

War Buddy©1998
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Call of Cthulhu

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Introduction

This adventure is set in the 1920s era and takes place in the Maine woods. The adventure can be set in other times and places with suitable modifications. The adventure is intended to be part of a ongoing campaign, but can be played as a stand alone adventure.

Getting the Investigators Involved

The investigators will be drawn into the horror by a desperate letter from Jack Meredith, who has clearly become involved in something very dangerous. The adventure is written based on the assumption that at least one investigator has a military background. If this is not the case, the investigators will have to be brought into the situation by a friend who was in the military with Jack Meredith.

The Letter

The adventure begins when a young man, dusty from riding in an open Model-T, brings the investigator a special courier letter. If asked, and tipped, the young man will tell the investigator that he has driven all the way from New York City to bring him the letter. If asked about Meredith, he will say that Meredith looked tired and that "Well, it was a bit odd. He kept looking around, checking out the windows and such. Like he was looking for something. He gave me a mighty strange look, like he was trying to look right through my skin. Yeah, I know that is a weird thing to say, but, God's honest truth, that's how it felt." The young man does not have anything else to say and will drive away.

Dear x,

Do you remember those days before the war when we were young and full of high

ideals? I remember how funny it was to practice with the broomsticks because the Army did not have enough rifles for everyone. How we all laughed and joked about how we were going to send the Kaiser's boys packing. Of course, we soon found out things were not going to be so easy.

I do not have to remind you of the mud, the blood, and the death. Even in my wildest nightmares I had never imagined such horrors. Like so many soldiers, the madness of war wormed its way deep into my heart. In the fire of the machineguns I could hear the chatter of demons, promising mutilation and death. In the explosions of the artillery shells I could hear a roaring voice, saying "God is dead," "God is dead," over and over.

The madness and horror chewed at my very soul, tearing away my faith in God and country. All that I held dear seemed empty and meaningless. I do not know how I survived those terrible days, but I did. Now, I think it might have been better if I had died.

Perhaps if we had been able to go back together, things might have turned out differently. But, on the return voyage I met another soldier, a man name Lance Blake. Like me, Blake had been terrible affected by the war. Blake, like myself, had lost his youthful connection to God and country. Unlike me, Blake had found something else to replace them.

I can only hint at the dark secrets that Blake had learned in dark and horrid places in the old land of Europe. Suffice it to say that Blake lead me blindly down a path leading to a madness and horror greater than any I had witnessed in the war.

Possessed of an almost infernal charm, Blake was able to draw others into a group, which he called the Order of the Ancient Stone. Many who joined thought it was buy yet another group of eccentric spiritualists, but they soon learned, to their endless horror, that Blake was offering something else.

Even now I cannot bring myself to write of all I know. Suffice it to say, that I have done terrible things and participated in activities that no sane and God-fearing man should engage in.

Ironically, it was Blake himself who caused me to turn against the group. He thought he could trust me and revealed some of his true plans. The horror of these words surpassed all the previous horrors and shocked me back to my senses. While I realized that I am beyond redemption, Blake must be stopped. Although I have not spoken to you in years, I know you to be a brave and good man. I hope I can count on you, for Blake must be stopped.

I have stolen an important item from Blake and I have entrusted it to Father Ronald Henesey. I have sent him to my family camp in Maine. You remember where it is. You must meet the good Father there and receive the item. He will be able to tell you more.

I now go to try to kill Blake. I fear that he cannot be slain by any mortal weapon, but I must try. For my soul, I must try.

Yours,

Lieutenant Jack Meredith

The Telegraph

Shortly after receiving the letter, the investigator will receive a special telegraph delivery from Charles Meredith, Jack's father. The telegraph will say: "Jack is dead. Suspect foul play."

The telegraph should convince the players that they will need to act quickly. The investigator who was a friend of Jack will remember where the camp is, since he spent several summer weekends there with Jack and his family

Investigation

The following information will be available to the investigators. The Keeper should be careful to keep the investigators on track. If they spend too much time investigating, they will arrive too late.

Jack Meredith

The investigator who knew Jack Meredith will remember the following about Jack Meredith: Jack was an active young man who was much given to flights of imagination as a boy. Jack was very religious and kind, but was always in search of something "more." In the war, Jack fought bravely, but he held up badly under the pressures of the war.

After the war, Jack sent the occasional letter to the investigator, telling of his latest attempt to find meaning. Jack wrote of his experiences with spiritualism, mediums, and other such things. Jack's next to last letter (the last being the letter that starts the adventure) mentioned that he had finally found an answer.

Keeper's Information

The "answer" that Jack found was Lance Blake, a man who had revived an ancient cult dedicated to finding six stones. Jack joined Blake's cult, but was horrified when he learned a small part of the actual truth. Jack contacted Father Henesey, whom he had met a few years ago during his quest for meaning. He gave Henesey an item he had taken from Blake and told him to go to the camp in Maine and wait for his friend. Henesey, who is a member of a secret society devoted to fighting the forces of evil and madness, took the item to the camp to await the arrival of Jack's friend.

Charles Meredith

If the investigator contacts Charles Meredith, Charles will obviously be upset. Charles is a wealthy man, but he lost his wife several years ago and now he has lost his only son. He will be able to tell the investigators that Jack drifted from one "group of oddballs to the next." Charles will say that he received one letter from Jack a few years ago, saying that he had found "the answer." Charles tried to find Jack, but was unable to do so, despite spending a considerable sum on private investigators.

The next time Charles saw his son was after the police called him. Jack was found dead in his apartment, only a few miles from his father's house. The doctor reported

that Jack died of a heart attack. Because of the expression of pure horror on his son's face, Charles thinks that someone killed Jack. He does not have any solid evidence, but he feels that something terrible happened to Jack. Charles will urge the investigators to find out more.

Keeper's Information

Charles is correct. Jack was killed by a horror that Lance Blake sent to take care of him. Blake knows that Jack took an item from him, but it will take him a short while to figure out who Jack gave it to and where the person went. If the investigators check Jack's apartment, it will be clear that it has been thoroughly searched. If the investigators check the apartment, they will find nothing of interest.

Father Henesey

Once the investigators get to the camp, they can speak with Father Henesey. The good Father has a photo of the investigator who knew Jack, so he will be able to recognize him. Henesey is very cautious and will keep a careful watch while he waits.

Father Henesey knows a great deal more than he is willing to tell the investigators, but he will share the following information:

The Eye

Clipping from *The Eye*, a skeptical, independent New York City newspaper that focuses on occult and other unusual matters.

The Order of the Ancient Stone is, despite the "Ancient" in its name, a relatively new group. Formed in the early 1920s by Lance Blake, the group meets here in New York City. According to one member, who chose to remain anonymous, the group is dedicated to "ancient secrets, deep mysteries, and really good poker games."

Ancient Legends and Myths,

Excerpt from *Ancient Legends and Myths*, by Dr. L. Prescott, Pilgrim Press, 1911.

There is a brief mention in the works of Lucetus, a little known historian in the Roman Empire, of a Cult of the Ancient Stone. According to Lucetus, this cult was dedicated to finding six stones that were "brought from on high." It was reported that the stones would "open a door into the world" that would allow "it who waits beyond the wall" to come to earth.

Lucetus reports that this cult was initially popular in Rome, but he notes that the cult died out when most of its leaders were found "torn asunder into bloody bits."

Other Information

Henesey says that he knew Jack from a time when Jack was lost and looking for answers: "Jack was a lost soul. He came to my church, looking for answers. Sadly, he

thought that God had abandoned him. We spoke at length and I must have made some impression on him, for he called me in his time of need and entrusted me with an item. I have had some experience with the sort of cult Jack had the misfortune of falling into, so I took what he said very seriously. I am sure the cult places a great deal of value on this item and I am certain that we must not let it fall back into their hands.”

Keeper's Information

Henesey is telling the truth about how he met Jack. However, Henesey will not say anything about the fact that he is a member of a secret society that has been waging a war against cults and other servants of madness and evil. He will admit that he has had some experience with unusual events, including an exorcism.

The item Henesey has is a shard from one of the six stones. He keeps the shard in a lead lined box, to protect himself and others from its effects. The shard is detailed below.

Maps

The following details the adventure's two maps.

Main Map

The main map details the area around the cabin. The cabin is located approximately six miles from the nearest town, which is Norway, Maine. The cabin can only be reached by a well worn trail that winds through the woods for about a mile and crosses a sturdy log bridge. Ripple Stream is shallow enough to be waded across and contains brook trout.

The Cabin Interior

The cabin is built out of native pine. It has been painted a cheerful white color with red trim. There are six glass windows which open by sliding one part of the window up. The door has a place for a padlock, a latch, and a small bolt (intended only to keep the door from swinging open-it can be broken by matching its STR of 7 on the Resistance Table). The roof is steep, to keep the Maine winter snows from crushing it.

The interior of the cabin is decorated with paintings of hunting, fishing and other nature scenes. There is a collection of camping gear, including folding cots, kerosene lamps, two cans of kerosene, cooking gear, and other common items such as fishing poles. There is even an Army surplus two-way radio in the living room along with a conventional civilian radio and record player.

The cabin does not have electricity or indoor plumbing. Lighting is provided by kerosene lamps. Water has to be poured from jugs and there is an outhouse behind the cabin.

Living Room: The living room contains a large oak table, obviously an expensive piece. It is carved with scenes of hunting. Meredith's mother made his father take it

to the camp because she thought the hunting scenes were out of place in her fine house. Around the table are several well made oak chairs. The living room also contains a well made brick fireplace. Over the fireplace hangs a double barrel 12-gauge shotgun, in excellent condition. There is a box of 50 shells for it in one of the cabinets.

Sleeping Area: The sleeping area contains two comfortable bunk beds, along with extra blankets.

Action

If the investigators act quickly and head to the camp without unnecessary delay, the action begins when the first of the forces sent to regain the stone arrive in the area. Fortunately for the investigators, Blake will sorely underestimate the abilities of the good Father Henesey and send only a relatively minor force against the investigators. Of course, Blake will not make the same mistake twice.

If the investigators spend too much time investigating and delaying, they will arrive to find the camp deserted. There will obvious signs of a desperate struggle (a broken door, bullet holes in the walls and blood) but they will find nothing else. Father Henesey will have been killed and the item Jack entrusted to him will have been taken by Blake's agent. If this occurs, the Keeper will need to prepare another adventure to give the investigators a chance to acquire the item.

The Ruffians

Lance Blake will eventually learn that Father Henesey has the item Jack took from him and that Henesey is in the camp. Believing that Henesey is not a serious threat, Blake will send Karl LeBlanc to recover the item.

After arriving in Maine, LeBlanc will hire some men of questionable character to go to the camp and rough up Father Henesey. He will tell them to keep Henesey there and that he will arrive at midnight with the rest of their money. Since the men have been out of work for quite some time and they are not exactly upright citizens, they will take his money without asking any questions.

Shortly after the investigators arrive and have had a chance to speak with Henesey, the ruffians will show up at the camp. They will knock on the door, pretending to be lost hunters. They do not expect the investigators to be there, so they might be able to take the ruffians by surprise.

The ruffians will put up a stiff fight, but if they think they are losing, they will try to escape. If they cannot escape, they will surrender and beg for mercy. If adequately motivated, they will be willing to say all they know: "Some guy hired us to come here and rough up the guy we found here. We were supposed to keep him here until midnight. The guy that hired us said he had some business, but he'd be here to give us the other half."

Karl LeBlanc and the Wood Shadows

LeBlanc knows how to summon Wood Shadows and decided, in his pride, to use

them to kill Henesey. Since Wood Shadows can only act at night, he had to make sure that Henesey would be in the cabin at night, so he hired the ruffians. Around 11:00 pm, LeBlanc will drive out to the trail to the camp and summon two Wood Shadows. He will then send them to kill everyone in the camp. LeBlanc is a frugal man, so he planned on getting his money back from the Ruffians.

The Wood Shadows will seep their way into the cabin and attack whoever happens to be in the darkest area. Henesey will recognize them for what they are and bring the silver blood into play. The Wood Shadows will attack madly until they are destroyed or the inhabitants of the cabin are all dead.

LeBlanc will be wait outside the cabin until he is certain that everyone is dead. If the investigators defeat the Wood Shadows, he will be a bit worried, but his pride and fear of Blake will cause him to try to take matters into his own hands. If he is defeated, he will refuse to talk, no matter how much he is pressed or tortured. He has seen what happens to those who cross Blake and nothing the investigators can do can compare with what Blake can do.

Conclusion

The adventure ends when the investigators defeat the forces sent against them or they themselves are defeated.

If the investigators actively defeat the forces sent against them and they are able to keep the stone, each investigator should receive a 1D6 Sanity Point award.

If the investigators escape without actively defeating the forces sent against them, but they manage to keep the stone, they should receive a 1D4 Sanity Point Award.

If the investigators allow the stone to fall into the hands of the enemy, each investigator should suffer a 1D3 Sanity Point loss.

If the investigators are able to keep Father Henesey alive, each investigator should receive a bonus of one Sanity Point. If the Father is killed, each investigator should suffer a one Sanity Point loss.

This adventure is intended to tie into the next adventure in the series. If the investigators do not have the stone at the end of this adventure, the Keeper will need to prepare another adventure in which the investigators have a chance to redeem themselves.

NPCs

Father Ronald Henesey, Catholic Priest

STR: 12 CON:13 SIZ:13 INT:14 POW:15 DEX: 13 APP:12 EDU: 19 SAN: 72 HP: 13
DB:+1D4

Description: Henesey is forty years old, but still in excellent shape. He has black hair and brown eyes. He has a thick beard and a scar on the left side of his face, from a shell fragment. He will be wearing hunting clothes when he is in the cabin. As mentioned above, Henesey is a member of a society that has been fighting against the evil and madness of cults like Blake's for centuries.

Henesey is a brave man and is not all afraid of combat, having served in the war before taking his vows.

Important Skills: Climb 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 6%, Credit Rating 34%, Dodge 37%, Fast Talk 35%, Hide 21%, History 35%, Library Use 55%, Natural History 25%, Occult 65%, Latin 55%, Persuade 55%, Rifle 55%

Spells: Create Silver Blood

Weapon: .45 Automatic 51% Damage 1D10+2 Range 15 Yards Attacks 1 Shots 7.

Items: Silver Blood in a silver flask, the Shard.

Karl LeBlanc, Cultist

STR: 14 CON:15 SIZ:13 INT:13 POW:14 DEX: 14 APP:14 EDU: 15 SAN: 00 HP: 14 DB:+1D4

Description: LeBlanc is thirty years old. He has brown hair, brown eyes and is reasonably handsome. He is also quite evil and quite mad by normal standards. LeBlanc's biggest weakness is his great pride. He is certain that he is better than almost anyone (except Blake) and this cause him to be overconfident. LeBlanc is also enamored of magic, which is also a weakness.

Important Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 16%, Fast Talk 55%, Hide 34%, Law 24%, Occult 45%, Persuade 55%, Sneak 42%

Spells: Summon Lesser Word Shadow, Bind Lesser Word Shadow

Weapon: .32 Automatic 41% Damage 1D8 Range 15 Yards Attacks 2 Shots 8

The Ruffians, Hired Muscle

The Ruffians are desperate men, lacking in morals.

Characteristics	#1	#2	#3	#4
STR	14	13	16	12
CON	12	14	13	13
SIZ	15	15	16	14
INT	11	10	11	9
POW	10	9	8	7
DEX	12	11	13	12
HP	14	15	15	14
Damage Bonus	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4
Weapon	Knife 41% 1D4+2+db	Knife 47% 1D4+2+db	Small Club 52% 1D6+db	.38 Revolver 23% 1D10 15 yard base range, 6 shots, Attacks 2.

Mythos Being

Lesser Wood Shadows, Lesser Independent Race

Description: Lesser Wood Shadows are foul creatures which dwell in shadowed woods where human blood has been spilled in anger. They appear as tall, horribly thin beings that seem to be composed of shadows that twist and writhe unnaturally. They have no mouths or nose, but they have eyes that glow like dying embers. Lesser Wood Shadows attack their victims with claws that appear to be made of jagged and filthy wood. Having no mouth, they do not eat their victims. Instead, they leave the torn bodies lying where they fell. Lesser Wood Spirits sometimes attack humans and forest creatures in the deep woods, but most of the time they rest in the shadows, barely aware of what is occurring around them. They can, however, be summoned by those who know the right enchantment.

Lesser Wood Shadows are only partially material. Because of this, they are not harmed by mundane weapons. They do, however, sustain full damage from enchanted weapons. They are also vulnerable to sunlight. Full exposure to the sun destroys a Lesser Wood Shadow, so they seek the dark places of the forest during the day. Lesser Wood Shadows find light, including fire light, distressing and painful. They do not take damage from light that is less intense than full daylight, but will avoid any light sources if possible. To enter an area that is more light than shadow, a Lesser Wood Shadow will need to roll under its POW X5 on a D100. Failure means that it cannot enter the area.

The claws of a Lesser Wood Spirit are composed of fairly conventional matter and can be parried. Normal armor is effective against their attacks.

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages	#1	#2
STR	2D6	7	8	9
CON	3D6	10-11	13	12
SIZ	3D6	10-11	14	15
INT	2D6	7	7	6
POW	2D6	7	8	5
DEX	4D6	14	18	15
HP		10-11	14	14
Damage Bonus		0	0	0

Move: 10

Weapons: Two Claws 50% Damage 1D4+DB

Armor: None, but mundane weapons have no effect on Wood Shadows. They sustain full damage from enchanted weapons and spells.

Spells: None

Skills: Hide 99%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity Points to see a Wood Shadow.

Spells and Items

Silver Blood: Silver blood is an enchanted mixture of mercury, iron and more exotic items. It is a thick fluid which will cling tenaciously to almost every metal except silver. It is known as silver blood because it looks like liquid silver with thin veins of red fluid (which is actually blood). When used to coat a weapon or projectile, it enables the weapon or projectile to act as an enchanted weapon. The first attack with a coated melee weapon will do full damage, the second attack half damage, and the third one quarter. After that, the silver blood will have come off the weapon. Coated projectiles can be used once. If a projectile hits, it will do full damage and the silver blood will be left in/on the target. If the projectile misses, the silver blood will most likely come off on whatever is hit.

If a weapon or projectile is coated with silver blood, but it is not used within about 15 minutes, the silver blood will gradually drip from the weapon or projectile. Steps may be taken to prevent this from happening, such as pushing the silver blood back onto the weapon or projectile. The effectiveness of such methods is left up to the Keeper.

Shard of the Stone

This shard is from one of the legendary six stones. The shard appears to be made of gray slate, but it has an odd metallic sheen to it. It is cool, almost cold to the touch. If a person touches it or even gets within a few inches of the stone, strange images will gradually appear in the person's mind. The images will grow stronger the longer a person holds it. The images appear to be mathematical and geometric symbols, odd curvings and anomalies of space-time, and brief, but horrific, manifestations of indescribable things. If a person holds the shard for longer than fifteen minutes, the images will manifest strongly enough to affect the person's mind. For every fifteen minutes the person holds the stone, the investigator must make a Sanity check. If the roll fails, the investigator loses 1 point of Sanity. A successful roll results in no sanity loss. While the stone is held, the person will receive, in addition to the maddening images, images that indicate where the full stone is located. For every fifteen minutes the shard is held, the investigator should roll 1D10 and note the results. This is the percent chance the person holding the shard will receive a useful clue to the location of the stone. The chance of receiving a useful clue is cumulative, so the longer a person holds the shard, the more likely it is that they will receive a useful clue. Of course, the person will be risking his

sanity in the attempt.

The effects of the shard are blocked by lead, which is why Henesey keeps the shard in a lead lined box.

Create Silver Blood

Knowledge of the ritual to create silver blood enables the caster to transform a mixture of mercury, iron shavings, and a small portion of his own blood into silver blood. The ritual takes three hours of mixing and tracing symbols and patterns into the fluid. The caster must expend six magic points to create enough silver blood to coat the cutting edges of about six knives, or about twenty small projectiles, such as arrowheads. There is no sanity cost for creating silver blood.

Summon/Bind Lesser Wood Spirit

This ritual must be cast in a dark woods in which human beings have been killed. It causes two Lesser Wood Spirits to ooze their way out of the darkest shadows of the wood. The magic cost varies. For each point used, the chance of success increases by 10%. A result of 96-00 is a failure. Casting the spell also costs 1D3 Sanity points. Once bound, the Wood Spirits will obey the caster.

Handouts

Handout #1-Letter from Jack Meredith

Dear x,

Do you remember those days before the war when we were young and full of high ideals? I remember how funny it was to practice with the broomsticks because the Army did not have enough rifles for everyone. How we all laughed and joked about how we were going to send the Kaiser's boys packing. Of course, we soon found out things were not going to be so easy.

I do not have to remind you of the mud, the blood, and the death. Even in my wildest nightmares I had never imagined such horrors. Like so many soldiers, the madness of war wormed its way deep into my heart. In the fire of the machineguns I could hear the chatter of demons, promising mutilation and death. In the explosions of the artillery shells I could hear a roaring voice, saying "God is dead," "God is dead," over and over.

The madness and horror chewed at my very soul, tearing away my faith in God and country. All that I held dear seemed empty and meaningless. I do not know how I survived those terrible days, but I did. Now, I think it might have been better if I had died.

Perhaps if we had been able to go back together, things might have turned out differently. But, on the return voyage I met another soldier, a man name Lance Blake. Like me, Blake had been terrible affected by the war. Blake, like myself, had lost his youthful connection to God and country. Unlike me, Blake had found something else to replace them.

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Even now I cannot bring myself to write of all I know. Suffice it to say, that I have done terrible things and participated in activities that no sane and God-fearing man should engage in.

Ironically, it was Blake himself who caused me to turn against the group. He thought he could trust me and revealed some of his true plans. The horror of these words surpassed all the previous horrors and shocked me back to my senses. While I realized that I am beyond redemption, Blake must be stopped. Although I have not spoken to you in years, I know you to be a brave and good man. I hope I can count on you, for Blake must be stopped.

I have stolen an important item from Blake and I have entrusted it to Father Ronald Henesey. I have sent him to my family camp in Maine. You must meet the good Father there and receive the item. He will be able to tell you more.

I now go to try to kill Blake. I fear that he cannot be slain by any mortal weapon, but I must try. For my soul, I must try.

Yours,

Lieutenant Jack Meredith

Handout #2-Telegram from Charles Meredith

Jack is dead. Suspect foul play. Charles Meredith.

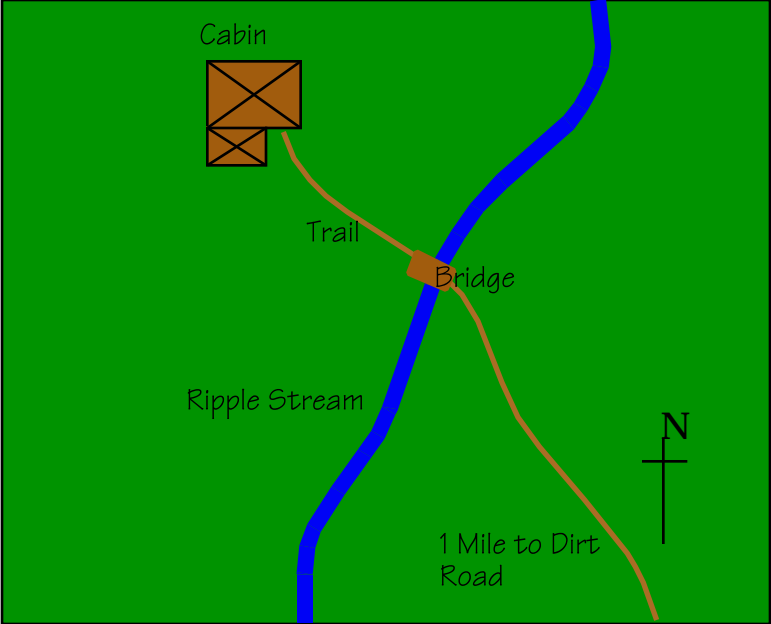
Handout #3-Clipping from *The Eye*.

The Order of the Ancient Stone is, despite the “Ancient” in its name, a relatively new group. Formed in the early 1920s by Lance Blake, the group meets here in New York City. According to one member, who chose to remain anonymous, the group is dedicated to “ancient secrets, deep mysteries, and really good poker games.”

Handout #4-Excerpt from *Ancient Legends and Myths*, by Dr. L. Prescott, Pilgrim Press, 1911.

There is a brief mention in the works of Lucetus, a little known historian in the Roman Empire, of a Cult of the Ancient Stone. According to Lucetus, this cult was dedicated to finding six stones that were “brought from on high.” It was reported that the stones would “open a door into the world” that would allow “it who waits beyond the wall” to come to earth.

Lucetus reports that this cult was initially popular in Rome, but he notes that the cult died out when most of its leaders were found “torn asunder into bloody bits.”



The Cabin Interior

