

THE SENSE OF THE SLEIGHT-OF-HAND MAN

A Call of Cthulhu Campaign of Wonder and Terror in H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY DENNIS DETWILLER



Welcome to the Land of Dreams

From a squalid New York drug den to the spectral ruins of Sarkomand . . .
From the horrors of the Underworld to the zoog-haunted Enchanted Wood . . .
From the twilight city of Inquanok to the endless sunset of Ilek-Vad . . .
All the wonders of dream await—and all the terrors of nightmare, too.

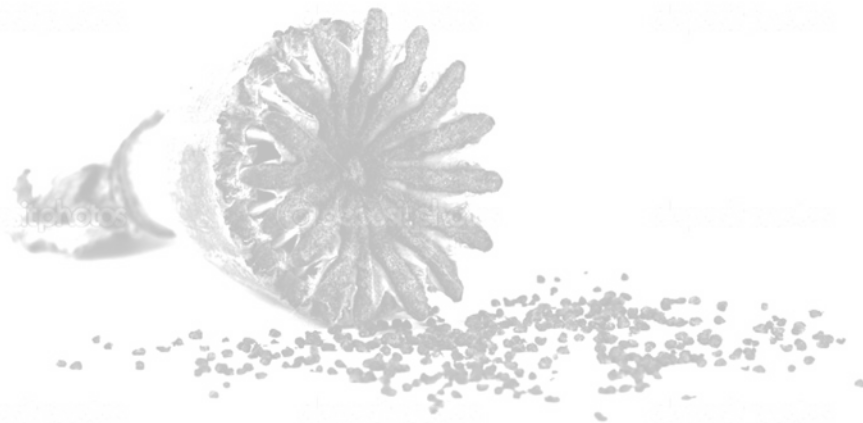
The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man is a full-length *Call of Cthulhu* campaign of adventure, cosmic mystery, and deepest fear set in the Dreamlands of H.P. Lovecraft. The player characters—the Dreamers—explore the breadth of the otherworldly Dreamlands seeking a way back to the lives that they left behind. But can they survive the countless dangers of a world of dream—and the strange enmity of Nyarlathotep, the messenger and soul of the Outer Gods, when they fall under his capricious gaze?



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Written and illustrated by Dennis Detwiler, © 2013
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A CALL OF CTHULHU CAMPAIGN
OF WONDER AND TERROR
IN H.P. LOVECRAFT'S DREAMLANDS

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY DENNIS DETWILLER

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The Unspeakable Oath is our magazine dedicated exclusively to Cthulhu Mythos roleplaying games. Every issue brings new adventures, monsters, Arcane Artifacts, Mysterious Manuscripts, Tales of Terror, and more. The *Oath* is available in print and in PDF. Subscribe now at www.theunspeakableoath.com.

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FOREWORD

There is nothing more satisfying, I think, than to write for a pre-established cause—to create something that you know will find its way to the hands (and eyes) of those who really, sincerely wish to read it. Strike that. Perhaps there is something more satisfying: knowing that the work will live on, on the gaming tables of those readers—where the ideas will leap to life amidst dice, pencils, papers, laughter and fun. *The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man* represents something special: a perfect confluence of want and willingness.

Roleplaying games and the books written for them are not private things. They encourage people to pull them apart, to spread them about, to share them, to fight over and through them. The words I wrote here will gain a second life. Not only did fans of my work turn out in record numbers to support the product, they will now take the work and make it their own in a thousand gaming rooms around the world.

I'd like to take a moment to thank those who contributed to the Kickstarter project that funded this work and those who convinced me to put *The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man* up on the service in the first place.

I'd like to thank Adam Crossingham, who saved this project from the doom of the ever-present and voracious WORK IN PROGRESS folder. And I'd like to thank Greg Stolze for showing nearly everyone the way in the fan-funding movement of the last decade. Don't believe anyone else who attempts to take credit for this. Greg—and Greg alone—led the way.

I hope all who contributed find the work contained in this book as satisfying as I found it to create and run it for my own group. If you have stories to share, please email them on to me at dennis.detwiller@me.com. I'd love to hear them. Finally, please follow me on Twitter @drgonzo123 and check out my ever-expanding body of work (art, roleplaying and writing) at www.detwillerdesign.com.

Dennis Detwiller
November 2012



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CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTER CREATION · OVERVIEW · TWO ALIKE IN THE MAKE OF THE MIND

*“Profound poetry of the poor and of the dead,
As in the last drop of the deepest blood,
As it falls from the heart and lies there to be seen”
—Wallace Stevens, “To an Old Philosopher in Rome”*

The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man is a campaign set in the Dreamlands for the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game. The player characters share a singular past, although they do not know one another, and a singular fate, although they are not sure what that fate may be. These adventures span from 1925 New York to the many realms of the Dreamlands, where time has no place.

CHARACTER CREATION

In this series of scenarios, the creativity of the players and the Keeper is put to the test. Each player takes the role of two characters, one on Earth and one in the Dreamlands—two characters that share one mind.

The players create their 1925 Earthly characters normally, with the exception that they all must be addicted to opium. See “Gifted but Damaged,” page 10, for guidelines and suggestions to customize Investigators for this campaign.

Keepers, be certain to make the players detail these characters lavishly. Make it clear that every detail matters: the character’s backstory, hopes, dreams, fears, loved ones, and especially what factors keep them coming back helplessly to their drug. If they have no idea what’s coming, it’s best to keep the nature of the adventure a secret. After all, it will be far more startling and shocking if the players don’t



know they will be playing in the Dreamlands.

The Keeper creates the attributes for players' Dreamlands surrogate bodies separately. Their POW, INT and EDU scores—and all related values such as the Idea, Know and Luck rolls—remain constant between both characters. Skills too carry over to the Dreamlands. Other statistics must be created from scratch. Some sample Dreamlands character bodies are presented in “New World, New Bodies” on page 28. This odd arrangement will provide both the players and Keeper with a new and exciting experience.

Through the use of a special drug on Earth, the characters' minds and knowledge are moved to other bodies in the Dreamlands, from which the previous soul has been removed. See “Chapter Three: Life in a Dream” on page 21 for details.

In this campaign we refer to the player characters, whether wandering the land of dreams or scrabbling for opium in New York, as Dreamers.

GIFTED BUT DAMAGED

The player characters in this campaign are gifted but damaged in ways that bring them, in particular, into the campaign. To reflect this, adjust character creation as follows.

Add +3 to each player character's POW (up to a maximum of 18).

Their SAN scores start at POW x 4 rather than POW x 5.

Each begins play with addiction to opium, morphine or heroin as an indefinite insanity.

Each player character also begins with bonus skill points related to the factors that contributed to the addiction. (And as it happens, these skills may prove useful in the Dreamlands.) For each, choose an entry below or roll 1D6.

(Continued.)

AN OVERVIEW

New York is a city of vices. The year is 1925 and it is the height of Prohibition, but the flow of drugs and liquor continues unhindered through dark corridors in darker hands. For the few who can afford it, opium is the drug of choice. Very few can afford it for very long.

The Dreamers, who do not know each other, have fallen behind on their payments to their supplier of opiates, Mr. Lao. He has shown his displeasure with polite threats and now offers demonstrations of what his men, the Tongs, will do if he does not receive his money. These demonstrations involve swords.

Dragged towards what each character is sure will be his or her turn under the blades, they instead find themselves face to face with each other and Mr. Lao. Lao offers them a last smoke, a type of opium he calls *bywandine*, before his men complete their task.

The drug is smoked, and as they pass into the haze, prepared now for knives and blood and death on a wave of opium, the Dreamers realize they are somewhere else . . . that they are *someone* else.

In truth, Mr. Lao is a trader of much more than drugs in the empty world of Earth. He trades in Kadath, in Celephais, in Lhosk, in Leng. He trades souls.

Mr. Lao is a rarity. It is unusual to know oneself in both the waking and sleeping worlds. But Lao was born in Leng, conterminous on both Earth and the Dreamlands. He has used this talent to his advantage, teaching skills to his dream twin and vice versa. They have known each other in dreams for many years, Mr. Lao and Sa'n Seith, his Dreamlands counterpart. They have talked often with one another. They have struck bargains.

When Mr. Lao discovers a person of powerful spirit—a character with a high Power stat—or when one has aroused his displeasure, he sends him or her to Sa'n Seith, using the mixture of herbs called *bywandine*. This exceedingly intricate mixture of rare plants, some of which grow on the plains near Leng, takes many months to prepare.

He has yet to perfect the process. Mixed properly, it causes the imbiber to shift physically from one realm to another, either from Earth to the Dreamlands or vice versa.

A fresh human is of great value in the Dreamlands.

Sa'n Seith is a Man from Leng, a hunched and pockmarked satyr who serves the faceless monstrosities from the dark side of the moon, the moon-beasts. Long ago, the powerful moon-beasts subjugated the Men from Leng, and that race lives now only to serve them. Seith provides fresh humans of powerful soul, and in exchange, as they have done for eons, the faceless ones produce the rare blood gems. It is unknown where they come from; even the Men from Leng have no idea. These gems are sought-after prizes in the realms of the Dreamlands. Their value is immense.

In truth, the moon-beasts do not mine the gems from secret places on the moon. They torture them from the humans provided by the Men from Leng. The gems are the souls of these victims, ripped free by magics just short of death, souls traded with and bought and sold every day.

Mr. Lao is to send the Dreamers over to the Dreamlands city of Sarkomand, where they will be transported to the dark side of the moon and the cities of the moon-beasts for Sa'n Seith. In the past, his mix of *bywandine* has taken many days to work, slowly erasing the imbiber from the Earth and re-coalescing them in physical form in the Dreamlands.

But the last of Lao's *bywandine* was imperfectly mixed. Instead of a gradual physical shift, the *bywandine* causes only the character's mind to be flung over to the Dreamlands, his or her soul instantly disappearing from Earth, disintegrating the earthly physical form with it. The spirit inhabits the first and nearest form in the Dreamlands found without consciousness, the discarded bodies of soulless prisoners, their essence squeezed free into the blood gems.

1. You needed the drug to cope with the pain of wounds and/or shell shock suffered in the Great War. Add +10 percentiles each to First Aid and Bayonet if you were a foot soldier, to Swim and Boating if you were a sailor, or to Navigate and Spot Hidden if you were an infantry officer, a navy officer or a pilot.

2. You needed the drug to cope with the pain and terror of a terrible accident. Add +10 percentiles each to Dodge and Listen.

3-4. You needed the drug to cope with the stress of the impossible demands of work and/or family. Add +10 percentiles each either to Accounting and Bargain or to Persuade and Psychology.

5. You needed the drug to escape the flashy, shallow, desperately careless excesses of the modern age. Add +10 percentiles each to Art (choose which art form) and Fast Talk.

6. After reading too deeply in a translation of the dreaded *Necronomicon*, you needed the drug to make peace with your despair of finding meaning in a hopeless world. Add +10 percentiles each to Cthulhu Mythos and Library Use.

THE CENTRAL CONFLICT

Part of the conflict in *The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man* is a struggle to return the Dreamers to Earth. But the deeper conflict of the campaign is between the Dreamers and Nyarlathotep, the trickster god. Many elements of the campaign—such as Mr. Lao, the Men from Leng and the monsters of the Dreamlands—serve this god’s dark purposes, whether they know it or not. The reasons for this conflict with Nyarlathotep are never clear. The Dreamers may sense only that they are some sort of prize to be “won” by Nyarlathotep. Their escape, happiness and victory are somehow anathema to the messenger of the Old Ones.

This conflict plays out on many levels, and it is up to the Keeper to properly portray the depth of the struggle. Though many examples and suggestions are sprinkled throughout the campaign, it remains ultimately up to the Keeper to maintain that drama, fear and horror throughout gameplay. Dreams, portents and visions may haunt the Dreamers, showing the Black Pharaoh watching their progress. Confrontations with a Black Man on the road or in a dream may foretell some doom. Sa’n Seith may speak of a portent. Mr. Lao may mention it before they are cast into the ruins of Sarkomand. But as a game element, it should always be given in hints to add some of the depth, gravitas and cosmic significance found in such works as *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* and “Through the Gates of the Silver Key.”



CHAPTER TWO

THE TONGS · MR. LAO · BYWANDINE · CAME THE ATTENDANT BYZANTINES

*“Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.”
—Wallace Stevens, “Peter Quince at the Clavier”*

The Tongs’ threats have gone unanswered, the Dreamers’ debts have remained, and Lao has grown impatient. The Dreamers have been watched and their schedules have been noted. When Lao feels it is time, they are all brought in.

At Lao’s leisure, a gang of 10 Tongs show up out of the blue to each Dreamer’s place of employment, home, or favorite speakeasy and drag him or her out into the street. If the Dreamer resists the Tongs manhandle the character, grabbing arms and legs and moving rapidly towards the waiting cars. No matter how much of a disturbance the Dreamer makes, no one does anything. Not even the police. The Tongs are a wealthy gang.

The leader, Tsing, encourages the Dreamers to come along quietly. If they cooperate, they remain surrounded at all times by gang members but are not openly threatened. Escape attempts incur beatings, and the gang pursues escapees to the death if necessary. Persistently foolish characters may get themselves seriously injured or killed before the campaign has begun.

The Tongs’ method of transport is two beat-up 1921 Packard Twin 6’s, into which the Dreamers are ushered if they are smart.

During the drive, if asked, the Tongs simply state that Mr. Lao has invited the Dreamers to dinner. No other answers can be gleaned from the Tongs no matter the method of inquiry.



THE TONGS

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Int	Pow	Dex	App	Edu	DB	HP
#1	9	13	12	10	10	15	10	5	—	13
#2	11	11	9	12	9	14	11	7	—	10
#3*	18	10	12	9	10	12	10	7	1D4	11
#4*	10	12	11	12	11	12	10	5	—	12
#5	11	10	13	13	10	11	12	7	—	12
#6	13	15	10	11	13	11	16	8	—	13
#7	17	10	15	11	11	11	9	9	1D4	13
#8	10	9	9	9	11	11	11	5	—	9
#9*	11	12	13	10	11	10	8	7	—	13
#10*	9	15	11	17	12	9	10	5	—	13

Skills: Dodge (DEX x 2) + 10%, Hide 35%. *Languages:* Mandarin (Own) 55%, English 23%.

Attacks: Punch 65%, damage 1D3+db

Dagger 48%, damage 1D4+2+db

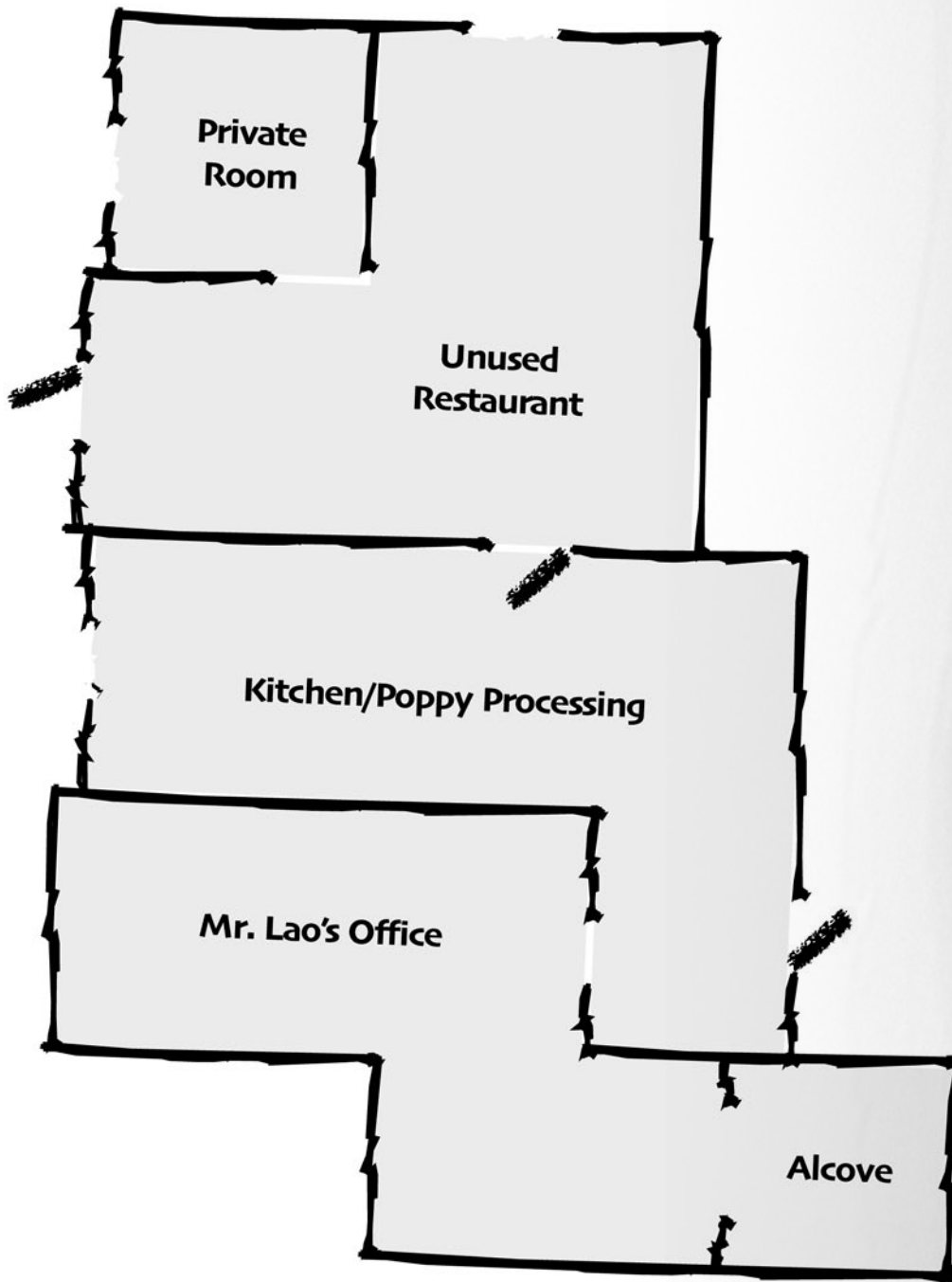
#3, 4, 9 and 10 only: .38 revolver 25%, damage 1D10 (6 shots)

THE PEACH BLOSSOM RESTAURANT

This establishment is located in Manhattan's Chinatown, surrounded by Italian, Chinese and Polish immigrants. The restaurant does no business except the illicit dealings of Mr. Lao.

THE PEACH BLOSSOM

DELANCEY STREET, MANHATTAN



The Tongs—Lao's servants—control the block, Delancey Street, and patrol it regularly in roving packs. Dozens of Tongs lounge in front of the restaurant, playing dice or listening to scratchy records on a bright red phonograph, glaring at passersby. A number of them openly display swords and knives and pistols with indifference.

Lao won the Peach Blossom Restaurant in a turf war with the Cho Sai gang in 1920. Its original owner is now a permanent fixture on the bottom of the Hudson River. His surviving men are now Mr. Lao's Tongs.

Since that time, the restaurant has been Mr. Lao's place of business. In a somewhat unusual arrangement, Lao himself oversees the sale of drugs from the establishment. He usually only makes the first sale to a new customer.

With his formidable library of spells, Lao can tell many things about a person by magical observation. If a customer is of strong soul (i.e., a high POW statistic), Lao continues to sell the drugs in person. He maintains a list of these people, and extensive files on them, in case he is called upon to send them to Sarkomand to serve his moon-beast masters.

The Dreamers know the restaurant and neighborhood well. They went there many times to buy opium from Lao before their money dried up.

It is a dingy, poorly kept front. Inside is a classic Chinese restaurant, done up in old red velvet and gaudy gold paint, with tattered paintings and rotting felt tabletops. Everything in it is covered in a fine layer of dust.

Only the former kitchen and back rooms are kept in an orderly state. The kitchen is used to process the raw poppy bulbs into opium paste, and 24 hours a day several men and women grind up the seeds with mortar and pestle. The new poppies lay in wet wood crates covering a wall, three deep.

The office is Mr. Lao's domain. It is incredibly lavish, with fine rugs, large sitting pillows and silk hangings. A large silver and gold water pipe with seven stems is mounted in a finely cut rosewood table at the room's center. A small alcove to the rear conceals a small, plain wood desk, chair and file-cabinets. The windows have all been bricked over except for narrow, shuttered slits.

The Dreamers are led together to the office to meet with Mr. Lao, perhaps for the last time.

THE SECRETS OF MR. LAO'S OFFICE

Hidden among the many exotic objects in Mr. Lao's office are several more esoteric items from the Dreamlands. Some of these are Earthly tomes which deal with the fantastic world of dreams. Others have been transported physically through Dreamland gates to the waking world by ghouls in exchange for magical services. Still others have been dictated to Lao in dream by his counterpart, Sa'n Seith, and have been meticulously recorded in files and folios too numerous to document.

On the plain wood desk in the alcove are two books, *Reflections Upon the Other World* and *The Instruction of Tlane*.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE OTHER WORLD

"And yet within endless ecstasies I did begin to spy a pattern, a form of a world more complex and colourful than any I had known before. I longed to be there at any cost."

In English. +2% Cthulhu Mythos. -1/1D4+2 SAN. Study time: 5 weeks. Skill check: Pharmacy. *Spells*: Create Bywandine, Transcendental Mind, The Measure of the Soul.

Contents and Description: This book was published in a limited run for a theosophical society known as the Order of the Traveler, which led a short but popular existence in 1890s London. The group's leader and the book's author was Arthur Emery Smyth, a failed poet and drunk, who late in life became involved in mysticism and drugs.

Beginning with a small congregation of many "upstanding" people, Smyth snowballed his organization into one of the more lucrative theosophical societies in London by 1899. Due in part to his magnetic personality and his ability with the written word, Smyth rebuffed attempts to discredit him, invited members of the press to participate in "rituals," and drew more members, totaling 120 before an incident

LAO'S TEXTS

The Dreamers do not have time to study Lao's books in depth, and *Instruction* is in a language none of them yet know. But by thumbing through pages they can see references to names and places that will let them make sense of the journey to come. In *Reflections*, they see a passage on a drug called *bywandine* that, when smoked, transports the soul to another realm. And even in *Instruction* they might see a passage in alien script circled by a modern pen with the word "Sarkomand" scrawled in a margin.

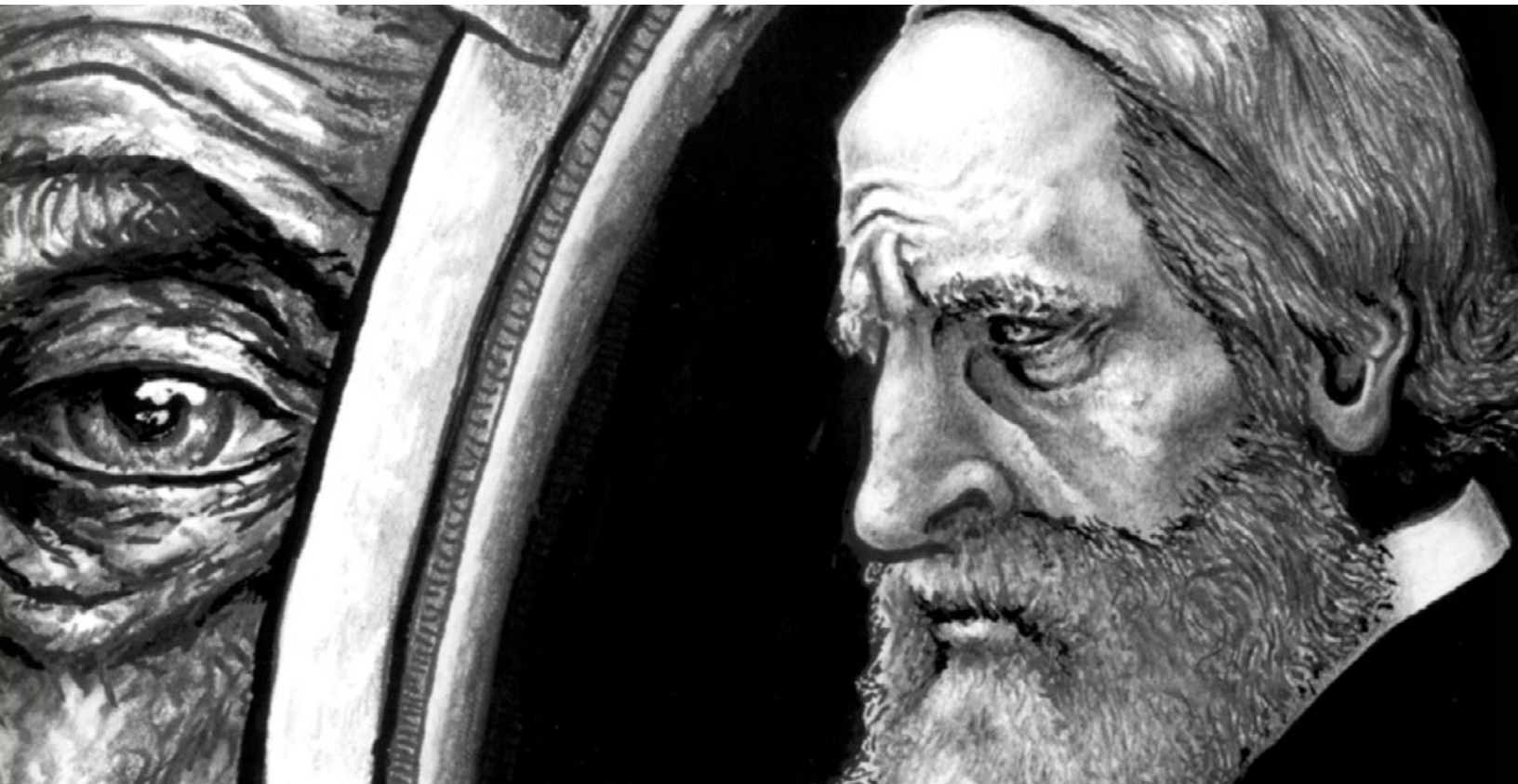
in 1899. Smyth managed to proselytize several members of the press during a period when it was popular in the news to discredit mediums and false prophets.

This book details Smyth's "discovery" of the World of Dreams, called by him the "World of Fancy," which was made possible by a special mixture of an opium drug called *bywandine*. The method of mixing the drug was given to him by an Indian fakir in Bombay.

With this drug one could travel for a time to the World of Fancy, but only mentally, leaving a sleeping form behind on Earth. It warns, however, that an improper mixture will cause deviations. What they might be are not mentioned.

This limited travel was incidental, Smyth believed, to a true spiritual transfer to the other realm, which he claims to have perfected with a stronger version of *bywandine*. This new mixture of the *bywandine* drug causes a permanent transfer of mind and body to the other realm. For this, many varying and exceedingly rare chemicals and plants were required, some found only in the realm of dreams.

The book also details the city in the Dreamlands which Smyth frequented, Celephais, where he spent unmeasured time composing poetry and enjoying the haunting beauty of the city in which none may age.



(In fact he may still be found there along with all 120 members of the Order of the *Traveller*. They all disappeared from Earth in 1899 after imbibing the new form of the more potent *bywandine*.)

THE INSTRUCTION OF TLANE

“The abilities of those beyond, the Gods we consider immeasurable and immutable, are a careful interplay of powers we perceive as such simply because we cannot comprehend the vast and true glory of the universe.”

In Oeuth. +4% Cthulhu Mythos. -1/1D6 SAN. Study Time: 10 Weeks. Skill check: Other Language (Oeuth). *Spells*: Eye of True Sight, Endless Rhyme, The Flutes of Nar-Haal, Word of Doubt, Morhalas' Gate.

Contents and Description: An ancient and battered folio, this tome is written in a language not native to Earth and will stump even the best Earthly linguist. Its characters are tiny interconnected symbols, reminiscent of both Sanskrit and Chinese. In actuality it is the language Oeuth, that of the Men from Leng. The paper is a bizarre animal skin not identifiable by Earthly science. If found by the authorities, this tome may become the next Voynich Manuscript.

This book predates Earth itself, and is the grimoire of one of the greatest enchanters of his time, Tlane of Sarkomand. This wizard perished thousands of years before Sarkomand fell to the moon-beasts. His grimoire passed through the hands of the powerful of his dwindling race until it finally fell to Sa'n Seith, a limited but adept sorcerer. He in turn gave it to his Earthly counterpart Lao to study.

Most of the spells contained within the book are coded and have yet to be deciphered. So far only 5 out of the 30 or more spells known to be contained in the book are understood.

The successfully deciphered spells each have notations in the margins giving the proper translation method (into Oeuth, not English). The others, although covered in hand-written notes, offer no such solutions.

A FINAL SMOKE

Mr. Lao, polite to a fault, asks the Dreamers to sit around the rosewood table. With a faint smile, he recommends that they get to know each other well, as they will be spending a length of time together. With this cryptic comment he excuses himself into the alcove.

Any Dreamer attempting to observe what Lao does in the alcove behind the silks may make a Spot Hidden roll at half chance, or a Sneak roll if the Dreamer wishes to inch toward the alcove despite the guards. If either succeeds, Lao is seen to remove a key from the base of a small doll. With it he opens a locked drawer on the desk. From that he removes a small teak box.

If a Dreamer is caught in the act of spying, Lao smiles and says, “Keeping eyes to oneself can become doubly difficult with such behavior.” He goes on to say many Medici courtiers ended up having their eyes put out due to their overly curious nature.

Lao carefully opens the teak box and removes a packet of dried yellowish powder. Anyone making a Spot Hidden roll notices that the powder is different than powdered opium: the coloring is slightly off.

If asked, Lao explains that it is a special opiate called *bywandine*, and that it comes from his homeland of Leng in the Far East.

After igniting the burner, Lao invites the Dreamers to smoke. He confesses that even in his restaurant they cannot allow screaming.

Dreamers that refuse find themselves at gunpoint. Lao produces a silver automatic from the folds of his robe.

“Indulge yourselves. I insist.”

Anyone refusing further is hauled to the kitchen, tied down on a butcher’s table and injected painfully in the thigh with a *bywandine* solution. As the drug takes effect, the obstinate Dreamer is returned to Lao’s office.



CHAPTER THREE

LIFE IN A DREAM · HEALING · SANITY · LIKE A NEW KNOWLEDGE OF REALITY

“It was not from the vast ventriloquism

Of sleep’s faded papier-mâché . . .

The sun was coming from the outside.”

—Wallace Stevens, “Not Ideas About the Thing But the Thing Itself”

Previous *Call of Cthulhu* game supplements have done their best to outline the world of dream and to provide rules to handle the “dreaming” skill: the power to change the reality of the Dreamlands by will alone. Find a copy of *H.P. Lovecraft’s Dreamlands*—it will go a long way to supplementing the ideas presented in this chapter.

However, we suggest that Keepers of this campaign DO NOT permit the use of the previous rules for “dreaming.”

The reasons are twofold. This campaign is about surprise and the lack of control. Once the players establish a stable, reliable footing in the world of Dreams, it ceases to be the world of Dreams and becomes yet another game system to exploit or abuse. When a player can predict with certainty the outcome of an action, it ceases being fun.

To this end, ignore the first section of *H.P. Lovecraft’s Dreamlands* (“Entering the Dreamlands”) and instead utilize the rules that follow.

LIFE IN A DREAM

The world of dreams, known as the Dreamlands to those with esoteric knowledge, is like a reflection of the minds of those who occupy the waking world of Earth—and hundreds of other worlds. As those in the waking world of Earth sleep, their alter egos populate the Dreamlands, and vice versa. Most denizens of Earth have no recollection of these nightly jaunts, but some Dreamers consciously enter the realms of the Dreamlands by choice. Some creatures and beings, however, exist solely in the Dreamlands or transition there when their earthly forms perish.

Life in the Dreamlands is unusual. Though the basics of existence on Earth are mimicked, characters set loose in the dream realms quickly find that there are no hard and fast rules; even constants like the basic physical laws on Earth often have no exact application in the Dreamlands. Water can run uphill. Time can stop. Inanimate objects can come to life.

Unlike Earth, the Dreamlands' reality is predicated on belief and the strength of that belief. Nearly anything is possible. Although some ideas remain rock-solid (such as, say, the existence of a city named Sarkomand) others come and go as dreamers exert their will. The smaller and less significant the change, and the stronger the power of the believer, the more likely a change will take place.

The most powerful dreamers are like gods of limited power and scope, people who can simply wish events to occur. However, this ability is not intrinsic to the denizens of the Dreamlands; some have it, most don't.

Magic in the Dreamlands—as readily accepted there as science is in our world—represents a way to exploit the loopholes and powers of pre-existing belief upon the world of the Dreamlands: a kind of shortcut to godlike power. But of course, it has a price.

The Dreamlands have a quality of life all their own. The regular pace of Earthly existence does not apply. Instead, the focus of attention and will warps and changes perception, time, needs and other things that would be constants on Earth. For example, people sleep and eat in the Dreamlands, as they do on Earth, but one might go days, weeks or years without food and never starve to death. Similarly, if a task consumed the will of a being utterly, he or she might go indefinitely without sleep. If the quest is engrossing enough to divert the dreamer's mind away from the usual mundane necessities (eating, sleeping) it's common for such needs to simply be put on hold.

PERCEPTION AND DIRECTION

The very nature of the world of dreams is change. Things are always subtly changing around the Dreamers. For example, a Dreamer might look away from an empty-handed statue of a satyr for a moment and look back to find it holding a flute. These changes

are subtle and seamless, and always seem to occur when a Dreamer is not looking. The Keeper can do much to keep the players guessing when such changes occur.

Only when the players themselves bring these changes up to the Keeper do things become interesting. Perception is the key—Dreamers that simply plod onward without paying attention (or who pay attention but don't question the Keeper about it) gain nothing from such shifts. Those who notice and comment, however, have taken a step towards becoming a Directed Dreamer—one who can manipulate the world of dreams in subtle ways.

Of course, this should never be told to the players.

Keep a tally of remarks by each player that indicate the player is noticing the changes. ("Wait, I thought you said the door was on the left side of the cavern.") Each of these "perceptions" grants the player a "Notch" which the Keeper holds in secret. The players should never know such a thing exists.

These Notches represent each Dreamer's growing ability to exist and work his or her will within the odd reality of the Dreamlands.

CHANGING THINGS

Players who pay attention can eventually learn what is required to change small things themselves in the Dreamlands. However, there are some hurdles to overcome.

First of all, talking in detail (in character) to one another about the possibility of making these changes dilutes the experience. If Dreamers plan together for making such a change, each involved loses one "Notch." Dreams are personal experiences—even shared dreams. They lose their magic when subjected to multiple points of view.

Secondly, Directed Dreaming never leads to an exactly directed outcome. A Dreamer wishing for rescue from an island might suddenly find himself in the hold of a slave ship as fresh stock. One wishing for fresh water in the desert may find himself suddenly washed away in a flood. The world of dreams has its own desires, needs and will. These "Notches" might give the Dreamer a leg up, but they can be a double-edged sword.

A Dreamer with Notches may attempt Directed Dreaming.

NOTCHES

The key to Directed Dreaming is for Dreamers to accumulate "Notches." The Dreamers get Notches only in moments when their *players* say that they notice the unreal dreaminess of the world around them—the subtle changes that occur when their characters aren't looking. That cannot happen unless you, the Keeper, make it happen.

First, you must remember to frequently add those subtle changes to your descriptions. In every scene include details of shape, color, smell, and feel to evoke atmosphere. Then mention a detail again—but inexplicably changed.

When the players acknowledge those changes, you must remember to keep a running tally of Notches for each of them.

Sometimes the players won't pick up on a change. Sometimes they may pick up on it without saying so. If you can tell by body language and expression that a player has observed some change in reality, you may want to award a Notch even if the player says nothing out loud.

Stay alert for opportunities to include subtle changes to the reality through which the Dreamers move, and for every moment when a player catches you doing it.

AN EXAMPLE

Chet Ridgely hopes to bend the world of the Dreamlands to his will by finding a sword. He imagines a jewel-encrusted scimitar. Unknown to him, Chet has 3 Notches gained from observant game play.

The scimitar is a Substantial outcome (+1 Notch) on top of the base cost of 1 Notch, for a total cost of 2 Notches. Chet's POW is 12. The Keeper rolls against POW x 5 to see if Chet succeeds—a 60% chance.

The Keeper rolls 16, succeeding. But to maintain mystery, he strings Chet along. After several fruitless minutes of searching his surroundings, Chet becomes frustrated and sits down on a rotted log. The log collapses, revealing the skeletal remains of a long-dead warrior inside, clutching the scimitar of Chet's dreams.

DIRECTED DREAMING

Directed Dreaming is the act of willing something—usually a small, singular change—to occur in the Dreamlands. The Notches gained by players recognizing changes in the Dreamlands fuel this ability. Since the player never learns that Notches exist, attempting to direct the reality of the Dreamlands is always an act of faith.

The deeper the Dreamers travel into the Dreamlands, the more the possibility of exerting such a change should grow in their minds. The Keeper should never confirm that such an outcome is possible. Instead, the player should arrive at this conclusion and experiment with it. With a limited number of Notches as fuel (remember, the players should have no idea how many Notches exist—or even that they exist at all), such Directed Dreaming is likewise limited.

When a player announces that a Dreamer hopes to change reality in some way, it requires a POW roll. If it succeeds, it uses up Notches. The minimum cost is *always* 1 Notch. The Keeper rolls against the POW of the Dreamer, keeping the results secret. A player with no Notches can attempt a change but nothing happens.

The cost and difficulty depend on the degree of change. Cosmetic changes are easy but at very large scale might be costly. Here are guidelines. The final difficulty, and whether a roll is even required, is always up to the Keeper.

Type of Directed Dreaming Change	Cost	POW Roll
Base (and minimum) cost	1 Notch	n/a
Is the outcome cosmetic? (Appearance, clothing, etc.)	-1 Notch	POW x 8
Is the change personal? (Something which matters only to the Dreamer.)	-1 Notch	POW x 7
Is the outcome substantial? (Some physical gain, money, property, weapons, etc.)	+1 Notch	POW x 5
Is the change something large? (Bigger than the character himself or herself.)	+2 Notches	POW x 3
Is the change something vast? (Bigger than a mansion.)	+5 Notches	POW x 2
Is the outcome of the change a matter of life or death?	All Notches	POW x 4

INJURY, SICKNESS AND DEATH

Injury, sickness and death in the Dreamlands bear a fundamental resemblance to their counterparts on Earth. But in the Dreamlands, death and disfigurement are preventable, even permanently avoidable.

In addition to normal healing per the *Call of Cthulhu* rules, injured Dreamers can “recover” hit points by spending Magic Points. Each magic point spent heals one hit point of damage. This ability is natural to all inhabitants of the Dreamlands, and all Dreamers have an intrinsic sense that such healing is possible. Still, it is amazing to see in action, particularly to those from Earth. Even disfiguring or crippling injuries can be restored by faith that they are not real. Each Dreamer suffers a SAN loss of 1/1D4 the first time he or she sees more than 4 HP healed in this way.

Disease and poison are more difficult to change, but can still be affected. Spending 1 magic point reduces the Potency (POT) of the disease or poison by 1.

Death in the Dreamlands is unusual. Certain beings are effectively immortal. Others live the equivalent of centuries of Earth time. For many it is a place where time means nothing.

The player-character Dreamers are unusually vulnerable. Most Dreamers of Earth come to the Dreamlands only in spirit, leaving their bodies waiting for them safely on Earth. Not so for the player characters. Their living bodies have been brought to the Dreamlands and transformed. If they die here, they die altogether.

Chances are the player characters will search for a route back to Earth, where their families and lives await—flawed lives, but their own. Those who head upon the dangerous and mystery-laden path to immortality in the Dreamlands must look elsewhere than this campaign to find their direction.

SANITY

In the world of Dreams, Sanity is more resilient and changeable than in the real world. At the beginning of each new day in the Dreamlands—or each equivalent transition, in times when the passage of days is impossible to track—each Dreamer may make a Sanity roll. If it succeeds, the Dreamer regains 1D4–1 SAN. If the roll fails, the score does not change. Dreamers can go up to their starting Sanity (POW x 5) in this manner.

Dreamers may also gain SAN for defeating monsters, as described in the *Call of Cthulhu* rules.

LUCK

In the Dreamlands, the tide can turn in an instant for the worse or for the better. When a group of Dreamers faces some peril or change of fortunes we may call for a group Luck roll. This determines the outcome of some binary element: whether or not a cave-in lands on the characters, or a book of ancient spells crumbles to dust.

Find the character with the lowest Luck score and roll against that score in secret. If it succeeds the outcome is positive; if it fails the group suffers the consequences.

ADDICTION

In the Dreamlands, the Dreamers do not suffer from physical addiction to opiates but the psychological addiction remains. This can come up whenever you want to use it as a motivator. If they settle in and refuse to seek a way home, the need begins to set in. The one thing they can never find in the Dreamlands, even if someone tells them it exists, is a drug that will satisfy that need. Once the need sets in, a Dreamer suffers penalties of 10% to 30% to all rolls every day until he or she sets out in search of a way home.

LANGUAGES

Alien languages never heard before on Earth are the common parlance in many regions of the Dreamlands. However, thanks to the nightly visits of millions from Earth, in the main region of the Dreamlands, English is commonly spoken.

Or is it English? A native French speaker might swear everyone in the Dreamlands is speaking French. The key is that Earthly Dreamers can speak to each other without the barrier of Earthly languages. When you see “English” in this book, let it stand for whatever Earthly language you wish.

The common native tongues of the Dreamlands are listed below, along with their region, and the races that speak them:

Language	Description	Written	Race/Region
Cum'Teha	An Earthly-sounding language; like a Polynesian tongue	Yes	Human/Baharna
Morga	The language of the Underworld, unspeakable by humans	No	Ghouls, Gugs, Ghosts/Underworld
Oeuth	A brutal, feral language of sharp consonants and barks	Yes	The Men from Leng
Pross	An Earthly-sounding language a little like Polish	Yes (rare)	Human/Ilek-Vad
Skand	An Earthly-sounding language, Scandinavian-sounding	Yes	Human/Inquanok
Talunen	An Earthly-sounding language, much like Spanish	Yes	Human/Lhosk
Ulet	An earthly-sounding language like an African tongue	Yes	Human/Ilarnek

SKILL CHECKS

The Dreamers will be called upon to learn and use skills that their waking selves never had a reason to know. The Keeper should allow them to improve skills more frequently than in the waking world.

Let the player note a skill check any time a Dreamer spends a significant amount of time and effort studying or practicing a skill; and any time the Dreamer attempts a skill, even if it fails, as long as the attempt itself seemed instructive.

By the same token, allow improvement rolls at the end of each chapter and at transition points or dramatic gaps that occur during a chapter.

The Keeper might allow Dreamlands languages to come more easily to Dreamers who have mastered foreign Earth languages. For example, a Dreamer with any skill in Other Language who studies a Dreamlands language intensively may attempt a roll with his or her best Other Language skill, no matter what that Other Language is. If it succeeds, the Dreamer gains a starting rating of $EDU + 1D_{10}$ percentiles in the Dreamlands language. He or she may increase it from there as usual. What qualifies as “intensive” study is entirely up to the Keeper.

BETTER FORMS

Some Dreamers can unconsciously shape their new forms. Each player has a budget of bonus points that can be added to physical attributes: STR, CON, SIZ, DEX, and/or APP. These are dream bodies, so the bonus points *can* raise physical attributes higher than 18.

Powerful, simple minds have the most influence over their dream-selves. The bonus points equal POW x 2 minus the sum of INT and EDU. For example, a Dreamer with POW 15, INT 12 and EDU 13 would have 30 (POW x 2) minus 25 (INT + EDU) or 5 bonus points to add to the new dream body's STR, CON, SIZ, DEX, and/or APP.

NEW WORLD, NEW BODIES

When the Dreamers wake in the Dreamlands, their minds have been transplanted into the soulless living cadavers of human slaves in the ruins of Sarkomand. Needless to say, the shock of such transference will most likely be severe, especially if the new form is extremely different from their native body.

Upon discovery of their predicament, each dreamer must make a Sanity roll or lose 0/1 SAN. In the waking world the toll would be higher, but this is the land of dreams.

However, until the Dreamer becomes comfortable with his or her new form, the roll must be made each time this new fact of life is confronted (i.e., noticing increased or decreased physical strength, height or weight, or viewing a reflection of oneself in a mirror or pool of water.) Until this roll is made 3 times in a row successfully, the SAN loss continues.

Here are sample alternate bodies for the Dreamers. The players may also roll up new stats from scratch.

Description	Str	Con	Siz	Dex	App	DB	HP
Male, African, covered in complex rectilinear tattoos	11	4	12	11	7	–	8
Female, northern caucasian, with crimson eyes	8	15	11	6	16	–	13
Male, Asian, with ritualistic piercings on face and arms	18	17	18	13	9	1D6	18
Male, Polynesian, with ritualistic scarring on back and face	15	17	17	7	5	1D4	17
Female, Indian, with an ornate and beautiful butterfly tattoo across her face	6	15	9	14	17	–	12
Male, Mediterranean caucasian, with very long hair	13	14	14	11	12	1D4	14
Male, caucasian, with long-healed scars from combat	18	11	16	7	10	1D6	14

THE TRANSITION

Now, back to the matter at hand. When the euphoria of the *bywandine* begins, the Dreamers notice a strange distortion in their sense of sight. Their peripheral vision is slowly disappearing, making anywhere a Dreamer looks seem like a dim tunnel opening into the world, which itself keeps getting smaller and smaller. The effect is much like slowly, slowly falling down a well.

The door on Earth closes suddenly, shutting out all sight, leaving the Dreamers in the void, each utterly alone, their bodies lost in empty space. With the euphoria of the drug at work, the fall feels delightful, leaving the Dreamers giddy.

As suddenly as everything disappeared, they find themselves awake. Through closed eyelids they perceive bright light and the pains of their new bodies.

They awaken in the ruins of Sarkomand.



CHAPTER FOUR

SARKOMAND · THE COLLECTOR · THE BLACK GALLEYS ·

A POSTCARD FROM THE VOLCANO

*“A dirty house in a gutted world,
A tatter of shadows peaked to white,
Smearèd with the gold of the opulent sun.”*
— Wallace Stevens, “A Postcard From the Volcano”

SARKOMAND

A truly ancient city, Sarkomand is older than humanity itself in both realms. It fell to ruin long before man’s ancestors even began to subsist in caves. It was constructed eons ago by the Men from Leng and was a point of trade with many exotic races from beyond the west.

It was once a beautiful port, with six sphinx-crowned gates that have now mostly fallen to ruin. Still standing, however, in the center of the ruined city are two huge lions sculpted of dark grey stone — diorite, notoriously hard — that guard the entrance to the Underworld, flanking the basalt steps that descend into absolute darkness.

Dozens of large buildings still stand, and hundreds of smaller ones, although no one lives in them. The moon-beasts and the Men from Leng make their home in the tunnels beneath Sarkomand.

Sarkomand fell to the moon-beasts and their magics in pre-history. It is now used as a camp for their folly, and for their servants’ trade with the outside societies of humans and the strange societies of the Underworld.

The ruins are populated with a few moon-beasts and overrun with Men from Leng. Human and alien slaves, although rare, are found performing repetitive and disgusting tasks in service of their masters, such as sorting and disposing of bodies, cleaning up moon-beast defecate, or performing in battle to entertain the Men from Leng.



Humans with strong souls are taken in black ships to the cities of the moon-beasts on the dark side of the moon, where their souls are ripped from them in torment to create the blood gems. Those still alive who suit the tastes of the moon-beasts are consumed; soulless bodies which disagree with the moon-beasts are brought back to Sarkomand to be traded to the creatures of the Underworld for exotic fungi and animals. This, notably, is the origin of the bodies the Dreamers occupy.

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- The stark hue of bright sunlight.
- Tattoos or jewelry on a particularly distinctive body.
- The phosphorescent clouds of a northern night shining sickly.
- A crumbling satyr statue.

AWAKENING

The Dreamers awaken to the smells of urine and feces, in bright sunlight. They are lying amidst a litter of human bodies. All are alive and breathing but still somehow wrong. The bodies' eyes are blank and no expressions save stupefaction are to be seen. Most sit in puddles of their own excrement.

Heaps of these still-breathing forms lie inert atop each other. Most are naked; some are clad in ripped cloths or skins. Some show signs of once possessing wealth: clean fingernails or an occasional ring or necklace. Others are covered in scars and welts, some of them quite recent. All show a peculiar mark on their backs (including the Dreamers if they check). This odd wound is two small burns on the base of the back, each about an inch across.

It becomes immediately apparent that someone is moving among the living cadavers, singing in a cracked and off-key voice in a wholly foreign language. The voice occasionally breaks off its singing, only to begin again after a small shuffling or fleshy noise.

The Collector, as he is known, is a hunched human slave who sorts through the living cadavers before they are sent into the Underworld. He collects jewelry or valuables from them, shaves the hair from some for use in trade or the making of ropes, and occasionally removes certain organs for spells, such as eyes, fingers or testicles (0/1 SAN cost to witness). He is the servant of the Men from Leng, who prefer the darkness of the tunnels beneath and dislike dealing with the empty human vessels, which they cannot cajole or threaten.

On certain nights the Black Galleys come from the moon and deliver living but comatose bodies to Sarkomand. The next day the Collector sorts and sifts through the bodies in the hope of finding something of value to turn over to his masters. That night they take the bodies to the great plaza for delivery to the Underworld.

An absolute coward, the Collector is liable to run off at the first sign of a disturbance. If captured by someone larger than him, he is completely and pitifully subservient. He remains so until he spies a chance for trickery or escape.



KEY TO THE MAP

1. The Collector
2. Wamp Lair
3. The Black Galleys
4. The Plaza

LOOKING AROUND

Dreamers who wish to get a better view may climb on top of rubble heaps or up the remnants of buildings. A Luck or Climb roll (whichever is higher) must be made; if it fails, bad footing, structural failure or clumsiness costs the character a spill for 1D4 HP damage.

At a sufficient height, the Dreamer can observe a large plaza to the north, nestled among many ruined buildings. A Spot Hidden roll spies occasional movement by shadowy, human-sized creatures in the plaza. In the distance, huge mountains stretch off to the horizon.

To the south, ruined docks can be seen with many submerged and half-submerged ancient ships, and past that the gray green of the ocean. A Spot Hidden roll notices that several docks have been restored. At those, several large black ships float.

It is obvious to anyone who takes sufficient time to examine their surroundings that this is not Earth (SAN loss 0/1).

THE COLLECTOR

The Collector is a short, fat, disfigured man with Asian features, yellowed rotting teeth and a slight hump. Although his speed is unaffected by his disfigurements, he walks and runs with a pronounced limp on his right side. He is covered in rolls of fat. His forehead is marked with the symbol of the Men from Leng.

He always wears rotting leather leggings, a cotton shirt and a large furred cloak made from the skin of a Buopoth. He carries no weapons, relying instead on his knowledge of Sarkomand to keep him from danger. He speaks many languages including English, Talunen, Oeuth, and Skand.



History: The Collector remembers little of his life before the age of 16, when he was sold into slavery to the Men from Leng. He was cast out of a family of some prominence in Lhosk and soon found his way to the slave markets. The mysterious merchants from Lelag-Leng seized him and sent him across the seas in the fabled Black Galleys. There, for the first time in his life, his deformities were an advantage. The moon-beasts found him too repugnant for food, and the Men from Leng treated him far more kindly than other slaves due to their physical similarities—to them he was not as disgusting as other humans. Instead of becoming a meal or a slave, he became an interpreter.

The Collector learned many languages, and as a sign of favor has recently been put to the task of sorting bodies unattended.

Goals: To escape any danger, and, if possible, to exact some sort of revenge on those he pitifully serves.

THE COLLECTOR

Sen Saot of the Family Babaot, of Lhosk, Servant of the Men from Leng, age 41

STR 8 CON 10 SIZ 15 INT 14 POW 12

DEX 13 APP 5 EDU 10 SAN 35 HP 13

Skills: Bargain 37%, Climb 49%, Conceal 62%, Fast Talk 51%, Hide 65%, Navigation 36%, Persuade 43%, Spot Hidden 52%, Track 38%.

Languages: Talunen (Own) 40%, English 39%, Oeuth 35%, Skand 13%.

Attacks: None of any consequence.

WHAT THE COLLECTOR HAS TO SAY

The Collector is the key to exposition at the start of this campaign. If at all possible he should be encountered for some length of time, in the hopes of giving the Dreamers a better idea of where they are and how they got there. This section is divided into general questions that might be asked of the Collector, but the sum of his knowledge and what he reveals is of course left up to the Keeper.

PLAYING THE COLLECTOR

The Collector is a tremendous coward, but don't have him flee too quickly. He's crucial to conveying things that the Dreamers need to know. If he flees or dies too soon, watch for other ways to convey the basics:

- They are in Sarkomand, an ancient city of long-forgotten glories.
- He serves the Men from Leng, and they serve the moon-beasts. He holds them in terror deep enough to guarantee his loyalty. He will not depart unless forced.
- He is terrified of what his masters might do to him if they think he awoke the Dreamers. His masters will stir at nightfall.
- At the Plaza is a portal to the Underworld. The Men from Leng and the moon-beasts do not venture there, but they send comatose bodies to its denizens in trade for exotic fungi and foods.
- They are not on Earth, but this realm is connected to Earth at many points. He has heard there is one somewhere in the Underworld. He does not know where others might be—only that they are out there, somewhere.

1) WHERE ARE WE? HOW DO WE GET BACK?

The Collector calls Sarkomand “the greatest city of this ancient world,” and reveals only that he serves his masters as a collector of items rightfully belonging to them. If asked at length about his masters, whom he calls “My Lords,” he points towards a statue of a satyr and says the people of Sarkomand were subjugated long ago by the moon-beasts, of whom he knows only a little. He has never seen one.

Otherwise the Collector is surprisingly well versed in the lore of the world of Dreams. He knows that the Dreamlands are physically connected to the Earth at several points, but that the majority of travelers from Earth enter only mentally. If asked about the nearest physical exit to Earth he says that it lies somewhere deep beneath the city, although exactly where he does not know.

Having been to the underground city of the Men from Leng several times, he knows that the main entrance is in the city plaza, but can offer little more in the way of directions. If dragged along to the underground city he resists, finally admitting that it crawls with all manner of unwholesome creatures who consider humanity a delicacy.

Other exits are many miles away and lie across the ocean. He does not know where.

If the Dreamers seem likely to slay him, the Collector tells them quite convincingly that their souls must find a way out of the Dreamlands and thus be reunited with their waking bodies or their dream-selves will sooner or later begin to unravel. He says he can help them if they swear to protect him.

2) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE OTHER HUMANS?

The Collector says they are to be sold to the denizens of the Underworld, who often use them for food or entertainment. In exchange, the Men from Leng receive balms of a healing fungus called Keim which they can trade in outside lands.

If asked more about the denizens of the Underworld he elaborates, telling often fanciful tales of gugs, ghastrs and ghouls, all of whom he believes are huge, blind and mindlessly carnivorous. (He has never seen any.)

3) WHERE CAN WE GET SUPPLIES OR WEAPONS?

The Collector knows of many caches of artifacts and items among the rubble, kept mostly by the Wamps which hunt there at night and sleep in deep burrows during the day. (If the characters pursue this avenue see “The Wamp Lair” on page 39.) He is too afraid to disturb their lair himself.

If asked about Wamps, he shows the Dreamers a Wamp skull, an ugly thing with no eyes, and give them a basic physical description.

The Collector has a great bit of jerked meat (from a “voonith,” whatever that is) stored in his home nearby. It tastes horrible but is nourishing, and his supply will provide about two weeks of regular meals. If forced to bring the Dreamers to his home he openly offers them the meat in the hopes they will let him go.

4) WHERE CAN WE FIND A SHIP?

He says that he is not allowed near the docks, but there are ships there that remain empty, as far as he knows, during the day.

5) WHAT IS THE NEAREST SAFE TOWN?

The closest human town to Sarkomand is Inquanok, although the Collector knows little about it except that his masters do not like to trade there often. Other cities include Ilek-Vad and Lhosk across the Cerenarian Sea.

6) WHERE IS LENG? DO YOU KNOW MR. LAO?

Leng, the Collector patiently and grovelingly explains, is where they are. Sarkomand is in Leng, although the famous plateau proper does not begin for another fifty miles inland.

He knows no one by the name of Mr. Lao. He pronounces “mister” as “missed her.”

7) WHERE DID YOU LEARN ENGLISH?

In the city of Lhosk, he claims, as many dreamers from Earth go there. It is a common language in the Dreamlands.

TREASURES IN THE HOVEL

The Collector gathers these artifacts from the ruins of Sarkomand.

STATUES

These beautiful veined marble statues depict the Men from Leng before the arrival of the moon-beasts. There are three statues of satyrs, one playing a bagpipe-like instrument, one dancing, and another writing upon a rock. All of the statues are exquisitely made but have various chips and cracks throughout due to age. Each weighs about two hundred pounds.

SCROLLS AND PAPERS

These conglomerations of papers are extracts of ancient legal proceedings written in Oeuth, the language of the Men from Leng. Among them is a scroll of the spell *Endless Rhyme* (see page 284), also in Oeuth but of considerable value to those interested in magical matters.

(Continued.)

THE HOVEL

If forced or followed, the Collector will lead the characters to his home, a patchwork shack made of old stained wood and pinkish furry skins. (A Zoology roll leaves the Dreamer baffled as to the creature; if asked, the Collector says the skins are from a buopoth.) The ramshackle house lies in the huge courtyard of some desolate, long-forgotten building.

The building itself is fabulous and the architectural style is fascinating to anyone from Earth. It is almost reminiscent of Indian temples, with smooth sinuous lines dictating space and form. Occasional rune-like carvings can be spied, but they are in no known Earthly language (they are in Oeuth). Dozens of empty black windows look into the courtyard of the building, and anyone entering it is struck by an uncontrollable wave of paranoia as to what could be hiding up in all those rooms. In addition, stealthy sounds can often be heard in the building: structural creaks, the dripping of water, strong echoes and other, less identifiable noises.

The hovel is a lavish pit built from the remnants of a dead city. Dozens of out-of-place objects dot the one-room tent, including several large, broken sculptures of satyrs, a water pipe, an open box of huge red gems, dozens of piles of scrolls and rotting papers, and everyday belts, wallets, and shoes from modern Earth.

The Collector pretty much has the ruins of the city to himself during the day. At night he hides in the shack, in the safety of the courtyard. Most nightly predators in Sarkomand hunt by sound, so they tend to steer clear of the courtyard due to its strange echoing effects (not that he will tell the characters this, if he can help it). Occasionally a strange creature wanders in and gets disoriented, and the Collector beats it to death with a rock and eats it.

THE WAMP LAIR

The Collector will lead the Dreamers to the Wamp lair only during the day. It is a short walk south towards the sea, through several avenues of ruined buildings. As the Dreamers approach the smell becomes evident, a pungent odor of ammonia and rot.

The Wamp lair would have been a gatehouse in ancient times. Dozens of rotting bodies and bones lay about, all stripped of valuables and clothing. Several are noticeably human. (Cost: 1/1D3 SAN.)

The Collector knows quite a bit about Wamps and has no wish to contract diseases from an infected Dreamer, so he is quite up front with the facts. He recommends that Dreamers cover their mouths with cloth and not breathe too deeply of the air inside. When it is daylight out, he assures the characters they have nothing to fear.

Inside the lair careful collections of valuables lay about, along with several sorted piles of blood-encrusted bones, still fresh. There is a pile of 23 swords of various designs and styles. Most are covered in a thin film of rust that is readily cleanable. Many have markings and runes that the characters will find indecipherable. Elsewhere is a pile of coins of ancient Sarkomand. Although they are worth something as collectibles, they are worthless for their metal. They are merely lead with a thin layering of gold. And there is an assortment of 39 belts of different styles, none of Earthly make, each worm-eaten or rotting. An Idea roll recognizes bite marks made by something with dozens of tiny, needle-like teeth—the Wamp.

The room is otherwise empty. The smell climbs to new levels in the enclosed room, and Dreamers failing a CON x 3 roll must leave or become violently ill for 1D6+2 rounds.

Dug through the flagstones on the floor is an open pit, smooth with age and wear. It recedes into the ground at nearly a forty-five degree angle, and is the source of the horrible smell of ammonia. The Collector informs the characters that the Wamp sleeps at the base of the pit, and it is to be avoided.

Unless physically disturbed the Wamp will not wake.

EARTH ARTIFACTS

A leather Sears belt, a pair of cheap suede shoes, and a leather wallet were recovered off the body of one of the living corpses some time ago, or so claims the Collector.

The wallet holds several scraps of paper. On one is a telephone number, Manchester-6110 (a New York number). On another is the address and telephone number of the Peach Blossom Restaurant. There are no identifying marks on the wallet, shoes or belt.

GEMSTONES

This chest holds 2D100 small blood gems scrounged from the living corpses by the Collector. They were considered too small for harvesting and remained stuck in the living corpses when they returned. He is not supposed to have them, and will offer them to the characters without hesitation. In other, far-off parts of the Dreamlands this chest would be worth a large portion of a city. Here it is worth nothing.

TREASURES IN THE WAMP LAIR

These objects stand out from the refuse and gore.

THE SWORD OF KAMAS-THA

This is a light, narrow blade of a thin greenish metal. Once cleaned it is of obviously high craftsmanship and value. Damage 1D6+1 (can impale), HP 15, +10% to hit and parry.

Talunen writing on the hilt explains it belongs to the head of the family Tha of the city of Lhosk. If asked, the Collector can read it. He adds that returning it to the family will mean a large reward. This sword has been passed down from father to son for over twenty generations. It was last in the possession of Kamas-Tha, who perished when moon-beasts raided his ship on the high seas due to political treachery. (If the characters pursue this, see "The Trade Family Tha" on page 184.)

To further this lead, if the characters fail to enter the Wamp lair the sword might also be found on the Nameless Rock (page 54) or in the Collector's Hovel (page 38).

(Continued.)

THE WAMP

Inhuman, Diseased Horror With an Appetite

STR 15 CON 29 SIZ 17 INT 10 POW 10
DEX 12 Move 9 HP 23

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapon: Bite 41%, 1D6+db+infection.

Armor: 2 points of flabby hide.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8

Notes: The Wamp is pale, bloated, with nine long legs, knife-like ears and a thin, wrinkled snout and flabby lips in an eyeless face. The bite of the Wamp is contaminated. Anyone bitten who fails a CON x 5% roll will be infected with a random disfiguring illness such as bubonic plague, leprosy or elephantitis (POT 15).



THE DOCKS

On the south tip of Sarkomand about a dozen miles of shoreline are taken up by ancient docks of wood and stone. The hand-carved flagstones around the docks each portray the happy face of a satyr, smiling, laughing, each expression slightly different. Covered in moss and worn smooth, these blocks are among the few reminders that Sarkomand once was a happy city.

Most of the docks have fallen into ruin, some centuries ago. Once beautiful, they are now little more than rotted wood planks suspended between shifting basalt stands, covered in a light mauve moss.

Anyone foolish enough to climb out on the docks must make a DEX x 3 or Climb roll every minute or fall into the water. If a Dreamer falls, an additional Luck roll must be made; if failed, the Dreamer suffers 1D10 damage striking underwater debris. Two Swim rolls are needed to get to shore.

Two docks stand out from the rest. It is hard to tell whether they are recent additions or resilient artifacts. They look nothing like the rest of the city's architecture. The entrance is an arched peak, and like the strange docks themselves it seems to be made out of a single chunk of cold black stone. There are no seams or rivets. It is as if some huge giant dropped the docks, whole, into the water in one go.

Tethered at each of these black docks is a huge galley, 150 feet long, seamless and black like the docks. It has no windows, sails or apparent steering mechanism.

THE BLACK GALLEYS

These are the moon-beasts' vessels, a source of legend and intrigue in all lands of trade. When in foreign ports, only the Men from Leng interact with humans, and then as quickly as possible, as the ways of humans do not agree with the satyrs. It is not known to the general public of other lands exactly where the men who pilot these ships come from, nor that they are satyrs at all, as they wear voluminous robes and turbans to cover their inhuman features.

The ships' rowers are the source of much speculation, as the tireless, rapid movement of the oars is the envy of every sea captain. At full speed the Black Galleys can top forty miles in an hour, faster than any other ship in the Dreamlands. No one has ever seen who or what powers the ships, but the oars move in unnatural unison, as if one giant hand moved every oar at once.

In truth, convict moon-beasts row the ships. Torture machines force the convicts to row in unison. If they resist or tire or row out of order they are shocked; if they falter too many times in a single day,

AN ENCHANTED SABER

If placed upon a flat surface, this slightly curved sword spins and points towards the closest safe port. The character who placed it there knows the name of the city and its distance. (In Sarkomand it points towards Lhosk.) The saber was a gift to a Baharnian sailor from a wizard to whom he gave safe passage.

THE ASTROLABE

This is a rusty but workable ship's astrolabe: a hand-sized brass wheel with a rotating cross-staff, used for navigation by marking the movement of stars. It is haunted by the soul of the captain to whom it last belonged, Talmes Reesh of Rinar. Every week, on the same night, its new owner relives the last moments of Reesh's life at the helm of his ship, the *White Palace*, which was sunk by a Cloudbeast (see page 51) off Ilek-Vad. These visions each cost 1/1D4 SAN. They continue until the astrolabe is given a proper Rinarian burial. Researching Rinarian customs reveals the way to stop the visions. Burying the astrolabe properly grants 1D4 SAN to those who participate.

THE SILVER CHALICE

This solid silver chalice is worth a great deal in any major port. It is of ancient Sarkomand design, and if sold to a collector will fetch a high price.

TREASURES IN THE BLACK GALLEYS

These can be found on any Black Galley.

THE DOUBLE-PRONGED SPEARS

Twelve of these modified moon-beast spears are kept on board each ship in case of mutiny. They are considerably smaller than usual so that the Men from Leng can use them (but so can humans).

A careful winding of silver filigree runs to each tip from the handle. The wielder loses 1D4-2 Magic Points upon contact with a spear. Each point does 1D4 HP stun damage; if the target's CON is exceeded by accumulated stun damage, he or she remains unconscious for 1D6+2 hours. Upon waking (or after a normal rest), this stun damage is "shaken off" and does not last like normal Hit Point damage.

THE MOON-BEAST CHARTS

These huge, silver discs expand and rotate mechanically, and are covered in a fine series of raised dots. Each weighing in excess of 100 pounds, they are difficult to move.

(Continued.)

they are horribly and finally electrocuted. Many moon-beasts perish despite their exceptional strength and constitution, and the rowers rest only when in port, a rarity. They do not leave the ship ever, until dead. They are fed and excrete through tubes. A Dreamer foolish enough to go below deck, although physically safe, suffers a loss 1/1D8 SAN, confronted with the terrifying forms of the moon-beasts trapped in their torturous prison. Such service is the penalty for the only crime among the moon-beasts: failure to worship Nyarlathotep as their lord and master. (Even so, many still choose to worship Azathoth directly instead.)

A simple panel on deck controls the direction and speed of the rowers. Besides that, there is only a single extremely large hatch leading below. Most of the interior of the ship is made up of storage space, holds for cargo and for human slaves bought at market. The huge hold of the convict moon-beasts comprises most of the lower decks.

The crew quarters for the Lengian sailors is a room of strange hammock-like hanging bags (they sleep standing), with an adjoining galley filled with horrific smells and what passes for food to the satyrs. The ceilings on this level are low and difficult for humans to get used to.

Each ship is loaded down with horrible food and fresh water enough for a journey of several months. Three nights after the Dreamers awaken in Sarkomand, the Black Galleys leave for the dark side of the moon.

At night the docks and galleys are crawling with Men from Leng. Any human discovered there will be "processed" as a slave.

THE PLAZA OF THE LIONS

Once the heart of the city, the plaza is now the only remnant of Sarkomand's former glory. Ferocious stone lions, twenty feet tall, still stand, each in repose, around the onyx flagstone square. (Each flagstone once contained a gold coin, but all have long since been scraped out by greedy, inhuman hands.)

Near the center of the square, a large, filthy green tent has been erected, flying a red flag. This tent covers the huge trapdoor to the Underworld, and is always guarded by a Man from Leng. If an alarm is raised a dozen of the satyrs pour up from below. (If there's fighting, there's a 10% chance the first round that it's overheard and the alarm is raised, 20% on the second round, 30% on the third, etc.)

If the guard is taken quietly and the characters have time to explore the tent, they also find a smooth, greased hole, four feet wide, which drops at a 45-degree angle into the earth. This is where the slaves are dropped down to the gate that leads across the Underground Sea to the Vaults of Zin.

If asked, the Collector says that the gate is lightly guarded below, as the ghouls do not like to come that close to the white fungus that grows there; they do so only to trade. The next shipment is not due for at least a week.

GUARDS: MEN FROM LENG

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Dex	Pow	DB	HP
#1	12	11	13	13	11	1D4	12
#2	15	10	15	13	12	1D4	13
#3	9	8	9	11	11	none	10
#4	13	14	15	10	10	1D4	15
#5	13	9	13	9	9	1D4	11

Skills: Listen 33%, Sneak 41%, Spot Hidden 43%, Track 49%. *Languages:* Oeuth (Own) 57%.

Attacks: Punch 45%, damage 1D3+db

Sword 40%, damage 1D8+1+db

SAN Loss: 0/1D6-1.

The moon-beast charts contain distances to various ports, including the dark side of the moon, Celephais, Inquanok, Hlanth, Lhosk, Aphorat, Thalarion, Rinar and Baharna. The charts contain only distances, not any geographical information.

At sea, the charts' distances are constantly, magically updated. If one studies the charts while the ship is moving, the direction of any city on the chart can be determined as their distances slowly change. This can be very valuable at sea.

A Dreamer studying these charts at length may make an Idea roll. If it succeeds, the operation of the machine seems incredibly simple and all the raised dots appear as tiny English words, or the native language of the character. (Not even the Men from Leng can read moon-beast writing.)

KEIM

Four boxes of this odd substance are on board each vessel. It is a lumpy, phosphorescent, grayish-green moss. In most realms it is worth quite a bit of money. If used properly as a poultice on a wound (requiring a First Aid roll once per day) Keim prevents infection and heals 1D6 HP per day. Each box has 50 applications.

ENTRANCES TO THE UNDERWORLD

There are two entrances to the Underworld in the tent: the greased chute which the Men from Leng use to send the mindless bodies below, and the trap door, which allows access to the Ten Thousand Steps, a huge and terrifying staircase which winds ever downward into the dark, guarded by pockets of the Men from Leng.

THE TEN THOUSAND STEPS

Flipping over the ancient, rotted wood trap door reveals the beginning of the Ten Thousand Steps, a dizzying tower of stairs that lead all the way to the base of the Underworld, nearly a mile below.

They begin as small, uneven, hand-hewn rock steps, but spread and change until they become immensely broad stairs, perfectly cut in a low, long fan. The rock wall occasionally opens onto vistas of blackness at the edges. These portholes into the vast Underworld hover nearly a mile up from the bottom, and nothing is visible in them.

Under no circumstances except direct threat of physical violence will the Collector enter the trap door. He informs the Dreamers that should they venture down the steps, there will be no hope of escape from his masters. If attacked, he flees down the greased chute instead of the stairs or else back out into the plaza.

If the trap door is opened, it emits a huge shriek as the rusted clasp sheds brown-green dust. Anyone making a Listen or Luck roll can hear the Men from Leng far below as they stir along the stairs, hooting and shouting in their alien language. This sends the Collector into a panic. If given a choice between waiting for the Men from Leng to arrive or taking the chute, the Collector leads the way, leaping down the hole without hesitation.

THE GREASED CHUTE

The Collector will struggle and fight if forced to the chute without some other motivation, but after 1 HP of damage or more he kowtows to the demands of the Dreamers and climbs in.

Riding down the greased chute is a harrowing experience. The ride takes more than a full minute, during which the Dreamers sometimes slide as fast as a horse can gallop. Those failing a Luck roll take 1 HP damage from friction burns, bruised shoulders or injured legs. Those rolling 100 suffer 1D10 HP damage as they break bones on the descent.

Down below, there is no light save for the soft glow of the white fungus that grows everywhere, and all attack and Spot Hidden rolls are halved. It is obvious that the Dreamers are in a huge underground passage. A foul breeze blows from the south. Besides that, little can be discerned.

As the Collector said, there are no guards at the base of the ancient steps nearby that lead up about a mile to Sarkomand. If the Men from Leng have not detected the characters' entry by now, Dreamers making a Listen roll can hear a great deal of noise echoing from above. If the characters persist here, in a matter of minutes a group of fifty Men from Leng will descend from above to capture them. Fleeing deeper into the Underworld is the only possibility of escape.

If the characters continue into the Underworld, see Chapter Seven.

SARKOMAND AT NIGHT

At night the city crawls with monsters. Dreamers foolish enough to venture out as a group most likely encounter a Wamp or a party of Men from Leng, or at worst a moon-beast.

A Dreamer venturing out alone is never seen again.

MOON · BEAST

Evil from the Dark Side of the Moon

STR 18 CON 10 SIZ 24 INT 13 POW 16
DEX 7 Move 7 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Attacks: Spear 41%, damage 1D8+1+db.

Armor: None, although it always takes the minimum possible damage from impaling weapons.

SAN Loss: 0/1D8

Spells: This moon-beast casts Emerald Darts of Ptath on the first attack, spending 12 magic points and doing 3D4 points damage which ignores all armor.



CHAPTER FIVE

ESCAPE BY SHIP · SHIPBOARD LIFE · FINDING PORT ·
WINDING ACROSS WIDE WATER, WITHOUT SOUND

*“Theatrical distances, bronze shadows heaped
On high horizons, mountainous atmospheres
Of sky and sea.”*
— Wallace Stevens, *The Idea of Order in Key West*

METHOD AND DIRECTION

Unless they tumble down the chute to the Underworld, the most likely method of escape from Sarkomand for the Dreamers is the daytime theft of a Black Galley from the docks. Other methods are available, though not recommended.

Foot travel up the rocky coast to the west is possible, and will eventually lead to a human realm (Inquanok). But the trail is beset by many dangerous obstacles, including the infamous Spiders of Leng. For more on Inquanok, see Chapter Eight: Inquanok on page 105. For possible encounters while exploring the Dreamlands by foot, see Chapter Six: Wandering, on page 58.

Directly south across the sea is Ilek-Vad, a city of glassy turrets built atop the convoluted mazes of the gnorri. This city often trades with the Men from Leng, and is by no means considered friendly to human dreamers. Although quite beautiful, the city maintains a dark reputation due to the lack of hospitality shown to travelers and the odd habits of its inhabitants. For more on Ilek-Vad see Chapter Ten: Ilek-Vad on page 196.

A bit to the west on the same coast as Ilek-Vad is the friendly port city of Lhosk, former home of the Collector. If the Dreamers land on the coast between Ilek-Vad and Lhosk, the Collector will be able to find his birthplace without difficulty. For more on Lhosk see Chapter Nine: Lhosk on page 143.

*TO THE
MOON AND
THE EDGE
OF THE
WORLD*

THE ORACLE OF THE
WESTERN MACHINE

THE WESTERN
PLATEAU

INQUANOK

THE VALLEY
OF ONYX

THE WESTERN
ROAD

SARKOMAND

THE NAMELESS
ROCK

CERENARIAN SEA

ILEK-VAD

LHOSK

ENCHANTED
WOOD

ULTHAR

ILARNEK

SARNATH

*TO GAK, THE VEIL
OF NIGHT,
AND FOREIGN
LANDS*

THE LAND OF DREAMS AND NEARBY REALMS



CAMPAIGN PATHS

This campaign is meant to be explored. It's not a fixed story in which one element must build on another. The Dreamers awaken in Sarkomand—that's the beginning, and it's fixed. They return to Earth (if they ever do!) through the Enchanted Wood near Ulthar. But the whole campaign waits in between.

From Sarkomand, the Dreamers either flee into the Underworld, or travel by land to Inquanok, or take ship to the sea. From those beginnings anything is possible. They might delve into every adventure across the Dreamlands or they might skip whole chapters altogether.

INTO THE UNDERWORLD

From the Underworld, they'll emerge in Sarnath and then might come to rest in Ilarne. From Ilarne they might already set their sights on Ulthar itself. But they must travel by sea or by land to get there. Waylay them! If they go by sea, the Merhadeen Pirates (page 52) could abduct them to the Nameless Rock. From there the Dreamers might flee to Inquanok as the nearest safe port. Only by performing a quest for the sages can they get passage south again—but perhaps the only ship that will carry them is going only to Lhosk. There they are pursued by the servants of Nyarlathotep until they arrange passage to Ilek-Vad. After an adventure with Randolph Carter they sail west and accompany merchant barges and caravans up the River Skai until they reach Ulthar.

BY LAND TO INQUANOK

If the Dreamers go first to Inquanok, they might fulfill the quest for the sages only to be forced into the Underworld after all on the way back, perhaps pursued by slavers or the Spiders of Leng. Or perhaps they'll take a ship and see what adventures await them by sea.

IN A BLACK GALLEY

If they take a stolen ship from Sarkomand (or Inquanok), they might land in Lhosk, Ilarne, or Ilek-Vad. In their explorations you can waylay or divert them however you like. Perhaps the Men from Leng drag them back to Sarkomand to sacrifice them in the infamous monastery, and like Randolph Carter in his dream-quest, the Dreamers must flee into the Underworld to escape. From the Underworld, Sarnath awaits.

The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man provides every manner of adventure and terror for your Dreamers, and it just scratches the surface of the Dreamlands. What the Dreamers encounter—and how they encounter it—we leave up to you, the Keeper.

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- Seabirds of bizarre color and sound.
- The shape of an ominous cloud ahead.
- The color of a vast waterfall leaping to the ocean from a verdant cliff.
- Phosphorescence in the waves, unseemly in its rhythmic writhing.

TRAVEL TIME

Time in the Dreamlands is an odd thing. Especially during long journeys, large sections of time can flash past, broken only by unorthodox encounters or other singularly strange events. The Dreamers do not lose their ability to motivate themselves, but unimportant stretches of routine seem to rush by, leaving the characters suddenly at their destination.

The Keeper may use this strange effect to his or her advantage by summing up what would have been weeks at sea in a single sentence, speeding game play and reinforcing the feeling of the dream.

FINDING PORT

Sailing south or following the coast west from Sarkomand are both valid methods for finding port. Utilizing the constantly updated moon-beast charts on the Black Galley will allow any Dreamer to reach any of the ports listed on the charts.

Blind sailing south will also work, but will take far more time, as the ship may find the coast at almost any point. The Keeper may elect to have the Collector know the sea lanes so as to speed time to port. Taking more time doesn't really matter to the Dreamers, but it ought to mean more encounters at sea.

HAZARDS OF SEA TRAVEL

The seas of the Dreamlands are dangerous. Malevolent and often intelligent creatures hunt both above and below the ocean, taking food wherever they can find it. Many ships leave port never to be seen or heard from again. Still others are found later wrecked upon foreign shores, or floating derelict, without crew.

Although certain areas of the seas are commonly sailed, no sailor will ever guarantee absolute safe passage, and those that do know nothing of sailing. Still the seas call, and people continue to sail despite the dangers. It has always been this way, and perhaps it always will.

Two options for seaborne encounters are offered below to make the campaign more difficult and entertaining. It is left to the Keeper to decide which (if any) are appropriate.

THE CLOUDBEAST

These huge beasts composed of a cloud-like substance often attack small ships, either picking them up and devouring sailors on deck or consuming the boat whole. Sometimes, when especially hungry or enraged, one attacks even a large vessel.

One day, this creature decides the characters' ship looks like a promising meal. The Cloudbeast slowly descends above the ship and attempts to snatch any targets it deems tasty off the deck.

If characters have not expressly set watch, each character is allowed a Spot Hidden roll. If any succeeds, the characters are alerted to the silent presence of the creature as it slowly approaches. If not, the creature is allowed a free attack on a Dreamer (or if the Keeper is kind, on an NPC). This will most likely give time for the crew to climb to relative safety below deck.

When no targets are left on deck, the Cloudbeast rocks the galley several times with its powerful tentacles and finally flies off, its hunger or territorial instinct satisfied.

CLOUDBEAST

Vaporous hungerer

STR n/a	CON 32	SIZ 63	INT 4	POW 9
DEX 10	Move 8			HP 48

Damage Bonus: n/a

Attacks: Bite 40%, damage 1D3+6

1D4 Tentacle-Paws 25%; each hit increases bite damage by +1D6

Armor: None, although takes no impaling damage. Regenerates 43 HPs per round until dead.

SAN Loss: 0/1D6

THE MERHADEEN PIRATES

This crew of degenerates operates from a hidden cove at the Nameless Rock—a spiral edifice of stone that juts from the ocean south of Sarkomand like a rotted tooth. They are cutthroat murderers who have given themselves over to the immoral worship of the soul of the Great Old Ones, the black man of the west, Nyarlathotep.

Like the Men from Leng, they serve the moon-beasts, giving over those they capture on the seas in exchange for tokens from the moon and the Underworld. A lone moon-beast oversees the ceremonies at the rock, a chosen spot for the worship of Nyarlathotep; it is also the nursery for one of Nyarlathotep's many horrendous offspring.

Though the pirates leave the Black Galleys alone and prey only on human ships, they have been informed of the character's "liberation" of a galley and of a bounty for its return.

PIRATE ATTACK!

The pirates attack the galley at night. Their captain, Seraj, uses his spell Jaunt to move fourteen of his men to the fast-moving galley. They silently arrive on deck, weapons drawn, ready to do battle. If they can, they stalk across the ship and attempt to overwhelm the Dreamers one by one.

The pirates hope to capture the Dreamers alive so they can offer them to the Lurker in the Pit, a larval Great Old One.

Dreamers who struggle too much or who kill more than two pirates find the attack becoming bloodier. The pirates keep up their attack until half of them fall in battle. At that point they flee with Seraj if he still lives, or they surrender or leap overboard if he has been slain.



SERAJ

Leader of the Merhadeen Pirates, Servant of the Crawling Chaos, age 50

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 16 INT 14 POW 16
DEX 16 APP 14 EDU 10 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Climb 55%, Conceal 71%, Degenerate Prayer 35%, Dodge 35%, Hide 40%, Navigation 40%, Threaten 60%. *Languages:* Skand (Own) 70%, English 29%, Oeuth 12%.

Spells: Commune with Nyarlathotep, Drain Soul, Jaunt, Summon Lurker in the Pit.

Attacks: Longsword 55%, damage 1D8+1+db

Long knife 75%, damage 1D6+db

Punch 55%, damage 1D3+db

Bite 25%, damage 1D4

Seraj, obviously mad, is a huge, muscular Inquanok man with pale blue eyes, hair so blonde it appears white, and thick yellow teeth. His body is covered in scars and in tattoos and symbols of his god. He speaks very little, and instead seems to dominate all who come in sight of him silently. His terrified men follow his every gesture.

Converted to worship of Nyarlathotep in his childhood, Seraj was raised in an ancient monastery in the mountains of Leng. He spent three decades hunting down the process of creating offspring for his lord. Piracy helps him gain fresh bodies to sacrifice. Now, he sees himself as the guardian of the Lurker in the Pit.

Seraj will willingly give his life to destroy anyone who opposes Nyarlathotep's goals.

THE MERHADEEN PIRATES

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	5	12	6	8	17	-1D6	9
#2	14	16	14	15	17	+1D4	15
#3	16	7	17	5	16	+1D6	12
#4	10	6	10	13	14	none	8
#5	13	11	11	18	14	none	11
#6	5	12	8	14	14	-1D4	10
#7	14	5	15	6	12	+1D4	10
#8	7	14	10	10	11	none	12
#9	10	18	10	16	9	none	14
#10	13	18	12	18	7	+1D4	15
#11	13	14	13	17	5	+1D4	14
#12	15	11	14	16	5	+1D4	13
#13	14	9	15	14	4	+1D4	12

Skills: Sail 35%, Sneak 40%, Swim 60%. *Languages:* English 12%, Skand 30%, Talunen 25%.

Attacks: Punch 50%, damage 1D3+db

Fighting knife 60%, damage 1D4+2+db

Cutlass 55%, damage 1D6+2+db

THE NAMELESS ROCK

This horrific rock rises from the Cerenarian Sea. There is no shore; instead the ocean beats relentlessly on the sheer faces of rock, long since rendered razor sharp from the surf. Any Dreamer unfortunate enough to end up in the ocean surrounding the mountain must make two Swim rolls every ten minutes or be smashed upon the rocks for 2D10+6 HP damage. Four Swim rolls brings the swimmer to safety.

There are no exterior landings, just a veiled cave that pierces to the

heart of the mountain, visible and traversable only at low tide. This huge cavern grants access to the Pit: a vast interior lake which makes it plain that the Nameless Rock is not a mountain but was, instead, at some time a volcano.

It is here the pirates have made their home. Rickety pilings and wooden shanties overhang the vast interior and wind their way up to the lip of the cone, nearly 1,000 feet above. When the pirates put into “port” they enter through the cave, row their way into the interior, and wait for the tide to rise, securing their ship in the center with ropes hurled down from above. (If the players’ galley was captured, the pirates bring it back to the Nameless Rock as well.)

All told, forty-six pirates make their home here, celebrating in horrific worship of Nyarlathotep. Nearly a decade ago their worship paid off, and in a terrible ceremony during an eclipse the dark water of the ancient volcano became home to the Dark One’s nightmarish offspring, the Lurker in the Pit.

THE PIT AND THE PRISONER

Captured characters find themselves thrown in a stone pit embedded in the side of the mountain. In the pit they find a single, dying man—an odd-looking man with greenish skin, yellow hair and white eyes. He looks as if he has been subjected to years of systematic torture and starvation.

The tongue he speaks seems to be beyond the ability of the human ear and mouth to reproduce. This does not stop him from focusing upon one Dreamer (the one with the highest POW), and waving him over, chattering in his strange tongue. He seems quite insane but harmless.

When the Dreamer comes close, the prisoner suddenly clutches him or her in a frenzy of inhuman strength. When he releases, the prisoner is dead. Where he touched, the Dreamer is marked with an odd, tattoo-like symbol—an eye.

The man is from the east, from another world’s Dreamlands. He was a priest bent on the destruction of the servants of Nyarlathotep, and was captured and imprisoned here long ago with two associates. Seraj long ago killed the other two.



THE EYE OF NODENS

The Eye of Nodens is a sigil that grants supernatural power against the servants of Nyarlathotep. It never leaves the target. It is even visible in the waking world, and its powers function there fully, should the wearer ever return there. When servants of Nyarlathotep are near, the eye fills the target with certainty and peace, granting the following abilities:

1) **SMITE:** Simply touching a servant of Nyarlathotep with the intent to cause harm inflicts 3D20 HP damage. This permanently drains 1 POW point from the sigil's wearer.

2) **CLARITY:** Every roll to attack, injure or outperform a Servant of Nyarlathotep may be rerolled once if it fails. Each reroll costs 1 SAN point as time seems to slow around the character.

3) **PURPOSE:** No matter what disguises they may employ, every servant of Nyarlathotep is clear to the Dreamer. In addition, the moment the servant is seen, the Dreamer becomes aware of the first two abilities of the eye, Smite and Clarity.

In his last throes of death, this priest has called upon his god—Nodens, the lord of the Abyss—for favor. Nodens heard his call and sent him a vision: Strangers would come from Earth, and one of them would be the vessel to destroy the offspring of the Crawling Chaos.

The Dreamer is now that vessel, imbued with the power of the Eye of Nodens.

THE CEREMONY

When the moon rises, heavily-armed pirates chain the Dreamers and drag them up an endless series of shabby catwalks to the top of the volcano. There, surrounded by pirates, Seraj enacts ancient rites to Nyarlathotep.

The chant continues for an hour as the moon fills the sky. Finally, the moon-beast priest emerges from his cave and takes the dais. This terrifying creature begins a chant in its own alien tongue, a mewling, deep howl.

Soon a rumbling begins from below, ending with the horrific arrival of the Lurker in the Pit: a terrifying spray of blood-red tentacles, eyes and maws erupting from the holes in the corona of the volcano.

MOON-BEAST PRIEST

Servant of the Crawling Chaos

STR 19 CON 12 SIZ 22 INT 13 POW 18
DEX 7 Move 7 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Attacks: Ceremonial Spike 51%, damage 1D6+1+db

Armor: None, although it always takes the minimum damage from impaling weapons.

Spells: If attacked, the moon-beast will cast Living X on two Dreamers (see page 269), hoping to immobilize them so they may be fed to the Lurker.

SAN Loss: 0/1D8

Notes: This moon-beast lives in a cave on top of the Nameless Rock, emerging only to lead the ancient rights to Nyarlathotep and its offspring, the Lurker in the Pit. If touched with the Eye of Nodens' Smite power, the moon-beast immediately suffers 3D20 damage.

THE LURKER IN THE PIT

Larval Great Old One

STR 34 CON 24 SIZ 41 INT 9 POW 18
DEX 10 Move 12 HP 33

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Attacks: Tentacle 61%, damage 1D8+1+db

Maw 70%, damage 2D10+6

It attacks with maw or with 1D8 tentacles, all on a single target. The Lurker can use the maw attack after it has hit the target with two or more tentacles.

Armor: 3 points of gelatinous blubber; it takes no damage from impaling weapons

Notes: This being lives in the dark waters of the volcano and winds its way up the cone amidst a hundred intertwining stone holes, squeezing its massive bulk through the tunnels like a giant slug. It treats the pirates—those who worship its father—with indifference, and will not hesitate to make a meal of them if they interfere with its feedings. It favors the moon-beast priest, and becomes incensed if this creature is attacked, protecting it with a child-like rage.

Weakness: When touched with the Eye of Nodens, the Lurker immediately suffers a “Smite” attack (page 56). If it is not slain, it immediately retreats into the rock and does not return.

SAN Loss: 1D4/1D20



CHAPTER SIX

WANDERING · WALKING THE DREAM · TRAVEL ·

THE RIVER THAT FLOWS NOWHERE, LIKE THE SEA

*“No shadow walks. The river is fateful,
Like the last one. But there is no ferryman.
He could not bend against its propelling force.”
—Wallace Stevens, “The River of Rivers in Connecticut”*

MOVEMENT IN THE WILD

Walking the less dangerous areas of the Dreamlands is a distracting, fascinating, wonderful pastime, occasionally punctuated by nightmarish flashes of the horrors that persist always in the shadows. Many areas in the Dreamlands are simply not settled, and are covered in unspoiled wilderness of many types: marsh, forest, desert. These areas have a stillness that the Dreamers will not find familiar. With no minds to work upon them, these areas remain in an endless loop of natural order, never spreading, growing or dying, but simply being. This leads to areas of breathtaking, permanent beauty that far surpass anything found on Earth.

Moving about in these areas is never a problem unless there is conflict within the group. Arguments, disagreements and even hidden resentment can cause obstacles to manifest themselves in the placid environment. Dreamers who are foolish enough to plot against one another or to openly fight find their path wrought with thunderstorms, deadfalls and worse.

If this portion of the world has an analog in the mind of sleeping humanity, it would be the more calm, fitful dreams that most sleepers have, which are forgotten upon waking. Like these areas of the unconscious mind, darker areas persist at the edges, haunted by creatures of nightmare and horror. Characters who push the boundaries, or who poke their heads into the darker recesses of such areas, might find something they did not expect to see there; something with teeth.

FOOD AND SHELTER

Characters who have a clear direction and goal, and who are not fighting with one another, find that issues of food and shelter really don't come up until someone brings the subject up. Dreamers confronted with the fact that they have not slept or eaten or even drunk water—to their recollection—despite days of travel might find themselves a bit upset by such a discovery.

Once the subject of food and shelter is brought up, each character must make a Sanity roll. Those that fail continue to enjoy the effects of being immune to exposure and starvation for as long as they are in the wilderness. They have discovered a secret knack of survival in the Dreamlands: the subconscious ability of the human mind to bypass particulars while in the midst of a journey. Those who *succeed* at the Sanity roll must find shelter each night and food and water each day or suffer 1 HP damage from exposure and starvation.

Clever Dreamers who have lost the knack and who think about food or shelter consistently (and who, of course, mention this to the Keeper), can make a group Luck roll each day to come upon black-berry bushes, dry caves cluttered in kindling, and other conveniences that just seem to appear from the ether.

THREATS AND TRAVELERS

The roads of the Dreamlands are well worn. A million dreamers have crossed every track and parcel, even those forbidden haunts in the extremes of the world, and some have died there. There is always an interesting figure coming down the road to encounter the characters. A few are detailed below to use as the Keeper sees fit.

And even the safest areas of the Dreamlands have dark corners. A few threats are presented here to make the journey more heroic and exhilarating. They can be used nearly anywhere in the Dreamlands outside of civilized areas, and their exact disposition remains up to the Keeper.

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- The antler shape or coloring of strange herd-beasts that seem suitable for hunting.
- The direction or shape of a grove of trees not far off, too dark and overgrown to promise respite.
- The hue or smell of vegetables from the ground, perhaps edible.
- The threat or quality of rainfall beneath a looming lavender sky.

THE BANDITS OF THE RED EARTH

The Dreamers find themselves camped near a huge, blood-red dirt barrow, punctuated with rough-cut stones and overgrown with a complex web of green ivy with huge purple leaves. It is obviously some sort of burial mound from ancient times, though for whom, no one can tell. No writing is visible on the structure. The hill is the only significant location in the area. It overlooks the worn goat track of a road that winds off over hills which are covered in deep grass and clover.

There is evidence that people and hooved animals passed this way recently. With a Track roll Dreamers can discern that the animals were sheep or goats led by men armed with spears. (The spears have left circular holes in the earth where the men stood guard.) Areas of the grass have been eaten away by these animals.

By searching the area the Dreamers find a cache of bones on the far side of the barrow. The bones are human, and have been picked clean by scavengers and plants. Some of the skulls have had teeth pulled from them. Others have been smashed by blunt force.

These are the victims of the Bandits of the Red Earth, an inbred family of killers that have found their way into the barrow and that attack those foolish enough to camp nearby. They have cleverly preyed upon the superstitions of the local goat herders and pretend to be the ghosts of the people buried in the mound. They emerge only at night, covered from head to toe in the red mud of the barrow, armed with ancient weapons they found in the burial chamber.

Their methods are most blunt. They attempt to surprise small groups of travelers, avoiding, if they can, attacking the local goat herders. They skulk up in the dead of night, armed with spears and covered in red mud, wild-eyed and silent, and attempt to run their victims through before they are even detected. Past that, they have never had to consider their actions; so far this method has proven most effective. It is likely that if the Dreamers counter-attack, the Red Earth family will prove more cowardly than they appear at first

blush. If Mother or Father is killed in the melee, remaining family members must make POW x 5% rolls or retreat.

Dreamers venturing inside the barrow mound (after locating the hidden entrance with a Spot Hidden roll) find an assortment of ancient weapons, armor and ceremonial gear from some long lost culture scattered about a room which was once a burial chamber. This is where the family makes its filthy home. In years of predation they have gathered food, treasure, clothing and supplies from dozens of victims.

THE BANDITS OF THE RED EARTH

Name	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
Cemel	16	12	15	4	16	+1D4	14
Rahs	9	12	9	8	15	—	11
Mother	7	12	10	10	15	—	11
Father	11	12	11	9	14	—	12
Edek	18	17	18	10	12	+1D6	18

Skills in Common: Dig 22%, Dodge (DEX x 2) + 10%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 30%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 80%, English 20%.

Attacks: Spear or sword 40%, 1D8+1+db

Dagger 50%, 1D4+2+db



SERVANT OF THE DARK MAN

The Dreamers come upon a thin man wearing black robes, sitting upon a lightning-split tree at a fork in the road. His face is obscured by the robe and his hands are gloved. He is shuffling and unfolding cards on an old stump of wood. Every few moments he flips a card, reacts to it with a sigh or a laugh, and then considers all the cards together. After a few cards are arrayed he slides them up in a gloved hand, puts them back in the deck, shuffles it, and starts again.

When he sees the characters, he laughs and beckons. His voice is deep and loud. No face can be seen in the hood. “My friends! Allow me to read your fortune!” he shouts jovially. He says there is no cost and that the cards said the characters would be coming. If the Dreamers refuse, he waves them off: “Ah well, no mind, others will come. Earth can wait.”

Dreamers desperate to return to Earth may find themselves terribly intrigued. Those who still manage to resist may leave. The man causes no other fuss. He remains sitting, reading his cards.

Asking this man’s name leads to a looping game of semantics. “What is a name? Perhaps here I shall be called ‘John’ and here I am called ‘Jake,’ but which is truth?” He implies that names are secondary to fate, and that as a reader of fate names mean little to him; *roles* mean more. Questions of his origin lead to similar comments. He finally, grudgingly admits only that he comes from the west.

Those who stop for a reading find themselves sitting across from a figure who, they now notice, has no skin showing. He picks one of the Dreamers to sit across from him. He unfolds the cards one by one. The cards are similar to tarot cards, but their suits and purposes are alien: the Drunkard, the Dwarf, the Retainer. He weaves a tale, answering questions and making vague guesses at the future. He implies the character’s way will be hard, that he or she will face many dangers, and that it is likely the character will fail. He paints a future of drudgery, danger and death—or, he suggests, the character can simply settle in the land of dreams forever. If so, he claims, they are destined for a wonderful future of riches and joy.

A Dreamer making a Psychology or Idea roll detects a note of

falsehood in the figure's prediction, and a manipulation in the shifting of his predictions from dire to wondrous when the characters decide to stay in the Dreamlands. Those who succeed realize he is manipulating them. Those who do not are shaken by his dire predictions. It seems, for some reason, he hopes to keep the characters permanently in the world of dreams. If asked about this, he denies it and replies that the cards tell the future, he does not.

He reads only a single fortune for the group, insisting that it marks the limits of his power. He bids the Dreamers good day and directs them wherever they care to go, sending them in the correct direction towards civilization.

If the Dreamers suddenly lash out they find that the robes hold nothing as they collapse to the ground, empty.

Those who confront the figure about his identity, or those who imply he might be Nyarlathotep (the Dreamers may have encountered him before) find the figure freezing in place, as if startled. From that point on it does not respond to voice or threat. Digging beneath the robe reveals a statue of a large, sexless human made of onyx, intercut with ritualistic etchings. (Cost: 1/1D6 SAN.)

THE GOBLINS AND THE CHANGELING

Entering a deep, thick forest, the Dreamers sense something is wrong. The weather changes, becoming dark and overcast. The air fills with the stench of something foul and the wind picks up. In this gloom, the Dreamers begin to hear noises. First they hear whispering, and a Spot Hidden roll barely notices movement in the underbrush. Then they hear the distant wailing of a child.

The sound leads to a clearing, within which a shape like a baby can be spied. The baby is swaddled in white linen and is tilted at an odd angle on the ground, as if it had been simply dropped there. The crying is loud and endless. Each Dreamer present must make a POW x 3% roll. Those who fail see a struggling, terrified baby mewling on the ground. Those who succeed see a rough, wooden statue of a baby

with a mechanical hinged mouth which clicks open and shut and emits a whooping cry like a bellows. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.) This is a goblin changeling, used to fool parents whose child has been snatched by the goblins.

If the group is split in this perception, fights may arise over that fate of the “baby.” Those who fall under the changeling’s spell will not be swayed by arguments that it is not a real baby, albeit one that never stops crying and struggling. Abandoning it or killing it costs those Dreamers 1/1D10 SAN. Arguments should be roleplayed out. The only way to break the changeling’s spell is to destroy the thing, by smashing it on a rock or burning it with fire (of course, those under the sway of the spell and with any sense of decency will attempt to protect it). A clever Keeper will use this argument as an opportunity to set up the goblin attack.

The goblins have gathered all the warriors they could, using the changeling as a distraction, and will attempt to ambush the Dreamers that have pierced their woods. The Dreamers’ high POW scores have allowed them to bypass the magics that conceal the goblin lair. The goblins are frightened and attempt to kill them before they can lead others here.

If the Dreamers defeat the goblins they find their camp easily as the goblin magic collapses. In the camp are various bits of offal and garbage, a small, uneven wooden hut laden with dozens of poorly built bunks, and three human children—real ones, five years old, three years old, and one year old—chained to a poorly built stove, weeping. These children were kidnapped from a nearby village and replaced by mechanical, magical changeling devices.

The five-year-old, Sohn, can describe life in the goblin camp. The children were stolen over a period of months from a nearby hamlet, one by one, and replaced with changelings. The goblins bound the children during the day and plied them at night with various rituals which Sohn did not understand. (In fact the goblins were casting progressive spells to transform the children into goblins.)

Sohn can direct the characters back to their village. Those who manage to return the children to their families receive 1D4 SAN points in reward and any gifts the villagers can spare.

THE GOBLIN WAR BAND

Name	Str	Con	Siz	Int	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
Grunt	9	10	4	14	4	28	-1D4	7
Squee	10	11	5	12	8	25	-1D4	8
Slurp	10	11	4	15	10	20	-1D4	7
Stick	11	14	8	16	7	15	—	11
Bone	9	14	8	8	5	14	—	11

Skills in Common: Hide 90%, Sneak 70%.

Attacks: Club 25%, damage 1D10+db

Fork 25%, damage 2D3+db

Hammer 25%, damage 1D6+2+db

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 for encountering the goblins

THE BRONZE WHEEL CIRCUS

This merry band can be heard from quite a distance. Their rickety cart, near collapsing under the weight of a ratty canvas tent and tent poles, slides across the track. A simple, looping, mechanical calliope plays, occasionally pausing as the vehicle pauses only to continue again. As it approaches, the Dreamers can spy its bronze wheels, green with age as they clack along. The calliope is an ancient affair affixed to a single well-greased mechanical shaft on a single wheel, with three pipes to amplify the sound.

Ten individuals accompany the cart in a loose band, two guiding a huge ox that pulls the cart and its contents. The group is led by Ohmon, a man in a bright red pointed cap, who is the apparent “founder of the feast.” The other nine are workmen, clowns, and acrobats who follow Ohmon’s rules to the letter. All look to him for instruction and direction and all are quiet around strangers.

The Bronze Wheel Circus sets up outside small villages, buys supplies for a small feast from the profit of their previous engagement, and then throws a party with acrobats, jugglers and clowns while selling food and spirits to the locals. They are completely mundane, and are not criminals by any stretch of the imagination, though they are often mistaken for such. They are wary of those they are just meeting, but seem to thaw as words are exchanged and Ohmon

comes to the conclusion that no harm is meant and that they are not dealing with cut throats or thieves.

The circus has a near perfect memory of towns, villages, roads, lodgings and directions, and they are a valuable resource for those lost on the road.

OHMON

Leader of the Bronze Wheel Circus, age 55

STR 18 CON 17 SIZ 16 INT 14 POW 13
DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 10 SAN 65 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Skills: Accounting 14%, Art (Performance) 44%, Bargain 51%, Conceal 20%, Dodge 57%, Fast Talk 65%, Listen 70%, Mechanical Repair 23%, Navigate 40%, Persuade 48%, Ride 33%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 55%, English 35%.

Attacks: Punch 67%, 1D3+db

Ohmon is hugely bulky, almost as wide as he is tall. He is never without a tall, peaked, red wool cap. His face is often split disarmingly by a bright, yellow-toothed smile. His voice is quiet and affable, but can rise to terrifying levels if need be. He is extremely physically intimidating, and uses this to his advantage in personal dealings by leaning in close in conversation. Still, Ohmon is a kind and giving individual, who is nearly as concerned for strangers as for his “family” in the circus. But the years on the road have taught him to be cautious.

Ohmon runs the Bronze Wheel Circus like his father before him. Many performers in his circus served under his father, Ahm, for years, and now serve Ohmon with equal fervor. Since his father’s death, Ohmon has maintained the circus much as it was when he was born. He has no family remaining except for the members of the troupe, for whom he would do anything.

Ohmon is eager to protect the future of the circus and its members and, after that, to do the right thing in tough circumstances. He will

not knowingly commit a crime or allow one to be committed in his presence, and will even go so far as to put himself in harm's way to assist a stranger.

He will also go out of his way to help those travelers the group may come upon who are lost.

PAR OF SONYA · NIL

Par appears as a lone figure on the road and is perhaps the most beautiful creature any of the characters has ever seen. She appears as a perfectly formed (however each Dreamer conceives perfection), petite woman with deep golden skin and white hair, garbed in a unblemished white robe inlaid with a blue-white filagree. She smiles easily and is eager to speak to those she comes across.

She appears unarmed, and indeed unsupplied—without kit or food—in the middle of the wilderness. If threatened, she attempts to calmly talk the source of the threat out of any action which might get them injured. If assaulted, she easily steps aside from any attack and the assailant ends up on the ground, either flipped, tripped or fallen. This is always followed by a disarming laugh on the part of the tiny scribe.

She is eager to converse with the Dreamers. With an apology, she attempts to write down their life stories with a book and pen that appear from nowhere. If she discovers the truth of the characters' history—of their magical banishment from Earth—she becomes doubly eager, probing them for details.

If asked about her own origins, she explains she is from Sonya-Nil, the Land of Fancy, a place beyond the edge of the Dreamlands where time and space do not operate under the rules found here or on Earth. It is a land of constant, perfect dream. She left this perfection to document the trials of those who live and exist in the lands where time and circumstance conspire against them. She finds imperfection, in all of its glory, to be fascinating. She quite literally surrendered perfection for chaos.

LORD IVAR OF IMEL (AND COMPANY)

This retinue can be heard at a great distance and banners hung on high poles can be spied coming over the hill. It sounds like a carriage of some sort, along with at least ten horses, and the ground rumbles as it approaches.

Four well-armed guards arrive well ahead of the company, riding up to the Dreamers and demanding their names. Those who do not comply, or who draw weapons, find that facing someone on horseback is not as easy as it might seem. These mercenaries simply circle around and rush the characters at high speed, sending them scattering. Any who attempts to stand his or her ground must make a Luck roll or suffer 1D20 damage.

Those who are peaceful, or who claim to be from Earth, note that the mood shifts. The mercenaries suddenly seem uninterested in them. With a whistle, the carriage comes over the hill. It is a powder-blue wooden construction of intricate detail, flying a gold, black and red banner on a high pole. The driver, like the mercenaries, is well armed. The passenger in the cart cannot be seen as a powder-blue filagreed cloth covers all windows. Six horses pull the cart, which is laden with luggage tied down by a canvas cover.

If anyone has discovered the characters are from Earth (whether there has been a conflict or not), the cart rides up and with great pomp, discloses a single, small passenger. This is Lord Ivar of Imel, a boy no more than ten years old.

He is eager, full of energy, and extraordinarily well-spoken for someone so young. He is eager to learn all he can of Earth and seems to know much already. If the characters will, he invites them to a lunch to discuss their lives on the distant world which seems to be his obsession. Those who agree find themselves in a clear field, flanked by mercenaries turned waiters, sitting in finely crafted folding chairs and eating fruits and cheeses. Those who decline are told to call upon him if they ever arrive in Lhosk, where he is traveling to marry into a family of some trade influence to further the ambitions of his house.

He even offers a scribbled note marked with his seal.

Ivar can become a valuable ally. His family is well known and his wealth is vast. He will, if he is met in friendship, assist the Dreamers in any way within his power—all for simple stories of life on Earth. Those who are charming or who take the little lord under their wing find that kindness repaid a thousand fold, as a single word from Ivar in nearly any civilized land can place the group high in local standings.

THE MERCENARIES

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
1	15	15	9	4	18	—	12
2	13	18	14	5	15	+1D4	16
3	12	5	17	15	13	+1D4	11
4	14	12	8	12	11	—	10
5	14	4	16	18	11	+1D4	10

Skills In Common: Dodge (DEX x 2) + 10%, Ride 49%, Spot Hidden 61%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 80%, English 30%.

Attacks: Lance 56%, 1D10+1+db

Cavalry sword 45%, 1D8+1+db

Dagger 65%, 1D4+2+db

LORD IVAR

Ivar, Son of Iva, Regent of Imel, age 9

STR 4 CON 6 SIZ 7 INT 9 POW 9

DEX 18 APP 15 EDU 8 SAN 45 HP 7

Damage Bonus: -1D6

Skills: Accounting 12%, Art 9%, Astronomy 11%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating 75%, Dodge 40%, Hide 51%, History 25%, Law 19%, Listen 62%, Occult 9%, Persuade 13%, Ride 22%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 30%, Swim 42%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 40%, English 25%.

Attacks: None to speak of.

Ivar is a small, thin child with light brown hair, blue eyes and a thick chin. He is eager, easily excited, and has a hard time suppressing his emotions.

Lord Ivar has little history to speak of, being only nine years old. Still, he eagerly looks forward to someday interacting with a wider world. He is a kind, forward-thinking noble, eager to secure and expand his family's good name.

LOCATING CIVILIZATION

Huge expanses of the Dreamlands remain uninhabited, but marks of the passage of man, as well as the remnants of ancient civilizations which predate his reign, are everywhere. Finding the direction towards civilized spaces is usually as easy as walking a few miles in any direction, following a river towards the sea, or looking for smoke on the horizon.

Characters who do any of these things discover that even the most removed areas of the Dream are not too far from shelter and civilization.

SMALLER TOWNS

Small towns of less than fifty souls are common in the Dreamlands. These villages are almost always agrarian, raising crops and livestock for sale in larger towns or cities, or simply for subsistence. Such a hamlet is usually ruled by a powerful family or a single individual of exceptional intelligence, strength or skill.

Characters entering these towns will find most doors closed to them, at least initially. First, however, they will be bluntly met by whatever passes for a militia in the town; usually a half dozen men armed with farm equipment. As a rule the inhabitants are distrustful of outsiders, but many will be friendly and forthcoming if they discover the characters come from Earth. Once this boundary is breached, and the characters are deemed inoffensive by the leaders, all barriers drop.

Money is of little use in these towns, which rely instead on the barter of skills or goods as an economy. Still, things with utility hold value, and often the leaders will trade food, clean water and shelter for useful tools.

TRADE ROUTES AND ROADS

Roads, tracks and paths crisscross the Dreamlands. Many are ancient and were laid in antiquity before humans arrived. Others are modern, with recently cut stones maintained on a yearly basis by nearby cities. Others still have guardposts to protect the caravans that wind along them.

Dreamers who seek such things rapidly locate a path, road or track, with one often leading to another. The larger roads invariably wind towards the sea, crossing small towns and villages along the way which feed into the highway system, and which bring food and goods to the seaside cities for trade.

HITCHING A RIDE

Anyone coming upon a road heading towards the sea meets many travelers. Some are on foot, but many have horses or carts. Hitching a ride on a cart is not difficult (the world of Dreams is more trusting than 1920s Earth), especially if the characters identify themselves as dreamers from Earth.

Dreamers who attempt to waylay, rob, or ambush travelers along a road will soon find themselves the subject of a hunt by local authorities (use guards' stats from page 147).

OTHER WAYS INTO THE DARK

If you wish to send the Dreamers into the Underworld but they fled Sarkomand without venturing into the Plaza, don't despair. In the Dreamlands, any cave or gap could lead to a new version of the Ten Thousand Steps, without the Men from Leng guarding them.

Dreamers in flight from slavers or goblins or warriors might flee down the steps and realize that their pursuers have stopped above, refusing to venture into the depths but waiting for their prey to come out again.

Venturing into the darkness, the Dreamers stumble across Madaeker and their grim adventure begins.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE UNDERWORLD · GHOULS · THE VAULTS OF ZIN ·
THE GUG CITY · TO INHUMAN DEPTHS

"This bitter meat sustains us...

Who then are they, seated here?

Is the table a mirror in which they sit and look?

Are they men eating reflections of themselves?"

— Wallace Stevens, *Cuisine Bourgeoise*

AT THE BASE OF THE TEN THOUSAND STEPS

Characters fed down the chute in Sarkomand arrive here, at the foot of the Ten Thousand Steps (which wind a mile back to the surface), bruised and friction-burned, sliding to a stop on a bed of spongy, glowing moss. There is no way back up the stairs as teeming hordes of Men from Leng are descending them even as the characters recover. Those who remain here for too long face a vast contingent of armed Men from Leng bent on murdering them.

The area is lit with a ghostly white light from the moss; otherwise it is barren of plant-life. Everything past thirty-feet is lost, first in a haze of grey and then in complete blackness. The only vertical surface of substance is the staircase—within and alongside it is the greased shaft in which the characters rode down. Everything else is relatively flat. The sensation of the area is that of a vast, terrifying gap beneath the earth whose ceiling is some enormous distance above. The thought that the entire city of Sarkomand sits on top of this chasm is utterly terrifying to most (0/1 SAN).

Near the point where the shaft opens is a scattering of human bones; leg bones and a skull or two. Those examining these bones closely (who make a Spot Hidden roll) realize they have been gnawed clean and the skulls carefully split, as if they were some sort

of fruit (cost: 0/1D4 SAN). In addition to these bones, there is a scattering of the crude equipment of the Men from Leng, including a backpack of leather, two cheap swords, some rotted shafts of wood which might have once been torches (but which are too wet to be of use) and some damp, rough cloth.

INTO DARKNESS

Wise characters retreat into the vast darkness surrounding the Ten Thousand Steps before the Men from Leng arrive. Those that wait too long can even see the creatures descending the stairs by the dozens, prepared for battle.

From the safety of the darkness, the stairs can be perceived, as can the bestial Men from Leng. The creatures circle the landing of the steps, but never venture far from them; it's obvious to all that they will not enter the darkness willingly. Even so, a detachment of 100 creatures fan out in a rough circle around the steps. It is clear they are not leaving and that there is no way to defeat them or sneak by them.

There is nowhere to go now but further out into the darkness.

THE GHOUL TRADER

Suddenly breaking the silence of the darkness, a lilting, almost melodic voice emanates from the caverns of the Underworld. It speaks an odd, old-sounding English. It hesitantly circles the players, asking strange questions such as "Are you of New Amsterdam?" and "How fares the port city?"

This odd being was born on Earth and, through darker means than the Dreamers, found his way to the Dreamlands: Madaeker, once Michael Daeker of New Amsterdam, left our world in the middle-1600s, never to return. He was once a man but now is not human. He looks like a cross between an ape, a dog and a man (cost: 0/1D6 SAN), though his white eyes are filled with a coherence that clearly implies intelligence. He stands upright but with a severe hunch, and wears a hooded robe over his thick, white fur. He carries a rucksack

MOTIVATING THE PLAYERS

Once in the Underworld, it's vitally important the characters move deeper into the darkness, as opposed to attempting to fight their way back up the stairs. Getting back out of the Underworld up the Ten Thousand Steps must be clearly portrayed as suicide.

This is easily achieved by illustrating the point; make it painfully obvious a vast number of Men from Leng are descending the staircase – describe the growing cacophony of terrifying sounds spilling down from above, growing closer and closer. If that fails, have the Collector insist that (though he's still horrified of the Underworld) waiting around means certain death.

If the Collector is not present, introducing Madaeker the Ghoul Trader early may be a way to draw the characters away from the Steps. Once the characters move several hundred yards from the stairs, the Men from Leng will not pursue.

Even they are not foolish enough to fully enter the Underworld – they never go more than a dozen yards from the base of the steps, no matter the reason.

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- The dank, peculiar, altogether unwholesome smell of the underworld air.
- The hue of luminescence leaking from phosphorescent fungi.
- The taste of the fungi that the Dreamers or their guides deem safe to eat.
- A rain of condensation from vast distances overhead, tasting of bone and stone.

of ruined leather filled with various artifacts of the world of the ghouls.

He's hesitant, bookish and strange. He speaks like a human but with a severe lisp. He trades with the Men from Leng that occasionally come down the steps, but he is not part of the warren of ghouls who normally trade here. In fact, he's a very anti-social ghoul.

Long since lost to the insanity of a ghoul's mind, Madaeker treats the Dreamers with a reserved air until he finds they are indeed from New York. ("So, the King took New Amsterdam, then?") He seems interested in the politics of what went on there, but has no idea of the amount of time that has passed since New Amsterdam became New York (nearly 300 years).

He is far too fast, agile and at home in the darkness of the Underworld for the Dreamers to pose any significant threat. Even so, he keeps his distance until he learns he can trust the Dreamers. Past that point, Madaeker, despite his hideous appearance, will be forthcoming and cooperative—even kind—something not all humans will be prepared for.

He is a clever fellow, but has forgotten most of his days on Earth. He understands such a place exists, but to him it is the equivalent of the world of dreams. He remembers dim snippets of what life was like "above," in the waking world, as well as "Mina", his "love"—but little else.

Madaeker will make a deal with willing humans, offering to guide them safely through the Underworld to another exit to the surface many miles away. In exchange, they must perform a task for him in the waking world when (and if) they ever return. (He seems to know that the characters are of the waking world.) He will not say what this task is until the journey is done. The Dreamers have little choice. If the Collector is present, he urges the players not to trust the "terrible creature," but wise Dreamers will see that Madaeker is far more benign than the Collector will ever be.

If told to leave, he does so willingly, but he watches the characters from a distance with his keen eyesight, shadowing them silently in the dark. After several hours to themselves in the Underworld he may quietly announce, "You've turned a circle in the black twice.

THE UNDERWORLD

THE TEN THOUSAND STEPS

GRAAL'S CAMP

THE UNDERGROUND SEA

RAZOR CLIFFS

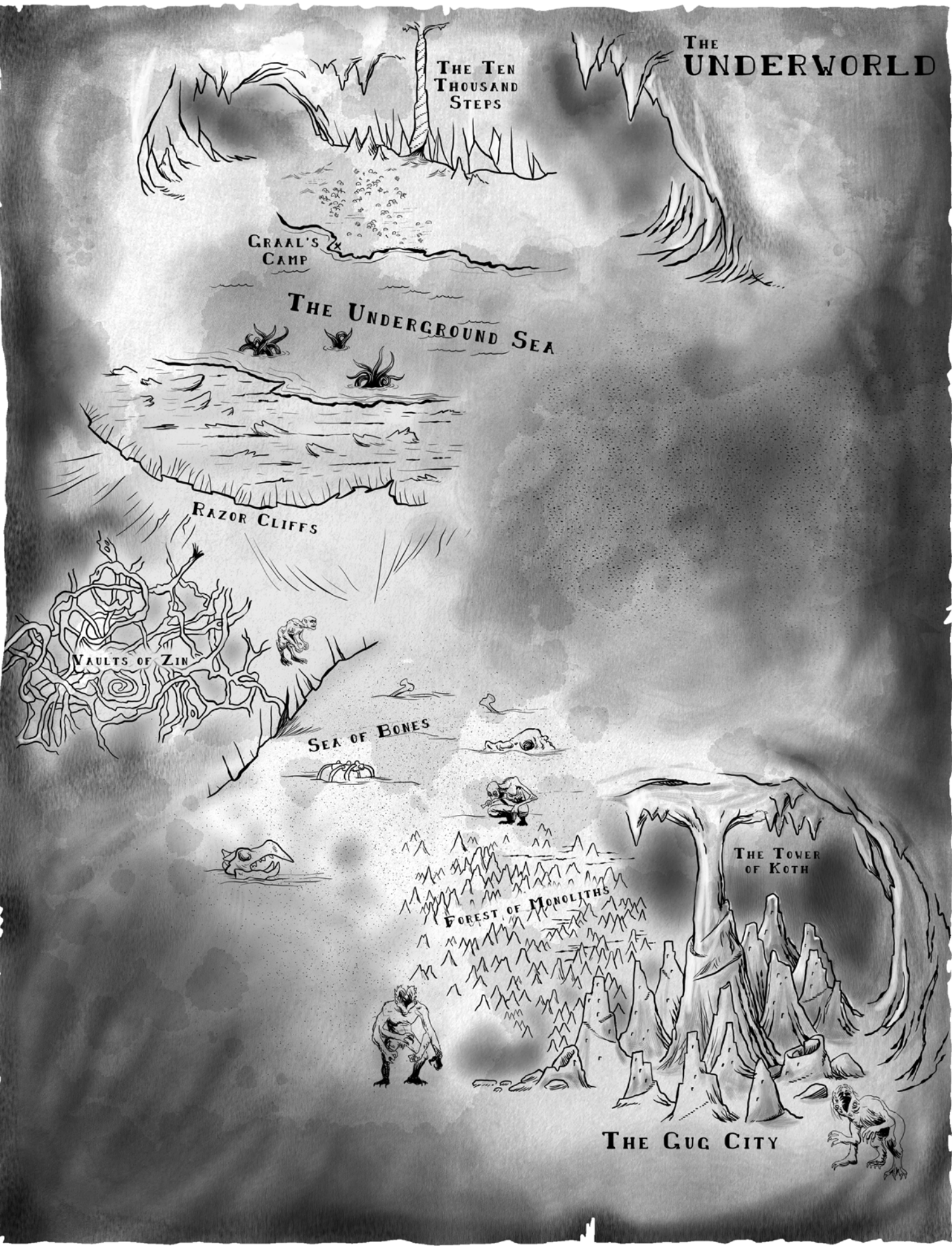
VAULTS OF ZIN

SEA OF BONES

FOREST OF MONOLITHS

THE TOWER OF KOTH

THE GUG CITY





Only I can show you the way.”

If pressed for details, Madaeker confirms the journey is far, and dangerous, but less dangerous than attempting to journey back up the Ten Thousand Steps. It involves a secret exit to a secluded wood accessible underground only in a place called the Gug City. Hearing this, the Collector begins to weep and whimper uncontrollably.

To seal the deal, Madaeker insists on a handshake—something that requires a SAN roll on the part of the human party (0/1 SAN). When he shakes the Dreamer’s hand, he looks deeply in the character’s eyes and says, “I have friends in your world as well. You shall keep whatever bargain we strike.” He does not release the hand offered until the character agrees. His strength is astonishing.

If the characters have not gained a respect of Madaeker by now, by the end of their journey, they will. When the characters agree to do all he says upon completion of his bargain, Madaeker turns into the darkness and beckons once: “This way. . . .”

MADAEKER (MICHAEL DAEKER)

Lesser Ghoul of New Amsterdam, age 352

STR 19	CON 17	SIZ 12	INT 14	POW 14
DEX 16	APP n/a	EDU 10	SAN n/a	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Burrow 72%, Climb 70%, Dodge 70%, Hide 80%, Jump 81%, Listen 61%, Sneak 85%, Underworld Navigation 80%. *Languages:* Morga (Own) 55%, English 31%, Dutch 39%.

Attacks: Claws 35%, damage 1D6+db (attacks with both claws and a bite each round)

Bite 31%, damage 1D6+automatic worry (see *Call of Cthulhu* Sixth Edition, page 160)

Armor: Projectiles do half damage; round up.

Spells: Ghoul’s Bargain (see page 285), The Mark of Mordiggian (see page 285), Summon/Bind Nightgaunt.

ABOUT MADAEKER

At 5’9” tall but monstrously strong, Madaeker looks like a cross between an ape, a man and a dog, with legs ending in scabrous

hooves. Despite this, his glowing eyes are human and retain some semblance of sanity.

Madaeker was born on Earth in New Amsterdam in the early 1600s. At some point in the distant past, he descended through the ghoulish warrens which connect the waking world with the world of dreams, and since then has never left.

Madaeker is honest. Disinterested in communing with others of his kind, he scours the Underworld for news of the waking world, which to him has become the equivalent of the world of dreams.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UNDERWORLD

Madaeker readily answers all questions put to him except one—he will not state the nature of the bargain struck by the characters for his assistance in the Underworld.

1) HOW FAR MUST WE TRAVEL?

The journey, he says, can take as long as 50,000 paces. He confesses humans find keeping time in the dark difficult. Madaeker recalls clocks and their basic use, but not well. All time is measured underground in movement.

2) WHAT DANGERS WILL WE FACE?

Gugs, ghastrs, and other ghouls who are not so well-behaved as himself. Madaeker clearly illustrates the situation. The Men from Leng were a dim shadow of the threat they now face; the only difference now is that there are places to hide in the dark. Confronting the Men from Leng at the Ten Thousand Steps is certain death; traveling through the Underworld is merely probable death.

3) WHAT WE WILL EAT AND DRINK?

Madaeker drives this point home—the characters **MUST NOT** eat or drink **ANYTHING** in the Underworld. He will not say why, only that “it is forbidden.” He will not elaborate.

4) WHAT IS A GUG OR GHAST? WHAT ARE GHOULS?

A gug is a gruesome giant, more than a match for all of the Dreamers put together. Though intelligent, they are not clever, and they hunt by sound and smell. Ghasts are unintelligent, wild beasts that haunt various portions of the Underworld. Gugs often eat them. Ghouls are those like himself, creatures—he claims—which were once men. They feed on the rotting flesh of the dead. They have no interest in live humans (the “unripened fruit”). Most ghouls are in league with other forces in the dark, such as the Men from Leng or even the gugs. Madaeker claims (truthfully) to be independent of such allegiances.

5) WHAT IS THE GUG CITY?

The Gug City is a huge, ancient edifice built long ago by the forbears of the gugs, beasts too large and horrible to imagine, which once haunted both the upper world and the Underworld. It has long since fallen into decline and is now occupied by the biggest, strongest and most terrible gugs. They use it to worship their god Ummar, the Blind One. It is the only exit from the Underworld that he knows other than the Ten Thousand Steps.

6) WHAT IS THE TASK WE HAVE AGREED TO DO IN EXCHANGE FOR YOUR HELP?

Madaeker says nothing of the bargain until the end of the journey.

JOURNEY INTO THE BLACK

Madaeker outfits each character properly for a journey through the Underworld. He answers questions readily—disturbingly so—as he searches the Dreamers. Those mistaking his probing for an attack or an attempt at robbery find him far beyond their reach before they can react violently. He reassures them: “I mean no harm. There are things in the dark that can smell a morsel at 500 paces and hear a pin drop on a goose-down bed.”

EATING AND DRINKING IN THE UNDERWORLD

Dreamers are forbidden from eating or drinking anything in the Underworld. This is part of the curse inflicted on the Underworld denizens by the Great Ones in ancient times.

This does not mean the Dreamers will perish from starvation or thirst. Despite such feelings, no negative physical effects are ever felt from lack of food or water. Willful Dreamers might live in the Underworld forever without ever eating or drinking. (Unless, of course, one of the terrifying denizens of the Underworld gets them.)

Those foolish enough to tempt the curse of the Great Ones by eating or drinking are in for an unpleasant surprise at the end of the journey to the surface. See "Those Left Behind" on page 104.

He locates any food on the Dreamers and discards it, with or without each Dreamer's permission. He refuses to begin the journey until all food is removed. In fact, he discovers several pounds of food secreted about the person of the Collector, who weeps when it is removed and thrown off into the darkness.

Next he urges the characters to discard any unnecessary metal items before the journey begins. When this is done he secures all remaining metal on their persons with rotten ropes from his rucksack.

THE ROUTE

The journey is far and involves traveling through the most dangerous reaches of the Underworld. Since it is part of the bargain, Madaeker will not be forthcoming with the exact route or method he chooses to take; instead, he generalizes and shares important information only as it is needed along the way.

Madaeker plans to guide the Dreamers first to the edge of the Underground Sea, a vast saline lake inhabited by horrible beasts. There he will parlay with Graal, a withdrawn creature not native to Earth's Dreamlands but who has fished the lake for centuries. If all goes well, Graal will bring them across the sea to the Vaults of Zin, the home of the ghastrs.

The Vaults of Zin are almost an Underworld unto themselves, a vast maze of crags with winding paths filled with ghastrs. They eventually bring travelers through the hunting grounds of the lesser gugs—those not strong enough to rule a portion of the Gug City.

The periphery between the Vaults of Zin and the gug hunting grounds is particularly dangerous. It is open ground, littered with the bones of thousands of creatures, including gugs, ghastrs, ghouls and even humans. Those crossing the zone find it impossible to move silently—something vital if one is being hunted by a creature that tracks by sound.

This zone eventually leads to the hunting ground known as the Forest of Monoliths. It is marked by huge, conical stone shapes more than 30 feet high that dot an otherwise naked landscape leading up to

the Gug City. In actuality, these shapes are the tombstones of the gug forebears who perished long before the Great Ones cursed the gugs to remain forever in the Underworld. Here sickly ghastrs are hunted by juvenile gugs throughout the tombstones. When these smaller gugs come of age or size, they battle for entrance to the Gug City, or are forever banished to the Vaults of Zin.

Finally there is the Gug City itself, a series of smooth, conical structures carved from stone, winding upwards to a vast tower that spirals up to the surface—the Tower of Koth—and finally a huge, stone gate that opens to the Enchanted Wood.

THE UNDERGROUND SEA

The Dreamers smell the Underground Sea long before they reach it. The air is filled with a pungent, sharp aroma of salt water, with an undercurrent of rot and moisture.

Moving through the dark, the Dreamers' eyes grow somewhat used to what seemed like absolute blackness. Madaeker plays shepherd, circling the group and making sure everyone is present and is keeping up.

All Spot Hidden rolls are at half chance. Dreamers who make two successful Spot Hidden rolls in a row can continue to see everything within 50' normally until they enter a new area. Any Dreamer who fails two in a row, however, must make a Luck roll or accidentally wander off (only to be found and returned to the group by Madaeker). Others remain with the group but can see only a few feet.

Several times in the dark, noises can be heard. Once it sounds like distant laughter. Another time it's the sound of flapping wings lost somewhere high above in the dark. (If asked, Madaeker states the wings belong to a creature called a "Nightgaunt." He does not elaborate.)

Finally, after what seems like countless hours of walking across smooth but undulating and uneven ground, each Dreamer who makes a Listen roll can hear the sounds of waves falling on a beach. They have arrived unmolested at the Underground Sea.

GRAAL THE OLD

Upon arriving at the pebbled shore of the Underground Sea, Madaeker informs the characters of his intention of “buying passage” on the ship of a being that is known to him — Graal the Old. Graal, he states plainly, is like him, holding no allegiances except to himself. He’s from another, distant dreamworld, and came here to the Underground Sea before Sarkomand fell to the moon-beasts in antiquity. He has lived here quietly since, hunting terrible underwater beasts that haunt the sea. Madaeker has dealt with Graal many times and is certain he poses no threat.

Madaeker attempts to hold the characters back as he walks down to the shore. Insistent characters find him pliable on the matter, as long as only one or two accompany him at first. More than that and he fears risking Graal’s “hospitality.”

Graal is a huge being, nearly nine feet tall and weighing in excess of 750 pounds. He looks basically human but is seemingly composed of a pale, translucent substance reminiscent of amber, which darkens to a honey color as the skin deepens and is lit from the inside by a flickering blue-white light. His eyes are simply blank sockets with sparks of blue-white light for pupils. He has no sex, three fingers and only the dimmest outlines of facial features.

At first, Dreamers find it difficult to read Graal’s intentions. It is clear the characters are seen as they approach, and Madaeker does much bowing and scraping as they come upon the camp. Graal stands completely still, emitting ghostly light from his skin and eyes, watching as they walk towards him. (0/1 SAN).

Graal speaks bluntly, and it becomes clear quickly that all subterfuge and subtlety is lost on this being. His statements are simple fact, emitted in a voice that sounds like air forced through a bellows. His breath is hot and reeks of sulfur. He wears no clothing and seems less to move his body as to retract and regrow his body to move. It is like seeing a film of an ever-changing statue that moves through space and time frame by frame.

Graal says that he has dreamt of carrying a number of people and Madaeker across the sea. In exchange, they must grant him a portion of their “will,” with which he will shape more weapons and expand his ship. Madaeker translates to characters that do not understand: Graal will take a “a tiny portion of their mote—the power which fuels their being—something not missed.” Madaeker makes it plain that there is no other way safely across the sea. He also makes it plain that he too must offer such a sacrifice to cross.

GRAAL THE OLD

Other-Worldly Hunter of Bholes

STR 39 CON 40 SIZ 20 INT 17 POW 22
DEX 13 Move 8 MP 31 HP 30

Damage Bonus: +3D6

Skills: Boating 51%, Empathy (Understand/Speak Any Language) 60%, Fashion Items from His Flesh 55%, Underworld Sea Navigation 90%.

Attacks: Punch 55%, damage 2D6+db

Self-Grown Spear 59%, damage 1D10+db (impales)

Armor: 10 points of stony hide.

Spells: No conventional spells. Graal’s abilities are native to his kind.

Graal is a hunter from a world somewhere beyond the Dreamlands of Earth. He came to the Dreamlands in antiquity to hunt a terrible creature which apparently tormented his kind. This beast, called a bhole, apparently devours entire worlds.

Graal’s sense of time is dilated to the point where the time he has spent in the Earth’s Dreamlands seems nothing more than a short excursion, despite the fact that he’s lived near the Underground Sea since before Sarkomand fell to the moon-beasts.

Graal pursues the bhole on the Underground Sea, occasionally killing its young before they can nest and breed. In all this time, he has only encountered the sire of the juvenile bholes twice. Both times it survived him. The next time, he is certain, he shall kill it.

QUESTIONING GRAAL

Graal speaks plainly to any topic brought up, answering truthfully and without any attempt to shade his statements in duplicity.

1) WHAT ARE MADAEKER'S INTENTIONS? DOES HE MEAN US HARM?

Graal says that Madaeker has never betrayed him, and that the ghoul is of a “higher order” than others of his kind. Madaeker—like all ghouls—eats only rotted flesh, something that Graal speaks about with some fascination (he has little concept of what “eating” is, but finds it interesting). Madaeker poses no threat to the Dreamers.

2) WHAT ARE YOUR INTENTIONS? DO YOU MEAN US HARM?

No, as long as the bargain is kept.

3) WHAT WORLD ARE YOU FROM?

Graal states he could not explain it clearly; that even the form they see is worn “like a suit of armor to interact with this place.” The place he comes from is beyond the furthest points of light in the night sky.

4) WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?

Graal is a “hunter” searching for a beast that has wronged him in another, distant world “beyond the moon.”

5) WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THE 'WILL' TAKEN FROM US?

Such power is used to shape his form and to generate the weapons and ship he uses to hunt the Underground Sea.

6) WHAT DO YOU HUNT?

The creature he hunts is a huge, terrible thing known here as a bhole. He has twice encountered it here, and twice it escaped. He will find it, slay it, and return its “will” to those from whom it has stolen.



7) HOW FAR IS THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE SEA?

Not far. But it is sometimes dangerous.

8) DO YOU KNOW ANY OTHER EXITS TO THE SURFACE?

Only the Gug City and the Ten Thousand Steps—which they would surely not survive. “For fragile beings such as yourselves, the Gug City is the only exit.”

PAYMENT

Those agreeing to the terms find themselves face to face (or face to abdomen) with Graal. The strange being gently places a huge, warm hand on the Dreamer’s chest and drains 1 point of POW painlessly. This point will regenerate over a period of time, returning to the Dreamer in ten days—but don’t tell the players this.

Those refusing the payment will be left behind on the rocky shore when the group boards Graal’s ship. Affecting Graal is completely beyond the abilities of the characters (and even Madaeker). He is immortal and, more to the point, immutable if a change is against his will. He does not hesitate to use force to protect his ship from unlawful entry, but does his best not to kill. It is not his way.

PALE BEASTS

After what seems like hours of movement over the Underground Sea, the Dreamers are startled from the silence by the sound of splashing water. Those carefully peering ahead towards the sound see brief flashes of movement. Graal seems unpeturbed, and continues forward unmindful of the disturbance.

As the boat approaches the noise, the Dreamers can spy huge, pale beasts writhing and intertwined like the limbs of some giant squid on the surface of the Underground Sea. They shake, twist and pull at one another. It’s nearly impossible to tell if it is one creature or many smaller creatures; in either case, such beasts could easily tip the vessel. (Cost: 0/1D4 SAN.)

Graal says nothing unless asked. If questioned, he says they are the offspring of the creature he hunts—tiny versions of it. They infest a planet like maggots, eating away its heart over tens of thousands of years. When their sire dies, they too will perish.

As the ship approaches the disturbance, the creatures pull away from the dim light generated within Graal, withdrawing back into the depths without a sound.

The journey continues in silence.

ILLUSIONS ON THE UNDERGROUND SEA

Cruel Keepers may complicate the lives of the Dreamers by populating the Underground Sea with creatures, illusions or distractions still more severe. Madaeker and Graal warn of the dangers of the Underground Sea. They say the sea itself is haunted and can lure unwary adventurers into its black depths.

Some options are outlined below.

1) SINGING

One or two Dreamers hear a dim, melodic singing coming from the dark, a woman's voice in an unknown tongue. If asked, Graal and Madaeker confess they hear no such noise. As the ship moves across the Underground Sea, the singing grows in volume until the listeners are certain that they must be right on top of the source. But just as it builds to a crescendo, it subsides and vanishes. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

2) THE PALACE

A Dreamer peering into the black water notices tiny, yellow pinpoints of light beneath the surface. At first it's impossible to determine what they are, but as the boat drifts towards them, it becomes clear they appear to be fires. Anyone directed to look can see them.

Despite this obvious impossibility, as the flickering lights grow closer two things become clear: first, they appear to be far underwater, 200 yards or more; and second, they appear to be torches.

As the ship slides over the point where these lights are closest, an incredible event occurs. What appears to be a moon suddenly materializes in an infinite sky beneath the waves, as if some underwater clouds parted. The moon lights the spires of an ancient palace of cupolas and spires for a few seconds, and then vanishes. Anyone foolish enough to enter the water to try to reach the palace is pulled under and never seen again. (Cost: 1/1D4 SAN.)

3) HANDS

A Dreamer who places anything in the water finds it suddenly grasped by pale, water-logged hands of enormous strength. If it's an item placed in the water, it is simply yanked out of the Dreamer's hands. If it is an arm or a leg, the Dreamer must beat a contest vs. STR 21 or be pulled in. (Cost: 1/1D4 SAN.)

Those who fall into the waters are rapidly yanked under by hundreds of such hands, never to be seen again. (Cost: 2/1D6 SAN.)

LANDING ON THE FAR SIDE

The landing on the far side of the Underground Sea is much more rocky and dangerous than the one the characters embarked on. It is a series of jagged, salt-slicked rocks, meandering up into the black.

Graal lands the ship at a single jutting shingle of stone. As Madaecker bows and scrapes once more, Graal encourages the Dreamers to disembark.

Climbing the rocky slope requires a DEX x 5 roll or a Climb roll. Those that fail slip and suffer 1D4 HP damage. Those that fumble the roll plummet into the icy cold water and must make a Swim roll every minute or drown (suffering 1D4 HP damage per round of drowning). Rescuing such an ill-fated individual is difficult, requiring a group Luck roll. Failing this roll indicates the character in the water must make another Swim roll or be swept under. A fumble on this roll and another character falls in, subject to the same rolls! Madaecker will do his best to help, but he cannot swim.

After scaling the sharp rocks the Dreamers find themselves at the top of a huge rise that spills down into a maze of smooth, undulating

REPLACING LOST DREAMERS

Replacing Dreamers lost in the Underworld may be easier than it seems. The Vaults of Zin and the Sea of Bones are directly linked to the waking world by the deepest fits of sleep of mortal men, who can often be found wandering there in the midst of nightmares. Some fail to disengage and are lost in the Underworld of Dreams. Often, these unfortunates eat or drink of the foulness that they find and become creatures that forever haunt the dark. But some hang on, searching for escape.

Have the Dreamers come upon such a lost dreamer from Earth—perhaps one that cannot wake up to his or her normal life and does not know why—as a replacement character in the pitch black of the Underworld. From there an alliance should not be hard to forge.

passageways, which vanish into absolute blackness far below. As they stand overlooking the sloping, terrifying blackness that awaits them, Madaeker announces, in a whisper: “The Vaults of Zin.”

THE VAULTS OF ZIN

The Vaults of Zin seem vaguely familiar. They represent the vast abyss of fear, anxiety and pain that dreamers from Earth often experience in sleep.

Located south of the Ten Thousand Steps across the Underground Sea, they are a huge maze of intertwining stone passageways—channels carved through a plummeting field of lava stone. They are the only way deeper into the Underworld.

THE POINT OF NO RETURN

Entering the Vaults of Zin is a point of no return for the Dreamers. There is effectively no way back to the Ten Thousand Steps once they enter the Vaults.

This also marks a sinister shift in the lethality of gameplay. The Dreamers have enjoyed good luck in meeting a somewhat odd ghoul (Madaeker) and a harmless entity from beyond space and time (Graal). In the Vaults, things become deadly serious. There are two ways to communicate this:

1) A CHANGE IN MADAEKER

Madaeker can become more gruff. He emphasizes with gruesomely evocative descriptions that failure to follow his instructions to the letter will result in death or much worse. If the Dreamers seem too light-hearted, have Madaeker set them straight.

2) AN OFFERING

More cruel Keepers might decide one or more characters will die along the way as an object lesson. Having the corpulent, back-stabbing Collector eaten by ghouls or gugs in front of them is a nice way to make the Dreamers reconsider their cavalier ways.

DESCENT INTO THE VAULTS

The Vaults are a treacherous abyss. Descending into the Vaults from the shoreline of the Underground Sea is dangerous: The Dreamers must first climb up the razor sharp cliffs and then down into the winding tunnels. Doing so requires a DEX x 5% roll or a Climb roll; failure indicates a Luck roll is necessary. Those failing the Luck roll fall and suffer 1D10 HP damage tumbling into the tunnels.

THE TUNNELS

Once in the crags of the Vault, the characters' eyes require more than a minute to adjust. It is darker in the Vault than on the Underground Sea, although a strange, irregular luminescence seems to float in the air, creating areas of nearly normal vision.

These tunnels wind for hundreds of miles, crossing back on one another, going further underground in places, intertwined in a single, huge maze of darkness. Dreamers separated from the group down here are likely to get lost permanently. If they are separated, only those wise enough to remain still and wait silently for help have any hope of rescue by Madaeker; those foolish enough to plow ahead are likely to run into a ghastr or something worse.

THE GHASTRS

The ghastrs are inhuman creatures that writhe, feed and mate in absolute darkness. They are the primary prey of the monstrous gugs, terrifying giants who haunt the edges of the Vaults of Zin, emanating from the Tower of Koth like a disease.

Despite a vaguely human-like silhouette, ghastrs are wild beasts. As large as a small horse, they move upright on a pair of kangaroo-like legs that end in scabrous hooves. They are animalistic, carnivorous and fearless. They often work together in packs, like wolves, hunting prey in the winding dark of the Vaults of Zin. When no prey is to be found, they feed on one another.

Ghastrs despise all light except the odd glow of the Underworld,

and perish due to exposure if the light is strong or persistent enough. Even something as bright as a torch will send the most numerous and powerful ghastrs scrambling to safety.

After a few minutes of moving in the darkness of the Vault, it becomes clear the Dreamers are being followed. A persistent scuffling, sniffing noise can be heard. The distance is hard to approximate, but anyone who makes a Listen roll determines that, whatever it is, it is less than 50 paces away.

Numbers are also difficult to guess. Sometimes it sounds like a single creature, at other times like more than a dozen intertwined sources at once. Those peering into the darkness and making a successful Spot Hidden roll at half chance, or who suddenly ignite a light source, find themselves surrounded on all sides by a vast horde of ghastrs. (Cost: 2/1D8+1 SAN under those circumstances.)

HUNTED

Madaeker is a clever leader, and in the Vaults of Zin he does his best to hurry the characters along. He rapidly circles the group three to four times every five minutes to remain certain he has not lost anyone. Madaeker is quite familiar with the ghastrs and their methods, and has contingencies to deal with the threat.

Every hundred feet or so, Madaeker pauses and pulls something from the rags he wears. He hurls it into the dark down a passage the group is not taking. Just seconds after the first piece is thrown, the Dreamers hear terrifying sounds of creatures fighting in the darkness. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

Those who make an Idea roll come to the conclusion that Madaeker is throwing food into the dark. Those who peer closer (requiring a Spot Hidden roll at half chance) see Madaeker removing bits of rotting flesh from a small pouch and throwing it into the dark (0/1 SAN). The ghoul is quite forthcoming (but impatient) with those who ask—yes, it is human flesh, he confirms, and then shoves the Dreamer deeper into the darkness.

Those foolish enough to refuse to follow, or who purposely leave

the group, find themselves attacked by 1D4 hungry ghosts. Barring some exceptional luck, or a light source, this can easily mark the end of a dreamer.

THE GHOSTS

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	24	21	23	9	16	+2D6	22
#2	22	20	20	12	15	+2D6	20
#3	23	19	20	10	12	+2D6	20
#4	22	16	19	7	12	+2D6	18

Skills: Sneak 70%

Attacks: Bite 40%, damage 1D10+db

Kick 25%, damage 1D6+DB

A ghost is able to kick once and bite once in each round.

Armor: 3 points of skin.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8.

PLAYING UP THE PURSUIT

Once the ghosts are on the trail of the characters, clever Keepers will not let up the pace. Pursuit by a slavering horde of unseen creatures—nothing more than glowing red-green eyes in the blackness—is the epitome of *Call of Cthulhu*. Here are some tips to keep it interesting.

1) FALLING BEHIND

With Madaeker's brisk pace, it is easy for a distracted Dreamer to fall behind. Anyone attempting to do anything besides move or communicate with Madaeker must make a Luck roll. Those failing lose their footing and fall, suffering 1D4–1 HP damage, and are left momentarily behind by the group. If the character holds still and waits for help, Madaeker arrives moments later, just as the awful noises following them seem to settle in around the fallen Dreamer.

A Dreamer foolish enough to shout for help while being pursued immediately hears the shuffling sounds of something large moving towards him or her in the dark. Seconds before the creature comes

into sight, the character is grabbed by strong arms from behind (cost: 0/1 SAN). Madaeker chides the Dreamer to keep up.

2) CLUTCHING

Have the character with the lowest Luck score roll. If it fails, the Dreamer falls slightly behind the group. Suddenly, the Dreamer is clutched in a violent, iron grip (cost: 1/1D4 SAN). Claws dig into the Dreamer's flesh (1D6 HP damage). The Dreamer must resist STR 22 on the resistance table or be yanked into the dark and immediately set upon by a dozen ghastrs. There is little hope of survival.

If the Dreamer successfully resists, he or she pulls free and moves closer to the group.

3) SOMETHING BIGGER IN THE DARK

Madaeker sniffs the air tentatively, and then in a whisper urges the Dreamers to get as low to the ground as they can. In the dim passage ahead, a sound can be heard, a high-pitched squeal that grows in volume and fervor. A Dreamer making a Spot Hidden roll at half chance dimly sees a pack of ghastrs rush by, fleeing something.

Then something HUGE moves past the passage in pursuit of the ghastrs. It is there and gone so swiftly that even characters who made the Spot Hidden roll at half chance don't get a good look at it. Whatever it is, it stands at least 20 feet tall.

Soon, it is gone. If asked, Madaeker reveals, "Such is a gug. And a small one, at that."

THE CAVERN OPENING

The Dreamers come to the end of the Vaults suddenly, spilling from the maze into open air. Here, the winding passages open into a vast, open space covered in dirt, giant, discarded bones (cost: /1 SAN), and darkness. The feeling is similar to the area next to the Ten Thousand Steps—some enormous, open cavern. Noises, even quiet ones, reverberate off unseen cliffs, making stealth all but impossible.

Madaeker has planned for this vast, open space. A straight run across it to the cavern that leads to the plateau is certain death. Even as the Dreamers wait for Madaeker to continue, the sounds of creatures circling them can be heard (cost: 0/1 SAN); but their locations cannot be pinpointed due to the odd acoustics.

Madaeker produces a stump of rotted wood from the rags covering his body, covers it with a spongy, green-white moss and then meticulously sets it alight with flint and steel. Immediately the area is engulfed in a wave of sound—the hoots, screams and shrieks of the inhuman ghosts who were hoping to consume the Dreamers. The torch reveals a veritable army of ghosts surrounding the group (cost: 2/1D8 SAN), who immediately flee away from the light. Several too close to the light immediately collapse and begin smoking, as if the dim torch was somehow cooking them at a distance of more than 10 feet.

Madaeker rushes the Dreamers forward to a gaping cavern in a huge, vertical cliff-face. Upon closer inspection it proves to be an enormous structure on the scale of the Empire State Building, constructed for beings 50 feet tall. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

Madaeker herds the Dreamers into the vast cavern and to the remnants of a staircase with steps three and a half feet tall. He says, “From here on, you shall not speak. We must be as silent as livestock outside the butcher’s door.” If asked why, Madaeker replies, “If we are not silent, we become the meal.”

He discards the torch and adds: “Even a wild ghost is not foolish enough to travel where we plan to go.” His toothy smile is far from reassuring.

THE GIANT STAIR

Traveling the giant staircase upwards out of the Vaults of Zin is exhausting. Each stair comes to the waist of an average man, and climbing each one requires a full minute for the entire group. The farther up the stairs the characters travel, a smell of feces and wet fur emerges and becomes worse and worse.

Finally, after hours of brutal climbing, the characters arrive at the top of the giant staircase, and find themselves on an enormous plateau stretching off into the black.

Behind them, the stair descends into the stone. A bit past that, a vertical drop descends nearly a half-mile down in blackness to the Vaults of Zin. Looking off the edge of the plateau is sobering. The edge is marked with the skulls of enormous beasts. Dreamers looking closely at the skulls realize they are of from a bizarre creature with a jaw hinged horizontally across the face (cost: 0/1 SAN).

THE FOREST OF MONOLITHS

South of the cliff, the plateau past the Giant Stair stretches off into the darkness. That is where Madaeker herds the Dreamers. He immediately silences any who speak. If any are foolish enough to continue such frivolous behavior, Madaeker silences them violently—the ghoul knocks the Dreamer flat with incredible force, but no damage. At least not unless the Dreamer insists on making more noise. It is clear Madaeker does not consider speech an option.

Madaeker leads the Dreamers towards something which reeks horribly. It smells like feces from the largest, most foul creature ever—which it indeed turns out to be!

This huge lump of excrement, nearly 60 pounds of it, is still warm. Madaeker places his hand in it and wipes some of it on his chest (cost: 0/1 SAN). To make matters worse, he then smears some on each of the Dreamers (cost: 1/1D4 SAN). Madaeker pins each Dreamer down if necessary to get the job done. He says it is a necessary disguise.

Once all the Dreamers are marked, Madaeker leads them deeper

into the periphery. About twenty minutes into the journey, the characters come upon the first monolith. These vast, conical, stone towers stretch up into the black, nearly 30 feet tall. Each is roughly carved with hideous symbols and faces (those looking too closely find enough horror in the primitive craftsmanship to cost 0/1 SAN). As the group continues onwards, they soon find themselves in a forest of monoliths.

For an entire hour, the group travels silently through a winding maze of monoliths, all similar in size and appearance. They are, in fact, the graves of the forebears of the gugs. Those were clever, dangerous creatures long ago banished to the Underworld by the Great Ones.

As the hour comes to an end, the Dreamers begin to notice a scattering of bones among the monoliths, and then fewer and fewer monoliths. Some of the bones seem human, but most do not. Some are enormous and bear little resemblance to anything the Dreamers have seen before. The bones become more and more numerous as the Dreamers move forward. Soon the Dreamers find themselves traversing entire dunes of bones without a monolith in sight.

THE SEA OF BONES

This vast area on the periphery of the Forest of Monoliths is filled with the bones of millions of creatures: humans, gugs, ghosts and worse. The entire area glows with a ghostly, white-green phosphorescence. A vast landscape of undulating hills of skeletons, long gnawed clean, sweeps south into the black.

Moving across the Sea of Bones is troublesome. Those moving at full speed create such a ruckus that Madaeker quickly silences them. Every incautious step causes a rattling of such huge proportions that it must be audible for more than a mile.

Those imitating Madaeker's style of movement on the sea soon find their footing. The ghouls follow the lowest points in the "dunes," moving very slowly between the peaks, spending as little time on the high points as possible. In this way the Dreamers make far less noise.

SPEAKING IN THE REALM OF THE GUGS

Foolish Dreamers who disobey Madaeker's orders find themselves rapidly out of luck. Juvenile gugs 25 feet tall hunt for scavengers in the Sea of Bones and the periphery of the Forest of Monoliths.

Any speech draws immediate attention from juvenile gugs. The offending player must make a Luck roll at half chance. If it succeeds, the Dreamer spies a pair of distant, red eyes blinking in the darkness. If the Dreamers all remain silent, the eyes soon vanish. But if the Dreamer fails the halved Luck roll, the group is suddenly set upon by a single juvenile gug (cost: 0/1D8 SAN).

The monster is more than a match for all of the Dreamers put together. However, the creature focuses only on the offending Dreamer, not the group. It leaps at him or her with a monstrous shriek of hunger. The victim is on his or her own—Madaeker leaves him or her for dead, rushing the group away before they can react with more disastrous speech.

To survive the pursuit, a hunted Dreamer must make two Dodge rolls, two Sneak rolls and one Hide roll. Each time a roll is failed, the Dreamer suffers 3D6 HP damage and must continue forward in the



sequence of rolls until all rolls are successful or the Dreamer is dead.

If the Dreamer does make it free, he or she is left wandering the Sea of Bones, lost and alone in the Underworld. It remains up to the Keeper whether escape is possible for such an unfortunate.

JUVENILE GUG

Hunger Given Huge and Terrifying Form

STR 42 CON 26 SIZ 51 INT 9 POW 8
DEX 8 Move 10 HP 39

Damage Bonus: +5D6

Attacks: Bite 39%, damage 1D10 (no db)

Claw(s) 29%, damage 4D6 each (no db)

Stomp 25%, damage 1D6+db

In combat, the gug may either bite, stomp, or attack with two claws. Both claws must strike the same opponent. This creature is mad with hunger, and will focus only on the character who made the noise to draw it to the party.

Armor: 6 points of tough hair, skin and cartilage.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8

A GROTESQUE ESCAPE

Just when the Sea of Bones seems to be diminishing, Madaeker stops, sniffs the air twice and hunkers down with the group. He then does something that should terrify anyone with half a brain—he speaks: “We are being hunted and they are on all sides. There is but one way out.”

Madaeker explains his plan. He will distract the gugs. While they pursue him, the Dreamers must find the gugs’ collection of dead prey, usually carried in a huge sack which the gugs drop while they hunt. When the Dreamers find this sack, they must get inside it.

The ghoul insists this is the only way into the Gug City. The gugs will hear or smell them if they do anything else.

In a moment, he is up and over the dune of bones, gibbering and weeping, drawing a hunting party of gugs away from the group.

The Dreamers must now take the initiative. Any who hold still, speak or make too much noise ruin Madaeker’s plan.

If the Dreamers move away from the terrifying sound of the gugs hunting the ghoul, they soon spy a huge object dropped on the Sea of Bones. It's a stench-laden hide of some foul animal (actually gug), dripping wet with black-red blood. It is roughly fashioned into a huge, primitive backpack. Inside are the corpses of mutilated ghastrs. Up to five Dreamers can fit inside in addition to the ghastr-corpse. Crawling inside costs 1/1D6 SAN.

After an immeasurable period of time, the Dreamers hear movement on the Sea of Bones as the gugs return for the sack. Suddenly, the sack is lifted easily and seems to float nearly forty feet off the ground (0/1 SAN). From that point little is heard except the pace of the creatures moving on the bones, and a huge, terrible breathing.

By this time, the Dreamers are covered in feces, urine, blood and worse in the sack. Some may be crushed by the weight (suffering 1 HP damage). Others may have to make another SAN roll to resist the urge to cry out or attempt escape.

Each who makes a Luck roll is situated in a place in the sack where he or she can peer outwards. Those making Spot Hidden rolls are lucky enough to see a full-sized gug, one of the hunting party sent from the Gug City to the Vaults of Zin to hunt ghastrs. Congratulations! This costs 0/1D8 SAN.

There are four gugs in this hunting party, enough to take on a small army of mere humans.

AN AVERAGE HUNTING GUG

What's Worse Than a Juvenile Gug? One That Has Grown Up

STR 50	CON 32	SIZ 58	INT 11	POW 11
DEX 14	Move 10			HP 45

Damage Bonus: +6D6

Attacks: Bite 60%, damage 1D10 (no db)

Claw(s) 40%, damage 4d6 each (no db)

Stomp 25%, damage 1D6+db

In combat, the gug may either bite, stomp, or attack with two claws. Both claws must strike the same opponent.

Armor: 8 points of tough hair, skin and cartilage.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8.

THE GUG CITY

This terrifying edifice of stone buildings surrounding the Tower of Koth was constructed in antiquity by the forebears of the gugs. It has fallen into ruin and destruction. Wars, skirmishes, one-on-one combat and wholesale slaughter by 50-foot giants have taken their toll on the conical towers, leaving wide areas in rubble.

In the center, spiraling upwards into the dark, is the vast tower that leads to the surface of the Dreamlands. This tower, marked by the Symbol of Koth, was once used by the gugs to gain entry to the Enchanted Wood above, where they wrought havoc on dreamers at night. Since the curse of the Great Ones, no gug may pass through the giant, iron-runged wooden door to the surface.

IN THE BLIND GOD'S REALM

Dreamers who insinuated themselves into the sack of ghost corpses find themselves roughly dropped upon the ground in the Gug City, taking 1D4 HP damage. Around them, giants walk to and fro in absolute silence. After a while, the feeling of being surrounded subsides.

It remains up to the Dreamers to decide how to proceed. Clever Dreamers will carefully peek at their surroundings before risking escape from the sack. A Spot Hidden roll is enough to register they are on an ancient stone street amidst gargantuan buildings. A Listen roll is enough to confirm that the immediate vicinity is abandoned.

Dreamers who simply rush out into the dark run into a gug.

The gugs are primitive, superstitious creatures ruled by brute force, violence and bloodlust. They pay homage to their own deity, the Blind God. It is he who enforces the laws of the gugs. It is he who is offended by speech. Within the Gug City, the power and influence of the Blind God should not be underestimated.

THE ALARM: The instant a Dreamer is seen by a gug or speaks aloud where any gug can hear, the alarm is magically raised: an enormous, nerve-wracking clanging like some immense bell, coming from nowhere and everywhere. From that moment the Dreamers will know only pursuit.



REUNITED

Fortunately, Madaeker—eager to keep his deal—is not far behind. When he arrives, he renews his demand for silence with a thin, clawed finger to his lips. He then leads the Dreamers deeper into the city, carefully skirting the deep shadows at the base of the enormous conical towers.

At last, arriving at the edge of some ancient plaza, Madaeker stabs a finger up into the dark, indicating the giant Tower of Koth.

UP THE TOWER OF KOTH

This enormous conical tower spirals thousands of feet up towards the surface. A large staircase winds upwards from the city of the gugs to the trapdoor at the top. At its base, the Tower is marked with the Sign of Koth.

As the Dreamers approach, Madaeker urges them to avert their eyes from the maddening symbol. Those foolish enough to look lose 1D20 SAN and freeze in their tracks, trying to puzzle out the intricacies and convolutions of the terrible symbol. Such a Dreamer can be led on by others but remains in a stupor until he or she makes a halved Luck roll, attempting once every few minutes. Having one or more Dreamers in such a stupor ought to increase the tension and suspense of the escape.

The staircase of the tower is ill-suited for human feet, but it is much more manageable than the Giant Stair. Its low, long, flat steps

must have been built for beings not unlike men, long ago.

The Tower itself is featureless, nothing more than a seemingly ordinary piece of rock surrounded by the spiraling stair.

Madaeker rushes the characters up the stairs, keeping the pace by staying behind them and goading the slowest characters along. “To the top! To the top!” he shouts as the terrifying gug alarms begin to sound.

THE SEALED GATE

The group arrives, hunted and exhausted, at the top of the Tower of Koth—the place to which Madaeker has led them through the horrors of the Underworld—only to find the exit blocked in a primitive but wholly effective way. A wooden trapdoor is visible above, but it has been blocked by a mountain of huge boulders packed tightly on the stairs. There is no gap larger than a few inches. Each boulder weighs tons.

Madaeker confesses that this is the sole exit that he knows from the Gug City to the surface.

As the noise of the gug war-party below them begins to build, Madaeker begins to chant unintelligibly. The ghoul rushes to the edge of the spiraling tower, pulls something from his rotted garb and hurls it into the dark. He shouts in English: “Nodens, Lord of the Abyss, answer our plea!” Madaeker touches each character once and then lays prostrate on the floor in submission.

After a long moment he slowly rises, looking drained and exhausted.

The ghoul draws the Dreamers to the far edge of the stairs just as the first gug comes into sight. It’s a terrifying creature, easily 50 feet tall and carrying a primitive spear the length of a telephone pole or a railway car. It slowly begins walking towards the characters, relishing the terror leading up to the kill. Madaeker shouts commands to it in an inhuman tongue (Morga), but the gug laughs horribly and continues forward.

That’s when the entire scene is suddenly engulfed in a sea of flapping blackness.

THE NIGHTGAUNTS

The Dreamers are violently swept away from certain death by a vast horde of Nightgaunts. These beasts inflict 1D4 HP damage on each “passenger” with their talons, and the bumpy, terrifying transport costs 1/1D6 SAN. No speech is possible during the flight. The only noise is the screaming of the Dreamers and the relentless flapping of leathery black wings.

A Dreamer who struggles to gain a look at his or her “rescuer” is met with the seamless, black face of the Nightgaunt (cost: 1/1D6 SAN). One foolish enough to attack a Nightgaunt is dropped, falling to a screaming death in the rocky Underworld below.

This flight lasts mere minutes but feels much, much longer. Finally, dimly in the distance, enormous snow-covered peaks can be seen coming nearer.

THE PEAKS OF THOK

The Nightgaunts drop the Dreamers roughly and suddenly onto a snow-covered slope of the Peaks of Thok: giant, jagged, underground mountains that loom above the grey-black of the Underworld. Each Dreamer must make a Luck roll or suffer 1D6 HP damage from the rough fall. The flapping Nightgaunts vanish into the black silence as the Dreamers lay injured on the steep, icy incline of the mountains.

Madaeker, looking sickly and weak, rouses the Dreamers. “If I had not been on the Tower, the minions of Nodens would not have heeded the call,” he says. “Not far now.”

THE EXIT

Madaeker’s attitude seems to soften, indicating that this territory is far safer than those they traversed before. The ghoul leads the group slowly upwards on a winding path through the highest passes of the mountains.



After several hours, with the path growing more and more narrow and treacherous, Madaeker rolls back a small boulder to reveal a smooth tunnel, four feet wide. It slopes upwards. He says, “The daylight awaits, my friends.”

RENEWING THE BARGAIN

Madaeker pulls aside one Dreamer as they move single-file into the tunnel and takes his or her hand. “Your part of the bargain shall be recalled when you return to New Amsterdam,” he says. The smile on Madaeker’s face is horrific, something like fear, hunger and hatred all at once.

Until the character shakes his hand in agreement, the ghoul does not release it.

THOSE LEFT BEHIND

If any Dreamers were foolish enough to eat or drink in the Underworld, Madaeker pulls them aside before they can leave. Even if Madaeker had not before been aware of their eating or drinking, he knows of it now.

He tells the Dreamer very plainly, “You may never return to the surface. The curse is now upon you. Do not worry. You shall pass the time as we all do, here in the dark.” If the Dreamer attempts to leave, he or she is incapable of moving up the tunnel, and instead is frozen in place until he or she decides to turn back. There is no cure for the curse. Such a Dreamer is lost forever.

Any Dreamer who has eaten or drunk in the Underworld is subject to the curse of the Underworld, the same powerful magic that prevents the gugs from emerging. Attempting to leave the Underworld despite the curse is a grave error. Any Dreamer so afflicted who leaves the Underworld suffers 1D20+6 HP damage per minute of exposure, withering and gasping in agony, until he or she returns to the Underworld.

THE SURFACE

The exit from the Peaks of Thok opens on to the ruined city of Sarnath (see Chapter Eleven: Sarnath on page 228), but Keepers can have the Dreamers emerge nearly anywhere in the Dreamlands. The tunnel could just as easily open to Inquanok (see Chapter Eight: Inquanok on page 105), Ilek-Vad (see Chapter Ten: Ilek-Vad on page 196) or Lhosk (see Chapter Nine: Lhosk on page 143).

CHAPTER EIGHT

INQUANOK · THE COUNCIL · THE GATE ON THE PLATEAU ·
DANGERS · IN RED WEATHER

*“Only, here and there, an old sailor,
Drunk and asleep in his boots,
Catches tigers
In red weather.”*
— Wallace Stevens, *“Disillusionment of 10 O’Clock”*

THE ROAD TO THE ONYX CITY

Dreamers that set off on foot to the west of Sarkomand (perhaps at the suggestion of the Collector, who will, if pressed, direct them towards the city he calls “Inganok”) find the ruins there difficult to pass through. It is a mess of destroyed stonework, as if something huge and terrifying smashed its way through the ancient structures, leaving rocks the size of houses scattered about. The streets are nearly impassable. Still, tantalizing glimpses of a winding, seaside road can be spied from high points in the ruins. This road snakes off to the west, hugging the mountainous coast outside of the city. From a distance it seems well maintained.

Traveling through the ruins requires Dreamers to climb over rubble heaps and up the remnants of toppled buildings. A Luck or Climb roll (whichever is higher) must be made by each character three times. Each time it is failed, bad footing, structural failure or clumsiness costs the character a spill and 1D4 HP damage. When three rolls are successfully made, the Dreamer has traversed the nastier ruins and found the exit through the collapsed west gate.

The scale of the west gate is difficult to clearly envision. It was once approximately the size of the Eiffel Tower, but built of blocks of pure, white marble which seem to be shot with a blue stone unknown

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- The quality of light reflected from Inquanok’s gleaming gate.
- The particular fold of robes in fashion in the Onyx City.
- The placement of the badges worn by the Golden Sun.
- The texture of the dirt of the path leading into the Oracle.

to Earth. A Dreamer who makes an Architecture roll or a halved Idea roll realizes it was once a giant arch which stretched more than half a mile across, and must have risen to more than 300 feet in height. Now it is nothing more than a scattering of building-sized blocks covering a mile of open ground, toppled and destroyed.

The force of the arch's destruction has left the boundaries to the west of Sarkomand in complete shambles, full of pits, crevasses and cantilevered streets. But a bit past the edge of the city, a road which seems ancient yet well maintained winds cleanly to the west. This is the road to Inquanok and the path to the Plateau of Leng.

WHAT THE COLLECTOR KNOWS OF INQUANOK

The Collector has had limited dealings with outcasts from the city of Inquanok (which he calls "Inganok"). The Collector paints a picture of a terrible walled fortress city, filled with blond, blue-eyed men who work stone and hate anyone not from their citadel. In truth, he has been no nearer Inquanok than the beginning of the western road. He has only the word of the Men from Leng and the description of outcasts from the city to fill his imagination. His information is limited, though not entirely inaccurate.

Those human outcasts with whom he has traded (and, on occasion, whom he helped his masters ambush and capture) are wary, strong and prone to violence, but they have deep knowledge of valuable metals. They occasionally prove useful to the Men from Leng, who are base creatures with little skill left in the working of precious metals.

If pressed, the Collector confesses that the men of Inquanok are legendary stone-workers, who cut stone to the south and move it by ship to sell in southern ports. Most of the southern cities have been constructed with Inquanokian stone.

If further pressed, he admits that the Men from Leng are not permitted near the city, that a state of war has existed between Inquanok and Sarkomand for centuries, and that the Inquanokian men kill the Men from Leng on sight.

The people of Inquanok are somber and quick to anger. They consider the humans of the southern climes to be soft and stupid. Still,

the men of Inquanok are known for their closed mouths. They tell no secrets. Inquanok is the only human city the Collector knows of that is nearby.

THE WESTERN ROAD

Characters traveling the western road during the day have little to fear, as nearly everything that hunts the Plateau of Leng hunts in darkness. The Collector fears the men of Inquanok far less than he fears the things which haunt the road at night.

High, impassable mountains stand between Inquanok and Leng, but a narrow road winds between the coast and the slopes, linking Inquanok to Sarkomand.

The road is clear of debris and appears to be in almost preternaturally perfect shape. There are no growths, split cobblestones, collapses or other damage which deface normal roads over time. The Collector claims the road was laid in antiquity by his masters to reach the quarries inland with which they built and maintained their city, and the road itself was laden with a magic that keeps it pristine. Once, he sadly says, his masters knew how to work stone and metal even better than the men of "Inganok."

The road is eerily silent, save the sounds of the ocean crashing far below and the occasional cry of a distant bird hunting far above. During the day, nothing else is ever present on the road. There are no other travelers, nor evidence of other travelers, no signs, and nowhere outside the road to go except up or down a sheer face of



stone. The rises upward have inhospitable winding paths that cut into the faces of the mountains, but these paths don't go very far. The cliffs below drop straight into a rough surf that smashes the rocks with the force of a rockslide. Heading downwards is certain, watery death.

At a brisk pace, traveling to Inquanok on foot takes at least a day. If they set out from Sarkomand any time after first light, they are still on the road when the kindness of daylight fades. They find the road a very different place at night. If they fail a group CON x 5% roll (roll once against the lowest CON) they face a second night on the road before reaching Inquanok.

NIGHT ON THE WESTERN ROAD

As dusk begins to fall, the Collector becomes very nervous. He repeatedly urges the Dreamers to find a cave in the difficult rises above the road, becoming more frantic with every minute. Dreamers who follow his lead can locate a small cave before too long and hunker down in it before complete darkness falls. The Collector pours a foul-smelling black liquid in front of the cave entrance and instructs the Dreamers to be silent. During the night, in absolute darkness, the group hears the sounds of various horrific creatures outside the cave, snuffling, grunting, and even speaking in unknown languages. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.) Those foolish enough to leave the cave before daybreak are never seen again, alive or otherwise. The Collector tries (though not too hard) to keep the characters in the cave.

Those who insist on making noise, shouting or drawing attention to the cave hear something large shuffle towards the entrance, snuffle at its threshold and then yelp in inhuman pain. In the dark it is difficult to see anything but a dim, tall shadow blotting out the blue-black sky. Those foolish enough to light a torch find themselves face-to-face with a monstrosity. It appears to be a deformed human head twisted onto the body of a lion, with a giant barbed scorpion-like tail: a manticore. (Cost: 0/1D6 SAN.) This is not some clean hybrid, but

position to his masters. Smart Dreamers will bind the Collector or keep him under absolute guard until they are far from Sarkomand.

Characters who are simply hunkered down on the road will first hear the hoots and hollers of a group of creatures coming from the east. There will be no lights, as the Men from Leng hunt comfortably in darkness. No Listen or Spot Hidden roll is necessary to detect this cacophony, and Dreamers will have several minutes to react.

Those who still remain on the road face a group of well-armed Men from Leng prepared to subdue them and return them to Sarkomand. This group fights until half its number are killed, and then the survivors retreat. If the Lengians know the Dreamers have learned any of their secrets (what powers the Black Galleys, for instance), the entire group fights to the death.

THE LENGIAN HUNTING PARTY

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	11	8	14	7	14	+1D4	11
#2	15	10	18	10	12	+1D6	14
#3	10	15	14	10	10	—	15
#4	15	5	18	9	10	+1D6	12

Skills: Listen 50%, Sneak 41%, Spot Hidden 43%, Track 60%. *Languages:* Oeuth (Own) 57%.

Attacks: Punch 45%, damage 1D3+db

Sword 40%, damage 1D8+1+db

Armor: None.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6-1.

The Men from Leng are persistent but not foolish. They will not travel into the mountains. Instead they remain on the road near where the characters left, sniffing the air and conversing in their strange, barking language. Eventually, if the characters remain silent, the Men from Leng retreat back the way they came. Due to the many threats in the area at night, they dislike remaining in one place for too long.

Dreamers who flee into the mountains can hunker down, but finding a cave in the dark without a light source is nearly impossible

(on a group Luck roll at 1/4 chance, the group finds a small cave in the blackness by touch and providence alone). Without a cave they wander the crags and crannies of the mountain until they come upon the manticore (see page 109) or the giant spiders that haunt the area.

THE SPIDERS

Dreamers who remain on the road for a second night face one of the terrors of the Plateau of Leng—Leng Spiders. The first indication that something is amiss is a skittering sound. Dreamers must make Listen rolls or mistake it for natural sounds such as the trickling of water or the spill of pebbles. Actually it is the skittering of thousands of chitinous feet. In either case, it is difficult to ignore and grows in volume over time.

Suddenly, small translucent shapes are seen on the grey cobblestones, rushing towards the Dreamers. Each is a spider the size of a cat, purple and bloated and glistening. These things have no fear and relentlessly rush towards characters despite screams, protests or attacks.

The Dreamers are swarmed. Each must first make a Sanity roll (cost: 1/1D4 SAN), and then a Dodge or Luck roll, whichever is better. Each who fails, or who chooses to attack and fails, is attacked by 1D3 spiders. More are coming. This happens once per round until there are three spiders on each Dreamer.

Dreamers who do not have spiders climbing on them can flee instead of attacking. They can easily outrun the spiders.

Dreamers can swat and swing their fists in an attempt to smash the spiders climbing on them, but attack rolls are halved and no weapons may be used—otherwise, the Dreamers risk injuring themselves. Or better, they can drop to the ground and roll about. A Dreamer smart enough to drop and roll subjects one spider per round to a 75% attack that inflicts 1D8+db damage. If it hits, it completely disrupts the spiders' attempt at entrapment for that round. But more arrive.

If three spiders climb onto a Dreamer, they begin to spin a web while circling the body. This takes 1D6 rounds of uninterrupted movement. If this dance is completed, the character is bound and falls



roughly to the ground, wrapped in disgusting webbing which reeks horrifically and burns uncovered skin (1D4-2 damage per round). Dreamers attempting to escape from the webbing may pit their STR against the webbing's STR of 2 per spider, or 6 total. On a success, the Dreamer manages to struggle free, suffering 1D4-1 HP in the process as the struggle removes webbing as well as skin.

What's worse, these spiders are simply a precursor for their mother, a giant Leng Spider that haunts the crags of the Western Road. She approaches the road slowly to see what her offspring might have bound for her. She is the size of a huge bear, suspended on legs that have a reach of two dozen feet or more.

The Dreamers are best served by simply turning and running up the road as fast as they can. Even at her top speed, the ponderous size of the mother prevents her from keeping pace. Dreamers who make CON x 5 rolls keep up their pace long enough to escape. Those who fail are left behind to be devoured unless a companion makes a STR vs. SIZ resistance roll to carry the laggard.

THE BABIES

Tiny Spiders from Leng

STR 6 CON 5 SIZ 3 INT 8 POW 11
DEX 16 Move 4 HP 4

Damage Bonus: -1D6

Attacks: Bite 30%, damage 1D6+db+poison (POT 2)

Web 35%, damage special (entangle with STR 2)

Armor: 1 point of chitin

SAN Loss: 1/1D4

THE MOTHER OF THE WESTERN ROAD

A Spider from Leng

STR 27 CON 16 SIZ 30 INT 10 POW 13
DEX 16 Move 6 HP 23

Damage Bonus: +3D6

Attacks: Bite 41%, damage 1D6+db+poison (POT 16)

Web 60%, damage special (entangle with STR 15)

Armor: 6 points of chitin

SAN Loss: 1/1D8

INQUANOK AND THE GOLDEN SUN

Arrival at the gated city of Inquanok is uneventful if the Dreamers were wise enough to travel only during the day and hide at night, or if they simply march there all in one go. The city walls are tall, more than ten stories, and bow outward so they lean in an uncomfortable and baffling manner out over the road. A large, square gatehouse, carved from a single piece of dull, grey metal, juts out from the high, bowing wall. The gatehouse is crowned with a gleaming golden sun. The gate itself is a set of huge wooden doors painted with the red circle of Inquanok.

The city itself is not visible past the walls, but the wall stretches nearly a mile from the mountains to the edge of the cliffs, blocking the Western Road, suggesting the city must lie behind it. It is as if



a giant crown which bows outward from its base was sunk into the mountains and road, blocking forward progress.

Dreamers who approach within 50 feet of the gate hear a clarion—a deep, resonating horn that shakes them to their bones. Suddenly ten soldiers carrying pikes are on all sides, surrounding them, having emerged from hiding places on the rises above the road and near the edge of the cliffs. These are the Golden Sun, the gate guards of Inquanok. They are human men who appear to be of Nordic extraction, almost all with blond hair and blue eyes. They seem fearful and ready for violence. They speak in Skand, a tongue that is vaguely Germanic. They shout demands in this language while menacing the Dreamers with pikes.

Anyone foolish enough to incite violence will find themselves first jabbed with a pike (1D4 damage) and then, if they still resist, all-out

attacked from multiple sides. The threats from the road are a very real thing and these guards do not fool around. They do not hesitate to kill a resisting Dreamer if that's what it takes to subdue the rest of the group.

THE GOLDEN SUN

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Int	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	10	15	15	14	5	16	1D4	15
#2	11	17	18	16	15	15	1D4	18
#3	7	10	9	18	15	15	-1d4	10
#4	17	5	16	11	16	14	1D6	11
#5	13	4	16	13	10	13	1D4	10
#6	9	14	9	9	18	11	-	12
#7	13	14	13	14	5	11	1D4	14
#8	10	15	18	15	12	9	1D4	17
#9	9	12	8	13	6	7	-	10
#10	16	7	12	18	4	7	1D4	10

Skills: Dodge (DEX x 2) + 10%, Law 21%, Spot Hidden 50%. *Languages:* Skand (Own) 80%, English 20%.

Attacks: Pike 56%, damage 1D10+2+db

Dagger 55%, damage 1D4+2+db

Armor: Breastplate and helmet (4 in 6 chance of 9 armor points)

The encounter with the guards of Inquanok can play out in several ways. Dreamers speaking English find themselves met with confused smiles and broken English responses. Pikes are lowered (but not withdrawn), tension fades, and questions will be asked instead of demands shouted.

If the Collector is present, he will be subject to shouting, shoving, and kicking. If the characters do not attempt to defend him, the guards lead him away after slapping him in shackles; he is held in one of the gate towers as a prisoner of the Sages of Inquanok. If the Dreamers defend him, a clear wave of distrust from the guards becomes evident. Why would they defend such a creature? He serves the satyrs! If Dreamers persist in his defense, they too are shackled and they are brought to the tower of the Elder Ones in chains.

If the Dreamers distance themselves from the Collector and

establish their identities as Dreamers of Earth, the guards lead them through the streets towards the center of the city.

Beyond the door, the Dreamers spy for the first time the streets of the onyx city, as well as a throng of fascinated onlookers. The city is beautiful, dark and secretive—and big. Inside, the wilderness of the Western Road gives way to comfortable streets where children play and animals lay about, bored. In short, the city looks peaceful and out of place compared to the horrors the characters have endured. This is Inquanok.

THE CITY OF ONYX

Inquanok (sometimes called “Inganok” in the southern countries) is a large city situated on the edge of the sea. Its walls encircle and close off a natural valley, the Valley of Onyx. This valley winds inland many miles to a plateau filled with quarries rich in metals and stone, surrounded on all sides by impassable cliffs and mountains. Inquanok is nearly impenetrable by land. Its weakest point is the huge city gates and they have never been breached.

Rock and metal are worked in the valley, moved to the docks on the city’s south side, and transported by ship over the sea to the southern ports for trade.

The docks lie outside the protection of the walls or mountains and are a weak point. As such, they are secured by a huge garrison of soldiers (the Golden Sun) in strongpoints and pickets. Pulleys and levers lower the stones down the cliff face to the docks below. This process is dangerous, and the engineers who ply this trade are considered some of the most valuable and skilled workers in Inquanok.

Inquanok is a marvel of construction. It is a city hewn from onyx rock and inlaid with craftsmanship of epic proportions. Every surface, door, tile and cobblestone is worked in such a masterful way that one could spend a week combing a street and still not find every clever piece of art hidden there. The entire city is a singular masterpiece.

Built in antiquity by men fleeing the southern countries, Inquanok has stood as a fortress city since the dawn of its existence. Its walls guard an isolated pass to a valley in the interior of the Plateau of Leng which is rich in valuable rocks such as marble, quartz and onyx, as well as silver, gold and platinum. Inquanok began as a simple picket filled with resilient stone workers. It has grown in time to a beautiful city of walls and gates of undreamt-of thickness and scale.

The outer walls stand ten stories high and hang outwards, tilted in a bow from the buildings which border them, fastened in a manner known only to the workmen of the city with metal cords as thick as a man's arm, each composed of thousands of smaller cords wound together. These walls surround the entire city and are legendary in their impenetrability. They have never been breached. Even the terrifying Spiders of Leng find transiting the tilted walls nearly impossible.

The buildings of the city rise to huge heights and are topped by carefully built and mathematically precise domes inlaid with gold, silver and lapis lazuli. Everything in the city is focused on stone or metal craft. Inns are called the Hewn Rock or the Counterbalance, and shops are filled with chisels, hammers, weights and pulleys. The residents have fat fingers, yellow beards filled with marble dust, and flinty eyes that seem to measure everything.

The streets are laid out in the manner of a cartwheel. In the city center upon a hill is the huge, sixteen-sided temple of the Elder Ones, topped by a flattened dome as large as a city block and hung with bells. The highest peak of the temple soars over the walls of the city and can spy the distant inland plateau, and the faces of the giant Old Ones carved in misty distance of Mt. Ngranak. It is said that the consecration of this temple in ancient times assured the safety of this enterprise in the wild lands of the dream.

Surrounding this temple is the Round Street, the seat of governance and knowledge in the city. It is here the characters are led, either as carefully watched guests or as prisoners.

A COLD, TWILIGHT LAND

"Their land, very far away, was called Inquanok, and not many people cared to go thither because it was a cold twilight land, and said to be close to unpleasant Leng; although high impassable mountains towered on the side where Leng was thought to lie, so that none might say whether this evil plateau with its horrible stone villages and unmentionable monastery were really there, or whether the rumour were only a fear that timid people felt in the night when those formidable barrier peaks loomed black against a rising moon."

H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

INQUANOK'S GEOGRAPHY AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOUTH

The ships that occupy the docks are not of Inquanokian origin; the natives of Inquanok do not sail and have no way with ships. The ships come from many different ports: Sinara, Sarrub, Lhosk, Baharna. Each flies a different flag.

To the southern city-states, Inquanok is a secretive, powerful mining concern. Inquanok holds a nearly complete monopoly on stone goods. Many foreign governments attempt to ply the Inquanok council of sages with gifts to sway their favor, which sometimes works—Lhosk currently enjoys reduced prices on stone goods thanks to its gifts.

Inquanok trades stone for one thing: food. Inquanok needs grains, green vegetables, fruits and meat. Though they grow beans and some fruits on the inner plateau, the selection is lackluster and almost all locals have a taste for foreign foods.

Needless to say, with such natural isolation, the natives of Inquanok are not used to seeing people approach from the road.

THE SAGES OF THE ROUND STREET

The city council is composed of the aged and the educated, the best minds of the City of Onyx. They rule from the Round Street, the vast center circle of the cartwheel of the city. Each district of the city has a representative called a sage who sees to its needs. At any time of day the street is a madhouse of activity with people shouting at their representatives or trading goods for favors, and with the black-robed sages arguing and even fighting with one another. It is a vibrant, and sometimes dangerous, place.

Even within this street of leaders, there are higher leaders still, those who have accumulated the most favors or whose force of will is greater than their compatriots. These men sit nearest the doors to the temple of the Elder Ones, where no one enters. This is where the Dreamers end up, one way or another, either as “guests” of the city or

on their knees in shackles as a enemies.

Here they meet two leaders vying for power over one another, Drax of Hombur and Yveddes. Their two families have had members among the sages for as long as anyone can remember, and these two have risen in power and influence until each holds nearly half the city's representatives in his pockets. Evenly matched in influence, they have turned to other methods to attempt to gain complete control of the city. Neither is truly good or honorable but Drax, unlike Yveddes, thinks of the safety of the city above his own profit and power.

The Dreamers have arrived just in time to become pawns in their political maneuvers.

MACHINATIONS

Yveddes and Drax have been crossing political swords for years. They vie for complete control of the Council of Sages in a singular contest. The point of contention: whether to expand the quarries outside the Valley of Onyx. For centuries the stone-smiths of Inquanok have dug and cut stone only within their valley, secured on all sides by impassable mountains and cliffs and by the city on the southern point. But the stones have been worked almost to exhaustion. Some quarries remain but the quality of the cuts is becoming poorer and poorer as the years pass.

Drax first broached the idea of establishing a new series of citadels to the east, leading to a well-known quarry rich with stone and metal outside the usual haunts of Inquanok. There new stone could be cut and moved safely back to the city, and the influence of the city would spread.

Yveddes has vowed complete resistance to such a plan, playing upon superstition and fear of weakening Inquanok to keep it from moving forward. In truth Yveddes' family owns many of the quarries in the Valley of Onyx, and their business would suffer greatly if such an expansion took place.

With the arrival of the Dreamers, Drax sees an opportunity. If the Dreamers voice their wish to return to Earth, the leaders say they have a book which might help: the *Book of Keys and Gates*, which

details every exit to the waking world. To earn it, Drax says, the Dreamers must serve the city Council of Sages in a task. They must venture inland to the Gate of Crystal in the heights of the Leng Plateau, and there question the Oracle.

Only travelers from Earth may put questions to the Oracle—hence the need for the Dreamers. One question must be put to the Oracle: Should Inquanok extend its influence east? An agent of Yveddes and of Drax will travel with the group to hear the Oracle's reply.

Yveddes, seeing no choice, agrees to Drax's plan, as long as his agent is included. It is decided that quickly. If the Dreamers agree, they will be granted passage to the south, a generous stipend, and access to the *Book of Keys and Gates*. If not, they may leave on foot and return to the terrors of the wilderness of the Leng Plateau. No ship will take them until they agree; all are terrified of losing favor with the stone-smiths of Inquanok.

YVEDDES

Elder Sage of the Round Street, age 66

STR 7	CON 9	SIZ 14	INT 17	POW 14
DEX 15	APP 13	EDU 17	SAN 70	HP 12

Damage Bonus: None.

Skills: Accounting 44%, Art 30%, Astronomy 15%, Bargain 64%, Conceal 45%, Fast Talk 71%, History (Inquanok) 84%, Law 60%, Library Use 44%, Persuade 85%. *Languages:* Skand (Own) 85%, English 22%.

Attacks: None.

Yveddes is an aged man of Inquanok's Nordic stock, short and fat, garbed in fine black velvet robes. He wears an ornate and richly decorated version of the Golden Sun about his neck. His hair, once red, is now all but white, and his gaze is blue and endless. He speaks slowly, has a kind demeanor, and is not prone to anger. In fact he appears to be completely serene on all subjects.

Yveddes has been a leader in Inquanok for nearly thirty years, having taken the sage seat from his older brother who died in a quarry accident. The Yveddes family is respected as miners and cut-

ters of stone, and they own many lots and quarries in the Valley of Onyx. Yveddes has the reputation of an even-keeled, thinking man's sage. One not prone to rash or angry action.

But Yveddes' serene demeanor is a clever façade developed over the decades to cover his true intentions. He is consumed by greed. Greed for money, and above all for power. He will do anything to maintain the iron grip on mining that his family's ownership of so much of the Valley of Onyx currently guarantees, and he has dozens of thugs, servants and cutthroats in his pay to carry out his plans.

DRAX OF HOMBUR

Up and Coming Sage of the Round Street, age 39

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 18 POW 10
DEX 17 APP 15 EDU 13 SAN 50 HP 14

Damage Bonus: None.

Skills: Accounting 30%, Bargain 22%, Chemistry 21%, Climb 50%, Craft (Stone) 44%, Dodge 64%, Law 15%, Listen 40%, Navigate (The Plateau of Leng) 35%, Persuade 75%, Ride 25%, Track 25%.

Languages: Skand (Own) 65%, English 30%.

Attacks: Dagger 55%, damage 1D4+2+db.

Drax is young and vibrant, brilliant and full of energy. His questions are quick and clever and his patience is, at best, limited. He comes from the common Nordic stock of Inquanok but his hair is dark, and his face is covered with a spade beard that makes him a dead ringer for the popular version of the Christian Devil as seen in American advertising.

Drax is from the street of Hombur, which controls the main gate from the Valley of Onyx, and thus the stones that come from the quarries there. This alone has vaulted him to power, and he has fought hard to advance his district. That has made him very popular among the townfolk.

Drax is seen as a progressive in the council and is positioned as the voice of the future. Drax pushes to expand the influence of Inquanok beyond the valley and the stone walls of the city, in the hopes of finding new stone quarries, metal veins and other valuables for the people

EQUIPMENT

Dreamers outfitted by Inquanok are very well fitted indeed. They want for nothing, and may pick and choose from the finest armors and weapons that have been traded with the port for its precious stone. Supplies are so plentiful and perfect that characters need not concern themselves with making exact counts. There always seems to be enough rations and water. Weapons are treated as in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook, but gain an automatic +1 damage. Armor is detailed below.

LIGHT ARMOR

Light armor is toughened leather with light metal inserts, banded and reinforced joints made with furred hide, and a small metal cap. Light armor offers 3 Points defense against any physical attack and penalizes Sneak and Climb rolls by -5%. Wearers are still somewhat nimble and may run, duck, hide and climb much as they could without the armor.

(Continued.)

to work. He envisions a kingdom that stretches across the coast from the city to the east, guarded by new walls and new fortresses. The older folk of the city see this plan as dangerous, but the young see it as the only option to continue the prosperity of Inquanok.

Drax is impatient to drag Inquanok into the future. He sees Yveddes as one of the old guard, hampering progress. But Drax naively believes that Yveddes is committed to good of the people of the city and is simply trying to protect them.

THE MISSION

The Dreamers are to accompany two servants of the council to the west, inland on the Plateau of Leng, to the Gate of Crystal. There they are to put to the Oracle the question of the city's expansion. Only Dreamers can approach the Oracle. Once this question is answered, one way or another, the Oracle will grant the Dreamers a token. The characters must return with the token to the city.

If they succeed, the Dreamers will be granted a generous reward, as well as passage to the south, and access to the most holy of books in the city of Inquanok: the *Book of Keys and Gates*, a manual which marks every known exit to the waking world of Earth.

THE ORACLE

It should be slightly disturbing to any Dreamer who attempts to learn more of the Oracle to find that the people of Inquanok know little or nothing. The Oracle is simply a force of nature, like the wind or sun or moon, yet one which has never been seen by any living resident of the city. This ephemerality of the Oracle does nothing to sway the locals' belief in it, though what "it" is they could not say.

They know it exists inland on the Western Plateau through a beautiful Gate of Crystal. Here, occasionally, Dreamers from Earth appear. These people—the last was seen nearly one hundred years before—are often holy men. They all appear the same way, outfitted in warm clothing, with pack and gear, and speaking of the Oracle of the Pass. When pressed, they have nothing further to add, except the

Oracle was kind and set them on a secret task.

Once, in antiquity, the sages sent an Earthly dreamer back to the Gate of Crystal to ask the Oracle for its favor. This mission returned the message that the men of Inquanok should build a city on the road. The sages hope to repeat that mission now in order to resolve the strife that disrupts the city government.

As for what the gate might be like, or who the Oracle is, the people of Inquanok have only a deep and abiding belief that all will be answered when the Dreamers arrive there.

PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY

The Dreamers have few options—it's either attempt the expedition or to return to the terrors of Sarkomand. No ship will take them south; the passage west leads into inhospitable wilderness; and no one in the city will assist them unless they accept the judgment of the Council of Sages.

The moment the characters accept the task to find the Oracle at the Gate of Crystal, they are suddenly heroes of the city. Fine weapons, armor and supplies are rained upon them; there is nothing they should be left wanting. Before the journey begins they are perfectly equipped, down to their smallest request. All items are of the finest, most beautiful design. They make the Dreamers look like heroes of legend. By comparison, the two mercenaries hired to travel with them, one representing Yveddes and one representing Drax, look positively shabby.

The council will even allow the Collector to be “released into the custody of the servants of the council” without any pretense or judgment. Within a day or two, the group should be ready for a dangerous and long journey.

MEDIUM ARMOR

Medium armor is chain mail with reinforced leather underpinnings, heavy boots and gloves, and a large, cushioned helmet. It offers 6 points of defense against any physical attack and penalizes Sneak and Climb rolls by -25%. Wearers cannot swim and have difficulty contorting their body in strange positions (such as bending at the waist to enter a cave). Running is possible only in short bursts (say one combat round at a time), whereupon the character must rest and regain their breath.

HEAVY ARMOR

Heavy armor is full plate mail with fur vest and underpinnings, leather reinforced joints, heavy gloves and boots, and a full helm with a closed face. Heavy armor offers 8 points of defense against any physical attacks and makes it all but impossible to Climb or Sneak. Running and swimming are also impossible in this outfit, and a sustained march or ride quickly becomes exhausting. All travel times overland are doubled while the armor is worn.

AVAT OF HOMBUR AND DEM

The two mercenaries sent with the Dreamers are experienced explorers known for ranging far outside the wall. They typically search for easily recovered valuables or signs of great wealth, such as surface gold veins and diamond. Each has been to the foothills beneath the Gate of Crystal but neither has entered it.

Avat of Hombur serves Drax and Dem serves Yveddes. Each is a creature of his particular employer, entrusted for a long time with less than savory tasks. Avat and Dem are casual killers of men, women and children as well as the inhuman monsters beyond the walls. Worse yet, they obviously hate one another.

They argue about everything, refuse to share food, equipment or assistance, and do their best to stay away from one another. If the situation arises where one could do away with the other quietly and without being seen, either would take it.

AVAT OF HOMBUR

Mercenary for Drax, age 29

STR 14	CON 15	SIZ 15	INT 10	POW 9
DEX 13	APP 12	EDU 9	SAN 35	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Astronomy 31%, Bargain 53%, Climb 82%, Dodge 33%, Hide 30%, Jump 35%, Listen 30%, Navigate 50%, Natural History 50%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 45%, Swim 35%, Track 30%. *Languages:* Skand (Own) 45%, English 16%.

Attacks: Heavy sword 51%, 1D10+1+db

Fighting knife 65%, 1D4+2+db

Avat is a big, tall man with a broad chest, thick arms and short-cropped blond hair. He is perpetually scowling, and his presence is intimidating to most. He suffers no SAN loss from cold-blooded murder nor from most encounters on the plateau.

Avat has been in the pocket of Drax of Hombur since his bank-rolled expedition discovered rich metal and stone quarries to the east. Avat is not overly clever and has no mind for politics, but he is

certain which side he is on, and where the money he hopes to make will be found. Avat will push the Dreamers to favor the expansion of the quarries to the east, and try to keep Dem's arguments from poisoning their ears.

DEM

Lieutenant of Yveddes, age 59

STR 8 CON 12 SIZ 9 INT 14 POW 16
DEX 13 APP 9 EDU 13 SAN 70 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Bargain 60%, Climb 70%, Dodge 50%, Hide 50%, Listen 70%, Natural History 60%, Navigate 70%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 80%, Track 50%. *Languages:* Skand (Own) 80%, English 40%.

Attacks: Sword 40%, 1D8+1+db

Dem is a small, thin, quiet individual with large eyes and a wary, clever demeanor. Nothing seems to escape his attention. He takes no SAN loss from cold-blooded murder nor from most encounters on the plateau.

Dem is a trusted lieutenant of Yveddes and has served him for nearly a decade. He understands the subtleties of this situation and will do his best to slowly, with careful words, turn the Dreamers against Avat and the plans of Drax of Hombur. He will never directly confront Avat unless accused of wrongdoing, and then he will have several clear arguments to imply Avat's guilt in whatever has gone wrong.

THE WESTERN PLATEAU

A dilapidated, unused gate (called the "Gate Dire") leads to the Western Plateau of Leng. The main door has been barred by huge stacks of timber, and only a small, steel door in the wall can be opened. Here, watched over by guards armed with longbows on the top of the bowed walls, the Dreamers venture onto the winding, raised plateau of the west; a flat, empty expanse of scrub grass, iced puddles and small drifts of snow. Distant, blue green mountains soar

to the sky on the horizon.

The door is shut without ceremony behind them and will not be reopened until the characters return with the “token of the Oracle.”

ENCOUNTERS IN THE WEST

The Western Plateau of Leng is a monotonous plain, occasionally cut by boulders, small gullies filled with clear, running water, small bushes, and occasional hillock-sized mounds that appear to be of intelligent design. These mounds are piles of stacked rocks overrun by red vines, spongy blue-green moss, and all manner of vermin. They are the burial mounds of the huge men who once called the plateau home, before they were overrun by the Leng Spiders. (Digging into one of these mounds reveals the remains of an immense skeleton, its skull nearly double the size of a normal human's.)

In the far distance, huge mountains hover over the horizon. This is the destination. Travel time across the plain is difficult to gauge, due to the ghostly peaks that forever seem to float at the edge of vision and never appear to grow any closer. Crossing the Western Plateau at a normal pace will take a week. During that time three encounters will frighten and engage the Dreamers.

Despite the apparent emptiness of the plateau, it is well-hunted and haunted, known for its dangers.

THE TITAN

One day, as the Dreamers cross the endless plain, the ground begins to shift beneath their feet as if a giant earthquake is rumbling to life. Cracks appear, opening gaps in the Earth. Each Dreamer that fails a DEX x 2% roll falls to the ground and suffers 1 HP damage. The rumbling increases and the entire world seems to pitch and yaw around them. Each who makes a Luck roll realizes something is much more wrong than a simple earthquake.

The Dreamers suddenly find themselves plunged into darkness as the sun is extinguished. The rumbling grows until characters are being slammed to the earth and flung from point to point as if they were chess pieces on a board being shaken. There is nothing really to

do except clutch the ground and wait.

Those who manage DEX x 1% rolls find their feet just as they realize that an immense being is passing them by. The creature is at least 800 feet tall, and each of its steps covers 100 feet at a fast pace. It is within a half-mile of the Dreamers. It appears to be a huge human composed of metal, casting a shadow a quarter of a mile long in the sun. It ignores the Dreamers, content in its own business, terrifying and vast. (Cost: 1D8 SAN.)

Once the immense thing is more than a mile away, the rumbling subsides to the point where it is simply a huge, deep, resonating sound. The vast figure can be seen to the east, hovering on the horizon for an impossibly long time until it is gone.

Avat spits on the ground, calls it a “Titan,” and says, “They and their kind are the least of our concerns.” He and Dem, dusting themselves off, seem somewhat bored by the whole ordeal.

Attacking the titan is beyond any conception, so no stats are provided. Anything short of modern artillery (something not easily come by in the Dreamlands) would fail to even alert the titan to the characters’ presence.

THE UNDEAD

One night while resting, even if the group has posted a guard, all the characters in the party—even the guard—suddenly find themselves awakened by distant, drunken singing. It sounds like a rowdy group just far enough away that the words of their music cannot be discerned. After the inevitable reproaches to the guards who fell asleep, a cursory glance about sees a light about a quarter-mile away—another camp site. A Spot Hidden roll determines that the “fire” looks strange: It’s blue-white, more like moonlight or starlight, although it is on the ground and flickering like a campfire.

The newcomers appear, at a glance in the dark, to be weary mercenaries. But in fact they are not men but undead specters who haunt the Western Plain and eat all unfortunate enough to cross their path. They are immaterial wisps composed of hatred and hunger and death. Despite their lust for human flesh, their curse is peculiar;

they believe they are living, and so their individual motivations and personalities remain for the most part intact.

Leaving the area immediately is possible. If the Dreamers quietly break camp and move off, have them make a group Luck roll. Success indicates they escape the area without detection. If it fails, the night is broken by one of the men at the fire standing and saying very loudly, "Did you hear that?" The "men" then spread out in the direction of the characters and begin to search in the night. At this point if the Dreamers move off quickly, have them make another group Luck roll. If it succeeds they escape the area without encountering the "men." If it fails, one of the Dreamers turns back to find himself or herself face to face with one of the specters and the battle is on.

If the Dreamers are overcome by curiosity and decide to spy on the new camp, those moving towards the light must make Sneak rolls. Those that fail find themselves set upon by the ravenous specters, who hope to slay and bathe in dying blood for a moment's warmth in their endless night.

Those who succeed at the Sneak roll find a strange-looking blue-white campfire surrounded by half a dozen shadowy men wearing arms and armor, drinking and shouting at one another and occasionally singing a dirge-like song. The light offers no heat. The song is hollow and empty of emotion, but haunting. It seems to be in every listener's native language.

"Blood and bone, and marrow warm.
I find my life behind me, gone.
Death and cold and no more dawn.
My shape, it cuts a shadowed form."

Carefully observing the "people" around the "fire" produces an unusual optical illusion. The flickering light seems to show skulls and blank bone in the gaps of their armor, and a moment later shows instead the gaunt and sickly face of a weary mercenary (cost: 0/1D4 SAN). Their eyes are never visible, lost in pools of shadow. The feeling around the "fire" is implacably cold.

Any Dreamer who succeeded at the Sneak roll to approach can

retreat again safely. Learning the details, the agents of the council, Avat and Dem, hurriedly pack their gear and attempt to get at least one Dreamer to follow them away, refusing to say just what about the situation has upset them. They will not speak about it. In fact they go out of their way to ignore the strange camp, as if it were not there. They refuse to even acknowledge its existence.

Fighting the Specters is extremely dangerous. The creatures are terrifying. Once engaged they become entirely inhuman. Their features warp to become monstrous and their forms drift in and out of solidity. They fight in a manner that is completely unnatural, teleporting from place to place in a blink, covering distances that would take a man seconds at a run, turning up behind targets, and running people through with ghostly blades. Worse yet, they are immune to all conventional weapons. They fear only fire and magic.

SIX SPECTERS

Spirits of Hate, Hunger and Cold

STR n/a	CON n/a	SIZ n/a	INT 12	POW 14
DEX n/a	Move special		HP n/a	

Attacks: Drain, POW vs. CON, damage 1D6 STR loss

Notes: The Specters appear to be ghostly human mercenaries until they attack or are attacked, whereupon they become terrifying, warped apparitions of horror and death. They can teleport anywhere they can see, cannot be outrun through normal means, and retreat only if injured by magic or fire.

Treat Drain as a POW vs. CON attack on the Dreamer. If the victim loses, he or she loses 1D6 STR. Each successful attack in this manner appears as if the specter is slashing at the target and drawing blood, but no wounds appear on the body. If the victim reaches 0 STR, all the specters descend on him or her, feeding on the still-warm corpse. Other quick-thinking Dreamers might make their escape during this frenzy.

Armor: Invulnerable to all attacks except fire and magic, which reduce a specter's POW rather than its HP. (When one reaches 0 POW, it evaporates forever.)

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8

THE SLAVERS

One morning a distant horn sounds at dawn, followed by the deep sound of drums. Avat and Dem immediately leap to alert, drawing their weapons. They encourage the characters to break camp as quickly as possible. If pressed, they warn they are being pursued by slavers.

Persistent Dreamers can drag some details from the guides. The slavers are degenerate humans from the Plain of Leng. They capture and drag off humans for sale to the creatures at Sarkomand, or in distant, unknown lands to the north. They hunt on horseback, using dogs and poisoned bows.

Avat and Dem move off from the camp at a fast pace to the west, occasionally calling for all in the party to lower themselves to the ground. Throughout this ordeal, which lasts more than five hours, horns are heard from all sides, and drums, and later, towards midday, the sound of a big, wild dog baying.

To escape safely, each Dreamer must make two CONx2 rolls, or become so exhausted they cannot carry on without 1D20 minutes rest. A Dreamer who pushes on despite this exhaustion must make a CONx1 roll after ten minutes or collapse, suffering 1D4 HP damage and falling unconscious for 1D4 hours.

If a Dreamer is abandoned or if the group stops to rest, the slavers come upon them and attack. Dreamers carried off by the slavers are likely to become fodder for the Men from Leng or the horrific moon-beasts, or worse things beyond the edge of the world.

There are ten slavers, five on horseback and five on foot, along with three hunting dogs used for tracking. They are small, shriveled men with yellow skin, black eyes and curly black beards. They wear light armor, carry small bows and curved swords, and scream intimidating commands in a language not known to anyone in the party. The slavers on horseback circle their quarry, shooting small, poisoned arrows at them with little bows. Three of those on foot hold the

dogs on leashes. The other two move in to tie up their unconscious victims. If a slaver is killed the group turns murderous. They loose the dogs and all attack. If five of the slavers fall in combat, the rest retreat and don't return.

TEN SLAVERS

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	10	6	8	16	16	—	7
#2	9	10	12	15	15	—	11
#3	11	7	15	3	14	+1D4	11
#4	11	3	14	9	12	+1D4	9
#5	13	10	12	11	12	+1D4	11
#6	10	10	10	13	12	—	10
#7	15	11	13	3	9	+1D4	12
#8	10	12	12	13	7	—	12
#9	9	10	10	5	5	—	10
#10	5	7	8	10	5	-1D4	8

Skills: Bargain 55%, English 8%, Sneak 41%, Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 51%, Ride 65%, Track 68%. *Languages:* Unknown Alien Tongue (Own) 80%.

Attacks: Scimitar 56%, damage 1D6+2+db

Bow 44%, damage 1D4+poison* (only those on horseback)

* A victim must resist POT 10 or collapse unconscious for 1D4 hours.

Armor: Leather breastplate, 50% chance of AP 3.

THREE ATTACK DOGS

Loyal and Dangerous

STR 5 CON 10 SIZ 4 INT 3 POW 9
DEX 13 Move 10 HP 7

Damage Bonus: -1D6.

Skills: Listen 40%, Track 90%.

Attacks: Bite 25%, damage 1D8+db.

Armor: None.

THE PATH TO THE GATE OF CRYSTAL

After a week or more of travel, the Dreamers reach the end of the Western Plateau and gaze upon a series of rolling, mossy hills that wind up over crevasses and become soaring mountains. At dawn and at dusk, a single bright, blue-white speck of crystalline light is visible from one of the peaks ahead. Avat or Dem might point it out—the Gate of Crystal.

As the incline grows, traveling in the mountains begins to take its toll. Avat and Dem seem unperturbed by the increasing difficulty of the terrain and do not slow down unless asked. Dreamers who attempt to keep their pace must make a CONx5 roll on the first day (those that fail suffer 1 HP damage as they collapse and roll down the slope); a CONx4 the second and third days; and finally a CONx2 roll on the fourth day (failing this roll, where the incline is more than fifty degrees, inflicts 1D8 HP damage). If the Dreamers insist on traveling slowly, the climb takes eight days and no CON rolls must be made.

THE DEAD PILGRIMS AND IVU THE CORRUPT

Finally, as the slope of the mountain becomes nearly impassable, the Dreamers come upon a sprawl of bodies lying face down, having fallen and skidded down the mountain face. All of these figures, in various states of decay, seem to have emerged from a single split in the mountain ahead—a huge, vertical cut that leads further up toward the Gate of Crystal. The path through this cut seems much more manageable.

Any Dreamer that inspects the bodies and makes an Idea roll realizes three things. First, these people were shot in the back with a bow firing large, three-foot arrows; second, their bodies were dragged

away from the opening to either side, so they would not be visible to those coming away from the Gate; and third, all the bodies are identically dressed in linens, with empty wineskins and leather packs that have been thrown open and emptied.

These unfortunate pilgrims are the victims of Ivu, an ancient man of the hills who discovered long ago that people occasionally come to the Oracle outfitted with fine food and gear. He has been casually murdering the pilgrims as they issue from the Oracle, stripping them of gear, and making his home in a cubby hole in the vertical face of rock for nearly two decades. By day he picks through the corpses, makes new arrows, and grows fat on the food and wine he loots from the bodies, all the while chattering away to himself.

His scheme is hideous in its simplicity. The old man stashes a ruined handbell, tied to a silver goblet, inside the path through the gap, some distance back. At the first clank of the bell as a pilgrim picks it up, Ivu rushes to his perch, loads his weapon and waits. When the pilgrims come out of the gap, they pause as they see the bodies sprawled on the ground. Then Ivu shoots them. Some even turn in time to see the arrow coming. Ivu then loots the bodies, drags them to the side, and returns his bell to its place in the gap. (The dead pilgrims came from afar and awakened inside the Oracle, rather than venturing into it on foot; they never saw the bodies on the south face until it is too late.)

Ivu's cave is accessible from a small, winding lip of rock that moves up to the right of the gap in the mountain. Anyone climbing to it must make a single Luck or Climb roll or fall, suffering 1D8 damage for tumbling down the rocks. Approximately 30 feet up is a small ovoid cave that stretches into the rock face about 25 feet. At the lip of the cave, Ivu has constructed a clever joist of cowgut, rope and stones that holds a huge longbow tilted towards the ground, allowing the old man to get maximum pull and maintain aim. From this crow's nest, Ivu can easily kill a victim who exits the mountain gap.

The cave is stacked full of wineskins, clothing, food and gear—a grotesque amount of them. Those who count estimate that Ivu has killed nearly 50 pilgrims. There are enough supplies in the cave to last months.

IVU THE CORRUPT

Nothing Is Beneath Him, age 57

STR 9 CON 7 SIZ 10 INT 11 POW 10
DEX 12 APP 5 EDU 2 SAN 0 HP 9

Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Astronomy 22%, Climb 81%, Conceal 45%, Hide 35%, Jump 35%, Listen 40%, Navigate 44%, Spot Hidden 30%, Swim 35%, Track 30%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 60%, English 21%.

Attacks: Hunting knife 60%, damage 1D6+db
Longbow 72%, 1D10+1D6

Ivu keeps the hunting knife cunningly hidden in a disgusting bandage tied about his forearm (to discover it, a searching character must roll Spot Hidden against Ivu's Conceal). Ivu has no qualms in cutting an unobservant character's throat. He'll even lick the blade in front of the group before most likely being slaughtered himself—an outcome he has been awaiting for nearly twenty years.

Ivu will shoot targets on the ground without any care for tactics. If he has a shot on a character, he will take it.

Ivu is disgusting. A short, Asiatic man bloated with wine and food and covered in open sores, he babbles to himself and is silent only when aiming his bow. Grinning wickedly with black eyes and teeth, Ivu cackles without provocation. He seems to be living half in a daze of insanity and half in the "real" world. Despite his build, Ivu is fast and can climb like a monkey.

Ivu does not fully recall how he came to the gap, as he calls it, only that he escaped cruel men sometime in the past on the Western Plateau and was pursued to a hole in the wall. There he met a traveler at a fire laden with fine wine and food who refused to share with the starving Ivu.

Ivu throttled the man with a knot of rope and looted his body. Over the years Ivu has refined his technique, growing more and more brazen. Today he refers to the pilgrims as "cattle" and has even, when supplies have grown thin, eaten their flesh. He is quite insane.

Ivu's only goal is the preservation of his lifestyle. If this seems to be coming to an end, he lashes out and attempts to kill anyone he can.



THE WESTERN MACHINE

After another day climbing up the slopes of the mountain, the Dreamers finally come to the glittering object they spied days before across the Western Plateau—the Oracle.

Two giant statues, made of a blue-white metal unlike anything found on Earth, flank a cleft in the mountain. They hang on the side of the mountain, buried in snow and rock, as if knocked aside by some giant creature. Each statue is about eighty feet tall and appears to be a thin, Asian man or woman standing, hands held together in prayer, eyes facing south. Past them a sparkling, crystalline cog, like that found in a clock but the size of a house, slowly turns in the side of the mountain. The cog glitters at each click of its workings, visible

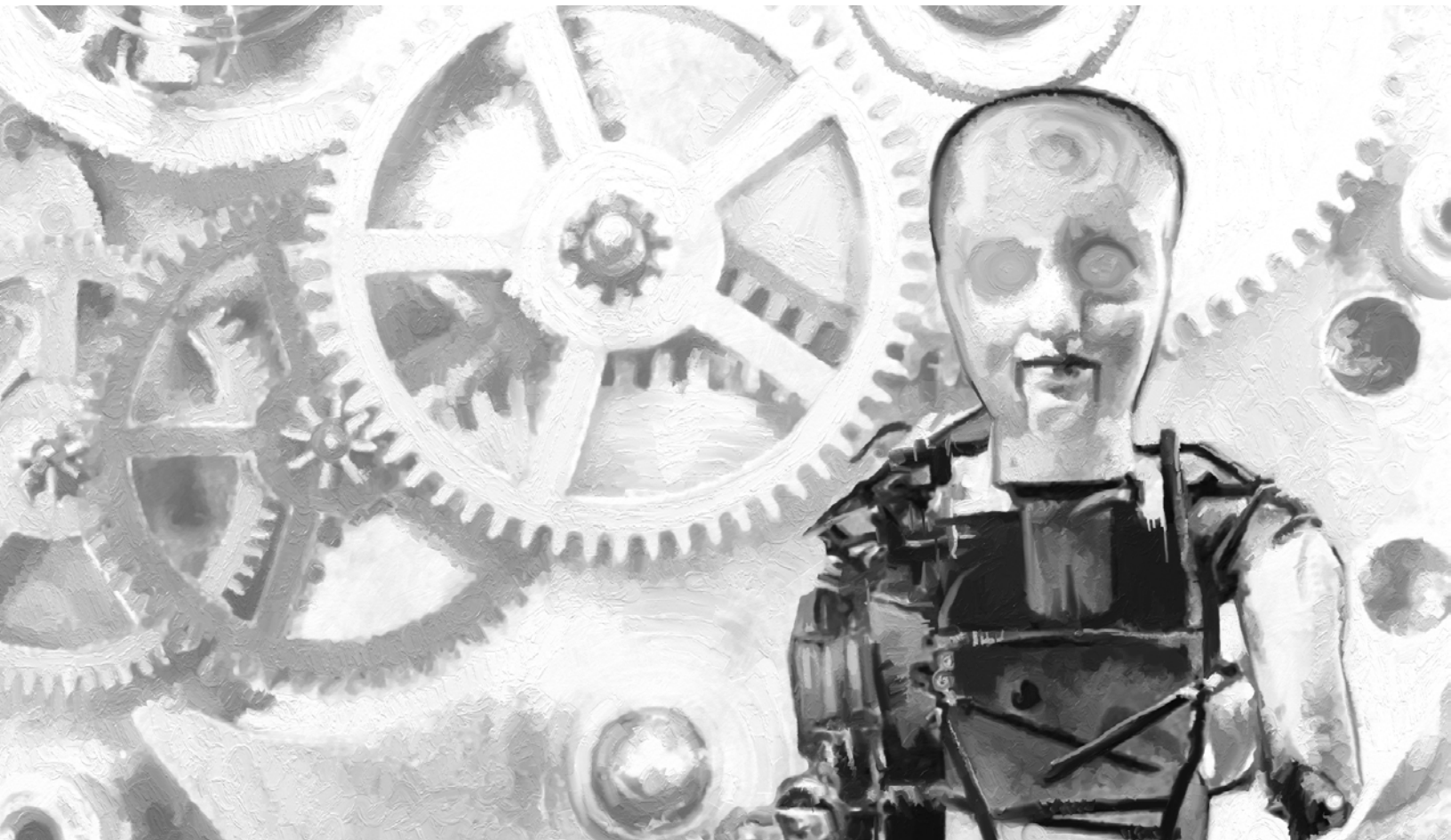
across the plain. The ground shakes lightly with each click.

The cog recedes into the mountain, beneath the ground. Visible beneath in the opening are dozens of similar works, connected and spinning at varying rates. Hand-carved and well-worn steps lead down into the rock. There are no gates or guards. Anyone may enter freely. Avat and Dem, however, will not continue onward. It is, they say, forbidden, though they will not say why. Nothing will persuade them to enter the caves.

DESCENT

The depths of the mountain are lit well by endless reflections from crystal. They are warm and hospitable, except for the noise. The ticking of the machine is so loud in some areas that the Dreamers must clutch their ears against the sound and conventional conversation is impossible. Other areas are quieter, but the clank and click of parts is always present.

There is but a single path with no deviations. Sometimes this narrow stair or hallway opens on a vista revealing the complexity and



scale of the machine. Ten minutes beneath the mountain, the characters pass a chamber the size of a vast stadium, filled with working, glittering crystal parts ticking away at some unknown rhythm. Certainly the machine was built with purpose and meaning, thought what it might be is impossible to guess.

The path leads to a small, wooden door, marked with a symbol. It looks like a five-limbed tree branch tipped to the right. A Dreamer who makes a Cthulhu Mythos roll recognizes the Elder Sign. The door is unlocked.

THE ORACLE OF THE WESTERN MACHINE

The chamber is large, and is evidently in the heart of the machine that fills the mountain. The curved half-dome is split by spinning cogs and pulleys and levers on all sides. The clicking in this room is quiet and brings to mind a grandfather clock ticking away in a peaceful study. Until the door is shut behind the characters, nothing happens.

The moment the door is shut a bell rings and the sound of a machine “spinning up” breaks the relative quiet. Any Dreamer who played with a string top as a child recognizes the sound of a string or cable being pulled at high speed to spin some axle. This is followed by four clicks. Any Dreamer who makes a Spot Hidden roll notices a shape detach itself from the far wall and move forward.

The shape is human-sized, composed of shafts of crystal and thin bars of metal. It is situated on a single steel pole instead of legs. This pole recedes into the ground, in a clear groove that cuts rectilinear patterns around the room’s stone floor. The face is a blank, white marionette-like mask with no eyes, only the vague outline of a nose, and a spring-loaded mechanical mouth. Its arms drift to its side in a jerky motion and it slides forward until it reaches the halfway point in the room. There it stops abruptly and then makes a series of uneven movements in sequence. It takes a moment to realize that the being has just bowed to the Dreamers.

This is the Oracle of the Western Machine.

INTERACTING WITH THE ORACLE

The Oracle remains inert until engaged, though those standing near it can hear various flywheels and mechanics spinning and moving in it. Attacking the Oracle is foolish, but those who persist may easily smash and destroy it. Moments later, a “new” Oracle is dropped into the slot in the wall from above, and the sequence of events repeats as if nothing untoward happened.

The moment someone speaks to the Oracle in the form of a question, it responds. Its voice is stilted and organ-like, emerging out of sequence with its mechanical mouth clacking open and shut. It responds only to questions. No other attempt at engagement works.

Once the characters have finished their inquiries, they may simply leave. Nothing keeps them in the Oracle’s chamber.

1) SHOULD INQUANOK EXPAND?

The main question the characters were sent to ask is the easiest to answer. The Oracle says, simply, NO. Its mouth then unhinges, and a chip of crystal drops out of the glittering mechanical works in its head. This is the token—a large, blue-white gem which seems, upon inspection, to contain something in its center: a creature, a symbol or some wires.

Further inquiry can reveal that if Inquanok expands, 55 years from now it will fall prey to a coordinated, protracted war by Sarkomand and the Spiders from Leng. It will take 72 years to completely collapse. Fewer than 190 residents will survive the final assault on the walls of Inquanok. Each of these details is doled out as a single, short, answer, and only if the character pursues such an answer.

2) WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

THE WESTERN MACHINE, the Oracle says. THE WORKS WHICH MOVE THIS CORNER OF THE WORLD.

3) WHO BUILT IT?

THE GREAT ONES, WHO LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF HEAVEN. Further questions about the “Great Ones” are met with what seems to be a “glitch” in the machine. The mouth moves and clicks but no sounds come out.

4) WHY CAN ONLY EARTHLY TRAVELERS ENTER?

ONLY THOSE NOT CONTROLLED BY THE MACHINE MAY ENTER IT.

5) HOW DO WE ESCAPE THE DREAMLANDS?

THERE ARE MANY EXITS. LOOK SOUTH IN THE ENCHANTED WOOD.

6) WHAT ARE THE INTENTIONS OF (CHARACTER)?

The Oracle can answer these questions with absolute authority, as long as the subject is a native of the Dreamlands. The Oracle could reveal that the Collector wishes to kill every member of the party and escape back to Sarkomand. Or that Yveddes is motivated entirely by greed, or that Dem is prepared to let them all die and lie to the sages about what they found. It says such things with absolute certainty. The implication is that the “Western Machine” is actually somehow running these people’s lives, hopes and dreams like a clock.

Notably, questions about Mr. Lao cannot be answered. His dual nature means he is free from the Oracle’s sight, for the most part.

RETURN TO INQUANOK

When the Dreamers emerge to the surface, those that show the token to Avat or Dem are met with their stunned silence. It is clear that the object means something to the men in a way it cannot to the Dreamers. When they look at it their eyes are filled with a quiet wonder, as if they are seeing something far more interesting than a gemstone.

The two men pester the Dreamers for the answer to the question

they brought to the Oracle. If the Dreamers refuse to answer (which would be wise), Avat and Dem encourage the group to return to Inquanok as fast as possible.

Of course, if he learns the truth, Dem will watch for a chance to get the whole party slain so he can take the token himself and tell the Council of Sages what his master wants them to hear. But Avat will be watchful. Dem should get a chance only if you feel the need for another deadly encounter.

If the Dreamers avoided the Underworld and you wish to send them there, this is a good chance. An encounter with one of the threats that they did not face before—especially slavers or perhaps a manticore—might drive them into a cavern from which the only escape is the strange stairs leading far, far downward—down to a fateful meeting with Madaeker the ghoul.

Otherwise the journey back to Inquanok is uneventful. The path, now relatively well known, offers no resistance if the Dreamers simply retrace their steps. Approximately 20 days after leaving the city, the characters return to the Gate Dire at Inquanok and are met by applause, garlands and flowers thrown from the city windows as they cross to the round street.

There Yveddes and Drax wait for the Dreamers, the answer to their question, and the token of the Oracle.

JUDGMENT

The sages require a council meeting to hear the answer of the Oracle. The token is presented as evidence of the judgment, and none seem to question it. Drax's dream is defeated as the sages unanimously vote to remain in the city walls—Drax himself votes to follow the Oracle. The Dreamers are thanked, named heroes of the city, and laden with jewels, treasures and trinkets. Even Drax seems not to hold a grudge, despite his defeat.

The characters are allowed unfettered access to the Temple of the Elder Ones, and in it, the *Book of Keys and Gates*.

THE BOOK OF KEYS AND GATES

This vast book, written in some ancient magical tongue, sits at the center of the Temple of the Elder Gods. The book itself is enormous, easily three feet thick when closed and weighing three hundred pounds. To an ordinary person it is nearly unmovable; even opening the cover is difficult.

The pages are made of a thin material, dark but translucent, and their edges are folded and carefully sewn. The words on each page are inscribed in golden ink. At first they appear to be unknown rectilinear hieroglyphs, but every Dreamer viewing the book may make a single POW x 2% roll. On a success, the hieroglyphs appear to flip, one by one, becoming the viewer's native language. Glancing at the book peripherally or through squinted eyes destroys this illusion, but otherwise the book becomes completely readable. Those who fail see—and will continue to see—only an alien language.

The book is thousands of pages long and is filled with many wonders. Those spending time laboriously flipping through it find they can read only five to six pages in a single day of tireless study, due to the cramped writing on each oversized page. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the book. It meanders, changes subject, and is filled with meaningless asides, as if its author had simply written the whole thing down in a single undirected stream of ideas.

The primary focus of the book seems to be the various exits from the Dreamlands and their intersections with Earth. While the book often mentions unrelated things, it always finds its way back to the theme of gates between the waking and dreaming worlds and the corresponding “keys” necessary to transit them.

Characters who search the book without any concept of what exactly they seek must read it for 1D8+2 weeks before uncovering one of the clues below. Those searching for something specific, such as “an exit to Earth from the Plateau of Leng” or “an exit to Earth from the Southern Cities,” must make a group Luck roll. On a success, it takes them 1D8+2 days to uncover a clue.

STUDYING THE BOOK OF KEYS AND GATES

Those who wish to read the *Book of Keys and Gates* from cover to cover must have 10+1D6 weeks of uninterrupted time and make the POWx2 roll.

Dreamers that do so suffer 0/1D4 SAN loss. They gain the information presented in the book normally, as well as the additional ability to instantly spot characters and objects from Earth. At a glance, the Dreamer can tell whether someone or something is from Earth rather than being a native of the Dreamlands or some other realm. This is not indicated by a visible glow or emanating power, but a strong and perfect knowledge of their origin.

Those successfully parsing the book at length discover that a relatively safe exit to Earth exists in the south, in a place called “The Enchanted Wood” near a city called “Ulthar.” Sages and city-folk claim it is a great city, but say those traveling south must move through the port of Lhosk first.

REWARDS AND THE JOURNEY SOUTH

In Inquanok the Dreamers are laden with small chests full of gold and gems, new armor, any weapons they like, and more—even brides or houses in the city proper. They are untouchable heroes of the walled city; if he is their companion, even the Collector is accepted there as a friend.

Dreamers wishing to journey south to Ulthar are told that ships run to Lhosk. From there, Ulthar may be reached by a journey on foot or horseback.

When it is time to depart, the Dreamers find themselves on the Lhoskian ship *Yan*, with their passage paid in its finest quarters, for the passage south. (See Chapter Five for details on shipboard life.)

CHAPTER NINE

LHOSK · THE BAZAAR · COMPLICATIONS · YOUR BOND TO ALL THAT DUST

“In the high west there burns a furious star.

It is for fiery boys that star was set.”

—Wallace Stevens, “Le Monocle de Mon Oncle”

LHOSK

A well-traveled human city on the coast of the Cerenarian Sea, Lhosk has prospered as a trade center for many surrounding lands due to its low levy and easygoing economic policies.

The city and its surrounding estates and farms wind along a thirty-five-mile stretch of tropical coastline, and the natural bay is protected by a series of small reefs and sandbars. Two large lighthouses called “the twins” mark the mouth of the port. At high tide the lighthouses seem to float on the water; at low tide the small islands on which they are built can be spied.

Lhosk’s beautiful teak docks are famous as far south as Baharna. The intricate patterns and winding spires of their etchings, carved in the classic Lhoskian style, make them a prized cultural treasure.

All Lhosk’s buildings except for port towers and lighthouses are gambrel-roofed, making them easy to maintain in the frequent rainfall. No private house is over three stories, and none has a basement. Hurricanes are frequent and the water table is quite high.

Most of the city proper stands within a mile or so of the sea, and all Lhoskian children are equally comfortable on land and water from a very early age. As one would expect, the major industry of the city is fishing, and the native barks are known up and down the Cerenarian coast as the prime traders of sea goods. In their own bazaars the Lhoskians hold a near monopoly on fish, fishing goods, shipboard goods and other maritime sundries. Other goods are left to foreign traders, as this promotes a healthy relationship with other lands and a strong economic base.

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- The most popular fish on the supper tables of Lhosk.
- The most common figurehead seen on the prows of Lhoskian ships and boats.
- The symbol used to designate a house as a temporary residence for travelers.
- The peculiar mix of spices used by Lhoskian cooks.

KEY TO THE MAP

1. Lighthouses ("The Twins")
2. Ballud's Outfitters
3. Grand ("Red") Bazaar
4. Council Spire
5. The Eye of the Needle
6. Mortimer's Potions
7. Ebony Temple
8. Trade Family Tha

The city itself is quite old, although no records reveal its true age. The people of Lhosk have been sailing and fishing on the Cerenarian coast as far back as any human books remember. The native language of the area is Talunen, although English and Skand are nearly as common.

A small council of sailors and traders rules Lhosk. The Tha family has held most of the council seats for many generations, although some seats are purposely vacated for set periods and presided over by foreign traders. The interplay and intrigues of great families has become more and more complex and incestuous with each passing generation.

Today, Lhosk is the predominant trade city in the northern reaches of the Dreamlands and is the gateway of trade to the exotic and dangerous north.





THE DOCKS

The ancient teak docks are the pride and joy of Lhosk. Intricate and fascinating carvings cover every square inch. Artists and sages travel from all over the Dreamlands to see them. They are a mecca to the creative spirit.

Hundreds of ships of every description dock in Lhosk every day, coming from ports as far west as Sarrub and as far east as Mhor. Sails and flags of countless descriptions can be found, often including some never seen before.

New traders must register with the Trade Council and offer a tribute to trade in the Grand Bazaar. Those who do not wish to pay the tithe and register may trade on the docks with no penalty (save that most customers stay in the bazaar), but most choose to find favor with the council. Those that do seldom go bankrupt.

Private owners rent dock slips to foreign ships. This lucrative business has become extremely cutthroat, with each slip-owner attempting to undercut his competitors with cheaper prices. Some accept only currency as payment for slip time; others accept goods or specialty services in exchange. The city manifest of ships in dock is updated every day by the slip-holding individuals and conglomerates. Any who fail to report a ship in a dock to the harbormaster are

PROGRESS THROUGH THE CAMPAIGN

Arriving in Lhosk is a significant step for Dreamers hoping to find their way to Earth. It is a relatively safe port (as far as the Dreamlands go), but is awash with the influence of Nyarlathotep—mostly through his agents, the Men from Leng. Clever Dreamers will take care.

ARRIVAL IN A BLACK GALLEY

If the characters arrive in a Black Galley, this will cause a stir in the locals. The Black Gallies are a well-known sight in town and are the object of lust by every trader in the northern oceans. See “Arrival in a Black Galley” on page 148.

ARRIVAL WITH THE SWORD OF KAMAS·THA

This sword, last held by the now deceased Kamas-Tha, is the key to a mystery in town and might gain the Dreamers the assistance of Maras-Tha (his son) or the enmity of Emen-Tha (his brother), who architected Kamas-Tha’s death. See “The Trade Family Tha” on page 184.

subject to extreme fines and possible imprisonment.

Pulling into the narrow docks is difficult and sometimes dangerous, requiring a skilled pilot. Anyone attempting to steer a ship into dock without the benefit of the Sailing skill, or if the Sailing roll fails, must make a halved Luck roll. If that succeeds, a rough docking is achieved. If it fails, a mishap damages the dock, dependent on the ship’s size and top speed. If the halved Luck roll comes up 96 or higher, both the ship and dock are severely damaged, possibly even causing the ship to sink or the dock to collapse.

The people of Lhosk value their docks greatly.

THE BAZAAR AND COUNCIL

The Grand Bazaar runs in a two-mile strip just off the docks near the center of Lhosk. It is called the Red Bazaar by locals due to the red tarpaulins that cover much of the bazaar from the frequent rains. This name often confuses newcomers. Sometimes a traveler can be found in the Grand Bazaar asking for directions to the Red Bazaar when they are one and the same place!

Over two hundred permanent shops and boutiques make their homes in the Red Bazaar, selling all varieties of goods and services. Thousands of other small shops come and go, erecting simple facades and tents daily in any available open spaces.

Almost any object imaginable can be found here for the right price, including live exotic animals, slaves, magical elixirs, enchanted rings and weapons, ancient books, tapestries, and totally alien goods from the lands of dreams to the West. In the Red Bazaar, money talks.

There is a small amount of regulated crime. Pickpockets are the most prevalent problem but they avoid well-known foreign traders and important buyers. The criminals want to be sure the Red Bazaar prospers, and with it their income off unwary travelers. They have struck bargains with certain unions of traders, monitoring crime and often preventing theft by independent thieves.

The Council Spire stands in the center of the Red Bazaar, in the remnants of the first lighthouse erected in the city. Inside, over thirty tired and crowded bureaucrats muddle through endless reams of

paperwork. Once a year, for two weeks, the Council meets in the assembly hall in the base of the lighthouse. This event is the talk of the town and draws huge crowds of merchants hoping to have their problems addressed. Often only those with the largest purses are heard.

Fifty men guard the Council Spire day and night. If this seems a bit overzealous, one must think of the sensitive nature of much of the paperwork contained therein. Also, the commander of the city guards maintains his office in a small shack at the base of the Spire, so any thought of thievery or assault near or in the spire is ill-advised.

LHOSK GUARDS

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	16	12	15	4	17	+1D4	14
#2	9	11	13	10	15	—	12
#3	9	14	13	14	15	—	14
#4	17	8	17	4	14	+1D6	13
#5	18	16	12	15	14	+1D4	13
#6	6	12	12	15	12	—	12
#7	15	15	16	15	10	+1D4	16
#8	9	11	14	7	7	—	13
#9	9	12	8	6	7	—	10
#10	13	10	12	17	6	+1D4	11

Skills In Common: Dodge (DEX x 2) + 10%, Law 25%, Spot Hidden 61%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 80%, English 50%.

Attacks: Pole arm 56%, damage 1D10+db

Short sword 35%, damage 1D6+1+db

Dagger 50%, damage 1D4+2+db

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Dreamers eager to immerse themselves in Lhosk need look no further than the pubs and inns on the waterfront. Buying drinks for the locals renders them more than willing to fill any gaps in the Dreamers' knowledge. The following basics are easily gained—no rolls are necessary, just time:

(Continued.)

ARRIVAL WITH THE COLLECTOR

The Collector once lived in Lhosk but was sold into slavery by his family due to his horrific appearance. His family will not stand for his reappearance and will go out of their way to remove him, no matter the cost. See "The Trade Family Bahaot" on page 194.

ARRIVAL FROM THE UNDERWORLD

Dreamers arriving from the Underworld, ironically, find themselves the best off. They appear to the locals to have come from nowhere special and are just more travelers visiting the city.

ARRIVAL FROM INQUANOK

Characters arriving on a ship from Inquanok find the Men from Leng waiting for them just as if they had arrived in a Black Galley. The Men from Leng's blood gems make tongues waggle, and merchants on Lhoskian ships have let slip that "heroes" from Earth arrived in Inquanok. The Men from Leng wait on all ships coming into port from the north, hoping to locate the Dreamers and enslave or kill them.

- 1) Lhosk is ruled from the Council Spire.
- 2) A free city with no king, Lhosk is led by a Council of Traders.
- 3) Taxes are fair, crime is low (in most of the city), and times are prosperous.
- 4) The city guard is generally just, though they are not above bribery.
- 5) People from many cultures of the Dreamlands call Lhosk home.
- 6) Travelers from Earth are often seen in Lhosk.

Each Persuade or Fast Talk roll reveals a deeper rumor:

- 1) A dark cult has built a church in a district of Lhosk and that district has fallen to ruin.
- 2) The dark church is called “The Ebony Temple.”
- 3) The foreigners who pilot the Black Galleys frequent the Ebony Temple.
- 4) The trouble began with the disappearance of Kamas-Tha, a member of the Council of Traders.
- 5) Since Kamas-Tha’s brother Emen-Tha took over his council seat, the foreigners from the Black Galleys can be seen everywhere.
- 6) Some say Emen-Tha had his brother killed on the seas to take his council seat.

In addition, nearly any local who has had a few free drinks will direct the characters to nearly any location or any service in the city.

ARRIVAL IN A BLACK GALLEY

If the Dreamers arrive in a Black Galley, by the time they make dock word of its arrival spreads to the Ebony Temple (see below). Disguised as humans, four Men from Leng wait on the dock. Once they see the Dreamers they beat a hasty retreat, choosing instead to act under cover of darkness lest they spoil their disguises. (Anyone who has seen an undisguised Man from Leng immediately recognizes them for what they truly are at the cost of 0/1D4 SAN).

Any Dreamer making a Spot Hidden roll notices the ill-formed men, wrapped in their huge cloaks and turbans, considering them from the shore with obvious hatred and confusion. The Men from Leng expected another group of their own kind. Finding the Dreamers instead, they retreat and plot their next move.

Likewise, the dockmasters will be confused at the arrival of normal-looking humans in a Black Galley. This should be role-played out, but characters who fail to handle themselves well here might find themselves in the midst of a riot or worse.

First, the dockmaster asks if the characters own the ship. If the answer is yes, word soon spreads of normal men owning the Black Galley. Second, they ask if there is anything to trade. If the answer is yes, within minutes a large group of traders congeals on the dock, hounding the characters in an attempt to make a deal.

SURVIVING THE UPROAR

Any Dreamer can assert control of the situation by demanding that the dockmaster alert the city guard. After a brief uproar and a gathering of passersby to gawk and haggle, ten city guards arrive, armed with pole-arms and short swords, and set up an effective perimeter. The crowd, frightened by the guards, begins to quiet and eventually waits silently behind the perimeter, watching.

If the Dreamers sit passively by, they watch in horror as an ever-escalating mess of locals show up and begin to swarm the dock. None attempts to cross the gangplank onto the Black Galley—such an action is forbidden both by law and local superstition—but dozens and then hundreds of people begin to swarm the dock, pushing the Dreamers back towards the water.

Once the Dreamers are identified as the owners, the focus of the crowd falls on them. They are pummeled, pulled and yelled at. Escaping the dock on foot requires either a STRx2 roll or a melee attack roll. However, Dreamers who attack with more than fists or feet find themselves in the midst of a huge, rolling riot. Each turn spent in the riot calls for a Luck roll. Failure indicates 1D4 HP damage. A 00 roll on Luck indicates 1D10+2 HP damage. Making three successful Luck rolls allows the Dreamer to escape into the city



streets away from the riot.

Retreating onto the Black Galley is an option, as no one will cross the gangplank, but this effectively traps the Dreamers on the ship. If the Dreamers make a group Luck roll they are soon greeted by a contingent of city guards, looking to speak with the owner of the Black Galley. Otherwise the characters are caught on the Black Galley for 1D20 hours before the crowd disperses.

SELLING THE BLACK GALLEY

One good way to find a buyer for the Black Galley—and anything else the Dreamers might sell—would be to look for an overweight, particularly well-appointed individual in the crowd. Agat the Corpulent is such a merchant. He is attended by two well-armed mercenaries who frown heavily upon anyone interrupting their fat employer's business.



AGAT THE CORPULENT

Servant of the Coin and Dealer of the Red Bazaar, age 45

STR 6 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 14 POW 12
DEX 10 APP 7 EDU 22 SAN 60 HP 14

Damage Bonus: None.

Skills: Accounting 64%, Bargain 75%, Law 61%, Persuade 60%, Spot Hidden 71%. *Languages:* Skand (Own) 100%, English 44%, Pross 21%, Talunen 60%.

Attacks: None.

A very short man of Bohunk descent, Agat is so fat he seems to be nothing more than pyramids of gelatinous limbs stacked one upon the other in all directions. His rings are crevasses in the bulk of his fingers. His neck is three blobs of bulk. His body, hidden beneath silk and jewels, is much the same. His face is a childlike, corpulent oval split by clean white teeth and blue eyes. His hair is a perfect, slicked-back black, and he wears a wet-looking black goatee.

Agat was born in Inquanok but has spent twenty years as the main seller of his family's goods—mostly worked marble and stone—in the Red Bazaar of Lhosk. This has made him a very wealthy man, and that wealth is most accurately represented by his excessive weight. As a sign of his success, his size gives him great pride.

Agat will do nearly anything to own a Black Galley. He does not imagine the horrors that power it, or the enemies it might gain him, but instead pictures the movement of vast tonnages of stone from Inquanok to Lhosk at a speed never before imagined—and thus an even fatter purse.

WHAT AN OFFER MIGHT ENTAIL

If the Dreamers deal with Agat, the city guard and Agat's mercenaries show up in force and clear the dock. This alone should indicate Agat's deep interest in the Black Galley. His attendants bring folding leather chairs, a table and a large coffer, and serve wine, apples and fresh meats. Agat does not eat—he plans to satisfy his boundless desires later—unless the Dreamers seem to suspect poison.

Agat offers to buy the Black Galley sight unseen for “a hefty



WEALTH IN LHOSK

Lhosk, the center of commerce for the Dreamlands, dreams deeply of capital, economy, and trade. One might wander penniless elsewhere in the Dreamlands and never worry for food and shelter. In Lhosk their lack is felt keenly.

The Dreamers might live in Lhosk for a long while and they are likely to trade for many things. Thus it might be amusing to gauge how richly or poorly they live.

This system is optional.



sum.” He offers the coffer that his attendants brought forth, filled with gold, gems and copper. This is a vast amount of wealth for most Lhoskians, but is *not* a fair trade for the Black Galley.

If the characters act offended or displeased in any way, Agat immediately opens the table to anything within his power. Clever characters can parlay this into homes, estates, ships, slaves and more, particularly with good Bargain rolls. The exact disposition remains up to the Keeper. If they simply take the coffer, they will have more immediate wealth than they need, but in fact they will have been hornswoggled.

THE FATE OF AGAT

The purchaser of the Black Galley—whether Agat or another merchant—soon meets a singular fate. The new owner discovers the horrors below deck on the Black Galley, but word of these monstrosities does not spread. Instead the merchant attempts to protect the new purchase from prying eyes. While struggling to formulate a plan to either offload the new purchase or get it out of town, he or she is set upon by the Men from Leng.

Using magic and subterfuge, the Men from Leng infiltrate the merchant’s house and kill all within. They strangle the merchant in his sleep, cutting out his tongue and eyes and severing his genitals. (Cost to see the results: 1/1D4 SAN.)

The Black Galley vanishes in the night, along with the dockmaster, who is later found floating drowned in the ocean. No one knows where it went. It has, in fact, been sailed out of port back to Sarkomand by the Men from Leng.

This shake-up will be spoken of in hushed tones around Lhosk. A Dreamer who makes a Persuade roll trying to learn more can catch the undercurrent: This was done by the ill-formed priests of the Ebony Temple.

SHOPS OF INTEREST

Lhosk is covered in shops. From the ocean to the inland fringes of the city, each street has at least one small shop, usually with a small wooden sign in front proclaiming its trade. (Some are known only to locals and are found in the oddest places.) Two in particular will be recommended as significant establishments well known in town: Bal-lud's Outfitters and Mortimer's Sundry Potions and Chemicals.

MORTIMER'S SUNDRY POTIONS AND CHEMICALS

Stephan Mortimer was once a resident of Earth, but since some-time in the early 17th century he has been in the Dreamlands, continuing the work he began in Florence many, many years before. Like Nicolas Flamel, Mortimer pursued the Philosopher's Stone, the key to the transmutation of lead into gold and the immortality to be found in that alchemical transmutation. In these studies he found a gateway to the world of dreams.

Since his permanent transference to the Dreamlands, Mortimer has enjoyed unnaturally long life due to the secrets, spells and chemicals he has uncovered in his searches.

Mortimer collects, mixes and sells alchemical concoctions. He is well known as a knowledgeable and honest trader. His reputation is above question and even the bosses of the Red Bazaar look to him for answers concerning crimes of a magical nature.

Mortimer appears to be a short, thick-waisted, dire young man. The only indications of his age are his protruding bushy eyebrows and yellowed teeth. Upon closer inspection, his skin appears worn and lizard-like. It seems to go through patterns over the course of a month, looking worse one day, worse still the next, until suddenly appearing perfect and pink, like that of a newborn baby. His eyes are a pearlescent blue which at first appears beautiful, but later seems reptilian and unnatural. He never blinks.

He is always clothed in voluminous robes which obscure his body

WEALTH LEVELS

The Credit Rating skill reflects financial savvy in the waking world. In Lhosk, the Dreamers have a Wealth rating that broadly reflects their resources: Poor, Comfortable, Wealthy, or Rich.

POOR: The Dreamers are barely scraping by. They rest in the open elements or in borrowed hovels. They never have quite enough to eat. If they want anything useful or new they must steal it.

COMFORTABLE: The Dreamers have someplace warm and quiet to live. They have food and clothing. They might even have a servant or two to help with menial chores. Anything exotic or especially valuable is beyond them, but they don't need to worry about the essentials.

WEALTHY: The Dreamers have a life of luxury and plenty. They have enough to throw parties and entertain, and to buy or trade for just about anything they need. They have servants in plenty and a fine, big mansion or a series of smaller but equally fine houses.

RICH: The Dreamers are among the rarefied elite of Lhosk. They live in comfort and splendor that few can even imagine. Princes, diplomats and the highest councilors curry their attention and favor.

INITIAL WEALTH

How wealthy are the Dreamers? It depends on what they brought when they arrived at Lhosk and what they did with it. They can trade treasures to live well.

Arrive with nothing but their clothes, weapons, armor, and perhaps a camel or two—*POOR*

Arrive with a caravan of trade goods and gifts from Inquanok and begin trading it for profit—*COMFORTABLE*

Arrive in a Black Galley and refuse to part with it—*POOR*

Arrive in a Black Galley and sell it cheap—*WEALTHY*

Arrive in a Black Galley and sell it at a high price—*RICH*

Sell a Black Galley after damaging the docks on arrival—*one wealth rank lower*

If the Dreamers damage the docks on arrival in a Black Galley and refuse to sell the galley to pay for it, they're not only Poor, they also owe a massive amount to cover the repairs. If they can't sell a treasure to cover it—see page 155—they face imprisonment or enslavement. We'll leave the details of that difficulty to the Keeper.

except from the wrists down and neck up. Mortimer is very protective of this concealment and reacts violently to anyone attempting to remove it. Very occasionally (noticed with a Spot Hidden roll) the robes seem to move around the midsection in an unnatural way. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

Mortimer was born in Vienna but spent much of his life on Earth in Florence, studying mysticism, magic and the occult and hiding from agents of the Catholic church. Since his escape to the land of dreams his life has become a frenzy of search, discovery and experimentation. He has only recently settled down, nearly 300 years later.

For the last hundred or so years, Mortimer has made his home in Lhosk due to its convenient location and access to various trade routes. In that time he has cemented a relationship with the town, becoming known as one of the foremost authorities in magic. Everyone knows him, and he has an encyclopedic knowledge of people, places and relationships in Lhosk.

STEPHAN MORTIMER

Married to His Darling; age unknown

STR 22	CON 19	SIZ 9	INT 17	POW 18
DEX 19	APP 9	EDU 22	SAN 33	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 22%, Alchemy 81%, Astronomy 58%, Bargain 90%, Biology 14%, Chemistry 77%, Climb 99%, Dodge 45%, Fast Talk 44%, Jump 51%, Law 41%, Medicine 23%, Occult 86%, Persuade 90%, Pharmacy 51%. *Languages:* German (Own) 50%, English 25%, Morga 75%, Pross 91%, Skand 90%, Talunen 90%.

Attacks: Punch 80%, damage 1D3+db

“Darling” biting and flailing 65%, damage 1D8

Spells: Bloat, Cascades of Florin, Deflection, Halt of Eanora, Spiral of Suth, Sundering Hurler, Wither Limb.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D6 to see “Darling”



MORTIMER'S DARLING

Mortimer is connected permanently to an other-worldly entity he calls “Darling,” concealed beneath his robes. This creature looks like a horrific hybrid between octopus, lamprey and bird. It is wrapped around his midsection and connected to his intestinal tract, a hitchhiker that attached itself during one of Mortimer’s extra-dimensional travels. Mortimer found that it granted him immortality and preternatural strength. Soon he ceased attempting to disconnect it.

With “Darling” attached, Mortimer does not eat or excrete. He does not age and he heals 1D6 HP per round until dead. Darling also makes Mortimer much, much stronger than he appears. If Mortimer dies, so does Darling, and vice versa. For this reason only one set of stats is given for the hybrid creature Mortimer has become.

But there is a price. Every month, Mortimer must inject a human host with Darling’s offspring, “his babies.” Failing to do so wears his body down as the stress of supporting multiple creatures eats away at it. He has always succeeded in spreading his seed when the time came, usually drugging a sailor in an ale house, performing the ritual and then releasing him in a stupor on the docks the next day.

Mortimer is clever, long-lived and eager to maintain his status in Lhosk. He will do nothing to expose his secret to the Dreamers. If his secret is exposed, he will kill to protect it.

UNIQUE TREASURES

The Dreamers may have gathered a number of unique treasures in their journeys. Each is rated in value—*Modest*, *Impressive*, or *Astonishing*.

An Astonishing treasure generally trades for five or six Impressive treasures; an Impressive treasure generally trades for five or six Modest treasures.

STANDARDS OF LIVING

Selling a treasure allows the Dreamers to live at a certain level of wealth and comfort for a while. If they are already at that level or greater, selling the treasure does not improve it further.

MODEST TREASURE:
Comfortable for a month

IMPRESSIVE TREASURE:
Wealthy for a month or
Comfortable for six months

ASTONISHING TREASURE:
Rich for a month, Wealthy
for six months, or
Comfortable for three years

If the Dreamers pay for damage to the docks, it requires the equivalent of one Astonishing treasure with a Bargain roll, two if the Bargain roll fails, three if the Bargain roll is a 96-00, or one Impressive treasure if the Bargain roll is a special success.

BUYING A TREASURE

The Dreamers can attempt to buy treasures in Lhosk rather than trading treasure for treasure. This always takes a Bargain roll. If that fails, the seller changes his or her mind for whatever reason and refuses to sell. If it succeeds, the Dreamers' standard of living suffers for a while.

MODEST: Drop from Comfortable to Poor for one month; no "cost" beyond the Bargain roll for Wealthy or Rich Dreamers.

IMPRESSIVE: Drop from Wealthy to Comfortable for one month, or from Comfortable to Poor for six months; no "cost" beyond the Bargain roll for Rich Dreamers.

ASTONISHING: Drop from Rich to Wealthy for one month; from Wealthy to Comfortable for six months; or from Comfortable to Poor permanently.

WHAT MORTIMER KNOWS

Clever Dreamers will search out the drug which brought them to the Dreamlands, *bywandine*. Such inquiries in Lhosk bring them to Mortimer. Mortimer has heard of the drug *bywandine* before, and recalls hearing of its mixture and creation in both the land of dreams and on Earth in Leng. It is a specially mixed compound based on opium.

Mortimer also knows the Men in Leng are not what they seem, but he does not readily admit this until the players reveal such knowledge themselves. If this secret is shared, Mortimer explains the history of the Men from Leng, their secret (that they are not human at all, but simply masquerade as humans), and that they are building a dark temple in the city of Lhosk to their lord, the Father of Knives, Nyarlathotep. Mortimer also reveals that it is well known in town that Emen-Tha, the council member, has been dealing with the satyrs. If asked, Mortimer can direct the players to the Ebony Temple, but he warns against going there.

Mortimer can mix *bywandine* for an excessive cost (a chest of gold or gems, or a single blood gem—something of Astonishing value according to the guidelines on page 155), but those imbibing it find it does nothing to return them to Earth. Its effects here are different.

BYWANDINE'S EFFECTS IN THE DREAMLANDS

Bywandine is even more dangerous in the Dreamlands than on Earth, as it propels users further into the Dreamlands. Those imbibing it feel the world recede around them, as it did before their transportation to the land of Dreams. They notice a strange distortion in their sense of sight. Their peripheral vision slowly disappears, making anywhere they look seem like a dim tunnel that gets smaller and smaller. The effect is much like slowly falling down a well.

The tunnel closes suddenly, shutting out all sight and leaving the Dreamers in the void, lost in empty space. With the euphorics of the drug at work, the fall feels delightful, leaving them giddy. Then as suddenly as it disappeared, the world returns.

THE “DREAM WITHIN A DREAM”

Suddenly each Dreamer is awakened by falling onto a rough stone floor. Each is alone on a giant stone balustrade of some enormous castle. (Each character who smokes *bywandine* has the same experience, but separately.) Above, the huge, squawking shape of an enormous, hideous, birdlike thing whirls away. Those who have seen a Shantak before recognize it; those who have not lose 0/1D8 SAN.

The castle is so vast, so huge, it dwarfs the largest amphitheaters ever seen on Earth. The night sky stretches out from the huge stones as far up, away, and down as the eye can see. Inside, torches more than ten feet tall light the passages, and the air is rich with the smells of palm oil, rosemary and ginger.

Wandering the halls the Dreamer sees bizarre sights. Incredible architecture seems to shift and change as it is looked at. (Cost: 0/1D4 SAN.) Statues of huge, perfectly formed humans loom: men and women with sharp features and long earlobes hung with loose fitting robes, each holding a twin-pronged golden spear. Pools of golden liquid bubble, smelling more delicious than can be imagined and tasting even better; drinking the liquid immediately restores all HP in both this dreaming body and the higher dreaming body.

After a time, when it seems sure that no one else is in the castle, a voice stops the Dreamer in his or her tracks. The voice is dark and rich and full of humor. It belongs to an ebony-skinned giant of perfect proportions, garbed in the dress of ancient Egypt, who seems to step out of nowhere or from just out of the Dreamer's glance:

“And so, you traveller in two worlds, you have found yourself before me, the first traveller and last. What brings you to the abode of the gods?”

He bids the Dreamer speak. He answers questions as follows:

1) WHO ARE YOU?

He claims he is no one of consequence. If pushed, he says he is merely a messenger for the residents of this magnificent palace. If further pushed, he claims that the Dreamer already knows who he is, whether they wish to admit it or not. “Your journey is the result of my identity.” He will say no more.

TREASURES AND THEIR VALUE

The Dreamers might have brought these treasures all the way from Sarkomand.

ONE BLOOD GEM (PAGE 39): Astonishing.

SCROLL OF ENDLESS RHYME (PAGE 38): Modest.

SWORD OF KAMAS·THA (PAGE 40): Modest in its own right; Impressive if sold to someone who knows to give it to the family for a reward.

ENCHANTED SABER (PAGE 41): Impressive.

ASTROLABE (PAGE 41): Modest; if its curse comes out the buyer will seek revenge.

SILVER CHALICE (PAGE 41): Impressive.

MOON·BEAST SPEAR (PAGE 42): Modest.

MOON·BEAST CHART (PAGE 42): Impressive.

BOX OF KEIM (PAGE 43): Impressive if no applications have been used; Modest otherwise.

COINS OF THE REALMS

Do your players thrive on knowing how many coins they spend and what kind? Here's a rough guide to value.

A *copper piece* allows one Dreamer to live at Poor quality for one day without working.

A *silver piece* allows one Dreamer to live Poor for a month, Comfortable for a week, or Wealthy for a day without working.

A *gold piece* allows one Dreamer to live Poor for two years, Comfortable for six months, Wealthy for a month, or Rich for a week without working. A treasure of Impressive value might sell for one gold piece.

DREAMING UP RICHES

The Dreamers can attempt to change their lifestyle with Directed Dreaming. (See page 24.) Improving their standard of living by one rank for a month costs +1 Notch and calls for a POW x 5% roll. Improving their standard of living by two ranks for a month, or by one rank permanently, costs +5 Notches and calls for a POW x 2% roll.

2) WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

It is the Palace of the Old Gods. The creatures who made this world and many others dwelt here for many eons until their recent departure. It is not his place to say where they went, though he knows—he is after all a messenger.

3) HOW DO I RETURN TO EARTH?

The magic that brought the Dreamers to the land of Dreams was exceptional in its power and permanence. Return to Earth is possible, but only through the physical portals found in the wilds of the land of Dreams. There is, however, one other method that might take the Dreamer home. The speaker can take the Dreamer there. Is the Dreamer interested? With a Luck roll the Dreamer realizes the speaker is suppressing great mirth. (See “The Journey” on page 159.)

4) WHO ARE THE MEN FROM LENG?

Misguided zealots. Their worship of something greater than themselves is admirable, as distorted as it might be. The Dreamer should avoid them; they are of no more concern than that.

5) HOW DO I DEFEAT MR. LAO?

Lao exists in both worlds simultaneously. He has made associations with many forces in many worlds, but now he has trespassed on the territory of the gods. The death of his body in the waking world or in the world of Dreams will bring about the eventual destruction of the other. In the world of Dreams, Lao is called Sa'n Seith and is a satyr like the Men from Leng.

6) ARE YOU NYARLATHOTEP?

He will not admit this directly, even if asked outright. He says only that he has many names and many identities, for his purpose requires him to travel to many worlds, places, and times.

7) CAN YOU TAKE ME TO EARTH?

If the Dreamer makes a Luck roll he or she sees the being sup-

press mirth. Yes, he says, he can take the Dreamer back to Earth, but the journey is far. He holds out his hand. Those taking it are most likely doomed. (See “The Journey” for details.) Those who refuse notice a ripple of distaste move across the ebony features. *“It is no matter of mine,”* he says with a shrug.

THE JOURNEY

If the Dreamer is foolish enough to accept the Black Pharaoh’s offer of travel back to Earth, he or she is escorted to a nearby balustrade and suddenly thrust upon the back of a Shantak by a huge ebony hand. (Cost: 1/1D8 SAN.) The Shantak wheels away up into the night sky at incredible speed. The world vanishes below, leaving only the inky blackness of space; and yet the Dreamer can still breathe. A second huge Shantak flies alongside, and on its back is the Black Pharaoh, whose face is full of reverent joy.

“The price of such a journey is steep, my friend, and you are most brave. We shall find Earth, but not before we circle the court and drop a curtsy to my lord, the Demon Sultan, and his court. Then to Earth! If you can still recognize it as your home.”

The Shantak birds seem to accelerate through nebulae and galaxies, further and further into space until the character’s entire line of sight is a band of white cutting the expanse of the universe in two. In the center of this band is a boiling red and white flame which seems to dance and shake, something the size of a sun or a million suns.

The only method of escape at this point, if you think of it as escape, is to leap hopelessly into the void off the back of the Shantak. A Dreamer attempting this must make a Luck roll. With a roll of 01-10 the Dreamer wakes suddenly in the Dreamlands where he or she took the *bywandine*, panting but otherwise unharmed. The Dreamer’s last coherent sight was the face of the Black Pharaoh grinning from the back of the Shantak. Then, nothing.

A Dreamer who fails the Luck roll after leaping from the Shantak plummets into the void, lost forever.

A Dreamer who remains on the back of the Shantak soon comes to the court of Azathoth, the Demon Sultan, a vast bubbling mass of energy at the center of the universe, about which everything spins.

THE FINAL PERIL

“There were, in such voyages, incalculable local dangers; as well as that shocking final peril which gibbers unmentionably outside the ordered universe, where no dreams reach; that last amorphous blight of nethermost confusion which blasphemes and bubbles at the centre of all infinity—the boundless daemon sultan Azathoth, whose name no lips dare speak aloud, and who gnaws hungrily in inconceivable, unlighted chambers beyond time amidst the muffled, maddening beating of vile drums and the thin, monotonous whine of accursed flutes; to which detestable pounding and piping dance slowly, awkwardly, and absurdly the gigantic Ultimate gods, the blind, voiceless, tenebrous, mindless Other gods whose soul and messenger is the crawling chaos Nyarlathotep.”

H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

BUYING FROM BALLUD'S

Ballud's is laden with weapons, armor and travel equipment. If the Dreamers are known to be associated with the Black Galley, Ballud sells to them personally. She attempts to upsell them to the best and most beautiful equipment, armor and weapons in exchange for treasures from the Black Galley.

Clever Dreamers who can manage a Bargain or a group Luck roll find their entire party outfitted with everything they need for something as simple as one of the moon-beast charts or a few of the double-pronged spears of the Men from Leng (i.e., something of Impressive value for the whole party, or something of Modest value to equip one Dreamer; see page 155).

Horrific beings of inconceivable size dance and flail with hundreds of limbs and play a dirge through enormous alien pipes. The music, the motion, the vastness and the ultimate, essential, fundamental reality of the situation are terrifying beyond all belief. Cost: 1D10/1D100 SAN.

WAKING

Waking is sudden. Those who dodge the Black Pharaoh's advances, or who still have SAN after encountering Azathoth, wake suddenly in the Dreamlands where they imbibed the *bywandine*. Those who leap into the void or go permanently mad in Azathoth's court are gone forever, leaving only an empty pile of clothes behind.

BALLUD'S OUTFITTERS

Located just off the first plaza in the city, near the docks, Ballud's Outfitters is known far and wide. Once it was a few houses and small buildings. Now it is a walled city block with two large buildings and walled-off sections, each containing a different speciality of goods—livestock, plants, trade goods and more.

Its owner is a slight woman named Ballud, who is well known as a fair trader with great wealth in coin and gems. Every sort of trade good can be bought from Ballud or one of her twenty employees. The facility is packed from dawn until dusk with customers eager to trade goods from recently landed ships or to stock up on provisions.

Ballud's is the largest trade area in town outside the Red Bazaar, and is almost seen as a rival to the bazaar itself. It maintains an uneasy truce with the bazaar by paying a heavy tariff on trades, enforced by a detachment of city guards who watch over transactions. Still, nearly monthly cries for its dissolution are common.

Ballud sometimes extends favors to those who might be of some advantage in the future. The moment she learns the Dreamers are from a Black Galley, she hounds them about it relentlessly: where they obtained it, what was inside it, whether it is for sale, and more.

Ballud is a terrible enemy to have. Asking anyone reveals that she holds grudges fiercely. If the Dreamers fail to keep even an implied

agreement, she contacts Emen-Tha, well known as an associate of the turbaned men from abroad. She informs him of everything she knows of the Dreamers and might even help draw them into a trap.

BALLUD OF TREI

Full of Bargains—and Hatred If Wronged, age 50

STR 9 CON 4 SIZ 9 INT 17 POW 15
DEX 10 APP 10 EDU 19 SAN 85 HP 7

Damage Bonus: None

Skills: Accounting 71%, Art 25%, Bargain 93%, Conceal 33%, Fast Talk 42%, Law 20%, Persuade 45%, Spot Hidden 51%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 95%, English 44%.

Attacks: None.

Ballud is a tiny woman, built like a bird, with frailness that implies she has never done work in her life. Her white hair is pulled back into complex interwoven patterns and held in place by an opulent pin, usually made in some type of fish. Her clothes are not of Lhoski-an style. Instead she wears clothing like an out-of-town worker, short-kneed trousers and a heavy cotton shirt. Her eyes are clear and clever.

Ballud was born in a small trade town called Trei, one of the dozens spread out past Lhosk on the Cerenarian Sea. She was drawn early to the big city. Her knack with numbers and ability to write, a gift from a grandfather who was a book scribe, led her to a job in a warehouse on the docks. From there, her ascension was only a matter of time.

Thirty years later she owns the largest mercantile in Lhosk. Her establishment is even said to be in direct competition with the Red Bazaar itself—though the relationship is much more complex than that.

Ballud is known for her up-front trading style, her friendly demeanor on the streets, and a black temper which comes out when she is wronged in any matter involving money.

Ballud is eager to find all she can of the Dreamers, these strangers from the Black Galley (if the characters did indeed arrive that way).

MAPS

Clever Dreamers might seek maps to plot their future course through the dangerous Dreamlands. Ballud possesses a collection of maps that are renowned throughout the civilized world. In one of the buildings a dusty room holds many shelves laden with ship's logs, parchment maps, charts and more.

Ballud handles the buying and selling of such things herself, as many of the maps are hundreds of years old and are extremely valuable. One map she says might be of particular interest to the Dreamers—a map which specifically shows the exits from the Dreamlands to the waking world. If the Dreamers seek such a map without Ballud's help, they need a group Luck roll to find it.

To buy that map, a Dreamer must make a Bargain roll when facing Ballud. Its cost is a trade of Astonishing value if the Bargain roll fails. (The blood rubies of the satyrs are well known to be associated with the Black Galleys. Ballud wants one.) If Bargain succeeds, Ballud parts with the map for three treasures of Impressive value instead. (See page 155.)

She plies her trade to unlock secrets or trade items from those who come from the Black Ships. The cost of a Black Galley itself, she confesses, is far beyond her means; instead she focuses on items such as blood gems, weaponry, Keim or anything else “alien.”

If the Dreamers make the mistake of wronging her, they will find her a bitter, clever and resourceful enemy who will do her best to make sure they consistently land flat-footed in the port of Lhosk.

ROOM AND BOARD

Many “hospitality houses” exist in Lhosk. The largest, “The Eye of the Needle” can comfortably house over fifty people. The smallest, “The Sow’s Ear,” can host no more than three at a time.

Various other inns are home to actors, musicians and entertainers, and each maintains a small staff that comes and goes, paying its way through performances.

Many private citizens of Lhosk make ends meet by renting out individual rooms to travelers. This service usually includes a single meal and a walking tour of the city nearby. These houses are very selective of their clientele, however. Lhoskians are an extremely private people who dislike intrusions into their personal lives. A list of available homes can be found at the Council Spire in the Red Bazaar.

THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE

The Eye of the Needle is the port’s premiere hospitality house. It is a sprawling building of three stories and more than eighty rooms, constructed of cheap cement, wood beams and love. It is clear that the building has stood for some time, and it leans and sprawls like the drunken sailors who often call it home. The doorways are uneven, the roofs sag, and windows hang at strange angles, but the overall feeling is of a well-tended home. The many people who occupy it love it as if it was indeed their own home.

The owner is a man named Bestul, known as Blind Bestul due to his ailment. His face is covered from the nose upwards with a cloth to conceal the horrific burns that cost Bestul his sight many years ago in

a shipboard fire.

It is a well-known story how Bestul landed in port with his injury, but with the help of an odd associate bought the building that would become The Eye of the Needle. He bought it with a single, huge, blood-red gem.

Bestul has been an old man for as long as any in the area have known him. His cousins, aunts, uncles and their children live in the basement of the Eye of the Needle and run the building for Bestul, their patriarch.

Bestul is encyclopedic in his knowledge of voices. And once a person defaults on a bill, equally encyclopedic in marking him or her for a thief. He is gruff and unforgiving, but he holds a soft spot for those down on their luck in port. He is known to give soup and a kind ear to those that turn up in port without a copper to their name.

The Trade Family Tha is well known to Bestul, and their word is more than enough to secure permanent, unquestioned residency at the Eye of the Needle.

Bestul is a frail old man with short, white hair. A cloth wrapping conceals an obvious deformity covering the top half of his face. Beneath the cloth are a series of long-healed third-degree burns. His ruined eyes are completely blind.

Bestul was a native of Celephais and a sailor for many years before his luck took a turn for the worse and he was confronted by the evil of the Men from Leng. What happened to him is a secret that he holds dear.

"BLIND" BESTUL

Survivor of Many Horrors, age 66

STR 4 CON 7 SIZ 12 INT 17 POW 5
DEX 15 APP 4 EDU 21 SAN 25 HP 10

Damage Bonus: -1D4

Skills: Bargain 95%, Cthulhu Mythos 4%, Fast Talk 95%, Persuade 30%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 95%, English 34%, Oeuth 3%, Skand 55%.

Attacks: None.



BESTUL'S SECRET

Bestul is an escapee from the Men from Leng like the player characters. Sailing from Celephais many years ago, his ship the *Wild Rose* was set upon by a Black Galley, attacked and boarded in the dead of night. As the Men from Leng boiled over the decks with their magical weaponry, Bestul's crew faltered. Clever and desperate, Bestul smashed casks of potent spirits and sent them rolling across the deck of the *Wild Rose* and onto the deck of the Black Galley. By smashing a lantern on deck he set both ships ablaze.

Bestul charged onto the Black Galley with sword in hand, but was struck by falling, burning timbers from his own ship. He spilled down the staircase of the Black Galley into the darkness below, unconscious, burned and blinded. When he woke, he was alone except for the rowing horrors below on the otherwise untouched Black Galley. The Men from Leng and his crew alike had died in the skirmish, and the *Wild Rose* had sunk. Blind and terrified, Bestul spent two weeks exploring his new ship and attempting to find port.

Sheer luck brought Bestul to the southern shore of the Cerenarian Sea, not far from Ilek-Vad. The Black Galley struck and beached, and by some miracle was not overturned and sunk. Instead Bestul found himself wandering an empty tract of land, surrounded by wilderness.

By then, the resourceful captain had recovered some of his senses, and in his weeks of exploration on the ship had discovered some of the weaponry, charts and magic of the moon-beasts. He had also found two gems of inordinate size, some horrible substance the beast men called food, and some fresh water.

Once again, luck shined on him. Bestul came upon a stranger on the beach, a traveler from the far west, a white-eyed and golden-skinned creature, tall and thin, named Tal. Tal sought only to help other beings. The two struck up a wary friendship, and with Tal's assistance Bestul dodged attempts by the Men from Leng to recapture or kill him. Tal encouraged Bestul to divest himself of the treasures found on the ship, before they corrupted him. But Bestul, feeling this was his only prize recovered from the ruins of his life, resisted. Tal, very wise, refused to force the issue. For a long time,

Tal and Bestul travelled the Dreamlands, with Tal teaching Bestul some of the secrets of peace and happiness from his own realm.

In time, Bestul's treasures from the Black Galley led the Men from Leng to him, and in Celephais Tal perished defending him from them. Bestul divested himself of all the items he found on the ship. Removing them from his life brought happiness and peace just as Tal had said. In Lhosk, Bestul purchased the Eye of the Needle (and much more) with his last possession from the raid, a single, flawed but giant ruby.

Dreamers sharing their true story of escape from Sarkomand and the Men from Leng find an ally in Bestul. He has many contacts in Lhosk and occasionally sits on the council. He knows and despises Emen-Tha and fears for the life of Maras-Tha. He is well aware that the Men from Leng are the residents of the Ebony Temple, and knows that Emen-Tha is their agent. If the Dreamers make a group Luck roll, Bestul shares his own story with them in turn and imparts a token given to him by Tal—the Mark of Ados.

THE MEN FROM LENG IN LHOSK

Since their secret deal was struck with Emen-Tha and their temple was completed, the strange men who pilot the Black Galleys have been a far more common sight in Lhosk. On any large street there is a chance of spying at least one of them hurrying about. Locals seem uneasy with their presence but attempt to ignore them.

Once, the black sailors (as the locals call them) were a rarity and were hesitant to be seen in public during the day, but now they wander with impunity, and even seem to have claimed a neighborhood in the religious district around their Ebony Temple.

Their coin is good and their dealings seem to be limited to money changing hands, but locals have little good to say about them.

The moment the characters land in Lhosk in a Black Galley, or become known to Emen-Tha, they become the target of the Men from Leng.

THE MARK OF ADOS

This small necklace is made of a perfectly flowing copper metal. The chain has no links, yet moves as if it does. A single small object hangs from it, difficult to see. Anyone focusing on it find himself or herself drifting in fascination, losing minutes in an attempt to puzzle out the intricacies of the emblem; this costs 0/1 SAN.

If used for meditation, the Mark allows the wearer to enter a trance state easily. It also aids in spell casting, granting an additional 1D20 Magic Points, once per week, with a successful POW x 1% roll.

When confronted with the direct presence of evil (it's up to the Keeper what counts as "evil"), the Mark vibrates on the neck of the wearer, shaking more and more as the evil approaches. Likewise, the Mark seems to physically grow as evil approaches, but never seems to weigh more. Evil creatures confronted with the Mark must roll POW x 2% roll or cover their eyes, losing a round of action. Beyond that it does not affect such beings.

The Dreamers would be best served to avoid the Men from Leng, but players often attempt crazy things. This section is a contingency to deal with oddities. For example, Dreamers might approach the Men from Leng to speak with them in the streets, or even worse, walk straight up to the Ebony Temple and knock on the door.

Or, more clever players might attempt to hit the Men from Leng where it hurts, revealing to the city what they truly are.

CONVERSING WITH THE MEN FROM LENG

Dreamers that approach Men from Leng on the streets of Lhosk during the day find themselves face to face with absolute hatred. The Men bark commands in their language (any who speaks Oeuth understand they are shouting orders to “stay back”) and slowly become more and more agitated until they beat a hasty retreat. During the day and in the open, they will not risk an attack unless directly assaulted.

APPROACHING THE TEMPLE

Dreamers foolish enough to approach the Ebony Temple during the day must make a group Luck roll. On a success, a huge, drunk man hails them as “friends!” and, clutching them, does his best to turn them from their destination. Those who struggle find themselves in a fight that causes no damage. The man playfully slaps back punches, and even manages to disarm those who use greater force. Those who make a Spot Hidden roll notice a tattoo of a stylized eye on the man’s inner wrist.

Those who turn with him find warnings whispered in a sober voice in between drunken shouts of revelry. Once the group is clear of the area he warns that the temple is no place for a *human* to be found. The man refuses to identify himself. After touching his wrist to his forehead, runs off into the crowd.

If the Dreamers find themselves at the block-like structure after all, see “The Ebony Temple” on page 175.

REVEALING THE MEN FROM LENG

The most compelling option might be the hardest for the players to arrive at: exposing the secret of the Men from Leng. The Men from Leng travel and trade in Lhosk only because their disguise allows them to do so. All locals (except the few involved in the conspiracy) believe the Lengians to be odd men from some distant land, not inhuman satyrs that worship Nyarlathotep. The Ebony Temple and the Black Galley traders operate within this secret. Without it, their plans in the port city would completely unravel.

CAPTURING A SATYR

Capturing a lone Man from Leng is a difficult prospect, as they almost always travel in packs of at least three. The Dreamers must shadow the Men from Leng for 1D8 hours and make TWO group Luck rolls before one of the Men breaks off from the others. Every hour allows the Men from Leng a single Spot Hidden roll of 35% to spot them, unless EVERY Dreamer in pursuit succeeds at a Hide roll. If the spies are noticed the Men from Leng retreat again.

Attacking a lone Man from Leng must be handled delicately. With any sign of conflict a still-conscious Man from Leng will shriek an inhuman warning, bringing 1D3+1 other Men from Leng running to his aid. If the characters continue to fight and not flee, the satyrs engage in open combat in the streets.

Any strike that reduces the Man from Leng to 2 Hit Points or fewer renders him unconscious. In addition, any Grapple attack that is aimed specifically at silencing the target (at half chance) manages to cover the creature's mouth before it can shout for help.

A captured Man from Leng will of course burden the player characters. Unless they have a cart, carrying him requires a Strength roll against the captive's Size on the Resistance Table. For every five minutes that they are in the open with the unconscious or restrained Man from Leng, the Dreamers must make a group Luck roll. Failure indicates the group is approached by 1D6+1 city guards who want



to know what is going on. They insist on setting the abductee free unless a Dreamer succeeds at both a Fast Talk roll to get them to listen and a Persuade roll to convince them of the need for the capture. If the Dreamers reveal the truth of the satyr, see “Revealing the Men from Leng to the City Guard,” page 169.

BURNING A SATYR

This is one of the simplest methods to reveal the horrors beneath the robes of the Men from Leng. Throwing a lantern, lamp or torch at one of the satyrs with a successful Throw roll is all that is needed.

When struck, the creature ignites, going into a frenzy of pain and fear, suffering 1D8 Hit Points damage per turn until dead or extinguished. If the creature is allowed to burn until dead, the group must make a Luck roll. If this fails, the corpse is burned to a crisp—so much that its “deformities” are not recognizable. Otherwise the horrific proportions of its body are clearly visible. The Men from Leng will not attempt to recover a corpse.

Satyrs merely injured and extinguished in this manner will be completely exhausted, unable to act or resist, and can be paraded nearly anywhere while they hiss and spit in their odd language. If the characters remain on the street, every ten minutes they must make a group Luck roll must be made. If the characters succeed, they encounter 1D6+1 city guards who want to question them. If they fail, they encounter 1D8+1 Men from Leng ready to do battle to free their compatriot or else follow the Dreamers while one of their number fetches 1D8+1 more.

THE GUARD OR THE PUBLIC?

Captured Men from Leng or their corpses become very valuable in Lhosk indeed. If the characters come into possession of a corpse, the Men from Leng attempt to sway the situation through politics (through Emen-Tha). If the group comes into possession of a live satyr, the Men from Leng pursue and attack as described earlier.

Dreamers can reveal the satyrs to the city guard or the public. Each offers a different risk.

REVEALING THE MEN FROM LENG TO THE CITY GUARD

Dreamers dragging a satyr (or a satyr corpse) to the city guard must make a group Luck roll. Those failing find themselves face-to-face with a guard loyal to Emen-Tha. Making an Idea or Psychology roll allows the character to notice the shift in the demeanor of the guard. Unless the Dreamers beat a hasty retreat the guard gathers 1D10 other guards loyal to Emen-Tha.

If the characters make the group Luck roll, they approach a city guard untouched by the corruption which Emen-Tha is spreading. Just such an individual is presented here.

TULARE · MAS

Honorable and Intelligent City Guard of the Red Council, age 34

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 17 INT 18 POW 10
DEX 12 APP 12 EDU 9 SAN 50 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Bargain 81%, Cthulhu Mythos 6%, Fast Talk 62%, Law 55%, Persuade 71%, Ride 44%, Sailing 30%, Spot Hidden 40%, Swim 50%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 90%, Cum'teha 20% English 75%, Skand 40%, Pross 33%.

Attacks: Saber 41%, damage 1D8+1+db

Fighting knife 55%, damage 1D4+2+db

Tulare-Mas is a big, widely built man with a deep brow, rich brown-red hair and a nose that has been broken more than once. He is missing several teeth, something quite visible due to his propensity for smiling all the time. The heavy scars on his hands and all over his body make it clear that he has been in many brawls and that he knows his way around a sword. Still, he manages to project a general air of good will, and his eyes are filled with concern for those in need.

Tulare-Mas was born to Yavan-Mas, a trader who once ran a fishmongery at the Red Bazaar. Tulare grew up on the docks, and by his sixteenth birthday was well known as a hooligan with a promising future in crime. If not for Kamas-Tha, his career in crime might have been quite prolific. Instead, brought before the council for some petty



offense, Tulare was dressed down by Kamas-Tha—humiliated, really. Finally his mother Yavan was brought in, and once more Tulare was humiliated as his mother wept. Kamas ended his speech explaining that people like Tulare were a drain on society and that they fed on the income of people like his own mother.

Tulare swore to never disappoint his mother again. Soon after, he joined the city guard as an apprentice and rose through the ranks rapidly. Today he is a captain and oversees the docks. Those who know the area know to stay out of his way. At the docks, Tulare-Mas is the undisputed law.

Tulare-Mas is certain that Kamas-Tha was “removed” by his crooked brother, Emen-Tha. Tulare has great insights into Emen-Tha’s illegal endeavors in Lhosk, and a great and lasting respect for Kamas-Tha, the man who changed his life for the better. He has no proof but has been collecting information on Emen-Tha’s relationship to the strange men from the Black Galleys.

REVEALING THE MEN FROM LENG TO THE PUBLIC

Simply revealing the corpse or a still-living but injured Man from Leng to the public of Lhosk is dangerous. There is already a deep undercurrent of distrust surrounding the odd men who trade in the Black Galleys, and few have overlooked the fact that Emen-Tha has allied himself with their powerful interests (or that such an alliance has made it possible for them to construct their odd temple in the now-ruined religious quarter).

Revealing the inhuman nature of a Man from Leng, living or not, in public unleashes hell on the city. Riots sparked by fear and fury kill hundreds if not thousands in fire and battles with the city guard. The Keeper should warn the Dreamers that tensions in the city mean the proposition carries risks of irreversible harm.

Once it begins, the city will begin to rip itself to pieces in a general revolt that takes 1D6+2 days to put down. During this time, mobs roam the streets, as will cadres of the city guard, attacking anyone they encounter as “looters”.

It all begins with an angry mob surrounding the Dreamers and the Man from Leng as the creature is revealed. Indignant shouts begin,

then fights. First the crowd turns on the city guards that show up to suppress the mob, and then they turn on one another. If the Man from Leng was alive during the revelation it will soon be killed as the crowd violently pushes past the player characters and seizes the beast, who is then beaten, burned, doused in hot pitch and assaulted from all sides. Within minutes the creature is dead, and then the body becomes a trophy, carried on a gaff by three men and paraded through the streets with shouts of “Those of the Black Galleys are *monsters!*” If the revelation is of a corpse, the crowd sweeps it up in a similar manner and marches it about as their banner. “*Emen-Tha serves the monsters!*” they cry.

Dreamers foolish enough to interject themselves between the crowd and the beast find themselves the targets of the crowd’s ire. Each turn of confused confrontation causes 1D4-1 HP damage on a successful Luck roll, or 1D8+1 on a failed Luck roll. Returning such an attack is useless as there are dozens of targets. There is no way to protect oneself without disengaging from the crowd entirely. Those that flee do so easily. They are not the focus of the hatred.

This violence spreads and soon escalates to fires, looting and anarchy. Player characters wandering the streets see the beaten and



burned corpses of Men from Leng caught in the open and killed by mobs. People run about armed with blunt weapons carrying looted items. Cadres of city guards attack any they find wandering the streets. Buildings are reduced to ashes. An hour after the inciting event, Lhosk is lost in complete madness.

A large group of the city guards loyal to Emen-Tha protect the Tha estate, leaving the city to burn, while other powerful interests in the city such as Bestul and Ballud gather mobs of their own to resist the crowd's assault. These areas are impenetrable, with well-armed groups of guards using bows and spears to kill anyone who comes within forty feet. (Those who dare to approach suffer 1D10+2 HP damage.)

The worst conflict occurs at the Ebony Temple. Surrounded on all sides by hundreds of enraged natives of Lhosk, the Men from Leng struggle to hold them off and protect the holy site. A few cowardly satyrs attempt to use the tunnels to escape but find the city impassable for those of their kind. They are killed one-by-one by the mobs as they try to make it to the Black Galleys.

By the morning of the second day of conflict, the Ebony Temple has been coated in pitch and set aflame. As the smoke pours through the temple, down it, through the tunnels beneath it, and up again from a hundred hidden entrances throughout the neighborhood, the hidden tunnels are revealed. Individual satyrs, overcome with smoke and flame, stumble from the doors only to be cut down by spears, stones and arrows. Soon, a pile of alien bodies are stacked in the center of the square out front.

By the evening of the second day, the Ebony Temple is a gutted husk with nothing living left in it. All the Men from Leng have been expunged and killed, the statue to Nyarlathotep has been overturned and defiled, and the holy items scattered and destroyed.

Though the locals will not board the Black Galleys (superstition prevents them from doing so), they shoot with longbows anyone who pokes a head up from below deck, and then set about bombarding the ship with buckets of flaming pitch. These uneven, burning ships are cut free of their moorings and set to drift with dead crew dotting their deck.

Having caused so much death and sorrow costs each Dreamer 1/1D6 SAN. But in just a few actions, the characters have ruined Nyarlathotep's foothold in Lhosk.

AMBUSH, THREE DIFFERENT KINDS

Dreamers foolish enough to venture out after dark after any encounter with the Men from Leng find themselves shadowed by the inhuman beasts at all hours. The Men from Leng are skilled stalkers and work best at night. They are difficult to spot (the Sneak roll of the Man from Leng must fail and then a Spot Hidden roll must be made) and are capable of using magic to make great leaps, crossing the thin, winding streets via rooftops and leaping human-impassable walls.

The Lengians are incredibly evil and will do their best to lure the Dreamers into a dark alley where they can be ambushed, knocked unconscious, and dragged off to the Ebony Temple for sacrifice to their dark god. (See "The Ebony Temple" for the fate of such unfortunates.) They are not above taking hostages, using innocents, or luring victims through greed, lust or worse.

THE MONKEY

A monkey rushes out of an alleyway, snatches a small possession from a Dreamer, and flees back into the alley. Those making a Spot Hidden roll notice a thin, silver chain around the neck of the monkey that snakes back into the darkness.

Dreamers rushing into the alley after the monkey find themselves surrounded by eight Men from Leng who rapidly close in. Using bludgeons, the beasts attempt to beat all characters present into submission. They kill if necessary, but do their best to bring as many characters as possible back alive to the Ebony Temple.



THE YOUNG BOY

A young boy approaches the most susceptible-looking member of the party when he or she is apart from the group, and begs the Dreamer to follow. The boy is young, malnourished and small for his age; that he could be a threat should never enter into the player's mind. The boy claims to have knowledge of Earth, and insists that he can show the Dreamer a gateway back to the waking world and that he knows of a place where the character might buy "the most potent of opium".

The boy leads the Dreamer by the hand through the twisting maze of streets of Lhosk. If the Dreamer knows the location of the Ebony Temple he or she may make an Idea roll to realize they are not far from it. If the Dreamer fails two Idea rolls, he or she realizes the subterfuge only when the boy runs off in a courtyard on a street with boarded doors and windows. The boy disappears into one of the doors, which slams shut and audibly locks.

Eight Men from Leng close in from all directions, one holding a large sack hung with strong hasps and belts. They attempt to beat and subdue the Dreamer without killing him or her, if possible. The hogtied Dreamer is then dragged off to the Ebony Temple.

THE WHOREHOUSE

The Dreamers are accosted by a group of whores from the Brazen Fantail, a small whorehouse on the waterfront. Whores of both sexes engulf them in charm, compliments and advances. The whores insist that since the Dreamers appear to be such powerful traders, any services this one time are free of charge. They insist that they are eager to make a good "first impression."

Dreamers foolish enough to enter the Brazen Fantail find it a deathtrap filled with a dozen Men from Leng all eager to subdue the characters. Escaping the house requires surviving two combat rounds of attacks without being killed or restrained.

Those captured will be hogtied and gagged and rushed off to the Ebony Temple.

SAMPLE MEN FROM LENG

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	12	9	13	12	13	+1D4	11
#2	14	7	11	14	13	+1D4	9
#3	9	13	11	12	13	—	12
#4	18	5	13	10	11	+1D4	9
#5	14	11	11	11	11	+1D4	11
#6	13	10	10	10	10	—	10
#7	12	12	12	8	10	—	12
#8	8	11	12	10	9	—	12
#9	6	10	11	16	9	—	11
#10	12	10	14	11	9	+1D4	12
#11	5	6	14	4	8	—	10
#12	9	9	9	8	6	—	9

Skills In Common: Jump 65%, Listen 35%, Sneak 35%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track 49%. *Languages:* Oeuth (Own) 60%, English 12%, Talunen 30%.

Attacks: Bludgeon 51%, damage 1D4+db

Sword 40%, damage 1D8+1+db

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6–1 SAN

THE EBONY TEMPLE

The Ebony Temple is a huge, jutting, tooth-like structure made of otherworldly black rock without windows, breached only by a single door. It appeared after a brief period of frenzied construction by foreign work crews nearly a year before the Dreamers arrive in Lhosk. Built by the Men from Leng with the assistance of Emen-Tha, this temple to Nyarlathotep is avoided by all in Lhosk. No one in the town knows who or what is worshipped there, but various and convoluted rumors persist. Strange scents and sounds are often smelled and heard even blocks away.

Since its construction, the once-prosperous district around it has fallen into ruin, and its street has been slowly abandoned. The ugly, block-like church is now the only inhabited building on that street. It has more and more attracted unruly folk, and murders and disappearances have increased exponentially. The streets around the



temple are filled with seedy criminals, darkened drug dens and the glutted shops of slavers. Fights are common, as is the sight of unconscious or dead bodies in the street. Even the city watch seems to avoid it. (In fact, they have been bribed to do so by Emen-Tha, so the Men from Leng can operate with impunity).

Locals are wary and dislike talking of the Men from Leng and their machinations. In fact a group Luck roll must be made, or the questioners are reported to the Men from Leng by human agents.

Those managing to pry information out of locals learn (or confirm) only that it is simply called The Ebony Temple and is known to be frequented by the strange, slant-eyed, turbaned traders who ride in the Black Galleys. The Men from Leng stay in the temple when in town, never venturing out except to do business, tend to their ships, or execute their evil plans. Only thanks to the power of Emen-Tha did they obtain the permit to build the temple in the first place. That same power maintains the temple's security by glossing over incidents and complaints from the public before they reach the council. Now that the money has secured the isolation of the district from the city watch, fewer complaints than ever reach the council.

It is widely believed that no one from town worships there, only foreigners. But with a special success at Persuade or a Luck roll, the witness says Emen-Tha visits the temple; with an ordinary success it's clear the witness is hiding something important. Emen-Tha has been seen coming and going from the temple at odd hours, always with a bevy of guards. Thanks to rumors like this, he is held suspect in the disappearance of his brother.

SPYING ON THE TEMPLE

Dreamers who attempt to spy on the temple must use caution as many of the low-lives in the area are in the pay of the Men from Leng. Each day spent observing the temple requires a group Luck roll. A failure means the group has been noticed by one of the agents of the Men from Leng. Soon after, 1D8+1 satyrs are dispatched to ambush the group (see "Ambush, Three Different Kinds," page 173).

Few people are seen coming or going from the only apparent entrance to the temple. Occasionally, and usually at night, a few of

the Men from Leng can be seen entering the doors carrying bur-lap sacks filled with goods, but few seem to leave. If the Dreamers observe for more than a day and make an Idea roll, they determine that no one seems to leave.

THE TEMPLE EXTERIOR

The surface of the Ebony Temple is seemingly carved from blunt blocks of a cool, luminous, black stone shot with sparkles, eddies and waves of grey-white minerals. The rock is not readily identifiable with a Geology roll. The stones, though flowing and uneven, are fitted together so cleverly that it takes a Spot Hidden roll to find the seams. It seems to be a single enormous rock that was cut into even blocks, transported and then re-fit back together.

All Climb rolls to move up the surface of the rock are cut in half. Those managing to move to the top of the temple find a vaulted roof with no entrance or even smoke holes. Attempting to enter the temple anywhere except the door is fruitless (and, by necessity, loud), and will no doubt draw attention from guards in the interior.

THE DOOR AND THE MAIN CHAMBER

The huge wooden door to the temple is barred from the inside. Forcing it open means rolling combined STR against STR 60 on the Resistance Table, but no more than three Dreamers can press against it at a time. (Unless they bring a battering ram, perhaps, but that will draw a great deal of attention.) The door will not burn. Each attempt to move, open or affect the door calls for a group Luck roll. On a failure, 1D10 Men from Leng come to the door to see what the commotion is. On a success, the meddling goes unnoticed for the moment.

Knocking on the door with the ornate brass door knocker—it is shaped like the leering face of a satyr—brings the Men from Leng to the door instantly.

If the Dreamers attract the Men from Leng, it will no doubt escalate to combat quickly. Just as with an ambush, such a confrontation will most likely end with the characters overwhelmed and captured.

Listening at the door requires a group Luck roll or a Listen roll. On a success, the characters hear a rhythmic chanting from inside, as



well as distant screams. If the roll fails, nothing is heard.

Inside the doorway a corridor is guarded by a small group of Lengians.

A giant, solid iron crossbeam can be thrown easily across the door, due to the vast amount of terrible-smelling grease spread over it.

Past a blood-red velvet sash is the temple's main chamber. This huge, circular room, with an arching ceiling overhead, is built around a vast, bronze statue of Nyarlathotep in its monstrous form. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.) There are no seats in the room, only a weird radiating pattern of "positions" marked out in waves from the center, each showing what looks like a stylized pair of hooves set in tiles at fixed intervals. These positions show the locations for worshippers to stand; Men from Leng do not sit.

A Dreamer approaching the statue who makes a Luck or Spot Hidden roll notices a rush of air, as if from a passage underneath.

GAINING ACCESS BELOW

It is easy enough to learn that the statue covers an entrance that leads below ground, but gaining access to it is another thing entirely. The door below is hidden amidst the various swirls and curls of a horrific tentacle that wraps around the bronze statue of Nyarlathotep near the base of its body.

Those making an Idea roll can easily determine the approximate location of the entrance; only one portion of the statue seems bulky enough and is connected to the floor to allow passage below. On the base of the statue are three small finger-size holes. On a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll, a Dreamer realizes that their placement hints at a certain gesture associated with Nyarlathotep. If one makes that gesture and inserts the fingers in those holes, a mechanical door opens, revealing a winding stone staircase that leads downwards. A stinking, tepid breeze wafts up, rich with garbage and worse.

If no one can make this Cthulhu Mythos roll, let the characters attempt a halved Idea roll to recognize the same gesture in the hands of the horrific statue itself. Each failure has a 10% chance of drawing 1D10 Men from Leng from below due to the players making too much noise.

THE WARRENS BELOW THE TEMPLE

The stairs lead down to a snug series of claustrophobic warrens which stink of death and refuse. There are no light sources below the temple (the Men from Leng can see in the dark), and characters will be forced to find some method of illumination to move further than a few feet down the stairs. The tunnels split, branch and wrap around one another in looping patterns which soon feel much bigger than the temple itself. They occasionally open on to small lopsided and curved rooms, some choked with garbage such as ruined clothing, rotting food, and bones, and others coated in water that smells of human waste. Other areas are obviously under construction, and are piled with worked rock, pick axes and odd tools that seem ill-fitted for human hands.

The Men from Leng have dug thousands of yards of tunnels, some as long as a mile at a run, under the temple and beyond. The entire district is criss-crossed by them. Through these tunnels the Men from Leng leave the temple, kidnap victims for their sacrifices and generally sneak about. The exits to these tunnels are rotted, crudely made T-beam ladders that rise up to concealed exits, usually in some dead-end alleyway or abandoned building.

Maps of the trackless warrens of the Men from Leng are beyond the scope of this book. Instead of tracking the Dreamers' specific location on a map, the Keeper can describe their findings and encounters more or less at random, depending on their luck, care, and skill. Every so often, roll for a possible encounter with Men from Leng and roll for a location that the Dreamers have stumbled upon.

PACE

First, ask the Dreamers whether they are being slow and stealthy or are hurrying despite the noise. Either way they run across something new about every 50 yards in the tunnels, though measuring distance and time in this loathsome catacomb is a fool's errand.

If they are being stealthy, roll for a location and an encounter once every 2D6 minutes. If they encounter Men from Leng, they can attempt a group Sneak roll to conceal their light source and themselves and avoid the encounter.



THE EYE OF NODENS IN THE TEMPLE

Dreamers who possess the Eye of Nodens can operate much more effectively inside the temple. They feel more confident and capable in the temple and the tunnels beneath it. Opening the passageway below for a character bearing the Eye is as simple as touching the statue.

In the temple and tunnels they always attack first, in addition to whatever other powers they bring to bear using the Eye. If they are surprised by an enemy, the first attack on them is always ineffective. (All other rolls are handled normally.)

If they are hurrying, roll for a location and an encounter about once every minute. If the hurrying Dreamers are already being pursued by a band of Men from Leng, however, they can make a group DEX x 5 roll to elude them.

ENCOUNTERS

Each time there's a possible encounter, the Dreamers must make a group Luck roll. If it fails, they come across 1D4 Men from Leng in a chamber or intersection. Unless the Dreamers hide from them, these creatures immediately loose a gibbering, hooting alarm which echoes through the tunnels. From then on, the Dreamers are on the run. Whether they're hurrying or stealthy, they must make a group Luck roll every minute or encounter another 1D4 Men from Leng. (Men from Leng are the only encounters in the warrens. No other Dreamlands creatures survive here.)

LOCATIONS

At a new location, roll 1D6 to see what it is.

- 1) Prison pits (but only after the Dreamers have found at least five other locations; otherwise treat this as a roll of 2)
- 2) Chamber littered with refuse and debris
- 3) Chamber slick with waste
- 4) Chamber still under construction
- 5) Ladder up to an exit hidden in an alley or empty building
- 6) Steps up into the temple

SEARCHING

The Dreamers can attempt to find a particular location in the warrens—a specific exit into the city, the path to the prison pits, or perhaps the steps up into the temple—but it won't be easy. From wherever they happen to be, it will take 1D6 Navigation rolls to find their goal. Only one Dreamer can roll Navigation. The Keeper should keep the total number needed a secret, and the Keeper ought to make the Navigation rolls in secret, too. (If the Dreamers think to mark the tunnels from time to time with chalk or paint, they get

a +10% bonus to the Navigation rolls; but the Men from Leng may notice, so there's also a -10% penalty to group Luck rolls to avoid encounters.) If a Navigation roll succeeds, they follow the correct course. A special success counts as two successes. If it fails, they follow the wrong tunnels for a while and risk getting lost; add one to the number of successes needed. If it fumbles, add two. They must roll for locations and encounters with each Navigation attempt.

THE PRISON PITS

At the center of the warren is a single large room with a low ceiling. Its uneven stone floor is pocked by human-sized holes ten feet deep. Two Men from Leng always stand guard here, even if an alarm has sounded.

The holes contain prisoners waiting for execution during the rituals to Nyarlathotep. Most prisoners are malnourished, half-mad, and covered in their own filth, but a few are sane and are willing to fight if released. Fighting in the area requires a DEX x 5% roll for each failed attack roll. If the DEX roll fails the character tumbles into one of the unseen pits below, suffering 1D6 HP damage.

REPLACEMENTS FROM EARTH

The prison pits beneath the Ebony Temple contain thieves, reprobates, and several natives of waking Earth. The refugees from Earth wish to return there; every prisoner is desperate to escape the temple. They can become valuable members of the Dreamers' group and perhaps replace fallen comrades. See Appendix B for their names and attributes.

THE MEN FROM LENG AT THE TEMPLE

The Men from Leng who haunt the temple mostly come and go from the Black Galleys as they arrive in port. The temple is the one place in town they can behave normally, removing their robes and turbans, standing in the manner that is natural to them, and eating and drinking the horrible substances they find delectable.

Most spend their time below the temple in the warrens, preferring those claustrophobic, hunched environs to the open area above. They





speak in their own guttural, barking tongue and are as cruel and violent to one another as they are to their prisoners, of which there is always an ample supply.

Four of the satyrs are permanent residents of the temple, chosen due to their occult knowledge or high POW. These priests lead the rituals, tend to the prisoners, and organize the activities of the temple. Each priest is marked by a purple turban and a ceremonial dagger in the shape of the bloody tongue of Nyarlathotep.

THE RITUAL TO NYARLATHOTEP

The rituals to Nyarlathotep occur once a month on the full moon. All the Men from Leng, including the door guards and prison pit guards, as well as the crews of any Black Galley in port, are involved. The hunched men arrive in small groups over the period of a few hours before dark; noticing that something is going on from outside doesn't even require a Spot Hidden roll. By the time the moon rises, forty or more Men from Leng can be found inside, gathered around the statue.

A victim is pulled from the pits below, gagged and bound and dragged upstairs. The victim is tied to recessed pegs in front of the giant Nyarlathotep statue and the chanting begins, led by the priests. Usually this lasts six to eight hours, culminating in the disembowelment of the victim with hooked knives and then the handing out and eating of viscera by the assembled group.

On special occasions, the statue seems to move (cost: 1/1D4 SAN). If that happens the priests become more active, removing the still-living victim's eyes and taunting the victim from time to time with small wounds to draw out screams of pain and terror. (Cost to watch: 0/1 SAN.) On special occasions such torture lasts for days.

On extremely rare occasions, just as the victim dies, the statue speaks in a deep, booming voice. It seems to be in the native language of each who hears it. The statement has specific meaning to each who hears it, and seems to foretell the future. If the Dreamers somehow witness the end of such a ritual, they hear the voice intone: *THERE IS NO REST AT THE GATE*. (Cost: 1/1D4 SAN.)





THE TRADE FAMILY THA

This is one of the original trade families of Lhosk, responsible in ancient times for the formation of the council and the Red Bazaar. Before the modern era, the Tha family was composed mostly of sailing traders, who by necessity were quite adept in the arts of battle. These skills have never been lost; to the contrary, they have been more and more deeply engrained in each passing generation.

The Tha family is known for humility, however, and is a favorite of traders in the Bazaar. Each member is treated with the utmost respect due to their connections and their obsession with hard work and the art of sailing. Unlike many trade families they have never lost sight of the needs of the everyday man, a most valuable skill in politics.

The Tha house sits on the outside of town, on the water. It is a

sprawling place with over four dozen rooms and five small guest cottages. Over fifty people live there, including the immediate family, distant relations, the cleaning staff, and guards.

Since Emen-Tha took the Council seat things have changed drastically. The family is now talked of in hushed tones. It is thought by the general public that Kamas-Tha's disappearance was a bit too convenient for his rival Emen-Tha, and Emen's odd association with the Ebony Temple in town has not gone unnoticed.

ALLEGIANCES

Nearly three years ago, two Black Galleys boarded Kamas-Tha's ship shortly after its departure from Lhosk. His brother, Emen-Tha, had made a deal with Sa'n Seith. In exchange for the removal of his brother, and gaining his seat on the Council, Emen-Tha would ensure permission to build a temple to Nyarlathotep in the religious quarter of Lhosk.

Kamas-Tha's sword was the key. It had to vanish along with Kamas-Tha. Without the sword and ceremonies that surrounded it, passage of the council title from father to son would be risky. Instead the title would revert to the next oldest brother, Emen-Tha. Kamas-Tha and his men were tortured and murdered for their souls by the moon-beasts. Seith destroyed some of their personal effects and scattered others in the rubble of Sarkomand.

Although his machinations worked perfectly, Emen-Tha is terrified that Maras-Tha will find out about the plot, and Seith often uses this fact as a lever for bargaining. To gain his father's council seat, Maras-Tha needs only the sword. Emen-Tha will do anything he can to stop this.

INTRIGUES

The trade family Tha comes to prominence in this campaign only if the Dreamers found and kept the sword of Kamas-Tha, or if they arrived in Lhosk in a Black Galley.

In the first case, it quickly becomes evident that the uncle did away with his brother in a bid for power. The entire city suspects it. Emen-Tha's dealing with the satyrs and their Black Galleys, as



well as the construction of the Ebony Temple—all still current in town gossip—should be enough to point the characters in the correct direction.

In the second case, when the players arrive in the Black Galley, the trail leads backwards to the family Tha through Emen-Tha's association with the Men from Leng who pilot the Black Galleys. Once the turbaned foreigners land on the trail of the characters, Emen-Tha and his guards are not far behind. From there, the characters can discover Maras-Tha and his plight and become involved.

EMEN · THA AND HIS CRONIES

Emen-Tha is incredibly powerful in Lhosk. He has consolidated his power through means that were less than legal or honorable, with the aid of the minions of Nyarlathotep. Recently, he has begun in secret to worship Nyarlathotep himself.

To the Council and to his nephew Maras-Tha, Emen-Tha plays the role of a kind leader. He is eager to help, to prevent troubles and disputes from cropping up again and again, to fix things—until the issue involves something he or his allies want to occur. Then he is a bitter and secretive enemy. Hamlet's observation that "one may smile, and smile, and be a villain" fits Emen-Tha perfectly.

Emen-Tha's influence has infected most of the Council of Lhosk. Many there owe him favors and significant amounts of money thanks to his freedom with the blood gems given by his allies). Some are implicated in crimes along with him. Many in the council know full well of the influence of the pilots of the Black Galleys on local politics. Very few wish to do anything more than keep their heads down. Emen-Tha has likewise gained control of the city guard through corruption of many of its men and their captains.

Emen-Tha's greatest fear is exposure: exposure of the Men in Black for what he knows them to be, inhuman monsters; and exposure of their (and his) worship of Nyarlathotep. The public would not stand for such things. He believes that if he could not flee town, he would be strung up from his neck on the lighthouse along with his inhuman compatriots.

EMEN · THA

Leader of the Red Council of Lbosk, the Smiling Villain, age 41

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 13 INT 14 POW 14
DEX 17 APP 16 EDU 11 SAN 51 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 54%, Art 31%, Astronomy 12%, Bargain 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 6%, Fast Talk 62%, Law 60%, Persuade 71%, Ride 44%, Sailing 30%, Sea Navigation 15%, Spot Hidden 40%, Swim 50%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 90%, Cum'teha 20%, English 75%, Pross 33%, Skand 40%.

Attacks: Saber 41%, 1D8+1+db

Fighting Knife 55%, 1D4+2+db

Emen-Tha is two people, really. In private he is a ruthless, dark soul, bent on the destruction of his enemies. In public he is a smiling everyman, eager to press palms, hand out coins and attend to the plight of the working people.

His silver hair, blue eyes and wide smile make him a popular sight in the streets, and his solid build gives him the appearance of a sailor. This is a look he cultivates carefully. Those who serve him know him to be vain and overly concerned with his dress and appearance.

Emen-Tha has lived since childhood in secret jealousy of his older brother Kamas-Tha, and later of his nephew Maras-Tha. Before his luck brought him into contact with one of the strange men from the Black Galleys, Emen never considered doing anything about it. Since that first meeting, however, he has ordered the murder of his brother and has assisted the creatures he now knows to be inhuman in the murder and sacrifice of dozens of citizens. Today, with the assistance of the black-robed sailors, he is unopposed as leader of the Red Council.

The years since the bargain was struck have cost him. Emen-Tha is a changed man. Though his ability to hide his true intentions remains his primary skill, some who know him well have noticed a carefully-concealed weariness.



Emen-Tha's life is a balancing act: appeasing his new god, Nyarlathotep; keeping the Men from Leng sated with blood; and keeping the truth from the council and his nephew. A conflict is building within him. Though he had planned to kill his nephew before he came of age, the thought gnaws at him that perhaps he has made a mistake from which he cannot recover.

EMEN·THA'S PERSONAL GUARD

These violent ex-criminals all pay allegiance to Emen-Tha alone. He saved each of them from jail time or banishment. They are eager to please their master and are not above getting their hands dirty. Many are skilled killers who will not hesitate to spill more blood.

They wear a special variant of the city guards' outfits; a Spot Hidden roll notices the differences in the gold epaulets. Locals know them on sight and avoid them. The city guards hate them but do nothing to interfere.

EMEN·THA'S GUARDS

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	17	12	16	8	17	+1D6	14
#2	9	8	15	10	15	—	12
#3	9	14	13	14	15	—	14
#4	17	8	10	4	14	+1D4	9
#5	18	3	11	15	14	+1D4	7
#6	6	12	8	15	14	—	10
#7	15	15	17	15	12	+1D4	16
#8	9	11	14	7	10	—	13
#9	9	12	8	6	6	—	10
#10	13	10	12	17	6	+1D4	11

Skills In Common: Dodge (DEX x 2) + 10%, Law 25%, Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 61%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 80%, English 50%.

Attacks: Short sword 35%, 1D6+1+db

Knife 50%, 1D4+2+db

Halberd 40%, 1D10+1+db

INTERVIEWING EMEN-THA

The fate of Dreamers foolish enough to seek or accept an audience with Emen-Tha depends on what the treacherous uncle knows about them. He is constantly surrounded by four of his guards.

1) Emen-Tha Knows Nothing of Them: If the characters manage, somehow, to ply their way into an audience with the head of the Lhoskian council under some pretense, he is civil but hurried, eager to end the interview. The moment he discovers they know something more of the incident with his brother, the Black Galleys, or the true nature of the satyrs, however, he grows incredibly friendly and invites them to a great banquet as his guests.

2) Emen-Tha Knows They Have the Sword of Kamas-Tha: Emen-Tha will be an *incredibly* courteous host, inviting the characters to stay and dine with him.

3) If They Arrived in a Black Galley: Emen-Tha will feign eagerness to bid on the Black Galley himself, if it has not yet been sold. Either way he invites them to stay and dine with him.

THE BANQUET

Under one of many pretenses, the Dreamers might find themselves at a banquet arranged by Emen-Tha. It is a sumptuous feast, intricately presented, and above all *private*. It is held in a remote outbuilding on the Tha estate, in an open-air portico covered by dark red curtains.

As guests, the Dreamers sit on soft pillows around a low table. At every door a guard stands with a halberd. Emen-Tha is charming and talkative as course after course is served. In truth, if the characters have made it this far, they are in great danger. Emen-Tha has set a plan in motion.

The food and wine are drugged. Within the first hour of the feast, each Dreamer must make a CON x 2% roll. Those failing fall asleep at the table, which draws seemingly good-natured jokes from Emen-Tha. Worse, drugged Dreamers who stay awake must roll INTx1 or *fail to care*. They are overwhelmed by a feeling of floating enjoyment.

Once the Dreamers are asleep or are too full of bliss to resist,



they are bundled into sacks and dragged across town to the Ebony Temple. They wake in the darkness and filth of the prison pits. (See “The Prison Pits” on page 181.)

Characters who fake eating and drinking must roll Sneak, Persuade, Fast Talk, or DEX x 2% to do so convincingly. If they fail, or if any refuse, Emen-Tha threatens the lives of their unconscious companions unless the rest down their wine. While they drink, Emen-Tha in his arrogance speaks truthfully to these clever Dreamers about his plot and the need to silence them.

Those who attempt to escape must fight Emen-Tha’s guards. Any who abandon their unconscious friends to what is surely a hideous fate lose 1/1D4 SAN. If they escape—especially if they kill Emen-Tha—they are marked as murderers in the city and are hunted tirelessly unless they publicly prove the true nature of the Men from Leng and Emen-Tha’s partnership with them.

MARAS · THA, THE HEIR OF HOUSE THA

Maras-Tha is the young son of Kamas-Tha, the former leader who was dispatched on the high seas through the treachery of his brother Emen-Tha. Maras, for his part, has no idea of his uncle’s motives or actions. He sees Emen as a benefactor, the last family member he has, and above all as his mentor. It will be difficult for the youth to believe his uncle was behind his father’s disappearance, but Dreamers that can prove such a thing win a valuable ally.

Emen believes it is still too dangerous to do away with Maras. Too many questions are still being asked about his brother’s disappearance at sea three years ago; an accident befalling Maras would seem too . . . neat. Emen has decided to wait until a later date to dispatch the youth—probably in a foreign land, so details on the death will be hard to come by. For now, the uncle dotes upon the nephew, lavishing him with gifts and attention, and Maras, unskilled in the ways of treachery, thinks the world of him.

MARAS · THA

Son of Kamas-Tha and Heir to the Council, age 17

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 11
DEX 12 APP 17 EDU 12 SAN 55 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Astronomy 38%, Bargain 51%, Climb 63%, Hide 26%,
Law 47%, Land Navigation 59%, Persuade 58%, Sailing 61%, Sea
Navigation 81%, Spot Hidden 59%, Swim 68%. *Languages:* Talunen
(Own) 60%, Cum'teha 12%, English 44%, Pross 18%, Skand 21%.

Attacks: Saber 41%, 1D8+1+db

Fighting Knife 55%, 1D4+2+db

Maras is a youth bursting with energy and craving adventure. Tanned, tall and powerful, he is quite a ladies' man, often sporting the company of several women at once. He is an avid fan of Earthly games, his favorite being rugby. He is an exceptional sportsman.

Well-liked by all except those who are jealous, Maras is a bit naive and credulous. He often overextends his good will rather than believing that someone is lying.

Maras has led a near perfect life, despite the tragic loss of his father. He has had everything he has ever wanted, but unlike other council children he has not lost sight of what is important. This is due to the teachings of Kamas-Tha. Maras adores his missing father. He talks of him often and prominently displays keepsakes and mementoes from his father's council chambers. Maras hopes to fulfill his father's dream by some day taking a council seat. But the only way he sees this happening is if his father returns to eventually pass the seat along to him after all, or his uncle dies.



INTERVIEWING MARAS·THA

The guards rebuff anyone seeking an interview by directly approaching the front gate of the Tha house, unless money or Kamas' sword is offered as persuasion.

If enough money is offered (equivalent to an Impressive treasure with a Bargain roll or an Astonishing one otherwise; see page 155), a direct interview with Maras-Tha may be possible. If his father's weapon is presented, an interview is certain.

But first the Dreamers must make a group Luck roll. If it fails, the Dreamers are intercepted first by Emen-Tha's personal guards, one per Dreamer, pretending to help. After being led through a complex maze of back streets to an apparent meeting with Maras-Tha, the Dreamers find themselves at the Ebony Temple (see page 175), where a band of $2D4+2$ Men from Leng attempt to take them captive and put them in the prison pits. If this ambush succeeds, the guards take the sword of Kamas-Tha to Emen-Tha, who breaks it and drops it into the depths of the sea.

If the Dreamers present his father's sword to Maras-Tha, they are officially recognized as members of house Tha. Maras swears to help the characters whenever called upon with anything in his power, until death.

SNEAKING INSIDE

Every lavish estate in Lhosk is well guarded, and the house of Tha is no exception. Each Dreamer hoping to gain entry to the estate must make a Climb roll and two rolls of Sneak or DEX x 2%, whichever is better. Success at all three indicates the Dreamer climbs the gate and finds egress into the main house.

Failure means coming face-to-face with one of Emen-Tha's ruffians, who quickly raises the alarm, blowing on a whistle which draws 1D8 other guards. The guards attempt to bring the Dreamers to heel with nonlethal force; but the moment any guard loses 5 or more hit points, their attacks turn deadly and they go for the kill.

Dreamers who gain access to the house during the evening can easily find Maras-Tha's room. Maras-Tha will be ready to fight and raise the alarm for his uncle's guards, expecting some sort of kidnapping plot. Dreamers must make a Fast Talk roll to calm him or present some proof of their intentions, such as his father's sword or proof of the satyrs' true nature.

FINDING MARAS · THA ON THE STREET

Maras-Tha often leaves home to visit friends, participate in rough sports at one of the parks, or to simply walk the bazaar and greet people. In such times he almost always waves off his uncle's personal guard, and simply carries his own saber for protection. He feels he has little to fear from "his people," and he is correct—even the lowest criminal knows and respects Maras-Tha and none would harm him.

Locating the youth is easy enough; he cuts a swath through the busy market simply with his presence, as people rush up to shake his hand, pat him on the back or greet him with a smile. Dreamers can easily approach Maras under these circumstances; but if they publicly present their intentions, or evidence of foul play (or most especially his father's sword), they must make a group Luck roll. Failure indicates that word makes it swiftly back to Emen-Tha. If it succeeds, the youth rushes them off into a bar for a private chat.



THE TRADE FAMILY BHAHOT

The Family Bahaot, originally from Baharna, has lived in Lhosk for two centuries. It is a minor but powerful family that controls much of the fur trade that moves through port. Many years ago the Bahaots sold a deformed son into slavery. It is possible that the creature that son has become, called the Collector, is with the Dreamers when they reach Lhosk.

The Bahaot estate lies north of Lhosk on a small hill. It is surrounded by high turreted walls built in the Baharnian manner, which looks out of place and odd in Lhosk. Lhoskians know the family is from elsewhere and keep to themselves. Marriages are made between the family and other families in Baharna, with brides and grooms being brought in from abroad. No one in the family has ever mixed with Lhosk through marriage. To Dreamers from Earth, the Bahaot family appear Asiatic, unlike the usually Mediterranean-seeming natives of Lhosk.

The family is composed of nine sisters, their mother and an extremely elderly and frail father who is near death. For the last ten years, the mother has run the family and has groomed the oldest sister to take over the family trade when the father dies. They are dire, humorless people more concerned with appearance than anything else. They are fast to take insult and are extremely proactive in their response to threats.

THE COLLECTOR IN LHOSK

As he walks the streets of Lhosk, the Collector recalls more and more about Lhosk, his family, their home, their trade and more. But he is not foolish enough to attempt contact with them. In fact, in town, the Collector covers his face goes out of his way not to interact with anyone directly, for fear of alerting his family to his presence. Each time he is seen, the Dreamers must make a group Luck roll. If they fail, his deformities have been recognized and the Bahaot family is informed of his arrival.

If pressed or threatened, the Collector admits to his family's prominence, but urges the Dreamers not to attempt to contact them. However, since the Collector is always acting in a cowardly manner, some might misread this as yet another ploy to stymie them.

MEETING THE FAMILY

Dreamers approaching the compound are met by cloaked guards covered from head to toe in stifling black garb which reveals only their Asiatic eyes. They are armed with long, curved, bronze swords. If the Dreamers present a good case for meeting the family, ten guards escort them inside. The family keeps dozens of guards on the compound at all times.

All ten healthy members of the family sit out in a grand receiving room covered in opulence. Fine food waits on the table. They all sit in the same position, legs folded beneath them on satin pillows, faces blank of emotion. A seat is laid out for each of the Dreamers, but not for the Collector.

Talk is terse and to the point, but always exceptionally and artificially polite. Only the mother, Zavan, speaks. She and her family never look at or directly acknowledge the Collector. He does not move or engage in conversation. He fears the swords of the guards.

1) If the Dreamers Threaten the Reputation of the Family: The mother responds by telling a long and boring parable about a boy who threatens a blind giant by altering his voice to pretend to be much bigger than he is. Eventually, the boy is smashed and eaten by the giant when his duplicity is discovered. She says nothing else. The interview is over.

2) If the Dreamers Attempt to Reconcile the Family: The mother refuses to acknowledge she ever had a son. She asks if there is any other business. If not, they characters are escorted out.

3) If the Dreamers Attempt to Extort the Family: The mother throws a large bag to the ground at the feet of the Dreamers. It clangs as it hits the tiles. "Never return to this city," she says, and the Dreamers are escorted out. In the bag are lead slugs cut in the rough shape of coins and a dead snake with its head cut off. If the Dreamers pursue the Bahaots further, we leave the details to the Keeper.



ARRIVAL IN ILEK · VAD

Dreamers can arrive at Ilek-Vad in three ways:

1) IN A BLACK GALLEY

Dreamers arriving in a Black Galley will be an odd sight, as those ships and the satyrs who pilot them never set foot in the realm of the King of Dusk. Such strangers will be met on the docks by an armed contingent of the king's men. (See "A Black Galley in Ilek-Vad" on page 197.)

2) FROM THE UNDERWORLD

The Dreamers might crawl from the earth, escorted by Madaeker to the surface. They arrive on the outskirts of the city without incident. Their comings and goings remain their own and they may enter the city as unknown visitors. (See "Fellow Travelers" on page 198.)

3) IN A STOLEN PIRATE SHIP

The Merhadeen pirates are known and hated in the sunset city. Dreamers arriving in a stolen pirate ship will be taken prisoner by the king's men and taken before the Magistrate. (See "The Magistrate and the Court" on page 203.)

CHAPTER TEN

ILEK · VAD · GLASS TURRETS AND DUSK ·

THE WORLD IS DARK AND THE PEOPLE ARE SAD

"Until the steeples of his city clanked and sprang

In an unburgherly apocalypse.

The doctor used his handkerchief and sighed."

—Wallace Stevens, "The Doctor of Geneva"

ILEK · VAD

Ilek-Vad on the Cerenarian Sea is a vast, beautiful city of minarets and turrets, built upon and around the glassy labyrinths of the non-human Gnorri—an underwater, tentacled race similar to mermen of Earthly tales. The city has an odd local "reality." As one approaches it, the sun seems to settle into a position of eternal, red sunset which highlights the water and glass buildings of the city in the most magnificent light. Full night falls only very rarely and very briefly. Stranger still, those who call the city home fail to notice this oddities. Only foreigners seem to sleep at all. The locals remain awake with the sun in an ever-present now.

The city is ruled by the human dreamer Randolph Carter, who comes from his citadel at the top of the city only once a year to sit within the beautiful temple at Kiran at the edge of the city. The locals say it is he who wills the city to be so, and who shapes and drives the world in the surrounding area through his mind alone. All revere him, although none have clearly seen his face. They call him "King of the Sunset" or "King of Dusk" and always touch their hands to their lips when talking of him.

Ilek-Vad is a city of perpetual sunset. Like a living painting the streets are filled with rich shadows and beautiful red and yellow highlights, and the sort of folk you might find in such a painting—sad, withdrawn, furtive. The bearded and finny Gnorri ply their strange trades in the sea-filled glass tunnels which intersect the city.

A BLACK GALLEY IN ILEK · VAD

It is likely the Dreamers will arrive in Ilek-Vad by Black Galley. If so, first they notice the ever-present dusk. This sets in a day or two before reaching the port. The characters' perceptions begin to shift as well. Dreamers who make an Idea roll notice that nobody in the endless dusk sleeps or eats in a normal manner.

Finally, they are met by a line of Gnorri warriors who flank the ship and lead it into port, leading the way with bronze tridents. At port they are herded into a narrow bay, which sits beneath the silhouette of a city on the mountains above. Inside the mouth of the bay is a maze of winding glass corridors which can barely fit the girth of the galley. Some magic seems to draw the ship to an isolated dock surrounded by rock and glass.

On the glass pier wait two dozen men, all clad in bright colors. A dozen are armed; the rest seem to be clerks or agents of the law. When the gang-plank is lowered, the oldest man present, Master Brugh, ambassador, unfurls a scroll and reads it aloud.

"It is decreed by the King of the Sunset that you are to be made most welcome in the Place of Turrets, of the Glass-Maze, of the Thousand Feasts, of the Waking Dream, Ilek-Vad, that most excellent city. You are humbly invited to dine with our most illustrious king six hours hence, in his citadel atop the city facing the sea which brought you to us. You are welcome here, as are all from Earth."

The old man bows uncomfortably, and the armed men salute by tipping their halberds. It is here that Master Brugh, ambassador, introduces himself, and hands the Dreamers the scroll. The scroll is a fanciful affair of carefully cut lamb-skin, covered in wax stamps and marks and the scrawled signature of the king. (Any Dreamer making a Spot Hidden roll reads the scrawl—in English—as "Randolph Carter." Those who fail can discern only the "R" and the "C.")

The Dreamers may leave the ship and are left, as are all in Ilek-Vad, to their own devices. Only outright violence will bring a violent response or arrest.

A NEW KING

"It is rumoured in Ulthar, beyond the River Skai, that a new king reigns on the opal throne of Ilek-Vad, that fabulous town of turrets atop the hollow cliffs of glass overlooking the twilight sea wherein the bearded and finny Gnorri build their singular labyrinths, and I believe I know how to interpret this rumour."

H.P. Lovecraft, "The Silver Key"

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- The percussive or melodious sound of a song echoing from a nearby glassy steeple.
- The shape of a crown on the head of a Gnorri staring for a moment from the water inside a glass tunnel.
- The texture of the scroll from the King of Dusk.
- The direction in which the red sun hangs in the sky.

Those searching for lodging are directed to Dreary House (see “The House Dreary” on page 202). Those who wish to treat with the king are directed to the Palace of Dusk (see page 210).

THE TWILIGHT GUARDS

Dreamers arriving in Ilek-Vad in a method other than the sea find the entrances to the city pass through thick, green-black walls. Upon closer examination the walls reveal themselves to be composed of a resilient crystal much like amber. The blocks are cut magnificently to form patterns and pentacles across vast spaces. When seen by someone making an Idea roll the patterns appear to show the visage of a rather plain-looking man (cost: 0/1 SAN). This illusion is persistent; once seen it cannot be unseen. The eyes of the man seem to follow the Dreamers as they move.

The gates and portcullis, which are crystalline like the walls that surround them, are open, though the way is blocked by city guards. As the Dreamers approach, they find the guards gathered around a dice game beneath the portcullis, all clad in elaborate, colorful garb and armed with ceremonial-looking halberds. A cat sleeps nearby atop a barrel of salted fish, sated. The twilight falls in through the opening, casting rainbows of reflections through the air. The entire scene feels so completely like a dream—even for the Dreamlands!—that the Dreamers have a hard time focusing unless they make Sanity rolls. Those who fail stand and goggle until someone rouses them.

The guards themselves are ridiculously over-dressed in garb of ceremony, but this does not seem to bother their game, which goes on and on. This game is so involving that the guards don’t seem to notice the Dreamers approaching. Instead they exchange a witty, repetitive banter punctuated by occasional shouts over who has won and who has lost. Dreamers observing the game for any length of time realize it is an endless loop, with money being won and lost in a seamless roundabout. The guards won’t notice this even if it is brought to their attention.

Dreamers who wish to do so may simply pass by the men, walking carefully around them, and enter the city unmolested. But those

rousing anyone with a hail or shout find themselves in a conversation with the guards.

The guards seem disinterested in defending the city. They do their best to wave the characters in, weapons and all, claiming if asked that the visitors pose no threat to the King of Dusk, whose will remakes the world. If the Dreamers claim no knowledge of such a king, the men laugh and go back to their game, gesturing one last time to the opening in the wall which leads to Ilek-Vad's winding streets.

Those insisting upon speaking further on any subject find themselves speaking to Macero Dun, Captain of the Twilight Guards. It is only then that real answers are forthcoming.

1) WHO IS THE KING OF DUSK?

The King of Dusk is the ruler of Ilek-Vad, and the one who made the city as it is today, an ever-present reality of satiation, of the moment after a good meal, a long day, in the twilight before a peaceful rest. All who live here for any length of time find themselves in such a state of perfect *now*. This is due to the dream of the king, who remakes the world in the image of his mind.

The king lives in the highest tower in the center of the city, surrounded by the houses of the magistrates and priests. The tower is empty save for the king, and he never leaves it except for once a year, when he walks covered in robes to the temple of Kiran. The priests say that the king was a man of Earth, once.

2) WHAT TRADE IS PLIED IN ILEK · VAD?

The power of the dream is all that is here, and anything that comes besides it is simply an accident of that dream. Few ships come through the city, as their captains fear the lasting effects of the dream on their men, who become lazy and content when they set foot on the shore. Some trade comes from Lhosk, but only by experienced crews who know the secret of the dream and how to resist its pull. Ilek-Vad produces nothing but contentment.

3) ARE THERE PASSAGES TO EARTH NEARBY?

Macero does not know, though Dreamers who make Spot Hid-

USING ARRAM IN THE CAMPAIGN

Arram can be a great resource. The cat has seen much and knows many secret places and ways. Whether and how he decides to assist the Dreamers remains up to the Keeper. Here are some suggestions.

1) RANDOLPH CARTER ORDERS HIM TO ASSIST THE DREAMERS

Dreamers that win the favor of the King of Dusk may have Arram assigned to their service by the kind king. Arram will serve without any consideration for himself, and will even give his life to help the characters in their quest. (See "Randolph Carter, the King of Dusk" on page 205.)

2) ARRAM BREAKS HIS OATH TO HELP THE DREAMERS

This requires some roleplaying to work out, but a storyline might be spun where the cat hopes to escape the twilight city and see the rest of the world. The cat's curiosity and the magical pull of the city might be set at odds, and the Dreamers might be the inciting event necessary to move him forward.

den rolls observe that the cat's ears perk up at this statement. Lhosk, Macero confides, understands much more of the machinations of Earth than do the people of Ilek-Vad.

4) DO THE MEN FROM LENG TRADE HERE?

Macero's face darkens. No, those in communion with the Nyarlathotep are not permitted to pass within the city walls. The Black Galleys are not welcomed. Nyarlathotep is a god in direct opposition to the King of Dusk. If the Dreamers have fled from the Men from Leng, they will find no place safer than Ilek-Vad.

ARRAM, CAT APOSTATE

This fat Maine Coon cat sleeps and watches on top of a barrel of salted fish, from which it occasionally retrieves a fresh morsel through a gap in the top. The guards do not seem to mind. All cats are welcome in Ilek-Vad and they appear always fat, sated and happy when seen in the streets.

Any Dreamer approaching Arram is met by the creature's inquisitive gaze. One who attempts true communication with the creature must make a POW x 3% roll. If it succeeds, the Dreamer "hears" the cat speak very clearly in his or her head. One who fails the roll but comes close (within 5 points) can catch snippets of thought from the cat. Those who fail completely see only a cat, though one that seems far smarter than any cat seen in the waking world. All cats "speak" in such a manner, it turns out, but only those Earthlings in communion with the world of Dreams can understand their speech clearly.

Dreamers who achieve communion with the cat learn his name is Arram. He is an outcast from his people and sleeps at the gate as a guard of sorts for his master, the King of Dusk. He sleeps here, he claims, because the minions of Nyarlathotep can hold no form or illusion that cats cannot see through. He will not speak of the crimes which brought him into the service of the King of Dusk, but will, if treated with respect, assist the characters. Despite his status as a criminal among cats, he is a loyal sort.

If the characters bypass the guard gate, Arram, full of curiosity,

follows them in the manner of cats. To detect this 'tail' the Dreamers must make a Spot Hidden roll and Arram must fail his Hide or Sneak roll.

ARRAM

Cat Apostate, age 8

STR 2 CON 6 SIZ 1 INT 13 POW 14
DEX 30 Move 10 SAN 70 HP 4

Damage Bonus: -1D6

Skills: Climb 71%, Dodge 89%, Fast Talk 41%, Hide 81%, Navigation 36%, Persuade 50%, Sneak 90%, Spot Hidden 90%, Track 40%.

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D4+db

Claw 40%, 1D3+db

Rip 80%, 2D3+db (only if two claw attacks succeed in a row)

Spells: Able to leap through space to other worlds.

Arram is a Maine Coon, an American long-hair breed. His fur is predominantly black but he has a white chin and stomach. The skin above his left eye is scarred and hairless from some long-ago injury.

Arram is a cat cast out from his people. Once he was a great scout but his curiosity got the better of him. During a skirmish on the moon (the cats of the Dreamlands often journey there) he crossed into the forbidden precincts travelled by the terrible moon-beasts and witnessed their evil rituals to Nyarlathotep.

Arram, considered tainted by the madness he witnessed, was banished from his clan and sent to wander the Dreamlands. In truth, Arram remained of sound mind, but there is no crime greater to the cat people than crossing the threshold of a temple to the Dark One.

Some time later Arram arrived at Ilek-Vad and found there a like mind, one who had also witnessed the horrors of Nyarlathotep and turned back: Randolph Carter, the King of Dusk. Arram swore fealty to his new lord and set off to serve him, acting as a guardian against Nyarlathotep's disguises and agents. Arram's great goals are to serve Randolph Carter and to redeem himself to his fellow cats.

(Continued.)

3) ARRAM KNOWS THE DREAMERS ARE MARKED BY NYARLATHOTEP AND HOPES TO REDEEM HIMSELF

The cat recognizes those cursed, like himself, by Nyarlathotep. Hoping to insult the dark lord, he seeks to assist the characters in their escape. By foiling the machinations of Nyarlathotep, Arram seeks to redeem his status among his people.



THE HOUSE DREARY

This slouching house is built in a manner reminiscent of the German medieval style with wooden crossbeams, white walls and tiled roofs. A sign with a pair of gold-embossed eyes hangs over the door, which never shuts properly. Instead it creaks, slightly open all the time. A panoply of failed and washed-up dreamers man the street-side café seating out front. Each face and form immediately denotes profession and disposition: a ship's pilot, a beggar, a one-man band, a priest. They all drink a thick, golden liquid from cracked, leaded glass containers. It is the only drink served in town. It has no name.

Inside, the bar is always dark and empty, fixed eternally between mid-day and night, and behind the bar is Polis Dreary, for whom the house is named. He is somewhat more coherent than the other denizens of the dusk world, having to deal with people from outside the city walls on a regular basis. Dreamers looking for lodging find themselves placed in fine, large rooms in the confusing maze of the Dreary House. Money changes hands but few can remember the exact details, only that the amount was a pittance and the price seemed fair.

POLIS DREARY

Master of House Dreary, age 50

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 16 INT 12 POW 12
DEX 11 APP 8 EDU 10 SAN 60 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 12%, Bargain 22%, Fast Talk 52%, Oratory 35%, Persuade 35%. *Languages:* Pross (Own) 60%, English 20%.

Attacks: Thrown Tankard, 25%, 1D3+db.

Polis is a tall, hunched man, built like a mountain with deep-set green eyes and thinning black hair that grows long on the sides but is falling out on top. He always wears a cotton shirt and a red brocade vest with gold piping. His face is set in an eternal calmness that is difficult to read.

Polis does not clearly recall a time before the King of Dusk, but

knows that such a time did exist. He is content to do his job. Whenever he finds himself thinking about the past, and the time before, he recalls the smiling face of a woman who is gone from his life now, and thinks perhaps the coming of the king was a blessing.

Like all in Ilek-Vad, Polis wants for nothing, and therefore has no goals—or at least no goals that can be understood by those not under the power of the King of Dusk. He simply exists and will remain in this state indefinitely.

THE MAGISTRATE AND THE COURT

Dreamers unfortunate enough to arrive in a stolen pirate vessel are led to the docks in a similar manner to “A Black Galley In Ilek-Vad” (page 197) but they are met at the docks by an overwhelming force of city guards, armed to the teeth. The Merhadeen pirates are a common threat to those hoping to find port in Ilek-Vad, and their association with Nyarlathotep is well known.

The guards order the Dreamers off the ship, calling them scoundrels and pirates. Protests are ignored. Foolish Dreamers hoping to fight their way off should be discouraged with 1D6 HP damage from prodding halberds. There really is no clear route of escape, and the weapons of the city guards have a long reach. Captured Dreamers are clamped in irons and moved through the winding streets of the city toward a huge tower at its center. Locals emerge from the tiny cramped buildings to line the street and spit at them.

They pass through a portcullised entrance to an inner keep and are dragged down cobblestone streets to a white marble building which looks like some sort of government house. They are dragged down steps behind it and up a long hallway lit by oil lamps, and are thrown into a small, low-ceilinged cell laid with damp straw. The characters spend some time in a dank cell below the enormous tower. Those making Listen rolls overhear the words “Magistrate Plumb” and “King of Dusk” several times as the voices of the guards echo up the corridor.

After a long while their cell is opened and the Dreamers are dragged upstairs by another route. The guards throw them into a docket, a wooden box overseen by a parapet on which perches the fattest man they have ever seen. This is Magistrate Plumb. He spews at the characters a series of charges ranging from blasphemy to piracy to kidnapping and murder. Any attempts by the Dreamers to speak during the reading of the charges are shouted down by a throng of locals that overlook the docket.

After this, the Dreamers are given opportunity to speak. Those who stand up and speak must roll Oratory or INT x 2%. A character who exhibits any falsehood during this speech is again shouted down. Telling the truth and making the roll causes the crowd to pause and murmur thoughtfully.

Plumb is a humorless tyrant. No matter how the Dreamers portray themselves, Plumb finally launches into a tirade about their crimes and the punishment in Ilek-Vad for those crimes: death by gibbet. Shouts of glee follow this, and rotten fruit and vegetables are launched at the characters. The Dreamers are dragged to their feet, and just as the scene begins to descend into absolute chaos, silence suddenly fills the air.

THE KING APPEARS

The doors to the court burst open and reveal a figure in an ebony cloak with gold trim. The cloak's hood hangs over his face, hiding his features. Everyone in the room freezes. A palpable feeling of fear passes through the crowd. Magistrate Plumb burbles some sort of apology, but it is lost in a fearful choke. The fat man throws himself to the floor, and everyone in the room follows. They leave only the Dreamers and the new figure standing. If the characters drop, the cloaked figure steps forward, into the Docket, and helps one up.

The figure hands the Dreamers a sealed scroll (identical to the scroll in "A Black Galley In Ilek-Vad," page 197). The figure's hand is well-manicured (with a Spot Hidden roll a Dreamer spies a silver and gold mark between the thumb and forefinger). The figure draws back and exits before anyone can engage him. If the Dreamers move after him, they get the dreamlike feeling that the figure, though it is

moving slowly, is rushing away at high speed. The figure says nothing and responds to no actions. Attacks fail to hit or even be noticed.

The door shuts, leaving the room in stunned silence. It is long minutes before anyone reacts. Finally Magistrate Plumb leaps to his feet, puts on an uncomfortable smile, steps forward and cordially invites the characters to stay at his home. He is so completely and perfectly self-abasing that it is difficult not to pity him (though some Dreamers may take this moment to exact some petty revenge).

RANDOLPH CARTER, THE KING OF DUSK

The dreamer known as the King of Dusk, who rules Ilek-Vad, is what remains of the human once called Randolph Carter. Born in 1873 in Boston, Carter was an antiquarian and student of Miskatonic University. For the past decade he has persisted wholly in the Dreamlands, where his thoughts, wishes and dreams shape the world in and around the secretive port of Ilek-Vad. Using magic unknown to most dreamers, Carter's mind controls local space and time in the manner of a god.

To say Carter has had an eventful life is to understate his accomplishments and adventures. He encountered ghouls and their ilk (in Lovecraft's "The Statement of Randolph Carter"); then he met an unknown beast haunting a 17th-century cemetery (in "The Unnameable"). He plied the Dreamlands in search of the lost city of his dreams (*The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*), only to be told by Nyarlathotep that it was merely a figment of boyhood memory. Finally, after locating a mystical key to unlock the Dreamlands and undertaking innumerable other adventures ("The Silver Key" and "Through the Gates of the Silver Key"), Carter found his way to the lost city at last — Ilek Vad.

Time is strange in the Dreamlands. In the waking world, Carter's adventures carry him through the year 1932. Yet here he is; nearly 100 years of dreamtime have passed since he took the throne. To the people of Ilek-Vad it feels as if he has always ruled as the King of

Dusk, thanks to the persistent feeling of dreaminess which permeates the twilight city. His influence and power are absolute, but he persists largely as an often unseen and unfelt influence. He is seen only once a year, when he makes his way from the citadel in the center of town to the temple of Kiran on the edge of the sea to meditate.

Unsurprisingly, having found the city of his boyhood dreams and unlocked the secrets of the cosmos at the foot of 'Umr at-Tawil, Carter still strives for more. His prayers and supplication at the temple of Kiran are attempts to undergo further exploration and transformation within the dimensions in the realm of dream. Carter hopes to unlock the secrets of the Old Gods, and once they are located, to further probe the deepest mysteries of time, reality and existence.

But all is not what it seems to Carter or the residents of Ilek-Vad. His enemy, Nyarlathotep, has not forgotten the wily human who thwarted him. The Crawling Chaos works steadily to reduce Carter's will, and the city with him, to nothing in a pique of revenge. When those in the town rest, Carter is borne on wings of the Shantak to the hidden palace of Nyarlathotep. There he is fed a drug which lulls him, removes his memories, and leaves him endlessly searching for meaning.

Without this interference, long ago Carter would have transcended this reality for another, deeper dream. Instead he remains trapped in Ilek-Vad, confused and somber, searching for the secret, certain that it must arrive soon. In truth, he is slowly slipping away into a repeating internal dreamworld where he may work his will but finds no meaning in it.

THE KING'S INTERACTION WITH ILEK · VAD

All who live in Ilek-Vad hold their king in perfect, unflappable esteem. They bless, praise and speak about him often, using honorariums, titles and flowery speech. All locals “feel” his presence and guiding hand in local events and are convinced of a personal and private connection with him (though none will say precisely why). To them he is a guardian, god and father-figure. They will give their lives to defend him or his honor.

Carter is usually seen only twice a year. On the New Year, the King of Dusk opens the giant doors of his citadel and marches down the winding streets to the Temple of Kiran at the sea's edge. Or at least, this figure seems to be the king. No one in the city knows precisely what the king looks like. The figure which appears shows no identifying marks and instead is clothed in a large, all-covering ebony cloak with gold trim.

This procession draws all from the city out of the stupor of their dream to line his path. People throw roses and offerings in the street as the king passes. Some shout questions or compliments but the figure never answers or stops. No one has ever attempted to stop the figure or interrupt it. It always marches down the streets to the temple at the edge of the sea.

This temple, like the citadel, remains empty unless the king is there. He has no servants, no guards, no pets, nothing living in either place save himself. It seems he does not eat, drink, change his dress or fear for his safety. (In fact he does none of these things, except for drinking the *pazu*; see page 209). The temple is a simple place of worship, a single round room with windows that overlook the sea, consecrated for no deity in particular.

At the temple of Kiran, the king supplicates himself to some higher power (no one in the city knows who or what he worships) for a time: sometimes hours, sometimes weeks. The common thought is that the king “fights off” evil influence from the outside world by his prayers, and that the longer he spends praying the more evil he is “defeating”.

When this ritual is done, the king returns to his citadel to wait another year; or so most think.

THE TEMPLE OF KIRAN

Before Carter assumed control of the city, the temple of Kiran was one of many time-ravaged, small, forgotten temples on the waterfront of Ilek-Vad. Upon their death, the names of the priests who lived and worshipped there were etched on the stony walls, leaving a count of two hundred and twenty six priests. The count of time since the first priest erected the temple can never be known, but rough estimate makes it 10,000 years, at least. Only in the last hundred or so years has the stewardship faltered.

For a time before the coming of the King of Dusk, the temple remained empty, without a clear owner. It remained unoccupied by others out of a deep superstition of the unknown being worshipped there. The religion was secretive—only the priest and his disciple knew what power resided there. When the last priest died before drawing in a disciple, the religion failed. Years passed, then decades.

The temple's stones sagged. The doors collapsed. Animals took to its rafters. And then one day, as dawn rose upon Ilek-Vad for the last time before an eternal dusk, the temple was restored. The doors were cleanly affixed, the animals and rot gone. It was made new.

The light poured through the single window which opened on the sun, and the doors opened to reveal the man in the ebony robes, the King of Dusk. This is how Randolph Carter arrived in Ilek-Vad. All who saw this recall it, and Carter's ascension to the citadel in the center of the city to assume the vacant throne of Ilek-Vad.

Today, the temple has become a focus of worship and obsession to the locals. When the King of Dusk is not present, the locals can be found loitering in small groups, offering tribute to the king through flowers, trinkets and food on its doorstep. None dare to pass the doors.

To Randolph Carter, the temple is a mystery that consumes him. It is there, in the light of dawn, that he found his way into the Dreamlands, somehow forgoing the normal methods of entry. It is there he returns once a year looking for guidance on how to best serve his city. One day, he emphatically believes, he will be transported from there to a deeper dream, unlocking a newer, more spectacular world beyond.

THE KING ON HIS OWN

Randolph Carter is the most powerful human dreamer in the history of Earth. His adventures span vast areas of space and time in many dimensions, but since his return to the Dreamlands years ago he has been isolated in Ilek-Vad. To Carter this seems natural. His mind has turned inwards, focusing on unravelling the world of the Dreamlands just as he unravelled the reality of Earth before it. This struggle requires supreme will, focus and thought, and so the king remains alone at almost all times. But the puzzle refuses to resolve itself. He feels he has completed the proper exercises and has understood the correct concepts, but no resolution has arrived.

This isolation, which began as a way to focus his inward energies, has been used by his enemy as a way into his powerful mind. Borne from the top of his tower one twilight on powerful wings just days after assuming the throne in Ilek-Vad, Carter was brought to the court of Nyarlathotep.

Carter was infected with the poison known as the *pazu* by Nyarlathotep himself. This drug has slowly sapped his will and focus. Soon it may turn him into a formless, thoughtless shade that does nothing more than go through the motions of abasement and worship as it controls the city of Ilek-Vad. The city will follow him down to such a fate, gradually becoming a blight of nightmare permanently imprinted on the fabric of the world of dreams.

Today, Carter is so confused that he drinks the *pazu* on his own, with no prompting, as an addict might drink laudanum to drive himself into a waking stupor. He does not recall what *pazu* is or precisely where it came from, only that is for him alone, and it must be imbibed to give his mind peace.

He rouses from his stupor only very occasionally now. The Dreamers' arrival may be his last chance to rouse himself from Nyarlathotep's noose before it is too late.

THE LOST CITY

"All golden and lovely
it blazed in the sunset,
with walls, temples,
colonnades and arched
bridges of veined marble,
silver-basined fountains of
prismatic spray in broad
squares and perfumed
gardens, and wide streets
marching between delicate
trees and blossom-laden
urns and ivory statues in
gleaming rows; while on
steep northward slopes
climbed tiers of red roofs
and old peaked gables
harbouring little lanes of
grassy cobbles. It was a
fever of the gods, a fanfare
of supernal trumpets and a
clash of immortal cymbals."

H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

THE TRICKERY OF NYARLATHOTEP

“Only to taunt had Nyarlathotep marked out the way to safety and the marvellous sunset city; only to mock had that black messenger revealed the secret of these truant gods whose steps he could so easily lead back at will. For madness and the void’s wild vengeance are Nyarlathotep’s only gifts to the presumptuous; and frantick though the rider strove to turn his disgusting steed, that leering, tittering Shantak coursed on impetuous and relentless, flapping its great slippery wings in malignant joy and headed for those unhallowed pits whither no dreams reach; that last amorphous blight of nether-most confusion where bubbles and blasphemes at infinity’s centre the mindless daemon-sultan Azathoth, whose name no lips dare speak aloud.”

H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

THE KING’S STRUGGLE

Carter’s focus on the puzzle of the reality of the Dreamlands, and how to transcend it, has engulfed him. He is distracted, distant, sometimes confused—though none in the town know this, having failed to interact with him for at any length of time. He still rules and forces his vast will on the town to make it as it is, but his will is fading. The town and people slowly change with it, though his power is still so strong that none notice.

His true struggle comes from the poison *pazu*. This golden liquid, found in the palace of the Old Gods, brings euphoria and lack of focus. To humans, even humans as powerful as Carter, it is a narcotic beyond control. The feeling of comfort and contentment that the poison inflicts on the mind is especially damaging to those who quest for inner knowledge. The poison saps the mind of memory and resistance, so the King of Dusk does not recall his visits to the table of his most hated enemy. Instead, he recalls only odd dreams of a golden glowing orb during his fitful periods of “sleep.”

THE PALACE OF DUSK

This huge palace at the center of Ilek-Vad is hauntingly beautiful. Built of black and gray stone, with gold filagree and porcelain tiles, it stretches up to monstrous heights to a gold domed roof. The grounds of the palace are empty but are always verdant and overgrown with summer flowers, despite the perpetual twilight. A maze of gardens winds from the wall surrounding the grounds to the huge double doors of the palace. No one is ever seen in these gardens except for the occasional fat and lazy cat, asleep on a piece of masonry or on a mat of perfect grass. If woken, the cat skitters off into the brush, disappearing.

Gates block every entry but nothing is ever locked. The giant doors to the structure swing wide, silently, with a single push.

Inside the Palace of Dusk the Dreamers find well-maintained, well-lit and lavish rooms. Those who separate from the group are in danger of losing their way in the dream-like corridors, which range far outside of what architecture and physics say they should be.

Rooms upon rooms, each representing a wish or memory of Randolph Carter, go on and on throughout the winding passages.

A Dreamer who goes alone must make a Sanity roll to find their way back to the group or to the front door. Those who fail lose no SAN but find themselves in ever more bizarre rooms: a clockwork museum filled with automata, an abandoned stage and theater filled with human-sized puppets, a room with a pool of liquid that instantly turns to porcelain anything living dropped into it.

Dreamers who stick together find themselves drawn to the sound of music—a phonograph playing behind a parlor door. (The song is “The Japanese Sandman” by Paul Whiteman.) Inside the parlor the Dreamers find Randolph Carter, looking wholly mundane in a smoking jacket, standing next to a phonograph on a table. The room appears completely conventional, down to the Sears rug.

“Come in, my friends,” Carter intones, smiling wanly. “You may lay down all cares at the door.”

MEETING THE KING OF DUSK

The King of Dusk is something more than the Randolph Carter who crossed the Dreamlands long ago to confront the old gods on Kadath. Since then Carter found the Silver Key. With it he met Umr at-Tawil, the strange cosmic being that is either one facet of the mind of Yog-Sothoth or the archetypal progenitor of Randolph Carter’s own many identities throughout time and space—or, somehow, both. (See Lovecraft’s “Through the Gates of the Silver Key.”)

At that time Carter lacked the crucial knowledge he needed to control the Silver Key and his mind came unhinged in time. He spent aeons in the body of one of his past selves, an utterly alien being from Yaddith. In that shared body he journeyed far across the cosmos to claim a scroll that held the knowledge he needed to use the Silver Key as he meant all along—to leave his body behind and return his mind to the land of dreams.

Randolph Carter now has powers over dream far beyond anything the player characters have seen. Everything in Ilek-Vad, including every building, serves Carter’s every whim. Doors open before him, lights appear and extinguish as he comes and goes, and he wants

for nothing. Food, water, clothing and his every desire is perfect and readily at hand, as if it simply materialized from his mind. Any request of the Dreamers, from the simplest to the most outrageous, is met in seconds. Though Carter avoids creating something out of nothing in direct observation of the characters, he will if they ask it: He provides a short demonstration where the room shifts in colors, styles and location. The window to the twilight city is replaced by a Tuscany sun, a bristling pine-filled wilderness, or the drying red canals of some dead planet. His power is breathtaking.

Carter is friendly eager to speak with those who have news of Earth. He probes the political conditions of the world, and news of the Middle East in particular. How fare Egypt and Arabia? Are there new leaders to speak of, any revolutions? He seems confused if the Dreamers offer no news of such upheavals. He expected Nyarlathotep to emerge there as a leader under his own name by now.

Carter serves drinks and food of Earth, and listens intently to the Dreamers' story if they wish to share it with him. He is, he assures them, the only one of this world who truly will understand them.

During the long conversation to come, Carter himself drinks a golden drink from an emerald decanter. He does not offer it to the Dreamers. If pressed, he refuses and laughs, saying, "This drink is far too potent for uninitiated guests."

If they threaten him, his countenance is not one of anger but confusion. Within seconds the offending party learns that Randolph Carter, the King of Dusk, is beyond such matters. Swords pass harmlessly through him, blows fail to land, and magic dwindles and collapses in on itself, leaving Carter perfect and unruffled. "My dear, dear friends," he says, "where has this conversation found itself?" He forgives such "slights" with the wave of a hand. "I am your ally here, and you might trust me as you trust yourself."

Carter's power is greater than one that affects only the world; he can paralyze, manipulate and even seize control of the Dreamers themselves, operating them like puppets. But he resists doing so unless the fight turns back upon the group. If Dreamers attack one another, Carter seizes them *all*, and once their attention is secured he lectures them on how to behave in front of a king.

THINGS MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO KNOW

The Dreamers can converse with Carter for long hours while he serves them any wine and food they wish. He drinks only the golden liquor which he keeps for himself.

Time seems to stretch beyond measure, with the clock ever approaching but never striking midnight. Carter tells the Dreamers of his many adventures in the Dreamlands: his boyhood escapes to the land of dreams; his dream-quest for unknown Kadath to reclaim the golden city of his younger dreams; his confrontations with Nyarlathotep; his delving into the secrets beyond the veil of worlds; his waking travel to wild Yaddith and back; and much more.

How much detail he gives is up to the player-character Dreamers. They can learn much from Randolph Carter. Perhaps too much.

DREAM QUEST: First Carter gives a brief summary of his dream-quest—his alliances with ghouls and with cats, his escape from the terrible gugs, his journey to the slopes of Kadath, and his escape from the wrath of jealous Nyarlathotep. Each Dreamer gains +1% Cthulhu Mythos and loses 1 SAN.

Now ask each player whether the Dreamer wants to keep hearing Carter's long tale. Those that want to turn their attention elsewhere while Carter continues must roll POW x 5. But if any of them ask him to stop now and give them only the most cursory of summations of what remains, Carter obliges them.

TRICKERY: If he continues, those Dreamers that failed to distract themselves, and those that chose to keep attending, learn more. He gives depth and detail to his adventures on his dream-quest, and describes Nyarlathotep's claim that the golden city of his visions never be more than the amalgamation of fading memories of his boyhood homeland—a claim that stuck with him after he awakened and caused him to turn from dreams altogether for many years. The listeners gain another +2% Cthulhu Mythos and lose 1/1D2 SAN. Each must choose again: Try to turn away (again it requires a POW x 5 roll), beg him to stop, or continue to absorb Carter's tale.

THE TRAP: If he keeps going, next they hear details of Carter's confrontation with Nyarlathotep. They learn of Nyarlathotep's attempt to bring him to the awful throne of the daemon sultan Azathoth at

'UMR AT · TAWIL

"The archetypes, throbbled the waves, are the people of the ultimate abyss—formless, ineffable, and guessed at only by rare dreamers on the low-dimensional worlds. Chief among such was this informing BEING itself . . . which indeed was Carter's own archetype. The glutless zeal of Carter and all his forbears for forbidden cosmic secrets was a natural result of derivation from the SUPREME ARCHETYPE. On every world all great wizards, all great thinkers, all great artists, are facets of IT.

"Almost stunned with awe, and with a kind of terrifying delight, Randolph Carter's consciousness did homage to that transcendent ENTITY from which it was derived."

H.P. Lovecraft with E. Hoffman Price, "Through the Gates of the Silver Key"

THE FLIGHT OF RANDOLPH CARTER

“Off that vast hippocephalic abomination leaped the doomed and desperate dreamer, and down through endless voids of sentient blackness he fell. Aeons reeled, universes died and were born again, stars became nebulae and nebulae became stars, and still Randolph Carter fell through those endless voids of sentient blackness.

“Then in the slow creeping course of eternity the utmost cycle of the cosmos churned itself into another futile completion, and all things became again as they were unreckoned kalpas before. Matter and light were born anew as space once had known them; and comets, suns and worlds sprang flaming into life, though nothing survived to tell that they had been and gone, been and gone, always and always, back to no first beginning.

“And there was a firmament again, and a wind, and a glare of purple light in the eyes of the falling dreamer. There were gods and presences and wills; beauty and evil, and the shrieking of noxious night robbed of its prey. For through the unknown ultimate cycle had lived a thought and a vision of a dreamer’s boyhood, and

the heart of all realities. And they learn of the aid Carter received from mysterious Nodens, who shouted in triumph at the frustration of the Crawling Chaos. The listeners gain +3% Cthulhu Mythos and lose 1/1D3 SAN, and must choose again: try to turn away, beg him to stop, or keep on.

THE SILVER KEY: Next Carter describes the Silver Key, the artifact that he learned could open the way to the land of Dreams after he thought he had lost access to it forever. He describes Dream as the one way that a human being can forge for himself true meaning in life, the sort of meaning that is ultimately absent from the sterile faiths and sciences of the waking world. Of course, he observes, the player characters have no doubt felt this for themselves. Perhaps, he speculates, that is why Nyarlathotep attempts to thwart them and attempted to thwart Carter himself. The power of human dream seems to baffle, balk and enrage the Crawling Chaos. The listeners gain +5% Cthulhu Mythos, lose 1/1D6 SAN, and must choose again: try to turn away, beg him to stop, or keep listening.

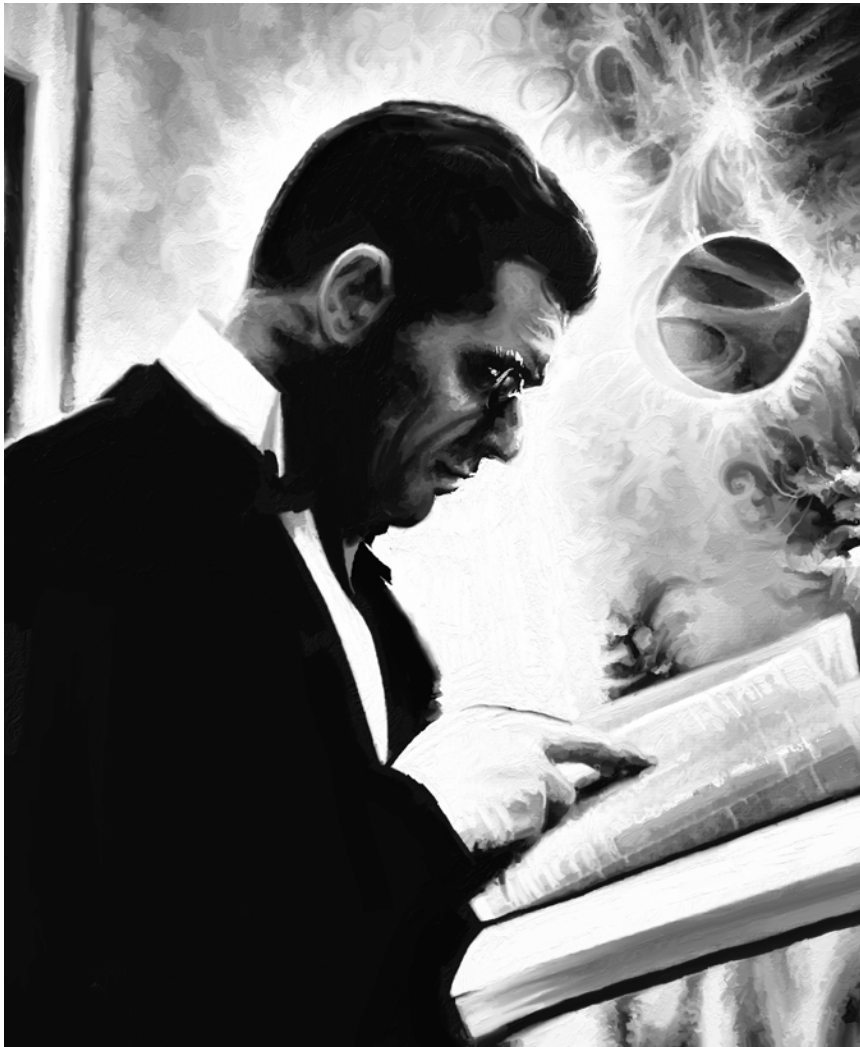
THE PROLONGED OF LIFE: Then Carter describes some of what happened when he used the Silver Key. His encounter with 'Umr at-Tawil and the slumbering Ancient Ones that guard the boundaries between worlds. His realization that he—and each of the Dreamers, too!—has countless other selves scattered throughout time and space that reincarnate in strange ways again and again. How he mistakenly came to share the body of one of his past selves, a hideous alien from bhole-eaten Yaddith. And the aeons he spent in that alien body journeying back to Earth, where he at last found the scroll that would allow him to master the Silver Key and return to the Dreamlands. The listeners gain +8% Cthulhu Mythos and lost 2/1D8+1 SAN. Once more they must choose to either attempt to turn away, or to beg him to stop, or to hear yet more wisdom.

THE KEY AND THE GATE: If they still heed him, Carter shares the revelation that 'Umr at-Tawil is in fact a facet of Yog-Sothoth—the cosmic being that is somehow linked to all of time and space and yet barred from taking shape in some times and spaces—and yet is also somehow the ultimate progenitor or source of Randolph Carter’s own infinity of selves! Why, think of it! That may link Carter at

some essential level to the Elder Things which bred shoggoths and mankind alike, and which some witch-cults sought—perhaps to the Serpent Men of Valusia who crafted such mighty spells—to Great Cthulhu sleeping fitfully in his crypt under the waves, whose stirrings drive artists and psychics mad—even to hideous, hateful Tsathoggua of black N’kai—and it may link all of those to each of the Dreamers, too! His listeners gain +13% Cthulhu Mythos and lose 2D6 SAN as their spinning minds correlate all these cosmic truths.

At that point, or at any point when a Dreamer begs him to stop, or when any Dreamer goes temporarily or indefinitely insane, Carter stops his hypnotic tale.

“Too much knowledge gained too quickly,” he says, “can harm even the stoutest mind.”



now there were remade a waking world and an old cherished city to body and to justify these things. Out of the void S’ngac the violet gas had pointed the way, and archaic Nodens was bellowing his guidance from unhinted deeps.

“Stars swelled to dawns, and dawns burst into fountains of gold, carmine, and purple, and still the dreamer fell. Cries rent the aether as ribbons of light beat back the fiends from outside. And hoary Nodens raised a howl of triumph when Nyarlathotep, close on his quarry, stopped baffled by a glare that seared his formless hunting-horrors to grey dust. Randolph Carter had indeed descended at last the wide marmoreal flights to his marvellous city, for he was come again to the fair New England world that had wrought him.”

H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

THE KING'S NEW QUEST

Randolph Carter has undertaken quest after impossible quest to attain the city of his dreams. But the quests themselves revealed still deeper mysteries and left him hungering to understand the meaning of realities that even he could not dream up. Now a new quest consumes him.

However much or little the Dreamers let Carter tell them of his cosmic adventures, he eagerly goes on to describe his current “studies.” He says he once believed the deepest secret of all was access to this very mystical plane—the Land of Dreams, where a human mind can shape its own reality and meaning out of the chaos of existence. Now, he understands that this too is only an illusion. There is *another* plane of reality even deeper than this.

It is this problem that he has set his mystical intellect to unravel. That is the purpose of Ilel-Vad. Carter's isolation and the melancholy of the town offer his mind a unique perspective to pursue his manipulations of time and space. He hopes to become one with the mind that, he believes, created the world of Dream: Nodens, the Lord of the Abyss, the creator of Outside and In, the Watcher—Nodens who once aided Carter against the schemes of the Crawling Chaos.

Carter speaks of reordering the cosmos itself so that it reveals a conscious mind, like turning the tumblers in a lock. He speaks of opening portals “beyond the veil of the world of dreams” and sliding through them, turning them in on themselves to reveal other realms and existences.

It should become clear that Carter is operating on a much more complex level than the Dreamers can comprehend. He persists in such explanations though they seem to make no sense. Ancient Nodens, he claims, made all that they see, and works even now to maintain all, without entering these worlds himself except in the most dire circumstances.

Carter warns the Dreamers that they are somehow entangled in the plans of Nyarlathotep. The Dark Man's interest in the Dreamers is as clear as a stamp upon their foreheads. That entity, the “Man of the West,” is pure malevolence, and somehow the Dreamers' travel to the land of Dreams is part of its immeasurable and baffling schemes.

They must be vigilant for subterfuge, tricks, and double-dealing. Many creatures are in service to Nyarlathotep and they will try to stop the Dreamers from returning to the waking world.

Why Nyarlathotep has selected them, Carter does not know, but he has long noticed the attention of the Dark Man shifting away from the land of Dreams. This is due in no small part, he believes, to his and others' struggles against Nyarlathotep in dream. Now the Crawling Chaos moves more in the waking world of Earth.

This, however, has not calmed Carter; it has made him even more guarded and suspicious. The waking realm is now forever beyond his grasp. He has become a creature of dreams, although soon, he hopes, he will become something much more.

Carter says that returning the Dreamers to Earth is of primary importance. He says the nearest way to Earth is in the Enchanted Forest, and offers to outfit the Dreamers for travel there. But he insists that they stay with him a while, first. Their arrival has shifted his mood, and this shift has offered him deeper insights into the problems he hopes to unravel.

"A day or two more, I insist. Perhaps it is what I have needed all along."

ASLEEP IN THE PALACE OF DUSK

One of the few places characters might recall sleeping in Ilek-Vad is the Palace of Dusk. Here, guests can manipulate the world in limited ways, altering the change that Randolph Carter has worked upon the town at large, allowing themselves to feel hunger, thirst, and the need for sleep.

The Dreamers find themselves each in a huge, ornate room of perfect appearance, with an endless supply of all needed things. Bureaus open on perfect sets of armor, boots and gear, each sized *exactly* for the character. Wardrobes are filled with perfect analogues of Earthly suits. Food and drink are laid at the door with a slight knock. Those opening the door find their food upon a gold tray, though the party

delivering it is never seen.

Eventually the Dreamers become drowsy and, finding their bedclothes, are drawn to the bed. There, perhaps for the first time in the land of Dreams, they sleep.

THE NIGHTLY TRAVEL

The Dreamers are woken by a gong. The sound is so sudden and pervasive that at first it is unclear if it was real or a dream within their dream. But a moment later it occurs again. A timed beat of a deep, resounding gong plays out, over and over, rousing the group. It is an easy enough matter to assemble in the hallway. There the Dreamers discover that they cannot speak.

Their voices are simply gone. No talking. No shouting. No screams. The Keeper should strictly enforce this. No speech. Those clever enough to attempt to write find their handwriting a mess of gibberish that seems to rearrange itself each time it is viewed. No communication beyond hand signals is possible. There is only the beat of the gong, and the darkened palace.

Dreamers who explore the palace discover several things.

It is night outside. For the first time since their arrival in Ilek-Vad, a huge moon hangs in the sky and the city sleeps. Second, tiny shadows can be seen—some near and some far—leaping from the world and into the night sky. Any Dreamer who makes a Spot Hidden roll sees that these are the shadows of cats, leaping into the air and disappearing into the void. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

The gong continues even outside. It seems to fill the whole world, timed like a metronome. Soon the Dreamers hear the beat of enormous wings and hear the distant, inhuman shrieks of some great beast. The time of the Shantaks has come.

THE COURIERS

The beasts first appear as small dots descending from the moon. Even at vast distances their shrieks and the beat of their wings can be heard. They have been dispatched by Nyarlathotep to collect anyone in the Palace of Dusk, as they do whenever the *pazu* overcomes the king. Usually the king is alone. Tonight their task means collecting

the Dreamers as well. They are stupid creatures.

A Shantak arrives for each Dreamer, growing larger and larger, and finally swarming the palace like a flock of birds fluttering about a light pole. Each Shantak is bigger than an elephant with a head like a horse. Their wings are so vast that when they beat upon the air they can knock a nearby man to the ground with each gust. That makes any attempt to flee a near impossibility when the creature is close — escape requires rolling a special success with Dodge.

Dreamers who rush to find the king in the upper regions of the palace arrive just in time to see the roof torn off by talons the size of a truck. Instead of collapsing, the structure floats off in chunks, like wood underwater swept downstream. (Cost: 1/1D4 SAN.) A Dreamer making a Spot Hidden roll spies Randolph Carter clutched in the claws of the giant Shantak as it rises into the air.

A moment later another Shantak rips its way into the palace in pursuit of the Dreamers. Pieces of the structure float away into space with no ill effects. Those attempting to flee are snatched up by the relentless creatures, pulled off their feet one by one and thrust into the night air, heading for the dark side of the moon.

A Dreamer foolish enough to inflict more than 9 points damage on a Shantak is dropped. The Dreamer has one of the most exhilarating minutes of his or her life plummeting through space towards the ground far below. When the Dreamer hits, he or she wakes in the palace of Ilek-Vad, in the dusk, suffering 1/1D8 SAN loss. The Dreamer's hair has gone completely white. Such Dreamers find their compatriots beds' empty, and the king is nowhere to be found.

THE SHANTAKS

Steed of Nyarlathotep

STR 34 CON 13 SIZ 50 INT 4 POW 11
DEX 10 Move 6/30 flying HP 32

Damage Bonus: +4D6.

Attacks: Bite 55%, 2D6+2.

Armor: 9 points of tough hide.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

SHANTAK · BIRDS

“Winged and whirring, those forms grew larger each moment, and the traveller knew his stumbling was at an end. They were not any birds or bats known elsewhere on earth or in dreamland, for they were larger than elephants and had heads like a horse's. Carter knew that they must be the Shantak-birds of ill rumour, and wondered no more what evil guardians and nameless sentinels made men avoid the boreal rock desert.

“It was hard work ascending, for the Shantak-bird has scales instead of feathers, and those scales are very slippery.”

H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

THE TOWER OF NYARLATHOTEP

After a timeless flight through black space the Shantaks swoop low over the glowing surface of the moon, clutching the Dreamers in their talons. The gong continues to ring out. The pocked lunar surface sweeps by at incredible speed as the Shantaks accelerate towards the dark side. Dreamers who succeed at Spot Hidden spy swarms of creatures moving on the surface below. What these beasts are cannot be discerned.

When the Shantaks cross to the dark side of the moon, the Dreamers spy vast fires lit in mystical patterns below. Soon they see a mile-high crystal tower lit by starlight. There the Shantaks drop them and Randolph Carter roughly on a vast parapet the size of a city block.

The tower is simple in shape but filigreed and carved to insane precision with millions of rectilinear patters. Letters and symbols draw the eye. The crystal surface seems to collect and redirect light, providing a ghostly and perfect illumination. But if the Dreamers gaze through the surface, this clarity is replaced by a milky pearlescence so the interior cannot be spied. Four huge doorways open to the inside of the tower, which must be the size of an Earthly arena.

The gong continues to ring out.

As the giant birds fly off, Randolph Carter stumbles to his feet and begins to walk into the tower. His face is that of a man in a happy reverie, his eyes heavy-lidded and lost, a dim smile on his face. His sleeping mind is under the control of Nyarlathotep. When he is on the moon, his will is not his own.

The Dreamers, opium addicts on the waking world, may find Carter's happy, useless delirium unpleasantly familiar.

Inside the tower they find a giant throne room. The pale crystal darkens like a blood clot, resolving itself in a deep red throne of crystal upon a dais. On the dais, next to the throne, a huge, muscular, dark-skinned man smashes a crystal gong at intervals with a hammer. It is Nyarlathotep himself. Dreamers may recognize him from an earlier encounter.

Each time the hammer falls on the gong, the gong turns blood-red and shatters, scattering pieces into the night air where they float and vanish. The gong reforms before each new stroke.

If the Dreamers thought to enter stealthily, they are lucky—they don't even need to succeed at Hide or Sneak rolls. Nyarlathotep is supremely confident in his position here and fears nothing. He is not looking for intruders. Those clever enough to stay out of sight, or to circle around behind the throne, go undiscovered while the Dark Man gloats over the King of Dusk.

Each beat of the gong brings the King of Dusk closer. When he stands at the dais, he stops, and Nyarlathotep places the hammer on a metal tray next to the throne. He picks up a small emerald decanter filled with golden liquid and moves back to the king.

“My dear friend Mr. Carter,” the Dark Man intones in a rich voice, “welcome once again to my dream—and your nightmare.”

THE PAZU

If the Dreamers wait and watch, they see Nyarlathotep feed Randolph Carter the golden liquid, the *pazu*. They will recall seeing a similar liquid in the Palace of Dusk earlier. Carter drinks greedily as Nyarlathotep, towering more than two feet taller, coos and comforts him, smiling the whole time. After Carter takes several drinks, Nyarlathotep places the decanter down next to the hammer, reclines in his throne, and questions Carter in an alien language.

Isolated Earthly words can be heard from time to time: New York, London, Cairo, Nairobi, Shanghai.

More clearly, the Dreamers hear the pharaoh ask whether Carter has mastered “the play.” Only when Carter says he has does the Dark One give him another thirsty sip of *pazu*. Nyarlathotep tells Carter that the time is upon them and he must perform his part perfectly.

A Dreamer foolish enough to imbibe the *pazu* may do so without discovery. Others observing someone who drinks the liquid simply see the Dreamer smile and then fade, finally disappearing in a burst of light. (Cost to witness: 0/1 SAN.) The drinker is effectively dead. It is clear to all who observe this that the drug is not an escape but a death, either slow or very fast.

CONFRONTATION

Dreamers who confront Nyarlathotep had better have a good idea what they are doing. They are facing the Crawling Chaos in his palace, on his throne, at the height of his power, and he is not to be trifled with. Until Carter is somehow woken, the Dreamers remain unable to speak.

Once he sees them, Nyarlathotep welcomes the Dreamers and speaks much like he did in “The Dream Within a Dream” on page 157. A Dreamer who makes a a Psychology roll (or an Idea roll at 1/5 chance) detects that Nyarlathotep is in fact fearful of their presence, both surprised and disturbed, though hiding it well. He takes the characters on twisting paths of logic, neither confirming or denying that they are part of his plans, all the while puffing up his chest in an effort to appear omniscient.



Dreamers who attempt to directly assault him find themselves held in place by an invisible force.

Their options are limited.

1) WAKING THE KING OF DUSK

Waking Randolph Carter is a difficult task as the *pazu* is a powerful drug. Any attempt to wake him fails, and only rouses the Dark Man's anger, unless the Dreamers use the Eye of Nodens or smash the tower itself.

2) SMASHING THE TOWER OF CRYSTAL

Clever Dreamers who saw the effect of the hammer on the crystal gong might contrive a plan to strike the tower itself with the weapon. They need strike only once to cause the tower to fracture and soon collapse as a blood-red blight of cracks spreads from the point of impact. This rouses the King of Dusk, who confronts Nyarlathotep.

3) USING THE EYE OF NODENS

Any Dreamer who met the mysterious stranger in the Nameless Rock and was marked with the Eye of Nodens (page 56) is filled with certainty that he or she can wake the King of Dusk simply by touching him. Doing so instantly wakes Randolph Carter, who does battle with Nyarlathotep.

4) CRYING OUT TO NODENS

Dreamers who listened to Randolph Carter in the Palace of Dusk may recall his speech about Nodens, whom he called the Creator. Dreamers that cry out for Nodens to protect his servant (Carter), or who verbally prostrate themselves to Nodens while at the throne of the Crawling Chaos, have a POW x 3% chance of rousing Nodens and drawing him to them. Such a plea is the only thing which the characters may say aloud while Carter sleeps.

THE VOID

"Kuranos did not know where Kadath was, or the marvellous sunset city; but he did know that the Great Ones were very dangerous creatures to seek out, and that the Other Gods had strange ways of protecting them from impertinent curiosity. He had learned much of the Other Gods in distant parts of space, especially in that region where form does not exist, and coloured gases study the innermost secrets. The violet gas S'ngac had told him terrible things of the crawling chaos Nyarlathotep, and had warned him never to approach the central void where the daemon sultan Azathoth gnaws hungrily in the dark."

H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

THE DREAMERS IN BATTLE

Once Randolph Carter begins to battle Nyarlathotep, particularly brave or mad Dreamers may wish to join in.

Even attempting to join the battle calls for a Sanity roll. If it FAILS, the Dreamer can join the fray. If it succeeds, the Dreamer is quite sensibly too cowed to face Nyarlathotep's wrath.

If a Dreamer joins in, the player must decide how much effort to put into the assault. The Dreamer can attack with a POW x 5 roll, but then can defend against any possible counterattack with only POW x 1. Or the Dreamer can attack with POW x 4 and defend with POW x 2; or attack and defend alike with POW x 3; or attack at POW x 2 and defend at POW x 4; or attack at POW x 1 and defend at POW x 5.

(Continued.)

CARTER CONFRONTS NYARLATHOTEP

If the King of Dusk is roused, he comes around slowly, and Nyarlathotep's face fills with misery and fear. The Dark Man girds himself for battle, summoning a spear and two giant Shantak birds who stand beside the throne to defend him. He will not retreat from his own stronghold.

In the land of Dreams, Carter is not cowed by Nyarlathotep. He and Nyarlathotep trade barbs in an alien language and finally do battle. They fling bolts of enormous power at one another, which fill the air with ozone and light, melting holes in the crystal Palace. Nyarlathotep seems unable to land attacks on Carter, who, woken, seems refilled with vitality. He laughs and with a wave of his hand remakes a giant Shantak into a pile of floundering fish. With the swing of another hand he smashes Nyarlathotep with bolts of energy which seem to unzip the world around them. With a gesture, Carter opens a portal to Ilel-Vad and urges the Dreamers through.

Those that leap through find themselves back in the palace, followed a moment later by Randolph Carter. The portal closes behind them and leaves Nyarlathotep behind.

NODENS APPEARS

If the Dreamers call on Nodens while at Nyarlathotep's throne—it takes a shout, not a thought or a whisper—they are swept back by an explosion of light and sound. A giant form, in the shape of a hulking man but nothing more than a shadow, stands between Carter, the Dreamers and Nyarlathotep. Carter throws himself to the ground in abasement.

The great shadowy being booms at Nyarlathotep: "What interloper stands before the watcher who oversaw the creation of all things?" Each syllable shakes the tower. (Cost: 0/1D10 SAN.)

A look of abject misery and defeat crosses the features of the Crawling Chaos. Then he locks eyes with the Dreamers in a look

filled with absolute, black hate.

“You!” Nyarlathotep shouts at the characters. “Even if you escape, you shall know no rest! My servants will hunt you to the end of this world, and the next!” A personal threat from such a being costs 0/1D6 SAN. We leave it to the Keeper to decide what shape, if any, capricious Nyarlathotep’s threat takes later in the campaign.

The shadow of Nodens shouts, “SILENCE,” and Nyarlathotep explodes into a spray of tentacles and eyes that burn into into a pure white light. Then even the light vanishes. Nyarlathotep, at least in this form and place, is no more.

In an instant the Dreamers and Carter are back in the Palace of Dusk.

ESCAPE TO ILEK · VAD

Dreamers who wake again in Ilek-Vad find Carter awake and of a different countenance than when they first met. Ilek-Vad itself, though still sedate with contentment, is of a lighter mood. The Dreamers, Carter claims, have saved him from the poison of the *pazu* and the secret plans of Nyarlathotep, which would have eventually twisted his mind and brought ruin down upon the twilight town. They are heroes of the first order and his saviors.

He holds in even more reverence and awe those that effected a direct appearance of Nodens. Long has Carter tried to stir the Creator from his throne outside of all.

Without the pollution of the *pazu*, Carter is certain he will be able to achieve communion with that being soon.

The heroes of Ilek-Vad are sent on their way to where they must go, the Enchanted Wood. The King of Dusk gives them anything they desire that he can make reality, along with his best and fondest wishes.

The Dreamer’s attack can take whatever shape the player describes. If the attack succeeds, it staggers Nyarlathotep—the Keeper must factor that into the description of Nyarlathotep’s defeat. But it draws a blast of annihilating energy from the Crawling Chaos in consequence, or perhaps a manifestation of clawing horrors or poisonous vipers. The Dreamer must make a POW defense roll to resist. If that fails, the Dreamer takes 1D20 damage (no armor protects against it) and loses 1/1D6 SAN. Nyarlathotep gives a failed attack no more than a hateful sneer.

A Dreamer who successfully attacks Nyarlathotep and survives the reprisal gains 1D10 SAN upon returning safe to Ilek-Vad.

. . . BUT IF THEY FAIL?

If the Dreamers fail to rescue Randolph Carter from the treachery of Nyarlathotep, they return to Ilek-Vad to find it changed. If they never left the palace, they awaken no longer there but in the city, and they are seized by an unhappy certainty that something has changed for the worse for their inaction. If they went to the moon but Nyarlathotep had his way with Carter uninterrupted, the Crawling Chaos eventually catches them and sends them back to the sunset city amid the fading echoes of his mocking laughter.

During the day, the city is abandoned. The streets wind and loop in a manner which makes getting lost very easy. The architecture seems different, Victorian even, with gas lamps and other modern oddities not normally found in the Dreamlands. No residents can be found during the day, though remnants of their passage can be found. It seems the population fled some impending disaster, leaving food on tables, money on shop counters and doors ajar.

Directed Dreaming is utterly useless. Even Dreamers who had great influence on the Dreamlands before find themselves powerless now in Ilek-Vad.

The gates of the palace remain closed and impenetrable. The spire of the tower has changed to a pearly white with gold filagree. There is no way inside the palace grounds, except on the night of the full moon.

In the place that Ilek-Vad has become, every night is the night of the full moon.

If the Dreamers pay close attention to the moon, or if one of them makes an Astronomy roll, they see that the face of the moon has changed. From here they see what is ordinarily its dark side.

When the moon rises, party-guests appear in a procession from the otherwise abandoned houses of the city. They wear velvet finery and elaborate porcelain masks showing emotionless faces. They dance through the streets and enter the palace.

Inside, the Dreamers find a lavish ball. All wait for the huge clock to strike midnight, drinking and laughing and dancing as the hours spin on. Conversation is idle and meaningless.

Finally, at midnight, Randolph Carter enters. Or so it appears at first glance. The being is tall and thin and robed in gold, and it wears a perfect mask of Carter's face, sculpted in porcelain.

The figure draws the attention of the crowd by standing at the top of the staircase. The clock strikes midnight. The party-goers shout to unmask. All in the room remove their masks except for the figure at the top of the stairs. The figure says, its porcelain lips moving, "I wear no mask."

The party-goers cry out in alarm — not in surprise but in despair. "No mask? No mask!" they cry, and "The king! He wears the Yellow Sign!" and "The King in Yellow!"

Any Dreamer with Occult or any Art skill at 50% or better recognizes elements of the infamous play *The King In Yellow*, which consumed so many sensitive souls before it was banned and driven underground at the turn of the century. To those with Occult or Art between 25% and 49% there's something dreadfully familiar about it, but they don't remember the details unless they make a roll.

Any Dreamer who makes a Cthulhu Mythos roll knows that the play somehow taps into an alien reality that changes and warps the concrete reality of Earth as easily as a madman's thoughts — or a dreamer's nightmare.

The Dreamers may flee, if they wish.

For Ilek-Vad, the clock strikes midnight forever.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SARNATH · EMPTY STREETS · THE DOOM ·
A TURQUOISE MONSTER MOVING ROUND

*“As if, in the presence of the sea,
We dried our nets and mended sail
And talked of never-ending things”
— Wallace Stevens, “Continual Conversation With a Silent Man”*

DEPARTING THE UNDERWORLD

As the Dreamers prepare to leave the Underworld (see page 104), those clever enough to ask the ghoul Madaeker about their surroundings discover he knows a bit of the surface in this area. His knowledge is limited (and somewhat wrong) and mostly learned through his brief contact with other ghouls. Still, it is better than nothing.

Madaeker says he cannot leave the Underworld, but that he has heard that above the Peaks of Thok are the ruins of a great human city called Sarnath, and that it has been abandoned for thousands of years. The ghouls speak of Sarnath in hushed tones and refuse to elaborate what caused its destruction, whether an invading army, plague or something more sinister.

After this Madaeker says no more, except to bid the characters depart as quickly as possible; every moment beneath the earth is another chance for them to fall under the curse of the Underworld. The ghoul himself cannot leave. He suffers the horrific curse of the Underworld already and would perish in the light.

Wise Dreamers will find leaving Madaeker behind bittersweet. The ghoul has indeed kept his word and more, struggling and perhaps almost dying to bring the characters through to daylight on the other side.

THE UPPER WORLD

The Dreamers emerge into a bright, foggy land, dotted with uneven boulders, green moss and the smell of water. The area seems deserted and is silent save for the lonesome cries of marsh birds.

As the Dreamers' eyes adjust, the banks of fog part. A plain of old, uneven cobblestones dotted with unhealthy gray grass leads down to a lake, which is edged by the ruins of an ancient city. The city is hardly that, mostly nothing more than standing stones a foot or two high made of greenish rock, scattered by time and weather.

As the Dreamers approach the lake they find themselves in a large, bowl-shaped valley. It is clear this was once a city of significant size, long ago destroyed; huge stone towers were toppled and spread along the ground so that nothing more than rubble remains. It appears as if the place were put to dynamite, leaving only crushed rocks in its wake. The scale of the destruction is so that the entire valley is nothing but stone fragments covered by unhealthy grass and small, evil-looking trees.

THE NAMELESS LAKE

The pulverized remains of the city descend a slope to the Nameless Lake, a large freshwater lake with no streams entering or exiting it. The last half-mile to the lake is a marshy bog springing up in the collapsed ruins of what once were docks and areas of commerce. The footing here is treacherous and muddy. Any Dreamer walking all the way to the lake must make a Luck roll or suffer 1 HP damage (and perhaps reduced movement for a few hours) from a twisted ankle.

Those who arrive at the lake can spy across it in the distance a larger, grey stone shape. It is the granite spike of Alkurion, though the Dreamers will likely not know this. The water is clear but greenish. It is potable but makes those that consume it slightly ill.

Greenish-tinged fog rolls across the lake from the north and seems to coat the entire valley in a green haze, making visibility vary from moment to moment. The cry of marsh birds can be heard but none can be seen, and nothing seems to move in the water.

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- The tempo of a distant drip-drip-drip of water on stone.
- The smell and taste of the unwholesome green water of the lake.
- The thickness and smell of fog.
- The symbols worn by the Green Priests or the guards of the Ilmarek road.

THE IDOL

In the midst of the ruins near the lake stands a huge, roughly-hewn idol of soapy green stone: a giant water-lizard with ingots of gold for eyes and a fan of giant blue-green gems along its neck. It stands on four legs, raising its head as if it has heard something, looking to the lake. Inhuman, unrecognizable writing is etched on its base. (If the Collector is present, he cannot read it.)

The idol has been festooned with fresh lilies, still-smoldering incense, the gutted remains of dogs and recent sprays of blood.

It seems completely out of place, sitting as it does amidst grey grass and a cracked landscape. It is untouched by the elements or time, immaculate save for the blood of offerings.

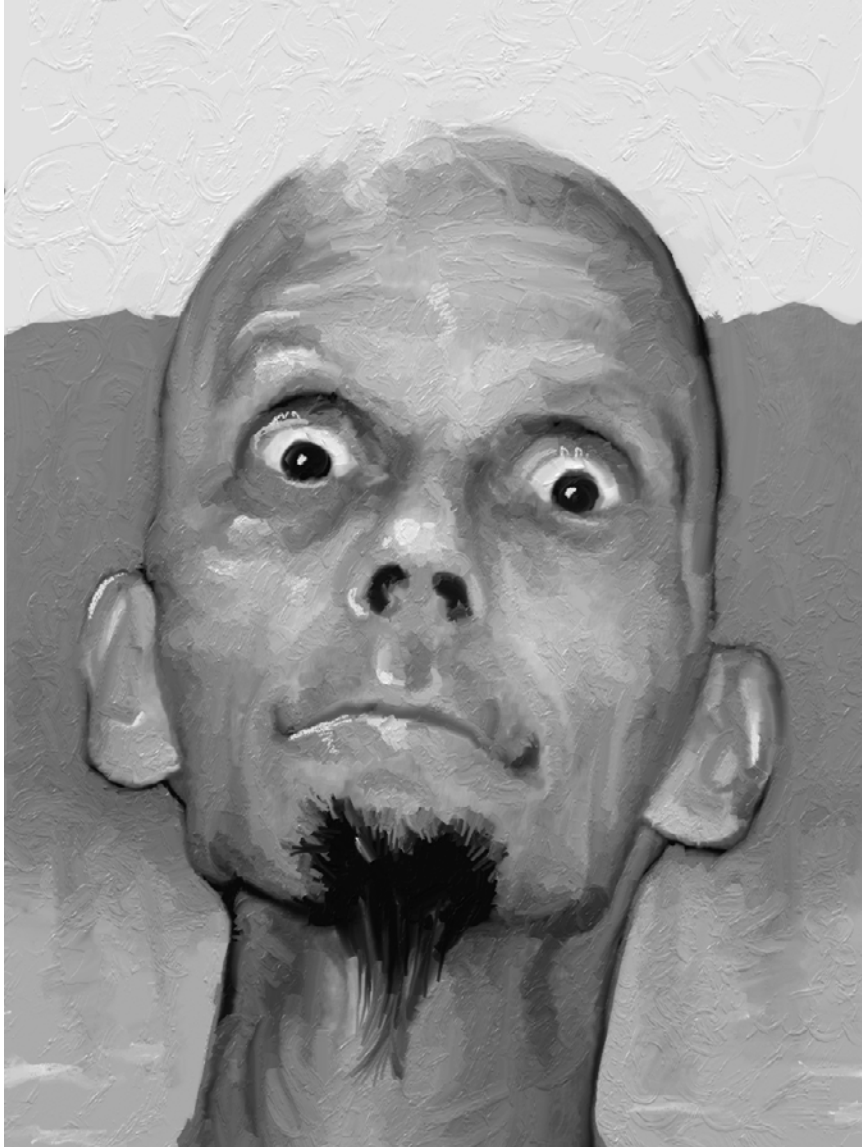
A Dreamer touching the statue receives a disturbing sensation like a deep and subtle shaking of the body by some unseen force, as if the statue were a tuning fork imparting its vibration by touch. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

THE OFFERING

The Dreamers hear distant weeping cries from the lake. Nearly fifty feet out in the water the head and arms of a man can be spied, just barely. The man is lashed to a crude cross, which apparently is sunk into the marshy land and has been overrun by the tide. It is unclear if the lake connects to a larger body of water, but in a few more minutes, if the tide continues, the man will drown.

The man's face is turned to face the statue but he is far enough out that he spies the Dreamers even if they don't approach the statue proper. He shouts in Talunen but switches to English if he hears them speak that tongue. Whether they understand him or not, he is clearly pleading for rescue. If they wait and let him drown it will cost each Dreamer 0/1D4 SAN.

Rescuing him requires a Swim roll. If it succeeds the Dreamers bring him to shore safely. Each Dreamer who fails the Swim roll must make a CON x 5 roll or suffer 1D3 damage from inhaling a mouthful of green water before they get back to shore.



The man is bald, bearded and covered in tattoos and markings. His name is Uvan Go. He is small and sickly and looks about fifty years old. He was captured and dragged here from the city of Ilarnekk against his will by priests in green robes, who trussed him up this morning at the foot of the lake. They said nothing to him and he claims to have no idea why out of all the residents of Ilarnekk—quite a metropolis—he was chosen as the victim.

Uvan knows the horrific story of Sarnath, as do all residents of Mnar, and he is very aware of where he is and what day it is. If pressed, and he feels like the Dreamers are taking too long to leave, he offers the abbreviated story of the Doom of Sarnath, all the while urging the characters to leave the area before nightfall.

UVAN GO

Thief and Unlucky Descendent of Sarnath, age 50

STR 10 CON 14 SIZ 9 INT 12 POW 12
DEX 15 APP 7 EDU 9 SAN 60 HP 12

Damage Bonus: None.

Skills: Bargain 43%, Climb 55%, Conceal 71%, Fast Talk 44%, Hide 70%, Sneak 54%, Spot Hidden 60%. *Languages:* Ulet (Own) 60%, English 35%, Talunen 33%.

Attacks: Dagger 55%

Uvan is a short, tattooed, sickly-looking man getting on in years. His head is carefully scraped clean of hair, and his luxurious, greying brown beard is carefully tied with braids and ornamented with cheap costume jewels. He wears little more than a loincloth and worn leather bracers. Careful examination of his wrists and ankles reveal years of scarring from shackles. He has no shoes or possessions.

He speaks Ulet, English, Talunen and can swear in Pross.

Uvan is a cutthroat and thief from Ilarnekk with the unfortunate luck to be of the bloodline of Taran-Ish, the priest consumed by the horrors of Bokrug and the beings of Ib a millennium before. Every year on this date the Green Priests of Ilarnekk use magic to locate an heir to Taran-Ish, and they deposit him as an offering at the Nameless Lake to be consumed by Bokrug and its servants to appease the cycle.

Uvan has no idea he has such relations. He is usually focused on either theft or serving time in prison. In his heyday he was a scrappy young troublemaker robbing people in the Plaza of Snakes. Now he is a clever old criminal more concerned with petty crimes. Or at least he was, until he was set upon by the silent Green Priests on the Street of Colored Smoke in Ilarnekk. What they would want to do with him, he had no idea.

Uvan is very familiar with the generalities of the situation: the Doom that came to Sarnath in ancient times and its return on the yearly anniversary. That anniversary is today. He is smart enough to be terrified and look for escape. He is desperate to escape Sarnath before nightfall, before the Doom returns.

THE DOOM

Long ago, Sarnath was a vast city of more than 50 million human inhabitants. These people first came down the river Ai. Discovering another, inhuman race inhabiting the area, the beings of Ib, the newcomers put them to the sword and settled the land for their own.

The beings of Ib were a rubbery, inhuman bug-eyed amphibian race that had no speech, known to have descended from the moon in a gray mist thousands of years before the first man set foot in Mnar. Still, they were benign, neither trading nor engaging in conflict with humans, instead keeping to their revels and secret plans. Their only crime was ugliness, and their possession of a prime freshwater lake which the humans coveted.

The beings of Ib worshipped their god Bokrug, the water lizard. Their god did not assist them when the humans burned and destroyed them, toppling their city and erasing their buildings with an industry and power the beings of Ib could not counter. The humans killed every member of that inhuman race and captured the idol of their god.

This green, roughly hewed statue was set in the temple of Sarnath to be the centerpiece of celebrations of victory over the Ibians. But that night something horrific occurred. Strange glowing lights were seen over the lake, and in the morning the high priest was found slain in the temple, having marked the temple with the symbol for DOOM in his own blood.

Worse yet, the huge statue of the lizard god had vanished.

For the next ten centuries, Sarnath soared in size and beauty, becoming the largest and most opulent city in Mnar. It was a center of trade and learning, and a vast priesthood and class of sages rose up in a huge temple district. Thousands came from all over to see the beauty and amazing architecture of the city and to trade with the caravans which converged there.

On the thousandth anniversary of the destruction of the beings of Ib, doom struck Sarnath. During the yearly celebration of the destruction of Ib, heavy mists rolled into the city and the people became maddened with fear. Many fled, reporting sightings of the

SARNATH AND IB

"Not far from the gray city of Ib did the wandering tribes lay the first stones of Sarnath, and at the beings of Ib they marveled greatly. But with their marveling was mixed hate, for they thought it not meet that beings of such aspect should walk about the world of men at dusk. Nor did they like the strange sculptures upon the gray monoliths of Ib, for why those sculptures lingered so late in the world, even until the coming men, none can tell; unless it was because the land of Mnar is very still, and remote from most other lands, both of waking and of dream.

"As the men of Sarnath beheld more of the beings of Ib their hate grew, and it was not less because they found the beings weak, and soft as jelly to the touch of stones and arrows. So one day the young warriors, the slingers and the spearmen and the bowmen, marched against Ib and slew all the inhabitants thereof, pushing the queer bodies into the lake with long spears, because they did not wish to touch them."

H.P. Lovecraft, "The Doom that Came to Sarnath"

long-dead beings of Ib as they danced and cavorted through the mist covered streets, silently reveling in communion with their god.

A single night was all that was required to scour the world clean of Sarnath and all who refused to flee. Those who returned found not the greatest city of the known world but a marshy ruin of smashed stones and gray grass. In the midst of the destruction sat the rough-hewn statue of Bokrug, the water-lizard, its revenge realized at last.

The statue was moved nearby to the high temple of Ilarneq, where dark rites were enacted to it to prevent further retribution against man. Yet even this appeasement is not complete.

Every year on the anniversary of the destruction of Ib, strange lights fill the lake. Ghostly, silent, rubbery beings dance in the long-vanished streets, and the statue of the water-lizard god returns to the ruins of Sarnath. Tonight, the night the Dreamers arrive in the ruins, is that anniversary.

THE GREEN PRIESTS' PLAN

Since the discovery of the statue of Bokrug in the ruins of Sarnath thousands of years ago, the Green Priests of the Onyx Temple of Ilarneq have taken the task of containing, appeasing and controlling the spirit of the water-lizard god. They carried the huge statue back to Ilarneq, encased it in the Onyx Temple at the highest point of the city, and surrounded it with wards, sigils and countersigns to prevent Sarnath's Doom from turning its power on Ilarneq, home to Sarnath's descendants.

Every year, however, as the anniversary of the destruction of Sarnath approaches, disturbances rock the temple. Shuddering earthquakes violently shake the area surrounding the statue. All who feel such disturbances know that Bokrug is waking and will soon be hungry.

Luckily, the true source of Bokrug's obsession seems to be Sarnath. On the anniversary, the statue transports itself to the ruins of Sarnath. It presides over the ghostly lights and the spectacle of the immaterial beings of Ib as they cavort and dance silently around the lake. The next day it rematerializes in the Onyx temple, where it

sleeps again for a year.

Long ago, it was discovered that favor seemed to fall on the city of Ilarneq when the blood of Sarnath was spilled there on the anniversary of the Doom. Those of Sarnathian descent were kidnapped and sacrificed on the statue of Bokrug in exchange for a good crop, healthy livestock and good trade. There was never any shortage of heirs; the survivors of the Doom bred in great numbers in Ilarneq. This practice persisted for nearly 800 years but it was bloody and difficult and did not agree with their religion.

An even more potent formula was struck upon nearly two hundred years ago. Using magic, the Green Priests managed to locate the descendants of Taran-Ish, the priest who presided over the statue of Bokrug a millennium before. Finding such a descendant was difficult, and often took most of the year, but it made the sacrifice more effective. The sacrifice was bound on the shore of the Nameless Lake, which would rise as the Doom returned. This type of sacrifice seemed to please Bokrug greatly, and in the last two hundred years Ilarneq has thrived like never before.

Uvan Go is the latest in a chain of offerings to the spirit of Bokrug and the monstrous ghosts of the beings of Ib.

THE GREEN PRIESTS ATTACK

The five Green Priests who brought Uvan Go to Sarnath have made camp on a hill in the mountains outside of the ruins. There they burn what little wood they can find and watch the valley below. They plan to stay until the morning and then return to Ilarneq. However, to be certain nothing goes wrong, they are keeping a close eye on their prisoner.

They see it if the Dreamers free Uvan Go. If the Dreamers and Go seem to be making progress out of the valley, the priests step in to prevent the prisoner's escape, even if they must risk their own lives to do so. To the Green Priests, the threat of Bokrug and the curse of Sarnath is a very real thing. Their entire religion is predicated on protecting their city from it. They are selfless zealots capable of nearly any action to ensure that Uvan Go remains alive and within

THE GREEN PRIESTS' SPELLS

BLACK BOX: Costs 24 magic points and 1D8 SAN, and takes three rounds. Two or more magicians may combine MP to cast it, but each must know the spell and each suffers the SAN loss. This horrific magical effect manifests as a floating cloud of monstrous faces, brimstone and blue-white magical power. It engulfs a single target and completely obscures the victim from sight. It melts and mutates the victim to terrifying effect. The victim's INT and POW remain unchanged, but all other stats are affected. Roll 2D6 for STR, CON, SIZ, DEX and APP. On each, if the result is even this 2D6 is added to the stat; if it is odd, it is subtracted. If any stat except APP goes below 1, the target dies. If the target survives, his or her body is horrifically changed, with blights, malformations and buboes covering every available area of flesh. The victim becomes an unrecognizable monster. This effect is permanent.

(Continued.)

the ruins of Sarnath until the coming of the Doom. Their magic points are enhanced by recent sacrifices and rituals.

If the Green Priests feel Uvan Go is under physical threat of harm or death—that is, it seems the Dreamers or some threat not related to the Doom might injure or kill the thief—they descend from their mountain overlook and attack.

The first round of the encounter, at a distance of 30 feet, two of the priests begin to cast the spell Stupefying Blast on the two Dreamers with the greatest SIZ. This takes two rounds. In the first of the two rounds of that incantation, two other priests cast White Webs of Soren to immobilize Uvan Go and anyone threatening them. The last priest defends his compatriots with his staff. If more than one priest is killed, all remaining priests retreat and cast Black Box, targeting the most dangerous Dreamers with the horrific effects of the spell.

If the priests manage to immobilize the whole group, they bind them *all* to leave them for the Doom. If the characters manage to overcome the priests without killing them all, they can easily learn from them the whole story of the Doom and Uvan Go. The priests fight to the death to keep Uvan Go alive, bound and in Sarnath for the Doom at nightfall.

THE GREEN PRIESTS

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Pow	Dex	DB	MP	HP
#1	16	6	11	13	17	+1D4	15	9
#2	18	14	12	9	14	+1D4	21	13
#3	8	6	12	9	14	—	12	9
#4	15	6	8	10	4	—	12	7
#5	10	9	13	12	3	—	32	11

Skills in Common: Dodge (DEX x 2) + 10%, Hide 35%. *Languages:* Ulet (Own) 55%, English 30%.

Attacks: Staff 41%, 1D8+db

Spells: Black Box, Stupefying Blast, White Web of Soren

DEALING WITH UVAN GO

Pulling the sickly man from the water is a chore. Once rescued, he chokes, coughs and sputters on the ground. This soon turns to wailing and shaking and crying. Anyone making a Spot Hidden roll or a Psychology roll spots the shackle marks on his arms and legs or notices him concealing them.

Uvan is surrounded, and plans to use subterfuge and treachery to either get the Dreamers to help him from the area or to steal enough from them to escape on his own. In his current state, with no boots and little clothing, no food and no weapon, he will likely perish or be killed before too long outside the ruins anyway.

He is wracked with dread. The story of Sarnath is not some vague, supernatural tale—it is a factual account of an actual event. Everyone in the Dreamlands who knows of Sarnath and the Doom that befell it are quite certain of its reality. Uvan is no different. As nightfall approaches he becomes more and more frantic, searching for any way out, like a rat caught in a trap.

If confronted about the scars on his arms and legs he tells the Dreamers that the priests who bound him were rough and that he has been wrongfully held captive a long time. (In fact he was held only for two nights. The marks are from prison sentences.) If challenged for his false emotions, he sobers and explains the Doom, frantically looking to accelerate his escape from the area before nightfall.

ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE

Simply leaving Sarnath proves much harder than can be imagined, especially with Uvan Go in tow. In fact, as long as the thief and descendant of the priest of Sarnath is with the group or shadowing the group, the Dreamers *cannot* leave. On a road that appears to lead straight out of the ruins a greenish fog falls. After a while it becomes clear the Dreamers and Uvan Go are walking deeper into the ruins and toward the statue of Bokrug, not away. While crossing the lake they swim or paddle through the fog only to land on the very shore they tried to leave behind.

STUPEFYING BLAST: Costs 16 magic points and 1D6 SAN and takes two rounds to cast. A chaotic blast of blue and green energy is sent up to 30 feet towards the target, who must successfully resist the caster's magic points on the Resistance Table or be struck deaf, blind, mute, and numb. Each hour after being struck, the victim can try to roll POW x 3% or less. After succeeding thrice in a row, the victim is cured.

WHITE WEB OF SOREN: Costs 4 magic points per strand, and 1D6 SAN and 1 round per strand of web. The spell shoots a white ribbon which wraps around a target up to 30 feet away. Each strand has 1D10 STR, cumulative. When this total exceeds the target's SIZ, the target is immobilized and falls to the ground. The target may attempt to free himself or herself each round by resisting the strands' cumulative STR with his or her STR on the Resistance Table.

Worse yet, if they free Uvan Go—even if they refuse to let him join them—he follows and must be physically restrained, knocked unconscious or killed to keep him from tagging along.

LEAVING UVAN GO BEHIND

This sounds simple but is not. Once the thief is freed from his crucifix, he refuses to be separated from the Dreamers without the group resorting to violence. Even then, he will shadow them and attempt to follow them out of the area. The characters' options are outlined below.

If the Dreamers do manage to leave without Uvan Go in their party or pursuing, movement outside the immediate area before nightfall is sufficient to avoid the Doom. Most Dreamers will find it hard to abandon such a pathetic figure to the power that seems to grow as night falls, but self-preservation is a powerful sentiment.

KILLING UVAN GO

Uvan Go is pathetic and difficult but is not a direct threat except under the most isolated circumstances. Murdering him in cold blood is possible only if a Dreamer *fails* a Sanity roll. Dreamers who succeed at the Sanity roll cannot bring themselves to attack him or allow him to be killed. If they attack him despite succeeding at the Sanity roll they lose 1/1D10 SAN for killing him or 1/1D4 if he runs away.

If Go is attacked while mobile, allow the thief a Dodge roll to avoid the attack. If the thief survives, from that point on he will keep his distance, and if pursued he falls back and shadows the Dreamers, staying out of sight. They locate him only if they make a Spot Hidden roll and Uvan Go fails a Sneak roll.

If the characters bind Go, it is likely that the Green Priests—fearful of their offering being slain before the appointed time—will attempt to save him by attacking the characters. The priests attack in force armed with staves and magic. (See “The Green Priests Attack” on page 235.)

ELUDING UVAN GO

Eluding Uvan Go is unlikely. The thief is extremely clever and watchful—he did not survive the Plaza of Snakes by being unobservant—and as desperate as he is, will easily outpace a group on foot. Even if the Dreamers attempt to flee at high speed, Uvan Go shadows the group, hoping to sneak in and rob them when they make camp.

The Dreamers must roll Spot Hidden and Uvan Go must fail a Sneak roll for them to locate him. Even then, the thief runs for cover to start the whole shadowing attempt over again. Dreamers hoping to run the thief down must beat his CON with theirs on the Resistance Table. If Go wins, he outruns the pursuers and begins to shadow the group again. If the Dreamers win, Go collapses, exhausted from the pursuit.

BINDING UVAN GO

Once Uvan Go is freed from his crucifix, he is extremely difficult to truss up again. The Dreamers would need to either overpower him or knock him unconscious to tie him up once more. If they attempt it, they must make a group Luck roll. If this fails, Go can make a Dodge roll against the attack.

If the thief's Dodge roll succeeds, he flees the area and shadows the group. (See "Eluding Uvan Go" for more details.) If he fails, the attacks land normally. Once he is knocked unconscious, of course, it is easy to bind Go up once more.

To grapple Uvan Go and bind him while he's awake, the Dreamers must make three Grapple rolls in a row. If they do, Go is held down and may be bound. If the Dreamers fail at two Grapple attacks in a row, Uvan Go struggles free and runs off.

Once tied up, if not silenced, Go swears and shouts at the Dreamers. If they ever intimate that they may kill him, Go begins to shriek, repeating their threats. This draws the Green Priests down from their mountain overlook to "save" their offering. (See "The Green Priests Attack," page 235.)

WALKING OUT NORTH

If the Dreamers walk out of the ruins of Sarnath without Uvan Go, the Green Priests do not interfere with them.

A worn track heads north. It becomes a broken cobblestone road. As the land rises and levels out it becomes a finely maintained road of newly placed stones with signs marking the distance to Ilarne.

After a dozen or so miles, the Dreamers spy small, wooden guard houses overlooking the road from nearby hills. The guards in these hill forts wear the green sashes of Ilarne and watch the path to Sarnath. The guards are affable and will share a fire with the Dreamers and answer basic questions. Most speak some sort of English.

They are interested to hear what the characters saw or did in Sarnath, but in truth they don't care to know too much. Most likely have seen ghostly manifestations of the Doom in years before. For the moment they feel safe enough, though. The road is relatively secure and free from incursions by threatening wildlife and bandits.

If the Dreamers hope to find more civilized areas, the guards point to Ilarne. After ten days of walking along the road to the north the characters will arrive at the grand, ancient city. In Ilarne they can find peace and safety—as long as the Doom does not descend. If the Dreamers killed Uvan Go, the earth quakes and Bokrug descends to avenge his people once again. Be sure to have priests in Ilarne lament that the untimely death of Uvan Go has doomed them all. If the Dreamers escape, that knowledge costs them 1D6+1/1D20 SAN. From Ilarne the Dreamers might find transport by ship to Ilek-Vad (page 196), Inquanok (page 114) or Lhosk (page 143).

ACROSS THE NAMELESS LAKE

Crossing the Nameless Lake requires some fortitude or a vehicle. Clever Dreamers might forge a primitive float from the rotted trees found along the edges of the lake with a Boating or Sailing roll. Or they might attempt to swim the distance. That needs two Swim rolls or the swimmer suffers 1D4 HP damage from choking and must begin again.

The lake itself is safe enough. Nothing lives within it and the waters are relatively still, but it is cold and has an oily, ill taste. Suc-

cessfully crossing the water brings the Dreamers, cold and wet, to a series of low hills to the south. From this vantage point, the spires of Akurion near the ruins of Sarnath are the only signs of habitation.

The only way out of the valley is further up into the hills. Away from Sarnath the land becomes more verdant and treacherous. The Dreamers must travel great distances back and forth to avoid dead-falls and huge clumps of stinging nettles.

Soon, the Dreamers come to the place where the hills drop off to the south and fall into a great, open plain of *nothing*. The view is disconcerting. The trees and grasses fade below them as the hills descend and lead out into a vast, open plain broken only by the distant grey horizon. It is a formless plain of dust, not quite a desert, with no trees, structures or visible landmarks.

Wise Dreamers should be filled with dread. Any NPCs urge the party to turn back.

Dreamers foolish enough to continue south find days and days of emptiness—they spy not a single living thing. As they move further south, the sun becomes an odd, wan, indistinct shape in the sky, and the moon at night seems to loom larger and larger.

Finally, the Dreamers come upon a crack in the ground, the first natural landmark spied since the hills. The further south they go, the more cracks they spy, and these cracks seem to intertwine to form larger, cube-shaped sections of land the size of towns. Each tilts slightly, as if they were slammed together by some huge force, like children's blocks hastily shoved together. At last, at the most terrible distance from civilized lands, when the Dreamers have been treading on the cobblestones of the world, they come to the edge of the Dreamlands themselves.

There, they can goggle over the edge of the world. At the southernmost extent the building-blocks of the world have dropped away in an uneven zig-zag of cubes, which simply end at the blankness of the void. (Cost: 1/1D10 SAN.) Here, at night the moon seems to fill the sky, while by day the sun is nothing but an oblong blue-white speck. Dreamers who turn back north find themselves at Sarnath in no time. Those who explore over the edge of the world plummet into the abyss and are lost forever.

DOOM

"Then, close to the hour of midnight, all the bronze gates of Sarnath burst open and emptied forth a frenzied throng that blackened the plain, so that all the visiting princes and travelers fled away in fright. For on the faces of this throng was writ a madness born of horror unendurable, and on their tongues were words so terrible that no hearer paused for proof. Men whose eyes were wild with fear shrieked aloud of the sight within the king's banquet-hall, where through the windows were seen no longer the forms of Nargis-Hei and his nobles and slaves, but a horde of indescribable green voiceless things with bulging eyes, pouting, flabby lips, and curious ears; things which danced horribly, bearing in their paws golden platters set with rubies and diamonds and containing uncouth flames. And the princes and travelers, as they fled from the doomed city of Sarnath on horses and camels and elephants, looked again upon the mist-begetting lake and saw the gray rock Akurion was quite submerged."

H.P. Lovecraft, "The Doom that Came to Sarnath"

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE DOOM

Those trapped in the loop of "leaving" are subject to any manner of mystical manifestations. As darkness falls a green miasma of fog rises and these manifestations grow in power and appearance until they rise up and begin to consume the party one by one. It is important for the Keeper to construct a clear narrative here of the group wandering through the fog and occasionally being separated and frightened by visions.

BECOMING SEPARATED

Dreamers not remaining with their group are likely to become lost. Every time a character sets off to complete some task alone in the mist, he or she must make a Luck roll. Failure indicates the character is lost in the smoke, unable to locate the other Dreamers. If it succeeds, the lone character finds the group again after a few minutes of frantic searching and shouting.

Uvan Go, for his part, clutches at the strongest Dreamer and refuses to let go. He constantly urges the group forward, and to remain together, and openly states his fear of things in the mist.

THE GHOSTLY PROCESSION

The Dreamers are overtaken by a seeping green-gray mist which seems to subsume them and obscure sight. All Spot Hidden rolls are halved. Soon, they begin to hear distant sounds. Those making Listen rolls recognize the beat of a drum and the clatter of tambourines. Soon shadows appear in the fog, dancing and moving in line, but never clearly seen, marching off into the smoke. No matter how the characters pursue, they cannot overtake this procession, though it can be clearly heard. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

The shadows cavort and shout in an alien language, but as the procession winds along they begin to shout in unison a word that Uvan Go at least understands: "BOKRUG! BOKRUG!" This chant rises in madness until it reaches a deafening crescendo, and then sud-



denly stops mid-word. The shadows, too, instantly vanish. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

Those searching the mist who make (halved) Spot Hidden rolls come upon the remnants of the procession: discarded masks, sticks of incense (still warm), confetti and a black liquid which seems to be blood. No people can be seen.

THE BEINGS OF IB

This manifestation only occurs to a separated party member. As the lone Dreamer wanders in the mist, seeking the group, he or she hears the squelching footsteps of something large and wet. With a Listen roll the Dreamer can tell this creature, whatever it is, walks on two legs.

Soon, the smell arrives, the dank and rich odor of something rotting in a lake. The footprints continue to shadow the dreamer's own, and if the character shouts (either to their group or as a warning) he or she hears a low moaning croak in response.

This croaking voice begins to sound out more and more often, building into a ululation that finally can be discerned as laughter. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.) The wet sound of slapping feet rushes toward the

Dreamer. If the Dreamer turns to run, he or she comes face-to-face with an aquatic horror. The being from Ib has huge, blank eyes, wide fish-lips, gills and scaly gelatinous skin. It clutches the shoulders of the Dreamer and croaks in his or her face, emitting the foulest stench the character has ever experienced. (Cost: 1/1D8 SAN.) Then the being flaps off into the mist again.

The Dreamer must make a CON x 2% roll or fall to the ground retching. As he or she recovers, the rest of the group stumbles across the Dreamer, but the being from Ib cannot be found. If the appearance of the creature is related to Uvan Go, the hardened criminal breaks down weeping, shouting, over and over, "The doom! The doom!"

If the lost Dreamer makes the CON x 2% roll, he or she can attack the being from Ib. It moves more slowly than a human and can be destroyed without too much trouble. The other Dreamers find the missing one afterward.

A BEING FROM IB

Flapping squelcher

STR 8	CON 9	SIZ 14	INT 13	POW 11
DEX 10	Move 7/8 swimming			HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Attacks: Paws (two attacks) 40%, 1D4

Armor: None.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6

BOKRUG

This happens only to an isolated Dreamer. Something huge shifts in the fog. With a Listen roll the Dreamer hears the crunch and clatter of rocks and the sound of something like canvas pulled across a stone floor. The ground shakes and the dreamer stumbles.

Something heavy and enormous moves towards the Dreamer. Fear begins to build, leaving the Dreamer breathless and ready to run. A smell gathers and becomes overwhelming, a musty stench of something long dead but still ripe. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.) The character must make a Luck roll or be overcome by the need to flee, to be anywhere

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but here. The sounds become more and more frequent, as does the power of the earthquake.

The Dreamer is drawn to a globe of white glowing in the mist. As the Dreamer approaches, it appears to be an opalescent stone the size of a shield, embedded in rough rock. It glows with an unnatural blue-white light. If the Dreamer touches it, a smaller, darker circle spins into view on the stone *and focuses on the Dreamer*, and it takes only a moment for the character to realize that it is an *eye*. (Cost: 1/1D6 SAN.)

By the time the character realizes the truth, that he or she is *on* monstrous Bokrug, it is too late. The creature shifts, sending the Dreamer flailing into the fog, falling down the beast and off to the ground (1D4+1 HP damage). The white eyes rise up to an incredible height, focused on the Dreamer, and then rushes down as if going in for the kill (1/1D4 SAN).

The killing blow never comes. Bokrug is gone. The character is left in the silent fog, looking for his or her compatriots.



THE CONSUMPTION OF UVAN GO

A gathering terror engulfs the group if they are unfortunate enough to still be in the company of Uvan Go when the last rays of sunlight disappear from the valley of Sarnath. Sounds slowly fill the air: chanting, a relentless drumbeat, exploding fireworks, and the fevered shouts of worshippers in an odd language. Finally, horrifically, Uvan Go is struck and paralyzed by some force, and a ghost world falls in around the characters. (Cost: 1/1D4 SAN.)

The Dreamers are surrounded by a magical shadow of Sarnath as it once was, overlapping the ruins at their feet, restoring the city to its former glory. Ghosts dance in the streets, cavorting outside the transparent outlines of a vast and ornate temple to celebrate their long-ago destruction of Ib and its beings. These ghost citizens smile and laugh but do not react to the characters. Instead they walk straight through them. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

Uvan Go, foaming at the mouth, begins to shake, and then begins to change. He transforms into a ghost-like image of his lost ancestor Taran-Ish, the high priest of ancient Sarnath, and then seems to fall in step with the other ghostly inhabitants of the city. (Cost: 1/1D4 SAN.) He wears the illusion of Taran-Ish's form like a spectral blanket, but those looking closely with a Spot Hidden roll can see Uvan Go trapped in this illusion, his eyes wide, pleading and full of consciousness. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

Pulling Uvan Go from this pre-described course is not possible. Attempts to stop him or block his way cause the character interfering with his path to be flung backwards as if struck by a STR 60 hand, suffering 1D8+1D4 HP damage. The only thing which can interrupt the chain of events moving forward past this point is killing Uvan Go. Doing so dooms Ilarneke to the wrath of Bokrug. Realizing afterward that by killing Uvan Go they have killed Ilarneke itself costs 1D6+1/1D20 SAN.

Playing out the illusion, Uvan Go/Taran-Ish enters the temple and within it finds the actual statue of Bokrug, not a ghostly illusion. The

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“priest” considers the idol. He stands before it for a long time. He stands until his head cocks to one side, his mouth goes slack and his ghost eyes widen.

Finally, he pulls a ghost knife from his belt and his face, cracked with an odd smile, tilts to one side. Uvan Go/Taran-Ish slides the ghost knife into his own stomach, upward into the depths of his chest. The transparent blade cuts the real flesh, and real blood wells out. (Cost: 1/1D4 SAN.) He crumples to the ground and the illusions vanish as the blood pours from the wound. Uvan Go dies in seconds, leaving the Dreamers in the sudden darkness of the ruins of Sarnath, devoid of anything living save themselves. Even the statue of Bokrug is gone. The cycle of the Doom has spun once more, and Ilarneq and the descendants of Sarnath remain safe for one more year.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE ENCHANTED WOOD · ULTHAR · THE ZOOQS ·
OF THE TWO DREAMS, NIGHT AND DAY

*“You dweller in the dark cabin,
Rise, since rising will not waken,
And hail, cry hail, cry hail.”*
— Wallace Stevens, *“Hymn from a Watermelon Pavilion”*

Dreamers searching for a gate to the waking world will find many who know of such a passage. But none exist in civilized realms except the gate in the Enchanted Wood, located near the town of Ulthar on the River Skai. Most who are asked know where this city lies and will gladly direct travelers there.

ULTHAR AND WHAT IS KNOWN OF THE GATE

It is well known that the Enchanted Wood contains a gate to the waking world of Earth. The city of Ulthar, a peaceful place occupied by traders and farmers on the River Skai, is the nearest and largest settlement to the Enchanted Wood. This place is crawling with Earthly dreamers, those who find their way to the Dreamlands every night and who remain for only a few hours, days or weeks before disappearing back to the “real world.” Everyone in the city is quite used to people from Earth and their customs, beliefs and languages.

The city is a cluster of winding red and white houses, bulging with upper stories that follow winding streets. It is picturesque, peaceful and beautiful, built around the single huge stone edifice of a temple to the Elder Ones, which sits upon the hill in the center of the city, covered in ivy.

The main law of the city is this: None may kill a cat. These intelligent creatures converse with humans if they care to, and live off the good graces of the locals, who consider them both good luck and

a deterrent to evil magics. Because of the law, the city is covered in cats. The second law, more recent, forbids drinking alcohol anywhere in Ulthar. Locals are quick to inform visitors of the rules.

Off to the northeast, down the river Skai, the rolling vast green of the Enchanted Wood is visible from nearly every eastern part of the city.

Locals believe there is a gate to Earth in the Enchanted Wood, and that dreamers emerge from the woods and walk to the city. But beyond that they know very little. It slowly becomes evident that no one in Ulthar has *seen* a gate—not even the dreamers from Earth! They have simply surmised, over the years, that since dreamers from Earth emerge from the woods, a gate must be there.

The locals also share the inconvenient fact that no one can enter the Enchanted Wood. Those who enter find themselves turned about by magic and emerge as they came, completely confused. Those who have stood at the threshold of the forest have seen the comings and goings of the Zoogs. These tiny, evil creatures haunt the woods and are a threat in the area surrounding the forest. Inquiries into breaching the barrier have been, at best, spotty.

When dreamers “return” to Earth, more often than not they simply dematerialize while asleep in Ulthar or its surroundings, vanishing in a wisp of smoke. Such a sight is not at all unusual. None re-enter the wood or have any cause to do so.

SETTLING INTO ULTHAR

Arrival in Ulthar is easy. There are no guards, no walls and no security to speak of. People wander in and out through the fields of wheat that grow around the city, and simply walk in, often with locals offering a hearty “Hello!” or “Good morning!” or cats swarming visitors and rubbing up against their feet.

Often the streets are packed with dreamers, all clothed in identical linens and each wearing the same waterskin and small pack, as if it were a uniform. Some streets are clogged with dreamers of every race and from every country on Earth, who wander with grins of their faces through the beautiful city. At night the city is silent except for

SUBTLE CHANGES

Here are a few elements to describe and then subtly change to allow players a chance to collect Notches for Directed Dreaming.

- The favorite meal served by natives of Ulthar.
- The color of the vines that coat the temple of the Elder Ones.
- The shape of the sign that marks the burgomaster’s office.
- The flavor of the drink that Ultharians have adopted since they abandoned liquor.

MENES' PRAYER

"On the third morning of the wanderers' stay in Ulthar, Menes could not find his kitten; and as he sobbed aloud in the market-place certain villagers told him of the old man and his wife, and of sounds heard in the night. And when he heard these things his sobbing gave place to meditation, and finally to prayer. He stretched out his arms toward the sun and prayed in a tongue no villager could understand; though indeed the villagers did not try very hard to understand, since their attention was mostly taken up by the sky and the odd shapes the clouds were assuming. It was very peculiar, but as the little boy uttered his petition there seemed to form overhead the shadowy, nebulous figures of exotic things; of hybrid creatures crowned with horn-flanked disks. Nature is full of such illusions to impress the imaginative."

H.P. Lovecraft, "The Cats of Ulthar"

the quiet patter of cats' paws. Dreamers often vanish the night after they arrive. Still others remain for days or weeks of local time, sleeping in the fields, in barns or in spare rooms, living off the good will of the locals. The locals think nothing of this. It is the way of the city.

Player characters hoping to settle into Ulthar find ready accommodations simply by asking. There are no taverns or inns to speak of, and money does not change hands for such things in Ulthar. With the elasticity of the dream, there is always room and food enough for all.

FINDING AND QUESTIONING FELLOW DREAMERS

Dreamers from Earth are a common sight in Ulthar. They are completely recognizable, due mostly to the look of awestruck wonder on their faces and their similar dress. Their smiles and laughter are without care, unlike the more work-a-day residents of the city, who glance at them with occasional bemusement as they pass.

Travelers from Earth are cared for by the good graces of the locals—such is one of the laws of Ulthar. Dreamers are fed, clothed as needed, and even outfitted for adventure in the world beyond, if they wish. Ulthar has long been a trade capital due to the huge influx of people. The people of Earth draw many foreigners to trade and set up shop in such a bustling city. The dreamers themselves are a tourist attraction.

The player characters can easily find a pliable traveler from Earth on the winding streets of Ulthar and question him or her. However, these people are difficult to manage, wistful and distracted by their new surroundings. Getting one to sit still and answer questions proves extremely hard.

WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

The Dreamer woke in the Enchanted Wood, in a copse of trees, alone, fully clothed, near the largest and oldest tree they had ever seen. Some dreamers report being woken by whispering, and being frightened by small, glowing yellow eyes in the underbrush. Some

report being drawn away from danger by a lone cat who called to them. Others followed the light out of the Enchanted Wood. All arrived in the daytime.

HOW DID YOU ARRIVE IN THE DREAMLANDS?

The dreamer does not know. Each woke beneath the huge, old tree. They do not recall their method of entry. Their memories of Earth are spotty—like trying to recall a dream—though they know they are not from this place. They can recall their cities of origin, their names, their professions, and little else except the vaguest outlines of their lives.

WHAT DID YOU SEE IN THE ENCHANTED WOOD?

Besides the yellow eyes and the whispering, nothing but an unoccupied forest of verdant green, covered in mushrooms, fungus and rich plants. Upon emerging from the wood, the first sight in the distance is beautiful Ulthar on the hill. There are small villages along the way, but their locals all sent the Dreamers towards the city.

THE BURGOMASTER KRANON

The leader of the city is the aged and wise Burgomaster Kranon, who makes his office at the base of the temple to the Elder Ones. The office is a rickety wooden structure built in the fashion of the city, with little concern for physics. It hangs improbably forward as if it drunk. There are no guards, lieutenants or clerks, only Kranon behind a huge desk carved from a single piece of golden wood. On the desk, blue-black books bulge with thick pages, stuffed with notes and pictures, scrolls and writs. His pen is carved from ivory and appears to be a lizard and cat intertwined in combat. The tip of the cat's claw is the ink hold.

Visitors find themselves at the mercy of Kranon's booming voice. He seems to run things in Ulthar. *Name? Place of birth? Age?* He rails off a litany of questions, writing each answer down in his huge, blue-black book. Once these essentials are done, Kranon, pleased, becomes more pliable.

It is his job, he says, to mediate disputes within the city and to see to the needs of dreamers that exceed the provenance of the locals. He is burgomaster for life, having been appointed nearly eighty years before—though he looks no more than sixty himself—by the Keeper of Dreams.

Kranon can explain the rules of the city, the source of the dreamers, the rules about killing cats, the ban on alcohol, the danger of the Zoogs to those near the Enchanted Wood, and function of the Keeper of Dreams. (See page 254.)

Kranon takes particular interest in the Dreamers and their story. He seems to know immediately when a character is being truthful or evasive, and those who tell the absolute truth find the Burgomaster a valuable ally. He confirms the connection between the Men from Leng and the dark lord Nyarlathotep; and that long before, such creatures were banished from Ulthar and surrounding areas by a powerful magical curse by an unknown god. (The same curse banished the creatures of the Underworld forever to the depths.) No Men from Leng may cross the borders of the city proper.

Kranon advises the characters to outfit themselves and seek the Keeper of Dreams—for if there is a story more deserving of his favor, Kranon has not heard it. Once they find the Keeper of Dreams they can continue on with whatever gift he might grant them.

KRANON THE BURGOMASTER OF ULTHAR

Public Servant of the Mystical City, age 112

STR 8 CON 10 SIZ 18 INT 12 POW 13
DEX 11 APP 13 EDU 17 SAN 65 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 61%, Art 25%, Astronomy 44%, Bargain 40%, Conceal 33%, Credit Rating 99% (within Ulthar), Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Fast Talk 55%, History (Ulthar) 96%, Law 80%, Navigate (Ulthar and Environs) 99%, Persuade 25%. *Languages:* Talunen (Own) 85%, English 40%.

Attacks: None.

Abilities: Due to the nature of his employment, Kranon is granted many special powers within the city limits of Ulthar. He knows

nearly everything there is to know about the city, including the names of all its inhabitants and whether someone within Ulthar is being truthful or lying.

Items: The Key to Ulthar. This magical item is only usable by Kranon. It can open any door within the city of Ulthar, and can grant Kranon instant passage between any two doors within the city. He is not at all shy about using this power to impress.

Kranon is a huge man, built more sideways than vertically, and his blue eyes glitter from beneath his bushy silver eyebrows. He wears a spade beard of blond, though more and more the silver creeps in, and has a solid set of yellow teeth like a picket.

He wears a red and white cassock along with a leather jerkin, and an inordinate amount of bronze jewelry. (This is traditional, a gift from city elders on a yearly basis, and indicates his great age). His hat is shaped in a T and hangs on his head in a manner which suggests it is always about to fall off.

Kranon was born in Ulthar 112 years ago to two farmers on the edge of the Enchanted Wood. In childhood he had many dealings with the tiny, terrifying creatures known as the Zoogs, who once wandered far beyond the edge of the woods.

In his twenty-fifth year, Kranon took up residence in Ulthar, becoming a clerk at the temple. He served for many years and became a just and well-liked politician. He met the Keeper of Dreams in his 32nd year and was granted a key to the ramshackle cottage at the base of the temple of the Old Ones. Inside he found the garments of the burgomaster, and realized his greatest wish had been fulfilled. Since then he has served the city, and the spirit which guards it, loyally.

Kranon is concerned only with performing the functions of his job and title. He will do anything, even give his life, to fulfill that goal.

THE KEEPER OF DREAMS

All locals know of the Keeper of Dreams. This person is a secretive magician known to haunt isolated areas of the city, who offers people a magical trinket which grants their deepest desires. Few can articulate how they know the Keeper of Dreams exists, or where, only that such knowledge is certain. It is more than a local legend; it is inherent and magical knowledge.

Those searching for something in Ulthar (like say, a way to get into the Enchanted Wood), particularly those from Earth, are directed to search the city for the Keeper of Dreams. The locals can't say how to find the Keeper, but say that those who deserve such a reward will *always* find it.

The Keeper of Dreams is in fact a spiritual force that takes human form and haunts the streets of Ulthar, magically assisting those in true need. In the last decade or so, the Keeper of Dreams has hidden in the open as a plaintive drunk who sleeps in the gutters of the streets of the city, overlooked. Clothed in rags, clutching an empty bottle, he fades into the background for those not paying careful attention. Many simply step over him in their search for the power, never thinking it is under their feet.

Dreamers who search for the Keeper of Dreams find nothing but dead ends, empty rooms and people who have no idea who or what the creature might be. Those paying careful attention may notice that this particular drunk is the only one in the city. There are no others, and with alcohol banned there are no ready spirits to be found. The Dreamers might find the rosy-cheeked drunk who always reeks of wine strange.

Waking the Keeper of Dreams reveals the drunk to actually be a sober, witty, wry soul. *So, you have found me.* His demeanor is one of immense power and responsibility. His charm, intelligence and impression of power make it clear he is something much greater than a common drunkard.



Attacks against him are useless. They lead only to the attacker looking foolish.

The Keeper of Dreams knows that the Dreamers seek a portal back to Earth, and possibly a restoration of their Earthly forms, and that they seek revenge there on Mr. Lao. He grants them a trinket: a small diamond set in the ellipse of an eye, a blue-white stone that twinkles even in absolute darkness.

This is the key to the Wood. With it, you can cross the threshold. It will not protect you from what haunts that space, however, and it is only of use at night. Fear the things that move in the dark. They have allies from beyond this world.

With that, the Keeper of Dreams tips his hat and walks away. Watchful Dreamers see him transform into a small boy, pulling along a wooden toy duck, before he turns a corner and is gone. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

DRAWING THEM TO THE KEEPER OF DREAMS

Often, getting players to follow leads is like, if you'll excuse the expression, herding cats. Here are some suggestions to keep them engaged in the search for the elusive Keeper of Dreams. Burgomaster Kranon is a strong ally in this cause, but there are other methods.

THE CATS: The cats of Ulthar are legendary, known far and wide for their wisdom and humor. The cats' magic might reveal the Dreamers' special origins. From that point on, the cats can become allies, offering hints, leading the Dreamers places and generally assisting in the search for the Keeper of Dreams. The cats can also reinforce the fact that the Keeper of Dreams is indeed a real thing. If Arram was introduced in Ilek-Vad, he may be used here to great effect. Of course, if he accompanied the Dreamers his quest to return to his people might play out here to good effect. (See "Arram, Cat Apostate," page 200.)

REVEAL THE KEEPER BUT REQUIRE A TEST: Dreamers that simply fail to search might find themselves face-to-face with the Keeper of Dreams anyway, but he may require a test of will before awarding their deepest wish.

The Keeper of Dreams sends them to an isolated clearing at the edge of the Enchanted Forest to recover a single flower called the *Kalixys*, which grows in a cursed spot. He gives the Dreamers a map and says that only access to that small portion of the Enchanted Wood is permitted. Those who stray from the path will be lost forever. (See "The Stone Door to the Underworld" on page 259.) If the Dreamers return with the flower, they are granted the mystical trinket by the Keeper of Dreams.

LEAD THEM BY THE NOSE: Sometimes it just comes down to making the players feel clever even if they are failing to be clever. Repeatedly and subtly peppering the conversation with references to the drunkard and the lack of alcohol in the city, along with the fact that the Keeper of Dreams is indeed a real force in Ulthar, should eventually do it.

THE ENCHANTED WOOD

This enormous forest is obviously magical in nature. It is vast, rolling over hills to the northeast of Ulthar, bordered by mountains on one end and by the River Skai on the other. The areas surrounding it are populated with sleepy farms and villages, each little more than a simple crossroads at a mill or a large barn.

The locals here are much less friendly than in Ulthar, and the influence of the Zoogs—who sometimes travel outside the forest at night—is clear. The simple farmers are fraught with superstition, eager to identify visitors and see them out. They lack even the basic reflex of hospitality. They are used to newcomers wandering out of the woods, and will try to direct the Dreamers to Ulthar. They are not at all used to anyone moving *toward* the forest, and assume such individuals are up to magic or mischief.

Approaching the woods, the farms fall into disrepair, leading finally to rolling fields of high green grass that rises to waist height. The



trees of the Enchanted Wood are like a wall. There are no outliers, simply a clear line of great trunks whose canopy completely envelops in darkness what is underneath. It is beautiful and intimidating.

Dreamers attempting to enter the Enchanted Wood without the trinket from the Keeper or Dreams or his map to the Stone Door find themselves turned around by some subtle but inextricable force. Within fifty feet of walking in they find themselves emerging from the forest at the same point they entered. This power is impossible to counteract with logic, markings, string, maps or any other method. Even magical means such as teleportation and Directed Dreaming seem unable to break the effect of the enchantment.

If they find and wait at the point just before they become turned around they can stand there indefinitely. The trees are huge and close together, broken up occasionally by paths and clearings lit by glowing mushrooms. Dreamers making Listen or Spot Hidden rolls can detect the Zoogs. These creatures hover at the periphery of the light, watching the Dreamers with interest. They make no attempt to interfere until the Dreamers enter deeper into the Enchanted Wood. (See “The Haunt of the Zoogs” on page 261.)

Occasionally, and only during the day, a new dreamer from Earth can be found wandering out from the perimeter of the forest. The newcomer is inevitably alone, clothed in a basic linen garment, carrying a waterskin, a pack filled with leavened bread, and a walking stick. He or she is friendly and talkative but remembers little of what happened between slumbering on Earth and arriving in the woods. If asked about the items, the newcomers tend to laugh and then look confused, as if the answer was obvious but suddenly forgotten. On a group Luck roll, the newcomer might utter, “The . . . man . . . gave them to me.” If this line of questioning is pursued, the rest is a complete blank. All dreamers questioned say they are to go to the city of Ulthar, and seem to know where it is, though how and why they know this they cannot say.

Player characters that enter the Enchanted Wood with the trinket from the Keeper of Dreams are not hindered as they walk deeper into the forest. But they may find exploring the Enchanted Wood a dangerous proposition.

THE STONE DOOR TO THE UNDERWORLD

Those sent on a quest by the Keeper of Dreams can follow his map, as it clearly marks a path from the River Skai into the Enchanted Wood. If they follow this path and do not deviate, they travel safely through the Enchanted Wood without succumbing to the mystical protection of the forest that turns uninvited travelers around.

The path winds through a stunted portion of the Enchanted Wood, where the trees seem sickly, covered in blight and overcome with fungus. The floor of the path is covered in small animal bones, discarded armor and weapons (long since gone to the elements) and fresh tracks which appear to be rat-like. Those who roll Listen or Spot Hidden detect tiny creatures watching their progress and whispering to one another in the darkness—the Zoogs. If the Keeper wants the Zoogs to feature as a threat in this portion of the adventure, please see “The Haunt of the Zoogs” on page 261.

Sickly ivy drapes the tree trunks and closes off the forest interior in a screen. Dreamers may dig through this underbrush to look deeper into the forest off the path. Those that do are met with a magical sight. Through the screen of ivy, perhaps forty yards into the forest underneath the canopy of trees, is a stone table. At that table are three of the most beautiful creatures any of the Dreamers has ever seen. (Their sex matches the sexual proclivities of the individual character seeing them.) These beings, bathed in a spectral light, laugh and sing and drink wine. They do not acknowledge any attempt at communication and continue their festivities no matter the ruckus made.

Dreamers foolish enough to enter the underbrush vanish into darkness and are never seen again.

Those who stick to the path find the clearing as it is marked on the map. The clearing is very large, bordered by more healthy trees to the north. A stone door hung with a giant iron loop is embedded in the earth in the center of the clearing, and the grass around it is rotted and dead, covered in fungus, weeds and unwholesome grey grass.





The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man

As the Dreamers near the stone trap door, a stench begins to fill their nostrils. Within fifty feet of the stone door, the clearing reeks of rotted meat and worse smells, like wild animal dung and wet fur. The tracks die off here. The clearing is silent.

Dreamers who survived the climb up the Tower of Koth in the Gug City must make a SAN roll upon seeing the trap door. Those that fail are overcome with terror and lose 1 SAN as they realize the door in the center of the clearing is the door that was blocked at the peak of the Tower of Koth—the place where they almost died—which means the horrific city of Gugs lies right beneath them.

Growing on top of the stone door, from earth which surrounds the iron loop, is a lone, beautiful, thin flower. It rises more than two feet and is lit by a spectral light. This is the *Kalixys*, the flower desired by the Keeper of Dreams. Characters who simply rush up, however, are in for a surprise.

The first Dreamer to come near the door must make a Spot Hidden roll. Those that succeed spy a crack in the ground beneath the stone door, and within the shadow two giant red eyes watching. (Cost: 0/1D4 SAN.) The Gug has

wedged itself at the door, waiting for prey.

Coming near the door calls for a Luck roll. If it succeeds, the Gug lashes out but cannot reach the character, and the huge arm smashes around on the grass looking for prey (0/1D8 SAN), while smoking foully from the ill effects of the Curse of the Underworld.

If the Luck roll fails, the Gug gets a claw attack roll. If it hits and the target fails to Dodge, the Dreamer is grabbed and dragged sluggishly toward the crack. The Dreamers have three rounds to beat the Gug's STR in a resistance contest or inflict 10 HP damage to its claw (past armor) before the caught Dreamer is dragged out of sight. If they successfully resist or inflict 10 points damage, the claw releases the Dreamer—but then the other claw on the same arm pushes out and attacks! If the Dreamers avoid this one or inflict 10 damage to it, the Gug's arm retreats underground.

If a Dreamer is pulled underground the rest of the group gets to hear him or her ripped to pieces and eaten alive. (Cost: 0/1D6 SAN.) The Gug does not return.

THE GUG FISHERMAN

Waiting Beneath the Stone Door for a Tasty Catch

STR 51 CON 34 SIZ 58 INT 12 POW 11
DEX 14 Move 10 HP 46

Damage Bonus: +6D6

Attacks: Bite 60%, 1D10

Two claws 40%, 4D6

Armor: 8 points of matted hair, tough skin and cartilage.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8

THE HAUNT OF THE ZOOGS

The Zoogs are small, rodent-like creatures imbued with high intelligence and powerful magical energy. Their faces appear mouse-like, except their glowing eyes are large and bulbous. A Zoog's muzzle ends in a spray of multi-colored tentacles which seem to shift and change as emotions play across the intelligent face.

The Zoogs are small and harmless in limited numbers. However, in

ZOOG SPELLS

LIVING X: Costs 8 Magic Points and 1D6 SAN and takes 2 rounds to cast. This is a slight variation on the usual version of this spell powered by the Black Pharaoh himself; any Dreamer who makes a Listen roll distinctly hears the name "Nyarlathotep" as part of the incantation. A glistening pink, crystalline shaft of energy shoots up to 30 yards at a target, who must resist the caster's POW or be instantly immobilized in an upright, spread-eagled position. The target can attempt to escape once per round by rolling STR x 1%.

WOEFUL ITCH: Costs 4 Magic Points and takes 1 round to cast. A cloud of glittering motes float to the target who falls into a frenzy of scratching and tearing to halt the maddening itch. The target is absolutely incapacitated until he or she rolls CON x 5%. The target can try once per round.

groups they are powerful, magical beings. They have a dark relationship with the moon and the creatures which inhabit it, such as the moon-beasts, and through them, their dark lord Nyarlathotep. The Zoogs serve no entity in particular. They serve *power*.

Since the Dreamers' escape from Sarkomand, the forces of Nyarlathotep have been searching the Dreamlands to capture or kill them. The Zoogs have been contacted by the forces of the moon and have agreed to search for the Dreamers. It's been clear for some time the Dreamers were attempting to find a portal back to Earth, such as the one that sits in the most Zoog-infested location in the Dreamlands, the Enchanted Wood.

Zoogs are cowardly and rely on their small size and stealth to steer clear of direct confrontation with such enormous creatures as the Dreamers. They do, however, reveal themselves if they believe the Dreamers are disabled, unconscious, or otherwise secured. When Zoogs appear, they always arrive in groups of 2D6 or more, but they immediately abandon any Zoog caught by a human. They are untrustworthy creatures, each with its own individual agenda.

AN AVERAGE ZOOG

Tiny, Clever Mercenary for the Moon

STR 3 CON 7 SIZ 2 INT 13 POW 11
DEX 20 Move 8 HP 5

Damage Bonus: -1D6

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 50%, Dream Lore 75%, Hide 70%, Sneak 70%, Track 50%. *Languages:* Zoog (Own) 65%, English 20%.

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D4+db

Knife 25%, 1D6+db

Dart 20%, 1D6+half db

Spells: A leader of the Zoogs has POW 17 and knows the spells Living X and Woeful Itch.

Armor: None.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D3

THE MACHINATIONS OF THE ZOOGS

Those who enter the Enchanted Wood in search of an exit to the waking world find their progress hampered by the Zoogs. Direct confrontation is not their style. Instead they use their magics to confuse and forestall the Dreamers and keep them from progressing deeper into the forest, all the while summoning their allies, the moon-beasts.

One or all three of these “traps” can be flung at the Dreamers, building in intensity towards nightfall. The moon-beasts cannot appear during the day, but once night falls the Dreamers find themselves confronted by a moon-beast hunting party, in the Enchanted Woods, at night. A terrifying proposition.

THE REFLECTION

The Dreamers are drawn to a glowing pool of still water by what sounds like distant *city traffic*. Each who looks in the pool must roll POW x 2%. Those who succeed see a black puddle with no reflection in it at all, glowing at its edges, like a puddle of paint—dull and flat.

Those who fail the roll see the reflection of a New York street, as if seen in a puddle on the street itself. In the reflection, the Dreamer appears as his or her normal Earthly self, but the Earthly body mimics all the movements of its Dreamlands counterpart. Skyscrapers can be seen in the background, as well as the tops of cars and trolleys as they rush by. Other people pass, paying no attention to the person staring into the puddle. Through the reflection all the noises of a busy New York street can be heard but they remain muffled and indistinct.

Dreamers that failed the roll are *certain* that they are seeing the real New York in the reflection of the puddle, and that entering the puddle will return them home. They



THE ZOOGS

“Out they swarmed, from hidden burrow and honeycombed tree, till the whole dim-litten region was alive with them. Some of the wilder ones brushed Carter unpleasantly, and one even nipped loathsomely at his ear; but these lawless spirits were soon restrained by their elders. The Council of Sages, recognizing the visitor, offered a gourd of fermented sap from a haunted tree unlike the others, which had grown from a seed dropt down by someone on the moon; and as Carter drank it ceremoniously a very strange colloquy began.”

H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

will do everything in their power to crawl into it. If the group is split between seeing the illusion and those not seeing it, physical violence or grappling will be necessary to prevent affected Dreamers from entering the puddle.

Those not under the illusion see those affected by it crawl down into the black puddle, which comes to life and engulfs them. It covers every inch of skin, mouth and body, until they appear to be covered in a thin rubbery liquid. The puddle is big enough to engulf all the Dreamers. Witnessing someone being engulfed costs 1D4 SAN. Touching the liquid once you have resisted its magic poses no threat, but once engulfed the victim is beyond the help of companions.

An engulfed Dreamer does not exactly struggle, but rolls lazily on the ground, suffering one point of CON damage per minute. A Dreamer who reaches 1 CON collapses and the liquid peels away, leaving the victim unconscious and helpless on the forest floor. The victim cannot be roused. Dragging the character along is exhausting. Only a Dreamer with STR in excess of the victim’s SIZ can do it. Two characters may be required to carry a third.

In the engulfed character’s mind, he or she is in New York city. The illusion is complete and perfect. No other Dreamers are around, no matter how many of them “entered” at the same time—each illusionary New York is separate. Those in the illusion may explore their surroundings normally, though people in “New York” do not engage with them. Passersby wave them off, covering their eyes with their hat and walking away or just running in the other direction. A Dreamer who looks for his or her reflection in a window or mirror sees only his or her own normal face and form, nothing unusual about it.

Otherwise the illusion is absolute. The victim can travel anywhere in this perfectly imagined “New York.” Those with enough prescience can travel to Mr. Lao’s restaurant in 1D10+5 minutes. They may even explore it. The Tongs ignore them, turn away, or pretend they are not there. Attacking someone in this vision is pointless. The fist or weapon simply bounces off and the target walks away, unharmed. No damage can be done.

The magic in the “pool” is powerful, and the Peach Blossom is a

perfect recreation of the actual location. It is so powerful that small physical changes carry over to the real world. All details are there. All books, items, locations and doors work perfectly, and the character has free rein within it. Clever characters might open a window latch to allow themselves access to a private office in the future. Or they might unload Mr. Lao's automatic pistol or move his books. Fires cannot be started; matches can be struck but the flame does not catch and spread. Locating a phial of iodine or opium extract and dumping it in a cup of tea in Mr. Lao's room is an interesting prospect, and remains up to the Keeper to mediate. Adjust Mr. Lao's final appearance in the campaign accordingly.

Each minute in the illusion, a Dreamer may make a POW x 1% roll. If it succeeds the Dreamer wakes struggling in the puddle of goo, which drops freely away, leaving the victim coughing and sputtering. The effects of the CON drain remain. Those with CON reduced below 3 make all skill and attribute tests at half chance. Half the lost CON points lost are regained with one night's rest, and the rest with one more day of rest. Unfortunately, rest is not likely.

When night falls, the moon-beast hunting party arrives (see page 268).

BERRIES AND BODIES

The Dreamers come upon several beautiful beings—apparently adult humans of both sexes—unconscious in a meadow, covered in giant, phosphorescent mushrooms. These beings are naked and lie inert on the ground, eyes closed. Anyone seeing them is overcome by an urge to rush to their assistance—each Dreamer must make an Idea roll to stop and look around first.

Dreamers who stopped and who roll Spot Hidden see that the beings have red on their hands and their mouth, and that reddish-blue berries are scattered on the ground near their hands and heads. The bushes around them are fragrant with a pungent yet alluring sweet smell of ripe fruit.

Anyone touching a berry—or even the liquid from a berry—is overcome with dizziness. The Dreamer must roll CON to resist a poison of POT 15. If the roll fails, the Dreamer collapses into a stupor



on the grass, unconscious for 2D20 hours. See “The Reflection” for the difficulties of moving an unconscious Dreamer about.

Those attempting to lift one of the beautiful beings find, to their horror, that they rip and tear and pull apart like overripe fruit. The bodies are mushrooms, grown and shaped in perfect mimicry of unconscious human beings. A set of bones, long eaten free of flesh, lie beneath them. (Cost: 1/1D6 SAN.)

THE SILVER PRISON

The Dreamers see a bright light through the trees in the distance. This light grows in intensity, rushing towards the characters suddenly, no matter which direction they run or where they attempt to hide. They soon see that it is a wall of silver crystal. It moves with bizarre implacability, sliding smoothly across the ground and simply passing through things too large for it to avoid. It moves so fast that it covers a distance from the furthest visible point to the ground just before the characters in seconds. It does all of this silently.

Dreamers facing away see the same thing approaching from all directions. With a huge clang like a bell, the silver prison slams shut on all sides in a shape like a malformed crystal. Its various facets match the directions the characters were facing, and the direction directly opposite, and connections between, and floor and ceiling. (Cost: 1/1D4 SAN.) The ringing lasts for long minutes, very gradually becoming a hum, and then a barely audible after-sound which hovers at the edge of hearing. Any time anything metal touches the walls of the prison, a similar noise is heard, in proportion to the force of the blow.

The entire prison suddenly shifts and then begins to move dramatically, as if subjected to an earthquake. In between bouts of shaking and tilting, the prison is still. Dreamers who fail to lie down on the floor to avoid being flung about suffer 1 HP damage.

Through the walls, the world is a distorted mess of swimming colors. Dreamers struggling to see clearly through the glass may do so on a successful Spot Hidden roll. What they see is terrible. Something huge holds them and a giant yellow eye considers them from

outside the prison. (Cost: 1/1D6 SAN.) This is a Zoog. With magic, the Zoogs have shrunken and trapped the Dreamers in a silver crystal prison, an object no bigger than a grape. They plan to hand them off to the moon-beasts at nightfall.

Clever Dreamers will explore the limits of the prison as the light outside drifts from sunlight towards dusk. They soon note the odd acoustics of the room, and those thinking on their feet will realize that metal reacts strangely with the crystal. Every strike on the walls of the crystal with a metal object causes an intense ringing noise. Strikes with nonmetal objects or fists cause a duller sound. Striking the same place twice causes that noise to rise. They can roll for damage, though there's no apparent harm. However, the noise is dreadful. With each blow, every Dreamer must make a Listen roll. If it succeeds, the Dreamer suffers 1 HP damage or loses 1 SAN, player's choice. If the Listen roll fails, there's no penalty beyond teeth-gritting annoyance.

If the Dreamers inflict 100 HP damage on the crystal (metal weapons inflict full damage; a non-metal object does minimum possible damage), the prison shatters, dropping the group to the forest floor in the middle of a startled group of 2D6 tiny Zoogs.

Any Dreamer can seize a Zoog with any unarmed attack roll as the others scatter into the dark. The Zoogs speak many tongues, including those of humans, and attempt to reason with their erstwhile prisoners. Zoogs taken as tiny hostages will do *anything* to keep themselves alive, including betraying their compatriots and leading the Dreamers straight to the gate to Earth. A Zoog hostage should be seen as an opportunity for exposition—they can explain all the traps and the calling of the moon-beasts, and they can help the Dreamers avoid the moon-beasts; and they are so tiny that they can be dispatched with the squeeze of a hand.

THE MOON · BEAST HUNTING PARTY

The moment night falls, a blue-white light arcs across the sky like a shooting star. It drops into the Enchanted Wood with an explosion that knocks the Dreamers from their feet. It is impossible to tell how far away it fell, only that it was in the woods and was strong enough to cause an earthquake.

The moon-beast hunting party has arrived. Silence fills the woods, followed by an inhuman, glottal baying of some huge creature. This is the Aok, the moon-beasts' hunting animal. Two powerful moon-beasts have brought it from the dark side of the moon to fulfill the wishes of Nyarlathotep.

Dreamers holding a Zoog find it chattering to them in English. It tells them that the moon-beasts have arrived and will find and drag the characters back to the dark side of the moon. The Zoog points with its tiny hand in the direction of the gate to Earth. It begs them to run, for it knows the moon-beasts will show it no mercy.

Dreamers without the help of a captive Zoog can only flee the sounds. Once the pursuit begins, it does not stop until the characters are captured or they find the Steps of Deeper Slumber.

The Keeper should create a fun, terrifying pursuit. Consider how much time the Dreamers lost to the traps of the Zoogs. If each trap was effective, they lost hours, they are far from safety when the moon-beasts arrive, and the pursuit is long, exhausting and risky. If they overcame the traps quickly, they are nearer safety when the moon-beasts arrive and their chances of escape are better.

HUNTED!

Use this system if you prefer to give some dice-rolling suspense to the chase. Play through the first stage of the pursuit with each Dreamer making a DEX resistance roll against the Aok's DEX as they dodge past trees and vines. Each Dreamer who fails falls behind. The Aok can make one limb attack against each Dreamer who fell behind. If it hits, the Aok can attempt an engulf attack as well. At the

end of each round of combat with the Aok, there's a 50% chance each that the moon-beast hunter and priest catch up. Dreamers who aren't engulfed or disabled can flee again.

The Dreamers may be subject to further attacks. Think back on each of the three Zoog traps. Did the traps stymie the Dreamers or did they get through them quickly? If one of the traps stymied them, each must make a STR x 5% roll to push past briars and brambles. If it fails the Dreamer either takes 1D6 damage from thorns and dead-falls or suffers another attack from the Aok.

If two Zoog traps stymied the Dreamers, they must make CON x 5% rolls to avoid exhaustion. If it fails, again they suffer attack by the Aok and the moon-beasts.

If all three Zoog traps stymied them, the Dreamers must find their way swiftly through the darkness. Here's how it works. At the outset of the chase they can pick a leader to make one Navigation roll for the group, or individual Dreamers can make their own Navigation rolls. Each Dreamer who fails the roll (or was following a leader who failed) is overtaken by the Aok for a final time just before the end.

MOON · BEAST PRIEST

Thing 1

STR 17 CON 12 SIZ 22 INT 15 POW 19
DEX 7 Move 7 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Attacks: None (it uses spells instead)

Armor: None, although the moon-beast takes the minimum possible damage from impaling weapons.

Spells: Living X.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8

MOON · BEAST SPELLS

LIVING X: Costs 8 Magic Points and 1D6 SAN and takes 2 rounds to cast. This is a slight variation on the usual version of this spell powered by the Black Pharaoh himself; any Dreamer who makes a Listen roll distinctly hears the name "Nyarlathotep" as part of the incantation. A glistening pink, crystalline shaft of energy shoots up to 30 yards at a target, who must resist the caster's POW or be instantly immobilized in an upright, spread-eagled position. The target can attempt to escape once per round by rolling STR x 1%.

MOON · BEAST HUNTER

Thing 2

STR 19 CON 14 SIZ 25 INT 12 POW 15
DEX 7 Move 7 HP 20

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Attacks: Spear 41%, damage 1D8+1+db.

Armor: None, although the moon-beast takes the minimum possible damage from impaling weapons.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D8

THE AOK

The Moon's Predator

STR 28 CON 24 SIZ 29 INT 5 POW 10
DEX 10 Move 8 HP 27

Damage Bonus: +3D6

Attacks: Limb 30%, 1D6+1+db

Engulf 70%, 1D10

Once it strikes a victim with a limb, the Aok can make an engulf roll to consume the target and then spit him or her out, covered in a disgusting sausage-like skin that's thin but seems impossible to break. The victim is trapped until he or she rolls STR x 1% or has assistance from outside.

Armor: 4 points of bone, rotting flesh and goo; it takes minimum damage from impaling weapons

Sanity Loss: 1D6/1D10

The Aok is a giant thing that appears to be a random mass of limbs, fleshy webs and red-white bones shoved together haphazardly. It looks like the remains from a slaughterhouse for giants, glued together while it was rotting and somehow brought back to horrible, stumbling life. It reorients, moves and shambles in any direction, without any apparent sense organs or even a head. This beast follows the guttural commands of the moon-beasts with a fierce tenacity. It fears nothing.

THE STEPS OF DEEPER SLUMBER

As the Dreamers stumble through the forest they find themselves suddenly at the base of a giant tree. It is so large and overwhelming that the characters find themselves frozen, even if they are pursued by the creatures from the moon. A door opens from the recesses of the tree, sliding on smooth, perfect hinges. A yellow-white light glows from within.

Keepers who have built up a chase to this point should have it build to crescendo now. Dreamers with any shred of self-preservation will stumble into the perfect, yellow-white doorway from the nighttime wood.

Those that enter find themselves stumbling down an uneven spiral staircase that crosses first through a tree and then into dirt and stone. If the Dreamers stop, the stairs continue moving for them, twirling and rocking, shifting beneath their feet. The staircase above them bends and crumbles, collapsing, leaving no exit except to continue down.

The Dreamers can barely keep up with the collapse. Finally, horrifically, the first Dreamer finds himself or herself at the bottom of the stairs, where the last step hangs out over a horribly vast, black, empty space. A moment later the other Dreamers smash into the first from behind and the whole structure collapses, flinging all of them into the void.



ementia	Epilepsy
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entia	unknown
entia	unknown
entia	Epilepsy
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scholia	unknown
scholia (State)	Religion
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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AWAKENING · CLOSING THE CIRCLE · RATIONALISTS,
WEARING SQUARE HATS, THINK, IN SQUARE ROOMS

*“When my dream was near the moon,
The white folds of its gown
Filled with yellow light.”
—Wallace Stevens, “Six Significant Landscapes”*

AWAKENING

The fall goes on for a long time, until the Dreamers find themselves overcome by a terrible drowsiness which feels more like drowning than falling asleep. Their minds are hurled through space like a ball thrown into the absolute black. They can only recall a flash of light not unlike a spray of stars against black velvet—when they wake behind a new set of eyes, back on Earth.

THE CATATONICS

The bodies in which the characters wake are, once again, completely different. Their Dreamlands forms have been discarded and they have woken in the bodies of the nearest “empty vessels” found by the power that sent them here—a group of catatonic patients at the Broadbent Asylum in Folk, New York. Just as with their transformation when they entered the Dreamlands, their skills and mental stats remain intact.

When the characters wake in these new bodies each must make a Sanity roll or lose 1 SAN. Until the character becomes comfortable with his or her new form, this roll must be made each time this new fact of life is confronted—noticing increased or decreased physical strength, noticing differences in height or weight, or viewing a reflection in a mirror or pool of water. This continues until the Sanity roll succeeds three times in a row.

speak, so they are fed and hydrated by tube and left in the big room (the guards call it the “Vegetable Garden”), only to be moved about once or twice a week by orderlies. They are considered a non-threat, and it will come as a great shock to see a group of these patients up and around. The door to the rest of the asylum is unlocked and unattended.

ESCAPE!

The doors open on a plain hallway covered in green tile. The hospital is dirty but is superior in almost all ways to most 1920s asylums. The Broadbent Asylum is progressive. At the end of the hallway Brian Curly, the only orderly on duty in this wing, sits at a small desk reading a newspaper. It’s the *New York Eagle* out of Manhattan.



Curly will be overwhelmed to see *any* catatonics conscious, much less a group of them. After several minutes of awkward conversation where Curly holds a wooden baton in a threatening manner to keep the characters back, he attempts to get on the phone hanging on the wall to alert the asylum managers. Characters *do not* want this to happen. If he does manage to make a call, in 1D8 minutes four orderlies armed with baseball bats and axe-handles show up to “subdue” the patients. The players must defeat these orderlies in combat to escape. Otherwise they are subdued, drugged and locked up in rubber rooms. What happens next is up to the devious Keeper.

The characters have arrived on a Sunday morning. No matter how long they seemed to spend in the Dreamlands, the newspaper’s date says it’s only two weeks after they left.

By subduing Curly they can gain access to his “office,” which is a shared locker room, with unsecured lockers filled with orderlies’ clothing and personal effects. Characters should have little difficulty securing ill-fitting clothing and shoes. In Curly’s locker a Ford car key hangs on a hook.

The exit to the outside is clearly marked, and opens on a large parking lot. There is only a single car there, a Model T roadster, and it happens to belong to Brian Curly. The rest of the asylum is a large brick building next door. The area where the characters awoke appears to be a smaller, more modern addition. If the characters are decisive and clever in subduing Curly, they can hop in the car and drive off to New York City with little difficulty. The police will eventually start looking for them but that will take hours to begin.

BRIAN CURLY

Confused Orderly, age 25

STR 16 CON 16 SIZ 18 INT 8 POW 4
DEX 9 APP 8 EDU 7 SAN 20 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Skills: Climb 45%, Drive Auto 35%, First Aid 40%, Hide 19%, Listen 35%, Pharmacy 11%. *Languages:* English 35%.

Attacks: Baton 65%, damage 1D6+db

Grapple 50%, damage special

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Epilepsy

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Dementia

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Dementia

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Dementia

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Epilepsy

Brian Curly is a big man with large hands, a pot belly, a small head, and beady little green eyes that look perpetually confused. His hair is shaved to a point in the center of his forehead and his pink scalp is visible beneath. His teeth are an uneven grey due to his habit of smoking whenever he gets the chance.

Curly landed employment at the Broadbent Asylum just six months ago and is now certain he has found his ideal job. He is paid a hefty (to him) sum to sit and watch the “vegetables,” who never do anything except occasionally thrash in their beds and shit themselves.

THE ORDERLIES

No.	Str	Con	Siz	Int	Pow	Dex	DB	HP
#1	17	9	17	11	18	17	+1D6	13
#2	13	13	15	13	5	8	+1D4	14
#3	9	10	14	12	11	7	—	12
#4	16	12	15	15	16	7	+1D4	14

Skills in Common: Dodge (DEX x 2) + 10%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Languages: English 40%.

Attacks: Axe handle or baseball bat 40%, damage 1D8+db

Punch 59%, damage 1D3+db

Grapple 50%, damage special



CURED OR CURSED

Even beyond their new bodies, the Investigators may have been changed forever by their time in the Dreamlands. What shape that change takes depends on the degree of a Dreamer's influence over the Dreamlands and whether the Dreamer went indefinitely insane there.

First consider the amount of influence that each character wielded in the Dreamlands over the course of the campaign. This is a subjective measure so it's entirely up to the Keeper. As a rule of thumb, a character who frequently succeeded with Directed Dreaming or who effected changes among the peoples or cultures of the Dreamlands had high influence. Others probably had low influence.

Also consider whether that character suffers from a new indefinite insanity gained during the campaign.

(Continued.)

Those walking the streets of Folk in broad daylight (particularly in odd garb) soon draw the local police — first a single officer but his whistle summons half a dozen others within a few rounds.

New York City is only two and a half hours away by train or automobile.

Make the boarding of the train or a driving shootout the climax of the scene. If anyone has been injured or killed in the characters' escape from the Broadbent Asylum, within the hour a bulletin has been issued of violent escaped inmates along with arrest warrants for all the characters. Every hour the characters are not completely hidden and unmoving, they must make a group Luck roll or face a police encounter.

FINDING MR. LAO

Lao can always be found in his office in the back of the Peach Blossom Restaurant, contemplating his magic and his double in the Dreamlands. He never leaves the safety of the office. Those observing the restaurant from outside never see him come or go. He can occasionally be spied through the tiny back window, backlit by flickering candle light. (Shooting at him through the inconvenient window has only 1/10 the usual chance to hit, and it will bring the entire crew of Tongs down on the attacker in seconds.)

The problem is not finding Lao but getting into the Peach Blossom undetected. The Tongs will not allow anyone inside without the express permission of Mr. Lao. They quickly escalate such an issue to a full-fledged gun battle. The local police are paid very well to turn a blind eye.

The best chance is to wait until the middle of the night to mount an assault on the Peach Blossom. Those who are not properly prepared will find the battle *far* outside the scope of their usual heroics. There is a huge difference between overpowering a single orderly and killing a dozen bloodthirsty Tong assassins — and the characters have no Directed Dreaming to make their lives easier here. See the Tong stats on page 14.

Form
al Disorder.

Supposed
Cause of Insanity.

The Sense of the Sleight-of-Hand Man

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Epilepsy
Epilepsy

Epilepsy
Epilepsy

lose 0/1D4 SAN. Those that "give in" suffer no such loss as long as they are actively attempting to locate the remains. Even those somehow detained during this period do not suffer SAN loss from it as long as they are trying to obey. Until the task is performed by at least one character, the suffering continues for all.

Characters need no instruction on where to go or what to do. The concepts appear whole in their mind. The characters know where they are going, how to get there, and what name they are looking for on the marker. The moment they find the marker, they know they must dig up the coffin.

The Gravesend Cemetery is very old, one of the first built in New Amsterdam by the Dutch settlers. It is split down the middle. One side is filled with graves marked by Italian and Irish names, the other with uneven aged stones marked almost exclusively by Dutch names.

Mina's marker is on the Dutch side. Hours of frantic digging brings up an ornate wooden box untouched by rot. No other souls come near enough to disturb the characters at this work. Pulling the lid, the characters are met by the waft of an aged and almost depleted stench. To their horror, the characters find it *enticing*. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.)

The body within is wasted down to a jerky-like consistency, eyes gone, teeth clenched, still dressed in the rotted linen of a white dress somehow somewhat preserved across the centuries. Any character who wishes to pull back now must make a Sanity roll. If it succeeds, the character loses 1D3 SAN and pulls away. If it fails the character immediately begins eating the remains, which breaks to bits under their fingers and teeth with sickening rapidity.

Within the hour, the body is consumed and the madness leaves the characters. All present, whether they partook or not, lose 1/1D6 SAN. The Ghoul's Bargain is complete. Madaeker is satiated and the hunger leaves them.

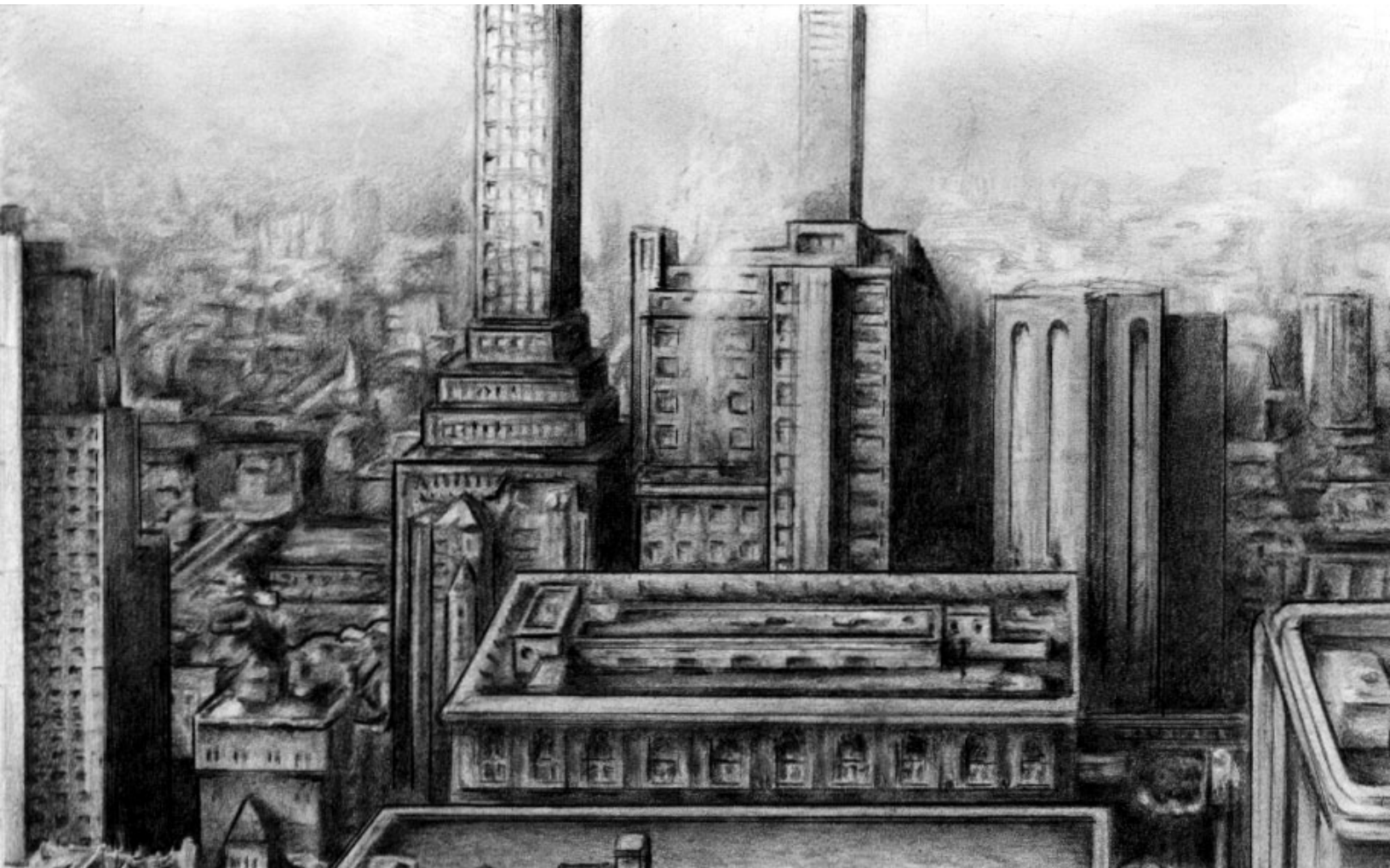
Some players may worry whether this meal is enough to turn them into ghouls. Let them. We leave the answer up to the Keeper.

NYARLATHOTEP'S DEFEAT AND WHAT COMES AFTER

Those who escape the Dreamlands and destroy Mr. Lao have defied the Crawling Chaos himself, achieving the ultimate victory. For some reason, Nyarlathotep's dark and unimaginable plans involved keeping the characters in the Dreamlands. Their escape is an affront to the will of the Old Ones. The capricious god will not let this audacity go unavenged.

What, exactly, will be the method of the Dark God's revenge? Well, the year is 1925, and Nyarlathotep's agents on Earth have begun to move, hoping to open a gate and release an especially dire form of the Crawling Chaos onto an unsuspecting world. See Chaosium's most excellent *Masks of Nyarlathotep* for details.

How easy would it be to involve the player characters in such world-spanning adventures? Very, very easy, I should say.



APPENDIX A

NEW SPELLS

*“Out of the window,
I saw how the planets gathered
Like the leaves themselves
Turning in the wind.”
—Wallace Stevens, “Domination of Black”*

In the Dreamlands, the concept of magic is on par with our waking conception of science. It is a fact of the world, not at all strange. It is always, however, dangerous. There is a sense of mystical balance in the Dreamlands; that is to say, changing an outcome one place for the better transforms another outcome somewhere else for the worse. The use of magic is therefore almost always a last resort.

As with any work created and passed down over the ages, spells vary by name, exact instructions and details. The vast and deep history of the Dreamlands, which far outstrips that of Earth, makes this variation of spell and effect even greater than those found in Earthly tomes and scrolls. Cruel Keepers might make spells incorrectly inscribed, causing odd or even dangerous effects.

CREATE BYWANDINE: There are two versions of this spell, both of which create a potent opium-based drug mixed with other, bizarre chemicals. Both versions are prohibitively expensive and take time, solitude and a deep knowledge of botany and chemistry.

The first “recipe” found in the main text of *Reflections Upon the Other World* is a mixture which transports an imbiber from Earth to the land of dreams impermanently. For ease of understanding, we shall call this lesser *bywandine*. Each batch of lesser *bywandine* requires one full pound of opium and various other tinctures, rare plants and chemicals which all together cost 1D6 x \$500. The character must make a Botany or Chemistry roll as well as a Pharmacy roll. If the Botany or Chemistry roll fails, the batch seems fine, but when smoked it inflicts 1D8 HP damage and poisons the imbiber with

horrific visions costing 1D4 SAN. If the Pharmacy roll is failed, the batch is destroyed and is useless. The process takes 3D4 hours.

Imbibing properly-created lesser *bywandine* causes the character to drift off into a sleep so deep he or she cannot be roused (in fact, the physical body can be attacked and killed without it waking). During this period of stupor, the character is transported to the Dreamlands, where his or her dream form may act normally for 1D20x2 days of “dream time”. This time differs on the other side of the veil of dreams, with only 1D8 hours passing on Earth.

The second “recipe,” near the end of the manuscript, is an odd deviation from the already bizarre mixture. This new recipe creates what we shall call greater *bywandine*. The creation is identical, as above, but once the mixture is complete a complex spell must be cast upon each dose, costing 1D8 magic points and taking 1D4 hours per dose.

Greater *bywandine* is irreversible. It transports a character’s mind to the Dreamlands permanently, leaving the Earthly body behind. In the Dreamlands, the mind enters the first “empty vessel” it can find (this process is guided by the spellcaster during the creation of the drug) and permanently occupies it. Death of this new body is “permanent death,” while the character’s former Earthly form is left behind as an empty vessel, incapable of independent action.

Only characters of significant POW can be transported in this manner. A character with POW of 10 or less must roll POW x 2% or be lost forever in the transfer, never arriving on the other side as his or her spirit dissipates in the ether. This same fate awaits someone who is transported to the Dreamlands without an appropriate “empty vessel” to occupy.

If the Chemistry or Botany roll is failed while creating greater *bywandine*, the batch is improperly mixed. It will still send the imbiber to the Dreamlands, but the physical body left behind disintegrates completely and is gone forever.

With either lesser *bywandine* or greater *bywandine*, the spellcaster can discern whether it’s a true or faulty mix with a Pharmacy roll and meditation, requiring one hour per dose.



ENDLESS RHYME: This spell costs 24 magic points and 1D6 SAN, and takes one round to cast. The caster whispers a secret phrase in the ear of a single victim, who must make a POW x 1% roll. If that fails, the victim loses 1D6 SAN and begins babbling an endless, sing-song rhyme in a deep, disturbing voice.

Anyone except the caster who hears this first target must make a POW x 2% roll. (Subjects who are not human, who are deaf, or who have somehow closed off their ears are immune.) If it fails, they too lose 1D6 SAN and begin chanting in the same manner, all in unison. A look of terror and confusion is clear on all victims' faces. (Cost: 0/1 SAN.) This spreads out like a disease, sometimes infecting hundreds at once.

The victims can attempt to break this enchantment once per hour with a successful Sanity roll. Each hour that this fails causes the victim to continue the rhyme and costs another 1D6 SAN. Once the effect breaks, the subject collapses, exhausted for 1D20 hours before they can act normally again.

EYE OF TRUE SIGHT: This spell costs 4 magic points and 1 SAN, and takes one round to cast. The caster must chant the four secret names of Nodens, Lord of the Abyss. Upon the utterance of the last name, the caster must clap his or her hands together as hard as possible, just in front of his or her face. Reflex causes the eyes to close. When the eyes open again, the caster can see through any magical illusion and spot those with malicious intent towards the caster as if they were lit from underneath by a huge spotlight. This effect lasts for 50 breaths, or about 15 rounds. No one else can see this effect.

This detection of magical illusion also shows the subject in its true form. The caster suffers normal SAN loss from seeing a formerly camouflaged monster.

The detection of illicit intent is only a yes/no indicator of whether a subject means to harm or steal from the caster.

THE FLUTES OF NAR·HAAL: This spell creates an enchanted pan flute. It costs 1D20 magic points and 1D6 SAN, and the caster must permanently invest 1 POW point into the flute to empower it.

Once created, the flute can be used at the cost of 1D4 magic points and 1 SAN. Any human hearing the flute must make a POW x 2% roll or be immediately calmed for 1D20 minutes regardless of any previous emotions. All conflict vanishes from the hearer's mind.

For example, if a listener attempting to rob a party heard the flute and failed the POW roll, he or she would immediately cease the attack. The robber might still feel animosity towards the victim, but would not attack again for 1D20 minutes.

The flute also works on beings related or equivalent to humans—the Men from Leng, ghouls, Tcho-Tcho, and so on. It does not work on truly alien monstrosities such as the moon-beasts or the Aok. Whether a particular creature is susceptible is up to the Keeper.

The magic flute has an even greater effect on animals. An animal must make a POWx1 roll or be strangely calmed for 1D4 days.

GHOU'L'S BARGAIN: This spell requires the target to agree to perform some act for the caster. It works even if the target doesn't know what the act may be, as long as the caster knows what's desired—it must be clear and specific in the caster's mind—and the target has agreed to perform it. Once the bargain is struck it may not be altered or cancelled. The only restriction is that the caster cannot require the target to injure or kill himself or herself. It costs 10 magic points and takes two rounds, but one casting can affect a group of up to 10 targets.

As soon as the target has the capacity to fulfill the bargain with only the work of a day or two, the target begins hearing ghostly voices that guide the way, step by small step. Every day the target fails to attempt to obey, he or she loses 0/1D4 SAN. Those that "give in" suffer no such loss as long as they are actively attempting to fulfill the bargain—even if outside forces detain them and keep them from doing it. Until the task is performed by at least one character who made the deal, the suffering continues for all.

THE MARK OF MORDIGGIAN: This is a tattoo of a stylized eye worn by humans and the more human-like creatures that haunt the Underworld, mostly ghouls. It marks a servant of Mordiggian, the god of death and decay, the patron god of the ghouls. To inscribe the mark



on a target, the caster must draw his or her own blood and cut the symbol into the target's skin with a nail or tooth. The blood is applied in the wound over a period of three days, until the wound forms a scar in the shape of an eye. The caster spends 6 magic points each day. At the end, caster and target each must sacrifice 1 POW.

Once the Mark is in place, it grants several abilities:

- The ability to exist indefinitely in the Underworld without food or water, without any negative physical or psychological effects.
- The ability to subsist on rotten flesh as if it were normal food.
- The ability to speak Morga and to understand it.
- Heightened senses (+20% to Spot Hidden and Listen) in darkness only.
- The ability to interact with ghouls without fear of unwonted attack. No ghoul will willingly violate the Mark except in self-defense. All who have the Mark can automatically recognize another with the Mark, even if it is not visible.

THE MEASURE OF THE SOUL: This spell costs 1D4 magic points, takes two turns and costs 1 SAN. It requires a picture of the target if the target is not present. A single gesture (looping the thumb and forefinger into a circle) is necessary. The target is looked at through this loop, and during this glance the caster knows how "powerful" the target is; that is, how much POW the target possesses. Once the hand is dropped, the effect ends. No one else can see the effect. A caster may use this on himself or herself. Mr. Lao uses this spell to great effect in gauging potential victims for transport to the Dreamlands.

MORHALAS' GATE: This spell creates a magical "escape hatch" which the caster may access at any time. This spell takes 1D4 months and the caster must spend one magic point per day. (If a day goes by without spending at least one magic point, the enchantment is broken and all invested magic points are lost.) These points must be invested in a single object known to the caster (a door, a piece of cobblestone, etc.) which then becomes the focus of the escape hatch.

Once the investment is complete, the caster can draw (with chalk or by tracing an outline in dirt, for example) a shape of the enchanted

object at any location in the world and spend 1 POW point permanently to open a gate back to the focus. The gate lasts 1D10 minutes. It can transport anything that fits through the portal at no further cost. If the focus object is destroyed, the gate shuts and cannot be created again.

TRANSCENDENTAL MIND: This spell costs 1D8 magic points and 1D4 SAN, and only lasts as long as the character's physical body is undisturbed. It takes two rounds to cast. It works in both the Dreamlands and on Earth. Upon casting, the character's mind leaves its body and may move freely around the world at the pace of a slow walk. It may enter and pass through an opening of any size (but not something that is hermetically sealed).

This mind-form cannot hear, speak, touch or manipulate, only see. The world is like a silent movie, and unless the character can read lips the use of this spell for spying is limited. But it can be useful for scouting.

If the caster's physical form is disturbed in any way, the character is returned to it, instantly, despite the distance. If the caster's physical form is killed in one blow (say, by a gunshot), the mind-form remains trapped in this state forever, and suffers 1D100 SAN loss.

WORD OF DOUBT: This spell costs 1D10+2 magic points, costs 1D4 SAN, and takes a round to cast. When successful, the caster can point at a single target and make whatever that target says next appear to all present to be an obvious falsehood. This only works for one statement from a single subject per casting. No matter how obviously true the affected statement may be ("we are standing on the Earth"), the disbelief will be instant, pervasive and permanent for as long as the caster remains present. No counterargument can convince those who heard the statement that it is true.

Once the caster leaves, the spell effect vanishes instantly, leaving its victims confused and certain that some magical effect had been cast upon them.



APPENDIX B

PRISONERS IN THE PITS OF THE EBONY TEMPLE

JESPER ANDERSON

Ready for Adventure, age 45

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 17
DEX 11 APP 13 EDU 21 SAN 85 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Anthropology 11%, Art (Singing) 25%, Chemistry 35%, Climb 44%, Diving 61%, Drive Auto 65%, Electrical Repair 20%, Listen 65%, Locksmith 51%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Operate Heavy Machinery 32%, Spot Hidden 60%, Swim 75%. *Languages:* Swedish (Own) 105%, English 56%, French 45%, Latin 35%, Spanish 21%.

Attacks: Punch 65%, damage 1D3+db

Knife 55%

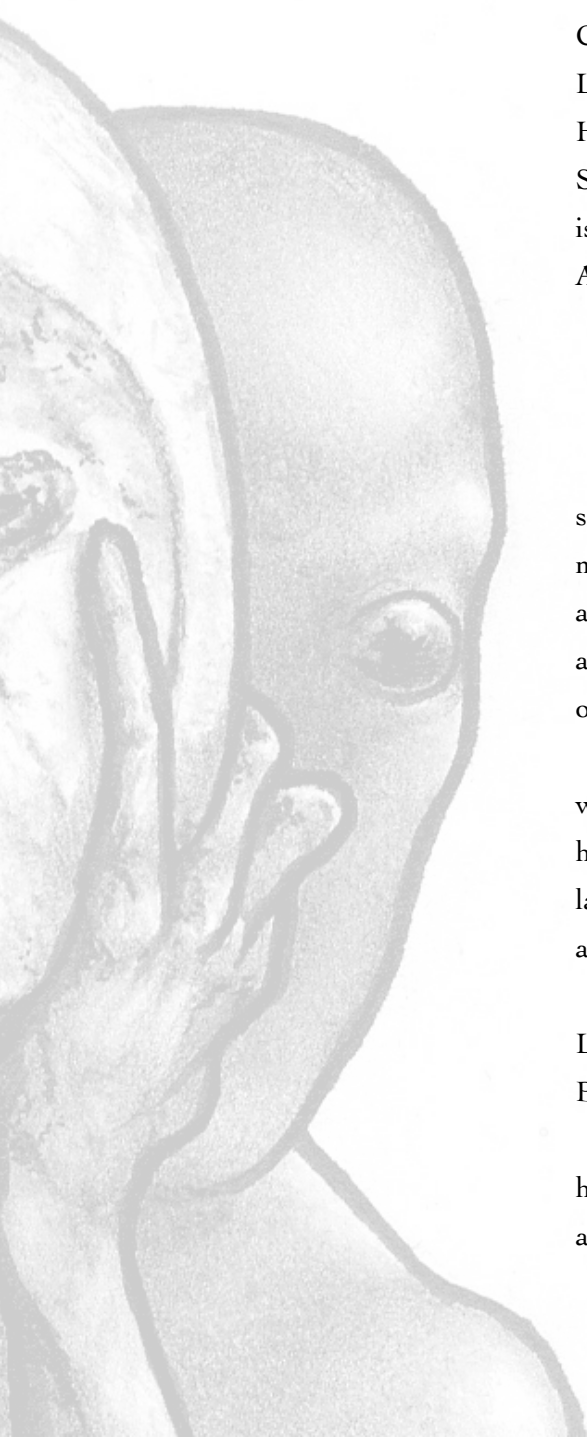
Sword 22%

Anderson is a big, muscular, bald Swede with a trimmed beard, sloping shoulders and green eyes. Coming from a family of some means, he trained from an early age to be an avid hunter, explorer and linguist. He served as a diver in the Great War. These obsessions, along with his predisposition for travel, brought him to the attention of the Men from Leng's servants on Earth.

Anderson was diving for treasure in a wreck off the coast of Malta when he found an ancient bronze crown. Little did he know this item had been used in pre-Roman times to transport worshippers of Nyarlathotep to Sarkomand. He innocently placed the crown on his head, and that was enough to fling him bodily to the Dreamlands.

In Sarkomand, Anderson was lucky to be captured by Men from Leng instead of less wholesome creatures. They threw him aboard a Black Galley and took him to Lhosk as fodder for the Ebony Temple.

Anderson is certain he is not on Earth. As with all things in life, he is ready to seize the opportunity to escape and set off on a new adventure.



DAVID FORSEY, PH.D.

Confused Mechanical Engineer, age 55

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 14 INT 14 POW 16
DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 21 SAN 80 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Astronomy 25%, Bargain 12%, Biology 15%, Chemistry 44%, Drive Auto 35%, Electrical Repair 56%, Law 20%, Library Use 50%, Locksmith 25%, Mechanical Repair 51%, Natural History 30%, Navigation 31%, Physics 33%. *Languages:* English (Own) 105%.

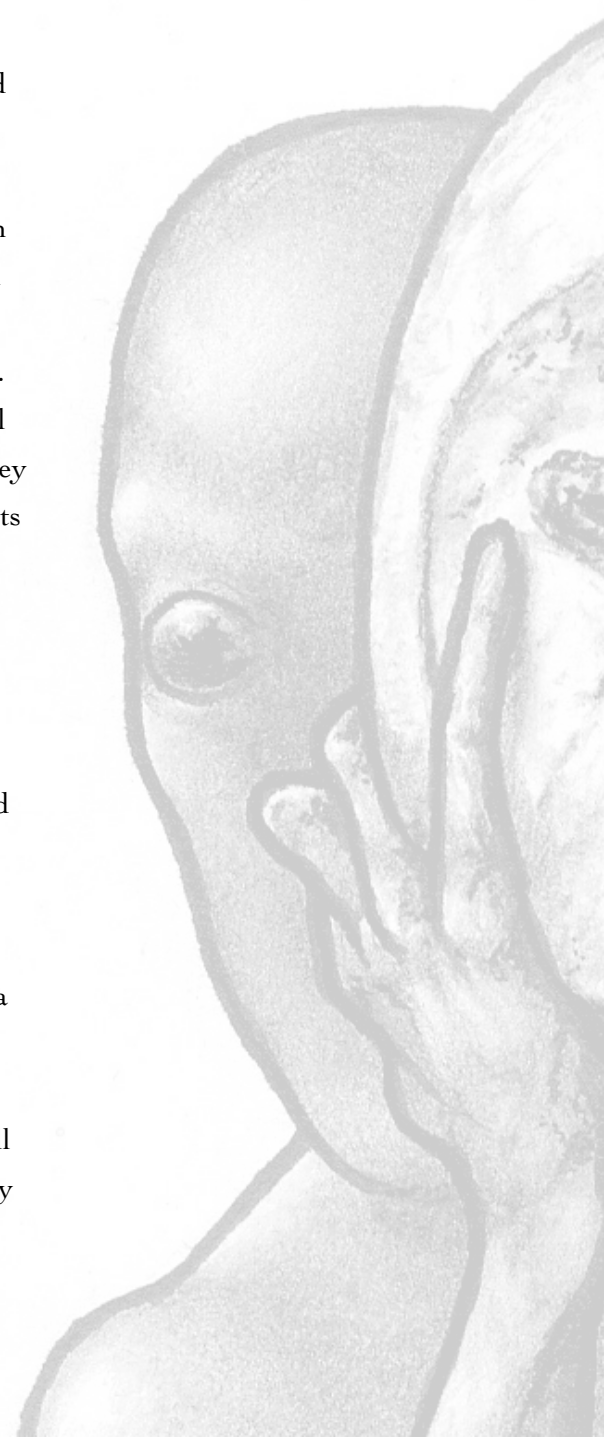
Attacks: Punch 52%, damage 1D3+db

Dr. Forsey is a tall, thin man with thinning grey hair, small round glasses with bronze rims, and an easy smile. After a fortnight in the prison pit he will seize any opportunity for escape.

Dr. Forsey, who lives on one of the islands off the coast of British Columbia, found himself embroiled in a scheme of Nyarlathotep. In the summer of 1922 he was working on a fuel compression device, designed to spray high-pressure liquid into an ignition chamber. Dr. Forsey's experiments with the internal combustion engine were well known, and when a mysterious benefactor from China offered Forsey a huge sum to continue his research under very specific requirements Forsey jumped at the chance. For several years the money flowed and the research, which Forsey eventually realized had to do with rocketry, continued apace.

Forsey completed his work only two weeks ago, and detected a note of falsity in the transaction only when he was ambushed by foreigners on a remote road near his house. He was forcibly injected with some sort of narcotic. When he woke, he found himself in this odd prison, interacting only with ferocious faces that occasionally floated by the top of the hole he found himself in.

As far as Forsey knows, he is still on Earth; he suspects it's China although he doesn't recognize his captors' language. Once the truth of the Dreamlands is revealed to him, he will enter full scientific mode, eager to puzzle out the "realities" of his situation. Still, he will be eager to get home to his family on Earth, and will readily join any group whose stated goal is to escape the Dreamlands.



GLEN IVEY

Lost Gadgeteer, age 40

STR 7 CON 11 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 16
DEX 13 APP 8 EDU 18 SAN 80 HP 13

Damage Bonus: none

Skills: Anthropology 16%, Art (Sculpture) 19%, Biology 20%, Chemistry 25%, Conceal 31%, Craft (Machinery) 65%, Drive Auto 35%, Electrical Repair 40%, Listen 59%, Locksmith 81%, Mechanical Repair 64%, Operate Heavy Machine 44%, Physics 22%, Spot Hidden 40%. *Languages:* English (Own) 90%.

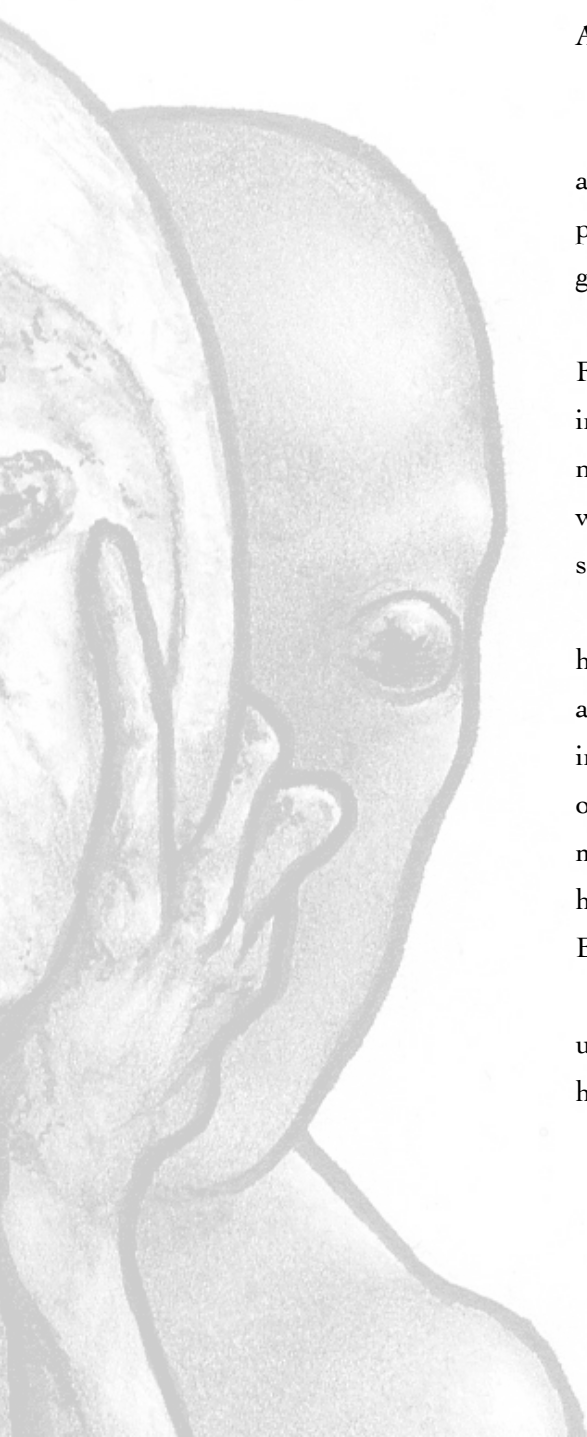
Attacks: Punch 59%, damage 1D3+db

Ivey is a stocky, studious man with short cropped brown hair and a bald spot. He tends to dress in workshop clothes—dungarees, suspenders, button-down shirts—and his hands are often stained with grease.

Ivey lived and worked in Emeryville, a sleepy, rural suburb of San Francisco, as a mechanical jack-of-all-trades. He began by repairing bicycles in his shed, then motor vehicles, and finally any manner of mechanical device. He was well known in the area as a man who could fix almost anything. This brought him to the attention of servants of the Men from Leng.

A device in their employ, used to spy the soul-strength in a human, had seized up due to exposure to sea air, and required mechanical attention. The men, swarthy foreigners, brought the device to Ivey in the hopes he could undo the rust that had set in the joints of the oddly-shaped device. He did. With the device working again, the men discerned the power of his spirit. They subdued him, injected him with a powerful mix of *bywandine*, and transported him to the Ebony Temple.

Ivey has no idea where he is, and will believe he is in California until confronted by the undeniable fact that he is *elsewhere*. Even then, he will remain baffled as to the new realities of the “world”.



ILIAS MASTROGIORGOS

Terrified Journalist, age 35

STR 12 CON 18 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 17
DEX 5 APP 12 EDU 12 SAN 85 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Art (Writing) 52%, Drive Auto 45%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 35%, History 51%, Library Use 65%, Photography 60%. *Languages:* Greek (Own) 60%, English 51%.

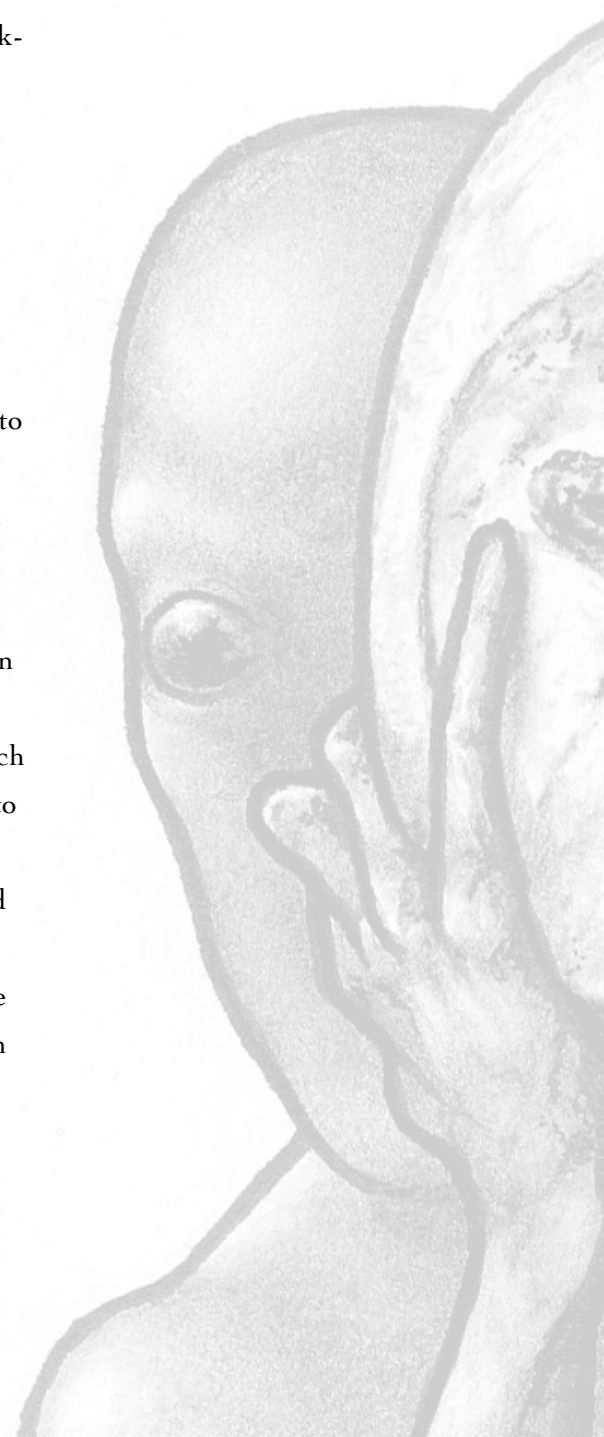
Attacks: All at base

Mastrogiorgos is an average-sized man with green eyes, high cheekbones, a Roman nose and short black hair, balding in front. He is a reporter for a Greek newspaper who recently was following a ring of thieves and smugglers stealing Greece's ancient history brick by brick. The group, called the Silver Keys, was known to have raided unguarded ruins and to have destroyed the Temple to Artemis at Agia. Mastrogiorgos' doggedness got the better of him. His prediction of the group's next strike proved both accurate and disastrous.

He was captured by the thieves, held at gunpoint, and subjected to "tests" by the Silver Keys' hirsute leader. The men, whose nationality Mastrogiorgos could not recognize, talked in a bizarre language. Then they beat him unconscious.

Mastrogiorgos woke to find himself facing the reconstructed columns thought destroyed in the Temple of Artemis, reassembled in an abandoned warehouse. Within the pillars was the most amazing thing he had ever seen, a skein of light like a blue-white mirror which wobbled and shook as people moved in the room. He was dragged to it and unceremoniously thrown through.

On the far side, in the dark, he was beaten some more and hurled to the bottom of a pit, where he has subsisted for days on noisome scraps that his captors throw down to him. He has no idea where he is, and guesses he is still in Greece until exposed to the bizarre truth of the Dreamlands.



ADAM REEDER

Open-Minded Publisher, age 45

STR 12 CON 13 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 16
DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 17 SAN 80 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Archaeology 16%, Handgun 35%, History 95%, Library Use 85%, Occult 65%, Persuade 90%, Psychology 35%. *Languages:* English (Own) 85%, French 56%.

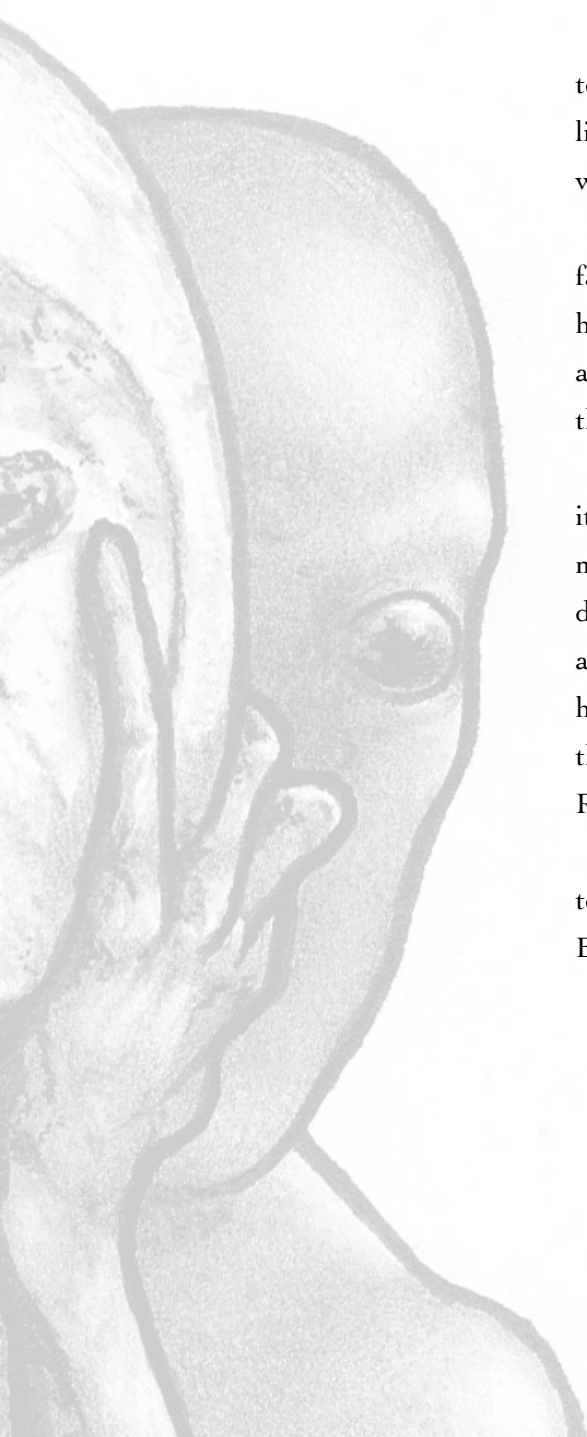
Attacks: Punch 59%, damage 1D3+db

Reeder is a nondescript man with glasses, fair hair greying at the temples, blue eyes, a slight paunch and a knowing smirk. He dresses like a rogue librarian: tweed suits, knitted ties and leather shoes which match his belt.

Reeder fell in with the wrong sort in London and he knew it. His failing publishing concern had bounced checks across the globe, and his publications' dwindling circulation was finally beginning to take a toll on his bank account. He did as many do and turned away from the darkness in his life to look for something new.

Reeder had longed for escape and one day, unceremoniously, it arrived. Smoking of the weed the Afghans called *bywandine* was miraculous. It erased the terror in his life in a single puff. Reeder drifted off on a cloud of *bywandine*—and woke to a vicious beating at the hands of men in turbans in some dark place. Where he was, he had no clue, but shortly after waking he found himself in a pit in the dark, spat and pissed upon by his evil captors. More and more, Reeder is certain they are not human at all but some sort of demon.

Reeder's early obsession with the occult has kept his mind open to nearly any possibility. He alone of the group of new people from Earth will be prepared to handle the truth of the situation.



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