

*431 South Walnut Street has a bad reputation. One that no one knows about. Soon its history will come to fulmination when a previous tenant decides that he wants to move back in – at any cost.*

The Shaft is an adventure for Call of Cthulhu 1920s era using the highly acclaimed World of Darkness rules. It is designed to bring together a new group of players in their first session and kick start a campaign.

Print the following pages double sided (odds first, turn over, then evens if your not sure how). Compile them all together and then fold them down the middle to make a half-sized book

# THE S H A F T



A Tale of Supernatural Terror

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*Samuel Hoag has come back for me after all these years, but I will not let him have his satisfaction.*

Player Aid #1: The Note

### LANDLORD CHARGED WITH MURDER

Samuel Hoag, owner of 431 South Walnut Street, was convicted of three cases of murder and is suspected to be involved in the disappearance of three other residents of Arkham. Samuel Hoag's activities only came to light after evidence supplied by a tenant in his building, one Phillip Gionini. The three people found to be killed by Samuel Hoag were all dispatched in a way that has been described as ritualistic in fashion, hinting that Hoag may have ascribed to the practices of devil cults heard of from Europe.

During his trial Hoag showed no remorse, nor even any fear, even though a guilty sentence carries a penalty of death under our states laws.

Player Aid #2: The Newspaper Article

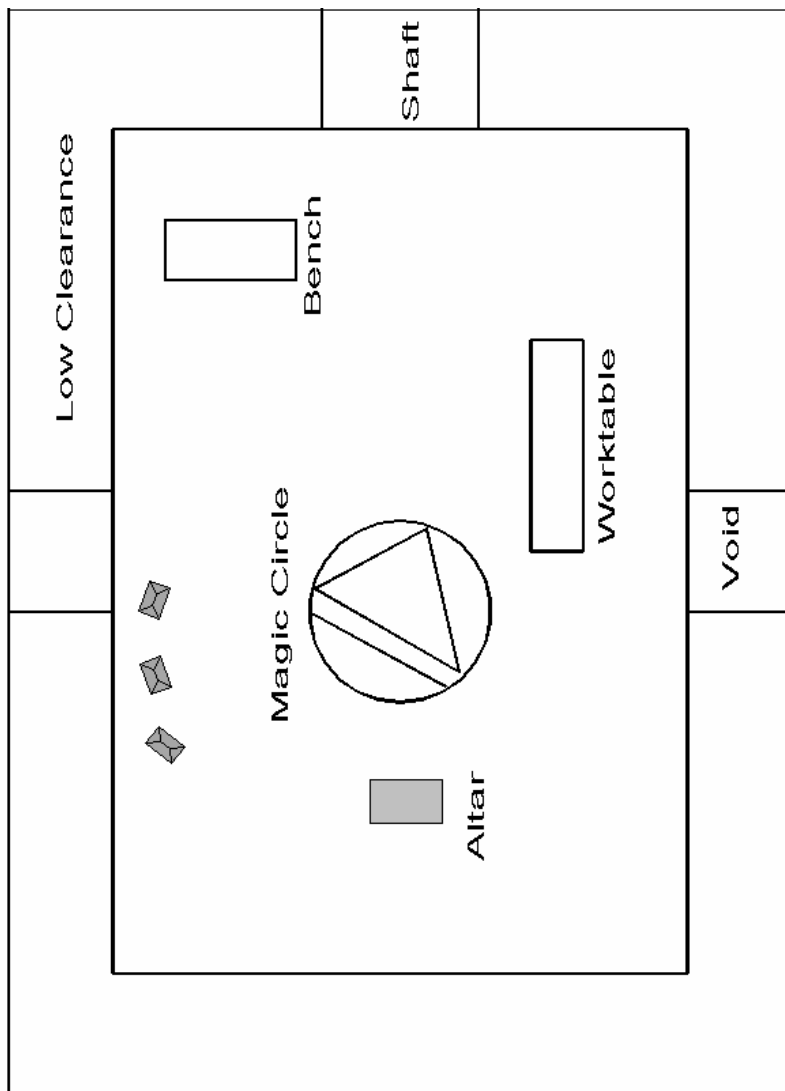
17<sup>th</sup> August

I have told the police as much as I can of Samuel's activities and they have followed through as best they can, taking him in custody to await trial. It seems that the body of evidence against him is sufficient to see him hang for his crimes. I have shown Father Iwanicki the book that contains Samuel's most heinous secrets, secrets of his unholy power and he has decried it as a blasphemy best disposed of. He does not believe that the authorities have the presence of mind to pay it any heed, they being men of the world and not troubled by those things that vex the spirit. I have taken it upon myself however to make sure it troubles not sane men anymore. When Samuel Hoag is interred to the earth this book will go with him, away from the light of day.

Player Aid #3: The Diary

“And so we have come to the end. Oh I grant that it was fun to see the expression on your faces as you fought the Abyssal Voyager. I have had so little enjoyment after the last decade. Gad I thought of all those years in the dark coffin until I was released. But enough of that. I can now continue my researches and I think your wretched hides should please Nyogtha as an initial sacrifice.”

Player Aid #4: The Statement



## The Attic

## The Shaft

*The room is not much to look upon. A simple rectangle with a barred window opening outside, one door, and a one-way window. In the center is a rectangular wooden table with two chairs, one of which you sit on. A bar heater below the window throws off scant heat, but you have felt enough heat for the time.*

*You haven't been inside a police interrogation room before, and the uninviting ambience of this one doesn't enchant you enough to return. The door opens and detective Harrigan walks in, a folder of papers in his hand. He sits opposite you, opens the folder and briefly scans them.*

*"Comfortable?" he asks.*

*You mumble a non-committal affirmative.*

*"What I would like to know, in your own words, is your version of the events that lead to the fire at 431 South Walnut Street where you were tenanted, and the death of Mr. Samuel Hoag."*

*You cast your mind back to when you found Phillip Gionini lying in a bath of his own blood and the note that he had left behind. It all seemed to stem from then ...*

The Shaft is an introductory adventure for Call of Cthulhu. Investigators begin as neighbors in a tenement with a bad history. Soon they find themselves enmeshed in a horror beyond their belief and must use all their skills to escape the evil lurking in the attic.

Playing this adventure will require some good adjudication on the Keeper's part as one of the investigators begins the game possessed by the spirit of dead sorcerer. The keeper is urged to pick a player who can, in the final scenes, play out this part without thought to his character's safety. The player should not be worried that his investigator will die out of hand as measures have been put in place that give him a chance of survival.



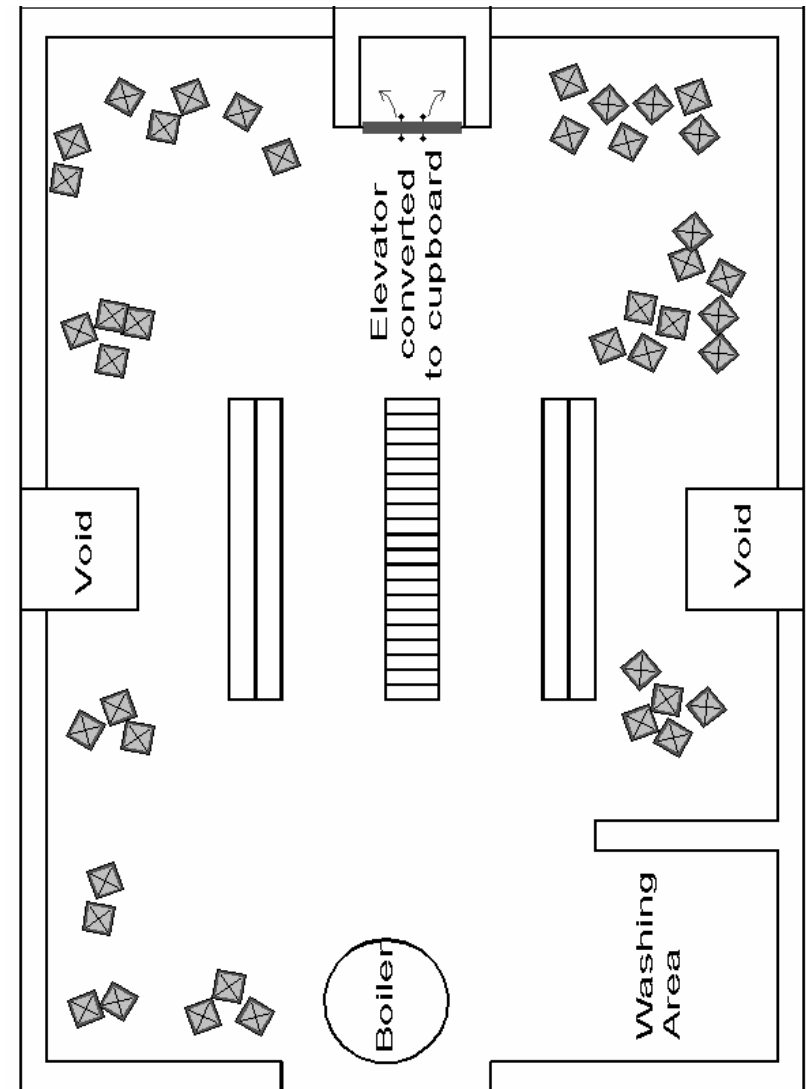
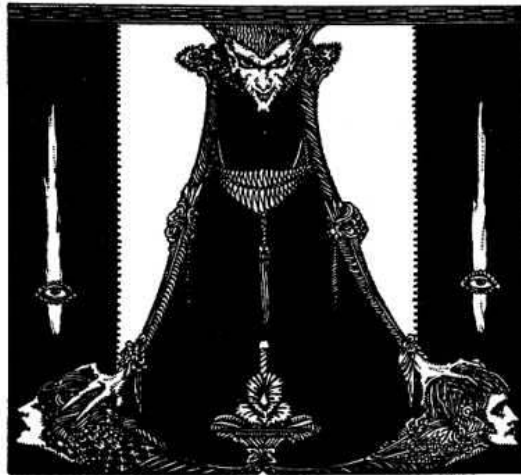
## History

431 South Walnut Street has seen some bad times. As a tenement it has housed many peoples and seen a landlord or two. Built in 1843, this unremarkable building was one of the first to sport the new vertical people platforms when they became popular at the turn of the century. It was always troublesome and the previous owner and landlord, Samuel Hoag, decided to board it up completely rather than keep paying for exorbitant repairs. Samuel was also a budding occultist and was a member of the Arkham witch cult and worshipper of Nyogtha until his actions were discovered by others and he was tried and hanged for his part in several disappearances. During his time as a member of the witch cult he had killed some personal enemies and left their bodies in the defunct elevator shaft that lead to his altar and workshop in the attic.

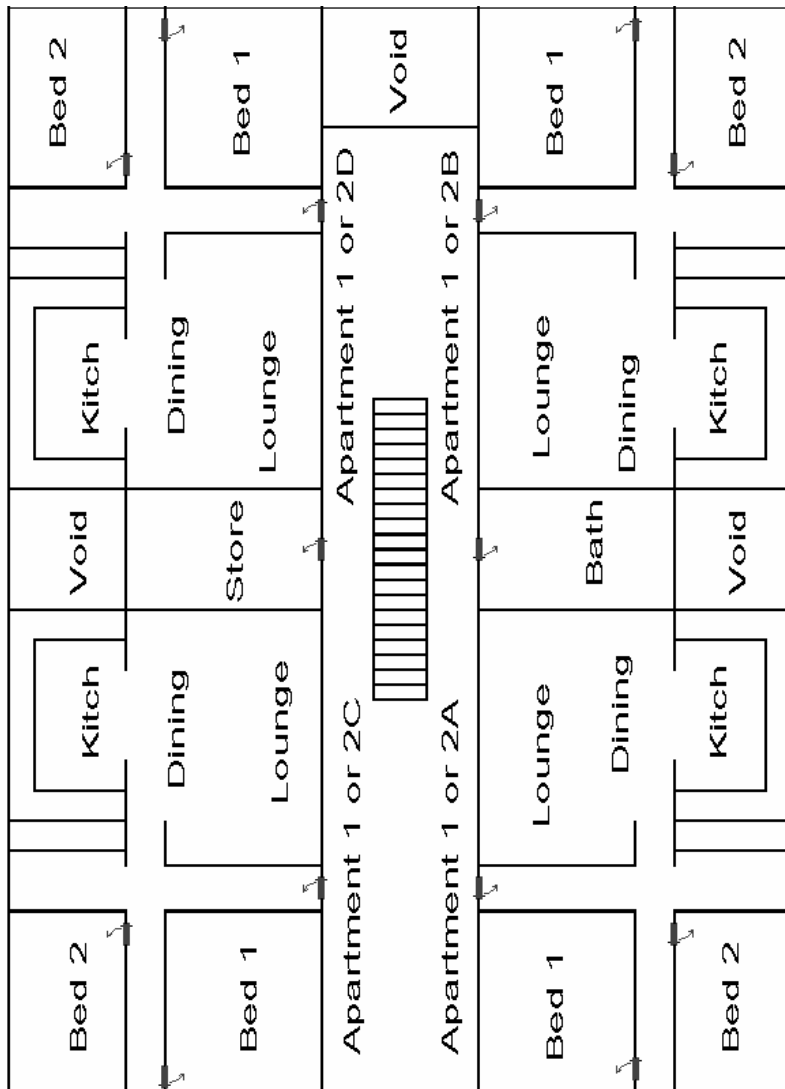
431 South Walnut Street was then put up for auction but its reputation as the home of a mad cultist left it in the hands of solicitors for two years until Darren LeGrange bought it for a ridiculously low price.

During the next eight years tenants came and went, except for one Phillip Gionini, who was pivotal in providing evidence at the trial of Samuel Hoag that saw him hang for his heinous crimes.

But Samuel Hoag was not happy to remain in his crypt, for once again the words of Ibn Saccaboa have held their wisdom, and his consciousness transferred itself to the crawling things of the earth, and thence to another slippery host until it found its way back to 431 South Walnut Street where it has possessed a tenant, one who will do his unholy bidding.



**The Basement**



**Second & Third Floors**

**Running the Adventure**

In this scenario the investigators are introduced into strange events following the suicide of a fellow tenant. These events will compete in importance with ordinary events that normally constitute the investigators day. As such the adventure may seem to be slow, but is more believable in the long run.

To bring this about, each player will have a 'turn' where they deal with an event. The 'turn' is a nebulous amount of time, perhaps a day or maybe several. Only one investigator at a time will have an esoteric encounter, all the others will have standard ones as detailed in the Day-to-Day Life and Arcane Happenings sections below.

The possessed investigator will go about his everyday life, but will, when suspicions are thrown up, be able to provide artificial evidence implicating Darren LeGrange as a mad cultist. He may also help the other investigators who fail certain rolls by supplying information that they are looking for.

**431 South Walnut Street**

Located in the Lower Southside, this three story tenement has 10 apartments and 1 large apartment for the owner/landlord, currently Darren LeGrange and his wife Enid. Distribute the investigators randomly throughout the other 10 apartments, don't let them choose. Once this is done populate the other apartments with any NPCs that you wish. Normally, in this era, single men and women don't share apartment complexes, but we will stretch this rule allowing women to board on the first floor where they can be watched over by Darne's wife Enid.

The apartment is located down from the Saint Stanislaus church and the area has a high degree of Italian families living there, though there are some Poles and Irish.

The tenement used to boast of an elevator but the previous landlord boarded it up and the current one, Darren LeGrange, has not bothered to open it up again. Between apartments there is either a communal bathroom or closet/store room. Behind these rooms are void spaces that carry gas, water, and electrical pipes. It would be possible to climb these spaces but they are cramped and dirty, a suggested penalty of 1 dice should be applied to any such rolls.

On the first floor two apartments have been made into one for the current landlord Darren and his wife. On the second and third floors there are 4 apartments each, lettered 2A to D for the second floor and 3A to D for those on the third floor. There is no access to the attic space from the third floor. The basement is a large storage area that also has a communal washroom and boiler for hot water and heating.

### A Sad Loss

The scenario begins with the investigators and their neighbors crowded into the hallway outside the communal bath where the body of Phillip Gionini has been found. Ambulance workers are retrieving the body from the bath and placing it in a gurney. They are in no hurry for Phillip Gionini is beyond any help that current medical practice can provide. To the discovering investigator you can hand Player Aid #1: The Note.

All that neighbors know, including Darren LeGrange, is that Phillip has lived here for a long time, since before Darren purchased the property. Phillip himself has been reticent to mention his past and the deeds that the previous landlord got up to. An empirically minded man, Phillip thought that with the death of Samuel Hoag he was safe from retribution; little did he know of the power of those steeped in the mythos.

### Is Anyone Curious?

The police, in the form of Detective Harrigan, a young cop who is also the star of the local rugby team, will ask neighbors, in particular the investigator who found Phillip, questions relating to the victim. They can tell him little. Phillip was a helpful man who worked as a carpenter for a cabinetmaker on Washington Street. He was not married but had family in Boston (a brother). He regularly attended St. Stanislaus church and did not keep odd hours. The note is a mystery to the investigators as they know of nothing in Phillip's past that it might refer to. Detective Harrigan will discover its significance by himself.

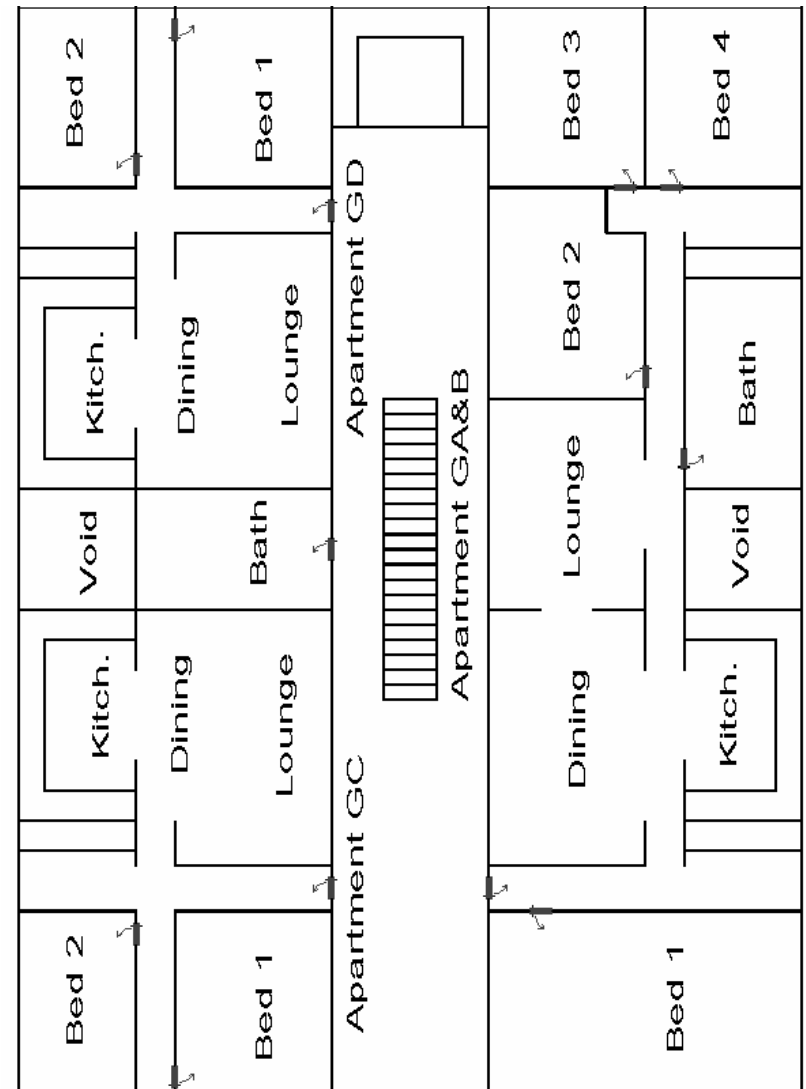
If investigators delve into the significance of the note they will have to examine the libraries newspaper archives. Darren LeGrange knows nothing of Samuel Hoag as he purchased the property from solicitors who dispersed the property after Samuel Hoag's death. All the other tenants of the apartment moved into the tenement after Darren LeGrange took over.

At the library an investigator can make a Wits + Academics roll (with a +2 bonus for using the library facilities) to discover a relevant newspaper article dated ten years ago. Give the players Player Aid #2: The Newspaper Article.

### Day-to-Day Life

After the suicide of Phillip Gionini, the daily grind of the investigators may seem a bit humdrum, however this is what they need to do to bring home the bacon to pay for the daily necessities of life.

The investigators may come from a wide variety of walks of life, college professors, struggling artists, tough gangsters, or even boring accounts clerks. As such they can all have a very varied experience. Below is a list of such experiences that they might have during a 'turn'.



First Floor

### Day to Day Life Events Chart

Investigator Type	Event
Business or Criminal	The investigator needs to negotiate a difficult contract. He may need to grease local authorities, impress an important out of town contact, or even arrange more social entertainments. Make a Manipulation + Persuasion roll. Expensive dinners, call-girls, bribes, etc can add to the roll if appropriate. This could be dragged out over several 'turns'.
Intellectual	The investigator is working on a project that will take some time. Initially he will need to gather his data. This will require one or more Intelligence + Academics rolls to gain the required information. After that he will need to review the data to develop his aims. This is purely either an Intelligence or Wits check (investigator's choice). Finally the investigator will need to explain his theories in a text of some form requiring a Manipulation + Expression roll. In the above rolls, Five successes allow for any leg to be completed in 5 days. Each extra success reduces that time by a day.
Artistic	The investigator needs to produce some work (a painting, singing, writing, etc) to pay the bills. Most works of art take time and this can be repeated again and again. Each requires an Expression roll matched with an appropriate Attributes (see WoD 80).
Criminal	Enforcing. Someone needs to be convinced that doing a job is in their best interest. This can be achieved with a Manipulation (torture) or Presence (intimidation) + Expression roll.
Social	The character may simply be chasing his true love. No rolls are really required, just let him get creative with what he is trying to achieve.
Legal	A policeman may need to investigate a crime. He can make a Wits + Investigate check to determine who has done what to whom. This may lead on to a bust on a later 'turn'.
Professional	An investigator may come from a variety of professional backgrounds that are constantly sought after, doctor, lawyer, etc. Rolls for these benefactors can vary greatly.

## Arcane Happenings

These events happen to individual investigators. On their own they are strange and noteworthy. More importantly they are unlikely to attract the attention of the local constabulary. If an investigator does call the police the best they get is a visit from a patrolman who makes a cursory examination and fobs the investigator off as having an overactive imagination (though not that they mention this).



## SAMUEL HOAG, Wizard beyond Death

**Attributes:** Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 1, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1, Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 3

**Skills:** Academics 3, Craft 2, Drive 1, Empathy 2, Expression 3, Occult 4, Persuasion 3, Politics 1, Science 1, Socialize 3, Stealth 2, Subterfuge 2

**Merits:** Language (French) 1, Mentor 1 (Camlas), Status (witch cult) 2

**Spells:** All those in his journal; An Intelligence + Medicine (which he doesn't have) + Cthulhu Mythos -3 roll can be used to heal damage, cost 1 mana; A Presence + Science + Cthulhu Mythos roll can cause a large shock to shoot out from his fingertips, cost 1 mana.

**Mana:** 11

**Willpower:** 5

**Cthulhu Mythos:** 3

**Morality:** 0

**Virtue:** Hope

**Vice:** Envy

**Initiative:** 8

**Defence:** 2

**Speed:** 7

**Size:** 2

**Health:**  (-1)  (-2)  (-3)

### Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	2 (L)	2

### Armour:

Type	Rating	Notes
Fur	1	







*“Ye shall know me as a pestilence upon the minds of men, a ravening sickness that comes before the darkness that is Nyogtha, and you shall bow to his will as surely as the mighty oak bends to a hurricane.”*

### Arcane Happenings Events Chart

Where Noticed	Event
Basement	Darren LeGrange is seen entering the basement, yet upon entering it themselves, the investigator finds no one there. Perhaps they were mistaken. (this event is only for the possessed investigator who wants to finger Darren LeGrange).
Room adjacent to shaft	Winds from a storm blow fiercely outside making windows rattle and blowing debris down the street. The investigator, however, can hear another tinkling sound. With 2 successes on a Wits + Composure roll the investigator determines that the sound is coming from beyond the wall. A third success recognizes the sound as rattling chains.
Anywhere	If one of the investigators has a pet then it mysteriously disappears. If none have one then a neighbor relates how his pet has disappeared. If concerned investigators search for the pet then they find a small pool of blood and a scrap of fur. The print of a small mammal is found in the blood.
Basement	While looking for something placed in the basement storage a while back, the investigator comes across the diary of Phillip Gionini. See the ‘Diary’ section below for more details.
Anywhere	Hearing a strange noise in the kitchen, the investigator finds what looks like a raccoon rooting through his cupboards, though its tail has no fur. Accosting it, it turns its flat, human-like face to the investigator, stands on its hind legs, bares its sharp teeth at the investigator and runs off with a large knife in its paws, disappearing in a hole hidden by the wallpaper. This event requires a Horror Rating 1 Sanity roll. This is the form that Samuel Hoag uses when not possessing the chosen investigator.
Outside	Darren Le Grange takes late night walks to the Christchurch Cemetary where he visits the grave of his estranged mother Lillian Androvetti. Darren is a bastard and something his Italian mother stridently tried to hide.

## **The Diary**

The diary of Phillip Gionini is fairly non-descript, relating his experiences as an Italian born immigrant carpenter struggling in the new world. It is a tale of minor prejudices, some romance, and resolve. If the reader of the volume has Hope as his Virtue then he will regain one Willpower from reading the diary.

More importantly, the last entries of the diary relate the events leading up to the capture of Samuel Hoag after Phillip exposes his activities to the authorities. He also states quite openly of Samuel's supposed involvement in the dark arts and of his own discovery of Samuel's secrets in a journal which he had buried with Samuel. Give the investigators Player Aid #3: The Diary.

## **Christchurch Cemetery**

It may not seem it, but the trail leads to Samuel's grave where Phillip Gionini placed Samuel Hoag's journal of evil rites. Samuel wants the book back but would prefer if someone else did the dirty work for him. Somehow the suggestion to exhume the book must get through to the investigators. Perhaps it can be suggested that if the journal contains Samuel's secrets it may also contain a way to destroy him, or at least ward him off.

Located on the south edge of town, Christchurch is the newest cemetery in Arkham and as such has not suffered the depredations of ghoul plunder that the others have. Entrance to the cemetery is through the main gate which is open from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. daily. There is a watchman who lives near the gate. Entering the cemetery after hours requires the climbing of its eight foot retaining wall topped with rusty iron spikes. A Dexterity + Athletics roll (possibly helped with the use of a ladder) will achieve this, though a secondary Dexterity roll is required to get over the spikes. If this roll is failed the investigator takes 1 point of lethal damage and needs to make a Stamina + Strength roll. If they fail this then they develop a tetanus infection. This requires the investigator to make further Stamina rolls after a number of days equal to 6 minus their Strength attribute. On a fail they lose 1 point of Stamina and gain a -1 penalty to all dice pools. If they reach 0 Stamina then they die.

After finding the non-descript and neglected grave of Samuel Hoag they can spend several hours digging his plot until they expose the coffin, a cheap pine affair that shows heavy wear from all manner of underground vermin and rot. Inside is the skeleton of Samuel Hoag lying at rest amid the rotten funeral garments he was buried in. Beneath his head is his journal. Several small holes allow grave dirt in to the box where it has rotted away.

No matter how cautious the investigators are in approaching in the body, and no matter what precautions they take to make sure it doesn't move, the moldering body of Samuel Hoag takes no aggressive actions whatsoever. However here is a monster that the undead wizard summoned earlier that drops from a nearby tree.

## **The Altar**

At the top of the shaft is Samuel Hoag's altar and laboratory looking eerily peaceful in the soft lighting provided by several candelabras and oil lamps. The alien situation is so relaxing that Darren LeGrange relaxes on a solid table at the other end of the room. Only his blood dripping into a bowl spoils the whole scene. As the characters make a Horror Rating 1 Sanity roll pass Player Aid #4: The Statement of the possessed investigator.

As he finishes he pulls a large knife from his clothing and leers intently at the other investigators. Samuel will try to kill or subdue the other investigators, confident in his semi-expendable body, magical prowess, and the inability of those who think in more logical lines to be able to cope with such situations.

## **Defeating Hoag**

The possessed investigator is under the compulsion of a creature very similar to a rat-thing. It is in this body that Samuel Hoag's consciousness now resides. Currently the rat-thing is rooming in the body of the possessed investigator. As the possessed investigator is attacked he may need to be healed, Hoag can use his magic for that application and the other investigators will see little hands appear from the wounds to seal them, requiring the investigators to make Horror Rating 1 Sanity checks.

If the other investigators manage to subdue or pin the possessed investigator then Hoag in his raccoon body will break out from the possessed investigator (for 1 point of lethal damage) and attack the remaining investigators.

Make this fight scary, hectic, and fun. Somewhere along the line an oil lamp will be knocked over and a fire will break out. Initially it will be the equivalent of a torch but over the next few scenes it will grow to the size of bonfire and investigators will have to be careful to evade it. By the end of the combat it will be the equivalent of an inferno with the third story also ablaze.

Give the remaining investigators little time to grab what they want and leave the scene and the building as the fire brigade and police arrive. At this point cut back to the interrogation room and let the investigator finish the tale in his or her own words. Without corroborating evidence it will all be very hard to prove and investigators may need to spend some time at Arkham Sanitarium for their best interests

## ZOMBIES, Victims of the Sorcerer

Essentially inanimate objects given will by a strange magic, zombies only attributes are treated like those of a ghost representing the shard of spirit needed to make the bodies animate. If certain spells are known then the animating spell can be attacked and destroy the zombie.

**Attributes:** Power 2, Finesse 2, Resistance 2.

**Skills:** Brawl 2

**Initiative:** 4

**Horror:** 2

**Defence:** 2

**Durability:** 2

**Speed:** 10

**Size:** 5

**Structure:** 2 (all wounds beyond its durability apply a -1 penalty)

**Damage:** 2 (if used as a weapon)

**Corpus:**     (-1)  (-2)  (-3)



### Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Slam	2 (B)	6

### Armour:

Type	Rating	Notes
Durability	2	Only damage in excess of its durability rating is subtracted from its Structure rating.

## The Thing in the Tree

In combat, a byakhee may either strike with both claws simultaneously (getting two attacks in the round), or attempt to bite the target. If the bite strikes home the byakhee remains attached to the victim and begins to drain his or her blood. Each round the byakhee remains attached, including the first, the blood drain deals bashing damage with a dice pool equal to the byakhee's Strength + Stamina from the victim until death. The byakhee characteristically remains attached with the Bite attack's grapple until it is slain or until the victim is drained of blood.

**Attributes:** Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2.

**Skills:** Brawl 1

**Spells:** None.

**Mana:** 9

**Willpower:** 4

**Cthulhu Mythos:** 2

**Initiative:** 5

**Horror:** 2

**Defence:** 2

**Speed:** 10/18 flying (species factor 3/12 flying)

**Size:** 6

**Health:**       (-1)  (-2)  (-3)



### Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Claw	1 (L)	6
Bite	1 (L) plus grapple	6

### Armour:

Type	Rating	Notes
Fur & hide	1	

## The Journal

When the investigators finally get to read the journal of Samuel Hoag they are given a valuable clue to uncovering what is really going on, however this only draws them further into a mire of secrets best left unknown. Any investigator can read it with just a few hours time given to the task.

Specifics are not given about the Arkham witch cult apart from the mention of him being a member, his secret name Dortheg, the name Nahab being applied to the leader of the group and Camlas, who introduced him into the cult. Most of the journal concentrates on his worship of a being called Nyogtha, his own particular specialty and now shared with the witch cult.

Hoag writes of esoteric experiences and experiments in his attic altar/laboratory and how he kills several people he has always hated and placed in his 'gallery' located in the old, disused elevator shaft, which he accesses from the basement. His last entry talks about the trial and its inconvenience to his plans but he has little fears, for he has the knowledge that will allow him to return.

Reading the diary requires a Horror Rating 1 Sanity roll. It contains the spells black binding, summon/bind byakhee,



## The Attic

There are no accesses to the attic through the third floor. If investigators who live on that floor wish to destroy their roof to gain access to the attic then they will have to deal with Darren LeGrange who will terminate their lease immediately if they refuse to stop the action and will call the police if necessary. Each door to the elevator on each floor has also been boarded over and destruction of these drywalls will be treated with the same attitude. If the investigators look in the far wall tool cupboard in the basement then they will find, with a little searching, the false roof leading to the disused elevator shaft. Looking up it is complete darkness but a soft ambient light can be seen, partially obscured by something in the shaft. Artificial light sources will reveal three bodies dangling in the shaft at various heights. Ask for a Horror Rating 0 Sanity roll.

## So What Do We Do Now?

Less audacious, or some would say sensible, investigators would call the police at this stage and let them handle it. It might be poignant to remind them that they have (possibly) illegally exhumed a corpse and faced a creature never before reported on this earth. While the police would be interested in the bodies in the shaft, there is obviously much more going on that they might not be prepared to take at face value. As in interesting aside, if the investigators think to look for Darren LeGrange then he will not be found in the building.

Perhaps it might be time for the possessed investigator to suggest that they can handle it themselves, that they should see it through. Samuel Hoag is a clever man and may try to play the investigators Virtues against them.

If the investigators insist on calling the police then have two patrolmen examine the scene, clamber up the shaft and scream for help after dropping his service revolver. Whatever it takes, get them up the damned shaft (oh and don't forget to have the patrolman's mangled corpse drop on someone).

## Through the Darkness

Climbing the shaft requires a Strength + Athletics roll attaining 3 success to scale the 30 feet from the top of the elevator (just below the first floor) to the top of the shaft (level with the roof of the third floor). The investigators can add an additional die for using the elevator shaft steel frame.

Of course the bodies animate to attack.

