

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions

by Kenneth Hite, Adam Gauntlett, Robin D. Laws,
Steven S. Long, Emma Marlow, Lauren Roy, Matthew Sanderson,
Tristan J. Tarwater, Jeff Tidball, Bill White



Pelgrane Press

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Credits



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Introduction

“BEFORE THAT THERE HAD BEEN WILD ENOUGH STORIES — ACCOUNTS OF MYSTERIOUS TRIPS TO THIBET, THE AFRICAN INTERIOR, THE ARABIAN DESERT, THE AMAZON VALLEY, ALASKA, AND CERTAIN LITTLE-KNOWN ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC...”

**— H. P. LOVECRAFT,
“THE HORROR IN THE MUSEUM”**

Bon voyage! You are about to depart on ten journeys into the unknown, following the *Trail of Cthulhu* to isolated Pacific islands, into the icy wastes of the Arctic, through jungles and war zones and even off the Earth itself. In the blank spaces of the map, dark deities flourish and evil festers... but the truth waits to be discovered, secret knowledge that man may not be meant to know but that Miskatonic University covets. Into that mystery your Investigators go, armed with gun and camera and notebook, risking their own survival to keep those blank spaces from swallowing up the world.

Hurry on board — the gangplank is going up!

Almost the very first Lovecraft story, “Dagon,” deals with a long voyage, a horrid discovery, and the return to a somehow changed civilization. This pattern recurs clearly in “The Nameless City,” “The Call of Cthulhu,” “The Whisperer in Darkness,” and finally the two great, full-fledged expeditionary stories: *At the Mountains of Madness* and “The Shadow Out of Time.” Its shadows flicker in tale after tale from “The Statement of Randolph Carter” (a doomed exploration of the Great Cypress Swamp) to “The Haunter in the Dark” (in which an archaeological

expedition a century before the story begins dooms the narrator). Over and over in his writing, Lovecraft uses the journey, the mission, the expedition, as a symbol of the Faustian drive for understanding that will inevitably doom mankind.

USING THIS BOOK

Before the adventures themselves begin, we lay down a few ground rules for expeditions in GUMSHOE, introducing the notion of the expedition Tour (how long are you away from civilization?) and Travel Increments (how many scenes do you play out en route?). The goal of these rules is, like all GUMSHOE rules, to recreate the travel narrative, especially the sort in which monsters and dust-storms and dust-storm monsters keep attacking you along the way. Thus, they focus on dangers, obstacles and scenery; specific inventories of ammunition and water are abstracted into an “expedition Health pool” — the Survival ability.

Although these adventures use the GUMSHOE expedition rules, experienced Keepers can keep them in the background or never even reference them, should they wish. After all, the expedition structure is easy and familiar, even inescapable:

- Investigators learn some reason to leave civilization
- Investigators travel through danger
- Investigators meet horror
- Investigators escape/overcome it or die / go mad / both

For that reason, *Mythos Expeditions* is designed as a collection of scenarios, not a campaign. When the only core clue

you really need is marked with a big red *X* on the map, the advantage, the core and key to a good expedition scenario is the scenery: the setting, the horror, the sense of, yes, travel to a strange far place. Running all these adventures in a row strains those advantages. Fodor’s Disease sets in: “If it’s Tuesday, this must be Belgian Congo.”

Ideally, you’ll parcel these episodes out over years of play, tossing an expedition into the middle of an ongoing series of urban Arkham adventures, rural Massachusetts bonfires and campus intrigues. Putting these scenarios in chronological order helps you plant seeds ahead of time. It lets you know when “sweeps week” might be coming for your campaign, and gives you big events to build up to.

Sure, you can change things up — only a churl would cavil if you extended the Yucatán Caste War, or moved FDR’s second Clipperton fishing trip up to his first term. You’re not tied to the real history (which is oddly bereft of Yithians and blasphemous frog-people, anyhow) — but you can always play in it, if you want. I think that’s more fun.

And if you further differ with me, and want to run them all in a row, who am I to say you can’t? However you want to play, spaced out or time shifted, this book also contains guidelines for using these adventures as the spine of an Armitage Inquiry campaign.

The Expeditions

This brief summary provides enough information to decide which adventure to play, and some notes about when chronologically the Keeper might fit

Mythos Expeditions

them into an ongoing *Trail of Cthulhu* campaign.

The **Tour** entry after each adventure's description gives the rough length of the expedition: how long are the Investigators off the edge of the map? Keepers can often compress or expand these values to suit drama. The travel time to the expedition's departure point should be especially flexible. It's never a good idea to let a realistic notion of how long a Pacific crossing or Arctic packing and planning job really takes interfere with mood, tension and narrative momentum.

The Dwellers in the Dunes

Maverick paleontologist Roy Chapman Andrews is making one last trip to the wilds of Mongolia, to uncover primordial fossils revealing the true heritage of mankind. At the edge of the world, on the brink of an invasion, the expedition must sift the dust of the Gobi and survive the truth. Andrews's last expedition was in 1930, but time tends to get weird out in Inner Mongolia. Japan's attacks on China in 1931–1932 may make this expedition seem impractical.

Tour: Travel time to Peking, then five months in Mongolia (which may get cut short).

The Mother of Malaria

Dr. H.C. Kelston hates anopheles mosquitoes, and seeks to wrest the secrets of their destruction from the impenetrable Busango Swamp in Northern Rhodesia. Unmoored to specific historical occurrences, this adventure might be run any time in the 1930s. That said, investigation of the anopheles mosquito in Rhodesia began in 1926. Further, the scenario presupposes a relatively placid political situation, implying a date before the Copperbelt strikes of 1935 and 1940.

Tour: Approximately two weeks from their arrival in Rhodesia.

Lost on a Sea of Dreams

Oceanographer William Beebe has invented an amazing device, the bathysphere, that promises to revolutionize deep exploration forever. A team of Miskatonic scholars is bringing him an improved model... sailing on a course leading through the Bermuda Triangle. Beebe's Bermuda expeditions ran from 1930 to 1934, opening up a vast horizon of chronological possibilities.

Tour: Time is fluid in this adventure, but plan for three weeks... or a lifetime.

An Incident at the Border

Set in a Paraguay battling for its life against Bolivian invasion, this expedition takes Miskatonic geologists — and a helpful oil company engineer — deep into the desolate heart of the Gran Chaco. Artillery strikes, vampire bats, dust storms: Paraguay's got it all during the Chaco War (1932–1935).

Tour: Forty days, plus travel time to Paraguay.

The Jaguars of El-Thar

An unstable anthropologist lies sick and raving in the wilds of Mayan Yucatán. The prestige (and expedition budget) of Miskatonic's Mayan studies program is on the line, in a remote province thrown into turmoil by Depression, rebellion and the return of unwelcome outsiders. This scenario riffs off the Mayan "Caste War" ending in April 1933, as well as another event that year that might spoil the adventure if I revealed it here.

Tour: Eighteen days, plus travel time to Yucatán.

Tongued By Fire

The historical roots of the Prester John legend — perhaps of the beginnings of Christianity in India — draw Miskatonic scholars to the hills above the Punjab to uncover the true significance of an ancient artifact that may have been touched by John the Baptist! Flashing back to Kipling's Raj and forward to

Gandhi's revolution, this expedition likely launches between 1936 and 1939.

Tour: Eight to ten days in India; getting to India takes between two and five weeks depending on the Investigators' starting point and whether they fly or take a ship.

Served Cold

Someone — or Something — is killing the surviving members of Robert Peary's 1895 expedition to Greenland. After discovering the common thread between the deaths, the Investigators mount an ad hoc expedition to Peary's icy base to find the enemy he left behind forty years ago. Like "Mother of Malaria" this scenario can occur at any time in the decade, until the War breaks out in 1939 and sea travel in the North Atlantic becomes dangerous.

Tour: Approximately a week of investigation in America, three to five days of travel to Greenland, and six months in Greenland.

Whistle and I'll Come

A mysterious stone whistle carved by an unknown tribe in the interior of a New Guinea island! Cannibals! Limestone caverns no human eye has ever seen! Errol Freaking Flynn! And I haven't even teased the best thing about this scenario yet. If you have a single pulp-gamer bone in your body, you will run this adventure set in May 1937. Trust me.

Tour: Approximately a week, after arriving in Rabaul.

A Load of Blarney

A curious shape in a cargo of iron leads Miskatonic's finest on a tangled trail through Irish history, past rath and grange and standing stone, through the Moon-Bog of the Barrys and into a mythic terror. It begins with the historical sinking of the steamship *Annagher* in December 1937, and ends... well, that would be telling, would it not?

Introduction

Here Be Monsters... And Spoilers

Before you read this box, make very sure that you are the Keeper, and not a player. It reveals the Big Bads and Mythos threats of each adventure, so that a Keeper can more conveniently work an expedition into a campaign dedicated to thwarting or discovering that specific Great Old One or alien race. The Investigators might venture on the expedition in all innocence, and learn the Hideous Truth that sends them off on the campaign arc — or the Keeper might insert her own evil magicians, vile cults or other plot elements into an expedition that serves as the climax to her story.

This is your last chance to look away.

Dwellers in the Dunes: Tcho-Tcho, or more specifically, proto-Tcho-Tcho shamans.

Mother of Malaria: Prugha'ath, the Mother of Malaria. She is the spawn of Azathoth, and connected somehow to the Pleiades, which might imply a further connection to Hastur. The effects of Prugha'ath's contamination resemble those of the Colour Out of Space.

Lost on a Sea of Dreams: Hypnos, dwelling within the Dreamlands' Sargasso. Monstrous presences therein include Calibans, a degenerate cannibal subspecies, and moon-beasts.

An Incident at the Border: Focuses on the war between Lrogg (an avatar of Nyarlathotep dwelling on the planet Uranus) and Shub-Niggurath. Sand-dwellers and dark young represent the two sides on the battlefield.

The Jaguars of El-Thar: The villainous cats of Saturn stalk the Investigators in this scenario that never *quite* reaches the Dreamlands.

Tongued With Fire: The Askripa are human cultists, Mythos versions of the Thuggee. For possible Mythos ascriptions to the Hindu and Christian holy figures worshiped by the Askripa, see p. 143. They also command yeti, Lemurians and perhaps something akin to a blood-shoggoth.

Served Cold: Ithaqua, unsurprisingly, backed up by a tupilaq.

Whistle and I'll Come: A flying polyp.

A Load of Blarney: The goddess Mormo, emerging from her prison on the Dreamlands' Moon. In addition to her cult, she is attended by moon-beasts.

Cerulean Halo: A sleeping Xothian and his Deep One attendants.

Tour: Seven days of travel in Ireland, and seven days asleep.

Cerulean Halo

President Roosevelt wants to return to Clipperton Island, an isolated speck in the Pacific hundreds of miles south

of Mexico. Clipperton is legendary for its deep-sea fishing and haunted by its murderous past. Miskatonic University wants FDR to take along a Miskatonic naturalist who knows the island. There isn't one, so the Investigators will have to do instead. The president did indeed

visit Clipperton in July 1938, so you must have found nothing amiss before then, right?

Tour: Three weeks from San Diego and back again.



GUMSHOE Expeditions

"THE NATHANIEL DERBY PICKMAN FOUNDATION, AIDED BY A FEW SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS, FINANCED THE EXPEDITION; HENCE OUR PREPARATIONS WERE EXTREMELY THOROUGH, DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF GREAT PUBLICITY. THE DOGS, SLEDGES, MACHINES, CAMP MATERIALS, AND UNASSEMBLED PARTS OF OUR FIVE PLANES WERE DELIVERED IN BOSTON, AND THERE OUR SHIPS WERE LOADED. WE WERE MARVELOUSLY WELL-EQUIPPED FOR OUR SPECIFIC PURPOSES, AND IN ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO SUPPLIES, REGIMEN, TRANSPORTATION, AND CAMP CONSTRUCTION WE PROFITED BY THE EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF OUR MANY RECENT AND EXCEPTIONALLY BRILLIANT PREDECESSORS."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT,
AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS

The archaeological dig. The military raid. The desperate escape into the wilds. In movies and books — even in nonfiction works — expeditions appear as brief montages, of burning sun or towering mountains, seldom providing any narrative more compelling than the red line moving on the sepia map in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The story doesn't really begin, or resume, until the expedition gets somewhere, even (especially?) if it wasn't where they thought they were going. At best, the rigors or wonders of the journey drive and explain the characters' emotional state: desperation, obsession, starvation or illumination.

This doesn't always work in roleplaying games. Players may want to know why their character "suddenly" lost two thirds of his hit points and all of his ammunition

in the desert. They often want to wander off the path, or at least touch the monkeys and shoot at the scenery along the way. In short, players want to feel like they traveled. On the other side of the screen, GMs can use scenes from an expedition to establish foreshadowing, set mood and bleed off high ability pools before the big showdown. Even if the story works better on paper with an abrupt beginning *in medias* jungle, both players and GMs — and hence the scenario in actual play — can benefit from a longer lead-in to the lost city, enemy fortress, or border station.

This GUMSHOE subsystem for expedition scenarios provides, as is our practice, an abstract rather than a complex model. It pays far more attention to dramatic necessity than to the messy logistics of bearers, hardtack and cowrie-shell accounting. It rests on two key concepts: the travel increment and the Survival pool.

THE TRAVEL INCREMENT

Rather than establish a specific value for each day of an expedition (which could rapidly become unwieldy), the GM first establishes the expedition's Tour: a general length of time during which — assuming everything goes right — the expedition could reach its goal and return to civilization. This is the amount of time the expedition spends away from industrial civilization: if an expedition travels by ship from Los Angeles to Lima, then heads into the altiplano to find a lost Inca city, the Tour only begins when the expedition leaves the last provincial capital behind.

This may not be hard and fast. For example, one GM might begin the Tour

for an expedition to Antarctica (as in *At the Mountains of Madness*) at the moment the ship leaves Arkham; another might only begin the Tour when the characters land their airplane on the ice sheet. Each GM figures out what works for her scenario, but, in very general terms, the Tour begins when the adventure — when the chance of disaster, danger or trouble — begins.

The GM then divides the Tour into travel increments: a travel increment might be a few hours (for a *Fear Itself* scenario riffing on *Blair Witch Project* or *Wrong Turn* or any other "lost in the woods" horror movie) or a few months (for an *Ashen Stars* scenario in which a crash-landed laser team must travel around a primitive planet to reach the nearest starport). Increments in an expedition Tour needn't be the same duration; the sea voyage might all be one month-long increment, but the river ascent is several increments measured in days. Again, different GMs may divide the same expedition, even the same Tour, into more or fewer increments depending on their plans for the story.

This is because the increment is a dramatic interval, not solely a physical one; it's not just about exposure and eating supplies, but a story beat in the ongoing "man vs. nature" or "man vs. Outside" or "civilization vs. barbarism" struggle the expedition narrates. Although every scenario is different, each travel increment generally comprises:

- Narrated "stock footage," describing the landscape (geographical and perhaps emotional) the expedition passes through.
- A spend of points from the expedition's Survival pool.

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GUMSHOE Expeditions

- At least one scene of some sort, which might prove directly related to the core mystery, a subplot, or be an unrelated “color scene.” If this scene presents a danger, it almost always involves a Survival test (see p. 13). Scenes that only exist to present danger are hazard scenes, and can usually be abstracted to a brief narrative setup and the test.

Of these components, the scene is the expendable one. Too many scenes along the journey slow down the story rhythm, putting off the climax arbitrarily and unnecessarily. Too many travel scenes can make the expedition seem “railroaded” and frustrate the players rather than engaging them with their surroundings and goal. In other words, when in doubt, montage!

However, if the players are enjoying the taut mini-game of Survival management, and the GM has plenty of exciting scenes in her bandolier, playing up the picaresque, exotic “travelogue” segment of the adventure can immerse players in the setting, and hence in the larger story. In many scenarios, the Survival test in the hazard scene should happen even if the scene itself is abstracted to mere stock footage and the die roll. You can also present a Survival test in the same increment as a different scene unconnected to the Survival test except perhaps thematically or chronologically. Often, the players have their own idea for a scene; if it makes sense at all, play it out!

Most expedition scenarios reach their dramatic climax, reasonably enough, at the expedition’s destination: a lost alien outpost, or a vampire castle in the remote Carpathians. Logically, getting back to civilization should be just as painful, sweaty and dangerous as getting to the expedition’s goal had been, but here as elsewhere realism can fatally damp out drama. The GM may want to make the entire return journey one increment, raising costs and Difficulties if necessary, to avoid a lingering anti-climactic tail to the adventure.

That said, the GM should divide the Tour into as many travel increments as she believes reasonable: a trip across the Sahara *should* “feel” longer than a trip into the Everglades. In an ongoing campaign, the GM may want to introduce another adventure in the jungle or wherever; Survival remains relevant even after the first scenario concludes.

THE SURVIVAL POOL

The Survival pool represents the expedition’s supplies, bearers, fuel, equipment, trade goods, vehicles, morale, animals, will to continue and so forth. It is an abstraction; 1 pool point

of Survival doesn’t translate into such-and-so many gallons of water or pounds of C-rations. It functions much like the Stability pools in many GUMSHOE games. Even the smoothest expedition costs Survival — and expeditions never go smoothly in adventure games.

Beginning Survival

The GM can allocate the expedition’s Survival pool in any number of ways:

- Make an arbitrary assignment of pool points based on her notion of how deadly or tense the scenario should feel.



1930s Expedition Costs

Mounting an expedition on anything like a major scale is beyond the individual resources of all but the wealthiest player characters. Richard Byrd's two-year, two-ship 1928–1930 exploration of Antarctica likely cost over half a million dollars. One of Roy Chapman Andrews's paleontological digs in Mongolia lasted an entire season, involved 40 men and 125 camels, and cost around \$200,000. The ten-man (and fifty-mule) 1938–1939 Ahnenerbe expedition to Tibet cost \$31,000, a relative bargain, but still rather more than any *Trail of Cthulhu* Investigator without Credit Rating 6+ can fund.

The obvious solution is to convince millionaires or institutions to fund your expedition, but this carries its own risks. Sponsors may have ulterior motives, and even if they're aboveboard, their agendas may differ from those of the characters. Sponsors often insist on coming along, or on sending their own interfering representatives to ensure the expedition follows the agenda of its paymaster.

- An academic character can raise funds or obtain grants suitable for a Survival pool equal to twice his Academic Reputation rating (see p. 23). To get more resources, recruit more prestigious scholars for your expedition! (Non-academic characters can spend 1 point of High Society or Credit Rating (6+) to add 3 points each to the Survival pool.)
- Using the Survival Costs table below (see p. 24), work out how much Survival it should take to complete the Tour absent any disasters, and start the expedition with roughly that many points. For example: A two-month journey into the Congo, played over six ten-day travel increments, would likely cost 21 Survival (average cost of 3½ points, times 6). The expedition is adequately funded, so the GM assigns it 24 Survival points. A more threadbare expedition planning to take on supplies or bearers at a village along the way (see Refreshing Survival, p. 18) might only depart with 12 Survival and a fervent hope that nothing too terrible has happened to the village...
- Base the expedition's Survival pool on the player characters: add

2 points for each character with situationally relevant abilities such as Outdoorsman, Anthropology or Archaeology. Allow characters to raise funds or hire bearers: an appropriate spend of 1 Interpersonal point (including their own High Society or Credit Rating, for wealthy characters) gains 3 points of Survival. Add bonus Survival for good player ideas, or for useful "in-game" resources like a seaplane or a tribe of friendly Mayans.

The GM can combine the previous two options: the NPC patrons or organizers of the expedition equip it at the minimal necessary level: Survival 18 for the Congo expedition above, for example. Then the player characters add their own bonuses for Outdoorsman or spend Credit Rating to provide that all-important cushion.

Ad hoc or involuntary expeditions — escapes from gulags, Vermont day trips turned into monster hunts, crash landings, etc. — likely begin with very small Survival pools (a lifeboat would have a week's supplies, for example), or with a pool of 0. In such cases, the player characters' abilities may be the only thing keeping them alive for even one increment. Better find supplies fast!

Survival Costs

The expedition's Survival at the beginning of the scenario may not be the same as it started with when it departed, of course. That's because even the smoothest travel through the wilderness costs Survival.

Each increment, the expedition's Survival pool drops by an amount depending on the terrain they passed through during that increment. Roll that amount like damage, on a single die. An expedition cannot gain Survival points from this roll.

The GM should make sure to luridly describe the agonies and miseries suffered by the expedition leading to a high die result, or wax rhapsodic about the kindness and beauty of Nature that fostered that lucky 1. Player input suggesting what went horribly wrong or fortunately right is always welcome.

An ongoing natural danger, especially one inescapably inherent in the landscape (a malarial swamp, a radioactive desert) adds +1 or 2 points to the Survival cost. Traveling in the wrong season (winter in the mountains, tundra or Antarctic; summer in the desert; rainy season in the jungle) also adds +1 point to the Survival cost.

The Survival loss roll for each increment spent traveling up the malarial Xingu River through the jungle during the rainy season is +2 (+0 for jungle, +1 for malaria, +1 for the wrong season).

Add +1 or more to the Survival cost if the terrain as a whole is supernaturally or unnaturally dangerous: haunted, non-Euclidean, shifting out of phase with the galaxy, etc.

Individual danger zones (an abandoned mine field, a gateway to Carcosa) should be handled as Survival tests or as full challenges in a scene.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

GUMSHOE Expeditions

Survival Costs

Expedition Terrain	Survival Cost per Increment
Moderate (plains, savannah, beach)	−3
Somewhat rough (forest, hills)	−2
Hostile or rough (desert caravan route, scrubland, tundra, ocean, marsh)	−1
Very hostile or rough (jungle, swamp, mountains, desert hills)	+0
Bleak or extremely rough (Arctic/Antarctic, high mountains, deep desert, alien world with no human-edible food)	+1

Most Survival tests involve a challenge or other barrier to forward progress. The more bearers, supplies, animals, vehicles, etc. that a given challenge threatens, the higher the potential Survival loss. Mere lost time is less costly than lost lives as a general rule, although the GM might decide that losing the caravan track in the middle of the Sahara could easily kill everyone, making it not a 3-point Survival test but an 8- or 9-point Survival test.

The *minimum* Difficulty for a Survival test is 2.

The GM may raise the Difficulty of the Survival test to 6 to reflect the same sorts of conditions that increase the Survival cost: unfavorable weather, ongoing disease, pervasive radioactivity, supernatural enmity, etc. Multiple such conditions, e.g., Ithaqua's curse on a winter trek through Siberia, might increase the Difficulty to 7 or even 8.

Survival Tests

The Survival test functions like a standard GUMSHOE General ability test: add points spent from the Survival pool to the roll of

one die, and beat a Difficulty Number. Survival tests default to a Difficulty of 5; the amount of Survival at risk varies with the toughness of the specific obstacle.

Ongoing Debilities

Especially in adventures that will involve regular combats or other tests along the way, some expeditions may also impose ongoing penalties or pool point costs. For example:

Heat or Cold

Treat characters who engage in any strenuous activity (such as combat) during extreme temperature conditions (daytime in the jungle; outdoors in Antarctica) as **hurt** for purposes of spends, Difficulties, etc.

Infection

The saturated air and the omnipresent parasites, mold and fungus mean that any open wound becomes infected almost immediately. Each First Aid point spent on any injury that pierces the skin restores 1 less Health point than normal.

Disease

Every increment, each character must make a Health test against Difficulty 4 or come down with a serious disease: dysentery, malaria, tropical ulcers, hepatitis, worms,

etc. On a failure, the character is considered **hurt** for the remainder of the expedition. The character also takes +0 damage to Health; every point of Medicine or Pharmacy spent in this increment cures 1 point of damage. The Difficulty of this Health test increases by 1 for each previous failure by the Investigator.

Jungle (or Desert, or...) Madness

Every increment, each character must make a 3-point Stability test as the oppressive isolation bores in on her.

Snow Blindness

The brilliant sun constantly glares off the snow (or desert, or methane ocean, or etc.). Characters without eye protection lose 1 extra point of Stability from each failed test; they also suffer +1 Difficulty to every visually based test (including combat and Survival tests).

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Mythos Expeditions

In virtually all cases, each increment should present only one Survival test. If an expedition's path is that replete with hazards, add more increments.

Relief Abilities

Most Survival tests present challenges of the sort that bold player characters exist to confront. For those Survival tests, the table or adventure lists a Relief ability (from the *Trail of Cthulhu* ability list; substitute appropriate abilities for other GUMSHOE games if needed) that any PC can use to reduce the danger.

In all cases, even if the GM hasn't blown the challenge out into a full-fledged scene, the player should describe how her character uses her Relief ability to overcome the hazard.

Investigative Abilities: One player may spend 1 point from the listed ability to reduce the Difficulty of the Survival test by 2.

General Abilities: One player may make a Difficulty 5 test against the listed ability; reduce the Difficulty of the Survival test by the margin of success at this test. A failed test means the Survival test goes forward as normal, in addition to any other consequences.



In some circumstances (Riding tests to round up stampeded camels, for example) another player may attempt the test after the first player fails; he must spend more points than the first player did, and must explain what his hero is doing that the unfortunate first PC didn't.

Some tests may allow cooperation, such as building a rope bridge across a chasm or chopping through a thorn hedge.

Outdoorsman: This ability or its equivalent is almost always useful and relevant in Survival tests. If a surviving member of the expedition (usually a player character or an important, named NPC) has an Outdoorsman *rating*, reduce the Difficulty of *either* the Survival test or the test of the Relief ability by 1. If two surviving members of the expedition have Outdoorsman, reduce *each* test's Difficulty by 1. *Player characters* may also spend 1 Outdoorsman point per increment to reduce any loss from the expedition's Survival pool by 2.

On NPC Ability Ratings

If an NPC has Investigative abilities listed, an Investigator can use his pools as though they were her own — assuming she uses the correct Interpersonal approach, as listed in the character description. To spend points from an NPC ability pool requires an equal spend from an Investigator pool. This spend usually comes from the listed Interpersonal ability, but clever players can sometimes justify something else: spending 2 Credit Rating points (to promise him a big bonus) to spend 2 of the guide's Outdoorsman points, for example.

The other role of named NPCs is to die or go mad informatively or interestingly, should it come to that. Don't be too hung up on their listed Health (or Stability) ratings, in other words.

Combat: Play out the combat, from the first Sense Trouble or Stealth test to the last Health point. Success in the combat means automatic success in the Survival test. Every day spent in combat after the first (tracking a lion, for example) costs 1 Survival point from the expedition's pool. The GM may also charge the Survival pool 1 or 2 points if the player characters only narrowly win the combat, or if the beast was able to kill valuable NPCs or pack animals before being slain. If a player character dies (or if the PCs give up without a death on either side), the Survival test goes forward as normal.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

GUMSHOE Expeditions

Relief Ability

Challenge	Relief Ability Spend or Test	Potential Survival Loss
Quicksand	Sense Trouble	3
Lost or confusing path	Outdoorsman	3
Dangerous snake	Combat with snake	3
Forced march necessary	Athletics	3
Bridge out or nonexistent	Mechanical Repair	4
Treachery (or incompetence) of guides	Assess Honesty	4
Biting flies	Pharmacy or Biology	4
Impenetrable forest (thorns, banyans, etc)	Athletics	4
Killer ants	Preparedness	4
Flash flood	Riding or Driving	5
Mutiny among bearers or askaris	Intimidation	5
Stampede of expedition's pack animals	Riding	5
Doldrums, unexpected lack of water	Stability	5
Mine field	Explosives	5
Marauding lions or other predators	Combat with lions	5
Toxic waste, bad water, spoiled food, poisonous insects	Medicine	6
Stampeding elephants, buffaloes or other heavy herd animals	Combat with lead elephant	6
Dust storm, blizzard	Stability	7
Avalanche	Sense Trouble	8

Hunters with the Outdoorsman ability can reduce the Difficulty of one test during this combat scene (including the initial Sense Trouble or Stealth test) by 1.

Variant Abilities: Players may well suggest other Relief abilities besides the ones listed in the table or the scenario write-up. For example, a player with plenty of points in Explosives may suggest

using small charges to trigger a controlled avalanche, rather than waiting until Sense Trouble warns the party of its icy doom. If the suggestion is realistic, or better yet fun and dramatic, and not merely a desperate

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Mythos Expeditions

attempt to soak seemingly useless pools, the GM should allow it.

Challenge Scenes

The scene in any given increment presenting the danger to the expedition is called the “challenge scene.” This scene isn’t the only awful thing to happen during that increment, or even necessarily the worst hazard the expedition faces then. It’s the scene that the GM feels is most exciting or immersive, or the most symbolic of the challenges the expedition (or the PCs) face, or that lets her show off her research to best effect.

A challenge scene may (and if the narrative calls for it, definitely should) include other elements: interpersonal drama; advancement of a plot arc; character development, including teasing Drives; core clues for the ultimate mystery at the heart of the expedition; or all of the above. A challenge scene may wind up being a knot of closely related scenes, depending on how front-loaded the expedition scenario is.

The GM should take player input very seriously during these scenes: treat “We need to take that other pass” or “We need to turn back and ambush those cannibals” as valid alternatives, not pointless derailing. Just remind players that leaving the pre-mapped path risks adding another increment of Survival loss to their Tour; only a decision to abandon the expedition entirely should trigger **hard drivers**. Unless the PCs are prisoners, hapless undergraduates or others with no decision-making power, their opinions should matter. The last place the players should see railroad tracks is in the trackless jungle, after all. A clever, resourceful gamble might even pay off with a short cut or an opportunity to refresh!

If the GM has a good, dramatic scene in mind, she can treat noncombat challenges like combat: blow up the



details and play out the scene. Player success automatically avoids the Survival test. For example, here’s a “blown up” version of a quicksand encounter:

A pool of deadly quicksand covers a low spot in the trail. All Investigators must make Difficulty 5 Sense Trouble tests (Difficulty 4 if they have Outdoorsman). Any Investigators who fail are

caught in the quicksand. If no Investigator fails, a named NPC is caught in the quicksand. Being caught in quicksand is an immediate 3-point Stability test. Failing this test also increases the Difficulty of all tests while in quicksand by 1.

After three rounds in quicksand, anyone caught begins drowning as per p. 68

Intelligent Foes

As a general rule, the GM should treat encounters with intelligent foes as full scenes, whether the player strategy involves bribery with trade goods (Negotiation), an attempt to speed past the encampment (a contest of Driving or Riding) or straight-up combat. Foes may be dangerous NPCs dripping with combat ability pool points, or one-shot low-Health mooks. Enemy survivors may lie in wait for the expedition’s return, or (if plausible) begin tracking and harassing it in future increments or scenes.

If the GM really doesn’t want to keep running combats, and the Investigators just can’t find or destroy the Tcho-Tcho stalking them, she should just add 1 to the Survival cost for the increment. However, she should feel free to add Tcho-Tcho archers to any challenge scene as a matter of narrative color. (“A tiny arrow speeds out of nowhere and buries itself in the guide’s throat.”) If the players insist on combat, go ahead and run it, remembering to charge 1 Survival point for each day spent doing that instead of pushing on.

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of **Trail of Cthulhu**. If they fail the Athletics test, they lose 1d6+3 points of Health each round from inhaling quicksand. An Outdoorsman knows that you can swim in quicksand; a Difficulty 3 Athletics test keeps you afloat and not drowning. It takes a Difficulty 5 Athletics test and two rounds to pull someone out of quicksand. A 1-point Preparedness spend produces a convenient rope, if nobody is carrying a bullwhip; throwing a rope to a trapped person is a Difficulty 3 Athletics test.

If no expedition member drowns in quicksand, the Survival test automatically succeeds. If someone does drown, the Survival test goes forward as normal.

Even if the GM doesn't have "blown up" rules for a specific challenge handy, she

should narrate the danger for maximum excitement and drama, encouraging players to spin out details and put flesh on the mere die roll.

Losing Survival

As the expedition loses points from its Survival pool, its cushion of supplies and morale dwindles. Every member of the party, including the player characters, begins to suffer physically and even mentally.

When the expedition's Survival is **between 5 and 1**, the expedition is **unsupplied**. Supplies begin running short. All Preparedness test Difficulties increase by 1. Before using a gun, a character must make a Firearms test at

Difficulty 3, representing ammunition shortages; on a failure, that gun cannot be used during this expedition until new ammo is acquired. If two players have, e.g., .45s, and one fails his Firearms test, he can't use his gun during that scene, but (assuming the other player agrees to share ammo) he can try again during the next.

When the expedition's Survival pool is **between 0 and -5**, the expedition is **ragged**. All personnel are on short rations, NPCs surly and mutinous, animals lame or dying, vehicles kept going by spit and baling wire, etc. The cost of all Negotiation or Bargain spends increases by 1. All Difficulties are increased by 1, including Survival tests. Pools for Athletics, Fleeing, Health and Stability are capped at two-thirds

Mythos Expeditions

Starvation

Whenever the GM decides the “starvation clock” has begun (usually when the expedition’s Survival pool drops below –5), player characters begin losing 1 pool point from Athletics (and from Fleeing, if the ability exists in the campaign) per increment *and* per scene. (Or per day, if the GM is playing more than one scene per increment.)

Once all the party’s Athletics and Fleeing pool points are gone, real hunger sets in. This is where the GM should cut to stock footage of vultures wheeling overhead. The cost of all Investigative spends increases by 1, and automatic (other than core) clues now require 1-point spends. All General ability Difficulties increase by 2 as well.

During the next increment, the cost of all Investigative spends increases by 1 again, as do all Difficulties. Player characters begin losing 1 Health point per increment *and* per scene (or per day, as above). During the next increment, this cumulative increase occurs again. After the third increment, player characters must make a Difficulty 7 Health test each day, or lapse into unconsciousness and die.

of their ratings (round up). Yes, this means you lose those points from your pool. This applies to PCs, NPCs and expedition animals. The ammunition shortage Firearms test is Difficulty 4.

Dr. Pembrose’s expedition to Burma is badly weakened. His normal ratings are Athletics 6, Fleeing 4, Health 10, Stability

8; his pools are now capped at Athletics 4, Fleeing 3, Health 7, Stability 6.

When the expedition’s Survival pool is **between –6 and –11**, the expedition is **starving**. Tattered and straggling, it barely hangs together at all. The cost of all Investigative spends increases by 1. All Difficulties are increased by 2,

including Survival tests. All characters are considered **hurt**, and pools (as above) are capped at one-third of their rating (round up). The ammunition shortage Firearms test is Difficulty 5.

After two months on the Plateau of Sung, Dr. Pembrose’s expedition is a wreck. His pools are now capped at Athletics 2, Fleeing 2, Health 4, Stability 3.

When the expedition’s Survival pool **reaches –12**, it has **disintegrated**. Surviving player characters continue starving to death (see sidebar).

Refreshing Survival

The expedition doesn’t just bleed Survival across the wilderness like a stuck pig. With planning or luck, it can refresh Survival on occasion.

The GM may automatically refresh the expedition’s Survival pool by the listed amount. This refresh may be a GM-offered opportunity (push on to the oasis at the risk of Bedouin attacks?) or a story point in the scenario notes. Players might have preplanned the refresh while organizing the expedition, or created (or deduced) an ad hoc refresh opportunity on the trail. Ad hoc refreshes should almost always involve a challenge: get over the pass to reach the lodge, spend Credit Rating or Network to have a friend in the village.

Survival Refreshes and Abilities

As with Survival tests, many abilities make Survival refreshes either possible or more successful. The GM can consult the table, invent her own prerequisites or adopt intelligent player suggestions.

Some refreshes may require spends: Bargain or Intimidation to get food from a strange village; Geology to find water; Outdoorsman or Stealth to hunt game. In general, a spend of 1 Investigative ability point, where possible, is worth a 2- or 3-point Survival refresh. Spends of General ability points normally refresh Survival on a



Refreshing Survival

Opportunity	Survival Refresh Ability Spend or Test	Potential Survival Refresh
Plentiful game	Outdoorsman	1–2
Morale boost	Psychoanalysis	1–2
Brief or bare respite: well in desert, cabin in mountains, etc.	—	2–3
Oasis, sylvan glade, other idyllic spot	—	3–4
Air drop, friendly traders, lamasery or inn	Outdoorsman, Bargain, Reassurance	3–6
Supply depot, prosperous and friendly village	Bargain, Anthropology	4–8
Long respite: one increment spent resting with food, water, care and shelter	—	10–14, or up to 2/3 of original Survival pool

1-for-1 basis. The GM may rule that spends can increase a preset refresh amount.

Some refreshes may even require tests of General abilities: Mechanical Repair to set traps for trade furs; Shrink to inspire calm reflection at an oasis; Preparedness to have already arranged an airdrop; Conceal to find a less-fortunate expedition's buried supply cache. In general, the higher the Difficulty of the test, the higher the potential refresh.

It's entirely possible to have a challenge scene in which victory gains Survival and loss costs Survival: If the expedition plans to trade with a Madan village, the PCs must defeat Fon raiders attacking the village before the expedition can replenish its supplies. With a victory, the village refreshes the expedition's Survival pool; with a loss, the village has no spare food and the Fon begin raiding the expedition's stores to boot.

An expedition only has one chance to refresh Survival in any given increment.

Refreshing Player Character Abilities

During expedition scenarios, player characters refresh some abilities at slowed-down rates.

Investigative Abilities: As normal, Investigative abilities refresh at the end of the adventure, usually after the expedition has reached and investigated its destination.

- **Medicine or Pharmacy:** Fully refreshes for one character per increment if she has an opportunity to restock her medicine chest.
- **General Abilities:** As normal, most General abilities refresh at the end of the adventure, usually after the expedition has reached its destination. Only a truly restful or idyllic stop allows a full refresh of up to three General abilities (except Health, Sanity and Stability) as with the haven rules (for example see *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 80).
- **Physical Abilities:** The physical abilities that normally refresh

every 24 hours (Athletics, Driving, Firearms, Fleeing, Piloting, Riding, Scuffling and Weapons) refresh only at the end of a travel increment. As noted on p. 17, Athletics and Fleeing are capped as the expedition's Survival drops below 1 and –5.

- **First Aid and Psychoanalysis** work as normal during scenes of combat or mental trauma. They cannot be used to restore Health or Stability points lost to ongoing debilities, Survival drain, etc. First Aid fully refreshes for one character per increment if she has an opportunity to restock her medicine chest.
- **Health:** Except in very rare circumstances, marching or riding in an expedition *does not* count as restful activity for the purposes of healing. Even being carried in a palanquin involves painful jolts and continued exposure to temperature, insects or rain.
- **Stability:** Except in very rare circumstances, characters cannot regain Stability from Sources of Stability dragged along on an expedition.

Expeditions and the Armitage Inquiry

"IN VIEW OF YOUR PREVIOUS DILIGENT WORK IN TRACKING DOWN THE LEGENDS AND EVERYTHING CONNECTED WITH THEM, I CANNOT DOUBT BUT THAT YOU WILL WANT TO LEAD AN EXPEDITION TO THE DESERT AND MAKE SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS. BOTH DR. BOYLE AND I ARE PREPARED TO COOPERATE IN SUCH WORK IF YOU — OR ORGANIZATIONS KNOWN TO YOU — CAN FURNISH THE FUNDS."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT, "THE SHADOW OUT OF TIME"

The default assumption in all of these adventures is that at least one Investigator is a professor at Miskatonic University. In any of them, however, the Keeper can substitute another Investigator's university with little or no difficulty: one academic environment is much like another in the 1930s. With the exception, of course, that Miskatonic University harbors a secret cabal of researchers dedicated to investigating and thwarting the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos: the Armitage Inquiry. (For more details on the Inquiry, see *Trail of Cthulhu*, pp. 206–7.)

With all the foregoing duly noted, this is not a full Armitage Inquiry campaign setting book. For one thing, there isn't enough room in the book to handle a proper academic campaign frame from homecoming to matriculation. For another, such a treatment would risk redundancy given the compendious *Miskatonic University* sourcebook by Sam Johnson available from Chaosium. Designed for our sister game, it is easily converted by Keepers wanting to set, or even base, a whole campaign on the green quadrangles of "Ole Misk."

What this book does is provide a few pointers, specific rules, and systems for Keepers who might want to use it as a framework for an Armitage Inquiry campaign. Specifically, it aims to support a globe-trotting Armitage Inquiry campaign, one that launches or accompanies lots of expeditions, whether they begin after hours in the Orne Library or not.

MISKATONIC EXPEDITIONS

In an expedition-centric campaign, the Investigators don't all have to be tweedy academics. Any number of other Occupations can prove helpful or downright critical on voyages to strange far places.

An **Antiquarian** may be an expert in objets d'art or perhaps a professor of art history whose role is to ascertain the authenticity of any artifacts the expedition may encounter or seeks to acquire. It would not be unreasonable for your value to the expedition to also lie in your extensive contacts among local art dealers and related social circles. You may also have your own agenda, or be seeking to obtain some particularly valuable artifact for the private collection of one of your clients. If the expedition's sponsor is not a player character, you may be his or her designated agent and the de jure leader of the trip.

Appropriate Drives: Antiquarianism, Arrogance, Artistic Sensitivity, Bad Luck, Thirst for Knowledge.

An **Archaeologist** may well have an academic position (in Ancient History, Classics or Oriental Studies, as well

as Archaeology per se) at Miskatonic or another university in eastern Massachusetts. Even on expeditions that don't begin as archaeological investigations, you often have experience organizing academic activity overseas and may be invited along as logistics and transport manager.

Appropriate Drives: Scholarship, Thirst for Knowledge.

In a decade before easily portable motion picture cameras and cheap color film, an **Artist** is a key asset for expeditions intended to raise interest (or funds for further expeditions) back home. You may be a professional artist, a graduate student or simply a skilled assistant. If you have technical training (usually 1 point in any relevant Academic ability) you can prepare publishable, useful renderings of artifacts, organisms or other discoveries. For yourself, big, publicity-friendly sketches, watercolors or other illustrations of exotic lands sell to *Collier's* or *Life* or any number of lucrative markets.

Appropriate Drives: Adventure, Artistic Sensitivity, Bad Luck, Curiosity; for a graduate student, add Duty, Follower, Scholarship and Thirst for Knowledge to the list.

The **Author** profile is also suitable for a graduate student — low man on the academic totem pole, charged with all sorts of tedious and repetitive scholarly tasks in return for the prospect of someday joining the academic elite. Alternately, you may be a writer recruited for the expedition by virtue of your published work on the country or topic, or perhaps you just tagged along in search of a story to sell to one of

Expeditions and the Armitage Inquiry

those magazines or even to more lurid markets. Just need to spice up all this dull science with something exciting...

Appropriate Drives: For a grad student, as above for “Artist”; for a real author, any Drive, really.

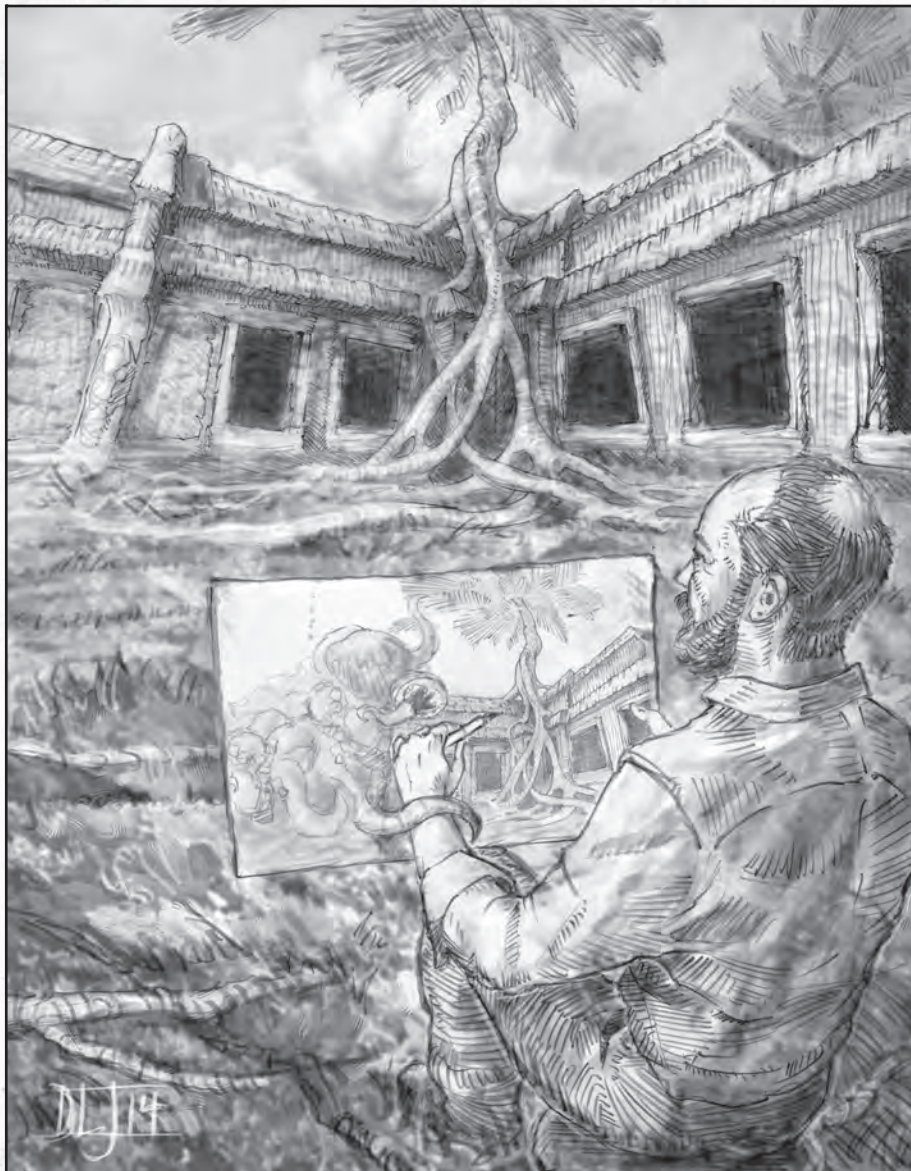
If you’re a member of the Catholic **Clergy**, you are likely a scholarly sort of priest or nun — a Jesuit who teaches at Boston College or another Catholic university, for example. Protestant clergy on expeditions are more likely missionaries, with deep if sometimes idiosyncratic knowledge of the local area and the scientific questions involved. In observational sciences like botany, ornithology, zoology and astronomy, and even in anthropology and ethnology, such amateurs still make the vast majority of finds in the 1930s; no intelligent academic shuns their input even if it comes with a clerical collar.

Appropriate Drives: Antiquarianism, Duty, Scholarship, Thirst for Knowledge.

Seekers after funding haunt strange far club-rooms. Thus, a **Dilettante** is welcome at most academic affairs, and expeditions are no exception. The professors may not appreciate your presence, but their deans and provosts and chancellors know better. You may have even funded the whole thing, and be the expedition’s real leader!

Appropriate Drives: Adventure, Antiquarianism, Artistic Sensitivity, Bad Luck, Curiosity, Ennui, In the Blood, Sudden Shock.

An expedition into a dangerous jungle or desert, or even into a remote area far from hospitals and pharmacies may well bring a **Doctor** or **Nurse** for the same reason ships do: just in case. Many missionaries are also doctors; you may do double duty as “local expert” and medic. Even if none of



your companions require your services (unlikely), providing medical attention to the locals also helps the expedition make friends and smooths many paths.

Appropriate Drives: Adventure, Curiosity, Duty, Ennui, Follower.

A **Journalist** will doubtless be assigned to cover a newsworthy event such as a hometown university mounting an expedition to thrilling foreign parts. Even national reporters from the Hearst chain or *Time* magazine might join a particularly eye-catching

voyage. Intelligent universities cultivate relationships with reporters to make sure the reporting eye is a friendly one; Miskatonic is no exception.

Appropriate Drives: Adventure, Bad Luck, Curiosity, Duty.

Like having a doctor along, having a **Military** man along more familiar with a rifle than with a camera or a theodolite is good practical insurance. You may have served in the area, or simply supplement your retirement pay with the occasional nursemaid stint.

The Troupe-Style Inquiry

If you're creating a full-fledged Armitage Inquiry campaign, consider playing it "troupe style." Each player creates their main Investigator, a professor at Miskatonic University. Then each player also creates at least one other Investigator of another sort: a retired Army specialist in tropical medicine, a bullwhip-wielding black market antiquarian, a reporter for the *Arkham Advertiser* and so forth. The whole play group can hold these "backup" characters in common, or keep them individual-only. On a given adventure — whether an expedition or an investigation in Arkham or environs — only one or two of the players need to play their professors; the other players fill in with the backup characters. Which player takes the role of which Investigator depends on the specific scenario: a meteor-hunting expedition might logically require the professors of astronomy and geology, leaving the rest of the group to fill the team with soldiers, artists, dilettantes or whatever else the situation seems to call for.

When not "in play," the backup Investigators carry on with their lives in Arkham, or the Miskatonic valley, or even the greater Boston area. Professors could meet characters with useful expeditionary backgrounds at the New England chapter of the Explorers Club in Boston, or by references from local museums.

If you're still active duty, you may be assigned to the expedition either as the liaison with the local military to avoid misunderstandings or as an ad hoc intelligence officer.

Appropriate Drives: Adventure, Curiosity, Duty, Ennui, Follower, In the Blood.

Even an expedition too large to fit in your small airplane can use a **Pilot**, for scouting and courier duty. Although none of the included expeditions assume an accompanying airman (or aviatrix), only "Lost on a Sea of Dreams" and "A Load of Blarney" would be actively short-circuited by one. As for the rest: airplanes are fragile, and the Mythos has a lot of ways to get at you in the sky and on the ground. Remember, you have to land sometime.

Appropriate Drives: Adventure, Curiosity, Duty, Ennui, Follower.

A **Scientist** may be a professor of a natural science whose research is tangential to the main purpose of the

expedition — obtaining botanical samples or animal samples from the area, for instance, or getting astronomical, geological, geomagnetic or meteorological data along the way. Alternately, you may be able to employ scientific techniques or equipment or both to aid in the search for the expedition's goal — for example, by choosing Cryptography and Physics as Occupational abilities you could be a mathematician whose statistical analysis techniques enable you to precisely identify a text's place and time of origin.

Appropriate Drives: Arrogance, Bad Luck, Curiosity, Duty, Follower, Scholarship, Thirst for Knowledge.

The Professor

The core occupation of the Armitage Inquiry campaign frame, the figure of the professor is so familiar from fiction and film as to require very little in the way of explanation or clarification. Players who are currently at university, or who recall their academic days with clarity,

will have a surfeit of character models. The specific mechanics of the American university have changed very little since the 1930s, with the professor in that era if anything even more exalted, privileged and respected than now. This, of course, encourages mentoring and harassment, quarreling and introspection, petty tyranny and pathbreaking research. Often in the same professor.

Most Professor characters will wind up differentiated mainly by their academic career: the geologist, the astronomer, the historian, the folklorist, the economist-turned-psychologist after Yithian possession and so forth. Their Drives are likely to be the same in most cases: Scholarship or Thirst for Knowledge, although Lovecraft's professor characters suffered from their share of Sudden Shocks.

As a possible guide to further differentiation, here are some models to look at based not on your Professor's field of study, but her Interpersonal abilities:

Assess Honesty: A Professor with Assess Honesty of 0 is gullible, easily led by appearance and surface words. Words are precision tools to you; surely no one would deliberately use them misleadingly! With Assess Honesty of 3+ you are the terror of undergraduates who didn't finish papers, of grad students who didn't read de Sitter on non-Euclidean space-time and of colleagues who haven't backed up their findings with research.

Bargain: At Bargain 0, you flourish in the academic cocoon. Every meal paid for, housing arranged by the university; you are a hothouse flower slightly detached from the real world. With Bargain 3+, if you don't teach business or law, you could get such a position easily. You can get most things easily; your contract has the lightest teaching load and the best research funding guarantees on campus.

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Bureaucracy: At Bureaucracy 0, you are led around by your secretary, always late for meetings and dependent on your powerful research work to keep you afloat in the academy's sea of paper. With Bureaucracy 3+ you may be a provost or dean or department chairman — or have enough pull to make sure you never have to serve in any of those capacities! Either way, nobody gets a grant without you knowing about it.

Flattery: At Flattery 0, you tell it as it is, without softeners. Fellow academics should be used to the truth by now! Your footnotes hammer your opponents, not for you those academic half-measures “might” or “perhaps.” With Flattery 3+ you effortlessly inspire students to believe they too can achieve some version of your greatness. And you also effortlessly keep the dean certain of his wisdom for hiring you.

Interrogation: Your lecture classes and student sessions are a complete mess at Interrogation 0. You can't organize your own thoughts, much less elicit anyone else's. By contrast, with Interrogation 3+ you are the star of any academic conference you attend, verbal and mental fireworks flying with every question.

Intimidation: You are a favorite with undergraduates at Intimidation 0, as they can always get an extension on your paper or drop a tough class after the deadline. You prefer collegial work and buckle down to your share and more of the departmental bumf. At Intimidation 3+ you are a pure and simple terror to all around you. You can fail a star running back or crew stroke with impunity, you command total silence during lectures; your assertions in the dining hall go unchallenged. To your face.

Oral History: With Oral History 0, you learn best from books, which can't change their story halfway through, or use a strange tone of voice to undermine their words. You are a “library ghost”

and a master of recondite references to long-dead scholars. At Oral History 3+ your lectures become seminars and your seminars become colloquia. You easily gather academic gossip, which greases your career if you let it.

Reassurance: There's just something about your manner at Reassurance 0; perhaps you condescend, or roll your eyes while explaining things, but some students actually get stupider in your presence. They certainly lose confidence in their own work — admittedly for good reason. Standards have slipped, and badly. With Reassurance 3+ you can always talk your way out of a knotty lecture question or uncomfortable administrative confrontation. That museum was a firetrap waiting to happen, and everybody always knew that!

Academic Reputation (Special)

This new ability reinforces and in some cases replaces Bureaucracy and Credit Rating. Think of it as an expansion of the Professor's special Occupational ability (*ToC*, p. 18). Every *academic* character in a purely academic campaign such as the Armitage Inquiry frame has an Academic Reputation rating. Campus cops, visiting parents and ex-Marine library custodians don't have this ability. (Nor do they much care.) In nonacademic or only partly academic campaigns, it's not worth tracking.

Academic Reputation cannot be bought at character creation. Instead, after building your Investigator's abilities, compute Academic Reputation as follows:

$$\text{Highest Academic ability rating} + \text{Credit Rating} = \text{Academic Reputation}$$

For the purposes of this rule, Astronomy and Chemistry count as Academic abilities, and Cthulhu Mythos and Occult *do not count* as Academic abilities. (You just *can't* get tenure based on your knowledge of the occult, in the 1930s or now.) Over the course of the campaign, Academic Reputation rises

and falls based on your Investigator's academic performance.

Increase your Academic Reputation rating by +1:

- for raising an Academic ability to 4
- for a major scholarly milestone (well-received definitive published work, major prize)

Decrease your Academic Reputation rating by -1:

- for publishing or promulgating anything crazy or even too heterodox
- for being institutionalized, imprisoned, etc.
- for bringing discredit on the University (academic fraud, plagiarism, being indicted for a series of unexplained arsons, etc.)
- for moral turpitude

Using Academic Reputation

You can always spend Academic Reputation as Bureaucracy in an academic context. When an NPC is amenable to “any Academic ability used as an Interpersonal ability,” Academic Reputation definitely counts. You may be able to use it in more generic academic circles as a more specific Interpersonal ability, from Intimidation (“Do you know who I am, young man?”) to Reassurance (“Don't worry, young man. You know who I am.”) to Flattery (“Young man, I know who you are!”).

Academic Reputation “activates” your special Occupational ability as a Professor: it lets you enjoy nearly unrestricted access to closed library stacks, research laboratories and even many private and government archives.

You can also spend it to get favors from your own institution, such as a sabbatical, extra grant money, your pick of grad students and so forth.

In some campaigns, the Keeper may build NPC academics who oppose you often enough to get their own

Other Inquiries

Miskatonic University isn't the only possible host for a coterie of occult Investigator-academics. A Keeper interested in shaking up the old familiar standards might set an Inquiry campaign at one of these institutions:

Brichester University: A red-brick university in the Severn Valley in Great Britain, Brichester University was chartered in 1901 (Brichester College dates back to 1783). The increasingly senile and paranoid head librarian, Dr. Philip Chesterton (b. 1861), keeps the school's copies of the *Necronomicon*, *De Vermis Mysteriis* and other tomes under lock and key after several attempted vandalisms. Sadly, no such effort is expended on the *Revelations of Glaaki*, which are shelved as pornography on the restricted (but not sealed) stacks. A small group of faculty have noticed the Mythos activity in the Severn Valley, but which of them have already read the truths of Glaaki? The Keirecheires cult of Y'gonolac (*Bookhounds of London*, pp. 64–65) still has remnants at the university, perhaps within the Inquiry itself.

Sanbourne Institute of Pacific Antiquities: Tuna-packing heir Philip Sanbourne founded this private anthropological society in Santiago, California, in 1875. Built around the amazing Sanbourne collection of Pacific artifacts, the institute assembled a major museum, and its scholars-in-residence came from prestigious schools like Stanford, Yale and Tulane. But the disastrous failure of the Copeland-Ellington Expedition to Mongolia in 1913 and Dr. Copeland's 1926 suicide in an asylum left the institute adrift. Both its successive directors (Dr. Henry Stephenson Blaine and Mr. Arthur Wilcox Hodgkins) went insane in 1928–1929, and a fire badly damaged the building.

Miskatonic University is in negotiations to acquire

the Copeland and Sanbourne collections, but needs a picked team of scholars to work out of the institute for an academic year. Their task is to determine the academic value, if any, of its research, especially the dubious Zanthu Tablets brought back from Mongolia. Players can take the roles of the Miskatonic team, of the resentful remaining Sanbourne scholars, or some of each.

University of Buenos Aires Museum of Ethnography: Founded as a public museum in 1879, it came under the university's direction in 1904, when it vastly expanded its reach, launching expeditions to all corners of South and Central America. In that vast slew of data, eventually one or two scholars noticed the parallels between certain shunned tribal customs and repellent artifacts and the descriptions in the *Necronomicon* kept in the university library. They slowly set up a study group, examining their theories from all angles, but the sudden outburst of Cthulhu-cult activity in 1925 forced them into carefully revealing what they knew to President Yrigoyen. Unfortunately, a right-wing coup overthrew Yrigoyen in 1930, and the quasi-military Argentine government wants the Indagación de los Seres Exoticas ("Inquiry into Exotic Beings") to use its knowledge for more practical purposes. On the model of, say, the Ahnenerbe in Germany. Museum director Dr. Félix Faustino Outes also chairs the Archaeology Department at the university, and tries to balance both his valued scholars and his patriotic sympathies. To evade government scrutiny, some members of the Indagación have turned to outside scholars and philosophers, especially those associated with the literary journal *Sur*.

Academic Reputation pools. They may thwart your academic actions based on the results of contests of Academic Reputation, resolved as General ability contests (*ToC*, pp. 58–60). Academic Reputation duels can resolve in slow motion, each party rolling once per adventure, or even once per semester! Whether the Keeper uses this rule or not, your Academic Reputation pool refreshes like any other Investigative ability pool.

Tenure

If your Academic Reputation is 8 or higher, you occupy a special place in the school's hierarchy.

- If you are a student (undergraduate or graduate), you are a **golden boy** (or **girl**): coddled by faculty and surrounded by student hangers-on. This may be due to your social position (that high Credit Rating) or to your incredible academic prowess. (Or to both, if your work attracts lots of grants and potentially rich donors.)

You are practically a professor, teaching lecture courses, presenting papers at conferences and helping your mentor with his own studies as a peer. Guiding you (and taking credit for your researches) is the sort of thing careers are made on.

- If you are a professor, you have **tenure**. This likely comes with the rank of full professor, but if your Investigator is too young for that exalted status, consider her to be on a bulletproof tenure track as an associate professor.

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- This replaces, but generally tracks with, the purely Credit Rating-driven rule for tenure in *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 18.

With tenure (*not* golden boy status), you cannot be dismissed from the institution without cause. Your pay is guaranteed, as is your academic freedom. Short of a major, publicized crime (academic or otherwise), you have near-total independence of action. Tenure, in short, is an Investigator's paradise. You can miss classes, fob your grading off on grad students, nap during lectures, including your own, take unannounced sabbaticals, sneak out your office window to hunt for the Holy Grail or present a paper on the demonic truths behind Marlowe's poetry without fear of major repercussions.

The Keeper may, for extremes of such behavior, penalize you an Academic Reputation rating point, but your tenure remains guaranteed even if your Reputation sinks to 0. The university's only real defense, assuming no actual criminality or overt insanity on your part, is to "kick you upstairs" as an emeritus professor. They still have to pay you and let you on campus, but they don't have to put your name in the course catalog unless you actually plan to show up and teach a class. They can pretend you've become a ghost, and you can ignore them likewise.

Members of the Inquiry

For context and convenience, we reprint and slightly expand the list of the Inquiry's membership from *Trail of Cthulhu*, pp. 206–7.

The "Dunwich Three" (Armitage, Morgan and Rice) form a kind of "inner circle" within the Inquiry, keeping secrets and rationing access to the *Necronomicon*. In addition to the Investigator academics, members of the Inquiry include:

Dr. Henry Armitage (b. 1855): Head librarian and specialist in medieval epigraphy, occultism and linguistics. Took his D. Litt. at Cambridge, and may have Mythos contacts at that university. Retires (becoming director emeritus) in 1936 to head the Inquiry full time.

Dr. Ferdinand Ashley (b. 1891): Associate professor of archaeology, specializing in Egyptology. Participated in the Western Australia Expedition. Like Morgan, young enough for field missions.

Dr. William Dyer (b. 1880): Professor of geology, survivor of the first Miskatonic Antarctic Expedition. Believes strongly in secrecy and preventing further expeditions.

Dr. Tyler M. Freeborn (b. 1906): Assistant professor of anthropology, and a participant in the Western Australia Expedition. A self-proclaimed Communist and radical, he clings to his tenure track by his fingernails against a storm of interdepartmental opposition. Devoted to field work, but his professional research sometimes takes precedence over Inquiry work.

Dr. Seneca Lapham (b. 1858): Professor emeritus of anthropology, and an increasingly dangerous and embarrassing ally. After his 1924 experience in Billington's Wood near Arkham, Lapham took an extended rest sabbatical. Lured back by Armitage in 1929 as an early peer and ally. Lapham, however, was not ready for careful Inquiry work. He theorizes well ahead of the data, even fabricating research to bolster pet hypotheses. Worse, he sends younger Inquiry members such as the Investigators on wild and occasionally dangerous field trips based on his thinking.

Dr. Cyrus Llanfer (b. 1871): Assistant director of the Orne Library, becomes head librarian in 1936. Has no real understanding of the Mythos, but is entirely loyal to Dr. Armitage.

Dr. William Moore (b. 1886): Professor of geology, specializing in paleontology. Cohead of the Starkweather-Moore Antarctic Expedition in 1933–1934. Its findings are officially minimized.

Dr. Francis Morgan (b. 1891): Associate professor of archaeology, specializing in the American Southwest, but with experience in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Logical and scientific in orientation. Still young enough for field missions.

Dr. Frank Pabodie (b. 1897): Professor of engineering, inventor of the Pabodie core sampling drill and other gear for the Miskatonic Antarctic Expeditions. He led the first expedition to the Antarctic and cautiously favors further ventures when the stakes are high enough. Designs much of the specialized equipment used by Inquiry teams in the field.

Dr. Wingate Peaslee (b. 1900): Professor of psychology, specializing in abnormal psychology. A devotee of Jung, he is driven by revenge for the suffering of his father, Professor Emeritus Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee, who has been in a sanitarium since his return from Australia.

Mrs. Agatha Warren Pickman (b. 1849): The eccentric and domineering head of the Nathaniel Derby Pickman Foundation, which provides financial support for some Inquiry operations. Mrs. Pickman insists on propriety, decency and to-the-penny accounting. She often calls Dr. Armitage "young man."

Dr. Warren Rice (b. 1866): Professor of classical languages, specializing in Semitic and Near Eastern tongues. Pessimistic and pragmatic.

Dr. Ephraim Sprague (b. 1886): Essex County medical examiner and

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private physician. Not associated with Miskatonic University, but obviously a key and useful ally.

Dr. Hiram Upham (b. 1870): Chairman of the Mathematics Department and mentor of Walter Gilman. Gilman's mysterious death in 1928 after theorizing a connection between hyperspace and medieval sorcery led Upham to Armitage. He prefers theoretical research and "brain work" to dangerous field excursions. Freeborn occasionally hints that Upham is simply a coward — why, he jumps whenever he hears a rat scratch in the wall!

Dr. Albert N. Wilmarth (b. 1861): Professor of English, specialist in New England folklore. He becomes chairman of the English Department in 1930. Between his departmental responsibilities and his delicate temperament (following the Vermont nightmare), he now sends graduate students and junior faculty to gather folklore firsthand.

Expeditions by Inquiry Member

If you've gotten an Inquiry member killed in a previous adventure, substitute another NPC — or an academic Investigator, if Armitage has cleared him — for the figure mentioned.

Dwellers in the Dunes: Dr. Bruce Culpepper (Archaeology) has been exposed to the Mythos but may or may not be an Inquiry member, depending on the Keeper's needs.

Mother of Malaria: No Inquiry members attached. If the Keeper requires one, Dr. Francis Morgan is a doctor of medicine in later Fritz Leiber stories; perhaps this is the adventure that sets him on that path.

Lost on a Sea of Dreams: No Inquiry members attached. The scenario depends on the near-complete and dream-like isolation of the Investigators; an Inquiry NPC doesn't fit the bill. The Keeper can replace Dr. Bowles with Dr.

Frank Pabodie if she desires, taking care to play him as more distracted and less vainglorious than Bowles.

An Incident at the Border: Dr. William Moore may or may not be an Inquiry member.

The Jaguars of El-Thar: No Inquiry members attached. If the Keeper wishes, it's probably easiest to make Stapleton an Inquiry member — his madness might seem related to previous experiences rather than the recent events in the Yucatán.

Tongued With Fire: Begins with a colloquium at Miskatonic that can include any or all Inquiry members. Drs. Armitage, Freeborn and Morgan are present, as is Mrs. Pickman. On the expedition itself, either Freeborn or Morgan can accompany the Investigators if need be.

Served Cold: Dr. Armitage may brief the Investigators, but no Inquiry members are attached to the expedition itself. Given his geological skills and potential Mythos knowledge, Dr. Dyer seems like a natural leader, if the players are being stubborn.

Whistle and I'll Come: Dr. Freeborn is the expedition's leader.

A Load of Blarney: Drs. Ashley and Peaslee accompany the expedition; Dr. Ashley is its leader.

Cerulean Halo: Dr. Bailey (Geology) is not an Inquiry member, but he trusts Dr. Dyer and has heard rumors of the Antarctic expeditions' true findings.

Miskatonic Destinations

If you're looking for places to send Miskatonic expeditions, here are some likely expedition destinations by department:

Archaeology: Miskatonic has a presence in Egypt and Iraq dating from before the Great War. Miskatonic expeditions also explore Central America and American Indian sites in the United States and Canada. Individual Miskatonic archaeologists might join other digs anywhere in the world.

Anthropology: In addition to the Arctic, Miskatonic anthropologists have ongoing projects in the Pacific and central Africa. Oral historians especially have begun investigating backwaters of Quebec, New England, Appalachia and Louisiana looking for folklore, ethnic music and other ethnological data.

Astronomy: Miskatonic astronomers might follow any of the total eclipses in 1930–1939:

- northern Canada (Apr. 28, 1930)
- mid-Pacific (Oct. 21, 1930)
- Borneo (Feb. 14, 1934)
- Siberia (Jun. 19, 1936)
- Peru or the eastern Pacific (Jun. 8, 1937)
- Bouvet Island near Antarctica (May 29, 1938)
- Victoria Land, Antarctica (Oct. 12, 1939)

The total eclipse of August 31, 1932, is visible from Arkham. Alternately, the (May 11, 1937) transit of Mercury visible from Southern Arabia and Western Australia seems tailor-made for Cthulhuoid adventure. Astronomers might also accompany geologists on meteorite recovery expeditions.

Biology: Expeditions anywhere in the world except Antarctica can always add a botanist or zoologist to gather specimens. Particularly fertile targets for specifically botanical or zoological expeditions include the Amazon, the East Indies, Central America, the Philippines and Thibet.

Classics: Professors of classical languages and history accompany

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expeditions to anywhere in the ancient world from Britain to Afghanistan. Most of these are archaeological or epigraphic, gathering inscriptions from newly found walls or ruins.

Geology: Meteorites might fall anywhere in the world. Miskatonic geologists may be asked to assist American oil companies in Arabia, Libya, Colombia or Canada. In 1930, Mount Merapi erupts in central Java; a geological expedition might study the aftermath. The Geology department also sponsors paleontological expeditions to the American West, Alaska, China, Australia and North Africa.

History: Historians can be attached to any archaeological expedition, as well as any

others into regions formerly or currently inhabited by literate peoples. Oral history and folklore expeditions fall under Anthropology or Rhetoric and Languages (the English department), depending on whether Dr Wilmarth gets his way.

Medicine: Medical expeditions might research tropical diseases in Indo-China, Panama, the Congo or the Caribbean, or fight sudden epidemics anywhere in the world.

Mediaeval Metaphysics and Philosophy: Your Miskatonic may not have a whole department devoted to this arcane subject, although Miskatonic's beginnings as a seminary make it at least somewhat possible. Its scholars might venture not only to safe places

like European archives, but to deserted monasteries in the Alps or Carpathians, or to abandoned Crusader castles in Palestine, Transjordan, Syria or Turkey.

Natural and Revealed Religion: These expeditions will likely follow the pattern of "Tongued With Fire" in this book: searching out isolated or forgotten sects in India, China, the Middle East and North Africa. Divinity and theology professors may well accompany anthropological expeditions for similar purposes.

Oriental Studies: This field originally referred not to east Asia but to the Middle East. By now, Orientalists study the history, culture, religion and language of peoples from Kurdistan to

Miskatonic and Expedition Timeline

To help contextualize an Armitage Inquiry campaign, or to better place the adventures in this book against the Lovecraftian background, this timeline gives all the “canonical” Miskatonic expeditions including the professors on them. It also adds other significant dates in Miskatonic history and the Mythos during this period. Keepers can modify “The Green Ape” and “Lord of the Jungle” in *Shadows Over Filmland* into Miskatonic expeditions as well, if they so desire.

1690: Arkham College and Salem Academy founded.

1693: The Rev. Ward Phillips donates his library to Arkham College.

1720: Simon Orne donates his library to Arkham College.

1773: Joseph Curwen’s widow, Eliza, donates her husband’s library to Arkham College.

1776: Arkham College merges with Salem Academy to become Miskatonic College.

1865: Miskatonic College merges with Elder Faith Seminary, becomes Miskatonic University.

1882: Arkham geologists investigate meteorite fall on a site now under the Quabbin Reservoir.

1887: Drs. Curtis Mathieson (Archaeology) and Laban Shrewsbury (Anthropology and Philosophy) excavate Etruscan remains in Tuscany, recovering the first of the Celaeno Fragments.

1889: Henry Armitage (A.M., Miskatonic University, 1882) becomes a librarian at Miskatonic.

1905: Typhoid outbreak in Arkham stemmed by Miskatonic medical faculty including Dr. Herbert West (Medicine).

1907: Miskatonic University Press founded.

1908: Dr. Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee (Political Economy) suffers a sudden seizure and attack of amnesia.

1910–1914: Miskatonic Mesopotamian Expedition excavates Kish and Kutha.

1913: Dr. Peaslee makes a full recovery.

1915: Dr. Shrewsbury leaves his manuscript notes on the Celaeno Fragments on the library doorstep and disappears.

1925: The island of R’lyeh briefly rises during a seaquake (Feb. 28–Apr. 2).

1928: Wilbur Whateley killed by guard dogs while attempting to steal the *Necronomicon* from the library (Aug. 3); public access to the restricted collection ends; Drs. Armitage, Rice and Morgan investigate the “Dunwich Horror” (Sep. 9–15); Dr. Wilmarth’s visit to Vermont ends traumatically (Sep.).

1929: Dr. Armitage rebuffed by the FBI in his attempt to buy the library of the Esoteric Order of Dagon, confiscated in the raid on Innsmouth the previous year. Mysterious fire at Arkham Public Library destroys many 17th and 18th century records.

1930: Asenath Waite graduates from Miskatonic University.

1930–1931: Pabodie Miskatonic Antarctic Expedition; departs (Sep. 2), reports deaths of Drs. Lake (Biology) and Atwood (Physics and Meteorology) (Jan. 24); returns (Feb.).

193–: Dr. Galloway leads an expedition to Egypt to discover the tomb of the Pharaoh Nitocris. (See “Death Across the Nile” in *Shadows Over Filmland*)

1933–1934: Starkweather-Moore Antarctic Expedition, codirected by Dr. William Moore.

1935: Western Australia Expedition under Dr. Dyer, including Drs. Nathaniel and Wingate Peaslee, Ashley and Freeborn; departs (Mar. 28), uncovers basalt blocks in desert (Jun.–Jul.), returns in time for the fall semester to begin.

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Korea. (Extinct languages of the Middle East, however, still fall under Classics or Archaeology at Miskatonic.) Any expedition into Asia could bring an Orientalist scholar along, if only as an interpreter.

Rhetoric and Languages: This school includes the English department, where Dr Wilmarth studies folklore, and currently fights pitched battles with the Anthropology department for control of that subject. Solely linguistic expeditions into the Amazon or New Guinea are relatively rare, but linguists could profitably accompany a team anywhere outside the Indo-European language sphere. Linguists may actually be anthropologists or Orientalists, in departmental terms.

Do not be restrained by these options; if you need a Miskatonic paleontological expedition to Tanganyika, just go ahead and invent one.

Perish or Publish

Besides horrible scars of mind and body, what else can the ambitious academic bring back from a Mythos expedition? To any self-respecting academic, the answer is obvious: publishable research data. To the Inquiry's scholars, the question is slightly more fraught. Much of the data they gather cannot be published for their reputation's sake — and some of it should never be published, for the world's sake. However, Dr. Armitage

doesn't want to waste the resources of an expedition: any knowledge can become a weapon against the horrors of the Mythos.

After any expedition, one Investigator can write up a Restricted Report of the party's findings. This is assumed to contain all the Mythos knowledge available from that adventure, unless the Keeper specifically decides the players missed something critical. (Which shouldn't happen with GUMSHOE, but players can be blind savants sometimes.) This Restricted Report is shelved in the Inquiry archives, available only to other scholars on Armitage's approved list. It functions, in short, as a new Mythos tome, written by the Investigator.

The Investigator who writes the Restricted Report may not publish a conventional academic paper using this research; too close an exposure to its true meaning renders her prose nonsensical or subtly unnerving. The credit, if any, from the expedition must go to someone else.

Guidelines for Restricted Report Tomes

The Report's author creates the dedicated point pool provided by skimming the Report. The maximum number of such points equals the author's Library Use rating. These points can be divided any way the author wishes. For example, the dedicated pool points might go to:

- A specific Investigative ability or abilities used heavily in the adventure (maximum 1 point); e.g., "1 dedicated pool point for Astronomy or Geology." No author can write a tome granting a specific ability in which he does not have a rating.
- Any Investigative ability used to research the subject matter, region, god or secrets behind the expedition; e.g., "2 dedicated pool points for any Investigative ability dealing with India, heretical Christianity or Azathoth."
- Points in Sense Trouble specifically dedicated to the expedition's dangers; e.g., "2 points in Sense Trouble while in the border of the Dreamlands."

Cthulhu Mythos Points

If anything in the adventure potentially cost Sanity (including a Cthulhu Mythos spend), then poring over the Report only provides +1 to Cthulhu Mythos if the reader has already read a major Mythos tome (e.g., the unabridged *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, the *Necronomicon*, the Pnakotic Manuscripts).

If two things in the adventure potentially cost Sanity, poring over the Report provides the reader 1 rating point of Cthulhu Mythos regardless.

If the Investigators witnessed (1), cast (2) or learned (3) any spells or rituals during the adventure, poring over the Report provides the listed number of Magic potential points.



The Dwellers in the Dunes

“ALL AT ONCE I CAME UPON A PLACE WHERE THE BEDROCK ROSE STARK THROUGH THE SAND AND FORMED A LOW CLIFF; AND HERE I SAW WITH JOY WHAT SEEMED TO PROMISE FURTHER TRACES OF THE ANTEDILUVIAN PEOPLE.”

— H. P. LOVECRAFT,
“THE NAMELESS CITY”

THE HOOK

Famed explorer Roy Chapman Andrews leads one final expedition into the harsh Gobi Desert of Mongolia in search of fossils. His true hope is to find evidence that humanity evolved in Central Asia as his academic mentor predicted years ago. When his latest expedition uncovers some hominid fossils, he and his colleagues are ecstatic — until members of the expedition start dying horribly. Can the Investigators figure out what’s going on and destroy or escape a menace out of time before they and the rest of the expedition become yet another collection of bones scattered across the desert?

THE SPINE

The Investigators **Arrive In Peking** and join up with the rest of the expedition. They **Set Off for the Gobi**, but along the way may encounter a number of hazards, including a **Bandit Encounter** or a stolen supply cache. Finally **Reaching the Campsite**, they begin

work. Soon **Fossils Are Discovered**, and not long after that **The Killings Begin**, and, from there, it’s only a matter of time before isolation, the weird fossils and the bizarre murders either drive the survivors insane or make them flee into the desert.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

The most important “fossils” the expedition discovers — the ones Andrews believes will at long last prove his theory that mankind originated in Central Asia, not Africa — aren’t truly fossils in the ordinary sense of the word. They’re the bones of proto-Tcho-Tcho shamans (the Tcho-Tcho equivalent of *Homo erectus*, so to speak). The shamans’ spirits linger around them and retain the power to use dark, ancient magics received from their foul Tcho-Tcho gods. They commit a series of brutal murders as part of an extended ritual to bring themselves fully back to life, doing their best to make the Investigators believe one or more members of the Expedition are guilty of the killings. Unless stopped, the proto-Tcho-Tchos will bring horror and destruction down on the entire expedition — and then the world.

The Political Situation

In addition to considering the real Roy Chapman Andrews’s career timeline

(see sidebar), you should also take the politics of eastern China into account when determining in what year to set “The Dwellers in the Dunes.” A relatively early date, such as 1932 or 1933, may work best.

During the Thirties, four groups struggle for power in China. The Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang, led by General Chiang Kai-shek, supposedly leads the country. Chiang’s hatred for his chief rival, the Communist Party led in part by Mao Tse-tung, is so intense he prefers to fight them instead of the Japanese.

The Communists are most powerful in the industrialized south. Due to a series of reverses against the Nationalist forces in the early Thirties, they’re forced to engage in the Long March retreat to the north and west beginning in roughly 1934. They’re unlikely to pose any serious threat to the Andrews Expedition — unless of course you want to introduce them as a complicating factor.

Tuchuns, or provincial military governors (read: warlords), control many parts of northern China (including some the Andrews Expedition has to pass through). Each of them has money, power and a private army, and enforces his own laws regardless of what the Nationalists want. The more powerful of them contend for control of China itself; the less powerful often descend into banditry.



Chapman in Mongolia

Roy Chapman Andrews is, of course, a real person — and a deservedly famous one, given the extent of his explorations and his discoveries in the fields of paleontology and other natural sciences. Although originally trained as a cetologist, he became best known for his four expeditions into Mongolia and its Gobi Desert from 1922 to 1925. He discovered numerous new dinosaur species, including *Velociraptor*, *Protosaurus*, *Oviraptor* and *Baluchitherium* (today known as *Indricotherium*). He also found the first fossilized dinosaur eggs ever discovered and made other advances in various scientific fields. But he failed in one of his chief goals: to obtain proof that mankind originated in Central Asia.

His later expeditions didn't go as well. In 1928 the Chinese authorities seized his discoveries, and he cancelled his planned 1929 expedition when the Chinese attempted to impose intolerable conditions on it. During his last trip to Mongolia, in 1930, he uncovered mastodon fossils.

During the early Thirties, Andrews served as president of the Explorer's Club while focusing on his career at the American Museum of Natural History. In 1934 he became director of the museum. This scenario assumes either that he makes one final expedition to Mongolia prior to assuming the directorship, or that he never receives that position.

Andrews was a master of self-promotion (and thus also of fundraising for his expeditions). His accounts of his explorations sold well, and he lectured extensively. It was through his writings that the term "Outer Mongolia" became synonymous with the concept of the uttermost remote location. His escapades are thought to have inspired many adventure movie serials of the Forties and Fifties — serials that in turn inspired the creation of Indiana Jones.

The Japanese

Besides those three native groups, the Japanese also have a role to play (most often in Manchuria, Shantung province and around Shanghai). The "Mukden Incident" (September 1931) gave the Imperial Army an excuse to seize first a Manchurian railroad, then all of Manchuria (which Japan renamed "Manchukuo"). In January 1932, the Japanese attacked Shanghai, initiating the first bombing raids against a civilian population in world history.

(Not all horror, after all, comes from the Mythos.) They returned control of Shanghai to the Chinese for a while, but invaded again in November 1935.

In July 1937, the second Sino-Japanese War began. The efficient, well-equipped Japanese military had little trouble defeating the Chinese. It captured Peking and all territories to the north within about a month. It attacked Shanghai again, blockaded the Chinese coast, and, in December 1937, captured Nanking,

murdering an estimated two hundred thousand civilians in the process.

The Japanese, who loathed the Chinese as subhuman, began using them for medical and military experiments as early as 1931, primarily through the auspices of the later-infamous Unit 731. They injected Chinese victims with disease, used them for live weapons testing and performed grotesque medical procedures upon them. A Keeper who wants to expand on his group's interactions with the Mythos in China could easily establish a connection between Unit 731's scientists and the beings of the Mythos; Nyarlathotep, among others, would certainly revel in this sort of chaos and destruction.

TOUR AND TRAVEL

The Tour for "The Dwellers in the Dunes" begins when the expedition leaves Ulan Bator, the last true outpost of (more or less) civilization before they're in the wilderness. Chapman's plan is to depart Ulan Bator as close to April 1 as possible, and to return no later than September 1, for a total time in-country of five months (including travel time out and back). Assuming all goes well, the travel increments are as follows:

- two weeks, during which the expedition travels steadily from Ulan Bator into its planned primary excavation point in the middle of the Gobi Desert
- four one-month periods, during which the expedition conducts its primary work — some members stay put and work at the main camp; others travel out on sub-expeditions to explore other promising areas, pursue live animals, visit local habitations for anthropological purposes and so forth

Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Desert (−1)	Setting Off for the Gobi, Bandit Encounter	See p. 41	See p. 41
Bleak Desert (+1)	Reaching the Campsite, Fossils Are Discovered	Outdoorsman (standard relief: reduce Difficulty by 1)	6 or 7
Bleak Desert (+1)	The Killings Begin	N/A	N/A
Bleak Desert (+1)	The killings continue?	N/A	N/A
Bleak Desert (+1)	The killings continue?	N/A	N/A
Desert (−1)	Escaping the Gobi	N/A	N/A

- two weeks, during which the expedition travels steadily from the primary excavation point back to Ulan Bator

All of the travel and sub-expeditions are at least loosely planned in advance, though Chapman and other veterans of his expeditions know there's almost certainly going to be some "improvisation" to deal with specific opportunities, threats and disasters that arise.

Survival Pool

Like Chapman's previous forays into the Gobi, this expedition relies as much on cars and trucks as on beasts of burden. Thus, in addition to food and water, medical supplies, survival tools and the like for the humans, it needs fodder for the beasts and gasoline for the vehicles. Because it's a scientific expedition, it also needs all the supplies necessary for collecting,

preserving and carrying back to civilization the paleontological, paleoanthropological and zoological fossils, samples, artifacts and specimens it finds. That includes crates for storing them, plaster of Paris, glassware, measuring instruments, all sorts of digging tools, ink and journals for making notes, and so forth.

This expedition is well funded, for, as always, Chapman is a master of promotion and fundraising. Even so, it's a major undertaking involving approximately four dozen men, a dozen vehicles and almost 150 camels (see below). Just keeping everything coordinated is a major task! Keeping all this in mind, the expedition has a Survival pool of 50 points, allocated as follows:

- Two weeks out: 5 points (see below)
- First month in-country: 10 points

- Second month in-country: 10 points
- Third month in-country: 10 points
- Fourth month in-country: 10 points
- Two weeks in: 5 points

Carrying all the supplies the expedition needs at once would be prohibitive, so Chapman long ago came up with a better method: supply dumps. Some weeks before the main expedition leaves, he sends out supply trains of camels led by trusted drivers. These camels carry most of the expedition's supplies (at approximately four hundred pounds' carrying capacity per healthy camel). The drivers leave specific amounts of supplies at specific locations planned out in advance for the expedition (or Andrews arranges to meet the caravan at a specific destination to restock). If possible the dumps are made at relatively secure points, such as a temple or monastery. Thus, the cars and trucks

Dwellers in the Dunes

leaving Ulan Bator on April 1 carry only 5 Survival points of supplies, expecting to gather the rest at the supply dumps along the way.

Players, being suspicious types, are likely to become worried about Andrews's logistics system. Feel free to encourage their fears. Alternately, you can allow them to periodically add to the Survival pool using Outdoorsman to shoot some game.

Lost Supplies

This method, of course, is vulnerable to losses: natural disasters, animals or bandits may ruin or take supplies from a dump, putting the expedition in peril. This is a perfect explanation for failed Survival checks — or a perfect opportunity for the Keeper to make things worse for the expedition.

EXPEDITION PERSONNEL

This section describes some of the chief personnel accompanying the Andrews Expedition (aside of course from the Investigators). Other than Andrews himself, they're all fictional, though they have many of the same specialties and skills as real people who took part in Andrews's earlier expeditions. (If you prefer to use historical persons for NPCs, you can find a complete list of the people who were a part of the 1920s expeditions in Andrews's book *The New Conquest of Central Asia*.)

If an NPC has Investigative abilities, one of the Investigators can use that NPC's pools as though they were his own, if he uses the proper Interpersonal ability to "connect" with the NPC (see individual

descriptions). This spend usually comes from the listed Interpersonal ability, but clever players can sometimes justify something else: for example, an Investigator could spend 2 Credit Rating points (to promise him a big bonus) to spend 2 of Erdeni's Outdoorsman points.

The NPCs have two primary roles in this scenario. The first is to serve as suspects (and victims) for the killings that take place after the expedition finds the Sleeper "fossils." So as Keeper, part of your job is to make as many of them as possible suspicious, and perhaps a bit dislikeable — the longer you can plausibly draw out the mystery and slowly siphon off the Investigators' Stability, the greater the feel of horror you'll evoke. The second is, of course, the standard NPC role in any *Trail of Cthulhu* adventure: to die or descend into madness in ways that provide useful information for the Investigators (or entertainment for the players). So don't worry too much about their listed Health ratings.

The NPCs' statistics are (mostly) limited to abilities useful in the field. For example, few of them have Library Use listed. However, since there are some monasteries in Mongolia where characters could perhaps do some research (assuming they know Mongolian), it's included for a couple of NPCs particularly inclined toward that sort of work.

Getting the Investigators Involved

Realism-minded players may question how their Investigators could become

The 1925 Expedition's Supplies

By way of illustration, Andrews's 1925 expedition into the Gobi took the following supplies:

- 4,000 gallons of gasoline
- 100 gallons of motor oil
- 2.5 tons of flour
- 1 ton of rice
- 0.5 tons of sugar

part of the Andrews Expedition. Historically, Andrews favored a broad approach that he called "correlated work." That means he has specialists in many subjects involved in his expedition (since in his experience they accomplish more, and can help one another solve problems none could solve alone), and that he recruits expedition members from a variety of universities and museums. It's no stretch at all to think he might have multiple members of the Miskatonic University faculty along with him this time, and Miskatonic provides a good connection to many Investigators. But he could also desire the expertise of academic-inclined Investigators associated with nearly any institution.

Given that Andrews also operates as an asset for the Office of Naval Intelligence, Investigators associated with Project Covenant have every reason to tag along. They may simply plan to keep an eye on Japanese and Soviet activity in Mongolia, only to discover something even worse waiting in the Gobi.

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Beyond that, the requirements of the Andrews Expedition are many — it's not just a group of scholars. Andrews needs, among other things, animal drivers familiar with camels, truck/car drivers, hunters, scouts/explorers, guards (i.e., characters who are good with a gun, and hopefully look intimidating) and mechanics. Anyone familiar with Chinese or Mongolian language or culture, or who has ties to powerful people in north China, could also be helpful. If worse comes to worst, he also needs people to cook, prepare plaster of Paris, dig and lift heavy things. One way or another, as Keeper you should be able to justify nearly any Investigator's presence on the Andrews Expedition.

Roy Chapman Andrews, Leader of the Expedition

"AN INCONGRUOUS MIXTURE OF EXPLORER, SOCIALITE, SCIENTIST, SPORTSMAN, AUTHOR, LECTURER, AND DIPLOMAT..."

— CHARLES GALLenkAMP, DRAGON HUNTER: ROY CHAPMAN ANDREWS AND THE CENTRAL ASIATIC EXPEDITIONS

Born in 1884, the world-famous Andrews leads the expedition. He's done this many times before; he's an old hand at dealing with the Chinese, the Mongolians and the vagaries of the Gobi Desert. He's fought off bandits, negotiated with surly Communists, dug fossils in the blistering sun, and, when back in civilization, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund his travels by using his social connections and gift for speaking. But he knows nothing of the Mythos — and he's about to get a rude awakening to the truth of the world.



Andrews is able to get along easily with many people; it's one of the reasons for his success. He responds well to characters of high social standing or wealth who use Credit Rating (especially if they make serious offers to fund future expeditions or projects), to academics who use Anthropology or other disciplines he's familiar with, or other explorer/hunter types who appeal to his love of being an Outdoorsman.

Abilities: Anthropology 5, Archaeology 2, Athletics 5, Bargain 3, Credit Rating 5, Driving 2, Firearms 6, First Aid 1, Fleeing 5, Geology 3, Health 7, Languages 2 (Mandarin Chinese, Mongolian), Outdoorsman 5, Preparedness 3, Reassurance 2, Scuffling 5, Weapons 6

Alertness Modifier: +2

Weapon: +1 (.45 Colt M1911 pistol), +1 (Winchester Model 70 rifle)

Professor Jeremiah Banks, Harvard University Department of Anthropology

Born in 1871, Banks has left his classroom at Harvard for one more



chance at fieldwork before he retires from that pursuit for good. He's not especially interested in fossils, though he'll gladly contribute his expertise if the expedition finds any hominid bones. He wants to study the people of China and Mongolia, and intends to spend as much time as possible on trips to local tribes, monasteries and villages; he's studying Mongolian in preparation. In his opinion, zoology and paleontology are very much "secondary" scientific disciplines compared to his own field, anthropology.

Banks is a vain, sometimes even arrogant, fellow. Flattery is one easy way for Investigators to get his assistance — so is appealing to his academic interests by letting him talk about Anthropology for hours on end.

Abilities: Anthropology 5, Archaeology 1, First Aid 1, Flattery 2, Fleeing 2, Health 4, Languages 4 (Finnish, German, Mandarin Chinese, Mongolian), History 3, Library Use 3, Oral History 4,



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Outdoorsman 1, Reassurance 3, Sense Trouble 2

Alertness Modifier: +0

Professor Bruce Culpepper,
Miskatonic University
Department of Archaeology



Born in 1877, Professor Culpepper is the Andrews Expedition's chief archaeologist. This is old hat for him; he's been on plenty of digs in Egypt, the Near East and China. He's not the most social of people — he often seems distracted, as if his thoughts are in the ancient past, which to him seems to have more “solidity” than the ephemeral, meaningless present. He's a heavy smoker, always with a pipe in his mouth; if the expedition runs out of tobacco, he'll continue to clench the pipe in his teeth out of habit.

Culpepper's the only member of the Andrews Expedition who's had any previous exposure to the Mythos. He's seen things in Egyptian tombs, and the Egyptian desert, related to Nyarlathotep, other Great Old Ones, and their servants. The Mythos

both terrifies him and arouses his scientific curiosity. The latter emotion will probably win out in the end — to his detriment.

Culpepper's most likely to respond to the use of Archaeology, History or a related Academic ability as an Interpersonal one, particularly if the Investigator's knowledgeable about his areas of greatest interest (ancient Egypt and ancient China). Attempts to use Credit Rating, Flattery or Intimidation only get his back up; he considers himself a man of unimpeachable integrity and doesn't respond well to such things.

Abilities: Anthropology 2, Archaeology 5, Athletics 1, Conceal 3, Credit Rating 3, Cthulhu Mythos 1, Firearms 2, First Aid 2, Geology 1, Health 5, History 5, Languages 5 (Ancient Egyptian, Arabic, Cantonese, Hebrew, Mandarin Chinese), Outdoorsman 2, Riding 1

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (.45 Colt M1911 pistol)

Jelme Erdeni,
Chief Camel Driver and Guide



Jelme Erdeni, a half-breed Mongolian-Chinese born in 1900, is the expedition's chief guide and camel driver. He worked with Andrews several times during his expeditions to Mongolia in the Twenties; the famed explorer trusts Erdeni implicitly — and with good reason. Erdeni is loyal (in part because Andrews pays him well), knows the territory and its people intimately and has a knack for getting things done. He's the one in charge of the vast camel trains that head into the desert in advance of Andrews's caravan of cars to drop off supply caches, among other crucial duties.

As the situation in the desert deteriorates, paranoia and fear quickly replace Erdeni's loyalty. He likes to show off his veneer of “modern sophistication,” but, deep down, he's just as superstitious as any nomadic tribesman, and the mysterious deaths will unhinge him. Things are likely to end tragically when he uses his gun or his whip to keep the Investigators and their colleagues away from him — or he flees with the lion's share of the supplies.

The best way for Investigators to appeal to Erdeni is through Riding (he loves camels [including racing them] and can talk about them ad nauseam), or the use of Credit Rating to touch his desire to seem “modern.” Flattery about how well he does his job usually also does the trick.

Abilities: Bargain 4, Driving 1, Firearms 3, Health 6, Languages 2 (English, Mandarin Chinese), Mechanical Repair 1, Outdoorsman 3, Riding 5, Weapons 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (Springfield 1873 rifle), -1 (bullwhip)

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Mythos Expeditions

Professor Natalie Finch,
Miskatonic University
Department of Geology



Professor Finch, born in 1874, has served on the Miskatonic faculty for nearly twenty years. Neither among the student body nor her colleagues is she known as a friendly or approachable individual — in fact, people often use the words “acerbic,” “rude,” and “short-tempered” to describe her — but there are few people on Earth who know as much about geology as she does.

Finch cares little for small talk or “trivial” matters (i.e., anything not related to geology or her other personal interests). Attempts to use Credit Rating, Reassurance or similar abilities on her are only going to get a rude reply or (at best) stony silence as she ignores the “interruption.” To get through to her, an Investigator must relate to her on her own playing field with Geology, Archaeology or some similar scientific discipline.

Abilities: Archaeology 2, Architecture 2, Chemistry 1, Explosives 1, Firearms 2, Fleeing 3, Geology 6, Health 5, Weapons 1

Weapon: +0 (pick)

Marcus Gruenwald,
Zoologist/Paleontologist,
American Museum of
Natural History



Marcus Gruenwald, born 1882, is much like Andrews in terms of his career — he’s been all over the world studying animals and digging up fossils. In the process he’s endured extreme weather, been shot at by (and returned fire at) hostile natives and found scientific treasures. But he lacks Andrews’s social connections and skills, and thus has always been relegated to secondary roles in expeditions such as this one — a position he’s increasingly come to resent.

Investigators can gain Gruenwald’s help in many ways. Someone with a high enough Credit Rating could

attract his interest if he makes an offer to finance an expedition of Gruenwald’s own, where he could at long last be the person in the spotlight. (Using Flattery to appeal to his insecurities can accomplish the same thing.) He enjoys talking about his work, so it’s easy to relate to him with Biology or similar academic abilities. He also likes to show off his outdoor skills, so an Investigator could lure him into a friendly rivalry (and eventually friendship) with Firearms, Riding or the like.

Abilities: Archaeology 2, Athletics 4, Biology 5, Credit Rating 3, Driving 2, Firearms 6, First Aid 3, Fleeing 5, Geology 1, Health 6, Intimidation 3, Languages 2 (Arabic, Spanish), Outdoorsman 5, Preparedness 1, Reassurance 2, Scuffling 4, Weapons 4

Alertness Modifier: +2

Weapon: +1 (Webley-Fosbery .38 revolver), +1 (Winchester Model 70 rifle)

Dmitri Ladinov,
Mongolian Government Official



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The Mongolian government insists that a “political representative” accompany the Andrews Expedition at all times while it’s in the country. This unpleasant duty falls to Dmitri Ladinov — who, as anyone can easily guess from his name, is really a servant of Moscow, not Ulan Bator. Ladinov is a spy and overseer here to ensure that the expedition members don’t support rebels against the Soviet Union or Mongolia, prospect for oil or minerals, or engage in other conduct “contrary to the interests of the glorious Mongolian people.”

Ladinov despises this duty. He’s a city man; being out in the wild, away from the comforts of civilization, annoys him. His attitude shows through in nearly everything he says and does. He dislikes pretty much everyone in the expedition, and the feeling is very, very mutual. Despite that, no one gets too upset with him, since he has the power to bring the entire expedition to a screeching halt.

Ladinov is suspicious of pretty much everyone, so getting him to help them will be a real challenge for the Investigators. Bureaucracy is probably their best bet; Ladinov is, after all, a cog in a vast government machine, and seems to enjoy being one. Flattery handled with *great* finesse might do it (a spend, or better two), but is just as likely to backfire. Bargain does the trick if they have something equally valuable to offer him, such as a tip that someone else in the expedition is a spy.

Abilities: Accounting 1, Assess Honesty 3, Athletics 1, Bargain 2, Bureaucracy 5, Credit Rating 3, Driving 1, Firearms 2, Flattery 3, Health 5, Interrogation 1, Intimidation 1, Languages 2 (English,

Mongolian), Reassurance 2, Scuffling 2

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (Tokarev TT-33 pistol)

Jane McCarren,
Expedition Photographer



Andrews wants to have his expeditions extensively documented (both for scientific and fundraising purposes), so he brings along an official photographer. McCarren, a well-known shutterbug whose work has been featured in *National Geographic*, *Asia Magazine* and many newspapers in America and Asia, is an “old China hand” who worked with him on his last expedition.

McCarren likes to think she’s “seen it all” and affects an air of unflappability. It’s not entirely an act, but she’s no less likely to go mad than anyone else in the expedition — especially if she starts seeing things through the lens that aren’t there when she looks with the naked eye.

McCarren is a sociable gal who gets along well with others, particularly hard-drinking, gambling “working people” like herself. Credit Rating, Flattery and Photography are the ways to reach her good side (especially the latter — she loves her work). Intimidation or acting “better” than she is are only likely to start a fistfight.

Abilities: Assess Honesty 3, Athletics 3, Bargain 2, Bureaucracy 2, Conceal 3, Cop Talk 1, Credit Rating 2, Driving 2, Filch 2, Firearms 3, Flattery 2, Fleeing 4, Health 6, Languages 2 (Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese), Outdoorsman 2, Photography 6, Riding 1, Scuffling 4, Streetwise 2

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (Winchester Model 70 rifle)

Bill Richmond,
Chief Mechanic and Driver



Bill Richmond grew up working in his father’s machine shop and garage, and he’s loved cars ever since he was old enough to realize what they were.

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Seeking adventure, he applied for a job with the Andrews Expedition and was hired as a mechanic. When the original chief mechanic got appendicitis in Peking, Richmond received a promotion. He's lived up to the responsibility well; Andrews and Williams have no complaints with his skills or work ethic.

As someone raised on the poor side of town, Richmond resents “stuck-up swells,” so using Credit Rating in any way that implies being superior or buying him off only earns his wrath. On the other hand, an appeal by a fellow “dirt under the fingernails” kind of person usually works. So will using Scuffling as an Interpersonal ability to beat him in a more-or-less friendly brawl over some meaningless thing; after that Richmond will consider the Investigator who trounced him a friend and fellow traveler.

Abilities: Assess Honesty 2, Driving 4, Electrical Repair 1, Firearms 2, Mechanical Repair 5, Scuffling 4, Sense Trouble 2

Alertness Modifier: +0

Weapon: +1 (Smith and Wesson Model 1917 revolver)

Frederica Williams, University of Chicago Department of Paleontology

Born in 1880, Frederica Williams comes from an old money Chicago family. The “Bone Wars” of the late nineteenth century captured her attention as a child and eventually led to her studying geology and zoology at the University of Chicago with the intention of becoming a paleontologist — a goal that, thanks to her family's finances, she succeeded at without a hitch. Although since 1930



she's primarily focused on teaching and institutional work, she participated in many field expeditions during the Twenties, and on one of them met Andrews and became good friends with him. She's the Andrews Expedition's second in command.

Williams comes across as an all-business kind of woman most of the time, especially since she's responsible for a lot of day-to-day details of running the expedition that Andrews doesn't want to bother with. She's most likely to respond to Reassurance (that whatever the Investigators want or are planning won't hurt the expedition) or to the use of an Academic ability as an Interpersonal ability.

Abilities: Anthropology 1, Athletics 1, Biology 4, Chemistry 1, Conceal 2, Credit Rating 7, Driving 1, Explosives 3, Firearms 1, Fleeing 3, Geology 4, Health 5, History 1, Outdoorsman 1, Preparedness 1

Other Expedition Members

The people described above aren't the only ones on the Andrews Expedition, of course — merely the most noteworthy, and the ones most likely to become suspects once the murders begin. Many lesser scientists also participate in the expedition, and, of course, they need plenty of assistants, servants and workers to help them. Over the years Andrews has built up a reliable core of native helpers — but of course they can't all be people he knows and trusts. If you want to drag more suspects across the Investigators' path, a surly or oddly acting Mongolian or Chinese worker may fit the bill perfectly. Here are some male given names you can use for these NPCs:

Chinese: An, Baio, Chen, Daquan, Fei, Gongquan, Haifeng, Hong, Hou, Jin, Juntao, Kien, Kuang, Liang, Ming-tun, Shangkun, Shing, Song, Tai-Sheng, Tung, Wei, Wu, Yang, Yiquan, Zhang

Mongolian: Alin, Altan, Badai, Bartan, Bukha, Charkhan, Chimbai, Dakhi, Daritai, Dorji, Garma, Guchuluk, Inancha, Jochi, Khadakh, Khasar, Khubilai, Khutula, Kiratai, Mairdar, Monglik, Nekun, Ogodei, Senge, Sengum, Sokhor, Taichar, Telegetu, Tsereng, Tukhu, Umitai, Yegu

ARRIVAL IN PEKING

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Out: Setting Off for the Gobi

Before the Investigators can head out into the back of beyond, they have to rendezvous with the rest of the Andrews Expedition in Peking. If they're in the United States, the expedition can arrange



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for them to meet up with Andrews and most of the rest of the personnel in San Francisco, from where the expedition plans to ship out. This may be a good opportunity for the Investigators to meet some of their colleagues for the trip — perhaps during a game of poker one evening, or over drinks in the ship’s bar.

If the Investigators aren’t in America, they have to get to Peking on their own (though the expedition may be able to contribute a small sum toward their travel expenses). Depending on where they are this may involve catching a flight, taking a trip on a tramp steamer or hitching a ride with a caravan from Leng. If you want to extend the scenario

a bit, this may be your opportunity to put the Investigators in peril or introduce extra elements of horror.

Peking

“IT IS THE MOST INTERESTING AND... DELIGHTFUL CITY IN THE WORLD.”

— ROY CHAPMAN ANDREWS
ON PEKING

Peking (or, officially, Peiping) is a hustling, bustling city that was the capital of China until 1928 (in the early Thirties that honor belongs to Nanking instead). Unlike most Chinese cities, which grew “organically,”

so that they’re a maze of streets confusing to outsiders (particularly foreigners), Peking’s laid out in a gridwork that makes it comparatively easy for the Investigators to get where they’re going. Of course, they have to contend with people, donkeys, cars, rickshaws, camels, bikes, horses and carts along the way, making it slow going.

Wherever the Investigators go, signs of China’s splendid past mix with the sordidness of the modern day: the Forbidden City, once off limits to ordinary people but now open to visitors; noblemen and their ladies in lavish attire mingling with nouveau riche merchants, White Russian refugees and wealthy foreigners; camel caravans from the west laden with goods moving

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down streets right next to motorcars; shops filled with wondrous and bizarre (to Western eyes) merchandise; people from Western lands who may be tourists, traders or spies. It can be an intoxicating place. If the Investigators want to do a little exploring or shopping, you might plant the seeds of a future adventure by having them stumble across an intriguing (and dangerous) artifact or manuscript — such as a scroll containing excerpts from the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan* in ancient Chinese.

At the same time, life in Peking isn't always tranquil. Dust storms from the north and west may strike; epidemics may ravage through the populace (foreigners, in their isolated legations and mansions, generally remain safe from such things). Worst of all is the potential threat posed by China's political instability. At any time fighting may shift nearer to the city, or a powerful warlord may set his sights on conquering it. So if you want to complicate the Investigators' lives with some foreign intrigue or some military action, feel free.

Andrews, divorced from his wife Yvette since March 30, 1931, still owns an old Manchu palace in Peking, with nearly two dozen servants and high walls to shield it from the troubles of China. The most honored members of the expedition stay there with him; for the rest he's arranged accommodations at the superb Hotel of Six Nations, a favorite among foreigners visiting the city.

Last Night in Town

The evening before the expedition sets out northward, Andrews hosts a lavish dinner at his Peking home. If the Investigators haven't yet met all

the other principle members of the expedition described above (except for Jelme Erdeni and Dmitri Ladinov, both of whom are already in Mongolia), now's the time for you to introduce them. Roleplay as long as you and the players enjoy it, either over the meal itself or cigars and brandy afterward. If any of the Investigators have anything strongly in common with one of the NPCs (such as a love of hunting), you can try to strike up a friendship between them on the basis of mutual interests.

If you can, plant the seeds to make at least two or three of the expedition scientists unlikeable so they make natural murderer suspects later on. For example, one of them may give a condescending answer to a question or express doubts about an Investigator's qualifications. Andrews can quickly smooth over any ruffled feathers — but the Investigators will remember.

If the Investigators want more information about Mongolia in advance, now's the time to provide it. Andrews can regale the group with tales from his previous expeditions (discovering dinosaur-egg fossils, fighting off bandits with a pistol, coping with storms...), Professor Banks can provide some details about the Mongolians or teach a few words of the language, and so forth.

SETTING OFF FOR THE GOBI

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Arrival in Peking

Lead-Outs: Reaching the Campsite, Bandit Encounter

With most of their gear and supplies having gone on ahead, the Investigators and the rest of the expedition personnel board a train for Kalgan, a trading center 145 miles northwest of Peking. Along the way they pass through the famed Great Wall of China.

From Kalgan the expedition sets out in a caravan of cars and trucks for its primary campsite. Realistically and historically, the expedition should detour far to the north to Ulan Bator, capital of Mongolia, to get more permits, deal with more bureaucratic red tape, pay more bribes and pick up Dmitri Ladinov. But unless you want to roleplay that you can bypass most of it with a brief bit of narration (after all, the Mythos is horrifying enough without exposing the Investigators to Asian bureaucrats, a sure source of Stability loss). Alternately, you can substitute a brief, spirited encounter with Mongolian border guards and assume Ladinov meets up with the expedition there.

The Land

Early on the going's not too bad, though hot and dusty. The Mongolian terrain generally consists of one of two types. The first is vast stretches of flat, mostly barren plains; this is the common topography in the east, central and southern regions of the country. The expedition can travel through these relatively easily; the Keeper shouldn't require any tests unless she wants to start out on a vindictive foot.

The northern, western and some parts of the southern regions of Mongolia aren't nearly as pleasant. They're a harsh, mountainous desert, similar in some ways to parts of the American



Dwellers in the Dunes

Southwest: cliffs, gorges; hills; canyons, escarpments, scree slopes, oddly shaped rock formations. The going in such places is much more difficult, if it's possible at all — but this is also where fossils are found, so that's where the expedition's setting its sights.

Survival loss for the four months in-country is thus +1 per month increment, or +0 if the Keeper feels like the Investigators have really worked to mitigate losses.

Desert Eyestrain

The Mongolians, and Andrews himself, often suffer from eyestrain in the desert. If appropriate, the Keeper may impose a penalty on any task involving eyesight when the daytime glare becomes too strong. The Mongols often wear “glasses” woven from horsehair, or made of pieces of wood with narrow slits cut in them, to diminish the problem.

Expedition Personnel

Once the caravan's well into Mongolia and there's no turning back, you can have some of the expedition members begin to cave in to the pressure and stress of the barren environment if you so desire. Some suggestions:

- **Andrews** becomes more eager. He doesn't want to stop for anything, even keeping the midday meal break to a minimum whenever possible.
- dedicated scientists like **Banks**, **Finch** and **Williams** want to stop for anything of even remote interest: Banks to speak with *every* native encountered, Finch to explore *any* notable geological formation, Williams to investigate *any* possible fossil site.

- **Culpepper** becomes more nervous and agitated, as if expecting the worst. He absolutely refuses to talk about it, though, insisting that he's fine.
- **Gruenwald** seems oddly unaffected — though also not especially talkative. **McCarren** is the same way, though she takes plenty of photographs.
- **Ladinov** becomes more suspicious and inquisitive, as if he can stave off impending disaster by poking his officious nose into everything. He also talks more and more about the glories of Communism. If anyone confronts him, he haughtily reminds them of his power to shut the expedition down.
- **Richmond** becomes obsessive about the cars, wincing over every little ding and jolt, and arguing with Andrews that the expedition should go slower so as not to ruin them.

Building the Suspense

Since the players know they're heading into a dangerous, horrifying experience for their Investigators, feed those fears! Besides potential encounters with bandits (see below), here are some bits of “flavor” you can throw in to stoke their suspicions:

- From a nearby ridge, a man watches the expedition pass. He seems oddly tall, long armed and gangly; even through binoculars it's difficult to make out his face.
- While on lunch break, one of the Investigators finds some unusual tracks. No one in the expedition can identify them. Gruenwald wants to follow them, but Andrews vetoes the plan, insisting they're ordinary antelope tracks distorted by the elements.

- The moon is an odd color one night: darker, almost... reddish.
- One evening, one of the Investigators finds a small fragment of rock near camp that seems to have writing on it. After examining it closely, Culpepper insists they're just ordinary, natural scratch marks, not letters; Finch isn't so certain but won't definitely state the marks are artificial.
- An expedition hunter (possibly an Investigator) brings down an antelope with a lucky shot. It seems like a perfectly healthy beast — but when it's cut open, its internal organs are oddly arranged and seemingly gangrenous. None of the Mongol or Chinese servants with the expedition will eat the animal's meat.

Bandit Encounter

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction (Tangential)

Lead-In: Setting Off for the Gobi

Lead-Out: Reaching the Campsite

The beings and forces of the Mythos aren't the only dangers lurking in the Gobi Desert. In fact, more mundane perils are a much greater threat at this stage of the expedition. In particular, Mongolia and northern China are rife with bandits. Andrews has fought off bandit raids on past expeditions, and may very well have to do so again with the help of the Investigators.

Many types of bandits could attack the Andrews Expedition. The most common are Mongolian tribesmen eager to enrich themselves at the expense of outsiders. They know the territory extremely well, but are relatively poorly armed with a variety of decades-old, well-used rifles. A deadlier possibility is renegade Chinese soldiers looking for anything of value or

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use — food, fuel, money, luxury items, ammunition. They have little discipline (otherwise they'd still serve with an actual army), and are, according to Andrews, “the world’s worst shot,” but they’re equipped with more modern firearms. Last but not least, the expedition might be unfortunate enough to run into a group of old White Russian fighters who fled into Mongolia to escape the Bolshevik victory in Russia and eventually took to mercenary work and banditry to survive. Although they’ve fallen far in the world, they’re tough, experienced soldiers who’ll put up a strong fight.

Mongolian Tribesmen

Abilities: Athletics 5, Firearms 5, Health 4, Outdoorsman 4, Scuffling 5, Weapons 4

Hit Threshold: 2

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (various rifles from the 1880–1910 period), –1 (knife)

Chinese Soldiers

Abilities: Athletics 6, Firearms 3, Health 5, Outdoorsman 2, Scuffling 5, Weapons 3

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (Hanyang 88 7.92mm rifle)

White Russian Soldiers

Abilities: Athletics 6, Firearms 6, Health 5, Outdoorsman 3, Scuffling 6, Weapons 3

Hit Threshold: 5

Alertness Modifier: +2

Weapon: +1 (Mosin-Nagant 7.62mm rifle)

Although most members of the Andrews Expedition don’t know much about fighting, more than enough of them do to mount a serious defense against any bandits — and that’s before you take the

Investigators into account. However, if Andrews deems it better not to get into a gun battle (or the Investigators persuade him this is the best course of action), any Investigator or NPC can use an appropriate Interpersonal ability to “negotiate” with the bandits. Bargain or Flattery is the best bet, though Intimidation may also work. The bandits will accept a “payoff” of 4 Survival points’ worth of supplies, –1 point for each point spent on an appropriate Interpersonal ability by an expedition member.

REACHING THE CAMPSITE

Scene Type: Refresh/Challenge

Lead-Ins: Setting Off for the Gobi, Bandit Encounter

Lead-Out: Fossils Are Discovered

After two weeks of grueling travel, the Andrews Expedition reaches its primary campsite. This cheers everyone, since it means reaching the bulk of the expedition’s supplies and thus restocking the Survival pool — a cause for an arrival-night feast, among other things. Any character who’s lost any Stability during the trip can refresh one die’s worth.

Lost Supplies

All this assumes, of course, that the supplies are still there. It’s possible that something bandits or Mongolian nomads may have found the expedition’s cache and made off with it — or at least some of it. If you want to inflict this sort of problem on the Investigators to keep the pressure on, reduce the amount of

The Mongolian Death Worm

On his 1922 expedition, the Mongolian government asked Andrews to recover specimens of a creature they called the *allergorhai horhai*, or olgoi-khorkhoi — the so-called “Mongolian death worm” that was said to live in the most desolate areas of the western Gobi. Andrews never found one, or even a Mongolian who claimed to have seen one, but he heard descriptions of it from dozens of natives that rarely varied: two feet long, red body like a sausage, no head or legs — and so poisonous that just touching it was fatal. Some stories also claimed it could spit acid and/or discharge electricity, thus allowing it to kill humans or animals from a distance.

Andrews didn’t believe the *allergorhai horhai* really existed, but he didn’t dismiss the possibility entirely. In a *Trail of Cthulhu* campaign, the obvious answer is that the creature exists and is related to the Mythos somehow. Perhaps it’s a minion of Tsathoggua, or a type of “pet” once kept by the proto-Tcho-Tcho that still survives in the wild. If you want to add more mystery and danger to this adventure, a Mongolian death worm or two may be the ideal way to do so.



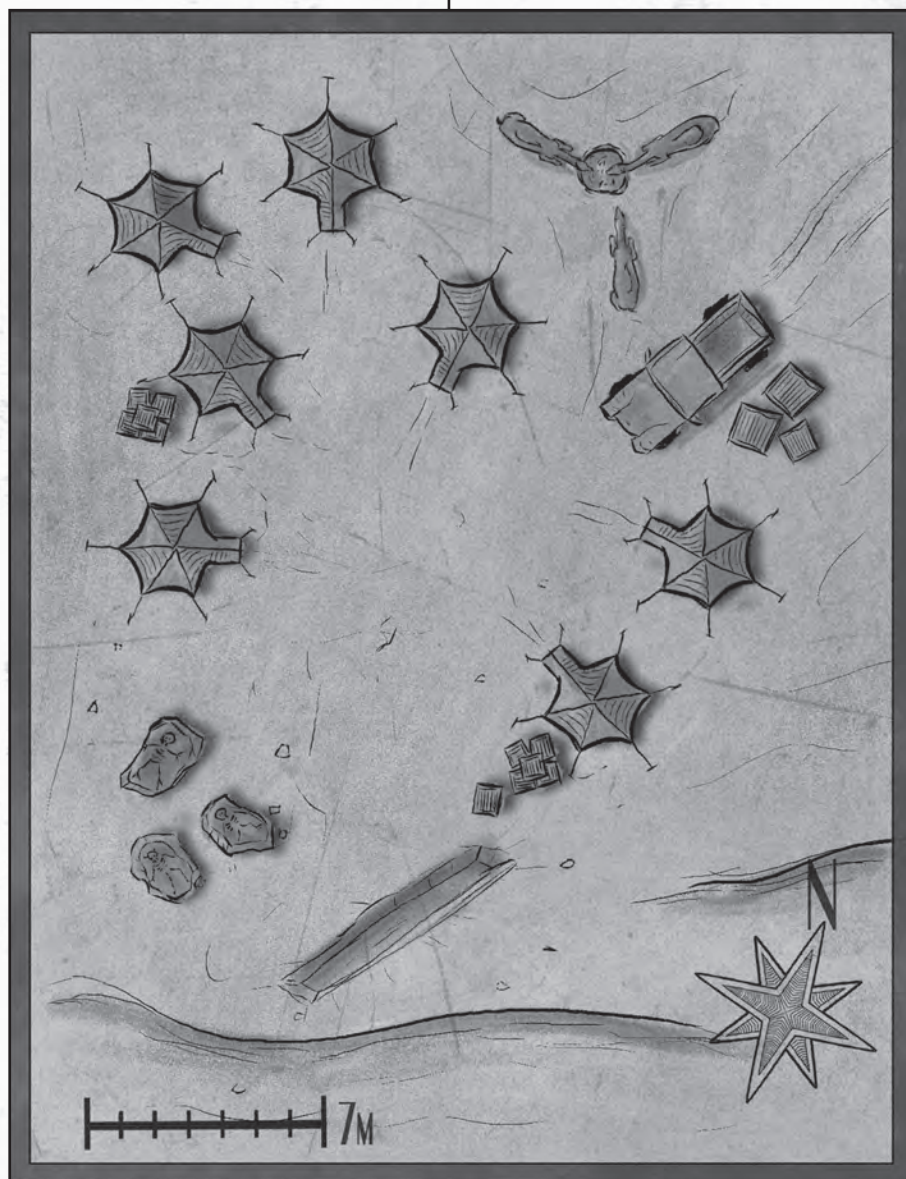
Dwellers in the Dunes

Survival points regained, and reduce or eliminate the Stability refresh.

Desert Storms

The Andrews Expedition intends to remain at the main campsite for months while it conducts its work. Some small

groups will make “sub-expeditions” to nearby areas of interest, but the main campsite remains the expedition’s focal point. That being the case, it’s vulnerable to attacks by large groups of bandits (see above), though due to the expedition’s size this is less of a threat than something the Investigators can’t prevent: storms.



At times the wind in the Gobi Desert can reach gale force levels, carrying along huge clouds of dust that threaten to bury the campsite and all its equipment. Depending on the direction of the winds, the dust may be ordinary sand (which is dangerous enough) or sediment from Mongolia’s cultivated regions. The latter is so fine grained that it can get into everything — even triple-boxed or -wrapped items.

A storm reduces visibility to almost nothing, and the loud winds (“a thousand shrieking demons,” according to one of Andrews’s accounts) make it nearly impossible to hear anything. Out in the isolation of the Gobi, with the forces of the Mythos already preying on the minds of the Expedition’s members, the eerie noises of the storm require a 2-point Stability test.

Coping with the storm requires a 6-point Survival test (Difficulty 4); otherwise equipment is ruined, food is fouled and so forth. Additionally some minor expedition members may lose their lives.

If a storm occurs after the expedition discovers the Gobi Sleepers, it’s not a natural storm, but instead something the Sleepers (or their god) evoke. In that case, increase the Survival test to 7 points, at Difficulty 5. Pick one Investigator at random. He sees strange, swirling shapes in the dust, humanoid shapes he can’t entirely explain or dismiss. He must make a 2-point Stability test against a Difficulty of 4.

Field Units

Since the members of the expedition can’t all do the work they want to do in the same place (the main campsite), field units go out to other parts of the Gobi

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where the scientists want to investigate and explore. Each field unit has its own driver, Mongolian interpreter, cook and necessary supplies. Thus, the expedition sometimes ends up with as many as three or four total camps that may be twenty to a hundred miles apart. If you want to extend or expand on the scenario, you can send the Investigators off with a field unit and have them discover some Mythos horror of your own invention.

FOSSILS ARE DISCOVERED

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Reaching the Campsite

Lead-Out: The Killings Begin

The day after the expedition arrives at its campsite, its true work begins in earnest. Mongolian and Chinese laborers set up the tents and get the camp running, scientists and the Investigators begin looking for fossils, and sub-expeditions prepare to set out in search of their own specific goals. Almost immediately animal fossils begin to accumulate in the working tents as expedition personnel make countless finds. Within a week the expedition is well on its way to qualifying as another triumphant success for Roy Chapman Andrews. Due to this initial success and the benefits of good, hard work, all Investigators and major NPCs get to make a confidence roll to refresh some Stability.

The Sleepers

Unfortunately things are about to descend into horror and madness, and all because of what seems like the greatest success of all. Ten days after

the expedition's arrival (or at a later point, if you want to drag things out and run down the Survival pool), one of the younger Mongolian workers rushes into camp to say that Andrews has made a tremendous discovery! No Investigators worth their Sanity can resist an announcement like that, so they join many other expedition members in following the young man back to where Andrews went to prospect for fossils.

There they find something amazing. Andrews has at long last uncovered evidence that mankind first evolved in Central Asia! After noticing what appeared to be the top of a human skull, Andrews and his assistants began limited digging and have uncovered what seem to be a group of three completely intact male hominid skeletons. The skeletons are markedly shorter than modern Europeans' — more in line with various pygmy peoples of Africa and Asia — but they're unquestionably hominid.

The rest of the expedition's work nearly grinds to a halt as eager scientists help Andrews uncover the fossils (which he calls "the Gobi Sleepers"), assist in other ways or just stand around and watch. The mood of jubilation soon changes to one of bafflement, then mild unease, as more and more of the skeletons' anatomies are uncovered. No one can quite put their finger on it (yet), but something about them is... wrong. In fact it's so wrong that anyone helping dig out the fossils suffers an automatic Stability loss of 2, and anyone watching automatically loses 1 Stability point.

If the Investigators press for details about why the Sleepers disturb them,

once the fossils are completely dug out of the ground. Investigators with **Anthropology** or **Archaeology** can uncover the following clues:

- **(core)** The odds of finding an intact hominid skeleton, never mind three at once, are mind-bogglingly high. Most hominid fossils are just one or a few bones, often no more than a tooth or two. Andrews has always had a large streak of luck, but this is beyond the pale. Could someone — or something — be manipulating events?
- **(1 point)** The skulls seem to be at least as well-developed as those of Cro-Magnon fossils, but still have thick browridges (that don't really look like those on Neanderthal skulls, either). This combination of traits makes no sense — for humans or any of their known ancestors.
- **(1 point)** The proportions of the limb bones don't seem right. They're only "off" by the tiniest amounts, but it's enough to raise an expert's hackles. The arm bones are just a bit too long, the leg bones just a bit too short.
- **(0 point)** The pelvis bones aren't quite right. Again, the difference isn't something a layman could even see, but it creates questions in an educated Investigator's mind that have no satisfactory answers. Also, the skeletons' ribs and spines are unusually thick and sturdy, even allowing for their stage of development.

Working With the Fossils

It takes a couple days, but Andrews and his helpers eventually free the rock holding the skeletons from the surrounding stone and haul it back to the camp so they can carefully dig the bones out in controlled conditions. This is exacting, time-consuming work, so



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any Investigator or other expedition member with an Anthropology or Archaeology rating of at least 4 is welcome to help ease the burden.

Unfortunately for any helpers, spending that much time working with or studying the Sleepers isn't good for one's state of mind. For each day spent on those activities, a character automatically loses 1d3 Stability points. For less than a full day's exposure, a character incurs a proportionate loss.

Expedition Personnel

The increasing atmosphere of terror and insanity affects the NPCs with the expedition even more strongly than it does the Investigators. Here are some suggestions for how they react:

- **Andrews** becomes obsessed with the three skeletons. He starts to sleep only a few hours a night, and spends

every waking minute working on the Sleepers, studying them, "helping" McCarren photograph them and so on. The lower his Stability sinks, the worse his obsession becomes. Before long he's ignoring his other duties as the expedition's leader, creating administrative problems.

- **Banks** ignores the Sleepers unless directly ordered by Andrews to help (they upset him for some reason he can't really articulate). Instead he spends more and more time each day driving out to talk to local Mongolian communities, seeking among their linguistic forms and folklore for clues about human evolution in the region. The more comfortable the natives become talking to him, the more some of their holy men reveal, and the lower his Stability becomes from the implications of their folktales and lore. (It drops slightly lower every two days or so.) He comes back to

the camp by dinnertime each day until he becomes **shaken**, at which point he "goes native" unless forcibly returned to camp.

- **Culpepper** is almost as attracted to the Gobi Sleepers as Andrews. As his Stability erodes, he becomes convinced Andrews is "keeping things" from him, and they argue loudly and frequently. Andrews never bars him from helping, though — not even after their disagreements lead to fistfights (that Culpepper always loses).
- **Erdeni** stays with the other Mongolian and Chinese laborers in their camp away from the expedition's main camp. He doesn't want anything to do with *any* of the fossils (a marked change from his behavior on previous Andrews expeditions), and if necessary violently resists being brought close to them.
- **Finch's** antisocial personality traits worsen to the point where she outright insults anyone who tries to interact with her. She spends most of her time studying local rock formations, and digging holes whose purpose no one can discern and she won't explain. (The holes are large and deep enough to contain a human body.)
- **Gruenwald** also takes a social turn for the worse, becoming so obviously jealous of and bitter toward Andrews that the expedition's leader forbids him to enter the tent where the Sleepers fossils are worked on, and has publicly told him to shut his mouth on more than one occasion. Gruenwald continues to do his job with top-notch professionalism, but his feelings toward Andrews often sour the camp's social interactions.

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- **Ladinov** spends most of his time drinking, as if he's trying to blind himself to (personal?) demons. If anyone tries to take away his alcohol he becomes surly, and possibly violent. He still keeps an eye on things, but doesn't devote much effort to it, because he knows he has little power so far from civilization.
- **McCarren** continues to take plenty of photographs, but seems to have a hard time holding her hands steady. Perhaps she sees something through the lens that she can't see with her naked eyes, and it terrifies her — but she refuses to discuss it because everyone will think she's gone insane. If anyone presses her on the issue, she becomes gruff and angry, and eventually hostile if not left alone.
- **Richmond** acts normally during the day, but at night seems captivated by the stars. He walks far enough away from the lights of camp that nothing interferes with his vision and stares up at the sky for hours. Occasionally he makes cryptic comments about things he's "seen" among the constellations, but then clams up and refuses to even discuss it.
- **Williams** devotes half her time to scientific work, half to handling expedition details that Andrews ignores. Of all the named NPCs she seems the most "normal," but also goes out of her way to avoid seeing the Sleepers at all — almost as if she fears one more glance will cause her to break down.

Building the Suspense

This is another point in the scenario when you should work to maintain the suspense. It's almost time to unleash the main event (the killings), so ideally you want the Investigators frazzled and the players on

the edge of their seats. The effect of the proto-Tcho-Tcho fossils should help you with that; here are some more events you can work into the narrative to heighten the dramatic tension:

- The members of a sub-expedition that went two days' travel to the north in search of animal fossils stumble back into camp. They don't have their vehicles or gear, and appear to have been subjected to some sort of attack, though their wounds aren't those of fists, knives or bullets — more like claws, fangs and abnormally long fingers. None of them are coherent or capable of sustained speech; all they can say is "the eyes in the cloud, the eyes in the cloud" a few times before lapsing back to a semi-catatonic state for hours. If the Investigators or anyone else goes in search of their campsite, they find nothing — no cars, no tools, not even footprints or any other sign anyone was ever there.
- Gruenwald insists that the Sleeper fossils speak to him. His work practically grinds to a halt as he stands next to the bone tent for hours, head cocked to one side, listening intently. Occasionally he responds as if to a comment or question, usually with just a few words ("I see"; "Yes, I agree"), but sometimes with long, quasi-philosophical/-mystical ramblings. But he refuses to tell anyone what he hears, insisting the messages are for him alone.
- The wind forms patterns in the dust that look like some strange, mysterious, disturbing script. No one in the camp can read it — and before anyone can write it down, another breeze comes along and blows it away.
- A group of half a dozen monks from a (relatively) nearby monastery

comes to visit the expedition. They seat themselves just outside the camp (making sure they're not in anyone's way). They spend the next three hours praying and chanting in a language no one recognizes (it's not Mongolian). Once finished, they stand up and leave. They won't speak to anyone or respond to questions; if confronted with physical force they peacefully withdraw. (In truth the monks know nothing useful; they can sense a "darkness" around the camp and are using ancient chants against evil they don't even understand themselves — unless you want them to.)

- Odd dust storms occur — they appear seemingly out of nowhere, then only last for a few minutes instead of hours.

THE KILLINGS BEGIN

Scene Type: Core, Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: Fossils Are Discovered

Lead-Out: Escaping the Gobi

Once you've built the suspense to a proper pitch, it's time to break the dam.

The Investigators awaken one morning to learn that a member of the expedition — a geologist named Miles Harper, unless you want to use one of the named NPCs for dramatic impact — has been murdered. The body lies spread-eagled on the ground some ways away from camp. The killer crudely cut open Harper's chest and ripped out his heart; the killer then drew a circle and other strange markings on the ground around the body using Harper's blood.

The body, in conjunction with the blood drawings, qualifies as a "particularly





grisly murder scene,” thus anyone who sees it faces a 3-point Stability test.

Investigating the Murder

Core clue: Evidence Collection shows there are no tracks, blood trails or noteworthy marks on the corpse. That fact tells the Investigators that something abnormal is going on.

A 1-point **Cthulhu Mythos** spend recognizes some of the signs on the ground as being similar to runes and signs used for life extension spells found in certain Mythos tomes. They’re not exactly the same, though — they seem more “primitive” and crude, as if drawn by someone who learned them long before those books

were penned. Or perhaps it’s because writing on the ground with human blood isn’t as easy as writing on paper with ink.

A 2-point **Anthropology** spend brings to light the fact that the signs resemble those used by certain South Asian shamanistic cults for spells involving the projection of the spirit during meditation.

The Killers

As mentioned above, the killers aren’t human — they’re proto-Tcho-Tchos. The Sleeper bones are those of proto-Tcho-Tcho shamans whose spirits have lingered near the remains for hundreds of thousands of years. Although their magic is “primitive” by “modern” standards, it is strong (as ancient wisdom so often is in *Trail of Cthulhu*). Among other things, the

shamans have the power to animate their bones so they can affect the physical world. If they can sacrifice enough humans to their blasphemous gods, they can restore flesh to their bones and walk the world again, spreading horror and death. Furthermore, if they succeed they’ll become the leaders of the worldwide Tcho-Tcho community, giving them even greater resources with which to spread their evil.

As spirits, the Sleepers can only be affected by magic, and have a limited ability to affect the physical world. If necessary for you to weave the most maddening mystery possible, allow them to take over a person’s thoughts using Mind Exchange (but only at night, so that the victim thinks the whole thing is a strange, unsettling dream). In

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their skeletal form — with an eerie, St. Elmo's fire-like luminescence binding the bones together and with tiny bits (or even large chunks) of stone still clinging to them — use the accompanying character information. They only speak a proto-Tcho-Tcho language, though, making communication difficult at best.

Proto-Tcho-Tcho Shamans (Skeleton Form)

Abilities: Astronomy 2, Athletics 5, Cthulhu Mythos 5, Fleeing 5, Health 8, Intimidation 5, Magic 8, Missiles 6, Outdoorsman 4, Scuffling 6, Theology 5, Weapons 4

Alertness Modifier: +3

Weapon: +1 (claw-like finger bones)

Spells: Brew Space-Mead, Call/Dismiss Hastur, Compound Liao, Contact Nyarlathotep, Contact Tsathoggua, Dho-Hna Formula, Dread Name Of Azathoth, Enchant Item, Hoy-Dhin Chant, Mind Exchange, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, Summon/Bind Hunting Horror, Vach-Viraj Incantation

Armor: -3 vs. any (stony form, encrusted rock)

Stability Loss: +2

The Suspects

The proto-Tcho-Tchos are clever and vicious enough to try to cover up their scheme by making it look as if some member of the expedition committed the murders. They don't care who the Investigators focus on as long as the situation remains unstable so they can go on sacrificing people until they complete their ritual of restoration. (How long this takes is up to you as the Keeper, but in theory either the Investigators figure out the plan and stop the Sleepers, or spreading insanity causes the entire expedition to fail,

leaving the world exposed to the Sleepers' threat.)

The proto-Tcho-Tchos perform one sacrifice per night as long as they can get away with it. They won't, for example, animate their bones if someone's in the tent where Andrews stores the fossils. Nor will they carry victims off unless they can do so without being seen. Fortunately, the servants' camp offers plenty of opportunities to snatch victims undiscovered even if the Investigators keep a close eye on the main expedition camp.

From this point on, you have to juggle the ongoing events and the Investigators' actions to draw the mystery out as long as possible while also maintaining the tension and horror. Ideally the Investigators should figure out what's happening and put an end to it just before they go irretrievably insane, thus giving them some chance to make it out of the Gobi alive and intact. But of course this is *Trail of Cthulhu*, and even in a more Pulpish adventure there are no promises.

You can put forward nearly any known member of the expedition as a suspect — by now they should have reason enough to dislike (or at least wonder about) all of them. For example:

- **Andrews** spends so much time with the Sleeper fossils no one ever sees him. He claims he heads back to his tent and sleeps when he's done for the day, but is that *really* what he's up to?
- **Banks** isn't present in camp much anymore; he knows a lot about the countryside and could easily plan and execute the killings.
- **Culpepper** quarrels with Andrews so much, and so vocally, that if either of

them ends up dead the other instantly becomes a suspect.

- **Erdeni** rarely socializes with the members of the expedition and probably resents them. After all, he's one of those primitive heathens!
- **Finch** is so hateful and annoying that anyone else in the expedition would love to pin the killings on her so they could "get rid of her" (one way or another).
- **Gruenwald's** bitterness and jealousy toward Andrews makes either of them a suspect if the other's killed. Also, the way he talks to the Sleeper fossils indicates his mental state is suffering...
- **Ladinov** would obviously prefer to see the expedition fail, or find a way to take credit for its discoveries. As a Communist he's not trustworthy on any level.
- **McCarren** moves around so much, trying to take pictures of everything, that it's hard for anyone to keep track of where she is and what she's doing.
- **Richmond** spends so much time stargazing he's rarely seen at night, when the killings occur. (This also makes him a likely victim of the Sleepers.)
- **Williams** seems the least likely suspect — which of course probably makes the Investigators suspect her all the more.

More Murders

The Sleepers continue their sacrifices until they're stopped or they achieve their objective of returning themselves to a fleshly existence (at which point they'll flee southward, heading for Burma (or some other place they expect to find Tcho-Tchos, if there's one closer). You can have them choose their victims to help the Investigators cross suspects off their list, or stick to unnamed NPCs to maintain as much mystery as possible.

Each succeeding murder resembles the one described above in all important



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particulars: none of the usual forensic evidence; victim's chest crudely cut open by the Sleepers' claw-like finger bones and heart ripped out; circle and strange markings drawn in the victim's blood (the markings change over time as the Sleepers' spell progresses).

If you can get the Investigators (or some named NPCs) sufficiently focused on one suspect to the point where they accuse him and kill him, so much the better. When the next murder occurs, their Stability suffers from the realization that they murdered an innocent man.

Of course, you can use the investigation itself to intensify the tension and erode the Investigators' Stability. They may pursue strange shapes in the darkness only to come upon Mongolian workers filching supplies, hear strange noises they can't explain, or experience the oddest dreams in which they "watch" another murder take place (because a Sleeper's used Mind Exchange on one of them). If one of them snaps, perhaps he begins committing copycat killings...

Stopping the Sleepers

The easiest way to stop the Sleepers' scheme is to smash their bones to powder. That deprives their spirits of a physical "anchor" to the world, sending them wailing into the Outer Darkness. Andrews (and possibly some other expedition personnel) absolutely opposes this, with force if necessary. He'll kill the Investigators (or anyone else) to protect the fossils and ensure he can get them back to civilization safely.

If any of the Investigators have the capacity to cast spells, performing a counter-magic ritual to "disrupt" or "deflect" the proto-Tcho-Tcho ritual and cause it to fail might be possible. But this will require studying at least three sacrifices' worth of symbols, which in and of itself threatens the Investigator's Stability (if not Sanity). And this method still leaves the Sleepers as a potential threat to humanity.

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Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-In: The Killings Begin

By the time the Investigators discover what's going on and put a stop to it — if they can do either — the expedition's in tatters. Death has taken its toll, insanity afflicts most of the personnel to one degree or another, and the survivors don't necessarily trust one another. Even though the expedition has enough supplies to stay in the field for months, everyone realizes (or should realize) that the best thing to do is return to civilization.

Getting back won't necessarily be easy, though. All the dangers the expedition faced on the way out could threaten it on the return trip. One bright spot: assuming nothing's happened to the camp's supply stash, carrying more than enough food and gear for the trip home is easy.

How much travail you want to put the Investigators through on the way home is up to you. If they survived, Sanity more or

less intact, to this point, most likely they deserve to fight another day. But this is *Trail of Cthulhu*, and sometimes a faint glimmer of hope near the end only makes the horrific conclusion all the more tragic. In this case perhaps the proto-Tcho-Tcho spirits survive by taking over members of the expedition and continuing the killings, or as a final act of evil they call up the Mother of All Dust Storms.

Exits and Rewards

Making it back to civilization is its own sweet reward. In a Pulp game, stopping the Sleepers refreshes 1 Sanity pool point.

FOR FURTHER READING

If you want to know more about Roy Chapman Andrews and his expeditions into Central Asia, there are plenty of books you can read. The best modern history of Andrews and his work is *Dragon Hunter*, by Charles Gallenkamp, but Andrews himself wrote numerous books, including:

Across Mongolian Plains

Camps and Trails in China

Ends of the Earth

The New Conquest of Central Asia

On the Trail of Ancient Man

Under a Lucky Star

The Mother of Malaria

"THREE TIMES, HOWEVER, HE HAD TAKEN LONG, LONE JAUNTS TO STRANGE AND DISTANT PLACES IN HIS STUDIES OF EXOTIC FEVERS AND HALF-FABULOUS PLAGUES."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT, "THE LAST TEST"

"THOUGH THE MALARIAL INCIDENCE DURING THE YEAR HAS INCREASED, PROVIDED THE USUAL PRECAUTIONS ARE TAKEN AGAINST INFECTION BY MOSQUITOES (THE USE OF A MOSQUITO NET, MOSQUITO BOOTS, ETC.), AND A DAILY DOSE OF QUININE IS TAKEN, THERE IS NO PART OF NORTHERN RHODESIA IN WHICH THIS DISEASE NEED ALARM THE INTENDING SETTLER OR HIS FAMILY."

— D. M. KENNEDY, "NORTHERN RHODESIA REPORT FOR 1930"

The Hook

Professor H. C. Kelston of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine both loves and hates anopheles mosquitoes. Every day he wakes up thinking about the damnable creatures, so perfectly designed by evolution for fecundity. They breed with the aid of our blood. In collecting it, these ignorant, unthinking, indifferent creatures drive their microscopic weapons into our flesh. In so doing, they infect thousands every day with malaria. Those lucky enough to receive quinine treatment in hospital generally recover. The vast majority of

anopheles victims, however, deprived by poverty and isolation of the fruits of modern medicine, succumb and die. No vaccine for malaria exists, or is likely to be developed in the near future.

Kelston seeks a better way to end the disease's reign of terror — by learning to control, and eventually exterminate, the mosquito itself.

After expeditions to Egypt, Panama and Greece, Kelston now trains his angry scientific eye on the British colony of North Rhodesia, in whose Busango Swamp is said to fester the Mother of Mosquitoes.

The Investigators prepare to join him on that quest.

Ask the players to suggest why they might want to join a London professor on his journey into Africa's heart of mosquito darkness. Pick one lead Investigator to motivate, assuming that the rest come along out of comradeship. Throw out appropriate prompts from this list if they find themselves stumped.

Professions:

- An **Archaeologist** may be interested in the iron workings and rock carvings of Northern Rhodesia, also said to be found in or on the way to the Busango Swamp.
- A **Clergy** member wishes to learn about the colony's efforts to properly school its diverse native population.

Torn From History

A researcher named H. S. Leeson specialized in anopheles mosquitoes, identifying several subspecies. He took part in an entomological expedition to Southern Rhodesia that lasted from 1926–1928. Any other resemblance between him and the doomed H. C. Kelston is purely coincidental.

A final skirmish between paramilitary police and dead-ender slavers did occur in Northern Rhodesia in 1900.

Facts about the protectorate supplied to Investigators adept in History and Anthropology are accurate. Scientific facts reflect the knowledge of the time, which may have been later superseded, for example in the case of theories about the origins of the Pleiades.

- A **Dilettante** thinks this might be less boring than another round of society parties.
- A **Doctor** wishes to see his profession from the research side.
- A **Nurse** interested in the work of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical



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Medicine hopes to prove herself to that heroic institution.

- A **Professor** may be interested in the unique geology and zoology of the Busango Swamp, or in the etiology and epidemiology of malaria, or in the ethnography of southern Africa.
- A **Scientist** shares Kelston's objectives.

Drives:

- **Adventure:** "You haven't really faced danger until you've plumbed the depths of the Dark Continent, say what?"
- **In the Blood:** "Some primal impulse lures me to Africa."
- **Scholarship / Thirst for Knowledge:** "Our knowledge of the breeding habits of the anopheles mosquito merely scratches the surface."

Abilities:

- **Anthropology:** Time among the various Bantu peoples will fill in a key gap in that paper you're writing.
- **Cthulhu Mythos:** You fear that the "Mother of Mosquitoes" is a translation of something far more ominous than malarial infection. Yet until you see for yourself, you dare not suggest this to a distinguished "civilian" like Kelston.
- **Geology:** A contact in the North Rhodesian mining industry tells you of the importance of Kelston's work.

THE SPINE

The sojourners get an early taste of the region's dangers when a locust swarm interferes with their landing at the **Broken Hill Aerodrome**. They move to rendezvous with the rest of the party at **The Hotel Mazabuka**, where hints of emotional contamination bubble beneath a placid colonial surface. Then they begin the quest in earnest, heading

into the **Busango Swamp** and soon its **Corrupted Zone**. Several debilitating travel increments later, they encounter opportunities to piece together the horrible truth when encountering a **(Mostly) Dead Ethnologist** and by finding the **Skin of Faisal al-Kharbi**. At this point, memories surface for an expedition member in **Chalkley Remembers**. As they face further deprivations, cartographic insight reveals the **Spawn of the Pleiades**, leading them to the **Mother of Malaria** and a terrible question — to save thousands of lives, what would you do to your own?

Structurally, this scenario consists of an arduous and horrific journey, in keeping with the *Mythos Expeditions* remit. Character interactions preceding its main action, from the Busango Swamp onward, bring out the theme of colonialism as a disease infecting colonized and colonizer alike. They also perform the usual GUMSHOE task of giving the Investigators opportunities to gather information. Your players may decide to interact with them heavily, get to know them and further their own personal agendas and peccadilloes. Or they might extract a bare minimum of factual intelligence and be on their way into the marsh. Either way, they're doing it right. The NPCs who circle the Hotel Mazabuka are trapped in an emotional and spiritual stasis, owing in part to the supernatural influence of the thing in the swamp. If the Investigators go out of their way to acquaint themselves, you'll find the material here that allows you to do that. If not, the locals stick to their personal hells. They do not pop out from vestibules to present themselves as plot lines demanding to be followed.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

The Arab-run slave trade continued in the region until the last decade of the 19th century, when it was finally smashed by British forces. The campaign against them commenced in 1893, climaxing the following year with the defeat and subsequent hanging of the Arab slaver chieftain Mlozi. British soldiers intercepted and freed the last slave caravan in 1898. The last recorded skirmish with slavers occurred two years later.

Suppressed details of that final incident lay behind the malignance called the Mother of Malaria. That slaving party, consisting of apostates from Islam, sought to reverse the British victory by conducting a ritual offering to long-forbidden gods to restore slavery to mankind. Its leader, Faisal al-Kharbi, of mixed Yemeni and Nyakyusa heritage, bore a tattoo of a piece of ceremonial poetry across his flesh, placed there on the orders of his father Saeed, who claimed descent from the writer Abd-al-Hazred. The text was a mystical formula calling on the Outer Gods.

In his hopes for the return of his livelihood, Faisal misread the text, as had Saeed before him. It promised not to restore slavery to mankind, but to restore mankind to its former state of slavery.

The ritual bade them to make a human sacrifice at a site of corrupt fecundity. Al-Kharbi selected, aptly, the Busango Swamp, and kidnapped seven Bantu children to serve as the gift to Azathoth. A British patrol interrupted them, shooting Faisal, and at least one of the children. The slaver-sorcerers escaped

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Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/ Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Air travel (none)	Broken Hill Aerodrome	See p. 56	See p. 56
Town (none)	Hotel Mazabuka (Hazel Konstam)	See p. 57	See p. 57
Scrubland (−1)	<i>Setting Out (More mutant locusts)</i>	<i>Mechanical Repair (fix bug-fouled gear)</i>	1–3
Jungle (+0)	<i>Setting Out (Humidity breeds dehydration)</i>	<i>First Aid</i>	1–3
Hills (+0)	<i>Setting Out (Avoid hyenas)</i>	<i>Fleeing</i>	1–3
River crossing (+1)	<i>Setting Out (Fast current)</i>	<i>Athletics</i>	2–4
Jungle (+0)	Setting Out (Anopheles mosquitoes (non-mutant))	Medicine	2–5
Swamp (+1)	<i>Busango Swamp (Drowning hazard)</i>	<i>Athletics</i>	1–3
Swamp (+1)	<i>Busango Swamp (Crocodiles)</i>	<i>Athletics/Fleeing or Firearms</i>	1–3
Swamp (+1)	<i>Busango Swamp (Lechwe (antelope) stampede)</i>	<i>Biology</i>	1–3
Swamp (+1)	Infected Poachers	N/A	N/A
Swamp (+2)	The Corrupted Zone	Reassurance	2–6
Swamp (+2)	The (Mostly) Dead Ethnologist	A spend in Anthropology or Outdoorsman	Refresh 1–3
Swamp (+2)	The New Mosquito	N/A	N/A
Swamp (+2)	Mother of Malaria	N/A	N/A
Return (+0)		N/A	N/A

Increments in *italics*, above, can be relatively easily compressed into a line or two of color and setup and a Survival test (or test of the Relief ability).

Base the Survival loss or refresh amount for each increment on how many of the hazards you play out, using the higher numbers if you skip Survival tests for many of the italicized increments.

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without the captives, taking with them a mortally wounded al-Kharbi.

The patrol combed the area for the slavers, finding al-Kharbi's tattooed skin slung between trees like a banner. After a brush with something else disturbing, they left the area, their minds already suppressing the full extent of what they saw in the swamp. The slavers' ritual had opened a small fissure between this realm and the cosmic voice, through which suppurred a Mythos entity of surpassing obscurity, the Mother of Malaria.

The resulting larval creature quietly spreads its alien wrongness through the swamp, "Colour Out of Space"-style. Its influence feeds an increasingly virulent malaria outbreak and generates most of the dangers confronting the group on its African expedition. Ultimately it aims to change the very nature of malaria, so humanity can no longer find refuge from it, anywhere on the planet.

TOUR AND TRAVEL

Survival Pool

The team's Survival pool starts at 34.

EXPEDITION PERSONNEL

Professor H. C. Kelston, Expedition Leader

A trim man in his mid-thirties, Kelston carries himself with the clipped authority befitting his experience in the field. In the movie he would be played by a young Ralph Fiennes. His reserve drops a notch, in favor of messianic determination, when



he turns to his key topic, the scourge of the anopheles mosquito. Repurpose this scenario's introductory text into a monologue for him.

To reveal his given name would be an informality, but if any of the group happens to be an old Etonian like himself, he permits that person to address him as Howard. Otherwise, "Professor" will do splendidly, thank you.

A rationalist supreme, Kelston falls apart as the supernatural root of the malaria menace grows increasingly evident. This leaves the Investigators in charge of handling the threat and getting out alive.

Abilities Anthropology 5, Archaeology 2, Athletics 5, Biology 4, Credit Rating 5, Driving 2, Firearms 6, First Aid 1, Fleeing 5, Geology 1, Health 7, Languages 2 (Greek, Latin) Medicine 3, Outdoorsman 1, Preparedness 3, Reassurance 2, Scuffling 5, Weapons 2
Alertness Modifier: +0

Weapon: +0 (Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 carbine), +1 (.45 Colt M1911 pistol), -1 (knife)

Bert Chalkley, Local Expert



Big, bluff and outwardly cheerful, Bert Chalkley, originally of Newcastle, has been kicking around Rhodesia since the end of the last century. Now in his sixties but still hearty and ready for action, Bert makes his living as a guide and surveyor. Kelston hired him as his expert on local conditions through contacts at the Broken Hill mine.

Though not a man who revisits his past, Chalkley gives off the unmistakable air of a former noncommissioned officer. On a 1-point **Oral History** spend, he opens up about his career. Initially a sergeant in the British army, he transferred to the paramilitary police force of the British South Africa Company, where in the waning years of the 19th century he took a humble part in operations under Sir Harry Johnston to quash the slave trade.

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He served with the Northern Rhodesia police from their formation in 1902 until 1919. After an unsatisfying stint as a manager at a mine, he went back to life in the outdoors, taking guide and surveying jobs as they arose.

Chalkley has suppressed all memory of his patrol's confrontation with slavers north of the swamp in 1900; for more on this, see "Chalkley Remembers," below.

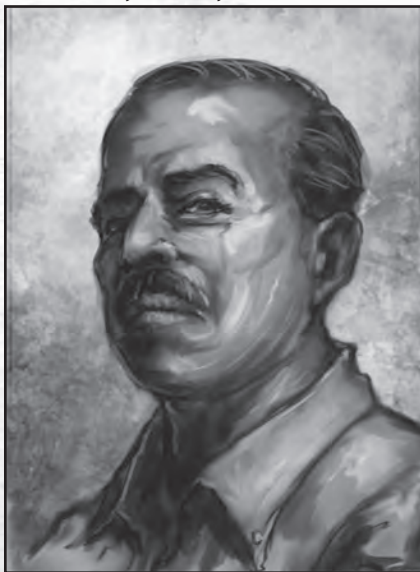
His habitual good humor deserts him only when others question his mastery of bush lore.

Abilities Athletics 8, Biology 1, Craft 2, Credit Rating 2, Driving 2, Firearms 8, First Aid 2, Geology 1, Health 7, Intimidation 2, Languages 4 (Afrikaans, Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga), Medicine 3, Outdoorsman 4, Preparedness 3, Scuffling 5, Weapons 2

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 carbine), +1 (.45 Colt M1911 pistol), -1 (knife)

S. P. Narayan, Physician



Dr. S. P. Narayan of Bangalore has worked with Professor Kelston since the latter's expedition to India six years ago. He comes off as efficient, dedicated and somewhat aloof. Narayan maintains a formal distance from his mentor, and from everyone else on the expedition for that matter, to conceal his fundamental dislike for the man. A supporter of Gandhi and proponent of Indian independence, Narayan boils inside whenever Kelston voices his casual acceptance of the British Raj. Yet Narayan's desire to free his people of a devastating disease trumps political affiliation, so he swallows it all and looks forward to the day when Kelston's approach frees the subcontinent of malaria.

Dr. Narayan disapproves of colonialism in Africa, though without the passion he feels toward his own homeland. If the explorers seem to support it, he will mark them down in his estimation, without saying so.

Assess Honesty shows that Narayan masks his true feelings toward others but does not go further than that. This red herring may lead the Investigators to suspect his loyalties.

In the movie version he would be played by Naveen Andrews.

When playing Narayan during or after the scene "Busango Swamp," slap every so often at your neck, arms or legs, as if smashing biting insects.

Biology: Narayan must belong to the ten percent of the population that, for reasons yet unknown, particularly attracts the attention of female mosquitoes.

If asked why he risks going into a malaria zone, Narayan assures them that he gets bitten all the time, but never contracts the disease.

Abilities Anthropology 1, Athletics 8, Bureaucracy 2, Credit Rating 3, Firearms 2, First Aid 8, Geology 1, Health 7, Languages 2 (English, Kannada) Medicine 3, Preparedness 3, Scuffling 5, Weapons 2

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (.45 Colt M1911 pistol), +0 (machete, pick)

Cyril Munyau, Would-be Student

Local would-be medical student Cyril Munyau signed onto Kelston's expedition in hopes of earning a recommendation to study in London. Kelston's support would go a long way toward securing him the scholarship he needs. He knows the threat of malaria as well as anyone, but privately doubts Kelston's goals. Africa will always produce more mosquitoes. It would be better to improve hospital conditions, so that his people have as high a survival rate as Europeans do. Less adept at hiding his feelings than Dr. Narayan, he may be provoked by a pot-stirring Investigator to vehemently disagree with Kelston.

He and Narayan should in theory find commonality with one another. In truth, each regards the other as too deferential toward Kelston.

Abilities Athletics 3, Biology 2, Credit Rating 2, Driving 2, Firearms 1, First Aid 8, Flattery 1, Geology 1, Health 3, Languages 2 (English, Nyanja), Medicine 1, Scuffling 2, Weapons 2

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 carbine), +0 (machete)

Sunday Lungu, Laborer

When his former employer told him that an expedition the company was funding needed a general dogsbody, miner Sunday Lungu jumped at the



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chance for safer work. His parents used to live in the Kafue National Park before 1924, when the government displaced the Nkoya people to turn it into a nature preserve. Sunday should have little memory of that time, so peg his age accordingly, depending on when in the 1930s you choose to set this scenario.

As his name suggests, Lungu is a Christian convert. Most of his relatives hate the English for stealing their land, but Sunday turns the other cheek. The Lord tests our forgiveness, and those who pass the test will go to heaven. Sunday maintains his equanimity through fervent prayer. Though always ready to proselytize to his fellow Africans, he knows better than to try it with Europeans. They have known Jesus all their lives, and how often they turn their thoughts to the Lord is none of Sunday's business.

He wants nothing more than to earn a few pounds and return safely to his sweetheart, so they can be married and start a family. He thinks himself prepared for the wilderness, because his father was raised in it. When he finds himself over his head, he tries to hide it from the others.

Abilities Athletics 8, Biology 1, Credit Rating 1, Driving 2, Firearms 1, First Aid 8, Flattery 1, Health 8, Languages 2, Oral History 2, Preparedness 5, Scuffling 2, Streetwise 1, Theology 1, Weapons 5

Alertness Modifier: -1

Weapon: +0 (Mannlicher-Carcano M1891 carbine), +0 (machete)

NORTHERN RHODESIA

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Out: Broken Hill Aerodrome

Before setting out for Northern Rhodesia, players may ask you what their characters already know about it. Or they may delay their queries, interspersing them through the scenario's main action.

Northern Rhodesia occupies a central spot in the continent's southern projection. It is bounded by the Belgian Congo to the north, Portuguese West Africa to the northwest and west, Southern Rhodesia and then Portuguese East Africa to the south, Nyasaland to the east and Tanganyika to the northeast. The Caprivi Strip territory of South-West Africa (under South African mandate) abuts its southeast corner.

Accounting: Zinc and copper mining accounts for the vast majority of the protectorate's exported wealth.

- Far behind these products, tobacco, farmed by English settlers, comprises Northern Rhodesia's third largest export.
- Attempts to establish large-scale ranching have so far failed — not for want of trying.

Anthropology: The native population consists mostly of various Bantu groups.

- They invaded in the 17th century, conquering and displacing the region's then-residents, of whom little is known.
- 19th century Portuguese traders returned from the region to tell of the wondrous kingdom of the Balunda, now lost, save for heroic legends of its rulers, the Muati Yamvo.
- Balunda was destroyed by the conquering Makalolo kingdom, which proved short-lived in turn when oppressed locals rose against them and slaughtered them to a man.

The Story Today

Today Northern Rhodesia is known as Zambia, having achieved independence from the British in 1964. Like most places in the world, it is much better off than in the 1930s. Present-day Zambia boasts one of the continent's highest development rates.

After the transition, the Busango Swamp reverted to a previous vowel state and is now called the Busanga Swamp.

Archaeology: The protectorate's ancient past has only begun to yield to excavation. In 1929 a pioneering program of cave exploration conducted by a Professor Cipriani explored caves throughout the territory, uncovering rock carvings and an ancient iron smelter.

History: In 1911 the British amalgamated two smaller protectorates, North-Western Rhodesia and North-Eastern Rhodesia, to form this one.

- Until 1924 it was administered by the British South Africa Company.
- Since then it has been directly run by the British government.
- The renowned David Livingstone explored this area in the mid 1800s. He found and named Victoria Falls, which lies about 350 miles south of the Busango Swamp, in 1855.

Languages: Fifty dialects are spoken in the region. A tongue called Chinyanja

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has achieved lingua franca status and is spoken by police and Europeans.

Offer any Investigator with Languages the opportunity to choose Chinyanja, as a loan against future build points if necessary. After two subsequent consecutive investigations in which the character does not speak Chinyanja, rebate the build point to be spent on something else — maybe another language that will only become relevant for a single scenario.

BROKEN HILL AERODROME

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Northern Rhodesia

Lead-Out: The Hotel Mazabuka

To start as deep into the story as possible, the action opens with the Investigators en route from an unspecified hub to the aerodrome at Broken Hill, a town in the center of the territory.

Accounting: The mining community of Broken Hill is also a center of rail transport.

Archaeology: In 1921 zinc miners found the skull of an early hominid, *Homo rhodesiensis*, here — hence its name, the Broken Hill skull. It might date from 125,000 to 300,000 years ago and could be a direct ancestor of mankind.

The pilot, a wide-faced Missourian named Les “Pappy” Carter, blathers happily away about his adventures as a Great War flying ace. (**History, Piloting or Assess Honesty:** He’s lying outrageously, but half believes his own nonsense.) In the

movie version, Pappy would be played by character actor Jack Carter.

Pappy has little to say about life in Northern Rhodesia; he prefers life in the air and bounces around Africa and Arabia as opportunities take him.

When interaction with Pappy trails off, as it soon will, a black cloud suddenly fills the air.

Biology: It’s a cloud of locusts — the biggest you’ve ever seen!

Visibility drops to zero. Pappy struggles at the controls as the plane strikes the cloud and is buffeted as if by a thunderstorm.

Piloting or Biology: This is no ordinary locust plague! The plane should be plowing right through them.

The cockpit window shatters. The plane fills with locusts. In the panic, the explorers make 3-point Stability tests (Difficulty 4).

Then they see the results of a freak accident: a chunk of the shattered glass has sliced through Pappy’s throat. Pappy collapses into the controls. The plane nosedives.

A Difficulty 4 **Piloting** test rights the plane, allowing the Investigator to escape the locust cloud and land safely at the Broken Hill aerodrome.

Before the Investigator makes the test, inform the players that the plane carries supplementary supplies for the mission to the swamp. The result of the test determines not only whether the group survives the landing, but how much, if any, of this gear makes it through in one piece.

Dead Locusts

In the event of a safe landing, a few intact locusts might remain inside the plane. **Biology:** These represent a previously unreported species. No entomologist would consider that remarkable in and of itself; Africa veritably buzzes with undocumented insect life. However, the morphology of these specimens displays a series of bizarre, apparently anti-adaptive features, like mandibles that can’t reach the mouth. Such features can’t be explained away as undesirable mutations, since the entire swarm possesses them. *How do such doomed creatures survive to reproduce?*

1-point **Chemistry** spend: (conducting analysis on crushed up locusts) Strange, unidentifiable inorganic compounds inexplicably riddle these specimens. Some of these resemble samples taken from a meteor-stricken heath outside Arkham, MA, in 1882.

A failed test leads to a crash landing, in which each Investigator takes +2 damage.

If the final result of the Piloting test exceeds 7, all supplies land intact. Otherwise, subtract the test result from 8. This number becomes a penalty applied to the starting Survival pool given in “Survival Pool,” p. 53.



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Meanwhile, Pappy has been seriously wounded. An expenditure of 2 First Aid points saves his life. Otherwise, he bleeds out as the Investigators look on, requiring another round of Stability tests (against a potential loss of 1 point).

However dramatic their arrival at the aerodrome, a liaison from the Broken Hill mine meets the group and gets them aboard the train to Mazabuka, where Kelston's team is due to assemble.

The liaison, E. Arthur Chaytor, completes this simple errand with polite formality, as one of too many tasks he must perform today. He knows only that he acts on instructions from his superiors, and that a reduction in the local malaria rate would prove a boon to labor productivity. If asked about the Broken Hill skull, his tone and body language make plain his impatience with profitless topics.

A railway journey takes the group without incident from Broken Hill to Mazabuka, a distance of about 120 miles. They find themselves the only occupants on its sole passenger car.

(Today, Broken Hill is known as Kabwe, Zambia.)

THE HOTEL MAZABUKA

Scene Type: Pipe / Red Herring

Lead-Ins: Broken Hill Aerodrome

Lead-Out: Setting Out

The Hotel Mazabuka exemplifies the British style of lonely frontier tropical hotel. Run by bachelor brothers John and Philip Paton, it exists only by dint of a retainer paid by the protectorate, to ensure that rooms are

available for officials and visitors as they are occasionally needed.

Though at any given time most of its rooms remain empty, the hotel lounge serves as an unofficial gathering point for the remote town's European inhabitants. Beyond bored with one another, they descend on the hotel when unfamiliar guests show up, hoping for a rejuvenating jolt of social novelty.

While the group waits for the rest of the expedition to show up, they may engage, or be engaged by, any of these fixtures of town life. Describe them and let the players decide who to talk to. Encourage the players to interact with these witness characters one on one. However hungry for fresh conversation, they are still British: rather than raffishly approach a promising Investigator, they go no further than to project a subtle air of approachability. Investigators must use a suitable Interpersonal ability to strike up a connection that goes beyond initial small talk.

One of these locals delivers the floating pipe clue, another a relevant but supplementary foreshadowing of a future event. The others may provide red herrings, as desired. Each shows signs of the subtle psychological destabilization now occurring as the Mother of Malaria's zone of influence slowly spreads from the swamp into the surrounding territory.

As you doubtless recall, a **pipe clue** becomes important later but does not directly lead to a subsequent scene. Try to time out the pipe clue so that it neither lands as the first or last bit of information given in this sequence.

Pipe Clue: This entire region used to be a hub of the slave trade. British forces smashed it only in the 1890s. A final skirmish with slavers occurred just north of the swamp, in 1900.

Relevant but Supplementary Clue: The last European to disappear in the Busango Swamp was the ethnologist Edmund Palsgrave, last seen, on... *oh, when was that?* About six or seven years ago. (**Anthropology:** Palsgrave, of the British Museum's Africa department, in fact left England for southern Africa eight years ago. Poor devil; you once saw him lecture.)

Red Herrings:

- The Broken Hill skull was not nearly as old as scientists claimed. Degenerate ape-men of the same physiognomy haunt the swamp even now. A fine trophy for any hunter!
- They say mosquitoes transmit malaria, but if you look at the damage the disease does to our mining industry, surely it can only be the work of the Germans. (Or Belgians, or Portuguese...)
- Professor Kelston is a known Freemason, and so must have some other agenda for entering the swamp.
- Angry spirits of the sinister Makalolo kingdom, massacred by their rebellious subjects, haunt the swamp. Or so the superstitious natives say.

Some of these NPCs may provide the wilder red herring clues in a dismissive fashion — as foolishness some other unnamed people believe.

To take this scenario in a wildly different direction, decide that one of the red herrings points to the real Horrible Truth, and that the slavery angle behind

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the Mother of Malaria story is actually a red herring. You might choose this option if the players become particularly enamored with a red herring.

Hazel Konstam, Hot and Bothered Settler



Slim and sharply beautiful, Hazel Konstam stands out like an alluring beacon amid the heat-wilted European population of Mazabuka. In the movie version, she would be played by seventies-era Charlotte Rampling.

She wordlessly trains her erotic sights on the Investigator whose player you think would most run with this plot possibility. Preferring her partners on the rough side, she responds especially well to any character who gives her a little touch of **Intimidation** or **Streetwise**. **Reassurance** cools her off.

Hazel runs the tobacco farm her invalid husband established six years ago, just outside Mazabuka. Thanks to her flinty business sense, the farm does better than many others in the area, though it's hardly a gold mine.

Having deemed an Investigator suitable for a roll in the hay, Hazel invites him (or her) back to the farmhouse. Clues may drop before or afterward.

She despises her sick husband, Trevor, for his weakness, for bringing her to this godforsaken pesthole and for his role as a millstone around her neck. Trevor has never fully recovered from a bout of malaria, which unusually has left him paralyzed from the neck down and unable to speak. He remains in full possession of his mental faculties, a fact Hazel may not bother to explain. If she gains the upper hand over her temporary romantic partner she will contrive to make the tryst as obvious as possible to poor, drooling Trevor. With a sufficiently rakish partner she might even do it with her husband in the room.

Psychoanalysis: Hazel, at the very least, suffers from severe neurosis.

Medicine: Trevor's ongoing symptoms do not match the usual complications for malaria.

- **Cthulhu Mythos:** There might be something cosmically unnatural about them.

Along with her pipe clue or red herring, Hazel might make the following observations:

- Africa is a pit where dreams go to die.
- Even if Trevor finally expires, she has nowhere to go.

- She will never see England again.
- Besides, after the death and desolation she's seen here, she would never fit back in London society again.
- Here she is tormented but free. There, she would be shackled by other's expectations, and no happier.

After a satisfying assignation, Hazel may offer additional supplies, replacing any losses suffered during the "Broken Hill Aerodrome" scene.

If you prefer your Cthulhuiana unpolluted by sexual intrigue Lovecraft would never conceive of, Hazel might be a more conventional pre-feminist martyr, desperate only for conversation and sympathy.

The Reverend Percy Arnold, Doubt-Wracked Schoolmaster

Thin as a rail and continually trembling, the high-strung Anglican priest and educator Percy Arnold would be played in the movie version by Sterling Holloway. In search of **Reassurance**, he seeks out a sympathetic-seeming stranger to tell him that his work at the Jeanes School deserves praise and should continue. He instantly trusts anyone displaying a familiarity with **Theology**. If he senses a kindred spirit, he invites him to the school. It teaches two hundred or so Bantu children math, English and the civilization-bringing virtues of Empire. A few dozen students, boys and girls alike, live in its dormitory. Secretly Percy has begun to fear that the irrationality of the jungle will ultimately claim all of his charges, for whom he expresses great personal fondness.



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After you've established Percy as charmingly feckless, young students run past him, speaking their own tongue on school grounds. He abruptly lashes out at the nearest of them, knocking him to the dirt and bruising his lip. Without skipping a beat, the Reverend laments the obstacles he faces in making proper Englishmen of these ignorant wretches. The sudden flicker of feral rage behind his eyes has vanished as quickly as it surfaced.

Statements he might make include these:

- Although the English must sometimes use a firm hand, they will leave behind a foundation of parliamentary tradition that will stand the Rhodesians in good stead.
- They might complain, but these fellows would be much worse off under the yoke of the Portuguese, Germans or, worst of all, the unspeakable Belgians.

Millicent Sedgwick, Harried Nurse



In the absence of its head doctor, who has been taken to Broken Hill for treatment of malaria, the humbly indomitable Millicent Sedgwick keeps Mazabuka's native hospital running single-handed. Her demeanor combines confident professionalism with nonthreatening spinsterhood. In the movie version, she'd be played by Mildred Dunnock.

Millicent responds well to **Flattery** of her efficiency, **Bureaucracy** for promises to speed up the location of a temporary new doctor, or any display of **Medicine**, which prompts her to dragoon the user into a temporary position at the hospital. Or try, at any rate.

In addition to the pipe clue or red herrings, she can supply the following background information:

- The chief of the hospital, a Dr. Buchanan, succumbed to an unusually virulent, quinine-resistant malarial fever while visiting a stricken village two months ago. He should have recovered by now, but at last report was still too weak to return to work.
- (if asked about Trevor Konstam's unusual case of malaria) Why, yes, come to think of it the two cases do show troubling similarities...
- Naturally Dr. Buchanan was taken to the European hospital in Broken Hill. This establishment caters to the native population and sadly cannot meet a level of care suitable for white patients.
- Over the past year, around twelve thousand Europeans were admitted to government hospitals with malaria or blackwater, only five of whom died.
- Of course this does not count native malaria deaths, which would be innumerable.

- Nor in fact does it count deaths of Europeans who did not make it to hospital.
- Since Millicent's arrival here six years ago, the rate of infection has not increased, but the death rate has. Or so her anecdotal experience indicates. The number of cases leaves no time for statistical record keeping.

While visiting the grounds, the character witnesses the death of a young child from malaria, occasioning a 2-point Stability test for the unhardened newcomer.

Medicine: Millicent does a splendid job of concealing her advanced morphine addiction.

Gerd Schmahl, Would-be Medical Entrepreneur

Tall, white-haired and bulbous-nosed, Gerd Schmahl speaks in a comically mellifluous Austrian accent. Show the players an image of character actor Sig Ruman. Schmahl wants a wealthy-seeming explorer to approach him about his surefire business opportunity, and responds favorably to **Accounting**, **Bargain** or Credit Rating 4+.

After a regrettable misunderstanding with the authorities in Portuguese West Africa, Schmahl came here in search of a ready supply of monkeys, to harvest for their glands. A protégé of the French-Russian surgeon Serge Voronoff, Schmahl believes in the miraculous vigor-granting powers of monkey-gland implants. He aims to set up an export house sending regular shipments to

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Voronoff and like-minded American clients, as soon as he secures a line of credit and solves a few inconsequential refrigeration issues. Schmahl operates from a recently abandoned tobacco farm, which he has converted to a research facility. Unlike other characters met at the hotel, he shows no great desire to take Investigators to his place.

Medicine: Though perhaps not as in vogue as it was a decade ago, monkey-gland implantation remains a respected and promising treatment within mainstream medicine.

Assess Honesty: Although he certainly believes what he's saying about monkey glands, something else isn't quite right about this man.

Forensics: The healed scratches on his hands look like defensive wounds inflicted by someone fighting him off.

It takes only a successful Difficulty 4 **Shadowing** test to follow Schmahl unawares back to his lab. Or the Investigators can simply ask where he lives and take a look while one of them keeps him occupied at the hotel.

In his facility they find not only a grisly assemblage of vivisected monkey parts, but a sausage-curing house full of human remains.

Forensics: Parts of at least four victims can be distinguished here, all African women in their late teens or twenties.

If confronted, Schmahl breaks down weeping and claims to be acting at the behest of a brain parasite contracted through a mosquito bite. The more he attempts to explain his actions, the more

he realizes that he too is baffled by what he has done. He offers no physical threat to a prepared defender. Given the opportunity, he lunges for a pistol and blows his brains out, or seizes some other means of suicide.

THE EXPEDITION GATHERS

After the character interactions of "Hotel Mazabuka" trail off, the rest of the expedition personnel congregate at the hotel.

Leave it to the players to decide how much interest to place in the expedition members here and throughout the main exploratory phase of the scenario. If they treat them as background redshirts, they're following Lovecraft's own penchant for efficiently dispatched characterization. Should they want to befriend and understand their expedition mates before they start getting mangled, dig into the background info given in "Expedition Personnel," p. 53.

Setting Out

- **Scene Type:** Challenge
- **Lead-In:** Hotel Mazabuka
- **Lead-Out:** Busango Swamp

The expedition sets out through the wilderness, through scrubland, into the jungle and over hills and a river crossing. See the Travel Increment Summary table, p. 52, for potential hazards for these types of terrain.

BUSANGO SWAMP

Scene Type: Transition

Lead-In: Setting Out

Lead-Out: Any swamp travel increment

The Busango Swamp sits inside the Kafue National Park. A flooded grassland occupied by a population of large herbivores and the predators that feed on them, it is today a place of stunning beauty. Show your players awe-inspiring National Geographic flyover footage of the swamp as it remains today, at bit.ly/15eUxLL, or by Googling the phrase "swamp lion defeated by swamp." (Being a lion in a swamp is, it turns out, a bad gig.)

For the purposes of this adventure, we'll be exaggerating and horror-izing the swamp. The presence of a Mythos entity accounts for the disjunction between reality and fiction.

The first legs of the trek into the swamp reflect the area's beauty. Kelston even appears disappointed by the relative paucity of anopheles mosquitoes. Only a few mosquitoes show up, all of them seeking to dine on Narayan.

Animals the group might spot, or face Survival challenges from, include lechwe (a species of antelope with lyre-like horns), waterbuck, African bush elephants, African buffalo, crocodiles and monitor lizards.

Infected Poachers

Scene Type: Challenge / Refresh / Swamp Travel Increment

Lead-In: Busango Swamp, any swamp travel increment

Lead-Out: Any swamp travel increment

Before anything outwardly weird happens in the swamp, the explorers stumble across a ragged encampment



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where sprawl four stricken native hunters.

Medicine: Their fever, chills, profuse sweating and complaints of muscle pain tell the tale — it's malaria.

Anthropology: They belong to the Nkoya tribe, displaced from the area when the authorities declared it a park.

Law: These men shouldn't be hunting in the national park.

Accounting: Poachers might be taking animals for food, or to sell the parts as trophies. In the latter case, unscrupulous

European traders make the bulk of the money, and men like these get only a pittance.

The men claim to have been merely passing through the park, with no intention to do anything illegal; **Assess Honesty** shows that this is untrue.

Under **Interrogation** or **Intimidation**, they drop the lie, which is not particularly germane to the expedition's goals.

Reassurance that the explorers don't care about their poaching puts the dying men in a more receptive mood. If asked about malaria, they describe the terrifying fever dreams in which they floated underwater,

connected by strange straw-like appendages to an enormous water bug. In the murk, they could only dimly apprehend its dreadful outlines. As the men tell the story, they grow increasingly frightened — only now do each of them realize that the others were having the exact same nightmare!

The group can save the men on a 1-point **Medicine** or **First Aid** spend, plus a spend of 1 point of Survival for each hunter they intend to cure. This reflects both the expended medical supplies and extra time spent getting them to a settlement and then returning to the swamp. Saving all the men grants each Investigator a 3-point Stability refresh.

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Amongst the desperate tribes of the swamp I have found a myth of curious provenance. It tells of the Sick Mother, or perhaps Mother of Sickness, who before the distant sun god rose to illuminate the world birthed Seven Sisters of Darkness: Azaggu, Shab'Nagaru, Kadulu, Hagura, Nayarlutu, Tosugua and Yogu'Gozo. Their difficult births destroyed the Sick Mother, but with the help of bad sorcery she pieced herself back together, with woe to all.

Most curiously, only those under the age of thirty or so tell this tale and swear they learned it as children. However, the elders disclaim all awareness of it, and grow restive when pressed on the matter.

When a bad story comes, they say, it is best to leave, because after bad stories come bad events. Thus all the locals, young and old, prepare to desert this place.

THE CORRUPTED ZONE

Scene Type: Corrupted Zone Travel Increment

Lead-In: Any swamp travel increment

Lead-Out: Any corrupted zone travel increment

As they penetrate into the heart of the swamp, the explorers find, first in patches and then in great stretches, that a mysterious plague has warped and altered its plant and animal life.

The corruption originates not in an explicable pathogen but in a cosmic infection. Although spawned of a different source, its physical manifestations match those loosed by the meteor that destroyed Nahum Gardner's farm and family in "The Colour Out of Space."

Manifestations explorers might behold include these:

- moss, grasses, trees and shrubs radiating a sickly silvery glow
- distorted animal forms, moving as with malleable bones
- fish and game animals that bleed a shining milky substance
- plants that make a strange humming noise at night

Overhead, the sky darkens with what seem like thick black clouds that refuse to loose their gathered rain. The ceiling of the world presses down on the travelers. Clouds of vaguely luminescent mist blow across the swamp. The lights of willow-the-wisps dance in the unfocused distance. Unseen monkeys shriek: "Malaria! Malaria! Malaria!"

All manner of unearthly effects conspire to drain the team's Survival pool. Describe them as follows or throw in your own creepy alternatives:

- reeking crystals appear on stored food, rendering it nauseating — or toxic

- seemingly solid ground beneath your feet resolves into fungal sludge
- ammo corrodes
- guns weep blood
- something scratches occult sigils into the lenses of someone's binoculars — or spectacles

As the expedition continues, you might throw hallucinations into the mix:

- spectral animals stare at them with mournful saucer-sized eyes
- the figures of those they have killed, or failed to save, stare reproachfully at them from beneath the swamp waters
- stretches of swamp that look just like the spots they've already surveyed, right down to the markers they've left behind — on a closer look, the markers are gone, and the landscape no longer feels familiar

The (Mostly) Dead Ethnologist

Scene Type: Corrupted Zone Travel Increment

Lead-In: Any corrupted zone travel increment

Lead-Out: Any corrupted zone travel increment

While surveying the swamp, the group spots an ominously human-sized lump in the vegetation up ahead. On closer inspection, they find the hideously preserved remains of Edmund Palsgrave. The body lies supine, in the rotten field gear of a British Museum explorer. Mosses and vines penetrate his corpse — in fact, what looks like his flesh and bones turns out to be carnivorous vegetable matter, which by slowly eating away at him, has replaced these various body parts. *He has been fossilized by man-eating plants!*



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Biology: Like the rest of the flora and fauna of the corrupted zone, samples from this grotesque manifestation are almost certainly too dangerous to take back home for study, as tempting as that might be.

If the group learned in “Hotel Mazabuka” that Palsgrave went missing in the swamp, they can deduce that this is him.

Otherwise, they can confirm his identity by combing through the surrounding mat of vegetation for his personal effects. They find his pack, passport, survival equipment and miscellaneous traveling gear. On a 1-point **Anthropology** or **Outdoorsman** spend, the character finds a key piece of lost or damaged equipment, earning a 1–3 point Survival refresh.

Most importantly, they find his notebook (**simple search**).

Anthropology: On a quick skim, the notes comprise an invaluable contribution to the as-yet thinly documented mythology of the Bantu peoples. The last entry, written in a feverish hand, stands out as anomalous:

When the group seems ready to move on, or when they try to interfere with the body (perhaps deciding to give it a decent burial), the horrible remnant form of Edmund Palsgrave achieves distressing animation. It shrieks inarticulately, flailing its mossy appendages. Destroying it is a simple matter of crushing the plant-ridden skull with a shovel. But in the meantime, it occasions a 4-point Stability test (Difficulty 5). If this happens after having read the excerpt from his notes, it counts as a Mythos shock.



The Skin of Faisal al-Kharbi

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Any corrupted zone travel increment

Lead-Out: Chalkley Remembers

Between a rare stand of twisted trees stretches a suggestively shaped leather sail. An unusual quiet hums around the area — the teeming animal life of the swamp shies from it.

On closer inspection, **Forensics** reveals the leather sail as a cured human hide, incised with tattooed Arabic script. Were one to discover this in a dry climate, one might say that it naturally

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mummified. However, since it should have rotted nearly instantly in the tropical damp, yet remains supple and intact, its preservation might be anything but natural.

Occult: Perverse rumors from the isle of Japan have it that the text of evil incantations, when inked into the flesh, protect the skin from decomposition after death.

Forensics: The skin was lashed to the trees as if to allow whoever did it to read the text without pause.

(core) **Occult** or **Languages (Arabic):** The text presents an incantation to revive and summon a supernatural being, Prugha'ath, the Mother of Sickness, who will restore slavery to the world.

- 1-point **Languages (Arabic)** spend: No, actually it means “return the world to slavery.”

Cthulhu Mythos: An obscure marginal note in a certain dread tome claims that an entity called the Mother of Sickness birthed the Old Ones and was destroyed in the process.

Occult: Unusually for such an incantation, it tells you how to destroy the manifestation if its gifts grow too onerous. One must “cut the food from its belly,” thus sending it back “to the constellation of Taurus.”

Archaeology: Beneath the skin lies evidence of a burial. If the group digs, they find the bones of Faisal al-Kharbi, along with his gun, whip and hashish pipe. Incised on the skull is a crude inscription:

- **Languages (Arabic):** “Brother Faisal, we borrow your murdered skin to realize your dream. Once

more men will own men, restoring the order of the world.”

Chalkley Remembers

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: The Skin of Faisal al-Kharbi

Lead-Out: Any corrupted zone travel increment

Interject statements of dread from Chalkley throughout the swamp journey. If asked to account for his distress, he claims merely to dislike untrustworthy ground. “Give me a solid footing any day, sir.” **Assess Honesty** suggests that there’s more to this — and that he’s unconsciously lying when he claims never to have been here before.

Psychoanalysis: Chalkley shows all the symptoms of a man who has suppressed a traumatic memory.

Interrogation (from someone with a military bearing) or **Intimidation** breaks his self-control, sending the memories flooding back in.

When this happens, Chalkley flees blindly into the swamp. It is a Difficulty 4 **Athletics** test to catch him without harm. On a failure, the pursuer still catches up with him, but suffers +0 damage in the process. (An ordinary pursuit contest, with its chance of failure, could deprive the group of key information.)

A burbling Chalkley then spills the story. Leave spaces for players to tease out the story with questions:

- Back in 1900 he served in the paramilitary police of North-

Western Rhodesia, as it then was. It recruited from the British Army and was largely indistinguishable from it.

- He trained and led a detachment of native police.
- While patrolling just north of here, he and a training detachment came across a party of slavers. Their leader matched the description of the notorious Faisal al-Kharbi, a half-breed slaver who escaped hanging by Sir Harry Johnston in 1894.
- Chalkley and his men fired on them, only to realize that they had innocent prisoners — seven Nkoya girls.
- Chalkley gut-shot al-Kharbi, but also, to his horror and shame, shot dead one of the girls.
- The slavers escaped with al-Kharbi but not their surviving captives.
- Chalkley and his men combed the swamp for the slavers, finding only al-Kharbi’s tattooed skin slung between those trees back there.
- Everything after that is a haze. They must have abandoned the swamp, after seeing something even worse. What that could be, Chalkley cannot imagine.

Anytime after this would be ideal for Chalkley to die horribly in the swamp.

The New Mosquito

Scene Type: Core / Challenge / Corrupted Zone Travel Increment

Lead-Ins: Any corrupted zone travel increment, Chalkley Remembers

Lead-Outs: Any corrupted zone travel increment, Spawn of the Pleiades

The inky clouds that have hung over the expedition for so long suddenly shift in



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the air overhead and descend. They reveal themselves not as clouds at all but as an impossibly thick mosquito swarm. Like a funnel cloud, the swarm swirls toward the expedition. The point of the cloud jabs like a spear toward Narayan, whom the mosquitoes have always found tasty.

Athletics (Difficulty 4) allows a character to knock Narayan out of the way, but it's no use. The mosquitoes simply change course, now landing on both the doctor and the Investigator who tried to save him.

In a flash the mosquito mass drains the blood from Narayan's flesh and bone. More mosquitoes attack other expedition members, though not in such profusion. Test **Athletics/Fleeing** against a Difficulty of 8. Failed characters lose Health equal to the margin between Difficulty and result.

The sight of Narayan's death occasions a 4-point Stability test (a Mythos shock).

Is Narayan already dead? If so, substitute Cyril Munyau, or Sunday Lungu. Unless they're already gone too, in which case the group is spared the sight of a terrible demise.

The attack ends as quickly as it began. The mosquitoes disperse, leaving the sky overhead a little lighter. Their squishy corpses choke equipment and befoul supplies.

Biology: As even a layman might surmise, these are no ordinary mosquitoes.

- Body morphologies of the constituent parts of the swarm differ considerably. Although anopheles mosquitoes predominate, at least half a dozen different other species,

all bizarre and previously unknown, can be picked from the dripping remains of the attack.

- (core) **Chemistry:** Bizarre puts the case mildly. The blood of these creatures runs thick with ethylene glycol — the same substance used to make antifreeze. These mosquitoes could potentially survive temperate winters — perhaps even the polar climates!
- **Medicine:** The blood of not only the anopheles specimens but the other species as well contains the plasmodium parasites that cause malaria. The ethylene glycol should kill them, but it doesn't.
- If no longer confined to the tropics, malaria, already one of the worst diseases on Earth, could absolutely devastate populations everywhere. It might not be the end of civilization, but it could take us to its very brink.

Spawn of the Pleiades

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: The New Mosquito, any corrupted zone travel increment

Lead-Outs: Mother's Elephants, any corrupted zone travel increment

As the group maps out the corrupted zone, it discovers that some areas are more mutated than others. Kelston orders a rigorous survey of the various transformation zones, which will take a period of days at the very least. Sure that he's onto something, he throws himself into the task, developing a rough schema to categorize the various degrees of environmental degeneracy.

After three days (two on a 1-point spend):

Astronomy: (looking at the map of the corruption zones) Viewed from above, the map of corrupted zones mimics the Pleiades — the constellation also known as the Seven Sisters. But it's how the Pleiades would have looked nearer to the time of their formation a hundred million years ago.

History: Which of course is long before humanity evolved.

(core) **Astronomy:** Further, the map shows the outlines of a bigger star cluster, giving birth to the constellation's seven components.

Astronomy: The Pleiades, otherwise known as the Seven Sisters, comprise part of the constellation of Taurus. Does this legend refer to the dead nebula that birthed those star clusters?

Anthropology: The legend must have spread, perhaps by dread instinct, after the slavers conducted the summoning ritual in 1900.

Occult: Astrological tablets incised by certain drug-addled priestlings of Sumeria claimed that the seven sisters were born from a dark mother, who birthed reality and would one day destroy it with pestilence.

The group hasn't yet mapped the likely location of the mother cluster. This is where the players figure out that this must be the location they seek.

MOTHER'S ELEPHANTS

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

Prugha'ath floats dreaming in the swamp, dreaming of destroying humanity with her new breeds of mosquito and the parasites they will

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carry. When those who would send her back to the stars verge too close, she sends disease-ridden, maddened animals to crush them, so she can go back to her epidemic reverie.

Disease-Mutant Elephants

Abilities: Athletics 12, Health 24, Scuffling 16

Alertness Modifier: -3

Stealth Modifier: -3

Weapon: +5 (gore), +5 (trample)

Hit Threshold: 2

Armor: -3 vs. any (thick skin); damage from firearms is capped at 2; damage from melee weapons is tripled

Stability Loss: +2

Imagine what elephants would look like if corrupted by the meteor spoor from “Colour Out of Space” and describe that to your players.

Send two elephants against a group of more than three players, or one for a group of three players or fewer.

On their first attacks, the creatures concentrate on any remaining NPC explorers, except for Professor Kelston, whom they ignore. They automatically dispatch one NPC per attack.

When a disease-o-phant takes melee weapon damage, describe great rotten hunks of its pus-dripping meat laving off the creature’s bones and falling all around the Investigator who dealt the damage.

In the wake of this confrontation, Kelston’s last vestige of scientific reserve deserts him. He tears at his clothing and screams at the darkening sky: “Die,

anopheles! Die!” Kelston fires wildly into the thickening mosquito cloud, as if this will somehow harm them.

Another mosquito tornado, like the one that got Narayan, buzzes down from the sky. It collides with Kelston so forcefully that he explodes in a great geyser of blood. The mosquitoes buzz around this, slurping it up, and retreat to the sky, once again momentarily satiated.

MOTHER OF MALARIA

Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-In: Mother’s Elephants

Prugha’ath, Mother of Malaria, summoned in 1900 by Faisal al-Kharbi’s slaver brothers, floats in an area of mostly open water in the swamp, corresponding to the map position discovered in “Spawn of the Pleiades.” She takes the form of an enormous mosquito larva, about a hundred feet long. A hooked appendage pierces the water’s surface.

Biology: On an ordinary mosquito larva, that’s a breathing tube called a spiracle.

Cthulhu Mythos: Whatever its outward form, you can bet that this thing doesn’t react like an ordinary insect.

Thin tubular projections jut out from Prugha’ath’s underside. These connect to various husk-like shapes.

Biology: These are the bodies of swamp animals, sucked dry of blood. They include water buffalo, elephants, antelopes and innumerable crocodiles.

Forensics: Some of the least recognizable shapes are those of humans.

(An astute player may deduce that these are the remains of al-Kharbi’s slavers. Deprived of their intended sacrifices, they fed the newly summoned Prugha’ath themselves.)

There should be nothing left of corpses left underwater for thirty years, but the word “should” stopped applying to this situation some time ago.

Unlike the more powerful Old Ones she may or may not have birthed, Prugha’ath can’t defend herself directly. There is, however, a 7-point Stability test for being in her presence; those who fail the test also lose 1 Sanity.

Interpreting the instructions for banishing her from “The Skin of Faisal al-Kharbi,” the group should deduce that it refers to the feeding tubes on her underside. An explorer may send her back to the Pleiades, or wherever, simply by swimming into the water with a knife, and cutting loose the tubes leading to the still recognizable animals currently supplying her with blood.

Biology or Medicine: However, the waters around this creature surely teem with microscopic plasmodium — the parasites that cause malaria. In all likelihood, they’re corruptly powerful, just like the new mosquitoes Prugha’ath is breeding to destroy mankind. Anyone going swimming there may well be infected — possibly to an extent that defies both medical science, and the curative properties of quinine.



The Mother of Malaria



In other words, an awful choice confronts the explorers: one of them can easily destroy this threat to millions, at the cost of his or her own life.

Should any of the rest of the party survive, they are too weakened or insane to make the attempt. It has to be an Investigator.

[Pulp] Or maybe the group can invent another, safe way to do it.

[Purist] Nope. All alternate attempts fail.

When the Investigators who dove in to cut the feeding tubes emerge from the

water, the group's worst imaginings prove true. These intrepid heroes mutate instantly into melting, purulent incarnations of disease and proceed to attack their fellows.

Disease Mutants

Abilities: Athletics 9, Health 18, Scuffling 9

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: -1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (bite); victim takes another +0 damage five minutes, five hours, ten hours, and twenty-four hours apiece, unless cured by brilliant

medical babble and a 1-point Medicine spend.

Armor: none; the disease mutants spontaneously takes +0 disease damage after its turn each round.

Stability Loss: +1; +3 if the disease mutant was known to the witness when alive

Exits and Rewards

With Prugha'ath and any disease-mutated Investigators dead, blue spots break through the blackness overhead. As if struck by a cosmic shockwave, all the mosquitoes die. Dead insects drift to the earth like millions of black snowflakes. In a Pulp game, Investigators refresh 2 Sanity points.

Even as they traverse out of the swamp, the explorers see corruption retreat and ordinary biological law reassert itself.

On their return journey, they face only the threats nature ordinarily places in the path of African explorers. As tough as these might be, they're nothing compared to the disaster they've prevented by removing Prugha'ath from the world.

Only when they consider how many countless lives continue to be snuffed out by everyday malaria might their thoughts return to the sobering indifference of the universe to human suffering.

Lost on a Sea of Dreams

"BUT MORE WONDERFUL THAN THE LORE OF OLD MEN AND THE LORE OF BOOKS IS THE SECRET LORE OF OCEAN.... ALL MY DAYS HAVE I WATCHED IT AND LISTENED TO IT, AND I KNOW IT WELL. AT FIRST IT TOLD TO ME ONLY THE PLAIN LITTLE TALES OF CALM BEACHES AND NEAR PORTS, BUT WITH THE YEARS IT GREW MORE FRIENDLY AND SPOKE OF OTHER THINGS; OF THINGS MORE STRANGE AND MORE DISTANT IN SPACE AND IN TIME. SOMETIMES AT TWILIGHT THE GREY VAPOURS OF THE HORIZON HAVE PARTED TO GRANT ME GLIMPSES OF THE WAYS BEYOND; AND SOMETIMES AT NIGHT THE DEEP WATERS OF THE SEA HAVE GROWN CLEAR AND PHOSPHORESCENT, TO GRANT ME GLIMPSES OF THE WAYS BENEATH."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT,
"THE WHITE SHIP"

An oceanic expedition to help a scientist goes dreadfully awry.

THE HOOK

The group, en route to Bermuda with a bathyscaph to assist naturalist and oceanographer William Beebe, is blown off course. The captain is injured in the storm, and few others aboard know much about navigation. Moreover what little they do know seems contradicted by the stars; none of the constellations are in the right place. How will the expedition get back on course?

THE SPINE

In *You Ladies of Spain*, the Investigators set sail on what ought to be an easy cruise through calm seas, but things don't stay that way for long. An unexpected storm, forcing them to **Batten Down the Hatches**, and its aftermath in the **Morning Watch** put them in the heart of a strange Sargasso Sea, and they aren't the only ones there. They will need to discover the navigational aids that will free them from being **Trapped in Sargasso**, before they are driven mad or die. Clever thinking and diplomacy while **Salvaging Derelicts** may get survivors aboard the stranded cargo ship *Newcastle* to help them, but even with the *Newcastle's* aid, refreshing Survival is a constant challenge. If successful, the *Bluebell*, much the worse for wear, will face a final challenge; failure means it will wreck itself on the rocky shores of Kingsport's North Point lighthouse like the fabled **White Ship**.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

The unnatural storm has blown the expedition's ship, the *Bluebell*, into the Dreamlands. There are ways of crossing back, but the expedition is in danger of being swallowed up by the great Sargasso, the living weed that has claimed so many other ships. The Investigators must be careful, since the other ships caught in the Sargasso hold information that will be vital to their salvation; but if they

get too close, the *Bluebell* could end up trapped like all the others. It doesn't help that some of the ships caught in the great weed are still occupied by cannibals and their moon-beast masters; and the strange glow coming from underneath the weed — which may tempt them to deploy the bathyscaph — comes from the mighty temple of the dream god Hypnos beneath the waves, lost for centuries, yet still sending out its maddening and deadly call, which the Investigators may have become entranced by.

TOUR AND TRAVEL

Since the route to Bermuda from the East Coast is well known, and there are no significant dangers, the *Bluebell* has not been stocked for a lengthy voyage. This is an ocean voyage, which counts as hostile (−1) for Survival purposes; some increments may be rated more than that, but never less. Under normal circumstances the journey would take perhaps three weeks, assuming moderately choppy weather and some minor navigation errors, and so counts as three travel increments.

Survival Pool

The expedition starts with a Survival pool of 12 points.

The *Bluebell* is a sailing ship, donated by a Miskatonic alumnus. The alumnus made a fair bit of money, during Prohibition,

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operating the *Bluebell* as a rum smuggler between Cuba and the Florida Keys; in those years, she was known as the *Pelican*. The alumnus thought it would be a nice gesture (and tax deductible, too) if he donated the renamed *Pelican* to Miskatonic as a research vessel. One relic of the *Bluebell*'s less salubrious career is a hidden compartment in the hold that not even the alumnus knew about. Should it be discovered, it contains several crates of rum, other supplies and a handgun with four corroded rounds, an effective equivalent of 1 Survival point.

The *Bluebell* is a three-masted schooner, about a hundred feet long, Bermuda rigged and Canadian built. In addition to the sails she also has a diesel engine, but fuel for this is limited, and the captain prefers to use it as a last resort. A minimum Difficulty 5 **Mechanical Repair** test is needed to operate this engine, fondly referred to as the "Mule" by the crew. Potential disasters include the engine catching fire, which can, in a worst-case situation, cripple or destroy

the ship. The *Bluebell* has a small Marconi radio set, for emergencies. She also has a flare gun and first aid kit, but any serious injury is well beyond the scant medical attention that can be provided on board.

EXPEDITION PERSONNEL

In addition to the players, the *Bluebell* has a crew of three: Captain Billy Hanrahan, Perry Norris and Mike Shea. Shea is the man in charge of the Mule, and also the only one who really knows how to cook. Hanrahan is the only one with significant Piloting. The ship doesn't have an armory as such, but Hanrahan does keep two pistols and some ammunition locked away in his cabin.

Captain Hanrahan

Abilities: Astronomy 1, Athletics 8, Credit Rating 3, Firearms 5, First Aid 6, Oral History 2, Outdoorsman 1, Piloting 10, Sanity 6, Scuffling 6, Stability 8



Weapon: -2 (fists), -1 (marlinspike), +0 (handgun)

Notes: Likes to whistle show tunes, and has a collection of Tin Pan Alley favorites for his Victrola. Wonders aloud "now what would poppa do?" his favorite phrase. Distrusts women, and thinks they're bad luck aboard a ship.

Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/ Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Ocean (-1)	You Ladies of Spain	N/A	N/A
Stormy Ocean (+0)	Batten Down the Hatches	See p. 73	See p. 73
Sargasso (+0)	Trapped in Sargasso	Stability (due to lack of water); Outdoorsman (seafood)	5 Refresh 1
Stormy Ocean (+0)	The White Ship	Psychoanalysis or Reassurance	8

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Perry Norris



Abilities: Art 1, Athletics 8, Craft 3, Credit Rating 1, First Aid 1, Piloting 2, Sanity 5, Scuffling 7, Stability 6

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: -2 (fists), -1 (knife)

Notes: Loves science fiction in all its forms, and is an avid reader when he can find the time. A keen wood-carver and carpenter. Looks up to heaven for guidance whenever faced with a problem.

Mike Shea

Abilities: Athletics 5, Credit Rating 2, Electrical Repair 3, Mechanical Repair 6, Sanity 4, Scuffling 6, Stability 4, Weapons 6

Weapon: -2 (fists), -1 (wrench)

Notes: Superstitious, and believes in the devil, whom he pictures as his father. Hot tempered, and turns the air blue at the least provocation. An avowed Temperance man, strong liquor puts him in a fighting mood.



BEEBE AND THE BATHYSCOUT

William Beebe isn't someone the characters are actually going to meet, but they ought to believe that they are. Consequently some background information is necessary, as is a description of the bathyscout the characters are meant to be delivering. The Investigators might need abilities — Oral History, for example — to know all of the Beebe information, but as this won't be relevant to the scenario, there should be no cost to acquire all Beebe data.

William Beebe, in his fifties at the time of the scenario, is an experienced explorer, naturalist and author. He's visited almost every corner of the planet in search of everything from birds to marine life, flown over the Western Front in the Great War and led several scientific expeditions, earning him fame and plaudits. His private life has been

stormy; his first wife divorced him in 1913, and, at the time of the scenario, he's on the verge of cheating on his current wife with his assistant. His work in Bermuda, at the ecological station on Nonsuch Island, has to do with marine biology; his team is trying to conduct an in-depth study of undersea life.

Marine study up till this point has been stymied by pressure. The deepest a human can dive before being crushed is a hundred feet; submarines go deeper, but lack portholes, making them useless for investigative work. Thus Beebe came up with the original concept, essentially a canister with windows in it, and his plan — published in the *New York Times* — caught the attention of engineer Otis Barton, who proposed the idea that Beebe eventually adopted; a round container, more capable of surviving the pressure at depth. It is that device that Beebe and Barton are using at Nonsuch, and will continue to use from about 1930 to 1934. They call it the bathysphere.

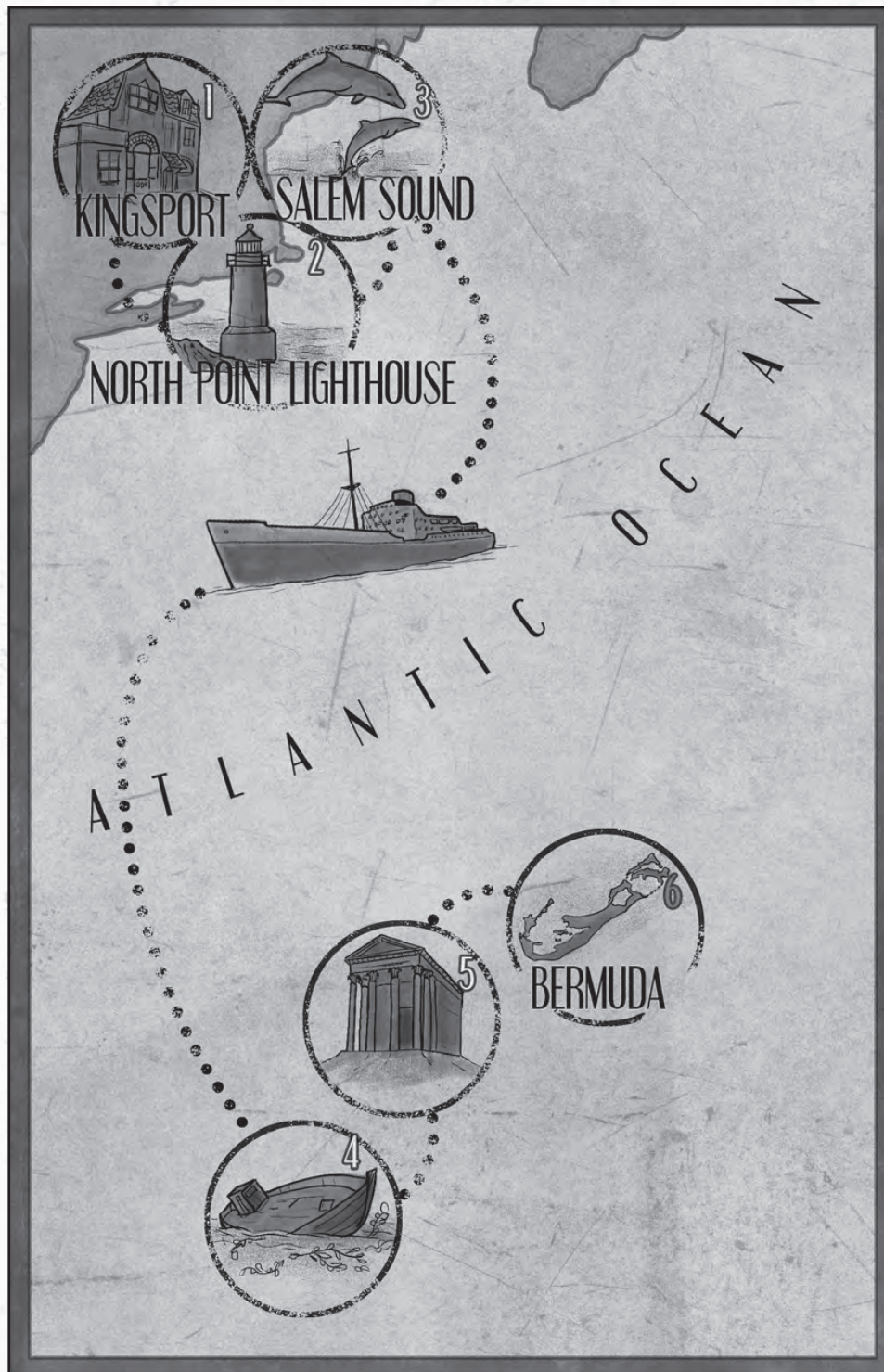
The device the characters have is more akin to Beebe's original idea, a cylinder with windows. Oxygen is provided via pressurized containers inside the cylinder, with calcium chloride pans set inside the device's walls to absorb CO₂. Two people can fit comfortably inside; more than that, and the oxygen runs out too quickly. It can communicate with the *Bluebell* via radio.

They have this device thanks to the determined efforts of a Miskatonic professor, Hiram Bowles, of the School of Natural Sciences. Bowles, like many others, tried to contact Beebe when the naturalist first announced his intentions, but was unsuccessful. Bowles is convinced that only academics like



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himself truly understand what is needed for undersea exploration. Engineering is, to Bowles, an inferior discipline, fit only for tinkers. Bowles happens to be on good terms with the alumnus who donated the *Bluebell*, which is how he managed to get hold of it. Bowles has sent the team to Beebe thinking that, if Beebe could only see his bathyscout in action, the naturalist would be convinced of its potential.

The bathyscout, like Beebe's bathysphere, is not powered, and does not have anything resembling an escape hatch. Once you're in, you're stuck there until the people on the surface pull you back up. That may change later, in the Dreamlands.

YOU LADIES OF SPAIN

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Outs: Flipper, Shipmates, Batten Down the Hatches

The Investigators set sail from Kingsport.

There is a small knot of well-wishers at the dock, including Professor Bowles, hobbling along on a crutch; he broke his leg in a recent accident, else he'd be going with them. He promises to be out as soon as he can, and gives last-minute advice on the care and use of his precious bathyscout. He impresses the importance of this mission; "Don't forget, Beebe is

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counting on you!” (No he isn’t; Beebe hasn’t even heard of them. Bowles is being an interfering busybody, but the Investigators wouldn’t know that.)

If the players want to make any last-minute purchases before the *Bluebell* sets out, now’s the time.

The last bit of Kingsport that the Investigators see, as they sail away, is the North Point Lighthouse. A tiny shape up at the top of the tower — the lighthouse keeper — waves to the crew, as the *Bluebell* passes by.

Outdoorsman notes that the weather is brisk but fair, and — according to the reports — should stay that way for the next week or so. Brisk is one way of putting it; the landlubbers in the group (possibly all of them) find the heaving decks most disconcerting. **Athletics** or **Health**, Difficulty 3, avoids seasickness; failure means that the sufferer is deathly ill, for roleplay purposes, but suffers no in-game penalty. The crew gets great pleasure offering the unfortunates salt pork as a “sure-fire remedy” against further sickness.

The *Bluebell* is following established routes, and often passes other ships — fishermen and coastal luggers, mostly — at the start of its journey. Once it hits the open water, days can pass without the *Bluebell* sighting a living soul. The only company the characters have, apart from the *Bluebell*’s crew, is a pod of friendly dolphins, which adopts the *Bluebell* for the first few days of her voyage; flashing ahead of her for a mile or two, afterward playing in the wake astern.

Flipper

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: You Ladies of Spain, Shipmates

Lead-Outs: Shipmates, Batten Down the Hatches

This side scene assumes that one or more of the Investigators are paying attention to the marine life around them, during the voyage.

Outdoorsman or **Biology** reveals that the dolphins following the *Bluebell* are behaving normally, for their social species, and their acrobatics at the stern are quite astounding to watch. However there is one that seems to keep apart from the rest; a large male, his body covered in small circular scars. At a guess, he’s in competition with one or more of the other males in the pod, and they’re keeping him away from the females; the scars will have come from fights. This male is paying much more attention to the *Bluebell* than the others, almost as though he’s waiting for something to happen.

With a 1-point spend, the male can be tempted closer. Its eyes seem almost human in their expressiveness, and, as it gets within touching distance, it locks its gaze on one of the Investigators. There is a sudden, instantaneous, soundless communication between them, and the Investigator — and only that Investigator — hears a snatch of what appears to be music. The sound, if it can be called that, is coming from a great distance away, but is heartbreakingly familiar; it’s almost like the song of home and happiness. This causes a 3-point Stability test, and the male vanishes

in a sudden splash of water, swimming vigorously away from the *Bluebell*.

That Investigator has been **touched by the temple**; see further “Trapped in Sargasso.”

Shipmates

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: You Ladies of Spain, Flipper

Lead-Outs: Flipper, Batten Down the Hatches

This side scene assumes that the Investigators spend some time trying to get to know the crewmen.

Oral History or **Reassurance** will get them talking. Only the captain is a career sailor, the other two having drifted into the job when their lives ashore didn’t work out. Mike Shea is dodging alimony, and used to be a mechanic in Queens, while Perry Norris lost his parents at a young age, and spent some time in prison during Prohibition, for selling liquor. Hanrahan, while not a grizzled old salt, has spent most of his thirty years at sea, and — lying about his age — served in the British Navy during the Great War.

Assess Honesty shows that all this is true, but also notes that, of the three, Shea is definitely the weak link. He’s too easily shaken (that’s his low Stability and Sanity coming to the fore) and may not behave well in times of crisis.

A 1-point **Oral History** or **Reassurance** spend will get Norris to share his book collection, which includes *The Boats of the “Glen Carrig”* by William Hope Hodgson. *Glen Carrig* happens to

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feature some very evocative scenes set in a Sargasso ship cemetery, and those who read it will find their later situation strangely familiar. Anyone who reads *Glen Carrig* is **touched by the temple**; see further “Trapped in Sargasso.”

BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-Ins: You Ladies of Spain, Flipper, Shipmates

Lead-Out: Morning Watch

The air is hot and muggy, and low, hard-edged clouds hang on the horizon, to the northwest of the *Bluebell*. Captain Hanrahan does his best to hide his worry but (**Assess Honesty**), he’s deeply troubled. The radio gives out nothing but static; no attempt to contact other ships is successful. **Outdoorsman** notes that a severe storm is likely.

If the Investigators don’t organize themselves, Hanrahan puts everyone to work. The sails need to be furled and secured, everything loose needs to be tied down, the storm jib — a triangular sail at the bow, used as a last resort to keep the ship moving — needs to be made ready. The *Bluebell* can’t hope to make harbor, nor will its anchor touch bottom, so there’s no question of riding this one out in safety. The *Bluebell*’s best hope is to run before the storm with her stern in the wind, hence the storm jib; if the winds become too severe, the jib will have to be taken down, or risk damaging the ship.

This storm raises the Difficulty of the Survival test to 6. Experiencing the storm

at its height calls for a 3-point Stability test. The rain hits first, cold and stinging, falling like bullets from the sky; then the wind comes blasting out of the northwest. It’s soon obvious that the storm jib won’t hold. **Athletics** (Difficulty 4) secures it, or it will tear off in the wind, damaging the mast as it does so. Treat this as an extra +1 to the Survival cost.

At the height of the thunderstorm, Shea becomes hysterical, screaming that the devil’s coming out of the storm to get him. In his haste to get away, he tries to jump over the side. Hanrahan will try to stop him, as might the Investigators. Shea will fight back. In the struggle, the boom — which ought to have been tied down — comes loose, and swings across the ship, posing a hazard to everyone on deck. That includes Hanrahan, and any Investigator trying to stop Shea from jumping overboard. (Difficulty 6 **Athletics** or **Sense Trouble** test or be struck for +1 damage.) This knocks Hanrahan cold. Shea may, in the confusion, jump overboard, unless the Investigators stop him. If that happens, there’s no chance of saving him in that heavy swell; he soon vanishes astern. As with the storm jib, the unsecured boom swinging in the wind could potentially damage the *Bluebell*; **Athletics** (Difficulty 5) ties it down, and failure adds an extra +1 to the Survival cost.

There is a chance to reduce the Survival penalty. A sea anchor, if deployed, will help stabilize the *Bluebell* and reduce the Survival cost by -1. A sea anchor can be made of almost anything; it’s basically a large lump of whatever’s lying to hand, put over at the stern with a rope attaching it to the ship. Its natural drag is what slows down and stabilizes the plunging *Bluebell*. Hanrahan will be

unconscious by this point, so it will be up to the Investigators to think of this; **Outdoorsman** may help, or **Piloting** used as an Investigative ability.

Hanrahan is gravely injured, and unconscious. Without medical attention, he will die before morning. A spend of 2 **First Aid** points will stabilize him.

Just after the business with Shea, Hanrahan and the boom is dealt with, the *Bluebell* is enveloped in blue-white flame, and a great hissing is heard, as if a thousand snakes were awakened at once. The mast is glowing as if it were ablaze, and a terrible knocking sound is heard. This causes a 4-point Stability test, as the *Bluebell* shudders as if struck.

Outdoorsman or similar may recognize the phenomenon as Saint Elmo’s fire, but that doesn’t account for the knocking, or the way the *Bluebell* shivers awkwardly in the wind. However, soon after this occurs, the storm ends.

Morning Watch

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Batten Down the Hatches

Lead-Outs: The Mysterious East, Lost in the Weeds, The Stars Aren’t Right, Trapped in Sargasso

After the storm, the Investigators take stock of their situation.

The *Bluebell* is not a happy ship. She won’t answer the helm; the wheel is jammed, so *Bluebell* keeps turning to port in a long, gentle curve. There’s an accumulation of what looks like seaweed draped around the bow, which



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extends underneath the keel. There may be other damage, depending on how badly the Survival test went.

Hanrahan and Shea may, or may not, be dead. Shea, if he drowned, will turn up later (see “Trapped in Sargasso”). Hanrahan will remain unconscious, and **Medicine** or similar will realize that he’s probably suffering from a severe concussion. There’s very little that can be done, except to make him comfortable; either he’ll live or he won’t. If made comfortable, he will eventually awaken in a later scene (Keeper’s choice as to exactly

when), but suffer from extreme disorientation, confusion and slurred speech. He won’t be of any help.

Shea, if he is still on board, is deeply remorseful. He seems calmer now, but — **Assess Honesty** or similar — he’s even more twitchy and unreliable than he was before. Effectively, his Stability and Sanity have dropped by 2 points each. He genuinely believes that the devil is on board the *Bluebell*, and could be hiding in disguise. If put under any significant stress — is attacked, sees something unnatural — Shea will become psychotic, and either attack the thing that caused the stress,

or try to throw himself overboard again. **Psychoanalysis**, if given before the stress is caused, will prevent this from happening.

That leaves Norris as the sole surviving sailor, and possibly the only person aboard with any **Piloting** ability. If someone else has more than he, Norris cheerfully defers to that person. Otherwise he takes his duty as effective captain deathly seriously, and will not confide his worries — or terrors — to the others, for fear of causing a panic. **Piloting**, it must be remembered, includes navigating by the stars, though **Outdoorsman** or **Astronomy** will be



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able to work out if something's wrong with the stars themselves. Norris doesn't have enough **Piloting** to know how to work a ship like the *Bluebell* on his own.

Evidence Collection, possibly assisted with **Athletics** or similar, or someone who dives over the side and looks, soon works out what has gone wrong with the wheel. Something has managed to jam itself in between the rudder and the hull.

Clearing the rudder won't be easy, as the wood is jammed in there tight. Someone — possibly several people piggybacking — using **Athletics** (Difficulty 5), will be able to clear the obstruction. Once this is done, the *Bluebell* can be steered. The obstruction is a piece of wood, probably from another ship.

Outdoorsman (core clue) will notice a low-lying mass — possibly debris, possibly land — some distance off to port. If the *Bluebell* keeps on her current heading, she'll eventually get there, though it may take a while. A 1-point spend of **Outdoorsman**, **Biology** or similar theorizes that the mass is Sargasso weed, which may indicate that the *Bluebell* is close to the Sargasso Sea, an accumulation of debris and natural growth that swirls and collects in the Atlantic; Bermuda — their destination — is on the fringes of that sea. However if that is what they're looking at, the sea ought to be a distinctive deep blue, and it's not; it's dark green in color. The point spend allows the Investigator to see that there are larger things, possibly ship-sized, out deep in the weed.

Evidence Collection or similar notices a dark mass several hundred feet astern, which must be solid, as it occasionally

breaks the surface of the water, though most of the time its bulk is hidden beneath the waves. A 1-point spend allows the Investigator to realize that the mass is most likely a derelict ship, almost — but not quite — sunk. Wrecks like these are a hazard to navigation; they're like floating rocks, easy enough to smash into or be smashed by. Most likely that was what caused the bumping noise the crew heard during the storm; the *Bluebell* went straight over the derelict, and by the grace of God didn't smash itself open, but just scraped her bottom instead.

The Mysterious East

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: Morning Watch, Lost in the Weeds, The Stars Aren't Right

Lead-Outs: Lost in the Weeds, The Stars Aren't Right, Trapped in Sargasso

This side scene assumes the Investigators investigate the wood that jammed their rudder, or try to get closer to the derelict ship.

The wood is long, curved and decorated with a stylized carved and painted eye. It has clearly been in the water for some time; **Biology** or similar can work out, from the sea growths on it, that it has been at least four to eight months submerged. **History** knows that decorations of this type were used in ancient Greek and Egyptian ships, to ward off evil; the practice is still carried on at the time of the scenario, usually on small fishing and coastal boats, but those are nothing like as elaborate as the example the Investigators are looking at. In any case, ships sporting eyes like this would be in the Mediterranean, not the Atlantic.

Investigating the wreck is difficult, and may require **Piloting** tests. The *Bluebell* can't afford to get too close, for fear of hitting the derelict again. Using the engine, rather than relying on the wind and current, would be better, but even then it's risky, since the derelict can change course at any moment, potentially causing a collision and therefore a 2-point Survival loss. However, once close enough, the wreck appears to have been a long ship, probably over 100–120 feet; part of it has been lost, making estimation difficult. It had one mast, long since snapped off; the remaining stump breaks the surface now and again. What may be oars, or what's left of them, hang off to one side. With a 1 point spend, **History** or similar tentatively identifies it as a Greek trireme, but the Investigator can't be certain, because nobody living has ever seen one; it fits the description given in books. This revelation triggers a 2-point Stability test.

Lost in the Weeds

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: Morning Watch, The Mysterious East, The Stars Aren't Right

Lead-Outs: The Mysterious East, The Stars Aren't Right, Trapped in Sargasso

This side scene assumes that the Investigators investigate the Sargasso weed.

Getting a sample is no problem; there are clumps of it everywhere. The weed — *Sargassum natans* — is golden-olive and dense, and clumps together in great bunches. If the weed becomes heavy enough, it can sink. It is infested with tiny creatures, like *Portunus sayi* — tiny swimming crabs, olive and yellow — and sea moss (*Membranipora tuberculata*)



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hangs from it, like an old man's white beard, tipped with tiny pearls. There's a host of details for a trained naturalist to pick over, and some signs that completely new species may be found out here: tiny, delicate little fish, with membranous fins as colorful as a sunset, apparently living in little weed nests they build for themselves; small ragged sea slugs, as yellow-olive as the Sargasso, only identifiable if their cover is disturbed.

The first time someone picks through the weed, the searcher discovers (**simple search**) an ivory figurine, very delicately carved, tangled up in the strands. It's just the right size to have hung from a necklace, or been kept in someone's pocket like a charm. The item depicts a youth with a beatific face, garlanded with poppy flowers; it is made in a Grecian or at any rate Mediterranean style, and appears to be of great antiquity. A 1-point **Art History, History, Physics** or similar spend will realize that, as a soft, porous substance, ivory would not last very long out in the ocean. Either this item hasn't been here long or isn't ivory.

Anyone who keeps this figurine is **touched by the temple**; see "Trapped in Sargasso."

The Stars Aren't Right

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: Morning Watch, The Mysterious East, Lost in the Weeds

Lead-Outs: The Mysterious East, Lost in the Weeds, Trapped in Sargasso

The Custom of the Sea

Here's one potential response to low Survival pools.

It's long been an unpleasant and not-often-talked-about part of maritime history that, *in extremis*, one means of extending survival time is to eat your shipmates. Anyone with **History, Law, Anthropology** or **Oral History** will know this has happened many times; the occupants of one of the lifeboats from the whaling ship *Essex*, inspiration for *Moby Dick*, only survived by eating seven of their own. The captain of the *Essex*, one of the survivors, honored his dead shipmates' memory by fasting each November 20th, the date of the sinking. There have been many other instances, including one that inspired a lawsuit: *R v. Dudley and Stephens* (1884). It established the principle that necessity is not a defense to the charge of murder. The two were accused of killing and eating their seventeen-year-old shipmate; they were sentenced to death, but this was commuted to six months imprisonment, on account of the sympathy their trial had generated.

It may occur to the Investigators that cannibalism is their only option. They may already have as many as two candidates: Shea and Hanrahan. Each corpse can potentially refresh 1–2 Survival points. Cannibalism requires a 6-point Stability test for participants; even those who only watch make a 3-point Stability test.

Those who participate in cannibalism are **touched by the temple**; see "Trapped in Sargasso."

This side scene covers what happens when the Investigators try to navigate out of the Sargasso.

As the *Bluebell* is trapped in the Dreamlands, the stars that hang overhead are not the stars that the Investigators are familiar with. For that matter, compasses don't work, and there's really no reason to think that the sun is actually rising in the east. This means that navigation is impossible. If Norris is in charge of the boat, he won't say anything, since he's convinced it's his own stupidity that's causing the problem, and shame prevents him from speaking out (**Assess Honesty** deduces this). This could

mean several wasted travel increments — all at –1 — if the Investigators don't catch on fast. A 1-point spend of **Astronomy, Outdoorsman** or similar will soon realize what's wrong; the stars don't match any known terrestrial pattern, which means that the *Bluebell* isn't on Earth any more. This is a Mythos shock causing a 5-point Stability test for the person who catches on. The Investigator is also **touched by the temple**; see "Trapped in Sargasso."

So long as the Investigators don't have the appropriate charts, they won't be able to navigate out. Every attempt to

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sail away ends up back in the Sargasso. Trying to navigate out does count as a travel increment, for Survival purposes.

TRAPPED IN SARGASSO

Scene Type: Core/Refresh

Lead-Ins: Morning Watch, The Mysterious East, Lost in the Weeds, The Stars Aren't Right

Lead-Outs: Lost in the Weeds, The Stars Aren't Right, Salvaging Derelicts, Bathyscout and Hypnos

As the *Bluebell* gets closer to the low-lying mass mentioned in "Morning Watch," it reveals itself to be a huge accumulation of Sargasso, unlike anything the Investigators have ever seen or heard of before. The Sargasso Sea they may be familiar with (**Biology, History, Oral History**) is nothing like this; the vast stretch of weed, extending as far as the eye can see, is like something out of a medieval traveler's tale. The result is a 3-point Stability test, as the Investigators realize that, not only is the weed utterly unnatural, it seems almost to be moving, as though constantly alive and twitching.

Moreover it has victims in its clutches. Buried deep in the weeds are ships of all descriptions; yachts, steam ships and what appears to be a battleship off in the far distance, rub cheek by jowl with galleons, tea clippers and even stranger vessels. Students of **History** may pick out Viking longships, galleys, caravels, triremes with their oars tangled in greenery, junks from far-off China and other craft they can't identify. Except possibly in dreams, as some are from shores far, far distant; long black galleys from Leng, strange ships with tattered lemon sails and many other Dreamlands wrecks.



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The Sargasso is not an unbroken mass. There are wide channels, akin to rivers, through which the *Bluebell* could pass without too much difficulty. Moreover a little observation soon shows that the mass is constantly breaking up and floating free, not dissimilar to the way in which icebergs calve from glaciers. Often when this happens, a ship that had, until that point, been mired in the weed is released, and drifts off over the horizon. These derelicts soon vanish from sight, and are not seen again. Theoretically it ought to be possible to move the weed aside, since it isn't anchored to anything, but the *Bluebell* lacks the mass and power to do more than push ineffectively at the great Sargasso.

The weed grows remarkably quickly. If an object remains stationary, or slow moving, in the weed for a day or more, its steering gear — rudders, engines — soon become clogged with the stuff, and, before long, the entire ship will be engulfed. However this can be prevented by constant activity; either clearing out the steering gear or keeping the vessel moving.

Any corpse that ends up in the ocean surfaces in the Sargasso. So Shea, for example, may be found floating in a tangle of weed, if he went overboard in the storm. However, before his body can be pulled from the sea, it vanishes beneath the waves, almost as though it deliberately swam under. It does not surface again.

Those who give it a go can — at least in places — climb over the Sargasso. It's not unlike walking on a very unstable raft; not something that can be done at a run, and there's every chance the bit you thought was safe to walk on isn't. **Athletics**,

Sense Trouble and similar tests may be needful here. Catastrophic failure may dump the unfortunate in the ocean, as the weed closes over the spot where he was standing seconds before; drowning tests in these circumstances start at Difficulty 4, and help may be needed to dig the victim out again. Theoretically someone could clamber over the weed toward one, or more, of the trapped ships.

There is wildlife in the weed. Schools of flying fish are often seen, buzzing over the weed-strewn ocean. Crabs scuttle from place to place, like bumbling businessmen on the way to work. Larger fish hide in the cool shadows under the weed. Even birds can be seen, wheeling overhead from ship to ship. But catching any of these to refresh Survival will be tricky; **Outdoorsman** or similar will help, but only 1 Survival point can be refreshed.

At night, a strange luminescence lights up the Sargasso, a light that comes from, not the weed itself, but something underneath it. Whatever this light source is, it must be far beneath the ocean's surface. Those who have been **touched by the temple** hear, at the same time that they see the mysterious light, a haunting musical refrain, a tune that they can't quite identify and that seems to be coming from very far away.

The Investigators will not be able to tell, without getting much closer, whether or not there are living creatures aboard the trapped ships. Every so often what might be a voice can be heard, shouting something indecipherable, but at this distance it's impossible to tell whether the sound is real, or a trick of the wind. See also the section "Prospero's Ghost," in "Salvaging Derelicts."

The Marconi radio, if the Investigators think to use it, does not pick up any of the usual emergency or official channels. Occasionally, at night, the radio broadcasts strange, unearthly music that is utterly alien, and yet somehow heartbreakingly familiar. Very rarely, the Investigators may be able to contact other derelicts stuck out in the weeds, but the operators manning those radios are always Calibans.

In addition to ships, the Investigators soon discover many bottles floating in the weed, each with messages inside. Though each message is different, they all have the same basic import: whoever threw them overboard was desperate, and hoped against hope that whomever received the message would come and rescue them. Many of these messages were written by Calibans. Theoretically, if enough (say, twenty or more) are collected, the messages would count as a kind of Mythos tome; skimming them provides 1 dedicated pool point in Piloting (Sargasso) — see "Salvaging Derelicts" — while poring over them adds +1 to the reader's Cthulhu Mythos rating.

Those who have been **touched by the temple** feel oddly fascinated by the Sargasso. The strange lights seen at night fill them, not with horror, but with wonder. Their Drives may push them forward, making them eager to explore the weed and see what is aboard the lost vessels. Each person who has been **touched by the temple** will, so long as they are trapped in the Sargasso, begin undergoing the challenges of Hypnos. See further the sidebar "Hypnos's Lure," p. 82.

Every travel increment — and it is possible, even likely, that there will be

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several — spent “Trapped in Sargasso” is treated as very hostile (+0). A potential variant, if the Investigators stay long enough, is a challenge: lack of water for a loss of 5 Survival points, with **Stability** as the Relief ability.

SALVAGING DERELICTS

Scene Type: Alternate/Refresh

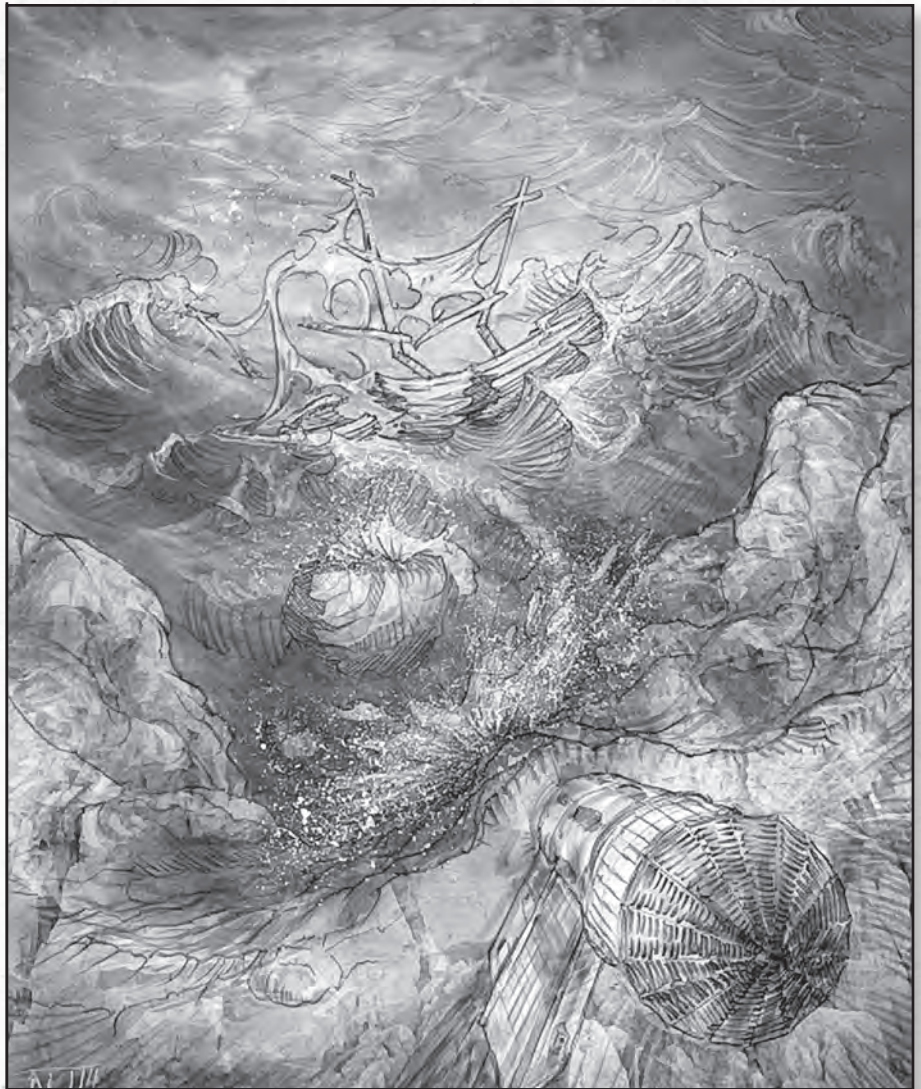
Lead-Ins: Trapped in Sargasso, Bathyscout and Hypnos

Lead-Outs: Bathyscout and Hypnos, The White Ship

This side scene assumes that the Investigators try to explore some of the trapped ships. Only abandoned ships are discussed in this first section; occupied ships are considered below in “Calibans.”

In truth, it is their best chance both for refreshing Survival and for finding their way out into the waking world, though they may not realize it at the time. Many of the ships here have been too long wrapped in weed, and have nothing useful aboard. However, some still have supplies hidden away, while one or two have clues aboard that will help the Investigators navigate out of their dilemma.

Of the crews, there is never very much sign. At most a few scattered bones and tattered clothing is all that is left of them. **Medicine, Forensics or Biology** will not be able to tell how they all died, though starvation and disease are both reasonable guesses, and there are many examples of blunt force trauma. In more than one instance, the bones have clearly been gnawed at, almost certainly by humans; it’s a 1-point Stability test for that revelation.



At most, an individual ship can refresh 1 Survival. This represents food, water, medicine and other supplies that haven’t yet spoiled. It is very rare to find any papers or charts; often damp and mold have made these illegible, when they can be found. However, before the final blow fell, these ships often tried to find their way out of their trap, only to discover — as the Investigators already have — that the

very stars were against them. That didn’t stop them trying, and the notes their crews left behind — whether scrawled in a logbook, carved into the timbers of the deck or in some other form — are a piecemeal map of the sea and stars. Piloting will not be able to get the Investigators out of the Sargasso; only the dedicated Piloting (Sargasso) pool can be spent. Even with it, the test is still Difficulty 8. Each



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time the Investigators discover one of these bits of map and study it, it adds 1 to a dedicated Piloting (Sargasso) pool. No wrecked ship has more than 1 point hidden aboard, so the Investigators will probably need to investigate at least two ships — and probably more than that — before they have even a slim chance of navigating out of the Sargasso. This vital information is written in several different **Languages** and may, at the Keeper's discretion, require other abilities — **Cryptography**, for instance — to decipher.

A Dreamlands ship is slightly different. A Dreamlands derelict will never refresh Survival points, but will always add 2 dedicated pool points to Piloting (Sargasso). The Keeper should probably only allow the Investigators to find one of these unoccupied; the others can be found in "Calibans."

Though these derelicts are not occupied, that does not mean there is no threat. Rat swarms can be found here (see *ToC*, pp. 156–57), and there is always the risk of disease. Fever and diarrhea are the two most common symptoms, and, in game terms, this will cause the sufferer to behave as if **hurt** until treated with **Medicine** or one to two weeks have passed. Successful Difficulty 4 **Athletics** or **Health** tests may avoid this disease penalty.

The Keeper is encouraged to invent derelicts, like these examples:

- *Edinburgh*, a cargo ship from the 1880s, which has been here over a quarter century. Her decks are so rotten that they sag underfoot.
- *Fearless*, a Royal Navy Napoleonic era gun-brig, which was in a ferocious sea

fight before she ended up here. Judging by the state of her, she's only been in the weed three weeks; some of her crew are still bloating below deck.

- *Fengzhou*, a Ming Dynasty Chinese junk, listing dangerously to one side, thanks probably to a storm that dismasted her. A fortune in porcelain can be found aboard. She's been here at least a year, probably longer.
- *Panther*, German torpedo boat circa 1943, or at any rate half of her; the other half, including the engine room, appears to have been destroyed by aerial bombardment. This is her twenty-second year in the weed.
- *Queenstown Belle*, Victorian-era pleasure yacht. The owner is the only one aboard, and he shot himself yesterday. Some of the bones on deck appear to have been gnawed by humans.
- A Dreamlands slaver, a long black galley, broken in half by some unguessable force. It has been in the weed for over a decade. The unnatural remains of its misshapen rowers are good for a 3-point Stability test.

Calibans

Not all of the ships caught in the weed are unoccupied.

Many of these crazed survivors are hostile, and will raid other ships for supplies. Most of these debased creatures are recognizable as human, but not all. Some few Dreamlands creatures have survived here. Nation and religion no longer matter to the Calibans; they'll butcher anyone they find, to put in the pot. The only reason for keeping a captive alive for any length of time is if they have a use. The weak might be kept alive, for later meals,

but the strong — the ones who pose a threat — will be butchered straight away. Calibans cannot be reasoned with; if captured, they may spit and snarl, but their speech is the speech of madmen, and little useful information can be gained. They come from all eras, and speak in a multitude of tongues, yet a Caliban can understand another Caliban, and all comprehend the mental commands of a moon-beast.

As far as arms and armor are concerned, most Calibans make do with knives, swords and other hand weapons. It is very rare for one of them to have a working firearm. Some live out in the weed itself, floating there like trapdoor spiders awaiting victims; they have a fine understanding of the weed, and rarely stand on unstable patches. Others use lifeboats, or rafts, to silently travel from victim to victim.

Caliban

Abilities: Athletics 8, Conceal 6, Firearms 4, Fleeing 10, Health 7, Piloting 6, Scuffling 8, Weapons 9

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +2

Weapon: –1 (knife), +0 (club, light firearm), +1 (sword)

Moon-Beasts

These massive, slippery grayish-white monstrosities have no fixed shape, but often resemble toad-like things, with very clever — and strong — forepaws. Their faces, if faces they can be called, are covered in a vibrating mass of pink tentacles. Very few of these survive in the weed, but those that do often put themselves in charge of bands of Calibans. They dislike the Sargasso, and prefer to live in one of the abandoned ships at all times. A band of Calibans led

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by one of these is truly debauched, but more likely to take captives; they need sacrifices for their dark rituals.

Their magical capabilities vary, but all know Contact Nyarlathotep, and Dominate is a particular favorite of theirs.

Abilities: Athletics 10, Health 14, Magic 8–12, Piloting 8, Scuffling 7, Weapons 12

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +2

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: -1 (claw), +1 (spear)

Armor: none, but firearms do minimal damage to these alien creatures.

Stability Loss: +0

Prospero's Ghost

There is one band of humans out here that has not fallen victim to madness, and it could be a useful source of Survival refresh. However the Investigators will need to win their trust before they will be allowed anywhere near.

Their ship is the *Newcastle*, a freighter from the Great War that has been trapped here for over a decade. The group, led by Patrick Abbot, a harpooner from New England, is made up of a score of men, women and children from several different wrecks, who banded together for survival. The goods aboard the freighter — mostly tinned food — have kept them fed so far, and a jury-rigged distillation system supplies just enough water. When they can, they also go looking for supplies on other ships, but they never tackle anything that appears threatening. They have a functioning society of sorts, complete with preacher, who leads them in hymns on what they think is

probably Sunday, though their concept of time is fluid at best.

These survivors are paranoid about the Calibans, and will keep the Investigators off with force if need be. They don't want to take the risk that seeming friends are actually cannibals in disguise, or creatures controlled by the moon-beasts. Their main threat — though it has few rounds left — is a machine gun salvaged from one of the warships, but they also have two rifles and several pistols, in addition to swords and knives.

Somehow gaining their trust will net the Investigators a 3–6 Survival pool refresh, and the *Newcastle* counts as a haven for General ability refresh purposes. But to get this benefit, they will have to overcome the survivors' paranoia.

The best means of doing that is by rescuing Prospero for them. This poor soul, whose real name is Obed Hutton, is their former leader. Years of living in the weed sapped his Sanity, and one night he fled out into the Sargasso. He hasn't been seen since, but has somehow survived out there; the *Newcastle's* people know this, because they hear Prospero — as they've come to know him — shouting, often repeating long soliloquies from his favorite reading material, Shakespeare's *Tempest*. The Investigators have been hearing Prospero, though they may not have realized it, since they first arrived; see "Trapped in Sargasso." His favorite passages are act I, scene II, from enter Ariel onward until Ariel exits, and act IV, scene I, up to the entrance of Caliban and his cronies. In his version, nobody has a voice save Prospero; he talks to the wind. He will Flee if approached, but there are means of calming him, of which the best

is to quote Shakespeare back to him. **Art History**, **Art (Theatre)** or similar will be helpful here. Otherwise he could be tricked with strong liquor — the like of which he hasn't seen in years — or lured in by a familiar voice. **Anthropology** would help pull this off; Hutton was originally from New England, and someone speaking in a familiar accent, or using phrases he remembers, even songs, will be able to get him close enough to capture. The Investigators had best hurry; Calibans led by a moon-beast are hunting him, and he may not be free much longer. The moon-beast is particularly anxious to get Prospero, as it thinks sacrificing him to Nyarlathotep may give it guidance on how to get out of the Sargasso.

No matter what happens, Prospero will not rejoin the group aboard the *Newcastle*. He refuses even to set foot on board, a turn of events that greatly saddens his former friends. However he does have information the Investigators will find useful; locked in his head is the equivalent of 2 points of Piloting (Sargasso), and, so long as he is willingly with them, his points can be added to their own whenever a Piloting (Sargasso) test is called for. He will "recognize" any messages or notes that the Investigators have already gathered as leaves from his magical book, and be very grateful that the Investigators recovered it for him.

The Investigators should only be allowed to refresh Survival with the *Newcastle* group once. Should they return in later scenes, they find that the survivors have been overrun by Calibans, and are already cooking up in the stew pot. Finding a butchered survivor's remains in a pot calls for a 4-point Stability test. If the Investigators want to get at whatever supplies remain — a potential



Hypnos's Lure

This is what happens to those **touched by the temple**.

Hypnos's influence is such that vulnerable individuals may be corrupted. Those who are corrupted see the Sargasso, and anything else touched or influenced by Hypnos — so the temple and its sunken city, the trapped derelicts, the weed, the sea life — as endlessly fascinating. Adventurous souls think that this is the finest thing they have ever done; Arrogant ones want to conquer the Sargasso and the temple, those with the Mythos In the Blood feel more comfortable and at home here than they have ever been and so on.

Those who become completely corrupted usually end up Calibans. Investigators who are temple-bound will be fascinated by the Calibans, and want to learn everything about them, including how they prepare their meals.

As time passes — and those touched start losing Stability — they begin seeing and hearing things that aren't really there. Examples include: the drowned bodies of all those killed so far, floating up to the surface to sing Hypnos's haunting music; a lecture delivered by Professor

Bowles on the superiority of the bathyscout, delivered as the professor dangles head downward from the mast like an image from the tarot; a smiling youth with poppies in his hair, walking across the surface of the water toward the *Bluebell*; a ship exactly like the *Bluebell* in every respect, except that it is crewed by Calibans who happen to resemble the Investigators, sailing past on the port side; a deserted island, with a beach on which a forlorn wizard sits, his staff broken across his knees. Each hallucination is a 4-point Stability test.

Should the Investigator's Stability drop below 0, the hallucinations become real enough that other people can see — but still not touch — them. So for them the island, for example, really exists, right up to the point that they try to set foot on the beach. Those who were not touched by the temple before, but who experience a shared hallucination and lose Stability as a result, are now **touched by the temple**; so, in time, the entire group could become affected.

2–3 survival refresh — they'll have to fight the Calibans for them.

Newcastle Survivors

Abilities: Athletics 6, Craft 2, Health 8, Firearms 6, Piloting 4, Sanity 5, Scuffling 6, Stability 6, Weapons 7

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: –1 (knife), +0 (club, light firearm), +1 (rifle, submachine gun)

Patrick Abbot

Abilities: Athletics 9, Craft 4, Health 10, Firearms 4, Piloting 8, Sanity 6, Scuffling 8, Stability 8, Weapons 9

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: –1 (knife), +0 (club, light handgun), +1 (whaling spear)

Prospero (Obed Hutton)

Abilities: Athletics 12, Craft 4, Health 9, Firearms 2, Fleeing 12, Magic 8, Piloting 12, Scuffling 10, Weapons 12

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: –1 (knife), +0 (staff)

Spells: Contact Nyarlathotep, Shrivelling

Bathyscout and Hypnos

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: Trapped in Sargasso, Salvaging Derelicts

Lead-Outs: Salvaging Derelicts

This side scene describes what happens if the Investigators try to use the bathyscout.

If they have been **touched by the temple**, their Drives may prompt them to do this, or they may come up with the idea on their own. The bathyscout is capable of exploring at depths up to 2,600 feet, but isn't happy about doing it; the pressure is immense, and the bathyscout groans and shudders under the strain.

There are many strange and wonderful creatures to be seen at depth under the Sargasso. Schools of tarpon (*Tarpon atlanticus*), cunning Sargassum fish

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(*Histrio histrio*) — relatives of the anglerfish — waiting near the weed and other creatures familiar to the Investigators can be found near the surface, or a relatively short distance beneath it. The dolphins first seen in “You Ladies of Spain” are also here, and they, unlike the other fish, accompany the bathyscaph to great depths. They apparently do not suffer from lack of oxygen, no matter how long they are down. However, as the bathyscaph goes deeper underwater, it starts to encounter sea creatures completely unfamiliar to science; alien lifeforms, somehow capable of survival at great, crushing depth, that glow with their own feeble light. Larger, darker shapes indicate predators at work, moving swiftly through the water, seeking victims. Yet after a time even these leave the area, and the bathyscaph is completely alone, in the dark.

If the Investigators think to check, the bathyscaph has descended much deeper than it had any right to, without sign of trouble. Moreover there seems to be no limit to the depth it can reach; the cable just keeps playing out, so long as the Investigators want to go down.

They may want to find out what the strange light is that appears each night. This is much easier to do at night, when the light can be tracked, but is possible even during the day, if the Investigators have been observant. **Outdoorsman** or similar may help, if they’re trying this during the day.

Far down on the bottom, in trackless depths the like of which the Investigators can’t begin to imagine, lies the remnants of an ancient, drowned city. It might be Greek, or Roman; the audacious may believe it to be Atlantis. Its mud-choked avenues and

gracious dwellings suggest (**Architecture, History**) a highly developed society, which probably flourished in the Bronze Age, or even earlier. Several statues can be seen, depicting a smiling youth — probably a god figure — whose features will be unsettlingly familiar to anyone who retrieved the ivory figure in “Lost in the Weeds.”

There is one artifact here that is very definitely modern: the remains of a German U-boat from the Great War, lying on its side in the mud. Its hatches have been opened, probably by one of the crew. Its portholes gaze sightlessly out into the void.

At this point, the Keeper ought to ask the Investigators in the bathyscaph if they want to use their own diving equipment, to look around. Those who have been **touched by the temple**



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will see nothing out of the ordinary in this; of course the bathyscout has diving equipment. Those who have not must make 3-point Stability tests, as they realize that not only does the bathyscout have diving equipment, it has an escape hatch, and it didn't have either of those before. Nor, for that matter, do U-boats normally have portholes or escape hatches like the stranded submarine down here possesses. It is impossible; yet it is there in front of them. Moreover the diving suits are self-contained, and don't need air hoses; the Investigators could wander as they saw fit.

The light, as the Investigators will soon discover, is coming from a great temple at the heart of the city. The moss-strewn steps in front of it lead up to two massive doors, behind which is — presumably — the great antechamber. Each night, a strange and awful light shines forth from this temple, heartbreakingly familiar yet impossibly alien music is heard and worship — of a sort — is given to the great god Hypnos, whose fane this is. A lone figure lies on the steps, dressed in the remains of a diving suit, but the suit is all that is left of him; the body has long since vanished.

The temple is dedicated to the god Hypnos. Mortals sometimes venerate him in the guise of a handsome youth garlanded with poppy, but he is a creature of Dream, and can take on any aspect. His role is to watch over the places where Dream and the world of mortals intersect, like the Sargasso, and his temples are places no man should go near, lest certain doom befall them.

Should the Investigators somehow do something to provoke the god — intruding in his sanctum is a good start

— they encounter Hypnos in his most nightmarish persona, a thing of darkness and terror. There is an additional +3 Stability pool point loss and an additional +1 Sanity pool point loss for encountering Hypnos in this aspect. If especially provoked — did they attack him? — Hypnos could even rise up to the surface in pursuit of a victim, but he is more likely to be satisfied by wreaking vengeance on the divers in the bathyscout.

If Hypnos is provoked, the Difficulty for all Piloting (Sargasso) rolls goes up by 1, as the god frustrates the Investigators' attempt to escape.

THE WHITE SHIP

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Salvaging Derelicts

By this point the Investigators should have realized that gathering Piloting (Sargasso) pool points is the only way out and, though the Difficulty is at least 8, eventually the Investigators will have enough points to make the return trip. Once they make a successful **Piloting (Sargasso)** test, the group has to endure a final challenge.

As with “Batten Down the Hatches,” a storm begins to brew. The *Bluebell* almost certainly isn't as well-prepared for it as before, but the Relief abilities **Athletics**, **Sense Trouble** and **Outdoorsman** will help the Investigators prepare for the worst; if they tie everything down, furl the sails and put out a storm anchor, the 8-point Survival test has a Difficulty of 5.

However, some of them may be too corrupted by Hypnos to be helpful.

Those who have been **touched by the temple**, and whose Stability is so low that they have begun sharing hallucinations, will — unconsciously — not want to leave the Sargasso. Those people will deliberately sabotage the group effort. They will claim to have secured the boom, even though it's swinging free, and others might believe them; this is the hallucination at work, raising the Difficulty to 7. A 1-point **Occult**, **Assess Honesty** or **Anthropology** spend will realize what is going on, and a Difficulty 5 **Psychoanalysis** test or 1-point **Reassurance** spend will persuade the group that what the Hypnos-corrupted Investigators are saying just isn't true. The boom still needs to be secured, the storm anchor needs to be gotten ready and so on. If this happens, then the Difficulty is adjusted as normal for using Relief abilities.

If, as a result of the Survival test, the Survival pool drops to -12 or below, the *Bluebell* breaks up under the strain, the bathyscout is pitched overboard and the ship starts to sink. Investigators can wait aboard the *Bluebell* for, at most, two rounds; those in the water start to drown immediately, with the Difficulty for the test beginning at 2 if they have some kind of flotation device, or 3 otherwise. However, they are close to the Kingsport lighthouse, and so there is hope of rescue. If they call out for help, Basil Elton will come to get them; and, as he does so, the storm vanishes as if it had never been.

If the *Bluebell* does not start to sink, the next thing that the Investigators see is a giant, with one great glowing eye, looming up in the salt spray in front of them. One final Difficulty 5

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Piloting test — this doesn't need to be Piloting (Sargasso) — will help them avoid disaster. The *Bluebell* is too close to avoid collision altogether, but success means that the Investigators manage to strand her, more or less upright, on the rocky shore next to Kingsport's North Point lighthouse. Failure means that the *Bluebell* is smashed against the rocks and immediately tips over, dumping the Investigators and everything on board into the sea. Those pitched into the sea take -1 damage, and start to drown immediately.

Basil Elton (Athletics 8, First Aid 8, Health 7) is the only one looking

after North Point lighthouse. He's horrified that the *Bluebell* turned up on his doorstep and wrecked, or almost wrecked, itself. He can't understand how it happened, he tells anyone he manages to pull from the sea. It was as if the *Bluebell* appeared out of nowhere, plunging straight for the rocks.

As for the storm, Elton denies that there was one. It's the calmest that night, he says, as he's ever known it, and he's been keeper of the North Point light for thirty years or more.

Exits and Rewards

The trip has gone quite differently than planned, the destination unreached, and the bathyscout, the *Bluebell* and any number of lives may have been lost. Even if no one died, the travails the Investigators and crew survived certainly ameliorate any frustration or upset Professor Bowles or university officials feel at the loss of property. Tales of the dream-like Sargasso are dismissed as a group hallucination by most who hear them, except Armitage Inquiry members.

In a Pulp game, returning to the real world refreshes 1 Sanity point.



An Incident at the Border

"PROFESSOR MAYFIELD OF THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, WHO EXAMINED SAMPLES OF THE STRANGE STONE, DECLARES IT A TRUE METEORITE; AN OPINION IN WHICH DR. VON WINTERFELDT OF HEIDELBERG (INTERRED IN 1918 AS A DANGEROUS ENEMY ALIEN) DOES NOT CONCUR."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT,
"THE GREEN MEADOW"

THE HOOK

On August 13 of 193-, during the Perseid meteor shower, something struck the earth somewhere in the remote reaches of the Gran Chaco, a disputed and inhospitable borderland between Bolivia and Paraguay. Its fiery passage through the sky startled astronomers in Lima and Santiago; their separate observations allowed the triangulation of its likely impact zone. The explosion was large enough to register on seismographs all over South America.

Now, it's late September, and Miskatonic University has asked the Investigators to assist with a scratch expedition to find the impact site, make a full report of the incident and recover any extraterrestrial material there, if any. Conveniently enough, Miskatonic professor of geology William Moore is in Buenos Aires, coordinating logistics for his upcoming Antarctic expedition. (If, in your campaign, the Starkweather-

Moore expedition has already happened, Moore is in Buenos Aires recovering from his Antarctic expedition, or perhaps planning a second.)

If the Investigators are in North America, Miskatonic provides tickets on a Pan American flight from Miami to Buenos Aires, and any Pullman berths needed to get them to Miami rapidly and reasonably well rested. If they are overseas, Miskatonic wires them steamship fare to the Argentine, or air tickets if a convenient route exists.

The only obstacle is delay. Well, that and the full-scale war raging right now between Bolivia and Paraguay, of course.

THE SPINE

The Investigators are **Welcome to Paraguay**, thanks in part to a grant from British South-American Oil. They travel **Into the Gran Chaco**, facing a series of hazards and dangers, including a **Paraguayan Patrol** and **Bolivian Deserters**. After a brief respite at the Mennonite colony of **Einsiedelei** and a possible horror under **The Sign of the Bat**, they find the true impact **At the Meteorite** and face the angry servitors of two Mythos monstrosities.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

The horrific entity Lrogg, worshiped by the inhabitants of Uranus, fights a

cosmic war with Shub-Niggurath. Every few thousand years, he hurls meteorites into Earth, awakening and creating his servants to carry his contagion forward against his dark nemesis. The meteorite that just hit the Chaco is one shell in his most recent battery; his earlier strikes have left it a hellish wasteland and mutilated a dozen tribes into his unthinking service.

Lrogg considers that a good start.

TOUR AND TRAVEL

Although the meteorite strike is only 150 miles or so away from the railhead, the completely road-less condition of the Gran Chaco keeps travel slow. Worse yet, the war has restricted all access to gasoline and even horses. Therefore, the expedition must use oxcarts, the traditional vehicle of Paraguay's lumber industry. Even where cattle tracks exist, an oxcart can only move ten miles in a day at best; out in the Chaco, cutting new paths through the thorn forest slows travel to half that, again under ideal conditions. Thus the Tour for this expedition is twenty-five days out and fifteen days back (returning over the trails chopped and beaten on the way there).

This expedition is divided into ten travel increments; the first nine being two or three days of travel toward the meteorite, and the last being the return journey.



An Incident At The Border

Torn From Today's Astronomy Columns

The Chaco War, of course, is real history, as are the meteor falls at Campo del Cielo, Villarrica, Rio Curuçá and Marudi Mountain, although I have transposed the date of that latter impact from December 1935 for dramatic purposes. I have also moved one batch of Mennonites far to the north of their actual settlement, for the same reason. Everything mentioned as local tribal belief or custom is based on actual anthropological reports, although the ethnology of the Gran Chaco is still very much a work in progress. Vampire bats are native to the Chaco, as the scenario indicates. I also invented remarkably little of the Germanic myths encountered herein.

A Matter of Dates

Although skirmishing began in 1928, and the peace treaty was not signed until 1938, the main fighting of the Chaco War took place between June 1932 and June 1935. Thus the ideal date for this scenario is September–October of 1932, 1933 or 1934. However, the Keeper can move things around to accommodate her own campaign's schedule: even if another professor (either an Investigator or an NPC) replaces Moore, or if the meteor fall doesn't coincide with the height of the war, the changes should prove cosmetic.

Survival Pool

The Moore Chaco Expedition sets off with a Survival pool of 25 points.

As noted on p. 11, each Investigator with a rating in Outdoorsman adds 2 points to the initial Survival pool.

If the Investigators work some kind of fancy Credit Rating or other miracle to supply the expedition with trucks (or if the adventure doesn't take place during the wartime gasoline rationing period), remind them of a few home truths. First, without roads, trucks can't travel much faster than oxcarts, especially through a thorn forest. Cutting a road still advances only five miles per day,

on a good day. Second, they need more than one truck (ideally four or five), which may at the very least increase any needed spends. Third, if a truck breaks down in the Gran Chaco, you can't cut a wooden replacement part for it. All that said, assuming the trucks stay intact, you can justify increasing the Survival pool for the expedition by 2 or 3 points per truck. Any failed Survival test knocks out one truck.

EXPEDITION PERSONNEL

This section describes the main named personnel on the expedition, aside from the Investigators. If an NPC

has Investigative abilities listed, an Investigator can use his pools as though they were her own — assuming she uses the correct Interpersonal approach, as listed in the character description. To spend points from an NPC ability pool requires an equal spend from an Investigator pool. This spend usually comes from the listed Interpersonal ability, but clever players can sometimes justify something else: spending 2 Credit Rating points (to promise him a big bonus) to spend 2 of Manduvi's Outdoorsman points, for example.

The other role of named NPCs is to die or go mad informatively or interestingly, should it come to that. Don't be too hung up on their listed Health ratings, in other words.

Statistics are abbreviated: for example, there aren't any libraries in the Gran Chaco, so nobody's stat block lists Library Use.

Miskatonic Team

In addition to the Investigators, the core Miskatonic members of the expedition include Professor Moore and two graduate students. (Both grad students are in their early twenties.) Moore sends his students to meet the Investigators at the Pan American seaplane dock in Buenos Aires. He meets them the next morning at the train station for the trip to Paraguay.

If there is a crucial Investigative ability missing from your party (possibly due to an inconvenient death or institutionalization earlier in the campaign), add it to Fentiman as another previous major.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions

Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Swamp (+0)	<i>The Sawgrass Swamp</i>	<i>Driving (keep carts from sinking) or Biology (recognize helpful plants)</i>	3
Scrubland (−1)	Paraguayan Patrol	See p. 95	4
Scrubland (−1)	<i>Thorn Jungle</i>	<i>Athletics</i>	4
Scrubland (−1)	<i>Missing Bridge</i>	<i>Mechanical Repair; Chemistry (purify river water)</i>	5 Refresh 2
Scrubland (−1)	Bolivian Deserters	See p. 97	5
Desert Hills (+0)	<i>Dust Storm</i>	<i>Stability</i>	7
Desert Hills (+0)	Einsiedelei	Driving; Reassurance or Intimidation (see p. 98)	5 or none Refresh 4 or more
Desert Hills (+0)	The Sign of the Bat (optional)	N/A	N/A
Desert Hills (+0)	At the Meteorite	See p. 100	See p. 100
Return (+1)	<i>Return Voyage</i>	<i>Outdoorsman (mapped route), Preparedness (caches of supplies)</i>	6

Every group and every game is different. Some Keepers prefer to compress scenes where possible, to adjust the rhythm of the adventure at the table.

Scenes in *italics*, above, can be relatively easily compressed into a line or two of color and setup and a Survival test (or test of the Relief ability). The scene “The Sign of the Bat” is up to the players to get themselves into, or not. Regardless of the length or indeed the presence of any of these scenes, the Keeper should remember to still roll the Survival cost for that travel increment, and ideally provide at least a brief line of stock footage.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

An Incident At The Border

William Moore,
Professor of Geology



Professor Moore (b. 1886) specializes in paleontology, and takes a similarly long view of most issues and questions. Phlegmatic and taciturn by nature, he especially keeps quiet about his experiences in the Great War and (if this expedition occurs after the Starkweather-Moore Expedition) in Antarctica. A born intellectual, he responds best to sharp academic questioning (use of an Academic ability as an Interpersonal ability) or to Reassurance that his audience is considering his statements as carefully as he is.

Abilities: Archaeology 1, Athletics 5, Chemistry 2, Explosives 1, Firearms 5, Fleeing 5, Geology 4, Health 6, Languages 3 (German, Inuit, Spanish), Physics 1, Scuffling 4, Weapons 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (.45 Colt M1911 pistol), +0 (machete, pick)

Rachael Colfax,
Graduate Student in Anthropology



Rachael Colfax comes from old money, although her politics are fashionably radical. She wangled her way onto the expedition because her specialty is the Indian tribes of South America and she needs the field observations. Her thesis adviser is Dr. Freeborn: whether he has hinted at any of his Mythos observations is up to the Keeper to decide. She affects a brash, mannish persona mostly to keep would-be white knights and Lotharios at bay; she responds best to no-nonsense straight talk (pretty much anything but Flattery).

One of Rachael's Languages slots is left open in case the Keeper needs someone who coincidentally speaks Chamacoco.

Abilities: Anthropology 2, Athletics 4, First Aid 2, Fleeing 4, Health 5, Languages 3 (Guaraní, Spanish), Oral History 2, Psychoanalysis 2

Alertness Modifier: +1

Schuyler Fentiman,
Graduate Student in Geology



Schuyler Fentiman comes from newer money; his father owns a factory in upstate New York, where he learned to hunt and fish. He's something of a dilettante, academically speaking, having toured through most of Miskatonic's scientific programs under a succession of mentors. Right now, he's serious about geology and considers Dr. Moore a genius; next year, maybe it will be high-energy physics with Professor Upham. Chatty and curious, Fentiman happily responds to demonstrations of knowledge (use of an Academic ability as an Interpersonal ability) or personal anecdote (Oral History).

Abilities: Astronomy 1, Athletics 4, Biology 1, Chemistry 1, Firearms 3, Geology 2, Health 5, Languages 2 (German, Spanish), Scuffling 5, Weapons 1

Weapon: +0 (Winchester 20-gauge shotgun), +0 (machete, pick)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions

Paraguayans

No expedition moves very far without local guides and supervisory personnel. Moore has arranged for a team in Paraguay; they meet the Investigators and the Miskatonic team in Puerto Casado, the expedition's jumping-off point.

Francis "Red" Bowers, Guide



"Red" Bowers (b. 1889) was one of the clutch of Texas cowboys who moved to Paraguay in 1910 in search of open range and easy cash. Most of them have gone back to America or settled down as ranchers with local wives, but Bowers still knocks around from rancho to rancho as the spirit takes him. He enjoys living up to his cowboy stereotype: confident, hard drinking, unflappable. He's happy to help out a pretty lady (Flattery) or pitch in with a hard-working man (Athletics or Credit Rating 2-4).

Abilities: Athletics 8, Driving 3, Firearms 6, First Aid 1, Health 6,

Intimidation 2, Languages 2 (Guaraní, Spanish), Outdoorsman 3, Riding 8, Scuffling 5, Weapons 6

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (Winchester Model 1895 .30-06 rifle, Colt .45 New Service revolver), +0 (axe), -1 (bowie knife; balanced for throwing), lasso

Manduvi, Chief Drover



The drovers handle the oxen, drive and repair the carts, and make sure the loads are packed and stable. They are all Guaraní (Paraguay's largest native group), including the chief drover, Manduvi (b. 1902). Egalitarian by nature, Manduvi doesn't respond well to anyone trying to lord it over him or boss him around (Intimidation just gets his back up) but considers any respectable offer with professional courtesy (Bargain).

Abilities: Athletics 6, Driving 7, Firearms 2, First Aid 1, Health 6, Languages 3 (Ayoreo, English, Spanish), Mechanical Repair 4, Outdoorsman 2, Weapons 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (Lee-Enfield .303 rifle), +0 (machete), bolas

The Money

Experienced academics and old South America hands may wonder just how an expedition of this scale could come together so fast: normally, endless bureaucratic delays snarl planning and permissions. The answer is simple — Miskatonic has a partner. The British South-American Oil Company is very interested in Paraguay's Chaco region, and is even more interested in long-term partnerships with eminent geologists such as Moore and his mentor Professor Dyer. British South-American has picked up the tab for the expedition, and used its clout with the Paraguayan government (currently desperate for foreign exchange) to get all the necessary clearances.

And they've generously donated another man to the team.

Ioan "Jack" Parry



An Incident At The Border

His people are Welsh coal miners, but “Jack” Parry (b. 1900) has his eye on different hydrocarbons. He has worked as a petroleum engineer and prospector for British South-American since taking his degree from the University of Manchester. A scholarship student, Parry bristles at any suggestion of incompetence, special dealing or favoritism — on his behalf or anyone else’s. His wartime service was with the British occupation forces in the Rhineland and he never saw combat; his quick temper and scrappy personality mask his own self-doubt. Reassurance or subtle Flattery works best to draw him out and keep him comfortable; he also responds well to men who work with their hands (Mechanical Repair used as an Interpersonal ability).

His Credit Rating reflects his ability to call on British South-American Oil resources, not his own working-class roots and comfort level.

Abilities: Athletics 4, Chemistry 2, Credit Rating 5, Explosives 4, Firearms 2, Geology 3, Health 5, Languages 3 (German, Spanish, Welsh), Mechanical Repair 2, Physics 2, Scuffling 3, Weapons 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (S&W .38 revolver), +0 (machete, pick)

WELCOME TO PARAGUAY

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Out: The Sawgrass Swamp, Paraguayan Patrol

From Buenos Aires, the Investigators and Moore’s team catch a train

New Rule: Lassos and bolas

Bowers’s lasso and Manduvi’s bolas (weighted spheres on long cords) have similar entangling effects. To attack with either is a Weapons test. If that test succeeds, the target makes an Athletics test against a Difficulty equal to the total of the attack roll (including any points spent). On a failure, the target is entangled and must make another test instead of taking any other action.

Bowers can spend his own Athletics points against that test if he keeps ahold of the lasso’s end; he can spend Athletics and Riding if he is on horseback. Lassos can only be thrown at Close or Point-Blank range.

If Manduvi rolls a 6 on his Weapons test, the bolas does –1 damage before any other effect, as its weights smack into a sensitive area of the target. Bolas can be thrown at close or near range; if used at point-blank range, they are whirling clubs (–1 damage) but don’t entangle.

This rule can be used in any *Trail of Cthulhu* game.

to Asunción, capital of Paraguay. There, they see a city at war: air raid sirens howl and loudspeakers blare indecipherable warnings, patriotic bunting and recruitment posters are everywhere, men in uniform march to trains across the rail yard. Somewhere an anti-aircraft cannon bangs; the locals don’t even flinch.

Moore has commissioned a steamboat to take the party and its equipment up the Paraguay River, but he may have been optimistic about what exactly is possible.

Getting a taxi to the river cannot be done without a Credit Rating spend: gasoline and motor transport are tightly rationed. It may take a Cop Talk spend to keep uniformed busybodies from confiscating the pile of supplies on the dock; it certainly requires the brandishing of many official documents

bedizened with seals and ribbons to get the boat to load and leave.

Puerto Casado

The raw cattle and lumber town of Puerto Casado lies 350 miles up the Paraguay River from Asunción. The main staging base of the Paraguayan Army on the western bank, it is if anything even more crowded and busy than Asunción. Soldiers crowd everywhere, and trains loaded with troops and supplies arrive seemingly hourly. Sandbags piled in the street and on top of roofs provide hopeful protection from air raids. In contrast with the almost completely assimilated Guaraní, natives wearing face paint, tattoos and feathers instead of (or along with) fedoras and trilbies can be seen pulling carts or driving mules from market to barracks and back again.

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The party meets Bowers and Manduvi at the dock, where they can climb aboard an oxcart with their gear. Manduvi whips up the oxen, and the cart creaks and squeals up the road to the manor house of Don José Casado, the town's mayor and chief industrialist. A patron of the sciences and arts, he has offered his home to the expedition as a meeting point, where he hosts them to one final night in the pleasures of civilization.

Dinner is a big *asado*, a Paraguayan barbecue, complete with torches, cheesy cornbread (*sopa Paraguaya*) and a butchered cow. Here, the party meets Parry while they wait for the food to finish grilling.

Parry introduces himself, and Moore explains the university's deal with British South-American Oil. If the players receive Parry genially or professionally, he shows off his equipment: an Eötvös torsion balance and an Eckhardt-Wyckoff pendulum gravimeter to measure tiny fluctuations in the earth's gravity, a magnetometer for finding buried iron masses such as meteorites and a Mintrop seismometer to map underground rock strata.

With a 1-point spend of **Geology**, an Investigator knows that such seismometers measure vibrations not just from earthquakes but from explosions; with that spend, **Evidence Collection** or an investigative use of **Explosives** catches a glimpse of two boxes of dynamite, carefully wrapped in oiled paper.



An Incident At The Border

The Plan of Attack

If the Keeper hasn't yet, she should introduce the various named NPCs on the expedition at the Casa Casado; perhaps even play out a long scene around Don José's dinner table.

Moore, Parry and any professorial Investigators look over an unsettlingly blank map of northern Paraguay, where triangulation lines cross in an anomalous clump of hills 150 miles to the northwest: the Cerro León. Fortunately, the expedition's route takes them away from the battlefield, which is due west and southwest.

Moore lays out the basic constraints: thanks to the war, there are no horses or trucks to be had, and, even if there were, there wouldn't be enough water and fodder, or any gasoline. So the solution must be oxcarts. They move ten miles per day at best; chopping new trails, a near certainty, will lower that speed by half. One oxcart must bring a water tank to supply the rest; water in the Chaco is rare and usually saline or alkaline. The rainy season begins in November, but that makes travel impossible. The Chaco is the hottest countryside in South America, although October temperatures shouldn't get above eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit.

On that cheery note, the conference breaks up; those inclined can grab a bottle of Don José's Argentine red or the local cane liquor, *caña*. Parry has gin in his quarters, if anyone fancies a tot.

Chaco Full of Facts

Choose how to unveil the various clues below, in this scene or the next, or

during Interpersonal exchanges along the trail. Much of this information could naturally come up during the final planning session at Casa Casado. Certainly, an Investigator with the requisite abilities can already know the corresponding information; information available with a spend from the relevant ability (or from interacting with an NPC without a spend) is indicated. If more than one player spends, the Keeper should split up the information. If possible, let the player recast the information in his own voice and words, roleplaying the exposition as much as possible.

If no Investigator has the relevant abilities, then they can pick up this information from the informants listed in parentheses. Rather than a single info dump, try working the exposition into other scenes establishing relationships with NPCs. For example, Colfax might irritably correct Fentiman's sloppy summary of the local tribes' beliefs, or Professor Moore might listen with interested approval to an Investigator using a Geology spend to impress him with Keeper-provided knowledge.

Astronomy: (Fentiman) On August 13, 1930 (the same calendar date as the meteor fall in the Chaco), three mysterious bolides struck the Rio Curaçá valley on the western border of Brazil.

- 1-point spend: Witnesses described eerie whistling noises, burning heat, the sun turning blood red and a fall of killing white ash on the vegetation. No stones were found.
- On August 11, 1933, another bolide smashed into the top of Marudi Mountain in British Guiana and killed

all the trees for miles around. No meteorites were found. Accounts of both this impact and the Rio Curaçá impact recall the famous Tunguska event of 1908. (If this scenario is set before that date, don't mention this clue, or move it to another date in the 1930s that does work.)

- 2-point spend: A five-inch long "stony" meteorite that fell near Villarrica in southern Paraguay in 1925 went missing shortly after it was reported; its exact composition is unrecorded.

Geology: (Moore or Fentiman) South of Paraguay, in the Argentine zone of the Chaco, lies the Campo del Cielo, the "Field of Heaven," a Spanish translation of the name the local tribes gave to a sprawling crater field containing over one hundred tons of iron meteorites. The craters are filled with a layer of charcoal and surrounded by petrified and vitrified vegetation.

- 1-point spend: Campo del Cielo meteorites have an unusually high density of "inclusions": foreign bodies or spaces contained inside the meteorite's iron mass.
- The Chaco was once all swamp, jungle and shallow lakes, but it suddenly dried out around 5000 BC.
- 2-point spend: A Spanish expedition located a meteorite described as a "table of silver" or a "trunk of silver" somewhere in the Campo del Cielo in 1576, but later expeditions could not find it.

Anthropology: (Colfax) The tribes of the Chaco are almost all nomads, generically feared and superstitiously hated by the Guaraní of eastern Paraguay. They have a number of different and seemingly incompatible languages, but share certain common belief patterns, especially about

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meteors. This is anthropologically unusual, though not impossible.

- 1-point spend: The Pilagá say that at the beginning of time terrible demons tore the moon apart, and it fell bleeding onto the earth in a rain of cold stones.
- The Mocoví retain a legend of the sun falling to the earth and burning the whole landscape. To them, falling stars cause drought but bring great luck and power to those who find a piece of one. They also believe that the stars lower a glowing silver trunk from heaven, up which the spirits of the dead climb to escape the underworld. Often, one death must occur underneath a falling star to bring about this silver tree.
- 2-point spend: The Toba say that when the sky fell, their people became caimans (similar to alligators), while others climbed the silver tree to the stars. They also believe that a bright falling star signals the upcoming death of a shaman.
- The Chiriguano believe that a certain mushroom is the corpse of a fallen star. Their word for meteor or comet means “guide” or “voice,” and it heralds the death of a chief.
- **History:** (Bowers or Parry) In the last few decades of this century, Paraguay has begun to develop the Chaco with land grants to cattlemen like Bowers and to Mennonite refugees from Soviet Russia and Canada. Wartime Paraguay is an odd place for pacifists to settle, but they produce cotton and commercial crops somehow, so apparently God isn’t too upset about it.
- Bolivia thinks the Chaco holds oil, and demands a port on the Paraguay River to give it an outlet on the sea. After a series of Bolivian raids on Paraguayan

border forts, Paraguay declared war. Bolivia vastly outnumbers and outguns Paraguay, and has total air superiority: so far, Paraguay has held its own at the front, but all that could come apart any time.

- 1-point spend: Organized settlement avoided the Chaco for centuries; even the Jesuits brought the Indians of the Chaco east across the Paraguay River into their “reduction” communes, refusing to let them return for the sake of their souls.

INTO THE GRAN CHACO

The first paragraph of each encounter below is “stock footage,” for the Keeper to rephrase in her own words and then present to the players. Some groups, and Keepers, enjoy this “travelogue” quality of an expedition adventure; others prefer to minimize it. The Keeper should use her best judgment for her own table.

Once the expedition’s Survival pool drops to 13 or below, the heat and thirst begin working on the members in earnest. After that point, even if the Survival pool refreshes:

- all Difficulties (except for Survival tests) increase by 1
- each travel increment thereafter, one Investigator must spend 1 point from an Academic or Interpersonal pool, to represent lost concentration or temper
- every failed Survival test now also costs the Investigators 1 Stability point
- Even before that point, the various NPCs’ personalities slowly begin to deform as the huge skies and hateful landscape of the Chaco bear down on their souls:

- **Moore** becomes ever more taciturn, crouched down looking at the clay beneath his feet. He whistles tonelessly, fails to respond to direct questions, takes no leadership. Even Fentiman’s groveling can’t inspire him to connect. If he’s already gone to Antarctica, he can be heard to mutter “Tekeli-li” under his breath, seemingly without knowing it.
- **Colfax** begins to open up, make dumb jokes, talk to the drovers about their children. She seems almost giddy with delight, especially with trees or plants or animals or birds. (Except bats.) She moves her hands swoopily through the air at odd moments. If it was 2000 instead of 1933, you’d think she was on Ecstasy.
- **Fentiman** begins to talk to people about geology. Fair enough, except he brings *everything* around to geology, with side helpings of Professor Moore’s genius. He carries rocks (well, hardened mud) along with him, stuffing them into his pockets or discoursing on their chemical makeup. His logorrhea eventually starts resembling a geology-focused Tourette’s syndrome.
- **Bowers** slowly stops interacting on a human level. Not withdrawn or distracted like Moore, simply robotic, with an almost feral underlay of self-possession. He plays with his bowie knife, drawing it and balancing it; eventually it doesn’t leave his hand.
- **Manduvi** just seethes. He calls all other natives, and then all non-Guarani, *guaikuru*, meaning “barbarian.” He darts resentful glances at the drovers, then at the academics, then at Bowers. He chews his lips and local *koro* tobacco constantly, spitting blood or drooling it as he growls in his throat, wary of the savages all around him.



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- **Parry** wants to find oil. He stops to work the magnetometer, or tinker with the torsion scale. He wants to delay because that white, crusty lump of clay looks like it might be a salt dome. He wants to set off a test charge of dynamite. He wants to go a little east and see what's there. He's paying for all of this, he should get his way. (Delaying a day for such prospecting costs 1 Survival pool point.)

During any full scene, the Keeper should indicate slow changes in the expedition personnel, either with a brief bit of dialogue or a simple description: "Finding no sign of oil seems to irritate Parry more and more." Psychoanalysis calms and centers an NPC for 1 travel increment per point spent.

If the Keeper can push buttons among the players to get their Investigators similarly deranged, good for her. Investigators with previous patterns of Mythos-driven personality derangement should be encouraged to repeat them.

The Sawgrass Swamp

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Welcome to Paraguay

Lead-Out: Paraguayan Patrol

Moving away from the river valley, the track passes between glinting sheets of brackish water, with saw grass and twisted trees poking up from hummocks. Every so often, the saturated clay slips under the cartwheels, spraying onto the walkers in sticky gray sheets. The branches and vines wave in the hot wind, or bob on the sluggish water. Clouds of flies and mosquitoes whine constantly, stinging and biting.

The party must make a 3-point Survival test or lose valuable supplies (and perhaps an ox) in this morass. With a Difficulty 5 test of **Driving**, an Investigator with an open slot (or a slot previously spent on oxcart, stagecoach or any other multiple-animal team) can help wrangle the team through the worst stretches.

An Investigator can also spend 1 point of **Biology** to find plants helpful in keeping away biting flies and mosquitoes; reduce the Survival test's Difficulty by 2.

Paraguayan Patrol

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction (Tangential)

Lead-Ins: Welcome to Paraguay, The Sawgrass Swamp

Lead-Outs: Thorn Jungle, Missing Bridge, Bolivian Deserters

Occasional palm trees dot the landscape, as the tall pale grass waves to the horizon. The sky looks like blued gunmetal, the air pressing down like a giant's exhalation. Vultures circle lazily overhead: they have time to wait.

The expedition crosses the track of a patrol of twenty Paraguayan soldiers about an hour before dusk. **Sense Trouble** (Difficulty 5) lets the Investigators know in advance. The patrol is suspicious; they've been attacked by Bolivian stragglers and strafed by Bolivian planes, and they don't like the Chaco any better than the Investigators do, but it's their desolate wasteland, and no gringo is going to tell them different.

They wear good, if primitive kit: green uniforms with bush hats. Except for the officer, a Lieutenant Lanza, the men are barefoot, a mix of Guaraní, Latinos and mestizos. Lanza has boots and a pith helmet — and a Smith & Wesson .38 pistol (+1 damage). All are on foot; they look at the oxcarts, Bowers's horse, and especially that big water tank with the eyes of thirsty, footsore patriots.

Let the players deploy whatever Interpersonal tactics they choose: **Law** to brandish their authorization from the Paraguayan government, **Bargain** or **Credit Rating** (he responds to 4+ from Americans or Europeans) to reward Lanza and his men as a grateful nation should, **Reassurance** of the party's innocence. Intimidation won't work, of course, unless the party decided to ambush the Paraguayans, which leads to its own problems. At the end, Lanza confiscates 4 Survival points worth of water and rations, minus 1 for each Interpersonal point spent by a member of the expedition.

At a particularly tender moment in the negotiation, a howling scream comes from overhead: Investigators with military service recognize the sound of artillery shells overhead. So do the Paraguayans; they drop to the ground and wait for the explosions behind them. A Difficulty 4 **Athletics** test lets Investigators avoid losing 1 Health from flying shrapnel during the twenty-minute bombardment. Then the guns fall silent and explosions sound a little farther off and farther south. **Physics** (or a Military Investigator, or Lanza in a pinch) provides the comforting news that the Bolivian guns are far to the southwest, not in the expedition's path.

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However, Lanza (assuming he's been Interpersonally befriended) can't promise the expedition will continue unmolested: he's heard rumors that the native tribes in the swamps and forests by the river are restless. Even long-time *tolderia* Indians (slum-reservation dwellers) have begun meeting in secret or walking into the Chaco. Personally, Lanza thinks it's Bolivian agitators at work.

Paraguayan Soldiers

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

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (Mauser Model 1907 7.65mm rifle), +0 (machete)

Thorn Jungle

Scene Type: Challenge/Alternate

Lead-In: Paraguayan Patrol

Lead-Outs: Missing Bridge, Bolivian Deserters

As the land imperceptibly climbs, the soil dries out and the trees become thicker and harder. Spiny cacti grow everywhere, especially at ankle and hip height. The tough quebracho tree cover is harder than walnut, and set much closer together. Finding a path through the thorn barrier becomes harder and harder, as flesh and patience abrade. It may be time to get out the machetes.

The party must make a 4-point Survival test or lose valuable time cutting through the iron-hard quebracho tangles. With a Difficulty 5 test of **Athletics**, an Investigator working all day in the hot sun can inspire the men to chop faster and more efficiently.

Evidence Collection notices a beaded feather hung on a thornbush, torn from a native passing through, headed northwest. A 1-point **Anthropology** spend identifies it as Tomárahó work. The forest-dwelling half of the Chamacoco or Ishir tribe to the east, the Tomárahó have kept their ancestral nomadic ways.

A 1-point spend of **Outdoorsman** notices another patch of thorn jungle



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farther ahead. This stretch has been hacked aside with what looks like a rude iron knife; a 1-point **Biology** spend notes that the plants all along the path are dead, some of them desiccating while others look burnt or poisoned. This path, likewise, points northwest.

Missing Bridge

Scene Type: Challenge/Refresh

Lead-In: Paraguayan Patrol, Thorn Jungle

Lead-Out: Bolivian Deserters

One of the long, muddy rivers that cut across the Chaco lies across the expedition's path. Large armadillos snuffle in the reeds; caimans sun themselves in the water. Unfortunately, the bridge marked on the map lies in ruins; someone's artillery decided to make sure nobody got across that river easily.

The party must make a 5-point Survival test or lose valuable supplies (and perhaps an ox) crossing the low, muddy river course. With a Difficulty 5 test of **Mechanical Repair**, an Investigator can direct the men to cut down some quebracho trees and bottle cactus and lay down a makeshift pontoon bridge over the trickiest stretch of river.

The water is brackish, but a spend of 1 **Chemistry** point to purify it with alum allows a refresh of 2 Survival points.

Bolivian Deserters

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction (Tangential)

Lead-Ins: Paraguayan Patrol, Thorn Jungle, Missing Bridge

Lead-Outs: Dust Storm, Einsiedelei

The sky is clear, but ominously so, seeming to ring silently like a glass falling off the edge of the table. The landscape is definitely more forbidding. Stetsonia cacti dominate the rare patches of vegetation and shade; barrel trees and clinging grasses grow in the lee of the occasional sand dune.

A group of nine men carrying rifles crests one of those dunes off to the west. **Sense Trouble** (Difficulty 5) warns an Investigator taking point in time to let the party prepare a defense: laagering the oxcarts, for example (**Driving** at Difficulty 4). An Investigator with military experience thinks of it; failing that, Bowers suggests it. If the players don't want to spend the Driving points, he doesn't insist.

The men wear badly worn boots and ragged khaki uniforms. Only one has any kind of hat, a French kepi. He is "Captain" Perez, the leader of this motley band of what **Assess Honesty** determines are Bolivian deserters. His men are thirsty, and surly about losing a war to a bunch of Paraguayan lowlander scum. If offered a bribe with a 2-point **Bargain** spend, they only take 5 Survival points worth of water and butchered ox meat. If it comes to a fight, they run when half their number are down.

"Captain" Perez

Abilities: Athletics 8, Firearms 5, Fleeing 2, Health 6, Scuffling 9, Weapons 6

Weapon: +1 (Luger P08 9mm pistol), -1 (knife)

Bolivian Deserters

Abilities: Athletics 5, Firearms 5, Fleeing 3, Health 3, Scuffling 8, Weapons 5

Weapon: +1 (Mauser VZ24 7.65mm rifle; badly maintained, jams on roll of 1), +0 (bayonet)

Dust Storm

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Bolivian Deserters

Lead-Out: Einsiedelei

The sun turns the color of blood, the sky turns bilious yellow, and a harsh, hot wind blows grit into the party members' faces. Soon, the red dust is everywhere, howling and skirling into every crevice, blasting skin and goading oxen to madness. The eerie pyramidal hills of the Cerro Leon rise on the northwest horizon and seem to roll past. Wherever they sit, the storm distorts wildly, and an eerie whistling noise fills the air. Just being in the storm triggers a 2-point Stability test.

The party must make a 7-point Survival test (Difficulty 6; the storm is the wave front of Lrogg), or the sand will foul equipment and blind oxen and men; the expedition might completely lose its bearings in the howling dust. With a Difficulty 6 test of **Stability**, an Investigator can keep calm and focus on pushing the whole party forward through the storm.

During this attempt, an Investigator (one who has gotten along well with Colfax) hears Rachael shriek. A lumpy, distorted human figure with a bulbous head seems to loom over her, holding a sickle-shaped knife in its hand. (3-point Stability test; Difficulty 5 for a Mythos being, in this case a sand-dweller.) Making out details is impossible in the storm, but when the Investigator arrives there is no sign of

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any stranger except Colfax crying and cursing in Guaraní. She has not been visibly attacked, and the wind sweeps away any tracks the thing might have left.

Einsiedelei

Scene Type: Core/Challenge/Refresh

Lead-Ins: Bolivian Deserters, Dust Storm

Lead-Outs: The Sign of the Bat, At the Meteorite

Up ahead against the setting sun lies a strange knot of structures: gray, wind-blasted barns and silos connected to low sod and wood longhouses. A low row of trees crouches behind the settlement. Above the whole rises an unadorned wooden cross made of two crossed tree trunks. The sign on the pathway in reads *Einsiedelei* (German for “hermitage” or “place of seclusion”). A collection of rusting sickles hangs from the bottom of the sign, clanking in the wind.

Just as the party approaches to pass the sign, suddenly bats appear everywhere, a whole cloud of them. **Biology** or **Outdoorsman** comforts with the realization that this is completely normal for dusk: that’s when bats come out, and when they do, they come in a flock. However, it’s probably not normal that so many of them seem deformed, bruised — did that one have *two heads*? (2-point Stability test.) A 1-point spend identifies the bats as vampire bats, which is worse news: they will batten themselves on the oxen if something can’t be done to protect the beasts. A 2-point spend notes that these bats seem born months prematurely, triggered by some unimaginable biological overpressure.

If the Investigators can’t unhitch the oxen and get them into those barns, the alternative is a 5-point Survival test. It’s a Difficulty 4 **Driving** test to do that — and someone has to convince the tall, lantern-jawed farmer with a fringe of beard to let them do it.

The Mennonites

Fortunately, Bruder Einar is a Mennonite, pacifist and devout. He can be bullied with **Intimidation** and a rifle, or asked for hospitality with **Reassurance** and a Bible quote. The oxen seen to, he offers shelter for the night in German. He also speaks a little Russian, and Bruder Absalom speaks some English from his time in the painted vanity of Canada.

The Mennonites of Einsiedelei dress unfashionably in dull colors, but not obviously anachronistically. They are quiet, but not super creepy. Players’ “weird isolated cult” alarms will be going off like gangbusters, of course, but these Mennonites haven’t been here long enough to degenerate in approved Lovecraft fashion. The black books are German-language Bibles, the church has no icon except the plain cross inside, little kids peek from around Mutti’s skirt, and nobody has webbed hands. There aren’t even any hex signs: **Theology** reminds a curious Investigator that Russian Mennonites wouldn’t use the sinful things even if they knew what they were.

There are some weird things, of course, even besides the bats. The forge sits by itself on the northwest side of the colony, centered on a solid piece of iron that **Geology** can immediately tell is meteoric (core clue). With a 1-point spend, it’s recognizably one of the

Campo del Cielo meteors, planed flat on top to serve as an anvil. Mushrooms grow all around the forge; they’re the only living thing that does, as the grass is dead. A 1-point **Biology** spend identifies the grass — weirdly — as the saw grass from the swamp, growing well away from its proper place no matter how carefully the Mennonites irrigate. The same spend pegs the mushroom as a variety native to the Chaco; a 1-point **Anthropology** spend identifies it as a variety used in shamanic rituals by a number of Chaco tribes.

The elders of Einsiedelei gather in Bruder Einar’s longhouse, and the womenfolk bring cheese and bread and soup with bacon. The drink is water, of course.

The conversation can cover any topic; the men will answer politely if they can. Some possible answers include the following:

- The colony thought the other Mennonites in Menno and Fernheim to the south were too close to civilization and likely to get corrupted, so they went north until they found the anvil-stone and (after praying on it) decided to settle there. That was 1930.
- They remember the meteor fall: it was a loud whistling noise, followed by the sun turning to blood. Bruder Einar gathered all the faithful in the church at that point, and preached for thirteen hours straight while the Devil howled outside. When they came out the next day, they saw the pillar of smoke to the northwest in the Cerro Leon hills.
- Those hills, by the way, are where the bats come from. They started coming out when the dust storms did, forty days after the meteor hit.



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- Don't eat the mushrooms; the herbal they brought from Russia identifies them as poison and likely to lead to demonic possession. But they only grow around the anvil, and only since the meteor hit.

The womenfolk are in the big kitchen, meanwhile, having their own discussion. Female Investigators can be in either room with only a look of mild reproof; Colfax goes to talk to the women. No women will speak while male Investigators are in the room, and Colfax will irritably urge such intruders to leave.

An Investigator with **Oral History** can get the women to speculate about

the weird doings, either in this room with the other ladies or after the party breaks up while people are finding bedding and rug blankets. Most of them agree with Bruder Einar's theory of the devil, but gnädige Frau Margrete says she heard of similar happenings in Russia when she was a girl. She says that Huld and Etzel are fighting, and there's nothing you can do about it except pray and plow and plant. Despite clucking from stricter believers, Margrete sticks to her guns: Huld is a fallen angel-wife who hoards seeds under the hills, and Etzel is the always-hungry hunter who wants to carry them into the clouds for his

hounds. He brings the rock, the wind and the knife; she brings the thorns, her hoof and the net. Neither can win, but that doesn't stop them fighting.

If no Investigator gathered this core clue, Colfax does. An Investigator can get it from her with Occult, Anthropology or an Interpersonal ability that's worked with her before. **Occult** recognizes Holle and Ewiche Yeeger in folk tales from the Pennsylvania Dutch country; a 1-point spend recalls the original German myth of Holda (a fertility goddess like Demeter) and an unknown spear-throwing sky god later identified with Wotan.

Mythos Expeditions

Refreshed

The howling wind and skreeking of bats interrupts the night's sleep, but each Investigator can fully refresh one General ability (except Health, Sanity and Stability). Einsiedelei is too obviously on the edge of horror to make a proper haven.

In the morning, the Mennonites provide what spare food and water they can for a Survival refresh of 4 points (more if the Keeper feels the players were polite and put up a devout front).

The Sign of the Bat

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: Einsiedelei

Lead-Out: At the Meteorite

This is an optional scene: if the Investigators don't want to follow the skulking figure, they don't have to. Just charge the party the normal Survival cost for this travel increment (+0) and move on.

The valleys surrounding the Cerro Leon hold dark, twisted woods. Trees with thick, waxy leaves and bulky, thorned vines hoard what little water accumulates at their base. Fortunately, the party can move along the sandy, eroded ridgeline toward the meteor site. Unfortunately, anyone watching nearby can see it do so.

An Investigator who makes a **Sense Trouble** test (Difficulty 5) sees a skulking figure watching the expedition pass. It's impossible to tell who or what it is; a **Stealth** test (Difficulty 7) is necessary to sneak up on him. On a failure, he drops into one of those

tangled valleys: **Shadowing** (Difficulty 7) keeps him in sight. (A pursuer with Outdoorsman lowers that Difficulty to 6.) On a success, following him is only Difficulty 5 (4 with Outdoorsman).

If tracked (2-point **Outdoorsman** spend) or followed, the figure leads the Investigators to a hollowed cliff face where five more Tomárahó Indians (**Anthropology**) wait. Four of them surround the fifth, who lies prone (and stoned) near a small pile of mushrooms on the rock beneath a black petroglyph stained into the rock long ago. His back tattoo matches it.

Both designs depict a two-headed bat tearing the moon between its jaws as stars fall around it. **Anthropology** recognizes it as similar to other Chaco tribal petroglyphs in style, although the subject matter is unfamiliar. (A 1-point spend reads some of the man's other tattoos as indicating shamanic status.) **Geology** identifies the rock as hematite, in between layers of sandstone; a 1-point spend looks at the pattern of varve strata and the lichen (which surrounds but does not touch the design) and suggests an age of seven thousand years for the exposed cliff, which seems very young for a nonvolcanic site. Could the Cerro Leon hills themselves be meteoric?

Sacrifice

As the Investigators watch and make geological guesses, the five Tomárahó take out iron axes and begin chopping their tattooed companion open. They slice through his tattoo and pull his lungs through his back. Then they flip him over, split his sternum, fold back his rib cage, spread his arms and put handfuls of mushrooms, salt and reddish gravel

into his exposed body cavity. (**Occult** recognizes the mutilations as eerily similar to the "blood eagle" human sacrifices made to Wotan in ancient Germany and Britain.) A dust devil blows up as they work, drying the blood and viscera, even seeming to mummify the flesh while the Investigators watch. (4-point Stability test.)

Or perhaps they don't watch. The Tomárahó are distracted by the ritual, so the Investigators can get a round of surprise if they attack after a piggybacked **Stealth** test (Difficulty 5). An interruption short of an attack — shrieking, for example — doesn't stop the ritual. If the confrontation ends with any of them remaining, their Chamacoco language is similar enough to Ayoreo for Manduvi to understand them and vice versa.

Tomárahó Warriors

Abilities: Athletics 8, Archery 6, Fleeing 5, Health 6, Scuffling 4, Weapons 6

Alertness Modifier: +2

Stealth Modifier: +1 (+2 in forest cover)

Weapon: +0 (axe, club, spear), +0 (bow and arrow; -1 damage at long range)

AT THE METEORITE

Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-Ins: Einsiedelei, The Sign of the Bat

With the Cerro Leon towering above, the expedition crosses the crater rim. Pools of alkaline water spread to the horizon; trees smashed in shock waves and torn up by storms litter the landscape next to twisted vines and pulverized, scorched cacti. Mushrooms grow everywhere in the thick clay soil.



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Cthulhu Mythos Use

Using Cthulhu Mythos during this adventure provides little insight until the Investigator learns of either Margrete's story or the Tomárahó ritual.

However, at any point after that, the Cthulhu Mythos ability unleashes a horrific epiphany: the Gran Chaco is also a cosmic battlefield, between an unguessable extraterrestrial entity and the fetid (but fertile) Shub-Niggurath. If the Investigator has read of Lrogg, Nyarlathotep's possible avatar on Uranus, he recognizes the two-headed bat emblem.

Lrogg bombards Earth with malign meteors, trying to find Shub-Niggurath's weak spots; human cultists (no different from Uranian ones) keep his weapons keen for the next round of war. The Chaco represents a place he has almost conquered: perhaps one more fire mission would truly clear it of earthly life.

The cosmic nature of this realization costs 4 Stability pool points and 1 Sanity pool point. If the Investigator especially values peace as a Pillar of Sanity, this realization might shatter it.

In the middle of the devastation sits a meteorite. **Geology** recognizes it as a one-ton iron-nickel body very similar to the Campo del Cielo falls, but does not recognize the weird silvery light playing on the meteor's stress lines and fracture points. The pattern of luminosity seems to resemble an ever-blossoming metal tree, eerily reflecting the whirling stars overhead. Some of those stars fall, blossoms and branches of the tree. (**Astronomy** identifies the Draconid meteor shower.)

Parry's instruments return nonsense: according to his torsion balance, local gravity near the meteorite fluctuates between 0 and 0.886 of normal. (This does not make it easier to lift onto an oxcart; if anything, it makes things clumsier.) The magnetometer responds fitfully to the iron; a compass held

near it points south, but sixty degrees off of true. An hour before sunrise, his pendulum gravimeter swings out and points up into the sky toward Pisces. (A 2-point **Astronomy** spend notes that the planet Uranus is in that direction.)

Studying the meteorite closely is a 3-point Stability test (Difficulty 5).

Meteoritic Madness

Every night spent near the meteorite impact zone requires another 3-point Stability test (Difficulty 5) for everyone.

It takes two days' work (1 Survival point cost, and 1 for every other day after that spent here) to rig a crane and pulley system, brace it and lift the meteorite onto an oxcart (**Mechanical Repair** test

at Difficulty 6; for every point over 6 in the total result, it takes two hours less). A speedier possibility would be to plant shaped charges with Parry's dynamite and blow the meteorite into pieces for easier transport. That requires both an **Explosives** test at Difficulty 6 (a roll of 1 does +1 damage to everyone within near range and leaves the meteorite eerily intact) *and* overcoming the visceral, manic opposition of Moore, Fentiman and Parry.

Here the Keeper can justifiably fan any of the personality deformations of the Miskatonic expedition into full madness. Homicidal attacks, panicked fleeing into the wilderness, sabotage of the equipment or the crane — anything is possible. The Keeper should follow the interpersonal rhythms established on the trip up, or push tensions toward crises the players seem very concerned about.

Other Claimants

The second night (or whichever night the insanities have come to boiling), a hideous silicate creature slouches into the camp. Its bloated cranium resembles a blunt-nosed alligator, or perhaps a wide-skulled jaguar. Its body is covered with scale-like boils dried to stony hardness. Its right paw ends in a wickedly curved blade of polished iron-stone; its left tapers into sharp chondrite knuckles.

Despite these horrors, the tattoos of the sacrificed Tomárahó shaman still glisten on its carapace: the ritual has transformed him into a sand-dweller. He wants to take pieces of the meteorite back to the lands of the Tomárahó to cut and mutilate Shub-Niggurath's works

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back there, plow her jungles under and control her vines.

The drovers, assuming any are still left, flee into the night at this point.

He moves toward the meteorite; when he touches it with the sickle-claw, chunks spall off it and cling magnetically to his body. The glowing silver threads intensify; the tree arches up into the night's abyss. If nobody tries to stop him, Moore, Fentiman or Parry opens fire at that point.

Whatever else happens in the fight, something wrecks the crane and pulley. If the sand-dweller kills any drovers or oxen, the expedition takes an increment of damage (-1) to its Survival pool.

A sand-dweller may make two attacks against the same target in a single round.

If the party survives this sand-dweller attack, two more arrive the next night: shamans from other tribes turned in 1930 or in 1925, drawn by the meteorite's fall to arrive in this month of the Draconid meteor shower as the silver tree blooms.

Sand-Dweller

Abilities: Athletics 8, Health 7, Scuffling 10, Weapons 6

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +2 (-1 in jungles)

Stealth Modifier: +2 (+0 in jungles)

Weapon: -1 (paw strike), +0 (sickle-claw)

Armor: -3 vs. any (silica-iron hide)

Stability Loss: +0

Counterbattery

Any human blood on the ground runs, against gravity, toward a clump of fallen

vegetation. A large clump, and getting larger. The death of a sand-dweller or Rachael Colfax provides the spark of life; the tree boles and tangled vines snap into place and a wet, fetid odor fills the air. Shub-Niggurath has sent her own soldier to reclaim her fields: a dark young comes.

It first attacks any sand-dwellers in the area, giving the humans a brief opportunity to flee if they will take it. If not, it ravens among them, too.

Dark Young

Abilities: Athletics 8, Health 12, Scuffling 18

Hit Threshold: 3 (big)

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +2 (in jungles or swamps)

Weapon: +5 (trampling hooves); +2 (tentacle); -2 (blood drain); after a successful tentacle attack, in lieu of doing



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damage, the dark young may pull its victim inexorably toward a mouth for an automatic blood drain each round thereafter; transfers drained blood (victim's lost Health) to either Health or Scuffling.

Armor: single-shot firearms do 1 point of damage (2 points on a rolled 6); shotguns do one-third damage; axes do half damage; -4 armor against all other weapons; sand-dweller sickle-claws or any weapon made from the meteor does full damage.

Stability Loss: +2

THE RETURN JOURNEY

Investigators fleeing their smashed camp have to make it back to Einsiedelei, a three-night voyage on foot. Allow the fleeing party to salvage 1 Survival point for each 3 points of **Preparedness** spent, plus 1 for each survivor with **Outdoorsman**.

On the way to the Mennonite colony, more sand-dwellers pass them by, only attacking if the Investigators (or surviving NPCs) have tried to bring any of the meteorite out with them.

If the expedition somehow manages to survive the attacks of the sand-dwellers and the dark young at the crater, raise the meteorite and pack it out on an oxcart, the sand-dwellers definitely attack. Two on the first night, four on the second. If the monsters kill or even cripple the oxen, there is no way to move the meteorite. Einsiedelei is a respite, but there remain at least ten nights of travel back to Puerto Casado from the colony. Going due south to the Menno colony at Filadelfia will only take six nights and the Paraguayan base at Lake Pitiantuta is only 4 nights away, but both routes pass through the war's front lines.

Making it from Einsiedelei to Puerto Casado even without monster attacks is a grueling 6-point Survival test, on foot or by oxcart. Spending 1 point of **Outdoorsman** reduces the Difficulty of the test by 2; a successful test of **Preparedness** (Difficulty 5) to have already buried caches of supplies on the route reduces the Difficulty of the Survival test by 2 for each 1 additional point of Survival spent (doubling the normal effectiveness of a spend).

Exits and Rewards

Keeping any sand-dweller from acquiring meteorite shards and destroying the dark young (if it appeared) is good for the recovery of 1 Sanity pool point in a Pulp game.

Bringing a significant fragment of the Cerro Leon meteorite (ideally with un-burst inclusions) back to Miskatonic along with a full geological paper pleases the academic sponsors of the expedition.

Bringing such a shard back with plenty of Lrogg-mushrooms and notes on the ritual to create a sand-dweller alarms the Inquiry not a little, but Armitage appreciates the thoroughness on display.

In a Pulpier game, that meteor fragment could be machined into a weapon doing extra damage to servitors of Shub-Niggurath, or made into a sigil to assist rituals to dismiss her. And there's almost a ton more back where that came from...



The Jaguars of El-Thar

“LISTEN TO ME, YOUNG FELLOW —
YOU DON’T THINK MEXICO IS REALLY
SPANISH, DO YOU?”

— H. P. LOVECRAFT,
“THE ELECTRIC EXECUTIONER”

Mexico. Geographically on the same continent as the United States and Canada, the ancient civilizations that dwelled and thrived and waned in the jungles of Mesoamerica have enthused archaeologists, anthropologists and linguists as much as the ancient Egyptians and Assyrians have. The cultures which existed and lived through the Spanish invasion of the Yucatán, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize inspired certain scholars to become Mayanists, studying the pyramids, villages, languages, customs and religion of those who came before and those still living in the land. Excavation and study has been happening since the 19th century, yet, in the early 1930s, there is still much to uncover and explore in the jungles full of pyramids and temples, much to decipher from the writing that survived the scrutiny of Spanish invaders in the 16th century.

Miskatonic University already has several scholars out in the field, sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation. Professor Henry Rutherford Stapleton of the Miskatonic Department of Anthropology is just west of Chichén Itzá, working with local Maya people and a few university

students at what he calls the Cenote of El-Thar. (See “Cenotes,” p. 112.) He is loath to leave his work behind, because he has fostered a relationship with the locals and reports he is on the verge of making a very important discovery. To the northwest, ethnolinguist Galina Aveniroya Prokhorov is studying glyphs found in the Temple of the Jaguar King, suggesting it has some connection with the cenote Stapleton is studying. With the Great Depression taking its toll on rich and poor alike, the Carnegie Foundation is eager to consolidate and cut projects. But for the time being, the two scientists’ proximity to great discoveries is too tempting to pull their funding.

Hurricane season is drawing to a close and Stapleton has requested several more students to aid him in investigating and dredging the cenotes, ruins and vibrant villages on the Yucatán peninsula.

THE HOOK

Linguists, geologists, archaeologists and anthropologists are all eager to make their way to this neighbor to the south, and the Investigators have been chosen to aid these two minds in their quest. Mexico has been hit by the Great Depression as well, but, as long as there is still money to sponsor such an expedition, burying one’s nose in science and discovery remains a viable goal.

In addition to aiding the scientists, the Investigators are asked to ascertain the mental state of Professor Stapleton. A recent illness has the Carnegie Foundation concerned as to the mental health of the professor, because his recent telegraphs and letters show a change that troubles some of his colleagues and those who have a financial interest in the project. They would love to acquire the items and artifacts Stapleton is unearthing but are worried his health may deteriorate to the point where his expertise and zeal for the field may be of no use. If the Investigators believe he is in no state to continue living in the jungles of Mexico, they are asked to bring him back, along with anything they have excavated.

The team is told to make their way to Texas and secure passage on a ship to the Yucatán, because arriving by rail is not a possibility. In the port city of Sisal, they are to meet with a Mayan guide, Menes Canche, and pick up supplies and burros to take them to the dig site, replenishing those already there. Those traveling are told to exercise wisdom. Hurricane season isn’t over until November, so a storm may still rise up. In addition, the political position of the Yucatán is still unsteady, the last skirmish of the Caste War happening in April 1933.

THE SPINE

The Investigators arrive in Sisal to encounter the **Americanos**. After a



The Jaguars of El-Thar

When Shall We Depart?

Ancient and contemporary Mesoamerica was being excavated and studied by scientists as early as the late 18th century, with many discoveries happening in the 1920s. The majority of the work done in the 1930s was more anthropological than archaeological in nature, with scientists taking an interest in the now living Maya and working on the written language, as thousands of Mayan codices were destroyed by the Spanish in the 16th century. Bishop Diego de Landa wrote, “We found a large number of books in these characters, and as they contained nothing in which were not to be seen as superstition and lies of the devil, we burned them all, which [the Maya] regretted to an amazing degree, and which caused them much affliction.”

The default time for the expedition is the fall of 1933. That year, the “Great White Spot” was observed on Saturn, a storm that happens once every Saturnian year (once every 28.5 Earth years). It was reported on a great deal in 1933 and lasted long enough that many people were able to observe it. Perhaps an amateur astronomer on deck of the ship that takes them to the Yucatán allows them to look through her telescope? Maybe someone is reading a paper with the astronomical phenomenon as the headline? The 1933 episode was observed by British comedian and amateur astronomer, Will Hay, and lasted several months, giving ample time for our Investigators to catch sight of it. In addition, April of 1933 marked the end of the Caste War, making the Yucatán safer for the Investigators to travel, as they won’t be caught in skirmishes between the Maya seeking independence from the Mexican government and Mexican soldiers.

night in a small inn, they leave Sisal with supplies with their guide to meet with **The Priest at the Edge of the Selva**. Leaving the simple but appreciated comforts of the village, they’re faced with **Slow Going through the Jungle** before finally arriving at **The Temple of the Jaguar King**. After a meeting with the ethnolinguist and a view of the temple, the group is **Followed** seemingly all the way to **The Cenote of El-Thar**. It is there they witness a **Catfight** of cosmic and dream-like proportions. Depending on the outcome of the fight they may or may not decide

to head **Into the Cenote** before leaving Mexico with their findings.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

The Yucatán is home to jaguars, one of the large cat species of the world. Many of the Mesoamerican cultures that proliferated here recognized their power and majesty, these felines showing up in their creation stories and heroic legends. Many jaguar deities existed in the Mayan pantheon, including deities of sorcery, midwifery, war and fire.

The cats of “The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath” are known for their fighting power, their willingness to aid and their ability to travel between worlds, as well as their hatred for their mortal enemies, the cats of Saturn. What if this animosity played out in the jungles of Mexico?

In Mayan tradition, jaguars were known for their ability to go between worlds, their penchant for swimming and their nocturnal habits pushing them farther into the spiritual realm. The cats helped Randolph Carter as he journeyed through the Dreamlands. When followers of the cats of Saturn, dislodged from their stronghold in the American Southwest, seek to control an important location on Earth, it is up to those who venerate the cats of Dream to call upon them and stop the cats of Saturn, lest evil befall the Yucatán. The cats of Saturn have tried before, and those who opposed them kept records, information now being unearthed by archaeologists and anthropologists. The followers of the cats of Saturn are closer than anyone thinks, drawing closer to this place of power, slinking toward the Cenote of El-Thar.

TOUR AND TRAVEL

The two archaeological sites are located in the Yucatán interior. The roads that do exist are in questionable if not dangerous condition. For the purpose of their expedition, they will be driving to the edge of the forest and then hacking their way through the forest to arrive at the archaeological sites. Burros will help carry extra supplies but machetes will only cut through so much forest in a day. Inclement weather or illness may slow them down as well.



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The Tour for the expedition is five travel increments (starting after “Americanos,” when they leave Sisal) going in, assuming they spend only one night at the Temple of the Jaguar King. Each night at the Temple of the Jaguar King or the cenote costs 1 Survival pool point (2 points if any expedition members are wounded or ill). The sixth and final increment of the Tour is the eight-day trip back out.

Besides the possible “jaguar” attack in “Followed,” there are no special Survival challenges or hazards — Menes avoids them all. If Menes is lost for some reason, feel free to add snakes, mosquito clouds, quicksand, fallen trees or any other appropriate hazard from scenarios elsewhere in this book.

SURVIVAL POOL

The Investigators are in the hands of a capable guide who knows the region very well and knows the routes, which helps to offset the supplies the Carnegie Foundation isn’t willing to pay for. The group must procure food, medicine and petrol for a truck to the village they will visit before they head into the interior; the jungle is too dense for vehicles, and they will have to walk through lush, thick selva in order to reach the intended destination. Burros will bring some of the supplies but the Investigators will have to carry packs in the humid climate.

Menes offers to procure goods for travel, but the Investigators are allowed to come

along and can try to bargain with the locals for goods. Any Investigators who speak the language add to the pool as they bargain; Investigators who don’t speak the language or insist on paying well below the worth of the goods subtract, as the sellers see their pushiness and insistent bartering as demeaning. The Survival pool starts at 13 points, with the Investigators able to add 2 each if they come along and help using Languages (Yucatec Mayan) and Bargain or 1 each if they only have Languages (Yucatec Mayan).

EXPEDITION PERSONNEL

This section describes the main named personnel on the expedition, aside

Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Plains (−3)	Americanos	Not allowing Hernandez’s party to accompany the Investigators	4 or none
Jungle (+2)	Slow Going Through the Jungle	Menes’s guidance; Outdoorsman or Biology	Refresh 1 per Investigator
Camp (1 per night)	Temple of the Jaguar King	N/A	N/A
Jungle (+0)	Followed	Driving or Athletics	3 per burro lost+
Jungle (+0, and 1 per night)	The Cenote of El-Thar	N/A	N/A
Return (+2)	Return Voyage	Outdoorsman (standard relief: reduce Difficulty by 1)	7 (panicked flight) or none

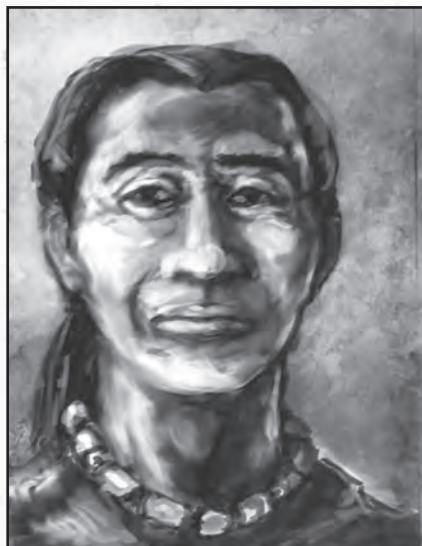
The Jaguars of El-Thar

from the Investigators. If an NPC has Investigative abilities listed, an Investigator can use his pools as though they were her own — assuming she uses the correct Interpersonal approach, as listed in the character description. To spend points from an NPC ability pool requires an equal spend from an Investigator pool. This spend usually comes from the listed Interpersonal ability, but clever players can sometimes justify something else: spending 2 Credit Rating points (to promise him a big bonus) to spend 2 of Menes Canche's Outdoorsman points, for example.

The other role of named NPCs is to die or go mad informatively or interestingly, should it come to that. Don't be too hung up on their listed Health ratings, in other words.

Statistics are abbreviated: for example, there aren't any libraries in the Yucatán, so nobody's stat block lists Library Use.

Menes Canche, Mayan Guide



Menes Canche is a guide highly recommended by Professor Stapleton and charged with taking the Investigators through the jungle to meet with him. The son of a guide previously employed by the Miskatonic-Carnegie team, Menes is an individual who was born and raised in the Yucatán but has grown up dealing with academics from many countries. Born at the beginning of the century, he is young for a guide but experienced, confident in both urban and rural environments. Menes is a natural intercessor, trying to reconcile between people. He responds best to reasoning; strong-arming him into making decisions causes him to withdraw and reconsider. (Bargain, Reassurance)

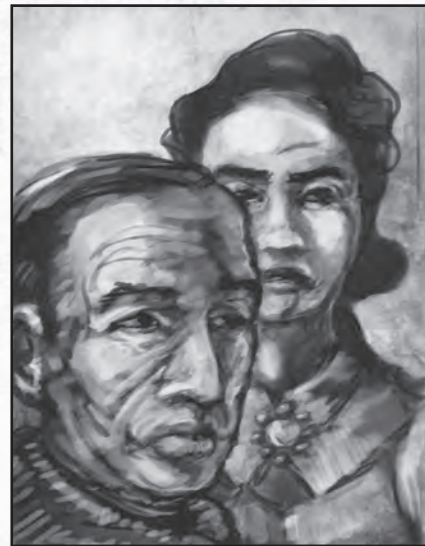
Abilities: Athletics 6, Driving 4, Firearms 3, First Aid 4, Health 6, Languages 2 (English, Spanish, Yucatec Mayan), Outdoorsman 3, Preparedness 5, Weapons 5

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (machete), +0 (.32 revolver), -1 (knife)

Francisco Hernandez, Mysterious Exile

Hernandez is a quiet but intense individual with a charismatic way of speaking. He speaks Spanish with an American accent and English with a Spanish accent, an individual born and raised in the multicultural Southwest. He leads his group of repatriated individuals, speaking for them often and appealing to the commonality between individuals. He implores people to "do the right thing," asking them how they would feel if they were in the same situation. That being said he carries himself in a confident way, bordering on egotistical. (Flattery)



Abilities: Astronomy 2, Athletics 8, Bargain 2, Firearms 3, First Aid 3, Health 5, Languages 1 (English, Spanish), Scuffling 4, Weapons 3

Weapon: +0 (machete), +1 (.45 revolver), -1 (knife)

Valeria Encarnacion-Hernandez, Menacing Exile

Valeria is Hernandez' right hand; she seldom speaks but her presence is felt among the group. An air of menace hangs around her and when she does speak, it is generally an order. Hernandez introduces her as his wife and no evidence points to the contrary. (Bargain, Flattery)

Abilities: Astronomy 3, Athletics 8, Firearms 4, Health 5, Intimidation 3, Languages 1 (Spanish, English), Occult 2, Outdoorsman 2, Scuffling 4

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (.32 automatic)

"Los Americanos"

The group of repatriated Mexican-Americans is made up of around seven

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individuals, including Hernandez and Valeria. (At least one more than the number of Investigators plus Menes.) They are all adults, ranging from their teens to late 50s. All speak Spanish and English, and, according to Hernandez, were all born in America, unable to return because of the repatriation (see sidebar, p. 110). They mostly speak among themselves in whispers and respond in short sentences; Valeria and Hernandez usually jump in to answer any questions and they are rarely far from their apparent leaders. The Keeper should feel free to give them abilities that will make them better assets to Hernandez. (Intimidation, Reassurance, any other well-played Interpersonal ability)

Abilities: Athletics 5, Firearms 2, Health 5, Languages 1 (English, Spanish), Scuffling 4, Weapons 1

Weapon: -2 (fists), +0 (machete), -1 (knife), +1 (12-gauge double-barrelled shotgun)

B'alam Pool, Mayan Priest



B'alam Pool is not a shaman but a priest of the Maya. Born in 1867, well after the beginning of the Caste War of the Yucatán, he grew up witnessing the conflict between the Mexican government and the indigenous people who rebelled against their harsh treatment during the henequen and sugar booms of the 19th century. He seems a bit apprehensive about the presence of the archaeologists but can be persuaded to do something if it is for the good of the people of the Yucatán and the other indigenous people. He does not like to talk about the Mexican government but when pushed reveals he thinks the Mexican government should stay out of the affairs of the indigenous people, though he is glad the fighting is now over (the last attack associated with the Caste War took place in April of 1933). He speaks Yucatec Mayan and prefers to converse in this language. Pointing out the good of his people and speaking to him in his first language will help convince him to help you. Speaking to him in Spanish first or speaking about the desires of the government or corporations will definitely turn him away from your purpose. He is an individual who wants to help others. (Anthropology or Languages (Yucatec Mayan) used as Interpersonal abilities, Reassurance)

Abilities: Athletics 4, First Aid 4, Health 4, Languages 1 (Spanish), Oral History 3, Outdoorsman 2, Psychoanalysis 6, Reassurance 2, Theology 1, Weapons 1
Weapon: +0 (machete)

Henry Rutherford Stapleton, Professor of Anthropology

An academic anthropologist, Stapleton's interests in the Yucatán have slowly turned from the educational to the



emotional — a personal investment in the people and culture of the Yucatán. He is intense in nature, becoming excited quickly; despite the length of his stay in the Yucatán, he has not grown used to the heat and humidity and sweats all the time. He seems to be the anthropological version of the Mad Scientist, engrossed in his work and his relationships with the Maya. Any talk of ending his research stops him dead. He sympathizes with the Maya who wish for independence, and Oral History in the village gathers talk of him being a spy for the resistance. (Anthropology or Archaeology used as Interpersonal abilities)

Abilities: Anthropology 3, Archaeology 1, Athletics 3, First Aid 1, Fleeing 4, Health 4, Languages 3 (Classic Maya, Spanish, Yucatec Mayan), Oral History 2, Outdoorsman 1, Weapons 1
Weapon: +0 (machete)

Professor Galina Avenirovna Prokhorov, Ethnolinguist

Professor Prokhorov is fluent in many languages but takes a special interest

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in deciphering the glyphs in the Mayan temples and codices. Her work excites her, but Prokhorov is level-headed by nature, not letting her enthusiasm interfere with her work or cause rifts between herself and those she works for. She is still well aware of the fact her research can be cut short at any time with a telegraph. Peaceful by nature, she tries to defuse situations by reminding people why they have traveled all this way. She responds well to inquiry and dislikes being reminded that she doesn't officially have a degree in Maya studies. Galina values ability and interest over purely academic necessity. (Archaeology or History used as Interpersonal abilities)

Abilities: Anthropology 1, Archaeology 1, Art History 1, Athletics 5, Cryptography 2, Firearms 1, First Aid 1, Fleeing 3, Health 6, Languages 5 (Classic Maya, English, French, Spanish, Yucatec Mayan)

Weapon: +1 (flare gun)

INTO THE YUCATÁN Americanos

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Out: The Priest at the Edge of the Selva

If the Investigators go with Menes to buy travel goods, they notice they are being followed. At first glance, it appears a group of locals have taken an interest in them, tailing the Investigators as they travel through the marketplace of Sisal, a port well known for its shipping of ropes and twine made of sisal and henequen. If the Investigators instead go straight to the cantina, they run into the group there, a small band of people in the corner, watching the Investigators as they relax over drinks and food.

One of the individuals approaches the Investigators eventually and asks in English, "Are you American?" The apparent leader of the group is a man who identifies himself as Francisco Hernandez, a Mexican-American exiled to Mexico by the US government's "repatriation" of Mexicans (see "The Mexican Repatriation," p. 110). With him are others in the same situation as he: Americans of Mexican descent, deported to Mexico despite their insistent claims of American citizenship. All of them speak English and Spanish. They have recently left America and are making their way through Mexico, looking for work and a place to settle down.

Hernandez is eager to hear about what the Investigators are doing in Mexico and asks for news about wherever the Investigators are from. He asks if he

and his small band of people can join with their group, claiming they have their own supplies and are looking for someone to travel with through the Yucatán. Not being from Mexico, they are facing difficulties navigating and have yet to find any place they can settle. Hernandez also claims the jungles are dangerous and expresses concerns the Caste War may not be over just yet. Power in numbers, he claims. The rest of his group is oddly silent but looks hopeful. The rest of the encounter likewise consists of Hernandez asking general questions about the Investigators and (once his name comes up) oddly specific questions about Professor Stapleton.

Assess Honesty can tell that Hernandez has some more urgent goal than simply wandering through the Yucatán; a 1-point spend notes his interest in Stapleton and offers the suspicion that Hernandez already knew about the archaeologist, an unlikely interest for someone who claims to have been a New Mexico rancher.

Pharmacy notes the pinpoint pupils of one of Hernandez's people and smells the bitter undertone in his hand-rolled cigarettes: the smoke is laced with jimson-weed, a powerful hallucinogen.

About Hernandez

The Investigators can try to find out more about the Americanos from the locals. Politeness, **Oral History** and Spanish will get them a long way; if they ask around town, chiefly the cantina owner, they find out the Americanos showed up two days ago on a bus from Campeche, dusty and travel worn.



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Hernandez and his crew haven't spent that much American money, either. Traveling by bus, they can't have brought too much with them, and there aren't any burros, bags of food or cans of water at their flophouse. **Outdoorsman** notes that the Americanos don't seem to have nearly enough supplies to travel through the jungle, with or without the Investigators.

Menes does not seem keen on allowing this second group to join them as they make their way to Prokhorov and Stapleton. If Hernandez's group is around when the Investigators ask Menes, he simply says it is not a good idea and seems bent on their own group going alone. If Hernandez' group is not there, Menes gives a cryptic warning about accepting help from strangers, especially once they get into the forest.

They have kept to themselves for the most part and paid for their drinks in American money. They seem to prefer to be awake at night, waking up late in

the morning. The cantina owner doesn't like the looks of them, but they pay in American money and don't cause trouble, so they're tolerated.

If the Investigators go back to tell the group of repatriated of their decision to not allow them to go with them,

The Mexican Repatriation

During the Great Depression in America, resources dwindled and many of the disenfranchised needed someone to turn their frustration toward. Desperation clawed away at their tolerance and discernment. In the American Southwest this meant many people of Mexican ancestry, both legal and illegal, were targeted not only by depressed citizens but by laws as well. The Mexican-American War (1846–1848) resulted in previously Mexican lands and the people who lived upon the soil becoming part of America. Some moved back beyond the borders to what was still considered Mexico, but a vast majority stayed. The promise of work in America and the Mexican Revolution brought many Mexicans onto American soil, and in the early part of the 20th century, immigration was fast and easy.

During the Depression, America began to enact laws making it illegal to hire illegal workers. The federal Immigration and Naturalization Service rounded up people of Mexican ancestry, deporting not just legal and illegal immigrants, but US citizens, giving them no legal recourse and making it difficult for them to return home. "Repatriation" tore between five hundred thousand and two million people away from their families; people who had never lived in Mexico (perhaps two-thirds of them US citizens) were deported.

Any Investigator with the **Law** ability knows the above.



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Hernandez is upset and tells them to beware of big cats in the jungle.

If the Investigators choose to bring Hernandez's people along despite Menes's opposition, deduct 4 from the Survival pool immediately. Tell the players about the impending deduction before their decision is final.

To the Edge of the Jungle

The road to the village at the end of the forest is technically a road; more precisely it's a dirt path wide enough for two cars in some areas, one car in other areas, with

potholes and other obstacles along the way. The truck (a 1930 two-and-a-half-ton Chevrolet flatbed; it looks like it's an old military vehicle painted over with what was not the right type of paint) holds their supplies, both for their own use as well as to barter with the village they are heading for. There isn't room for everyone to sit in the cab, so some are forced to sit in the bed with the things they'll need for the rest of their journey. The road is windy and bumpy. Menes makes good use of the horn as they drive; every time they encounter a car, it seems to be when the road is narrowest. Mexicans walk on the road, staring at the truck as it drives by, some of them waving at Menes, others making the sign of the cross. Cars aren't

the only vehicles on the road; there are carts pulled by donkeys, buses and the occasional motorbike, leaving a cloud of exhaust behind them.

If any of the Investigators are interested in driving, they can ask Menes. He will wait till they get to a long stretch of wide road (Difficulty 3 **Driving**) before allowing them to drive. If the truck does get stuck, a Difficulty 5 **Mechanical Repair** test overcomes the roadside hazard without spending any extra Survival. A failure costs 1 Survival point, but a passing farmer soon sets the truck to rights.

Any breeze is a welcome one, precious in its relief, and the bumpy road makes



Cenotes

The cenotes of the Yucatán Peninsula are an important geological and anthropological feature of the region. With only several rivers and only a few marshy lakes, these naturally occurring basins of fresh water were often the only source of drinkable water. As a result, many Mayan cities were built around or close to the cenotes. In addition to supplying potable water to this sophisticated civilization, cenotes were seen as a gate to the afterlife, the spiritual realm, the underworld. The Sacred Cenote of Chichén Itzá was believed to be one of the entrances to

Xibalba, the Mayan underworld, and archeological dredgings of the cenotes found the sacrifices that were made there. Gold, jade, weapons, objects made from materials not found in the Yucatán and more show that these natural features of the Yucatán were important to many of the people of the area. Some cenotes are more than just wells; several are part of elaborate underwater cave systems, only accessible at the surface and spanning for miles.

Any Investigator with **Archaeology** knows the above.

the going less than ideal for anyone with weak stomachs. Menes does his best to avoid pitfalls and the people traveling the road on foot, by burro or by cart, farmers driving flocks, people carrying items to markets. There is a brief stop for lunch at a roadside stand outside Mérida where tacos filled with beans, avocado and turkey are made. Water must be taken from their own supply. In the distance, the jungle looms, verdant and dark, the secrets of the Maya locked away behind its trees.

THE PRIEST AT THE EDGE OF THE SELVA

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Americanos

Lead-Out: Slow Going Through the Jungle

After an entire day of driving, their destination appears: a small village of traditional Mayan homes, round and built of poles and thatch with lime and adobe on the walls. The Investigators see the lights first, then smell the cooking fires and food, and then finally arrive, Menes honking the horn before they pull into the village. Men and women in traditional Mayan dress, brightly colored woven clothing, come out to meet Menes and greet him warmly. Cats sleep on porches and wander out from behind the houses.

The villagers ask the Investigators if they are hungry and offer plates of food: tortillas, plantains, black beans, avocado, turkey, chicken and salsa that may very well be too spicy for the Investigators to handle. They ask the Investigators about their interest in the Yucatán and if they know the professors.

Eventually the priest emerges from his home with Menes, who has been missing from the entire meal. B'alam Pool sits down and asks them about their trip and about their meeting with the Americanos in the cantina. He listens intently to their words, nodding. He speaks very highly of the professor, and, upon being asked about Stapleton's illness, B'alam Pool says the professor had a serious fever which rendered him unconscious for several hours. Transporting the professor further could have killed him, so the priest applied the best aid that he could there in the village. **Reassurance** (core clue) from the Investigators will convince the priest that they too have the professor's best interest at heart, leading him to reveal details about Stapleton's illness.

B'alam's Tale

For three days the professor's fever raged, on the brink of death, and the priest watched on, treating the professor. He says he cured the professor from an affliction of the mind, calling upon spirits to battle those who were attacking the professor. (**Anthropology** or **Theology** reveals the ritual is pre-Christian, possibly handed down from the Classic Maya civilization.) After the ritual was performed, the spirit's hold on the professor broke, rendering him conscious and able to speak of the terrible things he saw while in his fevered dreams: multicolored predatory cats, large in build and deadly in nature, stalking through the forest, searching for something, ready to attack, to kill. Pool continues to say that, even with his fever broken, the professor was still disturbed by his dreams. Stapleton left the priest with his nocturnal visions still weighing heavily on his mind but

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able to reason and in as good a health as could be expected, given his workload, constitution and the weather.

If the Americanos have joined the Investigators, Hernandez disappears from the group while Pool is telling his story. A feat of memory (and a 2-point **Oral History** spend) recalls that Hernandez turned pale and left as the priest was describing the ritual.

Asking Around

The Investigators may use **Oral History** to ask the villagers about Stapleton; they hear rumors to this effect, assuming they have Spanish, Yucatec Mayan or a translator:

- Stapleton didn't leave entirely well; while the priest seems stalwart in his belief the professor is well enough to continue his studies, the villagers are not so sure. Younger individuals feel Stapleton should go home to receive Western medicine.
- 1-point spend: Right when the priest cured him, a great yowling was heard, like the sound of a jaguar but stranger, more alien. All the animals in the forest were quiet for entirely too long.
- 2-point spend: Every night since the professor was cured, the priest has watched the stars more intently than ever. A 1-point **Astronomy** spend indicates the patch of sky includes Saturn.

A Sleep and a Benediction

Menes tells the Investigators that they will be leaving first thing in the morning and so it is best they get some sleep.

In the morning, the priest rises with them and asks the Investigators if he can perform a ceremony to grant them safe passage in the forest. Menes seems to think it is a good idea, and the priest blesses them in Maya, asking for their protection as they travel between the worlds, that they be without sin. He proceeds to bless Menes, pricking the guide's forehead with a knife and using the blood to draw a design on his forehead, praying that Menes face any adversaries fiercely. The villagers give the Investigators supplies consisting of food and water loaded onto donkeys, in exchange for the petrol and goods Menes brought with him from Sisal. This does not refresh the Survival pool — it merely transforms "potential" Survival bought in Sisal for "actual" Survival points here.

Menes takes up machete and leaving behind the village, the expedition heads into the selva of the Yucatán peninsula.

SLOW GOING THROUGH THE JUNGLE

Scene Type: Refresh

Lead-In: The Priest at the Edge of the Selva

Lead-Out: The Temple of the Jaguar King

It is up to the Keeper and the desires of the Investigators as to how much time is spent in game on their trek through the forest. Trekking through the forest is slow going and their arrival time to the Temple of the Jaguar is estimated to take anywhere from three to seven days.

This scenario continues to assume that the Investigators did not join forces

with Hernandez's group in Sisal. If they did, spend these scenes making sure that Hernandez and his followers get on the Investigators' nerves: smoking jimson weed instead of keeping watch, starting political arguments, vanishing into the forest on mysterious errands, stealing Investigators' ammunition ("for hunting") and pointlessly wasting food or water. (Hernandez's group, of course, has no intention of returning, or letting the Investigators return.)

A Feast of Life

While Menes has taken this route dozens of times before, traveling from cenote to cenote through the interior, anything that fell prey to the blade of his machete previously is now back, more lush than before. Trees that reach toward the sky, vines as fat as their arms, shrubs, flowers in every hue and heavy ripe fruit grow wild in this dense selvan landscape. Describe the intense heat and humidity and hordes of various stinging and biting insects. Menes advises the travelers to drink sips of water intermittently, to refrain from guzzling the water they have.

If the Investigators can get over the heat and the buzzing of mosquitoes, they are privy to the natural beauty and bounty of the Yucatán jungle. Plumeria, jasmine, copal, dogwood, mahogany, fiddlewood, chaya, achiote, avocado, fig, sapote, mamey, papaya, *guanabana*, chocolate fruit, tamarind, types of palm trees... the floral diversity is astounding. Not to be outdone, a wide range of animals resides in the jungles. Wild turkeys, small deer, scores of large and brightly colored butterflies, birds every color of the rainbow, geckos, iguanas, bats... and, as the party cannot forget, bugs.



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Mosquitoes abound in this wet area, along with scorpions, bees and termites, biting ants and venomous snakes.

If the Keeper needs a threat encounter, put in a coral snake (**Sense Trouble** test at Difficulty 6 to notice before it bites; Difficulty 5 if the Investigator has **Outdoorsman**) or six. Use the snake statistics from *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 157).

Of course, the apex predator of the Yucatán is the jaguar. This spotted New World cat is rarely seen as it slips through its selvan home. It quietly stalks its prey through the underbrush of the forest, preferring to ambush its would-be meals. When the party catches a glimpse of a jaguar, Menes smiles and says it is a good omen. An Investigator with **Biology** or **Outdoorsman** will know that a jaguar is an efficient killer, tending to kill its prey with a bite to the skull, crushing it or severing the spine. They rarely, if ever attack humans, only doing so when the animals are old or sick.

During this increment, the travelers have lots of opportunity to gather and even hunt for food. Add 1 to the party's Survival pool for each Investigator with **Outdoorsman** or **Biology**, as because they can help identify edible plants in the selva.

Rumor and Night

The jungle must be hacked through. Menes leads the group from cenote to cenote, sources of fresh water for the Investigators and places to rest. The heat makes heavy meals a bad idea, and mosquito nets must be put up before anyone can go to bed. As they head through the jungle, they do pass by isolated villages, able to stop and grab

coffee or tamales, but Menes tells the Investigators not to tarry too long and not to impose upon the villagers.

If they stop in any villages, **Assess Honesty** notes that reactions of the villagers range from wariness to something close to veneration if Menes is with them. Using **Oral History** or **Reassurance**, the Investigators find out the locals are a bit scared of Menes, whom they call "He Who Slips Through." Asking Menes about this sobriquet gets a subdued response: he credits it to his long practice traveling the jungle. Under the influence of **Flattery** or a bottle (or both), he brags a bit about his ability to get through the jungle in any weather or condition. He jokes that he should charge the Carnegie Foundation more for his services.

A 1-point spend of **Reassurance**, **Flattery** or **Oral History** gets a little more of the story out of Menes or a villager. His parents were killed in a fire when he was an infant, but he somehow escaped. Ever since, he's been considered supernaturally lucky, fated in some way.

At night the jungle doesn't quiet down. The fluttering of dark wings, the cry of nocturnal animals, and the drone of insects can make sleeping difficult. And of course, punctuating the night with its wild cry: the roar of a jaguar. After several days of traveling, the jaguars begin to infiltrate the dreams of some Investigators, walking alongside them and staring at them intently. They wake up in a cold sweat and must make a 2-point Stability test. If the Investigators report this to Menes, he does not seem disturbed. Jaguars are well known for their fighting ability and are sacred to

the indigenous people of the area; he calls dreams of jaguars a good omen.

Either Menes or a party member with **Anthropology** and a poetic cast of mind says something like this:

"Strong, quiet, sleek, swimming in the cenotes of the Yucatán, it is no wonder the people of this land revered the jaguar, emulating them, allowing those at the top of their hierarchies to wear their pelts and take the word for this precious animal for their family names."

After all, the Investigators are on the way to the Jaguar's temple: no wonder he's smelling them first.

THE TEMPLE OF THE JAGUAR KING

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Slow Going Through the Jungle

Lead-Out: Followed

After days to weeks of travel, the small group finally arrives at an archaeological site: an ancient Mayan village and the temple and final resting place for the Jaguar King.

The temple rises magnificently from the ground, a gray stone pyramid rising toward the sky, its many steps leading up to the uppermost level. The carefully crafted sides are steep, drawing the eye to the carvings at the top of the temple, the dark doorway somehow inviting yet ominous. The steps leading up to the precipice seem almost too steep to climb, the main body of the pyramid consisting of nine layers, each



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progressively smaller than the other but still formidable in form.

The Investigators are greeted by several archaeology students and by several Maya who are helping with the dig. Professor Galina Prokhorov herself appears at the very top of the pyramid's staircase. She is happy to see the group and asks them how their travels have been thus far, how they've enjoyed the Yucatán, and their impressions of the people and area. She asks about news at the university and of the Carnegie Foundation.

Despite her jovial greeting, Prokhorov is well aware of the motives of the Investigators, knowing they are there to check on her progress. The professor then proceeds to show them her work: the images she has rendered of the village, reconstructing it as it lay when it was inhabited by Maya and the temple in frequent use. Items found in the temple: jewelry, ceremonial knives, censers; many items had already been looted before she arrived. However, it is not the items that interest Prokhorov but the words.

Prokhorov takes the Investigators to her tent, showing them what she has been working on for the last few months: copying down the glyphs found inside the temple, a story she has begun to decipher slowly but surely, telling the tale of the Jaguar King and his effects on the people, how he rose up, not just a king but a priest, summoning jaguars in order to meet the city's foes; as far as she can tell, the enemies were both physical and spiritual, though she cannot say specifically whom their adversaries were. (This core clue needs no ability to obtain; Prokhorov is justly proud of her epigraphy and deciphering.) Prokhorov goes on to say she believes the text

describes the king's ritual actions and the foes' natures in more detail, but she must first decode the entire story before she goes back and looks for the clues.

She has transcribed the glyphs as well as their translation onto a scroll of paper and keeps them locked away in a waterproof, fireproof ammunition box, keeping the key on her at all times. The Investigators are welcome to look over the site to make their reports and aid in any assessments that might be of interest to them or their departments, or to simply enjoy hot food and ask questions.

If any Investigators bring up the possibility of her funding being cut, Galina assures the Investigators that with just a few more days, she will have the entirety of the walls of the temple transcribed; once this is done, she can bring her work back with her to

whatever university she decides to take residence at. Prokhorov assures them that while the temple and the jungle have their charms and excitement, she misses her father and hopes to be back with him soon. All she needs is the inscription, and, with the other clues she has from other sites, she firmly believes she can decode the writing and decipher the implied code within the text. **Assess Honesty** indicates that she is telling the truth about all of this; she is every bit the driven, if careerist, scholar she presents herself as.

When asked about Stapleton, Prokhorov tries to avoid saying anything disparaging about him. The Investigators can spend 1 point of **Reassurance** to get the academic's true sentiments out of her: she does admit that she is worried about the anthropologist. Stapleton has sent her a few letters since he returned from



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his “meeting with Pool,” Prokhorov says. She says he writes at length — almost raves — of his “dreams and planets and cats.” But he also speaks very fondly of the people he works with and is dedicated to learning more about the rituals that took place at the great cenote he is studying at. Prokhorov reveals she thinks Stapleton has gotten too involved with the locals, and she thinks he believes in their “primitive superstitions.” Spending another point of Reassurance gets Prokhorov to loan an Investigator Stapleton’s letters; see “Stapleton’s Dream” on p. 117 for their content.

Spend 1 point of Survival per night spent at the Temple; the camp has some supplies, but there are more mouths to feed as well.

If the Americanos are still with the Investigators, Hernandez announces his group’s intention to stay here for a while and pick up some dollars doing labor around the dig site.

Menes and the Investigators leave Professor Prokhorov behind at the temple, promising to pick her up on the way back.

Followed

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: The Temple of the Jaguar King

Lead-Out: The Cenote of El-Thar

A day or so after leaving the Temple of the Jaguar King, the Investigators feel as if they are being followed. (Call for a zero sum Sense Trouble contest, if you like; whichever Investigator rolls highest gets the creepy feeling of being

followed, perhaps along with the smell of jimsonweed.) Menes also seems to notice something is different and is shorter with his words, though he is still patient with the Investigators. The same sounds and sights greet them in the forest, but a point spent in **Outdoorsman** reveals that even the animals seem to be waiting, worried about something, making signs of distress.

One night as they are making camp, a sleek form glides through the underbrush. However, instead of the telltale dappled coat of the jaguar, those who see it experience something else. Something multicolored, shimmering with a strange unearthly light, stalking through the forest (3-point Stability test). In addition, Menes feels as if a person is following them, perhaps several. He tells the Investigators he has had a dream of a very old man or a very cruel cat, following them through the forest. **Theology** or **Anthropology** reveals dreams are very important to Menes, seen as oracles to him. He decides they should double their speed, in order to put as much distance between the expedition and its pursuers, and in order to reach Stapleton quickly.

The shimmery colored creature slinks through the underbrush, always at the corner of their eye, never showing itself. On one morning they come across a dead animal in their path, terribly mauled (2-point Stability test). Menes says he’s never seen a kill like that in the forest in all his years and presses on, trying to cover more ground. In the night, the sounds of the jungle are joined with the whispers of human voices off in the distance, lights flickering in different locations. Menes urges yet more speed; have each Investigator make a Difficulty 5 **Athletics** test to avoid delaying the party.

The burros don’t much like the new faster pace: it takes a Difficulty 5 **Riding** test (Difficulty 4 if the Investigator has a Riding slot for burro) to move them along and guard them on the trail. On a failure, the thing picks off the burros; one or two a night. Lose one burro automatically, and another one for each Investigator who failed the Athletics test above. Each lost burro costs the party 3 Survival points.

If the burros are saved by the Riding test, the thing kills yet more animals: deer, iguanas, turkeys. Their bodies are mauled and mutilated, found on the forest floor in the direction Menes means to take them. **Biology** reveals that the manner of killing was unlike that of a jaguar and notices that despite the hot, humid nature of the forest, no carrion bugs or animals have started in on the corpse, despite it being dead for several hours (2-point Stability test).

Menes insists on trying to get to the cenote as quickly as possible.

THE CENOTE OF EL-THAR

Scene Type: Core / Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: Followed

Lead-Out: Catfight

After much hustling, the Investigators, harried by terrible forces, arrive at the Cenote of El-Thar. The cenote is located below ground level, requiring the Investigators to climb down steps, but they are greeted with a breathtaking sight. The water is crystal clear, almost blue, and lush greenery grows down from the ground above, as if reaching



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for the precious water. The banks of the cenote slope gracefully for several yards and then... drop. If there is a bottom to the natural well, it can't be seen. There is enough space around the cenote for the good professor, the students and the locals to have their tents up, as well as look over their findings at the Cenote of El-Thar. On the almost exact opposite side of the sinkhole is another staircase carved into the side, giving another entrance or exit into the site.

A majority of the workers at the site are Maya with a few individual leftovers from the university, those who decided to stay but who look as if they might leave at any moment. (**Assess Honesty** can tell that morale is not good.)

Stapleton receives them, but anyone familiar with the anthropologist is in for a shock. Gaunt, sallow and bearded, with staring eyes, this is a man who has seen illness in the jungle and lived through it, but not thrived afterward. He embraces Menes and greets the Investigators, asking them for news of their homes and receiving them warmly in his makeshift home, a tent littered with Maya artifacts.

Hot food and coffee are prepared for the Investigators, and Stapleton tells them about his finds at the cenote, mentioning the artifacts and hinting at a "great find," something the foundation will find very interesting indeed.

Sweating and glassy-eyed, he listens intently to any stories the Investigators have to tell of their adventures in the Yucatán and smiles at the mention of B'alam. If they mention the strange kill or the strange sightings, Stapleton is visibly shaken.

Stapleton's Work

Professor Stapleton tells the Investigators he believes this cenote holds some important clues as to the goings-on of the ancient Maya that lived here. He shows the Investigators things he has dredged from this cenote, one of the deepest ones he has even encountered, with steep sides. Weapons, knives, shields, bowls, bones of animals, bones of humans, jade statuettes.

In the corner, the piece he spoke of earlier, a large, jade jaguar, stands. There is something unnerving about the statue, large as it is, the green jade bright. **Geology** reveals that the jade is not from the region; a 1-point spend indicates it originated in Central Asia. **Archaeology** finds it hard to place the particular style of statue among others. The snarl of the mouth looks as if it is ready to bite and the eyes are carved of something not jade, bright and seeming almost... human. Stapleton wonders if the village had some Olmec influence, referencing their belief in were-jaguars. The dating of the items in the cenote indicate that the water source fell out of use suddenly, the nearby village abandoned in a similar fashion. Stapleton thinks something strange happened at the cenote that drove the Maya off or required them to leave. A 1-point Archaeology spend notes that Stapleton's date (roughly the 10th century AD) corresponds to the general collapse of the southern Maya culture and the rise of the nearby state of Chichén Itzá.

The Investigators find the other university students ready to leave. They confirm the strangeness of the situation and also feel as if they are

being watched, but they do not know by whom. The Mayan locals are almost totally uncommunicative, even to Menes, whom they visibly avoid.

The students' account of the professor's illness can be gained through **Intimidation** or **Reassurance**, since their future careers are at stake. The students are under the impression he fell victim to malaria or perhaps reacted to the quinine he was taking. The students wanted to take him to the closest city for treatment, but the Mayan locals claimed he would be dead before they arrived. The students argued with the locals until Stapleton began convulsing, at which point they compromised and carried Stapleton through the jungle to the priest B'alam Pool. A 1-point spend of either ability gets this detail: "Fastest trip through the jungle I've ever made — it was like the whole forest wanted the professor to get to that guy's village. I swear I saw a jaguar pacing us for the last leg of the journey, just watching and following along."

Stapleton's Dream

The Investigators hear Stapleton's recollection of his illness (core clue). The anthropologist says he remembers he had just found the jaguar statue. He had it moved to his tent to further examine it, when he suddenly felt dizzy. He thought perhaps it was a combination of excitement and the heat, the day being warmer than usual and humid to boot. However, as he tried to draw nearer to the statue, the room began to spin and a sound, the sound of jaguars but more...

The professor pauses for a moment.

He then continues, revealing that the sound was terrifying, like a jaguar from



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another world, clawing at his mind. All he remembered were dreams that felt deceptively real, of two large jungle cats fighting ferociously in the jungle. They fought for what seemed like an eternity, the jungle destroyed around them as they clawed, snarled and ripped at each other, tearing down trees and unearthing stones as they chased and battled, the center of their battle a round pool of water, shining like the moon. The alien cat seems always to seek it out but the jaguar of this realm protects it, keeping its massive, sleek form between its enemy and the primary source of light, strange stars and ringed planets spinning through the night sky. Finally the jaguar of the Yucatán, its mouth frothing, its yellowed fangs bared, claws glinting in some preternatural light, overcame the alien jaguar. Right before the jaguar delivered the deathblow, there was a loud noise, like thunder, and he woke up, the priest standing over him.

Stapleton says he still has dreams of the jaguars, stalking the jungle, waiting for each other, one guarding, one seeking. **Assess Honesty** assures the Investigators the professor does believe his dream to have some significance; a 1-point spend notes his habit of nervously looking at the statue when he talks about his dreams.

Stapleton's Curse

The Investigators settle in for the night, only to be awoken by screams in the jungle. When everyone comes running out, one of the students is missing. The group splits up, each one taking an exit out of the cenote to go look for the missing student. Whoever finds her is sorry to have done so; she is disemboweled and mutilated like the forest animals were (3-point Stability

test). Menes and one of the other natives were keeping watch but said they never saw the student leave her tent, nor did they hear her enter the forest. The tragedy makes it difficult for the camp to settle down for the evening, and the jungle is strangely quiet.

Run this as you wish, killing off grad students whenever you can. The cats from Saturn come to the nervous, tired students in their dreams and “walk” them through dream to the killing ground. Thus, only watching a sleeping student all night keeps them safe. Menes watches the professor after the first kill.

Biology or **Outdoorsman** confirms what Menes and the professor insist: the deaths cannot be caused by jaguars, for the animals generally do not kill humans and the manner of deaths are not typical of the big cats.

At some point, the Mayan locals vanish into the jungle. One of them turns up as a mutilated victim, but the rest never return.

Spend 1 point of Survival per night spent at the cenote; this camp is, if anything, less well provided for than the temple campsite was.

CATFIGHT

Scene Type: Hazard

Lead-In: The Cenote of El-Thar

Lead-Out: Into the Cenote

When a gunshot is heard in the forest, the remainder of the crew decides it is time to scout the area. Menes volunteers to stay behind and guard the site, unwilling to leave the weakened, vulnerable professor.

The team goes out to investigate the gunshots; let the Investigators take the lead and sort themselves out however they'd like. An Investigator with Outdoorsman can subtract 1 from any Stealth tests to sneak or hide in the jungle.

Eventually either one or more Investigators are found by the Americanos or they find them, holding Prokhorov hostage. Valeria escorts the ethnolinguist at gunpoint while Hernandez demands the group allow him and his group into the cenote. If anyone protests, he shoots one of the remaining students. Hernandez says he wants the place of power, a place for his people to rebuild. He could not keep the stronghold they had in America because of the repatriation, but here in Mexico, the cenote is here, with the instructions on how to access it close at hand.

This is the kind of confrontation that players love to throw monkey wrenches into. Try to keep them off balance; don't give them time to plan. If they don't do anything *immediately*, fast-forward to the cenote, then into the big showdown.

Mayan Standoff

The entire group heads back to the cenote, Hernandez warning them that if they shout out, he will shoot the professor. When they arrive on the stairs, both Stapleton and Menes look alarmed. Hernandez orders Stapleton to reveal what he knows about the portal. Stapleton insists he is still trying to sort it out, but Hernandez throws Prokhorov's lockbox at Stapleton and demands he get to work; Prokhorov's deciphering at the Temple of the Jaguar King added to the findings of Stapleton



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Jaguars of El-Thar

should reveal how the cats of Saturn can take over the cenote, as they had almost done in the days of old before the Jaguar King stopped them.

Valeria releases Prokhorov to work with Stapleton, and that is when Menes makes his move. He turns and dives into the cenote, Valeria getting off a shot before he can sink beneath the waves. A long, thin cloud of blood rises through the clear water as Menes descends beneath the surface, lower and lower. The water begins to ripple and then churn, and figures rise up from the depths, erupting with the sleek, powerful forms of jaguars, otherworldly in size and presence, roaring like thunder. Hernandez screams a succession of strange words, not Spanish, not Mayan, and from the jungle erupt the scintillating forms of the cats of Saturn, their otherworldly cries shaking the selva.

Fighting Like Kulkulkani Cats

At this sight Stapleton loses it, gibbering as he sees the stuff of his nightmares unfold in the jungles. Anyone with **Astronomy** notes that Saturn is visible in the sky — if it wasn't night before, it is now. The cats from Saturn attack anyone not diving for cover, Jaguar and human alike. Guns barely slow them down, their mercurial blood pooling and dripping on the ground. The whole thing requires a 6-point Stability test.

The jaguars of El-Thar viciously protect the cenote, the gateway to realms unknown, concentrating on the cats from Saturn. Blood flies, the already warm jungle hot with the energy of their fighting, their cries unlike anything ever

heard before. Menes is still unaccounted for, as are the two professors. The Americanos attack the jaguars and humans alike, using machetes and guns to take down anyone in their way. The Americanos are sure not to shoot the professors, but anyone else is fair game.

Option One: Battle

If the Investigators wade into the battle, every Americano they kill erases one Saturnian cat from the fray — the cats need their human anchors until they can take over the cenote. When enough cats are gone, the Jaguars turn the tide and drive the Saturnian cats up into the sky, their yowls echoing like heat lightning.

If the Keeper feels like adding a complication, the Americanos at some point stop trying to kill the jaguars and Investigators and start trying to throw

Cats from Saturn

Only mentioned in “The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath,” the cats from Saturn are described as “large and peculiar.” Earth cats and the cats from the Dreamlands fear them. While unmistakably feline, they must still be peculiar. The Keeper may describe the cats in such a way as to make them seem otherworldly. Perhaps the colors they favor are bizarre, or they lack fur. Their eyes might seem more human, or perhaps the pupil runs in the opposite direction of a terrestrial cat’s or might seem more insectoid. What makes Earth cats fear them? In addition, the Keeper should feel free to elaborate on the alien call of the cats from Saturn, combining the yowl of a cat with something rendering it even more horrific. This is what has been prowling and killing in the forest since the characters left Sisal. Feel free to make them deserving of the Investigator’s fear, as their very presence may incite madness in those who set eyes upon them.

A cat from Saturn may make one paw-whip and one bite attack against a single target in a round.

Cat from Saturn

Abilities: Athletics 9, Health 6, Scuffling 13

Hit Threshold: 5 (weirdly quick)

Alertness Modifier: +2

Stealth Modifier: +2

Weapon: +0 (bite), –1 (whip-like paw); any human foe bitten by a cat from Saturn loses 1 Hit Threshold against further cat attacks, as they can slip up on him from dream-angles barely in his peripheral vision.

Armor: none; all impaling weapons do minimum damage

Stability Loss: +1

Jaguar

If you need game statistics for jaguars, use the lion from *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 156, as a guideline.

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themselves into the cenote, hoping their watery death will open the Saturnian cats' path. A jaguar takes care of the first jumper — but then dies under simultaneous Saturnian cat attack from its blind side. The Investigators may have to dive into the cenote and pull their enemies out — then, likely, kill them on shore.

Option Two: Flee

The Investigators can **Flee** into the jungle (Difficulty 4) and try to make their way back to the village of B'alam Pool. If they do so, they go without supplies (reduce the Survival pool by 2/3) and without a map unless they manage to find one before they make their escape (Difficulty 5 **Preparedness** test).

They can try to find shelter in one of the villages, but finding one is hard, and their state might cause them to be shut out instead of taken in. The Maya in the area have heard the howls of the cats and are not too keen on opening their doors to anyone.

A panicked flight back to B'alam's village constitutes a 7-point Survival test, in addition to the cost for that travel increment (+2).

Option Three: Hide

They can take their chances at the camp, hiding in the hopes they escape the carnage. This is a Difficulty 5 **Stealth** test, which for dramatic purposes can be piggybacked.

Aftermath

If he has survived, Professor Stapleton has completely lost his mind from the ordeal, his fever dream having come to life before him. He may or may not have a nonlethal wound from shots going off, catching him in the crossfire.

Menes never surfaces from the pool of water, leaving the Investigators unsure as to whether he is dead or alive.

If she is alive, Prokhorov is unresponsive, not speaking to anyone though she seems physically unhurt. She is in shock; a Difficulty 6 **Psychoanalysis** test gets her minimally restored, enough to head back, at any rate.

The bodies of any cats of Saturn are smoking, evaporating in a putrid fog, and no jaguars are seen.

It is up to the Keeper whether they find the bodies of any of the repatriated.

If the Investigators attempt to lead Stapleton and Galina through the forest, they must deal with their mental states, though they may try to find supplies among the ruins of the dig.

Stapleton is no longer in any shape to research anything; in a way the Carnegie Foundation got what they wanted. If he sees Saturn in the night sky, he whimpers and then begins to cry. If they take him back to B'alam Pool, the priest offers to take him in, which the professor seems to like. If the Investigators tell the priest of their ordeals, he is not surprised. He asks after Menes and seems to guess the answer before they give it.

INTO THE CENOTE

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: Catfight

If the Investigators hope to look into the disappearance of Menes into the cenote, they can make a Difficulty 4 **Athletics** test to dive in and try to find him. The water is crystal clear but light becomes an issue if they can swim down far enough. In the cenote swim fish, tiny crustaceans picking at



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the walls. Whoever is swimming finds something surprising: into the walls of the cenote are carved depictions of dozens if not hundreds of domestic cats and a land very much unlike the Yucatán — cities of plain and hill alongside a wide, winding river. **Art History** or **Archeology** indicates the carvings are in the style of the Preclassic Maya.

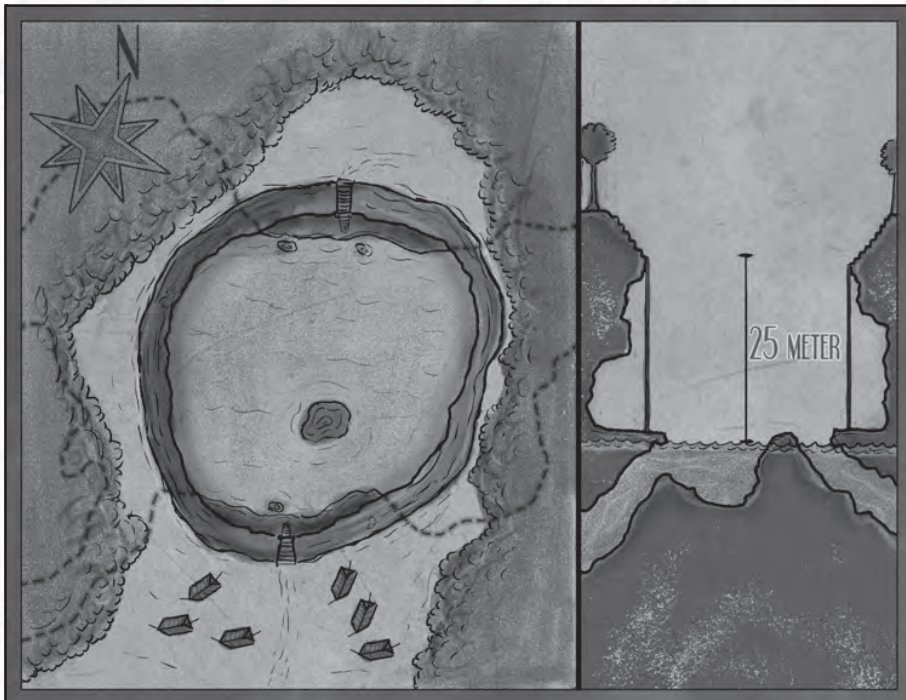
The body of Menes is nowhere to be found and no amount of waiting allows the body to surface.

Exits and Rewards

If the Investigators make it back with any artifacts or can salvage Prokhorov's notes on the writing on the walls from the Temple of the Jaguar King, the Carnegie Foundation is pleased.

If Stapleton has indeed survived the onslaught and the Investigators bring proof of it, they gain favor with his friends and colleagues back at Miskatonic University.

If the Investigators can recreate the images on the walls of the cenote, they can potentially secure funding for further expeditions into the Yucatán.



In a Pulpier game, the Investigators could be attacked by remaining members of Hernandez's crew or be followed as they try to get to the village. Even if no more supernatural creatures are around, the remaining cultists are still very angry and want revenge to make up for their masters. Mysterious storms can sweep up,

making their going more miserable. In addition, the Investigators could find the Americanos in one of the villages on the way to the temple or the cenote, Hernandez waving to them with a smile before disappearing into the forest with his crew.



Tongued by Fire

AND WHAT THE DEAD HAD NO
SPEECH FOR, WHEN LIVING,

THEY CAN TELL YOU, BEING DEAD:
THE COMMUNICATION

OF THE DEAD IS TONGUED WITH
FIRE BEYOND THE LANGUAGE OF THE
LIVING

— T. S. ELIOT,
“LITTLE GIDDING,” FOUR QUARTETS
(1943)

This expedition to India may take place anytime between the end of 1935 and the beginning of World War II in 1939. It is a time of increasingly nationalistic sentiment and patriotic fervor in India, and there is enormous desire among Indians for greater political autonomy and even independence from Britain — so enormous that it has at times produced civil unrest and violence. The situation is further complicated by Hindu-Muslim antagonism, ideological differences between Socialists and others, and reformist impulses directed at the Indian caste system. For their part, the British recognize their obligation to allow greater autonomy, but worry about the consequences of their departure. As a further fillip of tension, racial prejudice along color lines adds an invidious subtext to many Anglo-Indian interactions.

Against this dizzyingly complex sociopolitical backdrop, the Investigators seek to uncover a mystery from the past, and perils both modern and historical may emerge to challenge them.

THE HOOK

A retired British Army presents the Investigators — a group of Miskatonic University professors and their associates — with an intriguing artifact that he obtained during his service in colonial India in the late 19th century. He identifies the source of the artifact as a village called Usmavasati, where it was found in a temple wherein he was briefly besieged. The implications of the artifact are so profound and important for understanding the history of early Christianity that the only reasonable course of action is an immediate scholarly expedition to the site to find out more.

THE SPINE

The adventure begins *in media res* with the members of the expedition arriving in the Indian port city of Bombay (present-day Mumbai), on the western coast of the subcontinent, the **Gateway to India**. As they arrive at the hotel, one of the Investigators confronts a thief attempting to make off with one of the party's bags, a confrontation with the potential to become violent! At this cliffhanger moment, the action flashes

back to the origins of the expedition at **A Lively Colloquium at Miskatonic U**, involving the Investigators discussing the implications of an intriguing artifact. This leads into a set-piece travel montage that brings the action up to the present.

After dealing with the thieves in Bombay, the Investigators make arrangements for inland travel, during which time there are potential opportunities for **Delving Deeper**. Eventually, the Investigators no doubt press on via **The Frontier Mail** train. In **Amritsar**, they may hire guides, bearers and drovers. This will be the jumping-off place for their journey eastward into the Dasuya Forest and beyond into the Siwali Hills along **The Road to Usmavasati** and to the temple they are eager to explore. During the journey, however, the expedition is plagued by incidents of sabotage, and its members have the eerie feeling that they are being watched by hidden eyes in the jungle. When they arrive at the temple, there is a religious festival taking place. If the Investigators are not careful, they are taken unawares by Askripa infiltrators within their own party, captured, and taken to the **Temple of Usmavasati**, where the cult leader Baryuhanon intends to sacrifice them.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

The mountain village of Usmavasati was the center of a secretive hybrid quasi-Christian/Thuggee cult called the Askripa or “blood-drinkers” that

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ritually decapitated victims throughout India during the heyday of the Raj. The Askripa were able to use the severed heads of their victims as oracles of unholy wisdom by means of an antediluvian artifact called the “Mirror of the Maiden,” and its loss to a group of British soldiers in the late 19th century caused a rapid diminution of the cult’s fortunes. Now, having recouped enough of their power to reach out into the world, the Askripa seek to obtain the artifact that was stolen and wreak their revenge upon the criminal who took it.

THE EXPEDITION

Gateway to India

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Out: A Lively Colloquium at Miskatonic U

The Investigators have arrived in Bombay! They have come as part of a scholarly expedition sponsored by Miskatonic University in the belief that they are in pursuit of startling new evidence that may have a profound effect on modern understandings of medieval history.

As the Investigators make their way to their lodgings at the posh Taj Mahal Palace hotel, conveyed in an old Ford omnibus with their luggage piled on top, they take notice of their surroundings. The streets are thronged with motorcars and thick-wheeled bullock carts; the air is hot and steamy and loud. The architecture is a blend of styles, with straight-lined classical and ornate Gothic influences alongside the graceful domes and arches of Indo-Saracenic design, with hints of art

deco symmetry in some of the newest buildings.

The Taj Mahal Palace hotel itself is a magnificent and inspiring structure, the imposing square bulk of its form made light and almost whimsical by a façade comprising a gallery of arches, rising in rows level by level, and surmounted by a large red dome in the center, with smaller domes at each of the corners.

The omnibus pulls up in front of the hotel, and the Investigators stiffly climb down, as servants begin to unload the luggage from the roof of the vehicle.

Call for a zero sum **Sense Trouble** contest. The Investigator with the highest total notices that one of the servants is taking a bag — but *not* into the hotel. He’s walking off with it!

If the Investigator calls for help or otherwise raises the alarm, the thief begins to run. Roll a Difficulty 4 **Athletics** contest (with the thief rolling each round without spending) to see if the thief gets away. If the Investigator confronts the thief immediately, or catches up to him, the thief pulls out a knife, shouts something like, “Andhere ka hamara ledi ke nam!” and tries to stab the meddling Investigator (anyone who speaks Hindustani will understand him to be saying, “In the name of our lady of darkness!”). If the thief gets away after being chased, the Investigator finds himself alone in an alley near the Taj Mahal Palace hotel, when suddenly he feels his arms grabbed from behind and a cloth garrote descending over his head!

In either case, before any more dice are rolled, freeze the action and tell

the players that now is the time to flash back to the beginning and figure out why the Investigators are in India in the first place. Once that’s taken care of, you’ll come back to the cliffhanger.

A LIVELY COLLOQUIUM AT MISKATONIC U

Scene Type: Flashback

Lead-In: Gateway to India

Lead-Out: Passage to India

A colloquium is an academic presentation in which one or more scholars present their work and invite comments, discussion, and criticism from those in the audience. In this case, an elderly retired British Army officer named Fetheringhowe (but pronounced “Fenno”), desiring to find out more about an artifact acquired during his service, has brought it to the experts at the university in order to make it available to science. The experts at Miskatonic (including player-character professors) have examined the artifact separately and are now meeting to discuss their findings publically, in front of a small audience of graduate students, faculty and interested laypeople.

Give all players a description of the bowl (see “The Mirror of the Maiden,” at sidebar); additionally, give those who are participating in the colloquium as panelists the clues to which they are entitled, below. Then let them reveal what they know and in colloquy come to some conclusions and make some recommendations to (or accept some marching orders from) Dr. Armitage, Maj. Fetheringhowe or (most likely)



The Mirror of the Maiden

This is a shallow bowl shaped like a wheel about two feet across and perhaps half an inch thick. It is made of two kinds of stone, light and dark, with an exterior ring like a flattened toroid, within which is set a slightly concave black disk. The outer ring is a milky color irregularly marbled with veins of red, with iridescent colors shining through when it catches the light. Along its upper surface, elegant, flowing figures are carved in bas-relief: a throne room with king, queen and courtiers being entertained by dancers; an execution by beheading; a group of men sharing a cup at mealtime; a ship at sea, with a servant attending a wealthy merchant; a prophet preaching to a crowd; a divine, kingly figure baptizing worshippers in a flowing river; worshippers ascending bodily into the heavens. The circumference of the outer ring is flat, like the edge of a coin, and it is inscribed with the looping and curving symbols of some strange alphabet. The concave inner surface of the dark stone is smooth, polished and shiny. On the other side (the bottom of the bowl), the circumference of the dark stone is carved with a circle of bas relief fertility symbols — alternating, highly stylized phalli and vulvae, if you must know — with a spiraling ring of angular and abstract symbols circling in toward its center.

Mrs. Pickman. The scene ends when the decision is made to go to India and find the temple where the bowl came from.

Examining the Bowl

Investigators may bring a variety of abilities to bear in examining the artifact.

The Bowl As a Whole

Archaeology: It seems clear that the artifact is some sort of amalgam, with the dark interior bowl created first and then set within the marbled outer ring sometime much later.

Cthulhu Mythos: The black interior bowl may be a relic of the Pre-Cataclysmic Age, fashioned by a shaman of Grondar in the far east of the world,

and preserved by a cult of Zoroastrian heretics known to dwell in isolated lamaseries in certain wild regions of Central Asia.

Geology or Chemistry: The exterior ring seems to be chalcedony, a quartz mineral widely available in the ancient world, including India. The shiny black interior surface is apparently obsidian, which was well known to the ancient Greeks and Romans. The nearest source to India is in what is now Azerbaijan SSR, inside the Soviet Union, but a widespread trade in obsidian was common even in Neolithic times.

The Decorated Upper Surface

Archaeology: The imagery along the outer upper surface is typical of the Gandharan style common in northern

India between the 1st and 5th centuries AD, a syncretic Greco-Buddhist cultural pattern that flourished from the Hellenistic period until the arrival of Islam.

Art History: The bas-relief images along the upper surface seem to reference scenes from early Christian lore: the death of John the Baptist, the Last Supper, the journey of the apostle St. Thomas to India, and possibly Thomas's martyrdom near Madras in southern India.

History: The divine king blessing his worshippers foreshadows the medieval figure of Prester John, a saintly Christian king reputed to dwell in the Far East and rule over a mighty kingdom; of course, the legend of Prester John didn't arise until late in the medieval period.

- 1-point spend: Popular medieval accounts of Prester John's kingdom verge on the fantastic, describing a land filled with wonders like the Fountain of Youth and the Gates of Alexander (which held back the forces of Gog and Magog). His treasures included a mirror through which he could survey all of his provinces from afar and talk with kings of distant lands.

Theology: The carvings on the upper surface are consistent with the concern of early Christians for the role of baptism or anointing as an important liturgical or ceremonial element of worship. Furthermore, the "believers" seemingly ascending into heaven may in fact be an attempt to represent the emergent church hierarchy of *episkopoi* (bishops), *presbuteroi* (elders) and *diakonoi* (servants).

Tongued By Fire

The Inscription Along the Edge

Languages (Sanskrit) or 1-point **Library Use** spend: The script along the outer edge of the marbled white ring is written using Brahma, an ancient syllabary used across India. The language is a Sanskrit vernacular called Avanti, one of the “dramatic Prakrits” developed for use in literature and performance, to be spoken by thieves and rogues, and later adopted as a dialect by certain castes in northern India.

- **Archaeology:** Brahmi script developed in the last century BC or first century AD, and is possibly related to the symbol system used by recently excavated Indus Valley civilizations at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.
- 1-point **Languages (Sanskrit)** spend: The words along the outer edge of the bowl mean something like, “Dead speech is fire beyond the words of the living; hail the dark woman.” (Alternately, if a character has both **Cryptography** and **Library Use**, a 2-point spend involving one or both abilities can produce this information)

The Bottom of the Bowl

Archaeology: The symbols on the bottom of the bowl resemble those of no known culture; however, the crude fertility imagery suggests a primitive prehistoric, possibly Neolithic origin.

Cryptography: The spiral inscription on the bottom of the bowl shows regularities as if it were a message. It would be impossible to decrypt without knowing the language in which it’s written, however.

- 2-point spend: Some of the regularities on the bottom inscription

match up with those of the Sanskrit vernacular inscription on the rim of the outer wheel, allowing a tentative assignment of meanings to these symbols. (This provides 1 dedicated pool point for **Cthulhu Mythos** involving translating Mythos-related inscriptions and other writings)

Occult: The inscribed spiral on the bottom of the bowl is suggestive of the forbidden script described by Madame Blavatsky as the syllabary of the Hidden Masters of Thibet, which they learned from the Lemurians, giant four-armed, telepathic, three-eyed hermaphrodites.

Theology or Art History: The phallus and vulva are ancient fertility symbols, suggestive of procreation, and thus the giving of life in other contexts as well — as in agriculture, initiation and other liminal activities.

Participants at the Colloquium

Major Fetheringhowe, VC, KCB, (retd) Arthur Creighton Fetheringhowe (pronounced “Fenno”) (b. 1850) is a retired British military officer who spent his career with the King’s Royal Rifle Corps, called the Green Jackets. He is now in his eighties, but he continues bluff, hearty and opinionated, still seemingly in good health and full possession of his faculties — though he will no doubt nod off should there be a surfeit of abstruse talk or overly technical discussion. To play him, affect an upper-class British accent and “harrumph” a lot as you speak. Use the phrase, “Now see here —” with some frequency and channel your inner Rudyard Kipling. Fetheringhowe firmly believes in Britain’s civilizing mission in

India, and is suspicious of the “bolshie” (i.e., Bolshevik) contingent within the Indian National Congress that will lead the Indians away from the light of Christianity and material progress. Note that he is accompanied by his Indian manservant, a stern-faced and fiercely loyal Punjabi Muslim in his late fifties named Jasbir Hundal.

He explains that he obtained the bowl while besieged in a temple by some *dacoits* (bandits) in the hills outside Amritsar in northern India during the late 1880s. It was being held in one of the arms of a Hindu goddess statue that one of his men named “the Blue Madonna,” since, in addition to a sword and a severed head in each of its other three arms, it also carried a swaddled infant. When his men toppled the statue as a blasphemous mockery of the Virgin Mary, he took the bowl as a trophy of war and later donated it to the Albert and Victoria Museum in Bombay. After many long years of retirement, he is now curious about the origins and significance of the bowl, and the curators of the museum were gracious enough to make the artifact available for examination. He hopes that the assembled scholars of Miskatonic University can assuage his puzzlement.

Flattery works well on the old officer; he intends to return to London, but can be persuaded to meet them in Bombay, perhaps to attend a similar session at the Albert and Victoria Museum. Certainly it would be a kindness for him to visit an old comrade-in-arms now in a military pensioners’ home outside the city. “Poor old chap, wants me to come visit. Sent me a deucedly peculiar letter; seems he’s just about lost his English — gone native, I dare say.” **Oral History**



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extracts from the major a description of the approximate location of the temple, in the Beas River valley in the Siwali Hills on the eastern edge of the Punjab, where the Himalayas loom off in the distance, in a village called Usmavasati (which Sanskrit or Hindustani reveals to mean something like “summer palace”). Those who have the patience may allow him to recount how he ran the old villain who led the dacoits through the chest with a sword bayonet he took from a dead rifleman while escaping from an earthquake that brought the temple tumbling down, with only “young Jasbir here and a handful of my men beside me to tell the tale.”

Dr. Francis Morgan,
Associate Professor of Archaeology
Morgan (b. 1891) need only be present if no Investigator archaeologist is at the colloquium, but may make an interesting rival for academic leadership of the expedition even if one is. He will be skeptical about any interpretation of the mirror that suggests that it is other than an interesting indication of the cultural transmissibility of certain mythico-religious motifs from the ancient Middle East. He will be interested in finding the temple in order to obtain additional physical artifacts supporting a more complete model of the culture that produced it. If he takes on a leadership role in the expedition, he will be intent on reaching the temple, but he will be a rule follower and thus capable of being manipulated by those who understand the operations of **Bureaucracy**, and his focus on logic and reason means that he will find a good **Bargain** compelling. To play Morgan, frown and stroke your chin thoughtfully as you speak.

Dr. Tyler Freeborn,
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Freeborn (b. 1906), if present — probably because you want a “bolshie” foil for Maj. Fetheringhowe — won’t be able to contain himself. He will respond to Fetheringhowe’s story as an account of imperial hubris, an assault upon a defenseless community of quasi-Christians representing a possible survival of the pre-Pauline apostolic tradition! What a terrible loss to our knowledge of the development of the Church! He will call it butchery and warmongering, and Maj. Fetheringhowe will be within his rights if he becomes insulted; Jasbir Hundal (Fetheringhowe’s Punjabi manservant) will certainly frown menacingly at the man and put his right hand on his belt. If Freeborn comes on the expedition, he will always assume the best of Indian intentions and the worst of European ones. He will respond eagerly to **Flattery**, and, since he is a physical coward, **Intimidation** will cow him. To play Freeborn, speak excitedly in a slightly nasal tone and wave your hands around on either side of your head as you do, as if you’re trying to get people’s attention.

Dr. Henry Armitage,
Head Librarian Emeritus
Armitage (b. 1855) will frown in deep concern when the antiquity of the obsidian portion of the bowl is made clear. To play Armitage, tuck your chin into your chest and speak very slowly in a slightly quavering old man voice — think an avuncular and elderly Jimmy Stewart. He will lend his voice to those arguing for the need for an expedition (though of course he is too old to join it

himself), and he clearly has the ear of Mrs. Pickman. He may be able to suggest that Investigators consult certain references in the Orne Library stacks, but he will not go out of his way to make those references available to them (i.e., they will have to use their own resources or make their own spends to gain access).

Mrs. Agatha Warren Pickman



The octogenarian Mrs. Pickman (b. 1849) will be present if there is no high Credit Rating Investigator to bankroll the expedition. Victorian in upbringing, outlook and mores, she will listen quietly to the discussion, but when the question of an Indian expedition comes up, she will profess shock and dismay at the thought of long-lost Christian cousins “like sheep among wolves” left to fend for themselves in the wilds of India, descending into who knows what sorts of heterodoxy and heresy. She is willing to support a scholarly journey so long as it includes some missionary



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

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component. She is immune to **Flattery** and **Intimidation**, but good breeding (Credit Rating 5+) impresses her, and she will respond to well-informed religious arguments (**Theology**). In any event, she will demand scrupulously careful accounting of any Pickman Foundation funds devoted to the expedition — so much so that when

Survival pool points are lost as a result of failed Survival rolls, the Keeper has the right to demand that any expedition member with Accounting make a Stability test at a difficulty proportional to the loss (at least the first few times it happens). However, under no circumstances will Mrs. Pickman actually accompany the expedition.

To play Mrs. Pickman, purse your lips and knit your brow and speak in short, clipped sentences.

Tour and Travel

Planning for the expedition outlines its itinerary from Miskatonic: departing at

The Askripa

The loss of the Mirror of the Maiden, the deaths of many of its warriors, and the destruction of the temple in Usmavasati was a significant setback to the Askripa, the secretive cult whose headquarters was located in the village. Their leader, Baryuhanon, was near death from a bayonet wound inflicted by the officer in charge of their British attackers. Succored by the yetis he called upon *in extremis*, he endured a long convalescence and then returned to Usmavasati at the turn of the century, which had been occupied by *dalit* corpse-handlers of the Dom caste. With his yeti muscle and a few other survivors of the British attack, Baryuhanon quickly suborned the new inhabitants and set them to rebuilding the temple, meanwhile secretly indoctrinating their youth into his murderous cult. In the name of Smashan Kali, a funerary deity known as the dark mother of the cremation ground, he instituted an annual religious festival that began to attract a following among practitioners of *vamāmārga*, the “left-handed path” of Hindu tantrism, as well as visits from those seeking

to honor and remember the dead. From among the former, he recruited adherents; from among the latter, he identified victims, to be followed on their way home, robbed and murdered. After many years, the cult grew strong and powerful enough to expand outside the Siwali Hills, and Baryuhanon set his followers — who roam the land in small bands after the manner of the Thuggee of old — the task of finding the Mirror of the Maiden and the man who stole it from them.

Each band consists of at least five men and usually several more, ranging in age from late teens to their early fifties. The leader of the band is its *jemadar*; his lieutenants are the *ghatakas* or stranglers, of which there may be one or more. Each ghataka is assisted by three to six subordinates: one or two *hadharakas* (arm holders) and *pairedharakas* (leg holders) as well as one or more *darbanas* (lookouts), whose job it is to make loud noises or play music to disguise any sounds of struggle and prevent interlopers from coming upon the scene. The

darbanas and *dhārakas* are armed with gracefully curved short knives called *bichua* (−1 damage), while the *jemadar* and his *ghatakas* bear the *rumāl*, a khaki-colored kerchief used to garrote the victim (+0 strangling damage). The *jemadar* is also equipped with a sharp, heavy axe-like cleaver called a *bhuj* (+0 damage); its long haft contains a concealed vial of a knockout drug called *chai brahmi* (literally, water hyssop tea), administered by applying the liquid to a *rumāl* and squeezing it out into the victim’s mouth; this is usually done when the victim is already unconscious and the band desires to transport him or her somewhere — usually the *shmathāna*, or cremation ground, at Usmavasati, where the victims are burned alive in secret late-night ceremonies. This is an ancient practice, supplemented until the loss of the Mirror of the Maiden with an occasional beheading to allow the goddess to speak to the assembled worshippers.

If you need names, say for a captured Askripa, use these as first names:

Mythos Expeditions

The Askripa (continued)

Abhinandra, Bhaskara, Cakarpala, Damodara, Jonarajaa and Yashke, and these as surnames: Ganju, Haak, Jeetan, Kandhari, Mujoo and Nadeer.

A ghataka is capable of using his rumāl to choke a victim. Make a Weapons roll at Difficulty 8. This is reduced by 1 point for each dhā raka who has successfully grabbed a victim's limbs; each grab is a Scuffling roll against the victim's normal Hit Threshold. If the victim is unsuspecting, both the grabs and the rumāl attack receive a +2 bonus; otherwise, normal difficulties apply. The grabbers should usually make the roll straight (i.e., without any Scuffling points added), but the stranglers should generally get a +1 Weapons roll to reflect their expertise. A jemadar, as the senior and most experienced member of the band, will receive +2 to his Weapons roll, whether showing an inexperienced strangler how it's done or wielding his cleaver to silence a nosy Investigator.

To be the target of a concerted effort at strangulation is quite unsettling; remember to call for a 3-point Stability test for being an object of murder, but increase the Difficulty of the test to 5. Breaking free requires a test of Scuffling or Athletics at Difficulty 4 plus 2 for each Askripa assisting the strangler. Once a victim is at 0 Health or below, he or she must test Health

at a minimum Difficulty of 4 to avoid unconsciousness.

Assume that the band after the Mirror of the Maiden followed it out of the country when it was loaned back to Major Fetheringhowe by the Albert and Victoria Museum and has been waiting for a chance to grab it ever since. Should it be returned to the museum, or otherwise be out of the Investigators' control, the band will seize the opportunity to steal it. News of the theft may reach the Investigators before they get to Usnavasati — perhaps one of the Investigators has a radio tuned to the BBC World Service, which started in 1932. If it remains in the Investigators' possession, the Askripa shadowing the mirror will be content so long as the Investigators continue to head toward Usnavasati, which is where they want the mirror to go. If the Investigators destroy the mirror, the Askripa will collect the obsidian shards if possible and bring them back to Usnavasati. Baryuhanon's wrath toward the perpetrator, if identifiable, will be terrible. In that case, remember that an obsidian shard is scalpel sharp, and may in this case still be able to tap into the evil magic of the mirror.

A second band will have taken on the task of finding Major Fetheringhowe, whose identity was unknown to Baryuhanon until recently. Having located a former member of

Fetheringhowe's unit in an old soldier's home outside Bombay, the band infiltrated the home in the guise of cleaning men, pored over old records and even talked to the invalid veteran, found an address for Fetheringhowe, and then forged a letter inviting the old man to come visit. Their orders are to bring the old man to Usnavasati if ever they find him, but Fetheringhowe is safe so long as he never sets foot again in India.

But it is yet another one of these bands that has accosted the Investigators outside the Taj Mahal Palace hotel; Baryuhanon, having learned from connections within the civil service of the Investigators' plans to visit Usnavasati, has dispatched his men to find out more about the Investigators, keep tabs on them and report on their activities. The attempted theft may be a misstep, or an attempt to lure one of the Investigators into their clutches to be interrogated in a squalid safe house somewhere in Bombay — or it may be a cunning subterfuge intended to allow one of their number to ingratiate himself with the Investigators by coming to the rescue.

Average Askripa

Abilities: Athletics 9, Health 6, Scuffling 4, Weapons 4

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: -1 (bichua), +0 (bhuj)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Tongued By Fire

Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Through the Suez Canal (-5)	Passage to India	Bureaucracy, Cop Talk or Credit Rating 6+	2
Via Imperial Airways (-4)	Passage to India	Astronomy, Electrical Repair, Mechanical Repair or Piloting	1
Bombay—Amritsar (-4)	The Frontier Mail	Combat	2 or none
Amritsar—Kapurthala (-3)	The Road to Usmavasati	Medicine, Outdoorsman, First Aid or Stability	2
Kapurthala—Dasuya Forest (-3)	The Road to Usmavasati	Credit Rating 6+, Flattery, Outdoorsman or Riding	2
Siwali Hills (-2)	The Road to Usmavasati	Geology, Fleeing, Ride or Sense Trouble	4
Beas River Valley (-3)	The Road to Usmavasati	N/A	N/A

the end of the spring term from Arkham to board a Cunard-White Star passenger liner such as the *Georgic*, *Laconia*, *Scythia* or *Lancastria* in Boston, arriving in Liverpool after a 3–5 day crossing and a stop in the Irish tourist town of Cobh. If the adventure takes place in 1939, when Pan American begins its service to London, the members of the expedition may make an aerial crossing. This takes almost a full day aboard one of Pan American's Yankee Clipper seaplanes, along a northerly route from New York through Newfoundland and Ireland to Southampton.

From Europe, there are two main ways of getting to India, by sea or by

air. Travel by air is faster, but more expensive, and the expedition will be limited in the amount of equipment it can bring. Sea travel is more leisurely, cheaper and allows larger amounts of equipment to be shipped. The leaders of the expedition may choose to ship their equipment from the United States to India while sending their personnel by air from London; it will take about a month for that shipped equipment to arrive in Bombay from Boston or New York.

Survival Pool

At this stage, remind the players that the GUMSHOE Expeditions rules

presume that the expedition has a pool of Survival points that represents the logistical wherewithal and cohesion of the company of travelers. Its base value is equal to twice the Credit Rating of the expedition's sponsor; if this is the Pickman Foundation, the expedition begins with 12 Survival points.

PASSAGE TO INDIA

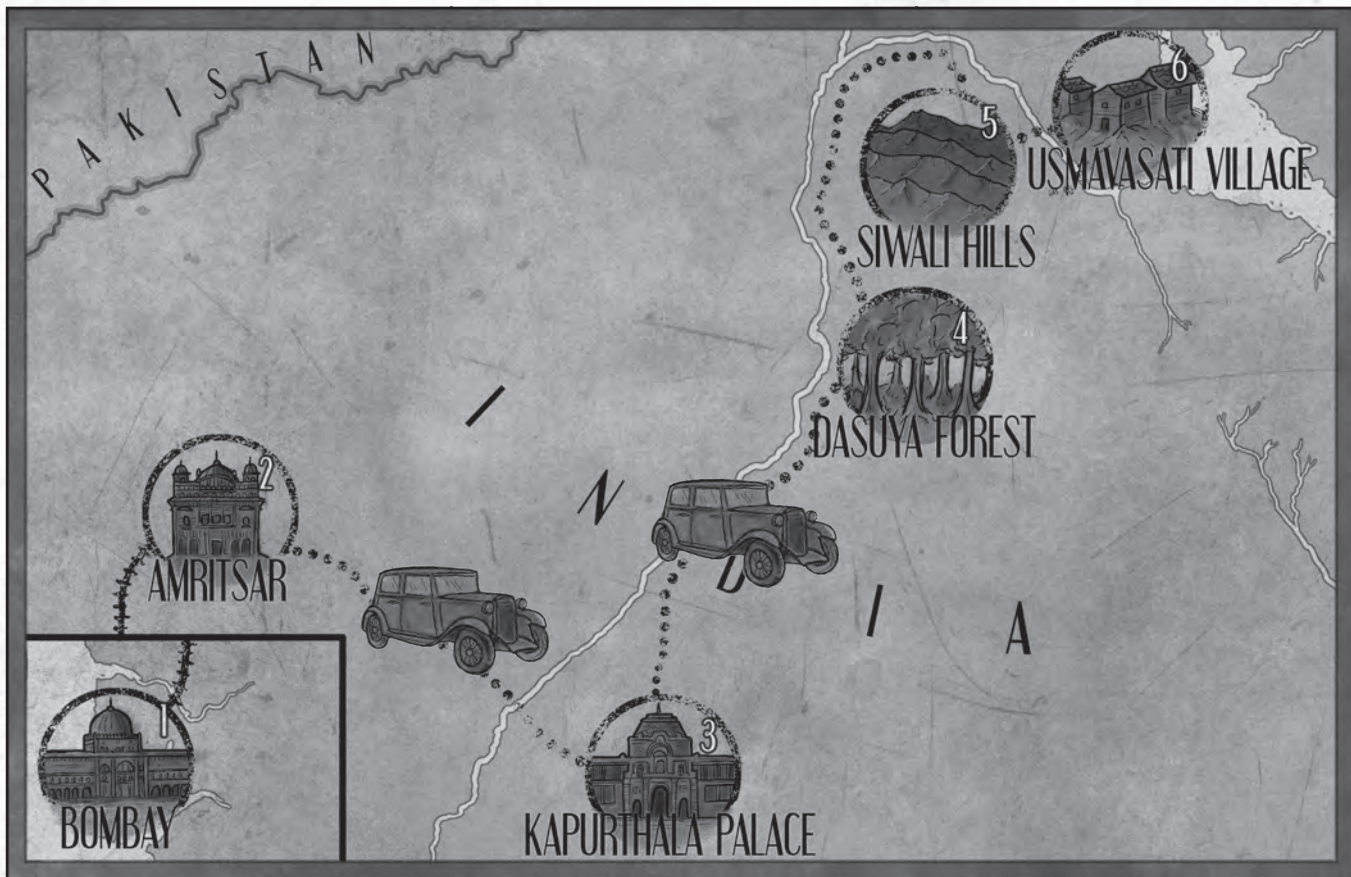
Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: A Lively Colloquium at Miskatonic U

Lead-Out: Delving Deeper

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions



Through the Suez Canal

Passengers may travel from London to Bombay by ship. The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) carries most of the maritime traffic between Great Britain and India. Travel time is about three weeks, passing Gibraltar and stopping at Marseilles at the end of the first week, cruising in the Mediterranean and making its way through the Suez Canal by the end of the second, and then leaving the Red Sea and crossing the Indian Ocean to Bombay by the end of the third. This brings the expedition to Bombay just as the monsoon season begins.

Bureaucratic cock-ups, customs and tariff difficulties, and other sorts of official attention and opprobrium throw up a 2-point Survival test (Difficulty 3). A 1-point spend of **Bureaucracy**, **Cop Talk** or Credit Rating (6+) reduces the Difficulty by 1. Outdoorsman's usual utility during expeditions doesn't apply here.

Via Imperial Airways

The expedition may decide that it is best to travel by air. From London, travelers may reach India by taking a series of flights on the official British air service

to India: across the Channel to Paris or Basel, Switzerland, by air to Athens or train to Genoa. The trip continues across the Mediterranean via flying boat to Alexandria, connecting by train to Cairo and flying across the Middle East to Basra at the end of the Persian Gulf, then hopping along the Gulf coast and into Asia via Bahrain, Sharjah, and Kandahar to Karachi. From Karachi, a plane belonging to Tata Airlines — operated by J. R. D. Tata, the Franco-Indian aviation entrepreneur — brings the expedition across the Indian Ocean to Bombay. The total time in the air will be on the order of sixty hours, with time spent at airports and fueling stations waiting for connections expanding the



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total travel time to anywhere between seven and twelve days. This brings the expedition to southern India in mid-May, in the middle of its hot, dry summer.

Mechanical difficulties, weather delays and similar hazards associated with air travel necessitate a 1-point Survival test (Difficulty 4; failing it also adds 2d6 days travel time). A 1-point spend of **Astronomy** reduces the Difficulty by 2; a Difficulty 5 **Electrical Repair**, **Mechanical Repair** or **Piloting** test reduces the Difficulty by the margin of success. Again, Outdoorsman provides no benefit here.

DELVING DEEPER

Scene Type: Pipe / Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: Passage to India

Lead-Out: The Frontier Mail

When Last We Left Our Heroes...

Before anything else can happen, the matter of the thief outside the Taj Mahal must be resolved! Use the information about the Askripa (at sidebar) to adjudicate the confrontation and subsequent events. Any member of the Askripa band captured will cop to being a thief and accept his punishment at the hands of the law, but he will avoid any mention of Usmavasati or Baryuhanon.

Hiring Bearers

It is customary for European visitors to engage a “bearer” or manservant to

attend to their needs while traveling. To quote Mark Twain: “You hire him as soon as you touch Indian soil; for no matter what your sex is, you cannot do without him. He is messenger, valet, chambermaid, table-waiter, lady’s maid, courier — he is everything. He carries a coarse linen clothes-bag and a quilt; he sleeps on the stone floor outside your chamber door, and gets his meals you do not know where nor when; you only know that he is not fed on the premises, either when you are in a hotel or when you are a guest in a private house.” The expense is minimal, and the hotel is happy to make recommendations, but paranoid Investigators may be suspicious of any attempts to foist a servant upon them. Allow such Investigators to do without, but unless at least half the party has them, the Difficulty of the Survival roll for each travel increment increases by 1. The bearers hired by the Investigators will provide flawless and loyal service, but when the expedition arrives at Amritsar, they will to a man resign their posts — some because they do not wish to travel to Usmavasati, which they will have discovered is an unclean place; others, because they have been intimidated by the Askripa to make a place for their own men near the Investigators.

The Albert and Victoria Museum

This is a handsome block-shaped Victorian home on the grounds of Bombay’s Victoria Gardens, which also houses the city’s zoo. **Sense Trouble** at Difficulty 6 may allow a visitor to notice watchers seemingly casing the premises, if the Askripa expect that the Mirror of the Maiden will eventually return here. This place allows a visitor to trade in up

to 2 points of **Library Use** on a one-for-one basis for dedicated pool points of **Anthropology**, **Archaeology**, **Architecture**, **Art History**, **Biology**, **History**, **Languages** or **Law** relevant to the Indian subcontinent.

- **Archaeology:** The recently completed excavation of the city of Taxila, near Rawalpindi along the Grand Trunk Road between Lahore and Peshawar, has found it to be the capital of the Indo-Parthian kingdom, an ancient center of learning and spirituality. Coins dating back to the 1st century BC portray its king, Gondophares. The kingdom was eventually conquered by the Kushan Empire in the 1st century AD.
- **Library Use:** Possible variations on the name “Gondophares” appear throughout the writings of early Christianity, always associated with a wise, kingly figure from the east. Armenian Christian accounts of the Indian churches founded by Thomas mention Gastaphar as one of its first converts. In Western European tales, “Gaspard, King of Persia” is one of the Three Magi who visit the infant Messiah.
- **Theology:** In the apocryphal Acts of Thomas, written in Greek, probably during the 4th century AD, the apostle is Jesus’s twin and makes two trips to India. On his first voyage, the apostle converts a northern Indian king named Gudnaphar. On his second, he founds “seven and a half churches” but is eventually martyred near Madras.
- **History:** (leverage: witnessing the Askripas’ methods) The Thuggee was a cult that worshipped an avatar of Kali called Bhowanee, goddess of vengeance. Operating in gangs, Thugs would ingratiate themselves



Mythos Expeditions

with travelers far from home, strangle them when they least expected it, and take their possessions as booty. The British carried out an organized effort to exterminate them beginning in 1830 and largely completed within the next ten to fifteen years. There hasn't been Thuggee activity in India since 1850 at the latest.

- 1-point **Library Use** spend: (leverage: witnessing the Askripas' methods) Mark Twain discusses India in his book *Following the Equator*. He spends almost two whole chapters on the Thugs, who "sacrificed anybody that came handy; but they kept the dead man's things themselves, for the god cared for nothing but the corpse." Twain notes that initiates were trained in the use of the strangling cord or choke-cloth so as to bring death swiftly and silently, and observes that the Thuggee relied on catching their victims off guard by infiltrating their company and winning their confidence, striking when their victims were at their most vulnerable — in the evening after making camp, for example. Twain notes that the Thuggee never preyed on British travelers.
- 1-point **Languages (Hindustani)** spend: (leverage: Thuggee) The name "thug" comes from the Sanskrit *thag*, or "thief"; they are also called *phansigar* or "noose users." A thuggee's favored execution ground is called a *bele*. The leader of the group was called a *jamadar*, meaning "boss." The Thuggee choke-cloth is a kerchief called a *rumāl*, which can be taken to mean "yellow (i.e., khaki) scarf." According to tales, Thuggee were forbidden to draw blood from their victims.

Additionally, the museum is a good place to put Mythos-related tomes for

the Investigators to find; these can be variations or glosses on existing tomes.

- *Sedaa Diwi*: A Persian (Farsi) version of the *Necronomicon* (*Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 105); its title roughly translates to "Voice of the Demon." Poring over it adds +3 Cthulhu Mythos rating as well as details of three spells. It may have an attached commentary in Portuguese that allows the Investigator to gain +2 Cthulhu Mythos but not the spells.
- *Call/Dismiss Azathoth* (Stability Test Difficulty 5, 4 with Art (Music) or Physics spend to compose and perform an atonal music score pleasing to the god); Cost 6 Stability; Opposition 8 when the stars are right, 24 at other times and to dismiss)
- *Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath* (Stability Test Difficulty 5; Cost 5 Stability or 10 Health; Opposition 15 to call, 30 to dismiss)
- *Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth* (Stability Test Difficulty 5; Cost 5 Stability or 10 points of other Investigative abilities; Opposition 12 to call, 36 to dismiss, -2 per point of Investigative ability sacrificed, representing moments of the person's lifeline eaten by the god)
- Mülder's 1847 German *Geheimes Mysterium von Asien* (*Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 106), the skimming of which provides 1 dedicated pool point for Biology involving identifying the signs and spoor of yeti and Lemurians and 1 dedicated pool point for Cryptography involving decrypting the forbidden syllabary of the Hidden Masters. Poring over it adds +1 Cthulhu Mythos rating.
- The 1845 English translation of von Junzt's *Nameless Cults* (*Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 109), the skimming of which provides 1 dedicated pool point of Oral History for interacting

with cultists. Poring over it adds +1 Cthulhu Mythos rating.

The Military Pensioners' Home

This mission-run charity is housed in a looming old Victorian Gothic mansion across the bay from the port of Bombay. The Askripa may be keeping an eye on this place as well. To get here, Investigators will have to travel through the slums of Bombay, and so should make a 2-point Stability test versus a Difficulty equal to their Credit Rating upon being exposed to the poverty, filth and squalor evident in the tightly packed streets. The home itself, however, is on a small ravine-cut hill somewhat inland, surrounded by a well-tended but not terribly abundant garden. The home is mainly for native veterans of the Indian Army, but some invalid British soldiers who were wounded or fell ill in India and deemed constitutionally unfit to travel back to Old Blighty, or to survive there, are also given care here. They live in a separate wing of the home, separate from the old and injured native soldiers, cared for by Anglo-Indian nurses under the supervision of an Anglican priest named James Hunter and a high-caste Indian doctor named Mahboob Goutharaju. If the Investigators don't know the name of Fetheringhowe's old comrade, **Bureaucracy** will let them identify one Corporal Peter Ledgerby, now in his late sixties, as the only soldier who served with the King's Royal Rifle Corps (Fetheringhowe's old outfit) present on the ward.

Ledgerby is wheelchair bound and feeble, with a slight palsy to his movements as he takes a cup of tea on the veranda overlooking the garden. He



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sent no letter to Fetheringhowe that he can recall, but he often has blackouts and loses days and sometimes even weeks. To play him, make rheumy old man noises as you speak, and say incomprehensible things like, “Cor bloimey, ’twas a rum fiddle and no m’slike,” and “Y’see, in vose dies, if ye took t’King’s pence, ye had to pie t’poiper wiv it — d’y’ssee?” If interviewed, he will provide a rambling account of his service to the Crown, full of names and places and occasionally dates all intertwined together in a semi-coherent narrative. Investigators can use **Oral History** to make sense of the story, whose important elements include the following:

- In 1888, a company of the British Army’s “Green Jackets” of the King’s Royal Rifle Corps were sent to arrest a well-known dacoit (bandit) leader named Baryuhanon. They traced the outlaws to a village in a wide part of the Beas River valley in the Siwali Hills. It being the dry season, they crossed the river easily, barely getting their ankles wet, and entered the village to apprehend their man just before nightfall.
- There was unexpectedly stiff resistance, and several men were felled by large stones hurled out of the darkness. After a confusion of firing, the men broke ranks and fought their way into the temple along the river, where they were surrounded by dacoits.
- There was a grotesque Hindu statue in the temple, its four arms carrying a sword, a severed head, a swaddled infant and a strange bowl. In the middle of the night, the *statue came to life* and smashed a soldier’s brains out against the wall of the temple; those nearby turned their weapons on it

and brought it down. The company commander — Fetheringhowe — came on the scene from elsewhere in the temple to complain about the racket.

- A little later, from outside there came a roaring and a rumbling, and the entire building began to shake. Fetheringhowe told the men to “Fix swords, riflemen!” and ordered a charge across the nearly dry riverbed. There were strange lights in the sky, and the sight of them did something to Ledgerby’s brain, because the next thing he knew he was in a hospital bed in Amritsar.
- **Languages (Aramaic):** (leverage: dacoit leader Baryuhanon) The name “Baryuhanon” means “Son of John” in the lingua franca of the ancient Middle East.

THE FRONTIER MAIL

Scene Type: Challenge / Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: Delving Deeper

Lead-Out: The Road to Usmavasati

From Bombay, the expedition continues via a trip by rail to the city of Amritsar, and then by road through the Princely State of Kapurthala, turning northeast to venture into the Dasuya Forest, and then east by northeast into the Siwali Hills to find Usmavasati and the temple (see the player handout map below).

Bombay-Amritsar

When the train pulls in to the station, the whole place springs to life. A loud babel of India’s different languages creates a cacophonous background din, and porters and servants in white

dhotis bearing packs and sacks and bags on their heads weave among striving middle-class babus in bowlers carrying umbrellas pushing to get on the train. Lower-class passengers clamber aboard, hanging on the sides and tops of the cars, as the stationmaster and the train conductor and the station’s uniformed guards try to keep order and get the train off on time. Aboard the train itself, first-class passage strives to provide a level of comfort equivalent to a luxury hotel suite, although the noise, grime and heat of the journey detract quite significantly from that goal. The Frontier Mail does have an air-conditioned car (cooled by blocks of ice). The other first-class passengers will tend to be British nationals, colonial administrators and military officers traveling on business, changing assignments, or en route to or from England, possibly including wives, children and servants, along with numerous bags, bedding, flasks, bundles and other travel paraphernalia.

The Investigators face a 2-point Survival test (Difficulty 4) from theft of baggage and personal goods by pilferage and burglary, unless they deal with the cause — a slippery sneak-thief on the train who has snuck into the their compartment while they sleep. To detect him, make a **Sense Trouble** test at Difficulty 7 if asleep and 5 if on guard. The thief has no connection to the Askripa. He is a teenage boy, a low-caste Shudra named Aabha Goripathi; if captured, and then befriended with an Interpersonal spend, he can become a loyal companion, or provide a 2-point pool of **Streetwise**.

Aabha Goripathi

(Abilities: Athletics 6, Fleeing 6, Scuffling 4; **Hit Threshold:** 4; **Stealth Bonus:** +1 [at night]; **Weapon:** –2



[fists]; **Armor:** -1 vs. barehanded attacks, -2 vs. grabs [greased body])

IN AMRITSAR

Amritsar is a lakeside city famous for the awe-inspiring Golden Temple of the Sikhs that rises out of the water at the end of a long pier. It is a bustling commercial center, albeit considerably smaller than Bombay. As the characters are making arrangements for the journey to Usnavasati, have them meet Bharat Sharma, a high-caste Brahmin yogi of the Gaur caste who is making his way to Usnavasati for the annual festival of Smashan Kali that has been held there since the end of the Great War. He is willing to serve as guide and interpreter for their journey. He is going there to make an offering on behalf of his son, who died in 1919. To play Sharma, put your palms together in front of your nose and speak in a kind of high-pitched lilt.

- **Archaeology:** In Hindu art, Smashan Kali is represented as a dancing four-armed goddess wearing a necklace of skulls who steps forth with her left foot and bears a sword in one of her right hands.
- **Assess Honesty:** Sharma radiates a kind of inner peace and tranquility that suggests a powerful and beneficent spirituality.
- **History:** In 1919, British troops in Amritsar under General Dyer opened fire on nonviolent protesters and killed over four hundred people, possibly as many as a thousand.
- **Occult:** Smashan Kali is worshipped by tantric yogis of the vāmamārga, or “left-handed path,” who regard the transgressive character of performing their meditative exercises on the cremation ground — associated as it



is with grief, fear of death, and low-caste status — to be a path to power.

- **Theology:** Smashan Kali is a funerary deity, the dark mother goddess of the cremation ground, where the chief mourner pays the

attendants who reside there a fee to light the funeral pyre.

- **Anthropology:** The shmachāna, or “cremation ground,” is regarded as unclean, and is typically occupied by a Dalit caste known as the Dol or Chandalla.



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- 1-point **Occult** spend: In Tantric thought, the goddess Dakshina Kali is regarded as the “highest of all realities,” the supreme primordial force, who devours even Lord Shiva (the eternal god who is without beginning or end) himself.
- 1-point **Theology** spend: The Hindu goddess Kali, the Black One, is associated with death, destruction, and time as the agent of change rather than the bearer of infinity. She is the consort of Shiva, the eternal, and is said to be his divine feminine counterpart. She dances upon the corpses of her enemies, maddened by the taste of blood. In one legend, Shiva appears in the form of a mewling infant, and Kali, hearing his cries, is calmed and begins to suckle the child.

Guards, Drivers and Bearers

Allow the player characters to exercise whatever precautions or vetting processes they desire in hiring guards, drivers and bearers for the expedition. Use the following table to help flesh out the NPCs the players hire. Eventually, all of these characters will be traveling companionably together on the road to Usmavasati; those who have not been hired by the Investigators will have taken up with them ostensibly for mutual protection as they journey through a wild region en route to the festival of Smashan Kali.

- **Anthropology:** The caste system in India plays a powerful role in shaping who associates with whom in Indian society. Each caste has a “varna status” that indicates its relative prestige: Brahmin castes are high-status priests

and spiritual guides. Just below them are the Kshatriya, descended of warriors and rulers. The Vaishyas, comprising merchants, landed farmers and craftsmen, are next. They are followed by the Shudras, or servant castes. Below them are the Dalit, once called “untouchables” and still subject to social opprobrium and isolation.

- 1-point **Anthropology** spend: A *naqalchi* is an Indian folk entertainer, a performer who specializes in imitation and pantomime. Some are musicians as well.

When the players become interested in who their fellow travelers are, a 1-point **Anthropology** or **Oral History** spend provides the “Travelers to Usmavasati” player handout (see p. 232). If some have departed or never joined the group for one reason or another, cross out their names, obviously. The handout shows by its arrangement who generally associates with whom; the different fonts are associated with the different religions the NPCs profess, and the languages they speak are indicated below their names, which are graded in size according to the relative status of the castes to which they belong. This information will be useful in attempting to ferret out the saboteur who will strike during the journey.

Meanwhile, you must decide which of those who have joined the expedition are in fact Askripa infiltrators; choose 8–12 individuals to be part of an Askripa band and assign them roles per the sidebar. Note that *everyone* who belongs to a given caste must either be an infiltrator or not be an infiltrator, because of the closeness of their association — those in the same caste and sharing the same occupation may have grown up

together, and, in any case, they certainly will know many of the same people and share the same cultural references; an infiltrator pretending to belong to a different caste is able to fool someone from a different caste, but that’s all.

- **Anthropology** will enable an Investigator to notice two or three Askripa who profess castes with different varna status associating with each other in a familiar way that violates typical norms of inter-caste formality; each additional 1-point spend will allow identification of another such atypical association.
- **Assess Honesty** will enable an Investigator to ascertain that the atmosphere in the camp is rife with anger, hostility and fear.
- **Languages (Sanskrit)** will enable an Investigator to overhear an Askripa speaking in a Prakrit (dialect) called Avanti (the literary language of thieves and rogues) to another Askripa.
- A 1-point **Streetwise** spend will enable the Investigator to identify the Askripa jemadar as someone who is more important than he’s pretending to be.

Additionally, you must choose a non-Askripa to be the saboteur. In general, the saboteur will be moved to act by a terrible confluence of fear and loyalty: fear of the ill reputation of Usmavasati and the resurgence of the Askripa, and loyalty toward someone in the expedition who is eager to get to the temple and its ceremonies. The saboteur wants to avoid the Askripa and hopes that his actions will make the expedition’s leaders turn back. If the boy thief from the Frontier Mail has joined them, he’s an ideal candidate. Similarly, the Dalit latrine attendant may wish to save wise Bharat Sharma the



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions

No.	Name	Religion	Occupation	Languages	Caste	Varna
1	Kunwar, Krishnan	Hindu	Guard	Hindustani	Agrawal	Kshatriya (2)
2	Dohre, Rahul	Muslim	Naqalchi (Jester)	Kashmiri	Bhand	Shudra (4)
3	Gautam, Pratul	Muslim	Naqalchi (Jester)	Kashmiri	Bhand	Shudra (4)
4	Prasad, Dinesh	Muslim	Naqalchi (Jester)	Kashmiri	Bhand	Shudra (4)
5	Biswas, Wasim	Hindu	Bearer/Attendant	Hindustani	Chowdary	Shudra (4)
6	Daggupati, Tarun	Hindu	Bearer/Attendant	Hindustani	Chowdary	Shudra (4)
7	Kuril, Hitish	Muslim	Camp Cook	Punjabi	Dhobi	Shudra (4)
8	Sharma, Bharat	Hindu	Yogi/Translator	English,Hindustani	Gaur	Brahmin (1)
9	Bauri, Amit Singh	Sikh	Guard	Punjabi	Jatt	Vaishya (3)
10	Jatav, Nadeem Singh	Sikh	Drover — Elephant	Punjabi	Jatt	Vaishya (3)
11	Lal, Girish	Muslim	Guard	Hindustani, Punjabi	Khattar	Kshatriya (2)
12	Bhopal, Yogesh	Muslim	Guard	English, Punjabi	Rajput	Kshatriya (2)
13	Annadi, Sandeep	Hindu	Drover — Ox Cart	Hindustani	Reddy	Vaishya (3)
14	Chandra, Umesh	Hindu	Drover — Ox Cart	Hindustani	Reddy	Vaishya (3)
15	Mandal, Ekram	Muslim	Latrine Attendant	Hindustani	Shunri	Dalit (5)
16	Bairu, Bharat	Hindu	Drover — Camel	Punjabi	Wani	Vaishya (3)
17	Darsam, Somesh	Hindu	Drover — Elephant	Punjabi	Wani	Vaishya (3)
18	Kumar, Mahesh	Hindu	Drover — Elephant	Punjabi	Wani	Vaishya (3)
19	Vuyuru, Abhinav	Hindu	Drover — Camel	Punjabi	Wani	Vaishya (3)
20	Challa, Vikas	Hindu	Bearer/Attendant	Hindustani	Yadav	Shudra (4)

Brahmin or Hitish Kuril the kindly camp cook — or even one of the Investigators who treated the young man with respect or dignity. Alternately, the three Kashmiri jesters may have decided that the language barrier they face and their altruistic piety leaves them no alternative but to take direct action on behalf of their fellow man. Or perhaps a member of one of the “martial races” (a Sikh or other Punjabi) finds the sly treachery of the Askripa to be detestable beyond words. In any case, the saboteur trusts no one and reveals himself to nobody unless forced to it. Once he does, however, his days are numbered.

- **Interrogation** can be used once per travel increment versus all the members of a given varna status (although each 1-point spend permits another use that increment). Askripa will be angry about the sabotage, while non-Askripa will be frightened.
- As a follow-up, **Assess Honesty** can reveal why a particular non-Askripa is frightened. Innocent men will be afraid of being blamed by the sahibs of the expedition; the saboteur will be afraid of something he dare not name. But the Investigator may only assess three individuals per travel increment, plus three per point spent.
- A 1-point **Reassurance** spend will cause the saboteur to confess his fear of the Askripa or whatever other motivation possessed him. A 1-point **Oral History** spend provides the saboteur’s account of what he knows about them.
- A 1-point **Evidence Collection** or **Interrogation** spend will let an Investigator rule out a particular individual as the saboteur if he is in fact innocent; if he is the saboteur or an Askripa, he will remain a suspect.

THE ROAD TO USMAVASATI

Scene Type: Challenge / Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: The Frontier Mail

Lead-Out: The Temple of Usmavasati

Amritsar-Kapurthala

Leaving Amritsar, the storied Grand Trunk Road leads from the North-West Frontier all the way to Bengal. The portion that the expedition follows winds a more or less straight course east by southeast across a grassy plain dotted with short, stunted, scattered trees. The mountains are green in the distance. Herds of goats graze skittishly in the fields, and the travelers pass turbaned farmers in loose trousers and tunics making their way into fields of corn and rice. Oxen haul carts over the roads and pull plows in the fields. The road leads to a ferry across the Beas River into the province of Kapurthala; leaving Amritsar any time before noon brings the Investigators there by nightfall, where the ferryman also keeps an inn. There, the expedition may be joined by other travelers to the festival at Usmavasati, drawn there by religious or business aims.

This day is the first real test of the Investigators’ ability to handle the conditions of traveling by road during the hot, humid Indian monsoon season, with a 2-point Survival test (Difficulty 4) representing fatigue and road-weariness, poor spirits, sores, sprains, blisters and other travel-related injuries. A 1-point spend of

Medicine or **Outdoorsman** reduces the Difficulty by 2; A Difficulty 5 **First Aid** or **Stability** test provides relief by lowering the Difficulty by the margin of success.

The next morning, the ferry brings all those who pay the fare across to the other side on a flat barge. The Grand Trunk Road continues to the city of Kapurthala, where the expedition’s course has it turn northeast toward the Dasuya Forest.

Sabotage!

Also, this morning and each subsequent morning until the culprit is identified, the Investigators discover an act of sabotage! Reduce the Survival pool by 1 or more points and describe the outcome of some obviously malicious act: food left out to spoil or otherwise polluted, travel equipment and other gear damaged or made inoperable, poisonous insects or snakes introduced to bedding or clothing (aimed at the Askripa infiltrators). Additionally, the Askripa will begin to take countermeasures. They will choose a member of the company they think likely to be the culprit, choke him unconscious, and then leave him out in the wilderness at night for the yeti, which shadows the expedition once they enter the Dasuya Forest, to savage to death. Ligation marks and traces of chai brahmi will present themselves to **Evidence Collection** and **Forensics** when the body is found. The nature of chai brahmi (an herbal concoction associated with ayurvedic medicine, brewed from a succulent, thick-leaved water plant with small white flowers, and known for its soporific effects) will reveal itself to **Chemistry**, **Medicine** or **Pharmacy**. They will do this in

Mythos Expeditions

retaliation for each act of sabotage until they get the right victim.

Kapurthala-Dasuya Forest

Kapurthala is a Princely State ruled by the Maharajah Jagatjit Singh, who acknowledges the suzerainty of the King of England but is nominally sovereign within his territory. His soldiers are fierce Jatt Sikhs who will escort the Western members of the expedition to meet the prince at his palace. The Maharajah is an active man of great energy and enthusiasm. He will entertain them lavishly with musicians, dancers and other performers as well as copious food and drink. He will insist

that they accompany him out onto the Punjab plains for an afternoon of hunting *chinkara* (Indian gazelle) with the cheetahs that he has had trained for the purpose.

A 2-point Survival test (Difficulty 4), representing “gifts,” baksheesh and other expenses necessary to reciprocate the Maharajah for his generosity, is required. The Investigators can offset the Difficulty by 2 by making a 1-point spend of **Credit Rating 6+**, **Flattery** or **Outdoorsman**; they can also impress him with a Difficulty 5 **Riding** test while hunting.

Departing Kapurthala, the expedition enters the Dasuya Forest; the ground begins to roll in ridges covered with

thick grasses, leafy bushes and scattered trees. In the distance, the Siwali Hills begin to look nearer through the hazy air. Monsoon clouds form. At night, the expedition must make camp, taking shelter from the rain in a small copse of trees with thick, strangely twisted trunks.

During the night, have the Investigators **Sense Trouble** at Difficulty 5 to notice that something is spooking the animals.

Outdoorsman: There was something out here last night, all right. These tracks look like a cross between a tiger and a gorilla. No idea what it could be.

Investigative abilities used to follow up on that observation should



Tongued By Fire

produce answers ranging from “rakshasa” to “abominable snowman” to “yeti.” A 1-point **Outdoorsman** spend to track it will allow a sighting of a white-furred ape-like creature (make a 3-point Stability test at Difficulty 5); a 2-point spend will permit an encounter with a yeti (*Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 159). Ordered by Baryuhanon to only watch the expedition, it will try to flee, but it will fight if cornered. If it overcomes its assailant, it will bring the unconscious Investigator back to the camp, and dump the body where it may be found. If the Investigators manage to capture or kill the yeti, this will make a powerful impression on one or more of the Askripa infiltrators among their traveling companions.

Siwali Hills

The road returns to the Beas River, which comes down from the hills here as a wide, shallow muddy watercourse, and bends east to follow it upstream through a wide pass that rises slowly, with steeper ridgelines ascending on either side and beyond it. The vegetation becomes much thicker. The dirt road has become muddy and is in some places overgrown. Having made slow progress, the expedition makes camp.

Sense Trouble at Difficulty 4 notices the anxiety of the animals if the previous test failed; otherwise, success is automatic (assuming the yeti problem still exists).

A sudden storm grows violent and intense, and then begins to taper off. As the expedition makes its way up through a twisting defile, a piece of overhanging

ground gives way and showers mud and dirt upon those below. Rushing water begins to fill the defile.

A 4-point Survival test (Difficulty 6), representing deaths, loss and damage from flash flooding and mudslides, ensues. If the roll fails, randomly kill off 1d6+1 NPCs; even if it succeeds, kill off one. A 1-point spend of **Geology** reduces the Difficulty by 2; a Difficulty 5 **Fleeing, Riding** or **Sense Trouble** reduces it by the margin of success.

Eventually, the expedition regroups and the survivors gather together once more, making camp in a safe and sheltered spot on a hillside. As before with the Sense Trouble test for the yeti.

Beas River Valley

The next day, the expedition ascends into the Beas River Valley, crossing the river itself at a wide ford at the top of the pass where the river forks, flowing out of the south and splitting into two streams — the westward-flowing one they’ve been following through the pass, and the northward-flowing one that leads to Usnavasati.

By the end of the day, they approach Usnavasati! From a distance, they can see a white-arched temple rising from the water’s edge; around it is a *maidan* (field) upon which have been erected funeral pyres. At their left hand, along the banks of the river as they make their way down the road toward the temple, people have set up tents and brought out slender boats to serve as biers for the shrouded, flower-bedecked corpses set upon them. The road is crowded now, and there is a festival atmosphere, with snake charmers, magicians and

fakirs alongside musicians, food sellers and purveyors of wine.

Entrance to the temple is forbidden to all but its priesthood (i.e., Askripa in ceremonial dress).

But that night, there is a mass ceremony in which the scores of boats, with male oarsmen and female gift bearers, and each carrying a corpse, glide toward the temple and pass through a waterside gate, where there is a ritual blessing. Then the oarsmen carry the boats through the temple and out into the outer precincts, where they are placed on the pyres. After another prayer, temple adherents light the pyres while others stand by chanting. As the dark night comes alive with light, the air is filled with ecstatic cries, sobs and ululations. The priesthood then withdraws into the temple for further devotions, and the celebrations continue late into the night.

- **Anthropology:** Clearly, the priesthood of this temple has grown quite wealthy from the gifts bestowed on it over the years by worshippers seeking blessings for the dead.
- **Occult:** The ones chanting by the fires must be tantric yogis. Their meditations for self-mastery are enhanced by the funerary rites.
- **Theology:** In this ceremony, the goddess of death is placated and the dead are welcomed home by the fires of the cremation ground.

If the Investigators take no action, and if they are in possession of the Mirror of the Maiden (or are identifiably responsible for its destruction) or the company of Major Fetheringhowe, the Askripa will strike that night, to carry off one or two of their number, hopefully unseen.



THE TEMPLE OF USMAVASATI

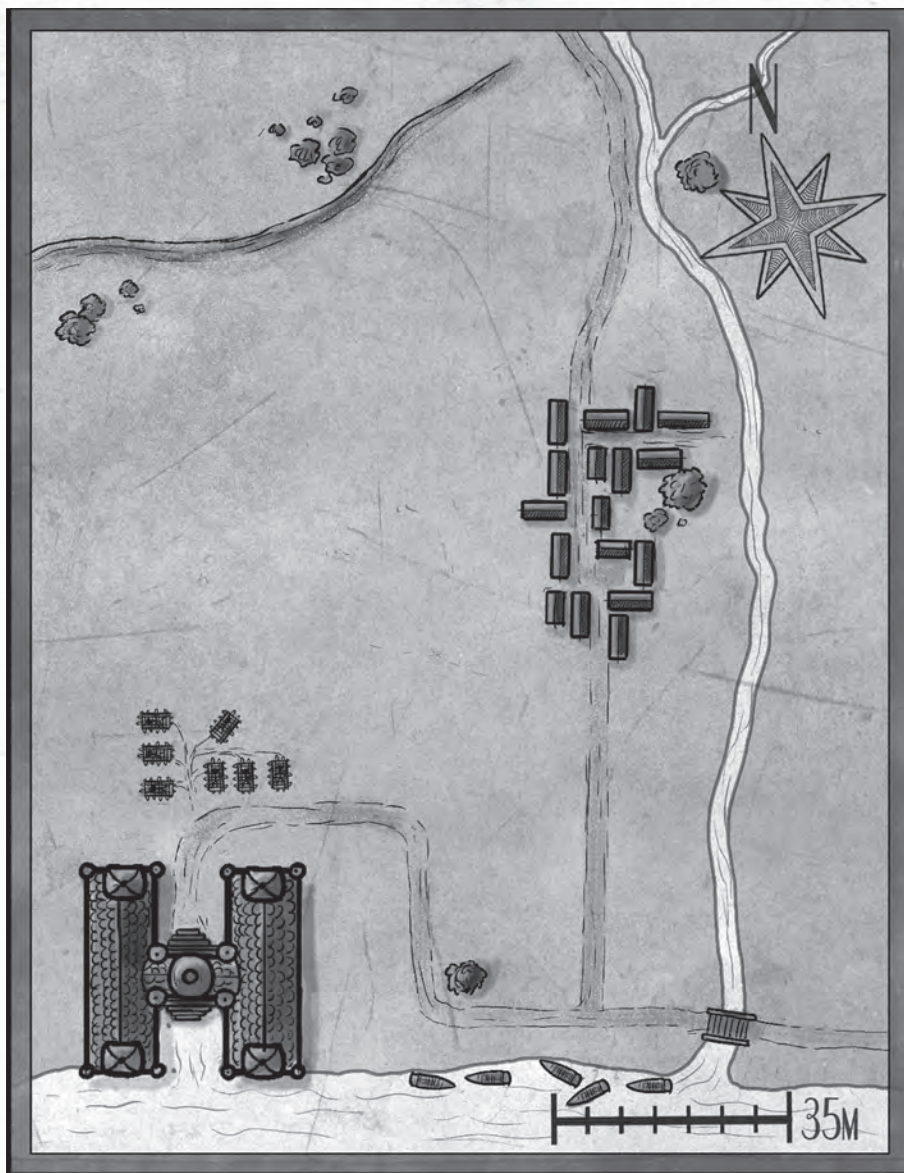
Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-In: The Road to Usmavasati

The Investigators may try to gain ingress to the temple by stealth; this could certainly work. If it fails, they will be inside the temple at any rate, even if captive. Alternately, some Investigators may have been imprisoned in the temple as a result of some aviation misadventure. Furthermore, if Baryuhanon wishes to destroy them (or, alternately, recruit them) he may invite them into the temple at his convenience, to partake in a ritual involving the Mirror of the Maiden. In any event, at some point they will get in.

It is an *H*-shaped structure of many arches and domes, with signs of carefully repaired construction. One opening of the *H* faces the river, and the water actually flows beneath a row of arches, to make a small square inlet, with the water lapping against white stone steps that lead up to another row of arches that pass into the temple interior. The cross-bar of the *H* is a long gallery with a vaulted roof, supported also by a row of decorated pillars along its length. There are mirror-image goddess statues at either end (i.e., at the mid-point where each vertical stroke joins the cross-bar of the *H*). Another set of steps on the opposite side of the gallery from the river leads into the cremation ground.

The arches leading into and out of the gallery seem to be picked out with spherical projections or carvings; closer inspection



reveals them to be carvings of wild-eyed and tongue-lolling human heads, each one different. The effect is creepy.

The art on the pillars consists of numerous images, mainly those of four-armed, three-eyed divinities, as well as

inscriptions that resemble the symbols on the bottom of the dark part of the Mirror of the Maiden. If translated, the symbols seem to be a prayer to those divinities; in other words, the spell Contact Lemurian is detailed there. Other spells may be present at the Keeper's discretion.



Secrets of the Mirror

When the severed head of a human being is placed in the Mirror of the Maiden, it opens its eyes, looks around and *screams* — test Stability at Difficulty 5 to avoid a 5-point loss. It then begins to babble; its babbling is in multiple languages, some or all of which may have been unknown to the living person. Listening to the stream of blasphemous and barely comprehensible words adds +1 Cthulhu Mythos rating the first time one is exposed to it. If one drinks the blood that pools in the bowl, one may gain additional points of Cthulhu Mythos, 1 per point of Sanity sacrificed, once per occasion. Once Sanity is reduced to 0, drinking the blood can be used to learn Mythos spells such as:

- *aakhya yeti* (Contact Yeti, *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 159)
- *ketaya vibhava Kali* (Summon/Bind Avatar of Kali; the spell is used to animate a statue of a blue-skinned, four-armed, wild-haired, skull-bedecked, shrieking female fury; treat as dark young of Shub-Niggurath, *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 129)
- or even *sadhana Dakshina Kali* (Call/Dismiss Azathoth: Stability Loss +6, minimum 5; Sanity Loss +5, minimum 3)

Drinking blood from the bowl may have other drastic effects, such as transforming the imbiber into a Lemurian (*Trail of Cthulhu*, pp. 139–40), with Sanity-shattering results. Additionally, as a deliberate ceremonial effect or as the product of reckless or ignorant use of the bowl — or of refusing to drink! — blood placed within it can be commanded to — or will on its own — coalesce to form an animated bloody slime that streams forth in great goutts out of the bowl to messily absorb those it pursues and catches; use the stats for a shoggoth if any are needed, *Trail of Cthulhu*, pp. 150–51.

The vertical strokes of the *H* comprise four separate two-floored wings, with the northwestern and southwestern wings on the river side and the northeastern and southeastern wings facing the road. The second level is accessible from stairs near the statues at each end of the central gallery. There are living spaces, storage rooms and cells for prisoners as well as a working crematorium. There is a room next to the crematorium that contains row upon row of bitumen-preserved heads; in an

alcove at one end is a covered stone urn with Aramaic writing around its edges that reads “Yuhanon Emedet’kuon” (John the Baptist).

- **Archaeology:** Much of the art style here is consistent with that of the Indo-Parthian kingdom that ruled in this region during the 1st century AD, but the pillars may be even older.
- **Architecture:** The central gallery is the original structure, and *really* old, centuries old; the wings on either

side have been constructed more recently, probably within the past fifty years.

- **Art History:** The naturalistic representation of the heads that line the arches is really quite striking.
- **Occult:** The four-eyed, three-eyed gods on the pillars resemble the Lemurians that Theosophist Madame Blavatsky described as the “third root race” in her 1888 book, *The Secret Doctrine*, which posited an ongoing process of human spiritual evolution overseen by Hidden Masters from beyond space and time.
- **Theology:** The mirror imaging of the goddess statues is interesting because of its symbolism. The statue that bears the sword in its left hand is Dakshina Kali; the one that bears it in its right is Smashana Kali — two very different avatars of the same goddess!

Meeting Baryuhanon

He is an ancient fakir, gaunt and half-naked, clad only in a dhoti. His skin is floured with gray ashes, and his unkempt hair straggles out from a loosely wrapped turban. In the middle of his chest is a horrible scar as from a stab wound. To play him, grimace and respond to inquiries and indignation by chuckling slowly, “Henh henh henh henh,” before giving some frightening answer.

Flattery: “Have you come seeking a king? Is that it? You wise men from the West, do you bring me gifts? Yes, that’s it. I am a king, from a line of kings, and I deserve your gifts. I will have them!”

Baryuhanon, Askripa Yogi

Athletics 12, Health 20, Scuffling 12

Hit Threshold: 5 (a yogi’s flexibility)

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions



Cthulhu Mythos Connections

Characters who obtain points in Cthulhu Mythos will no doubt wish to use those points in some way. Investigators may use their Mythos knowledge to make inferences based on the Hindu lore to which they are exposed.

- Smashana Kali is Shub-Niggurath, a charnel goddess, dark earth mother.
- Dakshina Kali is Azathoth, font of blind, destructive, supreme power.
- Shiva is Yog-Sothoth, lord of eternity — but no match for the destructive power of Dakshina Kali.
- But Shiva's infant form that soothes Kali with its cries may *also* be Azathoth, that blind mewling solipsist at the center of its own universe.
- Alternately (or simultaneously), the voices of the dead that speak through the Mirror of the Maiden are the

cries of the timeless infant Shiva and may be used to placate Kali in either form.

- The four-armed Lemurians may have inspired the four-armed representations of Kali and other Hindu gods and goddesses, having instructed the ancestors of the Hindus in their mysteries.
- The story of the visitation of the Magi in the Bible is a muddled account of their delivery of their Mythos secrets, as well as the Mirror of the Maiden, to Jesus at a young age. The mirror was brought back to the East by Thomas — supposedly Jesus's twin — who also brought the severed head of John the Baptist, now mummified and kept as a sacred relic.
- The ceremonies performed at the temple of Usmavasati may provide reserves of power — i.e., Stability or Magic points — for conducting Mythos rituals.

Weapon: —1 (open-handed strike)

Armor: —1 vs. hand-to-hand weapons (preternatural toughness)

Spells: Call/Dismiss Dakshina Kali, Contact Yeti, Summon/Bind Avatar of Kali

The culmination of the adventure is the Investigator's final encounter with Baryuhanon. He is tough but

not invincible, and your main goal is to provide lots of opportunities for Stability tests, with pronouncements of blasphemy uttered by severed heads speaking in tongues, divine bloody slime wreaking havoc, yeti going berserk and animated Kali statues on a rampage. There should be lots of chaos and cataclysm.

EXITS AND REWARDS

Investigators who survive their experiences in India return home with a deeper, if unsettling, understanding of religious history. In a Pulp game, keeping the Mirror of the Maiden out of the hands of the Askripa is worth a Sanity point refresh.



Served Cold

"PROFESSOR WEBB HAD BEEN ENGAGED, FORTY-EIGHT YEARS BEFORE, IN A TOUR OF GREENLAND AND ICELAND IN SEARCH OF SOME RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS WHICH HE FAILED TO UNEARTH; AND WHILST HIGH UP ON THE WEST GREENLAND COAST HAD ENCOUNTERED A SINGULAR TRIBE OR CULT OF DEGENERATE ESKIMOS WHOSE RELIGION, A CURIOUS FORM OF DEVIL-WORSHIP, CHILLED HIM WITH ITS DELIBERATE BLOODTHIRSTINESS AND REPULSIVENESS."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT,
"THE CALL OF CTHULHU"

In the years around the turn of the century, polar explorer Robert Peary mounted a number of expeditions to explore Greenland and the North Pole. One of his expeditions, from 1891–1895, saw his party excavate a trio of meteorites from the Greenland ice and bring six Inuit natives back to New York. The natives were given to the American Museum of Natural History for study, though nearly all died of tuberculosis in short order. Peary (or, rather, his wife) sold the meteorites to pay his bills and fund future expeditions. Over the course of his expeditions, Peary also left at least two children in Greenland, fathered with an Inuit woman.

Over the decades since the last of Peary's expeditions, the Aganik, the Inuit tribe that was the strongest of Peary's allies, fell on hard times. To some, the difficulties seemed

supernatural for their depth and duration. Season after season and year after year, hunts were poor, and ill fortune was a plague. Disease befell the healthy, animals went lame and elders passed before their time. The tribe eventually came to the determination that their dealings with Peary, and especially the explorer's looting of the meteorites, had been the misfortune's genesis.

In the meantime, the various members of Peary's expedition had returned home. Some — Peary himself, for example — joined or led other Arctic expeditions. Others took up more prosaic lives, most on America's eastern seaboard. Some are still alive in 193—, while others have died from natural or other causes.

THE HOOK

Two former members of Peary's expeditions have died in eerily similar fashion. One of them, Langdon Gibson, had been a long-time contact and consultant of either the Armitage Inquiry group or the staff at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, depending on which one the Investigators are affiliated with. At whichever of those institutions, a single individual with a grasp of the idea that certain inquiries are best conducted by certain kinds of people gathers the Investigators.

THE SPINE

In New England, **Two Gruesome Deaths** have occurred. Frederick Cook,

the Peary expedition's surgeon, was slain a few months ago in his hospital office in Danbury, Connecticut. Just last week, Langdon Gibson, listed on the expedition's roster as a "marksman and ornithologist," was slain on his acreage in the Catskills. Physical and academic clues gathered from death scenes suggest that there is, indeed, a connection between Cook's and Gibson's deaths and their participation in Peary's 1891–1895 expedition. Using the expedition's **Roster**, they track down other survivors in New York and Baltimore, which fills in more details, but gives little clue as to *why* these men died. **Transit to Greenland** is in order; Investigators who are slow to leap to action are personal witnesses to a third **Tupilaq Attack** that confirms both the pattern and the peril to those from the roster that still survive.

Landing at **Red Cliff**, the Greenland base from which Peary mounted his journeys, the Investigators learn of the Aganik, the slow decline that befell them and their intentions in migrating northward this past summer. They learn about tupilaq (if they haven't already), and learn how they may be turned from their missions of death.

As no one has heard from the Aganik for months, the Investigators must mount an expedition across Greenland's frozen ice pack. The perils and dangers of a sledge-trek across the Arctic wastes are likely compounded by being **Targeted**

Served Cold

by **Tupilaq, The Blizzard to End All Blizzards** and the knowledge that there is almost certainly nothing simple or easy at the end of their trek.

At the end of the trail, at the top of the figurative world and the literal crest of a fjord's plunging cliffs, the Investigators must confront **The Niinganik** — and perhaps the Old One they worship — in order to secure both their own lives as well as those of the members of the Peary expedition who yet live.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

Just last year, to forestall their extinction, the Aganik undertook a journey to the very north of Greenland. There, an outcast Inuit tribe, the Niinganik, were known to dwell. Shunned by other Inuit for their allegiance to the Old One Ithaqua, they were also known to have success in propitiating their patron for succor in the face of difficulty. As an offering to the Niinganik, the Aganik dislodged a chunk of iron to bring with them, from a meteorite that Peary hadn't looted.

Although the Aganik left some dead behind them on their long journey, they finally arrived in the Niinganik lands to make their case. Ithaqua, to whom meteoric iron is precious for its extra-earthly origin, directed his followers to slay the Aganik for having allowed any of it to be taken beyond the island's borders. But further, it was the god's will that vengeance be wreaked against Peary's expedition — those who still lived, in any case.

In Inuit culture, tupilaq are avenging monsters created by shamans from the bodies of animals and children, given life through ritual and released into the sea to

find and slay specific enemies. Knowing from the Aganik the full roster of the Peary expedition, the Niinganik released tupilaq into the Arctic Ocean to find and slay the thieves who had looted the Greenlandic space-iron those decades ago.

TWO GRUESOME DEATHS

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Outs: The Catskills of New York: Langdon Gibson; Danbury, CT: Frederick Cook; The Roster

By whatever means have been established in your campaign, or through an assortment of messenger-delivered letters, the Investigators are assembled for an audience with either Dr. Armitage of the Miskatonic Inquiry or Thomas Abbot, a curator of the American Natural History Museum in New York. Abbot's stats are given below.

Briefing

When the Investigators arrive, Armitage or Abbot collects them on the route to some other part of the campus or museum. He's running late for an important meeting, and will brief them as they walk. The salient points are these:

- Langdon Gibson, a friend of the establishment, died six days ago, quite violently, on his acreage in the Catskills. It was an attack of some kind, quite bloody, as reported secondhand from local officials.
- He knows of Gibson's death because he was in New York on other business but planned to visit him about a relatively trivial administrative matter.

- Another distant friend of the establishment, Frederick Cook, also died gruesomely, in Danbury, Connecticut, some months ago. Cook died in his medical office, he understands.
- It occurred to him that Gibson and Cook had a common link, in that both been involved in the Arctic expeditions of the famous explorer Robert Peary.
- Is this a coincidence? Hopefully. Even so, would the Investigators look into the deaths to satisfy him that no strange connection exists?
- He suggests that the Investigators make all haste to Gibson's land. He requested that the local authorities leave the death scene in place for the time being, but any clues that might remain will be rapidly failing, since Gibson died outdoors and it hasn't been cold enough this past week to preserve the body in any meaningful way.

Additional questions are answered forthrightly, although he doesn't know much more than is described above.

Details of location are conveyed, very modest logistical or financial assistance (because "After all, it's probably nothing") is given if requested, and the Investigators are off.

Details of Place

Throw in transit details as the Investigators walk with Armitage or Abbot. The goal of the "walking briefing" is to add a bit more interest than the traditional "sit down in the study" briefing, as well as to foreshadow some thematic elements for dramatic effect. Just a few ideas:

- A passerby in a hurry sidesteps to avoid the party and accidentally kicks

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over a floor-standing ashtray. Sand, ash and butts scatter across the floor or sidewalk.

- The group passes a plaque that lists donors, which seems nice, until it suddenly occurs to someone from the dates inscribed that all of these people are dead.
- There's a crisp wind blowing. It dries the eyes and makes Armitage's scarf flap animatedly. (Campus only.)
- The party passes a life-size display of a Native American camp, its residents strangely dead eyed. (Museum only.)

Thomas Abbot



Abilities: Anthropology 2, Athletics 3, Cthulhu Mythos 1, Health 8, Library Use 2, Reassurance 1, Sense Trouble 4, Stability 7

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: -2 (fists)

Notes: Begins sentences with bold, negative pronouncements that alarm at first but usually resolve differently (“Don’t!... think that we have no resources we could deploy on your

behalf.”). Makes strange connections to current events or his own past (“I saw a doctor once who had a pocket watch just like yours. He had a club foot. You haven’t, have you? Got a club foot, I mean?”). Drums on tables, the arms of chairs and other furniture.

THE ROSTER

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: Two Gruesome Deaths; The Catskills of New York: Langdon Gibson; Danbury, CT: Frederick Cook

Lead-Outs: New York, NY: Matthew Henson; Baltimore, MD: Josephine Peary

Sooner or later, the Investigators will become curious about the connection between Gibson and Cook. Since Robert Peary’s expeditions were a matter of national news, library research almost anywhere is a fruitful avenue of investigation.

The following details can be teased out of various written accounts — both books and newspapers — at Miskatonic University, the Museum of Natural History, any number of New York libraries and newspaper offices or even by interviewing the financial backers of Peary’s 1891–1895 expedition, who live in New York.

(core clue) **Library Use:** Comparing the rosters of the various Peary expeditions reveals that the link between Gibson and Cook appears to be the 1891–1895 expedition. (Give the party the “Peary Expedition Roster” handout.)

- The goal of the 1891–1895 expedition was to determine the northern extent of Greenland — was it an island or a vast Arctic promontory?

Travel Around New England

Several scenes of investigation in New England are geographically separated across several different states, which may give players hesitation as they proceed. Do your best to downplay the logistics involved in a trip to (say) Baltimore to interview the window Peary. After all, travel to another city can be dispensed as quickly as travel to the next room: “You board the train and arrive in Maryland some hours later. After lunch, you find yourselves standing before a modest house in a workman’s neighborhood. The sign on the gate says *Peary*.”

In a book about expeditions, there’s a tangible benefit to getting players used to the idea that they ought to just get up and go to faraway places. Don’t put any barriers you don’t need to in front of that idea, and if you can do anything to proactively rip those barriers down, do it.

- The expedition returned with six Inuit natives and three meteorites. The natives were given to the Museum of Natural History for study and soon died. The meteorites were sold to the museum by Peary’s wife; one of them weighs on the order of thirty tons and was excavated by hydraulic jacks and loaded onto a ship with steel rails.
- 1-point **Library Use** spend: In a minor travel narrative as told to a

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Roster of the Second Robert Peary Expedition to Greenland, 1891–1895

Robert Edwin Peary

*Josephine Diebitsch Peary,
his wife and the expedition's dietician*

Frederick A. Cook, surgeon

Eivind Astrup, a Norwegian

John M. Verhoeff, mineralogist and meteorologist

Langdon Gibson, marksman and ornithologist

Matthew Henson, a negro

newspaper reporter by John Verhoeff, Verhoeff intimates that both Peary and his “first man,” Matthew Henson, fathered children in Greenland, and that the natives were rather upset about the removal of the meteorites. “They hadn’t helped Peary find them in order to see them looted.”

- Robert Peary died of natural causes in 1920, in Washington, DC. He worked for the navy and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.
- John Verhoeff died of natural causes in 1924.
- (core clue) **Library Use:** (in New York) Matthew Henson lives in New York and works at the US Custom House there.
- (core clue) **Bureaucracy or Cop Talk:** (at any substantial naval base on the Eastern Seaboard) Josephine Peary lives in Baltimore.
- No details can be found about the present whereabouts — whether living or dead — of Eivind Astrup.

Keeper's Reference to Members of the Peary Expedition

This sidebar summarizes the fates or current whereabouts of the Peary expedition members, along with either the clues that might lead to them or the scenes in which their current situations are detailed.

The fates of some members the Peary expedition have been slightly altered from the tiresome historical record, in the name of drama.

Robert Peary: Died of natural causes in 1920, and buried in Washington, DC.

Josephine Peary: Still living, in Baltimore. See “Baltimore, MD: Josephine Peary.”

Frederick Cook: Recently deceased, slain by a tupilaq. See “Danbury, CT: Frederick Cook.”

Eivind Astrup: Returned to Norway since the Peary expeditions and completely impossible to track down. Slain by a tupilaq there some months ago — not that this can be discovered by any earthly means.

John Verhoeff: Died of natural causes in 1924, in New York City.

Langdon Gibson: Recently deceased, slain by a tupilaq. See “The Catskills of New York: Langdon Gibson.”

Matthew Henson: Still living, having worked for nearly thirty years at the Custom House in New York. See “New York, NY: Matthew Henson.”

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THE CATSKILLS OF NEW YORK: LANGDON GIBSON

Scene Type: Pipe

Lead-In: Two Gruesome Deaths

Lead-Out: The Roster

Langdon Gibson was an outdoorsman in the truest sense, finding satisfaction in hunting, fishing, hiking, travel and exploration since his boyhood. He lived alone on a substantial acreage in the Catskills, from which he traveled frequently to pursue and discuss his interests with a broad network of contacts.

While hunting on his land, just six days ago (as the scenario is introduced to the Investigators), he was attacked and gruesomely killed by the tupilaq dispatched to slay him for his participation in the Peary expedition. As these creatures do, the tupilaq collapsed into its constituent pieces on completing its grisly work.

Sheriff Sam Ruddy

Armitage or Abbot sends the Investigators to the site of Gibson's death by way of a local sheriff named Sam Ruddy (statistics below). They meet him at his offices at a small Catskills crossroads, where they all mount horses to make the sixty-minute ride to the murder scene on Gibson's acreage.

Ruddy is laconic, but, from him, the Investigators can learn the following with **Cop Talk**, **Flattery**, **Oral History** or **Reassurance**:

- Gibson's body (what's left of it) was discovered by a neighbor returning a borrowed tool. The neighbor lives a mile and a half distant from Gibson's cabin, but that's common, here.
- Gibson was an outdoorsman, well liked, who survived his wife and whose children are scattered.
- Ruddy is pretty well convinced that the killing is a bear attack. If pressed, Ruddy admits that the pattern doesn't fit particularly well, given Gibson's skill as an outdoorsman and the drastic violence done to the body. At the same time, Ruddy challenges the Investigators to suggest a more likely explanation.
- Nothing like this has happened in recent memory in the area.

Sam Ruddy



Abilities: Assess Honesty 1, Athletics 8, Cop Talk 1, Firearms 4, Health 9, Outdoorsman 2, Preparedness 8, Sense Trouble 1, Stability 12

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (Winchester rifle)

Notes: Rarely speaks more than five words consecutively. Compares the Investigators to specific animals based on their behavior ("Nervous badger, aren't you?"). Squints.

The Scene of the Attack

The scene of Gibson's death is a clearing in the forest that's unremarkable save for the meaty gore and gristle strewn through the area.

The smell is the first the thing Investigators notice, a few moments before they achieve the clearing. Their horses don't have much interest in approaching the scene, although can be made to if the Investigators wish.

On their arrival, obvious first impressions suggest to the Investigators that Gibson's body was violently dismembered. The sheer damage done to what was once a living human being forces a 3-point Stability test.

As the Investigators probe the scene, they can learn the following:

- **Forensics:** Gibson did, in fact, die about six days ago, plus however long it took the Investigators to get here. His remains are scattered and maggot ridden. His gear — appropriate for a day trip in the brush — is likewise scattered.
- **Evidence Collection or Forensics:** Gibson was ripped limb from limb, his extremities and viscera scattered as far as thirty feet from where it appears that he was first wounded.
- **Evidence Collection, Forensics or Medicine:** There's evidence that

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many of Gibson's body parts were bitten or chewed. It's impossible to tell whether this was part of the attack that killed him, or the work of scavengers in the past week.

- **Simple search** to find, **Evidence Collection** or **Forensics** to place the shot correctly in time at about a week ago: Gibson took at least one shot at something, from a bullet embedded in a tree trunk.
- **Outdoorsman**: One of Gibson's hands — well chewed — is found in the woods nearly a hundred feet from the site. It seems clear that this was the work of a forest scavenger.
- **Medicine** or a 1-point **Forensics** spend: One connected lump of viscera — this completely untouched by scavengers — appear to be the internal organs of a human infant. This discovery, once understood, is worth a 4-point Stability test.
- **Evidence Collection** or **Forensics** to find, **Biology** to identify : Certain remains in the clearing appear to comprise seal blubber and the ground-down teeth of an Arctic musk ox. These, too, are untouched by scavengers.
- **Outdoorsman**: (a two-hour investment of time spent painstakingly policing the area around the scene in expanding circles) A trail of broken branches and disturbed undergrowth begins at a river a quarter mile from the scene and leads to it. Something at least the size of a man, which traveled on two feet, emerged from the river and made its way to the clearing. There's no evidence that it ever left the clearing.

For your benefit as Keeper, seven days ago, the tupilaq emerged from the river and dragged itself, dripping, toward where Gibson was hiking through the

woods. Gibson heard it coming, called out (assuming that it was a lost hiker), shot when he saw what it was and fought as hard as he could but was no match for the thing's physical power. After ripping Gibson limb from limb, having performed its duty, the avenging creature collapsed into its component parts (the blubber, teeth, infant organs and various other meaty portions impossible to distinguish from Gibson's remains, save perhaps by noting that the forest scavengers appear to be ignoring the unnatural remains of the tupilaq while having no such compunctions about feasting on Gibson's body parts).

Ruddy leads the Investigators back out of the brush whenever they are ready to go. It's even more difficult to engage him in conversation on the way back.

DANBURY, CT: FREDERICK COOK

Scene Type: Pipe

Lead-In: Two Gruesome Deaths

Lead-Out: The Roster

Frederick A. Cook, surgeon of the Peary expedition, left the exploration business after his return to New England. He hung a shingle in Danbury, Connecticut, and practiced family medicine as a lifelong bachelor, his career successful enough.

With privileges at Danbury Hospital, he was attacked and killed by the tupilaq sent after him as he worked late in the night in his office at the hospital. The creature burst in through his window, demolished his body and disintegrated.

All clues in Danbury, sadly, have run cold by the time the Investigators arrive. Obvious routes of inquiry are the local police department and the hospital where Cook's body was found.

The Local Authorities

The local police investigator, Detective Alvin Humbert, informs any Investigator with **Cop Talk** that Frederick Cook's body was profoundly butchered, its remains scattered all over his hospital office, the entire place covered in blood and gore. Investigators with **Assess Honesty** or **Psychoanalysis** can see from Humbert's demeanor as he discusses the crime that the scene itself left an imprint on his psyche — and he an (apparently) veteran police detective.

Humbert answers questions about the specifics of the attack vaguely so as to avoid calling them back to mind. His written records are similarly vague; in point of fact, he did not investigate the scene as thoroughly as he should have because he found it so disturbing. The best that can be gotten out of him (and this only with a **Flattery**, **Interrogation** or **Intimidation** spend) is the supposition that multiple weapons were used in the attack — one blunt and another sharp. Neither was found at or near the scene.

- Facts less disturbing, available via **Cop Talk**, are as follows:
- Humbert's supposition that the broken office window was the attacker's means of ingress.
- Nothing was stolen, either from Cook's person or his office.

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- Cook had no known enemies. To the contrary, he was respected and well-liked.

As no further attacks have transpired, Humbert has moved on to other concerns. He suspects that a psychotic vagrant attacked Cook for no reason other than his own unbalanced psyche.

If Investigators who've been to the scene of Gibson's death inquire about infant viscera or the remains of Arctic wildlife, Humbert turns green and shakes his head mutely.

Detective Alvin Humbert

Abilities: Assess Honesty 1, Bureaucracy 1, Cop Talk 1, Firearms 3, Fleeing 4, Health 9, Interrogation 1, Stability 6

Weapon: —2 (fists)

Notes: Ends sentences with "... by gum." Wears a beard. Limps (if asked about the limp, mutters that it's "not important." If the Investigators pursue and make a spend, it turns out to have been the result of an embarrassing injury sustained at the police academy).

At the Hospital

The hospital administrator, Jerome Stackhouse, would like to forget the entire bloody incident, and so Cook's office at the hospital has been thoroughly cleaned and reassigned. Neither its new occupant nor the staff of the hospital recall or found any physical clues past recalling that Cook was terribly butchered and no one was caught or convicted.

Jerome Stackhouse

Abilities: Bureaucracy 2, Health 8, Stability 8

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapon: —2 (fists)

Notes: Shakes his head preemptively when talking to the Investigators, even if the answer to the question or line of inquiry will ultimately be yes. Absentmindedly picks things up and throws them away (lint, paperwork, deficient bandages) while in the hospital in the midst of other conversations. Quotes scripture.

New York, NY: Matthew Henson

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: The Roster

Lead-Out: Transit to Greenland

Matthew Henson met Robert Peary in Washington, DC, in 1887. Henson, who had experience as a sailor, was recruited by Peary to join his expedition du jour, and for the next twenty years, he served as Peary's "first man" on six voyages that were in the field for a total of eighteen years. Henson was skilled as a navigator and craftsman, learned to speak Inuit fluently, and ultimately wrote memoirs of the various expeditions.

For the past nearly thirty years, Henson has worked at the US Custom House in New York. After his name is discovered on the expedition roster, it is relatively easy to find him there, and he accepts visitors or appointments to discuss Peary's expeditions with an easy interest. Henson is happy to talk to the Investigators in his corner of the large customs storeroom where he keeps papers and inspects goods, or (even better) at a local bar — the Crap Shoot Inn — where he is a fixture in the evenings. If criticized, though, or

disrespected, Henson becomes irritated and cuts any interview short. He has better things to do than spend his time with such folk. To resume a productive interview after having offended Henson requires a 1-point **Reassurance** spend.

About the Expedition

Flattery, Reassurance or **Credit** Rating 4+ are sufficient to elicit from Henson a near infinitude of stories of Arctic exploration, although Henson does not come across as a blowhard or one who is easily manipulated.

The rough outline he gives of the 1891–1895 expedition is as follows:

- The expedition's goal was to determine whether or not Greenland was part of a single landmass extending to the North Pole.
- Henson had no particularly strong opinions for or against the other members of the expedition, although he doubts it would have been his decision to bring his wife. (Mrs. Peary didn't want to be away from her husband for four years, he says.)
- (core clue) Mr. Peary was injured aboard the ship on the way to Greenland, and so the expedition wound up spending six months at a camp they called Red Cliff after their arrival.
- From May to August, Peary and Henson — along with Gibson, Cook and Eivind Astrup — made the long, round-trip trek of more than twelve hundred miles that established that Greenland was an island.
- Peary did not return immediately to New York after that trek. Rather, an Inuit hired later told Perry of four meteorites — the "Woman," "Dog," "Tent," and "Man" — known to the

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tribes of the area. Peary looted the two-and-a-half-ton Woman and half-ton Dog near Cape York, but the Tent, estimated at one hundred tons (though actually just over thirty), couldn't be budged. On a return trip in 1895, using hydraulic jacks and steel rails, Peary managed to get it onto a ship. It came to be known as the Cape York meteorite, and is still thought to be the largest in the world. Peary's wife sold it to the Museum of Natural History for \$40,000. (The Man was never discovered.)

- If asked, Henson confirms that the expedition also brought six Inuit back from the expedition. He hasn't thought about them in some time, and doesn't know what happened to them.

Henson notes — it seems to be a matter of some pride for him, as well — that when on expedition, Peary built igloos in the Inuit fashion and wore Inuit garb. Further, he pioneered the “Peary system” of establishing supply caches along his expected routes and hiring Inuit to man and stock them, rather than attempting to haul by sledge all of the gear and supplies needed to make the long Arctic treks.

About the Killings

If told about the deaths of Cook and Gibson, Henson is incredulous, then troubled, especially if the Investigators convey the gory details. He forces the Investigators to speak the full implications of anything they insinuate, not because he can't see the connections, but because he wants them to say it out loud.

Henson spent too much time among the Inuit to be ignorant of their spiritualism, but he also doesn't have an encyclopedic memory, nor did he learn any specifics

of Inuit ritual. It takes a fair bit of talking in a circle with the Investigators, and they must be willing to spill what they learned at Gibson's crime scene, but one or more Investigators who collectively use **Assess Honesty**, **Flattery** and **Reassurance** (or make a 1-point spend in any of those) can tease these facts from Henson:

- Legends say that Inuit shamans could build avenging creatures to kill their enemies. (Henson does not know the word “tupilaq,” though.)
- Henson thinks that “built” means that they were assembled from organic material. Animal parts. This would be typical of nearly all Inuit tools, clothing and religious artifacts, in any case. Henson doesn't leap to the organs of infants himself, but he won't rule out the possibility that the organs of infants had to be, or could be, a part of the ritual to create one of these creatures.
- Henson emphasizes that Inuit communities are very close-knit — more like extended families than small towns. He explains that the Inuit put great stock in the power of truth telling and confession. He recalls a story where one of the avenging creatures was robbed of its power because its creator simply admitted, before his community, to having created the creature.

If the Investigators seem keen to learn more, Henson has only one piece of advice for them: they should go talk to Inuit elders in Greenland. As an explorer (even thirty years removed) the idea to simply travel to the source is natural to him, as are deep suspicions about the seriousness of anyone who wants to know something and *isn't* willing to take a trip.

About His Own Safety

Even if the Investigators don't suggest it, the longer Henson talks to them, the more unsettled he becomes at the obvious implication that those on the roster — himself included — have been marked for death. (Although it doesn't occur to him that Josephine Peary might be in danger. She wasn't *really* part of the expedition, to his mind. But he admits that the architect of whatever's happening might or might not make that distinction.)

Henson can't think of any specific enemies that the expedition made, and certainly not any that would have been suddenly moved to action these decades later, for any reason he can think of.

Henson's sympathetic to the idea that Peary, or others in his various parties, might have made accidental enemies. He's aware that Peary fathered children among the Inuit (and **Assess Honesty** can learn that Henson did, too), and supposes that an unwanted Greenlandic bastard might harbor bitterness against a departed father.

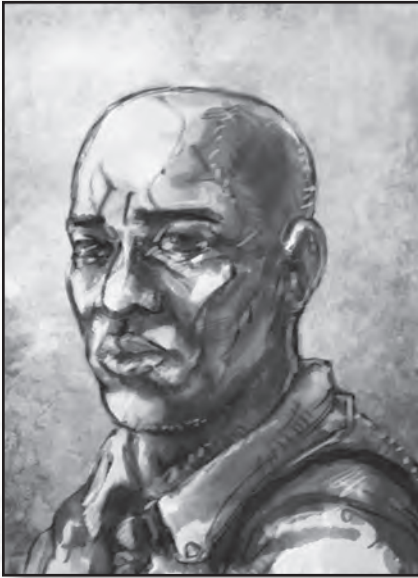
All that said, without more clear information, Henson isn't sure what action he might take. He'll lock his doors, sure, but what are his other options?

If the Investigators suggest that Henson ought to come along with them to Greenland, he's taken aback. He's in his late fifties, after all. But an Investigator who's diligent, who points out Henson's own apparent bias toward travel and action, and who makes a 1-point **Flattery**, **Reassurance** or **Outdoorsman** spend, is able to convince him. He'll be ready to depart in the morning, he says.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

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Matthew Henson



Abilities: Anthropology 1, Athletics 12, Bargain 1, Bureaucracy 1, Craft 2 (Sewing, Woodworking), Driving (Sledges) 8, First Aid 4, Geology 1, Health 12, Languages 2 (Inuit, Norwegian), Mechanical Repair 4, Outdoorsman 3, Scuffling 4, Bargain 1, Bureaucracy 1, Streetwise 2, Stability 7, Streetwise 2

Alertness Modifier: +2

Weapon: -2 (fists)

Notes: Laughs easily. Asks rhetorical questions to make his point. Moves like a much younger man.

BALTIMORE, MD: JOSEPHINE PEARY

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: The Roster

Lead-Out: Transit to Greenland

Josephine Peary was widowed many years ago, and has become comfortable in a completely prosaic life living on a navy survivor's pension. Unfortunately for the Investigators, she has almost nothing of use to tell them.

Peary is sad to hear that Gibson and Cook are dead, but hasn't seen either in "forever." She cuts the Investigators off if they delve into gory details, and asks them to leave her house if they persist.

She's glad to hear that Henson is doing well, and tells them a self-congratulatory tale about how her late husband insisted that all members of the expedition should be entitled to choose their birthday meal while on expedition, and that Henson — a negro, don't you know — had never before had such kindness shown to him as the observance of his birthday.

The widow can corroborate many of the details of Henson's account of the 1891–1895 expedition, although she remained aboard the expedition's ship and at Red Cliff for the duration rather than traveling inland by sledge at any point.

Peary is ignorant of Inuit spiritual observance. She found the Greenlandic natives an unfortunate group in general, cut off — as they are — from the worthwhile societies of the world.

Other than by directly threatening her themselves, the Investigators can't convince Peary that she might be in any danger. "I haven't been involved in all that in quite some time, young man," she insists, impervious.

Investigating Tupilaq

If the Investigators pursue lines of academic inquiry about the killings, and bring some combination of the physical clues they've discovered and Matthew Henson's knowledge to bear at, say, a university with a deep program in native cultures, they can probably get a professor somewhere to say the word "tupilaq."

Even so, details are scant, and the Investigators can't learn much more than what Henson can tell them. What they can learn is that enterprising Inuit have started, in recent years, to crafting likenesses of tupilaq in ivory in order to satisfy the curiosity of explorers and academics. Perhaps the university even has one of these carvings.

There is no particular benefit in examining or having an ivory tupilaq carving, as these are representations only.

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TUPILAQ ATTACK

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

Lead-Ins: New York, NY: Matthew Henson; Baltimore, MD: Josephine Peary

Lead-Out: Transit to Greenland

The threat to the lives of those members of the Peary expedition who are still alive is the primary motivator for the Investigators to carry their mission to its full and final end. To the extent that that danger becomes and remains real and present, their motivation will remain high.

The tupilaq attack described by this scene is your most effective motivational tool, but must be timed right and handled well, because to add a second attack if the first doesn't prove motivational may well suggest that the Investigators' best course is to barricade the survivors and wait, or, worse, that enough of the expedition are now dead that there's no point in trying to safeguard the rest. (Although, you may point out that the Investigators have no idea how to find — and thus, how to protect — the Norwegian Mr. Astrup, whom they can't know is already dead.)

Staging the Attack

In this scene, a tupilaq emerges from some body of water, stalks either Matthew Henson or Josephine Peary, and attacks them.

You have broad latitude in the timing and staging of the attack. No option that motivates the Investigators to continue at speed is wrong. Here are some ideas:

- The tupilaq attacks Josephine Peary in broad daylight, crashing through

her drawing room window while she serves the Investigators tea.

- The tupilaq comes out of nowhere on the streets of New York, as the Investigators are walking with Matthew Perry from his office at the

Custom House to the Crap Shoot Inn, where they'll talk more.

- The tupilaq comes up over the gunwales of the ship that the Investigators and Henson are taking to Greenland.



Tupilaq: Avenging Constructs

Tupilaq are created in secret by Inuit shamans, crafted from organic remains of creatures native to the Arctic and from certain viscera taken from human infants, and given life through rituals and chants. They are quickened by immersion in the ocean, through which they travel to the one person that their creator has charged them to dispatch. A tupilaq can be destroyed — reduced to its component parts — if its creator confesses to its creation before the others of his community.

In appearance, a tupilaq is a ropy agglomeration of flesh, bone and teeth, often (but not always) of humanoid shape.

Sizes vary, from that of a human child to that of a polar bear, this size bearing no relation to the magnitude of the components from which it was crafted. Where a tupilaq has digits, they can grasp and pull with inhuman force. Where its extremities are less dexterous, it wraps them around its target to break bones and backs. Teeth and bones may be embedded anywhere, as easily shredding victims' flesh from

what might be loosely described as the palm of a hand or a calf as from a mouth.

Tupilaq move with deliberation, at any speed up to what a sprinting human could make.

When slain or its target dispatched, a tupilaq disintegrates into component pieces — the flesh, bones and teeth used to make it — in a matter of moments, rapidly shrinking in size to no more than a few pounds of viscera.

Tupilaq

Abilities: Athletics 12, Health 30, Scuffling 22

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +0

Stealth Modifier: +1 (silent)

Weapon: +3 (powerfully muscular limbs capable of ripping flesh apart), -1 (jutting teeth and bone shards)

Armor: -2 vs. any (no vital organs)

Stability Loss: +1

Again, your goal with the attack is to prod the Investigators to action. As a secondary consideration, the attack should be timed to vary the unfolding scenario's texture, bringing some action at just the moment when back-to-back-to-back scenes of investigation are starting to try the players' patience.

The Unfolding Attack

The tupilaq's drive in the scene is very simple: kill its target, whether Henson or Peary. It takes no action that doesn't bring it closer to that goal, diverting to attack others only where they block the way.

The tupilaq's raw strength is the primary obstacle. It's highly likely that the Investigators will not be able to do enough damage quickly enough to prevent the tupilaq from killing its target. (And this is good for the unfolding scenario, if not for the victim and for the Investigators' collective Stability, so don't feel as though you need to fudge the combat to keep an NPC alive.)

Don't allow the attack to fall into a mechanical series of back-and-forth rolls of dice. Deploy unsettling details like these:

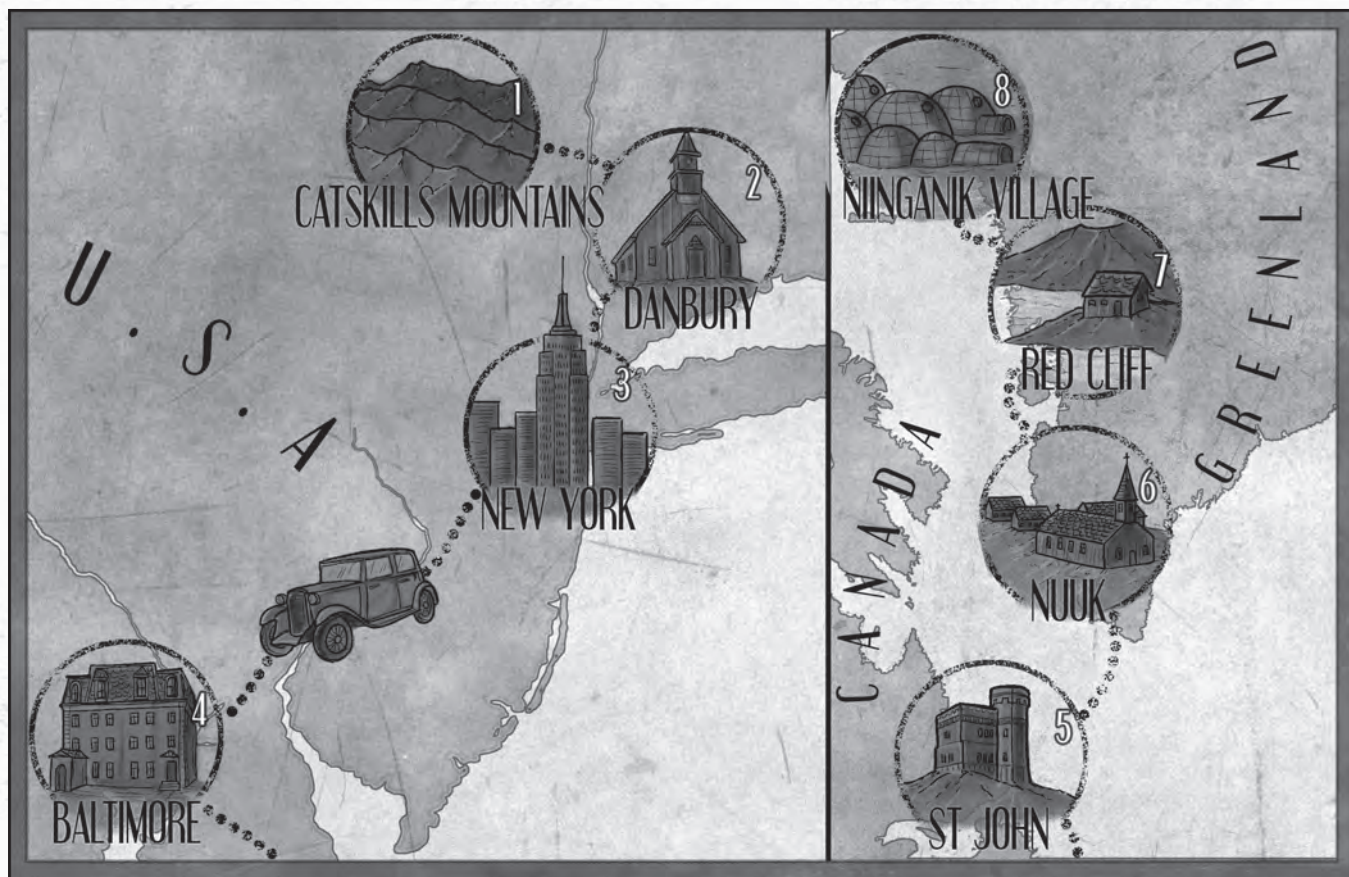
- Unnervingly, the creature's exertions are completely silent. You and your

companions are all breathing hard, shouting and screaming. The thing, on the other hand, doesn't seem to be breathing at all.

- Strangely, it doesn't bleed. You've shot men before, and, while your shot just splattered gobbets of flesh from an exit wound, there's no gush of blood. You might as well have shot a side of beef.
- You manage to stab the creature in what appears to be its head with your switchblade, but it gets stuck, and you lose your grip on it. Now it's just jutting there, lodged in the thing's head. And it *still* doesn't seem to care that you're even present.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Served Cold



If the Investigators fail to protect the tupilaq's target from death, it's a 5-point Stability test.

TRANSIT TO GREENLAND

Scene Type: Transition

Lead-Ins: New York, NY: Matthew Henson; Baltimore, MD: Josephine Peary; Tupilaq Attack

Lead-Out: Red Cliff

At some point the Investigators will exhaust their options for domestic

investigation, but without being able to say that the remaining members of the Peary expedition are safe. Clues point to Greenland, and it's the only obvious next step.

Booking passage to Greenland does not rise to the level of the expedition rules, unless you're keenly interested in inventing unusual hurdles for the voyage. Any Investigator with **Streetwise** or Credit Rating 5+ can book passage in any sizable port city and, with a spend in either, can expedite it.

It's worth posing to the players general questions about how they're equipping themselves for travel. Do they intend

to pack suitcases and go, or do they approach it as they would a months-long journey in a hostile climate? Their answers don't matter much. Your goal is just to start establishing an expeditionary mindset, and to make them nervous about whether they're truly prepared.

Once in transit, the voyage is whatever the Investigators make of it. If the Investigators have persuaded Matthew Henson to come with them, and if the tupilaq attack was not needed earlier, the ship-in-transit is an excellent setting for the scene "Tupilaq Attack." Otherwise, a few color comments will help transition the story from densely populated New England

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions



to a Greenland that's nearly devoid of civilization. You might mention the frigid air and whipping winds, the desolation of the Canadian coastline, the laconic (to the point of being hostile) demeanor of the ship's crew, and the depressingly long nights at these latitudes.

If the players resist undertaking the journey, either because it seems like too far to go or they seem to have (inaccurately) meta-gamed the sense that the scenario doesn't call for it, send them a communiqué from Armitage or Abbot encouraging them to press on. Failing all that, push on the Investigators' Drives. Adventure provides an obvious shove, Curiosity presses toward a resolution to the mystery, Duty requires that the threatened names on the roster be saved (not to mention that the request of Armitage or Abbot be carried out), Revenge requires that those responsible

for Gibson and Cook's deaths be repaid in kind and the Thirst for Knowledge must be slaked with information about the tupilaq's mysterious provenance.

Legs of the Journey

The Investigators wind up aboard the *Harpoon*, a fishing vessel traveling north along the Canadian coast, and then transfer at St. John's in Newfoundland to the *Gale*, an icebreaker bound for Nuuk (called Gotthaab in Danish) on Greenland's western coast.

If the Investigators wish to disembark there, they can, although they won't have any luck picking up the trail of clues until they head farther north to the vicinity of Red Cliff. That said, it might occur to an Investigator with Preparedness that this is likely to be the last place to hire an interpreter who can translate for them as they head north.

To get north to Red Cliff, the Investigators can either travel overland with native guides or hire a local fishing boat — or perhaps even persuade the crew of the *Gale* to travel north with them — with relatively trivial uses of Bargain, Credit Rating, or even Reassurance or Outdoorsman. As with their voyage across from America and Canada, this travel is without impediment. For color you might mention Inuit natives paddling kayaks along the coasts, herds of musk ox standing stupidly on the tops of rocky bluffs that plunge to the Atlantic, or the alienation of hearing locals talk happily to each other in a language thrice-removed from any tongue known to the Investigators.

RED CLIFF

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Transit to Greenland

Lead-Out: The First Leg

Red Cliff was the staging base established by the Peary expedition in 1891, where supplies were cached and from which inland journeys set forth. It is located on McCormick Bay, just northeast of Cape Alexander. The structure consists of a low wood building whose sides are lined with crates and palettes, built up with snow and ice, and is now inhabited by an Inuit couple, the hunters Gihlaq and Inka.

Finding Red Cliff

If accompanied by Matthew Henson, getting to Red Cliff is a **simple search** — he knows just where it is.

If unaccompanied, getting to Red Cliff requires at least one Investigator to

Served Cold

have **Outdoorsman** or **Preparedness**, the former to find it based on vague descriptions, the latter to have either thought to get a detailed description before leaving New England or to have brought along the detailed map found in one of Peary's travelogues. In this case, it's worth harassing the Investigators with at least one unpleasant overnight in frigid tents before they manage to locate the building, to underscore the idea that the land of convenient lodging has been left behind. Greenland is an expanse more than three times larger than Texas, but with substantially fewer inhabitants than Bangor, Maine.

Gihlaq and Inka

Gihlaq and Inka are Inuit in their twenties, originally members of a more southerly coastal tribe. The pair are more independent than most and decided — for reasons that **Assess Honesty** does not suggest are nefarious but that the couple do not wish to spell out for those who can't sort it out on their own — to live on their own rather than remain with their extended family. They live a simple life of hunting, gathering, a bit of agriculture in the short summers and happiness with each other's company.

They became aware of the Red Cliff dwelling through interactions with the Aganik tribe that once worked with Peary in the area. When the Aganik migrated north, Gihlaq and Inka moved into the dwelling.

At first, Gihlaq and Inka are neither unusually welcoming nor inappropriately standoffish. They offer food and fire, and remain open to whatever it is that the Investigators

want to say about their reasons for being here. Until they say otherwise, the couple assumes that the Investigators are explorers or ethnographers.

The greatest barrier to communication is likely to be language. Unless one of the Investigators speaks Inuit (and assuming that Matthew Henson is not present to interpret), they will have to fall back to Gihlaq's extremely rudimentary Danish. Investigators who know Norwegian or Swedish will be able to communicate acceptably though slowly, as the three languages are mutually intelligible. If the Investigators must fall back to German, communication is painstaking.

Core Clues at Red Cliff

In speaking with Gihlaq and Inka over as much time as is necessary, the Investigators learn...

- how Gihlaq and Inka came to live here.
- what happened to the Aganik that dwelled in the area prior, both over the last generations (a long decline since Peary's visits) and in the prior summer (they resolved to travel north to determine whether the Niinganik and their patron could reverse their misfortunes). See "The Horrible Truth" on page 145.
- that the Niinganik are outcasts from Inuit society for their inappropriate ways, but that the Niinganik are rumored to have access to strange powers due to an otherworldly patron whose name Gihlaq has either forgotten, never knew, or will not speak.
- that the Niinganik are — rumor has it — especially concerned with the iron from the heavens, and that the Aganik

intended to bring a hunk of iron from the meteorite called the Man to please the renegade tribe.

- that the Aganik have not returned from their journey, nor been heard from, although certainly enough time has elapsed for them to make the round trip, even at a slow pace.

If fluency in communication is an issue as these facts are related, take at least one opportunity to alarm Investigators with a poorly translated bit of tale. Allow it to be overcome after time, but if the players spend five minutes of conversation trying to figure out exactly what Gihlaq might have meant when he told them that the Aganik were "cursed by fortune's heel and then swallowed up by the north wind," that's good drama.

For paranoid Investigators (and who can blame them), there are no physical clues at Red Cliff to contradict what Gihlaq and Inka tell the Investigators. No evidence of violence, theft, recent burials, nefarious summonings or the like.

Tupilaq and Other Strangeness

Gihlaq and Inka do not exhibit any but the most polite curiosity about why the Investigators are seeking the Aganik, unless the Investigators ask questions or make statements that turn the discussions toward the supernatural, or the deaths of Gibson and Cook.

If discussion turns in that direction, the pair are more guarded, although (per **Assess Honesty**) they continue to communicate in a way that seems truthful.

Inka, more familiar with spiritual folklore than Gihlaq, becomes an authority. If the Investigators describe the clues at the scenes of the killings —



Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Arctic (+1)	The First Leg	Medicine, Outdoorsman or Reassurance negates failure	1 per failed Preparedness test
Arctic (+1)	The Last Supply Drop	Deciding how many supplies to take	Refresh 0–4
Arctic (+1)	Cracked Ice	See p. 161	4 or none
Arctic (+1)	Fjord Crossing	See p. 162	1 for taking alternate route
Supernatural Blizzard (+2)	The Blizzard to End All Blizzards	See p. 163	See p. 163
Arctic (+1)	Aftermath and Return	N/A	N/A

the animal remains and the rest — Inka fills in as much of the tupilaq myth as the Investigators have not already learned. Although Inka is aware of the creatures, knows (in theory) how a shaman would create one and so forth, Gihlaq's partner doesn't offer any speculations about how a tupilaq might have come to attack Americans thousands of miles distant.

If the Investigators have not already learned that it's the case, they're told that the only way a tupilaq can be destroyed prior to carrying out its homicidal mission is for the one who created it to confess the deed before his community.

Inka is, further, able to suggest that a tupilaq is created to track and slay a

particular person, and that a shaman creating one must have a detailed knowledge of the victim. The Aganik elders would certainly have had the requisite knowledge of the members of the Peary expedition, having lived and worked with them in close quarters over a period of years, decades ago though it was.

Pressing Northward

After learning what Gihlaq and Inka have to tell, the Investigators will have little choice but to head north after the Aganik. As with the trip to Greenland, press the Investigators' **drivers** as necessary. The same examples still apply.

The Investigators would be wise to recruit Gihlaq as a guide, and he is willing to serve for appropriate trade goods (a 1-point **Credit Rating** or **Preparedness** spend), assuming that the Investigators haven't done anything to antagonize the pair. Inka is not willing to go.

If for some reason the Investigators prefer to press ahead on their own, they can collect what seems like an accurate enough description of their destination that an Investigator with **Outdoorsman** will feel comfortable that an Outdoorsman spend near the destination will ultimately suffice — when the vicinity of it is reached — to locate the appropriate part of northern coastline.

For Especially Evil Keepers

A Keeper with a mean streak, or who feels that the Investigators have had too easy a time of the adventure so far, can cast Inka not as Gihlaq's benign and knowledgeable partner, but rather, as a jealous and mean-spirited (yet subtle) antagonist. After the Investigators' departure for the north, Inka creates tupilaq to stalk *them*, in order to cut their expedition short and speed Gihlaq's return.

TOUR AND TRAVEL

Preparations for the Arctic Tour

Eventually, the Investigators turn to a great northward trek across hundreds of miles of ice. Here begins the adventure's five-(or-more)-month Tour, a there-and-back-again cross-country sledge trip across some of the earth's most unforgiving landscape.

The duration of each of the Tour's travel increments varies. Most of the outgoing increments comprise a month of punishing travel each, with the post-climax return trip compressed into a single increment of three months. The Travel Increment Summary table summarizes what's to come.

The Survival Pool

The particulars of the Investigators' equipment, companions and guides

will likely have been established by the choices they made in earlier scenes.

Assuming average rolls on Survival costs across the Tour, the whole journey will cost the Investigators about 28 Survival points (not accounting for any adjustments for failing challenges or the various incidents that might transpire at the Niinganik village).

Use the table below to set the party's initial pool size based on various actions they might or might not have taken to this point. An Investigator with Outdoorsman can compare the group's pool total to the average cost of 28 (known only to you, of course) in order to get a general sense of whether enough supplies are available for a journey of the length and intensity that's been discussed.

If any of these activities are headed by an Investigator with Outdoorsman, his

Effort Undertaken by the Investigators

Survival Points

Bring expedition supplies of any magnitude from New York*	10
Recruit Matthew Henson	5
Recruit Gihlaq	10
Take on expedition supplies of any magnitude in Nuuk*	5
Trade for expedition supplies with Gihlaq and Inka*	3
Make a deliberate effort to find Inuit in order to trade or beg for supplies anywhere along the first leg (counts as Relief, essentially)	3
Each Inuit native hired to join the expedition (up to 8)	1

Greenland Overview

Greenland is an inhospitable island in the North Atlantic nearly covered (about eighty-five percent) by an ice sheet up to two miles thick.

Most of Greenland's interior comprises a vast basin covered in a thick sunken ice cap whose surface descends below sea level in some places. The peaks of the interior's highest mountains jut up through the ice, and the valleys and ravines between these peaks calve massive icebergs into the Arctic sea where they reach Greenland's jagged coastline and fjords.

Greenland's native inhabitants (there are negligible foreigners living in Greenland) are Inuit with cultural ties to brethren in Canada and Alaska. They live in extended

family groups. Traditionally, men hunt and woman prepare food, although gender roles are less proscribed than they are in many other cultures. There are fewer than twenty thousand Inuit in Greenland at this point in history, who cluster on the eastern, western and southern coastal regions, which are far more hospitable than the inland areas.

The island belongs to Denmark in the 1930s. Though Norway mounts a claim to certain parts of its eastern coast in the early part of the decade, international courts rule against it.

Outdoorsman rating is added to the quantity of Survival Points taken on for that line item due to a better quality of supplies selected, better decisions about what should be taken and so forth.

Even if the Investigators come to Greenland completely unprepared, there are Inuit tribes up and down the coast that can be found either by blind blundering, through introductions made by Gihlaq, by Matthew Henson or through whatever other twists and turns of plot are necessary. Assign a minimum of 18 points to the Survival pool, no matter how badly the Investigators have messed up their preparations.

If any of the players are curious about the specific nature of the supplies their pool comprises, here's a list of various things that would be brought on an Arctic expedition: husky dogs, wooden sledges, skis and snowshoes, dried meat, nuts, furs and parkas in the Inuit style, tents and sleeping bags for shelter, shoveling implements, layer on layer of clothing, goggles for eye protection,

compasses and navigational gear, rifles to hunt game (snow hares, musk ox, seals, walrus, reindeer), knives and implements for preparing game, and flint and steel.

THE FIRST LEG

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Red Cliff

Lead-Out: The Last Supply Drop

The Investigators set off on a bright, crisp morning with 3–4 sledges and 18–24 dogs to pull them. Most of those in the party will travel on skis or snowshoes, as the sledges are for supplies and equipment.

The first leg is a short travel increment whose target is an Inuit supply drop where the group can pick up additional supplies and spend a night or two in better shelter than their tents or snowshelters can provide.

The first week is a rude shock to Investigators not accustomed to hardship, and the shock is doubled when a snowstorm comes up out of nowhere on the third day of travel. None of the veterans believe it to be of such magnitude that the party should wait it out, and so two days of travel in whipping winds and low visibility ensue. It is the first true test of the Investigators' mettle as Arctic explorers: Any Investigator who fails a Difficulty 4 **Preparedness** test — which causes them to bungle their use of equipment, eat the wrong thing or similar — costs the expedition an extra Survival point during this travel increment. However, any particular Investigator's failure and its attendant loss can be negated by any other Investigator's 1-point spend in **Medicine**, **Outdoorsman** or **Reassurance**.

Eventually, the storm passes, and, after a few more days, the Investigators make it to the supply cache.

Served Cold

Stock Footage

- The intensity of the sun's light on the snow — during the relatively short daylight hours — is beyond dazzling. You didn't know it could be this bright.
- The dogs' company is pleasant, at least. The huskies are well adapted to the frigid weather, and truly seem to thrive on the work of pulling your sledges.
- The Arctic plain stretches away forever. The horizon never gets closer. The mountains in the distance could as easily be on another planet as on this one, for all the closer they get as you press on endlessly.

THE LAST SUPPLY DROP

Scene Type: Refresh

Lead-In: The First Leg

Lead-Out: Cracked Ice

From one of their hired guides or through discussion with local Inuit, the expedition is aware of a place where a local Inuit tribe has laid in supplies as a backstop against hard times. It represents a chance for the Investigators to stock up before heading into the truly desolate and deserted portion of their Tour.

The supply drop consists of a trio of very well dug-in igloos with room to sleep and stores of food, furs, fuel and other supplies. This travel increment lasts one or more days, depending on how long they stay.

There are no tests to make here. The Investigators must choose how many

Survival pool points they wish to recover, from none (they take nothing from the stores and don't even remain overnight) to 4 (they stay two days and substantially deplete the supplies). The ethical point in question is simply that the Inuit who laid in these supplies are nowhere to be found, so their permission to take supplies can't be secured.

Stock Footage

- Although it's not so cold at the Inuit supply camp, the distant resemblance of their igloos to the comforts of civilization gives you a bit of hope that you're not the last ones left on Earth.
- After a week of traveling, a few days' rest is welcome, for the mind as well as your wracked feet, ankles, hips and shoulders.

TARGETED BY TUPILAQ

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

Depending on unfolding dramatics of the adventure, the state of affairs may call for a fight at some point during the Tour. (Or, the Investigators may simply be itching for one.)

If such an interlude seems wise, there are two excuses you can employ to stage a tupilaq attack in the midst of the Investigators' trek. The first is the option described in the sidebar "For Especially Evil Keepers" on page 159. In this case, the tupilaq attack would come toward the beginning of the expedition's Tour, since the attacking creatures would originate in the vicinity of Red Cliff. The second is the possibility that Ithaqua's eldritch perception has sensed the Investigators' approach, which the creature communicates to the Niinganik, which send tupilaq to kill them. In this

case, the attack would come toward the end of the Tour, as the Investigators approach the Niinganik village.

Sending one tupilaq for each Investigator would be a death sentence for the party. Judging from the Investigators' state of health, one or two of the creatures is probably the best decision. Either can be justified by assuming that only so many of the resources required were available to the shaman who created the constructs. Use the same tupilaq statistics provided on page 154 (noting that each creature has a unique physical appearance of its common general type).

You may either substitute the tupilaq attack for a given travel increment's other challenges or stack them together, as best serves the needs of the story.

CRACKED ICE

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: The Last Supply Drop

Lead-Out: Fjord Crossing

The bulk of the journey begins in earnest once the last supply drop is left behind. An endless sameness of days begins, the dogs hauling the equipment-laden sledges and the Investigators hauling their weary selves.

As the party travels into Greenland's interior, the ice pack's depth thickens, and its surface becomes more irregular. Crevasses, hummocks, ridges and even more bizarre ice formations become common, and often necessitate detours and backtracking, both depleting morale and eating up time and supplies.



Mythos Expeditions



On one day during this leg of the journey, a sledge and its dogs plunge through a crack that appears in the ice as if from nowhere. They slide down a nearly vertical underground ravine face to either be crushed between grinding shelves of ice or impaled on sharp thrusts of the frozen stuff.

Two randomly chosen Investigators are close enough that they may be able to make a difference. Have all Investigators roll a die; the two highest are the chosen pair. (Dice off in case of ties that would indicate more than two.) If both of these can make a Difficulty 6 **Athletics** test, they can grab onto something — a strap, a dog, a harness — quickly enough to forestall the plunge and allow others to come to their aid, eventually dragging the frightened dogs and laden sledge back to the surface. If both fail, the team is lost. If one succeeds and the other fails, any Investigator may make

an **Outdoorsman** spend to attempt the same Athletics test in the place of the one who failed.

If the team is saved, there is no additional impact during this travel increment, other than the normal Survival cost. If the team is lost, however, an additional 4 points of the Survival pool are assessed. Depending on the personalities and Drives of the pair of Investigators who failed, Stability tests may be in order as the dogs howl to their doom and the supplies fall away.

Stock Footage

- The relatively flat ice pack of your first leg has transitioned into a mountainous hell, although not one made of mountains. Here, the ice itself rises up and plunges away into jagged crevices, glassy slopes and alien formations.
- Greenland. Ha! You haven't seen that color for as long as you can

remember. White and gray. The whole world is white and gray.

- Just a few weeks ago the constant noise of popping and cracking ice was so alarming that it kept you up for three nights running. Now it's just part of the background, no more worrisome than the sun's rise.

FJORD CROSSING

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Cracked Ice

Lead-Out: The Blizzard to End All Blizzards

In the second month of travel, the Investigators learn that they've come too far to the east in their travel, and that their route has come to the edge of a deep-jutting fjord along Greenland's northwestern coast. The good news is that the sea inlet is almost completely frozen. The bad news is that it is not entirely frozen.

So, the Investigators have a choice: They may either take the direct route across the fjord, risking drifting ice and open water, or take the long way around, using up precious supplies by spending additional days in the open.

If the Investigators cross the fjord, every Investigator without Outdoorsman must make a Difficulty 6 **Sense Trouble** test. Those who fail must make an additional Difficulty 6 **Athletics** test or either wind up on a floating iceberg surrounded by open water or go directly into the water as the ice gives way beneath them. (Keeper's choice.)

Investigators in the near-freezing Arctic waters take +0 damage per round of exposure, which continues for at least

Served Cold

three rounds after they're hauled out, as their wet, deadly clothing is stripped and steps are taken to bring their core temperatures back up. (Of course, it continues longer if supplies are not available for warming, or if no companions are available to help.) **First Aid** may be spent normally to counteract this damage.

If the Investigators go around the inlet to avoid the danger, one additional Survival point's worth of supplies are used up in this increment, due to the longer route.

Stock Footage

- You have become sick to death of the dogs. What earlier seemed laudable now seems bone stupid. What creature could enjoy these toils and travels?
- The high crags that border the fjord you arrived at yesterday have buoyed your spirits at least to the extent that you can see the ocean, which is assurance that there's something beyond this waste.
- Having found the sea again, it's an effort of will to continue forward. Why not follow the coast back to civilization, and end this nonsense? Really... why not?

THE BLIZZARD TO END ALL BLIZZARDS

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Fjord Crossing

Lead-Out: The Niinganik

As the Investigators' long trek nears its end, they are beset by a blizzard worse

than any of them could have imagined, and worse than any of their native or experienced guides has ever seen. It continues for more than a week, and those inclined to believe the worst are certain that unnatural forces have sensed their approach and are arrayed against them.

Every day, for seven days, each Investigator must make a Difficulty 5 test of **Athletics** or **Preparedness** (player's choice). Failure causes the Investigator +0 damage and a 1-point Stability test. The effects of any given failure can be counteracted by any Investigator's 1-point **Outdoorsman** spend. The need for any given Stability test can be counteracted by any Investigator's 1-point **Reassurance** spend. (The spending Investigator may be the one who failed, or not, as the players choose among themselves.)

Any Investigator reduced below 0 Health by these tests suffers deep frostbite to 1d6 toes and/or fingers. If neither a period of hospitalization nor a 1-point **Medicine** spend is made on that character's behalf within 1d6 months (roll in secret), they will have to be amputated, and, in the meantime, the character suffers the continual effects of being **hurt**, even if his Health is brought back above 0 by First Aid or other means. Any character so cursed by luck as to suffer this calamity to more than twenty fingers and toes should write to Pelgrane Press for an official letter of condolence.

Each day, 1d3 dogs are lost to the cold, although by this point in the trek, this does not reduce the party's Survival pool; steady consumption of supplies means that fewer dogs are needed to haul the necessities that remain.

If the Investigators give up hope of forward progress and go to ground to wait out the blizzard, they burn 1 Survival point each day, but reduce the Difficulties of their tests to 4. It lasts seven days in either case.

After seven days the blizzard breaks, and the Investigators discover that they're within hours of the Niinganik village. (Unless they had gone to ground, in which case one more day's travel brings them to this point.)

Stock Footage

- The snow has been coming down for days, sometimes so thick you can't see the sledge in front of you. It's madness to continue, but it seems just as mad to stop. If you stop, will you ever be able to dig out?
- Another of the dogs died this morning. Its companions can't even be bothered to set aside their misery for long enough to care.
- Every time you think the snowfall is letting up, it seems to double its intensity. You spend more time clearing your goggles than wearing them. Why on Earth did you agree to travel this godforsaken waste?

THE NIINGANIK

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: The Blizzard to End All Blizzards

Lead-Out: Aftermath and Return

The Niinganik tribe, worshippers of Ithaqua, are as mad as they come, possessed with an unnatural fervor for the Wind-Walker, and filled with his blessings.

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Their bodies perverted by this relationship, they are impervious to the cold. Some go about naked on snowshoes, others wear fur parkas over nothing, hanging open in front. Still others wear loincloths or loose pants of fur. Their skin is leathery and gray, dead but somehow remaining intact enough to sustain them. Their eyes are dull but living, their speech hoarse but human. These are not undead, but humans twisted and imbued with power by their association with an Old One.

The Niinganik number eighteen adults and adolescents. They live in igloos at the wind-whipped lip of a ravine that plunges a thousand feet down into the Atlantic ice of Greenland's north coast. Their lives consist of the bitter survival-oriented tasks of hunting enough food to live, and carrying out tasks and rituals pleasing to Ithaqua. Of their number, four constitute an informal leadership of the tribe: one elderly man, one adolescent woman and two male twins who appear to be in their late twenties. All members of the tribe refer to themselves and each other by the proper name "Niinganik," which appears to the Investigators to mean something like, "One who pleases the biting wind."

When the Investigators arrive, the Niinganik are vaguely aware — from the weather and other signs that they have observed in recent days — that events displeasing to Ithaqua have, or are, transpiring. Correspondingly, they take the Investigators' arrival as a bad omen, if not quite one that pushes their immediate reaction to be outright homicidal.

Communicating with the Niinganik

The Niinganik speak a dialect of Inuit that's removed from the one spoken on the western coast of Greenland. Although Inuit speakers like Matthew Henson and Gihlaq can understand it, communication is slow, fraught and subject to misunderstanding. The Niinganik know no other languages, so if the Investigators arrive without an Inuit translator, they are reduced to pantomime.

- **If the Investigators come in an attitude of outright hostility**, the Niinganik have no compunction about engaging them in immediate battle. If possible, they feign a less violent reaction and then strike at the opportune moment, attacking to incapacitate rather than kill (if they can), since living sacrifices are more pleasing to Ithaqua than dead ones.
- **If the Investigators approach with good faith and open arms**, the Niinganik reaction depends on what the Investigators do, and what they seem to want:
- **If they ask no questions and make no demands**, the Niinganik play wait-and-see.
- **If they demand, request or appear to need help in order to survive**, the Niinganik give them neither food nor comfort. As far as the Niinganik are concerned, the Investigators will survive the elements or not based on the pleasure of Ithaqua.
- **If they present the Niinganik with meteoric iron** in any quantity, from any source at all, they greet the gift with pleasure — nodding, smiles and firm shoulder claps all around.

- **If they make statements that associate them with the Peary expedition**, or with the Aganik, the Niinganik are concerned. The Investigators see many furrowed brows, pinched mouths and glances between Niinganik elders.
- **If they try to ascertain who among the Niinganik crafted the tupilaq** that have attacked the members of the expedition, observation of the entire group over an hour or so suggests — to Investigators with **Anthropology** — who the circle of four leaders are, among the entire group. **Occult** suggests that shamans would likely come from among this number, but also suggests some cultures that are counterexamples. It's hard to say.

Interactions ultimately point in three likely directions: an outright battle between the expedition and the Niinganik, a ritual of sacrifice in which the Niinganik summon Ithaqua to consume the Investigators, or Investigators' attempts to compel the Niinganik shaman to confess and thus destroy any tupilaq that are still hunting members of the Peary expedition.

There's no good way to script what happens, so you must simply be aware of what the Niinganik want (to do what is pleasing to Ithaqua) and allow the dramatics to unfold accordingly. As you can, press the Investigators to take action and make meaningful decisions, rather than letting them sit back in a wait-and-see stance. As always, manipulate the Investigators' Drives to spur interesting activity.

Physically torturing the four tribal leaders is the only way to force the admission that one of them created the tupilaq (since the four know that such admission will destroy the tupilaq).

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Served Cold

Engaging in torture is a 5-point Stability test. Investigators who do not participate but knowingly allow it to happen suffer a 3-point test. Successfully torturing them into the admission desired requires a 2-point **Intimidation** spend, or a 1-point spend combined with a 1-point **Reassurance** spend, the later pair of which may be contributed by two Investigators working together.

The circle of leaders knows how to call and dismiss Ithaqua (see *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 121). To extend the drama and give the Investigators a fighting chance, even though this spell only takes one round to cast above the Arctic Circle, you may wish to add a few rounds of preparation before the casting, during which the Investigators can make Sense/Trouble tests to understand what's about to happen, and try their best to prevent it.

If Ithaqua is summoned, it appears as an icy whirlwind a mile tall, off the edge of the ravine. Stability and Sanity losses are as described in *Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 86. Each round, 1d3 members of the Investigators' party are instantly frozen solid and explode into hundreds of frozen chunks of once-flesh. (Or, at your option, Investigators possessing meteoric iron are instead lifted from the ground and added — conscious but frozen — to the whirlwind, where they remain for all time.) Flight is the only recourse.

If the Investigators leave the Niinganik village having failed to force an admission (and so stop the tupilaq), and with any doubt as to whether there is more they could have done, all Investigators must make 3-point Stability tests, and perhaps additional or worse tests as their Drives might require. It also costs the Investigators 1 point of Sanity if they are

aware of the influence of the Mythos in reaching out, almost at random, to doom members of the Peary expedition decades after the fact for what human society generally considers laudable (or, at worst, benign) activities of exploration.

Niinganik Tribal Leaders

Abilities: Athletics 10, Cthulhu Mythos 2, Health 10, Scuffling 6, Stability 9, Weapons 6

WEAPON: -1 (bone knives and tools)

Notes:

- **The Old Man:** Missing three fingers on his left hand. Rocks back and forth while speaking. Vomits unpredictably.
- **The Young Woman:** Toothless. Laughs forcefully and uproariously at times that seem inappropriate. Closes her eyes tightly at random moments and leaves them closed for up to twenty or thirty seconds.

- **The Twins:** Slowly shuffle and shift their way to opposite sides of those they're talking to. One often reflexively echoes what the other has just said. They pass physical items back and forth while engaged in other things.

Niinganik Tribesmen and Tribeswomen

Abilities: Athletics 10, Health 7, Scuffling 3, Weapons 4

WEAPON: -1 (bone knives and tools)

NOTES: Leathery skin. Wide unblinking eyes. Hoarse but shouting voices (to be heard over the wind).

AFTERMATH AND THE RETURN

Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-In: The Niinganik





Served Cold

Whatever happens at the Niinganik village, the Investigators have a long — and perhaps doomed — trip back to civilization ahead of them.

The impact of the village encounter on the Investigators' Survival pool is highly variable. It's possible for the Niinganik to reduce their pool nearly to 0 by driving or throwing their sledges and

supplies over the edge of the cliff, but it's also possible that the Investigators can recover up to 8 pool points by looting the entire village of its implements and supplies.

In any case, only a single travel increment must be survived during the return to civilization, unless you or your players are unusually fond of anticlimax.

Exits and Rewards

In a Pulp game, if the Investigators come away from the Niinganik village with the belief that they have saved at least one life among the Peary expedition, a 1-point Sanity refresh is appropriate. Stability recovery will have to wait until the Investigators return to civilization, where the normal rules apply.



Whistle and I'll Come

"I THOUGHT I HEARD A SHRILL, WHISTLING SOUND, LIKE NOTHING ELSE ON EARTH, AND BEYOND ANY ADEQUATE VERBAL DESCRIPTION."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT, "THE SHADOW OUT OF TIME"

THE HOOK

Dr. Tyler Freeborn at Miskatonic University has acquired a strangely carved whistle taken from Stone Age tribes in the New Guinea jungle. He has persuaded Dr. Armitage and the Pickman Foundation to fund a small expedition to find the source of the whistle. They will journey to New Britain in the Territory of New Guinea, provision and hire guides, then venture into the unmapped rainforest to find the tribe that carved the whistle.

The adventure climaxes at the end of May 1937, when a volcanic eruption wiped out Rabaul, but this date can be moved as needed. Dr. Freeborn is on the Western Australia Expedition until autumn 1935, and Rabaul was busy with war from 1940 onward.

THE SPINE

Arriving at Rabaul, the investigators become, and meet, **Local Celebrities**. They travel by boat to a **Deserted Plantation**, and travel through the rainforest **Into the Nakanai Mountains**. They come across

Ghostly Floaters then rest and discover truths and rituals at a **Tolai Village**. They go **Down the Sinkhole** to find and destroy baby polyps, only to discover the angry parent then is **Coming for You**. There are **Panicked Plans and Polyps in the Mist**. Finally, **Full Steam Back to The Ritual** and to **Stop the Ship**. It all ends with erupting volcanoes.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

Millions of years ago, alien beings known as flying polyps escaped from their underground prisons and fought the Great Race of Yith, which had imprisoned them. One polyp was severely wounded, and fled back into the depths to escape death while it repaired itself. Above ground, the Yithians lost the war, and both sides disappeared from history.

For millions of years, the damaged polyp fought for life alone; volcanoes buried its lair, trapping it there. Its unearthly senses and flying ability have been destroyed beyond repair. The cooled lava became the island of New Britain. Rivers slowly wore away the imprisoning rock layers, freeing the polyp a thousand years ago. Since then it has cautiously explored the world above, fearful of Yithians and its own kind, which are not tolerant of weakness. It captured natives, but their knowledge of the world was limited.

Two years ago a German plantation owner, exploring, climbed down the sinkhole and was captured. The polyp pieced together from his knowledge that Yithians and polyps were unknown now, and decided the world is ripe for reconquest. It is too damaged to do this itself, so it began spawning, budding hundreds of proto-polyps from its own body that will grow into full monstrosities and rule the planet once again. The plantation owner lost his sanity, but kept his greed. The polyp has used him to engineer the release of its spawn all over the world; instead he plans to make his fortune selling them to a German university. Whatever happens, if these buds mature into an army of full-grown flying polyps, humanity is over.

The Yithians did help; a century ago, they possessed a member of the tribe nearest the polyp's lair. The possessed tribesman taught them a chant that can destroy the polyp and carved the whistle that calls it. His stories of cone-shaped beings also became the myths of the Dukduks and spread across New Britain.

Victory Condition

Victory is destroying both the budded polyps and the full-grown parent. If the parent is destroyed, but buds remain, they will reappear later, perhaps fully grown. If the parent remains but the buds are destroyed, then it will try and spawn again in a year or two.

Whistle and I'll Come

Ripped from the History Books

The geography of New Britain is authentic; the sinkhole is based on the Minye Doline in the Nakanai Mountains. McNicoll, Taylor and Chinnery were real people in Rabaul at that time. Extensive liberty has been taken with the Dukduks, which is a genuine secret society of the Tolai natives. They did hold their rituals in May and have Yithian-looking costumes, and many were killed by the volcano at Rabaul while performing their rituals in May 1937.

Tour and Travel

The expedition is only funded by the Pickman Foundation, so the budget is limited, and perhaps underfunded. Dr. Freeborn has made contact with officials in Rabaul, and they have recommended a boat and a guide. Academic Investigators and others with relevant skills are welcomed, but there is no pay, only the opportunity.

The expedition is not traveling far, about sixty miles by boat and twenty to twenty-five miles by foot, but the conditions are hard. The boat journey takes a day, in one travel increment, the foot trek takes between three to five days; each increment is a half day. Once the expedition reaches the tribal village, the party can recover before the final scenes.

When the Survival pool is below 5, the party is out of quinine, the protection against malaria, and everyone must make Health tests each rainforest increment or become infected with malaria. Malarial attacks occur 2–4 travel increments after the failed test as debilitating fevers. Affected Investigators are treated as if **hurt**. Don't use malarial attacks after "Down the Sinkhole"; being ill while momentous events occur is not interesting.

First Aid is less effective in the jungle. Each First Aid point spent restores 1 less Health point than normal. Anyone taking a wound must have it treated successfully, otherwise infection sets in, costing 1 Health each increment until successfully treated.

Travel Increment

The terrain is mountainous with steep river gorges, all covered in jungle. During the day the temperature rarely drops below ninety degrees Fahrenheit; however, the nights can be cool in the mountains. The different types of jungle have similar in-game effects, but each has a different feel.

Laurel rainforest is found below three thousand feet. Tall trees compete for the light, leaving the ground wet and warm, but shaded and therefore only lightly vegetated. Walking is easier, though the leaf litter, ferns and other low-light plants block far visibility.

Cloud rainforest occurs above three thousand feet, where cool, wet ocean air condenses into mist below the treetops. Trees are shorter; the ground is wet and covered with moss and ferns. Visibility is impaired, sounds are muffled, and the effect is spooky.

Survival Pool

The expedition's base Survival Pool is 35, modified by Investigator abilities (see Expedition rules, p. 11). Investigators can shop in the *bung* (market) for additional supplies. Each Credit Rating or Bargain spend adds 3 Survival points.

EXPEDITION PERSONNEL

Dr. Tyler Freeborn,
Assistant Professor of Anthropology



Dr. Freeborn is eager to go; there are many unknown tribes to contact. Getting back into the field, and not just anywhere, but a hotbed of anthropological research like New Guinea, will give him a chance to publish interesting papers, get the university off his back and safeguard his tenure. During the expedition, Freeborn goes native as the pressure increases, discarding his clothes and living the

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions

Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Coast (−3)	Tropical Storm	Athletics and Mechanical Repair	3 or none
Coast (−3)	Deserted Plantation	N/A	N/A
Secondary Growth (+0)	Abandoned Fields	Biology (finding a path through younger growth)	5
Laurel Rainforest (+0)	Torrential Downpour	Preparedness	4
Any Rainforest (+0)	River Crossing	Mechanical Repair	4
Any Rainforest (+0)	Tribal Attack	Combat	4 per lost carrier
Any Rainforest (+0)	Ghostly Floater	N/A	N/A
Any Rainforest (+0)	Cannibal Discovery	N/A	N/A
Rainforest Camp (−2)	Tribal Village	Outdoorsman or Stealth (hunting)	Refresh 3 per day spent
River (−1)	Down the Sinkhole	Athletics (safely lower the supplies)	4 or none
River Caves (−2)	Coming for You	N/A	N/A
Any Rainforest (+0)	Polyps in the Mist	See p. 184	See p. 184
Coast (−3)	Full Steam Back	N/A	N/A

The travel scenes above marked “Any Rainforest” can occur in either laurel or cloud rainforest, depending on the expedition’s height at the time.

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Whistle and I'll Come

native lifestyle. Dr. Freeborn is a scientific idealist: knowledge will make life better for everyone, but there is much to be learned from living close to nature.

Abilities: Anthropology 3, Athletics 5, Biology 1, Firearms 3, First Aid 2, Fleeing 5, Health 6, Languages 4 (French, German, Latin, Tok Pisin), Mechanical Repair 2, Occult 1, Oral History 3, Outdoorsman 2, Scuffling 3, Theology 1, Weapons 3

Weapon: +0 (.32 pistol), -1 (bowie knife)

Harvey Sharland,
Graduate Student in Anthropology



He has the theory and is super keen to put it into practice. He is annoyingly chirpy and eager, but also innocent. He has never been on a field trip outside the US, and proves a liability in the jungle. The Keeper can sacrifice him instead of an Investigator in combat, or present the Investigators a moral quandary if his injuries or malaria slow down their escape.

Abilities: Anthropology 2, Athletics 3, Biology 2, Firearms 1, Flattery 2, Fleeing 6, Geology 1, Health 4, Languages 2 (Navajo, Spanish), Theology 1, Weapons 2
Alter Harvey's core abilities and languages to balance out the party.

Lapoon, Local Guide



Lapoon is a small native, probably in his mid-thirties, dressed incongruously in shorts and creased shirt. He speaks the local pidgin (Tok Pisin) and basic English. His role makes him an outsider among his people, but he earns good money guiding prospectors around.

Abilities: Athletics 8, Health 6, Languages 1 (English), Outdoorsman 1, Scuffling 4, Weapons 5

Torsten Erland, Boat Captain

Torsten Erland is a large Norwegian and captain of the *Thor*, the boat Freeborn has hired. He has sailed these islands for decades, and speaks pidgin and English. He complains about the weather, the slow



pace of the Rabaul stevedores and the bureaucratic harbor master. Torsten knows Lapoon and trusts him, and vice versa.

Abilities: Athletics 6, Health 8, Languages 2 (English, Tok Pisin), Piloting (Boat) 8

GETTING THERE

The expedition gathers in San Francisco in late March, then sails across the Pacific to Brisbane, Australia, on the *SS Innaren*. They take the North Coast railway to Cairns and a QANTAS plane to Rabaul, arriving in mid-May. Before landing in Rabaul, the plane flies along the eastern coast of New Britain, giving the Investigators first sight of the paradise they will be trekking through. Green-shrouded mountains rise into the clouds, and the Investigators flash back to a meeting before they left...

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mythos Expeditions



ORIENTATION MEETING

Scene Type: Flashback

Lead-Out: Planning Session

This scene is a flashback to Miskatonic University letting the Investigators demonstrate their expertise, character and Drives.

In preparation for the expedition, Dr. Freeborn called a meeting to outline what he wants to achieve and share their knowledge. Before his initial briefing, he calls on each attendee to present their information.

The Keeper should allocate the following information to relevant Investigators,

ensuring each has something to contribute. If need be, have Dr. Freeborn provide any information for abilities not covered by a present Investigator.

History: The mandated Territory of New Guinea was given to Australia by the League of Nations after the Great War. It covers the eastern half of New Guinea island, and other smaller islands, including New Britain and New Ireland. Rabaul is the capital established by the Germans and taken over by the Australians.

- 1-point spend: When the Australians took over, they forced many of the German plantation owners out,

reselling their plantations on the cheap to Australian settlers.

Geology: The islands were formed by ancient volcanoes, and many are still active. The Nakanai Mountains are unmapped, but are believed to reach ten to thirteen thousand feet. Gold has been found on New Guinea, though there are no finds on New Britain yet. Rainfall is in excess of twenty feet per year.

Biology: The island is covered with jungle. There are plenty of crocodiles, snakes and insects, but no confirmed reports of large predators. Bird life is extensive (birds of paradise are of particular note), and frogs and amphibians

Whistle and I'll Come

do well in these conditions. The expedition should expect to come across new species.

Anthropology: There are many primitive tribes scattered throughout the jungles of New Britain, and probably many more uncontacted. They live a Stone Age existence isolated by the geography; each tribe has its own rituals and language.

- 1-point spend: Cannibalism is rare, but does happen. It is normally part of ritual dominance over a defeated enemy, consuming their power.

Theology: Missionaries were the earliest visitors to the island, bringing Christianity to the “savages.” Although many coastal tribes have converted to Christianity, there are many stories of mission stations found deserted, and documented cases of missionaries being eaten.

Outdoorsman: The terrain is not suitable for vehicles except on existing roads. The journey should be by boat as close to the destination before heading inland on foot. Porters hired locally will carry supplies; this means heavy equipment is impractical. Delicate instruments also will be difficult to protect from the humidity and hard traveling.

Medicine: Disease is a major problem in this climate. Mosquitoes spread malaria and dengue fever; jungle rot turns even small wounds lethally septic. Water must be boiled before being drunk, and leeches must be removed as fast as possible.

The Whistle

Once all the Investigators have presented their background on New Britain, Freeborn produces a wooden whistle.

“I acquired this whistle from a prospector who claims he traded it from a tribe near the Nakanai Mountains on the island of New Britain. Around it are carvings of what seems to be an unknown language, but no discovered New Guinea tribe has writing. So I want to find the source of this whistle.”

The whistle is about eight inches long, cut from a single piece of hardwood. The three finger holes make unpleasant, dissonant sounds in any combination. Carvings, almost worn away, spiral around it. They are strange patterns of curves and dots, clearly individual characters, some repeating. There is nothing like them in any book.

With a 1-point spend of **Anthropology** or **Occult**, an Investigator can suggest the following: Musical instruments in tribal cultures are often part of rituals to draw spirits’ attention... or scare them away.

In Rabaul

The short road from the airport to Rabaul follows the coast. Well-used jetties and docks push into Blanche Bay, surrounded by substantial warehouses and sheds for copra (dried coconut meat) production. On a hill overlooking the city is an old German shore-artillery piece that has seen better days. Winches lift bundles onto a large cargo ship (*SS Kaiser*), and many smaller boats sail the bay. Houses climb the surrounding hills, and smoking volcanoes either side of the bay dominate the skyline.

Rabaul is a thriving town. Several hotels and many bars serve the soldiers and a dynamic population of adventurers, prospectors and other sorts attracted to life on the frontier. In the town is a department store,

a cinema (the Regent), a cricket pitch and other amenities of civilized expat life. Wide streets are shaded by tall mango trees, laden with fruit and home to birds and butterflies. The air is full of the scent of hibiscus and bougainvillea. Native traders display exotic fish and fruits, and missionaries of every Christian denomination haggle for supplies. Rabaul is a long way from Arkham.

(core) **Geology:** Rabaul is built on an ancient caldera, a collapsed volcanic crater, giving the circular bay its shape. There are two vent volcanoes either side of the bay entrance, Tavurvur and Vulcan.

The expedition is staying in the Rabaul Hotel, and can remain a while to explore and acclimatize before heading off. The hotel is decent, but basic. Staying at the hotel are missionaries and prospectors: a sample prospector appears below.

Terry Loudan

Terry found gold in New Guinea, and is now in Rabaul trying his luck here. He has a rough and ready outback attitude. In the evenings he hits the hotel bar, hard. He views the natives as less evolved than white men (like him), and exploitation of them and their resources is natural, an attitude that angers Dr. Freeborn. Tempers fray after alcohol.

Planning Session

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-In: Orientation Meeting

Lead-Out: Local Celebrities

On the first morning, Torsten and Lapoon arrive at the hotel to help plan the route of the expedition.

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In the hotel bar with all gathered, Freeborn spreads out a map of New Britain. If Lapoon is shown the whistle, he says it is a Dukduk ritual whistle, not to be blown. He studies the carvings and points at a spot in the Nakanai Mountains as the likely source. He has never seen whistles with these carvings before. Lapoon stops anyone blowing the whistle, even knocking it out of their hands. Blowing it “calls bad spirits.”

1-point **Anthropology** spend: Dukduks are a secret society among the natives; their rituals call on nature elements: air, fire, earth and sea. May is the main month for their rituals.

Torsten points at the coast of Wide Bay, “I get you here in one day, a plantation owned by Herr Eckhart. I don’t know him, but he should let us pass.” They can dock there, and might be given overnight accommodation if he’s friendly.

Oral History: Asking around Rabaul, Investigators find out only that Eckhart has been here for several years, struggles with his plantation, and keeps himself to himself. Torsten knows of him; Lapoon doesn’t know him.

Local Celebrities

Scene Type: Core/Pipe

Lead-In: Planning Session

Lead-Out: Tropical Storm

The administrator of New Guinea, Walter McNicoll, invites the academics and any other Investigators with Credit Rating 3 or higher to dine at Government House one evening. This is a formal affair, a chance for the expats to dress up and hear fresh news of life outside New

Britain. Government House is a grand, porticoed mansion in the hills. It has large, well-kept gardens that look out over the town and bay. *Haus bois* (“house boys”) serve dinner and pour wine for the diners. Low Credit Rating (lower than 3) Investigators can mix with the *haus bois* in the kitchen.

Predinner drinks give everyone a chance to mingle, and, at dinner, each Investigator is next to a local. There are various conversation topics below; give each Investigator a chance to find areas of interest and roleplay at least one conversation. If stuck, **Oral History** or **Flattery** gets the local expounding on their particular interests. During dinner an earth tremor will shake the house, but not cause any damage. These happen regularly, apparently.

Guests

Administrator **Walter McNicoll** (b. 1887) is Australian. He served at Gallipoli, Ypres and the Somme. He personally led an expedition up the Sepik River in the Territory of New Guinea in 1935, and happily spends the evening discussing the practicalities of explorations and prospects for gold discovery in New Britain.

Anthropologist **Ernest Chinnery** (b. 1887), Australian, has worked in these territories since 1909 in government and as a patrol officer. He was a pilot in the Great War, and then an anthropology research student at Cambridge University. He has published anthropological papers and lectured to the Royal Geographical Society. Others visit, publish and become famous; he’s here doing the anthropological work every day.

His wife, **Sarah** (b. 1887), is Irish. She married Ernest in 1919 and is a talented photographer. She talks photography and gardening with enthusiasm, and asks to take photographs of the expedition members. She keeps a diary, and her illustrated articles on life in New Guinea are widely read. She can generate good or bad press for the expedition, depending on how the Investigators behave.

Captain Jim Taylor (b. 1901) is in charge of the local *kiaps* — roving law enforcement / judges. He has spent years walking the island, and Errol Flynn worked for him for a couple of months.

Karl Wilhelm (b. 1890), German, captains the *SS Kaiser*, the large cargo ship in the harbor. He trades between here and Germany, and is waiting for the last few plantation cargoes to arrive before sailing back. He is frustrated with the Australian rules and regulations, talking nostalgically of when New Guinea was run by Germany. “But business is business.”

- (core) **Assess Honesty:** There is something Kpt. Wilhelm is not saying; he’s waiting for something important.

Conversation Topics

Expeditions With McNicoll or Ernest: Outdoorsman, or a roleplayed story of exploration, allows the Investigator to impress with tales of derring-do. They join in with stories of the river expeditions they have undertaken. They are stopped by Sarah from providing graphic details of gangrenous wounds during dinner, but donate extra supplies to the expedition the next morning. This adds 10 to the Survival pool.

Whistle and I'll Come

Natives With Chinnery, McNicoll or the Haus Bois: If no Investigator raises the issue of the natives with Chinnery or McNicoll, Freeborn will. The Investigator with the highest **Anthropology** can then overhear this core clue: The natives have a secret society called the Dukduks. May is the most important month for their rituals, held on the Vulcan peak on the south side of the bay.

- 1-point spend: There is a Dukduk costume in the house. It is four feet high, made of grass and leaves woven together into a round base. On top is a conical head with large eyes painted on.

Errol Flynn With Taylor or Sarah: Errol Flynn was in Rabaul in the late Twenties and early Thirties, prospecting for gold and generally trying to make his fortune. He has just become a Hollywood sensation in the film *Captain Blood*, and the expats are still scandalized by his rakish ways, and also that he left without settling several large bar bills.

Plantation Owner Eckhart With Taylor, Haus Bois or Wilhelm: Eckhart is German, has not been seen in Rabaul for a while, and doesn't produce as much copra as his plantation should. He is apparently not a very good farmer.

Haus Boi Conversation: Investigators dining with the servants can also find out that "devils" have been seen in the jungle, though descriptions of them vary widely, and all differ.

Tropical Storm

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Local Celebrities

Lead-Out: Deserted Plantation

The *Thor* is a shallow coastal craft with a wheelhouse cabin. Expedition supplies are stacked in the open bow and the passengers in the stern.

The boat casts off early one morning, with dawn breaking gloriously ahead. The boat chugs solidly through light waves, and the coast glides past on the right. The rough huts of the native area of Rabaul are soon replaced by fields of palm trees. By midday the boat is passing the old capital, Kokopo. Soon all signs of human life have gone, and there is only solid green jungle on one side, and the open blue ocean on the other.

Torsten keeps the boat near to shore. In minutes the sky darkens as clouds close over and a warm, wet wind blows in from the east. Torsten shouts over the rising sound of the wind, "A storm comes!"

It quickly turns from paradise to nightmare; rain lashes over the gunwales and the wind howls, blowing the boat sideways. The supplies in the bow are in danger of falling overboard.

One of the Investigators must clamber forward (Difficulty 3 **Athletics** test) and secure the cargo (Difficulty 3 **Mechanical Repair** test) or lose 3 Survival pool points overboard.

Deserted Plantation

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Tropical Storm

Lead-Out: Abandoned Fields

Just before dusk the boat heads toward the shore and a plantation perched on a shore clearing, surrounded by jungle. A small cargo boat is moored at the plantation jetty. A wooden house stands in the clearing, with storage sheds either side. Regular lines of palm fields contrast against the chaos of the surrounding jungle. The Nakanai Mountains rise high into the sky beyond, the mist-draped peaks still brightly lit by the sinking sun.

Torsten docks, and carriers start unloading the expedition cargo. The plantation house seems oddly dark and unwelcoming. There is no sign of anyone.

The Investigators have a couple of hours to explore the plantation and boat before dark, while their ship is unloaded.

The boat is a small cargo boat, used to ship the plantation products back to Rabaul. The cargo space is empty. The storage sheds contain copra and palm kernels for shipping.

The plantation house is dilapidated and has not been occupied for many weeks; food is rotting in the cupboards. Eckhart was clearly not succeeding as a plantation owner.

(core) **Evidence Collection** or **Bureaucracy:** In the house are letters in German to Eckhart. One is from a German cargo company making arrangements for several crates of biological specimens to be transported by the *SS Kaiser* from Rabaul to the University of Berlin. A second letter from a Dr. Helmut Schlechter at that university offers 4,000 Reichsmarks (about \$1,600, a large amount in 1937) for "live specimens of the unique and

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possibly extra-terrestrial specimens you found in the river hole.” Dr. Freeborn can translate if no one else reads German.

Occult: Dr. Schlechter is known to be a member of the Deutsches Ahnenerbe society.

Torsten fetches supplies and returns to the boat to wait for the expedition.

Abandoned Fields

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Deserted Plantation

Lead-Out: Torrential Downpour

The expedition sets off into the fields behind the plantation. The jungle has been cleared but not maintained. Ferns, brush and vines grow back vigorously, and a path must be cleared for each step. Mosquitoes find any exposed skin, and flies continually hover around. There is little protection from the sun, and the hard work in the conditions is exhausting.

The party must make a Survival test at Difficulty 5 (Difficulty 4 with Outdoorsman) to ensure that clothing protects skin from mosquito bites and the sun. A 1-point spend of **Biology** spots younger, less thick growth, reducing the Survival test Difficulty by 2 more as a quicker path is found. On a failure, the expedition loses 5 points of Survival, as the bearers weaken badly. All Investigators likewise lose 2 points of Health. Torrential Downpour

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Abandoned Plantation

Lead-Out: Any rainforest travel increment

The expedition enters virgin jungle, and progress actually gets easier. Huge trees tower above, younger trees and ferns compete for light beneath. Thick vines and trailing plants thread through the foliage, though the ground is passable. The air is moist, and the trek climbs up into the foothills of the Nakanai Mountains. The humidity is oppressive, all trace of a breeze dies, and then the heavens open. Four inches of rain fall in an hour. The downpour is so heavy that movement becomes nearly impossible, the ground becomes part liquid, and debris falls from the canopy.

Water drenches everyone and everything. A **Preparedness** test at Difficulty 4 makes sure someone packed the supplies in watertight oilcloth (Difficulty 3 if the Investigator has Outdoorsman). On a failure, 4 Survival pool points wash away, and any electrical equipment requires an **Electrical Repair** test at Difficulty 4 to avoid being irreparably damaged.

River Crossing

Scene Type: Challenge / Rainforest Travel Increment

Lead-In: Any rainforest travel increment

Lead-Out: Any rainforest

The expedition comes across a fast river pounding down the mountains. The water has washed the topsoil away, leaving a two foot drop to the river itself, and slippery rocks underwater. It requires a Difficulty 5 Survival test to get everyone across safely. The party can make a **Mechanical**

Repair test at Difficulty 4 to fix ropes and cut vines across the river to ease the crossing and reduce the Survival test by the margin of success. Failure on the Survival test means that a bearer slips and drops 4 Survival pool points worth of supplies, and one of the Investigators is dunked into the river and must make a **Health** test against Difficulty 4 or take +0 damage from dysentery. On a Survival test roll of 1 that also fails, two bearers and two Investigators slip.

Tribal Attack

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction (Tangential) / Rainforest Travel Increment

Lead-In: Any rainforest travel increment

Lead-Out: Any rainforest travel increment

Heavy clouds promise more rain. Birds, invisible in the foliage, call to each other. Insects, constantly clicking and chittering, fall silent as you pass, resuming behind you.

A successful Difficulty 5 **Sense Trouble** test allows warning of the attack and the chance to avoid arrows.

Otherwise the first thing the expedition knows is a handful of arrows flying out of the jungle around. They aim at the carriers first. A local tribe is trying to scare off the party, fearing a rivals' raid. They fight until they have lost two members of their party or received two rounds of gunfire; then they disappear back into the jungle.

Six Tribal Warriors

Abilities: Archery 6, Athletics 7, Fleeing 8, Health 4, Scuffling 6

Whistle and I'll Come

Weapon: -1 (bow and arrow)

When the attackers flee, the bearers produce stone axes and chase after their attackers. A total of 2 points spent from **Intimidation** or **Reassurance** is required to stop them from disappearing. Running after the fleeing attackers is not recommended; non-natives must make **Health** tests (Difficulty 5) to avoid heat exhaustion (+1 damage). At best, running into the jungle only wastes a day (roll another Survival cost); at worst, the pursuers run into an ambush. Each bearer that is killed or runs off costs 4 Survival points.

Ghostly Floater

Scene Type: Core / Rainforest Travel Increment

Lead-In: Any rainforest travel increment

Lead-Outs: Any rainforest travel increment, Tribal Village (after Cannibal Discovery)

Suddenly the bearers become agitated. They shout, “Debil Tambaran!” and point at something about the size of a water bag and partially transparent floating above the treetops, down a slope. It is difficult to make out at this distance, but does appear to be fluttering. The tribesmen quickly string their bows, and let loose long arrows that fall short. They seem scared.

The Investigators can shoot at it; any hits burst it, and it falls to the jungle floor in bits. If the Investigators miss, the tribesmen hit it with a cloud of arrows for the same effect.

Investigators using binoculars or telescopes to get a better look see a



tubular, transparent creature or plant, it's not clear which, about two feet in length, being blown through the air. It has a simple translucent internal structure, and openings at the top and bottom, the lower surrounded by filaments or cilia. Muscular contractions rhythmically move up and down its body. Seeing this eerie unnatural beast is a 2-point Stability test (Difficulty 5).

Blowing the whistle causes the floater to actively swim toward the sound, but the carriers and Lapoon become angry and try to stop the whistler. The floater is too high to capture, and if killed only slime can be found.

Anthropology: Talking to the tribesmen translates that “Debil Tambaran” is an evil spirit or perhaps an ancient ghost. Lapoon has never seen these before.

(core) **Biology:** This is something new to science; it could be some sort of

plant or perhaps an invertebrate or a cloud of spiders.

Cannibal Discovery

Scene Type: Core / Rainforest Travel Increment

Lead-In: Any rainforest travel increment

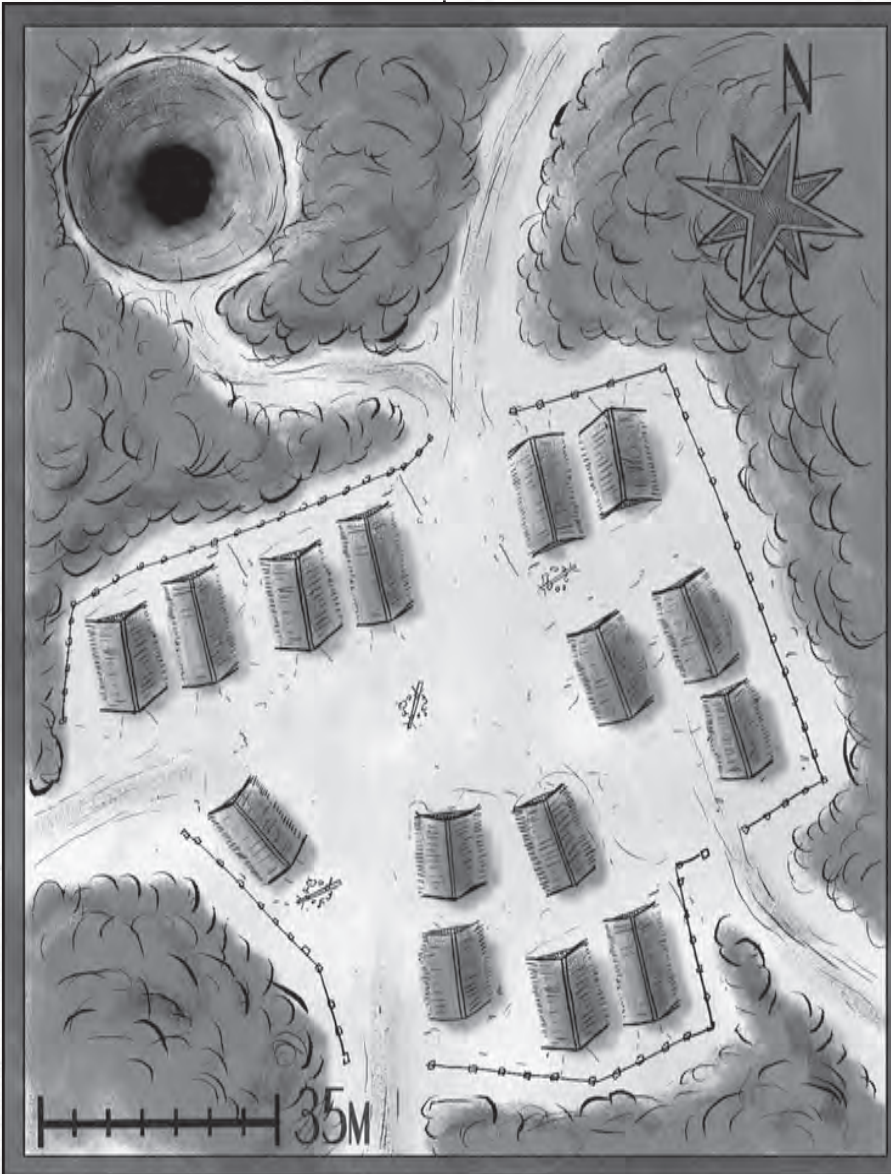
Lead-Outs: Any rainforest travel increment, Tribal Village (after Ghostly Floater)

As the expedition ascends, the forest changes character. The air cools, and mist obscures the forest canopy and the sky. Dark tree trunks loom out of the white and sound is deadened. Moss covers everything and the soil underfoot is deep in wet leaves and humus.

In the remains of a rough camp there are a small collection of three human skulls,

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Tribal Village

Scene: Core/Refresh

Lead-In: Any rainforest travel increment (after Ghostly Floater and Cannibal Discovery)

Lead-Out: Down the Sinkhole

The village sits on a flat clearing high in the mountains, surrounded by a wooden palisade. Unbroken rainforest rolls down the slopes and out across to the far horizon. Scattered around the clearing are fifteen wooden huts. Chickens and hairy pigs run loose and cook fires smolder. The villagers have wild hair, caked in pig fat; the males have long sheaths covering their genitals, and the women have grass skirts. Many villagers have sores or wounds. Lapoon indicates that this is the destination.

First Contact

The *luluai*, or chieftain, meets the expedition outside the village fence to assess them. Other villagers watch from inside the palisade. He offers a thin pig as a gift, and waits for a gift back.

Anthropology: Gift exchange is important in tribal cultures for establishing friendly relations. The expedition should give a gift back, ideally metal tools or salt. In the event, any manufactured goods impress the chief. If they give a gift, they gain 1 free point of Trust (see “Gaining Trust,” below).

Medicine: Many villagers have sores and wounds from jungle living. Treating those injuries helps gain the trust of the village. For every 3 points of First Aid spent per day, gain 1 free point of Trust (see “Gaining Trust,” below).

picked clean to the bone, and scattered around the fire pit are the remaining bones, triggering a 2-point Stability test.

1-point **Medicine** or **Forensics** spend: The skulls and bones are probably not natives, from the condition of the teeth.

Two of them have impact fractures that would have been fatal. Some of the long bones have been cracked to get at the marrow.

(core) **Evidence Collection:** Nearby is a broken crate, with a rotting unidentifiable translucent mush in it.

Whistle and I'll Come

Whistle Stop

After the first day, the villagers gather round the expedition camp and watch these strange aliens, getting closer as they relax. The luluai reacts strongly to being shown the whistle by Freeborn. He is happy to see it returned after all this time, as this confirms these ghost men are the sky spirits returned.

Asked about floaters or the German, Luluai communicates that the floaters are bits of the Devil Spirit ("Debil Tambaran"), and the German plantation owner has woken them from the river hole. They will not show or discuss further the river hole until they trust the expedition.

Gaining Trust

It takes time to gain the trust of the villagers. Language is a constant barrier; the villagers speak only basic pidgin, and some concepts are beyond that vocabulary. The Keeper should use mime and sign language to leave specifics unclear, to hint rather than tell. If the Investigators are stuck or getting frustrated, then make the gestures more understandable, or allow an Anthropology spend (or sudden Languages slot in Pidgin) to turn them into words ("bad place go down now") instead of gestures. Lapoon can interpret to some extent, as well.

The villagers only show the expedition the sinkhole when they trust them. Each day the Investigators can try to gain the villagers' trust. This is simulated by spending Interpersonal pool points, specifically Reassurance, Assess Honesty, Oral History and Flattery. The party can spend 1 point the first day, 2 the second and so forth. Any Investigator with Pidgin as a

language can spend 1 more point per day; any one Investigator can spend 1 Survival point and 1 Bargain point each day, representing giving away food or supplies. (This whole process is only possible because the Investigators and Freeborn are trained anthropologists; having an Anthropology ability makes this trust-gaining process possible at all.)

The total Trust required is 8 points.

The Keeper should not tell the players the total, but roleplay the villagers' increasing relaxation and friendliness. The expedition can make this task easier by their actions, during their first contact and by sharing the bounty of a successful hunt.

The village only has enough food for themselves, so Survival expenditure continues each day, adding time pressure to gaining their trust.

During this break Investigators may refresh up to three General abilities, except for Health, Sanity and Stability, and recover 1 Health point per day. A day hunting in the jungle (a 1-point **Outdoorsman** spend or Difficulty 3 **Stealth** test) provides 3 Survival Pool points. On a day when they hunt, an Investigator cannot also spend points gaining villagers' trust. However, Investigators may need to resort to hunting and sharing with the villagers to gain Trust, if they run out of Interpersonal pool points.

Meal and Myth

When the expedition has gained the villagers' trust, they cook a celebration meal, roasting pigs and sweet potatoes on a large fire. During the meal, the chief tells a myth for the Investigators. Lapoon says this is an old, old story told

from grandfather to son; he translates what he can. Again, the Keeper should try to convey that much of this story is lost in translation.

"Before grandfathers' grandfather, a sky spirit came down and taught us about the Devil Spirit. He made the whistle to call it and a song to wake the fire spirit. The whistle was lost, but we keep the song alive. The fire spirit comes when the whistle and song are together."

He performs a repetitive chant, all the villagers join in, and after a minute of this there is a small earth shudder and the villagers stop, pleased.

They bring out the original Dukduk ritual costume. It is slightly different from the one they saw in Rabaul. It is six feet high, with the same grass and leaf base, but the conical head is featureless and several long bird of paradise feathers come out of the cone's peak.

(core) **Anthropology** or **Occult**: The ritual chant is straightforward, but it is not a native language.

Cthulhu Mythos: These look like the cone-shaped beings the Great Race of Yith possessed, though they were wiped out before humans existed. This causes the loss of 2 Stability points.

The next morning, the luluai excitedly leads them to the sinkhole.

Down the Sinkhole

Scene Type: Core/Challenge

Lead-In: Tribal Village

Lead-Out: Coming for You

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The sinkhole is a huge thousand-foot circular hole punched out of the rainforest floor. The vertical walls drop seven hundred feet down into shadow, and the forest continues unabated at the bottom. A river flows in from one wall, across the bottom and into a large, dark cavern on the other side. On the rim nearby, the undergrowth is hacked back and modern ropes are fixed: someone has climbed down, or perhaps up. There is space to make camp at the bottom of the sinkhole.

Geology: This is a natural sinkhole, formed by heavy rain onto soft rocks causing a section to collapse. It is likely there are caverns below eroded by the river over thousands of years.

Getting the expedition down the sinkhole safely is a Difficulty 3 **Athletics** test using the ropes. (Without ropes, the test would be Difficulty 5.) Investigators can piggyback or cooperate. Failure costs 4 Survival pool points as supplies slip and are crushed on the rocks below.

(core) **Evidence Collection:** At the bottom, under an overhang, are pictographs drawn in mud, long dried on the wall. One clearly shows the outlines of Australia and Europe. Another picture, much larger, is of a triangle shape with fronds coming from the peak.

The first was drawn by Eckhart for the polyp; the second was the polyp querying if Yithians still existed. **Geology** tells any observer that the pictographs were drawn only a few years ago. **Anthropology** indicates that no native, even a mission-educated one, could draw those maps; they must have been sketched by a Westerner, and most likely a European.

Coming for You

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: Down the Sinkhole

Lead-Out: Panicked Plans

The river has cut cathedral-sized caverns through the mountain. Stalactites hang above pools of dark water. Every sound echoes, and there is a constant roar from the river. More caverns lead farther underground. Dark square stone shapes embedded in the limestone wall and floor have been exposed by the river's erosion.

Torchlight reveals a cave off to one side covered in glistening, undulating tubes, like the one they saw floating across the jungle. There are hundreds here, covering the whole side and roof of the cavern. They blindly gape and writhe, drooling. Describe these as loathsomely as possible (4-point Stability test, Difficulty 5). On the floor of the cavern are several wooden crates, similar to the ones found in the "Cannibal Discovery" scene.

The buds take no proactive action until handled or hurt; then they start whistling, and a few flop to the floor to attack the Investigators. They are easily destroyed individually by physical attacks or fire, but the volume of them requires time. If no one else does, Harvey will poke one with a stick and start them whistling.

1-point **Biology** spend: These are juvenile creatures, like the early stages of some crustaceans or insects. They are a completely new species.

(core) **Evidence Collection:** The crates have German stamps on them, and there were more crates here that are now gone.

Cthulhu Mythos: These are immature flying polyps. There are many. They are free. They will mature. Stability loss 3, Sanity loss 1.

Baby Flying Polyps

Abilities: Athletics 2, Health 1, Scuffling 1

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +0

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: -2 (sucking orifice)

Armor: none

Stability Loss: +0

After the buds start piping, the Investigators have a minute before they hear an atonal whistling sound in response, echoing from all directions.

The ancient polyp comes bursting up out of the river. A successful **Sense Trouble** test at Difficulty 5 prevents the polyp getting a free surprise attack. The polyp is a fifteen-foot-high translucent mess of pulsating sacs, tentacles and tubular orifices.

Non-Flying Flying Polyp

See rulebook for special attacks. This polyp has been crippled and cannot fly. Its suction attack also now only works on targets in line of sight.

Abilities: Athletics 8, Health 20, Scuffling 28, Wind 15

Hit Threshold: 4 (6 if invisible)

Alertness Modifier: +0 (damaged senses)

Weapon: +1 (polypous extrusion); ignores armor

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Whistle and I'll Come



Armor: -3 vs. anything; all physical attacks do only -1 damage; fire and electricity do normal damage.

Stability Loss: +2

The polyp, for dramatic reasons, attacks the bearers and any locals first, using its windblast. They scatter, only to be caught in the strange suction wind and bludgeoned to death. If an Investigator manages to hurt the polyp, it targets them next and uses its invisibility talent. Explosives, if the Investigators decided they were necessary on an anthropology expedition, and managed to keep them dry (Preparedness

test, Difficulty 4), do minimum damage unless they are incendiaries.

A flying polyp is a serious opponent, and it is likely the Investigators flee for their lives. Their escape options are limited: they can jump into the river and hope it emerges somewhere safe, or they can try to climb the ropes back up the sinkhole. Running deeper into the caverns quickly leads to a dark dead end, leaving only fighting or jumping into the river. Blowing the whistle gets the polyp's attention and draws its attacks. Heroic Investigator actions to distract

the polyp while others escape should be rewarded dramatically, perhaps by being knocked into the river at Health 1 instead of being killed.

Climbing Back Up

It requires either an **Athletics** or **Fleeing** test at Difficulty 5 to climb back up the swaying, wind-tossed ropes in a panic. Failure means the Investigator is stuck halfway up for a round before they can try again, still at risk of attack.

If the Keeper thinks it necessary, natives appear at the top of the sinkhole to

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pull on ropes (reducing the climbing Difficulty to 3) and provide covering arrow fire, distracting the polyp. The polyp spends another round destroying them with a wind blast.

Jumping in the River

The river is a raging torrent, and Investigators jumping in get swept uncontrollably through underground caverns, battered on rocks and nearly drowned. They wash up some minutes later in a jungle rock pool. Unless they make **Athletics** tests (Difficulty 5), they take a considerable battering (−1 damage).

When most of the Investigators have escaped, the polyp disappears back into the caverns and starts climbing up out of a small hole to chase them through the jungle. It can't fly but knows other cavern exits and can climb like a leech, end over end.

The Keeper should use this as a pacing tool: if the party easily escaped the initial attack, the polyp climbs up the sinkhole, maintaining the race against time. If the Investigators are scattered and badly hurt, it takes a longer route to the surface through the underground caverns, giving the Investigators a chance to regroup and repair. The sounds of whistling getting nearer can be used to maintain tension and keep pressure on. This scene should leave the Investigators hurt and shaken, but not dead. If the party splits, some climbing back up and others jumping in the river, the Keeper should reunite the party quickly.

Panicked Plans

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Coming for You

Lead-Outs: Polyps in the Mist, Full Steam Back

This short scene lets the Investigators discuss how to proceed after fleeing the sinkhole.

They need to deal with two threats, the personal threat of the polyp hunting them, and the wider threat of the buds being shipped back for purposes unknown. It is likely both threats come to a showdown in Rabaul.

The remaining scenes are to be mixed and matched by the Keeper in response to the Investigators' plans. The Keeper should also pace the bud cargo ship storyline, so Eckhart and the buds have arrived at Rabaul just ahead of the Investigators, whenever they get there.

The polyp is intelligent, and desperate to ensure its buds are dispersed. It cannot fly and so cannot leave New Britain. How it tracks the Investigators is unknown, but it should always appear at the best (i.e., worst) moment for drama. If the polyp is still alive when they get to Rabaul, it arrives and rampages through town in dramatic fashion. It will have refreshed all pools including half its lost Health.

Eckhart and Kapitän Wilhelm are trying to set sail with the buds to Germany. Eckhart will sacrifice anyone to achieve this; Wilhelm will not risk his life. Once the buds are loaded, the *Kaiser* sails away.

Threat One: Dealing with the Polyp

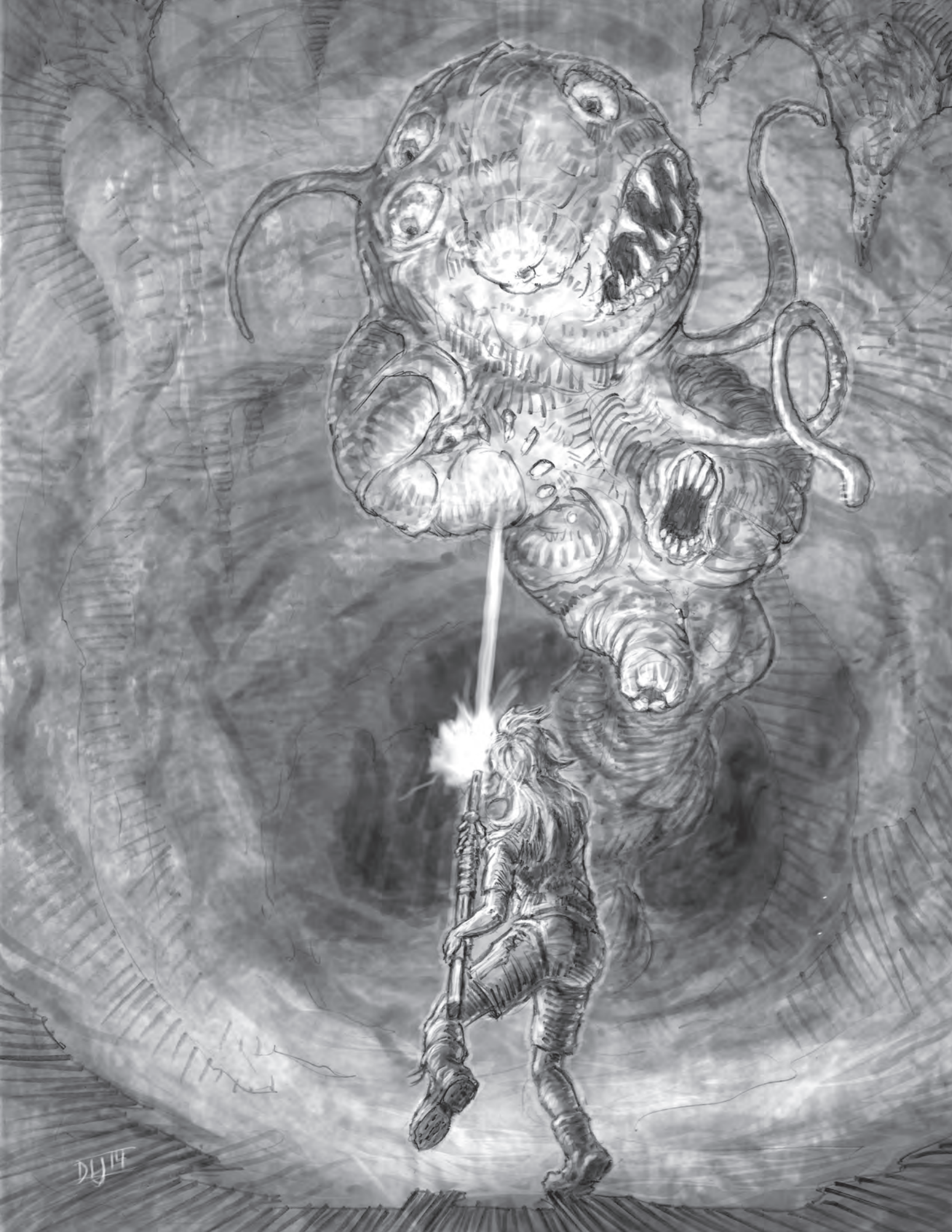
The main tools the Investigators have to stop the polyp are electricity and fire. Firearms and other physical attacks are ineffectual. Blowing the whistle, or a bud whistling for mommy, brings the polyp over any distance, giving the

Investigators a level of control. The most effective solutions follow a pattern of luring the polyp with the whistle into a killing trap.

The Keeper is free to remove options that are too Pulpy for her tastes, and players may come up with other viable plans.

- **Dukduk Ritual:** This can be instigated at Rabaul or, if desperate, elsewhere. At Rabaul, it causes the volcanoes to erupt, destroying the polyp and most of Rabaul. Elsewhere it calls a huge tropical thunderstorm. See "The Ritual" scene (p. 185).
- **Fire:** At the Rabaul docks and the plantation are stores of copra (dried coconut flesh) and palm oil, both of which can be used to create flame weapons or (with **Explosives**) enormous fireballs. The rainforest is wet and does not burn. The plantation house and sheds are both wooden and burn well.
- **Burying It:** Sealing the polyp in the underground cavern is difficult because there are many exits. Using **Explosives** (Difficulty 7 at least) to bury it under tons of rock will probably kill it or return it to stasis, if it can be lured into the right spot.
- **Fight:** Massed physical attacks, from tribesmen with spears, or troops with rifles at Rabaul, may stop it eventually, but at the cost of many lives. The tribesmen do not naturally work together, so Interpersonal abilities are required to get them to put aside generations of warfare. At Rabaul McNicoll won't give credence to crazy talk of invisible monsters, at least until it arrives. Credit Rating 5+ or a 3-point spend of **Reassurance** or **Intimidation** persuades him to lend five soldiers and a no-nonsense sergeant to the Investigators. If the polyp does





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attack Rabaul, McNicoll and the thirty troops in Rabaul prove steadfast, but outgunned.

- **We're Going to Need a Bigger Gun:** If everyone seems stumped, have an Investigator spend a point of Architecture to remember the gun emplacement ("I had thought it might be a Moltke-era rampart, but I suspect it was just shoddily done later"). Getting access to the gun requires either interacting with McNicoll as in "Fight," above, or a **Stealth** test (Difficulty 5) to sneak past the single guard on duty at the entrance to the emplacement. It requires a **Mechanical Repair** test at Difficulty 6 to put into condition (Difficulty 4 for serving or ex-Military Investigators). Fire the gun using Mechanical Repair instead of Firearms. There are only a handful of shells. (Roll a die, or give a number that seems good to you.) A direct hit on the polyp destroys it, but it needs to be lured within range, and the gun cannot quickly traverse to fire at moving targets (+1 to the polyp's Hit Threshold). The gun can also be used to sink the ship (Hit Threshold 3).

Threat Two: Stopping the Buds From Sailing

Getting back to the plantation is nightmarish if the polyp is still alive ("Polyps in the Mist"). But regardless, heading back to the plantation is the only sensible, known route. From the plantation the Investigators can sail back to Rabaul ("Full Steam Back"). Their options are then "The Ritual" and the "Stop the Ship" scenes.

If both threats come to a head in Rabaul with Investigators split between the two scenes, the Keeper should run both "Stop

the Ship" and "The Ritual" simultaneously, cutting back and forth between them. If this is too complicated, then the ship will not be ready to sail until the polyp is dead.

Polyps in the Mist

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: Panicked Plans

Lead-Out: Full Steam Back

Only use this scene if the Investigators head through the jungle without having killed the polyp.

The polyp hunts them through the forest (on foot/pseudopod). They can hear its whistling, sometimes far away, sometimes close. It uses its control over winds to either preternaturally bring mists, or suddenly clear them away.

The expedition has probably lost all their supplies, bearers and maybe Lapoon. Each Investigator can try a **Preparedness** test at Difficulty 4 to have 2 points of supplies on them. The Keeper can modify this depending on what happened down the sinkhole, but they hopefully still have the whistle. (Freeborn can always produce it, triumphantly, from his torn and mud-covered jacket.)

To get back to the plantation requires two successful **Piloting** tests, Difficulty 5, to navigate correctly through the jungle. An Investigator with Outdoorsman reduces that Difficulty to 4; if Lapoon is still with them, he reduces that Difficulty to 2. A failure means the expedition is lost and makes no progress for a travel increment, and still uses up Survival pool points.

With each test they also need to avoid the hunting polyp. They can do this by the following:

- **Hide:** This is a **Stealth** test at Difficulty 4. A **Sense Trouble** test (Difficulty 5) first gives time to prepare and reduces the Stealth test difficulty to 3. Keep the Stealth Difficulty hidden from the players so they don't know if it has seen them or not. The polyp comes waddling by and stops, and unnatural winds blow as it tries to sense them. If they succeeded, it moves on; if not, it detects and attacks someone. It takes a Difficulty 3 **Fleeing** or **Athletics** test to lose it in the jungle again.
- **Run:** This is a **Fleeing** or **Athletics** test to get far away, fast. Each Investigator must make a Difficulty 3 test or fall badly for +1 damage and exhaustion. This also doubles the rolled Survival pool cost for the increment.
- **Sacrifice:** If the Keeper feels things have gotten truly desperate, Lapoon, Freeborn or Harvey will sacrifice themselves, heading off alone making lots of noise, to lure the polyp away. (Freeborn presses the whistle into the hands of the nearest Investigator first.) The remaining expedition hears a terrible scream, and a triumphant whistling shortly afterward, for a 5-point Stability test (Difficulty 5).

If the expedition has any live specimen buds along, they whistle constantly, making hiding impossible.

If the Investigators travel through the jungle but aren't hunted by the polyp, then the journey is much simpler. Most of their supplies are still lost at the sinkhole. They can climb down again



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(**Athletics** test again) and recover what is left, returning their previous Survival Pool minus 1d6; alternatively, at the village, they can spend 2 points of either **Bargain** or **Intimidation** for 4 Survival Pool points. The journey back to the plantation is simplified to a single Survival test with a Difficulty of 6.

Full Steam Back

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-Ins: Panicked Plans, Polyps in the Mist

Lead-Outs: The Ritual, Stop the Ship

At the plantation, the *Thor* is still there, but there is no sign of the plantation boat or Torsten. Investigators should realize that Eckhart has left with crates of polyp buds to make his rendezvous with the cargo ship in Rabaul.

To sail the *Thor* without Torsten requires a **Piloting** test at Difficulty 3. If no Investigator has this ability then **Mechanical Repair** (Difficulty 5) at least lets them get under way. Navigation is straightforward as long as they keep the shore in sight, on the left.

If the polyp is alive, it smashes through the plantation house as they cast off. Once they are out to sea, it disappears into the jungle and, out of sight, heads to Rabaul.

During the day long trip back Investigators can refresh one General ability and First Aid.

As they sail into Blanche Bay again, the Investigators see the plantation boat alongside the *SS Kaiser* at the docks. Stevedores are loading and unloading cargo; the *Kaiser* is not ready to sail,

yet. German sailors stand on the decks with rifles.

On the southern volcano, Vulcan, large crowds of natives gather, and smoke rises from a large bonfire.

The Ritual

Scene: Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: Full Steam Back

Lead-Out: Stop the Ship

Use this scene if the Investigators attempt to recreate the Dukduk ritual.

Hundreds of natives are gathered on Vulcan to perform their rituals. Vulcan is on the south of the bay, two-and-a-half miles outside of Rabaul. There is a central crater at the peak of a bleak, ash-covered hill. Smoke billows into the sky from the crater, and sulfurous pools bubble around.

The natives circle around a large bonfire, but when the polyp arrives the women and children flee and warriors grab weapons and face it. The local elder puts on a Dukduk costume and begins a chant and hopping dance, repeating the same words over and over, but to no effect.

Occult or Anthropology: The chant is slightly different to the one heard in the village — a phrase is missing; the pronunciation is wrong. The right words must be used to make the ritual work.

There are several spare Dukduk costumes on Vulcan (plus the costumes in Government House), and an Investigator can perform the ritual by wearing the costume and chanting the words, assuming he has Occult or

Anthropology and was present at the village when the luluai told the story. If an Investigator joins in or is considering it, the elder is windblasted by the polyp, leaving the responsibility for the ritual solely on the Investigators.

Chanting the ritual requires a Difficulty 7 **Stability** test (Difficulty 5 with a 1-point spend of **Geology**) and the sacrifice of 20 total points of Health (the air seems forcibly expelled from your body, you sweat oceans, your skin burns up). Investigators chanting along may spend Health toward that total, whether they succeed in the Stability test or not — only one caster needs to succeed.

The Investigators also need to blow the whistle to attract the polyp, which heads for Rabaul initially.

If the Investigators do nothing, the polyp appears out of the jungle and slaughters the tribesmen attacking it with spears, then the Dukduks. This is a 7-point Stability test; fighting it is a 5-point Stability test. Both tests are Difficulty 5.

The ritual takes five rounds to complete, during which the polyp attacks. It must be held off to prevent it stopping the ritual.

The Investigators can distract the polyp by either attacking it or blowing the whistle. It moves toward anyone blowing the whistle and attacks with pseudopods, or attempts to kill the person performing the ritual. Flaming brands from the fire can be used as weapons (−1 damage on the polyp, ignoring its armor), and it avoids people wielding these.

As the ritual progresses, earthquakes and distant rumblings grow, getting

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more violent as the ritual peaks. The ritual climaxes as, through alien science, the volcano erupts. There is a massive earthquake; boulders and lava explode into the air. If it is nearby, a

vent opens and lava bursts out covering the polyp, which burns to death, whistling horrifically. Investigators near the polyp when it is killed take +2 damage.

The polyp should be killed here, if the Investigators try anything sensible.

Boulders fall into the bay, hitting and sinking the *Kaiser* or any other ship at sea or in dock, if the Keeper wants. Rabaul is showered with rocks, lava and ash, houses burn.

Anyone on the volcano's peak needs to make an **Athletics** test at Difficulty 6 (or a **Fleeing** test at Difficulty 5) to avoid being hit by red-hot debris and molten rocks for +2 damage. They come out covered in ash, coughing.

Whether by this or natural processes, the volcano at Rabaul always erupts at the end of the scenario. This wipes out any physical evidence of the polyp attack on Rabaul, if it occurred, and destroys the polyp, alive or dead.

Stop the Ship

Scene: Core

Lead In: Full Steam Back, The Ritual

Lead-Out: The Ritual

The Investigators can stop the cargo ship and buds by any of the following:

- **Ram:** Ramming the *Kaiser* with the *Thor* requires a **Piloting** test at Difficulty 3. The impact renders both ships unseaworthy. Eckhart then tries to take a crate and hijack a small boat to escape.
- **Law:** They can try to persuade McNicoll, the administrator, that the ship must be stopped. He is naturally suspicious of the German captain; a 1-point **Flattery** or **Credit Rating** (4+) spend persuades him to spare



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five soldiers, but, if the polyp is attacking Rabaul, this requires a 3-point spend: he needs all his men. The ship's crew resists with force.

- **Ritual:** Performing the Dukduk ritual causes the volcano to erupt, sinking the ship and its cargo at the bottom of the bay. See "The Ritual" scene.
- **Board:** If the Investigators can get aboard the German ship, they can kill the buds by hand. The crew are alert and armed, so this won't be easy. There are three crates in the hold containing buds.
- **Big Gun:** The artillery piece (see p. 173) can be used to shell the ship, if the ammunition has not been used already. Two hits against its Hit Threshold of 3, or one really good

one (a result of 8), are required to stop it.

Eckhart, Insane Plantation Owner

Abilities: Athletics 4, Health 4, Scuffling 3

Weapon: -2 (fists)

Five Sailors

Abilities: Athletics 4, Firearms 4, Fleeing 5, Health 4, Weapons 6

Weapon: -1 (belaying pin), -1 (.22 pistol), +0 (old Mauser rifle)

Exits and Rewards

Rabaul is in chaos after the eruption; people are lost and injured. Hundreds of natives were caught in the eruption. Fires burn, and the bay has changed shape. McNicoll organizes rescue

and medical centers, and soon ships and trucks evacuate everyone down to Kokopo for onward transport to Australia. Rabaul is under martial law and off-limits for the next few weeks.

For Pulp mode games, destroying all the polyp's buds and stopping them leaving New Britain is worth a refresh of 1 Sanity, and killing the polyp itself is another 1 Sanity.

In a Purist game the Keeper should remind Investigators of their adventure with recurrent malaria attacks, months later.

Bringing a recording of the ritual, a Dukduk costume and the whistle back to Miskatonic University is the ideal outcome from the Inquiry point of view.



A Load of Blarney

"THERE WERE SECRETS, SAID THE PEASANTS, WHICH MUST NOT BE UNCOVERED; SECRETS THAT HAD LAIN HIDDEN SINCE THE PLAGUE CAME TO THE CHILDREN OF PARTHOLAN IN THE FABULOUS YEARS BEYOND HISTORY."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT, "THE MOON-BOG"

THE HOOK

On December 11, 1937, the steamship *Annagher* sank off the coast of Ballymacormick, Ireland. The court investigation attributed the sinking to "a movement which was rendered inevitable by the peculiar quality of the cargo and its distribution." The wreck report also expressed puzzlement that, although the time between initial listing and capsizing was quick, the crew should have had ample time to make use of the *Annagher's* lifeboats, life jackets and life buoys, and yet did not. Nine of the ten-member crew died in the wreck.

In the early spring of 1938, a lump of iron recovered from the hold is sent to Miskatonic University for examination. Where the salvage crew saw nothing but scrap iron, steel and lead, a scholar at Dublin's Trinity College thinks she might have stumbled onto several idols depicting a goddess not of this world. She has sent it to Dr. Armitage for study, and has invited a team to cross the Atlantic and accompany her as she ventures into the graves of the kings and queens of Erin.

Associate Professor of Archaeology Ferdinand Ashley will join the Investigators, as does Dr. Wingate Peaslee. The university can book passage for the team on a steamship that travels from Boston to Dublin via Liverpool if they're in North America, or, if they're somewhere that air travel would be more convenient, the university will book them on a flight to London's Croydon Airport, and from there the Investigators can take a train to Liverpool and a ferry to Dublin.

THE SPINE

The Investigators meet Mary Sullivan, Dr. Armitage's contact at Trinity College, in **Welcome to Dublin**. After a day to learn what Professor Sullivan knows, they go **Into the Graves of the Kings at Brú na Bóinne**. From there, Sullivan takes them west to **The Barry Estate**, then into **Bog Country** to visit **The Hill of Uisneach** at Beltaine. The **Poulnabrone Dolmen** in the limestone hills of **The Burren** offers up clues to what Mormo and her followers might be planning. Heading north to **Sligo**, the expedition climbs Knocknarea and discovers **The Desecrated Cairn**, where the eldritch goddess awaits on **The Dark Side of the Moon**.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

The *Annagher's* hold contained more than a poorly distributed load of scrap

metal. Two of the now-deceased crew had accepted a bribe from a man who called himself an antiquarian, but who, in truth, was nothing more than a grave robber. They were to smuggle two trunks aboard the ship and release them into the custody of his associate when the ship docked, but it foundered before it was two hours out of Belfast.

Within those trunks were idols and statuettes sacred to the goddess Medb, and the theft has angered both the goddess and her followers. Conditions would be dire enough were Medb your run-of-the-mill spurned deity, but for thousands of years, those who worshiped this legendary queen of Tara have truly been worshipping Mormo.

With Beltaine just around the corner and the stars and moon lining up to suit their purposes, Mormo's cultists intend to free her from her exile on the dark side of the moon and unleash her on the world.

TOUR AND TRAVEL

National improvements in the 1920s made Ireland's motorways easy and convenient to travel. Relying on major roads, going from Dublin in the east to Galway in the west is a two-hour drive. Traveling south from Sligo to Kinsale takes about four and a half hours. However, the major cities

Where Headlines and History Meet

The *Annagher* truly did sink in December 1937, and the incident report mentions both the cargo's odd nature and the crew's failure to abandon ship. The survivor is not named, so Colin Doyle and his actions aboard the foundering ship have been completely invented for this expedition.

Ireland is rich with mythology and legends that are as old as or — as some of the stories about the shaping of the land suggest — older than the rolling green hills. Medb/Maeve was both queen and goddess, and rumor has it that a sunny day on February 1st means the Cailleach is gathering firewood for a long winter. The gruesome rite performed in “A Strange Kind of Worship” has been given a Lovecraftian twist, but several Irish legends tell of a man whose own hide was stripped away during an escape from danger and was replaced with that of a sheep or goat by his well-meaning friends.

Explorations of the Neolithic passage tombs were only just beginning in the 1930s. Many of the sites weren't restored until decades later — some were even being used as cow pastures and quarries before they were reclaimed for preservation. Today, visitors to Newgrange have to arrive early to claim a spot on a tour bus if they hope to get into the tomb. In 1938, the Investigators have the burial sites all to themselves.

Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Hills (−2)	Brú na Bóinne	N/A	N/A
Bog Land (−1)	The Barry Estate	Archaeology (false confidence)	4 or none
Hills (−2)	The Hill of Uisneach	N/A	N/A
<i>Bog Land (−1)</i>	<i>Blackwater Bog</i>	<i>Mechanical Repair</i>	4
Karst (−1)	Poulnabrone Dolmen	N/A	4 or none
<i>Hills (−2)</i>	<i>Sligo Town</i>	<i>Psychoanalysis or Oral History</i>	<i>Refresh 4</i>
Steep Hills (−1)	Medb's Cairn	N/A	N/A
Desert-like (+2)	The Dark Side of the Moon	N/A	N/A
<i>Return (−2)</i>	<i>Return Voyage</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Scenes in *italics*, above, can be relatively easily compressed into a line or two of color and setup and a Survival test (or test of the Relief ability).

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and towns were left to judge which of the local roads needed the most attention (or whether they needed any at all.) This makes it quite easy to get lost or for a car to get stuck in tracks that lead through bog lands.

Since the passage tombs aren't yet tourist attractions, however, accessing them often means leaving the road and traveling over uneven ground. It might be more convenient to camp out when the Investigators are finished gathering their clues than risk a broken ankle in the dark.

The Tour for this expedition is seven days, though that can be lengthened or shortened a bit depending on the Investigators' decisions. It is divided into nine travel increments. The first eight are the trip from site to site; the last is the return to town.

Survival, in the context of this scenario, doesn't primarily deal with physical threats like starvation or disease: modern grocery stores and chemist's shops are just hours away, after all! In this adventure, Survival represents the psychic resources of the team as a whole: Mormo is a goddess of chaos and fear, death and disruption. Think of this expedition as more like a haunted house exploration than a jungle expedition. The food doesn't dwindle; it ceases to nourish, tasting of mud and ashes. The party doesn't starve or sicken; it is sapped of will and energy. (Rather than drain Athletics due to starvation, drain Stability; only on the moon does losing Survival actually lead to true starvation.) Ammunition isn't expended; it just goes missing. That said, a wrong turn on the dark side

of the moon can be just as deadly as a missed path in the Amazon.

Survival Pool

The expedition leaves Dublin with a Survival pool of 15 points, representing a few packed lunches, a flask or canteen per person, good walking boots and a spare jerry can of gasoline.

Firearms

Gun-toting Investigators should remember that under the Irish Republic's Firearms Act of 1925, only licensed firearms may be carried. Unless the Investigator has Credit Rating 5+ and cares to spend 2 Law points, she cannot even carry a shotgun without an Irish government license. Irish citizen Investigators can spend 1 Law point or make a Preparedness test (Difficulty 4) to have a licensed firearm already.

Sullivan has a license; Ashley has a British license and a soft bag he keeps his rifle in to avoid nosy policemen.

EXPEDITION PERSONNEL

Miskatonic Team

Miskatonic sends Dr. Ferdinand Ashley and Dr. Wingate Peaslee, plus one of Ashley's young grad students, along with the Investigators. If everyone departs Boston together, there is time on the voyage across the Atlantic to get better acquainted, though Ashley spends the majority of his time in his cabin studying the artifact. If the Investigators arrive later, Alma Russell meets them at the ferry in Dublin.

Dr. Ferdinand Ashley,
Associate Professor
of Archaeology



Ferdinand Ashley (b. 1891) is a weathered man. Not quite fifty, but certainly on the far side of forty, he has the appearance of a man who's spent years in the sun being scoured by wind and sand. This is, quite simply, because that is true. He's equally comfortable sleeping beneath the stars or under the roof of a fine hotel. In his downtime he's known to regale his companions with tales of digs and peril in far-off lands. However, once he's at a dig site, he's all business.

While Dr. Ashley's specialization is in Egyptology, the archaeologist quite readily took the opportunity to explore some of Ireland's most ancient burial grounds. Many of the passage tombs have only recently been opened, and Ashley is eager to be among the first to discover what lies within.



Load of Blarney

He responds well to curiosity about his past adventures (Flattery), and to academic curiosity. Even out of the classroom, he's always teaching.

Abilities: Anthropology 3, Archaeology 4, Astronomy 1, Athletics 5, Firearms 5, Fleeing 4, Health 5, Languages 3 (Arabic, Latin, Spanish), Occult 2, Preparedness 3, Scuffling 4, Weapons 2

Weapon: +0 (Remington M34 .22LR sporting rifle), -1 (knife)

Dr. Wingate Peaslee, Professor of Psychology



A decade younger than his colleague, Wingate Peaslee (b. 1900) acts like a man ten years older. Quiet, introspective and often sad, it's hard to draw Peaslee out into conversation. However, if the topic turns to dreams, Peaslee will participate and attempt to interpret their meanings.

Dr. Peaslee hopes his concentration in abnormal psychology might help the

team gain insight on why the *Annagher's* crew didn't take advantage of the life-saving devices aboard the ship. There is an occasional awkwardness between Peaslee and Ashley, but it's by no means hostile. Both men were part of the Western Australia expedition of 1935, after which Dr. Peaslee's father was committed to an institution. Neither man brings the senior Peaslee up in conversation directly, but if the Investigators ask about him, they won't shy away from the discussion.

He responds positively to Investigators with an interest in Psychoanalysis, and, as long as he's not constantly prompted to hold up his end of the conversation, he seems content to listen to his companions' chatter (Oral History).

Abilities: Archaeology 1, Assess Honesty 4, Athletics 3, Driving 5, Evidence Collection 2, First Aid 4, Fleeing 3, Health 7, Languages 3 (German, Latin, Spanish), Library Use 3, Occult 1, Photography 3, Piloting 6, Preparedness 6, Psychoanalysis 3, Scuffling 6

Alma Russell, Graduate Student

Alma attended Miskatonic University on a full academic scholarship. The daughter of a seamstress and a long-absent sailor, she has scrimped and saved and studied her way through school. She insists she made room in her steamer trunk for books and tools by ruthlessly paring down her packing list, but the truth is she simply doesn't have the income to spare on an extensive wardrobe. The same outfits make several appearances over the course of the expedition. This is even more noticeable if the Investigators were on the ship with her: she only has the one dress.



Dr. Ashley has taken Alma under his wing, and she's proven herself to be a star student. While other more well-off grad students might have been likelier picks for this trip, Alma's minor is in the folklore of the British Isles. Dr. Ashley offered to cover — out of his own pocket — any costs for Miss Russell that the university doesn't.

Pleasant and personable, Alma has eyes only for her studies. Attempts at flirting are politely but firmly shut down; she's on this expedition to further her career, not find a partner. She responds best to curiosity about her field, and, like Ashley, enjoys taking on a teaching role.

Abilities: Anthropology 2, Archaeology 3, Athletics 3, Biology 1, First Aid 5, Fleeing 6, Health 5, History 4, Languages 1 (Gaelic), Scuffling 2, Sense Trouble 6

Alertness Modifier: +2



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Locals

Mary Sullivan,
Professor of Archaeology



Professor Sullivan has been teaching at Trinity College for a decade. Now in her early fifties, she spent her youth traveling the world as an archaeologist. Her particular passion is the relationship between ancient constructs and astronomical alignments. Give her a telescope and a set of ruins, and she'll be overjoyed. Her brook-no-nonsense outlook is softened by her eagerness to pursue and share knowledge. She gets along quite well with Dr. Ashley and Alma Russell, and can even coax a few sentences out of Dr. Peaslee from time to time. She has a habit of nibbling the pad of her left thumb when she's thinking.

Mary responds much like the other academics, to intellectual curiosity and an eagerness to learn.

Abilities: Anthropology 1, Archaeology 4, Astronomy 4, Athletics 3, Firearms 3, First Aid 4, Fleeing 5, Health 5, Languages 3 (French, Gaelic, German), Occult 2, Weapons 3

Weapon: +0 (Winchester Model 97 16-gauge shotgun), -1 (shillelagh)

Colin Doyle,
Survivor of the *Annagher*



Colin remembers very little of the last few hours of the *Annagher's* last voyage. What pieces he *can* recall seem like scenes from a very impossible, extremely terrifying dream. In the six months since the shipwreck, twists of white have worked themselves into the twenty-three-year-old's dark red hair, and the muscles he'd built up hauling cargo on the *Annagher* have begun to lose their tone. He's a big man withered by trauma, a young man turned old by fear. He does his best to keep up appearances, pretending nothing has changed for him. Joining

Professor Sullivan and the Miskatonic team on this expedition, he hopes, will help end the nightmares.

He responds best to straightforward talk. He knows he's not handling the aftermath of the wreck well, but doesn't want to be coddled. A bit of mutual Flattery goes a long way with him, and while he doesn't have the intellectual arsenal the rest of the team does, he's intent on being as useful as he can. Investigators who ask for his help carrying and hauling equipment are quickly obliged (Athletics). He gets frustrated if he's ignored during academic chats; asking his opinion and including him win him over (Reassurance).

Abilities: Athletics 8, Craft 1, Filch 3, Flattery 3, Intimidation 2, Mechanical Repair 4, Outdoorsman 2, Scuffling 6, Streetwise 1

Weapon: -1 (knife)

WELCOME TO DUBLIN

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Outs: Brú na Bóinne, Lords of Tara

After a long trip, the Investigators and the Miskatonic team arrive in Dublin. The city teems with life: businessmen hurry to their offices; shoppers stroll up Grafton Street, peering at window displays; students take advantage of the lovely spring day to loll about on St. Stephen's Green. In some places, the pleasant sights are interrupted by evidence of the damage done to the city during the Easter Rising of 1916 and the Irish Civil War, though Dublin is rebuilding.

Load of Blarney

A Question of Timing

This expedition assumes the Miskatonic team arrives in Dublin at the end of April 1938, and reaches the Hill of Uisneach on April 30. The Keeper might wish to keep the exact date they land in Dublin nebulous to build in enough time for any extra exploration the Investigators might need, to allow for them electing to spend an extra night or two at any of the sites in between, or in case they decide to take in as many sites in one day as they can — one can, after all, drive across the whole country in a few short hours.

If their investigations stretch out long enough that they arrive *after* May 1, don't panic: some Beltaine observations follow the astronomical date rather than the calendar one. This could place the celebration closer to May 5 or 7. Additionally, ancient Beltaine festivals often lasted several days, so having a few bonfires still lit when the group turns up isn't implausible.

The River Liffey splits the city into north and south, and is spanned by several bridges. Boaters drift by beneath, making way for the cargo ships and ferries.

They arrive at their hotel and meet Mary Sullivan, the Trinity College professor who contacted Dr. Armitage with the idol. Mary has reason to believe these idols have a connection to Medb, also known as Maeve or Queen Mab, but there are markings on them that are definitely *not* consistent with anything she's discovered in her years of studying Irish and Celtic mythology.

Mary has planned a tour of several known passage tombs: Newgrange in the east, Poulnabrone dolmen in the west, and — the grand finale — Knocknarea in the northwest.

With them, too, is Colin Doyle, the last survivor of the *Annagher*. He's looking for answers within the ruins, too, including

why he remembers so little of the wreck and why, in the dim recollections he does have, his crewmates refused to board the lifeboats.

Dinner — or perhaps an early lunch — is quite pleasant. Jokes are made about Beltaine approaching, and a 1-point **Anthropology** spend or chat with Alma reveals that the bonfires lit during Beltaine were done partly to protect the people from disease. The rituals there also were intended to appease the *aos si*, the spirits sometimes known as the Fair Folk, who could do harm or good on a whim.

Two of Dublin's museums might interest the Investigators. The National Museum has a collection of prehistoric pieces that tells much of the story of ancient Ireland and its inhabitants. The passage tombs themselves are in the early days of excavation, so the information on them isn't comprehensive, but the museum's collection offers some tantalizing

previews of what they can expect once they descend into the passage tombs.

The Natural History Museum opened in 1877, and its interior has remained unchanged since that time. It hosts the collection locals refer to as the "Dead Zoo," and perhaps some of the pieces in there seem just a touch off to the Investigators.

INTO THE GRAVES OF KINGS

Brú na Bóinne

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Welcome to Dublin

Lead-Outs: Lords of Tara, The Barry Estate

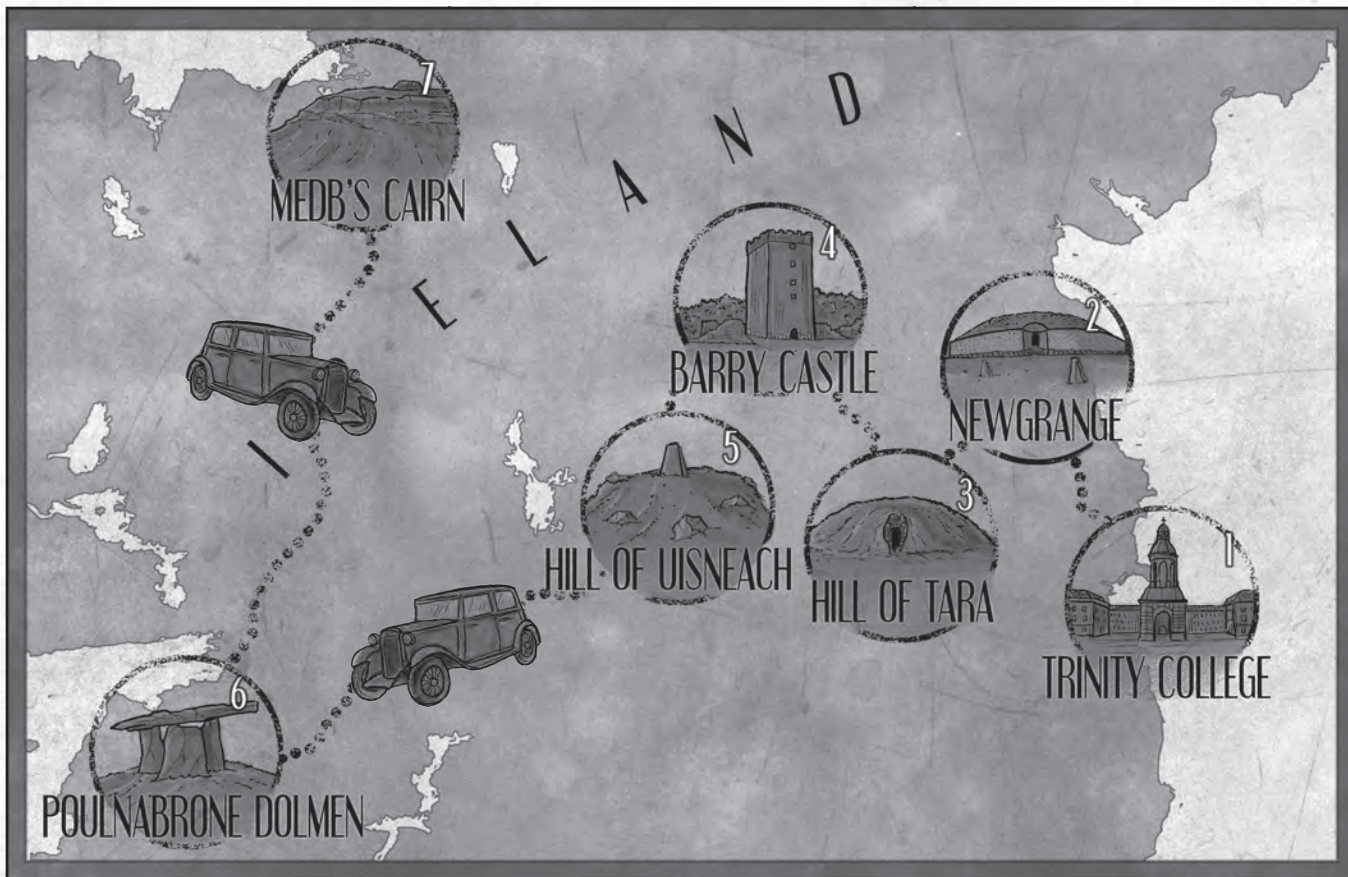
The next morning, early, Mary Sullivan gathers the Miskatonic team, and they set out for Brú na Bóinne to the south. There are three passage tombs here, at Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange. At this point in history, all three have fallen into disrepair. The sites, in fact, have occasionally been used as quarries — an unworthy fate for places that predate the pyramids of Egypt.

Still, even suffering from the ravages of time and disuse, Newgrange is a wonder to behold. The tomb itself is a large mound rising from the landscape, ringed by a wall of bright white limestone. Large boulders are spaced at intervals outside the tomb as well. Inside, from the entrance to the main chamber, is a passage about sixty feet long. The walls are barely wide enough for one person



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to stand with arms outspread, and, for the majority of the passage, the ceiling is just shy of five feet high.

The main chamber offers room to spread out a bit: it's roughly twenty feet square, and the corbeled ceiling soars nearly that same amount above the Investigators' heads. Three smaller chambers attach to the main one in a cruciform pattern, and the center of each contains a stone slab. **Archaeology** or a 1-point **Anthropology** spend reveals that it was likely used for burial rites in ancient times. The stones on either side are covered in megalithic art: spirals, lozenges and serpentine markings.

A 2-point spend in **Anthropology** or **Psychoanalysis** reveals that this art may depict things the artist had seen while in an altered state of consciousness. Archaeologists call it an entoptic phenomenon.

Evidence Collection (core clue) calls a loose slab to the Investigator's attention. Should they drag it away from the wall, they find more markings hidden on the other side, ones that make the stomach turn and eyes blur, even though none can decipher their meaning.

Colin, upon seeing the hidden art, grows increasingly upset. Investigators who look at it for a prolonged period and fail a 3-point

Stability test may join Colin in his auditory distress: they begin hearing whispers coming from the three smaller chambers.

If no other Investigators attempt to soothe the minds of the affected with **Reassurance** or a bit of **Psychoanalysis**, Dr. Peaslee suggests their troubles have been brought on by claustrophobia and guides any sufferers out of the tomb.

He doesn't necessarily seem to believe his own diagnosis, but it's good enough for Doyle, at least.

(core clue) Clearer heads (and **Astronomy**) recognize one of the patterns carved into the

Load of Blarney

rock as a constellation. If the Investigators don't, Mary will. The particular alignment carved into the stone is only a few days away, but Professor Sullivan and Dr. Ashley both agree that Newgrange isn't the ideal place from which to view the event. Mary recommends moving on to County Westmeath, to visit the Hill of Uisneach.

Beside the drawing of the constellation is a series of characters that **Archaeology** identifies as two lines of Ogham script. A 2-point spend reads it: The first word it spells is *Medb*. The second is *Exile*.

Outside, Colin has calmed down, but admits that seeing those carvings stirred a memory: when the *Annagher* started to list, he went to the cargo hold to see if the ship was taking on water there. He found that some of the metal had shifted, unveiling a pair of steamer trunks that had been buried beneath the chunks of scrap. Similar markings to those in the tomb were on the trunks. He thinks he might have opened one, but, when he tries to chase the memory, all he recalls is the half moon which shone that night.

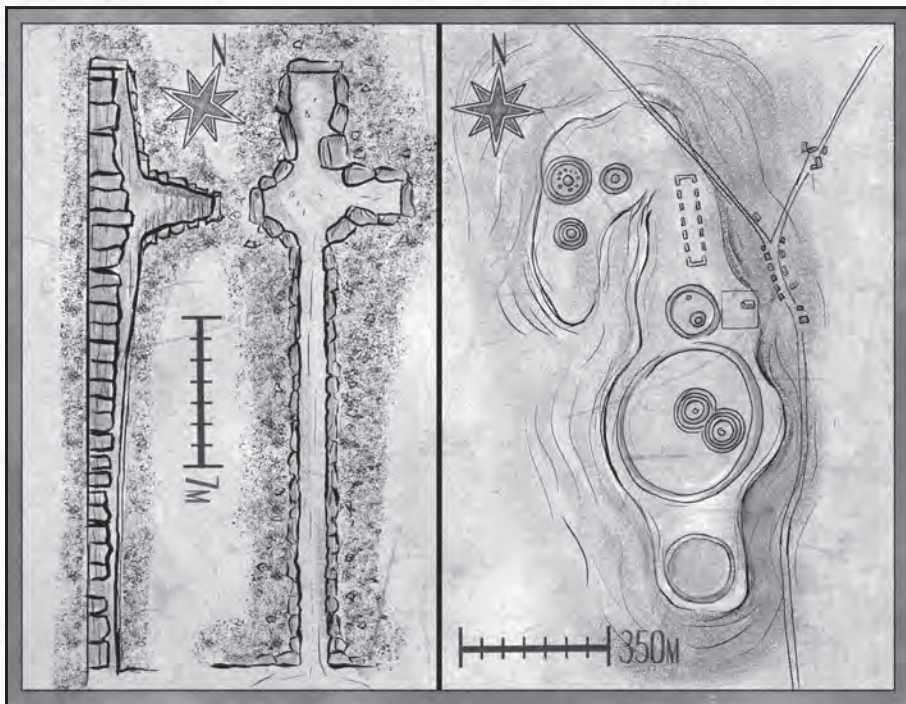
Lords of Tara

Scene Type: Alternate / Antagonist Reaction

Lead-Ins: Welcome to Dublin, Brú na Bóinne

Lead-Outs: The Barry Estate, Brú na Bóinne

Fewer than twenty miles from Newgrange lies the Hill of Tara, the place from which ancient kings of Erin — among them such luminaries as Finn



MacCumhail and Cúchulainn — ruled. If timing permits, or the team wishes to investigate connections to Medb and (if they've been to Newgrange) the whispering voices, Alma points out how close they are to Tara and suggests a stop to explore. It was, after all, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland — the place where they were selected and crowned, and where they married the goddess Medb for the health of the land.

The sites of several former ring forts are sprawled out across the Hill of Tara. At the top of it stands the Lia Fáil, the legendary stone which was said to roar when the High King of Ireland stood before it. If the team has already visited Newgrange, those who heard the whispers within might hear the stone screaming. If they went to the Hill of Tara first, perhaps the wind gusting over

the hills sounds like a banshee's wail. Alma, or an Investigator with **Occult**, notes that the *bean si*'s wail is an omen of impending death.

Half a mile south of the Hill of Tara are the ruins of Rath Maeve, another ring fort. While all of the ring forts here have been covered over by nature, this one is perhaps the most deteriorated. However, the team can still walk around the ruins. A 1-point **Archaeology** or 2-point **Evidence Collection** spend yields the discovery of several small statuettes buried in the ground. They resemble the piece recovered from the *Annagher*. A 1-point **Geology** spend notices a peculiarity: the ground above the statuettes was undisturbed, but the ground below was churned up — almost as if the statues were swimming up through the earth!



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Plucking these pieces from the mud causes another banshee wail to split the air. This time, *everyone* hears it as several pale, hunched figures drag themselves from the tree line and advance. A shaft of moonlight illuminates the toad-shaped creatures and reveals writhing feelers where their faces should be.

The party should make a 4-point Stability test (Difficulty 5) upon seeing the moon-beasts. If they choose to flee, the moon-beasts only chase them to the edge of the ring fort. Should they stay and fight instead, once they defeat half of the creatures, the rest retreat back into the trees. They don't seem to be trying to recover the idol so much as they're attacking those who disturbed the site.

Moon-Beasts

Abilities: Athletics 8, Health 6, Scuffling 7, Weapons 6

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +2

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: -1 (claw), +1 (spear)

Armor: none, but firearms automatically do minimum damage

Stability Loss: +0

This attack doesn't necessarily need to take place at Rath Maeve. If the Investigators don't visit the Hill of Tara, or it feels more dramatically appropriate at a different point in the story, feel free to let someone discover an idol at any of the other sites.

The Barry Estate

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction / Pipe

Lead-Ins: Brú na Bóinne, Lords of Tara

Lead-Out: The Hills of Uisneach

On the western edge of County Meath lies the town of Kilderry. The town is sparsely populated, but the castle that dominates the hillside has been painstakingly restored in the not-too-distant past. Denys Barry, the estate's former owner, disappeared in 1921 and left no heir. While it's not by any means a hotel, or even a country inn, Barry Castle has been made available for lodgings. Before leaving Dublin, Mary Sullivan arranged for the Miskatonic team to spend a night there on their way westward. She chose it as much for its convenient place on their route as she did the opportunity to explore the ancient crannog in the middle of the peat bog behind the castle. After their find at Newgrange, she's particularly excited to visit Barry Castle: Kilderry, she tells them, is rumored to be protected by a moon goddess.

Depending on whether they headed to Kilderry straight from Newgrange or took a detour through Tara, it's either late or *very* late by the time they arrive. Barry Castle rises above the town, a dark shape against a darker sky. A single light burns inside, as the cars wend their way toward the castle. As the team gathers their luggage and approaches the massive oaken doors, more lights come on, marking the progress of a single person through the halls. A pale young woman opens the door and welcomes them inside. She introduces herself as Eileen, the caretaker. (A 1-point

Anthropology or **Languages** spend, or any native Irish Investigator, notes that Eileen is from Ulster, not from the local area.) The rest of the staff has gone to bed, she tells them, but if they need anything, she'll provide it — they are, after all, the only guests tonight.

A modest meal is laid out if anyone is hungry: bread, cheese, tea. The bedrooms are ready, all clustered together in a second-floor wing. Doctors Peaslee and Ashley retire almost immediately. Professor Sullivan might stay up a little while, but she's not far behind the older gentlemen. Alma and Colin beg stiff drinks from Eileen before they make their own excuses. The Investigators are free to do as they please, though Professor Sullivan would like to begin early in the morning.

Any Investigators who choose to explore the castle find themselves on a dichotomous tour: Denys Barry's restorations remained true to the fifteenth-century architecture of the building, but the modern amenities make for an interesting juxtaposition. Electric lights shine beside sconces; tank-and-bowl toilets have been installed near board-over-chute garderobes. Very few doors are locked, and the ones that are can be picked with a 1-point **Locksmith** spend.

Some things the Investigators might learn with **Evidence Collection** while they scout around:

- Denys Barry's library remains largely untouched on the top floor of the western tower. Correspondence in his desk chronicles the restoration of his ancestral home.

Load of Blarney



- 1-point spend: Barry also had plans to drain the bog behind the castle, which met with opposition from the Kilderry townsfolk. He saved some of the more colorful letters of objection he received.
- (**Library Use** on the letters, or **Accounting** on the account books) When he went ahead with the plans, his local laborers and castle servants quit. Barry had to bring in new help from the north.
- 2-point spend: Venturing downstairs, the servants' quarters are empty — not unlivd in, merely currently unoccupied.

It's inadvisable for the Investigators to explore the ruins in the dark — the potential to get lost or injured out on the bog is high. For the brave souls who wish to ignore those dangers, a 4-point Survival test (Difficulty 6) is necessary. Chalk off a point or two of Health from everyone if this roll fails, but its real function is to model the psychic pressure and stress of this unholy bog.

A 1-point **Archaeology** spend gives false confidence from real experience, reducing the Difficulty to 4.

The Investigators make their way across the treacherous grounds and out onto the bog. The landscape is illuminated by the low gibbous moon... which an Investigator with **Astronomy** notes is odd, since earlier in the night the moon was a slim crescent. As they continue along, they begin to hear strange, reedy music. The piping skirls out across the bog, seeming to originate from the ruins in the center.

Barry's letters — if the Investigators dug through his desk — described the ruins as a rotting, decrepit eyesore, but, to the current observers, they've been restored just as lovingly as Barry Castle: marble Greek-style columns rise from the peat, their surfaces covered in the same megalithic art they saw at Newgrange. A red haze covers the moon as they draw closer, deepening until the world is washed in scarlet.

Movement appears in the temple. Ghostly white figures flit around the columns, playing those pipes, beating out stuttering rhythms on primitive drums. Now and then they lift their voices in exultation, and the name they shriek is *Mormo*. (Investigators who hear the name should make a 5-point Stability test; the shriek, banshee-like, awakens a stark terror of death.)

Dancing to that insistent, maddening song are Alma Russell and Colin Doyle, along with a score of others. Investigators who failed their Stability roll feel compelled to join in, and the Keeper might wish at this point to have anyone who went to bed rather than explore come sleepwalking out of the castle. Determined unaffected Investigators can attempt to awaken their friends with 2-point spends of **Intimidation** or **Reassurance** or physically restrain them (quick contest of **Athletics**).

The revels end when the moon sets, a couple of hours before dawn. The dancers trudge through the bog, back to their beds in the castle or in Kilderry town, and fall into an exhausted sleep.

Those who don't join in the revels still sleep poorly, their dreams filled with images from out of time: a plague sweeping through an ancient Greek settlement; a city beneath the bog, its streets bathed in crimson; pale young women dancing in the ruins, advancing with their sharp, sharp teeth...

The next morning, Dr. Ashley, Dr. Peaslee and Professor Sullivan are just as tired and ill-tempered as the rest of the team. Colin has remembered more about the last moments of the *Annagher*:



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his shipmates didn't climb into the lifeboats because they were completely taken by the dancing. He thinks perhaps he wasn't because he'd stolen one of the pieces from the chest, and held onto it. For the rest of the day, he is plagued by long periods of shuddering as he realizes how close he was to being among the drowned.

If they still wish to visit the ruins in daylight, they find no evidence of the previous night's activities, but a 1-point **Evidence Collection** or **Archaeology** spend reveals barely visible Ogham markings that match the ones at Newgrange: *Medb. Exile*. And another word: *Free*.

BOG COUNTRY

The Hill of Uisneach

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: The Barry Estate

Lead-Outs: A Strange Kind of Worship, Blackwater Bog

The Investigators leave Kilderry and head west into the middle of Ireland. They find the towns around their next destination, the Hill of Uisneach, preparing for May Day: rowan branches bedeck the doors and windows of the houses, brightly colored ribbons and flowers adorn the bushes — in some places, they might even see a maypole being erected.

The hill itself, though, might as well be part of another century. The Hill of Uisneach is about a half mile's walk from the nearest road. Several ceremonial sites spread out over the quarter mile that

comprises the location, and it appears that a few different groups have staked out the barrows and cairns that dot the grounds. The bones of at least half a dozen bonfires are being laid; near what Mary Sullivan names as a holy, or Clootie, well, a mixed group of locals and tourists are dipping rags into the water and tying them to the branches of a nearby tree.

Most of the people gathered are quite welcoming to the Miskatonic team, and might even invite them to stay for the evening's fires. The moon is one day past first quarter, and the stars will be out. Dr. Ashley and Professor Sullivan agree that this would be a good location from which to try to find the star pattern that was on the wall at Newgrange. Of course, the bonfires will destroy the stargazers' night vision.

Luckily, the remains of an ancient road lead away from the main celebrations on the hill, past a tree line and into another clearing where the group will be able to set up their telescopes. The trees are dense enough to block the light from the bonfires, and, out here, even the sounds of revelry are muted. The sun doesn't fully set until close to 9:00, so the Investigators have time to explore and perhaps revel a bit if they wish. Colin Doyle certainly takes advantage of the free-flowing whiskey to take his mind off the events of the previous day and the prior night's bad dreams.

Once the night darkens and the stars shine, Professor Sullivan sets up the telescope and points it toward where she and Dr. Ashley agree the carving indicated. Investigators can help pinpoint the particular region (in Pegasus and Andromeda) with a 1-point **Astronomy** spend.

The alignment depicted is still a few days away, but it's clear it's getting close. Professor Sullivan and any Investigator willing to make a further 2-point spend know that a) at least one of the stars in the Newgrange chart is in the wrong place in the sky for this time of year and b) the brightest star in it isn't even a known body.

That revelation comes just before the stars start to fall. At first only a few streak down at the edges of the sky, like a sudden meteor storm. Then *all* of them begin pelting across the black, though none actually fall to Earth. Even those least familiar with astronomy can recognize the Big Dipper taking its dive. They continue that way until the "Newgrange constellation" is the only one left. The banshee wind picks up again, howling through the trees.

Colin Doyle comes screaming along with it, crashing along the path toward the team and continuing straight past them, to where the ancient road continues deeper into the woods on the other side of the clearing.

Whether the Investigators chase Doyle along the path or stop him before he can disappear into the woods, his arrival seems to stop the stars from falling. Once the Investigators look up again, everything's back where it belongs up above.

A Strange Kind of Worship

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: The Hill of Uisneach



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Load of Blarney



Lead-Outs: The Blackwater Bog, The BurrenShould Doyle go rushing along the path, the Investigators can catch up with him about three hundred yards later. He's just broken through into a new clearing, this one lit by a much smaller bonfire than the ones back at Uisneach. The revelers here wear dark tattered robes, and are chanting and dancing around not only the bonfire but also a shirtless man on a large stone slab. He is sprawled out on his stomach, and seems to vacillate between ecstasy and terror. Tied to a stake next to him is a black goat.

The revelers pay no mind to the Miskatonic team as one of the robed figures approaches the man and proceeds to tear several strips of flesh from his back with a wicked-looking dagger. The man's cries of agony are taken up by the rest. The leader then turns to the goat and cuts similar strips from *its* back. The chanting grows ever more frantic as the goatskin is pressed against the man's wounds.

And adheres.

It is at this point — if the Investigators haven't tried to intervene — that some

of the revelers break off and confront the eavesdroppers. They don't give chase if the Investigators leave peacefully.

Putting a stop to the ritual would be difficult, as the Investigators are greatly outnumbered by the revelers, but if they're feeling heroic or attempt to use **Bargain** or **Intimidation** to sway the cultists, they're welcome to try. If they succeed, it quickly becomes clear that they've only delayed the ritual, not stopped it. They have the sense that once they're gone, it will start up again.



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Investigators who witness the ritual should make a 3-point Stability test.

Once they've regrouped, a 2-point **Occult**, **Anthropology** or **History** spend reveals that several stories out of Irish legend refer to a hero or his companion (the tale is most often told of Conán Mac Morna) getting stuck to the doorway of an enchanted castle. The man is freed only after two strong friends pull him away, leaving his hide behind. The only way the man's friends can think of to stop the bleeding is to take the hide of a sheep or goat and attach it to him. Afterward, as a humorous follow-up, the man is shorn yearly, and his wool is used by the companions, though what the Investigators witnessed in the clearing didn't seem nearly so amusing.

Blackwater Bog

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-Ins: The Hill of Uisneach, A Strange Kind of Worship

Lead-Out: Poul nabrone Dolmen

The team can camp out at the Hill of Uisneach, or head straight for their cars. Either way, when they leave to head farther west, a spring rain begins to fall. While the Irish government made vast improvements to its motorways, which roads were repaired and surfaced was primarily up to the local governments. Roads that are little more than narrow dirt paths certainly still abound, and here in the center of the country, many of those run through bogs.

The rain continues throughout the day, slowing them up, and, by the time the expedition's caravan enters County Offaly, it's sluicing down. A wrong turn takes them quite a distance along a road that is little more than a glorified cow path, which ends abruptly in between two large bogs. Peat and mud have overflowed onto the packed dirt, and, while attempting to turn around, one or both cars get stuck.

Working together, the team can eventually free the car or cars (**Athletics** test, Difficulty 5 +1 per car; cooperation is possible). When they do — or if they decide to wait out the rain or walk back to town, someone spies an object protruding from the peat. Whether churned up by the rain or the boots of those pushing the cars, the Investigators have found a body in the bog.

It's a twisted, grotesque corpse, but is about the size of a small adult. **Forensics** or a 1-point **Biology** spend reveals that the body was a man's, but a further 1-point spend from either makes the oddity immediately apparent once the mud is cleared away: the skull doesn't seem quite human. In fact, despite the desiccated nature of the bones, closer examination shows some of the features to be slightly amphibian. If the spend isn't made, Dr. Peaslee gets a good look, but makes the observation much later.

Clutched in the corpse's right hand (the webs between the fingers are still intact) is an idol similar to the piece from the *Annagher*. When someone pries it loose, the snap of brittle finger bones breaking echoes across the bog. The rain has stopped at last.

The squelching, sucking noises coming from either side of the road draw the Investigators' attention. More corpses rise from the peat, these ones far more nimble than their counterpart. They advance on the team with grasping hands; tentacles of mud and peat dangle from where their faces ought to be. If the team faced the moon-beasts at Rath Maeve, they can definitely discern the resemblance.

Like the moon-beasts, the peat creatures retreat once they suffer too many losses. Their brittle bones are easily shattered, so laying about with the tire irons from the cars is a valid strategy.

Peat-Men

Abilities: Athletics 6, Health 9, Scuffling 11

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: +0 (fists)

Armor: -3 (none against heavy impact, such as a tire iron)

Stability Loss: +0

Between the delay and the peat-men attack, the entire experience calls for a 4-point Survival test. A Difficulty 5 test of **Mechanical Repair** keeps engines and wheels clear of the gunk, lowering the Difficulty of the Survival test by the margin of success.

Any Investigator with **Outdoorsman** can figure out the best way out of the peat, and to a high, dry spot for camping. Emphasize the cloudy sky and misty land surrounding the party: they can see no sign of civilization apart from their own mud-covered autos.

In Dreams

That night, no one sleeps easy. Mormo is now quite aware of their presence, and

Load of Blarney

has no intention to let these interlopers stop the ritual that will summon her back to the earth. As she can't act directly yet, she reaches them through her other domain: dreams.

Alma Russell can be heard muttering and thrashing. Colin Doyle dreams of the *Anagher* listing ever more severely beneath his feet, and, in his descriptions the next morning, recalls seeing only "the terrible face of the moon." Professor Sullivan and Dr. Ashley appear to have slept poorly, but do not elaborate on their dreams. Dr. Peaslee would prefer to discuss his companions' dreams (including the Investigators'), but might tell someone who's gained his trust that his own consisted of exploring a set of ruins that were half-buried in shifting gray sands.

Other possible horrors the Investigators might see in their dreams include these:

- A large white dog, worrying at a piece of meat that turns out to be a human leg.
- Grotesque faces where the more familiar Man in the Moon should be.
- A set of ruins on an island in the middle of a lake. Something stirs within the shadows.
- Three young women, beckoning to the dreamer. Their dresses billow in the moonlight. As the dreamer approaches, the billowing is not due to the wind, but because the "dresses" are made of the writhing bodies of rats.

THE BURREN

By the time the (irritable, poorly rested) team is on the road the next day, the rain has let up, though the clouds remain. The

drive westward is a nearly silent affair, with even the normally unflappable Mary Sullivan gone quiet. The landscape becomes a fitting reflection of the last few days, as they head into the heart of the Burren's cracked limestone plains. No trees grow here, and the gray hills stretch on so far in all directions that the Investigators might well feel they've traveled to a distant planet.

Poulnabrone Dolmen

Scene Type: Alternate/Refresh

Lead-Ins: The Hill of Uisneach, A Strange Kind of Worship, Blackwater Bog

Lead-Outs: Sligo Town, Medb's Cairn

A few miles south of the village of Ballyvaughan, Professor Sullivan indicates it's time to gather their gear and leave the cars behind. The trek to the Poulnabrone dolmen will take at least two hours, accounting for the uneven terrain, and she'd like to reach the site by mid-afternoon. What, under normal circumstances, might be a pleasant journey across an interesting geological area becomes a trip fraught with tension.

Sleeplessness makes the Investigators' packs weigh them down faster, and the ominous cloud cover itself seems to press down on them. The sky and the land are the same dreary gray; the team's footfalls take on a monotonous rhythm — quite the opposite of the frantic drums they heard at the Barry Estate. Only the brief occasional squabbles between travelers break up the plodding pace.

If the Keeper has picked up on contention among the Investigators, she might want to encourage more, pointing out small irritations that grate on the nerves. Doyle complains of fatigue; Dr. Ashley tells him, quite crossly, that as the eldest member of this expedition *he's* doing just fine — perhaps the young man ought to take inspiration from that. Professor Sullivan has taken to nibbling at the pad of her thumb nearly constantly. Dr. Peaslee begins to analyze this behavior, which causes Alma to snap at him before she remembers her manners.

Stopping for lunch and a brief rest alleviates some of the tension, though not all of it. Investigators who elect, like Colin Doyle, to take a short nap, feel significantly better when Professor Sullivan awakens them a half hour later. (Refresh 1 Stability.) No dreams plague them in the daylight.

Once they're underway again, it's only another half-hour walk to Poulnabrone dolmen. The land rises up toward the burial site, and the first hints of stubborn green fauna begin peeking up between the fissures in the limestone, adding new color to the landscape at last. The burial site itself rises up above the plateau, its capstone seeming to hold up the sky. The long, thin slab of the capstone is supported by two six-foot-tall portal stones, like a table carved for giants. The tomb continues beneath the ground, opening up into a twenty-four-foot burial chamber.

Structures such as this one, Alma (or an Investigator making a 1-point **Archaeology** or **Anthropology** spend) points out, were used for both funereal and ceremonial



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purposes. It's of an age with Newgrange, dating from the Neolithic era.

Though the Investigators saw no one on their trek out to the site, it's apparent someone has been here recently: the remains of a campfire sit outside, and inside is evidence of a recently performed ritual.

- **Biology** or 1-point **Archaeology** spend: The charred bones inside the tomb are those of a cat.
- 1-point **Occult** or **Anthropology** spend: Medb is the patron of dogs. Perhaps this cat was an offering to win her approval by spilling enemy blood.
- **Evidence Collection** or **Archaeology**: Drawn onto the stone — likely with the tip of a bone — is more Ogham script, next to the same kind of nausea-inducing writing they found at Newgrange.
- **Evidence Collection**: A discarded star chart torn from an almanac flutters in the wind, trapped in a crevice.
- **Astronomy**: The constellation drawn onto it in faded ink also matches the one in Newgrange.

Daylight is beginning to fade as the team finishes its searching. Hiking back across the Burren at dusk and through the dark is entirely possible, but takes a 4-point Survival test (Difficulty 5).

They're perfectly well equipped to camp at the site, and build a fire on the bones of their predecessors.

The Grave of Clooth-na-Bare

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-In: Poulnabrone Dolmen

Lead-Outs: Sligo Town, Medb's Cairn

Should they decide to stay the night, the dreams that come are even more surreal than the previous few nights' have been. If the Investigators decide to establish a watch, the first few shifts are uneventful, the night's quiet broken only by the mutterings and thrashings of their companions.

An hour or so before dawn, the clouds finally dissipate. The moon is long since down, but the stars provide enough light for whoever's awake to see the hunched figure trekking across the limestone. The person doesn't respond to any hails, but, as they draw closer, the shape resolves itself into an ancient hag trudging along, leaning heavily on a gnarled walking stick twice her height. She pauses just outside the light, observing the team.

After a moment, she begins to speak. If anyone has taken Gaelic as a language, they can piece together what she's saying, although her speech is an archaic form. If none of the Investigators can understand her, Professor Sullivan or Alma translates haltingly as she puzzles it out.

The crone calls herself the Cailleach, and says, while she was on her way to her rest, she found interlopers at the door — she points toward the sill stone that serves as the lower roof of the tomb. *"Even had I gone to my bed," she says, "those terrible drums would have kept me awake."* She describes the ritual she witnessed, the pale women keening to the moon, the dancing, the blood. *"North they've gone, to free the moon from her tomb beneath the hill. Weep for Erin, if Medb crawls forth*

from the cairn." The Cailleach steps past them and makes her way into the chamber below Poulnabrone dolmen, where she disappears.

Helpful though it may have been, the spectral sight of the Cailleach triggers a 3-point Stability test.

THE DESECRATED CAIRN

North of The Burren, just west of Sligo, is Knocknarea, a huge limestone hill that is home to several tombs along its peak. The largest of them, the stones of its cairn piled nearly thirty-three feet high, is said to be the cairn of Queen Medb herself. And, while Knocknarea has been known as the hill of kings and executions, its name might also have come from Cnoc na Ré: "Hill of the Moon."

Sligo Town

Scene Type: Refresh

Lead-Ins: Poulnabrone Dolmen, The Grave of Clooth-na-Bare

Lead-Out: Medb's Cairn

If the Keeper feels the team needs a refresh, Professor Sullivan, Dr. Ashley and an Investigator making a 1-point **Astronomy** spend can determine there is still a day or so before the alignment, and might suggest spending a day resting up in Sligo. The dreams aren't much better, but at least the Investigators can sleep in beds, top up the lunch pails, and have a roof between themselves and the ever more threatening sky.

Load of Blarney

Peaslee leads the group in relaxing activities and academic gossip; if an Investigator with **Psychoanalysis** or **Oral History** joins in and spends 1 point, the party can refresh 4 points of Survival with this break.

Medb's Cairn

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: Poulabrone Dolmen, The Grave of Clooth-na-Bare, Sligo Town

Lead-Out: The Dark Side of the Moon

Rested or not, the day of the alignment dawns, and the team heads for Knocknarea. The climb is arduous in places, requiring an **Athletics** test (Difficulty 4). Failures might take the form of backsliding, twisted ankles (1 or 2 Health points lost by anyone who rolls a 1 and fails the test), or simply the need to rest awhile before continuing on. Dr. Peaslee and Colin

Doyle display an almost manic energy as they ascend: Doyle urges his companions to push harder, climb faster; the normally taciturn Peaslee cracks jokes, eggs on Doyle and even flirts (unsuccessfully) with Alma.

The team hears the cultists well before they crest the hill and see them: a combination of the chanting and music they heard at the Barry Estate. Gaining the top, they find the bonfires have already been laid, and half a dozen young men and women in white robes drum and pipe and dance around them. Four others work at the narrow end of the cairn, removing rocks from its mouth. They slow their pace when the Investigators arrive, but don't stop. A trio of women stands behind the workers, each wearing a different mask: the many eyes of a spider peer out from one, a feathered owl's face from the next, and the sneering face of a gray rat from the last.

The Investigators can attempt to interrupt the ceremony, but several dancers break off to intercept them before they can reach the three women. They're told they can leave, join in or be part of the sacrifice.

The wind shrieks its banshee wail in the space between the ultimatum and the Investigators' response.

If your team of Investigators is short on scufflers, they don't have to defeat or drive off all the cultists. Once the confrontation begins, the workers pull the stones away at an even more frantic pace (the grave robber didn't bother putting them back too securely, so it's faster work than if they were breaking in from an untouched section of wall). As soon as there's room for even one person to wriggle through, one of the ritual leaders breaks off her chanting and squeezes her way into the tomb beyond. Of course, if the Investigators are enjoying a good game of fisticuffs — perhaps releasing some of the fear and tension of the last few days — they don't have to give chase immediately. The longer they remain to deal with the dancers, the better the head start the leader (and possibly her two sisters) will have down below the earth.

Cultists

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

Weapon: -2 (fists), -1 (ceremonial knife)

A few moments after the first woman enters the tomb, the sky goes dark — regardless of what time of day it was when the conflict started. The cultists' reaction is immediate: they stop fighting to cheer at the stars... and

What Cthulhu Mythos Reveals

Mormo has three aspects, all aspects of the Three Sorrows: Mater Lachrymarum, the Lady of Tears, Mater Suspiriorum, the Lady of Sighs, and Mater Tenebrarum, the Lady of Darkness. They are maiden, mother and crone; blind, deaf and dumb. Perhaps Mormo's own great Sorrow is that she's been banished from the earth for thousands of years, shut away in her ruined city on the far side of the moon.

The cultists here are trying to bring and free her, their work made

easier by the tomb robber who broke into the cairn and stole those two chests full of idols. He broke wards and spells unknowingly, allowing the goddess to call out to her faithful.

Now, once the stars and moon align and the ritual completes, she will be free to return to the earth to spread sorrow to all.

This revelation costs the Investigator 3 Stability points and 1 Sanity.

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the fast-rising moon. Dr. Ashley rushes to the opening and shoves his way past any workers that might still be standing there, his agility dispelling any doubts the Investigators might have had about the stories of his youthful exploits.

Alma follows him, as do Professor Sullivan, Colin and Dr. Peaslee.

The best chance at stopping the ritual, the Investigators know, is through that opening.

Those who choose to stay outside need not be idle. A contingent of moon-beasts rises from the other passage tombs atop Knocknarea, and its attacks don't discriminate between Miskatonic personnel and devoted cultists. The dancers turn from opponents into allies within minutes as their mistress's pets come seeking blood. Fending the beasts off also keeps them away from the tomb's exposed entrance, so they can't flank those who went inside.

Investigators who enter the tomb find the air stale with millennia-old dust, but still breathable. The floor spirals ever downward, and striking a match or lighting a lantern reveals walls covered with megalithic art and Ogham writing that turns the stomach. The ritualists can be heard somewhere up ahead, chanting their goddess's names. The wind has joined the Investigators, too, its screams echoing off the too-close walls.

Neither Sullivan nor Ashley have heard of a Neolithic tomb constructed quite like this, and a 1-point **Archaeology**, **Geology** or **Physics** spend tells the Investigator the arcs and angles don't quite match Knocknarea itself. The

writing on the walls gets stranger, morphing from uneven Ogham script to a language no one present has seen. The Investigators can't go more than a few steps without finding alcoves filled with burial artifacts: figurines, jewelry, simple tools. The deeper they go, the more disturbing those items become. The statuettes take on amphibian qualities; the jewelry is made from what **Biology**, **Forensics** or **Archaeology** suggests is human bone; blood falls from crude knives, first in rust-colored flakes, then in fresh crimson drips.

Eventually, the path slopes up, and the Investigators emerge into a landscape completely different than the one they entered. Looking around, it is as barren as the Burren, but *the sky is wrong*.

The Dark Side of the Moon

Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-In: Medb's Cairn

The stars appear sharper and closer than they ever have, and there are so many more of them, that that initial realization briefly delays the bigger one: the Investigators are no longer on Knocknarea (**Astronomy**). Around them, gray sands bury and uncover and rebury the marble bones of a long-abandoned city. Ahead, the Investigators can see the three masked women hurrying toward a twenty-foot-high statue.

If anyone stayed behind, the Keeper should intersperse attempts at stopping the ritual with scenes from the fighting. As Mormo gains power on the moon, the moon-beasts

grow stronger and bolder. Both groups can see the alignment is close at hand.

Looking directly at the statue's face requires a 5-point Stability test: though the relentless sands have eroded some of the features, this is Mormo herself, frozen in stone for aeons. The women circle around the statue, and with each passing moment, cracks spiderweb across the statue. Chunks of rock tumble to the ground, revealing the sickly pale skin of the goddess beneath. If the ritual is allowed to continue uninterrupted long enough, Mormo begins to move.

Back on Knocknarea, the familiar face of the Man in the Moon is replaced by Mormo's terrible beauty, triggering a 4-point Stability test for anyone who looks upon it.

Though the pipes and drums haven't carried this far, Colin begins to dance between the women and the statue, begging for help, for it to stop, but he is drawn inexorably forward. Once he reaches the women, it's only a flick of the wrist before his throat is open and his blood pools at Mormo's feet. Empowered by this sacrifice, the statue takes a creaking step forward.

Stopping the women ends Mormo's return. They'll lash out at the Investigators with sharp stone blades, and any blood drawn gives Mormo strength. (If the Investigators lose 20 points of Health, Mormo awakens fully.) The masks, which on Earth were crafted of paper, feathers and fur, are masks no more. The shift refreshes the priestesses' pools, and changes some of their other statistics as well:

Spider-Woman

Hit Threshold: 5 (can walk up walls)



Load of Blarney

Weapon: +1 (poison bite); entangling web (+2 to all physical Difficulties, including Hit Thresholds)

Owl-Woman

Hit Threshold: 5 (can fly and rotate head to dodge attacks)

Weapon: +0 (beak)

Rat-Woman

Health refreshes by 3 each round as more rats squirm into place in her body

Weapon: +0 (fangs)

A 1-point **Occult** spend, if anyone has the wherewithal to make one, recalls myths of Irish shapechangers: they often had Druidic rods, magic cloaks or magic rings on their persons. Stealing or removing them broke whatever spells were in effect. The women indeed have these things divided between them. They share the same stats as their devotees back at Knocknarea, though an Investigator can attempt to **Filch** any of the items from them (the owl-woman has the ring, not around her finger, but on a chain around her neck); the Difficulty for such an attempt is 2 more than their Hit Threshold.

Even delaying the ritual is enough: once the stars, the planets and the moon slip out of their perfect alignment, the statue lets out a screech, and the last thing the Investigators remember is the stone covering it over once more before darkness descends.

THE RETURN JOURNEY

Daybreak comes eventually, and the Investigators find themselves outside of the resealed tomb. The cultists are gone. There's no sign of the spider-, owl- or rat-women, and neither Colin Doyle nor his corpse are anywhere to be found. As the Investigators gain their feet, they notice they're surrounded by a ring of limestone markers.

Travel back to Sligo takes only as long as the climb down and drive back, though once they return to civilization, the Miskatonic team realizes a week has passed while they slept.

EXITS AND REWARDS

Returning to Medb's Cairn in the daylight shows no sign of the horrors they experienced there: all evidence of the

ritual is gone; the bodies of the moon-beasts have been dragged off or melted away in the sunlight. If anyone attempts to reenter the cairn, they find only a passage tomb like those at Newgrange, nothing at all like the spiraling maze from the night of the alignment. No odd Ogham script, no strange artifacts.

Dr. Peaslee is eager to study what he's calling the team's "shared hallucination," while Dr. Ashley, Professor Sullivan and Alma are cautiously abuzz with the archaeological discoveries hidden in Medb's Cairn — the one that *isn't* on the moon. However, they feel it might be safer to simply seal it all away, lest the stars align again in the future.

Any artifacts Investigators picked up on their way through the cairn remain in their possession. Returning with them to Miskatonic will garner favor with the university.

Through Professor Sullivan, Investigators with interests in archaeology have a permanent contact at Trinity College. Perhaps soon, fully funded excavations of the passage tombs will begin.



Cerulean Halo

"WE LIVE ON A PLACID ISLAND OF IGNORANCE IN THE MIDST OF BLACK SEAS OF THE INFINITY, AND IT WAS NOT MEANT THAT WE SHOULD VOYAGE FAR."

— H. P. LOVECRAFT,
"THE CALL OF CTHULHU"

Tuesday, July 17, 1934. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, aboard the USS Houston, on a twelve-thousand-mile voyage from the Caribbean to Portland, Oregon, arrived at Clipperton Island. Intending to partake of the reputedly excellent deep-sea fishing there, the rough seas meant that the president did not stay as long as he had hoped. This seemingly innocent encounter was the moment that sparked what would become a near obsession with the remote island.

THE HOOK

Four years later, in the summer of 1938, the president is organizing a

return to the island as part of a six-thousand-mile cruise examining various islands known for their curious wildlife, including the Galapagos. Word reaches Miskatonic University that the White House is looking to employ the services of a naturalist to aid the crew upon their expedition. As the short list of candidates is prepared, Miskatonic decides to organize an expedition of its own to Clipperton Island. Given the president's previous visit, they hope that showing an existing interest in the island will help to tip the scales in their favor and grant one of their staff a place on the prestigious cruise.

The Miskatonic expedition has five weeks to gather enough data on the island to whet the president's appetite. With the journey taking a week from the southern tip of Baja California, they will have a week on the island before they have to head back to civilization and make their report. Upon an island with a dark past, of which humanity

knows so very little, a week can seem a very long time indeed...

THE SPINE

The Investigators, given their **Briefing** from the university, make the journey from **San Diego to Cabo San Lucas**, and then begin the week-long voyage toward Clipperton Island. Upon **Arrival** and **Setting Up Camp**, they begin **Exploring the Island**. In the course of their survey, the Investigators begin to uncover evidence of menacing activity in the area. Another vessel then arrives in the nearby area to conduct a rival survey. Afterward, the actions of either party could inadvertently bring the horror into the open. When the **Cleansing** begins, the expedition must make good their **Escape**.

THE HORRIBLE TRUTH

When the cataclysm struck the continent of Mu, the shockwaves reverberated across the Pacific. Seismic disturbances caused havoc across the region, including the explosion

Fact and Fiction

While some details have been altered to accommodate the story, the vast majority of the human history of Clipperton Island presented in this adventure is real. For such a remote island, it has a particularly varied history. President Roosevelt did indeed visit the island in 1934 and again in 1938. From then on, it occupied increasing amounts of his time as events worldwide unfolded around him.

What happens after 1938...? That depends on the actions of the Investigators.

Travel Increment Summary

Terrain (Survival Cost)	Scene	Relief/Refresh Ability	Potential Survival Loss / Refresh
Calm Open Ocean (−1)	Drifting Nets	Piloting (avoid the nets)	3 or none
Calm Open Ocean (−1)	Changing Winds	Helping untangle the cordage	3
Rough Open Ocean (+0)	Squall	Piloting or Outdoorsman	7
Rough Open Ocean (+0)	Arrival	Sense Trouble or Piloting	5
Island/Beach (−3)	Setting up Camp	N/A	N/A
Island/Beach (−3)	Exploring the Island	N/A	N/A
Island/Beach (−3)	Cleansing	N/A	1 per crew member lost
Rough Open Ocean (+0)	Escape	Piloting	6 per failed Piloting test
Calm Open Ocean (−1)	Coda	Piloting	See P. 224

of the volcanic mountain that millennia later would become known as Clipperton Island.

Fleeing the fall of Mu, a number of Xothians took to the skies to escape imprisonment in sinking R'lyeh. One fled to the northwest, over the open Pacific. While the nature of the cataclysm remains unknown, what is known is that this Xothian fell from the sky and landed in the crater where the mountain once stood. Its mind in pieces, the titanic beast fell into a dream-filled sleep and has remained that way for millennia. Meanwhile, the island was slowly carried westward toward the Americas by the rolling seabed being forced out from an oceanic ridge in the middle of the Pacific.

The Xothian dreams, and the psychic echoes of these nightmarish visions have been heard by the Deep Ones. Coming to its aid, the worshippers of Cthulhu and his spawn established a colony on the undersea slopes beyond the coral reef that now surrounds the island. From here, they keep vigil over the sleeping beast, waiting for the time when the stars are right, when it shall rise again with its brethren from sunken R'lyeh. With the passage of strange aeons, its mind will be restored. Until then, its broken mind threatens to destroy everything within its reach should it be prematurely awoken.

The Xothian is sensitive to psychic vibrations caused from emotional

trauma, so the Deep Ones have set up a crystal device that dampens such vibrations and placates the beast when it becomes restless. So far, it has been kept asleep, but the growing interests of man upon the island have threatened to destroy the equilibrium the Deep Ones have created. The Deep Ones will soon be forced to take action to protect the Xothian from discovery and to save themselves from the destruction it will bring upon them should it wake.

TOUR AND TRAVEL

While the Investigators first set sail from San Diego, the tour doesn't start until they embark upon the

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eight-hundred-mile voyage from the southern tip of Baja California, when they leave civilization behind. This takes approximately a week, based on conditions at the time. Thus, the whole tour becomes one week out, a week on the island, and a week back to Baja California: three weeks in total.

The expedition is divided into nine travel increments, as outlined in the Travel Increment Summary table.

SURVIVAL POOL

The Clipperton Expedition sets off with a Survival pool of 35 points. Furthermore, as noted on p. 12, each Investigator with a rating in Outdoorsman adds 2 points to the initial Survival pool.

If the Investigators decide that they need a bigger boat, Credit Rating can be used to make that happen, but they will have to take into account other considerations. As the size of the vessel increases, so does the size of crew needed. Finding extra crewmen at short notice is going to require even more money. Then there's the issue of paying and feeding the new crew members, and paying the existing ones extra for not departing on time, as per their contracts. It's not just a simple case of going for the next size up.

In addition to the normal effect of the Survival pool dropping below 0, as outlined on p. 17, when the pool hits -5, the expedition's ship sinks from damage it has sustained. Then, the survivors only have access to its two ten-person longboats to get them home, with the minimal supplies they have on them at the time.

EXPEDITION PERSONNEL

Accompanying the Investigators are two representatives of Miskatonic University. Neither of them are the controlling force of the operation — that is a responsibility that is solely in the Investigators' hands, as outlined in their initial briefing. These NPCs present the opportunity to use some abilities the Investigators might not possess that could be helpful upon the island. To utilize one of their Academic or Technical abilities, any Investigator present in the scene with an NPC needs to make an Interpersonal spend relevant to how they would obtain the knowledge from them.

Both of the NPCs have 2 more points of Investigative abilities that can be allocated, given the size of the expedition. If the Investigators are missing any important abilities, add them accordingly using these available points.

Otherwise, the remaining membership of the expedition consists of the crew of the vessel and her captain. Each of these has only been hired by, and is not part of, the university.

Dr. Leopold Bailey, Volcanologist

A talented volcanologist, Bailey has visited a great many sites of interest around the Pacific Rim and down the western coast of the Americas. Originally scheduled to be a part of the first Miskatonic expedition to Antarctica, he was replaced after being injured in a car accident shortly before setting sail. He walks with one stiff leg as a result, supported by a cane. It's a lingering reminder that he missed out



on what he considered would have been the crowning moment of his career, although his close friend Dr. William Dyer has been trying to convince him otherwise for some time.

Bailey has no substantial Mythos knowledge, but has heard fragments of what happened to the expedition to Antarctica. If he should learn of what resides at Clipperton Island, and if he makes it back to the university, he confides in Dr. Dyer, and thus the Armitage Inquiry is alerted in due course.

Bailey is a pleasant enough individual who enjoys the finer things in life, but also is happy enough to get his hands dirty out in the field. Off duty, he might be found reclining in a deck chair, drinking a glass of brandy while reading poetry and smoking a cigar. Out in the field, he is happy to do what is needed, but his injury and slow movement are a constant source of frustration for him. He much prefers to overcome



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difficulties himself rather than rely on others for assistances. Even well-meant offers of help can anger him, because, to him, it's a stark reminder he can't escape his own condition, despite the best of his efforts.

Abilities: Athletics 4, Biology 2, Chemistry 2, Explosives 2, First Aid 4, Geology 3, Health 8, Languages 3 (French, Portuguese, Spanish), Physics 2, Scuffling 4, Weapons 4

Julian Irvine, Photographer



Julian doesn't have any formal academic qualifications, but has a wealth of experience. He made his name in the photography trade during the Great War as a war correspondent in northern France. Seeing the horror of war, he returned to his native Boston a haunted man. Since then, he has worked with Miskatonic University and other academic institutions, photographing work conducted upon numerous expeditions worldwide. Having seen what he considers the most horrific

sights the world has to offer, he sees this as a chance to see the beauty it has instead.

Julian is almost always happy, and seems to be quite at home in the natural world. He can talk for hours about his experiences photographing the wildlife in Africa, the deserts of Arabia, the rainforests of the Amazon, etc. The only subject that will wipe the smile from his face and cease his seemingly never-ending recounting of his exploits is the Great War. He will try to avoid the subject entirely, or otherwise clam up completely.

Abilities: Anthropology 1, Athletics 8, Firearms 4, First Aid 2, Health 8, History 1, Languages 5 (Arabic, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish), Outdoorsman 2, Photography 3, Piloting 4, Scuffling 4

Joseph Emmerson, Captain of the *Amphitrite*



A former merchant sailor from when he was a young man, and now with ten years experience under his belt running deep-sea fishing charters into the eastern Pacific and the Caribbean, Captain Emmerson is proud of his achievements. The *Amphitrite* is his boat (named after the Greek sea goddess, the wife of Poseidon), and he likes to make sure people know that he is in charge.

While the university has hired him, he treats their representatives as guests rather than employers. He selected the other eleven crew members himself and has worked with them on many occasions over the last few years. While he isn't sentimental enough to consider them to be an extended family, he does consider them to be all good friends of his, and values their safety. In turn, they respect him and follow his orders.

Abilities: Athletics 5, Firearms 5, Health 8, Piloting 10, Scuffling 5, Sense Trouble 5, Weapons 5

Alertness Modifier: +2

Crew of the *Amphitrite*

The other eleven members of the crew are not specifically detailed. However, the Keeper is encouraged to outline a small number of these to enhance the character and tone of the adventure. Those wishing to inject a little humor to proceedings might like to insert a lively first mate. Others who want to emphasize tense undercurrents might like to design the ship's cook as a hard-line superstitious individual who has heard stories of the island's past, etc. The crew is an almost blank canvas, which the Keeper can craft to build the tone of the adventure as desired.

Individual crew members do not have statistics provided for them (except

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Health) but instead have a collective pool that they can draw upon as required in relevant scenes. In each case, let the Investigators know that such abilities are available, but a Keeper wishing to promote some tension may wish to keep the available number of points secret.

Abilities: Athletics 10, Firearms 5, Health 5 (each), Piloting 10, Scuffling 5, Sense Trouble 5, Weapons 5

EVENTS UNFOLD BRIEFING

Scene Type: Introduction

Lead-Out: San Diego to Cabo San Lucas

In an ongoing campaign, this scene should best be delivered by a contact at the university whom the Investigators have previously worked alongside and are on good terms with. Lacking such a figure, Dr. Allan Wilfred, professor of zoology, will brief the Investigators in his office on campus in the first week of March 1938.

Dr. Wilfred has been instructed to organize an expedition to Clipperton Island in the eastern Pacific, some eight hundred miles from the shores of the Americas. With other Miskatonic expeditions already underway across the world, the budget is relatively tight at the moment, so it is not going to be a large expedition — just the team of Investigators alongside Dr. Bailey and Mr. Irvine, whom are introduced at the meeting.

The key facts to present to the Investigators are these:

- The president is organizing a cruise in July that will visit various islands, including the Galapagos and Clipperton Island, to examine unusual wildlife habitats.
- The White House looks to invite a member of the academic community along to complement its growing team.
- Miskatonic University wishes to send an expedition to Clipperton that is not intended to exhaust all possible research that could be carried out in the island (which would sour the presidential excursion) but to uncover enough interesting facts about its geology, flora and fauna (which is why Dr. Wilfred has been selected to oversee it) that can be used to rouse the interest of the president and thus grant the available place on his cruise to a member of the Miskatonic faculty.
- Dr. Bailey will be joining the Investigators to help with the geological survey of the island, and Mr. Irvine will be present to photograph the expedition at work. Dr. Wilfred will not be joining them, due to prior commitments at the university (as well as the lack of funds being an issue, and that he gets terrible seasickness — although an Interpersonal spend is required to uncover that embarrassing fact).
- A ninety-foot Baltimore Clipper (a two-masted schooner) called the *Amphitrite* has been chartered by the university to take the expedition to Clipperton Island, under the command of Captain Emmerson, who will meet them with the ship in San Diego. The ship comes equipped with two ten-person longboats for landing on Clipperton.
- The journey will take one week from Cabo San Lucas on the southern tip of

Baja California. Paperwork to cover the journey to Mexico has already been arranged with the authorities. The team will have up to one week to perform surveys on the island before returning to San Diego by the end of the second week of April. The Investigators will then have until the end of April to file their reports so that they can be presented to the White House in time for the president to make his decision on whom he offers the available space to.

- Specific instructions are given as to what kind of investigations the team should be performing on the island:
- bring back samples of the local coral, soil and rocks for analysis
- survey the best locations for landing and dropping anchor around the island
- document the remnants of the human activity upon the island
- capture specimens of the island's wildlife (mostly birds and crabs) and plant life (mostly nonindigenous grasses and palms) to be brought back to the university for study.

Dr. Wilfred will also select one of the Investigators as the leader of the expedition in the field, although making it clear that they report back to him specifically when the expedition is over. This selection is to be based on which Investigator has the most points in the relevant Investigative abilities (**Geology** and **Biology**). In the event of a tie, or no Investigators having such abilities, leadership goes to whichever Investigator spends a relevant Interpersonal ability to attract Dr. Wilfred's immediate attention.

It is the job of the expedition leader to ensure that the required tasks are carried out and that everything runs smoothly.



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It is not stated outright, but it is implied that failure to deliver the report on time could cost the expedition leader dearly if it means the university fails to obtain the place on the presidential cruise.

The meeting concludes with the Investigators being given a couple of days to prepare and requisition whatever equipment they wish to take with them from the university supplies that might be available (requiring **Preparedness** tests, with difficulties set according to the Keeper's preference). The Investigators are also encouraged to make use of the extensive library on site, should they wish to do any background research before they depart, wherein they can find the following facts about the island, as well as a map (see Handout).

History (Core Clues - Library Use):

- Clipperton Island, also known as Île de la Passion (Passion Island), was named after an English pirate rumored to have used the island as a base and buried treasure there. No evidence has been found to support these rumors.
- The island came to international attention in the late 19th century during the rush to mine guano across South America. Guano, formed from the feces of seabirds, was a valuable fertilizer at the time, with high nitrogen and phosphorus content. The same high levels of nitrate also later made it an important source of explosives and gunpowder. However, the product mined from Clipperton has historically been only marginally profitable due to its inferior quality as a fertilizer, and relatively high calcium content also made it poor for use in explosives.
- (1-point Library Use spend) The Oceanic Phosphate Company of

San Francisco sent three men to the island to mine guano in 1897. When they were discovered by the Mexican authorities who claimed the island as their territory, two were taken back to the mainland. The third, Theodore Gussmann (a German emigrant), evaded capture and remained on the island, performing his duty to the company. When he was finally relieved, he claimed the island had almost driven him insane with its assault of monotonous, unchanging days, the deafening cries of the birds and the roar of the sea.

- The Pacific Island Company of London established another guano-mining operation on the island in the early years of the 20th century which was overseen by the Mexican government. Once again, due to the inferior quality of the product being mined, the operation failed to achieve long-term viability and was abandoned in 1910.
- The Mexican garrison remained on the island to reinforce its claim on the island, as official ownership was being contested between Mexico and France. The arbitration of Italy (which begun in 1909) finally awarded ownership of the island to France in January 1931.
- (1-point spend) The Mexican garrison became a tragic chapter in the island's history. Having been forgotten by the Mexican government following regime change on the mainland, the relief ship for the garrison never arrived. As supplies ran out, scurvy claimed many of the lives of the people on the island, and a boating accident claimed the rest, with the exception of Álvarez, the lighthouse keeper. He subsequently declared himself king of the island and proceeded to rape and

murder the women that remained who did not satisfy his every whim. He was subsequently murdered by one of the women he had terrorized, shortly before a rescue ship arrived in 1917.

Environment (Core Clues - Library Use):

- Clipperton Island is a low-lying coral atoll that is largely barren, apart from occasional grass patches and a few collections of coconut palms (about six hundred palms in total). Along its longest axis (rim to rim, southeast to northwest), the island is 2.6 miles wide. Along its shortest axis (southwest to northeast), it is 1.5 miles wide. Eighty-five percent of the area is the interior freshwater lagoon, its depth ranging from a few inches to at least fifty fathoms.
- Numerous coral reefs surround the island. Large vessels drop anchor a quarter mile to the southwest or northeast and then send smaller boats to shore. Another coral reef exists inside the lagoon.
- The lagoon water is drinkable, but not very pleasant. Collected rainwater is usually more palatable.
- June to November is the stormy season. While the expedition will miss the worst weather, the area is notorious for perpetually rough seas.
- Wildlife consists mainly of migratory birds (a million or more at any one time), and crabs (estimated around five million).

Key natural locations and landmarks:

- **Clipperton Rock:** Made of fused trachyte, the Rock is on the southeastern rim, three hundred feet long, twenty feet wide and seventy feet high. From a distance, it looks



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like a sail or castle. The north and east faces are sheer cliffs, but the south and west are step-like, formed of long, thin strands that resemble organ pipes. Tunnels of varying sizes run throughout the rock. Most are small crevices, but larger caves, their floors covered in feathers and droppings, are inhabited by small animals.

- **The Isthmus:** A stretch of beach that connects the Rock to the coral rim of the island. Treasure hunters have dug here looking for pirate gold rumored to be near the Rock.
- **Rock Bay and Thumb Point:** Along the lagoon shore, near the Rock, this bay and point are formed by projections from the surrounding beach.
- **The Hook:** A spit close to the Rock, formed by regularly deposits of new beach material.
- **Pincer Bay:** Clockwise around the shore from the Rock, this bay is formed by two strips of sand protruding into the lagoon that are nine hundred feet apart. Various inlets (the number of which being determined by the water level at the time) run between them. The largest inlet, a remnant of the reef, is about three hundred square feet in size.
- **Egg Islands:** The only parts of the interior reef above the lagoon waterline. Ranging from twenty to eight hundred square feet, they are found one hundred feet off the lagoons northwestern shore.
- **Green Point:** A discolored patch of sand midway along the northern shore that borders a one-time entrance to the lagoon.
- The island's shore was formed from two crescent coral reefs that joined to form the enclosure around the lagoon. The limestone coral rim and interior beach are 1,500 feet across

at the northwestern shore. The narrowest point is at Green Point, being 130 feet across.

Areas of previous human habitation:

- The Oceanic Phosphate mining operation of 1897 established five huts on a spit of lagoon shoreline on the northeastern rim. Three huts stored mining equipment, and two were sleeping quarters. Each was sixteen feet square and eighteen inches above the sand, due to the crabs. Three huts were later dismantled and reassembled on the southwestern shore to become part of the Pacific Island Company's camp.
- The Pacific Island Company built a wharf on the southwestern shore, connected by rail tracks to a warehouse nearby, but the coral reefs made it too dangerous for freighters to dock. They dropped anchor out to sea, and longboats rowed to the wharf.
- The open-sided warehouse nearby was where larger chunks of rock and guano were ground up.
- By 1908, the Pacific Island Company had sixteen sheet-metal buildings for storage, community eating, and living in the camp on the southwestern shore.
- A lighthouse was established by the Mexicans in 1908 on the summit of Clipperton Rock. Three cabins were built on the beach below: one for the lighthouse keeper, and two for equipment storage.

SAN DIEGO TO CABO SAN LUCAS

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Briefing

Lead-Out: Drifting Nets

Given that the team is on a tight schedule, the university flies them to San Diego early in the morning where they meet with Captain Emmerson and the other members of the *Amphitrite* crew. En route, the Keeper can take the opportunity to fully introduce Bailey and Irvine if not already doing so at the university. Likewise, at the docks and on the subsequent voyage to Cabo San Lucas, the Investigators should get to know Captain Emmerson's personality.

Emmerson is welcoming and cordial, but also professional in his dealings with the Investigators. He lays the ground rules from the start: on the *Amphitrite*, his word is law; if he orders them to do anything, they do it, no questions. *"The sea can be a dangerous place, and every hand may be needed — including yours. Remember that."*

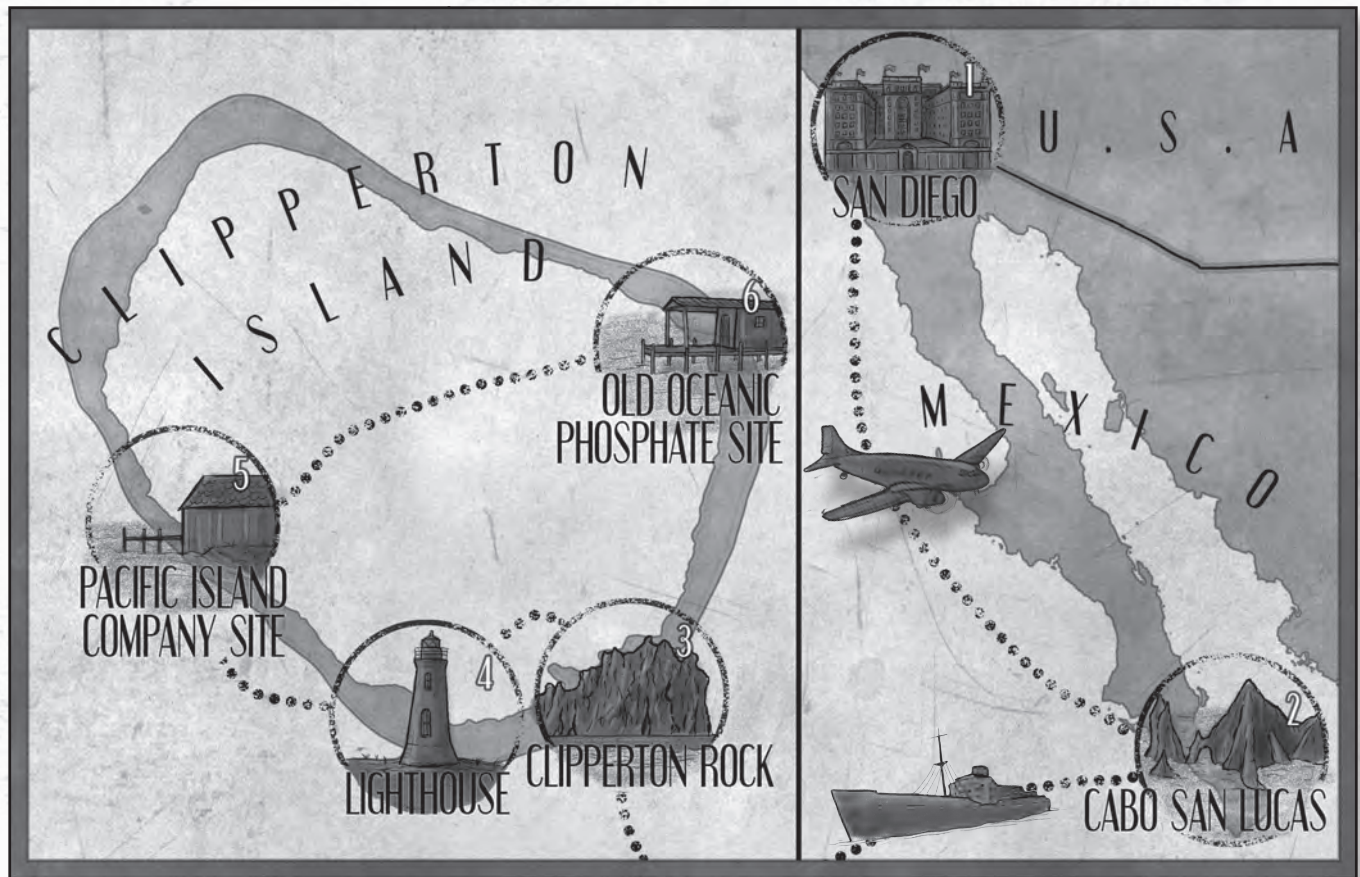
The expedition is then instructed to get its equipment loaded on board as soon as possible, as Emmerson wishes to set sail before the tide changes. The hold, divided in two, is just about big enough to store all their equipment in one half, and house a basic sleeping area for them in the other, with newly installed bunk beds.

Within the next couple of hours, they have left US waters and are over the Mexican border. Over the course of the next five days, the *Amphitrite* makes good time sailing down the Baja California coast. The bright sun is hot above them, the sea breeze is refreshing, and wind fills the white sails as the arid, mountain-framed coast passes them by. Gulls flying nearby occasionally land on the mast or the railings, and, on one occasion, dolphins swim alongside the bow of the ship, jumping out of the waves playfully.



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The Keeper should evoke a feeling of tranquil security for the period that the ship remains relatively close to land.

On the sixth day, the ship rounds the southern tip of Baja California and arrives at Cabo San Lucas. Captain Emmerson disembarks to take care of the paperwork for their arrival, and the crew is given orders to restock supplies. Given they have made good time, they are all given shore leave until the following day, when they will set sail again. Everyone is to return to the *Amphitrite* to sleep on board.

In this time, the Investigators are welcome to explore Cabo San Lucas. The center

of activity is around the port where a thriving fishing community has built up. Markets and bars are dotted around the surrounding area, where the Investigators can mingle with the locals. Here, they may be presented with the opportunity to make an **Oral History** spend to pick up any of the 1-point Library Use clues they did not pick up at the Miskatonic library (i.e., the marooning of Theodore Gussmann and the fate of the garrison) if they mention their destination to any locals.

In addition, the more superstitious among them will elaborate further, although their tone may imply that these stories should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Oral History / Relevant Interpersonal (Core Clue):

- The island is haunted by the men from the garrison who died from scurvy and the boating accident, eaten by sharks, and the women the mad lighthouse keeper shot. None of their souls are able to leave the ungodly island, and they stalk its shores throughout the night.
- Gussmann passed through Cabo San Lucas when he was finally taken from Clipperton, en route back to San Francisco. He was in a dreadful state, and was heard saying repeatedly that the island itself had tried to drive him insane. It showed him terrible things

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in his dreams, and he often woke screaming in the middle of the night.

In the middle of the following morning, the ship sets sail, heading south across the open ocean toward Clipperton, leaving civilization far behind.

ACROSS THE OPEN OCEAN

The first paragraph of each travel increment scene below is “stock footage” that the Keeper should present to the Investigators in her own words to help set the tone. Because groups take differently to the length of travel time, the Keeper can pitch the level of detail and depth accordingly.

There are no adverse affects upon the Investigators or the crew regarding the depletion of the Survival pool until they reach Clipperton. The open ocean is hostile territory, but not unnaturally so.

Drifting Nets

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: San Diego to Cabo San Lucas

Lead-Out: Changing Winds

The coast disappears over the horizon behind the *Amphitrite*. After a few hours, all hint of land is gone and the great expanse of ocean stretches in all directions. The sun beats down from above and casts a golden glare upon the water that stretches to the horizon. The waves are still relatively calm as they are only a few miles from shore. Buoys marking fishing nets are scattered here and there, through which the ship zigzags its way.

The party must make a 3-point Survival test or snare the rudder in a drifting fishing net, resulting in minor damage and a delay while they stop to untangle it. With a Difficulty 5 **Piloting** test, the nets can be avoided without incident. Given that the captain or crew will be at the wheel, the Investigators can elect to spend Piloting points from their own or any available pool, such as the captain’s or crew’s.

If the ship passes over the nets, there is a sharp juddering, and her speed rapidly drops. The captain, knowing what has happened and cursing loudly, orders one of the crewmen to go overboard and cut the nets free. He proceeds as ordered, but, a few minutes later, after surfacing for breath a couple of times between cutting various lines, he emerges crying in agony. Observing Investigators catch sight of large jellyfish emerging from under the ship, which have stung the crew member (+0 damage modifier). He can be hauled from the water and tended to with **First Aid** accordingly, but he is going to be off active duty for a couple of days recovering from the jellyfish’s painful stings.

Changing Winds

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Drifting Nets

Lead-Out: Squall

Two days out at sea roll by. The salt on the air becomes stronger, the glare of the sun off the ocean more intense, and the waves become more vicious. The ship pitches forward and sideways on occasion, prompting short bouts of mal de mer for much of one day among Investigators who are not used to ocean

voyages, until they find their sea legs. Clouds linger on the southern and western horizons, and the occasional flicker of lightning hints of storms, which are not uncommon in the area at this time of year.

The wind drops and suddenly changes direction sharply, resulting in cordage becoming tangled and a yard becoming jammed. The captain bellows at everyone on deck at the time to help untangle the cordage. If the Investigators refuse, 3 points of Survival are automatically lost as a wedge is driven between the crew and the rest of the expedition, damaging morale. If they help, a Survival test can be made as usual to negate the loss.

Once any Survival loss is assessed, the cordage can be untangled with a Difficulty 5 **Athletics** or **Mechanical Repair** test, and the freed yard swings back into place, lurching the ship forward quickly through the rough patch. Should the test be failed, the crew has to wait until the wind drops before it can safely untangle the trapped yard. As such, the Survival cost for the increment is paid again as time passes under slower speed. Furthermore, those performing the task, should it fail, take damage (modifier –1) from rope burns and falling on the slippery deck, etc.

Squall

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Changing Winds

Lead-Out: Arrival

The last night at sea before arriving on Clipperton. The wind has steadily strengthened, and the sea has roughened



Stability Track

From here, the Keeper needs to keep track of all losses and spends of Stability by the Investigators. This running total is the Stability Track. Mechanically, the Xothian stirs as Stability is lost and spent in the island's vicinity. The Deep One crystal device that placates it requires Health that is lost and spent in the same vicinity.

When the Stability Track equals two times the number of Investigators, the Xothian's dreams start to affect those on the island. When the Stability Track equals ten times the number of Investigators, it begins to wake and destroy everything in sight in its uncontrollable fit of rage and insanity. Use the stats for Xothians presented on p. 153–54 of *Trail of Cthulhu*.

For every 2 points of Health lost or spent (after the dreams begin), the Deep One crystal device reduces the Stability Track by 1 point. Visually, this manifests by blood spilled on the island being sucked into the ground toward the device (which, if viewed for the first time, ironically prompts a 3-point Stability test). The beast is only fully placated (thus stopping the dreams) when the Stability Track reaches 0.

The Keeper should feel free to alter the points on the Stability Track needed to make the dreams begin and for the beast to awaken, as well as the amount of Health needed to reduce the track.

throughout the day. As the sun goes down, lightning flickers on the southern horizon, just like when the winds changed. The *Amphitrite* sails toward the storm. The clouds overhead block out the moon and starlight. The darkness is only punctuated by the occasional flash of lightning. It is as though the ship ploughs through limitless void in all directions.

The party must make a 7-point Survival test as the wind suddenly increases and hits the boat like a wall of air from ahead, accompanied by a wave several feet high that washes over the bow. With a Difficulty 5 **Piloting** test, the crew

can attempt to ride through the squall unharmed. Given that the captain or crew will be at the wheel, the Investigators can elect to spend Piloting points from their own or any available pool.

If the test is failed, the wind rips through the sails, tearing a couple free. A yard breaks, smashing through the deck into the hold. The wave washes in through the broken deck and ruins equipment and supplies. The devastation it causes means the *Amphitrite* will have to carry out repairs in the morning, with the delay causing the increment cost to be paid again.

If the Investigators are on deck preceding the squall, they can spend 1 point of **Outdoorsman** to recognize a shelf cloud approaching ahead, illuminated by the occasional lightning flashes, indicating a squall is imminent. This gives the crew valuable minutes to prepare, bringing down the sails and securing the hatches on deck; reduce the Survival test's Difficulty by 2.

CLIPPERTON ISLAND

The following travel increments represent the arrival at Clipperton Island and the events in the days that follow. Each increment after arrival is divided into sub-scenes. The Survival cost is paid at the end of each whole increment rather than per sub-scene.

Arrival

Scene Type: Challenge

Lead-In: Squall

Lead-Out: Setting Up Camp

Late morning. The gray sky is dominated by clouds. A dark shape slowly rises over the southern horizon. It looks like a sail from afar, or maybe a castle-like building. This is Clipperton Rock. Clumps of palm trees slowly come into view, and waves crash loudly on the nearby shores. A cloud of thousands of birds hovers above the island. Their cries become louder as the ship approaches, almost drowning out the roar of the ocean.

Rather than drop anchor off the northeastern shore and row in, Captain Emerson suggests making for the southwestern shore to make use of the old wharf. It is ultimately the expedition

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leader's choice, but the southwestern shore makes logical sense, because it is best suited for establishing base camp. Staying on the ship in rough seas is not a safe or practical option.

The party must make a 5-point Survival test when the ship comes in to drop anchor off shore. Inaccuracies are common among maps of the island, and the ship strays too close to a coral reef. Investigators out on deck can make a Difficulty 5 **Sense Trouble** test to notice the approaching reef and warn the captain to steer away in time. Otherwise, the initial scraping of coral against the hull alerts the crew, prompting a Difficulty 5 **Piloting** test

to veer away at the last moment. Given that the captain or crew will be at the wheel, the Investigators can elect to spend Piloting points from their own or any available pool.

If the test is failed, the agonizing sound of the cracking hull echoes throughout the ship as it comes to a painful halt. Water begins to rush into the hold, ruining equipment and supplies. The prospect of being marooned here becomes very real, prompting a 2-point Stability test.

The damage is not irreparable, but will require significant repair time. Some of the crewmen are left behind to begin

repairs while the rest of them begin ferrying equipment to the shore via the longboats.

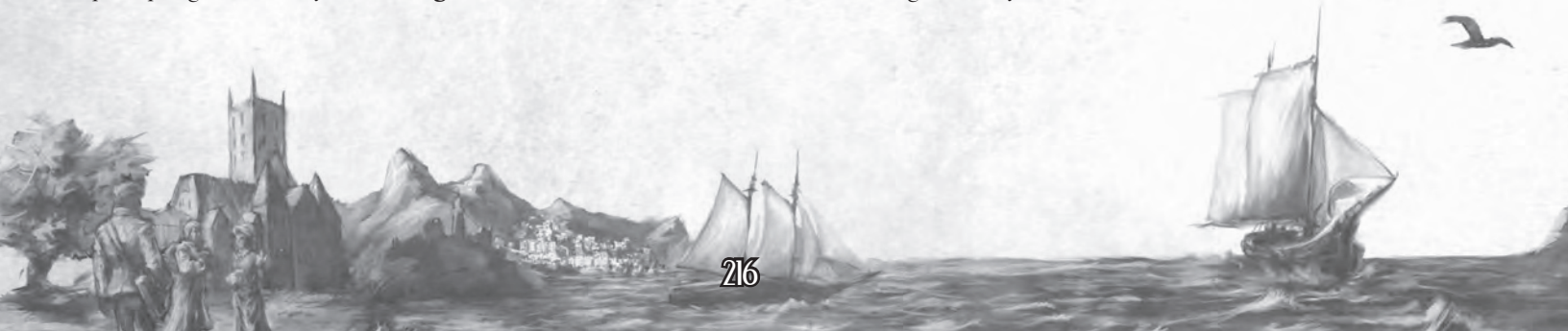
Setting Up Camp

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Arrival

Lead-Out: Exploring the Island

Ferrying the expedition's equipment from the *Amphitrite* to the old wharf (or the shore elsewhere) takes the rest of the morning. The party can choose to drop anchor on the northeastern shore, but anyone with **Outdoorsman** will know



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that making use of the former Pacific Island Company huts is a better choice, given the existing buildings there, rather than using barren shoreline. If they choose to ignore this, an additional Survival point is deducted from the pool at the end of each increment they remain on barren shores, battered by winds, etc.

Birds and Crabs

The din of the birds fills the air (identifiable as various boobies and noddies). Many boobies sit on the ground, protecting eggs in their nests, made from guano. The birds seem very docile but react violently if anyone wanders close to their nests. If Investigators startle birds perching in the trees, they take to the sky en masse with a deafening cry.

Orange crabs move slowly and cautiously, scavenging what they can find to eat (carcasses mainly), unless an Investigator walks by; then they quickly dart aside. Inquisitive creatures, they probe anything left on exposed ground, eventually trying to pick it apart and eat it with their claws.

Outdoorsman informs those looking for supplementary meals that the birds' meat is tough and the orange crabs are mildly poisonous.

Campsite

By mid-afternoon, everything is unloaded and camp set up begins. This involves a long and frustrating process of battling against the wind with large canvas tents if conducted in the open. At the old mining camp, some of the sheet-metal buildings remain, propped up above the ground. They still show signs of damage from a hurricane in September 1915.

Abandoned, rusting tools of the guano trade (shovels, barrows, etc.) litter the landscape intermittently across the island. There isn't anything of much use anywhere on the island, and no notable possessions are left at the old camp.

If the *Amphitrite* ran onto the reef, the crew also begins looking for any salvageable materials and hauls them back to the ship to be used for hull repairs.

Camp is ready by late afternoon. The cook prepares a meal and without much light remaining to conduct a survey safely, exploring has to wait until morning. This is a good opportunity to promote some interaction between the Investigators and the NPCs as the night draws in. Perimeter campfires are lit to keep away swarms of rats that come out under the cover of darkness.

The Investigators can volunteer to help the crew maintain a watch through the night to fend off rat incursions, if they wish.

After Dark

In the middle of the night, the Investigators make a **Sense Trouble** test (Difficulty 5). Those who fail, if asleep, remain so. In the unfortunate event that the Xothian's dreams are projecting by this point, pass the dream passage detailed on p. 220 to those sleeping.

Those who succeed are now awake (if not already), feeling that they are being watched. No one in the camp pays them such attention. Darkness extends beyond the campfires, filled by the roar of the ocean. Lights on the *Amphitrite* are mere dots at this distance. *Something* is watching them from the direction of the sea. The feeling prompts a 2-point Stability test.

A handful of Deep Ones observe the intruders from the waves while others examine the unmanned *Amphitrite*. They are too well obscured to be spotted at this point, but their presence is certainly felt.

Exploring the Island

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Setting Up Camp

Lead-Out: Cleansing

From here, the expedition becomes a "sand box" environment. This increment represents the first full day upon the island. Encounters and discoveries are presented here, but how the Investigations maneuver between them is completely down to them.

Morning Discoveries

Growing bird cries awaken the Investigators as dawn breaks. Breakfast is served while Bailey and Irvine prompt the team leader to outline the expedition's plan for the day. Emmerson orders two of the crewmen to check that the ship has fared well overnight. They return quickly and report that it looks like someone has boarded the vessel in the night.

Examining the *Amphitrite*, Investigators find marks on the railings. The crewmen say they look like grappling hooks, but the five parallel gouges more resemble claw marks. Also, why would grappling hooks be used to open the doors to the hold or crew quarters...? This prompts a 2-point Stability test. No Deep Ones remain onboard.

Primary Objectives

Collecting samples of the local soil and rocks is a trivial matter. Likewise, palm



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cuttings and nonindigenous grasses and weeds are not hard to find. In parts of the island, grasses are clumped near palm trees, and in others (such as near the Rock) they form thick carpets.

Coral is harder to obtain. The interior reef is accessible without hazard, but the surrounding reefs are in the open ocean. Sea snakes and some sharks that brave the shallow waters pose hazards that the Investigators have to overcome. The Keeper is free to set the danger level here to as little or as much as wished. Overcoming these hazards requires **Athletics** and **Sense Trouble** tests.

The difficulty for capturing any birds and crabs is also variable. **Stealth** or **Athletics** can be used, depending on Investigator tactics, with Difficulties ranging between 4 and 6. Crabs are fairly slow, so are easier to catch, while birds are faster.

Documenting the remnants of previous habitation and surveying landing points will require a circuit of the entire island, confirming that the northeast and southwest are indeed the best locations to drop anchor and row in, due to the comparatively shallow reefs there.

Clipperton Rock

Bailey wants to examine Clipperton Rock, because it will provide some insight about the island's geological past. The shard of volcanic rock is all that remains of the slopes of the former mountain. A **Geology** spend reveals the outline of its formation: a seamount was pushed up above the waterline, before exploding in a violent seismic disturbance aeons ago, and then pushed eastward by the rolling seabed. Bailey deduces that the Rock might contain passages, former vents and lava flows.

Investigators searching the lighthouse huts find they have been stripped bare,



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and the lighthouse dismantled. The French flag now flies in its place. Nearby, large footprints can be found heading toward a cave opening. **Outdoorsman** (core clue) confirms that the prints are fresh (two days old) and come from the shore. A 1-point spend confirms that the prints are webbed, prompting a 2-point Stability test.

Following the tracks leads the Investigators toward the Deep One crystal device. At the rear of the cave is a boulder that blocks the way forward. The tracks indicate someone moved the boulder to one side, went ahead, then moved the boulder back when they came out again. The boulder is too heavy for humans to move without mechanical assistance.

Setting up a pulley system will take the remainder of the day with the crew's help, ready for use tomorrow (requiring a cooperative **Athletics** test, with at least five participants, Difficulty 7). Dynamite would clear the obstacle easily, but unless the Investigators specifically requested some at the outset, they have none (no Preparedness tests allowed). The way remains blocked for the rest of the day, but they can potentially open it when a pulley is set up tomorrow.

Early entry to the crystal chamber (see p. 221) has the potential to bring the scenario to a premature conclusion, so be wary of allowing the Investigators access too soon.

Shark Remains

The night after the squall, the Deep Ones took precautionary measures and sacrificed three tiger sharks, letting their blood flow into the island to the

crystal device. Their now half-devoured, bloodless carcasses are laid out at Green Point, where the crabs and birds have been feasting on them.

Irvine will be equally fascinated and disgusted by the sight, feeling compelled to photograph it in detail, commenting that he has seen nothing like this before.

Biology (core clue) confirms that the sharks are completely exsanguinated and reveals the time of death.

A 2-point **Evidence Collection** spend confirms that the three carcasses laid out in parallel were carried to Green Point. Six sets of webbed footprints lead to and from the shore. The claw marks that gutted the sharks are the same as those found on the *Amphitrite*, and spilled organs imply the act was carried out on land... but there is no sign of any blood spilled on the sand. This prompts a 3-point Stability test.

Human Occupation

As mentioned, rusty tools are littered all over the island. Besides the Pacific Island Company site and the lighthouse huts, the only other major remains are those found at the old Oceanic Phosphate site. The empty remains of the two stilted wooden huts still stand. They are weather beaten with damaged roofs.

Inside one, where the marooned Theodore Gussmann resided, crosses and a Psalm (141:8) in his native German are scratched into the walls. It reads:

Aber meine Augen sind zu dir, O Gott, mein Herr; in dir Suche ich Zuflucht; lass mich nicht wehrlos!

Irvine can provide the translation if no Investigators speak German:

But my eyes are toward you, O God, my Lord; in you I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless!

A penknife bearing the initials T.G. is jammed into the wall at the end of the Psalm, implying it as Gussmann's doing. A 1-point **Theology** or **Assess Honesty** spend reveals that he was panicked when marking the words and crosses, hoping that they might provide a ward of some kind to keep something out of the hut.

This is where Gussmann slept and experienced the dreams of the Xothian that nearly drove him insane. He carved the crosses to protect against them, but it did him no good, and the hut will not help the Investigators if they try anything similar later.

Ship Sighting

Late afternoon, Captain Emmerson summons the expedition leader to the camp to report that a ship has been sighted on the northern horizon. Through a telescope, the vessel is a schooner similar to the *Amphitrite*. The ship (*Neptunus*, after Neptune) drops anchor on the far side of the island from the party as the sun sets. The crew does not attempt to make landfall in the dark.

This is a rival expedition, sponsored by the National Geographic Society, that hopes to achieve exactly the same goal as Miskatonic University — to provide the White House with material to secure the space on the cruise for one of their representatives. Lead by oceanographer Dr. Natalie Richardson, the ship carries a submersible similar to the bathysphere Otis Barton and



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Sleep embraces you, and you dream. The experience is disjointed and confusing. You're flying over the ocean. Panic grips you. You have fled your home, trying to escape a growing feeling of danger. You push onward, faster and faster, the clouds parting around you, the seas rising in your wake. The world shakes. In terror, you realize you cannot outrun the cataclysm. Your Father's screams echo to the four corners of the world as he sinks beneath the waves with your brethren. It drives you to the brink of madness. Falling from the skies, you try to focus. A shattered mountain rises from the waves. You hope that if you land there you can sleep and rest until your Father rises. You see your terrible shadow cast upon the waves below: gargantuan, bat-like wings that extend outward, head enshrouded by tentacles that writhe and grasp at the sky. You awake screaming. [Roll your Stability test]

William Beebe used between 1930 and 1934. This can be seen outlined on the deck at sunset through the telescope.

They intend to photograph as much of the underwater scenery as possible around the reefs, since such a survey has yet to be conducted there, and pay little attention to the island itself. Therefore, they will not seek to interfere with the Miskatonic expedition, whom they were unaware of before arriving, having set sail from San Diego two days after the *Amphitrite*.

Captain Emmerson and the crew veto any attempt to reach the *Neptunus* at night. The reef and strong seas make it too dangerous to attempt until morning. Everyone returns to the camp for dinner, the fires are lit as the night before, and slowly the Investigators drift off to sleep.

Dreams

When the Investigators sleep and the Sanity Track has reached two times

the number of Investigators, they are susceptible to the Xothian's dreams. Pass the following passage to them to read and then have them make a 7-point Stability Test (4 for proximity, +3 for Xothian modifier).

NPCs, while they do not mechanically count toward the Stability Track, can still suffer the dreams. The Keeper can have as many NPCs as desired affected, leading to growing tensions among superstitious crew members. Arguments spark about what the shared dream means. Is it still here? What does it want? What *is* it?

Cleansing

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

Lead-In: Exploring the Island

Lead-Out: Escape

This increment represents the second full day upon the island when the Deep One cleansing begins, sparked either by

Cthulhu Mythos Use

Using Cthulhu Mythos up until this point in the scenario just confirms the possibility that there might be a Deep One presence in the area. After experiencing the dream, or seeing the Xothian beyond the crystal chamber (see p. 221), it provides more insight.

The Investigator pieces together the references in the dream to the fall of Mu and R'lyeh. The father figure, as inferred from seeing the outline of the Xothian upon the waves, is Great Cthulhu. Mirroring the records of the dreams of Cthulhu recorded in 1925, the star-spawn is sleeping and dreaming, subconsciously projecting its memories of when it came to land on the island.

This explains the Deep One presence. They worship the Sleeper and his spawn, so would see the island as a holy place, akin to a nimbus or aureole surrounding the titan (a cerulean halo). If the beast was mentally scarred following the cataclysm, they could be protecting it while it sleeps. As such, they could view the human presence on Clipperton as a threat to the Xothian's safety...

The nature of this realization costs 3 Stability pool points and 1 Sanity pool point.

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the Investigators in the crystal chamber or onboard the *Neptunus*.

The Investigators can continue exploring before proceeding if they wish. If the party is enjoying the exploration, the Keeper should not move toward a premature ending. However, if they choose to rush headlong toward the climax, react accordingly.

Crystal Chamber

Beyond the boulder in the cave at Clipperton Rock, now able to be moved aside by the pulley system, is a network of passages heading below ground. In the course of using the pulley system, one of the crewmen assisting accidentally cuts his hand on an exposed nail and bleeds onto the ground. The blood is quickly soaked into the cave floor, since the device is almost certainly active now, prompting a 3-point Stability test.

In the passages, the floor has been trodden smooth by the millennia of use, so there is no test needed to determine the way forward. Fifty feet down, and a hundred feet out under the lagoon, a blue-green pulsating light can be seen ahead. The tunnel opens into a large geode-like crystal chamber, fifty feet across, apparently open at one end, with a slippery polished floor.

Crystal protrusions on the walls and ceiling, from which the light pulsates, all angle toward a crystal carving in the center of the chamber: an effigy of Cthulhu, eyes closed, with claws cupped above its head to form a receptacle. Blood flows into this from a larger protrusion directly above, should the Xothian be stirring and the island is collecting spilled blood. Seeing the terrible visage is a 3-point Stability test.



When Investigators examine the apparently dark opening on the other side of the chamber, they discover it is a wall of water, held at bay by some invisible force that cannot be crossed, prompting another 3-point Stability test. Approaching, the darkness parts like a clearing mist, revealing a

panorama of the bottom of the lagoon. Only a little light filters down through the murky water and plant matter near the surface. The floor of the lagoon shifts occasionally as large trunk-like strips writhe. Those who watch too long will see one almighty eyelid of the Xothian open to expose the rolling,



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dreaming eye beneath, prompting a 7-point Stability test (4 for proximity, +3 for Xothian modifier).

While they investigate, the shoggoth guard approaches. Sliding through the tubes that permeate Clipperton Rock, it observes from gaps between the crystals in the ceiling. It does not attack unless the Investigators try to destroy the chamber or remove the effigy of Cthulhu (the heart of the device). Revealing its presence unnecessarily could cause Stability loss, and thus threaten waking the Xothian. However, if the Investigators force it to act, all bets are off. It goes for a swift kill to feed blood to the effigy and placate the Xothian. This is an 8-point Stability test as it pours down from above and quickly reforms before attacking. Use the stats for shoggoths presented on p. 150 of *Trail of Cthulhu*.

If the Investigators retreat from the chamber without damaging the effigy or crystals, they leave without incident. If the shoggoth attacks, **Fleeing** tests are required to escape. The shoggoth does not leave the Rock, but near-deafeningly screams “Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!” which echoes across the island and out to sea, alerting the Deep Ones and beginning the cleansing of the island.

Rival Expedition

The quickest way to reach the *Neptunus* would be to use the *Amphitrite*. If damaged on the reef, the repairs should be finished by later this afternoon. The Investigators can either wait, or take the ten-person longboats around the island with the help of the captain and the crew. In either case, there is no obstacle besides time to reach the ship.

Dr. Richardson and the captain of the *Neptunus*, Captain Thomas, are ready on deck to welcome the Miskatonic party. They are open and friendly, explaining they were unaware of another expedition planned to Clipperton. While they explain that they are here to conduct some underwater photography for the National Geographic Society, only a relevant Interpersonal spend gets them to open up fully as to their motives behind their presence being the same as the university’s. If the party reveals its own agenda, Richardson is surprised, but ultimately approaches the situation as a good sport: they may be rivals, but there’s no need for hostility. They both have different focuses, so they are not impeding each other’s work.

With a relevant Interpersonal spend, the Investigators are permitted to observe the dive from onboard the *Neptunus*. To actually get a space in the submersible on one of the divers requires a further Interpersonal spend.

A short while later, the submersible is hoisted up from the deck, then lowered into the ocean. The colorful reef below is alive with fish and the occasional tiger shark. Photographing proceeds without incident, and Dr. Richardson reports back her findings to the *Neptunus* via a telephone line.

As the submersible is being raised, Richardson (or an Investigator if present), spots a light in the distance, down the slopes beyond the reef. It is too intense to be a reflection off a shipwrecked hull. This sighting of the Deep One colony from afar prompts her to move the *Neptunus* farther out to investigate what the light could be.

When the submersible dives for a second time, it is above the Deep One colony. Investigators that have talked their way inside the submersible can stare in awe at the undersea settlement that extends out below them, but find that awe is swiftly replaced by terror as the Deep Ones detect the intruders and move to destroy them (prompting a 5-point Stability test).

If no Investigators are in the submersible at the time, those listening over the telephone line hear Richardson’s running commentary of the view interrupted by screaming and sudden silence as the line is cut. The Deep Ones sever the line to the winch, and the submersible sinks into oblivion.

If there are Investigators in the submersible, they deserve a fighting chance, but the odds are stacked against them. The Deep Ones initially attack the spherical hull of the submersible but find it resilient to their claws. So, they move to the winch line shortly afterward. If the Investigators begin hauling the submersible to the surface within three rounds of the Deep Ones beginning their attack, it can be hauled back to the deck before the line is cut. Otherwise, the line is cut before the divers complete the ascent and the submersible, filling with water, falls toward the seabed.

Onboard, the twelve-strong crew of the *Neptunus* soon faces an onslaught of Deep Ones from below. Use the stats for Deep Ones presented on p. 129–30 of *Trail of Cthulhu*. Staying on the ship is a death sentence, with another Deep One appearing if one should fall. Eventually, they begin attacking the hull to sink it, succeeding at the Keeper’s discretion.



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If the Investigators arrived by longboat, their safest option is to make a quick dash for the shore. Two Deep Ones attempt to climb aboard and attack as it leaves, but the majority focus on the *Neptunus* as primary target. If they arrived by the *Amphitrite*, they could attempt to leave the island completely at this point, dooming those left behind on the island, which runs the risk of further Stability tests accordingly. Choosing this option initiates the “Escape” scene below.

Contingencies

If the Investigators go to the crystal chamber but do not cause the shoggoth to attack and they do not visit the *Neptunus*, Dr. Richardson’s dive over the Deep One colony still sparks the cleansing to take place. From the shore, the Investigators notice the ship lurching and sinking quickly. Through a telescope they can see the swarms of Deep Ones clambering onto the deck and tearing the crew to pieces, prompting a 4-point Stability test.

Plan of Attack

The Deep Ones first goal is to deal with the *Neptunus*, being closest to the colony. Then the hoard (fifty to a hundred strong as the Keeper desires) swims to the shore. Dividing into two groups, armed with tridents, they begin sweeping around the island in both directions. Eventually they converge upon the expedition’s camp.

Fleeing tests are required to reach the camp ahead of the oncoming hoard. There is little to-no time to pack equipment or supplies before they are assaulted, but they can make a run for the *Amphitrite* upon succeeded the **Fleeing** test. Failure means being attacked before they reach the camp. Standing their ground and fighting

(either on route to, or at the camp) will inevitably result in the party’s demise given the sheer weight of opposition.

For each member of the crew that falls (or is otherwise left behind on the island), the Survival Pool is reduced by 1 and all the crew’s communal ability pools drop by 2 points (except Health).

Escape

Scene Type: Core, Hazard

Lead-In: Cleansing

Lead-Out: Coda

Survival Cost: +0

If the party manage to evacuate the camp and head for the *Amphitrite* before the horde descend upon them, they can attempt to sail away from the island to safety. This increment covers running a gauntlet of Deep Ones assaulting the ship as it leaves.

The ocean is still rough around the reef as the horde begins swimming from the shore towards the ship. Once onboard, the crew can begin to get underway. The party must make a 6-point Survival test as the horde arrive just as the ship is beginning to pull away. Clawing can be heard all across the ship as the Deep Ones try to sink the vessel. With a Difficulty 6 **Piloting** test, the crew can pull the *Amphitrite* away quick enough so that no irreparable damage done to the hull. If the captain or crew are at the wheel, the Investigators can elect to spend Piloting points from either their own, the captain’s or crew’s collective pools.

If the test is failed, the ship begins to take on water and the party repeats the test until succeeding, losing 6 Survival pool points with each failure, risking the ship sinking should the pool reach –5. At which point, the party is stranded in the ocean, surrounded by Deep Ones intent on their demise, with no hope of escape. The curtain falls on the scene.

1d6 Deep Ones manage to claw their way onto the deck and begin attacking the crew whilst the rest turned their attention to destroying the hull. Succeeding the Survival test evades those attacking the hull, but those that have made it on board still need to be dealt with.

Should the party fight off the last of the horde, and the ship hasn’t sunk, they can begin the voyage home. Those looking behind them through a telescope will see the Deep Ones retreating to the shore, where they are forced to take desperate measures to placate the Xothian. Three of the Deep Ones are dragged onto the shore and forced onto their knees, whereupon they have their throats clawed out, a shower of blood raining onto the beach, as they are sacrificed to the star-spawn. They have been left with no choice, following the escape of the humans, but to offer what they have immediately to hand to prevent destruction being brought down upon the rest of the colony.

Wind fills the ships sails, and the party begins the week’s journey home.



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Coda

Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-In: Escape

The seas are calm all the way back to Cabo San Lucas, although it still takes a week to reach there, thus draining supplies and morale evermore.

The party must make a 3-point Survival test in order to complete the voyage. Should the party have made it this far with less than half the crew, this cost is doubled, given the extra strain on those left to pilot the ship. With a **Difficulty 5 Piloting** test, the crew can pull together and get the ship home. If the captain or crew are at the wheel, the Investigators can elect to spend Piloting points from their own or any available pool.

If the test is failed, the ship takes on water from the damage done to the hull, supplies run dangerously low and morale is hitting rock bottom as the horror of what the crew has experienced begins to sink in and tensions fray.

Exits and Rewards

Making it back to civilization without waking the Xothian is good for the recovery of 1 Sanity pool point in a Pulp game.

Should the Investigators file an unedited report to the university, word reaches the Inquiry, whereupon a sanitized version is logged in the archives while the original is kept under lock and key. The edited report goes to the White House, portraying the island as unworthy of the president's attention and instead highlighting how other

islands in the Pacific might suit his interest more. Should word of this reach the Investigators, and they begin to dig into why this occurred, they could find themselves meeting with the Inquiry in short order, sparking future scenarios.

Nonetheless, the presidential cruise sets sail for Clipperton, having invited Dr. Waldo L. Schmitt (of the Smithsonian Institution) to accompany them. On July 21, 1938, they land on the island. The end result of their visit is the discovery of a variety of new species which are named after the president (including fish, sponges, crabs, worms, mollusks and a royal palm).

While they leave without apparent incident, reports circulate in the press a few days later that three seaplanes made a two-hour survey flight over the island and surrounding area for "intelligence purposes."

Whatever the reason behind this, or the president's increasing interest in the island over the following years, is another story...

PURIST VS. PULP

The observant reader will notice that it has not yet been explicitly stated whether the scenario is designed to be played in Purist or Pulp mode. That is because it is down to the Keeper to decide how to run "Cerulean Halo."

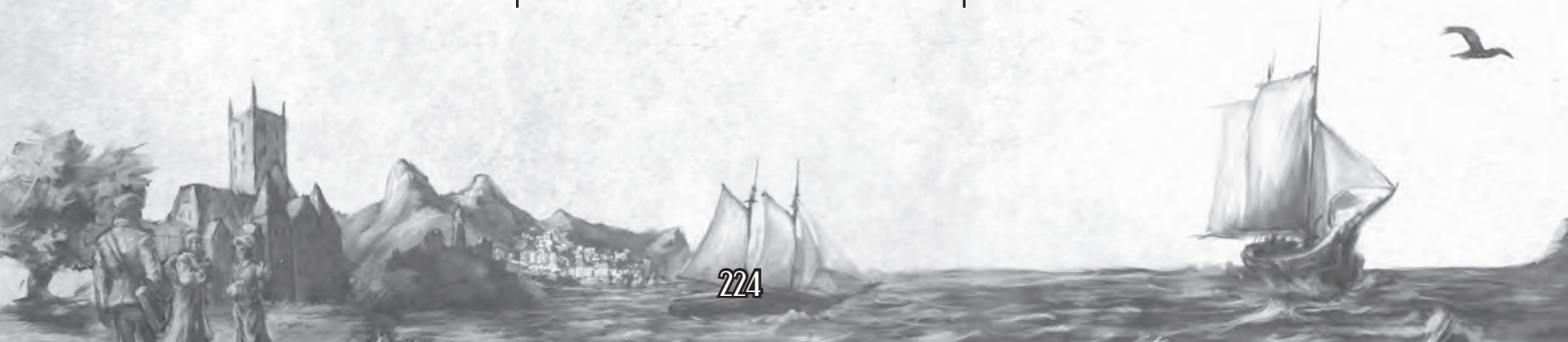
There are key elements that mean the scenario cannot be neatly pigeonholed into one mode or the other. The fact that the Investigators are walking into the close vicinity of one of the most terrifying creatures of the Mythos, with a high likelihood of death when it

awakens, slants it very heavily toward being a Purist scenario. However, there is a slim chance of survival. If luck is with them, the Investigators can fight their way to freedom. The running battle against the Deep One horde at the climax of the scenario would lean the scenario more toward a Pulp vein. The Keeper has to choose which style to emphasize more in the course of play.

If you decide upon a Purist tone, there are a couple of tips we can recommend. Keep track of lost Stability and Health as best you can in secret. Also, approach descriptions with a very clinical or scientific angle. The key here is to emphasize the mundane and natural so that when the Mythos rears its head, its impact should be all the more shattering.

If you decide upon a Pulp tone, then almost the opposite applies. Nominate one of the Investigators to keep a record of the Sanity Track and inform you when it reaches your set target number. Do not explicitly state that when Health points are lost or spent that this reduces the total, but just tell them to reduce the number accordingly at the right time. This helps to lay the foundations of a foreboding atmosphere. The players know that a clock is ticking, but they have no idea what it is counting down to or what will happen when the alarm sounds.

Likewise, if running in Pulp mode, emphasize the raw force of nature that surrounds the Investigators: the crashing of the waves on the shore, the storm at sea, the cries of the birds, etc. When it comes to the running battle at the end, focus on the more animalistic features of the Deep Ones — claws, teeth, etc.



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In regards to the running battle, perhaps consider the number of opponents the Investigators fight at any one time. In Purist mode it is perfectly acceptable to unleash the hoard in its entirety, leaving the Investigators to stare madly at the unstoppable force that descends upon

them. In a Pulp mode, sending one wave after another might work more effectively. The Investigators still have the odds heavily stacked against them, but at least one or two minor victories on the route to escape gives them some hope, even if it is ultimately dashed.

To reiterate, the key thing here is that it is down to the Keeper to make the final call. We have presented some options to help you present the scenario as you would like it to be run, but we are not going to force you into one mode more so than another.



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Dwellers in the Dunes Handouts

Expedition Overview



Gobi Desert Campsite



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Mother of Malaria Handouts

Expedition Overview



Handout 1

Amongst the desperate tribes of the swamp I have found a myth of curious provenance. It tells of the Sick Mother, or perhaps Mother of Sickness, who before the distant sun god rose to illuminate the world birthed Seven Sisters of Darkness: Azazzu, Shab'Nagaru, Kadulu, Hazura, Nayarlutu, Tosugua and Yogu'Gozo. Their difficult births destroyed the Sick Mother, but with the help of bad sorcery she pieced herself back together, with woe to all.

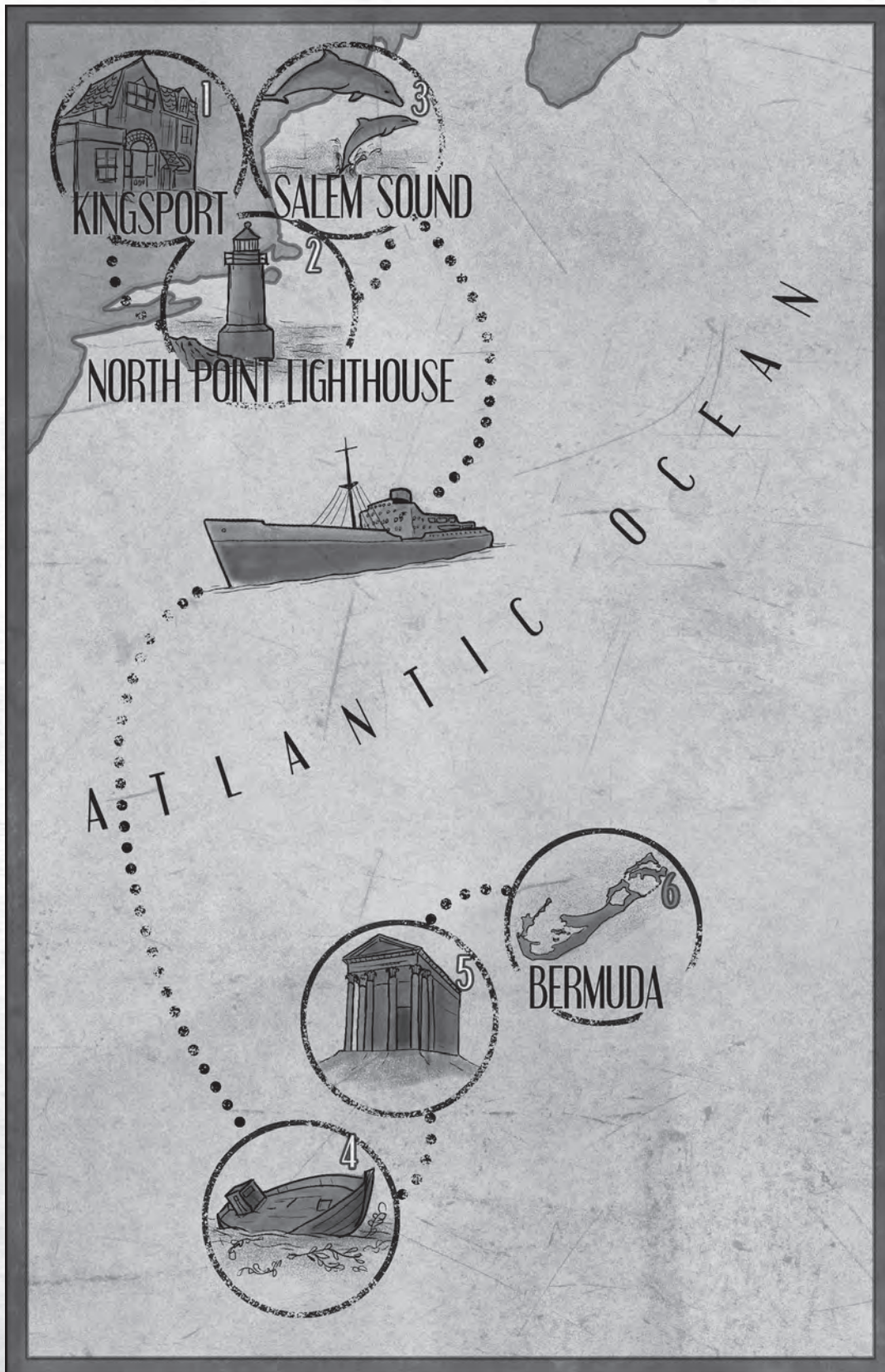
Most curiously, only those under the age of thirty or so tell this tale and swear they learned it as children. However, the elders disclaim all awareness of it, and grow restive when pressed on the matter.

When a bad story comes, they say, it is best to leave, because after bad stories come bad events. Thus all the locals, young and old, prepare to desert this place.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Lost on a Sea of Dreams Handout

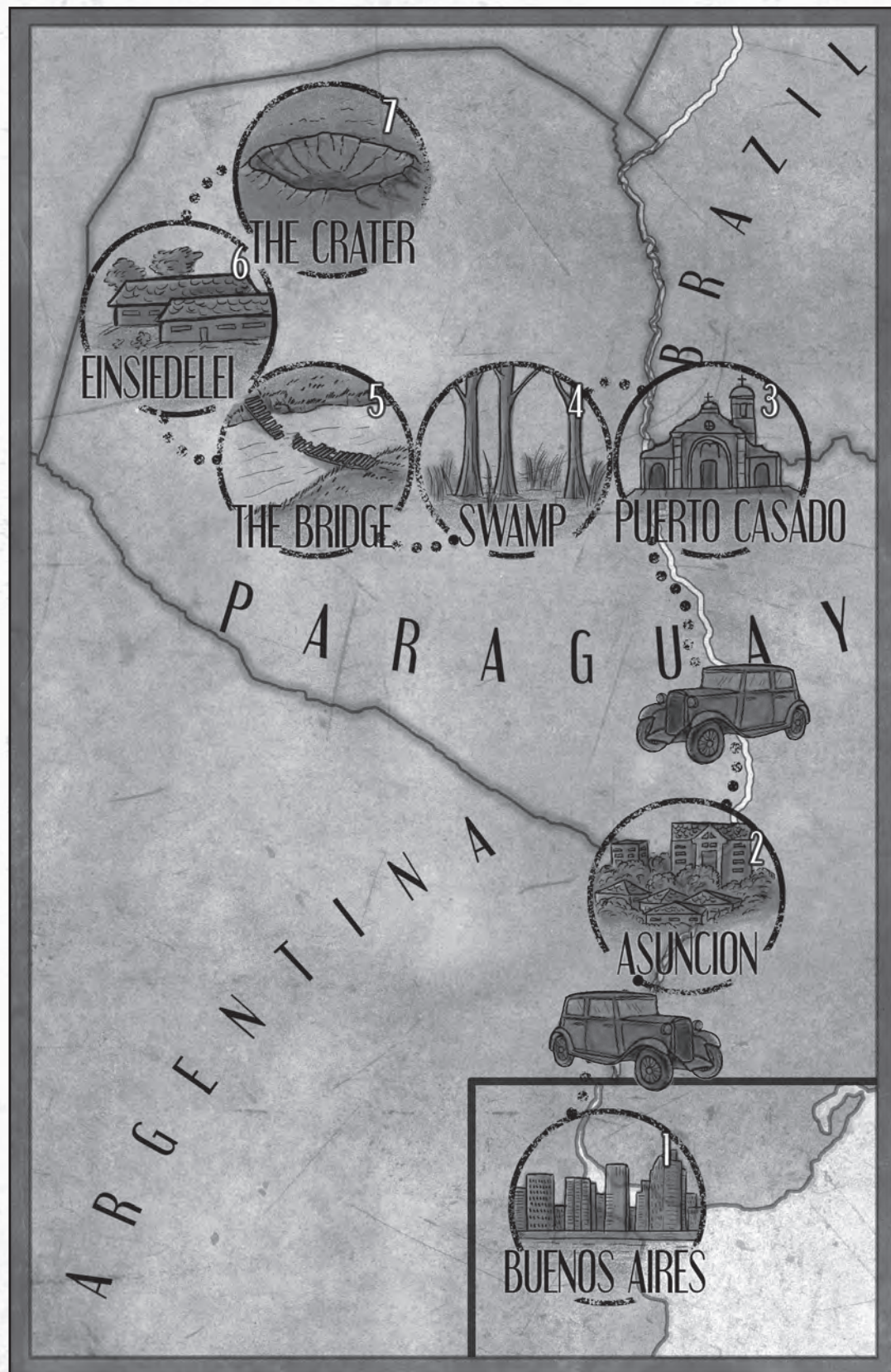
Expedition Overview



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

An Incident at the Border Handout

Expedition Overview



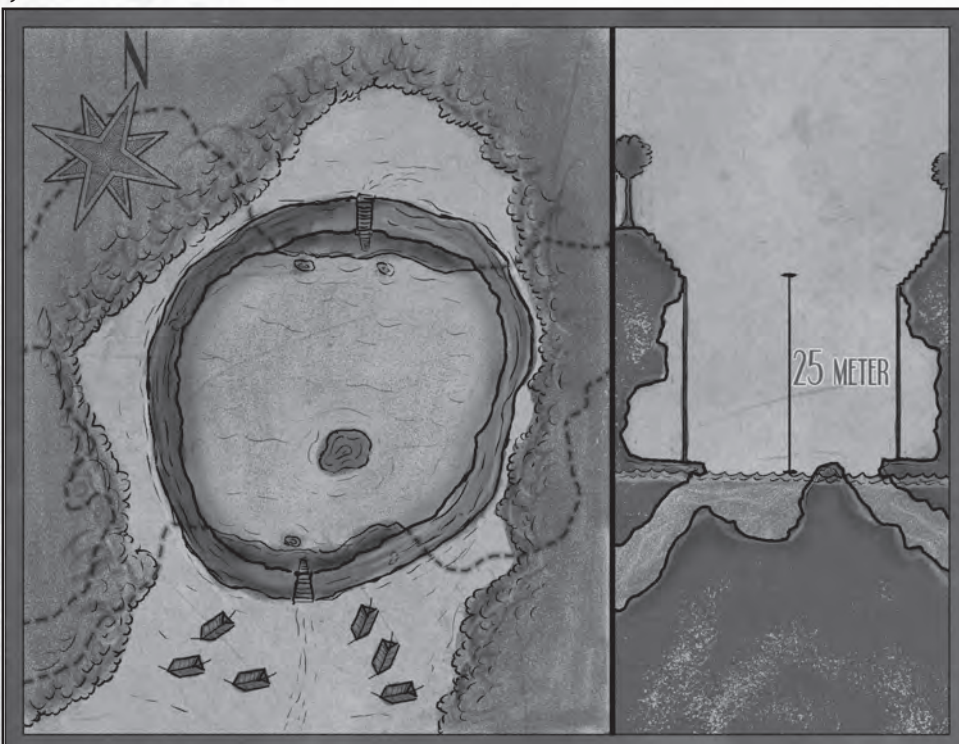
TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Jaguars of El-Thar Handouts

Expedition Overview



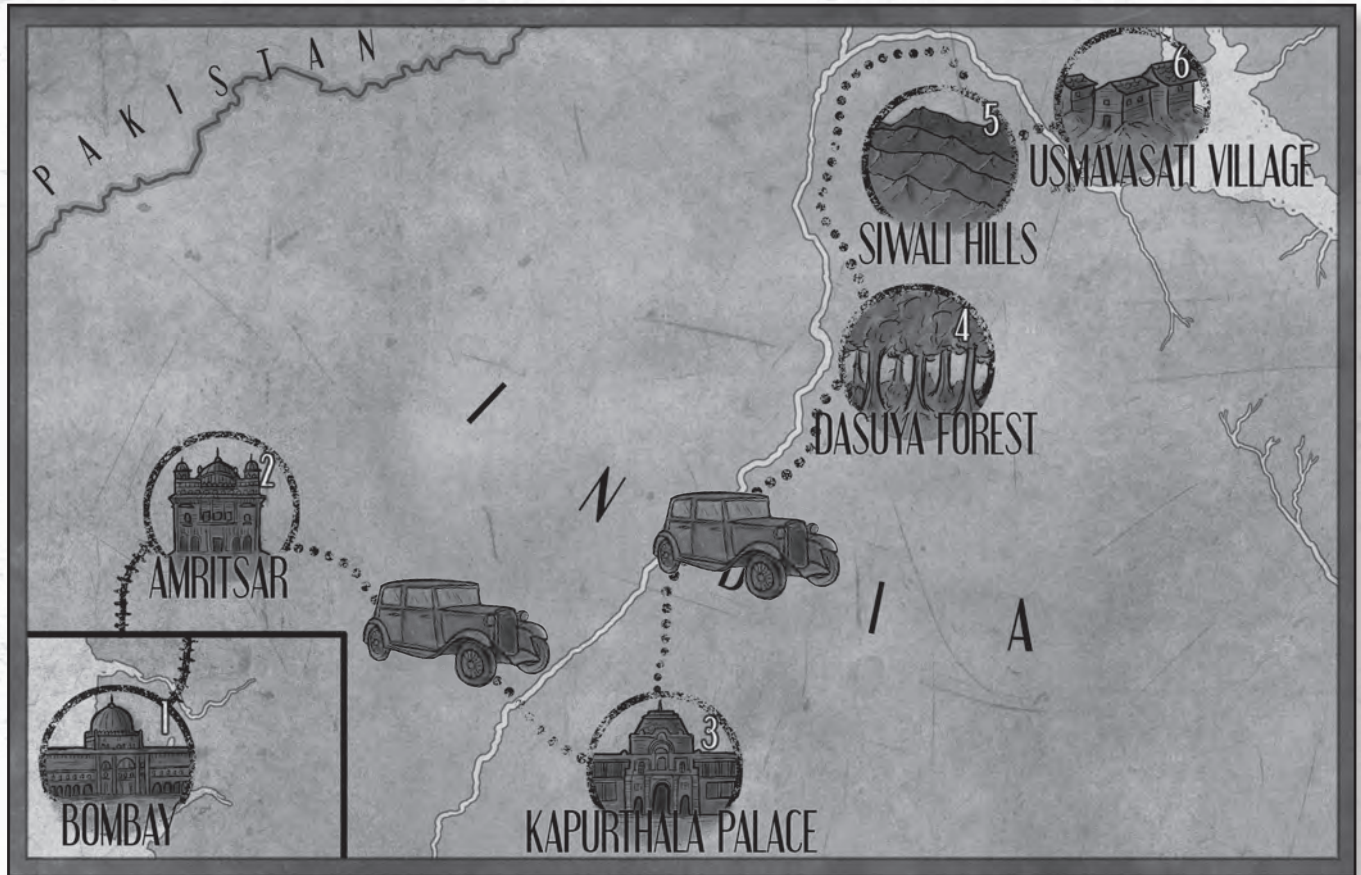
Gran Cenote



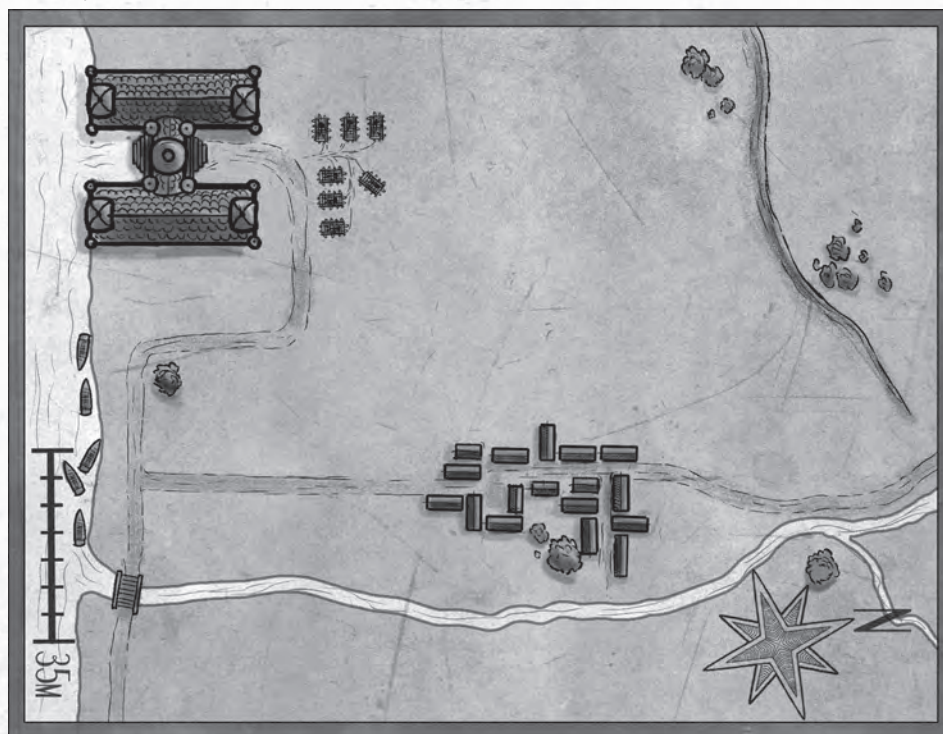
TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Tongued by Fire Handouts

Expedition Overview



Village and Temple of Usmavasati



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Tongued by Fire Handouts

Handout 2: Travelers to Usmavasati

EKRAM MANDAL
Hindustani

Rahul Dohre
Kashmiri

Dinesh Prasad
Kashmiri

Pratul Gautam
Kashmiri

Nadeem Simeh Jafay
Punjabi

Sitish Kuril
Punjabi

Maxesx Kumar
Punjabi

Amir Simeh Bawri
Punjabi

Somesx Darsam
Punjabi

Vogesh Bhopal
Punjabi/English

Sandeep Annadi
Hindustani

Bharat Sharma
Hindustani/English

Umesx Chandra
Hindustani

Girish Lal
Punjabi/Hindustani

Abhinav Virk
Punjabi

Krishnan Kunwar
Hindustani

Bharat Bairu
Punjabi

Varun Daggupati
Hindustani

Wasim Biswas
Hindustani

Vikas Challa
Hindustani

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Served Cold Handouts

Expedition Overview



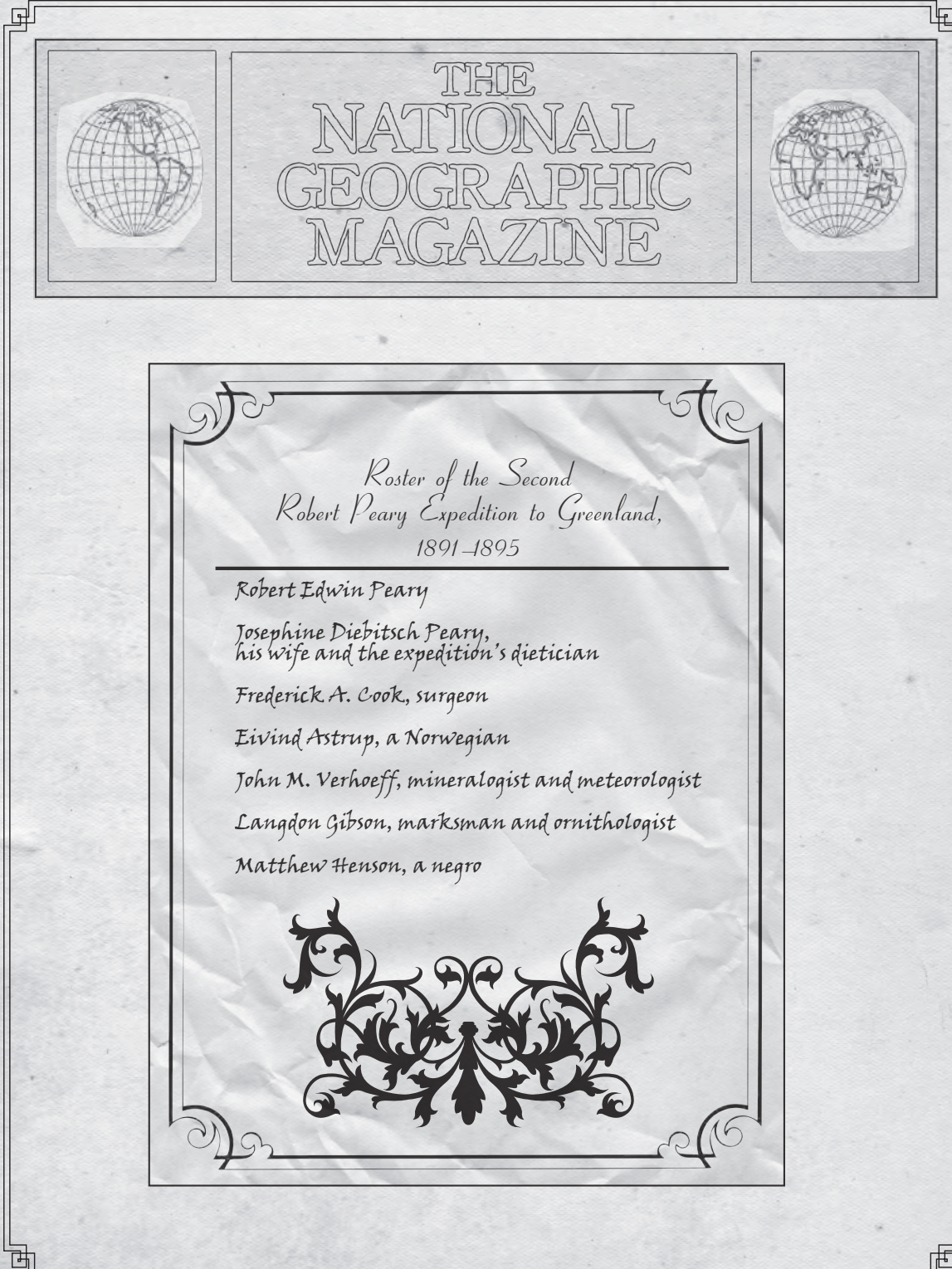
Niinganik Village



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Served Cold Handouts

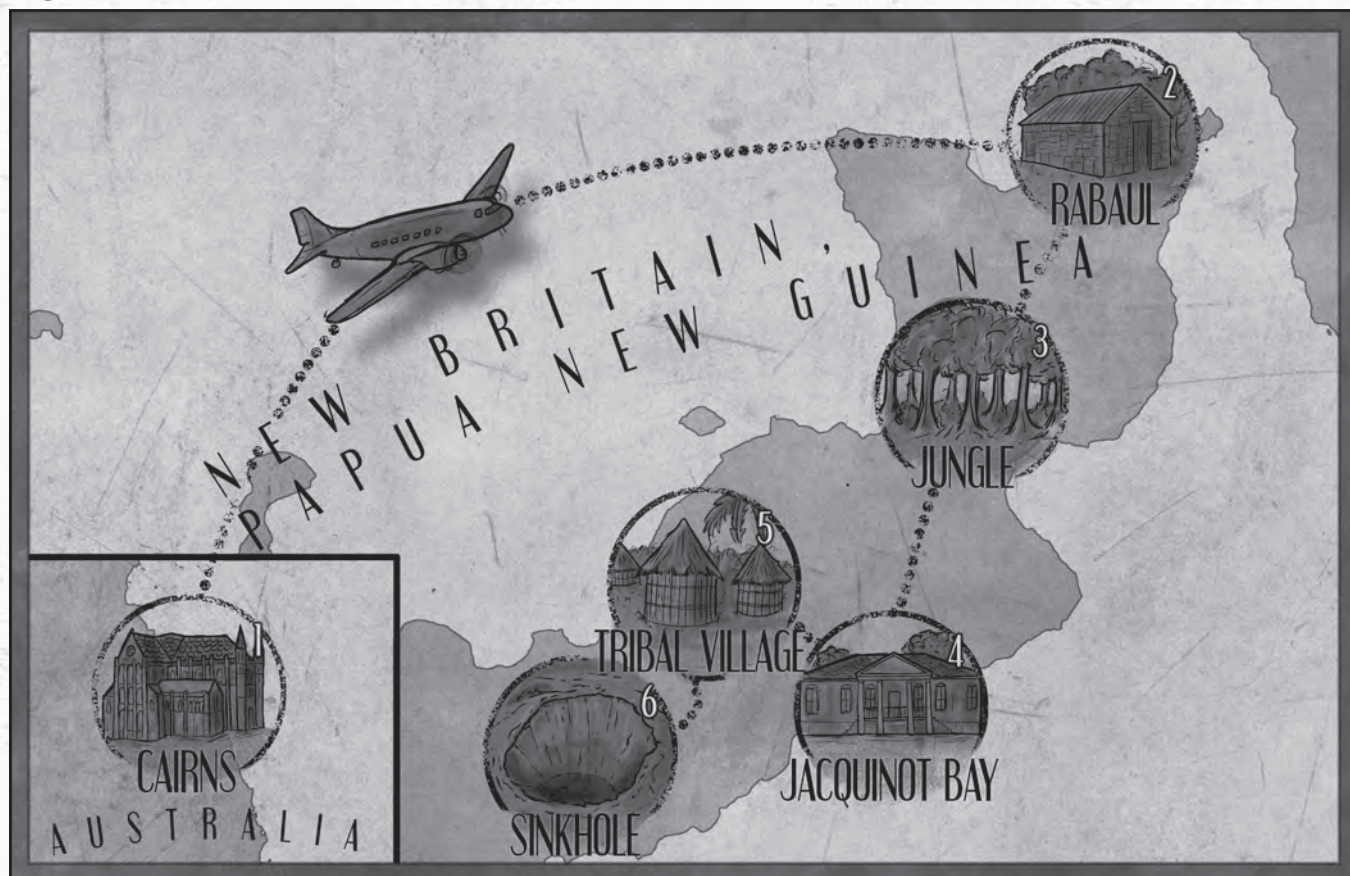
Handout 3: Peary Expedition Roster



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Whistle and I'll Come Handouts

Expedition Overview



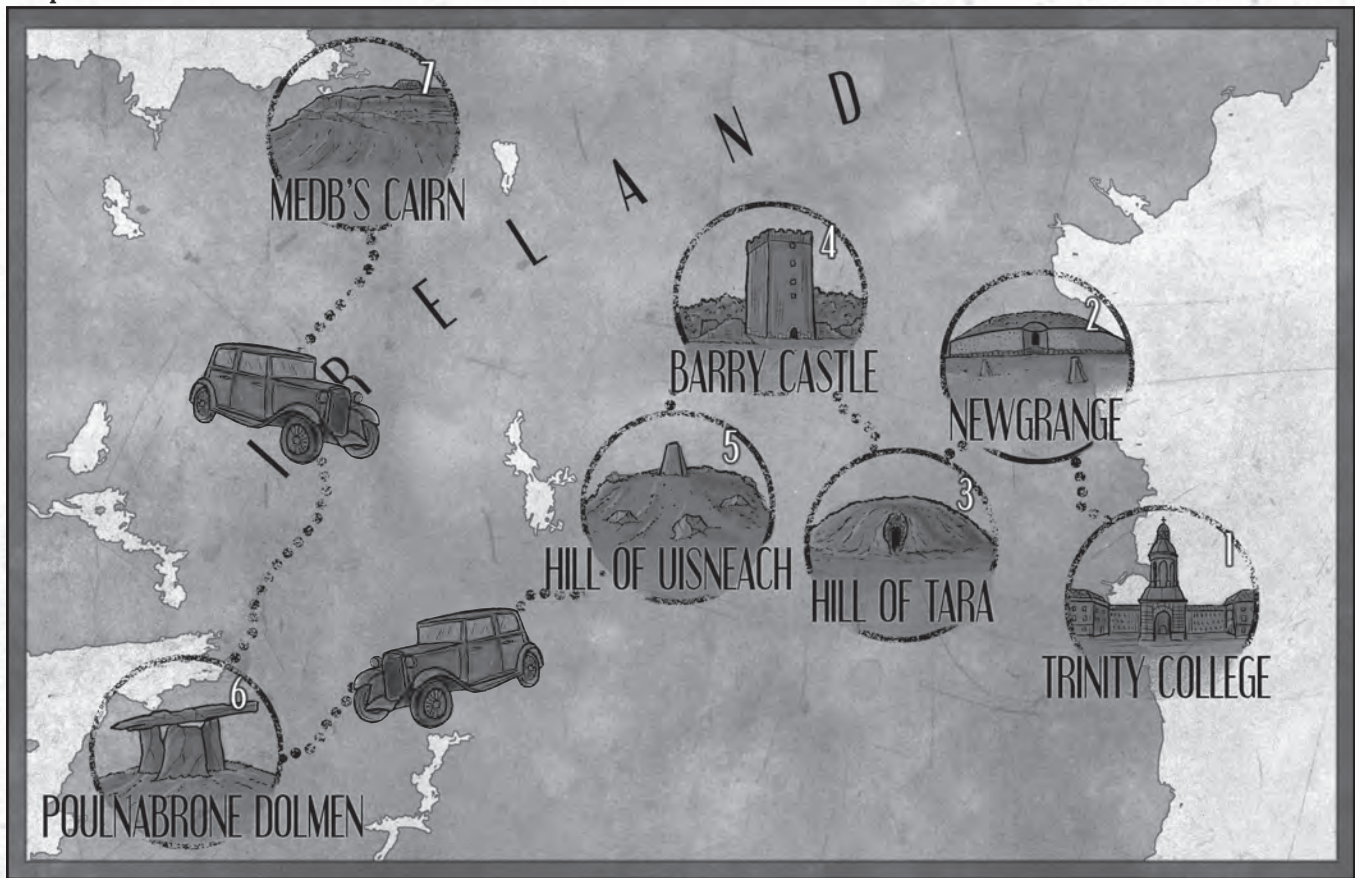
New Guinean Village



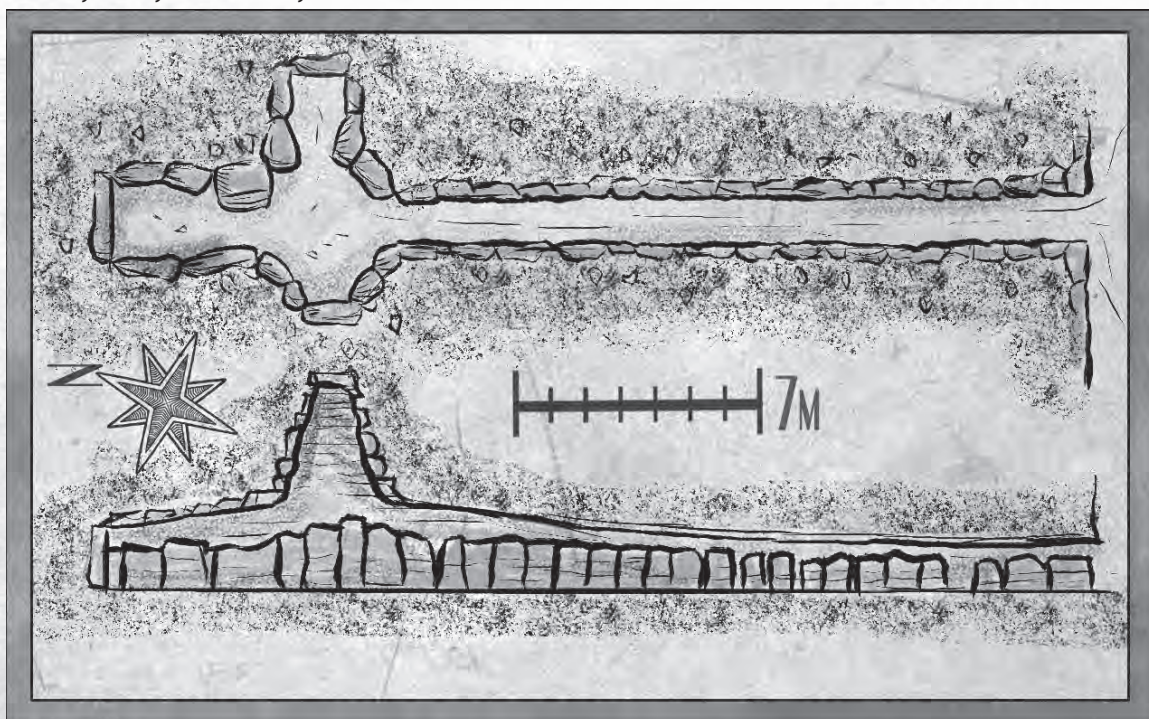
TRAIL OF CTHULHU

A Load of Blarney Handouts

Expedition Overview



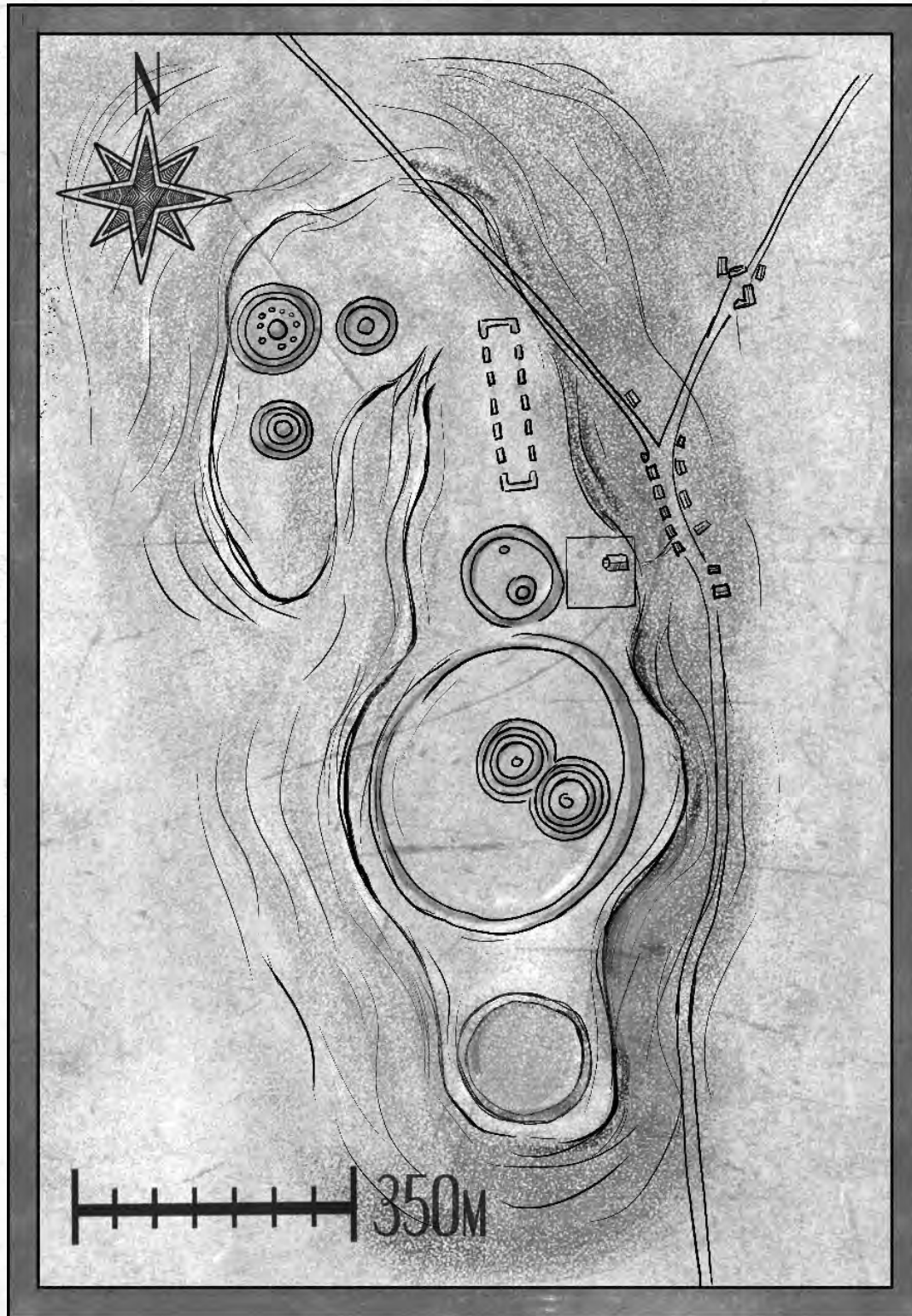
Newgrange Passage Tomb



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

A Load of Blarney Handouts

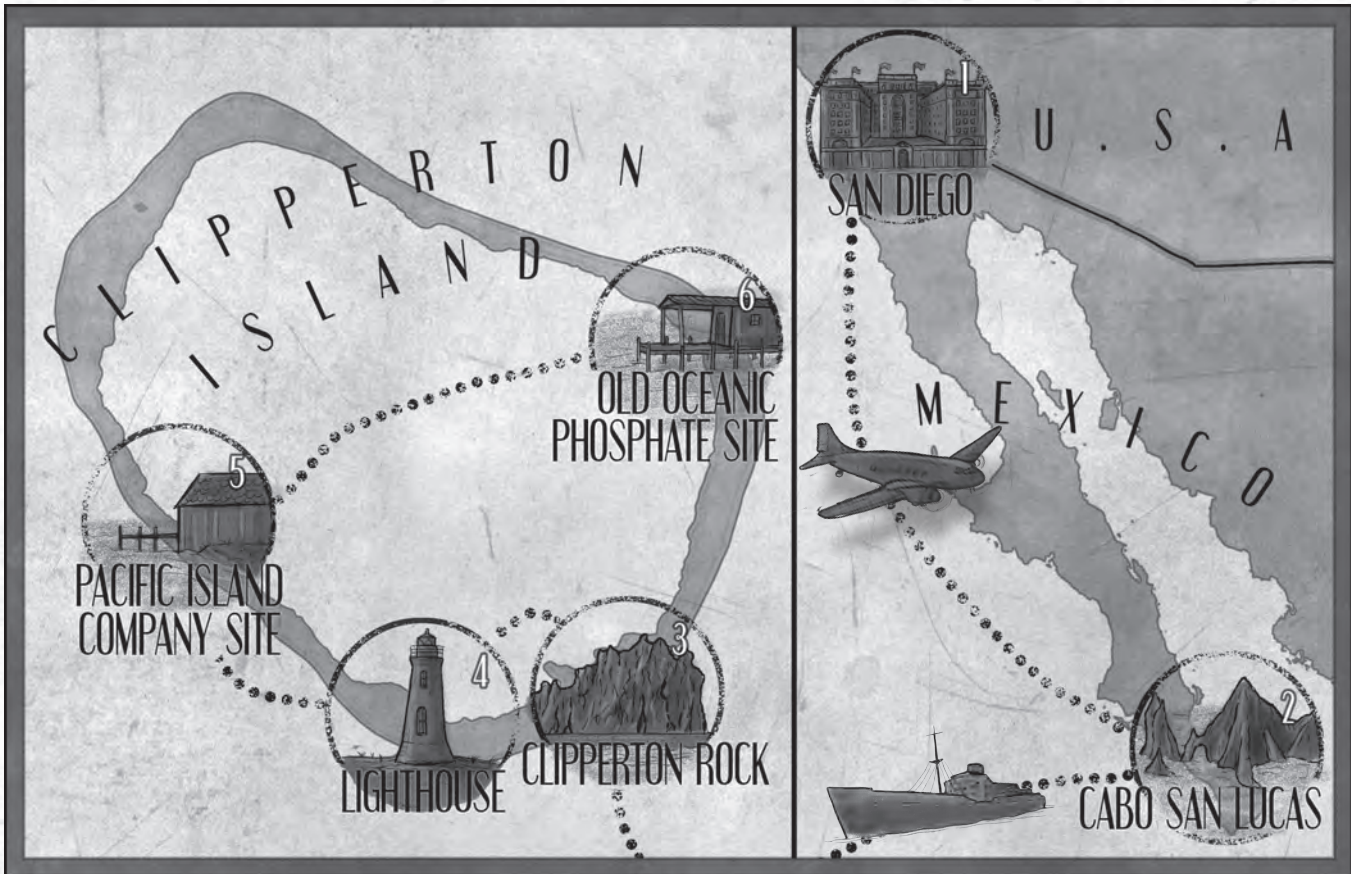
Hill of Tara



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Cerulean Halo Handouts

Expedition Overview



Handout 4

Sleep embraces you, and you dream. The experience is disjointed and confusing. You're flying over the ocean. Panic grips you. You have fled your home, trying to escape a growing feeling of danger. You push onward, faster and faster, the clouds parting around you, the seas rising in your wake. The world shakes. In terror, you realize you cannot outrun the cataclysm. Your Father's screams echo to the four corners of the world as he sinks beneath the waves with your brethren. It drives you to the brink of madness. Falling from the skies, you try to focus. A shattered mountain rises from the waves. You hope that if you land there you can sleep and rest until your Father rises. You see your terrible shadow cast upon the waves below: gargantuan, bat-like wings that extend outward, head enshrouded by tentacles that writhe and grasp at the sky. You awake screaming. [Roll your Stability test]

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Cerulean Halo Handouts

Clipperton Island

