

PELGT08

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

Down these mean streets no man should go...

Cyclopean skyscrapers, bizarre cults, strange foreigners and eerie alleyways – the city of New York stands on the threshold between the modern age and the Mythos. No-one in the NYPD speaks of it, but everyone knows that certain neighborhoods are to be left alone and that there are worse things than criminals in the shadows. Only the foolhardy or the desperate follow the trail down these haunted streets.

Four labyrinthine and spine-chilling mysteries for your *Trail of Cthulhu* investigators!

- **The Kidnapping:** An infant has been snatched from the cradle. Can the investigators track down the kidnappers before the parents are forced to pay the ransom?
- **The Book:** Two men die under similar circumstances within a day of each other, victims of a serial killer that stalks New York. As the investigators delve into the mystery, they discover the perils of learning too much...
- **The Wreck:** The tramp steamer *Star of Mauritius* is discovered drifting in the harbour. Her crew are all dead or missing. What secrets lie within her rusting hull?
- **Return to Red Hook:** Thomas Malone led the police into the slums of Red Hook ten years ago, and dozens of officers died there. Now, the horror at Red Hook has returned, and once again New York's finest must risk their lives amid the crumbling bricks tenements.

The Investigators are law enforcement agents and their civilian consultants, answerable for their actions, but will the full force of the law be enough to stem the tide of the Mythos?

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TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

by Gareth Hanrahan



Pelgrane Press



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We're Doomed And I Love It

My first encounter with *Call of Cthulhu* was at the very first games convention I attended. I had only ever played *Dungeons & Dragons* and variations thereof before, and had no idea that anything like *Call of Cthulhu* existed. I signed up and I sat down and played, and an hour later I find myself naked, running through the sewers of London with five other naked priests, pursued by an invisible monster.

Oh, and my hand had been turned to crystal by a magic mirror.

The other players and I knew *something* was going on. We had letters, diaries, clues, evidence that a cult was engaged

in a nefarious plot, but we couldn't put it together. Something connected the mirror, the invisible monsters, a 12th century monastery, legends of werewolves, a private club in London and our poor band of seminary students, but we were missing the key revelation that would draw it all together. We had all the clues, but we were running out of time and had to deduce the solution.

I'll never forget the excitement and intellectual exhilaration of knowing that if I didn't work out this puzzle, we were doomed to be eaten by horrible invisible monsters that were in some way connected to 12th century monks.

We failed dismally, as it happens, but it was still tremendous fun.

Ever since, it's been my template

for the ideal *Call of Cthulhu* game – a combination of a genuine mystery for the players to unravel, an atmosphere of confusion leading to a moment of terrible revelation as all the pieces fall into place, and bizarre cosmic horror. The *Mythos Detectives* series is designed to evoke that mood, dropping the players into the middle of a mystery. The GUMSHOE system ensures that the players get all the clues, but putting them together is still a challenge for the players.

So, if you're stuck in the middle of a mystery, with a big pile of clues and a bigger pile of bodies, with strange omens multiplying and doom impending, remember – it's all down to you. Work it out before the monsters eat you.

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Campaign Frame - Mythos Detectives

"POLICE METHODS ARE VARIED AND INGENIOUS. MALONE, THROUGH UNOSTENTATIOUS RAMBLES, CAREFULLY CASUAL CONVERSATIONS, WELL-TIMED OFFERS OF HIP-POCKET LIQUOR, AND JUDICIOUS DIALOGUES WITH FRIGHTENED PRISONERS, LEARNED MANY ISOLATED FACTS ABOUT THE MOVEMENT WHOSE ASPECT HAD BECOME SO MENACING."

- THE HORROR AT RED HOOK

The various municipal police services in New York and the surrounding area, as well as the federal Bureau of Investigation are becoming aware that certain cases are... unusual. As the

investigators have proven to be adept at handling things that are out of the ordinary, they get called in whenever there's a hint of the occult. Each investigation begins with some terrible crime that stems from some ghastly corruption caused by the Mythos.

The characters have both the resources and the limitations of law enforcement on their side. They can flash a police badge or private investigator card and claim official business when consulting records, and they can barge in and ask difficult questions. They have colleagues and other officers that they can draw on

for help. Unlike the average amateur sleuth who must face the horrors alone and unaided, official investigators have support and authority on their side.

At the same time, they must answer for their actions. 'Abuse' of one's powers and responsibilities as a detective, even in the cause of protecting humanity from Things With Tentacles, will be investigated; questions will be asked, especially if the investigators are behaving oddly. The characters must carefully consider how much they reveal to their superiors; often, burying both the evidence and the bodies is better



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than admitting Mythos involvement in a case.

Setting

Initially, New York, Providence and New England – all of ‘Lovecraft Country’. Later in the campaign, as the investigators become more trusted by the FBI, they might be sent anywhere in the continental United States. Most scenarios begin in the great metropolis – or seedy underworld - of New York.

It is the setting of a noir detective novel or movie, not the real world. The shadows are deeper, the colors more lush. Swarthy strangers lurk in alleyways, beautiful women hide terrible secrets, the rich are corrupt and the poor are desperate.

Style

The campaign has some pulp detective elements mixed in with a primarily Purist agenda, but is somewhat more hopeful and has more potential for the players making a meaningful difference to the world than most purist games. The threat of the Mythos is a subtle and terrible one, but human ingenuity and determination can turn back the tide. The primary emphasis is on the unraveling of the mystery and putting a stop to the Mythos activity, although each adventure does include some element of personal horror or juicy roleplaying for players to get their teeth into.

Mythos

The Mythos is unknown to most people, but poke around in the right musty bookstore or eerie church and you will uncover signs of the Cthulhu cult or another Mythos deity. Many strains of occultism conceal genuine magical secrets, and there are ghouls lurking in the subways. Our civilization exists on the fringes of older, greater inhuman civilizations like the Deep Ones or Mi-Go. The Mythos is hidden, but it is also all around us.

The primary manifestation of the Mythos encountered by the investigators is sorcery and summoned monsters – Mythos horror with a human motive to be investigated. Any contact with the inhuman elements of the Mythos, though, is overwhelming and incomprehensible. Human reason and detection fails when applied to things beyond our understanding.

Investigators

The investigators are mostly police detectives or federal agents, but the group could easily include a professor, antiquarian, doctor or other specialist as a consultant. The investigators should have a connection to New York, or to the occult, or both. They need to be competent and sane enough to be assigned important cases, but also strange enough to cope with occult investigations.

Continuing NPCs

The head of the Bureau of Investigation is, of course, **J. Edgar Hoover**. For the purposes of this campaign, Hoover is the voice of authority who shouts at the investigators to keep them in line and stops them from going public about the existence of the Mythos. He can either be a paranoid, eccentric but generally helpful superior, a sinister manipulator of events for his own ends, or just a force of nature that sometimes helps and sometimes hinders the investigators. The Bureau of Investigation is aware of several previous cases that involved the Mythos – in addition to the Horror at Red Hook, there was the successful raid on Innsmouth in ‘28, and Inspector Legrasse’s rounding up of the New Orleans cult earlier in the century.

Fictional FBI agent **Joseph Fort** is the investigator’s primary patron. A veteran of the Bureau, Fort is also fervently religious and convinced that unholy forces are at work to undermine the United States. He watches for any reports of crimes or unusual events that might be the work of ‘evil-doers’,

and arranges for the investigators to be assigned the case.

The New York Police Commissioner during this period is honest cop **Lewis J. Valentine**, a cold and practical officer who has no time for stories about the occult, but who approves of unorthodox measures as long as they get results.

Several years ago, an NYPD detective named Thomas Malone led a task force composed of both city and Federal officers into the Red Hook district of the Bronx; many of these officers were killed or crippled when a tenement building collapsed on them. Malone had claimed the degenerate foreigners of that shadowed district were involved in bizarre occult rites and blasphemous ceremonies. Older officers who remember the Red Hook disaster will be instantly suspicious of any investigators who babble about occult weirdness and murderous monsters. Senior officials in the police department are wary that *something* is out there, but after the Red Hook catastrophe are wary of any investigations related to such matters, unless compelling evidence of a clear threat to public safety can be produced.

Any of the contacts from *The Armitage Inquiry* (see the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook, page 206) can also show up if the investigators visit Arkham.

Rules Variations

All investigators get one free point of Cop Talk and Evidence Collection. Everyone should have a Credit Rating of at least 3 or 4.

The *Drives Thirst for Knowledge* and *Revenge* should only be taken after consulting with the Keeper.

Pitch

Might range from ‘*NYPD Colour out of Space*’ to ‘*Like the X-Files, only it’s the 1930s and it’s flying polyps instead of flying saucers*’

The Kidnapping

This scenario is aimed primarily at law enforcement officers, such as FBI agents, although any high-class professionals with a reputation as investigators can become involved. The game can be played in the Purist or Pulp style – the villains and theme are purist, but there's plenty of Pulp elements that can be emphasized for a lighter game. The main plot revolves around the kidnapping of a child by a gang of petty criminals, but as the characters dig deeper, they find that there are two opposing occult powers at work. If the characters follow both trails of clues, then the scenario presents them with an unexpected moral quandary – what do you do with an innocent monster?

The Hook

An infant has been kidnapped from the Corneliszes, a wealthy New York family, and the investigators are called in to help track down the missing child.

The Horrible Truth

The Corneliszes are immortal sorcerers and worshippers of Yog-Sothoth. The kidnapped child – Adam Cornelisz – is not wholly human. He was born of a union between the Cornelisz's servant and a summoned god, like Wilbur Whately. They intend for the hybrid child to open up gateways between this world and other dimensions.

In the dark labyrinths far below the surface, where the world is gnawed by strange and terrible creatures, there dwell the folk of K'n-yan (see page 139 of *Trail of Cthulhu*). They were human, once, but millennia of living in the blue-litten vaults below has changed them. They know much of the Mythos, and

have no desire to see the Great Old Ones return. One sect, the Watchful, are dedicated to preventing the foolish surface people from meddling with cosmic forces and calling back those who should remain Outside. The Watchful learned what the Corneliszes accomplished and decided that the child must be dealt with. They want to sacrifice him to Tssathoggua.

Their first attempt failed – they sent a Formless Spawn to kidnap the child from the Corneliszes, but the mansion has magical defenses that destroyed the spawn before it got close to the child. They must work through mortal agents.

Enter Ambrose Wisner. In certain places, such as the timber town of Shavertown, the surface world comes very close to the underworld. Ambrose Wisner's family once traded with those below, and they owe favors to the Watchful. The timber industry in Shavertown closed down, and many of the young people have drifted away to the big cities, looking for work. Ambrose has fallen in with the Barrett gang, a group of bank robbers and thugs. When the Watchful contacted the surface world, Ambrose was the obvious choice for a pawn.

Ambrose proposed kidnapping the Cornelisz child to Barrett. It seemed like a perfect target – an isolated house and an intensely private and very wealthy family. Barrett agreed, and had one of his men, Tommy Galiano, case the house. He managed to gain the confidence of the Corneliszes's housekeeper Olga, who agreed to help the gang for her own reasons.

After kidnapping the child, Ambrose

took it back to his home town of Shavertown, ostensibly to keep it safe while the rest of the gang collect the ransom. As far as Barrett knows, Ambrose will return the child to the family once the money is handed over. In fact, Ambrose is waiting for the K'n-yan Watchful to climb out of the earth and take the child. The Barretts will be killed to hide Ambrose's involvement in the kidnapping.

The Spine

Like some loathsome abomination raised up from its essential salts by a bungling necromancer, this *Trail of Cthulhu* scenario has two spines. The first trail of clues leads from a kidnapping to organized crime, ending in tragedy and a bloody shootout. The second trail delves into the Cthulhu Mythos and rival sorcerers.

To find the kidnapped child, the characters need to

- Discover the housekeeper, Olga, was involved in the kidnapping
- Follow the ransom money to the Barrett gang
- Confront the Barrett gang, either in a shootout or by identifying the criminals and arresting them one by one
- Survive the monstrous horror sent by the Watchful to kill the gangsters
- Track the last gang member, Ambrose Wisner, to Shavertown
- Rescue Adam

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To uncover the Mythos connection, the characters must

- Dig into the background of the Corneliszs, and discover that they are more than they seem.
- Learn the sad fate of their servant, Maria
- Realize that Adam is not the natural child of the Corneliszs.

- Learn that Ambrose Wisner is serving some strange master from Shavertown
- Descend into the depths of the Earth and battle the folk of K'n-yan.

Antagonist Reactions

There are three factions who may become adversaries of the characters.

- The Cornelisz family initially appears to be victims of a horrible crime, but as the characters learn more about them, they may learn the truth. The Corneliszs want to preserve their reputation as fine, upstanding citizens.
- The Barrett gang have been led to believe that the Corneliszs won't involve the police, but the investigations in New York will likely end in a shootout.
- Finally, the Watchful want the child, and intend to use the deaths of the Barrett gang to hide the true purpose of the kidnapping.

Victory Condition

The characters win a partial victory if they find Adam before he is sacrificed to Tssathoggua, or learn of his inhuman heritage.

They win a full victory if they can find the child *and* prevent the Corneliszs from getting hold of him once more.

SCENES

The Kidnapping

Scene Type: Prelude

The PCs are informed that a child has been kidnapped from a wealthy family in New York. They are to proceed there immediately and find out what happened.

If the characters are police officers, FBI detectives or other law enforcement agents, then their superior (we'll call him Commissioner Smith) informs them of the facts as they are known – the child belongs to the Cornelisz family, and was taken some time during the night. The police/FBI were called by a retired army officer, Colonel Ellis, a friend of the family. Commissioner

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The Kidnapping

Historical Inspiration

The scenario is heavily inspired by the Lindbergh kidnapping of 1932. The infant son of famed aviator Charles Lindbergh was kidnapped from a house in East Amwell, New Jersey. A ransom letter was left by the kidnappers, which contained a demand for \$50,000 and instructions on how to authenticate future letters, which would have a series of punched and colored circles. A number of well-connected people offered to help investigate, including 'Will Bill' Donovan (who would on to found the CIA), and Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf (head of the New Jersey police) and Henry Breckinridge, a lawyer. Unfortunately, a pair of speakeasy owners brought in to serve as underworld contacts ended up selling a copy of the ransom letter to the newspapers, and soon it was impossible to tell fake ransom notes and communications from real ones.

The police wanted to try to track down the criminals, who from the postmarks of the genuine letters appeared to be based in Brooklyn, but Lindbergh was worried that police involvement would endanger the child. Instead, an eccentric New York schoolteacher named John. F. Condon was chosen by the kidnappers as a go-between after he publicly offered a thousand dollars of his own money as extra ransom money. Condon (or 'Jafsie') as he became known met with one of the kidnappers and handed over the full ransom of \$70,000 after the kidnappers sent Lindbergh proof that they had the child.

After the money was handed over, the criminals left a note saying the child could be found on a boat at Martha's Vineyard. Unfortunately, there was no such boat and no sign of the child. The trail went dead until the body of a toddler was found in woods near the Lindbergh home. Legislation was rushed through making kidnapping a federal crime, and soon FBI (or, at that time, Bureau of Investigation) officers began to suspect it had been an inside job. Two suspects, a maid and a gardener, both killed themselves after coming under suspicion, but eventually Bruno Hauptmann, a German carpenter and criminal was arrested and executed for the crime in 'the Trial of the Century'.

Smith reminds the PCs of the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby in 1932 — the eyes of the nation will be on this case as soon as the news breaks.

If the characters aren't police officers of any kind, then they're called to the Cornelisz house by Colonel Ellis, who is a friend of a friend, and has heard of their skills as investigators. The colonel is an eccentric retired army officer with a wide circle of friends.

The characters arrive at the house in the evening, around 10pm.

The Missing Child

Scene Type: Core

Core Clue: The housekeeper was the only person present when Adam was taken.

The Cornelisz house is a mansion in Westchester, outside the city, built in the last century. It's surrounded by gardens and is in a very upscale area. A short avenue leads from the road to the house. The gates are open and lights are blazing in the windows.

The PCs are met by the master of the house, **Jacob Cornelisz** at the door. He escorts them up to the drawing room, where **Colonel Ellis** and **Harriet Cornelisz** are waiting. Their servant, **Olga Lesek**, serves coffee and takes the characters' coats. Ellis and Jacob will do most of the talking, but the PCs can ask to speak to Harriet or Olga separately.

Move onto **The Scene of the Crime** if the PCs are more interested in looking for physical clues.

Jacob Cornelisz: Dressed in a sharp suit, Cornelisz is grave and elegant. He speaks with a pronounced Dutch accent, and has a habit of using archaic words. His dark eyes are heavy-lidded, and he looks exhausted. He introduces himself as a man of property and finance; his family has old money, and owned much of New York when it was still New Amsterdam. The stolen child is his son, Adam, his firstborn and only child.

Jacob will co-operate with the characters, but wasn't the one who alerted the police (Ellis was) and would

politely prefer to deal with the whole matter privately. No doubt a ransom note will be delivered; he will pay it, and the child will be returned to him. Money is of no concern to him.

Jacob's Story: Leaving the child in Olga's care, he and Harriet were out driving for the evening; they picked up their friend Colonel Ellis on the way back. When they returned at eight, the child was gone.

Athletics 7, Health 10, Scuffling 5, Stability 10, Weapons 6

Weapons: +0 (heavy cane)

Spells: Enchant Stone, Dho-Hna Formula, Power of Ibn-Ghazi, Summon-Bind Star Vampire, Call Yog-Sothoth, Shriveling.

Harriet Cornelisz: The beautiful wife of Jacob is quite composed despite the theft of her baby. Her eyes glitter with tears, but her voice is steady. She repeats the same account given by Jacob. If the characters question her too forcefully, then she will excuse herself

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and leave, saying that her nerves are too strained by the kidnapping and the questions.

Athletics 5, Health 8, Scuffling 3,
Stability 7.

Weapons: -2 (fists)

Spells: Dho-Hna Formula, Summon-Bind Star Vampire, Call Yog-Sothoth.

Colonel Ellis: Ellis is an elderly and excitable gentleman. Since his wife's death, he has become a fixture in the more esoteric fringes of New York society, from spiritualism and Theosophy to avant-garde art. Many of his acquaintances think of him as something of a fool, and the Corneliszs privately loathe him. He has attached himself to them like a social remora, and they cannot rid themselves of him without causing offence. He is full of suggestions for the characters' investigation, most of which are quite ludicrous, anti-Semitic, or both. He is convinced that the best thing to do is to charge off with guns blazing.

Ellis' Story: Ellis was the one who alerted the authorities. The Corneliszses had been out driving, and picked him up on the way back as arranged so he could borrow some books on history.

Athletics 6, Firearms 4, Health 8,
Scuffling 4, Stability 6, Weapons 5

Weapons: +0 (pistol)

Olga Leseck: The Corneliszses employ a servant and nursemaid, a Polish woman named Olga Leseck. Of everyone in the house, Olga is by far the most visibly upset by the loss of the child. She is a sturdy-looking woman with thin blonde hair. She is a recent immigrant and has relatively poor English.

Olga's Story: She put Adam to bed at seven, and checked on him again at

seven-thirty. He is such a good child, he never cries and always goes to sleep very quickly, like an angel. When the Corneliszses returned a little after eight, she brought Mrs. Cornelisz up to the nursery, and they discovered the child was gone. She heard nothing, saw nothing. It was as if he simply vanished.

Background Checks Scene Type: Investigation

Suspicious players may wish to look into the backgrounds of the Cornelisz family or Colonel Ellis. If they ask, Jacob can provide them with a single photo of Adam, who looks like a remarkably healthy baby. There are no photos of Jacob or Harriet during the pregnancy.

Oral History or Streetwise: The Cornelisz had another servant, Maria. She left their employment a few months ago. (She actually died giving birth to Adam. Her body was dissolved in acids in the basement of the mansion.)

Cop Talk or Oral History: One of the Cornelisz's neighbors complained about an incredibly foul stench six months ago. There were also reports of dogs barking and a strange bubbling sound. (The Watchful sent a Formless Spawn to steal Adam when he was born, but the servitor was wounded and forced to flee by the magical defenses of the mansion.)

Cop Talk: Colonel Ellis was arrested for public drunkenness twice in the last year. He has a number of unusual friends. (A red herring.)

Occult or Credit Rating: Colonel Ellis has considerable gambling debts. (Another red herring.)



The Scene of the Crime Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clue: None.

The Cornelisz mansion offers few clues to investigators.

The House

The brooding mansion is mostly empty, with room after room of dusty portraits and strange books. The Cornelisz occult library is upstairs; it is not hidden, but they will not show it to the police without being prompted. The nursery where Adam slept is also upstairs. All the windows and doors are heavily bolted from the inside, including the one in the nursery. (Olga rebolted it after the child was kidnapped.)

Forensics or Locksmith: The window wasn't forced, and the only fingerprints on it are Olga's. On the bottom of the windowsill, the characters manage to find a clear fingerprint that doesn't match anyone in the building.

If the characters specifically search Olga's room with **Evidence Collection**, they find there is a loose floorboard beneath her bed; in the hollow beneath, Olga keeps **Maria's Diary** (see page 12).

Architecture confirms that a house of this type should have an extensive cellar.

The cellar of the mansion is locked, and only Jacob has a key. If the characters demand that he open it (or possess **Locksmith**), they find an elaborate if old-fashioned chemical laboratory. Jacob admits that he dabbles in alchemy as a part of his meditations.

In one corner of the laboratory is a spherical stone, a hammer and a chisel. Jacob is making another marker stone to replace the damaged one in the garden. Next to the stone is a book from Jacob's

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The Kidnapping

Green Children

The Green Children were a pair of children, brother and sister, who appeared in the village of Woolpit in Suffolk in the 12th century. They spoke a strange language and had green skin. They claimed to come from a dimly lit 'Land of St. Martin', but got lost when they followed the sound of church bells. The boy sickened and died, but the girl lost her green skin tone, grew up, and married a local man. Theories about the origin of the Green Children range from 'they were the children of Flemish merchants who got lost in the woods, and their green skin was caused by the lack of iron in their diet while wandering' to 'they arrived from a hollow world'.

library, a book on folklore of the British Isles. According to the book, stones marked with those spiral symbols were placed at the borderland between the mortal world and the underworld. Another chapter of the book discusses stories of children stolen by the faeries, and related the tale of the Green Children of Woolpit.

Chemistry: One item in particular draws the investigators' attention. There's a large porcelain tub under one table that bears strange discolorations. Spending a point of **Chemistry** reveals that the tub is stained with a residue of caustic lye (sodium hydroxide).

The Gardens & Outside

The gardens of the house are poorly maintained. A handyman visits every few weeks. The characters can easily find tracks in the flowerbed beneath the nursery window. The ladder used in the crime has been discarded in the garden,

Evidence Collection lets the



characters take plaster casts of the boot prints. There were at least two men, wearing heavy boots. One set of boots can be identified as a steel-toed brand popular with hikers and lumberjacks.

A point of **Evidence Collection** finds scratches on the wall beneath the nursery window, further proving that the kidnappers entered through the window.

Also in the garden are several carved stones, hidden in the middle of the shrubberies. These ancient stones are marked with strange runes. A three point **Occult** spend or a point of **Library Use** lets a character work out that these runes are traditionally associated with Celtic mythology, and were placed on stones marking the boundary between this world and other worlds. The characters can also discover

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this information from the book in the basement laboratory.

There is a chemical stain on the grass near one of the stones. **Chemistry** is informatively useless – if the characters take samples and analyze them, they discover that the stain is primarily carbon ash, but contains bizarre heavy metals and elements that cannot be identified.

Asking the neighbors: One neighbor, John Milwood, recalls seeing an unfamiliar automobile leave the Cornelisz estate a little before eight in the evening. It backfired loudly as it passed, which contradicts Olga's story.

Olga

Scene Type: Core

Core Clues: The kidnapped child is not what it seems. Olga helped the kidnappers break into the house.

By this stage, the characters should suspect Olga of being involved in the kidnapping.

The Polish woman is terrified of her employers, and will not speak if the Cornelisz are present, or if they know she is talking to the investigators. The characters will have to distract Jacob and Harriet Cornelisz, or bring everyone in to help with inquiries.

Olga is a knot of emotions. She is proud that she rescued an innocent from a nest of vipers, guilty for consorting with criminals, scared she will be arrested or deported, and most of all she fears Jacob's wrath if he finds out what she has done. She is trapped in hell, and sees no way to escape, but at least she has rescued Adam.

Getting the truth out of Olga requires either **Reassurance** in a safe environment and good roleplaying, or interrogating her and showing her proof

that they know about her involvement.

Olga's Tale

Olga prefaces her tale with all sorts of wild accusations about the Cornelisz – they are devil worshippers and witches, she hears strange voices at night, and the house is haunted. She seems quite deranged and superstitious. She tells the investigators that a man named Mr. Jerry Grant hired her on behalf of the Cornelisz, and she was paid very well to keep quiet. She sensed something was strange, but her family needed the money. They told her the previous servant, Maria, quit unexpectedly and that Mrs. Harriet needed more help with the baby.

At first, all was well. Mrs. Harriet was strange, and took little interest in young Adam, but the pay was very good and Adam was a good child. She rarely left the house – she knows no-one in Westchester, and the Cornelisz did not give her any time off to go home. Then, under the floorboards in her room, Olga found a diary left by Maria. She read it (see *Maria's Diary*), and was terrified. She had to do *something*, she could not leave Adam with his parents.

A man came to the house two weeks ago while the Cornelisz were out driving. He was a jobbing laborer who gave his name as Thomas. He asked for work, and kept her talking for a long time, asking about her employers and Adam. He was the first person to come to the house in months who was not a friend of the Cornelisz, and she confessed her fears to him. Tommy returned a week later with another man, and said that if she left the window open in the nursery at night, then – Olga breaks down in tears at this point, and a point spend of **Reassurance** is needed to keep her talking. Tommy said that if she left the window open, then he would take the child away and put it in an orphanage.

Assess Honesty confirms she believes

she's telling the truth.

With **Interrogation** or **Oral History**, the characters can get some more information out of her. Thomas had dark hair and was quite handsome, but his nose was a bit squashed.

The other man did not speak. He had red hair and a scar on one cheek. He was also missing two fingers on one hand, and was wearing heavy boots.

If the characters ask why the kidnappers went to the trouble of breaking into the house when the only person present was willing to aid them, Olga says that she would be too scared to defy Jacob openly. It took all her courage just to leave the window open.

If the characters want to see the diary, they will have to get it out of the house themselves. Once Olga confesses to the characters, she will refuse to stay with the Cornelisz ever again. Olga can summarize the tale of the diary in her own words if she has to.

Maria's Diary

The diary is written in a cheap pocketbook, and is covered in dust and cobwebs. Most of the text inside is written in English, in an increasingly unsteady hand. It begins two years ago, when Maria begins her employment with the Cornelisz (arranged by Jerry Grant). She is excited by the prospect of a new job, and has started keeping the diary to practice her written English. She praises the Cornelisz highly. The first month of entries are all domestic matters – what she cooked for them, the new clothes she has bought and so forth. Towards the end, she writes of her growing loneliness – no-one ever comes to the house, and she misses her family.

The next section is in Polish. Eleven months ago, Jacob Cornelisz came to her room at night and stripped her naked. He dragged her out into the gardens,

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where all the stars were strange. There was a terrible bright moon in the sky, and it fell on her.

There are no entries for several months, then the diary begins again. Maria writes about how she can feel the baby inside her, kicking and writhing, growing and growing. She describes every inch of her

room in obsessive detail, and how she can no longer remember sunlight. She wonders if the outside world was ever anything but a dream.

The last entry relates how Jacob delivered the child and gave it to Harriet. He gave Maria a bitter-tasting tea to drink; it is getting hard to write and the room is

growing dark, but she wants to finish the diary, so that someone would know that the child was *hers*.

The diary ends six months ago, around the time Maria left the employ of the Cornelisz (or, more accurately, when Maria was murdered).

April 12th: Hello diary, my new friend. I write this on English to practice. It was a strange day in this new house, so differently to the small dwellings in New York. It is, thus calmly out here, misses I the noises of the roads.

April 15th: Mr. Jacob and Mrs. Harriet seem very friendly, but not the kind of the people, which would be friends with Jerry Grant. I do not trust Jerry Grant, it have cruel eyes. Old eyes have the Cornelisz, like deep wells.

April 25th: They never seem like my cooking. I know that I am a good cook and they eat whatever I set before them. They say even that they like it, but it never each possible joy in their voice gives.

The next section is in Polish.

May 2nd: God, God, why? He came into my room at night and pulled me from my bed. He tore my clothes away and I thought he would force himself on me, but no, he dragged me into the garden. The stars were all strange and there was another moon in the sky. It descended on me, and it-

The next entries are in English.

May 10th: I feel very sick today.

September 16th: I can feel it kicking inside me. When mother was pregnant with Ela, she did not feel the baby kick until much later. The baby is very healthy.

October 31st: I heard them leave the house. I tried to run away, but I am too big to move. I crawled as far as the top of the stairs before the pain was too much to ensure.

December 3rd: Today it is my birthday. I wrote a letter home, telling them that I would not be coming home because I have too much work. It makes me laugh. I miss work. I miss walking. I miss being able to leave this bed, this room. My back is covered in sores.

December 5th: Mother visited me, and brought Ela with her. She is a whore now, and the whole city has her. I screamed at mother, and woke Jacob. He did not strike me, but he looked at me with eyes of fire, and it was the inside of my head was on fire.

January 10th: There are one hundred and seventeen stars on the wallpaper on the wall. There are sixteen panels in the wardrobe door.

January 15th: I have read all the books they will give me a dozen times. Mother visited me again, and we talked for a long time. She told me that all this was because I was a disobedient girl, and that God was punishing me. I am in hell. Jesus said, in my father's house there are many rooms, and it is like that in the Devil's house too. In the night, I hear all the other sinners whispering through the walls.

February 20th: I decided today that I would kill myself. It won't let me.

March 12th: I think it's coming. Jacob haunts me, never leaves my side. I beg him to cut it out of me, but he wants it born naturally. Naturally. As if anything about this unholy abomination was natural.

March 15th: Free.

March 16th: Jacob brought me a bitter tea to drink. Harriet came in, and she had the child with her. My child. She has named him Adam. He is perfect, beautiful, the child I always dreamed of.

I am very tired. Too tired to write. Goodbye, goodbye. I am so sorry.



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If Jacob Knows...

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

If Jacob finds out about Olga's betrayal, then he will be furious. He will dismiss Olga's accusations as nonsensical, and hint that she is delusional. The diary, he says, is obviously a forgery. The characters may wish to confront Jacob, but without proof of his wrongdoing, there is little they can do. They may be able to protect Olga from his wrath, but arresting a wealthy fellow of good character who has just had his son stolen would not go down well with the authorities.

If possible, Jacob will destroy the diary. He will not murder Olga unless he is confident that he can get away with it, but as soon as the eyes of the world are off him then Olga will end up in the same acid bath as Maria.

Maria's Family

Scene Type: Investigation

The characters may wish to contact Maria's family. They can get the address from Jerry Grant, or from the local police. Maria's mother, Katarina and her sister Eva are both still living at the same address. They are still looking for the missing girl, and have heard nothing from her in a year. They have reported her as missing, and Eva suspects the Cornelisz of being somehow responsible. The mother, Katarina, disagrees and will hear nothing bad said against Jacob, who took pity on the family and gave them some money after Maria vanished.

Note that Maria was insane when she wrote the latter entries in her diary. She and her mother never quarreled, and Eva is certainly not a prostitute. If the characters try to use Maria's diary as evidence against the Cornelisz in court, then Jacob will use these facts to discredit them. If Maria was wrong

about all these things, then she can be wrong about the pregnancy and all the rest.

If pressed for more details about Maria, then Jacob tells them that Maria left their service unexpectedly, and that he gave her enough money to travel home to New York. He doesn't know where she went after that – the girl had become undependable and troublesome, and he was thinking of dismissing her when she quit.

Awkward Questions

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

With Adam's parentage in doubt, the investigators may wish to ask the Cornelisz some awkward and impolite questions. There are no photos of Harriet while pregnant, nor do they have any friends who saw her with child. Jacob delivered the child himself at home, and they do not have a family doctor. The birth certificate lists Jacob and Harriet as the parents, but that's hardly conclusive proof.

The most damning evidence is Harriet's own body. She won't submit to a medical exam under any circumstances, and Jacob is prepared to get on the phone to Washington and lobby Hoover if the characters push things that far without firm evidence. However, a character who looks at her with **Medicine** can say that it is extremely unlikely that a woman with that figure gave birth to a child only a year ago.

It is possible that overly aggressive players will push Jacob to the brink, and he will turn his sorcery on the characters. See Jacob's statistics on page 9.

Jerry Grant

Scene Type: Antagonist Action

Another friend of the Cornelisz

arrives early in the morning after the kidnapping. He is a thin, weasel-faced man in a cheap suit, who introduces himself as Jerry Grant, a property owner from the city. Those with **Streetwise** know that Grant is a speakeasy owner with ties to organized crime. Despite the vast gulf in their social standings, Jacob greets him warmly. Colonel Ellis looks less pleased.

Jacob explains that he has called Grant to the house to deal with the criminals who no doubt kidnapped Adam. Mr. Grant has a certain level of experience in dealing with the criminal element. Grant is an unpleasant, oily sycophant. Olga is especially nervous around him.

Grant & The Servants: Grant recruited both Olga and Maria to the Cornelisz's service. If asked about this, he tells the investigators that he has many friends among the poor Polish families, but admits that such people are sometimes sadly unreliable.

Athletics 8, Firearms 6, Health 7, Scuffling 5, Stability 6, Weapons 5

Weapons: +0 (pistol or knife)

The Letter

Scene Type: Core

Core Clue: The gang are looking for the ransom to be handed over in Brooklyn.

That morning, a letter arrives at the Cornelisz mansion. Jacob shows the letter to Grant, Ellis and any PCs who are present.

The letter is written in a child-like hand with an occasional odd blot. **Evidence Collection** or **Cryptography** suggests that the writer was holding the pen awkwardly (Ambrose wrote the letter, and is missing two fingers). It lists the gang's demands that Jacob

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send \$50,000 to New York. His representative is to be at the 45th Street subway station in Brooklyn at five o'clock in two days time. Stand by the poster advertising Lucky cigarettes, and wait for further instructions.

On reading the letter, Cornelisz mutters that he suspected it was some base criminal who has taken his son. The money is not a problem; it is a considerable sum, but Cornelisz has considerable wealth and would pay ten times that for the safe return of his beloved son. He proposes that Jerry Grant go to New York and hand over the money. Ellis immediately pipes up, saying that such low-down dogs as would kidnap an innocent baby would also be the sort of people to attack Grant and steal the money, so Grant should not go alone.

Dear Sir

We have your sun. You will pay 50000 dollans or you will not see him alive again. Bring the money in a suit case to the 45th St. station, Brooklyn in 2 days time at 5 sharp. Wear a yello cravat and in front of the lucky strikes poster and we will tell you more then. Come alone. If you go to the polis or make anything public we will kno.

The letter is post-marked in Brooklyn, New York. The kidnappers were careless, and used the nearest post office to their hideout. It was also sent before the kidnapping, implying they were remarkably confident of success.



Red Hook

The Barrett's gang's base is not far from Red Hook, where a minor cult flourished in the 1920s before being destroyed by an angry mob after a child was snatched. The previous incident at Red Hook is of no significant relevance to this case, but the characters may dig up references to it in their investigations. The rumored leader of the cult, an eccentric Dutch scholar named Robert Suydam, was a correspondent of the Cornelisz.

He had for some time been detailed to the Butler Street station in Brooklyn when the Red Hook matter came to his notice. Red Hook is a maze of hybrid squalor near the ancient waterfront opposite Governor's Island, with dirty highways climbing the hill from the wharves to that higher ground where the decayed lengths of Clinton and Court Streets lead off toward the Borough Hall. Its houses are mostly of brick, dating from the first quarter to the middle of the nineteenth century, and some of the obscurer alleys and byways have that alluring antique flavour which conventional reading leads us to call 'Dickensian'. The population is a hopeless tangle and enigma; Syrian, Spanish, Italian, and Negro elements impinging upon one another, and fragments of Scandinavian and American belts lying not far distant. It is a babel of sound and filth, and sends out strange cries to answer the lapping oily waves at its grimy piers and the monstrous organ litanies of the harbour whistles. Here long ago a brighter picture dwelt, with clear-eyed mariners on the lower streets and homes of taste and substance where the larger houses line the hill. One can trace the relics of this former happiness in the trim shapes of the buildings, the occasional graceful churches, and the evidences of original art and background in bits of detail here and there - a worn flight of steps, a battered doorway, a wormy pair of decorative columns or pilasters, or a fragment of once green space with bent and rusted iron railing. The houses are generally in solid blocks, and now and then a many-windowed cupola arises to tell of days when the households of captains and ship-owners watched the sea.

- H.P. Lovecraft, The Horror At Red Hook

New York Scene Type: Investigation

The characters have the best part of two days to track down the kidnappers before they have to hand the ransom over. Ambrose has taken the child back to Shavertown. The plan is for him to keep Adam there safely until the money is collected, and the child will then be returned to the Cornelisz - at least, that is what the rest of the gang believe (see **The Horror in the Docks**). They have a shack near the Brooklyn docks.

The Fateful Telegram

As soon as the gang gets the money, Barrett sends young Gallo down to the local telegraph office to send a message to Ambrose Wisner in Shavertown,

to tell him to bring Adam back. Shavertown is too small to have its own telegraph, so the message goes to the slightly larger town of Downsville and is then delivered to Wisner a day later.

The telegram is addressed to 'Ambrose Wisner, Shavertown, NY' and reads 'Ambrose, they have delivered it. You can both come back now. Ray.' If the characters ask, the telegrapher primly tells them that she corrected the young gentleman's abysmal spelling and grammar.

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If the characters are staking the shack out, they will see Gallo leave the pier and walk to the telegraph office. They can easily apprehend him on the street, or wait until the message is sent and have Downsville put a stop on it.

Raiding the Shack

In a firefight, Barrett sends Higgins up to the roof of the shack with one of the rifles. The rest of the gang fire out the window, but the only one who has a chance of hitting people on the dockside is Barrett with the other rifle. Still, it is a formidable barrage of fire.

If the characters go and raid the shack on their own, then they may be able to cross the little pier stealthily and reach the door of the shack without being seen from inside. This requires two Stealth checks, at Difficulty 3 if

the characters wait until fog rolls in, at difficulty 4 normally, and at Difficulty 5 if the gang are expecting trouble. As soon as a Stealth roll is failed, the gang start shooting.

Alternatively, the characters can call in help from New York's finest. It will take a few hours to organize two wagons containing ten police officers each, but with a child's life in danger, the police are willing to put considerable resources at the characters' disposal. The downside of this approach is that the gang can easily see a dozen police officers advancing on them, and will panic and start shooting.

There is plenty of cover on the dockside, but both Higgins and Barrett have rifles, so a character making a target of himself will get shot at. The real danger is crossing the pier, which is in range of

the handguns. A character crossing the pier must make two Athletics checks to

No Raid

If the characters fail to follow the gang, or just observe the shack, then the Formless Spawn attacks anyway. The screams and bloody deaths should attract the attention of investigators. If the characters are not in New York, then they will read of the disaster in the morning newspaper, and how a child's blanket was found amid the debris. From there, the characters may be able to trace Ambrose back to Shavertown by inquiring into his background.

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sprint from cover to cover. If a check is failed, then the character has no cover when the gang shoots at him.

Forcing the door open requires another Athletics roll. The gang will try to flee if the police start hammering on the door... but they won't get far.

Death in the Water

Ambrose's masters want the trail to end here, so their theft of Adam goes undetected. Therefore, another Formless Spawn (see page 133 of the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook) has been dispatched to kill the Barrett gang. Unfortunately, it shows up during the police raid.

The spawn swims up the Hudson like an oil slick moving against the currents, then slithers up the rickety legs of the pier and through the floorboards. Razor-sharp tentacles flicker out, slicing flesh and bone. It engulfs gang members, crushing them like a cobra. It flows into mouths and noses and explodes chest cavities from the inside. Some, like Galiano, try to fight back. Others throw themselves into the river, or try to flee along the pier.

While slaughtering the gang, the horror also wraps tentacles around the pillars supporting the pier, and rips them apart. A few seconds after the attack begins, the whole pier collapses into the river.

If the PCs are on the dock when the attack begins, then they glimpse *something* emerge from the river and slither into the shack. Seconds later, there are screams and gunfire from inside, and horrendous wet ripping sounds. Gallo emerges, sprints along the pier, then is dragged back by a tentacle that grabs his ankle.

If the PCs are on the pier or even in the shack when the Formless Spawn arrives, then they are in grave danger.

The monster will try to kill anyone in the shack or on the pier. **Fleeing** is the best option.

The Stability loss for being present at the attack is 3; the Stability loss for being in the shack and witnessing the slaughter up close is 6. The spawn has a Scuffling pool of 20 and can attack up to three targets per round, adding +1 to the Hit Threshold for each additional target. Assume that the spawn kills all the gang members first with one hit each before turning on the investigators.

Its mission complete, the Formless Spawn returns to the river and vanishes into the sewers. If the characters have somehow managed to avoid picking up the core clue leading them to Shavertown, then one of the gang members miraculously survives the Spawn attack. His dying body is left floating in the river. To get the clue, one of the investigators will have to dive into the Hudson, where the Spawn is still lurking, swim out and cradle the gangster as he dies whispering '*Shavertown...the kid's in Shavertown.*'

The Trail to Shavertown

Scene Type: Core

Core Clue: Interrogating townsfolk to find Ambrose

By this stage in the scenario, the investigators should have a clear clue leading them to the little hamlet of Shavertown, west of from New York City. The Delaware and Eastern railroad runs through it, or the characters can drive there.

Paranoid characters may take a force of armed police officers with them; more subtle investigators can go without such backup.

The route to Shavertown climbs up into rocky hills thick with gnarled trees. A grey rain begins to fall, turning

the road into a morass of mud and rivulets cascading from the heights above. As the characters leave the city and climb up into the densely wooded hills, call for **Sense Trouble** rolls. Those who succeed have a growing feeling of foreboding, as if something terrible is about to happen. Sometimes, through the rain-streaked windows, the characters glimpse what appear to be carvings on the rocks, similar to the ones on the stones in Cornélisz's garden. If they stop and check, though, they cannot find the spot that resembled the carved runes; every time, it was just an odd pattern of cracks that resembled a rune from the angle of the road.

The Town

Finally, the characters reach the Shavertown valley, surrounded by rocky hills. The first thing they see is the spire of the town church, rising above the trees around the town. The road leads along the river (a tributary of the Delaware) to the town, a tangle of shacks and crumbling houses. Shavertown is a town in terminal decline, and no-one ever comes here.

As the characters approach, they catch sight of pale faces looking out suspiciously at them.

Shavertown

Shavertown was a real place. It was a small village of a few hundred people, reliant on the timber industry. In 1938, it was one of four towns chosen to be sacrificed and drowned in the construction of the Pepacton reservoir. A dam was built at Downsville, eight miles west of Shavertown, and the reservoir was completed in 1954. It was not an inbred den of cultists.

Investigations in Shavertown

Scene Type: Investigation

Overly enthusiastic characters may head straight for Wisner's house; others may wish to be more cautious and ask around in town. When talking to the inhabitants of Shavertown, any characters who passed the **Sense Trouble** rolls earlier notice that many people in the town have gold fillings in their teeth. If asked, the townsfolk claim that this is an old tradition in the town, dating from a time where gold was found in the river. (The gold was a gift from the folk of K'n-yan.)

Gary Olden, the Postman

The post office in Downsville can direct the characters to Gary Olden, the postman in Shavertown who allegedly knows everyone in town. Olden is a sullen, yellow-eyed man who smokes foul hand-rolled cigarettes constantly. For a few dollars or a use of **Interrogation**, he tells the characters where the Wisners live.

Assess Honesty suggests that Olden is holding back. If the characters press him with more cash or **Intimidation**, then he admits that Ambrose Wisner recently returned to Shavertown, and is living in the shack, and that Older thinks he heard a baby cry the last time he was there.

Herman Long, the Spokesman

Long is as close to a civic leader that Shavertown can muster — a loud and angry man who mistrusts outsiders. If the characters are (or claim to be) federal agents, then he blusters about how the town needs money from the government. If they are private citizens, he tells them are unwelcome and should leave. If they ask about Ambrose Wisner, he tells them that

the 'Wisner boy' left town months ago, and has not been seen since.

Assess Honesty here tells the characters that Long isn't quite sure about Wisner's absence, but just wants them to leave.

The Church

The crumbling church in the middle of town is quite unusual. **Architecture** confirms that the design of the church is quite unlike any other building in the town; there are no pillars supporting the roof, and it is built as a series of arches and triangles using geodesic principles. There is no pastor or other religious leader in Shavertown any more, and the church is officially closed but is not locked.

Inside, the church smells strongly of must and decay, and mushrooms grow between the pews. A few cans of beans and a blanket lie on the ground, suggesting someone has been sleeping rough here. There are three small rocks placed in a triangle around the blanket. These rocks have crude spiral patterns scratched into them, similar to the ones in the garden of the Cornelisz's mansion.

There are old paintings on the walls, which are covered in a thick layer of grime and mould. **Art History** or **Art** lets a character clear away this obscuring dirt, revealing on one wall a curious illustration of the Biblical incident of the Transfiguration, where Jesus, Elijah and Moses appear on a mountain. Unusually, the three appear to be emerging from a blue-litten cave under the ground.

On the other wall is a painting of three men in 18th-century costumes trading with a blue-skinned figure in ornate robes, beneath a new moon. There's a new moon in a few night's time.

Mad Zeke

If the characters investigate the church, or ask around town, they will encounter Mad Zeke, a local eccentric and drunkard. Zeke was a former lumberjack before he fell from a tree and shattered both legs. He walks with the aid of battered crutches, dragging a twisted foot behind him. Zeke is aware of the Watchful in the hills below Shavertown, and blames them for his misfortune. He is insane and incoherent, but can give the characters useful information about the town and the horrors beneath. **Oral History** or a bottle of rotgut can induce him to talk on any of the following topics:

The Church: *They builded it in the '40s, when them below came up. They shewn 'em how to do to it. It was their place, long ago, when the peple here served 'em. Long ago. I watchit now, kep 'em away. They've not been up for an age, an age. They did it to me, ye know? I was uppen a tree, an' they made the ground twist an' I fell. They live in the hills, and they hate us.*

Ambrose Wisner: *The Wisners've been servants of them below fer an age. They done what them below needed done in the light'a'day, fer they cannot abide it. Not the honest day, not them. They're like worms in yer head, y'see. Watchin' all the time.*

Wisner, I saw him drive into town a few day ago. Went out to the shack in the woods, on the slopes of their hill. They live unnerground, ye know? Like worms.

Those Below: *They called 'em fairies in the old country, I think. Indians knew ta fear 'em, and they shunned these hills. We shoul'da' done the same, instead of tradin' with 'em. They look like men, but they're not. They kin twist things. Make the earth shake, and cloud yer mind. Soon's the night they rise, when the moon's new.*



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The Wisner House

Scene Type: Core

The Wisner house is a ramshackle one-storey building on the outskirts of town, in the shadow of a rocky hill. It sags as if rotting from within. It's surrounded by thick woodland and nigh-impenetrable undergrowth. A dirt track leads up the hill to the shack. A van is parked next to the house, matching the description of the workman's van that visited the Cornelisz' house when Adam was kidnapped. A trio of large guard dogs roam the yard outside.

If the characters observe the house for a while, they glimpse movement inside – Ambrose Wisner and his aged mother are inside with Adam. They are waiting for the night when the portal to the underworld opens and they can hand the child over, but as soon as they spot any sign of outsiders, they will panic. Martha Wisner is a bloated old woman with blotchy skin, and is totally devoted to the Watchful. She and Ambrose quarreled over serving the men of K'n-yan before, but not that Ambrose has 'returned to the fold', she is devoted to him.

As the characters approach the shack, they hear the shriek of a crying baby within over the rain hammering on the tin roof.

If the characters get too close, or start an assault on the house, then the dogs will begin barking ferociously. They are vicious brutes, a mongrel breed that's mostly Rottweiler, and are brave enough to attack the characters.

If alerted or panicked, then Ambrose runs out the back of the house and up the hill. At the same time, his mother Martha Wisner bursts out the front door with a Tommy gun and opens fire, spraying the dirt track and surrounding woodland with a hail of fire. When using her Tommy gun in this fashion,

Ma Wisner has an extra two Firearms points in her pool, but the Hit Threshold is increased by one for each additional target, and by one for the thick cover of the trees.

Ma Wisner

Athletics 4, Firearms 3 (5),
Health 7, Scuffling 5, Stability
0, Weapons 5

Weapons: +1 (Tommy Gun)

To keep the fleeing Ambrose in sight, characters must either pursue him immediately or use **Outdoorsman** to track him.

Ambrose Wisner

Athletics 8, Firearms 6, Health
7, Scuffling 5, Stability 3

Weapons: +0 (pistol)

The House Surrounded

If the characters surround the house to stop Ambrose escaping, then introduce a convenient escape tunnel beneath the shack. The exit is concealed in the underbrush a few yards away from the house, but it will give Ambrose enough cover to flee up the hill to the final confrontation.

From Below

Scene Type: Core

The trail leads up the hill through thick woods. Ambrose always seems only a short distance ahead of his pursuers as he pounds up the slope through the mud. Characters chasing him need to make Athletics checks to keep him in sight.

Near the top of the hill, Ambrose darts behind a rocky outcropping

and vanishes. When the investigators arrive there, they find steps leading underground. The steps are oddly smooth yet treacherous, although Ambrose seems to have little trouble with him – the characters can hear him running down into the darkness, breathing heavily and muffling Adam's wails with his shirt.

If the characters have a torch or other light source, they can make their way down the steps without incident. Otherwise, they will have to feel their way down, their fingers running over strange carvings on the curved walls of the spiraling shaft. The air is cold and smells oddly of incense.

Finally, the staircase opens up into a wide cavern, dimly lit by phosphorescent moss. The characters can see Ambrose Wisner huddled against the far wall, hammering on the stone with one hand and cradling Adam with the other. Ambrose screams that he is here and it is thought it is not the appointed time, they must come *now*. If the characters approach Ambrose, he redoubles his efforts, beating his fist to a bloody pulp on the unyielding stone wall. He does not struggle or resist if the characters restrain him or remove Adam from his grasp; instead, he slumps down and says *'they ain't coming. I dun't reckon ye'd find me so soon, thought I had 'til they'd come with the moon. Take the wicked child an' leav' me be here. Leave me be here.'* He has completely given up and will say no more. The cave echoes with Adam's wails for a moment, but as soon as any of the player characters pick up and comfort the crying child, he stops wailing and it all goes quiet.

The characters have a moment to act, to grab Adam or restrain Ambrose, before the wall next to the kidnapper *vanishes*, rotated into another dimension. The cavern is suddenly bathed in an electric blue light, emanating from the adjacent cavern now linked to this one. The men of K'n-yan have arrived.

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A 4-point Stability test is required for seeing the wall vanish.

There are two of them, standing in front of the blue light. Their long hair swirls in the electric air, and their eyes glitter with an unearthly light. They are androgynous, pale-skinned, and profoundly disturbing. One carries a silver staff tipped with a sacrificial blade, the other has a large ray weapon.

One of the K'n-yani raises his spear and points it at Adam. The other raises his ray weapon warily. The men of K'n-yan are confused by the presence of the characters, unsure if they are enemies or allies of Ambrose, and begin by using telepathy to probe their minds. The eerie feeling of telepathic contact causes a 1-point Stability test, and also causes images of Jacob Cornelisz to flood into their brains.

The K'n-yani with the spear reaches out towards the child, as if asking the characters to hand the baby over to them. If the characters refuse once, the K'n-yani send them another telepathic image. This horrific image depicts a naked human woman, and a dark and loathsome shape approaching her from the sky, some rough shape loping towards Bethlehem to be born. In the vision, Adam swells obscenely, his human frame transforming and warping into some bizarre miscegenation of mortal and godling. This second image is far more terrifying, provoking a six-point Stability text.

If the characters hand Adam over, then the K'n-yani stabs Adam with the silver spear. The half-human infant is impaled, and seems to *shrivel* in a bizarre way as the silver pierces his heart. His skin sloughs off, revealing anatomy that is distinctly inhuman. As soon as the child is dead, they cause the wall to appear again, leaving Ambrose and the dead child behind.

If the characters grab Adam and flee,

or shoot back at the underworlders, then they have a chance to escape up the stairwell back to the surface. If the fight goes badly for the K'n-yani, then they retreat – preserving their own immortal lives is more important than dealing with Adam. One throws the silver spear to the ground, as if offering it to the characters, and the other waves a hand, causing the wall to reform. The spear lands on the far side of the wall, but Ambrose is caught in the stone as it reappears.

If the characters fail to fight back and let Adam be killed, then the K'n-yani vanish when their work is done.

Better Solutions

Clever players may be able to find a better solution than just shooting or running. If they remember the carvings from the stones in Cornelisz's garden (or better yet, have one of the stones), they can use the symbols to repel the K'n-yani.

Alternatively, when in telepathic communication, characters can negotiate with the underworlders. The cold-hearted K'n-yani have no fear of killing Adam, but really just want him removed from the baleful influence of the Corneliszes. If the characters can promise that the sorcerers will be dealt with, then the K'n-yani will leave them the silver spear and depart.

More Like His Father

Scene Type: Epilogue

By this point in the scenario, the characters should have rescued Adam from Ambrose Wisner's clutches (or else the child is dead). The men of K'n-

yan are gone, and Wisner is either dead or under arrest.

What do they do now? As far as the wider world knows, Adam is the kidnapped son of Jacob and Harriet Cornelisz, and should be returned to them. Adam shows no surface signs of being an inhuman hybrid, but if the characters take blood samples, **Chemistry** or **Medicine** can confirm that his blood includes elements that are utterly foreign to human biology.

Between the blood tests and the evidence of Maria's diary, the characters *might* be able to prevent the parents from reclaiming custody of Adam, but doing so will be politically and legally difficult, as the Corneliszes have wealth and influence to fight a court battle. Proving Jacob was responsible for Maria's death and the creation of a half-human, half-*other* child will be almost impossible. Faking the child's death and having him anonymously put up for adoption may be a better option, but what will happen when Adam grows up?



Return to Red Hook

The Hook

A woman contacts the police, asking if they have any news of her missing brother. The investigation leads them to a murdered bookseller and to tales of a mysterious vanishing building.

The Horrible Truth

For generations, a cult worshipping Nyarlathotep, Mormo and other manifestations of the Mythos has thrived in the tenements and narrow alleyways of the Red Hook district. Investigating the cult drove Thomas

Malone mad, as recounted in the HP Lovecraft tale *The Horror At Red Hook*. Many of the members of the cult were arrested and deported, but the cult's leaders survived by travelling through a Gate into some other dimension where the gods dwell.

A young scholar of the occult, Alaquín Hirt, began researching a book about the Red Hook cult. He was initiated by the surviving cult members, but when they discovered he was planning to reveal their secrets to the outside world, they attempted to murder him by sending an invisible monster in pursuit. He fled,

escaping into the Nameless City using their rituals.

The Spine

The investigation begins when the characters are contacted by a woman who introduces herself as Marlene Hirt; her brother has gone missing, and she wants to know if the police have found any sign of him. In truth, she is a member of the cult, a priestess named Morgiana who is also searching for Alaquín.

A search of Alaquín's apartment leads



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the characters to an occult bookseller and evidence that Alaquin was writing a book about strange sects in the district. They also discover that the real Marlene Hirt has also been kidnapped by the cult.

The characters hear rumours of a ghostly building, an eldritch tower that appears and vanishes with the moonlight. This building is the moon-tower, a link between the Earth and the Nameless City on the moon.

While side investigations can delve into the history of the cult and current strange events, the main thrust of the investigation brings the characters to a cult meeting in Red Hook. There, they are drawn through a gate into a terrible Nameless City, which the investigators can escape only by finding another gate back to New York. The obvious gate is the building that is flickering back and forth between dimensions...

Antagonist Reactions

The whole scenario is effectively triggered by an antagonist reaction, as Morgiana tries to find the vanished Alaquin Hirt. As the investigators get closer to the cult, Morgiana may try to sabotage their investigation and throw them off course in her role as Marlene, or send a monster after them (see *The Cult Strikes Back*, page 31).

Victory Condition

A partial victory is won by escaping the Nameless City with one's Sanity intact. Investigators may also be able to rescue Marlene Hirt from the clutches of the cult, her brother from the Nameless City, and finally drive the Red Hook cult out of the city.

Shadows over Red Hook

The movements and actions of aspiring writer Alaquin Hirt and the Red Hook cult he is investigating are key to this

adventure. This timeline lists key events that occur before the investigation begins.

1918: Palatine Hirt dies, leaving a small fortune to his young children Marlene and Alaquin.

1924: Malone's raid on the Red Hook cult results in the collapse of a building and the death of many police officers.

Several years ago: Alaquin becomes interested in the occult and spiritualism.

One year ago: The Red Hook cult begins to rebuild, and open Gates to the Nameless City where their patron gods and secret masters dwell.

Six months: Alaquin begins investigating the Red Hook cult.

Three months ago: Alaquin begins writing a book. He employs Guy Grenville as his agent.

Two months ago: Alaquin meets Morgiana, a woman whose cult name is Gorgo.

One month ago: He is initiated into the cult and learns some of their magical secrets.

Two weeks ago: Alaquin visits Grenville, but he is followed to the agent by Morgiana, who realises he is about to betray the cult. A monster is dispatched to eliminate Alaquin, but he uses a cult spell to escape into the Nameless City.

Believing Alaquin had managed to avoid the monster and is still a threat to the cult, Morgiana takes further steps to protect their secrets. Threatening letters are sent to Guy Grenville, urging him not to have any further dealings with Hirt.

One week ago: Morgiana breaks into Alaquin's apartment and starts to ransack the place, stealing his books and notes.

Five days ago: Alaquin's sister Marlene visits Alaquin's apartment and meets Morgiana there. She mistakes Morgiana for her brother's lover, and is furious when Morgiana refuses to tell her where Alaquin is. Morgiana follows Marlene home and has her kidnapped,

New Spell: Door to Beyond

This spell opens a gateway from this reality into a hyperspatial fold containing the Nameless City, which the Red Hook cult believes to be the fabled city of Irem. The spell relies on using Earth's moon as a lens, and so can only be cast in certain places that are connected to the moon by means of an alien structure called a moon-bridge. These bridges occur naturally in the Dreamlands; one existed in the deserts of the East, and another is partially extant in Brooklyn (the moon tower, see page 36).

Note that this spell only goes to the city – to leave the city, a different spell is needed.

Stability Test: 5 (4 with Occult, 3 with an Occult spend). If the moon-bridge is not active (i.e. the moon is not visible, or after the scenario), the Difficulty is raised to 10.

Cost: 1 stability. Furthermore, if the caster is not a blood descendant of the folk of the Nameless City, there is a chance that he is devoured by invisible monsters at the threshold of reality instead of transiting into the hyperspatial fold.

Time: All that the spell requires is that the user say the magic phrase *Iytahya Cthym*.

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Return to Red Hook

to keep her as a bargaining chip in case Hirt surfaces again; she will be sacrificed when her usefulness is at an end.

Two days ago: With no word from Hirt, Morgiana starts her own investigation – she poses as Marlene and takes up residence in Hirt’s apartment.

SCENES

A Plea for Help

Scene Type: Introduction

Core Clues: Alaquin Hirt’s Disappearance, A Calling Card

By now, the investigators should have a reputation for dealing with unusual cases, so the desk sergeant contacts them when a strange woman visits the police station. Her brother is missing, but she is talking about Red Hook and some nonsense about moon-men – can the investigators get rid of her? She’s waiting downstairs.

‘Marlene Hirt’ is a striking dark-eyed woman, possibly of Greek or Turkish blood, with a mane of night-black hair. She is well dressed, although **Psychoanalysis** notes that she seems rather ill-at-ease. She wears a silver necklace and silver rings. As the investigators arrive, she was just getting up to leave, and is visibly irritated to be talking to another useless police officer.

If the investigators question her, ‘Marlene’ tells them that she is Marlene Hirt. She lives with her brother Alaquin, a writer and amateur journalist. He has been missing for six days, and she has no idea where he has gone. He didn’t come home one night. Alaquin had been talking nonsense about moon-men and monsters in Brooklyn, and she worries that he has become unbalanced. She visited the police station to see if Alaquin had

been found on the streets. Initially, she seems uncomfortable to discuss the situation, but as she talks to the investigators, she opens up and it becomes clear that her embarrassment over having to deal with the police is warring with her concern for her brother.

Assess Honesty suggests she’s hiding something; offer the player a chance to make a three-point **Assess Honesty** or **Interrogation** spend. If this is done, the investigator gets the impression that ‘Marlene’ is up to something, and may be lying about everything she’s said thus far. Pressing her makes ‘Marlene’ admit that her brother had talked about going to Europe, but she assumed that he would discuss any such voyage with her first.

As she leaves, ‘Marlene’ leaves the characters with her brother’s calling card, which reads:

*Alaquin Hirt
Writer & Historian
Apartment 302,
Shaller Building
Tribeca, Manhattan
New York*

‘Marlene’ departs as soon as she can, again assuring the investigators that it is possible her wastrel of a brother is just staying with friends, or has embarked on a boat for Europe. He is an unreliable sort, she says, and she despairs of him ever making anything of himself. **Assess Honesty** or **Psychology** suggests that she is actually a lot more worried than she seems, and that she may be trying to convince herself that Alaquin is safe.

Initial Investigations

Before the characters take to the streets, they may already know some facts pertinent to the case.

Anthropology: Marlene Hirt’s complexion, speech patterns and general appearance are definitely not Northern European.

Art History: Marlene’s necklace is Kurdish, and depicts the moon. If a character has a chance to carefully examine the necklace, he will discover a symbol carved on the back of it. This symbol is the rune of the Red Hook cult, and can be identified as such with a two-point **Occult** spend or checking the police records of the 1924 raid on the cult.

Cop Talk or Bureaucracy: The character drops Alaquin’s unusual name when talking to a desk officer, or checks the records, but either way he discovers that Alaquin Hirt wrote to the NYPD, asking to see the records from the Red Hook case.

Credit Rating: A character with Credit Rating 5 or more remembers the name Hirt – a Palatine Hirt died along with his wife of Spanish flu in 1918, leaving his fortune to his two young children. The case was memorable because of a lawsuit involving Palatine’s brother, Jacob, who attempted to have the will overturned.

Oral History or Occult: The Red Hook district has an evil reputation. A police raid on a Kurdish sect there resulted in the deaths of several officers. Detective Malone was in charge of the investigation; he retired to the countryside soon afterwards, and is now terrified of cities.

If the investigators decide that the case is not worth pursuing, then the strange events of *Madness by Moonlight* should inspire them to action.

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Jacob Hirt

Core Clue: Marlene's address

The wicked uncle is something of a red herring – Jacob has no connection to the Mythos or to the rest of the case. He's a tired old man who regrets the lawsuit. He believed his brother was far richer than he actually was, and that the will was missing many of the Hirt assets. The rest of the family never forgave Jacob, though, and now he rarely sees his only two living relatives, his niece Marlene and his nephew Alaquin. He lives out in Westchester.

He knows nothing about Alaquin having disappeared, but is unsurprised. The boy has always been strange. He asks if they have spoken to Marlene – 'she sees him once or twice a week', which players should pick up on as being odd.

If asked, he can give addresses for both Marlene and Alaquin. Alaquin's address matches the one given on the card, but he has a different address for Marlene – another Manhattan apartment.

The Missing Mr. Hirt *Scene Type:* Investigation

Core Clue: Hirt's investigations in Red Hook, Guy Grenville, Kaynak Bilginin

Hirt's apartment is in a bohemian district of New York, full of small bookstores, theatres and coffee shops. The investigators soon discover that Hirt was a well known figure, although many thought him eccentric. He had few close friends, but regularly haunted the cafes and bookstores. Hirt's favorite coffee shop is called *The Lonely Shepherd* – it's patronized by a mix of students, writers and flappers.

Occult, Streetwise or Bargain:

A few discrete inquiries or a few free drinks gets the information that Hirt was visiting Red Hook regularly. His behaviour had changed lately, becoming much more secretive. He also spread money around less lavishly than he used to.

Bargain or Library Use: Asking at a local second-hand bookstore reveals that Hirt sold a large number of books over the last few months. Many are still on the shelves. Checking those books reveals that several were purchased at somewhere called 'Kaynak Bilginin' in Brooklyn. The bookplate is in both English and Turkish.

Oral History: A stunning dark-haired woman came into the coffee shop a few days ago, asking about Hirt. She's been seen in the neighborhood a few times since then. If the characters mention that she is Hirt's sister, the coffee shop patrons are surprised – Hirt mentioned his sister a few times, calling her 'mousy' and 'stay-at-home'.

A **one-point spend** digs up the rumour that Hirt was working on a book, and that he had even hired an agent. A character who then makes a **one-point Theology or Occult and Library Use** can easily think of a list of literary agents in New York who would deal in books on cults in Red Hook, and it's a short list. A few calls will bring the characters to the door of Guy Grenville – see *The Agent*.

Records of the Red Hook Cult *Scene Type:* Background

Core Clues: Kaynak Bilginin

Investigators will likely consult the police files on the original Red Hook investigation. Players may simply read *The Horror At Red Hook* for the full gory details – the official police

account is much less lurid and also less informative.

Police detective Thomas F. Malone was assigned to work on the case of Robert Suydam, a rich New Yorker whose relatives believed he had gone mad. Suydam owned a flat in Parker Place in the Red Hook district, in addition to his old mansion on Flatbrush, and was spending increasing amounts of time there in the company of known criminals and mysterious foreigners. He claimed to be studying the folklore of the Kurdish immigrants in the neighbourhood.

Many of Suydam's new associates were involved with bootlegging and smuggling; there were rumours of concealed tunnels and wharfs where illegal goods were brought ashore by rowboat from tramp steamers. Police investigations led to a semi-abandoned church, also used as a dance hall, which seemed to be a meeting place for the Red Hook gangs.

The case grew in importance when several children went missing, believed kidnapped by devil-worshippers among the immigrants. Police raids on several buildings, including the dance hall and Suydam's flat, failed to find the missing children, but did turn up considerable evidence of strange occult beliefs. One photograph, taken in Suydam's basement flat, shows a weird symbol painted in the centre of a magic circle.

A second raid on Red Hook in June again failed to recover the missing children, but they did find the secret underground canal used by the smugglers. Regrettably, several buildings in Parker Place collapsed, killing several officers and the majority of the strange immigrants suspected of the kidnapping. Detective Malone, who led the raid, survived only because he was in the basement at the time. He subsequently retired to Rhode Island.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Return to Red Hook

Meanwhile, Suydam's behaviour changed. The former recluse suddenly became much more social, culminating in his engagement to Miss Cornelia Gerritsen of Bayside. Some even speculated that the elderly Suydam seemed considerably *younger*.

In June, Suydam married Ms. Gerritsen and departed on board a Cunard Line ship. That night, both Mr. Suydam and his wife died in mysterious circumstances — they were found in a locked stateroom, wounded as if torn apart by a ferocious beast. The crewman who broke down the door went mad, and committed suicide in an asylum some years later. Minutes later, a tramp steamer came alongside, and her crew demanded that Suydam's body be handed over to them. They bore a note from the late Suydam authorising this transfer.

Thomas Malone: With a **Library Use** spend, characters can dig up an account by Detective Malone, written soon after the raid on Red Hook. Alternatively, they can take a trip out to Chepachet in rural Rhode Island to speak to the old detective directly. Malone claims that he found a door in the basement of the Parker Place house, a door that opened from the other side and sucked him into a nightmare city of frightful dimensions, where he witnessed a ghastly marriage between the walking, rotting corpse that had once been Robert Suydam and something inhuman, whose worshippers called Lilith. Malone's doctors assure him that it was all a dream, although he was found in the collapsed basement with a corpse that was subsequently identified through dental records as Robert Suydam.

If contacted, Malone is unwilling to give much help to the investigators. The devil-worshippers are older and stronger than good Christians, and the world will be theirs one day. He does recommend the bookshop Kaynak Bilginin as a source of honest



information — the owner Saljuk was of great use during the earlier investigation.

Hirt's Apartment Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clues: Marlene's Address, Kaynak Bilginin, Guy Grenville, Hirt's Investigations in Red Hook

If the characters are visiting 'Marlene'

to ask her further questions about her brother, or to examine his apartment, run *More Conversations With Marlene*. If they have come to suspect 'Marlene' is not what she seems, skip onto 'Confronting Marlene', below.

Hirt's apartment is a small one in a fashionable building. Downstairs, there is a wall of brass mailboxes for the residents; a uniformed bellman waits in the elevator, ready to serve guests. If the characters ask him, then

he confirms that Mr. Hirt has not been home in several days; a dark-haired woman is staying in his apartment. Passing the bellman a folded five-dollar bill with **Bargain** or **Streetwise** gets the information that the woman has been an infrequent visitor to Mr. Hirt's rooms over the last few months. As the characters leave the elevator, the bellman asks the characters to remind the woman to keep her dog quiet, as the residents have been complaining.

If a player asks, or as the players are leaving the building having interviewed 'Marlene', then the characters can check out the row of mailboxes. There is a mailbox for apartment 302, and there are several letters uncollected in it. **Locksmith** lets the characters pop the box open and read Alaquín's mail.

The Letters: Most of the letters are irrelevant to the disappearance of Alaquín Hirt, but four are of special interest.

- A receipt from *Kaynak Bilginin* in Brooklyn, acknowledging the receipt of a cheque from Hirt and letting him know that the copy of *Myth-Cycles of Sumeria and Other Mesopotamian Cultures* is ready for collection, dated two weeks ago.
- A letter from Guy Grenville, literary agent, asking Hirt to call in for a meeting at his earliest convenience. The address of Grenville's office is listed. The letter is dated ten days ago.
- A letter from Marlene Hirt, wondering if Hirt's telephone is broken, as she cannot get through to him. On the back of the envelope is Marlene's return address – an apartment in Manhattan. It's dated one week ago.
- A second letter from Marlene Hirt, dated five days ago. She is furious

with her brother – why has he not replied to her? Who is the rude woman staying in his apartment? What in heaven's name is going on? Again, her return address is printed on the back of the envelope.

The Apartment: Hirt's apartment is curiously bare. There are plenty of bookshelves, but few books. There is a well-appointed drawing room with a noticeably new rug on the floor.

The study is equally bare of books, and Hirt's writing-desk is almost empty. There are a few notes and scraps of paper, but the desk has obviously been recently cleared. There are a few items of interest here – a framed painting on the wall depicts a phantasmagorical city, dominated by a bizarre pale tower. There is also a well-thumbed book of street maps of New York, especially south Brooklyn. There is also a beautiful edition of *The Thousand and One Nights*; the bookmark is set to the start of the tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. The rest of the apartment can only be examined by the investigators if 'Marlene' is not present or if some of the characters distract her.

There are two bedrooms, one of which is devoid of any personal items whatsoever. The second bedroom is obviously Hirt's own – the wardrobes are packed with clothes, and there are bookshelves here laden with novels and other mundane books.

The window in the kitchen is broken, and a cold wind whistles through it. There are obvious scratches on the floor here.

Despite what the bellman said, there is no sign of a dog.

Art or Evidence Collection: That carpet on the floor is really out of place. It's brand new and doesn't fit with the rest of the furniture. If the edges of the

carpet are surreptitiously lifted, the character can clearly see several deep grooves or scratches in the wood. If the carpet is moved, the scratches can be seen to be deep gouges, like the claw-marks of some tremendous beast. There are also blood-stains in the grooves – the floor has been washed, but no amount of scrubbing could remove all the blood.

Art History or Architecture: The painting in the study is a work of bizarre genius. The architecture is an weird combination of modern design and Middle Eastern influences; many of the buildings are physically impossible, like an Escher drawing.

Library Use: There are obviously books missing from this collection. Someone has packed up many of Hirt's books. It looks like it was done hastily.

Forensics or Evidence Collection: There are signs of a struggle. It appears as though someone smashed against the kitchen door with great force, damaging the hinges as if trying to batter the door down. There is also a missing carving knife, and a knife mark on one cabinet, suggesting that someone was waving a knife around wildly in the kitchen.

There's a torn scrap of fabric in one corner, probably from a tweed jacket.

Outdoorsman: There's a pair of mud-encrusted waders in a closet, suggesting that Hirt spend time wandering around the shoreline. There's no evidence anywhere else of Alaquín having the slightest interest in the outdoors. With **Chemistry** or a one-point **Forensics** spend, it can be determined that the mud and debris clinging to the soles is from the shoreline near Red Hook in Brooklyn.



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Return to Red Hook

A Window on the World

The broken window in Hirt's apartment's kitchen was shattered when he opened a Gate to the Nameless City, and the glass retains some echo of the eldritch sorcery he used. The character with the highest Sense Trouble or Occult in the kitchen sees silvery light glow from the cracks in the glass. Looking through it, he momentarily beholds a nightmare city – cyclopean black towers loom over misty streets, winged things flit through the air, and a terrible pale tower stretches into the heavens, forming a bridge between the city and the sickly yellowing alien moon in the discoloured sky. This tower flickers in and out of the vision.

Stability loss is Difficulty 4, 4 points.

More Conversations With Marlene

Scene Type: Roleplaying

Core Clue: None

'Marlene's' goals in any conversations with the investigators are to find out

- If they know where Alaquín Hirt is
- If they don't know, to push them to discover his fate
- What, if anything, they know about the cult in Red Hook, and to dissuade them from learning too much about the cult.

She will adopt whatever tactics get her closest to her goals – lies, seduction, veiled threats, wide-eyed curiosity. Try to play her as sympathetically as possible; make the players *want* to help her, if possible. She will hint that Alaquín has gone insane, and that she fears not just for his safety, but for the

safety of those around him.

If the characters ask her about her brother's work, she says that she knows very little about it. She knows that he was interested in occult nonsense, and had even talked about writing a book about the topic. If the characters mention Grenville having seen her and Hirt arguing, she claims that she found out that Alaquín had an agent, and was angry with her brother for wasting so much time on his ludicrous hobby. There is an undercurrent of fear in her voice – what if the things her brother described are real?

If they have found evidence that Marlene has her own apartment, then she hurriedly claims that she has her own place, but moved into her brother's apartment to take care of it until he came back.

If they ask if she has a dog, she says that she was taking care of an animal for a friend, but it's gone now.

The Agent

Scene Type: Roleplaying

Core Clue: 'Marlene' is not what she seems, Kaynak Bilginin

Grenville's literary agency amounts to a brass plaque on a grubby brownstone in Brooklyn and a small office up several flights of narrow stairs. Grenville is a chubby man who suffers from chronic indigestion, and complains about to anyone nearby. His main business is finding young writers for the pulp market who can churn out stories at a penny a word. He had originally hoped to channel Alaquín that way, but was disappointed when he realised that the young man meant all that nonsense about cults and space gods, and intended for his book to be treated as serious social anthropology and not fiction.

When the investigators meet him, he is visibly nervous, which makes his indigestion even worse. He refuses to admit he knows anyone named Alaquín Hirt, and will repeat this denial with increasing vigour unless the characters use **Reassurance** or **Interrogation**, or show him one of the letters from Hirt's mailbox, at which point he collapses into his chair.

'Look, I've no idea what Hirt's mixed up in. He was writing some book about crazy cults and sorcerers. I wanted him to sell it as fiction, but he started insisting it all real. I thought it was nonsense, then I started getting threats.'

He hands the players a sheaf of typewritten letters. They're all hand-delivered, with no stamps or postmarks. The first letter reads:

HIRT IS A DEAD MAN AND SO ARE HIS FRIENDS. BURN ANY NOTES OR LETTERS FROM HIM, FORGET EVERYTHING HE TOLD YOU, FORGET HE EVER EXISTED AND MAYBE YOU WILL BE SPARED HIS FATE.

The second letter was written a few days later.

DO NOT THINK WE ARE A JOKE. DO NOT THINK WE ARE NOT REAL. OUR HAND IS AT YOUR THROAT. BURN HIRT'S NOTES AND DENY YOU EVER KNEW HIM. IF YOU PUBLISH ANYTHING ABOUT THIS, WE WILL KILL YOU. WE ARE WATCHING.

'There's more', confesses Grenville 'I keep seeing foreigners on the streets, and they stare at me! And...the dogs, I hear them every night, growling and scraping at my door. One night, I swear they were inside my apartment.'

If asked about Hirt, Grenville says that

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Hirt contacted him three months ago by letter, saying that he was working on a book about cults in modern-day America. Grenville met with Hirt four or five times since then – the cult stuff seemed nonsensical, but Grenville hoped to persuade Hirt to rewrite it as fiction and sell it to a magazine as a serial. The focus of Hirt's investigations was down in Red Hook, among the immigrant families there.

In their second-last meeting, Hirt arrived in a very strange mood. He seemed drunk, and was talking about how he had 'signed his name in the Book of Death, and received the ashen blessing of the Father'. He said something about having 'talked with ghouls who were three centuries old' and 'seen men fall screaming from the moon-bridge'. Grenville told Hirt to come back the next day.

Hirt came back the next day, looking like 'death warmed over'. He was endlessly apologetic, explaining that he had participated in a ceremony in the cult and had been 'quite overcome by revelation'. He was eager to complete the book, and believed he would soon have a first draft ready for Grenville to read. The agent assured Hirt that he would give it his fullest attention as soon as the damn thing was actually done. After Hirt left the office, Grenville heard an argument from outside. Looking out the window, he saw Hirt on the street below, arguing with a striking, dark-haired woman. If the characters describe 'Marlene', then Grenville agrees that seems to be the woman he saw.

If the characters ask about Hirt's notes, then Grenville admits he burnt everything that Hirt sent him, which wasn't much – a few typewritten sample pages, talking about Mormo, a Greek goddess and how she was just a mask for Ny-something. Grenville does have one lead for the investigators – Hirt mentioned a bookstore that

was very useful to him, a Turkish place called *Kaynak Bilginin*.

Assess Honesty confirms that Grenville seems to be telling the truth; a one-point spend informs the character that the agent is actually glad to be having this conversation, to get all his fears off his corpulent chest.

Psychology suggests that Grenville's paranoia is developing rapidly.

Occult fills in the missing name as 'Nyarlathotep'.

Marlene's Apartment

Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clue: Hirt's investigations in Red Hook, The Scraped Car, The Pioneer Street Diner

Marlene Hirt is gone, kidnapped by the cult and is imprisoned in Red Hook. The kidnapping was orchestrated by Morgiana. After Marlene confronted the priestess at Alaquin's apartment, Morgiana tracked the sister down. At night, cult members broke into the building through a back door and went directly to Marlene's door. They picked the lock and kidnapped the sleeping girl, drugging her with chloroform and dragging her down to a waiting automobile. They also stole Marlene's keys. The next day, Morgiana visited the building and used the key to enter the apartment to search it for any documents sent by Alaquin to his sister.

Several clues lead the investigators to this apartment building overlooking Central Park. Marlene's apartment is on the fifth floor. Inquiries with the building manager reveal that Ms. Hirt has not been home in a few days, but this is not unusual for her – she has a number of friends in Long Island who she regularly visits.

Before the characters enter the apartment, they may pick up a few clues about this kidnapping.

Oral History: Some odd foreign-looking men were loitering around the building a few days ago. The police should do something about it. A one-point spend gets the character a long and rambling diatribe about the damn noisy car in the alleyway behind the building.

Locksmith: The only way into the building, other than the front door, is a service entrance at the back. The back door was expertly forced by a burglar, while Marlene's door was picked with a skeleton key.

Forensics: Tire tracks in the alleyway outside suggest that a car took off at high speed. It scraped against the wall as it left the alleyway, leaving black paint flecks on the bricks.

Inside, the apartment has been ransacked. Drawers have been torn open, books pulled from their shelves, clothes torn from wardrobes. Letters and other documents are piled on one table. There's no sign of Marlene.

A photograph on the wall shows Alaquin and Marlene. The real Marlene looks much more like her brother, and looks nothing like Morgiana. A strange symbol has been hastily daubed over the photograph – this rune is a symbol of the Red Hook cult.

Scouring the place for clues gets the following:

Chemistry or Pharmacy: There's a faint whiff of chloroform from Marlene's bed, and from a rag in the wastebasket.

Evidence Collection: Also in the wastebasket, buried at the bottom, is a matchbook from a cheap diner on Pioneer Street in Red Hook, left by

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Alaquin after he visited his sister a few weeks before he vanished.

Occult or checking the police files on the 1924 raid: The symbol painted on the photograph is the sign used by the Red Hook cult.

Marlene has obviously been kidnapped by the same cult that is apparently responsible for the disappearance of her brother.

The Bookseller Scene Type: Roleplaying

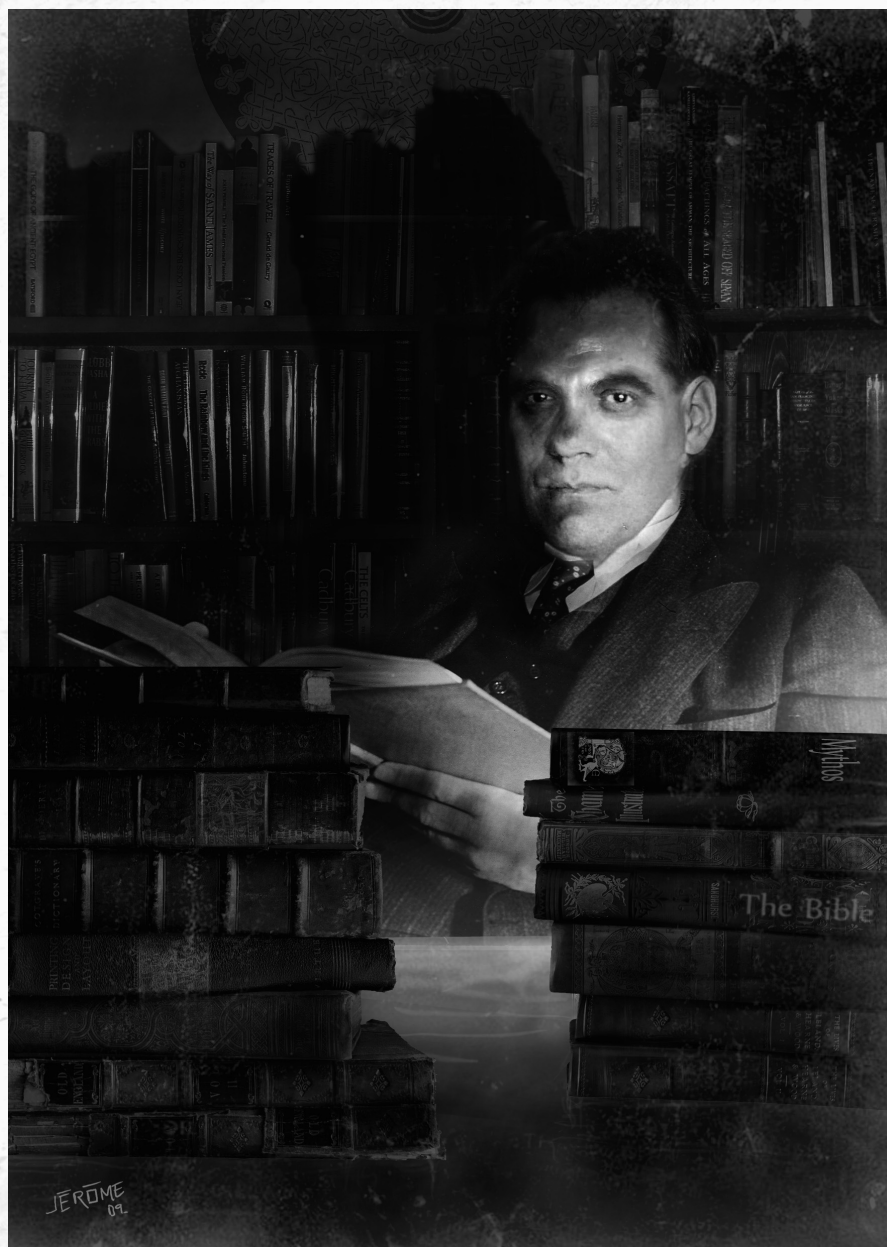
Core Clue: The cult rituals, Hirt's investigations in Red Hook

Kaynak Bilginin is in the middle of a small immigrant neighbourhood in Brooklyn. You could walk around the whole block and hear conversations in a dozen languages, none of them English. Kaynak Bilginin is hard to find – it's down an alleyway and up a short flight of stairs. Most people in the neighbourhood know it, although they refer to it simply as 'kütüphane' – the bookstore. (Note that the word is pronounced kootoopeeane, which paranoid investigators may mishear as another name.)

The bookstore sells a mix of English dictionaries, religious books and paraphernalia, curious and imported antiques. It smells of spices and mint tea. The owner is an elderly Turkish gentleman named Saljuk. He is busily pottering around the back of the shop when the bell rings, signalling the investigators arrival.

Saljuk speaks excellent English with a strong accent – he was educated at a British university in his youth. He is suspicious of any inquiries about cult activity in the Red Hook region.

If asked about Hirt, Saljuk sighs. *'I fear Mr. Hirt did not heed my warnings. I told*



him to restrict his curiosity to old books and academic knowledge, but I think he has experienced that which fascinated him directly. I do not think we shall see him again.'

If pressed, he continues, explaining *'Mr. Hirt came to be asking about a sect of, I suppose you would call them devil-worshippers, originally from Kurdistan, but who have spread throughout the world. There are places not ten minutes walk from this very shop where... well, it is not good to speak of such things.'*

If you must seek Mr. Hirt, then I will say that he was conducting enquiries in the Red Hook neighbourhood. Anyone living there will know of the sect, although I doubt any will talk about it willingly. I would urge you, though, to simply say that Mr. Hirt has gone away and is not coming back.'

If the characters use **Intimidation** or **Interrogation** to encourage the old man to speak further, then Saljuk says *'You must understand, I have no liking for this sect, nor do I especially fear it. The men in it are cruel, wicked men, but they are*

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just men. It is their gods whom I fear. Push too far into the dark corners of the Earth, sirs, and you will awaken things that have slumbered long, and against them there is no defence, no hope.

Perhaps you do not believe me. You will sleep better if you do not. In any event, I fear that'

A two-point **Occult** spend or anyone with **Cthulhu Mythos** can drop names, letting Saljuk know that they are aware of the genuine existence of the sort of horrors he hinted at. Once he knows he is talking to initiates, Saljuk speaks more freely.

'Ah, forgive me. I did not know I was speaking to one who knew of such things. Perhaps you will understand, then, if I say that the cult in Red Hook worships Nyarlathotep and other gods, and that they traffic with moon-beasts beyond the wall of sleep. Their masters knew Irem in the desert in their youth, and fled the world of men to dwell eternally with their cruel gods.

The cult is older than Babylon, sirs. If you go after them, you might arrest a few of their acolytes, but I don't think you will find Mr. Hirt alive, and I fear you will anger them.

If the characters ask about books purchased by Hirt, Saljuk can provide them with a list – they're a mix of obscure texts on mythology and history. He also, reluctantly, admits that he has a number of documents that belong to Hirt, which he was supposed to translate from Kurdish into English. The documents were copies of original texts obtained by Hirt. Saljuk is glad to be rid of them.

Cthulhu Mythos or **Occult** confirms that the secrets contained in the papers appear to be genuine. In addition to the *Door to Beyond* spell contained in the ritual, the papers give a two-point **Occult** pool that can only be spent in connection to the Red Hook cult or the Nameless City.

After speaking to the characters, Saljuk urges them to leave. *'Please, go. I am sorry, but I worry that I have revealed too much already. I wish you good luck'.*

The documents are disjointed fragments of text. **Cryptography** or **Occult** suggests suggesting that the original papers obtained by Alaquín Hirt were damaged or incomplete.

In days when there were two moons in the sky, the void-folk of ????? descended the moon-bridge and taught the lore of the gods to our father's father's father, the men of Irem. In time, the pleas and offerings of the men of Irem reached the ears of mighty ???? on his throne in distant Kadath, and he walked among our people and showed them wonders. The void-folk of ????? were gleeful at this sight, and black diamonds and ????? were strewn beneath the feet of ?????.

A curse issued from the mouth of the fish, and the moon-bridge could not endure, and our fathers were left without the protection of the void-folk. Our enemies were many, and encamped in the hills beyond Irem, and they called on ?????.

????, Father of All opened the casket of the shining stone, and the radiance of ????? struck the land. Our enemies were burned like dry sticks, and Irem was hidden in the shadow of the moon. Our father's fathers are those who left the city before it was hidden, and we remember their fathers, who died and live eternally in the city.

This is the secret lore of Irem, and the curse of ????? be upon he who speaks it to the uninitiated or to the servants of ?????.
Speak the words Iytahya Cthyim

when you stand on the threshold of the moon, and you shall come to Irem and walk with our father's father's fathers.

Confronting Marlene

Scene Type: Action

Core Clues: The cult rituals

Run this scene when the investigators have realised that 'Marlene' is not what she seems, and they attempt to arrest or otherwise confront her.

Marlene – or Morgiana as she may now be referred to – is supernaturally prescient and will know that the investigators are onto her. If the characters arrive at Hirt's apartment with the intention of arresting her, then she locks the door and vanishes into the Nameless City, using the same ritual that Alaquín did. When the investigators get through the door (picking the lock, battering it down, getting the bellboy to unlock it), they are confronted by a huge black dog – a sacred animal to the cult, and Morgiana's guardian beast.

If the characters confront Morgiana unexpectedly (during *Conversations with Marlene*), then the dog bursts into the room from one of the bedrooms, even if an investigator checked that room moment earlier and found it empty. Morgiana uses the sudden appearance of the animal to dodge away into the kitchen or another room.

If the characters suspect Morgiana, but have not confronted her while in the apartment, then she makes some excuse to slip away into another room, from where she vanishes into the Nameless City. The dog then bursts out of that room.

The Dog: The hound is a huge animal, standing more than four feet tall at the shoulder and black as night except for

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a whitish tuft of hair running down its spine. Its jaws look wide enough to gobble up an investigator whole, and it slavers glowing spittle that hisses when it hits the floor. Its barking sounds like gunshots.

It attacks any investigators, focussing its attacks on those who are threatening Morgiana or close on her heels. The dog leaps on its victims, knocking them to the floor and tearing at their throats. Other than its size and savagery, and its apparently supernatural entry, the dog is wholly mundane and can be put down with gunfire. Use the characteristics for a Wolf (page 158 of the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook).

Vanishing into the Nameless City: Morgiana uses the spell *Door to Beyond* to flee to the outer dimension. This spell can be cast in any place where the sorcerous influence of the cult's gods reaches – which currently means anywhere within sight of the Moon Bridge. The spell is a simple one, requiring only mental discipline and the uttering of a single command phrase, *lytahya Cthym*. The characters will overhear Morgiana shouting these magic words.

If a character is in the same room as Morgiana when she casts the spell, he sees her move away in a direction he can't name, and the room is momentarily bathed in moonlight (and a burst of gamma radiation, although the characters are unlikely to notice this). Stability loss for seeing the woman vanish into nothingness is Difficulty 5, 5 points. Optionally, the character may catch a glimpse of the Nameless City, or even be drawn into the Nameless City.



Never Split The Party!

If one or two of the investigators are drawn through a gate, and the rest are left in New York, then the Keeper should switch back and forth between the two groups. While some are investigating the Red Hook cult, the others can explore the wonders and horrors of the Nameless City. The climax of the scenario then becomes rescuing the trapped characters from the Nameless City, not saving Alaquin Hirt.

The Cult Strikes Back

Scene Type: Antagonist Action

Core Clue: None

If the investigators push the cult too hard, then the cult fights back by dispatching an invisible monster to attack the investigators. This attack can happen anywhere – on the streets, in the investigator's home, or even in the police station – but always at night, when the moon is in the sky. The characters should have obtained the spell *Door to Beyond* before the attack takes place.

The monster is a huge invisible cat from the Nameless City, called across the moon-bridge.

Occult lets the character spot the white shaft of the moon tower glimmer in the skies over Red Hook as the cat arrives. **Sense Trouble** (Difficulty 4) lets the investigator spot claw marks appearing on the floor before the cat attacks, or hear the monster's growl.

The invisible monster will attack only the investigators. Remind any severely wounded characters about the *Door to Beyond* spell, which they can use to

escape the beast. Those unable to flee or defeat the horror are devoured and torn apart by unseen claws.

Alternatively, this grisly fate can befall Saljuk the bookseller after he speaks to the investigators, in which case his body will be found inside a locked room, his throat torn out as if by the talons of some enormous beast.

Cat-Thing From Beyond

Abilities: Athletics 14,
Health 6, Scuffling 10

Hit Threshold: 6

Stealth Modifier: +2

Alertness Modifier: +2

Weapons: +1 (claw)

Stability Loss: +0

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By this point in the investigation, the characters should know that Alaquin Hirt was involved with the Red Hook cult before he vanished; they may also have discovered that Marlene Hirt has been kidnapped by that same cult.

Red Hook has changed little since the 1924 raid – it's still a dangerous, run-down neighborhood, full of narrow streets and tenement blocks and the ever-present smell of the harbour. The police rarely go there, and when they do, they are met with blank stares and passive hostility. Characters walking the streets of this district feel watched and unwelcome no matter where they go. Al Capone got his start in these streets. Currently, the heart of the district is being demolished to make way for a new housing project.

Characters with **Streetwise** or **Oral History** can pick up one of these rumors each for free; more rumors can

be obtained by spending points from either pool.

- Gangsters and strange foreign types still control Red Hook. The Pioneer Street diner is the place to go for business.
- They're demolishing half the neighborhood to make room for the new government housing. Maybe things are finally looking up.
- The wrecking crew found bones when they knocked down some of the old houses. They told everyone that they were animal bones, but everyone knows about the kids that go missing every few months...
- The church on Visitation Street is haunted – stay away from it.
- There's a ghost skyscraper in Red Hook. Look up in the sky at night when the moon is bright, and you'll see it.
- Cops aren't welcome in Red Hook; they'll get what's coming to them.
- There's a festival coming soon. Festival times are bad in Red Hook – there'll be missing children and fires in the night soon.
- Something's moving, deep underground. You can hear it at night – it makes the buildings vibrate.

Cult Symbol: The moon symbol of the cult can be seen everywhere in the district. It is scratched into walls, embroidered into window blinds, tattooed onto skin or painted on banners that hang from balconies high above the street that the investigators can never reach from inside the building.



The Red Hook Cult Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clues: The Moon Tower, the Bay Street house

Armed with their knowledge of the old Red Hook investigation, their own inquiries and rumours from the streets, there are several leads the characters can follow.

Suydam's Apartment: The buildings on Parker Place where the cult once had its stronghold have been replaced by new housing that has already begun to pick up the grime and decay of the rest of the neighbourhood. In the alleyway next to the new building is a small pile of offerings – money, whiskey, a dead cat wrapped in a blanket. A huge black dog is sniffing at the altar when the characters arrive – it lopes off into the alleyway and vanishes when they approach.

Asking around with **Oral History** or **Streetwise** gets plenty of stories about missing children, ghosts, underground tunnels and devils. The most common one that Robert Suydam sold his soul to the devil in exchange for wealth and youth; he then started building the biggest skyscraper in New York, but it fell down and now it's a ghost tower inhabited by the spirits of all the dead kids.

The Canals: In 1924, the Red Hook cult used a hidden underground canal to smuggle goods and cultists into Brooklyn. The tunnel they used was bricked up after the police raid, but they have dug other passageways. If the investigators wish, they can take a rowboat or go tramping around the docks, looking for these underground canals. The tunnel used by the cult is impossible to find during the day, but at night, **Outdoorsman** lets the characters spot a rowboat with a hooded lamp going up to a locked sewer grate.

Beyond this grate, a lightless half-flooded tunnel worms its way into the heart of Red Hook. At several points, the ceiling drops so low that the characters need to crouch to the gunwales of their boat to get through. The canal ends in the basement of the cult stronghold (see *Blasphemous Rites*, below).

The Diner: The Pioneer Street Diner is a dingy, greasy place, lit by a garish neon sign outside. It's patronised by longshoremen, smugglers and gangsters; more money changes hands here under the table than across the counter. **Bargain** and a dollar or a one-point **Flattery** spend gets a story out of the waitress Luna – a well-dressed guy visited the diner several times a few weeks ago. He was really out of place, and tipped well, that's why she remembered him. At first, she guessed he was a Fed or some rich kid slumming, but he kept asking questions about the old church and... well, stuff she shouldn't be talking about.

Later, she saw him with that *puta* Morgiana up on Bay Street (near the cult stronghold).

The Church: The abandoned church used by the cult for their dances and ceremonies is in use once more. Every night, people from the neighbourhood gather here and dance wildly. They sing strange and disturbing songs; hashish and other drugs are used freely. Any investigators not of Middle Eastern descent stand out like sore thumbs in the crowd, and no-one is willing to talk to them. If they try **Intimidation**, then their target claims to speak no English. A character with **Occult** identifies several names in the songs, including Gorgo, Mormo and Irem.

There is no sign of Alaquín Hirt or Morgiana in the crowd. However, the driver of the scraped car does visit the dance-hall regularly.

The Scraped Car: If the characters

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have visited Marlene Hirt's apartment and know that her kidnappers scraped their car during the escape, then they can look for a damaged car. If they visit the church, they will spot a battered Model A with recent damage to the right wheel arch, which they can follow back to the cult stronghold. Alternatively, **Streetwise** and several hours walking the streets lets the characters find the car parked outside the cult stronghold – see *Blasphemous Rites*, page 34.

The driver of the car is a cult member named Rewan; if arrested, he claims not to speak English. Investigations will eventually reveal that he is an illegal immigrant. Searching his car uncovers a ladies purse under the seat, belonging to Marlene Hirt. A few bribes with **Bargain**, **Oral History** or **Streetwise** lets the character discover where Rewan lives – the cult stronghold.

The Cult Symbol: If the players are very stuck, then one character with **Sense Trouble** notices a particularly impressive and ornate version of the cult symbol in the window of one house. This house is the cult stronghold (see *Blasphemous Rites*, page 34). A pale white face in the topmost window of the house catches the character's eye – it's Marlene Hirt, who is imprisoned in the uppermost room.

Red Hook Raids

Police or federal characters may wish to call out the troops once more and conduct another series of raids on Red Hook. As long as they have some proof that Marlene Hirt was kidnapped, and can convince their superiors that the best approach is to kick down some doors and break some heads, they will be put in charge of a force of some thirty officers from three stations.



Madness By Moonlight Scene Type: Roleplaying

Core Clues: The Bay Street house

On certain nights, in the moonlight, a tower appears in Red Hook. It is a phantasmal horror that could be made of white stone, or flesh, or frozen light. The tower flickers in and out of existence, and seems to move across the district like a lighthouse beam. The tower is visible from anywhere in Red

Hook, and when the moon is especially bright (and certain stars are below the horizon) it can be seen for miles. Most of those who have seen the tower unconsciously ignore it – the sight is unsettling and *wrong*, as the tower seemingly stretches to the moon.

Seeing the tower for the first time calls for a **Stability Test** (Difficulty 3, 1 point).

Characters who pay attention to the

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tower can see it more clearly each night, and can make out grotesque details – the yawning windows, the rings of pulsating veins, the weird gargoyles, the shapes that crawl on the upper stories... (**Stability**, Difficulty 4, 3 points)

Finding the base of the tower is like trying to find the end of a rainbow – as you get closer, it moves away. The tower first manifests on the west side of Red Hook, near where Robert Suydam's body was found and so many died. It tracks east, lingering for some time on the cult's stronghold on Bay Street, then vanishes into the maze of demolished buildings and construction sites that will one day be the Red Hook Houses.

Victims of the Tower: If the players are unwilling to investigate Red Hook, or if they bring added police forces into the district, then two uniformed officers fall victim to the tower. The officers, Morgan and O'Brien, are found dead on waste ground at the edge of the new construction site. Their bodies were crushed by some tremendous force, powdering every bone in their bodies and squashing them flat.

Cop Talk: These two were cracking down on smugglers in Red Hook, and thought there was a secret canal down by the waterfront. A one-point spend gets the rumour that they were taking bribes from the mob, and had many enemies among the natives of Red Hook.

Medicine or Architecture: These men were crushed by a huge force that was exerted simultaneously on every inch of their bodies. A sheet metal press might have the same effect, but they were definitely killed right here.

Forensics: The ground around the two men in a perfectly regular square has been compacted by some terrible weight.

Hunted by The Tower: Characters in Red Hook at night have a very unsettling encounter. Out of the corner of their eyes, they see the Moon Tower in the distant. Next blink, it's closer; after that, closer still. The characters are being stalked across the city by a cyclopean structure hundred of miles tall. The tower never moves when they are looking at it, but look away, even for an instant, and it is nearly on top of you.

The tower's interaction with physical objects varies depending on the intensity of the moonlight. When the moon is behind the clouds, the tower is almost invisible and utterly intangible. As the moon brightens, the tower's reality becomes sufficient to crush small objects like trash on the streets or cause gas lamps to shatter. Brighter still, and the weight of the tower causes depressions in the ground or dislodges chunks of masonry from other buildings.

Escaping the tower requires either **Fleeing** (Difficulty 6, 5 with Streetwise) or **Driving** (Difficulty 5, 4 with Streetwise). Failing the test means that the tower catches the character. At the Keeper's whim, the character is either crushed to a pulp or carried off to the Nameless City.

Blasphemous Rites

Scene Type: Action

Core Clue: Secret basement

Ideally, the characters locate the cult stronghold at night. If the players are tempted to wait until daylight before making a raid, hint that Marlene Hirt is in peril (which is entirely true).

The cult's new stronghold is a trio of four-storey townhouses on Bay Street. These townhouses have been converted, first into a dozen small apartments, then later into a stronghold

for the cult. Interior walls have been knocked through, creating a maze of passageways. More than fifty people, all cultists, live here. Inside, the air is thick with incense; the walls are covered with bizarrely elaborate diagrams, pentagrams and magic circles.

Marlene Hirt is imprisoned on the top floor of the middle building, locked in a small room. She hasn't eaten in several days, and is chained to a radiator, but is otherwise physically unharmed. She has seen the Moon-Tower flickering in and out of existence around the house, and looked through the windows out at the Nameless City. The door to Marlene's room is concealed behind a heavy wall hanging (**Architecture** to find it).

In the basement of the house is a crudely dug underground canal that leads to the docks. The cult uses this to smuggle goods and cult members into the city. The underground chamber is also used for the most sacred ceremonies of the cult. A shaft, converted from the main chimney, runs all the way through the building to the basement. Each night, the cult members gather in this subterranean temple and dance in the moonlight, calling on the Thousand-Faced Moon. The entrance to the basement is hidden underneath the main stairs (again, **Architecture** is needed to notice the secret door).

Cult Ceremonies: The best time to attempt a rescue of Marlene Hirt is during one of cult ceremonies in the basement, when the majority of the cult members are gathered underground, worshipping the moon. See *The Thing in the Moonlight* for details.

Marlene is dragged downstairs to watch the ceremonies; she is so shaken after each experience that she spends the rest of the night sobbing.

Sneaking In: Getting into the house requires **Locksmith** (difficulty 4) or **Athletics** (difficulty 5) to open a door,

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and then **Sneaking** (Difficulty 7, +1 per investigator; drops to Difficulty 3, +1 per investigator during the cult ceremonies at night). A failed check means the door opens, but the cult is alerted to the investigators' presence, which counts as *storming in*.

Storming In: If the characters charge in guns blazing, the cultists will fight back, and cramped quarters favor the horde of fanatics with melee weapons over the armed police. Alternatively, if the characters are just arresting the cultists, then the cultists will not fight back but will try to slow and impede the police as much as possible.

If the characters take the aggressive approach, then there are around twenty cultists who will fight back. The fight should be as confusing and cramped as possible, with thugs appearing from doors, from behind wall hangings, down staircases and so on. The cultists are armed with clubs, heavy knives and daggers, and some even have handguns. There are ten cultists on the ground floor, and the rest are scattered on the upper levels.

If the characters are being more reasonable, then they will need to spend either **Intimidation** or **Scuffling** points to get through the crowds – the number of points spent determines how long it takes the characters to push through the cultists. It takes 10 minus the number of points spent in minutes to get to the top floor, or 5 minus the number of points spent to reach the basement.

In reaction to any attack, the cult leaders including Morgiana flee to the underground canal and escape. Marlene Hirt will be bound, gagged and lowered down the central shaft by rope. It takes three minutes for the first cultists to flee by boat; Marlene will be lowered into the basement after five minutes and gone after eight.

New Monster: Moon-Beasts

FOR THEY WERE NOT MEN AT ALL, OR EVEN APPROXIMATELY MEN, BUT GREAT GREYISH-WHITE SLIPPERY THINGS WHICH COULD EXPAND AND CONTRACT AT WILL, AND WHOSE PRINCIPAL SHAPE—THOUGH IT OFTEN CHANGED—WAS THAT OF A SORT OF TOAD WITHOUT ANY EYES, BUT WITH A CURIOUS VIBRATING MASS OF SHORT PINK TENTACLES ON THE END OF ITS BLUNT, VAGUE SNOUT.

- HP LOVECRAFT, *THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH*

Moon-beasts are denizens of the Dreamlands of Earth's moon, but are also encountered on rare occasions in the waking world. They delight in torture and suffering, and have also been known to trade with humans (using intermediaries where necessary) indicating that they are comparatively similar to mankind in terms of psychology. Physiologically, they are squamous toad-like monsters who perceive the world around them using their facial tentacles.

Game Statistics

Abilities: Athletics 7, Health 4/8/12/16, Scuffling 4/8/10/12, Weapons 6.

Hit Modifier: 5/4/3/2

Alertness Modifier: +0/+0/-1/-2

Stealth Modifier: +2/+0/-2/-4

Weapon: -1/+1/+2/+3 claw, +1 spear

Armour: None, but firearms automatically do minimum damage.

Stability Loss: +0

Moonbeasts can alter their size by concentrating, from the size of a small dog (the first set of values in each variable group) to that of a human (the second set), a horse (the third set) or even larger (the fourth set). It takes one round of concentration for the creature to alter its size.

Investigation

Bargain: The little man with the turban offered rubies of incredible size at an even more incredible price. Something's wrong there.

Forensics: The wounds on the body look like they were inflicted by a spear or harpoon. The attacker twisted the weapon when it was inside the victim – it must have been a slow and agonising death, poor bastard.

Biology: There was no light – whatever that thing was, it must have had some other way of perceiving its surroundings. Echolocation like a bat perhaps, or something stranger. Maybe it could sense vibrations, or see in the infrared, or even detect electrochemical changes nearby. Every muscle twitch, hell every *thought* would be like a little spark of light to such a creature.

The Thing In The Moonlight

Scene Type: Action

Core Clue: None

Run this scene when the investigators break into the cult basement at night.

A circle of silver moonlight shines from

above, illuminating a hellish sight. Cultists dance lewdly to the music of pipes and drums. A woman writhes in the centre of the circle, wearing nothing but an ornate headdress and mask. She carries a blue knife in either hand as she dances. Worshippers thrust sacrifices into the circle, cats and other small animals, and her knife-strokes send black blood spurting across her flesh. The corpses are thrown into a pool of black water, which pulses in time with the music like a living thing. The air smells of ozone; it

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is unbearably hot, but your breath steams in the air in front of you.

As you enter, the cultists panic. Some charge towards you, others throw themselves into the black waters of the pool. The music rises to a crescendo, and the light changes. The building overhead creaks as a tremendous weight settles on it, and the ground shakes.

Suddenly, there is a thing in the moonlight alongside the woman, a shambling white grub that squats on its hind legs and flexes its razor-sharp foreclaws. It has no eyes, but tendrils on its featureless face strain in your direction.

The creature that just arrived via the moon-bridge is a Moon-Beast, a monstrous ally of the cult. It begins its attack by leaping over the characters and blocking the stairs back up to the house (or else by chasing them down the canal). It will attack any intruders mercilessly with its claws. The moon-beast is virtually immune to mundane weapons, and will rapidly slaughter the investigators. The best escape is to use the spell *Door to Beyond* to flee to the Nameless City.

If the characters have not picked up on the cult spell yet, then have Morgiana use the spell to escape. If the Keeper is feeling merciful, then the characters can be drawn in by the same portal she uses to flee.



THE NAMELESS CITY

OF COURSE IT WAS A DREAM. ALL THE SPECIALISTS HAVE TOLD HIM SO, AND HE HAS NOTHING TO PROVE THE CONTRARY. INDEED, HE WOULD RATHER HAVE IT THUS; FOR THEN THE SIGHT OF OLD BRICK SLUMS AND DARK FOREIGN FACES WOULD NOT EAT SO DEEPLY INTO HIS SOUL. BUT AT THE TIME IT WAS ALL HORRIBLY REAL, AND NOTHING CAN EVER EFFACE THE MEMORY OF THOSE NIGHTED CRYPTS, THOSE TITAN ARCADES, AND THOSE HALF-FORMED SHAPES OF HELL THAT STRODE GIGANTICALLY IN SILENCE HOLDING HALF-EATEN THINGS WHOSE STILL SURVIVING PORTIONS SCREAMED FOR MERCY OR LAUGHED WITH MADNESS. ODOURS OF INCENSE AND CORRUPTION JOINED IN SICKENING CONCERT, AND THE BLACK AIR WAS ALIVE WITH THE CLOUDY, SEMI-VISIBLE BULK OF SHAPELESS ELEMENTAL THINGS WITH EYES. SOMEWHERE DARK STICKY WATER WAS LAPPING AT ONYX PIERS, AND ONCE THE SHIVERY TINKLE OF RAUCOUS LITTLE BELLS PELED OUT TO GREET THE INSANE TITTER OF A NAKED PHOSPHORESCENT THING WHICH SWAM INTO SIGHT, SCRAMBLED ASHORE, AND CLIMBED UP TO SQUAT LEERINGLY ON A CARVED GOLDEN PEDESTAL IN THE BACKGROUND.

- HP LOVECRAFT, *THE HORROR AT RED HOOK*

In this final section of the adventure, the investigators are transported to the Nameless City worshipped by the cult, the same other-dimensional nightmare that Thomas Malone glimpsed before he went mad. The cult believe that the city is Irem of the Pillars, the fabled lost city of Araby that was rescued by their dark gods before it could be overrun by their enemies. Perhaps the tale is true, and Nyarlathotep gathered up Irem like the genie of Haroun al-Rashid, or perhaps the city was raised by hands that are not remotely human.

The city exists in the Dreamlands on the dark side of Earth's moon, and can be reached from the waking world only by means of a spell – and that spell requires a moon-bridge to work. The cult's ceremonies and invocations are aimed at drawing the moon-bridge down to Earth, so they can contact the twisted,

withered denizens of the city that the cultists believe to be their ancestors.

An experienced and brave dreamer might also be able to find the city, but the only way the characters will escape its nightmare boulevards is through the moon-bridge.

There are several ways the characters can end up in the city – they can be dragged in through a portal, or flee an attack using the *Door to Beyond* spell like Alaquin Hirt did.

Somewhere in the city, a wounded Alaquin Hirt lies bleeding.

Welcome to the City

Scene Type: Introduction

Clue Clue: The Moon-Tower

The characters find themselves sprawled on an onyx parapet, in the middle of a bizarre alien city. Huge buildings loom above them like some opium-nightmare vision of Manhattan. Most of the buildings are featureless black stone, but others are decorated with intricate arabesques or green-gilded carvings. Few of the buildings have entrances reachable by the characters, as if the city was designed for things that could fly or at least levitate. The tops of the taller towers are lost in a thick purple fog. Shapes move in the fog far above. A **Stability** test (Difficulty 5, 4 points) is needed.

Streets lead off in every direction, and the characters can wander off into the city if they wish. Anyone wandering without a goal in mind, however, will likely blunder into some cosmic horror and be devoured. Anyone with **Outdoorsman** or **Cthulhu Mythos** will realise this instantly. The investigators need to find a way out of this hell. One of the nearby buildings has steps leading up to a quadrilateral opening, and there are windows on its

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Return to Red Hook



upper levels. In the darkness beyond the opening there may be a way up to the windows.

If the characters have a light source with them (a **Preparedness** test may be required, depending on the circumstances that the characters entered the Nameless City), they find that the corridors of the building are covered with carved hieroglyphs and symbols that seem to crawl when looked at directly. There are mummified corpses in niches all along the wall. The corpses might have been human, once, but their limbs are unnaturally long and have extra joints. Other corpses have strangely-shaped heads beneath the bandages, as if the corpse's human head had been replaced by that of a crocodile or other large animal. The stairs up has steps that are both uneven and jaggedly sharp – an **Athletics** test (Difficulty

4) is needed to climb the stairs without injuring oneself for one Health point. If a character does spill blood inside the building, then the blood runs towards the nearest mummy as if the ground sloped that way. The blood seeps into the corpse's musty bandages.

If the characters don't have a light source, then they get to *feel* their way through the narrow passages, feeling the carved glyphs squirm under their fingertips, to smell the dust and decay and trace the weird shape of the corpses, and to cut their shins rather bloodily on the sharp steps (the darkness increases the **Athletics** difficulty to 5 and doubles the damage).

From the upper level, the characters can see out across the city. There are gaps in the purple clouds off in the distance, and through them the characters

glimpse strange stars. **Astronomy** suggests that the characters are on the far side of the moon, but there are stars visible here never seen on Earth. There is a bridge across an expanse of black water, and on the far side of that there is a shining white building – the same vile building the characters saw in New York. This building flickers in and out of existence every few seconds. Winged things circle around it.

The moon-tower is the characters' way out of the city.

The Cats of the City

Scene Type: Action

As the characters walk through the streets of the city, they encounter the strange cats that dwell there. At any rate, the creatures move like cats, prowling

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Arkham Detective Tales

and leaping and screaming through the shadows. They have fins running down their spines, and their eyes are human eyes. The characters see one cat, then another and another. A stream of the weird animals files past the characters, emerging from the alleyways and running down the wide street.

A dozen of the creatures are gathered around something on the street. As the characters approach, they see that the cats are devouring something like a human body. The cats are stripping the flesh from its bones with the efficiency and gusto of a piranha swarm. If the characters disturb the cats, the creatures hiss and spit, but allow the characters to discover that the body is dressed in the clothes of a longshoreman; a tattered wallet gives his name as Karl Hoffsen, a former resident of Red Hook.

Moments later, the characters must make **Sense Trouble** tests (Difficulty 5). If they succeed, they hear a big animal breathing, and see scratches appear in the stone as an invisible cat stalks towards them. This elder cat is the size of a small horse, and is hungry for fresh meat. See page 39 for the monster's characteristics.

A Procession

Scene Type: Mythos Horror

After another period of wandering through the streets, the characters hear the same music of pipes and drums that they may have heard in the basement of the cult stronghold. A host of strange creatures emerge from the gates of an ugly temple. There are moon-beasts in the crowd, and humans, and shambling zombies, but there are also other unknown horrors; the whole tableau is like something out of Bosch. Some of the procession carry instruments, others wear masks and elaborate costumes; others push carts laden with disturbing cargoes. Mercifully, the leaders of the procession are cloaked in fog.

Just seeing the procession requires a **Stability** test (Difficulty 4, 4 points).

The procession takes several minutes to issue from the gates of the temple, which then swing shut behind them. The characters can either wait for the procession to vanish down the street, try to find an alternate route, or even risk joining the procession.

If the characters did not disturb the cats, then they can wait in safety with a **Stealth** test (Difficulty 6). Those who fail are grabbed by procession members and dragged away to join the grisly march.

Finding an alternate route requires an **Outdoorsman** or **Streetwise** spend to navigate. If this is not done, the characters blunder around the maze of buildings for several minutes before they have to backtrack.

Finally, if the characters dare to join the procession, they must make another **Stability** roll (Difficulty 5, 7 points) as they are jostled and surrounded by rotting corpses and other things. This horrific procession marches over *The Bridge* (see below) to *The Ceremony* (see page 39), singing joyful invocations to Gorgo, Mormo, Nyarlathotep and other dark powers.

The Bridge

Scene Type: Action

The route to the Moon Tower crosses a narrow bridge across the waters. The bridge is lit by wrought-iron lanterns of curious design, decorated with silver; green flames burn in their sconces. The waters below are cold and dark, and anyone foolish enough to try swimming is eaten.

If the characters bypassed the procession or waited for it to pass, then as they cross the bridge, they hear the pipes and drums of another assembly

of horrors coming from behind them. This second procession is led by a corpulent monster; rolls of its greenish, luminescent fat droop over either edge of the bridge as it squeezes past each pair of lanterns. A **Fleeing** test (Difficulty 4) is needed to stay ahead of the second procession.

A character who fails the Fleeing test may choose to jump over the side of the bridge instead of getting caught by the procession. If he chooses this option, he might land on a passing black ship, one of the trading ships of the moon-beasts that visits the cities of Earth's Dreamland. The fate of an investigator who jumps on a boat is outside the scope of this adventure. (CSI: Celephais, anyone). Characters who fail the test and do not jump off the bridge are either devoured whole or incorporated into the procession.

The Bloody Trail

Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clue: Alaquin Hirt

As the characters are running ahead of the procession (or being carried along by it), they spot one of the moon-beasts in the procession snuffling at a smear of blood on the flagstones. The moon-beast nudges a scrap of fabric that was stuck to the ground with dried blood – the characters recognise this as a piece of tweed, similar to the one found in the kitchen of Alaquin Hirt's apartment.

If the characters are in the procession, they will have to sneak away with a **Stealth** test (Difficulty 6). Otherwise, the characters can just choose to follow the blood trail, which winds through a labyrinth of narrow alleyways and down into a lightless crypt. As the characters approach the steps, they hear movement behind them – a hunting party of three moon-beasts is on the trail of the blood. The

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characters can either stand and fight, flee through the alleyways, or brave the crypt.

A fetid stink rises from the crypt, and again the investigators will need a light source to explore it properly. After a few minutes of searching, the characters hear the faint sound of sobbing. In a corner of the crypt lies Alaquín Hirt, or what's left of him anyway. His limbs are as cold as the stone they rest on. He's suffering from massive blood loss, dehydration and hypothermia, and an immediate **First Aid** spend is needed to keep him alive.

Hirt is delusional, moaning about 'the tower' and 'I'm late...for the book launch...' If the investigators ask him how they can escape the city, he mutters about 'the moon-bridge... we've crossed the moon-bridge'.

The Ceremony Scene Type: Action

The white moon-tower rises from the heart of the Nameless City. It stands over a basalt crypt, a tomb for something vast and ancient. All the streets in this region of the city radiate from the crypt, so all routes lead to the tower.

The procession from the temple descends into the black crypt beneath the Moon-Tower. If the characters wish to slip away from the crowd, this is their last opportunity. Inside the crypt, an eerily familiar ceremony is taking place. The ritual here is virtually identical to the ceremony performed by the Red Hook cult in the basement room on Bay Street, but here the celebrants are moon-beasts and undead horrors instead of cultists. The role performed by Morgiana in Red Hook is taken here by a tittering phosphorescent thing that cavorts in the middle of the crypt. The moon-tower flickers in time to the pounding music of the drums.

If the characters leap into the moon-tower, they are transported back to Earth, and will find themselves back somewhere in Red Hook – see *Escape to New York*. A courageous character could disrupt the alien ceremony, breaking the connection to Earth and reducing the power of the Red Hook cult, but at the cost of his own life.

Escape to New York Scene Type: Aftermath

The moon-tower deposits the character back somewhere in Red Hook, along with Alaquín Hirt if they were able to rescue him. *Where* they arrive depends on how the characters entered the Nameless City.

If the characters travelled to the city by experimenting with the *Door to Beyond* spell, then they reappear in the middle of a cult ceremony in the Red Hook stronghold, as described in *Blasphemous Rites* (page 34X). The appearance of the investigators instead of the expected moon-beast terrifies the cultists, and the characters can escape in the confusion. The moon-beast will follow the characters across the bridge a few moments later, but they will have enough time to escape (and grab Marlene Hirt) if they do not hesitate.

If the characters have already raided the Red Hook cult and seen the ceremony in the basement, then the moon-bridge deposits them on the muddy shoreline off Red Hook. By the time they make it back to the Bay Street house, it is abandoned and there is no sign of Morgiana or any other cultists there.

Either way, the characters have escaped the Nameless City.

The Hirts: Both Marlene and her brother need medical attention. Both have suffered severe psychological trauma, and Alaquín was seriously injured by the claws of a moon-beast.

If they recover, Marlene blames her brother for the cult's kidnapping of her, and refuses to speak to him ever again. She moves to Europe several months later.

Even after a stay in hospital, Alaquín is greatly weakened by his ordeal. His zeal for warning the world about the dangers of the Mythos remains, however, and he stays in contact with the investigators. He even suggests that he can write a book about their experiences, and can pass on future adventure hooks to them.

The Moon-Bridge: The strange tower is seen for another few nights over Brooklyn, then it vanishes. A character with **Astronomy** notices an article in a scientific journal, noting that the star Fomalhaut underwent an unexplained period of brilliance on the night the tower disappeared.

The Red Hook Cult: The cult's activity drops away again after the moon-bridge vanishes or after the police raid their stronghold. If arrested, Morgiana vanishes from her cell on night of the next full moon. Even imprisoning every cultist in the Bay Street building is ultimately fruitless – the worship of Mormo and the things in the Nameless City is a religion older than the civilisation that the investigators represent, and it will outlast that civilisation too. As long as the moon rises over the Earth, the cult will endure.



The Book

This scenario literalizes the Lovecraftian concept of ‘things man was not meant to know’. Those who read *The Invisible Path* – the Book of the title – become tainted by the thoughts of its author, a deranged poet and philosopher. This evil knowledge makes them a target for both a serial killer and for entities from the furthest reaches of space-time. By the time the investigators realize what is going on, it is too late – being able to make that realization, to correlate the contents of your mind necessitates that your mind is tainted by the unthinkable.

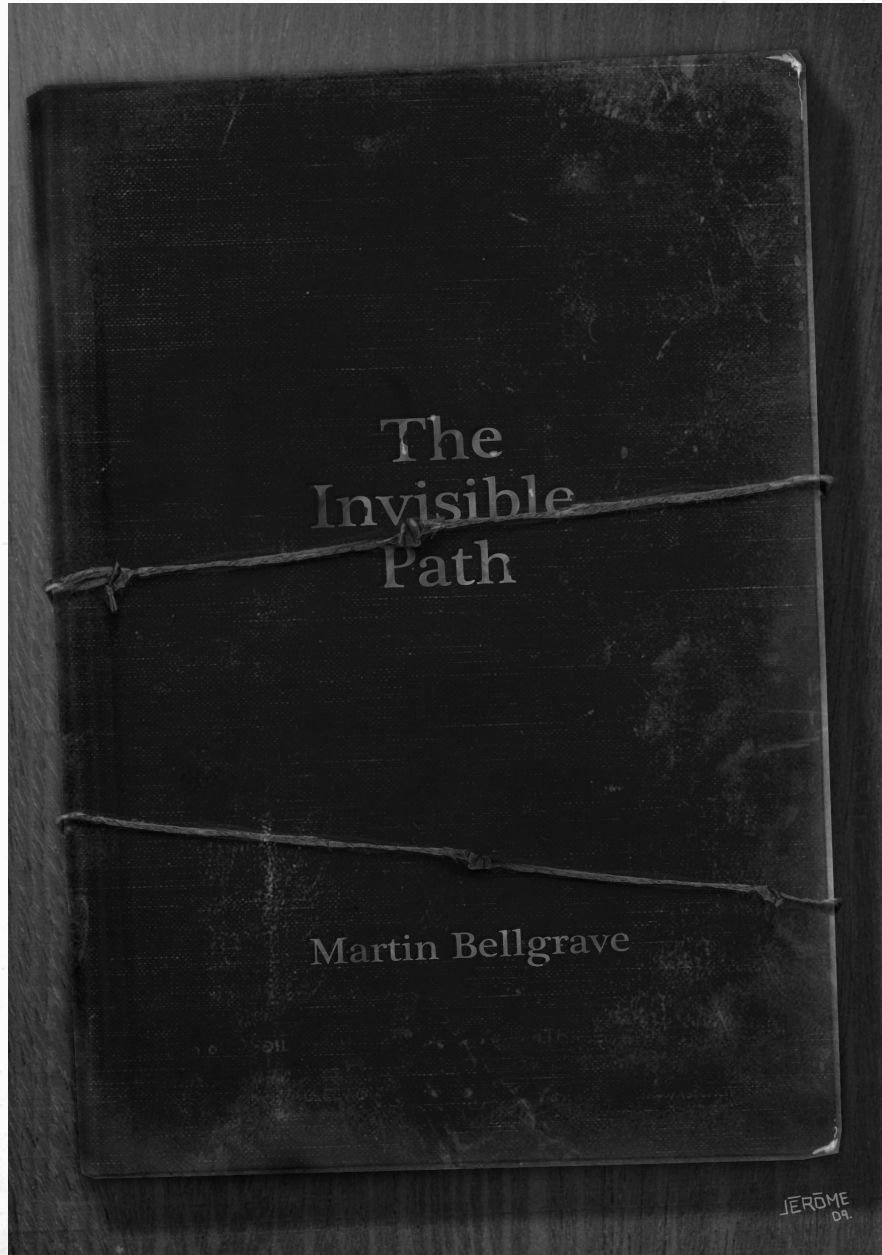
The Hook

The characters are called to investigate a pair of murders. Both victims were killed in a nearly identical way, their eyes gouged out and their throats cut open. Other than the method of death, though, there appears to be no connection between the two. Who is this murderous lunatic who has killed two people – and is about to kill again!

The Horrible Truth

In the middle of the 19th century, a New England poet and philosopher named Martin Bellgrave wrote and privately published a collection of poetry called *The Invisible Path*, or *Observations On What Lies Ahead*. Only a handful of copies were printed, and they have found their way into the libraries of a few universities and private collectors.

Bellgrave was a user of the strange Liao drug, which allows users to view the distant past. He saw the primordial ages of the Earth, and learned how to invoke the race-memory of humanity. When he died – in ghastly and



mysterious circumstances - an echo of his consciousness became embedded in the books. Anyone who read *The Invisible Path* became a carrier for a part of Bellgrave – in effect, when you read the book, some part of your thoughts

become Bellgrave, a shade of him. This creates hallucinations, psychic flashes and other strange phenomena, but nothing more – the connection to Bellgrave is not normally strong enough to do anything more, unless the reader

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The Book

is aware that reading *The Invisible Path* imprints part of your mind with the thoughts of an eccentric occultist.

At least, that is true in most cases. Some minds are more suitable than others. A copy of *The Invisible Path* fell into the hands of a New York detective, Francis Moon, as part of his investigations into a book theft. Moon was naturally sensitive, so when he read the book he developed a strong psychic connection to Bellgrave – so strong that the shade in Moon’s mind believed that it might be possible to fully possess Moon’s body and return to life. Bellgrave could only do this, though, if there were no other shades, no other psychic echoes to distort his close alignment with Moon’s mind. He would have to destroy all the surviving copies of *The Invisible Path*, as well as kill any person who read the book and formed a shade.

If there is only one Bellgrave, then he can live again.

Unfortunately for humanity, Bellgrave was being hunted by entities from the primordial past, the Fires of Tindalos, akin or even another form of the fabled Hounds. Those who contain a shade of Bellgrave are prey for these fires...

The Spine

The initial part of the investigation is reactive – the characters will be unable to stop Francis Moon’s killings, and must instead follow the trail of bodies. The first two deaths appear to have no connection, but clues soon draw the characters’ attention to *The Invisible Path*. Once they have the book, they can bait a trap for the killer, and those who have read the book may also develop a psychic link to Bellgrave, thus putting themselves on Moon’s hit list.

To complete this scenario, the investigators must

- Discover that ownership of *The*

The Thought of a Thought

As the nature of Martin Bellgrave’s book and the strange phenomena it induces are vital to this scenario, it is important to clarify them now. Bellgrave is not a ghost, per se, nor is he still an individual. ‘He’ is a self-aware thought that exists only in the mind of the reader. When you read *The Invisible Path*, the thoughts provoked by the words and images take root in your brain. A part of your mind starts thinking exactly like Bellgrave would have done, sharing his encoded memories. In effect, a part of you becomes Martin Bellgrave. These copies are called shades. Normally, a shade only lasts for a few days or weeks – as long as the reader is thinking of the book, then he has a shade in his mind. Forget the book, forget what you read, and you lay the shade to rest.

Bellgrave was able to accomplish this feat of neuro-linguistic programming through his experimentation with the fabled Liao drug, which allows the user to project his consciousness back into the dark recesses of prehistory. Bellgrave’s poetry draws on images derived from the collective race memory of humanity, which makes it uniquely potent.

The detective Francis Moon has an unusually strong connection with Bellgrave’s shade, and over the course of this scenario, the shade slowly consumes Moon’s consciousness entirely. When first encountered, Bellgrave can only take over for brief periods, or when Moon is sleeping, drunk or otherwise distracted, but later he will be able to take over completely.

Timeline of Events

Billions of years ago: Martin Bellgrave’s consciousness observes strange things through the medium of Liao.

1830: Martin Bellgrave born.

1861: Martin Bellgrave publishes ‘*A Journey into Lonely Places*’, a book of poetry and prose. No-one reads it.

1865: Bellgrave obtains a supply of the Liao drug. His family fortune is spent acquiring more of the drug.

1869: Bellgrave meets a very young Lewis Holland. The two take an instant dislike to each other.

1870: Bellgrave publishes a few copies of ‘*The Invisible Path*’.

1871: Martin Bellgrave dies in a fire.

1901: Lewis Holland attempts to purchase all the copies of *The Invisible Path*.

1919: A reader annotates the New York Public Library copy of *The Invisible Path*.

Three months ago: Geoffrey Hill borrows a copy of *The Invisible Path* from Fordham University Library.

Two months ago: Jim Brown breaks into the library of Lewis Holland and steals several books, including *The Invisible Path*. Holland hires the private detective, Francis Moon, to track down the thief.

Two months ago: Geoffrey Hill writes to various antiquarian bookstores, looking for a copy of *The Invisible Path* that he can purchase.

Two weeks ago: Francis Moon tracks Jim Brown down and manages to recapture most of the books, but the thief escapes. Moon reads *The Invisible Path* and becomes partially possessed by Bellgrave.

Four days ago: Moon finds Jim Brown again and kills him. He picks up the psychic scent of Geoffrey Hill.

Two days ago: Gollan & Sons booksellers reply to Geoffrey Hill’s letter, informing him that they have found a copy of *The Invisible Path* for purchase.

One day ago: Moon murders Geoffrey Hill.

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Arkham Detective Tales

Invisible Path is the connection between the murders

- Obtain a copy of *The Invisible Path*
- Meet Francis Moon
- Learn the strange history of Martin Bellgrave
- Meet industrialist Lewis Holland
- Possibly use their own connection to Martin Bellgrave to learn more about the killer
- Identify Francis Moon as the killer
- Find a way to disperse the echo of the consciousness of Martin Bellgrave before they are killed by the Fires of Tindalos

Antagonist Reactions

The primary antagonist in this scenario is Francis Moon, who becomes progressively more subject to the control of the shade of Martin Bellgrave in his mind. Moon should be accompanying the investigators by the time they reach Providence. Slowly, over the course of the scenario, the investigators should become aware that Moon is actually the killer they are chasing, and that he is accompanying them only so he can kill them when the time is right. Moon has the advantage of being somewhat psychic, which makes him a singularly dangerous foe even though he is merely mortal.

The second antagonist group are the ancient horrors from the deep part, called up by Martin Bellgrave's experimentations with the Liao drug. These beings, the Fires of Tindalos, killed Martin in 1871, but they home in on his psychic signature, so anyone containing a shade of Bellgrave in their minds is a potential target. They require a clear signal to attract their attention initially, so it was only the unusually

strong connection between Moon and Bellgrave that drew them out of the past again. Now that they are here in the present, though, they will hunt down all those carrying shades – including the investigators who have read *The Invisible Path*. These horrors should be a mounting threat in the last section of the adventure.

The third antagonist is Martin Bellgrave (d. 1871); a failed, narcissistic wastrel of a poet who turned to occult sorcery and drugs to overcome his lack of talent. Martin poses little danger to the investigators – apart from the fact that anyone who has read the book and created a shade of Martin in their minds is a target for the hunters.

Victory Condition

Just *surviving* this scenario is something of a victory.

Working out what happened and destroying all the copies of *The Invisible Path* is an excellent success.

Truly skilled and clever investigators may be able to save Lewis Holland from destruction; if they do, he can become a patron in future adventures.

SCENES

The First Killing

Scene Type: Hook/Investigation

Core Clues: Geoffrey's interest in a book from the library, the envelope from the rare book dealer

The investigation opens *in media res*, with the investigators being summoned to the scene of a murder in the Bronx. The victim is Geoffrey Hill, a sophomore student at Fordham University (a small Jesuit-run college). His body was found by the landlady on the floor of the small apartment he shared with another

student, a few streets away from the university campus.

The investigators were called in because of the singularly gruesome nature of the killings.

While investigating this murder scene, the investigators are contacted by the police once more, alerting them to a second killing nearby that appears to be the work of the same madman. See *The Second Killing*, below.

What Happened Here

Geoffrey borrowed a copy of *The Invisible Path* from Fordham University Library, and was reading it when he was visited by Francis Moon. Once Moon had confirmed that Geoffrey was the only person to read the book, the detective murdered him. He then threw Geoffrey's copy of the book, the student's notes on it, a letter to a rare book dealer and his library card into the fire before fleeing. Moon wore gloves to hide his fingerprints.

Geoffrey Hill's Apartment

The victim's apartment is small and cramped, a classic student bedsit. There's one living/dining room, a tiny dingy kitchen, and a bedroom with twin beds. The wallpaper has a singularly unpleasant yellow pattern.

The first thing the investigators see when they enter the apartment is a toppled dining table, with a pair of legs sticking out from behind it. The smells of ash, blood and urine hang thickly in the air. Geoffrey Hill's body lies in the middle of the room, contorted and bloodied (see *Hill's Body*, below, for more details). The remains of a fire burn in the grating, and there's a lot of ash there, suggesting some object was burned.

There are two smashed coffee cups on the floor next to the overturned

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Book

table, and a recently boiled kettle in the kitchen. The instant coffee jar is stacked neatly on a shelf next to two empty coffee jars.

The bedroom contains two unmade beds and various wardrobes and chests of drawers. There are two distinct sets of clothes – the simple suits and shirts belonging to the late Geoffrey Hill, and his roommate James Rathbone's considerably more expensive and stylish outfits.

Locksmith: The door to the apartment is made of heavy wood, and has both a lock and a chain. Neither was forced, suggesting that Geoffrey Hill let his murderer in freely. A **one-point spend** lets the character note that the chain hasn't been used in a long time (Geoffrey never left the chain on the door, as otherwise Rathbone would wake him when the roommate came home-drunk.)

Forensics: Geoffrey's fingerprints are all over the coffee cups, the jar and every surface in the apartment – he's been a shut-in here for days. A **one-point spend** confirms that there are smudges on one cup, suggesting that the cup was lifted by someone wearing leather gloves.

One of the shards of coffee cup is covered in blood – it was used as a weapon to attach Geoffrey's eyes and throat.

Evidence Collection: Examining in the ash in the grate reveals the remains of three burnt objects. One was definitely a small book, the others were a notebook and a piece of paper, perhaps a letter. A **one-point spend** lets the investigator find half of Hill's library card stuck a little way up the chimney. The card was obviously thrown on the fire, but lifted out of the flames by an updraft.

The Landlady

Hill's landlady is an elderly widow named Mrs. Elway. She discovered her young tenant's body, and has been on the edge of hysterics ever since. She lives upstairs from Hill's apartment. If the investigators talk to her, all she'll say is 'the eyes! The eyes! He had no eyes!' until someone spends **two points of Reassurance** or **three points of CopTalk** to get her to co-operate. She is still very shaky even then.

Mrs. Elway confirms that she has two tenants in the apartment downstairs – that nice young Mr. Hill and that horrible Mr. Rathbone. She's had terrible trouble with Mr. Rathbone, always coming in drunk and keeping strange hours, but never any with Mr. Hill. Hill had been a tenant of hers for two years, and never made any noise or caused any problems, although he was occasionally a few days late with the rent.

This evening, she heard a crash from downstairs. She guessed that that awful Mr. Rathbone had fallen over again, but after a while she got worried and went downstairs, where she found the door was open. She called, then went in and discovered Hill's corpse. She doesn't quite know what happened after that, but managed to raise the alarm and phone the police, who contacted the investigators.

Hill's Corpse

Geoffrey Hill was cruelly and savagely murdered. His neck has been broken. His eyes have been gouged out, and his throat slashed and partially opened by a sharp object – specifically, the broken shard of coffee cup.

A **one-point Medicine** or **Forensics** suggests the assailant took Hill by surprise, and was considerably bigger and stronger than him.

Hill's wallet is in his pocket, and contains twelve dollars and nineteen cents. There's also a folded envelope, addressed to Geoffrey Hill. The return address written on the back is '*Gollam & Sons Rare Books, Westminster St., Providence, RI*'. A **one-point Art History** or **Occult spend** confirms that Gollam & Sons are a small but reputable dealer in unusual books, specialising in reselling the libraries of deceased collectors or obscure publishers.

The Flatmate

Geoffrey Hill's flatmate James Rathbone is suspiciously missing during this initial investigation. Rathbone is a spoiled rich brat who's been ejected from half a dozen colleges due to poor behaviour. His family have cut his allowance down to a mere pittance, so he's moved to this little apartment to save money; he spends what he saves in speakeasies with his fashionable friends.

The investigators can trawl the New York underworld to find Rathbone, or they can just wait for him to show up back at the apartment. Rathbone is a thoroughly abominable fellow, self-centred and laconic. His first reaction to being told of Hill's death is to ask if the '*bugger got any blood on my suits*.' He initially assumes that Geoffrey committed suicide. If asked why, Rathbone explains that '*Hill was such a moody fellow. Always sitting indoors in the dark, reading that same damn nonsense book. He was obsessed by it, writing all sorts of gobbledygook in his diary. Utter nonsense*.'

A **one-point spend** of interpersonal skill like **Interrogation** or **Flattery** extracts some extra information from Rathbone. '*He got that book out of the library at Fordham a few weeks ago. Some silly book of poetry, terrible, terrible stuff. Called the, hrm, something about a path I think. Old Professor Drew put Hill onto it. Drove him over the edge, I'd say. Killed by a bad rhyme*.' **Assess Honesty** suggests that Rathbone is considerably more scared

than he's giving away, but he doesn't seem to be hiding anything more.

The Second Killing Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clues: The bookplate pointing to the Holland collection.

While the investigators are at Geoffrey Hill's apartment, the police contact them again. A second body has been found nearby that appears to be the work of the same killer.

This murder took place in a crowded tenement in Brooklyn. The body was lying there for four days before a neighbour noticed the smell in Room 56.

The Tenement

Rooms are offered for rent by the week, at rates that reflect the run-down state of both the building and the neighbourhood. Whole families are crammed into these tiny, filthy rooms; the plumbing never works and there's a worrying, ever-present smell of gas. **Streetwise** confirms the impression that this tenement is an abode of poor, desperate people and petty criminals. A **two-point Streetwise** or **one-point Oral History spend** picks up the information that the man in room 56 was named Brown, and that he arrived a week or two ago. Rumours claim that he was on the run from the law, or was an escaped lunatic, or that he was a British lord who fled England after a scandal. He had no friends in the building, but a few days ago, a detective was asking questions about him. No-one told the detective anything.

The building manager is a heavy-set man called Sullivan. He shakes his head wearily when the investigators speak to him – he could smell trouble on Brown when he arrived. He co-operates fully with their inquiries, and mentions that

Brown had a New England accent. He lets the investigators into Brown's one-room bedsit.

Room 56

There's a single unmade bed, a little gas cooker with several cans of beans, a saucepan with a thick crust of burnt beans, several plates covered in the remains of beans, two suitcases, and a body. The beans contain no clues.

In a waste-bin under the sink, there are several blood-soaked bandages, and several sheets that were torn into ad-hoc bandages. These are also encrusted with dried blood. On top are a few scraps of paper, which can be pieced together into a torn bookplate.

The suitcases are both stacked under the bed. One contains a selection of cheap suits and underwear. The other, however, is more interesting, containing the following items:

- One well-tailored and expensive suit, with matching shirt and shoes. (Brown used these when casing burglary targets.)
- A set of knives, lockpicks and safecracking tools, as would be used by a professional burglar.
- A folded street map of Providence.
- A copy of *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New England Canaan 1801 printing*, (see the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook, page 108) with a bookplate marking it as belonging to the Holland Collection of Providence, RI. A **one-point Credit Rating spend** remind the character that he's heard of a Lewis Holland, who is an eccentric millionaire industrialist living in Providence.
- A copy of *De Vermis Mysteriis*, in Leggett's 1821 English translation

(page 106 of the rulebook). The first page of this book has been scraped with a knife, as Brown attempted to remove the bookplate so it could be resold.

The Second Corpse

Like Geoffrey Hill, Jim Brown has had his eyes gouged out and his throat cut. The weapon in both cases was a pocket knife that's been stuffed back into his trouser pocket. He has a bullet wound in his side, where a shot grazed his ribs. A **one point Firearms spend** suggests it was a small-calibre pistol; a **one-point Medicine spend** reveals that the bullet injury is at least a week old. He also has several smaller cuts and scrapes on his palms and knees, implying he was involved in a scuffle or chase.

A **one-point Evidence Collection spend** finds a bus ticket in an inner pocket, from Providence to New York. It's dated two weeks ago. **Evidence Collection** can also be used to identify Jim Brown from his fingerprints, but by the time the investigators get the results back, they will have already met Francis Moon.



The Book

INVESTIGATIONS IN NEW YORK Fordham University Library

Scene Type: Background

Core Clue: None

The burnt book and library card in Hill's apartment may encourage players to check out the library there. **Library Use** or **Cop Talk** (or asking Professor Drew to help) gets access to Geoffrey's lending record. He's repeated taken out the same book, *The Invisible Path* (Martin Bellgrave, 1870, Private Printing) for the last three months.

Another book, *A Journey Into Lonely Places* by the same author is available, but it's lost in the stacks. A **one-point Library Use** spend lets an investigator track down *A Journey Into Lonely Places* — it's being used to prop up the leg of a lop-sided reading desk in the history section. Skimming *A Journey Into Lonely Places* is downright painful — it's very, very bad poetry full of complaints about how horrible everything is. There are also several short stories, which are either thinly disguised polemics against Abolitionism or dull ghost stories where the twist is obvious from the first paragraph.

Professor Drew

Scene Type: Background

Core Clue: The existence of a copy of *The Invisible Path* in the New York Public Library

If the investigators spoke to Hill's roommate James Rathbone, or if they investigate Hill's activities at Fordham University, they will quickly be put in touch with **Professor Drew**, a lecturer in literature and humanities. Drew is a jovial, charming fellow whose enthusiasm makes him seems much

younger than his fifty years. (If possible, sow paranoia among the players. In a mystery scenario, the twist is often that the seemingly-nice avuncular character is actually the villain. That's not true here, but if you can make them this that, then it will be much easier to get them to trust Francis Moon when he shows up.)

Drew has not yet been informed of Hill's death, so it will be up to the investigators to break the news to him. When they do, he will be shocked and appalled. 'My God... that poor boy. Geoffrey is... was... a fine student of good family. Very bright, very dedicated... I worried when he roomed with Rathbone, who's a hellraiser and a cad, but I never thought... have you gone to the registrar's office and told them to inform the parents, or should I do that? Or should the police do it? I... fear I don't know what to do... Do in this sort of... my god...' **Reassurance** will be needed to keep the Professor on track.

If asked about Geoffrey's scholastic record, then Drew is on firmer ground and can give more confident answers.

'He was studying Modern American Literature and Journalism. I think he had his eye on becoming a critic, eventually. He was a voracious reader, spent all his freshman evenings in the library. That's where I met the boy and took him under my wing, so to speak. Academically, he was good, not especially exceptional, and in the last few weeks his work has been slipping, but... hmmm...'

If the burnt book in Hill's room is mentioned, or if the investigators ask about *The Invisible Path*, then Professor Drew's memory is sparked.

'Oh, yes, yes. I mentioned an obscure Providence writer to Geoffrey a few months ago. Martin Bellgrave, died eighteen-seventy or so. He was the only child of a wealthy landowner, and managed to squander his inheritance over his lifetime. Never did a day's work in his life, apart from writing two books of poetry.

I used to know A Journey Into Lonely Places quite well. When I was an undergraduate, some friends and I used to hold contents. You start reading a section out loud, and try to get as far as you can before you can no longer contain your mirth. Absolutely abominable, turgid, ludicrous writing. There should be a copy in the library, I urge you not to read it for the sake of your sanity.

The other book, though, The Invisible Path was the title. A very strange book. His style was very different, not more mature, just as poor and laboured, but there was something interesting about it. I read parts of it, and slept poorly that night. It had no artistic merit, mind you, but it... well, even a penny-dreadful tale of blood and gore can sow nightmares, I suppose.

Poor Geoffrey, though, he seemed to think there was something in it. The last time I met him, he said something about rescuing Bellgrave from obscurity.'

Finding the Book: If the characters ask about *The Invisible Path*, Professor Drew tells them that as far as he is aware, only a few copies survived. The New York Public Library probably has one. If they check this out, see *New York Public Library*, below.

Martin Bellgrave's History

Scene Type: Background

Core Clue: Martin Bellgrave's house is still standing

Professor Drew is the obvious person to ask about Bellgrave's history, although a **one-point Library Use**, **Art History** or **History spend** can bring up the information too. Bellgrave was the scion of a declining family of landowners. He was very ill as a child, and never married. He self-published a book of poetry which was savaged by critics and roundly ignored by everyone. He locked himself away in his family

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

mansion outside Providence, and never emerged again except to publish a few copies of *The Invisible Path*. He died in a mysterious fire in 1871.

If the investigators bother to check, then a **one-point Law** or **Accounting spend** digs up the fact that industrialist Lewis Holland bought Bellgrave's land after his death.

Lewis Holland

Scene Type: Background
Research

Core Clue: Lewis Holland has an interest in Martin Bellgrave

The bookplate from the tenement building, or the mention of Lewis Holland in Bellgrave's biography may put the investigators on the trail of Lewis Holland. Holland's construction firm made his fortune in the reconstruction after the Civil War. He lives in Providence, and is a patron of the arts. A **one-point Art History** or **Occult spend** reveals that Holland is also a collector of antique books and is rumoured to have an unusually extensive occult library, but **Theology** also offers up the fact that he's a committed and faithful churchgoer.

There's a mention of Holland in a recent gossip column, discussing a rumor that his home was robbed a few months ago.

Francis Moon

Scene Type: Core

This scene should come early in the investigation, after the characters have found the two murder victims. There are several ways to introduce Francis Moon:

- He can contact the investigators through the New York police, explaining that he's a licensed



private investigator who was searching for Jim Brown.

- He can meet the investigators at the New York Public Library, checking to see if the copy of *The Invisible Path* contains any clues.
- He can meet the investigators at Gollam & sons, checking to see if their copy is actually the one stolen from Holland.

- He can be introduced to them by Holland when they visit the industrialist.

If possible, present Moon to them as a hook to bring them to Holland rather than an important character in his own right.

Francis Moon

The long-faced detective is American-born, of Irish origin. He is tall, but hunches his shoulders and hangs his

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Book

Francis Moon

Assess Honesty 1, Law 2,
Cop Talk 3, Oral History
1, Streetwise 1, Evidence
Collection 2, Locksmith 2

Athletics 8, Firearms 6,
Health 10, Scuffling 8, Sense
Trouble 10, Shadowing 6,
Weapons 4

Hit Threshold: 4

Weapon: Heavy Pistol +1

head so he appears much smaller. He speaks softly and mumbles when nervous, and has a knack for blending into the background when he wants to. He dresses in a long brown coat and hat, and carries a black umbrella even in the height of summer. His copy of *The Invisible Path* is kept hidden inside his coat, wrapped in brown paper.

Moon has a surprising capacity for violence. He has a [[[PISTOL]]] in the same pocket as *The Invisible Path*, and carries spare ammunition mixed in with notebooks, pens and small change. His umbrella is reinforced with a steel spine, making it a sturdy bludgeon. It's this capacity for violence combined with his psychic sensitivity that makes him such a dangerous host for a shade of Martin Bellgrave.

When Bellgrave's shade is in control, Moon's demeanor changes. He becomes more arrogant, more demanding, and walks with a limp.

Introducing The Detective

When introduced to Francis Moon, the detective shows the investigators his badge, and explains that he's been hired by Lewis Holland to recover several rare books that were stolen from Holland's Providence mansion. The thief broke into a safe in Holland's

office and stole cash and jewelry as well. Moon traced the thief, Jim Brown, via a fence in Rhode Island, and was able to track Brown to his hideout. Moon confronted him there, and even fired a shot at him, but Brown was able to escape once more. Most of the stolen goods were recovered from the hideout, but three rare books are missing. If asked about the books, then Moon removes a notebook from his pocket and reads the titles phonetically – *The Vermies Mysteries*, *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New England Canaan*, and *The Invisible Path*.

Moon can identify the body of Jim Brown, and confirm that he is the burglar who robbed Lewis Holland.

Using **Assess Honesty** on Moon confirms that he's telling the truth. A **two-point Assess Honesty spend** suggests there's something strange about the detective, as if his answers are slightly too rehearsed. **Cop Talk** confirms that he's a trained and licensed detective. A **two-point Cop Talk spend** lets the character remember some gossip about Moon – apparently, he's got an almost supernatural knack for finding useful clues by happenstance.

Reading The Invisible Path

Scene Type: Core

This group of scenes can come at any point in the scenario, as soon as the players get their hands on a copy of *The Invisible Path*. It's a small hardbound book of some two hundred pages, printed on poor paper. It is dedicated to 'the reader'.

Inside, the book is a collection of free-verse poetry. Several images are repeated – a red sky over an unnaturally lush and verdant plain, shapes moving through the heat-haze of a desert, an

eye in the sea, things filtering down from the sky, star-headed beings and moving globules of slime, tablets locked in a dark cave, and the phrase 'Ia! A'to! Ia! Ny-ho!' Anyone with **Cthulhu Mythos** notes that many of these images are reminiscent of Mythos creatures – a **two-point Cthulhu Mythos spend** lets the investigator identify the star-headed beings as Elder Things or Old Ones, the globules are therefore their Shoggoth servitors, and the tablets might be the tablets of lore guarded by fabled Ubbo-Sathla. A **four-point Cthulhu Mythos spend** or **two-point Cthulhu Mythos spend** coupled with a **two-point Pharmacy spend** suggests that the poems might have been written by a user of the Liao drug.

The last poem in the book is entitled 'The Red Eyes of Hounds' and describes a vivid dream where the author is pursued down 'corridors of the mind' by 'red-litten eyes of hounds from hell'.

Skimming the book takes two hours, or one hour with a **one-point Library Use spend**. Reading the book in detail grants no further benefit – its effect is contained in the subliminal references in the poetry, which explode like depth-charges in the human psyche.

Anyone who skims *The Invisible Path* must make a Stability test. Those who fail this test create a shade of Martin Bellgrave in their minds at the cost of one Stability. This shade causes the character to suffer hallucinations and odd impressions, which trigger another Stability test soon after. Fail that test, and the shade grows in strength. This is measured in a series of levels – to move to the next level, the investigator must fail the preceding Stability test.

Getting to Level 3 requires that the investigator have a connection to Bellgrave – either obsessive rereading of the book and deliberately acting like Bellgrave, or going to the house

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

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| Level | Effects | Stability Test | Stability Loss |
|-------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| 0 | None | When you read the book | 1 |
| 1 | Slight hallucinations | Several minutes later | 2 |
| 2 | Images of Martin Bellgrave | When you dwell on the book | 4 |
| 3 | Conversations with Martin Bellgrave | When you deliberately seek out connections to Bellgrave | 6 |
| 4 | Possession | When you have a psychic link | - |

in Providence. Level 4 needs a psychic connection, which only Francis Moon has.

An investigator may willingly spend another point of Stability to retake a test if he *wants* to move to later levels. As the investigators learn the effects of *The Invisible Path*, they may wish to conjure up the shade of Martin Bellgrave and learn from him.

Note that although several investigators may read the book and create shades of Bellgrave in their minds, these shades have no real knowledge of each other. You should run each investigator's conversations with Bellgrave separately, even if they each learn the same information. If possible, sow paranoia that Bellgrave is telling different things to different characters, or imply that Bellgrave has a greater hold on some people.

Level 1: Hallucinations

The minor hallucinations caused by exposure to the book take a variety of forms, some of which are echoes of Martin Bellgrave, others are images created by Bellgrave's use of humanity's race memory. Throw in some of the following strange encounters or events into any other scene.

- The investigator starts limping, echoing Bellgrave's polio-ruined leg

- The investigator starts unconsciously adding rhymes (especially bad rhymes) to sentences spoke by others. For example, if one investigator says *'we have to find who's read the book'*, then the afflicted investigator involuntarily replies *'for them we'll have to take a look'*.
- The investigator suddenly develops a taste for snuff, red wine and oysters.
- The investigator stammers when talking to women.
- The investigator suddenly dislikes virtually ever minority.
- The investigator perceives the sky overhead as a sudden red.
- The investigator hears something skulking outside the window.
- The investigator mistakes ropes, curtain ties, belts and other such objects for tentacles
- The investigator thinks the building is on fire

Level 2: Images of Martin Bellgrave

The investigator starts seeing Martin Bellgrave everywhere he goes. Bellgrave is a round-faced man,

somewhat overweight, wearing an old-fashioned suit. He carries an ornate ivory cane, and limps. These images of Martin Bellgrave might be overlaid onto actual people in the real world, so the investigator mistakes some vagrant on the road or a customer in a diner for Bellgrave. His subconscious might also insert Bellgrave into paintings, photographs and so forth.

He will also hear Martin Bellgrave's voice on occasion. Sometimes, the voice quotes lines from the book or Bellgrave's thoughts. At other times, a character might hear a radio announcer, singer or even another investigator speak in Bellgrave's voice. Choice Bellgrave quotes to drop into the game include:

- *I dreamed of red skies over a blasted land*
- *To name a thing is to define a thing. The fundamental components of the human psyche are as distinct as syllables in a name, and can be reordered by the correct choice of words and images.*
- *Mr. Darwin and his acolytes tells us that all humans are descended from the ape, and the ape is descended from the monkey, and the monkey from the vole, and so on back to the primal source. Therefore, do we not all share the same heritage, the same shared memory of suffering? And can one not speak to all humanity with one word?*
- *And a thousand thousand slimy things lived on, and so did I.*
- *I no longer worry about the miscegenation of the White man, or the dissolution of these United States, or whatever other horrors the newspaper hacks conjure up. I have seen worse things.*
- *Father, your protestations embarrass you. I am not adapted for base work.*

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Book



I have a gift for poetry, and that is a higher calling than anything you can offer.

- *Chong, you have single-handedly justified the existence of your whole degenerate Yellow kind. As Coleridge used laudanum, so shall I use this.*

Aaagh! They are coming!

Level 3 - Conversations

At this level, the investigator finds himself in a hallucinatory version of the Bellgrave house in Providence. It's a decaying Colonial mansion, with shuttered windows and a great many books. There are also several Oriental screens and curios, purchased by Bellgrave from the same suppliers who brought him his Liao drugs. A reddish light gleams through the shutters – if

the character opens the shutters, he beholds the primordial landscape of Earth, billions of years ago.

Waiting for the investigator is a shade of Martin Bellgrave. He is aware of what he is, the poetry-spawned shade of a dead personality. It is rare for anyone to reach this level, so Bellgrave is quite willing to talk to his host.

Who Are You? 'Why, I'm you, sir. I am the part of you that was touched by the genius of Martin Bellgrave.'

No, Really, Who Are You? 'Consider the nature of emotion. A well-placed word or phrase can conjure up an emotion or provoke a thought, yes. When I was a young man, I sought to evoke emotion and beauty through my words – but because of my illness, my domineering mother and my father's

failings, and the degeneration of the modern world, I found that my words went unappreciated. I could not touch the minds of those fellow bright spirits who might otherwise have appreciated my work.

I sought another mode of expression, a way to overcome the gulf between my thoughts and the rest of humanity. I sought a new path.

I found it in the Liao drug, a rare compound from the distant Orient. On the wings of Liao, my mind was transported back in time, to times undreamed-of. Do you know what dwelt inside the Black Tower in Irēm? Do you remember the words of the priests in Ebach-Oa, the first city raised by human hands? Do you recall the desperate pilgrimage across the land bridge from the land of the conical beings?

New Spell: Primal Tongue

This spell is actually a fragment of the first language spoken by humanity, a debased subset of the musical language used by the Elder Things. Those speaking in tongues (glossolia) approach the Primal Tongue, but it takes the learning of a sorcerer to use it properly. The Primal Tongue is a string of short syllables ending in vowels, and sounds like barbaric chanting.

In game terms, the *Primal Tongue* spell allows the sorcerer to evoke emotions in humans. Anyone listening to the caster must make a Stability test at Difficulty 6; if they fail, then they feel the emotion chosen by the caster. Those affected by the spell will also suffer from nightmares and paranoia for some days to come, as race memories bubble up from the collective unconscious.

Stability Test Difficulty: 6, 5 with Languages, 4 with a Languages spend.

Cost: 1 Stability.

Time: Instantaneous or longer, depending on the strength and subtlety of the emotion desired.

No! Your conscious mind does not. But these words, these events are graven on your bones and your blood, contained in the race-memory of humanity, passed down from your ancestors. Through the medium of Liao and the medium of poetry, I evoked these images with such precision and wit that I could shape the unconscious minds of the readers. I poured myself into my poetry – and so I poured myself into your mind!

What Do You Want? 'Want? Want, sir? I do not truly exist. I am a phantom of your thoughts, a shade in your mind. I have no desires, surely, just the memory of desires. If it were possible, I would wish to live again, but I am not some spectre who can possess your body. Your mind has such defenses that I cannot overcome them.

I would count myself fortunate, sir, if you would on occasion reread my book and retrace the passages of word and memory that sustain me. Visit me in your mind, if you will.'

How can I get rid of you? 'And why would I tell you that, sir? All I am is your thought, and while that is only a little life, I shall cling to it nonetheless. Why would you wish to get rid of me, anyway? I am but a harmless thought in the back of your brain.'

What's the connection between The Invisible Path and the killings: 'In my life, I was never a violent person. I do not deny that I was often wrathful, but I was never a man who could rise to physical action.'

At this point, there's a loud creaking noise from elsewhere in the hallucinatory mansion, as if some invisible monster were moving through the building. Martin Bellgrave looks pained for a moment, and says 'however, since I formed in your mind, I have been aware of a certain pressure. Perhaps others have read the book, and you are somehow aware of them. The Chinaman who sold me the Liao drugs spoke of mystics and seers with mental powers – are you such a sensitive soul?'

What do you know about Lewis Holland? 'That irritating little boy? He visited me in his grandfather's company once. I despise children, slobbering little runts, and he was the worst of the lot.'

What do you know about Francis Moon/

me/any other characters? 'Nothing that you do not know, sir. I am in your mind, after all, and know nothing except what you know?'

What killed you? 'I cannot, of course, know for certain – I died after I completed The Invisible Path, and all I am is derived from that. I would surmise, though, that...well, I cannot lie to you, because I am you. The Liao drug comes with a heavy price. There are entities in the recesses of deep times that are lean and hungry. When they espy some vagrant dreamer, they hunt him down across the centuries. The Chinaman warned me of such things, but I found immortality in art to be worth any peril.

The entities, he said, could follow travellers from the distant past. He described them as being akin to hounds of time.'

If the investigator suggests that these Hounds could be responsible for the killings, Martin shrugs – he doesn't give a damn about other people.

Other uses for Bellgrave: The poet is quite knowledgeable about some aspects of the Mythos, although most of his insights are poetic images as opposed to useful facts. Keeping Martin Bellgrave in your mind increases your **Cthulhu Mythos** rating by 2 and your History rating by 1. He also knows a smattering of other Languages, increasing his host's Language Rating by 1. If you listen to his advice, your Art rating is reduced by 3.

Bellgrave also knows the spells *Compound Liao* and *Primal Tongue*.



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Book

The Horror at the Library Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clue: Helena Tyler, the Annotated Invisible Path

The New York Public Library on 5th Avenue is one of the largest and best stocked libraries in the world. The bulk of its books come from two other libraries that were incorporated into it, the Astor library and the Lenox library. The copy of *The Invisible Path* comes from the Lenox collection, and is buried deep in the stacks.

Checking the lending records reveals that the book has been checked out only three times in the library's history – in 1912, 1922 and one month ago. The clerk remembers who checked the book out most recently – a pretty young blonde woman who is in and out of the library quite often. Her name's Helena Tyler, and he can get her address from the records. It's an apartment not far from the library. Ideally, Francis Moon accompanies them there; otherwise, he gets the information about the last reader the same way the investigators do, by asking the clerk.

Asking a librarian for help or using **Library Use** allows an investigator to find the book. (If they haven't met Francis Moon yet, then an ideal time to introduce him is right now; they can find him searching through the same stack for a copy of *The Invisible Path*.)

The Annotated Book

The library's copy of *The Invisible Path* has not been treated well. Several pages are torn or stained with something colored a sickly yellow, and a bizarre rant is scrawled across the dedication page (the book is dedicated 'to the reader'), which reads 'HE WATCHED THEM CRAWL ACROSS A RED SKY. IT IS HIS DREAMS THAT I DREAM AND IT IS HIS WORDS THAT CONSUME ME LIKE

TONGUES OF PENTACOSTAL FLAME. I AM NOT WHAT I WAS AND I AM NOT WHO I WAS WHEN I BEGAN. THIS BOOK IS EVIL AND EVIL DWELLS WITHIN IT.

I WRITE THIS AS WARNING AND I WRITE THIS AS TESTAMENT. SOON I WILL BE DEAD, AND I WOULD BURN THE BOOK HAD I THE WILL. IF ONLY I COULD FORGET HIM, BUT EACH NIGHT I DREAM OF A RED SKY.

DO NOT READ THIS.

J. R. SMITH, 30th October, The year of our lord nineteen hundred and twelve.'

If the investigators read the book, see *The Invisible Path*, page 47. Checking records (a **one point Library Use** or **History** spend) comes up with a record of the death of a J.R. Smith by suicide in 1912. He borrowed the book in 1912, and it was found among his possessions and returned to the library by the police.

Helena Tyler

Scene Type: Roleplaying/
investigation

If the investigators go to the address given by the library clerk, the door is opened by a pretty young blonde woman in a white dress. She is Helena Tyler, a twenty-two year old woman who lives here in Manhattan with her elderly father Archibald. Her father is senile and nearly bedridden, so she spends all her time taking care of him. Reading is the only entertainment available to her, so she's making her way through the poetry section of the library. She's charming and has a seemingly endless reserve of patience.

When the investigators show their credentials (or use a point of **Reassurance, Cop Talk or Credit Rating**), she invites them into the small apartment. Her father, Archibald, is sitting by a heater reading and

muttering to himself. He is confused by the appearance of strangers in his little domain, and demands to know who they are. Once told, he promptly forgets and asks again a few minutes later.

If questioned, Helena freely tells the investigators that she did borrow *The Invisible Path* from the library, but only read a few pages of it. She thought it was very strange and only skimmed it before returning it two days later.

A successful **Sense Trouble** roll (Difficulty 6) lets an investigator notice that Archibald looks upset at the mention of *The Invisible Path*. They can try questioning him, but all Archibald says is 'the sky was red in my dreams... and there was a man there, he spoke to me, and he feared himself.' Archibald secretly read the book at night when Helena was asleep, and now has a shade of Martin Bellgrave in his mind.

The Killer Strikes Again

Scene Type: Antagonist Action/
Investigation

On the second night, Francis Moon returns to Helena Tyler's apartment. He checks to make sure that he is not being followed, then knocks on the door and bluffs his way in using his detective's license. He then shoots Helena Tyler dead with his silenced pistol before gouging out her father's eyes and cutting his throat with a kitchen knife.

Having **Firearms** or **Forensics** lets the character work out that Helena was killed with a single pistol shot. A **three-point Forensics spend** allows the character to realise that the calibres of the gun that killed Helena and the one that injured Jim Brown are very similar, and might in fact be identical.

A **one-point Oral History spend** lets the investigators find a neighbour who heard a muffled thump (the gunshot that killed Helena). The

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

A FLIGHT OF STEPS WITH IRON
RAIL,
A BELFRY LOOMING TALL,
A SLENDER STEEPLE, CARVED AND
PALE,
A MOSS-GROWN GARDEN WALL.
A HIDDEN CHURCHYARD'S
CRUMBLING PROOFS
OF MAN'S MORTALITY,
A ROTTING WHARF WHERE
GAMBREL ROOFS
KEEP WATCH ABOVE THE SEA.

- HP LOVECRAFT, *PROVIDENCE*

neighbour saw someone leave the flat, but she can't give a description. **Interrogation** lets a character put pressure on her to talk, and she admits that she thought that she saw a limping man with a round face in old-fashioned clothes (Martin Bellgrave) leaving the apartment, but when she looked again he was taller and wearing a dark coat (Francis Moon).

Investigations in Providence

Several clues point the characters to Providence, and so it is to that old town they go. There, they can visit Gollam & Sons booksellers or the mansion of Lewis Holland, or they can investigate the ruins of Martin Bellgrave's house.

Gollam & Sons Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clue: A list of extant copies of *The Invisible Path*

Gollam & Sons are a bibliophile's dream. In their little shop are hundreds of rare books, and their catalogue contains thousands more, assembled from the stocks of other booksellers and collectors. Gollam himself is long dead, but his four sons have carried on

the business for decades.

Reynald Gollam tells the investigators that they received a letter from Geoffrey Hill two months ago, asking for a copy of *The Invisible Path*. Reynald shakes his head and smiles wanly – *The Invisible Path* is somewhat notorious among Providence booksellers and collectors. Only a few copies were printed, and most of those were purchased by local property magnate

and industrialist Lewis Holland thirty years ago. Reynald produces a typewritten list of extant copies.

Lewis Holland Scene Type: Background

Holland's mansion is in a well-to-do neighbourhood of Providence. It's an imposing building, classically



The Invisible Path

Martin Bellgrave, 1870,
Privately Published, Octavo,
Unknown Print Run

- Lewis Holland, Providence, RI (private collection, multiple copies)
- Society of Modern American Poetry, RI
- Fordham University Library, NY
- Miskatonic University Library, MA
- New York Public Library, NY
- Buster Locke, Providence, RI

decorated and whitewashed, and quite overshadows the other houses nearby. It's surrounded by well-kept gardens, and there are four brand-new automobiles waiting in the large garage. When the investigators arrive, they are met by Holland's manservant, Wallis, who informs them that Mr. Holland is out driving, but will be back shortly. (If you haven't introduced Francis Moon yet, then he can also be waiting here to report to his employer.)

If the investigators wish, they can consult Holland's extensive library. It's almost entirely modern scientific textbooks and engineering journals, without a hint of the supernatural, the occult or even the fictional. There's a locked door adjoining the library, leading to the study from which Jim Brown stole several books.

After half an hour, the investigators hear the roar of a powerful automobile zooming up the driveway. Mr. Holland has come home.

Lewis Holland is in his mid-sixties

(born in 1865), but is as hale and driven as a much younger man. He is almost invariably dressed in racing leathers and even sometimes wears a twenty-year-old pair of driving goggles. He fell in love with the automobile several years ago, as part of his ongoing infatuation with the mechanical. He speaks quickly, thinks quickly, and has no time for diplomacy, mysticism or slow people.

If the investigators do not mention *The Invisible Path* or Martin Bellgrave early in the conversation, then Holland will have no time for them. Unless you are a business partner, an engineer, a pretty young woman, or know something about Martin Bellgrave, you are not one of Holland's obsessions and do not exist in his world.

Haunted By The Past

When Holland was young, he met Martin Bellgrave. At that point, Bellgrave was beginning his experimentations with Liao, and the young Holland saw Bellgrave with a child's innocent eyes, so he was able to perceive the strangeness of the poet. The two took an instant dislike to each other, and Holland came to think of Bellgrave as symbolising everything he dislikes. Later, after Bellgrave's death, Holland read *The Invisible Path*, creating a shade of Bellgrave in his mind. Holland's obsessive nature and hatred of Bellgrave caused him to reread the book over and over, reinforcing the shade but also banishing it to the back of his mind. Holland is not driven by self-hate per se, but he holds the precise thing he hates in his mind. Unlike Moon, who has a similarly strong connection, Bellgrave can exercise no control over Holland - they merely hate each other.

There are several questions the investigators may wish to ask Holland, but as soon as you get him talking about one of his pet topics, he keeps on

until his magazine of staccato words is exhausted.

Martin Bellgrave: *I met him once, when I was four or five. My grandfather was a friend of his father, and felt some responsibility towards the wretch I think. Martin Bellgrave has... I have no time for nonsense or spiritualism, but Martin Bellgrave has haunted me since that meeting. I have known a great many people, many of whom were not good or pleasant people, but Bellgrave was the only one who I would call genuinely evil. There was an aura of unwholesomeness about him, a fetid stench. As a foulness shall ye know them, as some old mystic said.*

It wasn't until several years later, though, after Bellgrave died in a fire, that I really began to hate the man. He had given my grandfather a copy of his second book of terrible poetry, and after my grandfather passed on, I found it and read it. It disgusted me. I am quite liberal in many of my beliefs, sirs, and do not hold with censorship in general, but I made it one of my life's missions to erase The Invisible Path from existence. I do not call it rational or reasonable, but I am a very wealthy and successful man and have, I think, contributed a great deal to my nation and to humanity. Am I not allowed an indulgence?'

Assess Honesty confirms that Holland is telling the truth; a **one-point spend** notes that he twitched visibly when he said Bellgrave was haunting him, and again when he reiterated his vow to erase *The Invisible Path*.

The Bellgrave House: *'It burned down in 1871, I believe. The place had been allowed to fall to pieces completely, so it was no great loss. The ruins are actually still standing - after Bellgrave died, the land passed onto some distant cousin, who did nothing with it for some time. Then I bought it. I had the intention of building a home there, but I eventually decided on building right here in Providence.*

I remember one evening a few days before the fire. I saw the most fabulous shower of shooting stars above the house, all burning red. Magnificent.

You can visit if you like. There's nothing there anymore.'

The Burglary: *'Ah, yes. Some cur broke into my study a few weeks ago. He stole some trifling amount of money from my safe, along with some books that I keep in there. I despise criminals and dishonest men — there's plenty of money out there to be made if you have an ounce of gumption and a willingness to work. Rather than trust my affairs to the police — a waste of time, in my experience — I employed a detective, Francis Moon. He came most highly recommended, he's said to have a fantastic knack for ferreting out the truth. No doubt he's already found the thief. If it were up to me, we'd hang the wretch.'*

If the characters tell Holland that the thief, Jim Brown, is dead, then the industrialist is intrigued, but not especially concerned, as long as it can't affect him legally. He questions Francis Moon about his investigations, and Moon tells him that he's still looking for the missing copy of *The Invisible Path* — presumably, whoever killed Jim Brown took the book.

Next Steps

With no clear leads on from this point, the investigators may be unsure where to go next. Holland tells them that he will purchase any copies of *The Invisible Path* they are able to retrieve (by any means), paying them \$2,000 per copy. Moon also suggests that whoever killed Jim Brown and stole that copy of the book seems to be hunting for other copies, and he will accompany the investigators as they search for the remaining copies.



The Bellgrave Ruins

Scene Type: Investigation/
Horror

The ruins of the Bellgrave mansion are located on land now owned by Lewis Holland — several acres of overgrown waste land, specifically, located on the edge of Providence. The ruins are unusually overgrown, and the once-magnificent colonial mansion is now little more than a shell covered in ivy and trees. Investigators with **Outdoorsman** or **Biology** note that the vegetation here is unusually thick and strong; even though the fire was sixty years ago, the trees have managed a size more commonly associated with the passage of two hundred years or more.

In the middle of the ruin, there are several lumps of misshapen glass. A careful examination of these with **Chemistry** or **Physics** reveals that the fire was hot enough to fuse stone and dirt into glass; such a heat is quite beyond the normal temperature of a house-fire. Anyone bothering to examine this glass in a laboratory discovers that it is highly radioactive. These bizarre effects were caused by the hunters who killed Martin Bellgrave.

Anyone willing to make a **one-point Architecture** or **Archaeology** notes that the basement of this ruin might still be intact. Finding the entrance requires a little digging in the dirt, but soon the investigators find a trapdoor into the decaying cellar below. It's full of mud, insects, wreckage from the house above and gnarled tree roots, but if an investigator is willing to squirm into the dark, wet recesses of the house, he comes across a blackened box that somehow survived the blaze. The box might once have been richly decorated with lacquers, but was scorched by the fire. Inside, there is a glass bottle and chemical equipment,

mostly ruined. The bottle contains dried lotus essence, enough to concoct several doses of the Liao drug if the investigator knows *Compound Liao*.

Anyone taking samples of the burnt ash notes something

The Invisible Path: If any investigators have read *The Invisible Path*, then the landscape seems unusually familiar to them. Out of the corner of their eyes, they see not ruined walls, but an intact structure. The Bellgrave mansion appears to them as it once was, in the days when Martin Bellgrave lived here. This unnatural perception calls for a two-point Stability test. Investigators can also use this location to reach the third level of connection to Martin Bellgrave (see page 49).

Francis Moon: If Francis Moon is with the characters, then returning to Bellgrave's old home is too much for the shade in his mind. Moon also sees the Bellgrave house reform before his eyes, but then his psychic gift calls up a vision of the original death of Martin Bellgrave. The detective screams *'the red eyes, they've come for me! They burn! They're killing me! They're killing me!'* and flees, tripping over the broken walls and crashing through the unnatural trees. He limps as he runs, as the shade in his mind has now fully taken control.

Lights in the Sky

Scene Type: Foreshadowing

The Fires of Tindalos are homing in on the shades of Martin Bellgrave, and they are coming close to the present time. They appear in the sky as tiny red lights, dancing through the clouds over New York or Providence.

Mention the appearance of these lights several times, such as when the investigators are moving from one location to another. They are especially

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The Book



likely to be seen when Francis Moon is present.

Buster Locke

Scene Type: Investigation/
Action

Buster Locke is a farmer in Providence who found a tea-chest full of his father's books in the attic, and offered to sell them to Gollam & Sons. *The Invisible Path* was one of these books,

but before he sold it to the booksellers, an agent of Lewis Holland contacted him with a counter-offer. Locke held onto the book in the hopes of spurring a bidding war. He has not heard back from either Holland or Gollam & sons in several days. Locke's a simple, salt-of-the-earth farmer, and has not bothered reading the book – he '*doesn't have much taste for poesy*'. No-one in his family has read the book either, so there's no need for Francis Moon to kill any of them.

Moon's Response: If Francis Moon is with the characters, then he reminds the investigators of Lewis Holland's offer to purchase any copies of *The Invisible Path* they find. If they can persuade Locke to sell, then Moon collects the copy of the book and promises to deliver it to Holland. Instead, he secretly destroys it. If the investigators try to collect their reward, they may discover Moon's treachery this way.

The Society for American Poetry

Scene Type: Investigation/
Action

The Society for American Poetry is a small charitable foundation dedicated to the 'advancement and enrichment of American Poetry'. They own a small library in the heart of Providence, where they hold poetry readings and charitable events to support young poets. The society has only a handful of active members, but has many more subscribers among Rhode Island's upper classes – it's a fashionable cause to support.

If the investigators visit the society, they meet Ms. Danvers, the librarian. She can confirm that there's a copy of *The Invisible Path* in the society's library, but she doesn't think anyone has read it in years. She even goes and digs it out of the archives. She refuses to sell it – Mr. Holland has offered before, but the society's bylaws forbid the sale of poetry books from the society library. She appears intrigued by the book, especially if the investigators mention its unusual properties.

Moon's Response: Francis Moon breaks into the library that night and searches for the book. When he fails to find it, he searches Ms. Danvers' desk and retrieves an envelope with her home address. He then goes to her home (which is only a few blocks

away from the Society library) and knocks on the door, claiming to have a message from Lewis Holland. Once she opens the door and lets him in, he knocks her out and searches her house. When he finds *The Invisible Path* copy open on her nightstand, he takes a knife from her kitchen, cuts out her eyes and slices open her throat. Finally, he throws the book into her stove and burns it.

Miskatonic University

Scene Type: Investigation/ Action

If the investigators travel to Arkham to check the library copy of *The Invisible Path* there, then Francis Moon accompanies them. The copy there has not been read in years, and is kept in an unsecured section of the university's famous library. The investigators can steal it easily.

Moon's Response: The train journey back from Arkham is an excellent opportunity for Moon to murder the investigators.

Confronting Francis Moon

Scene Type: Action

There are two ways the investigators will confront Francis Moon – either they work out that Moon is the killer (or that he is possessed), or else he attacks one of the investigators who has a Bellgrave shade in his mind. Moon is an opportunistic killer – he will try to draw his target away from the rest of the group, then attack. He has his pistol on him at all times, and will normally use it as his opening attack. In melee, he grabs some sharp object to use as a knife, then stabs. He always attacks the eyes and throat of shade-hosts; other victims are just dispatched as quickly as possible.

Moon's psychic powers give him the ability to always Sense Trouble, so it is impossible to surprise or sneak up on him.

While attacking, Moon's mutterings give a clue about what's really going.

- *I am Martin Bellgrave, the only Martin Bellgrave.*
- *You're just an echo of me. When you are all gone, I can think clearly!*
- *Sir, you offend me with your existence. Begone!*
- *He's in my head! For the love of God, help me!*
- *The tragedy isn't your death! The tragedy is that you'll never understand what I have accomplished!*

Moon's Death: When Moon is about to kill one of the player characters, or if he is reduced to -6 Health, then the following happens:

A red spark of light like a firefly appears above Francis Moon, then another and another. Beams of heat stab down at the detective. His hair and clothes burst into flame, and through the burning haze you see his body contort in agony, as if it was being crushed or twisted under some tremendous pressure.

'No!' he screams 'not again! I'm not hiiiiiiiiimmm!' His hands scrabble in his jacket, and he throws a smouldering book out of the red light. It falls on the ground in front of you.

Instantly later, there is nothing left of Moon except white ash spiralling upwards on the hot wind.

The sparks circle around the devastation, then move away, and you know they are moving in a way you cannot normally perceive. Circles of fire roll out from the ruins of Moon's body, setting flame to the surrounding area.

New Monster: Fires of Tindalos

These entities are akin to the Hounds of Tindalos (see page 135 of the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook), and may in fact be an alternate manifestation of the Hounds. They also bear a resemblance to Fire Vampires. A Fire of Tindalos is an infinitesimally small red light, floating through the sky. They dance like fireflies, but when angered produce beams of concentrated heat that burn hotter than the heart of the sun. They are psychic, and hunt for specific mental patterns. Unlike the Hounds, they are not restricted to sharp angles when manifesting, but are not as intelligent nor as dogged.

Immune to weapons: Fires of Tindalos are immune to all non-magical weapons. They can be stopped by physical barriers for brief periods, but can burn through any obstacle if they have to. However, a Fire is more likely to slip around the obstacle in time than force its way through in space.

Game Statistics

Abilities: Health 1 (if you can hit them)

Hit Modifier: 6

Alertness Modifier: +2

Stealth Modifier: +2

Weapon: +5 (heat beam)

Armour: None

Stability Loss: +0

If an investigator acts immediately, he can reach into the fire and grab the book that Moon dropped. It's scorched and damaged, but it's obviously a copy of *The Invisible Path*, and has a Holland library bookplate inside.



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The Book

Holland's Death

Scene Type: Action

There are two possibilities for Lewis Holland's death – he can be murdered by Francis Moon, or he can be killed by the hunters from the past. If the investigators save him from the first fate, then he gets killed by the second.

Moon As Killer: If the investigators have not confronted Francis Moon by the time they return to Providence from Arkham, then Lewis Holland offers them guest rooms in his mansion for the night while they consider their next moves. After dinner, Holland retires to his study to reread *The Invisible Path*, assuming that the investigators have brought back a copy. That night, Francis Moon creeps downstairs and attempts to kill Holland. As he sneaks towards Holland's study, Moon is caught by the butler Wallis. He shoots Wallis, awakening the investigators.

Unless the investigators stop him, then Moon kills Holland in the same way that he murdered all the rest.

The Fires of Tindalos As Killer:

If the investigators stop Moon, or have already stopped him, then Holland will fall victim to the Fires of Tindalos instead. Holland summons the investigators to his mansion so they can explain what happened with Francis Moon. Assuming they have worked out the connection between reading *The Invisible Path* and possession by Martin Bellgrave, Holland then begins speculating about the fiery death of Moon, and how it might be connected to the fiery destruction of the Bellgrave house in 1871.

The Fires of Tindalos then arrive, burning through the glass panels of the windows and flying down the chimney.



The red rays reach out hungrily for Lewis Holland, incinerating him in an instant. 'Bellgrave, damn you!' are his last words.

Banishing Bellgrave

Scene Type: Climax

By this point in the scenario, the investigators should have worked out that the Fires of Tindalos are hunting down everyone who has an active shade of Bellgrave in their minds. Some of

the investigators will have read *The Invisible Path*, and so will be among those hunted by the Fires, unless they can somehow rid themselves of Bellgrave's shade.

This is primarily a roleplaying challenge, not a puzzle-solving one, as the solution for each character will be different. They need to drive Bellgrave out of their minds by any means necessary. Hesitation is fatal here – if investigators dither too long or do not realise what must be done, then start

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destroying them one at a time. Possible options are:

Hypnotism: A character with the **Hypnosis** skill can treat Bellgrave as a memory, and bury him in the subject's mind. This is a Difficulty 4 test to accomplish.

Electroshock: A doctor with **Psychoanalysis** or **Medicine** can arrange for an afflicted character to be given 'Edison medicine', which will drive Bellgrave out of the subject's mind for good.

Focussing on drives or obsessions: If a character focuses on the drive that consumes him, he can fill his mind completely and leave no room for Bellgrave.

Alcohol: Getting completely hammered is only a temporary solution, but it will keep the Fires of Tindalos at bay long enough for them to tire of the hunt and return to the distant past.

Liao: The Liao drug carries the user's mind back into the distant past or future, so an investigator could escape the hunters by taking

the drug. While the Fires hunt for the investigator in the present, his mind is in another time altogether.

Whatever option the investigators take, this final scene should be one of mounting terror as the red lights flicker across the sky, coming closer and closer while the investigators desperately try not to think of Martin Bellgrave. And in their minds, Bellgrave laughs and laughs as this second stolen life of his is about to be snuffed out once more...



The Wreck

"DURING THE WINTER OF 1927-8 OFFICIALS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MADE A STRANGE AND SECRET INVESTIGATION OF CERTAIN CONDITIONS IN THE ANCIENT MASSACHUSETTS SEAPORT OF INNSMOUTH..."

- THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH

The Hook

A tramp steamer is found drifting outside New York harbour, a dead man at her helm. The rest of the crew are missing, presumed lost overboard. The investigators are called in to discover what happened on board.

The Horrible Truth

In 1928, the Federal Government raided the town of Innsmouth. The Marsh refinery was seized by the state, and wound up. Another company, Atlas Industries, purchased many of the assets of the Marsh company, and has begun transferring those assets from Innsmouth to New York. As far as the government knows, the assets of the Marsh company consisted of a refinery and a few old boats.

The men of the Atlas company found other things, too, buried under the refinery. These, too, they shipped to New York. The owner of Atlas, Henry Wilcox, had little interest in the company he inherited from his uncle until items recovered from Innsmouth reminded him of March, 1925, when he dreamed of a strange city under the sea (Wilcox appears in *The Call of Cthulhu* novella; there, he is a young artist who carves a bas-relief of Cthulhu after dreaming of the dead god). Wilcox's obsession with Cthulhu is growing with each shipment from Innsmouth.

He has awoken something that slumbered long in the depths. Wilcox is about to get everything he dreamed of...

The Spine

The scenario kicks off with a brief prologue, where the players play the doomed crew of the tramp steamer as they are picked off one by one by the Deep Ones. This prologue ends when the last crewman is killed. The game then moves into the investigation, which has three parts.

Firstly, the investigators board the recovered tramp steamer and learn the sorry fate of the crew.

Next, they investigate the owners of the ship, and learn of Atlas Industries connections to the Innsmouth Raid of 1928. Initially, the company refuses to co-operate with their inquiries, but relents when they learn that the investigators have the relic from the hold. (There are several ways this can play out, depending on the actions of the investigators.) They are also contacted by another survivor of the Innsmouth raid, an ex-Federal agent named Malcolm Croft, who wants their aid in tracking down Wilcox.

They may also investigate Robert's Boarding House, where sailors from the *Star* often stay when in New York. There, they are attacked by resurrected drowned men, sent by the Deep Ones to recover the artifact. After fending off this attack, the characters discover a stone used to call up the Deep Ones.

While all this is doing on, the artifact's psychic influence causes the characters

Fire Island & The Hurricane of 1938

This adventure ends with a fierce storm hitting Fire Island. If it fits with your game's timeline, then you could work in the Great Hurricane of September, 1938. This hurricane caused deaths and damage across New England, and caused such devastation on Fire Island that the place was virtually abandoned.

to undergo a series of bizarre hallucinations.

Finally, the investigators visit Wilcox's private estate on East Fire Island off the coast of New York, which comes under attack by Deep Ones.

Antagonist Reactions

There are three other groups who may react to the Investigators.

The first is Malcolm Croft, a former federal agent who was involved in the raid on Innsmouth and went mad. He's been roaming the country hunting down what he sees as agents of the Mythos. He is a ruined wreck of a man, but still dangerous. His current obsession is killing Henry Wilcox, and he will attempt to recruit the investigators to aid him.

Wilcox is the owner of Atlas Engineering, and he wants the artifact from the hold of the *Star of Mauritius*. He will contact the investigators midway through the investigation, or after they start on his trail. He lives on a private

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island, and will invite the characters to visit him – as long as they bring the artifact.

Finally, the Deep Ones who attacked the *Star* must recover the artifact. Their initial attempt involves animating the corpses of the dead crew of the *Star* and sending them into New York to track down the artifact. At the climax of the adventure, they attack Wilcox's island.

Victory Condition

If the characters stop the artifact from leaking its toxic dreams into the psyche of New York, then it's a victory. Deactivating the artifact is a better solution than giving it back to the Deep Ones.

SCENES

Worse things happen at sea

Scene Type: Flashback

Core Clue: None

In this scene, the players are not playing their investigators. Instead, they are playing the crew of the tramp steamer *Star of Mauritius*. The skipper of the vessel, Mulholland, is a non-player character in this scene. The rest of the crew – i.e., the temporary player characters – are about to get eaten by Deep Ones.

Read the following to the players:

Waves crash over your little ship as she fights through the heavy seas off the coast of New Jersey. It's nearly one in the morning, but none of you are going to get any sleep. Your heavy cargo of industrial machinery keeps you low in the water, and each wave sends water running over the deck and down into the hold.

Captain Mulholland roars like a man possessed. (Point at the players in turn as

you read out the names of the crew, so the players know who their temporary characters are.)

Jones, get down to the engine room. Gant, Boris, secure the damn cargo. Frenchie, check the bloody lifeboat. Cookie, you're on the radio. The rest of you, on deck with me. Move!

Don't bother with statistics for the crew – assume they have 7 points of Health and 2-3 points in Scuffling, Stealth, Piloting and so on. There's a map of the ship on page 62. Take note of whatever the crew do, as the investigators will find evidence of the action on the ship later in the scenario.

Ask the players what they are doing to deal with the storm. Call for tests (Difficulty 5 because of the rolling of the ship and the harsh conditions) and describe the ship fighting through the waves and driving rain. Lighting crashes overhead, the wind howls, and the sea is dark and fierce.

Next, strange events begin to happen.

- The ship's radio goes dead. All the operator can pick up is static, although it almost seems like there's a repeated pattern concealed in the hissing distortion, an odd rhythm that he can't quite recall, but he feels like he's heard before.
- The ship's compass starts spinning wildly.
- An unusual amount of seaweed, shells, mud and other debris is thrown up on deck by the waves, and the most fetid and vile stench rises from the ocean.
- Anyone down in the hold gets a static shock from the machinery stored there. This shock is enough to stun a character. The machinery is not connected to the ship's

generator and has no known power source – it's all pipes and pumps, as far as they know. A few pieces are stamped with the legend 'MARSH REFINERY'.

- The ship begins to slow, as if the screw is caught on something.

Ten Green Bottles

At this point, Deep Ones start to crawl onto the ship and start killing the crew. If possible, pick the crew off one by one, and never tell the players exactly what is killing them. For example, start with a character on deck and say '[Name], out of the corner of your eye you see something moving near the railing. What do you do?'. If the player investigates, then take that player aside and inform him that his temporary character just got killed by... something, and that he should sit down and wait for the other characters to get killed - it won't take long! A list of the crew of the ship is on page 67.

There is no sign of the remains of any murdered characters. Throw in as much blood as you like, but the bodies are dragged overboard by the Deep Ones, and will show up as zombies later in the investigation.

The Deep Ones move through the ship, heading towards the hold and location 12.

If the players ask, then there is one gun on board, kept in a locked drawer in the captain's cabin. It will do them no good, but pick off any characters who try to make it to the cabin. Any characters who try to make it to the lifeboat are dragged overboard by long, rugose arms that reach over the railing and snatch sailors to their doom. Remember to also pick the captain off at some point.

Just as the Deep Ones approach the hold, then any surviving characters on deck see the lights of a ship moving

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Wreck



towards the *Star of Mauritius* — this second vessel is a coast guard ship. The approach of the interloping vessel disturbs the Deep Ones, and they flee, killing all but one of the characters as they flee.



A Cold, Cold Morning Scene Type: Introduction

Core Clue: None

The game opens at a very early hour of the morning. Somewhere beyond the clouds, the sun is rising, but no sign of its light can be seen through the sheets of rain that lash New York City. The investigators were roused from their warm beds and called to this rain-drenched dock an hour ago by the Port Authority. Mike Zebewski, a

representative of the Port Authority, is waiting for them at the dock. Beneath his heavy oilskin rain jacket, he's a fat man with a moustache that's normally impressively bushy. Right now, his moustache is plastered to his cheeks by the rain and wind.

The facts are these — during the night, a coast guard ship spotted the steamer, apparently out of control. When the storm died down, a Port Authority tug went out and met the steamer, the *Star of Mauritius*. Crewmen from the tug boarded her, and found... well, the tug's bringing the steamer into the dock now, and the investigators will probably want to take a look themselves. Zebewski crosses himself as behind him, the lights of two boats appear through the sheets of rain.

The *Star of Mauritius*, now under the control of a pilot from New York Port, wallows through the heavy seas and comes to a stop at the dock. A spotlight is trained on it from a nearby building. As the spotlight tracks over the ship's side, it illuminates a huge patch of blood on one wall.

As the gangplank is being lowered, Zebewski points towards the lighted bridge of the steamer. 'They found one man on the bridge. Everyone else... no sign of them.'

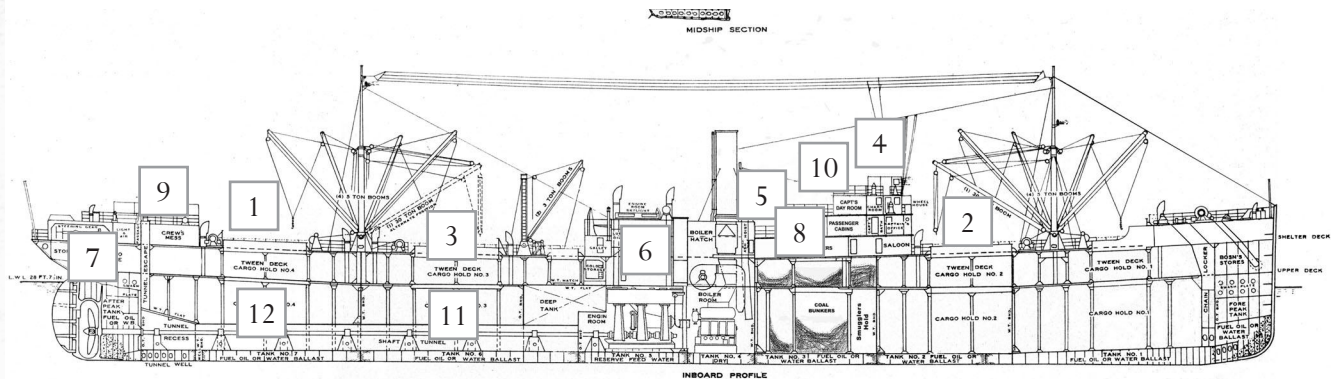
Exploring the Star of Mauritius

Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clues: The locked door in the hold; Atlas Industries, Robert's Boarding House

As the investigators explore the ship, the Deep One artifact in the hold leaks baleful psychic effluvia. The investigators will get 'flashes' of past events on board ships. Base these flashes on the events of the prologue — for example, if one of the crew was killed

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by the Deep Ones in the engine room, then when the investigators enter the engine room for the first time, one of them will have a sudden and disturbing glimpse of something with teeth and scales looming out of the oily darkness.

1. Bloodstain: Large bloodstains like this one can be found throughout the ship, wherever the temporary player characters were killed. **Evidence Collection** reveals that the blood spatter patterns suggests that the victims were cut with a large knife or blade, then carried or dragged to the deck and thrown overboard. A one-point **Outdoorsman** or **Scuffling** spend lets the character realise that a single assailant carried at least three of the corpses single-handedly.

2. On Deck: The deck is encrusted with filth and slime. A one-point Zoology spend lets the character note that many of the fish skeletons and other debris on deck is material that one would normally expect to find only at the sea-bed, and while the storm last night was fierce, it was not strong enough to stir up the sea bed like that. A two-point **Evidence Collection** or **Sense Trouble** spend lets the character spot the glint of gold amid the mud – it's a small golden talisman the size of a coin, squat and ugly.

3. The Lifeboat: A large hold has been punched out the bottom of the lifeboat, probably using a sledge-hammer. A one-

point **Evidence Collection** spend lets the investigator find what looks like a fish scale caught on the edge of the hole (it's a scrap of flesh from the hide of a Deep One).

4. Bridge: Whatever temporary character survived to the end is found here, lashed to the wheel with his face in a rictus grin of terror. A one-point **Medic** spend shows that the cause of death is probably a heart attack, a fact that will be confirmed if the characters bother with an autopsy.

5. Stairs down: If any of the temporary characters were killed below decks, then there are scratch-marks in the paint on these stairs, suggesting that someone was scrabbling at the walls as something dragged away.

Note that the tugboat crew did not dare go another further than this point – they shouted down and got no response, so they quite sensibly assumed that there was no-one else alive onboard. As the investigators explore the lower decks, throw in weird noises as the ship creaks and clanks and shivers. There is something terrible *wrong* on board the *Star of Mauritius*, something more than just the murdered crew. Paranoid or sensitive investigators may spot movement out of the corner of their eyes. The exposed pipes and other machinery drip with seawater and slime and look disturbingly like the ship's intestines, exposed for all to see.

Bloodstains are everywhere.

6. Engine Room: A character with **Mechanical Repair** can tell that the ship's engines are in perfect condition, and that the ship was perfectly seaworthy when the crew vanished.

7. Stores: Food and other equipment. The most notable thing about this room is the sturdy door.

8. Office: Office is a grandiose term for this nook where the ship's papers and log are kept. Anyone with **Bureaucracy** or **Piloting** can quickly skim these documents. The ship is registered as owned by a Captain Gary Mulholland, and is currently hired by a Providence-based company called Atlas Industries. The log is kept in a locked drawer, along with a pistol. A character with **Locksmith** can pick the lock.

The ship's log is spotty and poorly maintained — Mulholland was far from conscientious at the best of times, and many of the *Star's* jobs are illegal. According to the log, she was transporting 'miscellaneous machine parts and salvage' from Kingsport, Massachusetts, to East Fire Island off the coast of New York. The last few entries are of particular interest.

the log

- Arrived Kingsport and gave the crew twenty-four hours liberty

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The Wreck

- Made good time; loaded cargo.
- Paid \$300 from Wilcox account for special
- Secured special hold before embarking crew.
- Departed Kingsport late – vagabond attempted to stowaway.
- Storm blowing up from SE, heavy seas
- lights

9. Crew Cabin: The crew of the *Star* are crammed into these rooms. Four cramped bunks line the walls; personal effects are held in lockers or strewn around the floor. A character with **Evidence Collection** spots a diary in one of the lockers. This is the diary of Horace Quint, a young man of good family who ran away from his family home in Boston. In this, he records his experiences on board various ships and his increasingly miserable adventures.

In the last entry, he notes that the crew were dropped off at Kingsport for a day. The ship then left the harbour and headed north, and collected them the following morning. As they were loading the ship at Kingsport, they discovered a man hiding in the lifeboat under a canvas cover. The man attempted to fight back, but the crew threw him overboard at the pier after giving him a solid thrashing. Quint also notes that one of the other crew, Boris, was going to show him a good boarding house in New York called Robert's in the Red Hook area.

10. Captain's Cabin

11. Cargo Hold: The hold is packed with heavy industrial machinery, mostly pipes and pumps. It is all obviously used and old, and several sections are rusted or coated with mud and barnacles. In other places, the gleam of bright metal

shows where sections were recently sawn apart. The machinery lies scattered across the hold, having apparently come loose from the restraints holding it. A careful examination of this material shows several claw-marks on it.

As originally stowed, the machinery would have concealed the door into the forward section of the hold, but now a character who specifically investigates the machinery or makes a two-point **Evidence Collection** spend can see there is a bulkhead door behind the stacked pipes and parts. To get to this door, the character will have to crawl through a gap in the machinery. If a character tries to crawl in without securing the machinery, then a freak wave slaps the side of the *Star*, causing it to tilt to one side and sending the machinery sliding across the hold. The unfortunate investigator will be crushed by the cargo, suffering 1d6+2 damage.

The hidden door is heavily scored, as if someone had tried to hack through the steel with an axe, but it is still secure.

To open the sealed door, the investigators will have to get the cargo unloaded from the main hold, then either pick the lock (two point **Locksmith** spend) or cut it open with a torch. The key to the sealed hold went down with Captain Mulholland. Alternatively, Atlas Industries can open the hold.

12. Sealed Hold: The sealed hold contains yet more machinery, apparently identical to the junk in the main cargo hold. Characters entering this room do feel a strange prickly sensation – there is a strong magnetic field here, and the occasional spark of static electricity.

One length of pipe is sealed at both ends, and rattles if the characters shake it. It is also the centre of the magnetic disturbance, drawing compass needles towards it. Inside this pipe is the Y'hanithlei artifact retrieved from

Innsmouth (see The Artifact, below).

The Artifact

The artifact concealed in the hold of the *Star* is the size of a human infant, and is made of a greenish stone that is oily to the touch. From certain angles, it resembles an elephant's head; from others, a calcified sea-sponge. There are flecks of gold embedded in its rough surface. It is unusually heavy and extremely hard to damage. Its magnetic field waxes and wanes in time with the rising and falling of certain stars in the night sky.

The artifact was a treasure of the Esoteric Order of Dagon in Innsmouth, smuggled out of the ruined town by Wilcox's agents. It was brought up from buried R'lyeh by the Deep Ones, and is not of any terrestrial origin. It is imprinted with the dreams of Great Cthulhu, a psychic sponge soaked in his alien influence. Communion with the artifact is a religious experience for the Deep Ones and for their hybrid children.

Currently, the artifact is mercifully dormant, its influence ebbing and flowing like a gentle tide. It absorbs psychic energies from those around it, and then later releases them. This psychic tide is the cause of the subliminal flashbacks in this scenario. If the artifact is triggered with the correct rituals, however, it will awaken and send out the dreams of Great Cthulhu, unattenuated by the thousands of meters of seawater and stone that currently protect humanity from His sleeping mind.

If a character can see the artifact when a psychic vision is triggered, the surface of the artifact appears to ripple and warp, as if its surface is oddly liquid. Only those who have previously experienced such a vision can see this.

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Drawn Up, Hideously Chang'd

Scene Type: Flashback

Core Clue: The effects of the Artifact

The first time the characters discover or examine the artifact, it triggers another hallucination, a memory of a previous time when the artifact had contact with humanity. Experiencing such a vision causes a **Stability** test (Difficulty 4, 3 points).

The initial vision affects a single investigator. He finds himself in the body of a child in a medieval fishing village. The Mediterranean shimmers in the hot sun. Jagged black rocks, curiously twisted, surround the little cove. A wave has just washed up something covered in seaweed and grime, but through the filth the child sees something glitter with gold.

Time is fluid in a dream, and suddenly the character finds several months have passed. The artifact has been discovered by the villagers and taken to the church. An epidemic of religious manias seizes the village, and many believe that the apocalypse is at hand. Villagers have visions of strange vistas and wild oceans.

Later, wild weather and high seas have cut the little village off from the rest of Spain. The hallucinations have grown worse; many of the villagers are now insane. Bodies hang from rafters, victims of suicide or murder. Strange symbols and shapes have been carved into the stone buildings, and certain alleyways in the town are now always shadowed even in the noon sun. The fishing boats rot on the beach, but the market stalls overflow with curiously bloated fish.

The character sees the villagers throwing strangely carved stones into the water. (These are Contact Stones, as described on page 71). A priest in ornate robes

and a golden tiara holds the artifact aloft, chanting words of power to it, and the vision ends as *shapes* approach the shore underwater.

The Innsmouth Dreams

Scene Type: Flashback

Core Clue: The effects of the Artifact

The second set of visions takes place in Innsmouth. The characters glimpse a dark cavern underground. Pipes run along the ceiling, and the characters can hear voices and gunshots echo down the tunnels. The character is in the body of one of the priests of the Esoteric Order of Dagon, and holds the artifact in his hands. He waddles down the tunnel with difficulty, his limbs having adapted themselves for swimming, not running. He whispers words under his breath to the artifact as he cradles it like a child.

Men — strangers — emerge out of the darkness. They flash torches at him, and aim their guns. They are invaders, trespassers, defiling this sacred place. One of them is Malcolm Croft, and the character will recognise the former agent when he encounters him. Croft raises his gun to fire at the priest — and then something comes shrieking out of a side tunnel, a flowing mass of ghoulish spheres and pseudopods. The cost for seeing a *shoggoth*, even in a vision, is a **Stability** test (Difficulty 4, 3 points).

Dreams Of The Book

Scene Type: Flashback

Core Clue: The existence of a book related to the artifact.

This set of visions shows the characters that the artifact is capable of recording and transmitting memories. The character finds himself in the body of a medieval monk in a monastery scriptorium in Spain, a century after the first set of visions. The monk has the

artifact swaddled in a blanket; whenever anyone passes by, he hastily covers the twisted icon. The monk reaches out and caresses the artifact, and it is as though he is suddenly plunged into icy waters. Darkness boils up all around him as strange memories pour from the artifact into his mind. The player character does not share this vision-in-a-vision, but he feels sickened, as if something terrible brushed past his mind.

As the vision fades, the monk begins to write a description of what the artifact showed him. *Ia, Cthulhu...*

Dreams of the Deep

Scene Type: Flashback

The final set of visions is the most cryptic and troubling. The visions are of tremendous basalt cities, of sky-flung towers, of nighted labyrinths, of strangely shaped stones draped with weeds and vile growths — and of something moving in the darkness. The characters are sharing the dreams of Cthulhu.

A City Going Mad

Scene Type: Background Horror

From the moment the *Star of Mauritius* arrived in New York harbour, memories and dreams began leaking from the artifact. Because of their proximity to the artifact, the investigators are the first to experience these horrors, but they are not alone. Over the course of the scenario, hundreds and then thousands of people will dream of Cthulhu. It will be like the strange months of 1923 when R'lyeh rose and the sensitive across the world went mad, only concentrated into a few days and a few square miles of city.

Over the course of the scenario, the effects of the artifact should be shown to the players. The investigations should take place over three to four days; each

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night, eldritch dreams will crawl into the minds of sleepers. Friends and family – those cherished pillars of sanity – will speak of curious visions. Drunks and vagrants on the street will scream blasphemous names that echo off the skyscrapers of Manhattan; graffiti on the walls reminds the characters of inscriptions in ancient tombs.

Police characters who try to solve everything by throwing waves of patrolmen at it will find this resource denied them – ordinary police are needed to keep order in Red Hook and other dangerous neighbourhoods near the docks.

If the characters fail to either deactivate the artifact or return it to the Deep Ones, then the city will boil over into madness.

Investigating The Artifact Scene Type: Investigation

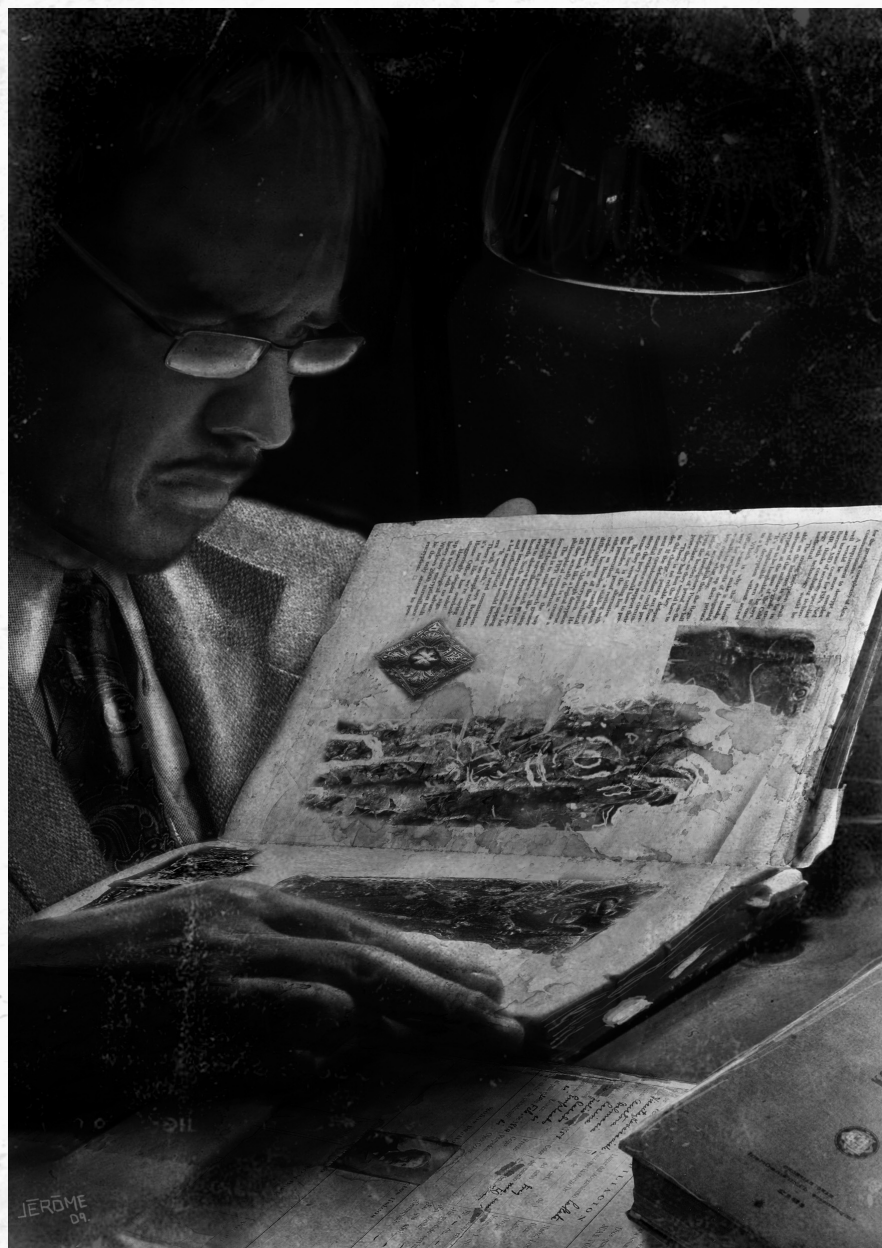
Core Clue: None.

Anthropology: reveals that while the artifact is not the product of any known culture, it is reminiscent of the Ponape islanders of the Pacific.

Astronomy/Physics: A one-point spend coupled with a one-point **Physics** spend lets the character work out that the artifact's magnetic field is waxing and waning as certain stars come over the horizon. It appears to react to the appearance of the Pleiades.

Chemistry: The artifact is composed primarily of some sort of soapstone, but includes several unidentifiable elements. It is apparently indestructible, or at least exceedingly hard to damage. The surface of the artifact is encrusted with salt.

History/Occult: A three-point **History** or **Occult** spend turns up a reference to a now-vanished Spanish



village in the 13th century called Imbolca, located in the north-east. 'The devil' washed up on the shore one day and breathed evil into the souls of everyone who lived there. The Inquisition destroyed the town, but not before the devil crawled back into the sea. The depictions of the devil resemble the artifact.

Occult: A further one-point **Occult** or two-point **History** spend reveals that a 14th century monk named Orosco

wrote a monograph on the events at Imbolca. This book was placed on the Papal Index of Banned Books, and all copies were destroyed, although there are rumours that a few survived in private collections.

Investigating The Steamer

The *Star of Mauritius* itself is a dead end; it is registered to its owner-operator, Gary Mulholland. She has been carrying cargo around the North-east for twenty years. Currently, she is under contract

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to Atlas Industries, a Providence-based engineering company.

Atlas Industries

Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clue: Mr. Wilcox is at his estate on East Fire Island.

Bureaucracy digs up the details on Atlas Industries – it is a small, privately owned company belonging to the Wilcox family of Providence, Rhode Island. The company has an office in New York. A two-point **Bureaucracy** or **Credit Rating** spend reveals that the company has a private island off the coast of New York, purchased in 1930.

A one-point **Library Use** spend or **Art History** digs up a curious clipping from 1929. The former owner of Atlas Industries, Jeremiah Wilcox, died and left the company to his nephew Henry Wilcox. Young Henry was a student of art and a notorious figure in the Providence art scene, known for his bizarre and quite outré carvings and sculptures. Many worried that putting such a dreamer in charge of the engineering company would lead to bankruptcy and disaster, but Henry apparently rose to the challenge and the company has survived the turmoil of the last few years. Wilcox purchased an estate on Fire Island and built a summer house there.

A one-point **Art History** spend lets a character learn that one of Henry Wilcox's bas-reliefs is on show at an avant-garde gallery in Greenwich. This bas-relief depicts a strange city of many-angled buildings and impossible tombs, and somehow reminds the investigators of the artifact. The gallery is an excellent place for the investigators to run into Malcolm Croft.

Contacting Atlas Industries

Scene Type: Roleplaying

Core Clue: Mr. Wilcox is at his estate on East Fire Island.

If the characters contact Atlas Industries, they are put in touch with Mr. Boyle of the New York office. Boyle is a nervous and standoffish fellow, so terrified of losing his job that he refuses to do anything without first contacting the Providence office or Mr. Wilcox himself for permission. Boyle can confirm that the *Star of Mauritius* was under contract to Atlas Industries to deliver machine parts from Kingsport to New York, but refuses to reveal anything more without a warrant. Intimidation will result in Boyle crumpling under the pressure, but not in any useful way.

With a warrant, or a one-point **Reassurance** spend, Boyle does admit that the machine parts carried on the *Star* were scrap from the old Marsh refinery in Innsmouth, and that Atlas bought them from the federal government though a connection of the late Jeremiah Wilcox.

If the characters ask about Henry Wilcox, Boyle tells them that Mr. Wilcox is a recluse who does not see anyone; he can contact the Providence office who will contact the Fire Island estate if they wish, but he doubts it will do any good.

The Innsmouth Connection

Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clue: None

A character who tries to follow the paper trail back to Innsmouth runs into a wall; the town of Innsmouth is still under Federal jurisdiction, and is in fact being handled the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior. A one-point **Cop Talk** or **Bureaucracy** spend reveals that the

government would rather forget about the whole Innsmouth operation, and asking too many questions will annoy very important people in Washington. The gold refinery was 'thoroughly' searched before the Atlas salvage team was allowed in, and nothing unusual was found there. In fact, the artifact was taken from one of the tunnels beneath the refinery.

Holding the Evidence

A day after the start of the investigation, or after the characters contact Atlas Industries, Boyle contacts the New York police, asking about the cargo of the *Star of Mauritius*. He argues that it cannot be relevant to the case, as nothing dangerous was stored on board. Can the characters kindly release the cargo to Atlas Industries, who will make arrangements to have it transported to their Fire Island facility?

If the characters agree, and have not yet found the hidden artifact, then run *Return to the Scene of the Murder* on page 69, which will put the characters on the trail of the dead crew and the artifact. Ensure that the investigators get their hands on the artifact, as it is necessary for the plot to continue.

If the investigators refuse to hand over the cargo, or hand over the refinery junk but not the artifact, then Boyle contacts them again, informing them that Mr. Wilcox is willing to meet with them to discuss the transfer of the cargo. The investigators are invited to his estate on East Fire Island, as long as they bring with them a particular item from the *Star of Mauritius* – he hands them a letter from Wilcox, explaining the terms of the visit.

If the characters fail to take Wilcox up on his offer, then have Agent Croft pressure them into doing so. If they remain obstinate, then the artifact's baleful influence will be felt in *Dreams of the Deep*. That should put them on

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Babylon Estate,

East Fire Island

To Whom It May Concern,

I am given to understand that a terrible tragedy has befallen one of the proud ships that brave the wild seas, and that the ship in question is the *Star of Mauritius*, engaged by my company to perform certain tasks. There are certain matters that must be attended to, matters of both art and considerable urgency, and I believe they would best be discussed in person. You are invited to visit me at my private estate on East Fire Island—please contact the Atlas Industries office in New York and Mr. Boyle will arrange transport immediately.

Yours,

H. A. Wilcox

Postscript: In addition to its normal cargo, the Star was, I understand, carrying a peculiar and valuable piece of modern art that is most dear to my heart. It is, of course, of no relevance in any criminal investigation, so if you could bring it with you to my estate, I would consider it, shall we say, the price of your passage.

the trail of Henry Wilcox.

The Crew of the *Star of Mauritius*

Core Clue: Robert's Boarding House

If the players investigate the crew of the ship, they can dig up the following details from official records and asking questions on the docks.

Captain Gary Mulholland, age 51, resident of Baltimore: the owner and operator of the *Star*. He purchased the ship in the South Pacific in 1919, and changed her registry from Singapore to Baltimore in 1926. A one-point **Streetwise** spend on the docks gets the character the rumour that Mulholland was a whiskey smuggler during Prohibition and has ties to organized crime.

Paul Jones (age 34, no address): The

ship's engineer. Formerly US Navy, dishonourably discharged for striking a superior officer.

Mikal Gant (age 40, resident of New York): Polish sailor. See *Dockside Encounter*, below.

Boris (age ??, no address): A character with **Languages** who speaks Russian can pick up some more details on Boris—he starts at Robert's boarding house when in New York.

Alain 'Frenchie' Dain (age 30s, French): No details.

'Cookie' Hayes (age 50, resident of Baltimore): An old associate of Mulholland.

Horace Quint (age 22, resident of Boston): Horace Quint is being sought by his family in Boston; he ran away to sea at age 17.

Albert Spitzer (age 21, resident of New York): Polish sailor.

Dockside Encounter

Scene Type: Roleplaying

Core Clue: Robert's Boarding House

If the characters are asking questions about the *Star* in the docklands of New York, they are approached by an old Polish man named Joachim. With a **Flattery** or **Cop Talk** spend and a bottle of rotgut, he informs them that Mikal Gant and other men from the *Star* stayed at Robert's Boarding House when in port.

Alternatively, a character can make a one-point **Oral History** spend to pick up a rumour about four strange sailors who paid for a room at Robert's Boarding House with old gold coins.

Ships Passing In The Night

Scene Type: Investigation

Core Clue: Joe Palry

Two other vessels saw the *Star of Mauritius* that fateful night.

The tugboat crew are unwilling to talk to the investigators—they are all shaken by their grisly discovery on board the *Star*. One of them, a young Irishman named McNulty, does say that he thought he saw something in the water as they were towing the boat to the port. He can't be sure, but press him with **Interrogation** or a **Reassurance** spend and he admits that he thought he saw a face in the water, looking up at him.

The captain of the tug, Brendan Hoss, tells the characters that the coast guard vessel that spotted the *Star* was the USCGC *Mackinac*. That ship is still at sea; with patience and a one-point

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Bureaucracy or **Cop Talk** spend, the characters can get in touch with the coast guard when it docks at Long Beach in Nassau County. The coast guard have no useful information for the investigators, but mention that one of their crew went mad and tried to jump overboard, and had to be tied to his bed until they could bring him to a hospital. He's in a hospital in Long Island now.

If asked for an account of their encounter with the *Star of Mauritius*, the captain says that they saw the lights of the steamer in the night at the height of the storm. The seas were too rough for the coast guard to board the steamer or render assistance, so they contacted the port and warned them that the steamer was adrift. Anyone with Outdoorsman, Piloting or Law will know that the coast guard should have offered assistance unless the storm was so wild that it endangered both ships; if pressed, the captain admits that they might have been able to reach the *Star*, but he was struck by the conviction that there was no-one left alive to save on board her.

Joe Palry

Scene Type: Roleplaying

Core Clue: The Effects of the Artifact

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour hospital is a small private hospital, formerly a mansion that was donated to the church when its owners could no longer afford the upkeep of the decaying pile. It's all gothic architecture and polished wood; it stinks of incense and varnish.

The investigators hear Palry long before they reach his private room. He is singing in a dialect of Spanish; a character who speaks the language can make out a few words, like 'gold of the sea' and 'the devil's breath'. The nuns who run the hospital warn the investigators that Palry is very ill and liable to be violent, so they have him

tied down and mildly sedated for his own good.

Palry is a broad-shouldered, vigorous young man, tough and practical, so it is strange to see him so broken and confused. When questioned by the characters, he manages to pull himself together briefly and answer some questions. He switches from medieval Spanish to English in his native New Yorker accent at random, and drifts in and out of lucidity.

He saw 'the devil' climb out of the sea and onto the *Star of Mauritius*, just like it did in (and he switches back to Spanish) 'the village of Imbolca'. He rambles on about demons possessing people and terrible dreams, then the devil came out of the sea and, and... and then he starts screaming, and doesn't stop.

The Drowned

The crew of the *Star of Mauritius* were dragged overboard by the Deep Ones. The lucky ones were dead before they hit the water, but some were drowned by the remorseless creatures. The Deep Ones fled before the lights of the coast guard vessel – after the attacks by the surface folk on holy Y'hanithlei, they have learned to respect the weapons of humanity.

The artifact was still in the hands of the surface folk, and the Deep Ones dared not follow the *Star* into New York harbour. In the silted depths of the Hudson estuary, they wove a spell around the dead men, turning them into unliving slaves of the Deep Ones. Four bloated, water-logged corpses crawled out of the water and vanished into the teeming crowds of New York.

They can pass for human – almost – because their human thoughts and personalities are echoed in the artifact. Most of the time, the sailors are shambling wrecks, but when necessary, they can present a halting façade of

Drowned Dead

Abilities: Athletics 5, Health 8, Scuffling 10, Weapons 4

Hit Threshold: 3

Alertness Modifier: -1

Weapons: Whatever comes to hand, usually a club or other improvised weapon (-1)

Armour: None, but all weapons do half damage. Firearms only do one point of damage, except at point blank range, when all weapons except shotguns do half damage. Shotguns do one point of damage, except at point-blank range when they do full damage.

Stability Loss: +0

normality drawn from the well of memory in the artifact. They have a low animal cunning, and are utterly dedicated to their mission.

After crawling out of the water, the four make their way to Robert's, a cheap boarding-house frequented by sailors and rented a room there. One of the four then heads to the dock to search the *Star of Mauritius*, and another to the police station or whatever offices the characters are using. The third wanders the streets, searching for a psychic trace, and will end up on the trail of the investigators. The final undead stays in the boarding house, ready to lend assistance to whichever of the other zombies finds the artifact.

Choose which of the crew become zombies based on the events of *Ten Little Indians*. The undead are drawn to the artifact when within a short range of it.

Each of the four zombies is dressed in foul-smelling and damp clothes. Their skin is puffy and bloated, and they are beginning to rot. When injured, they

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do not bleed — the blood has congealed in their veins into a reddish sludge. Their lungs are waterlogged, and they gurgle when they speak. None of them is armed.

Several of the zombies suffered severe wounds in the attack; these wounds are now covered by a greyish gooey scab of scaly pseudoflesh.

Moments before a zombie speaks, a character who has already experienced a vision from the artifact will get another psychic flash. He will hear the words before the undead creature speaks, as the zombie draws on the human memories in the artifact to shape its thoughts.

The Break-In Scene Type: Antagonist Action

Core Clue: Robert's Boarding House

This scene can take place either on board the *Star*, at the character's offices, or wherever the characters are storing the artifact. If the characters have failed to discover the artifact and are ignoring the *Star of Mauritius*, then run *Return to the Scene of the Murder*.

The zombie attacker approaches as stealthily as it can, and pretends to be human (drawing on the artifact's memories if necessary). For example, if an investigator has hidden the artifact in his room, then he hears a knock on the door and a gurgling voice saying 'sir... I am Captain Mulholland...you took something from my ship...give it back...' The zombies only use deception for as long as it takes to get close to the investigator; as soon as the victim is within arm's reach, the zombie lunges at him and attempts to throttle him.

The aim of the break-in is not to eliminate investigators, it is to recover the artifact. If the zombie succeeds in getting its rotting hands on the relic, it

tries to escape to the streets and make its way to Robert's Boarding House. The investigators can use **Shadowing** (Difficulty 4) to follow the zombie through the streets to the boarding house; failure means the characters are ambushed by another two zombies before reaching the boarding house.

Return to the Scene of the Murder Scene Type: Antagonist Action

Core Clue: Robert's Boarding House

Run this scene if the characters have not discovered the artifact in the hold of the *Star*. As the ship is still impounded and is a crime scene, there are two night watchmen at the docks, a pair of men named Henshaw and Pearse. During the night, the zombies attack the docks and shamle onto the ship. Pearse is killed by the zombies; Henshaw survives by hiding in the store-room. As soon as the zombies recovered the artifact from the sealed forward hold, they left. Henshaw waited until it was safe, then raised the alarm. By the time the characters arrive at the docks once more, more than an hour has elapsed since the break-in.

Henshaw survived the experience but is obviously shaken, and a one-point **Reassurance** or **Cop Talk** spend is required to get him to pull himself together. He says that he caught a glimpse of movement on the dockside and went to investigate while Pearse stayed on the ship. The movement turned out to be nothing more than rats, but then he heard Pearse shout. He ran back to the ship, catching a glimpse of at least two men climbing down the stairs to the lower decks. He found Pearse at the bottom of the stairs, dead.

Panicked, Henshaw drew his firearm and went after the intruders. He remembers challenging one of them, and firing his gun repeatedly, but it had no effect. They chased him, and he hid

in the store-room, holding the door shut with a crowbar. He heard them trying to get in, but after a few minutes they stopped trying.

If pressed for a description of the intruders, he says they looked like seamen, and one was definitely wearing an oilskin jacket. They certainly stank of fish.

A quick examination of the scene turns up the following clues:

- A gate in a wire fence sectioning off the dock was forced open. **Locksmith** or **Scuffling** shows that the metal frame of the gate was twisted and torn, suggesting the use of incredible strength.
- Pearse's body lies at the foot of the stairs. His neck is broken.
- **Forensics** lets the character notice where Henshaw fired his gun. The bullets embedded themselves in the wooden frame of a door. There are some blood splashes, but these are very strange indeed. The blood is oddly thick, as if it was already partially congealed. There is also a small gold coin lying in the blood, which must have fallen from the pocket of one of the intruders.
- Henshaw took refuge in the store-room. The store-room door is scratched and battered, but a one-point **Forensics** spend shows that the scratches on this door were *not* made by whatever attacked the ship at sea. These are clearly the marks of human hands, admittedly a human who was crazy or stupid enough to try to claw through a steel door.
- The stacked machinery in the main hold has been torn down, revealing a previously concealed door that leads into a hidden section of the

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hold. It's obvious that something was removed from this hold.

Just charging off after the zombies won't work — they're long gone by now. The characters can either call in police help and search the streets, in which case a patrolman in Brooklyn will put them on the trail to Robert's Boarding House, or they can continue their investigations which should lead them to the Boarding House. Asking around with **Oral History** lets the investigator meet Joachim (see *Dockside Encounter* on page 67). The old man is confused — not half an hour ago, he saw Mikal Gant off the *Star* pass him on the street. He greeted his old friend, but Gant ignored him. Gant was walking with some others from the crew; maybe they were drunk, but that's no excuse for ignoring an old friend.

Robert's Boarding House Scene Type: Action

Core Clue: The Contact Stone

Robert's boarding house is a flophouse near the waterfront, on Court Street in the Red Hook district. You can hire a room for twenty cents for the night, or by the hour. The owner, a toothless old hag who speaks a weird mix of Polish, English and French, asks no questions about her guests. An **Intimidation** spend lets a character threaten her into pointing upstairs, jabbering something, and dropping four golden coins on the table. These coins are solid gold, but so worn that it is impossible to tell where they came from. The rooms are filthy and crammed with rotting furniture; the beds are alive with bugs. Plaster dust and water stain everything.

The Deep Ones' servants have taken a room overlooking the harbour. (If you've run *The Kidnapping*, then the characters can see the remains of the shack used by the Barrett Gang from the window). One zombie remains



there at all times; the others come and go as they hunt for the artifact.

Notable features of the room, other than the lurking zombie, are:

- The bath is filled to the brim with salt water. The zombies were instructed to do this to dampen the psychic influence of the artifact. If the zombies have stolen the artifact, then the artifact is submerged in the bath here;

removing it triggers an instant vision.

- Wrapped in an oilcloth is a double handful of gold coins, and a curious chunk of soapstone inscribed with strange runes, similar to symbols from the Innsmouth flashbacks. This stone is a Contact Stone — see overleaf.

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The Contact Stone

This is an inscribed stone prepared for use with the *Contact Deep One* ritual. It can be used without knowledge of the ritual, just by throwing it into a body of sea water. The Deep Ones sense the stone and are drawn to it. It also serves as a sort of passport, signifying that the bearer is a friend and should not be attacked.

Agent Croft

In 1928, the Federal authorities raided the town of Innsmouth, taking many of the inhabitants into custody and confiscating various books and items, especially from the Marsh family and the Esoteric Order of Dagon church. Strange and terrible things were found beneath the town, and the imprisoned townsfolk revealed in hints and dark allusions that there was a greater threat deep beneath the waves off Devil's Reef.

A submarine discharged torpedoes off Devil's Reef, the townsfolk were scattered among naval and military prisons, and the relics and books were locked away in government archives. The government considered the matter of Innsmouth dealt with; few in Washington were willing to contemplate the terrible implications of the existence of the Deep Ones. (The Innsmouth raid may have led to the creation of *Project Covenant* – see the *Trail of Cthulhu* rulebook, page 207).

Malcolm Croft was one of seven men who went into the tunnels beneath the Marsh Refinery, and one of only two who came out alive. In that night-black subterranean labyrinth, carved by nameless things that gnaw the bones of those sacrificed to Father Dagon and Mother Hydra, Croft looked into

the heart of horror – and he refused to submit to madness or despair. After his escape and recovery, he became obsessed with the threat posed by the Deep Ones and the other creatures of the Mythos.

For three years, Croft remained a federal agent, although he became increasingly unstable and paranoid. He collected rare books and manuscripts. He visited Arkham and consulted the library at Miskatonic, even venturing to read the dread *Necronomicon*. He wrote letters to every person of influence he believed he could trust, from the President on down, but the lack of response convinced him that *they* had subverted the highest authorities in the land.

Croft vanished into the underground. He has spent the last few years riding the rails across America, hunting down signs of cult activity and Mythos worship. In his mind, he is humanity's champion, doing what must be done to hold back the tide of darkness. He has no friends, no family, and precious little sanity. He is a wreck of a man, driven by fear and hatred.

Malcolm Croft has tried to return to Innsmouth several times, and even tried to stow away on board the *Star* when it visited Kingsport on its last voyage. He knows that Atlas Engineering is salvaging the old Marsh gold refinery, and he knows something of Henry Wilcox's interest in the Cthulhu Mythos. Croft believes – partially correctly – that Wilcox is a worshipper of the Old Ones. For this, Wilcox must die, but Wilcox never leaves his East Fire Island mansion.

Initially, Croft's only interest in the investigators is in their ability to get him to the island. Once he discovers that they are aware of the threat posed by the Mythos, though, he will try to recruit them as allies or even, according to his own twisted ethos,

friends. Croft has been isolated from humanity for so long that any friendly contact is a strange and unfamiliar thing. Fundamentally, though, Croft is a ruined and a dangerous man, likely to assume that his new 'friends' are just waxen masks concealing horror and betrayal.

Croft is unshaven and perilously thin, and his G-man suits are thread-bare, but he still has a commanding voice and a piercing blue glare. When he pulls himself together, he has the bearing of a Federal agent, but most of the time he mutters to himself and casts wary glances into the shadows or at any angles in the walls. He has several fading bruises on his face, souvenirs from his attempt to stow away on board the *Star* at Kingsport.

Malcolm Croft

Athletics 6, Firearms 8, Health 6, Scuffling 6, Weapons 4

Stealth Modifier: +2

Weapons: Heavy pistol (+2)

Meet Agent Croft

Scene Type: Roleplaying

Croft will stalk the investigators for a time before making contact. He will follow them if they visit the docked *Star of Mauritius*, or the Atlas Engineering offices, or if they visit the gallery showing the Wilcox bas-relief. He may bluff his way into the NYPD or FBI offices, claiming to be a Federal agent, and consult the characters' files and records. He may even break into a character's home and confront him there. Yes, this is very similar to how the zombie sailors approach the characters – trigger-happy investigators may decide that Croft is another zombie.

When he finally confronts the characters, Croft begins by interrogating them

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

about their investigations thus far. Do they know about Wilcox? Do they know what happened at Innsmouth? Do they know what's coming?

Assess Honesty confirms that Croft is telling the truth; **Psychoanalysis** that he appears dangerous, and **Cop Talk** backs up Croft's talk about being a former Federal agent.

Likely questions for Croft include:

What's going on? Wilcox — he owns Atlas Engineering, inherited from his uncle. Have you seen his depraved art? He was one of those touched by the epidemic of '25, when degenerates across the United States fell under their sway. We wiped out the infestation at Innsmouth, but he's trying to put it all back together. We have to stop him.

What happened at Innsmouth? They crawled up out of the sea. Old Man Marsh called them up, and he offered his daughters to them. They birthed horrors in that town, terrible half-human things. The government found out, we raided Innsmouth in the winter of '28. S-19 and the Urania dropped depth charges off Devil's Reef. They thought that would be enough, the fools, but a few bombs won't stop them. It's not enough, not enough by half. It's up to me — to us, now. You're good men, good American men. You've seen them and their works, I can tell by your eyes. Unless we act, they'll rise up and devour the world.

What do you want us to do? Wilcox is the key to all this. He must be stopped. I can't get to his estate on Fire Island, it's a damnable fortress — but you can force him to let you in. Get me in too, and I'll deal with the bastard.

Croft AND The Artifact

If Malcolm Croft is shown the artifact, then he recognizes it and shudders, saying *'this was in the temple under Innsmouth. They worshipped it, they said they drank from it. They said their gods could be heard in it. I shot it, I swear, but*

there's no mark there. No mark... and then the thing came out of the tunnel...' Croft breaks down at this point, his eyes wide and staring back into the past, back to the tunnels under Innsmouth and the attack of the fetid, iridescent shoggoth that nearly killed him.

The characters need to restrain Croft or get the artifact out of sight immediately, or he will attempt to flee the room in a blind panic.

If Croft learns that Henry Wilcox will only let the investigators visit East Fire Island with the artifact, then he urges them to accept the invitation, but not to let Wilcox get his hands on the artifact.

The Island Scene Type: Transitional

Core Clue: None

Once the characters decide to accept Wilcox's invitation to visit him on his private island, then Royce contacts the island and a motor launch sent out to collect from Long Beach, which they can get to by train. Croft demands to be included in their party; if the investigator refuses, then he stows away on board the launch in one of the supply crates being taken to East Fire Island. (If the players successfully prevent Croft from ever reaching the island, then you will have to modify the events of the finale.)

The crew on the motor launch are named Collier and Lewis. They are both employees of Atlas Engineering, and both live on the island. Collier's from Boston; Lewis has lived on the coast along here all his life. If asked about their employee, both men are taciturn. **Oral History** lets them open up enough to say that Wilcox is an eccentric artist who takes little interest in running the company, and that they don't have much to do except sort through debris brought

in by the tramp steamer. A one-point **Oral History** spend gets the information that Wilcox spent several years traveling in the Orient.

A one-point **Intimidation** spend lets the character convince them that they may be in trouble, which makes Lewis volunteer that the tramp steamer was bringing more than scrap metal out of Innsmouth, and that Wilcox received several books and curios from the cursed town.

The trip to the island takes about one hour as the launch crosses from Long Beach to East Fire Island. To the port side, the characters see the coast of Long Island; to starboard, the low green sandy spit of Fire Island stretches out for miles. The main island is lightly inhabited — a mix of fishermen and rich New Yorkers with summer homes. The fall sun glitters on the cold waters of the North Atlantic.

East Fire Island is a much smaller circle of sand and stone. On the west side, an obviously new metal pier extends out into the water. Piles of pipes and other scrap metal lie piled near the pier, and there are several corrugated-iron sheds nearby. There is also a long and oddly shaped boathouse by the pier. There is a dock for the motor launch here, as well as Wilcox's pride and joy — a private submersible, built by his company. This little submarine is only capable of descending a short distance and has a severely limited range.

Near the work sheds are several small cottages, where the island's servants and engineers live. Wilcox has half a dozen staff on the island most of the time — groundskeepers, cleaners, engineers and guards.

The launch crew tell the investigators that Mr. Wilcox awaits them at the house. Wilcox's mansion stands on a small rise to the south; it's a smart modern beachhouse with electric

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Wreck

If the Investigators do not bring the artifact...

...then the crew of the motor launch will refuse to leave New York harbour. They received specific instructions from Wilcox not to leave without the artifact. The characters can force the crew to travel without the artifact with a three-point **Bargain** or **Intimidation** spend.

Wilcox will be furious if the characters do not bring the artifact. The Deep One attack will happen in response to Croft's murder of Wilcox instead of the presence of the artifact. See also *Dreams of New York* on page 77.

The East Fire Raid

An alternative possibility for NYPD characters is to take a police boat or even a whole task force and raid East Fire Island. Getting a warrant to raid Wilcox's house requires considerable evidence. The characters will get little co-operation from their superiors unless they mention the name of 'Innsmouth' (in which case the word comes down from the Federal government to approve the raid), or unless they wait until the psychic influence of the artifact has spread to the general population (in which case the authorities will be increasingly willing to approve extreme measures).

Having a large number of armed humans on the island will dismay but not dissuade the Deep Ones; they are more likely to drag the boats down from below instead of openly attacking. There are enough Deep Ones to deal with any number of police officers.

lights and a columned colonnade walkway along the beach-front.

The Wilcox House

The Wilcox house is more like an art gallery than an inhabited house. The whole place is spotless and sterile, apart from the small suite of rooms at the back of the house where Wilcox actually lives. The art is an eclectic mix of folk art from various Middle Eastern and Pacific cultures, and the most avant-garde fever-dreams of the futurists and the surrealists. A framed close-up photograph of a razor-blade cutting into a human eye hangs next to a tattered Sanskrit scroll.

There are also a number of bas-reliefs of bizarre shapes that suggest, from a certain angle, a tremendous cyclopean city. **Art History** suggests that several, but not all, of those pieces are by Wilcox himself. **Psychoanalysis** or **Cthulhu Mythos** gives the unsettling impression that there's a common thread in all the disparate pieces of art. Any characters who have experienced the dreams from the Spanish village will notice one carving that reminds them of that cursed place.

The library contains a number of occult books; a character with **Occult** notes that the collection is extensive, but patchy – it looks like Wilcox grabbed whatever books he could find on the rare book market in the last few years. He has a good copy of the 1845 *Nameless Cults, Secret Mysteries of Asia*, as well as the lesser-known books *Atlantis Lives* and the treacherous *Encyclopaedia of Eastern and African Religions and Beliefs*, by the mad missionary Sigismund Cartwright. There is also a copy of the manuscript by the Spanish monk glimpsed in the *Dreams of the Book* vision. This last document is a crumbling and ragged collection of loose pages, and is kept in an airtight glass case to protect it.

One side of the library is a grand bay

window, looking down the slope to the colonnade and the seashore beyond. In front of this window is an empty plinth flanked by two incense burners. A yellow silk cushion sits a short distance back from the plinth, and next to it is a box containing various art supplies. It is here that Wilcox intends to awaken his muse once more.

Henry Anthony Wilcox, Esq.

R'lyeh rose in 1925, and for a brief time, Great Cthulhu's psychic tendrils reached across the world (as recounted in *The Call of Cthulhu*). Cults performed blasphemous rites, creatures older than humanity stirred in the depths of the sea and in lightless caverns, and sensitive men and women were driven mad by His terrible dreams. Wilcox was such a man, an artist who heard Cthulhu's call and made a bas-relief depiction of R'lyeh and the house were dead Cthulhu lies dreaming.

Wilcox considered this an artistic triumph – Cthulhu is his muse, his inspiration, and when the Great Old One sank back beneath the waves, Wilcox was shattered. He sought out other vestiges of the Cthulhu cult, collecting artifacts and pieces of art and occult lore, trying to recapture the dreams. The artifact recovered from Innsmouth is his holy grail, the culmination of his quest.

He knows that degenerate madmen worship Cthulhu, but he believes these people are simply misguided. He does not believe in the reality of Cthulhu or any non-human entities, or at least he does not believe that such things could have survived to the present day or be any sort of threat to his sheltered life or to humanity. He no more fears Cthulhu than a collector of Roman art fears being murdered by the ghost of Julius Caesar. In short, Wilcox is a fool who is about to have a rude awakening.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Arkham Detective Tales

He believes the artifact brought from Innsmouth is currently wholly dormant and harmless, and has not heard about any hallucinations or visions caused by it. He thinks he will have to activate it using a ritual before it can be of any use.

'Dreams Older Than Tyre or Babylon'

Scene Type: Roleplaying

Core Clue: None

Wilcox serves the investigators some fine coffee, then launches into his account of why he wants the artifact.

'In the spring of 1925, I was attending the Rhode Island School of Design, studying sculpture. A strange mania came over me in February, a period of limitless creativity and inspiration that I have never experienced since. I dreamed — such dreams, gentlemen — dreams of nighted Cyclopean stones and strange sky-flung monoliths, a city of such wonder and terror as to defy merely human conception. It was a dream older than brooding Tyre, or the contemplative Sphinx, or garden-girdled Babylon. It was... the singular experience of my life.

The dreams lingered for a few short days, then vanished. I lapsed first into fever, then into lethargy. I had lost my eldritch muse. All I had left were a few words half-remembered in a dream — Cthulhu! R'lyeh! Cthulhu fhtagn!

I knew — do not ask how I knew — that the dreams were not wholly mine, that they were older than I. Others had dreamed them before, and I resolved to seek them out.

My family had a little money, and I travelled the world, looking for signs of such dreams. I found a few traces, a few folk tales, but... well, I see you are men who have walked in dark places. The secrets of pre-human history have fallen into the hands of primitives and superstitious madmen, and I lacked the courage or the stomach to ingratiate myself

with them. Disheartened and defeated, I returned home to Providence, arriving just in time to be at my uncle Jeremiah's deathbed.

(As Wilcox speaks, the weather outside worsens. Rain begins to splatter against the big bay windows, and fog rolls up from the sea.)

He had quarrelled with my cousin Timothy, and so he left the majority of shares in his engineering company to me. I had little interest in the work, although I will not deny that the money was welcome. I purchased this house to work on my art in private, hoping I could recapture my dream through toil.

Then fortune smiled upon me. By chance, I learned that there was a town but a few miles from my birthplace where the dreams I sought had taken root. Its name was Innsmouth. I would have travelled there immediately, but I learned there was an outbreak of disease there and the Federal government had quarantined the whole region. Visitors were not permitted.

It took me some time to find a way in. An old friend of my uncle worked for the Federal government. There was an old gold refinery in Innsmouth that had been seized by the government after the deaths of the whole Marsh family in the outbreak, and through my uncle's friend — I'll not name him — I arranged for the demolition and salvage contract to be awarded to my company.

I had hoped to carry away some books and works of art from Innsmouth, but the over-zealous agents of our government have decreed that nothing may be removed from the town without their mission. I was forced, finally, to bribe and smuggle items out of the town. The artifact found aboard the Star of Mauritius was one of these prizes.

Gentlemen — the fancies of madmen and eccentrics aside, these items are harmless. I swear I do not know what happened aboard that steamer, but it simply cannot have had the slightest connection to my little indiscretions.'

Assess Honesty confirms that Wilcox is being largely honest — he is genuinely appalled by the death of the crew of the *Star of Mauritius*, and is uncomfortable with any suggestion that he is in any way responsible.

Psychoanalysis suggests that his experiences in 1925, whatever they were, traumatised Wilcox so much that they warped all his future actions. He is not as sane as he appears.

The Artifact & Wilcox

If questioned about or shown the artifact, Wilcox eagerly relates what he knows of it.

'From what I can gather, it's a sort of psychic sponge. It absorbs thoughts and dreams from those who venerate it, and then slowly exudes them back out. An adept could even reach into the stone and recover specific dreams. It's like a recording of our distant past, a library of thought! I do not know if this is a natural phenomenon that was then attributed to the pre-human gods, or if it is the product of some ancient mental science beyond our modern understanding, but... it is beautiful, is it not? A work of sublime artistry!

An ancient priest in Sumatra told me of a chant that commands the stone and attunes the mind. Once I recite the chant, the gates of dream will open to me! Not of horn or ivory, but of soapstone and clay.'

If the investigators suggest that the artifact is already active, then Wilcox is initially confused and dismissive. *'No, I am quite sure that the command chant is needed before... at least, that is the impression the old priest gave me, but I admit that my interpreter was not the most reliable sort of fellow'.*

Wilcox wants the artifact placed on the plinth in the library immediately. If it is active, he can douse it with the reverse chant. It only takes a few words spoke aloud -

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Wreck

No More Sorcerers!

Now (ideally) it all goes to hell. Agent Croft has either been lurking quietly in the midst of the investigators, or else sneaking around the island if he had to stow away on the motor launch. He acts as soon as Wilcox does anything that Croft perceives as threatening, such as speaking the chant or attempting to touch the artifact.

He shoots Wilcox in the chest, firing until his gun is empty or the characters stop him. *'You can't let these damn sorcerers speak a word, you fools! Not one blasphemy! He's one of them, I tell you, and God knows what he'd have called up! He has to die!'*

Lightning crashes outside, echoing the gunshots. Wilcox staggers towards the plinth, then sinks onto his cushion and scrabbles at the art box before dying. He tries to speak, but only bubbles of bloody froth burst from his lips. Croft laughs hysterically, and will attack any investigators who keep trying to restrain him. He urges them to burn the mansion and all its cursed books.

The character with the highest **Sense Trouble** feels a prickling at the back of his neck, alerting him to some movement outside. Through the rising storm, the character sees *something* crawl out of the water and start shambling up the slope towards the Wilcox house.

They Rise!

Scene Type: Action

The investigators and Malcolm Croft face the remainder of the animated crew of the *Star*, as well as several Deep Ones. The Deep Ones will only reveal themselves when it is absolutely necessary, preferring to let their undead servants recapture the artifact and deal with any surface vermin.

The characters have a few minutes to act before the zombies storm the house,

time in which the characters can either attempt to deal with the artifact, fortify their position, or flee for their lives. For his part, an increasingly insane Croft tries to fight back against the approaching horrors – he will be torn apart by the Deep Ones, finally joining the other men who died in Innsmouth all those years ago.

The Artifact

Wilcox claimed to know a spell that would activate or deactivate the stone, but he just died. If the artifact is present, then a character could theoretically use the artifact's ability to record and store psychic impressions to recover the chant from it. If the players do not realise this, then a one-point **Cthulhu Mythos** spend lets them make the connection. Alternatively, if the characters examine the Spanish manuscript in the library, and can translate medieval Latin while being chased by scaly horrors, they can read the priest's description of how he accessed the memories held within the artifact and be inspired by his example.

To recover the chant, one character needs to make a Stability test. The difficulty for this test is initially 10, but drops by 1 per attempt. A character can make one attempt every few rounds. Each failed attempt costs 3 Stability. Each failed test represents the character's picking up the wrong psychic current from the artifact – either reuse previous visions, episodes from Wilcox's life, or just lurid and Mythos-filled visions from the distant past.

Once the investigator succeeds the Stability test, he relives the experience of being shot by Croft from the perspective of the victim, but also learns the chant that can be used to deactivate the stone. Once the chant is used, the Deep Ones assume that the humans have succeeded in destroying the artifact, and retreat back into the fog.

Fighting Back

...is ultimately futile, as the Deep Ones will eventually call up a hurricane that levels the mansion. Still, if the players want to run around the mansion shooting zombies, they can. The zombies attack through the bay windows of the library as well as the front and back doors. The Deep Ones are attacking the mansion first, then heading for the cottages and workshops, so if the characters flee to the cottages, they can rally the staff to fight back.

There are no weapons in the mansion, but there are several rifles and handguns stored in a cabinet in the boathouse. The rain and wind increases the Difficulty of any ranged attacks by 2.

Escape!

The best way – indeed, the only way – off East Fire Island is by boat. The motor launch is waiting at the boathouse, along with the rowboats for suicidal or brave investigators. Getting to the boathouse requires a **Fleeing** test, where the difficulty varies depending on the order the investigators flee the mansion. The first investigator to run faces only Difficulty 3, the next Difficulty 4 and so on.

Once the characters reach the boathouse, then a **Piloting** test (Difficulty 4) lets them sail out onto the sea. The waters near East Fire Island are too heavily trafficked for the Deep Ones to risk pursuing the characters for long. Note that the staff of the island will flee to the motor launch as soon as they realise that they're under attack, so if the characters linger too long, the launch will be gone.

Fleeing on the rowboat requires an **Athletics** test at Difficulty 6. Fail that, and you end up in the water with hungry Deep Ones.

The submersible can also be used, but it



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

The Wreck

The Trawler

Cruel Keepers may add this encounter, reflecting the omnipresence of the Cthulhu cult. As an investigator flees along the sandy shore, he sees the lights of a ship within swimming distance. If he swims out, he finds himself dragged onboard a small fishing trawler, her decks laden with a superlative catch of fish. The crew are all foreign-looking brutes; the character notices that each of them is wearing a golden ring that seems oddly familiar. The crew are all part of the Cthulhu cult, here to support their Deep One masters. Unless the character wants to fight the whole crew, or jumps back into the water, he'll be strangled with a fishing net and his body will end up in a fish cannery.

Trawler Cultists

Athletics 5, Health 7,
Scuffling 6, Weapons 4

Weapons: Clubs and hooks
(+1)

is an immensely harrowing experience. A Piloting test (Difficulty 6) is needed

Dreams of New York

If the investigators visited East Fire Island without the artifact, then they still need to deal with it back in New York. It will continue to leak increasingly terrifying visions into the ether; unless it is destroyed or removed, the whole city will be driven insane. The characters can either retrieve the command spell as described above, or use the Contact Stone to give it back to the Deep Ones, or throw it into the ocean and forget about it, or come up with their own solution.

to use it, and the character must also make a 5-point Stability test as the horrors are clearly visible through the submersible's wide windows.

Bargaining with the Deep Ones

A character with the Contact Stone from Robert's Boarding House can attempt to treat with the Deep Ones. The Contact Stone ensures that the

Deep Ones do not immediately attack him; if the character then hands over the artifact, the squamous horrors will spare his life and depart. The character who approached the Deep Ones bearing a Contact Stone is marked as being a potential ally of theirs, and may be visited by swarthy sailors with bulbous eyes and a disturbing fishy odour.

Escaping the Island

Once the investigators get off the island, the storm intensifies. A hurricane strikes the Fire Islands, and the Wilcox estate is hit especially hard. By the morning, nothing will remain.

Dreams of the Future

Scene Type: Flashforward

This final scene only occurs if the Deep Ones recovered the artifact. One night, the character with the highest **Cthulhu Mythos** dreams of a beach, somewhere in the United States. Waves wash over the beach, and the last wave leaves something horrifically familiar behind it – the artifact. A human child finds it lying in the sand, and picks it up... and the grim cycle begins again.



April 12th: Hello diary, my new friend. I write this on English to practice. It was a strange day in this new house, so differently to the small dwelling in New York. It is, thus calmly out here, misses I the noises of the roads.

April 15th: Mr. Jacob and Mrs. Harriet seem very friendly, but not the kind of the people, which would be friends with Jerry Grant. I do not trust Jerry Grant, it have cruel eyes. Old eyes have the Corneliszs, like deep wells.

April 25th: They never seem like my cooking. I know that I am a good cook and they eat whatever I set before them. They say even that they like it, but it never each possible joy in their voice gives.

2 maja: Boże, czym sobie na to zastużyłam? Tej nocy on wtargnął do mej sypialni i rzucił mnie z łóżka. Gdy zerwał ze mnie koszulę, byłam pewna, że chce posiąść mnie siłą. Zamiast tego, zaciągnął mnie na zewnątrz do ogrodu. Gwiazdy były takie dziwne, a na niebie cudem jakimś widniał drugi księżyc, który po chwili zbliżył się do mnie i...

May 10th: I feel very sick today.

September 16th: I can feel it kicking inside me. When mother was pregnant with Ela, she did not feel the baby kick until much later. The baby is very healthy.

October 31st: I heard them leave the house. I tried to run away, but I am too big to move. I crawled as far as the top of the stairs before the pain was too much to ensure.

December 3rd: Today it is my birthday. I wrote a letter home, telling them that I would not be coming home because I have too much work. It makes me laugh. I miss work. I miss walking. I miss being able to leave this bed, this room. My back is covered in sores.

December 5th: Mother visited me, and brought Ela with her. She is a whore now, and the whole city has her. I screamed at mother, and woke Jacob. He did not strike me, but he looked at me with eyes of fire, and it was the inside of my head was on fire.

January 10th: There are one hundred and seventeen stars on the wallpaper on the wall. There are sixteen panels in the wardrobe door.

January 15th: I have read all the books they will give me a dozen times. Mother visited me again, and we talked for a long time. She told me that all this was because I was a disobedient girl, and that God was punishing me. I am in hell. Jesus said, in my father's house there are many rooms, and it is like that in the Devil's house too. In the night, I hear all the other sinners whispering through the walls.

February 20th: I decided today that I would kill myself. It won't let me.

March 12th: I think it's coming. Jacob haunts me, never leaves my side. I beg him to cut it out of me, but he wants it born naturally! Naturally! As if anything about this unholy abomination was natural!

March 15th: Free.

March 16th: Jacob brought me a bitter tea to drink. Harriet came in, and she had the child with her. My child. She has named him Adam. He is perfect, beautiful, the child I always dreamed of.

I am very tired. Too tired to write.
Goodbye, goodbye.

I am so sorry.

Dear Sir

We have your son.

You will pay 50000\$ dollars
or you will not see him alive
again.

Bring the money in a suit case
to the 45th st. station Brooklyn
in 2 days time at 5 sharp.

Stand in front of the lucky
strikes poster and we will
tell you more then.

Come alone. If you go to the
polis or make anything public
we will kno.

CLASS OF SERVICE
This is a full-rate
Telegram or Cable-
gram unless its de-
ferred character is in-
dicated by a suitable
symbol above or pre-
ceding the address.

WESTERN
UNION

SYMBOLS
DL=Day Letter
NL=Night Letter
LC=Deferred Cable
NLT=Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

form 1204

Received at : Downsville

Ambrose Wisner, Shavertown, NY

Ambrose, they have delivered it.
You can both come back now.
Ray.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICES

Alaquin Hirt

Writer & Historian

*Apartment 302,
Shaller Building
Tribeca, Manhattan
New York*

HIRT IS A DEAD MAN AND SO ARE HIS
FRIENDS. BURN ANY NOTES OR LETTERS FROM
HIM, FORGET EVERYTHING HE TOLD YOU,
FORGET HE EVER EXISTED AND MAYBE YOU
WILL BE SPARED HIS FATE.

DO NOT THINK WE ARE A JOKE. DO NOT THINK
WE ARE NOT REAL. OUR HAND IS AT YOUR
THROAT. BURN HIRT'S NOTES AND DENY YOU
EVER KNEW HIM. IF YOU PUBLISH ANYTHING
ABOUT THIS, WE WILL KILL YOU. WE ARE WAT-
CHING.

In days when there were two moons in the sky,
the void-folk of ????? descended the moon-bridge
and taught the lore of the gods to our father's
father's father, the men of Irem. In time, the pleas
and offerings of the men of Irem reached the ears
of mighty ???? on his throne in distant Kadath, and he
walked among our people and showed them wonders.
The void-folk of ????? were gleeful at this sight,
and black diamonds and ????? were strewn beneath the
feet of ?????.

A curse issued from the mouth of the fish, and the
moon-bridge could not endure, and our fathers were
left without the protection of the void-folk.
Our enemies were many, and encamped in the hills
beyond Irem, and they called on ?????.

????, Father of All, opened the casket of the shi-
ning stone, and the radiance of ????? struck the land.
Our enemies were burned like dry sticks, and Irem
was hidden in the shadow of the moon. Our father's
fathers are those who left the city before it was
hidden, and we remember their fathers, who died and
live eternally in the city.

This is the secret lore of Irem, and the curse of
???? be upon he who speaks it to the uninitiated
or to the servants of ?????. Speak the words Iytahya
Cthyin when you stand on the threshold of the
moon, and you shall come to Irem and walk with
our father's father's fathers.

E



To the reader

HE WATCHED THEM CRAWL ACROSS A
RED SKY IT IS HIS DREAMS THAT I
DREAM AND IT IS HIS WORDS THAT
CONSUME ME LIKE TONGUES OF PENTA
COSTAL FLAME I AM NOT WHAT I WAS
AND I AM NOT WHO I WAS WHEN I
BEGAN THIS BOOK IS EVIL AND EVIL
DWE

LIS WITHIN IT

I WRITE THIS AS WARNING AND I
WRITE THIS AS TESTAMENT SOON I
WILL BE DEAD AND I WOULD BURN
THE BOOK HAD I THE WILL IF ONLY I
COULD FORGET HIM BUT EACH NIGHT
I DREAM OF A RED SKY
DO NOT READ THIS

J R SMITH 32th October The year of our
lord nineteen hundred and twelve

The Invisible Path

Martin Bellgrave, 1870, Privately
Published, Octavo, Unknown Print
Run

- Lewis Holland, Providence, RI
(private collection, multiple
copies)

- Society of Modern American
Poetry, RI

- Fordham University Library, NY

- Miskatonic University Library,
MA

- New York Public Library, NY

- Buster Locke, Providence, RI

- Arrived Kingsport and gave the
crew twenty-four hours liberty

- Made good time; loaded cargo.

- Paid \$300 from Wilcox account
for special

- Secured special hold before em-
barking crew.

- Departed Kingsport late? vaga-
bond attempted to stowaway.

- Storm blowing up from SE, heavy
seas

- lights

Babylon Estate,
East Fire Island

To Whom It May Concern,

I am given to understand that a terrible tragedy has befallen one of the proud ships that brave the wild seas, and that the ship in question is the Star of Mauritius, engaged by my company to perform certain tasks. There are certain matters that must be attended to, matters of both art and considerable urgency, and I believe they would best be discussed in person. You are invited to visit me at my private estate on East Fire Island? please contact the Atlas Industries office in New York and Mr. Boyle will arrange transport immediately.

Yours,

H. A. Wilcox

Postscript: In addition to its normal cargo, the Star was, I understand, carrying a peculiar and valuable piece of modern art that is most dear to my heart. It is, of course, of no relevance in any criminal investigation, so if you could bring it with you to my estate, I would consider it, shall we say, the price of your passage.

