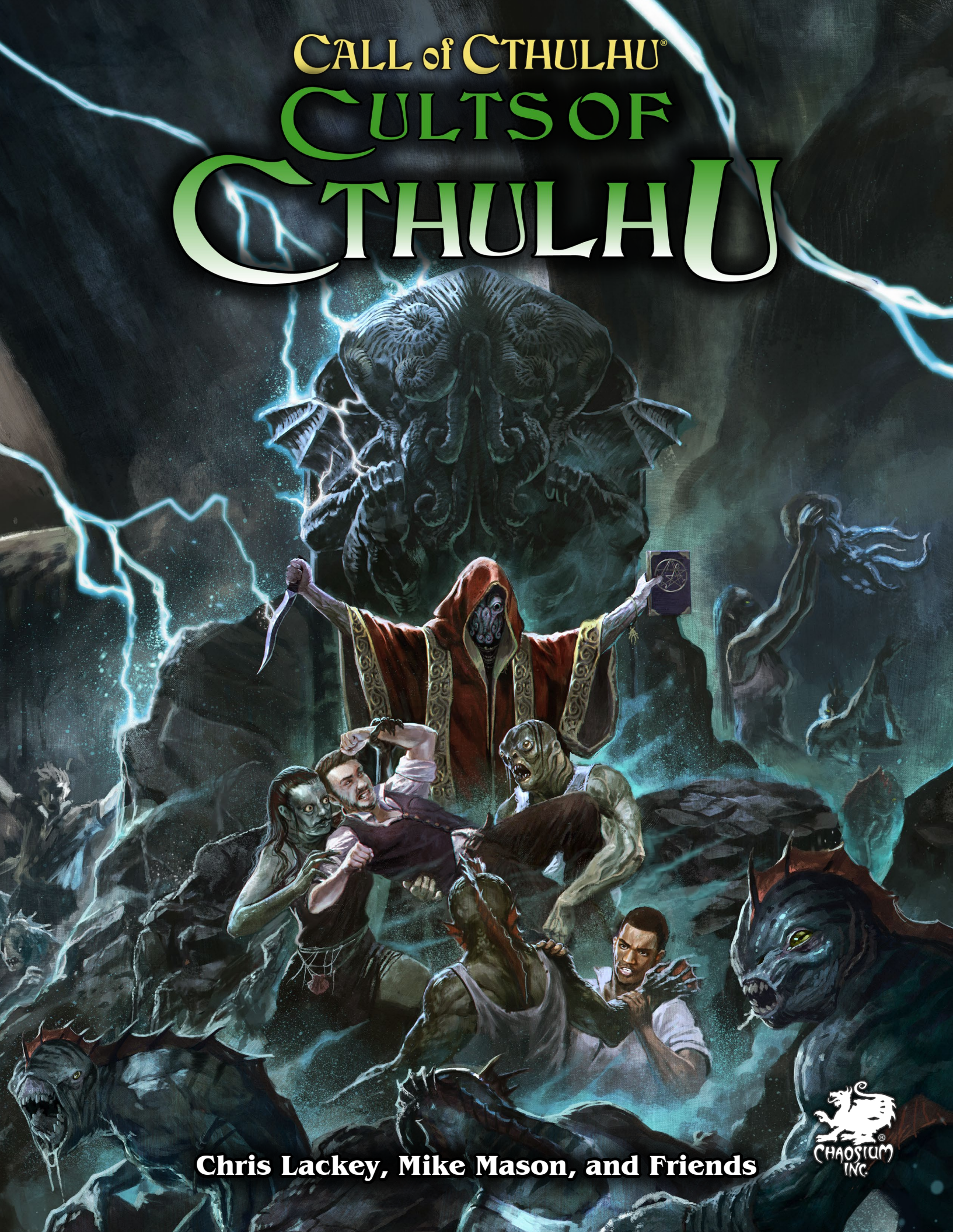
Call of Cthulhu®

Cults of Cthulhu



Chris Lackey, Mike Mason, and Friends

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CULTS OF CTHULHU

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MATURE CONTENT WARNING

The material in this supplement deals with mature themes—coercion, abuse, violence, murder, assault, moral corruption, and sexual activity. The presentation of the Cthulhu Cult deals with such subject matter in the context of weird cult activities and crimes. All Mythos cults are unsavory, with most downright diabolical and wicked in their actions and effect upon others. These are "evil" cults in the fully human sense of the word, and their attitude to life and their hideous crimes are meant to be diametrically opposed to societal norms, as well as the moral steadfastness of investigators and pulp heroes. Of course, while some humans do not require the impetus of the Cthulhu Mythos to enact the most dire and awful things, the cults in this book are composed of humans who have been somehow touched by the corrupting and malign influence of the Mythos.

Keepers are advised to think carefully about and adjust their presentation of this subject matter—and the specifics thereof—in accordance with their own and their group's comfort levels. While some groups may want to explore certain themes and realize their game world as a full-on visceral and gritty diorama, others may desire a subtler approach and seek not to address certain matters. Adjusting or eliminating details to suit your group's tastes, and fading out from difficult material as needed, are all tools that can be used.

Ensure your group has the opportunity to discuss how they wish the game world to be presented, what subject matter should be off the table, and what level of detail they will enjoy. This should inform you, the Keeper, how the cults operate in your portrayal of the game world. Remember, the game is designed to be a shared experience and everyone in the group should feel they can contribute to it in a safe and enjoyable manner. Taking time to discuss how, and if, such darker material should feature in your games is time well spent and ensures that no one is uncomfortable or distressed by the events and depictions that occur. This is, after all, a game—adjust the material so that everyone can have fun.

INTRODUCTION

"Cthulhu still lives, too, I suppose, again in that chasm of stone which has shielded him since the sun was young. His accursed city is sunken once more, for the Vigilant *sailed over the spot after the April storm; but his ministers on earth still bellow and prance and slay around idol-capped monoliths in lonely places. He must have been trapped by the sinking whilst within his black abyss, or else the world would by now be screaming with fright and frenzy. Who knows the end? What has risen may sink, and what has sunk may rise. Loathsomeness waits and dreams in the deep, and decay spreads over the tottering cities of men. A time will come—but I must not and cannot think! Let me pray that, if I do not survive this manuscript, my executors may put caution before audacity and see that it meets no other eye."*

—H. P. Lovecraft *The Call of Cthulhu*

That final paragraph from *The Call of Cthulhu* story leaves us with an open door we cannot close. Or, a lid to a Pandora's Box that can never be shut. We know that evil still lurks in the world and we have only seen a glimmer of that darkness. We can choose to ignore it and hope we are lucky enough to never cross its path or we can try and fight, no matter the cost and how hopeless it may be.

In *Cults of Cthulhu* we delve into the human side of a dark and horrific world. Where humans twist their minds and souls into crazed shapes to survive the hopeless universe, or seek to find meaning in their fleeting and insignificant lives. We delve into the world of the Cthulhu Cult and those who hear its master's call.

In the *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* there are many people who serve the dark forces of the universe, from sorcerers to cultists, who trade favors with all manner of malignant entities like Nyarlathotep, Hastur, and Shub-Niggurath. But, it is Lovecraft's seminal tale—the story after which this roleplaying game is named—that paints the picture of an insidious cult. One that has secretly permeated human civilization since before human civilization even existed.

This book attempts to throw open that door and step inside, exploring the intricacies of a Cthulhu Cult and its varying permutations. As a Keeper, writer, or storyteller, this book can be used as a tool to help inspire you to expand on the fiction of Lovecraft and others, to create something totally new, but still rooted in the twisted brambles and sunken seaweed of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Cults of Cthulhu will guide you in the creation of complex and believable antagonists for your scenarios—villains who are more than just faceless, robed minions. Cultists are people too. They have hopes and dreams. They have families and friends. They have loved and been hurt. They are human. They are us. And, these things are what make them the most terrifying threat in all of the Mythos. For they are us, and if they can become the corrupted servants of the Mythos, then so can we.

COMPOSITION

Chapter 1: History of the Cthulhu Cult. A collection of historical accounts of events that may be connected to the worship of Great Cthulhu. It is divided into two parts: the first is the collected research of Mildred Schwartz, a woman who found the infamous Angell box and continued the research of Francis Wayland Thurston; the second part is a look at the Cthulhu Cult in the modern age, when David Eberhart, a documentary film student, discovers the work of Mildred Schwartz and follows in her footsteps. Both accounts provide inspiration and potential material, although it is up to the Keeper to decide if either have any basis in the reality of their game world.

Chapter 2: Cults of Cthulhu. A detailed look at five Cthulhu cults from different periods in history. Two of these cults were created by Lovecraft, while the other three pose new threats for your investigators to face. Each section explores the history, beliefs, and social structure of the differing cults, as well as detailing the leaders and key members, along with possible plot and story ideas for your own campaigns or scenarios.

- **The Elevated Order of Morpheus:** a Cthulhu cult based in 1890s London, where the wealthy and elite are not satisfied with mundane power and influence.
- **The Louisiana Swamp Cult:** a detailed depiction of the brutal Cthulhu cult disbanded by Inspector Legrasse in the swamps just outside of New Orleans in 1907.
- **The Society of the Angelic Ones:** a Cthulhu cult thriving in 1920s Los Angeles, preying on those that came west chasing the California dream, only to be left hopeless and desperate.
- **The Esoteric Order of Dagon:** an expanded look into the deep one cult from Lovecraft's *The Shadow over Innsmouth*, where serving Cthulhu is only part of a far greater plan.
- **The Church of the Perfect Science:** a modern-day cult that uses psychology, technology, and mass media to prepare humanity for the coming of Great Cthulhu.

Chapter 3: Creating a Cthulhu Cult. Gets into the nitty-gritty of creating your own Cthulhu cult, providing details about what makes a Cthulhu cult different from other types of Mythos cults, as well as going into the basics of organizational structure. This chapter details a step-by-step process for designing a cult from the ground up, looking deep into aspects such as financing, recruitment, and organization. Advice for creating a cult leader, arguably, the linchpin of any cult, is included. Three example cults are included to demonstrate the method as well as offer inspiration.

Chapter 4: Cultists, Monsters, and Artifacts. Provides resources for Keepers, including profiles for generic cultists

that you can use in your own scenarios. This chapter also details some new monsters, supernatural artifacts, and new spells to keep things fresh for your investigators and cause them nightmares.

Chapters 5 to 7: Scenarios. A collection of three adventures, set in different time periods and locations, which can be linked together by an artifact—an idol of Cthulhu. You can play these scenarios as separate adventures or link them together to paint a much broader picture of the Cthulhu Cult across the world. While structured to take place in differing eras, the scenarios can be adjusted to allow play in a single time period, be it the 1920s–1930s or modern-day.

- **Loki's Gift:** set in 1890s London, the investigators must look into the death of a talented young musician who seemingly committed suicide. This scenario explores the darker side of the arts and music, reflecting the ills of society back onto the investigators.
- **Angel's Thirst:** set in 1920s Los Angeles, the investigators are hired by a young woman whose taxi-driving father has been missing for over a week. This scenario delves into the power of religion, community, and family, and how everything can be twisted to serve a dark purpose.
- **A God's Dream:** set in 2017, the investigators must track down their friend in the heart of Chicago. This adventure looks at how technology can aid a cult—granting wealth and corporate influence to potentially awaken the Great Old Ones.

Appendices. Cover suggested further reading and inspiration, using Mythos tomes when researching Cthulhu, and collected player handouts and maps from the scenarios.

A Cthulhu symbol

CHAPTER 1

HISTORY OF THE CTHULHU CULT

The Cthulhu Cult is mentioned sparingly in Lovecraft's fiction; *The Call of Cthulhu* and *The Shadow over Innsmouth* being the two major exceptions. But, even within those stories, the author says little about what they are and how they actually operate. This chapter's primary purpose is to present a fleshed-out history of the Cthulhu Cult, while also attempting to preserve some of the mystery surrounding it.

The Cthulhu Cult is comprised of seemingly separate and disparate cults, all worshiping Great Cthulhu in different ways. Whether communication between these cults exists, and whether they all fall under the direction of the Deathless Masters, should remain in the purview of the Keeper. Thus, on one hand, the Keeper could decide that all the various cults devoted to Cthulhu fall under the umbrella of a single "Cthulhu Cult" or, on the other hand, that numerous unconnected cults exist that are collectively (in the eyes of outsiders at least) regarded as the Cthulhu Cult. Alternatively, one might suppose that alongside numerous unconnected Cthulhu-worshipping cults, there is also the Cthulhu Cult, which does loosely connect some of these cults together—this proposition suggesting that the Cthulhu Cult is the major player, while there are others who operate to their own (often limited) agendas. It's feasible to expect that some of these disparate cults may, in time, be discovered by the Cthulhu Cult and embraced into its fold or, quite likely, used as cat's paws to further the Cthulhu Cult's aims without the lesser cult's knowledge.

Cthulhu cults, like Cthulhu itself, should be enigmatic. They receive/interpret commands from a being that thinks beyond human understanding. Trying to understand Cthulhu would be like a dog trying to understand what a human is doing when sat at a computer. No matter how much time you sat down with that dog, how many analogies you use, how many doggie treats you offer, that animal is incapable of understanding a computer. And so are we, when it comes to Cthulhu.

We can never understand Cthulhu. So, how do you write for a Great Old One? You don't. You write for its cult.

A cult's ultimate goals may be unknowable because the supernatural forces they worship are unknowable; however, the leaders and members of a cult have human emotions and agendas, and they perceive Cthulhu's messages through a human filter. They don't fully understand Cthulhu either, although in their insanity they may glean insights beyond the average human mind. Thus, for most cults, their tactics and daily activities are (to some degree) understandable. Cults need money to operate. Cultists need to eat, pay the bills, and operate within society, all of which allows them to remain under the radar of law enforcement. Cult members have hopes and personal goals, and they sometimes have families. Cultists are humans and therefore have human limitations and desires—be they a quest for power, knowledge, money, or simply wanting to be among the "chosen ones" when Cthulhu rises.

This chapter provides examples of Cthulhu cults through history—but what they were doing, and why, can never be fully understood. A group of cultists may want to make sacrifices to Cthulhu. That's understandable. But, what does Cthulhu get out of people being killed in its name? Power? What kind of power? What for? How does it work? There is no answer to these questions we could properly comprehend or understand.

Cults, on the other hand, have many small goals that can, and should be, understood by the Keeper. The cult wants to sacrifice 13 people. The cult needs to steal a gemstone or an artifact. The cult must cosmetically modify themselves to look like Edgar Allen Poe. These goals, which the investigators can understand and interfere with, are the human level of the story and where the Keeper's focus should lie. Don't sweat the big picture. The more a Mythos god's actions seem strange, random, and confusing, the more horrified your players will be.

Opposite: Henry Wilcox sculpts a horror in clay

PREFACE

The following sections are drawn from the research of Mildred Schwartz, dated October 5, 1939, and express her personal findings and opinions on the matter of Cthulhu cults. Schwartz's text is presented in full, with minor editorial corrections.

The Cthulhu Cult is real. I cannot express to you how difficult it was to write those words, but this in the irrefutable truth. I have gathered information on the worshipers of the Sleeping God over the last eight years, traveling across the United States and Europe, and collecting records of events that I believe show a global threat to humanity.

I have never personally experienced the supernatural. Unfortunately, in doing my research, I fear I have caught the notice of people that want to keep these groups and incidents hidden. When I began looking into the Cthulhu Cult, it was out of boredom and curiosity. Now, I realize the importance of this research. I know there are living people that believe in, and worship, the ancient god Cthulhu.

I had never heard of Cthulhu or its cults until nine years ago. I was working for a clipping agency and was assigned with cleaning up the storeroom. Doing so, I discovered a locked box and odd key on a back shelf, hidden away among the files and dust. When I opened the box, I discovered that it had belonged to one of our clients, Francis W. Thurston, who died in 1927. No one in the office knew how we received the box, but it seemed to have been in the agency's possession since just before Thurston's death.

Mildred Schwartz

The box contained the research of a Professor George Angell (1841–1925) of Brown University, documenting several eyewitness accounts of Cthulhu worship. I possess a master's degree in theological studies, and found the idea of this "Cthulhu Cult" most intriguing. Thus, I began my own investigation, undertaking extensive research and interviewing a number of individuals regarding Cthulhu's worship. I feel I have only seen the tip of this dread iceberg.

The practice of Cthulhu worship extends through different cultures and time periods, with a surprising lack of connection between different manifestations of the cults. There is no Cthulhu "bible" or doctrine, though Cthulhu is described in many ancient tomes.

Ultimately, I'm not sure how these cults originated. My findings suggest that the worshipers are connected to Cthulhu in their dreams, with their commands dictated by the "Great Old One." Or, perhaps, the so-called "Deathless Masters" have been passing information to new generations throughout history, with their true power and influence being cleverly obfuscated. Perhaps, the source of the Cthulhu cults is something totally unknown to us, with no historical records in existence. Only time will tell.

The following historical accounts I have included in this document are all the records I could find that have some connection to Cthulhu worship, if not cults in and of themselves. Some seem more solid than others, and I'll let the reader conclude on the ultimate validity of the accounts. I speak only English and French, so am limited to records in these languages. I guess that there are other accounts I am unaware of, due to the lack of English translations of these records. Indeed, I feel that my research only scratches the surface. I'm releasing these materials with the hopes of extending knowledge and bringing these cults into the light of day.

ON CTHULHU

Cthulhu is said to be an extraterrestrial deity that came to this planet, along with others of its kind, tens of millions of years before the existence of humanity. It is often depicted and described as a giant humanoid with scaly, rubbery skin, bat-like wings, and an octopus-like head with a mass of tentacles erupting from its face. Cthulhu and its kind were not necessarily composed of flesh and blood. It is theorized that their physical presence does not consist of matter as we understand it.

Cthulhu lies dead or sleeping in the sunken city of R'lyeh, from which it dreams, sending out psychic visions and

messages to "sensitive" humans. It is said that R'lyeh will rise "when the stars are right" and with it, Cthulhu and its kind will awaken to regain mastery of this world. What Cthulhu is supposed to do, once risen, is a matter of debate among worshipers. Some believe that Cthulhu has already risen and returned to its slumber, but again, the legend varies.

By piecing together the records of William Dyer from his expedition to Antarctica, accounts from the *Necronomicon*, and the confessions of a Louisiana cultist known only as Castro, a more detailed history of Cthulhu and its kind can be extrapolated. According to Dyer's account of an ancient alien mural, created by creatures he calls the "Old Ones" or "Elder Things," we find some insight.

The Elder Things created a vast civilization, tens of millions of years before the dawn of man. At some point in this ancient history, octopoid beings, who are said to be the spawn of Cthulhu itself (or smaller examples of this god-like race), came from the stars to Earth. Cthulhu and its spawn populated the planet and started a war with the Elder Things. Such warfare may have come to pass due to the encroachment of Cthulhu's spawn, which pushed the Elder Things into the oceans. The Cthulhu spawn (also known as "star-spawn"), at some point came to an understanding with the Elder Things. The Cthulhu spawn would possess much of the Elder Things' former territory, leaving the Elder Things with a small portion of land as well as the seas, since the oceans were somehow inhospitable to Cthulhu and its kind.

Great cities of the Cthulhu spawn were built all over the earth, with R'lyeh, their greatest city, being built in (what is now) the South Pacific. Some time passed and, for an unknown reason, the Pacific lands of Cthulhu, including R'lyeh, sank into the ocean. R'lyeh supposedly still rests at the bottom of the ocean, at coordinates of S. Latitude 47° 9′, W. Longitude 126° 43′ (according to an account by a Norwegian sailor, Gustaf Johansen). The journal of Johansen states that R'lyeh rose in 1925, albeit temporarily. And with it, Cthulhu.

THE AWAKENING OF CTHULHU

The work of Professor Angell and Mr. Thurston creates a well-documented account of what happened in the South Pacific in 1925. The first signs were seen on February 28. Angell collected numerous reports of artists and poets having strange, yet similar dreams revolving around Cthulhu and R'lyeh.

Angell met one such person, a young artist named Henry Anthony Wilcox, who studied sculpture at the Rhode Island School of Design, and who came to Angell with a bas-relief depicting strange hieroglyphics. Wilcox wanted to know what the writing meant, having sculpted the bas-relief after experiencing a strange dream.

Wilcox described his dream to Angell, telling of great cyclopean cities made with giant stones, the structures dripping with green ooze. The hieroglyphics he had carved in the bas-relief had covered the walls and pillars of these strange cities. As the dream came to an end, Wilcox heard an inhuman voice say, "Cthulhu fhtagn."

Wilcox had said he was "psychically hypersensitive" and had been since childhood. Many of the other accounts gathered by Angell not only involved artist and poets, but patients of asylums. Something seemed to have happened on both a global and a psychic level.

The intensity of these dreams continued to grow, until the night of March 27, when the victims of these visions entered a state of madness, drifting between sleep and delirium. Angell monitored Wilcox while he endured a weird mental state, slipping in and out of consciousness. This continued until April 2 at 3 pm, when Wilcox snapped out of the fugue with no memory of what he had experienced.

Angell went on to collect news reports corresponding to the dates between March 27 and April 2, with the material showing a widespread increase of reported psychotic episodes, mob attacks, murders, and suicides—over twice the normal numbers during that period of time. Angell found that most of those "psychically sensitive" had similar recoveries to Wilcox, though a few had suffered permanent mental trauma.

All of these episodes seemed to be some kind of warning, or indication, of the event described in the journal of Gustaf Johansen, a sailor serving on a two-masted schooner, the *Emma*, which had left Auckland for Callao on February 20 with a complement of 11 men. On March 1, the *Emma* was thrown off course by a terrible storm that coincided with a large earthquake. While correcting course and trying to make up for lost time, the *Emma* encountered another vessel, the *Alert*. The commander of the *Alert* warned the crew of the *Emma* to turn back, but when the captain refused, the *Alert* opened fire on the *Emma*—it was very unusual for a vessel such as the *Alert* to be armed with a cannon. The *Emma* was hit and began taking on water. The captain of the *Emma* was able to get her close enough to the *Alert* to board the enemy vessel. After a heated battle, the crew of the *Emma* took control of the *Alert*. The encounter left the entire crew of the *Alert* dead, while the *Emma* lost three men, including the captain and first mate, leaving Johansen to take command of the *Alert*.

After securing the vessel, Johansen found an altar to Cthulhu on board, as well as records of illegal activities that the *Alert's* former crew had been involved in. From what I have been able to put together, the *Alert*'s crew

were members of a Cthulhu cult based out of Fiji, and one possibly connected to the **Esoteric Order of Dagon** (page 84). The cultists set off from Dunedin for the coordinates of S. Latitude 47° 9′, W. Longitude 126° 43′ on March 1—the same day as the earthquake and storm.

Following the direction of those coordinates, the crew could see a large tower rising out of the sea. No landmass has been recorded in that area before or since. The crew decided to investigate and proceeded to the great stone tower.

Moving closer, they could see that the tower was part of a larger landmass made of a strange city that had emerged from the depths. Johansen and his crew went ashore to investigate this alien structure. Johansen postulated that perhaps only the tip of a great city had emerged, with a majority of the landmass still lying under the sea.

The city's architecture was unlike anything made by human hands, the stones used in its construction were gigantic and made from an unknown material. Strange hieroglyphs marked many of the structures, and the scale of the archways and steps seemed as if the city was made for creatures much larger than humans. But, most importantly, many of the structures were non-Euclidian; they did not fit with any known understanding of geometry or physics. The buildings defied the laws of nature by their very existence. Such information confirms (perhaps) that the creatures that built this place had a grasp of physics superseding not only our understanding, but our perceptions. This varies greatly from the structures built by the Elder Things, which, while alien in design, seem to conform to humanity's understanding of physical space and structure. Cthulhu and its ilk are not just alien, they are truly "other."

The seamen found themselves at the pinnacle of the island, near the foot of the monolithic tower, the base of which was carved with an octopoid-dragon image (most likely Cthulhu) on the surface of an acre-sized door. The men examined the door, touching and climbing its surface. I find their behavior curious. I'm not sure what possessed these men to go to this door, or even to enter the risen city. These men were sailors, not explorers. Johansen often states how terrified he was, yet he continued to lead these men. To what end? What is it that they hoped to gain? It was hypothesized to me by professor Wilmarth, that some supernatural force might have compelled these men to act as they did. And, in truth, I feel he must be correct.

By the acts of the men, or by chance alone, the great door slowly opened. An opaque darkness filled the entryway as a noxious odor seeped out. Then a green, gelatinous mass, squeezed out of the doorway. Once emerged, the shape shifted into the giant form of a scaly, octopus-headed, dragon-winged humanoid. Johansen emphatically states in his journal, that this was Cthulhu.

The creature quickly snatched up some of the sailors in its giant claws. I assume they were consumed, but Johansen is vague in his account, with their deaths only being implied. In their panicked fear, other sailors lost their footing and fell to their deaths. One, named Parker, was said to have fallen into "an angle which was acute, but behaved as if it were obtuse" and simply disappeared. Again, the account shows us this place does not only exist in different dimensions, but it also enables humans (and others) to move into or through them.

Johansen and one other sailor, Briden, made it back to the rowboat and then to the *Alert*, with Cthulhu lumbering behind them. Johansen, knowing that the creature would overtake his ship, decided to turn the vessel around and attempt to ram the beast. When he did, the creature, surprisingly, popped—Johansen describes "a bursting as of an exploding bladder, a slushy nastiness as of a cloven sunfish, a stench as of a thousand opened graves…" All that was left was a noxious, green smoke. This account, again, illustrates a creature completely alien to our understanding. It seemingly had no skeleton or muscle structure, but was composed of a gaseous material. Or, perhaps, it can disassemble itself on a molecular level. Possibly, such behavior could be the result of Cthulhu existing in multiple dimensions simultaneously. Of course, Cthulhu's true nature remains unclear and we may never fully comprehend or understand such matters.

Johansen continued on, moving away from the risen city, only to look back and see the green cloud reform into its previous shape. This moment seemed to be a mental breaking point for Johansen, as his account ends with no further description of the creature, the city, or any coherent thought. Within his crazed ramblings, Johansen described another powerful storm on April 2, after which he experienced a feeling of relief.

The survivors of the account are now dead. Briden died before the *Alert* was found floating aimlessly at sea, while Johansen died a year later at his home in Oslo. Thus, further interviews with the supposed eyewitnesses are impossible.

One is led to ask: is this account true? This being the only record I have found of anyone actually ever finding R'lyeh or Cthulhu. Why rise and quickly descend again? Johansen was the only survivor of the incident, with no physical evidence ever acquired. So, did it happen? Perhaps Johansen and his crew experienced something else entirely, a group psychosis or some form of mass hysteria. If this location was the actual source of the world-wide psychic event, perhaps the crew of the *Alert* experienced some kind of mental attack or shock, with Johansen's record being his interpretation of what transpired, and thus must be viewed as his perception rather than a statement of fact. There is no evidence to corroborate my theory, but there is also no physical evidence whatsoever of the event. What actually transpired, truly remains a mystery.

BELIEFS OF CTHULHU WORSHIPERS

The most comprehensive testimony of a Cthulhu cultist is found in the *Angell Papers*. The cultist known only as "Castro" let slip insightful facts during his interrogation at the hands of Inspector John Raymond LeGrasse of the New Orleans Police Department.

According to Castro, Cthulhu was a high priest of its species, able to use great magics to preserve its dead (or sleeping) kin as well as itself. Such magic is connected to the stars and their position in the heavens, although this may be a correlation and not necessarily a source of power. The stars, however, dictate when Cthulhu and the "Great Old Ones" can arise. The cults waiting for this resurrection spend their time in worship of Cthulhu, perhaps somehow assisting the Dead God and its kind to awaken and rule the planet once more. From Castro we discover the chant used by Cthulhu cultists in almost all cultures and periods in history:

"Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn."

The phrase is said to mean: "*In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming.*" The original language is unknown and relates to no known language, living or dead.

A common element in many Cthulhu cults is the connection to an idol or statue of some kind, usually depicting Cthulhu. Typically, such idols are made by a cultist although some statues are implied to be created by Cthulhu's spawn, discovered by humanity long after the creature's imprisonment. The idol found by Johansen was made of an unknown material, perhaps from some kind of meteorite or brought to Earth by the creatures themselves.

Castro, in his younger days, was a sailor and had spent some time in China. It was there, he claims, that he was introduced to Cthulhu worship by "Deathless Chinamen." In my research, I have found references to Deathless Masters and Undying Ones—perhaps, they are all one and the same.

Prayers and rituals are not only performed to gain insight into the Dead God's wishes, but to somehow access its power. Castro claimed that the Old Gods would come back and teach new ways of "shouting and killing and reveling in joy." Humanity would evolve beyond good and evil, with societal rules thrown aside to indulge in a "Great Ecstasy." These end times would come at a point where humanity had already "become as the Great Old Ones." What he meant by these things we can only speculate. Perhaps liberation from not only morality but from a Euclidian way of thought. Perhaps followers of Cthulhu will be granted insights into our very existence and purpose, providing its worshipers with greater power over their destinies as well as over others. This is a common idea found in many of the Cthulhu cults that I've discovered in my studies. Cthulhu will give you something no one else can give you—if you pay its price.

A Cthulhu idol

TIMELINE OF CTHULHU WORSHIP

Following is a timeline I have constructed from historical accounts of what I believe to be Cthulhu or Cthulhu Cult related worship. Some of the evidence is, I admit, tenuous, but I will allow the reader to judge for themselves if the information is helpful or not.

CULT OF SUMER (2000 BC)

The Cult of Sumer is the oldest record I have found of a possible Cthulhu cult. The account is attributed to the Greek scholar, Aeschines, who heard the story from a Persian merchant.

During the reign of Shulgi, in the Third Dynasty of Ur, the city of Ur was struck by a "plague of madness" that lasted for a few days. During that time, the city was in chaos, paving the way for an attempted coup. The unnamed leader of the revolt was said to call "demons from the sky" and to "poison the minds of the people." The cult leader said he was given his gifts from the "god before gods who sleeps dead in the city under the sea." The leader and his followers were able to perform a number of rituals in the city's streets and market, most of which included orgiastic rites, as well as animal and human sacrifices.

The power of the cult was so great that it was able to recruit most of Shulgi's trusted servants. Shulgi and his remaining scholars knew that this threat could not be defeated by force, and so sought out ancient knowledge to destroy the cult. For two days, Shulgi and his men searched for answers in ancient writings and prayed to the gods for guidance. On the morning of the third day of madness, Shulgi claimed that a demon came to him in a dream and showed him a sunken city that would again rise. But also, the dream showed him answers.

Shulgi went alone to the marketplace where the cult was performing a ritual. He calmly walked up to the cult leader and stood before him. The leader of the cult believed that Shulgi had come to join in the ritual; however, Shulgi pulled his dagger and slit the cult leader's throat. With the death of its leader, the cult's followers seemed "to wake from a walking slumber" and life returned to normal.

A bas-relief of the Cult of Sumer

CTHULHU IN ROME (60 AD)

The Roman historian Tacitus writes an account of a possible Cthulhu cult. In the port of Ostia, a group of sailors was arrested for the murder of 24 people over the span of three weeks. The leader of the group, a merchant and sculptor known as Fabius, had collected like-minded sailors from around the empire to help him bless the world for "Kathlulu."

It seemed that Fabius planned to create ten-foot-tall sculptures of his god—described as having the head of squid and the wings of a bat—and place them around parts of the greater Roman Empire. Once each sculpture was erected, Fabius and his cult followers would sacrifice a person and cover the statue in the victim's blood. Fabius did not recall how many statutes he had made but, according to Tacitus, 31 were discovered by the authorities and destroyed. While the account leaves out many details, it appears Fabius and his followers were executed.

Note: see **Cthulhu Statues of Fabius**, Chapter 4, page 183, for further details.

IRAM: CITY OF CTHULHU (4TH CENTURY)

Little is known about the lost city of Iram. It is mentioned in the Quran only briefly, described as "having lofty pillars" and, due to its corruption, was destroyed by God and now lies buried in the desert sands. The only other documentation I could find on the "City of Pillars," is attributed to the Arab scholar Ali ibn Isa al-Asturlabi, allegedly written in the 9th century. The strange gods worshiped in Iram could point to a cult of Cthulhu operating in the heart of the city.

According to the story, the ruler of this city-state, referred to only as the Last King of Iram, may have been a devout worshiper of Cthulhu. The Last King was said to be nearly 200 years old and was accepted by his people to be a messenger of the gods. A direct translation of the name of the primary god is difficult, but seems to be pronounced "Kah-tho-oo."

The Last King received dreams of a sunken city where a god dreams and waits. This dreaming god would send visions to the faithful, teaching them the true ways of the universe and granting supernatural powers. Thus, such dreams provided uncommon knowledge to the king, as evidenced by the Last King creating strange structures in his city—buildings that "could move while standing still."

So great was his connection to Cthulhu that the Last King was able to commune with "unearthly creatures" that lived "below and above" the city. At the center of Iram, a great statue was erected depicting an immense god with the head of an octopus, the wings of a bat, and a tail that wrapped around its own throat. The statue stood before a temple built of unnatural stone—the stone was said to have been found deep in the desert and identified through visions received by the Last King. After its construction, it was said that this temple was difficult for people to look upon and impossible to describe.

As the legend goes, God saw this city of devils and turned his back upon it. The beginning of the end for Iram was when a holy man came to the city, who it was claimed possessed a greater understanding of demons than even King Solomon. The stranger warned all that God was going to destroy the city, and that anyone who knew and feared the one True God must flee or be taken away with Iram into the desert sands.

The Last King sent winged demons to slay the holy man, but they burned in the skies before they could act. The Last King called giant worms from the earth to eat the holy man, but the beasts split open in the fresh desert air. The Last King finally sent his trusted followers to capture the holy man, but once they looked into the holy man's eyes, they threw down their weapons and fled. The holy man, and those he swayed, left Iram. At dawn the next day, the city was gone.

THE ROYAL CTHULHU CULT OF JAPAN (781 AD)

In 781, Prince Sawara, the fifth son of the Emperor Kōnin of Japan, became the heir-presumptive after his older brother, Kanmu, became emperor. There had been rumors that Prince Sawara had a keen interest in the occult, but as royalty, his obsessions were accepted as noble fancy.

It was said that Sawara would hold strange, nighttime rites near the ocean and that he was often seen wearing curious jewelry adorned with octopoid imagery. Sawara's followers, who participated in these dark rituals, were known to be fiercely loyal and undertook his directions without question.

In 785, the administrator of the capital city, Fujiwara no Tanetsugu, was assassinated. Sawara and his followers were implicated in the murder, which was carried out in a bloody and ritualistic fashion. The motivation for the murder was painted as political, but the true reason seemed to be that Fujiwara discovered that Sawara was performing human sacrifices to his sea god.

Prince Sawara's followers were executed, while he was exiled to the Awaji Province. On his journey, he began to waste away. In a matter of days, the prince lost so much weight that his guards described him to be "like a skeleton." Sawara died before he reached his destination, with his final words said to be, "The dead god sleeps and dreams in his house."

WITCH CULT (1290)

A German Benedictine monk, Aldo Keller, writes an account of a witch cult with hundreds of members near the city of Weihenstephan. Keller notes that the cult was unusual, not only because of its large membership, but because the members of the coven came from all walks of life. He claims the cult stretched across social classes, with worshipers consisting of farmers, merchants, and members of the nobility, as well as some from within the clergy. For months prior to the surfacing of the cult, many people in the area were openly performing pagan rituals and spells.

According to eyewitness accounts, an elderly man in the village was said to have grown younger by almost 30 years; a woman went into labor and then proceeded to give birth to seven children, all of which were able to walk within days; and "stones of gold" were found lying in the street, with nobody paying any notice or taking them.

The authorities, feeling that they were losing control to dark forces, began hunting down and executing witches. One account speaks of the men of the militia hunting for cultists, whereupon they were "set upon and taken by winged fiends," while others were pulled into the ground by "tree roots like serpents." It wasn't until soldiers were brought in from out of town that the cult leader was found and captured. The unnamed leader of the witch cult was said to have command of the village and had a small altar in her home with a statue of an "octopus-demon" at its center. On the gallows, she was said to repeat, "*The dead god will rise and none can stop him. You will see him in your dreams and know the errors of this day.*"

Woodblock print of the Witch Cult

A CURE TO ST. VITUS' DANCE (1381)

St. Vitus' Dance (better known as Sydenham's chorea) is an affliction causing uncontrollable jerking movements affecting the face, hands, and feet. The disease is often accompanied by mental instability, causing victims to cry or laugh uncontrollably. This affliction has historically manifested or been characterized as uncontrollable dancing.

One account of St. Vitus' Dance comes from Augsburg, Bavaria in 1381. Fifteen people spontaneously began dancing uncontrollably. Often these stories revolve around a church or religious ceremony, but this time the affliction seems to have no obvious cause or instigation. The people danced until they passed out from exhaustion, only to wake up the following day to start again. By the end of the second day, three monks came into the village claiming to know how to cure the victims. They performed an "ungodly" ritual for over an hour, at the end of which, the victims had control of themselves once more. A local scholar wrote down what he was alleged to have heard the monk's repeating over and over again during the ritual: "*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.*"

THE WELL TO HELL (1485)

This account comes from the German inquisitor Heinrich Kramer while in the Austrian province of Tyrol. It was reported to Kramer that the village of Vomperberg was a haven for heretics and witches.

When Kramer began his investigation, he found the locals of Vomperberg to be god-fearing Catholics, but sensed this might be a ruse to cover up demonic activity. Thus, Kramer made a gesture of leaving, but stayed the night in the woods just outside of the village, allowing him to observe events. He saw a group of eleven villagers perform a ritual around the town's well. As the ritual reached its climax, a "malformed shape" emerged from the well. Kramer believed this creature to be a demon, describing it as being "larger than a horse, but having the basic shape of a man, while its over-sized head was that of a squid, with tentacles grabbing at the air. As it emerged, great bat wings unfolded." He claimed that its aspect was so horrific that most of his men took leave of their senses and ran deep into the woods.

Soon after, Kramer gathered a local militia and arrested the cultists who had participated in the ritual, burning down their homes and destroying the well for good measure.

CULT OF CTHULHUL (1486)

The reign of the Aztec king, Tizoc, was short-lived. After ascending the throne, Tizoc fought the Otomies at Metztitlán, but was able to capture only 40 prisoners for sacrifice at his coronation. Such a low number of sacrifices is believed to have weakened his position and caused him to constantly fight for control. Tizoc's ultimate downfall is said to have come at the hand of this younger brother, Ahuitzotl, who poisoned him. Ahuitzotl is described as worshipping a lesser-known Aztec god, called Cthulhul.

There are very few accounts of Cthulhul in Aztec mythology, all of which say that the god dreams from within its temple under the sea, in a place called Ya-R'lyeh. It is said that Cthulhul's worshipers could journey to Ya-R'lyeh in their dreams, where they could learn the secrets of life and death.

NARVÁEZ EXPEDITION (1528)

While exploring what is now, western Florida, the Narváez expedition landed at the Jungle Prada site. After claiming the land for Spain, Narváez spoke to the local native population and discovered legends concerning a city of gold, called Apalachen. Wanting to find Apalachen and its gold, Narváez split his party, taking 300 men inland with him to search for the city, while the rest sailed north to Panuco.

On arriving at Apalachen, Narváez discovered the people had very little gold. The villagers, wanting to be rid of the invaders, told the Spaniard of another village called Aute, where there was so much gold that the people sewed it into their clothes. Eager to claim the gold, Narváez and his men moved on, their sights now set on Aute.

The villagers of Aute, again, had very little gold. This time, the people of Aute said that they had once been rich, but they had been raided by men from the village of Rutno. The people of Aute were afraid of the men of Rutno not only because of their aggressive behavior, but for the fact that they worshipped a dark god. The gold that they had stolen was used to make a large statue at the center of the village in the shape of their dark god. Thus, Narváez and his troops moved on to Rutno.

Narváez found that Rutno did indeed have a statue that was nearly 20 feet tall, but it was not made of gold as the people of Aute had said. Instead, it was fashioned from a dark green, almost jade-like, crystal, in the shape of a terrifying creature. The statue was said to look like a dragon with the head of an octopus and possessed long, clawed arms and the wings of a bat. Narváez wanted no part of the village, nor the statue, and planned to return Aute. But, before he left, the Rutno villagers began smashing their own statue with rocks. Some of Narváez men, against orders, joined in and helped the villagers destroy the statue of the squid-like god. As the statue fell to the ground, the villagers began to fight with one another. Narváez ordered his men to withdraw. Narváez describes watching the villagers kill each other, and then, themselves.

Some days later, on arrival back at Aute, the Spanish found the village had been burned to the ground. No sign of the villagers could be found.

THE SUBTERRANEAN WORLD OF XINAIÁN (1545)

The Asturian explorer Pánfilo de Zamacona y Nuñez claimed to have discovered a race of subterranean people in 1545, near what is now Binger, Oklahoma. This bizarre account tells of a vast underground city, called K'nyan, where these "Indians" (as Nuñez describes them) lived with strange creatures and advanced technology. Nuñez claimed these people worshipped a pantheon of gods, including Yig, Shub-Niggurath, Tsathoggua, and Tulu—this is one of the few accounts I have found where worship of Cthulhu ("Tulu") is placed on par with other entities.

The K'nyanians were said to be immortal and, with their technology, were able to breed strange creatures that they subjugated for their own dark deeds and pleasures. According to Nuñez, the K'nyanian civilization was declining, seemingly abandoning learning and growth for absolute hedonism.

Nuñez's account was discovered on a scroll found in a metal cylinder (made of an unknown material) in 1928. No physical evidence corroborating the existence of the K'nyanians has, to date, been found.

Detail of Narváez Expedition from 16th century manuscript.

CULT OF FIJI (1643)

The Dutch explorer Abel Tasman visited Fiji in 1643. Within the great collection of islands in the South Pacific, Tasman happened upon an isolated community of people shunned by other Fijians due to their strange religious beliefs.

These "Others" (as most Fijians described them) claimed to be visited by the "Children of the Shark God," who would guide the community to secret places where fish were abundant. These people from the sea were described as "fish in the shape of man." The island community said the fish-folk told tales of the time before man came to be, and would on occasion take both men and women from the community to breed with. The offspring of such mating were believed to be blessed by the Shark God with everlasting life.

The Fijians informing Tasman of the Others believed them to be a cursed people, and that while they claimed to be communing with oceanic gods, the fish-folk were actually evil spirits. Such tales piqued Tasman's curiosity and he decided to visit the island of the Others.

Tasman didn't stay long. He described the Others as malformed and unpleasant; off-putting in both appearance and demeanor. While he and his crew attempted to trade with the Others, the Dutchmen quickly learned these people were disinterested in the goods offered. Tasman noted that this was the first time he had seen Fijians living in stone structures; their homes constructed with large stones and covered in strange hieroglyphs. Tasman wondered at the Others ability to move and work such great stones and concluded that these stones and structures must have originated from an earlier and more advanced civilization.

COVEN OF NORFOLK (1645)

The self-pronounced "Witchfinder General," Matthew Hopkins relates his encounter with a group of witches that, I believe, may have been worshipers of Cthulhu. In spring of 1645, Hopkins went to the village of Broomholm to investigate a group of four women suspected of performing witchcraft. When Hopkins arrived, the women had already been released from custody, and upon questioning the village leader as to why the women had been arrested in the first place, Hopkins was told that the women had been accused of killing livestock in sacrifice to Satan. The official claimed the women had laughed at him and said their god was far older than Satan. Fearing supernatural retribution, the village leader let them return to their homes.

Sketches of the Coven of Norfolk

The four women lived together in a cottage not far from the seashore. Hopkins believed the carvings on the door of the cottage were a sign of witchcraft. Bursting inside, Hopkins and his men found the women with a black-winged devil performing "horrific deeds." When Hopkins' men attempted to kill the creature, it is said to have "melted into a pile of black bile" and then flew out of the cottage. While the women behaved ferociously, defending themselves against Hopkins' attack, they were eventually killed.

Hopkins notes that the women had built an altar in their home, behind which hung a tapestry depicting a strange city populated with demons "possessing worms for mouths and the wings of ravens." The cottage, the tapestry, and the women's remains were burned to ashes.

UNDYING MASTERS (1691)

Antoine Thomas, a Belgian Jesuit priest, mathematician, and astronomer was an advisor for the Chinese Emperor Kangxi. Thomas briefly discusses how a cult, called the Ghost Eaters, infiltrated the Emperor's court.

Before the cult's discovery, villagers from the surrounding countryside were going missing, with rumors persisting about strange rituals being performed in the caves outside of the city. While an investigation found no evidence of a cult within the caves, the person who made the original allegation was discovered drowned soon after.

The Emperor's advisor, Hui Qiang, took over the investigation, and soon caught some local undesirables, having them executed. Thomas' diary notes his dislike of Hui Qiang's methods and how the advisor's account of the cult didn't make sense to him. After conducting his own investigation, Thomas discovered that Hui Qiang was in possession of various occult paraphernalia. Upon Thomas bringing these findings to the court, the Emperor commanded that soldiers be sent to apprehend Hui Qiang. Thomas' diary suggests that Hui Qiang used magic to make some of the soldiers "cry and laugh and pull out their hair." The remaining soldiers attacked and stabbed Hui Qiang, but with apparently little effect. Hui Qiang then leapt from a window where he was "caught by a winged creature" and carried off into the night sky.

In his rush to escape, Hui Qiang left documents detailing his studies of the occult and advanced mathematics. After acquiring and studying the documents, Thomas learned that Hui Qiang was a member of the Ghost Eaters cult, who worshiped the god Cthulhu—a being that promised its followers understanding of the universe and the power to change it. Hui Qiang, according to the documents, was over 300 years old, though he seemed to be in his mid-30s. Thomas believed Hui Qiang had discovered the key to immortality, which may have been one of the reasons why Thomas went into reclusion to study the documents, only to return declaring that all of Hui Qiang's papers were nonsense and the work of a madman. Thomas claimed he had destroyed all the documents and never spoke of the incident again.

It is hard not to suspect that Hui Qiang may have been one of the Deathless Masters said to orchestrate the Cthulhu Cult.

VIENNESE UNDYING MASTERS (1778)

Another account of the Deathless Masters (in the account referred to as the Undying Masters) arises in Vienna, Austria, in 1778. Count Derex von Caprara had his assets seized after evidence came to light of his participation in witchcraft involving human sacrifice. While the Count denied the charge, his accusers claimed that he was not Count Derex von Caprara, but rather his great grandfather, Deiter von Caprara. The accusers claimed that Deiter von Caprara had used witchcraft and ritual sacrifice to stave off the aging process.

While awaiting trial, the Count's home was searched and a large sculpture of a man with a squid's head was discovered, and, among certain correspondence, were letters from practitioners of witchcraft. Some of the letters referred a higher order of sorcerers called the Undying Masters. Found guilty, the Count was burned at the stake.

STRANGE MINISTRY OF CAPE TOWN (1854)

A South African priest, Dennis Jonckers, age 42, was convicted of poisoning his congregation in Cape Town. According to various accounts, Jonckers had been acting strangely, claiming that God was communicating to him and his flock through dreams that provided insights into the "higher powers" of the universe. In the days leading up to Jonckers' poisoning the communion wine, the priest was heard to use the phrase "*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn*" in a number of his sermons.

Six people were killed as a result of Jonckers' poison, with dozens of others falling violently ill. The priest was tried and hanged, but his body was never buried due to his remains being stolen soon after execution.

GREENLAND CULT (1860)

William Channing Webb, professor of anthropology at Princeton University, came across a Greenlandic Cthulhu cult in 1860. The cult consisted of a small group of outcast Kalaallit Inuit who followed the teachings of an Angekok (a sorcerer priest). The group worshipped a "dead god" said to possess a squid-like form, and who came to this land before man was made.

Professor Webb reported seeing a stone bas-relief depicting Cthulhu, around which the cultists would dance and perform their rituals (alleged to include human sacrifice). According to the Greenlandic authorities, the cult was broken up. Various incidents of missing people (including children) in western Greenland occurring in 1898 and 1907 caused some to question whether remnants of the cult still existed, although investigations at those times were inconclusive. From what can be surmised, if a cult was involved, local people may have taken matters into their own hands (while the authorities turned a blind eye to such vigilantism). But, without any official records, it is possible that the Kalaallit Cthulhu cult continues to this day.

CULT OF VASAVASAMUDRAM (1872)

This record comes from Lieutenant Commander William Hemsley, who discovered a bizarre cult in southeastern India in the spring of 1872. The locals referred to members of the cult as *danavas* (a type of demon) because of their disturbing appearance due to self-mutilation. The *danavas* would ritualistically remove all body hair, ears, and genitals. Higher-ranking members were believed to remove more body parts, including eyes, tongue, fingers, toes, and sometimes limbs. The cult was said to worship a being called Katulul.

Helmsley, horrified by the cult's practices, questioned the locals as to why they permitted the cult to persist. The locals said they feared the cult as, should harm come to its members, Katulul would visit death upon them. Helmsley, seeking to break the cult's hold, went with his men in a bid to arrest the cult's members. In the ensuing fight, many of the *danavas* were killed, with the rest captured and arrested thereafter. Thus, the power of the cult seemed broken.

In the following days, Helmsley and his men began to suffer horrible dreams, with all falling seriously ill. On the third night of the sickness, Helmsley's squad disappeared. British officials, who later came to investigate, were told that the "Men of the Sea" had taken Helmsley and his men as they angered Katulul, the god of the cult they had destroyed.

THE ELEVATED ORDER OF MORPHEUS (1890s)

In the 1890s, members of a fraternal order known as the Elevated Order of Morpheus practiced their dark rituals in the heart of London. Not unlike most fraternal orders, the Order gathered in secret and supported one another in terms of commerce and life in general. At the height of its success, the Order was believed to have over 100 members, all from London's high society. Despite appearing to have numerous respected members of society within its membership, the Order fell under suspicion due to alleged criminal activity, including kidnapping and murder. Though no police records exist of any official investigation of the Order itself, available documentation can be found concerning the investigation and arrest of some of its members convicted of crimes.

Benjamin Leslie, a prominent surgeon, was caught running naked through the streets of Notting Hill. Upon arrest, Leslie admitted he had been imprisoning prostitutes in a secret dungeon he owned in Soho. When the police investigated, they found 13 women imprisoned on Leslie's property, all of whom appeared to be over the age of 60 and in severe mental shock. While most of the victims were unable to speak, some claimed to be young women who had been "drained of life" by a man wearing an octopus mask. Leslie vanished from the police holding cell and was never recaptured.

Lord Weldon Payne was arrested for attacking police officers who had been attempting to shut down the unlawful construction of a structure in Brompton Cemetery. Apparently, Lord Payne had the construction well underway before the authorities realized he didn't have the proper authorization. The structure was described as a large scaffolding built in strange geometric shapes. Lord Payne was released from custody without charge, but thereafter suffered a sudden mental breakdown and spent the rest of his days in a nursing home unable to communicate.

Theodore Holcombe, a founding member of the Order, was arrested after murdering his wife, children, and their servants in 1898. He was discovered by the police in his home, rolling on the floor in the entrails of his victims, laughing and screaming. He committed suicide the following day by chewing on his arm until he bled to death. According to the police report, the last words heard coming from his cell were "Cthulhu fhtagn."

The Elevated Order of Morpheus seemingly disbanded around 1898 after their lodge building was destroyed in a fire. The incident was judged to be accidental by the authorities.

Opposite: illustration of Greenland Cult from Victorian encyclopedia.

GREENLAND CULT.

YONKERS REVIVAL (1892)

In 1892, a traveling preacher named Reverend Dennis Yonkers was sought by Georgia State police for arson. Yonkers had trapped a congregation of 32 people in a revival tent and set it ablaze. While the majority suffered terrible burns, at least 12 people died in the blaze. According to survivor accounts, Yonkers was in the tent when it was set on fire, although his body was never found.

His ministry referred to the "Sleeping Lord." In one of his publications, he stated, "One day the Sleeping Lord will speak to you. In dreams he will tell and show you how to live. How you can find joy and ecstasy in your life, and how you can be free to live like him, without restraint. Once we become like the Sleeping Lord, he will join us and take us to an everlasting heaven!"

LOUISIANA SWAMP CULT (1907)

This account, taken from the *Angell Papers*, was told by Inspector John Raymond Legrasse of the New Orleans Police Department.

Reports of Voodoo cult activity from a parish south of New Orleans came to the attention of the police. The reports involved the abduction of women and children, and so the police were determined to act. The focus of these activities was centered in an area of the deep woods, from which drumming, shouts, and screams were said to come.

The police assigned 20 men to the task of bringing the culprits to justice. The cult was rumored to be practicing out by a squatter settlement. The squatters themselves claimed to have known who had kidnapped their people but were too frightened of the cult to take any action. From the squatter settlement, the police staged their assault, following the drum beats deeper into the woods. The police were shocked by what they found.

The police discovered a ritual in progress, with near 100 cultists dancing, screaming, and performing unspeakable acts of sex and violence. All were chanting the phrase, "*Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.*" These activities occurred around a ring-shaped bonfire, at the center of which was an eight-foot-tall stone monolith. At the top of the monolith was a stone statue of Cthulhu, no bigger than a foot in height. The monolith was made of granite, but the stone-like material of the Cthulhu idol was unidentifiable to the police.

Circling the entire scene were twelve scaffolds from which hung the mutilated bodies of some of the missing people. One of the officers claimed to see something beyond the ritual,

Police sketches of the Louisiana Swamp Cult

deeper into the woods—some old local legends spoke of creatures that lived in the swamp, described as "formless white polypous things with luminous eyes." Other legends described winged devils haunting the swamps. One officer claimed to see both the white creature and multiple winged things.

The police moved to break up the ritual. Five cultists were killed, two severely wounded, and 47 were captured. A few dozen were thought to have escaped into the woods. The cultists were a diverse mix of people from differing social, racial, and economic backgrounds. Indeed, a large proportion were sailors and not local to the area.

Only two of the captured cultists were deemed sane enough to stand trial. Though they proclaimed they didn't kill anyone, both were found guilty and executed. Strangely, their defense admitted to kidnapping but claimed it was the "black-winged ones" that committed the murders. One of the captured cultists, known only as Castro, claimed to have traveled the world, making connections with a group he called the "Deathless Chinamen," all of them being members of a greater cult, which he termed the Cthulhu Cult. It was from these that Castro learned about Cthulhu, its history and about the workings of the cult. Presumably, it was these "deathless ones" who supplied Castro with the Cthulhu idol.

As far as my research can tell me, the Cthulhu Cult of Louisiana was truly disbanded after the night of the raid. No more official reports have been forthcoming. Thus, one assumes that the escaped cultists must have moved on to other places.

SOCIETY OF THE ANGELIC ONES (1920s)

In 1925, the organization known as the Society of the Angelic Ones came to attention due to accusations of fraud and embezzlement. This was one among a number of events focusing on the so-called "California Cults." While it appears that most of these cults were simply scams designed to take money from desperate people hoping to fulfill their California dreams, the Society of the Angelic Ones seems to have had a far darker purpose.

During the ensuing trial, bizarre facts came to light and incited a public outcry for the police to take a more active role in breaking up the California Cults. After reading many of these accounts, I have found Mrs. Cartwright's Society of the Angelic Ones to be the only cult with possible connections to Cthulhu worship.

Mrs. Cartwright had a long police history of petty theft and fraud, but was rarely convicted or served only a small amount of time. She had three children (Elsie, Paul, and Kristina), and had no problem in using them as part of her scams. Cartwright had been married six times, having either divorced or had her former husband's die under mysterious circumstances. Her last husband, John Cartwright, died in a swimming accident in 1910.

In 1916, Mrs. Cartwright managed to convince members of the local Baptist church that she could commune with angels. It was reported that she would know things that no person should know, and that Mrs. Cartwright could use her divine connection to help people find lost things or communicate with loved ones taken from this world. Despite some initial positive attention, the minister of the Baptist church, Brad Craven, believed Cartwright was practicing witchcraft and excommunicated her from the church later that year.

Thereafter, Mrs. Cartwright worked privately out of her home in Santa Monica, reading fortunes and channeling the divine. It was in 1917 that Benjamin Gold, a local, wealthy businessman, came to Cartwright for spiritual advice. At one of Gold's consultations, Cartwright introduced him to her eldest daughter, Elsie, saying that her daughter was not human, as she had the eternal soul of an angel. It is believed that Cartwright encouraged a sexual relationship between Gold, 48 years old, and her daughter, who was 16 at the time.

Later that year, Benjamin Gold married Elsie Cartwright in a small, local ceremony. Four months later, Gold died of a heart attack and Elsie inherited Gold's entire fortune. Mrs. Cartwright used her daughter's newfound fortune to grow her consulting practice into a full-blown cult, officially establishing the Society of the Angelic Ones in 1919.

The first major project Mrs. Cartwright undertook for the Society was the building of a temple, not far along the coast in Venice, California. Construction went quickly and the project was finished in 1920. The temple was constructed in odd geometric shapes, with the main structure being a pyramid. The building was covered with strange runic symbols, which Mrs. Cartwright claimed was the script of the Angelic Ones.

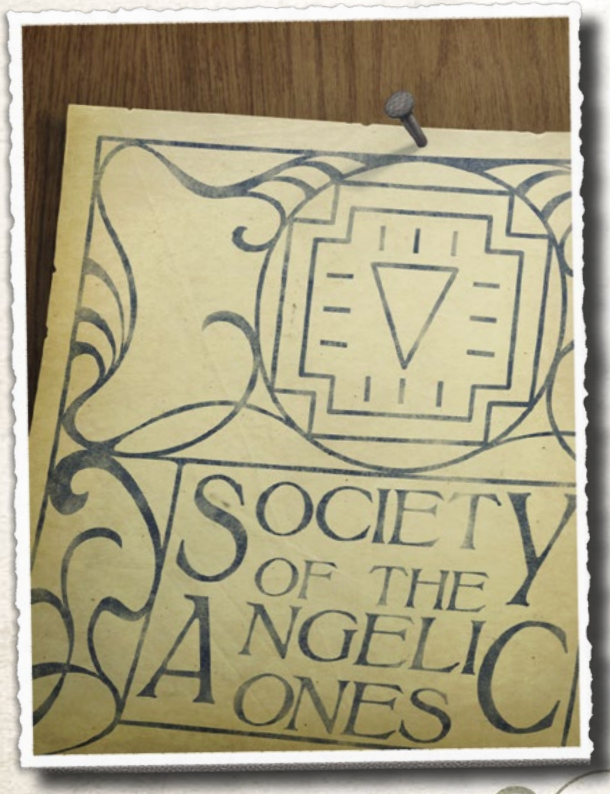
The Society of the Angelic Ones theology was loosely based on Christianity, but the cult focused on angelic beings that could take physical shape. Mrs. Cartwright said the Angelic Ones came from the elements, "angels of air, land, fire, and water." The Angelic Ones of the Air would come in the night and took the shape of black-winged angels. The Angelic Ones of the Earth would come from the ground and eat away the sins of man, showing themselves as great, pale serpents. The Angelic Ones of the Fire would come from the sun and shine their warmth to heal the faithful's wounds. While the Angelic Ones of the Water would bless the followers with everlasting life, showing themselves as aquatic humans.

Mrs. Cartwright claimed that her children were given to her by the union of the Angelic Ones of the Water. Cartwright seemed to believe that one day her children would transcend the mundane world and become Angelic Ones themselves.

Finding members for the cult was easy at that time in California. Wealth and success were sought by newcomers, but many found life much harder in the promised land than they had hoped. These lost souls needed not only food and a place to live, but a place to belong. The Society of the Angelic Ones provided that place to many, and the Society's membership rapidly rose to well over 100 people.

The Society continued without any major incidents until 1921. It had been gaining a dark reputation, with rumors of drugs and sex rituals. Elsie was said to be at the center of the sex rituals, engaging with multiple members of the cult during the ceremonies. Later that year, a member of the Society came to the police with accusations of assault and kidnapping. The woman claimed that she and four others (two other women and two men) were kidnapped by the cult, tied to poles, and left on the beach in the middle of the night. She managed to break free and attempted to release the others but was frightened off by figures coming out of the sea. The victim believed the figures who came out of the sea were Angelic Ones. She said that the "Angelic Ones weren't beautiful, they were horrific." The members allegedly involved in the kidnapping were arrested but later claimed they acted alone, with no connection to the Society. After further investigation, the Society was exonerated of any wrongdoing and the blame was pointed at a small group of individuals acting without reference to the Society.

The next notable incident occurred in 1923. Members of the cult were found in the desert near San Bernardino, some had been killed or injured, while the rest were missing. One coherent survivor claimed that they had come out to the desert to contact an Angelic One of the Earth to purify them of their sinful ways. But, for some reason, the Angelic One was displeased and attacked them. Of the 40 members supposedly in attendance, two were injured, two dead (smashed by a great weight), with the rest missing. A freshly dug tunnel, some 4 feet in circumference and 12 feet deep, was found on the scene, but no digging tools or displaced earth was found. Again, the survivors claimed that Mrs. Cartwright had no knowledge of the event.



Symbol of the Angelic Ones

Over the next few years, a number of crimes were committed by members of the Society, including theft, fraud, illegal alcohol distribution, rape, and murder, but none of these crimes could be connected directly to the Society or Mrs. Cartwright. But the local and state authorities were finally interested, and so began building a case.

In the Spring of 1925, local and state police raided the Temple of the Angelic Ones and arrested many members, including Mrs. Cartwright. The police found a number of strange things in the temple—including four million dollars' worth of gold bars, giant bas-relief sculptures of strange creatures, a torture chamber, dozens of mummified animal corpses, and seven entombed human bodies.

Members of the cult took the blame for the crimes discovered, seemingly to protect Mrs. Cartwright, but the police were able to link Mrs. Cartwright to fraud and embezzlement. She was sentenced to 20 years in a state prison where she remains to this day. The temple was bought in 1926 by a private oil company, E. H. M. Chemicals, and was demolished soon after. The whereabouts of Mrs. Cartwright's children remains unknown.

ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON (1928)

While the Esoteric Order of Dagon (EOD) does worship Cthulhu, its primary purpose appears to be to orchestrate an interbreeding culture between humans and the race of aquatic humanoids known as the "Deep Ones." The EOD was founded in Innsmouth, Massachusetts in 1838 by Obed Marsh, a sea captain who discovered a community of South Pacific islanders (somewhere east of Tahiti) who enjoyed an ongoing relationship with a colony of deep ones; the relationship going as far as a program of interbreeding. The island was said to have large stone sculptures, many with strange writing and pictographs, and monuments shaped as gigantic human heads. The islanders practiced a religion starkly different to the beliefs of the peoples of its neighboring islands, this being a form of Cthulhu worship that included the veneration of lesser deities known as Mother Hydra and

Father Dagon. By paying tribute to Dagon and Hydra, the followers were given aid by the deep ones to find plentiful fishing sources as well as the location of sunken gold.

Spending time and living among the community brought Captain Marsh to the resolution that the islanders' beliefs were a more logical and practical religion to follow than Christianity, as its practitioners were given tangible rewards in return for worship and submission. Marsh was inducted and learned the rites and rituals from the community and, hence, began assisting the islanders in return for the great quantities of gold they possessed, which they had little use for. Marsh devised a trade agreement, shipping the islanders' gold back to Innsmouth, where he converted an old mill into a gold refinery. Marsh would continue going back and forth between Innsmouth and the island, making himself and his crew particularly wealthy, while also bringing much-needed prosperity to the town.

However, in 1838, Marsh returned to the island to discover that the islanders had been wiped out by a neighboring community who had long viewed the Cthulhu-worshipping people as loathsome and unnatural. The attackers had killed every man, woman, and child on the island, and had destroyed all of the cults' ancient sculptures and artifacts. Without his island allies, Marsh's income was destroyed and Innsmouth fell into economic hardship. Such events prompted Marsh to bring the religion of the islanders to the people of Innsmouth, encouraging the townsfolk to take up the practice of worshipping Dagon.

At first, the townspeople seemed strongly opposed to Marsh's plan, but he was able to convince enough people to secretly conduct rites to summon and then treat with the deep one colony hidden below the ocean on Devil Reef, which lay off the shore of Innsmouth. Thus, a pact was sealed and the deep ones, aided by Marsh and his cronies, set their sights on Innsmouth.

Those in opposition to the Dagon cult began to disappear, while Marsh and his followers began to prosper. Fishermen who joined Marsh's cult soon found their nets full of fish and their livelihoods thriving. Indeed, with gold now coming directly from Devil Reef, the refinery started up again. Marsh bought the town's old Masonic Hall and converted it into a temple for the newly formed Esoteric Order of Dagon.

In 1848, things came to a head as the remaining Christian folk of the town armed themselves and went to the seashore to confront Marsh and his followers. The confrontation was folly, for Marsh had known of the coming attack and had prepared, calling the deep ones to his side to help thwart the confrontation. Every last member of the Christian mob was killed or captured, and none of them were ever seen again.

Innsmouth gold

Thus, Innsmouth fell completely into the control of the EOD. Those who did not participate before were now forced to comply. Those resisting the religious conversion simply disappeared. The cult cut off nearly all interactions with people outside of Innsmouth, with only certain business transactions allowed to continue. Apart from the Newburyport-Innsmouth-Arkham bus, the town of Innsmouth was effectively cut off from the rest of society. Indeed, as rumors spread, Innsmouth took on a dark name and was generally shunned by its neighboring towns.

With the whole town now controlled by the EOD, most of its people were willing converts to Marsh's religion. Anyone who did not willingly accept the EOD's Oaths to Dagon were forced to comply, or else be disappeared. The Third Oath to Dagon compelled both men and women to breed with the deep ones from Devil Reef and, consequently, numerous human-deep one offspring were born and grew within the town. Such offspring would typically be born human and then, as they matured, would become more fish-like. By late adulthood the physical changes would be complete, and they would then go into the sea as fully-fledged deep ones and never return. It was said that those who became full deep ones would be granted the gift of immortality.

Captain Marsh died in 1878, with his grandson, Barnabas Marsh, taking over the gold refinery—and possibly the cult. In winter of 1927, the federal government began an investigation into Innsmouth that culminated with a raid in late January 1928. The reasons behind the federal interest in the town is unclear. Many houses and buildings were demolished, while hundreds of townsfolk were arrested and placed into concentration camps. The raid concluded with Devil Reef being torpedoed. Officially, the action was described as necessary to contain a "possible biological threat." There is no public record of what happened to the individuals interned in those concentration camps, and despite my attempts to glean further information, I am at a loss to know more. As to the knowledge or disposition of the federal government regarding Cthulhu, Dagon, and the deep ones, I am again uncertain.

MODERN CULTS

The following is taken from the writings of David Eberhart, dated May 5, 2017. The entries are presented in full with minor editorial corrections, and are those received by Eberhart by A. C. Nightly, of the blog Truth Out There. *The contents were verified by comparison with the notes sent by Eberhart to the website* EyeLineNews.com

I'm not sure how long this is going to be live, but I have to post it. I've also e-mailed copies of it to every newspaper and high-traffic blog I could think of. I know folks will think I'm crazy, but, if they look into this, they'll see what's happening.

My name is David Eberhart. I'm a communications major at Northern Illinois University. I was never really into the occult or conspiracies or anything like that, but I found something that changed the way I understood the world: Mildred Schwartz's research paper from 1939.

I found Schwartz's research while I was digging around some old papers on early feminism. Like, physical papers in a folder. I don't know how her papers ended up mixed in with all that feminist stuff, but there it was. When I started reading it, I thought it was a work of fiction. I liked the style (a fake research paper), so I read the whole thing in one sitting. Strangely, I immediately read it again. And then again. Something about it rang true.

Ms. Schwartz prompted me to do my own research. And what I found was shocking. Cthulhu cults aren't just some historical footnote, they exist in the 21st century. Worse than that, they're thriving. I'm writing my findings of modern Cthulhu worship, picking up where Ms. Schwartz left off.

My initial reason for the investigation was to produce a documentary film project about the Cthulhu Cult. I've stopped. I'm scared by what I've found and I now fear for my safety. I've reached out to the police and the FBI, but they've written me off as a nut. Maybe I am. I feel crazy. But if I'm not, and these things are real, I must bring this information out into the light. These cults have power because of their secrecy. The more people know about them, the less powerful they become.

I've put my name on this work as a sort of precaution. I figure, if I make a big deal out of all this stuff in public and something happens to me, people will start to get curious. It's in the cult's best interest to let me be and have folks label me a nut. At least, I hope it is.

CULT OF GINOZA (1945)

In 1945, at the end of the Second World War, American soldiers took control of the island Kitadaitōjima, off the coast of southern Japan. This story comes from Lieutenant Brian Holmes of the U.S. Marine Corps, who retold his account in *Strange* magazine, a few years before his death in 1993.

Lt. Holmes was part of the platoon that took Kitadaitōjima. On the island, they discovered a small village called Ginoza. The locals didn't put up any resistance and were quite friendly. The Japanese in the region had avoided the village, saying it was cursed. Lt. Holmes notes how the inhabitants of Ginoza were odd-looking, with a variety of skin conditions he described as "scaly, with large eyes," as well as limb deformities. Sounds like the human-deep one offspring mentioned by Schwartz to me—I'm calling them hybrids.

During the first night on the island, the American soldiers were attacked by what Lt. Holmes called "fish people." Obviously deep ones. He says they came out of the sea, moving with great speed and strength. The ferocity of the attack killed most of the platoon and drove the surviving soldiers inland to regroup. The platoon of 45 men was reduced to 16, and these were trapped with seemingly no hope for escape since radio contact couldn't be established to call in reinforcements. They considered mounting a counter-attack but were unsure how many enemies they were up against. To the platoon's surprise, one of the men they thought killed in the attack, Private Capraro, came into their camp. Lt. Holmes said that he seemed confused and on edge. Capraro said the villagers and fish-men knew where they were, and that he was sent to make Lt. Holmes an offer: surrender and they would not be harmed, as long as they left the island and promised to never return. Lt. Holmes and his men refused.

At this point, Private Capraro started crying and pleading with them. He said he saw a few of the creatures eat some of the fallen men, but that was not the worst of it. Something else had happened to him, something he wouldn't or couldn't explain fully. From what Lt. Holmes understood, it seemed that Capraro had been captured by one of the fish people and held in some sort of pit where he was tortured or possibly experimented upon. Between his sobs, Capraro tried to describe what had taken place, and what the creature had done to him, which the soldier seemed to say was a female of the species. When Lt. Holmes went to comfort him, Capraro snatched the Lieutenant's sidearm and shot himself in the head.

After that incident, the whole situation seemed hopeless. But, fortunately for the soldiers, communication was reestablished and an airstrike was called in, with the village of Ginoza destroyed. Lt. Holmes and the other survivors managed to reach the shore and were rescued.

When asked about any evidence of the fish people being collected, Lt. Holmes said military intelligence came in and took everything, telling him and his men that the matter was classified. By the 1990's he felt it was time the story was told. Of course, only fringe and conspiracy theory tabloids would publish the material.

How much does the government know about these things?

CHURCH OF PERFECT SCIENCE (1952–PRESENT)

In 1952, the moderately successful, science fiction and horror author Roger Blake started his own religion, The Church of Perfect Science (CPS). Blake got his start writing horror fiction for pulp magazines in the 1930s, basing his stories on actual occult research. As Blake gained popularity, his stories grew less supernatural and entered the realm of science fiction, at times blending the two. By 1940, Blake had started his own publishing company, Vista Dimensions Press, with his first book being a collection of his short stories. While this collection wasn't a hit, it did manage to make some money for Blake's new company. With his first novel, *Opening the Mind to Time and Space*, Blake discussed ideas about other dimensions. He posited that with time and practice, the human brain could see and interact with other layers of reality. He also discussed non-

Strange magazine detailing The Cult of Ginoza

human creatures that came to earth long before mammals existed, and that these aliens understood the universe as it really was. In this first book, he described the aliens as being cephalopodic yet humanoid. In his later works, he says these same aliens exist in a death-like state of suspended animation, and that their bodies occupy a space that humans can't perceive. They can still communicate with us in our dreams through a type of telepathy. He calls the leader of these creatures "Kutu"—sounds a lot like Cthulhu to me. This first novel was, again, not a best seller, but made him enough money to continue writing.

By 1949, Blake had produced six novels and five books of a quasi-philosophical or religious nature. This series of books became known as the *Books of Perfect Science*. None of his books ever received critical acclaim, but he did find success with a very solid fan base.

The basic idea of Perfect Science, as I understand it, is that it is a tool to assist you in every aspect of life. Perfect Science can be applied to work, careers, social lives, relationships and personal happiness. By using a complicated process (a sort of flow-chart), you can focus and filter your attention on things that matter. Blake, with the help of a neuroscience physician, Dr. Sal Seidman, created a device they called the Processor. They said the Processor could monitor brain functions to help "streamline your thought." But, according to mainstream medical science, the device was nothing more than an electroencephalogram (EEG) monitor.

Cover of Roger Blake's first novel

In 1952, Blake formed the CPS, with the headquarters in Albany, New York. Blake had cultivated many celebrity friends and contacts in New York who joined the church in the early days, giving it more promotion than it probably deserved. Over time, Blake's church grew in size, acquiring more real estate in the US and abroad, while continuing to recruit new members.

Soon after Blake's death in 1971, an article in the *New York Record* claimed to have had a high-ranking member from within the CPS come forward to reveal secrets about their beliefs and practices. Perfect Science, on the surface, looks like a self-help group—but, according to the *New York Record* informant, at higher levels of authority in the Church, Blake's earlier works of fiction are taken as literal truth. Thus, god-like beings live in other spaces and dimensions beyond our perception. Many such gods exist in outer space as well, and these entities sometimes quarrel or war with one another, but their ultimate actions are unknowable to humanity. One of these gods, whom Blake called the Dead God, could contact psychically sensitive individuals through their dreams. The informant claimed that Blake's and Dr. Seidman's Processor was designed to specifically connect people to the Dead God's thoughts. Eventually, the *New York Record* had to run an apology, as well as settle out of court on a lawsuit filed by the CPS. There's no record of what happened to the unnamed informant, and the article's writer apparently disappeared!

The Church of Perfect Science is a Cthulhu Cult

The CPS has grown in numbers over the last 60 years, boasting some 9 million people claiming to be "Perfect Scientists." Celebrities continue to be courted, with promises of being given advantages to help with their careers. Some celebrities have enjoyed an elevated status in the organization, helping to further raise the Church's profile.

CPS claims to help directionless individuals, or those with a lack of discipline, to find their life goals. The Church uses several psychological techniques to help members better themselves and find mental, as well as economic, stability. The Processor, as originally designed, continues to be used in various programs.

A number of investigations and litigations have been brought against CPS, with claims of abuse, brainwashing, unlicensed medical surgeries, and fraud (among others). None of these claims have ever been proven in a court of law, but many critics claim CPS uses intimidation tactics, criminal obstruction of justice, and bribery to make such cases go away.

To my knowledge, CPS is the most powerful Cthulhu cult in existence. This is terrifying. Looking back at Ms. Schwartz's papers, I'm led to wonder whether CPS has

become the de facto "Cthulhu Cult" or if this is just another puppet organization of the true Cthulhu Cult, still in existence, still hiding in the shadows, and still pulling the strings to this day.

CARNIVAL OF CTHULHU (1968)

In the summer of 1968, the Wichita Kansas police arrested 11 men and women who were part of a strange cult in a traveling carnival. The cult members were kidnapping, assaulting, and murdering people as the moved from town to town, in 14 different states.

The leader of the cult, Bob Jefferies, was the owner of the Dizzy Dew Traveling Carnival. Jefferies had his hand in several illegal projects including drug dealing, pornography, and prostitution. Even worse, Jefferies and the members of his group would create and sell snuff films.

When police raided Jefferies' Carnival, they found one truck whose sole purpose seemed to be a place to kill people. This trailer had an altar and a large statue of an octopus with wings. Bizarre writing and symbols were painted on the interior walls. Among other items gathered by the police was a collection of "snuff films." Most of these were said to be filmed rituals that showed human sacrifice being performed in front of the octopus statue. Always present in the filmed rituals was Michael Foster, aka "The Fishman." Foster was an attraction in the carnival's freak show, being a man who was allegedly part fish. He's described as having large eyes, pointed teeth, patches of scaly skin, and webbed hands with long nails. Foster was arrested along with the rest of the cult.

While in holding, three armed men assaulted the police station, with two officers killed and seven injured in the incident. The armed men managed to enter the station and execute Jefferies and all of the other cult members, except for Foster who they helped to escape. Michael Foster and the three men disappeared without a trace.

PARADISE MASSACRE (1971)

In 1971, 658 members of the Twilight Church were poisoned with chlorine and phosgene gas after being locked inside their temple by the church leader Todd Merryweather.

Merryweather was a community organizer from Cleveland, Ohio, and someone who was actively involved in helping the poor, doing everything from working in soup kitchens to building low-cost housing. He also helped with after-school programs for inner-city kids, as well as funding scholarship programs.

The Twilight Church was started by Merryweather in 1965. The doctrine was vaguely Christian, with some Theosophical leanings, but was accepting of anyone, regardless of religious background. Membership grew quickly due to Merryweather's amazing oratory skills and a good relationship with the press. Soon, the Twilight Church was getting national press coverage. Membership and revenue soared.

In 1967, Merryweather self-published a manifesto laying out the beliefs and purpose of the Twilight Church. The manifesto was regarded by critics as supporting communism and generally considered to be un-American. This was the beginning of the end for Merryweather. The negative publicity caused his membership to wane, and he made fewer and fewer public appearances, till eventually he was only seen at his weekly services at the Twilight Church.

Perhaps seeking an escape, Merryweather began to travel extensively in 1968, heading first to the South Pacific and then to Southeast Asia, South America, Scandinavia, and Northern Africa. When he returned, he was said to be a different man, and he took his church in a new direction. The nature of his new services was very different, using strange languages and rituals he had discovered on his travels. One of the more shocking developments was his new-found ability to heal the sick. The press labeled him a charlatan, but those that received his healing became devout followers. Merryweather also appeared to have a new source of income, being able to finance various community projects. Though the Twilight Church was gaining popularity again, Merryweather was rarely seen in public. He was focusing his attention on another project: Paradise.

Paradise was the name of a compound Merryweather was building in San Juan, Panama. Paradise was designed to be self-sufficient and a place where his followers could start a new and better way of life. In 1970, Merryweather selected his most devout followers and commenced a mass migration to Paradise.

At first, Paradise seemed to be what everyone had hoped for. Every member had a role and a place, all working together for the good of the commune. But, as the weeks wore on, Merryweather's behavior grew stranger and domineering. Where previously he had told his followers to embrace celibacy, he now openly encouraged sexual unions and commanded female followers to join a growing harem of "wives." Soon, he began to orchestrate group sex sessions with all of the commune's members. Animal sacrifices followed and other, more bizarre, rituals (held in an unknown language) took place.

The FBI began an investigation into the Twilight Church following reports of family members being abducted and taken to Paradise. As the investigators were not permitted to enter Paradise, which was protected by armed guards, the FBI agents sought assistance from the Panamanian authorities, only to discover that Merryweather had

somehow managed to establish excellent relations with the local government. After almost six months of negotiation with the Panamanian government, the FBI was finally allowed to enter the compound.

Someone tipped off Merryweather that the FBI was on their way. He called a meeting inside the temple in Paradise with all of his congregation in attendance. The doors were locked from the inside and the building was filled with cyanide-based pesticide gas, killing all 658 men, women, and children. Six members of the congregation did not make it inside before the doors were locked and therefore survived. Somehow, the temple caught fire, destroying evidence and making it difficult to identify the victims. By the time the FBI arrived, it was too late.

Years later, one of the survivors published a book about her time in Paradise. In it, Wanda Potter describes Merryweather as a madman who had brainwashed all of the congregation. They were required to perform daily rituals, which often included the use of hallucinogenic drugs. Potter says in her book, that Merryweather claimed to be the avatar of the Great Old One, Cthulhu, and that through him, all in his congregation would evolve to a new level of consciousness. Potter also claimed that Merryweather escaped the mass execution. As Potter, her husband, two children, and two other members of the congregation tried to enter the temple, they heard the screams and gags of the victims. Potter claims that she and the other survivors saw Merryweather fly out of the top of the temple on the back of a winged octopus, just as the fire broke out.

CARLO ORTEGA MURDERS (1973)

In 1973, near the Spanish city of Sitges, a local poet named Carlo Ortega was arrested for multiple murders. It was alleged that Ortega killed 21 people, mostly drifters or the very poor, with a knife in the deep woods. He was caught abducting a young woman, whereupon he confessed all of his crimes to the local police.

When asked why he did it, he said he was "pleasing the Old One in the woods, the sleeping, dead god who will rise again." He told the police where they could find the missing bodies in the Garraf National Park. The bodies were discovered unburied and surrounding a ten-foot tall stone statue of a man with an octopus head and the wings of a dragon. The bodies had been untouched by animals. The statue seemed to be ancient, with dating placing it close to two thousand years old. Could this be one of the lost sculptures of the Roman sculptor Fabius? If so, are there more out there waiting to be discovered?

CHILDREN OF R'LYEH (1980)

Sisters Velma and Michelle Pastoric were daughters of a Lutheran Pastor. They were very devout and heavily involved in church activities, but, by their early twenties, they fell in with a bad crowd and were drawn into drinking, drugs, and sex. When they would not change their ways, their father kicked them out of their home.

In 1977, the girls were living with their aunt in Pittsburgh, where they met a local man named Sean Miller. Both girls were interested in Miller romantically and he played that to his advantage, starting a sexual relationship with both of them. He also introduced the girls to hallucinogenic drugs, including psilocybin mushrooms and LSD. It was on her first psychotropic trip that Velma had a vision of a sunken city. After her trip, she continued to have dreams of the city, which she called R'lyeh. On the third night, Miller and Michelle had a shared vision of R'lyeh with Velma. On realizing that they had all shared the same dream-vision, they considered it a "sign" and decided to start a new religion, calling themselves the Children of R'lyeh.

To get money to grow their new faith, they began selling drugs and committing robberies. They quickly found that small-time burglaries weren't paying enough and knew they had to find more wealthy targets. Since the girls' aunt was a stockbroker, they were able to find some personal information on her wealthier clients. The trio subsequently broke into the

Carlo Ortega Murders

home of an elderly couple, Max and Irene Cole, attacking and subduing them. The trio then performed an elaborate rite, ritually murdering the couple in Cthulhu's name.

The trio managed to kill five other wealthy people in a similar fashion, performing a ritual to Cthulhu three more times. They claimed the rituals granted contact with Cthulhu, through which they gained great insights—obviously, Cthulhu didn't grant them enough "insight" because they were all busted. The police linked all of the victims to the same stockbroker, the girls' aunt. Since the girls were bad at hiding evidence, they and Sean Miller were arrested.

The girls were each sentenced to 50 years while Miller received a life sentence. However, Miller was murdered after only a year in prison. Rumors persist about Velma and Michelle's continued observations to their god while in jail. Their prayers to Cthulhu are said to be heard by other felons and prison staff throughout their continued confinement. According to an article revisiting their case in 2010, the Pastoric sisters have formed an officially licensed religion and have recruited followers from among the inmates at the Pennsylvania State Penitentiary. They are eligible for parole in 2020.

GLENVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL FIVE (1984)

During the Fall of 1984, five students from East Moline, IL were taken into custody in relation to 12 missing persons cases. The students were between the ages of 12–13, and were all boys. According to the police report, the leader of "The Five," 13-year-old Matthew Bentley, claimed he had found a small statue of a creature, which he called "C'tulu." Bentley said he began to have a reoccurring dream of a sunken city and a dreaming god. Upon waking, each time, he claimed he could sense something in the woods calling to him. After a few nights of experiencing the dream, he followed the call and headed into the wood near to his home. He related that, deep inside the wood, he found the statue buried three feet under the soil. He took the statute home and cleaned it up.

He kept his find secret, hiding the statue under his bed. He believed its close proximity caused the dreams to intensify. He claimed C'tulu showed him the dark places of the universe and how the laws of physics could be manipulated. Bentley began creating a device in the basement of his parent's home, building it from discarded machine parts and his computer.

During his interrogation, Bentley said he had needed help with his project and had shown the statue to some of his friends, hoping they would feel as he did. At first, they laughed and refused to help him, however, the next day, they all returned to help Bentley with the project, saying that they too had now dreamt the same dream. The five boys worked on the machine for three weeks, using up all of their time outside of school. When questioned by the police, other students at the school said that the boys were always "weird," but that their behavior over that period was "really weird."

Jennifer Fisher, a fellow student at Glenview Middle School, was reported missing by her family. Witness reports spoke of Jennifer being last seen talking to Bentley at the end of the school day. While the police did interview Bentley at the time, he did not fall under suspicion and was not arrested. Over the next two weeks, five other students disappeared, as well as a video store clerk, three teenagers from a local high school, a police officer, and Bentley's elderly neighbor, Ben Jenkins.

It was Ben Jenkin's disappearance that ultimately led to the arrest of The Five. When police attempted to question Bentley's parents, they were nowhere to be found. After repeated attempts, the police became suspicious and entered Bentley's house, where they found The Five and a lot of strange evidence.

The interior of the house was covered in wires and electronics parts, all of which were connected to a strange machine in the basement. At the center of the machine was Bentley's C'tulu statue that he had found in the wood. Near the machine, police discovered articles of clothing and personal items belonging to some of the missing people, as well as a jar containing human eyes—eighteen pairs in total.

Glenview Middle School Five

Forensics showed the eyes belonged to some of the missing persons, but the rest were never identified. Bentley and the other boys put up no resistance when taken into custody.

During the questioning of the boys, only Bentley deigned to answer questions, but did not speak until the statue was brought to him, revealing that, "Great C'tulu dreams in R'lyeh, speaking to those who listen." Bentley said he listened and was told where to find the statue and how to build the machine. Further questioning elicited Bentley to enigmatically explain that the machine would "make and undo and then make again." Notably, Bentley thereafter sat mumbling to himself—the police report makes it clear that Bentley was repeating the phrase: Fn-lim-glow-nath c-tu-lu reelie w-gah nag f-tang—which I guess is close enough to "Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn."

The police could find no other trace of the missing persons, nor could they, or the experts they brought in, understand the purpose of the machine the boys were building. The Five were deemed unfit to stand trial and were instead placed into permanent psychiatric care at the Kankakee State Hospital. Two of the boys died in care, one in 1987, the other in 1993. In 2002, Matthew Bentley and the other surviving members of The Five disappeared from the hospital. No evidence of a breakout could be found and surveillance video shows them all in their cells one minute and then gone the next, as though they had simply winked out of existence. Guess what? The whereabouts of the boys remains unknown.

TIRE CTHULHU (1989–1992)

Just outside the small town of Box Elder, Montana, was a 50-foot-tall statue of Cthulhu made of old tires. I kid you not. "The Box Elder Monster," as it was dubbed by locals, became a tourist attraction from 1989–1992. Local artist, Jerry Thomas, claimed that he saw the thing in a dream and he felt compelled to build it. He spent all of his savings and sold most of his personal assets to buy the land and build his creation, just off Highway 87.

Thomas opened up a small stand under the sculpture to sell souvenirs to tourists. You can find a t-shirt or mug every so often on the internet for sale—I got myself a pencil sharpener with a picture of the Box Elder Monster on it just a few months ago.

Somehow, the Box Elder Monster caught fire in 1992 and Thomas sold the land thereafter. Supposedly, he still lives in Montana and is trying to get a hundred-foot version of the Box Elder Monster built.

KANALOA RISING (1992)

Kanaloa Rising is a progressive, psychedelic, fusion jazz/rock group formed in 1979. Its improvisational style and long jam-session performances helped the band hit cult status. More or less continually touring since 1981, the group has found a strong following of devoted fans calling themselves "Risers."

Kanaloa is the Hawaiian god of the underworld and magic. According to legend, Kanaloa led spirits to rebel against the other gods but was defeated and cast into the underworld. Kanaloa is often represented as a squid or an octopus.

While many of Kanaloa Rising's songs are about freedom, inner exploration, and enlightenment, one song, Wake Me Up, contains the lyrics:

Kanaloa is not dead, he only sleeps,
He dreams in his city,
He wants to give us freedom
From the bonds we gave ourselves.

All of this may be a simple coincidence, but there have been a statistically high number of missing persons associated with, or considering themselves members of, the Risers. The police and FBI have investigated but found most of the issues involving the Risers to be drug-related. Despite such findings, one incident involving FBI agent Albert Whitley stands out.

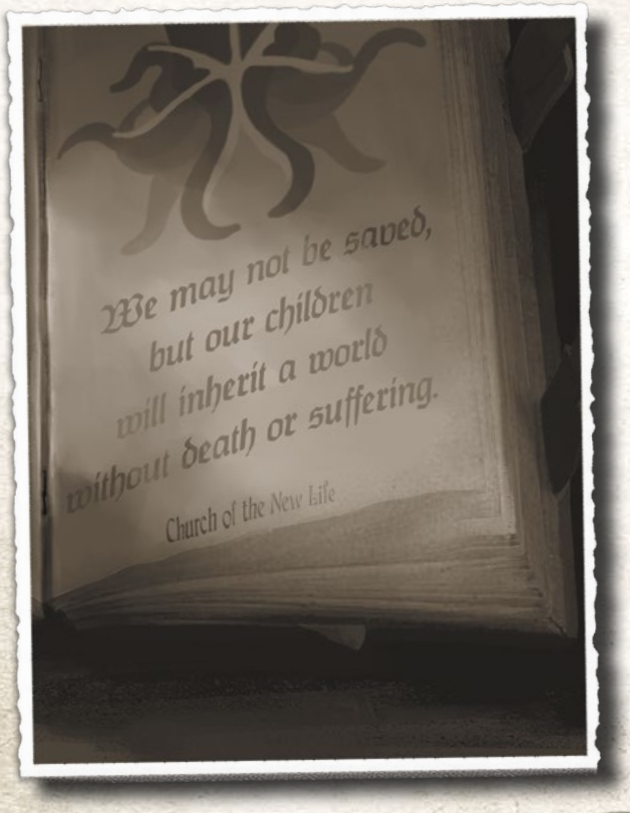
Kanaloa Rising vinyl album cover artwork.

Agent Whitley went undercover as a Riser in 1992 to obtain evidence about a high-end designer drug with a street name of "Dream," which appeared to be connected to (or at least supplied during) Kanaloa Rising concerts. After only a month undercover, Agent Whitley's cover was blown and the operation was made public. Agent Whitley had taken Dream during a Kanaloa Rising concert, jumped up on stage, and attempted to arrest the band members. Kanaloa Rising's concerts are often recorded, traded, and sold as bootlegs, so the audio of the whole altercation became public.

Having listened to the audio of the event, it appears Agent Whitley brandished his gun while holding up his badge, and said a number of seemingly incoherent things—the following words, spoken by the agent, stand out:

"Where did they go? How did they do that? They walked into the Pyramid! It's solid…but it looks like a doorway. It's like… it goes in, but it actually goes out…but it's not... It's solid. They danced into it. Where are they? How did you take them?"

What Agent Whitley seemed to be referring to, was a large pyramid prop on the ground in front of the stage. Agent Whitley claimed he saw a number of people dance into the shape but that they never came out. Subsequent investigation of the band could determine no wrongdoing nor crime to have taken place. The pyramid was just a prop made from fiberglass and contained no secret doors. Reading between the lines, Agent Whitley appeared to have a psychological breakdown following the incident and has since retired from the FBI. Kanaloa Rising is still touring.



Evidence taken from the Oregon Standoff

OREGON STANDOFF (2001)

Just north of Depoe Bay, Oregon, joint Federal and State Police attempted, in 2001, to raid a compound owned by Ronald Woodburn, the founder of the Church of the New Life (CNL). The raid was poorly managed, alerting Woodburn and his followers to prepare for a standoff that lasted four days. The situation ended when law enforcement saw no activity in the building and proceeded to enter, discovering 34 CNL members had committed suicide by consuming cyanide tablets. During the entry, the police noticed some members of the Church had escaped through a tunnel leading to the ocean. Officers on the scene said they saw almost a dozen people jump into the ocean and never resurface. The authorities assumed these individuals had consequently drowned.

To me, this all seems very odd. I think this has similarities to the incident in Innsmouth in 1928, where people swam off into the ocean. This could just be a coincidence, but I was able to find a brochure from the Church of the New Life, dating two years before the raid. It says that the core belief of the Church was "the transformation of life as we know it," and also said, "angels are not winged beings from the heavens, but rather beautiful creatures of the sea, who come to bring change to humanity for the better." The brochure concluded with the ominous line, "We might not be saved, but our children will inherit a world without death or suffering."

To the best of my knowledge, the FBI has kept the facts of this case under wraps—apparently due to the case still being under investigation. Why has this case been under investigation for 15 years? I wonder if the Department of Justice, or whoever took care of the incident at Innsmouth back in the 1920s, might be suppressing details found at the CNL's compound.

END NOTE

That's all I got. If you have similar stories, please contact me. I know I, like Ms. Schwartz, have just scratched the surface. The world is a lot more dangerous than we ever imagined. Be careful.

—David Eberhart, May 5, 2017.

CHAPTER 2

CULTS OF CTHULHU

"Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn."

"In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming."

This chapter looks in detail at five differing Cthulhu cults, focusing on their history, ideology, and structures. While the cults are presented as operating in certain timeframes, the Keeper can easily move them to other eras or extend their lifespans accordingly. The five cults described are:

- Elevated Order of Morpheus (1890s)
- Louisiana Swamp Cult (1900s)
- Society of the Angelic Ones (1920s)
- Esoteric Order of Dagon (1920s)
- Church of Perfect Science (modern)

A sample of each cult's membership is provided for Keepers to drop into their games or to foreshadow a cult's involvement, and for use when designing scenarios or campaigns focused around a particular cult. Such characters are described in the context of their respective organizations and each has a game profile—note that some have a Luck value and other changed statistics for *Pulp Cthulhu* (with can be ignored for regular *Call of Cthulhu* games)—and some possess "Cthulhu's Blessing," detailing a particular ability they have manifested through their worship of Great Cthulhu (for more on **Cthulhu's Blessings**, see page 163).

ELEVATED ORDER OF MORPHEUS

Period: Circa 1896

The Elevated Order of Morpheus is a fraternal order founded in 1890 by Sir Wendell Whitlocke. Sir Wendell served as an officer in Her Royal Majesty's army during the Ninth Xhosa War (1877–1879). It was while serving in South Africa that Sir Wendell encountered a strange man from Birmingham, England, who lived a hermit-like existence in a cave not far from the Xhosa people. The encounter would change the course of Sir Wendell's life and become a foundational moment in the establishment of the Order.

BACKGROUND

Upon hearing about a curious English witch living in South Africa, Sir Wendell sent men to investigate. When the soldiers returned, they reported that the strange old man was quite crazy; however, they were able to gather that the man claimed to have been shipwrecked in South Africa some 30 years prior. Because the cave was in an area of strategic significance, Sir Wendell ordered his men to remove the old man for his own safety, but, of course, the old fellow refused to leave. In the ensuing standoff, the old man asked to speak to Sir Wendell Whitlocke by name—despite none of the soldiers having mentioned their commander's name to the hermit. Intrigued by the request, Sir Wendell agreed to meet with the old man.

Pembroke and the idol

When Sir Wendell arrived, the old man seemed calm and focused, not the gibbering loon his soldiers had described. He softly told Sir Wendell that he was not a sailor, but a soldier named John Pembroke, who had come to South Africa during the Fifth Xhosa War (1818–1819), explaining that he had stumbled upon something that meant he could not leave. Intrigued, Sir Wendell asked Pembroke to tell his story in full.

On a scouting mission, Pembroke had found a cave and in it, a small statuette of remarkable power. At first, he thought it was some native trinket and took it for his own, keeping the statuette in his footlocker. But, that night, he had a dream in which he saw a powerful god in a sunken city, a god calling itself "Cthulhu." Pembroke continued to have dreams of Cthulhu every night, but each morning would find himself "drained and tired," making him confused, lethargic, and unfocused during the day. His commanding officer thought he was suffering from some kind of disease and told him to rest up, but that same night, the dream told him to return to the cave and "wait until the time was right." The overriding compulsion led Pembroke to desert his regiment and take up residence in the cave, along with statuette.

Eventually, troops sent to recover Pembroke found him in the cave, clutching the squid-like idol and refusing to return. Despite his protestations, Pembroke remained calm and used no violence against the soldiers charged with his return, however, when the soldiers attempted to take him, they became violently ill on the spot. Pembroke warned his former comrades that if they did not leave him alone, or if they tried to harm him, the illness would kill them. Not given to idle threats, Pembroke's commanding officer laughed at Pembroke's words and went to drag him out of the cave himself. Yet, as he began to manhandle Pembroke out of the cave, the officer let out a sudden cry and dropped dead. Unsure of what had taken place and now growing scared of Pembroke, the soldiers agreed among themselves to report back that the officer had suffered a heart attack while searching for Pembroke, and that while they had eventually found the missing soldier, he was already dead from exposure.

The old hermit told Sir Wendell that he had remained in the cave ever since, which by his calculations must amount to over 30 years spent living in isolation. When Sir Wendell asked Pembroke why the cave was so important, the old man said that "Great Cthulhu" had told him to wait in it until a "man called Whitlocke" arrived and then to give this man the statuette. At first, Sir Wendell refused, but the old man insisted, saying that if Sir Wendell took the statuette then he could finally leave the cave for good, and what's more,

the idol would grant Sir Wendell great military victories. To conclude the matter and appease the old man, Sir Wendell agreed and took the statuette. Pembroke shouted with joy, as if a great weight had been lifted. A moment later Sir Wendell's bemusement turned to horror when, all of sudden, Pembroke drew a knife and stabbed himself in the heart. Nothing could be done. Pembroke was dead.

Shaken by the unforeseen turn of events, Sir Wendell kept the idol. That night, he experienced a powerful dream of the sunken city and its inhabitants as described by Pembroke. On waking, Sir Wendell saw the world with fresh eyes, his thoughts now imbued with a new perspective. Over the next few months, Sir Wendell went on to claim many victories in battle.

Return to England

After the war, Sir Wendell returned a decorated hero, but medals and accolades held little interest for him now. He turned away from military matters and began to research the supernatural, gathering tomes and reading any manuscript he could find with the mention of Cthulhu. He even managed to acquire a copy of the John Dee *Necronomicon*. Through his research and reading, Sir Wendell's understanding deepened while his knowledge of the mystic arts grew, all further enhanced and empowered through nightly dream-contact with Cthulhu. As his connection to Cthulhu strengthened, so did his understanding of the Great Old One's desires.

Already a member of the fraternal order of the Freemasons, Sir Wendell began to slowly introduce certain curious ideas to his fellow Brothers. Most found such ideas amusing, but fellow Freemason Theodore Holcombe took a greater interest. Holcombe and Sir Wendell's conversations were frank and open, and the pair grew close, meeting often to discuss matters that their colleagues would frown upon or, at worst, charge as blasphemy. On one visit to Sir Wendell's home, Holcombe was introduced to the "true power" of which his friend had been explaining. Sir Wendell cast a levitation spell, confirming to Holcombe that magic was a real and tangible thing, and that by embracing Cthulhu as their god their power could be limitless. Holcombe was hooked.

Thus, began a period of intense study, with Sir Wendell and Holcombe laying the groundwork of a perceived cosmology with Cthulhu at the center. They then moved into the practice of real magic. To produce greater results, they understood the need to draw upon the mystical energies and lifeforce of others, with Holcombe suggesting they gather more like-minded individuals to them. Thus, began the

Sir Wendell proves magic is real

Elevated Order of Morpheus. The name of Morpheus was chosen because the Greek god of dreams would be a more acceptable and less alien-sounding name than that of their true god, Cthulhu. Over the next few months, Sir Wendell and Holcombe began recruiting high-standing members of London Society into the Order. They sought out learned men possessing financial and social advantages, enticing them with promises of mind-expanding experiences, indulgences in sexual taboos, the power over other men's minds, and ultimately the secret of eternal life. By the spring of 1892, the Elevated Order of Morpheus had over 20 members and a permanent meeting lodge in the borough of Kensington, West London.

Come the summer of 1892, Sir Wendell informed the Order that, under the direction of Cthulhu, he had established contact with an extradimensional entity, saying that the Order must perform a sacred rite for the entity to unlock its otherworldly secrets. That night, 20 of the Order's members descended into a newly constructed underground (subway) tunnel to perform a ritual of summoning. The ritual brought forth a bizarre creature—seemingly a horrific combination of worm and lizard, and possessing numerous mouths and appendages extending outward with smaller pseudopods (**Vermiison**, see page 181). Upon its arrival, a few of the men lost their minds, screaming and succumbing to a madness from which they would never recover—the entity moved swiftly to devour most of these. While the screams of the crazed were silenced by the entity's appetite, Sir Wendell, Holcombe, and the remaining Order members continued a chant of binding. Finally, the thing stopped moving and fell motionless. Sir Wendell strode toward the paralyzed creature and began to tear at and devour its strange flesh. Holcombe followed suit, as did the others. As the entity's life force drained away, what remained of its corpse melted into a foul-smelling sludge. The following day, all of the surviving members found they had not only a feeling of euphoria but had gained great physical strength. Any residual revulsion for their actions quickly faded with a new understanding of the universe and their place within it. These men were to become the first Wardens of the Elevated Order of Morpheus.

With a new-found zeal, the Wardens doubled their efforts to recruit wealthy and influential members. The Order was expanding not only in its membership but its goals. Sir Wendell converted the lower section of the lodge into a laboratory to begin testing new mystical and scientific ideas. He wanted to push the Order into the realms of existential exploration as a means to seek new levels of power and knowledge. Sir Wendell and Holcombe continued their membership of the Freemasons, but only until they had poached all of the members they wished to join the Order.

By 1894, the Order swelled to 80 members, and, with this growth, the demands of its membership also grew. While Sir Wendell, Holcombe, and the Wardens knew the Order's true purpose (in terms of the worship of Cthulhu), the lower-ranking members were looking to be thrilled by supernatural experiences and to indulge in some forbidden vices. To ensure they had continued access to their members' money and influence, the Wardens needed to keep the lower ranks of members happy. This task usually fell to Holcombe, now self-titled as the High Warden of the Order. Holcombe's task was not easy. Not only did he have to orchestrate the covering up of illegal activities (including assault, kidnapping, and murder), but he had to keep "talkative" members in check. Word had begun to get out that the Order was a secret society holding true power—such gossip and rumor was surely death for a society that wanted to remain secret. Thus, it fell to Holcombe to convince talkative members to be silent or, if they would not agree, make them disappear.

It was later in 1894 that Holcombe opened a private gentleman's club, called the Pacific Club, in Marylebone in the West End of London. The club served as a social getaway for members of the Order, as well as a place to recruit potential new members. While all of the Order's secret activity would be done in its Kensington lodge, the Pacific Club would be the legitimate face of its membership.

Conflict Rises

The first real internal conflict occurred in the fall of 1895, when a low-ranking member (a "Disciple") named Emerson Lowther wanted out of the Order. In terms of "interests" within the Order, Lowther's were mild—he saw membership as a means to meet like-minded companions (same-sex relationships being illegal in the period). Lowther's intelligence and opened-minded nature caught the attention of Sir Wendell, who thought Lowther could be potential Warden material. Sir Wendell invited Lowther to a private meeting, where he performed a special ceremony as a means to reveal certain truths and connect Lowther's mind to Cthulhu. Previously, if someone was not a viable candidate, they would simply forget the experience or write it off as a bad dream, but Lowther remembered the experience. Not only did he remember, he knew that Cthulhu was something to be feared.

Lowther avoided speaking in front of the Wardens but began trying to express his concerns to other Initiates and Disciples of the Order. Most laughed him off as weak-willed and easily spooked, but a few who heard what Lowther had to say brought reports to the Wardens.

Lowther stopped attending lodge meetings. When he was approached as to why he was no longer attending, he became frightened and went to the authorities. Unknown to

Lowther, Holcombe had a high-ranking friend in Scotland Yard, who tipped him off to Lowther's betrayal. That night, Holcombe went to Lowther's home to assassinate him, using a spell to levitate up to a bedroom window, gain access, and pour poison into the sleeping Lowther's ear. Thanks to Holcombe's police friend in Scotland Yard, any files recording Lowther's account of the Order were "misplaced," while the poor man's death was labeled a heart attack.

Early in 1896, another incident raised potential issues for the Order, when Benjamin Leslie was arrested by the police. Leslie was a prominent surgeon and a Warden of high standing within the Order. Sir Wendell had specially chosen Leslie to assist him with a special project involving the extraction of a person's lifeforce. Sir Wendell theorized that by taking another's lifeforce and injecting it into another person, it would make them younger. Sir Wendell, ever the scientific and mystical explorer, sought to test such theories and was known to have a number of these projects on the go at any one time. Thus, Leslie was placed in charge of this particular study.

Leslie conducted his experiments in the cellar of a rundown townhouse in Soho, which he had purchased for the Order. He hired some local low-life criminals to kidnap vulnerable men and women living on London's streets, locking them away in his Soho dungeon. While conducting the experiments, Leslie felt it important that none of his victims see his face; thus, he would wear a ceremonial leather mask, fashioned in an image of Cthulhu's face. While initially used to hide his identity, as his testing went on, Leslie began to feel that wearing the mask brought him closer to Cthulhu. In fact, Leslie became so comfortable in his mask that he would often wear it around his home during his leisure time.

Seemingly, Leslie's experiments were successful, yet the results were perplexing. The magically-enabled procedure would siphon away decades of life from his victims, but seemed to grant only a few years to those injected with the resulting serum. Leslie prayed to Cthulhu for greater understanding and his prayers were answered. Fueled by insights channeled from the dreaming mind of Cthulhu, what was left of Leslie's rationality and mind was stripped away, driving him into madness. He stripped off his clothing and ran naked out into the streets of London, raving about the futility of life and how man was but an insect. The police arrested him and, with no change in his demeanor, an alienist was called in to evaluate him.

The Order encourages experimentation

While in custody, between bouts of screaming and laughing, Leslie revealed the nature of his experiments, and how he had 13 men and women locked inside his Soho property. The police investigated and found the victims in chains; more than half were quite frail and elderly, while a few seemed well cared for and in good health.

Holcombe's was notified of Leslie's arrest by his associate in Scotland Yard and arranged for Leslie's escape, whereupon he and some of the Order's Wardens took Leslie to the lodge to see if he could be "refocused." But, Leslie was too far gone, lost in his madness; thus, Holcombe ordered his murder.

The Current Situation

As of mid-1896, the Order is thriving. Membership has grown to 120, although the majority have little inkling as to the Order's true purpose. The inner circle, comprised of the Wardens and led by Holcombe and Sir Wendell, conduct their rituals to Cthulhu, while also experimenting with magic and devising experiments to reveal further secrets of the cosmos. Holcombe looks after day-to-day affairs while Sir Wendell directs various projects and has the final say on all matters. Each month, low-level members are chosen to be elevated in rank, permitting them access to deeper secrets while opening their minds to the will of Cthulhu.

GOALS

The Elevated Order of Morpheus interprets and follows the whims of the Great Cthulhu. Through dream visions and contact, the Order learns insight into the desires of Cthulhu. Such contact is deciphered by the membership and actions are determined and then acted upon accordingly. As interpreted by Sir Wendell, Cthulhu wishes the Order to better understand the universe, enabling humanity to be lifted from its shackles of restraint and thereby enter a new age of enlightenment. Such goals are achieved through mystical-scientific experimentation and ritual.

To fund these experiments, the Order aims to recruit wealthy members, who are kept "happy" by enabling them to enjoy a range of petty diversions and fantasies that would be deemed criminal, or at least socially unacceptable, by the public at large. Thus, the financial support of the Order's rank and file members is bought. High Warden Holcombe is responsible for keeping the Order and its activities secret, plugging any leaks in security that arise and ensuring that all members keep their mouths shut.

There are a number of immediate goals dictated by Holcombe and Sir Wendell; some mundane, while others are quite fantastic. Notable goals include: a means to indefinitely extend human life, allowing the Order to increase its power while waiting for the coming of Cthulhu; the design and construction of a non-Euclidian portal able to permit humans to travel to the places seen through Cthulhu's dreams; the alteration of human physiology to become amphibious, which seeks to enable humans to breathe underwater so they may better commune with Cthulhu's spawn, known as the Deep Ones; and generating and storing vast amounts of energy to better fuel significant magical workings.

Such goals have been formulated by Holcombe and Sir Wendell, who believe such scientific and magical endeavors are commanded by Cthulhu. As to what real end these experiments are working toward is unknown—they may be human folly, born of limited perception and misinterpretation of Cthulhu's dreams, or they could be preparing the way: a series of necessary steps to bring the chosen of humanity to new realms of perception and understanding.

STRUCTURE

The cult is highly structured. Each member defers to a member of higher standing on all matters, both public and private. Higher standing members know the importance of not exercising this power unless absolutely necessary, as it is important that all members are respected, regardless of their standing within the Order. If any member appears to be abusing their position, lower status members are encouraged to discuss their issues with the offender's peers, or even superiors. The social structure of the Order is a careful balancing act, designed to ensure members know their place yet feel free from restraint—keeping wealthy and influential members happy is an important consideration while ensuring secrecy and discretion.

The meeting house, known to members as the Lodge of Dreams, is located in Kensington. Members of the rank of Disciple and above are free to come and go as they please, at all times. Meals, drink, and lodging, as well as several other services are available to members at the Lodge. Members, depending on rank, are awarded special keys allowing them entry into different parts of the building. The higher the member's rank, the greater the access. There is one lounge, on the ground floor, where Disciples and above may bring Initiate guests who are being considered for elevation in the Order. Otherwise, uninvited visitors to the Lodge are forbidden. Any member (Initiate and above) may make use of the facilities at the Pacific Club.

All members of the Order to date have been white males, although some of the Acolytes are drawn from differing cultures. The ranks of the Order are known to all members. This is not only important so that members know where they stand, but it also gives ambitious members goals and status. The ranks are: Grand Master Magus, High Warden, Warden, Disciple, Initiate, and Acolyte.

Grand Master Magus

The Grand Master Magus is the definitive leader of the Elevated Order of Morpheus. There is, and has only been, one Grand Master Magus: Sir Wendell Whitlocke. It was his connection to Cthulhu, originating through the Cthulhu statuette given to him by John Pembroke, that provided Sir Wendell with sights (visions) into previously unknown other worlds and dimensions. Through exploring and understanding these new worlds and perceptions, Sir Wendell believes that he and the Order can refashion humanity in preparation for the return of Cthulhu.

The Grand Master Magus' primary duty is to experiment and push the boundaries of understanding, as well as overseeing the Wardens in their endeavors. This usually involves regular check-ins, where Sir Wendell receives updates on current experiments while also giving advice and project direction. When he believes a project has gone as far as it can, the Grand Master Magus determines what new task or experiment the Warden should now pursue.

It also falls upon the Grand Master Magus to lead all rituals and rites. A weekly ritual is performed, with more elaborate annual rituals being held on Samhain (October 31) and May Eve (April 30). The annual ceremonies usually include a section where members of the Order are elevated in rank, although this may also happen during the weekly rituals if needed. Where a Disciple is deemed to be a "good fit," the Grand Master Magus notifies the Wardens to begin grooming the member—a process where the prospective Warden is slowly introduced to the greater truths of the universe. If the Disciple responds well and is accepting of the potential for increased responsibility, they are chosen for elevation; otherwise, they either remain at the level of Disciple or (rarely) are quietly removed from the Order. Thus, the Grand Master Magus ultimately determines each member's fate.

High Warden

The High Warden is the right hand of the Grand Master Magus and is his voice to the Wardens. Theodore Holcombe is the current and only High Warden the Order has ever had. The High Warden's primary duty is to oversee the day-to-day functions of the Order. This task includes managing the Order's finances, maintenance and running of the Order's lodge in Kensington and the Pacific Club in Marylebone, and handling member issues. The latter component involves ensuring the needs of the Order's members are met (be it drugs or other vices), as well as policing the members (resolving disputes, identifying possible threats, and so on). Lastly, the High Warden is charged with the Order's security; those who threaten to expose the secrets of the Order (including its illegal activities) are dealt with firmly—the High Warden has absolute discretion as to how such matters are resolved. Thus, as a problem arises, it is up to the High Warden to make sure it gets fixed by whatever means are deemed most effective.

Warden

Warden is the highest station a member of the Order can hope to attain—unless something should happen to Sir Wendell or Holcombe. There are currently 11 Wardens, each tasked to explore a mystical or scientific objective. The Wardens form an inner circle and their opinions have weight. Usually, it is the Wardens who propose member elevation in the ranks, with their recommendations and concerns heard by Sir Wendell and Holcombe.

Elevated Order of Morpheus symbol

The Wardens meet as a group once per week with the Grand Master Magus and the High Warden. At the meetings, the Wardens are expected to provide status updates on their various projects, as well as to highlight and address current issues, concerns, or opportunities. Unofficially, each Warden is also expected to meet regularly with the Grand Master Magus, on a one-to-one basis, to discuss their work in detail. These private sessions enable Sir Wendell to monitor as well as advise and counsel. Some of the Wardens (secretly) feel that the meetings with Sir Wendell are unnecessary, as they often understand their subject on a much deeper level than the Grand Master Magus, with some resenting his involvement and seeing it as interfering—especially as Sir Wendell often dictates a change of direction and, sometimes, calls for a project to be shut down prematurely. Presently, none of the Wardens have dared to disobey their masters' wishes, preferring to quietly grumble to one another about the Grand Master Magus and the High Warden rather than actually act to oppose them.

Acolyte

Acolytes are somewhat outside of the main structure of the Order, in that they are, in the main, recruited from working-class folk to provide service functions. Acolytes are men who have worked for the High Warden and, consequently, earned a place within the Order. Usually, they are physically fit and often possess combat experience; thus, many have some form of military service. The primary function of an Acolyte is security, which involves protecting the Kensington lodge and the Pacific Club from prying eyes, making sure Disciples and Initiates obey the Order's rules, and carrying out "off-the-books" work for the High Warden. Day-to-day, most of the Acolytes work as serving and maintenance staff at the lodge and the Pacific Club.

Acolytes serve the High Warden directly, being his eyes and ears, and sometimes hands. If Holcombe needs unsavory work doing amidst the streets of London—anything from acquiring drugs to disposing of bodies—he tasks the Acolytes with the duty. Acolytes either directly take care of any ugly business or (sometimes) pay outside third parties to handle the work at a remove. Of course, should a third party turn on the Order, it is the Acolytes' responsibility to handle the matter while also providing a buffer to protect the Order from any culpability.

Though, to most members, they come from a "low birth," the Acolytes are generally treated with respect. Should a member show even the slightest amount of disrespect, they are harshly disciplined by the High Warden—the punishment (usually some form of physical penance, like scarification) is often carried out by the offended Acolyte. Members who refuse to submit can expect a far harsher punishment from the Wardens, and so most comply and take their scars.

Acolytes know a great deal about the workings of the Order. They know about the crimes perpetrated by the members, they know about the murders, and they know where the bodies are buried (figuratively and literally). Of course, they also know of the horrific fate that awaits them should they turn on the Order. In swearing fealty to Holcombe, they vow to give their lives to protect him and the Order. In recompense, the Acolytes are treated and paid well. There are currently 23 Acolytes serving the Order, working as barkeepers, cooks, servers, doormen, and cleaners.

Disciple

Disciples make up the majority of Order members, with 66 people currently holding the position. Most regard and use the Order as a social club, splitting their time between the Pacific Club and the lodge in Kensington. Of course, the Order lures such members into its fold by offering what other gentlemen's clubs do not—access to exotic and illegal desires, with no questions asked. While Disciples are not required to attend the Order's weekly rituals, those that do, tend to have their needs met in a timelier fashion.

Many are unaware of the deeper secrets to be found within the higher rank of Warden, although some Disciples take their membership very seriously. Such individuals have perhaps a greater appreciation of what elevation within the Order represents, and yearn to access greater power and understanding of the "hidden world." Suitable candidates are noticed and taken under the wing of a Warden, whose interests most align with theirs. The Disciple is allowed a glimpse of the deeper truths of the universe (and if able to hold their mind together), they are given more responsibilities and asked to participate in the Warden's experiments—if the Disciple excels (and survives), they are considered for promotion to Warden.

Initiate

An Initiate is the lowest form of membership. Initiates must be recommended by an Order member, whereupon a prospective member is invited to the Pacific Club to meet other members. The informal interview is designed to evaluate whether a candidate is "Order material." If so, the invitee is asked to join and informed of the basic responsibilities and financial requirements. If accepted, the new member must agree to participate in the Ritual of Elevation—a non-supernatural ritual, held purely for ceremony. At least five Wardens and the Grand Master Magus or the High Warden perform the ritual in secret, each wearing gold-colored, octopoid masks. The new member cuts their hand and allows a drop of their blood to fall into a vial while swearing an oath. When the ritual is completed, the new member is given an Initiate's key to the Lodge of Dreams and can enjoy the

privileges of membership, as well as being able to fully access the Pacific Club. The new Initiate then spends the next three months being instructed by a Warden, learning how the Order functions and what their duties and responsibilities are. If at the end of the three months, they have acquitted themselves appropriately, they are given a Disciple's key to the Lodge of Dreams. Currently, there are 28 Initiates.

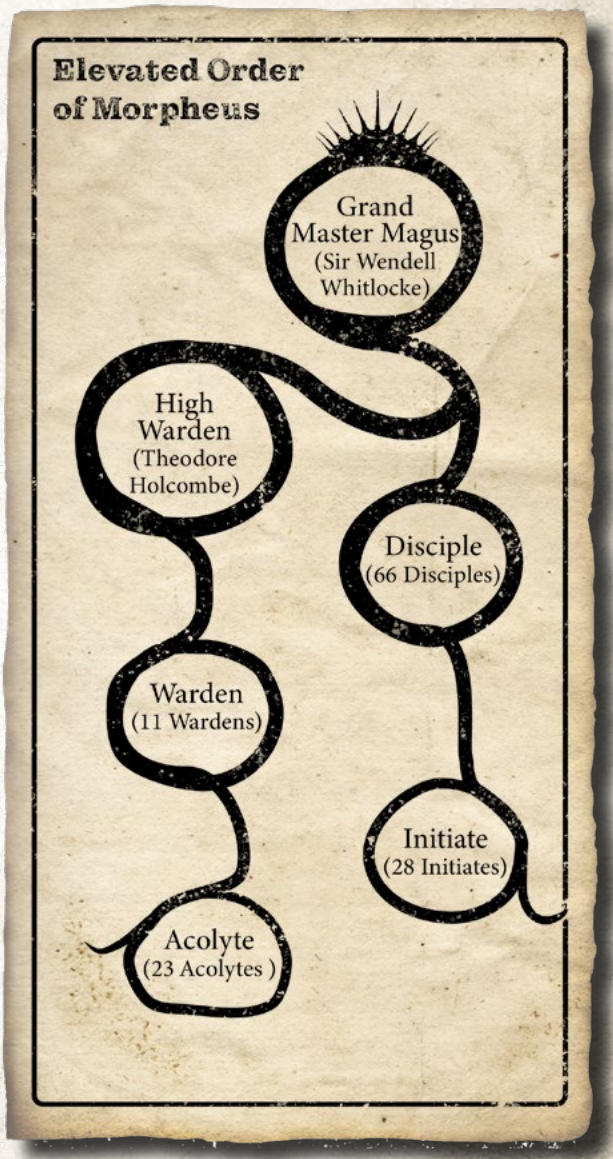
FINANCING

All of the money for the Elevated Order of Morpheus comes from membership dues. While the higher-ranking members know how this money is used, Initiates and Disciples believe that their dues are paying for their indulgence of vices (and necessary bribes), as well as paying for the upkeep of the Pacific Club, the Lodge of Dreams, and for staff. While this is partially true, a significant portion of their money goes into the funding of experiments.

It is no secret that getting ahead in the Order requires money. Indeed, Disciples eager to elevate their status find that making a healthy donation or increasing their monthly dues does wonders for their prospects. When discussing a potential elevation to Warden, Disciples are encouraged to make a significant financial contribution toward their trial project work. In addition, should a particular member's vice be particularly unsavory and criminal, they are expected to pay more for the privilege of membership and should not be surprised when they are asked for additional funds (to cover up evidence and bribe the parties involved).

Those who fail to pay their dues are approached by the High Warden, who (if the situation is repairable) offers to help with a loan to see them out of any financial troubles they are experiencing. If the loan cannot be repaid, the member is likely to be advised to sign over property or other assets to meet their debt. If the financial situation cannot be rectified, the High Warden decides how to proceed, which is usually based on the member's contribution to the Order as a whole, whether they are an asset, or if they show particular promise. If none of these things apply, the High Warden is liable to command his Acolytes to quietly murder the offending member.

Inside the Pacific Club



RECRUITMENT

Initially, Sir Wendell and Holcombe began to recruit from within their peers in the Freemasons, approaching friends and colleague with invitations to small social meetings where their interests could be explored. Such conversations usually encouraged the prospective member to reveal their vices, their view on occult matters, and their desire for power. Playing to such secrets, Sir Wendell and Holcombe would offer the prospective member the opportunity to indulge their vice, to learn hidden secrets, and ultimately access power beyond their understanding. Sifting out posers and others who did not possess like minds, the pair were able to identify those who shared their dark passions, tempting them further with small shows of magic and/or access to illicit activities.

Once a potential member was hooked, they would be formally invited to join the Order, paying for the privilege with money, resources, or influence—the amount would be determined by the difficulty in obtaining and maintaining the recruit's desires. Once a balance was found, the potential member would be made an Initiate.

As membership grew, less work was required from Sir Wendell and Holcombe, as word of mouth within London's High Society got around. As interest grew, the Order was able to be more selective, choosing members with access to greater wealth and influence, and those whose vices would give the Order greater leverage. The more dependent (or depraved) a member's needs were, the greater their loyalty would be.

Currently membership is at a comfortable level, and the Order is not actively looking for new members. But, if someone with significant influence is interested, then the Order will make room.

A NOTE ABOUT CULTIST PROFILES

The cultists profiled in this chapter are provided, where appropriate, with a number of spells. The Keeper may elect to revise such spell lists (which tend to be drawn from the Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic), changing the spells (i.e. using ones from the Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook) and/or adding further spells as desired.

Some of the cultists possess "Cthulhu Blessing," which is a specific ability or power bestowed upon them by Cthulhu. The Keeper should feel free to modify or ignore this to better suit their game. Generally, only cultists of higher rank and those with a longer devotion to Cthulhu are accorded such a boon. It is feasible for a particular blessing to be granted to an individual for a limited period, such as when commanded to perform a special function or mission; in this case.

Lastly, a few cultists have been given a Luck value (either equal to POW, half POW, or quarter POW) for use with Pulp Cthulhu. Ignore this value (i.e. treat as zero Luck) for regular game of Call of Cthulhu).

SAMPLE MEMBERS

Sir Wendell Whitlocke, *appears age 39 (age 59), Retired Brigadier & Cult Leader*

Position: Grand Master Magus, leader

Sir Wendell, with the help of Holcombe, has created a thriving cult. Leaving the day-to-day operation to Holcombe, Sir Wendell has been able to devote more time and resources to his studies and experiments. He is a powerful individual, yet has grown distant from his former life. His personal relationships have fallen to the wayside and his interest in the daily functions of the Order have waned due to his obsessive desire to delve into the secrets of existence and the mystic arts.

In conversation, Sir Wendell seems distracted, as if hearing another conversation entirely, and sometimes appears to be in some kind of altered state, his focus seemingly thousands of miles away. To cope with Sir Wendell's "detachment," Holcombe has appointed some Wardens and Acolytes to take care of all of Sir Wendell's mundane concerns, including his personal health and finances.

Sir Wendell might very well be the most powerful sorcerer in all of England. Where once he spent all of his time obeying the will of Cthulhu, he now quests for cosmic understanding. Sir Wendell spends most of his time in quiet meditation and study. In truth, Sir Wendell is changing. His prolonged and deep contact with Cthulhu has not only affected his mind, but also his body on a molecular level. As to what he is changing into, and how much longer it will go on before it concludes, is uncertain. What is certain is that whatever Sir Wendell becomes, it will no longer be human.

Backstory

- **Description:** white European, tall and handsome, and looking 20 years younger than he actually is. His unkempt hair, once gray, is now more salt-and-pepper, and he sports a full beard. He is typically dressed in pajamas and robe when not completely nude.

- **Traits:** unfocused, seemingly appearing to be in some sort of altered state of consciousness for most of the time. Sometimes, he answers questions many minutes after they are asked, and can at times appear to answer questions not yet asked of him. When in conversation, he never looks directly at the person he is speaking with.

Sir Wendell Whitlocke, *cult leader*

STR 60	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 75	**INT** 85
APP 60	**POW** 100	**EDU** 85	**SAN** 00	**HP** 13
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 20+*	

**MP supplemented by Whitlocke's magical cane, which can hold up to 40 magic points.*

Cthulhu's Blessings

Transformation: Sir Wendell is slowly changing into something other than human. The rate of change should be determined by the Keeper, as should the form of the transformation—possibly a **Black-Winged One**, a **Blessed of Cthulhu**, or a **Thrall of Cthulhu** (see **Chapter 4**, pages 176, 174, or 174 respectively).

Mind Gate: able to send forth his consciousness to explore other dimensions, while leaving his physical body in meditative/sleeping state. On such journeys, who knows what knowledge Whitlocke may learn, or what entities he may encounter and treat with.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3 or weapon
.32 revolver	60% (30/12), damage 1D8
.303 Lee-Enfield rifle	50% (25/10), damage 2D6+4
12-g shotgun (2B)	50% (25/10), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Anthropology 20%, Archaeology 30%, Art/Craft (Military Tactics) 80%, Credit Rating 85%, Cthulhu Mythos 70%, History 40%, Intimidate 60%, Language (Afrikaans) 35%, Language (English) 85%, Language (Latin) 60%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 40%, Library Use 75%, Listen 40%, Occult 80%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 45%, Throw 60%.

Spells

Call Forth the Angel Yazrael (Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth), Command the Angel Dilyah (Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods), Consult Dark Servant (Contact Ghoul), Consult Spirit of the Earth (Contact Nyarlathotep), Contact Cthulhu, Create Scrying Window, Dominate, Dust of Suleiman, Elder Sign, Gate, Levitation, Look to the Future, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Vermiison**, Voorish Sign.

****See *New & Variant Spells*, page 189.**

Sir Wendell Whitlocke: Pulp Adjustments

- HP: 27
- Luck: 50

Pulp Talents

- **Arcane Insight:** halve time required to learn spells, gains bonus die to casting rolls.
- **Weird Science:** build and repair weird science devices.

Sir Wendell Whitlocke

Theodore Holcombe,
age 45, Banker & Second in Command

Position: High Warden

Theodore Holcombe was born to a wealthy London family that had made their money in banking. He was raised with his life already planned out for him: he was going to be a banker. Yet, something in his soul cried out to be more: to experience a full life, and to travel the world. But, his strong sense of family obligation kept him close to home, and after his father's death, he resigned himself to stay at home and manage the family's estate.

It wasn't until Holcombe was in his forties that he met the brilliant Sir Wendell Whitlocke, a member of his Masonic order. Sir Wendell had traveled the world and regaled a captivated Holcombe with his tales of exploration and insights into the occult. Sir Wendell was as charming as he was knowledgeable, and Holcombe knew this was a man who could help him escape from his mundane life.

Holcombe was a fast learner when it came to matters of the arcane, but it was his keen business sense that expanded Sir Wendell's goals and their now combined studies. Exploring the occult was both time-consuming and expensive, and Holcombe knew their funds would only last so long, so he devised a scheme to ensure a steady flow of income while also expanding the nature and capabilities of their dark studies. Thus, together the pair created their own organization: the Elevated Order of Morpheus.

In time, Holcombe became a powerful sorcerer in his own right, but was always able to maintain a very practical and human perspective while Sir Wendell became detached from mundane realities. With Sir Wendell following his own path in regard to his pursuit of cosmic lore, it has fallen on Holcombe to oversee the daily functions of the Order—a task that ensures both his and Sir Wendell's goals can be realized. While Holcombe would desperately like to throw himself into his mystic studies, he knows that if he were to do so, the Order would fall apart.

Unknown to anyone, the pressures of maintaining the Order combined with his daily (public) life are beginning to get to Holcombe. He has begun to experience blackouts and missing periods of time, often finding himself in strange locations and situations without any memory of how he came to be there. He is seeking answers to his condition, which appears to be growing worse, and now wonders how much longer he will be able to function. In his mind, a nagging realization appears to be gaining credence—that he is changing into something not entirely human.

Theodore Holcombe

Backstory

- **Description:** white European, a thin man of average height, Holcombe is usually fashionably dressed with a top hat and cloak. His dark and sunken eyes are piercing and powerful, and he possesses a finely manicured and waxed mustache.
- **Traits:** dislikes fidgeting and spends long periods unmoving, his fixed gaze on others tends to make them feel quite uncomfortable. When he moves it always appears controlled and precise, and when he speaks, his mouth moves only the barest minimum to make sure he is heard.

Theodore Holcombe, *high warden*

STR 55	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 55	**INT** 80
APP 50	**POW** 80	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 00	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 16	

Cthulhu's Blessings

Transformation: Holcombe is slowly changing into something other than human. The rate of change should be determined by the Keeper, as should the form of the transformation—possibly a **Black-Winged One**, a **Blessed of Cthulhu**, or a **Thrall of Cthulhu** (see **Chapter 4**, pages 176, 174, or 174 respectively)..

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Sword cane	50%, (25/10), damage 1D6
.41 revolver	40% (20/8), damage 1D10
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 75%, Appraise 50%, Art/Craft (Fine Art) 60%, Charm 50%, Credit Rating 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Intimidate 80%, Language (Arabic) 30%, Language (English) 60%, Language (French) 50%, Language (Latin) 40%, Law 30%, Listen 65%, Occult 60%, Ride 45%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 80%, Throw 60%.

Spells

Cloud Mind, Command the Angel Dilyah (Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods), Consult Dark Servant (Contact Ghoul), Contact Cthulhu, Create Scrying Window, Dominate, Dust of Suleiman, Elder Sign, Levitation, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi, Shrivelling, Summon/Bind Vermiison**, Voorish Sign.

**See ***New & Variant Spells*, *page 189*.

Theodore Holcombe: Pulp Adjustments

- HP: 21
- Luck: 40

Pulp Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Sword cane	70%, (35/14), damage 1D6
.41 revolver	40% (20/8), damage 1D10
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Resourceful:** always has what he needs to hand when spending 10 Luck.
- **Rapid Attack:** may spend 10 Luck to gain extra attack in a single combat round.

Lord Weldon Payne, *age 51, Architect*

Position: Warden

Lord Weldon Payne is a renowned architect who has attracted praise for the design of many projects in London built over the last 30 years. Falling prey to the pressures of success, he has struggled throughout his life with an addiction to opium—a fact unknown to his wife and children.

It was his friend, Benjamin Leslie, who introduced Lord Payne to the Elevated Order of Morpheus. Leslie knew of his friend's opium use and believed the Order could help; either to safely supply a source of opium or to help Lord Payne kick the habit once and for all. Thus recruited, Lord Payne enjoyed the privileges of membership but began to worry that the Order could try to manipulate him, possibly using his addiction to blackmail him; however, the wily Holcombe assured Lord Payne that blackmail was beneath the Order's conduct and that such petty concerns would pale into insignificance if he would accept elevation into the ranks of the Wardens where, Holcombe assured him, true understanding could be found.

And so, Lord Payne was introduced to Cthulhu, the experience revealing new ways of perceiving space and time, while also fueling him with strange sensations and a renewed vigor. Almost immediately, the effect of Cthulhu's dreams

Lord Weldon Payne

upon Lord Payne manifested in bouts of creativity that saw the architect inspired to push the boundaries of design. With study, experimentation, and dream contact with Cthulhu, Lord Payne was able to devise and build small sculptures that existed in more than three dimensions. Encouraged by Sir Wendell, he created a room in the Order's lodge that was three times larger than physical dimensions would appear to allow. Later experimentation saw the construction of dimensional shortcuts within his home enabling him to move between any of the rooms with but a single step, and building on this, he fashioned a number of archways (one in his home and at least one in the Order's lodge) that could transport a person to different locations throughout London in the blink of an eye. Distraught and not a little unnerved by her husband's strange household "renovations," as well as his growing distance, Lady Payne has taken herself and their children to the family's estate near Sidmouth on the southwest coast. Unsure of what exactly is happening to her husband or its cause, she hopes that in time things will resolve themselves. At present, "out of sight and out of mind" is Lady Payne's personal mantra.

Currently, Sir Wendell has tasked Lord Payne with a new "special" project; however, the architect is unable to explain to anyone what it is supposed to do, as every time he attempts an explanation, his speech devolves into incoherent babbling—interestingly, the Grand Master Magus is able to understand such babbling, leading some to believe that Sir Wendell has placed some form of hex on Lord Payne in a bid to ensure absolute secrecy concerning the special project.

Backstory

- **Description:** white European and small in stature, balding, possesses a bountiful pair of mutton chops, dresses in suit and top hat.
- **Traits:** manically enthusiastic personality, happy to talk excitedly about any subject. When he doesn't know much about a subject, he'll exuberantly ask questions, tying the subject into architecture and sculpture in any way he can.

Lord Weldon Payne, *warden*

STR 40	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 65	**INT** 65
APP 70	**POW** 60	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 00	**HP** 9
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 12	

Cthulhu's Blessings

Hyper-Sight: able to perceive an area (up to 50 feet/15 m) in multiple dimensions—all directions, behind walls, in containers, and so on, all at once. Cannot see into magically protected areas. Cannot be surprised (always allowed a Dodge/action).

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
12-g shotgun (2B)	35% (17/7), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	32% (16/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Architecture) 90%, Charm 50%, Climb 60%, Credit Rating 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Intimidate 75%, Language (English) 80%, Language (French) 40%, Language (Latin) 50%, Law 30%, Listen 70%, Occult 60%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 40%, Ride 40%, Science (Engineering) 80%, Science (Mathematics) 80%, Science (Physics) 70%, Spot Hidden 80%, Stealth 70%, Throw 45%.

Spells

Create Mist of R'lyeh, Curse of Apophis, Defy Gravity, Find Gate, Look to the Future, Touch of Decay.

Finley Harden, *age 29, Ex-Soldier & Doorman*

Position: Acolyte

Finley Harden met Sir Wendell years ago in South Africa while in the army as an enlisted man. Harden served (indirectly) under Sir Wendell, and found him to be an impressive man. After sustaining a severe knee injury, Harden left the army and worked on London's dock. Despite a desire to work, his old injury continued to cause him pain and limited his capability for numerous tasks. Thus, unable to make ends meet, he began to pick up work as an enforcer for a local crime boss. Not truly a bully, Harden often found the things he was asked to do difficult but choked down such feelings not only to ensure the money came in, but also because of his strong sense of loyalty—no matter how unpalatable the task.

Some years later, and now working solely within London's warrens of crime, Harden was employed to help some wealthy "snobs" dispose of a body. When he arrived at the Elevated Order of Morpheus he was surprised to be reunited with Sir Wendell, his old Commanding Officer. Sir Wendell remembered Harden as a loyal and dedicated soldier—just the type of man the Order needed. Thus, Sir Wendell sought and arranged a deal with Harden's boss to buy him out and bring him to work for the Order on a full-time basis. In his new position, outwardly serving as a doorman while secretly handling whatever tasks Sir Wendell and Holcombe ask of him, Harden has been shown miraculous things and witnessed the darkest acts.

Harden's life had changed for the better. He now wears fine clothes and is treated with respect by people in higher stations than himself. He believes he now serves a higher purpose, thanks to Sir Wendell, and that purpose has made him a loyal Acolyte in the Order. No matter the task, Harden is prepared and willing to see it done.

Despite his total devotion to the Order, a recent event has troubled Harden's mind. One evening, Harden heard unusual noises coming from Sir Wendell's rooms in the lodge and entered (unannounced) to check on his master, only to spy Sir Wendell in communication with a large, slug-like creature. Apart from the shock of the creature's visage, something about how the creature and Sir Wendell interacted deeply unsettled Harden. Ever since, while he has continued to do his duty, Harden has begun to question who or what it is that he really serves.

Backstory

- **Description:** white European, a tall and large man, with a handlebar mustache, typically dressed in a long coat and bowler (derby) hat. His eyes have tired sadness about them. He walks with a limp.
- **Traits:** polite, but firm; he is a perfect soldier, knowing how to follow orders, but takes the initiative when needed.

Finley Harden, *muscle*

STR 75	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 75	**DEX** 35	**INT** 60
APP 45	**POW** 40	**EDU** 50	**SAN** 45	**HP** 15
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 8	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4 or large knife 1D6+1D4
.32 revolver	40% (20/8), damage 1D8
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Climb 50%, Credit Rating 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Drive Carriage 40%, First Aid 50%, Intimidate 75%, Jump 40%, Language (Afrikaans) 20%, Language (English) 50%, Listen 60%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Navigate 60%, Occult 30%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 60%, Ride 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 60%, Survival (Bush/Grassland) 60%, Throw 60%, Track 35%.

Spells

None.

Finley Harden: Pulp Adjustments

- HP: 30
- Luck: 20

Pulp Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4 or large knife 1D6+1D4
.32 revolver	45% (22/9), damage 1D8
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Fleet Footed:** spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter.
- **Rapid Attack:** may spend 10 Luck to gain extra attack in a single combat round.

Finley Harden

STORY IDEAS

While the scenario—**Loki's Gift** (page 191)—concerns the Elevated Order of Morpheus, Keepers looking to expand or introduce the Order by different means may find the following two scenario seeds ripe for development.

A Father's Vengeance

The investigators are called in by a wealthy client named Elizabeth Worthington to help her find her missing daughter, Ellen, who was last seen at a dinner party in the family's London townhouse a few days ago. After retiring early, Ellen went to her room, but come the morning, she was missing. With no clear evidence of foul play, the police are at a loss and have been unable to find any leads.

Upon searching, the investigators may find subtle signs of a struggle in her room, but no specific clues to what happened to Ellen. When questioning the guests from the dinner party, they discover that one of the guests, George Warrick, has appeared to show Ellen an inappropriate amount of attention. When the investigators go to question Warrick, they stumble into two men standing over the fallen Warrick. The men are attempting to kill Warrick, but flee if the investigators intervene.

What's Going On

George Warrick and Ellen's father, Arthur Worthington, are both Disciples of the Order. Warrick has taken a perverse interest in Ellen; the night of the dinner party, he sneaked his way to Ellen's room, whereupon he made unwanted advances. Ellen fought back, but slipped and knocked herself out. In a panic, Warrick pushed her unconscious body out of the bedroom window, hoping to make it look like a suicide; however, since it was late at night, no one noticed her fall. Warwick went back to the party for a short time before making his exit. On his departure, he went to the side of the house to see if Ellen was dead, but found she was still alive. He wrapped her up in his cloak and hid her in a nearby alley, and then paid a cabbie to deliver a message for assistance to the Order.

When Holcombe and a pair of Acolytes arrived, Warrick tried to tell Holcombe that the girl was a prostitute who "got out of line," but Holcombe knew who Ellen was. While he tried to figure out how to handle the situation between the two members, Holcombe told Warrick he would take care of things and sent him home. Thinking he could find some way to wipe Ellen's memories of the evening, Holcombe was dismayed to find that she had died of her injuries by the time he had gotten her back to the lodge.

While Warrick's membership (i.e. money) in the Order is important, Holcombe considers his actions to be dishonorable, as they have directly affected another member. Holcombe warned Warrick to lay low while he acts to resolve the affair, while also secretly informing Arthur Worthington that Warrick was responsible for his daughter's death. Worthington wants justice, but to protect the Order he has agreed to remain silent and let the High Warden deal with Warrick. In consequence, the rest of Worthington's family are in the dark, hence his wife Elizabeth taking her own action to find her "missing" daughter.

The men discovered attempting to murder Warrick were Acolytes sent by Holcombe. Should Warrick deduce that Holcombe was behind the attack, he resolves to fight fire with fire and seek a way to either frame Holcombe for Ellen's murder or, if that proves too difficult, to murder him. Perhaps somewhat deluded, Warrick believes that he can replace Holcombe as High Warden, if he can remove him from that position. Ideally, Warrick uses the investigators as a means to either of these ends, while unaware of their other connection to the situation.

With the investigators' involvement possibly at crossed purposes, who do they believe and how near do they actually come to the Order? Does the Order see them as a threat? Does Holcombe act to further intervene? Do they unwittingly take Warrick's side? Perhaps, they see through the smoke and lies and manage to deal with Warrick, potentially placing them on Holcombe's radar—might they make ideal candidates to join the Order and thereby become useful tools in Holcombe's arsenal? Are the investigators able to retrieve Ellen's body and allow her mother to put her to rest? Or, is Ellen's corpse now a component in one of the Order's experiments? Who knows, perhaps Ellen (freshly reanimated) can be found and returned home—but with what consequences?

The Freemasons

The investigators are called in by Joseph Armstrong to find his missing friend, William Forge, the well-respected owner of a successful shipping company. Forge supposedly went to India on a business trip, but Armstrong knows he never left and believes his friend was mixed up with a secret society, called "The Order." Armstrong wonders if Forge got involved in something above his head and wants the investigators to discover the truth.

If any of the investigators are Freemasons, then the request is made by Armstrong as a fellow Mason; Armstrong being advised that the investigator(s) are reliable and the very souls of discretion.

What's Going On

In truth, Armstrong knows Forge joined the Order—because Armstrong encouraged him to join! Armstrong and Forge are both members of the Freemasons; a few prominent members of their Masonic lodge have been noticeably absent, spending less and less time with the Freemasons and instead focusing all of their attention on the Elevated Order of Morpheus.

Armstrong, a Master Mason within Freemasonry, has not been invited to join the Order, but Forge was invited and, being a loyal friend, told Armstrong about his potential recruitment, hoping for some guidance on what to do. Armstrong suggested that Forge should accept Order membership as a means to find out who is in the order, who is in charge, and just what the Order is all about.

Forge duly became an Initiate but, after asking too many questions, raised suspicions with the High Warden, who proceeded to undertake his own investigation. The High Warden discovered that William Forge was supplying information about the Order to another Freemason, and so had Forge killed and his body hidden away. Acolytes working for the High Warden then made it look as though Forge had left for India.

Depending on the initial set up, Armstrong does not reveal to the investigators that he, or Forge, are Freemasons unless absolutely necessary. High Warden Holcombe is unsure as to how much information was passed to Armstrong about the Order, and so, is devising a secret war with the Freemasons, aiming to either dismantle or absorb Armstrong's Masonic lodge into the Elevated Order of Morpheus.

What role do the investigators play in this cold war between secret societies? Are they able to discover the truth while remaining under Holcombe's radar? Does Holcombe attempt to buy their silence with offers of membership, and if refused, does he target the investigators, perhaps pinning the blame on Armstrong and his fellow Masons?

ALTERNATIVES

Other Locations: the Order could have easily set up chapter houses in other cities across the world, such as New York, Paris, Berlin, India, and/or Melbourne.

Other Times: the Order could continue into the 1920s or even modern-day, though the heyday of the gentleman's club has long since passed. It would also be possible to relocate the formation of the Order to a later date and place, perhaps Boston or Berlin. If the Order continues into the 20th century, Sir Wendell may still be alive, using any number of means to extend his life—perhaps he is no longer human and has become one of the Deathless Masters.

William Forge's murder

LOUISIANA SWAMP CULT

Period: Circa 1906

"In a natural glade of the swamp stood a grassy island of perhaps an acre's extent, clear of trees and tolerably dry. On this now leaped and twisted a more indescribable horde of human abnormality than any but a Sime or an Angarola could paint. Void of clothing, this hybrid spawn were braying, bellowing, and writhing about a monstrous ring-shaped bonfire; in the centre of which, revealed by occasional rifts in the curtain of flame, stood a great granite monolith some eight feet in height; on top of which, incongruous with its diminutiveness, rested the noxious carven statuette. From a wide circle of ten scaffolds set up at regular intervals with the flame-girt monolith as a centre hung, head downward, the oddly marred bodies of the helpless squatters who had disappeared. It was inside this circle that the ring of worshippers jumped and roared, the general direction of the mass motion being from left to right in endless Bacchanal between the ring of bodies and the ring of fire."

—H. P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu*

The Louisiana Swamp Cult is a small component of a larger religious order worshipping Great Cthulhu. The Louisiana cult was started by Pascal Castro in 1884, following his return to New Orleans after spending most of his life as a sailor. It was during his travels that he came into the possession of a Cthulhu idol that was to become the literal centerpiece of his cult.

BACKGROUND

Born sometime around 1840, near Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, Pascal Castro left on a sailing vessel when he was in his early teens. He would never stay aboard any one ship for very long, mostly due to his disagreeable behavior that often put him at odds with his fellow crew. Castro was a liar, a cheat, and a thief. Once he had robbed or offended the crew of a vessel, he would make a hasty retreat, jump ship, and find work on a new vessel. Soon, the only people that would sail with him were just as loathsome as he was.

Life on the sea was difficult, but no harder than it was back in Louisiana. Castro did whatever it took to survive, taking any job to make money, no matter how despicable it might have been. In those early years, Castro was able to forge relationships with a number of cutthroats, pirates, and veritable ne'er-do-wells.

It wasn't until Castro was in his early 30's that he met a charismatic sailor named Jon Lockwood. Lockwood was a privateer and sometime merchant marine. He and Castro took a liking to one another and quickly became partners in crime. After a time, as the trust between them grew, Lockwood told Castro about the old gods, who he called the "Old Ones." At first, Castro dismissed Lockwood's stories as just "another foreign religion," but Lockwood was able to demonstrate that the worship of Cthulhu brought untold pleasures and fulfillment. Lockwood began introducing Castro to fellow worshipers at certain ports around the world; the pair joining in with small ceremonies in praise of Cthulhu—small gatherings of half a dozen or so people that soon descended into drug-fueled orgies. Thus, Castro began to understand that Cthulhu was a pathway to new and pleasurable experiences. It was during such ritual orgies that Castro first heard the words: *Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn.*

Castro became infatuated with Cthulhu and participated in rites whenever he could. Soon he began having dreams of the sunken city of R'lyeh and of Great Cthulhu itself—dreams that affected the way he saw the world and how he felt about himself. He told Lockwood about his nightly dreams and how he felt he was developing a deep connection to Cthulhu. Lockwood smiled and told Castro that there was much more to this cult than he had yet been shown, and how those with a true and deep connection to Cthulhu could perform unbelievable feats of magic and have access to strange powers. Lockwood claimed that some of these people were so connected to the Old One that they would never die. These immortal wizards had many names: the Deathless Ones, the Undying Masters, and the Chosen of Cthulhu, among others. They were said to live all over the world and came from all walks of life. Some were believed to live in the mountains of China, while other stories told of them shaking off their human skin to live beneath the sea. Castro's mind was consumed by the possibilities spoken about by his friend; his thirst for understanding and power not yet sated, he insisted they go and find the Undying Masters.

Lockwood and Castro first traveled to Shanghai and then further into the deepest regions of China. They trekked into the mountains, questioned villagers, and searched for signs of Cthulhu worship. Eventually, they came to a remote village with no name. The people of the village were suspicious at first, but soon warmed to the outsiders when they understood that Castro had been touched by Cthulhu and gifted with nightly dreams. After days spent among the villagers, the pair were finally led by one of the elders along a hidden path to a mountain, where stood a strange temple of curious design.

Opposite: The Louisiana Swamp Cult

The Undying Ones

Upon entering, Castro and Lockwood were greeted by a man whose eyes were only empty sockets, who led them to see a young man in meditation. Introducing himself as Hui Qiang, the young man explained that he was one of the leaders of the temple and how he had foreseen Castro's coming, as Cthulhu had foretold him that Castro was to perform a great task. Hui Qiang said that if Castro was ready, he needed to *"do what must be done."* Castro understood, stood up, moved behind Lockwood, and slit his friend's throat.

Castro spent a long time at the temple, learning the necessary rites and rituals concerning Cthulhu and being taught ancient secrets meant only for those who had been touched by Cthulhu. Hui Qiang explained that those such as he, one of the Deathless Masters, could see and move into other spaces that exist between worlds, and how they possessed the power to command other men, beasts, and other things not of this earth. Yet, time for humans was brief, and to learn and command such powers took many lifetimes, and so the gift of eternal life allowed Hui Qiang and others to transcend beyond humanity and become something greater, something better to serve the will of Cthulhu. With such knowledge and power, the Deathless Masters would become like the Great Old Ones and be ready when the oceans boiled and R'lyeh was raised to return Cthulhu to the mastery of this world.

The Cthulhu Idol

At the temple, Hui Qiang explained there were three Deathless Masters: a woman named Cornelia Visser, a man called Johar, and himself. Hui Qiang implied there were more Deathless Masters than those he named, living elsewhere in the world, secluded and remote from society, hinting that some existed in Europe and possibly in the Americas. Castro was told that the Deathless Masters were able to communicate using their minds, receiving and sending messages to one another in dreams and visions, much like the ones they received from Cthulhu. Lifetimes of attuning their minds to Cthulhu's thoughts meant that the Deathless Masters intuitively understood their god's desires. Thus, their will was the will of Cthulhu.

Despite such insights, Hui Qiang remained vague about the Deathless Masters' ultimate plan, if such a plan even existed, and Castro was told that only with time would Cthulhu's plans be made plain to him. In the meantime, Castro was to continue his worship and, when the time was right, his true purpose would be revealed.

Although he desired to remain with Hui Qiang at the temple, Castro was eventually told to leave, as his work was yet to be done. Nevertheless, he left the temple satisfied and fulfilled. Over the next ten years, he returned to his life as a sailor and criminal, recruiting others into the Cthulhu Cult, and performing the rites and rituals, patiently waiting for Cthulhu to guide him. It was during one such ritual that Castro received a waking vision of a statue of Cthulhu—an idol that was deeply connected to the sleeping god and created by the Cthulhu's kin before the dawn of humanity. Castro understood that the statue possessed great power and could act as a focus to expand and amplify his connection to his god, not only that, but within the vision Castro saw where the idol could be found: in the home of an old woman, in the village of Scario in Italy. His mind set upon a single purpose, Castro gathered his followers and set sail for Italy.

*See **Chapter 4** for further details about the Deathless Masters as well as a profile for Hui Qiang.*

The Cthulhu Idol

Guided through dreams, Castro traveled to Scario and the home of the old woman and stole inside. But, upon entering the cottage, he found the old woman hanging from a rafter, the Cthulhu idol on the floor below her feet. It seemed that she had committed suicide earlier that day. Castro took the idol and snuck back to his ship. That night, Castro's dreams were sharper and possessed far greater clarity than those previously experienced. In the visions he saw his home of Louisiana and learned the truth concerning the legends of the "evil things" that dwelt in the woods. He saw Gah'took, a formless, pale monstrosity, possessing dozens of

glowing eyes, that lurked within a forgotten lake, and the black-winged things that slept in deep caverns within the earth. These horrific creatures were, like him, servants of Cthulhu. The dream message was clear, he must return to his birthplace in Louisiana and appease Gah'took and the many black-winged things, calling them to wake so he may nourish them with the flesh of unbelievers.

Finally, Castro understood Cthulhu's plan and the role he must play within it. Returning to Louisiana with his motley crew of followers, Castro went about recruiting more to his cause, gathering a new cult devoted to Cthulhu. Together, Castro and his cultists spent days searching the Louisiana wood and swamps before finding the hidden lake seen in his dreams. It was to be here that the cult would hold their rituals and rites honoring Cthulhu. Castro called forth the formless shape of Gah'took, a shoggoth, from the depths of the lake, whose first act was to consume three of the cultists. Standing firm in the face of this ancient horror, Castro spoke aloud the words of command taught to him by Hui Qiang, and Gah'took was calmed. The shoggoth formed a mouth and then spoke to Castro, saying that it would help Castro to call out the black-winged ones so that together, as one, they would praise Great Cthulhu. Gah'took sunk back into the lake and then reemerged, dragging out a tall monolith made of granite. It had once had some kind of markings upon on it, but they were unintelligible and long faded with age. Gah'took pulled the monolith deeper into the swamp and set it on its end, and then returned to the lake to rest.

When the time was right, Castro and 33 cultists gathered to perform their first ritual at the hidden monolith. Castro knew an offering to the black-winged ones would be needed to call them to awaken and join in the devotions to Cthulhu. To this end, the cult had kidnapped a young man from the bayou, who would serve as their first sacrifice. The Cthulhu idol was placed on top of the monolith while a fire was built and set around the stone, wherein the rites would be performed.

As the sky grew black, the chanting of the cultists called forth the black-winged ones from out of the earth. These monstrous avian terrors flew to the ritual whereupon they descended and accepted the offering made to them, devouring the sacrifice while the unfortunate fellow's screams filled the night. Now satisfied, the black-winged ones joined the ceremony, witness to the appalling orgy of carnality and depravity that followed.

Over time, Castro's cult has grown in number, requiring that the ritual site be expanded to provide more room for its members and their sacrifices. While weekly and monthly rites bring a respectable number of cultists, it is the annual ceremonies, held on Samhain (Halloween; October 31) and Walpurgis Night (May Eve; April 30), where the full extend and size of the cult is made manifest.

The Current Situation

By 1906, the cult has increased to around 100 people strong and continues to grow. Castro believes he is unstoppable, yet some within the cult believe that they are becoming too bold and fear the attention of the authorities. Castro remains unafraid of such reprisals, saying, "*If they do, it is as Cthulhu wills.*"

GOALS

"The time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones; free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and revelling in joy. Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom. Meanwhile the cult, by appropriate rites, must keep alive the memory of those ancient ways and shadow forth the prophecy of their return."

—H. P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu*

The Louisiana Swamp Cult has lofty ideas but their primary function is limited. The overall goal of the cult is to prepare and assist with the awakening of Cthulhu when the stars are right. Castro has taught his cultists that once awakened, Cthulhu will rule the earth and show its followers new ways to live and revel, and that all the world will be set aflame with "*a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom.*"

Gah'took, the shoggoth

When the stars will be right is a matter of speculation. The cult believes the coming of Cthulhu will be signified when humanity shakes off its inhibitions and lives unbridled without moral restraint. Thus, humanity will give up the ideas of good and evil, and will live "purely," just as the Great Old Ones did and will again.

The cult believes that, through the rites and rituals adorating Cthulhu, humanity can become untethered from the burden of morality. Thus, they must enjoy life to the fullest, feeding into whatever hedonistic desires they possess, and delving as deeply as possible into their passions. Only then can they be ready for the return of Cthulhu.

On a more practical side, the cult's goals are very basic. Castro understands that Cthulhu wants him and his followers to offer sacrifices to the black-winged ones. Why Cthulhu has chosen this task for Castro, he doesn't know—perhaps it's due to his connection to the area wherein they rest, or it is a test to ensure absolute obedience to Cthulhu's wishes. Possibly, Cthulhu wants (or needs) the black-winged ones appeased for some future service. To Castro's cultists, it doesn't really matter—they know they are doing their master's bidding and helping him connect to Cthulhu's higher power. The rituals allow them all to indulge in carnal desire, free from fear of reprisal or sanction. Indeed, for Castro and the cultists, they have found a sickening "bliss" in the worship of Cthulhu.

Rituals

The cult's weekly rituals are small ceremonies consisting of a few dozen individuals. Sacrificial offerings tend to be made around once per month with greater numbers of cultists attending. To accommodate the larger attendance of worshippers at the monthly and annual ceremonies, wooden scaffolding has been constructed to better secure and hold the sacrifices for the black-winged ones while also allowing the gathered cultists more space to participate in the rituals.

The cult is, more or less, careful in abducting people from a wide area so as not bring undue attention upon themselves. Such captives are held in various locations before being brought to the ritual site, where they are tied to the scaffolding around the monolith on which the Cthulhu idol sits. A bonfire is lit around the base of the monolith, which signifies the start of the ceremony. The rites are typically led by Castro, although from time to time he tutors others to conduct the ceremonies, ensuring numerous individuals are capable of the task, which provides some form of stability should Castro have to travel away for a period—while Castro believes he shall live forever, he recognizes the need to ensure the cult can continue without him.

Rituals start with the lighting of the bonfire and with the beating of drums, followed by chanting using a "speak and response" structure, but this soon devolves into a chaotic

Sacrificing to the black winged ones

free-for-all as the ritual progresses. Soon, the cultists enter an ecstatic state: dancing around the monolith, writhing and speaking in strange tongues, and then engaging in sexual activity. Around this point, any formal ritual structure disintegrates and anything can happen: from self-flagellation and self-mutilation to wanton acts of violence and sexual antics—be they consensual or otherwise. The one act that is (surprisingly) forbidden during the rituals is murder—only the black-winged ones are allowed to take a life during these rites. Those who break this command usually find themselves tied to the scaffolding at the next ritual; an extra sacrifice for the black-winged ones.

The combined build-up and release of the gathered cultists' energy, fueled through the ritual, summons the black-winged ones. Their arrival tends to be around an hour into the ceremony, once the collective energies of the cultists have reached a certain pitch. Provided formal sacrificial offerings have been prepared, the black-winged ones do not harm the cultists, instead spending their time slowly torturing and then devouring the sacrifices. Certainly, Castro has been wise to always ensure sacrifices are offered when the black-winged ones are called—otherwise, it seems likely the flying horrors would take their fill from the gathered cultists. Once they have been appeased, the black-winged ones return to

THE BLACK WINGED ONES

"Only two of the prisoners were found sane enough to be hanged, and the rest were committed to various institutions. All denied a part in the ritual murders, and averred that the killing had been done by Black Winged Ones which had come to them from their immemorial meeting-place in the haunted wood."

—H. P. Lovecraft, The Call of Cthulhu

The black-winged ones are mentioned but briefly in Lovecraft's story, leaving a lot of freedom for a Keeper to expand on what they may actually be and why these horrors are demanding/taking sacrifices. While each Keeper is encouraged to form their own ideas, the following provides some potential inspiration.

Nightgaunts: more than one writer has suggested that the black-winged ones were just another name for nightgaunts. But, why would the nightgaunts come to a ritual for Cthulhu and violently kill sacrifices? Perhaps, this particular group of nightgaunts, being creatures of the Dreamlands, have some sort connection to the slumbering god? Or, they represent some other entity, such as Nyarlathotep, that has made some sort of bargain with Cthulhu.

Star-Spawn: perhaps some of the star-spawn that arrived on earth with Cthulhu found a resting place in what would later become the bayous of Louisiana? While the star-spawn are often considered to be smaller, yet similar, versions of Cthulhu, it seems probable that the entities brought with it from Xoth could possess a variety of forms. Thus, the black-winged ones are a distinct type of star-spawn; smaller and somehow playing a role in the preparations for Great Cthulhu's reawakening. By violently murdering the sacrifices offered, these creatures clearly demonstrate to the gathered the cultist the "new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves"—this visceral and shocking "education" burned into the minds of those in attendance.

Dream Fashioned: the black-winged ones have been formed from the alien dreams of Cthulhu. These thoughts given flesh need sustenance to become truly "alive." Thus, Cthulhu has commanded Castro to raise the cult with a clear mission to honor and provide sacrifices to these flying horrors, with each feeding further solidifying their material forms. In time, this new race of beings shall serve Cthulhu.

Unique: the black-winged ones may be remnants of a race of subterranean intelligences now inhabiting vast underground caverns. Perhaps Cthulhu sees their value in the work to come, and so the offerings made by Castro go some way to forming a bond and ensuring their assistance when the "stars are right." Within their underground lairs, these creatures dwell in a state of suspended animation, with the collected energies of the cult's rites enough to wake and stir them to feed. Thus, they only venture to the surface when they are summoned to indulge their violent appetites.

See **Chapter 4** for further details about the black-winged ones.

the air, flying around the monolith for a time; an act which signals the apex of the ritual. Once completed, the black-winged ones fly off into the night, leaving the bodies behind.

From time to time, Gah'took the shoggoth deigns to attend a ceremony. Rolling into the ritual site, the gelatinous horror participates in the rites, engaging with the cultist on *all* levels. In such situations, Gah'took consumes the remains of the sacrifices after the black-winged ones are done with them before slinking back to its watery abode.

STRUCTURE

The Louisiana Swamp Cult has a very loose organization. Castro is the most knowledgeable within the cult but, due to its iconoclastic nature, he's not formally the leader. Weekly and monthly rituals are held in the swamp, with larger ceremonies held twice yearly (Samhain and Walpurgis Night). Typically, Castro leads the rituals, although there are a few others who have been taught the rites, with such favored cultists sometimes leading the smaller weekly or monthly rituals.

While the ceremonies started as highly structured affairs, with time, they have slipped into more chaotic and variable practices. The participants, being fueled with drugs and raised to altered states of consciousness, have been encouraged to give in to their desires above all else, allowing the specifics of the rites to fall more or less by the wayside. Castro saw this disintegration of formality as part and parcel of the cultists becoming more like the Old Ones. While a modicum of ritual is maintained, the events are likely to be seen by observers as crazed and spontaneous outpourings of chaos.

Outside of the ceremonies, the cultists understand that it is their responsibility to keep the existence of the cult secret. Those who step out of line are quickly reprimanded; if the indiscretion was blatant or completely negligent, the cultist will be silenced (murdered). The preferred method of execution is as sacrifice to the black-winged ones but, if that is not possible, the intended target is poisoned or else suffers some form of "accident."

Castro's favored poison is called the Black Drop; this being a mixture of snake venom combined with a plant Castro discovered in the South Pacific. The poison induces a heart attack, leaves little trace, and is very difficult to detect. Typically, the victim is approached while in public, with the assailant "bumping" into the victim while injecting them with the poison. The Black Drop takes around 2 to 8 hours to kill the target, so the victims rarely realize that they have been poisoned until far too late.

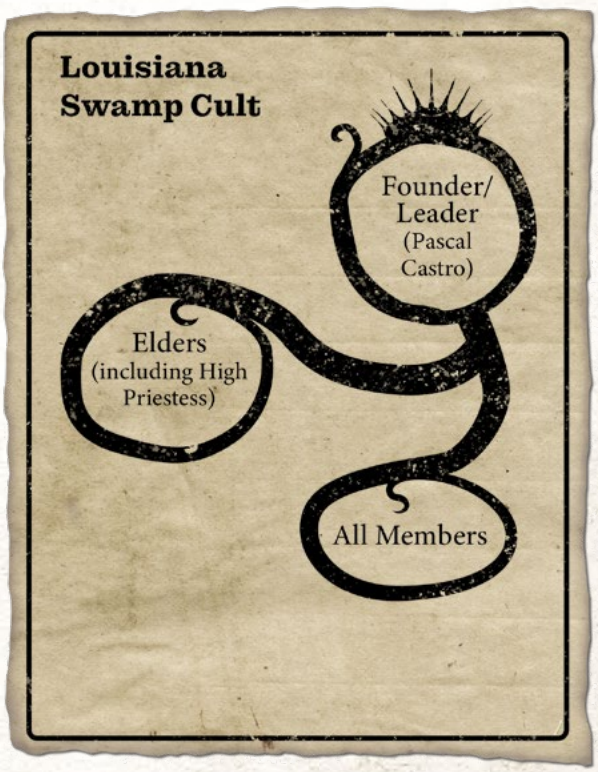
Cultists are also responsible for acquiring sacrifices for the rituals, with the task being assigned to a different group of individuals each month. All are expected to pull their weight and provide sacrifices when commanded to do so. Cultists often drive for hours to find suitable victims outside of the cult's base of operations.

FINANCING

Substantial amounts of money are not essential to the daily functions of the Louisiana Swamp Cult. Most of the members are poor or working-class people, who make their livings in a variety of ways. Castro runs a small bait shop and sells narcotics on the side. The cult's activities only take a small amount of personal time each week, leaving cultists to lead seemingly normal lives. If a specific task needs financing, Castro either collects money from wealthier cultists or conspires to arrange criminal activities, such as robbery or blackmail.

RECRUITMENT

The cult is predominantly male, with women only making up about one-fifth of the cult's overall size, due in the main to the cult being primarily made up of sailors. Over time, more local inhabitants have been recruited, so the gender mix is somewhat fluid. Ethnicities from around the world rub shoulder to shoulder in the cult.



A typical recruitment involves a potential member being offered drugs (typically alcohol and opium), followed by sexual advances by a member of the cult. The cult plays to whatever desires the recruit possesses, hooking them with access to forbidden pleasures and experiences. As the recruitment phase goes on, the recruit is introduced to ritual elements and knowledge of Cthulhu, first in mythical terms and then as fact. Typically, as such people go through this indoctrination process, they find themselves more invigorated and confident in their daily lives. Cult recruiters are experts in helping such people grow in confidence while unlocking the doors to their inner cravings—cravings that only the cult can fulfill.

Once a prospective cultist is ready, they are taken to the swamp where a full ritual before the monolith takes place. Such introductory sessions typically contain no sacrificial elements, but an individual black-winged one is summoned by Castro to watch over the ritual, while the recruit is handed a knife. If the recruit doesn't attack the horror or attempt suicide, they then undergo full initiation.

Of course, not all come to the cult willingly. Some are cajoled and forced into submission by other family members, their minds often broken by the experience. Despite higher male numbers overall, women tend to hold the important and favored positions within the cult's hierarchy. Clearly, with the cult's open attitude to sex, it welcomes any and all, whatever their gender or sexual orientation.

SAMPLE MEMBERS

Pascal Castro, *age 61, Cult Founder*

Position: Leader

Castro is the de facto leader of the Louisiana Swamp Cult in the loosest sense. In the beginning, he orchestrated highly structured rituals at the monolith but, as the cult has grown, the rituals have become laxer. The chaotic nature of these ceremonies makes Castro feel akin to the Great Old Ones, and he is happy to train others to take up the mantle of ceremonial leaders and allow them the freedom to run most day-to-day affairs of the cult. Of course, in all significant matters, he expects everyone to follow his command.

Castro keeps an eye on his flock, as much as he is able, and tries to ensure things run smoothly. Where a member is having difficulty or is perhaps at risk of breaking the cult's secrecy, Castro may visit them to help resolve their problems or concerns and "refocus" them as needed. When some guiding words, more drugs, or a gentle warning doesn't work, things may be remedied with harsher actions, up to and including murder.

By day, Castro operates a small bait shop, out near the bayou, from which he also distributes narcotics (cocaine, marijuana, peyote, psilocybin mushrooms, and opium) to cult members as well as local residents. Castro no longer uses drugs himself, his strong connection to Cthulhu granting him moments of higher consciousness and elevated levels of pleasure.

Castro is a true believer. He believes that some of humanity is destined for greatness, but knows that most can never realize their true potential. For those that have open minds, he will guide them to a better existence. As for those that reject the "truth," Castro knows their life is insignificant and meaningless, and that they are the "fodder" on which he and the Old Ones will dine upon when they are elevated to mastery of this world.

Backstory

- **Description:** an aged and weathered man of combined European and Indigenous American heritage, of slight frame and possessing wiry but muscular limbs; despite his years, he has the vigor of someone half his age. His gray beard and hair are thin and straggly. He dresses in simple overalls when working but may don a fine suit when the occasion fits.
- **Traits:** malicious, cruel, and cunning; he greets the world with a smile and a twinkle in his eye. He delights in his dark schemes and fantasies, and is at times chaotic and rampant in his worship of Cthulhu.

Pascal Castro

Pascal Castro, *cult leader*

STR 45	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 50	**INT** 80
APP 35	**POW** 92*	**EDU** 45	**SAN** 00	**HP** 9
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 26*	

**Magically increased through the use of Dread Curse of Azathoth and Power Drain spells.*

Cthulhu's Blessings

Self-Ward: slows down the advance of age (halving the aging process) and protects from physical damage (acting as 6-point armor). Castro may supplement the ongoing effect by drinking the blood of another person, with each pint consumed conferring either 1-point of magical armor (to a maximum of +6) or reducing his age by 1 year.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3 or knife 1D8
Garrote	40% (20/8), damage 1D6
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Appraise 40%, Charm 60%, Climb 40%, Credit Rating 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 35%, Fast Talk 50%, Intimidate 45%, Language (English) 45%, Language (French) 40%, Language (Chinese) 20%, Listen 40%, Locksmith 50%, Mechanical Repair 60%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 60%, Science (Pharmacy) 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 55%, Throw 50%, Track 40%.

Spells

Bind Enemy, Contact Cthulhu, Drain Youth, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Mental Suggestion, Power Drain, Summon Black-Winged Ones**, Summon Shoggoth, Wrack.

** *See* ***New & Variant Spells****, page 186.*

Pascal Castro: Pulp Adjustments

- HP: 18
- Luck: 90

Pulp Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3 or knife 1D8
Garrote	50% (25/10), damage 1D6
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Pulp Talents

- **Quick Healer:** natural healing; +3 HP per day.
- **Rapid Attack:** may spend 10 Luck to gain extra attack in a single combat round.

Beatrice Bordelon, *age 36, Cult Elder*

Position: High Priestess

At age 16, Beatrice Landry was married to George Bordelon, a man some 30 years her senior. The Bodelons were old money, although the family's heyday had long since passed. George was the last of the line and arranged an exceptional dowry to effectively purchase a young wife, with the hope of fathering an heir to the family's fortune.

It was soon clear why her new husband had failed to attract a wife previously. His abusive behavior came steadily to the fore over a matter of months. Never one to turn the other cheek, Beatrice railed against her mistreatment, which served to only exacerbate her husband's ill will. Realizing that she could either submit or turn the situation to her favor, she sought out help and was directed by one of her servants to a man called Castro, who it was said, could solve such problems.

Supplied with a particular potion by Castro, Beatrice poured a double measure into her husband's drink and then laughed as he convulsed and expired before her eyes. With no evidence to the contrary, George Bordelon's death was determined a heart attack, with his fortune and land passing solely into the hands of Beatrice. Castro was well rewarded, not only with money but also with Beatrice's company, as she found her "savior" a learned man who possessed much wisdom. The two began an affair, and with each passing month, Castro whispered many secrets concerning Cthulhu into his lover's ear.

Beatrice Bordelon

In time, Beatrice was initiated into the cult, her love of Castro cemented in the worship of Cthulhu. Beatrice maintains a heathy distance from the day-to-day machinations of the cult, attending only the annual ceremonies and a few of the monthly ones (when her desire for gratification rises to the fore). Despite such outward distance, Beatrice is deeply committed to the cult's cause and feels she owes Castro a debt that can never be repaid. She is among the most trusted of Castro's followers and has been elevated to the status of high priestess.

Backstory

- **Description:** white female of French ancestry, possessing a fuller figure and average height, with long and curly blonde hair. Dresses in expensive clothing, imported from Europe.
- **Traits:** sadistic and cunning, she presents an outward mask of "girly" innocent and naivety wrapped with elegance and grandeur; when this mask slips away, she delights in the suffering of others.

Beatrice Bordelon, *high priestess*

STR 50	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 65	**INT** 70
APP 70	**POW** 55	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 00	**HP** 13
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 11	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	75% (37/15), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+2
.22 short auto	45% (22/9), damage 1D6
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Charm 45%, Credit Rating 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Drive Auto 50%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Language (English) 65%, Language (French) 65%, Listen 50%, Occult 40%, Persuade 80%, Psychology 55%, Ride 60%, Sleight of Hand 40%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 50%, Throw 35%.

Spells

Contact Cthulhu, Mental Suggestion, Summon Black-Winged Ones**, Summon Shoggoth, Wrack.

**See ***New & Variant Spells*, *page 186*.

Beatrice Bordelon: Pulp Adjustments

- HP: 26
- Luck: 55

Pulp Talents

- **Keen Hearing:** gains bonus die to Listen rolls.
- **Strong Willed:** may spend 10 Luck to gain bonus die to POW rolls.

Luke LuDoux, *age 37, Longshoreman*

Position: Enforcer

Luke LuDoux suffered from violent outbursts as a child and was never truly emotionally connected to anyone. As he got older, he learned to accommodate other people in his life, finding a place in society while pretending to feel empathy; however, this was purely a survival mechanism that enabled him to indulge in his desires.

At an early age, Luke started to explore his violent tendencies, torturing small animals—at first insects and then mammals of increasing size. He was a bully, enjoying the fear he instilled in other children, but it wasn't until he was 13 that he snuck up on a lone child and beat him to death. Somehow, he managed to take the body to the swamp and dump it for the 'gators before anyone noticed the boy was missing.

At age 21, while working as a longshoreman, LuDoux met Castro. Observing the young man for some time, Castro had noticed that LuDoux kept to himself while others seemed to avoid him. A perfect candidate for his cult, Castro tried to interest Luke in easy sex and drugs

Luke LuDoux

but soon figured his tastes were far more bloodthirsty. By helping him find and kill victims, Castro established a deep connection with LuDoux, possibly a stronger connection than with almost anyone else Castro may have counted as a friend. The feeling was mutual, with LuDoux coming to better understand his nature through conversations with Castro, while also being enveloped in Castro's passion and knowledge of Cthulhu. Over time, LuDoux has become one of the cult's most fervent members and the trusted right-hand of Castro. It is LuDoux who is called upon to undertake Castro's "special" tasks.

Backstory

- **Description:** a sturdy and muscular white male, typically dressed as a longshoreman but may don a hood or mask when on cult business. He has a neatly trimmed mustache and short-cropped, dark-brown hair.
- **Traits:** solitary and vindictive, he dislikes socially interacting with people, although is capable of feigning a friendly attitude, which combined with his softly spoken voice often makes others underestimate the threat he presents.

Luke LuDoux, *sailor & sociopath*

STR 80	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 55	**INT** 45
APP 40	**POW** 55	**EDU** 35	**SAN** 00	**HP** 13
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 11	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	75% (37/15), damage 1D3+1D4 or knife 1D4+2+1D4
Garrote	70% (35/14), damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 70%, Credit Rating 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 7%, Disguise 50%, Fast Talk 45%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate 80%, Language (English) 35%, Language (French) 35%, Listen 40%, Locksmith 45%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Navigate 60%, Psychology 30%, Rope Use 70%, Sneer with Malice 80%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 75%, Swim 70%, Throw 70%, Track 60%.

Spells

None.

Olivia Tabuteau, *age 24, Sex Worker*

Position: Recruiter

Tabuteau came from a large and destitute family in New Orleans where she never received the attention or affirmation she deserved. Unable to find legal work, she became a sex worker, with her then-boyfriend pimping her out to his friends. It was only a matter of time before Tabuteau's boyfriend "recruited" another girlfriend, and then another, and so on. Soon, she was but one of many being exploited by her "boyfriend."

By the time she was 17, Tabuteau was introduced to a man who was said to have "particular tastes" and who paid well to indulge them. The man was Castro. Spending time with Castro, Tabuteau's mind was opened to Cthulhu. Shortly, thereafter, she cast off her old life to begin a new one as a follower of Castro and servant of Cthulhu. To help matters along, Castro sought out her "boyfriend" pimp and arranged for cult members to kidnap him. Soon thereafter he was sacrificed to the black-winged ones while laughter and tears of joy poured from Tabuteau's eyes.

Now, Tabuteau serves the cult by finding and recruiting new members. Luring both men and women with the promise of illicit delights, she gets to know her mark, makes the first steps in revealing the secrets of the cult, and decides their worthiness for the cult's embrace. Over time, Tabuteau has become a particularly accomplished blackmailer, able to raise funds, deter unwanted attention, and ensure secrets are kept.

Olivia Tabuteau

Backstory

- **Description:** a light-skinned, African-American woman who dresses in once-fine clothing that is now somewhat threadbare. She has a small, crescent-shaped scar on her forehead that is usually obscured by her long hair.
- **Traits:** pleasant and charming, with a self-deprecating sense of humor. She is a quick study of people's characters.

Olivia Tabuteau, *cult recruiter*

STR 40	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 60	**INT** 65
APP 70	**POW** 35	**EDU** 25	**SAN** 25	**HP** 9
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 7	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3–1 or knife 1D4–1
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Skills

Charm 70%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating 20%, Disguise 50%, Fast Talk 60%, Language (English) 35%, Language (French) 20%, Listen 40%, Locksmith 35%, Occult 25%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 80%, Sleight of Hand 60%, Stealth 60%, Throw 35%.

Spells

None.

STORY IDEAS

Up to No Good

A friend or family member asks one of the investigators to help find her missing husband, believing that her husband has been living a secret life, pretending to work late but seeing other women. The police gave the case little attention, more or less saying that they thought the husband to have run off with another woman. Despite her husband's antics, his wife still loves him and wants him found. Even if he has begun a new life without her, she needs to know for sure, before she can move on with her own life.

Interviewing the missing man's work colleagues, the investigators find out there was a place of "ill repute" that he liked to frequent, called the Seesaw Rooms. On arrival, it is found to be an opium den and brothel catering to the hidden underbelly of New Orleans. If the investigators ask around, they find Scarlet Star, a sex worker who knows the missing man, having spent much time in his company. Scarlet is friendly and, discovering that the man is missing, sincerely worried about him. She says that a new girl—Tallulah—started working at the Seesaw Rooms a few weeks ago, and how the missing man became besotted with her. Scarlet overhead one of their conversations, which led her to believe that the pair were making arrangements to meet outside of the establishment (something forbidden by the management), and that perhaps he fell afoul of some scam perpetrated by this Tallulah. Further canvasing of the Seesaw's staff nets the investigators with an address for Tallulah.

What's Going On

Tallulah, aka Olivia Tabuteau, is in the process of luring the missing husband into the cult; if he isn't deemed worthy, then he'll make do as a sacrifice to the black-winged ones. At present, he is being kept in a drug-addled stated by Tabuteau in a rundown apartment building in the city.

Assuming the investigators track down Tabuteau and the apartment, they find a small orgy taking place, whereupon they are invited to join in. Once it becomes apparent that they are not there to participate, cult ruffians appear from within the apartment, aiming to drag the investigators outside and rough them up in the alley.

If the investigators continue to "harass" Tabuteau and pursue the missing man's case, the Louisiana Swamp Cult considers them to be a threat and acts to take them permanently out of the picture. Perhaps, if somehow captured, the investigators may find themselves being offered up as sacrifices for an upcoming ritual in the swamp. Whether the missing man joins the cult or joins the ranks of sacrifices is down to the investigators and the Keeper.

Revenge of the Deathless Masters

The investigators are tipped off by a journalist contact about a recent massacre. Some people were slain in a warehouse on the docks, and apparently burned to death. The New Orleans Police Department is investigating but are, so far, drawing a blank, although it seems that at least some of the group were sailors. Witness reports suggest that a man was seen leaving the area on the night in question, possibly a sailor.

Through contacts on the force or via other means, the investigators learn that while some of the deceased had been burned, others appeared to have had all the liquid removed from their bodies, while some apparently committed suicide—the coroner is at a loss to fully explain or understand what took place.

Asking around the docks, the investigators are told that the group of sailors all arrived in New Orleans on the same ship, called *The Monroe*. While that vessel's captain doesn't take too kindly to the investigators, one of his crew quietly arranges to meet with the investigators, telling them that the sailors found dead in the warehouse were into some kind

of devil worship and associates of a woman named Mrs. Lemonnier, who runs a lodging house in New Orleans.

When the investigators arrive at Mrs. Lemonnier's lodging house, they hear a scream coming from an upper story. If they rush to investigate, they are in time to see a man jump from the upper window only to be snatched away in midair by a bird-like creature.

If they search inside, they find Mrs. Lemonnier is dead, her charred and blackened corpse a sickening sight. Hidden in her private rooms is a small altar decorated with tentacled idols (Cthulhu), as well as a ledger containing the name of guests, a few of which have a strange mark against their names (these being members of the Louisiana Swamp Cult). The door to the room of the jumping man has been torn from its hinges with great force.

What's Going On

A Deathless Master has come to New Orleans to "reclaim" Castro's Cthulhu idol. This undying and once-human horror is systematically locating and torturing cultists to find where Castro and the idol are hiding. Word is spreading rapidly around the cult about its members going missing or else found murdered, although none comprehend the threat they face. Many have gone to ground, hoping to lie low till Castro handles the situation.

The investigators should find one of the cultists—still alive but unaware of the coming Deathless Master—while they are questioning the cultist, the Deathless Master arrives. Trying to save the cultist (or simply being in the wrong place at the right time) brings the investigators into the crosshairs of the Deathless Master. How the story plays out depends on the investigators. Do they help the Louisiana Swamp Cult? Does Castro come to them for help (seeing them as useful pawns or fodder to throw at his enemy)? Why is the Deathless Master and the Swamp Cult at odds? And, in spite of events so far, do Castro and the Deathless Master reach some sort of accord that ultimately sees them joining forces to herald a new era for the cult?

The events present a great opportunity to immerse the investigators in the city's darker side, rubbing shoulders with criminals and with practitioners of Louisiana Voodoo, in their quest to piece together just what is going on.

ALTERNATIVES

The Louisiana Swamp Cult is only one small group in a number of cults under the shadowy direction of the Deathless Masters. Of course, the Swamp Cult is destroyed by Inspector Legrasse in 1908, but the Deathless Masters have cults and followers all over the world that are contributing to an unknowable plan. Some of these cults are innocuous, while others perform horrible acts on a daily basis. The Deathless Masters create a cult for a purpose, only understood by Cthulhu. Perhaps the Deathless Masters themselves have a greater understanding than most of the cult members, but they too are limited by their human origins.

The Deathless Masters will teach their pupil what they feel they should know and send them off into the world to perform the task. This gives a lot of freedom for a Keeper to create a cult in a different location with different goals to keep the Investigators guessing.

Other Locations: offshoots of the Louisiana Swamp Cult could be found anywhere in the world, given the number of sailors counting themselves as members—such as in Uganda, Ireland, or San Francisco. Such offshoots might be performing rituals to physically transform people into "better" humans; the cultists might be working to dig up ancient relics connected to Cthulhu; perhaps they have been tasked with constructing a temple made entirely of green glass beneath a city in a subterranean chasm, with the temple acting to amplify magic or the worship of Cthulhu; or these cults could simply be replicating the rituals taught to them by Castro.

Other Times: the cult would not be very different in the past, performing the same rituals as stated. In modern times, the Louisiana Swamp Cult could still exist but has become both more organized and subtler in its operation, able to hide in plain sight and use funds amassed over the years to purchase private land where it conducts hidden ceremonies. Perhaps Castro still lives and guides the cult from an inner sanctum, with layers of people and organizational fronts separating him from public view.

SOCIETY OF THE ANGELIC ONES

Period: Circa 1922

"A mighty angel appeared wrapped in cloud and rainbow. His face was like the sun, and his limbs burned with fire. When he opened his mouth to speak, so could be heard the roaring of lions and tremor of thunder so loud the ground shook. For he is of the Angelic Ones who watch over us and shall guide us to divinity."

—The Gospel of Wilma Cartright

The Society of the Angelic Ones is a religious organization based out of Los Angeles, California. The Society believes that humanity is surrounded and observed by supernatural beings that act to foster and protect humanity, guiding all to a new utopian society. The founder of this religion, Wilma Cartwright, believes her daughter Elsie is a host to one of these angelic beings.

BACKGROUND

Wilma Cartwright (then Wilma Fisher) was born in Stillwater, Oklahoma in 1870 to a poor farming family. When she was five years old, her family fell on hard times and lost the farm to the bank. Her father committed suicide soon after, while her mother, brothers, and sisters did everything they could to survive. Indeed, Wilma and two of her brothers would often steal to get by but soon discovered that carrying out small cons was a better way to make money. Eventually, due to their lack of experience, they landed themselves in jail. Wilma, however, was very good at feigning innocence and always seemed to find a way to let her brothers (willingly) take the fall, even though she was the real brains behind the operation.

As Wilma aged, she grew into an attractive woman and she knew it. She would flirt to get attention and then manipulate both men and boys for her ends. But it wasn't until Wilma caught the eye of an Oklahoma City businessman that she found one of her best cons: marriage.

She married her first husband, Luke Kettle, when she was 16 years old. They were married for only two years before Wilma murdered Kettle, making the incident look like a suicide. Kettle had a drinking problem and was known to suffer from depression, so the police didn't look too deeply into his death. Wilma received a comfortable insurance claim.

She was married again two years later, in 1890, to Arthur Carlin, a businessman in Omaha—where Wilma moved after her first husband's death. Wilma poisoned Carlin in his sleep, his death appearing to be a heart attack. She married again in 1893 to George Emerson, but divorced him in 1894 after he became suspicious of her past. Subsequently, she moved to Carson City where she married Kenneth Davis in 1897.

Davis had a keen interest in the occult and mysticism. Wilma thought that the supernatural was mostly drivel, but she soon realized that there was more to what her new suitor believed. She took an interest in Theosophy and mysticism, studying some of the books that Davis had acquired. Once married, Wilma and Davis moved to Portland. In 1898, Davis was reported missing and presumed dead. This time, however, Wilma had no idea what had happened to her husband.

A year later, Wilma met a man from Depoe Bay, Oregon, named Steven Clark, who came from a wealthy fishing family and shared Wilma's interest in the occult. Clark fell for Wilma's charms and they were married in 1900. Wilma's new family was strange and secretive, but the wealthy lifestyle she married into kept her from getting too nosey. Clark pressed Wilma for children, she refused at first as she had never been interested in motherhood, but she sensed her husband's strong dissatisfaction and quickly realized that he might actually leave her, so agreed to his demand. Wilma gave birth to Elsie in 1901, Paul in 1903, and Kristina in 1905.

During her pregnancy with Kristina, Wilma noticed strange physical changes in her husband. Clark knew that he could no longer keep his secret and told Wilma that he would soon "change" and "go to the sea," as his bloodline was that of the "Deep Ones." Wilma, always looking to take advantage of any situation, accepted her husband's admission and asked him to teach her about the "Ones from the Sea" and their mysterious god named Cthulhu. Thus, Clark and his family told Wilma about the secrets of magic and how Cthulhu sometimes granted visions to loyal followers. Clark's mother showed Wilma the rituals of the deep ones. Though she found such knowledge interesting, Wilma craved something that her new family could not offer—true power. By 1907, Clark's transformation into a deep one was nearing completion, so Wilma secretly took her children and moved to Los Angeles, California.

God-Given Powers

In Los Angeles, Wilma quickly met and then married wealthy magnate John Cartwright in 1908. Cartwright died just two years later in a swimming accident. With the insurance money from his death, Wilma splurged on acquiring old books of magic and sorcery. Her studies confirmed the lessons taught to her by Clark and his family. Through her reading, she came to understand that to obtain

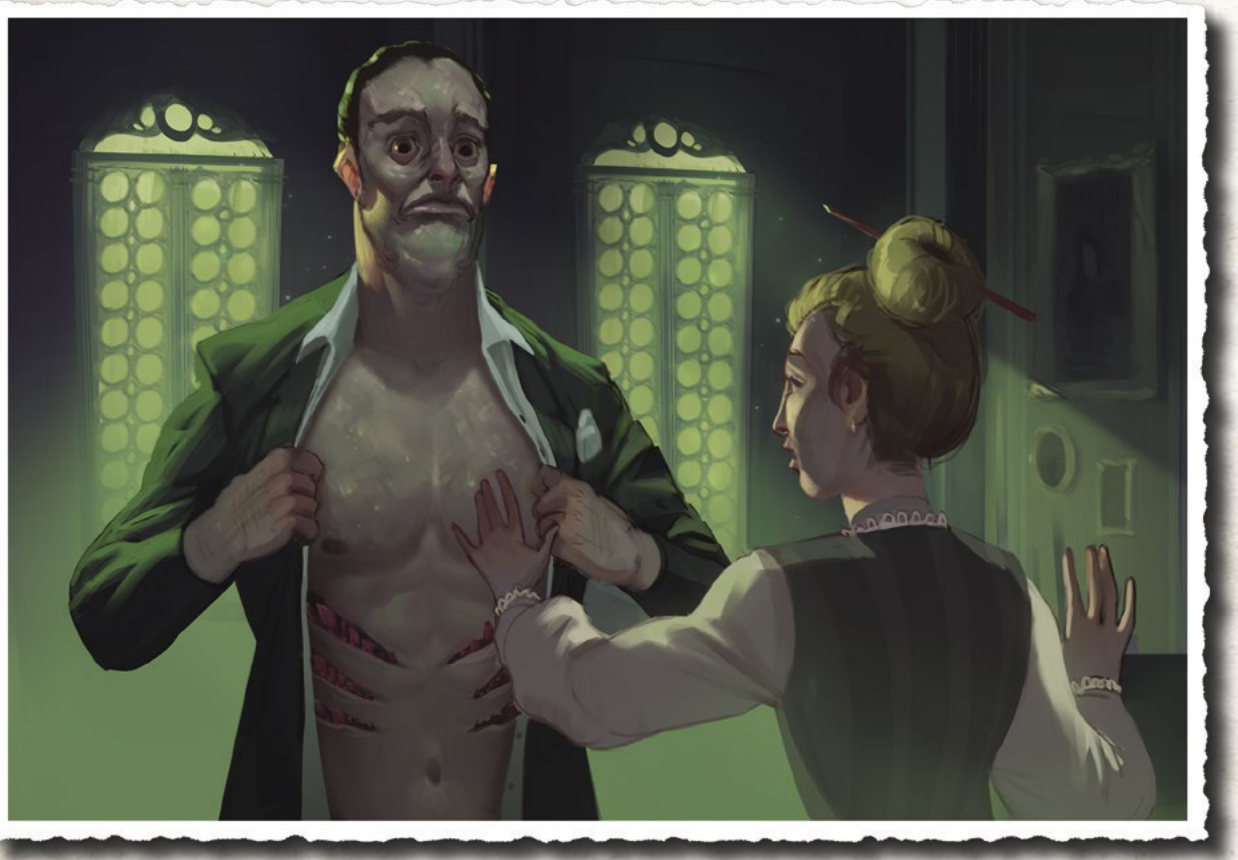
true power she needed followers—the powerful rituals dedicated to Cthulhu required many people to be performed properly—but, to get people to worship a sleeping and dead god would be no easy task. Thus, she formulated a plan.

By 1916 Wilma had been a member of a small, Baptist church for almost three years. During a Christmas Eve midnight mass, a ball of light appeared above the altar, shocking the two-dozen attendees. Wilma stood up and said that the light was an angel who had given her the ability to see and hear things no one else could. Of course, this lighting effect was a simple trick she had orchestrated to start her "new con."

From that point on, Wilma said that she had been blessed by God with the ability to talk with angels and the dead. Furthermore, she could see into the future. She used her newfound "gifts" to help people find lost items and connect with dead loved ones. Most of the time, Wilma used simple trickery to get her results but would, when needed, use real magic to create impressive effects. As she gained popularity, the leader of the church, Pastor Carl Riddleston, asked her to refrain from using her powers for personal gain, confronting her with the suggestion that she was performing witchcraft. Wilma said she was simply following God's will and would not stop in her appointed "divine" task, forcing the pastor to excommunicate her.

Wilma moved her family to Santa Monica, working out of her new home. She would use her "abilities" to provide fortunetelling for wealthy clientele, some of whom were simple rubes, while others she saw as potential recruits to her cause. As her reputation grew, so did her wealth and influence.

Wilma's next step, in 1917, was to get her wealthiest client, Benjamin Gold, to marry her sixteen-year-old daughter, Elsie. After a year of marriage, Wilma magically induced Gold to die from a heart attack, granting her access to his great fortune through Elsie. By 1918, Cartwright had begun holding meetings and prayer ceremonies for certain groups of clients, as well as performing ceremonies in public, while also financing soup kitchens and other charitable works to bring her religious ideas to a wider audience. When attendees at her events began to number in the hundreds, she announced something miraculous—her daughter Elsie was the child of an angel and had special gifts from God. Elsie would show those who accepted the Word of God (as



Steven Clark reveals his family secrets to Wilma Cartwright

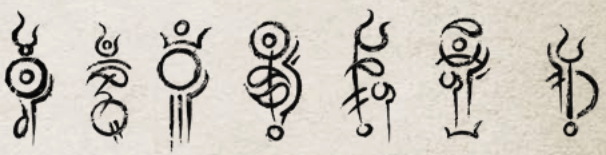
delivered by Cartwright) how to become closer to the divine and through this, how to improve their lives. And so, in 1919, the Society of the Angelic Ones was officially established by Cartwright as a new religion.

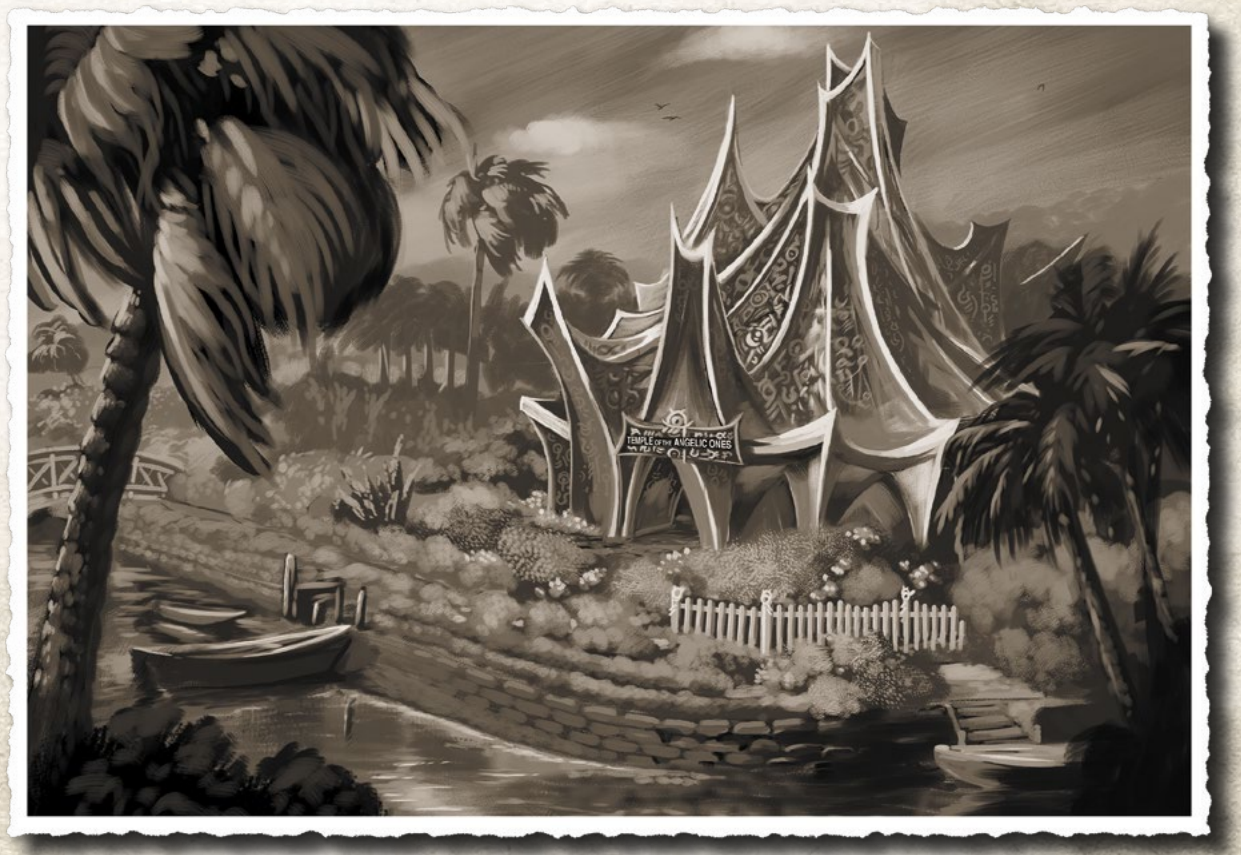
Over the next year, the Society built the Temple of the Angelic Ones in Venice, California, designed by Cartwright and Gil Donovan, a member of the church and a talented architect. Donovan used unorthodox geometry in its construction, while Cartwright had the temple's walls inscribed with strange hieroglyphs, which she said was a language called R'lyehian, and was divine in nature.

By now, Cartwright was getting older and, as much as she enjoyed the adoration, knew that her daughter Elsie possessed the looks and charisma to attract and recruit more members than she ever could. Thus, Cartwright decided to make her daughter the focal point of the church while she pulled the strings from the background. To control her daughter, Cartwright would limit people's access to Elsie and thereby begin to fashion a mystique around her. In teaching the rituals needed to contact the "Angelic Ones," Cartwright warned Elsie that the Angelic Ones would be set against her should she ever betray her mother.

R'LYEHIAN

Also known as R'lyeh Glyphs, R'lyehian is a hieroglyphical text consisting of "word" bars (usually horizontal but sometimes vertical) from which single letters hang down to form words and phrases. It is thought to have derived on Xoth from where Cthulhu and its spawn dwelt prior to arrival on Earth. Pronunciation, by those able to decipher the language, seems to consist of glottal stops where pressure is placed on the glottis, closing and pivoting the vocal chords, producing what sounds like a stream of guttural consonants. The effect is quite bizarre and unnerving to hear, with language experts unable to identify or trace its phonological heritage.





Temple of the Angelic Ones

Glu'tuk Bah

While construction of the Temple took place, Cartwright developed a relationship with a deep one community in the underwater city of Glu'tuk Bah, off the coast of Venice, California. In exchange for magical knowledge, Cartwright provided whatever the deep ones required. Among other spells, she learned a rite to contact Cthulhu, although Cartwright soon understood that the mind of this sleeping entity was a force quite beyond her ability to understand let alone control, and one that must be appeased. In time, Cartwright was given the secret words to summon and commune with the black-winged ones, the "Fher'roque," and the "Scarlet Ones"—she collectively referred to these creatures as the "Angelic Ones." The Temple of the Angelic Ones became a focal point for these four, differing species of the Mythos to directly connect with humanity.

Under Cartwright's direction, the ceremonies held at the Temple became more provocative. Where previously the rites involved chanting and the occasional sacrifice of an animal, drug use and sexual activities were now woven into the ceremonies. Such new aspects of worship caused a few prominent members of the congregation to leave, although their loss was soon covered by new recruits. Indeed, the congregation grew more devout and fevered in their commitment to Cartwright and the Temple. Those that left were threatened and blackmailed to ensure they would not talk to anyone about the Society, and while most complied, those who resisted would be "disappeared."

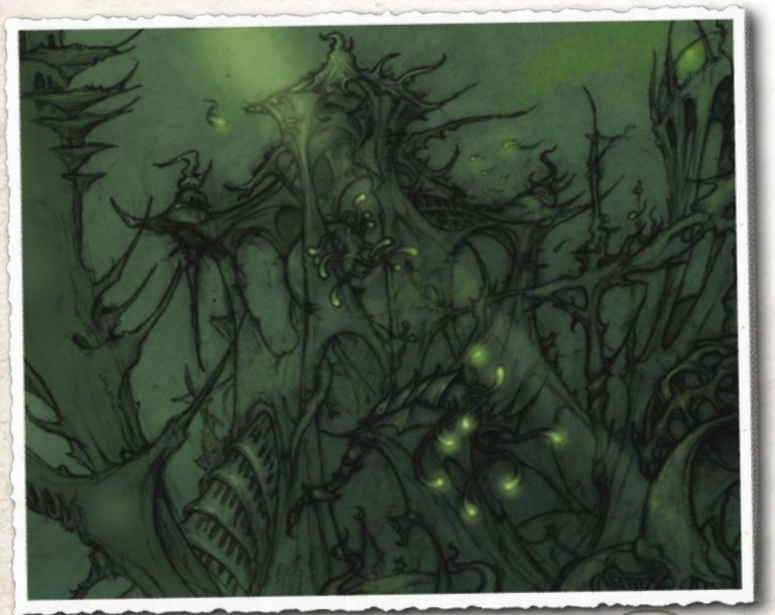
Elsie, now the figurehead of the Society, was treated like a god by the Society's members. Any who were hesitant or uncomfortable with aspects of the worship were brought to Elsie to be "calmed," which could mean anything from being allocated a "buddy" to support them (i.e. undergo close supervision and indoctrination) to being supplied with drugs or whatever vice the member needed. When such things were unable to achieve the desired effect, Cartwright would quietly step in and use mind-altering magic (such as the Cloud Mind spell) to ensure compliance. Though she played the part of goddess, Elsie was the opposite—she was a puppet, controlled by her mother through psychological and magical means, with almost no will of her own.

The very nature of the relationship with Cartwright's so-called Angelic Ones meant that the Society needed to perform numerous illegal acts, which included the kidnapping and murder of sacrifices, but also extended to blackmail, theft, and bribes. In the main, the Society was generally very good at covering its tracks, but such work leaves traces and these were not always so carefully buried. Police attention would sometimes fall on a member of the Society, with suspects brought in for questioning and, on occasion, arrests might be made. Despite such legal interference, Cartwright and the Society as a whole were able to maintain a distance, as such crimes could not be directly linked back to them. When caught red-handed, or where the evidence was clear, the member concerned would take full responsibility, and so protect the Society from legal scrutiny.

The Current Situation

While Elsie is the figurehead, directed to give sermons and make public speaking engagements at society functions, Cartwright has begun a recruitment drive to grow the membership while also commanding her inner circle of Enlightened members to bring in whatever cash they can, with some getting criminally creative—bootlegging, theft, fraud, and embezzlement are just some of the ongoing activities taking place behind a mask of soup kitchens, charity galas, and other good works. Of course, while such criminal enterprises are lucrative, they are putting the Society at greater risk. The local authorities have been unable to link such criminality to the Society, and healthy bribes seem to ensure no such links are ever made. But, not all are willing to be bought off, and there is at least one police detective determined to uncover the truth.

Plenty of money is flowing into the Society's coffers, much of which goes toward purchasing properties, land, and generating various outreach services. But, such things don't account for every dime, and unbeknown to almost all, Cartwright is using funds to buy gold, which is then hidden away. Just what Cartwright intends to do with this amassed golden horde is, as yet, anyone's guess.



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GOALS

The Society of the Angelic Ones claims to be a place where humanity can connect with the divine in a literal and physical way—this may be the case, but humans rarely understand what this connection entails or the cost of such contact.

During weekly rituals, Wilma Cartwright communes with or summons alien creatures to the Temple of the Angelic Ones, an act that she believes she has been called to do by Cthulhu. The members of her congregation support this endeavor, performing rituals to bring a greater understanding of Cthulhu's will and opening their minds to the "Great Divine." In reality, Cartwright knows such alien minds are feeding off her congregation, either literally supping on the gathered human lifeforce or using it to supply human sacrifices (i.e. food). Cartwright assumes that, in time, the congregation will become more attuned and better able to comprehend the desires and thoughts of Cthulhu (i.e. "enlightened"), with those too weak to fulfill this destiny becoming sustenance for others.

For outsiders and the majority of the (unenlightened) congregation, the Society's beliefs appeared to be a variant form of Christianity, teaching that throughout history certain humans have become vessels of the "Nephelim"—these being either the offspring of humans and Angelic Ones or those possessed by the "grace" of the Angelic Ones. Cartwright has picked apart the Bible to find useful phrases to imbue her sermons and rituals with suitably Biblical dressing; perhaps her most used phrase originates from Genesis 6, verse 4, with additional flourish courtesy of Cartwright:

"Yea, the Nephelim walked upon the earth in past days, and also afterward, when the angels came to the daughters of man and bore children. These were the chosen ones born of the divine."

ANGELIC ONES: THE FHER'ROQUE & THE SCARLET ONES

Fher'roque

A race of telepathic creatures, the fher'roque are psychically connected to one another with a "hivemind." As such, they form close-knit social groups of around 40 individuals, each grouping living in unison, yet separate to other groups. Intelligent and capable of communication with humans (via mental thought transference), the fher'roque appear as eyeless reptilian monstrosities, possessing a trunk-like proboscis or tentacle-like appendage sprouting from their faces. Subterranean dwellers, they have a very slow metabolism and spend a significant amount of time in hibernation. When active, they rarely come to the surface of their own accord.

The fher'roque claim to have followed Cthulhu to this planet in ages past, and certainly many groups of these creatives worship the Sleeper in R'lyeh. The group connected to the Society of the Angelic Ones dwell below the ground near to San Bernardino, some 80 miles (129 km) to the east of Santa Monica, and faithfully serve Cthulhu. Wilma Cartwright was directed to contact the fher'roque group through Cthulhu's dreams, and has established a relationship, which in practice requires her to deliver human sacrifices two to three times per year.

Scarlet Ones

The scarlet ones appear as floating orbs of reddish-white light, ranging between 6–12 inches (15–30 cm) in size, and come from another dimension. Their presence appears to instigate euphoric visions in humans, which last from a few seconds to a couple of minutes—the experience is psychedelic, hallucinatory, and bestows a sense of wellbeing and comfort—and, on occasion, grants cosmic visions of things beyond human understanding.

Summoned by Wilma Cartwright during certain ceremonies, the scarlet ones manifest in the air and float around the gathered participants, bringing about ecstatic visions and the touch of the "divine." Some members of the Society have experienced the loss of time, memory lapses, and even drastic personality change after such contact. It is unknown how (or even if) the scarlet ones serve Cthulhu or what they gain from contact with humans.

See Chapter 4 for further details about the fher'roque and the scarlet ones.

The Society teaches that the Angelic Ones exist all around us, but we cannot see them until our minds and hearts have been opened. Cartwright has linked four types of Angelic Ones to the four Classical elements of earth (the fher'roque), water (the deep ones), air (the black-winged ones), and fire (the scarlet ones), saying that these "angelic beings" provide a means to connect with the Divine (Cthulhu). She goes on to say that each order (element) of the Angelic Ones reflects a different aspect of ourselves and that humanity must find balance within these elements, which in turn helps to better understand our place in the universe. By communing with the different Angelic Ones, the worshiper balances and connects themselves, and becomes a greater being.

Of course, such insights must be earned, with each of the Angelic Ones presenting different challenges that each member of the congregation must overcome (a series of levels). At first, these challenges are presented as metaphorical and symbolic, but as a member falls deeper into the Society, the "challenges" become very real. Thus, as they progress from recruit to full member, they are required to commit acts that bind them ever closer to the Society—acts that could later be used to blackmail them should they begin to doubt Cartwright's message. Of course, the very nature of the experiences undertaken also act to change the person, making them crave them all the more, and again binding them closer to Cartwright.

Each of the following rituals is first undertaken symbolically and performed within the Temple of the Angelic Ones, taking the form of prayers and chanting while members are encouraged to give free rein to whatever actions pop into their heads—encouraged by the consumption of drugs (either openly supplied or covertly secreted into wine or food, depending on the experience of those taking part). Thus, participants may speak in tongues, writhe, engage in sexual acts, or wildly dart about, and so on. From time to time, Cartwright or Elsie summons the scarlet ones, bringing a unique and unforgettable experience to those present while demonstrating a tangible manifestation of the Angelic Ones, all of which usually dispels any doubts recruits have to the reality of the Society's teachings.

Once the entry-level versions of the rites have been successfully performed, the rituals grow more practical, with smaller groups of the congregation appointed to make specific sacrifices to the differing Angelic Ones, under the guidance of Cartwright or Elsie. Each of the four rituals increase in scope and commitment, and members must successfully perform each ritual before they can move on to the next. Thus, each group of acolytes prepare for their forthcoming ritual over many months. In practice, this means that the congregation is divided into two camps: those who have undertaken all four of the elemental rituals as well as the fifth and final rite (Enlightenment), and those who are working through the rituals—the latter are comprised of numerous smaller groups (of two to six people), with each group working toward one of the rituals at any given time. Enlightened members may, at Cartwright's request, mentor junior members and support by attending ritual performances. By appeasing the four aspects of the Angelic Ones, a cultist becomes eligible to participate in the final ritual, where Cartwright casts Contact Cthulhu, enabling the acolytes "to see the Great Divine" (Cthulhu) in their dreams and so reach enlightenment.

Level One: Ritual of Earth

The recruits are ordered to bring an animal sacrifice to a certain location in the San Bernardino desert, where the ritual is held. Cartwright supplies a special oil (unpleasant to the fher'roque) that the members smear onto themselves, making them repellent to the creatures (and therefore cannot be mistaken as sacrifices). The ritual summons the fher'roque, with one or two of the creatures burrowing up from the ground to take the sacrifice, either eating it on the spot or dragging it down below to be consumed.

Note that full members, led by Cartwright or Elsie, also undertake this ritual twice a year, although their offering takes the form of a human blood sacrifice.

Level Two: Ritual of Air

Like the Ritual of Earth, the members are tasked with bringing a suitable sacrifice for the Angelic Ones of the Air. In this case, animals are not sufficient and a human offering is required. The rite is conducted on private property in the Hollywood hills, hidden away from prying eyes. The bodies of the sacrifices (or what remains of them) are ceremonially mummified and placed in a cave-tomb hidden on the property.

Level Three: Ritual of Fire

The Angelic Ones of the Fire are summoned during a special ceremony held in the Santa Monica Mountains. The scarlet ones are summoned in the hope that they will grant insight and wisdom. During the ritual, seemingly random members of the congregation are "touched" by the Angelic Ones and thereby receive some form of vision or knowledge, which may range from a psychedelic-like experience where other (parallel) dimensions are experienced or visions of the past, present, or future. Most gain some Mythos knowledge from the experience, although a few may discover that it is more than just their mind that has changed—anything is possible, from a person's hair turning pure white or falling out to them growing a third eye in their forehead. Such body mutations are considered to be significant blessings.

Level Four: Ritual of Water

Recruits are brought to a secret place on the seashore (a private beach) to offer themselves in the hope that they will be chosen to become parents of the Nephelim. The recruits perform a ritual to cleanse their bodies and minds, and then call forth a number of deep ones to crawl out of the sea. During the final segment of the ritual, the deep ones choose between one to three recruits to mate with (from the males and females present). Such unions may produce human-deep one hybrid progeny.

STRUCTURE

The Society of the Angelic Ones doesn't have a deeply layered structure. To the congregation, Elsie Cartwright ranks the highest in terms of importance, as she is one of the "Nephelim"—part human, part Angelic One, while her mother Wilma Cartwright is next in level of importance, and called the "Holy Mother." Those who have performed all four of the rituals devoted to the Angelic Ones and have undertaken the fifth and final ritual, opening their minds to Cthulhu, are known as the "Enlightened." Those who are currently on the path of performing the four elemental rituals are simply called "Members of the Congregation," while those who have yet to start their ritual journey are "Recruits." Anyone else is considered to be a "Guest," who may in time become a Recruit. Clearly, until Enlightened, members are unlikely to have heard of or understand the meaning of the word "Cthulhu," and the vast majority of Recruits know nothing of the elemental rituals.

Nephelim

Drawing on Biblical terms and references, Cartwright has fashioned a twisted mythology whereby humanity shall be conveyed toward enlightenment by the so-called Nephelim. So far, only one Nephelim has "truly" manifested, namely Elsie, although (according to Cartwright) her brother and sister may one day manifest their "true forms."

Thus, Elsie—"The Nephelim"—leads all ceremonies, both public and private. She is the spiritual leader of the Society and, on occasion, performs as an oracle of sorts for both guests and members, telling fortunes or revealing knowledge. During such public ceremonies, Elsie performs minor theatrics designed to impress onlookers—including creating small earth tremors, igniting candles from a distance, and acts of levitation. Otherwise, the Society's meetings are, on the

Ritual of Earth

surface, very similar to a protestant ceremony, with sermons quoting from the Bible. Of course, occasionally, readings from more ancient texts are inserted amidst the Christian rhetoric.

Apart from services open to the public, private ceremonies for the Society's full members are held where Elsie performs mystic rites and leads rituals to the Angelic Ones. Differing levels of private ceremonies correspond to the levels of membership, and it is only at gatherings of the Enlightened where Cthulhu is fully venerated.

In truth, the Nephelim are deep one-human hybrids. Wilma Cartwright's late husband was a hybrid and it remains to be seen if Elsie will actually transform into a full deep one. According to Cartwright's manufactured mythology, any child born of a human and Angelic One union would be considered a Nephelim. Those few offspring born from the Ritual of Water are still but infants, and so will not be considered to be Nephelim until they reach age 16.

The Holy Mother

Wilma Cartwright is known as the Holy Mother and is the true power controlling the Society. She manages access to the Nephelim, administrates membership, and controls the society's finances. Outside of the ceremonial performances, the Holy Mother commands the congregation in all matters, from organizing members to overseeing small tasks (like the maintenance of the Temple of the Angelic Ones and secret ritual sites) to ensuring the security of the Society. The Holy Mother can call upon the Enlightened members as needed, delegating tasks as necessary.

The Holy Mother is the most learned in the Society when it comes to matters of the Mythos and Cthulhu. She is a skilled sorcerer who maintains an iron grip on the Society, as well as her daughter, the Nephelim.

The Enlightened

The Enlightened have attained the highest possible position within the Society of the Angelic Ones. To become Enlightened, one must participate in all of the four elemental rituals to appease the Angelic Ones and perform the fifth ritual to contact Cthulhu. The process takes a heavy toll, as not all can withstand or find "enlightenment" from the varied assaults by the forces of the Mythos, and many who hear the call of Cthulhu are unable to function in society. Such broken individuals are either hidden away and institutionalized or murdered by the Society—Cartwright's preference has increasingly been to kill those unable to hold onto some portion of their humanity. Thus, only a few survive with enough presence of mind to become Enlightened members, and it is these who are most likely to possess abnormal capabilities in terms of mind and body, as contact with Cthulhu often changes a person.

Though the Enlightened are obligated to protect and obey the Nephelim, they understand that it is the Holy Mother that speaks for her. The Enlightened are tasked by the Holy Mother to attend to and protect the Society, enforcing the rules and talent spotting from the Recruits and Guests.

When a person is deemed to be ready to be Enlightened, they are invited to a private ceremony, called the "Ritual of Welcoming." The person is given a warm drink laced with a mild hallucinogenic, whereupon the Angelic Ones of Fire are summoned, filling the chamber with discordant singing and dazzling lights, provoking an altered state of consciousness and a sense of euphoria. This first part of the ceremony imbues the person with a mental trigger so that whenever the same "singing" is heard, the person enters a hypnogogic state where they are susceptible to suggestion (i.e. the commands of Cartwright). The second half of the ceremony is an invocation to Cthulhu, effectively tuning in the mind of the person to Cthulhu's dreams. The ceremony completed, the person has become Enlightened. The mental conditioning applied by Cartwright through the ceremony ensures compliance.

Currently, there are nine Enlightened members in the Society.

Members of the Congregation

Those who have begun working toward the performance of the four elemental rituals. Thus, their knowledge and experience can vary by significant degrees, with those in the early stages knowing very little while those inching toward the third and fourth rituals knowing a great deal, this latter group has seen the miracles of the Nephelim and the existence of the Angelic Ones. Throughout the process, the Members are given "ritual drinks" (wine laced with hallucinogens) that act to distance a person from the hideous acts they are being asked to perform, making them more pliable and able to carry out such deeds.

The Members are encouraged to perform all of the elemental rituals of the Angelic Ones and to reach Enlightenment. Given the nature and commitment required by the elemental rituals, Member numbers reduce through the initiation process. Those who do not pass the tests are dealt with in a variety of ways, from being convinced they have undergone a hallucinatory experience to being quietly ensconced in out of the way care facilities (their accounts and memories considered to be symptoms of insanity). If a significant risk to the Society, some are blackmailed or murdered, or become blood sacrifices.

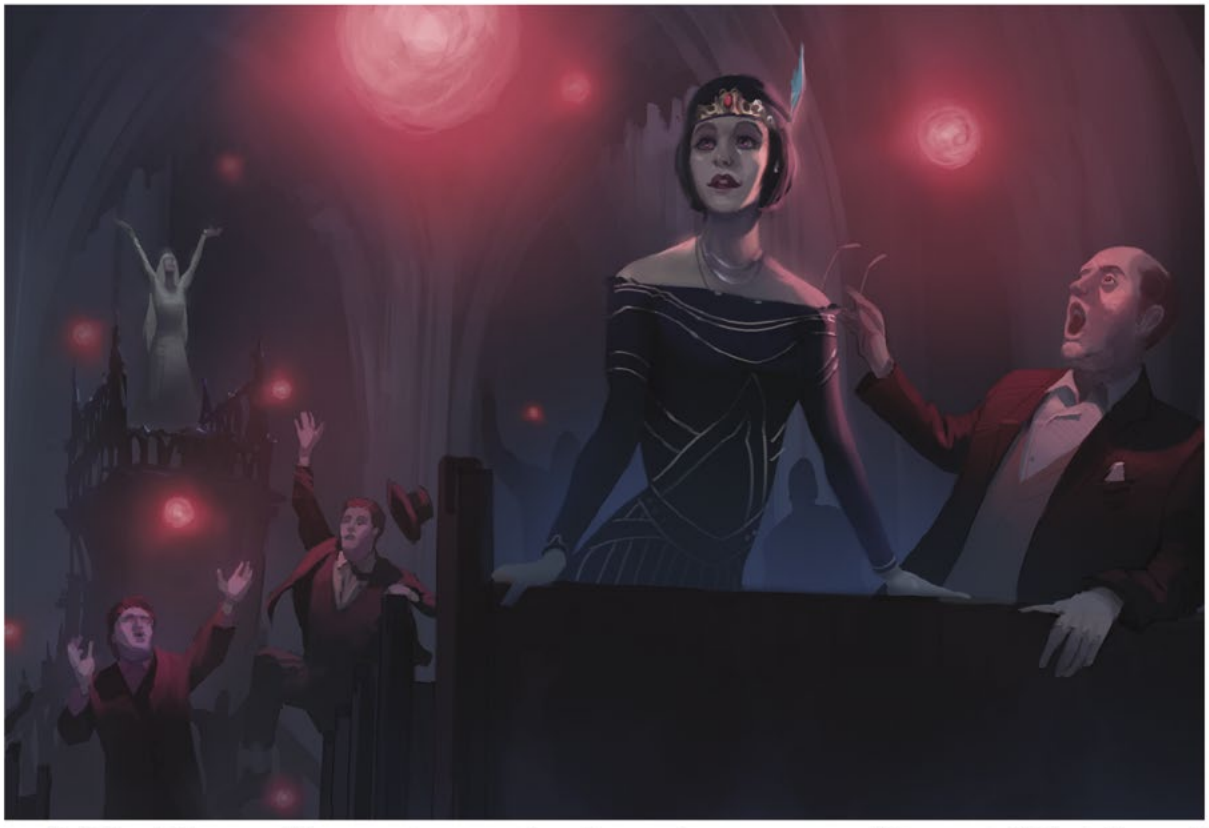
Membership tasks including recruitment, property management, organizing and operating soup kitchens and other community outreach programs, and whatever else Cartwright and the Enlightened members ask. Currently, there are 24 Members of the Congregation at varying levels of knowledge.

EMPLOYMENT & ACCOMMODATION

While many of the Society's charitable programs are staffed by volunteers, some of the Members and Recruits are employed full- or part-time by the Society. Such individuals tend to be those who have washed up in California chasing an elusive dream. Down on the uppers, the Society takes them in, offers them work, and gives them a purpose. Thus, most are truly grateful to the Holy Mother and willingly do whatever is asked of them.

With the Society owning and continuing to purchase property around the Los Angeles area, there is a need for property maintenance and management. Most of the properties are converted into communal apartments, where members may live either rent-free or at a relatively low cost, further binding them to the Society. Usually, members are placed in accommodation so that they live with others of similar rank within the Society; thus, Recruits tend to live alongside other Recruits, Members with Members, and so on, although it is normal for a property to be "managed" by a member of higher rank, who lives with and oversees the coming and goings of those also living there; so a full Member would run a property housing Recruits.

Other work can be varied: from chauffeuring the Holy Mother, the Nephelim, and members of the Enlightened around to catering and event organization. Of course, for some, the work required of them is murky and downright criminal. Those identified as possessing "criminal talents" are given free accommodation on the condition they are at the disposal of the Society as and when required.



Members of the Congregation

Recruits

Recruits are those who have joined the Society but have yet to begin the process of full initiation into Membership. Thus, they know almost nothing about the Angelic Ones nor do they even know that there are elemental rituals and enlightenment. Attending the public services, the Recruits hear Cartwright's gospel as spoken through Elsie, the Nephelim, which is to say sermons describing the wonders of the Heavens and the blessing of the Angelic Ones that watch over all. Such rhetoric is appealing and essentially positive, providing a "feel good" experience for most, it being but a slight deviation from what one might hear in a traditional Protestant Christian church. Occasionally, at Cartwright's direction, some minor miracle or spectacle is manifested, designed to capture the devotion of the audience. Cult language is subtly introduced, with words like Enlightened, Nephelim, and Angelic Ones used, although used in close approximation to their Biblical origins.

Enlightened and full Members may sit among the audience, keeping an eye out for those who might be suitable for initiation. With such folk invited to private sermons and a face-to-face conversation with Elsie and Cartwright, where they can be grilled about their backgrounds, wealth, and suitability.

Recruits provide the main "workforce" of the Society, staffing soup kitchens, undertaking building maintenance and other odd jobs, and helping to recruit others. At present, there are 76 Recruits attending the Society's public gatherings. From this number, about a quarter have the potential to go forward for initiation.

Guests

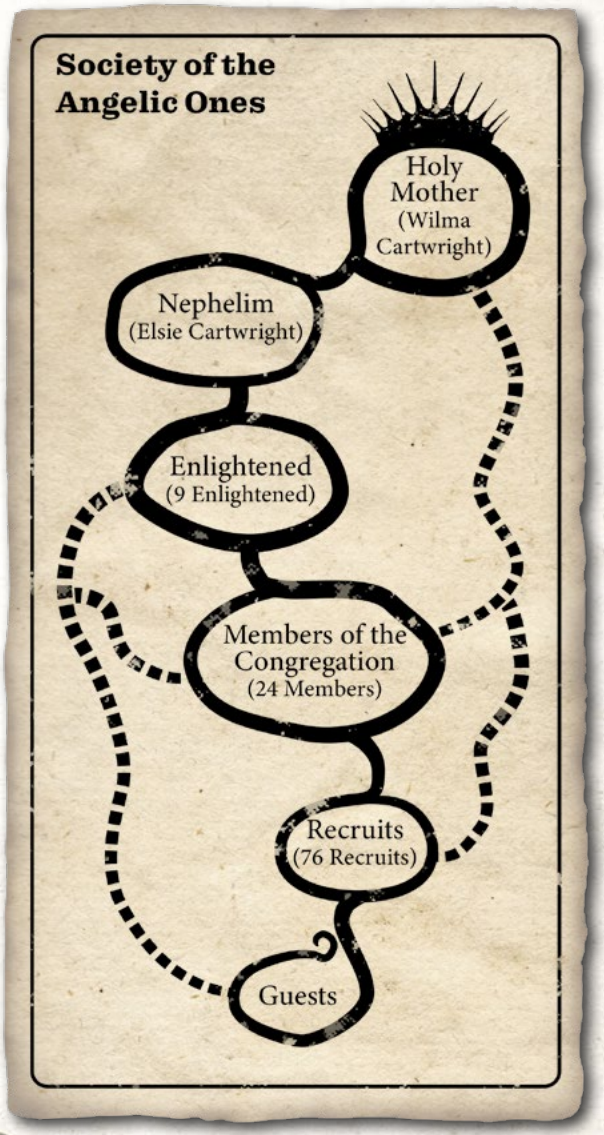
Guest are those who have not yet joined the Society (i.e. they have not made a formal declaration of membership and do not pay any regular contributions). While anyone can attend one of the public meetings, those who do so unannounced find they are soon chaperoned by one of the Enlightened or full Members, eager to hear all about them, how they heard about the Society, and what brought them to attend. Such open gatherings are designed to identify potential Recruits and also those capable of making significant donations.

FINANCING

Recruits and full members are expected to give as much as they can to the Society, and agree to make a regular (weekly or monthly) donation or tithe (the sum being agreed upon during the application for membership—sometimes this is "in-kind" in place of money for "services rendered"). Some folk give everything they have. Indeed, some at the level of Recruit and above have sold off their homes and given the proceeds to the Society, so enamored are they by the miracles and good work of the Society—many are then given accommodation in one of several shared homes owned by the Society. Members about to become enlightened are strongly encouraged and helped to divest themselves of all worldly assets, signing these over to the Society.

Guests are hit upon to make singular or multiple donations to the Society, and those from wealthy society are courted by Cartwright and Elsie accordingly, invited to private "benefactor" parties and gatherings designed to milk them of money. The Society also acquires funds through criminal means, as and when possible.

After day-to-day costs, the money is used to buy properties and fix them up for members (whose rent comes to the Society), land in the desert or on the coast, and gold. Perhaps Cartwright's love of gold stems from the period when she



first contacted the deep ones, whose gifts of gold helped the Society to take shape. Perhaps, she simply covets gold. Interestingly, the holy Mother no longer receives gold from the deep ones, although the reason as to why is uncertain.

RECRUITMENT

There are many pathways leading into the Society. Whether one is seeking answers, personal fulfillment, or help, the Society welcomes all, especially those able to financially contribute to its good works.

Southern California has often been viewed as a "land of dreams"; first with settlers and prospectors, and later with performers hoping to get into motion pictures. Unfortunately, the realities of life in the Los Angeles area can turn into a nightmare. Many come to follow their dreams but soon find themselves alone, penniless, and without hope. Fortunately, the Society of the Angelic Ones runs many shelters and soup kitchens in the area. It is through the Society that those who are ready to open their hearts to the Angelic Ones can find a better way of life.

The Society is always proselytizing to those they help, promising a better life through religious devotion. For those who hear the call, there is paid work, living accommodation, and friendship. Most of the time, such jobs are with the church directly, but the Society's wide network offers many possibilities. Those that come to the Society suffering from drug and/or alcohol addiction are cared for and eventually coerced into becoming Recruits—a pathway leading to the Ritual of Welcoming (see **The Enlightened**, above)—those who survive "intact" go on to become particularly loyal members.

SAMPLE MEMBERS

Mrs. Wilma Cartwright, *age 52, Cult Founder*

Position: Holy Mother, Leader

Wilma Cartwright is a psychopath. Ever since she was a small girl, she has had an inability to empathize with people and has cared only for her own wants and needs. In spite of this, or because of it, she is very good at reading other people's emotional states, knowing what they want, and understanding how to manipulate them to get what she wants.

Through the study of eldritch tomes and forgotten rites, Cartwright discovered that "power" could be hers to hold—or so she thought. Over the years, she has come to understand that her power comes with a cost, indebting her to the dead god Cthulhu, and making her its pawn. Cartwright's insanity has transformed from a devotion to Cthulhu to an all-encompassing megalomania in which she believes she can attain command over Cthulhu. She seeks godhood and mastery of the Angelic Ones. Despite such ambitions, she knows she is not yet ready and must continue to fulfill the needs of both Cthulhu and the Angelic Ones, biding her time in service until she can access and harness the hidden powers of reality for her own ends.

Thus, Cartwright is trying to figure a way out of her situation. She is convinced there must be a way to gain power over her current masters and turn them to her will. For the time being, she spends all of her time researching ancient texts, sending out her minions to steal from libraries and collections, as well as acquiring relics and artifacts that might unlock the path to the power she seeks. This recent change of focus has caused her to be negligent in her duties to the Society, leaving the daily operations to her daughter Elsie and the Enlightened members. While her authority is generally unquestioned, many of the higher-ranking members have begun to notice her lack of guidance.

Backstory

- **Description:** an attractive white woman of diminutive height, whose age is starting to show; she dresses conservatively, with her graying hair pulled back into a tight bun.
- **Traits:** portrays a kind and caring "grandmotherly" attitude, offering sympathy and concern, keeping up this facade even when performing horrific acts (trying to "console" her victims to the very end). When frustrated, threatened, or trapped she may let the mask slip, revealing a cold and vindictive personality.

Mrs. Wilma Cartwright

Wilma Cartwright, *cult leader*

STR 35 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 35 **DEX** 45 **INT** 75
APP 65 **POW** 80 **EDU** 65 **SAN** 00 **HP** 8
DB: –1 **Build:** –1 **Move:** 6 **MP:** 16*

**May be increased through Cthulhu's Blessing, below.*

Cthulhu's Blessings

Consume Lifeforce: as needed, Cartwright may consume and thereby steal the magic points of others. The consumption takes varied forms, depending on Cartwright's mood and time available: drinking a person's blood (2 MP per round), eating their flesh (3 MP per round), or simply holding (or strangling) a person (1 MP per round). With enough time, she may leech all of a person's magic points, leaving that person unconscious, or continue to drain hit points once all magic points have gone, leaving the person injured or dead

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3–1, or weapon
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Acting) 70%, Charm 80%, Credit Rating 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Fast Talk 75%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate 60% Language (English) 65%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 60%, Library Use 55%, Listen 55%, Occult 60%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 65%, Sleight of Hand 40%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 70%, Throw 35%.

Spells

Contact Cthulhu, Curse of the Putrid Husk, Ecstasy**, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Summon Angelic Ones of Air (Black-Winged Ones)**, Summon/Bind Angelic Ones of Earth (Fher'roque)**, Summon Angelic Ones of Fire (Scarlet Ones)**, Summon/Bind Angelic Ones of Water (Deep One), Words of Power, Wrack.

** *See **New & Variant Spells**, page 186.*

Wilma Cartwright: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck: 80
- HP: 16

Pulp Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3–1 or weapon
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Rapid Attack:** spend 10 Luck to gain one further attack in a single combat round.
- **Strong Willed:** spend 10 Luck to gain bonus die for POW rolls.

Elsie Cartwright, *age 21, High Priestess*

Position: the Nephelim

Elsie Cartwright's whole life has been dominated by a mother who has been incapable of providing the compassion and care required. From time to time, Elsie rebelled against her mother Wilma, but such outbursts were always met with severe punishment. When the young girl grew resistant to the beatings and no longer fearing the pain her mother could unleash upon her, the control and abuse shifted, with Wilma focusing the punishment for Elsie's "misdeeds" upon the girl's younger brother Paul and sister Kristina. Unable to bear the pain of letting her siblings suffer, Elsie learned to control her outbursts and complied with her mother's demands.

Elsie was sixteen-years-old when she was married to Benjamin Gold, who was 32 years her senior. Her dreams of falling in love with someone who would take her and her siblings away from their mother were not to be—although for a time she thought that Gold might be her salvation. When she tried to explain to Gold that her mother was nothing more than a twisted monster who cared only for herself, her words fell on deaf ears, as Gold was already a loyal believer and follower of Wilma Cartwright, who went straight to her mother to report on what Elsie had said. Rather than act, Wilma waited and bided her time.

Benjamin Gold's heart attack came as a shock to Elsie, although she soon began to suspect that her husband's death had been caused by her mother and went to confront her. During the ensuing argument, Wilma first tried to explain that Gold's death had been the will of God, but Elsie was no stranger to the depths of cruelty to which her mother could stoop and would hear none of it. Thus, Wilma told her the truth—about her father, her divine heritage, and the true power of magic. At first, Elsie was horrified, believing her mother was performing yet another cruel trick, but Wilma's demonstration of real magical power and summoning of the deep ones changed her mind. Finally, Elsie understood her heritage and that she was more than human. Wilma explained that Elsie was special and how, one day, she would lead others in praising and communicating with the Angelic Ones, and how she would ultimately prepare humanity for the coming of Cthulhu. Wilma then set about contacting Cthulhu so that her daughter would be connected to the "Great Divine" and thereafter be attuned to the Great Old One's dreams. The ritual experience left Elsie in a near-catatonic state, which served to make her suitably compliant to her mother's wishes. Thus, Elsie did everything her mother commanded: leading ceremonies and sermons, courting the wealthy, and overseeing ritual sacrifices made to unspeakable monsters.

Elsie went about her "work" in a semi-detached state, a part of her (human and screaming) mind sealed away

while the rest operated on "auto-pilot." That portion of her humanity crushed and locked away, Elsie blindly followed where her mother led. Nothing mattered anymore—that is, until she became pregnant.

The realization and sense of self brought on by carrying a child somehow snapped Elsie out of her fugue-like state, unlocking that portion of her humanity that had for so long been hidden away. She now comprehends the horror she has overseen and how every diabolical act has stemmed from her mother. Elsie knows she must protect her unborn child and, to do so, she must end her mother's wicked schemes. So far, she has kept her pregnancy a secret from Wilma, aiming to do so long enough to find a way to destroy the Society of the Angelic Ones and deal with her mother and her god, Cthulhu.

Backstory

- **Description:** a young, white woman of rare beauty, with long, light-blonde hair usually braided into a long tail. Like her mother, she is diminutive in stature. She usually wears white, flowing gowns.
- **Traits:** graceful and aloof, seemingly looking down her nose in a benevolent fashion. In moments of solitude and when out of sight of the congregation she may appear distant and sad. She is slow to give her thoughts or opinions on any subject.

Elsie Cartwright, *the Nephelim*

STR 45	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 35	**DEX** 55	**INT** 65
APP 85	**POW** 70	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 08	**HP** 10
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 14	

Cthulhu's Blessings

Armor of Will: (variable MP) instantaneously deflects harm, costing a number of magic points equal to the damage inflicted (Elsie may elect to reduce all or part of such damage). Witnesses observing the effect see wounds bursting with bright light, which then fades, leaving Elsie unharmed.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3–1
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Art/Craft (Acting) 60%, Charm 75%, Climb 50%, Credit Rating 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 35%, Fast Talk 40%, Jump 60%, Language (English) 55%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 30%, Library Use 30%, Listen 40%, Occult 20%, Persuade 75%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 60%, Swim 70%, Throw 35%.

Spells

Contact Cthulhu, Curse of the Putrid Husk, Ecstasy**, Mental Suggestion, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Summon Angelic Ones of Air (Black-Winged Ones)**, Summon/Bind Angelic Ones of Earth (Fher'roque)**, Summon Angelic Ones of Fire (Scarlet Ones)**, Summon/Bind Angelic Ones of Water (Deep One), Words of Power, Wrack.

** *See* ***New & Variant Spells****, page 186.*

Elsie Cartwright: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck: 70
- HP: 20

Pulp Combat

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3–1 or weapon
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Alert:** never surprised in combat.
- **Fleet Footed:** spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one encounter.

Elsie Cartwright

Bradley Gardner, *age 32, Baker & Odd-Job Man*

Position: Enlightened Member

Bradley Gardner came as a guest to one of the open services of the Society of the Angelic Ones after having been out of work for some months. He was being evicted out of his apartment and down to his last few bucks. Coming across one of the Society's outreach soup kitchens, he heard a message of hope and it touched him, leading him to attend a service. The sermon described how angelic beings watched over all, and how embracing these divine creatures could improve his life in a real and practical sense.

The message resonated with Bradley, who then spoke with some of the Society's members about his situation. In short order, the Society helped him to secure a job at a local bakery, allowing him to keep his apartment. Things were looking up and he had the Society to thank for it. He wanted to give back, not just financially, but with his time. Thus, Bradley spent much of his free time volunteering in Society run soup kitchens.

Soon, he was told that there were ways to connect with the Angelic Ones. Bradley, excited at the opportunity, jumped at the chance to fully commit and begin the process of undertaking the elemental rituals. Over time, Bradley participated in all of the necessary rituals and became Enlightened. His experiences taught him that the Angelic Ones must be appeased if he were to benefit from their gifts. Already somewhat hardened to slings and arrows of life, Bradley came to understand that all could not be saved, and that many must be sacrificed for the few to survive and prosper under the "benevolent watch" of Cthulhu.

Like many, Bradley is totally besotted and committed to the Nephelim and will do anything she asks. While he adheres to the commands of the Holy Mother, his heart is guided by the Nephelim. Recently, he has begun to wonder if the time has come for the Holy Mother to stand aside and let the Nephelim take full control. While he would never act without the consent of the Nephelim, he imagines himself as the vessel to enact this change.

Backstory

- **Description:** a tall, muscular white male, with angular features and thinning, brown hair. He typically wears a shabby dark suit and fedora hat.
- **Traits:** talkative and extroverted, often unaware he is either talking too much or invading people's personal space. He's all smiles until he becomes angry or frustrated, whereupon he tends to physically lash out and smash objects nearby—particularly if he can't get away with hurting the person who is the source of his displeasure.

Bradley Gardner, *enlightened muscle*

STR 65	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 45	**INT** 55
APP 60	**POW** 45	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 9	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3+1D4 or knife 1D4+2+1D4
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Art/Craft (Acting) 55%, Charm 20%, Climb 60%, Credit Rating 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Drive Auto 60%, Fast Talk 35%, Intimidate 70%, Language (English) 60%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Repair 35%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 25%, Swim 60%, Track 30%, Throw 60%.

Spells

None.

Bradley Gardner

Bradley Gardner: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck: 20
- HP: 25

Pulp Combat

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4 or weapon
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Tough Guy:** may spend 10 Luck to shrug off up to 5 damage in one combat round.
- **Fleet Footed:** spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one encounter.

Bonnie Rodriguez, *age 30, Misguided Mother*

Position: Member of the Congregation

Bonnie Rodriguez found the Society some two years after her husband left her to fend for herself with her three children. She was working two jobs, while her eldest son Marco (11) watched after her two younger children, Daisy (9) and Filo (6). When Marco was arrested for shoplifting food, she found herself at her wit's end. Desperate and uncertain how to go on, Rodriguez was approached by a member of the Society, who told her they could help and encouraged her to attend one of the Society's open services, where she was welcomed with open arms. In discussing her problems, she discovered a member who came from her neighborhood and who was more than happy to help watch her children while she worked. In time, the Society was able to help her find work closer to her home.

Always a devout Catholic, Rodriguez saw how the beliefs of the Society fitted with her own, albeit with a slight modification. Unaware she was being fed hallucinogens, she believed that she was experiencing divine visions, even seeing the Virgin Mary on one occasion. The visions combined with the softly spoken indoctrination fueled her belief that the Holy Mother, Wilma Cartwright and her daughter, the Nephelim, were touched by the divine and doing God's work. When experiencing a manifestation of the scarlet ones, Rodriguez saw a vision wherein she and her children were healthy and happy, and understood that her family had been selected to be among the "Chosen Ones" who would inherit the earth while the rest of humanity (the sinners) would perish. Now corrupted and beguiled, Rodriguez took solace in the knowledge that the sacrificial offerings they were making were preordained and necessary to bring everlasting peace and harmony.

Rodriguez believes that she and her children are destined for great things, although there is one troubling issue—her eldest son Marco is nowhere to be seen in any of her visions. The Holy Mother has suggested that perhaps Marco's place is with God and the Angelic Ones, rather than on earth, going as far as to suggest that he would make a beautiful gift, sealing his position in "Heaven" as one of the eternal children of God. Conflicted, Rodriguez wants to do the right thing in Gods' eyes, but her maternal instinct is causing her to waver. Unless something happens to convince her otherwise, Rodriguez has agreed with the Holy Mother that Marco will be offered as a beautiful sacrifice come this next Halloween.

Backstory

- **Description:** a Hispanic woman of below-average height, who wears her hair pulled into a faux bob. Despite her youthful looks, her eyes carry the weight of the world.
- **Traits:** tends to smile broadly as she talks, while her eyes have a one-thousand-yard stare.

Bonnie Rodriguez

Bonnie Rodriguez, *acolyte*

STR 40	**CON** 55	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 60	**INT** 45
APP 55	**POW** 35	**EDU** 45	**SAN** 00	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 7	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Charm 25%, Credit Rating 10%, Cthulhu Mythos 6%, First Aid 50%, Intimidate 35%, Language (English) 35%, Language (Spanish) 45%, Listen 60%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Occult 25%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 30%, Throw 40%.

Spells

None.

STORY IDEAS

As well as the following two adventure seeds, the scenario—**Angel's Thirst** (page 233)—deals specifically with the Society of the Angelic Ones.

Land Grab

While undertaking a geological survey on its extensive landholdings, an oil company in Riverside, California has discovered some old ruins in the San Bernardino desert. The subterranean ruins are connected to a series of large tunnels that seem to run for miles in different directions. The Society of the Angelic Ones has become aware of the ruins and tunnels and is mounting a bid to buy the land due to its "religious and historical" importance. The investigators are brought in by the oil company to determine the origins of the ruins and their cultural significance.

During the investigation, some of the non-player character team members go missing, and strange marks may be found in the tunnels or upon the ground (as though something dug itself up from below). Then, a series of small earth tremors strike the tunnels and ruins. Geologists (either the investigators or those employed by the oil company) may come to believe that these earthquakes do not seem natural. The strange tunnels are discovered to cross over the border of the oil company's land—into an area of land owned by the Society of the Angelic Ones.

What's Going On

The ruins and tunnels are remnants of ancient worship of the fher'roque, and some of these creatures still dwell farther below, beneath the near-surface level tunnels. The fher'roque became aware of the survey, capturing and "interrogating" some of the surveyors. Not wishing to have their rest disturbed, the fher'roque caused the tremors, hoping to scare off and put an end to the human interference.

Wilma Cartwright knows the importance of these ruins. She has owned the neighboring land for the last few years, and this is a site where the Ritual of Earth is conducted. Having received a mental communique from the fher'roque, Cartwright has been tasked with protecting the area and maintaining the secret of what dwells below the desert. Only now aware that the tunnels and ruins project beyond the Society's land, Cartwright is eager to acquire the oil company's land, and to also discover what other secrets (and possible knowledge and power) might be hidden there. Thus, she wants to scare off the oil company and buy the land.

Altered State

The investigators are asked to find the whereabouts of a man named Jerome Connell, who seems to have left his old life behind and taken up with a new religious organization. He's not technically missing, so the police want nothing to do with the case.

Connell is discovered to be a member of the Society of the Angelic Ones. Tailing him, the investigators follow Connell to a private (midnight) ceremony in the Santa Monica Mountains. During the ceremony, the Angelic Ones of the Fire (scarlet ones) manifest—being nearby, as the creatures manifest, the investigators receive a vision of a parallel world with things familiar yet different, such as showing a deceased love one (perhaps they died recently in an accident or from an illness, but are here seen alive and well), while also showing a political upheaval or divergent society quite unlike the "real" world known by the investigator.

What's Going On

Jerome Connell is undertaking the four elemental rituals, and the investigators unwittingly come close to the Ritual of Fire and are "touched" by the scarlet ones. The experience should perplex, confuse, and perhaps even appeal. Do the investigators seek to return to this other world? Or, seek answers that only the Society of the Angelic One can give? Perhaps Connell tries to recruit them, or, if they prove a danger, do they become targets?

ALTERNATIVES

The Society of the Angelic Ones is something of a curious beast, inspired and created from a range of sources by Wilma Cartwright. She is attempting to obtain as much personal "power" as she can, and now only appeasing the whims of Cthulhu and its allied creatures when she absolutely must. She believes she can turn the situation around so that Cthulhu and the Angelic Ones become her minions.

Other Locations: as Cartwright's other children grow older, it is possible that she (or they) declares that they are Nephelim. In doing so, the Holy Mother may situate her younger children in other cities with the command to recruit and build new temples, and so increase the reach of the Society. Perhaps New York or Chicago, or possibly somewhere quiet in the Midwest, where an entire town might be swayed to join the cult.

The Society crumbles when Wilma Cartwright allows herself to be arrested and put in prison (sometime around 1925). While incarcerated, she continues to try and rebuild the Society through her faithful followers and perhaps her children, still trying to find a means to control Cthulhu (rather than be controlled). Soon, she is more or less running the prison, using her spells to dominate her fellow inmates as well as the guards. She could prove to be an interesting antagonist, operating from inside the prison—especially if lawbreaking investigators find themselves incarcerated inside with her!

Other Times: with the dissolution of the Society around 1925–1926, Cartwright's children and/or Enlightened members may seek to recreate or build a new cult to continue their worship of Cthulhu. The process may take some time and occur far away from California. Perhaps, later during the 1930s or even in the modern-day, a cult concerning Angelic Ones appears, with links back to the Cartwright family and their older, strange religion that once operated out of Venice, California.

ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON

Period: Circa 1812 to 1924

"As the good lady shewed me out of the building she made it clear that the pirate theory of the Marsh fortune was a popular one among the intelligent people of the region. Her own attitude toward shadowed Innsmouth—which she had never seen—was one of disgust at a community slipping far down the cultural scale, and she assured me that the rumours of devil-worship were partly justified by a peculiar secret cult which had gained force there and engulfed all the orthodox churches.

It was called, she said, "The Esoteric Order of Dagon", and was undoubtedly a debased, quasi-pagan thing imported from the East a century before, at a time when the Innsmouth fisheries seemed to be going barren. Its persistence among a simple people was quite natural in view of the sudden and permanent return of abundantly fine fishing, and it soon came to be the greatest influence on the town, replacing Freemasonry altogether and taking up headquarters in the old Masonic Hall on New Church Green."

—H. P. Lovecraft, *The Shadow over Innsmouth*

In the early 19th century, the Massachusetts town of Innsmouth was in financial hardship: the shipping trade was falling off, industry was seemingly in decline, and many of its young men had been killed privateering in the war of 1812 against the British. Yet, before Innsmouth finally vanished into nothingness, something remarkable happened and the town found new prosperity. The change of fortune can be ascribed to one person, a seafaring fellow called Captain Obed Marsh.

BACKGROUND

Captain Obed Marsh operated ships out of Innsmouth and was one of the few shipping concerns that still conducted trade with the East Indian Company. Captain Marsh shipped extensively in the South Pacific, and it was while voyaging to China that he came upon an island, east of Otaheite (Tahiti), which drew his interest. The island possessed what seemed to be unique and ancient stone ruins, many of which were sculpted in the fashion of gigantic animal heads, unlike anything he had seen before. Nearby, a number of smaller volcanic islands also possessed gigantic sculptures, seemingly of ancient design, although these were more grotesque in aspect.

The initial meeting with the islanders went well. It appeared they were successful fishermen and, of particular note to Captain Marsh, they all wore elaborate gold jewelry incorporating designs of sea creatures. When Marsh inquired as to the source of the jewelry, the leader of the islanders, Walakea, said they came from the "sea gods" and that they would be pleased to trade gold with the Captain.

While some of Marsh's crew were distrustful of the islanders due to many of them possessing strikingly unusual features, such as large, orb-like eyes, broad smiles, and rough skin that seemed to be comprised of tiny scales, Marsh paid little heed and recognized a great opportunity had presented itself—one he was not going to let slip away. Thus, Walakea and Marsh established a lucrative trading agreement, with the purchase of the islanders' golden jewelry in return for glass beads. The pair became good friends, with Marsh learning all he could from Walakea about the life of the islanders and their beliefs.

When taken by Walakea to one of the nearby volcanic islands to view the strange sculptures, Marsh was told that these were once parts of "the city of the sea gods beneath the waves," which had been throw up from the ocean floor in ages past. And, how it was to these grotesque carvings that Walakea's people offered human sacrifices in return for good fishing, safe weather, and the treasures of the ocean. As long as his people prospered and the sea gods were happy, Walakea was content to continue the practice.

Before Captain Marsh and his crew left for China, with gold worth more than the ship's cargo, Walakea gifted the captain with a handful of strange-looking metal disks, etched on both sides with curious characters and sigils. The island chieftain said the sea gods could be summoned by casting the disks into the sea near one of their sunken cities. The captain pocketed the disks and set sail, promising to return with more beads.

Marsh traded with the island community over the following few years, sending ships to collect the golden treasure while ensuring his agreement (and the location of the island) remained a secret. After a time, the abundance of gold jewelry coming out of Innsmouth began to raise questions as to its source, so Captain Marsh purchased an old mill and repurposed it as the Marsh Refining Company—a place where the islander's gold could be melted down into bullion, which could then be sold on with far fewer questions asked.

In 1838, Captain Marsh returned to the island but, on arrival, found that Walakea's community had been razed to the ground. It seemed that the communities from some of the neighboring islanders had taken against the practice of human sacrifice and Walakea's people's commerce with the sea gods. A force had attacked the community, and by using certain charms, these angry neighbors were able to stop the sea gods from rising from the deep to protect Walakea's people. The confrontation saw all Walakea's people killed, their homes destroyed, and the ancient stone heads toppled over and broken. Nothing but ashes remained, while Marsh's lucrative trade deal disappeared on the salty breeze.

ESOTERIC ORDER
OF DAGON

The Rebirth of Innsmouth

Innsmouth's new-found prosperity had been based solely on the gold brought in by Captain Marsh and its sudden loss badly affected the entire community, which was already somewhat in decline with most other avenues of trade virtually dead and its fishing fleet struggling to return with anything like full catches. Perplexed with how to recover from his setback, Marsh remembered the metal disks given to him by Walakea years before. Perhaps, if he could find and treat with the "sea gods," Marsh could find a new way to bring the bounty of the sea to Innsmouth.

Desperate and intrigued by Walakea's words, Marsh rowed out with some of his oldest crew to an ocean promontory called Devil Reef. The year was 1840, and as the moon shone down, he cast a few of the disks into the sea while quietly muttering the words taught to him by the island chieftain. As time slipped by, Marsh began to feel foolish for believing the endeavor could work, yet just before dawn, shapes rose from the water around the reef. The sea gods, who called themselves "deep ones," had come and were prepared to treat with Marsh, offering good fishing and gold in return for the colored glass beads once so prized by Walakea. With a new compact agreed, Marsh breathed a sigh of relief; however, his new "business partners" would soon have other demands.

It was not long before the deep ones, who came from a city beneath the waves called Y'ha-nthlei, told Marsh that his glass beads were no longer sufficient. They demanded human sacrifices of both men and women, otherwise, Innsmouth's fishing nets would be empty of the treasures of the deep and the town would starve. Marsh had no choice but to comply. He set about turning the beliefs of the town's residents away from Christianity and toward a new religion. Marsh began to spread word through Innsmouth that there were other gods who did not sit idly by and let their followers starve. Gods that would bring prosperity back to Innsmouth, who would listen to the people's needs, and who would fill the town's fishing nets with a great abundance of fish and gold. To the hungry inhabitants of Innsmouth, Marsh's words struck a chord, and many began to listen to his words. Soon, Marsh's fishing vessels began to return with proof of his claims—their nets filled with all manner of fish, and among the fish, golden jewelry!

Marsh purchased the old Masonic Hall and converted it into a church he dubbed the Esoteric Order of Dagon (EOD). The people began to turn away from their old god, and the worship of Dagon flourished. With dwindling congregations, the town's churches closed down and their ministers either fled or mysteriously disappeared. First the Congregationalist church, then the Methodist, and finally

Rebirth of Innsmouth

the Baptist church closed their doors. All that was left was Captain Marsh's new religion.

People began to disappear, and although these absences were investigated they went unsolved. Rumors hatched regarding the nighttime activities of Marsh and his followers, who each month rowed out to Devil Reef, where it was said they held blasphemous rites. While some spoke out with accusations, most folk looked the other way, fearful of turning against Marsh and losing the new-found prosperity he had brought. It did not take long for some of the dissenting voices to fall silent, with such folk quietly "removed" from town or else threatened to stay in line. Fear crept around the homes of those who wanted no truck with Marsh and his brand of "devil worship."

Matters came to a head in 1846. A sizeable portion of Innsmouth's residents still resisted Captain Marsh and conversion to the EOD. Too many people had gone missing, there was much talk of unchristian gods, and there were allegations of murders and blood sacrifices being made under the moon on Devil Reef. Thus, these dissenters armed themselves and followed Marsh and around 30 of his followers out to Devil Reef. With the element of surprise and some well-aimed gunshots, the dissenters captured Marsh and his people, accused them of murder and kidnapping, and placed them in the town's jail.

Marsh and his cultists were imprisoned for two weeks and, importantly, during this period no tributes were made to the deep ones. On the last night of the second week, a swarm of deep ones rose out of the Manuxet waters and rampaged through the streets, enacting their vengeance against Innsmouth. All resistance was quickly put down while Marsh and his followers were freed from jail. By morning, more than half of the town either lay dead or were missing. Those who still drew breath were now Marsh's people, whether they liked it or not. Captain Marsh became the de facto leader of the town.

The Awful Compact

As Marsh's grip tightened, so did the demands of the deep ones, and if he did not appease their demands, Innsmouth would suffer the consequences. The "sea gods" now wanted to mate with humans. Marsh was forced to take a deep one as a second wife, while a series of new oaths were implanted into the rites and ceremonies of the EOD. These Oaths of Dagon culminated in the "marriage" between humans and deep ones. The male and female members of the EOD were, at first, encouraged to take the Third Oath, then later compelled to do so, with some preferring to take their own lives rather than submit.

The children born of such unions first looked human but, as they grew older, they would eventually change into deep ones. Importantly, these hybrid children would never die, though they were still susceptible to death from violence. The age when a hybrid would make the final change into a full deep one varied; some would be fully transformed by the time they reached their early 30s, while others wouldn't lose their "humanity" until they were in their 60s or 70s. A few hybrids would never change and be forever trapped in a state between deep one and human.

In 1863, when recruiters for the US government came to Innsmouth to enlist men for the Civil War, some seized the chance to escape the nightmare town and run headfirst into the bloody conflict. The EOD was somewhat powerless to stop these few leaving, lest its actions bring the unwanted attention of the Union authorities. Of course, although many wanted to leave, most were afraid to do so, fearful that Marsh, his cronies, and the deep ones would somehow still be able to find them and exact some form of vengeance.

After the war ended, Innsmouth fell on hard times. Its shrinking population—from the war, the murders, and its compact with the deep ones—simply meant that its industry was ebbing away. Many of the hybrids were born deformed and incapable of working in the town's mills, refinery, or aboard its fishing vessels. Beasts of burden were frightened by the hybrids, so even horses and cattle had to be kept away from the town. As their deep one heritage became more pronounced, most of the hybrids would remain indoors, waiting until their change was complete and they could take to the sea.

Innsmouth gold

As the remaining years of the 19th century passed, the town continued its downward spiral. The harbor closed to all but the last few fishing vessels, as did the railroad to Rowley, and Marsh's refinery fell into decline as the deep ones began to bring less gold to the town. Ugly and fearful rumors continued to spread in the surrounding countryside, with the good folk of Rowley, Ipswich, and Arkham preferring to keep well away from the "blight" that seemed to infect Innsmouth.

Captain Obed Marsh had three children with his deep one bride. Two transformed into full deep ones early, but the third, his daughter, Delores, looked human enough and was married off to a man in Arkham. From his first marriage, Marsh had children, but those children eventually took deep one mates as well. Until his death in 1878, Captain Marsh ruled the town and wrought the EOD into a tool to do his bidding. His legacy was one of unbelievable horror and misery. And, after this death, his grandson, Barnabas Marsh, took over, maintaining the agreement with the deep ones.

The Current Situation

Now, in 1924, Obed Marsh's grandson, Barnabas Marsh, some 70 years old and nearing complete transformation into full deep one, remains the town's patriarch. Barnabas is all but a deep one, and for the last few years has remained hidden away from public view. His son, Robert Marsh, now commands the EOD and runs Innsmouth.

Innsmouth continues to slide into squalor and even its once-strong fishing trade can no longer compete with the industrious mass production of Gloucester and elsewhere. Even with the introduction of electricity and gas supplies, a darkness surrounds the houses—few remain un-boarded, their inhabitants preferring the chill of darkness while they wait to go to the sea. The worship of Dagon continues: the rites and sacrifices are made, the oaths observed.

GOALS

"God, what I seen senct I was fifteen year' old—Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin!—the folks as was missin', an' them as kilt theirselves—them as told things in Arkham or Ipswich or sech places was all called crazy, like you're a-callin' me right naow—but God, what I seen— They'd a kilt me long ago fer what I know, only I'd took the fust an' secon' Oaths o' Dagon offen Obed, so was pertected unlessen a jury of'em proved I told things knowin' an' delib'rit . . . but I wudn't take the third Oath—I'd a died ruther'n take that—"

—Zadok Allen, from H. P. Lovecraft's
The Shadow over Innsmouth

The Esoteric Order of Dagon (EOD) is the only cult based out of the town of Innsmouth. When describing the goals of the EOD, we are not discussing the goals of deep ones, Dagon (or Hydra), or even Cthulhu—the goals of those creatures and entities are unknown. Our explanation exposes the desires, goals, and needs of the humans and hybrids of the EOD cult.

When a human-deep one hybrid makes the final change into full deep one, it is not a physical change alone, but a mental one as well. As the body changes, so does the mind, becoming less and less human, and somehow connecting and tuning into the dream-thoughts of Cthulhu. Once the change is complete, the hybrid is lost to the EOD, and the newly transformed deep one takes to the sea to travel down to the underwater city of Y'ha-nthlei.

Over time, the goals of the EOD have changed. Captain Obed Marsh once believed that, by working with the deep ones, Innsmouth would flourish and thrive. But, as time moved on, he knew that his power was illusory and completely dependent on the desires of the deep ones—they were the true power and he was but a vessel through which they imposed their will. While there are the **Three Oaths of Dagon** (see box, nearby), in reality, there is but one goal central to the EOD: do as the deep ones' decree.

The First Oath: Secrecy

- While membership in the EOD is not compulsory, the residents of Innsmouth are strongly encouraged to become members and take the First Oath.

It is of the utmost importance for the existence of the deep ones (and their goals) to remain hidden from human society. While it remains unknown how many deep ones there are in the world, it can be assumed that their numbers are far fewer than humanity. Until the stars are right and their master, Cthulhu, wakes, they appear to be unready or unwilling to reveal themselves to humanity as a whole; it may be assumed that should humanity truly come to understand the existence of the deep ones, they would be actively sought out, leading to conflict with calamitous repercussions. As powerful as the deep ones may be, against the combined might of humanity, they *could* be destroyed or severely weakened. Thus, the imperative of secrecy is a primary consideration.

The Second Oath: Loyalty

- Those taking the Second Oath should be considered, on the whole, as active agents of the EOD, willing to do whatever is needed to protect the Order.

The deep ones make use of human agents when they wish to influence or direct events on dry land. Such agents ensure an

interface that eliminates the risk of detection. Members of the EOD protect the secrets of Innsmouth against outsiders, scaring them off or, if necessary, killing them as needed. In addition, members of the EOD perform the tasks and governance to keep Innsmouth functioning (even if this is just barely functioning), as well as conducting the rites and sacrificial offerings required by the deep ones.

Exactly why the deep ones want such rites and sacrifices performed remains a mystery. Perhaps they gain some magical power, or it may simply be a process of control to ensure the obedience of humans. As virtually all of Innsmouth's inhabitants now possess some degree of deep one heritage, the link between "humans" and deep ones in the town is strong. Thus, the bond of loyalty is more or less inbred and the populace indoctrinated.

The Third Oath: Children

- While initially resisted by many, over time the situation has flipped with many inhabitants being the progeny of humans and deep ones. As these hybrids age, the taking of the Third Oath becomes a natural and accepted part of life. There are virtually no humans left in the town who have not submitted to the demands of the Third Oath.

The creation, nurturing, and protection of human-deep one offspring is perhaps the most important duty of the EOD. Despite their magical prowess and alignment with

The Innsmouth look: the change near complete

THE THREE OATHS OF DAGON

All members of the Esoteric Order of Dagon are required to swear the First Oath of Dagon. Those deemed worthy are initiated into the higher degrees and take the far more terrible Second and Third Oaths. Failure to obey a sworn oath results in a trial conducted by members of the Order, with punishments ranging anywhere from fines, to imprisonment or death.

In the formative period of the EOD's control over Innsmouth, a sigil denoting each of the three oaths was carved into the front doors of those who had taken them. Thus, at a glance, members of the EOD could see which oaths had been taken by which homes and families. While this device is no longer used in Innsmouth, the aged woodwork of the town's houses still bear testimony to these curious marks.

FIRST OATH

Ia! Dagon! I, [speaker's name] do solemnly swear that I will neither hinder, nor inform upon, the activities of the deep ones. Should I forsake this oath, I shall be shunned and judged unworthy of Dagon's favor, and bear whatever punishment appointed to me, even to death. Ia! Dagon!

SECOND OATH

Ia! Dagon! I, [speaker's name] do solemnly swear that I will render all aid and assistance to the deep ones to the best of my ability, and in whatever form or manner is required of me. Should I forsake this oath, I shall be shunned and judged unworthy of Dagon's favor, and bear whatever punishment appointed to me, even to death. Ia! Dagon!

THIRD OATH

Ia! Dagon! Iii! Hydra! I, [speaker's name] do solemnly swear that I take [this deep one] as my [wife or husband], and that I shall take them into my home, and that I will raise children from the fruit of our union so that the race, and the faith, can prosper, as is Dagon and Hydra's will. Should I forsake this oath, I shall be shunned and judged unworthy of Dagon's favor, and bear whatever punishment appointed to me, even to death. Ia! Dagon! Iii! Hydra!

the forces of the Mythos, the deep one race appears to be in decline, seemingly due to an inability to bear their own young, whereas breeding with humans appears to garner a far higher degree of success in terms of birth rates.

The origin of the deep ones is unknown, but clearly, there is some shared biology—or else a magical component—that permits breeding between the species. Some members of the EOD believe that deep ones and humanity share some common ancestor, while others state that the transition to deep one is the next stage in human evolution. When the Third Oath was first introduced, while many were repulsed by its implications, some found appeal in the notion that their resulting children would never die, and their legacy would be eternal.

STRUCTURE

The Esoteric Order of Dagon has a rigid, top-down pyramidal structure. Delineation of responsibilities is clear, with control of the Order maintained by a small elite, whose families were among the first to embrace the new compact offered by Obed Marsh. The average cult member (i.e. those in the lowest ranks) are told and understand only as much as they need to know. While those who have achieved or are birthed to a higher status are privileged to not only learn the deeper secrets of the Order, but also to command it.

High Priest

The High Priest is the leader of both Innsmouth and the EOD. The first High Priest was Captain Obed Marsh, and after his death in 1878, his grandson, Barnabas Marsh took over. Barnabas was the son of Onesiphorus Marsh, the child of Obed and his first (human) wife. While Onesiphorus was human, his mate was a deep one, and so Barnabas is a human-deep one hybrid. Now all but a full deep one, Barnabas withdrew from public life some ten years ago, and now waits to take to the sea, leaving the governance of Innsmouth and control of the EOD to his son, Robert Marsh, the Order's third and current High Priest.

It is the High Priest's duty to lead all of the significant religious rites while also guiding the organization in all matters. Any infractions or disobedience by the cult's members are judged and ruled upon solely by the High Priest. Punishments are usually harsh, often taking the form of branding, severe beatings, and/or periods of imprisonment. Where the perceived "crime" is particularly heinous, such as oath-breaking, the accused may endure limited punishment if they remain of use to the Order, or where not, they either become a sacrificial offering and are murdered, or are simply handed over to the deep ones and never seen or heard from again.

Like Obed before him, Barnabas' reign is harsh and dictatorial. None within the EOD would dare oppose him; however, as always, the true power behind the EOD is the deep ones.

Innsmouth elite

Town Elders

Beneath the High Priest are the Town Elders. Each of the elite and ruling Innsmouth families have representatives on the Board of Elders, which consists of seven members: two Waites, two Gilmans, two Eliots, and one Marsh (in addition to Robert and Barnabas Marsh). No one may become an Elder unless they have already taken the Three Oaths of Dagon. The Elders are "lieutenants" to the High Priest managing the day-to-day running of Innsmouth and the EOD. In the main, interactions with the outside world are directed by the Elders and then undertaken by nominated Order members. The Elders also oversee the settling of any personal disputes between Order members.

Deacons

Below the Elders are the Deacons, high-ranking members who include the priests and priestesses of the Order, and who manage and run the town's various functions. All Deacons have taken the Third Oath, and most are raising hybrid children. Lower-ranking cultists are appointed as house servants to the Deacons, as well as to the Elders. Note that the Deacons may take leave of their civic duties for extended periods, allowing them to focus on the upbringing of their hybrid children. Indeed, female deep ones who have mated with a human male tend to play no part in the child's development, usually leaving their offspring with the father for its upbringing.

Weekly mass services are held for the Innsmouth community, with most of the community attending—those nearing the change into deep one do not usually attend, preferring to remain hidden in their homes. Other, private rites are held for small gatherings, and as needed. Such private rites include particular sacrificial offerings to the deep ones.

The Order's weekly meetings consist of sermons glorifying Dagon, the sea god, and asking him and his "bride" Hydra to bestow their blessings upon the people of Innsmouth. Such sermons often contain vague Biblical allegory, as well as pieces of non-Western religious traditions, all mixed with and presented in terms of oceanic metaphors. The EOD's priests and priestesses wear robes stitched with designs of fishes and other sea creatures, as well as symbols representing Cthulhu, Dagon, and Hydra, and all wear the strange golden jewelry (tiaras, bracelets, rings, chains) that comes from the deep ones.

Acolytes

Members of the Order who have taken the Second Oath are known as Acolytes and are the most numerous within the EOD. These are tasked with the "grunt work" of the cult, being the primary workforce for the town. Such members are expected to attend all ceremonies and rites, and do whatever is asked of them. For their loyalty, these cultists are provided with food and protection.

The Rest

Everyone else in Innsmouth has taken the First Oath—either willingly or due to fear of reprisal. Membership is expected but no one is *openly* forced to join. Over time, most of those who simply paid lip service have been "weeded out." The will of the free people of Innsmouth was broken years ago, and those who did not accept Obed Marsh or the EOD, escaped, disappeared, or fell in line. With better jobs given to the Deacons and above, everyone else must make do with whatever jobs are left: household servants, street cleaners, sewage workers, fishermen, and so on.

FINANCING

The primary source of income for the EOD is the Marsh Gold Refinery. In the early days of the cult, there was still strong fishing, shipping, and mill industries in the town, but as the years passed and the workforce shrank, these industries either failed or diminished to almost nothing—the influence of the Cthulhu Mythos is pervasive, corrupting not only humans but human institutions also. While fishing still exists, the catches landed in Innsmouth are no longer transported for sale across New England, but rather act to feed the town and stave off starvation.

The Marsh Refinery now operates at a fraction of its former capacity. It ensures it has the necessary business licenses and pays the appropriate taxes to avoid unwanted state and federal eyes from taking too close a look at the town. Profits from the refinery are poured into the EOD, which enjoys certain tax breaks and exemptions. Of course, all of the gold that is claimed to be purchased from overseas mines actually derives from the deep ones. Should anyone look closely at the documentation held in the refinery's offices or into the foreign mining concerns, they would quickly discover a fabrication on a grand scale. On the rare occasion of being scrutinized by some official, the EOD has been able to produce people claiming they are representatives of foreign mining operations, and thus been able to conceal the truth—such representatives being no more than EOD members acting the part.

RECRUITMENT

Almost all members of the EOD have been born and raised in Innsmouth. Over time, as the human population of the town decreases, the ruling elite have sought to bring outsiders into the cult to provide a wider gene pool. Such outward-facing recruitment is usually done through marriage.

A hybrid, aged between 17 and 30, and who still possesses a human appearance, is sent out into the world to find and marry a mate. Sometimes, the hybrid is sent overseas or to a university, or perhaps just another small town in New England. The hybrid attempts to have a seemingly normal life in order to attract a partner. Once married, the hybrid is keen to have as many children as possible with their spouse, before "the change" comes upon them. All Innsmouth hybrids, even those unaware of their strange heritage, feel drawn to the town at the early onset of their transformation, which for some could be in their late 20s or older. Thus, often before early physical changes manifest, they find themselves headed to Innsmouth, but uncertain or unconscious of the attraction pulling them there.

Typically, the human parent is unaware of the true nature of their spouse and children. If the signs start to manifest early, the hybrid parent notices these and acts accordingly. The hybrid parent may simply kidnap their children and take them to Innsmouth or arranges for the children to take a "vacation" with their family. In some cases, the hybrid parent may convince their human spouse to relocate to Innsmouth.

Should the human parent or any of their extended family come to Innsmouth looking for a missing family member, the town's residents act to obfuscate and distract. Any clues pointing to Innsmouth either dry up or are directed elsewhere, forcing the prying outsider/s to give up or move on to follow some false lead. When a human parent or spouse is particularly tenacious, they may be captured and offered the opportunity to join their family and become a permanent part of the community, or else are quietly murdered or sacrificed.

Occasionally, outsiders drift into Innsmouth and stay. These are typically blue-collar workers, hobos, or just people down on their luck. The EOD vets such newcomers, and if they appear pliable, sets them up with a menial job and a place to live. EOD "handlers" are appointed to watch over and ingratiate themselves with the newcomers, slowly introducing them to the beliefs and ways of the town. When the time is right, they are asked to take the First Oath. Those who accept usually become full members of the cult in due course, while those who do not must either find a means to escape or risk never being heard from again.

SAMPLE MEMBERS

Robert Marsh, *age 41, Cult Leader*

Position: De facto Leader, High Priest

Barnabas Marsh, great-grandson of Captain Obed Marsh, is a hybrid and the master and high priest of the EOD, although for some years Barnabas has been secluded away while undergoing the change into a full deep one. Thus, his son Robert Marsh has become the de facto leader of the cult.

Robert, already undergoing the change, possesses a pronounced "Innsmouth look." He is short and stocky, with large eyes and the scales on his skin are particularly noticeable. Hidden by his robes are well-formed gills, which already afford him the ability to breathe underwater and travel to Y'ha-nthlei. His feet are large (very wide) and his fingers and toes are webbed. Despite still maintaining a good head of hair, his ears have all but disappeared, leaving only rudimentary nodules of flesh surrounding the ear canals.

Throughout his time as High Priest, Robert has been a strong leader. He is aware that Innsmouth's decline cannot be stopped unless new commerce is found, and to this end, he has sent out agents to big cities, like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia to seek out opportunities. At the same time,

Robert is trying to get the deep ones of Y'ha-nthlei to increase the amount of gold being sent into the town and has recently persuaded them to send a little more. Thus, the refinery is more active now than it has been for the past ten years.

Backstory

- **Description:** his body shape is closer to that of a deep one than a human, most of it hidden beneath his robes. His eyes bulge, with a near-constant stream of watery tears giving his scaly face a wet look. A head of thick brown hair hides the fact he no longer possesses ears. His fingers are webbed, and his nails are beginning to look more like claws.
- **Traits:** Robert shifts his weight from side to side as he moves (his feet are no longer human, appearing more like clawed flippers). Occasionally, he has difficulty speaking, his words sounding more like croaks, caused by the changing shape of his mouth. As his eyes rarely blink, he seems to stare fixedly upon his guest, as like a snake "hypnotizing" its prey.

Robert Marsh, *high priest*

STR 65 **CON** 80 **SIZ** 70 **DEX** 65 **INT** 80
APP 06 **POW** 110 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 00 **HP** 15
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 6 **MP:** 46*

**Increased through Power Drain spell.*

Cthulhu's Blessings

Cthulhu's Kiss: (2 MP) Marsh's flesh becomes a channel for Cthulhu's power, burning and corrupting the flesh of those touched. The effect lasts one round per 2 magic points invested and inflicts 1D6+1 damage per round; the damage is automatic on the rounds following a successful attack, assuming Marsh continues to power the ability. The victim may attempt to break free (on following rounds) with a successful opposed STR roll.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4 or knife 1D4+2+1D4
Cthulhu's Kiss	70% (35/14), damage 1D6+1 per round—see below
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Archaeology 35%, Credit Rating (Innsmouth) 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 75%, History 55%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 50%, Language (English) 70%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 60%, Occult 65%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 45%, Science (Astronomy) 55%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 45%, Swim 85%, Throw 40%.

Spells

Breath of the Deep, Call Father Dagon**, Call Mother Hydra**, Contact Cthulhu, Contact Deep One, Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu, Curse of the Stone, Drown Mind, Grasp of Cthulhu, Power Drain, Summon Deep One, Wither Limb.

New spell, see* ***New & Variant Spells*, page 186.*

Robert Marsh: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck: 90
- HP: 30

Pulp Combat

Brawl	75% (37/15), damage 1D3+1D4 or knife 1D4+2+1D4
Cthulhu's Kiss	75% (37/15), damage 1D6+1 per round—see below
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Pulp Talents

- **Heavy Hitter:** may spend 10 Luck to add additional damage die in melee combat.
- **Fleet Footed:** spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one encounter.

Robert Marsh.

Francis Murray Gilman, *age 40, Town Selectman & Hotel Owner*

Position: Elder

F. Murray Gilman is a human-appearing hybrid, the offspring of a human father and a hybrid mother. While his mother made the change into a deep one many years ago and departed for a new life beneath the waves, his father died an alcoholic. With no sign of the change coming upon him and his very human appearance, some speculate that he will never make the full change.

Gilman is one of Innsmouth's selectmen, governing the town, and also owns and runs the Gilman House Hotel, a five-story building whose peeling paint and shabby appearance belies that it was once a magnificent sight to behold. The only hotel open to guests in the town, the Gilman House is usually the first (and last) port of call for visitors.

As a selectman, Gilman tries to exert pressure on Robert Marsh to reinvigorate the town's economy, and is very supportive of the drive to send young Innsmouth folk out into the wider world to find new business opportunities. He fears that Innsmouth's decay may be irreversible, and is somewhat scared by the thought that he won't undergo the full change and be left here alone while the town rots around him. His concerns are compounded by the fear of the outside world finally taking notice of Innsmouth and uncovering its dark secret. Thus, he takes a great interest in any outsiders who venture into the town, often spying on them through peepholes he has placed around his hotel. Such visitors often say or do something that Gilman perceives as suspicious, and so many of them disappear in the night, with only their screams to note they were ever there.

Francis Murray Gilman

Backstory

- **Description:** thin and stalk-like, with balding hair and small, round spectacles. He wears a once-fine suit that is some 20 years out of style.
- **Traits:** a focused listener. When someone talks to him, he pays attention to what is said and is always ready with follow-up questions. He does, however, have a hard time making himself heard, lacking the confidence to get the other Elders to pay attention to his concerns.

F. Murray Gilman, *cult elder*

STR 55	**CON** 55	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 50	**INT** 70
APP 50	**POW** 60	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 12	**Luck:** 30

Cthulhu's Blessings

Throat Tentacles: able to shoot forth two tentacles from his mouth, which may hold items or be used to attack others. In attacking, both tentacles may attempt to swipe a target per round (i.e. two attacks) or work together to strangle (one attack). Such attacks are in addition to Gilman's usual one attack per round.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (or 2 throat tentacles)

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+2
Club	30% (15/6), damage 1D6
Throat tentacles	45% (22/9), damage 1D2 (swipe) or 1D4 (strangle); see below
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Accounting 50%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating (Innsmouth) 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 40%, Fast Talk 60%, History 30%, Intimidate 60%, Language (English) 75%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 35%, Law 40%, Listen 70%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 65%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 70%, Swim 40%, Throw 50%.

Spells

Call Father Dagon**, Call Mother Hydra**, Contact Cthulhu, Summon Deep One.

***New spell, see **New & Variant Spells**, page 186.*

F. Murray Gilman: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck: 30
- HP: 24

Pulp Combat

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+2
Club	45% (22/9), damage 1D6
Throat tentacles	60% (30/12), damage 1D2 (swipe) or 1D4 (strangle); see below
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Pulp Talents

- **Alert:** never surprised in combat.

Dorothy Waite, *age 45, Housewife & Priestess*

Position: Deacon, Priestess

Dorothy Waite is a human who married into the Waite family. Left parentless at an early age, Dorothy was raised in an all-girls religious orphanage. Having no life goals other than to marry and raise a family of her own, Dorothy found herself training to become a nurse, an occupation she could pursue until she found a husband. She was studying nursing when she met Hiram Waite (an Innsmouth hybrid), who drove the bus that took her to the hospital. It was love at first sight, and in a matter of weeks, she had dropped out of school to marry Hiram and move to his home of Innsmouth.

Dorothy took to Innsmouth surprisingly well. She found the EOD both fascinating and welcoming—perhaps a response to the harsh Catholic upbringing she had experienced. She soon took the First and Second Oaths; however, Hiram did not want her to take the Third Oath out of personal jealousy. He wanted Dorothy to bear only his children, and not those of the deep ones. Dorothy's loyalty to her husband was second only to that of the Order, and she was unsure how to navigate the dilemma she faced: abide by her husband's wishes or follow the creed of her new-found religion. Desperate for direction, she approached the High Priest on the matter, who advised that while the Third Oath was not compulsory, it provided a way for Dorothy to fully embrace Dagon and grow spiritually. Wishing to do so, she asked to take the Third Oath but would first conceive a child with Hiram. While he was not happy about the outcome, Hiram relented and agreed.

Over the next few years, Hiram and Dorothy's relationship became strained. Although they had created a son together, Hiram's jealousy would not give him peace, and he grew increasingly angry, torn between his love for Dorothy and his conditioning to serve Dagon and the deep ones. The anger turned into abuse. The Order became aware of the situation and reprimanded Hiram, but nevertheless, he continued. Finally, the Order removed Hiram to the local jail to protect Dorothy, who had by now taken a deep one mate, who she called her "true husband," and given birth to two hybrid children. She continued to fulfill the Third Oath, with a total of six children born to her and her deep one husband.

The High Priest was particularly taken with Dorothy's devotion and proclaimed her an exemplary member of the Order, and even though human, she was inducted as a priestess. In addition, her commitment to the Order and her true belief made her an ideal candidate to help govern the town, and she became its first female Elder. Being human, Dorothy is usually the person called upon to "handle" outsiders visiting Innsmouth.

It is her belief that the children of humans and deep ones are the next step in the creation of a "holy race" of beings, who shall inherit the earth. She finds great joy and completeness serving the EOD, and is ruthless in ensuring no harm can come to her children or the Order.

Dorothy Waite

Backstory

- **Description:** average height, with light-brown hair and strikingly blue eyes. She typically dresses in practical and warm clothing.
- **Traits:** clever and tenacious, and always puts the Order above her own well-being. She has a no-nonsense approach to life, seldom makes small talk, and believes action speaks louder than words. She appears to show warmth and kindness only to her hybrid children and her deep one husband. Dorothy is not squeamish and is more than happy to get her hands bloody.

Dorothy Waite, *deacon*

STR 45	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 65	**INT** 70
APP 55	**POW** 80	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 16	**Luck:** 40

Cthulhu's Blessings

Mind Control: able to exert influence over other people similar to the Dominate spell (1 MP per person); each person targeted must be within 10 yards/meters and each must be overcome in an opposed POW roll. Commands inherently harmful to the target/s may be resisted with a second opposed POW roll.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+2
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Charm 60%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 32%, Intimidate 40%, Language (English) 55%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 35%, Swim 30%, Throw 50%.

Spells

Contact Deep One.

Dorothy Waite: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck: 40
- HP: 24

Pulp Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+2
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Night Vision:** no penalty for actions made in darkness.

Larry Conner, *age 28, Handyman & Enforcer*

Position: Acolyte, Enforcer

Larry Conner is a drifter who breezed into Innsmouth about four years ago and somehow managed to survive the experience. Not only that, he was able to convince Robert Marsh, the High Priest of the EOD, to let him stay.

Conner had a strained and difficult upbringing alongside twelve brothers and sisters. He often got lost in the shuffle, although anonymity sometimes helped to avoid the ongoing emotional and physical abuse of his parents. At age 14, he fled his home and started out on his own, drifting from town to town, picking up any work he could. Most of the time, such work was hard to come by, so he would be forced to steal to survive. With his sticky fingers and a volatile disposition, Conner often found himself in jail. At the relatively young age of 24, Conner had already become a hard and cruel man.

When Conner washed up in Innsmouth looking for work he spent a few days keeping out of sight and just watching. He noticed the lack of police and the strange atmosphere surrounding the town. But, importantly, he noticed that the inhabitants were hiding something. Despite taking care, he had been noticed and the EOD organized a hunt to bring this stranger to ground. Careful to avoid capture, Conner headed straight to the biggest house and broke in, reckoning that bargaining with the town's "chief" might be a way to improve what was quickly turning into a desperate situation. His gambit paid off and he found himself face-to-face with Robert Marsh.

Conner, at first somewhat taken back by Marsh's unusual appearance, began to speak about his life and how he came to find himself in Innsmouth. The words poured out of him like wine from an uncorked bottle, and for the first time in many a year he felt unburdened. Throughout, Marsh listened and asked questions, and found himself impressed with Conner's tale of survival and adversity. Marsh could use a man like Conner, whose blunt edges could be refined to serve the needs of the town, and whose blood would strengthen the Innsmouth line. And so, Conner was offered a bargain, he would work for Marsh in return for good pay, a home, and a purpose.

Since that time, Conner has turned his aptitude for violence toward serving the community. Whether it's ensuring troublesome outsiders disappear, venturing beyond Innsmouth to murder someone marked for death, or helping to kidnap and guard those scheduled for sacrifice, Conner plays his role with relish. He likes to hurt people and feels powerful doing so. While his loyalty to the Order is more about money and power, he also has a healthy fear of what Robert Marsh would do to him if he reneged on his deal. While not, as yet, having taken the Third Oath, Conner has

accepted the First and Second Oaths. He has seen what Robert Marsh can do, seen the deep ones, and witnessed the manifestation of Dagon. Although some part of his humanity rails against the inhuman horrors all around him, this part is deeply buried and locked away.

Backstory

- **Description:** sinuous and tall, with short-cropped blond hair. He wears the vest and trousers of a suit, but feels more comfortable in the coveralls he dons when "working."
- **Traits:** a cruel man who enjoys intimidating those he deems weak; invading personal space, acting rude to stir up trouble, and using sudden bout of violence to get his point across. Interestingly, when in the presence of hybrids in an advanced state of change or around deep ones, he becomes quiet, reserved, and servile.

Larry Conner, *cult enforcer*

STR 75	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 70	**INT** 35
APP 45	**POW** 50	**EDU** 25	**SAN** 10*	**HP** 15
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** 25

**Immune to Sanity loss from deep ones and deep-one hybrids.*

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4 or knife 1D6+1D4
Spiked club	80% (40/16), damage 1D6+2+1D4
12g shotgun (2B)	50% (25/10), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 70%, Credit Rating (Innsmouth) 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Fast Talk 60%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 60%, Language (English) 25%, Listen 40%, Locksmith 60%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Navigate 50%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 60%, Swim 30%, Track 60%, Throw 70%.

Spells

None.

STORY IDEAS

Wedding Bells

A relation (a sibling or cousin) of one of the investigators is engaged. The mother, aunt, or another relation does not like the fiancé, but can't figure out why, and asks the investigators to look into the family background of the bride or groom.

The investigators discover that Bethany the bride (or Bert the groom), arrived in the city with their father, Jeremiah Eliot, some 12 years ago, and that little is known about their previous life. In all respects, Jeremiah seems a devoted parent, hardworking and respectable. Jeremiah's unusual tattoos may be of interest, which when researched indicate a connection to a strange religion called the Esoteric Order of Dagon, said to herald from a seaport called Innsmouth. Yet, it soon becomes apparent that the investigators are not the only people asking questions.

What's Going On

Bethany and her father left to get away from the Esoteric Order of Dagon and start a new life. Bethany is a hybrid (appearing quite human), while her father is completely human. Jeremiah regrets his complicity in going along with the machinations of the EOD, and cannot bear the thought of his daughter taking the Third Oath or living a life controlled by the Order. Jeremiah wanted to be free of the curse of Innsmouth and believed that by moving away he and Bethany could start a new life.

Larry Conner

On the night of their escape from Innsmouth, Jeremiah attempted to smuggle his daughter out of town but was caught by his hybrid wife, Ann, a devout follower of Dagon. Ann tried to prevent her husband's departure but a struggle ensued and she was accidentally killed when Jeremiah tried to shrug her off. Ann fell to the ground and hit her head on the cobbled pavement. In panic and rage, Jeremiah grabbed Bethany and ran.

While Bethany possesses few childhood memories of Innsmouth, Jeremiah may be convinced to talk and arranges to meet with the investigators; however, before that can happen, he and Bethany are abducted by a bunch of Innsmouth hybrids who have finally tracked the pair down.

Following the kidnappers, all roads lead to Innsmouth where the investigators must navigate not only its unfriendly inhabitants but also the EOD, which wants to know why these strangers have arrived in town and whether they pose a threat. The Order wants to avoid complications, and so prefers to have the investigators come up empty-handed and leave of their own free will, rather than running them out of town or murdering them, which is liable to cause more people to come asking awkward questions. Meanwhile, the investigators may discover that Jeremiah killed his wife and that he's wanted for murder. They may also find clues to where Bethany and her father are being kept.

Are the investigators able to mount a rescue? Do they assist in the escape of a wanted man and become wanted themselves? Is Bethany's heritage discovered? Perhaps Bethany manages to make her own escape back to the city and the arms of her betrothed? Does the conclusion play out on the streets of Innsmouth or amidst the wedding celebrations? Difficult questions may be raised—does Bethany's heritage doom her future? And, can she and her husband make a life together with the Order on their trail? Do the investigators end up helping or damning the union?

Treasure of the Deep

The investigators are employed in connection with an item of gold jewelry. A museum may want the provenance of the jewelry authenticated; a collector believes the piece is part of a set and wants the other pieces found; or the investigators find the item among the possessions of a person of interest, someone with connections to the Cthulhu Mythos.

The jewelry is wrought in 24-karat (pure) gold—it might be a ring, a medallion and chain, a tiara, or something else of the Keeper's choosing. In all cases, the item is unusually crafted and engraved with ocean-themed designs (fish, octopi, seaweed) as well as curious glyphs or symbols that defy translation.

Tracking down the item's previous owners, who all believe the jewelry is cursed due to the bad luck experienced while they possessed it, the investigators discover the item dates back to the middle 1800s, when it was first sold on by a young sailor named Jed Hennard, who came from Innsmouth. A little research finds a Mary Hennard living in Arkham or Boston, who when contacted says her father Jedediah Hennard was a sailor in his younger days and that he still lives in Innsmouth. Despite all invitations, Mary has no desire to return to Innsmouth and refuses to even contact her father, although gives the investigators his address if they promise never to mention her or where she lives to anyone from Innsmouth.

What's Going On

The jewelry came from the sea and is a treasure from the deep ones. It does indeed carry a curse, with those who possess it experiencing misfortune and bad luck. This piece was taken by Jed Hennard, who treasured it but later sold it on when he needed the money after losing a leg in a fishing accident. Now very old, Hennard asks if the investigators would bring the jewelry for him to see one last time before he dies.

Of course, the investigators' arrival in Innsmouth is noted and their conversation with Hennard overheard. The EOD wants the jewelry back, not only to reclaim what they deem is theirs by right but to also ensure no one else can connect the item to Innsmouth—such loose ends can bring unwanted attention to the town. Thus, the EOD sends its minions to reclaim the piece and silence the outsiders. The minions follow and spy on the investigators, determining the best time to strike, which could be when they return to Innsmouth with the jewelry or (if they are unable to do so or don't wish to risk it) wherever it is being kept (in a museum, a private collection, a bank, etc.). Once the jewelry is in the clutches of the minions, they aim to silence anyone who knows of the item—including the investigators. If their threats don't work, they turn to kidnapping and murder.

ALTERNATIVES

Using the EOD in another time or location is pretty straightforward. The intent and structure of the order can stretch across many times and locations, and just requires relocating elements of the Captain Marsh and Innsmouth story elsewhere, or (if positioning in a later time) having an element of the EOD spread beyond the town and take up residence elsewhere, where in later years it reignites and takes hold.

Other Locations: the EOD could easily be recast in any coastal town before the start of the 20th century. A connection to an island near Otaheite (Tahiti) would be useful but not necessary, as deep one cities exist in the oceans around the world. For example, a remote fishing village on the northern coast of Scotland with links to deep ones living beneath the North Sea, or a village in Chile, Western Africa, China, and so on—anywhere is possible.

Other Times: commerce between deep ones and humans may stretch far back in time, with villages in the Dark Ages or the Roman era under the watery shadow of the "sea gods" or "sea demons." In the late 1920s, Innsmouth is raided by Federal authorities during the winter of 1927–1928, with navy torpedoes sent to destroy Devil Reef and the monsters below it, and some two-thirds of the Innsmouth residents captured and interred. The raid leaves the town all but demolished and razed to the ground. In time, a few dozen of those interned are released, while the rest disappear from record. What happens to these survivors? Some probably head back home and attempt to rebuild Innsmouth, but whether they succeed or fail now becomes your story to tell. While little remains of Devil Reef, it's certain that the navy failed to destroy the deep one city of Y'ha-nthlei. After a time, do the deep ones return offering to reinvigorate the town once more? What of the many hybrids sent out into the wider world before Innsmouth's fall? It can be assumed that most of these avoided the attention and capture of the Federal authorities. What happens when the change begins to affect them and they are moved to return to their home?

Should the EOD survive into the modern-day, it has probably become very adept in covering its tracks and maintaining a cover for its practices and work; operating behind seemingly benign "fronts," highly cautious, and well organized.

CHURCH OF PERFECT SCIENCE

Period: Present Day

The Church of Perfect Science (CPS) was founded in 1952 and has subsequently grown to boast a membership of 9 million across the world. Despite the loss of its founder, the CPS found a new leader whose ambition is boundless. All pretty amazing for an organization created by a second-rate writer of pulp fiction.

BACKGROUND

Roger Blake published his first short story, "The Creeping Crypt of Death," in the June, 1934, issue of the pulp magazine *Gruesome Tales*, when he was just sixteen-years-old. Though not highly regarded critically, it allowed Blake to get his footing in writing and publication. As his writing style progressed, so did Blake's taste, as stories like "The Specter of Doom" and "Kiss of the Witch's Ghost" gave way to more science-based stories like "Gateway to the Past" and "Invaders from the Other Space." Blending elements of horror and the supernatural with science fiction became second nature to the young author, whose interest in the occult grew apace with his success.

Researching old religious and occult texts, Blake used the material he found to imbue his tales with greater depth, as well as a source of inspiration for plot hooks and monsters. Ever searching for new material to mine, he came across references to certain tomes, such as *Apportions of Infinity, Cultes des Goules,* and *The Black Book of Costernulus,* as well as oblique mentions of something known as the *Necronomicon.* While Blake's irrepressible writing regime meant he had little time to chase after such mysterious-sounding books, he noted their names with a view to one day tracking them down.

By 1940, tired of being at the mercy of magazine editors, Blake started his own publishing company, called Vista Dimensions Press, based in Albany, New York. The first book he published was a collection of his own material called *Tales of the Strange and Horrible*. The book turned a tidy profit for Blake despite receiving poor critical reviews. Emboldened by the experience, Blake began contacting lesser-known pulp authors to gain their agreement to print collections of their work. The effort paid off, with these subsequent collections garnering a degree of praise and forging Vista Dimensions Press into a successful publishing company.

Two years later, Blake received an unsolicited story from Douglas Jones. The manuscript was one of the most disturbing things that Blake had ever read, prompting him to contact Jones about publishing rights. When asked about where he got his ideas for his story, Jones explained that he was inspired by an old book he had inherited from his uncle, called *The Treatise of Kutu*. While the book was unknown to Blake, it fired his imagination and he asked Jones if he might see it—hoping for a publishing deal, Jones agreed. Blake wasted no time, hopping into his car to drive to Jones' apartment in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where he spent the following night until the next dawn reading *The Treatise of Kutu.* The book gripped Blake, its contents offering deeply layered insights into the origins of life, the hidden dimensions of reality, and the vast intelligences beyond human comprehension that governed the cosmos. The book contained so much, more than could be consumed in a single read-through, more that needed study and reflection to fully understand. Blake asked if he might borrow the book, but Jones declined, fearful of never seeing it again if he let a relative stranger walk away with it. A heated argument ensued, with Blake growing angry and, in a moment of fury, attacking Jones with a glass ashtray. When the red mist cleared, Blake looked down and realized he had killed the young author. Thus, in the dawn light of a new day, Blake stole away from the apartment, *The Treatise of Kutu* clutched in his arms, and fled back to New York. As the days turned into weeks and then months, Blake waited for the police to come, but they never did. Douglas Jones' murder went unsolved and the case went cold.

New Insights, New Beginnings

Blake had not written much since starting his publishing company, but his study of *The Treatise of Kutu* opened his mind, spurring a creative urge he had not felt in years. In a matter of days, he wrote his first full-length novel, *Opening the Mind to Time and Space*. The book's story concerned a writer, named Robert Ashton, who discovers the ability to see other dimensions. Able to perceive these new avenues of reality, Ashton begins to navigate through them and then attempts to share his new-found revelations with the world, but his ideas and tales of the beyond are rejected and ridiculed. Ashton concludes that he must hide what he knows from the world, as people are not ready to understand. In the end, Ashton sets about finding a few individuals who can see past their fears and prejudices, and who are ready to be taught the truths of the cosmos.

Blake wrote five more Robert Ashton novels, all finding a devoted following. In between penning the novels, Blake started to write a parallel series of "philosophical" non-fiction books. By 1949, he had concluded the Robert Ashton novels and written his last non-fiction book, *The Further Evolution of Man*, completing what he would eventually call *Books of Perfect Science*.

Opposite: Church of Perfect Science

In his novels, Blake had introduced the idea that humanity was the byproduct of experimentation by alien beings he called the Ancient Ones, who had guided the evolution of life on earth until another alien race, led by an immense being called Kutu, arrived and destroyed the Ancient Ones' empire. Kutu and its multitude of alien spawn ruled for thousands of years, but then a change in cosmic alignments caused them all to enter a death-like hibernation lasting millions of years. The novels described how, one day in the future, earthly life (humanity) would evolve capable of waking and restoring Kutu. An event that would grant untold knowledge and benefits to humanity, who would through this become like Kutu.

It was during the writing of *The Further Evolution of Man* that Blake had met physician and neuroscientist Dr. Sal Seidman. A fan of Blake's novels, Dr. Seidman was introduced to Blake at a mutual friend's New York City party, and the pair hit it off, becoming fast friends. Their discussions soon turned to Blake's research and his bizarre ideas concerning reality. Blake described his exploration to transform his mind, opening it up to truly perceive the world. At first, Dr. Seidman found it difficult to take Blake's theories seriously, what with the author's claims of being able to contact "intelligences beyond human." That is until Blake demonstrated a technique to induce a state of deep sleep wherein Seidman heard the dreams of Kutu. The experience was a revelation and one that changed Seidman forever.

Using Blake's technique, both he and Seidman undertook further "deep-state mediations," sharing their experiences and pooling their knowledge. During 1950, Seidman experimented with medical equipment to find a way to artificially induce Blake's deep-state meditation, finding success with a repurposed electroencephalogram (EEG) monitor. Blake, along with a handful of trusted friends, tested the machine under Seidman's supervision. The work paid off, and the doctor and Blake were able to fine-tune the device to induce the so-called deep-state meditation. Blake christened the device a "Processor" and its operation "Processing."

Through Processing, Blake and Seidman had engineered a means to tap into the psychic emanations of Kutu (aka Great Cthulhu)—tuning the human brain to be more receptive to the dream messages of the dead-yet-sleeping Old One. What at first had been a vague and fragmentary mental connection was, empowered by Processing, becoming more defined and clearer. Blake and Seidman heard Cthulhu's call. In time, they came to the realization that Kutu would one day awaken and reclaim dominion over the world. If humanity were to survive and have a place in this new world, then Blake and Seidman would have to prepare humanity.

Almost every night, Blake, Seidman, and their small band of followers induced deep-state meditation, slipping into a state of consciousness balanced between waking and sleep under the supervision of a single "Operator" who guided and monitored the session. They experienced contact with Kutu, sometimes individually, and sometimes through shared-group experiences—such contact was now believed to be a pathway to enlightenment. As the days and experimentation progressed, the work expanded into adaptations in lifestyle, such as diet, sleep patterns, and language. Such adaptations served to make the Processing experiences deeper and more powerful, and thus these became a daily regimen and part of the Processing procedure, which was now simply called the "Process."

Blake believed the Process was the key to uplifting and preparing humanity for the coming of Kutu; however, to achieve such a goal, significant expansion would be required if the people of the world were all to benefit. Blake thus directed his small band of followers to begin recruiting others to their group. Coinciding with the recruitment drive, Blake formally founded the Church of Perfect Science, filing the necessary paperwork for it to be identified as a religious organization in 1952. A meeting hall and offices were set up in New York City, with these becoming the hub of the organization and where recruitment talks and personal one-on-one Process sessions were held. The site worked particularly well as a place for social functions too, designed to entice the rich and famous. Word spread, people became interested, the meetings grew more and more popular, and membership soared.

A Better Brain

By 1960, the CPS had hundreds of members and had purchased a huge complex in Albany that encompassed a whole city block. The complex included an auditorium, offices, lecture room facilities, private residence apartments, and plenty of additional room for Blake and Seidman's continued experimentation to fine-tune the Processor.

To the outside world, the CPS looked like a pseudo-scientific, new age, self-help organization. While B-list film industry people and off-Broadway theater folk claimed some personal success with the group, it never caught on in the New York art scene or film industry. Instead, Blake marketed the CPS as a pathway to increasing personal success, focusing not only on its members developing "better brains," but also implying that membership opened doors and was a route to making beneficial connections with the "right" people—the CPS provided the "right" connections and introductions. Seen as a gateway to both self-improvement and success, those looking to make their dreams a reality flocked to the Church to undergo the Process.

As the Process became more defined and thus probed deeper into the psyche, more practitioners became unstable. With its unprecedented and unusual mental manipulation, the Process caused a few people to become erratic and manic. Those adversely affected would descend into extreme obsessive-compulsive routines and/or experience total disconnection with the world around them. Such cases were carefully managed and hidden to avoid negative publicity. These incidents did, however, enable Blake and Seidman to deduce that their Process would not work for everyone, as the human brain was too primitive and limited. If the mind was to grow and expand, they would need to find a way to alter the human brain to better accept the Process.

In the fall of 1967, Blake received a significantly intense vision during a Process session. The vision pictured Blake in a small fishing village in Greenland, walking along a long road toward a hidden cave that housed a creature that was living part of Kutu. The creature slumbered, but unlike Cthulhu, it was going to wake up soon. When Blake "returned" he was compelled to find this creature and set about organizing a trip (or "expedition" as he called it) to Greenland.

The expedition was successful. Following the path seen in his vision, Blake and his team found the creature (a sleeping star-spawn frozen in ice) and were able to excavate it from the cave. The task took many days and the work was carried out in secret, under the guise of an archaeological dig. The

The Thing in the ice

work team consisted entirely of CPS members, hand-picked for possessing the required skillsets. During the excavation, some of the team members "tuned" into the psychic emanations coming from the sleeping star-spawn while undergoing the Process on site. A few of these were unable to filter or assimilate the alien mind and thoughts, driving them into a violent frenzy. Six deaths and five serious injuries resulted, which were hidden and never came to the attention of the public nor the authorities. Despite such issues, the work continued and the ice-entombed creature was shipped to Albany where a specially prepared chamber waited at the CPS's ever-expanding complex.

Over many days, the star-spawn was slowly thawed from the ice. Interestingly, it remained inanimate for several years, until waking briefly in 1971, although Blake had established what he termed "telepathic communication" with the sleeping entity in 1968. Whether such communications were actual conversations, rather than Blake interpreting the psychic messages he was receiving, is unknown. Certainly, Blake was reticent to share the secrets of his dialogue with the "sleeping giant." The only apparent outcome was Blake's command to begin construction of a large machine he termed the "Phase II Device."

The New York Record

BRAINWASHED BY THE CULT OF PERFECT SCIENCE

Expose on the Church of Perfect Science

Phase II

During its construction, the purpose of the Phase II Device remained a mystery. Blake directed the whole enterprise, saying he could see the blueprints in his head. The only other person in the loop was Seidman, who supervised the construction when Blake was required elsewhere. The machine, more a room-sized conglomeration of wires, resistors, and proto-microchips, was created within the lower basement of the complex in Albany, near to the sleeping star-spawn.

The device was completed in 1971, and, a few days later, the star-spawn woke up. Within 24 hours, Blake and the creature were connected to the Phase II Device with a multitude of tubes and wires. Once this was done, both appeared to die. While Blake had not explained the machine's purpose to him, Seidman came to believe it was designed to induce artificial hibernation—suspended animation—that could feasibly last decades, if not centuries. For all intents and purposes, Roger Blake was dead, and all but a handful of the most devoted followers had no clue as to what had happened.

Some two months later, Seidman made a public statement announcing that Roger Blake had passed away in the spring of 1971 of a sudden heart attack. With the loss of Blake, Seidman has been expected to take on the leadership of the CPS; however, the doctor had no desire to spend his days navigating what was already a monolithic organization, he wished to be left alone to continue his work on perfecting the Processor, a work he now saw as the only hope to save humanity when Kutu awoke. Thus, Seidman concluded the public statement by welcoming and introducing Michael Fishel as the Church's new leader. Fishel was among the first followers of Blake back in the day, becoming close friends with the Church's founder and with Seidman as the years passed. As he accepted the role of leader, little did Fishel know that within a few months the CPS would face one of its most testing times.

The *New York Record* released an exposé of the CPS. The source of the article was an unnamed, high-ranking member of the Church who (the article claimed) had disclosed certain bizarre truths that formed the heart of the Church's beliefs. The article described the CPS as a "cult" intent on "brainwashing" people. The second part of the article, released the following day despite the efforts of a CPS legal team trying to stop its publication, went on to state that the Church taught that alien beings from beyond our galaxy had visited our world in prehistory and that they would return one day to herald a new dawn for humanity. The CPS's "strange experiments and brainwashing" (aka the Process) were designed to "recalibrate" human brains for just this event.

The CPS sued the newspaper and won—the paper's unnamed source could not be produced to testify, having seemingly disappeared along with the writer of the article. While foul play was suspected, nothing could be proven, and the *New York Record* was ordered to print a retraction. But, the damage was done. Any previous negative speculation about the CPS was now doubled, with the whole organization seen by many as a hotbed of "cranks and crazies." For the remainder of the 1970s and into the early 1980s, the CPS was a byword for "crazy." Of course, despite the truth being out there, no one believed it. The Church licked its wounds, kept its head down, and regrouped.

In the mid-1980s, the CPS relaunched itself reframing and reinforcing its message of personal success and enlightenment through the Process. Most people had long forgotten the bad press of the 1970s, plus there was a new generation seeking to find success and prosperity, and for whom the CPS's positivity was a clarion call. Membership increased and interest grew—even a handful of young celebrities (mainly actors and television hosts) joined, whose actions inspired their fans to take a Process session or to sign up as members. Although the Church had publicly fallen silent after the *New York Record* piece, it had not stopped planning for the future and, under the careful direction of Fishel, it reorganized, reconfiguring its teachings into a series of "levels" that each member could take on their pathway to enlightenment. Publicly, members were told that there were ten levels, although once one had "leveled up" to tenth, they were then told of the five secret levels, with Level 15 (or "Processed 5L" in CPS terminology) being the highest. Public perception about the CPS changed, its membership increased, and its coffers were full. Yes, there were many who remembered the "Crazy Church" and who wanted nothing to do with it, but to most, it was a humanist-centered religion teaching the means to personal success and a happier world. Only those at its heart knew the truth.

Roger Blake woke up in 1987. Seidman watched as his old friend got up and, without a word or acknowledgment, started to reconfigure the Phase II Device—all while the star-spawn seemingly continued to sleep, still connected to the device. Over the next two weeks, Blake continued to work on the machine, building a new (third) compartment. Never sleeping or speaking, Blake would write down lists of materials he required, which Seidman ensured were brought as quickly as possible. With the work completed, Blake turned and looked into Seidman's eyes and then reconnected himself to the machine, falling back into suspended animation.

The "Final Process"

To observers, the look between Blake and Seidman may have possessed some form of knowledge transfer, as Seidman seemed to know what Blake had created—a mechanical means to "transform and prepare" humanity for its next evolutionary step. The device now included a third "bay" in which a person's physical form would be altered by an electrical and chemical process—a process beyond the comprehension of Seidman and others.

Seidman found a willing volunteer to undergo Blake's new treatment, hooking up Kelis Douglas to the device, he initiated what would later be called the "Final Process." Connected by a series of tubes, Douglas appeared to secrete a cocoon-like covering over the course of a week. Approximately three weeks later, Douglas broke free of the cocoon. She had become something else: a hairless, slender humanoid with grey-yellow skin, large black and pupil-less eyes, and a mouth of tentacles. Seidman called this transformation "Sedecim."

The transformed Douglas communicated by thought, guiding Seidman's understanding of what had taken place, and then directing him to outfit a room in the complex ("Room SB22") that would exist in non-Euclidean space—essentially an area existing without the four-dimensional constraints of human perception. Despite Seidman's requests, the Sedecim was unable or did not want to convey its purpose; thus, Seidman volunteered to be the next person to undergo the Final Process and become a Sedecim. About a month later, the transformed Seidman emerged.

The Current Situation

There are 13 people who have achieved "Processed 5L" to date; the last transformation happening in 2004. This special group operates from the hyper-realities of Room SB22, occasionally sending forth one of their number to communicate with the Church's current leader, Isabella Pérez. Such communication takes the form of commands that Pérez is compelled to act upon. What the Processed 5L's (colloquially called Sedecim or "The Fives") are doing and why Blake and the star-spawn remain in suspended animation is a mystery to Pérez (and everyone else of sufficient rank). The one guiding principle the Sedecim have relayed to Pérez is that everything they ask is a necessary preparation for the coming of Kutu.

The CPS claims to have over 9 million members worldwide, but the true numbers are closer to 200,000. The majority of members are low-level initiates and have no knowledge of Kutu or anything else beyond understanding that the Process is used to achieve personal success and prosperity. Pérez plans to increase membership over the next few years, while the Church's research and design division appears on the verge of creating a mobile version of the Process that uses artificial intelligence to guide a person through the lower levels without the need of a human Operator. Elements of the AI's design have come directly from the Sedecim. Pérez hopes to release this new version of the Process to the world sometime in 2021–2022.

GOALS

The ultimate goal of the Church of Perfect Science is to prepare humanity for the coming of Cthulhu by expanding their minds and bodies to be able to thrive in a changed world where the Great Old One rules. This aim varies somewhat from most other Cthulhu cults in that the CPS wants to both elevate and hasten the evolution of its members so they possess a physicality and consciousness able to cope with the demands the future will bring. The Church does not see Cthulhu as a master to be served, but as a being of ultimate enlightenment to be emulated.

Blake and Seidman set out to transform humanity by speeding up the natural process of human evolution, although it seems certain that the evolutionary path they designed is entirely unnatural, and rather one fabricated and influenced through Cthulhu's dreams. Blake's first attempt to do this was through philosophy and science: his novels and self-help non-fiction were written to open people's minds to the cosmic realities of the universe (and thereby begin the process of transcending human limitations). The non-fiction books offer ideas to improve the quality of the reader's life, giving advice on finances, relationships, and meditation using various flowcharts and questionnaires.

With the help of Seidman, Blake was able to construct the Processor device to be used under supervision by an Operator—someone trained to guide a subject through the Process by asking a series of questions and monitoring the subject's responses. At its basic level of function, the Process is a form of guided psychotherapy, helping to expand perceptions and deal with minor psychological issues. (In game terms, and at the Keeper's discretion, undergoing the early stages of the Process may enable a subject to regain Sanity points (see **Process Sanity**, page 109).

Once a Perfect Scientist attains a level of Operator (7L) they work to becoming Prime (10L). These latter levels aim to begin a subtle manipulation of the brain in order to prepare them for the secret levels (Processed 1L to Processed 5L). The secret higher levels now attempt to tune the brain to be receptive to non-Euclidian space-time; if the Processed person is able to handle the revelation of "11L," they become "Processed 1L," and then Processed 2L, and so on.

Once at Processed 2L, the "cultist" is told of the true history of the world (much of which was presented as fiction in Blake's novels). At Processed 3L, the cultist learns of humanity's creation as a genetic accident caused by a race

of aliens called the Elder Ones. At Processed 4L, the cultist is taught how to directly access Kutu's (Cthulhu's) dreams, and how to use Mythos magic. In addition, the cultist is told of the next level, Sedecim, where the final stage of human evolution takes place.

The CPS is slow to introduce its members to the Processed levels, as many of the members may not be able to handle the mental revelations of the higher levels (i.e. the resultant Sanity loss) and thus become either useless to the cult or dangerous to the organization's secrecy and good name. Most members spend their lives being Processed through 1L to 10L, never learning of the secret higher levels, with only a handful chosen to progress further.

STRUCTURE

The CPS has a complex structure that combines two different frameworks. On one hand, it operates as a business, with a president, CFO, a board of directors, and so on. But, there is also a ranking of enlightenment, showing how far each member has progressed along the Process. All high-ranking members have (at least) achieved Processed 1L.

Upper Management

President

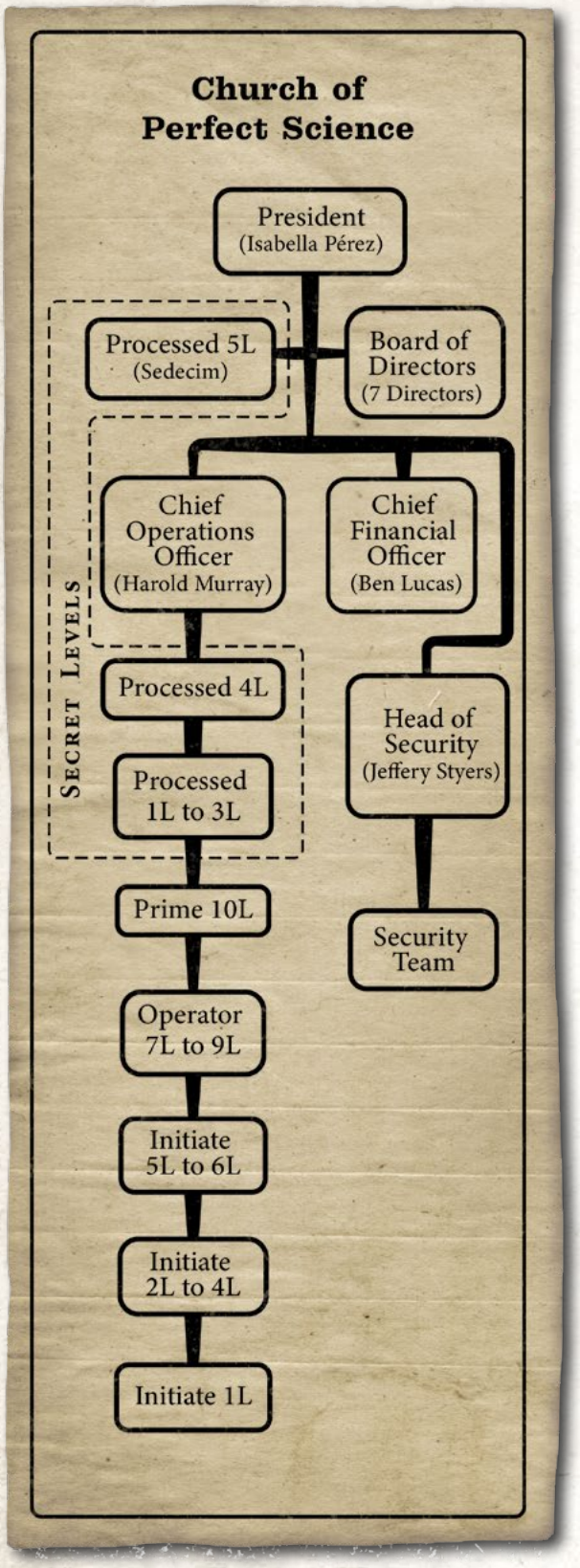
The president is the Chief Executive Officer as well as the Chair of the Board of Directors, and must have attained Processed 4L (understanding the true goals of the organization and the fate of humanity).

Roger Blake was the first president, followed by Dr. Seidman, then Michael Fishel, and now the position is held by Isabella Pérez. The president is responsible for the entirety of the Church, answering only to the Board of Directors. The president must implement decisions made by the board, while keeping the Church in working order. In addition, the demands of the Sedecim must also be met.

Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for strategic direction and corporate policy, approving budgets and business strategy, and essentially dealing with the "mundane side of the business." Board members are the brains of the Church in terms of organizational matters. There are currently six members on the board, all of whom are Processed 1L and higher. They all believe in the vision set out by Roger Blake but sometimes disagree on the best way to follow and implement it.

Dark magics



The current members are: Isabella Pérez (45), Lyle Bentley (69), Mike Dunbar (42), Danielle Feeley (51), Cef Shipton (59), Mary Kay Capraro (39), and Christopher Conklin (57, but really 361). Unknown to anyone else (except perhaps the Sedecim), Conklin is a Deathless Master who was directed by Cthulhu to join the Church (in 1986). Isabella Pérez suspects there is more to Conklin, but as yet has been unwilling or unable to discover his secret.

Chief Operations Officer (COO)

The COO, sometimes called the VP or Vice President, is in charge of marketing, recruitment, and personnel. While the president looks after the big picture, the COO takes charge of day-to-day operations, working closely with the department heads and directors of the CPS's various facilities. The current COO is Harold Murray, a Processed 4L, and former president of Creative Stars Management, one of the largest talent agencies in New York City.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Responsible for the organization's finances, the CFO sets and monitors budgets, reviews financial data, and seeks ways to maximize profits. The position works closely with the President and COO and regularly meets with the Board of Directors. The current incumbent is Ben Lucas, Processed 1L.

Head of Security (HoS)

The Church possesses its own security force comprised of ex-military and intelligence agents. The Head of Security is Jeffrey Styers, a former US Army intelligence officer, who began a lucrative private security firm, Price Security, before being headhunted by the CPS. Initially, the Church hired Styers' firm for a series of outsourced work, and then recruited Styers when it bought his business outright. Subsequently, Styers has undergone fast-track Processing and has achieved Processed 3L. The Church has a small, full-time security force of approximately 30 people, but commissions outside contractors for jobs as needed. It is Styers' job to deal with and eliminate any significant threats.

LEVELS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Initiate: 1L

Those undergoing an initial evaluation by a Church member trained in using a Processor (Operator L7 and above) and who decide to join and pursue the pathway to enlightenment are known as Initiates or 1Ls. Most people experience initial Process sessions as calming and insightful (see **Process Sanity**, nearby). No money or donations are required for

1L, although to advance to 2L and above requires full membership (a monthly subscription between $20 to £100+, based on affluence).

Initiate: 2L to 4L

Having formally joined the Church, the Initiate may now progress the Process through to 4L. In terms of personal development, the pathway at these early levels consists of regular Process sessions under the supervision of an Operator (7L+) and Life Instruction modules (talks, seminars, group sessions, guided self-study of the Church's books, and so on) that profess to help organize and "self-control" aspects of life. Each member's "Pathway Plan" details the various sessions, learning, and modules they must undergo to achieve the next level up (from 2L to 4L). Note that all sessions and modules (inc. reading materials) cost between $50 to $100+ (a sliding fee where members pay what the Church believes they can afford).

The modules are little more than practical self-help, guided psychological study, and common-sense advice concerning finance, relationships, self-motivation, and goal setting. Regular Process sessions with an Operator focus on historical challenges, life experiences, and cleansing the mind—such low-level Processing subtly begins to prepare the brain for more significant changes to come later.

When the candidate advances to 3L and 4L, they get to have more one-on-one sessions with an Operator, who uses the Processor with the Initiate while they respond to questions about their life and personality. The sessions may focus on differing matters, from finance to relations, and so on. At 4L, the Operator is using the Processor a great deal, guiding the Initiate to an "Open Mental State." The main goal at this level is to have the Initiate sign over their income to the Church to help better manage their expenses; once the Initiate agrees to this, they are elevated to 5L.

Initiate 5L to 6L

Having given control of their finances over to the Church, the organization is careful not to abuse this power and, more often than not, works to smooth out any financial issues the member may have with bad credit, loans, and so on. At the Initiate levels, the Church is aiming to build trust with the member. Initiates are encouraged to break ties with people who are not members of the Church (unless there is the possibility of recruitment). They are also offered a place to live in a Church-owned facility.

Throughout 5L and 6L, the Initiate is taught how to use the Processor on themselves and others. This is necessary to become an Operator: the level at which they can begin to conduct Process sessions with lower-level Initiates. Also, unbeknown to anyone below the level of Processed 1L, the Process now works to tune the brain to be receptive to the more powerful emanations from the Processor device that are experienced at the higher levels. Each Process session, while appearing to focus on further personal development and growth, is actually causing the subject's brain to be rewired, making them more susceptible to new realities.

PROCESS SANITY

At the Keeper's discretion, those undergoing the Process—specifically experiencing one or more Process sessions—may recover or gain Sanity points. The first Process session always awards +1 Sanity point. Further sessions may grant +1 Sanity point per session to a maximum total of 6 Sanity points recovered (no further gain is possible after this).

The Keeper may choose to award Sanity in varying ways, and rather than granting +1 point per session for the first six sessions, may grant +1D6 points in the first session or +1D3 points for each of the first two sessions. The method is designed to be flexible, and the Keeper should feel free to use whatever methodology seems best.

Operator 7L to 9L

Having achieved 7L, the Initiate becomes an Operator, able to use the Processor device and conduct Process sessions for people at 1L to 6L. In terms of their own development, they undergo regular one-on-one sessions with a person at the rank of Prime 10L. Such sessions continue to dig deeper and deeper into the candidate's psyche while also continuing to tune their brain. The goal is now to achieve 10L and become Processed.

Through these levels, the candidate is monitored closely and, in most cases, is invited to move into CPS accommodation (if they have not already done so). Such monitoring ensures that those who react adversely to the effects of the Process can be dealt with as necessary. Panic attacks and/or episodes of mania sometimes result, and these can be de-escalated by experienced Operators and Processed members. A handful of people suffer extreme reactions to their brains being rewired, with these experiencing one or more symptoms: disassociation, withdrawal, extreme obsessive-compulsive behavior, and/or violent outbursts. Where the reaction cannot be remedied or treated, the affected candidate is removed to one of the Church's private care facilities (positioned in out of the way and securely guarded places, away from the public eye).

Prime 10L

At this, the highest public level, the candidate has shaken off their personal demons, cleared their mind of negativity, and changed behaviors that adversely affect their life. Many will remain at this level, devoted to the CPS, probably working in some capacity for the organization, living in Church accommodation, and delivering the Process to others. Some, however, will be ready to move on to the secret upper levels and truly begin their next evolutionary step.

If the candidate is deemed suitable, at some point they will undergo a special Process session with a member at Processed 1L to 4L rank. The aim of the session is to decide whether the candidate should progress or remain where they are. The session increases the effects of the Processing device, provoking an automatic Sanity loss of 1D6 points while the candidate is guided through a deep-state meditation to touch upon the outlying dream-sendings of Kutu (Cthulhu). The experience varies, but usually brings on strange visions that beget more questions rather than answers, and additionally rewards with an increase of +5 points of Cthulhu Mythos (this may increase to +10 if temporary insanity occurred). The session leader is trained to cope with most outbursts or outcomes (i.e. bouts of madness) and is rarely surprised by the candidate's reaction. If deemed suitable, at the end of the session the candidate is told that they have been chosen to become Processed 1L and may now begin their journey to achieve the secret higher levels to total enlightenment.

Processed 1L

The candidate now undergoes a series of six Process sessions (over 12 to 36 months) to finalize their brain tuning. Each session provokes a Sanity roll (1D4/1D6 loss) and a gain of +1 point of Cthulhu Mythos. Once completed, the candidate advances to Processed 2L.

Processed 2L

During a course of six Process sessions, the candidate is told the true (i.e. Mythos) history of the world. Each session provokes a Sanity roll (1D4/1D6 loss) and a gain of +2 points of Cthulhu Mythos. Additional sessions further expose the candidate's mind to the outlying dream-sendings of Kutu, costing the automatic loss of 1 Sanity point.

Processed 3L

Over four sessions, the candidate learns the true (Mythos) origin of humanity, of the elder races, and of other dimensions. Each session costs 1D4/1D6 Sanity loss and nets +2 points of Cthulhu Mythos. Monitoring of the candidate continues to ensure any severe bouts of insanity are managed or dealt with—many begin to succumb to madness, although this is not necessarily grounds for removal to a private care facility if the candidate can learn to cope with any lasting or underlying effects. The CPS has become adept at teaching its members to cope with and use their unique perceptions for the benefit of the organization. Further Process sessions help to manage ongoing conditions, which are seen as part and parcel of the evolutionary journey. Finally, at this level, the candidates begin to learn about the Sedecim, although the full truth concerning these is withheld until Processed 4L.

Processed 4L

Although already exposed to Kutu's dreams, the candidate is now taught how to use the Processing device to directly interface with Kutu. The overall cost is the loss of any remaining Sanity points and the acquisition of +10 points of Cthulhu Mythos. The candidate now has full access to Church's inner library of occult and Mythos lore and is directed and encouraged to explore or join special projects, such as Processor enhancement, bio-engineering, mental abilities, non-Euclidian engineering, exploration of other dimensions, magic, communication with non-human beings, and so on. Those not involved in such research often take up positions of leadership in the CPS.

Processed 4Ls are taught about the next step in evolution, the Sedecim (aka "The Fives"), and undergo "orientation" with at least one of the current Sedecim at regular intervals. Rather than choosing or volunteering to become Processed 5L, members are chosen by the Sedecim, who command selected people to undergo the procedure.

Processed 5L: Sedecim (aka The Fives)

The Fives are no longer human. Their new form is humanoid, tall, thin, and hairless. Their skull is twice the size of an average human's, with large black eyes and skin a mottled yellow-gray color, smooth and slick. Most horrifically, the nose and mouth of the Sedecim have been replaced with a mass of tentacles.

The Fives communicate telepathically, but only with Processed 4Ls; they typically make demands without explanation. The Sedecim inhabit a special "room" within the Albany complex, which exists in hyper-dimensional space, which humans below Processed 4L are forbidden from entering. It is understood The Fives have created Gates, allowing them to travel around and beyond the planet.

No one is certain exactly what the Sedecim want or are doing. Some 4Ls suspect they are simply guiding the Church's preparations and waiting for Kutu to rise, while a few imagine something far grander is taking shape—perhaps shepherding events to bring about Kutu's return.

FINANCING

Originally, the CPS's funding came via membership levies and contributions, which not only covered the costs of the organization but enabled the purchase of real estate. Over time, investments in property and land have recouped significant returns, with these now contributing to funding

CHURCH OF PERFECT SCIENCE LEVELS

Level	Rank/Notes
1L	Initiate; Sanity gain*
2L	Initiate; Sanity gain*
3L	Initiate; Sanity gain*
4L	Initiate; Sanity gain*
5L	Initiate; Sanity gain*
6L	Initiate; Sanity gain*
7L	Operator; 7L and above may conduct Process sessions
8L	Operator
9L	Operator
10L	Prime; 1D6Sanity loss; +5 Cthulhu Mythos (+10 if temporary insanity).
(Secret) Processed 1L	Brain tuning completed; six sessions each conferring 1D4/1D6 Sanity loss and +1 Cthulhu Mythos
(Secret) Processed 2L	True history of the world revealed; six sessions each conferring 1D4/1D6 Sanity loss and +2 Cthulhu Mythos; additional sessions possible, each costing –1 Sanity loss
(Secret) Processed 3L	Humanity's true origin revealed; four sessions each conferring 1D4/1D6 Sanity loss and +2 Cthulhu Mythos
(Secret) Processed 4L	Accessing Kutu's dreams; principles of magic; loss of all remaining Sanity points and +10 Cthulhu Mythos
(Secret) Sedecim	Final Process; transformation into a Sedecim

***Sanity:** the first session always awards +1 Sanity point. Further sessions may grant +1 Sanity point per session to a maximum total of 6 Sanity points recovered (no further gain is possible after this). The Keeper chooses how awarded Sanity gains are divided across the initial sessions—see **Process Sanity** box, page 109.

alongside membership dues, events, and publishing. In addition, the Church speculates on the stock market through a series of dummy/front organizations, an enterprise that has increased its fortune tenfold.

RECRUITMENT

The Church has benefitted from its celebrity associations—originally up-and-coming artists and some B-list movie stars—many of which have publicly spoken about the Process and how it's changed their lives for the better. In time, a handful of A-list actors and influencers—like Tony Tedesco, Jennifer Dobbs, and Kenny Stevenson—joined the Church, increasing public awareness with their near-perpetual presence in the tabloids and social media. Such "success stories" bring many people to the CPS. There never seems to be a shortage of potential new members.

Another valuable recruitment tool is member word-of-mouth. Initiates often make the best recruiters, able to genuinely express the positive effects of the Process upon their lives. All are welcome, with the Church not discriminating on grounds of race, gender, or sexual orientation. Should someone be unable to afford the standard rates, the Church usually helps them find a way to make things work (loans, reduced fees, employment within the organization, and so on).

Isabella Pérez

During the recruitment process all potential members' backgrounds are researched (to varying degrees) to try and weed out those attempting to join on nefarious grounds, such as investigative journalists, critics, and others with an axe to grind.

Despite its open-door policy and apparent transparency, the Church is careful to construct its public-facing image and goes to great lengths to silence critics and exposés—usually through lawsuits, although intimidation and muck-slinging tactics are not uncommon. Not all bad press can be silenced, however, and a fair number of people are scared away by media coverage of ex-members lambasting the CPS, weird rumors of mind control, and the general "cult" vibe such reports focus upon.

SAMPLE MEMBERS

Isabella Pérez, *age 45, President*

Rank: Processed 4L

Isabella Pérez is the President and leader of the CPS. She has a head for business, as well as technology, and is single-mindedly using the Church's resources to prepare humanity for the coming of Kutu and the dawning of a new age. She is a powerful driving force who believes that what she is doing is for the betterment of all humanity. Consequently, she will do whatever it takes to make the dream a reality—morality and laws be damned.

She feels ready to take the next step and become one of the Sedecim, in fact, she desperately wants this, but so far none of The Fives has selected her for transformation. While she waits, Pérez keeps her focus on ensuring the growth of the Church.

Backstory

- **Description:** a dark-haired Latina woman who dresses in expensive business attire; she possesses a charming smile and sparkling eyes.
- **Traits:** an easy and approachable manner; however, the longer a person spends in her company, certain characteristics become noticeable: she rarely makes eye contact and instead focuses (stares) at a person's forehead, she never eats in the company of others, and tends to rock her head back and forth when thinking. In addition, she usually deflects questions with questions of her own.

Isabella Pérez, *church leader*

STR 50	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 65	**INT** 80
APP 75	**POW** 90	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 18	

Cthulhu's Blessings

Hear Dreams: (2 MP) able to "read" the dreams of a specific and known target, and discern meaning to grant insight (gains one bonus die if acting in opposition to that person or may attempt an INT roll to determine their next likely course of action).

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
.38 automatic	45% (22/9), damage 1D10
Dodge	32% (16/6)

Skills

Accounting 70%, Appraise 60%, Art/Craft (Fine Art) 45%, Charm 70%, Computer Use 60%, Credit Rating 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 40%, Electronics 40%, Fast Talk 50%, Intimidate 40%, Language (English) 70%, Language (Spanish) 80%, Law 20%, Listen 60%, Occult 30%, Persuade 80%, Psychology 75%, Psychoanalysis 40%, Spot Hidden 65%, Stealth 60%, Throw 40%.

Spells

Breath of the Deep, Cloud Memory, Contact Kutu (Cthulhu), Dominate, Grasp of Kutu (Cthulhu), Send Dream, Wrack.

Isabella Pérez: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck: 45
- HP: 22

Pulp Combat

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3
.38 automatic	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Pulp Talents

- **Nimble:** does not lose next action when diving for cover versus firearms.

Lyle Bentley, *age 73, Board Member*

Rank: Processed 4L

Lyle Bentley was a close friend of Roger Blake's and a member of his original band of followers. While he always possessed a keen business sense, the Process opened and sharpened his mind, enabling him to anticipate trends and assess risk at a near superhuman level. Over the last 20 years, Bentley has made himself and the Church very wealthy.

Since Blake's "hibernation," Bentley has acted to ensure his friend's legacy and vision remain true, which has at times put him at odds with some of the younger up-and-coming Church leadership. He does not see eye to eye with Isabella Pérez on the direction she is taking with the Church and argues that trying to emulate the Process with artificially intelligent software is misguided and potentially disastrous. His reasoning stems from the interpretations of his dream revelations received over the last five years, which have led him to the conclusion that there is no path to real enlightenment and that Kutu is an existential threat—a god to be feared and obeyed, and not a benevolent guide into a new age. Bentley has seen visions of the future and knows that only total devotion to Kutu may afford a reprieve from oblivion. Anything else is wishful thinking. He considers the Sedecim are nothing more than livings extensions of Kutu's will, and that they are not an evolutionary step forward. Like Kutu, they are monsters and do not possess any humanity.

Bentley keeps his beliefs to himself and a small group of followers he has cultivated, as he knows the Church's leadership does not hold with his conclusions. Fearful about the CPS's reliance on technology, he practices the old rites and sacrifices in secret in his Malibu home. He plans to seize control, purge those who are misguided, and redirect the CPS's resources toward ensuring he and his followers are blessed rather than damned when Kutu wakes.

Backstory

- **Description:** an overweight white man with dark grey hair, he wears expensive but out of style suits. His dark and beady eyes are almost hidden beneath bushy brows upon a sagging face.
- **Traits:** an over confident and self-obsessed narcissist. He often underestimates those he despises, although is shrewd enough to keep his mouth shut until he holds all the cards. He has no morals, and takes a certain delight in murder.

Lyle Bentley

Lyle Bentley, *the old guard*

STR 40	**CON** 35	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 40	**INT** 75
APP 50	**POW** 80	**EDU** 85	**SAN** 00	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 3	**MP:** 16	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3 or dagger 1D4+2
.38 revolver	40% (20/8), damage 1D10
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Accounting 90%, Appraise 60%, Charm 40%, Credit Rating 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 65%, Intimidate 65%, Language (English) 85%, Language (Hebrew) 40%, Language (Latin) 60%, Law 40%, Listen 50%, Occult 55%, Persuade 70%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 40%, Throw 30%.

Spells

Contact Kutu (Cthulhu), Contact Deep Ones, Death Spell, Deflect Harm, Implant Fear, Mental Suggestion, Steal Life.

Special: possesses two Gate Boxes and may travel between their locations.

Tony Tedesco

Tony Tedesco, *age 60, Celebrity Recruiter*

Rank: Processed 1L

Anthony Tedesco was an American heartthrob from the late 1970s through to the mid-1980s. His career had already begun to wane when he joined the CPS in 1986. Just two years later, his new friends in the Church helped him land a role in the film *My Other Story*, an off-beat romantic comedy that became a surprise box office hit and which won him an Academy Award the following year. His career was revitalized and he went on to appear in numerous features. Nowadays, Tedesco is semi-retired, yet between making the cameo appearances in films and guesting on numerous talk shows, he remains something of a Hollywood darling, although for the last few years he has been somewhat absent from the media spotlight. In interviews he puts his success and good health down to his membership in the CPS and the Process.

Of late, Tedesco has taken to cannibalism. He had achieved Processed 3L, but the Process caused an extreme reaction and he took a dark and violent turn. Due to his public profile, something had to be done, and so certain spells were used to repress and cloud his memory, reverting his mind to a "pre-P3L" level. The result was that Tedesco's reaction was calmed and he was formally set back to Processed 1L. The Church believes he has been cured of any serious long-term damage from the Process and is intent on quietly retiring him—perhaps just to roll him out at large events to smile and wave. Unfortunately, the magical memory erasing was not 100 percent effective, and his underlying psychopathy is presenting in a craving for human flesh. Tedesco has become surprisingly good at hiding his gruesome habit and, so far, no one in the Church is aware—the last CPS handler sent to check in on him disappeared (and made for a delicious entrée).

Backstory

- **Description:** a fit, white male who's doing well holding back the ravages of time; he dresses in the latest fashions, and has short, light brown hair, bright blue eyes, and gleaming white teeth.
- **Traits:** affable, he seems to have a way with people that leaves them happy; he often rubs the back of his neck, sometimes obsessively, and has a habit of making "near the knuckle" wisecracks.

Tony Tedesco, *aging heartthrob & cannibal*

STR 65	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 55	**INT** 50
APP 70	**POW** 40	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 5	**MP:** 8	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4 or knife 1D4+2+1D4
Sword	40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1+1D4
.44 Magnum	50% (25/10), damage 1D10+1D4+2
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Art/Craft (Acting) 80%, Art/Craft (Human Cuisine) 60%, Charm 90%, Credit Rating 85%, Drive Auto 60%, Fast Talk 70%, Intimidate 55%, Language (English) 65%, Language (Italian) 55%, Language (Spanish) 40%, Listen 40%, Persuade 40%, Pilot 60%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 50%, Throw 60%.

Dana Hopster, *age 26, Acolyte*

Rank: Initiate 6L

Dana Hopster is a young woman who has suffered from heroin addiction. She was homeless and desperate when she attempted to solicit a CPS Initiate; the Initiate offered her $100 if she would visit the local CPS center and try a Process session. Something clicked and she was able to quit the drugs with the help of the Process. The Church provided her with a place to live and, soon after, a job as well. The CPS turned Hopster's life around and she was grateful. For a time.

Having advanced to Initiate 6L, Hopster's life is now controlled by the Church: from her bank account through to who she can see (all contact with her parents, brothers, and sister have been severed). Her isolation and total dependency on the CPS have begun to worry her. While she has not talked about these feelings in her sessions, she fears the people around her know as she has been moved to the Albany complex and is unable to leave. She knows the Process is doing something to her mind, but is unsure just what that may be, and realizes that at some point soon she will confess her fears in a Process session. To avoid this, Hopster is working on escaping from the complex—if she can find a way to do so.

Hopster is a low-level member and employee of the Church who has concluded that the CPS is up to no good. She feels trapped and unsure of what is happening to her, but has heard rumors of murder, kidnapping, and even aliens from other dimensions! She acts the part of a good employee and member, hoping to catch a break and escape before the Process claims all of her mind.

Backstory

- **Description:** an African-American woman of average build and height, with hazel-colored eyes, and dressed in simple and conservative attire.
- **Traits:** warm and welcoming, she hides her fear and worries behind a smile. She acts like an exemplary employee and has enough experience of the Process to (for now) hide her true state of mind, but knows she cannot keep this up for much longer.

Dana Hopster, *cultist with a change of heart*

STR 45	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 65	**INT** 45
APP 65	**POW** 65	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 61	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 13	

Cthulhu's Blessings

None.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3 or weapon
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Art/Craft (Acting) 60%, Charm 45%, Credit Rating 15%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 60%, Jump 35%, Language (English) 60%, Listen 55%, Navigate 40%, Occult 30%, Psychology 40%, Sleight of Hand 60%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Throw 50%.

Dana Hopster

STORY IDEAS

The scenario—**God's Dream** (page 283)—concerns the Church of Perfect Science, although the following two adventure seeds are offered as additional inspiration for Keepers wishing to build a larger modern-day campaign around the cult.

Deprogrammed

The investigators are employed by a family to rescue and "deprogram" their son Brian from the clutches of the CPS. Brian is about to reach Prime 10L and is fully committed to the Church, having already given over his finances and works as a recruiter, whose job is to go out into the community to identify potential recruits and persuade them to come to a Process session. Able to easily access Brian, the investigators can snatch him off the streets and take him to a secure location in an attempt to deprogram him.

What's Going On

Deprogramming—using coercive measures to force a person out of an unconventional belief system—is controversial (to say the least). When the investigators talk to Brian in-depth, they realize he is quite happy, although he does seem to suffer from short-term memory lapses (caused by the Process). Brian may play along for a while but will be intent on escaping—either by persuading the investigators to just let him go ("I'm ok") or by finding a way to get out and make a run for it.

Meanwhile, others from the CPS may be looking for Brian, as word has perhaps reached them of Brian's abduction. The CPS team aims to track down Brian's kidnappers and rescue him—either by force or (more easily) by directing the police to the investigators' whereabouts.

Things should pique the investigators' interest in the CPS and its Process—perhaps they attend a session or get Brian to conduct one, and/or get involved in some sort of battle (literal or not) with the CPS. The investigators may snoop around to see what they can dig up on the Church, putting them in contact with ex-members—who all have conflicting stories. Some will seem reasonable while others appear changed or damaged by their experience. Some have grievances and some are happy to let bygones be bygones. Such contact may again bring the investigators to the Church's attention.

At some point, the investigators may be approached by Tim Christensen, a conspiracy theorist. Christensen not only has what he claims is proof of the CPS's illegal activities, but also claims there are supernatural factors at play—he possesses photographs of a Church member in London, UK and also in Albany, New York, US, timestamped with the same date and only one hour apart, which he says proves they have teleportation technology or powers (actually accomplished using a magical Gate). Christensen goes on to say the Church has a secret lab where aliens are imprisoned.

The scenario can play out in many ways, with the investigators directing the route they take. Perhaps they get to break into the "secret lab" and come face-to-face with non-Euclidian architecture and the Sedecim. What do they do when and if find the body of Roger Blake in suspended animation (let alone a star-spawn)? And, what happens to Brian?

The Device

A friend or acquaintance of the investigators sends them a package containing a strange device along with a note telling them to hide the machine. The device's function is not obvious, but it plugs into an electrical socket and turns on, seemingly with no effect other than causing a slight dizziness to all within a few feet/meters. If the device is left on, the area of effect seems to double while everyone in it becomes very tired and falls asleep. During this slumber, everyone experiences fantastic dreams akin to a bizarre psychedelic trip.

The next day, the place where the device is being hidden is broken into and the device may be stolen (if they were careless). If the device is well hidden and guarded, the invaders either fail and leave or may be repulsed by the investigators. If trying to get in touch with the person who sent them the device, the investigators discover they recently died in an "accident."

From this point, cultists from the CPS monitor the investigators' activity with an aim to retrieve the device. The situation may force the cultists to attempt to kidnap one of the investigators and interrogate them.

What's Going On

The device is a prototype, designed by the Sedecim and build by the Church's scientists. It alters a sleeping person's

brainwaves, enabling a direct and powerful connection to the dreams of Cthulhu. At first, the contact seems like a psychedelic experience, although repeated use further tunes the sleeper's brainwaves and amplifies the connection, with the resulting dreams becoming horrific, alien, and loathsome (causing from 1 to 1D6 Sanity loss and perhaps granting from 1 to 1D4 Cthulhu Mythos). The Church is experimenting with such devices to cause "rapid enlightenment" on a major scale, although it is still early days and testing is incomplete (there may be additional side effects at the Keeper's discretion).

This particular device was stolen by a low-level Church member (who was somewhere they were not supposed to be), who took it to an old friend (the investigators' acquaintance). Unfortunately, the thief was identified and he has been captured and questioned (his fate is left to the Keeper to decide), directing attention to the person he left the device with, and so on.

The CPS is planning a big test at an apartment complex (owned by a dummy corporation controlled by the Church). The tenants are not members and have no knowledge of what they are going to be subjected to. Can the investigators stop the experiment in time? And, if they do, what do they do next?

ALTERNATIVES

The Church of Perfect Science is, most likely, one of the most powerful Cthulhu cults that has ever existed. They are slowly and meticulously expanding—not only through the entertainment and business worlds but also into governments on a domestic and international level. To this end, they are a perfect "super villain" for an extended campaign that might well drive toward the end of civilization and the beginning of the End Times.

But, they may also have a point. If humanity is going to survive the coming Age of Cthulhu, people will have to adapt and become something more than human. A possible angle may be running the CPS as more sympathetic and providing the only way for many to survive. While their tactics and actions may be problematic, illegal, and immoral, the Process may be the best hope for humanity. Can the enemy become the savior? Or, is the price too high to pay? Only the investigators can decide.

Other Locations: the CPS has large centers in Albany, Los Angeles, Chicago, Orlando, London, and Sydney; however, any metropolitan location might have a small to medium-sized "education center," if not a private compound or facility. The organization is based out of the US, but could easily have started elsewhere, such as India, Australia, Russia, or Europe.

Other Times: it would be possible to focus on the cult's earlier development phase in the late 1940s or 1950s, perhaps when it was just Blake, Seidman, and a bunch of followers. Or, slightly later during the Swinging Sixties. Or, one might relocate the cult in time, perhaps to the 1930s with more of a *Pulp Cthulhu* vibe.

Alternatively, it might be interesting to explore a near-future period, where the Church's power is such that its members now sit in Congress and state governments, or even the White House. With such power, how will the CPS direct its beliefs to ensure that "some" of humanity is ready when the Old Ones return?

The device

CHAPTER 3

CREATING A CTHULHU CULT

This book provides a number of Cthulhu cults to use and adapt in your games, but, if you are looking for antagonists that are tailor-made to vex your investigators, creating your own Cthulhu cult might be something to consider. The following chapter explores creating and fashioning your own version of a Cthulhu cult. At the end of the chapter, you will find a Cult Master form with which you can write up your designs and then use as a reference during play and when designing scenarios.

The word "cult" derives from the Latin word *cultus*, meaning worship, but the definition of the idea behind the word has little in the way of consensus. The sociological concept of a cult is one of a tightly bound social group that is lead, or controlled, by a leader or organization. A cult may also be defined as a heretical religious order, or as a religion that endorses negative social behaviors, such as racism, terror, domination, or even homicide. In *Call of Cthulhu*, a Cthulhu cult could be all of these things.

There is, of course, a difference between cults in the real world and those presented within the *Call of Cthulhu* game—the game's Cthulhu cults are technically correct in their beliefs, to a degree. In the game, Cthulhu is real and "sleeps" in R'lyeh. It will one day rise. Looking at Lovecraft's stories, his perceived intention was that the religions of the world are wrong—there is no benevolent deity protecting and guiding humanity. There are no saviors, no true prophets. Instead, there are only strange and alien things that care little, if at all, for humanity. The "sane" people of the world are deluding themselves, and it is the cultists who actually have a better understanding of the "real" universe. This is a key element of the horror of *Call of Cthulhu*.

Yet, such Mythos cults do not see everything the same way—they frequently disagree on their interpretations of the "Cthulhu Mythos." There are cults worshipping Yog-Sothoth, Shub-Niggurath, Yig, and any number of supernatural or otherworldly beings, and each group has its own idea of how they fit into the grand scheme of the cosmos. Even Cthulhu cults have differing ideas on how to serve their Dead God.

When a cultist reads a tome or receives a vision from Great Cthulhu, what they take away from it has as much to do with who they are and how they see the world, as much as it does the text or vision itself. Such revelations are seen through the lens of the cultist's own experiences, prejudices, and world views. While there may be no correct answer, the individual cultist or cult believes they are right. Ultimately, the Keeper must be the one to decide the truth of the game universe.

For our purpose here, a Cthulhu cult is a group of people that believe they are serving the needs and desires of Great Cthulhu. How they do this, and what they get out of it, depends on the individual cult's belief system. Note that the decision on whether the range of Cthulhu cults operate under the umbrella of a single (somewhat unified) "Cthulhu Cult" is the province of each Keeper—in your game, all cults worshipping Cthulhu may in some way be part of a greater Cthulhu Cult or not. There is no defining canon here, only possibilities that can be explored in your games.

Creating a Cthulhu cult can be a lot of fun. If you're looking to design a group of antagonists for a one-shot game or long-term campaign, you will need the cult to fit your story. The hope, of course, is to offer your players something fresh that will challenge their investigators in new and exciting ways.

A cult works fine for a single adventure (and allows you and the players to play in an "all bets are off" style of game), but where a cult really shines is in being a proactive and reactive villain in an on-going campaign, played across numerous game sessions. This chapter aims to help you build a cult leader, structure, and organization, and create a reality for your cult that makes a lasting impression on your players.

WHY CREATE A CTHULHU CULT?

A cult is an emotionally powerful group of antagonists. A lone sorcerer or an interdimensional monster can be exciting adversaries, but a cult offers its own unique style of intrigue and horror. Cults are people—ordinary people—who ended up in the wrong place, at the wrong time, trusting a person who probably doesn't have their best interests at heart. On some level, we all understand this. Everyone has been deceived by someone we trusted and knows the pain it can inflict, not just to our feelings, but to our faith in our fellow man. For some people, it's easier to believe the deception than it is to admit the fraud. The ultimate reward promised to the cultist can be so alluring that they push aside any doubt or pangs of conscience to attain the goal. So, they go on, allowing the lies to become the truth, falling deeper and deeper into the illusion. This is the path of the cultist. Thus, a cultist could be played as a victim, a perpetrator, or both.

By contrast, a cult leader is someone who is often a master manipulator and probably an egomaniac whose actions are either self-aggrandizing or insanely devout. They represent the truest evil of humanity, the surrender of conscience to a darker force or self-glory. As a main antagonist, a cult leader is someone to be feared, taking people's natural inclinations of cooperation and loyalty and then twisting them to their own dark designs. Our fear of the cult is the fear of ourselves and what we could become.

Designing a Cthulhu cult takes the idea of a cult and connects it to perhaps the greatest creation of Lovecraft: Cthulhu. As an alien, malevolent, and unknowable being, Cthulhu—as the central belief of a cult—creates a feeling of betrayal. Humans turn against their culture, society, and morals to appease a thing that cares little for humanity, let alone the individual. What could possibly drive a person to such dark, horrific depths? That is a question that should plague the investigators—and their players—throughout the game.

Uniqueness of the Cthulhu Cult

What is the common thread among the cults described in this book? Obviously, Cthulhu. But, what does that mean exactly? How is worshiping and serving Cthulhu different than serving Yog-Sothoth or Nyarlathotep? For this, we look to Lovecraft's seminal tale *The Call of Cthulhu* and the statement of the Cthulhu cultist, Castro, who says this of the Cthulhu Cult:

"That cult would never die till the stars came right again, and the secret priests would take great Cthulhu from His tomb to revive His subjects and resume His rule of earth."

The central idea of this statement is that "secret priests" (humans?) will help Cthulhu rise from R'lyeh and revive his subjects (star-spawn?) and rule the earth once more. How humans can facilitate this, and what will be gained once it happens, is open to interpretation. Serving Cthulhu may directly or indirectly assist with this goal (by moving pieces into place or gathering resources) to make Cthulhu's rise possible. The Dead God may have other, unknown goals, but assisting Cthulhu's rise should play some element when designing your cult for the game. Castro's description of the time and signs of Cthulhu's awakening is more enigmatic. He says:

"The time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones; free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and revelling in joy."

A direct interpretation of this statement suggests that when the time is right for the return of Cthulhu, humanity, or part of humanity, would exist in an immoral and anarchistic state. Yet, Castro's words could mean other things to a creative Keeper. Perhaps the prophecy means that humanity will evolve into some kind of super-intelligent being and that our primitive concepts of right and wrong will be replaced by some higher understanding of our existence ("beyond good and evil"). This might be a physical transformation, as well as a psychological one. Perhaps Cthulhu is not intended to rise for thousands of years and humanity will have naturally (or unnaturally) evolved into something else entirely, beyond what we can currently conceive. Castro's vision of a world ruled by Cthulhu is, perhaps, the most horrific of his predictions:

"Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom."

This could mean that Cthulhu will teach humanity to become eviler and more depraved than ever before while destroying the very planet around us. However, with a second glance, we can look at this from a different view. The liberated Old Ones (Cthulhu and its kind) will teach "new ways"—this could mean that Cthulhu is not a force of destruction, but of enlightenment. Change is never easy and there is a degree of "out with the old and in with the new." The "holocaust of ecstasy and freedom" could be the cleansing of old ideas and the fruition of the new and better way of life.

When designing a cult, use Castro's words as a baseline and then try to bend this character's testimony into new and different paths. Prophecies and words are very much open to interpretation, and therein lies the conundrum of the Mythos in terms of human perception and understanding. Of course, as a Keeper, you have the right to disregard what Castro says, as he may be an unreliable narrator and his words may be based on his biased ideas of the future, what Cthulhu is, and what Cthulhu has in store for humanity. The source material should inspire, not shackle you to a pre-existing concept.

CREATING A CULT

Before beginning, it's important to have an idea of what kind of cult you want to create. What time period is the cult active? Are they rural or city-based? Is it a small, "backwoods" type coven or a huge global conspiracy? Is it a new cult or has it been around for many years?

The following guidance presents a number of tables to help inspire your creative process. If you already have an idea, run with it. If you roll on a table for an idea and get something you don't like, roll again or just choose the elements that jump out at you. The tables are there to help if you get stuck—they don't need to be followed with any strict adherence. Let your creative juices flow and have fun!

Throughout, we have illustrated certain steps with three on-going examples. Each shows how three different people use the information to fashion a cult for their game. We have Rachel, Andrew, and Chad, who are all trying to do different things in the design of their Cthulhu cult.

Example #1: *Rachel is starting a new* Call of Cthulhu *campaign and wants to make something different, but doesn't know where to start. Her players have rolled up their investigators, who are mostly academics. She likes the idea that her cultists will be primal, hedonistic, and violent, but beyond that, she's looking for inspiration.*

Example #2: *Andrew knows his game will be set in the 1920s and centered around a small town in South Carolina. He wants a cult that feels "small town" and wishes to twist that sentiment into something frightening.*

Example #3: *Chad noticed the street kids in his local neighborhood and thought it might be cool to have a cult made up of homeless teenagers, something he knows his players haven't seen before.*

CREATING A LEADER

Once you have a basic idea of what you're looking to build, you can proceed to creating the leader of the cult. Cult leaders come in many forms, but they do have a few things in common.

Cult leaders have power. If they didn't, they wouldn't be able to get a group of people to follow them and do despicable things. Often, this could be the power of charisma—the ability to sway people to their way of thinking and to inspire and comfort. They may use their wealth or social privilege to give others what they want, seducing them into acceptance and compliance. A cult leader sees what people need and is able to give it to them, while at the same time being able to sense the weaknesses in people and exploit it. The ultimate personal goal of any cult leader is power. Power to control their own lives and determine their fate, while also controlling the fate and lives of others. Cult leaders like to flex their power, to show others (and themselves) that they are the ones in control.

The Cthulhu cult leader is looking to (or using) Cthulhu and its minions for power and control. This could be in the form of a master manipulator who uses magic and forbidden knowledge for earthly rewards or a true believer who has completely given themselves over to the will of Cthulhu. With the revelation that they are insignificant in the eyes of the cosmos, it becomes all the more important to find and obtain some degree of control—anywhere they can find it. Some questions to ask about your Cthulhu Cult leader:

How did they Discover Cthulhu?

Did they find a tome or learn something from a relative's old notes? Were they in a cult before or did they hear something from another person? Did they come into the possession of an artifact with some connection to Cthulhu? Did Cthulhu contact them in a dream? Did they witness something strange, like the shadow of a star-spawn against moon-lit clouds or some unusual frog-like people swimming in the ocean?

Where are they From?

Not so much an actual location, although that can be important, but rather their social and economic background. Are they from a wealthy or poor family? Upper, middle, or working class? Were they already a part of a strong social network or were they a loner or outcast? How does their origin and upbringing play a role in what they become?

What is their Motivation?

Are they looking to gain power: political, wealth, mastery over others, magic? Do they seek to be more than they were (immortality, physical or mental change)? Do they serve Cthulhu out of fear, hope, or lust? What do they want? What do they want from their followers?

How Insane are They?

To be a Cthulhu cult leader, one would most likely have to be permanently insane. But, do they suffer from a specific type of psychosis? How might it manifest? Are they devoid of emotion? Do they fear death? Are they prone to sudden outbursts of mania or cool and collected, their insanity bubbling beneath the surface of seeming rationality? Remember, a Sanity value of zero doesn't mean a stark, raving lunatic, but rather someone whose mind has been opened to the "terrible wonders" of the Mythos and the realities of the cosmos—for whom the comfortable lie of reality has been stripped away. They may possess some strange ticks or their

insanity may manifest in peculiar ways, but they should (generally) possess the ability to seem completely normal to the rest of humanity. Only at certain times will their mask of rationality slip and the corruption of the Mythos spill forth.

If you want some inspiration, take a look at **Table 1: Cult Leader**. You can simply skim over it for ideas, choose a specific position, or roll randomly as you desire.

Example #1: *Rachel looks over the information on* ***Table 1: Cult Leader*** *and takes an interest in the idea of a politician. She likes the notion that the cult is led by a high-ranking state or even national official. As her game will be set around 2020, she thinks a female antagonist would be a good move and names her cult leader Carol Parker. Rachel fleshes out Parker's background, writing that she's from a wealthy family, and decides to make her a congresswoman for Massachusetts. Rachel thinks that it would be interesting if Parker outwardly appears very conservative and religious, even having a degree in theology—it was Parker's study of comparative religions that brought her to a tome called* The Sonnets of R'lyeh, *which ultimately created a connection between her and the dreams of Cthulhu. Rachel calls the cult the Children of Cthulhu.*

Example #2: *Andrew decides to roll randomly on the Cult Leader table, and gets a 4: Religious Leader. For his small-town setting, Andrew likes the idea that the local preacher is a secret Cthulhu worshipper, holding rituals in the small hours of the morning. Andrew gets creative, coming up with Ben Conway, a minister who came across Cthulhu worshipers in South America while on missionary work. In trying to convert the locals, Conway became converted instead! The cultists opened his mind to the dark designs of the Dead God. Now, he recruits malleable members of his congregation to his secret cult.*

Example #3: *Chad decides not to roll on the table as he already has an idea in mind. He wants his cult to be a group of street kids and sees the leader being a slightly older homeless youth. He's setting his campaign in modern-day Los Angeles—specifically on Santa Monica's 3rd Street Promenade. The leader is a 19-year-old street kid named Devan, who has been homeless since he was 13. Last year, while on the beach, he found a strange idol that had washed up onshore. Soon after, Devan began experiencing wild dreams about a great sunken city, and Cthulhu's dreams took hold in his mind. Now, he finds himself doing despicable things for his Dreaming God.*

Cult leaders come in many forms

TABLE 1: CULT LEADER

Choose or Roll 1D10	Position	Notes
1	Wealthy Businessperson	Money is power. Someone who owns a successful small business; someone on the board of directors of a multinational corporation; a powerful film producer; an investment banker; and so on.
2	Family Matriarch/ Patriarch	Blood is a bond that carries particular and binding power. An ancient grandmother to an extended family in the Appalachian Mountains; the noble great grandfather of a large and aristocratic family; the descendant of a powerful sorcerer; the single father or mother of a pair of twins.
3	Gang Leader	Criminals have a way of operating under the radar—experience that may help when hiding the activities of a Cthulhu cult. The leader of an inner-city street gang; the boss of a crime organization; the leader of a large drug cartel; an up-and-coming street punk who the other kids admire.
4	Religious Leader	Already in a position of influence, providing access to large groups of people, some of whom are in great need and all the more vulnerable to deceit and temptation. Plus, such religious leaders may be exempt from taxation. A priest, rabbi, imam, or pastor of a mainstream religion.
5	College Professor/ Teacher	Someone with access to many impressionable, youthful minds. A high school teacher or principal; a college professor with the keys to the library containing hoary tomes; a youth leader who has sway with activist groups whose agendas may be redirected.
6	Politician	Political influence can direct policy, line pockets, and even change laws. A mayor or city councilperson; a state congress person; a governor or even the president of a country.
7	Farmer/ Factory Worker	A "blue-collar "cult leader may have sway over the people whose functions ensure the smooth running of society, such as factory operatives, rural workers, construction trades, and maintenance workers.
8	Military Officer	Having a cult within the military is a frightening proposition. A high-ranking officer within the armed forces or perhaps an executive within an intelligence agency, such as the FBI or CIA, or similar agencies of foreign powers.
9	Ship's Captain	At sea, the captain is in a very powerful position. Could be the captain of a large transport, a sailing ship, a merchant vessel, or even a cruise liner.
10	Outsider	Someone on the fringes of society who tends to go about unnoticed, such as a traveling salesperson, a work-from-home web developer, a blues guitarist/singer.

Creating the Leader's Profile

Once you know who the cult's leader will be, the next step is to create a game profile for the character. You could look at the cultist profiles in **Chapters 2** and **5** to give you inspiration, or just use those and adjust them as needed. But, if you're looking for a truly unique character, this section aims to help you "roll up" your cult leader. It's important to remember, you don't necessarily need to build a full character. While characteristics like STR, DEX, CON, and POW are necessary, you need only to include the key skills that they are most likely to use when confronting the investigators. Often, these are action-orientated, such as Jump and Throw or combat skills, but don't forget communication/social skills like Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, and Persuade—the weighting on these helps to determine how the cult leader puts themselves across to others: are they overbearing and demanding or friendly and subtle in their approach? Other skills, like Appraise, Disguise, Drive Auto, Languages, Locksmith, Psychology, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth may be useful too. Focus on the key skills most likely to be used in their depiction and role in the game and just assume any other is either at base level or 40%. Also, if your game is set in an era other than the 1920s or 1930s, skills like Ride, Drive (Carriage), or Computer Use may be relevant.

An important aspect to consider is personality. Are they willful? Charming or intimidating? Do they present themselves to the world in a particular way, masking their true personality? Remember, a cult leader is only human (more or less), and some skills may demonstrate a weakness, such as someone who is cunning (good Persuade value) but whose appearance and mannerisms are unwholesome (their Charm skill is low). Perhaps someone who is a poor fighter makes up for this weakness by having excellent verbal skills, able to command others to protect them when the chips are down. Strengths *and* weaknesses make for interesting characters.

Consider the cult leader's personality, description, and traits. While some of these may be evidenced in certain skills, much will be narrative, rather than game, based. Write out some short statements about how the character appears when going about in society, as well as how they dress when performing cult rituals. Do they possess a pleasant or foul smell? What traits are unique to them? Do they have a certain mannerism, such as constantly rubbing their hands or blinking too much? How do they move? See **Table 2: Description and Personality** for inspiration. Sum up their features and personality in a few bullet points. Such things then act as an aide-mémoire for you during play.

Assigning Characteristics

There are four ways to assign characteristic values for your cult leader:

1. Randomly roll a cult leader's characteristics and allot the results as desired, using the standard method of character creation.
2. Simply determine the values and allot them per your character concept—some sense of fair play is required, giving values of 80+ across all characteristics is probably a step away from being realistic and fair in character creation.
3. Use the Cult Leader profile presented in **Chapter 4** and adjust it as required.
4. Use the following allocation method, allotting set values as desired.

Think about your concept for the cult leader and ensure the characteristics match that design. Thus, if charismatic and attractive, APP should be above average and maybe the highest value characteristic, or if particularly nimble and lithe, then DEX will be high, and so on. Of course, if the cult leader is to be especially well equipped with spells, then their POW value should be at least 70%, if not higher.

Allocation Method

Below are four sets of values, choose one and allocate these across the characteristics: STR, CON, SIZ, DEX, INT, APP, POW, and EDU.

A (average):	75, 70, 65, 60, 55, 50, 40, 35.
B (above average):	80, 75, 70, 60, 55, 50, 40, 35
C (strong):	90, 85, 80, 80, 70, 60, 60, 50.
D (older):	100, 80, 60, 60, 45, 40, 35, 35.

A presents a roughly average figure, with **B** an above-average character, **C** a particularly "strong" set of values, while **D** represents an older cult leader, past their physical prime, whose mental powers are undiminished (high values should be allotted to POW, INT, EDU, while the lower values represent the effects of natural aging on physical characteristics). The intention is to provide a quick set of numbers for Keepers who don't have the time to create values from scratch.

Sanity for just about every cult leader will be zero ("00"), as they have become fully corrupted by the Mythos. Of course, there is no reason why a cult leader can't have some Sanity points remaining—perhaps a value between 10 and 30—if they have not fully completed their journey into the dark heart of Mythos wisdom, although such examples will be rare.

If using *Pulp Cthulhu*, the cult leader should have a Luck value, which should be equal to their POW, or POW halved if they are not to be the actual main villain of the campaign.

Example #1: *Rachel decides her cult leader, Carol Parker, is in her late 40s and a bit out of shape. Rachel picks the above average (B) set of values from the Allocation Method. She wants her cultist to be a charming, intelligent, and well-educated woman*

with a strong sense of purpose, so higher values are given to INT, POW, and EDU, while lesser values go to STR, CON, and SIZ.

***STR** 35 **CON** 40 **SIZ** 50 **DEX** 55*
***INT** 70 **APP** 60 **POW** 75 **EDU** 80*

***Example #2:** Andrew thinks about Ben Conway, a fit man in his late 30s. Andrew likes the idea of Conway being a little clumsy, but in good physical shape due to regular exercise. He also likes the idea that Conway isn't that intelligent or educated, but he has a very strong will. Andrew rolls dice to determine a set of values and then allocates them to match the character concept.*

***STR** 55 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 40*
***INT** 55 **APP** 60 **POW** 85 **EDU** 70*

***Example #3:** Chad has a pretty good take on his cult leader, Devan Diaz. He's basing Diaz on a guy he knew in high school, who had the right balance of strange and creepy. Diaz is not well educated and not very smart. He's a bit ugly, physically weak, but very quick and slippery. Chad decides to simply determine values to match his character concept.*

***STR** 45 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 45 **DEX** 75*
***INT** 45 **APP** 40 **POW** 60 **EDU** 50*

Assigning Skills

It's important to think about how the cult leader's skills reflect who they are. A skill value in Operate Heavy Machinery or Mechanical Repair may mean they worked in a factory or farm. A value in Stealth means they know how to go about unnoticed and is perhaps a skill gained from their life experience. Determining skills helps to develop and further illustrate who the character is, but, keep in mind that you only really need those skills that are likely to come into play once the investigators turn up.

When assigning skill values, make sure to keep them reasonable and realistic to the character concept. If your physics professor cult leader goes hunting on weekends, it's reasonable to give them a slight increase in their rifle skill—a value of 90% would be way over the top, as well as deadly to the investigators. If you're not sure what a skill level represents, consult **Skill Points: What Do They Mean?** on page 54 of the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook.*

For quick reference, some useful skills for a cult leader, divided by type, are shown on the table on page 130. Those marked with * indicate very useful skills, while ** is an essential skill. Note that "character skills" are unlikely to be used in play, but good values in some of these essentially round out the character and provide context to their experience and background (e.g., Credit Rating may be important in demonstrating the cult leader's position in society—are they a respected member of the community and someone trusted by the police?).

There are four ways to allocate skill point values:

- Multiply EDU* by four, adding this value to the sum of INT multiplied by two, and then add a further 200 to the total sum to create a pool of skill points. Allocate points to skills from the total pool of points. This is the standard method but requires more time.
- Simply choose a value for each skill. This is quick but can produce over-skilled adversaries, as most people tend to inflate skill values. This method requires the Keeper to be fair and balanced in the allocation of points.
- Use the skills listed for the Cult Leader profile in **Chapter 4** and adjust as required.
- Use the following allocation method, allotting set values as desired.

Remember to allocate points to the Cthulhu Mythos skill, no matter which method you decide to use!

**Alternatively, use the characteristics described by occupation, as per investigator creation. See pages 40–41 of the* Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook *or Chapter 4 of the* Investigator Handbook.

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTION AND PERSONALITY

Choose or Roll 1D100	Description / Features	Personality / Traits
1	Beefy	Romantic
2	Shaggy hair	Hostile
3	Wild eyes	Lustful
4	Dripping with sweat	Aloof
5	Bad teeth	Arrogant
6	Very tall	Callous
7	Very "average" looking	Fussy
8	Bony	Stubborn
9	Immaculately dressed	Pompous
10	Squinting	Detached
11	Deep-set eyes	Erratic
12	Sagging	Belligerent
13	Pockmarked	Coarse
14	Scarred	Sadistic
15	Close-set eyes	Neurotic
16	Wrinkled	Finickity
17	Tattooed	Extravagant
18	High forehead	Compulsive
19	Chiseled	Pretentious
20	Sunken eyes	Narcissistic
21	Jowly	Hesitant
22	Double chin	Miserly
23	Crooked nose	Unstable
24	Protruding brow	Predatory
25	Bald	Rash

Choose or Roll 1D100	Description / Features	Personality / Traits
26	Manicured nails	Miserable
27	Petite	Jealous
28	Gaunt	Insulting
29	Overweight	Dogmatic
30	Calloused hands	Jovial
31	Wispy hair	Extreme
32	Long fingernails	Calculating
33	Willowy	Boastful
34	Slender	Cruel
35	Athletic	Obnoxious
36	Ink-stained fingers	Nasty
37	Luxuriant hair	Obsessive
38	Small hands	Touchy
39	Grotesque	Affable
40	Eczema	Patient
41	Bad breath	Incisive
42	Clothes all the same color	Humorous
43	Missing fingers	Suave
44	Narrow face	Vivacious
45	Dry skin	Witty
46	Statuesque	Orderly
47	Piercings	Neat
48	Hollow cheeks	Curious
49	Plump	Clear-headed
50	One eye	Educated

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTION AND PERSONALITY

Choose or Roll 1D100	Description / Features	Personality / Traits
51	Veiny skin	Precise
52	Sinuous	Spontaneous
53	Polished	Stable
54	Wiry	Ambitious
55	Fashionable	Authoritarian
56	Ugly	Austere
57	Filthy	Demanding
58	Muscular	Sincere
59	Delicate	Deceitful
60	Stout	Loyal
61	Spectacles	Rude
62	Attractive	Quarrelsome
63	Unkempt	Caustic
64	Monocle	Unforgiving
65	Glamorous	Rough
66	Plain-looking	Impatient
67	Shock of white hair	Intense
68	Creepy smile	Murderous
69	Old-fashioned	Maniacal
70	Regal	Carefree
71	Stooped	Strict
72	Flamboyant	Sly
73	Bewitching	Absent-minded
74	Cattish	Enigmatic
75	Blazing eyes	Amoral
76	Cadaverous	Awkward
77	Mask	Calm
78	Rotting	Frustrated
79	Missing a limb	Gracious
80	Hairless	Manipulative
81	Diseased	Addiction
82	Shrunken	Perfectionist
83	Frail	Relaxed
84	Towering	Proud
85	Skeletal	Sarcastic
86	Anemic	Reserved
87	Bent	Tense
88	Slouching	Vain
89	Lithe	Bloodthirsty
90	Lumbering	Short-tempered
91	Pallid	Cautious
92	Bestial	Energetic
93	Waxen	Impulsive
94	Vulpine	Materialistic
95	Cherubic	Flippant
96	Haggard	Melodramatic
97	Repellent	Ruthless
98	Ageless	Paranoid
99	Fleshy	Over-emotional
100	Withered	No emotion

QUICK-REFERENCE SKILLS

Action Skills	Useful Skills	Character Skills	Combat Skills
Climb	Art/Craft (Acting)	Anthropology	Fighting (Brawl)
Jump	Cthulhu Mythos**	Appraise	Dodge*
Listen	Disguise	Archaeology	Throw
Spot Hidden*	Drive Auto	Credit Rating*	Fighting (Club/Sword/Spear)
Charm*	Mechanical Repair	Languages	Firearms (Handgun)
Fast Talk*	Locksmith	Law	
Intimidate*	Psychology**	Natural World	**Key:** *Useful skills for a cult leader.
Persuade*	Sleight of Hand	Sciences	**Essential skills for a cult leader.
Stealth			

Note: judging how many skill points a cult leader should have is down to your game and style of play. While a cult leader may have minions to help resist the efforts of the investigators, ultimately it may come down to the cult leader versus three to six investigators. Plus, such characters are meant to be capable and effective leaders. The standard guidance being:

The eye of Cthulhu

- Around 300 to 400 total skill points—a weak cult leader, comparable to an average investigator.
- Around 400 to 500 total skill points—comparable to an above-average investigator.
- Around 600 to 700 total skill points—moderate to strong cult leader.
- Around 800 to 1,000 total skill points—a very strong cult leader.

Allocation Method

Below are five sets of values, choose one and allocate these across the cult leader's key skills—ignore skill base values (the number noted to next to skills on investigator sheets). The values provide a spread of ability, ranging from a value with parity to an average investigator (Sets A, B, and C) to someone with a broader capability (Sets D and E). Sets A, B, and C are meant for a very quick approach—just allocate the value to the six most important skills in terms of game play—while sets D and E provide twelve values for a more comprehensive character. Note that Sets D and E skill pool values provide more points because these are important villains and key adversaries—we want them to be capable but not godlike in power.

- **Set A—6 Key Skills (350 points):** 80, 60, 60, 60, 50, 40.
- **Set B—6 Key Skills (390 points):** 100, 80, 60, 60, 50, 40.
- **Set C—6 Key Skills (425 points):** 90, 80, 70, 70, 60, 55.
- **Set D—12 Key Skills (700 points):** 80, 75, 70, 65, 65, 60, 60, 55, 55, 50, 40, 25.
- **Set E—12 Key Skills (700 points):** 90, 85, 75, 70, 60, 60, 60, 55, 50, 40, 30, 25.

Example #1: *Rachel decides to use the standard creation method, using the Elected Official occupation template (page 79,* Investigator Handbook*), which creates a skill pool from EDU×2 plus APP×2, totaling a pool of 420 skill points, which added to 200 provides a total pool of 620 points. Rachel notes down the eight skills plus Credit Rating listed for an Elected Official and then chooses a few additional ones suited to the life of a cult leader and relevant to the concept she has come up with. All of the social skills are already included in the Elected Official entry, which is good as Rachel wants these skills to be among the highest. Carol Parker's concept calls for her to be fairly wealthy, so Rachel notes Credit Rating down for a high value. Parker has some understanding of the Mythos but is not yet a true "expert," and so Rachel chooses to allocate just 25 points to the skill. Rachel doesn't think Parker would have any meaningful combat skills since she'll use her cult minions for that kind of thing. Rachel divides the pool of skill points across the Elected Official occupation skills plus a few extra skills to round out the character; the skill points are added to each skill's base value.*

Carol Parker

- *Occupation skills: Charm 80%, Credit Rating 65%, Fast Talk 55%, History 40%, Intimidate 45%, Language (English) 80%, Listen 60%, Persuade 85%, and Psychology 60%.*
- *Additional skills: Accounting 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Law 50%, Library Use 60%, Occult 45%, and Spot Hidden 55%.*

Example #2: *Andrew chooses to just pick skills that he feels that his cult leader, Ben Conway, should have. Conway has a rural upbringing, so Andrew decides to note down Animal Handling, Natural World, Operate Heavy Machinery, Survival, and Track. Conway probably knows how to use firearms, so Rifle/Shotgun is noted also. Andrew also feels Conway will possess physical skills like Climb, Jump, and Swim, plus he knows a bit about the Occult and has practical Cthulhu Mythos experience. Since he's a small-town minister, Conway's Credit Rating will be in the low-average level. Andrew doesn't think a lot of these skills will come into play but wants to note them down as they help to flesh out Conway's character. Ben can't be bothered to work out skill pools, so just decides the value for each skill. After doing this, Andrews adds up how many skill points he spent, totaling 760 points—deducting the base skill values (amounting to 196 points) means Andrew actually "spent" 564 points.*

Ben Conway:

- *Animal Handling 40%, Climb 50%, Credit Rating 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Fighting (Brawl) 70%, Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) 50%, Intimidate 70%, Jump 55%, Natural World 40%, Navigate 50%, Occult 30%, Operate Heavy Machinery 50%, Survival (Wilderness) 40%, Swim 55%, Throw 45%, Track 60%.*

Example #3: *Devan, Chad's cult leader, has been on the street since he was 13. He comes from a physically abusive household and has learned to be violent to survive on the streets. Most of his skills are going to be criminal or physical in nature. Chad uses the allocation method, using Set D, and noting down twelve skills: Climb, Cthulhu Mythos, Dodge, Fast Talk, Fighting (Brawl), Jump, Intimidate, Locksmith, Psychology, Sleight of Hand, Spot Hidden, and Stealth. He then assigns the values from Set D across these 12 skills.*

Devan Diaz:

- *Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Dodge 65%, Fast Talk 65%, Fighting (Brawl) 70%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 40%, Locksmith 50%, Psychology 60%, Sleight of Hand 55%, Spot Hidden55%, and Stealth 75%.*

Adding the Supernatural

Adding a touch of the supernatural makes your Cthulhu cult leader stand out from the run-of-the-mill cult "enthusiast." Ultimately, this means deciding how powerful the cult leader is and where they derive their power. Are they a sorcerer? Do they possess a mystically powerful artifact? Are they aided by a Mythos entity? Do they have access to alien technology?

When thinking about the power level of the cult leader, consider how you want a confrontation with the investigators to turn out. Should the cult leader perform feats that will make the investigators run in fear? How fatal might such a confrontation be? It's important to consider at least one weakness as well. If they have monstrous servants, is there a price to pay? Does the leader have the complete or only partial support of their followers? If the cult leader's amulet provides a certain power, does it also drain something from its user? And, what happens if the amulet is destroyed? Such weaknesses may factor into your scenario and campaign design, providing possible ways for the investigators to combat and defeat the leader and their cult.

Determining Sources of Powers

You may just create and decide what special power(s) the cult leader has access to, or roll 1D10 and consult **Table 3: Sources of Power** for inspiration and ideas. Nearly all cult leaders will have access to some spells (see following), however some may have one or more additional sources of power at your discretion.

Once the source(s) of power is decided, you then need to determine what it does and if it possesses any weaknesses. Rather than prescribe many possible (endless!) variations, you are advised to be creative and think of something relatively unique.

For artifacts and technology, looking through the artifacts and the spells described in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper*

Rulebook can provide inspiration for spell-like effects, and these references also give specific details on effects (damage rolls, armor protection, etc.). *The Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic* can also be used for reference, providing hundreds of possible spells and inspiration for effects/powers.

With monsters, look at their profiles and write-ups for ideas. Of course, nothing is stopping you from fashioning a unique monster, perhaps blending ingredients from a couple of monster entries to create something new and original for your game—Volume 1 of the *Malleus Monstrorum* includes guidance and ideas on monster creation.

For granted powers (blessings), these could be inspired from a spell or be similar—probably slightly watered-down versions—to the special powers of some monsters. A good reference for blessings is Volume 2 of the *Malleus Monstrorum*, which provides examples for all god-like Mythos entities—don't feel restrained to those illustrated in the Cthulhu entry of that book, any of the blessings from any of the entities could be used as-is or as inspiration in designing your own.

Spells

Each cult leader probably has access to a number of spells. As a rough rule of thumb, use this guide to determine how many spells. The terms "young," "mature," etc. refer to the length of time spent devoted to Great Cthulhu, with the assumption that more time has provided more access to spell learning. See the spell lists in **Undying Power** (page 166, Chapter 4) for suggested spells for those in service of Cthulhu.

- **Young cult leader:** 1D4+1 spells.
- **Average cult leader:** 1D6+1D4+2 spells.
- **Mature cult leader:** 3D6+4 spells.
- **Ancient cult leader:** 4D6+10 spells.

Example #1: *Rachel wants Carol Parker to possess a magical power that enables her to influence people, as well as be able to cast a few interesting spells. Rachel goes to the* Keeper Rulebook *and looks through the spell list. She finds what she's looking for: Mental Suggestion (page 260). She decides this is a granted power (given via Cthulhu's dreams), but works pretty much as described in the spell entry (except the MP costs are reduced by half, rounded down). Rachel gives Parker three spells: Contact Cthulhu, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, and Wrack—one can summon a monster and one can be used offensively.*

Example #2: *Andrew knows he wants Ben Conway to be able to cast the Shrivelling spell (page 262 in the* Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*)—it's just a cool, scary spell and Andrew loves it. But, he also likes the idea of there being a big, vile creature down in the cellar of the church. He first thinks a shoggoth would be interesting, but he used them in his last game. He likes the idea of having a formless spawn, but notices they typically are not aligned with Cthulhu. He still likes the monster and decides to make it different. Andrew decides that a formless spawn is "baptizing" the cult's followers, per Conway's understanding of what Cthulhu wishes from his use of the Contact Cthulhu spell. Andrew decides Conway summoned the creature following dream contact with Cthulhu, and it now lives in an underground passage connected to the cellar of the church. Andrew feels that's plenty of supernatural tidbits for his cult.*

Example #3: *Chad wants to break away from the typical "guys-in-robes" kind of thing with his cult, the Decedents. He likes the idea that Devan isn't really into the occult and he just found a Cthulhu statue on the beach, which subsequently "spoke" to him. Thus, Devan doesn't know any spells. Instead, he just receives crazy dreams of Cthulhu, R'lyeh, and a glen in the Malibu hills where, following a meteorite shower, strange mushrooms grow. Chad gets the idea that these strange mushrooms, when eaten, alter a person's mental frequency, making them able to tune into Cthulhu's thoughts. However, a side effect of ingesting the mushrooms means that others who eat the fungi become mentally linked, forming a sort of hivemind. Since Devan has eaten the mushrooms longer than anyone else, his is the dominant mind—though influenced by Cthulhu. The mushrooms are really the only new supernatural element in the story, so Chad writes up their effects (see page 184 for* **Cthulhu 'Shrooms***).*

TABLE 3: SOURCES OF POWER

Choose or Roll 1D10	Source	Notes
1–3	**Mythos Entity**	Some form of relationship to a Mythos creature, such as deep one, rat-thing, shantak, shoggoth, star-spawn, star vampire, and so on. In return for some kind of service or sacrifice, the monster protects and aids the cult leader.
4–6	**Artifact**	An item granting spell-like power(s), protection, a form of attack, or similar (such as acting as a storage device for magic points or even POW points). The artifact may come from beyond the planet or from ancient times.
7–8	**Technology**	Perhaps originating on Xoth (Cthulhu's home before Earth), from another dimension, or from another world, this device may grant spell-like effects, store magic points, be a magical weapon, or act like armor.
9–10	**Granted Power**	Some form of "blessing," implanted in the mind of the cult leader by Cthulhu or one of its minions. This power probably replicates a spell effect at the same or reduced cost (normally half) in magic points or POW. Such a power may, alternatively, be some form of physical or sensory change: tentacles sprouting from the face or body, scaly skin armor, heightened senses, and so on.

Brotherhood of R'lyeh

Finishing Touches

When rounding out your cult leader, it's important to remember that they are human. They have hopes and fears, loves and hates, and people and things they care about (besides Cthulhu). Take the time to write a few notes about these things, all of which make your cult leader a more-rounded person. Lastly, note down any key pieces of equipment and/or weapons.

Example #1: *Rachel's Carol Parker likes to go to cafes and drink cappuccinos; she watches the people and thinks about how clueless they are and how clever she is. Parker doesn't like animals and, if given the chance, acts cruelly toward them. She doesn't like her husband, Herb, but cares for her adopted daughter Melinda (aged 8). Parker aims to get rid of her husband and hopes to one day bring her daughter into the fold of her cult—she's too young to accept the truths of the universe for now.*

Example #2: *Andrew's Ben Conway spends most of his time doing charity work and presenting a good public image. Conway likes to help people and his community, and his worship of Cthulhu actually reinforces that belief. Conway thinks Cthulhu can guide the way to a better existence and a happier life. Of course, some people will have to be killed or sacrificed along the way, but it's for the good of the whole—and they aren't believers, so who cares? Conway is physically fit. He loves his wife, Wanda, but knows she isn't ready to hear the dreams of Cthulhu. Perhaps, if he can make her hear those dreams, she will love him more. Despite his love for Wanda, he can't resist finding pleasure in the arms of other women.*

Example #3: *Devan, Chad's cult leader, is obsessed with his image and position in his neighborhood. Devan really likes classic 70s rock music. He misses his mother deeply, who died when he was 11 years old, leaving him with his abusive father. He wants to kill his father, and plans on carrying that deed out soon but has been distracted by the effects of the hivemind, which allows him to view himself through the eyes of others, as well as control other people. He's still learning the potential benefits of this hivemind thing—who knows what power it can bring him.*

CREATING CULT GOALS

The goals of the cult determine the cult's actions, and it's those actions that the investigators will be uncovering, scrutinizing, and trying to stop. The cult's goal is one of the key driving forces for the story you will collectively "tell" through the game.

Cult goals should be specific. Of course, a Cthulhu cult wants to worship Cthulhu, but how they do that allows for a lot of variation. If the goal is to make sacrifices to Cthulhu, then determining how and where the cult finds victims, where the victims are kept, and what happens during and after such sacrificial rituals is important, as these elements provide a clue framework for the investigators to interact with. When and where are the cultists performing their rituals? If it's at night, think about when they sleep and if they don't sleep, how that would affect them. They might be living double lives, being over-worked, tired, and sloppy—perhaps making mistakes that leave valuable clues for the investigators. If it's during the day, think about how the cultists perform their normal, day-to-day jobs—if they miss work, people may notice. Cultists are people. Their human limitations make them interesting and provide the clues needed to investigate them.

Almost all Cthulhu cults want their god to rise and take ownership of the planet—but that might not be in the cards in the near future. We know Cthulhu will appear again "when the stars are right," but when is that? Ten years? A hundred years? Ten thousand years? Does the cult accept this? Or are they trying to find some workaround to nudge things forward? As the Keeper, you can make Cthulhu rise whenever you like, but more likely than not, Cthulhu won't be escaping from R'lyeh anytime soon. So, what are the motivations for the cult in the meantime?

Some Questions to Consider about the Cthulhu Cult's Goals

What does the Cult want from Cthulhu?

Power? What kind of power? Power in the mundane world? Supernatural power? Immortality? Knowledge? Cosmic insight? How do the cult leader's goals differ from those of the individual cultists? Some suggestions are provided in **Table 4: Cult Goals—Wants**. Choose, roll, or just use the entries for inspiration.

How do They Get What They Want?

Do they perform rituals or offer sacrifices? Do they summon otherworldly beings as proxies for Cthulhu? Do they collect tomes or artifacts? Are there places sacred to the cult? Do they need to perform a specific task (or tasks) for Cthulhu, like building or destroying something? Some suggestions are provided in **Table 5: Cult Goals—Means**. Choose, roll, or just use the entries for inspiration.

How does the Cult Connect with the Mythos?

Does the cult use magic to commune with Cthulhu or work through a proxy entity, like the deep ones, Dagon, or the black-winged ones? Is the message pure and clear, coming directly from Cthulhu's dreams? Or, is the message distorted and patchy? Does the cult's interpretation of the message mean that it becomes twisted and biased by human perception? Is there a true connection at all or is it simply the cult leader's self-deluded (or otherwise) pronouncements?

Do They Want to Recruit?

Is the cult a small and tight-knit group or an expanding society? Is membership growing? Will more members help the cause or prove to be a security risk? Does the cult use a front to mask its true beliefs? Who in the cult really knows the truth? Is there an inner circle or does everyone know and embrace Cthulhu?

Example #1: *Rachel rolls on* ***Table 4: Cult Goals*—Wants** *to get an idea for what her cult leader wants from Cthulhu, getting 5: Power Over Others. The result neatly ties into Parker's quest for political power and her dismissive judgment of others. Now, Rachel wants to see how Parker attains those favors from Cthulhu and rolls on* ***Table 5: Cult Goals—Means****, getting 6: Destruction. That doesn't feel quite right to Rachel, so she rolls again and gets a 3: Gathering. Rachels notes down that Representative Carol Parker studied and collected different editions of the Bible when she still believed in the Christian God, devoting much time in the search for truth. Now, she hungers for a different truth: using her followers to acquire Mythos tomes, she gathers and reads forbidden texts. At the same time, she is gathering political power to steer humanity into a new age.*

Rachel thinks that a cult leader who uses mind control (in a very literal sense) would be an interesting angle for the cult, so she runs with that idea. Parker is a sorcerer with limited abilities but is questing for more power. Her cult could be comprised of true believers, but also mind-controlled slaves, as well as sleeper agents that don't even know they are being mind-controlled.

Parker's connection to Cthulhu began when she found a Mythos tome from which she learned and cast the Contact Cthulhu spell, believing this was some ancient ritual to God. The contact delivered to her a dream vision of a beautiful and terrifying future, which Parker interpreted as meaning that she and the "chosen ones" would be granted salvation from destruction through the worship of Cthulhu. Parker knows there are layers of meaning in the visions she now receives, so looks for answers in her expanding collection of Mythos tomes.

Rachel notes that the Children of Cthulhu hold important rites twice a year, on Halloween and again on Walpurgisnacht. It is during these rites that Parker contacts Cthulhu to see if her god is pleased and to discern what tasks Cthulhu wishes her to enact.

Example #2: *Andrew rolls on* ***Table 4: Cult Goals*—Wants** *and gets a 7: Violence. This result intrigues Andrew. The idea of a minister professing kindness and love during the day, yet committing brutal acts of violence in the secret hours of the night is something that fires his imagination. Andrew thinks it would be interesting if Conway sees violence not as a means, but as an end in and of itself. That some form of purification comes with*

The Great Old Ones rise

TABLE 4: CULT GOALS—WANTS

Choose or Roll 1D10	What	Notes
1	**Money**	Be it gold from the ocean, financial predictions, or valuable ancient artifacts, the cult believes Cthulhu will grant some form of wealth. This may be something specific and helpful to the individual or group. Do not underestimate the power of money—it can drive people to do the most despicable of acts.
2	**Magical Power**	Knowledge of powerful spells and rituals. Such magic may provide valuable insight into the cosmos (higher learning) or could be a means to control and/or kill others—power over life through magic. Untapping the secrets of reality is a heady and enticing brew that many would seek to drink to their fill. Perhaps the acquisition of magical power is a means to a greater end.
3	**Desire**	Could mean companionship or physical desire and lust. There are a lot of lonely people in the world who would do almost anything to feel connected to another person. There are some who delight in the extremes of pleasure, for whom membership in a cult legitimizes their actions and desires.
4	**Salvation**	Cthulhu's rise will herald previously unknown levels of horror and devastation. Some believe that, by appeasing Cthulhu, they will be saved from this grand devastation—they are the chosen ones who will usher in a New Age under Cthulhu's reign. What the cult does now is buying their salvation to come.
5	**Power Over Others**	Control over other people: individuals, a group, a community, a city, a country, etc. Turning people to the cult's will is key to its mission. Perhaps done through magic, brainwashing, or subtle conditioning. The cult wants people to do their bidding—which may fuel some scheme or could just be what the cult thinks Cthulhu requires of them.
6	**Cosmic Understanding**	Seekers of truth, no matter how horrible or damning it may be. "Truth" can sometimes be subjective—the more subjective the better for making a compelling story. Knowledge is power. Who knows what can come from delving into the secrets of the Mythos.
7	**Violence**	Some people want to watch the world burn. These cultists kill and maim in the name of Cthulhu. They see their actions as the ultimate freedom, casting aside morality for a place a Cthulhu's table—they believe they herald the next stage in human development. Some may use violence as a means to enact a greater plan, while others use it as a distraction to hide a far more terrible truth.
8	**Find a Solution**	A seemingly benevolent goal, such as curing a disease, purging a corrupt authority, understanding human behavior—which becomes twisted and corrupted by Cthulhu's influence. The path of good intention takes a turn into darkness.
9	**Feeding Addiction**	Fueling some kind of addiction, be it mundane (drugs, gambling, power, and so on) or Mythos inspired (magic, knowledge, transformation, etc.). People who are addicted to something are probably easier to control—the cult wants to control its members.
10	**Love**	Not to be confused with physical intimacy, love is a strong driving force for most people. A cult could use the love of family, a spouse, or the bonds of friendship to control people. Maybe the goal of love has become somehow twisted. Perhaps the cult is motivated out of a love for humanity and works to "save" the world in a very misguided fashion.

TABLE 5: CULT GOALS—MEANS

Choose or Roll 1D8	What	Notes
1	**Sacrifice**	For some purpose, the cultists sacrifice living humans and/or animals. This may be to prove their devotion, as a source of some power, or is part of a greater scheme.
2	**Ritual**	A ritual (one type or more) is performed, requiring either a small group or a large number of participants. The ritual may wholly serve the needs of the cult or could be serving the will of Cthulhu to accomplish something (large or small).
3	**Gathering**	Maybe the collection of knowledge (Mythos tomes), certain resources, or even specific people. The cult must gather "something" for any number of reasons known only to Cthulhu.
4	**Serve**	By serving a Mythos being—one with a connection to Cthulhu—the cult is serving the will of Cthulhu. In return, the cult is aided in some manner by the entity. Alternatively, the cult is in thrall to the entity and must comply with its commands. Perhaps the entity has no real connection to Cthulhu, but claims it does to gain power over the cult.
5	**Creation**	The cult has been commanded to build something. This could be a magical gateway, a mystical artifact, a place to concentrate great power, or a temple. Perhaps it is simply the creation of a secret network to one day take over a town, a city, a country, or the world.
6	**Destruction**	The cult has been commanded to destroy something—perhaps something that impedes, angers, or hurts Cthulhu. This could be destroying an ancient temple, a mystical ward, or toppling a government or organization that is interfering with Cthulhu's goals.
7	**Transformation**	The cultists must be transformed—physically and/or mentally. Humans are limited and not capable of completing the goals of Cthulhu, or are too fragile for the world to come, so the cultists seek to transform themselves into something more powerful. This may be a new stage of human evolution or some joining with the Mythos, as with the deep ones.
8	**Hunt and Kill**	The destruction of the enemies of Cthulhu, such as certain human factions or another Mythos race (like the elder things) who act in opposition. Such beings may become a problem to Cthulhu's dread plan. Perhaps in hunting down and killing their targets, the cult gains something in return: eating their kills provides them with Mythos powers or insights, and so on.

inflicting violence—perhaps accumulating power and skill, and possibly a deep (and disturbing) joy that comes from hurting and dominating others.

Andrew rolls on ***Table 5: Cult Goals—Means*** *and gets a 6: Destruction. Andrew thinks about this a moment and decides that he can work with that. Conway and his cult, the Brotherhood of R'lyeh, are looking to destroy the other churches in their small town—through physical attacks on the buildings themselves and by undermining their leaders. Conway will use his sermons to preach against the churches and their leaders, aiming to subtly and then overtly preach violence to incite the local populace into committing violence while he and his cult set up the church leaders to be caught in real or fabricated scandals.*

Example #3: *Chad rolls on* ***Table 4: Cult Goals*****—Wants** *and gets a 9: Feeding Addiction. At first, that sounds perfect for his idea with the Cthulhu 'srooms, but, on second thought, it feels a little too on the nose. Instead, Chad wants his cult of street kids to be more about destroying the rich, breaking social norms, and overthrowing society. The street kids have no real power, so they use their innocuous nature and trickery to sow corruption and deceit, along with the occasional violent act.*

Chad now rolls on ***Table 5: Cult Goals—Means****, getting a 5: Creation. This is almost the opposite of what his original idea for the cult was, so Chad thinks about it. He likes the idea that the street kids are trying to create a new culture. One that is about freedom and joy with no rules or ties of morality. Thinking back to the result of Feeding Addiction, Chad connects that idea to the hivemind concept—the cultists crave to be connected to one another and are merciless to those who try to stop them or stand in their way. The cult wants others to join the "great mind," to expand it on a potentially global level.*

For the backstory, Devan's dreams of Cthulhu directed him to the mushrooms that grow in a hidden canyon in the Topanga Forest. All who eat the mushroom become psychically linked, although they must continue to eat the strange mushroom regularly to maintain the link. Devan must supply his followers with mushrooms every few days to keep the connection to the great hivemind, and thus create a society ready for the return of Cthulhu.

CREATING A CULT'S STRUCTURE

Just like any other organization, the majority of cults have a hierarchy of sorts. The structure may be anything from a chaotic gathering of anarchists to a comprehensive system where position and rank are strictly earned and enforced. To

The cult gathers

achieve its goals, a cult must have some form of structure to organize its tasks and responsibilities, and to enforce its rules.

At the very basic level, there is probably a leader who commands everyone else or a group who collectively share responsibility for the cult's direction. It is usually a cult's leader who constructs the hierarchy of the cult. The cultists are typically assigned tasks or duties and are expected to comply with orders from the leader, or one of the higher-ranking members appointed by the leader.

The Keeper should decide the size of a cult. If the cult is small, perhaps less than a dozen people, one leader can usually keep control on their own; however, the larger a cult becomes, the more likely that delegation has to take place. Thus, it is important to consider the structure within the cult. Is it tightly organized, by levels and ranks, or is it a chaotic band of miscreants? If the cult is large enough, consider mapping out a ranking system. A leader at the top, with lieutenants, and then followers. Consider how the leader communicates and gives orders. Do they speak directly, send notes or text messages, use intermediaries, or some kind of magical transfer of information?

A cult leader may also want to establish a barrier between them and the lower levels of the cult. This could be for protection—to insulate and keep the leader at a remove from the "dirty work"—or to create an air of power and authority—sitting above the rank and file. A good rule of thumb is that for every seven to twelve cultists, there needs to be someone in direct control. A more complex cult set up may see some form of cell structure, with each cell operating autonomously to a degree, with only the cell's leader in contact with elements within the overall cult structure.

Think about whether the cult operates in society. Does it allow its members to mix with relations and associates outside of the cult or is the cult isolationist, with its members required to cut ties with friends and family? Does the cult require family bonds be severed or just limited? Many Cthulhu cults tend to operate within or at the fringes of society, rather than being totally isolationist, allowing cultists to be hidden within plain sight, going about their days and jobs as though regular folk, and only revealing their cult affiliations to other members.

Example #1: *Rachel thinks about the structure of the Children of Cthulhu. She wants to keep it to about 20 members but thinks there might be additional people that Parker has under her influence. Rachel decides that Parker has a right-hand man, who she's calling Colin Daniels, and two other lieutenants. Parker calls herself the Avatar of Cthulhu, with Daniels and the other lieutenants being dubbed Deacons. The other cultists are under the direct control of the Deacons, to keep Parker's identity secret. Parker only comes directly into contact with the other cultists during the two major rites and, even then, Parker always wears a mask, so none of the lesser cultists know who she is.*

Example #2: *Andrew wants his cult, the Brotherhood of R'lyeh, to be large but wants it to seem much smaller than it really is. He thinks there are about 100 members—or rather, 100 people greatly influenced by Conway, who act individually. Most are unaware of the others, with each believing themselves to be a committed follower of Conway. A smaller group is directly under the command of Conway, meeting with him in secret—either as a group or individually—to map out their next steps in Conway's plan. Of this latter group, Conway has chosen some of them to infiltrate the other churches in town with the aim of gathering information on the different preachers while sowing seeds of dissent.*

Since 100 people is a lot to manage, Andrew knows Conway has to do some serious delegation. Thus, there are five bosses under Conway. Each boss manages around 20 people, perhaps elevating one or two to be lieutenants. The structure ensures that there are layers in the organization that the investigators can peel back to uncover its secrets.

Example #3: *Chad's cult, the Decedents, is more chaotic. Devan is the leader and his access to the hivemind allows him to keep in touch with all of his followers. One thing that must be organized is the growth and distribution of the mushroom (which the cult calls "the Sacrament"). If a person is prevented from taking the Sacrament for a few days, they lose their connection to the hivemind and, consequently, suffer an extreme withdrawal—they feel compelled to reconnect to the hivemind (and thereby to Cthulhu), and will do almost anything necessary to access the mushrooms. Chad notes that the cult has about 25 members; but, since the supply of the Cthulhu 'shroom is running low, Devan must increase the growth of the 'shrooms or eliminate members. Thus, the size of the cult is limited by the supply of the 'shrooms.*

CREATING CULTISTS

When populating a cult with members, there are a few things to keep in mind. What is the cult's leader selling in terms of the appeal of the cult? Are they selling hope? Perhaps it is access to something, such as power, everlasting life, or freedom? Or, is the leader nurturing and fueling something, such as hatred, love, or greed? Consider the membership—how did the members come to join the cult? What purpose do they serve? And, what type of people are members? Are they criminals? White-collar workers? Laborers? High society? Low society?

While not everyone needs to be from the same background or position in society, the majority should be similar to a greater degree; this is certainly truer for small to medium-sized cults, although larger cults, with multiple levels or circles of membership, may demonstrate quite a wide social pool. Obviously, everyone should have some connection to the cult leader. Most cult leaders will inevitably promote to and draw recruits from a common, familiar, and accessible collection of people.

Membership in a cult has a lot to do with recruitment. Who does the cult have access to? Who are the ideal candidates? How are people recruited: word of mouth, via a "front" organization, and so on? Does the cult's leader alone decide who is to be recruited, do members recruit others, or is there an open-door policy?

Example #1: *Rachel wants Parker's cult to be populated with the rich and powerful—people that have supported Parker's previous political campaigns and who thirsts for power at any cost. Rachel decides that Parker wouldn't necessarily trust the wealthy and power-hungry with the position of Deacon within the cult, so she chooses past employees to be the Deacons instead—those who have shown their commitment to Parker and her vision. So, the Deacons will be Parker's former campaign manager, Colin Daniels; Lucy Tott, a mayor in her district; and Matt Pfeifer, the minister at Parker's evangelical church.*

Example #2: *Andrew wants his cult made of everyday people. He wants there to be farmers, shopkeepers, elderly people, and teenagers populating the Brotherhood. Anyone can be in the cult, but they must all live in the small town where the cult is based. Conway initially started recruiting from his congregation, especially the emotionally vulnerable, but then started pulling people in from the community at large. The cult's bosses are going to be Lynn Samson, a mother who is active in the PTA and community; Tim Landry, a foreman at the auto plant just outside of town; David Reynolds, a retired police officer; Beth Williams, a local shop owner; and Buck Tanner, a local high-school teacher.*

Example #3: *Chad knows the cult will mostly be comprised of street kids, but there will be a few who are people that are known to Devan and who he feels could be useful. These older folk work around the promenade where the cult is based: Clara, a barista at a local coffee house; David, a shop clerk who works at a new age bookstore; and Connor, a student at Santa Monica College.*

When creating profiles for the cultists, it's important to remember that, for many cults, most of them are just regular people. Some may have violent inclinations while others may be skilled in a particular occupational area. Some generic cultists from a variety of backgrounds are provided in **Chapter 5**—feel free to modify these to fit your concepts.

Example #1: *Parker's Cthulhu cult are mostly wealthy people, so Rachel uses the* ***Aristocratic Cultist*** *(page 158) profile for her cultists. She has a few special cultists that she wants to add, so she uses the* ***Aristocratic Cultist*** *as a baseline, modifying it to suit the special characters (i.e. those she wants to develop into named NPCs).*

Example #2: *Andrew cultists are a fairly mixed bag, but he feels that the* ***Blue-Collar Cultist*** *(page 158) would be a good baseline for most, with a handful based on the* ***Academic Cultist*** *and* ***Law Enforcement Cultist*** *profiles.*

Example #3: *for the Decedents, Chad uses the* ***Young Cultist*** *(page 161). His cultists are a bit younger than the profile, so he lowers some of their skill values (deducting 10 to 20 points) to represent slightly inexperienced characters.*

CULT INITIATION

To join a cult, it is typical for prospective members to undergo an initiation process or ritual. This may involve taking an oath, participating in a ritual, or performing some act to demonstrate their worthiness. Initiations can often be demeaning, putting the initiate in a vulnerable position, which gives the cult and its leader some form of leverage should that member ever fall out of line. Larger cults may have differing levels of initiation, particularly where there are higher ranks and inner cabals. Some cults may allow anyone to join the public façade of the organization, with full-on cult initiation happening only when a member is ready or chosen to advance into the secret heart of the cult.

Typically, cult initiations are unlikely to factor into your scenario or campaign—unless that process is going to be witnessed or participated in by the investigators—but, deciding what the cultists have to go through to be accepted into the Cthulhu cult helps to determine their level of commitment and can inform their behavior.

Example #1: *Rachel doesn't think the initiation needs to be that big of a deal. She does think there is a financial aspect to it, so notes down that all of the members have to make a large donation to Parker's political "war chest." She also likes the idea that the initiation involves doing something that could be later used for blackmail. Rachel decides that prospective members must take a mind-altering drug and then perform a ritual with the other cultists, which Parker secretly records on video.*

Example #2: *because of the violent aspect of the cult, Andrew thinks that the initiation should be violent as well. He decides that recruits must prove their worth by killing something, perhaps an animal or even another human. Those unable to kill on command are beaten down by the other members, and if they hold their own in the fight, they are given one final chance to kill—the victim may be one of their attackers. Those who can go through with the initiation are then taken down to the cellar to be "baptized" by Conway's "pet" formless spawn. Those who survive the encounter become full members. Andrew thinks that, on occasion, the formless spawn kills a recruit for no apparent reason, although the cult assumes this outcome must be due to the initiate being unworthy.*

Example #3: *Chad knows the initiation for his cult is simple: eating the Cthulhu 'shrooms. Once an initiate consumes the mushroom and connects to the hivemind, they are part of the cult.*

Cultist Insanity

Another key aspect to consider is cultist Sanity values. Do they become insane when inducted into the cult or do the cult's activities and insights drive them insane over time? If the latter, those holding onto some Sanity may present a risk whereby they somehow reject the cult and try to leave or perhaps try to destroy the cult. The cult's leader may be watchful for this type of event, and so ensures newer members are watched or kept close at hand so they do not turn against the cult. The initiation process strips away some or all of the recruit's Sanity (mechanically speaking). Exposing recruits to Mythos creatures, magics, otherworldly phenomenon, or horrific violence can provoke sudden and devastating Sanity loss.

Note that, unlike investigators, cultists are Keeper-controlled non-player characters (NPCs) and therefore their Sanity (or lack thereof) is determined by the Keeper. There is no need to roll dice to determine a cultist's Sanity, just choose an appropriate level, which in the majority of cases will be zero. One assumes that a person's exposure to the Mythos (and associated horrors) via membership in a cult is enough to corrupt and diminish all Sanity, leaving them fully open to and transformed by the cosmic truths of reality, and now possessing a new understanding of their place in the universe. Where a Keeper wishes for a cultist to be on the path to permanent insanity, yet not quite there—leaving the possibility of redemption or some form of rejection of the cult—assume a Sanity value of around 10 to 35 points.

CULT ACCOUNTING

Most cults need money to keep functioning. The larger the cult, the more likely it needs some form of income generation. To figure out how much money a cult needs, look at the cult's expenses. Some possible cult expenses include:

- Paying/taking care of cultists.
- Purchasing and maintaining property.
- Purchasing equipment (tomes, artifacts, cars, weapons, etc.).
- Buying supplies (alcohol, drugs, spell/ritual ingredients, and so on).
- Paying legal fees.
- Bribes and payoffs.
- Security (more a factor in modern-era cults).

By looking at the type, size, and goals of the cult, you can figure out the kind of things the cult requires to function. It's not necessary to actually work costs out, just determine whether the cult runs without any real costs (like Castro's **Louisiana Swamp Cult**, page 54, who don't really own any property and instead meet in the swamps for free) or if it's a large enterprise, where the cult owns and runs one or many properties, and operates as a business (e.g. **Church of Perfect Science**, page 100). Once you factor such costs into the cult,

it's easy to know whether the cult needs a lot of money to keep operating. The following section explores some of the avenues open to cults to generate money.

While it can seem a bit mundane to think about this stuff, financial information (what gets bought and how the money comes in) can be important when thinking about how these factors can generate interesting story ideas, possible scenario hooks, and clues for investigators. If a resource is threatened, the cult will try to defend it. If a cult is using a resource (be it goods from a supplier or renting property), it's likely someone knows about it—such people may or may not be in the cult—and such breadcrumbs of information can provide useful clues for those researching a cult's operation.

Funding a cult is more difficult than other types of organizations, due to (most often) the need for secrecy and a lack of revenue creation. It's hard to find investors willing to finance a cult worshipping an ancient and alien god-like entity, and one very much outside of traditional and established religions—unless there is something in it for them. And, if there is, such investors are most likely already members of the cult.

In most cases, it falls on the members of a cult to acquire the money needed to finance its operations. How much money a cult can directly access probably corresponds to the wealth of its members. Of course, if more money is suddenly needed, members could sell assets (like their homes) and cash in their savings to help out; however, cults must be cautious of such behavior, as sudden and strange activity can draw the attention of concerned friends and family and, possibly, law enforcement.

A cult may be able to use some form of legitimate or criminal business to help its finances, such as selling "personal development" courses, drugs, or trading in rare commodities. Starting a successful business is a difficult task in and of itself, so just starting a business to fund a cult may be counterproductive or not worth the effort. Understanding the nature, purpose, and means of a cult helps to determine the sort of organization it is and whether income generation is important or not.

If the cult's members are not experienced criminals, illegal enterprises (coordinated theft, fraud, and other crimes) can be difficult to "get right." Inexperienced members may be arrested, making such activity risky in terms of unraveling a cult's secrecy. It would not really help a group of academic cultists with little in the way of "street smarts" to start making and dealing drugs, as "proper" criminal enterprises are liable to take offense and stamp out such perceived competition in their territory, let alone the attention such amateur efforts may raise with law enforcement. Of course, such a situation could make for an interesting scenario set up!

Consider the members in a cult. What experience are they likely to have? What backgrounds are they from? What are the members capable of doing? Consider this question in respect of the cult's "type" and its purpose and goals. Is there some way to incorporate the member's expertise into money-making schemes?

Of course, if this angle of investigation is not really going to fit with your planned scenario or campaign, and the direction of play is much more direct, then you don't really need to think about such things—although having at least a rough idea about a cult's money is a useful tidbit of information to have up your sleeve.

The following sections explore some of the operations of a cult, including legal and illegal actions, where money gets spent, and the differing approaches cults might take in dealing with problems (like the investigators).

TAKING CARE OF CULTISTS

A key question is deciding whether the cult's activity is full time. Do the cultists have regular jobs or do they only "work" for the cult? Those who devote all their time to the cult must either be independently wealthy or derive some form of care from the cult (money, accommodation, and so on). If the plans of the cult are particularly labor-intensive, some of the cultists are likely to be provided for in some manner, probably paid a sort of wage. What happens when the cult

runs out of money? How devoted are the cultists? Do they carry on, driven by belief, or "down tools" and begin to drift away from the cult? A lot depends on the cult's basis and who it recruits.

Example #1: *Rachel's cult is full of wealthy individuals, so they are self-sufficient and use their own money to support the cult. Parker milks her cultists (as well non-members) for cash through donations and fund-raising events.*

Example #2: *Andrew decides his cultists have day jobs and lives that they need to maintain, as it's important for the cultists to appear as normal as possible. A few of the members are employed by the church full time, with these being some of the most committed to Conway's cause.*

Example #3: *the Decedents are mostly teenagers who don't have money, so Chad decides that they'll stay at different places but gather together for a few days at a time in a small, shanty-like village they have set up in the forest of the Topanga Valley. In terms of food, the members get what they can—some go to food pantries while others spend their days panhandling or stealing supplies.*

Purchasing & Maintaining Property

If the cult has a temple or some kind of commune, someone has to pay for it. If not just hiding out in the forest, the cult may have to pay taxes and maintain a property's utilities and upkeep, or else find some way to get around such things. Maintaining property not only costs money, but it also creates leads for investigators. The Keeper might consider who's actually paying the bills? Who manages the property? What did the plumbers see when they were called in to fix a leak? All of these elements may provide possible story hooks and give the investigators a way to research a cult's activities.

Example #1: *the Children of Cthulhu meets at members' homes and mansions to hold gatherings and rituals (akin to the Stanley Kubrick film* Eyes Wide Shut). *Rachel decides cult leader Parker pays the cult's bills using a charitable organization as a front while keeping the cult's books and artifacts in a hidden library within her home.*

Example #2: *the Brotherhood of R'lyeh gathers at St. Luke's Methodist Church where Conway is the minister. The church has bills to pay and appearances to keep up, and functions as a regular church, doing charity work and holding services a few times a week. The cult meets late at night in the church's basement to hold its rituals to Cthulhu.*

Example #3: *Chad decides the cult does not just use one place. Since they are all part of a hivemind, they can easily hide things in places that everyone in the cult knows about. The key location is the shanty-like town set up in the forest, where the special mushrooms grow and where the big rituals are held. Otherwise, there are no outgoings in terms of property expenses.*

Acquiring Books & Magical Artifacts

Getting hold of ancient tomes and artifacts can be the focal point of a story, especially where the cult must resort to theft, blackmail, and other crimes to obtain the items desired. Such actions make the cult vulnerable if not handled right, bringing them to the attention of the investigators or else leaving useful clues behind.

Such priceless tomes and artifacts rarely come up for sale and, if they do, they are either acquired by private sale or auction. Sometimes, such items are housed in museums or libraries and are not for sale, requiring a cunning plan to steal them. To put things in perspective, in 1987 a Gutenberg Bible was sold for $5.4 million—if sold today it's price tag would be closer to $12 million; Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex of Leicester* (aka *Codex Hammer*) sold for $30.8 million in 1994, a price equivalent to $52.8 million today. And, neither of those books allow you to summon a deep one. Thus, when a prized tome like the *Necronomicon* comes onto the market, a cult must possess very deep pockets if it is to obtain the book legally.

It is possible that a cult might be able to trade or borrow a magical artifact or book for goods or services. Perhaps the cult holds something the artifact or book's owner wants, or the cult could perform a service the dealer needs. Such things may first be offered before a cult turns to crime. But, crime while risky is usually the cheapest option. A cult could always attempt to kill and steal to get what they want. Again, most means to obtain such treasures leave traces—clues for the investigators to uncover.

Example #1: *Rachel's cult is on the lookout for Mythos tomes. The members are wealthy individuals who, together with the cult's leader, can pool their finances to legally purchase most things. If not, then blackmail is probably the preferred option.*

Example #2: *Andrew's cult does not have the resources to purchase expensive treasures. If they discover the existence of a mystical artifact, they would more than likely have to try and agree to some form of reciprocal deal with the owner/seller, or else resort to theft and possibly murder.*

Example #3: *Chad's cult, the Decedents, don't have any use for books or artifacts. But if Cthulhu commanded them to get a book or some other artifact, they would find themselves with little to offer a dealer.*

Buying Illegal Supplies

Cthulhu worship often involves hedonistic pleasures and an altered state of consciousness. Many such cults use drugs in one form or another to achieve a suitable state of mind. Depending on where and when your campaign takes place, certain drugs may be illegal and difficult to obtain. While opiates and cocaine could be purchased (usually under license/prescription) in 1920s America, alcohol was prohibited. In the UK, the 1920 Dangerous Drugs Act led to sales of opium, morphine, heroin, and cocaine to be licensed or authorized by the Home Office, although the sale of alcohol was never banned. In the modern era, the criminalization of drugs, from opiates to psychoactives, is heavily proscribed in most developed countries, although the criminal market for such things continues to prosper. Thus, the era of play influences the ease with which cults can obtain "drugs" for their rituals.

Cults may simply purchase the drugs through a supplier (legal or otherwise) or could manufacture them. Either way, deals, connections, and logistics all provide avenues of investigation for those seeking information on a cult. Some cults may have illicit agreements in place with certain authorities, such as the police, which may provide different access routes into the workings of a cult. Some cults may not only use drugs but trade in them as well, as a source of income. Perhaps the city's "drug lord" is none other than the cult's leader, although the transportation and sale of drugs provide their own particular headaches and problems.

Another aspect to consider is the purchase or creation of poisons. The **Louisiana Swamp Cult** (page 54) often uses poison to kill people who get too close to discovering its secrets. Many poisons could be made with a little ingenuity and pharmacological knowledge or can be purchased for the right price. Both poisons and drugs may originate outside the country of the cult's operation, such as heralding from South America and Asia, and so leave breadcrumbs of clues for the investigators to find.

Example #1: *Rachel thinks her cult, the Children of Cthulhu, uses recreational drugs during their rituals, acquiring them through third-party sources. Should one of their suppliers fall under the attention of the authorities, Rachel thinks the cult would either try to sever all leads (perhaps killing the third-party sources) or seek to bribe, confuse, or misdirect the authorities.*

Example #2: *the Brotherhood of R'lyeh uses psychoactive drugs during their rituals. The drug is a special concoction created by a member of the cult in a makeshift laboratory at a farm just*

Cult library

outside of town, although the ingredients are hard to come by. To avoid unwanted attention, the cult has created a dummy chemical company to import the ingredients from Asia. To supplement the cost of production, the cult is involved in processing heroin to supply local dealers (heroin became illegal in the USA in 1924).

***Example #3:** Chad's cult uses drugs recreationally, but, since they are financially limited, are only able to buy (or barter) from small, local dealers—increasing the odds that a member will be arrested or that one of the dealers could rat them out in some kind of plea bargain. The cult's Sacrament (the mystical mushrooms) are gathered for free; however, joining the hivemind is a two-way street, so anyone who takes the Sacrament knows all of the cult's plans and activities. Thus, Devan is very selective about who gets to join the cult and who has access to the Sacrament.*

Paying Legal or Business Fees

In the modern age, lawyers can be a strong defense or a powerful weapon in a cult's arsenal. If law enforcement or the investigators get too close to a cult's activities, lawyers could file lawsuits to set up legal roadblocks to stymie their efforts—presuming such investigation comes to the attention of the cult. Lawyers can use anything from libel suits to accusations of harassment as part of their arsenal of tactics to fend off unwanted attention.

If a cult member is arrested, a strong legal team could get the case dropped or provide a strong defense (if the case goes to trial). It might be in a cult's best interest to avoid violence if its activities are detected, relying instead on a solely legal defense. Or, maybe a combination of legal and criminal approaches helps to solve the cult's problem.

A cult operating as a business or using business-like fronts may use corporate law to obfuscate financial transactions and money movements. A corporation could be set up in such a complicated way as to make it difficult to assign liability of wrongdoing to any one individual. Of course, such tactics can be very expensive and only work for wealthy cults. Poorer cults might simply resort to threats, blackmail, and murder to silence those who would cause a problem, or else seek to escape and hide from the attention of the law—some might just "pull up stakes" and quietly leave the city or state to begin anew elsewhere under a different name.

***Example #1:** Rachel's cult is not only full of wealthy members but is politically well connected. If local police become a problem, a state senator (either as a cult member or through blackmail) could put pressure on the mayor, who could then push the police into dropping the investigation. The cult could try to sue the investigators for harassment or slander if they get too close. Perhaps Parker has connections within the IRS and can arrange to have one or more of the investigators audited!*

***Example #2:** Andrew's cult does not have great financial resources but might hire a private detective to dig up some dirt on the investigators, which could then be sent to the police. Alternatively, the cult could try to frame an investigator for a crime.*

***Example #3:** the Decedents would not be able to hire lawyers and would have to rely on public defenders if apprehended, although being mostly teenagers, the members are liable to act before thinking—fortunately, their hivemind ensures some measure of protection against foolhardy actions, or at least makes it easier for the cult to know what has happened and deal with a situation quickly. Without status or resources, the cult must rely on its members to deal with threats.*

Bribes

As organized crime has known for hundreds of years, sometimes it's easier to catch flies with honey. Bribes can grease the wheels of many operations and sometimes stop roadblocks, gain information, reach a politician's ear, or just convince someone to look the other way. Not everyone can be bribed, so cultists must be careful to understand who they can or can't approach in this manner.

Bribes not only take the form of cash but may be goods provided in return for a favor—this might be anything from an expensive bottle of wine to a highly sought-after

Careful, who is watching...

collectible action figure (depending on the era of play). If one doesn't have access to goods or money, favors can often open doors, which could be anything from fulfilling the desires of a security guard to roughing up a landlord to forget some unpaid rent, or even getting a job for someone's nephew. Typically, these kinds of favors are of an illicit nature. Finding someone to do dirty jobs costs money, so trading favors can work out well for poorer cults.

It's also important to look at long-term relationships based on bribery. Like a mole in the police department who calls in tips in exchange for a few hundred bucks or someone in the "mob" who gets paid to dispose of the cult's victims—the mob didn't want anything specific in return, but can call in favors from the cult whenever it wants. A long-term, uneasy partnership with organized crime or someone in authority could create some interesting story lines.

Example #1: *the Children of Cthulhu has on-going relationships (bribes) with some high-ranking police officers in local and state law enforcement. The crooked cops notify the cult of any interest taken in the cult's membership and activities, while also working to bury evidence and pressure others to look the other way. Enemies of the cult who go to the police will either be ignored or soon find the Children's agents coming for them.*

Example #2: *Andrew's cult operates out of St. Luke's Methodist Church. The neighborhood around the church is residential, with a lot of nosey and elderly neighbors who love to gossip. The cult members, presenting themselves as church volunteers, often visit these old people, helping with lawn work, baking cookies, and just being friendly. Having worked to get these old folk "on side," the cult enjoys the benefit of these people reporting to them about anyone strange snooping around the church and neighborhood.*

Example #3: *Chad's cult members provide favors for local criminals and crooked cops, be it acting as lookout for drug deals, running messages, or similar activities. In return, those criminals and cops pass on tips or look the other way when needed.*

Security

Most cults use secrecy as their primary form of defense—if no one knows the cult exists then no one can interfere with it. Thus, for some cults, silence is golden. But, sometimes a cult will have locations, events, or items that need protection from prying eyes. Typically, cult members defend what is theirs with greater intensity than any hired goon, although the cultist may sometimes not be able to handle the task at hand and so employ outside security agents.

There are any number of security "firms" whose services can be bought by anybody willing to pay. If the cult is wealthy, they can hire military-level security, which, while extremely expensive, is typically the best available and ready to do whatever is asked of them, no questions asked. Alternatively, smaller private firms can be hired. If the cult has law enforcement connections, off-duty police officers may work as security. Of course, a cult needs to be careful with who they work with and employ, as not everyone is prepared to look the other way or countenance illegal or questionable activities.

Example #1: *Rachel's cult can hire the best in private security. During important rituals, the cult employs heavily armed guards, security cameras, and even drones to protect its ritual site. Of course, too much security can draw attention, but the caliber of the security hired means they not only keep their opinions to themselves, but they also ensure their operation keeps a low profile.*

Example #2: *the Brotherhood of R'lyeh uses its own members for security. Within the cult's ranks are a couple of police officers and some farmers who know how to use a shotgun.*

Example #3: *the Decedents don't have the resources to hire anyone, and so the cultists protect themselves. Most members are armed with knives while a handful may have access to a handgun. The hivemind tends to agree that knives are the best weapons as guns are noisy and likely to draw unwanted attention—the cult relies on secrecy as their primary defense.*

CULTS & THE SUPERNATURAL

Without a link to the Cthulhu Mythos, cultists are just a bunch of fanatics. While creepy and potentially dangerous in their own right, that doesn't deliver on the promise of *Call of Cthulhu*.

When creating a cult leader, you should have developed a good idea of how their cult interacts with the Mythos and the supernatural in general. Moving forward, you'll need to decide some specifics—not just on what the cult knows, but consider how the different members are privy to the Mythos. Is the cult's leader the only one who truly knows about the Mythos (and consequently wields all the power)? Can any of the cultists cast spells, or only a few? How much Mythos knowledge is known throughout the ranks of the cult?

In line with Mythos knowledge is the levels of Sanity among the cultists. What is their exposure to the Mythos and to what degree have they become corrupted by it? Are they all at zero Sanity points or just those at the higher levels? Do any important members possess phobias or manias that could be built into their characters? Even if some of the cultists have had limited exposure to the Mythos, they may have witnessed or performed violent and morally questionable actions that have drained some of their Sanity.

Mechanically, the Sanity value of most cultists seldom comes into play. Thinking about a cultist's mental state is more of a tool to inform the Keeper's story design and roleplaying. As noted in **Cultist Insanity** (page 141), cult members' Sanity levels are determined by the Keeper.

Example #1: *Rachel thinks the leader, Carol Parker, hoards all the magical knowledge, not wanting to share such power unless she has to. Rachel decides that it would be interesting to have some of the cultists dissatisfied with this situation, as they too want to access the power demonstrated by Parker. Rachel decides that the cult is aiming to summon a Mythos creature to participate in key rituals and take offered sacrifices. While Parker knows the most about the Mythos, she still has much to learn, possessing just 25 points in Cthulhu Mythos. Despite her limited knowledge, her experience with the Mythos and contact with Cthulhu specifically has already drained her Sanity to zero. Everyone else in the cult knows about the Mythos, but possess only around 5 to 15 points in the skill, with many understanding the Mythos in vague terms and not really seeing the big picture. In the main, the cult's members will have between zero and 40 Sanity points. Parker is the only member (so far) to know any spells.*

Example #2: *the Brotherhood of R'lyeh is very limited in their understanding of the Mythos. Ben Conway has a Cthulhu Mythos rating of 30 percent, but only reveals bits and pieces, painting a picture of a future where all of the chosen humans live in harmony with the flow of the universe. Andrew decided earlier that Conroy has access to only a handful of spells and his Sanity is zero. As for the other cultists, Andrew determines that they know little to nothing about the Mythos, with most possessing zero values in Cthulhu Mythos, with perhaps just a few having around one to four percent in the skill. Consequently, the cult's members' Sanity values are in the region of 20 to 50 points, as they have yet to fully witness or succumb to the corruption of the Mythos.*

Example #3: *Chad thinks that Devan Diaz doesn't really know that much about the Mythos. Devan receives visions of Cthulhu, R'lyeh, and a post-apocalyptic future, but doesn't yet know what this all means—these visions have affected his Sanity, which has drained to zero—and he possesses no spells. The other Decedents, being connected by a hivemind, know what Devan knows and, through him, get to experience his visions of the Mythos; thus, they too are either at zero Sanity or possess only around 10 points each. The Decedents are a truly chaotic cult, with no sorcery or connection to monsters, other than a direct connection to Cthulhu's dreams.*

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Having considered the various steps and jotted down your ideas, you should (hopefully) have a pretty well-thought-out cult design. A solid understanding of the cult and how it functions, what it wants, and how it responds to threats is a good basis from which you can begin to think about scenarios and how the investigators will interact with your creation—everything you need for your Cthulhu cult to become the nemesis of your investigators!

FINDING THE WEAKNESS

On paper, your cult should be a functioning machine. But, reality has a way of undoing even the most water-tight plans. Consider the cult's leader and their personality, think about the membership, and review the cult's operations and goals. What weaknesses could exist? What cracks in the fabric of the cult will allow the investigators to get a foothold in the organization?

The cultists probably believe they have thought of every contingency and are ready to stop any threat to their plans. But of course, they missed something. Someone got sloppy, an eyewitness stumbled into something they shouldn't have, or maybe someone defected from the cult. Perhaps the cult summoned up a creature they could not control or one of their victims escaped and is seeking revenge or some form of reckoning? What could go wrong? Such things are the leads that will bring the investigators to delve into the cult's activities.

While a weakness within the cult may not be the start of the investigation, such factors may be uncovered and help the investigators during the course of the scenario or campaign. Weakness creates a good story.

Example #1: *one of the members of the Children of Cthulhu was horribly mauled and killed when Parker tried to summon a Mythos entity. That member was Dale Johnson, the founder of Clove Industries, a multi-million-dollar corporation. Johnson's wife Diane, also in the cult, had her husband's death filed as a heart attack and the body quickly cremated; however, their daughter, Eileen, sensed something wasn't right and decided to look into what her mother and father were doing on that fateful night. After snooping around, Eileen concludes her mother is lying and, determined to find the truth, hires some people to find the answers—cue the investigators.*

Example #2: *the Brotherhood of R'lyeh is attempting to purchase a rare gemstone from a jewel smuggler—they want the gemstone for a ritual. The tricky smuggler demands more money, but the cult doesn't have it. Thus, the cultists cook up a plan to kill the dealer at the meetup to exchange the gemstone for the cash. Everything goes wrong! The smuggler and one of the cultists are killed, and the gemstone is nowhere to be found (hidden nearby by the smuggler in case things went south). The police are stumped by the double murder—there seems to be no connection between the victims, and one of the victims is covered in strange scars and tattoos. The investigators are called in to help solve the case, either by a contact in law enforcement or by family members (unrelated to the cult) of one of the victims. Alternatively, the whole thing looks like a juicy story so a journalist investigator (and their colleagues) decide to look into the situation.*

Example #3: *the Decedents perform a drug-fueled communion ritual where one of the cultists takes a very high dose of some psychotropic drug that causes disconnection from the hivemind. In a drug-induced*

stupor, the affected cultist wanders away from the ritual, covered in blood. The investigators are driving and are suddenly surprised when they nearly run over the cultist in the road. On their way to the hospital, the investigators hear the cultist babbling about a dead god and something about being "disconnected." Even when sober there are few answers—the shock of disconnection from the hivemind has driven the cultist into a state of madness. Do the investigators look into the mystery of their own accord? Or, does a family member of the injured cultist ask for help?

Enemies of the Cult

Cults have a way of creating their own enemies—even before the investigators arrive on the scene. Perhaps the cult stole something from somebody, trespassed and was noticed, destroyed property, or killed a loved one. Someone has been crossed by the cult or harmed in some way. Such instances may spark an investigation or be clues in an on-going case. Perhaps the enemy of my enemies can be a useful help or resource to the investigators? Or, an enemy of the cult is another cult, leading the investigators to discover they are caught in the middle of a war.

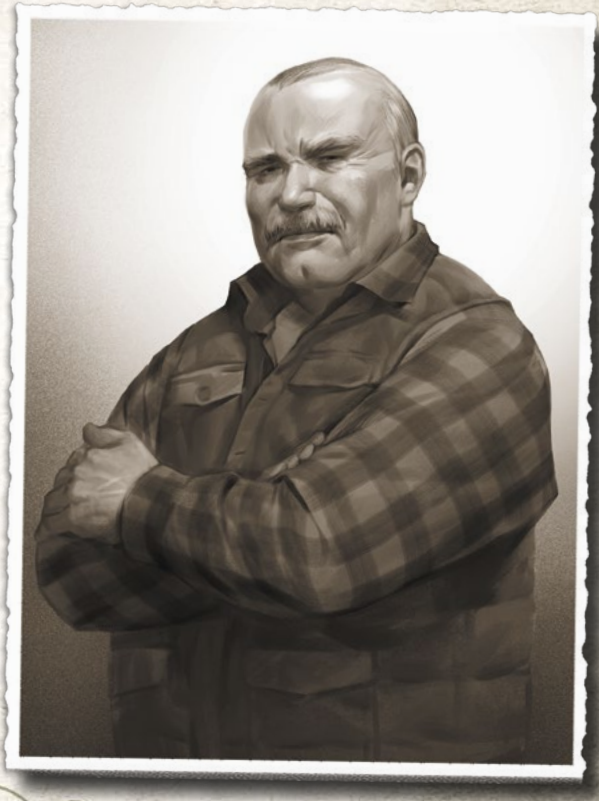
With the cult you have created, it should be fairly straightforward to think up a range of possible enemies of the cult. Pick the most engaging and exciting (with the investigators in mind) and bring these people to life. Think about how such characters have been affected, how their life may have been disrupted, and what their goal may be. Such things don't have to be overly dramatic—in fact, keeping the issue mundane may make more sense, as extreme offenses are likely to be covered up by the cult. If someone saw a murder, the witness may have already gone to the authorities, but if someone is bothered by people cutting through the woods behind their house in the middle of the night, they wouldn't necessarily call the police—yet, if asked about it by the investigators, they would probably love to complain and talk about the "weird" people they have seen in the vicinity.

These "friends" to the investigators might also have their own secrets. They may be involved in illegal activity or have been snooping where they shouldn't, and they don't want to go to the authorities. Alternatively, such witnesses might be too scared to come forward to the police but might talk to the nice librarian asking some casual questions. There is the possibility of an ex-cultist or kidnapped victim who somehow escapes from the cult. Perhaps a cultist holding on to a shred of their humanity now looks for an opportunity to stop the cult—but they need the investigators' help in doing so.

Example #1: *Rachel's cult doesn't have any known enemies, but some of the cult's members have plenty of personal enemies. There are those who jealousy watch the well-to-do arrive at their neighbor's mansions to attend lavish parties—parties they have not been invited to. There is the hired help that found bloody clothing under a bed, and the limousine driver who saw the body of a young girl being carried out of a (cultist's) home. And the enemies of those members who lead major corporations— enemies that seek the downfall of competitors.*

Example #2: *Andrew's cult lives in a quiet community and appears to have good relationships with the neighbors—except "Old" Pete Brewster. One cultist attempted to butter him up, but Old Pete saw straight through their honeyed words. Indeed, Old Pete doesn't like the way that Preacher Conway goes about rabblerousing. While he hasn't seen any illegal activity, Old Pete can smell that there's something going on. He doesn't like those people at St. Luke's, nor the noises they make late at night. Old Pete keeps an eye out for anything shady.*

Example #3: *being homeless teens, Chad's cultists are disliked by many in the neighborhood, who see them as troublemakers. The shopkeepers know they steal from their stores, while the beat cops grow tired of dispersing them for loitering. The parents of other teenagers don't want their children hanging out with them. There's no shortage of folk who don't like the Decedents.*



Old Pete

CULT FLOWCHARTS & WORKSHEET

To help plot the cults you design for games, the following may be a useful reference. As you go through the process, write down names, places, items, spells, or anything else that is important to the cult on some scrap paper and draw circles around them. When the next element pops up, write it down and circle it too. Then, draw a line from the first key element to the second. On that line, write what connects the two things in your story. Continue to do this with each new element and it will build a web of connections and plot ideas. See the cult organizational diagrams in **Chapter 2** for examples (pages 43, 60, 76, 91, 108).

All elements don't need to be connected to each other, but they should be connected to at least one other element. After you've gone through the process, think about which elements could trigger the start of a scenario or where possible clues or interactions with the investigators could fit. Use these as the basis for developing plots and building stories that have meaningful and personal connections.

Once you have some ideas from the flowchart, record the key information on the **Cult Worksheet Master** (page 362) and the **Cult Leader Master** (page 363). As well as these blank master sheets to copy and use for your own designs, pre-filled versions illustrating the three example cults described in this chapter provide a handy reference—as well as ready-made "new" cults you can use or adapt for your games.

CULT LEADER

CULT NAME	LEADER NAME	AGE	GENDER
Children of Cthuhlu	Carol Parker	48	Female

OCCUPATION US Representative for State of Massachusetts

BACKGROUND White; rich, privileged.

DESCRIPTION Short, with curled light-brown hair; conservatively dressed. During rituals, wears a sheer white dress, with a ceremonial octopoid mask.

PERSONALITY/ TRAITS Appears conservative and religious. Always smiling. Friendly eyes, but with sadness behind them. Always polite, even if she's about to kill someone. Loves to drink cappuccinos. Hates cats. Loves her adopted daughter Melinda (age 8); hates husband Herb.

	Reg	Half	Fifth
STR	35	17	7
CON	40	20	8
SIZ	50	25	10
DEX	55	27	11
APP	60	30	12
POW	75	37	15
EDU	80	40	16
INT	70	35	14

	Starting	Current
SANITY	0	
HIT POINTS	9	
LUCK	75	

	Maximum	Current
MAGIC POINTS	15	

DAMAGE BONUS: 0 | BUILD: 0 | MOVE: 7

SKILLS Accounting 35%, Charm 80%, Credit Rating 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Fast Talk 55%, History 40%, Intimidate 45%, Law 50%, Library Use 60%, Listen 60%, Language (English) 80%, Occult 45%, Persuade 85%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 55%.

	Reg	Half	Fifth	Damage
BRAWL	25	12	5	1D3
DODGE	27	13	5	

Weapon	Reg	Half	Fifth	Damage
.32 auto	20	10	4	1D8
Dagger	70	35	14	1D4

SPELLS Contact Cthulhu, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler, Wrack.

SPECIAL POWERS Influence people: works as Mental Suggestion spell (pg. 260 Rulebook) - except the MP costs are reduced by half, rounded down.

OTHER Source of Powers: Tomes

Cult Worksheet

Cult Name	Diety	Year/Setting	Main Location
Children of Cthulhu	Cthulhu	2021 / Modern	Boston, Mass.

Goals/Means

To collect Mythos tomes and knowledge. Holds monthly rituals, and big rituals on Halloween and Walpurgisnacht involving summoning a dimensional shambler, human sacrifice, and contacting Cthulhu.

Structure

Leader—Carol Parker; three lieutenants (Deacons)—Colin Daniels, Lucy Tott, Matt Pfeifer (evangelical priest); 16 cult members. Parker wears a mask to keep identity secret.

Number of Members	Archetype/s
20	Aristocratic Cultist

Cthulhu Mythos: Leader	Cthulhu Mythos: Members	Sanity Level of Members
35%	5% to 15%	Zero to 40

Initiation

Swearing of oath and participation in ritual, as well as a donation of $20,000.

Other Locations

Various members' homes and private property.

Resources

Wealthy cult members, political and charitable donations routed to cult's coffers.

Tomes/Artifacts/Special

The Sonnets of R'lyeh, *The Puck Manuscript*, *Testimony of Winifred Donner*, ceremonial enchanted dagger. All kept in secret library in Parker's home.

Security

Private security firm (Spartan Security)—use Soldier Cultist archetype for stats.

Associated Monsters

Dimensional Shambler.

Key Dealings (Legal/Illegal)

Recreational and ritual drug use (heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, marijuana, LSD); access to law firms through members and leadership; high-ranking police officers in local and state law enforcement (some members, some are bribed). Mainly uses blackmail.

Enemies/Weaknesses

Eileen Johnson, daughter of Dale and Diane (Dale, head of Clove Industries, was a cult member killed during monster summoning). Some members have personal enemies (jealousy, business rivals, etc.). Some members jealous of Carol Parker's power/spells. Hired staff (chauffeur, etc.) may have seen "things."

Notes

Only Carol Parker knows spells; lieutenants and members have vague understanding of Cthulhu and have seen/interacted with a dimensional shambler. Some members desire to learn spells.

Cult Name	Leader Name	Age	Gender
Brotherhood of R'lyeh	Ben Conway	38	Male

Occupation	Background
Methodist Minister	White; middle class, privileged.

Description Average height, lean build; dressed in minister's black suit and collar; balding slightly with dark brown hair, and bright blue eyes. Physically fit.

Personality/ Traits Presents a friendly and caring public image, masking a strong inner sadism. Believes violence purifies. He loves his wife, Wanda (not in the cult). Womanizer.

	Reg	Half	Fifth
STR	55	27	11
CON	70	35	14
SIZ	55	27	11
DEX	40	20	8
APP	60	30	12
POW	85	42	17
EDU	70	35	14
INT	55	27	11

	Starting	Current
Sanity	0	
Hit Points	12	
Luck	85	

	Maximum	Current
Magic Points	17	

Damage Bonus	Build	Move
0	0	8

Skills Animal Handling 40%, Climb 50%, Credit Rating 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Fighting (Brawl) 70%, Firearms (Rifle/Shotgun) 50%, Intimidate 70%, Jump 55%, Natural World 40%, Navigate 50%, Occult 30%, Operate Heavy Machinery 50%, Survival (Wilderness) 40%, Swim 55%, Throw 45%, Track 60%.

Weapon	Reg	Half	Fifth	Damage
Brawl	70	35	14	1D3
12 gauge shotgun (2B)	50	25	10	4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	20	10	4	
Knife	70	35	14	1D4 + 2

Spells Contact Deity (Cthulhu), Shrivelling.

Special Powers

Other

Cult Worksheet

Cult Name	Diety	Year/Setting	Main Location
Brotherhood of R'lyeh	Cthulhu	1925 / 20s-30s	Oliver's Landing, South Carolina

Goals/Means

Violence. Destroy all other churches in Oliver's Landing through subversion and deceit. Convert or dispose of all Oliver's Landing residents. Purify one's self through violence. Believe Cthulhu will make life better for a select portion of humanity.

Structure

One leader—Preacher Ben Conway; five lieutenants—Lynn Samson (mother), Tim Landry (foreman), David Reynolds (ex-police), Beth Williams (shop owner), Buck Tanner (teacher); each manages 20 cult members.

Number of Members

100

Archetype/s

Blue-Collar Cultists mostly; a few Academic and Law Enforcement Cultists.

Cthulhu Mythos: Leader	Cthulhu Mythos: Members	Sanity Level of Members
30%	Lieutenants up to 4% (no spells) (everyone else zero)	20 to 50

Initiation

Recruits must kill something (animal or human). Those unable to kill on command are beaten down by the other members, but if they hold their own, they are given one final chance to kill. Those who pass get "baptized" by Conway's formless spawn.

Other Locations

St. Luke's Methodist Church.

Resources

Church donations, counseling center fees, members personal resources, heroin manufacturing.

Tomes/Artifacts/Special

The Book of the New Earth.

Security

Provided by members—use Law Enforcement Cultist for stats.

Associated Monsters

Formless Spawn (connected to Cthulhu) in Church basement.

Key Dealings (Legal/Illegal)

Use psychoactive drugs, called "The Blessing"; uses dummy chemical company to import ingredients from Asia. Supplies heroin to bring in cash. Cult members help out with local old people and then uses these people to keep watch around the church and neighborhood.

Enemies/Weaknesses

Old Pete Brewster, crotchety neighbour who dislikes Parker and his church.

Notes

CULT LEADER

CULT NAME	LEADER NAME	AGE	GENDER
The Decedents	Devan Diaz	19	Male

OCCUPATION	BACKGROUND
Homeless teenager	Hispanic; homeless since age 13.

DESCRIPTION Short and thin. Dark hair, long on the top with shaved sides. Many facial piercings. Large brown eyes. Dresses in old, patched-up clothes with a punk rock sort of vibe.

PERSONALITY/ TRAITS Arrogant. Always smirking. Likes classic 70s rock music. Misses his mother, who died when he was 11-years-old, leaving him with an abusive father (who he wants to kill).

	Reg	Half	Fifth		Reg	Half	Fifth		Reg	Half	Fifth		Reg	Half	Fifth		Starting	Current
STR	45	22	9	**CON**	50	25	10	**SIZ**	45	22	9	**DEX**	75	37	15	**SANITY**	0	
APP	40	20	8	**POW**	60	30	12	**EDU**	50	25	10	**INT**	45	22	9	**HIT POINTS**	9	

DAMAGE BONUS	BUILD	MOVE	MAGIC POINTS (Maximum / Current)	LUCK (Starting / Current)
0	0	8	12	60

SKILLS Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Dodge 65%, Fast Talk 65%, Fighting (Brawl) 70%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 40%, Locksmith 50%, Psychology 60%, Sleight of Hand 55%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 75%.

	Reg	Half	Fifth	Damage		Reg	Half	Fifth	Damage
BRAWL	70	35	14	1D3	**DODGE**	65	32	13	
Weapon: Knife	70	35	14	1D4 + 2					
Weapon:									

SPELLS None.

SPECIAL POWERS The Sacrament (Cthulhu 'shrooms)—Devan dominates the hivemind of those who eat the 'shrooms. He's still learning about this power and how to use it.

OTHER

Cult Worksheet

Cult Name	Diety	Year/Setting	Main Location
The Decedents	Cthulhu	2017/Modern	Santa Monica, California

Goals/Means

Destroy society to make way for a new society that will prosper with the return of Cthulhu. Sow corruption and deceit. On the local scale, destroy businesses and property in Santa Monica while expanding the hivemind. Devan Diaz found an idol washed-up on the shore and began experiencing contact with Cthulhu. The cult has no real understanding about Cthulhu, but is influenced by the Dead God. Cult aims to expand the hivemind via distribution of the mushrooms.

Structure

One leader (Reverend) Devon Diaz, with all other cult members being connected to him via the hivemind. Diaz's mind influences all the other minds. The whole thing is chaotic in practical terms. Size of cult determined by how many have eaten the mushrooms.

Number of Members	Archetype/s
25	Young Cultists

Cthulhu Mythos: Leader	Cthulhu Mythos: Members	Sanity Level of Members
25%	25% (hivemind)	Zero to 10

Initiation

Consuming the sacrament (Cthulhu 'shroom) and connecting with the hivemind.

Other Locations

Small shanty village in the woods of Topanga Valley. Street locations, including 3rd Street Promenade.

Resources

All members of the cult are homeless, only getting money through panhandling, going to food banks, or stealing.

Tomes/Artifacts/Special

The Sacrament (Cthulhu 'shrooms)—Devan was directed through Cthulhu's dreams to a narrow canyon in the Topanga Forest where, following a meteorite shower, these weird mushrooms grow. Consumption alters a person's mental frequency, easier to tune into Cthulhu's thoughts. Those who eat the 'shrooms join a hivemind – with Devan as the dominate mind.

Security

The Decedents provide their own security, relying mostly on stealth and secrecy for protection.

Associated Monsters

None.

Key Dealings (Legal/Illegal)

The Decedents sometimes do favors for drug dealers and crooked cops to acquire drugs and ignore cult activity.

Enemies/Weaknesses

The cultists are disliked in the neighborhood. Shopkeepers angry about thefts from stores; the beat cops tired of their troublemaking; parents of other teenagers scared of their children being influenced. High doses of psychotropic drugs can cause disconnection from the hivemind.

Notes

Supply of mushrooms is diminishing. Devan receives visions of Cthulhu, R'lyeh, and a post-apocalyptic future, but he doesn't yet know what this all means.

CHAPTER 4

CULTISTS, MONSTERS, & ARTIFACTS

The information in this chapter provides some quick-reference profiles for a range of "average" cultists from different backgrounds, as well as some monstrous cultists, all of which help flesh out a cult. A look at the Cthulhu Cult's enigmatic Deathless Masters discusses the motivations, powers, and role of these immortal sorcerers, and delivers guidance on using these formidable characters for your campaigns. In addition, a number of monsters and artifacts connected to Great Cthulhu are examined, many of which could be useful when designing scenarios. The chapter is rounded off with a selection of new or variant spells that could be used by Cthulhu cultists.

HUMAN CULTISTS

This section focuses on human cultists hailing from a variety of walks of life. These may be used "as is" for dropping into games when such characters are needed, or as templates to adjust for specific named NPCs.

ADJUSTING CULTIST ARCHETYPES

The information provided in **Chapter 3**, such as **Table 2: Description and Personality** (page 128), may also be used here to quickly determine a couple of specifics about an average cultist. Most average cultists tend to be "faceless" NPCs, but noting a distinct look or trait can help to differentiate such folk to the investigators. The characteristics and skills for each archetype may be adjusted as needed, perhaps beefing these up for a cult lieutenant or "inner" circle member. A standard set of values that any low-ranking cultist might possess is as follows—if in doubt, just use these when you want to quickly determine a nameless cultist NPC off the cuff in the middle of the game.

Basic Cultist Profile

STR 60	**CON** 40	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 50	**INT** 65
APP 50	**POW** 50	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 00†	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

†*Default Sanity is zero but may be 20 or 30 at the Keeper's discretion (see* ***Sanity*** *box, nearby).*

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3 (+1 with knuckledusters)
Knife	40% (20/8), damage 1D4+2
Club	40% (20/8), damage 1D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Climb 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Drive Auto 40%, Jump 30%, Listen 35%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 35%, Swim 25%, Throw 40%.

Social skill: pick one from Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade at 45%.

Armor: none.

Spells: none.

Opposite: Black Winged Ones

Academic Cultist, *archaeology professor*

Learned, meticulous, and self-absorbed, the academic cultist usually prefers to remain in the background and offer advice and strategy to those of a higher rank. May view the cult as means to an end—to obtain information, texts, and access to things difficult to obtain.

STR 50	**CON** 40	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 55	**INT** 80
APP 45	**POW** 70	**EDU** 90	**SAN** 00	**HP** 9
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Knife	25% (12/5), damage 1D4+2
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Anthropology 50%, Archaeology 80%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, History 75%, Language (Latin) 60%, Language (Other) 40%, Language (Own) 90%, Library Use 75%, Natural World 35%, Occult 50%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 25%, Science (Geology) 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 30%, Throw 25%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 80% chance to know 1D4+1 spells.

Aristocratic Cultist, *entrepreneur*

Wealthy, charismatic, and often greedy, such aristocrats are usually at the top of the food chain—and they know it. When not in their ceremonial robes, they dress expensively and probably have access to good quality vehicles and equipment. May provide land and/or manor houses for cult ceremonies, and possibly schemes to depose whoever runs the cult, believing they are better suited to take command.

STR 40	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 50	**INT** 65
APP 70	**POW** 55	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 11	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Knife	35% (17/7), damage 1D4+2
12g-shotgun (2B)	45% (22/9), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Appraise 40%, Art/Craft (Fine Art) 35%, Charm 45%, Credit Rating 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 40%, Intimidate 40%, Language (Other) 60%, Language (Own) 65%, Law 20%, Listen 35%, Ride 45%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Swim 50%, Throw 30%, Track 35%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 50% chance to know 1D4 spells.

Blue-Collar Cultist, *manual worker*

Could be a factory worker, farmer, builder/laborer, mechanic, or electrician. Sometimes skilled in a particular craft or a jack-of-all-trades. People that build the world and keep it running. May get caught up in a cult through a desire for some kind of fulfilment, be it spiritual or temporal. Possibly has political leanings that may become confused or fused with a cult's ideology.

SANITY

While the majority of "faceless" cultists will have zero Sanity (all of the templates here have a default of zero Sanity), some Keepers may want more flexibility. Roll 1D6 for a quick Sanity value as needed.

1. 05 Sanity
2. 10 Sanity
3. 20 Sanity
4. 25 Sanity
5. 30 Sanity
6. 40 Sanity

STR 70	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 50	**INT** 45
APP 40	**POW** 40	**EDU** 35	**SAN** 00	**HP** 15
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 8	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4
Club	50% (25/10), damage 1D6+1D4
Knife	50% (25/10), damage 1D4+1D4
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Charm 40%, Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 6%, Fast Talk 60%, Intimidate 60%, Jump 45%, Language (Own) 35%, Listen 40%, Natural World 35%, Navigate 30%, Psychology 20%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 30%, Swim 30%, Throw 50%.
Occupational (choose two): Animal Handling 70%, Art/Craft (choose) 70%, Demolitions 45%, Electrical Repair 60%, Locksmith 60%, Mechanical Repair 70%, Operate Heavy Machinery 70%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 10% chance to know 1 spell.

Criminal Cultist: Burglar

Those who possess certain skills highly useful to a cult. Those with (perhaps) a wide range of criminal contacts and who may know someone with particular expertise when a job needs doing. Criminal cultists know how to skirt the law and go about unnoticed.

STR 65	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 60	**INT** 50
APP 35	**POW** 45	**EDU** 35	**SAN** 00	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Cosh	50% (25/10), damage 1D8
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Appraise 30%, Art/Craft (Acting) 50%, Disguise 40%, Credit Rating 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Fast Talk 70%, Jump 60%, Language (Own) 35%, Listen 60%, Locksmith 60%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Navigate 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 70%, Throw 45%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 10% chance to know 1D2 spells.

Criminal Cultist: Muscle

Those who make ends meet using their physicality to get things done, be it as a debt collector, enforcing a protection racket, or as a killer for hire. Within a cult, such individuals are used for enforcing the leader's will, making the best use of their skillset to ensure the cult's enemies are kept silent, while also being the ones who capture sacrificial victims and guard them till needed.

STR 80*	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 80	**DEX** 50	**INT** 45
APP 40	**POW** 50	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 00	**HP** 15
DB: +1D4*	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** 25

**For seriously strong types, increase STR to 90, DB to +1D6, and Build to 2.*

Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4
Knife	70% (35/14), damage 1D4+2+1D4
Club	70% (35/14), damage 1D6+1D4
.34 revolver	55% (27/11), damage 1D10
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Credit Rating 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate 70%, Jump 40%, Language (Own) 30%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Navigate 45%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 60%, Throw 50%, Track 30%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 10% chance to know 1 spell.

Law Enforcement Cultist, *police officer*

May work by day as a law enforcement officer (local or state in the US), or could be someone within a national role, such as within the Federal Bureau of Investigation (the Bureau of Investigation pre-1933) or the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (Bureau of Internal Revenue in 1920). Alternatively, could be an ex-police officer with some contacts still on the force.

STR 70	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 55	**INT** 60
APP 55	**POW** 60	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 00	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 12	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4
Nightstick	65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4
.38 revolver	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Charm 35%, Climb 50%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 45%, First Aid 45%, History 40%, Intimidate 40%, Jump 30%, Language (Own) 60%, Law 30%, Listen 40%, Navigate 60%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 65%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 40%, Swim 40%, Throw 40%, Track 35%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 10% chance to know 1 spell.

Medical Cultist, *doctor*

A doctor, nurse or even a veterinarian, skilled in the healing arts. Their understanding of the workings of the human body may be turned to malign purposes, such as weird experimentation, or used to quietly patch-up wounded cult members.

STR 45	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 60	**INT** 80
APP 60	**POW** 65	**EDU** 95	**SAN** 00	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 13	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Scalpel*	50% (25/10), damage 1D4+1
Dodge	30% (15/6)

**Medical knowledge means knowing how and where to cause the most damage.*

Skills

Anthropology 40%, Charm 50%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, First Aid 80%, Intimidate 40%, Language (Latin) 30%, Language (Own) 95%, Law 20%, Library Use 55%, Listen 25%, Medicine 75%, Occult 25%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 50%, Science (Biology) 60%, Science (Pharmacy) 55%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 30%, Throw 30%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 20% chance to know 1D3 spells.

Soldier Cultist, *military experience*

Someone who is, or was, a member of the military. The cultist may continue to serve in some capacity or now work as a mercenary, guard, or in a more civilian line of work. Either a non-commissioned soldier or an officer.

Non-Commissioned Soldier

STR 65	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 70	**INT** 60
APP 40	**POW** 50	**EDU** 50	**SAN** 00	**HP** 13
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4
Bayonet (knife)	60% (30/12), damage 1D4+2+1D4
Bayonet (spear)	50% (25/10), damage 1D8+1D4
.30 carbine rifle	40% (20/8), damage 2D6
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 70%, Credit Rating 30%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 40%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Language (Own) 50%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Navigate 45%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 60%, Survival (choose) 35%, Swim 55%, Throw 50%, Track 35%.

Armor: none.
Spells: none.

Officer

STR 50	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 65	**INT** 70
APP 50	**POW** 60	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 12	**Luck:** —

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
.38 auto	45% (22/9), damage 1D10
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Charm 30%, Climb 60%, Credit Rating 40%, First Aid 35%, History 45%, Jump 35%, Language (Other) 45%, Language (Own) 70%, Listen 40%, Navigate 50%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 50%, Survival (choose) 40%, Swim 50%, Throw 40%, Track 25%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 20% chance to know 1D2 spells.

Young Cultist, *high school to street punk*

A young cultist could be a high school or college student or they may have skipped or dropped out of high school or college and now be in the workforce, or have turned to crime. Typically, those employed will be working in low-wage service jobs that require little training or experience. Depending on their background/experience, skillsets will vary—three versions follow: in education, in work, in crime.

STR 50	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 70	**INT** 60
APP 55	**POW** 45	**EDU** 50	**SAN** 00*	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 9	**Luck:** —

**May not have been fully exposed to the Cthulhu Mythos; adjust Sanity to 20–50 range and reduce Cthulhu Mythos to 1%.*

Young Cultist in Education

Combat

Brawl	25% (13/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Art/Craft (choose) 30%, Charm 25%, Climb 40%, Credit Rating 10%, Cthulhu Mythos* 5%, Fast Talk 35%, Jump 40%, Language (Other) 20%, Language (Own) 50%, Library Use 50%, Listen 30%, Persuade 20%, Science (choose) 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 25%, Swim 40%, Throw 40%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 10% chance to know 1 spell.

Young Cultist in Work

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Art/Craft (choose) 10%, Charm 30%, Climb 40%, Credit Rating 12%, Cthulhu Mythos* 5%, Fast Talk 45%, Jump 40%, Language (Own) 50%, Listen 30%, Persuade 25%, Psychology 30%, Sleight of Hand 25%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 45%, Swim 40%, Throw 40%.

Armor: none.
Spells: none.

Young Cultist in Crime

Combat

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3
Knife	45% (22/9), damage 1D4
Club	45% (22/9), damage 1D6
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Charm 40%, Climb 60%, Credit Rating 6%, Cthulhu Mythos* 5%, Fast Talk 50%, Intimidate 35%, Jump 45%, Language (Own) 50%, Listen 40%, Navigate 60%, Psychology 35%, Sleight of Hand 50%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 60%, Swim 30%, Throw 40%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 10% chance to know 1 spell.

Cult Priest/Priestess

Perhaps a second-in-command or otherwise trusted cult member who has deeper insight into the Mythos. Able to officiate at ceremonies as well as support rituals led by the cult's leader.

STR 55	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 60	**INT** 75
APP 35	**POW** 80	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 16	**Luck:** 35

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3
Knife	40% (20/8), damage 1D4+2
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (music/song) 40%, Climb 25%, Credit Rating 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 35%, Jump 30%, Language (Own) 70%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 30%, Listen 35%, Occult 40%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Throw 45%.
Social skill: pick one from Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate, or Persuade at 60%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 1D6+1 spells.

Cult Leader

A generic cult leader; Keepers are advised to fashion cult leaders using the advice in Chapter 3, making each one unique.

STR 65	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 70	**INT** 85
APP 50	**POW** 90	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 00	**HP** 13
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 18	**Luck:** 90

Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4
Knife	80% (40/16), damage 1D4+2+1D4
.38 auto	50% (25/10), damage 1D10
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Charm 60%, Climb 40%, Credit Rating 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 45%, Disguise 45%, Intimidate 70%, Jump 35%, Language (Own) 80%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 45%, Listen 40%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 70%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 60%, Throw 35%.

Armor: none.
Spells: 1D6+1D4+2 spells.

CTHULHU'S BLESSINGS

Certain, favored cultists may receive blessings from Cthulhu (or Dagon or Hydra), granting some form of power, mutation, or ability. While not every rank and file cultist should have such a thing, the Keeper is encouraged to grant one or two low-level cultists with a blessing to surprise the investigators. Naturally, such boons are more likely to be found among high-ranking cultists who have given up their lives to serve their god.

A selection of possible blessings follows. The Keeper is free to take these as inspiration and design their own, or modify these to suit the nature of the cult and the story they are creating. Note that some blessings require an expenditure of magic points, while others cost the cultist nothing to use.

- **Ageless:** slows down the advance of age, halving the aging process.
- **Armor of Will:** (variable MP) deflects harm, costing a number of magic points equal to the damage inflicted (may elect to reduce all or part of damage).
- **Consume Lifeforce:** consume and steal the magic points of others. The consumption can take various forms: drinking a person's blood (2 MP per round), eating flesh (3 MP per round), or strangling a person (1 MP per round). With enough time, all of a person's magic points may be consumed, leaving that person unconscious, or may continue to drain hit points once all magic points have gone, leaving the person injured or dead.
- **Create Mist:** (5 MP) mist pours from eyes and mouth, creating a dense fog 50 yards/meters in diameter.
- **Cthulhu's Kiss:** (2+ MP) the flesh becomes a channel for Cthulhu's power, burning and corrupting the flesh of those touched. The effect lasts one round per 2 magic points invested, inflicting 1D6+1 damage per round it is continued; damage is automatic on rounds following a successful (Brawl) attack. Victim may attempt to break free (on following rounds) with a successful opposed STR roll.
- **Hear Dreams:** (2 MP) able to read the dreams of a specific and known target, and discern meaning to grant insight (granting one bonus die if acting in opposition to that person or may attempt an INT roll to determine their next likely course of action).
- **Hyper-Sight:** able to perceive an area (up to 50 feet/15 m) in multiple dimensions—all directions, behind walls, in containers, and so on, all at once. Cannot see into magically protected areas. Cannot be surprised (always allowed a Dodge/action).
- **Increase Mass:** (10 MP) expands body mass to double normal SIZ and STR (which may increase hit points, movement rate, damage bonus, and build). The new physique lasts for 1D4 hours.
- **Gills:** able to breathe underwater, or, if possessing deep one heritage, may find their transformation into full deep one is rapidly accelerated.
- **Give Pain:** (4 MP per round) touch causes a target's flesh to melt, with a successful attack (Brawl) dealing 1D4+1 damage per round; target may halve the damage with a successful CON roll (per round).
- **Glamor:** (2 MP) grants the ability to appear beautiful and beguiling to others (of either sex), and lasts for six hours.
- **Imbue:** (5 MP) grants increased strength and dexterity, temporarily increasing STR and DEX by +4D10 points (which may increase movement rate, damage bonus, and build).
- **Mesmerize:** (2 MP) may hypnotize others (winning an opposed POW roll) to question them or direct them to perform a single task (not harmful to themselves).
- **Mind Control:** (1 MP per person) exert influence over other people similar to the Dominate spell; each person targeted must be within 10 yards/meters, and each must be overcome in an opposed POW roll. Commands harmful to the target/s may be resisted with a second opposed POW roll.
- **Mind Gate:** (3 MP) able to send forth consciousness to explore other dimensions, while leaving physical body in a meditative/sleeping state.
- **More Limbs:** body has grown extra limbs (+1D4), enabling additional unarmed attacks (+1D2 attacks).
- **Regenerate:** accelerated natural healing, granting +1D3 hit points per round (death at zero hit points).
- **Self-Ward:** (4 MP) protection from physical damage that acts as 6-point armor.
- **Sprout Tentacles:** (3+ MP) tentacles rapidly grow from face or body, granting an extra attack per 3 MP invested. Attacks use Brawl skill and deal 1D4+DB damage. Witnesses may need to make a Sanity roll (0/1D6 loss).
- **Throat Tentacles:** (5 MP) shoots forth two tentacles from mouth, which may hold items or be used to attack. When attacking, both tentacles may attempt to swipe a target per round (i.e. two attacks) or work together to strangle (one attack). Such attacks are in addition to normal attacks per round.
- **Touch of Ice:** (5 MP) touch causes a target's flesh to freeze, with a successful attack (Brawl) dealing 1D4 damage.
- **Transformation:** cultist is changing into something other than human, and the process may already be half or more completed—the Keeper may adjust cultist's profile to embody benefits from a particular monster (such as increased hit points, damage bonus, armor, and so on).

DEATHLESS MASTERS

"By our will shall you know the serpentine dreams of the Sleeper of R'lyeh. By our command shall you forge the world to come. By our power shall you doubt not our resolve. For we are legion. For we are the Masters. We see all."

—*The Undying Declaration*, anon.

No examination of the Cthulhu Cult would be complete without attempting to discern the nature and role of the so-called Deathless Masters who allegedly control and direct humanity's worship of Great Cthulhu. These cultists are known by numerous names: Deathless Masters, Undying Masters, Undying Ones, and the Chosen of Cthulhu, to name but four. They rarely play an active part in the day-to-day machinations of Cthulhu-worshipping cults and always seem to work from a remove, using others as pawns to further their secret agenda.

The clearest picture is obtained from the story of Pascal Castro as described in the story *The Call of Cthulhu*, and further detailed here in the **Louisiana Swamp Cult** (page 54). In the original fiction, Castro refers to "deathless Chinamen," but this term is misleading as the Deathless Masters do not derive solely from China, and their number comprises people from around the world. Castro's words appear based on his own experience of meeting "deathless Chinamen," who may not even have been Chinese at all. The deathless element could be ascribed to something similar to the Sokushinbutsu—monks or nuns who enter a state of mummification while alive. Such individuals have been attributed to different regions including India, Tibet, China, and Japan. Thus, it could be assumed that the Deathless Masters may, in part, be similar to these mummified yet living humans, although their creed and beliefs are a far cry from the teachings of Buddhism.

The following section looks at the Undying Ones, offering ideas and a range of possibilities for how they could be incorporated into campaigns, and details what elements (spells, powers, knowledge) they may possess.

ROLE OF THE MASTERS

It matters little if the Cthulhu Cult is a broad "church" composed of numerous Cthulhu cults, each operating without knowledge or regard of the others, or a single unified entity with many tentacles sprouting pockets of Cthulhu worship around the globe. In either case, the Deathless Masters' role would appear to be one of guiding humanity's worship of Cthulhu. In theory,

these worshippers (whether collectively or individually) have come the closest to interpreting and understanding Cthulhu's dreams. The simple fact that they have lived many lifetimes means that their prolonged contact with Cthulhu has had time to coalesce and sharpen, providing them with a certain clarity in deciphering and deducing the Great Old One's desires and designs. In short, they profess to understand Cthulhu.

Of course, being human, the Deathless Masters can never fully comprehend Cthulhu's mind. Whatever messages they receive, must still be filtered through a degree of human perception. It is up to each Keeper to decide whether such messages have been interpreted correctly or if their commands are simply what they "think" Cthulhu wants. One could argue that the act of becoming a Deathless Master essentially causes that person to become a vessel for a portion of Cthulhu's will, and thus they are no longer truly human at all, but rather channels through which pockets of Cthulhu's dreams take root. If so, then their commands would be strongly in tune with the Old One's desires and should be taken as extensions of Cthulhu's will.

In one sense, the Deathless Masters could be seen as a cult unto itself, with a small number of highly adept members spread across human civilization, all pursuing the same goal—the restoration of Cthulhu's dominion—each working in isolation but telepathically (or otherwise) communicating with one another. Each uses other cults and people to further their aims, nudging them (gently or not) in the direction chosen by the Deathless Masters. The relationships with "lesser" cults probably vary. Most Deathless Masters prefer to work from the shadows (secretly guiding and advising a cult's leader), while others may come forward (probably in disguise) at certain times to take over the leadership of a cult to ensure the successful conclusion of a specific project or goal.

Primarily, the Undying Ones act to guide those humans somehow touched by Cthulhu. Such guidance may be accomplished in person, with a Deathless Master journeying to the target or the target being summoned to them, or the guidance may come via telepathy, allowing a Deathless Master to influence through thoughts and dreams (much in the same manner as Cthulhu).

Collectively, the Undying Ones appear to work in unison to direct the worship of their master and pave the way for Cthulhu's return. Imagine the possibility that there are 13 Deathless Masters in total, each working individually to guide an array of cults around the world to achieve certain tasks or behaviors, while coordinating their joint efforts through mental communication—a sort of psychic inner circle where such plans and actions are agreed upon.

Of course, nothing is set in stone, and each Keeper should reflect on where and how the Deathless Masters interact with their plots and stories. In your game, this hidden cabal of high priests and priestesses should be tailored to suit your campaign and the story you wish to build with your players. If you prefer the notion that each Undying One is a separate "unit" with its own interpretation of Cthulhu's will, then fine. Alternatively, if you see them as a hidden conspiracy at the center of the mystery, working together to shape a greater "Cthulhu Cult" consisting of numerous small cults, that's fine too.

In terms of the goals of the Deathless Masters (either collectively or individually), the following points provide some inspiration and are meant to help define just what these insidious cultists want. Like most human worshippers of the Old Ones and Outer Gods, the Deathless Masters not only want to reshape the world with the return of alien gods, but also want to survive—believing that through their worship and actions they somehow become favored, and will thereby reap certain rewards.

- Establish and grow a world-wide conspiracy of Cthulhu worshippers.
- Identify and help key individuals to hear Cthulhu's call, and then guide their beliefs.
- Act to control Cthulhu-worshipping cults, thereby to form a network (the Cthulhu Cult) under their direct command.
- Maintain and grow the conspiracy between humans and deep ones.
- Drive humanity to abandon the concept of morality so as to become like the Old Ones and thus prepare humanity for when the stars are right.
- Acquire such knowledge and power that they become like the Great Old Ones, attaining transformation into something beyond human.
- Act to create the necessary environment or events needed to wake Cthulhu.

One way to consider the role of the Deathless Masters is to see them as "middle agents," who consider themselves the chosen interface between Cthulhu and humanity. They seek and hear Cthulhu's commands and then relay these to others. Thus, in their view, they are Cthulhu's mouthpiece, and only they truly understand Cthulhu.

A possible twist, based on the assumption above, could see the Undying Ones possessing their own agenda, divergent from the common belief of Cthulhu cults. Here, the Deathless Masters work to maintain Cthulhu's sleep, as opposed to waking the Old One, as they understand that all humanity will perish when that event takes place. This small cabal has grown accustomed to power and immortality, and does not wish for Cthulhu's return until they have found a certain means to survive. They like being the "top dogs," and do all in their capacity to distract and prevent Cthulhu worshippers from getting too ambitious in their endeavors to raise their god. In effect, stretching things out as long as they can to buy them more time. Perhaps it is they who wish to inherit the earth.

WHAT IS A DEATHLESS MASTER?

While some Deathless Masters remain physically active, a few may be likened to mummified living priests. After living numerous lifetimes, even the most powerful of magics may be unable to prevent the ultimate corruption of the flesh. And, as their minds accumulate higher degrees of Mythos wisdom and power, their fleshy bodies are needed less and less. Thus, the power of thought eventually transcends their flesh—they are able to view the world remotely while speaking to others through telepathy and visions. Such Deathless Masters simply stop moving and become living mummies tended by acolytes. In time their bodies may die, yet they seek a way to free their minds to journey to other planes of existence and/or combine with the deep intelligences of the Mythos. Some living mummies may find that their minds, through near-constant contact with Cthulhu, become transposed by Cthulhu's will. Their will is consumed and replaced by a portion of Cthulhu's thoughts.

There are likely few Deathless Masters in total, and even fewer who have become living mummies. Of the rest, they may appear (more or less) human and go about in society as they see fit. Some Undying Ones may take an active role, guiding a cult from a relative position of power, perhaps taking over its leadership until they move on and focus their attention elsewhere. Others work from the shadows. Most, if not all, rarely divulge who and what they are, as to do so opens them up to risk. Better to work through others. Each probably has their own idiosyncrasies, as being human means their emotions and experiences can still play a factor. As such, they could be encountered in almost any walk of life, from your kindly next-door neighbor to a member of a board of directors for a powerful business, from a hermit-like monk to a traveling salesperson. Like a snake, they shed their "skin" and take on a new persona and mask to suit their need.

As a baseline, Deathless Masters are long-lived high priests/priestesses and sorcerers of Cthulhu. Their primary task is to prepare (possibly hasten) the way for Cthulhu's return. They work through others, principally Cthulhu cultists, and they control the "Cthulhu Cult"—either by their own design or (perhaps) as vessels of Cthulhu's will.

UNDYING POWER

Each Deathless Master should be more or less unique. Each has followed their own path in their worship of Cthulhu before ascending into this strange and secretive cabal. All should be considered powerful sorcerers, able to command a range of spells drawn from their own researches and also directly learned through their mental contact with Cthulhu. Each is liable to possess common or unique powers—blessings from Cthulhu—enabling them to perform certain near-magical feats.

Following are a range of abilities and powers that a Deathless One may have at their disposal, as well as a selection of spells. Some of these are likely to be possessed by all the Undying Ones, while others should be selected when designing one of these formidable foes.

Common Powers

Command: the voice and/or the mind of an Undying One can compel other humans and animals to undertake certain actions if they are physically within 1 mile (1.6 km). For animals, the command is automatic, while humans must be overcome with an opposed POW roll (if the Deathless Master's POW is double that of the target, the target suffers a penalty die to their roll). The command must be reasonably simple and clear, such as attack, flee, sleep, and so on. More complex commands do not work on animals, but may do so with specific humans—the Keeper may call for the target to succeed with an INT roll to determine if they understand what they are being compelled to do). The range of command may be extended by spending 5 magic points for each mile beyond the first (there is no limit other than the availability of magic points). In general, this power (at a simple level) works on no more than 1D10 targets within the area of effect, although if a specific person is known to the Deathless Master, that person alone can be targeted with more complex commands. Note that minions of Cthulhu (such as deep ones, star-spawn, and dwellers in the depths) may also be targeted by this power—up to 1D10 individual lesser minions or a single star-spawn/greater minion.

Cthulhu's Dreams: possesses a direct connection to Cthulhu's mind, able to receive elements of the Old One's dreams, which can then be interpreted and acted upon. The Keeper decides whether the message is intuitively understood or if the Deathless Master is filtering it though human perception and thereby concocting their own interpretation, which may be different.

Longevity: through certain means, the ability to live far beyond a normal human lifespan. This may be achieved through a spell (or combination of spells), such as Apportion Ka*, Create Self-Ward, Extend Life, Food of Life, Immortality, Koshchey's Death, Mind Transfer*, Pact of Quachil Uttaus, Resurrection*, Sacred Molting of the Serpent, Steal Life, or Transfer Soul.

Alternatively, longevity may arise from some sort of power granted by Cthulhu to the Deathless Master. At the simplest level, the Undying one is imbued with a fraction of Cthulhu's vitality, which ensures immortality. A more complex version may require the Deathless Master to regularly consume blood (much like a vampire) or else the "lifeforce" of another person.

*Denotes a spell found in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, other spells can be found in the *Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic*.

Telepathy: able to convey their thoughts through mental exchanges, which may be received as a voice heard in the target's mind and/or as visions or dreams. The target must have experienced some form of "contact" with Cthulhu (via an idol, image, mental contact, dream, and so on), which enables the Deathless Master to identify and focus down on them. Any distance upon the earth may be covered. Targets who do not possess experience of Cthulhu may cunningly be given or sent an item depicting or fashioned with Cthulhu's likeness, thereby manufacturing the requirement for contact.

Travel: able to travel physically and mentally to other places; with living mummies, this power is limited to mental travel only. In terms of physical travel, Deathless Masters use Gates (either the Gate spell or, more commonly, a Gate device, such as Gate Boxes), whereas for mental travel the power may be innate and something bestowed or learned. Refer to the details of the Gate spell (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*) and Gate Boxes spell (*Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic*).

Mental travel enables the Undying One's mind to journey anywhere on earth and beyond, even to other dimensions, and may require some kind of physical focus, such as a gem stone, bone, or similar artifact. The cost of such journeys is paid in magic points per the **Gate Creation and Travel Costs** table (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* and *Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic*); the POW cost for creation should be ignored. In theory, the mind may continue to travel for as long as a Deathless Master's magic points hold out (at zero, the mind is snapped back to the body).

Common Spells

In addition to the possible knowledge of spells mentioned in **Longevity** and **Travel** (above), the following spells are likely known by all Deathless Masters:

- Call Deity: Father Dagon**
- Call Deity: Mother Hydra**
- Cloud Memory*
- Contact Cthulhu*
- Contact Deep One*
- Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu*
- Create Mist of R'lyeh*
- Deflect Harm
- Dominate*
- Implant Fear*
- Summon/Bind Deep One

*Denotes a spell found in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, other spells can be found in the *Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic*.
New spell, **New & Variant Spells, page 186, at end of this chapter.

Unique Powers

The following should be selected or used as inspiration when designing a Deathless Master, helping to fashion a unique sorcerer and high priest/priestess. It is advised to pick a maximum of two or three unique powers per character—these villains are powerful but they should not be completely impervious to the wiles and abilities of the investigators, as the players should always have a chance to win the day (total powerlessness in the face of "human" threats may be a recipe for player dissatisfaction). Keepers should scale the opposition based on their group's capabilities and the type of story being played—is this a grim and bleak campaign where there are no winners or are the investigators able to defeat (to some degree) the Deathless Master and their schemes? The latter certainly encourages a greater level of player motivation, even if the stakes are high.

Absorption: able to smother and then absorb another person into their own body. The ability costs 10 magic points and the Deathless Master must successfully attack the target with a

combat maneuver to grab and smother them. When absorbed (over 1D10 rounds), the target's hit points are transferred to the Deathless Master (increasing their total). During the period of absorption, the target may try to escape with a STR or POW roll opposed by the Deathless Master's POW.

Armor: some form of armor (which may be a mental energy shield, scales, or use of extradimensional space) that bestows an armor value of 2 to 6 points, or is equal to the number of magic points invested (each magic point creates one point of armor; armor points are depleted by absorbing damage points but can be renewed by investing further magic points on a subsequent round).

Breath of Cthulhu: great gouts of mist pour from the mouth of the Undying One, creating a dense fog (1 yard/meter per round). Navigation within the fog suffers a penalty die and visibility is limited to 3 feet (1 m).

Cry of Cthulhu: produces an alien-sounding scream that compels animals to flee and humans to freeze. Humans hearing the scream should make a Sanity roll (0/1D4 loss), with those suffering Sanity loss also required to make a POW roll, which, if failed, causes the person to become frozen in fear for 1D4 rounds. In addition, or alternatively, the cry inflicts 1D4 damage if the POW roll is failed.

Gather Heart: able to magically tear out a target's heart and have it leap into the Undying One's hand. The ability costs 10 magic points and the target must lose an opposed POW roll. If the target wins, they still suffer 1D4 damage from the awful experience.

Gather the Dead: possess the ability to imbue undeath into nearby corpses, animating them as zombies under the Undying One's will. Assume 1D6 to 2D10 corpses within an area of 1 mile (1.6 km).

Implant Spell: able to convey knowledge of a spell directly into a willing target's mind. The target may cast the spell (with its usual costs) but a casting roll is not required.

Insight: can impart cosmic knowledge by having a target stare into their eyes. If the Deathless Master wins an opposed POW roll, the target is transfixed and gains +1D10 points of Cthulhu Mythos per round until able to break away (winning an opposed POW roll, which can be attempted each round) or the procedure is stopped by the Deathless Master.

Mental Relocation: may temporarily shift their mind to inhabit another body, using that host body while their own remains in a state of torpor. This requires winning an opposed POW roll with the target host. The Undying One's consciousness may remain in the host body for an extended time (perhaps years), although the possession eventually begins to corrupt the host's flesh, as though horribly diseased (skin and organs begin to rot and so on), until the host is more or less a walking corpse held together only by the Deathless Master's will. Certain spells (such as Cast Out the Devil) or artifacts may force the possessing mind from the host.

Mesmerize: can hypnotize others by winning an opposed POW roll. Targets may be questioned (revealing all they know) or used to perform tasks (if a task calls for self-harm or would harm a loved one, the target may resist with another opposed POW roll).

Rebirth: at zero hit points, the Deathless Master transforms into a gaseous or viscous state, which after many hours or days reforms into their physical body, restored and healthy.

Regeneration: automatically heals 2 hit points per round (death at zero hit points; i.e. when reduced to zero HP, they die).

Touch of Cthulhu: the hands of the Deathless Master channel the raw energy of Cthulhu, when touching human skin (i.e. a successful attack) they burn and corrupt flesh, dealing 1D6+4 damage. Optionally, such damage may cause long-term strange effects.

Transform: able to temporarily physically transform into a monstrous shape, which may be akin to a deep one, a star-spawn, a thrall of Cthulhu, or another monster (determine a monstrous profile using any of these as a baseline), or something unique (as designed by the Keeper). The transformation is likely to be rapid (1D6 rounds) but limited by time (perhaps 1D6 rounds or minutes).

Other Spells

Undying Ones will know a selection of the following spells (in addition to the common ones listed above). Assume each Deathless Master knows six of these spells at minimum, with most knowing 1D10+6 spells, or more at the Keeper's discretion. Variants and deeper magic versions will also be known.

- Barrier of Pain
- Bestow Glimpse of Truth
- Bind Enemy
- Bind Shoggoth
- Bless Blade*
- Blunt the Weapon

- Body Warping of Gorgoroth*
- Breath of Cthulhu (Pazzuzu)
- Breath of the Deep
- Brew Space-Mead*
- Call Lightning
- Command Shoggoth
- Consume Likeness*
- Consume Memories
- Contact Deep One*
- Contact Ghoul*
- Contact Nyarlathotep
- Contact Yog-Sothoth
- Create Zombi/Zombie*
- Curse of Darkness
- Curse of the Stone
- Death Spell*
- Detect Enchantment
- Dread Curse of Azathoth*
- Drown Mind
- Ecstasy**
- Enchant Amulet of The Old Ones
- Enchant Cane
- Enchant Knife*
- Enchant Stone Tablet
- Grasp of Cthulhu
- Grey Binding*
- Levitate
- Mental Suggestion*
- Mind Cloud
- Mind Exchange*
- Mind Transfer*
- Mindblast*
- Necrosis
- Possession
- Power Drain
- Quicken the Voice of the Deep
- Shrivelling*
- Stop Heart
- Summon Black-Winged Ones**
- Summon/Bind Byakhee*
- Summon/Bind Fher'roque**
- Summon Scarlet Ones**
- Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods*
- Summon/Bind Shoggoth
- Summon/Bind Star Vampire*
- Summon/Bind Vermiison**
- Temporal Rip
- Voorish Sign
- Wave of Oblivion*
- Words of Power*
- Wrack*
- Wrath of Ages
- Wrath of Cthulhu (Pazzuzu)

**Denotes a spell found in the* Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, other spells can be found in the* Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic.

New spell, see* ***New & Variant Spells*, page 186, at end of this chapter.*

PULP CONSIDERATIONS

For *Pulp Cthulhu*, double the hit points of Deathless Masters so that they are on an equal footing to the heroes. Likewise, choose two to four pulp talents (from page 121 of *Pulp Cthulhu*). Lastly, an Undying One should have a maximum of 90 Luck points.

BASELINE DEATHLESS MASTER

This profile is a baseline for a Deathless Master, although the Keeper is at liberty to alter this to suit their design.

char.	*roll*	*average*
STR	4D6×5	70*
CON	4D6×5	70
SIZ	(2D6+6)×5	65
DEX	4D6×5	70*
INT	4D6×5	70
APP	2D6×5	35**
POW	(4D6+4)×5	90
EDU	(4D6+4)×5	90

**If living mummy form, reduce these to 05 or 10.*
***If living mummy form, reduce APP to 10; others may have APP 00 as they are so disgusting or horrific to look upon.*

Luck: 90
Average Hit Points: 13
Average Damage Bonus (DB): +1D4
Average Build: 1
Average Magic Points: 18 (usually supplemented by an artifact storing points)
Move: 9

Combat

Attacks per Round: 2 (unarmed, weapon, spell, power)
May use standard melee or weapon attacks, as well as cast spells or use powers. Note that those in living mummy form may possess only mental attacks via powers and spells.

Fighting	40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4 or by weapon/power
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Pulp Adjustments

- HP: 27
- Luck: 90

Pulp Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4 or by weapon/power
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Pulp Talents

- **Alert:** never surprised in combat.
- **Master of Disguise:** may spend 10 Luck points to gain a bonus die to Disguise or Art/Craft (Acting) rolls; includes ventriloquism (able to throw voice over long distances). Note that if someone is trying to detect the disguise, their Spot Hidden or Psychology roll's difficulty is raised to Hard.

Skills

Charm 80%, Climb 60%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 80%, Disguise 80%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 45%, Language (Other) 70%, Language (Own) 80%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 80%, Listen 50%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 80%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 50%, Throw 50%.

Armor: none—may possess armor through power or spell.
Spells: Call Deity: Father Dagon**, Call Deity: Mother Hydra**, Cloud Memory*, Contact Cthulhu*, Contact Deep One*, Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu*, Create Mist of R'lyeh*, Deflect Harm, Dominate*, Implant Fear*, Summon/Bind Deep One, plus six further spells, and one or more from Apportion Ka*, Create Self-Ward, Extend Life, Food of Life, Immortality, Koshchey's Death, Mind Transfer*, Pact of Quachil Uttaus, Resurrection*, Sacred Molting of the Serpent, Steal Life, or Transfer Soul.
**Denotes a spell found in the* Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook, *other spells can be found in the* Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic.
New spell, see* ***New & Variant Spells*, page 186, at end of this chapter.*
Sanity Loss: none; some possessing a horrific visage may provoke a 0/1D6 Sanity loss.

EXAMPLES OF DEATHLESS MASTERS

Two Undying Ones are presented here as examples. The first is an "old friend" and the second is original to this book. Both detail differing takes that can be used as templates for when designing a Deathless Master or used as is, allowing a Keeper to drop them into play as necessary—of course, Keepers are advised to be careful if utilizing Carl Stanford, especially if they plan to run certain campaigns with their player group.

Carl Stanford, *appears 47 (over 300 years old), immortal sorcerer*

Carl Stanford first appeared in Chaosium's *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* campaign (in 1982) as master of a gobal organization bent on raising Cthulhu and destroying humanity. Seemingly, Stanford's connection to Cthulhu is deep and superior to most, making him a possible Deathless Master.

Possibly one of the most powerful wizards in the world, Stanford has a knack for escaping death and turning up when least expected. When threatened, he is unhesitating in his use of the Shriveling and Mindblast spells (among others) to ensure his safety—rather than fight to the death, Stanford is shrewd and always opts to flee rather than put himself at risk, using minions to fight his battles. Stanford is clever, cunning, and extremely cautious, to the point of paranoia.

Stanford's background is shrouded in mystery, but it can be assumed he originated in Europe or North America sometime in the 17th century, possibly growing up in Scotland, England, Sweden, the Netherlands, or was born in one of the American colonies. With the passage of time, Stanford appears to have cast off any remaining European traits (if he had any to begin with), and now appears quite the American. While his New England accent occasionally reveals a hint of Bostonian, his manner of speaking is usually quiet, calm, and clipped. Stanford has never sought the limelight, preferring to remain in the shadows and orchestrate his plans through puppets. His seemingly "completely average" appearance and dress make it easy for him to blend into crowds, while his face is entirely forgettable.

What role Stanford plays among the Deathless Ones is uncertain, yet it can be assumed to be significant as he appears to hold prominence among the favored ones of Cthulhu. Rumors hint that he answers only to Cthulhu, commanding the respect and devotion of all other members of the Cthulhu Cult, although whether this is merely a clever "front" engineered to elevate his position remains unclear.

Carl Stanford makes an appearance in both the *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth* and the *Masks of Nyarlathotep* campaigns, playing an important role in both. It is certain that this wicked wizard is involved in numerous other plots (perhaps smaller in scale) too.

- **Description:** European heritage, middle-aged, bespectacled, and clean-shaven with receding hair; his meek face is slightly pudgy and entirely forgettable. He usually wears a suit and tie.
- **Traits:** ruthless, sadistic, and arrogant, with a penchant for paranoia.

Carl Stanford, *immortal sorcerer*

STR 70	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 70	**INT** 90
APP 50	**POW** 200	**EDU** 99	**SAN** 00	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 40*	

**Magical cane stores 150 magic points.*

Powers

Insight: can impart cosmic knowledge by having a target stare into their eyes. If Stanford wins an opposed POW roll, the target is transfixed and gains +1D10 points of Cthulhu Mythos per round until able to break away (winning another opposed POW roll, which can be attempted each round) or the procedure is stopped by Stanford.

Regeneration: automatically heals 2 hit points per round (death at zero hit points).

Touch of Cthulhu: the hands of Stanford channel the raw energy of Cthulhu, and when touching human skin (i.e. a successful attack) they burn and corrupt flesh, dealing 1D6+4 damage. Optionally, such damage may cause long-term strange effects.

Combat

Attacks per round: 2 (unarmed, weapon, spell, power)

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3+1D4
Sword cane*	65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Archaeology 75%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 49%, Fast Talk 85%, History 55%, Intimidate 70%, Language (Arabic) 80%, Language (Classical Greek) 95%, Language (English) 95%, Language (Mandarin) 80%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 60%, Library Use 95%, Listen 60%, Occult 75%, Persuade 90%, Science (Astronomy) 20%, Spot Hidden 87%, Stealth 80%, Throw 60%.

Special

Gate boxes: used to escape if events conspire against him.
Magical sword cane: stores around 150 magic points, providing Stanford with the ability to cast an arsenal of spells before he even needs to dip into his personal magic points.

Armor: none.
Spells: Bind Enemy, Bless Blade*, Breath of the Deep, Brew Space-Mead*, Call Deity: Father Dagon/Mother Hydra**, Cloud Memory*, Contact Cthulhu*, Contact Deep One*, Contact Ghoul*, Contact Nyarlathotep, Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu*, Create Mist of R'lyeh*, Create Zombi/Zombie*, Death Spell, Deflect Harm, Dominate*, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Drown Mind, Enchant Cane, Flesh Ward, Gate, Grasp of Cthulhu, Immortality, Implant Fear*, Mindblast, Resurrection*, Shrivelling, Steal Life, Summon/Bind Deep One, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon Black-Winged Ones**, Wither Limb, Words of Power*, Wrack*, plus any others the Keeper desires.

**Denotes a spell found in the* Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, other spells can be found in the* Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic.
New spell, see* ***New & Variant Spells*, page 186, at end of this chapter.*

Sanity Loss: none.

Carl Stanford: Pulp Adjustments

- HP: 28
- Luck: 90

Pulp Combat

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4
Sword cane*	95% (47/19), damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge	65% (32/13)

Pulp Talents

- **Arcane Insight:** half time to learn spells, bonus die to casting rolls.
- **Rapid Attack:** may spend 10 Luck points to gain one further attack in a single combat round.

Carl Stanford

Hui Qiang, *appears 52 (over 500 years old), teacher of secrets*

Hui Qiang was born to Chinese nobility in the year 1341, during the Yuan Dynasty. Being the fifth son, Hui Qiang found he had little responsibility and became something of a hedonist. During his early teens, he experimented with all manner of sensory delights and experiences. In time, such mundane pursuits grew tiring and Hui Qiang was forced to explore forbidden pathways to find ever-exciting stimuli and revelatory experiences. In delving into dark and unwholesome activities and lore he found a connection to a mind greater than his own.

Hui Qiang's interest in the occult became an obsession, leading him to scour libraries and the spoken revelations of sages and those who had trodden dark paths. After years of research and travel, Hui Qiang found himself west of China, where he became a student of a shunned sage, who dwelt in a hidden temple high in the mountains. The sage, named Randúlfr, was unmoving as he was in the process of living mummification. Randúlfr enabled his student to receive and connect with Cthulhu, teaching Hui Qiang not only how to interpret Cthulhu's dreams but how to also perform magic, talk to "demons," and overcome death. Once Hui Qiang had learned all he could from Randúlfr, he stabbed his teacher through the heart and set the temple ablaze. Hui Qiang returned to China and established his own temple, hidden deep in the mountains.

Over the following centuries, Hui Qiang's time has been spent in deep meditation, listening to Cthulhu's dreams and divining the Sleeping God's will. From time to time, Hui Qiang's mind ventures forth to seek out others who have been touched by the call of Cthulhu, and leads them to the hidden temple where they can be instructed in the correct manner of worship and learn Cthulhu's plan as revealed by Hui Qiang.

Hui Qiang

- **Description:** Asiatic heritage, clean-shaven, below average height, and usually dressed in the traditional attire of a 15th-century monk.
- **Traits:** deferential and softly spoken, yet holds the gaze of whomever he is addressing; grows forthright and domineering when angered.

Note: see **The Louisiana Swamp Cult**, page 54, for more details about Hui Qiang.

Hui Qiang, *deathless master*

STR 50	**CON** 80	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 80	**INT** 90
APP 40	**POW** 120	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 24*	

**Focus crystal stores a further 40 magic points.*

Powers

Gather Heart: able to magically tear out a target's heart and have it leap into Hui Qiang's hand. The ability costs 10 magic points and the target must lose an opposed POW roll. If the target wins, they still suffer 1D4 damage from the awful experience.

Implant Spell: able to convey knowledge of a spell directly into a willing target's mind. The target may cast the spell (with usual costs) but a casting roll is not required.

Combat

Attacks per Round: 2 (unarmed, weapon, spell, power)

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+2
Sword (magical)	65% (32/13), damage 1D8+1
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 80%, Disguise 60%, Dreaming 70%, Intimidate 90%, Jump 45%, Language (Mandarin) 90%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 70%, Listen 60%, Occult 90%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 80%, Throw 60%.

Special

Focus crystal: stores around 40 magic points, allowing Hui Qiang to draw upon this reserve before using his personal magic points.

Magical jian sword: double-edged sword capable of ignoring mundane and magical armor.

Armor: none.
Spells: Bless Blade*, Cloud Memory*, Contact Cthulhu*, Contact Deep One*, Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu*, Create Mist of R'lyeh*, Death Spell, Deflect Harm, Dominate*, Drown Mind, Flesh Ward, Grasp of Cthulhu, Immortality, Implant Fear*, Levitation, Steal Life, Summon/Bind Deep One, Wrack*.
**Denotes a spell found in the* Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook, *other spells can be found in the* Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic.
Sanity Loss: none.

Hui Qiang: Pulp Adjustments

- HP: 24
- Luck: 90

Pulp Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+2
Sword (magical)	90% (45/18), damage 1D8+1
Dodge	70% (35/14)

Pulp Talents

- **Fleet Footed:** may spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter.
- **Tough Guy:** soaks up damage, may spend 10 Luck points to shrug off up to 5 hit points worth of damage taken in one combat round.

MONSTROUS CULTISTS

HYBRID DEEP ONES

Such hybrids are the progeny of deep one and human mating. Although the offspring of such unions are usually born as normal humans, changes in appearance and physiology tend to occur in their late teens—commonly known as the "Innsmouth Look." By middle age, most hybrids display some form of gross deformity and such individuals either retire to the privacy of their close-shuttered homes or don masks and attire to hide their differences (these are likely dispensed with during cult rituals). Within a few years, the hybrid undergoes the final transformation into a full deep one and embarks on a new life in the sea.

Breathe Underwater: human-deep one hybrids are unable to breathe underwater until they have undergone the full change into a deep one; however, from early childhood, they can remain underwater for up to twice as long as the average human.

Deep One Hybrid, *monstrous progeny*

char.	*roll*	*average*
STR	(2D6+6)×5	65
CON	(2D6+6)×5	65
SIZ	3D6×5	50–55
DEX	(2D6+6)×5	65
INT	(2D6+6)×5	65
POW	3D6×5	50–55
APP	2D6×5	35

Average Hit Points: 11–12
Average Damage Bonus (DB): 0
Average Build: 0
Average Magic Points: 10
Move: 9 / 8 swimming

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (unarmed, weapon)
May attack unarmed or use weapons (incl. firearms) as humans do.

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D3+DB, or by weapon type
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 40%, Cthulhu Mythos (varies) 00% to 30%, Jump 45%, Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 46%, Swim 70%.

Deep One Hybrid

Armor: none.
Spells: older hybrids who have embraced their heritage have a 10% chance of knowing 1D3 spells.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity points to encounter a deep one hybrid, although this may be increased (1/1D6+) for particularly monstrous specimens.

Blessed of Cthulhu, *touched by Cthulhu*

Occasionally, human-deep one hybrid monstrosities are born—creatures with tentacled faces or arms, sometimes with long, sinuous fin-tailed bodies or even flaccid, undeveloped bat-like wings. Such offspring are believed to have been touched by Great Cthulhu and are held sacred by the deep ones. Often suffering from impaired mental development, these mutant offspring are usually kept hidden from sight and only brought forth during ceremonies or let loose to hunt down a cult's enemies.

char.	*roll*	*average*
STR	6D6×5	105
CON	6D6×5	105
SIZ	(4D6+15)×5	145
DEX	3D6×5	50–55
INT	(1D6+3)×5	30
POW	(6D6+6)×5	135
APP	1D3×5 or n/a	10 or 00

Blessed of Cthulhu

Average Hit Points: 25
Average Damage Bonus (DB): +2D6
Average Build: 3
Average Magic Points: 27
Move: 6 / 10 swimming

Combat

Attacks per Round: 2 (unarmed, weapon)
May attack unarmed or use weapons (incl. firearms) as humans do.

Fighting	65% (32/13), damage 1D6+DB
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Climb 30%, Jump 50%, Listen 40%, Scent Prey 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 60%, Swim 100%.

Armor: 1D6-point scaly hide.
Spells: those with a POW 70 or more may know 1D4 spells.
Sanity Loss: cause from 1/1D8 to 1D4/1D10 Sanity points to encounter a Blessed of Cthulhu.

THRALL OF CTHULHU

Humans who have transformed into monstrous servant creatures, their minds totally consumed by their devotion to Great Cthulhu. They appear as bloated, jelly-like gray-blue corpulent masses, whose puffy flesh exudes tiny, jelly-like droplets that smell of methane. They are hairless, with slit-like unblinking yellow-red eyes. Vestigial tentacles surround a mouth filled with crooked and sharp teeth, or else sprout from their heads like snake-like hair. Their forms vary but each usually belies their human heritage, sometimes sporting sharp claws on rudimentary fingers, hands that have become masses of wriggling feelers, or arms ending in muscular tentacles. Most have legs—short and stumpy things—on which they awkwardly move, although some slither, slug-like, on quivering flesh. A cultist may be chosen or randomly transformed into a thrall. Sometimes, the process takes many years, although for some it is rapid, happening in a matter of moments.

Despite a lack of ear pinnae, thralls hear remarkably well in water and can breathe equally well on land or in the sea. When not performing Cthulhu's or a cult's bidding, thralls prefer to be submerged, as they dislike direct sunlight. What's left of their voice boxes delivers a dribbling and queasy-sounding voice, loathsome and repellent to most human listeners. While able to move quickly over short distances

(their short, puffy legs can sustain no more than a few yards/meters distance), their ideal environment is in water, able to swim with great speed and power.

When a thrall reaches advanced age (somewhere around 50 to 100 years), it permanently enters the sea to continue its service to Cthulhu, usually joining with deep ones, Cthulhu's star-spawn, and other entities of the brine; once sea-bound, a thrall rarely (if ever) leaves the ocean.

Transformation: when a human transforms into a thrall of Cthulhu their STR, CON, and SIZ increase by 20 points, while their DEX decreases by 20 points. Although POW and INT remain the same, EDU and APP are no longer applicable, and Sanity is reduced to zero (if not already). Thralls retain most skills they had as humans, with some of the newly transformed still able to make use of skills like Charm, Fast Talk, and Persuade, although these fade and become useless with time. Note that thralls continue to transform as time passes, losing most, if not all, resemblance to humanity. For every 10 years of "new" life, a thrall increases STR, CON, and SIZ by 1D10 points, in addition to any blessings bestowed by Cthulhu (spells, increased POW, increased attacks, and so on).

Not Death: regenerates 1D6 hit points per round. If reduced to zero hit points by physical damage a thrall turns into a cloud of gray, foul-smelling gas, and in 1D8+1 rounds the gas reforms into the thrall with its characteristics fully restored. If reduced to zero hit points by a spell or other magical attack, a thrall dies permanently (a combination of mundane and magical damage is effective). After several decades a thrall loses its ability to regenerate except when completely submerged in saltwater.

Thrall of Cthulhu, *jellied horrors*

In generating a thrall, take the human's original characteristics (or human average) and apply the modifier. Statistics for an average and mature thrall are provided (the number in parentheses in the various categories signifies a mature thrall).

char.	*roll*	*average*	*mature*
STR	former + 20	75	120
CON	former + 20	75	120
SIZ	former + 20	85	130
DEX	former – 20	30	30
INT	former	65	65
POW	former	55	80

Average Hit Points: 16 (25)
Average Damage Bonus (DB): +1D4 (+2D6)
Average Build: 1 (3)
Average Magic Points: 11 (16)
Move: 6 / 10 swimming

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (claw, bite, swipe, squeeze, crush, choke)

Each thrall's attacks are slightly different, depending on the nature and form of its transformation; some may have claws, some tentacles, multiple mouths, and so on. Some thralls may also be able to wield weapons, although firearms are beyond their power to adequately control.

Fighting	40% (20/8), damage 1D6+2+DB, or by weapon type
Dodge	15% (7/3)

Skills

Climb 40%, Listen in Water 70%, Swim 80%.

Armor: none; regenerates 1D6 hit points per round; if reduced to zero hit points through mundane physical attacks, can reform completely healed in 1D8+1 rounds.
Spells: 40% chance to know 1D6+1 spells.
Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to encounter a thrall of Cthulhu.

Thrall of Cthulhu

MONSTERS

Some monsters possess some form of connection to Great Cthulhu, either as servants or as Mythos entities allied (at least for now) with the Great Old One. Monsters, such as deep ones and star-spawn of Cthulhu, are detailed in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook,* while horrors like the dwellers in the depths appear in the *Malleus Monstrorum*. The monsters in this section are new.

BLACK-WINGED ONES

Alternative names: Dark Fliers, Flapping Ones, Svartvingede, Volants, Winged Callers.

Humanoid creatures with elongated arms connected to its torso with membranous flesh, which when stretched, creates a pair of wings. Their clawed hands are masses of evil-looking talons. Upon a vaguely human-like and eyeless head, their faces are more a cluster of insect-like mandibles surrounding a large and toothy mouth. Their skin coloration ranges from pure black to a dark greenish-gray.

Rarely seen above ground, they frequent the bowels of the earth but may venture forth upon a new moon to perform rites to their god, Cthulhu. Often summoned to participate in ceremonies held in Cthulhu's name, these creatures sometimes fall upon and devour offered sacrifices or else disappear into the night with them. Sometimes, where a cult has been able to establish a relationship or via magic, the back-winged ones may perform certain tasks (if it suits them), such as hunting down a target, surveying an area from above, or carrying someone through the air to a hard to reach place—the creature seldom performs any task without suitable recompense, and have been known to devour their summoners if the mood takes them. The *Necronomicon* suggests that, in ancient Lomar, the black-winged ones taught the first humans the rites to worship Cthulhu.

Some speculate that these flying humanoids are nightgaunts allied to Cthulhu, yet close study reveals differences in their physicality and appearance (such as their face-mandibles). It remains possible that the black-winged ones are a divergent species of nightgaunt, although some scholars prefer to offer that they were once humans who were transformed by Cthulhu's will into a shape better suited to serve the Sleeping God. Others claim they have always existed, having been born out among the stars before the Earth was formed, and who later followed Cthulhu and its star-spawn to lurk in dark places and await the Old One's return to power. Lore suggests that the black-winged ones seek a means to enter Earth's Dreamlands, so that they may infect and spread Cthulhu's will among the lands of dream.

Sonar: emits ultra-high frequency whining sounds to navigate and detect prey; able to perceive objects and their surroundings in complete darkness.

Black-Winged Ones, *malignant servitors*

char.	*rolls*	*average*
STR	(2D6+6)×5	65
CON	(2D6+6)×5	65
SIZ	(2D6+6)×5	65
DEX	(2D6+7)×5	70
INT	3D6×5	50–55
POW	(2D6+3)×5	50

Average Hit Points: 13
Average Damage Bonus (DB): +1D4
Average Build: 1
Average Magic Points: 10
Move: 8 / 14 flying

Combat

Attacks per round: 3 (claws, bite)
May strike out up to three times per round, twice with sharp claws (on hands and feet) and once with a bite.

Bite: a successful bite attack means the mandibles have sunk into the flesh; the monster may either tear a chunk of flesh away (1D4+1 damage) or simply hold on (1D4 damage applied once), which allows it to pull the target into the air on the following round. If held, the victim may attempt an opposed STR roll to escape each round while held. Victims

borne aloft may be carried off to be devoured later or dropped from a height (1D6 damage per 10 feet/3m; roll 1D6 multiplied by 10 to determine height).

Fighting	60% (30/12), damage 1D4+1D4
Bite	60% (30/12), damage 1D4+1 or 1D4 (see above)
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Armor: 1-point tough flesh.
Spells: 10% chance to know 1D4 spells.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to encounter a black-winged one.

FHER'ROQUE

Alternative names: Mapaugar, Minhocão, Ones Below, Sleepers.

Large and eyeless, these elephant-sized, armored, and reptile-like creatures possess tapering bodies with six legs (the largest being the forelegs, with each pair getting successively smaller) and a stumpy tail. Their heads taper into a long, trunk-like appendage, able to grasp and pull prey into its gaping maw.

The fher'roque spend almost 80 percent of the year hibernating; their slow metabolism enables them to subsist on very little food. When they do eat, they tend to consume a human-sized creature or larger and then enter hibernation for a few months, slowly digesting the meal. The fher'roque predominately remain underground, sleeping in caves and burrowing, and only coming to the surface to hunt, treat with others, or accept sacrifices. They live in packs of four to eight, although larger groups are possible, and reproduce only when one of their colony dies. Death is rare, as these creatures have a lifespan of thousands of years, tending to hibernate for longer periods (hundreds of years) the older they become.

Many fher'roque worship and serve Cthulhu, although some colonies have been known to serve other deities. A few Mythos scholars have suggested these creatures are some sort of by-product or progeny of the star-spawn, although this has yet to be proven.

Telepathy: can psychically connect to one another if within 50 feet (15 m); able to share complex thoughts and memories, creating a close-knit community. May psychically communicate with humans or other Mythos creatures (those with INT 15 and higher), but rarely find a reason to do so. If a human target is unwilling to accept the psychic link, a fher'roque may try to force the connection with an opposed POW roll; if the target wins, the connection is severed, although in this case a fher'roque may spend 5 magic points to read the target's surface thoughts.

Aversion: the Oil of Silence is a special ointment that repels fher'roque, who dislike its taste and smell. A human covered in this substance may remain in the presence of a fher'roque without harm; however, should such a person cause harm or otherwise displease a fher'roque, the Oil of Silence will not prevent an angered fher'roque from attacking, although it does confer a penalty die to a fher'roque's attack against a person covered in the Oil. Those summoning these monsters make use of the Oil to avoid being mistaken for food or sacrifices. See **Oil of Silence**, page 186.

Fher'roque, *deep sleepers*

char.	*rolls*	*average*
STR	(4D6+26)×5	200
CON	(4D6+26)×5	200
SIZ	(4D6+26)×5	200
DEX	(2D6+1)×5	40
INT	4D6×5	70
POW	(4D6+4)×5	90

Average Hit Points: 40
Average Damage Bonus (DB): +4D6
Average Build: 5
Average Magic Points: 18
Move: 6 / 2 burrowing

Fher'roque

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 or 2 (claws, trunk grab) or 1 (trample) When submerged in the earth, a fher'roque may attack with only a trunk grab, but if the front portion of its body is out of the ground (or is otherwise free of restraint) it may perform up to two attacks per round with either trunk grabs or claw attacks, or one of each.

Trunk Grab (mnvr): uses its trunk-like tentacle to grab prey; a successful attack means the target has been grasped and, on the following round, the trunk constrains all of the target's movement—the target may break free before the end of the second round with a STR or DEX roll opposed by the trunk's STR 100 or choose to initiate an attack instead. On the third round, the target is pulled into the fher'roque's mouth to be crushed in its powerful jaws (4D6 per round). Kind Keepers may determine that significant damage to the monster during this period causes it to release whatever it is holding or consuming.

Trample (mnvr): may charge to trample targets in its path—up to 1D3 targets if all are in close proximity (within a few feet of one another).

Fighting	40% (20/8), claw damage 2D6
Trunk grab (mnvr)	50% (25/10), see above
Trample (mnvr)	40% (20/8), claw damage 4D6+2
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Armor: 6-point scaly and leathery hide.
Spells: none.
Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D10 Sanity points to encounter a fher'roque.

SCARLET ONES

Alternative names: Burning Ones, Dead Lights, Ky' Kelema, Spirit Orbs.

Extradimensional lifeforms consisting of pure energy. They appear as reddish-white orbs, between 6–12 inches (15–30 cm) in diameter, floating in the air. Their presence appears to instigate euphoric visions in humans (lasting from a few seconds to a couple of minutes)—the experience is near-psychedelic and bestows a sense of wellbeing and comfort, and may grant cosmic visions of things beyond human understanding. Nearby humans sense a warmness radiating from these creatures, although they may also experience time loss, memory lapses, and even drastic personality change after such contact.

The connection between the scarlet ones and Cthulhu is unclear. One theory suggests they are manifestations of Cthulhu's dreams—something like random "thought bubbles" given limited form. Another claims they are a lifeform and perhaps a race that, sometime in the recesses of time, grew divergent from the entities often called "fire vampires."

Incorporeal: floating orbs of light that cannot be harmed with mundane weapons; magical weapons, attacks, and spells may affect them. Water may, at the Keeper's discretion, affect scarlet ones—a jet of sustained water causing a scarlet one to blink out of this reality. When summoned, scarlet ones must spend 1 magic point per minute to remain in this reality, and must leave should their magic points become exhausted.

Euphoric Visions: humans (and others) in close proximity may experience visions of times past or future and/or see otherworldly spectacles and places. Such visions are akin to a psychedelic "trip," with recipients feeling an overpowering sense of comfort and well-being (even if the visions are particularly strange or unnerving). Humans may attempt to resist this effect with a Hard POW roll, although those who "open" their minds automatically receive the experience.

While in this state, which lasts for around 1D6+4 minutes, those affected cannot see or hear what is going on around them in the real world—suffering damage instantly pulls a person out of the dream-like state. Such visions provide one point of Cthulhu Mythos (per experience) and may, with a successful Sanity roll, impart +1 point of Sanity (up to the character's normal starting maximum)—a failed Sanity roll causes the loss of 1D4 Sanity points. Unbeknown to those affected, the scarlet ones absorb 1D6 magic points, per person, from this process (may be deducted from hit points if a person does not possess enough magic points). At the end of the experience, humans should make a POW roll, which if fumbled (a result of "100") causes some kind of permanent change—choose or roll 1D6:

1. Permanent loss of 1D10 POW.
2. Permanent loss of 1D4 POW.
3. Hair turns white (all or a shock of hair).
4. Eye color changes.
5. Bodily change/mutation of the Keeper's choosing (this should be a minor rather than major change).
6. Third eye begins to grow on forehead (the eye may provide normal vision, be blind, or show "unseen" things at the Keeper's discretion).

Radioactive: scarlet ones are radioactive, and close contact may cause humans to suffer nasty effects. Those within 5 feet (1.5 m) and who spend 8+ minutes (cumulative) near a scarlet one should make a CON roll—if failed, they experience headaches, nausea, and weakness (penalty die to physical actions) for 2D6 hours; if fumbled, a person additionally suffers the loss of

1D4 hit points and their mental skills are affected (penalty die) for 2D6 hours. After this period, hit points are recovered normally and any penalties are removed. Repeated exposure provokes another CON roll, although a fumbled roll results in the permanent loss of one hit point (only magical means may return this lost point). Should three successive exposures result in three failed CON rolls (fumbled or just failed), the person begins to die from radiation poisoning, losing 2 hit points per day until death occurs (again, only magical means may prevent death and return lost hit points). Note that should a person achieve a critical success with a CON roll in this regard, they somehow become permanently immune to these effects.

Scarlet Ones, *extradimensional orbs*

char.	*rolls*	*average*
STR	n/a	n/a
CON	n/a	n/a
SIZ	n/a	n/a
DEX	n/a	n/a
INT	(4D6+2)×5	80
POW	(4D6+3)×5	85

Average Hit Points: 1
Average Damage Bonus (DB): n/a
Average Build: n/a
Average Magic Points: 17
Move: 10 floating

Scarlet Ones

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (burn)

Normally, scarlet ones only attack in defense. If provoked, a scarlet one may increase the heat it radiates outward, costing 1 magic point, and causing those within 5 feet (1.5 m) to suffer 1 burn damage. Each additional scarlet one increases the damage by one point; thus, two orbs would cause 2 points of damage, and so on. Each additional magic point spent increases the damage by 1 point; thus, two orbs both spending 5 magic points would cause 10 damage to those nearby. Heat resistant clothing/protection (such as dousing oneself in water) negates or reduces such damage as determined by the Keeper (if in doubt, negate or reduce damage by half).

Burn	100% (50/120), damage 1+, see above

Armor: none; immune to mundane attacks; water may provoke a scarlet one to leave this reality at the Keeper's discretion.
Spells: none.
Sanity Loss: zero Sanity points to encounter a scarlet one, although their presence may provoke Sanity loss (see Euphoric Visions).

SEDECIM

Also known as "The Fives," sedecim are thin, hairless humanoids standing around 7 feet (2 m) tall. Their skulls are twice the size of an average human, with large black eyes and eight tentacles instead of a nose and mouth. Their skin is lightly mottled yellow-grey, with a slick and oily look, yet dry to the touch.

Once human, sedecim have undergone the final stage (Processed 5L) of "Processing" within the **Church of Perfect Science** (**Chapter 2**, page 100). The transformation takes around a month, with the subject placed in a large, coffin-like tank and given a number of mysterious chemical and electrical treatments. The subject excretes a cocoon-like covering and begins to change. If the subject is not already permanently insane, they are by the conclusion of the process.

Sedecim are given free rein within the CPS to work on their esoteric and scientific projects, most of which are not fully understood by the human members of the organization. In particular, sedecim appear to have some form of knowledge and ability with non-Euclidian space, able to construct such areas on Earth. As such, these once-human creatures rarely interact with humans, except to issue telepathic commands. It is believed sedecim are able to listen to the dreams of Cthulhu at will.

Breathing: able to breathe underwater, in the vacuum of space, and on land.

Telepathic: able to communicate telepathically, but must be within 50 feet (15 m) to communicate with humans, while the range at which they can communicate with one another is unknown. Humans can try to resist the psychic messaging with an opposed POW roll; otherwise, their mind is opened and may be probed for information.

Alien Technology: able to create devices that cause spell-like effects (i.e. acting like a given spell). Such devices use the magic points and/or POW (as per a spell's cost) to power the effect. An average human using one of these devices may be subject to Sanity loss (per spell description and for the effect itself) at the Keeper's discretion.

Higher Dimensions: able to see and create pathways to other dimensions and times (costing 5 magic points), and able to create semi-permanent extra-dimensional "pocket" spaces upon Earth (costing 10+ magic points)—see **Non-Euclidian Architecture**, page 185. Humans using or encountering such spaces may be subject to Sanity loss (from 1D4 to 1D8 loss), and, if using extra-dimensional pathways, it may cost Sanity and magic points akin to Gate travel costs.

Sedecim

Sedecim, *"the fives"*

char.	*rolls*	*average*
STR	(4D6+6) ×5	100
CON	(4D6+8) ×5	110
SIZ	(4D6+8) ×5	110
DEX	4D6×5	70
INT	(4D6+4) ×5	90
POW	4D6+4) ×5	90

Average Hit Points: 22
Average Damage Bonus (DB): +2D6
Average Build: 3
Average Magic Points: 18
Move: 8 / 9 floating

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (melee, grab, or psychic blast)
May employ standard humanoid melee attacks (swipe, punch, kick, etc.), attempt to grab an opponent and pull them toward its mouth tentacles, or emit a psychic blast.

Grab (mnvr): attempts to grab an opponent and, if successful, pulls them toward its head and mouth tentacles, which proceed to drill into the target's flesh (1D6 automatic damage per round). The victim can attempt to pull themselves free with an opposed STR roll. Should a sedecim suffer the loss of half of its current hit points, it releases the victim.

Psychic Blast: able to emit a stunning psychic blast against a single target within 50 feet (15 m). The target is stunned for 1D6 rounds if a POW roll is failed, as well as suffering 1D6 Sanity loss. While stunned, the target may act but all skill rolls (inc. combat) suffer a penalty die.

Pain Inducer: a hand-held device producing a powerful psychokinetic energy blast. If hit, the target is stunned (unable to take any actions) and blinded for 1D6 rounds if they fail a Hard POW roll—if the roll is successful, the duration is reduced to 1D3 rounds and the target may act with a penalty die imposed on rolls.

Fighting	50% (25/10), damage 1D3+2D6
Grab (mnvr)	50% (25/10), damage 1D6 (see above)
Psychic blast	automatic (see above)
Pain inducer	40% (20/8), see above
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Armor: 1 point of tough, leathery skin.
Spells: each knows 2D4 spells.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to encounter a sedecim.

VERMIISON

Alternative names: Old Worm, Earth Creeper, Vurmis, Wyrm.

Vermiison are a race of subterranean worm-like entities frequenting underground caves and tunnel/sewer systems. They are bizarre and horrific creatures, seemingly gigantic hookworms with reptilian features and an abundance of orifices and appendages—these ending in finger-length pseudopods. Ranging from 15 to 20 feet (4.5 to 6 m) in length, their midsections are roughly 3.5 feet (1 m) thick, tapering at the front and back; their flesh is mottled and excretes a slimy and sticky fluid. An eyeless head possesses a small and misshapen mouth. They fester and wallow in damp nests.

These "Earth Creepers" have a relationship with Cthulhu, often serving or working alongside other allies of the Sleeping God. One strange practice of the vermiison is the giving of themselves to other servants of Cthulhu to be eaten alive, with this unspeakable meal imparting strange knowledge (granting +10% Cthulhu Mythos, while costing 1D8+4 Sanity points).

Amphibious: equally capable of breathing on land and in water.

Communication: vermiison communicate by ejecting a portion of its "innards" (internal organs) out from their mouths and connecting these to the ejected innards of another worm. Once connected in this fashion, two or more worms are able to share information. The same communication can take place when a worm latches its innards onto human flesh, although the procedure can cause a form of psychic shock to humans (provoking a Sanity roll with 1D10 loss).

Vermiison, *subterranean fonts of knowledge*

char.	*rolls*	*average*
STR	(4D6+6)×5	100
CON	(2D6+6) ×5	65
SIZ	(4D6+6)×5	100
DEX	(2D6+1)×5	40
INT	(3D6+4) ×5	70–75
POW	(2D6+6) ×5	65

Average Hit Points: 16
Average Damage Bonus (DB): +1D6
Average Build: 2
Average Magic Points: 13
Move: 5 / 8 swimming

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (bash, organ ejection, or crush)
While a vermiison may bash or strike with its appendages or use its body to crush, its preferred attack is to shoot out it's innards, attempting to stun and then devour. The numerous pseudopods are too small to mount a serious attack; although their sticky nature allows them to grip and pick up objects, they cannot use weapons.

Crush: rears up and drop down onto a victim or rolls to smother an opponent. If unsurprised, the target may try to Dodge or fight back (even if fight back is successful, the target may still suffer from crushing damage).

Organ Ejection: forcefully expels internal organs up to a distance of 20 feet (6 m); if the target is successfully hit they must make a successful combined CON and POW roll or be knocked unconscious by both the physical and psychic contact. On the following round, the vermiison retracts the organs along with its victim—the victim, if conscious, may attempt an opposed STR or DEX roll versus the worm's STR to break free. If unable to break free, the victim is pulled into the stomach and dissolved, suffering 1D2 damage per round thereafter until dead. If the vermiison is killed or an otherwise significant wound is caused—ripping open its flesh and stomach—an ingested victim may be pulled free with no further harm. Each vermiison can ingest up to two average-sized humans at a time (at this capacity, the worm's movement is halved).

Vermiison

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D4+2
Crush	30% (15/6), damage 1D6+1D6
Organ ejection	50% (25/10), see above
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Armor: none.
Spells: 60% chance of knowing 1D4 spells.
Sanity Loss: 1D2/1D8 Sanity points to encounter a vermiison.

SHOGGOTHS AND CTHULHU

Shoggoths were the lifeforms created and used as beasts of burden by the elder things millions of years before the rise of humanity. In times past, the elder things warred with Cthulhu and its spawn, suffering great defeats that forced the elder things into the oceans and the remotest parts of the world. At some point, the shoggoths rebelled against their masters. Some theorize that Cthulhu's star-spawn may have had a hand in the shoggoths' emancipation. Do shoggoths and Cthulhu have a link?

In *The Shadow over Innsmouth*, Zadok Allen asks, *"…ever hear tell of a shoggoth?"* The narrator, at the end of the story, tells how he dreams of the deep one city, Y'ha-nthlei, and it is there he first sees a shoggoth. The deep ones, with the help of the shoggoths, appear to be planning the takeover of a city much larger than Innsmouth, as well as preparing for the coming of Cthulhu. Again, in *The Call of Cthulhu*, the Louisiana Swamp Cult speaks of *"a hidden lake unglimpsed by mortal sight, in which dwelt a huge, formless white polypous thing with luminous eyes."* Could this be a description of a shoggoth?

It is clear from these stories that the shoggoths are, if not directly, tangentially connected to Cthulhu and its cults. In certain *Call of Cthulhu* adventures, like *Masks of Nyarlathotep*, we see deep ones controlling shoggoths. The question remains: did the shoggoths overthrow one master only to fall under the spell of another? Or, is the relationship symbiotic?

ARTIFACTS

Idols from R'lyeh

A common element in *The Call of Cthulhu* story is the Cthulhu Cult's possession of various statues or sculptural pieces depicting Great Cthulhu. The Louisiana Swamp Cult is focused around an idol of the Great Old One, as are the cultists onboard the *Alert* in the South Pacific, while the Greenland cult had a bas-relief at the center of their rituals. Even Henry Wilcox felt compelled to sculpt clay in the image of the Dead God. Castro hinted that the original statues were made by the Old Ones and given to humans to help connect them to Cthulhu. It is possible that such pieces are more than objects to assist in worship, and may affect the holder in some way.

Many of these pieces are made of a greenish, strange-textured stone, perhaps alien in origin. They can come as carved stone or possibly as clay objects, and fashioned into statues/statuettes, bas-relief, and tiles (full pieces or shards). Common to all is the peculiar effect that, when first touched, they can cause the holder to momentarily experience a sensation or vision of Cthulhu or some aspect of R'lyeh—such impressions may be vague and register emotionally rather than appearing sharp or vivid. Thus, touching such pieces calls for a POW roll, which if unsuccessful, forces an experience that lasts for a second or two, and consequentially a Sanity roll (0/1 loss). Some pieces may possess or provide additional boons for cultists—some possibilities are outlined below.

Note that where a clay or stone piece causes some calamitous effect (such as cursing a human to become a deep one), that destruction of the piece before the change is fully completed may halt or reverse the process. Likewise, should a piece that is a repository of stored magic or POW points be broken or destroyed, it may cause a sudden and unforeseen magical effect—use the ideas presented in Failing a Pushed Casting Roll, page 178 of the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*.

Possible Additional Effects

Amplify Contact: when used with the Contact Deity (Cthulhu) spell, the close proximity of the piece makes it easier to establish contact. The caster gains a bonus die to the Hard POW roll for determining the spell's success. Such objects may be fashioned in the likeness of one of Cthulhu's avatars and be specifically intended for contacting that particular avatar rather than Great Cthulhu. Likewise, pieces fashioned in the likeness of a deep one, star-spawn, and so on, may grant some form of a boon (examples follow).

- **Bind Shoggoth**—negates the need for a Hard Know roll the first time the spell is cast, and some pieces may grant

automatic binding of a shoggoth, with the cost for this reduced to 1 magic point per 5 rounds of control (and no need for further opposed POW rolls).

- **Contact Deep One**—the spell may be cast anywhere and, if inland, deep one hybrids (rather than deep ones) may be summoned. If by the sea, numerous deep ones are summoned. Casting cost reduced to 1 magic point.
- **Contact Star-Spawn**—grants awareness (through visions) of the location of the nearest star-spawn, and reduces the casting cost to 3 magic points.
- **Summon Deep One**—grants +30% to the chance to perform a successful working of the spell.
- **Summon Shoggoth**—grants +20% to the chance to perform a successful working of the spell. Some pieces may additionally grant a bonus die to the opposed POW to bind a summoned shoggoth.

Gain Insight: if the piece is kept close by, especially when sleeping, it may cause the possessor to experience insightful dreams pertaining to the form of the piece (i.e. if fashioned into a likeness of Cthulhu, the dreams will relate to Cthulhu). Such insights bestow +1D4 points to the Cthulhu Mythos skill while costing 1D6 Sanity loss. The Keeper should determine how long such insights bestow Cthulhu Mythos points and reduce Sanity points—it may be a one-off experience or continue each night for a week or even a month. Each piece is different and their effects vary.

Power Magic: the piece may store POW points, which could be invested by the possessor (pouring their own blood or another's onto the stone/clay) with each hit point sacrificed turned into a stored POW point, which can be accessed by the possessor at a later time. Alternatively, through mental exercise (a chant or meditation), the possessor can invest magic points (any number up to their normal maximum) into the piece, which can later be used to help power spells and so on. Some pieces may "gather" magic points from worshipers who participate in a particular chant or ritual (assume 1 to 1D3 magic points per worshipper).

Protection: some pieces may grant safe passage for humans. Holding the piece aloft may help keep deep ones at bay or bestow the ability to breathe underwater. Perhaps a piece makes the holder appear like a deep one to other deep ones.

Rapid Change: possession of a piece may rapidly increase the rate of change from hybrid to full deep one for those with the appropriate heritage (the transformation may take days rather than years). It is entirely possible for some rare pieces to curse a normal human to change into a deep one.

Spells: a certain spell may be inscribed into the clay or carved in the stone, and sleeping nearby or concentrating on the piece automatically burns the spell into the mind (some Keepers may call for a POW roll to successfully learn the spell in this manner).

CTHULHU STATUES OF FABIUS

The statues of "Kathlulu" sculpted by the artist Fabius during the Roman era (**Cthulhu in Rome**, Chapter 1, page 17) are nearly 10 foot (3 m) tall depictions of Cthulhu, carved from marble. Fabius used an unknown spell to enchant the sculptures with special properties, energized through human sacrifice. Such statues are magical beacons, able to call out to and establish mental contact with any star-spawn within 500 miles (804 km). In terms of activation, a statue must be doused in saltwater while the Latin inscription carved onto its base is spoken aloud. All those reading the inscription invest magic points (60 points are required to re-energize the statute) and, in addition, suffer the loss of 1D6 Sanity points. Such statues may also possess certain unique powers as outlined in the **Idols from R'lyeh** entry.

Bas-relief of Cthulhu

Cthulhu 'shrooms

These strange mushrooms are alien in origin, usually spreading by meteorite showers. They grow around 2 inches (5 cm) tall, and their caps are multicolored and shimmering, appearing like an oil-slick with a mix of dark blue, green, purple, and yellow colors. They appear overnight and may continue to grow for around a month or longer, but usually die out as suddenly as they appeared. Consumption produces a psychedelic experience (similar to Psilocybin) lasting 2D6 hours and provokes a Sanity roll (1/1D6 loss). The experience usually contains visions of Cthulhu, Xoth, and R'lyeh mixed with fragments of other people's consciousness—anyone else who has eaten from this batch of 'shrooms. The fungi affect human consciousness, establishing psychic links between those who consumed 'shrooms from the same batch, forming a type of hivemind where everyone affected shares their consciousness.

The first time Cthulhu 'shrooms are eaten, in addition to the experience noted above, a Hard POW roll is made, with failure causing the person to become part of the hivemind (if the Hard POW roll is successful, the 'shrooms have no further effect on that person). Those who join the hivemind automatically lose 1D6 Sanity points. If they are the first person to have eaten from this batch, they become the controlling "authority" of the hivemind, able to impose their will on others who later join the hivemind. It may be possible, at the Keeper's discretion, for a later member of the hivemind to usurp control by winning an opposed POW roll with the original "authority." Usually, the person within the hivemind with the highest POW is the controlling authority, and their connection to Cthulhu influences the other members of the hive mind, making them think the wishes of the authority are their own.

Once connected to the hivemind, a person may access the mental skills, knowledge, and awareness possessed by any other member. When "borrowing" a skill from another in the hivemind, it costs the user one magic point—the skill is rolled using the original owner's skill value.

A person's connection to the hivemind fades after 1D3 days unless more Cthulhu 'shrooms are consumed. Only a few grams are needed every few days to keep the connection strong. After three days without the 'shrooms, a person suffers from withdrawal, which causes a penalty die to be imposed on all actions for 1D4 days. After this period, the otherworldly narcotic is completely out of their system and the influence of the hivemind is gone.

Note: see **Chapter 3** for more on Cthulhu 'shrooms.

Processor

Processor

Members of the Church of Perfect Science (CPS) use a device called a Processor to elevate their consciousness and produce "deep-state meditation," which is another way of saying connecting to the dream-thoughts of Kutu (Great Cthulhu). A Processor is used within the "Process" operated by members of the CPS, a scheme of guided psychotherapy through which a person may expand their perception and potentially remedy minor psychological issues, but which also tunes that person's mind to be more receptive to the psychic emanations of Cthulhu.

The Processor has gone through a number of iterations and currently resembles a small, tablet-sized computer connected to electrodes that are then attached to a subject's forehead. The Processor typically requires a trained operator to guide the subject—asking questions and monitoring results. But, as a person becomes trained in the use of the Processor and the Process itself, they can self-administer the Processor.

An initial use of a Processor imparts +1 Sanity point, and up to +6 Sanity points may be recovered in this manner over the course of six sessions (see **Process Sanity**, page 109, for alternatives). Prolonged use, over many sessions at higher levels, changes a person's perception (rewiring the brain) and opens their mind to Cthulhu, with possible gains in Cthulhu Mythos and Sanity loss.

Note: see **Church of Perfect Science**, Chapter 2, page 100, for further information.

Non-Euclidean Architecture

Non-Euclidean architecture enables the construction of structures and spaces that defy the accepted perception of space-time. Such structures allow their users to move considerable distances in only a few steps, to create rooms that have more space inside than out, and to travel into other dimensions or journey through time.

While anyone can walk through or enter a non-Euclidean space or gateway, only an extra-dimensional entity or someone with a high Cthulhu Mythos value (50% or higher) and zero Sanity can actually create it— this ability is the purview of NPCs and monsters, such as the sedecim, and is up to the Keeper as to how such things operate in their games. Normal humans entering a non-Euclidean space are subject to a Sanity roll (from 0/1 to 1D6/2D10 loss)—for example, if a room is somewhat larger on the inside than the outside, a loss of 0/1 may be proportionate; however, greater distortions of "normal" reality will carry larger potential losses. While no magic points are needed to enter such spaces, travel through extradimensional portals to other places and times may incur magic point and Sanity loss (akin to the use of Gate spell).

Certain spaces may impose particular effects on humans entering them, such as acting as "luck voids" wherein all Luck rolls become Hard and Luck spends are doubled or negated (at the Keeper's discretion). Other effects may see a penalty die imposed on all actions within the space, or the chance of a fumble is increased (so that any roll of 75 or above is a fumble).

The Black Drop

Created by Pascal Castro of the **Louisiana Swamp Cult** (page 54), the black drop is a poison that induces a heart attack. The ingredients include snake venom combined with a rare plant Castro discovered in the South Pacific. The poison leaves little trace and is very difficult to detect using 1920s pharmacology, although modern-day science is likely to identify this horrific concoction.

Typically, the poison is administered on a needle or spike, with a sharp jab that breaks the skin (normally requiring a successful Fighting (Brawl) roll, although a Sleight of Hand roll may be appropriate in some circumstances). The poison takes around 2 to 8 hours to take effect, requiring the target to make an Extreme CON roll: if successful, the target suffers moderate nervous spasms and 1D6 damage; if failed, the target suffers violent muscular spams and takes 2D6+1 damage, resulting in a heart attack. If the target succeeds with a critical success, the poison is ineffective.

Pain Inducer

A pain inducer is a small hand-held device that resembles a gray-black sphere, its surface covered in irregular circular impressions. It emits a powerful psychokinetic energy blast, similar to the effect of the Wrack spell. If hit by a blast, the target must make a Hard POW roll, which if failed means they suffer intense pain that causes them to collapse in agony for 1D6 rounds—the effect manifests not only as intolerable pain but also causes eyes to bleed, resulting in temporary blindness (of the same 1D6 rounds duration). Those so affected are stunned and can take no actions during this period. Those who succeed the Hard POW roll suffer a lesser effect, lasting 1D3 rounds, and may take actions with a penalty die imposed.

The base skill for a human attacking with Firearms (Pain Inducer) is 20%, although an average human should make a Sanity roll (1/1D6 loss) when witnessing the effect caused on others (by their hand).

Note: created and used by **Sedecim**, see page 179.

Pain Inducer

NEW & VARIANT SPELLS

Call Deity: Father Dagon or Mother Hydra

- **Cost:** 1+ magic point per person; 1D10 Sanity points (caster)
- **Casting time:** 1–100 minutes.

Calls Father Dagon or Mother Hydra to a consecrated stone monolith (at least 10 feet/3 m in height). The spell must be performed in or by naturally occurring saltwater, on the night of the new moon. The spell requires 12 hit points worth of blood from one or more human sacrifices—if no sacrifice is offered, the summoner will be taken by Father Dagon or Mother Hydra.

Alternative names: *Beckon Mother/Father of the Sea, Call the Father/Mother of the Depths, Bring Forth the Salt King /Queen.*

Note: for the full rules on **Call Deity Spells** see page 248, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook.*

Ecstasy

- **Cost:** 1+ magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 3 rounds

By gently touching the target and whispering the spell's incantations, the caster causes a target to feel intense feelings of joy and euphoria. For each round of operation, the caster spends 1 magic point. While in this ecstatic state, the target is oblivious to their surroundings—even physical injury caused to them goes unnoticed.

Having experienced the spell's effect, the target desires to undergo its effects again, establishing a strong and positive attachment to the caster, viewing them as a friend and savior of a sort. Thus, the target seeks to remain close to the caster and petition them to repeat the experience, as though an addiction. If removed from the caster's influence, such feelings may be repressed with a successful POW roll and/or if they are subject to a successful Psychoanalysis roll.

Alternative names: *Aphrodite's Kiss, Rati's Embrace, Touch of Cupid.*

Oil of Silence

- **Cost:** 4+ magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** one night

The spell creates a magical oil capable of repelling fher'roque, who dislike the oil's taste and smell. A human covered in the substance may remain in the presence of a fher'roque without harm; however, should such a person cause harm or otherwise displease a fher'roque, the Oil of Silence will not prevent an angered fher'roque from attacking, although it does confer a penalty die to a fher'roque's attack against a person covered in the Oil.

The spell requires certain ingredients (rare herbs, fish oils, and the ground-down hair and bones of a murderer) to be mixed into a thick paste and enchanted. The caster performs the "cooking" over one night, while chanting, and invests 4 magic points per "dose" required (one dose is enough for one person; thus, 16 magic points are required to create enough for four people). Others may assist in the preparation and invest any number of additional magic points to meet the number required. Once created, the Oil of Silence may be bottled and kept for later use.

Alternative names: *Murderer's Skin, Skin of Misdirection, Ward of the Earth.*

Summon Black-Winged Ones

- **Summoning Cost:** 6+ magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Binding Cost:** n/a
- **Casting time:** 5 minutes per magic point spent

Summons 1D6 black-winged ones. The spell requires six people—the caster plus five others, who each contribute at least 2 magic points—and should be performed at night, under an open sky. The summoning spell calls for the sacrifice of 2 magic points per 10 percentiles chance for success (for example, 6 magic points provides a 30% chance for success). In general, for each magic point spent, the caster spends five minutes chanting. A result of 96–100 is always a failure—a rolled result of 100 (fumble) should always have bad consequences. The participants all lose 1D4 Sanity points, whether the spell succeeds or not.

On arrival, the black-winged ones demand at least one living sacrifice—if none are offered, the creatures either leave immediately or attack the summoners, and do not cooperate with the summoners (in this case, later attempts to cast this spell suffer a penalty die). If a suitable sacrifice is made, the black-winged ones usually devour the victim(s) but may, on occasion, take the sacrifice(s) with them once "business" has been concluded.

Binding: it is believed that no binding spell for the black-winged ones exists and, as such, they cannot be bound and must be placated instead.

Deeper Magic: increases the number of black-winged ones summoned to 2D6 (usually requiring at least two sacrifices).

Alternative names: *Call the Spirits of the Bat, Dance of Demons, Manifest the Feasting Darkness.*

Summon/Bind Fher'roque

- **Summoning Cost:** 1+ magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Binding Cost:** 1 Sanity point
- **Casting time:** 5 minutes per magic point spent; binding takes 1 round

Summons one fher'roque. The spell is effective only if performed within 2 miles (3 km) of a dwelling place of fher'roque. The caster, either alone or with others, invests 1+ magic point, with each point granting 10 percentiles to the success of the spell (thus, 1 magic point confers 10% chance of success)—others assisting with the spell may each invest no more than 1 magic point each, while the caster may invest any number. A result of 96–100 is always a failure—a rolled result of 100 (fumble) should always have bad consequences. The participants all lose 1D4 Sanity points, whether the spell succeeds or not. The spell consists of chanting while beating a small drum.

With a success, the earth rumbles and the fher'roque likely bursts upward from the ground. Having been awoken from slumber, the fher'roque is usually hungry and will seek to eat (either an offered living sacrifice or one of the summoners). The monster may, at the Keeper's discretion, drag its food below ground to share with its pack. Clever summoners make use of the **Oil of Silence** (page 186) to avoid being eaten.

Binding: takes one round and requires an opposed POW roll, with a cost of 1 Sanity point, and affects one fher'roque—repeated bindings are required for multiple monsters. The binding may be broken by another wizard if they invest magic points equal to one-fifth of the monster's POW (the average being 18 points), which grants a bonus die to an opposed POW roll made against the original binder—if successful, the original binding is broken and the monster is free to do as it pleases, and a new binding can be performed.

Deeper Magic: increases the number of fher'roque summoned to 1D2.

Alternative names: *Ground Rhythms, Song of the Earth Spirits.*

Creating the Oil of Silence

Summon/Bind Vermiison

- **Summoning Cost:** 1+ magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Binding Cost:** 1 Sanity point
- **Casting time:** 5 minutes per magic point spent; binding takes 1 round

Summons one vermiison. The caster draws, paints, or engraves a specific magical symbol on the ground while reciting a chant. The spell should be performed in near darkness. The summoning spell calls for the sacrifice of 2 magic points per 10 percentiles chance for success (for example, 6 magic points provides a 30% chance for success). In general, for each magic point spent, the caster spends five minutes chanting. A result of 96–100 is always a failure—a rolled result of 100 (fumble) should always have bad consequences. Additional people may participate, investing magic points as necessary. The participants all lose 1D4 Sanity points, whether the spell succeeds or not. With a success, a vermiison arrives and, unless immediately bound, will attempt to consume anyone nearby until sated.

Binding: takes one round and requires an opposed POW roll, with a cost of 1 Sanity point, and affects one vermiison—repeated bindings are required for multiple monsters. Once bound, a vermiison becomes docile and allows part or all of itself to be consumed. The binder may opt to forgo such a feast and instead communicate with the monster and/or petition it for a task to be undertaken. If eaten, each person consuming portions of a vermiison gains +10% Cthulhu Mythos and loses 1D8+4 Sanity points.

The original binding may be broken by another wizard if they invest magic points equal to one-fifth of the monster's POW (the average being 13 points), which grants a bonus die to an opposed POW roll made against the original binder—if successful, the original binding is broken and the monster free to do as it pleases, and a new binding can be performed.

Alternative names: *Call the Old Wyrm, Conjure the Demon of Wisdom, Feast of Hidden Insights.*

Summon Scarlet Ones

- **Summoning Cost:** 1+ magic points; 1D4 Sanity points
- **Binding Cost:** n/a
- **Casting time:** 5 minutes per magic point spent

Summons 3D4 scarlet ones. The ritual requires a specially crafted pipe to play a specific melody (where recording devices are available, the tune may be recorded and replayed instead of performed live). The summoning calls for the sacrifice of 1 magic point per 10 percentiles chance for success (for example, 6 magic points provides a 60% chance for success). In general, for each magic point spent, the caster must play the spell's melody for one minute. A result of 96–100 is always a failure—a rolled result of 100 (fumble) should always have bad consequences. The caster loses 1D4 Sanity points, whether the spell succeeds or not. The spell must be performed solo, and no magic points may be invested by others.

With a successful roll, the scarlet ones appear in the air and, at this point, everyone in their proximity suffers the loss of 1D6 magic points (the caster is immune to this loss). See the entry for **Scarlet Ones**, page 178, for further details.

Binding: scarlet ones cannot be bound.

Alternative names: *Beckon the Burning Ones, Call Forth the Lights of the Eyes of the Dead, Summon Ky' Kelema.*

Opposite: Cthulhu Nouveau

CHAPTER 5

LOKI'S GIFT

"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

—William Shakespeare, Macbeth

Theater is a powerful art form. A visceral means for people to communicate complex ideas and feelings in a contained period of time. Such expression show us aspects of our life and society in ways that we might not have noticed or previously understood. Theater can change us, so we are no longer the person we were before the performance. Loki's Gift attempts to take this powerful art form and make it into a tool. A tool wielded by a Cthulhu cult.

This scenario is intended for up to six players and encompasses around four to six hours of gameplay. The story is set in Victorian London in the year 1896, and investigators are assumed to be upper or upper-middle class. Class distinctions are important in Victorian London; however, if a player wishes to play a character of a lower class, concessions can be made without seriously altering the adventure as written. The scenario deals with the machinations of the **Elevated Order of Morpheus**, and the Keeper is directed to review the material about this cult in **Chapter 2**.

As always, the Keeper should read through the adventure and be familiar with the events and characters before running the game. Some non-player characters (NPCs) have complex belief systems that they are enthusiastic about sharing with the investigators. It is important for the Keeper to understand these beliefs so they may correctly portray these characters and give the investigators (and players) something to think about.

Note: this scenario contains mature themes and the Keeper should ensure everyone's comfort in the game. Such aspects can be hidden, adjusted, or removed to better suit the playgroup. It is advised that the Keeper inform their players beforehand about these themes to check that everyone is comfortable and gauge if any of the material should be toned down or removed.

KEEPER INFORMATION

Numerous secret societies have spawned within the fog-shrouded streets of late 19th century London. Yet, only one of these worships the dead but sleeping god, Great Cthulhu. Although a relatively new cult, formed in 1890, the Elevated Order of Morpheus has grown quickly in size and power. The founder of the Order, Sir Wendell Whitlocke, discovered an ancient Cthulhu idol with unique properties that opened his mind to the will of the dead god. The Order's primary goal is to gain knowledge and understanding of the universe so that they can prepare the Earth for the resurrection of Cthulhu.

Sir Wendell not only looks for forgotten books of lore and obscure artifacts, he also seeks people who might have the capacity to add to the collective intelligence of the Order. In September of last year (1895), Sir Wendell attended an exhibition of avant-garde painter, Ernest Chillingworth. While the artist's work demonstrated tantalizing insights into a hidden world, Sir Wendell believed that the young man needed a push to become truly extraordinary and fulfill his potential. Thus, Sir Wendell befriended Chillingworth, supporting his work and engaging him in long existential

PLAYER HANDOUTS

The player handouts in this scenario are presented in a realistic fashion, such as handwritten letters and so on. If you have access to the PDF package that accompanies this book, please note that plain text versions of the text-based handouts are included for reference.

conversations. When the time was right, Sir Wendell gifted the artist with the very Cthulhu idol that had opened his mind to the greater universe.

Chillingworth soon began to have dreams of R'lyeh and of Cthulhu. His understanding of reality changed and so did his art. He continued to paint, but felt unable to fully convey his subject matter on static canvases. Downing his paintbrush, Chillingworth explored sculpture, dance, and finally theater to share his vision of the world and the world to come.

This scenario's plot describes events connected, but in some ways adjacent, to the Elevated Order of Morpheus, and is intended as a way to begin revealing this cult to the investigators. Following the conclusion, the Keeper may wish to further develop the cult's activities with a view to fully focusing the investigators on and against the cult in an extended campaign. Otherwise, the scenario can be played as a one-shot or as part of a loose campaign with the two subsequent adventures in this book, with each focusing on a different Cthulhu cult across different eras, where the players (rather than their investigators) are the common link.

THE ARTIST'S MIND

For the last handful of years, Ernest Chillingworth has been a staple in the artistic community of London. Being a bohemian and libertine, he has attracted other talented artists and performers to his parties and gatherings. Following his supernatural awakening, his appeal blossomed and his parties are now the stuff of legend. Chillingworth's antics have become something of a *cause célèbre*, arousing shock and awe in equal measure.

Chillingworth's combined home and studio in Soho is an infamous gathering place for artists and art-lovers. Over the last eight months, Chillingworth's collective of hangers-on has become informally known as "The Artist's Mind." At all times, at least a dozen people can be found at Chillingworth's place: rehearsing, sculpting, debating philosophy, painting, smoking opium, and engaging in sordid orgies. Chillingworth encourages his "friends" to free themselves from societal oppressions and to be who they truly are on the inside, no matter how depraved or dangerous this might be. Despite things sometimes getting out of hand—be it drunken revelry spilling out into the Soho streets or someone being violently assaulted—The Artist's Mind has enjoyed protection from arrests and prosecution by Chillingworth's friends in the Elevated Order of Morpheus.

Sir Wendell has been too distracted of late with his other pursuits to pay much attention to Chillingworth, so the Order's High Warden, Theodore Holcombe, has taken an active role in guiding the artist and his followers toward new avenues of expression. Holcombe hopes these artistic endeavors can open up humanity to new ways of thinking and thus better prepare society for the return of Cthulhu.

THE PLAY

Having gained renown as a sculptor and painter, Chillingworth felt he had exhausted those art forms to their fullest potential. Looking to express himself in new ways, he decided to write and direct a play. With more than a few actors and playwrights in The Artist's Mind, he began writing what he considered to be the most important piece of theater to have ever been created.

Chillingworth called his play *Loki's Gift*, referencing the Norse trickster god and the ultimate joke being played on all of humanity. The play attempts to point out the uselessness of human culture and society, showing that our endeavors will ultimately amount to nothing. The only hope for humanity is to shed its antiquated beliefs and restraints and prepare for the coming of Cthulhu. In this manner humanity shall be ready to receive the gifts of true insight and wisdom, enabling everyone to embrace a more fulfilled existence in a new world.

After a series of rehearsals, Chillingworth realized he was not getting the reaction from the audience he was aiming for. He experimented with lighting effects, bizarre costumes, and special make-up for the actors, before finally realizing what the piece was missing—the right music to get his audience into the correct frame of mind.

The Music

Chillingworth required a talented composer and was fortunate to find Charles Gladstone via Margaret Cornwall, one of the actors working on the play. Cornwall and Gladstone were in a relationship, and with the introduction made, Chillingworth welcomed Gladstone into the fold.

Belonging to a wealthy family, Gladstone had lived a sheltered life until, sometime last year, he began spending time among artists and bohemian types. Inspired by these "free thinkers," the young composer began to push the boundaries of his music. Gladstone was immediately drawn to Chillingworth and the artist-playwright's wild ideas and ways of expression. And, after a night of opium-induced discussion and visions (helped by the proximity of the Cthulhu idol that Chillingworth had brought with him), Gladstone's mind was opened to the hidden world and the message the artist-playwright wanted to communicate.

Gladstone worked tirelessly for a month but was having difficulty focusing on the music while trying to hold on to his sanity. To help Gladstone, Chillingworth brought in Daniel Ridley, a composer from outside of The Artist's Mind clique.

Charles Gladstone

Kept in the dark, Ridley was unaware of Chillingworth's fascination and devotion to Cthulhu.

Within a week of working with Gladstone, the music began to affect Ridley, causing him to experience visions that resolved to build his understanding of what Gladstone and Chillingworth were trying to achieve. Filled with new insight, Ridley took over the composition, and Gladstone was supplanted. No longer the creator of what he viewed as his masterwork, Gladstone threw himself from a third-story window.

Lord Richard Gladstone, Charles Gladstone's father, is now looking for someone to investigate his son's death. A grieving father, unaware of his son's recent activities and affiliations, Lord Richard desperately wants to understand why his seemingly happy son would take his own life.

CHILLINGWORTH'S PLAN

Ernest Chillingworth is now working on the final stages of his production. With a dress rehearsal scheduled in a few days' time, he wants to see how a fresh audience responds to his "masterpiece." Chillingworth is planning a lavish party to take place after the dress rehearsal of *Loki's Gift*, where he intends to sacrifice humans to Cthulhu in an occult ritual—not just any humans, but the investigators! Beside all of the normal difficulties of performing such a feat, there is an added complication for the artist-playwright: the investigators must come to the ritual of their own free will.

Two weeks ago, Chillingworth had a dream in which he was contacted by Cthulhu (or what he believes to be Cthulhu). In the dream, Chillingworth saw the investigators and understood that Cthulhu wanted them to be sacrificed in its name. Perhaps due to the inherent power of the act, Chillingworth cannot physically force the intended victims to come to the ritual. While the investigators don't have to be willing sacrifices, they must come to the ritual of their own volition. In Chillingworth's mind, using blackmail or tricks to get the investigators to attend falls within the scope of the ritual's demands.

Theodore Holcombe and the Order support Chillingworth's production, believing the play to be a powerful means to communicate Cthulhu's message and so help prepare humanity for the world to come. Chillingworth is planning to enact the sacrifice during the after-party, as a "delightful surprise" for Holcombe. However, with so many influential people due to attend the after-show party, many of whom are not within the fold of the Order, Holcombe—were he aware of the plan—would never allow such a grisly event to take place.

Keeper note: it may be difficult to hide this twist from your players. As Chillingworth, you are trying to trick the investigators, and, as is so often the case, players aren't so easily tricked. With that in mind, try to remember Chillingworth's end goal: to get the investigators to come to the ritual. The scenario offers some built-in story elements that should get them where they need to be, but players are notorious for doing exactly what you don't want them to! The most persuasive idea is that the investigators believe some other individuals are in danger and that only *they* can help them. This scenario tries to anticipate what the investigators might do, but you'll know your players and what kind of tactics they might employ throughout the adventure, so do whatever you need to do to get them to go to the party.

INVOLVING THE INVESTIGATORS

Ideally, at least one investigator should have some form of relationship with Charles Gladstone or with his father Lord Richard Gladstone. This works best if one or more investigators is related to Gladstone, as a cousin, uncle, or aunt. It is possible to play the sister of Charles Gladstone (or invent another sibling), but some estrangement in the backstory may be required to explain the lack of knowledge of Gladstone's activities before his death. If the players are using investigators from a previous game, the relationship with Charles Gladstone should be retrofitted to one of them.

While a prior connection to the Gladstone family is suggested, it is not vital. It is feasible that Lord Richard has heard of the investigators due to their previous exploits—perhaps a close friend suggests they can help uncover the facts behind his son's death. Possibly, one of Lord Richard's contacts in business or from a club leads to a recommendation to hire the investigators.

Note that social class is an important issue in the context of the story. The investigators will be dealing with wealthy and powerful people, to whom the lower classes have almost no social access. Thus, middle- to upper-class occupations mean little adjustment within the scenario is required. However, you may wish to use a looser social structure to allow for a more diverse group of investigators, which is fine, as it won't interfere with the overall story.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following section outlines the backgrounds and roles for all the major non-player characters (NPCs) in this scenario. Full profiles for the various NPCs can be found at the end of the scenario in **Characters** (page 230) or in the write up of the **Elevated Order of Morpheus** in **Chapter 2** (starting on page 38)—it is suggested that the Keeper copies or prints out the NPC profiles in advance to use as a handy reference while running the scenario.

Ernest Chillingworth

Ernest Chillingworth, *28, artist & playwright*

Ernest Chillingworth is the son of a successful London banker, with whom he has always had a strained relationship. His childhood was easy and free from any real challenge or thrills. Dissatisfied with his father's world of finance, he found his passion in not only art and history, but the strange and esoteric. Chillingworth traveled through Europe, studying with various art masters to find his own artistic path. He returned to London feeling disappointed and unfulfilled.

In September 1895, Chillingworth met Sir Wendell Whitlocke at the opening of an exhibition of his latest work. Sir Wendell saw potential in the young artist's sensitivity and purchased some of his work, thereby cultivating a friendship. Sir Wendell introduced Chillingworth to a world he suspected existed, but which had always eluded him: a world of dark gods and mysterious myths. Sir Wendell gifted his Cthulhu idol to Chillingworth in the hope of opening his mind to the greater mysteries of the universe. It worked. Chillingworth was touched by Cthulhu. His art style shifted as he began experimenting with new styles and themes, yet such things failed to communicate his new artistic vision. While personally dissatisfied with this period of experimentation, his creations drew the interest of other artists and patrons and, in the spring of 1896, a collective formed around him, informally known as "The Artist's Mind."

Abandoning other art forms, Chillingworth became obsessed with theater, believing it to be the true vehicle to engage with and affect his audience. He truly believes that his play, *Loki's Gift*, is his *magnum opus*. He now spends most of his days refining his script and rehearsing with his actors, although he never loses sight of his newfound philosophy and spends a good deal of his time viewing art and performances by others.

- **Description:** a handsome white man, with wavy, light-brown hair and sparkling eyes. He dresses in expensive clothing, though they are often wrinkled and partly undone.
- **Traits:** smiles broadly and enjoys life to the fullest, always laughing and finding the humor in any situation. Nothing seems to unnerve him—even in dangerous situations, he will sing, dance, and laugh. But, unlike most egotists, Chillingworth really enjoys seeing others having fun as well. He believes that by entertaining, he can change hearts and minds, and prepare the way for Cthulhu.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** seeks to find common ground with the investigators, as only then can he lead them down the path to enlightenment—which in their case, means death!

Lord Richard Gladstone, *58, aristocrat*

Lord Richard is a powerful and wealthy man, with diverse financial interests. He has spent most of his life accumulating wealth and power. While very fond of his two children, Charles and his younger sister Catherine, he has never spent much time with them due to the constant demands of his work. With the passing of Charles, he now deeply regrets the years he spent focused on money and status. Deep down, he fears that Charles' death was his fault: if he had been a better father his dear son would still be alive. In a search for answers and redemption, Lord Richard employs the investigators' services in the selfish hope of granting himself some form of forgiveness for his son's death.

Lord Richard is deeply saddened. He is an English gentleman, always polite and respectful, but is finding it difficult to maintain his composure. Lord Richard shows no emotion; if he did, it would only be despair.

- **Description:** middle-aged white male who wears an immaculate black suit, made by the finest tailors in London. His hair is steel gray and he has a tightly trimmed beard. His dark blue eyes often stare off in the distance, lost in thought.
- **Traits:** speaks in short sentences and always to the point. He never looks anyone in the eye and instead stares off into the distance. He shows little emotion, although he keenly feels the loss of his son and is angry and conflicted. To casual observers, he is a man steadfast in his duties.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** seeks to engage the investigators, commissioning them with the task of getting to the bottom of whatever led to his son's death.

Margaret Cornwall, *33, actor*

Margaret Cornwall is a talented actor who has worked in theater since she was 11 years old. She can sing, dance, juggle, and perform everything from Shakespeare to slapstick comedy with aplomb. Capable and headstrong, she has negotiated and fought to overcome barriers all of her life within a male-orientated world.

She knows that her star is on the decline and, despite her willful spirit, Cornwall cannot escape the effects of age. There is always someone—younger—willing to take her place. But, even though she knows that she will ultimately lose, she is determined to fight all the way, with as much wit and grace as humanly possible.

- **Description:** a fair-haired white woman, of great beauty and little modesty. Her once rounded features are growing thin, as her hedonistic lifestyle is beginning to catch up with her.
- **Traits:** charming and flirty, the meaning of her smile is easy to read ("I know what you've been up to!"), and she is self-deprecating. Her caustic tongue is liable to put anyone who crosses the line in their place.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** flirts harmlessly with the investigators, regardless of age or gender. Provides the investigators with the address of Ernest Chillingworth's studio in Soho.

Lord Richard Gladstone

Margaret Cornwall

Daniel Ridley, *29, pianist & composer*

Daniel Ridley is an accomplished pianist, having played for some of the most important people in all of Europe. Yet, due to his drinking problem, he became unreliable and temperamental, and his star quickly faded. Despite his issues, or maybe because of them, Ernest Chillingworth approached Ridley to assist Charles Gladstone with his score for *Loki's Gift*. Ridley saw this partnership as a way to repair his status. Working with Gladstone opened Ridley's mind to strange insights and madness. While the partnership gave Ridley a new purpose and drive, Gladstone became lost in fear and despair. In time, Ridley became obsessed with the composition.

Now that Gladstone is gone, Ridley finally feels free to develop the music that he sees as vital to readying humanity for the coming of Cthulhu. Everything else is an unnecessary distraction.

- **Description:** a short and portly white man, with dark hair, who neglects his personal hygiene and wears only his bedclothes and robe.
- **Traits:** hates to be distracted while working, considering all interlopers as being the worst people to have ever lived, and does whatever he needs to be rid of them. Once he is finished with the composition, he is a different person, with a broad smile as though all the cares of the world have disappeared.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** he has no time for the investigators and their nonsense. He is agitated and dismissive of anyone who tries to keep him from his work. Once his work is complete, he becomes euphoric and relaxed, basking in the glory of his perfection before killing himself.

Michael Robbins, *46, manager of the Pacific Club*

Michael Robbins comes from a lower middle-class background but carries himself as though he is of a higher status. He has a proven talent for management, having previously revived a well-known London Hotel to its former success and glory.

He was recruited by Theodore Holcombe into the Elevated Order of Morpheus almost three years ago, to manage the Pacific Club. As an Acolyte of the Order, Robbins takes great pride in his work and does anything necessary to protect the Pacific Club and his position. Robbins knows he holds power and delights in it; however, he is careful not to anger the wrong people, taking care to never offend those he wants to please. If threatened, he takes any action, no matter how drastic, to remove the problem.

Daniel Ridley

Michael Robbins

- **Description:** a short, thin white man, with a well-maintained mustache. He is always perfectly dressed, with polished shoes and white gloves.
- **Traits:** smiles with his mouth but never with his eyes. Always assessing someone's worth. His enunciation is very clipped, while his movements are almost robotic in their precision.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** disdainful of the investigators, fearing they are trouble for him and the Order, and so seeks to manipulate and entrap them.

Ruth Jones, *19, muse & cultist*

Ruth Jones is from a poor working-class family. Previously, she earned enough to scrape by doing odds jobs around the Thames docks. While on an errand in Soho, she was approached by Ernest Chillingworth, who said she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. Chillingworth offered to hire her as his muse and she readily agreed.

Soon, Jones became both Chillingworth's muse and lover. She became besotted with him, listening spellbound to his lengthy discourses about the nature of the universe and humanity's place within it. Dreams and visions followed, and Jones soon saw things as Chillingworth did and so became his most devout follower. While Jones has embraced the will of Cthulhu, her love for Chillingworth outweighs her devotion to the dead god.

- **Description:** a young, beautiful, and petite, white woman with long, dark brown hair and bright blue eyes. She wears loose-fitting dresses that Chillingworth has bought for her.
- **Traits:** always careful with her words and takes a moment to think before speaking. Her fingers unconsciously twirl her hair when she listens to people. Compliments fall from her lips like leaves from a tree in autumn.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Jones does as she is told by Chillingworth, attempting to gain the investigators' favor so as to manipulate them into being just where her master wants them (at the ritual).

Theodore Holcombe, *58, aristocrat & cultist*

For information on Theodore Holcombe, see entry in the **Elevated Order of Morpheus** in Chapter 2 (page 48).

- **Roleplaying hooks:** Holcombe can be used to manipulate the investigators into attending the dress rehearsal of *Loki's Gift*. If the investigators poke their noses into the Order's business, he acts to move against them.

Ruth Jones

LEADS

To make things easier for the Keeper when running the adventure, each key scene has clearly marked "leads" at the end of it. These provide clear indications for the Keeper on where the investigator might go next in terms of clue progression.

Such leads may be marked "obscure," meaning that a skill roll or some form of action on the investigators' part may be required to access the information, and that the information is not completely necessary for the scenario to move forward. Otherwise, leads may be considered "obvious," meaning that the investigators should be made aware of them through the discourse of the scene. These terms are further explained in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* (page 202).

TIMELINE

September 1895	Sir Wendell Whitlocke attends an exhibition of Ernest Chillingworth's art. Later that month, Sir Wendell gifts Chillingworth the Cthulhu idol.
Spring 1896	The Artist's Mind collective forms around Chillingworth and his studio. Chillingworth begins work on writing a play entitled *Loki's Gift*.
Six Weeks Ago	Margaret Cornwall introduces Charles Gladstone (her boyfriend) to Ernest Chillingworth.
Five Weeks Ago	Charles Gladstone is engaged to work on the musical score for *Loki's Gift*.
Two Weeks Ago	Ernest Chillingworth has a dream through which Cthulhu grants a vision of the investigators and demands for them to be sacrificed.
One Week Ago	Daniel Ridley is taken on to assist with the music for *Loki's Gift*.
Five Days Ago	Daniel Ridley takes the lead on the composition. Charles Gladstone commits suicide.
Yesterday	Charles Gladstone is buried in the family's plot.
Today	The investigators meet with Lord Richard Gladstone.
Two Days' Time	The dress rehearsal of *Loki's Gift*, Chillingworth's party, and the ritual.

Opposite: Dramatis Personae Relationship Map

Dramatis Personae

Relationship Map

Sir Wendell Whitlock
Cult Leader

Fellow Cultists

Theodore Holcombe
Cult High Warden

Recruited to Run Club

Lends Cthulhu Idol

Overseeing Ernest's Play

Ernest Chillingworth
Artist & Writer

Daniel Ridley
Pianist & Composer

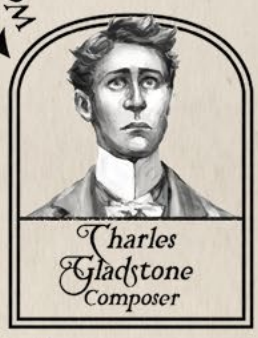
Working Relationship

Working Relationship

Michael Robbins
Pacific Club Manager

Romance

Working Relationship

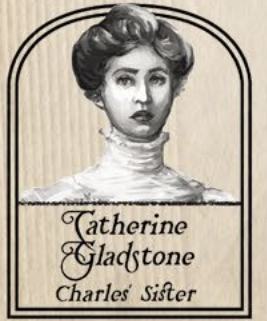


Charles Gladstone
Composer

Friendship

Ruth Jones
Muse & Cultist

Family



Catherine Gladstone
Charles' Sister

Family

Lord Gladstone
Charles' Father

Romance

Margaret Cornwall
Actor

START: A FAMILY TRAGEDY

It is the fall of 1896. London has enjoyed over a week of heavy rain and the winter chill appears to have come early. The investigators have been called to the home of Lord Richard Gladstone in Kensington. Upon entry, they are asked to wait a short time before a servant leads them upstairs to a study.

Lord Richard looks out of a window at the gray sky, while rain runs down the windowpane. He turns and solemnly welcomes the investigators, saying that he has heard great things about their abilities to discreetly uncover the truth. If none of the investigators are close friends or members of the family, Lord Richard mentions that they were recommended to him by a trusted friend. He then gives an account of the death of his son, Charles Gladstone, saying that, five days ago, a balcony railing gave way and Charles fell to his death. But, then admits, the truth of the matter is different to what the newspapers reported, and that he jumped and committed suicide.

Lord Richard goes on to say that he believes his son would never have killed himself, although he freely admits that this may just be the delusion of a grieving father. *"Charles was a thoughtful, kind and sensitive man,"* he says, *"perhaps we overly sheltered him."*

Keeper note: a successful **Psychology** roll confirms Lord Richard's feelings of guilt. He thinks he didn't spend enough time with his son, and doesn't really know what Charles had been up to these past few years. He wonders if he had spent less time working and more time with his family whether Charles would still be alive.

If asked, Lord Richard says that he didn't notice any strange behavior from Charles, but neither did he see much of him over the last few months. He then mentions that his daughter, Catherine, was close to her brother, before changing tact and speaking proudly of Charles' musical talent, saying he performed a self-composed piece when he was but 12 years of age. He misses the sound of Charles' beautiful music filling the house. Pausing, he looks the nearest investigator in the eye, *"I know Charles was spending a lot of time with bohemian types, namely Margaret Cornwall, an actress…"* He lets the last word hang in the air. *"Ms. Cornwall was almost ten years older than Charles."* He then remarks that Charles had been spending time at a lesser-known gentleman's club, called the Pacific Club. *"The Gladstones are members of the prestigious White's Gentlemen's Club, so I find it odd he would frequent such a lesser establishment."*

Lord Richard grieves
Opposite: London Neighborhoods map

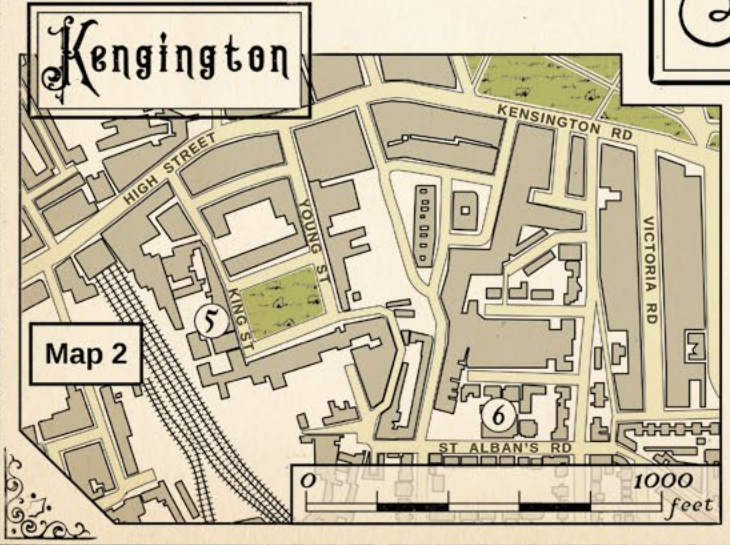
Soho Locations

1. Ernest Chillingworth's Townhouse
2. Daniel Ridley's House
3. Greene Theatre
4. Gaeity Theatre

London
1896 Neighborhoods

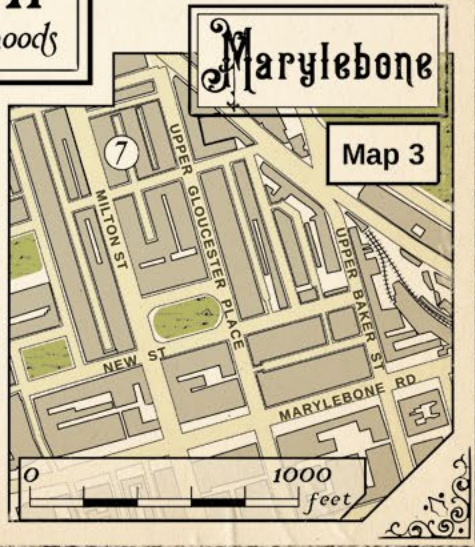
Marylebone Locations

7. The Pacific Club



Kensington Locations

5. Lodge of Dreams
6. Lord Gladstone's House



After another long pause, Lord Richard requests the services of the investigators in confirming the reasons behind his son's demise. *"I need to know. I must know the reason why Charles took his own life."* He offers £100 for their time, expertise, and discretion. With that, he says the investigators are at liberty to look through Charles' room and speak to his sister, if considered necessary.

Keeper note: Lord Richard is less understanding should the investigators ask to speak to Charles' mother, Lady Gladstone, as she is indisposed (due to grief) and not willing to talk about her son at this time.

Leads

- **Interviewing Catherine Gladstone** (nearby): she is at home and can be spoken with immediately (obvious).
- **Charles' Room** (page 203): also located within the house (obvious).
- **Interviewing the Servants** (page 204): those of the Gladstone household (obscure).
- **The Gaiety Theatre** (page 204): by asking around or simply checking press theater reviews, it can be established that Margaret Cornwall is currently starring in a production of the musical *The Shop Girl*, at the Gaiety Theatre (obvious).
- **The Pacific Club** (page 207): the club is easily found in the Marylebone borough of London by looking it up in a directory (obvious).

INTERVIEWING CATHERINE GLADSTONE

If the investigators wish to talk to Catherine about her brother, Lord Richard takes them downstairs to the drawing room where she can be found doing some embroidery. Catherine is a young woman with curly blonde hair and a pale complexion. Unless the investigators ask otherwise, Lord Richard remains in the room during the interview.

For the most part, Catherine just repeats what her father said previously (**Opening Scene**, above). A successful **Psychology** roll reveals that Catherine appears reluctant to share information about her brother while her father is around. Should Lord Richard be asked to leave, he does so, but not before taking a long pause to stare at the investigators with some measure of brooding anger. Alternatively, if an investigator asks to speak to him alone at this point, he leaves the room happily to discuss matters with them in private, and so clearing the way for Catherine to speak openly.

With her father gone, Catherine shares more:

- She doesn't want to say anything in front of her father for fear of tarnishing his memory of her brother.
- Charles was always kind and thoughtful, if a bit over-sensitive at times. He was a wonderful big brother and always supportive.
- But, this last year, Charles had been spending most of his time with other musicians and artists. She considers these to have been a bad influence, taking Charles to places of ill repute to drink, gamble, and carouse.
- About three months ago, he met Margaret Cornwall, an actress of some fame. Charles spent a great deal of time with Cornwall and, Catherine hints, their relationship was more than platonic. Catherine believes Cornwall introduced her brother to some very bad things, but won't actually say opium and prostitution unless pressed.
- She believes Cornwall seduced Gladstone and then broke his heart, and that his suicide was a direct result of these events.
- It's clear she blames Margaret Cornwall for her brother's death.

Leads

- **The Gaiety Theatre** (page 204): Catherine knows that Margaret Cornwall is currently starring in a production of the musical *The Shop Girl* at the Gaiety Theatre (obvious).

Catherine Gladstone

CHARLES' ROOM

Charles Gladstone's room, located on the third floor of the house, is well maintained and sparsely decorated. His bedroom is connected to a sitting room with a desk and a grand piano. Handwritten sheet music can be found on both the desk and piano. The sitting room has a small balcony overlooking an alleyway—the railing is in good shape and, if close attention is paid, has not been recently repaired.

- The various sheets appear to comprise sections (some unfinished) of music for a piece titled *Loki's Gift*. Gathered together, the sheets form a long piece, with multiple movements, which looks to be some part of an overture.
- A successful **Art/Craft (Music or similar)** or a Hard **EDU** roll recognizes the musical notation is highly complex and somewhat discordant. If an attempt to play the music on the grand piano is made, the pianist finds it particularly hard to play, although a Hard **Art/Craft (Music or Piano**) success means the investigator is up to the task.
- If the playing is successful, everyone in the room should make a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss) due to the outré score that, for a moment, inexplicably fills the listeners with unassociated terrifying thoughts.

Investigating Charles' room

- If the room is searched, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll uncovers a letter tucked away at the back of a desk drawer. The letter is from Daniel Ridley and is dated two weeks ago, and bears a return address in Soho (**Handout: Loki's Gift 1**).

Leads

- **Finding Daniel Ridley** (page 214): the hidden letter provides the address of Daniel Ridley's home on Noel Street in Soho (obscure).

INTERVIEWING THE SERVANTS

Lord Richard doesn't quite understand why the investigators would want to question the household staff but accedes to such a request if asked. The staff comprises Walter Morris the butler, Susie Stevens the housekeeper, and a footman, several maids, and two valets. All can give a basic character description of Charles as a kind gentleman who of late was rarely at home. Morris and the male members of staff can corroborate Lord Richard's and Catherine's statements concerning Charles (mention of the Pacific Club and a dalliance with Margaret Cornwall specifically), but can offer no further insights.

Leads

- **Charles' Room** (see page 203): also located within the house (obvious clue).
- **The Gaiety Theatre** (page 204): Margaret Cornwall is currently starring in a production of the musical *The Shop Girl*, at the Gaiety Theatre (obvious).
- **The Pacific Club** (page 207): the club is in Marylebone (obvious).

NEXT STEPS

The investigators may pursue the following leads, as detailed in the following sections:

- **The Gaiety Theatre**, page 204.
- **The Pacific Club**, page 207.

Which in turn lead to:

- **Researching Ernest Chillingworth**, page 208.
- **Ernest's Chillingworth's Studio**, page 210.
- **Finding Daniel Ridley**, page 214.
- **Whitechapel Brothel**, page 216.

THE GAIETY THEATRE

Aldwych, the Strand.

Asking around London's theater district or looking through today's newspapers (such as the *London Daily News* or the *London Evening Standard*) easily finds notice of Margaret Cornwall starring in the long-running musical comedy *The Shop Girl* at the Gaiety Theatre. The theater stands at the eastern end of the Strand, on Aldwych, and is well known for showing operetta, pantomimes, and humorous musicals.

The investigators may choose to buy tickets to a performance of *The Shop Girl* (see box nearby) or they can just try at the stage door for Margaret Cornwall. Before, during, and post performances the stage door is usually guarded by a doorman, Ronald Wilson, who is happy to take a small tip to inquire if Ms. Cornwall is available to well-wishers. At such times, Cornwall is busy and refuses to see anyone who she doesn't personally know, although a suitably expensive gift may garner her interest enough to meet with an unknown caller.

Should the investigators show up earlier in the day, during rehearsals, she has more time and is willing to see admirers, as long as they either present a suitable gift or succeed in convincing Ronald Wilson with a **Charm**, **Persuade**, or **Fast Talk** roll (a pushed roll might be a bribe of a few shillings to Wilson, which, if failed, is considered too miserly). Regardless of how the investigators gain Wilson's favor, they are escorted by him to Cornwall's dressing room.

Margaret Cornwall welcomes the investigators and offers autographs before wanting to know the reason for their visit. During this scene, Cornwall gives the investigators a hard time, just for fun. She flirts with the most uptight investigator, she insults the friendliest, and makes jokes at the expense of the most serious. In the end, she shares what information she has, but not without making the investigators sweat a little.

Cornwall's Information

Cornwall is aware of Charles Gladstone's death and seems sad about it. If asked about her relationship with Gladstone, she freely admits they were lovers for a time, but she soon outgrew their relationship. In fact, she says, Gladstone seemed ready to move on as well. A successful **Psychology** roll reveals that she's not all that bothered by her former beau's death, nor is she being entirely honest about everything.

Keeper note: in reality, Gladstone drifted away from Margaret Cornwall when he started spending time with Ernest Chillingworth.

Handout: Loki's Gift 1

To the gentle Mr Gladstone,

I write this letter with the intention of introducing myself and in regard to our collaboration together. My name is Daniel Ridley and I am a reasonably accomplished composer in my own right. Chillingworth speaks very highly of you and your work, but has felt somewhat concerned about your wellbeing. He hopes that I can help you to finish the score to his play, Loki's Gift, within the next few weeks. Though I'm reluctant to interfere in any artist's creation, Chillingworth assures me that I am only to assist you in completing your task.

I look forward to meeting you in person and hope that together we can fully realise your vision.

Yours,

Daniel Ridley

- If pressed, she reveals that Gladstone became obsessed with writing theater music after she had introduced him to a friend.
- It is over a month since she last saw Gladstone.
- Asked for further clarity, Cornwall goes on to explain that, about six weeks ago, she took Gladstone to see an amazing artist friend of hers, Ernest Chillingworth. *"Ernest is a delightfully strange person who pushes the boundaries of art."* She pulls out a statuette, carved in jade, some 16-inches (40 cm) tall, that she keeps in her makeup-table drawer. The sculpture is of a woman, with a raised right arm, whose dress and lower body flows into a base of curling flames or tentacles. Cornwall laughs at anyone who seems put off by the statute and admits she keeps it around because it seems to always provoke a reaction from people. She says Ernest sculpted the statuette and gave it to her as a gift (see **The Jade Dancer**, nearby).

Keeper note: if an investigator holds or otherwise closely studies the statuette, they should make a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss), with failure indicating they are somehow repelled by the thing.

- If asked to speak further about Chillingworth, Cornwall relates that he has gathered a menagerie of artists and sycophants who hang around his studio in Soho. *"They started calling themselves The Artist's Mind for some reason,"* she laughs, *"most likely to sound clever and pretentious."* She goes on to say that Chillingworth had written a play and needed music, so she introduced him to Charles.
- If asked about Chillingworth's play, she doesn't know much. She's heard that it's some kind of *avant-garde* piece, but not much more. Chillingworth asked her to perform in the play but her schedule is fully booked and she just doesn't have the time. She hasn't heard anything from Chillingworth since she introduced him to Gladstone.
- Assuming the interview has gone reasonably well, Cornwall is happy to furnish the investigators with the address of Chillingworth's studio.

Leads

- **Ernest Chillingworth's Studio** (page 210): Cornwall provides the address of Ernest Chillingworth's studio in Soho—on Great Chapel Street, two blocks west of Soho Square (obvious).

THE JADE DANCER

While the Cthulhu idol plays a role within this scenario, the jade statuette of the woman is of lesser relevance. Both the Cthulhu idol and the Jade Dancer appear in all three of the scenarios, although only the idol is significant. Unlike the Cthulhu idol, whose creation is unknown, the Jade Dancer is an exquisite piece crafted by Ernest Chillingworth. Apart from a certain otherworldliness and its chilling effect upon those who encounter it (Sanity loss 0/1), the details concerning the Jade Dancer are purposefully left vague, allowing the Keeper to use it as they will, perhaps granting it some form of power or using it to develop new adventures. If the Keeper prefers, the Jade Dancer can be removed from the following two scenarios, allowing it to turn up elsewhere at some other point.

THE SHOP GIRL (1894)

The Shop Girl was a successful musical comedy written by H. J. W. Dam, with Lyrics by Dam and Adrian Ross, and a musical score by Ivan Caryll. Its success prompted a series of "girl" themed productions.

The story concerns a charming London shop girl called Bessie Brent, who falls in love with Charles Appleby, a poor student from a good family. Bessie soon meets John Brown, a millionaire who had struck it rich as a miner in America. Brown has returned to England to find the daughter of a friend who has inherited a fortune. Of course, the soon-to-be-rich daughter is none other than Bessie. Despite the twists and turns, all comes good in the end, with Bessie marrying Charles.

THE PACIFIC CLUB

21 Milton Street (now Balcombe Street), Marylebone.

Should the investigators check into the background of the club, via contacts or old newspapers, they find it is relatively new, having been in operation for just two years. Due to some "misplaced" records, an Extreme **Library Use** roll is needed to discover that **Sir Wendell Whitlocke** (page 46) is the owner of the building. If the investigators pursue this lead, they are intercepted by Theodore Holcombe (see **Theodore Holcombe's Warning**, page 218).

The Pacific Club is located on Milton Street, in the borough of Marylebone in London's West End. When the investigators arrive, a doorman greets them in the foyer area (3) and politely makes it clear that membership is private, and that who is or who is not a member of the club is not a matter of public information. Membership to the Pacific Club is by invitation only.

If the investigators visit without an invitation and they appear to be respectable individuals with questions about an ongoing investigation, they are shown to the sitting room (2) off the front hallway—this being the only room that non-members are admitted to. After 15 minutes, the manager of the club, Michael Robbins, enters and greets them.

In Conversation with Michael Robbins

Robbins is polite but offers no information on any club members. If the investigators ask about Charles Gladstone, he begrudgingly says that he was never a member, though he did visit. Robbins adds that Gladstone was *"A little too rough around the edges to ever be a member of the club."* If pressed, he says that Gladstone was rumored to be a gambler and spent time with women of ill repute. Robbins says he overheard Gladstone once speak of a brothel in Whitechapel that he liked to frequent.

Keeper note: a successful **Psychology** roll reveals that Robbins is being untruthful. If confronted on this, he is insulted and asks the investigators to leave unless they retract the accusation and offer an apology (with a successful **Charm** or **Persuade** roll). Unknown to the investigators, the brothel is controlled by the Elevated Order of Morpheus, and Robbins is setting a trap for them (see **Whitechapel Brothel**, page 216).

- If the investigators want to know who sponsored Gladstone at the club, Robbins does not say. Attempts to bribe or otherwise convince Robbins fail, with only a successful Hard

The Pacific Club

Intimidate roll getting him to reveal that it was a member, Ernest Chillingworth, who brought Gladstone in as a guest.
- Suitably encouraged, Robbins can provide the address of Chillingworth's studio in Soho (**Ernest Chillingworth's Studio**, page 210).
- Note that, any further rough stuff from the investigators causes Robbins to scream loudly, bringing the **Pacific Club Security** (page 231) and ending the meeting.

Keeper note: after this scene, Robbins sends some street toughs to follow the investigators to discover who they are and what they are up to. They have now been noticed by the Order.

Sneaking into the Club

Should the investigators attempt to sneak into the Pacific Club, they can try with a **Stealth** roll combined with a **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll to force one of the rear doors or windows. Other means could be employed, such as causing a diversion to allow others to sneak in. The Keeper should feel free to reward imaginative plans.

On entry, what the investigators find is somewhat dependent on the hour of the day or night. It is assumed that such an endeavor takes place outside of the Club's busy daylight and evening hours. But, even when quiet, there are likely to be a handful of members on-site, possibly asleep in armchairs, playing cards, reading, or in conversation. None of which is particularly exciting or informative. All of the business and activities of the Elevated Order of Morpheus are conducted at other locations—the Pacific Club is just for socializing. Despite this, the Keeper may wish to reward courageous investigators with some information, which, at most, would be confirmation of Ernest Chillingworth's membership in the club, and possibly some paperwork (bills, receipts, and so on) mentioning names like Sir Wendell Whitlocke or Theodore Holcombe. If necessary, a piece of membership paperwork could reveal the address of Ernest Chillingworth's studio—assuming the investigators were unable to gain that information from Michael Robbins or Margaret Cornwall.

Keeper note: any further information to be gained at the Pacific Club is likely to be limited, although the Keeper may wish to sow seeds for further or extended play beyond the scope of the scenario as written.

Leads
- **Whitechapel Brothel** (page 216): Robbins provides directions to the brothel and says that the password is "Clementine" (obvious).
- **Ernest Chillingworth's Studio** (page 210): Robbins gives the address—Great Chapel Street, two blocks west of Soho Square (obscure).

RESEARCHING ERNEST CHILLINGWORTH

If conducting research on Ernest Chillingworth, the investigators may gain some, or all, of the information below. It is suggested to give out information appropriate to the source; for example, a successful Library Use roll would not reveal that Chillingworth is a member of the Pacific Club, whereas the use of a social skill when conversing with someone of good standing, perhaps at another club, might yield this information as a rumor. Allow the investigators to determine how they wish to go about the research and then supply the following information accordingly.

This information is obvious and may be discovered without a skill roll:
- About a year ago (circa September 1895), Chillingworth had a successful exhibition, finding buyers for all of his pieces.
- Chillingworth only does private commissions these days, choosing his clients as he deems fit.
- He lives above his studio in Soho on Great Chapel Street.
- Chillingworth is a member of the Pacific Club.

The following information is obscure, thus not vital to the scenario, and may be gathered with an appropriate skill roll:
- Chillingworth is an artist of minor reputation. Over the last year, his art has taken a powerful turn and he's become a success within the avant-garde fringe of the artistic scene.
- Chillingworth has a collection of hangers-on that are constantly at his studio. Some artists, some art lovers; all strange; they call themselves The Artist's Mind.
- Rumor has it that Chillingworth has moved away from painting and sculpting and is now working on a theater piece.

Leads
- **Ernest's Chillingworth's Studio** (page 210): any art dealer or enthusiast knows how to find or already knows the address (obvious).
- **The Pacific Club** (page 207): the club is easily found in the Marylebone area of London (obvious).

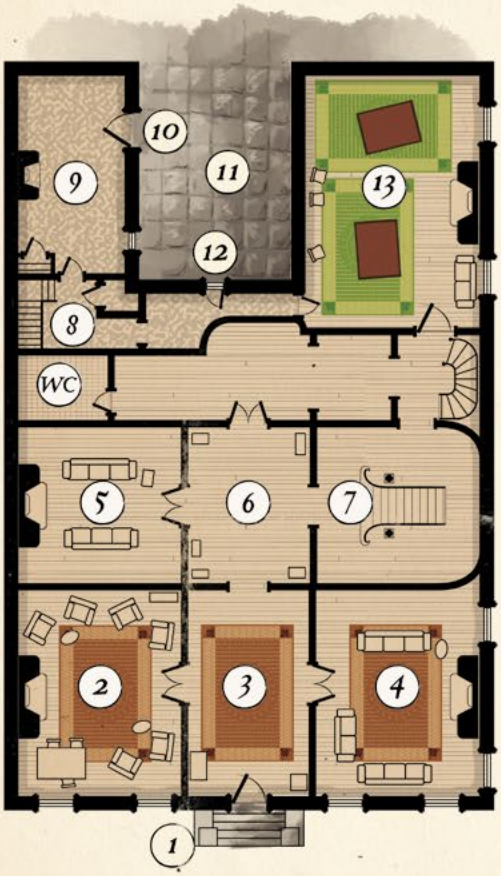
Opposite: The Pacific Club map

The Pacific Club

21 Milton Street

0 25 feet

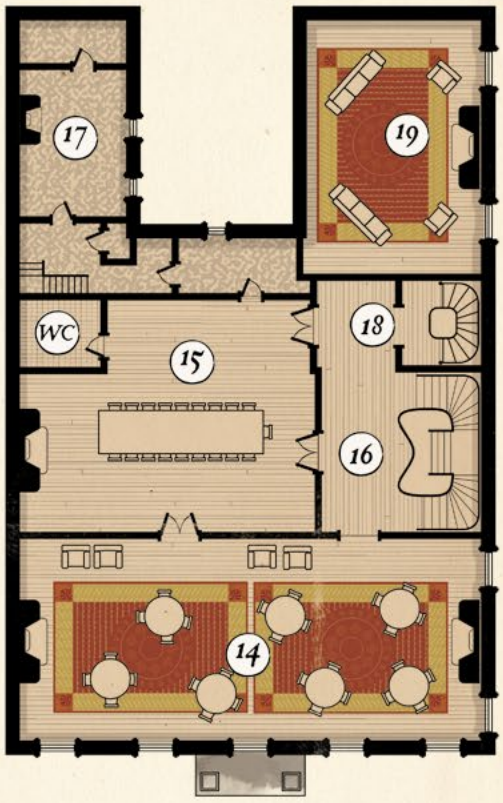
scale of drawings



Ground Floor

Explanation

1. Front Entrance
2. Sitting Room
3. Hall
4. Morning Room
5. Trophy Room
6. Hall
7. Main Stairs
8. Servants' Stairs
9. Kitchen with Access to Basement
10. Delivery Access
11. Courtyard
12. Servants' Entrance
13. Billiard Room



Upper Floor

Explanation

14. Coffee Room
15. Dining Hall
16. Main Stairs
17. Servants' Rooms
18. Stairs to Third Floor Bedrooms
19. Card Room

WC. Water Closet

Door

Window

Servants' Areas

ERNEST CHILLINGWORTH'S STUDIO

20 Great Chapel Street, two blocks west of Soho Square.

Ernest Chillingworth's studio in Soho is a large, three-story terraced house. The first two floors are used as studio space, for everything from painting to dancing and sculpting to performance art. The third floor contains three sizable bedrooms and Chillingworth's office.

The front entrance (1) is always unlocked, with people walking in and out at all hours. If the investigators knock, the door is answered by a young and petite woman with long hair and bright blue eyes, wearing a loose-fitting dress (**Ruth Jones**, see write up in the **Dramatis Personae**, page 197). She doesn't introduce herself and appears confused by the investigators' knocking. Whatever the investigators say, she looks puzzled until the name "Ernest" or "Chillingworth" is mention, whereupon she silently directs the visitors inside and guides them through the house.

- On their way through the house, the investigators see a dozen or so people: a disheveled man plays a piano (3), while a classically trained woman dances (8); three artists paint a nude, male model (7); and groups of half-dressed men and women lounge on soft furnishings and smoke opium (throughout)—**Chillingworth's Followers** (page 230).
- Finally, Jones leads the investigators upstairs to an office (12) where Chillingworth is working at a desk. Chillingworth turns and enthusiastically welcomes the investigators. He appears happy to chat and answer questions, directing his visitors to find a seat on a chair or on one of the large cushions on the floor.

Roleplaying Ernest

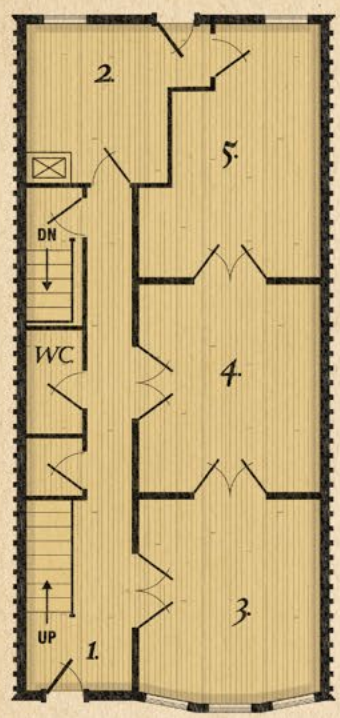
Chillingworth's goal in the scene is to test the investigators. He has seen their faces in a dream sent to him by Cthulhu, and so he is unsurprised by their visit. He makes his assessment by engaging the investigators in conversation and debate. He can see by their outward appearances that they are respectable Victorians; however, what he wants to gauge is whether there is darkness at their core.

The artist-playwright believes he has a deep connection to Cthulhu, who now inspires his every deed. Chillingworth knows that human civilization amounts to nothing and will soon pass into obscurity, although some humans—like him—may live on after Cthulhu returns to bask in the god's glory. Such knowledge has driven Chillingworth quite insane, but it has also freed him from inhibitions and, in a way, made

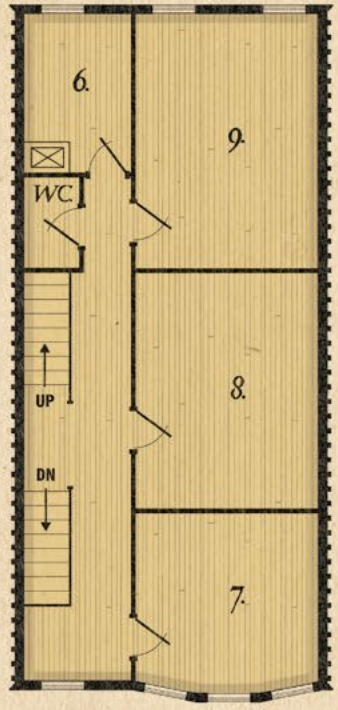
Chillingworth's studio
Opposite: Ernest Chillingworth's Studio map

Ernest Chillingworth's Studio

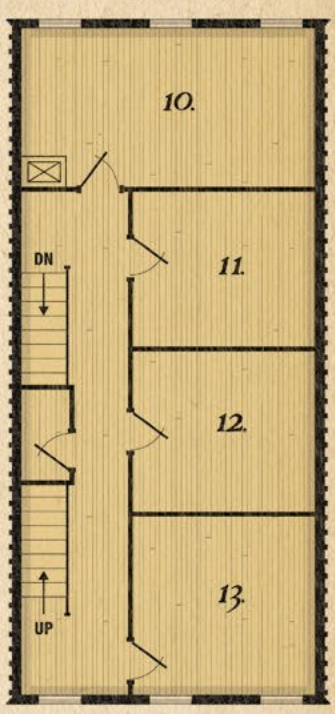
20 Great Chapel Street



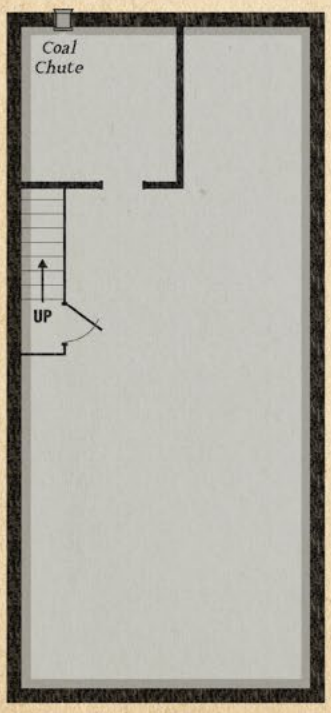
Ground 1st Floor



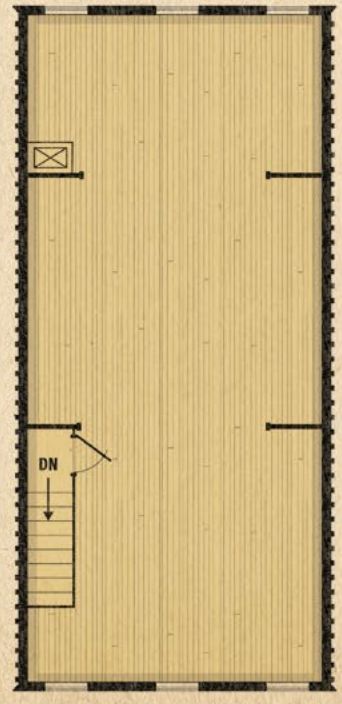
Upper 2nd Floor



Upper 3rd Floor



Cellar



Attic

Explanation

1. Entrance Hallway
2. Kitchen
3. Front Room
4. Drawing Room
5. Dining Room
6. Housekeeper
7. Painting Studio
8. Dancing Studio
9. Sculpture Studio
10. Master Bedroom
11. Bedroom #1
12. Office
13. Bedroom #2

WC Water Closet

Dumbwaiter

Window

Door

Great Chapel Street Elevation

0 10 20

Measurements in Feet

him happy. Thus, it is impossible to anger or to frighten him. Throughout, his manner is laidback and easygoing. His only sensitive point is his play, and he takes great offense at any criticism about his masterpiece, should the investigators go down that track.

A Conversation with Chillingworth

Chillingworth offers the investigators drinks: wine, whiskey, or anything else they might want. He also offers opium—to gauge their reactions. If the investigators seem uptight, he pushes the boundaries by offering other pleasures, calling in some beautiful, young men and women and making it plain that, *"love in this household is free and without restraint."* Assuming such offers are refused, he politely asks the nearest investigator (whatever their gender) to join him in dancing a waltz to the music echoing throughout the house from the piano downstairs. On a *quid pro quo* basis, Chillingworth answers a question and then asks one himself—use the following list.

- Who are you?
- Where do you live?
- What do you do?
- What are your interests?
- Tell me about your family.
- What is the name of your wife/husband?
- How many children do you have? What are their names?
- What do you desire most?

If asked why he wants to know such things, he smiles and says, *"you all are so different from my friends here in The Artist's Mind. I'm so curious!"* During the conversation, he shares his philosophy with them. He is a nihilist—he believes life has no meaning or value and rejects all moral and religious values. To him, anyone who claims to know their life has meaning is either deluded or dishonest. Pertinent questions and his answers follow—the Keeper should elaborate as necessary, building in Chillingworth's nihilistic viewpoint where possible.

About Charles Gladstone

Gladstone was working with him on a musical score for his new play, *Loki's Gift*. *"He was a delightful fellow and possessed a rare talent."*

Keeper note: Chillingworth speaks with glowing enthusiasm about Charles, although a successful **Psychology** roll detects a touch of sadness in his eyes as speaks about the composer.

About Gladstone's Death

"*Everyone must die. I'm just glad I had the time I did with him."* He won't be drawn on the manner of Gladstone's death, just that it was *"tragic."* Chillingworth laments that they never found the *"right music,"* but that he hasn't given up. In fact, he has now commissioned Daniel Ridley, who is working hard to finish the score.

About Loki's Gift

"My little masterpiece!" He laughs and then invites the investigators to the dress rehearsal in two days' time. *"We start at eight o'clock sharp, at the Green Theatre on Piccadilly, so please don't be late."*

Keeper note: if asked whether they can read a copy of the play, Chillingworth replies that only he and the actors have seen the script, and that's how it shall remain. The only copy in the house is on his desk and he keeps a very close eye on it, taking it with him should he leave the room —see **Return to Chillingworth's Studio**, page 219, for accessing the play's script..

About Daniel Ridley

Chillingworth believes Ridley will soon be finished with his work, but even if he isn't, the show must go on! *"No more delays! The show must go on!"*

Keeper note: Chillingworth doesn't want the investigators bothering Ridley, so he won't pass on the composer's address; however, when leaving the house, an investigator may gain Ridley's address from one of the many hangers-on in the studio. This could happen just before Ruth Jones appears (**Ruth's Approach**, following).

The Conversation Ends

At a suitable moment, Chillingworth ends the conversation, saying he must return to his work. He thanks the investigators for their visit and says they may stay awhile in his studio to enjoy its many varied pleasures. He adds that Ruth will see them to the door (see **Ruth's Approach**). The investigators leave the office and are directed downstairs.

Exploring the Studio

The investigators have a few moments before Jones appears to show them out. In this time, they may look around the studio's ground and upper floors, although there is little new to be seen at present. The Artist's Mind is comprised of young men and women who lounge about: some paint, some compose, some model, but most are content to do nothing. While they cannot add any further detail to whatever Chillingworth has already told the investigators, they can, if asked, supply an address for Daniel Ridley. Before the investigators can access the cellar or

attic (should they be so inclined), Ruth Jones finds them and steers them toward the front door.

Leads

- **Ruth's Approach** (following): Jones has already been prepped by Chillingworth to set his plan in motion. She speaks to the investigators as she shows them out of the house, although this could take place a little later, elsewhere, if desired (obvious).
- **Finding Daniel Ridley** (page 214): Chillingworth doesn't want the investigators to disturb Ridley, so tries to dissuade them from contacting him. If any of The Artist's Mind are asked, they happily say that Ridley lives close by on Noel Street (obvious).
- **Dress Rehearsal** (page 220): the dress rehearsal is in two days' time at the Greene Theatre in Piccadilly (obvious).

RUTH'S APPROACH

Ruth Jones "appears" to be a reluctant member of The Artist's Mind. She approaches the investigators and introduces herself (having failed to do so when they first arrived at the studio).

Roleplaying Ruth

Jones is a devoted worshiper of Cthulhu and is infatuated with Ernest Chillingworth. For her, Chillingworth is the conduit to her god and her high priest, and only through him can she find true joy and happiness. Her past is a nightmare of abuse from her father, previous lovers, and from Chillingworth. Never quite able to find the solace and time to heal or escape, her story is a tragic one. Her relationship with Chillingworth and Cthulhu has pushed her beyond breaking point and driven her insane. Perhaps with the right treatment and care, well away from Chillingworth, she might find some peace. But, in the meantime, she is utterly devoted to Chillingworth, and is like a blank slate to be overwritten by him, turning her into whatever he needs her to be. Thus, she performs whatever role is required of her: from damsel in distress to executioner.

Her current role is to manipulate the investigators. She should appear frightened but brave. Do not hint at her true allegiance, as the players will likely be automatically suspicious of her. It's useful if she's seen as an ally of sorts and that the investigators begin to trust her. One tactic—to make her credible—is to have her act as though she doesn't trust the investigators: maybe they don't care about her, or that they are working with Chillingworth to trap her. The Keeper could ask for a **Persuade** or **Charm** roll from an investigator to really sell this deception.

- If asked, she does whatever the investigators request, as long as it doesn't directly interfere with Chillingworth's plans. A good rule of thumb is to have Jones say she'll try to do what the investigators' ask but then have her go to Chillingworth and tell him what they want. Chillingworth determines what she can return to the investigators with, and, if necessary, changes or adapts his plans accordingly.
- If the investigators grow suspicious of Jones, a successful **Psychology** roll reveals that she is frightened, while a Hard success suggests that she seems to have a constantly changing love-hate relationship with Chillingworth. If a doctor or alienist (psychiatric practitioner) makes a Hard **Psychology** success, they conclude that Jones is possibly suffering from some form of psychosis. If she is asked directly whether she is lying or trying to deceive them, Jones informs the investigators that she is trying to tell them the whole truth but that some things are less clear than others.

Keeper note: an option, if the investigators don't trust Jones and won't accept her "help," is to have Chillingworth change tactics and position Jones as being the one in danger. Thus, he could, purposefully "drop" evidence in the investigators' path that points to her being in some sort of peril, such as being marked for sacrifice at the after-show party (**After the Performance**, page 223).

What Ruth Jones Says

Jones says that she's afraid of Chillingworth and that, over the last year, he's gone from a brilliant artist to a madman. She thinks that *Loki's Gift* will have a terrible effect on people, although she can't be specific. *"There's a madness, an energy to it… that seems to be getting all of The Artist's Mind into a strange excitement. I can't explain it more clearly."*

- If asked how well she knows Chillingworth, she explains that she's been his muse and one of his lovers this past year. *"At first it was wonderful, but now he's changed, become different. Ever since he got that statue of the octopus god."* As she speaks these last words, a visible shiver passes across her body and face. *"No, I don't know where he keeps it, but I think it's very old,"* she says.
- If asked about Daniel Ridley, Jones knows where he lives and can either give them his address or even take the investigators there.
- She'll answer a few questions with vague answers before saying, *"Look, I need your help. There's no one here I can really count on, you see."* She then asks if the investigators are coming to the dress rehearsal, reinforcing the fact that she thinks they should, so they can see the *"energy"* of it for themselves. Then, she whispers, *"I think Ernest is planning something big once the rehearsal is over, as he's planning an*

after-show party, here, at the studio. I need you to make sure you come. Please say you will."

Keeper note: Jones is hiding a lie within a truth, so should a **Psychology** roll be made to determine her honesty, a Hard success is required to note that she is telling the truth, just not every last detail of it.

Leads

- **Finding Daniel Ridley** (page 214): if asked, Jones knows where Ridley lives and can direct or take the investigators there—Noel Street, Soho (obscure).
- **Dress Rehearsal** (page 220): the rehearsal is in two days' time at the Greene Theatre in Piccadilly, London (obvious).

FINDING DANIEL RIDLEY

Noel Street, Soho.

Keeper note: multiple clues may lead the investigators to Daniel Ridley (**Charles' Room**, page 203; **Ernest Chillingworth's Studio**, page 210; **Ruth's Approach**, page 213), and the timing of meeting Ridley is variable; thus, two options are presented here: the first for meeting Ridley before meeting Chillingworth, and the second, for meeting Ridley after Chillingworth.

Ridley's apartment can be found on Noel Street, Soho, just a few minutes' walk from Chillingworth's studio. A rundown terrace house in Soho, Ridley's home is on the upper floor, while two unsavory toughs live on the ground floor. The front door notes "17A" and "17B" addresses, suggesting two apartments within, and leads to an open hallway and staircase from which the upper and lower apartments are accessed. There is no fire escape to the upper floor, with the only rear access via a locked back door, beyond another door at the far end of the hallway.

The two toughs, Frank and Cecil, know little about the man living above them. They are small-time criminals who have been paid by Ernest Chillingworth to keep an eye on Ridley and ensure he finishes the music for the play. As long as the investigators aren't a nuisance or otherwise overtly disturb Ridley, Frank and Cecil stay out of the way and cause no trouble. If the toughs do get involved—perhaps the investigators try to steal the sheet music—they try to threaten the investigators to leave, and only resort to violence if the investigators throw the first punch or else need to prevent the theft of the music.

As Chillingworth, through his dreams, is aware of the investigators before they visit Ridley, the toughs have been given strict instructions not to seriously harm or kill them. If the investigators manage to steal the music or overpower one of the toughs, the other shouts for help, rousing the neighborhood. Suddenly, there are ten or more locals (toughs, street traders, and others) converging on the property, blocking the investigators' route of escape. If the music has been taken, the crowd forces the investigators to hand it back. If necessary, the commotion brings a police officer, who on hearing about the situation from Ridley, the toughs, or their neighborhood friends, suggests the investigators hand it back before things turn ugly. Assuming the investigators comply, the matter is soon over and everyone departs, with Ridley and the police allowing the interlopers to go on their way.

Keeper note: should clever investigators be able to escape with the sheet music, that's fine. Assume Ridley has kept a copy of the unfinished work and picks up where he left off.

The Music

If the investigators steal or otherwise look closely at Ridley's sheet music, a successful **Art/Craft (Music or similar)** or a Hard **EDU** roll determines that it's an overture. The musical notation is bizarrely complex and discordant. A Hard **Art/Craft (Music or instrument**) success allows an investigator to play the music, which is cacophonous and hard to listen to, and which fills listeners with a brooding fear, provoking a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss).

Visiting Ridley Before Chillingworth

Discordant piano music can be heard playing as the investigators enter through the unlocked front door. Ridley's place consists of a bedroom (at the rear) and a living room-cum-parlor (at the front). The living area contains a small upright piano, as well as a desk and chair, but little else. There are no decorations and the fabric of the place is in bad repair.

The investigators need to bang loudly on the upstairs hallway door to get Ridley to notice their presence. When he opens the door, he is ill-tempered and shabby, wanting nothing more than the investigators to leave.

Keeper note: at this point in the story, Ridley is obsessed with finishing the score to *Loki's Gift*. After working with Charles Gladstone so closely, listening to his music, and contemplating it, Ridley's dreams were touched by Cthulhu. This connection to the sleeping god gave him an epiphany, enabling him to take over Gladstone's work on the score. Ridley knows he has latched on to some greater truth, but he is having difficulty getting it right. Like a lost word on the tip of his tongue, Ridley is frustrated and upset. Only by working through the problem, can he find peace.

If the investigators threaten Ridley, a successful **Intimidation** roll makes him compliant, but he does not leave, stop his work, or allow anyone to look at his sheet music. Alternative approaches (**Charm**, **Fast Talk**, **Persuade**) require a Hard success but offer little extra in terms of reward. Ridley does not have a copy of the script for *Loki's Gift*. He answers questions about Gladstone but does not allow the investigators more than three questions before he shoos them away and shuts the door. Possible questions and answers follow.

About Charles Gladstone

Ridley didn't know Gladstone well. He was asked to help in the composition of a musical score that Gladstone was struggling to finish. All in all, he probably spent just a handful of weeks working with the man. He was shocked to hear that Gladstone took his own life, saying, *"he was highly strung and obsessive. In the time I knew him, he was friendly but I fear he resented me being there. He seemed to deteriorate as the weeks went by and his inspiration seemed to fade. There was little in it. I was asked to take over the project myself and I never saw him again."*

About the Music (Loki's Gift)

"It's a score for a new play I'm still working on. The play is due to be performed at the Greene Theatre in Piccadilly in a few days' time. I'm up against it, so you'll pardon me for saying that you are interrupting me." If pressed, Ridley confirms the play was written by and is being produced by Ernest Chillingworth.

About Ernest Chillingworth

"Chillingworth brought me in to help finish the music and I ended up having to take it over. I'm not sure how I came to his acquaintance, perhaps someone who knew my talents suggested me to him." If pressed, he gives up the address of Chillingworth's studio on Great Chapel Street.

Leads

- **Ernest Chillingworth's Studio** (page 210): if pressed, Ridley gives the address of Chillingworth's studio (obscure).
- **Dress Rehearsal** (page 220): Ridley may mention the Greene Theatre as the venue (obscure).

Visiting Ridley After Chillingworth

The house is quiet and there is no evidence of Frank and Cecil downstairs. Upstairs, the hallway door is slightly ajar. When the investigators enter, they are hit with the awful smell of excrement, and then see Ridley quietly writing at his desk, his back to the door. He says nothing at first, just quietly putting down his fountain pen. He appears to take a deep breath and then stands, turning toward the investigators. Tears are running down his face, and it's clear that he is the source of the bad smell. He has finished the music.

As the investigators start to ask him questions, he casually calls toward the bedroom, where Frank and Cecil are waiting. They quietly shuffle out, take the sheet music Ridley hands them, placing it into an envelope, and then leave. All while Ridley talks to the investigators.

- The toughs ignore the investigators unless attempts are made to physically stop them from leaving, in which case the pair resorts to force—see **Frank & Cecil**, page 231.
- The toughs know they aren't supposed to kill the investigators, but they must get the latest version of the score to Chillingworth. If the investigators try to get the envelope containing the music, Cecil tries to distract them, perhaps simply barreling into them, while Frank runs with the music in hand. Ridley could also begin jumping about manically to interfere with whatever the investigators are doing.
- If pursued, Frank (or whoever) yells for a police officer—he's done nothing illegal and the investigators are trying to steal a legally commissioned piece of art. As noted above, police and locals waylay the investigator who is holding the music, forcing its return.

Alternatively, the investigators could follow Cecil and Frank to see where they take the music. The pair make no attempt to conceal their route or destination, leading the investigators to Chillingworth's studio.

Whether the scene in Ridley's room descends into chaos or not, while the investigators are distracted with the toughs, Ridley slits his own throat, a look of relief and peace upon his face. Depending on the circumstances, the Keeper may call for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D2 loss).

Leads

- **Return to Ernest's Studio** (page 219): if the investigators follow the toughs, they arrive back at Chillingworth's Studio (obvious).

WHITECHAPEL BROTHEL

Michael Robbins, the manager of the Pacific Club, may have directed the investigators to this unnamed brothel in the heart of Whitechapel. The area is a literal maze of alleys, courtyards, and the roads are sparsely lit by a few gas lamps, making the area dark and foreboding to visitors. Alongside the unemployed street sleepers and urchins is the ever-present criminal fraternity, happy to relieve an unwitting stranger of their coin. What's more, cattle and other livestock are routinely herded through these streets, leaving behind trails of excrement for the unwary to slip on. Raw sewage adds to the overall ambiance.

Following Robbins directions, the investigators are brought to the back door of a shabby, three-story building. Knocking, a grim-looking man answers the door, saying nothing. If the investigators don't know the password he just closes the door on them. If they say "clementine" he shows them inside to a makeshift pub. If required, use the profile for **Frank & Cecil** (page 231) for the doorman.

The pub has a male bartender, various male patrons, and five women. If the investigators don't wish to appear completely like fish out of water, they should take seats and order drinks. While this goes on, one woman approaches the investigators and introduces herself (in an Irish accent) as Belle.

- Belle attempts to take one of the investigators by the hand so as to proposition them, which may provide an opportunity for the investigator to quietly question Belle about Gladstone. If so, she becomes agitated. A successful **Psychology** roll detects that she is afraid and nervous at the mention of Gladstone.
- She tells the investigator that if they want her to talk, they'll have to rent a room for 10 shillings. Doing so makes sense if they want the conversation to be private.
- Belle leads the investigator to one of the private rooms where two low-ranking cultists of the Elevated Order of Morpheus are waiting in ambush (use the profile for **Frank & Cecil**, page 231). As Belle walks the investigator toward the room, a group of men (more cultists) get up and begin to follow.

Keeper note: assuming there is at least one other investigator in the pub, watching their comrade's back, they easily see this group of men. It's clear that this is all some kind of trap and that their comrade is in trouble! If there's no backup, a solo investigator may become aware of the situation with a successful **Spot Hidden**, **Listen**, or **Psychology** roll. Note that, apart from the two cultists already inside the room, there are men equal to the number of investigators in the scene, less one.

Whitechapel brothel

How this now plays out depends on the investigator(s). Alerted to the trap, they may attempt to make a run for it, having only to defend against a couple of blows before they make good their escape. If unaware or they are slow to act, the trap is sprung, with the men both inside and outside the room converging to deliver a beating. Consider the following possibilities.

- If the fight is going poorly for the investigators, Belle produces a knife and stabs a cultist in the back, taking him out of the action (no roll necessary). As one of their number falls to the floor with a loud moan, the others pause for a second in surprise. This momentary break in the hostilities could provide the investigators with a chance to run or gain the upper hand—perhaps granting a bonus die to their next actions.
- If an investigator produces a firearm, the cultists stop and begin to back off slowly, sizing up the investigator and determining whether they will actually shoot. Call for an **Intimidate** roll, which, if successful, allows the investigator(s) to quickly depart. If the roll is failed, the cultists are liable to move in, with one or more of them performing a combat maneuver to grab or otherwise disarm the investigator.
- If a firearm is discharged, the noise may bring a policeman—depending on the success of the investigator's **Luck** roll. If so, the cultists quickly disperse, mostly evading capture (those caught tell a story of just trying to rob one of the investigators). Of course, if someone was shot (and is unable to escape), the police question the investigator(s). Presumably, they can honestly say they were acting in self-defense, which, along with their good reputation(s), quickly gets them off the hook.
- The cultists have been ordered to beat, rather than kill, the investigator(s), and so will pull back and quickly depart once they have scored a "few" blows or the investigator(s) get knocked down. Likewise, should two of their number get knocked down or one of them gets seriously hurt, the others lose their confidence and run.

If the cultists have been dealt with, Belle warns the investigators that more may come soon and that they'd best make themselves scarce. If they will agree to take her with them, she can lead the investigators out through a tunnel under the brothel from where they can escape. Once clear of the danger or if the cultists were successfully driven off, Belle is happy to talk. Her real name is Mary Walsh. She wants the investigators' help to escape from the brothel and London, and return home to Ireland. If necessary, she begs the investigators to help and, if they agree to support her, she tells them what she knows.

- Mary says that Mabel Velvetine is the brothel's madam but that a man called Robbins, who owns the establishment, has power over her. Mary has overheard some of the well-to-do patrons talking about a *"Pacific Club,"* and suspects many of this club's members frequent the brothel.
- If the investigators suggest going to the police, Mary is totally against it. She believes that the local police are *"on the take,"* with Mabel and Robbins paying them to turn a blind eye. Mary knows that, from time to time, Mabel pays off some of the police constables to *"get rid"* of those who threaten her business.
- If the investigators mention Charles Gladstone, Mary says she was told by Mabel to keep a lookout for anyone asking for that name and to take them to the men hiding in the private room.
- If they ask about Ernest Chillingworth, Mary recalls that he came to the brothel a few times but never rented a room; only socializing with the women and buying them drinks. All she can add is that Chillingworth was an artist who had a studio on Great Chapel Street in Soho. She knows nothing more.

Leads

- **Ernest Chillingworth's Studio** (page 210): Mary can provide the location of the studio (obvious).
- **Return to the Pacific Club** (following): the investigators may wish to revisit Michael Robbins, the man who apparently set them up for a beating (obvious).

RETURN TO THE PACIFIC CLUB

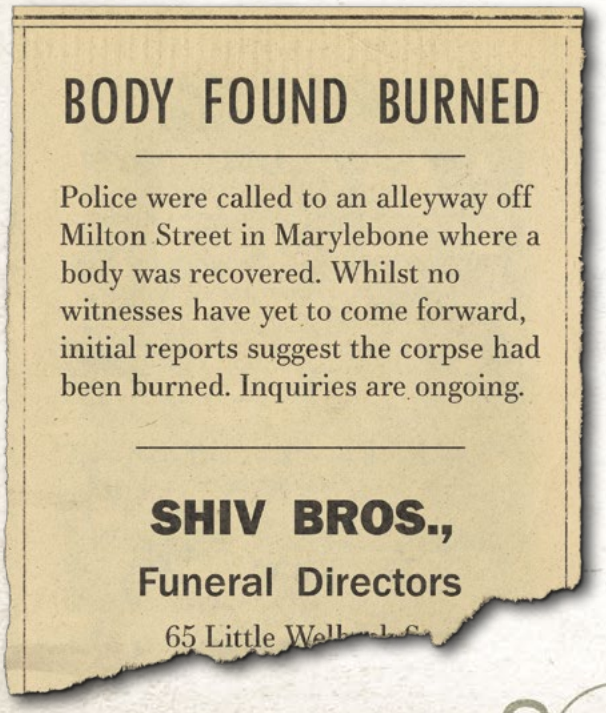
If returning to the Pacific Club to confront Michael Robbins, the investigators have a hard time of it. If they try to barge in the front door, the club's security guards are ready for them (**Pacific Club Security**, page 231). Not only does starting such a public fight look bad, but when the police arrive they side with the Pacific Club and its staff.

If the investigators try to sneak into the club later that night or early next morning (**Sneaking into the Club**, page 208), they find the shriveled remains of Robbins lying in the alley, just behind the club. The blackened and wasted body is almost unrecognizable, but the clothes, jewelry, and hairstyle all match those of Robbins. Finding the body provokes a **Sanity** roll (0/1D4 loss). If the investigators do not find the body, they can read about it in the newspapers (**Handout: Loki's Gift 2**).

Keeper note: Robbins tried Theodore Holcombe's patience one too many times and Holcombe blasted him with a Shrivelling spell, leaving the body there as an example and warning to those who would question his authority.

- If the police are notified, they remove the body. If later inquiries are made, the investigators are told that it was actually a stolen mummy that had been dressed in modern clothes; probably some sort of sick prank. At the Pacific Club, the assistant manager, Ronald Redmond, is now the acting manager. All inquiries at the club provide the same answer: Robbins left London to go up north to care for his ailing mother.

Handout: Loki's Gift 2



BODY FOUND BURNED

Police were called to an alleyway off Milton Street in Marylebone where a body was recovered. Whilst no witnesses have yet to come forward, initial reports suggest the corpse had been burned. Inquiries are ongoing.

SHIV BROS.,
Funeral Directors
65 Little Wel

Leads

- **None:** this scene ties up a loose end for the antagonists, but does provide further insight into the machinations of the Pacific Club, and potentially the Elevated Order of Morpheus.

THEODORE HOLCOMBE'S WARNING (OPTIONAL)

At some point during the investigation, one or more of the investigators could be approached by Theodore Holcombe (see entry in the **Elevated Order of Morpheus** in Chapter 2, page 48). Word about the investigators may have reached Holcombe—possibly via Michael Robbins or his replacement, Ronald Redmond, at the Pacific Club. Holcombe fears they could interfere with Ernest Chillingworth's theatrical experiment. While Chillingworth has said that the play will have *"mind-opening effects,"* Holcombe isn't quite sure what exactly that means and doesn't wish this *"little experiment"* to go wrong. Thus, the following is optional—to be used if it fits with the events of the scenario.

For Holcombe, *Loki's Gift* is another of the many experiments conducted by the membership of the Elevated Order of Morpheus. Observing Chillingworth's project from a distance, Holcombe is curious to see what happens when a large group of people is exposed to Cthulhu's influence. Will they become violent? More malleable? Elated or depressed? Holcombe and the Order sit in the background to observe Chillingworth's experiment and see what happens. Thus, while Holcombe is cautious about the investigators, he is also intrigued to see what happens to them should they see the play. In some sense, he may see the performance as a way to stymie the investigators' interest in the affair.

How Holcombe is used in the scenario is dependent on the activities of the investigators and should be adapted to fit the circumstances—two potential options follow.

- Holcombe could approach the investigators pretending to be a concerned citizen who wants to protect the integrity of his club (the Pacific Club). He says that one of the members is an *avant-garde* artist whose new play may be *"too strong"* and throw *"bad light"* upon the club. He wants the investigators to attend the dress rehearsal to judge whether the play is *"acceptable,"* as, if it is not, he can take measures to close it down before public performances begin.

Keeper note: this tactic is risky, as the investigators could see through Holcombe's rouse. Yet, it does reinforce the need to get the group to the dress rehearsal. If the players are too cautious about Holcombe's proposition, he could make up some lies (or give more truth) concerning Chillingworth to ensure the focus remains on the artist, rather than the Order.

- If the investigators begin to look too closely into the Order, Holcombe may seek to scare them off. A possible way could be to threaten their families or work. Have Holcombe send a strange and scary minion to confront an investigator, and say something like, *"Hello Mr. —. How's your wife doing? You should be careful to make sure you lock your back door. There's all sort of ruffians about. You'd best keep your nose out of other people's business if you don't want trouble coming through your door."* Alternatively, if the timing is around the death of Michael Robbins (**Return to the Pacific Club**, page 218), Holcombe could up the ante and arrange for Robbins' severed and withered head to be boxed and delivered to one of the investigators as a gruesome gift (**Sanity** roll, 1/1D4 loss).

Keeper note: this tactic is a safer bet, rousing the curiosity of the players without directly implicating Holcombe and the Order. If the message includes something like, "Stay away from *Loki's Gift*," it's likely to make the players determined to do the exact opposite, which is ideal.

Though Chillingworth's play is interesting to Holcombe, it's not something he has personally devoted much time to. If it has little effect or doesn't work out for any reason, he won't be overly concerned—the Order has a lot of irons in the fire. But, remember, it is important to Holcombe that any threat to the Order be dealt with efficiently and harshly. Using Holcombe provides a way to point the investigators toward the Elevated Order of Morpheus, which may be useful if the Keeper is considering extending play beyond this scenario into a full-on investigation into, and battle with, the Order.

Leads

- **Dress Rehearsal** (page 220): held at the Greene Theatre in Piccadilly (obscure or obvious, depending on how you choose to play Holcombe).

RETURN TO CHILLINGWORTH'S STUDIO

The investigators may return to Chillingworth's studio before the dress rehearsal for a number of reasons (see below). It is important to remember that Chillingworth has no fear of the investigators and he plays down any threats or accusations that they make toward him with a joke and a smile. The artist-playwright not only has the backing of the Order but, as he sees it, of Cthulhu itself. To him, the investigators are an amusing joke.

Possible reasons for returning to the Studio:

- **To confront Chillingworth:** if the investigators accuse him of using Gladstone and/or Ridley for his own evil ends, he laughs, *"I'm doing a play! A brilliant play, but only that. You'll see, when you attend the dress rehearsal. I'm saddened by the loss of these artists, but they had their own problems that have nothing to do with me. . Now, can I get you a cup of tea or some opium, perhaps?"*
- **To get a copy of the script:** Chillingworth will not give out a copy of the script, but sneaky investigators may be able to get their hands on it. The script doesn't contain any real secrets. If someone reads the script, call for a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss), after which the Keeper should paraphrase the plot of the script (see **The Performance**, page 220) for the player concerned. The script should not sound that strange to the players, maybe a bit nihilistic, but should get them wondering just what is causing people to kill themselves.

If, at any point, the investigators try to threaten or hurt Chillingworth, his followers are quick to act (**Chillingworth's Followers**, page 230). They are not particularly good combatants, but there are always at least six people close to him who are willing to die to protect him. If combat ensues, Chillingworth gets his cultists to occupy the investigators while he escapes. If the police are involved, they take Chillingworth's side. At this point, the investigators probably do not have any evidence of wrongdoing on Chillingworth's part. If the investigators act rashly and are arrested by the police, Chillingworth (quietly) asks for their release, which is granted.

Leads

- **Dress Rehearsal** (page 220): to be held at the Greene Theatre in Piccadilly, London (obvious).

DRESS REHEARSAL

All routes should lead the investigators to the Greene Theatre, 105 Shaftesbury Avenue, Piccadilly, for the dress rehearsal of *Loki's Gift*.

GETTING IN

When the investigators arrive around 7 pm, they notice the marquee outside the theater is blank and only half of the exterior gas lamps are currently lit. There is a young woman standing outside the box office, and, as guests arrive, she greets and checks them off her invitation list. Any investigator who has met Chillingworth is on the list, with whatever names were given.

If the investigators go to the stage door, they are greeted by a stagehand who politely asks them to go to the main entrance. If the investigators get physically aggressive, the stagehand lets them in but quickly notifies Chillingworth. As they begin to wander backstage, Chillingworth appears and approaches the investigators, asking them politely to take their seats. If they refuse, Chillingworth calls over a few of his followers to force them out (**Chillingworth's Followers**, page 230). If the investigators start to brandish or use weapons or if get particularly violent, Chillingworth calls for the police. Depending on how the investigators react to this, they are either allowed to take their seats (if they promise to be good) or are ejected from the theater.

Should the investigators try to sneak into the theater, there is an open window, on the side of the building, requiring a **Climb** roll to access. Once inside, a single investigator can help others up with no further rolls required.

BEFORE THE SHOW

The theater's bar is open before the show. In addition, waiters bring trays laden with glasses of champagne and canapés around for the audience. Most of the guests are upper class or at least upper-middle class, and are clearly the friends and family of the performers. It is possible the investigators might know someone in attendance, so ask one or two of the players to explain who their investigators see and give a little background on their relationship. If that person is asked how they heard about the performance, they could be an investor or they have been told about it by friends in the art world. Having a short conversation with the person makes the next part of the scene more personal.

Keeper note: anyone could be in the audience, and the Keeper might consider placing some future villain or ally among the crowd, allowing for a brief interaction to sow seeds that can bear fruit later in another adventure or in an expanded campaign against the Elevated Order of Morpheus.

Theodore Holcombe is also in attendance (to see the play's effect for himself), and can be seen chatting with various guests. If known by the investigators and approached, he is polite and says that he is glad that they've come to the performance. If asked about the play, he says this is his first time seeing it fully produced and that he is curious as to how the audience will receive it.

If the investigators manage to get backstage and sneak around (**Stealth**, **Disguise**, or a social skill may be useful here), they witness the normal hustle and bustle of a live performance: actors getting into costume and going over their lines; stage crew checking cues and technical effects; the orchestra tuning their instruments and chatting with the conductor. Everything appears normal.

THE PERFORMANCE

Shortly before 8 pm, a young man comes out from behind the stage's curtains and tells the audience to take their seats as the show is about to begin. Five minutes later, the house lights go down and the orchestra begins playing. If the investigators have heard any of Gladstones' or Ridley's music, they recognize it immediately. Read the following text aloud or phrase it in your own words.

The lights come up on a minimalist stage, depicting what could be a nice domestic parlor. A woman and two children stand in the center. After a short pause, a man, Bertie, enters the room, apparently returning home from work. They all seem quite happy.

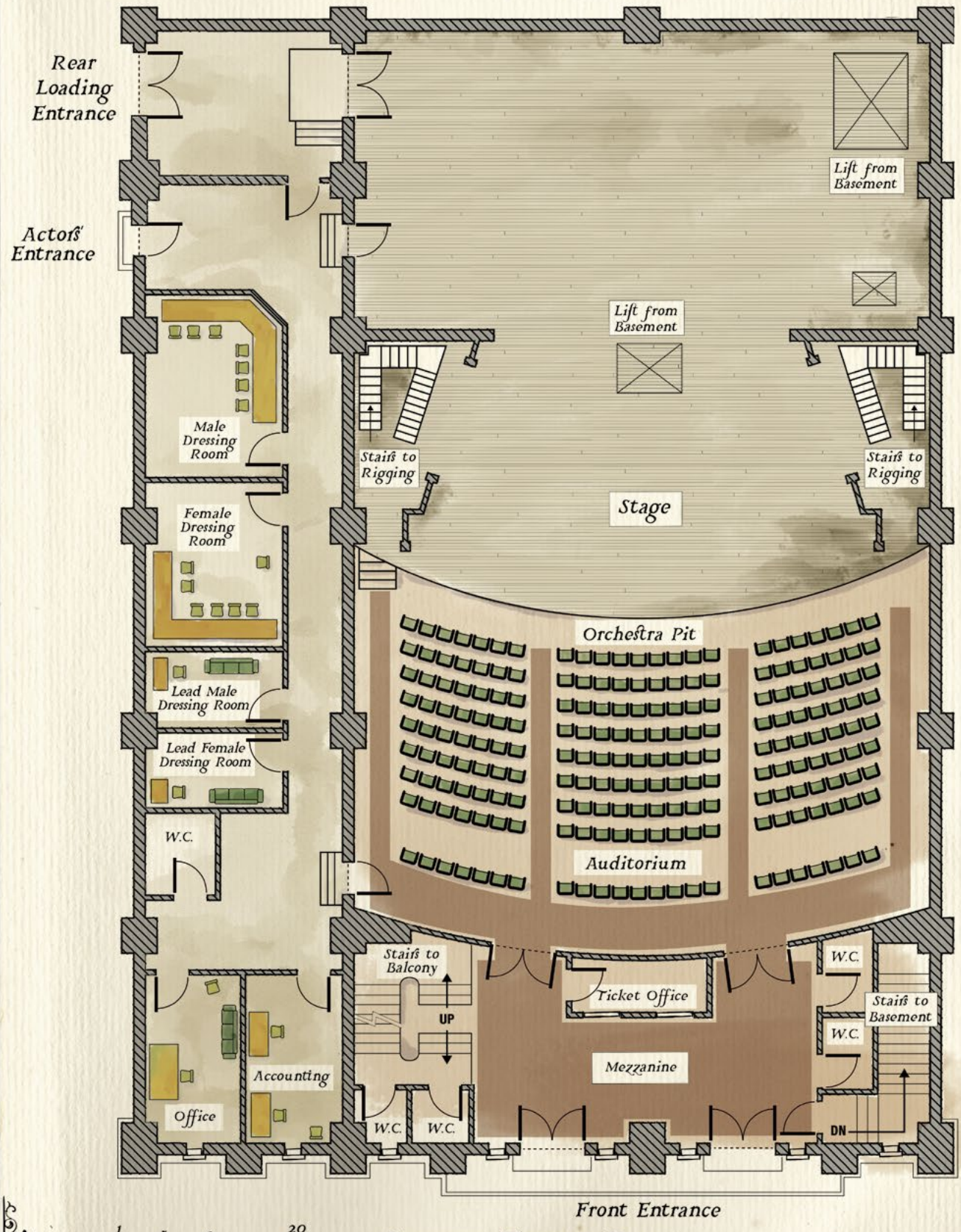
The play goes on to show that Bertie is a wealthy man with a perfect family. The following day, while on his way to work, Bertie is stopped by a well-dressed man in black who seems to know him, though Bertie doesn't recognize him. The man in black asks Bertie if he's figured it all out yet, but Bertie just looks confused by this. The man explains that Bertie's life is not real and is just a game, or a joke, that is being played for the amusement of others. As they talk, the man in black reveals that all of the people in Bertie's life are just actors playing their part. With a smile, the man says that Bertie's true parents were vagrants who sold him for a pound. His owners have been paying actors to pretend to be his family and friends his whole life. Nothing is as it seems, and it's all going to fall apart soon.

Bertie gets angry with the man in black, who just laughs as he leaves. Bertie thinks this is some kind of joke that one of his work colleagues is playing on him, but, despite his bravado, Bertie is very unsettled.

Opposite: Greene Theater map

Greene Theatre

105 Shaftesbury Ave.



Ground Floor Plan

The Keeper should attempt to express the uneasiness of this part of the play. Ask for a **Sanity** roll (0/1 loss) as the music, in conjunction with the play, strikes the investigators as authentic, the man in black's words seemingly ringing true in a personal sense to all who are watching. As always, failing a Sanity roll triggers an involuntary reaction, which, in this instance, could simply be a tear rolling down their cheek, as the investigator experiences a momentary flash of realization that their own life is a hollow sham, just like Bertie's. The rest of the audience sits unmoving, enthralled by the experience. Tears can also be seen on some of their faces.

Keeper note: the investigators may be concerned about listening to the music, especially if they already saw or heard parts of the score. Those plugging their ears to avoid listening are unaffected by the music, so do not need to make a Sanity roll. Of course, they won't hear the dialogue either, and will miss out on the details of the performance. The emotional resonance of the actors' performances, and the audience's reactions around them, is probably enough to convey the tone and mood, and influence non-hearing investigators and, given this, as the play moves toward its climax, the Keeper may choose to impose a **Sanity** roll for the overall effect (0/1 loss).

The next scene shows Bertie returning home but now the furniture has been subtly altered. His wife has a different hairstyle, and one child is played by a different actor. Bertie seems to know something is off, but he can't put his finger on it. A few more scenes follow in which Bertie goes to work and has a drink at his social club. Everyone seems to be acting like they're in on some joke, which perplexes and then angers Bertie. All the while, everyone admonishes him for acting like a lunatic.

At this point, the music has become particularly discordant. The audience becomes noticeably agitated: some begin to fidget in their seats, others laugh nervously, while a few get up and leave.

After running away from his home, Bertie wanders the streets not knowing who to trust, eventually having a crisis near a café. The man in black reveals himself from behind a newspaper. Bertie pleads with him to explain what's going on, to which he replies, 'I already have.'

The man in black explains that humanity is nothing more than an amusing distraction—a silly accident. A fun little joke. What's different about this joke is that we're all complicit in the telling of it, but few of us will ever understand the punchline. The joke is told over and over again, but most people don't even know that it's being told. Even fewer think it's funny.

The man in black tells Bertie that the joke is coming to an end. And, when it does, the whole world will end. But, this is no reason to be glum, as in its place there will be something after, something pure and real. No comedy, just ecstasy and truth. No more confusion, no more wasted effort, no more self-delusion.

The man in black goes on to explain that there is a way past the joke. The answer is to laugh at it. That is the first step on the path to enlightenment. There will be many guides on this path, some willing, some not, but they will help Bertie understand. And, behind them all is the great priest who is really a god. Then, there is a pause, while the actors, the audience, and the musicians are all silent with anticipation.

Ask for a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 loss) at this resonant moment. After a prolonged pause, the man in black says the name *"Cthulhu."* Simultaneously, everyone else—the other actors, the audience, and any investigators who failed their Sanity roll, all repeat that abhorrent name.

The silence is broken. People gasp, some laugh hysterically, some cry, others scream or vomit. Some look on, mouths agape, in utter silence—they begin to comprehend the horrible and crushing truth of life being played out before them. Those investigators who succeeded with their Sanity roll are able to dismiss this realization. Those who failed the roll find a clawing hopelessness begin to overwhelm them, bringing them to tears. Or perhaps, they finally understand the cosmic joke of it all and just laugh and laugh and laugh.

The last portion of the play grows more surreal, or at least it seems to. If an investigator is suffering the effects of insanity, they may even see themselves, or a fellow investigator, in place of Bertie in the play.

Bertie speaks to the man in black, saying he will retake charge of his life. Bertie is shown to dominate his life and family. Now, his wife and children adore and obey him, and, at work, his business partners fear and respect him. But, this all means nothing to Bertie. The joke finally makes sense to him. It is all meaningless—success—failure—it doesn't matter! It will end in death, as will all things. No matter what he does or how he plays the game, he will lose everything. And it doesn't matter.

Bertie laughs and laughs. By now, most of the audience is laughing along with him, while others cry hysterically. As he continues to laugh, a noose drops down from above. Bertie pulls up a chair, slips the noose around his neck, and kicks the chair out from under himself. The stage goes black and the curtains close.

The ending of the play, though bleak, does not induce any further loss of sanity. Something in the music changes, bringing the viewer back to some semblance of reality and normality. Those suffering from temporary insanity feel its effects rapidly fade away, although anyone suffering from indefinite insanity is not so lucky, and its effects remain.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

The majority of the audience gives a standing ovation, while a few just sit and contemplate their experience. Interestingly, some of the actors are noticeably not available for the curtain call; however, Chillingworth emerges at the end, bows, and thanks everyone for attending. Amidst the applause, he loudly invites anyone who wishes to discuss what they have experienced to come to his studio where he is hosting an after-show party.

- If the investigators talk to other audience members, they encounter a variety of opinions. Some believe it to be a mind-opening experience, while others think it was horrible theatrics used to manipulate the audience. Still others think it was a delicious dark comedy. If the investigators know anyone else who was in the audience, have their reaction be whatever seems the most unlikely. So, if the investigator knows a banker who is serious-minded and stoic, have that NPC think the play was beautiful, thoughtful, or that it was the funniest thing they have ever seen. If the investigators press anyone to explain what they feel in more detail, they become confused and have no useful answers.
- Should the investigators look for Theodore Holcombe, he slipped out before the end of the show.
- If the investigators stick around for more than a few moments, Chillingworth comes out front and approaches them, asking what they thought of his play. Anything they say is met with a knowing smile. He invites them back to his studio to discuss the show, saying he has some ideas for how to promote it—he wants thousands of people to see the play, maybe more. He also tells the investigators he's got something special planned for the party, and that they won't want to miss it.

As is always possible, the investigators may decide to get violent with Chillingworth. If they attack him, he defends himself and tries to escape. Members of the audience and theater staff, as well as Chillingworth's followers, do their best to pull the investigators back and protect Chillingworth. Unless they back down, there is chaos, with numerous people

The performers take a bow

either attacking or trying to hold down the investigators. Make sure the players understand that these are a mix of older patrons, young artists, and society butterflies—not people that would normally get physically aggressive—demonstrating that the performance has a powerful effect on them. If all else fails, Chillingworth calms everything down with a commanding voice, saying that words rather than fists shall be the order of the night. With this, he departs and reminds everyone that his studio is open for those seeking enlightenment and discussion.

Leads

- **The After-Party** (following): Chillingworth invites the investigators to attend (obvious).

THE AFTER-PARTY

The party is well underway when the investigators arrive at Chillingworth's Soho studio. Music can be heard coming from within as they approach; rather than the discordant melodies of the *Loki's Gift* score, this is popular "parlor music" of the time. Even if the investigators left the theater performance early, they find the townhouse already abuzz with activity.

The mood seems lively, but is slightly "off." Most of the attendees are having conversations about *Loki's Gift*, while others enjoy the music and eat meticulously prepared food. There are some, however, who appear to be in various states of composure: a couple holds each other quietly in a corner; a man laughs so hard he seems on the verge of tears; and an older gentleman sits on the floor, his breathing particularly labored.

Keeper note: the majority of people here are loyal to Chillingworth, but, if they see the investigators up to anything suspicious, they won't interfere. Instead, they quietly observe and then tell Chillingworth when he arrives.

- In the center of the drawing room (4), surrounded by candles, is the Cthulhu idol given to Chillingworth by Sir Wendell Whitlocke. The dancing candle lights cause the idol to cast suitably strange shadows, and its presentation suggests the idol is some sort of main attraction at the party.
- Many people just stand and stare at the thing, while a few of them reach out to touch it. An older woman comes forward and places both of her hands on the idol and then makes a guttural, coughing noise three times, before walking away. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll notes that the old woman never actually looks at the idol throughout this time, her eyes downcast, as though in supplication or prayer.

Arriving at the party

RUTH RETURNS

If the investigators have not already yet met Ruth Jones, she approaches and introduces herself; otherwise, she comes over and greets them again. She quietly says that she wants to talk to the investigators in private. If they agree, Jones takes them to the third floor and leads them into one of the bedrooms (13), locking the door behind her. She says that the play, while quite horrible, is the least of her concerns at present, because Chillingworth is going to do something awful tonight at the party: he intends to sacrifice human beings to his dark god! If the investigators are in any doubt as to who this dark god is, Jones remarks they can see its horrid form on display downstairs in the drawing room (4).

- Jones thinks that the intended victims are already in the house, but does not know where they are being held, or how many there are. She knows that the cellar is locked, as is the attic, so Chillingworth could be holding people hostage in either of those places. She believes he intends to commit the murders in front of the idol. With no one else she can turn to, Jones pleads with the investigators to help find and rescue the intended victims before Chillingworth can act.
- If the investigators suggest going to the police with this information, Jones looks worried and tells them that Chillingworth has people in the police force loyal to him and that any attempt to enlist their aid is futile, serving only to tip Chillingworth off.
- Assuming their cooperation, Jones suggests trying the attic first and then the cellar. With so many of Chillingworth's followers on the premises, she strongly recommends they all stick together in case things go wrong.

The Attic

Ruth Jones leads them to the locked attic door. She believes that a member of The Artist's Mind, named Sam, has the keys. The investigators may either try to find Sam or pick the lock with a successful **Locksmith** roll. Breaking through the door with a Hard **Strength** roll is possible, but this is liable to make a lot of noise and attract unwanted attention.

If the investigators want to try to take the key from Sam, Jones casually leads them back downstairs, pointing him out in the front room (3). Sam is a white male in his mid-30s, dressed in a loose-fitting smock (use **Chillingworth's Toughs** profile, page 230). He is engaged in conversation with a small group of men. Without a distraction of some kind, a Hard **Sleight of Hand** roll is required to get the keys; a diversion lowers the difficulty to Regular. If somehow lured away from the party, Sam gives up the key at the slightest threat, but, afterward, he seeks out Chillingworth to let him know what happened.

Once the investigators have made their way into the attic, they find a lavish bedroom. lounging semi-naked on multiple large beds are five good-looking people, all of them high on opium. Attempts to rouse and warn them of the danger they face are met with laughter and disinterest. As this seemingly pointless exercise plays out, Jones begin to cry, turning to the investigators and saying, *"What are we going to do?"*

It is possible for the investigators to attempt to sneak the lethargic attic-dwellers out of the townhouse. Some possibilities are outlined here:

- There is a dumbwaiter in the attic that connects, via the master bedroom (10), to the housekeeper's room (6), and then to the kitchen (2), from where an exit can be made via the back door; however, the kitchen is currently filled with servants preparing food, as well as members of The Artist's Mind holding intimate conversations.
- Escorting the attic-dwellers out through the front door will be prevented by members of The Artist's Mind, who ask what the investigators are doing with these people, and what their intentions are. These cultists do not fight if the investigators become aggressive, but the commotion does prompt Chillingworth to come over to see what's going on. Any accusations thrown at Chillingworth are met with laughter and a shrug. He claims he doesn't know who the attic-dwellers are or how they got into his home—obviously, they got to his opium! He says they'll be alright if they stay at his house, and that he can have someone watch over them until they sober up. If the investigators insist on taking them away, Chillingworth won't put up a fight and allows them to leave—as long as they promise to return to the party for the *"big climax."*

Any accusations made by the investigators about a cult or sacrifices are met with laughter from everyone around and followed by Chillingworth sending one of his followers off to get the police—who are in the pocket of The Artist's Mind. Jones keeps quiet and fades away into the crowd. When the police arrive, they detain the investigators and then quietly speak to Chillingworth, before accusing the investigators of trying to take advantage of the attic-dwellers. When spoken to, the attic-dwellers mumble about their rest being disturbed and how they must return to the attic. As the police move to make arrests, Chillingworth comes to the investigators' defense, saying it is all a big misunderstanding. If the investigators relent and allow Chillingworth's people to take the attic-dwellers back upstairs, to sleep and recover, then no charges will be forthcoming. With the investigators' agreement, the scene calms down and the police depart. Chillingworth asks the investigators to stay, saying, *"We've got something amazing planned, I think you'll love it."*

Keeper note: remember, Chillingworth wants the investigators to come to the ritual. Do whatever seems appropriate to get them to either stay at the party or return, should they escape with the attic-dwellers. Use Ruth Jones as needed to be their "conscience," saying that there could be more people locked in the cellar, or that they must return to stop whatever Chillingworth has planned, especially as the police can't be trusted. Even if the investigators somehow give the police enough cause to arrest them, as they are being removed from the house, Chillingworth comes forward again to have a quiet word with the arresting officer. A few moments later, the investigators are freed and their host invites them back inside to have a drink and let *"bygones be bygones."*

The Cellar

The door leading to the cellar is locked, but can be picked, forced, or unlocked in the same way as the attic door. The cellar key and the attic key are on the same set held by Sam and can be acquired in the same manner. As they descend the stairs, the investigators can hear a waltz being played on a gramophone below them. When they enter the cellar, they see three couples dressed as 18th-century French aristocrats, with white powdered wigs and flamboyant makeup. Looking more closely, the peoples' clothes look dirty and worn, and their make-up has been applied in a sloppy fashion. The cellar is dingy, cold, and smells of urine.

- If the investigators use **Stealth** to sneak into the cellar, they can enter the room unnoticed to see the dancers practicing a waltz. The dancers are not very good and appear quite drunk.
- If the investigators just walk into the room, the dancers stop. An older woman from one of the couples turns to them, asking, in a broad Cockney accent, *"Is it time yet?"* If questioned, she explains that they are *"street people"* who were offered money and drink to dance for some *"arty types"* this evening. The dancers have been drinking heavily and are committed to doing the dance (because they want the money).

If the investigators offer to pay the dancers not to perform, ask for a **Persuade** roll. If they attempt to convince the dancers they are in danger, call for a Hard **Persuade** roll. If successfully convinced, whether by bribery or persuasion, the dancers can be led upstairs to exit the townhouse; however, as with escorting the drugged attic-dwellers off the premises, it is difficult to avoid the cultists' attention, especially with the loud hollering made by the inebriated dancers. And, in short succession, Chillingworth arrives in the scene to explain that the dance is a key part of the evening's show. He quietly

The cellar

explains that his dancing guests were only locked in the cellar to prevent them from being disturbed while they rehearsed. He immediately and loudly offers to double the dancers' payment if they stay until just after midnight—an offer that is greedily and raucously accepted. Chillingworth feigns being hurt at the investigators' actions, but says the show must go on and encourages the investigators to stay for the main event.

Keeper note: as with the attic scene, Ruth Jones manages to fade into the background when the investigators are stopped. If needs be, she can continue to play-act being on the investigators' side, perhaps coming forward to defend the investigators by saying there has been some misunderstanding. Chillingworth plays along, of course. Jones' only true purpose is to ensure the investigators remain at the party.

BEFORE THE RITUAL

As the party continues toward midnight, the attendees' behavior grows more extreme as emotions and desires run high and the mood becomes volatile: arguments flair up and minor physical scuffles break out. Some folk descend into drunken revelry, while others turn amorous. A few just kneel and pray while the party carries on around them. The rooms are filled with cigar, cigarette, and opium smoke. While one might say the party is in full swing, the varied antics of those present is baser and more primal. Normal social inhibitions and mores are clearly abandoned.

If the investigators are just waiting around to see what's going on, the Keeper may choose to fast forward to **The Ritual** (following). Otherwise, should they attempt to sabotage the party, the Keeper can point out that, so far, Chillingworth does not appear to have broken any laws (that they are aware of) and that taking extreme action could have severe repercussions for the investigators. Depending on their actions, the investigators could be arrested and go to jail, which would be scandal enough for society to turn against them.

- **Arson:** the investigators may attempt to burn the studio down. If a fire is started, the cultists get everyone out of the building while others try to extinguish the fire. Unless there are some carefully planned incendiaries, the cultists are able to extinguish the flames. If the fire grows out of control, Chillingworth and his followers stop at nothing to get the Cthulhu idol out of the house, whereupon they move the party back to the Greene Theatre, intending to perform the ritual there.
- **Assassination:** as Chillingworth doesn't suspect that the investigators would do something so rash. If an attempt it made on Chillingworth's life, the cultists protect him with their lives and seek to beat the investigators into submission or unconsciousness. Once captured, the investigators are tied up for the ritual. If Chillingworth is killed, Ruth Jones takes his place and completes the ritual. Any investigators who manage to escape should immediately start thinking of how to rescue their companions—the clock is ticking. If Jones hasn't played her hand yet, she could appear, saying she managed to get out in the chaos. She can then be used to "guide" the investigators back to the ritual, saying there's no time to get help—it's up to them to stop it.
- **Flight:** the investigators could attempt to leave and decide not to get further involved. Chillingworth does his best to stop them, promising all manner of insights and delights if only they would stay for the main event. If his words cannot convince them, that's fine, let the investigators leave. When they return home, they find that someone close to them has been abducted by Chillingworth's followers. A handwritten note can be found, which says that the loved one decided to attend an event this evening, and asks their partner/spouse/friend to join them there, with the address given for Chillingworth's studio. At the bottom of the note is a small drawing—a crude sketch of the Cthulhu idol, recognizable if the idol has been seen previously by the investigator concerned. If the note is taken to the police, it is seemingly taken seriously, but no one actually does anything about it, and it's soon apparent that the investigator(s) is or are on their own.

THE RITUAL

There are two alternate endings provided. The first is a hard, horrible, and perhaps unfair, conclusion. The investigators are duped, trapped, and then ritually sacrificed to Cthulhu. In the spirit of a true horror story, it is brutal and terrible—this is *Call of Cthulhu,* did you expect the universe to be kind? The second ending provides a more survivable outcome and gives the investigators a chance to escape or to enact justice. Of course, with the open-ended nature of roleplaying games, you may have to adjust, blend, or otherwise create an ending to best fit whatever your players have gotten themselves into.

The ritual is scheduled to start at midnight, but this timing is not essential. Chillingworth can move to begin at an earlier opportunity if it presents itself. Try to be as theatrical in the timing as possible! In Chillingworth's mind, it would be best if the investigators were in the drawing room (4) of their own free will, arriving or already in place for the ritual; if this is not possible, he has his cultists find and attempt to grab the investigators to bring them to the drawing room. If they attend the party but leave too soon, they are attacked as they seek to exit the building.

ENDING ONE: DESPAIR

Just before midnight, the space around the Cthulhu idol is cleared and a string quartet begins to play a waltz. The dancers from the cellar come up and begin their clumsy performance. Everyone quietly watches. After the short waltz, the dancers leave and Chillingworth takes center stage. He begins a speech that turns into a ritual. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

> *"My guests! You have been reborn tonight! You have witnessed the curtain drop and seen the world for what it is. I know, at first, this can be frightening, but change always is! Your worries are now over! Our new lives, our new world begins now. Cthulhu will guide us! Cthulhu will show us the way! Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn!"*

The members of The Artist's Mind join the chant with Chillingworth, as do some of the other party-goers. He tells the group to bring him the *"callers."* The attic-dwellers, high on opium, are now brought forward, in front of the Cthulhu idol, where they begin to cavort in a manner that any upstanding Victorian would proclaim most lewd.

Chillingworth then calls for the sacrifices to be brought forth. At this point, if the investigators are present, the cultists seek to grab them—the investigators being outnumbered four to one (**Chillingworth's Toughs**, page 230). It's important to try to save this reveal until the last possible moment. If the investigators try to leave, start a fight, or perform some other mischief right before the ritual, the cultists seek to grab them and tie them to chairs. If the investigators believe they are hidden or that no one is paying attention to them, when the ritual starts the cultists suddenly grab them. Despite putting up a fight, the investigators are likely to be overwhelmed (remember to use the **Outnumbered** rule in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 108). If any do escape, then their companion's deaths may weigh heavily on them in the years to follow.

Once the investigators are bound and placed before the idol, Chillingworth chants in some unknown tongue, draws a ceremonial dagger, and slits their throats, one by one. To encapsulate the idea that this is the intended horrific ending, read aloud or paraphrase the following narration.

Ritual in the cellar

As you watch your comrade's life flow from their body, you realize that all you had done had been in vain. Soon, you too will die, and there will be no one to stop this cult, their play, and the will of Cthulhu! Perhaps this was all planned and you are part of something greater, some scheme to bring humanity into a new age. Or, it means nothing. Your lives, your families, your people, your civilization… it all means nothing, so maybe nothing is really lost this day.

ENDING TWO: HOPE

This ending is just like the first, but, this time, the investigators have a chance. Having all been captured and brought to the altar, two investigators realize that their bonds are loose (due to opium-smoking cultists being lax in their duties)—pick the two investigators with the highest Luck scores. Since all eyes are on Chillingworth, there are a few things the two investigators can do:

- Free their feet.
- Free another investigator's hands or feet.
- Draw a hidden weapon (if they have one).

Any obvious action requires a **Stealth** or **Sleight of Hand** roll to avoid detection, although given the candlelight and smoky atmosphere, a kind Keeper may grant a bonus die. If another investigator thinks to create a distraction, a further bonus die may be granted.

Just before Chillingworth draws his dagger, hoping to slit an investigator's throat, an authoritative voice shouts out, "*What is this?*" Theodore Holcombe, escorted by two burly men, storms into the middle of the proceedings. Chillingworth looks confused and asks Holcombe what he is doing. Holcombe replies, *"This performance' has gone on long enough. It is over!"* Chillingworth looks distraught and cries that he is obeying the will of Cthulhu and that this interruption is sacrilege. As he takes a breath to yell again at Holcombe, Holcombe stares him in the eye, raises one finger, and silences him. Chillingworth looks absolutely terrified.

No one is looking at the investigators at this moment, so they can take advantage of the distraction—actions that might have required rolls before (for Stealth, Sleight of Hand, and so on), may be done without having to roll (at the Keeper's discretion).

In a calm voice, Holcombe commands everyone to go home. When people are slow to move, he shouts, "*GO HOME!*" in a manner that makes everyone jump and quickly leave. Remaining in the drawing room and studio are Chillingworth, Holcombe and his two toughs, the five attic-dwellers (quite oblivious to what is going on), and the investigators.

Holcombe escorts Chillingworth into the dining room (5), while the toughs deal with the attic-dwellers. A Hard **Spot Hidden** roll notices Chillingworth's ritual dagger on the floor, where he was previously standing. While the toughs are distracted by the attic-dwellers, the investigators have a chance to escape or to attack. The toughs attempt to contain the situation, but, if one of them is taken down, the other calls for Holcombe and runs in his direction.

If the investigators enter the dining room, they find Ernest Chillingworth's blackened and shriveled body on the floor—call for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss). The body is unrecognizable, yet the clothes are intact and undamaged and are clearly Chillingworth's. Holcombe is nowhere to be seen, while the toughs run out into the night, only to disappear amid the thick London smog.

CONCLUSION

The Elevated Order of Morpheus sees to it that Chillingworth's property is purged with fire. The police, under the guidance of the Order—as well as having a total lack of understanding of what actually happened—say that Chillingworth was burned in a fire at his studio. The case is quickly closed.

As for the play, the Order has no further plans for it. Holcombe fears the repercussions that might ensue from the chaos that *Loki's Gift* could inspire, so closes the play down immediately. His men hunt down copies of the script and the sheet music. It is possible one or two copies of the script, as well as parts of the music, might escape their attention.

It is up to the investigator to decide how much, if anything, they tell Lord Richard Gladstone. He accepts any plausible explanation, although the truth only serves to anger him. If the investigators insist on pressing the truth, he pays them but never speaks to them again. They have lost a potentially useful ally.

The investigator with the lowest current Sanity value receives a delivery a few days after the incident. Upon opening the package, they discover the Cthulhu idol inside. As the poor investigator looks down open-mouthed at the idol, this is perhaps a good place to end your story for now. Perhaps, sometime later, the companions of this investigator may feel the need to look into the disappearance of their friend, and find the shadow of the Elevated Order of Morpheus falling upon them once more…

REWARDS

Grant an investigator development phase:

- For a walkthrough of the investigator development phase, see **Rewards of Experience: The Investigator Development Phase**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 94.
- For healing wounds, see **Regular Damage Recovery** and **Major Wound Recovery**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook,* page 121.
- For regaining Sanity points by spending time with a backstory element, see **Self Help**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 167.

Apply the following rewards to surviving investigators:

- If they believe all copies of the play *Loki's Gift* have been destroyed: +1D6 Sanity points.
- If the attic-dwellers and homeless dancers escaped with their lives: +1D4 Sanity points.
- If any investigators were sacrificed in the ritual: –1D8 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS

Ernest Chillingworth, *age 28, artist & playwright*

STR 55	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 70	**INT** 75
APP 80	**POW** 85	**EDU** 85	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 17	

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Dagger	40% (20/8), damage 1D6
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Appraise 45%, Art/Craft (Dance) 35%, Art/Craft (Fine Art) 85%, Art/Craft (Writer) 65%, Charm 70%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 23%, Intimidate 55%, Listen 45%, Occult 55%, Persuade 80%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 45%.

Spells: Contact Cthulhu.

Chillingworth's Followers, *the artist's mind cultists*

STR 40	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 50	**INT** 65
APP 70	**POW** 55	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 11	

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Knife	35% (17/7), damage 1D4
Club	35% (17/7), damage 1D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Appraise 40%, Art/Craft (Fine Art) 35%, Charm 45%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Fast Talk 40%, Intimidate 40%, Language (Other) 60%, Language (Own) 65%, Law 20%, Listen 35%, Ride 45%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Swim 50%, Throw 30%, Track 35%.

Chillingworth's Toughs, *lower-class cultists*

STR 50	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 45	**INT** 65
APP 70	**POW** 50	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3
Club	40% (20/8), damage 1D6
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Credit Rating 10%, Fast Talk 35%, Intimidate 45%, Listen 30%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 45%, Throw 40%.

Margaret Cornwall, *age 33, actor*

STR 40	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 60	**INT** 60
APP 75	**POW** 45	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 45	**HP** 10
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 9	

Combat

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

Skills

Appraise 25%, Art/Craft (Acting) 75%, Charm 75%, Credit Rating 45%, Intimidate 45%, Persuade 65%, Psychology 60%.

Lord Richard Gladstone, *age 58, aristocrat*

STR 45	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 40	**INT** 65
APP 55	**POW** 60	**EDU** 90	**SAN** 50	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 5	**MP:** 12	

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills
Accounting 85%, Appraise 65%, Charm 40%, Credit Rating 90%, Intimidate 65%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 65%.

Theodore Holcombe, *age 58, aristocrat & cultist*

See Theodore Holcombe's profile in **Chapter 2**, page 48.

Ruth Jones, *age 19, muse & cultist*

STR 45	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 65	**INT** 55
APP 80	**POW** 55	**EDU** 35	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 11	

Combat

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

Skills
Art/Craft (Dance) 35%, Charm 70%, Credit Rating 15%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 70%.

Daniel Ridley, *age 29, pianist & composer*

STR 40	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 50	**INT** 80
APP 40	**POW** 65	**EDU** 70	**SAN** 00	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 13	

Combat

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

Skills
Art/Craft (Music) 80%, Art/Craft (Piano) 75%, Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Fast Talk 45%, Listen 45%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 45%.

Frank & Cecil, *Daniel Ridley's minders*

STR 80	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 80	**DEX** 50	**INT** 45
APP 40	**POW** 50	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 00	**HP** 15
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4
Knife	70% (35/14), damage 1D4+2+1D4
Club	70% (35/14), damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills
Credit Rating 25%, Fast Talk 40%, Intimidate 70%, Jump 40%, Listen 45%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 60%, Throw 50%.

Frank & Cecil: Pulp Adjustments
- Luck: 25

Pulp Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4
Knife	80% (40/16), damage 1D4+2+1D4
Club	80% (40/16), damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents
- **Frank—Rapid Attack:** spend 10 Luck to gain one additional melee attack in a single combat round.
- **Cecil—Heavy Hitter:** spend 10 Luck to add an additional damage die in melee (according to the weapon used).

Michael Robbins, *age 46, manager of the Pacific Club*

STR 50	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 60	**INT** 70
APP 55	**POW** 70	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 35	**HP** 9
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	

Combat

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills
Accounting 65%, Appraise 45%, Charm 50%, Credit Rating 48%, Intimidate 65%, Listen 45% Persuade 65%, Psychology 55%. Stealth 60%, Throw 60%.

Pacific Club Security

STR 65	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 60	**INT** 60
APP 50	**POW** 50	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 45	**HP** 12
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills
Intimidate 60%, Listen 45%, Psychology 45%.

Pacific Club Security: Pulp Adjustments
- Luck: 25

Pulp Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents
- **Rapid Attack:** spend 10 Luck points to gain one additional melee attack in a single combat round.

CHAPTER 6

ANGEL'S THIRST

"Religion is still useful among the herd—that it helps their orderly conduct as nothing else could. The crude human animal is in-eradicably superstitious, and there is every biological reason why they should be. Take away his Christian god and saints, and he will worship something else..."

—H. P. Lovecraft

Angel's Thirst is the second scenario in the trilogy of tales within *Cults of Cthulhu*. This adventure combines the sway of religion and humanity's darker, primal urges into a story of horror and depravity. The strength of the cult in this story, the Society of the Angelic Ones (see **Chapter 2**, page 67), is its ability to prey upon the weak and desperate, giving them what they think they need as a means to use them to attain their nefarious goals. The plot concerns base human desires, including sex and drug use, but also the exploitation of fear and the use of violence for power and control. Seeing the world from their "normal" viewpoint, the investigators are challenged to perceive a place where the id rules supreme.

This scenario is intended for up to six players and may encompass around six hours of game time. The story is set in Los Angeles in the year 1922. The investigators are assumed to be characters who investigate crimes or strange occurrences, like private investigators or even police officers. The Keeper should read through the adventure and be familiar with the events and characters before running the game. It's important to understand the plot elements and how the non-player characters (NPCs) are likely to react to the investigators.

The element linking together the three scenarios in this book is the Cthulhu idol previously owned by Sir Wendell Whitlocke (of the **Elevated Order of Morpheus**, Chapter 2, page 46) and Ernest Chillingworth (**Loki's Gift**, page 194). The idol contains great power and a deep connection to the dead and sleeping god Cthulhu. Naturally, various Cthulhu cults wish to gain possession of this artifact for their own purposes.

Note: this scenario contains mature themes and the Keeper should ensure everyone's comfort in the game. Such aspects can be hidden, adjusted, or removed to better suit the play group. It is advised that the Keeper inform their players beforehand about these themes to check that everyone is comfortable and gauge if any of the material should be toned down or removed.

KEEPER INFORMATION

Of the many strange cults existing in Los Angeles in the 1920s, the Society of the Angelic Ones is truly the most despicable. At the center of the organization is Wilma Cartwright, a sorcerer and worshiper of Great Cthulhu. The Society is her cult and it is involved in a number of legitimate and illegitimate business operations.

Last summer, Wilma purchased an ancient idol depicting her god Cthulhu, along with a second statuette depicting a dancing woman (see **Loki's Gift: The Jade Dancer**, page 206). Both items are rumored to have once been owned by an *avant-garde* artist and playwright named Ernest Chillingworth; in fact, the woman sculpted in jade is said to have been created by Chillingworth (see **Loki's Gift: Cornwall's Information**, page 204).

Wilma employed the services of a local agent, Lombardo Shipping, to transport the items from England to Los Angeles. Unbeknown to Wilma, Lombardo Shipping is a Mafia front, owned and run by Sebastiano Lombardo. Looking into Wilma's background, Lombardo discovered she had money and a somewhat shady history. Thus, Lombardo decided to

PLAYER HANDOUTS

The player handouts in this scenario are presented in realistic fashion, such as handwritten letters and so on. If you have access to the PDF package that accompanies this book, please note that plain text versions of the text-based handouts are included for reference.

squeeze Wilma for more money, reneging on their previous business agreement and hiking up the price of the shipping transaction. The items shipped would remain in Lombardo's warehouse unless Wilma paid the higher shipping fee he now demanded. Not one to be scammed in this manner, Wilma elected to use her cultists and call upon supernatural forces to take her property by force. Arriving at the warehouse, the cultists and summoned monsters attacked Lombardo's crew and forcibly took the Cthulhu idol and the Jade Dancer.

Consequently, while Lombardo has no clear proof of Wilma's involvement, he's no fool and believes Wilma must be tied to the incident. Meanwhile, upping the ante and in a somewhat provocative act to waylay suspicion, Wilma continues to demand that Lombardo hands over her property for the price they originally agreed.

To further complicate matters, Wilma's suspicious daughter and figurehead of the cult, Elsie Cartwright, went to see what her mother's minions were up to on the night of the theft. She hailed a taxi cab to follow the cultists to the warehouse where the Cthulhu idol and the Jade Dancer were being kept. The taxi driver, Levi Diaz, dropped Elsie off down the block from the warehouse and waited for her to return. When Diaz heard gunshots, he got out of his cab and went to check on Elsie and so was witness to a bloodbath of criminals, cultists, and horrible creatures (deep one hybrids and a black-winged one). The cultists took Diaz and several mobsters captive, to be used as sacrifices in an upcoming ritual on Halloween.

That all happened two weeks ago. Since then, the Society of the Angelic Ones has been collecting more sacrifices for their grand ritual, which is to be held on the northeastern edge of the Angeles National Forest. Diaz has been imprisoned with 11 others in an underground facility behind a gas station, about two miles from where the ritual is due to take place.

With the Cthulhu idol now in her possession, Wilma plans to use it in the ritual on Halloween to contact a star-spawn. Wilma aims to bargain with the summoned creature to grant her more power and insight into the secrets of the cosmos. Yet, there is still more skullduggery afoot. Unbeknown to Wilma, her lover and partner, Carl Mann, is using her for his own ends. Wilma knows that Mann is a deep one hybrid, and is pleased that he has agreed to bring a group of full-blood deep ones to the ritual. Carl and his friends, however, are intending to use the ritual for their own purpose—not to mentally contact the star-spawn, but rather to free it from its ancient tomb beneath the desert. Mann and his deep one allies hope that, once freed, the star-spawn will attack Los Angeles to sate its aeons-long hunger on human flesh! Such a deed, they believe, shall grant them blessings from Great Cthulhu itself.

While Wilma directs her attention toward Lombardo, she has failed to grasp that her real enemy is closer to home, and that Carl Mann's deceit may well be her undoing.

INVOLVING THE INVESTIGATORS

The adventure begins when Selena Diaz, the teenage daughter of Levi, comes to the investigators for help. The investigators should be the type of characters that someone in need could go to for help with a criminal case, especially after the police have proven to be of little help. One or more investigators might be off-duty or retired police officers, or private eyes. Selena might additionally or alternatively seek to involve academically minded investigators or those with some link to the paranormal and occult, as she has been suffering from nightmares wherein her father appears trapped in some strange and ruined city. Thus, investigators with a reputation for dealing with unusual or supernatural cases would be ideal candidates. If this setup doesn't fit well for the investigators, they could instead be related to the Diaz family or otherwise are friends of the family and people Selena can turn to for help.

A third option, should the Keeper wish to build the three scenarios in this book into a history-spanning campaign, is to have the investigators' notes (a diary perhaps) from **Loki's Gift** fall into the hands of the 1920s era investigators, or possibly be inherited by investigator-descendants. The Keeper will need to adjust the initial set up of **Angel's Thirst**, allowing the investigators to receive word that the Cthulhu idol (and/or the Jade Dancer) have been put up for sale in England and shipped to Los Angeles by Lombardo Shipping, from where they can pick up the case.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following section outlines the backgrounds and roles for all the major non-player characters (NPCs) in this scenario. Full profiles for the various NPCs can be found at the end of the scenario in **Characters and Monsters** (page 276), and the Keeper is recommended to review the entries also in the write-up of the **Society of the Angelic Ones** in **Chapter 2** (starting on page 67)—it is suggested that the Keeper copies or prints out the NPC and monster profiles in advance to use as a handy reference while running the scenario.

Elsie Cartwright, *age 21, Reluctant High Priestess*

For information on Elsie Cartwright, see entry in the **Society of the Angelic Ones** in Chapter 2, page 78.

Wilma Cartwright, *age 52, Holy Mother*

For information on Mrs. Wilma Cartwright, see entry in the **Society of the Angelic Ones** in Chapter 2, page 77.

Louise Crosby, *age 38, Manager of the Society's Temple*

Five years ago, Louise's husband left her for a younger woman. With no children, Louise had nothing left in her life and felt lost. A friend recommended she speak with Wilma Cartwright, who was described as a wise and insightful woman. Wilma listened and nurtured Louise's hatred of her husband and her inner desire to torture and kill. Louise found an acceptance she had not known previously in her life, and she demonstrated an elevated understanding of Wilma's doctrine. Louise was eager to learn the lessons that Great Cthulhu would teach through Wilma. Since then, Louise has been devoted and loyal to Wilma, helping her build the Society of the Angelic Ones.

- **Description:** a heavy-set, white woman with blonde hair. She has a warm and friendly smile and dresses conservatively.
- **Traits** always smiling and bubbly; her outward demeanor of enthusiasm and kindness hides a deranged psychopath who delights in violence and torture.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** Louise is evangelical about the Society and tries to get the investigators to join; however, as soon as she realizes they are enemies, she becomes hostile.

Selena Diaz, *age 17, Secretary*

Selena is the eldest daughter of the captive taxi driver, Levi Diaz. Since her mother died three years ago, she has been helping her father take care of her younger siblings. To help them get by, Selena works as an office secretary for her uncle's construction firm. She has been a mother to her younger brother and two sisters and is wise beyond her age.

Since childhood, Selena has gained a reputation for being psychically sensitive. She has been known to locate missing objects and predict the deaths of loved ones. Selena has no control over these strange feelings or intuitions, but she believes they are real. Whether or not Selena has some supernatural premonition is entirely up to the Keeper—it has no impact on the scenario. Selena believes that a guardian angel speaks to her; a secret, known only to her close family and a few friends. She has dreamt that her father is still alive, but also feels that he is in great danger. She is worried for him to the point of desperation.

- **Description:** a young, Latino woman who dresses conservatively, with her hair tied in a bun. She is short with a petite frame.
- **Traits:** softly spoken, with a slight Mexican accent. Tends to sit up straight with her hands folded on her lap. She avoids confrontation, but is quite capable of standing up for herself when required.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Selena appeals to the investigators for aid in locating her father. If pressed, she may tell the investigators about her guardian angel in the hope that they are impressed and motivated to find her father.

Louise Crosby

Selena Diaz

Sebastiano Lombardo, *age 41, Mafia Capo*

Lombardo reports to the mob boss, Joseph Ernest Ardizzone. After a power play in 1920 by crime boss Vito DiGiorgio, Lombardo helped Ardizzone regain control of the Los Angeles crime network. In reward for his loyalty, Ardizzone granted Lombardo considerable power in the city. Most of Lombardo's enemies are now dead, and he has plenty of cops on his payroll.

Lombardo has been growing his shipping business—Lombardo Shipping—for the last ten years, with good success. The majority of his shipping enterprise is legitimate, which provides an excellent cover for smuggling illegal goods into the US from various foreign sources (mainly in Europe).

A man on top of the world, Lombardo has, of late, forgiven affronts he would previously have killed an offender for. Secure and well-fed, he's apt to let minor transgressions slide with a hearty chuckle—as long as he isn't pushed too far. If someone becomes a problem, he may call for a beat down or look to have the offender killed. Though he doesn't show it, he's currently quite rattled about what happened to his boys at the recent warehouse robbery, especially since he's not sure what actually went down there.

Lombardo's dispute with Wilma Cartwright arose out of his misogyny and greed. Wilma is a forceful woman and was quick to dictate terms, which, in Lombardo's eyes, made her seem arrogant and condescending. Plus, he found out she had money. When he finally acquired the items that Wilma wanted (the Cthulhu idol and the Jade Dancer), he chose to double his price, just to show her who was really in control.

- **Description:** a tall, heavyset Italian-American man, with dark, usually slicked-back hair. Once a fit man, rich living has seen Lombardo put on a few pounds.
- **Traits:** relaxed, commonly sits with his hands behind his head. He tends to laugh off minor insults, as long as they don't hit too close to home. He's a misogynist who becomes infuriated by women who refuse to adhere to what he sees as their traditional roles.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** he will be suspicious of strangers or those connected with Wilma Cartwright—if he suspects the investigators are associated with Wilma, he will be wary of them.

Carl Mann, *age 33, Gold Dealer/Deep One Hybrid*

Carl is a schemer: he's always got an angle and a plan, and he's gotten pretty good at getting what he wants. He has few scruples and is willing to do almost anything to win, with no guilt or embarrassment attached. Carl believes himself to be superior to everyone else; in his mind, everyone else is an idiot.

Sebastiano Lombardo

Carl Mann

Not wanting to follow in his father's footsteps as a longshoreman, Carl saw there was an easier way to get things done, rather than having to labor hard for a living. Deep one blood runs through his veins, from his mother's side of the family, and he became aware of his strange heritage at a relatively young age. In reestablishing contact with his "extended" family, Carl now performs all manner of deeds for the deep ones in exchange for gold—from theft and kidnapping to murder.

Carl lives a life of leisure at his family's old beach house. Occasionally, the deep ones or other hybrids ask him to perform a few "chores." As of late, he's been directed to assist Wilma Cartwright and her Society with their more nefarious activities. Carl has been told to gain Wilma's confidence and trust. He has taken this as far as he can, seducing her and forming an intimate relationship. When everyone is gathered and everything is in place, he and his deep one allies aim betray Wilma and hijack her ritual for their own purposes.

- **Description:** a white and fat, pudgy man with dark, thinning hair. He has a sickly look about him, with pale skin and large, glassy eyes. He walks slightly stooped over.
- **Traits:** looks people in the eye when he speaks to them, it's his way of expressing his dominance.

Doug Mann

- **Roleplaying Hooks:** Carl treats the investigators with contempt, and, depending on their interaction with him, he may see their value as additional sacrifices—thus, he may try to lure the investigators to the ritual.

Doug Mann, *age 31, Longshoreman/Deep One Hybrid*

The younger brother of Carl, Doug Mann looks up to his sibling. While there is not a significant deep one hybrid community in Southern California, there are small pockets, usually extended families, dotted along the coast. Doug and Carl's father married into a local Latino family that has been interbreeding with deep ones for a hundred years.

Doug's father, and his father before him, worked as longshoremen, and (unlike Carl) Doug has picked up the family trade. Consequently, Doug has little contact with deep ones or other hybrids, apart from his brother. Doug doesn't know much about what's going on and is happy to take orders from his brother. Doug has begun to feel the change coming upon him and has started to dream about taking to the sea to live in the deep one city off the coast of Los Angeles.

Doug lacks confidence and has always let his older brother tell him what to do; he hates having to make decisions. He loves his brother dearly, and, when the going gets tough, he would rather have Carl sort out problems than deal with them himself.

- **Description:** a white and slim, dark-haired man. He is a bit strange looking as his round eyes seem to pop out; although he has only just started to undergo the change to a full deep one and can still easily pass for human.
- **Traits:** looks down at the ground, shakes his head, and mumbles when he talks.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** Doug knows he isn't supposed to talk to strangers about "secret stuff," like his family or the deep ones, their plans, and business, etc., but, if the investigators were to manage to persuade him of a threat to his brother Carl, he might give up what he knows. He is a weak link in Carl Mann's operation.

Sheriff Clark Moore, *age 44, Corrupt Cop*

Sheriff Moore is a cop on the take who is happy to take what Wilma Cartwright is paying him to keep her out of trouble. Adding impetus to this, pressure is bearing down on Moore from higher up in the police force, as Wilma is also blackmailing a high-ranking police official, who has told Moore to turn a blind eye to Wilma's affairs. Nevertheless, Moore is loyal to his men and will side with them over Wilma, should things go all to hell.

The sheriff plays no role until **The Ritual** (page 269), although the Keeper may wish to bring him into the scenario sooner, if Wilma Cartwright gets suspicious of the investigators. In this event, Sheriff Moore is used to scare off the investigators and generally cause them trouble.

- **Description:** a middle-aged white man with chiseled and still youthful features. He wears his uniform and a wide-brimmed cowboy hat, which does little to hide his large ears.
- **Traits:** says as little as possible, preferring to let the other person do the talking to fill any awkward silences; a tactic that often causes them to say too much. He usually has a toothpick in his mouth, shifting it from side to side when he gets annoyed.
- **Roleplaying Hooks:** in Moore's eyes the investigators are meddlers who need to be sent on their way or taught a lesson.

LEADS

To make things easier for the Keeper when running the scenario, each key scene has a section marked "leads" at the end of it. These provide clear indications for the Keeper on where the investigator might go next in terms of clue and story progression.

Such leads may be marked "obscure," meaning that a skill roll or some form of action on the investigators' part may be required to access the information, and that the information is not completely necessary for the scenario to move forward. Otherwise, leads may be considered "obvious," meaning that the investigators should be made aware of them through the course of the scene. These terms are further explained in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* (page 202).

TIMELINE 1922

Key events, past and upcoming. Though the past events are fixed, the upcoming events may change due to the actions of the investigators.

Past Events

Tuesday, August 29	Wilma Cartwright purchases the Cthulhu idol and Jade Dancer from a dealer in England.
Tuesday, September 12	Cartwright makes a deal with Lombardo Shipping to have the two artifacts smuggled into the US.
Monday, October 9	The Cthulhu idol and Jade Dancer arrive on the East Coast, US.
Thursday, October 12	Sebastiano Lombardo pressures Wilma Cartwright to pay more money for the artifacts.
Friday, October 13	The artifacts are received at Lombardo Shipping, Los Angeles.
Saturday, October 14	Cultists from the Society of the Angelic Ones are sent to steal the artifacts from Lombardo's warehouse; during the event, taxi driver Levi Diaz is kidnapped.
Friday, October 27	Selena Diaz approaches the investigators for help in finding her father.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, October 28	Society of the Angelic Ones, church service at 7:00 pm.
Sunday, October 29	Society of the Angelic Ones, church services at 9:00 am and 7:00 pm.
Tuesday, October 31	The cult performs the ritual in the desert at midnight.

START: A NEW JOB

Early on Friday morning, October 27, 1922, the investigators are approached by **Selena Diaz** (see **Dramatis Personae**, page 235). The manner of her approach depends upon what type of investigators the players have created: if they are private investigators, she comes to their office; if they are part of a university faculty, she could approach them after a lecture. She contacts the most open-minded investigator to explain the issue with her father, telling them she either read about one of their previous cases or they were recommended to her by a mutual acquaintance. At the Keeper's discretion, Selena could have dreamt about the investigators and know certain details from one of their earlier cases that no one else should know; this dream has caused her to seek them out for help.

Selena explains that her father, Levi Diaz, is a taxi driver who has worked for Speedy Taxicabs for over 20 years, driving carriages and, more recently, automobiles. On Monday, October 16, she was visited early in the morning by Dan Shippey from the cab company, who was looking for her father. She didn't know where her father was, as the last time she had seen him was the previous day. With her father's whereabouts unknown, the cab company reported his car missing. The cab was later found, undamaged, on the corner of Maxella and Del Ray.

- The police are searching for her father. The detective assigned to the case, Clive Brooker, is moving too slowly for Selena. Brooker thinks Levi *"ran off or something"* and feels there are more pressing cases to be worked. Selena is unhappy with the glacial speed of the police and wants the investigators to find her father, who she believes is alive and in some sort of danger.
- If pressed for reasons why she is coming to them, Selena cautiously tells the investigators that she has dreamt of her father being in pain and trapped in a strange, ruined city. In the dream, her father tells her he loves her, but that he can't come back. It's too late for him and she should watch over her siblings and move on with her life. He tells her that the monsters have him and if she comes looking for him, they'll get her too. As Selena recounts the dream, she begins to cry and is clearly distressed.
- If the investigators are suspicious of Selena, allow a **Psychology** roll: with success, there's a sense that she is holding something back. If pressed, she looks a little shy and then explains that a guardian angel speaks to her in dreams. The angel told her of her father's fate. Another successful **Psychology** roll reveals that she believes the angel and her dream-visions to be completely true. She may reveal that she has used her visions to find missing objects and even a lost child—all things that can be corroborated by her close friends and family, should the investigators wish to check on her.

Keeper note: use Selena to put the investigators back on track if they begin to go astray: demanding their help, telling them her father is in danger, and saying she has no one else who she can turn to.

Leads

- **Speedy Taxicabs** (page 239): Levi Diaz's employer (obvious).
- **Detective Brooker** (page 240): the detective investigating the case (obvious).

SPEEDY TAXICABS

The main garage of the Speedy Taxicabs company is located in Sawtelle, to the northeast of Santa Monica. A cabbie by the name of Dan Shippey approaches the investigators and asks what they want. If they mention Levi Diaz, Shippey checks if they are cops before saying he knows a few things about the guy but it will cost them. A small bribe gets Shippey talking, although a successful social skill roll (**Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Intimidate**) also works.

- According to Shippey, Levi was is honest guy but he likes to gamble and fool around with women. A **Psychology** roll may reveal he is lying, and a Hard success provides an indication why: Shippey is the one with a gambling problem. If pressed, he reveals that he owes Levi money.
- In Shippey's mind, Levi is a *"stuck-up jerk"* who thinks he is better than everyone else.
- If accused of being involved in Levi's disappearance, or if the investigators simply imply that he was involved, Shippey declares he is innocent (which he is).

At some point, the firm's manager, Myrtle Cunningham, a world-weary woman in her fifties, approaches the investigators. Myrtle says that she talked to *"a Detective Brooker"* last week about Levi. Once she ascertains the investigators' interest, she cooperates fully.

- Myrtle likes Levi and considers him a good friend, saying that Levi is a *"stand-up guy."* He always arrives at work on time and keeps his car in good condition. Never a complaint. His disappearance is totally out of the ordinary and out of character.
- Myrtle shares that Levi is a family man, who is proud of his children, especially his daughter Selena. He talks about his family to anyone who listens.

- If the investigators mention Selena's "gift," Myrtle pauses before saying that Levi once told her about the time Selena helped find a missing child.
- Myrtle stresses that Levi is not the kind of guy to just take off. A successful **Psychology** roll or social skill roll confirms that she's afraid something bad has happened to Levi.
- If asked about Levi's routes, Myrtle says he usually works around the westside of Los Angeles, mostly in the Santa Monica area. His vehicle was found on the corner of Maxella and Del Ray.
- She also mentions that it might be worthwhile speaking to Betty Guthrie, who is one of his regular fares. She seems to know him well and always requests Levi when she wants a cab to take her shopping each week. According to Myrtle's records, Guthrie was the last fare picked up by Levi on October 14. If the investigators are interested in this tip, Myrtle provides Guthrie's address.

Should the investigators ask about Myrtle's conversation with Detective Brooker, she is dismissive of the detective, saying he seemed distracted when talking to her and only stayed around a few minutes to ask a few perfunctory questions. It's clear that Myrtle has little faith in Brooker finding Levi.

Leads

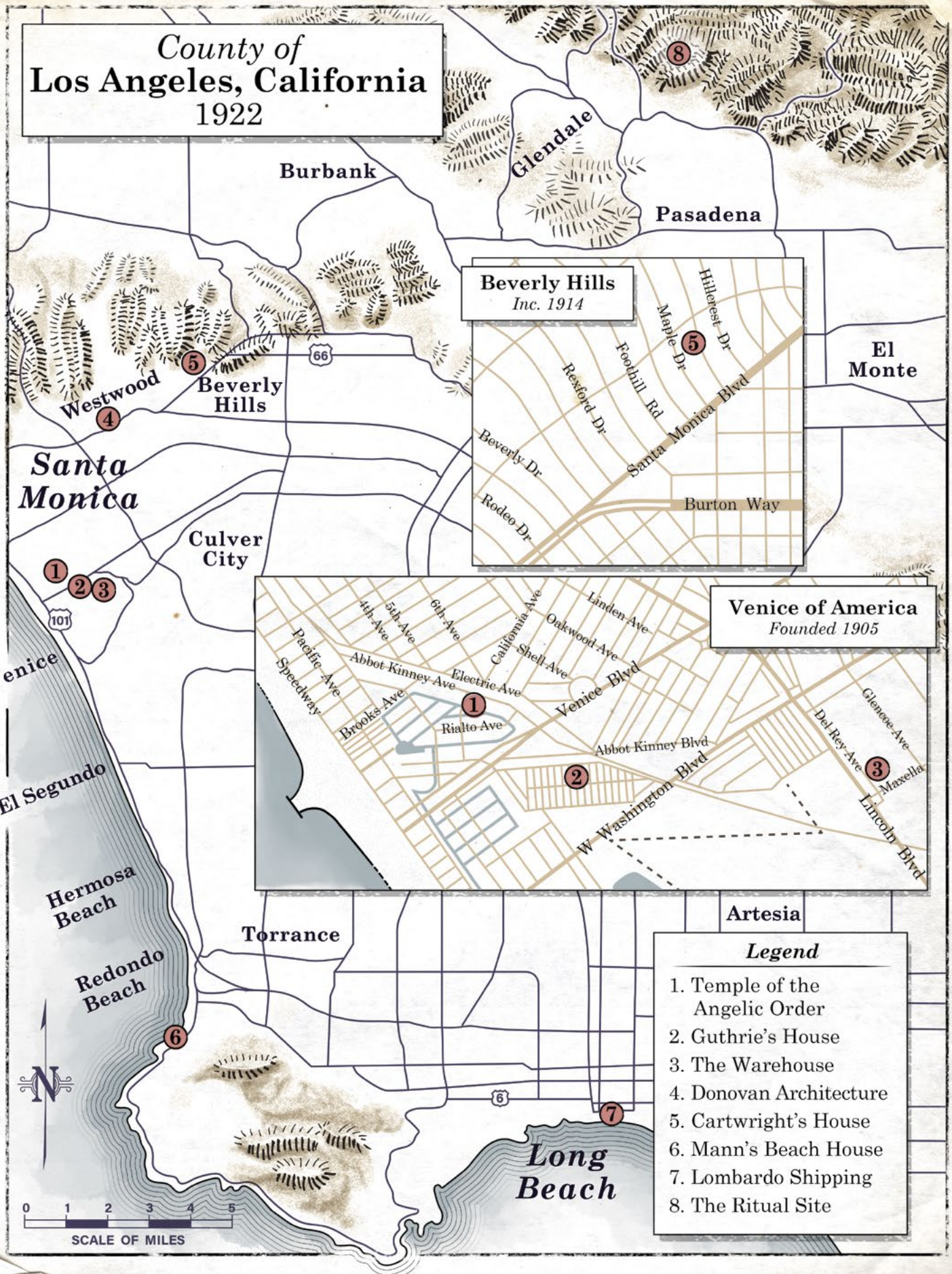
- **Detective Brooker** (page 240): Myrtle Cunningham recounts his visit (obvious).
- **Betty Guthrie's House** (page 242): mentioned by Myrtle Cunningham as Levi Diaz's last fare (obvious).
- **Maxella and Del Ray** (page 243): the location where Levi's taxicab was found (obvious).

DETECTIVE BROOKER

Detective Clive Brooker can be found at the Santa Monica Police Department. The station always seems to be busy and the investigators have to wait an hour until Brooker can spare time to see them—if the investigators have good connections with the police, the wait is shorter.

The old-before-his-time detective comes out to the lobby, wiping sweat from his forehead with a handkerchief before asking the investigators what he can do for them. When the investigators tell Brooker that they want to know about Levi Diaz, he gets annoyed and becomes defensive, saying that it's an ongoing investigation. If pressed, he says that he doesn't need *"Some civilians poking around."* This could go differently if the investigator doing the talking is connected to the

Haggling the price for a fare
Opposite: Los Angeles County map


County of
Los Angeles, California
1922
Burbank
Glendale
Pasadena
El Monte
Westwood
Beverly Hills
Santa Monica
Culver City
Venice
El Segundo
Hermosa Beach
Redondo Beach
Torrance
Artesia
Long Beach
66
101
6
Beverly Hills
Inc. 1914
Hillcrest Dr
Maple Dr
Foothill Rd
Rexford Dr
Santa Monica Blvd
Beverly Dr
Rodeo Dr
Burton Way
Venice of America
Founded 1905
4th Ave
5th Ave
6th Ave
California Ave
Linden Ave
Oakwood Ave
Shell Ave
Pacific Ave
Speedway
Abbot Kinney Ave
Electric Ave
Brooks Ave
Rialto Ave
Venice Blvd
Abbot Kinney Blvd
W Washington Blvd
Del Rey Ave
Glencoe Ave
Maxella
Lincoln Blvd
Legend
1. Temple of the Angelic Order
2. Guthrie's House
3. The Warehouse
4. Donovan Architecture
5. Cartwright's House
6. Mann's Beach House
7. Lombardo Shipping
8. The Ritual Site
0 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE OF MILES

police (maybe an ex-cop or similar), with Brooker being a little more forthcoming. Otherwise, a successful **Persuade** or **Charm** roll convinces him to talk, or, if the investigators take the initiative and promise to share any information they find with him first, he shares what he's got—Brooker's case load is heavy and he takes any help he can get. The following details may be given to the investigators.

- Levi Diaz was born and raised in Los Angeles.
- Diaz is a widower, whose wife Carmen died of stomach cancer three years ago.
- Diaz lives with his daughters Selena (17), Melinda (11), and Marta (9), and his son Carlo (14).
- Diaz has no criminal record.
- He was last seen by Betty Guthrie, a fare he dropped off around 5:00 pm on Saturday, October 14.
- The night he disappeared, he was working a 4:00 pm to midnight shift.
- No damage could be found on his taxicab, which had an almost-full tank of gas.
- Diaz's vehicle was found by a mailbox on the corner of Maxella Avenue and Del Ray Avenue. Brooker canvassed the neighborhood, but no one saw anything. The area is mostly industrial, with a few workshops and small storage facilities.
- Brooker has no active leads and the case remains open.

Detective Clive Booker

If the investigators press Brooker on why he isn't pursuing the case, ask for a **Psychology** roll: with success, it seems that Brooker is holding something back. Pushing him on this, Brooker states that the frequency of missing persons cases has risen a little in the last year, but not distressingly so. The population is increasing, so that might have a lot to do with that. Plus, a lot of the time, the person missing has simply run off to start fresh somewhere. The police just don't have the manpower to put too much effort into these types of cases.

Keeper note: what Brooker won't say is that one of his superiors has told him to lay off the case, without giving any reasons. Brooker is not about to put his career on the line for some missing taxi driver.

If the investigators push him any further on the matter, or if they begin to question him about the Society of the Angelic Ones, he angrily says he can spare them no more time and, if necessary, gets them thrown out of the station. Investigating corruption in the Los Angeles police is beyond the scope of what can be achieved within the duration of this scenario. Brooker doesn't know much about the Society, and whenever it comes up in an investigation, his boss subtly tells him to leave it well alone.

Leads

- **Betty Guthrie's House** (following): Guthrie was Levi Diaz's last known fare (obscure).
- **Maxella and Del Ray** (page 243): the location where Levi's taxicab was found (obscure).

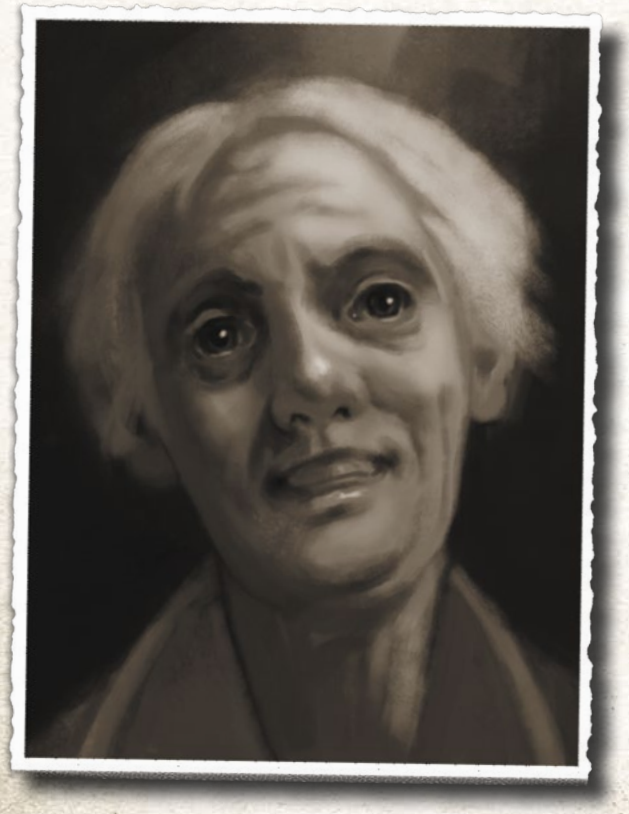
BETTY GUTHRIE'S HOUSE

Keeper note: if the name of the Society of the Angelic Ones has already come up, ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll when the investigators make their way to Betty Guthrie's address. With a success, the investigators notice the Society's strange-looking temple building on the way. If the investigators wish to take a closer look, refer to the **Temple of the Angelic Ones** (page 255). But, if the Society hasn't yet been referenced, there's no reason why it would draw the investigators attention at present—have them recall the odd-shaped building later on, when the Society gets mentioned.

Betty Guthrie lives alone in a small, yellow bungalow in Venice. She is 88 years old, full of energy, and smart as a whip. If the investigators pay a visit after dark, Betty is suspicious and unlikely to open the door for them. If they do so during the day, she is friendly and invites the investigators inside, offering tea or coffee. A particularly talkative individual,

Betty asks more questions of the investigators than they ask of her. She's interested in their families, their jobs, their personal histories, and so on. She has no ulterior motives; she's just very engaging and personable, and a bit lonely.

- At the mention of Levi Diaz, Betty looks concerned and asks what the investigators know, saying that she heard he was missing from Dan, the new cabbie that Speedy's sent over. She's worried about Levi and hopes he's found alive and well. She confirms that Levi picked her up each week on a Saturday to drive her to buy groceries. The last time was October 14, and he brought her home just before 5:00 pm. He would always help her carry her bags in. *"Such a nice man."*
- Betty mentions talking with Detective Brooker; she thinks for a moment and then asks the investigators if this has anything to do with that *"funny church"* down the street? She goes onto mention that the detective asked her a few questions about the church, which calls itself the Society of the Angelic Ones. She went there once for a service, but didn't like it, and has not returned. From what she remembers, the sermon was focused more on angels than on God, which to her, as a Methodist, seems inappropriate.



Betty Guthrie

Keeper note: Brooker asked about the Society due to Betty living near it—he is curious to know what the church is all about, given his boss telling him to keep away from it.

If pressed about the church, she can't say much more, other than something was *"off about the place"* and that it's funny that they (the investigators) bring it up because she saw the *"woman minister"*—another reason she didn't like the church—walking down the street in her white flowing dress the night Levi disappeared. Betty thought it odd because she's never seen that woman outside the church before.

Leads

- **Speedy Taxicabs** (page 239): Levi Diaz's employer (obvious).
- **Detective Clive Brooker** (page 240): Betty mentions that he visited her about Levi (obvious).
- **Researching the Society** (page 249) and **Temple of the Angelic Ones** (page 255): Betty brings up the church and elaborates if asked (obvious).

MAXELLA AND DEL REY

Maxella and Del Rey avenues are south of Venice, just over a mile from the ocean. The area has a number of businesses, workshops, and storage facilities. The police said Levi Diaz's taxicab was found next to the mailbox on Del Rey, making it easy for the investigators to find the spot. From that location, they can see a furniture workshop, a ball-bearing distributor, an auto mechanic (see below for all three of these), and an **Unmarked Warehouse** (see following).

Ball-Bearing Distributor (3) and the Auto Mechanic (4)

If the investigators canvas the area and make inquiries in either the ball-bearing distributor or the auto mechanic, they get a cool reception. The people at these establishments have no helpful information about the night Levi Diaz disappeared, but each asks for a business card or a way of getting in touch with the investigators. A successful **Psychology** roll raises a red flag to the investigators: they get a hunch that these people don't want to be helpful and that they are hiding something. If the investigators press for more information, the workers and foremen make it plain they don't want to answer any more questions with decisively threatening looks.

Keeper note: after they leave, one of the foremen calls a contact in Lombardo's gang to tip them off about the investigators' visit and their questions—Lombardo now begins his own investigation of the investigators.

Furniture Workshop (2)

If the investigators approach the furniture workshop, they meet the owner, Nick Swanson, who confirms that there was an abandoned taxi left on the corner. Swanson doesn't know anything about Levi Diaz, but recalls Detective Brooker coming by to ask a few questions. He says no one was around the Saturday night when the taxi driver is said to have disappeared, but remarks that he's seen some shady stuff going on over at a small warehouse across the street, usually in the evenings when he's had to work late. Swanson believes mobsters have some connection to the warehouse; some of his workers have seen, on separate occasions, men with Tommy guns and just too many well-dressed fellows in expensive cars for an industrial neighborhood. Naturally, everyone steers clear of the warehouse and asks no questions.

Leads

- **Unmarked Warehouse** (following): just across the street, and pointed out by Nick Swanson at the furniture warehouse (obvious).

UNMARKED WAREHOUSE

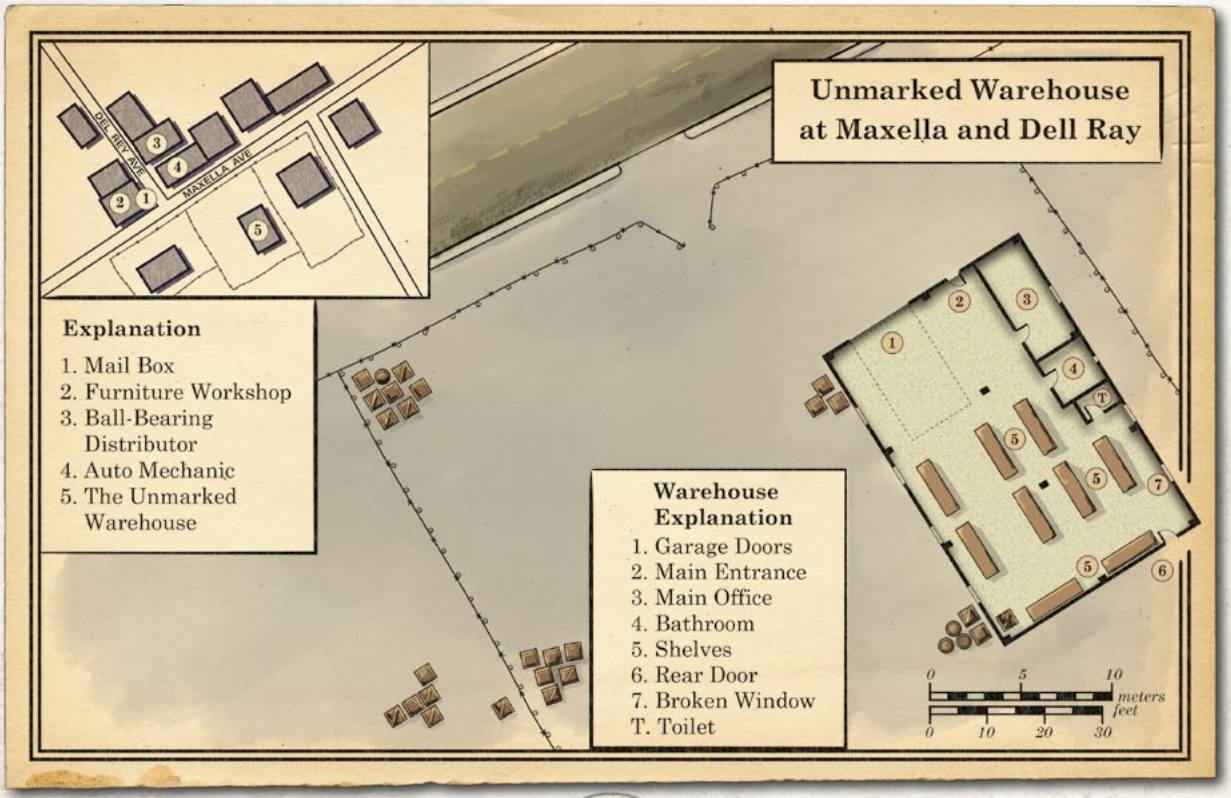
If the investigators go over to look at the warehouse, they find no signs on the exterior of the building. A 10-foot (3 m) wire fence surrounds the building and its parking lot. A large gate is fitted with a relatively new padlock and chain. The building has a few second-story windows and skylights in the roof, as well as a large loading door. From here, it looks like one of the skylights has been damaged.

It's not difficult to climb the fence and get into the small parking lot. At night, no one is around to see, but, during the day, the investigators should attempt a **Stealth** roll to avoid being noticed—if failed, a neighbor, friendly to Lombardo, informs the gangsters that someone is snooping around the warehouse. The mobsters won't show up for half an hour or so, possibly giving the investigators enough time to look around. They can break in with a successful **Locksmith** roll or a Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll, which opens any of the doors leading inside, including the big loading door, or they could smash a window (assuming they can find or bring a ladder to reach the second story).

General Impressions

Inside, the warehouse is one large room containing shelving and numerous crates and boxes, with a number of skylights helping to illuminate the space. On the left (as one enters) is an office (3) and bathroom (4).

It's clear that the place is being used to store goods from Far East Asia. Statues, furniture, and works of art can all be



Unmarked Warehouse map

found (some boxed and wrapped, some not). With a **Spot Hidden** (unless the investigators state they are checking out the skylights above), the investigators see pieces of glass have been swept into a pile, off to the right side of the warehouse. Looking up, they can see a boarded-up skylight.

It's a warehouse, so there are some long ladders available. Using a ladder to access the broken skylight provides the opportunity to inspect the damage.

- It appears that the skylight's metal frame has been twisted and bent (outward?) and scratched in many places. It looks like some big animal tore through or ripped the skylight open.

Keeper note: if the investigator inspecting the skylight has points in the **Cthulhu Mythos** skill, ask them to make a roll: with a success, they sense a strange vibration or smell something that chills their blood, and then suddenly perceive a great dark shadow with black wings in the corner of their eye. The next moment the sensation and image are gone.

Snooping Around

Searching the warehouse, ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll: if successful, some dried blood is found at the base of one of the shelving units below the broken skylight. It looks like someone did a sloppy job of cleaning the blood up.

The Office (3)

The office is locked, although a successful **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll gets it open. Smashing a window into the office is another option, as is forcing the door with a **STR** roll. Paperwork in the office reveals that the warehouse is owned by Lombardo Shipping.

- A search of the desk finds a letter from a lawyer acting on behalf of a Wilma Cartwright and the Society of the Angelic Ones, who appear to be suing Lombardo Shipping for the loss of a "priceless octopus statue and a statuette of a dancer." The lawsuit is asking for $200,000 in damages.

Freddy Arrives

At some point, have Freddy the mobster drive up in his car. If Lombardo's crew have been alerted to people snooping around, or if Freddy spots signs of a break-in, he is vigilant and enters quietly. Otherwise, Freddy is just making a routine visit. Either way, the investigators may, at the Keeper's discretion, get a **Listen** roll to hear him arrive—if Freddy is being stealthy, he parks down the road and enters on foot from the rear of the building, increasing the difficulty to Hard. If lookouts were posted, they either see Freddy approach the front gate (no roll) or require a **Spot Hidden** to notice him slinking in the back.

- If Freddy gets the drop on the investigators, he first watches to see who the intruders are. Reasoning they are not cops, he may attempt to scare them off, figuring that, being on his own, a fight isn't worth risking his neck for. Thus, he avoids combat, preferring to run and jump in his car.
- If the investigators manage to capture Freddie, he refuses to talk—his fear of Lombardo is greater than whatever his captors can do to him.
- Assuming he doesn't become entangled with the investigators, his next act is to tells his boss, Lombardo, who starts an investigation of his own—perhaps getting more details about the investigators from the businesses near to the warehouse.

Leads

- **Lombardo Shipping** (page 246): the business associated with this warehouse (obvious).
- **Researching Wilma Cartwright** (page 252) and **Researching the Society** (page 249): paperwork in the office (obvious clue).
- **Picked up by Lombardo's Crew** (following): Freddy probably tells Lombardo about the investigators, who then proceeds to look into them and may, at some point, decide to "invite" them over for a "chat."

PICKED UP BY LOMBARDO'S CREW (OPTIONAL)

If the investigators don't make their own way to **Lombardo Shipping** (following), their snooping around is likely to come to Sebastiano Lombardo's attention. At an appropriate point, the mobster captain sends some of his men to pick up the investigators and bring them to him for a chat. The muscle he sends are ordered to bring in the snoopers unharmed, so they avoid any kind of out-and-out fight, but they will use hard looks, smart wisecracks, and weapons to threaten the investigators if necessary (**Lombardo's Muscle**, page 278). Hopefully, the investigators are as keen to speak to Lombardo as he is to talk to them.

Leads

- **Lombardo Shipping** (following): the mobsters make an offer the investigators can't refuse (obvious).

LOMBARDO SHIPPING

Lombardo Shipping is located on the Long Beach coast, with its offices and main warehouse on the docks. Finding the details is easy, it's a legitimate business listed in public records. No matter what time the investigators arrive, there are always people working: a half dozen longshoremen and a few security guards. The offices are accessible to the public and are staffed by four people during business hours. Sophia Marino is Sebastiano Lombardo's secretary (and his mistress) and is the first to greet people. Lombardo is present at the warehouse only for a few hours each day; if the investigators want to speak with him, they most likely have to wait around, and, even when he does show up, he won't talk to them unless they give a good reason.

A successful **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Persuade** roll convinces Marino that the investigators have something worthwhile to hear and allows them to see her boss. If attempts to intimidate or threaten Lombardo are made, he'll have his men throw the investigators into the street (use **Lombardo's Muscle**, page 278). Otherwise, Lombardo listens to the investigators. Use the following in response to what the investigators say and ask, adapting it as necessary. Note that Lombardo is anxious about what happened at the unmarked warehouse at Maxella and Del Rey: two of his men were brutally killed, three are missing, and one is insane. He's also looking for answers and, if the investigators make a good impression of themselves, he could recruit them—or simply point them to Wilma Cartwright and thereby attempt to use the investigators to do his dirty work.

- Yes, his warehouse at Maxella and Del Rey was broken into on Saturday, October 14.
- He doesn't know anything about Levi Diaz.
- The only thing missing from the warehouse was a couple of *"weird statues."*

If the investigators bring up Wilma Cartwright or her Society, he pumps them for information, using the following to draw out what they know:

- The statues were a special order for a lady named Wilma Cartwright, who runs a church. *"One tough lady."*
- After the robbery, Cartwright called the office offering to pay for her goods, but Lombardo is confident that she only did that to establish an alibi.
- He suspects Cartwright is responsible for the burglary, but he has no idea who she used—they must have been real firebrands to take out his men like that. *"If she wasn't behind it, I'm completely stumped."*
- Cartwright has filed a lawsuit, which he thinks is just another component in her establishing an alibi.

If the investigators have any information he can use, he'll be interested and, assuming he and the investigators are *"getting on fine,"* Lombardo reveals that, before the break-in, he convinced his brother's sister-in-law, Michelle Marconi, to go to Cartwright's church to see what they were all about. Michelle has been volunteering in one of their soup kitchens and has attended services for a few weeks. So far, his plant hasn't gotten any insightful information, but he's waiting and hopeful she can dig up some dirt.

If Lombardo is getting on well with the investigators, he may suggest taking them to meet Michelle at some point, and, as mentioned, "recruit" the investigators, offering to pay them if they can come up with anything useful he can use on Cartwright.

If the interview goes poorly, Lombardo is unlikely to share much, but will make sure to say just enough to redirect the investigators away from him and toward Wilma Cartwright.

Keeper note: the scene **Meeting Michelle Marconi** is optional and advised to take place around the mid-point of the scenario, its timing is dependent on how quickly the investigators move through the scenes.

Leads

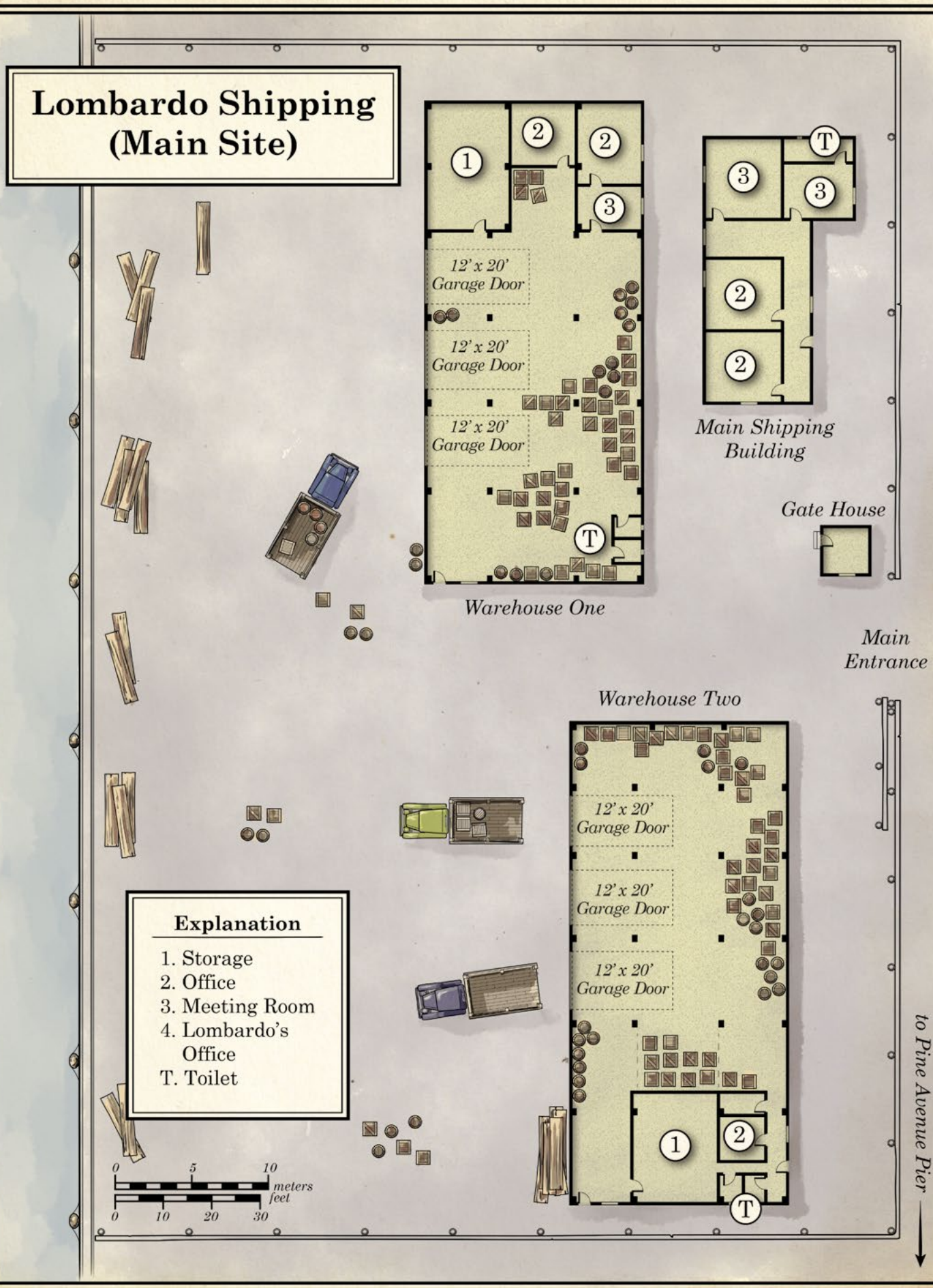
- **Hit on Lombardo** (following): the Keeper may optionally run this scene following a meeting with Lombardo.
- **Researching Wilma Cartwright** (page 252) and **Researching the Society** (page 249): Lombardo capitalizes on the conversation to point the investigators' toward Wilma Cartwright (obvious).
- **Meeting Michelle Marconi** (page 264): possibly mentioned by Lombardo (obscure).

HIT ON LOMBARDO

There are two ways this scene can play out, depending on whether the investigators are present for the attack or not. Unknown to Sebastiano Lombardo, one of his employees—longshoreman Doug Mann—is a deep one hybrid and ally to the Society. Doug's brother Carl knows that Lombardo is suspicious of Wilma Cartwright and has figured that Lombardo might, should he catch wind of things, attempt to interfere with the big ritual. Carl doesn't want that, so he's convinced Doug to make a hit on Lombardo. The Keeper should choose an appropriate moment for the hit to go down—this could happen during or after meeting Lombardo, returning from a visit to Michelle Marconi, or as the Keeper wishes.

Doug has convinced his fellow workers to make themselves scarce for a while so that he and some deep ones can sneak in and kill Lombardo. Adjust the number

Opposite: Lombardo Shipping map


Lombardo Shipping
(Main Site)
1
2
2
3
12' x 20'
Garage Door
12' x 20'
Garage Door
12' x 20'
Garage Door
T
Warehouse One
T
3
3
2
2
Main Shipping
Building
Gate House
Main
Entrance
Warehouse Two
12' x 20'
Garage Door
12' x 20'
Garage Door
12' x 20'
Garage Door
1
2
T
Explanation
1. Storage
2. Office
3. Meeting Room
4. Lombardo's
Office
T. Toilet
0
5
10
meters
feet
0
10
20
30
to Pine Avenue Pier

of deep ones so that there is one for every two investigators in the scene (maximum of three, although this may rise to six if using *Pulp Cthulhu*). Lombardo has two of his men with him (**Lombardo's Muscle**, page 278) to further even out the fight.

Doug is a coward and avoids directly participating in the attack, but may join in if it's apparent that the deep ones are winning so that he can share the glory. If he holds back, investigators may see him watching the fight (a successful **Spot Hidden** roll). Either way, at the end of the combat, Doug heads for the ocean, diving in and swimming away unless caught or killed.

Option 1: Lombardo with the Investigators

If the investigators already have Lombardo on their side (or if he is pulling their strings), they might be in his office with two of his men. The warehouse is empty, and the office crew are out for lunch or it's later in the evening once most of the workers have gone home.

Doug directs the deep ones where to go and then watches from a distance. The deep ones break into the office—provoking a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss). One of Lombardo's men screams and flees in panic, while the other one steps toward a deep one and is gutted in one blow. Lombardo screams for help. Play out the scene. The deep ones want to grab Lombardo and run off with him, dead or alive, and deliver him to Carl Mann at his Malibu home (**Carl Mann's Beach House**, page 265). The deep ones don't care about the investigators and may leave them alone if they don't heed Lombardo's cries for help and refuse to intercede; otherwise, they are targeted if they get in the way.

Option 2: Lombardo without the Investigators

If the investigators are returning to try to speak to Lombardo again (or if they initially failed to do so), or if they are leaving, having just finished talking to him, gunshots are heard from the office. If one of Lombardo's mobsters was escorting them off the premises, they stop whatever they're doing and run back in the direction of the office. Thus, the investigators are able to see Lombardo running for his life with deep ones hot on his heels. It is up to them whether they join the action (after making a **Sanity** roll, 0/1D6 loss).

Lombardo's Fate

If the investigators help Lombardo escape or defeat the deep ones, this act wins his gratitude and he comes clean about everything he knows about the warehouse incident

The hit on Lombardo

and Wilma Cartwright, although framing things so that he appears in the best light. He mentions (if he hasn't done so already) that he's got a spy on the inside of the Society and offers to arrange a meeting (**Meeting Michelle Marconi**, page 264).

Interrogating Doug

If Doug Mann is captured, he initially acts tough but plays dumb. A successful **Intimidate** roll gets him to talk. He says that his family is friends with Wilma Cartwright and that sometimes they do favors for each other.

- He warns that Wilma is a powerful woman and the investigators should steer clear of her or they are likely to end up dead.
- If he senses that the investigators or Lombardo don't like Wilma, he tries to get on their good side—hoping to win their favor and be released—by talking about his brother Carl's plan to attack one of Wilma's big rituals. He doesn't know the details but knows it's happening soon. He naively thinks that this is what the investigators and Lombardo want to hear.

Keeper note: all Doug really knows about Wilma is that she's a sorcerer and Cthulhu worshiper, and that his brother Carl is going out with her.

Lombardo will happily torture Doug for more answers, but also just for revenge, unless the investigators persuade him otherwise. Lombardo will release Doug into their hands if they give a good enough reason. If so, Doug attempts to escape the first chance he gets: making a run for it, and jumping into the ocean to swim away.

Leads

- **Meeting Michelle Marconi** (page 264): Lombardo may reveal his spy (obscure).

RESEARCHING THE SOCIETY

The Los Angeles County Court offices and the City Planners offices can both provide public information with a search of their records—a successful **Library Use** roll means the information is found quickly; otherwise, with a failure, it takes around four to six hours.

- The Society of the Angelic Ones was registered as a religion in 1919.
- Wilma Cartwright is the founder of the Society of the Angelic Ones.
- The Society of the Angelic Ones filed to build a place of worship on a plot of land in the area known as St. Mark's Island in Venice, California.
- Construction of a "temple" by the Society of the Angelic Ones was completed in 1920. The architect is listed as Gil Donovan (his address is in the record), and the building's plans are on file (**Handout: Angels 1**).

A search of old newspapers and a successful **Library Use** roll (or the use of a social skill to convince a librarian to assist), finds a mention of the Society in 1920 (**Handout: Angels 2,** see below).

Handout: Angels 2

9

SOCIETY OF THE ANGELIC ONES

The new Society of the Angelic Ones is certainly making a mark in Venice, having recently finished the construction a new temple building on a vacant plot situated on St. Marks Island, on the Altair Canal. The Society's founder, Mrs. Wilma Cartwright took a few moments out of her busy schedule to explain the work and beliefs of the congregation, saying that the church's goal is to improve the lives of its members and is a place where they can connect with the divine angels of God. Mrs. Cartwright believes that God's angels watch over us all and that by following the Good Word, we can fill ourselves with good grace to benefit not only our souls, but also our day-to-day life. "We are all God's servants," said Mrs. Cartwright, "and we must endeavor to spread our angelic wings to do good works for our fellow man." Indeed, the Society of the Angelic Ones has begun a drive to provide soup kitchens for the poor of the city, which Mrs. Cartwright explained is just the start of her church's mission to help all, no matter their sins or predicament, and that everyone is welcome at the new temple. "We offer salvation for those who strayed from the path of righteousness," Mrs. Cartwright added.

For those wanting to hear more of what Mrs. Cartwright is offering, public services take place on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 6:00 pm, as well as 9:00 am and 6:00 pm on Sundays.

Leads

- **Gil Donovan** (following): the architect of the Temple (obvious).
- **Researching Wilma Cartwright** (page 252): the founder of the Society (obvious).
- **Temple of the Angelic Ones** (page 255): following up on the research with a visit (obvious)

GIL DONOVAN

Donovan's architectural office is in Westwood, not far from Santa Monica. He's middle-aged, white, and trim, sporting a thin mustache and wearing a suit with a bowtie. If telephoned in advance, he is happy to meet with the investigators to talk about his work, but should they mention Wilma Cartwright or her Society, he gets noticeably edgy and comes up with reasons why he can't meet with them. In person, he is charming and helpful, but when Wilma's name comes up, he tries to get rid of the investigators as soon as possible.

Keeper note: a profile is not provided for Donovan.

- He admits that he designed the Temple to incorporate Mrs. Cartwrights *"stylistic design requirements,"* as he puts it, explaining that she had lots of ideas, from curving lines to unusual symbols that she wanted incorporated into the design. He doesn't know what the symbols mean, but he knows that they were very important to his client. He can't provide any real information on how the building was paid for, just saying that he was well paid and funds were never an issue.
- If he is pressed or cajoled to talk further (a **Charm**, **Intimidate**, or **Persuade** roll), he admits that he grew to be afraid of Wilma. With this, it appears he wants to say no more. A successful **Psychology** roll notes his discomfort, which suggests Wilma had or continues to have some hold or leverage on him. Pushing him (an Extreme social skill roll—although the threat of physical violence and an **Intimidate** roll reduces this to Hard), the investigators get him to admit that he slept with Wilma's daughter, Elsie.
- It doesn't require a Spot Hidden roll to notice the wedding ring on his finger. Donovan goes on to say that Wilma somehow had photographs of him and Elsie, and used these to blackmail him to do extra, secret work on the Temple. He begins to weep, saying that Wilma told him to keep quiet and that no one was supposed to know about the secret basement. Wilma could ruin his marriage and life with the photographs.
- Desperate and fearful, Donovan pleads with the investigators to help him and get the photos from Wilma, saying he'll do anything if they will come to his aid. If the investigators appear helpful at this point, he rummages in his cabinets and brings forth two differing rolled-up plans of the Temple design (**Handout: Angels 1** and **Angels 3**). Unrolling the plans, he reveals that the ones lodged with the authority (**Handout: Angels 1**) do not include the secret basement level, although this can be seen on the alternative, complete version of the plans (**Handout: Angels 3**). Comparing the two sets of plans, the investigators can make out that the basement level can only be accessed by a secret passageway.

Keeper note: even though Donovan may have spilled his secrets to the investigators, he's still very afraid of Wilma. He spends the rest of the day or night sweating over things and finally concludes that he must tell Wilma, calling her up and explaining that he was forced to show the investigators the secret plans. He gives her as much detail as possible about his "unwelcome" visitors. Thus, the investigators are on Wilma's radar now.

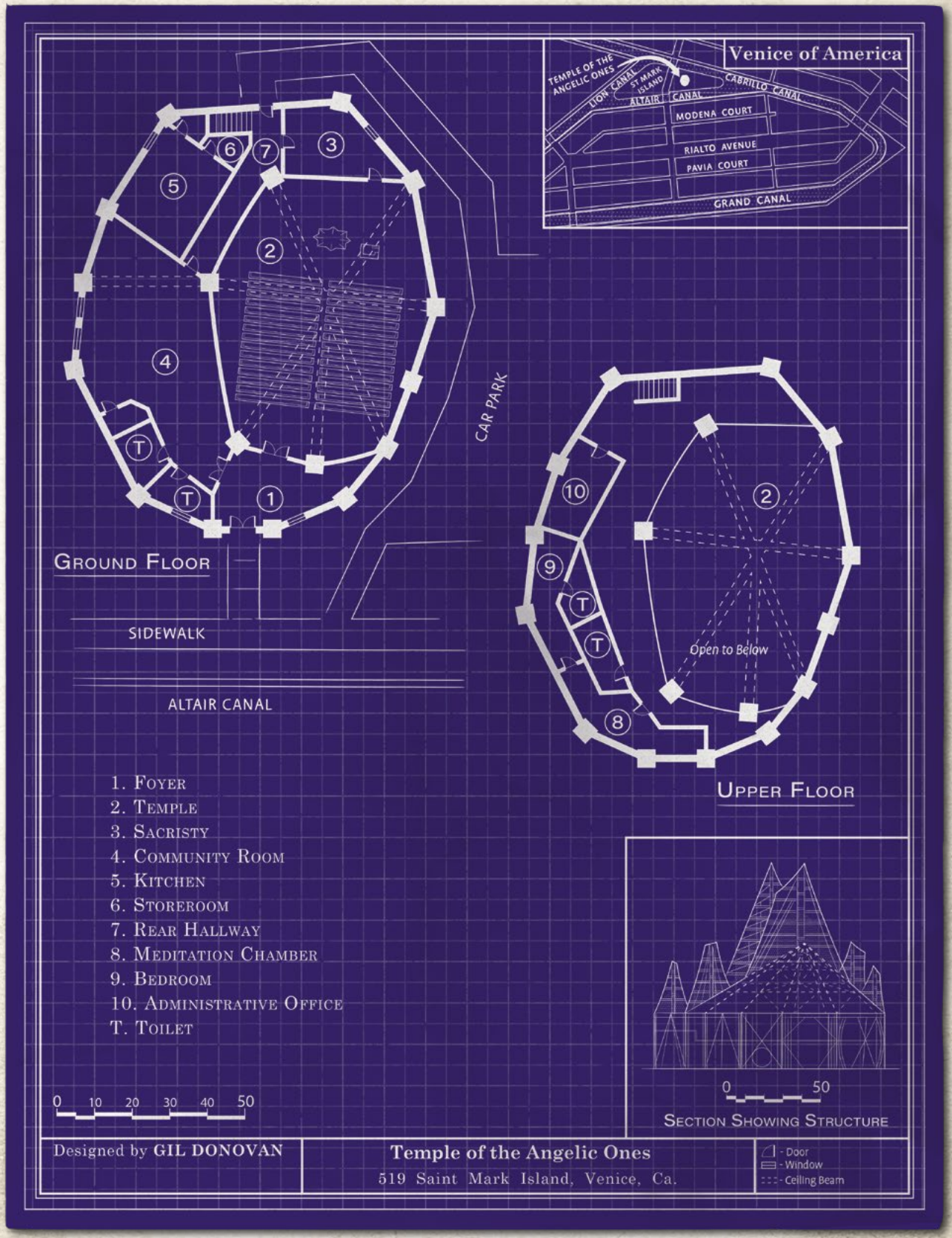
At the Keeper's discretion, Wilma may decide to cut ties to Donovan, as he's clearly a liability. She could send one of her cultists to murder him, or could kidnap him to be later sacrificed (**The Ritual**, page 269).

Leads

- **Temple of the Angelic Ones** (page 255): the investigators may now possess the secret plans (obscure).

Gil Donovan

Handout: Angels 1



RESEARCHING WILMA CARTWRIGHT

Checking with the local police and/or the county clerk's office, the investigators may find the following information with appropriate skill rolls (**Accounting**, **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, **Library Use**, and so on)—a pre-existing police contact may negate the need for a roll.

With a success, it takes about an hour to dig up the relevant material per location.

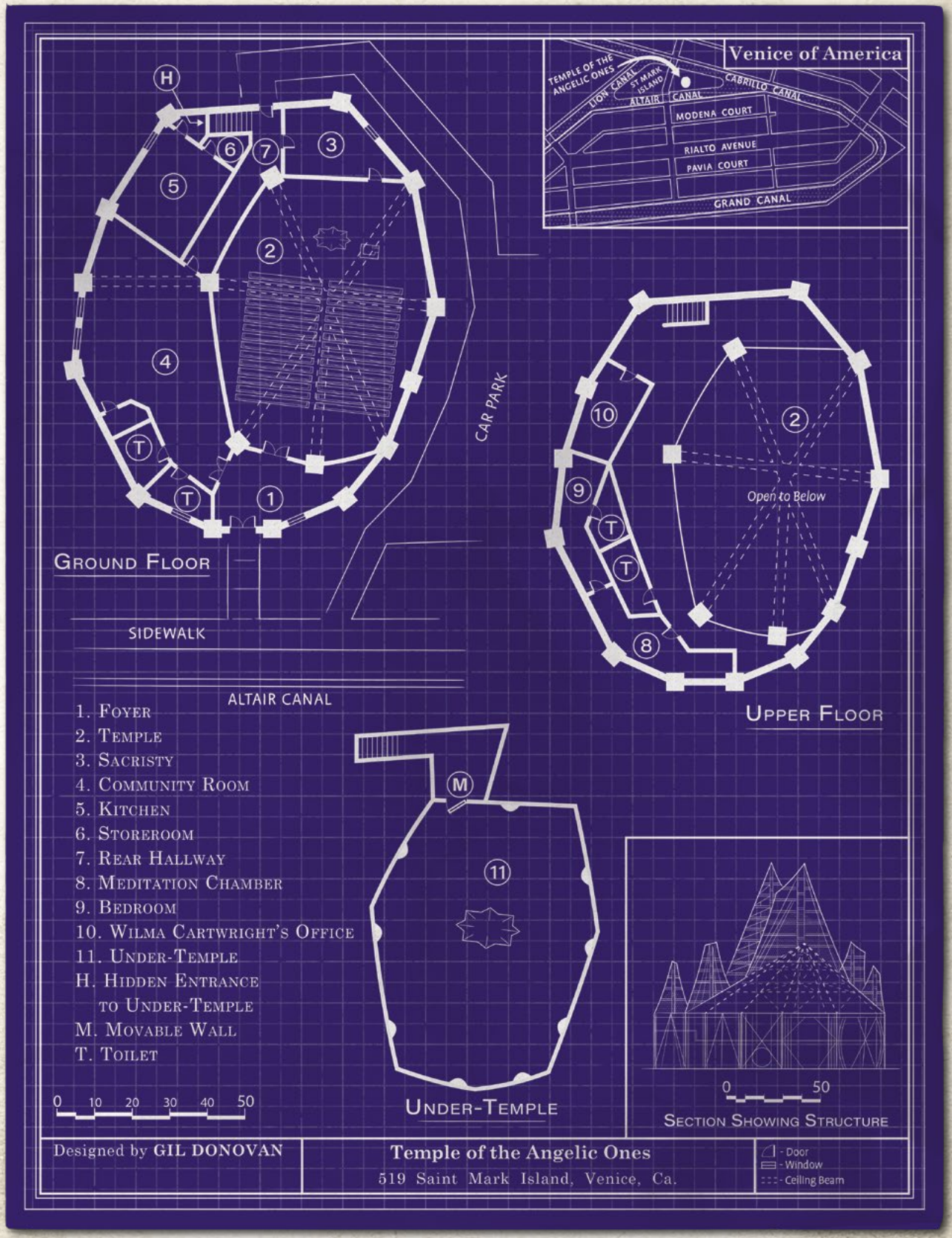
Keeper note: the information here concerns Wilma's Cartwright's life in California. Revealing her previous marriages and history requires extensive research outside the bounds of this scenario. If the investigators seek to contact the authorities in Stillwater, Oklahoma, they may be directed to Oklahoma City and the details of Wilma's first marriage to Luke Kettle. While Wilma's historical trail is difficult to follow, further digging may lead to Omaha and Wilma's marriage to Arthur Carlin and then George Emerson. Piecing together her move to Carson City and marriage to Kenneth Davis, and their later move to Portland may be difficult but not impossible. If the Keeper wishes to develop such research into the scenario, they are advised to review Wilma's history, provided in **Chapter 2** in the **Background** section (page 67) of the **Society of the Angelic Ones**.

County Information

- Wilma Cartwright (née Clark) was born in Stillwater, Oklahoma in 1870, and is registered as living in Los Angeles from 1907.
- Wilma Cartwright (née Clark) has three children: Elsie (21), Paul (19), and Kristina (17). Steven Clark is recorded as the father.
- Wilma Clark is the widow of Steven Clark of Depoe Bay, Oregon; a death certificate for Steven Clark records him as being lost at sea during a fishing voyage in 1906.
- Wilma Cartwright is the widow of John Cartwright, a wealthy Los Angeles businessman. They were married in 1908, with John Cartwright's death recorded two years later in a swimming accident, with a coroner's verdict of accidental death.
- Wilma Cartwright's daughter, Elsie, married Benjamin Gold in 1917. Elsie was 16 years old at the time of her marriage, while Gold was 45.
- Benjamin Gold died of a heart attack in 1918, twelve months after his marriage to Elsie Cartwright.
- Wilma Cartwright has a home at 82 Maple Drive, Beverly Hills.
- Wilma Cartwright is registered as operating a "spiritual consulting practice" from 1916 to 1920.

Meeting Wilma Cartwright

Handout: Angels 3



- Wilma Cartwright is the founder of the Society of the Angelic Ones, which was registered as a religion in 1919.

Police Information

- Wilma Cartwright does not have a local criminal record—nor does Wilma "Clark."
- Elsie Cartwright does not have a local criminal record.
- Wilma Cartwright was the widow of John Cartwright, a wealthy Los Angeles businessman. They were married in 1908, with John Cartwright's death recorded two years later in a swimming accident, with a corner's verdict of accidental death. The police information notes that Wilma was previously married to Steven Clark, who died at sea during a fishing voyage in 1906; despite the similarity of the deaths, no evidence of wrongdoing on Wilma's part could be found by the investigating police.
- Elsie Cartwright was married to Benjamin Gold, who died of a heart attack twelve months after their marriage; the coroner recorded a verdict of death by natural causes.

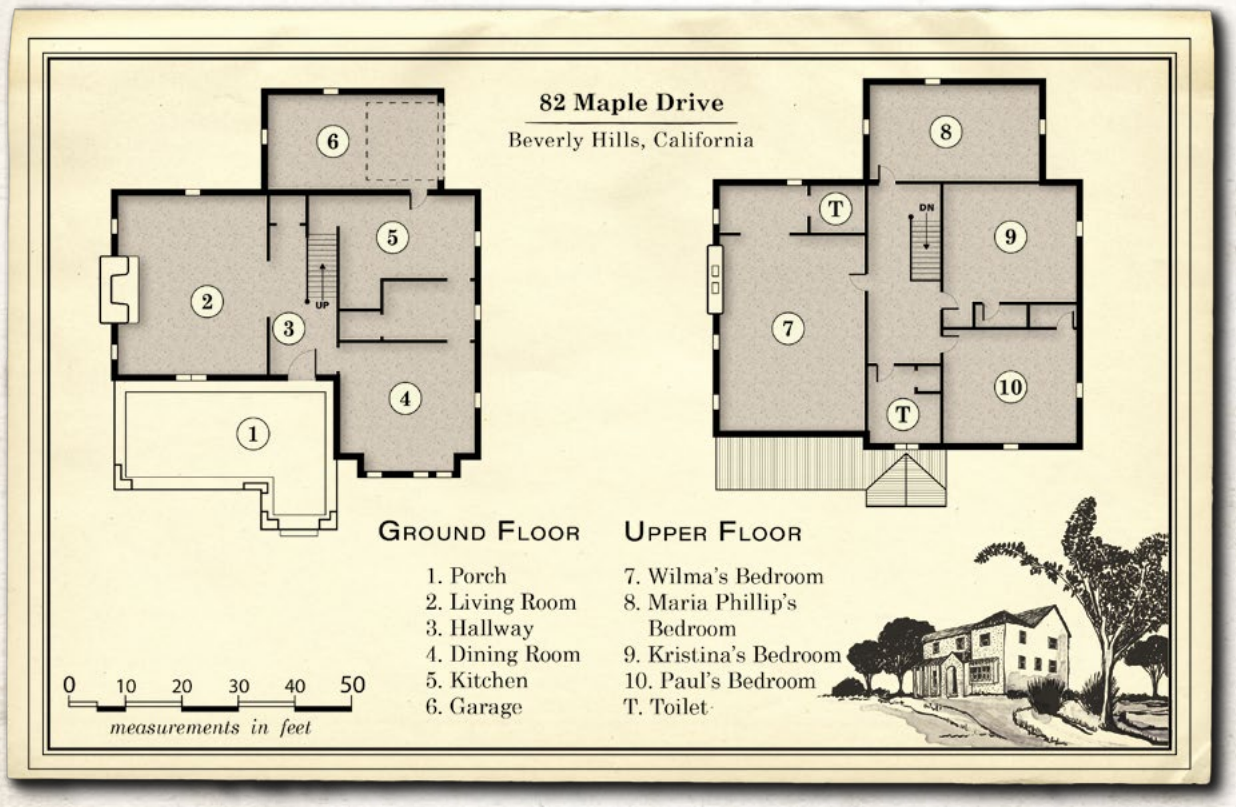
Leads

- **Wilma Cartwright's House** (following): investigators may wish to check out her home at some point (obvious).
- **Temple of the Angelic Ones** (page 255): Wilma Cartwright is the founder (obscure).
- **Meeting Wilma Cartwright** (page 256): the investigators may wish to meet Wilma (obscure).
- **Meeting Elsie Cartwright** (page 261): they may wish to meet Elsie (obscure).

WILMA CARTWRIGHT'S HOUSE

Wilma Cartwright's house is at 82 Maple Drive, Beverly Hills, and is a large, Spanish-styled home. Wilma keeps the house free of "cult" activities and possessions, so there are no physical clues at this location. Besides Wilma, two of her three children (Paul and Kristina) live at the house, while Elsie stays mostly at the Temple. A full-time housekeeper, Maria Phillips, also lives on site.

Investigators calling at the house are met by the housekeeper, who turns them away should they inquire about Wilma and her family. Maria is well-paid and is also very protective of the children, and refuses to let unannounced visitors inside, with no exceptions. The housekeeper is unaware of the children's transformation into deep ones, and knows little about the Society, so is unable to supply any useful information.



Wilma Cartwright's house map

- If attempting a disguise, such as a door-to-door salesperson or similar, any social skill roll to gain Maria's trust in this manner is at Hard difficulty, and she is liable to threaten to call the police if anyone becomes a nuisance.
- While Maria rarely leaves the property, the investigators may try to break in, although a Hard **Stealth** roll is required to avoid being seen by someone given the affluent neighborhood. A **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll gains admittance inside via a door or window.

Keeper note: optionally, Wilma Cartwright could be at home when the investigators call, although she tends to spend most of her time at the Temple until late evening. Refer to **Meeting Wilma Cartwright** (page 256) as necessary.

Inside 82 Maple Drive

Paul and Kristina Cartwright are kept indoors as Wilma believes their appearance might put off some Society parishioners, so she keeps them in seclusion.

- The teenage children are deep one hybrids, though they don't know it. Even at their relatively young age, they are already manifesting some deep one traits: Paul has widely spaced eyes and his hair is thinning, while Kristina has broad shoulders and small ears that she covers over with her stringy, dark hair. Though odd-looking, they do not appear inhuman, but those with experience of deep one hybrids may recognize their physical traits. Both are quiet and shy, having led sheltered and somewhat sad lives.

If the investigators manage to contrive a way to speak to Paul and/or Kristina, their general ignorance offers little by way of answers. If Elsie's name is mentioned, they say that she lives at the Temple nowadays, as she's being punished for something; but they don't know what and can't say more. They won't say anything bad about their mother, although a successful **Psychology** roll reveals they are afraid of Wilma.

Leads

- **Meeting Wilma Cartwright** (page 256): she may be home or elsewhere (obvious).
- **Temple of the Angelic Ones** (following): the children mention that Elsie lives at the temple (obvious, if asking the children).
- **Meeting Elsie Cartwright** (page 261): the children mention that she lives at the Temple (obvious, if asking the children).

TEMPLE OF THE ANGELIC ONES

The Temple of the Society of the Angelic Ones is located in Venice, on St. Mark's Island; the location is bordered by Riviera Avenue to the east, the Lion Canal to the north, the Grand Canal to the south, and the lagoon on the west. The Temple is newly built and is of an unusual design, which some may describe as being in the Art Deco style.

- Close inspection of the building's exterior sees that there are strange symbols carved and drawn on the surfaces.
- A sign near the main entrance lists the service times: Sunday 9 am; Sunday 6 pm; Wednesday 6 pm; Saturday 6 pm. Another sign reads: Wednesday Coffee Mornings at 9 am. And yet another sign promotes a soup kitchen: open Sundays 4 pm, Wednesdays 4 pm, and Fridays 6 pm.

Keeper note: a successful **Occult** roll notes that some of the symbols on the Temple's stone and woodwork are connected to Theosophy. If **Cthulhu Mythos** is used successfully, some of the symbols appear to be glyphs associated with Cthulhu and its fabled sunken city of R'lyeh.

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

Theosophy is a philosophy that seeks to understand the mysteries of nature and the supernatural underpinnings of the universe. It is considered to be part of Western esotericism, which is the belief that hidden knowledge from the ancient world offers a path to power and enlightenment.

Founded in New York City in 1875 by Helena Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott, the Theosophical Society mixes and matches many religious and philosophical ideas. Much of Theosophy is influenced by Buddhism and Hinduism, and focuses on personal and spiritual enlightenment, as well as supernatural powers and insight, like telepathy. Theosophy's popularity rose out of the growing interest in Spiritualism in the late 1800's. Blavatsky wrote the Society's holy book, *The Secret Doctrine*, in 1888.

AN ANGELIC SERVICE

If the investigators decide to time their visit with a service, they see a wide spectrum of people entering the Temple, almost filling the auditorium (2). Just before the service begins, a young man lights candles, and then an organ starts playing classic hymns. A beautiful and fair-haired, young woman (Elsie Cartwright) walks out in ceremonial robes, at which point the congregation rises. The woman then leads the service from the raised platform at the front of the congregation. Atmospheric footlights lend the woman an almost supernatural aura.

The service is similar to a typical Christian service, although some elements are a little strange—a **Know** roll (or other relevant skill) suggests these may be from Asian philosophy. There is a strong emphasis on angels and how their works manifest God's divine will. The Keeper may wish to present a short example of the sermon, as follows.

> *"We stand upon the shoreless ocean of the universal truth. Light in darkness, darkness in light. The angelic breath is eternal. It proceeds from without to within, flowering outward to encompass all things. Light is the cold fire; its flames produce the heat of life eternal. The water of life is the angelic breath, filling us with its divine power.*
>
> *The angelic ones' spark must be relit. Must be relit within our hearts so that we shall know the universal truth spoken by the angelic ones' tongues. Through fire, earth, air, and water shall their word be known and lift us up so that we may manifest our true spirit without the impediments of the flesh."*

A successful **Occult** roll detects a lot of Theosophical dogma, altered to sound more Christian, and focusing particularly on angelic beings. Toward the end, the congregation rises for the sacrament. The woman says that by ingesting the bread and wine, they consume the body and blood of the Angelic Ones, which is in stark contrast to the accepted Christian sacrament. Note that the wine and wafers are normal, although the investigators may suspect otherwise.

After the service, the congregation more or less moves to the community room (4), where coffee, tea, and biscuits are served. Investigators find the various members of the congregation friendly and welcoming. By chatting with those around them, the investigators can obtain the name of the woman who led the service: Elsie Cartwright. Interestingly, Elsie does not socialize and leaves right after the service is concluded. During this time, the investigators meet Louise Crosby (see her write-up in the **Dramatis Personae**, page 235), the Temple's manager. Crosby is friendly and welcoming, and if asked about the Society's beliefs, she presents the public version of the Church—use the following information to inform the discussion.

- The Society of the Angelic Ones' goal is to improve the lives of all of its members, in all aspects: spiritually, physically, and even financially.
- The church is monotheistic, believing in the one true God. The Angelic Ones are God's servants.
- The Society uses the term "Angelic Ones" instead of "Angels" because they do not *"in reality"* take the forms of humans with wings, as seen in popular culture. They *"in fact"* come in many forms and have many different functions.
- The Society believes that Jesus was the divine child of an Angelic One and a human, which the church calls a "Nephelim."
- The spiritual leader of the Society is Elsie, Wilma Cartwright's daughter. Elsie is touched by God—*but Crosby won't share that Elsie is a Nephelim.*
- Crosby downplays all the occult and Eastern-derived mysticism and instead focuses on the Christian aspects of the church, as well as the charitable work that it does for the community: running a soup kitchen that serves food to the hungry three times a week.

If the investigators ask anything about the warehouse at Maxella and Del Ray, the stolen statuettes, or taxicab driver Levi Diaz, Crosby claims ignorance. If the investigators get too pushy, Wilma Cartwright intercedes. After introducing herself, she basically regurgitates the same information about the Society as Crosby, but uses the discussion to learn more about the investigators—their names, where they live, and their interest in the Society. Refer to **Meeting Wilma Cartwright** (following).

Keeper note: Crosby knows that Wilma purchased the Cthulhu idol and the Jade Dancer, and is aware of her dispute with Lombardo Shipping regarding these items; and Crosby knows the Society kidnaps and sacrifices people. But, she doesn't know anything about the warehouse incident or Levi Diaz's disappearance.

MEETING WILMA CARTWRIGHT

Wilma is easily accessible, spending most of her time at the Temple. If the investigators have already caught her attention by snooping around, she may approach them while they are visiting the Temple. When talking to the investigators, Wilma assumes a friendly "grandmother" persona, apparently happy to discuss almost anything, although if the investigators pry into things she doesn't want to talk about, she'll answer questions with questions or change the subject. At all times, she seeks to (gently) question the investigators without giving away too much information herself. Some possible questions and responses follow.

If asked about the statuettes

Wilma says that she believes one of the statuettes—the octopoid-looking one—was made by the Angelic Ones somewhere in the South Pacific. Apparently, carvings on the sculpture bear similarities to those she has deduced are connected to the Angelic Ones. She purchased the item, along with another statuette of interest, from a dealer in London. The items cost a great deal and their theft from the shipping warehouse is unacceptable. She goes on to remark that she is suing the shipping company, Lombardo Shipping, for the loss of her items.

Keeper note: Wilma believes the Cthulhu idol can help to provide a direct channel to Great Cthulhu, through which she can access mystical power. She knows the Jade Dancer was made or owned by Ernest Chillingworth, who she has discovered had some form of connection to Cthulhu. See **Chapter 5: Loki's Gift** for details on Chillingworth and the statuettes—if that scenario was played previously, its events and outcome may be known to the investigators (and possibly Wilma) if they were present, are descendants, or have access to the diaries of the Victorian-era investigators involved.

Wilma has the Cthulhu idol and Jade Dancer and endeavors to keep them with her at all times, carrying them around in a locked briefcase that has been padded inside to safely house the artifacts. When present at the Temple, she keeps the briefcase locked in a safe in her office on the upper floor. When at home, she keeps it under her bed, although sometimes she sleeps with the statuettes in her bed. She does her best to keep the artifacts hidden.

Note that **Carl Mann** (**Dramatis Personae**, page 236) plans to take the Cthulhu idol from Wilma at the ritual. He is in no rush to obtain the artifact, preferring to bide his time until the night of the ritual.

If asked about Elsie

Wilma explains that her daughter Elsie is literally divine: a human being touched by the Angelic Ones. She says no more, but does invite the investigators to meet with Elsie in person—see **Meeting Elsie Cartwright**, page 261.

Keeper note: when talking of Elsie, investigators may detect a certain gleam in Wilma's eyes should they succeed with a **Psychology** roll. Wilma is proud of her daughter.

An angelic service

If the investigators become threatening toward Wilma
Faced with accusations or threats, Wilma changes tactics and, as though "coming clean," offers to introduce them to the Angelic Ones and reveal their mystery. If the investigators agree, she arranges to meet them at the Temple or an out-of-the-way spot later that night. If they accept the invitation, Wilma gathers four church members and together they summon the scarlet ones to visit the investigators. Wilma's aim is to either convert the investigators to her cause or scare them off. The full profile for the scarlet ones can be found in **Chapter 4**, on page 178. Regardless of the outcome of this scene, should it even occur, Wilma has the investigators followed and seeks to find out more about them. Investigators may be tipped off as they continue their investigation, noticing their tail with an appropriate **Spot Hidden**, **Psychology**, or **Listen** roll.

Leads

- **Layout of the Temple** (following): the investigators may contrive a way to explore the building (obvious).
- **Meeting Elsie Cartwright** (page 261): Wilma may invite the investigators to meet Elsie (obvious).

LAYOUT OF THE TEMPLE

The Temple of the Society of the Angelic Ones is open to the public only just before and after public services and events, with the front door locked at all other times. During the daytime, the back entrance is usually unlocked (a **Luck** roll may be used to determine this). A small parking lot is located to the left of the building. There are two guards, armed with pistols, protecting the building at night (**Cultists/Guards**, page 280).

Ground Floor

The ground floor has two entrances: the front entrance (canal side), set back off the street, and a rear entrance. While the front door requires a Hard **Locksmith** or Extreme **Mechanical Repair** roll to pick the lock, the rear door needs only a Regular **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll.

Foyer (1): the main entrance leads to a foyer that opens into the main temple (2) and also the community room (4). The foyer is modestly decorated with strange symbols carved into the woodwork and masonry.

- A successful **Occult** roll reveals that some of these are Theosophical symbols of protection.

Temple (2): the temple room has two entrances, one from the foyer (1) and the other leading to the sacristy (3). The temple room is modern with Art Deco styling, and creates the impression of being inside a cocoon, as the curved and strangely angled walls seem to converge around those standing within. Despite the weird architecture, the interior is laid out in a common style, with an altar at the center of the chancel and a pulpit to the left, while lines of wooden pews are provided for the congregation (enough to seat 160 people). The ceiling is high, reaching to the roof of the building where bizarrely shaped skylights of differing colored glass let in streams of light.

- If an investigator has architectural or similar expertise (otherwise a successful **Spot Hidden** roll), they notice a conventional, rectangular-shaped skylight above the center section of the pews, which is latched and could therefore be opened with a hook on a pole (one can be found leaning up against the east wall).
- Behind the altar is a large, simple crucifix wrought in metal. Despite its seemingly Christian presentation, the altar and interior walls are engraved with many strange designs. A successful Occult roll confirms that these include symbols of protection and power taken directly or modified from various mystic or religious sources, such as pagan pentacles, Egyptian ankhs, the nine-pointed star of the Bahá'í faith, the Druidic triskelion, and so on. A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll notes that some of the symbols derive from the worship of Cthulhu, Dagon, and Hydra, a number of which are alleged to channel mystic power; if the result is a Hard success, the position of these symbols suggests their power is being directed below.

Sacristy (3): a small room behind the altar area, containing communion items, incense, and linens. There is a second door that leads into the rear hallway.

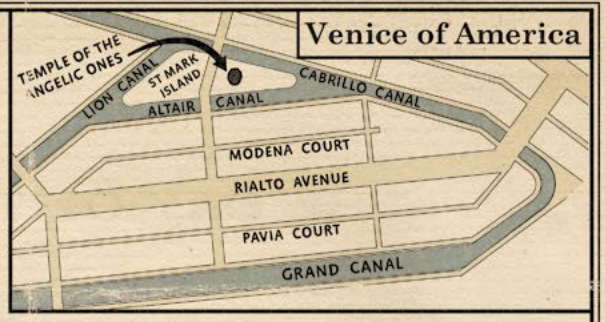
Community Room (4): nearly as large as the temple room but with a lower ceiling, it shares the Art Deco styling but there are none of the mystic/religious symbols. Tables and chairs are set out for pre- and post-service gatherings. A serving counter provides access from the kitchen (5).

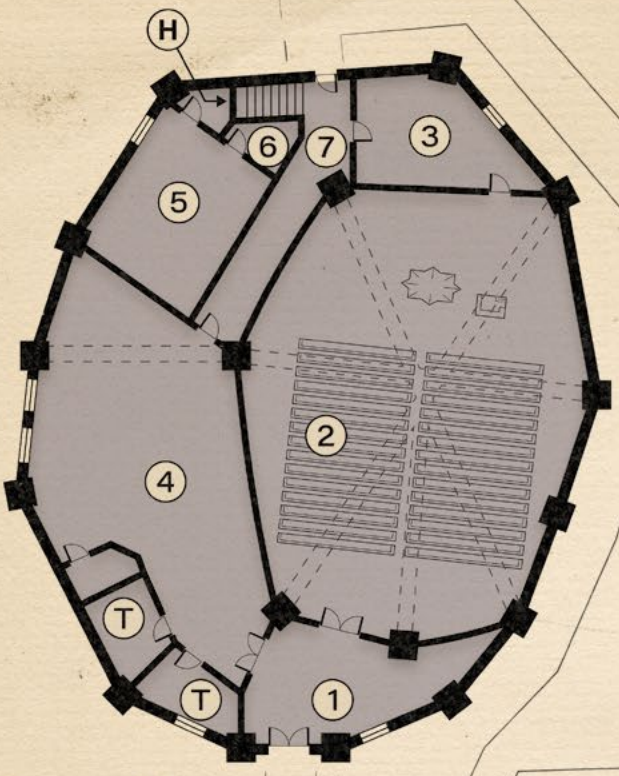
Kitchen (5): large and fully stocked with a walk-in pantry, the kitchen can provide refreshments and meals for a large number of people. The community soup kitchen for the homeless and hungry operates here three times a week.

Storeroom (6): additional chairs, folded tables, and other supplies are kept in here.

- If carefully searching the room, or with a successful **Spot Hidden** roll, a secret door (S) may be revealed behind a trolley of chairs. This door opens onto a set of stairs descending to another hidden door (M), which leads to the under-temple (11).

Opposite: Temple of the Angelic Ones map



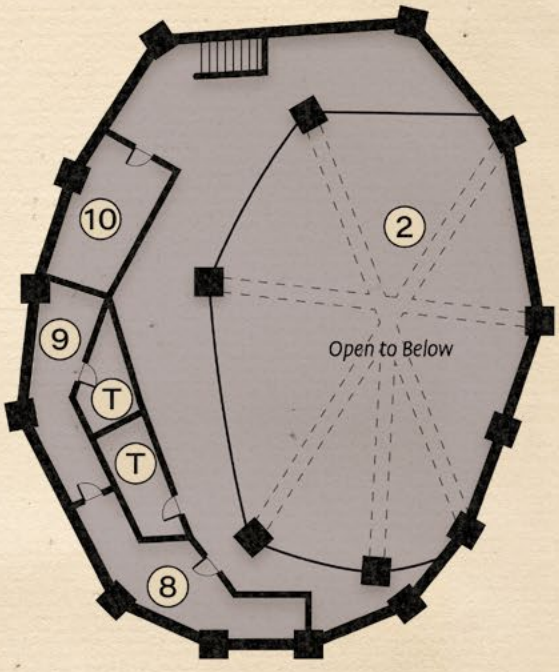


GROUND FLOOR

CAR PARK

SIDEWALK

ALTAIR CANAL



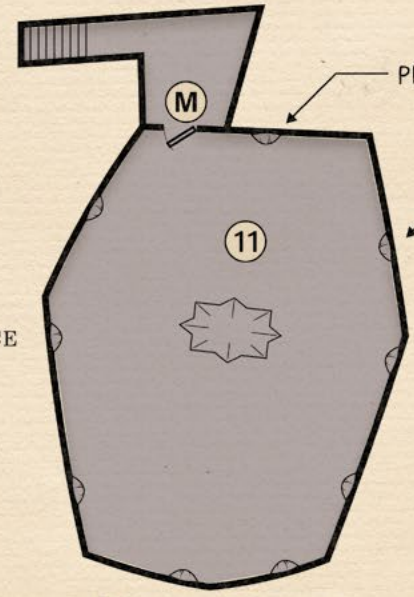
UPPER FLOOR

1. FOYER
2. TEMPLE
3. SACRISTY
4. COMMUNITY ROOM
5. KITCHEN
6. STOREROOM
7. REAR HALLWAY
8. MEDITATION CHAMBER
9. BEDROOM
10. WILMA CARTWRIGHT'S OFFICE
11. UNDER-TEMPLE

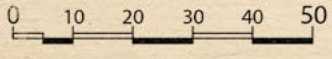
H. HIDDEN ENTRANCE TO UNDER-TEMPLE

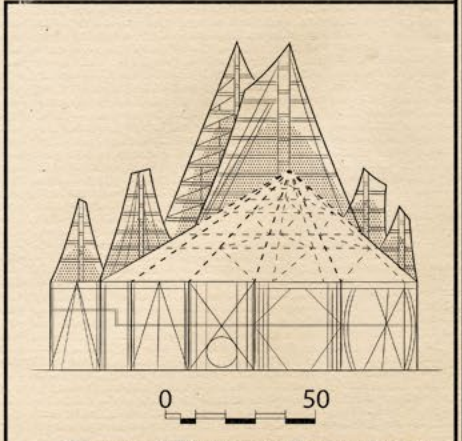
M. MOVABLE WALL

T. TOILET



UNDER-TEMPLE





SECTION SHOWING STRUCTURE

Designed by **GIL DONOVAN**

Temple of the Angelic Ones

519 Saint Mark Island, Venice, Ca.

- Door
- Window
- Ceiling Beam

Rear Hallway (7): provides access to the backdoor, the community room (4), and to the sacristy (3), as well as the stairs ascending to the upper level.

Upper Floor

The stairs lead up to a long hallway that overlooks the temple room. On the other side of the hallway, are three doors: Elsie Cartwright's meditation chamber (8), Wilma Cartwright's office (11), and a toilet (T).

Meditation Chamber (8): has the look and feel of an ancient Greek temple, with faux pillars and a small altar. A prayer mat lies on the floor in front of the altar.

Though Elsie Cartwright has a room at Wilma Cartwright's house in Beverley Hills, she primarily lives in the Temple, within her meditation chamber and bedroom (9). Since her nocturnal wandering a few weeks ago, her mother has been keeping her under lock and key in the building. While she has the run of the building, Elsie tends to remain here most of the time.

- The pair of armed guards patrolling at night are here to "protect" Elsie and prevent her from leaving and getting into trouble. Over the last few days, Elsie has worked (with success) to charm the guards and win their loyalty. For now, she has not acted to leave, preferring to make her mother believe the guards remain under her sway—otherwise, Wilma would have them replaced.

Bedroom (9): the room is dominated by a large bed, surrounded by flowing curtains. Apart from a dressing cabinet and a wardrobe, there are a few comfortable chairs, a settee, and a coffee table.

Wilma Cartwright's Office (10): pleasantly decorated with cute knick-knacks and ceramic ornaments of dogs and cats, the room presents the vibe of a "kindly grandmother's den" rather than an office. There are fresh flowers by the window, and willow-pattern cups and saucers are placed ready to serve tea. A large oak desk stands before a well-stocked bookcase, while a large oil painting depicting Jesus' sermon on the mount takes pride of place on a wall.

- The bookcase is filled with religious and occult books. Making either an **Occult** or **Library Use** roll may reveal that many of these volumes are both rare and valuable; however, there are no Cthulhu Mythos tomes on these shelves.
- A search or successful **Spot Hidden** roll discovers that the painting of Jesus covers a wall safe. The safe uses a combination lock and, if lacking specialist tools, requires a Hard **Locksmith** or Extreme **Mechanical Repair** roll to open—with the right tools, reduce the difficulty by one step. On a failed pushed roll, the Keeper is advised to have someone enter the room: a guard, Louise Crosby, or Wilma.
- The wall safe contains legal documents regarding all manner of property and financial holdings. If the investigators have time to go through these documents, a successful **Accounting** roll reveals the purchase of two properties: a house in Malibu and a gas station near the northeastern edge of the Angeles National Forest—these stand out from the other holdings, which are, in the main, apartment buildings in Los Angeles. Attached to the Malibu house and gas station paperwork are transfer of ownership papers (at zero cost) to a Carl Mann. There is also correspondence between Carl Mann and Wilma, where Carl thanks Wilma for doing "the right thing by his family," and refers to the house in Malibu as a "holy place." Addresses for both the Malibu house and the gas station are in the files.

Keeper note: what the documents don't report is that the gas station is where the sacrifices (including Levi Diaz) are being held, and that the Malibu house is Carl Mann's old family home that was repurchased and given to Carl as a reward for his help in communicating with the deep ones.

- The safe also contains three Mythos tomes: *Invocations to Dagon*, the *Sussex Manuscript*, and an English translation of the *R'lyeh Text*. Details for all three of these tomes can be found in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* on pages 238, 230, and 233 respectively.

Under-Temple (11)

The stairs from the secret door (S) lead down into what looks to be a small but empty storeroom. A good search or a successful **Spot Hidden** roll detects a hidden lever in a wall (M). When the lever is pulled, the far end wall of the room moves aside to reveal the under-temple. Without accessing the lever, the stone wall would require hours of work with a sledgehammer to get through. The wall can be moved back into place by another lever on its far side.

The under-temple lies directly beneath the floor of the public temple above. The space, while similar to the temple room above, is smaller and has significant differences. The Art Deco styling is replaced with what looks like a mix of Aztec- and Egyptian-inspired designs and instead of a crucifix behind the altar, there is a large bas-relief depicting a large squid-like being (Cthulhu). There are no pews or pulpit, and the altar is larger, with a flat top in which channels run into a series of spouts. The walls are carved and inscribed with various symbols, as well as a series of plaster plaques on which more unusual symbols and character forms are inscribed.

Keeper note: if it's not already clear to the investigators, a successful **Occult** roll determines this is a sacrificial altar where the channels collect and funnel blood to the spouts. Traces of what looks to be dried blood can be seen on the altar—this can be confirmed as human blood if a sample is collected and tested (suitable **Science** skill roll success).

- If examining the altar, a drawer can be found, which contains a sacrificial dagger.
- A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll reveals that all the symbols on the walls are associated with the worship of Cthulhu, Dagon, and Hydra, and may be in a rudimentary form of R'lyehian, also known as R'lyeh Glyphs. Such symbols are thought to amplify and collect "mystical energy." If the result is a Hard success, the investigator considers that the whole set up is somehow a means to channel magical energy directly to Great Cthulhu.
- Sealed into the walls, behind the plaster plaques, are a number of Egyptian-like sarcophagi containing the mummified bodies of former members of the Society of the Angelic Ones. Hammers and chisels, or similar tools, are needed to break through the plaster and extract the sarcophagi, allowing their grisly contents to be revealed. The investigators may never discover these, but if they do, call for a **Sanity** roll (0/1D3 loss).

Leads from the various Temple rooms

- **Meeting Wilma Cartwright** (page 256): she spends most of her time in the Temple (obvious).
- **Meeting with Elsie** (following): either coming upon Elsie if snooping around or via Wilma's invitation (obvious).
- **Researching the Society** (page 249): the investigators may wish to find out more (obvious).
- **Carl Mann's Beach House** (page 265): paperwork in the office safe (obscure).
- **The Gas Station** (page 267): paperwork in the office safe (obscure).

MEETING ELSIE CARTWRIGHT

There are two ways the investigators can meet with Elsie: via Wilma Cartwright, who can invite the investigators to meet her; or they may run into her while sneaking about the Temple. Elsie spends most of her time in her mediation chamber (8) or bedroom (9) on the upper floor of the Temple.

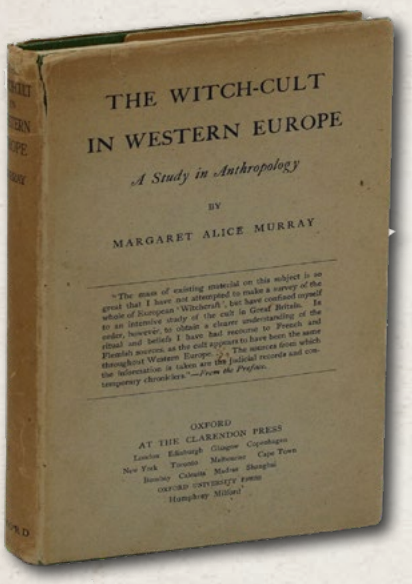
THE WITCH-CULT IN WESTERN EUROPE

English, by Margaret Murray, 1921

Published in 1921, the book is an anthropological study of witchcraft and posits that, before Christianity, an older religion existed that venerated a horned god and followed the seasonal pattern of death and rebirth. Murray argues that the pagan "witch cult" flourished up to and beyond the Renaissance. She alleges the forebears of the religion were "small people," giving rise to folklore concerning fairies, gnomes, and the like. The book contains source material taken from witch trials, as well as detailing ceremonies and rites.

The book makes no direct reference to the Cthulhu Mythos, although some consider its focus on the "horned man" to be a thinly veiled reference to one of Nyarlathotep's many forms. If asked to discuss the book, Elsie Cartwright conjectures that the horned man described by Murray is, in her opinion, a messenger of Great Cthulhu, and that the "small people" may be related to or derived from, as she puts it, *"the sea folk, who dwell below."*

- **Sanity loss:** none.
- **Skills:** +1 percentile in Occult.



During the day, Wilma and her cronies keep a watch on Elsie, while at night the two guards ensure she stays put.

- When the investigators meet Elsie, she is probably lounging on her bed and reading a copy of *Witch Cults in Western Europe* by Margaret Murray.

Two versions of the meeting follow: one where Wilma is present, and a second where she is absent. These two versions may intermix to some degree, so the Keeper should be prepared to adjust and present Elsie in light of the circumstances.

Elsie's Motivation

Elsie doesn't want to be part of her mother's cult any longer. She is pregnant and has managed to keep the information from her mother, but she won't be able to hide it for much longer. Time is running out for her. She wants to take her younger brother and sister away to someplace safe where they can live a relatively normal life. Where that is, she doesn't know. She knows if she runs, her mother and her minions will try to find her and punish them all. The only way out, she thinks, is by her mother's death. Elsie's first goal is to protect her unborn child.

Elsie has power of her own but is unsure of her mother's abilities. Since her mother has been keeping her in the dark, Elsie doesn't know what kind of deals Wilma has made with the "sea creatures" and her followers, or what secret sorceries she can wield. This lack of knowledge makes Elsie cautious about trying to escape from her mother and the Society. Elsie will not directly move against her mother but knows that Wilma has enemies and may seek to assist them if she feels that her mother won't find out.

Recently, Carl Mann befriended Elsie. Carl recognized her hybrid nature and thinks Elsie may prove to be useful to him in the long run, but, for now, all he has done is to cultivate their friendship. Elsie sees Carl as a potential problem solver and may direct those she perceives as enemies or troublemakers (perhaps the investigators) to Carl so he can deal with them.

When meeting the investigators, Elsie is trying to work out whether they are useful pawns, enemies, potential allies, or even friends.

Keeper note: the father of Elsie's unborn child is left open for the Keeper to decide. The father may never be revealed, or could be anyone from Carl Mann to one of the Society's congregation. Elsie is probably the only person who knows for sure.

Meeting Elsie with Her Mother Present

Wilma escorts the investigators upstairs to Elsie's meditation chamber (8). Wilma breezes into the rooms without knocking and introduces the investigators. Throughout, Wilma tries to direct the conversation as a means to find out more about the investigators, for example:

- "*Elsie, why don't you ask these good people about their interests?*"
- *"Perhaps our new friends can recommend some new books to you?*"
- *"Elsie would love to travel. Tell us about your hometowns."*

Elsie feigns ignorance of the warehouse robbery and the stolen statuettes. If the investigators ask questions about Levi Diaz, call for a **Psychology** roll: even with a failure, they note the recognition in her face. With a success, they detect she knows more but the fear of her mother prevents her from saying anything; it is clear she knows about Levi's abduction and is ashamed about it.

If the investigators attempt to draw Wilma away, so that some of their number can speak to Elsie alone, Wilma complies, saying to Elsie, *"I'll leave you to get more acquainted,"* which is code for *"find out everything you can about them, then tell me later"*—see the following section for how the conversation changes when Wilma leaves the room. Otherwise, the conversation carries until the point where Wilma feels she has got all she can out of the investigations without pushing things too far.

Keeper note: while Elsie's pregnancy is not yet showing, there could be, at the Keeper's discretion, some smaller tell-tale signs. Medically inclined investigators and those with experience of childbirth are the most likely to notice such signs. Optionally, a successfully **Psychology** or **Medicine** roll may hint at Elsie's condition.

Continuing the conversation without Wilma

Once alone with the investigators, Elsie attempts to fathom their motives and interest. Each of the following points suggests a path for Elsie to take—combine and adjust these as necessary.

- **If they seem dangerous or reckless:** Elsie tries to persuade them to leave her alone and directs them to **Carl Mann's Beach House** (page 265)—where she expects Carl can deal with them however he sees fit.
- **If the investigators are accusatory:** she calls out for help from her mother (or the guards, if at night) to escort the investigators out.
- **If they seem suspicious of the Society and Wilma:** she may open up to them somewhat, using the conversation to see how much the investigators really know and how she can use them to help her escape from her mother.
- **If the investigators are sympathetic:** Elsie may be convinced to reveal that she knows the Society has kidnapped Levi Diaz, but is unsure where he is being kept. She knows her mother keeps secret and important documents in her office safe in the room next door—see **Wilma Cartwright's Office (11)**.
- **If she perceives them as clever:** they could be pawns to use against her mother, with Elsie perhaps trying to use them to "rescue" her siblings from their Beverley Hills home (**Wilma Cartwright's House**, page 254). If mention of alerting the police is made, Elsie countermands this by saying that her mother has close ties with the local police, so they can't be trusted.

Elsie with Her Mother Absent

If the investigators manage to sneak in at night and get past the guards, they can find Elsie either in her rooms or perhaps downstairs in the kitchen making a drink or snack. At first, Elsie tells the investigators only what she must. Gauge the approach made by the investigators, and present Elsie accordingly using the following guide with the points above from the alternative version of the scene.

- **If they ask about Levi Diaz:** Elsie says he is still alive but is unsure where he is being held, and suggests that the documents in her mother's wall safe in her office may provide an answer (they don't provide a clear answer). If pressed, she guesses (correctly) that Levi might be being held at a gas station on the way to the Angeles National Forest—she can provide directions (**The Gas Station**, page 267).
- **If they ask about what's going on:** she warns them that there is great danger. A great ritual is planned for All Hallows' Eve, somewhere on the northeastern edge of the Angeles National Forest. She doesn't know the exact location, but remembers her mother speaking about a gas station, which she assumes is close by. Elsie knows the secret password, "Revenant," which allows access to the ritual site (see **The Ritual**, page 269).
- **If they ask about Wilma:** Elsie warns that her mother is a powerful woman and, if they have the chance to kill her, they must do so. The Society is a deadly cult and her mother has supernatural allies from beyond this world. They can't go to the police as Wilma has someone high up in her pocket.
- **If they ask whether Elsie is pregnant:** she feigns shock and says no, although she could then say yes if she wishes to either use her pregnancy to push the investigators to help her (using them as pawns) or if she trusts and sides with them (becoming true allies).
- **If they seem willing to cross Wilma:** Elsie takes pleasure in saying how her mother's boyfriend, Carl Mann, is going to

double-cross Wilma. She laughs viscously, whispering how Carl has boasted to her of his secret plan to take control of the big ritual for his own purposes. *"Oh yes, Carl and his friends are going to rouse the Sleeper, and mommy's not going to like that one little bit!"*

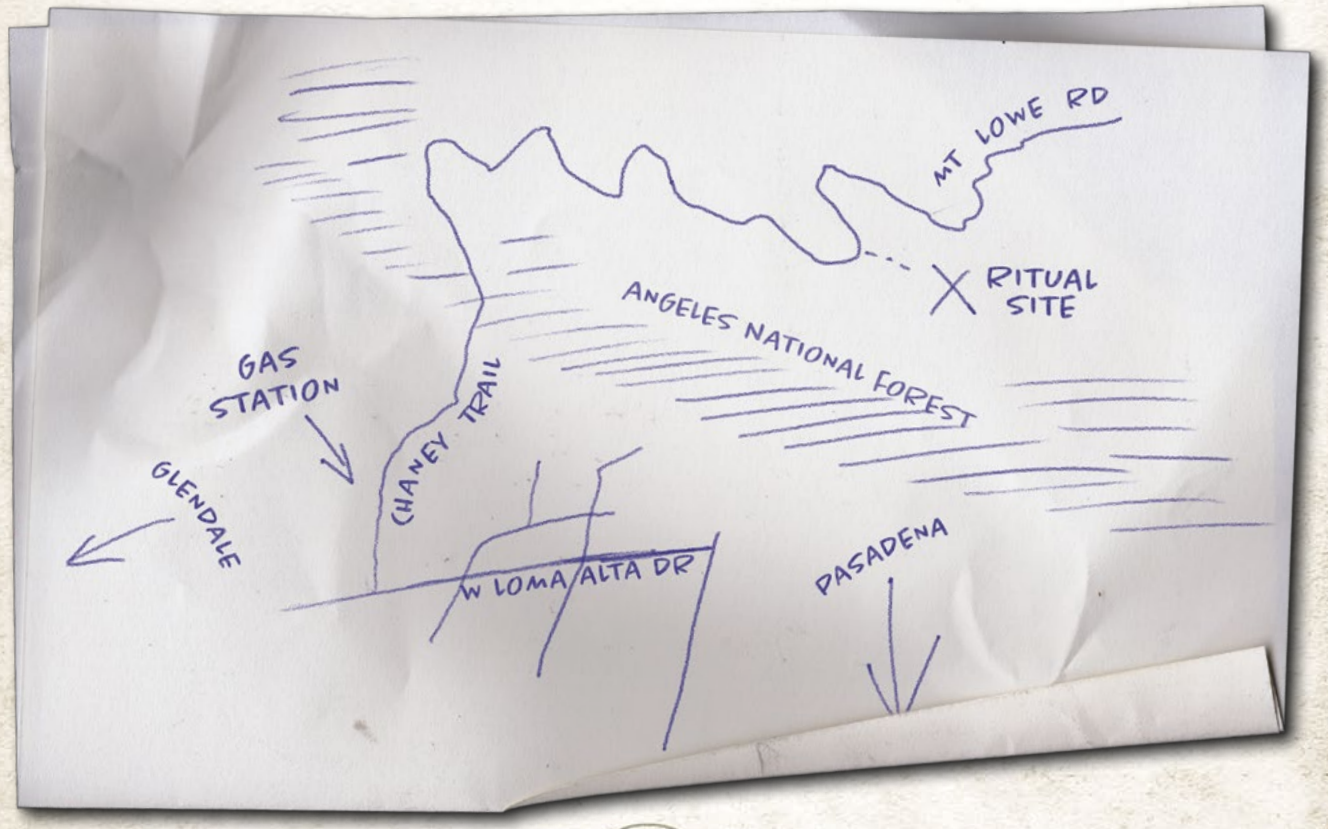
- **If they threaten Elsie:** she'll call for the guards and, if necessary, use the spells Mental Suggestion or Words of Power to change the investigator(s) perception.

Assuming Elsie "recruits" the investigators to help her in some manner, she says that there are a handful of people in the congregation who are loyal to her, and, if necessary, she uses them to get messages to the investigators. Note that in this case, Elsie buys such loyalty with the liberal application of the Mental Suggestion spell.

Leads

- **Wilma Cartwright's Office** (page 260): Elsie says her mother keeps important information in the safe (obvious).
- **Carl Mann's Beach House** (page 265): Elsie may direct the investigators there for varied reasons (obvious).
- **The Gas Station** (page 267): possibly close to the ritual site (obscure).

Handout: Angels 4



MEETING MICHELLE MARCONI

It is advisable to run this scene around the mid-way to later stages of the scenario, particularly if the investigators have, so far, failed to find clues pointing to the ritual and Carl Mann. Otherwise, this scene can be ignored unless the Keeper wishes to add some action to spice things up.

Michelle Marconi is the unmarried sister-in-law of Lombardo's brother, Jonathan. Lombardo had an affair with Michelle a few years back and ended things on a good note. Since then, they have remained friends and she had done little jobs for him here and there. Last week, Lombardo asked Michelle to go to the Temple of the Angelic Ones to see what she could find out—mainly to determine if Wilma Cartwright has the stolen statuettes.

Michelle lives alone in a respectable apartment on the ground floor of a building in downtown Los Angeles. The only way for the investigators to get to Michelle is through Sebastiano Lombardo, who accompanies the investigators to her apartment to make introductions. This scene assumes Lombardo is present; if not, the investigators must make a Hard social skill roll to convince her to talk to them. Use the following points to conduct the interview.

- Michelle explains that she's only been attending the Society of the Angelic Ones for a week, but she's gone to every event and volunteered at the soup kitchen. Since she's new, she hasn't been brought into the inner circle, but she's done some snooping around.
- Michelle thinks that most of the congregation are nice people, but a few of them are *"off."* If pressed on this point, she characterizes them as *"a bit dangerous."*
- One time, she followed Wilma Cartwright out of town to the north, to a guy living at a beach house (**Carl Mann's Beach House**, page 265). She can provide the address.
- She has picked up that the Society is planning some kind of big ritual for Halloween, that will take place somewhere in the mountains on the northeastern edge of the Angeles National Forest. She was able to sneak a peek at a map of the location, and she can draw this for the investigators from what she remembers (**Handout: Angels 4)**.

Toward the end of the meeting, have the investigators make a **Spot Hidden** roll: with success, they notice something or someone moving outside of her window. A closer look sees an armed man moving around outside (**Cultist Shooters**, page 279). Otherwise, they are surprised when a cultist shoots into the room, hitting Michelle in the head. If Lombardo is present, he is the next target, followed by the investigators. After a couple of shots are fired (grant a bonus die to **Dodge** to hit the floor), the cultist runs across the street to where a motorbike is waiting. Another cultist is sat on the motorbike with the engine running. If not stopped, they ride off as soon as the shooter jumps on.

- If the cultists are captured, ask for a Hard **Intimidate** roll to get any useful information from them. If they talk, they say they serve the Dead God, Great Cthulhu, and there will be a reckoning. Add further crazy cult talk as desired, although the cultists know little more other than Wilma Cartwright sent them and that they boast about preparing a powerful ritual to take place on All Hallows' Eve.

If Lombardo is alive and present, he calls his people to clean things up and get away before the cops show up, advising the investigators to do likewise.

Leads

- **Carl Mann's Beach House** (page 265): Michelle provides the address (obvious).
- **The Ritual** (page 269): Michelle gives the route to the site (obvious if Lombardo is present).

CARL MANN'S BEACH HOUSE

The beach house is positioned on the Malibu coast road and sits on a cliff overlooking the beach and the ocean. The house is a large, two-story, hacienda-style building, and clearly in need of repair. The beach below the house is littered with old fishing nets and rotting rowboats.

- If the investigators search around on the beach below (accessed further down the road by a pathway), they can find a hidden cave (15) with a successful Hard **Spot Hidden** roll. The cave's entrance is obscured by both the natural structure of the cliff walls and by an old rowboat that has been leant upright, covering the opening. If the investigators continue inside, refer to **The Cave** (following).
- If knocking on the front door (1), Carl Mann answers after a few minutes. He is overly hostile and dismissive of unannounced callers, and demands that they leave. If he deems the investigators to be a threat, Carl attempts to close the door and then runs for the tunnel that leads beneath the house. Carl cries for help, with the deep one upstairs in the master bedroom (12) coming down to assist and protect him. Carl may also run into the cellar (14) and call for additional help from the deep ones in the cave (15).
- Should the investigators prefer to sneak into the house, they could watch for a while and see when the figure inside (Carl Mann) goes upstairs. If they avoid making undue noise, the investigators can use **Stealth** to go through an open downstairs window.

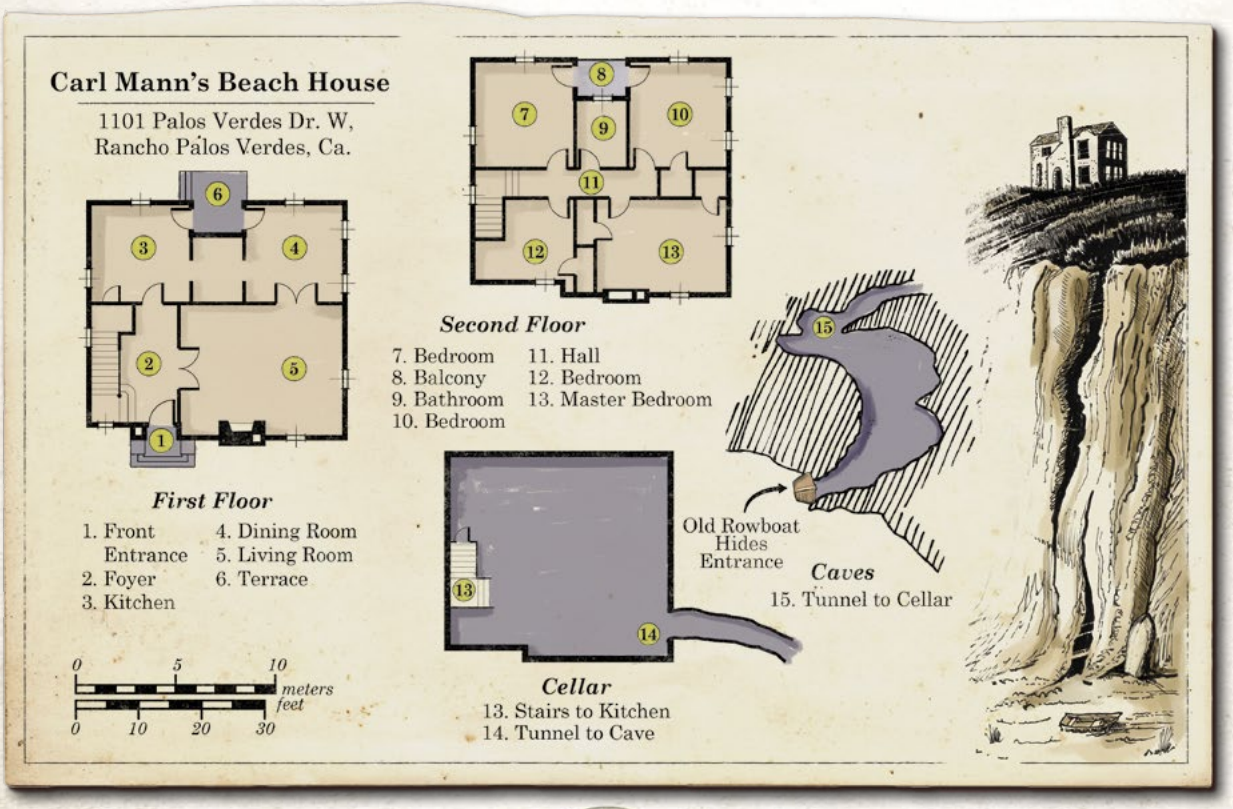
Inside the property, the first thing the investigators notice is the strong (fishy) smell of the ocean combined with a musky scent of body odor and decay. The house is in bad repair, its Victorian-era furniture and fittings are worn and faded. All of the ground floor rooms are unremarkable except for the living room (5), which contains something of interest to the investigators: on a table are the deeds to a gas station on the northeastern edge of the Angeles National Forest, along with information concerning the recent construction of an underground storage facility on the site. Additional searching in the study with a **Spot Hidden** roll finds paperwork detailing gold sales to a number of different dealers; although the records are unorganized, a successful **Accounting** roll (or a Hard **INT** roll if necessary) finds that Carl has amassed thousands of dollars spread out over multiple bank accounts.

Keeper note: while they are downstairs, call for a **Listen** roll to hear deep guttural sounds coming from upstairs.

Going upstairs, investigators entering the master bedroom (12)—from where the noise is emanating—discover Carl Mann and a deep one deep in conversation, which provokes a **Sanity** roll (0/1D6 loss). If the investigators are sneaking (**Stealth** roll), Carl and the deep one fail to notice them, whereas any loud noises from the investigators while in the house alert the pair, who exit the room to see what's going on. Carl keeps a shotgun under the bed in the master bedroom, so he may be armed at the Keeper's discretion. If confronted, Carl and the deep one attack, but their goal is to escape to the tunnel and cave, and jump into the ocean. Once in the tunnel, they can alert the deep ones in the cave for assistance. Ultimately, the deep ones will try to escape, forsaking Carl, if necessary to do so; they are not prepared to die for Carl.

- If the investigators manage to capture Carl, an **Intimidate** roll is needed to get him to talk. With a success, he confirms he is in a relationship with Wilma Cartwright and that she "looks after" him, having given him the house. He can also reveal that Wilma is planning to conduct a big ritual on Halloween. If pressed (or the Intimidate was a Hard success), he discloses the location of the ritual as being in a small valley in the mountains on the northeastern edge of the Angeles National Forest; if an Extreme success, he says the sacrifices (including Levi Diaz) are being held at a gas station on the route to the ritual site.
- If the investigators already talked to Doug Mann (**Hit on Lombardo**, page 246) and know about Carl's plan to attack Wilma's big ritual, Carl confesses that, yes, he and his "allies" are aiming to subvert the ritual for their own purposes. As to what those "purposes" are, Carl is reluctant to say, offering only something along the lines of, *"We are going to stop her from getting the power."* Gauging the investigators' interest, Carl could present a scheme whereby he'll offer to help them stop Wilma's ritual—*"it's what we were going to do anyway"*—if they let him go free to make sure that his "allies" are set up and prepared. He goes on to say that they plan to pretend to go along with the ritual, but then he and his "friends" will stop it. A successful **Psychology** roll detects he is being truthful to a point. *"You have to trust me. None of us want Wilma's ritual to be successful."* If the investigators insist on having some of their number accompany him, he refuses, saying that he can't allow it as that would alert Wilma. Thus, Carl spills the beans to save his skin.
- Carl's goal is to escape from the investigators the first chance he gets.

Keeper note: the outcome of a conversation with Carl is variable. He may tell them about the ritual and the gas station but then seek to escape, or, if they already know of his plans from Doug, he could try to suggest they work together, with him on the "inside" of the ritual and the investigators



Carl Mann's beach house map

on the "outside," watching close by. He can supply the secret password, "Revenant," which allows access to the ritual site (see **The Ritual**, page 269). Of course, Carl assumes the investigators will be killed when he takes control of the ritual and summons a star-spawn.

Leads

- **The Gas Station** (nearby): the deed indicates the location (obvious) or Carl says the sacrifices are held there (obscure).
- **The Ritual** (page 269): Carl talks about Wilma's scheme (obscure).

THE CAVE

A natural cave mouth leads into a large cave, from which a tunnel zig-zags upward, eventually leading to an open iron gate into the cellar of Carl Mann's beach house. The tunnels and cave smell of rotting fish and human waste. Old and somewhat rusty manacles have been affixed to the walls, enough to hold ten people, while odd bits of cloth litter the floor.

Within the cave proper are two deep ones, who, if not forewarned of the investigators' arrival, are eating and waiting for the return of the third deep one (currently in the master bedroom, 12). Faced with intruders, the deep ones may attack but will attempt to flee into the sea if faced with superior opponents.

The inhabitant of the cave

Keeper note: the Keeper may wish to increase the number of deep ones (from three to six) if running the scenario with *Pulp Cthulhu*.

An Option

If the investigators get an opportunity to search the cave, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll finds some creased but recent photographs that depict the investigators during an earlier stage of the scenario, perhaps from a scene where they were talking to Lombardo. If Selena Diaz has played an active role and helped the investigators throughout the scenario, the images could show Selena with the investigators. Clearly, someone has been spying on them.

The images came from Wilma, via Carl, and were taken by one of her cultists sent to watch the investigators after they made an appearance at her home or at the Temple.

THE GAS STATION

The gas station is on a lonely desert road, right at the base of the mountains on the northeastern perimeter of the Angeles National Forest. The station is little more than a couple of pumps and a small shop attached to a garage, with a shack some 100 yards/meters to the rear. Above the garage is an apartment. Staffing the place is an attendant (Barney) and a mechanic (Joey). They are both Society cultists and are sadistic and bloodthirsty types:

- **Barney:** age 45, a lumbering giant of a man, white, with unkempt and thinning hair and a mean look about him, dressed in cotton vest and dungarees.
- **Joey:** age 28, a wiry-thin Latino male, with a mustache and facial stubble, dressed in mechanic's overalls.
- Both know the secret password, "Revenant," which allows access to the ritual site (see **The Ritual**, page 269).

On Monday, October 30, at noon, two more Society heavies are there, making sure nothing happens to their sacrifices. Early in the morning of Tuesday, October 31, more cultists arrive in a truck to transport the sacrifices to the ritual site.

Visiting the gas station before midday on Tuesday, October 31

If the investigators stop at the gas station, pretending to be regular customers (maybe asking for directions), Barney is helpful and cheery, doing his best to get the investigators on their way. If he suspects they are there to interfere with the ritual or to rescue the prisoners, he finds a reason to excuse himself briefly—perhaps heading inside to get a map or some such. Once inside, he and Joey arm themselves with shotguns and then attempt to capture the investigators for

use as additional sacrifices. The cultists do not want to kill people unless they have to—sacrifices are needed and finding new ones can be problematic.

Visiting the gas station on Tuesday, October 31, between Midday and 6:00 pm

A black sedan is parked to the side of the station. The car's occupants, two additional cult heavies (Clyde and Zed), are inside the station playing cards with Barney and Joey. The situation plays out the same as described above.

Visiting the gas station on Tuesday, October 31, after 10:00 pm

At 10:00 pm a truck turns up to collect the sacrifices and drive them to the ritual site. The driver (Otis) pulls the truck over to the shack at the rear of the station and the captives are loaded inside. Barney and Joey stay at the gas station to maintain a semblance of normality and to direct any lost cultists to the ritual site, before they head to the ritual site at 11:00 pm. Note that the investigators could potentially pass themselves off as cultists heading to the ritual site, Barney and Joey will be none the wiser with so many cultists traveling through for the event.

The Captives

If the investigators are captured, they are taken to a small shack about 100 yards/meters behind the station. The door is padlocked (Barney and Joey each have keys), but this can be opened with a successful **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll, or alternatively a Hard **STR** roll is enough to break through. The shack opens to a stairway leading down into the ground, some 20 feet (6 meters), to another locked door. This door is opened by another key and leads into a foul-smelling room. Inside, are 13 people manacled to the walls, one of whom is Levi Diaz. The prisoners are tired, starved, and suffering from various injuries.

Captured investigators are chained to the wall for use later as sacrifices in the big ritual. Only three of the prisoners are in any condition to fight (Levi is one), as the rest are too injured and weak to help. Escaping the bonds requires a Hard **Sleight of Hand** or an Extreme **DEX** roll, although a kind keeper might say that new prisoners are tied with rope (as there are no more manacles available), requiring a successful Regular **Sleight of Hand**, Hard **DEX**, or perhaps a Hard **STR** roll to get free of their bonds. Alternatively, ingenious use of **Charm** or **Fast Talk** might buy the investigators a chance to escape.

Leads

- **The Ritual** (following): (obscure).

ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST

The Angeles National Forest was established in 1908, bringing together the San Gabriel Forest Reserve, the San Bernardino Forest, and the Santa Barbara Forest Reserve. Covering some 1,094 square miles (2,834 km^2), the area encompasses the San Gabriel Mountains and the Sierra Pelona Mountains and contains dense chaparral and oak forests, with Douglas-fir and pines on the higher elevations. Home to rattlesnakes, bobcats, and cougars, as well as black bears.

THE RITUAL

The ritual is scheduled to take place just before midnight on October 31—Halloween, also known as All Hallows' Eve. The site lies in a small valley some 2 miles (3 km) beyond the gas station. A remote place far from any prying eyes.

The day of the ritual is a busy one for the Society—a schedule of events is detailed below. The schedule shows how the events play out if the investigators do not interfere. Once the investigators get involved, the Society's schedule is likely to be disrupted. Possible cult actions are discussed in the following text, but it is up to the Keeper to adjust events to follow the players' lead.

- **9:00 am:** a truck and two cars arrive at the ritual site. The truck contains a 10-foot (3 m) stone monolith. The surface of the monolith is carved with signs and sigils, which a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll identifies as power glyphs related to Cthulhu and which are meant to amplify a flow of "power." The monolith looks as if it has been recently carved. Eight cultists are needed to get the monolith into position (5), while another six keep a lookout around the area. Once the monolith is in place, the cultists pitch tents (8) and remain at the site, rotating the lookouts every few hours.
- **10:30 am:** another truck arrives with six cultists, three large tents, food, water, and other supplies, including a large amount of firewood. Most of the wood is set up around the monolith in preparation for a bonfire, while the rest is kept in a pile nearby. One large tent (3) is erected not far from the monolith (5). The cultists patrol the area in teams of two.
- **1:00 pm:** the cultists drive iron stakes (6) into the ground around the monolith. Chains are then affixed to the stakes.
- **5:02 pm:** sunset.
- **6:00 pm: Sheriff Clark Moore** (see **Dramatis Personae**, page 237) and two of his deputies close the road between the gas station and the ritual site (P). The Sheriff and his men stand guard, only allowing vehicles to pass if they know the password: "Revenant." While the Sheriff and his deputies are well paid by Wilma Cartwright to look the other way, they don't really know what is going on, nor do they care. If someone comes by and seems suspicious, they are liable to be arrested, handcuffed, and put in the back of a car. The sheriff and his deputies depart just before midnight.
- **7:00 pm:** the majority of the cultists begin to arrive, setting up tents (8) for the night and cooking food. Their behavior is calm. Cultists continue to trickle in for the next two hours.
- **10:00 pm:** Wilma and Elsie Cartwright arrive, along with Louise Crosby, followed by a truck driven by Carl Mann,

The sheriff and his deputies

which has four deep ones in the back. They all go into the large tent (3) and begin making preparations. Wilma has the Cthulhu idol with her. Sanity loss for the deep ones 0/1D6.

- **10:15 pm:** the cultists start drinking, taking drugs, playing drums, and dancing. The sacrifices arrive in a truck and are dragged out to be placed in manacles, which are chain-linked (6) to one another, and positioned in a circle around the monolith (5). If he was kidnapped, **Gil Donovan** (page 250), is among the sacrifices, as are any captured investigators.
- **11:00 pm:** the Cthulhu idol is placed on top of the monolith (5), and the bonfire surrounding it is set ablaze.
- **11:30 pm:** Elsie, Wilma, and the deep ones emerge from the large tent (3) and the ritual begins. Elsie leads the ritual, starting with call and response phrases, with humans and deep ones both joining in—a **Cthulhu Mythos** roll may deduce that these are invocations and exaltations for Great Cthulhu, followed by some form of summoning rite.
- **11:45 pm:** the first summoning rite is concluded and a number of scarlet ones arrive and begin moving around the bonfire (see **Chapter 4: Scarlet Ones**, page 178)—some cultists interact with these, receiving their blessing. Elsie and Wilma begin a new summoning. Sanity loss for the scarlet ones is zero.
- **12:00 am:** the earth begins to shake and the ground bursts open. From this large hole (4) a fher'roque emerges (see **Chapter 4: Fher'roque**, page 177) and begins to tear apart and consume the sacrifices. Sanity loss for the fher'roque 1D3/1D10.

In terms of numbers, there are no less than 25 cultists and 4 deep ones taking part in the ritual, although the actual number of cultists is likely to be around 50—the Keeper may adjust this head count up or down as they desire; for *Pulp Cthulhu*, increase the number of cultists to at least 50.

Keeper note: two versions of what happens at midnight follow. The first assumes the deep ones are unable or fail to act to disrupt the ritual, which might happen if the investigators captured or killed Carl Mann and the deep ones at his Malibu house (**Carl Mann's Beach House**, page 265)—if this is the case, obviously Carl and the deep ones do not arrive on site at 10:00 pm. The second presumes Carl and deep ones are on site.

WILMA'S MIDNIGHT PLAN

In return for the sacrifices, the fher'roque fulfills Wilma's wish and opens a channel between her mind and that of the star-spawn entombed deep below the site. An ethereal image of the star-spawn manifests in the air above Wilma, while the cultists scream with excitement, dancing faster and harder. Seeing the vision and the fher'roque's carnage provokes a **Sanity** roll (1D3/1D10).

As a result of communing with the star-spawn, Wilma's POW is increased by 25 points, she gains 10 points to her Cthulhu Mythos knowledge, and she learns new spells (of the Keeper's choosing). While in communion with the star-spawn, she can draw from its magic points to fuel any spells she wishes to cast; thus, she temporarily gains 20 additional magic points.

All of the sacrifices are killed within 15 minutes, with the fher'roque retreating back into the earth. The scarlet ones also begin to fade away. Some of the more crazed and far-gone cultists smear blood on themselves and eat leftover flesh. Generally, the cultists continue on into the night, engaging in all manner of violent and deviant behavior until morning, whereupon they clean up the site, removing all evidence of their hideous celebrations.

What if the Sacrifices were Freed?

If the investigators managed to rescue the captives before the ritual, this is a setback for Wilma. If they were freed back at the gas station, she demands volunteers from among the cultists, along with any who she deems responsible for failing to stop the escape. The ritual goes ahead with a reduced number of sacrifices. Ask for a group **Luck** roll: with a success, the fher'roque is displeased with the number of sacrifices offered and refuses to connect Wilma with the star-spawn.

THE DEEP ONES' MIDNIGHT PLAN

At midnight, the deep ones let out almighty screams, calling to their companions hiding in the hills. Around 20 deep ones charge in and attack the cultists. As they kill the bewildered cultists, the deep ones and Carl Mann begin a strange, guttural chant. Wilma realizes what is happening and that Carl and the deep ones have betrayed her. She attempts to run to a vehicle and flee the scene.

As the chanting continues, the earth begins to shake. Soon, amidst the carnage and mayhem, the star-spawn physically emerges from its tomb deep below the ground, letting out an unearthly cry, with the deep ones replying in something resembling joy! The scene provokes a **Sanity** roll (1D6/2D10).

The star-spawn rises up and then strides off toward Santa Monica, with the deep ones in tow. On arrival, the star-spawn lays waste to the city and feasts on the flesh of many unfortunate humans. When its hunger is sated, the star-spawn heads to the ocean and disappears beneath the dark waves.

Opposite: The ritual site map

The
Ritual
Site
MT LOWE RD
CHANEY TRAIL
W LOMA ALTA DR
P
1
2
3
8
8
6
5
7
4
8
9
Explanation
1. Gas Station
2. Ritual Site
3. Elsie's Big Tent
4. Hole
5. Monolith
6. Iron Stakes & Chains
7. Fire
8. Tents
9. Vehicles
P. Police Road Block
0
5
10
yards
feet
0
10
15

There is little the investigators can do once the star-spawn is out of its tomb. Perhaps *Pulp Cthulhu* heroes might be able to do more, although this, too, is unlikely. If the investigators know about Great Cthulhu, it would make sense if they thought this star-spawn was actually the Great Old One itself! Those with enough points might think to try a spontaneous use of the Cthulhu Mythos skill, perhaps to banish the star-spawn—a successful opposed roll of **Cthulhu Mythos** versus the star-spawn's POW, combined with an investment of 21 magic points and 1D3 Sanity points would do the trick (see *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 180). Otherwise, the best the investigators can hope for is to live long enough to read about the story in the newspaper.

OPTIONS: RUNNING THE RITUAL

If the investigators learn about Carl Mann and the deep ones' plan, they could decide to warn Wilma. Or, vice versa, assist Carl against Wilma (although they are unlikely to know the full extent of Carl's plan). It depends on who they think is the greater or more imminent threat. This may be a tasty dilemma for the players: do they try to stop the ritual or do they try to play one side off against the other?

As Keeper, put the clues in the players' hands and let them decide how to interpret the information and what to do with it. Depending on their choices, the investigators may find themselves outnumbered, although there are options they can explore to even the odds. Try to give any plan the players come up with a fair chance of success, or, at the very least, a dramatic ending!

Following, are a few ways in which the investigators could arrive at the ritual, as well as some thoughts on how they might tackle the situation and where they could find some assistance.

CAPTURED

The worst-case scenario for the investigators is to be captured. Most likely, the investigators are in chains and without hope of rescue—unless they told someone where they were going and what they were doing. If they did, having the cavalry show up at the beginning of the ritual provides the most dramatic effect. If Lombardo is an ally, he could turn up with some armed mobsters to throw a spanner in the works and rescue the investigators—a suitable match against the

Unleashing the star-spawn

cultists and deep ones. If a big fight breaks out, focus on the investigators and what's happening to them. If Wilma, Carl, or one or more deep ones are killed, the rest of the cultists and deep ones probably turn tail and run. Another option is Selena Diaz, who might have a vision of the investigators in trouble and gather help to come to their aid.

If they don't have anyone coming to the rescue, it is up to the Keeper to offer some possibilities and choices. For example, Levi Diaz might manage to fashion a hairpin or a thin nail into a lock-pick. The manacles have simple locks—if using a lock-pick, award a bonus die to any **Locksmith** or **Mechanical Repair** roll to escape. If the investigators manage to escape, they must decide how many prisoners they wish to free, and how they'll get them to safety. This could involve a car chase through the desert or a standoff at the gas station. It's important to try and end with a bang!

SNEAKING IN

The ritual area is set up with the monolith at its center, a large tent some 50 yards/meters from the monolith, and other smaller tents around the periphery of the site. Lookouts, armed with rifles, patrol the area around the perimeter. Once the sun sets, the guards carelessly join the other cultists in drinking alcohol and are not likely to spot stealthy investigators.

If they discover the location and time of the ritual in advance, the investigators may try to sneak near to the ritual site. Lookouts are posted from around 9:00 am (six cultists dotted around the site). After sunset (5:02 pm), the light fades quickly, so no rolls are required to get close to the encampment if the main road is avoided. If the investigators do come by road in the evening, they must contend with Sheriff Moore and his men from 6:00 pm onward. The desert around the area is rough, making driving off-road difficult—Hard **Drive Auto** roll: failure may see a flat tire, while a pushed failure could be that the car ends up stuck in a ditch or dies.

- Depending on the time of day or night, once near the ritual site, the investigators should be mindful of cultist lookouts. During the day and early in the evening the cultists are particularly vigilant. But, as the night falls, the cultists grow lax and indulge in drugs and alcohol. By the time the ritual starts, they are pretty much oblivious to all but the most drastic or noisy events.
- At night, it is easy for the investigators to sneak into the area. If earlier, a **Stealth** roll is needed, but grant a bonus die if it is early evening as the light begins to fade. Picking off the cultists on the perimeter, one by one, may be a viable initial strategy; however, there are a large group of cultists (25+) gathered at the ritual site, forcing the investigators to use other tactics in dealing with them.

FINDING ALLIES

Taking on the gathered cultists may be beyond the capabilities of the investigators, so finding people to help would make the task at hand less insurmountable.

- **The police:** are of no help to investigators, as the county sheriff has been instructed to turn a blind eye by his superiors. If the investigators do attempt to involve the police, they are warned off. If they persist, they are arrested on trumped-up charges until the ritual is over.
- **Lombardo and the mob:** Lombardo can get a group of eight men together, with four "tommy guns" between them. If they wait until the Mythos creatures appear, assume a quarter of the mobsters fall temporarily insane. Lombardo wants revenge on Wilma, so she is his primary target.
- **The Diaz family:** if the investigators tell Selena that they know where her father is, but are unable to get him, she would be more than willing to recruit members of her extended family to help mount a rescue. Depending on the amount of time she has to get everyone together, she could get between six to ten armed individuals to support the investigators. If they see the monsters, assume half of them fall temporarily insane.
- **Friends and family:** the investigators might call on past associates, close friends, or family members to stop this ritual. Instead of spending too long roleplaying each scene with each potential recruit, have the player just list people that would take up arms to fight a cult for them. If needed, a roll of a relevant skill could be used to determine how many people respond to the call:
  - Fumble: none
  - Fail: 1D4
  - Regular success: 1D6+1
  - Hard success: 2D6
  - Extreme success: 3D6+3

Getting to the captives requires the investigators to deal quietly with at least five cultists (a lookout and four who just happen to be nearby). Getting to Wilma Cartwright would likewise require the investigators to deal with a different set of five cultists.

- If the alarm is raised, mayhem breaks out. The investigators are outnumbered and their only viable option (probably) is to flee into the night. An all-out sprint and a successful **Stealth** roll to hide should allow them to escape pursuit in the dark desert.
- Of course, if Carl Mann and the deep ones enact their plan, the scene becomes chaos, which the investigators could use to slip in and deal with the main villains.
- Note that investigators who disguise themselves as cultists may be able to get to the heart of the ritual without much trouble—enabling them to slip in early and bide their time (as long as they play along with the other cultists), and then make their move.

ASSAULT

The investigators may decide on a full-frontal assault. Some cultists are carrying knives or clubs, but around half of them are armed with handguns, shotguns, or rifles. Assume that of the half with firearms, 25 percent of these must get to the vehicles where they have stored their weapons. The deep ones are not armed (other than natural claws and teeth) but can pick up weapons from the ground or take them from any cultist offering them up.

- Within the general commotion of the ritual, Wilma is able to pull some cultists out of their frenzy and direct them toward the investigators. Any summoned monsters could also be directed to help end the investigators' incursion. If the investigators have so far had it easy, a challenging encounter would be in order. But, if the path to this moment has been difficult or they have been particularly adept at planning, having only a few guards protecting Wilma would be fine.
- The sheriff at the gas station does not interfere, no matter what. He has been told to ignore any strange things he may hear and he sticks to that. He doesn't care about what happens to Wilma and her followers—even if he hears machine gun fire, monster howls or explosions, he and his deputies leave around midnight, preferring to look after their own health, rather than take unnecessary risks. Of course, if desired, the sheriff may wait down the road after midnight, just to keep an eye on things. If the sheriff sees blood-splattered investigators fleeing the scene, he may arrest them, and when, in the cold light of morning, he sees the aftermath at the site, may charge them with murder—assuming any evidence remains at the site.
- If the investigators attempt to attack Wilma directly, remember to describe her small and frail-looking form. In physical combat, she is easily beaten, responding instead with magic. She calls on the help of her minions to cause enough of a distraction to help her get away. Wilma is a survivor and she does not take unnecessary risks. If she suspects she is in danger, she attempts to depart, with Elsie in tow.

The investigators are going to be potentially facing many cultists, four deep ones, around a dozen scarlet ones, and a fher'roque. It would be in their best interests to stop the ritual and the monster summoning before they start.

RUNNING MASS COMBATS

Handling a mass combat, with investigators, lots of NPCs, and monsters is a challenge—so don't try to do it. Focus only on what is directly happening to the investigators and be mindful of their specific goals each round. Everything else is a backdrop. Describe what each investigator can see and what is going on around them, and then ask what each of them wants to do. Follow that action forward, with the investigators working in one or more smaller groups. Only make rolls relevant to the investigators. Describe opportunities, "there's a gap, giving you a direct line to Wilma," and threats, "two deep ones seem to be making their way toward you," allowing the players to decide what they want to do in response. On their actions, reward investigators for trying to change the dynamic of the situation, "I want to tackle Wilma into a hold, so I can try to use her as a shield to escape."

Remember, the cultists are human and once they see some of their number getting shot or injured, they will probably run off into the desert to escape. One or more hardened types might remain if the investigators (or pulp heroes) need more of a challenge. The deep ones pose a real threat, but they won't want to risk their immortality if faced with capable opponents, preferring to abandon their plan for now.

A key tip: the full game mechanics (skill rolls, damage rolls, etc.) need only to be made when the investigators are directly involved.

Stealth Attack

Waiting until darkness falls could provide the investigators with a chance to slowly pick off the cultists. However, up until around 11:00 pm, the cultists are preparing for the ritual, and anyone going "missing" before this time may be quickly noticed by the others. But, as time progresses, the cultists become more distracted, indulging in alcohol and drugs, and working themselves up into a minor frenzy. By the time the ritual begins, the cultists are so lost in the proceedings that they are oblivious to all but the most obvious dangers. If the investigators time things right, a well-placed shot or distraction could incapacitate or kill an important NPC, cause chaos, and lead to the ritual being abandoned.

Depending on when they attack, the investigators are probably facing intoxicated cultists, who (in the main) pose little real threat, with only the monsters and Wilma presenting actual danger. Should Mythos monsters appear, the Keeper is free to declare that a bunch of NPCs run off screaming (with no need for Sanity rolls). When a cultist attacks a friendly NPC, you don't need to roll for it in the usual way; instead, ask for a group **Luck** roll from the investigators each round to determine whether the fight goes in the players' favor or not. With a successful Luck roll, assume 1D6 cultists are taken out of the fight by friendly NPCs in some way, and, with a failure, some of the investigators' allies are incapacitated, killed, or run off. Remember, the Keeper controls the cultists, so if you feel that some would run off in fear or drop their weapons and beg for mercy, that is what they do. Self-preservation is a strong motivation.

CONCLUSION

How the ritual and its consequences play out will vary depending on the route taken by the investigators and their actions during the climax. Some possible outcomes are noted here; of course, all of these are just suggestions. It is ultimately up to the Keeper to decide on what makes a fitting end to the story. The scenario could be a one-off or the start of a longer campaign.

A Success for Wilma

The ritual happens according to Wilma's plan. Come the following morning, the cultists thoroughly clean up the site, leaving almost no trace of their activities behind. They remove bodies to be buried out in the desert and take all significant objects with them. Unless the federal authorities are notified, no one comes out to the site for weeks or even months after the event. The state police defer to the county sheriff, even if accusations are made.

If any of the investigators were killed, their bodies are buried along with the other corpses. Surviving investigators are marked by the Society and its allies, and are likely hunted down in the future, thereby extending the scenario (or acting as the plot for a future one). This could be a fate worse than death, as, not only are they targets, but their friends, families, and associates may also become targets for the Society of the Angelic Ones.

On a cosmic scale, Wilma's ritual (or the deep one's hijacking of it) won't change the world in any perceptible way. Cthulhu does not rise and humanity continues blindly along. If Carl Mann and the deep ones did act to subvert Wilma's plans, she may seek retribution—or, overcome with realization of their power, she seeks to draw closer to them as a means to accessing that power for herself. If Wilma succeeded in contacting the star-spawn, she is strengthened, and while not a god yet, she grows in confidence and doubles down on realizing this goal. But, for the time being, Wilma lets her daughter or Louise lead the Society while she tries to unpack what she has learned and forge new plans. The stage is now set for an ongoing campaign against Wilma and her Society.

The Society Still Stands

Stopping the ritual is one thing; stamping out the Society is quite another. If Wilma and most of her cult were killed, Elsie could turn this to her advantage. What Mythos power or knowledge leaked into Elsie's brain during the ritual? Does she now assume complete leadership of the Society? The remains of the congregation would naturally look to her for answers and a way forward. Does Elsie leave town, only to change her name and start the cult anew elsewhere?

Perhaps Wilma survived and escaped with some of the cult. She won't attempt the ritual again until she is sure it is safe to do so. She focuses all of her energies on eliminating the threats to the Society. Again, whether or not the ritual succeeds or fails, has little to do with the success of the Society.

If Levi Diaz was rescued, he will be alright, eventually. Going to the police in Los Angeles with Levi to testify about what happened to him won't lead to much—the police contact the state police, who hold things up but eventually hand it over to the federal government. There's an investigation of sorts, but it is unlikely to find enough evidence to arrest Wilma. One positive outcome may be that someone in the police force or from a federal law enforcement agency takes notice, perhaps instigating a longer-term investigation into the Society of the Angelic Ones, which could involve investigators, old and new.

The Star-Spawn Awoke

If the deep ones managed to raise the star-spawn, total carnage ensues. Wilma, Elsie, and a few cultists may escape, so the cult lives to fight another day. The wreckage of Santa Monica is explained as the result of a severe tornado. Locals who survived are at a loss to explain or even remember what happened. Perhaps, in time, a few experience nightmares recalling the horror of the star-spawn and then seek out others to find comfort and answers. Some of these folks may find answers in the arms of the congregation of the Society of the Angelic Ones.

The Society Was Defeated

If the investigators managed to stop the ritual and capture, kill, or scare off most of the cultists, the Society is in disarray. If Lombardo and his mobsters were involved, the Keeper should think about what "favor" Lombardo wants in return, once the dust has settled.

What happened to Wilma and Elsie? Did either of them die or escape? What of Carl Mann and his ambitions? Do any of these survivors return with revenge in mind? What foul magics could Wilma use to hang onto life, and how might these change her?

REWARDS

Grant an investigator development phase:

- For a walkthrough of the investigator development phase, see **Rewards of Experience: The Investigator Development Phase**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 94.
- For healing wounds, see **Regular Damage Recovery** and **Major Wound Recovery**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 121.
- For regaining Sanity points by spending time with a backstory element, see **Self Help**, *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 167.

And, depending on what the investigators actually experienced, apply the following rewards:

- The ritual was stopped: +1D6 Sanity points.
- The investigators toppled the cult: +2D4 Sanity points.
- The investigators massacred the cultists without mercy: –1D4 Sanity points.
- The investigators failed to stop Wilma: –1D6 Sanity points.
- The investigators defeated Carl Mann and the deep ones' plan: +1D6 Sanity points.
- The investigators defeated the fher'roque: +1D8 Sanity points.
- The investigators defeated the star-spawn (if called forth): +1D10 Sanity points.
- The star-spawn destroys Santa Monica: –1D10 Sanity points.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Elsie Cartwright

STR 45	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 35	**DEX** 55	**INT** 65
APP 85	**POW** 70	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 08	**HP** 10
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 14	

Combat

Armor of Will: (variable MP) instantaneously deflects harm, costing a number of magic points equal to the damage inflicted (may elect to reduce all or part of such damage).

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3–1
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Charm 75%, Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 35%, Fast Talk 40%, Jump 60%, Listen 40%, Persuade 75%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 60%, Throw 35%.

Spells: Contact Cthulhu, Curse of the Putrid Husk, Ecstasy, Mental Suggestion, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Summon Angelic Ones of Air (Black-Winged Ones), Summon/Bind Angelic Ones of Earth (Fher'roque)**, Summon Angelic Ones of Fire (Scarlet Ones), Summon/Bind Angelic Ones of Water (Deep One), Words of Power, Wrack.

Elsie Cartwright: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck 70
- HP 20

Pulp Combat

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3–1 or weapon
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Alert:** never surprised in combat.
- **Fleet Footed:** spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one encounter.

Wilma Cartwright

STR 35	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 35	**DEX** 45	**INT** 75
APP 65	**POW** 80	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 00	**HP** 8
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 16*	

Combat

Consume Lifeforce: as needed, Cartwright may steal the magic points of others: drinking a person's blood (2 MP per round), eating their flesh (3 MP per round), or strangling a person (1 MP per round).

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3–1 or weapon
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Charm 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Fast Talk 75%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate 60%, Listen 55%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 65%, Sleight of Hand 40%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 70%, Throw 35%.

Spells: Contact Cthulhu, Curse of the Putrid Husk, Ecstasy, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Summon Angelic Ones of Air (Black-Winged Ones), Summon/Bind Angelic Ones of Earth (Fher'roque), Summon Angelic Ones of Fire (Scarlet Ones), Summon/Bind Angelic Ones of Water (Deep One), Words of Power, Wrack.

Wilma Cartwright: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck 80
- HP 16

Pulp Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3–1 or weapon
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Rapid Attack:** spend 10 Luck to gain one further attack in a single combat round.
- **Strong Willed:** spend 10 Luck to gain bonus die for POW rolls.

Louise Crosby, *age 38, manager of the Temple*

STR 40	**CON** 45	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 50	**INT** 65
APP 50	**POW** 75	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 15	

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+1
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Accounting 45%, Charm 70%, Credit Rating 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Fast Talk 65%, Language (English) 65%, Listen 45%, Occult 65%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 45%, Throw 35%.

Levi Diaz, *age 46, kidnapped driver*

STR 45	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 45	**INT** 65
APP 50	**POW** 50	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 47	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3
Dodge	22% (11/5)

Skills

Charm 45%, Climb 35%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 70%, Fast Talk 60%, Jump 35%, Language (English) 60%, Language (Spanish) 65%, Listen 60%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 40%, Throw 45%.

Selena Diaz, *age 17, secretary*

STR 40	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 60	**INT** 70
APP 55	**POW** 90	**EDU** 85	**SAN** 85	**HP** 10
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 18	

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3–1
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Accounting 35%, Charm 40%, Credit Rating 15%, First Aid 45%, Jump 45%, Language (English) 85%, Language (Spanish) 50%, Listen 40%, Occult 20%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 60%, Throw 30%.

Selena Diaz: Pulp Adjustments

- STR 50
- DB 0
- Build 0
- HP 20
- Luck 45

Pulp Combat

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Psychic Power:** Clairvoyance 45%.

Sebastiano Lombardo, *age 41, mobster & owner of Lombardo Shipping*

STR 75	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 80	**DEX** 55	**INT** 75
APP 60	**POW** 65	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 39	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 13	

Combat

Brawl	55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4 or knife 1D4+1+1D4
.32 revolver	60% (30/12), damage 1D8
12g shotgun (2B)	45% (22/9), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Skills

Accounting 25%, Appraise 35%, Charm 50%, Credit Rating 70%, Drive Auto 40%, Intimidate 75%, Language (English) 55%, Language (Italian) 55%, Locksmith 25%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 50%, Swim 40%, Throw 60%.

Sebastiano Lombardo: Pulp Adjustments

- HP 28
- Luck 65

Pulp Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D4
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Rapid Attack:** may spend 10 Luck points to gain one additional melee attack in a single combat round.

Freddy, *Lombardo's man*

STR 65	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 60	**INT** 50
APP 35	**POW** 45	**EDU** 35	**SAN** 45	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 9	

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
.38 revolver	45% (22/9), damage 1D10
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Art/Craft (Acting) 50%, Disguise 40%, Credit Rating 25%, Fast Talk 70%, Jump 60%, Listen 60%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 70%, Throw 45%.

Lombardo's Muscle, *gangster toughs*

STR 80	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 80	**DEX** 50	**INT** 45
APP 40	**POW** 50	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 50	**HP** 15
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4
Knife	70% (35/14), damage 1D4+2+1D4
Club	70% (35/14), damage 1D6+1D4
.38 revolver	55% (27/11), damage 1D10
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Skills

Credit Rating 25%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 40%, Language (English) 30%, Language (Italian) 40%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Navigate 45%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 60%, Throw 50%, Track 30%.

Carl Mann, *age 33, gold dealer & deep one hybrid*

STR 80	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 55	**INT** 55
APP 25	**POW** 60	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 00	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 12	

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4
2g shotgun (2B)	30% (15/6), damage 4D6/2D6/1D6
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 45%, Appraise 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 24%, Intimidate 55%, Language (English) 55%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 25%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 30%, Swim 80%, Throw 35%.

Carl Mann: Pulp Adjustments

- Luck 30

Pulp Combat

Brawl	55% (27/11), damage 1D3+1D4
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Fleet Footed:** may spend 10 Luck points to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter.

Doug Mann, *age 31, longshoreman & deep one hybrid*

STR 70 **CON** 80 **SIZ** 55 **DEX** 65 **INT** 35
APP 40 **POW** 50 **EDU** 45 **SAN** 00 **HP** 13
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 9 **MP:** 10

Combat

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3+1D4
Club	45% (22/9), damage 1D8+1D4
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Cthulhu Mythos 8%, Fast Talk 40%, Intimidate 25%, Jump 60%, Language (English) 45%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 35%, Swim 80%, Throw 45%.

Sheriff Clark Moore, *age 44, corrupt cop*

STR 85 **CON** 65 **SIZ** 65 **DEX** 60 **INT** 60
APP 40 **POW** 65 **EDU** 65 **SAN** 45 **HP** 13
DB: +1D4 **Build:** 1 **Move:** 7 **MP:** 13

Combat

Brawl	65% (32/13), damage 1D3+ D4
Nightstick	65% (32/13), damage 1D6+1D4
.38 revolver	60% (30/12), damage 1D10
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Climb 35%, Drive Auto 50%, Intimidate 80%, Language (English) 65%, Language (Spanish) 30%, Listen 30%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 35%, Throw 55%.

County Sheriff Deputies

STR 50 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 70 **DEX** 55 **INT** 40
APP 55 **POW** 50 **EDU** 60 **SAN** 65 **HP** 14
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 7 **MP:** 10

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4
Nightstick	50% (25/10), damage 1D6+1D4
.38 revolver	40% (20/8), damage 1D10
Dodge	27% (13/5)

Skills

Climb 40%, Drive Auto 40%, First Aid 35%, Intimidate 35%, Language (English) 60%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 45%, Throw 35%.

Barney, *gas station attendant*

STR 70 **CON** 80 **SIZ** 95 **DEX** 50 **INT** 45
APP 40 **POW** 40 **EDU** 35 **SAN** 00 **HP** 17
DB: +1D6 **Build:** 2 **Move:** 6 **MP:** 8

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D6
Knife	50% (25/10), damage 1D4+1D6
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Fast Talk 40%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 40%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Language (English) 35%, Operate Heavy Machinery 70%, Psychology 20%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 30%, Throw 50%.

Joey, *gas station mechanic*

STR 50 **CON** 80 **SIZ** 50 **DEX** 60 **INT** 55
APP 40 **POW** 40 **EDU** 45 **SAN** 00 **HP** 13
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 8 **MP:** 8

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3
Club	40% (20/8), damage 1D6
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Charm 40%, Climb 60%, Electrical Repair 60%, Fast Talk 40%, Intimidate 40%, Jump 50%, Language (English) 45%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 70%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 35%, Throw 40%.

Cultist Shooters

STR 40 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 60 **DEX** 40 **INT** 50
APP 40 **POW** 40 **EDU** 30 **SAN** 00 **HP** 12
DB: 0 **Build:** 0 **Move:** 7 **MP:** 8

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
.38 revolver	40% (20/8), damage 1D10
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Cthulhu Mythos 6%, Jump 40%, Persuade 35%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 50%.

Cultists/Guards

STR 50	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 40	**INT** 45
APP 40	**POW** 50	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 50	**HP** 13
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3
Club	50% (25/10), damage 1D6
.38 revolver	40% (20/8), damage 1D10
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Credit Rating 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Language (English) 50%, Listen 40%, Persuade 35%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 30%, Throw 30%.

MONSTERS

Deep Ones

STR 70	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 80	**DEX** 50	**INT** 65
APP —	**POW** 50	**EDU** —	**SAN** —	**HP** 13
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Attacks per Round: 1 (claw, bite, weapon)

Fighting	45% (22/9), damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge	25% (12/5)

Skills

Climb 30%, Language (Deep One Speech) 70%, Language (R'lyeh Glyphs) 70%, Listen 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 40%, Swim 90%.

Armor: 1-point skin and scales.
Spells: Contact Star-Spawn of Cthulhu, plus a 40% chance to know one from: Cloud Memory, Create Mist of R'lyeh, Grasp of Cthulhu, or Implant Fear.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to encounter a deep one.

Fher'roque

*See fher'roque's full profile in **Chapter 4**, page 177.*

STR 200	**CON** 200	**SIZ** 200	**DEX** 40
INT 70	**POW** 90	**HP** 40	
DB: +4D6	**Build:** 5	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 18

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 or 2 (claws, trunk grab) or 1 (trample)

Trunk Grab (mnvr): grabs prey; on following round, the trunk constrains target's movement—target may break free before the end of the second round with a STR or DEX roll opposed by the trunk's STR 200 (kind Keepers may reduce the trunk's STR to 100), or choose to initiate an attack instead. On the third round, the target is pulled into the mouth to be crushed (4D6 damage per round).

Trample (mnvr): up to 1D3 targets if in close proximity.

Fighting	40% (20/8), claw damage 2D6
Trunk grab (mnvr)	50% (25/10), see above
Trample (mnvr)	40% (20/8), claw damage 4D6+2
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Armor: 6-point scaly and leathery hide.
Spells: none.
Sanity Loss: 1D3/1D10 Sanity points.

Scarlet Ones

See scarlet ones' full profile in **Chapter 4**, page 178.

INT 80 **POW** 85 **HP** 1
DB: n/a **Build:** n/a **Move:** 10 **MP:** 17

Euphoric Visions: humans in close proximity may experience visions (resisted with a Hard POW roll) lasting 1D6+4 minutes, those affected cannot see or hear what is going on around them—suffering damage instantly pulls a person out of the state. During this, the scarlet ones absorb 1D6 magic points, per person (deducted from HP if a person does not possess enough MP). Humans make a POW roll, which if fumbled causes some kind of permanent change. See full write-up on page 178.

Radioactive: those within 5 feet (1.5 m) and who spend 8+ minutes (cumulative) near a scarlet one should make a CON roll—if failed, they experience headaches, nausea, and weakness (penalty die to physical actions) for 2D6 hours; if fumbled, a person additionally suffers the loss of 1D4 hit points and their mental skills are affected (penalty die) for 2D6 hours. If a critical success with CON roll, they are permanently immune to these effects.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (burn)
Radiates heat, costing 1 MP, causing those within 5 feet (1.5 m) to suffer 1 burn damage; each additional scarlet one in the area increases damage by one point; each additional MP spent increases the damage by 1 point. Heat protection (e.g. water) negates or reduces damage by half.

Burn	100% (50/20), damage 1+

Armor: none; immune to mundane attacks; water may provoke a scarlet one to depart.
Spells: none.
Sanity Loss: zero Sanity points.

Star-Spawn

STR 350 **CON** 260 **SIZ** 525 **DEX** 50 **INT** 105
APP — **POW** 105 **EDU** — **SAN** — **HP** 78
DB: +10D6 **Build:** 11 **Move:** 15 **MP:** 21

Combat

Attacks per Round: 4 (claw, tentacle, body slam)

Fighting	80% (40/16), damage 10D6
Dodge	26% (13/5)

Skills

Destroy Santa Monica 100%.

Powers

Dream Sending: humans living within the area of an entombed star-spawn may be subject to its psychic residue, a form of dream sending that can "speak" to susceptible subjects. Such psychic phenomenon causes no more than occasional odd nightmares, although for individuals with low POW, the effects and consequences may be greater, with some experiencing "dreams" of a Mythos nature. Eventually, some either become a puppet for the star-spawn's mind or, through their acquired knowledge, a servant of Cthulhu.

Armor: 10-point hide and blubber; regenerates 3 hit points per round (death at zero hit points).
Spells: knows 3D6 spells including Contact Cthulhu, Create Mist of R'lyeh, Grasp of Cthulhu, Send Dream, and others as the Keeper desires.
Sanity Loss: 1D6/1D20 Sanity points to encounter a star-spawn.

CHAPTER 7

A GOD'S DREAM

"The world is indeed comic, but the joke is on mankind."

—H. P. Lovecraft

A God's Dream is the final adventure in the trilogy of tales for *The Cults of Cthulhu*. In this scenario, the investigators are under the direct influence of Cthulhu—being used as pawns in the Great Old One's incomprehensible machinations. The investigators are the target of one the most powerful Cthulhu cults and, through their actions, they may glimpse the future of humanity and venture to an alien planet millions of light-years away.

This scenario's themes are about humanity's miniscule role in the universe and an individual's total insignificance in the grand scheme of things. Power is an illusion. Choice is a dream. Control is non-existent. The path to a tolerable life is to retreat back into a world of blissful ignorance.

Intended for up to six players, the scenario will likely encompass around six hours of game time, possibly more, depending on the style of the game. This story is set in modern-day Chicago, in December of the present year, and the investigators are assumed to come from occupations that investigate strange occurrences or crimes, with at least one investigator having a good knowledge of the occult.

As always, Keepers should read through the adventure and be familiar with the events and characters before running the game. It is important for the Keeper to have a good understanding of the various plot elements and non-player character (NPC) motivations.

The element linking all the scenarios in this book is the Cthulhu idol previously owned by Sir Wendell Whitlocke of the **Elevated Order of Morpheus** (page 46), followed by Ernest Chillingworth in **Loki's Gift** (page 194), and then Wilma Cartwright in **The Angel's Thirst** (page 256). The idol has great power and a deep connection to the dead yet dreaming god, making it highly desirable to Cthulhu cults and something they would do anything to possess. The scenario focuses on the **Church of Perfect Science** (CPS or "Church") as detailed in **Chapter 2** (page 100).

Note: this scenario contains mature themes and the Keeper should ensure everyone's comfort in the game. Such aspects can be hidden, adjusted, or removed to better suit the play group. It is advised that the Keeper inform their players beforehand about these themes to check that everyone is comfortable and gauge if any of the material should be toned down or removed.

Keeper note: some references to technology (USB drives, etc.) may date the scenario with time, in which case either run this scenario as a period "2020s" setting or replace/update such elements with current equivalents. In addition, certain addresses are fictional or have been "moved" to suit the fiction of the scenario.

KEEPER INFORMATION

Remember Fletcher is a witch. She moved to Chicago, Illinois, from Arkham, Massachusetts, where she was under suspicion for murder and devil worship. Having accumulated great wealth over an extended lifetime, Fletcher wanted

PLAYER HANDOUTS

The player handouts in this scenario are presented in a realistic fashion, such as handwritten letters and so on. If you have access to the PDF package that accompanies this book, please note that plain text versions of the text-based handouts are included for reference.

to use her understanding of magic and mathematics to construct a house that would allow her to not only slip into other worlds, but also to travel to other places on this planet.

The house at 1424 Brown Avenue was built in 1928, and Fletcher lived there for the next 30 years. In the quiet solitude of the Chicago suburb of Evanston she was able to continue her experiments in secrecy. During this time, she was responsible for a number of murders, but was never suspected of any wrongdoing.

Fletcher seemingly died in the spring of 1958. She had made specific arrangements with a local mortician for the care of her remains, which involved preparing her body for a type of resurrection. The mortician concealed her body within the house on Brown Avenue, and Remember Fletcher was never seen again. In truth, Fletcher transformed into something else and continued to exist in the places between worlds within the house.

Over the next 60 years the house gathered a reputation for being haunted, as many of the people that lived there died prematurely or fled in terror. Over the years, the house's reputation attracted authors to publish books on the alleged hauntings, and there have even been television programs made. Remember Fletcher has not been forgotten.

1424 Brown Avenue has stood empty now for some years. That is, until one month ago, when, on November 2, the property was purchased by Michael and Barbara Watson.

IN THE INTERESTS OF PERFECT SCIENCE

The Watsons are members of the **Church of Perfect Science** (**Chapter 2**, page 100), a stylized "self-help" cult of growing influence and power. In reality, the CPS is a secret Cthulhu cult with ambitions to explore the means to uplift and prepare humanity for the coming of Cthulhu. The cult takes an active interest in strange phenomena, hoping to gain a deeper understanding of the universe.

The CPS sent the Watsons to live at 1424 Brown Avenue to examine its supernatural legacy. It didn't take long for the Watsons to discover that the building was constructed using non-Euclidean architecture, which enables the creation of Gates to other places and times. Intrigued by the Watsons' initial findings, the Church provided the funds to purchase the property, which enabled more in-depth research to be undertaken. Subsequently, CPS members have been visiting the old house to conduct various experiments under the guise of carrying out renovation work. The Church plans to incorporate the house into **Project: New Haven** (see box nearby).

In an effort to forestall the meddling of nosy neighbors, the CPS has made generous offers on the houses surrounding 1424 Brown Avenue, managing to buy all but one. The owner of 1425 Brown Avenue, Diana Chase, suspects that something of value has been found in the neighborhood (she thinks oil or gold) and has hired a private investigator, Carl Day, to see if he can find out who wants to buy up the street and why.

PROJECT: NEW HAVEN

The Church of Perfect Science is constructing of a network of Gates on Earth capable of transporting people to an ancient and ruined city on the distant planet Lok-Gol'la. The Church mistakenly believes this is the planet Cthulhu and its spawn came from before arriving on Earth millennia ago. Though the program is in its infancy, the CPS plans to explore the remains of the dead city on Lok-Gol'la in search of lost treasures and arcane knowledge.

Carl Day's Investigation

Carl Day began digging around and soon discovered the Church of Perfect Science's involvement in the property purchases on Brown Avenue. Alarm bells rang in Carl's head: he's cautious about getting too deeply involved in the case, not only due to the Church's litigious nature, but also because his son Jake is involved with the organization. Carl worries that he might be getting into more trouble than he bargained for. Still, a job is a job, so he took some photographs through an open window of 1424 Brown Avenue to see if he could figure out what was going on inside. Studying the photographs revealed little except for some strange patterns in the plaster molding, which he thinks resemble some sort of strange and indecipherable writing. Unable to make sense of the language, Carl has contacted an old friend who knows about ancient languages and occult symbols—this contact is one of the investigators (or someone who then calls the investigators to get them involved).

Cthulhu's Will

Cthulhu is an unknowable entity: it thinks in ways that humanity cannot possibly comprehend, and its desires and goals may seem strange, even counter-intuitive. But, in Cthulhu's ultimate plans, all is known and anticipated. This concept is used throughout the scenario as a means to not only progress the story, but to also freak out the players.

As Keeper, you must understand that Cthulhu's influence is going to destroy Project: New Haven. One could say that Cthulhu "wants" the project destroyed, but this would be to limit the mind of Cthulhu with human terms. One might

also wonder why Cthulhu doesn't just send a message to its cultists and command them to stop working on the project. For whatever reason, Cthulhu doesn't do that. Instead, Cthulhu's influence is going to steer the investigators toward ending the project, which could all be part of some dark cosmic joke. Carl Day's involvement is all part of this complex and elaborate plan. Thus, the Keeper should use "Cthulhu" in strange, inconsistent, and unpredictable ways that will, hopefully, keep the investigators guessing.

In its present state, Cthulhu's power is limited. It can only influence the minds and dreams of the sensitive, or those who are in close proximity to an item enchanted or imbued with a sliver of its will, such as the Cthulhu idol. Nevertheless, the influence is powerful in and of itself, and it can easily cloud or steer a person in ways their conscious human mind cannot begin to fathom.

The will of Cthulhu is subtle. Rarely will it direct or influence a human to do anything that is directly counter to their beliefs and morals. Cthulhu might have someone dream of buying a newspaper and writing the word "ADVERSARY" under the day's headline, and then leaving it on a park bench. The person concerned is only "lightly" compelled to do this, as their will is still their own, but the dreams cause an itch that can only be scratched by performing the deed Cthulhu has projected into their sleeping mind.

The true power of Cthulhu is in its foresight. As a being of staggering intelligence, Cthulhu knows how human events will play out and, because of this, time means little to it. So, anticipating something that will take place months or even years down the line is not a problem for the god. Thus, for example, if the investigators need to get into a professor's home, and Cthulhu wants them there, then the door has been left unlocked—the professor simply failed to lock it, or perhaps the sensitive mind of the cleaner was "directed" to unlock it. Maybe that cleaner is really a cultist who was commanded by Cthulhu to find employment with the professor more than a year ago.

Note that this interpretation of Cthulhu's will can lead scholars down very deep rabbit holes. The intent of this scenario is to horrify: to show that Cthulhu is truly something beyond human understanding and a force that can never be meaningfully defeated. Yet, it is important to save this revelation for the very end—if the players feel they have no control over the game, they may become frustrated. The illusion of control must always be there for players, at least until the end.

Some Keepers may not like the concept of Cthulhu's will influencing events in the investigator's favor. If so, most of the scenes where it comes into play can be run straight, although the Keeper is advised to give the players more chances to detect forthcoming attacks with appropriate skill rolls (Spot Hidden, Listen, Psychology, and so on). Additionally, certain elements in the scenario have a "non-Cthulhu" option describing how key information could be obtained in an alternative manner.

INVOLVING THE INVESTIGATORS

The investigators are brought into the story by Carl Day, a private investigator who needs their help in identifying a strange language or code that he has stumbled upon. Either he knows at least one of the investigators from back in the day (such as an old college buddy) or has possibly worked with them before (perhaps commissioned by Carl to act as a translator or expert of some kind).

One or more of the investigators should have expertise in languages or the occult. Ideal occupations include anthropologist, linguist, occultist, and historian, although amateur-experts in such fields are also possible. The investigators may be a team, drawn from a university department or a group of researchers, who have had dealings with Carl Day previously. The scenario is set in Chicago, so it is assumed the investigators live in or near to that city.

To give the story more weight, it would be ideal if at least one of the investigators is a good friend of Carl's—playing in a monthly poker game with him, meeting him for drinks at a local dive bar once a month, or perhaps even being the brother or sister to one of Carl's ex-wives. Creating this kind of personal connection lends the story more dramatic weight.

If required, it should not be too difficult to retrofit these requirements to existing investigators. Even if none of the existing investigators possess exceptional language skills, you can still have Carl turn to them for aid due to their experience with strange mysteries or weird phenomena, or simply because he thinks he can count on them as friends.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following section outlines the backgrounds and roles for all the major non-player characters (NPCs) in this scenario. Full profiles for the various NPCs can be found at the end of the scenario in **Characters and Monsters** (page 326) or in the write up of the **Church of Perfect Science** in **Chapter 2** (starting on page 112)—it is suggested that the Keeper copies or prints out the NPC and monster profiles in advance to use as a handy reference while running the scenario.

Carl Day, *age 46, Private Investigator*

Carl got into the private-eye business when he started doing jobs for his uncle Larry, an ex-police officer who decided he could make more money working for angry spouses than cleaning up the streets. Carl learned the trade from Larry and, when his uncle retired and moved to Miami, Carl took over the business.

Carl is not above bending the law. That is not to say he's a bad guy, in fact, he's a sensitive soul, loyal to his friends, and a champion for the underdog. But, if he feels a client is being cheated, he's not against breaking the rules to vindicate them.

Carl is twice divorced; not due to any real wrong-doing on his or his wives' parts, he's just one of those people with a problem for every solution. He's a good private investigator, but a lonely guy. When he's working, he's professional and dependable, but when he's not working, he falls easily into depression and excessive drinking.

He has a good relationship with his kids, but, as they grow older, he's spending less and less time with them. His eldest son, Jake, became a member of the Church of Perfect Science around five years ago and, consequently, Carl hasn't seen Jake in three years.

Note that no profile is provided for Carl.

- **Description**: a short, pudgy, middle-aged white man. His hair is growing thin and grey. The fact that he is nondescript sometimes works to his advantage, as he is good at blending in wherever he goes.
- **Traits:** speaks with a thick Midwest accent. He's always ready with a few corny "dad jokes," and habitually asks people about their families or events going on in their life. He'll also talk about the Chicago Bears (American football) or the Bulls (basketball) every chance he gets.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** from the outset, Carl wants to get the investigators to help with the case. He is worried about antagonizing the CPS, especially as his son is somehow involved, but he feels obliged to do the job, and maybe having the investigators' support will help.

Jake Day, *age 24, Security Operative*

Jake is Carl Day's son and has been a member of the CPS for five years, although he's starting to have doubts about it all. The Church promises him a lot, but he never seems to actually get much in return for his efforts. He doesn't know much about the inner workings of the Church, but has always followed their directions with diligence, up to and including cutting ties with his family. He has not spoken to his father for three years.

- **Description**: wears black clothing and a ski mask. A muscular white man, with dark hair and a rugged jawline, and has his father's nose and eyes.
- **Traits:** when on duty, he is quiet, professional, and not easily spooked. Off duty, Jake likes to drink and carouse.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Jake doesn't want anything to do with the investigators, and does his best to deceive and mislead them. If the investigators meet Jake, they should recognize the family resemblance to Carl Day. The investigators could potentially get Jake on their side if they persevere with him.

Remember Fletcher, *age 243, Mythos Witch*

Remember Fletcher owned and lived in the house at 1424 Brown Avenue for 30 years, where she kidnapped and murdered a number of people in the course of her strange experiments. She "died" in 1958 and her body was interred in the property. Over time, she transformed into something other than human and dwelt in the spaces between

Carl Day

Jake Day

dimensions within the structure of the house. Subsequently, the experiments of the CPS within the property have caused her to manifest and become trapped in the house's attic.

- **Description**: looks like an attractive woman in her mid-twenties, but, at times, she has the appearance of an ancient, withered, and twisted old woman.
- **Traits:** never makes eye-contact and instead looks over the shoulder of the person she is addressing. She speaks with a light, dream-like voice, and often smiles as though she is in on a joke that the investigators are not a party to.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Fletcher is central to the background of this scenario, but not to its resolution. No longer quite human, her behavior is erratic and weird. If she believes the investigators pose a threat, she attempts to kill them, but, otherwise, vanishes soon after meeting them.

Morgan Landry, *age 43, Manager of Project: New Haven, Processed 4L*

Morgan Landry is from a middle-class family in the Chicago area and received a liberal arts education. Once out of college, she found herself somewhat lost in the world. One day, while walking in downtown Chicago, she wandered into a Perfect Science Center. Her first evaluation from the Process changed her life and gave her focus and direction.

Over the next 20 years, Landry climbed the Church's ladder, managing projects until she was able to attain Processed level 4. Thus, she works closely with the sedecim and, through them, discovered a way to the alien world of Lok-Gol'la. She believes that the ruins on Lok-Gol'la are indicators that Cthulhu and its kind once dwelled on this planet hundreds of millions of years ago. By finding a way to travel to the dead world to study its ruins, Landry hopes to have a better understanding of Cthulhu, and consequently be ready to make the change to Processed level 5.

- **Description**: an impeccably dressed African American businesswoman, with short auburn-colored hair, and sharp, attractive features.
- **Traits:** personable and charming; an active listener, who maneuvers a conversation so as to make the other person reveal more than they intended. She's not above exploiting her good looks to get what she wants. Once she realizes someone has nothing to offer, she politely disengages and moves on. She is calculating and manipulative.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** polite and engages with the investigators if they have something she wants. If not, she politely ignores them.

Greig Montel, *age 39, Head of Security for Project: New Haven, Processed 3L*

With a cruel mother and an abusive father, the world seemed like a horrible place to young Greig Montel. He often took refuge in reading, and especially enjoyed the works of Roger

Remember Fletcher

Morgan Landry

Blake (see **Chapter 2: Church of Perfect Science**, page 100), finding truth in the weird fiction and worldview presented in Blake's self-help writing. Montel enlisted in the army on his 18th birthday and never looked back.

Two years ago, Landry contacted Montel about an employment opportunity with the CPS. A fan of Blake's works, Montel jumped at the opportunity and became a full-time security consultant. Montel fitted in just fine and found the Church's teachings both familiar and reassuring. He started as a team leader, and, over the years, has worked his way up the ladder. Though not the head of the Church's entire security division, Montel knows that Project: New Haven is one of the most important endeavors of the CPS, and, if it succeeds, it might provide his ticket to ascend to Processed level 4. He is deeply obsessed with the sedecim and has guessed that they are the next stage in human evolution; a conclusion that makes him desperate to become one himself.

- **Description**: a muscular and trim African American man, with short hair and a close-cropped beard.
- **Traits:** cool, calm, and collected, he is always in control. Tends to condescend, except when speaking to his superiors. He delights in violence and smiles even when he's losing.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** if the investigators mess with the CPS, he'll mess with them.

Tanya Rieger, *age 34, Biologist, Processed 4L*

Tanya Rieger applied for numerous college scholarships, including one offered by the CPS. Following an interview and assessment, the CPS deemed her intelligent, yet pliable, and offered to fund her education at the University of Albany, which she accepted along with a simultaneous placement on a fast-track Processing program. By the time she graduated, she had attained Processed level 4. She has been working with the Church's special projects division ever since.

- **Description:** a slim, white woman, with pale skin and numerous freckles. Usually wears a white lab coat over conservative clothes, with tied-back hair and rectangular spectacles.
- **Traits:** tends to unconsciously touch her face and hair a lot, especially when she's thinking.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** has been having dreams about the investigators; she believes (correctly) that such dreams come from Cthulhu, but is unsure what they mean. She will be somewhat surprised and intrigued when she meets the investigators in the flesh.

Greig Montel

Tanya Rieger

Barbara Watson, *age 31, Perfect Scientist, Processed 3L*

Barbara Watson found the CPS when she was a student and has been a devotee ever since. She has not had contact with her birth family for eleven years and considers the Church to be her family. Indeed, she married another member, Michael Watson, ten years ago.

Barbara is generally cheerful and friendly, but behind this facade is a truly twisted mind that craves power. She would drop Michael in a moment if it meant promotion in the Church. Both are currently living at 1424 Brown Avenue at the bidding of the CPS.

- **Description**: a thin-faced white woman, with dyed blonde hair, pulled back in a ponytail. Usually dressed in sweatpants and a sweater while at home.
- **Traits:** when listening, she nods and says "uh-huh" repeatedly; she seems to have a fixed smile and talks constantly about the latest TV shows.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Barbara tries to find out what she can about the investigators, passing this information on to her superiors.

Michael Watson, *age 34, Perfect Scientist, (Processed 3L)*

Michael Watson is a know-it-all with an unreasonable degree self-confidence. Almost everything he says is phrased as a question, and he always has an answer waiting, taking pleasure in telling others where and how they are wrong or misinformed. Talking to him is a delight if you are a CPS member, but torture for anyone else.

He loves his wife, Barbara, deeply and would do anything for her, but, he knows deep down that the feeling isn't mutual. If an investigator were to have an in-depth talk with him they might discover his vulnerability (Hard **Psychology** roll), or if somehow compromised, he might open up and say more than he should.

- **Description**: a dour-looking and thin white man, with dark hair cut in an old-fashioned style, with a finely groomed and well-clipped beard. Usually wears a suit and tie, and rarely seen in public in casual clothes.
- **Traits:** on meeting new people, he asks if they've met before and says that they look familiar (he thinks this is endearing). He loves to talk endlessly about the weather, computers, or anything technical.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** he'll do his best to befriend the investigators and get to know them. He passes on any information he gains to his superiors.

Barbara and Michael Watson

LEADS

To make things easier for the Keeper when running the adventure, each key scene has a section marked "leads" at the end of it. These provide clear indications for the Keeper on where the investigator might go next in terms of clue and story progression.

Such leads may be marked "obscure," meaning that a skill roll or some form of action on the investigators' part may be required to access the information, and that the information is not completely necessary for the scenario to move forward. Otherwise, leads may be considered "obvious," meaning that the investigators should be made aware of them over the course of the scene. These terms are further explained in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* (page 202).

TIMELINE

Key events, past and upcoming. Though the past events are fixed, the upcoming events may change due to the actions of the investigators.

1928	The house at 1424 Brown Avenue is built by Remember Fletcher.
1958	Remember Fletcher "dies" and her remains are buried in the property at 1424 Brown Avenue.
2011	Diana Chase hears a weird noise and strange blue light coming from 1424 Brown Avenue.

NOW (2021)

Tuesday, November 2	CPS sends Barbara and Michael Watson to 1424 Brown Avenue.
Thursday, December 2	Diana Chase contacts Carl Day and hires him to investigate recent property sales on her street in Evanston.
Tuesday, December 7	Carl Day is seen in Chicago in the morning by family and/or secretary Colleen Conroy. Diana Chase speaks to Carl Day on the telephone for an update on his investigation. *Carl Day is discovered in Antarctica, clutching a statue; he is flown to the Rio Grande Regional Hospital in Argentina.*
Thursday, December 9	Midmorning, Dr. Sonia Sanchez contacts the investigators. Around midday, Carl Day calls the investigators, asking to meet that evening at 8:00 pm in the Insomnia Coffee House, Chicago. Around 1:00 pm, Carl Day leaves his apartment and is abducted by Greig Montel and two other CPS operatives, and questioned. Around 4:00 pm, Carl Day escapes and, via a circuitous route, uses a magical Gate that transports him in time and space to Alexander Island, Antarctica, on Tuesday, December 7. Around 8:00 pm, the investigators go to meet Carl Day at Insomnia, but Carl does not make an appearance.

Opposite: Chicago metropolitan area map

Chicago
Metropolitan Area
1 The Watsons' House
1424 Brown Ave.
2 Diana Chase's House
1425 Brown Ave.
3 Perfect Science Mansion
2970 N Lake Shore Dr.
4 Insomnia Coffee House
1722 W Grand Ave.
5 Carl Day's Office
1158 W Hubbard St.
6 Carl Day's Apartment
727 W Ohio St.
7 Perfect Science Center
46 W Washington St.
8 Global Realty Office
57 W Madison St.
N
Church St
Dodge Ave
Brown Ave
Dempster St
Evanston
N Sheridan Rd
N Lake Shore Dr
41
14
90
94
W Augusta St
Ashland Ave
W Chicago Ave
W Grand Ave
W Hubbard St
Lake
View East
West Town
N Clark St
S Wacker Dr
W Randolp St
W Washington St
W Madison St
Chicago
Loop
290
0
1
2
scale in miles

START: A CALL FROM ARGENTINA

Around midmorning on Thursday, December 9, one or more of the investigators get an unexpected call about Carl Day. The investigator(s) concerned should have previously had some form of positive relationship with Day—see **Involving the Investigators** (page 285) for details.

The call comes from Dr. Sonia Sanchez of the Rio Grande Regional Hospital. Speaking with what the investigator(s) might describe as a Spanish accent, she says that their friend, a Mr. Carl Day, is currently a patient under her care. Dr. Sanchez goes on to explain that Mr. Day was found on December 7, a few miles outside a research station in Antarctica, with severe frostbite to his hands and face. He was discovered wearing some kind of environmental suit that lacked a hood or gloves, and he was clutching a stone statue. The Antarctic researchers who found him couldn't understand what was going on or how he came to be there. Fortunately, a plane was scheduled to fly out that day, so Mr. Day was transported to the Rio Grande Regional Hospital.

Dr. Sanchez continues by saying that in a moment of lucidity, Mr. Day asked her to call the investigator(s). He insisted that it was a matter of life and death, and that, *"someone was coming after him and the statue."* Soon after, he descended into a heightened state of psychosis and had to be sedated. Dr. Sanchez asks if the investigator(s) know if Mr. Day has any family who she could call, and then asks if they have any idea how he ended up in Antarctica. Beyond this, the doctor has little more to say and, having only glimpsed the statue, she can only remark that it is *"weird looking."*

- The investigators may just let it all go and not worry about it—although the fact that Carl, a private detective in Chicago, somehow ended up in Antarctica is bizarre, to say the least.
- They may try to contact someone Carl knows, perhaps his secretary Colleen Conroy, his family, or some other friend or acquaintance (like another investigator). If Conroy or a family member, the investigator gets a confused response, with the person they are speaking to saying that they saw Carl yesterday (Wednesday, December 8) in Chicago! Any mention of Carl being in a hospital in Argentina is considered ridiculous.
- They may try calling the hospital again to speak to Carl directly; if so, they are eventually transferred to Dr. Sanchez, who says Carl is in no fit state to talk at this time and recommends they try again in a few days.
- If they head to Carl's apartment or his office (assume at least one of the investigators knows or can easily find the addresses), just as they set out, Carl calls them—proceed with **Contact with Carl Day** (following).
- If they call Carl's cell phone, he answers, saying that he was just about to ring them—proceed with **Contact with Carl Day** (following).

Whatever their response, events proceed with Carl contacting an investigator about 30 to 60 minutes after Dr. Sanchez's call, as follows.

CONTACT WITH CARL DAY

After the call from Dr. Sanchez, Carl Day calls (or is called by) one or more of the investigators, reaching out to those whom he thinks possesses the best knowledge of the occult and/or ancient languages. If the investigator doesn't mention the mysterious call from the doctor, Carl makes small talk at first, asking how family members are, did they see such-and-such television show last night, or any other subject that underpins their relationship. He then asks to meet with the investigator(s) that evening, at 8:00 pm in the Insomnia Coffee House, Chicago, saying that he's working a case and has uncovered some strange writing he wants their help to decipher. If asked, Carl says the writing looks like Viking runes, but he's pretty sure it's actually something else, and that he gets an *"occult vibe"* from it.

- If an investigator professes to have little knowledge of "Viking runes," Carl emphasizes that the text only seems that way to him and is probably some other ancient language. He asks if the investigator knows anyone else who could assist or help and, if so, to bring them to the meeting. *"All the merrier,"* he says—this basically gives the investigator *carte blanche* to rope in the other investigators, if they are not already involved.
- If Carl is asked to email a picture of the text, he'll say that he can't do so right now, adding that he doesn't like to send case material online—the investigator may remember that this is a "thing" with Carl, who distrusts email and is very careful about digital security, preferring to keep things "old fashioned" and paper-based where sensitive information is concerned.
- If the investigator tells Carl about the doctor's call, Carl assumes they're playing some kind of joke on him. If the investigator persists, Carl is confused and says he has never been to Argentina, but that they can talk about it when they meet at the coffee house.
- If the discussion gets overly complicated, have the call get inexplicably cut off (as often happends). They find later that they have a voicemail from Carl asking the investigator to meet him at Insomnia.

Should any of the investigators want to contact Carl again, before the evening meet up, any such attempt fails. His phone is switched off and no one knows where he is—this is because he's been abducted by the Church of Perfect Science (see **What Happened to Carl**? nearby).

Leads

- **Insomnia Coffee House** (following): Carl Day invites the investigators to meet him (obvious).

WHAT HAPPENED TO CARL?

After Carl Day calls the investigators on Thursday, December 9, he leaves his apartment in Chicago around 1:00 pm. On the way to his car, he is abducted by Greig Montel (**Dramatis Personae**, page 287) and two other CPS operatives and transported outside of the city to the Church's mansion in the wealthy suburb of Lakeview.

Over the course of the next couple of hours, Carl is questioned by Montel about why he was snooping around the house on Brown Avenue. Carl says that he noticed the recent spate of properties selling in the area and that he was conducting an independent investigation. Montel leaves the interrogation to consult Morgan Landry, leaving Carl alone in a locked room.

At around 4:00 pm, Carl, believing that he is going to be killed, picks the lock on the door. Despite the need to flee, Carl feels a strange compulsion to look around the mansion and heads into the basement, where he finds a bizarre, high-tech laboratory. Within the lab is a vast window that looks out on the landscape of an alien world—Lok-Gol'la. Shocked by this revelation, Carl turns to finds a Cthulhu idol (the one from the previous scenarios in this book) connected into a machine. Somehow, almost intuitively, Carl knows the idol is significant and may somehow save his life. Searching the basement, he finds an environmental suit in a locker and puts it on. He then grabs the idol and jumps through the window (a Gate), arriving on the surface of Lok-Gol'la.

Carl explores this strange, dead alien world, walking into a ruined city where he finds another Gate, which takes him back to Earth—not back to Chicago, but to Alexander Island in Antarctica. Somehow, the Gate or the power of the idol propels Carl back through time as well, sending him to Tuesday, December 7. This whole escapade causes Carl to suffer a bout of insanity.

Note that the time-traveling aspect of the Gate is a singular event, willed by Cthulhu and empowered by the idol; the Gate in the mansion's secret laboratory does not function in this manner again.

INSOMNIA COFFEE HOUSE

1722 West Grand Avenue, Chicago.

Insomnia is a small coffee house in Chicago. It is a place that may be familiar to the investigators, with nothing out of the ordinary about it. As they wait for Carl, the sky turns black and heavy rain begins to fall. At some point, it becomes clear that Carl is a no-show.

- If the investigators call or leave a message on Carl's cell phone, they get no response.
- If they try his work number, it goes straight to voicemail.
- The investigators might know Carl's secretary, Colleen Conroy (her number can be easily found, if they don't already have it), but she hasn't seen her boss since this morning (December 9). She knows he was planning to head to the University of Chicago's library that afternoon (he never arrived), but that is all. Despite the investigators' questions, she does not share any information about any cases he is currently working on, even if she knows the investigators well. More to get rid of the investigators and their questions, she suggests that Carl is probably caught up with work in the office or at his apartment; if necessary, Conroy can provide the addresses for both.

Leads

- **Carl Day's Apartment** (following): at least one of the investigators knows where Carl lives, or else Conroy supplies the details (obvious).
- **Carl Day's Office** (page 297): Conroy supplies the address unless an investigator already knows it from their previous association (obvious).

CARL DAY'S APARTMENT

727 West Ohio Street, Chicago.

Carl lives on the upper, third floor of a converted brownstone apartment building. The building has a front and a back entrance (both locked). Buzzing his apartment gets no reply. If the investigators wish to get in, they can try a **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll, or alternatively buzz one of the neighbors to let them in, requiring a **Fast Talk** or **Luck** roll.

If the investigators arrive in the evening, they see light from inside Carl's apartment, from the peephole in the door to the hallway. Knocking on the door gets no response, but a successful **Listen** roll reveals someone is in the apartment.

Insomnia Coffee House

Keeper note: inside is one of Greig Montel's men, Jake Day (see **Dramatis Personae**, page 286). Jake is wearing a face mask, and is looking for anything that might lead police to the CPS or the house on Brown Avenue. He waits for the investigators to leave, before continuing his search. If the investigators seem like they're going to stick around, he'll try to slip out the back window and into the alley. The Keeper might like to time Jake's escape so that the investigators have a chance to chase him. The chase is made up of seven locations. If the investigators made the **Listen** roll or thought to check the back window, Jake is only one location ahead of them, if they failed the roll, he's two locations ahead—for the details on running Chase scenes, see **Chapter Seven, Chases**, in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook,* page 130.

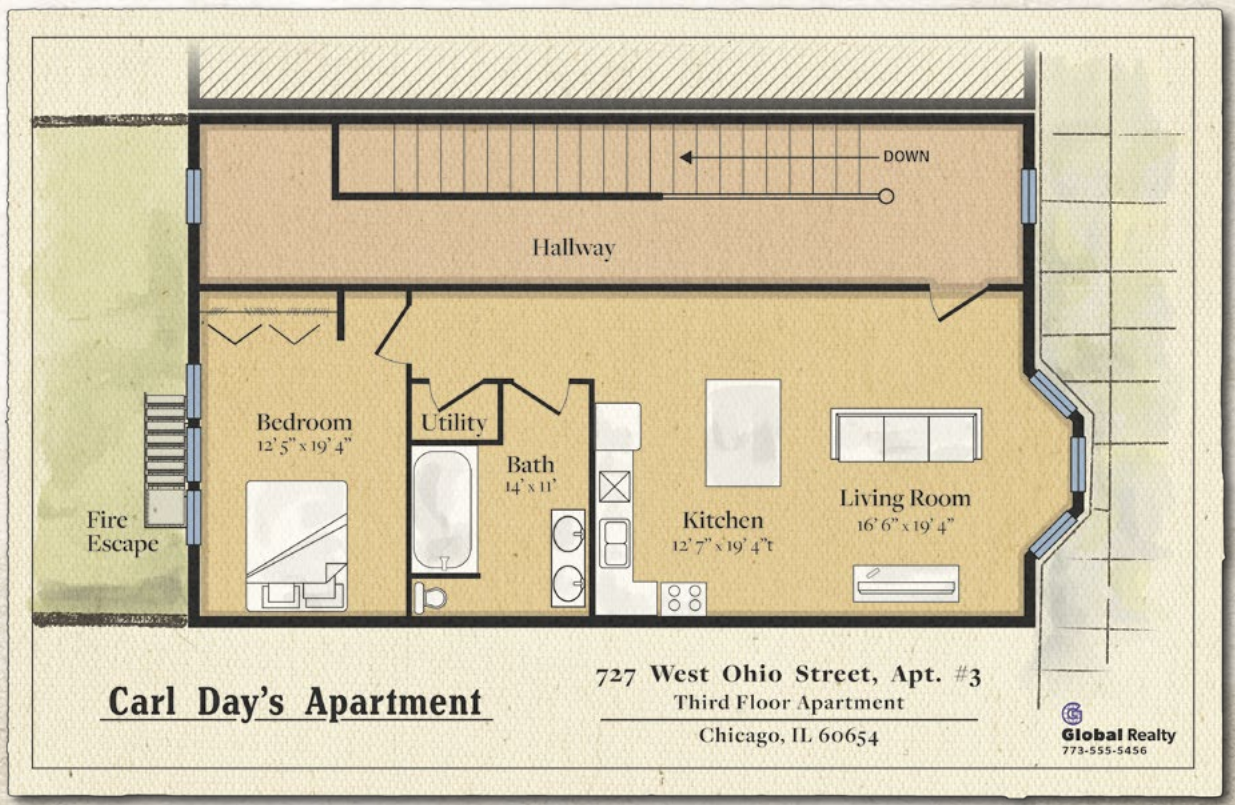
Chase Aid

- The first location is the bathroom; a **Climb** roll is required to get out to a ledge (hazard).
- The second location is a tree that can be reached with a **Jump** roll from the ledge (hazard: 1D10 damage, –1D3 movement actions).
- The third location is the alley below, which is icy; requiring a **DEX** roll not to slip and fall (hazard).
- The fourth and fifth locations are stretches of the alleyway.
- The sixth location is a tall fence, requiring a **Climb** roll (barrier).
- The seventh location is a black sedan on the other side of the fence. The vehicle does not have a license plate. If Jake makes it to location seven before the investigators, he gets into the car and drives away.

If the investigators get close enough to Jake to engage in combat, he attempts to dodge and flee. If he feels that his life is threatened, he may pull out his knife or pistol to intimidate or use if necessary.

If Jake is captured, the investigators find Carl Day's laptop in Jake's backpack; Jake claims it's his, but if asked for proof, he says he's not going to allow the investigators access to his computer. He tries to stall them for as long as he can, in the hope it won't be long before **Greig Montel** (see profile, page 287) comes to his rescue.

- At the Keeper's discretion, Greig Montel arrives with a couple of toughs approximately ten minutes after Jake is captured. All are wearing face masks; use the **Criminal Cultist: Muscle** profile (**Chapter 4**, page 159) for the toughs. Montel sends in the toughs to cause enough chaos for Jake to escape. Montel will join in if necessary, threatening to use his .32 automatic if Jake is not released.
- If the investigators move quickly, taking Jake with them, then Montel and the toughs arrive too late to help.



Carl Day's apartment map

- If Jake is unmasked at any point, the investigators should note his resemblance to Carl Day and, if this is remarked upon, Jake may admit that Carl is his father, although they haven't spoken for some time.
- If questioned, Jake says he was paid by *"a guy"* to get Carl Day's laptop, but knows no more. A successful **Psychology** roll reveals he's keeping something back. A successful **Persuade** or **Intimidate** roll is necessary for him to admit that he's a member of the Church of Perfect Science. See Jake's **Dramatis Personae** entry (page 286), as the investigators could possibly recruit him as an ally, if they can get him to trust them.
- If inspected, Carl's laptop requires a password to access (a successful Hard **Computer Use** gets into the data). Unfortunately, other than confirming it owner, the hard drive contains mostly billing and other administrative files and emails. The calendar function notes Carl's appointment for meeting with the investigator (s) at Insomnia on December 9, and that he planned to see his family for an hour on the morning of December 6. Previous to those dates, the calendar is full of various client meetings, but none stand out as relevant. The most recent diary note (that correlates to some emails), is a new client named Diana Chase of 1425 Brown Avenue, Evanston, North Chicago, although further details are sketchy. The investigator(s) may need to be reminded that Carl distrusts email and prefers old-fashioned paper to computers.
- If Jake is handed over to the police, he is soon released on bail. Some days later, and if the investigators roughed him up, they are sued by Jake—but, by then, other matters are likely to be more important.

Leads

- **Inside the Apartment** (following): searching Carl's place (obvious).
- **Talking to Diana Chase** (page 298): following up on the information on Carl's laptop (obscure).
- Greig Montel may now be aware of the investigators. They are likely to meet again (**Visiting the Mansion II**, after receiving the idol, page 316).
- Jake Day's relationship to Carl Day may be known (obvious).
- The investigators may, at some point, recruit Jake to their cause (if they think to do so).

Inside the Apartment

Keeper note: if the investigators interrupt Jake Day, the place is messy, but not totally ransacked. If they arrive after Jake has been there, such as the following morning, the apartment looks more or less untouched, as Jake was careful to disguise his search.

Inside Carl's apartment

Carl lives in a small, one-bedroom apartment, with almost no decorations. Pictures of his kids (from his first marriage) are the only things that make the place look like a home.

- A casual look around reveals a laptop power cord plugged into the wall in the kitchen, but there's no laptop to be found (Jake has taken this).
- A more thorough search finds a sticky note, half stuck to the bottom of one of Carl's shoes (it's easy to spot). The note says: Chase 224-555-2312. A quick online search reveals this to be the phone number of Diana Chase at 1425 Brown Avenue, Evanston, in the North Side of Chicago.
- A search of Carl's bedroom finds a small key, stuck to the underside of a nightstand drawer with tape (obscure). The key is a spare for the safe in Carl's office.

Leads

- **Carl Day's Office** (following): one or more of the investigators know the location (obvious); the key opens the office safe (obscure).
- **Talking to Diana Chase** (page 298): following up on the note (obvious).

CARL DAY'S OFFICE

1158 West Hubbard Street, Chicago.

The office building is open 8 am to 6 pm, but anyone with a key can gain access to the building at any time. The front desk is staffed 24 hours a day, with security cameras focused on the garage, back entrance, front entrance, and lobby.

If the investigators show up after business hours, the security guard tells them to come back in the morning. It takes a successful social skill roll to get the security guard to let the investigators into the building.

- If the investigators check the back entrance, a **Spot Hidden** roll may reveal the security camera here has been disabled. Close examination shows the lens has been sprayed with black paint. The lock on the back door is broken. The security guard is aware of the malfunctioning camera (when she came on duty) and has called her supervisor about the camera. A repair crew won't be there until morning. And, so far, she has not yet realized that the back-door lock has been broken.
- Sneaking in the back way requires a **Stealth** roll, but, if the security guard is somehow distracted, no roll is necessary.

Inside the Office

Carl Day's office door has been forced, seemingly with a crowbar. Inside, the office has been ransacked. There is a small waiting room with a desk, a kitchenette and some chairs, and a main office.

- A search locates a wall safe behind a signed picture of the 1985 Chicago Bears. It requires a successful **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll to open (grant a bonus die if an investigator has the appropriate tools). If the investigators are unsuccessful, they could call out for a professional locksmith (either the legal or criminal variety), providing they can come up with a good story. Alternatively, the safe's key can be found in Carl's apartment (**Inside the Apartment**, page 296)—if they have not yet found this, and are stuck, a gentle reminder about checking out Carl's home is recommended, allowing them to find the key.
- Inside the safe is cash, film negatives, USB drives, and paper files. Information on Carl's newest case is contained in the paper files and concerns Diana Chase, who hired Carl to find out about the recent spate of property sales on her street in Evanston, and whether her new neighbors, the Watsons, are involved in this in some illegal way.
- Digging into these files, the investigators find that Carl discovered that the realtor, Global Realty, and the Watsons are both connected to the Church of Perfect Science.
- One of the USB drives contains photographs of the interior of the property that appear to have been taken through an outside window. The images show strange patterns or symbols on the interior plaster molding, which at first glance seem runic in nature. Another image shows the front of a property with the number "1424." It appears to be a recently renovated, early twentieth century two-story home.
- A successful **Occult** roll may conclude that the symbols and patterns have no connection to any known religion or magical practice. Only a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll allows the investigators to deduce that these symbols are elements of some kind of spell or alien language, possibly connected to the worship of Cthulhu.

Leads

Getting into the office safe is key, which once done, makes all of the following leads obvious:

- **Talking to Diana Chase** (following): her details can be found in the safe (obvious).
- **Researching Global Realty** (page 299): information in the safe (obvious).
- **Researching the Church of Perfect Science** (page 299): information in the safe (obvious).
- **Researching 1424 Brown Avenue** (page 300): information in the safe (obvious).
- **Researching the Watsons** (page 302): information in the safe (obvious).

- **Visiting 1424 Brown Avenue** (page 302): information in the safe (obvious).

Keeper note: if the investigators bungle getting to the information inside the safe, these leads could alternatively come via Jake Day, if he is captured and questioned. Otherwise, the investigators should obtain the contact details for Diana Chase from Carl's apartment (**Inside the Apartment**, page 296), which allows them to bypass the information in the safe.

TALKING TO DIANA CHASE

1425 Brown Avenue, Evanston, Chicago.

Chase is a divorced woman in her 60s, with well-coiffed hair atop a thin face. She lives alone. If contacting her over the telephone, she is wary of anyone asking about her private business, and a successful **Charm** or **Fast Talk** may be needed to get her to agree to meet. If contacted in person, Chase is more likely to accept any reasonable story the investigators give at face value, and, consequently, is forthright with her answers. Mentioning that they are looking into the disappearance of Carl Day certainly gets her interest and she is concerned enough to offer all the help she can.

Keeper note: a profile is not provided for Chase.

Diana Chase

- Having previously employed Carl Day to successfully obtain evidence on her cheating (now ex-) husband (to initiate divorce proceedings), she recently rehired Day to look into Global Realty.
- Global Realty is a real estate company that appears to be buying up all the houses in her neighborhood at above market values.
- It all started a month ago, when someone finally bought 1424—the house across from her. A young couple, named Michael and Barbara Watson, moved in and began renovating the house.
- Chase believes the Watsons might have found something of value, as, besides construction workers, there have been people in suits coming and going from the house, some of whom Chase describes as "*forensic investigators.*"
- The people at 1422 and 1423 Brown Avenue sold their houses to Global Realty at 15 percent above market value. Less than two weeks ago, a man from Global Realty, Dave Sanders, approached Chase and made her an offer on her house at 10 percent above market value. She explains that she has strong sentimental feelings toward her home and so refused the offer. But, Sanders came back with another offer at 20 percent above market value, which made Chase suspect the Watson's must have discovered something, *"maybe gold or oil,"* that would make the land's price go up. Thus, she hired Carl Day, about a week ago, to get the real story.
- There have long been rumors that 1424 Brown Avenue is haunted. Chase mentions that *"some rock star lived there for a while."* She is not sure whether she believes in ghosts, but she did witness something strange about 10 years ago, namely a *"creepy howling"* coming from the house, which didn't sound like the wind or a dog. Looking out of her the window, she saw a strange blue light from the attic window of 1424. Moments later, the light faded and the howling stopped simultaneously. She's never seen or heard anything like it since.

More about Carl Day

The last time she talked to Carl was two days before he went missing (December 7). She called him for an update, and he told her that he was still looking into things and would get back in touch soon.

More about the Watsons

Chase says the Watsons seem to be nice people, but a little guarded. Michael Watson works in *"computers or something,"* but she's not sure what Barbara Watson does, but she goes out most days.

Leads

- **Researching Global Realty** (following): Diana Chase mentions the name (obvious).
- **Researching 1424 Brown Avenue** (page 300) and **Visiting 1424 Brown Avenue** (page 302): the focus of Diana Chase's current obsession (obvious).
- **Researching the Watsons** (page 302): Chase specifically talks about them (obvious).

RESEARCH

Following the clues found in Carl Day's office safe (**Inside the Office**, page 297) and the information gleaned from Diana Chase (**Talking to Diana Chase**, page 298), the investigators are likely to want to conduct their own research into the things that Carl has uncovered. The following areas may be explored at any time during the scenario.

RESEARCHING GLOBAL REALTY

West Madison Street, downtown Chicago.

An internet search reveals Global Realty has been around for 26 years and boasts offices in Chicago, New York, London, and Berlin.

- A successful **Library Use** (on a computer or via Chicago city records) shows that the company has done a lot of business for the Church of Perfect Science.
- Further digging requires either a **Computer Use** or an **Accounting** roll, revealing that Global Realty is a subsidiary of Future Corp, a business with strong ties to the Church of Perfect Science, as it shares many of the same board members.
- Specifically searching for mention of Dave Sanders (the man who approached Diana Chase) requires a successful **Computer Use** or **Library Use** roll. Sanders lives in Deerfield, north of Evanston, and is married with two teenage children. He has been a member of the Church of Perfect Science since 2010. His social media presence reveals that he has a keen interest in most well-known science fiction TV shows, with various cosplay photos of him in uniform or attire from a variety of shows from the 1960s to the modern-day.
- Looking at property sales for Brown Avenue, the investigators can see that Global Realty purchased the houses numbered 1422, 1423, and 1424.

Visiting the Chicago office

If the investigators call into the Global Realty office on West Madison Street, downtown Chicago, they find Dave Sanders to be personable and energetic. Depending on their cover story, Sanders is forthcoming about the benefits of employing his services to sell or buy properties in the area; however, he won't talk specifics about any of his clients. During the course of any conversation, Sanders attempts to get as much information about the investigators as he can. And, depending on the questions or names mentioned by the investigators, he may become suspicious of their motives. If so, once the investigators have left, he contacts Morgan Landry (at the Perfect Science Mansion) to inform her of his suspicions.

Leads

- **Researching the Church of Perfect Science** (following): following up the connection between Global Realty and the CPS (obscure).

RESEARCHING THE CHURCH OF PERFECT SCIENCE

The Church of Perfect Science is widely known across the world and all the information provided below is easily found without a skill roll. The information may come via websites, traditional newsprint articles, television documentaries, and so on.

- In recent years, the CPS has received a lot of negative publicity implying the organization is a cult that takes over people's lives.
- The CPS is litigious, throwing lawsuits at those who publicly say anything bad. This tactic seems to have worked well over the years, but, of late, more and more former members have spoken out against the Church. All of these members have been relatively low-level, none higher than Processed L1. Such people have spoken publicly about the beliefs of the cult, including the notion that evil aliens, called the Old Ones, created humanity, and that another alien race, called the Enlightened and guided by a being known as Kutu, defeated them. Once the evil Old Ones were defeated, Kutu's people went into a deep sleep. Apparently, Kutu is waiting for humanity to evolve sufficiently to create a new utopia, in which Kutu and the Enlightened will live with humanity in an age of everlasting wonder, prosperity, and peace.
- CPS spokespeople claim their beliefs are metaphorical, but former members discount such statements, saying the Church considers all of the beliefs to be literal fact.

- Locally, in Chicago, the CPS has a public facility, The Perfect Science Center, located on West Washington Street in downtown Chicago, and also a private mansion on North Lake Shore Drive in the Lakeview neighborhood.

The internet is, of course, full of rumors and conspiracy theories about the CPS. The following can easily be found, and the Keeper may wish to feed the investigators these rumors throughout the scenario, rather than in one chunk.

- The CPS has advanced alien technology that surpasses even the US Government.
- The Church can control people's minds and read their thoughts.
- The CPS's "Process" turns people into emotionless zombies.
- Some sources claim the Church encourages "deviant sexual behavior," while others argue that it discourages sexual activity altogether.
- The Church controls many of the world's governments.
- Celebrity actor, and member of the Church, Tony Tedesco, had his genitals removed at the bidding of the CPS.

More information about the actual activities of the Church of Perfect Science can be found in **Chapter 2** (page 100).

Handout: Dream 1

March 15, 1993

NEWS

ROCK STAR BUYS THE MOST HAUNTED HOUSE IN CHICAGO

Residents of Evanston have long been aware of the creepy house at 1424 Brown Avenue. For decades it has been regarded as haunted by not only the local children but most of its neighbors, too. Now, Devon Razor the well-known shock rocker is moving in, adding further infamy to what some call the most haunted house in Chicago.

Built in 1928 by Remember Fletcher, a widow and former resident of Massachusetts, the house first attracted attention back in the 1950s. Neighbors recall the property gained an unsavory reputation, reporting strange sounds and colored lights emanating from the house in the late hours of the night. It is said that in the winter, snow would melt around Mrs. Fletcher's house long before the other homes on the street, while other accounts mention neighbors saying that the area around the house was always colder than elsewhere. In no time at all, the local children were spreading rumors that Remember Fletcher was a witch and that her house was haunted.

Following Mrs. Fletcher's death in 1958, the property has had a succession of owners, none of whom have stayed long. Missing persons, murder, and suicide have all been attached to the house on Brown Avenue, which one may speculate as key buying points for Devon Razor, whose performances and lifestyle are known to focus on the occult. We can only hope that suburban life is just what Mr. Razor needs to finally settle down and age gracefully, although this reporter, for one, doubts that will ever happen!

Leads

- **Visiting the Perfect Science Center I** (before receiving the idol, page 308), or **Visiting the Perfect Science Center II** (after receiving the idol, page 314): the investigators may want to visit the CPS's local, public building (obvious).
- **Visiting the Mansion I** (before receiving the idol, page 311) or **Visiting the Mansion II** (after receiving the idol, page 316): the investigators may want to visit the CPS's local, private building (obvious).

RESEARCHING 1424 BROWN AVENUE

Handouts: Dream 1 and **2** can be easily found (obvious), they are examples of similar articles stemming from newspaper write-ups, TV specials, and paranormal/ghost-hunting websites. If the investigators wish to verify the information within the handouts, a search of the city records, newspaper archives, and so on, can find the following with a successful **Library Use** roll and a few hours work, per the sections dated below (obscure). Note that the following details don't really add anything new to the handouts, but are bullet-pointed here for the ease of the Keeper, who should feel free to elaborate as necessary.

1928 to 1958

- The two-story house at 1424 Brown Avenue was built in 1928, on a plot of land purchased by Remember Fletcher. Fletcher is believed to have originated from Massachusetts (no prior records can be found despite further searching). Fletcher, a widow in her 70's, is said to have been the house's architect and hired a local construction firm to perform the work.
- In the fall of 1958, Fletcher is reported to have died. The coroner recording "old age" as the cause of death. There are no records concerning next of kin, nor any details regarding her burial.

1959 to 1960

- The property was purchased at auction in 1959 by Ken and Sharon Lawson. By the spring of 1960, Sharon Lawson was reported missing to the police and, shortly after, Ken Lawson was institutionalized. Birth and death records note that Ken Lawson died in October 1960.
- The house was purchased in 1960 by Daniel and Lucy Kirk; Daniel was a retired school principal. A news story some six months later, luridly describes Lucy Kirk stabbing her husband to death and then slitting her own throat.

1969 to 1978

- The house stayed on the market for almost 10 years before being purchased in 1969 by Dick and Wendy Bentley. A news story relates that the couple fled the house after only one month, stating that they believed it was haunted, although the article somewhat ridicules the Bentleys in its reporting.
- The house remained unsold until 1978, when 55-year-old Mrs. Alex Bellington moved in. Mrs. Bellington is reported as dying of a heart attack after only three weeks of living at the property.

1980 to 1988

- In 1980, David Brooke Realty, the company dealing with the property, hired a parapsychologist, named Glen Phillips, from the University of Chicago to survey the house. Phillips recorded a number of unusual phenomena, including strange sounds, lights under doors, time discrepancies, and extreme temperature fluctuations. The results were inconsistent and Phillips was unable to determine their cause. Phillips died in 2007 from colon cancer.
- Throughout the 1980s, parapsychologists, psychics, and magicians of all brands came to the house to investigate. One psychic, Tina Yardley, had a brain aneurysm within ten minutes of entering the house in 1985.
- An episode of the 1986–88 show *Strange Phenomenon* devoted an episode to the "Witch House of Evanston."

News story on 1424 Brown Avenue

1993 to 2004

- In 1993, the house was purchased by acclaimed musician and "shock rocker" Devon Razor. While he never actually lived in the house for an extended period of time, he used it often for séances and parties. Razor reported a few strange experiences and claimed to befriend the ghost of Remember Fletcher. He sold the house in 2004 to Brian and Heather Jensen. Later that year, the couple went (and remain) missing, although Brian's severed left hand was found inside the front hallway of the house.

This Year (2021)

- The house was empty until one month ago, when it was purchased by Michael and Barbara Watson on November 2.

Leads

- **Researching the Watsons** (following): the current owners of the house (obvious).
- **Visiting 1424 Brown Avenue** (nearby): the focus of the investigation (obvious).

RESEARCHING THE WATSONS

A search of the city records and a successful **Library Use** roll finds that Michael and Barbara (née Gump) Watson were married in 2010 in Chicago. Michael is 34 years old and from Albany, New York. Barbara is 31 years old and from Chicago. They both work at the Perfect Science Center, West Washington Street, Chicago. Michael is an IT specialist, while Barbara is a project manager for the Chicago branch's public relations division. Finding more information about the couple is difficult, as they don't appear to have any presence on social media.

Keeper note: both Michael and Barbara are second-generation Perfect Scientists, having been brought up in the Church. They are currently Processed 3L, and are hoping Project: New Haven will enable them to become 4Ls and thereby enter the special projects department. This information is impossible to find unless the investigators gain access to the intranet at the Perfect Science Center (**Accessing the CPS Intranet**, page 310).

Leads

- **Visiting 1424 Brown Avenue** (following): the Watsons' new home (obvious).
- **Visiting the Perfect Science Center I (**before receiving the idol, page 308), or **Visiting the Perfect Science Center II** (after receiving the idol, page 314): the Watsons' workplace (obscure).

VISITING 1424 BROWN AVENUE

Number 1424 is the last house on the left at the end of the block. The house looks to have been recently renovated but otherwise looks much as it would have in the 1920's. Currently, Michael and Barbara Watson reside there.

- Most days, there is one car in the driveway (Michael Watson's) and, in the evening, Barbara's car is there also.
- The curtains are closed at all times, and all doors and windows are locked.
- A successful **Spot Hidden** roll reveals numerous hidden cameras on the outside of the house. To anyone with an appropriate background, these are known to be state-of-the-art models and very expensive.

Keeper note: the security cameras are remotely monitored by the CPS security officers, who can have an armed response to the house within 10 minutes.

Michael rarely leaves the house, but Barbara spends most days at the Perfect Science Center in downtown Chicago (see **Dramatis Personae** for their write-ups, page 285). If the investigators knock at the door, Michael answers and is overly polite and friendly. Depending on how the investigators approach the visit, Michael is likely to invite the investigators inside and is happy to answer simple questions. If a visit is made in the evening, Barbara joins the conversation. The house is decorated with a modern sensibility and is very clean, almost like a show house.

- A **Spot Hidden** roll may notice that odd symbols can be seen, externally and internally on archways and walls, in some of the woodwork and plaster of the house. These appear old and some have been painted over, leaving only faint trace lines. A successful **Occult** or **Cthulhu Mythos** roll suggests they correspond to warding and protection.
- If asked about the symbols, the Watson's say they were already there when they moved in; they like the design aesthetic, so don't intend on removing or covering them up.
- During any discussion, the Watsons will question the investigators to ascertain why they are here.
- They answer simple questions about the neighborhood, the recent move into the house, and will confirm that they are members of the CPS—basically telling the investigators only what they already know. In addition, they talk about irrelevant topics (movies, television, sports, and so on).
- If the questions become more probing, they say they are busy or tired, and ask if they can continue the conversation another time.

Handout: Dream 2

October 30, 2010

NEWS

HOUSE OF HORROR REMEMBERED

Long regarded as the most haunted house in Chicago, the two-story property standing at 1424 Brown Avenue in Evanston remains something of an enigma and a beacon for ghost hunters. With Halloween approaching, readers may recall the house's long and sad history.

The house, built in 1928, was said to have been designed by Remember Fletcher. Local folklore says Remember fled Massachusetts to escape accusations of witchcraft, but it seems she brought her spell books and cauldron with her to Illinois. Over the thirty years she lived on Brown Avenue, Fletcher's house was a source of spooky lights and weird noises, and a place locals stayed away from lest they be cursed by a spell. When Remember died in 1958, some said she had suffered a heart attack when summoning a devil in a midnight ceremony, although the coroner's records are a little more down to earth, giving old age as the cause.

With the passing of Remember Fletcher, the house continued to have a less than happy history. Purchased in 1959 by Ken and Sharon Lawson, calamity came to the new owners after only a few months, with Mrs. Lawson reported to the police as missing in April 1960. The loss of his wife is believed to have driven Mr. Lawson mad with grief, and he was committed to the Chicago State Hospital, better known these days as the Chicago-Read Mental Health Center. But even greater horror was to come. Just a few months later in 1960, the property was sold to a retired school principal and his wife, whose fates would seal the house's reputation as a place most folk would want to steer clear of. As, in early 1961, the school principal's wife viciously stabbed her husband to death and then slit her own throat.

The house remained empty for some ten years until purchased by the Bentley family, who again found no joy inside its walls. Allegedly, the Bentleys fled the house after just a month due to a rising tide of unexplained events caused by what they said were demonic spirits. Again, the property stood abandoned for a decade, till, in 1978, a Mrs. Alex Bellington moved in. After three weeks, she suffered a massive heart attack and died. She was just 55 years old.

Given the deaths and misery associated with the house, the firm in charge of selling it needed help, as no one wanted to buy it. People said it was haunted and that anyone who lived there would come to a bad end. And, the historical facts seemed to bear that out. So, in 1980, Glen Phillips from the University of Chicago was brought in to conduct experiments inside the house. The notable parapsychologist said, when contacted by this newspaper, that he had recorded a series of strange phenomena in the house, from unaccountable sounds and lights to sudden temperature fluctuations. He even described episodes of missing time, which even now continue to trouble him. Mr. Phillips said he was glad to leave Brown Avenue and never return.

For the following thirteen years, the house remained unsold but continued to attract the attention of psychics, magicians, and academic researchers. While little is known of their findings (presumably as these amounted to little), one such researcher's fate was awful. Tina Yardley, a self-proclaimed psychic, spent a mere ten minutes inside the property before dropping dead of a brain aneurysm.

Following the unfortunate demise of Tina Yardley, even researchers stayed away from Brown Avenue. But, in 1993, Devon Razor brought the property back into the public's consciousness when he purchased it to hold wild parties and séances. Readers may recall the publicity surrounding the "shock rocker" and his elaborate and bloody stage shows. While Razor is said to have never made the house his home, he often spent time there with friends and groupies. Accounts of these days in Razor's autobiography, Bloody Razors, speak of weirdness in the house, but most significant is the musician's belief that he contacted the spirit of the house's designer, Remember Fletcher. Razor relates befriending Fletcher's ghost and that she would instruct him in the dark arts.

Whether Razor actually contacted the "Other Side" or if this was all just another of his well-known publicity stunts remains to be determined. Either way, he sold the house in 2004 to Brian and Heather Jensen. Unfortunately, the Jensens, like many before them, did not fare well once they moved in. In December of that year, police were called to the property when the Jensens failed to show up at work, and, on arrival, discovered a severed hand in the entrance hallway. On inspection, no trace of the Jensens could be found, and they remain listed as missing persons. Later forensic analysis confirmed the severed hand belonged to Brian Jensen.

Now, the house on Brown Avenue is quiet. No one lives there anymore and none are likely to, given its history. So, be careful this Halloween and keep away from the house of horror!

- They will not answer any awkward questions, saying, *"We aren't comfortable with that."*
- They don't allow the investigators to look around the house.
- If the investigators get overly hostile for any reason, the Watsons attempt to call the police, running outside if necessary to do so. As necessary, Michael will protect Barbara.

If time is spent watching the house, the investigators learn that Barbara Watson leaves the premises every day. If she is followed, she always drives to the Perfect Science Center in downtown Chicago. Michael Watson tends to leave the house for around two hours every other day, to fetch groceries or take a walk.

SNEAKING AROUND THE HOUSE

If the investigators contrive a means to get into the house, avoiding the security cameras (Hard **Stealth** roll), and look around, call for a **Stealth** roll (if applicable), which, if failed, alerts the Watsons. Assuming they get inside okay, they find a well-kept and clean house, with nothing (visibly) out of the ordinary.

- Getting hold of one of the Watsons' laptops or cell phones is possible, although they are password protected. A Hard **Computer Use** roll is needed to gain access, which grants addresses, names, positions, and phone numbers of all the key CPS-related NPCs in this scenario. All important and confidential information is held on the CPS intranet and not accessible from outside of CPS premises (**Accessing the CPS Intranet**, page 310).
- If necessary, ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll when in the upper-story hallway (6): with success, the investigators notice a sliding panel in the ceiling. Behind the panel is a locked hatch that requires a **Locksmith** or Hard **Mechanical Repair** roll to open. Brute force also works (no roll), but this approach causes considerable noise and property damage. Opening the hatch grants access to a fold-down ladder and the **Attic** (10; following).

THE ATTIC

The attic has been thoroughly cleaned, but looks to be largely unchanged since the 1920's. It is mostly empty, but the northern section is dominated by something large and tall covered by a gray blanket.

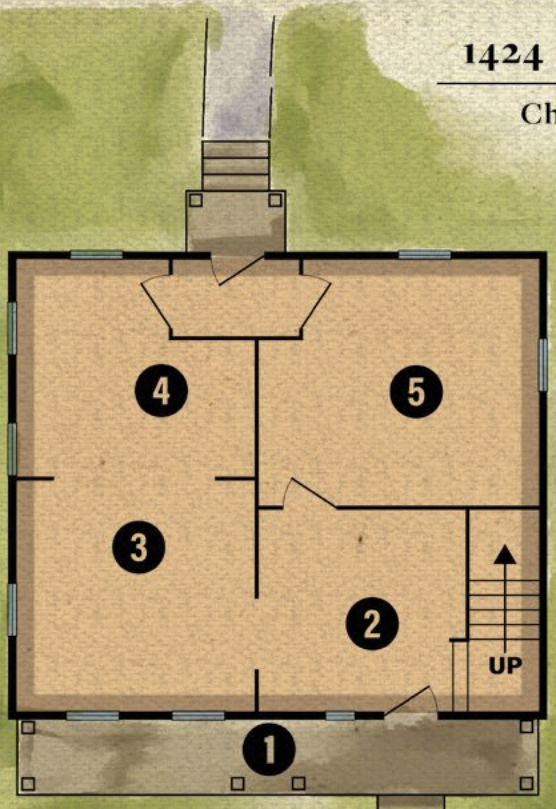
Visiting 1424 Brown Avenue
Opposite: 1424 Brown Avenue map

1424 Brown Avenue

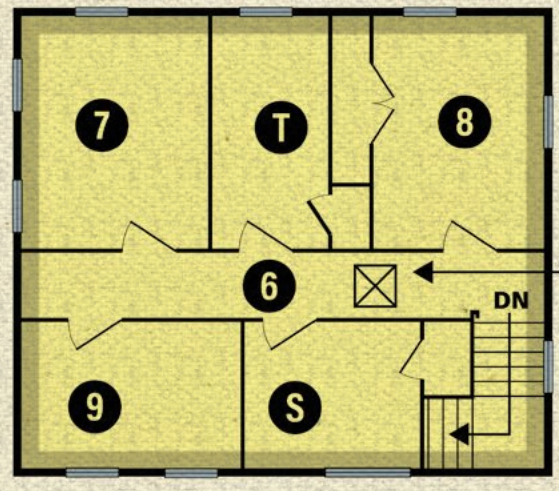
Chicago, IL 60654

1. Front Porch
2. Foyer
3. Living Room
4. Kitchen
5. Dining Room
6. Hallway
7. Office
8. Master Bedroom
9. Second Bedroom

S - Storage
T - Toilet

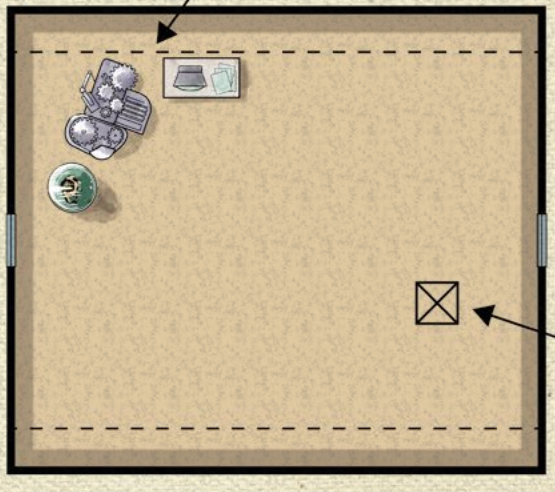


GROUND FLOOR



UPPER FLOOR

Trapdoor in Ceiling



ATTIC

Trapdoor in Floor

NORTH ELEVATION

0 feet 30

0 meters 10

Global Realty
773-555-5456

- If the investigators look under or remove the blanket, they see a tall machine attached to a computer by cables and pipes. Next to these is a 6-foot (1.8 m) tall glass tube with a naked woman trapped inside. She has long hair and looks to be in her 20s to 30s.
- If an investigator comes close, the woman's eyes flick open, she screams, and bangs on the glass. Due to the thickness of the glass, the sounds are muffled and barely audible.

Keeper note: the woman is Remember Fletcher (see **Dramatis Personae**, page 286). Though she looks human, she is now something else: a being that has existed in other times and places simultaneously, as she has continued to pursue her own dark purposes. That was until she came into conflict with the CPS and was imprisoned within one of their devices. She says anything to get the investigators to release her from her glass prison.

- The computer requires a username and password, or a Hard **Computer Use** roll to access. If successful, the user can quickly figure out how to disable the containment machine trapping the woman.
- The investigators could break the thick glass with sufficient force (a Hard **STR** roll; grant a bonus if a heavy tool of some kind is used).

If Fletcher is released, she is grateful and thanks the investigators as she partially covers herself in the blanket. The next moment, she sniffs the investigators while making strange symbols with her fingers. Her eyes dart about the room, occasionally focusing on each investigator. A successful **Psychology** roll reveals little, she is hard to pin down, her actions and movement are at points cat-like, human, and just plain weird, and the best that can be discerned is that she appears to be very troubled. She listens, but appears unable to stand still, moving around with a twisting walk. All of a sudden, she begins speaking.

- Fletcher says that the Church of Perfect Science worships an ancient god-like being, called Cthulhu. She goes onto say that this *"cult"* is trying to steal everything that she's worked to create and, consequently, she wants to destroy the CPS.
- If pressed for more information about what is going on, Fletcher tells the investigators that they couldn't possibly begin to understand everything—although the Keeper is at liberty to use Fletcher to fill in any important clues they may have missed, such as having designed the house herself as a means to conduct experiments in *"traveling beyond,"* although she won't be drawn into what that means.
- If she is attacked, or when Fletcher decides to end the conversation, she take a step to the left and disappears in the blink of an eye—phasing into non-Euclidian space where the investigators can't follow.

Keeper note: Remember Fletcher plays no part in the events of the rest of the scenario; her history informs the current events, but there is no set role for her to play from this point forward. At the Keeper's discretion, she could appear again (anywhere) to help, hinder, or outright trouble the investigators. She is a free agent with her own, somewhat unknowable agenda, and she could easily not appear at all as the scenario moves to its climax. Instead, the Keeper may choose to use Fletcher again in later scenarios: either as a potential ally or as a force the investigators must stop.

The Rest of the Attic

If the investigators take time to look around the rest of the attic, they can find strange symbols carved into the support beams. There appear to be old carvings (going back to the 1930's) as well as newer, more recent ones.

- A successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll reveals the carvings are associated with movement and travel, while a Hard success means they identify the newer carvings as a version of the Gate spell, and can determine, with 1D10+5 minutes of study, how to activate it. An Extreme success enables the investigators to understand that there are two different versions of the Gate spell inscribed on the beams, although the older spell's inscriptions have been disfigured by the newer ones.
- If the new Gate is activated, those passing through find themselves arriving in a room on the main or upper level of the Perfect Science Mansion (**Visiting the Mansion I** & **II**, page 311 and 316) at a cost of 1 magic point and 1 Sanity point—the exact room in which the investigators arrive should be determined by the Keeper; if later in the scenario, the Gate could transport them nearer to the mansion's secret laboratory.
- The old Gate cannot be activated, due to the new carvings disfiguring the older symbols.

Keeper note: the new Gate was created by the Watsons and CPS, while Fletcher's older Gate (the older carvings) once allowed travel to a number of strange places and times. The old Gate no longer functions, due to the deliberate disfigurement of the old carvings; the Watsons documented the old carvings before they began carving over them to break the old Gate.

Leads

- **Visiting the Perfect Science Center I** (before receiving the idol, page 308) or **Visiting the Perfect Science Center II** (after receiving the idol, page 314): Barbara Watson drives to the Perfect Science Center each day and could easily be followed (obvious).
- **Visiting the Mansion I** (before receiving the idol, page 311) or **Visiting the Mansion** II (after receiving the idol, page 316) which they may enter through the Gate (obscure).

Opposite: The woman in the attic

VISITING THE PERFECT SCIENCE CENTER I

BEFORE RECEIVING THE IDOL

46 West Washington Street, downtown Chicago.

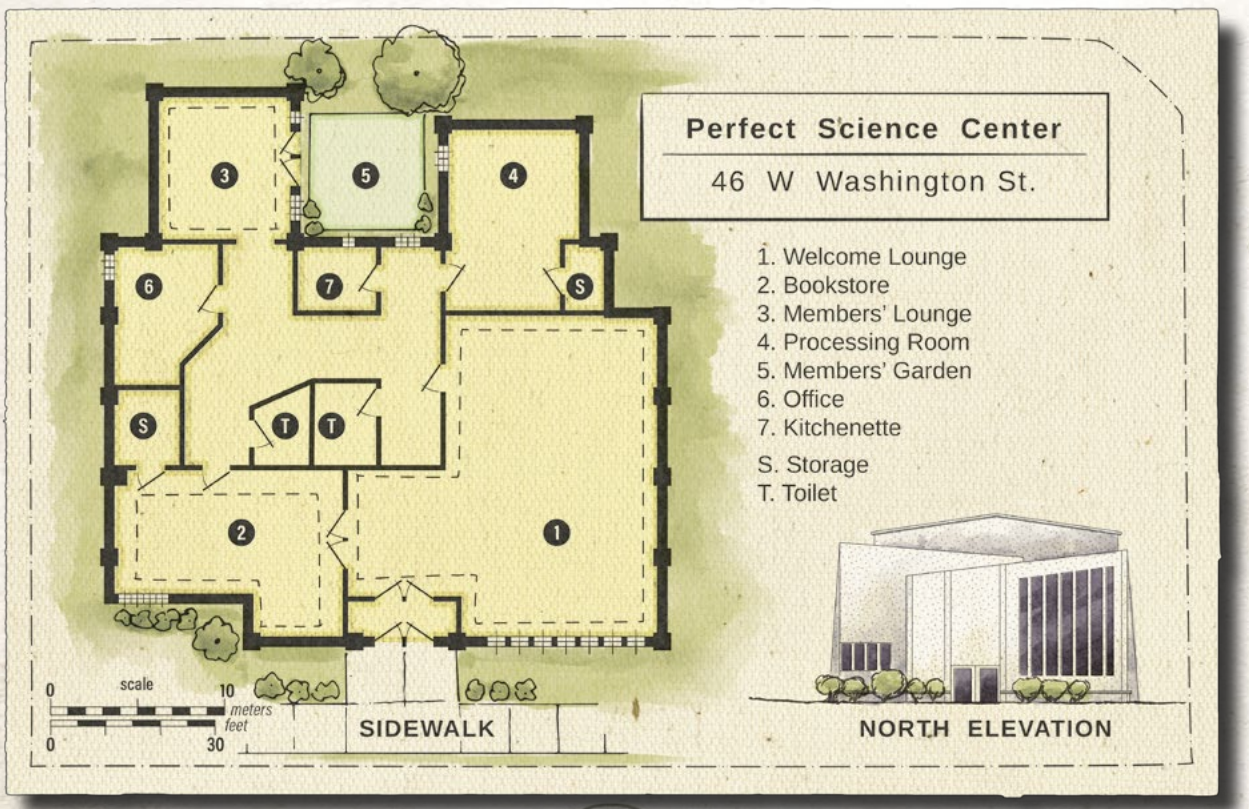
Keeper note: if the investigators already have the Cthulhu idol (**Event 1: The Package Arrives**, page 313), go to **Visiting the Perfect Science Center II** (after receiving the idol; page 314).

The Perfect Science Center is located in downtown Chicago and possesses a modern, almost futuristic, design. It is open to the public from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm. The entryway, which opens into the welcome lounge (1) has greeters, dressed very conservatively, who are ready to engage with visitors. To the left is a bookstore (2), which, like the welcome lounge, is open to the public. Access to the rest of the center requires visitors to be escorted by a Church member. Doug Lewis (Processed 2L) is the site's manager (use **CPS Personnel** profile, page 328). He usually spends most of his time in the office (6), although when the investigators arrive, he could be conducting a Process session (4), or be visiting the CPS mansion in Lakeview (**Visiting the Mansion I** & **II**, page 311 and 316), where he drives at least three times a week. One CPS security guard is on site at all times, although they tend to be dressed in regular clothes to blend in—at the Keeper's discretion, Jake Day (see **Dramatis Personae**, page 286, and **Carl Day's Apartment**, page 294) could be the security guard on duty.

On arrival, the investigators are approached by an attractive young woman in her 20s, named Yolanda Bethany (use **CPS Personnel** profile, page 328). She enthusiastically asks how she can help and is happy to share her knowledge about the (public version) of the Church. Give or use the information provided in **Handout: Dream 3**. The Keeper may also wish to refer back to the information about the CPS provided in **Chapter 2: Church of Perfect Science** (page 100).

- If the investigators start asking about aliens and other off-topic things, Yolanda laughs off and dismisses such assertions as figurative or allegorical.
- Yolanda offers the investigators an assessment—the first step in the Process. She politely asks for contact information and books individual appointments on a computer diary.

Investigators who wish to sneak into the other parts of the Perfect Science Center may do so with a successful **Stealth** roll, perhaps visiting the restroom and getting "lost" on their return. There's not much to be found: a Processing



Perfect Science Center map

Handout: Dream 3

How Do I Start?

The Church of Perfect Science has Welcome Centers in many countries and cities. Our guides will be delighted to help you find the success you deserve.

Your nearest Welcome Center is in this city,

Chicago

and you can find it at,

West Washington Street

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What Is Perfect Science?

What is Perfect Science?

For generations, humanity has been seeking the answers to understand our place in the world and the universe. Perfect science is applying certain tried and trusted techniques to find those answers. In doing so, you will find your true purpose, reach personal success, and find the pathway to enlightenment.

The Perfect Science process was invented and developed by our founder, Roger Blake, PhD. His goal was to help mankind and his work is the basis for helping you to find your truth and enjoy the bounty of success.

Perfect Science brings together ancient wisdom that has been forgotten and lost, and combines it with modern-day science to enable you to find personal liberation, self-growth, financial success, and the answers to the mysteries of life.

How Can I Get Better?

Perfect Science uses a safe, thoroughly researched, highly developed, yet simple process to help our members cast off life's challenges and be all they can be. Our fully trained life-guides will assist you to clear your mind of negativity and change unwanted behaviors that are stopping you from reaching your total potential and finding personal and financial reward.

As you progress through the process, your negativity levels will automatically diminish, opening your mind to endless positivity and the means to throw off the mental weights that keep you from success.

Perfect Science does not use drugs or any dubious mental techniques, like so many other self-proclaimed self-help therapies. We use only tried and trusted science – safe and proven to help.

room (4), with table, chairs, and a couch; a kitchenette (7), with a fridge, microwave, and coffee-making facilities; and a members' lounge (3). The office (6) has two desks with computers that can access the CPS intranet (see **Accessing the CPS Intranet**, nearby).

- A successful **Spot Hidden** roll in the office finds a memo addressed to Doug Lewis, telling him to support Morgan Landry in any requests she makes concerning Project: New Haven, which according to this memo, is based out of the Perfect Science Mansion in the Lakeview area of Chicago.

Leads

- **Researching the Church of Perfect Science** (page 299): the investigators may wish to carry out more research after their visit (obvious).
- **Visiting the Mansion I** (before receiving the idol, page 311) or **Visiting the Mansion II** (after receiving the idol, page 314): this clue is either found in Doug Lewis' office (obscure) or the investigators could follow Lewis when he drives from the Center to the mansion (obvious).

ACCESSING THE CPS INTRANET

The CPS intranet is only accessible via computer terminals on Church premises. Remote access is limited to those high-up in the organization. All terminals require a user log-in and password, although a successful Hard **Computer Use** roll can gain access to the general intranet. Access to restricted areas, like security, special projects, and so on, requires high-level authorization.

In terms of information accessible by the investigators, the following files can be found with a **Library Use** roll (or by entering the specific search term) and enough time spent at a terminal, although such time may be difficult to find, given the Church's obsession with security.

- **Michael and Barbara Watson:** personal details, their address as 1424 Brown Avenue, Evanston, and the fact that the Church owns the property (refer to **Researching the Watsons**, page 302).
- **Global Realty:** address and information confirming the business has and is currently involved in purchasing a number of properties on Brown Avenue, Evanston (refer to **Researching Global Realty**, page 299).
- **Perfect Science Mansion, Chicago:** address and the fact the site was purchased (via Global Realty) for the Church ten years ago, with numerous records showing heavy refurbishment has taken place. Of note, are purchase orders for a range of scientific items and equipment that would not look out of place in a laboratory, but which seem out of character for a mansion house.
- **Greig Montel:** listed as "Head of Security, Project: New Haven." Further details are barred to those without high-level authorization.
- **Jake Day:** age 24, 3L, with five years membership, attached to the Chicago security team reporting to Greig Montel, Chicago home address, and a special note attached to the file that flags up that he is the son of Carl Day, an outsider under observation.
- **Carl Day:** age 46, private investigator, home and office addresses, divorced twice, and suffers from depression and alcoholism. A red flag note on the file states that Carl Day is an outsider under observation.
- **Morgan Landry:** address listed as the Perfect Science Mansion, Chicago, and that she is noted as Processed 4L and manager of "Project: New Haven." Further details are barred to those without high-level authorization.
- **Project: New Haven:** listed as being under the direction of Morgan Landry. Further details are barred to those without high-level authorization, although a combined **Library Use** and **Computer Use**, both at Hard difficulty, finds a memo (**Handout: Dream 4**, see page 311).
- **Special** (see note below): a file labeled "Chicago Mansion." When opened, the file is revealed to be the CPS mansion's floorplan (**Handout: Dream 5**, see page 312).

Keeper note: while going through the information on the intranet, the investigator concerned finds **Handout: Dream 5**; this is provided "for free" due to **Cthulhu's Will** (page 284)—if this is not being used, the floorplan can be found with a **Library Use** or **Computer Use** roll.

Keeper note: as desired, the intranet could supply the investigators with specific information missed previously.

VISITING THE MANSION I

BEFORE RECEIVING THE IDOL

2970 North Lake Shore Drive, Lakeview.

Keeper note: if the investigators already have the Cthulhu idol (**Event 1: The Package Arrives**, page 313), go to **Visiting the Mansion II** (after receiving the idol, page 316).

Note: room numbers refer to map on page 323.

The mansion is surrounded by grounds with high stone walls with numerous security cameras dotted about. There are two entrances to the mansion's grounds: the main front gate and the rear gate, which is used for deliveries; both have security cameras and intercoms linked to the site's security center (12). External parking at the front is used by the majority of people, although designated parking spaces for senior members are available in an enclosed garage (14) at the front of the property.

- If the entrance intercoms are buzzed, a security guard responds, asking for the name and the nature of the caller's business. The guard politely informs visitors without an appointment to go away. If asked, the guard can supply a phone number, as well as the address, to the Perfect Science Center in downtown Chicago.

Keeper note: at this point in the story, it would be virtually impossible for the investigators to gain admission to the mansion without being detected. If an attempt is made, a **Climb** roll, followed by a Hard **Stealth** roll, is needed to overcome the perimeter wall, and a further Hard **Stealth** roll is required to make their way through the grounds and to the mansion undetected. Then, a way inside must be found, using subterfuge, force, or skill, and another Hard **Stealth** roll. If caught, the investigators are gently questioned while the police are called, who arrive in 1D10+5 minutes to escort the trespassers downtown. The police hold the investigators for a few hours and then book them for criminal trespass, a Class B misdemeanor. The investigators face between 30 days to 6 months jail time, up to two years' probation, and a maximum fine of $1,500. In most cases, a plea bargain might see a fine of $200 to $500 imposed without jail time. The Keeper is advised to check if any of the investigators have some degree of **Law** skill, and "remind" them of the possible consequences for criminal trespass *before* they make such an attempt.

Leads

- **Researching the Church of Perfect Science** (page 299): the investigators may wish to carry out more research after their visit (obvious).
- **Visiting the Perfect Science Center I** (before receiving the idol, page 308), or **Visiting the Perfect Science Center II** (after receiving the idol, page 314): a security guard provides details (obvious).
- **Event 1: The Package Arrives** (following): this event should happen soon after a visit to the mansion (Keeper timed).

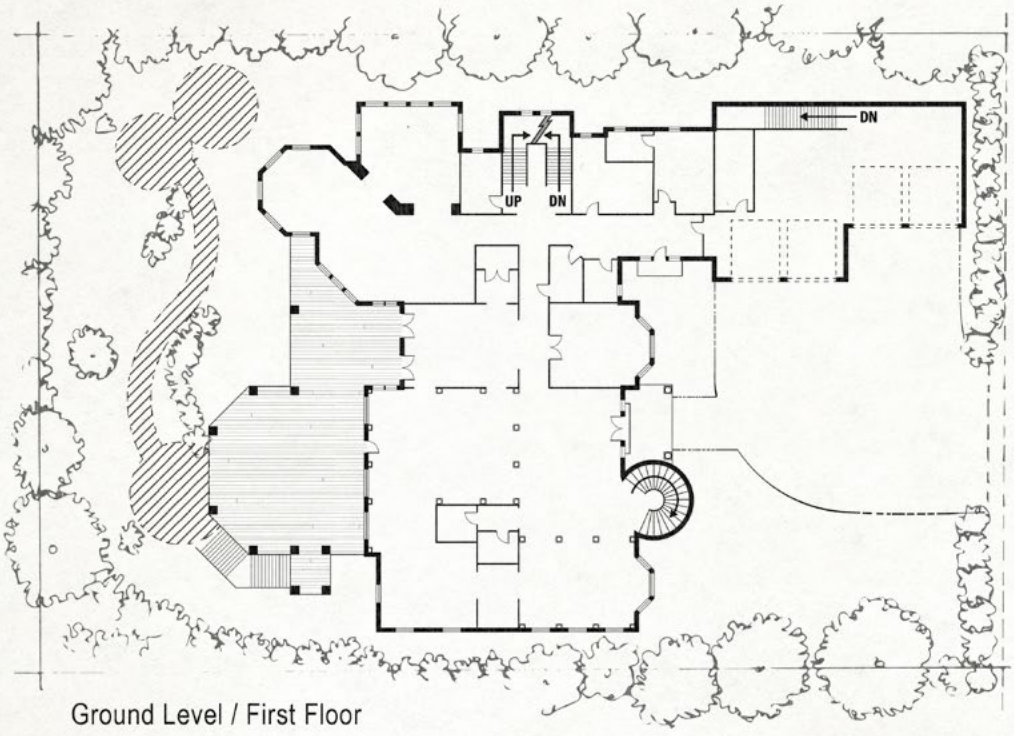
Handout: Dream 4

From: M Landry
Status: P3L and above.
Re: Project: New Haven

Initial findings (M & B Watson) confirm non-Euclidian geometry in property's attic, believed placed by Remember Fletcher. Details copied for further analysis. Initial viewing confirms possible portal to Lok-Gol'la. Further experimentation to be conducted off site in purpose-built laboratory.

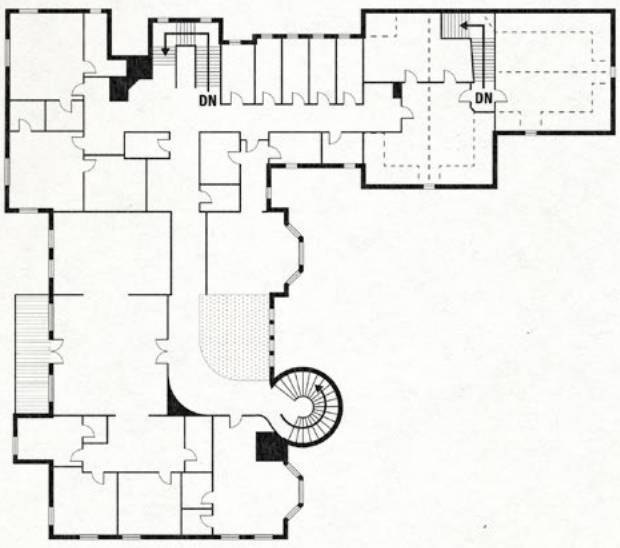
Handout: Dream 5

Re: Perfect Science Mansion Floor Plan

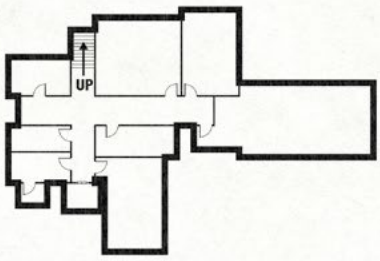


2970 N Lake Shore Drive

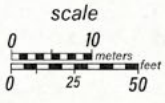
Ground Level / First Floor



Upper Level / Second Floor



Basement Level



EVENT 1: THE PACKAGE ARRIVES

Soon after the first phone call from Argentina (**Start: A Call from Argentina**, page 292), Carl Day becomes obsessed with getting the (Cthulhu) idol he found to safety. He begs Dr. Sanchez to mail the idol to the investigator with whom he had the closest relationship.

As luck would have it, Dr. Sanchez's partner, a consultant named Teresa Campillo, is attending an oncology conference in Chicago and agrees to make the delivery. The investigator receives a phone call from Campillo explaining that she is staying at the Hilton hotel in downtown Chicago and that she has a package for them from Carl Day. She can either arrange a meeting or leave the parcel with the hotel's reception. If questioned about Carl, as far as Campillo knows, Dr. Sanchez is doing a good job of caring for their friend.

- In the package is the Cthulhu idol, with a note from Carl Day and also one from Dr. Sanchez (**Handout: Dream 6a & 6b**).

A SECOND CALL FROM ARGENTINA

Once they have opened the package and read the handout, Dr. Sanchez makes a final phone call to the investigators (calling whoever spoke to her previously). In a panicked voice, she says that Carl Day died of heart failure about an hour ago. As this news sinks in, she asks if they received the package? Her voice growing more distraught, she then says there are strangers asking questions about Carl and the idol. At this point, the investigator can hear someone knocking at her door. Dr. Sanchez stops speaking, and then mumbles something about a delivery, that she must answer the door, and that she'll be right back, leaving the investigator listening on the line.

Confusing sounds of distress can be heard, then silence. Suddenly, a different voice comes on the line; a sinister, male voice. He asks if—insert the name(s) of investigators known to Carl day—are there, laughs, and then hangs up. It appears the man knows at least one or more of the investigators!

- If the investigators try to call Dr. Sanchez back, they get no response. If they persist, someone picks up her phone a

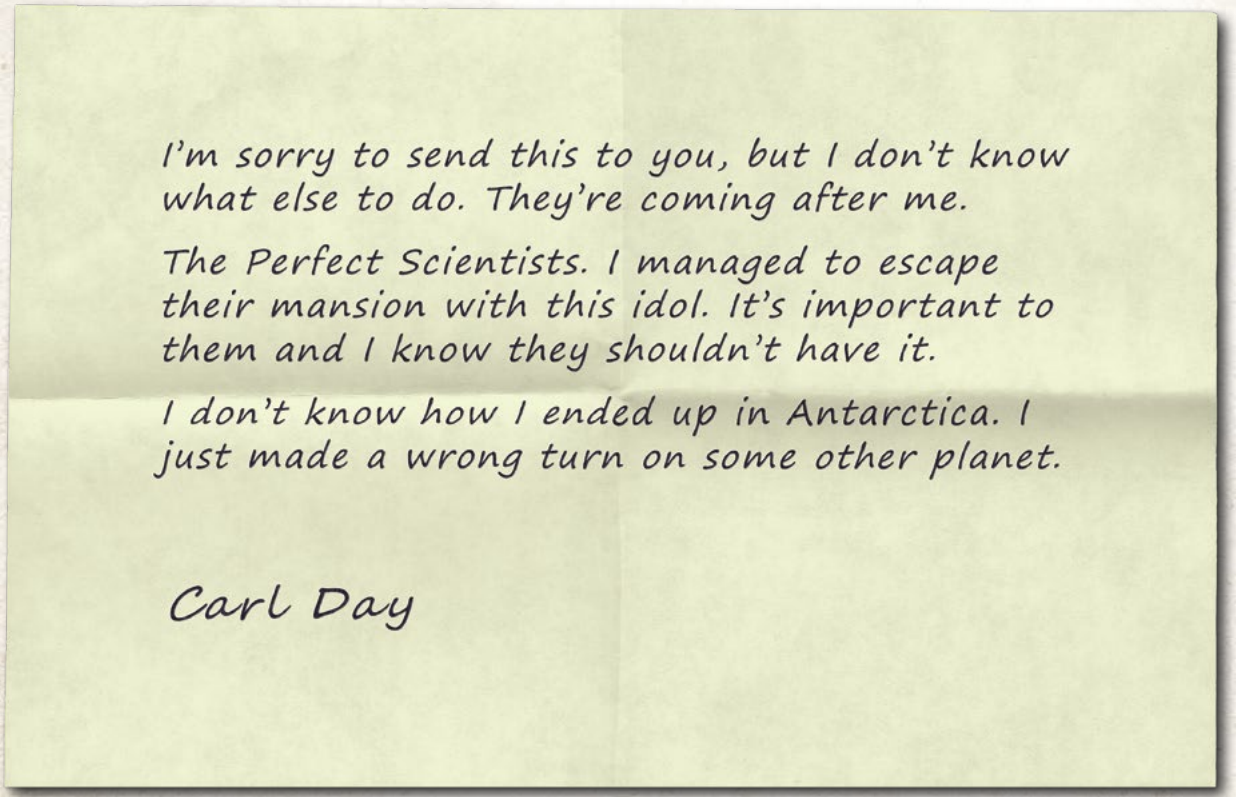
The package arrives

few hours later, saying that Dr. Sanchez is in the hospital, in a coma, following a road traffic accident. The police are looking into the cause of the accident, but there is a rumor that Dr. Sanchez was drunk.

Keeper note: what the investigators don't know is that the Perfect Scientists are attempting to track down the idol. The CPS has operatives all over the world, so were able to find Carl's location. Local cultists went to the hospital and discovered that Carl had passed the idol on to Dr. Sanchez. They then administered a lethal injection, causing Carl's heart to fail, before heading to Dr. Sanchez's apartment and abducting her while she was on the phone to the investigators. Dr. Sanchez refused to give up the name of the person she'd passed the statue onto (Teresa, her lover). Unable to get any more information, the cultists plied her with alcohol and pushed her in front of a bus.

The cultist could see the investigator's name on Dr. Sanchez's phone, but, at that point, knows little more than their name and that they are in Chicago. The cultists in Argentina pass this information up the chain to the CPS in Chicago, who then send out a team to the investigator's home address to establish if the idol is there and, if so, seize it (see **Event 2: Cultist Attack**, page 316).

Handout: Dream 6a



Leads

- **Visiting the Perfect Science Center II** (after receiving the idol, below): the investigators may wish to continue their CPS research or keep an appointment for a Processing session.

VISITING THE PERFECT SCIENCE CENTER II

AFTER RECEIVING THE IDOL

46 West Washington Street, downtown Chicago.

Keeper note: if this is the first time the investigators go to the Perfect Science Center, the interaction goes much the same as it would have in **Visiting the Perfect Science Center I** (before receiving the idol, page 308), and the investigators should be able to pick up **Handout: Dream 3**. However, once the investigators have received the idol, the CPS are on the lookout for the investigator who they think now has it (**Event 1: The Package Arrives**, page 313).

- On entering the Center, if one of the investigators is identified as the person the CPS is looking for, the staff at the Perfect Science Center alert the Project: New Haven security team at the mansion in Lakeview. Doug Lewis advises Yolanda Bethany (use **CPS Personnel** profile for both, page 328) to keep the investigator there as long as possible while he makes the call. A few minutes later, Lewis comes out from his office and asks if—insert the investigator's name—is here, and that they have a phone call. Lewis then hands the investigator concerned a cordless telephone.
- On the other end of the line is Morgan Landry (see **Dramatis Personae**, page 287). She lets the investigator know that she is aware that they have the idol sent by Carl Day and that it is stolen property, which she would like returned. She offers $50,000, with no questions asked, and gives assurances regarding the safety of their friends and family (a veiled threat). Landry then explains that the idol's theft was reported to the police (a lie), and if the investigator agrees to hand it over, no charges will be pressed (another veiled threat).
- If asked what the idol is, Landry says it is of religious and historical significance, but nothing else.

Keeper note: the reason Landry is talking to the investigator now, and not earlier, is that, as far as she knew, the investigators did not know that the CPS was involved. Now they are at the Center, she suspects they have information about the CPS's involvement. The offer is, of course, a trap. Landry's plan is to get the investigator(s) to hand over the idol, preferably at a secluded location, where she and her strike team can kill the investigators.

- Landry suggests that the investigator comes to the Mansion in Lakeview for the exchange.
- If the investigators insist on a public location, Landry pauses, then agrees.

Keeper note: if a public place is agreed upon, Landry arrives alone with a check for $50,000 to make the exchange. She has her security operatives watching, who then follow and attempt to assassinate the investigators (**Event 2: Cultist Attack**, page 316).

Leads

- **A Warning** (following): occurs if the investigators agree to meet Landry (Keeper timed).
- **Visiting the Mansion II** (after receiving the idol, page 316): if the exchange is made there (obvious).

Handout: Dream 6b

Mr. Day, in moments of lucidity, begged me to send you this idol and his note. I'm not sure if I made the right choice, but I felt I must comply with his wishes. I lied to him and told him that I had done so, but then I felt guilty about lying. So I am finally sending the idol and these notes with my trusted colleague, Ms. Campillo. I don't know if Mr. Day's note makes any sense to you, I'm certainly not sure what to make of it.

—Dr. Sonia Sanchez,

Rio Grande Regional Hospital

- **Event 2: Cultist Attack** (nearby): with the exchange made in public or if no exchange is agreed, Landry seeks to end the threat posed by the investigators (Keeper timed).
- **Event 3: Unexpected Help** (page 318): Cthulhu's will works to use the investigators to destroy Project: New Haven (Keeper timed).

A WARNING

Remember, **Cthulhu's Will** (page 284) is engineering the situation and, in this case, it works to warn the investigators of a coming attack. It is left up to the Keeper to devise a way to send someone to stop the investigators from going to meet Morgan Landry or otherwise interrupt the meeting. Cthulhu's will may affect the dreams of people, so just about anyone (including an investigator) could receive a dream that warns against the meeting. For example, it could be as simple as a phone call from a random person who says:

"I had a dream, over and over, that I called this number. And then I said, 'It's a trap. Don't go to the meeting with Landry. She wants to kill you and take the idol.' *Does this make sense to you? Why would I have this dream? Who are you?"*

After that, this nameless NPC's part is done, leaving the investigators pondering what just happened.

VISITING THE MANSION II

AFTER RECEIVING THE IDOL

2970 North Lake Shore Drive, Lakeview.

This section is for when investigators have received the Cthulhu idol and then decide to go to the mansion, perhaps to make a deal with Morgan Landry. Refer to **Visiting the Mansion I** (before receiving the idol, page 311) as necessary.

On approaching the entrance gate, the investigators are asked to identify who they are. Presuming one of them is the investigator now known to the CPS, they are invited inside. If a different, (presumably) unknown investigator responds, they are turned away, unless they reveal they are carrying the idol. Any companions with them are also invited inside.

Arriving at the mansion's front entrance (1), an attractive young man, dressed in white, loose-fitting clothing, leads the investigators into the lounge (3). The lounge is decorated in a modern, almost futuristic style. The man, who introduces himself as Jon, asks the investigators if they would like anything to eat or drink. While they wait, ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll: with success, an investigator notices something green and glowing in the billiard room (5), seen through the open plan architecture of the building. A closer look reveals it to be the Jade Dancer (see **Loki's Gift: The Jade Dancer**, page 206), its color accentuated by sunlight falling on to it through a window. After 15 minutes pass, Landry walks in with a warm smile on her face.

- Landry listens to whatever the investigators have to say. She does not divulge anything about Carl Day, but does say that a precious statuette was stolen. She also states the CPS is offering a reward of $50,000 for its safe return, no questions asked.
- Assuming the investigators brought the idol with them, the exchange can take place. Landry is thrilled and offers to write them a check or, if they wait, to get them the money in cash.
- Landry suspects that the investigators are getting help from someone, perhaps even someone within Project: New Haven. Thus, she tries to get as much information from them as possible, but, when she feels she has exhausted the questioning, she excuses herself and has the investigators escorted off the premises.
- Landry is polite and cordial throughout. If the investigators become aggressive or violent, half a dozen security guards make their presence known by stepping into the lounge.
- With the meeting concluded, the investigators are shown out.
- From this point on, Greig Montel and his security team attempt to follow each investigators home, where they try to kill them and erase any sign of their investigation into the CPS.

Leads

- **Event 2: Cultist Attack** (following): with the exchange made, Landry seeks to end the threat posed by the investigators (Keeper timed).
- **Event 3: Unexpected Help** (page 318): Cthulhu's will works to use the investigators to destroy Project: New Haven (Keeper timed).

EVENT 2: CULTIST ATTACK

Keeper note: this event may play out slightly differently, depending on the investigators' actions after they obtain the Cthulhu idol. Possibly, the investigators made a deal with Morgan Landry (either at the mansion or some public place), or they refused (**Visiting the Perfect Science Center**

II, after receiving the idol, page 314), or have fallen under the surveillance of a CPC security team (**A Second Call from Argentina**, page 313). Whatever the situation, a CPS security team, under Grieg Montel's direction, are surveilling the investigator known to them—the surveillance is subsequently expanded to include the rest of the investigators (well, all those apparently associating with them). The team intends to assassinate all of the investigators.

- The security operatives, armed with knives and silenced pistols (**CPS Security**, page 328), are tasked to recover the idol and/or kill whoever possesses it and/or has picked up Carl Day's investigation into the CPS.

Montel's team consists of eight personnel (including Montel). They divide into teams of two or three, depending on the number of investigators who went to the mansion. If necessary, the team may have to send individual members to deal with some of the investigators. The operatives locate each investigator's home, find some way to gain entry (the crews are equipped with lockpicks and electronic devices that can disable security systems), and attempt to murder and take or destroy any evidence linked to the CPS. But an unseen hand will influence the events and act to help the investigators.

Keeper note: if *Pulp Cthulhu*, increase Montel's team to 12 agents in total.

- Play through a scene where three cultists break into one of the investigator's homes and sneak into the bedroom where the investigator is sleeping. Ask for a **Listen** roll: if successful, allow the investigator to take an action before the cultists enter; otherwise, they wake up to see the men hovering over them. Make sure to tell the investigator what the time is when they wake up (say 2:45 am). The cultists are wearing black ski masks and one has a knife drawn. One searches the home, while two others grab hold of the investigator and ask questions. No matter what the investigator tells them, the lead cultist slits their throat.
- At that moment, tell the player concerned that their investigator wakes from this nightmare. It was all a dream! Looking at their bedside clock, they it is 2:30 am—15 minutes before the time they noted in their dream. Was it a premonition? What do they want to do?
- Hopefully, this panics the investigator, and they look outside to see a black van parked across the street. Inside, are three figures, dressed in black. The investigator intuitively knows that these are the ones from their dream.
- If the investigator calls the police and reports the suspicious-looking men in the van, the police dispatcher says they will send an officer by to investigate. Ask for a **Luck** roll: on a success, the police arrive in the nick of time and the CPS agents drive off.
- Otherwise, the investigator has just under 15 minutes to get out or prepare for a fight.

Keeper note: it is suggested that the attacks do not take place at the same time and on the same night, as trying to run this scene simultaneously with multiple investigators in different locations will be difficult. The best option is to run the attack with the investigator who was called by Dr. Sanchez (**A Second Call from Argentina**, page 313), with it taking place before any other attacks. That way, the outcome can inform the other investigators' plans to avoid further attacks and, at the same time, drive them toward the climax (**Attacking the Mansion**, page 320). Alternatively, reconfigure the scene, and have all of the investigators together—perhaps they are meeting at one of their homes to discuss their next steps—the scene plays out, but, with the investigators sitting about planning, with more CPS agents storming inside. Just at the critical moment, have one of the investigators wake up—they were daydreaming or snoozing while the others talked—and reveal the dream they just had. Now, together, the investigators have 15 minutes before the scene plays out for real.

The cultists attack

- If the cultists realize the investigator(s) are somehow forewarned and prepared, they will retreat, rather than risk injury. A show of force also sends the cultists running. The cultists do not want to attract any attention to themselves, but, if they think they have the jump on the investigators, they proceed.
- The license plate(s) of the cultists can be tracked with a **Computer Use** roll, revealing that the vehicle belongs to a Chicago rental company, called Sweet Ride Rentals. Following this up, the booking(s) were made by a G. Montel.

Leads

- **Event 3: Unexpected Help** (page 318): the attack may not yield any direct leads, but the plot can now proceed (Keeper timed).

EVENT 3: UNEXPECTED HELP

Cthulhu's will is working to "help" the investigators stop Project: New Haven, and it now acts to put three elements into motion. These elements can happen at any time, even earlier in the scenario—try to space them out rather than have them all occur consecutively.

Keeper note: if you are not using Cthulhu's will as a plot device, alternative options are included for how the investigators can obtain the information.

A: Codes

One investigator is approached at home, work, or on the street. A smart, young man in his early 20's, named David Beres, walks up to the investigator and says, *"Oh, my God. You're real!"* No matter what the investigator says or does, Beres hands them a sheet of paper with these security numbers written on it (**Handout: Dream 7**). The numbers are:

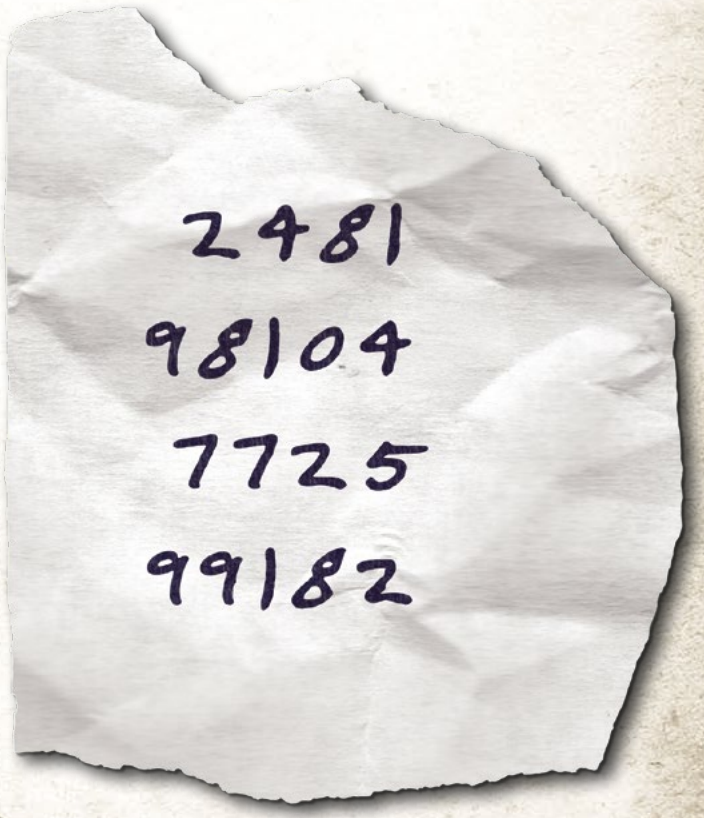
2481
98104
7725
99182

Beres says he's been having a recurring dream where he walks up to the investigator and gives them a sheet of paper with these security numbers written on it. Beres is a graphic artist who works at an online card start-up. If asked about Cthulhu or the CPS, he doesn't know anything and just looks bemused. Just before he goes on his way, Beres pauses, and then asks if the investigator has the blueberry pie. When they say they don't, he looks puzzled and says that it was part of the dream. He walks off, confused.

- Investigators who follow up on David Beres can find nothing untoward—he has no connection to the CPS, the investigators, or any of the NPCs.
- The first three codes that Beres hands over provide security overrides for the CPS mansion, allowing them to access all areas, while also switching off any recording or monitoring devices on the property. The codes can be input on-site, at one of the entrance gate terminals or even pre-rigged by using the CPS intranet available at the Perfect Science Center. The final code (99182) grants access to the elevator in the mansion's basement that goes to the secret laboratory.

Alternative option: accessing the CPS intranet in the Center or the mansion finds the mansion's security override codes (see **Accessing the CPS Intranet**, page 310). Alternatively, a successful Hard **Electronics** or **Electrical Repair** roll disables the security system. Or, the investigator could purchase some form of jamming equipment that does the same job, although such items are likely to be illegal and hard to come by.

Handout: Dream 7



B: The Explosives

One of the investigators has a dream—ideally, one who has touched the Cthulhu idol. The dream presents a scene where the investigator is sitting in a car with at least one of the other investigators, plus an unknown woman. The woman is in her late 50's and acts as if she knows the investigators well. They are driving in Chicago at night, and eventually arrive at an out-of-the-way storage unit.

They park up outside the unit and get out of the car. The woman opens the unit by entering a code into the door lock. Inside, are three crates of plastic explosives and detonators. The dream ends.

Keeper note: the woman in the dream is Ethel Brannigan, an accomplished sculptor who has been receiving a reoccurring dream from Cthulhu. The dream centers on a storage facility in Chicago for which Brannigan now knows the security code. In the dream she takes the investigators to the storage unit and unlocks it.

The Keeper should decide when and how Brannigan approaches the investigators. When she does, she is surprised that the people in her dream really exist, although she admits that, deep down, she kind of always knew they did. She can't explain it, other than by recounting her dream. She is eager to talk and find out who the investigators are, and wants an explanation to the mystery. She goes on to say that she has been too nervous to go to the storage facility on her own, but is eager to do so if the investigators take her there—assuming they appear likable and trustworthy (if not, she'll write the details down for them and then say goodbye).

- If the investigators decide to go to the storage facility, the man working the front desk won't give out any information about who actually owns the particular storage unit.
- Bribery (at least $50) or a successful **Charm, Fast Talk** or **Persuade** roll gets him to reveal that the unit is rented by a firm called Spiel Construction Inc. He also says that no one has been inside the unit for as long as he can remember. Fetching the paperwork, it appears the rental began three years ago and was signed for by a Brad Combs. The unit's rent has been paid without issue ever since.
- Using the code known to Ethel Brannigan, the investigators can access the unit. Inside, they find three crates of plastic explosives and detonators, and instructions for their use. Enough to destroy a large building.
- If Brannigan is with them, she is unsurprised to find the explosives but does ask what they will be used for. What the investigators tell her is up to them. She is both excited and nervous, and wants to know that no one will be hurt. Maybe because of her dreams and intuition, she somehow knows the investigators are on the side of *"good,"* so any plausible explanation should be fine. If the investigators say that they will use the explosives to rid the city of a great evil (or similar), Brannigan nods and accepts the situation.

Keeper note: Brad Combs, a worker at Spiel Construction Inc. was influenced by Cthulhu's will to doctor site records and steal the explosives. Combs did all of this three years ago and, when his task was completed, he committed suicide.

- Investigators who follow up on Brad Combs find that he committed suicide around Christmas three years ago. He was a single man, aged 33, and worked for Spiel Construction Inc.

Keeper note: Brannigan's role is over following this scene, although she could ask to help the investigators and become an ally NPC, helping them to stop Project: New Haven. She could also be used as a replacement investigator—if so, her dreams could have revealed more of what's taken place so far, so she's more or less up to speed with what the other investigators know.

Alternative option: it may not occur to the investigators to use explosives to destroy the CPS mansion and its secret laboratory, so they may instead look to come up with other options, such as setting a fire and so on. If they decide (on their own) that explosives would be useful and then go about obtaining them, it probably requires some form of trickery, theft, or even black-market dealing—these fall outside the scope of the scenario as written, so the Keeper may have to design a scene to encompass this. Investigators with links to construction or the armed forces, through past association, friends, or family, may be best placed to engineer the matter. Alternatively, the investigators could turn to magic, using or seeking out a tome to learn a spell like Bring Haboob*, summoning and binding a monster (like a dark young, a shoggoth, or a hunting horror) to do the destructive work, or entering into some deal with Nyarlathotep.

*See *Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic*, page 51.

C: The Plan

A young boy steps in to provide added incentive. Ethan Washington is an 11-year-old kid who makes his own comic books. At a public location, Ethan walks up to the investigators with a look of awe on his face, which quickly turns to terror. He says nothing, and just hands them a copy of his homemade comic book called *Evil Rises*. He then runs off.

- The cover of Ethan's comic has a big squid-like monster fighting an epic battle with a bunch of people that look a lot like the investigators. Opening it, they discover that not only do they appear to be the characters depicted, but

that they have the same names. The comic (correctly) tells the story of the scenario so far, but goes further. In the later pages, it shows the investigators attacking what looks to be the CPS mansion and finding an elevator, which takes them down to a secret laboratory where they discover an evil plan to mutate humanity and take over the world. The final panels show the investigators working on a plan to destroy the laboratory and mansion with explosives.

- If the investigators manage to catch Ethan, he is terrified, but answers their questions. He says he got the whole story in a dream and wanted to tell it in one of his homebrewed comic books. This was over a month ago. He's stuck on how to end the story and hasn't had any more dreams. The last one he remembers had his school principal turning into a big squid.

Alternative option: creating this information without the device of Cthulhu's will is somewhat harder to achieve. One option is to simply ignore it and let the players determine what they want to do, which could include walking away from the rest of the scenario, although most groups will be, by now, invested in uncovering what is going on. Another option might include having one of the investigators getting some sort of premonition, insane insight, or even have a fortune teller approach them, saying that she's had a vision about them—if **The Angel's Thirst** was played previously, this could be a descendant of Selena Diaz who shares Selena's premonition ability. If these possibilities are too "out there," then the Keeper has the option for someone like Jake Day to come to them and reveal that there's a secret lab underneath the CPS mansion. In this respect, Jake or another CPS member has somehow seen (or heard) too much and decided to leave the organization, and now comes to the investigators for help—perhaps Jake is troubled by the death of his father at the hands of CPS cultists.

The prophetic comic book

ATTACKING THE MANSION

Infiltrating the mansion should not be difficult. The imposition of Cthulhu's will has orchestrated this event, planning the fall of Project: New Haven long before its inception. But, of course, the investigators don't know this. The elements provided in **Event 3: Unexpected Help** are designed to guide and enable the investigators.

The investigators may choose to enter the site via the main entrance, the rear service entrance, or over one of the walls, and make their way into the mansion. It should not be hard to find the basement and then the elevator (24) to the secret laboratory, given what they already know. Try to maintain a sense of drama and a growing tension as the investigators make their way around the site.

If using the device of Cthulhu's will, ask for appropriate skill rolls, like **Stealth**, **Listen**, and **Spot Hidden**, using these to navigate the investigators' route through the building while avoiding anyone who is around. When a roll is failed, describe how an investigator is just about to get spotted or caught, but then something happens, causing the person who would have seen or heard them to suddenly turn and go off in another direction—perhaps they are called away by someone, a phone call, or are hailed by a radio handset. For example, a security guard walks by and looks toward the investigators' hiding place; ask for a **Stealth** roll: with success, the guard moves along; with failure, they start to move toward the investigators, but a cat runs by and distracts the guard.

Use such instances to demonstrate just how lucky the investigators are tonight, as if "someone" was watching out for them—subtle hints like this are likely to fill your players with dread, which is exactly the point. If not using Cthulhu's will, then the skill rolls stand and the investigators may have a less easy time of it, although the use of the optional Luck spending rule (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook,* page 99) should help things along. In any case, provide the investigators with plenty of opportunities to overcome the challenges they face in getting to the laboratory.

The mansion is covered in security cameras, inside and out. If the system has not already been disabled, and as the investigators go about, ensure they notice the red lights on the cameras going out, revealing the cameras are being switched off (obvious). Indeed, whatever route they take, the cameras fall inactive, just before they approach.

If the investigators start to feel invincible and act rashly, have one of them get captured by security. If the investigators get violent, combat should be real and risky, but give them every advantage.

MANSION: PEOPLE ON SITE

During the daytime, various CPS staff go about their business in the genteel surroundings of the mansion. People come and go, holding meetings, have Processing sessions, and so on. The security team remains in the background, monitoring things via the security cameras.

Naturally, the best option for the investigators is to infiltrate the mansion during the night, when virtually all of the residents are in bed and asleep. Only a skeleton crew of six security guards are awake: one in the security center (12), one in the security office (11), two walking the exterior grounds, one walking the ground floor, and one walking the upper floor. At times, the guards take a break, meeting in the kitchen (8), leaving the building's hallways all but empty.

- If still active, Greig Montel is asleep in the bedroom on the basement level (17; room near to the elevator, 24, connecting to the secret laboratory).
- Morgan Landry is asleep in a bedroom suite on the upper level (17; at the far end of the east wing, next to the lounge, 19).
- Tanya Rieger is always in the secret laboratory (26) whenever the investigators arrive there.

If an alarm is tripped, all of the above (except Tanya Rieger) wake and seek out the source of the alarm. In addition, five additional security guards wake up in the security team barracks (23), quickly get dressed, and storm up to the security center (12) to see what's going on.

MANSION: ROOMS

The Keeper is directed to use the information provided on the floorplan of the mansion in terms of its various rooms, as these are straightforward and have little bearing on the plot. Thus, the meeting room (9) is a large room with a big, expensive-looking conference-style table, while the lounge areas (3, 15) are open areas with comfy armchairs and sofas. Nothing is particularly out of the ordinary, although the minimalist fixtures and fittings are plush and expensive throughout. Pictures and photographs, showing Roger Blake, CPS buildings, and publicity-friendly images of CPS folk, litter the walls.

Of special note is the ground floor billiard room (5), wherein the Jade Dancer stands on a shelf, in pride of place—perhaps last seen in the scenario **The Angel's Thirst** (for more information, see **Loki's Gift: The Jade Dancer**, page 206).

Note that the basement level is more utilitarian, with stark, white walls devoid of images. One sign is replicated throughout:

Area Off Limits

Security and Prime 10L Only

If the investigators previously handed over the Cthulhu idol, another room of note is Morgan Landry's master bedroom suite on the upper floor, as the idol is now here, in plain sight, next to her bed (17; next to the lounge, 19).

The elevator (24) to the secret laboratory (26) requires an access code to use (the last code provided in **Handout: Dream 7**). If the investigators don't have this code for whatever reason, they can get it from either Montel or Landry, assuming they can be convinced to give it up. If none of that happens, then have Tanya Rieger (see **The Secret Laboratory**, following) ride up the elevator to meet the investigators, just as they are trying to figure out how to access it.

Keeper note: as written, there are no secrets about the Church of Perfect Science to be found in the mansion (other than those in the secret laboratory). If the Keeper desires to expand the scenario or is using it as part of a on-going campaign, they may wish to plant useful clues and leads where they see fit.

THE SECRET LABORATORY

Arriving via the elevator (24), the investigators are confronted by a long, white-walled corridor (25), lined with seven doors (three on either side, plus one at the far end). The six doors along the corridor cannot be opened, and their handles are quite cold to the touch. The seventh door, at the end of the corridor, is unlocked. Once through this door, the investigators see a weirdly shaped laboratory (26) containing rows of workbenches topped with all manner of electronics, wires, pipes, and electrical equipment. But, what takes the investigators' breath away is the large window that dominates the entire space, through which can be seen an alien landscape. Brownish-orange mountains seem to

support a purple-green sky, radiating down upon a field of cyclopean ruins, that look to lie about a mile (1.6 km) away from the view. There are no signs of life in the desolate scene. As the investigators take it all in and realize that this is not a projection or transmitted image, but rather a window onto another world, call for a **Sanity** roll (1D3/1D6+1 loss).

Keeper note: the laboratory is not situated on Earth, and the investigators have unwittingly crossed through a Gate to the planet Lok-Gol'la. Ask the players to deduct 1 Sanity and 10 magic points for the special Gate travel; if this is more than a character's available magic points, the surplus should be taken from hit points.

- As the investigators take stock of the laboratory, its non-Euclidian construction and appearance provokes another shock, calling for a **CON** roll: if failed, the investigators are momentarily overcome with dizziness, imposing a penalty die on all actions for the next 2D6 rounds. Beyond the room's strange appearance, its unnatural twisting of time and space can be sensed by the human mind and body.
- To the right-hand side of the room is an airlock (27) that leads out onto the alien world. Beside the airlock are a number of locker-cabinets bearing labels that read "ENVIRONMENTAL SUIT." However, only one locker contains a suit.

Keeper note: the missing environmental suits are currently being used by an expedition sent out to explore Lok-Gol'la. Only Tanya Rieger (see **Dramatis Personae**, page 288) remains in the laboratory, monitoring the expedition.

- Tanya Rieger is sitting quietly in the corner, watching the investigators as they enter, and it may take a moment before they notice her, due to the powerful distraction of Lok-Gol'la through the window. Once noticed, she says, *"You're really here!"* apparently quite surprised and intrigued by the presence of the investigators.
- If questioned, Rieger explains that she's been having vivid dreams for months in which she's seen the investigators as they go about their business in Chicago. She goes on to say that, somehow, she knows *"we"* shouldn't be here, on this planet called Lok-Gol'la.
- She's kept a journal, recording what she remembers each morning, which she now hands to the investigators.
- Rieger has not told her colleagues about the dreams or her journal.

Tanya Rieger's Dream Journal

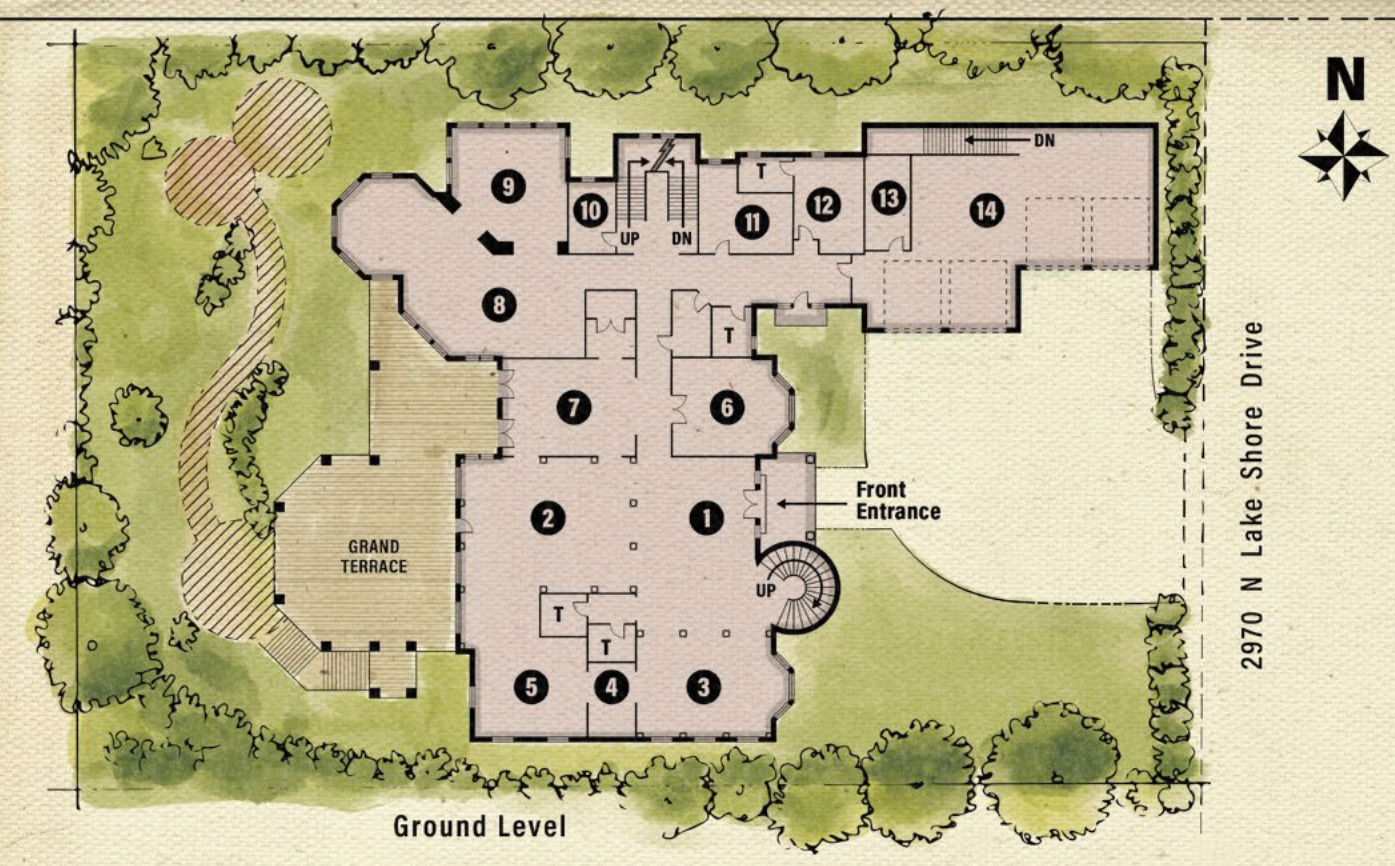
Though dated a few weeks ago, the journal entries contain detailed accounts of the investigators' actions over the last few days. Her documentation of the dreams is littered with questions like, "Why does Kutu not want us on Lok-Gol'la?" and "Is anyone else having these dreams?" She writes about feeling the need to help the people in her dreams in some way, and needing to obey Kutu. The journal is rambling at times, and clearly none of it seems to make any sense to her.

- If needed, a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll concludes that Kutu must be an alternative name for Cthulhu.
- Tanya Rieger listens to whatever the investigators say. If they explain that they have come here to destroy the lab, she nods and says yes, she will help them, because that's what Kutu desires.
- She can set the explosives, prepare a fire, sabotage equipment, or do whatever the investigators feel they need to do to destroy the lab. She can instruct them on where it would be best to set the explosives to collapse the Gate.
- A successful **Psychology** roll confirms that Rieger is insane.
- If the investigators prefer to set the explosives themselves (or set in motion whatever means they choose to destroy the place), there is no real time constraint; so long as they follow the instructions and don't take risks, no skill roll is needed. Otherwise, the Keeper may call for a roll—unless an investigator has the **Demolitions** skill, assume they can set things up with an **INT** roll: if successful, there's no problem; if failed, ask for a **Luck** roll but hold the result back for now, and use it to determine whether the explosion happens as expected or goes off early, before the investigators can leave the lab (if so, they are all killed unless they can individually succeed with a **DEX** roll to get into the elevator and be magically transported back to Earth before they die). One investigator could, in theory, climb into the last remaining environmental suit and escape onto the surface of Lok-Gol'la—what they find there, or, rather, what finds them, is up to the Keeper.
- At this point, the investigators may react negatively to the notion that they are being used by Cthulhu or another unseen force in some way and, thus, may not want to comply with this "prearranged" plan.

The investigators are free to do what they want to do. How do they react? Do they carry out the predestined plan to destroy the laboratory?

- The Keeper may wish to plant clues or information in the lab to seed a continuation of the scenario or for a long-term campaign against the Church of Perfect Science.
- If the investigators set explosives or wreck the lab by other means, they must depart and get back to Earth. Once they emerge from the elevator (24), ask for a group **Luck** roll to determine whether a team of security guards is waiting for

Opposite: Perfect Science Mansion map



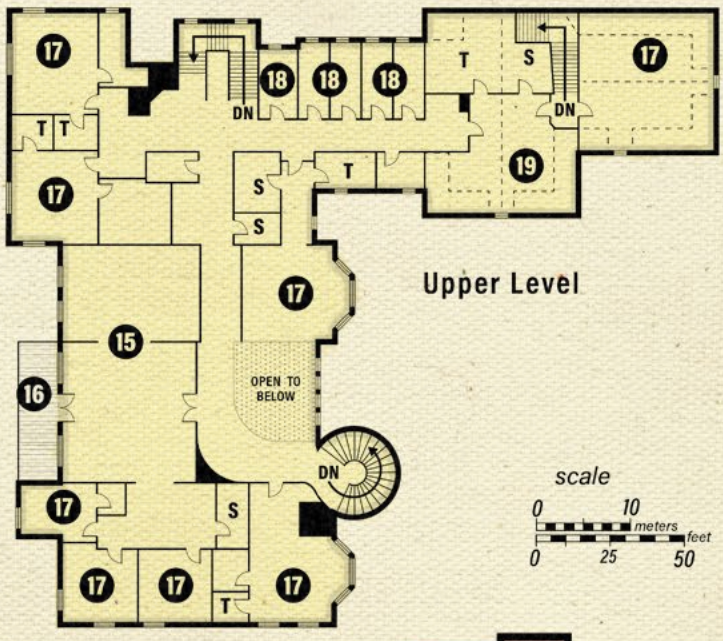
Perfect Science Mansion

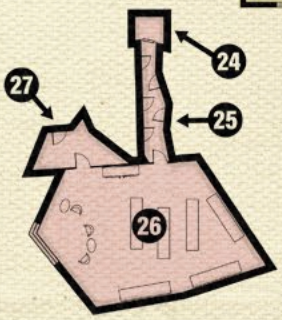
Lakeview, Chicago

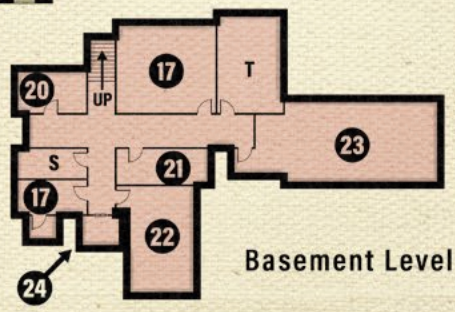
1. Lobby
2. Great Room
3. Lounge
4. Sitting Room
5. Billiard Room
6. Library
7. Dining Room
8. Kitchen
9. Meeting Room
10. Office
11. Security Office
12 Security Center
13. Laundry
14. Garage

T. Toilet
S. Storage Room

15. Upper Lounge
16. Upper Terrace
17. Bedroom
18. Processing Room
19. Lounge
20. Security
21. Processing Room
22. Computer Room
23. Security Team Barracks
24. Elevator
25. Hallway
26. Laboratory
27. Airlock







them. At this point, they have done as Cthulhu wished, so their fates no longer matter. The security cameras are still not functioning, but the guards are up and about, having detected that something is amiss, and are under orders to investigate and capture any intruders. If significant resistance is met, the guards use deadly force to subdue any intrusion.

- The situation may vary if the device of Cthulhu's will is not being used. The investigators' earlier progress through the mansion may have alerted security, who must now be contended with, either by force or stealth, if they wish to escape the mansion.

CONCLUSION

While the progression through the scenario is fairly straightforward, from the mid-point to the conclusion, more distinct variations are possible. Following are a few likely resolutions to inform and guide the Keeper.

OFF THE RAILS

It is not only possible, but likely, that your investigators do something out of sequence or completely unexpected. That is the nature of roleplaying games and part of what makes them so fun!

Roll with whatever is thrown at you and don't worry too much about the details. Keep in mind that Cthulhu wins, in any eventuality. Whatever the investigators do, that is what Cthulhu wanted them to do: if they team up with the Church of Perfect Science; if they are captured or defeated; their role was simply to test the Church's mettle; if they just ignore everything, the cultists eventually track them down to find out why they were poking their noses into CPS business.

Cthulhu is beyond human understanding. It will outthink us all, and it will get what it wants eventually. That is the true horror of both this story and the *Call of Cthulhu* game in general. Humans are like germs on specks of dust floating randomly through a vast universe. Winning is an illusion.

Narratively, make sure the investigators are making their own choices, and that their decisions matter in the moment. They have goals and their actions have consequences. It won't be until the very end of the sceanrio that you may reveal that all they did was to act as Cthulhu willed.

DESTRUCTION & ESCAPE

The investigators destroy the facility and then try to make their way out before the detonation occurs. If the explosives were set correctly or as Tanya Rieger instructed, the explosion is unregistered, assuming they are back on Earth. The structure of the mansion remains intact unless that was also rigged to explode or otherwise be destroyed.

After a detonation, an alarm sounds and the security guards go on high alert. It is possible, since the explosives are set by timers, that the investigators escape the building before the explosion occurs. But, before they get clear of the building or grounds, there is one last surprise for them.

One of the sedecim materializes in front of them (**Sedecim**, **Characters and Monsters**, page 329). After a **Sanity** roll is made (0/1D6), the sedecim attempts to mentally probe the investigators' minds (an opposed **POW** roll). If the investigators react by attacking, the sedecim defends itself and lashes out with a psychic blast for one round, and will dematerialize once it has read at least one investigator's mind. Assuming the probe reveals the attempted destruction of the laboratory, the sedecim departs in an attempt to stop the destruction, if it believes it has enough time to do so.

If the investigators flee, the sedecim does not pursue them beyond the mansion's grounds. And, likewise, the security guards do not pursue them off of the premises.

ABORT THE MISSION

If the investigators turn back before they meet Tanya Rieger, all they need to do is get past a few security guards to escape. There may still be hope for them to try again later, so keep the options open.

If the investigators talk to Rieger and feel they are being played, they may decide not to set the explosives. Rieger pleads with them to do as Kutu wishes and destroy the Gate. If they ignore her, she pulls out a handgun and threatens to use it if they don't follow the *"plan."* If they still refuse, she attacks the investigators, who should be able to find ample cover in the laboratory while they come up with a plan to subdue her. One option sees Rieger directing the investigators to set the explosives at gunpoint.

It is, of course, possible that the investigators did not bring the explosives with them (or they were never part of the scenario if Cthulhu's will was not used). If Rieger discovers the lack of explosives (assume her insanity makes her think the investigators are following "her" dream plan), she is angry as the will of Kutu is being defied. She draws her gun and starts asking questions about the location of the explosives, with the intent of destroying the lab herself—how this plays out is likely determined by whether the investigators are aware of the explosives or not.

If the investigators take too long, they should notice the distant CPS expedition making their way back toward the lab. As they get closer, the investigators notice that one of the people is not wearing an environmental suit and doesn't look human at all (a sedecim). The sedecim senses something is wrong and sprints toward the lab. The investigators have six rounds before the sedecim gets to the airlock. The human scientists are slowed considerably by their bulky environmental suits.

Once inside, the sedecim attacks the investigators with either its pain inducer or a psychic blast. It attempts to capture the investigators alive for questioning, but will kill, if necessary. If the investigators can get to the lift, they can escape. If they have the Cthulhu idol, they could bargain for their lives, as the sedecim and CPS want the idol more than they care about the investigators.

CAPTURE

If any investigators are captured, they are taken to a small, windowless room and zip-tied to a metal chair. In time, a sedecim comes in and telepathically interrogates them (opposed **POW** roll) for information on what they were doing and why. It will ask about the location of the Cthulhu idol if it has not yet been handed over.

The sedecim gets one attempt to deeply probe an investigator's mind—if it fails the opposed POW roll to do this, it departs and hands the captive over to Grieg Montel (or his successor), who interrogates them for information. The experience provokes a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6), which if failed also means the investigator has given up some information (see next paragraph). At this point, the sedecim returns and probes them again, gaining a bonus die to its POW roll against an investigator who failed the Sanity roll.

The CPS is confused if they learn the truth: that Kutu (Cthulhu) has been directing the investigators. While Morgan Landry assumes it is some other force pretending to be Kutu in order to subvert the Church's work, the sedecim accepts the truth and, given that the investigators were chosen by Kutu to do its bidding, decides to let any captured investigators go. However, they will first be sedated and, while unconscious, are surgically implanted with a tiny tracking device. Forty-eight hours after being captured, the investigators wake up in their homes.

If the CPS is later contacted, all knowledge of the investigators and the matter is denied; however, somewhere, in a nondescript office, there's a CPS operative looking at a collection of tracking dots on a screen.

Sedecim troubles

AFTERMATH

When all is said and done, the investigators are either dead or have escaped. If the latter, the CPS now considers them to have been touched by Kutu and, consequently, they present no direct threat. The CPS leaves them to their own devices. If they are being monitored, the CPS (and specifically the sedecim) will take an interest if the investigators appear to be getting involved in Church business again. They will be watched closely while the sedecim try to figure out if they are enacting Kutu's will.

Some days later, when things have calmed down, each investigator receives a phone call. Each call is made by a different person, but the message is exactly the same:

"I'm sorry this has happened to you. You were forced to play a part in a story you did not write. Control was taken from you and we're sure that feels horrible. Be glad. You have served your purpose as intended. Now, you are free. Live your life and make the most of what little time you have left."

Each call is made from an untraceable number and the caller hangs up immediately after giving the message. Though the message is apologetic and somewhat helpful, there is something in the final words that strikes each investigator, not so much as a threat, but more as a warning, that time, for everyone, is running out.

REWARDS

There are no sanity awards for this scenario. The investigators, and, by association, the players, should be left not quite understanding what has really taken place. It may be discomforting, and that is the point. Resist revealing the scenario's secrets beyond what was learned during play.

Of course, this could just be the start. The players and their investigators may want to continue to discover just what the end game of the Church of Perfect Science is and work toward stopping it. In such a campaign, the investigators would need to find allies to help them topple the largest and most powerful Cthulhu cult to have ever existed.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Ethel Brannigan, *age 57, accomplished sculptor*

STR 35	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 50	**INT** 85
APP 60	**POW** 80	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 80	**HP** 11
DB: –1	**Build:** –1	**Move:** 6	**MP:** 16	

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3–1
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Appraise 50%, Art/Craft (Sculpture) 80%, Charm 60%, Computer Use 30%, Credit Rating 48%, Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 50%, Library Use 60%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 65%, Spot Hidden 70%, Throw 45%.

Jake Day, *age 24, CPS security operative*

STR 60	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 65	**DEX** 65	**INT** 50
APP 55	**POW** 55	**EDU** 60	**SAN** 49	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 11	

Combat

Brawl	40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4
Knife (medium)	40% (20/8), damage 1D4+2+1D4
.32 auto	60% (30/12), damage 1D8
Dodge	35% (17/7)

Skills

Climb 50%, Computer Use 35%, Credit Rating 32%, Demolitions 20%, Disguise 25%, Drive Auto 35%, Electrical Repair 25%, Electronics 15%, Fast Talk 30%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 30%, Stealth 50%, Track 25%, Throw 35%.

Morgan Landry, *age 43, manager of Project: New Haven*

STR 45	**CON** 55	**SIZ** 45	**DEX** 55	**INT** 75
APP 75	**POW** 85	**EDU** 75	**SAN** 00	**HP** 10
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 17	

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 40%, Appraise 35%, Art/Craft (Fine Art) 30%, Charm 60%, Computer Use 40%, Credit Rating 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 35%, Fast Talk 45%, Intimidate 45%, Law 35%, Listen 40%, Occult 30%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 40%, Throw 35%.

Greig Montel, *age 39, head of security, Project: New Haven*

STR 80	**CON** 75	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 65	**INT** 65
APP 65	**POW** 70	**EDU** 65	**SAN** 18	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 14	

Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4
Knife	70% (35/14), damage 1D4+2+1D4
.32 auto	60% (30/12), damage 1D8
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Charm 40%, Climb 60%, Computer Use 30%, Credit Rating 47%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Demolitions 40%, Drive Auto 45%, Electrical Repair 30%, Electronics 25%, Fast Talk 45%, Intimidate 80%, Jump 50%, Navigate 60%, Persuade 40%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 50%, Throw 55%, Track 65%.

Greig Montel: Pulp Adjustments

- STR 90
- SIZ 80
- HP 22
- Luck 70
- DB: +1D6
- Build: 2

Pulp Combat

Brawl	80% (40/16), damage 1D3+1D6
Knife	80% (40/16), damage 1D4+2+1D6
.32 auto	65% (32/13), damage 1D8
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Pulp Talents

- **Tough Guy:** may spend 10 Luck to shrug off up to 5 damage in one combat round.
- **Rapid Attack:** may spend 10 Luck to gain one extra attack in a single combat round.

Tanya Rieger, *age 34, CPS scientist*

STR 45	**CON** 50	**SIZ** 40	**DEX** 65	**INT** 80
APP 55	**POW** 60	**EDU** 90	**SAN** 00	**HP** 9
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 9	**MP:** 12	

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
.32 auto	35% (17/7), damage 1D8
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Computer Use 70%, Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 33%, Demolitions 60%, Electrical Repair 40%, Library Use 70%, Medicine 50%, Occult 35%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 30%, Science (Biology) 85%, Science (Chemistry) 65%, Science (Physics) 45%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Throw 40%.

Barbara Watson, *age 31, perfect scientist*

STR 40	**CON** 65	**SIZ** 55	**DEX** 55	**INT** 70
APP 65	**POW** 60	**EDU** 80	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 12	

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Dodge	40% (20/8)

Skills

Accounting 45%, Charm 40%, Computer Use 60%, Credit Rating 38%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Drive Auto 60%, Fast Talk 55%, Listen 55%, Occult 40%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 45%, Throw 40%.

Michael Watson, *age 34, perfect scientist*

STR 60	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 60	**INT** 75
APP 70	**POW** 50	**EDU** 85	**SAN** 00	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Charm 30%, Computer Use 75%, Credit Rating 34%, Cthulhu Mythos 25%, Electrical Repair 55%, Electronics 40%, First Aid 55%, Listen 45%, Occult 30%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 44%, Spot Hidden 35%, Stealth 40%, Throw 50%.

CPS Personnel

Use or adjust this profile for other CPS personnel, like Doug Lewis and Yolanda Bethany.

STR 50	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 60	**DEX** 40	**INT** 45
APP 40	**POW** 50	**EDU** 30	**SAN** 34	**HP** 12
DB: 0	**Build:** 0	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 10	

Combat

Brawl	30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Dodge	20% (10/4)

Skills

Credit Rating 30%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate 45%, Jump 40%, Listen 40%, Persuade 35%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 30%, Throw 30%.

CPS Security

Use this profile for CPS security personnel.

STR 60	**CON** 70	**SIZ** 70	**DEX** 50	**INT** 45
APP 40	**POW** 45	**EDU** 55	**SAN** 41	**HP** 14
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 7	**MP:** 9	

Combat

Brawl	60% (30/12), damage 1D3+1D4
Knife	60% (30/12), damage 1D4+2+1D4
Club	60% (30/12), damage 1D6+1D4
.32 auto	55% (27/11), damage 1D8
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Credit Rating 32%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate 60%, Jump 40%, Listen 45%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Navigate 45%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 60%, Throw 50%, Track 30%.

MONSTERS

Remember Fletcher, *age 243, Mythos witch*

A once-human witch, her mind and body have been warped by centuries of dimensional travel.

STR 75	**CON** 60	**SIZ** 50	**DEX** 55	**INT** 80
APP 75	**POW** 120	**EDU** 90	**SAN** 00	**HP** 11
DB: +1D4	**Build:** 1	**Move:** 8	**MP:** 48*	

**Magically increased.*

Combat

Attacks per Round: 2 (unarmed, claws, weapon, power)
May use standard melee attacks, sprout claws to rip and tear, or use her powers and spells.

Brawl	50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4
Dagger	50% (25/10), damage 1D4+2+1D4
Claws	50% (25/10), damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge	60% (30/12)

Skills

Charm 70%, Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 66%, History 85%, Intimidate 70%, Listen 55%, Natural World 80%, Occult 80%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 40%, Science (Non-Euclidian Geometry) 80%, Sleight of Hand 60%, Stealth 80%, Spot Hidden 60%, Throw 55%.

Languages

English 90%, French 40%, German 60%, Ghoul Tongue 47%, Greek 60%, Latin 80%, R'lyeh Glyphs 48%.

Powers

Claws: her nails magically and instantaneously transform into long, curving claws capable of inflicting 1D4+DB damage (1D8+DB in *Pulp Cthulhu*), at a cost of 1 magic point.

Frightful Scream: produce a terrifying scream that can cause listeners to quake with fear if they fail a POW roll; those affected lose their next action.

Glamour: uses this power to hide her ancient, withered, and twisted flesh, which is horrific to see and smell. This power costs no magic points and is, more or less, permanently "on." If suffering a major wound or at death, her true form manifests.

Walk Between: able to phase between different realities and dimensions, as if passing through a personal Gate, at a cost of 1 magic point per journey. The transportation is instantaneous on her action in a round.

Spells: Contact Deity (Nyarlathotep), Contact Ghoul, Dominate, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Flesh Ward, Gate, Shrivelling, Steal Life*, Summon/Bind Hunting Horror, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Voorish Sign, Warding*, Wrack.

Armor: none; uses Flesh Ward spell to create between 1D6 to 4D6 armor.
Sanity Loss: none, but encountering her true form costs 1/1D6 Sanity points.

Remember Fletcher: Pulp Adjustments

- HP 22
- Luck 80

Pulp Combat

Brawl	70% (35/14), damage 1D3+1D4
Dagger	70% (35/14), damage 1D4+2+1D4
Claws	70% (35/14), damage 1D6+1D4
Dodge	70% (35/14)

Pulp Talents

- **Alert:** never surprised in combat.
- **Nimble:** does not lose next action when diving for cover.
- **Fleet Footed:** may spend 10 Luck to avoid being outnumbered in melee combat for one combat encounter.

Sedecim

See sedecim's full profile in **Chapter 4**, page 179.

STR 100	**CON** 110	**SIZ** 110	**DEX** 70
INT 90	**POW** 90	**HP** 22	
DB: +2D6	**Build:** 3	**Move:** 8*	**MP:** 18

**Move: 9 floating.*

Combat

Attacks per round: 1 (melee, grab, or psychic blast)

Grab (mnvr): pulls target to mouth tentacles (1D6 automatic damage per round); victim may break free with opposed STR roll. If sedecim suffers loss of half HP it releases the victim.

Psychic Blast: emits a stunning psychic blast to a single target within 50 feet (15 m). Target stunned (1D6 rounds) if a POW roll is failed, and suffers 1D6 SAN loss. While stunned, target may act (all actions suffer a penalty die).

Pain Inducer: device produces an energy blast. Target is stunned (unable to take any actions) and blinded (1D6 rounds) if a Hard POW roll is failed; if roll is successful, reduce duration to 1D3 rounds, and target may act with a penalty die.

Fighting	50% (25/10), damage 1D3+2D6
Grab (mnvr)	50% (25/10), damage 1D6
	(see above)
Psychic blast	automatic (see above)
Pain inducer	40% (20/8), see above
Dodge	50% (25/10)

Armor: 1 point of tough, leathery skin.
Spells: Cloud Memory, Dominate, Wrack; others as the Keeper determines.
Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points.

APPENDIX

A INSPIRATION

There are numerous books, films, and television shows to draw inspiration from. The following is a distilled list of those that played a role in the development and ideas in this book.

FICTION

- *The Call of Cthulhu*, *The Shadow over Innsmouth, The Whisperer in Darkness* by H. P. Lovecraft. These stories are direct inspirations for this book. While *Whisperer* does not feature a Cthulhu cult, it has good examples of human agents and the supernatural.
- *Strange Eons* by Robert Bloch. A fun, fast-paced Lovecraftian tale with lots of twists and turns. Plenty of ideas to mine from this novel.
- *Cult of the Great Eleven* by Samuel Fort. The true account of the Los Angeles-based cult in the 1920s. Real life example of the truth being stranger than fiction.

MOVIES

- *The Wicker Man* (Hardy, 1973). An investigator goes to an isolated Scottish village looking for a missing girl. It's strange, surreal, and very creepy.
- *Faults* (Steams, 2014). A cult deprogrammer kidnaps a young woman at the request of her parents. A low budget film, with good writing and great acting that keeps you guessing to the end.
- *The Omen Trilogy* (Donner, Taylor, Baker, 1976–1991). While these films are about the Antichrist rather than cosmic horror, they do a great job of showing how a powerful cult infiltrates society.
- *The Void* (Kostanski, Gillespie, 2016). A gory horror film centered around a group of people trapped in a hospital surrounded by a murderous cult. Creepy and atmospheric, but with some over-the-top blood and guts.
- *The Devils* (Russell, 1971). Set in 17th century France, a priest is accused of witchcraft, while a nunnery succumbs to demonic possession. Outrageous, explicit, and scary.
- *Kill List* (Wheatley, 2011). A low-budget British film about two criminals who stumble into "something." Engaging story with cult under- and then over-tones, with a powerful ending.
- *Children of the Corn* (Kiersch, 1984). Based on the Stephen King story, the movie is about a murderous cult of children that have taken over an American small town.
- *Rosemary's Baby* (Polanski, 1968). A psychological horror concerning Rosemary's pregnancy. Illustrates a cult at work, manipulating events to bring about their goals.
- *Cthulhu* (Gildark, 2007). Loosely based on *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, a history professor reconnects with his past and destiny while a vast conspiracy enacts its ultimate goal.
- *Dagon* (Gordon, 2001). A reworking of *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, set in Spain. Our hero must navigate the horrors of Imboca while drawing ever near to his destiny.
- *The Call of Cthulhu* (Leman, 2005). A fantastic version of Lovecraft's story told as a silent film of the 20s era.
- *Apostle* (Evans, 2017). Set in the early 1900s, a brother travels to a remote island off Wales to find his sister, who has been kidnapped and held for ransom by a cult.

TELEVISION

- *Millennium* (Carter, 1996–1998). Lance Henriksen stars as investigator and psychic sensitive tracking down serial killers. There is a third season—don't watch it—pretend it doesn't exist.
- *True Detective*, season 1 (Pizzolatto, 2014). Two police officers involved in a murder investigation uncover a conspiracy. Watch this.
- *The Path* (Goldberg, 2016–2018). Portrays a fictional religious "cult" in the modern-day.
- *Wild Wild Country* (Way, 0218). Documentary series detailing the leader and members of the Rajneeshee community in Oregon.
- *The Following* (Williamson, 2013–2015). Kevin Bacon stars as former FBI agent trying to recapture James Purefoy's cult leader.
- *Jonestown: Paradise Lost* (Wolochatiuk, 2007). A television documentary about the Jonestown Massacre and the Jim Jones cult. A sobering look at the potential power of real-world cults.

APPENDIX

B

CTHULHU IN MYTHOS TOMES

The Keeper is advised to look over Chapter 9: Magic in the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* to refresh their memory of using tomes in games. The following guidance tweaks those rules, allowing an investigator to use a Mythos tome for research without first undertaking an Initial or Full reading.

The rules here assume the investigator is quickly skimming the pages, looking for a specific term rather than reading pages or big chunks of text. The reader does not get a sense of a tome's outlook, full contents, spells, or other characteristics—they only focus down on lines that deal with Cthulhu or some associated term, like Dagon or R'lyeh.

The time taken to use a tome for reference in this manner is determined by the Keeper, although it is suggested that a tome's number of weeks for full study is converted into minutes plus one hour; thus, if using Al Azif in this way (68 weeks for a Full reading), the time spent on research with the tome would be one hour plus 68 minutes, equaling two hours and eight minutes. This method assumes the investigator is desperately skimming the pages for a nugget of useful information, and the Keeper is recommended to provide one piece of information per the time stated. To find another useful tidbit of detail requires the same amount of time again; thus, going back into the Al Azif for a second time requires another two hours and eight minutes. Such time is elastic, and the Keeper may choose to increase or decrease it to suit the story being told.

With the necessary time spent skimming the tome, the investigator makes a percentile roll, and needs a result equal to or below its "Cthulhu Rating" (see following). Depending on the circumstances, the Keeper might apply a bonus or penalty die to this roll. If successful, a useful piece of information concerning Cthulhu has been found. If the roll is failed, either the book does not hold the information or the reader failed to locate it. The Keeper is recommended to keep a note of the book and the information it contained for future reference.

In the context of an investigator using a tome to find some lore connected to Cthulhu, the standard Mythos Rating provides a simple way to ascertain if their research comes up with anything useful (see Mythos Rating—Books as References; *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 175). Yet, certain tomes are more likely to include relevant information about Cthulhu: in the following table, the column **Cthulhu Rating** notes an adjusted Mythos Rating, and assumes the research is specifically about Cthulhu and associated details. If the same tome is being used to look up something other than Cthulhu, such as Nyarlathotep, then use the standard Mythos Rating percentile instead.

The Sanity loss for the information found is also adjusted, as noted in the following table's "SAN Loss" column. The Sanity loss is taken for each piece of information uncovered in skimming a tome for a Cthulhu reference. Multiple skims may duplicate this Sanity loss at the Keeper's discretion. If the investigator later undertakes an Initial and/or Full reading of the same tome, apply the Sanity loss for the tome as normal but decrease the cost by the amount of Sanity already lost when previously skimming the tome.

For example: *Mirriam skims the Greek language Necronomicon for something useful about Cthulhu. After two hours and eight minutes, she makes the Cthulhu Rating roll, and succeeds. The Keeper tells her what she found and asks for a Sanity loss (1D8), which results in 6 loss. Later, Mirriam undertakes an Initial reading of the same tome, which costs her 2D10 Sanity, and results in 14 Sanity points loss. As she already lost 6 Sanity to that tome, the 14 points are reduced by 6 to 8 loss. If Mirriam was then to undertake a Full study of the tome, the Sanity loss (2D10) would not be reduced, as the reduction based on earlier skimming has already been accounted for.*

ASSOCIATED DETAILS

What sort of information might be found in a tome? Some possibilities are as follows, although the Keeper should decide and determine such information ideally before an investigator buries themselves in research, so you have something on hand and specific to the scenario/campaign being played. Think about what clues or confirmation you want the investigators to have and what will help to drive and motivate them forward in the plot.

- Details on Great Cthulhu the entity, its history, it alleged powers, its place in the cosmos, its effect on planet Earth.
- Prophecies concerning Cthulhu, when the stars will be right.
- Details about R'lyeh, its history and alleged location.
- Material on Dagon and Hydra, their roles, their association with Cthulhu, the powers they possess.
- Material on deep ones, their history, connection to humanity, connection to Cthulhu, their cities.
- Information about Cthulhu's other minions, children, kin, and so on.
- Cthulhu's cult/s, their differing histories, beliefs, actions, and goals.
- Enemies of Cthulhu, their history, effect, and goals.
- Ceremonies and rituals.
- Spells and other special workings designed to help or hinder Cthulhu.
- Artifacts associated with Cthulhu and their alleged powers or significance.

MYTHOS TOMES POSSIBLY CONTAINING REFERENCES TO CTHULHU

A selection of Mythos tomes containing references to Cthulhu, Cthulhu worship, and associated information.

Note: for direct research concerning Cthulhu, use the Cthulhu Rating value; otherwise use Mythos Rating.

Tome	Author	Language	Mythos Rating	Cthulhu Rating	SAN Loss
Al-Azif	Al-Hazrad	Arabic	54%	70%	1D8
Book of Dzyan	?	English	27%	35%	1D3
Book of Eibon, The	Eibon	English	33%	43%	1D4
Celaeno Fragments	Shrewsbury	English	27%	21%	1D4
Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus	Clithanus	Latin	27%	19%	1D4
Cthaat Aquadingen	?	Latin	39%	60%	1D6
Cthaat Aquadingen	?	Middle English	18%	20%	1D4
Cthonic Revelations	Phram	Laotian	18%	32%	1D4
Cthulhu in the Necronomicon	Shrewsbury	English	18%	80%	1D4
De Vermiis Mysrteriis	Prinn	Latin	36%	42%	1D4
Eltdown Shards	Winters-Hall	English	33%	36%	1D3
Fischbuch	Von Gerner	German	9%	24%	1
Hydrophinnae	Gantley	Latin	9%	23%	1
Invocations to Dagon	Waite	English	27%	90%	1D4
Johansen Narrative	Johansen	English	12%	80%	1
Liber Ivonis	Eibon; trans. Phillipus	Latin	39%	49%	1D4
Livre D'Ivon	Eibon; trans. Du Nord	French	36%	46%	1D4
Monsters and their Kynde	?	English	24%	33%	1D4
Nameless Cults	?	English	36%	49%	1D6
Nameless Cults (1909)	?	English	27%	33%	1D4
Necronomicon	Al-Hazred; trans. Philetas	Greek	51%	67%	1D8
Necronomicon	Al-Hazred; trans. Dee	English	45%	54%	1D8

MYTHOS TOMES POSSIBLY CONTAINING REFERENCES TO CTHULHU

A selection of Mythos tomes containing references to Cthulhu, Cthulhu worship, and associated information.

Note: for direct research concerning Cthulhu, use the Cthulhu Rating value; otherwise use Mythos Rating.

Tome	Author	Language	Mythos Rating	Cthulhu Rating	SAN Loss
Necronomicon	Al-Hazred; trans. Wormius	Latin	48%	58%	1D8
Of Evill Sorceries Done in New-England of Daemons in no Humane Shape	?	English	12%	26%	1D3
Pnakotic Manuscripts	?	English	30%	25%	1D4
Polynesian Mythology, with a Note on the Cthulhu Legend-Cycle	Copeland	English	9%	46%	1
Ponape Scripture	Hoag	English	15%	40%	1D3
Prehistoric Pacific in the Light of the Ponape Scripture	Copeland	English	12%	48%	1
Prehistory in the Pacific: A Preliminary Investigation	Copeland	English	3%	12%	1
R'lyeh Text	?	Chinese	45%	80%	1D8
Revelations of Gla'aki	?	English	45%	15%	1D6
Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan	Hsan	Chinese	24%	38%	1D4
Sussex Manuscript	Al-Hazred; trans. Frederic	English	21%	20%	1D3
Thaumaturgical Prodigies In The New-England Canaan	Phillips	English	12%	5%	1D3
True Magick	Wenn	English	18%	20%	1D4
Tuscan Rituals	?	Italian	6%	15%	1
Unaussprechlichen Kulten	Von Junzt	German	45%	58%	1D6
Unter Zee Kulten	Gauberg	German	18%	54%	1D3
Yhe Ritual	Niggoum-Zhog	Egyptian	27%	39%	1D4
Yuggya Chants	?	English	12%	33%	1D3
Zanthu Tablets	Copeland	English	9%	24%	1D3

APPENDIX

C

COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS AND MAPS

Handout: Loki's Gift 2

BODY FOUND BURNED

Police were called to an alleyway off Milton Street in Marylebone where a body was recovered. Whilst no witnesses have yet to come forward, initial reports suggest the corpse had been burned. Inquiries are ongoing.

SHIV BROS.,

Funeral Directors

65 Little Wel

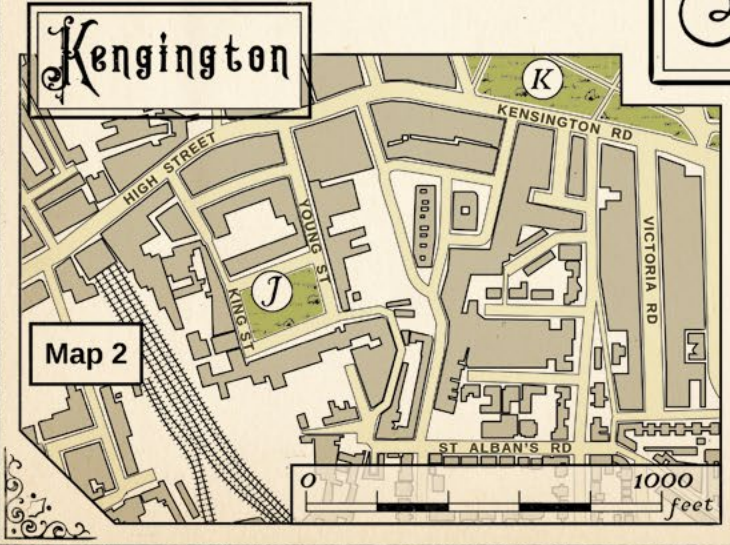
London
1896 Neighborhoods

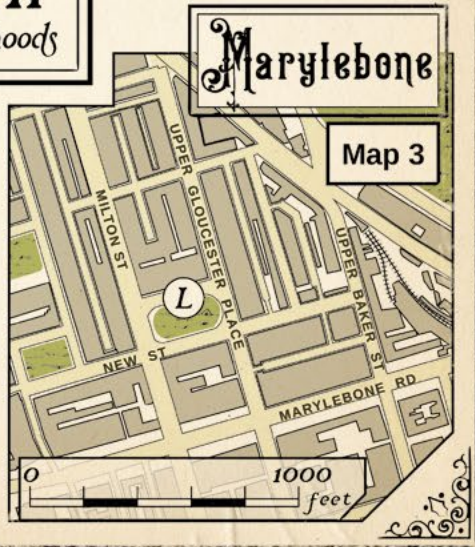
Locations of Note

- *A. Cavendish Square*
- *B. Hanover Square*
- *C. Berkeley Square*
- *D. Soho Square*
- *E. Bedford Square*
- *F. British Museum*
- *G. National Gallery*

Locations of Note

- *H. Lincolns Inn Fields*
- *I. Somerset House*
- *J. Kensington Square*
- *K. Kensington Gardens*
- *L. Dorset Square*





Handout: Loki's Gift 1

To the gentle Mr Gladstone,

I write this letter with the intention of introducing myself and in regard to our collaboration together. My name is Daniel Ridley and I am a reasonably accomplished composer in my own right. Chillingworth speaks very highly of you and your work, but has felt somewhat concerned about your wellbeing. He hopes that I can help you to finish the score to his play, Loki's Gift, within the next few weeks. Though I'm reluctant to interfere in any artist's creation, Chillingworth assures me that I am only to assist you in completing your task.

I look forward to meeting you in person and hope that together we can fully realise your vision.

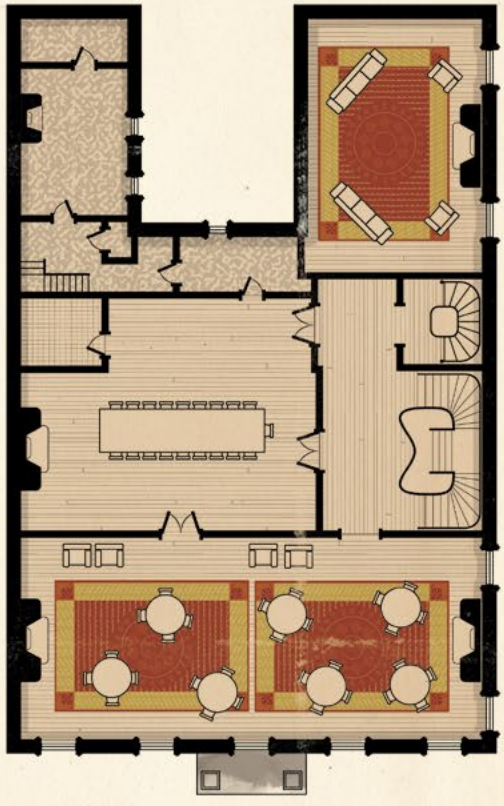
Yours,

Daniel Ridley

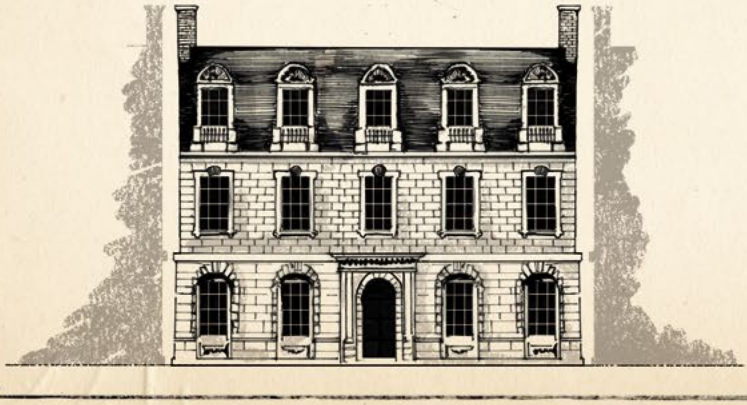
The Pacific Club

21 Milton Street

Ground Floor



Upper Floor



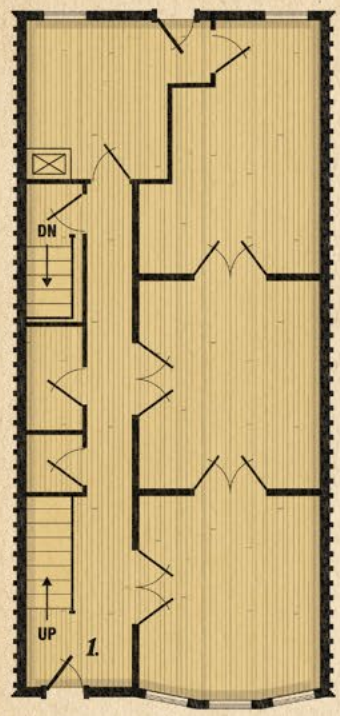
Door
Window
Servants' Areas

0 — 25 feet

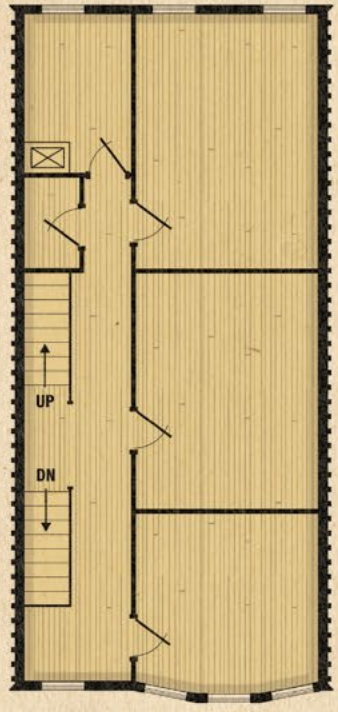
scale of drawings

Ernest Chillingworth's Studio

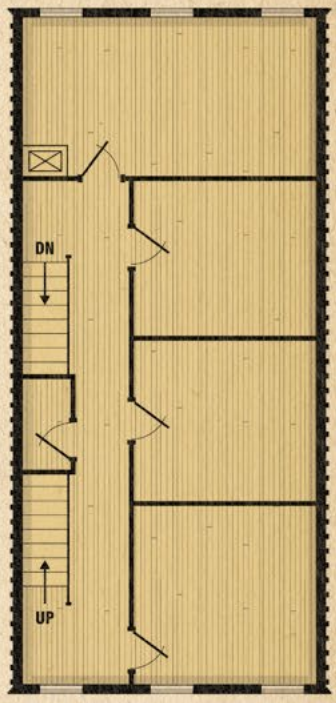
20 Great Chapel Street



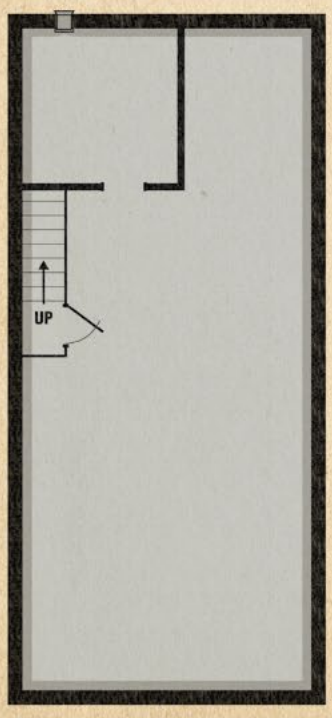
Ground 1st Floor



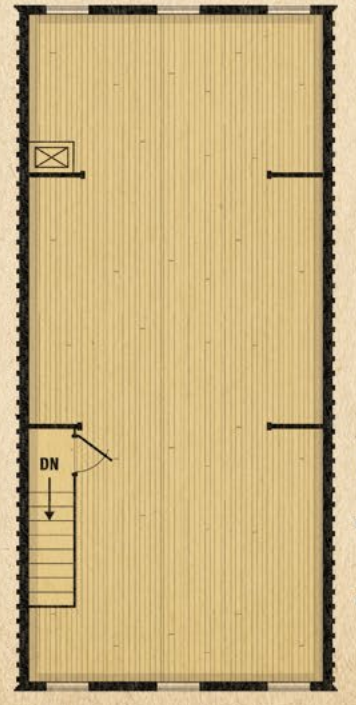
Upper 2nd Floor



Upper 3rd Floor



Cellar



Attic

Dumbwaiter

Window

Door

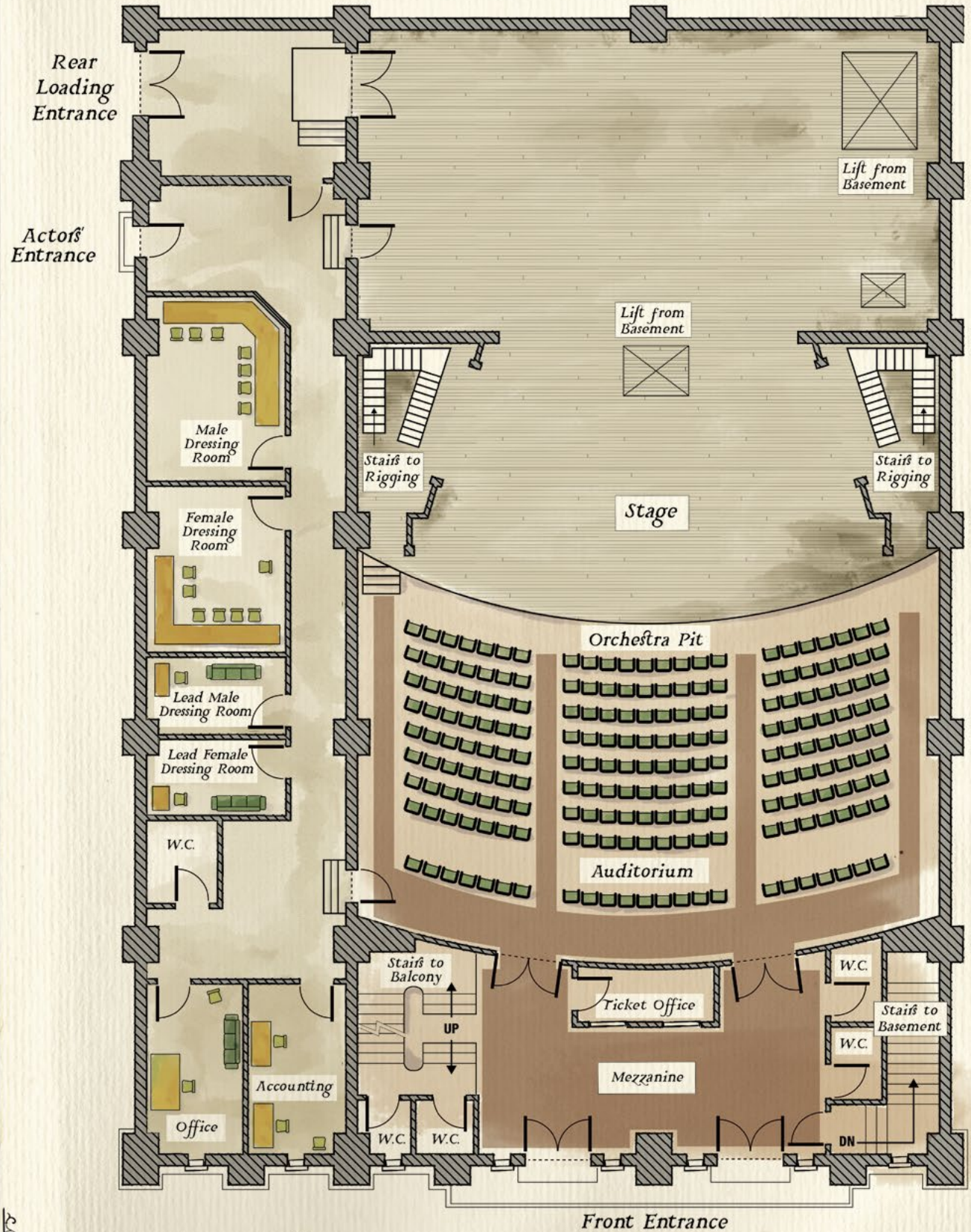
Great Chapel Street Elevation

0 10 20

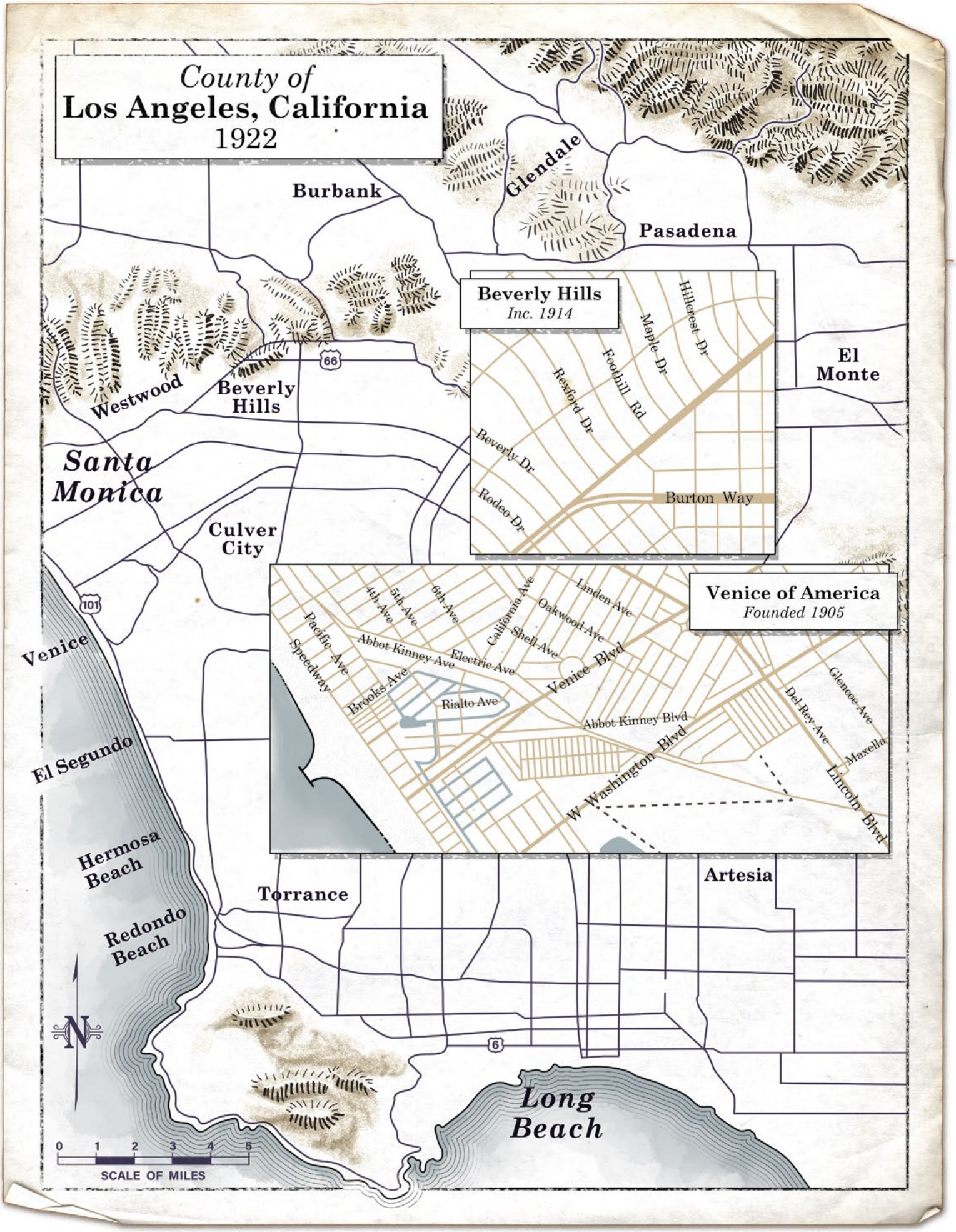
Measurements in Feet

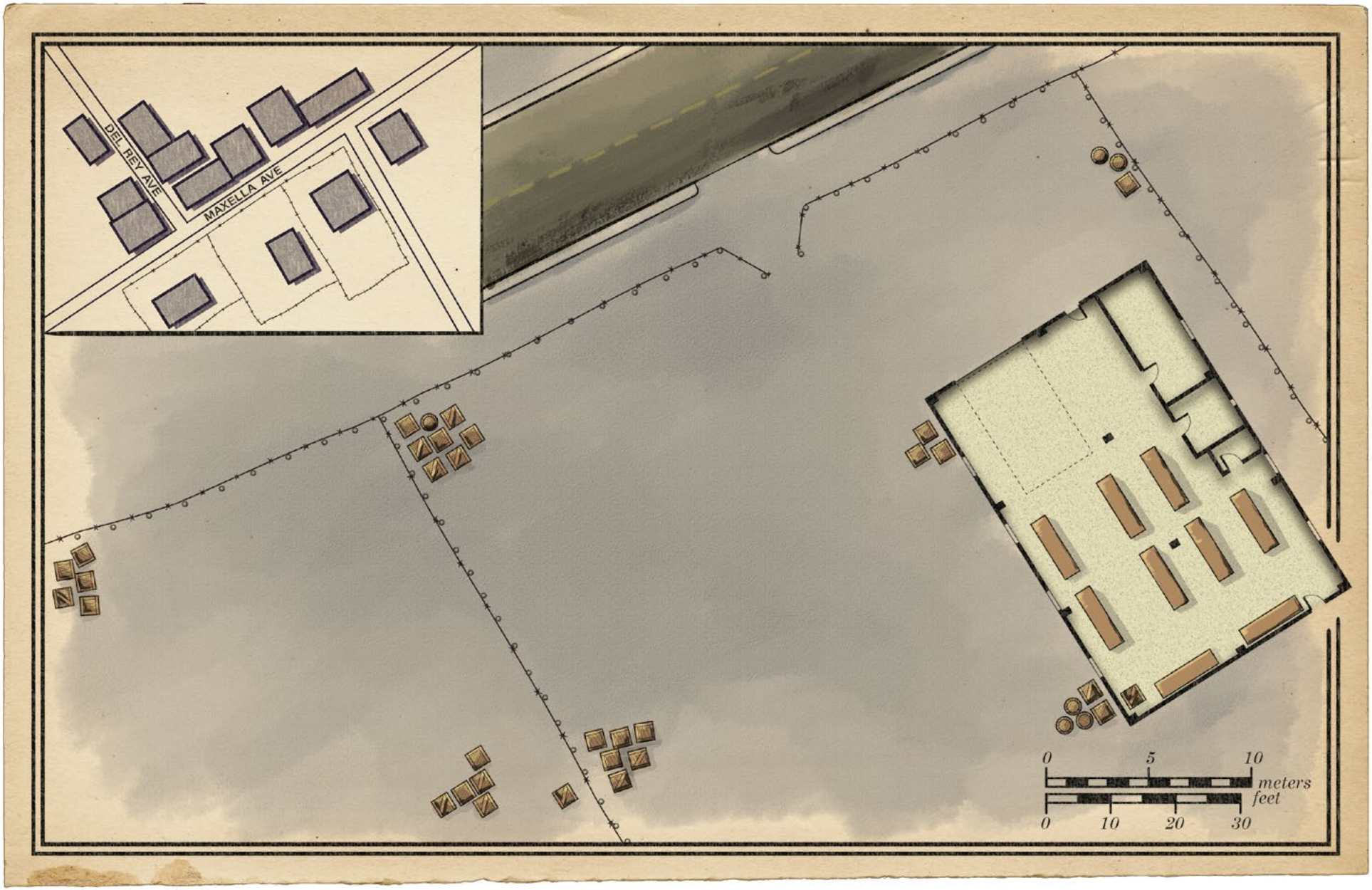
Greene Theatre

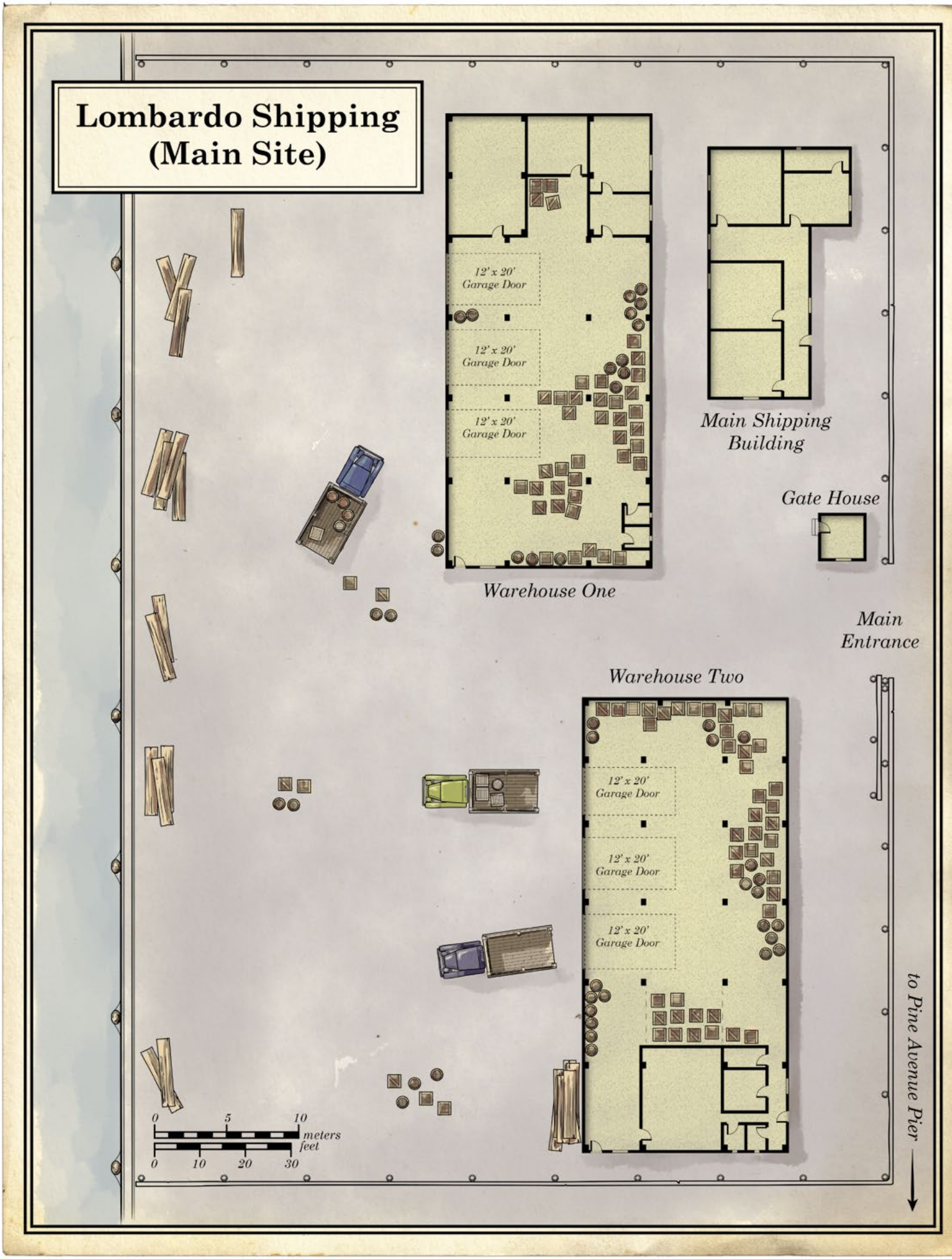
105 Shaftesbury Ave.

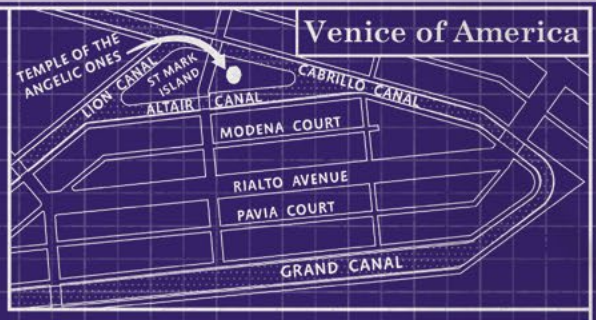


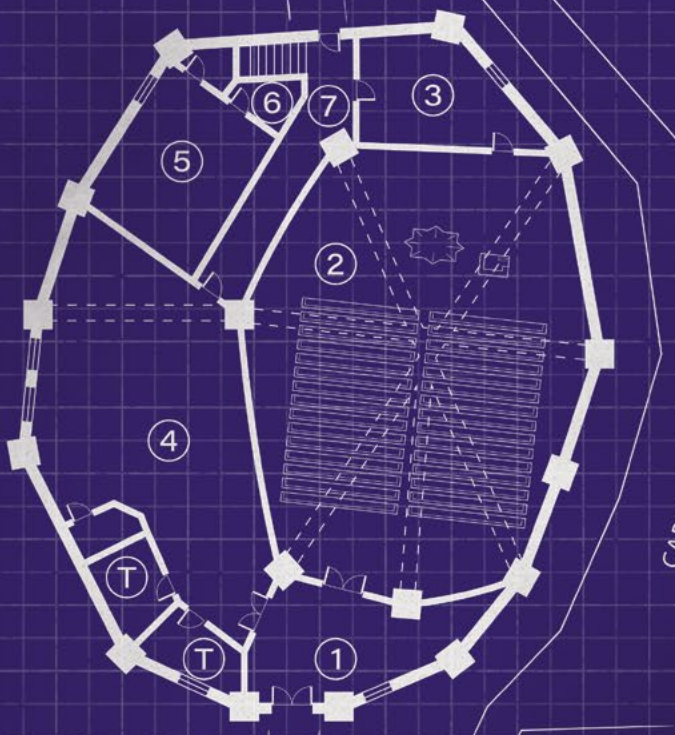
Ground Floor Plan


County of
Los Angeles, California
1922
Burbank
Glendale
Pasadena
Beverly Hills
Inc. 1914
Hillcrest Dr
Maple Dr
Foothill Rd
Rexford Dr
Beverly Dr
Rodeo Dr
Burton Way
El Monte
Westwood
Beverly Hills
66
Santa Monica
Culver City
101
Venice
Venice of America
Founded 1905
Linden Ave
Oakwood Ave
California Ave
Shell Ave
Venice Blvd
6th Ave
5th Ave
4th Ave
Pacific Ave
Speedway
Abbot Kinney Ave
Electric Ave
Brooks Ave
Rialto Ave
Abbot Kinney Blvd
W Washington Blvd
Glencoe Ave
Del Rey Ave
Maxella
Lincoln Blvd
El Segundo
Hermosa Beach
Redondo Beach
Torrance
Artesia
6
Long Beach
N
0 1 2 3 4 5
SCALE OF MILES


DEL REY AVE
MAXELLA AVE
0
5
10
meters
feet
0
10
20
30


Lombardo Shipping
(Main Site)
12' x 20'
Garage Door
12' x 20'
Garage Door
12' x 20'
Garage Door
Warehouse One
Main Shipping
Building
Gate House
Main
Entrance
Warehouse Two
12' x 20'
Garage Door
12' x 20'
Garage Door
12' x 20'
Garage Door
0 5 10
meters
feet
0 10 20 30
to Pine Avenue Pier



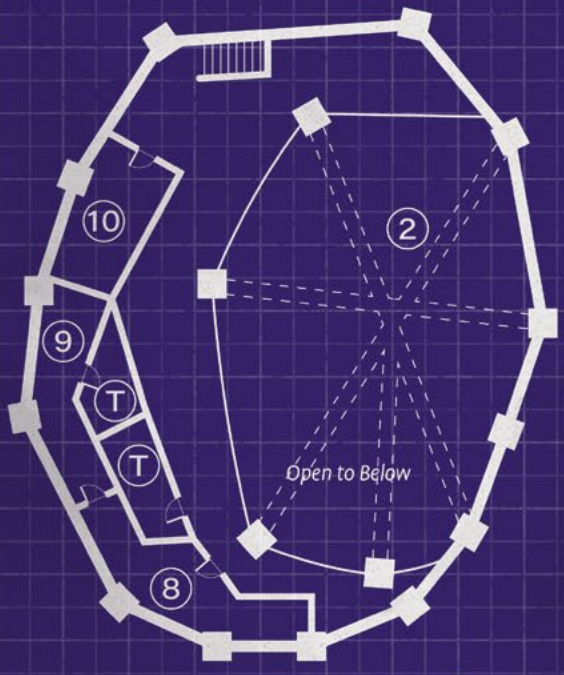


GROUND FLOOR

CAR PARK

SIDEWALK

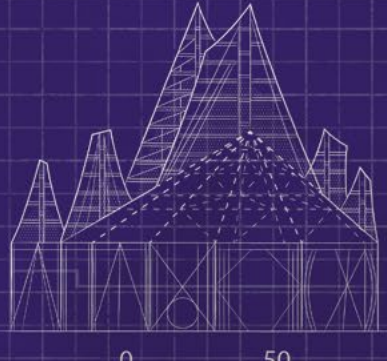
ALTAIR CANAL



UPPER FLOOR

1. FOYER
2. TEMPLE
3. SACRISTY
4. COMMUNITY ROOM
5. KITCHEN
6. STOREROOM
7. REAR HALLWAY
8. MEDITATION CHAMBER
9. BEDROOM
10. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
T. TOILET

0 10 20 30 40 50



0 50

SECTION SHOWING STRUCTURE

Designed by **GIL DONOVAN**

Temple of the Angelic Ones

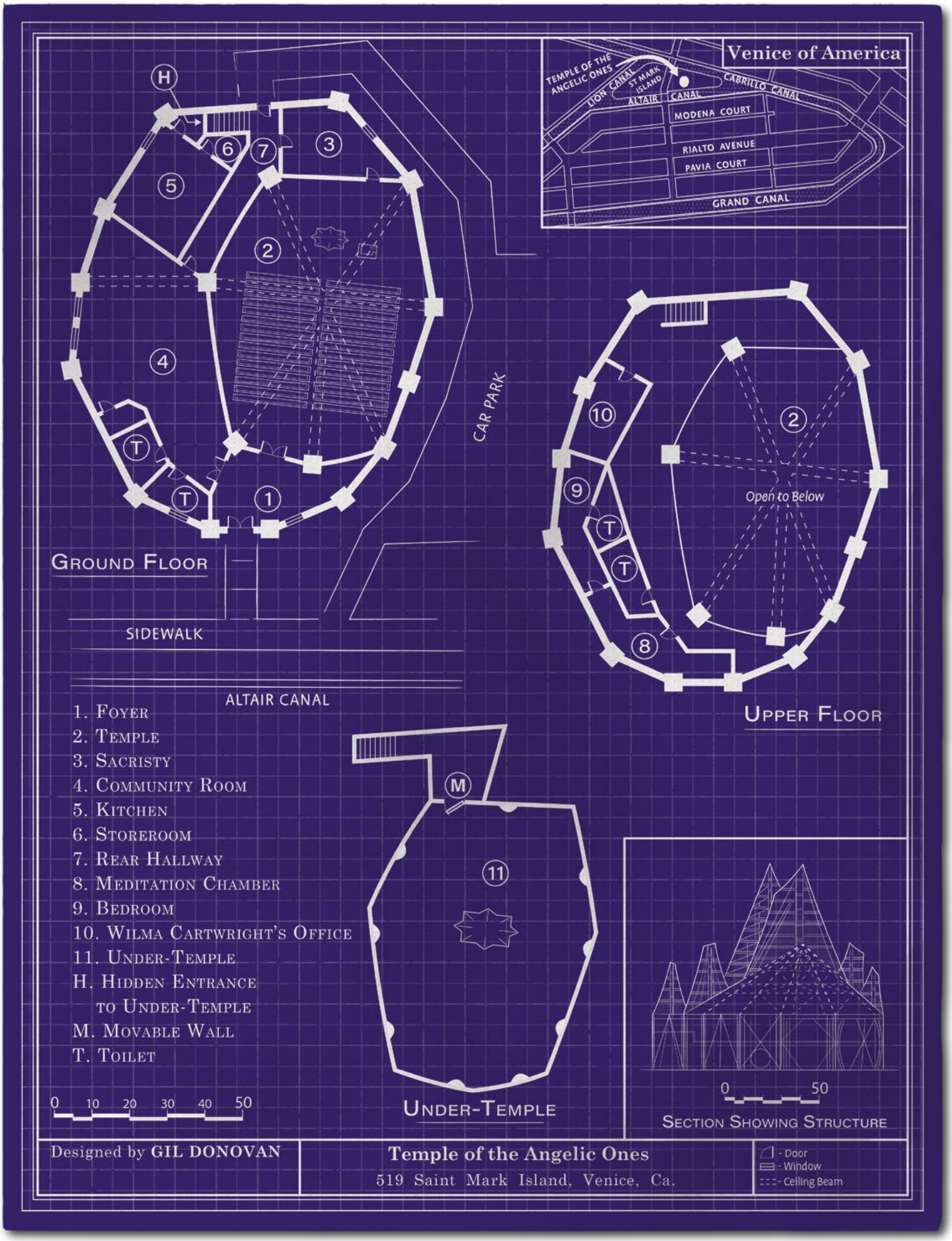
519 Saint Mark Island, Venice, Ca.

- Door
- Window
- Ceiling Beam

SOCIETY OF THE ANGELIC ONES

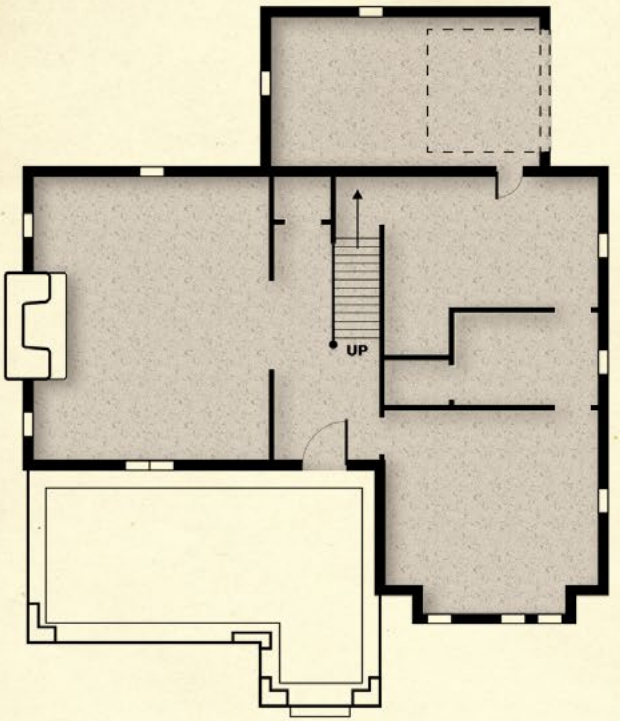
The new Society of the Angelic Ones is certainly making a mark in Venice, having recently finished the construction a new temple building on a vacant plot situated on St. Marks Island, on the Altair Canal. The Society's founder, Mrs. Wilma Cartwright took a few moments out of her busy schedule to explain the work and beliefs of the congregation, saying that the church's goal is to improve the lives of its members and is a place where they can connect with the divine angels of God. Mrs. Cartwright believes that God's angels watch over us all and that by following the Good Word, we can fill ourselves with good grace to benefit not only our souls, but also our day-to-day life. "We are all God's servants," said Mrs. Cartwright, "and we must endeavor to spread our angelic wings to do good works for our fellow man." Indeed, the Society of the Angelic Ones has begun a drive to provide soup kitchens for the poor of the city, which Mrs. Cartwright explained is just the start of her church's mission to help all, no matter their sins or predicament, and that everyone is welcome at the new temple. "We offer salvation for those who strayed from the path of righteousness," Mrs. Cartwright added.

For those wanting to hear more of what Mrs. Cartwright is offering, public services take place on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 6:00 pm, as well as 9:00 am and 6:00 pm on Sundays.

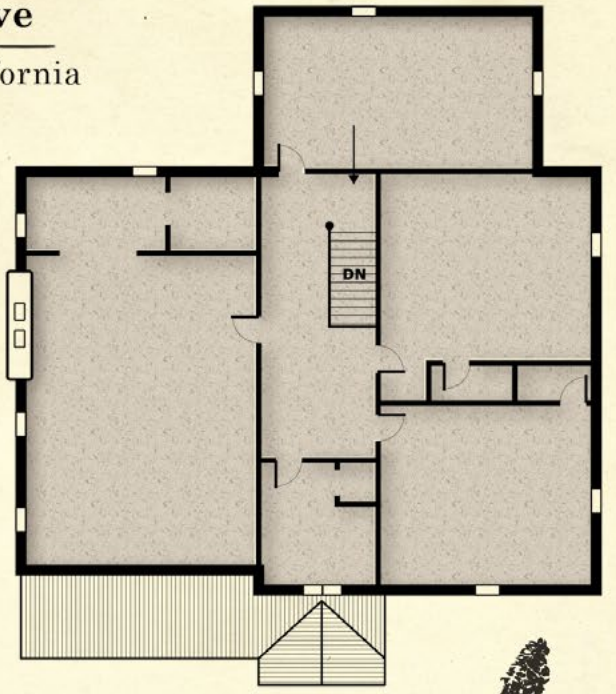

Venice of America
TEMPLE OF THE ANGELIC ONES
LION CANAL
ST MARK ISLAND
ALTAIR CANAL
CABRILLO CANAL
MODENA COURT
RIALTO AVENUE
PAVIA COURT
GRAND CANAL
H
6
7
3
5
2
4
T
T
1
CAR PARK
GROUND FLOOR
SIDEWALK
ALTAIR CANAL
10
2
9
T
T
Open to Below
8
UPPER FLOOR
1. FOYER
2. TEMPLE
3. SACRISTY
4. COMMUNITY ROOM
5. KITCHEN
6. STOREROOM
7. REAR HALLWAY
8. MEDITATION CHAMBER
9. BEDROOM
10. WILMA CARTWRIGHT'S OFFICE
11. UNDER-TEMPLE
H. HIDDEN ENTRANCE TO UNDER-TEMPLE
M. MOVABLE WALL
T. TOILET
0 10 20 30 40 50
M
11
UNDER-TEMPLE
0 50
SECTION SHOWING STRUCTURE
Designed by GIL DONOVAN
Temple of the Angelic Ones
519 Saint Mark Island, Venice, Ca.
- Door
- Window
- Ceiling Beam

82 Maple Drive

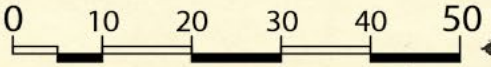
Beverly Hills, California



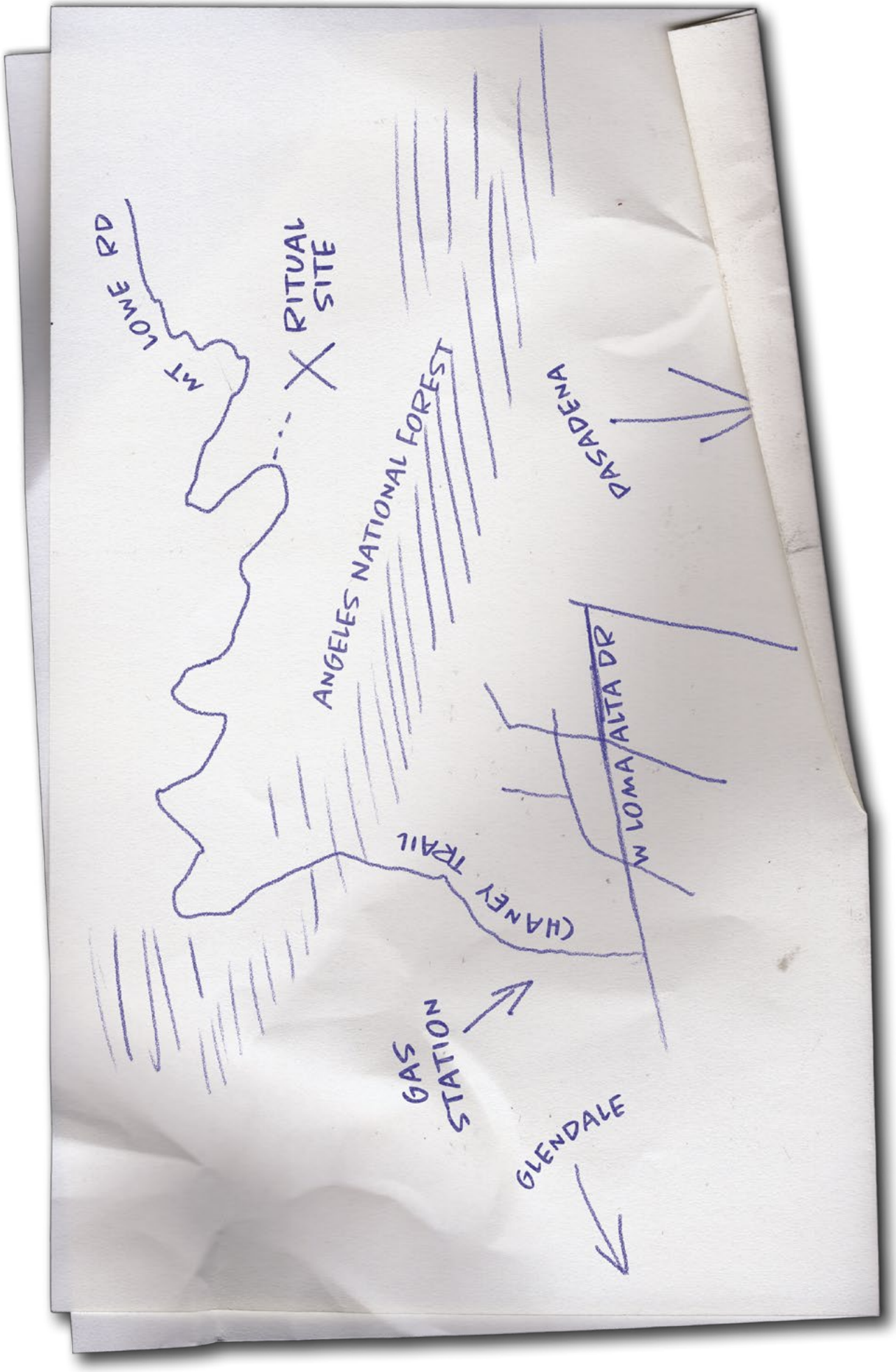
Ground Floor



Upper Floor

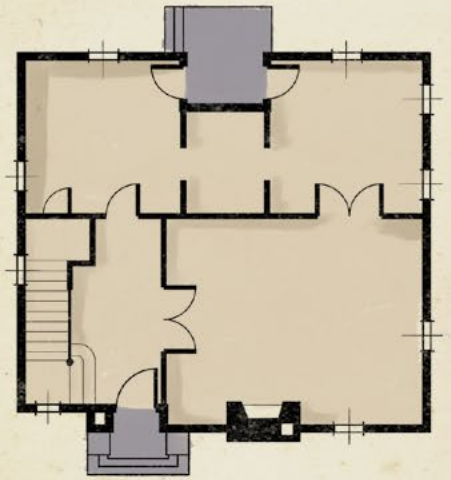


measurements in feet

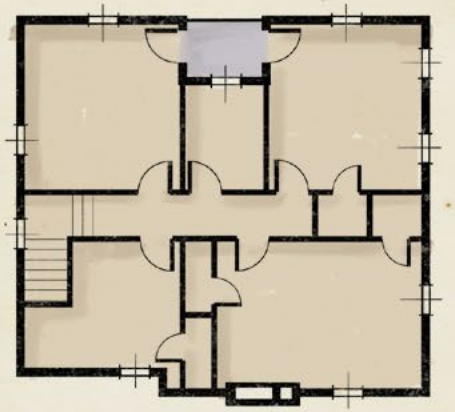

MT LOWE RD
RITUAL SITE
ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST
PASADENA
W LOMA ALTA DR
CHANEY TRAIL
GAS STATION
GLENDALE

Carl Mann's Beach House

1101 Palos Verdes Dr. W,
Rancho Palos Verdes, Ca.

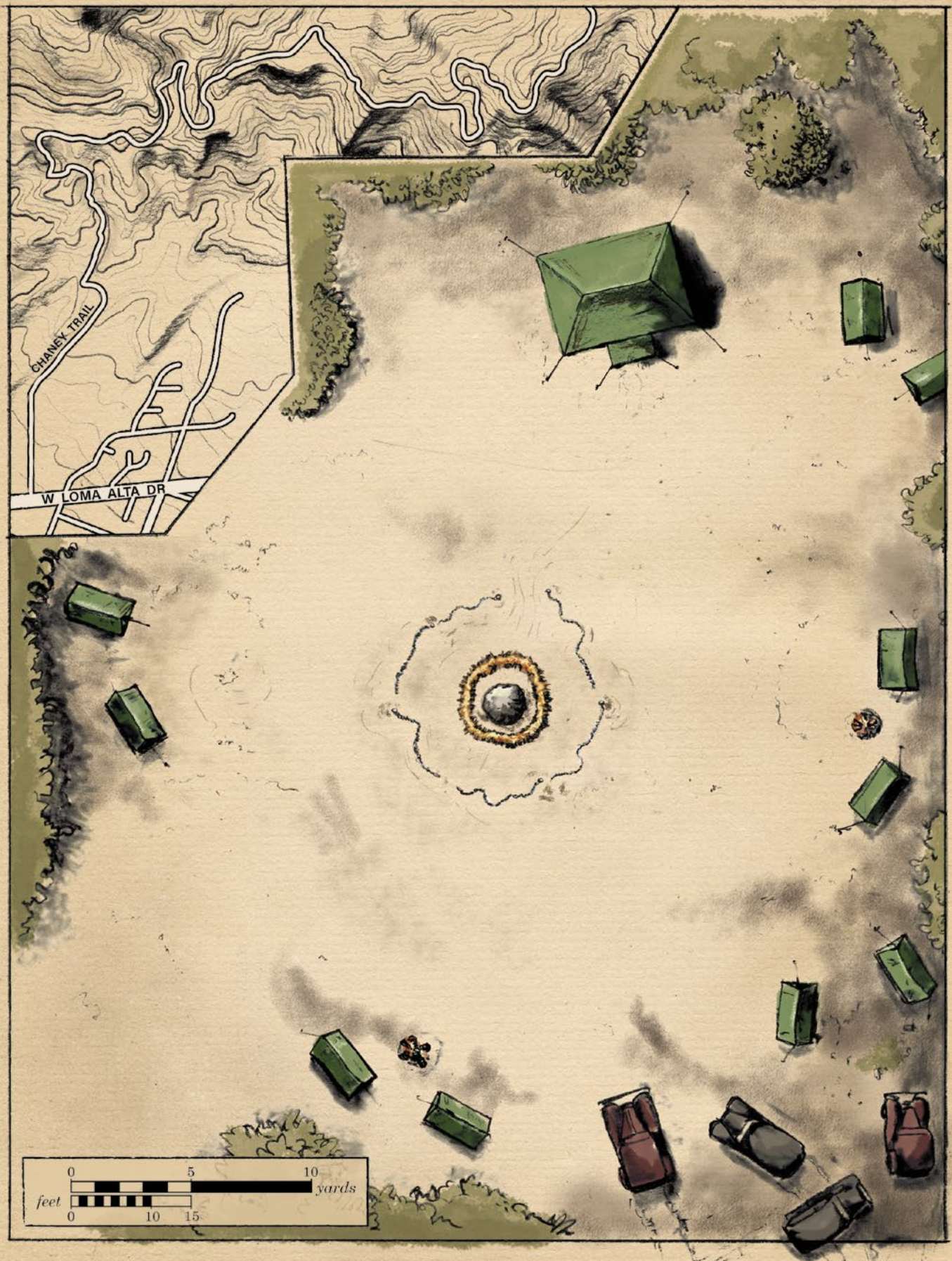


First Floor



Second Floor

Cellar


CHANEY TRAIL
W LOMA ALTA DR
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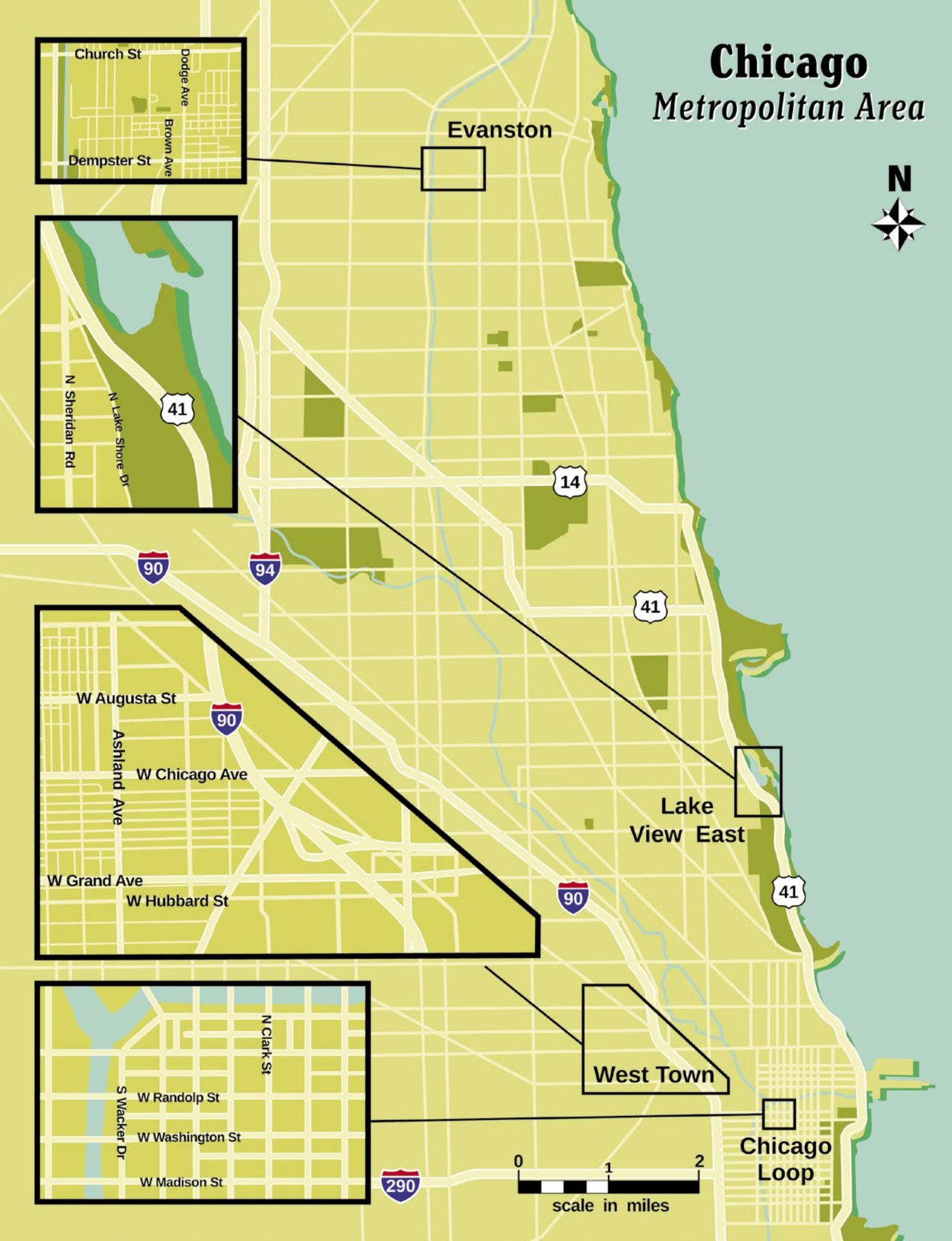
5
10
yards
feet
0
10
15


Chicago
Metropolitan Area
N
Church St
Dodge Ave
Brown Ave
Dempster St
Evanston
N Sheridan Rd
N Lake Shore Dr
41
14
90
94
41
W Augusta St
Ashland Ave
W Chicago Ave
W Grand Ave
W Hubbard St
90
Lake
View East
41
N Clark St
S Wacker Dr
W Randolp St
W Washington St
W Madison St
West Town
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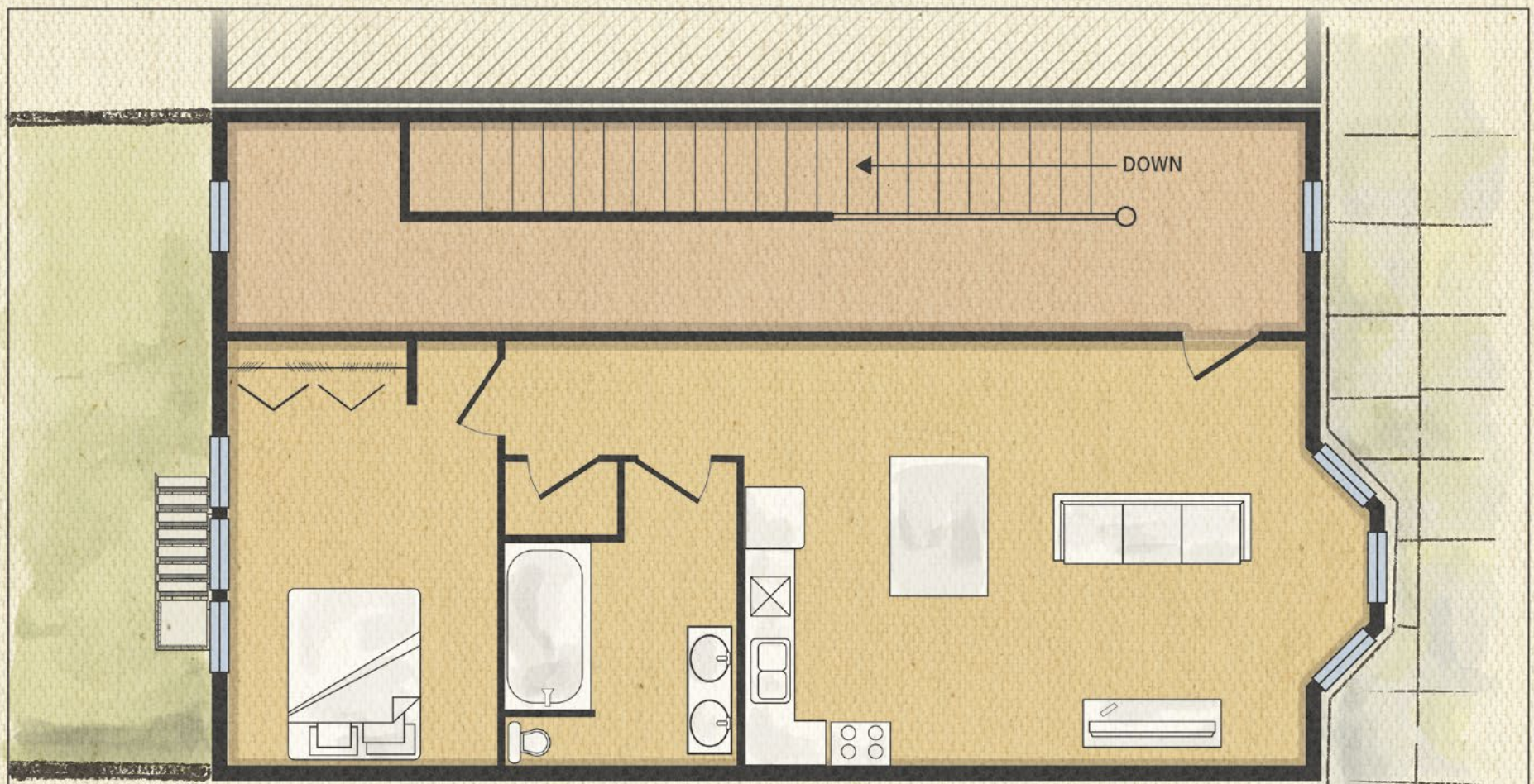
0
1
2
scale in miles



727 West Ohio Street, Apt. #3

Third Floor Apartment

Chicago, IL 60654

Global Realty
773-555-5456

March 15, 1993

NEWS

ROCK STAR BUYS THE MOST HAUNTED HOUSE IN CHICAGO

Residents of Evanston have long been aware of the creepy house at 1424 Brown Avenue. For decades it has been regarded as haunted by not only the local children but most of its neighbors, too. Now, Devon Razor the well-known shock rocker is moving in, adding further infamy to what some call the most haunted house in Chicago.

Built in 1928 by Remember Fletcher, a widow and former resident of Massachusetts, the house first attracted attention back in the 1930s. Neighbors recall the property gained an unsavory reputation, reporting strange sounds and colored lights emanating from the house in the late hours of the night. It is said that in the winter, snow would melt around Mrs. Fletcher's house long before the other homes on the street, while other accounts mention neighbors saying that the area around the house was always colder than elsewhere. In no time at all, the local children were spreading rumors that Remember Fletcher was a witch and that her house was haunted.

Following Mrs. Fletcher's death in 1958, the property has had a succession of owners, none of whom have stayed long. Missing persons, murder, and suicide have all been attached to the house on Brown Avenue, which one may speculate as key buying points for Devon Razor, whose performances and lifestyle are known to focus on the occult. We can only hope that suburban life is just what Mr. Razor needs to finally settle down and age gracefully, although this reporter, for one, doubts that will ever happen!

Handout: Dream 1

October 30, 2010

NEWS

HOUSE OF HORROR REMEMBERED

Long regarded as the most haunted house in Chicago, the two-story property standing at 1424 Brown Avenue in Evanston remains something of an enigma and a beacon for ghost hunters. With Halloween approaching, readers may recall the house's long and sad history.

The house, built in 1928, was said to have been designed by Remember Fletcher. Local folklore says Remember fled Massachusetts to escape accusations of witchcraft, but it seems she brought her spell books and cauldron with her to Illinois. Over the thirty years she lived on Brown Avenue, Fletcher's house was a source of spooky lights and weird noises, and a place locals stayed away from lest they be cursed by a spell. When Remember died in 1958, some said she had suffered a heart attack when summoning a devil in a midnight ceremony, although the coroner's records are a little more down to earth, giving old age as the cause.

With the passing of Remember Fletcher, the house continued to have a less than happy history. Purchased in 1959 by Ken and Sharon Lawson, calamity came to the new owners after only a few months, with Mrs. Lawson reported to the police as missing in April 1960. The loss of his wife is believed to have driven Mr. Lawson mad with grief, and he was committed to the Chicago State Hospital, better known these days as the Chicago-Read Mental Health Center. But even greater horror was to come. Just a few months later in 1960, the property was sold to a retired school principal and his wife, whose fates would seal the house's reputation as a place most folk would want to steer clear of. As, in early 1961, the school principal's wife viciously stabbed her husband to death and then slit her own throat.

The house remained empty for some ten years until purchased by the Bentley family, who again found no joy inside its walls. Allegedly, the Bentleys fled the house after just a month due to a rising tide of unexplained events caused by what they said were demonic spirits. Again, the property stood abandoned for a decade, till, in 1978, a Mrs. Alex Bellington moved in. After three weeks, she suffered a massive heart attack and died. She was just 55 years old.

Given the deaths and misery associated with the house, the firm in charge of selling it needed help, as no one wanted to buy it. People said it was haunted and that anyone who lived there would come to a bad end. And, the historical facts seemed to bear that out. So, in 1980, Glen Phillips from the University of Chicago was brought in to conduct experiments inside the house. The notable parapsychologist said, when contacted by this newspaper, that he had recorded a series of strange phenomena in the house, from unaccountable sounds and lights to sudden temperature fluctuations. He even described episodes of missing time, which even now continue to trouble him. Mr. Phillips said he was glad to leave Brown Avenue and never return.

For the following thirteen years, the house remained unsold but continued to attract the attention of psychics, magicians, and academic researchers. While little is known of their findings (presumably as these amounted to little), one such researcher's fate was awful. Tina Yardley, a self-proclaimed psychic, spent a mere ten minutes inside the property before dropping dead of a brain aneurysm.

Following the unfortunate demise of Tina Yardley, even researchers stayed away from Brown Avenue. But, in 1993, Devon Razor brought the property back into the public's consciousness when he purchased it to hold wild parties and séances. Readers may recall the publicity surrounding the "shock rocker" and his elaborate and bloody stage shows. While Razor is said to have never made the house his home, he often spent time there with friends and groupies. Accounts of these days in Razor's autobiography, Bloody Razors, speak of weirdness in the house, but most significant is the musician's belief that he contacted the spirit of the house's designer, Remember Fletcher. Razor relates befriending Fletcher's ghost and that she would instruct him in the dark arts.

Whether Razor actually contacted the "Other Side" or if this was all just another of his well-known publicity stunts remains to be determined. Either way, he sold the house in 2004 to Brian and Heather Jensen. Unfortunately, the Jensens, like many before them, did not fare well once they moved in. In December of that year, police were called to the property when the Jensens failed to show up at work, and, on arrival, discovered a severed hand in the entrance hallway. On inspection, no trace of the Jensens could be found, and they remain listed as missing persons. Later forensic analysis confirmed the severed hand belonged to Brian Jensen.

Now, the house on Brown Avenue is quiet. No one lives there anymore and none are likely to, given its history. So, be careful this Halloween and keep away from the house of horror!

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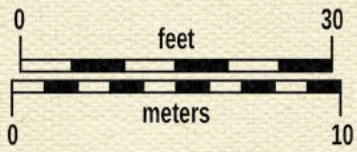
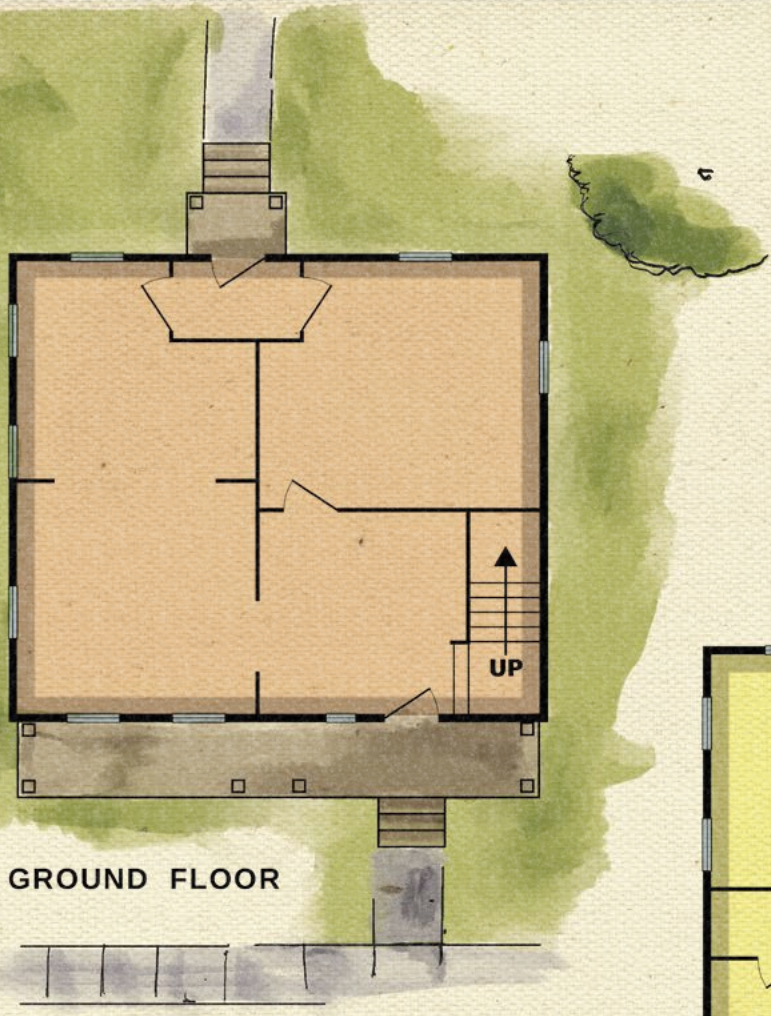
773-555-5456

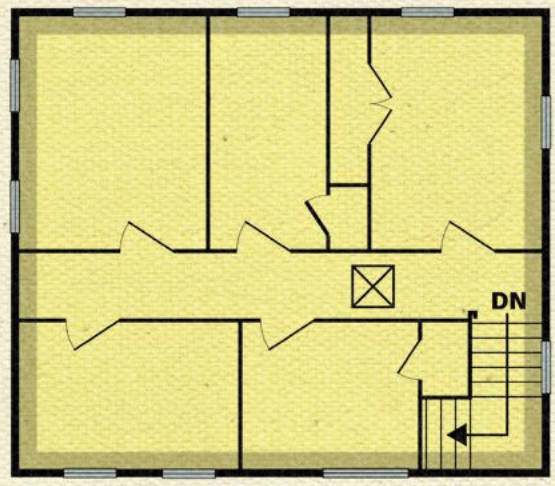
1424 Brown Avenue

Chicago, IL 60654

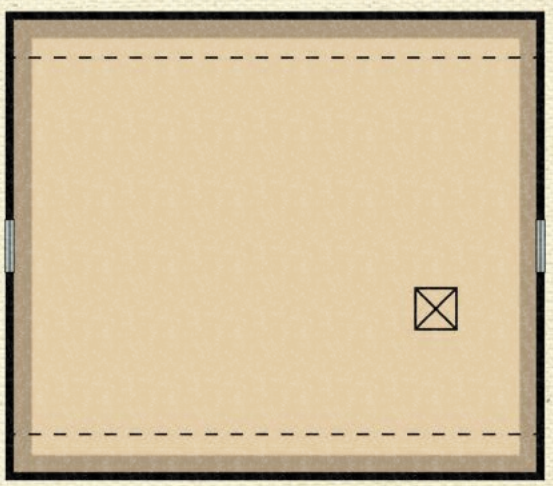




GROUND FLOOR



UPPER FLOOR



ATTIC

NORTH ELEVATION

How Do I Start?

The Church of Perfect Science has Welcome Centers in many countries and cities. Our guides will be delighted to help you find the success you deserve.

Your nearest Welcome Center is in this city,

Chicago

and you can find it at,

West Washington Street

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What Is Perfect Science?

What is Perfect Science?

For generations, humanity has been seeking the answers to understand our place in the world and the universe. Perfect science is applying certain tried and trusted techniques to find those answers. In doing so, you will find your true purpose, reach personal success, and find the pathway to enlightenment.

The Perfect Science process was invented and developed by our founder, Roger Blake, PhD. His goal was to help mankind and his work is the basis for helping you to find your truth and enjoy the bounty of success.

Perfect Science brings together ancient wisdom that has been forgotten and lost, and combines it with modern-day science to enable you to find personal liberation, self-growth, financial success, and the answers to the mysteries of life.

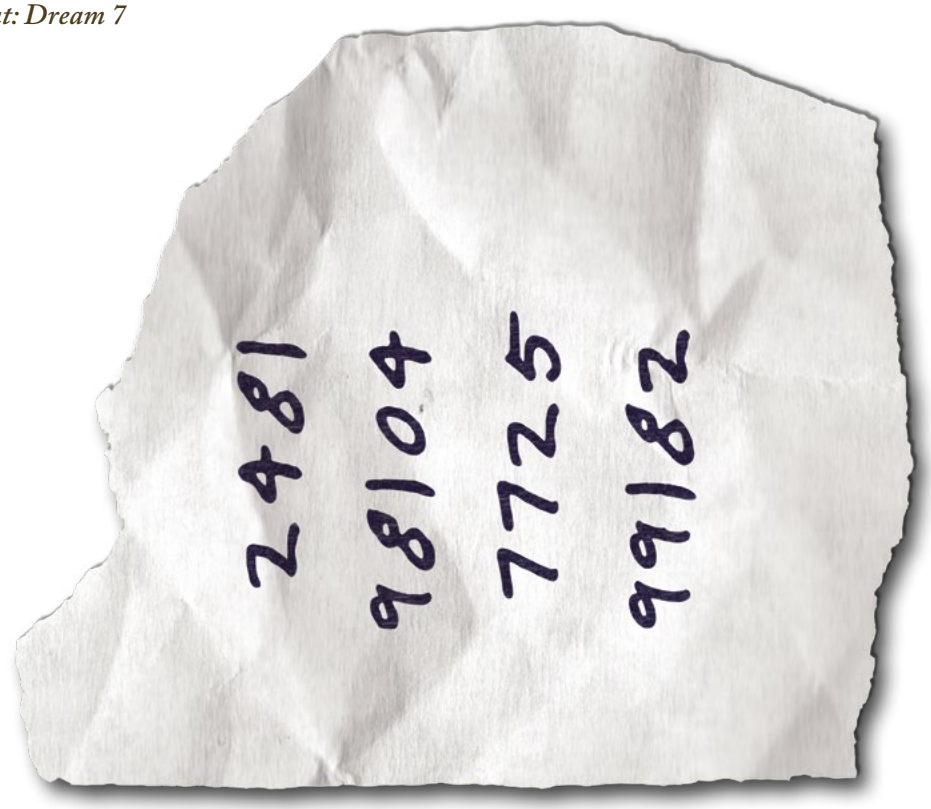
How Can I Get Better?

Perfect Science uses a safe, thoroughly researched, highly developed, yet simple process to help our members cast off life's challenges and be all they can be. Our fully trained life-guides will assist you to clear your mind of negativity and change unwanted behaviors that are stopping you from reaching your total potential and finding personal and financial reward.

As you progress through the process, your negativity levels will automatically diminish, opening your mind to endless positivity and the means to throw off the mental weights that keep you from success.

Perfect Science does not use drugs or any dubious mental techniques, like so many other self-proclaimed self-help therapies. We use only tried and trusted science – safe and proven to help.

Handout: Dream 7

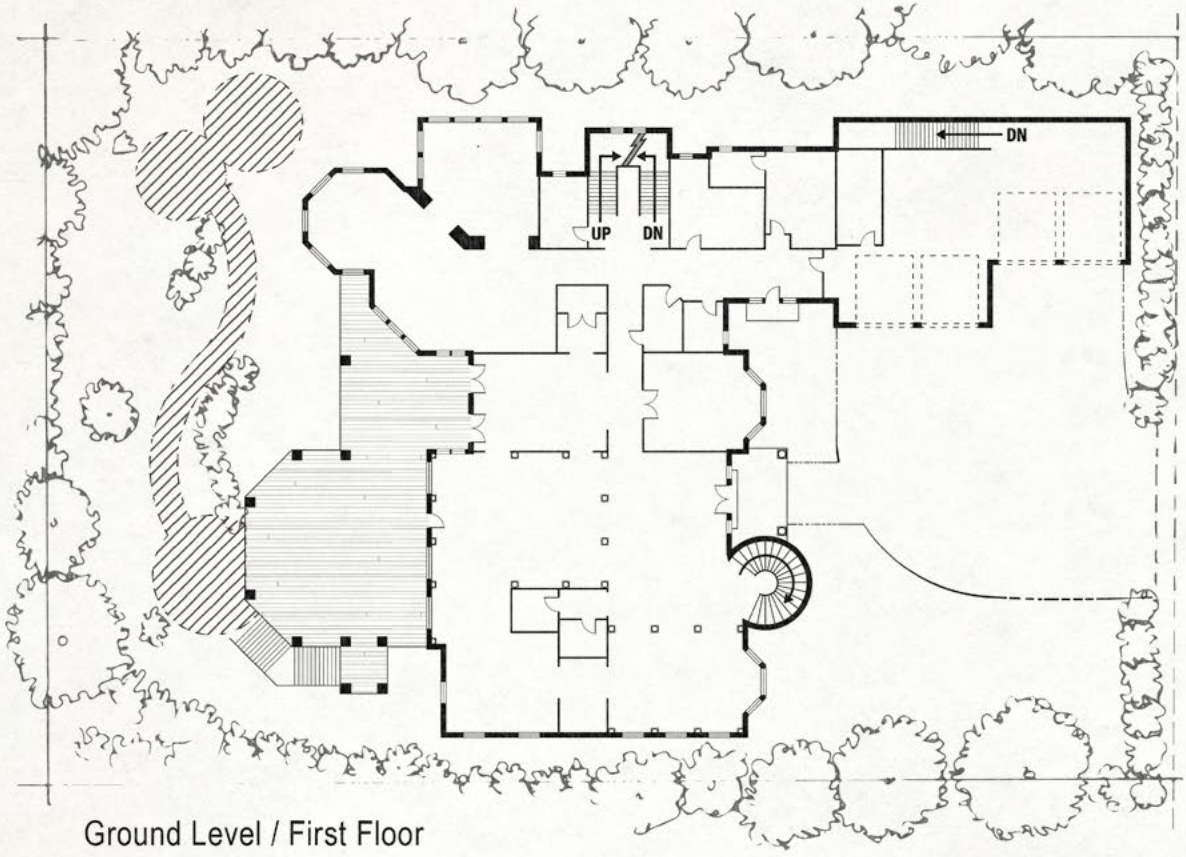


Handout: Dream 4

From: M Landry
Status: P3L and above.
Re: Project: New Haven

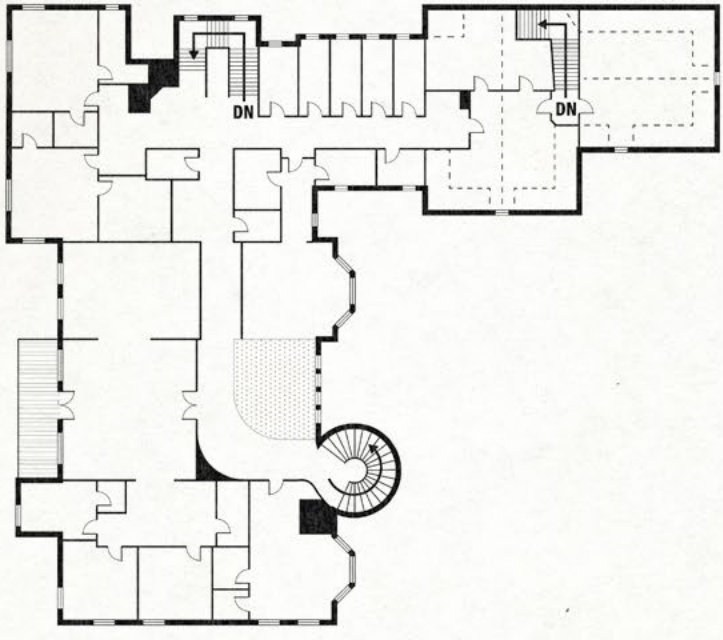
Initial findings (M & B Watson) confirm non-Euclidian geometry in property's attic, believed placed by Remember Fletcher. Details copied for further analysis. Initial viewing confirms possible portal to Lok-Gol'la. Further experimentation to be conducted off site in purpose-built laboratory.

Re: Perfect Science Mansion Floor Plan

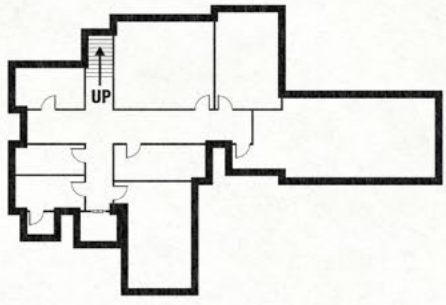


Ground Level / First Floor

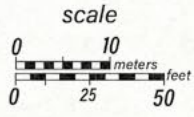
2970 N Lake Shore Drive



Upper Level / Second Floor



Basement Level



Handout: Dream 6a

I'm sorry to send this to you, but I don't know what else to do. They're coming after me.

The Perfect Scientists. I managed to escape their mansion with this idol. It's important to them and I know they shouldn't have it.

I don't know how I ended up in Antarctica. I just made a wrong turn on some other planet.

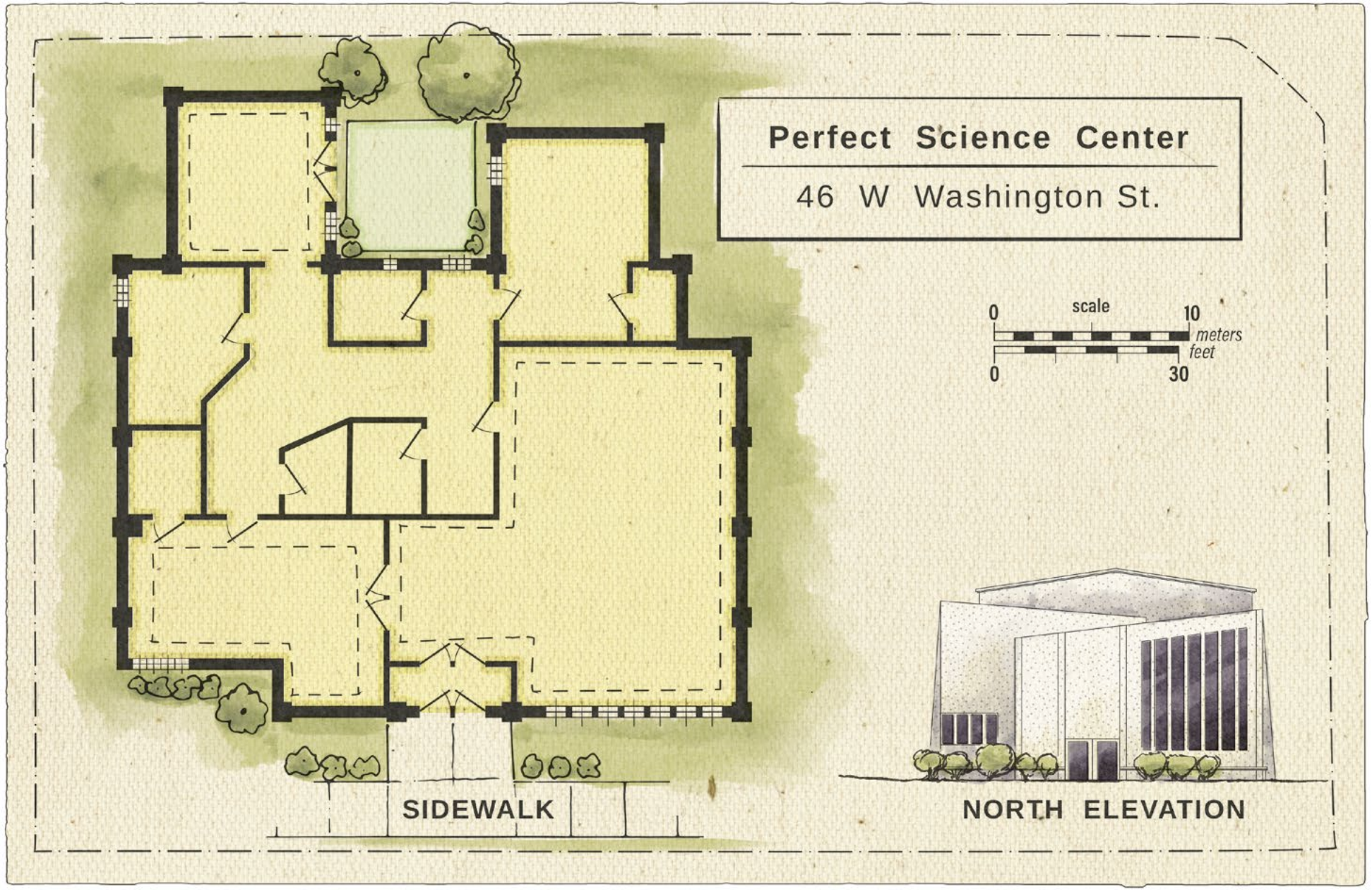
Carl Day

Handout: Dream 6b

Mr. Day, in moments of lucidity, begged me to send you this idol and his note. I'm not sure if I made the right choice, but I felt I must comply with his wishes. I lied to him and told him that I had done so, but then I felt guilty about lying. So I am finally sending the idol and these notes with my trusted colleague, Ms. Campillo. I don't know if Mr. Day's note makes any sense to you, I'm certainly not sure what to make of it.

—Dr. Sonia Sanchez,

Rio Grande Regional Hospital


Perfect Science Center
46 W Washington St.
scale
0
10
meters
feet
0
30
SIDEWALK
NORTH ELEVATION

Cult Worksheet

Cult Name	Diety	Year/Setting	Main Location

Goals/Means

Structure

Number of Members	Archetype/s

Cthulhu Mythos: Leader	Cthulhu Mythos: Members	Sanity Level of Members

Initiation	Other Locations

Resources	Tomes/Artifacts/Special

Security	Associated Monsters

Key Dealings (Legal/Illegal)	Enemies/Weaknesses

Notes

Cult Leader

Cult Name

Leader Name | Age | Gender

Occupation | Background

Portrait

Description

Personality/Traits

	Reg	Half	Fifth
STR			
CON			
SIZ			
DEX			
APP			
POW			
EDU			
INT			

Damage Bonus | Build | Move

	Starting	Current
Sanity		
Luck		

	Maximum	Current
Magic Points		

	Starting	Current
Hit Points		

Skills

	Reg	Half	Fifth	Damage
Brawl				
Dodge				
Weapon				
Weapon				
Weapon				
Weapon				
Weapon				
Weapon				
Weapon				
Weapon				

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Chris Lackey is the co-host of The H.P. Lovecraft Literary Podcast (HPPodcraft.com) and the Rachel Watches Star Trek podcast (RachelWatchesStarTrek.com). Born in 1973 on the Illinois side of the Quad Cities, Chris was introduced to the world of roleplaying games by his dad at the tender age of 8 years-old. Unknown to his father, these Saturday afternoon *Dungeons & Dragons* sessions at the Luthern church would usher him into a lifelong obsession.

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Chris started playing *Call of Cthulhu* in 1987 and has never really stopped. The madness has overwhelmed him and he now drifts between phantasmagoria and lucidity on a daily basis. Chris lives in West Yorkshire, England with his wife and two children.

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Around the millennium, Mike published *The Whisperer,* a fanzine devoted to *Call of Cthulhu*, and ran the Kult of Keepers, a group of *Call of Cthulhu* scenario writers organizing convention games. Mike previously worked for Games Workshop as the Line Manager and co-writer of the ENnie Award winning *Warhammer 40,000 RPG*: *Dark Heresy*, as well as working on *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*. Mike lives in the Midlands of England, betwixt the rolling Derbyshire Peaks and the Satanic Mills of Nottinghamshire, with a grumpy cat called Stripey.

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