse saying that he should interview the new patients when they showed signs of delusions.

If the heroes gain a Hard or Extreme success with their **Psychoanalysis** or **Hypnotism** roll, they are able to go deeper, breaking down more of the doctor's conditioning. In this case, Thibault realizes he has been performing the same tests on the infected patients again and again. Each time repeating tests to achieve the same, inconclusive, results. If pressed about the nurses, the doctor recalls often drinking tea prepared by nurse De Vooght. As the memories flood back, he remembers the tea tastes a little of raspberries.

Keeper note: De Vooght/Zyneste's tea is laced with domination serum, which does taste somewhat like raspberries.

Should the heroes use **Psychoanalysis** or **Hypnotism** with nurse Tétrault (whose last dose of domination serum is fading), they can achieve similar results, with Tétrault able to recall that, every couple of weeks, nurse Van Laere has been serving her raspberry flavored tea.

De Vooght/Zyneste or Van Laere/Sevestra are, naturally, reluctant to sit for the heroes while they are mentally probed. Initially, the disguised serpent people say they have no time to indulge the heroes and make themselves look busy around the hospital but, if pressed or cornered, they don't wait for their cover to be blown and go on the offensive—see **Zyneste and Sevestra Discovered**, page 172.

Zyneste and Sevestra Discovered

Once the serpent people's mental control of Dr. Thibault's and/or nurse De Vooght's has been broken, the heroes may seek further evidence of wrongdoing by De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra. The heroes are likely to want to search the hospital. If they can distract De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra, searching the disguised serpent people's room probably uncovers the radio receiver, while searching the doctor's office or their own isolation room finds the microphones with a successful **Spot Hidden** roll (see **The Hospital**, page 165). If the heroes' attempt to distract the serpent people goes wrong, De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra see through the ruse and enact their escape plan (see following).

When De Vooght/Zyneste and Van Laere/Sevestra realize the game is up and their cover is blown, or if they are confronted, they attempt to open the **Tsetse Fly Cache** (page 168). Using their panic buttons (hidden in their pockets) they aim to release the tsetse flies and spread panic throughout the village, allowing them to escape to **The Diamond Mine** (page 175). If the disguised serpent people can be seen, observant heroes may be allowed a **Psychology** roll to figure that the "nurses" are up to something, or a **Spot Hidden** roll to notice the nurses' hands fiddling with something in their pockets (the panic button)—if the heroes act immediately, they may be able to prevent the release of the flies. If the heroes win an opposed **DEX** or **Fighting** roll, they are able to stop the serpent people from pushing the panic buttons in time. In this event, a fight breaks out, the serpent people aiming to incapacitate their attackers and escape at the first opportunity. Should the serpent people suffer damage, their disguises fall away.

If either of the serpent people escape, the heroes can try to follow them through the jungle with a successful **Track** roll; however, the heroes run the risk of activating the plant defenses (see **Cargo Plane**, page 170) and attracting serpent people patrols. If Kasongo is aware of the situation—especially if he sees one of the serpent nurses' disguises failing—he offers to accompany the heroes to confront the monsters, as he wants to make them pay for what they have done to Kenda and Meta. Professor Roux and Garreau could also be convinced to lend assistance—if tempted by the prospect of capturing a living "lizard man".

If De Vooght/Zyneste is captured at any point, a successful **Intimidate** roll forces her to reveal the elaborate plan designed to discover what the heroes actually know concerning the truth behind Caduceus. In addition, De Vooght/Zyneste confirms that the heroes were brought here through the Gate underneath the Meadham Building. Van Laere/Sevestra, on the other hand, opts to fight to the death and so reveals nothing of the plan.

Interrogating De Vooght/Zyneste also provides the Keeper with a chance to convey information about Caduceus's wider plans for the human race to the heroes. How much she knows about the bigger picture is left to the Keeper to decide. If this chapter occurs fairly late in the campaign and the heroes have yet to learn the whole truth, this could be a good chance to fill in gaps in their knowledge. Conversely, if this chapter occurs early in the campaign, the Keeper probably wants to limit the information (thus, De Vooght/Zyneste knows little of the bigger picture).

THE DOCK

The 5.5 mile journey to the dock initially takes the heroes north along a dirt road for 4.5 miles over open grassland, followed by another mile through hot and sticky jungle. Kasongo can accompany the heroes if his help is requested; Roux and Garreau might join the heroes if they feel confident about the heroes' capabilities—and if they are well armed.

Tsetse flies dart about the area. Call for a **Luck** roll per hero per day to see if anyone is bitten (see **The Mutated Variation, Sleeping Sickness**, page 162). Heroes taking precautions (covering all bare skin) do not need to make a **Luck** roll, although the heat of the jungle compounded by their clothing requires a successful **CON** roll (per day) to avoid heat exhaustion—causing 1D3 damage and, if the hero continues without resting, imposing a penalty die to rolls concerning physical exertion.

Emerging from the jungle, the heroes see a riverbank clearing from where three jetties extend. Fishing boats have been hauled up to stand on the shore. A couple of boats can be seen partially submerged, still tied to the jetties—if the heroes take a closer look at these two boats, it's clear their hulls have been smashed. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals a large six-inch long tooth (left by the mosasaur) protruding from the wreckage. While a successful **Natural World** roll can estimate how big the owner of the tooth would be: approximately 50 feet long (SIZ 470).

Professor Roux and Garreau's steam-powered narrow boat that can also be seen, still tied to a jetty. This vessel can easily hold a crew of ten plus cargo. A closer look at the narrow boat finds the engine and rudder are damaged (from the mosasaur attack), requiring a **Hard Mechanical Repair** roll to repair. If failed, a push roll temporarily fixes the engine for five minutes, which then breaks irreparably.

Other than the boats, there is little by way of usable equipment to salvage other than a few fishing nets that could otherwise have been obtained in Ulunga.

The River

If the heroes attempt to escape the area by following the river (either by boat or on foot, in either direction), a few miles along, they come across a plantation with a grand house looking. The area looks deserted.

If they stop to investigate, the heroes find the remains of the staff and owners dotted around the house. Their bodies are swarming with mutated tsetse flies and countless maggots that have stripped most of the flesh from the corpses (**Sanity** roll, 0/1D3 loss). Searching through the house, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll locates 1D6 rifles, 1D3 handguns, and associated ammunition to supply the group. Machetes can be found in a tool shed.

Heading further along the river, the heroes spy a large ripple in the water, seemingly heading towards them. A round later, a mosasaur attacks. Unlike the other dinosaurs, which are controlled by the serpent people (see **Into the Jungle**, following), the mosasaur has been left to roam the waterways and attack anything it desires. The dinosaur attempts to sink the heroes' boat, which it can do with a successful **Fighting** attack opposed by a **Pilot (Boat)** roll. Failing to sink the boat outright, the mosasaur proceeds to bite chunks out of the hull. In just a few moments, the heroes' boat is letting on water and sinking.



PLAYTEST NOTES

The mosasaur attack created absolute panic in one of the playtest groups. After the beast's first assault, the boat was left spiraling out of control. The Keeper asked for a **Pilot (Boat)** roll to stop the boat from capsizing as the creature rammed it repeatedly. It was at this point that the players realized that none of them had any skill points in **Pilot (Boat)** and that the skill's base chance is 1%, necessitating significant **Luck** expenditure!

The heroes can exit the craft and swim to shore with a successful **Swim** roll (one success is all that is required but those failing can attempt a roll each round, or be pulled along by their colleagues who make successful rolls). There is no time for a hero to drown, as the mosasaur attacks the hero who failed the **Swim** roll by the worst degree each round until no-one is left in the water. Once everyone has reached land, the mosasaur disappears into the muddy waters once more.

Pressing on further along the river on foot (or by boat if they are lucky enough to escape the mosasaur and have an intact boat), within another mile, the heroes come across an immense cloud of tsetse flies. Trying to push any further forward involves entering the swarm, where being bitten by flies and contracting sleeping sickness is a very real and likely threat—call for a **Luck** roll to avoid being bitten unless the heroes are completely covered.

If the heroes decide to press on, they encounter one such swarm every day. Furthermore, don't forget about heatstroke—being fully covered in the jungle for prolonged periods necessitates a **CON** roll. Failure results in 1D3 damage from heat exhaustion and a penalty die to physical exertion rolls if the person does not rest.

A group **Luck** roll is also required each day to avoid patrols of 1D3 serpent people, each mounted on a tyrannosaurus rex, which have been dispatched to bring the heroes to the laboratory. The heroes' escape has left the serpent people no choice but to capture and hold the heroes in confinement until the nerve agent has left their system, which then allows them to use domination serum to interrogate the heroes.

Traveling through the thick jungle is slow progress, but after a week, the heroes reach the edge of the infested area. Soon after, they can make their own arrangements to get home (which the Keeper is encouraged to improvise). If the heroes follow the river, the nearest airfields are in Kole (37 miles west of Ulunga) and Lodja (30 miles east of Ulunga). If the heroes decide to head overland, the nearest airfields are in Gengwa (28 miles north of Ulunga) and Bena Dibebe (44 miles south of Ulunga).

If they prefer to avoid the tsetse swarms and patrols, the heroes can turn back and head into the jungle for Ulunga. If Kasongo is with the heroes, he certainly prefers to head back rather than go on, and can lead the way to the village. Those leaving the river for the jungle now run the risk of activating plant defenses set by the serpent people (see **Into the Jungle**, following).

INTO THE JUNGLE

Heroes leaving the village and heading into the jungle at any point risk attack from serpent person patrols. Refer to the **Cargo Plane** (page 170) for details of the serpent people's plant detection system, which if triggered alerts a nearby patrol to arrive within 1D8 minutes. Otherwise, call for a group **Luck** roll for each day spent in the jungle: if failed, a serpent person patrol (1D3 serpent people each with a tyrannosaurus rex) crosses the heroes' path.

How long the heroes spend in the jungle is up to them but the longer they stay, the greater the chance of discovery



by the serpent people. Once discovered, the serpent people send out patrols to hunt and capture the heroes. Any heroes so caught are taken to **The Laboratory** (see page 177). Call for a **Navigate** roll each day to see if the heroes get lost. Otherwise, the heroes may end up circling through the jungle to arrive either at **The Dock** (page 172), **The Diamond Mine** (following), or, perhaps very luckily, back in **Ulunga** (page 166).

THE DIAMOND MINE

Following the road south out of Ulunga is the easiest way to reach the mine, taking about four hours to reach (at a steady pace). The way is lined with motion-detecting engineered plants, requiring everyone passing within 10 yards to pass a **Hard Stealth** roll; otherwise, 1D3 serpent people, each with a tyrannosaurus rex, arrive within 1D8 minutes (see **Cargo Plane**, page 170).

A strong chain-link fence, topped with barbed wire, surrounds the mine site, keeping animals and other unwanted visitors out. Looking in through the fence, the heroes see a handful of seemingly abandoned buildings, which look like offices, tool stores, and workers' quarters. Beyond the buildings, at the center of the compound appears to be an immense pit—the heroes can see little more unless they move past the fence and enter the site.

Getting over or through the fence requires either wire cutters or a successful **Climb** roll—climbing the fence is easy, the roll decides whether the hero gets entangled on the barbed wire. If entangled, a successful **DEX** roll frees the hero; failure means the hero rips clothing and suffers 1 point of damage.

Once inside the fence, the heroes can see the vast pit in the middle of the compound, hundreds of feet across and over 100 feet deep. In the center of the pit stands a stone pyramid, the summit of which almost reaches to the top of the pit. There are no windows in the pyramid and only one entrance (at ground level) can be seen. Around the base of the pyramid are the humans the serpent people have used as test subjects for the disease, turning them into mindless slaves (see **The Mutated Variation**, page 162). Hundreds shamble aimlessly, occasionally wandering towards troughs containing water and liquidized food.

The test subjects are not comprised solely of the indigenous population. Potential witnesses and loose ends from the heroes previous adventures might be seen among the horde, brought here by Caduceus agents to be used as test subjects so that they may be silenced. Successful **Spot Hidden** rolls identify individuals that the heroes have previously met (e.g. Bolivian soldiers, North



DESCRIBING THE JUNGLE

The jungle is characterized by tall, closely packed trees, occasionally giving way to small clearings full of thick, high grass. The shade of the trees is more preferable towards the middle of the day, when the heat of the sun in the cloudless sky is most intense. Humidity is high, drenching the heroes in sweat.

The sounds of life are everywhere. The cacophony of buzzing insects never stops, even at night. During the day, every now and then a bird call is heard echoing through the trees. Occasionally, a sudden flurry marks a bird taking flight above the trees; a myriad of bright colored feathers and long beaks. Heroes looking up see strange pairs of eyes staring down at them from all manner of monkeys, lizards, and birds. While at the ground level, the heroes are accosted by the insects and flies.

A thick carpet of vegetation grows between the trees, making progress very slow going. Machetes are required to hack through the vines that dangle down from the trees, many of which have woven together to form impassable walls. Likewise, thick bushes hamper progress.

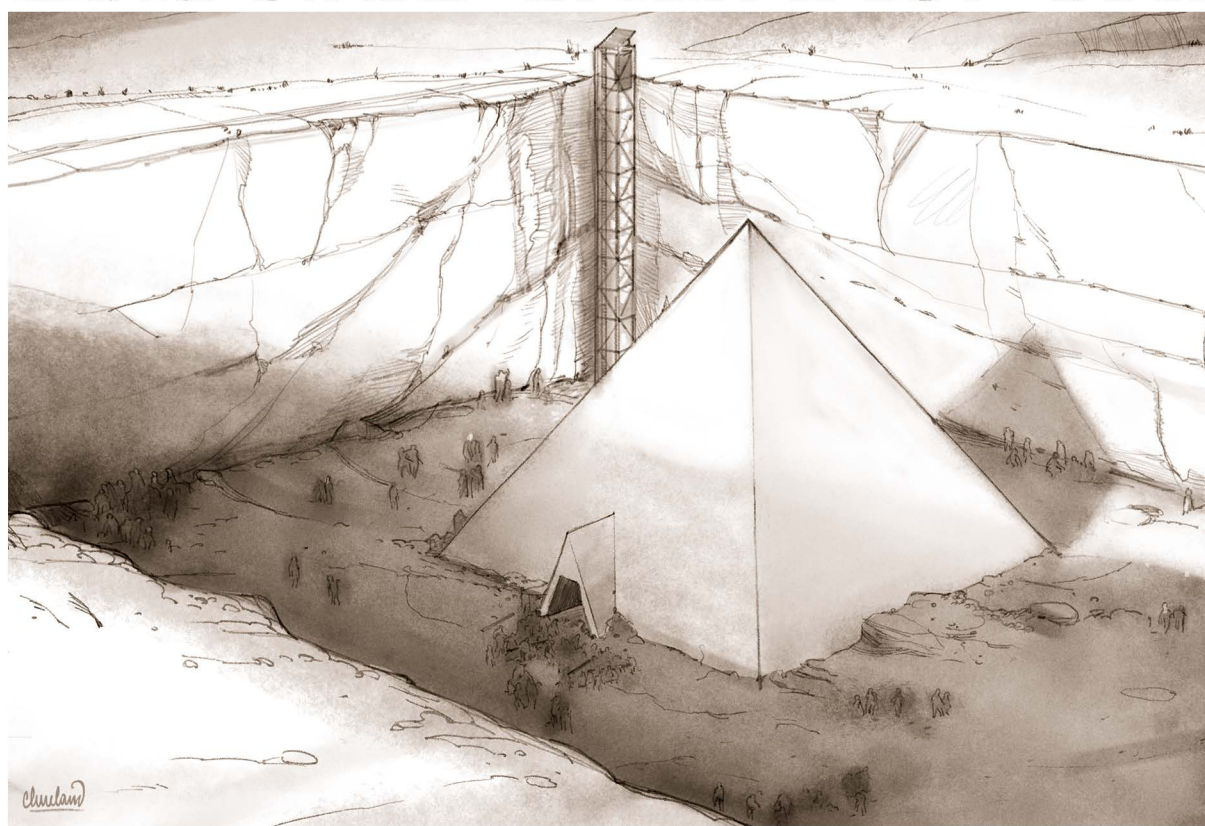
Borneo farmers, Icelanders, Oklahoma townsfolk, and so on). Recognizing these individuals prompts a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss).

Four lifts are positioned equidistantly around the edge of the pit. Each has two plates inside for the operator to place their hand upon and direct the lift up and down. These devices require the expenditure of 1 magic point to activate them, ensuring that the test subjects cannot accidentally escape, as they do not possess the willpower necessary to operate the devices.

The test subjects are harmless and the heroes are ignored, as the zombie-like humans will not attack unless ordered to by their serpent masters. They simply shamble on, drooling with vacant eyes and emotionless expressions. Should they be commanded to attack, they become extremely dangerous. In this case, treat the test subjects like a hoard of zombies, who attack the heroes en masse. If the heroes have been careful, then the serpent folk are not aware of their arrival, allowing the heroes to pass through the test subjects without incident.

Beside the entrance to the pyramid is a serpent person hand-shaped sensor pad, which takes a small blood sample





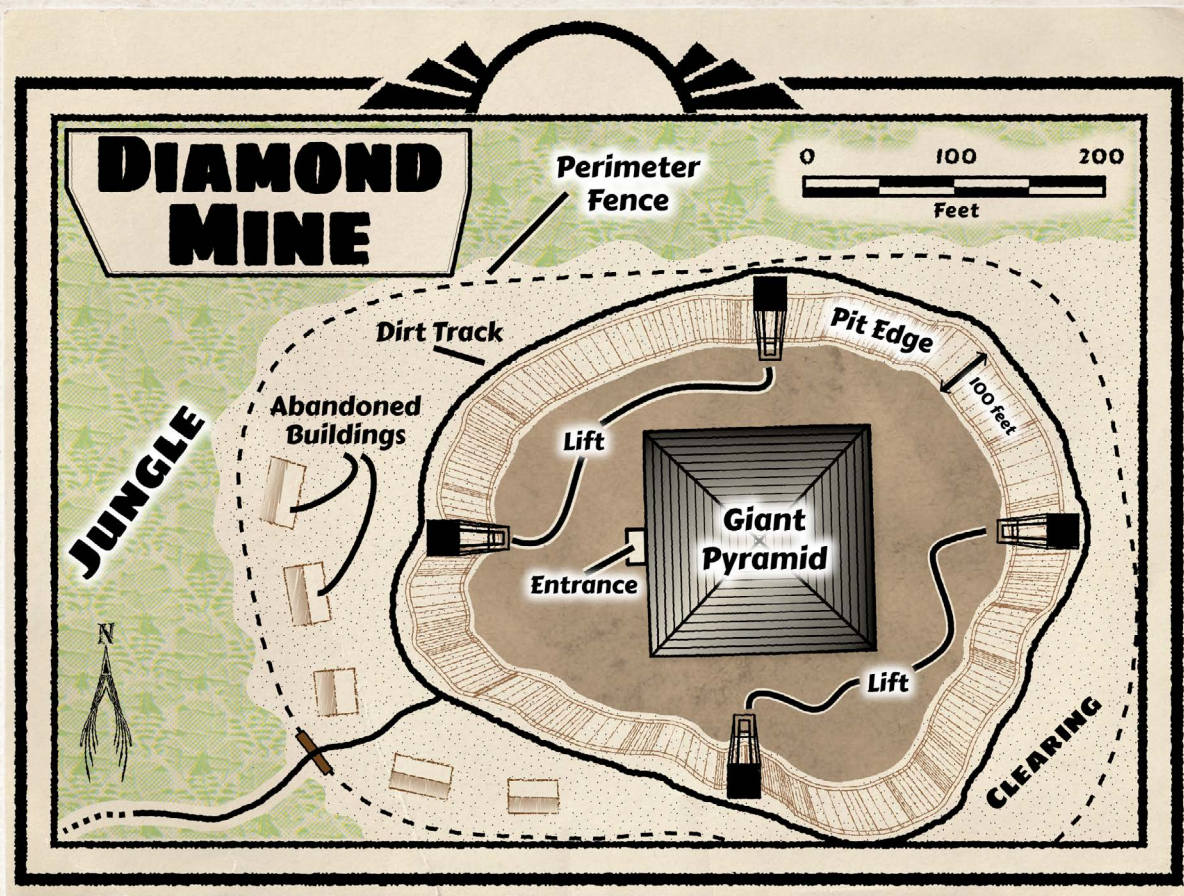
PLAYTEST NOTES

Entering the pyramid proved a problem for one of the playtest groups. While they had a serpent person hybrid among their number, she was the only hero not to try the door. In the end, another hero, who was a skilled mechanic, risked his life to disassemble the flamethrower and turn it into a bomb. The resulting explosion blew a hole in the wall of the pyramid, which the heroes promptly walked through, any element of surprise long gone.

If your group has trouble working out how to open the door, you should be receptive to any creative solutions they come up with. If all else fails, maybe the heroes create enough of a disturbance that one of the serpent people in the pyramid comes out to investigate.

through a pin-like device in its center. Those that have undergone partial hybridization are recognized as a serpent person and the door opens. If serpent person DNA is not registered, a funnel emerges from an opening above the door and engulfs the area in a jet of fire on the following round, causing 4D10 damage. Cautious heroes who notice (**Listen** or **Spot Hidden** roll) the funnel emerging can step back before being burnt by the fire; otherwise, a **Dodge** roll is required to get out of the area in time. A severed serpent person hand is the safest way to open the door but, if necessary, the door can be forced opened (STR 200; or damage amounting to 40 hit points—the door has 4 armor points). Once through the door, the heroes have gained access to the serpent people's laboratory (see following).

Keeper note: although a cure for the mutated version of sleeping sickness can be found in the laboratory (see **Store Room and Armory**, page 180), the test subjects around the outside of the pyramid are too far gone to be saved.



THE LABORATORY

Inside the pyramid, the laboratory is divided into a series of rooms radiating off a central atrium, lit from above by a sphere of light at the top of the pyramid. A spiral staircase coils around the atrium wall, leading to the various rooms on the ground and upper levels. In the center of the atrium is another, smaller, spiral stairwell leading down to the lower level.

The number of serpent scientists and soldiers in the facility at any one time is determined by the Keeper, allowing this location to be as combative as they wish. While certain rooms have a stated number of serpent occupants, the Keeper is free to lower or raise these numbers.

A successful **Stealth** roll is required to move undetected through one of the complexes levels, as there is always activity with serpent people moving up and down the outer staircase in the atrium. If spotted, a serpent person attempts to sound an alarm, which quick acting heroes may be able to prevent. If the alarm is operated, things quickly descend into all-out conflict with the serpent soldiers breaking out weapons from the armory (see following) and hurrying to the alarm's location. The serpent scientists

initially avoid becoming involved in combat, some may try to flee through the Gate back to the Meadham building to report (or call for reinforcements), which could further complicate issues for the heroes.

Details of the various rooms within the pyramid follow.

Ground Level

First Surgery Room

This room holds a number of metal operating tables and rows of surgical equipment, surrounded by twenty holding pens for human test subjects. The test subjects are being transformed, surgically and genetically, into copies of Rose Meadham (like those found in **The Lower Basements** of the Meadham Building in **Chapter 2: New York City**, see page 57)—if the heroes have not encountered or seen Rose before, they obviously have no clue as to who this person is. The Rose replicas are clearly derived from different ethnic groups, and all are drugged to keep them subdued. Each shows various degrees of physical accuracy (only really noticeable if the heroes have seen the real Rose Meadham).

A number of failed experiments, where the resemblance is only partial or completely way out, have been stabbed through the forehead, with their bodies stacked on a trolley in a corner, awaiting disposal. Two serpent scientists are currently working in here and try to escape if approached by the heroes.

Second Surgery Room:

Identical in layout as the first surgery room, the nature of the work being conducted here is different. The holding pens contain sedated human test subjects. Four serpent scientists experiment on humans strapped to the operating tables. The subjects' brains have been exposed, with various wires and probes inserted to monitor responses to drugs, which are being injected into their brains. Others have had sections of their skin peeled back and their nervous system is slowly being unraveled—all while the subjects remain alive and conscious! The sights, screams, and moans provoke a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss).

Keeper note: if the heroes are captured, they will be secured in the pens in this room. A **Locksmith** roll or Extreme **STR** roll is required to break open the pen doors.

Fly Breeding and DNA Storage

Large glass tubes, running from floor to ceiling around the edges of this room, contain a green mist, within which are swarms of the mutated tsetse flies. The flies are being grown (yet to reach maturity) in a biological agent, which infects them with the mutated version of the sleeping sickness.

Copies of the notes documenting experiments with various viruses on patients at the hospital (see **Tsetse Fly Cache**, page 168) may also be found here.

Upper Level

Cloning Laboratory

A glass storage cabinet containing thousands of small vials fills an entire wall. The vials contain the DNA of various dinosaurs, animals, and plant life long-since extinct but preserved by the serpent people. On the far side of the room is a huge glass tank full of oxygenated liquid. Inside, a baby tyrannosaurus rex is suspended by cables, while a serpent person administers food through a tube running into its mouth. This is where the dinosaurs are grown.

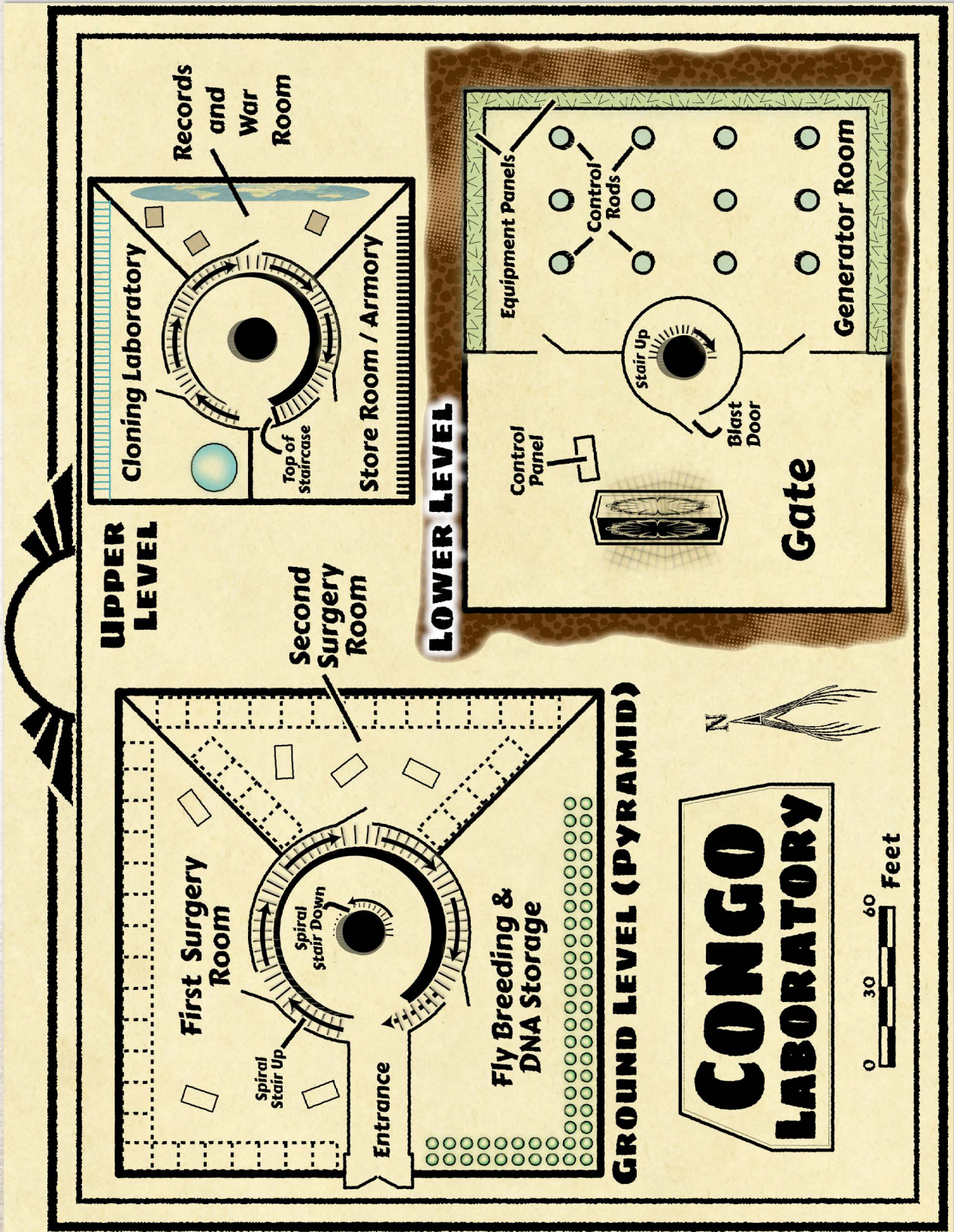
Records and War Room

A map of the world dominates the far wall. Various sites are marked—each appears to be a mass population center. Rings have been drawn, radiating out from these centers, as if to mark a blast radius.

Keeper note: the maps shows places where the serpent people's bio-weapon would need to be deployed to have maximum effect. The radiating rings denote the spread of the infection through the populace. Scientific heroes can deduce the schematics easily, while others might require an **INT** roll.

Various tables around the room hold files containing reports about the various experiments conducted in the laboratory. The heroes can possibly skim read these, getting the gist of the information (see following), while practical heroes are likely to gather up the reports for leisurely reading later. The reports are mostly written in English although some of the older material is in Naacal.

- The mutated form of the sleeping sickness is an accelerated version of the disease, quickly destroying higher brain functions. Infected subjects can later be exposed to a neural agent, administered through a procedure, turning the brain dead humans into willing slaves.
- The serpent scientists appear to have perfected the process and have managed to further mutate the disease so that it contains the neural agent, allowing humanity to be enslaved through a single exposure (i.e. no need for a second procedure).
- While the serpent scientists have perfected the disease that can turn humanity into a slave race, a delivery mechanism to spread it effectively throughout the world is still required. The mutated tsetse flies were one possible solution but the reports indicate that the flies cannot be used in all climates and that their spread is too slow. Thus, the serpent people are still searching for a universal solution. One report makes mention of biomechanical flies, which are being designed to replace organic tsetse flies, and suggests that the facilities in the Citadel on Mu will make it quicker and easier to manufacture them.
- One of maps on the wall is of the South Atlantic, and has a landmass the size of a small continent drawn on it, off the eastern coast of South America. Brazil is the nearest point to its shores. The landmass is labeled "Mu." There are lines drawn from a location on Mu, labeled "The Citadel," to heavily populated areas around the world.
- Notes and documents pinned to the board make reference to the use of transport spheres as a mechanism for distributing the biomechanical flies from Mu, once it has been returned to Earth.
- Importantly, for those infected with sleeping sickness, the reports detail a chemical formula for the cure of the mutated version of sleeping sickness. The report mocks humanity, stating that the cure's complexity,



coupled with the infancy of human science, are beyond mankind's ability. Humanity will not be able to develop a cure before the world population has been enslaved. The report also states that a number of vials of the cure are kept in the laboratory's storage facility (see **Store Room and Armory**).

- Copies of **Handout: New York 4, Update on the Activities of the Inner Night** (see page 53) and **Handout: New York 6, Research on the Facilities Available at the Citadel** (see page 55) can also be found here.

Store Room and Armory

All of the equipment and weapons that were taken from the heroes after they came through the Gate can be found here. Mounted on one wall is a row of laser staffs (see **Appendix B**, page 253). In addition, vials of carotid toxin (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 269) and domination serum are stored here, alongside samples of the cure for the mutated version of sleeping sickness, as well as other drugs. All are clearly marked, so no skill rolls are required to notice or understand what these vials contain. If heroes infected with sleeping sickness take the cure, it halts the symptoms of the disease and returns all lost INT within 1D3 rounds. If Kasongo is with the heroes, he insists on taking as much of the cure as he can carry. With this, he waves goodbye and runs out, attempting to head back to the hospital so he can save Kenda and Meta. Kasongo runs through any and all opposition, leaping over and between serpent people like a man possessed (which cunning heroes could use as a distraction).

Lower Level

Gate Room

At the base of the pyramid, a heavy blast door (100 hit points, 10 armor) stands ajar. Beyond is an empty room, where the Gate is a free standing metal doorframe in the middle of the room, resembling its twin housed in the corridor of the Meadham building. A nearby control panel can deactivate the sensors positioned in the pillars lining the corridor below the Meadham Building (see **Player Introduction**, page 153) before the heroes exit—otherwise the heroes' presence will activate the sensors when they arrive back in the corridor in New York (successful INT roll to figure this out). Travel through the Gate costs 3 magic points and 1 Sanity point.

Generator Room

The laboratory's generator is nuclear powered. The control room is built on top of the generator itself, with controls

panels around the walls and control rods set into the floor. The rods can be lowered into the floor to regulate power output.

The laboratory does not have a dedicated self-destruct mechanism but a combined **Mechanical Repair** and **Electrical Repair** roll at Extreme difficulty (Hard for those with the Weird Science talent) can sabotage the generator, overloading it to achieve the desired result. Success starts a chain reaction, leaving the heroes with five minutes to escape through the Gate before the laboratory and everything in a 2-mile radius is destroyed in a nuclear explosion. As the Gate is destroyed in the process, the explosion does not extend through it into New York City. If the combined roll is failed, it simply means the attempt was unsuccessful and nothing happens, while a fumble or failed Pushed roll starts an accelerated chain reaction, with an explosion occurring in 3D10 rounds.

CONCLUSION

What reception the heroes find waiting for them back at the Meadham Building depends on how much of a disturbance they make at the laboratory in the Belgian Congo. If any of the serpent person scientists managed to escape through the Gate, the heroes could face a running battle through the building to escape onto the streets of New York City. Alternatively, if Caduceus are unaware of the situation developing at the laboratory, the heroes could use **Stealth** to quietly exit the building or even make their way upstairs, acting their part as Caduceus employees. In either case—unless the heroes escaped by conventional means, in which case they may not have seen the secrets of the laboratory—the heroes now know the dark truth at the heart of Caduceus.

In the Belgian Congo, as long as the laboratory remains active, the infestation of tsetse flies continues. If the laboratory is destroyed, all members of the Cult of Yig withdraw (including Vice Governor Bourget). No longer being required, the flies eventually die out over the course of a couple of weeks and the area slowly returns to normal.

If the heroes blew up the laboratory, it takes weeks for news of the explosion to reach the outside world. The authorities have no idea what could have caused it, so rely on the best scientific guess they can muster: a large meteorite struck the area.

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- Breaking the mental control over Dr. Thibault and/or nurse Tétrault +1D3 Sanity points per person.
- Killing the mosasaur +1D6 Sanity points.

- Helping Professor Roux and Garreau capture substantive evidence of a cryptid +1D4 Sanity points.
- Destroying the tsetse fly cache in Ulunga before it could be released +1D4 Sanity points.
- Not preventing the release of the tsetse fly cache upon Ulunga -1D4 Sanity points.
- Destroying the laboratory +1D8 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Dr. Mason Thibault, 40, Belgian doctor

STR 45 CON 60 SIZ 60 DEX 65 INT 90
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 95 SAN 45 HP 12
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 47%, English 55%, First Aid 70%, French 85%, Medicine 80%, Listen 50%, Persuade 65%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 70%, Tshiluba 60%.

Equipment: doctor's bag and associated equipment, plus four syringes of powerful sedatives (Extreme CON roll to resist or target falls unconscious for 1D3 hours (damage or physical shock sustained in this time automatically awakens the target)).

Nurse Fleurette Tétrault, 35, Belgian nurse

STR 50 CON 55 SIZ 50 DEX 70 INT 85
APP 70 POW 55 EDU 85 SAN 50 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 11 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills

English 65%, First Aid 75%, French 80%, Medicine 40%, Listen 60%, Persuade 70%, Spot Hidden 65%, Tshiluba 55%.

Equipment: two syringes of powerful sedatives (Extreme CON roll to resist or target falls unconscious for 1D3 hours (damage or physical shock sustained in this time automatically awakens the target)).

Nurse Melania De Vooght, appears 50, serpent scientist disguised as a nurse

Use this profile for all serpent people scientists.

STR 55 CON 60 SIZ 50 DEX 90 INT 95
APP 60* POW 80 EDU — SAN — HP 11
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 16 Luck: 40

**As human.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (usual range of unarmed attacks open to humanoids)

Bite: shares the characteristics of the indigenous black mamba snake, which have particularly deadly venom. The target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 2D10 damage.

Fighting 70% (35/14), damage 1D3, or scalpel 1D4
Bite 45% (22/9), damage 1D8 + poison
Dodge 50% (25/10)

Skills

Climb 60%, English 50%, Fast Talk 60%, First Aid 60%, French 70%, Jump 70%, Medicine 75%, Listen 55%, Persuade 70%, Spot Hidden 65%, Stealth 60%, Tshiluba 50%.

Armor: 1-point scales.

Spells: Consume Likeness, Shadow Mastery (see Appendix B, page 257).

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent person.

Equipment: six syringes of powerful sedatives (Extreme CON roll to resist or target falls unconscious for 1D3 hours (damage or physical shock sustained in this time automatically awakens the target)), scalpels, and two vials of domination serum.

Nurse Geertruyd Van Laere, appears 45, serpent soldier disguised as a nurse

Use this profile for all serpent people soldiers.

STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 55 DEX 100 INT 85
APP 65* POW 70 EDU — SAN — HP 12
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 14 Luck: 35

**As human.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (usual range of unarmed attacks open to humanoids)

Bite: shares the characteristics of the indigenous black mamba snake, which have particularly deadly venom. The target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 2D10 damage.

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage 1D3 + 1D4, or scalpel 1D4 + 1D4
Bite	50% (25/10), damage 1D8 + poison
Laser staff*	45%, (22/9), damage 1D10+5 heat damage
Dodge	60% (30/12)

**Serpent soldiers only. The laser beam ignores mundane armor (i.e. not applicable to Mythos monsters of non-terrestrial origin) and inflicts 1D10+5 heat damage. Each staff can hold 8 shots before needing to be recharged for 10 hours.*

Skills

Climb 80%, English 50%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 55%, French 60%, Jump 75%, Listen 60%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 80%, Tshiluba 40%.

Armor: 1-point scales.

Spells: Consume Likeness, Shadow Mastery (see Appendix B).

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent person.

Equipment: six syringes of powerful sedatives (Extreme CON roll to resist or target falls unconscious for 1D3 hours (damage or physical shock sustained in this time automatically awakens the target)), scalpels, and two vials of domination serum.

Professor Carole Roux, 35, zoologist

STR 45 CON 65 SIZ 50 DEX 60 INT 95
APP 75 POW 65 EDU 96 SAN 62 HP 11
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 13 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3, or machete 1D8
.303 rifle	45% (22/9), damage 2D6+4
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Anthropology 40%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating 50%, English 45%, French 90%, Latin 40%, Natural World 85%, Navigate 40%, Occult 25%, Science (Zoology) 75%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 55%, Track 50%.

Manville Garreau, 38, big game hunter

STR 55 CON 70 SIZ 65 DEX 80 INT 80
APP 65 POW 70 EDU 80 SAN 65 HP 13
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 14 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3, or machete 1D8
Elephant gun	80% (40/16), damage 3D6+4
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 40%, Climb 55%, English 40%, French 80%, Intimidate 40%, Listen 40%, Pilot (Boat) 35%, Navigate 80%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 75%, Survival (Jungle) 45%, Track 80%, Tshiluba 40%.

Kasongo Odia, 35, village chief and fisherman

STR 60 CON 70 SIZ 65 DEX 70 INT 60
APP 55 POW 55 EDU 65 SAN 55 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 11 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3 + 1D4
Spear	60% (30/12), damage 1D8 + 1D4
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Charm 65%, Climb 50%, English 20%, French 45%, German 10%, Listen 50%, Navigate 70%, Pilot (Boat) 80%, Spanish 20%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 65%, Swim 80%, Track 45%, Tshiluba 75%.

Luba Villagers

Use this profile for the average villager.

STR 50 CON 60 SIZ 55 DEX 60 INT 55
APP 50 POW 55 EDU 60 SAN 55 HP 11
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 11 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Spear	45% (22/9), damage 1D8
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

French 40%, Listen 45%, Spot Hidden 45%, Track 60%, Tshiluba 70%.

BELGIAN CONGO

Mosasaur, giant aquatic monster

Huge carnivorous aquatic lizards, 50 feet long, with a barrel-shaped body, long tail, and four flippers. Its head somewhat resembles a crocodile. Its primary habitat is water, where it propels itself through the shallows much like a shark. Preys on fish and anything tasty that wanders into the water.

STR 420 **CON** 260 **SIZ** 470 **DEX** 65 **INT** 15
APP — **POW** 60 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 73
DB: +10D6 **Build:** 11 **Move:** 12* **MP:** 12 **Luck:** 0
**Swimming.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite or body slam)

Fighting attacks: the creature's default method of attack is to bite, swimming up to the target below the waterline and then bursting through the surface. If the target is large (such as a boat) it will propel itself half out of the water and slam down its body weight on the target in an effort to knock it under the surface, where it can more easily be bitten.

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D10 + 10D6
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Detect Prey 45%.

Armor: 14-point hide.

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a living mosasaur.

Tyrannosaurus Rex, king of the dinosaurs

These bipedal beasts are 40 feet in length and some 13 feet tall. Able to walk with their bodies almost horizontal, balanced by a long tail, they rear up when attacking.

Each tyrannosaurus rex is fitted with a telepathic control headset, linked to his or her serpent person handler, who also wears a similar headset. Should the controller die or fall unconscious, the dinosaur is free of the control and acts of its own accord, likely to attack its former master and then anything else that moves. See **Dinosaur Control**, page 170 for further details.

STR 335 **CON** 175 **SIZ** 265 **DEX** 80 **INT** 15
APP — **POW** 65 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 44
DB: +6D6 **Build:** 7 **Move:** 12 **MP:** 13 **Luck:** 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite, tear with its fore claws, or kick)

Fighting attacks: the beast's default method of attack is to bite. It may use its fore claws to grab prey, allowing it to take an automatic bite on the following round. When facing smaller opponents, the beast may attempt to kick them, inflicting damage and propelling the target away by 2D10 yards.

Fighting	50% (25/10), damage 2D6 + 6D6, or kick 1D6 + 6D6 (thrown 2D10 yards)
Grab and Bite	(mnvr) damage 1D6 + 6D6, following round automatic bite 2D6 + 6D6
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Jump 50%, Listen 45%, Sense Prey 35%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track 50%.

Armor: 10-point hide.

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a living tyrannosaurus rex.

Human Test Subjects

Use this profile for all of the test subjects.

STR 60 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 35 **INT** 05
APP — **POW** 05 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 11
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 6 **MP:** 1 **Luck:** 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (rip, tear, bite)

Fighting attacks: harmless unless commanded to attack by their serpent masters.

Fighting	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Dodge:	lacking volition, this is not an option

Skills

Shamble Aimlessly 90%.

Armor: none.

Sanity loss: none.



CALCUTTA

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

— William Shakespeare, *Henry IV. Part II*

THE JEWEL
IN THE CROWN

OVERVIEW

The Calcutta chapter brings all the major factions of the campaign into one location and, with them, the potential for some exciting action scenes, including a chase through the crowded backstreets of Calcutta and a showdown that should result in the elimination of at least one of the heroes' major adversaries. Events in Calcutta are designed to shake up your story and set it on a fast track towards the endgame in **Chapter 9: Mu**.

The Cobra Crown (see **Appendix B**, page 248) is a highly prized relic, considered by most to be little more than a myth. Quite how a Hindu sect came to possess the crown several centuries ago might be an interesting story but it is not explored here. All you need to know is that the sect treasures the crown as an object of great religious significance but are unaware of its true heritage or power. An independent, relic-hunting duo have recently discovered the crown's hiding place and have made plans to steal it. For the serpent people, the crown holds great symbolic importance and is also the key to circumventing the monsters that guard the Gate to Mu. When word of the crown's discovery spreads, Joshua Meadham, Rose Meadham, and Tyranissh each turn their attention to Calcutta.

If the heroes did not discover the clues in Joshua Meadham's office safe in the Meadham Building (see **Chapter 2: New York City**, page 49), refer to **Alternative Entry Points** (page 187) for ideas on how to introduce the players to this chapter.

HOW TO HANDLE THIS CHAPTER
IF TYRANISSH IS DEAD

Tyranissh plays a key role in this chapter. If she has already been eliminated in your game, pick one of the following options:

- Tyranissh returns from the dead! Her spirit possesses an NPC and she takes on her role as written in this chapter.
- Rose Meadham takes a more proactive approach and she, rather than Tyranissh, steals the crown from the sect and calls upon the Ilogor.

BACKGROUND

Long ago the Cobra Crown was stolen from Tyranissh's tomb in Bolivia. It passed through many hands and is now possessed by a religious sect in Calcutta, who revere it as a holy object. Until recently it was just another fabled artifact sought by treasure hunters the world over. Tulsidas Vikmatji is one such treasure hunter, but unlike the rest, he actually knows where the crown is.

Vikmatji and Taylor, Treasure Hunters

Tulsidas Vikmatji and Jonathan Taylor were members of the Cambridge University cricket team and struck up a firm friendship. Each yearned for a life of adventure and so chose to collaborate, traveling to remote corners of the world in search of obscure artifacts that they could sell to wealthy buyers. The fabled Cobra Crown has always featured on their wish list and, to this end, Vikmatji and Taylor have spent years poring over crumbling manuscripts and interviewing learned mystics and traders across Asia.

Vikmatji and Taylor's quest led them to cross paths with one of Rose Meadham's agents, who was also on the trail of the Cobra Crown. Both sides were guarded, wanting to find out what the other knew without giving away vital clues to a rival searcher. It was clear to the Inner Night agent that Vikmatji and Taylor were intelligent and experienced, so rather than forcing information out of them, Rose Meadham took the decision to make a deal. She met the pair in person and came to an agreement: should they finally secure the crown, they would reserve it for sale to her exclusively.

Recent Events

One month ago:

Vikmatji and Taylor find the Cobra Crown

Vikmatji and Taylor located the Cobra Crown in Calcutta. Through guile and bribery, they were permitted to view the crown and are convinced of its authenticity.

Vikmatji and Taylor's modus operandi has always been to sell to the highest bidder. While they feel obliged to sell the crown to Rose Meadham, they still wish to get the best price. So that they might have some bargaining power, they discussed the sale of the crown with a number of other potential buyers, including a curator at the India Museum in Calcutta named Vatsala Kumtekar, as well as a curious eccentric (Tyranissh in disguise).

10 days ago (Saturday):

Tyranissh comes in search of the crown

Tyranissh (in human guise) arrived in India two weeks ago and met with Vikmatji and Taylor soon after. Having just assumed a new physical form after the long journey, she was at less than her full strength and chose not to use her magical powers over Vikmatji and Taylor, believing she would get another opportunity later. Tyranissh is unaccustomed to the modern times in which she finds herself and is unaware of the impression she presented to Vikmatji and Taylor, who were so disturbed by the encounter that they chose not to meet her again. Tyranissh, however, is never idle for long. Acting on some clues that

Vikmatji let slip to her, she has begun her own search for the crown among the many temples of Calcutta. Tyranissh is also busy establishing a following in Calcutta, impressing people with her knowledge and magical abilities.

8 days ago (Monday):

The museum curator's announcement

Vatsala Kumtekar is a young and ambitious curator at the India Museum in Calcutta. He cannot believe his luck when a pair of explorers visits the museum to discuss the Cobra Crown with him. He immediately begins to fantasize about the glory he will earn by securing the Cobra Crown for the museum. Overcome with enthusiasm, he believes that Vikmatji has promised the crown to him. Kumtekar then seeks naively to raise his own professional standing by prematurely announcing a forthcoming exhibition of the Cobra Crown to the press (see **Handout: Calcutta 1**, page 189).

6 days ago (Wednesday): Rose turns up the pressure

Rose Meadham is highly vexed when she hears news of the forthcoming exhibition in the press, believing that Vikmatji and Taylor have reneged on their deal to deliver the crown to her. She meets again with the pair of treasure hunters and threatens them, demanding that they promptly secure the crown for her alone. As a sign that she is serious, she severs the little finger from each of their left hands. Vikmatji and Taylor are terrified and desperate. Unsure as to whether Rose would actually pay them for the crown or simply kill them and take it, they plot revenge on Rose, planning to take her money and leave her with a valueless imitation.

1 day ago (Monday): Joshua Meadham wades in

In the meantime, following news of the India Museum exhibition, Joshua Meadham has traveled to Calcutta. On Monday, he visits the museum and meets with Kumtekar. Later that evening Joshua Meadham and Canning visit Kumtekar's home, where the unfortunate museum curator is interrogated and then killed.

Joshua Meadham has discovered that a pair of men, Vikmatji and Taylor, were to supply Kumtekar with the crown. Joshua, together with his right-hand man Canning, sets about searching the hotels in Calcutta for Vikmatji and Taylor—a course of action that may lead to a chance meeting with the heroes.

Vikmatji and Taylor overhear Joshua Meadham enquiring after them at the Great Eastern Hotel reception and panic. Already feeling somewhat paranoid following Rose Meadham's visit, they now know that someone else is after them. They move to a different hotel—the Grand Hotel—registering under false names. Rose Meadham has an agent following them and knows their new location.

Earlier today (Tuesday)

Vikmatji and Taylor have made plans to deceive Rose Meadham with a fake crown, with the intention of taking her money and then hiding. Once they have Rose's cash, they plan to steal the real crown and flee to England.

Taylor, taking a fake crown with him, arranges to meet Rose in a public place and she plays along. Taylor's backup plan, should Rose recognize the crown as a fake, is to play dumb, pretending that he believes it to be the real crown. Vikmatji and Taylor hope either to get Rose's money or, failing that, to persuade her that they are innocent fools (hoping that she will not pursue them further). They are mistaken on both counts.

Taylor meets with Rose as planned around midday on Tuesday. She, of course, immediately recognizes the crown as a fake. Panicking, Taylor blurts out an apology and attempts to leave hastily. Seeing that he is pursued, Taylor flees directly into the path of a truck and is killed instantly, much to Rose's frustration. After confirming Taylor is dead, Rose heads directly to Vikmatji's hiding place with her goons.

As the game begins (Tuesday, just after midday)

Vikmatji is waiting anxiously in his room in the Grand Hotel for Taylor, who will never return. When Rose's goons start breaking through his door, Vikmatji flees by the balcony window, taking a second fake crown with him. The intention here is to draw the heroes into an exciting chase scene through the backstreets of Calcutta (see **Opening Scene: Chasing Vikmatji**, page 192).

When Rose hears of the death of the museum curator, she will send one of her agents to investigate, thus learning of her father's (Joshua Meadham) presence in the city.

When Tyranissh hears of the death of the museum curator, she likewise steps up her game. Unable to contact Vikmatji and Taylor, she uses the Consume Likeness spell to infiltrate a number of religious sects, hoping to chance upon the right one before the Cobra Crown is found by her enemies.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

At some point during the campaign, it is to be expected that the heroes turn against Caduceus. Understanding that they have been working for less than humanitarian organization, they (hopefully) feel the need to break into Joshua Meadham's New York City office and discover documents discussing the crown, which lead them to Calcutta (see **Chapter 2: New York City**).

Alternative methods for ensuring Joshua Meadham's documents reach the heroes are also outlined in **Chapter 2** (see **Ensuring the Heroes Find These Clues**, page 49). Failing that, there are various other clues that the Keeper can introduce that bring the players to this chapter (see **Alternate Entry Points**, following). Remember this is a pulp game and it is therefore quite appropriate for the Keeper to take a more liberal, even heavy-handed, approach to the dissemination of clues.

ALTERNATIVE ENTRY POINTS

Options for engaging heroes who have become free agents or who have allied with another faction opposed to Caduceus include the following.

Gossip and Clues at Caduceus HQ

The administration and secretarial staff in Caduceus's New York City office know of Joshua Meadham's secret trip to Calcutta. Rumors circulate quickly around the office as resources are being diverted and travel arrangements are drawn up. Secretaries speculate to one another about traveling to exotic locations as they fix their makeup in the office bathroom or gather in the break room. The heroes may overhear such conversations, sparking their interest. With a little digging, the heroes should be able to find out about Joshua Meadham's expedition to Calcutta to find the Cobra Crown.

Newspaper Reports

A forthcoming exhibition of Cobra Crown at the India Museum in Calcutta is reported in some areas of the press. The heroes may come across the article themselves or a contact might draw it to their attention. See **Handout: Calcutta 1**, see page 189.

Tyranissh

If the heroes have formed a relationship with Tyranissh, she may call upon them—perhaps under the pretext of dealing with a mutual adversary (either Joshua or Rose Meadham)—to head to Calcutta and seek out the Cobra Crown. Tyranissh is very clever and aims to use the heroes as pawns in her game to regain her lost crown. She will not hesitate to sacrifice the heroes to achieve her goal.






THE GREAT EASTERN HOTEL

Established in 1841 and situated on Dalhousie Square, the Great Eastern Hotel offers the height of luxury. The staff here are attentive yet discreet. All manner of upper-class items may be purchased within the hotel, which features shops and tailors.

Vikmatji and Taylor stayed here for several weeks and became well known to the staff. They recently panicked and moved to the Grand Hotel under false names.

Hotel staff will be able to match Vikmatji and Taylor's names with descriptions. One staff member, who was familiar with the pair, saw them in a Willard's Tearoom numerous times; it seemed to be a favorite with them. In fact, Vikmatji continues to dine there, which may lead to a chance meeting (see *Chance Meeting at Willard's Tearoom*, page 199).

Joshua Meadham will visit this hotel in his search for Vikmatji and Taylor, which may lead to a chance meeting with the heroes (see *Encountering Joshua Meadham and Canning*, page 198).



THE SETTING

Calcutta is a major trading center for jute, tea, cotton, rice, and silk. Trains are widely used in India and many railway lines flow in and out of Calcutta. The Hooghly River is deep enough to accommodate large, ocean-going vessels.

A taxi journey through the streets of Calcutta presents a traveler with a wide range of sights and smells: bold statements of colonial architecture attest to the legacy of the British Empire; fingerless beggars sit at street corners; street vendors fry a variety of foods; white-uniformed policemen direct traffic; stick-thin Indian men pull fat Englishmen in rickshaws; barefooted children play cricket with a scrap of wood in a dusty side street; ubiquitous adverts for Lifebuoy Soap and Lipton's Tea; sacred cows wander unmolested in the suburbs.

Over a million people throng the busy streets of Calcutta. The climate is hot and sticky, reaching a peak in April and May, after which come the monsoon rains from June to September. Temperatures range from 23 to 40°C (73 to 104°F).

ANCIENT TREASURE TO GO ON SHOW

Calcutta, India. The recently discovered Cobra Crown is to be a publicly on show at the India Museum in Calcutta. The fabled Cobra Crown, thought by historians to be nothing more than a fable, has come to into the possession of the museum. Head curator at the India Museum, Mr. Kumtekar, says he will be pleased to be able to prove all the so-called experts wrong when the piece goes on display. Mr. Kumtekar was unable to confirm the opening date of the exhibition but assured us that plans were underway to exhibit the Cobra Crown in Calcutta soon.

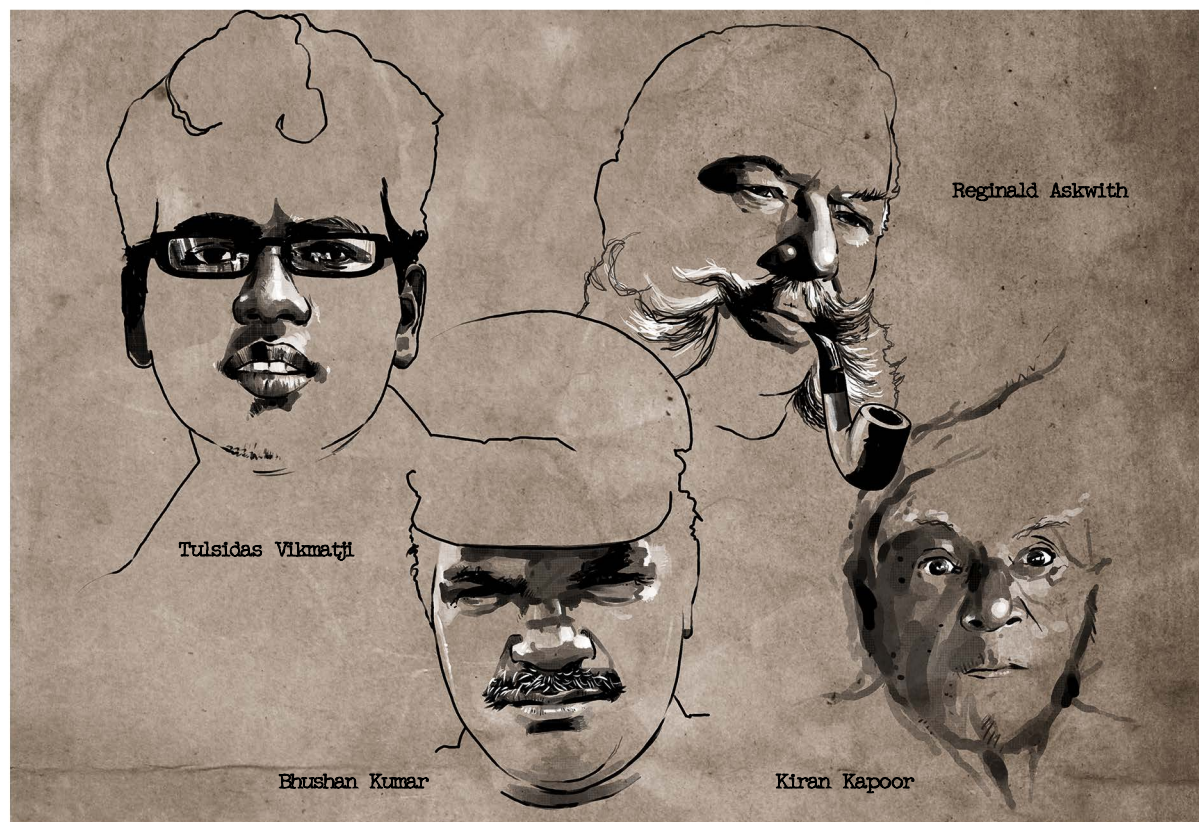
Many languages are spoken, chiefly Hindi, followed by Bengali and English—visitors can get by with English alone if need be. The currency is the British Pound.

Throughout the 1930s India remains under British control. Mahatma Gandhi has called for noncompliance with unjust laws, leading to occasional riots, and there is growing support for the Indian National Congress. The end of British rule will not come until 1947 when India and Pakistan become sovereign states. While India is under British rule and many Indians live in poverty, there are also many prosperous Indians in positions of power in society; however, even these find themselves unable to gain entry to the most exclusive white-only clubs. There are also Anglo-Indians, children of marriages between Indian and European parents.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Note: Joshua Meadham, Canning, Rose Meadham, and Tyrnaish are detailed in *Appendix A* (page 240), as they may be encountered in multiple chapters.

Statistics for the following NPCs are presented at the end of this chapter.



Tulsidas Vikmatji,
29, Cambridge-educated explorer

Vikmatji, born in India in 1905, is the son of a prosperous merchant-class Indian family and was sent to study in England as a child. He read History at Cambridge University, where he got to know a fellow student named Jonathan Taylor.

Formerly attired in a tailored suit, Vikmatji has now donned shalwar kameez (a traditional loose-fitting tunic and trousers) hoping to blend in with the crowds and escape attention. When moving hotels he adopts pseudonyms: Yogendra Singh (at the Grand Hotel) and Ramchandra Konwar (at the Bristol Hotel).

- **Description:** a good-looking man of medium build, dark haired with a neatly trimmed mustache. He wears wire-framed glasses.
- **Traits:** has a habit of removing and cleaning his glasses while in conversation.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** Vikmatji is in fear of his life, desperately searching for reassurance and companionship. If the heroes are charitable towards him he probably latches onto them.

Jonathan Taylor,
30, Cambridge-educated explorer (deceased)

Taylor dies in a road accident at the start of this chapter. He was the business partner of Tulsidas Vikmatji.

Bhushan Kumar, 38, policeman

Bhushan is the policeman that attends Jonathan Taylor's death on Chowringhee Road at the start of this chapter. If he is not encountered there, he may be met later at the morgue or police station.

- **Description:** Bhushan's white police uniform is marked with cigarette ash and food stains.
- **Traits:** tends to speak loudly or shout. His hearing is impaired, though he refuses to admit it.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** Bhushan is proud of his position and seeks to assert his authority over those he considers beneath him (a group that includes all those who do not professionally outrank him).

POINTS OF INTEREST

Botanical Gardens: wonderfully diverse in its range of plants; highlights include a huge banyan tree, with a circumference of 1100 feet.

The Bristol Hotel: a middle-class hotel situated on a side-road off Chowringhee Road. The Bristol does not offer the finery or service of either the Great Eastern or Grand Hotels.

Chowringhee Road: business, hotels, and a shopping area vie for space with market stalls and trams.

Conrad Arms: British style, whites-only pub.

Dalhousie Square: center of British colonial admin. Includes a post office, town hall, and telegraph office.

Elphinstone Picture Palace: a popular cinema on Chowringhee Road.

Fairlawn Hotel: a luxurious, colonial style building, close to the Indian Museum.

Fort William: built on a huge open expanse of Calcutta called the Maiden. Used by the British Army.

Government House: office of the British Governor and administration.

The Grand Hotel: established around twenty years ago and built in an extravagant neoclassical style, this is a popular upmarket hotel on the Chowringhee Road. Despite its name, it is not as grand as the Great Eastern Hotel.

Howrah Bridge: ugly and stark, leads west away from the prosperous eastern districts of Calcutta into the slums of Howrah and the homes of the untouchables (India's lowest social class). Muggers and pickpockets are common.

India Museum: founded 1875, archaeological pieces from India are displayed, including meteorites—including one found at the Siberian explosion of 1908, which once belonged to Grigory Yefimovich Rasputin.

Insane Asylum: a thoroughly unpleasant place that resounds with the sounds of screaming and wailing.

Victoria Memorial: statue of Queen Victoria, completed in 1921.

Vatsala Kumtekar, 23, India Museum curator (deceased)

A junior curator at the India Museum in Calcutta, Kumtekar is murdered by Canning (see Appendix A, page 241) early in this chapter.

Reginald Askwith, 54, curator at the British Museum

Askwith is a senior curator at the British Museum in London. He is unlikely to feature in person but may be contacted by the heroes with reference to Vikmatji and the Cobra Crown.

- **Description:** sports particularly fine mutton chops and is never without his pipe.
- **Traits:** no conversation is complete without reference to his service in the Boer War (1899-1902).
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** asks the heroes to protect Vikmatji and put him on an airplane to England, preferably with the Cobra Crown in his luggage—though he will not mention the crown unless the heroes raise the subject.

Kiran Kapoor, 31, doomed devotee

Kapoor is abducted by Tyranissh, only to arrive later at the Temple of Mansa Devi in time to utter his last words to the heroes (see *Tyranissh and the Sect*, page 201).

OPTIONAL OPENING SCENE: HIT AND RUN

This scene is likely to take place “off screen,” a short while before the **Opening Scene**. The heroes could, at the Keeper's discretion, witness the scene, especially if they have split up during the course of the campaign. Alternatively, the mention in later newspaper reports of a traffic accident involving a man carrying a crown might pique the heroes' interest, leading them to visit the body at the morgue.

Just after midday, in front of the Elphinstone Picture Palace on Chowringhee Road, there is a sudden screech of brakes and a dull thump. Cries of panic rise above the midday hubbub and a crowd soon gathers at the scene.

A goods truck, laden with mangoes, has collided with a pedestrian. The man is lying in the road; his sola topee (pith helmet) has cracked open like an egg, spilling a trickle of blood onto the hot road. The man's right hand is clutching a golden crown. His left hand is bandaged and is missing the little finger.

A white-uniformed policeman (**Bhushan Kumar**, page 190) attends the scene and quickly ascertains that the man is dead. He performs a cursory search of the deceased's pockets, locating a wallet containing identification papers. The policeman picks up the crown and studies it before secreting it under his jacket for "safekeeping." The policeman inspects the truck, writing down details in a notebook, and then gives the truck driver a hard time. Another vehicle is called to convey the deceased man to a mortuary.

While the crown is a replica of the Cobra Crown, it appears genuine at a distance. For a hero to realize that it is a fake requires that they actually handle it and succeed in either an **Appraise** or **Cthulhu Mythos** skill roll. Observant witnesses who survey the crowd may notice Rose Meadham with her goons, taking a close interest in the dying man, then, when it becomes apparent that the man is dead, leaving the scene—Rose knows that the crown is a fake. If followed, Rose and her men are heading for Vikmatji's hiding place at the Grand Hotel (see **Opening Scene**, following).

If the heroes choose to investigate the death later that day, the Keeper may choose to locate the following evidence at either the morgue or the police station, where a **Fast Talk**, **Persuade**, **Charm**, or **Intimidate** roll should yield these clues. For the sake of continuity, have the policeman, Bhushan Kumar, who attended the incident, present for the heroes to talk to.

Road Traffic Accident Clues:

The deceased man's papers identify him as Jonathan Taylor, a 30-year-old Englishman and a graduate of Cambridge University. He has a number of items in his pocket (see **Handouts: Calcutta 2, 3, 4, and 5**, see page 193), including:

- A calling card for Vatsala Kumtekar (the museum curator, see **Visiting the India Museum**, page 196).
- A calling card for Reginald Askwith (a British Museum contact, see **Inspecting the Museum Curator's Home**, page 197).
- A Fairlawn Hotel matchbook, on which is written "217" (Rose Meadham's room, see **Meeting Rose Meadham**, page 199).
- A paper napkin bearing the name of Willard's Tearoom (see **Chance Meeting at Willard's Tearoom**, page 199).



THE GREAT EASTERN HOTEL

Established in 1841 and situated on Dalhousie Square, the Great Eastern Hotel offers the height of luxury. The staff here are attentive yet discreet. All manner of upper-class items may be purchased within the hotel, which features shops and tailors.

Vikmatji and Taylor stayed here for several weeks and became well known to the staff. They recently panicked and moved to the Grand Hotel under false names.

Hotel staff will be able to match Vikmatji and Taylor's names with descriptions. One staff member, who was familiar with the pair, saw them in a Willard's Tearoom numerous times; it seemed to be a favorite with them. In fact, Vikmatji continues to dine there, which may lead to a chance meeting (see **Chance Meeting at Willard's Tearoom**, page 199).

Joshua Meadham will visit this hotel in his search for Vikmatji and Taylor, which may lead to a chance meeting with the heroes (see **Encountering Joshua Meadham and Canning**, page 198).



Realizing that questions might be asked about the crown, the policeman substitutes a cheap tin crown amongst the deceased's possessions. It is immediately apparent to anyone who witnessed the accident that this is not the same crown. Bhushan sequestered the fake crown at the scene of Taylor's death. He has it concealed in his locker and believes it may be valuable. He will be reluctant to reveal it to anyone unless, of course, they offer a good price for it.

OPENING SCENE: CHASING VIKMATJI

Fearing that their lives were in danger, Vikmatji and Taylor moved to the Grand Hotel in a rush earlier today (Tuesday morning). They registered under assumed names (Yogendra Singh and Norman Jones), taking a room on the second floor. Taylor then called Rose Meadham at the Fairlawn Hotel to arrange a meeting departing just before noon (see previous **Optional Opening Scene: Hit and Run**). Vikmatji now waits nervously for Taylor's return, unaware that he will never see his friend alive again.

CALCUTTA

Handout: Calcutta 2

VATSALA KUMTEKAR

MUSEUM CURATOR
MUSEUM OF INDIA

CHOWRINGHEE ROAD

CALCUTTA, INDIA

Handout: Calcutta 3

REGINALD ASKWITH

MUSEUM CURATOR
THE BRITISH MUSEUM

GREAT RUSSELL STREET

LONDON, WC1B

Handout: Calcutta 4



Handout: Calcutta 5

Willard's



Tearoom

At 12.30 pm, Vikmatji excitedly rises from his chair to answer a knock at his door; however, caution takes hold of him. A second, more insistent knock sends waves of terror running through Vikmatji. Now captive in his own hotel room, Vikmatji makes for the only available exit—the window! He jumps down to the side street below. Above him, Rose Meadham's goons smash through the hotel door and rush to the window, just in time to see Vikmatji reaching the street below. One goon stays to search the room while the other gives pursuit.

Outside the Grand Hotel, on the far side of the street, Rose Meadham waits in an Austin taxi, watching the action unfold. She is angry with Vikmatji and would enjoy expressing her feelings to him. She licks her lips in anticipation; it will cost him far more than a finger this time. Despite such feelings, her determination for the whole crown affair is wavering; is it all just a wild goose chase? She is also acutely aware of pressing matters elsewhere in the world that demand her attention.

ENTER THE HEROES

The heroes are likely to look for a place to stay soon after arriving in Calcutta. A simple way to introduce the

Opening Scene is to contrive to have the heroes arriving at the Grand Hotel. If the heroes name an alternative hotel, simply transpose that location for the one given; the location details are not essential and can be altered by the Keeper to suit the story.

On arriving outside the hotel, one of the heroes should spot (an obvious clue, no dice roll required) Rose Meadham in a taxi across the street, where she remains, watching her two men as they enter the hotel.

If the players follow Rose's goons, they may encounter one searching Vikmatji's room and/or join the other one in the chase. If they approach Rose, she either she drives off (another potential chase) or, at the Keeper's discretion, talks with them. If the Keeper wishes, such a meeting may precipitate **Meeting Rose Meadham** (page 199).

The Chase

The default position start is for the heroes to have followed Rose's goons into Vikmatji's hotel room, with at least one of the heroes heading out of the window in pursuit. Ten chase locations are provided and the Keeper is encouraged to improvise additional ones as required. The chase is not intended to conform to locations on a map and instead should feature a speedy array of scenes that finish at the Bristol Hotel.



Location 1: the hotel room and window. This is where the chase is likely to begin. Rooms at the Grand Hotel are large and well furnished. Vikmatji and Taylor's suitcases are here, packed ready in preparation for another swift exit. Their cases contain the usual selection of clothes and toiletries, a couple of books on antiques, and a guide to Calcutta.

Location 2: the fire escape.

- **Obstacle:** quickly deploying the ladder to street level requires a Hard **DEX** roll (constituting a chase obstacle); otherwise, 1D3 movement actions are lost. Alternatively, a hero may elect (as Vikmatji and the pursuing goon have done) to jump down, aiming to break his or her fall on a market stall. Failing the **Jump** roll results in 1D6 damage and a delay (1D3 movement actions) as the hero extricates him or herself from the broken stall, torn canvas, and angry vendors.

Location 3: the side street. This narrow street is crowded with people and market stalls.

- **Obstacle:** the crowds make progress difficult. A character may use force (STR or SIZ) to barge through the crowd.

Location 4: the side street (continued). Further up the street, some snake traders (unrelated to the plot) are conducting their business.

- **Obstacle:** a small crowd is gathered around a man seated before a basket, who is playing a pipe as a cobra rises up before him. The cobra's mouth has been cruelly sewn shut, nullifying any threat, although this will not be apparent to onlookers. To one side of the crowd, a man is purchasing a basket containing another cobra (a huge specimen, whose jaws are free). Those charging through the scene must make a **Dodge** roll to avoid colliding with the men and their baskets. Such a collision results in chaos: money flies through the fair and falls to the ground, the dangerous cobra is freed, and the crowd panic. Anyone passing through must barge through a tightly packed crowd (**STR** roll) or **Dodge** one attack from a cobra to pass on to Location 5.

Location 5: a busy road.

- **Obstacle:** cars, taxis, rickshaws, and trucks. Pursuers can opt to take time to cross in safety (sacrificing 1D3 additional movement actions) or rush across. Rushing across the busy road requires a combined **Spot Hidden** and **Dodge** skill roll: failure indicates being hit by a vehicle for 2D10 damage.

HUGE COBRA, FREED AND ANGRY

STR 40	CON 50	SIZ 30	DEX 90	INT
APP —	POW 50	EDU —	SAN —	HP 8
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 8	MP: 10	Luck: 0

Combat

Fighting	40% (20/8), damage 1D4 + poison*
Dodge	46% (23/9)

***Poison:** make Extreme CON roll or suffer convulsions and 2D10 damage; if roll is an Extreme success, only 1D10 damage.

Location 6: restaurant.

- **Obstacle:** diners at the Bombay Bistro are seated for lunch as Vikmatji dashes through the restaurant, heading for the kitchens and the back door. On his way through, he collides with a waiter, spilling food and drinks across a seated group of railway officials. These outraged diners remonstrate with anyone else who attempts disturb their repast. Those rushing through will have to win one opposed combat roll each (choosing either to dodge or fight back) to successfully fend off angry diners and make it to the rear of the restaurant.

RAILWAY OFFICIALS, ANGRY DINERS

STR 60	CON 60	SIZ 65	DEX 55	INT 50
APP 50	POW 60	EDU 55	SAN 60	HP 12
DB: +1D4	Build: 1	Move: 7	MP: 12	Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3 + 1D4
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Location 7: kitchen. As hot as Calcutta is, this room is even hotter. It is filled with steam and the perfume of Indian spices. Sunlight shines in through the open door at the far side of the kitchen. As Vikmatji speeds through the kitchen, he purposefully kicks a bucket of *ghee* (clarified butter) across the tiled floor, which is now as slipperier than a greased eel.

- **Obstacle:** anyone running through the kitchen must make a **DEX** roll to keep his or her footing. Alternatively, a pursuer might choose to leap across the spill with a **Jump** roll. Failing either roll results in 1D6 damage and 1D3 lost movement actions.

Location 8 and 9: alley. A quiet alley at the rear of the restaurant. Vikmatji turns left and runs along this alley before ducking into the Bristol Hotel through an open service door. There are no obstacles here, but those who reach this location too late (after Vikmatji has entered the Bristol Hotel) may not know whether to turn left or right out of the kitchen door as they exit the previous location.

Location 10: Bristol Hotel. Vikmatji enters through a rear service door. So long as there is no one directly on his heels, he attempts to secrete himself within the hotel. Taking the stairs to the second floor, he conceals himself in a broom cupboard, where he remains for an hour before making his way to the hotel lobby and booking himself into a room. The hotel staff is curious why he has no luggage but a small bribe proves an acceptable answer.

Unless the heroes catch Vikmatji or somehow alter the flow of events, this is the place that Vikmatji will flee to following the pursuit from the Grand Hotel. Vikmatji registers at the hotel under the name Ramchandra Konwar. Vikmatji wires his contact (Reginald Askwith) at the British Museum in London from the hotel, informing Askwith that he has the Cobra Crown (a lie) and asking for money to be wired to him in Calcutta.

If, following this scene, the players hit a dead end, refer to **Running this Chapter** (below) for guidance on what to do next.

Chance meetings

In time, Vikmatji attempts to don a (poor) disguise and sneak out to the Willard Tearooms in search of comfort. This excursion provides the Keeper with the opportunity to stage a chance meeting (see **Chance Meeting at Willard's Tearoom**, page 199).

Joshua Meadham and his manservant Canning are on the trail of Vikmatji and Taylor, and visit the Grand Hotel in their search, providing another good opportunity for a chance meeting (see **Encountering Joshua Meadham and Canning**, page 198).

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

The Calcutta chapter is something of a sandbox and relies on the Keeper pushing the various factions at the heroes. The following scenes (locations and events) are written in the order they are most likely to happen, although the Keeper is free to move scenes and events around to suit the direction the heroes take. The final encounters set up the scenes so that confrontation with some or all of the heroes' adversaries (Tyranish, Rose, and Joshua Meadham) is possible, allowing the heroes the chance to dispatch one or even two of their adversaries before the chapter's conclusion.

VISITING THE INDIA MUSEUM

The India Museum is situated on the corner of Park Street and Chowringhee. Managed by a trust established by the government of India, the museum is immensely popular, receiving 5,000 visitors each day. The vast collection is divided into five sections, each with many halls: the Archaeological Section, the Zoological Section, the Geological Section, the Industrial Section, and the Art gallery. A wide array of items is on show: rare materials reflecting Oriental manners, customs, and history; figures of Hindu deities; ancient coins and manuscripts; musical instruments; vessels used in religious ceremonies; stuffed animals and dried plants.

The scenario assumes the heroes visit the museum on Tuesday, the day following the curator's murder, allowing the heroes to be the ones who find the body (if and when they visit Vatsala Kumtekar's home). If this is not the case, neighbors find the curator's body, with the heroes reading about it in the newspaper soon after—most likely *The Statesman*, an Indian English-language newspaper.

Those asking about the Cobra Crown exhibition are directed up a marble staircase to the Art Gallery, whereupon enquiring, they receive a withering look, a shake of the head, and apologizes that there is to be no such exhibition. It is clear that many such inquiries have already been received and any further questions are politely fobbed off. If the heroes persist, curator Nathaniel Blyth (standing beneath a painting of Emperor Jahangir shooting a lion) takes the heroes into his confidence and explains that a junior curator let his excitement get the better of him and that, sadly, the fabled Cobra Crown remains lost. Blyth goes on to say, somewhat condescendingly, that the junior curator in question has not turned up to work today, perhaps shamed by his recent failings. Blyth is reluctant

to give out personal detail, but if the heroes successfully employ an interpersonal skill (**Fast Talk**, **Intimidate**, **Charm**, or **Persuade**), he furnishes them with Kumtekar's name and address.

If the heroes think to ask whether anyone else has recently been inquiring about the Cobra Crown, an exasperated Blyth informs them that the museum is inundated with such inquiries. To illustrate this, the Keeper might have some inconsequential NPC interrupt Blyth and the heroes' discussion to ask after the Cobra Crown, providing the perfect opportunity for a red herring. Blyth was present when Joshua Meadham and Canning visited the museum to speak with Kumtekar (yesterday). He remembers them vividly and can recount the incident if the heroes ask the right questions (perhaps they specifically describe Meadham). Blyth knows very little but can give a clear description of Joshua Meadham and Canning. Blyth cannot recall the exact wording of Meadham's enquiry but he will recount Canning's curious hissing intake of breath on being informed of the crown's absence.

INSPECTING THE MUSEUM CURATOR'S HOME

Vatsala Kumtekar lived with his wife and family in a residential district situated a few streets away from the India Museum. A modest, whitewashed brick dwelling on a narrow street, the neighbors disappear indoors quickly when the heroes show up. The wooden front door is closed but not locked, and shows no signs of having been forced.

Inside, the smell of death pervades the darkened two-room dwelling. Kumtekar's body lies dead on the floor, his still face twisted in a rictus of pain. Against the side wall, hanging from a rafter by her feet is his wife's mutilated body. It may be deduced that he was forced to watch her being tortured and killed. Vatsala Kumtekar's skull has been crushed and the impression of (Canning's) huge hands can be discerned by anyone making a successful **Spot Hidden** or **Medicine** roll. Evidence of infants can be found (baby clothes) but their little bodies are absent—suffice to say, Canning gives breakfast a miss the following day.

An empty glass bottle lies discarded on the floor nearby. If examined, the label has mostly worn off but the Caduceus logo can just be made out. The residue inside the bottle smells of raspberries.

Keeper note: the residue in the bottle has the power to render a person suggestible for a short time. It was used on Kumtekar's wife to prevent her screaming aloud, while



PLAYTEST NOTES

One group of heroes tried to intimidate Blyth into giving out details about Kumtekar and the Cobra Crown. Upon failing, one of the heroes became physically threatening, pushing the roll and failing again. As a consequence, when the heroes left, Blyth contacted Joshua Meadham at his hotel to say that he did not appreciate Meadham sending ruffians around to threaten him. When Blyth described the ruffians in question, Meadham had confirmation that the heroes were in Calcutta and, consequently, sent Canning off to deal with them.

Kumtekar's mouth was clamped shut by one of Canning's oversized hands. If time is taken to analyze the bottle's contents, a successful **Science (Chemistry or Pharmacy)** or **Medicine** roll can identify the residue in the bottle as domination serum (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 270).

Kumtekar, being a junior curator, was not wealthy and his home reflects this. Before it was turned over by Canning, the interior was clean and tidy. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll locates a matchbook secreted inside a vase, placed there by Kumtekar for safekeeping and later forgotten. The matchbook bears the names of "The Great Eastern Hotel" and inside is written "Reginald Askwith, British Museum." Vikmatji dropped Askwith's name in conversation to boost his credentials. Kumtekar took note of the name in case he should need it later.

If they can be persuaded to talk, the neighbors describe the two men (Joshua Meadham and Canning) who arrived at Kumtekar's home after dark last Monday. They did not see the men leave.

If the heroes do not attend the scene, the neighbors enter Kumtekar's home later that day and alert the police. The story is soon reported in the press.

CONTACTING REGINALD ASKWITH

Askwith is a senior curator at the British Museum in London, who has the firm belief that valuable artifacts should be looked after by the British Museum (rather than left to what he views as the vagaries of foreigners). To this end, he is willing to ignore importation laws and so on,

especially where they conflict with his misplaced sense of duty to the British Empire. If the heroes make contact with Askwith and establish a positive relationship, he will readily volunteer Vikmatji's name and ask the heroes if they are familiar with the fellow. Whatever time of day the heroes call, Askwith will be avuncular and appear to have enjoyed some after dinner drinks. Askwith is likely to state that Vikmatji has recently been in contact, asking for money to be wired to him.

ENCOUNTERING JOSHUA MEADHAM AND CANNING

Through their interrogation of Vatsala Kumtekar, Joshua Meadham and Canning learned that Vikmatji and Taylor were staying at the Great Eastern Hotel. Vikmatji overheard Meadham asking questions at the hotel's reception and quickly vacated the premises, making for the Grand Hotel. Meadham was frustrated to find the pair had given him the slip and since then, he has been trying to find the men, asking questions at other hotels, train stations, and so on.

The search for Vikmatji and Taylor provides an opportunity to stage a chance encounter with Joshua Meadham and Canning at any location in Calcutta. The nature of the encounter will, of course, depend on the heroes' present relationship with Joshua Meadham and Caduceus. This encounter assumes that a fight breaks out between the heroes and Joshua Meadham in the foyer of a large hotel. Obviously, the Keeper will have to tailor the scene to suit whatever location is used but hopefully, the text here will provide some inspiration.

Three potential adversaries (Joshua Meadham, Rose Meadham, and Tyranissh) are presented in this campaign. With the end of the campaign in sight, aim to have at least one of these eliminated during this chapter. This should not prove too difficult: all of these enemies are in Calcutta—all the Keeper needs to do is bring them face-to-face with the heroes and provide some provocation!

RUMBLE IN RECEPTION

Joshua Meadham stands at the reception desk of the hotel, feigning patience, as a young woman rings a bell, signaling for the concierge to attend. As Meadham looks around the lobby, his eyes meet with those of one of the heroes, "You!" he bellows, pointing a gnarled finger in their direction. The

next thing the hero sees is the looming form of Canning dispatched like a dog from Meadham's side. Canning is a huge bulk of a man, whose unstoppable force barges across the lobby floor. Bellboys and bags bounce off him, while a gentleman pausing to light his pipe is bowled to the floor. Canning reaches out with a slab-like hand to grab the hero.

Canning unleashes his full force to hit the heroes hard. He is the kind of adversary that you have seen in films; a mountain of a man, who remains unmoved when punched and, instead, simply frowns and looks offended before taking his vengeance. Of course, that may play out differently when the punch comes from a hero! Be sure to use his tongue lash attack to good effect (see **Appendix A**, page 241); use this to paralyze and draw foes into range. Other NPCs in the scene can be used as set dressing to show off Canning's might. Have hotel staff attempt to restrain him, with six of them jumping on him only to be cast off like rag dolls. There is no need to make dice rolls for combat between the NPCs, as you can simply narrate whatever you feel is most dramatic. Make good use of props: swing on chandeliers, jump over chairs, literally pull the rug from under people's feet, pick up umbrellas as improvised weapons, and so on.

PLAYTEST NOTES

Canning nearly proved the undoing of one group of heroes. The heroes had encountered and killed Joshua Meadham, who they discovered searching their hotel room, which left them bloodied and battered. They then walked out into the corridor to encounter Canning, who entered into a killing rage upon seeing the corpse of his master.

Because this was a close-quarters melee fight, it was difficult for the heroes to use firearms. The first time one of them aimed a gun, the Keeper reminded her that shooting into the melee risked her hitting one of her comrades and, consequently, she decided to be cautious. As a result, Canning disabled three out of the four heroes almost immediately. The last man standing only survived by spending Luck to remain conscious as he shot Canning in the chest with the last round in his sawn-off shotgun. This was the closest the heroes came to being wiped out in the course of the campaign.

Meadham has his Flesh Ward spell already cast (see **Appendix A**, page 240); he doesn't hesitate to use magic against the heroes. Up until this point, he should have been portrayed as a doddering old man, reliant on Canning for protection. Now, this conceit can be lifted as he unleashes his own powers as a martial artist. Like a youthful actor who was only playing the role of an old man, he suddenly flies into action. Remember to take advantage of his having two attacks each round and, with his DEX of 97, it is likely that he acts first (unless someone has a readied firearm). His attacks should be described as acrobatic: flying kicks, jumps, back flips, rolls—he moves like a kung fu master!

At your discretion, when either Meadham or Canning is eliminated, the other may decide to flee. Alternatively, if the heroes are beaten to unconsciousness—or even seemingly killed and recover using a Luck spend—they may find themselves gagged and bound and at the mercy of their captors. This should provide the perfect opportunity for their enemy to explain his secret plan to the heroes, just before they free themselves and escape!

MEETING ROSE MEADHAM

Assuming that her goons do not capture Vikmatji in the **Opening Scene** (page 192) and that nothing has occurred to make her think otherwise, Rose plans to leave Calcutta. She has other things to see to elsewhere in the world; the ultimate prize lies beyond Snake Island and while that location presents a challenge, at least it is one that she can face head-on, rather than the endless cat-and-mouse game in Calcutta.

Rose is traveling with a Haftorang Device (see **Appendix B**, page 252). Depending upon the relationship, if any, that she has with the heroes, she may arrange a meeting. At the meeting she portrays herself as the wronged party, vilifying her father and encouraging the heroes to enter into a coalition with her. In her attempt to bring the heroes round to her side, she shares all she knows of Caduceus's scheme to use an engineered virus to enslave the human race. She shares a document prepared by one of her analysts (**Handout: Calcutta 6**, page 200) by way of evidence, although she apologizes for the poor grammar and presentation. "Good help is so very hard to find," she sighs.

To ensure that the Caduceus plan is stopped, she also hands the heroes a Haftorang Device and instructs them in its use. She lies to the heroes, saying that the explosion has a short range and that it can be set to explode after a delay of up to one whole day. In fact, the box is much like the one seen in North Borneo (see **Chapter 3: North**

Borneo, page 76), though Rose is likely to be unaware that the heroes have previously seen such a device. The delay mechanism is actually calibrated in minutes, not hours, and if detonated would destroy half of Calcutta. Once the Haftorang Device is in the heroes' hands, Rose will leave India for good.

If this meeting does not play out in your game, endeavor to have the Haftorang Device fall into the heroes' hands by other means, as it may provide their salvation when they reach Mu. Rose and her team are staying at the Fairlawn Hotel. If the heroes break into Rose's room, the device and **Handout: Calcutta 6** could be conveniently positioned for them to find. Rose could, of course, simply leave the box primed and ready to explode before leaving Calcutta, but she hopes that her deceit will manipulate a human agent into ensuring that her target is hit, as well as potentially wiping out the heroes before they can interfere further with her plans.

If this set up is unlikely to play out, Joshua Meadham could bring a similar device with him, leaving it in his hotel room for the heroes to find. Thus, the heroes have a very useful device when they journey to Mu in **Chapter 9**.

CHANCE MEETING AT WILLARD'S TEAROOM

Willard's Tearoom is an old-fashioned sort of place. Tea is served in bone china cups and saucers upon gingham tablecloths. Whatever the time of day one visits, one cannot help but feel that somewhere a mantelpiece clock is gently signaling teatime as it chimes 4 o'clock. Even without a Spot Hidden roll, one of the heroes should notice a gentleman slumped alone in one of the leather chairs in a shadowy corner. He is an Indian man wearing dark glasses, his collar turned up, and is reading a newspaper that he lowers and peers over to check out the people in the tearoom. There is something obviously curious about him; the heroes have a sense of having seen him before somewhere. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll immediately identifies the mystery man as Vikmatji.

Vikmatji is in fear for his life and may attempt to flee if confronted. A chase may ensue but due to his tired and overwrought state, Vikmatji automatically fails the initial Speed (CON) roll, reducing his movement rate by 1 point, making him easier to catch; otherwise, fast-acting heroes may be able to use **Stealth** or distraction to pounce on him.

Vikmatji is desperate and takes any deal offered to him by the heroes. If the heroes appear friendly, he attempts to ingratiate himself and join their gang, figuring there

We have more news from our spies and diviners. The news is not all good. I hope this does not make you angry, or at least that it only makes you angry at our enemies. They deserve all your anger.

Ssulithan and his ~~snevetting smithing~~ cowardly lackies are on the trail of the Cobra Crown. They think it is in India. Our diviners say it is in Atlantis, but they are wrong. That would be bad because we do not know where Atlantis is. If it is in India we can try to find it, but India is a big place. We will let you know when we find it.

If Ssulithan and his ugly minions find the Cobra Crown maybe they can get to Mu without getting eaten. We know from the raid on the estate in Connettycut that their Gate gets lots of them turned into leather statues. The Gate they have on ~~de Quesadilla~~ Grand Snake Island also gets lots of them killed, but these ones get eaten by something big. We think they want the Cobra Crown to control the big thing that eats them. We want the Cobra Crown instead, then we can use the Gate and go to Mu without getting eaten.

~~One of our enemy's undertings gets a lot of information from the Dreamer when they have her in their basement. She says that the Doomsday Device is still there and that it does what we want it to do. If we can get to it and it works like all the old books say, we can use it to kill all our enemies.~~

If our enemies in Caduceus get to the Citadel first, we think that they make lots of biting flies and more of their disease that makes humans stupider and weaker and then they put the disease in the flies and they put the flies in transport spheres and they send them over the world to bite all the people. ~~Is it all bad if they do this? Maybe stupider people are easier to kill.~~

We have agents in Santos (which is a place in Brazil) ready to go to Snake Island when our enemies make it safe. We let you know when it is safe. If we get the Cobra Crown first, we will be the ones that make it safe, but it will be you doing this, so you will not need me to tell you when it is safe. I will tell you anyway.



is safety in numbers. Vikmatji knows the location of the Cobra Crown and divulges this information if he feels his newfound friends will do right by him.

TYRANISSH AND THE SECT

Unlike the Judeo-Christian view of the snake representing evil, in ancient African, Egyptian, and Indian religions it is generally regarded as a positive symbol, representing the creative life force of the Earth Goddess.

The real Cobra Crown has long been held by a religious sect in Calcutta, who reveres it as a holy artifact but do not know its full history or power. Vikmatji and Taylor discovered the artifact's whereabouts and Tyranissh picked up enough clues from the pair to deduce its location.

The Cobra Crown resides in a temple devoted to Mansa Devi, a Hindu folk goddess of snakes. She is worshiped mainly in the Bengal region, although there are temples devoted to her across India. Mansa Devi is believed to answer the wishes of sincere devotees; petitioners bring her offerings of coconuts, fruits, garlands, and incense sticks. Her statue in the temple depicts the goddess as wearing a crown, her infant son, Astika, sat in her lap. The crown on the statue's head resembles the Cobra Crown but is part of the same casting as the statue and has no power.

The temple is located by the Adi Ganga canal about a mile to the south of the center of Calcutta. This was once the main course of the Hooghly River, which led into the Ganges, but is now little more than an open sewer. The temple boasts ornate white pillars outside and white steps leading up to the front door. Inside, statues fill the area, some plain metal and some painted brightly. The Cobra Crown is kept locked away in an underground room. Devotees of Mansa Devi believe gods should only wear the Cobra Crown and that it spells certain death for a mortal to place it upon their head.

Tyranissh has upped her game, visiting religious sects across Calcutta in search of the Cobra Crown. Her modus operandi is to abduct a sect member and subject them to her magic, first questioning them and then adopting their appearance. Tyranissh then discards her doomed target, leaving them to wander the streets until they disintegrate into dust (a side effect of her Consume Likeness spell, see **Appendix A**, page 245). Through a combination of blind luck and focusing her attention on sects that revere snakes, Tyranissh hits upon the right temple. In the guise of devotee Kiran Kapoor, she enters the temple of Mansa Devi with ease. Asking a few questions, she soon finds the

Cobra Crown and takes it for her own; any opposition is dispatched by her magic, leaving her to exit the temple with due haste.

The timing of this event should coincide with the heroes' visit to the same temple. When the heroes arrive, they find that Tyranissh has recently left with the Crown. The temple is in disarray, with several dead and dying devotees. In their distraught state, members of the temple are unlikely to wish to speak with the heroes; although a successful **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, **Intimidate**, or **Persuade** roll encourages the survivor to talk: a devotee of the temple, by the name of Kiran Kapoor, arrived about an hour ago and headed straight for the rooms below the temple. Kapoor left a short time later, having stolen the crown of Mansa Devi (the Cobra Crown). The devotee tells how he heard screams and ran to see what was happening but was too late to stop the theft.

If the heroes inspect the corpses and the dying, they find many of them are hideously injured—fluid weeps from blistered skin and their eyes are clouded with blood (evidence of Tyranissh's use of the **Wrack** spell).

As the heroes are leaving, a curious figure approaches them. Devotees cry out that it is Kiran Kapoor, the murderer who brought death to the temple. It is immediately apparent that all is not well with Kapoor. As he reaches out a hand toward the temple, a cloud of dust falls from his arm, as if his tattered garments are full of powder. Within a few moments, he crumbles and falls at the gates of the temple, leaving only dust to be mixed with the dry earth and carried away on the wind. If a hero gets close enough, he or she hears Kiapoor's dying whisper, "She took my face." Witnessing the disintegration of Kapoor demands a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss).

TYRANISSH OPENS THE GATE

Tyranissh, still wearing the stolen form of Kiran Kapoor, takes the Cobra Crown to the poorer eastern part of Calcutta. Using her ability to climb walls like a gecko, she clambers up to the roof of a three-story building and calls down to the people below. A crowd soon gathers. She uses a show of magic and oratory to seduce the crowd, just as she did long ago to impress her own people. The market square throngs with ever-greater numbers of people eager to see what is going on.

Tyranissh dons the Cobra Crown and the gathering erupts with cheers and cries, as a wondrous ring of light appears in the air above them. The ring of light, some 50

yards across, is on the horizontal plane, level to where Tyranissh is standing. The crowd falls silent and the only thing that can be heard is an ululating high-pitched whine, coming from the ring above their heads.

The crowd moves forward slowly, pressing in, climbing on top of one another. At some point, it becomes apparent to onlookers that the members of the crowd are coalescing into huge amorphous masses, each one made up of several hundred people. Flesh melts and blends together, bones pop and dislocate, and hair and teeth float to the surface hardening into a carapace. The process takes several minutes. Soon, the crowd has been transformed into six huge, lizard-like beasts, which stand in the square, gazing up at the circle of light. Witnessing this transformation requires a **Sanity** roll (1D3/2D10 loss).

Throughout this process, Tyranissh continues to chant, using her magic to transform the crowd into physical vessels ready to contain the incorporeal monsters (**Lloigor**, see page 205) that dwell within the circle of light that is the Gate to Mu. These guardian spirits are drawn out of the circle of light by Tyranissh's magic and then trapped within the physical abominations below. The air is filled with terrible screaming, combining the voices of thousands of tortured human beings with the anguish of six insane lloigor. As Tyranissh chants, she casts off her human guise to reveal the full glory of her true serpent person form.

Once the ceremony is complete, Tyranissh leaps atop the nearest lloigor, using the power of the Cobra Crown to dominate and control her new steed. The remaining five lloigor run amok through the slums of Calcutta, crushing those in their path.

Within a few hours, the incorporeal entities trapped inside each of the five rogue beasts free themselves of their fleshy shells, leaving a stinking pile of twisted, rotting corpses behind. The lloigor then move underground, where they live off the psychic energy of those that dwell nearby—in effect, cursing the area for generations (or until the monsters are expelled).

Tyranissh had hoped that once the lloigor guarding the Gate to Mu were drawn out, she would then be able to proceed through the Gate into Mu. While her magic was strong enough to weaken the Gate and to draw the lloigor out, she lacked the power to fully open the Gate; thus, she is unable to enter Mu. She knows that she must now physically travel to Snake Island (see **Chapter 8**) and pass through the Gate there. To this end, Tyranissh heads for the Hooghly River docks and commandeers a large cargo vessel, setting sail for the South Atlantic.

All of the events described above are presented without intervention from the heroes. News of Tyranissh and her crowd of followers spreads rapidly through Calcutta—this

news should reach the heroes, who will be close by if they visited the temple of Mansa Devi. The Keeper should time events so that the heroes arrive as the crowd is massing in the square, just before Tyranissh opens the ring of light. Reaching Tyranissh should prove challenging due to the density of crowd and their antipathy towards anyone who means harm toward Tyranissh. As the people begin to coalesce, the heroes should have enough time to climb or run up inside the building to reach Tyranissh (call for **Climb**, **DEX**, etc., as appropriate).

Unless the heroes can somehow intervene (severely wounding or killing Tyranissh), the Gate to Mu is no longer protected by the lloigor, which leaves the way open for anyone to use the Gate on Snake Island. Thus, begins a race to the Citadel in Mu (see **Chapter 9**).

CONFRONTATION AT DUM DUM AIRPORT

Situated 11 miles from the city center, Dum Dum Airport is relatively basic, compared to what the heroes are probably used to. Since 1924, KLM (Dutch) airplanes flying from Amsterdam to Jakarta have stopped at Calcutta. Imperial Airways (British) have also recently begun flights from London to Australia via Calcutta.

There are several events and decisions that may lead the heroes towards a confrontation at the airport:

- The heroes may choose to follow Rose Meadham to the airport when she seeks to leave India.
- If Tyranissh succeeds in leaving India with the Cobra Crown, Joshua Meadham heads quickly for the airport.
- If the heroes get the Crown, they may seek to leave via the airport (and find themselves confronted by Joshua Meadham there).

An airport is a great setting for an action scene, presenting so many great props and toys for the Keeper to play with: tanks of aviation fuel, planes taxiing, landing or getting ready for takeoff, massive propellers, the overwhelming noise, and so on.

If you still have all three adversaries (Tyranissh, Rose, and Joshua Meadham) in play, this final scene offers one last chance for you to push a confrontation where one of the enemy factions can be eliminated. What follows assumes Joshua Meadham and Canning survived any earlier encounters. As Keeper, feel free to use the elements presented here, tailoring them to fit your story and the choices of the players.

A large airplane hangar stands with its doors open, facing a sunbaked, concrete runway. Here and there, green shoots sprout from the many cracks in the concrete. Engineers and workmen toil under the hot tin roof of the hangar, while signalman stands idly before a large, twin-propeller airplane that sits on the runway, its engines running as the pilot carries out last-minute safety checks. The side of the airplane is emblazoned with the Caduceus logo. Inside the airplane, Canning and Joshua Meadham are strapped into their seats, along with the pilot and co-pilot, awaiting takeoff.

If the heroes approach the Caduceus airplane, the signalman attempts to wave them away, gesturing for them to move back—the pilot misinterprets the hand waving as the signal for takeoff and begins to taxi the airplane around to the runway for 3 rounds, then turns and accelerates for 6 rounds for takeoff. Any heroes wishing to run and climb aboard the taxiing airplane must make a successful Jump or Climb roll. Those trying to climb aboard during the first 3 rounds as it accelerates for takeoff receive one penalty die to their roll, increasing to two penalty dice in the final 3 rounds.

Rounds	Airplane	Hero Action
1-3	Airplane taxis to runway	—
4-6	Airplane begins to accelerate	One penalty die to climb/jump inside
7-9	Airplane accelerates takeoff	Two penalty dice to climb/jump inside
10	Airplane takeoff	Too late!

The door hatch is, of course, closed, but can be opened the following round by any hero who has succeeded in climbing or jumping aboard. Joshua Meadham orders the pilot to ignore the intruders and takeoff regardless. Unless the heroes intervene, the airplane flies off according to the time sequence detailed above.

Canning will be the first to unstrap and confront any intruders head on, while Joshua Meadham holds back, ready to unleash magical attacks from afar. The pilot and co-pilot do their best to get the airplane off the ground and into the air while the fight goes on. If the pilot and co-pilot are incapacitated the airplane lurches and then begins to plummet towards the ground, in a scene reminiscent of the opening of the North Borneo chapter. If a hero takes the controls a successful **Pilot (Aircraft)** roll can land the airplane safely—failing a pushed Pilot roll inflict 4D10 damage on all occupants as the airplane crash lands through trees (damage is halved for anyone who is strapped into a seat).

If successful, the heroes can discover documents in Joshua Meadham's briefcase, showing their destination as Santos, via São Paulo, Brazil. This information can also be deduced from the pilot's flight plan in the cockpit.

CONCLUSION

There should be two key outcomes from this chapter. First, the elimination of one or two of the heroes' adversaries (Joshua Meadham, Rose Meadham, or Tyranissh), and second, someone should escape India with the Cobra Crown—this could be the heroes or any one of the remaining adversaries, most likely Tyranissh. Beyond that, everything else is fair game.

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- Allowing the Haftorang Device to explode in a populated area -1D8 Sanity points.
- Ensuring the Cobra Crown does not remain in enemy hands +1D6 Sanity points.
- Eliminating Tyranissh, Rose, or Joshua Meadham +1D8 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Note: profiles for key NPCs can be found in Appendix A:

- Tyrannissh, page 245.
- Rose Meadham, page 244.
- Joshua Meadham, page 240.
- Canning, page 241.

Tulsidas Vikmatji, 29, Cambridge-educated explorer

STR 60 CON 70 SIZ 55 DEX 70 INT 90
 APP 75 POW 70 EDU 90 SAN 70 HP 12
 DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 14 Luck: 70

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3
 Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Climb 50%, English 70%, Fast Talk 45%, Greek 20%,
 Hindi 90%, History 80%, Jump 40%, Latin 30%, Spot
 Hidden 50%, Stealth 40%.

Bhushan Kumar, 38, policeman

STR 60 CON 50 SIZ 60 DEX 50 INT 55
 APP 45 POW 40 EDU 50 SAN 40 HP 11
 DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 8 Luck: 0

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3,
 or truncheon 1D6
 Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Bengali 40%, English 30%, Hindi 60%, Law 50%,
 Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Rose Meadham's Goons, serpent people henchmen

Rose has six henchmen with her in Calcutta. All are serpent people in human guise, having used the Consume Likeness spell. The climate in Calcutta suits their reptilian metabolism perfectly; even though they are dressed in smart suits, they do not sweat.

STR 70 CON 70 SIZ 70 DEX 70 INT 70
 APP 40 POW 60 EDU — SAN — HP 14
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 14 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (usual range of unarmed attacks open to humanoids)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Fighting 60% (30/12), damage 1D3 + 1D4
 Bite 40% (20/8), damage 1D8 + poison
 Flame pistol 60% (30/12), damage 1D10
 (see Appendix B, page 251)
 Dodge 50% (25/10)

Skills

Climb 60%, English 50%, Intimidate 50%, Jump 40%,
 Listen 40%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 30%.

A armor: 1-point scales.

Spells: Consume Likeness.

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent person.

Lloigor, crazed guardians in physical form

These huge monsters are travesties of their race, tortured and distorted by millennia of imprisonment, trapped in the Gate between Earth and Mu. Once extracted from their prison by Tyranissh, they find themselves forced into physical forms made from hundreds of melded human bodies, twisted into the shapes of giant lizards. If engaged in combat, they fight in a frenzied and unpredictable fashion, accounting for their higher-than-usual combat skill.

These twisted travesties do not have access to the telekinetic effects ability usual to their kind, neither do they possess the control required to utilize their races' vortex attack (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 300)—instead, they release a similar effect upon being killed. As they die, the lloigor explode with the sound of thunder, inflicting 1D100 hit points of damage on everything within 5 meters, as shards of bone and meat fly in all directions.

STR 200 **CON** 140 **SIZ** 250 **DEX** 60 **INT** 20
APP — **POW** 70 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 39
DB: +5D6 **Build:** 6 **Move:** 7/3***MP:** 14 **Luck:** 0

**Move 3 through stone when immaterial.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (claw, bite)

Fighting	70% (35/14), damage 1D6 + 5D6 damage bonus
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Armor: 8-point hide.

Spells: none.

Sanity loss: 0/1D8 Sanity points to see a lloigor.





MWM

SNAKE ISLAND

Snakes. Why'd it have to be snakes?

– Indiana Jones, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

DEATH HIDES IN EVERY SHADOW

OVERVIEW

This chapter is the prelude to the campaign's climax, where the heroes try to find their way onto what is possibly the most dangerous island in the South Atlantic. They will face stormy weather, a giant sea serpent, and thousands of deadly snakes. Getting to the island places them in conflict with their former Caduceus allies, who are prepared to use foul black sorcery to destroy the heroes.

Once on the island, the heroes are faced with an unstable Gate to Mu, guarded by armed serpent people and, possibly, a nasty surprise waiting on the other side. After this, their problems really begin...

BACKGROUND

To execute the end game of their plan, Caduceus has been trying to open a stable Gate to Mu for some time. They have calculated that the nearest point to the current otherworldly location of Mu is the *Ilha de Queimada Grande*, also known as Snake Island, just off the coast of Brazil.

The Inner Night has been waiting for Caduceus to create a stable Gate and to deal with its monstrous lloigor guardians, allowing the Inner Night to step in at the last moment and take control. Tyranissh, if still alive, is prepared to use the Gate as well. All of the factions are



A NOTE ON PACING

This chapter contains support information for the Port of Santos, provided for heroes wishing to spend time exploring the port. Such exploration is not mandatory by any means. The heroes may decide to bypass Santos altogether and head straight for Snake Island. This is fine. The pace of the campaign should have accelerated greatly by this stage, and the Keeper should not slow down players who are hungry to get to the action.

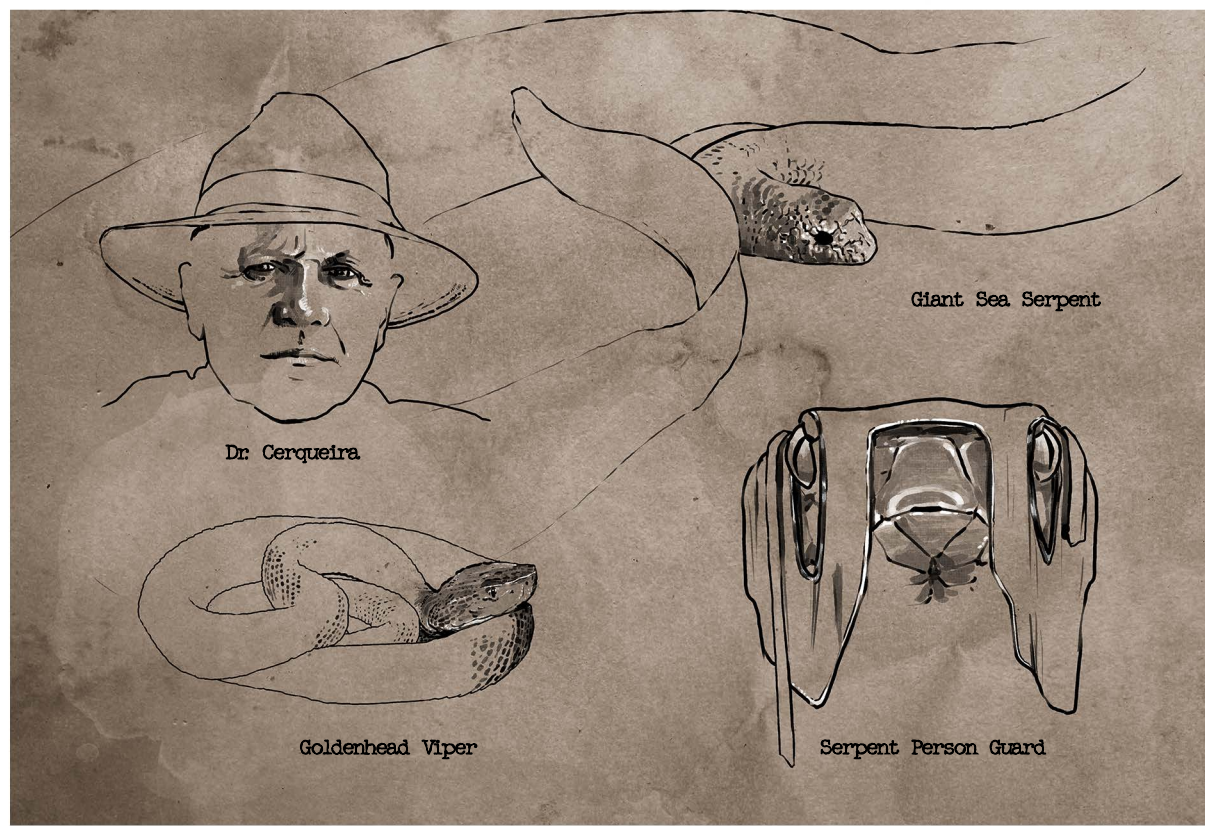
On the other hand, if the players want to poke around Santos for a while, there is plenty of danger and intrigue awaiting them.



ready to converge on Snake Island and ready to pass into the hidden dimension where Mu lies imprisoned.

ENTRY POINTS

Assuming the heroes are free agents by this stage, they should have either found **Handout: New York 3** (see **Chapter 2: New York City**) or been passed this information by a mole within Caduceus, which leads them to Santos, Brazil, and then on to Snake Island. Alternatively, if the heroes are tracking any of the antagonists, their path should lead them here.



Dr. Cerqueira

Giant Sea Serpent

Goldenhead Viper

Serpent Person Guard

It is very unlikely that the heroes are still working for Caduceus by this stage. In the event that they are, Dr. Gonçalves dispatches them to Snake Island to provide additional security in case of attack by either Tyranissh or the Inner Night. Once on the scene, if the heroes show no inclination to investigate what Caduceus is up to there, a malfunction of the Gate can result in them being transported to Mu by accident.

If the heroes have sided with the Inner Night or Tyranissh, these parties can bring the heroes along to provide extra security.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Note: Joshua Meadham, Canning, Frank De Luca, Rose Meadham, and Tyranissh are detailed in **Appendix A** (page 240), as they may be encountered in multiple chapters.

Statistics for the following NPCs are presented at the end of this chapter.

Dr. Sérgio Cerqueira, 43, Caduceus station chief

A trusted human lackey and member of the Cult of Yig, Dr. Cerqueira runs an office for Caduceus, located in the port of Santos. The office's main task is to help with the distribution of medical aid across South America, but this is a front: Cerqueira's real task is to arrange the logistics necessary for the operation on Snake Island. Cerqueira knows he is helping the organization gain control of ancient serpent person technology in lost Mu and believes the technology will allow Joshua Meadham to crush his enemies in the Inner Night. As well as being an initiate of Yig, Dr. Cerqueira is a moderately powerful sorcerer, and can be used to cast *The Coils Of Yig* spell, should the heroes have already neutralized Dr. Gonçalves.

Dr. Cerqueira is the man on the ground in Santos, and pays the locals well to keep him apprised of matters of interest, such as the arrival of the heroes. With the arrival of Dr. Gonçalves, Cerqueira's role is to gather information, leaving any confrontations with the heroes to Gonçalves. If the heroes have already dealt with Gonçalves in an earlier chapter or dispatch him early in this scenario, then it is left to Cerqueira to stop the heroes from reaching Snake Island.

- **Description:** a portly man, with slicked-back dark hair and a neat beard. Cerqueira usually wears a cream-colored suit and a matching Panama hat. He smokes pungent cigarettes, usually with the aid of an ivory cigarette holder.
- **Traits:** Dr. Cerqueira is fastidious about his appearance and avoids getting dirt on his suit, if at all possible. If his clothing becomes soiled, he dabs at it with a white handkerchief while cursing venomously in Portuguese.
- **Roleplaying Hook:** asks lots of questions about why the heroes are in Santos, trying to work out if they pose a threat to Caduceus and the operation on Snake Island.

Dr. Victor Gomes Gonçalves, 54, sorcerer and fanatical servant of Yig

Gonçalves takes the lead in preventing the heroes from reaching Snake Island, using magic to incapacitate or kill as many as he can. If Gonçalves has previously been killed or otherwise dealt with by the heroes in an earlier chapter, his role is taken by Dr. Cerqueira.

See **Appendix A**, page 242, for the full details of Dr. Gonçalves.

THE SETTING

Located partially on the island of São Vicente, off the coast of the Brazilian mainland, Santos is a thriving and modern port town. Its operations lie at the heart of Brazil's coffee trade, and the money from such exports has brought people from across the country to work here. Heavy commercial boat traffic flows in and out of the port on a regular basis. A network of canals crisscrosses the town. Road and rail bridges link Santos to São Paulo City, some 50 miles inland.

Santos has a tropical rainforest climate. Each month sees approximately 2 inches of rainfall. The weather is warm throughout the year; the average temperature ranges from 23 to 28°C (73 to 82°F).

The heroes can expect to find all the amenities of a modern town in Santos. The local language is Portuguese but the international nature of the port means that heroes can encounter people from all over the world, as well as locals who speak multiple languages.

SNAKE ISLAND

Ilha de Queimada Grande, known colloquially as Snake Island, is located some 100 miles off the coast of Brazil, and falls under Brazilian jurisdiction. The nearest large port is Santos, near São Paulo City. The island is a tropical forest, approximately 110 acres in area, with several types



BRAZILIAN NAMES

Most names in Brazil follow the pattern of a given name followed by the father's surname, then the mother's surname. Use the following examples for any minor NPCs encountered.

Female: Giovanna Ferreira Santos, Carla Alves Cardoso, Giovanna Correia Souza, Júlia Sousa Cunha, Emily Costa Barros, Isabelle Costa Araujo.

Male: Fábio Ribeiro Lima, Breno Souza Rodrigues, Carlos Barbosa Oliveira, Estevan Almeida Barbosa, Vitor Correia Melo, Mateus Cunha Pinto.



of habitats including forest, clearings, and shrubs. The climate is quite mild; temperatures rarely fall below 18°C (64°F) or rise above 22°C (72°F).

Snake Island is home to the golden lancehead viper, which is found nowhere else in the world (see **The Golden Lancehead Viper**, box nearby). There are thousands of vipers on the island, approximately one to five snakes per square yard of land, depending on whose estimates you trust. They are well camouflaged by the thick undergrowth and forest that cover most of the island.

The only man-made structure on the island is a lighthouse. The island has been unpopulated since the mid-1920s, when the last lighthouse keeper and his family vanished under mysterious circumstances. Rumors abound that snakes bit them and their bodies disappeared, hidden beneath the heavy undergrowth or lost to the sea. There has been no thorough search of the island due to the dangers involved in doing so. The lighthouse has been automated for the past ten years, with the Brazilian authorities sending out a maintenance crew once per year to ensure its smooth running.

The island is of special interest to Caduceus, as they have determined that it is the closest point to the former Earthly location of Mu. Previous interpretations of the R'lyeh Text had placed Mu in the Pacific Ocean, near R'lyeh. After correlating this information with other sources, as well as factoring in the movement of tectonic plates in relation to the detachment of the island from the material world, scholars at Caduceus have placed its current location in the South Atlantic. They believe

the northern tip of Mu to be within 100 miles of Snake Island. This information is a closely guarded secret within Caduceus but, of course, spies for the Inner Night have reported this knowledge to Rose Meadham. Tyrannissh was also able to use sorcery to learn of the island's importance while she was a prisoner of Caduceus.

Initial experiments conducted by Caduceus have proved the hypothesis that opening a Gate in close to Mu will allow the casters to control the Gate's destination more reliably and avoid the far end's (fatal) pull towards Ghataothoa (see **Chapter 9: Mu**). The scientists' successful results thereby overcome the one major barrier to Caduceus's plan—it also provides a means for the Inner Night and Tyrannissh to close in on their goals.

Last year, the first stable Gate was established but Caduceus quickly shut it down when a lloigor came through and killed most of the field team. Subsequent attempts have led to pitched battles between Caduceus agents and the lloigor (all of which the lloigor have won). The Gate remains at the ready but the final push has been waiting for Joshua Meadham to locate and secure the Cobra Crown—and thereby, the Crown's ability to subdue the lloigor.

OPENING SCENE

There is no prescribed opening scene for this chapter, as the heroes may arrive in Santos, Brazil by a number of means, be it by aircraft, boat, or possibly even magic. Once the heroes decide to head to Brazil to reach Snake Island, encourage to the players to act quickly as any delay could play into the hands of Caduceus, as well as those of the Inner Night and Tyrannissh.

If flying direct from Calcutta, per the **Confrontation at Dum Dum Airport** (see **Chapter 7: Calcutta**, page 202), the distance is just over 9,500 miles. Traveling down from New York, the distance is just over 4,800 miles by airplane, or just over 4,000 nautical miles if arriving by boat. Red line the travel and start things off with the heroes arriving in Santos. If you want to get straight into the action, the heroes' arrival is being observed by hirelings of Dr. Cerqueira, who blend into the surrounding easily—requiring a Hard Spot Hidden or Psychology roll to detect their intent. If discovered, an initial scene may be a chase sequence with the heroes in pursuit of the hireling (a suspicious-looking youth).

THE GOLDEN LANCEHEAD VIPER

The golden lancehead viper (*Bothrops insularis*) is unique to Snake Island, and is the only species of snake to be found here. This adaptation of the lancehead viper is notable for having much stronger venom than any related species (in fact, it is considered by some to be one of the deadliest snakes in the world), which enables it to hunt the birds that visit or dwell on the island. The venom is deadly enough (4D10 damage) that it will usually kill any human bitten within an hour, painfully liquefying their organs and swelling their brain until they die of internal bleeding. Antivenin mitigates the effect, halving the damage. A bite victim experiences chills, nausea, convulsions, and necrosis of the flesh in the affected area. The bite of the golden lancehead is harmless to serpent people and humans undergoing hybridization. The snakes will also avoid biting initiates of the cult of Yig.

As the name suggests, golden lanceheads are golden yellow in color, affording them excellent camouflage amongst dead leaves. An average specimen is around 2 feet in length, although they can grow to twice this size. The snakes can usually be found among leaf litter or in rock crevices, especially after ingesting prey, or sunning themselves on a rock or patch of earth. The heroes may be further perturbed by the fact that the snakes also can be found in trees hunting for prey.

Forward-thinking heroes may wish to take precautions, stocking up on stout knee-length boots, leather gloves, and the like, while in Santos. If so equipped, the Keeper should allow heroes to make an additional Luck roll to see if a striking snake hits a protected area or not (see **Arriving at Snake Island**, page 216).

Possible obstacles to the chase include:

- A group of children playing football in the street (**Dodge** roll to avoid colliding with a running child, or **STR** or **SIZ** roll to push the child out of the way).
- A pile of empty wooden crates (**Jump** roll to leap over them without losing pace).



- A narrow side street with washing lines stretched across it (**DEX** roll to duck and weave through the lines).
- A truck unloading sacks of coffee beans into a warehouse, blocking the road (**Spot Hidden** to notice that there is in fact enough room to run between the front bumper and nearest wall, or **DEX** to clamber under the truck).
- A street vendor pushing a cart of fresh fish to market (**Jump** to leap over the cart or **STR** to push it out of the way without slowing).
- A mob of visiting sailors engaged in a fistfight (**Intimidate** to convince the sailors to get out of the way or **Fighting (Brawl)** to battle through the crowd).

If the youth, known only as Yago, is captured, he gives up what he knows easily if successfully **Intimidated** or bribed. He relates (in broken English or Spanish) that he was paid to look for the arrival of the heroes, showing them a piece of paper with their names and descriptions on in (in Portuguese), and report their arrival and whereabouts to the man in the Caduceus office on Rua Euzébio de Queiroz, near the main docks. He can give a brief description of Dr. Cerqueira.

Of course, if the heroes do manage to spot and interrogate Yago, Dr. Cerqueira still finds out about their arrival, as he's paid more than one local to keep a watch for the heroes.

RUNNING THIS CHAPTER

The most likely reasons for the heroes to stop in Santos are to charter a boat, refuel a seaplane, or to learn something more about Snake Island before heading there. See the section titled **Arriving at Snake Island** (page 216) for details of the complications they can face while doing so.

Some heroes may want to investigate Caduceus's operation at the port to learn more about the dangers they may face when moving on to the island. See the section titled **The Caduceus Offices** (see nearby) for details of what they may find.

Heroes simply wanting to stock up on weapons and other supplies can do so readily enough. Santos is an international port with a great many places to buy what they need. The only restriction is on supplies of golden lancehead viper antivenin. As a disincentive to would-be intruders, Caduceus has purchased all the local stocks of golden lancehead antivenin. Most of this has already been destroyed but some vials are stored in the Caduceus offices in Santos (in case human operatives are required on the island).

Rumors and Information in the Port of Santos

If the heroes wish to gather information about Snake Island, Caduceus, or other related matters, the Keeper should ask for appropriate interpersonal skill rolls (**Fast Talk**, **Charm**, **Intimidate**, or **Persuade**), depending on the approach the heroes use. Each roll will reveal one of the following pieces of information. Heroes failing a pushed roll should come to the attention of one of the paid informants Caduceus have scattered around the port, who will then report back to Dr. Cerqueira.

Heroes asking about neutral subjects, such as the history of Snake Island, do not need to make any rolls.

- Dr. Cerqueira of Caduceus has paid a number of people in the city to let him know if anyone tries to hire a boat out to Snake Island.
- *The Asclepius*, a cargo ship belonging to Caduceus, is currently docked in the port.
- A medical aid charity has bought up all the supplies of golden lancehead antivenin.
- An American woman wearing a veil has been asking questions about Caduceus and Snake Island. She has not been seen for a few days.

THE CADUCEUS OFFICES

Caduceus keeps a suite of offices and a small warehouse in Santos, ostensibly to help with the distribution of medical aid across South America and report on health issues affecting the region. The truth is that the organization only bought the offices after their researchers began to suspect the truth about the location of Mu, some ten years ago. Dr. Cerqueira runs the operation for Caduceus.

The offices and warehouse are all housed in a single wooden structure, located on the Rua Euzébio de Queiroz, a few hundred yards from one of the main docks in Santos. The Caduceus logo is featured prominently on the front of the building. While there is a "closed" sign on the front door in both Portuguese and English, and the door is locked, there are lights on inside and occasional signs of movement. Those observing the building can see people coming and going, although not frequently. Such people may include Joshua Meadham, Canning, Frank De Luca, and Dr. Gonçalves, depending on who is still alive, as well as Dr. Cerqueira and his hirelings. They perform a variety of errands, including sending telegrams, inspecting *The Asclepius* (see below) and arranging for a fresh delivery of guinea pigs.

The warehouse is currently being used as barracks for the serpent people preparing to ship out to Snake Island; 12 will be resting in the warehouse at any given time. There are a few crates of medical supplies piled around

the walls, but most of the stock has been discarded in a back street behind the warehouse to make room; two of the crates outside contain vials of golden lancehead viper antivenin. Inside the warehouse, sitting on some of the remaining crates are cages containing rodents, and a few capybaras run around freely. There are sleeping mats dotted around the floor, many of which have fragments of shed snakeskin on them, like so much oversized dandruff. The room smells like the reptile house at a zoo.

If able to poke around Dr. Cerqueira's office, the heroes may uncover (**Spot Hidden**) documents giving the heroes' descriptions, as well as photographs of them. The note with the documents requests that Dr. Cerqueira keep watch for the arrival of these people and to keep them under surveillance. The note ends by saying that Dr. Gonçalves has been dispatched to Santos to ensure "these enemies of Caduceus" are prevented from reaching *Ilha de Queimada Grande*, and that Dr. Cerqueira should provide whatever assistance is necessary and all available means to ensure Dr. Gonçalves can complete his mission.

Dr. Cerqueira's office also contains a docking permit for *The Asclepius* (giving the current location of the ship), a map of Snake Island with the Gate marked on it and, in a locked iron safe, copies of **Handouts 3, 4, 5, and 6** from **Chapter 2: New York** (see pages 52–55). Dr. Cerqueira carries the key on his person at all times, but the safe may be opened with a successful **Locksmith** roll.

Unless the heroes' actions have allowed Joshua Meadham to advance his timeline, a private freighter belonging to Caduceus, *The Asclepius*, is docked nearby. Joshua Meadham's plan is to use the freighter to take a final group of serpent people to Snake Island, along with essential supplies, ready to advance into Mu and take the Citadel. If circumstances have changed, *The Asclepius* will either have been abandoned or is already at Snake Island.

PLAYTEST NOTES

One hero passed her **Cthulhu Mythos** roll upon seeing the sigil and immediately started looking around for a dark place. As the coils of shadow began to choke the life out of one of her companions, she convinced him to hide under a nearby truck, where he would cast no shadow. The afflicted hero cowered there in safety while the rest of his companions hunted for the sorcerer who had targeted him.

MARCHING STRAIGHT INTO THE CADUCEUS OFFICES

A particularly brazen group of heroes may decide to march straight into the Caduceus offices and confront whoever is there. First of all, they will need to break down one of the outside doors, pick a lock or convince someone inside to open the door. Convincing one of the local staff that there has been a misunderstanding and that the heroes still work for Caduceus would require a **Hard Fast Talk** roll, increasing to Extreme difficulty if Joshua Meadham has met a violent death. There is no chance of making such a roll to convince Dr. Gonçalves.

Attempts to intimidate may not prove any easier, as there are 12 serpent people resting in the warehouse, ready to run into the offices if there is an altercation. The heroes will need to silence and **Intimidate** Dr. Cerqueira to avoid drawing attention to themselves. Should this fail, Dr. Cerqueira is happy to try to take the heroes alive to use as sacrifices on Snake Island, assuming that Dr. Gonçalves is dead or otherwise occupied.

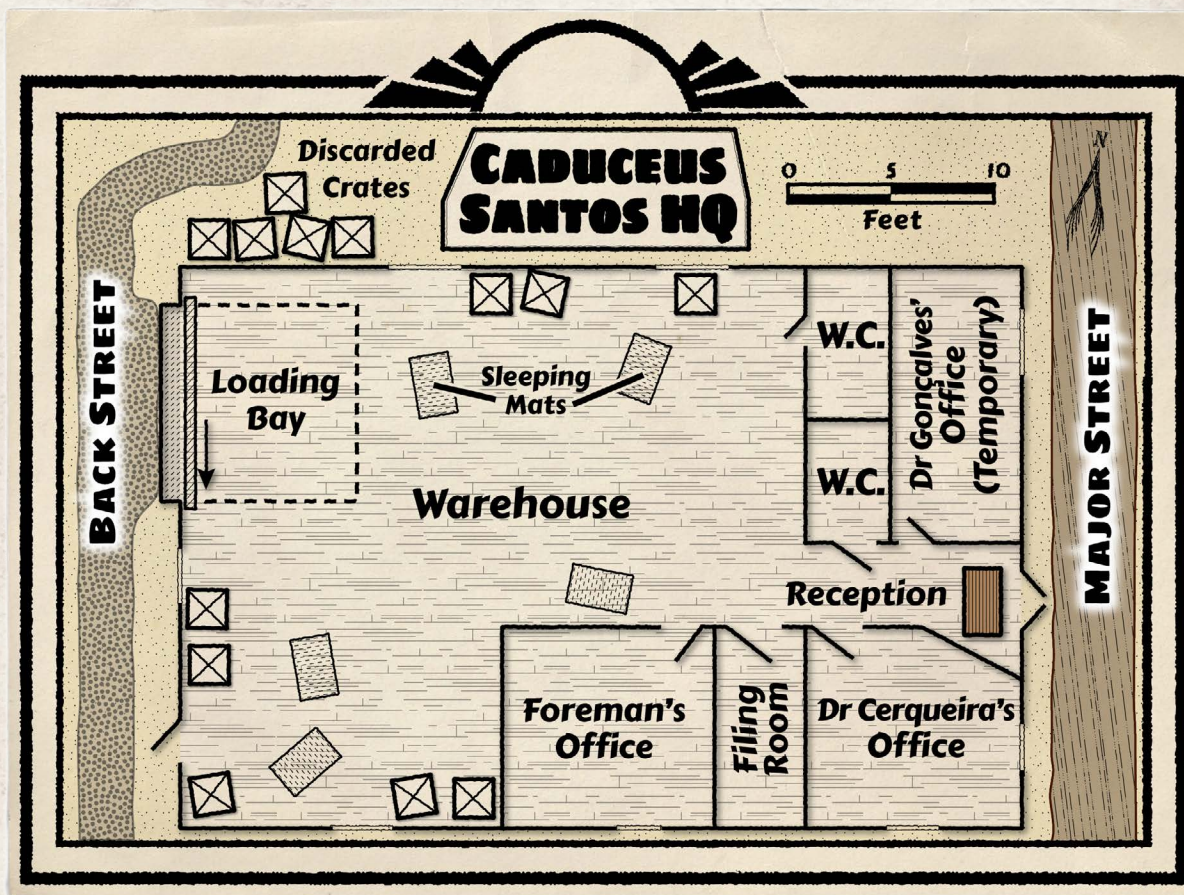
Dangers in Santos

Dr. Cerqueira has been told to keep an eye out for the heroes (descriptions and photographs have been sent to him) and ensure they do not get to Snake Island. If still alive, Dr. Gonçalves has been sent, arriving a day ahead of the heroes, to work with Cerqueira to locate the heroes and eliminate them.

Note that Dr. Gonçalves' mission remains in effect even if Joshua Meadham is dead, as Caduceus still wants to see Meadham's plan come to fruition. Frank De Luca will also be present, as Gonçalves does not know the full scope of Caduceus's plan for Mu, as these have only been trusted to serpent people. Also, if Caduceus suspects that the heroes are responsible for Joshua Meadham's death, its remaining leaders want revenge.

While Cerqueira and Gonçalves are mere humans, both are powerful sorcerers, well versed in the Mythos, with access to nasty spells. Gonçalves has access to the Heart of Yig and three Winged Vipers (see **Appendix B**, page 250).

Once the heroes have been located, Gonçalves sends a street urchin named Diego Sousa to pass them a message. The message takes the form of a folded piece of paper with a strange, eye-like sigil drawn on it in metallic green ink. When viewed, the eye appears to blink (**Sanity** roll, 0/1



loss). Those who view the sigil can later be targeted by the spell, *The Coils Of Yig* (see Appendix B, page 256).

Heroes making a successful *Cthulhu Mythos* roll can determine the purpose of the sigil and the fact that looking at it has placed them in deadly peril. This knowledge also allows them to realize that they are only in immediate danger if they are casting a shadow. It is up to the heroes to come up with suitable countermeasures; as well as the obvious solution of hiding in darkness until Gonçalves is dealt with, it may be possible to devise some sorcerous protection through spontaneous use of the *Cthulhu Mythos* skill, potentially even turning the attack back on the caster.

Keeper note: you might like to use the handout of the sigil (see *Handout: Snake Island 1*) folded up like a message. Pass the folded paper to those players whose heroes are present in the scene. If any of the players look at the unfolded image, their heroes can be judged to be under the spell.

Diego was warned not to look at the note but couldn't resist doing so—he will be the first to die, writhing and screaming in panic as his coiling shadow strangles him over the course

of three rounds—unless the heroes prevent Gonçalves from casting the spell. If any of the heroes can speak Portuguese, or they have a translator, Diego be persuaded to describe the man who gave him the note, allowing the heroes to identify the culprit as Dr. Gonçalves. Going to the dockside fish market, where Gonçalves hired the child, the heroes can find no trace of Gonçalves, who has retreated to a nearby storage shed so he can cast his spell in private.

Heroes moving around the area, actively looking for the source of the spell, may attempt a Hard *Listen* roll to hear muttered chanting or a Hard *Spot Hidden* roll to detect the odor of strange incense coming from the shed; given the size of the area around the docks, it will still take 1D6 rounds for a hero to get close enough to the shed. If interrupted, Gonçalves immediately stops the casting and defends himself with his *Winged Vipers* (see Appendix B, page 250).

When the spell activates, the shadow of the first person to look at the sigil comes to life, unwinding into a mass of grasping tentacles that bind the victim tight. If the spell kills the first victim and there is someone else who has looked at the sigil, Gonçalves moves onto the next target, as long as he has enough magic points to do so.

SNAKE ISLAND

Handout: Snake Island 1



GETTING TO SNAKE ISLAND

There are a number of factors that make getting to the island complicated. Local sailors know that it is illegal to set foot there—for the protection of both the snakes and any people who may come into contact with them. Moreover, they all know the reputation of the island and believe that those seeking to go there must be insane (and inherently a danger to themselves and any sailor foolish enough to provide them passage).

Caduceus has spread a lot of money around to convince local sea captains, both of shipping vessels and fishing craft, to inform Dr. Cerqueira if anyone tries to hire them to go to *Ilha de Queimada Grande*. Unless the heroes are able to convince (either with bribery or through intimidation) one of the boat captains not to report them to Dr. Cerqueira, a few Caduceus serpent people and human goons ambush the heroes on the docks as soon as they try to set off for the island.

If the heroes already have access to a seaplane, the logical place for them to stop and refuel is Santos; again, Caduceus have paid locals to watch out for seaplanes and inform Dr. Cerqueira should any arrive. Heroes refueling a seaplane will be asked lots of questions about their destination; should the person selling the fuel work out that the heroes are headed to Snake Island, he sabotages their plane by putting sugar in the fuel tank, providing Caduceus time to act. Of course, a suitably paranoid group of heroes may see this coming and prevent the mechanical damage.

The heroes may also choose to use *The Asclepius* to reach Snake Island. Given the size of the vessel, it would be impossible for one person to pilot it. The heroes would either need to drive the crew from the boat and man all positions themselves, or find some way of convincing the captain—a crusty old man named Vinicius Costa Silva—to take them: a Hard **Intimidate** roll is required (unless backed up by a tangible threat, lowering the difficulty to Regular) or bribery (a significant amount of money, along with a combined **Credit Rating** and either Hard **Persuade** or Hard **Charm** roll) could convince him to break with Caduceus.

Stealing a smaller craft may prove easier. The heroes could sneak or talk their way on board and then use a combined **Pilot (Boat)** and **Navigate** roll to get to Snake Island.

Alternatively, the heroes may choose to stow away. Sneaking on board *The Asclepius* requires a successful **Stealth** roll from the hero with the lowest rating in the skill (increased to a Hard roll if the attempt is in broad daylight). There are plenty of crates in the hold to provide

cover for stowaways. A particularly unkind Keeper may choose to have the heroes make a group **Luck** roll during the voyage to see if any of the crew examines the cargo *en route*.

Finally, heroes who are taken prisoner by Caduceus may be taken to Snake Island as prisoners. There is a chance that human sacrifices may be required when facing the Ilogor, and the heroes will do nicely.

ARRIVING AT SNAKE ISLAND

Once the heroes have worked out how to get to the island, they are faced with two grave problems. The first is that there is a storm approaching. The skies darken, the sea becomes tumultuous, and everyone on board the vessel must pass a **CON** roll or be laid low with seasickness (increase skill roll difficulty levels or impose a penalty die at the Keeper's discretion); additionally, whoever is piloting the boat will need to succeed in a **Pilot (Boat)** roll to avoid running aground on the submerged rocks that surround the island. Similarly, anyone attempting to land a seaplane should attempt a **Pilot (Aircraft)** roll to land safely.

The second, more serious problem is that the waters are guarded by a genetically engineered sea serpent. Spotting it below the surface before it attacks the ship calls for a Hard **Spot Hidden** roll in storm conditions (or a Regular roll if the heroes sensibly wait for the storm to pass before heading into the island). The serpent attacks anything that approaches the island, attempting to sink boats and devour any survivors. Treat the serpent's attacks as attacking the boat, which may be opposed with **Pilot (Boat)** rolls.

Use these statistics for the heroes' boat: MOV 11, Build 26, Armor for Passengers 0. The serpent inflicts 8D6 damage per successful attack, slamming its tail to break up the boat—each full 10 points of damage decreases the boat's build by 1 point (round down); damage below 10 hit points is ignored. If the boat's build is reduced to half of its starting value or lower, its maneuverability is impaired (one penalty die to **Pilot (Boat)** skill rolls) and it begins to take on water. If damage reduces the boat to zero build through cumulative damage, the boat is rapidly sinking. Refer to **Chapter 7: Chases** in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* for guidance on vehicular damage.

If the boat sinks, survivors can attempt to avoid the serpent while heading for shore by making a combined **Swim** and **Stealth** roll; otherwise, the serpent begins to

attack individuals (kindly Keepers don't need to impose penalties for fighting in the water, they're "heroes" after all). Of course, if the heroes have secretly stowed onboard *The Asclepius*, the serpent people on the vessel turn the sea serpent away, and, once moored at the island, the heroes can attempt to slip out unnoticed.

If the heroes try to land a seaplane near the island, the serpent rears up from the water and attempts to bite one of the wings; if successful, the damage forces the heroes to make an emergency landing, requiring a **Hard Pilot (Aircraft)** roll as the plane spirals out of control. Again, the serpent will move in to devour anyone fleeing a downed plane unless the heroes are successful in a combined **Swim** and **Stealth** roll.

Assuming the heroes manage to get past the serpent, they still have to land on the island. Cliffs and huge boulders cover most of the shore, requiring a **Hard Climb** roll to ascend in storm conditions, or a **Regular Climb** or **Jump** roll if the storm has passed. If the heroes are able to navigate around the island, they find a large section of flat, slimy rock where they can disembark easily—although a **DEX** roll is needed if doing so while fleeing or fighting.

Once on land, the heroes now must contend with the island and its inhabitants. From wherever the heroes arrive, the lighthouse at the center of the island can be seen. Heading toward the island's only structure requires clambering over large, mossy rocks, through undergrowth filled with snakes, and along steep paths through a dense forest. Large tropical cockroaches scuttle everywhere, along with the swaying of branches and long grasses, and the constant shaking of the undergrowth due to rain. The constant sense of movement all around should keep the heroes in a state of paranoia.

Spotting hidden vipers in the undergrowth or hanging from trees calls for a **Hard Spot Hidden** roll. Only call for one of these rolls per hour on the island; failure means that the hero in question has missed a viper in the undergrowth, on an overhanging branch, or another suitable hiding place. The hero must now make a **Luck** roll to see if they have alarmed the snake, provoking it to strike (see the golden lancehead's profile, page 210).

Joshua Meadham's Plan

There are three possibilities open to Caduceus at this stage.

The first, and simplest, is to use the power of the Cobra Crown to push into Mu, driving back the lloigor (if Tyranissh has not already dealt with them during the Calcutta chapter). Ideally, this involves the Cobra Crown being in the possession of Joshua Meadham, who aims to deal with the lloigor himself (see below). If the Cobra Crown has fallen into the hands of the heroes, and they are

no longer loyal to Caduceus, Joshua's plan will be to kill the heroes in Santos and take the Cobra Crown from them. If this fails, plan B is to intercept the heroes on Snake Island, hoping that they will be foolish enough to bring the Cobra Crown with them. If the sea serpent or guards on the island kill the heroes, Joshua can retrieve the crown from their corpses. Otherwise, he relies on his followers on the island telling the heroes that Mr. Meadham has already passed through the Gate—encouraging the heroes to pass through the Gate first, which Joshua hopes will cause enough of a distraction for the lloigor to allow him to pass through unnoticed. Failing that, Joshua Meadham has managed to learn the Body Warping Of Gorgoroth spell. He plans to suck magic points out of a number of his minions, allowing him to assume the form of reptilian lloigor, hoping that this disguise will allow him to pass through the Gate and into Mu safely. Given the personal risk involved, he has been reluctant to attempt this, but will do so if no safer options are available.

The final resort is to destroy the enchantments banishing Mu. This extremely dangerous ceremony must be performed on Snake Island (see **Raising Mu**, nearby). Joshua Meadham has resisted enacting this ceremony—not only does it require mass sacrifices, it also calls forth a tsunami likely to wipe out the entire island, along with most of the eastern seaboard of the Americas and that of Western Africa. With Mu returned to the Earth, a byakhee would be summoned to carry Joshua to across to Mu—but this plan is very risky as it relies on him surviving the initial chaos. Note that this series of events is also Rose Meadham's backup plan, although she is much less squeamish about the widespread destruction and the attention it will bring.

Of course, if Tyranissh opened a Gate in Calcutta and pulled the lloigor through, the Gate on Snake Island is no longer defended. If this is the case, Joshua Meadham and his cohort have already passed to Mu and are in the Citadel by the time the heroes arrive on Snake Island. Alternatively, if Caduceus has been weakened, Rose Meadham may have taken the opportunity to take over control of the island and pass through to Mu instead (see **Other Factions in Control**, following). Thus, in either of these cases, the heroes arrive to find Snake Island empty of Caduceus or Inner Night agents and the way to the Gate clear.

The Gate to Mu

If the lloigor have been removed by events in Calcutta and are no longer in a position to defend their end of the Gate, Caduceus agents have reopened the Gate on Snake Island. The Gate takes the form of a swirling vortex, around 10 yards in diameter, in the ground by the lighthouse, not

unlike a very strange pool of water. The heroes can pass through the Gate by leaping into it.

Closing the Gate requires a reverse casting of the Create Gate spell or spontaneous use of the Cthulhu Mythos skill—but it is too late for this to be of help as Caduceus have already sent a number of agents through, and if Joshua Meadham is still alive and ahead of the heroes, he has also reached Mu.

The Caduceus Camp

Caduceus has had a presence on Snake Island for over ten years. Caduceus agents murdered the lighthouse keeper and his family; the original plan had been to replace them but Joshua Meadham (rightly) determined that the fear brought about by their mysterious disappearances would deter future visitors.

The Caduceus presence has been low-key until recently, setting up and testing Gates and ensuring that no trespassers, especially those loyal to the Inner Night, set foot on the island. Now that their plans are nearing completion, there are a dozen serpent people on the island, camped out around the lighthouse in wooden huts, Caduceus field tents, and inside the lighthouse itself. They no longer bother with human disguises. The serpent people are all armed with flame pistols, which they wield with a skill of 40%.

If Joshua Meadham has not already passed through the Gate to Mu, twelve serpent people are currently in and around the Caduceus camp, guarding the Gate. If Rose Meadham has taken control of the island, see **Other Factions in Control**, following).

The Lighthouse

Sitting atop the highest point of the island, on the peak of a small hill, stands the lighthouse. The square, white tower is built in a Spanish Colonial style and is almost 100 feet tall. Attached to tower stands the old lighthouse keeper's house.

Inside, the tower is hollow, with a ladder running up to the beacon at the top. The ground floor of the tower has piles of crates, scrolls, and books lying all around. The written materials are in a number of languages, some pre-human; the accompanying notes, written in English, indicate that a Gate has been constructed here, providing a stable portal to Mu. Hidden amongst the crates here is a sleeping golden lancehead viper, requiring a **Hard Spot Hidden** roll to notice it while searching through the paperwork; if the roll is failed, the heroes wake the snake, which is not well disposed towards them. Depending on the circumstance, check to see who has the lowest **Luck** score to determine which hero is likely to be bitten, and then have the snake attack him or her.

The former lighthouse keeper's house is in a poor state of repair. Years of heavy rain, plant growth and rot have caused the structure to collapse in places. The local vegetation has grown inside, some of which has been cut back to make space for some bedrolls while, elsewhere, the bushes and creepers have completely taken over. There is the occasional ominous rustling of golden lanceheads moving through the plants—there are rarely fewer than a dozen snakes sheltering here at any one time. The bedrolls, as well as some clothing, belong to the serpent people who have been using the house for shelter.

Hidden amongst the foliage and rubble are the skeletons of the lighthouse keeper and his family, their bones long-since picked clean by insects.

OTHER FACTIONS IN CONTROL

If Caduceus has been largely neutralized as a threat and Rose Meadham is aware of this, she takes over the Gate on Snake Island. Heroes arriving after this event discover the aftermath of a battle, with the burnt and mutilated corpses of serpent people littering the ground. Some have been torn asunder by formless spawn; the dismembered corpses are covered in telltale black slime—a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll reveals the black slime's source as formless spawn of Tsathoggua. By the time the heroes arrive on the scene, Rose has passed through the Gate, taking the formless spawn with her.

If Tyrannis's actions resulted in the lloigor manifesting in Calcutta, Rose passes through the gate without incident; otherwise, the far side of the Gate will hold the aftermath of a mighty battle between the formless spawn and the lloigor. The triumphant Rose Meadham will be at the Citadel, making preparations to activate the Doomsday Device.

If Tyrannis is dominant, she has convinced all but one of the serpent people on the island to follow her through the Gate, leaving it undefended. The last remaining serpent person will be trying to disable the Gate as the Heroes arrive—giving them the opportunity to prevent the Gate from being disabled and allowing them to pass into Mu to stop the Doomsday Device. If the lloigor were still on the other side of the Gate, Tyrannis's followers are all dead but she has used the chaos to flee to the Citadel.

Traveling Through the Gate

The journey through the gate is strange and disconcerting. Passing through pulsating light that beat in their brains, the heroes feel like they are being pulled inside out, their heads flooded with disjointed and terrifying images; call for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss). If a hero can make a



MWM



RAISING MU


This option is provided as a contingency in case the heroes have managed to find a method to stop any of the factions from passing through the Gate. Should this happen, the Keeper could choose to end the campaign with a more terrestrial showdown between the heroes and one of the enemy factions, although this may feel a little anticlimactic. If you wish to end the campaign in Mu, there is another option.

Both Joshua and Rose Meadham have a contingency they will only use as a last resort: return Mu to the material world before implementing their plans. In this event, both parties summon a byakhee to fly them to the Citadel on Mu.

There are a number of reasons why both Joshua and Rose are reluctant to implement the plan to have Mu materialize on Earth. The ritual developed by Caduceus to destroy the pocket universe containing Mu requires a massive sacrifice of hundreds of serpent people or humans—neither they nor the Inner Night are squeamish about that—but it will require some logistical planning, however, and risks attracting attention.

The ritual is extremely dangerous, as much like the Gate, it needs to be cast physically near to Mu's current location. Suddenly returning a small continent to the South Atlantic Ocean will cause massive earthquakes and tsunamis, and there is a good chance that no one involved in the ritual will survive such earth-shattering events.

The next complication is that an unprecedented amount of attention will be attracted. The serpent people need some time at the Citadel to enact their plan. The sudden presence of a huge island in the South Atlantic will almost certainly bring humans from around the world, probably in the form of the military. While any of the factions could execute their plans before such a force discovers them, none of them are in a hurry to take that risk.



successful Hard POW roll, he or she can make sense of these images and construct a narrative. The images tell how the elder things (a Cthulhu Mythos roll can identify these, otherwise simply give a physical description of the elder things) tore Mu out of the world using their alien science. In doing so, they also trapped themselves and all of the other residents of Mu in a separate reality. Understanding this narrative grants 1D3 points of Cthulhu Mythos.

The heroes arrive on the other side of the Gate opens on a blasted plain, covered with the broken bodies, torn flesh, and blood of the first waves of serpent people that Caduceus (or the Inner Night) sent through, only to be killed by the lloigor. The sky overhead is a swirling mass of grey fog. A few members of the Caduceus expedition can be seen in the distance, moving across a sinister-looking marsh towards a volcano, straddled by the once-mighty Citadel. At this distance, all that is visible is a shimmering mass of metal and glass as large as the volcano itself. Occasional flashes of light and explosions can just be made out, but the battle generating them is too far away for sound to carry.

CONCLUSION

Assuming the heroes have managed to survive the dangers of Snake Island and have traveled through the Gate to Mu, events now proceed as described in **Chapter 9: Mu**. The Keeper should avoid having a hero development phase now. Instead, simply just award the Sanity gains given in **Rewards** (following) and move straight on to the final chapter and climax of the campaign.

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- Defeating Dr. Gonçalves and/or Dr. Cerqueira +1D4 Sanity points.
- Surviving myriad dangers and reaching Mu +1D6 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Note: profiles for key NPCs (if surviving) can be found in **Appendix A**:

- Dr. Gonçalves, page 242.
- Tyranissh, page 245.
- Rose Meadham, page 244.
- Joshua Meadham, page 240.
- Canning, page 241.

Dr. Sérgio Cerqueira, 43, Caduceus station chief

STR 50	CON 60	SIZ 70	DEX 65	INT 75
APP 50	POW 80	EDU 75	SAN 00	HP 13
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 6	MP: 16	Luck: 40

SNAKE ISLAND

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
.38 automatic	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Skills

Cthulhu Mythos 33%, Climb 35%, English 35%, Fast Talk 60%, First Aid 60%, Jump 40%, Listen 50%, Medicine 60%, Portuguese 75%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 60%, Throw 45%.

Spells: Flesh Warding, Fist Of Yog-Sothoth, Coils Of Yig
Note: While Cerqueira (if Dr. Gonçalves has already been eliminated by the heroes) will attempt to use The Coils Of Yig to destroy the heroes; he will not use all of his own magic points to do so—using the magic points stored in the Heart of Yig, saving his own pool for self-defense, should he need them.

The Sea Serpent, monstrous watery snake

This giant snake is similar to the one found in the temple in Bolivia but is adapted to life in the sea. Six foot in diameter and over one hundred feet long, its mottled green skin affords it some degree of camouflage in all but the clearest seawater—heroes must succeed with a **Spot Hidden** roll to see the serpent when it is fully submerged. Despite being a sea creature, the serpent breathes air and needs to surface every twenty minutes or so.

STR 300	CON 260	SIZ 400	DEX 80	INT 30
APP —	POW 75	EDU —	SAN —	HP 66
DB: +8D6	Build: 0	Move: 9	MP: 15	Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (tail slam, bite, swallow)

Swallow (fighting maneuver): if swallowed, the target automatically suffers 1D10 damage at the end of each round (a combination of suffocation and stomach acid). The snake's armor can be bypassed if a swallowed target attacks from the inside. Being swallowed is a traumatic experience requiring a Sanity roll (1/1D8 loss).

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 8D6
Swallow (mnvr)	60% (30/12), the target (up to Build 1) is swallowed whole
Tail slam	60% (30/12), damage 8D6

Armor: 10-point scaly hide.

Sanity loss: 1/1D10 to see the sea serpent.

Golden Lancehead Vipers, deadly and hidden terrors

STR 10	CON 50	SIZ 10	DEX 80	INT 10
APP —	POW 50	EDU —	SAN —	HP 6
DB: -2	Build: -2	Move: 8	MP: 10	Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bite)

Bite: inflicts a single point of damage + poison causing 4D10 damage. A successful Hard CON roll reduces poison damage by half.

Bite	60% (30/12), 1 + 4D10 poison
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Armor: 1-point scaly hide.

Sanity Loss: none.

Serpent Person Guards

Should Caduceus or the Inner Night be in control of the island when the heroes arrive, twelve guards are positioned around the Gate (unless otherwise specified in the preceding text). Use the serpent person profiles in **Appendix A** for either faction (see **Sample Serpent People**, page 247, **Appendix A**).





The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.

—L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*

THE FORGOTTEN CONTINENT

OVERVIEW

The heroes become the first humans to set foot on the lost continent of Mu for over 10,000 years. Here, they face unidentifiable creatures, paranoid elder things, a rampaging shoggoth, and a pitched battle for control of what was once at the heart of the Second Serpent Person Empire—the Citadel.

Once inside the Citadel, the heroes encounter a forgotten civilization of degenerate serpent people, deadly biomechanical defense systems, and the breakdown of reality itself. It is down to the heroes to make a desperate last fight for humanity's future.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

The far side of the Gate from Snake Island opens onto a blasted plateau, covered with the broken bodies of serpent people, alongside which lie mangled bodies of giant reptilian lloigor. The ground is drenched in blood, enough to have turned the ground into mud. Rocks have been torn asunder and the ground is rent and furrowed. Looking up, the sky is a great swirling mass of dense gray fog, with strange stands reaching down like writhing tentacles. The peak of a mighty volcano (Yaddith-Gho) can be seen across a valley filled with swampland. A strange, spired structure

atop of the volcano glints like steel and glass, while flashes of light and fire cut through the surrounding fog.

A path leads down the plateau into the swamp, roughly in the direction of the volcano. There are footprints in the mud—the number and type of which vary depending on which faction managed to gain control of the Gate in Chapter 8: Snake Island.

WHO IS IN CONTROL?

In Chapter 8: Snake Island, the different situations were discussed—especially in relation to the actions of the heroes—which would lead each of the factions to be first through the Gate. It is likely that, by this stage, the heroes have neutralized one or two of the factions, leaving an obvious front-runner. Even if this is not the case and multiple factions are still in play, the Keeper should focus on one faction only from this point onwards. The situation in the Citadel is deadly enough without the heroes having to deal with Caduceus, the Inner Night, and Tyranissh at the same time.

If it is not obvious which faction is in the lead, the Keeper should prioritize whichever the heroes have clashed with most—this will probably be Caduceus, with the Inner Night a close second and Tyranissh largely a complication. Be prepared to juggle these around depending on the main battles your players have picked. The important thing in this chapter is to give the heroes an epic and climactic battle against someone they see as their true nemesis.

THE SETTING

Mu is a strange and uncomfortable place to human sensibilities. The sky is shrouded with roiling gray fog that almost seems to be alive. While there is no sun visible in the sky, patches of golden light break through the fog, apparently at random, and drift around the landscape like searchlights. The air is saturated with humidity and warmer than the climes the heroes just left, averaging around 38°C (100°F), and filled with buzzing insects that no human entomologist could identify.

The flora and fauna of Mu differs wildly from anything the heroes may have seen before. This is partly because it is home to a great many species that have long been extinct on Earth, but largely because the serpent people and elder things of Mu were accomplished genetic engineers and tampered with a great many life forms while conducting their experiments.

In the distance, beyond the swamp and the volcano, the heroes can see what looks like thick, vibrant rainforest, although it seems that the trees are much larger than those found in any terrestrial jungle. There are bursts of colors that have no place in such foliage, such as bright yellow and scarlet. Occasionally, large creatures can be seen gliding overhead, and a **Natural World** or **Archaeology** roll may identify them as impossibly large pterosaurs.

THE SWAMP

The path through the swamp is meandering and treacherous, leading on for over five miles before it reaches the base of Yaddith-Gho. The ground seethes and bubbles with steam, weaving between hillocks of festering mud and pools of thick, foul-smelling liquid. Twisted forms can be seen writhing just below the surface, some of which stare up with disarmingly intelligent eyes. Stunted plants of vivid hues grow everywhere, some bridging the barrier between plant and animal. While few are dangerous to anything of human size, the heroes are regularly slapped by tendrils and have wet mouth-like pods snap at them as they pass.

Insects, the size of human heads, flap around and laugh like children. Mud bubbles spray hot gasses smelling of anything from excrement to cooked meat; some of the bubbles explode with flashes of light and flame. Visibility changes wildly as colorful mists drift and dissipate again as quickly as they arrived. Gusts of warm, moist wind blow in distant sounds of rending metal, inhuman screams, and explosions.

Not everything the heroes encounter in the swamp is harmless. A few possible threats and nuisances are described below. The following encounters are presented

for the Keeper to use as he or she chooses. If the heroes are already badly hurt, it may not, for example, be a good idea to throw a shoggoth at them. Pick whichever encounters you find entertaining but remember that the campaign may feel anticlimactic if the heroes fail to make it to the Citadel alive. Only **The Base of the Volcano** (see following page) must be encountered, as this leads the heroes directly to the Citadel.

The purpose of the journey through the swamp is to play up the weirdness and menace of Mu as much as possible. The heroes have found themselves in a strange land that has existed outside reality for 10,000 years, and which is populated by alien intelligences—particularly serpent people, elder things, and lloigor—as well as their strange creations. Nothing about this place should feel familiar or safe.

The occasional boom and flash of light from a distant explosion drifts across the swamp, coming from the pitched battle raging at the base of the volcano. Sometimes the air stills and, in the silence of the swamp, the heroes hear the distant sounds of strange weaponry, tearing metal, and inhuman screams.

The Slurper

While traveling through the swamp, several large bubbles of mud blow up from the ground before popping. Up ahead, a particularly large bubble pushes up more and more but instead of popping it opens, revealing itself to be the eye of a monstrous entity writhing below the swamp. It starts to suck in all the foul liquid around the heroes, leaving them exposed and on crumbling, muddy ground.

The heroes can choose to flee, trying to leap across onto safer ground (a combined **Spot Hidden** and **Jump** roll), or drive the creature off (inflicting 40 points damage causes the creature to pull under the surface again with a huge slurping noise). The creature vomits up fluid, sending waves in all directions. Any heroes within 20 yards need to make **Dodge** or **Jump** rolls; otherwise, they could be pulled below the surface and have to swim to safety. The Keeper should remind the heroes that they are not alone in the foul water, with wriggling forms bumping against them as they attempt to get to get out of the liquid mud—there is no actual danger but the Keeper should still try to make the experience as uncomfortable as possible.

The Swamp Chorus

The swamp chorus is made up of little flapping creatures, resembling a cross between a stingray and a parrot, with frog-like skin. The creatures skitter across the mud behind the heroes, quietly at first, until the first time they hear the heroes make a sound.

Good mimics, the chorus repeats words, phrases, and other sounds that they hear in loud, screeching voices. Unless driven off, they ruin any element of surprise the heroes hope to maintain.

Driving the chorus away is difficult. They scatter as soon as anyone gets within ten feet of them, flapping across the mud or disappearing underwater, making them almost impossible to engage in melee; only a successful **Stealth** roll gets a would-be attacker close enough to strike. Ranged weapons fare better but the chorus members' small size and constant movement mean that any attack incurs two penalty dice. The chorus gleefully echoes the sound of any gunfire, even louder than the original salvo.

As soon as a hero inflicts even a single point of damage to the chorus, they scatter; for every 3 points of damage the heroes inflict, they manage to kill one of the creatures. The heroes may then make a group **Luck** roll: if successful, the chorus stays away; otherwise, they return during the heroes' next encounter with another denizen of the swamp.

Deadly Dreams

The path dips down through a stretch of sunken ground, then up over a steep hillock. The side of the hillock is covered with swaying, fleshy plants of purple-mottled skin, topped by what appear to be seedpods. The plants move a little more than the breeze can explain, turning toward the hero with the lowest Luck and spraying some kind of dust toward him or her. The dust can be avoided with a Hard **Dodge** roll (made more difficult by the unstable ground), or a Hard **CON** roll, if the hero holds his or her breath until past the danger.

If the hero breathes in a lungful of the fine, multicolored seeds, they prove hallucinogenic. The Keeper should treat this as a bout of insanity, giving full rein to delusions. As strange as the swamp is, it seems more dangerous when everything around the affected hero is alive and trying to eat him or her. These delusions are simply a side effect. The real purpose of the seeds is to reproduce; they sprout inside the victim's lungs over the next month, gradually suffocating him or her. Only experimental surgery, weird science, or magic can save the hero from a slow, painful death. Assuming the hero in question survives this chapter, a search for a cure may form the basis for a follow-up scenario.

Injured Serpent Man

One of the serpent people traveling with Joshua Meadham (substitute Rose Meadham or Tyranissh if one of them is in the dominant position) has been injured and now lies stuck in a pool of sucking mud, left for dead. He clutches onto life and whimpers for help. If rescued, he can fill the heroes in on Joshua Meadham's plan (or the plans of

Rose Meadham or Tyranissh if applicable) if they make an appropriate social skill roll. If the heroes pulled him free, they gain a bonus die to the roll for saving his life.

The Fallen Elder Things

About a mile from the base of the volcano is a reed-covered clearing, surrounded by swamp, containing the aftermath of a violent skirmish. Three dead elder things, scorched by flame pistols, lie beside the broken remains of two serpent people. One of the serpents' bodies has been so badly crushed by a gravity manipulator (see **Appendix B**, page 251) that it is little more than a red smear.

A fourth elder thing has survived, weak, injured, and barely conscious, it floats in a pool next to the clearing, being nibbled at by creatures that look like human eyes with the legs of spiders. The elder thing clutches a strange metal device in one of its tentacles. This is a psychic communicator (see **Appendix B**, page 253). Any hero attempting to help the elder thing gains a bonus die on any social skill rolls using the Communicator.

The elder thing has been trying to summon a shoggoth from the nearby battle. The shoggoth arrives in two minutes unless the heroes do something to prevent it. Within a minute, they will be able to hear an approaching piping cry of "Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!" Moments after that, the heroes see huge waves of stagnant liquid thrown into the air as the shoggoth pushes through the swamp like a freight train.

If a hero touches the psychic communicator, it drains 5 magic points and immediately creates a link with the elder thing, flooding the hero's head with images showing an army massing around the base of the citadel. It also reveals the shoggoth is on its way.

One of the dead elder things is holding a device that looks like a bronze cube with irregular indentations and abstract carvings covering its surface. This is a gravity manipulator, which the elder thing had been using as a weapon (see **Appendix B**, page 251).

The Base of the Volcano

As the heroes approach the base of Yaddith-Gho, the landscape starts to change. The sounds of insects and slithering creatures drop away, even before they would be drowned out by the battle ahead. The only movement in the swamp comes from bubbling mud, fronds blowing in the slight wind, and the wisps of mist that drift past.

Ahead, a number of strange creatures can be seen. They are oddly still and make no attempt to get out of the way of the heroes. When approached, these creatures prove to be nothing more than leathery hides; some crumble to dust if touched.



PLAYTEST NOTES

One playtest group was so taken with the gravity manipulator that they neglected the psychic communicator completely. They had no idea that there was a shoggoth en route until they saw the giant wake in the swamp water and heard the cry of "Tekeli-li!" Happily, during these few minutes, they had developed a basic idea of how the manipulator worked, if not quite a full mastery. This process of discovery led to the sudden and violent death of the serpent person they had rescued in the previous encounter, who was suddenly reduced to a lumpy red smear in the mud, and the propulsion of the surviving elder thing (and its communicator) high into the fog above Mu.

As the shoggoth arrived, one of the heroes turned the gravity manipulator on it, sending the creature soaring up into the sky uncontrollably. The heroes then fled the area before the shoggoth had a chance to fall again and kept running until they reached the volcano.

As well as some of the denizens of the swamp, a number of petrified elder things and lloigor can be found here. There is even a frozen shoggoth, resembling an outcrop of volcanic rock. These creatures have all been petrified by exposure to Ghatanothoa, whose power waxes and wanes, occasionally extending out in waves over the swamp, petrifying anything in the vicinity—this will not happen during the course of this chapter, unless the heroes wake the Great Old One.

THE CITADEL

The serpent people of Mu built the heart of their empire over the volcano Yaddith-Gho, which contains the sleeping form of Ghatanothoa, using elements of an earlier structure built by the mi-go. The Citadel is a twisted structure of crystal and silvery metal, almost the size of the volcano itself, with arching legs that hook into the walls of the crater; long poles of crystal and metal push down into the crater, deep into the flesh of the god, drawing power to the Citadel directly from the life force of Ghatanothoa.

The existence of the Citadel has always been an affront to the lloigor, who worship Ghatanothoa, while the elder things fear the Doomsday Device contained within the

Citadel's walls. Each has tried to destroy the structure many times. In response, the serpent people constructed a number of defense systems, the most powerful of which is ironic in the light of Mu's fate: the entire structure is slightly out of phase with the reality of Mu. The Citadel is visible but it is usually impossible to interact with it physically, which also keeps the occupants safe from the petrifying effects of Ghatanothoa. For all their efforts since the fall of Mu, the elder things and the lloigor have been unable to affect the Citadel in the slightest.

Whichever faction—Caduceus, the Inner Night, or Tyranissh—has managed to make it to the Citadel first, has brought part of the citadel back into phase with the rest of Mu. If Caduceus, they have used ancient technology to re-align the phase shift. If the Inner Night or Tyranissh, they have performed a ritual to achieve the same result.

Alerted by this new activity, the elder things of Mu have struck, using a gravity weapon to collapse one of the Citadel's supporting struts. The entire structure now tilts alarmingly, sinking slowly into the volcanic crater. Most importantly, its ability to phase out of synch with Mu has been damaged. Different parts of the citadel are now cycling through various phases of reality, with potentially deadly effects.

Meanwhile, the serpent people from our world have managed to gain entry to the Citadel, activating some of its defense systems. As a result, the Citadel is now under siege.

THE SIEGE

The elder things see themselves as the last line of defense against destruction, especially if the lloigor have fallen or been dispersed. They assume that any serpent people who have returned to the Citadel have done so in order to bring Mu back into the material world and activate the Doomsday Device. The elder things aim to stop this happening at all costs.

This is a desperate battle, as the elder thing numbers are small and they have only a few dozen shoggoths at their disposal. They are using what resources they have to try to destroy the Citadel before the serpent people can bring death upon them all.

The siege is proving bloody. Serpent person laser weapons sweep the grounds, killing elder things and causing shoggoths to boil and explode into balls of still-living protoplasm. In return, the shoggoths are swarming those parts of the citadel that (briefly) connect with Mu, with the elder things using gravity weapons to tear chunks off the superstructure. There is fire, rending metal, and death all around. The good news is that the existing factions are so busy enough killing each other that the heroes should be able to reach the base of the Citadel without having to engage any of the parties involved.



Entering the Citadel

Getting into the Citadel is tricky. With the structure phasing in and out of reality, the heroes have to time their entry carefully. For each round they attempt this, a group Luck roll is required for that part of the structure to be tangible enough to clamber through. Even when it becomes accessible, entry is impossible for vehicles larger than a transport sphere.

For each round the heroes are trapped outside, roll 1D10 to see whether they have a danger to deal with:

Roll	Result
1	A rampaging shoggoth takes an interest in the heroes.
2	An elder thing, armed with a gravity manipulator, identifies the heroes as hostile.
3	The Citadel defense systems target the heroes with laser fire: 50% chance of hitting, with 1D10 damage (this may be dodged).
4	Part of the Citadel superstructure collapses. Each hero makes a Luck roll to be clear of the area; otherwise, they suffer 1D6 damage from falling debris (this may be dodged).
5-10	The battle continues around the heroes but they are not drawn into it.

Due to the proximity of Ghataothoa, spending time immediately outside the Citadel is risky enough even if there weren't for the laser fire strafing the ground and rampaging shoggoths. Some of the elder things have already begun to petrify; although (given their alien physiology) the only way to tell is that they're not moving about as much, even when in danger. The shoggoths are slower to be affected, possibly because of their unusual physiology.

Being this close to the Great Old One risks incurring a variant of the Curse of Ghataothoa (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 319)—even if the god cannot be seen from its resting place deep within the crater. For every ten minutes spent in the shadow of Yaddith-Gho, all living entities must attempt CON rolls; the heroes should make one roll if they spend more than five rounds trying to enter the Citadel. If failed, 3D10 points of DEX are lost as muscles stiffen and creeping paralysis begins. If DEX is brought to zero, complete immobilization occurs; a petrification process that is normally irreversible. In a few minutes, the victim's flesh and sinews rapidly harden to the consistency of leather and bone. The brain and other internal organs remain fresh and alive in this hard,

immobile case, aware yet unbearably imprisoned. Only the destruction of the brain ends the victim's suffering. The blind and numb victim suffers the loss of 1D6 Sanity points per day until reaching permanent madness or the forgiving release of death. Creatures within the Citadel are immune to this effect due to the protective wards enshrined by its original builders. In the glory days of the Second Empire, the powers of the serpent people were great enough to protect against the gods themselves.

INSIDE THE CITADEL

The technology that keeps the Citadel out of phase with the rest of Mu is a mixed blessing. It has allowed the structure and its occupants to resist attack by their enemies and to avoid the petrifying effects of Ghataothoa, but it has also meant that those who live within have been isolated for thousands of years. This has had some strange effects.

While technology in the Citadel is far beyond human understanding, mixing elements of biomechanics, electronics, eldritch engineering, and pure sorcery, it is also beyond the understanding of the now-degenerate serpent people who still dwell within. Inbreeding, superstition, and indolence have led to the residents developing a cargo-cult mentality, reliant entirely on the automated systems of the Citadel for survival.

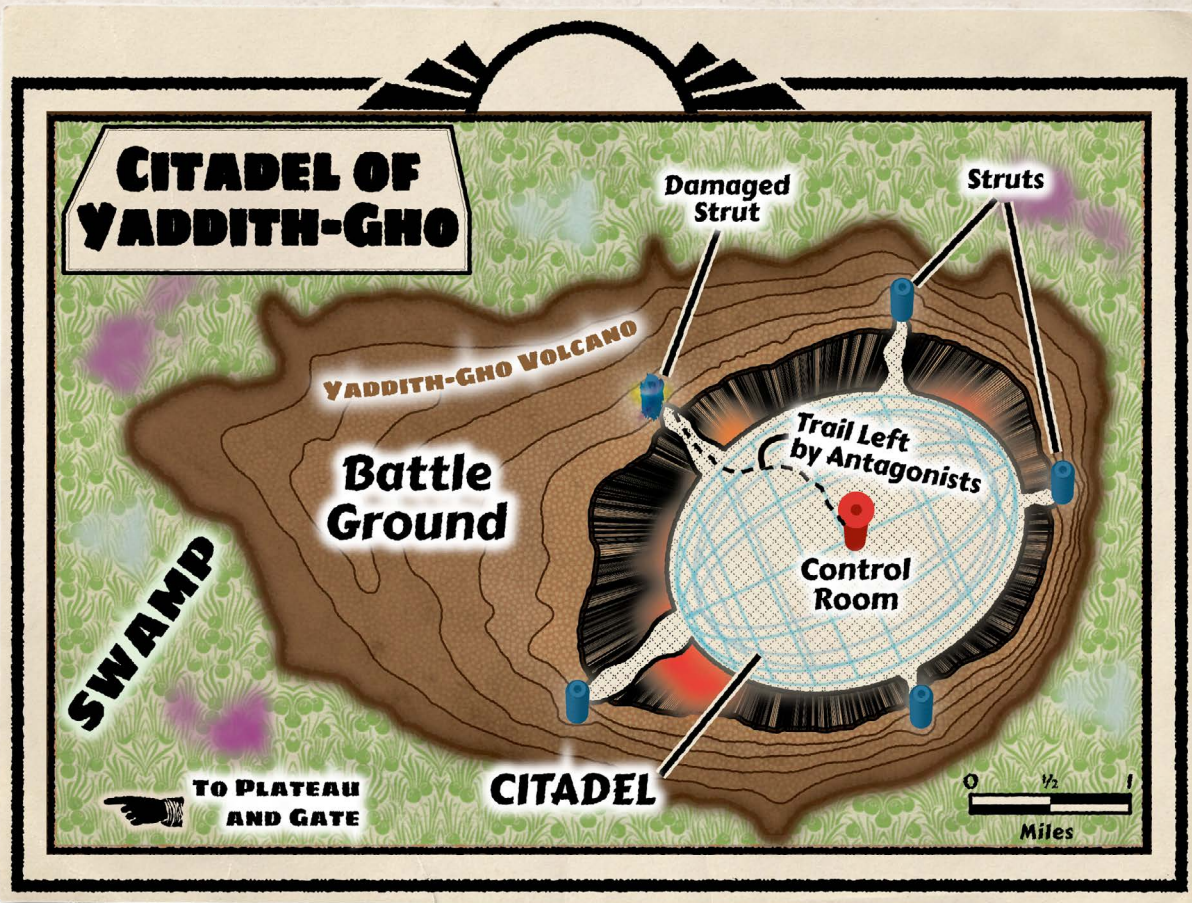
The Citadel maintains itself using autonomous drones and self-repairing biomechanical systems, drawing all the energy it needs from the pulsing heart of the god beneath, providing for all the physical needs of its residents. Some of the systems have become defective over time, giving rise to the degenerate serpent people of the Citadel developing beliefs and rituals around these irregularities.

As a general tip for portraying the Citadel, think of an almost miraculous technology that is failing in strange and disturbing ways. This is exacerbated by the assault outside, which is causing portions of the Citadel to phase through different levels of reality.

NAVIGATING THE CITADEL

The Keeper should avoid presenting the Citadel as a "dungeon crawl." This is a huge structure, home to tens of thousands of degenerate serpent people, and needless exploration could take days and will rob the climax of any sense of urgency.

Instead, treat this as a series of encounters while the heroes try to follow whichever foe has entered the Citadel before them. The trail leads through the following locations:



Locations

1. The Food Hall (page 231).
2. Living Quarters (page 231).
3. The Birthing Chambers (page 231).
4. The Collective Memory (page 231).
5. The Temple of Yig/Control Room (page 235).

The heroes only find the **Repair Workshop** (page 232) if either one or more of them are seriously injured in the Citadel and taken away for repairs by biomechanical rats, or if they have learned that the Hybridization process can be reversed and decide to look for it.

When following the trail from one location to the next, one of the heroes must attempt a **Track** roll. Success means the heroes pass to the next location without incident; failure causes them to take an accidental detour that brings them into contact with one of the following encounters. Failure does not mean that the heroes lose the trail completely—they still find their way to the next location after their encounter (see below).

Encounters (in the order in which they occur):

1. Escaped Food Animals (page 230).
2. The Procession of Supplicants (page 230).
3. The Dissolution (page 230).
4. The Briny Depths (page 230).
5. A swarm of razor flies (page 230).

Keeper note: if the Inner Night is in control, it may prove slightly easier to track their movements, as the two formless spawn they have brought with them leave occasional trails of slime. Any **Track** rolls made to follow such a trail are granted a bonus die.

Defense Systems

As well as the external-facing lasers, there are internal defense systems in the Citadel. Most are non-operational since they have not been needed for 10,000 years and have gone into hibernation. Only remnants still stalk the corridors of the Citadel, and encounters with these systems should be rare. The Keeper should use them as a threat or complication to a scene instead of a series of combat encounters.

Silver Snakes: these large serpents, made of living metal, patrol silently throughout the Citadel, watching for intruders. They have reprogrammed themselves to become less alert, following millennia of security marred only by the occasional false alarm leading to the accidental death of a serpent person. As a result, the heroes only encounter a silver snake if they spend too long in a single location.

For every ten minutes the heroes spend exploring a named area, call for a group **Luck** roll: failure means that a silver snake has arrived to investigate. A profile for the silver snakes can be found at the end of this scenario (page 238).

Razor Flies: swarms of razor flies drift through the corridors of the Citadel at random. They are attracted by loud noises and the presence of particles of serpent person blood in the atmosphere. Should the heroes kill or seriously injure a serpent person in the Citadel, or if a hybridized hero is injured, a swarm of flies is drawn to their location within 1D10 rounds. The mechanism that allows the flies to tell friend from foe has not worked for thousands of years and they will attack any living creatures within ten yards of any spilled blood.

The degenerate serpent people of the Citadel have learned the dangers of the razor flies and flee as soon as any blood is spilled. They have seen their comrades swiftly reduced to bones after accidents that have drawn blood. Injured serpent people who are either very lucky or simply did not bleed enough to attract the flies' attention are dragged away by small metallic rat-like creatures (see **The Repair Workshop**, page 232). A profile for the razor flies can be found at the end of this scenario (page 238).

ENCOUNTERS

Escaped Food Animals

The small, blind, and hairless mammalian animals created by the mechanisms of the **Food Hall** (see following page) often get loose and can be found wandering around the corridors. Physically, they resemble a variety of rodents but ultimately look like nothing in nature. They are usually deformed, with too many or too few limbs, some vestigial. Their squeals often sound disturbingly like human screams, and can be heard echoing down quiet corridors.

These food animals have no fear; if they sense the heroes, the animals attempt to crawl over to them and try to nuzzle for warmth.

The Procession of Supplicants

Frightened by the sounds of battle going on outside, some of the most deranged serpent people have decided that

this must be a punishment visited on them by Yig for insufficient piousness. A few dozen degenerate serpent folk have decided to abase themselves and are heading to the Control Room, crawling along on their bellies and hissing broken prayers in Naacal. If they encounter a hero who has been hybridized, they realize that there is something special about this person and take an interest. If the hero can perform some act or make a speech that convinces the supplicants that he or she is beloved of Yig, they start to worship the hero. Otherwise, the supplicants turn against the hero and attempt to destroy him or her as an abomination. Fleeing them should be easy as the supplicants refuse to use their limbs for fear of angering Yig, giving them a movement rate of 2 (see **Degenerate Serpent People**, page 238).

The Dissolution

With the Citadel phasing in and out of reality, some parts become insubstantial with little or no notice. A hero may attempt a **Spot Hidden** roll to notice metal turning spongy or becoming foggy in appearance; otherwise, he or she risks stepping into a section of ground that is out of phase, having to make a **DEX** roll to avoid falling through the floor and becoming separated from the group.

The area under the floor is made up of ducts and tunnels. Some contain waste, while others pulse with the light of glowing cables. Most may be flooded due to the actions of the heroes (see **The Briny Depths**, following). A Hero making a **Navigate** roll can find a route out to where he or she disappeared; otherwise, they surface in a location of the Keeper's choosing.

A generous Keeper may want to provide warning of this danger by having the heroes witness a degenerate serpent person falling through a section of apparently solid floor with a frightened scream.

The Briny Depths

One of the dimensional realities that a section of the Citadel cycles through is aquatic. The merging of the two realities means that the walls of the rooms and corridors in this area are now made of water, yet still hold the shape of the structure. The heroes can still walk across the floors but every step is spongy, splashing up droplets of freezing brine. The movement of any creature walking across this surface is halved.

The walls are translucent and, while the depths seen beyond are too far down for there to be natural light, strange luminescent structures of green coral tower over the corridor, shaped almost like buildings. The dark, humanoid forms of deep ones can occasionally be spotted swimming between the spires. As the heroes pass through this area,

the deep ones take an interest and swim over to look, like people watching fish in an aquarium—provoking a **Sanity** roll for seeing the deep ones (0/1D6 loss).

While the walls of this area are stable, they are also fragile. Even a single point of damage causes one of the watery surfaces to spring a leak. Given the huge pressure differential between the air of the corridor and the depths outside, this quickly turns into a deluge. A huge wave of cold seawater pushes out in all directions, inflicting 1D10 damage on anyone caught within its wake as they are battered against every hard object in the vicinity. The Keeper should be generous with whatever crazy plans the players may come up with to avoid their heroes being drowned—quick thinking and action should help the heroes reach safety; a **Jump**, **Climb**, or **Swim** roll may be appropriate.

A rent in the wall eventually seals over as the reality of the Citadel reasserts itself. The seawater that came through remains, however, and the heroes will have to wade through cold, murky, and knee-deep brine from now on, making it impossible to run. A particularly cruel Keeper may ask the players to make a group **Luck** roll to avoid any deep ones having been sucked through the rent (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 288).

LOCATIONS

The Food Hall

A large and foul-smelling hall with metal walls, crystalline pillars, pulsing lights, and long, rusty tables dotted around. These tables are too large for the degenerate serpent people to sit at comfortably, so they tend to squat on them instead, often falling asleep in situ after a meal. The floor is littered with bones, rotting food waste, and serpent person excrement.

The automated systems of the Citadel transform the energy harvested from Ghatanothoa and organic waste materials, including excrement and corpses (offered up reverentially to a metal orifice in the machinery), into food for the residents. This processing goes on under the floor and within the walls of a great ringed structure that circles around the upper level of the Citadel. These raw materials also allow the creation of the biomechanical constructs of the Citadel, including the insects Caduceus plans to use to spread its virus.

The walls are covered with what appear to be pulsating orifices of spongy meat, each of which slowly forms and extrudes living flesh. As the serpent people prefer live food, the meals created by this machinery appear to be small, hairless, and eyeless mammals, with stunted limbs and no claws, and which mewl like kittens (see *Escaped*

Food Animals, page 230). They whimper and thrash as they are forced from the dispensers. Most are plucked and devoured by waiting serpent people but some fall to the ground and crawl helplessly until they are either found and eaten or find somewhere quiet to die.

The Birthing Chambers

A huge, sunken chamber filled with rows and rows of eggs, each about the size of a football. Many of the eggs are ancient, having long since rotted and collapsed in on themselves. The smell of decay is overpowering. The air is warm and humid, making the walls drip with repellantly meaty condensation.

Those few degenerate serpent people who conceive bring their eggs here to develop. Some of the eggs closer to the door are pulsating as the embryonic serpent people within prepare to hatch.

Two silver snakes patrol the room, ensuring no one disturbs the eggs. They will not attack unless someone damages an egg, in which case they will make their presence known quickly.

Living Quarters

Dozens of these little rooms are scattered around the Citadel. Their original purposes may have varied but they are now all used by the degenerate serpent people to sleep or rut. The floors are covered with once-fine cloths, including some tapestries dating back to the Valusian Empire, now stained and filthy. Such cloths may provide protection from the razor flies (page 230).

Some of the degenerate serpent people still have a creative urge; heroes poking around may uncover fetishes made of bone and wire, twisting sculptures made of living metal and shed skin, or strange, scuttling devices which spark and look up with what appear to be living eyes.

The Collective Memory

A spacious but dark and squalid room, with what appears to be thousands of metal tentacles writhing from the walls. The moaning forms of hundreds of degenerate serpent people litter the ground, each with one of these tentacles attached to their head.

The tentacles are neurological links to an organic computer, programmed to preserve the knowledge and history of the serpent people and disseminate it for future generations. The current generations only use it for entertainment, reliving first-person accounts of the days when serpent people ruled the Earth, crushing their rivals beneath scaled heels. The more technical and academic recordings have long since atrophied from lack of use and barely offer more than disconnected images and strange hints.

Should a hero allow one of the tentacles to connect to his or her skull, they may attempt a Hard POW roll to learn something useful. Success means that the hero gains 1D20 skill points in Cthulhu Mythos and also in the Naacal language, but loses an equal amount of Sanity points. In addition, the hero gains knowledge of the layout of the Citadel, as well as the purpose of the Control Room. A fumbled roll or failed push attempt may result in a bout of madness in which the hero believes him or herself to be one of the ancient serpent people of Valusia or Mu; a hero experiencing a bout of madness as a result of the Sanity loss from using the device is also subject to this delusion.

If the heroes have not already learned from the Caduceus researchers or Tyranissh about the Repair Workshop containing a way to reverse the Hybridization process, this information can be learned through connecting to the collective memory.

The Repair Workshop

Broken biomechanical devices and injured serpent people (those not devoured by razor flies in error) are dragged into a cavernous workshop for repairs by swarms of rat-like metallic creatures. There are huge open vats, crystal tubes, and pulsating fleshy pods where machines and creatures are broken down and reassembled. Heroes falling unconscious due to injury may be ferried here by the metallic rat-creatures unless prevented by their comrades. As such, their injuries will be treated, restoring 2D10 hit points but at a cost—heroes healed in this manner should roll 1D4 on the following table to see how they have been altered:

1. They are now host to a colony of biomechanical worms, which live inside their flesh, crawling through it like dirt. Due to incompatible biology, the worms are not able to help with injury or sickness, as they are designed to do, but will heal the damage they inflict when they burrow. Their presence causes discomfort at best and occasionally agonizing pain. A hero realizing that this has happened to them should make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D8 loss).
2. The damaged parts of the hero's body have been replaced by living metal. This will hold its form when the hero is conscious and sane; otherwise, it will twist through a variety of alarming and strange forms or simply pool into a puddle. A hero undergoing this procedure should make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D8 loss).

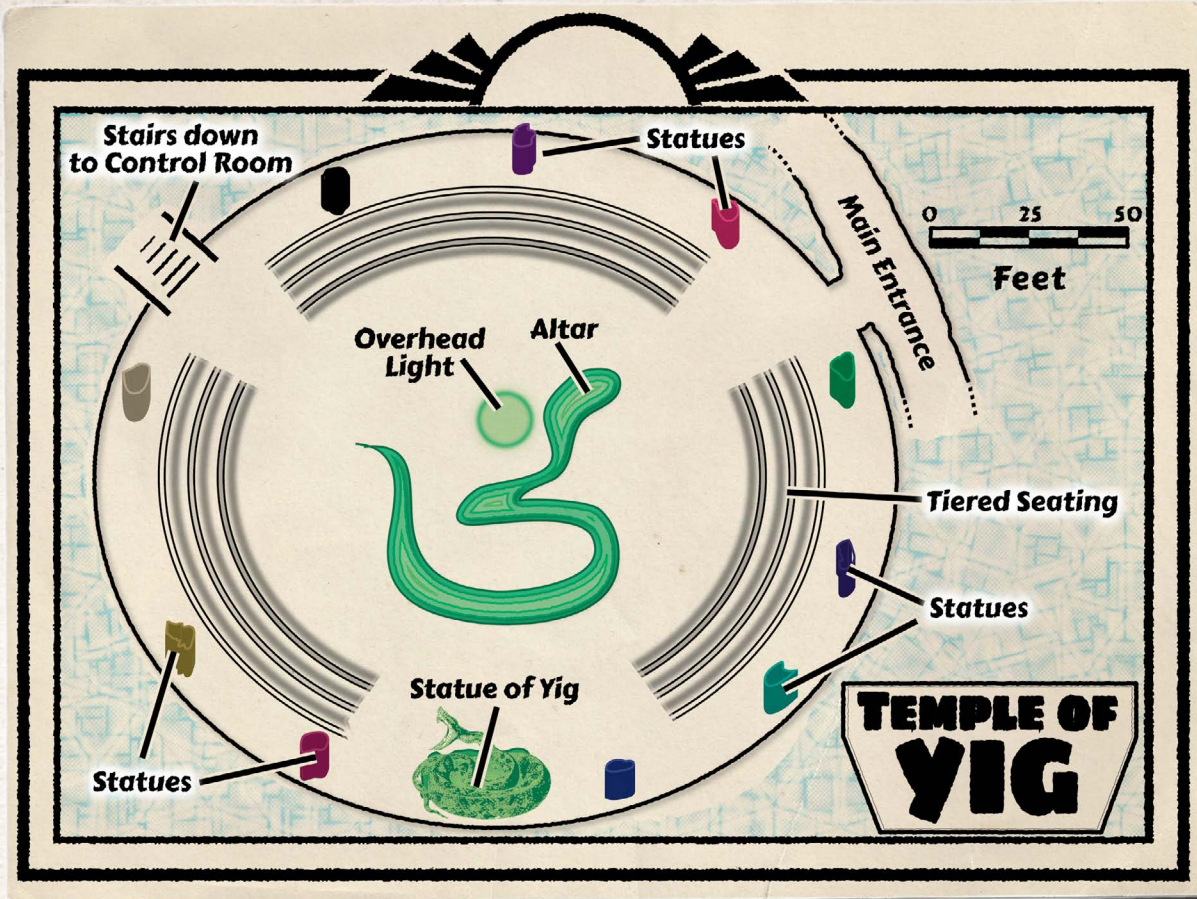
3. The hero is now covered in scales, reducing APP by 5D10 points but providing 1 point of armor. A hero realizing that this has happened to them should make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D8 loss).
4. The hero's injuries are healed with no obvious ill effects. At some point in the future, however, he or she will start producing eggs from whatever orifices are available. The hero should make a **Sanity** roll when this occurs (1/1D8 loss).

The machinery in this area can also be used to reverse the hybridization process. Performing this procedure requires a combined **Cthulhu Mythos** and **Operate Heavy Machinery** roll, as the hero's body is placed into a biomechanical flesh pod, broken down and rebuilt. A fumble or a failed push attempt may result in the hero being transformed completely into a serpent person instead.

One wall of this immense room is taken up with machinery and a dizzying network of tubes, constructed from of a mixture of shining metal, crystal, and pulsating flesh, which creates transport spheres like an insect laying eggs. If Caduceus or Tyranissh has taken control of the Citadel, this machinery is in motion and the floor is littered with open spheres. Clouds of biomechanical insects, resembling the razor flies, buzz into the spheres in clumps. None of these spheres have launched yet—this may change once the heroes reach **The Control Room** (page 235).

PLAYTEST NOTES

Two of our playtest groups included a hero who underwent the hybridization procedure, and the reactions of the two players were almost polar opposites. One largely accepted the changes, and her character became more sympathetic to serpent people as she came closer to being one herself, although she remained a steadfast opponent to any plans to dominate or destroy humanity. The other saw his change as an affliction and fought against it at every stage. The process to undo the hybridization was initially improvised by one of the Keepers as a way to cater to the player's desires.



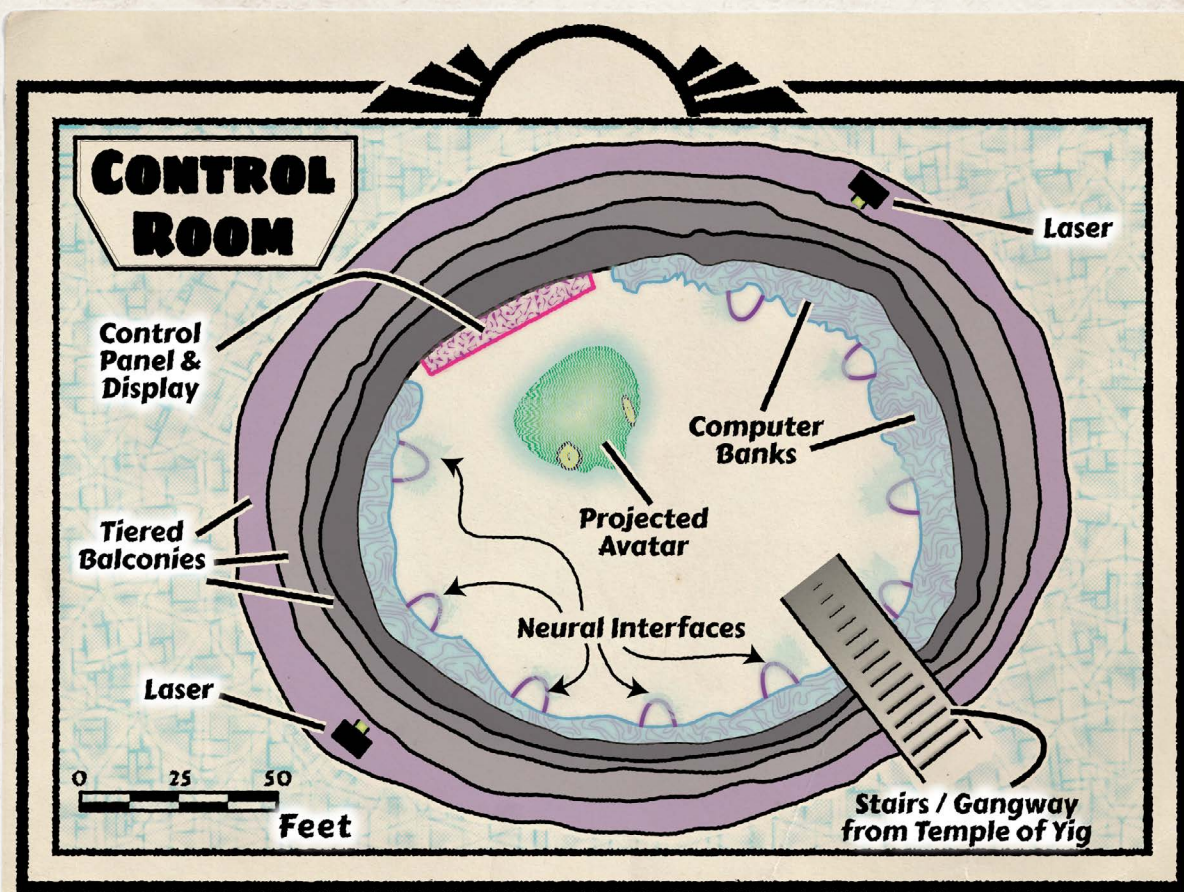
THE TEMPLE OF YIG

At the center of the Citadel squats an ancient temple dedicated to Yig. It is a grand, circular structure, some 200 feet in diameter. Alcoves around the edge are filled with colorful, ophidian statues that writhe constantly, animated by a combination of ancient power and technology. The walls coil up to a domed roof hundreds of feet high, with a glowing green ball of energy at its apex. The glowing ball provides lighting for the room, painting everything with a green tinge. The temple is built over the Control Room and, following some recent structural damage to the Citadel, provides the only means of access.

Many of the degenerate serpent people come here to worship, although many have little knowledge of Yig anymore and have come to accept the computer system in the Control Room below as their true god instead (see *The Control Room*, following). There are rarely fewer than a dozen degenerate serpent people here.

If Joshua Meadham is in control: the tiers of metallic seats surrounding the central pit are packed with the forms of hundreds of chanting and writhing degenerate serpent people. Some of the degenerate serpent people make offerings to Yig of their shed skins; every surface of the temple is covered with such scraps. If there is a violent confrontation here, the movement stirs these flakes into the air, like scaly confetti, reducing visibility and making ranged attacks difficult (impose one penalty die). See *The Invocation of Yig*, following.

If the Inner Night is in control: Rose Meadham leaves one of her two formless spawn here to guard the entrance to the Control Room. The formless spawn buries itself under sheets of shed skin and appears like a pile of detritus; a successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals black slime oozing out from between some of the larger pieces of skin. The



formless spawn strikes as soon as any humans approach the entrance to the Control Room.

If Tyranissh is in control: the only presence in the temple will be a few dozen degenerate serpent people, sleeping, eating, or watching the sphere of light with rapt interest. Tyranissh has no need of them or the temple.

THE INVOCATION OF YIG

This section only applies if Joshua Meadham is still alive and Caduceus remains an active threat. If they have been neutralized, refer to the options relating to the Inner Night or Tyranissh in the section titled **The Control Room**, which follows.

Through his studies, Joshua Meadham has learned that the pure essence of Yig has survived in Mu and that the Yig that exists in the rest of the world is but a shadow. His original plan was to rededicate the temple, shaking loose the spiritual detritus of what he sees as millennia of corrupt worship but, once he started, he realized that there was something even greater here. While his

associates busy themselves in the Control Room below, Joshua Meadham is in the temple, drawing Yig's power into himself, becoming a vessel for the god reborn.

As the heroes approach the temple, they can hear the cries and chants of hundreds of degenerate serpent people, offering up prayers in broken Naacal. Punctuating these cries is what sounds like arcing electricity crackling through the air and a building roar of some mighty creature.

Within the temple, Joshua Meadham's transformation is almost complete. He will become Yig within three rounds (consult the profile for the **Avatar of Yig**, page 239, for more details). The hundreds of degenerate serpent people chant the name of Yig, writhing in ecstasy or abasing themselves on the floor.

Moving through this mass requires a Hard STR or SIZ roll to push the wriggling bodies out of the way, or a Hard DEX roll to step over and around them. The serpent people pay no attention to the heroes, being utterly captivated by the rebirth of their god. If the heroes attack Yig, the serpent people make no move to defend him, being too frightened of violence, and attempt to flee instead. Avoiding being swept up in the wave of panicking creatures requires a

Regular **Dodge** or Hard **STR**, **SIZ** or **DEX** roll; failure means the hero suffers 1D10 damage from being crushed and trampled, ending up in the corridor outside the temple.

If Joshua Meadham completes his transformation, he uses his new power to keep the heroes from accessing the Control Room until his associates have managed to prime and start launching transport spheres full of virus-laden biomechanical insects across the globe (see **The Control Room**, following).

THE CONTROL ROOM

Beneath the Temple of Yig, the Control Room has become a replacement temple for the degenerate serpent people. They remember that the room was once important and played a part in their downfall, and now believe that by venerating the computer that controls their lives, they can earn redemption.

The chamber holding the Control Room hangs just above the pulsing flesh of Ghatanothoa. With the disruption to the Citadel's supports, it is now within reach of the god, and Ghatanothoa is attempting to push away the monstrous structure that has tormented it for so long. This means that for every round spent in the Control Room there is a 25% chance that Ghatanothoa lashes out at the structure, sending shock waves through the chamber and forcing everyone within to make a Hard **DEX** roll to perform an action that round. Those failing the roll suffer 1D4 damage from colliding with a hard surface.

THE COMPUTER

After millennia of improper maintenance, worship from the degenerate serpent people, and increasingly deranged self-reflection, the sentient computer that runs the Citadel has decided that it is a god. Having the Doomsday Device under its control, giving it the power of life and death over not only the residents of the Citadel but potentially the entire planet, has only bolstered its megalomania. The only reason it has not triggered the Doomsday Device is the isolation of Mu from the rest of the world—depending on which faction is in control, this may not be the case when the heroes arrive.

The computer exists as banks of baroquely twisted silver, gold, and glass serpentine coils, which surround the Control Room. The various control panels allow operators to connect to the computer either through touch-screen panels or direct neural interfaces, which envelop the heads and hands of operators with a pulsating mass of purple psychoactive jelly. Two serpent people are connected to the neural interfaces when the heroes arrive.

The neural interfaces are dangerous to humans, as they are calibrated for serpent person nervous systems; heroes interacting with the interfaces and who have not been hybridized need to make a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss) to avoid being overwhelmed by alien thoughts and images. If a hero can connect safely via a neural interface, he or she does not need to combine the Naacal language skill with other skills when communicating with the computer (see below).

The computer projects a holographic avatar directly into the air above the Control Room, taking the form of a giant serpent person head, wearing a replica of the Cobra Crown. Its voice is sibilant and booming, loud enough to shake the entire chamber when it speaks. While it knows many languages, the computer only deigns to speak in Naacal.

The personality of the computer is capricious, cruel, and mocking; it sees all other intelligent entities as little more than insects. It wants to see the serpent person empire rise once more and for its worshippers to flourish. The computer remembers that humans are enemies of its creators and despises them. Any human trying to threaten, reason with, or plead to the computer suffers two penalty dice to all social skill rolls; hybrids only receive one penalty die.

A group of clever heroes may be able to find ways of dealing with the computer. A successful combined **Language (Naacal)** and **Computer Use** roll could allow a hero to construct some kind of logical paradox that drives the computer insane. While a combined **Language (Naacal)** and **Extreme Persuade** roll may let the hero convince the computer that there is no hope for the serpent person empire, which sends the computer into suicidal despair. In both of these cases, the computer activates a self-destruct mechanism, which will destroy the Citadel and everything in it within five minutes—necessitating a speedy exit if the heroes wish to get clear before everything blows up (see **Escaping from the Citadel**, page 236).

If the heroes use violence against the computer, use the profile given at the end of the scenario (see **The Citadel Master Computer**, page 239). If the heroes take fire from the computer's lasers, call for a group **Luck** roll every time one of the shots goes wild; failure means that a blast has hit a structural support—combined with the damage already caused by Ghatanothoa thrashing below, this is enough to cause the floor of the central pit of the Control Room to collapse within 1D3 rounds. In such an event, anyone on this floor must succeed with a **Jump** roll or fall into the living core of Ghatanothoa. Heroes attempting to avoid looking down at the horror that is the Great Old One should make a **POW** roll to resist the temptation to do so; failure provokes a **Sanity** roll for gazing upon Ghatanothoa (1D10/1D100 loss). The protective force field that contains the god protects the heroes from petrification but any additional structural damage causes such protections to fail in 2D6 rounds.

If Caduceus are in Control

Six of Joshua Meadham's loyal serpent person followers have headed down into the Control Room to prime the transport sphere network. While the actual mechanism is located in the **Repair Workshop** (page 232), it is operated and controlled from the Control Room. The computer projects a map of the world in the air, just below its hovering head; dotted lines show the projected paths of transport spheres filled with virus-laden biomechanical insects.

Joshua Meadham's followers have also fed instructions into the computer about how to break free of the pocket universe constructed by the elder things, allowing Mu to return to the material world. From the time the heroes arrive in the Control Room, they have 6 rounds to deactivate the control system before it starts the process of returning Mu to the world. If the heroes opt to deal with this immediate problem instead of disabling the computer completely, they can attempt a combined **Computer Use** and **Cthulhu Mythos** roll to access the systems directly, bypassing the computer's personality. Using one of the neural interfaces adds a bonus die to this roll (if the hero doing so manages to remain sane). A Regular success allows the heroes to shut down the control system in 10 rounds, by which time Mu begins manifesting in the real world, causing cataclysmic earthquakes and tsunamis—but preventing the launch of any transport spheres. A Hard success shuts it down in 5 rounds, just as the system is about to activate, while an Extreme success shuts it off immediately.

Two of Joshua Meadham's followers are connected to neural interfaces, oblivious to the outside world; however, the other four followers can defend the computer with flame pistols (see **Appendix B**, page 251). Use the serpent person profile at the end of the scenario (page 238). After one round of combat, the computer activates its own laser defense systems (see **The Citadel Master Computer**, page 239).

If the Inner Night are in Control

Rose Meadham, accompanied by three henchmen and a formless spawn, have already made contact with the computer by the time the heroes arrive. The Inner Night has convinced the computer that, as a god, it should remake the world in its own image. Rose's spies have stolen the instructions for returning Mu to the material world from Caduceus, allowing her to feed them into the computer.

Deal with any attempts to stop Rose as per the section titled **If Caduceus are in Control**, above. The main difference is that instead of launching transport spheres, the computer activates the Doomsday Device once Mu has returned to Earth. In this case, the end result is one of the Earth's 1,500 volcanoes erupting every quarter hour, as

well as widespread seismic activity. The world will become largely uninhabitable within days, shrouded in darkness and deadly cold, and human civilization will fall.

Of course, Rose Meadham, her goons, and her formless spawn try to (vigorously) prevent any interference by the heroes. The formless spawn has hidden in the crevices of the ceiling, ready to drop on intruders—a successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals drops of black slime falling from above.

If Tyranissh is in Control

Tyranissh's plan is identical to Joshua Meadham's, having learned the secret to returning Mu to the material world while a prisoner at Caduceus. The key difference in her plan (to that of Caduceus) is that she aims to use the transport sphere network and biomechanical insects to distribute a mutagen that will cause humanity to turn into serpent person hybrids. Mechanically, this has the same effect as the hybridization process outlined in **Appendix C**, page 259.

While she has no serpent person followers, Tyranissh has convinced the last surviving lloigor to follow her, with the promise that she will destroy the Citadel and release their god once her plan has come to fruition. The lloigor is intangible when the heroes arrive but will take physical form to defend Tyranissh if required. In addition, Tyranissh has convinced the computer to follow her instructions and so, she is free to defend herself when the heroes arrive in the Control Room.

ESCAPING FROM THE CITADEL

If the heroes provoke the computer into initiating its self-destruct system, they have limited time to escape before they are destroyed. Heroes on foot have a number of hazards to deal with before they can get to the breach where they entered the Citadel.

Throngs of degenerate serpent people run through the Citadel in a blind panic. The hero leading the way out must succeed in a Hard **Intimidate** roll to proceed through the panicking crowd; failure means the heroes each receive a penalty die on their next skill roll—which represents a delay and/or the general confusion of the situation as they try to escape.

A series of small explosions rock the Citadel, shaking the ground and sending debris flying. Each hero must attempt a **Dodge** roll to avoid being caught in a shockwave; otherwise, the shockwave inflicts 1D10 points of damage.

Torrents of freezing seawater gush through the complex as the section merged with the ocean depths collapses.

Heroes can choose to make a Hard **STR** roll to grab hold of something solid to avoid being swept away, a **Swim** roll to navigate the fast-moving water, or a **Luck** roll to go with the flow and hope that it leads to safety—heroes failing this last roll are still trying to make their way out of the Citadel when it finally explodes.

If the heroes have access to a vehicle to flee the Citadel, they should make a single roll at Hard difficulty with the appropriate **Pilot** skill—or a **POW** roll for a transport sphere—to represent dodging through the various hazards.

As ever, the Keeper is encouraged to adapt to any crazy plans the players may come up with. This is a dangerous situation and creative solutions may make the difference between life and death. Sudden applications of weird science, spontaneous Cthulhu Mythos use, and magic are all possibilities and the Keeper should look favorably on ingenious ideas.

Using a Haftorang Device

If the heroes are in possession of a Haftorang Device (possibly from the Calcutta chapter), this may provide a simpler method of demolishing the Citadel. Unfortunately, both Joshua and Rose Meadham know how to disable such devices and will be alerted to the presence of this obvious threat by either the computer or the residents of the Citadel. A Hard **Stealth** roll is required to hide the device successfully in the Citadel.

An alternative approach may involve the heroes detonating the device on a short fuse. Of course, they won't have time to get away but a spend of 30 or more points of Luck points may still provide a miraculous escape from certain death!

CONCLUSION

It is likely that the actions of the heroes lead to the violent destruction of the Citadel. In this case, Ghatanothoa is released, causing any creatures engaged in the battle outside to flee before they are petrified. The heroes would be wise to do the same.

With the power of the Citadel gone, the Gate back to Earth is no longer stable—determine whether the Gate is operable with a group **Luck** roll; if this is failed, the Gate has collapsed. If Mu has already manifested in the material world, the heroes may look for other ways to return to escape; however, if Mu is still trapped in its own dimension, this probably leaves the heroes with no way home.

Of course, Mu is a big continent, full of wonders, horrors, weird sorcery, strange technology, and dangerous residents. A clever group of heroes should be able to find a way to escape, eventually, or maybe to prove themselves

PLAYTEST NOTES

While all of our playtests ended with the violent destruction of the Citadel, they played out very differently.

One group defeated Rose Meadham and her formless spawn without suffering casualties, then set a long fuse on the Haftorang Device and fled the Citadel on modified transport spheres. They failed their group **Luck** roll for the Gate to still be functioning, but their generous Keeper then gave them a chance to repair the Gate with weird science. They returned to Earth safely, armed with death rays and transport spheres, looking for new ways to battle the Mythos.

A second group found themselves facing Joshua Meadham as he transformed into the avatar of Yig and fought him to a stalemate, but could not get past him to stop his henchmen from releasing the transport spheres filled with flies. One noble hero set the Haftorang Device on a short fuse, knowing that Joshua Meadham's goons would be able to disarm it otherwise, and guarded it until it exploded. Thanks to his sacrifice, the rest of the heroes escaped intact and found a working Gate waiting for them.

The final group battled Rose Meadham in the computer room and damaged it badly enough that one of their number tumbled down into the living core of Ghatanothoa. Another hero sacrificed herself to set off the self-destruct while the control room shook itself apart. The remainder of the cohort fled the Citadel on foot, battling their way through dangers and making it out just before it exploded. They found the Gate closed, and the campaign ended with them deciding to set out and explore Mu, looking for another way home.

masters of this strange new world. But that's a story for another time...

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the chapter, the heroes may each be granted the following rewards:

- The heroes stop the master plan of whichever faction is in control +1D20 Sanity points.
- The Citadel is destroyed +1D10 Sanity points.
- The heroes manage to return to Earth +1D10 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Note: profiles for key NPCs can be found in **Appendix A:**

- Tyrannissh, page 245.
- Rose Meadham, page 244.
- Joshua Meadham, page 240.
- Canning, page 241.

Silver Snakes, *guardians of the Citadel*

These biomechanical entities appear to be pythons, up to 15 feet long, made of glistening liquid metal. They can shift their forms slightly, allowing them to pass through cracks or under doors, but not to take on the appearance of other entities.

STR 140 **CON** 100 **SIZ** 140 **DEX** 65 **INT** 10
APP — **POW** 40 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 24
DB: +2D6 **Build:** 3 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 8 **Luck:** 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (constriction)

Fighting attacks: like pythons, the silver snakes are constrictors and attack by coiling around their prey. As well as wrapping themselves around a victim, they also cover mouth and nose of their target, filling them with viscous, silvery liquid to suffocate all the faster. Their first attack will be a fighting maneuver to hold their prey fast. In the following and subsequent rounds, the snake automatically inflicts their damage bonus until their target breaks free (opposed STR or DEX roll versus the snake's STR) or dies.

Fighting	60% (30/12), constrict, damage 2D6 on following rounds
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Armor: none, but silver snakes take minimum damage from impaling weapons due to their fluid flesh.

Sanity loss: 0/1 to see a silver snake.

Razor Flies, *flesh-eating swarms*

These biomechanical insects, each little larger than a mosquito, travel in swarms of thousands. The flies make an eerie, metallic buzzing sound as they travel, and can be heard from hundreds of yards away.

If a swarm encounters an intruder, it surrounds the target and strips its flesh, like airborne piranhas. Any amount of all-over body armor provides protection, as each fly does little damage on its own. Wrapping oneself, head to foot, in heavy cloth or layers of clothing is an effective protection. An unprotected target takes 1D6 damage per round until the flies are dispersed, destroyed, or the target escapes.

Most weapons are useless against the flies, which will simply buzz around melee or ranged attacks. Explosives, fire, electricity, or magic proves more effective: 10 points of damage from one of these sources causes a swarm of razor flies to disperse. The flies cannot function in water or other fluids.

The flies move at a speed of 8. Use the chase rules if a hero tries to flee.

Degenerate Serpent People, *fallen scions of Mu*

Compared to the serpent people that the heroes have encountered on Earth, the residents of the Citadel are puny, weak, and ineffectual. Most are barely larger than a human child, with piebald, pale scales and twisted, scrawny bodies. They flee when threatened with violence, mewling in terror. They are also stupid in comparison to their earthbound relatives and easily deceived; heroes attempting to trick them should receive a bonus die on any skill rolls to do so.

STR 30 **CON** 40 **SIZ** 30 **DEX** 45 **INT** 30
APP — **POW** 50 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 7
DB: -2 **Build:** -2 **Move:** 6 **MP:** 10 **Luck:** 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (slap, scratch, bite)

Fighting attacks: degenerate serpent people only fight when cornered and, even then, their attacks are little more than slaps and scratches. With an Extreme success, one may succeed in biting; their poison is still as strong as that of a normal serpent person.

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Fighting	20% (10/4), damage 1D3-2 (+ bite if Extreme success)
Dodge	22% (11/4)

Armor: none

Sanity loss: 0/1D3 to see a degenerate serpent person.

Avatar of Yig, ophidian fury incarnate

When encountered on Earth, Yig is comparatively weak for a Mythos deity. Here, on Mu, Joshua Meadham is able to channel the god's power and tap into a more primal version of Yig. Consequently, his avatar is a mighty thing indeed.

The avatar resembles a gigantic serpent person, bulging with muscles and with long and sharp black claws. His eyes bulge and trickle tears of blood and venom. His skin is mottled with the markings of all manner of serpentine creatures, dancing slowly in chaotic swells of color. Two huge fangs dominate his mouth, dripping with sizzling venom, which he can spit for up to 100 yards. His shadow writhes unnaturally as if comprising of a thousand snakes made of living darkness.

STR 200 CON 200 SIZ 200 DEX 80 INT 150
APP — POW 140 EDU — SAN — HP 40
DB: +4D6 Build: 5 Move: 10 MP: 28 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (claw, bite, crush)

Fighting attacks: the avatar uses claws and teeth to rend the flesh of its enemies, or its feet and tail to crush them.

Spit venom: poison causes 1D6 damage, while burning acid blinds for 1D10 rounds (target may attempt Hard CON roll to avoid being blinded).

Fighting	120% (60/24), damage 1D8 + 4D6
Spit Venom	50% (25/10), damage 1D6 + acid
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Armor: Joshua Meadham's transition to avatar is still finalizing when the heroes first encounter him —initially, he has only a 2-point scaly hide. His armor increases by 2 points per round as his hide thickens, up to a maximum of 10 points.

Sanity loss: 1D3/1D10 for seeing the avatar of Yig.

The Citadel Master Computer, cruel and deluded would-be god

While immobile, the computer is hard to destroy and capable of defending itself with two laser cannons hidden in the ceiling of the Control Room. The lasers have 8 hit points each and can be targeted directly—they are small and recessed, so attacks against them suffer a penalty die.

If the computer is destroyed violently (i.e. not via the neural interfaces), this activates the Citadel's self-destruct mechanism, giving the heroes five minutes to get clear of the structure before it detonates, killing everything inside it (see *The Computer*, page 235).

STR — CON — SIZ 500 DEX — INT 400
APP — POW 50 EDU — SAN — HP 40
DB: n/a Build: n/a Move: 0 MP: 10 Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (lasers)

Fighting attacks: defense lasers hidden in the upper corners of the Control Room, which can rain green fiery death down on any would-be attackers.

Laser	50% (25/10), damage 1D8
Dodge	n/a

Armor: 2-point metal, crystal, and glass casing.
Sanity Loss: none.

RECURRING NPCs AND MONSTERS

CADUCEUS

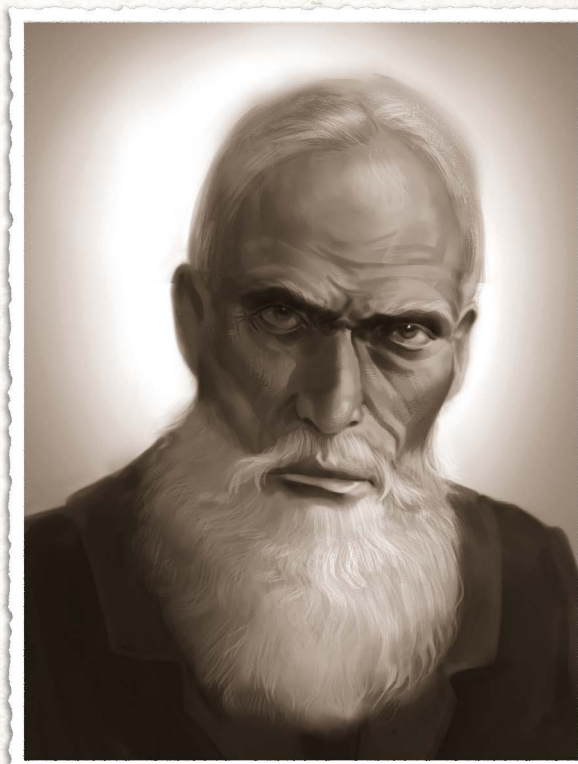
Joshua Meadham (Ssulithan),
appears 70, head of Caduceus

- Appears in: Chapters 2–9

Ssulithan, the serpent man impersonating Joshua Meadham, has used genetic material from the original Meadham to take on his victim's appearance permanently, becoming a hybrid. He has taken care to age his human guise as the man himself would have aged, and now appears to be in his seventies.

While the serpent man has taken care to present a more philanthropic nature than the real Joshua Meadham ever possessed, in order to lend credibility to Caduceus, he has been careful to preserve the less pleasant side of the man's personality as well. This new Joshua Meadham is as quick to mock, attack weakness, and crush his opponents as the original was, although now his ruthlessness is seen by many as serving a greater purpose.

Once the heroes have learned that Caduceus plan to head to Mu, he will try to distract them by sharing all he knows about the Inner Night's plans to wipe out humanity using the Doomsday Device, as well as any information he has about Tyrannis. He hopes that by emphasizing their shared enemy, he can convince the heroes to deal with those who oppose him and leave his own plans alone.



STR 100	CON 90	SIZ 70	DEX 95	INT 100
APP 60*	POW 120	EDU —	SAN —	HP 16
DB: +1D6	Build: 2	Move: 8	MP: 24	Luck: 99

**As human.*

RECURRING NPCs AND MONSTERS

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (claw, weapon, bite)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Claws: retractable claws inflict 1D6 + DB damage.

Fighting	120% (60/24), damage 1D3 + 1D6, claws 1D6 + 1D6
Bite	100% (50/20), damage 1D8 + poison
Dodge	100% (50/20)

Skills

Credit Rating 99%, Cthulhu Mythos 60%, English 90%, Intimidate 60%, Naacal 85%, Persuade 70%, Pilot (Aircraft) 40%, Portuguese 40%, Psychology 60%, Spanish 40%, Stealth 70%, Throw 60%.

Pulp Talents

Heavy Hitter (may spend 10 Luck points to add an additional damage die when dealing out melee combat (die type depends on the weapon being used, e.g. 1D3 for unarmed combat, 1D6 for a sword, etc.))

Armor: 1-point scales hidden beneath his human flesh; **Flesh Ward** usually in place, providing 5D6 points of additional armor (costing 5 magic points).

Spells: Contact Yig, **Flesh Ward**

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 for seeing Joshua Meadham in true serpent person form.

- **Description:** small and frail in appearance; walks with the aid of a cane. His white hair has grown thin but his eyebrows and beard are still impressively bushy. His apparent frailty is at odds with his dark, piercing eyes, which show no signs of age or diminished faculties. Under his clothes, the pretense of being an old man ends and his body is a wiry mass of muscles, shifting under smooth, pink, hairless skin. As with all serpent person hybrids, Joshua lacks external genitalia.
- **Traits:** in conversation, Joshua Meadham is sharp and acerbic.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** compliments loyal heroes on their work, attempting to inspire them to do more; seeks vengeance on heroes who turn against him.

Canning, appears 40, mountainous manservant

- **Appears in:** Chapters 2–9

Canning is Joshua Meadham's manservant and accompanies his master everywhere.

Like his master, Canning is a hybridized serpent person but, in his case, he was created with multiple strands of DNA from differing sources used to create the perfect living weapon. He has thick layers of scales under his human skin, providing him with armor, and he has all the quickness of a black mamba. His bite is highly venomous, due to DNA taken from a sea snake.

STR 120 **CON** 85 **SIZ** 95 **DEX** 75 **INT** 60
APP 40* **POW** 75 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 18
DB: +2D6 **Build:** 3 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 15 **Luck:** 35

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (claw, weapon, bite)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 2D8 damage.



APPENDIX A

Tongue lash: a chameleon-like tongue that, once per round, can lash out over distances of up to 10 feet. A seized target must attempt a Hard CON roll to avoid losing all muscular control when exposed to the poison that coats the tongue. The poison causes searing pain (not physical damage) that immobilizes (stuns) the target for 2D4 rounds. Immobilized or not, the target can be pulled towards Canning, who can then attack the target on the following round with a bonus die. If the poison is resisted, the target may attempt an opposed STR roll to break free the tongue's hold.

Fighting	100% (50/2), damage 1D3 + 2D6
Bite	100% (50/20), damage 1D8 + poison
Tongue lash	60% (30/12), immobilizing poison + held
Dodge	100% (50/20)

Skills

Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Drive Auto 75%, English 50%, Intimidate 90%, Naacal 65%, Stealth 60%, Throw 80%.

Pulp Talents

Alert (never surprised in combat).



Armor: 5-point thick scales hidden beneath his human skin, which may be exposed by cuts or wounds.

Spells: none.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 for seeing Canning in true serpent person form (if the scales beneath his skin are revealed).

- **Description:** a brute of a man, topping seven feet tall and heavily muscled. His head is smooth, his eyes are steely, and he never speaks. The process used to create Canning failed to give him any human vocal cords or hair, and he is completely bald and without eyebrows.
- **Traits:** never speaks. His gaze shifts around constantly, except when he gives a warning glare to anyone he thinks is failing to give Joshua Meadham the respect he demands. Any attempts to engage Canning in conversation will be met with a cold glower.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** keeps a close eye on any hero who appears to be acting suspiciously, either following them or arranging for Frank De Luca to do so (see **Chapter 2: New York City**). Those who pose a threat to Mr. Meadham are dealt with mercilessly.

Dr. Victor Gomes Gonçalves, 54, doctor, sorcerer and fanatical servant of Yig

- **Appears in:** Chapters 2–9

Born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil, Gonçalves studied and then practiced medicine in the USA before joining Caduceus as a field worker, shortly after the organization was founded. As he has progressed further in the organization, he has learned the truth at its heart.

Gonçalves knows that Caduceus is a cult of Yig devoted to wiping out the heretical worship of Tsathoggua, and that the organization's leaders are serpent people in disguise. Rather than turning him against his employers, this knowledge had brought Gonçalves deeper into the fold, as he is intoxicated by the knowledge and power he has gained. Knowing Yig to be a living, powerful god, Gonçalves is as dedicated to the god's worship as any serpent person. The serpent people in Caduceus tolerate Gonçalves the human, as they consider him to be useful. Once the master plan is in effect, they will either subjugate him like the rest of humanity or offer him the chance to undergo the hybridization process to become a serpent person.

STR 45	CON 80	SIZ 70	DEX 65	INT 105
APP 60	POW 120	EDU 80	SAN 00	HP 15
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 5	MP: 24	Luck: 60

RECURRING NPCs AND MONSTERS

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (unarmed, weapon)

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
.38 auto	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Winged Viper (Throw)	65% (32/13), damage 1D6 + special*
Dodge	45% (22/9)

*See *Winged Vipers*, page 250, Appendix B.

Skills

Cthulhu Mythos 43%, English 55%, Intimidate 70%, First Aid 70%, Listen 50%, Medicine 70%, Portuguese 80%, Psychology 65%, Spot Hidden 60%, Spanish 30%, Throw 65%.

Pulp Talents

Fleet Footed (may spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter).

Armor: none.

Spells: Coils Of Yig**, Contact Yig, Fist Of Yog-Sothoth, Flesh Ward, Shrivelling.

Sanity Loss: n/a.

****Note:** while Gonçalves may attempt to use Coils Of Yig to destroy the heroes, he will not use his own magic points to do so, preferring to use the magic points from the Heart of Yig. Thus, saving his own magic points for self-defense, should he need them.

- **Description:** a mild-looking man of average build, with well-oiled hair and a neatly trimmed moustache. Gonçalves has a noticeable Brazilian accent and is quietly spoken most of the time. When he is angered or becomes passionate about something, his whole manner changes and he becomes fiery and quite intimidating.
- **Traits:** rarely makes eye contact with people and seems uncomfortable when this happens.
- **Possessions:** The Heart of Yig, loaned from Joshua Meadham. See *Heart of Yig*, page 250, Appendix B.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** presents himself as helpful, trustworthy, and approachable. Tries to learn as much about the heroes and their actions as possible. While he considers the heroes to be disposable tools, that doesn't mean that they shouldn't be properly "maintained." Tries to convince the heroes to spare any human worshippers of Yig they encounter, no matter what the official orders are.

Frank De Luca (Niressh), appears 40, Caduceus security chief and hybridized serpent person

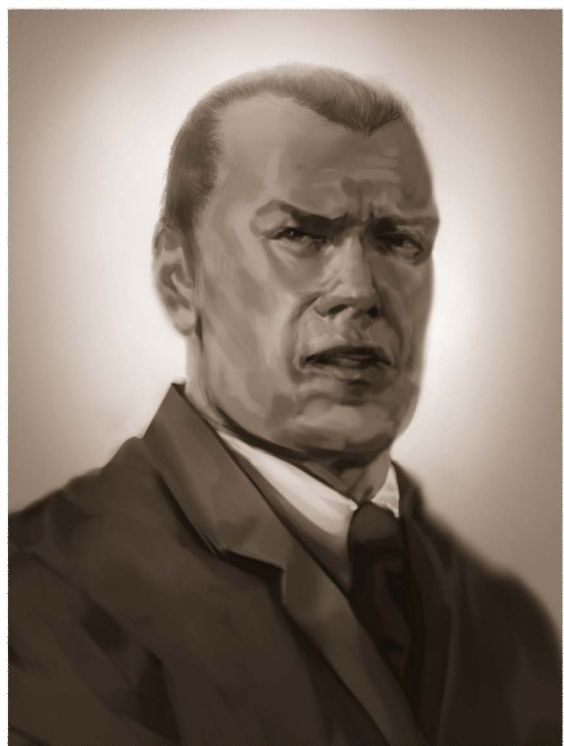
- **Appears in:** Chapters 2, 8, and 9

The security of Caduceus is too sensitive to entrust to even the most loyal of humans, so Joshua Meadham arranged for one of his inner cabal of serpent people to be hybridized to take on the role of his security chief.

Frank De Luca (as the hybridized Niressh is now known) takes a hands-on approach. While he has a number of human minions and a few serpent people under his command, he is paranoid enough to insist on personally overseeing the security of not only the Meadham Building but also Caduceus's facility in the Belgian Congo. He has come to rely on stimulants to keep him alert, and has found that cocaine works best with his semi-human body chemistry; unfortunately, this has the side effect of making him paranoid and ill tempered. A few human guards have disappeared without explanation after coming under De Luca's suspicion.

STR 80	CON 70	SIZ 60	DEX 70	INT 90
APP 50*	POW 60	EDU —	SAN —	HP 13
DB: +1D4	Build: 1	Move: 9	MP: 12	Luck: 30

*As human.



Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (usual range of unarmed attacks open to humanoids)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Fighting	75% (37/15), damage 1D3 + 1D4
.38 auto	55% (27/11), damage 1D10
Bite	55% (27/11), damage 1D8 + poison
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Drive Auto 50%, Intimidate 40%, Language (Naacal) 50%, Listen 70%, Spot Hidden 70%, Stealth 50%.

Armor: 1-point scales (hidden under human skin).

Spells: none.

Sanity loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a serpent person in their true form.

- **Description:** a broad, jowly man with heavy features and a pronounced widow's peak. He appears muscular, if slightly fat, and walks with a rolling gait.
- **Traits:** De Luca enjoys pushing people around, especially humans, who he sees as inferiors in all respects. Cocaine use has made him twitchy, and he rarely sits still.
- **Roleplaying hook:** spies on the heroes if they act suspiciously, either following them in a dark saloon car or arranging for other Caduceus insiders (including Canning) to do so.

THE INNER NIGHT

Rose Meadham (Sashannal), appears 35, leader of the Inner Night

- **Appears in:** Chapters 2–9

Another hybrid, Sashannal has held onto the identity of Rose Meadham, finding it useful when dealing with the human world. While her betrayal and true allegiance is now known to the inner cabal of Caduceus, public knowledge is simply that there was some dispute between Rose and her father, leading to the estranged daughter being disowned. Before her escape from Caduceus, Sashannal managed to embezzle enough money from Caduceus to fund the Inner Night.

As she prepared to leave Caduceus in 1928, Sashannal attempted to assassinate Joshua Meadham/ Ssulithan, as well as the other members of the secret cabal. She was caught by Canning in the act of planting a bomb in the boardroom of the Meadham Building in New York City. Canning bit Sashannal during the fight, injecting her with venom that, consequently, rotted away some of Sashannal's false human flesh. Now, she is forced to cover her appearance with veils and wide-brimmed hats when interacting with humans. Rose Meadham is notoriously reclusive. She is only seen in human society rarely and briefly—usually when she has business to conduct, disappearing as quickly as she appears. Dark rumors about her abound.

Rose Meadham has been working on a new holy book devoted to Tsathoggua, titled *The Inmost Night* (see **Appendix B**, page 256). She carries the manuscript with her wherever she goes, editing and updating it compulsively.

Always keen to find ways to undermine her enemies, Rose Meadham uses any meeting or discussion with the heroes to tell them about Caduceus and their plans to enslave the human race, as well as whatever she has managed to glean about Tyranissh's plans. She will, of course, downplay her own scheme to wipe out humanity. She also carries a carefully redacted report from one of her analysts on the current state of Caduceus's plans (**Handout: Calcutta 6**, see page 200), which she is always happy to pass on to the heroes to spread suspicion and dissent.



STR 90 CON 90 SIZ 80 DEX 75 INT 110
 APP 20* POW 110 EDU — SAN — HP 17
 DB: +1D6 Build: 2 Move: 8 MP: 22 Luck: 99

**As human.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claw, weapon, bite)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Claws: retractable claws inflict 1D6 + DB damage.

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage 1D3 + 1D6, claws 1D6 + 1D6
Bite	60% (30/12), damage 1D8 + poison
Dodge	60% (30/12)

Skills

Charm 80%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 70%, English 70%, Naacal 80%, Psychology 40%, Throw 60%.

Pulp Talents

Rapid Attack (may spend 10 Luck points to gain one further attack in a single combat round); Fleet Footed (may spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter).

Armor: 1-point scales hidden beneath her human flesh; Flesh Ward usually in place, providing 5D6 points of additional armor (costing 5 magic points).

Spells: Contact Tsathoggua, Contact Formless Spawn, Shrivelling, Flesh Ward.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 for seeing Rose Meadham in true serpent person form.

- **Description:** the skin of Rose Meadham's face is badly scarred, resembling molten wax (a result of Canning's venom). She tends to wear a veil when in human company to avoid frightening people needlessly.
- **Traits:** possesses a charm that belies her disfigurement. Beneath the masks of her veil and her human face lies a cold heart devoted to a dark alien god.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** if possible, she will attempt to turn the heroes against Joshua Meadham and Caduceus. If she cannot get the heroes on her side, she attempts to manipulate them using other human intermediaries to supply misinformation.

TYRANISSH, THE DREAMING SORCERER

- **Appears in:** Chapters 1–9

Tyrannissh has been lost in dream dimensions for millennia. She believes the serpent people have forsaken her. The split between the worshippers of Tsathoggua and Yig had not yet torn her people apart completely when Tyrannissh undertook her dream journey. Consequently, once she has awoken, she despairs at the futility of her people's religious divide and now wishes to use her knowledge to raise her people to greatness again. Should she be awoken, she embarks on a quest to complete the work of the Muvian science-sorcerers, merging serpent people and humanity into a single race.

As Tyrannissh dates from a time when the serpent people were still mighty, she is a tougher physical specimen than most of her modern brethren. Tyrannissh's use of the Consume Likeness spell manifests in a unique manner; instead of consuming the target's flesh, she lays her hands upon the victim and slowly changes her own appearance to mimic theirs. The victim remains alive for some hours but



slowly desiccates and then disintegrates into a pile of dust.

Heroes who befriend Tyranissh may learn some Naacal from her. She will teach 1D10 skill points in Other Language (Naacal) given a minimum of two days' personal conversation.

Tyranissh is especially disposed to befriending heroes who are undergoing hybridization, as they remind her of her own plans for humanity. While she will not discuss these plans, she will share her negative opinions of the cults of Yig and Tsathoggua. From Chapter 7 onward, this extends to her discussing her misgivings about the ultimate goals of both Caduceus and the Inner night. She will also use revelations about her rivals' plans to deflect and misdirect heroes who are investigating her own activities.

STR 90 **CON** 75 **SIZ** 85 **DEX** 90 **INT** 120
APP — **POW** 125 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 16
DB: +1D6 **Build:** 2 **Move:** 8* **MP:** 25 **Luck:** 99

**Able to climb vertical surfaces like a gecko.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claw, weapon, bite)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Fighting	70% (35/14), damage 1D3 + 1D6
Bite	50% (25/10), damage 1D8 + poison
Dodge	60% (30/12)

Skills

Cthulhu Mythos 70%, Dreaming 80%, English 30%, Intimidate 70%, Jump 70%, Listen 50%, Naacal 80%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 65%, Throw 50%.

Pulp Talents

Scary (reduces difficulty by one level or gains bonus die to Intimidate rolls); Weird Science (may build and repair weird science devices).

Armor: 3-point scales hidden beneath her human flesh; Flesh Ward usually in place, providing 5D6 points of additional armor (costing 5 magic points).

Spells: Cloud Memory, Consume Likeness, Call Ghatanothoa, Contact Tsathoggua, Contact Yig, Create Gate, Create Mist Of R'lyeh, Dominate, Fist Of Yog-Sothoth, Flesh Ward, Melt Flesh, Shriveling, Summon/Bind Formless Spawn, Wrack.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see Tryanissh.

CALL GHATANOTHOA

- **Cost:** 1+ magic points per person; 1D10 Sanity points (caster only)
- **Casting time:** 1–100 minutes

Calls Ghatanothoa, the Lord of the Volcano, to the caster. The spell only works if performed on the continent of Mu. Unless summoned in absolute darkness, the summoner risks life and limb, as gazing upon the Great Old One's form turns one's body into a petrified living mummy, where the body becomes like hardened leather and the brain and organs are somehow preserved indefinitely—yet the consciousness lives on in sanity draining agony.

- **Description:** in her serpent woman form, Tyranissh is a tall humanoid, covered in fine, multi-hued scales. She favors scarlet robes; such as she wore long ago. She has a majestic air about her.
- **Traits:** smells the air with her tongue; this is a new world for her, full of strange flavors.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** if the opportunity presents itself, she asks questions about the world, about humanity, present-day serpent people, and Mu. Later, she may attempt to recruit the heroes to her cause.

Keeper note: if the heroes become allied with Tyranissh, they may have the opportunity to advance their learning. At the discretion of the Keeper, Tyranissh can teach the heroes, granting 1D10 points in Language (Naacal) and Cthulhu Mythos.

MONSTERS

Sample Serpent People

Here are ten sets of statistics for serpent people, providing the Keeper with some variation. It is suggested that the Keeper should vary their descriptions based upon their characteristics (e.g. one being smaller (low SIZ), one big and muscly (high SIZ and STR), another particularly quick (high DEX), and so on).

Luck: 0

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (claw, bite, weapon)

Bite: injects venom, the target must succeed with an Extreme CON roll or suffer 1D8 damage.

Fighting: damage 1D3 + DB, or weapon (see below)

Each serpent person may be armed with the following:

1. Garrote: damage 1D6 + DB
2. Large knife: damage 1D4 + 2 + DB
3. Winged Vipers × 3 (page 250);
4. Large sword: damage 1D8 + 1 + DB
5. Small knife: damage 1D4 + DB
6. Pain Whip (page 250)
7. Club: damage 1D6 + DB
8. Machete: damage 1D8 + DB
9. Flying Fangs × 3 (page 250); Throw skill is equal to Fighting skill
10. Nunchaku: damage 1D8 + DB

Armor: 1-point scales.

Spells: none (Keeper may allocate spells as desired).

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 for seeing a serpent person.

Serpent Person	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	INT	POW
1	50	35	50	60	85	90
2	55	90	35	55	80	45
3	90	40	30	90	50	50
4	80	90	90	65	120	55
5	90	60	45	65	115	90
6	50	85	50	80	110	50
7	35	90	65	55	75	55
8	40	80	65	60	45	60
9	45	40	90	75	100	50
10	85	50	40	50	80	40

Serpent Person	HP	DB	BUILD	MOV	FIGHT	DODGE
1	8	0	0	8	80% (40/16)	60% (30/12)
2	12	0	0	9	60% (30/12)	30% (15/6)
3	7	0	0	9	50% (25/10)	70% (35/14)
4	18	+1D6	2	7	80% (40/16)	60% (30/12)
5	10	+1D4	1	9	50% (25/10)	40% (20/8)
6	13	0	0	8	80% (40/16)	30% (15/6)
7	15	0	0	7	60% (30/12)	70% (35/14)
8	14	0	0	7	60% (30/12)	30% (15/6)
9	13	+1D4	1	7	60% (30/12)	40% (20/8)
10	9	+1D4	1	9	60% (30/12)	30% (15/6)

NEW ARTIFACTS, TECHNOLOGY, TOMES AND SPELLS

ARTIFACTS

COBRA CROWN, THE

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 7: Calcutta

The Cobra Crown was once worn by the Sorcerer-Kings of Ancient Mu and is instilled with great power. The way to Mu from Earth is protected by dire guardians—the hideous lloigor, entities that assail those who would open the Gate to Mu. Although the lloigor are usually non-corporeal, they have enough of a reptilian nature in their physical aspect that they are subject to the power of the Cobra Crown. This means that the crown is key to removing these guardians from the Gate. Thus, the artifact is greatly desired by Joshua and Rose Meadham, as well as Tyranissh, all of whom are seeking the crown; a task of such importance that none of them are prepared to entrust it to their minions.

Physically, the crown is more solid than most of the finely filigreed serpent person artifacts the heroes will have encountered: it is a thick dome of gold, some eight inches in height. The metal has been dented and scratched over the years, but is still resplendent with inset jewels and ophidian carvings. Six ruby-eyed golden cobras surround the rim, their hoods wide and their tails trailing just below the rim of the crown. The crown weighs around twelve pounds (5.5kg), making it uncomfortable for most humans to wear.

When a human or hybrid dons the Cobra Crown, the ornate gold cobras that decorate the crown writhe, their tails drilling into the skull of the wearer, delivering 2D10 damage in the process; full serpent people are spared this ordeal, already being worthy of donning the crown due to their ophidian nature. From that point on, the crown can only be removed through surgery either on the living wearer (inflicting a further 2D10 damage unless the surgeon succeeds in a **Hard Medicine** roll) or upon the wearer's corpse.

Should the wearer of the crown survive the initial donning, the artifact grants the following powers:

- Control of nearby reptilian animals (not serpent people) with a combined POW value of up to 200. If the wearer also bears the **Serpent Scepter** (page 250), this control trebles to a value of 600 POW.
- The wearer gains a bonus die on all POW rolls.
- Snakes will not attack the wearer, who is now immune to all snake venom (including that of serpent people).
- All nearby snakes are attracted to the wearer and seek to nest with the wearer as he or she sleeps.
- An immediate increase of 1D10 points in the Cthulhu Mythos skill and 1D20 points of Other Language (Naacal).

COILED WATCHER, THE

- Appearance in the campaign: Chapter 2: New York City

A small jade statue, three inches in height and two in diameter. It takes the form of a coiled snake, with two gem-like red eyes looking forward from the snake's head. The Coiled Watcher can be compelled to remember everything it sees for a short period of time (the user must feed it one magic point for every hour to be recorded).

The next serpent person or human being to pick up the statue has his or her mind flooded with the images that the Watcher has seen, causing the person to become immobilized for one minute for every hour the Watcher recorded. If the person did not expect this, he or she must make a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss)—as well as any Sanity rolls for horrors the Watcher may have observed and recorded.

Like a snake, the Watcher can only see and taste the air around it. Its memories do not include sound or any other sensory data. Anyone retrieving its memories must pass an **INT** roll to pick out specific pieces of information from the chaos of images and reptilian senses; if failed, the user has been overwhelmed and must make a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss).

FIVE DEADLY VENOMS, THE

- Appearance in the campaign: Chapter 2: New York City

A jade box, nine inches from corner to corner, carved with abstract serpentine shapes and sigils. Within the box are five stone vials, each containing six doses of venom (see following). Each vial is inscribed with a sigil that gives the venom's name; the names are derived from Naacal and these can be understood with either a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** or **Hard Language (Naacal)** roll.

The various venoms are derived from snakes across the world, mixed with serpent person blood, blended in caves that have never seen light, and enhanced through sorceries lost in ages past.

Each of the venoms may be given to a victim via food, drink, injection, or through a wound (the venom being applied to a bladed weapon). Larger targets require more venom—an additional dose is needed for every 50 points of **SIZ** over 100.

Desiccating Venom: this venom dries up the bodily fluids of its target at an unnatural rate. The target must attempt a **Hard CON** roll: if failed, all moisture in the target's body begins to dry out, causing 4D10 damage; if passed, the damage is halved. The process takes 1D10 minutes. If the target dies as a result, his or her body crumbles into dust. Those witnessing such a horrible death must make a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss).

Dissolving Venom: turns the bodily fluids of a target into a potent acid. The target must attempt a **Hard CON** roll: if failed, he or she begins to dissolve from the inside out, suffering 4D10 of damage; if passed, the damage is halved. The process takes 1D10 minutes. If the target dies, acid leaks from their body over the course of the next 1D6 minutes, dissolving everything it comes into contact with. Those witnessing such a horrible death must make a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss).

Explosive Venom: anyone ingesting or injected with this venom must pass a **Hard CON** roll or explode 1D10 minutes later. The first sign is abdominal cramps, followed quickly by bloating and intense pain throughout the target's body. The target's skin turns red, as if sunburned, and is hot to the touch. If the target succeeds in passing the **CON** roll, the symptoms begin to cease within the next 1D6 hours. The explosion of those fatally poisoned is total and sudden, with flesh, bone, and viscera blasting out in a sudden concussion. Those within five feet of the explosion must pass a **Dodge** roll or suffer 1D6 points of damage from flying bone fragments, as well as making a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss).

Mind-Killing Venom: this is the only one of the five venoms not designed to be fatal. A target must pass a **Hard CON** roll or permanently lose 6D10 from both **INT** and **POW**; passing the roll halves the effect and allows the target to recover after a day (their characteristics returning to their normal values). A target losing half of his or her **INT** or **POW** as a result of the venom becomes extremely suggestible: a **POW** roll should be made to resist any command given to them. If the target's **INT** or **POW** is reduced to zero, they become a mindless zombie, unable to resist any direct command.

Skin-Shedding Venom: causes a human target to shed his or her skin. If the target does not succeed with a **Hard CON** roll, their skin begins to slough off, inflicting 4D10 of damage and permanently reducing **APP** to zero. The process takes 1D10 minutes. Those who lose all of their skin and survive are in constant agony and will need continuous medical care from this point forward. Those witnessing this horrific effect must make a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss). If the target passes the **CON** roll, the damage is halved and **APP** loss is limited to 4D10 points; his or her skin is still attached, although it is reddened, flaky, and loose, causing it to often shift about in alarming ways.

Keeper note: heroes who come to possess the Five Deadly Venoms may attempt to figure out the effects of each of the venoms. As noted, a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** or **Language (Naacal)** roll allows each of the vials' sigils to be interpreted. Some heroes with scientific expertise may wish to analyze each of the vials' contents, requiring suitable time and equipment, and a combined **Science (Biology)** and **(Chemistry)** roll (such rolls may be ignored if the hero is able to construct a "venom analyzer" through the application of weird science). If successful, the hero will be able to create more of the venoms. The ingredients for each dose cost $1D6 \times \$100$. It takes $1D3$ days and access to a well-stocked laboratory to prepare each dose.

FLUTE OF TSATHOGGUA

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 1: Bolivia

More properly a whistle, this small wind instrument is made of unidentifiable black stone. When blown and invested with 3 magic points, it calls any formless spawn or serpent hounds within a three-mile radius. Note that it does not offer any form of control over these creatures.

FLYING FANG

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 1: Bolivia, Chapter 2: New York City

A throwing weapon of serpent person design, consisting of a short metal snake-like spike, it has a range of 10 yards and its use requires the Throw skill. When thrown, a flying fang causes minimal damage ($1D3$ points) but inflicts agonizing pain. Those hit must attempt a Hard CON roll or fall to the ground in agony for $1D6$ rounds, effectively incapacitated.

HEART OF YIG, THE

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 8: Snake Island

A jade stone, the size and shape of a large python's heart, carved with serpent person sigils and inset with gold. The Heart of Yig allows its wielder to leech $1D10$ magic points per round from a target, who must be in physical contact with the Heart. The area touched by the Heart shrivels and the skin becomes dry and scaly. Leeches magic points can be used by the Heart's owner for spell casting, as well as for other magical purposes. The Heart can hold a maximum of 50 magic points—currently it holds 35 points.

PAIN WHIP

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 1: Bolivia

Made of some kind of tanned reptilian hide and covered with sharp white spines that resemble the fangs of a snake. The voormis learned to fear these whips, which were wielded by their serpent person masters in ages past.

A pain whip inflicts $1D3$ damage + half damage bonus. If injured by the whip, the target must attempt a Hard CON roll or be agonized and incapacitated for $1D6$ rounds. The whip has a range of 12 feet. If heroes wish to use the whip, use the Fighting (Whip) skill (05% base chance).

SERPENT SCEPTER, THE

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 1: Bolivia, Chapter 7: Calcutta

An ornate scepter, three feet (approximately 1 meter) in length, crafted from gold, with a pearl, the size of a fist, held in place by the spiraling form of a golden snake. Anyone holding the scepter must succeed in either a **Cthulhu Mythos** or **Extreme POW** roll (which becomes a Regular POW roll if he or she is also wearing the Cobra Crown). If the POW roll is failed, the individual is assailed by visions of snakes until they release and drop the scepter. The person immediately develops Ophidiophobia (phobia of snakes) and will be attacked by the next snake that crosses their path. If the POW roll is successful, the bearer has mastered the Serpent Scepter. While holding the scepter, that individual is offered the opportunity to invest 10 magic points into the scepter—the effect of investing the magic points should be unknown and a mystery—if the bearer agrees, their sacrifice of 10 magic points summons all snakes within a one-mile radius. The snakes do not attack the bearer (unless provoked), but neither do they fall under the bearer's command. The scepter augments the power of the **Cobra Crown** (page 248).

WINGED VIPERS

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 2: New York City

These small, elaborate jade carvings, around four inches in length, resemble stylized snakes, with wavy bodies and sharply pointed tails. They can be used as throwing daggers (with the Throw skill). When invested with 5 magic points, they burrow into a target on a successful attack roll.

If hit, the target may attempt a combined Hard DEX and STR roll on their next available action to grab hold of the Winged Viper to prevent it worming its way into their flesh. If unsuccessful, the animated dart burrows to the target's heart, inflicting 1D6 damage per round until it is cut out (requiring a Hard First Aid or Medicine roll) or the target dies.

TECHNOLOGY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUIT

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 5: Iceland

While the form of an environmental suit has a human outline, it appears to be little more than skin, with a thick layer of fat underneath. The skin is warm to the touch and slightly sticky. There is little sign of blood, despite the vertical cut that runs from the neck to the abdomen; this cut is entirely clean and smooth and, should anyone think to push the edges together, they seal shut. There is another such cut across the neck, allowing the "head" to loll back. The head appears to be that of a baby, with unformed features but larger than a normal human adult, and it has no skull. Its eyes look around vacantly and it emits a gurgling sound. Seeing a living suit of skin calls for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss).

The fleshy environmental suits are worn by serpent people to protect themselves from cold environments (such as that of Iceland) and are living organisms, converted from humans. The conversion process removes the skeleton and most of the internal organs, replacing them with artificial analogues that take up less space. The process also greatly increases the amount of subcutaneous fat, while skin is expanded, making it large enough for the serpent people to wear comfortably. The process leaves the suit looking like a huge, hollowed-out baby.

While the suits have only the barest trace of sentience left in them, they do occasionally babble, gurgle, and cry. They still have human eyes in the misshapen, pudgy faces, but these are dead and lightless in appearance.

Due to their cold-blooded nature, serpent people operating in cold environments—including anywhere in Iceland beyond the heated rooms of the underground research facility—take a penalty die to all physical actions unless kept warm by an environmental suit. In theory, a human could don one of these horrific suits to withstand the cold, although the experience will not be pleasant.

FLAME PISTOL

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 1: Bolivia, Chapter 5: Iceland, Chapter 9: Mu

The original serpent people who built the Citadel in Mu armed themselves with these small but deadly weapons, and a number of them have survived into the present. They are exquisitely sculpted metal pistols in the shape of a coiled serpent. The coils wrap around the wrist of the wielder, as if alive, and the weapon is fired by psychic will. Two small red gems (the serpent's eyes) light up when fired and a small-but-intense ball of fire comes flying out of the serpent's mouth.

The **Handgun** skill is used for operating a flame pistol. The serpent people in the Citadel, naturally, have greater experience of the weapons, granting them a 40% skill in their use. The gun can be fired up to three times per round, with the normal rules for multiple shots applying; each shot requires 1 magic point to power it. Each ball of fire inflicts 1D10 of damage and, if hit, the target needs to make a Luck roll to avoid being set on fire. Treat attacks with Extreme successes as impales, representing increased damage.

Flame pistols are attuned to the nervous systems of serpent people and any human attempting to use one suffers a penalty die to their attack roll, with the risk that a fumble makes the gun explode, inflicting 2D10 fire damage and possibly setting the user on fire (Luck roll to avoid). Any hero undergoing the hybridization process (see **Appendix C**) will not suffer this penalty.

GRAVITY MANIPULATOR

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 2: New York City, Chapter 9: Mu

Designed and utilized by the elder things, the manipulator can increase or reverse the gravitational effect on a target, crushing it like a bug or causing it to float. The first time a hero tries to use a gravity manipulator call for a combined **Cthulhu Mythos** and Extreme INT roll to determine if the hero can operate the device successfully; on subsequent uses it simply requires a Hard INT roll to operate the device and select the appropriate target (treat this as a normal ranged attack roll). If the roll is fumbled, the manipulator targets the user or their nearest ally—depending on who has the lowest current Luck value.

The operator has the choice of briefly increasing or decreasing gravity on a particular target. If the roll was fumbled, roll 1D6 to determine the outcome: on 1–3, gravity is increased, and on 4–6 it is reversed.

The effects of increasing or reversing gravity on a target are unpredictable. To work out how much damage the target suffers, roll 1D4 and then roll that many D10s worth of damage. This may represent the target being floated high in the air and then dropped, or crushed as if by a giant, invisible fist.

A gravity manipulator may also be targeted against inanimate objects, inflicting the same range of random damage.

HAFTORANG DEVICE

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 3: North Borneo, Chapter 7: Calcutta, Chapter 9: Mu

Outwardly, these devices appear to be a mahogany box with the dimensions of a standard tea chest (20 x 20 x 30 inches). The box lies on its side, with one of the four larger faces being comprised of a two-part lid, attached by brass hinges on the longer sides. A rotating brass disc, inscribed with a four-pointed star, holds the lid in place.

The four faces around the outside of the box are inscribed with patterns of stars, which a successful **Astronomy** roll reveals to be the constellations of Leo (northern face), Taurus (eastern face), Piscis Austrinus (southern face), and Scorpius (western face). On each face, silver strips inlaid into the wood form the lines between the stars. The majority of the stars are marked with citrine (yellow quartz), except for Regulus (Leo), Aldebaran (Taurus), Fomalhaut (Piscis Austrinus) and Antares (Scorpius), which are all marked by rubies. The aforementioned Astronomy roll also reveals that these are the “Royal Stars”—according to ancient Persian wisdom, the guardians of the sky, named Venant, Tascheter, Haftorang, and Satevi, were believed to hold both the power of good and evil.

Across both halves of the lid, two fishes are carved, inlaid with gold. The mouths of both fishes are open and pointed towards one another, with the brass disc that keeps the box closed between them (corresponding to the position of Fomalhaut in Piscis Austrinus).

The brass disc must be turned 360 degrees to open the lid. The interior of the box is filled with a complex series of rotating hoops, discs, wheels, and gears. All are made of brass and inscribed with astrological sigils that chart various paths through the celestial sphere. The entire mechanism resembles a strange armillary sphere, with a large tetrahedron made from a single ruby, about the size of a clenched fist, at its heart.

A series of six dials, three at each end of the interior of the chest, are marked with the numbers 1 through 10 in Persian. Once one is turned, they all begin to click and turn, implying it might be a mechanism of some fashion to measure the passage of time.

Function

The Haftorang Device is a powerful weapon in Caduceus’s arsenal, capable of completely destroying everything in an area between 1 and 10 miles in diameter, centered on the device. It creates a Gate through which a portion of Cthugha, the fiery Great Old One that resides near the star Fomalhaut, is summoned, reducing the area to little more than a glass-lined crater.

The six dials inside the device control the size of the area to be destroyed, the time delay till when the Gate opens (instantaneous to a 24 hour delay), and how long it remains open (1 to 10 minutes). Unless instructed on how to operate the device, it requires an **Astronomy**, **Demolitions**, **Science (Mathematics)**, or **Hard INT** roll to arm or disarm it the first time. If this skill roll is pushed and failed, it may result in an immediate activation. Otherwise, it will activate after a period of time determined by the Keeper.

Upon activation, when the Gate is opened, a series of devastating waves of fire engulf everything in the area of effect. These may be outrun with the aid of a motor vehicle or an airplane moving at high speed, requiring a **Hard Drive Auto** or **Hard Pilot** roll, respectively. Anything caught by the waves of fire is instantly incinerated. Witnessing the activation of a Haftorang Device requires a **Sanity** roll (1D3/1D20 loss).

Optional Rule: these devices are destroyed (unsurprisingly) when activated and are quite fragile. Each device has 10 HP. When a blow is inflicted that would destroy the device, a group **Luck** roll is required to avoid an immediate activation. Sudden, powerful bumps or jolts that do 3 or more points of damage might damage the mechanism, triggering a countdown to begin that cannot be disarmed. Quick thinking and an appropriate skill roll may cancel the countdown at the Keeper’s discretion.

Keeper note: be aware that a Haftorang Device is a very dangerous weapon for the heroes to have access to. Likewise, having one activate by accident can be detrimental to the campaign. If the Keeper is not comfortable running with the fallout of the activation of the device, or if it ruins their campaign, they can narrate a malfunction leading to a limited activation, or no activation at all.

LASER STAFF

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 6: Belgian Congo

These weapons resemble golden tubes, the length of a long broom handle. Mechanically, they function as per Death Rays (see *Pulp Cthulhu*, page 88). They are operated by turning one half of the tube by 90 degrees, which then fires a laser beam from the opposite end.

The laser beam ignores mundane armor (i.e. not applicable to Mythos monsters of non-terrestrial origin) and inflicts 1D10+5 heat damage. Each staff can hold 8 shots before needing to be recharged for 10 hours. Due to their length, the Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) skill is required to use them.

PETRIFICATION GUN

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 5: Iceland

This device looks like a cross between a squat shotgun and a hypodermic syringe. The core is a glass cylinder filled with a viscous silver-grey fluid, surrounded by filigree work reminiscent of the artistic style of the serpent person tableaux seen in **Chapter 1: Bolivia**. One end of the weapon protrudes in a sharp metal point. There is a handle, which is slightly too large for a human hand to grip comfortably. When the needle is pressed into anything that offers resistance, it starts to ooze the silver-grey fluid out through the tip, which is a petrification agent that the serpent people created, millennia ago, to control and destroy their monstrous creations. Each round that the tip is pressed into a living organism, it injects enough fluid to rob the target of 1D10 × 5 points of DEX. The flesh of the victim turns to stone from the point of injection, radiating outwards. Once the target's DEX hits zero, they are completely petrified. The effect wears off naturally—but this process takes centuries to achieve.

The petrification gun can be wielded in combat using the **Fighting (Brawl)** skill. It cannot be used as a ranged weapon.

PSYCHIC COMMUNICATOR

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 9: Mu

This device, of elder thing design, resembles a stylized star constructed from writhing silver tongues. It is designed to create psychic links between two sentient creatures. If a hero takes hold of the device, invests it with 5 magic points and looks at another sentient creature or thinks about an

entity he or she knows, the device connects their minds for 1D10 minutes. The magic point cost is doubled to 10 if the target is more than ten miles away and increases to 20 if they are more than 100 miles away. It is not possible to use the device to communicate with intelligences on other planets or planes of existence. The connection lasts 1D10+10 rounds and may be resisted with an opposed POW roll.

Human users can attempt to use the device to communicate with non-human entities, including elder things; social skill rolls suffer a penalty die due to alien thought processes. The device can also be used to control a single shoggoth, as long as the hero succeeds in an opposed POW roll against the shoggoth.

TRANSPORT SPHERE

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 1: Bolivia, Chapter 5: Iceland, Chapter 9: Mu

These glassy spheres travel through the air at 300 MPH. The spheres are large enough to contain a human being, or two people with a combined SIZ of 120 or less. Unless the sphere is filled with oxygenated fluid, those riding inside suffer 2D10 damage from being thrown around as the sphere changes speed and direction. More dangerously, the sphere is airtight and, unless filled with the oxygen-rich fluid, only contains enough air for a person to breathe for 30 minutes.

A hero can attune to a sphere with a successful POW roll, allowing them to exert conscious control over its movement.

VOORMI SLAVE COLLARS

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 5: Iceland

These filigreed metal collars are designed to keep slave voormis under control through a constant regimen of negative reinforcement. A collar administers a strong electric shock to its wearer every time it detects the sound of the word "obey" in Naacal, inflicting 1D8 damage along with agonizing pain—the wearer must succeed with a CON roll to remain conscious; otherwise, they fall unconscious for 1D6 rounds.

The collars' apparently delicate and ornamental design hides a resilience that makes them difficult and dangerous to remove. Doing so requires a combined **Electrical Repair** and **Mechanical Repair** roll at Hard difficulty; failure causes the collar to shock both the wearer and the person attempting to remove it. Each collar has 20 hit points and if damaged also discharges a shock.

The collar is adjustable and may be fitted to a human or serpent person neck. The serpent people have largely avoided using the collars on humans, as they tend to prove too fragile.

TOMES

ANNALS OF MU

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 1: Bolivia

These fragile scrolls are written in Naacal and tell the history of Mu and describe the rise of the usurper race of humanity in Valusia. Opinions about humanity among the serpent people are divided. One faction of serpent people saw the future of their race in coexistence with humans and went so far as to mix their genetic material with humanity. They constructed a temple, over a dead volcano and drew upon its arcane power to fuel their engines of transformation. The rest of the serpent people saw the human race as a scourge and something to be eradicated, fearing that interbreeding would contaminate the pure serpent person bloodline. The resulting conflict led to the growth of extremist factions and a civil war.

The scrolls also describe an assault on the citadel in Mu by an alien race. This attack somehow resulted in the shattering of reality, separating Mu from the rest of Earth. Many of the serpent people were left unable to return home to Mu, destined to walk in the world of men. The final passages speak of the Chosen One: a serpent person whose destiny is to unite the serpent people and lead them home to glorious Mu.

The Annals of Mu

- Language: Naacal
- Cthulhu Mythos (Initial Reading): +1%
- Cthulhu Mythos (Full Study): +3%
- Mythos Rating: 12
- Reading Time: 1 week
- Sanity Cost: 1D4
- Spells: Summon/Bind Formless Spawn.

CADUCEUS ORIENTATION PACKAGE

- **Appearance in the campaign:** Chapter 2: New York City, Chapter 3: North Borneo

The Orientation Package is a collection of typed pages held in a blue-colored ring binder. The typeface is large and the lines are widely spaced, making it very easy to read. There are three tiers of the Caduceus operation, which dictate the level of briefing an agent is given:

- **Tier One:** agents who comprise the mundane medical charity.
- **Tier Two:** agents who fight Mythos threats, primarily the machinations of the serpent people. Recruits pass ascend to this tier after vetting.
- **Tier Three:** Joshua Meadham's inner circle.

Tier One Briefing:

The text outlines the history of the Caduceus Foundation. In 1912, Joshua Meadham sold the pharmaceutical empire he had built up over the previous 30 years. With the proceeds, he founded the Caduceus Foundation. Various newspaper articles follow, each detailing the help Caduceus has brought to people across the globe following epidemics, natural disasters, and wars.

Tier Two Briefing:

The text outlines information that the Caduceus Foundation has been able to learn about the serpent people race. It appears that the serpent people are native to Earth, having ruled empires that have now faded into history, and walked lands long before the rise of humanity. A religious schism occurred many millennia ago that split the race in two. One side worships an entity called Yig, the Father of Serpents (potentially the progenitor of the race). The other worships an entity known as Tsathoggua, an evil toad-like monstrosity that revels in vile acts and atrocities. This latter faction refers to themselves as "The Inner Night."

Caduceus has found, in their experience, the worshipers of Yig are content to hide from humanity, deep below the ground in subterranean cities. They know that to pick a fight with humanity could spell annihilation, despite their vastly superior technology. Conversely, the evidence that Caduceus has gathered makes the organization believe that the Inner Night (who were responsible for attacking Joshua Meadham) is working toward a plan that will spell disaster for the human race. The details of this plan are not yet known but it is imperative that it be discovered soon.

The Inner Night faction is organizing and coordinating its efforts across the globe. There might not be much time left.

Some of the sources referred to in this pack are written in Naacal (there are translation notes supplied). Anyone studying these for a day can gain +10 percentiles in Other Language (Naacal).

Tier Two Briefing Pack

- Sanity Loss: 1D4
- Cthulhu Mythos: +5 percentiles
- Mythos Rating: 10
- Study: 2 hours
- Spells: none

Tier Three Briefing:

Further details are on a need-to-know basis only. When the inner circle of Caduceus believe a Tier Two agent is ready for promotion and the further responsibilities that entails, he or she will be notified when the time is right (see **The Initiation Ritual**, page 59, **Chapter 2: New York City**).

Following initiation, Tier Three briefings are conducted verbally, and any gains in Cthulhu Mythos and other skills come from the initiation ritual itself. Anyone entering Tier Three also receives a copy of the briefing **Update on the Activities of the Inner Night** (Handout: New York 4, see page 53).

EXTRACTS FROM THE R'LYEH TEXT

- Appearance in the campaign: Chapter 2: New York City

English, Caduceus Researchers, 1932

This leather folio holds a few hundred sheets of paper and several photographs. Some of the papers are typed but most are hand-written. The paper stock includes modern onionskin typing paper, rough, yellowed and cracked, hand-made paper, and a few pieces of vellum. Many of the sheets are loose but most are bound together with string.

The bulk of the text is in English but some passages are in Chinese and there are marginal notes in Naacal throughout. The photographs are of ancient Chinese clay tablets, covered with writing and unwholesome carven images, taken from archaeological sites around the world.

Even if a hero does not understand Naacal, the locations of the serpent person symbols in the margins indicate the key points of the text. These relate to the sinking of Mu, supposedly beneath the waves of the Pacific Ocean. Attached memoranda from Dr. Gonçalves and other researchers reference other sources, including the carvings in the photographs, and provide

an alternative narrative. In the researchers' version of events, the serpent people of Mu had developed a "doomsday weapon" that could plunge the world into eternal night, wiping out most sentient life that dwelt on the surface while the serpent race retreated to underground cities. Faced with the prospect of such a weapon, one of the other sentient Mythos races found a way to tear Mu from reality and isolate it in another dimension (pocket universe). The cataclysmic earthquakes and tsunamis that resulted when the land mass of Mu simply disappeared from the ocean led to the human legends of a mysterious continent sinking below the waves.

Some of the typed documents make reference to the construction of a portal in the Meadham Building in New York City, and also to more recent operations on an island named *Ilha da Queimada Grande*, off the coast of Brazil.

Extracts from the R'lyeh Text

- Sanity Loss: 2D4
- Cthulhu Mythos (Initial Reading): +4%
- Cthulhu Mythos (Full Study): +8%
- Mythos Rating: 40
- Study: 4 weeks
- Spells: Contact Ghatanothoa, Contact Deep Ones, Contact Lloigor, Curse Of The Stone, Grasp Of Cthulhu, Wave Of Oblivion.

Anyone performing an initial reading of the extracts also gains +5 percentiles in Other Language (Naacal).

GOSPEL OF YIG

- Appearance in the campaign: Chapter 4: Oklahoma

English, Reverend Kornfield, 1933

A large, leather bound tome, which was originally a standard Bible. The margins contain many handwritten notes and drawings. Some passages have been amended, some crossed out, and replaced with new ones.

Gospel of Yig

- Sanity Loss: 1D6
- Cthulhu Mythos (Initial Reading): +2%
- Cthulhu Mythos (Full Study): +4%
- Mythos Rating: 18
- Study: 7 days
- Spells: Contact Yig

Anyone performing an initial reading of the gospel also gains +2 percentiles in Other Language (Naacal).

THE INMOST NIGHT

- Appearance in the campaign: Chapters 2–9

Naacal, Rose Meadham/Sashannal, 1928–1933 (unfinished)

Since her religious conversion, Sashannal has been working on her own holy book, devoted to the worship of Tsathoggua. In her time with both Caduceus and the Inner Night, Sashannal has learned much about the Mythos, and her notes contain many eclectic asides covering topics unrelated to Tsathoggua or even to serpent people.

Sashannal is not a gifted writer, and work has been slow. Her manuscript is written mostly in Naacal, and fills six leather-bound notebooks. The notes are a mass of crossings-out, annotations, and cryptic symbols that mean something to Sashannal, but not to anyone else. Many pages are torn out, and pages and notes from other sources are tucked into the books, apparently at random.

The Inmost Night

- Sanity Loss: 1D6
- Cthulhu Mythos (Initial Reading): +2%
- Cthulhu Mythos (Full Study): +5%
- Mythos Rating: 20
- Study: 2 weeks
- Spells: Contact Tsathoggua, Contact Formless Spawn, Shrivelling, Flesh Ward

KORNFIELD BROADCASTS (A MYTHOS AUDIO-TOME)

- Appearance in the campaign: Chapter 4: Oklahoma

English and Naacal, Reverend Kornfield, 1933, 78-rpm records

Reverend Kornfield of Bingham, Oklahoma, makes a new recording each week at the Telegraph Office in Bingham. The recordings are delivered to Radio KFOC in Oklahoma City and then broadcast multiple times during the following week. A listener may make a POW roll once per day: On a critical success (01) they begin to understand the language being spoken, gaining 1D10 skill points in Other Language (Naacal); they also find themselves drawn to Bingham. The complete recordings, if listened to, function in much the same way as a tome.

Kornfield Broadcasts

- Sanity Loss: 1D4
- Cthulhu Mythos: +1/+3 percentiles
- Mythos Rating: 12
- Study: 2 days
- Spells: Contact Yig

NEW SPELLS

BECOME THE DARKNESS

- **Cost:** all remaining magic points; all remaining POW; all remaining Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1 round

This spell is a form of self-sacrifice. The caster intones a brief prayer to Tsathoggua and lets the dark god's power flow through them. Their body melts into a pool of inky blackness as they are irreversibly transformed into a formless spawn of Tsathoggua.

Within 1D3 rounds after successfully casting the spell, the caster is fully transformed. If they are killed within these first 1D3 rounds (using their original statistics), then the transformation halts. Once the transformation is complete, the Keeper should refer to the statistics for a formless spawn in the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook* (page 293).

COILS OF YIG

- **Cost:** 5 magic points per round; 1D10 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 10 minutes

For an individual to be targeted by this spell they first have to come under the gaze of Yig. The caster prepares special ink, made from serpent venom, ground jade, and quicksilver, and then uses this mixture to draw a sigil representing the eye of Yig. For the next 24 hours, those who look at the sigil see it blink at them and they can then be targeted by the Coils Of Yig spell.

The caster then performs a ritual, calling on the secret names of Yig and burning incense made from hallucinogenic herbs and snake venom. After ten minutes of chanting, they can mount a magical attack.

Wherever the target is, his or her shadow comes to life, stretching out in long, serpentine coils, which wrap themselves around the target, binding them tightly. For each round they are targeted, the victim loses 1D10 magic points; once they run out of magic points, the points are deducted from hit points, as if they were casting a spell—this takes the form being crushed by great coils of darkness that slowly work around the victim's flesh, crushing their bones and internal organs. Blood runs from the victim's mouth, choking them as they scream in agony, until either they die or the caster runs out of magic points.

The target can attempt to resist by breaking out of the coils, requiring an opposed roll, using their STR versus the caster's POW. Such escape may only bring a round's respite until the coils close in again.

The only possible defences against the spell are to kill the caster; to retreat somewhere that is in complete darkness and where the target casts no shadow; or possibly a spontaneous use of the Cthulhu Mythos skill (a plea to Yig for mercy may prove successful, for example).

CONTACT YIG (VARIANT)

- **Cost:** 5 POW; 1D6 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1D6 + 4 rounds

The caster prepares a noxious red potion from the poison glands of a sacred snake of Yig. A prepared sacrifice is made to drink the potion, which induces painful muscle spasms. During the convulsions, the sacrifice is strapped upon an altar, while attendants chant the ritual.

The chance of successfully contacting Yig is equal to half the caster's POW (reduced after paying 5 POW cost). If a Hard POW roll succeeds, a snake forms from the sacrifice's intestines and bursts out of their body. Yig converses with the caster for a few minutes through this horrific snake. Yig is unlikely to impart anything of value to non-worshippers.

When the Father of Serpents departs, the sacrifice's remaining intestines wriggle out of the corpse in the form of 2D10 snakes (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 339).

THE SERPENT'S NEW SKIN

- **Cost:** 10 magic points; 10 POW; 1D10 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 1D10 minutes

This spell is a variant of the Consume Likeness spell (see *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*, page 250) and mechanically works the same, with a few exceptions. The differences are that it only takes minutes, rather than days, to cast. The caster consumes all of the victim's flesh (this may be achieved quickly for certain species). Also, the caster's shadow matches the form of the person they consume. However,

their body retains some characteristics of the caster's original (i.e. serpent person) form, which may manifest as needing to keep warm (such as by basking in the sun), that the "person" is noticeably cold and dry to the touch, or that the "person" never blinks (given that snakes have no eyelids). Otherwise, the deception is perfect.

As with the deeper version of Consume Likeness, this spell allows the caster to gain the target's memories.

Keeper note: this spell allows Sahrizan to know how to operate the Haftorang Device (see **Chapter 3: North Borneo**). It also allows Hlysa to know the structure and operation of the Bonanno crime family (see **Chapter 2: New York City**).

SHADOW MASTERY

- **Cost:** 4+ magic points; 1D3 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 3 rounds

Allows the caster to manipulate shadows within their line of sight (including their own). The caster chants for a moment over a burning candle in an otherwise lightless room, concluding with blowing out the candle and plunging the caster into complete darkness.

The effect lasts initially for 1D4 hours but may be extended at the rate of 1 magic point per hour thereafter, as the caster desires. A POW roll is required to manipulate shadows within line of sight of the caster, changing their outlines, direction, size, and so on. Once manipulated, the shadow remains in its new form, until the spell ends, whereupon it reverts to its normal form.

This spell works in conjunction with the Consume Likeness spell to disguise the true nature of the caster but also has other benefits. It can provoke Sanity checks for targets that see their own shadow acting abnormally (0/1D3 loss). Wrapping shadows around the caster grants a bonus die to Stealth rolls. It may also be used to allow the shadow of the caster to attack other insubstantial beings made of shadow or darkness, using the caster's Fighting (Brawl) skill and inflicting damage equal to their regular unarmed attacks.

SKINWALKING

- **Cost:** 10 magic points (+ 5 magic points per additional day)
- **Casting time:** 1 hour

This spell is the epitome of the phrase “a wolf in sheep’s clothing.” The caster requires the fresh skin of the being they wish to impersonate. The skin must come from a being of the same Build value as the caster. The caster dons the skin of their target and then performs the spell, costing 10 magic points. As the spell is worked, the skin tightens over the caster’s body.

The effect of the spell is to create an illusion that makes the disguise highly credible. The caster actually appears to be the person whose skin they are wearing. The spell lasts one day and the illusion may be extended indefinitely at the cost of 5 magic points per day thereafter.

Anyone close to the caster may attempt a Spot Hidden roll: if successful, they notice that the caster’s skin has a strange appearance. If the viewer wishes to look closer, he or she should make an opposed POW roll with the caster: if successful, that viewer sees through the illusion; if the caster wins, the illusion is maintained.

Should the caster take damage and the skin is broken, viewers catch a glimpse of the caster’s true form beneath their disguise. In such an event, the caster would do well to patch up any tears and thus maintain their disguise (costing additional magic points; 1 for minor injuries, 5 for large wounds).

Serpent people commonly use this spell; it lacks the finesse of the Consume Likeness spell but is quicker and easier. Note, unlike Consume Likeness, the skin walker’s shadow matches their assumed likeness.



HYBRIDIZATION

By being injected with quantities of serpent person DNA, along with various arcane drugs of serpent person manufacture, a human can become a serpent person hybrid.

Caduceus only carries out this procedure on its own agents. Hybridization is usually offered to those who progress to become members of the Cult of Yig as a way of rewarding them for their loyal devotion to their god. It can also be used as a way to save near-fatally injured agents or those infected with normally terminal diseases that serpent people are immune to (such as the Yellow Death, see **Chapter 3: North Borneo**).

The procedure takes a full 24-hours; throughout which, the subject is sedated. During this time, the subject experiences fragmented dreams where an immense force wraps itself around them in a dark void, squeezing them harder and harder until the force finally passes through them, writhing like a thousand snakes under their skin (Sanity roll, 0/1D3 loss).

Initially, there are no visible signs of hybridization upon the subject. Visible signs only occur after the subject is later wounded and begins to heal the damage, as this allows the serpent person physiology to come to the fore.

Should a hero undergo hybridization, every time they suffer the loss of half of their maximum hit points (a “major wound” in standard *Call of Cthulhu*), the wound heals with scales instead of skin. If the wound occurs on a part of the body that cannot easily be concealed (e.g. face, head, hands, etc.) then a loss of APP would be appropriate—determined by the Keeper based on the size of the wound: for example –5 for very minor injuries, –10 for small, –20 for large, etc.

The different stages of hybridization are determined by the cumulative number of “major wounds” the hybrid suffers after completion of the procedure. In *Pulp Cthulhu* (page 66), major wounds are ignored, although the hero is required to pass a CON roll to remain conscious. Thus, in respect of hybridization, the term major wound is used as shorthand for when a hero loses half or more of their hit points in an attack. See the **Hybridization Progression** table (below) for further details.

The serpent people of Mu once knew a way to reverse the hybridization process, returning a hybrid back to being purely human. Such knowledge has been lost to serpent person scientists of the modern world but the necessary equipment remains in the Citadel in Mu that can carry out the procedure (see **Chapter 9: Mu**). Nothing else can reverse the process. The heroes could potentially learn about the reversal process from Tyrannissh, if they establish a rapport with her, or by talking with more learned members of the Cult of Yig (although the latter would seek to know why the heroes would want to cast aside what they see as a blessing bestowed upon them by Yig).

For Keepers, the hybridization process provides a means to help severely injured heroes to a speedy recovery. If on a mission for Caduceus and the hero suffers severe hit point loss or is exposed to a deadly pathogen, the hero undergoes the hybridization process on their return to Caduceus in New York City—completely unaware of the fact. Theoretically, heroes might undergo the secret process while abroad on a mission, if suitable Caduceus scientists/doctors are available in the vicinity. The process heals the hero of any injuries, returning them to full hit points. Of course, the hero is unaware that they now host serpent DNA!

TABLE: HYBRIDIZATION PROCESS

Stage	Major Wounds* Cumulative	Notes
Stage 1	0	Immediately following the procedure, the hybrid produces serpent person pheromones; thus, biological screening (as encountered in Iceland and the Belgian Congo) identifies that person as a serpent person rather than human.
Stage 2	1	Scales cover the hybrid's wound. Depending on the area affected, the hybrid may lose between -5 to -20 points of APP. In addition, tiny, almost imperceptible scales begin to cover the entire body, providing a natural 1-point armor.
Stage 3	2	<p>The hybrid develops retractable fangs (as per a serpent person). The hybrid gains a Fighting (Bite) skill, with a starting value of half their current Fighting (Brawl) rating. The bite inflicts 1D8 damage + poison (the victim of their bite must succeed in an Extreme CON roll or suffer an additional 1D8 poison damage). Those who see the unnatural changes (e.g. scaled skin, fangs, etc.), should make a Sanity roll (0/1D3 loss).</p> <p>Hybrids at this stage of transformation also shed their outer layer of skin once a month as scales develop underneath. In the week before the shedding, their skin looks loose and baggy, before starting to peel off in long, dead strips.</p>
Stage 4	3	<p>Once 3 major wounds have been received, the hybrid must make a CON roll: if failed, the serpent person DNA completely consumes the remaining human DNA; the transformation is complete and the hybrid is now a complete serpent person. Seeing the newly created serpent person provokes a Sanity roll (0/1D6 loss). The hybrid's mind remains human: only their body has changed. Heroes having become fully serpent will require some creative use of the Disguise skill to pass for human while out in public. Alternatively, a hybrid could make use of the same range of spells that serpent people use to disguise themselves (e.g. Consume Likeness)—if they have access to such magic.</p> <p>If the CON roll was successful, a fourth major wound would require a new CON roll at Hard difficulty: if failed, apply the results described above.</p> <p>If a fifth major wound is suffered, the CON roll becomes Extreme. If the hybrid's transformation is not yet fully complete, for each subsequent major wound, a cumulative Penalty die is added to the Extreme CON roll to avoid their body becoming completely serpent person.</p>

*Major Wounds: denotes the hero having suffered the loss of half of their maximum hit points in one attack.

PRE-GENERATED PLAYER CHARACTERS

CHRISTINE MEI, 36, Medical Doctor

Archetype: Scholar

STR 50 CON 80 SIZ 65 DEX 45 INT 70
 APP 55 POW 65 EDU 95 SAN 65 HP 29
 DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 13
 Luck: 3D6 x 5

Combat

Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
 Dodge 22% (11/4)

Skills:

Credit Rating 35% (17/7), English 50%, First Aid 55% (27/11), History 40% (20/8), Latin 20%, Library Use 40% (20/8), Mandarin Chinese 95%, Medicine 70% (35/14), Occult 55% (27/11), Psychoanalysis 30% (15/5), Psychology 40% (20/8), Science (Anthropology) 30% (15/6), Science (Biology) 60% (30/12), Science (Pharmacy) 40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents:

- **Quick Study:** halve time to read books.
- **Lucky:** gain +1D10 Luck points when Luck Recovery roll is made.
- **Special: Non-Believer (of Cthulhu Mythos):** takes no SAN loss for reading tomes (until proof of Mythos is actually seen).



Backstory

- **Description:** Wears conservative dresses and hats, with long brown hair and an angular face.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Understands the world through analysis and study.
- **Traits:** Cheerful, often smiling. Seeks knowledge.

APPENDIX D



DERRICK JAMESON, Age 35, Private Investigator

Archetype: Hardboiled

STR 50 CON 90 SIZ 65 DEX 70 INT 55
APP 50 POW 80 EDU 60 SAN 80 HP 31
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 16
Luck: 3D6 x 5

Combat

Fighting (Brawl) 60% (30/12), damage 1D3
.38 automatic 50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Art/Craft (Photography) 20% (10/4), Credit Rating 20% (10/4), Disguise 45% (22/9), Drive Auto 40% (20/8), Electrical Repair 30% (15/6), English 60%, Fast Talk 45% (22/9), Firearms (SMG) 25% (12/5), Intimidate 50% (25/10), Law 25% (12/5), Library Use 50% (25/10), Listen 40% (20/8), Locksmith 21% (10/4), Psychology 50% (25/10), Spot Hidden 50% (25/10), Stealth 30% (15/6), Throw 40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Sharp Witted:** bonus to INT rolls.
- **Quick Draw:** +50 DEX in combat (firearm doesn't have to be "readied").

Backstory

- **Description:** Black trench coat, fedora hat, and black suit.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Use whatever tools are at your disposal to get the job done, even if it means cracking a few heads along the way.
- **Traits:** Fights fire with fire.

JAMIE MOORE, Age 34, Archaeologist

Archetype: Adventurer

STR 45 CON 70 SIZ 45 DEX 95 INT 65
APP 65 POW 65 EDU 80 SAN 65 HP 23
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 13
Luck: 3D6 x 5

Combat

Fighting (Brawl) 65% (32/13), damage 1D3
Sword (medium) 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1
.32 revolver 30% (15/6), damage 1D10
Dodge 47% (23/9)

Skills

Appraise 60% (30/12), Archaeology 70% (35/14), Climb 40% (20/8), Credit Rating 40% (20/8), Drive Auto 30% (15/6), Electrical Repair 30% (15/6), English 80%, Fast Talk 45% (22/9), First Aid 40% (20/8), Hindi 30%, Latin 30%, Library Use 50% (25/10), Listen 30% (15/6),



PRE-GENERATED PLAYER CHARACTERS



Mechanical Repair 20% (10/4), Navigate 50% (25/10), Pilot (Airplane) 30% (15/6), Ride 45% (22/9), Spot Hidden 60% (30/12), Stealth 40% (20/8), Swim 30% (15/6), Throw 30% (15/6)

Pulp Talents

- **Nimble:** doesn't lose an action when "diving for cover."
- **Resilient:** may spend Luck to avoid Sanity lose (1 for 1).

Backstory

- **Description:** Linen shirt and old-leather jacket, with wavy brown hair.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** The world is a big place, so get out there and find glory.
- **Traits:** Risk taker, sometimes reckless.

JAYAPRAKASH SINGH, Age 56, Scientist

Archetype: Egghead

STR 40 CON 70 SIZ 60 DEX 50 INT 85
APP 50 POW 65 EDU 90 SAN 65 HP 26
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 13
Luck: 3D6 x 5

Combat

Fighting (Brawl) 35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills

Appraise 15% (7/3), Bengali 90%, Computer Use 30% (15/6), Credit Rating 40% (20/8), Electrical Repair 40% (20/8), English 60%, Firearms (Handgun) 30% (15/6), First Aid 50% (25/10), Library Use 50% (25/10), Mechanical Repair 40% (20/8), Medicine 11% (5/2), Natural World 50% (25/10), Op. Hvy. Machinery 30% (15/6), Persuade 60% (30/12), Science (Chemistry) 81% (40/16), Science (Physics) 61% (30/12), Science (Geology) 31% (15/6), Spot Hidden 35% (17/7), Swim 30% (15/6), Throw 40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Weird Science.**
- **Resourceful:** spend 10 Luck to find what you need.

Backstory

- **Description:** Beige tweed three-piece suit, with red bow tie, round glasses, a full beard, and a red turban.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Knowledge is a treasure and a joy—a puzzle to explore.
- **Traits:** Practical and enjoys getting his hands dirty. Can become absorbed in a thing, failing to see what is around him.

KARINA MONTTOYA, Age 28, Gun Moll

Archetype: Femme Fatale

STR 40 CON 65 SIZ 45 DEX 80 INT 80
APP 90 POW 55 EDU 70 SAN 55 HP 22
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 11
Luck: 3D6 x 5

Combat

Fighting (Brawl) 45% (22/9), damage 1D3
or flick-knife 1D4
.32 automatic 60% (30/12), damage 1D8
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Art/Craft (Acting) 45% (22/9), Charm 70% (35/14), Climb 40% (20/8), Credit Rating 30% (5/6), Disguise 75% (37/15), Drive Auto 40% (20/8), English 50%, Fast Talk 40% (20/8), Intimidate 25% (12/5), Jump 30% (5/6), Listen 45% (22/9), Locksmith 40% (20/8), Occult 30% (15/6), Psychology 25% (12/5), Ride 20% (10/4), Sleight of Hand 40% (20/8), Spanish 70%, Spot Hidden 40% (20/8), Stealth 40% (20/8)

APPENDIX D



Pulp Talents

- **Strong Willed:** bonus to POW rolls.
- **Master of Disguise:** spend 10 Luck to gain bonus die for disguise skills; ventriloquism.

Backstory

- **Description:** Wears a dark “empire waist” dress, stockings, and heels. Her hair is tied back in a bun.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Her outward beauty masks a self-centered approach to life.
- **Traits:** Uses her allure to manipulate others. Brave and shrewd.

RANDALL SAVAGE,

Age 61, Explorer

Archetype: Hunter

STR 75 CON 90 SIZ 60 DEX 70 INT 65
 APP 50 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 30
 DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 9 MP: 12
 Luck: 3D6 x 5

Combat

Fighting (Brawl) 50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4
 .45 revolver 40% (20/8), damage 1D10+2
 .30-06 rifle 60% (30/12), damage 2D6+4
 Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

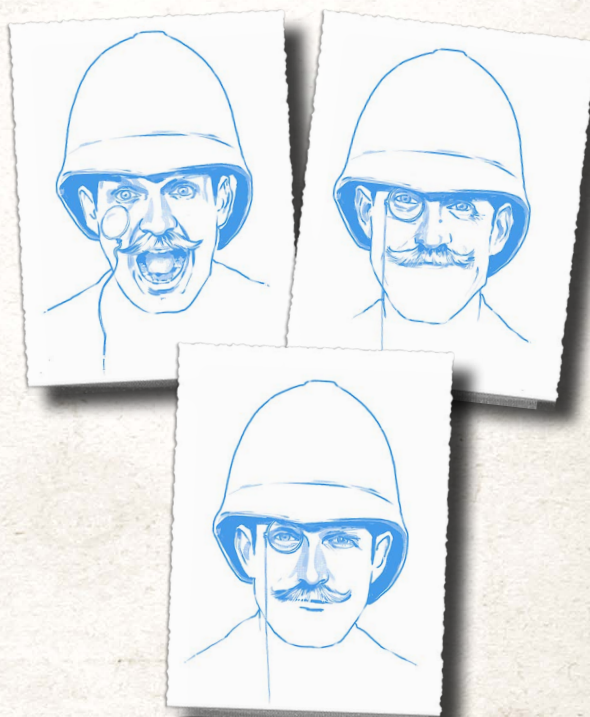
Credit Rating 55% (27/11), English 70%, First Aid 40% (20/8), French 20%, History 30% (15/6), Intimidate 40% (20/8), Jump 30% (5/6), Listen 60% (30/12), Mechanical Repair 20% (10/4), Natural World 50% (25/10), Navigate 60% (30/12), Psychology 20% (10/4), Ride 65% (32/13), Spot Hidden 40% (20/8), Stealth 45% (22/9), Survival (Jungle) 40% (20/8), Swim 40% (20/8), Track 35% (17/7)

Pulp Talents

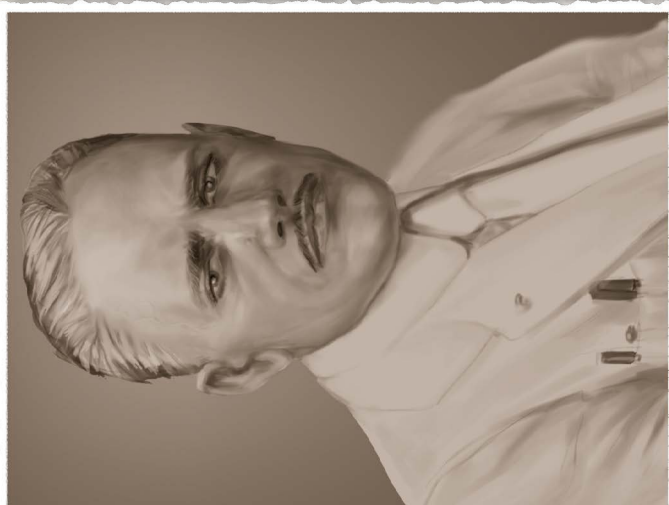
- **Shadow:** bonus to Stealth rolls; makes 2 “Surprise” attacks.
- **Beady Eye:** no penalty for aiming at small targets; no penalty for firing into melee.

Backstory

- **Description:** Archetypal colonial hunter, with tan clothing, brown boots, and a pith helmet. White hair, a large waxed moustache (curled upwards), and a monocle.
- **Ideology/Beliefs:** Seeks the thrill of the chase and the glory of success. An innate drive to master his environment.
- **Traits:** Calm, calculated, and relentless.



PORTRAITS OF RECURRING
NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS



1933 CALENDAR



CALENDAR FOR THE YEAR 1933

JANUARY

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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FEBRUARY

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APRIL

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MAY

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JULY

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AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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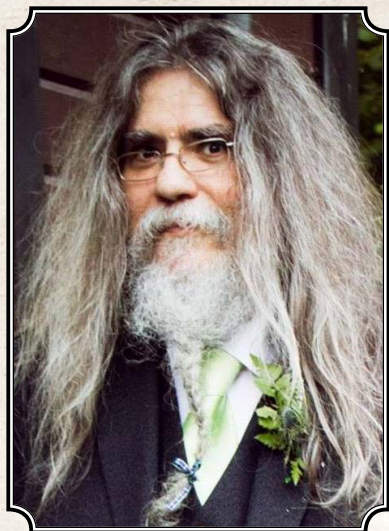
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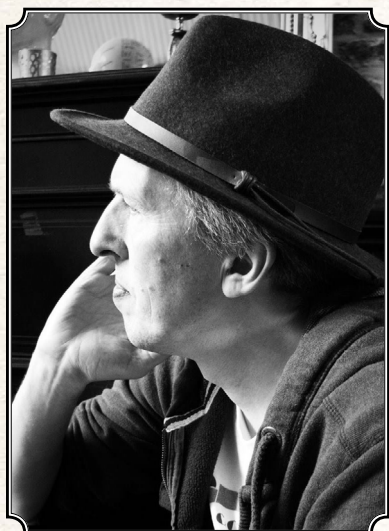
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