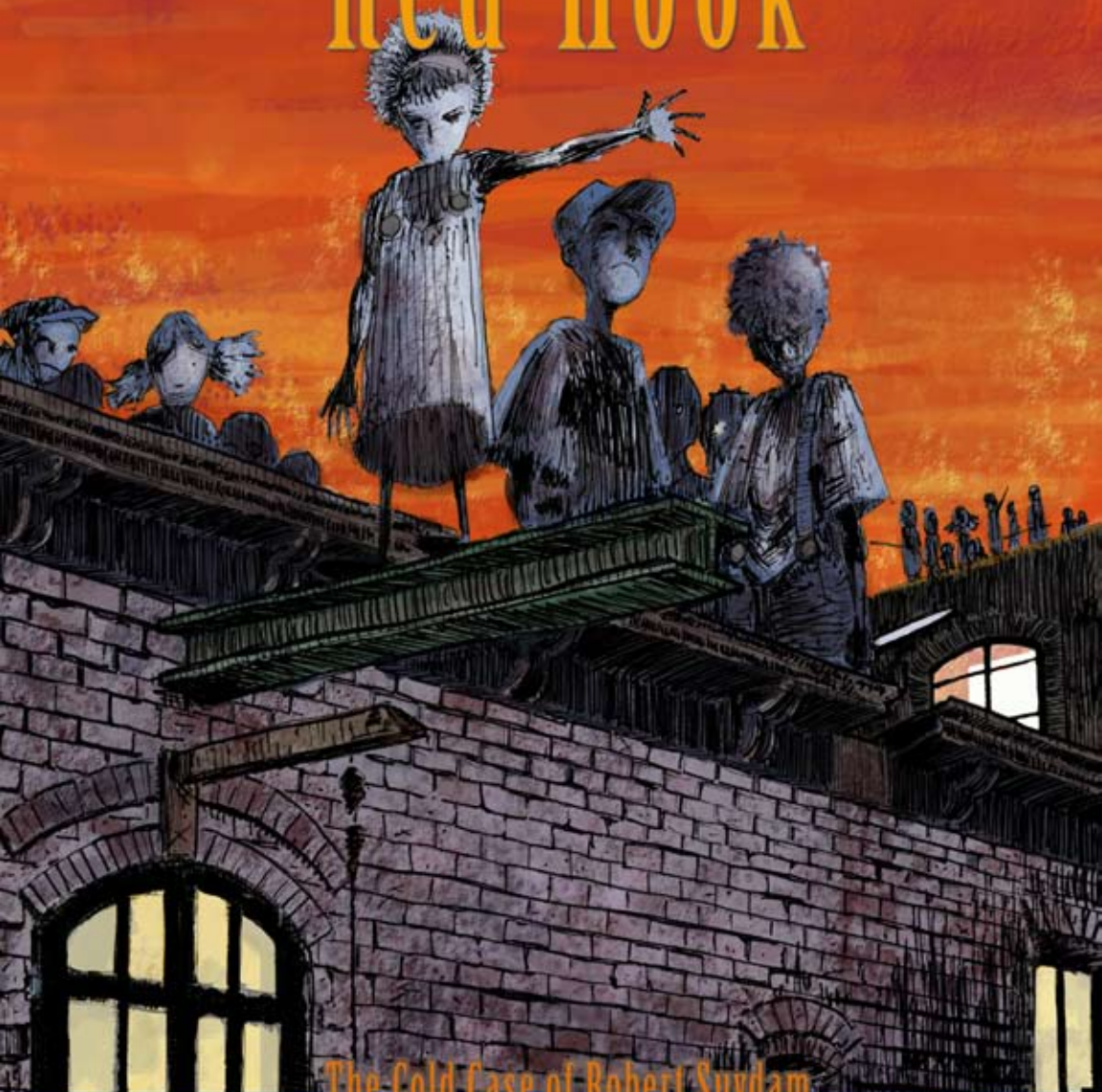


After Lovecraft: **CALL of
ETHULHU**

The Horror at Red Hook



The Cold Case of Robert Suydam
Rick Dakan

CALL OF CHAOSIUM LICENSED CTHULHU

After Lovecraft: The Horror at Redhook The Cold Case of Robert Suydam A Classic *CALL OF CTHULHU*® Adventure

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After Lovecraft:

The Cold Case of Robert Suydam

Introduction

H. P. Lovecraft's imagination brought us together here and now, you reading what I'm writing. As the inspiration for the *CALL OF CTHULHU* RPG, tens of thousands of hours of game play have crept out investigators and keepers around the world for decades now. But very few of those adventures have directly engaged Lovecraft's stories themselves. Those that have offer an extra thrill, a bit of borrowed majesty from the master, for players. The *After Lovecraft* line of adventures seeks to offer players scenarios that build directly upon Lovecraft's tales, where the investigators themselves read Lovecraft's stories in game, as part of the adventure.

Involving the Investigators

This scenario presumes that the players have all read H.P. Lovecraft's "*The Horror at Red Hook*," which will be referred to going forward as The Malone Manuscript and is provided at the end of the adventure as a hand out. Keepers can also download a printable version from the Super Genius Website at <http://www.supergeniusgames.com>. The events described in the story took place a decade prior to the scenario's beginning, during which time Detective Malone has been living a largely rural life away from the horrors of the big city. But recent inquiries from a Manhattan socialite have dredged up old nightmares, and Malone feels duty-bound to do whatever he can to help unravel this lingering thread from that old, tragic mystery.

The Keeper has several options with regard to how best to present the manuscript. While written in the third person, the story clearly focuses on events that only Malone could know. He may well have written it

himself, putting it into the third person as a form of emotional and psychic self-defense and intending to release it after his death. If this option is chosen, Malone or some mutual friend approaches the investigators with the manuscript, asking them to read it first and then speak to Malone.

Another option is to create a researcher character to serve as a Lovecraft analog for your adventures. This option works especially well for Keepers interested in running more After Lovecraft style adventures that involve the investigators reading and reacting to Lovecraft's actual stories. The researcher would be someone obsessed with the occult, an investigator in his or her own right who specializes in interviewing and collecting first person accounts of the weird and supernatural. For game groups that desire a little meta in their fiction, this researcher could even be Lovecraft himself.

Synopsis: Past and Future

This section summarizes both the back story that leads up to the adventure and then the scenario itself. Keepers, like the players, should be familiar with *"The Horror at Red Hook"* before reading this section, as it does contain spoilers.

What's Happened in Red Hook?

Ten years ago, the sinister forces at work in Brooklyn's Red Hook neighborhood metastasized into public consciousness with the events described in *"The Horror at Red Hook"* short story. The abductions, child sacrifices, and public downfall of Robert Suydam, a reclusive member of a well-respected family, captured imaginations and stirred up deep-seated fears at the time, but a decade later those demonic events are long forgotten by most. Only two living people know what really happened that night in Red Hook when devils and demons walked the Earth – an agoraphobic retired police detective named Malone and a very special young girl who wasn't even born yet.

New York City police and fire rescuers pulled out 17 survivors from the ruins of Robert Suydam's Parker Place house of horrors, three of whom were pregnant. All three mothers died in childbirth, two of them alongside their stillborn, monstrously deformed offspring. Only one infant girl survived, a relatively healthy (by comparison) young babe notable only for her exceedingly pale, almost translucent skin and coal black eyes. After a prolonged stay in the hospital while doctors watched to make sure she survived the stressful conditions of her birth, the orphaned child was given

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the name Ellen and handed over to the Catholic Church to be raised. She has languished in their care ever since, and now lives in a Brooklyn orphanage called St. Lucia House.

Ellen's mother, like all the unfortunate women impregnated in the tunnels beneath Red Hook that year, was not bearing the child of any human father. Indeed, Ellen has no true father at all. She is a Child of Lilith, the seductive Great One that has stirred men's loins and induced fertility since ancient times. A cult of Kurdish-based death magicians had made a pact with the goddess, hoping to wed the power of her supernatural fertility with their own devotion to an aspect of Shub-Niggurath. By re-assembling the ancient artifact known as the Throne of Lilith, they were able to use Lilith's influence to inseminate human women with monstrous, other worldly spawn. They hoped to breed a race of such half-human monsters that would in turn be capable of procreating and some day running humans off the face of the Earth.

The cult thought it had found the perfect patsy in Robert Suydam, and indeed they had. Lilith's entrancing allure drew him from his shell and into the occult underworld. His fragile yet insightful intellect proved vital to unlocking the arcane pathways through which the cult's fertility program might succeed, including the full restoration of the damaged Throne of Lilith to its original power and glory. This restoration was of course what Lilith schemed for all along, and she never had any interest in furthering whatever incomprehensible and fearful agenda the Shub-Niggurathites were pursuing. The Throne restored, she cut her cords of control over Suydam, leaving him blissfully enthralled with his young wife. The cult however, was not done with him. As related in the story, they murdered him and his wife aboard ship and absconded with both his body and the vital ancient tome that he'd been stealing away to Europe with.

They reanimated Suydam's corpse in order to squeeze every last bit of knowledge from him, and as a form of punishment for his betrayal. His last, valiant push that sent the Throne of Lilith plunging into the abyss was his revenge, an act which, when combined with the police raid and the collapse of their Parker Place abode, put an end to the cult's scheme of breeding a monster race. They turned their attention to other dark matters, and Lilith faded from the scene. Her throne was once again lost, but she had gotten one thing out of the debacle: a new daughter.

Ellen's childhood wasn't so very different from the typical orphan, with the exception that the nuns and later the lay workers entrusted with her care were particularly kind and caring with her, sometimes to the

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detriment of the other kids. Something about her (namely the spirit of her ancient fertility goddess mother) just made adults swoon. As she has aged, the effect has grown stronger and stronger, and in the past year she has begun to realize who and what she truly is. Lilith speaks to her in her dreams, whispering secrets and filling her mind with both grand macabre ambitions and the knowledge and skills to achieve them. For the past nine months she has focused all her attention on the first step of her plan: recovering and restoring the Throne of Lilith.

Although she remains bodily a ten year old girl, intellectually she channels a small but impressive sliver of her mother's psyche. With her charms she can enthrall any post-pubescent human she comes into contact with, and the more exposure she has, the easier it becomes. Other children remain immune to her magical persuasions, but she is equally adept at inspiring un-enchanted loyalty in her peers. She now rules St Lucia House and has thus earned the devotion of her fellow orphans, who've never had it so good. Using the resources of her adult thralls, she's also been able to buy the affections of numerous poor and homeless children from around the neighborhood, whom she employs as a network of spies and errand boys.

Guided by Lilith, Ellen and her followers have spent the last few months recovering various pieces of lost arcana that once belonged to Robert Suydam. Although most of his library was destroyed when the Parker Place houses collapsed, there were some hidden caches that even the Shub-Niggurath cult did not know about. Ellen has recovered the contents of two of these caches and recently unearthed a third, which was in an abandoned row house that had become a favorite squat for a homeless man named Coal Tooth Carl. He'd already discovered some of the books left there and sold them in a Brooklyn pawn shop before a gang of street urchins came by and ran him off.

The books are only of ancillary interest to Ellen. Her real interest is the gold. Suydam had overseen the acquisition and importing of a rare, accursed gold alloy found only in such inhospitable lands as the Plateau of Leng. This special Heart's Gold (so named for the blood-red tint) was the key element in repairing the Throne of Lilith. He ended up acquiring more than proved necessary, and hid the rest in various secret caches where his untrustworthy allies wouldn't find it (an idea he didn't need Lilith to put in his head).

Meanwhile, Ellen's great work has been excavating the ancient tunnels where Robert Suydam met his second death and Detective Malone

lost his sanity. The new apartments on the old Parker Place site are too crowded and public for her excavations to go unnoticed, so Ellen has instead enthralled the Kanstansus family household a few blocks away. Her sturdiest adult thralls have been digging for six months now, tunneling their way to the ancient caves and then destroying the cement seals placed over the water-filled abyss that held the Throne of Lilith. With the well now accessible, she's turned to the problem of trying to find some way to lift the throne from the depths, but it's hundreds of feet below the surface. She is now working on pumping the well dry, and is making headway against the flow of water into the well from the aquifer. Just a few days more should suffice.

This brings us up to date with where the investigators come into the story. The book *Coal Tooth Carl* sold to the pawn shop ended up passing through the hands of a rare book dealer and then finding its way into an upscale rare book auction in Mintner's Auction House in Manhattan. Marlene Van Brunt, Suydam's niece and adjudicated heir, became aware of the book and its origin as part of her uncle's lost library. Receiving stony silence from Mintner's, she turned to Detective Malone in hopes that he might shed some light on the where the book might have come from and if there might, as family rumor has long held, there might be more where that came from.

Detective Malone Today

Malone is a wan shadow of his former self. He cannot come into the city, but will talk to the investigators at his country home or via telephone if they can't make the journey in person. He confirms all the details of the story, but doesn't have much else to add. Asked about the more fantastical elements of the story, Malone now hems and haws, claiming they were delusional fantasies, the product of stress and an over stimulated imagination. He denies any certain knowledge of the supernatural. Instead he focuses back on the swarthy, Kurdish cultists who he believes were behind it all. Malone feels that many of them escaped capture and that the cult as a whole has no doubt returned to its former level of malevolence in the intervening decade. They've learned how to keep a lower profile though, out of the eyes of New York's finest.

However, there's been a recent break in the case. He was recently contacted by lawyers representing Marlene Van Brunt, one of Suydam's nieces and heirs. She claims that books from her uncle's library have showed up at an auction house, books though lost to the cultists. Malone

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believes that the cult might be selling the books to raise funds for some new, nefarious endeavor. Or perhaps one of their disobedient members stole the tome and sold it for his own profit. Either way, it's a tie to the old Suydam case, and one he can't investigate himself. But the Investigators can. If they're the sort who requires such motivation, he can offer some modest payment from his dwindling savings. It's clear this case still haunts him. He offers to contact Marlene Van Brunt and tell her they're on their way.

What's Going to Happen Next?

The investigators begin with Marlene Brunt, whose only interest is finding remains of her uncle's estate and whose only lead is the name of the auction house who's selling the book, Mintners. The auctioneers are reluctant to reveal their sources, but the Investigators are able to trace the book to a pawn shop in Brooklyn. From there they learn that a local indigent man named Coal Tooth Carl brought the book in. The Investigators might also investigate some locales from the Malone Manuscript, and find that the dark past has been built over, but that fertility rates are high.

Coal Tooth Carl is scared of some street urchins who've been harassing him, and won't talk unless the Investigators ensure him that he'll be safe. There are some too-curious looking kids hanging about, so there might be something to his fears. He tells the investigators that he found the book in an abandoned house in Red Hook, but that the kids chased him off. The kids work for Ellen, and now that they've seen Carl talking to the Investigators, his days are numbered.

The abandoned house used to belong to Suydam, owned under another name and thus never connected to the estate. He kept some valuable books and even more valuable gold here, hidden in the walls and protected by weak magic charms. Ellen found the house through a Lilith-given dream after Carl broke one of the charms and found the book. She dispatched urchins to claim the rest, but Kurdish cultists devoted to Shub-Niggurath have found the place as well.

Inside the house the Investigators find lots of dead, mostly eaten children and a half dozen angry, knife and magic wielding Shub-Niggurath cultists. The Investigators clear the house of evil and find a cache of strange, red-tinged gold ingots with curious markings. By tracing the gold's origin and recent transactions, they can discover that a little girl has been visiting pawn brokers and jewelers and selling off the ingots one at a time..

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While they investigate, Ellen sets her urchins upon them with orders to use every cute/mischievous kid trick in the book (and some magic) to get the gold back from the investigators.

Either through the pawn shop transactions or from questioning or following one of the urchin thieves, the Investigators find their way to Ellen's lair: the St. Lucia House Orphanage. Ellen has the entire staff under her thrall, along with most of the block and several helpful police officers. The Investigators can get in the door and have a meeting with super-creepy, much to mature for her age, and more than a little threatening, Ellen. Ensnared behind her wall of innocent kids and enthralled adults, she's mostly untouchable in St. Lucia House. They'll have to wait for another opportunity.

They only have to wait until nightfall, when Ellen leaves the orphanage surrounded by a gang of large workmen under her thrall. She's off to visit the Throne of Lilith beneath Red Hook, which she's been excavating for months. Suspecting she's being followed by the Investigators and knowing that the Shub-Niggurath cultists are closing in on her, she leads the investigators into conflict with the cultists and slips away in the confusion. The Investigators follow along as best they can, perhaps with the aid of one of her enthralled devotees who stayed behind to fight and now is desperate to reunite with Ellen.

The trail leads them to a small house and an elderly couple under Ellen's spell. In their basement is a hole leading down into part of the ancient tunnel network described in the Malone Manuscript. As the Investigators explore the tunnels, they come upon the remains of the old cult's inhuman breeding program, are haunted by ghosts of horrors past, and rescue a small boy who's been trapped down there for days.

The adventure comes to a finale in Ellen's Throne Room, where the recently excavated Throne of Lilith becomes a source point for temporal disruption. Ellen has two dozen or so enthralled adults arrayed before her, and as the distortion field spreads out, it turns them into demonic servants of Lilith. The Investigators must rescue as many as they can and venture into the field itself to finally confront and destroy Ellen. Assuming they survive, they're left with a lot of psychically scarred adults and children and a huge, evil golden pedestal to deal with. On the plus side, all of New York wasn't turned into Lilith/Allen's personal playground.

Act 1: Overdue Books

Synopsis: The players meet Robert Suydam's heir, Marlene Van Brunt, who sets them on the trail of her uncle's lost and now found book. The investigators follow up leads in auction houses and pawn shops and eventually find their way to a frightened hobo named Coal Tooth Carl who found the book. He'll tell them where he found the book, if they keep a gang of frightening children away from him. They also have an opportunity to follow up on some of the other leads from the Malone Manuscript, and note some oddly fertile families living in what used to be Parker Place.

Meeting Marlene Van Brunt

Marlene Van Brunt is the only heir to Robert Suydam who's managed to keep some semblance of the family's once prodigious fortune and social standing. Following Suydam's demise, the extended clan fell on increasingly hard times as investments went bad, businesses went bankrupt, and tragic accidents and unexpected suicides thinned the family ranks. Marlene is Suydam's niece, although she only met her mysterious uncle a handful of times during his life. She holds no great affection for him or his stained memory, but in the course of the past decade of heated legal wrangling and probate disputes Marlene did achieve a settlement from the courts naming her as Suydam's sole heir. At the time this allowed her to take some small profit from selling off the abandoned Parker Place property. She, like everyone in the family, has heard the rumors that Suydam left behind some secret cache of gold, but up until recently never gave them much credence.

Then Marlene received word from friends of hers that an inscribed, first edition of *The Golden Bough* is being listed for auction as part of a lot of rare books. According to the auction catalog from Mintner's Auction House in Manhattan, the tome bears an inscription shows that "the book is from the library of deceased Brooklynite and controversial recluse, Robert Suydam." Marlene's lawyers have contacted the auction house, but they claim to have gotten the book through legitimate channels. Since there's no way to prove when the book might have left the library, Marlene can't legally lay claim to it. She doesn't care much about the fate of the book itself, but wants very much to know where it came from, suspecting that it might lead to other lost treasures from her uncle's estate. Her lawyers' inquiries led them to Detective Malone, who in turn contacted the investigators.

Marlene sees the investigators in her 5th Avenue apartment – it’s no penthouse suite, but it’s large, stylish, and comfortable, supported by her family’s investments and her husband’s income as a mid-level Wall Street banker. She’s a distinguished woman in her early 40s, severe-featured with a conservative demeanor and dress that is belied only by a luxuriantly long and full hairstyle that falls well past her shoulders. She addresses them formally and professionally at all times, laying out the basics of her situation. Marlene has read Malone’s account of what happened to her uncle, but refuses to talk about or directly acknowledge any of those scandalous details. She makes her wishes clear: she wants to know the origin of this mysterious copy of the Golden Bough and if there’s anything else where that came from. She’s prepared to pay well above market rate for this information, providing nothing scandalous gets attached to her family’s name. She hints that she wouldn’t be surprised if the book’s appearance had something to do with the sordid characters her uncle once caroused with, and she trusts the investigators will “handle” any such connections with appropriate discretion and, yes, ruthlessness. Marlene is clearly a woman focused on results and outcomes, no matter what methods are used behind the scenes to achieve them.

Marlene gives no indication that the family legends maintain that Suydam had a secret cache of foreign gold, and should the investigators return to her with such suspicions, she’ll act surprised. She seems more concerned that some sort of diary or journal of her uncle’s depravities might surface, although she only talks about such things in the most oblique language possible.

Mintner’s Auction House

Mintner’s is a boutique auction house in Midtown Manhattan that specializes in rare books, maps, and 17th and 18th century etchings. It is wholly owned by Christopher Mintner, a portly, balding man in his early thirties who recently took over the business from his father. Mintner dresses in expensive suits, but doesn’t wear them well, and generally gives the impression of someone who’s putting on airs. If the investigators have called ahead for an appointment and have told his assistant Philip what they’re inquiring about, Mintner does his best to put them off. If they simply show up, he acts the friendly businessman at first, but quickly goes cold once the topic of the Suydam tome is mentioned. He says he’s already said everything he has to say to Mrs. Van Brunt’s lawyers.

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The investigators must find some way to overcome his recalcitrance. He's susceptible to bribery, although he doesn't come cheap. He can also be bullied or threatened, but more by threats to his reputation and standing than threats to his well-being. Physical intimidation results in a quick call to the police, who take his side. The investigators can come back after hours to search the records, or perhaps work on Philip, who's much easier to bribe. Philip can tell them that ever since Christopher took over the business, the Mintner House's standards for ethically acquired items have grown quite lax. If they convince Mintner himself to talk or search the records, he offers or they find a receipt for the book from Sinclair's Pawn Shop in Brooklyn. Not the kind of place one normally finds rare books, but Mintner's has broken no laws.

No matter what, Mintner refuses to admit he's done anything wrong or that anyone besides him has legal claim to the book. If Mrs. Van Brunt wants it so much, she can buy it at next month's auction.

Sinclair's Pawn Shop

Sinclair's Pawn shop is in Cobble Hill, a neighborhood in Brooklyn just north of Red Hook. It's a flourishing business in an otherwise depressed block, owing mostly to the fact that Michael Sinclair pays regular protection money to local gangsters and in return fences a lot of their ill-gotten goods. With that kind of backup, he's not easily intimidated, and isn't afraid to let strong arming investigators know that he's got some muscle protecting him. Sinclair is in his mid fifties, a fireplug of a man, with thick arms and a rock-solid pot belly. He's also very well-read, and has an expert's eye for antiquities and valuables of all kinds.

If the investigators have gotten Mintner's cooperation or just manage to convince Sinclair that they do, he'll share his source for the book with them. If not, they'll have to find some other way, but since it's not great secret, a five dollar bill will do the job. Sinclair will take a little pleasure in stringing them along at first, trying to figure out what their angle is and if there's any possible profit to be made.

Sinclair tells the investigators that he bought the book from a hobo named Coal Tooth Carl, who sometimes brings knick-knacks by. Sinclair saw the book's value at once, and claims to have paid a fair price for it. Carl said he found it in an abandoned house, and who's Sinclair to call him a liar. He told the hobo to be on the lookout for any more such "finds." He tells them Carl usually hangs out down near the docks in Red Hook. If they have any other questions, they'll have to ask him themselves.

Unknown even to him, Sinclair has also been involved in the case in one other way – he has bought an ingot of the cult’s lost gold from Ellen. He has no idea she’s connected to the book, and even if asked about recent gold acquisitions, won’t mention the transaction. In fact, he bought the gold at fair market value from her, something totally uncharacteristic of him. He’s still not sure why he didn’t cheat her – after all, she had to be up to no good. Ten year old girls don’t have gold ingots. The whole transaction disturbed him, and he’s already melted the gold down and sold it off.

Coal Tooth Carl

Coal Tooth Carl, so named because he has just one tooth left in the front of his upper jaw, and it’s coal-black, is a lifelong Brooklynite and former merchant seaman. His age is in-determinant given the hard life he’s led, and he’s not saying, but on a good day he can pass for thirty and on a bad one for sixty. He mostly begs off sailors and dock workers, occasionally doing an odd job here and there when he has to. Always polite to the point of ingratiating, everyone around the Red Hook docks knows him at least by sight, and few of them hassle him very often. It only takes a little asking around for investigators to find Carl’s nest.

In summer and spring, Carl sleeps in a little nest he’s built for himself in the rafters beneath one of the piers using stolen wood and a few ratty tarps. The combination of its inaccessibility and unpleasantness means that he seldom has competition for it. He feels safe up there, ten feet off the ground, and still retains the nimble climbing skills of his sailing days. When the investigators find him, he pretends to be asleep. He doesn’t want to talk to anybody. He’s clearly scared and promises without provocation that he hasn’t done anything wrong.

Soothing words or angry intimidation, especially when combined with an offer of drink or cash, get Carl down from his perch. He’s wiry, compact, and stinks of fish and the sea. He’s got slightly bulging eyes and hollow cheekbones that might mislead paranoid players to think he’s got some Deep One in him, but he doesn’t. Carl’s clearly scared, his eyes darting from side to side and nearly jumping at any unexpected sight or sound.

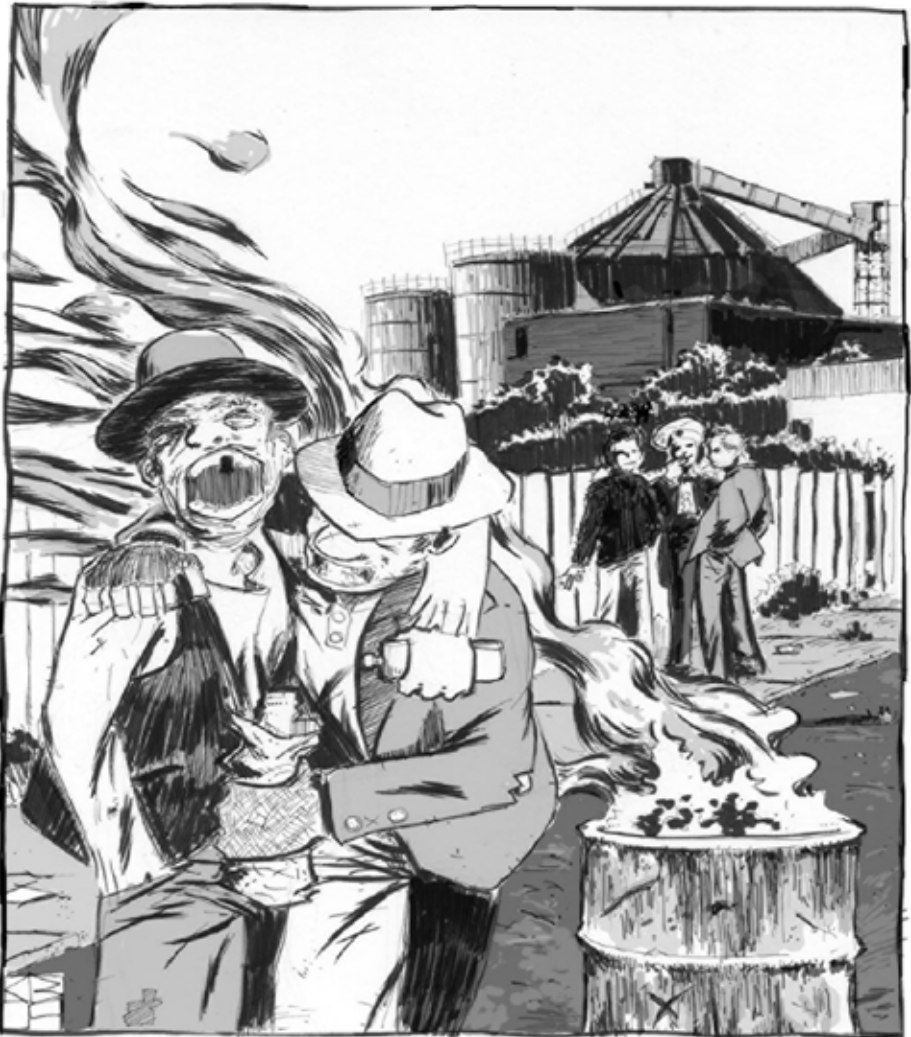
Carl claims not to have sold the book. He doesn’t know anything about any book. What book? Must’ve been some other guy. He’s clearly lying. Pressed, he admits to finding the book, but it was just on the street, just sitting there, OK? No big deal. He just picked it up, right? Another lie

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of course. Only once the investigators really press him does he admit that there's more to the story, but he's sworn to secrecy.

Now of course, the investigators have to know what he's hiding.

Only once they promise to protect him and make sure there aren't any children lurking around does Carl tell his story. There are in fact children lurking around, sent by Ellen to spy on Carl. A successful Spot Hidden check by someone actively scanning for curious urchins spots a young child of indeterminate gender couching behind a wall about 100 feet away. The child flees if approached and is challenging to catch as he dodges through holes in fences and clambers into crawlspaces. Catching up with him should require some serious successes on the part of the pursuing



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Investigators. If they do catch him, he has nothing to say about nothin'. He's just a kid named Julius, mindin' his own business. Unless they really press him hard (and one should question the morality of any investigator who does), he doesn't give up Ellen.

Once he feels safe, Carl explains that he found the book in an abandoned brownstone that's less than ten blocks from his nest. Sometimes he hides out there when the weather's cold. It's got no roof, but the downstairs is OK if you don't mind rats. Sometimes he strips wood from the place for his nest, especially when the city workers occasionally come by and break his nest up while he's gone. A few weeks ago he was stripping some wood from the walls and found this book hidden there. It looked pretty fancy and was in good shape – it'd been wrapped in some leather along with some other books and diaries. *The Golden Bough* was the biggest and fanciest looking of the pile, so he took it to Sinclair's and got \$5 for it. He went right back to get the rest, but there were these kids inside. A bunch of 'em, and they started throwing stuff at him and so he ran off.

Carl came back the next night, but those kids were still there, only this time they'd trapped the place and he was snared good and tight. They beat on him and made him swear never to come 'round that house no more, and let him go. But ever since then they've been harassing him, and he only went by the house just one other time, about a week ago, just to see if they was still inhabiting it. They chased him off again and said they'd kill him if he ever came back. So no, he's not ever going back there, not while those kids are 'round anyway. He will, however, gladly tell the Investigators where the house is, especially if they promise to take care of those damned kids.

CARL'S FATE

If the Investigators do not do something to help Carl relocate to a safer neighborhood, the next time they come to see him, if they do, they'll find he's been crushed to a bloody pulp while sleeping in his nest. Dock workers discover his body the next day, drawn by a foul odor that's worse than rotting flesh. Their grim discovery makes the papers. Upon hearing her spy's report that Carl was talking to the investigators, Ellen decided that he was the kind of liability that needed a magical remedy and so she summoned a demonic serpent of Lilith to take care of him.

Following up on Malone's Manuscript

There are a few leads from Malone's story that the players might want to follow up on at some point in the investigation. Neither of them are vital for advancing the plot, but they do provide some added clues that savvy investigators will find useful in their quest to figure out what's going on. Depending on when the Investigators follow up on these leads, the Keeper might well layer in some added elements. If they've already come to Ellen's attention by interviewing Coal Tooth Carl, she probably has some of her urchins keeping an eye on them, and observant investigators might spot them. If they've already cleared out the Abandoned House (see page 10), then other members of the Shub-Niggurath cult might take another shot at the interlopers. Or the Investigators might breeze on through these investigations if that better suits the Keeper's pacing.

Parker Place

As suggested in the Malone Manuscript, Suydam's old lair in Parker Place has been cleared away since its collapse and the street re-named. It is now Cowlton Court, and is the site of a new, six story apartment building that was erected seven years ago on top of the original lair. The building houses mostly lower-income, working families, many of them stevedores and other shipping-related laborers. The buildings are architecturally plain except for one feature that comes to light with a Knowledge roll made while examining either the basement or the blue prints for the building. The basement is only half as deep as is typical for such a structure, and the cement foundations three times as thick. It ties into sewer and water through the structures next door, effectively sealing it off from the ancient passages that once connected Suydam's building to the subterranean horrors beneath Red Hook. Interviewing the residents reveals no reports of anything strange or unnatural, but a successful Idea or Medicine check lets investigators notice that the pregnancy rate amongst the women is four to five times what one would expect. Lilith's fertile energy still has its effect, even through the layers of concrete in the basement.

The Survivors

One of the more tantalizing leads from Malone's description is the fate of those survivors who had been kept captive beneath Parker Place and were pulled out of the rubble alive. As the manuscript describes, some of them died upon exposure to the light, and many were irrecoverably mad.

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Every one of the victims who survived that day sadly died within the next three years, as police and hospital records will show. A successful **LIBRARY USE** also turns up the fact seventeen of them were pregnant at the time. Three of those mothers gave birth to living children, but all the mothers died during childbirth. The three orphans were given into custody of the Catholic Church, which had played a key role locally in helping the community of Red Hook recover from the disaster.

Tracking down the fates of those three children requires investigators to work their way through the church bureaucracy in multiple stages, a task which take the better part of a day, possibly two. **CREDIT RATING** and **FAST TALK** can ease things along. The church records indicate two of the infants, both male, were severely deformed and both died before reaching five years of age. The third was a girl, apparently healthy and normal in all respects, who was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Sullivan of Brooklyn. The Jones lead is a dead end however – as the couple died in a house fire the night before they were supposed to take custody of the girl. The girl ended up being moved to an orphanage, according to newspaper reports of the day, but which one is not mentioned.

Act 2: The Abandoned House

Synopsis: The investigators explore an abandoned brownstone where

- Kurdish cultists of Shub-Niggurath have set up shop and are feasting on the flesh of the children the Investigators probably expected to find here. If they survive, they'll come away with new clues about the mysterious gold. Researching the gold reveals its occult significance and points the way to Ellen and St. Lucia House.

Cultists Everywhere

The abandoned house in Red Hook is five blocks away from the old Parker Place brownstones. Robert Suydam purchased the brownstone just weeks before his marriage and murder, using money from his cultist allies and a legal name from his wife's extended family, Robert Olson. The cult planned to use it as an extension of their slow but steady takeover of Red Hook, but events spiraled out of control too fast and the property only got limited use before everything came crashing down. No one in the cult who knew about it survived the police raid, and no paper trail ever linked it back to Suydam for Marlene Van Brunt to find. Suydam himself never

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set foot in the place, but he had given over some lesser volumes from his occult library to one of the cultists, who hid the books there along with a cache of the cult's foreign gold.

The house remained officially empty ever afterwards, although a local family, the Baradosts, who had distant connections to the cult, knew enough to guess that no one would be claiming ownership anytime soon. So they moved in themselves, pretending to be the owners. That worked well right up until two years ago when some of those distant cult connections became a few degrees closer and the whole family was murdered in a ritual killing that left the brownstone damaged and the adjacent home gutted by fire. The city finally took notice of the property's true state of legal limbo during the investigation and the building has been officially condemned ever since. Like many of the buildings on its street, it soon became a haven for the homeless, and up until recently was frequented by Coal Tooth Carl.

Ellen became aware of the house when Carl broke the moldering magical seal that the cultists had placed over the cache of books. It sent out a faint warning dream that Ellen could intercept and interpret. Once she learned about the abandoned house and its hidden gold, she led a core cadre of her urchins and some enthralled adults to take the building back. They found the books and soon after discovered and broke the second seal that protected the larger of two gold caches. Ellen has been using these treasures ever since to finance her excavation of Lilith's Throne.

But Ellen wasn't the only one who received a mystic message when the seals were broken. The cult of Shub-Niggurath placed those seals in the first place, and sent some of their members to look into it. The cadre of Kurdish cultists crept up upon the house late in the night, just a day or so before the investigators find their way to the abandoned building. They found some of Ellen's urchin followers there, still searching for any more caches and generally using it as a club house of sorts. They were no match for the grizzled, blood-mad killers. Only one child managed to escape the ensuing slaughter and report what had happened to Ellen. Ellen has been weighing her options for dealing with the cultists, but she's loathe to draw their attention to her. Fortunately the Investigators have come along to take care of the problem for her.



Entering the House

The cultists are only now beginning to come down from the blood-frenzied induced high and ensuing ritual cannibalism that accompanied their seizing the house. They've indulged their appetites for child-flesh and done proper obeisance to their dread god. Now it's time to get down to work. The children had already torn into most of the walls, crawlspaces, and cupboards in the house, leaving only the basement un-excavated.

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Insane but not dumb, the cultists have decided to start their search there. The exact number of cultists should be modified by the Keeper in order to match the Investigators well, but here it is assumed that there are six of them in current residence. Four are down below, including their leader, while the other two lurk elsewhere in the home.

Shub-Niggurath Cultists

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 16 INT 10 POW 17
DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 13 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Pick/Shovel 64%, 1d3+1d4

Key Skills: Dodge 70%, Hide 75%, Sneak 60%, Spot Hidden 70%

The front door to the ramshackle brownstone is boarded over, as are all the windows (the glass is long gone). Hobos, urchins, and cultists alike all use the back door to enter. The previous occupants had pried loose some boards from the lower part of the door and would crawl through. The cultists simply tore off the boards and have hung a dirty, stained canvas tarp for privacy. Close examination reveals that many of those stains appear to be blood. As a security measure, the cultists have rolled out a three by three foot sheet of leather studded with rusty nails and covered with a cloth. Anyone who comes barging through the door without carefully checking for traps (**SPOT HIDDEN**), will step on it, taking 1D4 points of damage for every 6 points of size they have (round down). It requires a successful POW check to avoid crying out in pain and alarm.

Investigators can try and access through either the front door or any of the windows, but all of these require prying loose or breaking through the planks of wood used to seal them shut. Doing so isn't difficult, but is almost certainly quite noisy and will alert the cultists inside to their presence. They in turn will be waiting in ambush.

Something's Cooking Inside

The first floor consists of a living room/parlor in the front, a dining room in the middle and a kitchen in the back. Stairs lead from the front room up to the second floor, and a door from the kitchen leads down into the basement. The second floor has three small bedrooms and a bath, with significant portions of the ceiling missing entirely, which means these upper story rooms have suffered severe water damage, warping and rotting the floors. All the plumbing and fixtures have been either removed or smashed.

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The front two rooms are empty of anything but garbage and rubble. The walls have been torn open in multiple places, exposing the bare interiors. There is still detritus from the various homeless residents who've inhabited the house over the years, including some children's toys like a dismembered, rotting cloth doll and a fraying, torn baseball.

The kitchen is much worse. In the dim light creeping in through slits in the boarded up windows, deep red stains creep across the wooden floor. A lone, makeshift table created from planks resting on wooden crates is the only furniture left in this kitchen turned abattoir. Unidentifiable hunks of meat and intestines lie scattered across the table and scattered in wet, tangled clumps on the floor around. Cracked and splintered bones, many with muscle and tendon still clinging in shreds, are piled in a heap in the far corner. A child-sized human skull glares up with empty, bloody eye sockets, nose, cheeks, and ears gone, but a blood soaked mat of hair still clinging to its scalp.

Add more gory details as desired. After killing the children in a ritual upstairs (where they had access to the open sky through the holes in the roof), the cultists took the corpses that remained down here to the kitchen and butchered them. They've been feeding of the remains ever since.

If the Investigators made too much noise in their entrance to the house, most or all of the cultists will be waiting here or just inside the door to the basement to attack them once they stumble over the nail trap. They set upon the intruders without warning or mercy.

If the Investigators have managed a more stealthy approach, the first floor is entirely empty. Two of the cultists are upstairs, resting and snacking, brewing up some foul potion. They've taken over the largest of the three bedrooms, which is at the front of the house. There they've widened the hole in the roof until it's over five feet in circumference. They've laid down sheets of tin on top of bricks to form a fire-proof surface. Originally this was for a ritual fire, but now it supports coals and a large stew pot where the cultists are brewing a rare hallucinogenic potion the requires virgin sacrifice and allows direct communication with Shub-Niggurath. One cultist chants quietly as he stirs the pot, while the other tends the flames.

From downstairs in the kitchen, investigators can make a **LISTEN** roll to hear both the faint chanting from above and the sounds of men grunting at work with shovels and picks down in the basement. It requires a **SNEAK** roll to move up the warped, creaky stairs without giving their

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presence away. A failed roll or any loud noise from the first floor will quiet the chanting and send the fire-tender downstairs to investigate. Once he sees the Investigators, he starts screaming, and if not silenced within one round, will alert the cultists in the basement.

Confronted with invaders, the potion-brewer decides to use his concoction as a weapon. If he's alerted, he will hide at the top of the stairs and then douse the Investigators as they ascend towards him. Should the investigators catch him at the fire, he will throw it at the nearest or most threatening looking target.

The cultists has a 75% chance of hitting someone he catches by surprise on the stairs, with an added 25% chance of splash damage done to anyone else on the stairs behind the first target. Confronted upstairs, he has a 50% chance of hitting, with a 25% chance of hitting anyone else standing within two feet of the target.

Anyone hit with the potion takes 1d8 damage from the boiling liquid. Furthermore, as the substance seeps into their pores, they begin to hallucinate. Fortunately for them, without the attendant ritual words, they aren't subjected to actually seeing Shub-Niggurath. However, they suffer a -25% penalty to all their skills while hallucinating. Each round they make a **SANITY CHECK**. If they fail, they lose 1d3 SAN and continue to freak out. If they pass, no SAN loss. Once they pass two Sanity checks or after six rounds pass (whichever comes first), they stop seeing things.

Winds in the Basement

The majority of the cultists are spending their time in the basement with picks and shovels. The Lead Cultist and three others are busy hacking away at the earth, and unless gunshots or cries of alarm from their comrades upstairs have alerted them, they keep on working until someone opens the door to the kitchen at the top of the stairs. Then one of them calls up in Kurdish, wondering which of their fellows is coming downstairs. If they don't recognize the voice immediately, they begin to grow suspicious. Taking them by surprise thus requires two successful **SNEAK** skill checks, one for the door and one for creeping down the stairs.

The basement is damp and cold and smells of freshly turned soil. The cultists have cleared most of the detritus and garbage out of the space, and have been piling up bricks and dirt in one corner. The cultists have torn out a huge section of brick wall on the Eastern side of the basement, and are digging a tunnel that slopes down into the ground, but they've only excavated a few feet. The whole room reeks of sweat and filth.

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The cultists immediately assault any intruders, with the three working cultists rushing forward with picks and shovels. The leader meanwhile drops his shovel and takes out a ritual knife. He spends the first round of combat casting a ritual, invoking Shub-Niggurath's aid against the enemy. Unless stopped, he manages to make his invocation, costing him 10 MP and a 1 HP blood sacrifice from his own arm.

Shub-Niggurath Cult Leader

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 16 POW 18

DEX 10 APP 14 EDU 19 SAN 26 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Ritual Knife 75% 1d4 +1d4

Key Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 18%, Hide 35%, Listen 86% Occult 77%, Sneak 59%, Spot Hidden 82%

Spells: *Magic Points: 14*—Breath of Shub-Niggurath

A whirling, whistling, then howling wind (New Spell, *Breath of Shub-Niggurath*) rises up from nowhere, filling the air in the small basement with dirt, bricks, and debris. This has the effect of nearly blinding everyone, including the cultists. As a result, all ranged combat skills suffer a -25% penalty at greater than point blank range. In addition, the winds reveal the collection of splintered children's bones that lay beneath the pile of dirt – remnants of an earlier meal. With mystical, malevolent purpose, the spell turns these bones into deadly projectiles aimed at the investigators. At the end of each round, there is a 30% chance for each PC that he or she will be struck by one of these bones, taking 1d4+1 points of damage. The spell ends once the Leader is killed or five rounds pass.

The cultists fight to the death, speak little English, and refuse to give up anything to the Investigators. If somehow the investigators do manage to force them to talk, they don't have much to reveal other than that Shub-Niggurath sent them to recover some artifacts.

Propped in the corner opposite the pile of earth and bricks is a rune-inscribed, polished piece of wood about two feet long and stained a dark red. It's a sort of divining rod, used to detect magical energies. With a good reference library and a successful **OCCULT** check, investigators can learn to operate the divining rod. The user closes his eyes, holding the stick loosely in the hand, parallel to the ground. It drains one **MAGIC POINT** per minute when within half a mile of any powerful source of mystic energy, when it tugs slightly in that direction. The cultists used it to find the third

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sealed cache of gold, which they have already excavated. If the investigators use the rod themselves, they can learn what the cultists already know – there's a powerful magical energy on the other side of the wall they're excavating. What none of them realize is that it is nearly half a mile away and several hundred more feet beneath the Earth: the Throne of Lilith. Investigators can use the rod to take a compass bearing from the direction the cultists were digging. That line points directly East, towards the cavern beneath the home where Ellen is currently running her own, much more extensive excavation.

The big prize, however, is the gold. It's wrapped in skin stripped from the children that's been tanned in the same solution they were brewing up on the second floor. As a result, anyone touching the leather wrapping with their bare hands suffers brief but terrible hallucinations of Shub-Niggurath and its young. **SAN CHECK:** 1/1d3. There are five, small gold ingots within, flat and rectangular like dominoes. They're each about two ounces of pure gold and are inscribed with strange symbols. The gold itself has a reddish tint to it, and on close examination appears to have almost microscopic red veins running all through it. It clearly deserves some further research, which is better carried out somewhere besides this blood-filled basement.

Heart's Gold

The investigators now have at least one solid gold lead and a number of other tenuous ones. They know that a gang of street kids is somehow involved in what's going on, and there's clearly a connection to the cult described in the Malone manuscript. The abandoned house linked the two together, and the gold is the most obvious place to start. The gold ingots provide several paths for research, none of which can be done effectively in the basement of the abandoned house.

OCCULT: Successful **OCCULT** or **CTHULHU MYTHOS** rolls when combined with appropriate reference materials (such as the library), reveal some information about the imagery inscribed into the gold. Although it seems more abstract than representational and does not conform to any widely known script or language, research reveals that similar imagery is found among Anatolian blood cults that were a pernicious plague during the early centuries of the Ottoman Empire. **CTHULHU MYTHOS** adds that these blood cults were in fact devoted to Shub-Niggurath and were particularly infamous for their nefarious breeding rituals that produced demonic, even dimensionally unstable offspring.

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• **GEOLOGY/CHEMISTRY:** Successful skill checks using these skills or with the aid of a knowledgeable expert reveals that the gold itself is quite rare and unusual. It's called Heart's Gold, both because of the red tinge and the tiny red veins of impurities running through it. There is no record of an actual vein of Heart's Gold ever being mined. It has only ever been found as a refined ore used to make jewelry, coins, or ingots, usually in ancient Near Eastern burial sites. There are less than a hundred such pieces known to be circulating in the world, all of them in the hands of museums or collectors. Heart's Gold is stronger and less malleable than normal gold, and sometimes behaves strangely when melted, getting even harder at very high temperatures but becoming pliant if you get the heat just right. Together, these properties make it difficult if not impossible to mix Heart's Gold with other forms of the precious metal.

The truth is, Heart's Gold is not of this Earth, and all that exists on our planet comes from inter-dimensional and inter-stellar travelers. A successful **CTHULHU MYTHOS** roll (made after investigators have used science to identify the gold) reveals the gold's unearthly origin and hints that it is sometimes given as a reward to devoted worshipers and is said to have a magical affinity that makes it a powerful tool in performing rituals and rites.

Follow the Money

• It might take an **IDEA ROLL**-associated leap to get the players thinking about following the money, but they know that Coal Tooth Carl sold a book he found at a pawn shop, so it's entirely possible that someone else sold some gold. The obvious thing to do is to start asking around town. There are scores of pawn shops and jewelry stores in Brooklyn, but the gold itself is so rare and unusual that anyone who's come across it is likely to remember it. **CREDIT RATING** successes can reduce the time and effort in cutting through dealers' natural reticence to discuss their clients, as can **PERSUADE** or **FAST TALK** if the investigators spin a believable line (investigating a crime or that the gold is stolen both work).

The first pawn shop that the Investigators find success in comes just north of Red Hook in Cobble Hill, only five blocks away from Sinclair's shop where he sold Suydam's book. This particular pawn shop deals with more jewelry than most, and the owner remembers purchasing the gold very well. A pretty young girl came in, maybe ten years old and wearing a beautiful white, Sunday dress, even though it was a Thursday. She had two pieces of this gold, in small, flat ingots identical to the ones

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the investigators might show him. She said her father had brought them back from The Great War, only he'd passed since, and now her mother was very sick and she needed to pay the hospital bills. He paid her 10% above market. Gold at the time is selling for about \$20 an ounce, he paid out \$23. She took home over \$100, which cleaned him out for the day. He hasn't re-sold the gold yet – he thinks its rare coloration will fetch a high price if he can find the right buyer.

A day's investigating reveals similar stories at half a dozen other shops around Brooklyn, all of them within half a mile of the border between Red Hook and Cobble Hill. All of them describe the cute little girl in the white dress, although at each store she's got a different sob story – dying aunts, grannies, papas, baby brothers, and so on. None of them have sold the gold to anyone else yet. Everyone's waiting for something it seems (in fact they're waiting for the enthrallment to wear off, which it won't as long as they possess the gold – as far as Ellen's concerned, they're as good as banks). None of them give up the gold without a real live policeman there telling them to, and even then they're very uncomfortable with the idea.

POOR CARL

If they Investigators haven't gone back to check on Coal Tooth Carl and didn't do anything to relocate/protect him earlier, he's surely dead by now. The Keeper might like to find an opportune moment for them to come across his mangled corpse. Even though the kids didn't kill him, they know about his death and might try to lead the investigators to him as a kind of warning or scare tactic.

Kids Do the Scariest Things

Ellen had someone watching the abandoned house of course, and now she knows (and is pleased) that the Investigators have taken care of her cultist problem. Once they're gone, she sends some kids back to check the place over, but of course there's nothing left for them to find. If the investigators have decided to stake the building out, there's a good chance that they'll be able to pull off a surprise and catch one of the kids on their own. If not here, there will be other opportunities. At some point, especially if they've failed to follow the trail of the gold all the way to its end, it will become important to have the Investigators interrogate one of the urchins, who will give away Ellen's name and location.

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Having the investigators and urchins cross paths shouldn't be too difficult though, since the kids are now under orders from Ellen to steal that gold from the Investigators by any means possible. Remember though, these are still kids who are loyal to Ellen, but not enthralled. They're willing to take risks, but they're not wild-eyed cultists or professional criminals. They'll be sneaky and manipulative, but nothing they do will directly threaten the Investigators' lives unless they find themselves cornered and facing certain violence. How the Investigators respond to this challenge will say a great deal about them and their moral characters. The Keeper should never do anything to indicate the kids are possessed or demonic in any way. If the Investigators do respond with deadly force, there should be real consequences for them. Keep this in mind not necessarily out of any moral qualms as a gamer, but because it makes this whole section of the adventure much more challenging for the players if they can't just fall back on violence and weaponry.

Instead, the children will use the tricks and skills they've already honed growing up on the streets: misdirection, manipulation, and light fingers. With Ellen's support they have access to more props and tools than normal, such as clean, middle-class clothing they can use to disguise themselves with and pocket money for buying necessities. They also have special magical charms infused by Lilith that Ellen has given them especially for use in recovering the gold.

• THORNS OF LILITH

The Thorns of Lilith are spiked balls about the size of a large marble made from some sort of organic material, presumably a plant. Their spikes are no sharper than a toothpick in their dormant state, but a quick, one line prayer to Lilith and **3 MAGIC POINTS** activates them and the tips become needle-sharp. When they come into contact with bare skin belonging to anyone but the user within the next 5 minutes, the Thorns burrow into the flesh almost instantly. The children like to fire them from slings or just toss them at people. Sometimes they hide them where people will sit on them, or under a piece of cloth or paper where an adult might place their hand. It feels like being stung by a bee, but leaves no trace on the skin besides a slight reddening.

There are two colors – Black and Dark Green. Both are **POTENCY 15** toxins. The Black Thorns render the subject dull-witted and sluggish feeling, as if they were exhausted after staying awake for days on end. The victim suffers a -35% to all **SKILL LEVELS** involving any kind of concentration, especially **SPOT HIDDEN**, **PSYCHOLOGY**, and any academic

skills. The Dark Green Thorns give a mild effect similar to that Ellen has on all adults: the victim (who must be post-pubescent) feels positively disposed towards the caster, who benefits from a +35% to **FAST TALK** when dealing with the victim. Furthermore, the victim can take no physical action against the child unless he overcomes the Thorns **POTENCY** level with a **POW** check. The effects of both thorns last 10 minutes.

Urchin Tactics

Ellen's urchins employ a variety of tactics in their quest to alleviate the investigators of the burden of carrying all that alien gold around. Several of them are expert pick pockets, while all of them are now accomplished street hustlers. If possible they'll add in a Thorn of Lilith into these plans, but all of them have the potential to work without magical assistance. The Keeper should mix and match to suit the Investigators actions, interrupting their other investigations with urchin encounters.

Distract and Grab: This is the most straight-forward technique, and the kids only use it if they see a perfect opportunity (the Investigators are distracted by something else) or they are desperate. One or two kids approach the investigators from the front, taunting them or otherwise getting their attention. One of their sure-fingered compatriots then comes up from behind and tries to pick a pocket, snag a bag, or run off with a brief case. Another version involves the kids swarming around the person carrying the gold in a cheering mob, maybe asking for money or just making a lot of noise. One kid grabs for the gold and then everyone scatters in different directions, leaving the victim unsure who to chase.

Lure and Trip: A child provokes the Investigators into giving chase, usually by hurling insults or rocks, and maybe a Black Thorn of Lilith. The scamp then tears off down an alleyway carefully ducking under the piano wire that's been strung across the alley at chest height. The pursuer gets knocked flat, and innocent seeming children who "just happened" to be loitering nearby come to his aid, slapping a Green Thorn into place and then offering to help (help them free of that gold).

Manipulating Adults: For groups of dangerous looking investigators, the urchins may need to be more subtle. Using a Green Thorn on a policeman, one of the children enlists his aid, convincing the beat cop that the Investigators stole something from her poor, blind granny. She describes the gold exactly, and the cop makes the PC turn out his pockets. How the investigator avoids either giving up the gold to the kid or being arrested is up to him.

Sob Story: The kids might cut out the middleman and try to manipulate the Investigators directly. A particularly pitiful looking urchin approaches the Investigators and begs for the gold. She says that those nasty, mean, foreign cultist types have her baby brother captive and want the gold as ransom. If they see anyone else coming with it, like the big, tough, heroic investigators, they'll kill him. Give her the gold and she'll lead them there – they can take them out once her brother's free. Of course as soon as the Investigators give the child some gold, she just runs for it.

INTERROGATING URCHINS

Eventually the Investigators should get their hands on one of these pesky kids. At first the captive child tries the typical child-appropriate gambits. They act all tough, seemingly unconvinced that the Investigators can do anything to them. However, threats of being shipped off to orphanages up state or sent to work in a sweat shop somewhere prove effective, as do more drastic threats. Then the kids bring out the big guns: they start crying. The tears just flow and flow and the investigators should realize they are just dealing with kids here. They can decide to be comforting or remain threatening, as their consciences dictate, but Keepers should dish out guilt trips as needed.

Once they've broken one of the children they reveal the following: They get their instructions from Miss Ellen, a beautiful, smart, wonderful girl who takes care of them. No one else even cares about them, but she gives them food and money and clothes and shows them how to have fun and stand up to grown-ups and not have to go to school or anything. Plus she's an angel. They've all met her a whole bunch of times. She comes out only at night usually and will meet them in an old house or maybe an empty lot or someplace where no one else is around. She gives them stuff and kids do stuff for her, no problem. They know when to meet because the word gets spread. You just hear it, one kid tells another. No one knows where the word starts though.

Mostly she just asks them to watch people or run little errands and stuff. She had some kids watching and living in that abandoned house, but then they got killed so Ellen told them to stay away from it so they wouldn't get hurt and that she'd take care of the bad men. Now that the bad men are gone, she said she needs the gold that the investigators stole from the house, because it belongs to Ellen. When they get it they're supposed to bring it to her. There's no set meeting yet.

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They have no idea where Ellen lives. Probably in heaven or maybe a church, although somebody says they saw her at an orphanage one time. Maybe she looks after the kids there too?

The investigators must decide what to do with the child once they're done questioning him or her. If they let him go, he runs off and word quickly gets back to Ellen. Other options including turning him into some orphanage or the police or just packing him off to a friendly family member to look after.

Together with the information about the gold and where it's been sold, the Investigators can narrow down their search parameters to orphanages in the Red Hook/ Cobble Hill area. And it turns out there's just one: St. Lucia House, which is just north of Red Hook proper.

Act 3: St. Lucia House

Synopsis: The players investigate St. Lucia House, an orphanage where every single adult is enthralled by Ellen and the children rule the roost. They'll have to talk or sneak their way past the adults to get inside and end up having a rather surreal conversation with a little girl named Ellen who seems wiser, creepier, and more threatening than the sum of her words and appearance should dictate. They now know their enemy, but probably remain unsure of how to fight her.

The Orphanage

St. Lucia sits in the middle of a block on Henry Street, towards the south end of Cobble Hill and near Red Hook. It's actually not just one house, but three adjacent row houses that have been woven together by the Catholic Church into an orphanage for older children. It serves as both a school and a residence, and houses thirty-seven children between the ages of five and thirteen. Entrance is from the middle of the front facade, the other two former front doors having been sealed off. The house is three stories tall, with a red brick, well cared for exterior. There are cross motifs incorporated into the ironwork on the windows, which serve as bars on the first floor. There's a green space of ten feet between the sidewalk and the front door which is filled with thorny bushes, except for a flagstone path leading up to the front door. A bronze plaque next to the black painted, wood door says simply "St. Lucia House," with a cross underneath the name.

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As investigators approach the house, there are a couple of points of interest about the neighborhood. First of all, there seem to be more than the usual number of children playing in the streets. These aren't the street-urchin types they've been dealing with, but rather the children who live in homes from around the neighborhood, mixing with some of the kids from inside the orphanage. A **MEDICINE** or **IDEA** roll also notes that there is more than the statistically predicted number of pregnant women in the area. Finally, a pair of beat cops lean casually against the stoop across from the house, interacting with smiles and laughter with the playing children and nodding amiably to passing mothers. They're entirely under Ellen's thrall and they, or ones like them, are on guard in front of the house at all times – a new security measure of Ellen's since the Kurdish cultists arrived. They take umbrage at anyone questioning their presence, and if presented with some authority (say, one of the Investigators is a police officer), will insist that they have orders to be there. They don't, but they sincerely believe that they do. Note that these are normal cops who will react like any cop would if there's some sort of attack on the orphanage or the kids inside. They're enchanted, not evil.

Knocking on the door is the only legal way to gain entry, and the most obvious. The door is always locked, day or night, but during the day there's always someone standing nearby to open it, usually Sister Catherine, a twenty-seven year old, stocky nun with a friendly, welcoming affect. She stands in the doorway, filling all the available space. She'll let any children come and go, but has no intention of letting the Investigators inside without a very good reason. Persuade or Fast Talk can get them in the door, but they'll need a plausible excuse.

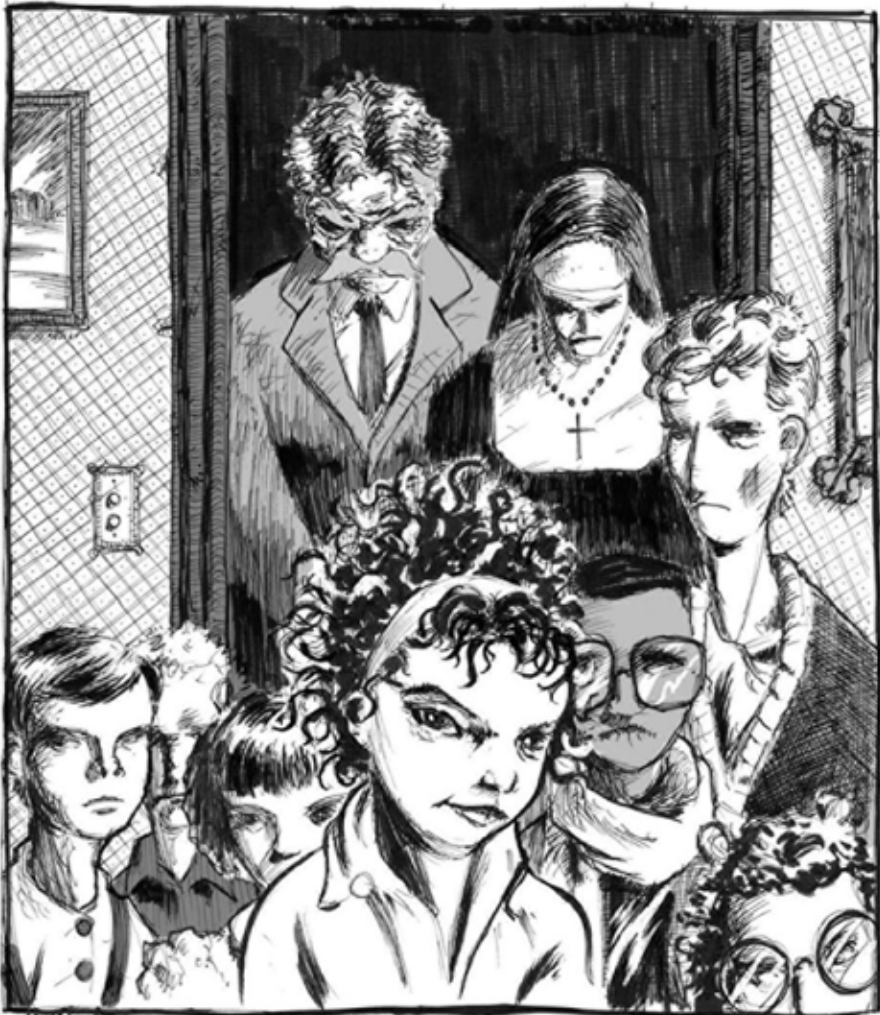
The small foyer has a plain wooden bench along one wall under a print of the Virgin Mary. Sister Catherine asks the Investigators to wait there. She passes through the interior door, giving them a glimpse beyond. They see kids running around and hear laughter, without a scolding voice to be heard. They're all waiting for Ellen's instructions. Just inside, at the base of the stairs, waits Sister Mary Elizabeth, watching to make sure the investigators don't do anything they shouldn't.

Under Ellen's Thrall

Ellen's supernatural influence over adults is an in-born part of her Lilith heritage. It's not something she even has to really think about. It only affects post-pubescent individuals, although there's not necessarily a sexual component to it. Rather, the magic keys off of certain hormone levels in adults. Without even trying, Ellen's power makes her automatically more

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appealing to and influential over adults, in effect raising her **PERSUADE** and **FAST TALK** skills by 45% when dealing with them. This charm effect grows with time, eroding any resistance to her. It takes three months of at least an hour's exposure each day for someone to become completely enthralled to Ellen. At that point, they will do whatever she commands, even if it means harming or killing themselves or ones they love. The enthralled are not zombie-like and retain their basic personalities, skill-sets, and abilities, although they are generally drained of any personal initiative or desire. They just want what Ellen wants. As a result, the thralls seem pretty normal unless the topic of conversation turns to Ellen or she is in the room. Then is quickly becomes clear that she's the one in charge.



Keith Bonifide

Ellen can also focus her enthralling effect, charming a single person for a short period of time. This requires her to overcome the target's **POW** on a resistance check and costs 5 MP. The target will then find it impossible to attack her for the next three rounds and Ellen gains a 45% bonus to all her skills when targeting the victim. Ellen can only focus enthrall one victim at a time.

Meeting Ellen

Chances are, Ellen knows who the Investigators are, at least in general. Unless they've been very careful in rounding up and sequestering nosy urchins, she's gotten reports about how they took care of the cultists in the abandoned house. She therefore knows that they're formidable. She also knows that they've been useful to her. Finally, she knows that they're adults, and if there's one thing in the world Ellen never worries too much about, it's adults. She's upstairs in her room when the Investigators arrive, and she listens from the top of the stairs once the investigators negotiate their way inside. She waits for the perfect moment to make her appearance.

The adults are all very protective of her and stonewall any attempts by the Investigators to see her. Threats are met with a cold insistence that the investigators leave. Wily Investigators might pretend to want to adopt the little orphan girl. To their surprise, this elicits fervent, almost bizarre anger amongst the adults. They can't bear the thought of being separated from their darling little goddess. They'll insist the Investigators leave at once, and if they don't, one of them will head out to get the policemen from across the street.

More subtle investigators might come at the problem from an oblique angle, pretending to be interested in adopting one of the other children or posing as some sort of inspector or church official looking into the orphanage's facilities. This might well earn them a tour, at least of the ground floor, before Ellen makes an appearance. Otherwise she'll come down the stairs just at the moment before the Investigators are ejected from the building.

Ellen is ten years old, always wears white, immaculate dresses, and has adorable flowing chestnut curls and wide, innocent looking eyes. She's just the cutest little thing, really. As she comes down the stairs she takes her time, deliberately taking each step one at a time while keeping her gaze focused on the investigators below. She smiles at them, but doesn't give the other adults the slightest acknowledgment. They on the other hand, look on at her like proud parents at graduation. As she descends, children

from both upstairs and from the other ground floor rooms begin to drift towards the front door. Their movements are totally natural, even playful, like any normal kids checking out something that's piqued their interest. Other adults appear, including a professorial looking man, Mr. Whalen (who holds a wooden pointer like it was a sword), and the cook, Ralph (who has a kitchen knife tucked into his apron). "Hello," she says with a dramatic curtsy. "My name's Ellen."

When playing Ellen, Keepers should channel the creepiest, too-old-for-her-body child actress they know. Ellen is here to see just how the investigators are going to react to her. She provokes them mercilessly, but always in oblique ways, with hints and references that don't specifically implicate her. "It's so nice living here at St. Lucia House and not in some abandoned old building where crazy foreigners can get you." "Did you know some homeless people can't even read, they just sell books for money? I love to read." "It's nice to live with all these great kids, everyone in the neighborhood loves us so much." She's daring them to make a move or an accusation against her, even though there's little they can do right now unless they want to start shooting up an orphanage.

Ellen does not, however, mention anything supernatural, nor does she acknowledge any connection to Robert Suydam or the events detailed in the Malone Manuscript. Shub-Niggurath and Lilith don't elicit even a raised eyebrow. She wants the investigators to know she's onto them and that she's well-protected behind her wall of innocence and enthralled policemen. She's not going to give them anything that might lead to her true ambitions as regards the Throne of Lilith.

After she's toyed with them enough to take their measure, Ellen says it's nap time. She turns and heads back upstairs and the nuns and other adults usher the Investigators out the front door. The children disperse back into the house to play. The only way for the Investigators to resist is by getting violent, which will lead to the police coming from across the street and them getting arrested or becoming mass murderers.

Inside St. Lucia House

Stymied for the moment, the investigators might well try to sneak back into the house at some other time. It's of course much easier at night, but as the next section shows, there's other things going on at night that will probably draw their attention. Nevertheless, it's possible they will find some way to worm their way inside, and if they do, they'll find some disturbing, very unusual behavior going on, especially for an orphanage.

The front door is locked tight at night, and the ground floor windows are covered with iron grill work. However, the second and third story windows are seldom locked, and if it's a nice night, many of them will be open. The stone wall that surrounds the back yard is seven feet high and has a row of dull iron-spiked fencing along the top of it – not an insurmountable obstacle. The rear door is also locked at night. Neither lock is more difficult than normal to pick, but both doors are heavy wood and challenging to break down.

Ellen, wary of an attack by the Shub-Niggurath cultists, has sweetly asked for a 24-hour police guard on the house, so there's always at least one beat cop within a block of the front door. Inside, one of the adults, a different one each night, patrols as a night-watchman, armed with a .38 pistol and a flashlight. The watchman spends most of his night in the kitchen at the rear of the house, which is where the rear door leads.

The Basement

A typical basement, with some preserved foodstuffs, tools, lumber and firewood, and an accumulation of junk. The only items that seem unusual is the row of six picks and seven shovels stacked neatly against the wall by the stairs, along with an empty dynamite case that now hold hand tools. These are spare tools that Ellen has recently acquired and not yet transferred to the dig site.

The Ground Floor

The ground floor houses the kitchen, a large dining room with three long wooden tables in it, a public area/front room with a selection of new toys and games scattered across the hard wood floors, and three small classrooms. There are also two small offices, one for the nuns and one for the teachers. Stairs in the front of the house lead up to the second floor, while a set from the kitchen leads down into the basement. The stairways from the other two brownstones were removed during renovation to make space for classrooms.

The classrooms may once have been staid, orderly affairs, but now the walls are covered in paint and pencil scratchings, and pieces of child-made art tacked up to the wall in haphazard fashion. There is not the slightest sign of adult supervision. The common room up front is even worse, with toys and crumbs of food and chalk everywhere. Moving silently through this room in the dark is a special challenge, given the mine-field of scattered toys and baubles. At night, Sister Mary Elizabeth sleeps on a blanket on the floor in her office, her room upstairs having been taken over by Ellen.

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The Second Floor

Here are the large, common rooms where the children sleep. There are four of them, along with two bathrooms. Two are for boys, two for girls, and each sleeps as many as ten, although there are currently only 31 children living in St. Lucia House. These rooms are even more of a disaster area than the downstairs, with none of the made beds and neatly folded clothes you'd expect from a house run by nuns. At night, most of the kids sleep, worn out from the day's good times. Ellen doesn't take any of the kids from the orphanage on her nightly expeditions – she's very protective of them and has no intention of exposing them to Lilith and the supernatural world until the come of age.

The Third Floor

This originally housed the staff quarters and has four small bedrooms, a bathroom, and a lovely little sitting room/library. Now the entire floor is Ellen's domain, where she holds court. She has taken over the head nun's bedroom and made it her own, replacing the plain, unpleasant décor with a fluffy, yellow-sheet clad bed and a thick oriental rug (gifts from some admiring adults). She has a phonograph and a stack of records, mostly jazz. She also has her own radio, a brand new and quite expensive model. She rewards her fellow orphans that please her by inviting them upstairs to listen to music with her. A few of her favorites have been allowed to move into the other bedrooms.

In a small chest kept under her bed is a collection of Thorns of Lilith, 5 black and 6 green. Unless Ellen herself activates them, they will not work. Anyone pricked by one must resist a **POT 15** poison or grow nauseous and headachy for five minutes. Ellen keeps no other supernatural related material in the orphanage.

The former sitting room has been converted into a special classroom where Ellen can gradually indoctrinate the other children into admiration and eventual worship of Lilith. Several months back she enthralled a Columbia University Classics Professor, Gene Klobnitz. Now he lives in the attic, and during the day tells small groups of the children classical stories and myths, re-purposed to emphasize Lilith's importance to world culture. They also learn a little Greek, Latin, and Aramaic. All the Christian religious iconography and books have been removed from the room and sold off, replaced by a chalk board, some comfortable chairs and cushions, and writing tablets for students. On the chalk board, written

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- in Ancient Greek, is the phrase: “*O friend and companion of night, thou who rejoicest in the baying of dogs and spilt blood, who wanderest in the midst of shades among the tombs, who longest for blood and bringest terror to mortals, Gorgo, Mormo, thousand-faced moon, look favorably on our sacrifices.*”

The Attic

The attic is accessible through a trapdoor in the ceiling of the central hallway that runs the length of the third floor. There is a step ladder propped against the wall right below it, and scuff marks on the floor show that it gets a lot of use.

Amongst boxes of moldering donated clothes and various religious paraphernalia, the once dusty attic is now home to most of the adults who work at the orphanage, along with a number who now just work for Ellen. They sleep on thin blankets and have just a couple of buckets for facilities. In addition to the three nuns, the teacher Mr. Whalen, the cook and the handyman/grounds keeper (who didn't used to live here), there are eleven other adults that Ellen has enthralled. There's Prof. Klobnitz, Diana Wells, a Broadway dancer who abandoned her show without notice two months ago and now teaches the children dance and music; Sabine Holst, a baker who makes Ellen's favorite cakes; and a number of day laborers and construction workers that Ellen has enthralled to do her excavating for her.

- At night, Ellen takes the laborers and handyman with her to the excavation site. They sleep during the day, while the others are tending to the children's whims and education. All are quite placid and seem utterly satisfied with their current state of affairs. Any bad word about Ellen or any of her decisions (including where they live) is met with anger and possibly even violence. Unfortunately for these poor men and women, they've been around Ellen long enough that these feeling will never go away. Even if the Investigators defeat her and Lilith's plans, the freed thralls will maintain their devotion to their little angel, probably forming their own cult dedicated to her. Who knows, they might even find a way to summon her back.

Act 4: Red Hook Nights

Synopsis: Ellen leaves her orphanage every night to oversee the excavating of the Throne of Lilith. The investigators have a chance to follow her to her hidden entrance, but Ellen has plans for them. She sets up an encounter between the Investigators and some cultists. The heroes must then make their way past a sweet, old, enthralled couple in order to make their way to the horrors below Red Hook.

Midnight March

The next step is to get all the principals, heroes and villains alike, into the caves. This can happen several ways, depending on how aggressive and/or patient the investigators are. The safest, sanest course is for the Investigators to stake out St. Lucia House and wait for Ellen and company to come out at night. Most of the rest of this chapter assumes that, or something similar is what happens.

If the players decide to go in guns blazing and raid St. Lucia House, Ellen throws every enthralled adult and nearby cop she has at them. Meanwhile, she makes a run for it, headed for her second base of operations, the Cannelli residence (see below). Ellen has bolt holes and secret passages that let her slip out of the orphanage either onto neighboring roofs or through the basement. After they've managed to somehow deal with the legal consequences of shooting up an orphanage, the investigators can interrogate one of the children and learn that Ellen sometimes spends the night with her aunt and uncle, the Cannelli's. A little digging around in city records will come up with the Red Hook Address they're looking for. Ellen will be there waiting for them.

Assuming the investigators check their fire and stake out St. Lucia House, there are a number of places they can hide. The roofs of adjacent buildings can be accessed via fire escapes, and there are several empty apartments in the building across the street that they could access by bribing the superintendent with a few bucks and a good excuse (**PERSUADE** or **FAST TALK**). Remember there's always an enthralled beat cop within a block of the front door. Around 10 PM, a strange procession comes boldly out the front door of the orphanage, a sight locals are now familiar with, but have been charmed or enthralled into keeping quiet about.

Ellen has with her half a dozen workers from the basement of St. Lucia house, all fit and hardy men who walk along in joyful spirits.

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They resemble a gaggle of kids out for a naughty lark, teasing each other and prancing about Ellen in a most un-adult manner. Ellen is the calm, beneficent smiling center of their storm that each of the others is trying to impress. She even has to shush them from time to time when they make too much noise. It would be a sweet scene if they weren't carrying heavy-duty picks and shovels in their well-muscled grips.

It's ten long blocks from St Lucia's to the Cannelli house, and Ellen's troop steers clear of the busier streets, often cutting down alleyways and doubling back on their path. She knows she's being followed by the PC's, but she also know she's being watched by the worshipers of Shub-Niggurath. They're scrying on her via magical means, a fact Lilith has revealed to Ellen. Her plan is to lead the investigators and the cultists into conflict once more, hoping that one group will take care of the other. She doesn't care which prevails, she'll dispose of the other in the caves below.

The Investigators are presumably following at a distance. The Keeper should call for **SNEAK** checks, or make them in secret on behalf of the players, but Ellen knows they're there – she's just pretending not to notice as she leads them to her trap. There's a chance however that the Investigators will try and make a play for Ellen out on the streets where she's presumably more vulnerable. If that happens, her worker thralls rise to her defense while she makes a getaway, screaming for help from the police. Several officers arrive on the scene in short order, and although not under her thrall, her age and preternatural charm make them disposed to take her side in affairs. They escort her safely to her "aunt's" house (the Cannelli's), and demand some explanation from the Investigators. Particularly skilled players might short-cut all of this, in which case she slips into the sewers down a manhole and makes her way to the caves that way.

ENTHRALLED WORKERS

STR 13 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 17 POW 8 DEX 14 APP 16
EDU 17 SAN 13 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Various Improvisational Weapons 55% 1d3 +1d4

Key Skills: Dodge 58%, Listen 45%, Sneak 65%, Spot Hidden 55%, Throw 40% , Track 65%

Who's Ambushing Whom?

The remaining cultists are holed up in the basement of an apartment building about half-way between the orphanage and the Cannelli house.

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They've been moving every day, homing in closer and closer on Ellen's location via their sacrificial augury (reading wild dog entrails is not an exact science). Ellen knows that they're close enough now that they pose a real threat of discovering her location (they don't know about the orphanage or the Cannelli house). She's decided to give them a tempting target to lure them out.

Ellen leads her group right past the doorstep of the five story apartment building where the cultists are squatting for the night. She orders one of her workers to go inside, while she and the others wait outside. Just a couple minutes later, the sound of agonized screaming scarcely muffled by decaying brick echoes across the deserted street. Ellen's workers look panicked, but she calms them and they begin to withdraw down the street, maneuvering so as to put the Investigators between her and the building.

A moment later a sickening green fog erupts from a basement window, shattering the glass and sending the metal grate flying across the street. The fog swirls out towards the investigators, filling the street with its sickening stench. The cultists come scrambling up and out through the window, knives drawn and looking for trouble. Ellen wasn't suspecting them to react so quickly, and so she runs for it with two of her thralls, leaving the other three to guard her retreat.

Investigators might chase after her, in which case they can follow her to the Cannelli house. But if they don't take care of the cultists, the Shub-Niggurathites are right on their tails, accompanied by their eldritch fog, and the fight can take place outside of the home. Alternately, the Keeper should ensure that at least one of the enthralled workers survives the fight, probably wounded, and in his delirious state he pleads to be taken to Ellen, giving the Investigators directions on just where to go. Sometimes blind devotion is not always very discrete.

The fog limits vision to five feet without any penalties. Any actions (such as ranged attacks) at between five and fifteen feet suffer a -25% penalty. Beyond fifteen feet the fog blocks all line of sight. Those non-cultists in the fog also suffer strange flashes and auditory hallucinations, resulting in a -30% penalty to all **SPOT HIDDEN** and **LISTEN** checks. After five rounds in the fog, non-cultists must make a SAN check every round for a 1/1d3 loss as the visions of Shub-Niggurath become more and more vivid.

The cultists are not at full strength, and this fight shouldn't be too much of a challenge for the Investigators. There are much greater

horrors ahead. If the Investigators have a tough go of it, Ellen's worker thralls are there to help sway the fight. Two of the workers should die in the melee, and the third be wounded enough (and rattled by the fog), that he demands to be escorted to the Cannelli home. The cultists fight to the death, but the fog lingers after they pass, not disappearing until exposed to the morning sun.

If the investigators stop to search the cultists' lair, it's clear they haven't been there long. There's a sacrificial dog splayed out on the floor of the basement along with the partially consumed body of the building's superintendent and of course the recently killed worker thrall that Ellen used to lure them out.

Mr. and Mrs. Cannelli's House

Only a few blocks from Parker Place, this is a simple row house indistinguishable from the others. The Cannelli's have the bottom floor and basement. The top floor is occupied by the Correggio family, which is uninvolved and unaware of what happens below them (although they think Ellen is a lovely girl, quite sweet, and always so polite).

This elderly Italian immigrant couple thought Ellen was just the cutest little thing when she showed up "lost and confused" on their doorstep. They took her in and gave her cookies and milk. In return, she utterly enthralled them in record time. Their slender, modest home happens to sit just a few dozen feet above an accessible part of the ancient tunnel system that runs below Red Hook. Since her original contact with the house, Ellen has also enthralled the neighbors above and on both sides and across the street in order to ensure no one asks too many questions about late-night noises and the comings and goings of strange workmen at all hours.

Unless they come up with a very convincing tale, the Cannelli's refuse entry to the investigators if it's night time and Ellen is there. They're mostly likely to be swayed by some sort of appeal to Ellen's well-being, or by the idea the Investigators are also devotees of the little darling. During the day they'll be more likely to invite to Investigators in for coffee, but will claim no special knowledge of Ellen nor allow the Investigators down into the basement. They are of course old and feeble and easily overcome, although if any violence is used against either of them, there's a 45% chance Arturo Cannelli will have a heart attack.

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The above-ground portion of the house is a typical home, crowded with knick-knacks, family pictures, and shabby furniture. Perceptive Investigators might notice several less faded sections of wall where pictures and at least one crucifix used to hang. Ellen doesn't care for such iconography. The basement is where things get interesting. There's manhole-sized opening in the floor. During the day it's covered with a heavy stone slab that takes four sturdy men to dislodge. They move it when Ellen arrives. Assuming Ellen has come through ahead of the investigators, the basement is empty, the hole is uncovered, and she and her thralls have descended. There are cots along four walls, where five other workers spend their days. These are men who've been either mangled by the excavation work or driven insane by what they've seen (or both). They remain devoted to Ellen, but are too wild-eyed and disturbed for her to allow them up on the streets of Brooklyn. Thus they live under the Cannellis' care. If the Investigators come through the basement ahead of Ellen, they will rise up to challenge the interlopers, although like the Cannelli's, it's possible to Persuade them that the Investigators really are on Ellen's side.

Act 5: The Horror Beneath Red Hook

Synopsis: The investigators descend bellow Red Hook and into the tunnels formerly occupied by the cult described in the Malone Manuscript. They explore a series of disturbing chambers that were the scene of foul and inhuman breeding experiments, possibly getting in trouble by touching things better left alone. They also have a chance to rescue a frightened urchin named Tony who has been trapped down here. At the finale they confront Ellen and her thralls as she sits on the Throne of Lilith, racing against time as she warps reality around her, turning her innocent thralls into demonic attackers.

The Tunnels

The hole in the basement floor descends twenty feet through rock and soil into the darkness below. Access is via a sturdy wooden ladder whose steps are closer together than typical; it was crafted with Ellen in mind. There is no light source in the tunnel or at the bottom, so investigators will have to bring their own light with them. If they've forgotten, there are a couple kerosene lamps in the Cannelli basement they could borrow.

The ladder leads into a tunnel about twenty feet wide and twelve feet high that curves away to both the north and the south. It is cold, damp, and dark down here, and sounds echo off the walls with a curious flatness, as if the air itself were being suppressed. As a successful **GEOLOGY** roll reveals, the cave system the Investigators now find themselves in clearly predates the city above, and is also clearly not of natural origin. The walls do not look worked via traditional excavation tools, but they are much too regularly shaped and structurally sound to have been the result of purely natural processes. However they came to be, they're clearly thousands, maybe tens of thousands of years old.

Ellen and her followers have rushed ahead to the Throne Room, wanting to make sure that she's ready for the Investigators by the time they catch up with her. The path forward for the investigators is unclear – there are no tracks to be followed in the dusty ground. This alone reveals one of the strange facts of life here in the caves. Although dust and dirt cover the floor and those passing through do leave footprints, those prints vanish minutes later. This is a side effect of the time-warping magic that Ellen and Lilith have been employing in the excavation process – the tunnels returning to a “pristine” state that dates back to before they were used by cultists or discovered by interlopers.

Ellen and her servants have all gathered in the Throne Room, leaving the investigators a relatively free run of the rest of the cave complex. The tunnel system here is a spiral shape, twisting in towards the throne room in the center. There are additional tunnels that branch off in other directions, spreading out beneath the city and even out to sea. It is up to the Keeper to populate them appropriately should the Investigators venture off into the shadows.

Old Cult Chambers

If the players choose the tunnel heading south (further out along the spiral), they'll soon come upon the partially excavated old cult chambers. Beyond this room the spiral continues south towards Suydam's old Parker Place basement, but that part of the tunnel remains sealed with concrete and rubble. Ellen has had nothing of interest in that direction, and so the police department's efforts to seal the tunnels completely seemingly remain successful.

Scattered throughout the rubble are skeletons and shreds of decayed clothing and rusted ritual knives. These are the remains of cultists killed by the police whom the authorities saw no point in bringing up

to the surface. Under a layer of dust, crude, obscene images can just scarcely be discerned. Clearing the dust away reveals decadent cave-wall paintings of devils, satyrs, and naked humans disporting themselves most pornographically in a forest – a forest where some of the trees seem overly animate and uncomfortably involved in the carnality.

Breeding Chamber

Moving north along the spiraling tunnel leads the investigators into their first seriously disturbing temporal anomaly. From up ahead they hear the wailing of children and the pained grunting of women in agony. The cries echo along the hallway and have a tinny, hollow sound to them, almost as if they're from a recording or a weak radio signal. They actually decrease in volume as the Investigators move forward, although the intensity of the despair and agony behind them doesn't lessen in the slightest. By the time they arrive in the breeding chamber, the sounds have become indistinguishable whispering and those soon fade as well.

The oblong chamber might remind some investigators of ancient catacombs, although the room is quite spacious compared to the cramped quarters beneath Paris. But the walls are riddled with coffin-sized niches cut into the stone at seemingly random heights and intervals. There are thirty-three of them in all, and none contain coffins. Instead there are rusted sets of manacles in at each end for the head and feet of the women once imprisoned here. Closer examination reveals shows the stone stained with blood and other bodily fluids from prolonged and frequent exposure. This is where the cult carried out its forced breeding program, and a successful Idea Roll invokes the uncomfortable revelation that this room was in all probability a kind of birthing center.

In the center of the room, arranged in a circle, are five stone slabs that might be altars or tables. These too have manacles, and even more blood stains. The ceiling above these birth-slabs has a crude bas-relief of a goddess figure surrounded by grasping demonic figures. Bullet holes from and shotgun blasts have torn away some of the more disturbing carvings, including the goddess' face, the result of righteously angered policemen who liberated this house of horrors a decade past. A successful **CTHULHU MYTHOS** roll identifies the figure as Lilith. A successful **ARCHEOLOGY** roll reveals that the goddess figure was probably carved by a different artist and at an earlier date than the other, more monstrous entities.

As the Investigators search the chamber, possibly looking for the source of the crying children and women, they find no signs that

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the room as been occupied or used in years. At some point though, the Keeper should prepare for a little shock. Having a heavy book to slam down on the floor or gaming table might work best, or even just a sudden, unexpected shout. Do something to shock your players out of their stillness, then describe the return of the wailing and crying. Now that they're in the room, the Investigators can hear the terrible, distraught sounds at full volume. They can also discern that the noises have unique points of origin. The loudest screams of pain and most of the baby-wails come from the birthing slabs. They can also now discern lower moans of prolonged despair mixed with retching sobs coming from the alcoves carved into the wall. Running like a deep base line through it all, almost inaudible it's so deep, is the chanting choir of, "*O friend and companion of night, thou who rejoicest in the baying of dogs and spilt blood, who wanderest in the midst of shades among the tombs, who longest for blood and bringest terror to mortals, Gorgo, Mormo, thousand-faced moon, look favorably on our sacrifices.*"

Players should make **SAN** checks or lose 1d4 **SANITY**. The sounds continue for just a couple minutes before fading away again, although they'll return at some random time within the next hour, as they have been ever since Ellen returned.

Nursery

Further down the spiral tunnel, there's a branching side-passage off to the right. Investigators don't need a **LISTEN** roll to hear whimpering and soft crying coming from down the passage, but a successful **LISTEN** roll does discern that this sound seems more natural than the strange noises that have been assailing them in the previous room.

The hall leads twenty feet to the old nursery, where the cultists raised the things that the mothers gave birth to. The chamber is a rough circle about fifty feet in diameter. In the center of the room are thirteen pits, each only about six feet deep. Scattered around them are shards of rotting wood from the covers that once sealed these nursery chambers, but which the police tore up and destroyed during their raid. There are seven iron plates fused into the wall spread out around the circumference of the room, plus an eighth open cubbyhole that has had its plate pried off (it lays on the floor in front of the empty hole). On close examination, the plates are etched with strange, ancient-looking runes and symbols. A **CTHULHU MYTHOS** roll determines them to be charms in praise of Lilith.

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The whimpering noise is coming from inside one of the pits on the far side of the room. Inside crouches a seven year old boy in ratty clothing. He's filthy and exhausted looking, and shudders in the light. His name is Tony Compallo, and he needs help.

Tony is one of the orphans from St. Lucia House. A week ago he snuck out one night and followed Ellen down into these caves. There he saw the Ellen's excavation first-hand, and he knew he was seeing something bad. When he tried to escape, he found that he couldn't lift the trapdoor over the entrance to the Cannelli's basement. He's been trapped ever since, scared by both the ghost sounds and of Ellen. He's lived mostly on some old tins of sardines he found in the port (see below), but those are gone now and he's on the brink of starvation.

Tony can describe in frightened detail the Throne Room (see below) and how Ellen has been making the grown-ups dig for her buried treasure. He says he saw the treasure when they found it in the ground and that when Ellen touched it she went crazy and started screaming and he ran away. He knew if she found him she'd kill him, he just knew it. He thinks maybe she killed one of the grown-ups instead. And then there were all these noises and dogs and animals growling. The boy starts weeping as he relates the horrors.

The investigators must now decide what to do about the poor lad. He trusts them and doesn't want to leave their side, but of course he's scared to go anywhere near that throne room. It's up to the Keeper to decide how much of a pain in the butt it is to have Tony in tow, but the child can also serve as a good source of hints if the players need help dealing with Ellen in some way.

If the players get it into their heads that prying off one of the metal plaques from the wall is a fine plan, they find it a challenging task. But an appropriate crowbar-style lever and a **RESISTANCE 20 STRENGTH** check pops the metal seal loose, releasing a gushing flow of gelatinous red/brown fluid and the remains of a deformed, scarcely human fetus that proceeds to squirm and cry out in trilling, piping sounds for the next few minutes. After five minutes of flapping about like a dying fish, it expires. **SANITY** checks, 1d3/1d6. Poor Tony doesn't deal with the sight very well at all.

The Port

A side tunnel branches off from the main spiral. Investigators can smell a hint of brine in the air and an increased dampness as they travel up the sloping hall and into the room beyond.

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This chamber links eventually to the docks of Red Hook via hidden canals, and is one of several such subterranean waterways that the cults have made use of for centuries. The tunnel is now partially collapsed in several sections, making direct transit to the outside impossible without completely underwater stretches that go for hundreds of feet, so boats no longer ply the water. The natural cave formation has been expanded and shaped over the years, but still retains a rough, unfinished feel. It measures three hundred feet in length and varies from 25 to 100 feet in width, most of which is taken up by black, briny water that gives of a fetid, fishy odor. A crumbling black stone dock reaches out twenty feet into the water. It and area of dry land near the cave's entrance are covered with scattered debris from wrecked crates, broken bottles, and shattered pottery. The ground around the lake-side is a thick black mud that sucks those who cross it down a good foot or so.

Sticking out of the mud are the remains of several crates, including one that looks to have been recently opened. Young Tony found this and opened it, revealing a store of canned food mixed in with now rotten dried fish and other, unidentifiable organic remains. Also in the mud is the remains of a large, wooden barge that is cracked in half. Stuck in the mud with it are four oil drums, two of which are punctured and empty, but two of which contain heating oil and are dented but intact. It requires a **RESISTANCE 25 STRENGTH** check to remove them from the mud, but up to three people can cooperate wrestle them free.

Garden

This side chamber is a low-ceilinged offshoot from the main tunnel, partially collapsed and filled with dirt and debris. The ceiling is only five feet from the uneven dirt floor, and the irregularly shaped room snakes back into the darkness about fifty feet. It is pitch black, but there is a half-full kerosene lantern placed next to the entrance. Inside are rows of pale white vines, creeping up thin wooden stakes about two feet in height. The vines conform to no known plant species and are covered in black and green thorns. The air is thick with vegetative odors. This is where Ellen grows her Thorns of Lilith. Brushing away the top inch or so of soil reveals that the stakes are driven not into the ground, but into moldering corpses. Only a handful of the thorns are mature, and they do not yet have the magical properties because Ellen hasn't "blessed" them yet.

Facing The Throne of Lilith

This is not the original chamber where Robert Suydam sacrificed his own un-life to topple the Throne of Lilith into a watery abyss. That foul chamber was collapsed by explosives and capped over with concrete. But the water-filled tunnels beneath Red Hook link up to one another in labyrinthine patterns, and the shifting silt has had preternatural help pushing the sunken pedestal through the murk and mire. The room Ellen refers to as her Throne Room was once a simple side chamber used for preparing animal sacrifices. She has done some redecorating since then, while her thralls dug down through rock and stone to unearth her birthright.

The room is of a regular, rectangular shape, measuring 100 feet along its long axis and 50 feet in width. The floor is finished in dark flagstones, the walls lined with crumbling bricks and crude limestone columns arching up to support a vaulted ceiling. Colorful, childish drawings cover every surface of the brick walls up to a height of about four feet. They are the bored imaginings of a half-demonic mind, the way Ellen passed her time as her thralls worked for her. They show scenes of wild creatures ravaging hapless men and women. Phrases in multiple languages and alphabets are scribbled about, incantations and praise to her mother, Lilith. Ellen has recorded much of her own story as well, her stick-figure likeness shown leading the children of Red Hook to bloody salvation and bending the adults to her will.

The center of the floor has been torn up, and dug out, giving the appearance that a sinkhole might have opened up there. In fact, as the piles of dirt, broken flagstones, and other debris attest, it is the result of manual labor. A precarious looking wooden scaffold stands in the center of the muddy depression, pulleys and ropes dangling from it down into the water-filled pit at the base of the excavation. A ramp of boards laid end to end leads up out of the depression towards the far side of the room where, still host to clinging gobs of mud and other, fouler substances, sits the golden pedestal shape of the Throne Of Lilith. Sitting on top of that is Ellen.

Between the investigators and Ellen stand twenty-seven enthralled humans, including people from St Lucia house and any workers she's managed to get past the investigators and down into the chamber. They stand with their backs to the Investigators, their gazes fixed on Ellen in abject worship. Ellen's hands and the floor in front of the throne are stained with fresh blood. At the base of the throne lies a freshly sacrificed

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- body, preferably one of the adults that the Investigators talked with at St. Lucia house. If they never went back and looked in on him, it could also be Coal Tooth Carl. The Keeper should choose the victim for maximum effect.



THE COLD CASE OF ROBERT SUYDAM

The air around Ellen is distorted and hazy, as if the Investigators were looking through some tremendous heat. As they take it all in, the distortion quickly becomes more pronounced and starts to expand out from Ellen and the Throne. The wall behind her and the floor beneath seem to grow brighter, newer, as if being restored to a pristine condition. There comes the braying of far-off animals and the tittering of tiny, malevolent voices. The distortion field expands to include the adult thrall closest to the Throne, who's then transformed with a wracking scream into a satyr-like figure with black pits for eyes and a squid's gnashing beak for a mouth. SAN Check for 1D3/1D8 loss.

The Investigators will probably try to break this process up as soon as possible, but bullets fired into the distortion area transform into black and purple beetles that fly away from their intended targets. The field expands at a rate of about a foot a second, creeping out into the room and transforming everything it touches. The room around them becomes a temple to Lilith. The enthralled adults become her demoniac servants. Ellen smiles serenely from her throne.

Defeating Ellen

Ellen never leaves her Throne – that's where she feels safe and that's where her power comes from. As long as she's on the throne, the distortion zone keeps expanding. Her Demoniac Servants on the other hand, do leave the distortion field, intent on killing the Investigators. Every time field encompasses one of the enthralled adults, he or she transforms into a monster. The change is irreversible, although the beasts can of course be killed. It should be obvious to the Investigators that they need to pull the thralls out of the path of the advancing distortion field. They're in deep hypnotic states, and will come along if pulled by the hand in a particular direction.

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Without any interference from the Investigators, the chart below shows how many thralls are created in which round as the field expands out:

Round	Thralls
Round 1	1
Round 3	3
Round 5	2
Round 7	8
Round 10	5
Round 13	7
Round 15	1

The Investigators can pull the thralls to the other side of the pit in just two rounds of action. At the current rate of expansion, it will be at least ten minutes before the field crosses the pit, assuming its current rate remains steady. Of course, the demons will be harassing the Investigators every step of the way. They will not, however, harm the thralls if they can help it.

Seeing its effect on the thralls, the investigators will probably be loathe to step into the field themselves. This is, unfortunately, exactly what they need to do. The demons will even try to drag them into the field, where they are more at home. Perhaps a now fully insane young Tommy rushes into the field to attack Ellen, proving it's "safe."

Once inside, the cacophony of other-worldly hoots, howls, and mad music becomes almost deafening. Everything seems more vibrant, more alive, more unhinged. The walls swirl and flicker in and out of existence, revealing alien plains and ancient forests teeming with unidentifiable life. Entering the field induces a **SANITY CHECK** for 1/1d10 loss. It also makes the monsters swarm in on the poor PC. Ellen giggles girlishly and urges them to tear the interlopers to pieces.

But now Ellen is vulnerable to attack. Bullets no longer turn to beetles and she is still, after all, just a little girl. She will try to enthrall attacking Investigators, but she can only affect one of them at a time. If they manage to get past her demonic guardians and up close, it's not hard to kill a ten year old girl.

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Once she's dead, the field vanishes, taking the monsters with it. The adults snap out of their enthralled state, and most of them start weeping, blubbering, or shouting. They remember everything and are going to be psychically scarred for a long time to come. Keepers wanting to inflict a resonant tone with their players might emphasize the disturbing nature of slaying a seemingly innocent little girl, perhaps even calling for SANITY checks for those investigators with children in their lives.

ELLEN, DAUGHTER OF LILITH

STR 4 CON 7 SIZ 6 INT 14 POW 13 DEX 13 APP 15
EDU 7 SAN 0 HP 7

Damage Bonus: -1d6

Weapons: none

Key Skills: Hide 50%, Persuade 50%, Spot Hidden 25%

Aftermath

There's a lot of cleaning up to be done in the wake of Ellen's terror. If for some reason the investigators found Ellen insuperable and she's managed to survive, things start to go very bad for Red Hook and then the rest of the city. Ellen's expanding field of distortion does not stop expanding until she decides to stop it. She's not going to stop it. Ruling from her mother's throne, Ellen slowly but surely transforms the city into a demonic/pastoral wonderland filled with pleasures and pains of the flesh in equal proportion and featuring a population transformed into monstrous satyrs and nymphs. The only way to stop it is to dethrone the child-queen, which grows more and more impossible. Still, it would make for a pretty cool, very action heavy adventure.

With Ellen gone, the psychic and emotional havoc wrought on St. Lucia House and everyone else under Ellen's thrall remains. No one there is in a position to resume their old lives. Even with the spell of enthrallment shattered, they retain the lingering, profound sense of loss and depression that comes with losing their beloved little princess. They're like parents suffering after the loss of a child. St. Lucia House will be shut down, the orphans who live there scattered to other facilities, perhaps out into the streets. Maria Van Brunt of course still wants her uncle's gold and possessions, but she's not a cruel woman. It's possible that she could be convinced to take responsibility for the now abandoned orphans and use some of her resources to better their lives.

Something needs to be done with those orphans, because while they were never magically enthralled to Ellen, they were devoted to her and were subjected to daily Lilith proselytizing. Their world views have been shaped by these events, and many of them have now lost the only person they ever believed really cared for them. Upon hearing of Ellen's death, a core cadre of the most devoted will no doubt make a run for it, probably linking up with the street urchins to form the nucleus of what will eventually become a Cult of Ellen. Her brief, miraculous life and untimely death offer all the ingredients for a new religion, one that Lilith herself will do everything in her power to encourage. Ten years later, they could be a significant threat, and perhaps the source of another adventure.

The big, golden elephant in the room is the Throne of Lilith. It's over a ton of pure, cursed gold. It's an ancient relic worth millions. Maria Van Brunt will think it belongs to her. The most obvious thing for the Investigators to do is use the ropes and pulleys and manhandle the thing back down into the hole from which Ellen dredged it up. That's a temporary solution at best, but probably the easiest option. They can also try to destroy it or cut it into pieces. That works too, although those individual pieces of gold remain tied to Lilith and are thus a method for her to work her influence through. An interesting adventure might revolve around the gold being sold off to become jewelry for various high society types around New York, all of whom become servants of Lilith. Should Maria or any other sole individual come into possession of the intact throne, they'll soon find themselves in Lilith's thrall.

Finally there is the Kurdish Shub-Niggurath cult still lurking out there. They want the throne for their own foul purposes and should its unearthing become public knowledge, they'll bend all their efforts towards retrieving it. Likewise, the investigators have clearly declared themselves foes to the cult, and it is likely that they will come after the players again. A trip to Turkey might be the only way to rid themselves of the problem.

The Horror at Red Hook

by H. P. Lovecraft

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I

Not many weeks ago, on a street corner in the village of Pascoag, Rhode Island, a tall, heavily built, and wholesome-looking pedestrian furnished much speculation by a singular lapse of behaviour. He had, it appears, been descending the hill by the road from Chepachet; and encountering the compact section, had turned to his left into the main thoroughfare where several modest business blocks convey a touch of the urban. At this point, without visible provocation, he committed his astonishing lapse; staring queerly for a second at the tallest of the buildings before him, and then, with a series of terrified, hysterical shrieks, breaking into a frantic run which ended in a stumble and fall at the next crossing. Picked up and dusted off by ready hands, he was found to be conscious, organically unhurt, and evidently cured of his sudden nervous attack. He muttered some shamefaced explanations involving a strain he had undergone, and with downcast glance turned back up the Chepachet road, trudging out of sight without once looking behind him. It was a strange incident to befall so large, robust, normal-featured, and capable-looking a man, and the strangeness was not lessened by the remarks of a bystander who had recognised him as the boarder of a well-known dairyman on the outskirts of Chepachet.

He was, it developed, a New York police detective named Thomas F. Malone, now on a long leave of absence under medical treatment after some disproportionately arduous work on a gruesome local case which accident had made dramatic. There had been a collapse of several old brick buildings during a raid in which he had shared, and something about the wholesale loss of life, both of prisoners and of his companions, had peculiarly appalled him. As a result, he had acquired an acute and anomalous horror of any buildings even remotely suggesting the ones which had fallen in, so that

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in the end mental specialists forbade him the sight of such things for an indefinite period. A police surgeon with relatives in Chepachet had put forward that quaint hamlet of wooden colonial houses as an ideal spot for the psychological convalescence; and thither the sufferer had gone, promising never to venture among the brick-lined streets of larger villages till duly advised by the Woonsocket specialist with whom he was put in touch. This walk to Pascoag for magazines had been a mistake, and the patient had paid in fright, bruises, and humiliation for his disobedience.

So much the gossips of Chepachet and Pascoag knew; and so much, also, the most learned specialists believed. But Malone had at first told the specialists much more, ceasing only when he saw that utter incredulity was his portion. Thereafter he held his peace, protesting not at all when it was generally agreed that the collapse of certain squalid brick houses in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn, and the consequent death of many brave officers, had unseated his nervous equilibrium. He had worked too hard, all said, it trying to clean up those nests of disorder and violence; certain features were shocking enough, in all conscience, and the unexpected tragedy was the last straw. This was a simple explanation which everyone could understand, and because Malone was not a simple person he perceived that he had better let it suffice. To hint to unimaginative people of a horror beyond all human conception - a horror of houses and blocks and cities leprous and cancerous with evil dragged from elder worlds - would be merely to invite a padded cell instead of a restful rustication, and Malone was a man of sense despite his mysticism. He had the Celt's far vision of weird and hidden things, but the logician's quick eye for the outwardly unconvincing; an amalgam which had led him far afield in the forty-two years of his life, and set him in strange places for a Dublin University man born in a Georgian villa near Phoenix Park.

And now, as he reviewed the things he had seen and felt and apprehended, Malone was content to keep unshared the secret of what could reduce a dauntless fighter to a quivering neurotic; what could make old brick slums and seas of dark, subtle faces a thing of nightmare and eldritch portent. It would not be the first time his sensations had been forced to bide uninterpreted - for was not his very act of plunging into the polyglot abyss of New York's underworld a freak beyond sensible explanation? What could he tell the prosaic of the antique witcheries and grotesque marvels discernible to sensitive eyes amidst the poison cauldron where all the varied dregs of unwholesome ages mix their venom and perpetuate their obscene terrors? He had seen the hellish green flame of secret wonder in this blatant, evasive

welter of outward greed and inward blasphemy, and had smiled gently when all the New-Yorkers he knew scoffed at his experiment in police work. They had been very witty and cynical, deriding his fantastic pursuit of unknowable mysteries and assuring him that in these days New York held nothing but cheapness and vulgarity. One of them had wagered him a heavy sum that he could not - despite many poignant things to his credit in the *Dublin Review* - even write a truly interesting story of New York low life; and now, looking back, he perceived that cosmic irony had justified the prophet's words while secretly confuting their flippant meaning. The horror, as glimpsed at last, could not make a story - for like the book cited by Poe's Germany authority, '*es lässt sich nicht lesen* - it does not permit itself to be read.'

II

To Malone the sense of latent mystery in existence was always present. In youth he had felt the hidden beauty and ecstasy of things, and had been a poet; but poverty and sorrow and exile had turned his gaze in darker directions, and he had thrilled at the imputations of evil in the world around. Daily life had for him come to be a phantasmagoria of macabre shadow-studies; now glittering and leering with concealed rottenness as in Beardsley's best manner, now hinting terrors behind the commonest shapes and objects as in the subtler and less obvious work of Gustave Doré. He would often regard it as merciful that most persons of high Intelligence jeer at the inmost mysteries; for, he argued, if superior minds were ever placed in fullest contact with the secrets preserved by ancient and lowly cults, the resultant abnormalities would soon not only wreck the world, but threaten the very integrity of the universe. All this reflection was no doubt morbid, but keen logic and a deep sense of humour ably offset it. Malone was satisfied to let his notions remain as half-spied and forbidden visions to be lightly played with; and hysteria came only when duty flung him into a hell of revelation too sudden and insidious to escape.

He had for some time been detailed to the Butler Street station in Brooklyn when the Red Hook matter came to his notice. Red Hook is a maze of hybrid squalor near the ancient waterfront opposite Governor's Island, with dirty highways climbing the hill from the wharves to that higher ground where the decayed lengths of Clinton and Court Streets lead off toward the Borough Hall. Its houses are mostly of brick, dating from the first quarter to the middle of the nineteenth century, and some of the obscurer alleys and byways have that alluring antique flavour which conventional reading leads us to call 'Dickensian'. The population is a hopeless tangle and

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enigma; Syrian, Spanish, Italian, and Negro elements impinging upon one another, and fragments of Scandinavian and American belts lying not far distant. It is a babel of sound and filth, and sends out strange cries to answer the lapping oily waves at its grimy piers and the monstrous organ litanies of the harbour whistles. Here long ago a brighter picture dwelt, with clear-eyed mariners on the lower streets and homes of taste and substance where the larger houses line the hill. One can trace the relics of this former happiness in the trim shapes of the buildings, the occasional graceful churches, and the evidences of original art and background in bits of detail here and there - a worn flight of steps, a battered doorway, a wormy pair of decorative columns or pilasters, or a fragment of once green space with bent and rusted iron railing. The houses are generally in solid blocks, and now and then a many-windowed cupola arises to tell of days when the households of captains and ship-owners watched the sea.

From this tangle of material and spiritual putrescence the blasphemies of an hundred dialects assail the sky. Hordes of prowlers reel shouting and singing along the lanes and thoroughfares, occasional furtive hands suddenly extinguish lights and pull down curtains, and swarthy, sin-pitted faces disappear from windows when visitors pick their way through. Policemen despair of order or reform, and seek rather to erect barriers protecting the outside world from the contagion. The clang of the patrol is answered by a kind of spectral silence, and such prisoners as are taken are never communicative. Visible offences are as varied as the local dialects, and run the gamut from the smuggling of rum and prohibited aliens through diverse stages of lawlessness and obscure vice to murder and mutilation in their most abhorrent guises. That these visible affairs are not more frequent is not to the neighbourhood's credit, unless the power of concealment be an art demanding credit. More people enter Red Hook than leave it - or at least, than leave it by the landward side - and those who are not loquacious are the likeliest to leave.

Malone found in this state of things a faint stench of secrets more terrible than any of the sins denounced by citizens and bemoaned by priests and philanthropists. He was conscious, as one who united imagination with scientific knowledge, that modern people under lawless conditions tend uncannily to repeat the darkest instinctive patterns of primitive half-ape savagery in their daily life and ritual observances; and he had often viewed with an anthropologist's shudder the chanting, cursing processions of bleary-eyed and pockmarked young men which wound their way along in the

dark small hours of morning. One saw groups of these youths incessantly; sometimes in leering vigils on street corners, sometimes in doorways playing eerily on cheap instruments of music, sometimes in stupefied dozes or indecent dialogues around cafeteria tables near Borough Hall, and sometimes in whispering converse around dingy taxicabs drawn up at the high stoops of crumbling and closely shuttered old houses. They chilled and fascinated him more than he dared confess to his associates on the force, for he seemed to see in them some monstrous thread of secret continuity; some fiendish, cryptical, and ancient pattern utterly beyond and below the sordid mass of facts and habits and haunts listed with such conscientious technical care by the police. They must be, he felt inwardly, the heirs of some shocking and primordial tradition; the sharers of debased and broken scraps from cults and ceremonies older than mankind. Their coherence and definiteness suggested it, and it shewed in the singular suspicion of order which lurked beneath their squalid disorder. He had not read in vain such treatises as Miss Murray's *Witch-Cult in Western Europe*; and knew that up to recent years there had certainly survived among peasants and furtive folk a frightful and clandestine system of assemblies and orgies descended from dark religions antedating the Aryan world, and appearing in popular legends as Black Masses and Witches' Sabbaths. That these hellish vestiges of old Turanian-Asiatic magic and fertility cults were even now wholly dead he could not for a moment suppose, and he frequently wondered how much older and how much blacker than the very worst of the muttered tales some of them might really be.

III

It was the case of Robert Suydam which took Malone to the heart of things in Red Hook. Suydam was a lettered recluse of ancient Dutch family, possessed originally of barely independent means, and inhabiting the spacious but ill-preserved mansion which his grandfather had built in Flatbush when that village was little more than a pleasant group of colonial cottages surrounding the steepled and ivy-clad Reformed Church with its iron-railed yard of Netherlandish gravestones. In his lonely house, set back from Martense Street amidst a yard of venerable trees, Suydam had read and brooded for some six decades except for a period a generation before, when he had sailed for the old world and remained there out of sight for eight years. He could afford no servants, and would admit but few visitors to his absolute solitude; eschewing close friendships and receiving his rare acquaintances in one of the three ground-floor rooms which he kept in order

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• a vast, high-ceiled library whose walls were solidly packed with tattered books of ponderous, archaic, and vaguely repellent aspect. The growth of the town and its final absorption in the Brooklyn district had meant nothing to Suydam, and he had come to mean less and less to the town. Elderly people still pointed him out on the streets, but to most of the recent population he was merely a queer, corpulent old fellow whose unkempt white hair, stubbly beard, shiny black clothes, and gold-headed cane earned him an amused glance and nothing more. Malone did not know him by sight till duty called him to the case, but had heard of him indirectly as a really profound authority on mediaeval superstition, and had once idly meant to look up an out-of-print pamphlet of his on the Kabbalah and the Faustus legend, which a friend had quoted from memory.

Suydam became a case when his distant and only relatives sought court pronouncements on his sanity. Their action seemed sudden to the outside world, but was really undertaken only after prolonged observation and sorrowful debate. It was based on certain odd changes in his speech and habits; wild references to impending wonders, and unaccountable hauntings of disreputable Brooklyn neighbourhoods. He had been growing shabbier and shabbier with the years, and now prowled about like a veritable mendicant; seen occasionally by humiliated friends in subway stations, or loitering on the benches around Borough Hall in conversation with groups of swarthy, evil-looking strangers. When he spoke it was to babble of unlimited powers almost within his grasp, and to repeat with knowing leers such mystical words or names as 'Sephiroth', 'Ashmodai', and 'Samaël'. The court action revealed that he was using up his income and wasting his principal in the purchase of curious tomes imported from London and Paris, and in the maintenance of a squalid basement flat in the Red Hook district where he spent nearly every night, receiving odd delegations of mixed rowdies and foreigners, and apparently conducting some kind of ceremonial service behind the green blinds of secretive windows. Detectives assigned to follow him reported strange cries and chants and prancing of feet filtering out from these nocturnal rites, and shuddered at their peculiar ecstasy and abandon despite the commonness of weird orgies in that sodden section. When, however, the matter came to a hearing, Suydam managed to preserve his liberty. Before the judge his manner grew urbane and reasonable, and he freely admitted the queerness of demeanour and extravagant cast of language into which he had fallen through excessive devotion to study and research. He was, he said, engaged in the investigation of certain details of European tradition which required the closest contact with foreign groups and their

songs and folk dances. The notion that any low secret society was preying upon him, as hinted by his relatives, was obviously absurd; and shewed how sadly limited was their understanding of him and his work. Triumphant with his calm explanations, he was suffered to depart unhindered; and the paid detectives of the Suydams, Corlears, and Van Brunts were withdrawn in resigned disgust.

It was here that an alliance of Federal inspectors and police, Malone with them, entered the case. The law had watched the Suydam action with interest, and had in many instances been called upon to aid the private detectives. In this work it developed that Suydam's new associates were among the blackest and most vicious criminals of Red Hook's devious lanes, and that at least a third of them were known and repeated offenders in the matter of thievery, disorder, and the importation of illegal immigrants. Indeed, it would not have been too much to say that the old scholar's particular circle coincided almost perfectly with the worst of the organized cliques which smuggled ashore certain nameless and unclassified Asian dregs wisely turned back by Ellis Island. In the teeming rookeries of Parker Place - since renamed - where Suydam had his basement flat, there had grown up a very unusual colony of unclassified slant-eyed folk who used the Arabic alphabet but were eloquently repudiated by the great mass of Syrians in and around Atlantic Avenue. They could all have been deported for lack of credentials, but legalism is slow-moving, and one does not disturb Red Hook unless publicity forces one to.

These creatures attended a tumbledown stone church, used Wednesdays as a dance-hall, which reared its Gothic buttresses near the vilest part of the waterfront. It was nominally Catholic; but priests throughout Brooklyn denied the place all standing and authenticity, and policemen agreed with them when they listened to the noises it emitted at night. Malone used to fancy he heard terrible cracked bass notes from a hidden organ far underground when the church stood empty and unlighted, whilst all observers dreaded the shrieking and drumming which accompanied the visible services. Suydam, when questioned, said he thought the ritual was some remnant of Nestorian Christianity tintured with the Shamanism of Thibet. Most of the people, he conjectured, were of Mongoloid stock, originating somewhere in or near Kurdistan - and Malone could not help recalling that Kurdistan is the land of the Yezidis, last survivors of the Persian devil-worshippers. However this may have been, the stir of the Suydam investigation made it certain that these unauthorised newcomers were

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flooding Red Hook in increasing numbers; entering through some marine conspiracy unreached by revenue officers and harbour police, overrunning Parker Place and rapidly spreading up the hill, and welcomed with curious fraternalism by the other assorted denizens of the region. Their squat figures and characteristic squinting physiognomies, grotesquely combined with flashy American clothing, appeared more and more numerous among the loafers and nomad gangsters of the Borough Hall section; till at length it was deemed necessary to compute their numbers, ascertain their sources and occupations, and find if possible a way to round them up and deliver them to the proper immigration authorities. To this task Malone was assigned by agreement of Federal and city forces, and as he commenced his canvass of Red Hook he felt poised upon the brink of nameless terrors, with the shabby, unkempt figure of Robert Suydam as arch-fiend and adversary.

IV

Police methods are varied and ingenious. Malone, through unostentatious rambles, carefully casual conversations, well-timed offers of hip-pocket liquor, and judicious dialogues with frightened prisoners, learned many isolated facts about the movement whose aspect had become so menacing. The newcomers were indeed Kurds, but of a dialect obscure and puzzling to exact philology. Such of them as worked lived mostly as dock-hands and unlicensed pedlars, though frequently serving in Greek restaurants and tending corner news stands. Most of them, however, had no visible means of support; and were obviously connected with underworld pursuits, of which smuggling and 'bootlegging' were the least indescribable. They had come in steamships, apparently tramp freighters, and had been unloaded by stealth on moonless nights in rowboats which stole under a certain wharf and followed a hidden canal to a secret subterranean pool beneath a house. This wharf, canal, and house Malone could not locate, for the memories of his informants were exceedingly confused, while their speech was to a great extent beyond even the ablest interpreters; nor could he gain any real data on the reasons for their systematic importation. They were reticent about the exact spot from which they had come, and were never sufficiently off guard to reveal the agencies which had sought them out and directed their course. Indeed, they developed something like acute fright when asked the reasons for their presence. Gangsters of other breeds were equally taciturn, and the most that could be gathered was that some god or great priesthood had promised them unheard-of powers and supernatural glories and rulerships in a strange land.

The attendance of both newcomers and old gangsters at Suydam's closely guarded nocturnal meetings was very regular, and the police soon learned that the erstwhile recluse had leased additional flats to accommodate such guests as knew his password; at last occupying three entire houses and permanently harbouring many of his queer companions. He spent but little time now at his Flatbush home, apparently going and coming only to obtain and return books; and his face and manner had attained an appalling pitch of wildness. Malone twice interviewed him, but was each time brusquely repulsed. He knew nothing, he said, of any mysterious plots or movements; and had no idea how the Kurds could have entered or what they wanted. His business was to study undisturbed the folklore of all the immigrants of the district; a business with which policemen had no legitimate concern. Malone mentioned his admiration for Suydam's old brochure on the Kabbalah and other myths, but the old man's softening was only momentary. He sensed an intrusion, and rebuffed his visitor in no uncertain way; till Malone withdrew disgusted, and turned to other channels of information.

What Malone would have unearthed could he have worked continuously on the case, we shall never know. As it was, a stupid conflict between city and Federal authority suspended the investigations for several months, during which the detective was busy with other assignments. But at no time did he lose interest, or fail to stand amazed at what began to happen to Robert Suydam. Just at the time when a wave of kidnappings and disappearances spread its excitement over New York, the unkempt scholar embarked upon a metamorphosis as startling as it was absurd. One day he was seen near Borough Hall with clean-shaved face, well-trimmed hair, and tastefully immaculate attire, and on every day thereafter some obscure improvement was noticed in him. He maintained his new fastidiousness without interruption, added to it an unwonted sparkle of eye and crispness of speech, and began little by little to shed the corpulence which had so long deformed him. Now frequently taken for less than his age, he acquired an elasticity of step and buoyancy of demeanour to match the new tradition, and shewed a curious darkening of the hair which somehow did not suggest dye. As the months passed, he commenced to dress less and less conservatively, and finally astonished his new friends by renovating and redecorating his Flatbush mansion, which he threw open in a series of receptions, summoning all the acquaintances he could remember, and extending a special welcome to the fully forgiven relatives who had so lately sought his restraint. Some attended through curiosity, others through duty; but all were suddenly charmed by the dawning grace and urbanity of the

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former hermit. He had, he asserted, accomplished most of his allotted work; and having just inherited some property from a half-forgotten European friend, was about to spend his remaining years in a brighter second youth which ease, care, and diet had made possible to him. Less and less was he seen at Red Hook, and more and more did he move in the society to which he was born. Policemen noted a tendency of the gangsters to congregate at the old stone church and dance-hall instead of at the basement flat in Parker Place, though the latter and its recent annexes still overflowed with noxious life.

Then two incidents occurred - wide enough apart, but both of intense interest in the case as Malone envisaged it. One was a quiet announcement in the Eagle of Robert Suydam's engagement to Miss Cornelia Gerritsen of Bayside, a young woman of excellent position, and distantly related to the elderly bridegroom-elect; whilst the other was a raid on the dance-hall church by city police, after a report that the face of a kidnapped child had been seen for a second at one of the basement windows. Malone had participated in this raid, and studied the place with much care when inside. Nothing was found - in fact, the building was entirely deserted when visited - but the sensitive Celt was vaguely disturbed by many things about the interior. There were crudely painted panels he did not like - panels which depicted sacred faces with peculiarly worldly and sardonic expressions, and which occasionally took liberties that even a layman's sense of decorum could scarcely countenance. Then, too, he did not relish the Greek inscription on the wall above the pulpit; an ancient incantation which he had once stumbled upon in Dublin college days, and which read, literally translated,

'O friend and companion of night, thou who rejoicest in the baying of dogs and spilt blood, who wanderest in the midst of shades among the tombs, who longest for blood and bringest terror to mortals, Gorgo, Mormo, thousand-faced moon, look favourably on our sacrifices!'

When he read this he shuddered, and thought vaguely of the cracked bass organ notes he fancied he had heard beneath the church on certain nights. He shuddered again at the rust around the rim of a metal basin which stood on the altar, and paused nervously when his nostrils seemed to detect a curious and ghastly stench from somewhere in the neighbourhood. That organ memory haunted him, and he explored the basement with particular assiduity before he left. The place was very hateful to him; yet after all, were the blasphemous panels and inscriptions more than mere crudities perpetrated by the ignorant?

By the time of Suydam's wedding the kidnapping epidemic had become a popular newspaper scandal. Most of the victims were young children of the lowest classes, but the increasing number of disappearances had worked up a sentiment of the strongest fury. Journals clamoured for action from the police, and once more the Butler Street Station sent its men over Red Hook for clues, discoveries, and criminals. Malone was glad to be on the trail again, and took pride in a raid on one of Suydam's Parker Place houses. There, indeed, no stolen child was found, despite the tales of screams and the red sash picked up in the areaway; but the paintings and rough inscriptions on the peeling walls of most of the rooms, and the primitive chemical laboratory in the attic, all helped to convince the detective that he was on the track of something tremendous. The paintings were appalling - hideous monsters of every shape and size, and parodies on human outlines which cannot be described. The writing was in red, and varied from Arabic to Greek, Roman, and Hebrew letters. Malone could not read much of it, but what he did decipher was portentous and cabbalistic enough. One frequently repeated motto was in a Sort of Hebraised Hellenistic Greek, and suggested the most terrible daemon-evocations of the Alexandrian decadence:

'HEL • HELOYM • SOTHER • EMMANVEL • SABAOTH
 • AGLA • TETRAGRAMMATON • AGYROS • OTHEOS •
 ISCHYROS • ATHANATOS • IEHOVA • VA • ADONAI • SADAY •
 HOMOVSION • MESSIAS • ESCHEREHEYE.'

Circles and pentagrams loomed on every hand, and told indubitably of the strange beliefs and aspirations of those who dwelt so squalidly here. In the cellar, however, the strangest thing was found - a pile of genuine gold ingots covered carelessly with a piece of burlap, and bearing upon their shining surfaces the same weird hieroglyphics which also adorned the walls. During the raid the police encountered only a passive resistance from the squinting Orientals that swarmed from every door. Finding nothing relevant, they had to leave all as it was; but the precinct captain wrote Suydam a note advising him to look closely to the character of his tenants and protégés in view of the growing public clamour.

V

Then came the June wedding and the great sensation. Flatbush was gay for the hour about high noon, and pennanted motors thronged the streets near the old Dutch church where an awning stretched from door to highway. No local event ever surpassed the Suydam-Gerritsen nuptials in tone and scale, and the party which escorted bride and groom to the Cunard

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Pier was, if not exactly the smartest, at least a solid page from the Social Register. At five o'clock adieux were waved, and the ponderous liner edged away from the long pier, slowly turned its nose seaward, discarded its tug, and headed for the widening water spaces that led to old world wonders. By night the outer harbour was cleared, and late passengers watched the stars twinkling above an unpolluted ocean.

Whether the tramp steamer or the scream was first to gain attention, no one can say. Probably they were simultaneous, but it is of no use to calculate. The scream came from the Suydam stateroom, and the sailor who broke down the door could perhaps have told frightful things if he had not forthwith gone completely mad - as it is, he shrieked more loudly than the first victims, and thereafter ran simpering about the vessel till caught and put in irons. The ship's doctor who entered the stateroom and turned on the lights a moment later did not go mad, but told nobody what he saw till afterward, when he corresponded with Malone in Chepachet. It was murder - strangulation - but one need not say that the claw-mark on Mrs. Suydam's throat could not have come from her husband's or any other human hand, or that upon the white wall there flickered for an instant in hateful red a legend which, later copied from memory, seems to have been nothing less than the fearsome Chaldee letters of the word 'LILITH'. One need not mention these things because they vanished so quickly - as for Suydam, one could at least bar others from the room until one knew what to think oneself. The doctor has distinctly assured Malone that he did not see IT. The open porthole, just before he turned on the lights, was clouded for a second with a certain phosphorescence, and for a moment there seemed to echo in the night outside the suggestion of a faint and hellish tittering; but no real outline met the eye. As proof, the doctor points to his continued sanity.

Then the tramp steamer claimed all attention. A boat put off, and a horde of swart, insolent ruffians in officers' dress swarmed aboard the temporarily halted Cunarder. They wanted Suydam or his body - they had known of his trip, and for certain reasons were sure he would die. The captain's deck was almost a pandemonium; for at the instant, between the doctor's report from the stateroom and the demands of the men from the tramp, not even the wisest and gravest seaman could think what to do. Suddenly the leader of the visiting mariners, an Arab with a hatefully negroid mouth, pulled forth a dirty, crumpled paper and handed it to the captain. It was signed by Robert Suydam, and bore the following odd message.

In case of sudden or unexplained accident or death on my part, please deliver me or my body unquestioningly into the hands of the bearer and his associates. Everything, for me, and perhaps for you, depends on absolute compliance. Explanations can come later - do not fail me now.

- ROBERT SUYDAM

Captain and doctor looked at each other, and the latter whispered something to the former. Finally they nodded rather helplessly and led the way to the Suydam stateroom. The doctor directed the captain's glance away as he unlocked the door and admitted the strange seamen, nor did he breathe easily till they filed out with their burden after an unaccountably long period of preparation. It was wrapped in bedding from the berths, and the doctor was glad that the outlines were not very revealing. Somehow the men got the thing over the side and away to their tramp steamer without uncovering it. The Cunarder started again, and the doctor and a ship's undertaker sought out the Suydam stateroom to perform what last services they could. Once more the physician was forced to reticence and even to mendacity, for a hellish thing had happened. When the undertaker asked him why he had drained off all of Mrs. Suydam's blood, he neglected to affirm that he had not done so; nor did he point to the vacant bottle-spaces on the rack, or to the odour in the sink which shewed the hasty disposition of the bottles' original contents. The pockets of those men - if men they were - had bulged damnably when they left the ship. Two hours later, and the world knew by radio all that it ought to know of the horrible affair.

VI

That same June evening, without having heard a word from the sea, Malone was desperately busy among the alleys of Red Hook. A sudden stir seemed to permeate the place, and as if apprised by 'grapevine telegraph' of something singular, the denizens clustered expectantly around the dance-hall church and the houses in Parker Place. Three children had just disappeared - blue-eyed Norwegians from the streets toward Gowanus - and there were rumours of a mob forming among the sturdy Vikings of that section. Malone had for weeks been urging his colleagues to attempt a general cleanup; and at last, moved by conditions more obvious to their common sense than the conjectures of a Dublin dreamer, they had agreed upon a final stroke. The unrest and menace of this evening had been the deciding factor, and just about midnight a raiding party recruited from three stations descended upon Parker Place and its environs. Doors were battered in, stragglers arrested, and candlelighted rooms forced to disgorge unbelievable throngs of mixed

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foreigners in figured robes, mitres, and other inexplicable devices. Much was lost in the melee, for objects were thrown hastily down unexpected shafts, and betraying odours deadened by the sudden kindling of pungent incense. But spattered blood was everywhere, and Malone shuddered whenever he saw a brazier or altar from which the smoke was still rising.

He wanted to be in several places at once, and decided on Suydam's basement flat only after a messenger had reported the complete emptiness of the dilapidated dance-hall church. The flat, he thought, must hold some clue to a cult of which the occult scholar had so obviously become the centre and leader; and it was with real expectancy that he ransacked the musty rooms, noted their vaguely charnel odour, and examined the curious books, instruments, gold ingots, and glass-stoppered bottles scattered carelessly here and there. Once a lean, black-and-white cat edged between his feet and tripped him, overturning at the same time a beaker half full of a red liquid. The shock was severe, and to this day Malone is not certain of what he saw; but in dreams he still pictures that cat as it scuttled away with certain monstrous alterations and peculiarities. Then came the locked cellar door, and the search for something to break it down. A heavy stool stood near, and its tough seat was more than enough for the antique panels. A crack formed and enlarged, and the whole door gave way - but from the *other side*; whence poured a howling tumult of ice-cold wind with all the stenches of the bottomless pit, and whence reached a sucking force not of earth or heaven, which, coiling sentiently about the paralysed detective, dragged him through the aperture and down unmeasured spaces filled with whispers and wails, and gusts of mocking laughter.

Of course it was a dream. All the specialists have told him so, and he has nothing to prove the contrary. Indeed, he would rather have it thus; for then the sight of old brick slums and dark foreign faces would not eat so deeply into his soul. But at the time it was all horribly real, and nothing can ever efface the memory of those nighted crypts, those titan arcades, and those half-formed shapes of hell that strode gigantically in silence holding half-eaten things whose still surviving portions screamed for mercy or laughed with madness. Odours of incense and corruption joined in sickening concert, and the black air was alive with the cloudy, semi-visible bulk of shapeless elemental things with eyes. Somewhere dark sticky water was lapping at onyx piers, and once the shivery tinkle of raucous little bells pealed out to greet the insane titter of a naked phosphorescent thing which swam into sight, scrambled ashore, and climbed up to squat leeringly on a carved golden pedestal in the background.

Avenues of limitless night seemed to radiate in every direction, till one might fancy that here lay the root of a contagion destined to sicken and swallow cities, and engulf nations in the foetor of hybrid pestilence. Here cosmic sin had entered, and festered by unhallowed rites had commenced the grinning march of death that was to rot us all to fungous abnormalities too hideous for the grave's holding. Satan here held his Babylonish court, and in the blood of stainless childhood the leprous limbs of phosphorescent Lilith were laved. Incubi and succubae howled praise to Hecate, and headless moon-calves bleated to the Magna Mater. Goats leaped to the sound of thin accursed flutes, and Ægyrans chased endlessly after misshapen fauns over rocks twisted like swollen toads. Moloch and Ashtaroth were not absent; for in this quintessence of all damnation the bounds of consciousness were let down, and man's fancy lay open to vistas of every realm of horror and every forbidden dimension that evil had power to mould. The world and Nature were helpless against such assaults from unsealed wells of night, nor could any sign or prayer check the Walpurgis-riot of horror which had come when a sage with the hateful key had stumbled on a horde with the locked and brimming coffer of transmitted daemon-lore.

Suddenly a ray of physical light shot through these phantasms, and Malone heard the sound of oars amidst the blasphemies of things that should be dead. A boat with a lantern in its prow darted into sight, made fast to an iron ring in the slimy stone pier, and vomited forth several dark men bearing a long burden swathed in bedding. They took it to the naked phosphorescent thing on the carved golden pedestal, and the thing tittered and pawed at the bedding. Then they unswathed it, and propped upright before the pedestal the gangrenous corpse of a corpulent old man with stubby beard and unkempt white hair. The phosphorescent thing tittered again, and the men produced bottles from their pockets and anointed its feet with red, whilst they afterward gave the bottles to the thing to drink from.

All at once, from an arcaded avenue leading endlessly away, there came the daemonic rattle and wheeze of a blasphemous organ, choking and rumbling out the mockeries of hell in a cracked, sardonic bass. In an instant every moving entity was electrified; and forming at once into a ceremonial procession, the nightmare horde slithered away in quest of the sound - goat, satyr, and Ægyran, incubus, succubus and lemur, twisted toad and shapeless elemental, dog-faced howler and silent strutter in darkness - all led by the abominable naked phosphorescent thing that had squatted on the carved

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golden throne, and that now strode insolently bearing in its arms the glassy-eyed corpse of the corpulent old man. The strange dark men danced in the rear, and the whole column skipped and leaped with Dionysiac fury. Malone staggered after them a few steps, delirious and hazy, and doubtful of his place in this or in any world. Then he turned, faltered, and sank down on the cold damp stone, gasping and shivering as the daemon organ croaked on, and the howling and drumming and tinkling of the mad procession grew fainter and fainter.

Vaguely he was conscious of chanted horrors and shocking croakings afar off. Now and then a wail or whine of ceremonial devotion would float to him through the black arcade, whilst eventually there rose the dreadful Greek incantation whose text he had read above the pulpit of that dance-hall church.

'O friend and companion of night, thou who rejoicest in the baying of dogs (here a hideous howl bust forth) and spilt blood (here nameless sounds vied with morbid shriekings) who wanderest in the midst of shades among the tombs, (here a whistling sigh occurred) who longest for blood and bringest terror to mortals, (short, sharp cries from myriad throats) Gorgo, (repeated as response) Mormo, (repeated with ecstasy) thousand-faced moon, (sighs and flute notes) look favourably on our sacrifices!'

As the chant closed, a general shout went up, and hissing sounds nearly drowned the croaking of the cracked bass organ. Then a gasp as from many throats, and a babel of barked and bleated words - 'Lilith, Great Lilith, behold the Bridegroom!' More cries, a clamour of rioting, and the sharp, clicking footfalls of a running figure. The footfalls approached, and Malone raised himself to his elbow to look.

The luminosity of the crypt, lately diminished, had now slightly increased; and in that devil-light there appeared the fleeing form of that which should not flee or feel or breathe - the glassy-eyed, gangrenous corpse of the corpulent old man, now needing no support, but animated by some infernal sorcery of the rite just closed. After it raced the naked, tittering, phosphorescent thing that belonged on the carven pedestal, and still farther behind panted the dark men, and all the dread crew of sentient loathsomenesses. The corpse was gaining on its pursuers, and seemed bent on a definite object, straining with every rotting muscle toward the carved golden pedestal, whose necromantic importance was evidently so great. Another moment and it had reached its goal, whilst the trailing

through laboured on with more frantic speed. But they were too late, for in one final spurt of strength which ripped tendon from tendon and sent its noisome bulk floundering to the floor in a state of jellyish dissolution, the staring corpse which had been Robert Suydam achieved its object and its triumph. The push had been tremendous, but the force had held out; and as the pusher collapsed to a muddy blotch of corruption the pedestal he had pushed tottered, tipped, and finally careened from its onyx base into the thick waters below, sending up a parting gleam of carven gold as it sank heavily to undreamable gulfs of lower Tartarus. In that instant, too, the whole scene of horror faded to nothingness before Malone's eyes; and he fainted amidst a thunderous crash which seemed to blot out all the evil universe.

VII

Malone's dream, experienced in full before he knew of Suydam's death and transfer at sea, was curiously supplemented by some odd realities of the case; though that is no reason why anyone should believe it. The three old houses in Parker Place, doubtless long rotten with decay in its most insidious form, collapsed without visible cause while half the raiders and most of the prisoners were inside; and of both the greater number were instantly killed. Only in the basements and cellars was there much saving of life, and Malone was lucky to have been deep below the house of Robert Suydam. For he really was there, as no one is disposed to deny. They found him unconscious by the edge of a night-black pool, with a grotesquely horrible jumble of decay and bone, identifiable through dental work as the body of Suydam, a few feet away. The case was plain, for it was hither that the smugglers' underground canal led; and the men who took Suydam from the ship had brought him home. They themselves were never found, or at least never identified; and the ship's doctor is not yet satisfied with the simple certitudes of the police.

Suydam was evidently a leader in extensive man-smuggling operations, for the canal to his house was but one of several subterranean channels and tunnels in the neighbourhood. There was a tunnel from this house to a crypt beneath the dance-hall church; a crypt accessible from the church only through a narrow secret passage in the north wall, and in whose chambers some singular and terrible things were discovered. The croaking organ was there, as well as a vast arched chapel with wooden benches and a strangely figured altar. The walls were lined with small cells, in seventeen of which - hideous to relate - solitary prisoners in a state of

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• complete idiocy were found chained, including four mothers with infants of disturbingly strange appearance. These infants died soon after exposure to the light; a circumstance which the doctors thought rather merciful. Nobody but Malone, among those who inspected them, remembered the sombre question of old Delrio: 'An sint unquam daemones incubi et succubae, et an ex tali congressu proles nasci queat?'

Before the canals were filled up they were thoroughly dredged, and yielded forth a sensational array of sawed and split bones of all sizes. The kidnapping epidemic, very clearly, had been traced home; though only two of the surviving prisoners could by any legal thread be connected with it. These men are now in prison, since they failed of conviction as accessories in the actual murders. The carved golden pedestal or throne so often mentioned by Malone as of primary occult importance was never brought to light, though at one place under the Suydam house the canal was observed to sink into a well too deep for dredging. It was choked up at the mouth and cemented over when the cellars of the new houses were made, but Malone often speculates on what lies beneath. The police, satisfied that they had shattered a dangerous gang of maniacs and man-smugglers, turned over to the Federal authorities the unconvicted Kurds, who before their deportation were conclusively found to belong to the Yezidi clan of devil-worshippers. The tramp ship and its crew remain an elusive mystery. though cynical detectives are once more ready to combat its smuggling and rum-running ventures. • Malone thinks these detectives shew a sadly limited perspective in their lack of wonder at the myriad unexplainable details, and the suggestive obscurity of the whole case; though he is just as critical of the newspapers, which saw only a morbid sensation and gloated over a minor sadist cult which they might have proclaimed a horror from the universe's very heart. But he is content to rest silent in Chepachet, calming his nervous system and praying that time may gradually transfer his terrible experience from the realm of present reality to that of picturesque and semi-mythical remoteness.

Robert Suydam sleeps beside his bride in Greenwood Cemetery. No funeral was held over the strangely released bones, and relatives are grateful for the swift oblivion which overtook the case as a whole. The scholar's connexion with the Red Hook horrors, indeed, was never emblazoned by legal proof; since his death forestalled the inquiry he would otherwise have faced. His own end is not much mentioned, and the Suydams hope that posterity may recall him only as a gentle recluse who dabbled in harmless magic and folklore.

As for Red Hook - it is always the same. Suydam came and went; a terror gathered and faded; but the evil spirit of darkness and squalor broods on amongst the mongrels in the old brick houses, and prowling bands still parade on unknown errands past windows where lights and twisted faces unaccountably appear and disappear. Age-old horror is a hydra with a thousand heads, and the cults of darkness are rooted in blasphemies deeper than the well of Democritus, The soul of the beast is omnipresent and triumphant, and Red Hook's legions of bleary-eyed, pockmarked youths still chant and curse and howl as they file from abyss to abyss, none knows whence or whither, pushed on by blind laws of biology which they may never understand. As of old, more people enter Red Hook than leave it on the landward side, and there are already rumours of new canals running underground to certain centres of traffic in liquor and less mentionable things.

The dance-hall church is now mostly a dance-hall, and queer faces have appeared at night at the windows. Lately a policeman expressed the belief that the filled-up crypt has been dug out again, and for no simply explainable purpose. Who are we to combat poisons older than history and mankind? Apes danced in Asia to those horrors, and the cancer lurks secure and spreading where furtiveness hides in rows of decaying brick.

Malone does not shudder without cause - for only the other day an officer overheard a swarthy squinting hag teaching a small child some whispered patois in the shadow of an areaway. He listened, and thought it very strange when he heard her repeat over and over again,

'O friend and companion of night, thou who rejoicest in the baying of dogs and spilt blood, who wanderest in the midst of shades among the tombs, who longest for blood and bringest terror to mortals, Gorgo, Mormo, thousand-faced moon, look favourably on our sacrifices!'

St. John (Sinjin) Harkins, Occult Expert

STR: 11 DB: +1d4
CON: 13 HP: 14
SIZ: 14 MP: 12
INT: 15 Idea: 65%
POW: 12 Luck: 60%
DEX: 10
APP: 17
EDU: 14 Know: 70%
SAN: 64



Key Skills

Accounting 41%, Bargain 82%,
Conceal 29%, Credit Rating 91%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Dodge 51%,
Drive Auto 38%, Fast Talk 88%, Hide 54%, Law 63%, Library Use 46%,
Occult 80%, Read/Speak Latin 41%, Persuade 74%, Ride 34%, Spot
Hidden 65%

Gear

- Fine suit of clothing, sword cane, plenty of cash, other items as appropriate

Background

St. John grew up in London, the youngest son of a minor English noble family. From a young age he was fascinated by tales of the macabre and occult. After graduating from Eton, he scandalized his family by announcing that occult investigation would be his life's calling. Since then he's used the generous monthly remittance (paid to guarantee he will never come home nor publicly claim any connection to the family) to travel the globe in search of things man was not meant to know. Recently St. John arrived in New York and has been settling in to see what secrets the city has been hiding. To help protect himself from the more unsavory elements of his new home, he has hired James to act as his bodyguard.

James Jones, Enforcer

STR: 18 DB: +1d6
 CON: 16 HP: 17
 SIZ: 18 MP: 13
 INT: 12 Idea: 60%
 POW: 13 Luck: 80%
 DEX: 14
 APP: 9
 EDU: 14 Know: 70%
 SAN: 66

**Key Skills**

Climb 79%, Conceal 76%, Cthulhu Mythos 4%, Dodge 72%, Drive Auto 47%, Electrical Repair 34%, Handgun 53%, History 61%, Jump 36%, Listen 69%, Martial Arts 82%, Mechanical Repair 46%, Occult 24%, Shotgun 56%, Spot Hidden 77%, Track 64%

Gear

.38 Automatic, handcuffs, sap, and other items as appropriate

Background

James was at the start of a promising career as a prizefighter. When he refused to cooperate with a fight-rigging plan by a local mobster, though, he was beaten so soundly outside the ring that he could no longer compete within it. Never having planned for anything other path in life, he found drifted to other jobs where his size and ferocity were advantageous. After several of those brought him back in touch with the same mobsters who ended his boxing career, James decided to try being a bodyguard. He recently began working for St. John Harkins, doing the physical work that a gentleman can't and leaving the thinking to his employer. So far, James is quite happy with the arrangement. When more manpower is needed, he will call on other former boxers he knows, especially Tom Nickels, to get the job done.

Matt Barker, Confidence Man

STR: 8 DB: +0
 CON: 13 HP: 12
 SIZ: 11 MP: 12
 INT: 17 Idea: 85%
 POW: 12 Luck: 60%
 DEX: 12
 APP: 16
 EDU: 18 Know: 90%
 SAN: 60



Key Skills

Bargain 75%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 2%, Dodge 34%, Fast Talk 75%, Handgun 50%, Law 25%, Library Use 55%, Persuade 65%, Physics 20%, Psychology 70%, Spot Hidden 85%

Gear

Fine Clothing, \$2,000, Inventory and contact book (large ledger book), other items as appropriate.

Background

Matt has a secret—he isn't really Matt. He's actually Dick Whitman, a low-stakes grifter barely staying out of jail in his small Kansas hometown. While stationed in France during the Great War, Dick and his commanding officer were attacked by some nameless creature. A group of people came to fight the creature off using powers Dick couldn't begin to comprehend. The officer was killed and Dick was injured, but one of the mysterious men switched the men's dog tags, and when Dick awoke in an army hospital everyone was calling him Major Matthew Barker. Dick assumed the identity of "Matt" and severed all ties with both his original and his new false family. He used the respect his assumed rank gave him to run even better, more profitable scams. Somewhere along the line, while running a scam that required a partner, Matt joined up with Tom Nickels. Something about Tom's luckless existence reminded Matt of how his own life could have been, if not for that fateful experience.

Tom Nickels, Down on His Luck Former Boxer

STR: 14 DB: +1d4
 CON: 17 HP: 16
 SIZ: 14 MP: 13
 INT: 13 Idea: 65%
 POW: 13 Luck: 65%
 DEX: 12
 APP: 15
 EDU: 14 Know: 70%
 SAN: 65



Key Skills

Bargain 35%, Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 1%, Dodge 40%, Drive 60%
 Handgun 50%, Jump 50%, Knife 50%, Mechanical Repair 30%, Occult
 30%, Pilot Boat 60%, Rifle 70%, Swim 45%

Gear

Jacket, Warm Sweatshirt, .45 Revolver, Box of 20 .45 Shells, Fighting
 knife, other equipment as appropriate.

Background

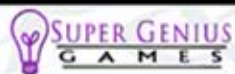
Tom used to be somebody, he was a star athlete in high school and a hit with the ladies. He was offered a scholarship to a well-regarded university, but first he felt it was his duty to go to Europe and do his part to end the Great War. He doesn't remember exactly what happened there but he knows that it was bad, and that to this day he wakes up nightly from dreams filled with people speaking French and a nameless figure speaking in a long-dead tongue. After coming home, Tom began to steadily decline and lost his ability to focus on anything. University was out of the question so he tried his hand at professional boxing, but his lack of focus meant that all he did was get beaten mercilessly by less talented fighters. He hit bottom, living as a vagrant, until Matt Barker offered him a chance to make some money. The work wasn't strictly legal, but something about his new charismatic friend helped Tom keep the dark thoughts at bay. He now considers the two of them an inseparable pair.

The Cold Case of Robert Suydam

You'll Never Read Lovecraft the Same Way Again...

Ten years ago, the sinister forces at work in Brooklyn's Red Hook neighborhood coalesced in the events described in the short story: "*The Horror at Red Hook*." The abductions, child sacrifices, and public downfall of the previously reclusive and well-respected Robert Suydam were big news at the time, but a decade later those demonic events are nearly forgotten. Only two living people know what really happened that night in Red Hook when devils and demons walked the Earth--an agoraphobic retired police detective named Malone and a very special young girl who wasn't even born when the events took place.

After Lovecraft: *The Horror at Red Hook*, *The Cold Case of Robert Suydam* contains everything a *Call of Cthulhu* group needs for a few evenings of Mythos-inspired fun, including pre-generated characters and the entire text of Lovecraft's short story "*The Horror at Red Hook*." It is the latest in the innovative line of officially licensed *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios and supplements from *Super Genius Games*.



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