

“Player of Hell” © 2001

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Call of Cthulhu

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Introduction

This adventure is intended to follow “The Bookstore” and is part of a continuing min-campaign. However, it can easily be run as a stand alone adventure as it does not presuppose the events in "The Bookstore."

Keeper's Background

After the events in "The Bookstore" the investigators will have a brief interlude of peace. But, of course, this will not last. One of professor Preston's students will have the misfortune of falling victim to a vrykolokas, or Greek vampire. After the initial attack, the student will confide in Preston, who will recognize the attack for what it is.

Getting the Investigators Involved

The investigators will be contacted by Preston who will inform them that he needs their help again. He will say the following: "This will sound odd, but given what we have been though nothing sounds odd anymore...In any case, I believe that one of my students has fallen victim to some sort of terrible being. I need your aid once again."

If the investigators agree, Preston will meet them in his office and say the following:

"Daniel Mays, one of my graduate students, told me that someone had given him a free MP3 Player while he was on his way to class. He said she was a 'freaky looking old chick' but he wasn't about to 'turn down some free hardware.' The next day he seemed a bit haggard and worn. He approached me after class and, knowing my interest in unusual events, he related how he had a terrible dream."

Preston will relate the dream as follows:

"I was asleep in my apartment when I had this horrible nightmare. It felt like the room was cold and it seemed like I was in this black void. Out of the blackness came this terrible face...the face of the old woman. She tore at my throat...I woke up screaming, with blood on my pillow."

Preston will conclude by saying "I believe that we might be dealing with a vampire. That, or Mr. Mays had one hell of a nightmare."

Investigation

There are a few avenues of investigation.

Daniel Mays

Daniel will initially believe that his experience was just a bad dream. However, he does worry that either he is going mad again or that the experience was real (he is not sure which would be worse). When he was 15, Daniel was institutionalized for a brief period and requires medication to avoid having "episodes." The Keeper might wish to play this up to create doubts in the minds of the players.

If the investigators approach Mays politely, with Preston present, he can be persuaded to describe his experience. If he is examined by a person with medical skill, it can be determined that he has two odd bite marks on his neck and that he has lost a significant amount of blood (far more than would flow from the wounds).

Preston's Information

Preston believes that his student might be the subject of a vampire's attention. He can convey the usual information about vampires, but will consult with some of his more esoteric associates as more details are gained. Eventually he will acquire a translation of the key parts of the *The Ancient Ways of the Vrykoloka*.

The Ancient Ways of the Vrykolokas.

The following useful information about the vrykolokas may be found in *The Ancient Ways of the Vrykolokas*. The information is based, in part, on Russell's short story.

"The vrykolokas, like other vampires, is an undead being who subsists on the blood of the living. Like the others of its family, it is supposed to find the cross repulsive..."

"Unlike in the myths of the Balkans, the vrykolokas lies not in his coffin during the day. This horror may freely traverse the waking world, but fortunately it is weaker and less energetic in the light of day."

"While the vrykolokas feeds upon the blood of its victims, it also has a singular method of finishing its dining. When the victim is at last slain, the vrykolokas devours the entire corpse. The noted German metaphysician Hasselberg speculates that the creature does this to prevent the creation of a competitor. He speculates that a victim slain by a vrykolokas will rise again as a vampire. Other sources state that vrykolokas are created from the bodies of people who were vicious beyond the pale of humanity in life."

"While the tales of the Balkans state that a vampire might be slain by a wooden stake, by decapitation or by the use of silver bullets, the vrykolokas proves to be unaffected by such attempts to end its existence. The only thing that has proven to be a reliable means of scourging the creatures is the use of fire."

"Like other vampires, the vrykolokas has an unusual appearance. The skin is like ancient papyrus, the face features unusual growths of hair, and the body seems to be starved. The eyes, like those of other vampires, are hypnotic. The creature has a great and

terrible ability to sway the minds of men, especially those who are feeble, inexperienced or tainted with evil. "

"A final mark distinguishes the vrykolokas from other vampires. Whereas most vampires will simply select a victim based on his whims and set to feeding, the vrykolokas must present his intended victim with a physical item that creates the foul spiritual link between victim and victimizer. The victim must freely take this item, but once it is in the victim's possession it proves to be indestructible and unavoidable. It has been speculated that the item is not, in fact, a physical object at all, but a manifestation of the creature itself."

Map

May's Apartment

Dining Room/Kitchen Area: The dining room and kitchen area for the apartment. The area contains a table, a book shelf and the kitchen appliances.

Bedroom: The bedroom. Contains a bed, desk and two bookshelves.

Closet: A closet. Contains clothes, shoes and such.

Bathroom: A bathroom, typically in need of cleaning.

Fire Escape: A standard metal fire escape.

The Basement

The following details the vrykolokas' lair. It is located in the basement of a building the vrykolokas owned when it was alive. The reputation of the woman the vrykolokas was lives on-the people in the area still speak of her legendary cruelty as a slum lord.

The basement is a normal basement, except (obviously) for the lair of the creature. The lair itself is equipped with a fire suppression system-the vampire is well aware of its vulnerability to fire and has acted accordingly. The investigators will need to disable the system in order to effectively burn the vampire here. It is up to the Keeper how the sprinkler system affects the investigators' attempts.

Hidden Door: The heavy steel door is locked and is hidden behind a pile of old boxes. The vampire generally does not use the door very often, to avoid being seen.

Tunnel to Sewer: This tunnel leads to the sewer. The vampire knows the sewers well and uses them to move about the city unseen.

Main Room: The main room is decorated as a tasteful living room. It seems strangely incongruous here. There are various valuable items, works of art and such, if the investigators are inclined to looting.

Resting Area: this is where the vampire rests during the day. There is a couch in the room, which is lined with photographs of the vampire's victims (she always takes a picture to remind herself of the evil she has done).

Action

The action begins when the investigators set out to deal with the vrykolokas. While the adventure is, by its nature, fairly free flowing, here are the likely events.

The MP3 Player

The player was taken by the vrykolokas from its last victim and it now uses it as its linking item. The player is, in effect, enchanted and cannot be destroyed or thrown away. It will always reappear shortly after such attempts. It still functions as a player.

Attacks

The vrykolokas will visit May each night until he is dead. He lives in a small one-bedroom apartment in a complex in the city. The investigators can try to ambush the vrykolokas there. In such a situation, the vrykolokas will combat the investigators. If the investigators reduce it to 0 hit points or less, it will transform into a mist and flee. It will be careful to not let the investigators follow it (which will be easy for the mist form-it can seep through cracks and such). If May is killed, the vrykolokas will not return and the MP3 Player will be nowhere to be found (the vrykolokas will take it back).

The Lair

Mays will eventually realize that he has a link to the creature. If he trusts the investigators, he will confide that he can "feel" the creature and will be able to lead them to its lair.

If the investigators take him up on it, he will lead them right to its lair. If the vrykolokas is confronted in the day, it will be weaker and easier to defeat. At night it will be at full strength. Naturally, it will know where Mays is, so will be forewarned of his approach. It will not, however, know if anyone else is with him until it sees them.

If the investigators do not go with May, he will go himself and be slain by the vrykolokas.

Conclusion

If the investigators defeat the vampire, they should receive a 1D6 Sanity point reward. If Daniel May dies, they should lose 1D4 sanity points.

If the vampire eludes them, it will continue to find victims. The Keeper might wish to give them another crack at it, or he might wish to impose a 1D3 Sanity point loss for their knowledge that it still stalks the world.

New Being**Vrykolokas**

Char	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	2D6+6	13
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	2D6+6	13
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move: 8		
HP		13

Average Damage Bonus:

Weapons: Bite 50% 1D4+blood loss*, Gaze**, Claw 50% damage 1D4+db

* If the vrykolokas bites its victim, he sustains 1D4 points of damage on the first round. Once bitten, the victim must match POW with the vrykolokas to resist. The vrykolokas then drains 1D6 points of STR.

** The vrykolokas uses its gaze by matching the victim's POW on the resistance table. If the vrykolokas succeeds, the victim is confused and unable to take any action. If the vrykolokas averts his gaze, the victim is freed. If the vrykolokas attacks the victim, the vrykolokas must match POW again or the victim is freed.

Armor: None, but regenerates damage from physical attacks at the rate of one point per round.

Spells: None

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 to be attacked.

Description: A vrykolokas is a Greek vampire, an undead being who subsists on the blood of the living. Unlike other vampires, a vrykolokas is able to remain active during the day and is not harmed by sunlight. However, the day brings a great torpor on a vrykolokas. In game terms, the vrykolokas is at -1D4 Dex and -10 percentiles on all attacks and skills.

Like other vampires, a vrykolokas feeds on the blood of its victims. It will visit a victim once each night until the victim is dead or it is thwarted. When the victim dies, it will consume the body.

Because of their undead nature, vrykolokas are not permanently harmed by physical weapons. When injured, they regenerate one point each round until fully restored. When reduced below zero hit points by any means other than fire, the vrykolokas will turn to a foul, black mist and seep away to regenerate. The mist moves at a rate of 12. They cannot be killed by wooden stakes, decapitation, or silver bullets. They are not harmed by holy water. They can be repelled by the cross if the wielder has faith and successfully matches the vrykolokas' POW on the resistance table.

A vrykolokas must present his intended victim with a special item that creates a foul spiritual link between victim and victimizer. This item, which may be any small item, is imbued with 1 point of the creature's POW. The victim must freely take this item, but once it is in the victim's possession it is effectively indestructible and unavoidable. Though the object can be thrown away, it will, through the workings of the creature's POW, always find its way back to the victim. Attempts to destroy the item will also prove futile. The item enables the creature to find the victim wherever he may be. Once the victim is dead, the vrykolokas reabsorbs the POW. If the vrykolokas is defeated, the item can be kept and gives the possessor 1 extra point of POW for purposes of resisting POW based attacks (such as spells).

The link to the victim is partially two-way. If the victim can make an Idea roll, she will be able to find her way to the vrykolokas.

In terms of appearance, the skin of a vrykolokas is like ancient papyrus, the face features unusual growths of hair, and the body seems to be starved. The eyes, like those of other vampires, are hypnotic.

The vrykolokas in this adventure was an exceptional cruel and vicious woman named Simmone Adopolis. She died in 1958 and her evil heart and rituals she had learned caused her to rise again as a vrykolokas.

New Book

Ancient Ways of the Vrykolokas: This 1863 work in Greek, by Aristotle Pappas, contains a detailed discussion of the vrykolokas (the Greek vampire). *Sanity loss 0/1; Occult +3 percentiles. Average 3 weeks to study and comprehend/6 hours to skim.* Contains no spells.

The book discusses the Greek Vampire and, peripherally, other vampires. It's matter of fact and lucid approach to the subject conveys that the writer is working from actual experience and not simply rehashing old legends(hence the potential for Sanity loss). The book details how to destroy a vrykolokas.

NPCs

Reginald Preston, Scholar

STR: 4 CON: 7 SIZ: 8 INT: 15 POW: 18 DEX: 6
APP: 9 EDU: 20 SAN: 70 HP: 8 DB: -1D6

Important Skills: Astronomy 11%, Bargain 65%, Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Library Use 85%, Natural History 20%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 25%, Occult 63%, Philosophy & Religion 82%

Languages: French 41%, Latin 60%, German 41%, Spanish 16%, Japanese 11%, Russian 15%, Chinese 12%

Weapons: Fist 50% 1D3-1D6

Spells: Elder Sign, Call up Dwellers of the Charnel Yard (Contact Ghoul), Symbol of Power (Voorish Sign), Binding of the Ethereal Protector (Bind Guardian).

Description: At the age of eight, Preston was in terrible automobile accident that killed his parents and left him physically crippled. Fortunately, even at that young age, Preston had an indomitable will that prevented him from giving in to despair. Taken in by his uncle, a noted professor of religion, Preston was set upon a path of learning. By the time he was twenty-three, he held two doctorates and was considered one of the foremost scholars in the fields of philosophy and religion. His scholarly pursuits would have led him to a notable, if mundane, career if not for his chance discovery of a strange text at an old bookstore. This book, a minor mythos text, started him on a path of strange research into the occult and the mythos itself. Since that time Preston has been diligently pursuing clues to the true nature of the world.

Physically, Preston is a very thin man who is missing both legs and half of one arm. He has scars across his face and is confined to a wheel chair most of the time. He has prosthetic legs and a prosthetic arm, but the severity of his injuries and later illnesses prevents him from being very active physically. Mentally, Preston is extremely sharp and displays a powerful and influential personality.

Preston recognizes the mythos as a grave threat to humanity and is dedicated to doing all he can to protect the world from this menace. Preston's one weakness is that he hopes to find some magic which will cure his body.

Daniel Mays, Student

STR: 11 CON: 12 SIZ: 13 INT: 14 POW: 12 DEX: 12
APP: 12 EDU: 14 SAN: 43 HP: 13 DB: 0

Important Skills: Philosophy & Religion 30%

Weapons: Fist 50% 1D3

Daniel Mays is a 23 year old graduate student. While intelligent and friendly, he is somewhat unbalanced and has to take medication to avoid having episodes. He has no desire to be involved in the horror he is trapped in. He will initially dismiss what has happened as a bad dream, but it will become evident to him that it is not.

He is not exceptionally brave and is ill-suited to combat. However, given that his life is at stake, he will cooperate with the investigators. If he goes temporarily insane, he will curl up in a ball and start chewing on his wrists.

Handout

"The vrykolokas, like other vampires, is an undead being who subsists on the blood of the living. Like the others of its family, it is supposed to find the cross repulsive..."

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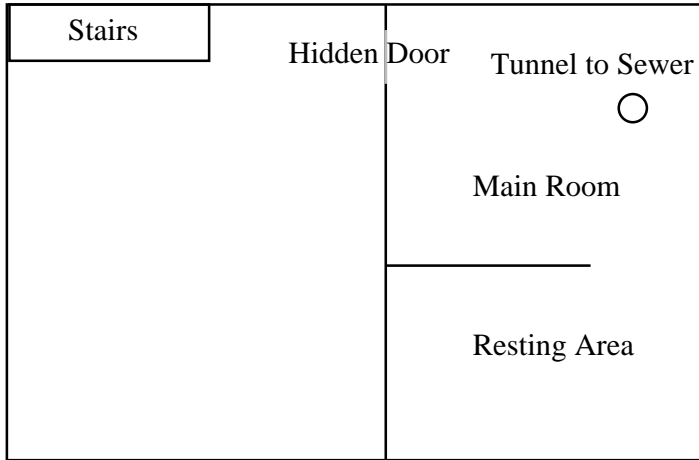
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Basement



Apartment

