

Homecoming

A Call Of Cthulhu Adventure

This scenario is intended as an introduction to Call of Cthulhu, and is best played with 3 - 4 Investigators. They need not have anything in common, save the friendship of William H. Pendergast IV, who will be a member of the party either as an NPC, or a fellow Investigator.

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As written, it takes place in a fictitious town in Northern Ohio in the Fall of 1925, but could be moved anywhere at any time if the Keeper so desires. If it is moved ahead to the modern era, Keepers may have to adjust the location and circumstances somewhat to keep the Investigators isolated.

This scenario will introduce the players to the Mythos, but a large part of its horror comes from within the party itself. This will be via the gradual corruption and takeover of a member of the party: the one who has brought the others here for aid, William Pendergast. Pendergast could be an NPC run by the Keeper, but it's more effective if she hands it over to the best player to portray -- after all, who's going to suspect good old William?

If the Keeper chooses to do this, then she'll need to set up some things ahead of time, and work with that player to present the "player information" part of the scenario accordingly. A private, one-on-one "prelude" session with that player may be needed.

Player Information

It's October 26, 1925, and the Investigators have just been asked to come to the Columbus, Ohio home of well-to-do socialite William H. Pendergast IV. They may know William from having gone to Harvard with him, having been fellow socialites themselves, or anything else that works for all involved. William will pay for their travel expenses if it's a problem, and asks them to make arrangements for at least two weeks.

William has just "come of age," by the standards of his wealthy family, and been given a great deal of his family holdings that were held in trust. Amongst these are an old family home in the small town of Valdemar, Ohio, some one hundred miles North of Columbus. A great deal of the family's old belongings have been left there since its abandonment fifty years ago, and William, being an antiques buff, is very eager to go up and see what can be found there.

To this end he's contacted the Investigators, and would like them to accompany him up there for a two week "excursion into the past." He's made certain to bring food and various "party supplies" (read, high-class liquor smuggled in from Europe) and it promises to be a real gay time. The locals are supposed to be rather accommodating, so there shouldn't be much trouble getting them to help if it's needed. And Halloween will be falling within that space of time, won't it? Better and better.

If the Investigators agree -- and who wouldn't? -- then they can be on a train for Valdemar, Ohio tomorrow, and in the house tomorrow night. This evening they will be guests at the Pendergast's Italianate mansion.

Keeper Information

The Investigators, and William, have just unwittingly blundered into a sick web of cosmic usury. William has been told that the Pendergast house in Grove Corner was abandoned when the family struck it rich in industry and moved to Columbus. That is not the entire truth. They left because the house has become infused with the presence of an Outer God's time and space warping influence.

The Pendergast's fortune was the result of precognitive visions given his great-grandfather, William H. Pendergast I, by the Outer God Daoloth. The family has carefully followed the written instructions left by the old codger prior to his disappearance on Halloween night, 1875. These mundane actions, which have mostly consisted of knowing which stocks to buy and sell, have secured their place in the world.

The last instruction the elder Pendergast wrote was to send his great-grandson up to the house in time for Halloween, 1925, and "to be prepared for my return." Presumably, he will come back with more instructions. At this point, the family is so used to obeying orders to secure their station that sacrificing their only son is a small price to pay.

The younger William has been groomed for this moment in time. He has no idea that he's to be sacrificed for the family fortune by his sycophant parents. As he enters the house, and spends time there, his ancestor's essence will slowly be taking him over until Halloween night, when the transfer of minds will be complete.

The Investigators will have a chance to stop this from happening. William, if he is played by one of the Investigators, may also be able to avert the fate once he realizes what's about to happen. It all depends on how soon they realize that something is amiss, and if they can use their brains to overcome the weird menace before them.

Columbus to Valdemar

The day of the 27th, the Investigators will be treated to a good, early breakfast prior to packing their bags. The Keeper should get an accurate list of what they are taking with them for the trip. William's father warns that Grove Corner isn't the most modern and well-connected of places, and they might wish to stock up prior to getting there; if the Investigators don't do it now, then Valdemar might not have what the Investigators wish. Did everyone remember their costumes for Halloween night?

The Train

The train ride is a well-heelled, three hour journey with a few small stops along the way. The Fall in Ohio is a pleasant, if nippy, thing, and the Investigators will be treated to the changing colors of the landscape as they chug along. This will give them all a chance to get better acquainted with one another if their only connection is with William.

As the train pulls in, the sky darkens and the wind changes direction abruptly, bringing a strange coldness. The stationmaster sighs and gets out his raincoat, mumbling something about the damn rain. If asked, he says that it's been raining off and on every day for the last week.

Valdemar (est. 1854, pop 42) is a small, flat hamlet of twenty dark houses. It has a post office/general store, a simple church and a police station by the train depot. The roads are dirt and gravel which has been all but covered by the mud. One road leads off into the dark, lush forests that ring the town. According to William, that's the way to the old house.

The local Sheriff, Harold Vickers, has been looking after the place for the family, and they'll need to get the key from him. He can probably provide a lift to the place as well. He seems to be one of the few people here with an automobile: a dirty, old Ford sits in front of his office.

As they go to the office, they see an old woman looking at William with a mixture of myopia and scorn. She shakes her head and goes back into her house. The door slams. William shrugs this off: "I suddenly remember my father saying that a lot of the locals are still sore at us for getting out of here. I suppose we'll have less help than we thought?"

The Sheriff

Sheriff Vickers is in, sitting behind his desk with his star on his shirt pocket. He's an old, mustachioed man who's skinny as a rail and quick as a snake. When the party comes in, he smiles warmly at William and rises to meet him, giving him a firm handshake.

"You're the spittin' image a your grandfather, young sir. I'd a recognized you from outside the window if my eyes weren't so bad these days."

After some small talk, he produces the key to the place. "It's a locked up tight, just like your grandfather asked. A course, no one goes up there, anyway."

He seems to want to say more, but doesn't. He'll offer to take the Investigators up there as soon as they're ready to go. Psychology Rolls indicate that he seems uneasy about something, but if they ask him if everything's alright he will deny that anything's wrong -- except the weather.

Stats and more information on the Sheriff can be found at the end of the Scenario.

The General Store

Investigators who realized they're short of something might wish to try to buy it now. The small General Store, across from the Sheriff's office, is a one-room affair full of mostly empty shelves: it has a 50% chance of having most common items and almost no chance of anything special or unusual. Inside, behind the counter, there's a young man with rolled-up shirtsleeves and round spectacles. This is Junior Holden, and he's been running the place since his father's demise five years ago.

If William comes in with them, Holden will be nothing short of rude and surly to everyone. He believes that the Pendergast place had something to do with his father's death - which it did - but will not say as much if William is present.

If William stays outside Holden will be polite and friendly, at least until the Investigators say why they're here, where they're going and why. When they do, he turns serious, looks outside the window, and then tells them the following.

"Now you all be careful up there," he says, "My father always said there was somethin' wrong with the folks up there on the hill, an when they left the house wasn't right either. Strange people make strange things happen around themselves, an ordinary folk get hurt."

He's willing to leave it at that if the Investigators don't press him, or don't wind up buying anything from his poorly-stocked store. If they do, he elaborates with the following.

"The house up there ain't right. Sometimes it's like you spend all day by there but it's only been a few hours, and sometimes it's like you just go up for a look and you come back late. Sometimes you hear

things a coming from the woods. Awful noises. I went up there once and I never come back." He shivers.

In either case, he will say what he has to say and not elaborate further, save to say that his father died while he was up there. He won't say how, and if the Investigators press him he might just ask them to leave.

Stats and more information on Junior Holden can be found at the end of the scenario.

Mrs. Junction

The old lady who looked at them funny was Valdemar's only septuagenarian, Mrs. Cassius Junction. Mr. Junction has been in the ground for the last twenty years, buried behind the church, and Mrs. Junction hasn't been quite altogether since.

The Investigators shouldn't meet her on their first day in Valdemar, save for the brief glimpse they catch of her seeing them (described previously). If they come back to town for supplies, and William is not with them, she approaches them and harangues them for a while. Most of it might be dismissed as a bitter old lady lashing out against young folks, especially well-to-do young folks who are friends with "those people," but there are some kernels of truth in what she says:

- "You got no business a being here now. It's the wrong time to be here, an it's the wrong time to be there. Hallows eve is a comin! An you don't want to be up there when midnight comes, then. No you don't."

- "Willie Pendergast was a crazy old coot, but he wasn't just crazy. He'd come into town an say things that sounded crazy, an then they'd a happen. Like when he said old Parson was a going to die by being kicked by a cow? Week later, when he was a visiting a farmer in Vanderburg, wouldn't you know he got kicked by a cow? Wouldn't you know he died that very night?"

- "No one around here likes the Pendergasts. Sheriff Vickers' a gettin money in the post to look after the place, but he ain't set foot near it for years. Not since Mr. Holden a went up there an died. They found him on the ground, an his hair was as white as mine and his skin was aa wrinkled like mine an his teeth had all fallen out a their gums. I'm 77 years by the grace of God this last March. He was just 41! Now a how do you like that?"

At some point, a Psychology roll -- if not common sense -- will indicate that the old lady's a bit off her rocker. Depending on what the Investigators may have seen by that point, they may wish to terminate the conversation there, or try to get more information out of her. The Keeper should ad-lib either: Mrs. Junction can provide as much or as little help as the Keeper desires, but she should not make connections for them, or solve the matter. That's their job.

More information on her is at the end of the scenario.

The Church

The church of Valdemar is a small, one-room affair that has been here since the town itself has been. It's a Protestant church, with a simple altar and lectern, and high-backed pews that have been recently installed. Out back is a graveyard ringed by a wooden fence, and small, simple stones and wooden slats bear the name of Valdemar's early settlers. The stone marking the resting place of Harrison Holden Senior (1/7/1879 - 10/31/1920) is the most recent one.

Parson Daniel Winter is a middle-aged, stout and stern fellow who doesn't care much for nosey people poking around his church. He has been here since the church board sent him to take over from Parson

Biddle three years ago. Parson Biddle, in turn, had taken over when Parson Beak was kicked by the cow in 1872. Biddle died last year and left no descendants.

The church is the only place in town that has a record of births and deaths. If the Investigators can get Winter to let them look at it, which will not be easy at all, they notice the following about the Pendergasts:

- William Harold Pendergast of Philadelphia, who helped settle Valdemar, was born in 1800. He was married to Eliza Bumblehoot in 1834. His only son, William II, was born in Philadelphia in 1846.
- The Pendergasts came with the other founding families, being the Holdens and the Vickers, to found the town in 1854. They stayed in town for a while, and then created a farmstead two miles outside of town.
- In 1875, William the first died. A cause of death is not given. William was buried on the family's property "in accordance with his wishes, but against the counsel of the Parson." A History roll will hint that this may be a polite way of saying that the Parson was not present at the funeral.

There is nothing more about the Pendergasts in the record. William will confirm that this is when they got their "first lucky break" and moved to Columbus to enjoy it.

If the Investigators look up the matter of Mr. Holden's death in there, the date is given but the cause of death will not be specified. Winter has no idea what happened because he was not here, then, and has not been able to get a straight answer from anyone who was, including Sheriff Vickers. If presented with Mrs. Junction's views on the subject, Winter politely turns them aside as the "ramblings of an old woman who should come to hear God's word more often." (As an aside note, Mr. Junction died in his sleep on 5/1/1900 at the age of 53, in case the Investigators look)

As for the strange goings-on at the Pendergast estate, Parson Winter can neither confirm nor deny any of the stories told. If pressed further, he shakes his head and comments: "The Lord God is mighty and sere, but the Devil has ways to sneak around His works. I would not set foot on that property unless He bade me to go there in His name, and even then I would be sore afraid to do so."

Right about then, Winter's time, and patience with nosy strangers, become rare things and he bids them good day. His stats can be found at the end of the Scenario.

The House

Getting There

Sheriff Vickers will drive the Investigators up the way to the house on the hill. On the way there, anyone making a Spot Hidden roll will notice Mrs. Junction staring at them from out of her window as they go. They won't need a Spot Hidden roll to see other people scowling at them as they pass. Vickers sighs and chuckles: "People around here always get upset when the weather's bad." This is true, but it's still dodge from the issue. He seems nervous.

The house is a two and a half miles out of town, and the Investigators will be treated to nice -- if cold and wet -- scenery all the way there. The Ford is surrounded by a canopy of low-hanging tree limbs almost the entire time. They will not see another living soul all the way there, but they will see some deer crashing through the forests as the car drives by; Vickers will slow down accordingly.

After a time, the road starts going up a little, and then the canopy overhead starts to back off. The forests part to reveal the hill, and the large, Federal-style house on top of it. It is a breathtaking sight, but something about the way it looks defies easy description. Trying to trace the lines invites confusion, and somehow, just somehow, it seems to have more angles than it should: 0/1d2 San to realize this.

Vickers drives up to the front and stops by the porch. "Here you are," he says, handing the key over to William, "You all have yourselves a good time, and if you need anything, you just call me."

And then he drives away, leaving the Investigators to their own devices. Brandy, anyone?

Insides and Out

The outside of the house is typical for a farm. There is a barn out to the South which is in need of some repairs and a chicken coop with nothing in it but chicken bones. Several fields that have lain fallow for too long are barely recognizable for what they are, having been grown over with grass and weeds long ago. A pair of privies stand at attention behind the house: one with a crescent moon cut into the door and one with a full circle.

Out back, by the privies, there is a substantial woodpile that is, unfortunately, soaked by the rain. Some distance behind it, ringed by a wooden fence, is a wooden gravestone. It reads: William Harold Pendergast. Born 7th March, 1800. Died 31st October, 1875. "Time is not holding us, for time is of us."

Astute Investigators may have cause to think about that motto in the days to come.

Ground Floor

The entire house has no electricity and, despite Vickers' advice, no telephone, either.

The front hallway leads straight back to an open kitchen area on the left, and a stairwell and pantry on the right. The back door is at the other end of the hallway. There is a small indentation on the left, by the front door, to hang coats and hats. A door on the left and a door on the right, directly across from one another, are closed. The left one leads to the Dining Room, the right to the Family Room.

The kitchen has a cast-iron, wood-fed stove, a cutting board, and a washtub. There are racks and bare shelves here, along with some cast iron cookware long since abandoned. A door connects the kitchen to the Dining Room.

The pantry has a few jars of canned tomatoes and beans. Some of them have broken and rotted, giving the pantry a dull, nasty smell. There are a few boxes of homemade candles, and an old, homemade broom sits in the corner.

Dining Room: An oaken table with no chairs sits here gathering dust: William can explain that the chairs were taken to Columbus, and they were sitting in them last night. Two windows in the front overlook the yard. A china cabinet with no plates in it stands on the wall, next to the fireplace.

Sitting Room: Empty. There's another pair of windows like the ones in the dining room overlooking the yard. All the furniture in here was taken to Columbus in the move. Another fireplace gaps

Second Floor

Once up the stairwell, the hallway runs South to North, with a branch going right, halfway down. There

are three doors on the left side of the hallway: a bedroom, a reading room, and a second bedroom. On the branch, there are two doors right across from one another: a master bedroom on the left and a storage room on the right.

Bedroom 1: Except for an old bed with a dusty mattress and quilt, there is nothing in here at all.

Reading room: This room is locked. The key that opens the front door will not open it. The key for this room is in the storage room, hanging by the door.

Once inside, the reason for locking becomes obvious: nothing was taken and everything was left here. This looks like it must have been William H. Pendergast's study, with a desk, bookshelves and lots of curious old knickknacks. William IV will go frantic with joy when he sees it, especially the old, straight-backed chair that he'd heard so much about.

A great window in the front overlooks the yard and the forests beyond. When the Sun rises in the morning the rays of dawn filter in and illuminate everything as though it were covered with gold.

There are a lot of old books here, many of which could give any bibliophile cause for a lengthy stay. Of chief interest to the scenario is a small, handwritten black book, there amongst the other books on a small shelf by the desk. The handwriting will be identifiable as that of William H. Pendergast I by anyone who looks at other examples of that gentleman's writing, here and there about the study.

Black Book (not named). English, written mid 1800's by William H. Pendergast I. Seemingly a book of mathematical techniques that is far ahead of his time, but has much more to it than that. It speaks in oblique terms of how space and time might be bent and folded like paper, and contains veiled allegorical references to Daoloth. Requires a Physics or Mathematics roll to understand, in addition to any Other Language rolls required. Sanity Loss 1d4/1d8. Cthulhu Mythos +3. Spell Multiplier x1. Spells: Create Gate, Create House of Mathematical Harmony (see section on New Spells), Voorish Sign.

At some point in the Scenario, when William the elder has all but taken over the body and mind of William the Younger, a peculiar mathematical problem will be jotted down by the former (latter?) If an Investigator looks on page 42 of the little black book, he will discover a key whereby the mathematical principles are rendered into vocal patterns, thus creating an endless loop of noises: a chant.

This is, in fact, William Pendergast's version of the spell Call Daoloth, and works just as any other Call spell. Dismissing Daoloth would require the chant be done backwards. The whole house is set up so that it could be used as an "altar" for such a purpose. In order to Call Daoloth anywhere else, another "altar" would have to be made, either according to the spell in the black book or another method.

Bedroom 2: Another dusty bed and musty quilt, plus a chamberpot that someone had the decency to clean prior to the move.

Master Bedroom: A great, towering four-poster bed is here. A wooden trunk is full of blankets and old clothes that the moths have not touched. A dresser's door swings open drunkenly, and reveals lots of old, gentlemen's clothes. Once again, William will be enraptured by the find.

Storage: There is nothing in here but dust and vacant spiderwebs. On the right wall, hanging from an unused hook, is the key to the reading room.

Something not quite right about this room. The angles seem wrong, somehow, but walking around and visibly measuring things out with one's hand reveals nothing out of the ordinary. This requires a San check: 0/1d2. As it turns out, this is the best room in the house to summon Daoloth from: the Outer God will manifest in the branch of the hallway, outside the door, and stay between the two doors until dismissed.

Time Going Out of Joint

The following section details what goes wrong when, and gives possible consequences. The Keeper may wish to alter them a bit, depending on the mood of the Scenario and how things are progressing. She should keep in mind that too much too soon will ruin the suspense, though. Halloween night should be the climax, with the morning revealing either victory over the darkness, or else a living hell.

Sanity Loss for the time dilations should be handled carefully, as having the whole party gibbering and mad before the end is a bit frustrating for the players. Time the shocks well and assign appropriate losses: 0/1d3 for small but obvious ones, 1/1d6 for really bizarre ones and 1d4/1d10 for the truly severe ones is about right, but could be raised or lowered depending on the circumstances. Having two windows in the same room showing two different time zones should be a high one, though.

Also note the Degeneration scheme. Once the fourth stage is reached, there is only the fifth left to go, and that will be the total assumption of William's body by the mind of his great-grandfather. This will not happen until Halloween night, though, so if the fourth stage is reached a few days previous, then the fourth stage will last for those few days and not get any worse until it's meant to. If, on the other hand, William rolls fairly well in the days previous, then the roll on Halloween night takes him from whatever stage he's at to the fifth, provided it isn't stopped.

Possible Timeline

26th: The Investigators arrive. The first night should be relatively festive and carefree, with some exploring and party games going on. Some rather small dilations in time may occur. Idea rolls reveal that it seems to take longer to do some things than one might think, or that it takes less time to do it: "Well, you certainly got that fire going quickly, old bean." "I did? Thought it took too long, really..."

That night, at Midnight, William seems a little tired. Roll his POW against that of his great-grandfather's. If William is an NPC, and the roll is a success for his great-grandfather, then follow the first degeneration and the instructions at the end of Dream Handout #1. If a player is portraying William Pendergast IV, and the roll is a success for the Grandfather, slip his player Dream Handout #1 to read when they bunk down for the night and request that she have him act out the Instructions the following day.

27th: More explorations and looking around the old house. Some minor time dilations will be noticed. Anyone being expected back at a certain time will be late, but when watches are compared the late person's watch is revealed to be up to a half an hour "slow," or is the other person's watch "fast?" The Sun's movement across the sky seems to be slightly irregular, but with the weather being what it is -- rain, no rain, clear, cloudy, rain, etc. -- that could just be a trick of the clouds. Maybe.

Once again, William gets tired that night, and another POW vs. POW roll is made with his great-grandfather. If the elder William did not win last night, but won tonight, give William's player Dream Handout #1 and proceed as noted above. If the elder William won last night and tonight, give the player Dream Handout #2 and ask her to follow the instructions there. Proceed in this manner until Halloween

night.

28th: The clocks in the house definitely have something wrong with them. No two clocks or watches are aligned with one another, and no matter what anyone does to try and set them, they are doomed to slip out of precision sooner or later. It's kind of amusing at first but slowly gets unnerving...

If the Investigators have not gone into town yet, then today would be a good day to have them do so. See about arranging a talk with Mrs. Junction if they haven't done so already, or surreptitiously suggest a trip to the church if that hasn't crossed their minds. Sheriff Vickers will be "gon fishin," according to a sign on his office. Junior Holden might warm up to them a bit if William's not there.

That night, one of the Investigators will look out the window and see many shrouded figures moving across the back lawn. A closer look reveals these to be Indians. Then, on closer inspection..., they aren't there after all. Were they ever there at all? (right about then is when William gets tired again...)

29th: Today, in the morning, one Investigator will look outside the window and see the Sun set and the Moon rise, and then see them reverse course. If anyone goes outside to investigate, they will be frozen in time the moment they step off the front porch, out the back door, or lean out an open window.

To onlookers, they will freeze in mid-action as they do so and stay that way until pulled back; to them, it will seem like only a split second has passed when they're pulled back. Anyone caught in the freeze cannot do anything, but can be harmed or otherwise affected by the actions of people outside the freeze, or things which occur around them (such as gunshots, blows, or a fire)

The Investigators are now trapped in the house. They will see many more queer dilations of time, now. The clocks start to go slower than they should, and in some cases the spaces between seconds take more than a second to resolve. One Investigator's watch starts going backwards, and then it stops and rights itself again but he starts speaking backwards...

30th: Time dilations become more regular, both inside the house and outdoors. Flashes of different time zones happen all the time, and Investigators will actually see one another repeating the same actions over and over and over again. These don't last for too long, thankfully, but the people trapped in these loops have no idea they were happening to them at the time.

31st: Halloween. The time dilations become extremely severe. One window will show night 100 years ago while the one right next to it will show day 100 years from now. The view from the front porch is maddening: the seasons fly by like leaves in high wind and past, present and future all collide like mad.

Tonight, one hour before Midnight, William I will make a POW vs. POW roll against William IV, but tonight it will be as though the elder William had a POW of 50. He will most likely win, and William IV will get up, go upstairs, and disappear into the storage room. If the Investigators follow after him, he will be gone.

At Midnight, William IV will appear in his new body. And the Investigators are in deep trouble.

Nov 1st: Come "dawn," either William I and IV will be dead, or the Investigators will be. Either way, the effect will be broken and someone will leave the house. But whom?

Degeneration of William IV

The following have two sets of sanity losses along with them. The first are for William and the second are for the Investigators, providing they make Idea Rolls and realize that something seems odd.

First stage: He starts to have strange flashes of times gone by. Sometimes his language use is more cultured than his normal speech: more antiquated. San loss: 1/1d3 and 0/0

Second stage: The flashes become more pronounced. He can remember brief things about those days gone past. His language takes a turn for the East, now, and he sounds more like his father than himself. Brief, precognitive flashes occur (10% chance). San loss: 1/1d4 and 0/1

Third stage: The flashes are noticeable and last for short periods of time, during which he writes. He can be roused from them by shaking and shouting, but tends to come out swinging as though awoken from a fever dream. Now he won't remember anything from them, though, and won't recognize what he's written. Nor will it be his own handwriting -- but that of his great-grandfather's! (San loss to realize this is 1/1d6 for him and 1/1d4 for others) The precognitive flashes become more frequent and more accurate (35% chance). San loss: 1/1d5 and 0/1d3

Fourth stage: William starts to wear the clothing from his great-grandfather's dresser. The flashes now last for long periods of time, in which William writes and does not respond to outside stimuli. He remembers only "things going on forever and ever without end." He now speaks just like a man from the last century and has some queer, 19th century notions all of a sudden. He seems to have developed a knack of knowing what's going to happen before it does (60% chance). San loss 1/1d6 and 1/1d4.

Fifth stage: William the IV no longer exists. William I is back, and he is less than amused at these young meddlers in his plans. And they will die for it. San loss: all remaining and 1/1d6.

Dealing With the Problem

Once the Investigators realize enough of what's going on, they will probably sense the need for action. But what to do?

Leaving the House: By the time the problem is recognizable as real, it will be too late to do this. Investigators who step off the porch are frozen in time as described in the entry for the 29th.

Destroying the House: This will work. A fire, if set correctly, will burn down the house and break the conditions. However, the Investigators will still not be able to leave until the entire building is a collapsed and smoldering heap. Stepping off the porch while it's still more or less extant will mean they are frozen in place, and they will die of heat or being burned to death before the house is destroyed. Afterwards, their bodies will re-enter normal time and fall to the ground.

Killing William IV: This will also work, but is morally questionable. Any Investigators who consider and then carry out such a plan should suffer 1/1d5 San Losses for the murder of a friend, and then they'll have to deal with the authorities.

William will not die easily, though. Given the way time tends to be bending, any number of affects may occur, and his great-grandfather will do anything possible to encourage his chosen vessel to be in the right places at the right times to take advantage of them. A swing with the hatchet might take forever to fall, giving William plenty of time to dodge, and a bullet might never leave the chamber, or do so only when the Investigator stupidly looks down the barrel to see what went wrong. If worse comes to worse the lynch mob might get stuck running down the same hallway over and over and over and over and over...

Killing William I: Once the transfer of minds is complete, William I will want to remonstrate with the people who tried to stop his plans. He is not as powerful a sorcerer as he could be, nor is he particularly crafty, but he has the advantage of usually knowing what the Investigators will do before they do it, and can plan to counter their moves in advance. He also has some control over the time dilations in the house, and can use these to harm them or protect himself.

His best plan is to try and hold out the ruse of being William IV at first, and then picking off the party one at a time. He'd like to call Daoloth down and present the upstart fools as sacrifices, but that will take most of his reserve of energy, and that might not be so wise. What if it fails? As he starts having some success, he will become overconfident and tip his hand a bit; hopefully the Investigators will play into this and use it for an advantage.

Should the Investigators succeed in killing his new body, his spirit will be banished from this plane forever. They will still have to explain the death of William H. Pendergast IV, though.

Calling Daoloth: This is the best solution, but it's one that will only become clear by reading William IV's rambling notes from the third and fourth states of his degeneration. The Investigators should have no idea what they are about to do: the notes make it sound as though they're going to create a new effect, or stop what happened, but nowhere in them does it say that such a thing is bringing down you-know-what.

If the Outer God is summoned prior to Halloween night, which would include any time on the 31st prior to Sundown, Its presence will disrupt the effect and It will then leave on its own. The house will lose its power. William I will lose his way back to this plane at this time, and William IV will return to normal. He will not remember a lot of what happened, but will know that his great-grandfather was somehow trying to come back from "beyond" and do him harm. Some of the other memories of what he experienced may remain (Keeper's call on that, especially if William is being played as an Investigator)

If the Outer God is summoned on the Morning of November 1st, after William I has usurped his Great-Grandson's body, then it will behave as it normally behaves.

However, if the Outer God is summoned on Halloween night, before William I and IV swap minds, It will join with the effect and create a monstrous synergy. The house will no longer be able to contain It, and It will spill out of the windows, the chimney and the doors like water breaking through a weary embankment. It will expand out to a full mile in diameter and then disappear, engulfing everything within and leaving a spherical crater.

At the bottom of that crater will be the ruins of the Pendergast house. In that house will be the broken and dead bodies of the Investigators, including William IV. No more will ever be heard from William I, as he will have entered the body of his great-grandson just as his deity abandoned this plane, and thereby died along with the people trying to stop him.

This event will never fully be explained or resolved, but may provide a good reason to have a new bunch of Investigators arrive in Valdemar...

Conclusion

Halting the plans of William H. Pendergast I will get the players 1d10 Sanity if they're able to do so without killing their friend in the process. Otherwise they only get 1d4.

If William is dead the Investigators have a lot of explaining to do. Even if cleared they will be in social exclusion in Columbus for at least as long as the Pendergast fortune lasts, which won't be too long (see below).

If William lives, then what happens from here with William and his parents is up to either the Keeper or the player who portrayed him. Certainly he won't be in any hurry to go back home. But what can he say? Who would believe him?

Regardless of how that happens, the Pendergast fortune flounders. Having become entirely dependent on set, precognitive instructions, William III loses his "savvy," and then his sanity, and will be placed in an Institution within the next year. The family fortune no longer exists the year after that, and Black Friday puts paid any hope of a comeback.

William will either have to take his share of the money and invest it well, or follow them into bankruptcy. If he retains the notes his great-grandfather wrote through him he may have an important clue about what's going to happen, and may be able to plan accordingly.

The Keeper could spin a few more threads out of this. Where did William I learn of the Outer God? Are there other servants of Daoloth operating back in Philadelphia, or elsewhere? Might there be other industrialist families whose livelihood is based on a little book of instructions?

New Spells

Create House of Mathematical Harmony: This is the "altar" for Call/Dismiss Daoloth, and the method by which Daoloth is contained. It requires that a structure of a certain mass be created, with certain angles and features built into the structure itself in order to act as a resonator for the chants, and to contain the Outer God when it arrives. No less than 10 points of POW must be placed into the structure during its construction at certain, correct times. The structure thereafter contains the Outer God, adds 30% to the chance to call It and 30% to Dismiss It. It costs 1d4 Sanity every time POW is sunk into the structure.

Time Dilation: By spending a certain amount of Magic Points, and rolling one's POW against the POW of a target in line of sight, the caster can force a chronological effect on her.

This ranges from slowing the target down (thus doubling all chances to hit her, halving her chances to hit and making her lose her turn this round and be able to act every other round thereafter), speeding the target up (halving all chances to hit her, doubling her chances to hit and allowing her to act twice in the same round), or sticking her in a Mobius loop where she repeats the same action over and over again.

Slowing someone down is 3 magic points, as is speeding them up, and loops are 5 magic points. The effects last for the rest of the combat, or until the caster decides to switch them off. This costs 1d4 San to speed or slow, and 1d6 to put the target in a loop.

Characters

William H. Pendergast IV, age 25, victim of circumstance STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 8 DEX

12 APP 14 EDU 19 SAN 40 HP 13 Damage Bonus: none Weapons: Fist/Punch 20% 1d3+db. Skills: Art (Viola) 34%, Bargain 40%, Carouse 50%, Credit Rating 80%, Dodge 39%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 30%, History 65%, Library Use 50%, O.L. Latin 40%, Persuade 30%, Spot Hidden 40% (If the Keeper wants him to be a Player Character, then make him a Dilettante and have the player re-do the skills, keeping History and Credit Rating high.)

Harold Vickers, age 59, small town lawman STR 12 CON 10 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 10 DEX 18 APP 9 EDU 13 SAN 50 HP 12 Damage Bonus: 1d4 Weapons: Fist/punch: 60% 1d3 + db, .32 Revolver 50%, damage 1d8. Skills: Condescend 70%, Credit Rating 30%, Dodge 45%, Fast Talk 20%, Persuade 60%, Police Procedure 70%

Junior Holden, age 32, bitter storeowner STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 8 DEX 12 APP 14 EDU 19 SAN 40 HP 13 Damage Bonus: none Weapons: Fist/Punch 20% 1d3 + db, broom 45% 1d4 + db. Skills: Dodge 30%, Forget to Order Things 45%, Hate Pendergasts 99%,

Mrs. Junction, age 77, mad old lady STR 5 CON 15 SIZ 10 INT 13 POW 14 DEX 6 APP 8 EDU 8 SAN 30 HP 13 Damage Bonus: -1d4 Weapons: Rolling Pin 40%, 1d6 + db. Skills: Babble Incoherently 50%, History 60%, Occult 30%,

Pastor Daniel Winter, age 41, disinterested shepherd STR 8 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 18 POW 15 DEX 12 APP 10 EDU 20 SAN 65 HP 15 Damage Bonus: none Weapons: Fist/Punch 40% 1d3 + db Skills: History 25%, Persuade 50%, Occult 20%, Preach 70%, Theology 70%

William H. Pendergast I, age 75(?), timeless sorcerer STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 18 POW 21 DEX 12 APP 14 EDU 21 SAN 0 HP 13 Damage Bonus: none Weapons: Fist/Punch 25% 1d3 + db Skills: Astronomy 70%, Conceal 45%, Chemistry 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 14%, Dodge 40%, Geology 30%, Hide 40%, History 60%, Mathematics 100%, Occult 90%, O.L. Latin 70%, Persuade 40%, Physics 60%, Prognosticate 90%*, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 50% Spells: Create Gate, Call/Dismiss Daoloth, Create House of Mathematical Harmony, Time Dilation, Voorish Sign,

*This allows him to predict the future, more or less. With a successful roll he's able to ask a question and have it answered. This means he may know what will happen, or what others will do, but if he doesn't ask it specifically, taking all variables into account, he may not get a completely accurate answer. Case in point: success in his return was assured if his great-grandson came back to the homestead. However, he asked nothing about what would happen if his great-grandson brought friends along for the ride...

Daoloth, render of the veils. STR N/A CON 100 SIZ varies INT 50 POW 70 DEX 30 Move 8 HP 100 Damage Bonus: N/A Weapon: Engulf, automatic success. Sends victim somewhere else... Armor: Anything that hits it goes somewhere else. Some spells might harm it. Spells: Anything the Keeper deems appropriate, such as spells relating to traveling the planes and dealing with time. Sanity Loss: 1d10/1d100 to see it the first round, with 1d10 lost each round thereafter, no matter what, just to be near it.

Notes from the 3rd degeneration:

"...and I will light the candle well, and hold it to my breast while chanting the litanies over and over again. And well you may ask what they are, but they are the sort that few can fathom. Mathematics is the language of the higher ones from beyond..."

"In 1926, two gentlemen will lay down the principles by which HE may be better understood. They should be contacted and asked to join HIM. When you do, one will refuse; you and the other will stand above his grave and laugh..."

"...in the tiny black book in the Sun room are HIS words, clear to understand for those who understand such things. Guard it well. Guard them well. In them lie the key to our best endeavours. By them I am

gone. By them I am here. By them I will soon be coming home."

"It has all been planned. Child will be with child, and that child, in turn, will bring to me a new home. I can count on the greed of my younger ones to carry my instructions through, and when they do... I shall return..."

Notes from the Fourth Degeneration

"October 11th, 1929. Divert all funds from American holdings into gold in Britain. Make plans to move there as soon as possible. Sell all stocks..."

"And using the notes I wrote in the book, the house itself has become a place of power for HIM. Within these walls we share in that power. The formulae are such that they work in perfect balance. Do not tip the scales! To do more without understanding the full pattern is to bring about the collapse of what has gone before. In the name of those who worked this great thing, I say no!"

"Time does not hold us in an iron grip. Time is a choice. We can follow its dictates or step beyond them at any time. I am proof of this, as are we all here. One day HE shall render the veils of time asunder and we shall all be eternal..."

"On page forty-two of the book, the key rests. Guard the key. Guard the key with your very life."

There is one more, and William will do this one last. It looks like a long, complicated mathematical problem. Any Investigator who makes a successful Physics or Mathematics roll will identify it as something that should not make sense, but does, somehow. (San check to realize this: 1/1d4).

This is, once translated with key on page 42 of the black book in the reading room, the version of the Call/Dismiss Daoloth spell that William H. Pendergast I used. Dismissal is done by repeating it backwards. Learning the spell takes one hour and requires a successful Int X 1 roll to do so. Success earns a loss of 1d2 San.

Dream Handouts

#1

That night, you dream you are in a long, long tunnel. As you walk forward you see there are doors on every side, even on the ceilings and floors. What are you walking on? Which way is up?

You think you have been going around in a loop for a long time. Somehow you know this has been going on for fifty years, but you feel no older. Something great is about to happen. You can feel it.

(Tomorrow, start to have strange flashes of times gone by. Sometimes make your language use more cultured than your normal speech: more antiquated. Make a San Check: 1/1d3)

#2

You remember holding your son aloft. You think he looks a lot like your pictures of grandfather when he was a baby. You're looking up at a great, metal thing on a wall in a basement and singing a slow, strange song. As you watch, the metal thing on the wall starts to pulsate and move, and you can hear a great, dancing song in your head...

You wake up cold and sweating.

(Tomorrow, the flashes become more pronounced. You can "remember" brief things about those days gone past. Your language sounds more like his father than You. Brief, precognitive flashes may also occur (10% chance - roll when the Keeper asks you to). San loss: 1/1d4)

#3

You sit at a desk in the reading room. As you do, night becomes day and the entire room is suffused with a golden glow. You read from a small black book and write in a crabbed hand. In the room next door your Son and that woman he married are rutting away like pigs, but your mind is far, far away from all that now. So much to do. So very, very much to do...

When you wake up, you have sleepwalked into the reading room and are sitting at the chair of your Grandfather. The morning light is shining through the window and the room is bathed in a golden glow.

(Tomorrow, the flashes are very noticeable and last for short periods of time, during which you write. Go into them when the Keeper indicates. You can be roused from them by shaking and shouting, but come out swinging as though awoken from a fever dream. You won't remember anything from them, though, and won't recognize what you've written. Nor will it be your own handwriting -- but that of your great-grandfather's! Just like the dream! (San loss to realize this is 1/1d6 for you) The precognitive flashes become more frequent and more accurate (35% chance). San loss: 1/1d5

#4

There is a door, here. It's right in front of you. It's always been there. Behind you are your Son and your daughter in law, now starting to swell with child. He holds a book in his hands and has promised to follow it to the letter. You know he will. You take great pleasure in knowing what he'll do to that damned woman he married once she's delivered.

And then you're stepping through the door. And there's another door. And another one beyond that. And another. And another. Over and over and over without end. Is it the same door? The reflection of the door? The further and further you go the less you can hear that woman sobbing a tearful goodbye.

On and on and on, but you can hear HIM. HE is calling. One more door, you open it, and...

You awake to find your hand on the door of the supply room, across from the master bedroom.

(Tomorrow, when you wake up, go to the dresser and pick out some of your grandfather's clothing to wear. The flashes now last for long periods of time, in which you write and will not respond to outside stimuli. You now remember only "things going on forever and ever without end." Speak just like a man from the last century and develop some antiquated, 19th century notions. You seem to have developed a knack of knowing what's going to happen before it does (60% chance). San loss 1/1d6)

#5

This time it is not a dream. Or maybe you're sleepwalking. You remember leaving your friends and going upstairs. Then you remember opening the door and finding another one just like it on the other side. Then another. Another still. On and on and on and on until...

...he's standing before you now, his hand on the other side of the knob you just turned. You were going to meet him? Or was he coming to meet you?

He looks a lot like you in spite of the age. He smiles and puts his hands on your shoulders. For a moment you think he might be proud of you, but no..., not you. He's just pleased with himself.

"A suitable boy," he says. And then he is you. And you are...

(The Keeper will give you a new character sheet. You are now William Pendergast I. Follow the Keeper's instructions carefully and don't tell anyone what's just happened.)



