

TAINTED LEGACIES

Cosmic Horror Roleplaying Adventures

Gary Sumpter

with Rob Malkovich

Proofreading

Gary Eddy & David Hallett

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Similarities between characters in TAINTED LEGACIES and persons living or dead are strictly coincidental.

Game data in this book are formatted so that players of most random-roll attribute, percentile-skill based systems can fully enjoy it.

**For Jim Ryan,
the teacher who inspired the leap
from imagination to paper all those years ago**

Tainted Legacies

Death would be a boon if only it could blot out the memories.

– H.P. Lovecraft,
The Call of Cthulhu

Welcome to *Tainted Legacies*. Two of the adventures in this book are set in the Roaring Twenties; the other two take place in the modern era. While each presents players with a unique set of challenges, all share a common theme: the legacy bequeathed to mankind by the Cthulhu Mythos. These adventures were written over the course of a dozen years. Electronic versions – via PDF download – were made available through garysumpter.com in 2005; this is their first time in print. Thanks are due to Rob Malkovich, who co-wrote *Second Coming*, to Gary Eddy and David Hallett, who did the proofreading, and to all those who playtested the adventures.

Roaring Twenties

- *The Blight*: The characters travel to New Mexico at the invitation of an old friend, but quickly find themselves embroiled in a sinister mystery.
- *Second Coming*: In New Orleans, the characters are swept up in a rising tide of horror long believed dead.

Modern Era

- *The Usurpers*: The characters come face to face with unspeakable horrors in – and beneath – legend-haunted Arkham.
- *Widdershins*: An urgent request for help from old friends leads the characters to the Severn Valley where an abomination awaits.

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Attributes + Skills

This book is designed so that players of most random-roll attribute, percentile-skill based systems can fully enjoy it. The adventures herein use universal attributes and standard skills, as described below. Specific game systems will have equivalents.

Primary Attributes

The following attributes are represented by a scale of 3 to 18 or, in the case of Education, 21. The higher the number the stronger the attribute.

- **Strength** – A measure of muscle power.
- **Endurance** – This gauges the health and fitness of the character.
- **Size** – A single number that represents the average of the character's height and weight.
- **Intelligence** – This indicates a character's aptitude for learning; how smart a character is.
- **Willpower** – This represents strength of will.
- **Agility** – This measures quickness, dexterity and coordination.
- **Charisma** – A measure of physical attractiveness.
- **Education** – A measure of knowledge and the number of years it took to acquire it in an academic setting.
- **Mental Health (Willpower x 5)** – A measure of sanity and the ability to withstand the traumatic impact of cosmic horror.

Derived Attributes

The following attributes are derived by multiplying the relevant primary attribute by five.

- **Intuition (Intelligence x 5)** – This represents hunches and ideas.

- **Fate (Willpower x 5)** – This represents a character's luck.
- **Trivia (Education x 5)** – This represents miscellaneous knowledge gained through experience and education.

Skills

The following skills are represented by a scale of 1 to 100. The higher the number, the better the skill.

- **Anthropology** – The study of human behavior, past and present.
- **Archaeology** – The study of past human cultures by analyzing sites and artifacts.
- **Art** – The ability to express creativity.
- **Astronomy** – The study of celestial bodies and the universe as a whole.
- **Biology** – The study of living organisms.
- **Bluff** – The ability to impress or fast-talk with a false or exaggerated display of confidence.
- **Bookkeeping** – The accounting of financial transactions.
- **Camouflage** – The ability to conceal something other than oneself.
- **Chemistry** – The study of the composition of substances and their properties and reactions.
- **Climb** – The ability to move oneself upward by using the hands and feet, with or without climbing apparatus.
- **Computers** – Familiarity with computers and various software.
- **Convince** – The ability to persuade through the use of argument or evidence.
- **Craft** – The ability to do or make something using manual dexterity and/or skilled artistry.
- **Detect** – The ability to discover (through visual, tactile, gustatory and/or olfactory senses) something hidden or subtle.
- **Disguise** – The ability to modify manner or appearance in order to prevent recognition.

- **Drive** – The ability to steer and guide a car.
- **Eldritch Lore** – Forbidden knowledge regarding humanity's insignificance in the universe and the alien entities that permeate it.
- **Electrical** – The ability to work with electricity, including repairs to electrical devices.
- **Electronics** – The ability to work with electronic devices.
- **Evade (Agility x 2)** – The ability to avoid or dodge an attack by moving quickly aside.
- **First Aid** – Emergency care given immediately to an injured person.
- **Geology** – The study of the history of the Earth as recorded in rocks.
- **Heavy Equipment** – The ability to operate heavy-duty vehicles and machinery.
- **Hide** – The ability to keep oneself out of sight.
- **History** – The study of past events.
- **Jump** – The ability to leap over or across an obstacle.
- **Law** – An understanding of the rules that govern human behavior and the principles that lead courts to make the decisions they do.
- **Listen** – The ability to hear something otherwise undetectable.
- **Martial Arts** – The study of effective fighting techniques.
- **Mechanics** – The ability to make or repair machines, vehicles and/or tools.
- **Medicine** – The study of the human body in health and disease.
- **Natural Lore** – An understanding of the natural world, including botany, zoology and geography.
- **Navigate** – The ability to determine the position (of a ship, aircraft or oneself) and to chart a course from one point to another.
- **Negotiate** – The ability to bargain or haggle effectively.
- **Occult** – Knowledge of the supernatural, mystical and/or magical.
- **Open Lock** – The ability to open a lock without a key or combination.
- **Pharmacy** – The study of the design, production and use of medicines.
- **Photography** – The art of producing images by the action of light rays on a light sensitive material.
- **Physics** – The study of matter and energy and their interactions.

- **Pilot** – The ability to fly an airplane and/or sail a boat.
- **Psychology** – The study of mental processes and behavior.
- **Psychotherapy** – The treatment of mental and emotional disorders.
- **Reputation** – A measure of apparent status, prestige and prosperity.
- **Research** – The ability to search for and gather information in a library or archive.
- **Ride** – The ability to control and guide a horse or similar animal.
- **Stealth** – The ability to move covertly.
- **Swim** – The ability to move through water.
- **Throw** – The ability to accurately cast, fling or hurl something.
- **Track** – The ability to pursue a person or animal by following the tracks or marks they left behind.



The Blight

Wherein the Dark Man's gift to the Apache becomes a legacy of horror in the 20th century

Introduction

This adventure takes place in New Mexico in the late 1920s. The adventure, as written, assumes that the year is 1927; if desired, the GM can easily select a later date. GMs demanding absolute historical accuracy, however, may not wish to place these events prior to improvements in Geiger counters in that era.

H.P. Lovecraft largely neglected the American West as a setting for his tales of the macabre; in a 1936 letter to E. Hoffman Price, Lovecraft (speaking specifically of the Mojave Desert) wrote: "It is not likely that the region would hold for me that element of the sinister... only that which is cold is supremely associated with evil, horror, and death."

Nevertheless, Lovecraft did use the region in a very few stories: his own "The Transition of Juan Romero" (written before 1917), and two revisions for Zealia Bishop, "The Curse of Yig" (1928) and "The Mound" (1929-30). GMs interested in obtaining a Lovecraftian view of the American West are directed to these stories, available from several publishers.

This adventure is suitable for three to six characters. It works best with groups based in North America, although characters based overseas need only undertake a transatlantic (or transpacific) voyage before tackling the adventure.

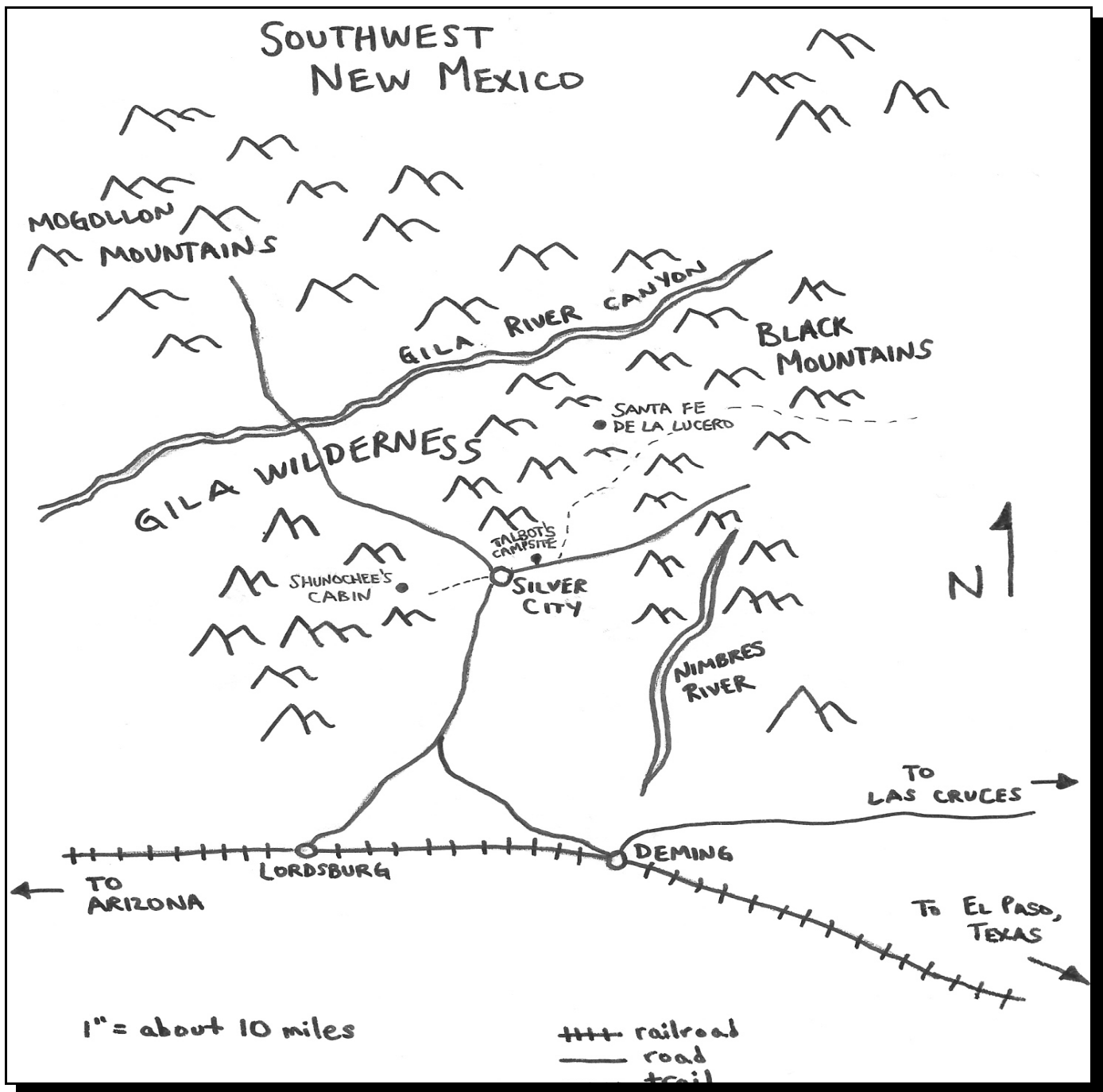
Adventure Considerations

Author Edward Nash, an old chum or schoolmate of the characters, has invited them (by letter or telegram) to join him in New Mexico, where he is currently researching his latest book – a study of the supernatural in the Old Southwest. At least one of the characters should be a friend of Nash; most should at least be familiar with his work.

The characters have not seen Edward Nash for several years and, having found his previous work on occult topics quite fascinating, are eager to get a "sneak preview" of Nash's latest effort. Nash invites the characters to look him up at the Sombrero Hotel in Silver City.

Getting to Silver City

The southwest corner of New Mexico is the wildest, least-populated part of the state. Characters traveling from the northeast by train pass through Kansas City, then west through Topeka and Wichita, and on to Albuquerque and then to Las Cruces. At Las Cruces, the characters have the option of disembarking and taking a bus to Deming or Lordsburg, or continuing to El Paso, where they can transfer to another line that runs through those cities on its way to Los Angeles. From Deming or Lordsburg, a two-hour bus ride takes the characters fifty miles north over a dusty, rutted road to Silver City, in the foothills of high mountain country.



In this semiarid region, rainfall is rare and subject to rapid evaporation. During the day it is always hot – even scorching – under the merciless sun, but the nights are often quite cold. The GM might reasonably call for **ENDURANCE** x5 rolls to simulate the effects on characters not yet acclimatized.

New Mexico

New Mexico was admitted to the Union in 1912, as the 47th state. The geography of the state varies greatly, from broken mesas and wide deserts to heavily forested mountain wildernesses and high, bare peaks. The dominant features of the landscape are the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, which run

north-south in the center of the southern half of the state; the broad, semiarid plains of the south, covered with cactus, sage brush and desert grasses; and the lonely Gila Wilderness of the southwest (where this adventure takes place).

Some forty percent of the state's population is of mixed Spanish descent. Spanish is still an acceptable language throughout New Mexico and the dominant tongue in many isolated communities.

Silver City

As its name suggests, this little town of about 1000 once relied heavily upon nearby silver mines for its economic livelihood. Once an Apache camp, Silver City was by the turn of the century home to miners from Wales, southeastern Europe, Mexico and the northeast United States, but the decline of the silver and gold industry over the last twenty years has forced the mining companies to turn to copper to remain solvent.

There is a good supply of clay for brick-making and, because an early ordinance prohibited frame construction, many of Silver City's first houses – built during the mining heyday half a century ago – are of brick and remain little changed. A number of mansard-roofed Victorian residences are found throughout town, along with Queen Anne and Italianate houses. Although the boom days are gone, Silver City is still a bustling community.

The Sombrero Hotel

Edward Nash has been staying at this unpretentious little hotel on North Hudson Street. The proprietor, a sluggish and unshaven fellow named Juan Armijo whose English is only passable, reluctantly confirms that Nash has engaged a room.

According to Armijo, “Señor Nash” set out early yesterday morning in his motor car, but has not yet returned. If asked about Nash's destination, Armijo does not know but informs the characters that Nash

asked directions to the Gila Wilderness the night before he left. He can repeat those directions for the characters' benefit. Should the characters request admittance to Nash's room, Armijo steadfastly refuses unless they offer a couple of dollars for the favor. Once it has become clear that something has happened to Nash, however, Armijo allows the characters to examine the room. Unless a **BLUFF** roll succeeds, he insists on accompanying the characters.

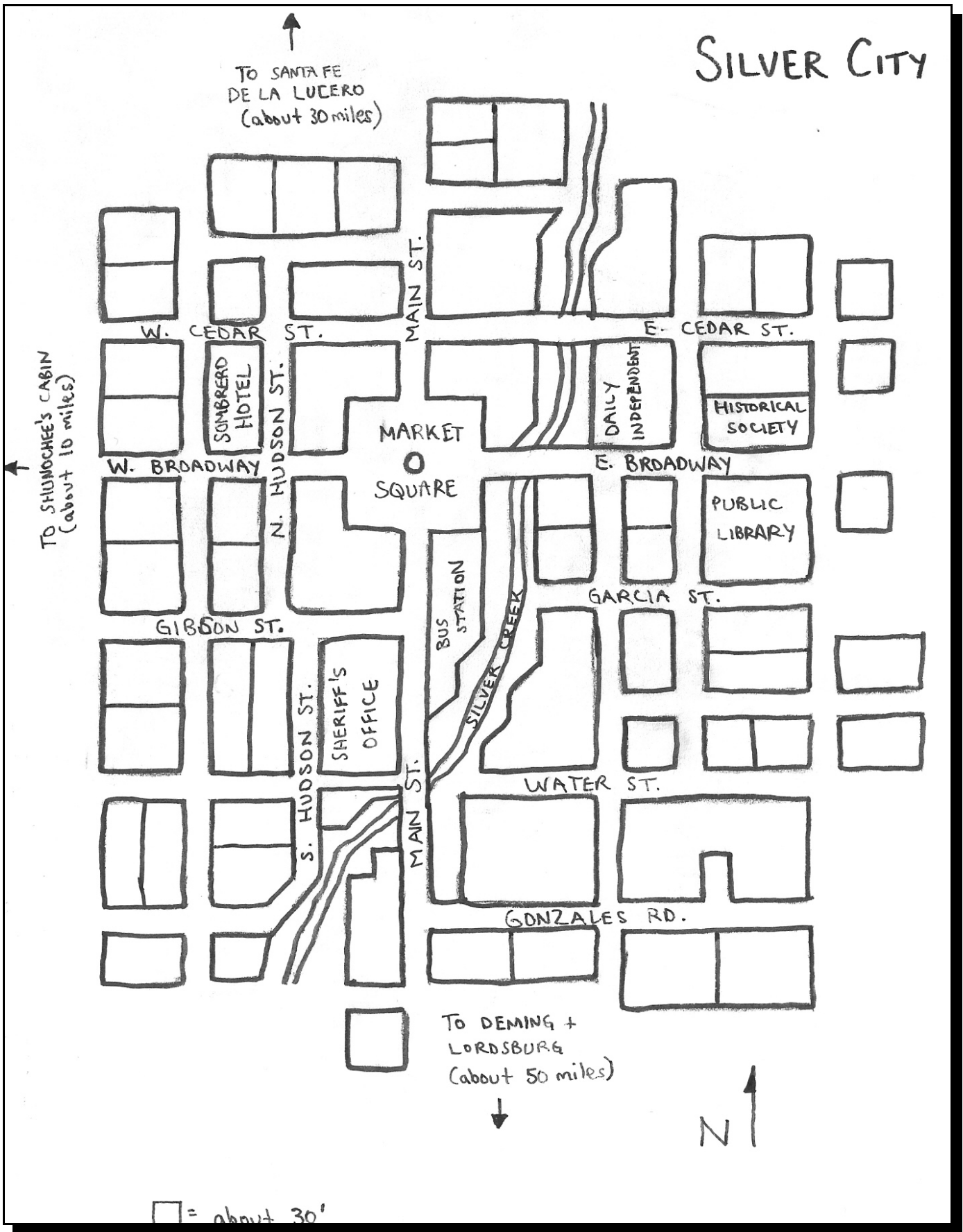


The Sombrero Hotel on North Hudson Street

Nash's Hotel Room

At first glance there is little of any significance in Nash's hotel room; his suitcase, which lies open on the tidy bed, contains only clothing and personal effects. A well-tailored, neatly-pressed suit hangs in the closet; like all of Nash's suits, it was impeccably tailored by London's trendsetting Beckwith & Sons.

On the bedside table are two books. The first, *Notes on Religion in Early New Mexico* by Umberto Diaz, was published in Albuquerque in 1887; the second, Elias Hall's *Legendary and Customs of the Indians of the Southwest*, was published in New York in 1905. Both books deal broadly with their subjects



and rely entirely on secondhand accounts, but anyone who reads them (four hours per book) discovers two passages that have been faintly underlined in pencil: Player Aids #1 (*Notes on Religion in Early New Mexico*) and #2 (*Legendry and Customs of the Indians of the Southwest*).

Player Aid #1

Not all of the native peoples were eager to be converted; the church at Lucero was said to have been built over the ruins of an ancient, eldritch temple where monstrous rituals had once been performed and where certain gates, if opened by now long-forgotten and alien incantations, would gape to let elder demons pass from other spheres.

Player Aid #2

Somewhere in the vast wilderness near present-day Silver City was said to be a meeting-place for worshippers of strange gods. The Indians say that subterranean passages burrow down to the very bowels of the earth, and hint that not all who crawl down these tunnels to worship are human.

Silver City Daily Independent

The offices of the *Silver City Daily Independent* – established in 1881 – are located in a flat-roofed adobe building on East Cedar Street. Back issues of the paper are stored in the basement; access is easily gained, although the request is somewhat unusual here (only Mrs Littlewood of the Grant County Historical Society ever consults the files). For every four hours spent rummaging, allow each character a **RESEARCH** roll to find either of the following recent articles of interest: Player Aid #5 (*Romance of Seven Cities Still Alive*) and #6 (*The Oldest Living Resident of Grant County*).

Player Aid #5

ROMANCE OF SEVEN CITIES STILL ALIVE

Did seven Portuguese bishops, fleeing from the Moslem invasion of their homeland, embark their congregations in the year 714 and set sail for the New World? Since the days of Coronado, rumours have abounded that the bishops founded seven cities of immense wealth, cities that many believe lay somewhere in New Mexico. Many a Spaniard and American have searched for the fabled Seven Cities without success; if they actually exist, the cities have eluded treasure-seekers for centuries.

Player Aid #6

THE OLDEST LIVING RESIDENT OF GRANT COUNTY

Although Silver City boasts a number of long-lived citizens you won't find the oldest resident of the county here - or in any other town for that matter - according to the Indians who sell their handiwork at the market in Silver City; the county's oldest resident is apparently a medicine man, well over one hundred years of age, who lives alone in the hills west of town. When his tribe was resettled around the turn of the century, the Indians say, the medicine man refused to go. They claim that spiritual cleanliness is the key to his long life, but although he is rumoured to possess much knowledge and Indian lore, the medicine man - if he exists - must offer proof of his alleged age if he wants to lay claim to the title of "oldest resident of Grant County".

Following Edward Nash's disappearance, a short article appears asking residents who might have seen him after he left Silver City to come forward with any information they might have. No one does.

Grant County Sheriff's Office

Located on Main Street, the small Police Department of Silver City and environs can provide little information. Once Edward Nash's disappearance has been reported, an investigation is made but the sheriff and his men are unable to make any headway; Nash simply seems to have vanished into thin air.

Deputy Stephen Garcia

Once Nash's disappearance is reported, Deputy Stephen Garcia is assigned to the case. A clean-shaven fellow in his mid-thirties, Deputy Garcia has been with the Sheriff's Office for close to ten years. He does not rule out foul play in Nash's disappearance but, with neither suspect nor motive, Deputy Garcia does not have a case – just a puzzling set of circumstances.

If asked about the break-in at the Historical Society and the theft of the radioactive thighbone, Garcia informs the characters that there are, at this point, no leads. His personal opinion is that the crime was nothing more than an impulsive prank by mischievous youths; after all, what could anyone possibly want with a thighbone?

Silver City Public Library

This small, unremarkable building on Garcia Street appears to be one of the oldest structures in town. It houses the library, which is open Monday through Saturday from 9am to 5pm with extended hours (until 9pm) on Thursday. The library is closed on Sunday.

The ground floor contains a card index, several reading desks, rows of shelves, and two desks – one for reference and one for circulation. Offices are housed on the upper level, which is off-limits to all but staff. The librarian, Rosa Corrasco, hardly fits the popular image of the grey-haired spinster bookworm; she is a friendly newlywed in her mid-twenties. Her manner is pleasant and she is quite

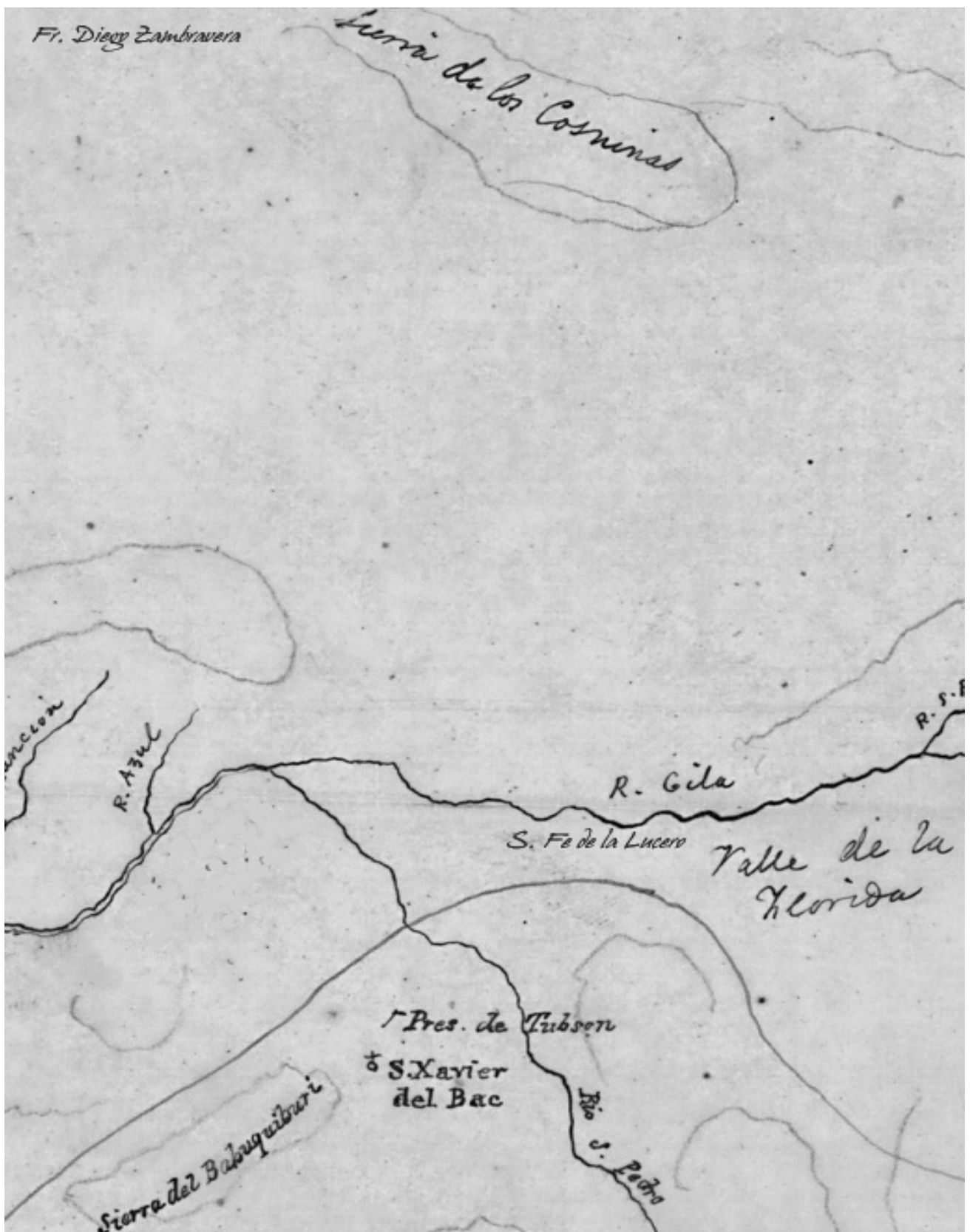
helpful. Mrs Corrasco gladly provides assistance to those who request it.

Information about the history of New Mexico, and Silver City itself, can be gleaned from a number of books here, but nothing is of particular relevance to Nash's disappearance. The library owns very few books on the occult; those it has are uniformly unremarkable. It does not possess copies of Diaz's *Notes on Religion in Early New Mexico* or Hall's *Legendary and Customs of the Indians of the Southwest*. Characters seeking information about Francisco Comida de Zaldivar (whose journal may be found in the Historical Society) find, with Mrs Corrasco's assistance, only a single reference; he was apparently an unremarkable treasure hunter of the 18th century. The dates of his birth and death are unknown.

There are a number of historical maps housed in a special collection in the basement; specific maps from the collection are available for perusal upon request. One map of particular interest to the characters is catalogued as "Maps – Spanish – 18th century"; give the players Player Aid #7.

Although it cannot be dated with certainty, the map is estimated to be well over two-hundred years old. The fragile parchment, which bears the name *Fr. Diego Zambravera* in the bottom lefthand corner, purports to be an authentic map of Spanish settlements in what is now southwest New Mexico. Of Father Zambravera, nothing is known; apart from this map, there seems to be no record of his having ever existed. A **HISTORY** roll suggests that, if the map is a fraud, it was – without a doubt – perpetrated sometime in the 18th century. The map is not unlike others of the period, save for one curious feature not present in similar specimens: a settlement labeled *S. Fe de la Lucero*, in the wild hills north of present-day Silver City. Oddly enough, no other primary source referring to Santa Fe de la Lucero ("Holy Faith of the Bright Star") has ever been found; scholarly opinion holds that the existence of the village was a hoax.

Player Aid #7



Although the map's veracity is in doubt, Santa Fe de la Lucero is actually the site of the ghost town mentioned by Shunoochee, the Medicine Man. The village is also referred to by Diaz, in his *Notes on Religion in Early New Mexico*, simply as *Lucero*.

Grant County Historical Society

Founded in 1902 “to preserve the heritage and history of Grant County,” the society is housed in a renovated Victorian mansion on East Broadway. A bell chimes as visitors enter into the small reception area where Agnes Littlewood, the aged curator, greets the society's guests with a friendly smile.

The ground floor is given over to a modest museum. The exhibits deal mostly with the history of mining in the area; there is a large section on the nearby Naiad Queen silver mine, founded by Henry A. Ailman and Hartford M. Meredith in 1873. Other items of historical interest include:

- Indian flageolets (musical instruments similar to fifes) up to eight inches long and made from the bones of birds
- An ornate 16th-Century Spanish spur
- An officer's pistol made in Madrid in 1703
- A Spanish officer's shield, of three-ply bull hide
- A silver crucifix of the Franciscan order, circa 1650
- Indian prayer sticks, about fifteen inches long and made of spruce twigs
- A number of old musket balls and coins from the 17th and 18th centuries

In one corner of the little museum, a display case has been covered up with a white sheet. Beneath this sheet the case is empty, and the top pane of glass has been shattered. A small brass plaque indicates the former contents of the display case:

Radioactive Femur of Human Origin, Age Unknown

If asked, Mrs. Littlewood can inform the characters that about two weeks ago the Historical Society was broken into in the middle of the night. Nothing was disturbed except the radioactive thighbone. Mrs. Littlewood is baffled as to why someone would break into the building and ignore the many other items of obvious value. As to the origin of the radioactive curiosity, all Mrs Littlewood knows is that it was discovered by a prospector in the Gila Wilderness about fifty years ago. Doctors who examined it confirmed that, although severely deformed, it was of human origin. Recently, the femur was examined by the research laboratory of the University of New Mexico. A newly-developed instrument – a Geiger Counter – for detecting and measuring radiation was employed and, incredibly, the femur was found to possess a radiation level fifty times more than normal. No one at the university could offer an explanation, but it was suggested that perhaps the Geiger Counter, being such a recent innovation, was inaccurate.

The only other item of real interest to the characters is a crumbling manuscript, handwritten in Spanish and kept in another glass display case – the 18th-century journal of Francisco Comida de Zaldivar.

Very little is known about de Zaldivar. Mrs Littlewood can tell the characters that de Zaldivar was probably born in Mexico sometime around the year 1695. He was a mercenary, an adventurer, and an explorer who disappeared without a trace after setting out from Santa Fe in the early 1730s. Nothing more was known of de Zaldivar until 1875 when Lieutenant George Wheeler, leading a scientific survey for the United States government, discovered the journal lying near the banks of the Gila River.

Mrs. Littlewood is very reluctant to let anyone handle the book; a successful **CONVINCE** roll persuades her to permit the characters to examine it firsthand. She carefully removes the journal from its display case and reverently carries it over to a nearby study table. Only one character is allowed to peruse the book at a time, and he is required to use

the thin cotton gloves and padded forceps that Mrs Littlewood provides.

The journal begins in the year 1730 and ends abruptly on May 21, 1733. The last half of the book is blank. A **SPANISH** roll is required, and reading the thin book takes about half an hour. For the most part the journal seems unremarkable, dealing mostly with mundane events in Santa Fe, but the final entries are of some interest; provide the characters with Player Aid #3.

Player Aid #3

11 May, 1733 ~ Having secured two sturdy mounts and the blessing of the Governor, I bade farewell to my darling Ysobel and set out with my companion de Vargas at dawn this morning from Santa Fe to explore the Great Wilderness that lies some fifty leagues to the southwest.

15 May, 1733 ~ De Vargas and I have followed the Rio Grande south for four days; we have been travelling about eight leagues each day. Tomorrow we turn west, to skirt the San Mateo Mountains. We should reach the Great Wilderness within two days.

18 May, 1733 ~ We are lost. This vast forest of pine that stretches as far as the eye can see must surely be the fabled Great Wilderness, but without the benefit of an accurate map, de Vargas and I have lost all sense of direction and distance. Our best estimates place us about twenty leagues west of the Rio Grande.

20 May, 1733 ~ Our food supply runs low. Many of the indigenous plants of this land are said to be edible, but de Vargas and I would rather trust to game than risk possible poisoning. We must continue in what we believe to be an easterly direction.

21 May, 1733 ~ This morning, we consumed the last of our food. Game is scarce and I fear we shall perish for want of food. As the day drew to a close de Vargas, by keen sight and the Grace of God, espied a cluster of adobe structures of Spanish design in the distance; we thanked God for this good fortune, and will make for the colony at dawn.

Mountain Driving

Although Santa Fe de la Lucero lies less than thirty miles from Silver City, getting there by automobile takes three hours; six by horse, and twelve on foot. Characters attempting to negotiate the mountain roads north of Silver City are required to make **DRIVE** rolls once per hour. These roads are not engineered for the ordinary driver; they are typically narrow, poorly graded, and unsafe. Characters driving recklessly or involved in high-speed chases, must make **DRIVE** rolls every ten minutes. The GM should make the same rolls for the characters' adversaries.

A failed roll indicates that the automobile has run off the road, sustaining minor damage. Any passengers failing a **FATE** roll suffer one point of damage. A fumbled roll indicates that the driver has lost control; the vehicle might tumble down a slope, smash into rocks, or even flip over. All passengers in such circumstances who fail a subsequent **FATE** roll take 1D6+1 damage; those who make the roll lose a single point. It takes three successive **MECHANICS** rolls to get the car running again; a fumbled roll renders it completely inoperable.

Native Market

Every weekday from 8am until noon, among the timeless dust-covered adobe facades in the center of Silver City, local Indians sell handicrafts including pottery, blankets, rugs, woodcarvings and jewelry. Prices are reasonable, and the crafts genuine. Shoddy workmanship, while not completely absent, is infrequent; the Indians take great pride in their work.

If the characters have come across the article about the hundred year old medicine man (entitled *Oldest Living Resident of Grant County*) in the Silver City

Independent, they may gain further information here. There is a 30% chance that any given Indian in the market knows of the medicine man; a bribe of \$5 or more encourages him to answer the characters' questions. None of the Indians the characters are likely to encounter here has ever seen the medicine man firsthand.

According to the Indians in the market, the medicine man's name is Shunoochee. They say he is a master storyteller; although well over a hundred years old, the medicine man's mind is clear and his memory long. He does not trust the white man, and wishes only to be left to live in peace. The Indians in the market can tell the characters the general location of Shunoochee's cabin but unfortunately, they say, there is no road. No one is willing to act as a guide for the characters; if they wish to visit Shunoochee, they must do so on their own.

If asked about the ghost town, the Indians say simply that their people shun the whole area – including whatever town might have once existed there – as a place of evil.

Nash's Disappearance

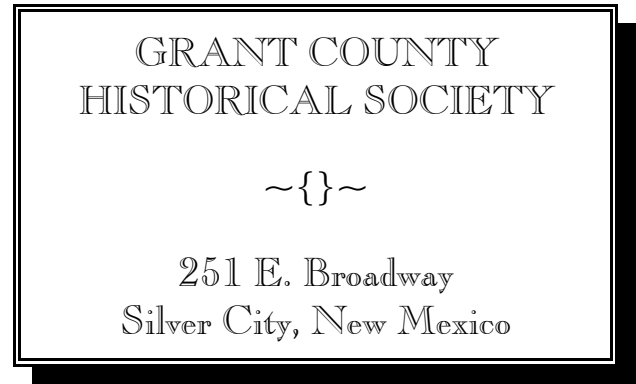
If the characters visit the Sombrero Hotel and learn that Edward Nash has not returned from his outing, they may decide to go into the mountains to look for him. In the rocky foothills about twenty miles north of Silver City, the characters find an abandoned automobile on a lonely stretch of road.

There is no evidence of any sort of accident or collision; the car is intact. The driver's door has been left ajar, and the Massachusetts license plates suggest that the car belongs to Edward Nash; registration papers in the glove compartment confirm it. The glove compartment also contains a small card: give the characters Player Aid #4.

Of Nash there is no trace. The keys are in the ignition but the motor has been shut off. If the area is searched, a successful **DETECT** roll discovers a string of beads lying on the roadside a few yards from the automobile (an **INTUITION** roll suggests

that this is a rosary). The soil adjacent to the roadway is hard-packed and does not reveal any footprints; no **TRACK** roll attempts are possible. The position and direction of Nash's car suggest that he was driving towards Silver City. The automobile is in good running condition and the gas tank is half full.

Player Aid #4



The Research Team

A research team, led by Doctor Morgan Talbot, is a wildcard. At the beginning of the adventure, this group – which includes two burly drivers and two young assistants – is located in the foothills outside Silver City; occasional forays into town are made to procure supplies. Ostensibly in the area to research archaeological sites, Dr Talbot is, in reality, searching for the source of radioactivity in the Gila Wilderness. Neither Talbot nor the members of his team are allies of the Cthulhu Mythos; they are, in fact, entirely ignorant of such things. Talbot, however, is obsessed with the possibility of atomic energy (nuclear fission is still a decade away) and will stop at nothing – even murder – to pioneer nuclear research. Talbot is an egomaniac who craves the tremendous publicity that such a discovery would bring. An overnight celebrity, Talbot would be hailed as a genius and a hero. He foresees potent nuclear forces as a deterrent – surely no one would dare challenge the nation that wields them.

The team's drivers are nothing more than hired thugs to whom Talbot's dream means little; they

carry out his order with an obedience born of greed. Talbot tells his assistants that their work will be of great benefit to mankind, and of distinct personal advantage when their employer becomes the toast of presidents and kings. Such rampant egoism is not entirely lost on Talbot's assistants, but it does have its seductive appeal.

Although there is virtually no chance of Talbot's twisted dream becoming reality, he and his team are a serious threat; it is certain that the activities of the characters in Silver City eventually come to the attention of Dr Talbot. How he and his team react is largely up to the GM, but they inevitably become enemies; they might shadow the characters, hoping to be led right to the radioactive secret, or perhaps they might attempt to hinder – or even eliminate – the characters. Depending on the paths the characters choose, they might find themselves the victims of break-ins, blackmail or death threats, or involved in reckless high-speed mountain chases or shoot-outs in the desolate wilderness. Whatever course of action Talbot and his team take, they always act discretely – never obviously.

Talbot and his team have set up camp in a sheltered ravine just off the main road several miles north of Silver City. A small, rocky trail leads down to the camp, which is situated near a dry creek bed. Two small trucks and about a half-dozen tents make up the encampment. Visitors are greeted rather formally, and informed that private archaeological research is being undertaken. The characters are discouraged from lingering about the camp; there is much work to be done.

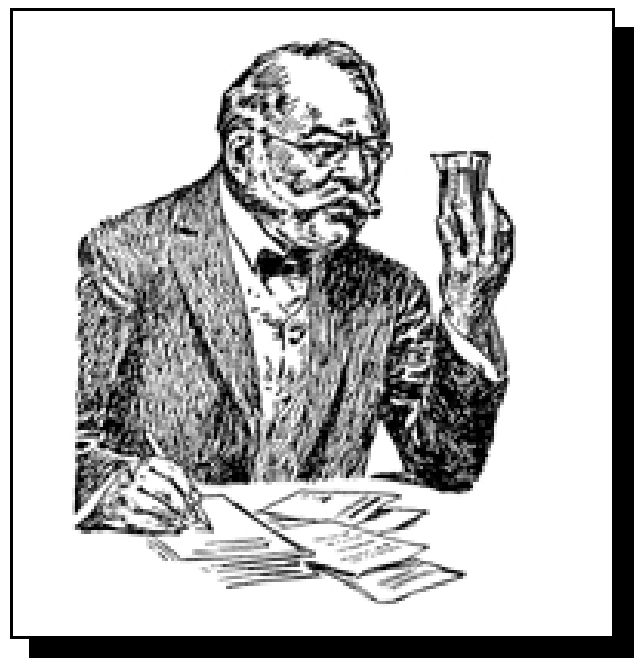
There are five tents in all: Talbot's tent; one for each of his assistants; one for the drivers; and a supply tent. The tents belonging to the assistants and drivers are of little or no interest. The supply tent contains food, water, spare tanks of gasoline for the trucks, and digging equipment. There are other items among the provisions, such as a pair of heavy, lead-lined gloves, a half-dozen pairs of goggles with dark lenses, and a strange, box-like device about the size of a wireless radio set, made of wood with metal and glass components. A small metal plate on the underside indicates that it is of German manufacture. Anyone making a successful

PHYSICS roll deduces that this is a Geiger Counter – a recent invention, an instrument for detecting the presence and intensity of radiation. A **HEAVY EQUIPMENT** roll must be made in order to figure out how to operate the device.

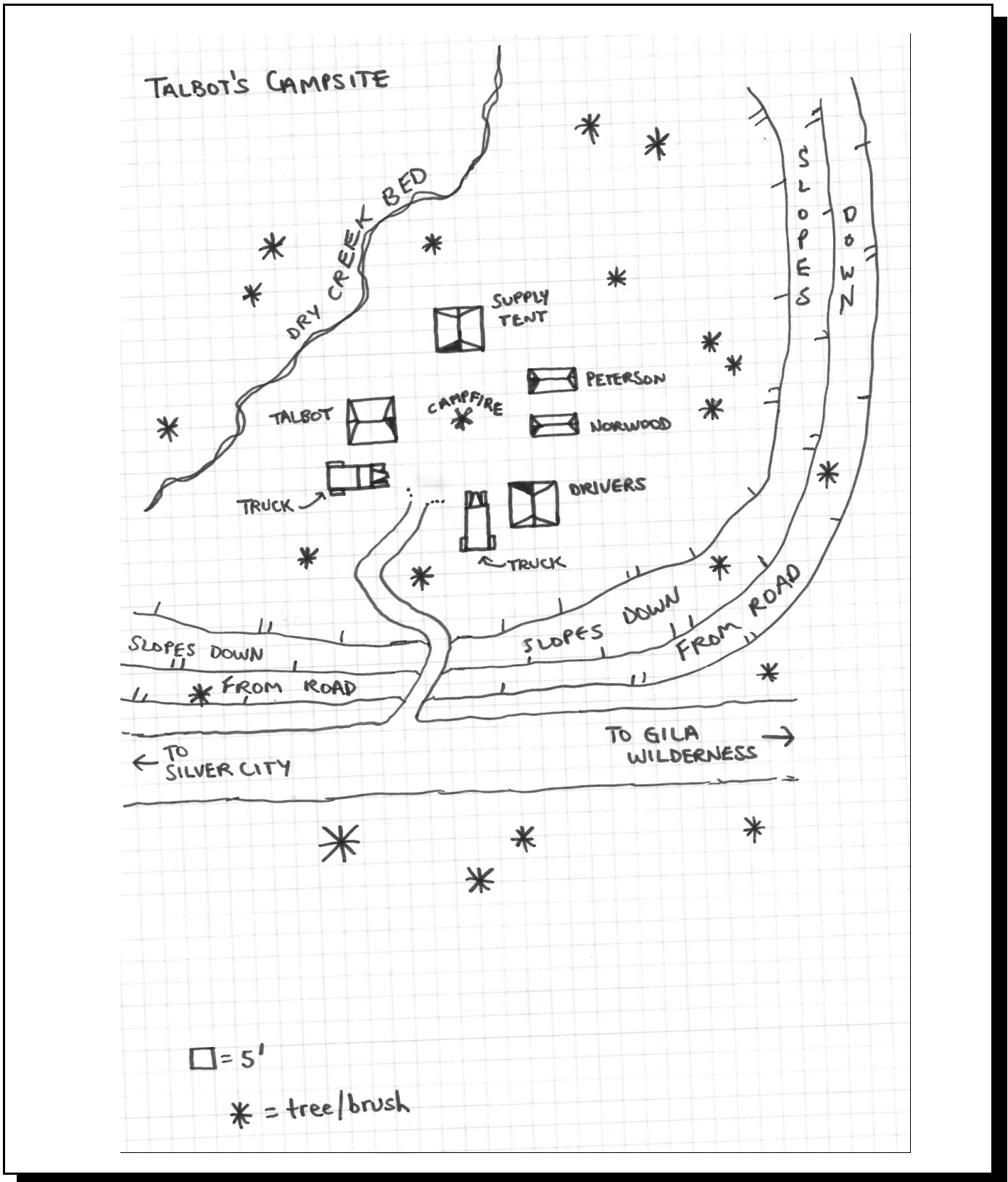
Anyone who examines the contents of the supply tent and the camp in general, and then makes an **ARCHAEOLOGY** roll, thinks that Talbot's team does not possess enough of the appropriate equipment for proper archaeological research.

In addition to its spartan furnishings, Talbot's tent contains a lead-lined trunk about two feet high by two feet wide and two feet deep. It is locked (Talbot carries the only key in his pocket) and contains a large bone. A doctor, or anyone making a **MEDICINE** roll, can ascertain that this is a misshapen human thighbone. It was pilfered from the Silver City Historical Society by Talbot's thugs. If the Geiger Counter is successfully used on it, the femur gives what appears to be an extremely high reading.

Dr. Morgan Talbot



Dr Morgan Talbot



Talbot is a tall, slender, silver-haired fellow in his mid-fifties. His spectacles are thick, making his dark grey eyes conspicuous. He dresses smartly in a pin-stripe suit and almost always wears a bow-tie.

Dr Talbot is calm and reserved, almost pompous, and quietly disdainful of what he calls "the inferior races."

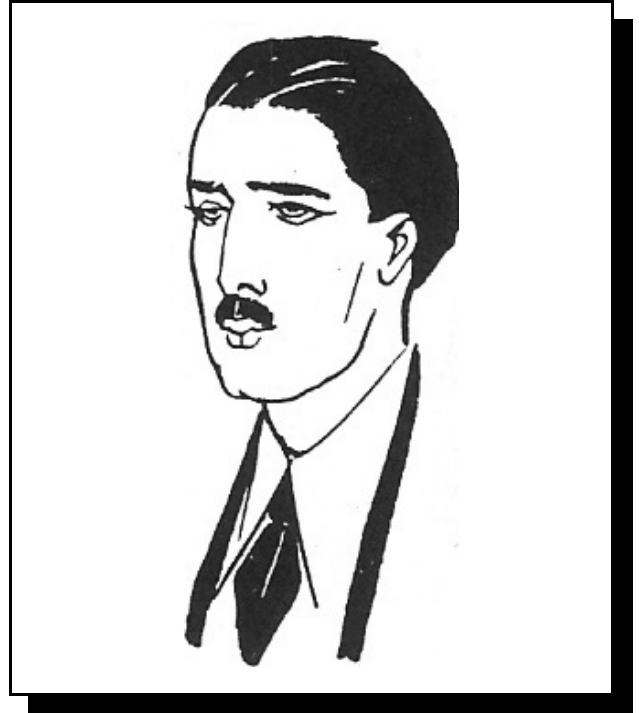
In his shirt pocket there is a newspaper clipping. If the characters find it, give them Player Aid #8. The clipping is not dated but appears recent, and it is impossible to determine the newspaper from which it came.

Player Aid #8

RADIOACTIVE HUMAN THighbONE FOUND IN NEW MEXICO

Researchers at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque have discovered that a human thighbone found half a century ago in the Gila Wilderness contains radiation levels an astonishing fifty times normal. Using the latest technology, researchers were able to detect an aura of intense radiation surrounding the femur, which is the property of the Grant County Historical Society in Silver City, New Mexico. Scientists are baffled at this astounding discovery. Following the examination, the femur was returned to the Historical Society.

is likely to protest – but only verbally, for Peterson is not a violent man. Dr Talbot does not appreciate such dissension; if Peterson survives Talbot's wrath, he might become a useful ally for the characters.



Grant Peterson

Talbot's Hired Thugs

Talbot's hired thugs are both brawny hulks better suited for brawling than archaeological research. They are quiet, but quick tempered. Jim Hogan and Mike Pollard do most of Talbot's dirty work. Both are dark-haired and clean-shaven. Hogan has a bad complexion and Pollard sports several navy tattoos on his forearms.

Grant Peterson

A skinny, somewhat sullen individual in his early twenties, Peterson sports a moustache and cravat in order to cultivate a more mature, intellectual look. He does not know about the radioactive femur that Hogan and Pollard stole from the Historical Society for Dr Talbot. Although he admires Talbot, if Peterson is made aware of the doctor's actions, he

Judy Norwood

Norwood is a slender, fair-skinned blonde in her mid-twenties. She is cheerful and easygoing. Of Talbot's two assistants, Norwood is the one with the most reverence for the doctor; her admiration borders on fanaticism. She is engrossed with Talbot's project even though she might not agree with his ethnocentric views, and is proud to be part of something with such significant implications. Even though Norwood does not know about the radioactive femur that Hogan and Pollard pilfered from the Historical Society, informing her of the doctor's actions only serves to increase her respect for him; Talbot's plan becomes all the more seductive, and the team's success even more urgent. Norwood simply refuses to believe that her mentor could be capable of any wrong, be it through word or deed. If she perceives the characters as a threat to Talbot's work, Norwood might play along, letting them think they have gained her confidence, in

order to find out as much information as she can from them; she then reveals it to the grateful doctor who has the matter attended to immediately (by Hogan and Pollard, presumably). Norwood stands by Dr Talbot to the bitter end; her seemingly boundless devotion might even include murder, to avenge him.



Judy Norwood

The Medicine Man

About ten miles west of Silver City, in an isolated mountainous region not served by any road, lies a small, dilapidated shack built of adobe. Shunochee, the Apache medicine man, lives here with his great-granddaughter, Maria Puxavi.

Shunochee's cabin cannot be reached by automobile; characters wishing to visit must hike or hire burros in Silver City (characters who choose to ride make the trip in two hours; those who walk, in four). Like the prospectors of old, the characters must learn to handle these stubborn creatures; they may even have to chase (or be chased by) an ornery burro. Each character must make a **RIDE** roll for each hour spent riding in the hills; those who fail are thrown ignobly from the saddle, while a fumbled roll indicates that the unlucky rider has suffered 1D4 points of damage from the fall.

A descendant of the Mogollon band of the Chiricahua Apache that entered the area in the late 16th century, Shunochee eschews contact with the white man's world. He lives on the land of his ancestors, eking out an unremarkable existence by trapping and fishing. He is visited only infrequently by Apache of the Mescalero Reservation, west of Roswell. Shunochee speaks no English and is very suspicious of intruders, especially whites. Fortunately, Maria does not share her great-grandfather's misgivings. She was schooled on the Reservation and speaks several languages; if the characters can win her confidence, she can convince Shunochee to answer their questions, and will translate for them.

Shunochee

No one knows for certain just how old Shunochee is; even he gave up counting long ago. When the Apache were resettled to the Mescalero Reservation thirty years ago, he was a tribal elder; he is now certainly over one hundred years of age. Frail and nearly blind from cataracts, Shunochee grows increasingly dependent upon his great-granddaughter. He wears the traditional garb of his tribe and his long, grey hair is bound in a ponytail.

Maria Puxavi

Tall and willowy, with long dark hair and hazel eyes, Shunochee's great-granddaughter is an attractive young woman. She is typically clad in a loose peasant blouse and a colorful skirt. Maria was born and raised on the Mescalero Apache Reservation; her father was killed in a hunting accident when she was quite young and, when her mother died two years ago, Maria came to live with her great-grandfather. Although life is difficult, even harsh, here, without many of the comforts of the Reservation, Maria feels obligated to look after her great-grandfather. Although she is very sociable and yearns to return to the Reservation, Maria will not leave her great-grandfather's side while he remains alive.

Talking to Shunoochee

Even with Maria as translator, Shunoochee is very reluctant to talk. After much deliberation, however, the old man relates a strange tale.

Shunoochee's Tale

Many, many years ago the Chief of the Apache was hunting buffalo. The sun was beginning to set and the Chief knew it was time to return to his village. Suddenly, he heard a noise behind him and he saw a tall man whose skin was as black as the night sky and whose eyes blazed like the sun. The Chief bowed to this man, who was surely a spirit, perhaps even a god. The dark man did not speak, but gave the Chief a gift: a round stone that shone as bright as the sun.

The Chief thanked the god for this wonderful gift and returned to his village. All the people of the village gathered around to see and touch the shining stone. The shaman of the tribe proclaimed that this gift from the gods must surely have great powers, and that the people of the village should pay homage to it. Not long after, the Apache became sick, and soon many children were born deformed. The shaman proclaimed that worshipping the shining stone would remove this plague, but the people only became sicker, and more and more children were born deformed.

One day, as the Chief lay dying, his son denounced the shining stone as the source of the plague; it was not a gift from the gods but a curse. Despite the protests of the shaman, the Chief's son took the stone far away and buried it. Not long after, the people began to regain health; no more children were born deformed. Since that day, the Apache have shunned the wilderness to which the Chief's son carried the shining stone.

According to Shunoochee, many years later when the Spanish came, they began building great villages on the land of the Apache. One group of settlers did not heed the warnings of the Apache and built their homes on the accursed land. The village did not prosper; it is now a ghost town, and the Apache shun it. Shunoochee does not elaborate; if he is asked further questions, the aged medicine man tells the characters that they are asking "too much."

Tribal elders like Shunoochee do not tell white men the whole truth for the very good reason that they do not trust Europeans, out of long and tragic experience; if the characters do not realize this themselves, Maria informs them, rather pointedly. If the characters persist, the old man smiles a toothless grin and says "Let the peyote give you sight."

The Vision of the Peyote

If the characters are willing, Shunoochee motions for them to sit cross-legged in a circle. From the leather pouch around his waist the medicine man pulls what appears to be a mushroom, and places it in his mouth. He chews it for a few moments, then rolls it into a number of pellets – one for each willing character and one for himself (Maria does not participate), and distributes them.

Peyotism is the most widespread indigenous Indian religion, and the mushroom-like crown of the spineless peyote cactus is a sacramental food; it is chewed until soft, then rolled into pellets to be swallowed for its narcotic effect. Peyote tastes bitter, causing an initial feeling of nausea; characters who fail an **ENDURANCE** roll on 1D20 become physically ill soon after ingesting the drug, and spit the pellet up. For those who are not nauseous, the peyote produces visions and changes in perception, time sense, and mood. The exact nature of these effects is left to the GM to decide. The character with the highest **ELDRITCH LORE** score (dice randomly if there is a tie, or if none of the characters possesses this knowledge) receives a special vision.

The Vision

You are whirling blindly through the unplumbed graveyard of the universe, past the ghastly shells of dead worlds with rotting scars that were once great cities. All around you, a chill wind blows; the stars flicker dimly, like sputtering candles in a sudden draught. Beyond the planets and the stars, in the inconceivable depths of time and space at the center of the universe, there lies a vortex of shimmering mist, bathed in a pale and sourceless green light, and surrounded by the thin, mindless whine of countless flutes.

Just before Azathoth – the blasphemous source of the green glow – becomes apparent, the vision mercifully fades and the character slowly recovers his senses. **MENTAL HEALTH** loss is 0/1D4.

After the hallucinogenic effects of the peyote have worn off, Shunoochee gets to his feet and, without a word, retires to his cabin. Maria tells the characters that there is nothing more her great-grandfather can do for them. They must now leave, and rely on their own wits. She wishes the characters luck, and bids them goodbye.

If the characters attracted Dr Talbot's attention, they are probably followed to Shunoochee's cabin by Talbot's thugs, and perhaps even Talbot himself. Once the characters have left, Talbot's men visit Shunoochee to find out what he told his visitors. Shunoochee, sensing dark motives, refuses to speak – even under torture. The old medicine man is probably killed out of frustration. His great-granddaughter, however, is not so stoic and eventually succumbs. Maria might be left alive and, if the characters return, she asks them to avenge Shunoochee. Her description of the thugs might be recognized by the characters, who learn something of the true nature of Dr Talbot in the process.

The Ghost Town

Most ghost towns in New Mexico owe their existence to mining. They flourished and faded with the rise and decline of the gold and silver mines around which they grew and upon which they depended. The ghost town of Santa Fe de la Lucero, however, lies in an isolated box canyon in the foothills of the Mogollon Mountains, and predates those of the 19th century by nearly two hundred years. It came into being before the dawn of the 18th century. Spanish settlers farmed and raised stock; there was a minimum of mining undertaken, but almost continual prospecting.

Anyone making a **TRIVIA** roll realizes that all the buildings here are adobe structures of Spanish design, and seem to date from no later than the early 19th century.

Only a handful of ruins remain in this desolate place. In many ways it is typical of most ghost towns: sagging house-lined, tumbleweed-strewn streets; the wind whistles through the broken eaves; and at night, one might even hear the clanking of Spanish armor as the ghosts of luckless adventurers march in search of the Seven Golden Cities.

The Church of Santa Fe de la Lucero

A large adobe church is the only structure that remains relatively intact, but it does not appear to have been used in a very long time. The roof sags, the walls are cracked, and the windows have been boarded up. The adjacent graveyard contains a number of crumbling tombstones bearing Spanish inscriptions. The oldest dates from the 17th century, while the most recent seems to be dated no later than about 1730. An inordinate number of tombstones date from the second decade of the 18th century, as though some sudden calamity befell the community at that time.

The door to the church creaks on rusted hinges, but is otherwise functional. There is no lock. Inside, an

eerie green glow fills the church, and silence hangs heavy. Cobweb-draped candelabra dominate the scene, but trappings of Christianity are manifestly absent. There is an atmosphere of unwholesomeness and decay here, and even only quasi-religious characters quickly realize that this place is hardly appropriate for Christian worship.

The Shining Stone

Toward the altar, the first few rows of pews on either side of the aisle are pushed back to form an open space. Placed in a chalice upon the dusty altar sits the source of the unnatural glow – a shining green stone about the size and shape of a milk bottle. The stone is perfectly smooth, translucent, and devoid of any markings or carvings.

This weird object is the Shining Stone which, according to Shunoochee, was given to the Apache centuries ago by a tall, dark god. The legend is essentially accurate; the stone is actually a highly radioactive gift from Nyarlathotep. His motives are subtle, his reasons unguessable, but a present from Nyarlathotep is always calculated to bring chaos and turmoil to its recipient.

Anyone successfully using Talbot's Geiger Counter on the stone finds that it contains an extremely potent amount of radiation. The stone has no magical powers of any sort; its sole effect is a ghastly form of radiation sickness.

The Shining Stone is not damaged by firearms, and cannot be broken, crushed, or otherwise destroyed by any means likely to be available to the characters. Talbot's lead-lined gloves afford some protection if worn while handling the stone. The safest thing to do with the stone is to leave it be, drop it down an abandoned mine shaft, or bury it.

The Entrance to the Crypt

The altar itself, which is devoid of any trappings, slides away with some effort (match the combined **STRENGTH** of up to four characters against a Resistance of 22) to reveal a narrow stone staircase

descending into the blackness below. The air is thick with a kind of charnel musk. Any characters getting even a whiff of this noxious odor must make an **ENDURANCE** roll on 1D20 or become incapacitated due to nausea for 2D4 minutes.

The Crypt

After a short descent, the steps are no longer of stone but of earth itself, damp and fungus-sprouting. After a time, a large, unlit chamber is reached where rows of grey stone slabs are arranged in narrow aisles; on each slab, what appears to be a shrouded corpse stares sightlessly at the roof above. At the far end of the crypt an archway marks the beginning of a black, winding staircase leading down into inconceivable depths. Here lie centuries of the dead of Santa Fe de la Lucero. Most of the remains are skeletal, but some appear to be relatively recent.

Virtually all are horribly deformed: many have extra appendages; others, misshapen skulls; and several appear to be missing entire limbs. **MENTAL HEALTH** loss upon discovery of these disturbing phenomena is 0/1D3.

As the characters examine these curiosities, one suddenly comes to life and attacks. Although it appears to be a zombie or ghoul of some sort, this hideous creature – with a smaller, malformed twin sprouting from the side of its chest – is actually a living denizen of Santa Fe de la Lucero, a guardian of the crypt.

CRYPT MUTANT

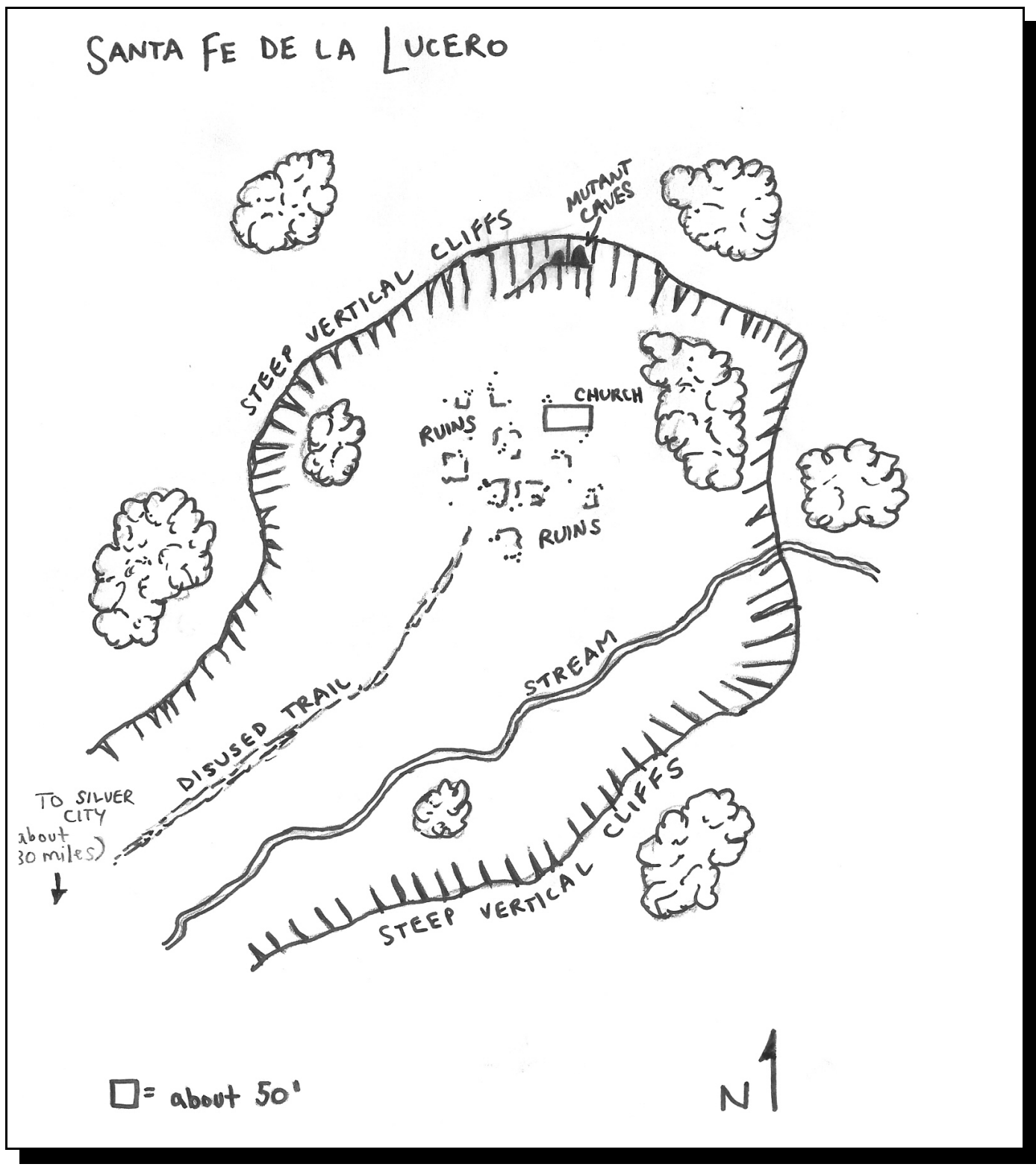
Strength	15	Endurance	16
Size	11	Intelligence	07
Willpower	11	Agility	12
Charisma	05	Education	n/a
Mental Health	00	Hit Points	14

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Bite 55%, 1D4+DM

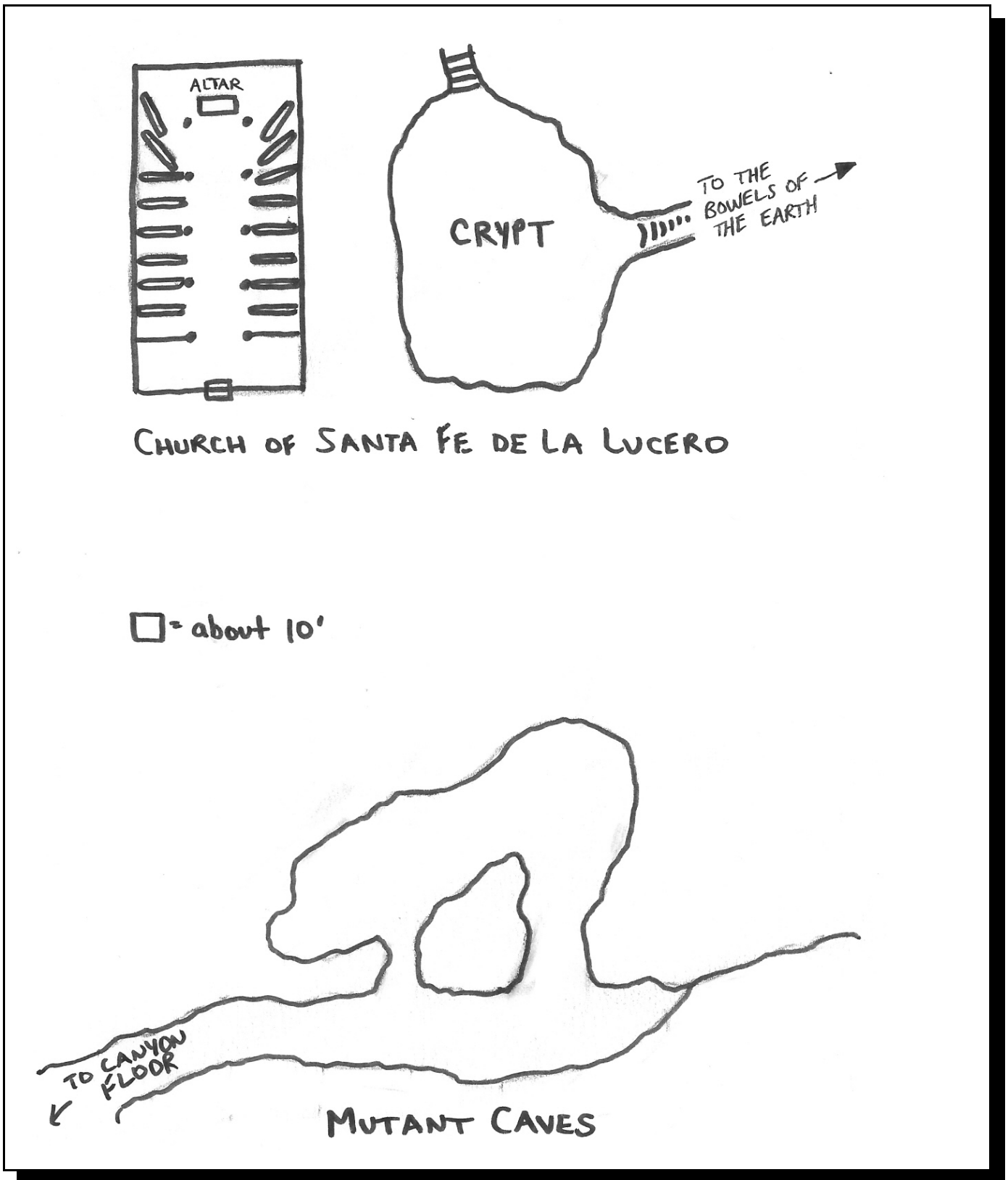
Skills: Detect 41%, Hide 72%, Listen 47%, Stealth 52%, Track 57%

Mental Health Cost: 0/1D4



This blasphemous thing fights to the death in a snarling rage. After the mutant has been killed, its hideous twin lives on for a few moments, wailing horribly. Anyone bitten by the mutant needs his wounds treated quickly; if not, the victim must make an **ENDURANCE** roll on 1D20 or suffer any

one or more of the effects of a mild dose of radiation.



CHURCH OF SANTA FE DE LA LUCERO

□ = about 10'

MUTANT CAVES

Tunnels

From the crypt, a black and winding staircase leads

down into a network of rough-hewn passages. Typically, these are not quite large enough to accommodate a man walking upright, and in some places they are so small as to be impassable.

The tunnels wind their way down to unguessable depths. No map has been provided, but characters attempting to explore the full extent of these passages should be deterred by fatigue, falling rock, and ominous rumblings. Should this fail, the characters encounter one of the hazards of traversing the tunnels – a cave-in. A section of the tunnel collapses upon them: each character who makes a successful **EVADE** roll is able to escape the falling rocks; those who fail suffer 1D6+2 points of damage. The characters' descent is effectively blocked by the cave-in; what manner of creature exists beyond is for the GM to determine.

The Mutants

The inhabitants of Santa Fe de la Lucero, through centuries of inbreeding and radiation poisoning, have become hideously mutated; there are but few live births, and each has a gruesome deformity. Although these horrible creatures are not long-lived, and their numbers are dwindling, they are yet human.

Despite the warnings of the Indians, the original settlers of Santa Fe de la Lucero came here in search of the Seven Golden Cities; having unearthed the Shining Stone, most of the settlers found only death, but others, surviving exposure to the deadly object, were condemned to the living horror of radiation poisoning, as are their descendants. There are about two dozen inhabitants of Santa Fe de la Lucero remaining, not including a handful of small children. Physically, there is not much to distinguish the males of the clan from the females; all are unwashed and repulsive, clad in tattered old rags or poorly-cured skins. Each suffers from some manner of grotesque deformity. Many are hunchbacks and some – like the guardian in the crypt – have half-formed siamese twins; others have an extra eye, ear, arm, or other appendage, and a few are missing one or more of the same.

These monstrous travesties of humanity spend their days in the cool shade of caves burrowed into the side of the canyon, returning to the village at night to sleep amongst the decaying ruins of their ancestors. Although incapable of speech, the

Radiation Poisoning

Persons exposed to the Shining Stone for up to 24 hours must make an **ENDURANCE** roll on 1D20 or suffer from one or more of the following symptoms: weakness, loss of appetite, vomiting, and/or diarrhea. Persons suffering this mild dose have a reduced defense against infection and an increased tendency to bleed; all damage taken is increased by 1D3 points.

Anyone who touches the stone with bare skin, or is exposed to it for up to 48 hours, automatically suffers any one or more of the above effects. Additionally, an **ENDURANCE** roll on 1D20 must be made, or damage to brain tissue occurs, resulting in an excruciating death within 48 hours. Characters who make the initial **ENDURANCE** roll must make one for each successive 24-hour period of exposure.

Persons foolhardy enough to test the object for miraculous curative powers by touching a wound to the stone, or otherwise causing contact with the bloodstream, must make an **ENDURANCE** roll on 1D20 or receive a reaction so severe that death ensues within the hour, usually due to severe anemia or hemorrhage, to infection, or to dehydration.

Radiation sickness is a relatively recent phenomenon; the expression itself was coined only a few short years ago. The unfortunate character who contracts radiation poisoning is essentially doomed to his fate; chemotherapy is still in its experimental stages, and it will be another decade before medical science gains enough experience to be researching more effective treatments. It is left to the GM to decide the fate of any character so afflicted; one option for campaign play is to downplay the immediate symptoms in favor of long-term effects.

mutants communicate through a series of grunts and gestures that are virtually incomprehensible to outsiders. Lacking in intelligence, but not guile, the mutants are voraciously omnivorous; their diet consists mostly of roots, insects, and whatever rodents they are able to snare. Man-flesh is a rare delicacy to these vile things, and they pursue it vigorously. Despite the deformities, the agony of these pitiable creatures can be seen in their melancholy, all-too human expressions; perhaps they comprehend and lament their unfortunate heritage? The mutants are not intrinsically evil, but the Shining Stone is sacred to them, and any outsider who would seek to disturb its sanctum is dealt with harshly. Statistics for three mutants follow; the GM may re-use these as necessary.

MUTANT ONE

Strength	14	Endurance	12
Size	12	Intelligence	04
Willpower	11	Agility	13
Charisma	06	Education	n/a
Mental Health	00	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Claw 45%, 1D4+DM

Skills: Climb 80%, Detect 50%, Hide 25%, Listen 40%, Stealth 30%, Track 55%

Mental Health Cost: 0/1D4

MUTANT TWO

Strength	13	Endurance	15
Size	12	Intelligence	05
Willpower	10	Agility	12
Charisma	07	Education	n/a
Mental Health	00	Hit Points	14

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Claw 55%, 1D4+DM

Skills: Detect 40%, Hide 70%, Listen 30%, Stealth 50%, Throw 60%, Track 40%

Mental Health Cost: 0/1D4

MUTANT THREE

Strength	12	Endurance	12
Size	11	Intelligence	03
Willpower	12	Agility	12
Charisma	05	Education	n/a
Mental Health	00	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: Claw 55%, 1D4+DM

Skills: Conceal 60%, Climb 50%, Detect 80%, Stealth 40%, Track 60%

Mental Health Cost: 0/1D4

Any character clawed by one of these creatures must have a successful **FIRST AID** applied to his wounds or be susceptible to any one or more of the effects of a mild dose of radiation sickness if he fails an **ENDURANCE** roll on 1D20.

The caves in which the mutants dwell contain heaps of offal and discarded bones. There are a few broken chairs scattered about. At the very back of the cave is a chest, so old and rotted that it crumbles to the touch, which contains the meager treasure of these repulsive creatures: a few Spanish coins (worth about \$5 in Silver City), and a man's signet ring, still attached to a bony finger, bearing the initials "FC" and the Spanish inscription "*Amor de Ysobel.*" The fate of Francisco Comida de Zaldivar is a mystery no longer.

Returning to Silver City

Apparently foiled in their search for Edward Nash, the characters eventually head back toward Silver City. On their way back to town, the characters are confronted by a large hunchbacked mutant, clad in an ill-fitting suit of disturbingly contemporary style. It might once have belonged to a gentleman of discriminating taste, but the suit is now ripped and soiled, and unsettling dark stains are evident. He raises his outstretched arms to the heavens and lets out a piercing shriek. It is at once a cry of rage and despair.

MUTANT PRIEST

Strength	17	Endurance	15
Size	16	Intelligence	12
Willpower	15	Agility	17
Charisma	10	Education	n/a
Mental Health	0	Hit Points	16

Damage Modifier: +1D6

Weapons: Knife 80%, 1D6+DM

Claw 90%, 1D4+DM

Skills: Detect 70%, Hide 75%, Stealth 75%, Track 80%

Mental Health Cost: 0/1D4

This mutant carries a knife in one hand and an old Spanish bible in the other. He is the priest of Santa Fe de la Lucero and, although demented, his intelligence makes him the unquestioned authority of the tribe. He keeps his people safe from harm, maintains order, and attends to the sacred Shining Stone in priestlike fashion.

His bible is in poor condition: most of the pages are creased and torn; many are missing completely. At first glance, it appears to be of little or no value or use; closer inspection reveals that it was privately printed in Madrid in 1681 and, according to an inscription on the flyleaf, once belonged to Father Diego Zambravera. Reading the book takes a full day, and requires a **SPANISH** roll. Oddly enough, the book diverges from standard Christian teachings and hints at long-forgotten eldritch races that ruled Earth long before the advent of man. Apparently these entities still exist in the spaces between the stars; the book intimates that they may be called upon by those who possess the knowledge thereof. Due to its disturbing nature, anyone reading the book loses 0/1 point of Mental Health; 1/2 if he is a devout Christian. A single point of **ELDRITCH LORE** is gained.

If anyone checks the label of the mutant's suit, it reads:

Beckwith & Sons, London

Perceptive players recall that the suit found in the closet of Nash's room at the Sombrero Hotel bore the same mark. After Edward Nash visited the area,

the priest followed him and, luring Nash from his car, subdued him and dragged him off. It is best not to contemplate the horrible fate that befell Nash at the hands of this vile cannibal, but the suit that the mutant priest now wears was once Nash's and one day, perhaps, the bleached bones of the characters' friend might be found somewhere in the wilds of southwest New Mexico.

Police Involvement

The Sheriff and his deputies are unlikely to believe any wild stories of hideous mutants and radioactive stones. If the characters somehow manage to convince the police to visit Santa Fe de la Lucero, a bloody battle is likely to ensue. The exact nature of any such conflict is up to the GM, but the result should always be the same: most – if not all – of the mutants are killed; several deputies are wounded, perhaps even killed; and the incident is hushed up. Characters who lead the police to the village are discouraged from taking part, but those who do – and survive – are sworn to secrecy. No report is made.

Disposing of the Shining Stone

Once the characters have dealt with the mutants and learned of the terrible fate of their friend, one final challenge remains: deciding what – if anything – to do with the Shining Stone.

Of the options available, dropping it down an abandoned mine shaft is perhaps the most efficient method of dealing with the stone, since it is impervious to the assault of any man-made weapons that the characters are likely to possess. Choosing this course gains each character 1D8 Mental Health points. Burying the stone is a reasonably effective solution, but only for as long as it takes someone to dig it up again. Each character

gains 1D6 points of Mental Health for this option. Leaving the stone where it lies in the church at Santa Fe de la Lucero is an acceptable option, given the circumstances, and each character gains 1D4 points of Mental Health for this choice – but if any mutants have survived, they are likely to continue their veneration of the stone, so no Mental Health points are awarded.

Characters who retain the stone for further study choose poorly; unless they store it in a radiation-proof container – such as the lead-lined trunk in which Dr Talbot hides the stolen femur – they run the risk of spreading the radiation poisoning. No Mental Health bonus is awarded.

If Dr Talbot ends up in possession of the stone, no Mental Health points are awarded, and the GM must decide the ultimate outcome. Talbot's dream of world peace through nuclear proliferation is folly, of course, but perhaps he becomes a pawn of some government – American, German, or other – or even of dread Azathoth itself. Tracking Talbot down and recovering the stone might form the basis of an intriguing sequel.

If left alone, the mutant clan continues to degenerate. Within two or three generations, the last survivor mercifully dies.

If the characters succeed in safely disposing of the stone, they can congratulate themselves on ridding the world of the ghastly radiant energy – but only temporarily. Already, Nyarlathotep has formulated grand plans for the proliferation of the Great Nuclear Chaos throughout the world.

Statistics

STEPHEN GARCIA, Sheriff's Deputy

Age 36

Strength	12	Endurance	13
Size	13	Intelligence	11
Willpower	12	Agility	12
Charisma	14	Education	12
Mental Health	60	Hit Points	13

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: .38 revolver 45%, 1D10

Punch 60%, 1D6

Skills: Bluff 40%, Detect 40%, Drive 60%, Law 50%, Listen 55%, Psychology 20%, Ride 40%, Spanish 60%, Track 15%

AVERAGE POLICEMAN

Strength	16	Endurance	14
Size	15	Intelligence	13
Willpower	12	Agility	13
Charisma	12	Education	10
Mental Health	55	Hit Points	15

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Punch 50%, 1D3+DM

.38 revolver 50%, 1D10

Nightstick 60%, 1D6+DM

Skills: Bluff 40%, Climb 50%, Detect 45%, Drive 25%, First Aid 35%, Hide 20%, Jump 40%, Law 20%, Listen 60%, Negotiate 40%, Psychology 10%, Stealth 25%, Throw 40%, Track 35%

DR. MORGAN TALBOT, Scientist

Age 57

Strength	12	Endurance	11
Size	12	Intelligence	16
Willpower	15	Agility	15
Charisma	12	Education	20
Mental Health	15	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: Knife 35%, 1D6+DM

.38 revolver 35%, 1D10

Skills: Anthropology 50%, Archaeology 80%, Detect 50%, History 50%, Latin 40%, Navigate 60%, Occult 30%, Psychology 25%, Reputation 35%, Spanish 70%

GRANT PETERSON, Talbot's Assistant

Age 23

Strength	10	Endurance	12
Size	11	Intelligence	17
Willpower	13	Agility	13
Charisma	12	Education	17
Mental Health	65	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: none

Skills: Anthropology 40%, Archaeology 55%, Bluff 55%, Climb 35%, Detect 40%, Drive 40%, Evade 55%, First Aid 40%, History 55%, Jump 40%, Listen 60%, Negotiate 40%, Psychology 50%, Research 50%, Stealth 50%, Spanish 25%, Throw 45%

JUDY NORWOOD, Talbot's Assistant

Age 24

Strength	08	Endurance	13
Size	10	Intelligence	16
Willpower	11	Agility	11
Charisma	16	Education	16
Mental Health	50	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: none

Skills: Anthropology 55%, Archaeology 25%, Astronomy 30%, Climb 50%, Detect 45%, Drive 35%, Evade 45%, First Aid 40%, Geology 55%, History 30%, Latin 60%, Listen 45%, Natural Lore 45%, Navigate 25%, Negotiate 25%, Photography 25%, Research 75%

JIM HOGAN, Thug

Age 28

Strength	14	Endurance	16
Size	15	Intelligence	10
Willpower	11	Agility	12
Charisma	10	Education	09
Mental Health	50	Hit Points	16

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Punch 65%, 1D3+DM

.45 revolver 75%, 1D10+2

Skills: Drive 60%, Hide 55%, Stealth 65%, Throw 60%, Track 55%

MIKE POLLARD, Thug

Age 32

Strength	16	Endurance	14
Size	15	Intelligence	10
Willpower	11	Agility	10
Charisma	10	Education	10
Mental Health	45	Hit Points	15

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Knife 60%, 1D4+2+DM

Punch 65%, 1D3+DM

Skills: Detect 55%, Drive 70%, Hide 60%, Ride
75%, Stealth 60%, Track 70%

Second Coming

Wherein a new horror, born of the old, is investigated.

*Like an angel wild of eye,
I shall return to where you lie
And towards you, noiseless, glide
With the shades of eventide.*

– Charles Baudelaire, *The Ghost*

Background

On the night of November 1, 1907, a contingent of police led by Inspector John Raymond Legrasse dispersed a sinister cult that was terrorizing squatters in the bayou country south of New Orleans. This cult – comprising mostly mongrel sailors – worshiped Great Cthulhu, keeping alive the old beliefs until his return.

Following directions provided by the swamp-folk, Legrasse led twenty stout-hearted men into the swamps to investigate. In a small clearing, they found nearly a hundred degenerate cultists dancing around makeshift scaffolds that held the mutilated bodies of several missing swamp-folk. Although shaken by the scene, Legrasse and his men plunged into the clearing and put an end to the mad gathering. In the ensuing chaos, five cultists were killed, two were wounded, and close to fifty were captured, along with a hideous statuette of their dark god. The captives turned out to be a rabble of sailors of widely varying nationalities. Two were hanged but the rest were institutionalized as dangerously insane. (For further details on these events, see H.P. Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulhu*.)

Some of those who evaded capture fled deeper into the swamp or made their way back to New Orleans – and from there, perhaps, to far-flung ports. The

leaders, however, remained in the city and worked patiently to resurrect the cult. Now, some twenty years later, the cult has returned. In the guise of a seaman's union and guided by the original leaders – including one who, in thrall to the Master of R'lyeh, has become a Minion of Cthulhu – the cult prepares for the day when that unspeakable sunken city rises from the sea and Great Cthulhu returns to rule the world.

The Unseen Masters

Inspector Legrasse suspected that someone else, some unseen master, had been responsible for establishing and directing the cult. Although he had no evidence to support this theory, Legrasse knew that none of the men he had captured was capable of organizing such a complex endeavor.

Legrasse was correct: four seemingly normal citizens of New Orleans (Cèsar Gallier, his wife Marie, Stephan Landreaux, and Eddie LaRocca) helped to control and fund the cult, and participated in the ritual of 1907. Brought together by their shared interest in the occult, the foursome became drawn into the designs of Great Cthulhu and his cult in New Orleans.

Cèsar Gallier, a psychically sensitive man possessed of an artistic temperament matched with a tenuous morality, had become subject to the dream-sendings of Cthulhu, projected through a temple in the hidden lake outside of the city. At first confusing, they soon began to take shape and form coherent images and thoughts that led him on a quest to understand their true meaning. In time, Cèsar began

to believe that he had a greater destiny – to undergo a *transformation* in order to better serve the god that had contacted him. He must become a Minion of Cthulhu: no longer human, but a thrall to the Master of R'lyeh.

Gallier began to research the images he saw in his dreams, and in the fall of 1905 he tracked down Stephan Landreaux, an anthropology graduate student, and queried him about certain hidden rituals performed in the dark corners of the Earth. The passion for the occult that both men shared soon ignited a friendship. Gallier fed the younger man tantalizing bits and pieces (but never the entire truth) of what he had seen in his dreams, and what his studies had revealed about the ancient worship of Cthulhu. Landreaux had a trusting nature and a clumsy fondness for Gallier's wife, and was soon committed to helping Gallier understand the ancient South Pacific rituals that were required to begin his transformation.

However, Gallier was not the casual dilettante he had led the younger man to believe, but a man with great schemes in mind. Soon, Landreaux was regularly meeting with Cèsar and Marie Gallier at their home for lively discussions; before long, these meetings included “experiential” sessions involving strange rituals. By this time a fourth member, shipping heir Eddie LaRocca, had joined the circle. LaRocca's interest was less intellectual. Having met Marie Gallier during the 1905 Mardi Gras celebrations, he took an interest in the attractive young woman and the two began a brief affair. For a time, LaRocca and Marie Gallier shared a certain closeness, and LaRocca's complete lack of human decency made him an ideal participant in Gallier's plans.

Only one man, Joseph D. Galvez, could see the evil rising. A member of Legrasse's raiding party, Galvez saw firsthand the horrors that lurked in the swamp and was forever changed by them. A superstitious man, he devoted the rest of his life to finding something Legrasse couldn't (or wouldn't): the cult's source. His investigations led him to the cult's unseen masters and the far more terrible revelation that the cult of Cthulhu was not a local phenomenon but a global conspiracy. In a desperate

attempt to forestall the cult's resurrection, Galvez stole the statue of the evil entity that Legrasse had liberated from the worship site, and gave it to Cecile Tabron, his half-sister and a voodoo priestess, for safekeeping. In a cruel twist of irony, the cult's own voodoo agents conspired to punish Galvez with a gruesome fate: his soul was “stolen” and he was buried alive at the very site of the 1907 raid that had crushed the original cult.

Involving the Characters

In 1908, Inspector Legrasse traveled to a meeting of the American Archaeological Society (AAS) in St. Louis hoping to identify the sinister statuette confiscated during the raid on the cult. The events of this gathering were subsequently published as the *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Archaeological Society*; it is the brief mention in this publication that brings the matter to the characters' attention, and leads them to New Orleans. It appears here as Player Aid #1.

Experienced characters who come across the article doubtless recognize Mythos activity and may decide to visit New Orleans to investigate. Alternatively, the characters might be hired (by a professor of anthropology, perhaps) to verify the existence of the statuette. The characters might also be recruited by a private collector or a curator who wants to purchase the statuette. In both cases, the individual is either unable to contact Legrasse or has had no response from him.

New Orleans

With a population of over 550,000, New Orleans is the largest city in Louisiana and one of the principal ports of the South. Founded by the French in 1718, New Orleans is a great melting pot of cultures and its residents treasure custom and tradition. Known as the Crescent City for its location on a bend of the

Mississippi River, much of New Orleans lies below sea level; an ingenious system of water pumps, drainage canals and levees protects the city from flooding. It is well served by rail lines.

Player Aid #1

spoke quite favorably of the facilities offered, and thanked the committee for its diligence.

One of the more interesting incidents was the visit of Inspector Legrasse of the New Orleans Police Department, who brought with him a stone idol of unknown origin. The exquisitely crafted statuette had been recently confiscated from the site of a supposed voodoo gathering. The idol's workmanship was surpassed only by its repulsiveness, depicting as it did a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head. The artifact was of such antiquity that none of the assembled men of science were able to help the Inspector identify its source. Its origin remains a mystery.

Because of a hailstorm, trains arriving from the west were delayed by several hours, causing some members to miss the registration and part of the first lecture.

John Raymond Legrasse

The characters might locate Inspector Legrasse's residence through the New Orleans Police Department (see *New Orleans Police*, below) or a city directory. His distinctive yet unobtrusive residence is scant yards from the Mississippi River

waterfront, on the east side of Bienville Street. An arched corridor leads to a small court, barred by a handsome wrought-iron gate.

Legrasse lives alone here, with regular visits from his housekeeper, Mrs. Girod. Now retired from the New Orleans police, Legrasse spends much time in his courtyard garden, tending his magnolias.

Legrasse has strong Gallic features. He is a stout fellow with pale skin and large black eyes, clean-shaven except for a pencil-thin moustache. At first, Legrasse is reluctant to speak of the cult: "It was a single night I've spent twenty years trying to forget," he says with utmost sincerity. Once the proper credentials of his visitors have been established, however, he may be persuaded with a **CONVINCE** roll to discuss the matter. Over strong coffee in his parlor, Legrasse can verify the American Archaeological Society's report and, if necessary, furnish additional details regarding the raid.

Legrasse has a box of files that effectively summarize the raid and list the names of prisoners and officers involved. Statements from swamp-folk and cultists are also here. The cultists' depositions confirm that these people worshiped horrible ancient deities in the swamp, and that those deities' monstrous servants killed the squatters. They declare their cult to be worldwide and timeless.

Legrasse had attended the AAS meeting hoping for information that might lead him to the fountainhead of the cult, which displayed an underlying complexity that was clearly beyond the capacity of the captured celebrants to create or maintain. When his visit to St. Louis failed to unearth any tangible knowledge regarding these "unseen masters," Legrasse set the matter aside. Today his only reminder of the cult is the statuette, which he keeps in a wooden box on his mantel and now offers to show the characters. The idol, he says, was found during the raid: the cultists reluctantly identified it as "Great Thooloo," one of their monstrous gods.



When Legrasse goes to retrieve the statuette, however, he discovers to his surprise that the box is empty. He last saw the statuette about two weeks ago, when he accidentally knocked the box off the mantel; neither the box nor the statuette was damaged. Legrasse has in the past displayed the statuette to occasional visitors, all respected academics or persons whose credentials he considers to be impeccable. He knows of no one who would want to steal the statuette. The cult, he says, is dead and gone; the last survivor of the raid died in the madhouse a year ago.

If the characters want more information about the cult, Legrasse directs them to Joseph Galvez, a former policeman who took part in the raid. According to Legrasse, Galvez was “a good man, if superstitious” who was profoundly affected by what he saw that night in November 1907. Eventually, suffering from “nervous exhaustion and mental fatigue,” Galvez resigned from the police department and spent some time in the City Hospital. Legrasse hasn’t seen him in several years but can provide a recent address. He shows the characters a photograph taken about ten years ago

of himself and Galvez, a wiry fellow with a furtive look about him, as though he disliked having his picture taken.

Joseph Galvez

Galvez' address, the Hotel Gollancz, is in a run-down section of the Vieux Carré, a place where once-stately mansions have been reduced to crumbling tenements, their balconies begrimed and their iron railings rusted and disintegrating. Many buildings here are abandoned, their doors boarded up and windows tightly shuttered.

The hotel is home to a wide variety of indigents and itinerants, including traveling salesmen, laborers, immigrant families and those who are just plain down on their luck. The manager, Otis Perry, informs the characters that Galvez has been renting room 307 by the month for several years. Perry says Galvez never causes any trouble and always pays his rent on time. Galvez' neighbors can offer little information. They say Galvez keeps to himself: he is polite but not talkative. The last time anyone can recall seeing Galvez was three days ago, under mundane circumstances.

Attempts to locate Galvez are futile. His research brought him to the cult's attention and he met a terrible fate at the hands of Brotherhood of the Sea president Edouard Carrefour. See *Site of the Raid*, below, for more information.

Provided the characters reimburse him for his time, Perry doesn't object to letting them examine Galvez' room. Alternatively, Legrasse might use his still-considerable clout to intervene on the characters' behalf. Galvez' room is small, about 10' by 20', and consists of a sitting area, a kitchenette and a sleeping alcove. Washroom facilities at the end of the hall are shared among all the residents of the third floor. The most striking thing about Galvez' room is the amount of artifacts present – religious, occult, and otherwise. Crosses abound, as do a plethora of voodoo and other, more obscure symbols. An **OCCULT** roll suggests that their owner is hugely superstitious.

Galvez has devoted much of his time since the raid attempting, to the point of obsession, to unravel the cult's worldwide conspiracy. His research brought

Enlisting Legrasse's Assistance

At some point the characters may wish to enlist the aid of Inspector Legrasse in overcoming the cult. This is a reasonable strategy as Legrasse has "unfinished business" with the cult, having previously (and frustratingly) failed to identify its unseen masters. The characters, armed with the knowledge Legrasse once sought, might use it to gain his assistance; the GM may consult the following table to determine their chance of success:

Base chance = $\frac{1}{4}$ **CONVINCE** (of the character with the highest skill), rounded up, plus:

- Identify the four "unseen masters": +5% for each one identified
- Provide evidence of Galvez' murder at the hands of the cult: +10%
- Provide the location of the swamp temple: +20%

Although retired, Legrasse still wields considerable influence in the city, particularly with the police department. He seeks to avoid any "official" police involvement, however. he has seen enough to know that the cult can't be dealt with through official channels and that, under the present circumstances, "one might be excused for taking the law into one's own hands."

about much mental strain, however, which eroded his sanity and prevented him from completing his work.

There are numerous books here, strewn on any flat surface, including the floor. There are several bibles and prayer books, and a number of works on voodoo. A page torn from last year's city directory serves as a bookmark inside a copy of Sir George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History*. The book itself is of no particular interest to the matter at hand, but the bookmark is: the directory lists antiquarian book dealers in the city, and one of the entries, "Dallaire's Arcane Bookshop" in the French Quarter, has been circled.

One wall, incongruously, is plastered with posters and photographs of Arizona. A typical advertisement proclaims: *Visit the Arizona Desert!* A slim manila folder on a cluttered table contains several items of interest. There are two articles crudely excised from issues of *National Geographic*: from October 1909, an article entitled "Scenes from Greenland" and from December 1912, "Origin of Stefansson's Blond Eskimo." The folder also contains a grainy 5x7 photograph, detailed below.

As the characters snoop about Galvez' room, a successful **DETECT** roll allows one of them to notice a black cat watching them intently from the ledge of an outside window. The cat meows at them then disappears down the fire escape and into the alley below. Characters who have already visited Cecile Tabron may recognize Solomon but his purpose here (keeping tabs on Galvez and/or the characters themselves) is unknown.

City Hospital for Mental Disease

This public institution is located at 2700 Tulane Avenue. Both white and black patients of both sexes are housed here, in separate wards. At the moment the asylum is overcrowded, with perhaps 200 patients. Very little effective rehabilitation is done here. The staff are little more than harried

The Photograph

This grainy photograph shows four unidentified people standing in front of a stone monolith; behind them is a web of tree branches weighted with Spanish moss. Although the exact location is impossible to identify, a **NATURAL LORE** roll (or, for New Orleans residents, an **INTUITION** roll) suggests that the photo was taken in the bayou country south of the city. The stone monolith stands about eight feet high. The people in the photograph are, from left to right:

- A man, dressed in a dark suit and hat. His eyes glare icily at the photographer.
- A man, dressed more casually in a jaunty cap and a Tulane University jacket. He is smoking a cigarette and has turned his head to look at the monolith, rather than the photographer. He appears to be the youngest of the group.
- A shorter and somewhat heavy-set man, with a slightly swarthy complexion. His right hand rests on an ornate walking-stick and his face is drawn into a wide grin.
- A woman, her face partially obscured by a fashionable hat and hanging dark hair. She is dressed in a heavy jacket, dark pants and knee-high boots. In her cupped hands rests a small statue, the contours and proportions of which vaguely suggest some fantastic, hulking creature.

The four are, respectively: Cèsar Gallier, Stephan Landreaux, Eddie LaRocca, and Marie Gallier. The photograph, taken by their Cajun guide in 1906, preceded a series of events that would inexorably alter their lives. The image was purloined from the Gallier residence by Galvez during his investigations of the unseen masters.

caretakers.

Characters arriving during visiting hours (1pm - 3pm) aren't even given the time of day; the staff are far too busy to provide interviews. There is, unfortunately, no good time to visit – but characters who show up in mid-morning, after the daily administration of medicines, might locate (with a group **FATE** roll) orderly Henry Paulson between duties.

Paulson recalls that Galvez was a patient “several times” over the last ten years. Overworked and underpaid, the orderly retrieves Galvez’s file for some ready cash; the chance of his cooperation is 1% per \$1 offered. The file, however, is low on details and ultimately disappointing. It indicates that Galvez was committed, voluntarily and involuntarily, several times from 1917 until last year, when he was pronounced “functional” and discharged. Scribbled notes indicate various treatments and describe his condition as “hysterical and high-strung.” Galvez, apparently, had an irrational dread of swamps. Paulson recalls Galvez inquiring if he knew of a place where there were no swamps. The orderly half-jokingly suggested his birthplace of Tuscon, Arizona, and Galvez became fixated with the place, even to the point of having Paulson obtain posters of the area for him. The file contains an address for Galvez identical to that provided by Inspector Legrasse. Paulson mentions, as an afterthought, that Galvez talked about a half-sister by the name of Cecile – “some sort of voodoo queen in the shantytown.”

If any of the characters are (or can pass themselves off as) medical professionals, he offers to show them around the facility. There is nothing relevant to be learned during such a tour, however.

Paulson can also confirm that some of the cultists captured in the 1907 raid did indeed languish here, but they're all dead now. The orderly knows that these patients had been involved in some sort of murderous cult, but he is unaware of its exact nature. They seldom spoke, and when they did it was in a barbarous mixture of foreign languages and English. Because hospital policy dictates that

individual records are to be destroyed one year after the patient’s death, Paulson is able to retrieve only a single file – with the chance of his co-operation again being 1% per \$1 offered. This file, for a patient known only as “Hernando,” indicates merely that he was an “incorrigible lunatic.” Hernando’s insistence, even some twenty years later, that the squatters had been killed by “Black Winged Ones” who served “the Old Ones” is cited as clear evidence of the hopelessness of his case. Hernando died of heart failure in the hospital about ten months ago.

Dallaire's Arcane Bookshop

This store, which has been in business for more than thirty years, is located in an unnamed alley just off a narrow street in the Vieux Carre. The store and its owner, Bertrand Dallaire, are listed in the city directory.

A hand-lettered card in one of the dusty store-front windows identifies the place as “Dallaire’s Arcane Bookshop.” Inside the dim shop are shelves and tables cluttered with dusty volumes of every size and age. Their exact contents and nature are left to the GM, but books of mythology and magic are certainly well represented. There are at present no Mythos books among Dallaire’s stock, unless it serves the GM to plant one there.

As the characters browse, a gaunt man with graying hair appears from the rear of the store and takes his place behind a cluttered desk. Bertrand Dallaire, the proprietor, is just over six feet tall with a long, tapering fingers. He speaks with an exotic accent that truly represents the polyglot languages of the city. He keeps a loaded .38 revolver in a drawer under the cash register.

Dallaire, in his soft-spoken tones, is reluctant to talk about the cult or the statuette. A successful **PSYCHOLOGY** roll reveals that Dallaire is nervous about the subject, but if gently prodded he acknowledges the cult’s activities in the bayou country, although he does not know the details. Regarding the Cthulhu statuette, Dallaire informs

the characters that it was once part of his inventory. He bought it around the turn of the century from a down-and-out sailor who claimed to be a *bokor* – a voodoo sorcerer. This fellow seemed to be in quite a hurry to part with the item and Dallaire – who normally deals only in books – was able to purchase it “at a very reasonable price.” The statuette gathered dust in a corner of the shop until it was discovered by a customer a few years later. Dallaire does not divulge the identity of this customer, but if the characters indicate that they know it was Cèsar Gallier, he verifies that fact. According to Dallaire, Gallier made frequent trips to the shop, looking for obscure titles pertaining to the South Seas, until his death in 1908. Dallaire does not know the nature of the statuette, except that he was glad to be rid of it, nor is he aware of Gallier’s connection to the cult.

New Orleans Police

Oddly, there is no file on the raid of 1907, and the police don’t seem concerned about the lack of one. If the characters can provide respectable credentials – evidenced by a successful **REPUTATION** roll, perhaps – the duty sergeant suggests that they contact Inspector Legrasse, for whom an address is provided.

Of the twenty men who took part in the 1907 raid, six no longer live in New Orleans, eight are dead, and three (including Legrasse and Galvez) are retired. Of the three still on duty, all confirm that they saw the cultists and the mangled bodies but nothing more. With a successful **FATE** roll someone suggests contacting Galvez, who claims to have seen terrible things in the swamp. The characters are cautioned to take anything Galvez says with a grain of salt: he has been in and out of City Hospital ever since. The police can offer no further assistance.

Shantytown

On the outskirts of New Orleans, a shantytown of ramshackle huts and corrugated hovels sprawls for several miles. Residents of this district – the poorest

in the city – are almost entirely black. A few mulattoes live here, but whites are treated with suspicion. The police seldom enter this area.

Characters who come in search of a voodoo queen named Cecile have great difficulty locating the woman. No one admits knowing her and the characters’ questions and requests for information are passed from one person to another in a very tedious and frustrating manner. **BLUFF** and **CONVINCE** rolls are of no use and bribes invariably fail. It is obvious that no one in the shantytown is inclined to offer any information to the characters. Finally, with a **FATE** roll, someone points Cecile Tabron’s house out to the characters: it is a nondescript shack at the edge of the shantytown, crouching at the bottom of a thickly wooded hillside. Chickens wander the yard, pecking randomly amid the sparse vegetation. By this point, thanks to her neighbors’ stalling tactics, Mlle Tabron has already been informed of the presence of would-be visitors.

Cecile Tabron

No matter what time of the day or night the characters choose to visit, they find Cecile Tabron at home. She answers the door and inquires politely as to the nature of their visit. Any reasonable response obtains an interview with the woman.

Characters who choose to break in are able to do so with little difficulty, as none of the doors or windows is particularly secure, but dark blinds on the windows preclude any view of the interior. It is unlikely that Cecile is taken by surprise. She is a light sleeper with an almost uncanny sixth sense. Rather than being shocked or frightened by the characters’ forced entry, Cecile is merely amused by their boldness – or foolhardiness – and greets them cordially.

A darkly beautiful Creole woman with scintillant eyes and vermilion lips, Cecile Tabron is a powerful second-generation voodoo *mambo* (priestess), and the illegitimate daughter of a Spaniard whom she never met. For generations her maternal ancestors have been voodoo priestesses in

New Orleans. Her father, Ernesto Galvez, was also the father of Joseph Galvez – her half-brother, of whom she never speaks.



Cecile Tabron

Cecile's junk-filled shack comprises a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom. An **OCCULT** roll indicates that voodoo paraphernalia is everywhere. Electricity is unknown in Shantytown; the only illumination in the shack is provided by the many candles scattered about the room.

Cecile has no particular reason to trust the characters, nor is she inclined to offer assistance. She speaks in generalities, warning of the great danger that lies ahead. If they can persuade her that Galvez is in danger the characters may, with a successful **CONVINCE** roll, enlist her assistance in locating the statue. Proof of Galvez' horrible death or, better still, the jar containing his soul not only brings automatic success but encourages Mlle Tabron to furnish the characters with an enchanted blade for their protection – which may be used effectively against the Minion of Cthulhu, formerly Cèsar Gallier.

Solomon the Cat

A friendly old cat with jet black fur sits on the bed and purrs at the characters. Cecile calls him Solomon and he likes to walk back and forth between the legs of guests, rubbing his back with delight on their shins. He pays particular heed to the character – male or female – with the highest combined **CHARISMA** and **ENDURANCE** scores. Solomon does not resist attempts to pick him up; the cat enjoys attention and purrs his contentment if tickled or stroked under the chin. If a character encourages Solomon in any way, the old cat jumps up into his or her lap. Curling up into a ball, Solomon purrs, closes his eyes and soon falls asleep.

At some point during the characters' visit, Solomon awakes with a start and suddenly leaps from his berth, scratching the character's hand or arm in the process. The wound is not severe but it is deep enough to cause pain and draw blood. Solomon meows and scurries away under the bed. Cecile apologizes profusely and rushes to the character's assistance, wiping up the blood with a cloth and skilfully tending to the wound with ointment and a bandage. Later that night – after the characters have gone – Cecile selects a chicken from her yard and sacrifices it, in conjunction with seven drops of the blood secretly collected on the cloth earlier that day, to cast Enslave the Soul (see p. 59) and bind the character to her will. The quivering heart of the sacrifice and the character's blood are burned in a small fire; the ashes are scooped into a ceramic jar, which is then buried somewhere behind the shack.

Unless the ritual is somehow interrupted, success is automatic. The victim of the spell might be male or female; it means little to Cecile, who has no preference in such matters. Unless the characters plot against the priestess (thus causing the victim to oppose and obstruct his colleagues' actions) or if Cecile finds it necessary to direct the victim's actions, there is a good chance that the victim might never learn that his or her soul is imprisoned. Cecile uses this spell to reduce the chances of the characters betraying her. She has no intention of ever releasing the imprisoned soul. A few sealed

ceramic jars containing other imprisoned souls are also buried in the woods behind the shack, but their locations are known only to Cecile.

The Trail of the Statue

When her half-brother Joseph Galvez brought her the statuette for safekeeping, Cecile performed the Dance of the Loa (see p. 58), which causes her body to become possessed by the goddess Ezili – the essence of voluptuous femininity, who speaks in sweet soprano tones when pleased, or a gruff, almost animal growl when angered. While possessed, Cecile hid the statuette; she now has no idea where it is and must bring Ezili into her body to reveal its location. Only if Cecile is convinced that Galvez is in danger – or dead – can she be persuaded to do this.

Characters witnessing the intense ritual do not suffer any Mental Health loss, but are surely affected – be it shock, amazement or revulsion. The arrival of Ezili is marked by Cecile’s eyes rolling back to expose only the whites and erotic, almost lecherous, actions toward the gathered characters. Suddenly, without warning, the possessed priestess bolts for the door; characters who do not pursue immediately risk losing her. The spirit of Ezili leads the characters on a merry chase into the woods, clambering over rocks and fallen trees until finally reaching a gnarled stump scorched by lightning, within which the statuette is hidden.

Cesar and Marie Gallier

Most of New Orleans society knows of the Galliers, and can easily identify them from the photograph found in Galvez’ hotel room. Cèsar’s death at age 26 in 1908 caused quite a stir, many attributing it to his dissolute lifestyle. Marie Gallier, a popular target of gossip since that time, has been granted little respect; although no one would openly accuse her of moral turpitude, many gladly hint around the subject or perhaps offer that “the woman does not behave in a manner befitting her age.” A successful **REPUTATION** roll gleans that Marie owns the Gallier Plantation, which her husband had inherited,

The Statue of Cthulhu

The soapy, greenish-black stone with its golden or iridescent flecks and striations resembles nothing familiar to geology or mineralogy. The figure, between seven and eight inches in height, is of exquisitely artistic workmanship. It represents a bloated, corpulent monster of vaguely anthropoid outline but with an octopus-like head whose face is a mass of feelers, and a long, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind. It squats on a rectangular block or pedestal covered with undecipherable characters. The tips of the wings touch the back edge of the block and the seat occupies the center; the long, curved claws of the doubled-up, crouching hind legs grip the front edge and extend a quarter of the way toward the bottom of the pedestal. The cephalopod head is bent forward so that the ends of the facial feelers brush the backs of huge forepaws which clasp the croucher’s elevated knees. Its age is both incalculable and unmistakable.

Focusing on the artifact while casting the Call Cthulhu spell adds 20% to the caster’s chance for success. Merely gazing upon the loathsome thing costs 0/1 **MENTAL HEALTH**.

but lives in the Vieux Carré, where she attends the occasional social event and frequents several restaurants.

Once a wealthy member of New Orleans society, Cèsar Gallier’s life seemed to revolve around nothing more than enjoying the quiet pleasures of polite company. Having inherited his wealth, Gallier – possessed of a keen mind but an idle spirit – began cultivating new interests in poetry and literature. Fond of the poetry of Baudelaire, he moved on to works by de Quincey, Rimbaud, De Sade, Crowley, possibly Castaigne’s *The King in*

Yellow and finally, a passable English translation of *The R'lyeh Text* which he acquired from Edouard Carrefour, through his seafaring contacts.

An obituary for Cèsar Gallier appeared in the June 7, 1908 edition of the *Times-Picayune*. It can be located with a successful **RESEARCH** roll at the newspaper morgue, the public library or the library of Tulane University. It appears as Player Aid #4.

Player Aid #4

MR. CESAR GALLIER DIES.

On June 7, after an extended illness, Mr. Cesar Gallier departed this life in his 27th year. The father and mother of the departed both preceded their son into eternity. Mr. Gallier is survived by his devoted wife. The body was laid to rest yesterday in the family tomb in St. Louis Cemetery No. 3, following funeral services at the home.

Gallier's Tomb

The Gallier family tomb is located in St. Louis Cemetery #3 on Esplanade Avenue. Although relatively new (the cemetery was opened in 1835 and the Gallier tomb was built in the latter part of the 19th century, after the deaths of Gallier's parents) it appears to have been neglected over the years. Enterprising individuals who break into the tomb find that Cèsar Gallier's casket contains a body – but it has been reduced to moldy bones, making positive identification all but impossible. The body is, in fact, not Gallier's but that of an itinerant sharecropper who met an unfortunate end at the hands of the cult. There is little the characters can do to determine this except perhaps to ask a *mambo* like Cecile Tabron, who may – for a price – be able to tell them that these are not the bones of Cèsar Gallier.

Marie Gallier

A woman who could be considered more evil than the man she married, Cèsar Gallier's widow shares her husband's peculiar tastes but is also possessed of a drive and intelligence that allows her to see

beyond his narrow vision. Their marriage was initially one of mutual depravity, but as Cèsar became increasingly interested in the more esoteric aspects of the occult, Marie began to lose interest and found other outlets for her amusement, taking a series of lovers and indulging in all varieties of sexual diversion. Marie is particularly aroused by the suffering of others, and repelled by any signs of weakness in her lovers.

Marie in her younger years was a very attractive woman, but age has not been kind to her. Although still relatively young at 44, years of abuse make her look at least ten years older. Marie's vanity is perhaps her greatest weakness; handsome young characters may find that flattery and/or flirtation are quite useful tools in getting to know Mme Gallier. Characters seeking Marie Gallier at the plantation find that she is rarely there, but instead maintains a home in the Vieux Carré.



Marie Gallier

Marie Gallier speaks with a certain weariness: years of devotion to the Minion have begun to wear on her. Her loyalty, however, is not in question. Characters are brushed off with polite indifference;

vague answers laced with seductive looks and the occasional innuendo are Marie's specialty. Confronted with any sort of incriminating evidence, Marie attempts to lure the characters to their deaths by pretending to show them something "unbelievable" that will answer all of their questions about the cult. She may also appeal to their sense of chivalry by intimating that she is in imminent danger. Mme Gallier's true aim, of course, is to have the cult members capture the characters, so they can be slowly tortured. Any particularly attractive younger character will be taken by Mme Gallier to be used for her pleasure. The character in question is unlikely to survive this experience, although he may be kept alive for several days until his ability to amuse his captors has waned.

If she is due to make an expedition to the swamp, Mme Gallier typically goes with 1D4 cultists, plus plantation overseer Marcellus LaBaptiste and a sacrificial victim. Visits occur approximately once per month. If, however, she feels the Minion is in some danger, Marie makes a trip out to warn him.

Marie Gallier's Home

A bright, peach-colored building in the Vieux Carré, Gallier's residence is typical of a small courtyard home. Surrounded by a narrow, ten-foot high fence topped with rusted iron spikes, the home is entered through a passageway that opens onto a courtyard and small garden. The building has a large balcony at the rear and a smaller one in the front. The main floor, onto which the courtyard opens, is open to the elements at the side and rear: this area serves as a shady spot to while away the long and humid afternoons. Stairs lead up to the second floor and a large room rather garishly decorated in red satin. A set of stairs on this level leads up to the third floor, which consists of three rooms: a dining room that opens out to the rear balcony; Marie's bedroom, with doors to the front balcony; and a washroom. Mme Gallier keeps a .32 revolver in the drawer of her bed table.

In a desk in the sitting room, characters can find

Cèsar Gallier's Transformation

The process that allowed Cèsar Gallier to transform into a Minion of Cthulhu was a complex one; the knowledge came to Gallier through Cthulhu's dream-sendings and there is no precise written record of what took place.

There were three stages to the transformation. The first, the "cleansing" stage, involved intense meditation, self-deprivation and ritual chanting – in which Gallier was assisted by his wife Marie, Stephan Landreaux and Eddie LaRocca. Many of the steps of this stage are similar to rituals performed by various South Pacific tribes. The second, the "ritual" stage, involved a series of lesser rituals, each bringing the caster closer to becoming a Minion. The earlier rituals involved scarification and the amputation of Gallier's ears; the last required seven human sacrifices. This latter part, the aftermath of which Legrasse and his men intruded upon, also involved the combined willpower of a large group and the more-or-less symbolic "mating" of a sacrificial victim with a tentacled Cthulhu-Spawn. The third and final stage was the "transformation" itself. In this stage Gallier's body completed its metamorphosis into that of a Minion. Infused with the blessing of Cthulhu, Gallier's body began to sprout small, vestigial tentacles. During this time, when a Minion begins to give off an odor of methane as his human organs and chemistry are digested and expelled by the new physiology, Gallier remained at his plantation home until it was time to go to the hidden lake deep in the swamp. Here, he will travel through the gate to R'lyeh to complete his journey and become a thrall to Great Cthulhu.

various financial documents. Those making a

successful **BOOKKEEPING** roll determine that Marie Gallier is a well-to-do woman with a sizable estate. Although her finances appear to be in order, several curious payments have been made over the years to the “Brotherhood of the Sea,” the amounts averaging 5,000 to 15,000 dollars per year. Consulting a city directory determines that the Brotherhood of the Sea is a Seaman’s Union on the waterfront.

Servants’ quarters, located in a separate building in the back corner of the property, contain living quarters for Gallier’s housekeeper, Lil Johnson, along with kitchen facilities.

Lil Johnson

A 29 year old black woman, Lil has lived in fear of “Madame” for many years now. An inadvertent witness to some of Mme Gallier’s scandalous activities, Lil knows what would happen to her if she ever betrayed her employer. There is one thing that Lil fears more than Mme Gallier, however, and that is voodoo. A devoted practitioner, Lil maintains a small shrine in the corner of her room. Various protective items hang can be found in the room, some of which Lil purchased from Cecile Tabron.

Characters who are able to earn Lil’s trust – perhaps merely by being in the good graces of Cecile Tabron or through the offer of protection (preferably voodoo in nature) may succeed in getting her to talk. Lil has seen both Marcellus LaBaptiste and Edouard Carrefour come and go in the small hours of the night: she knows the two men by reputation and is fearful of them, especially Carrefour, who is no stranger to voodoo. Occasionally Lil has been asked to deliver notes to Carrefour at the cult headquarters but she has no knowledge of their content. Lil has often heard Mme Gallier talk of Cèsar in the present tense in front of Carrefour, and knows that occasionally her employer visits the bayou country for some unknown purpose.

Despite her faith in voodoo, Lil keeps a small knife in her dress pocket should she ever need to defend

herself.

The Gallier Plantation

Located outside the city limits along the north bank of the Mississippi River, the Gallier Plantation has fallen into disrepair since the death of Cèsar Gallier. Marie Gallier does not give the plantation much attention, nor does she spend a great deal of time here: anyone the characters speak to here can attest to that fact. There are, however, several interesting clues which may be discovered – along with an unanticipated danger.

The Plantation House

Once an imposing mansion, the house has fallen into disrepair over the years. Marie Gallier spends most of her time in the city and rarely visits here. The house is two stories tall with stout columns flanking the entrance. The interior has an extremely musty smell; moldy patches have begun to grown in damp corners of the house, and in some of the closed-off rooms the air is quite fetid. There are several items inside that may catch the characters’ attention. Because of the building’s condition, finding a loose door or window is not difficult. There is a 20% chance that if a break-in occurs during the evening, Marcellus LaBaptiste is sleeping in one of the bedrooms.

A desk in the library holds a diary belonging to Cèsar Gallier. It is rather long, undated and entirely handwritten. The penmanship near the end becomes almost impossible to read, and many portions seem to be train-of-thought ramblings that verge on attempts at poetry. Characters must make a successful **ENGLISH** roll to successfully comprehend the diary. **MENTAL HEALTH** loss is 0/1. It appears here as Player Aid #2.

Player Aid #2

I have found something that I think will prove to be most useful. The bookseller tells me he bought it from a down-and-out sailor who claimed to be a Bokor – but the bookseller seemed nervous and in quite a hurry to part with the item, and hence I was able to purchase it at a most agreeable price. I rushed home with it, and tore its wrappings off, so eager I was to compare it to what the book described.

I have met the man to whom the statue originally belonged – the man who sold it to the bookseller may indeed be a Bokor, by the name of Carrefour. I have explained my interest to him in regards to the statue, and he seems to be quite intrigued. We spent many hours talking – it would seem that we both learned much from the other. At first when he appeared at the door, I feared that our confrontation would be less than pleasant – but it would seem we were meant to find each other, for I believe we share the same purpose, and indeed the same master, just under a different guise.

Marie has finally ceased to interrupt my study with her requests. I believe she has taken a liking to the new servant girl. Hopefully this will keep her amused until it is time for the ritual. She cannot come where I am going, and I believe she once resented it, but now I sense it bothers her less. It is of no matter to me, as long as she continues to serve me.

The rituals progress well. I have felt his power flow through my body. I can feel him taking hold. Already I am perceiving things differently – even the smallest things – smells, colors, sounds – it all seems so different. The pain has brought me a great many visions. I have told the others what I have seen and what they will have to do.

It pains me to not have written in some time. The transformation is consuming most of my strength. Soon it will be time to go to him, in the tomb where he sleeps. They will take me to the lake, and it is there I will meet him. I hope this will be my last entry. It takes every bit of my concentration & strength to lay these words down, but I do this to provide a map of my journey to those who will follow afterwards. Iâ!

The library contains works by Baudelaire, de Quincey, Rimbaud, De Sade, and Crowley, and a substantial collection of anthropology books and journals.

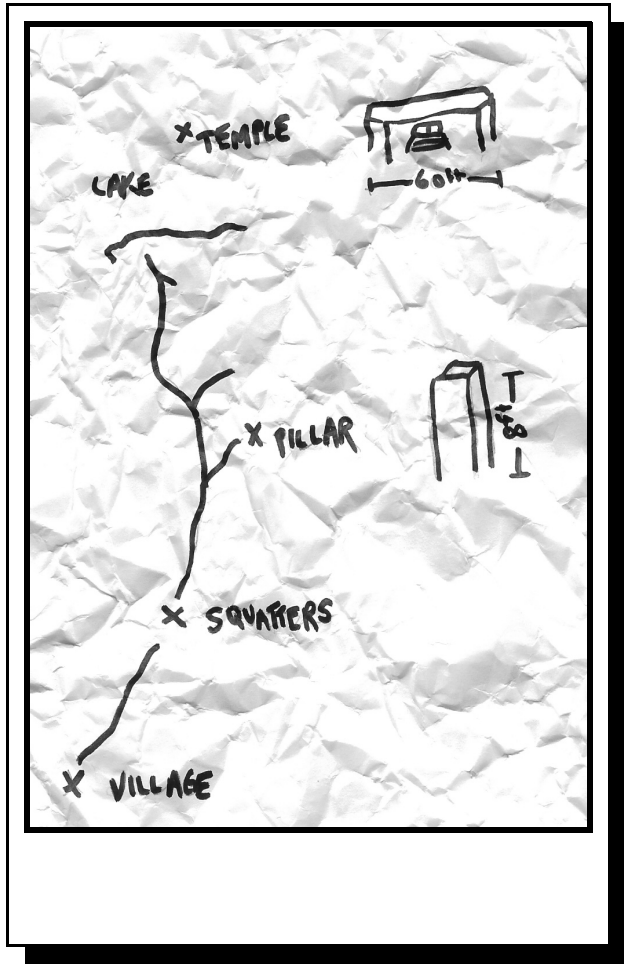
A side table holds several maps and drawings, including a hand-drawn map of the bayou and ritual area and directions to the hidden lake. The map also includes sketches of the stone pillar and the sunken temple. It appears here as Player Aid #5.

Characters making a **DETECT** roll also discover, amongst the moldy papers, a deed for the purchase of a piece of property in the waterfront section of New Orleans. Those making a **LAW** roll can determine that the building was purchased for the use of the “Brotherhood of the Sea.” Edouard

Carrefour is listed as a co-signatory.

In the master bedroom, in a drawer of a bedside table, is a notebook with strange scrawlings. This was the book that Cèsar Gallier used to transcribe the strange images and thoughts that came to him in his dreams. Most of the notes consist of strange runes and other seemingly incomprehensible things, but anyone making an **ELDRITCH LORE** roll can determine that, taken as a whole, the book spells out the steps of a ritual, the name of which roughly translates to “The Transformation for He Who Waits Dreaming.” Further translation is not possible. The room, and the bed in particular, has a faint odor; a **TRIVIA** roll suggests that it is methane.

Player Aid #5



The sitting room contains one last important clue. Characters closely examining the bottom of one of the outer walls can discover, with a successful **DETECT** roll, a strange stain pattern on the wall, as if a large quantity of liquid had splattered against the wall prior to painting. Scraping away the paint reveals a brownish stain. (This is blood and brain matter from Stephen Landreaux, who was savagely beaten to death by Eddie LaRocca at the request of Marie Gallier; with an **INTUITION** roll, characters may conclude that a violent confrontation took place here.)

The Sharecroppers

The fields of the plantation were long ago given over to sharecroppers. These men, women and children work the land for a meager return. Numerous pitiful shacks dot the property, each home to a small family of black or mulatto

sharecroppers. Attempting to talk to the sharecroppers may be frustrating; they politely decline any invitation to conversation. In fact, most try to avoid eye contact. If the characters show any genuine kindness to any of the sharecroppers, however, they may be able to find out a few facts.

One young sharecropper, known as T. Paul (from *Petit Paul* or “Little Paul”) has some information he’d like to share and, if Marcellus LaBaptiste is not around, the young man approaches the group. T. Paul is a slight man in his mid-twenties. He wears overalls and an oversized, wide-brimmed hat that shades a youthful face.

T. Paul tells the characters that a few years back, he unearthed a human skull while digging in the fields. If the characters wish, he can take them to the approximate area in which he found it; those digging may attempt a **FATE** roll each hour to see if anything turns up. What they might discover is the body of Stephan Landreaux, buried here by Eddie LaRocca several years ago. Consisting now only of bones, the body is dressed in a tattered but still-recognizable Tulane University jacket. Thorough characters making a **TRIVIA** roll notice that the skull shows obvious signs of severe trauma; the parietal bone is badly fractured as if from a series of severe blows. T. Paul denies damaging the skull when he dug it up; he is a religious man and was careful to return the remains to their resting place. T. Paul cannot say how the body came to be here and he has never said anything about it to anyone, but frequent berating – and the occasional beating – by LaBaptiste has turned this usually reticent man to thinking of how to get revenge on the overseer.

Marcellus LaBaptiste

Overseeing the plantation for Marie Gallier is Marcellus LaBaptiste, a towering black man whose face is locked into a perpetual scowl. LaBaptiste is a cruel and wholly unlikable man. The sharecroppers fear him and what he might do to them should he become angered. In the past LaBaptiste has inflicted severe beatings on the sharecroppers for the most minor of offenses.

He lives in an outbuilding beside the plantation house and keeps a keen eye on the comings and goings of the sharecroppers and any visitors. There is a 75% chance during the day that he is outside “inspecting,” otherwise he is in his house, sleeping off a hangover. On any given day, there is a 30% chance 1D3 cultists are here with him. LaBaptiste’s home is a filthy one-room dwelling; soiled clothing and empty liquor bottles litter the ground, creating a possible hazard in the darkness. A loaded 20-gauge shotgun is propped beside the bed and several boxes of shells can be found nearby. In a battered shoe box under the bed are \$40 in small bills, a bowie knife, and what appears to be a dried and shriveled human ear.

LaBaptiste acts as a liaison between Marie Gallier and the cult, delivering monies or instructions as required. On the rare occasion that Marie spends the night at the plantation, she often summons the strapping LaBaptiste to her bed.

Stephan Landreaux

Neither wealthy nor notorious, Landreaux was a graduate student of anthropology at Tulane – his thesis was titled *Myths and Legends of Fiji, Tonga and Rotuma* – when he was recruited by Cèsar Gallier. After Gallier’s transformation, Landreaux began to have serious doubts about his own involvement and was troubled by what he had seen and done. Believing that Landreaux would confide in someone or go to the police, Marie Gallier had him killed by Eddie LaRocca.

Identifying Landreaux from the photograph proves somewhat difficult; canvassing the Tulane campus may, with a critical **FATE** roll, find Arthur George, a professor of mathematics who knew Landreaux when they were both students.

Professor George

An affable gentleman, Professor George describes Landreaux as a studious young man who had taken quite an interest in “primitive religions and rituals”

and had come across something in the local area that had utterly captivated him. He recalls that Landreaux spent a fair deal of time with a local couple (he doesn't recall the Gallier name, but recognizes Cèsar and Marie if shown the photograph) and later provided some assistance to the wife after her husband passed away. Professor George does not believe that Landreaux simply left town – it seemed quite out of character for the somewhat naïve young man. If asked about other friends he mentions that Landreaux had been spending a lot of time with “that cad LaRocca,” the son of the wealthy LaRocca shipping family. Professor George isn't quite sure what the two men could possibly have had in common and regrets not being more persistent in his warnings to Landreaux about associating with the “wrong crowd.” Professor George has always suspected foul play but has no direct evidence for his claim: “I think that LaRocca fellow must have had something to do with it, though. He was no good, through and through.” Professor George also recalls that Landreaux seemed distant, if not depressed, shortly before his disappearance.

Other Research

A **RESEARCH** roll made while searching through back numbers of the *Times-Picayune* turns up a brief article dated April 18, 1909 that mentions that Stephan Landreaux had been reported missing by university staff after not being seen for several weeks. It appears here as Player Aid #3.

In the end police were able to turn up no leads and assumed Landreaux had simply grown bored with his life in New Orleans and left the city, perhaps to continue his studies elsewhere. Attempting to locate others who knew Landreaux is difficult at best; at the GM’s option, the characters may stumble onto a former friend of Landreaux’s who recalls that the young man spent a great deal of time at one of the plantation homes outside of the city (the friend has no idea which one) and that Stephan had shown no inclination to leave the city. None of Landreaux’s family in Baton Rouge has any idea what may have happened to him.

Player Aid #3

TULANE STUDENT MISSING

Police Request Public Assistance

Tulane University staff have reported that Stephan Landreaux, a graduate student, has been missing for several weeks. Alerted by several students and faculty the University contacted police who in turn are requesting the assistance of the public.

Landreaux, a native of Baton Rouge, has been attending Tulane for five years. He is described as approximately six feet tall, of average build, with blond hair and blue eyes. Persons with information regarding Stephan Landreaux are asked to contact the New Orleans Police Department as soon as possible.

Eddie LaRocca

Notorious in certain circles, Eddie is the youngest son of the LaRocca family, long known in the city for its shipping business. Ultimately horrified by the cult with which he became involved – and terrified of its power – LaRocca now attempts to soothe his conscience with excessive drink and cheap prostitutes. A wastrel and virtually disowned by his family, LaRocca lives in a run-down apartment in the Vieux Carré.

LaRocca's family has been involved in the shipping industry for many years and, ironically, has had secret ties to the cult. Eddie is unaware that he carries with him the taint of something inhuman, as do all of his family – the price of their long involvement with the Cthulhu cult. For Eddie LaRocca this taint, carried through a trace of Deep One lineage, manifests itself as what might be diagnosed as schizophrenia, strange voices and visions that are the responses of LaRocca's mind to the dream-sendings of Cthulhu. It was this taint that subconsciously drew LaRocca to the Galliers and

even now continues to haunt him.

LaRocca bears little resemblance to his old photographs. He has gained a great deal of weight and has lost most of his hair. His skin is a waxy-yellow color with red blotches – rosacea – which are especially bad around his nose. His eyes are dark and bulging and almost look dead; heavy bags hang beneath them. His teeth are stained and rotting, and his breath reeks of liquor and spicy food. He wears a gold pocket watch with the initials "S.L." engraved inside (liberated from the unfortunate Stephan Landreaux).

If family members are asked about Eddie, most claim (truthfully) that they haven't seen him in several years, but that they believe he still lives somewhere in town. Most of the family are fairly well-to-do and are hesitant to provide much information for fear of embarrassment. Visiting the offices of the LaRocca Shipping Company at the foot of Jackson Avenue may be of some use. Characters making a successful **REPUTATION** roll are able to coax LaRocca's address from a clerk who also tells them that a check is issued to Eddie by mail each month, the amount being sufficient to live comfortably but unremarkably. Eddie has chosen a cheap part of town in order to save money to support his expensive habits.

Armed with only the photograph obtained in Galvez' apartment, the characters stand little chance of finding LaRocca. The one clue in the photo is the rather ornate walking-stick that appears in LaRocca's hand. Enquiring at pawn shops that deal in such items, characters making a successful **FATE** roll eventually turn up a walking-stick that looks remarkably similar. It is, in fact, LaRocca's. The owner of the store recalls a man selling it to him several years ago. Digging through his records, he uncovers a receipt made out to an Edward LaRocca for \$28.00, listing his current address in the Vieux Carré.

Eddie LaRocca's Apartment

LaRocca's bachelor apartment, a one-room affair in a decaying and unnumbered section of the Vieux

Carré, can be located with a successful **BLUFF** roll after speaking to one of the locals. LaRocca, allowed a moderate allowance by his family, spends many an hour staring into a glass of absinthe and alternately weeping and laughing to himself.

LaRocca is not liked by the locals and they would be happy to be rid of him. He is known to have a bad temper and a cruel streak: several young prostitutes have suffered terrible beatings while in his hire. The fact that LaRocca is being actively watched by the cult is the only thing keeping him alive.

Having partaken of many rituals, including those involving human sacrifice, LaRocca's sanity is questionable to say the least. Of late, LaRocca's conscience has begun to re-assert itself, as the faces of those he murdered are emerging from the depths of his memories, driving him deeper into drink.

LaRocca and Marie Gallier were lovers for some time during and after her husband's transformation, but Eddie was cast aside by Marie after he began to show signs of weakness: his commitment never firm, he simply wanted no more to do with the cult and the Minion.

Marie currently sees LaRocca as a pest, not a threat: "That cockroach" is how she refers to him. Eddie sees Marie as purely evil, and his hatred for her barely disguises the fact that he fears her and the cult greatly. If LaRocca is given the opportunity to betray Marie he will; he blames her for getting him involved with the cult in the first place.

An alliance with LaRocca is an uneasy one at best for a character's conscience. Although he is willing to betray his "friends," LaRocca demands a high price: his freedom. Promised protection from Marie Gallier and the cult, he tells the characters everything he knows if given the chance. Unfortunately for LaRocca it is highly likely someone in the cult will find out what he is up to, as his home is often under surveillance. The GM may choose a suitably hideous fate for LaRocca; his death should serve as a warning to any that would betray the cult. He may be tortured to death or

buried alive as opportunity dictates.

If the characters need to provide Legrasse with continued evidence of cult activity, producing LaRocca and his testimony would not only corroborate Legrasse's theory of "unseen masters" being at work in 1907, but would help convince him to aid the characters against the cult.

Brotherhood of the Sea

The Brotherhood of the Sea is, ostensibly, a seaman's union. Chartered in 1906 as an offshoot of the Atlantic Coast Seaman's Union (ACSU), the Brotherhood maintains its headquarters on the waterfront.

Many of the members of the Cthulhu cult belonged to the ACSU, but they were never able to subvert it. Following the 1907 raid, the survivors determined that establishing their own organization would be the most effective way to consolidate their power and to shield their activities. By 1921, a break from the ACSU was made and the Brotherhood of the Sea was formed.

Unlike the ACSU, which is comprised of honest and hard-working seafarers, the Brotherhood's members are a motley collection of thugs, mongrels and riffraff from around the globe. For most of the Brothers, English is a second – or even a third – language; some few speak no English at all. At any given time, fully half of the membership is at sea, where they serve on the meanest and most desperate of enterprises afloat. Most reputable shippers won't hire a member of the Brotherhood and other seafarers typically refuse to sail with them.

The Brotherhood is headquartered in an old warehouse whose singular dereliction is noticeable even in a district full of derelicts. During the day, surly-looking characters of imponderable heritage loaf around the building, sharing crude jokes in a cacophony of foreign tongues loosened by even cruder homemade liquor. These thugs – there are usually 1D4+2 of them – are armed with a variety of weapons, including chains, knives and broken

bottles. They answer no questions and discourage would-be visitors through silent intimidation.

Cult Thugs

These degenerate thugs lounge around the building, intimidating interlopers. Most are sailors of dubious heritage; most have nothing more than a few years' education. They are bad tempered and foul mouthed. They serve the cult faithfully, in anticipation of the day when they will be "gods among men."

Four Thugs

	One	Two	Three	Four
Strength	12	13	14	13
Endurance	11	12	13	13
Size	13	13	12	13
Willpower	13	14	11	11
Agility	12	14	13	12
Hit Points	12	13	13	13

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: .32 revolver 50%, 1D8

Skills: Eldritch Lore 05%, English 25%, Evade 30%, Heavy Equipment 45%, Hide 40%, Intimidate 35%, Listen 40%, Occult 20%, Pilot Boat 35%, Stealth 40%, Track 30%

The warehouse backs onto the river where a small jetty – visible only from the water – provides access to the water. The Brotherhood owns a ship, the *Terrapin*, which is usually moored here. Several others may be out to sea at any given time, on inscrutable errands. When the stars come right and R'lyeh begins to rise the Brothers will use these vessels to attend the spectacle. The ship also provides a convenient method of escape should they require one. Facing the street, a pair of loading docks with oversized corrugated steel doors accommodates delivery by truck, but shipments occur rarely.

The office itself comprises only a small portion of the building: the rest of the warehouse has been given over to living quarters for the Brothers. During the day there are 1D4-1 members here, loafing, drinking, and playing cards. At night,

however, the crude bunks are crammed with 2D6+1 occupants who sleep lightly and do not take kindly to being disturbed.

The offices are disorganized. In one, a small filing cabinet holds a partial membership list identifying only those who reside in New Orleans. In many cases, addresses and first names are omitted. An account book shows dues received and owed (mostly the latter) along with expenses. A **BOOKKEEPING** roll indicates that without some other unrecorded source of income the Brotherhood would have been bankrupted a long time ago. In some entries, large sums of money mysteriously appear without justification. Correspondence in various files demonstrates an integral link with various locations around the world – including Greenland and China – although the nature of the correspondence is mundane and business-related.

Edouard Carrefour, the Brotherhood's president, is a tall, powerfully-built mulatto with scintillating, almost hypnotic, blue eyes. He wears dark tailored suits and gold jewelry. Born and raised in a culture steeped in voodoo tradition, M. Carrefour learned powerful magic. It was as a member of the ACSU that he acquired the Cthulhu statue. Troubled by the disturbing dreams it gave him, however, Carrefour sold it cheaply to Bertrand Dallaire, a New Orleans bookseller. Cèsar Gallier purchased the statue and tracked Carrefour down, introducing him to the cult. After the 1907 raid, Carrefour disappeared for several years, spent traveling to exotic ports and gathering support among other survivors before returning to New Orleans, where he broke ranks with the ACSU and formed the Brotherhood of the Sea.

In person, M. Carrefour seems incongruously civil in comparison to the rank and file of the Brotherhood – but underlying the polite facade is a sense of menace. Despite the presence of Brotherhood thugs outside the headquarters, persistent characters are eventually granted an interview with M. Carrefour. His handshake is firm, almost crushing; in conversation, his unblinking gaze never wavers from the person to whom he speaks, a most disturbing phenomenon. He listens

intently when others are speaking, often slowly turning a thick gold band on the middle finger of his left hand.

Shelves on the wall behind his desk are lined with ceramic jars, many of them stoppered and etched with curious glyphs. These vessels contain the imprisoned souls of those who have earned M. Carrefour's enmity, and their soulless bodies serve the Brotherhood as zombies in the swamp around the temple. One of these vessels contains the soul of Joseph D. Galvez. Should the characters somehow locate it, an **OCCULT** roll suggests that smashing it will free his soul and allow him to enter the afterlife.

M. Carrefour answers the characters' questions politely, if evasively, but there is always the hint of menace, that this is not a man to anger. He denies any knowledge of – or interest in – voodoo, the occult or Cthulhu but the tone of his response says *prove me wrong*. M. Carrefour refuses to be drawn into an argument and shrugs off even the most inflammatory accusations with a smile. His unflappable demeanor is unsettling.

His private persona, however, is quite different. Most nights, M. Carrefour delivers stirring sermons to the Brothers assembled in the warehouse, exhorting them to be unwavering in their faith and to await the day when “we shall live as gods.” Aware that complex philosophical platitudes would be lost on the Brothers, M. Carrefour tells them that when Cthulhu returns they will be “free and wild, with all men shouting and killing and reveling in joy.” These prospects are always met with frenzied enthusiasm. For these and other ceremonial occasions, M. Carrefour strips to the waist, revealing curious scars upon his chest and back – of which some of the latter appear to be old welts raised by whipping.

Atlantic Coast Seaman's Union

As some members of the Brotherhood of the Sea formerly belonged to the ACSU, a visit here may corroborate the list found in the Brotherhood's office. Gaining access to the ACSU's records,

however, is not easy; the most direct method is to enlist Inspector Legrasse's assistance. Even with a letter of introduction from Legrasse, a **REPUTATION** roll is required. On their own, characters may attempt a **REPUTATION** roll followed by a **CONVINCE** roll. Alternatively, the characters may attempt to gain access by employing more creative, if illegal, methods. Breaking in at night is an option, as the building is guarded only by a lone watchman and his aged dog. During the day, accessing the files requires distracting the clerks long enough to locate (and read or steal) the relevant information.

The handful of names on the Brotherhood's list that also appear on the ACSU's list invariably belong to those who were in arrears for dues owed or disciplined for a variety of minor infractions or both. The only pattern to emerge is, perhaps, already obvious: the members of the Brotherhood are, by and large, incorrigible troublemakers.

M. Carrefour's name appears on the active membership list from 1898 to 1907. From 1908 to 1919, his name is listed as inactive; no dues were paid, no meetings attended, no work reported. In 1920, his name again appears on the active list but in 1921 (the year he split from the ACSU and formed the Brotherhood of the Sea), M. Carrefour was struck from the rolls. His name does not appear again.

Finding someone to discuss M. Carrefour is difficult. Most won't even acknowledge knowing who he is; others are reluctant to talk about him and when they do it's in hushed tones, as though he might somehow overhear. A successful **FATE** roll is required to locate someone who actually knows anything about M. Carrefour; a subsequent **REPUTATION** roll convinces this person that the characters aren't agents of M. Carrefour himself. A **CONVINCE** roll finally gets him to talk. This sequence of rolls may only be attempted once per character.

Having found someone willing to talk, the characters learn that M. Carrefour was a troublemaker, an “agitator” who sought constantly

to subvert the membership of the union to his own hidden agenda. His typical targets were poor, uneducated members of “foreign blood.” In the opinion of the characters’ informant, the ACSU was better off without “them types” anyway.

The union’s leaders are aware that some of its members were arrested by the police in 1907, but the details are murky. The ACSU believes that a few of its members, amounting to no more than a tiny fraction, were involved in some sort of voodoo ceremony – hardly surprising given the varied background of its members. No one is aware of M. Carrefour’s involvement.

The Bayou

The area which in which the raid of 1907 took place is located south of the city, in Lafourche Parish. Getting there may, however, prove to be a challenge. If the characters have recovered a map or have directions from Inspector Legrasse, they should have no problem with the first leg of the journey. By automobile it is a two-hour drive south of the city along roads that gradually degenerate to narrow, bumpy trails snaking through swampy terrain. The drive ends literally where the road does, at the beginning of a dark cypress wood that extends into the bayou as far as the eye can see.

After this point the path becomes less certain and the characters may wish to hire a guide. There are several Cajun villages along the way at which they might stop and ask directions. The folk they encounter are polite and happy to lend their aid, although conversation may be difficult because of their unique dialect. Most of the Cajuns speak little if any English; characters with a skill in **FRENCH** can muddle through a conversation at ½ their usual chance.

Very few of the Cajuns remember much of the raid of 1907. It happened suddenly, at night, but most can relate the tale of the police coming up from New Orleans and bringing a bunch of strange and foreign men out of the bayou. Most were alive but

some were dead or injured. They strongly deny that these men were Cajuns; several can relate that strange groups had been coming to that area for many years, and were generally considered responsible for several deaths and disappearances in the local community. The area in which the raid took place, and a large part of the swamp beyond it, is known by locals to be haunted – by what they cannot say, but talk of odd lights and strange cries, ghosts, a lake hidden deep in the bayou and encounters with odd strangers predominate. If questioned further about strangers seen in the area, several Cajuns indicate that a man and a woman have been seen hiking into the woods several times over the past few years. Physical descriptions closely match those of Marie Gallier and Marcellus LaBaptiste.



What dangers lurk in the bayou?

Some of the older locals relate how, years ago, squatters who lived deeper in the bayou began to

have problems. There were many reports of strange lights from deep in the bayou; tales were told of a hidden lake that lay in the directions of the lights and it is possible that these squatters fished the lake and knew some of its secrets. The older locals soon discovered that a group of outsiders had taken to coming to the bayou. At first, no one paid much attention to the newcomers but as some of the squatters began to go missing, they came to the conclusion that these outsiders were somehow involved.

Zepherin Comeaux

A long-time resident of the area, Comeaux is a crusty old Cajun guide and *raconteur* who knows the bayou country and its stories very well. Although weathered by time and his environment, Comeaux is still spry enough to traverse the bayou with the agility of a much younger man. Anyone asking around in the local Cajun community for someone who knows the area and its stories well is quickly led to Comeaux. He can be hired as a guide for a dollar or two per day. Comeaux is hesitant to guide the group beyond the site of the raid but his curiosity and desire to earn a few more dollars probably overcome his fear.

If Comeaux is shown the photograph of the “unseen masters” he proudly proclaims that he himself took the picture a long time ago, with a camera one of the men had brought along. Comeaux had been acting as a guide for the people in the photograph (he has long since forgotten their names), who were looking for the stone monolith in the swamp. One of the men (Cèsar Gallier) was consulting a notebook of some sort – Comeaux tried to steal a look at it, but “it looked like scribbles and jottings, don't know what kind of sense anyone could make from that!”

The group was interested in tales of a hidden lake deeper inside the bayou. Cajun stories tell of a haunted lake deep in the bayou, believed to be a sacred place from ancient times. Asked why the Cajuns avoid the lake, Comeaux states that they are a superstitious folk and that “there ain't no fish in there, at least there ain't none that have ever been

caught.” The people in the photograph seemed excited once they got to the lake, and then dismissed Comeaux. He saw all four come out of the bayou a few days later.

Into the Swamp

If the characters make a successful **TRACK** roll, or have brought a guide along, the remains of a trail that winds into the darkness of the woods can be discovered. The trail itself can be quite wet and difficult to traverse, depending on the time of year and the weather. The noise caused by the characters splashing and slogging through the bayou echoes through the surrounding canopy of trees and moss. Because it has not seen extensive use over the years, the trail is overgrown and at times hard to follow. In particularly adverse conditions, an additional **TRACK** roll may be required.

Piles of dark stones and portions of rotting walls rise up through the muck, perhaps tempting characters to examine them, but there is nothing to be found other than a growing sense of isolation and decay. About an hour or so into their muddy walk, the characters come upon the ruins of the squatter settlement whose inhabitants sought Inspector Legrasse's aid in 1907.

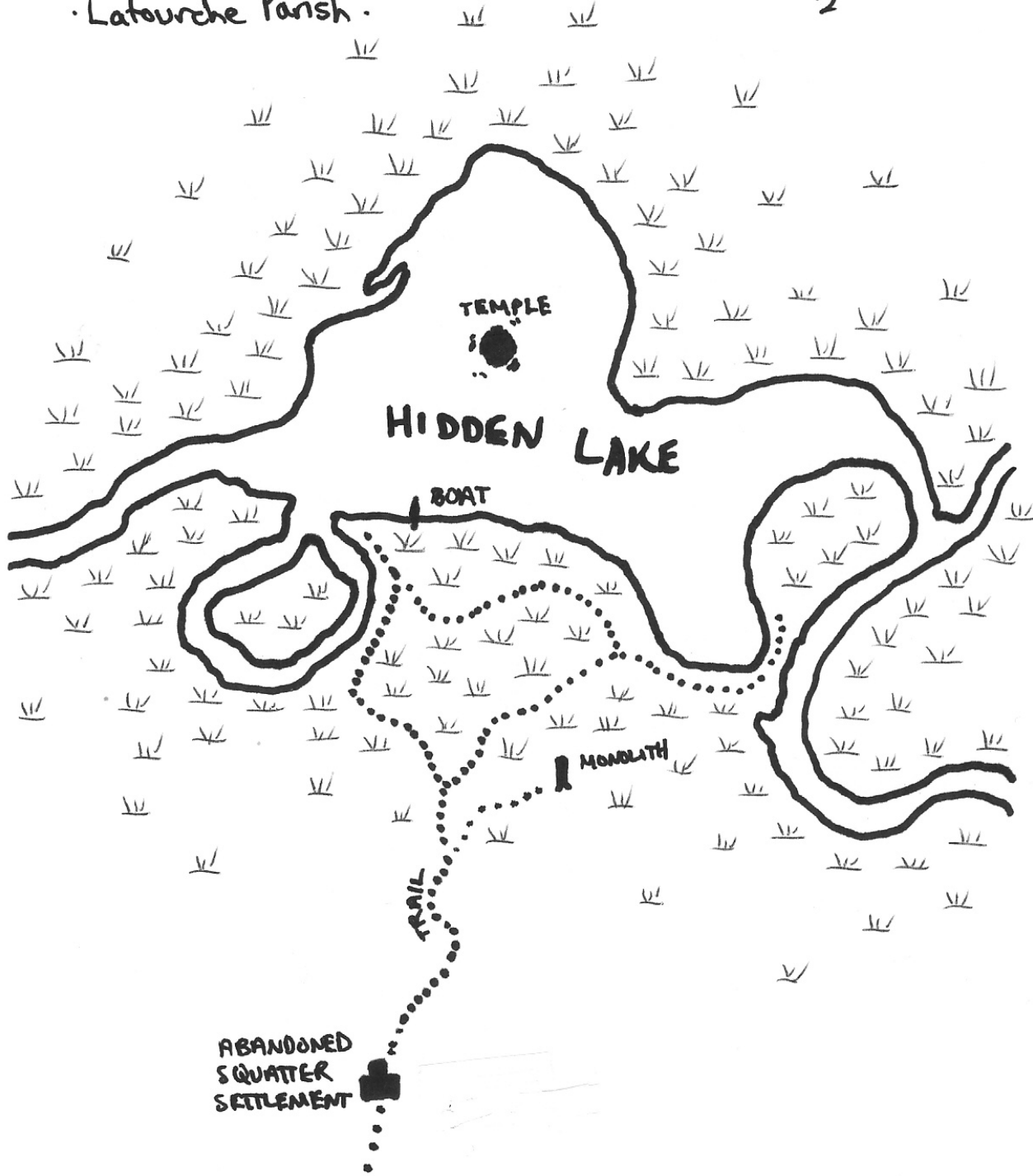
The Squatter Settlement

A collection of no more than a score of leaning wooden huts, this settlement has long been abandoned. Most of the buildings are overgrown with moss and any contents left behind have long since rotted or rusted away. There is little of note to discover here. Comeaux, if he has accompanied the characters, suggests that this site might serve as a good location to make a base camp, as it is relatively dry and somewhat sheltered.

BAYOU COUNTRY

· Lafourche Parish ·

NEW ORLEANS ↑



Dangers of the Bayou

Although no real danger exists along the old path, those straying far from the area could encounter several dangers. Characters may encounter any or all of the following, at the GM's discretion:

- Poisonous snakes lurking in the water: Move 6, Agility 13; 4 Hit Points; Bite (40%) Potency 10 venom
- Alligator: Move 6/8; Strength 22; Endurance 18; Size 22; Agility 7; Hit Points 21; Bite (50%) 1D10+DM; Armor: 5 point hide. Skills: Hide (60%), Stealth (50%)
- Unexpected deep water; fall in a “hole” 1D10+2 feet deep – Drowning may apply.

Additional natural hazards may occur as the GM desires.

Site of the Raid

Another hour or so of travel through the swamp brings the characters to the site of the 1907 raid. As the trees begin to thin, a dry and grassy mound can be seen to rise, forming a small island in the shallow and stagnant bayou. Atop the island sits a granite monolith some eight feet high, the discovery of which serves to confirm Legrasse's story. The wooden scaffolds that once stood here have long since rotted away. Long abandoned as a worship site, the area reveals little of its past; there is no obvious sign of the horrible rituals of twenty years ago. Those with sensitive psyches, however, may begin to sense a powerful residue of evil here.

The monolith is unremarkable in appearance; it bears no markings or symbols and its surface is wet and slippery, making it dangerous to climb should anyone be so inclined. At the base of the monolith,

however, is a low mound of earth which may be noticed with a **DETECT** roll. A subsequent **INTUITION** roll suggests that the earth here has been recently disturbed. Anyone digging here quickly comes to the realization that this is some sort of grave.

A few scant feet below the surface lies a flimsy wooden coffin. Attempting to remove it only serves to damage it, but the lid is only loosely nailed on and may be pried off with little difficulty. Within, a grim discovery awaits. The coffin contains the body of Joseph D. Galvez, recognizable with an **INTUITION** roll from the photograph shown to the characters by Inspector Legrasse. Deep scratch marks embedded within the inside of the lid offer, with an **INTUITION** roll, an even grimmer revelation: Galvez was buried alive! **MENTAL HEALTH** loss is 1/1D4 for this horrible realization. A subsequent **OCCULT** roll suggests that this method of murder is often associated with voodoo. If the body is exhumed and an autopsy performed, the cause of death may be determined to be suffocation. Injuries to the head, hands and feet are commensurate with those that might have been made during frantic – but utterly futile – attempts to escape.

The Hidden Lake

The dark, stagnant waters of the lake stretch out from the shoreline into the mist of the swamp, obscuring any view of the far side. Rotting cypress trees dripping with Spanish moss encircle the lake, their dark and distorted trunks leaning precariously toward the water. Moldering trunks protrude through the surface of the lake, their dark shapes jutting out like weathered tombstones in a watery cemetery. Unlike other parts of the bayou, there is no wildlife in the lake or in the surrounding area, save for insects and the occasional snake.

The lake itself is oval in shape, about a mile-and-a-half wide by four miles long. At no point, however, are the characters able to see to the other side of the lake. At best, visibility is limited to 400 feet or so before the mist hides what lies beyond. Duckweed

covers large portions of the lake's surface, serving as a tissue-thin green carpet. While easily maneuvered through, duckweed may easily be mistaken for solid ground if the characters are in a panic. In the center of the lake lies a partially submerged temple. It is here that Cèsar Gallier, now a Minion of Cthulhu, lives and it is here that the characters face their greatest peril. The first problem is navigating the lake. Swimming is an option only for those of stout constitution and low intelligence; while the lake ranges in depth from one to twenty feet, the bottom is soft and those attempting to walk on it find themselves sinking another 1D8 feet into the muck and rot that lies there. Characters sucked far enough into the muck to become fully submerged are subject to drowning. An actual swim to the temple is a distance of at least two-thirds of a mile, depending on where the swimmers start. Because the lake waters are choked with weeds and other, unknown debris, two consecutive **SWIM** rolls are required to successfully make it to the temple.

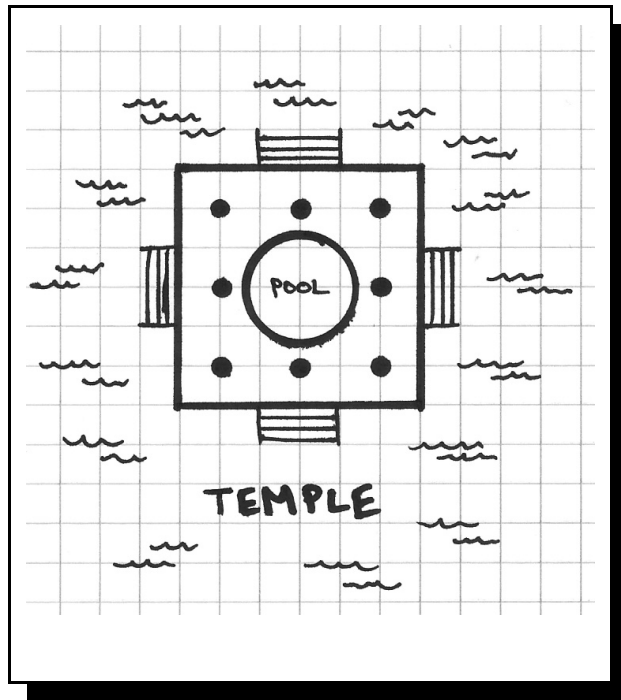
A safer option is to find a boat of some sort. Comeaux can provide the characters with a flat-bottomed boat ideal for shallow marshland, but it must be hauled overland to the lake. Anyone making a critical **DETECT** roll locates a small wooden boat hidden along the shore. This boat belongs to Marie Gallier; it is unremarkable but holds three people safely.

Those unfortunates who inhale or swallow the lake water are required to make an **ENDURANCEx3** roll to avoid a week-long bout of severe cramps, nausea and diarrhea. Onset is 1D3 hours; **ENDURANCE** is halved for the duration (1D4+3 days).

The Temple

The temple is a simple open structure, square in shape, each side 60 feet long and with a roof supported by wet blackish pillars along the perimeter. The floor of the temple is raised on four large steps which rise a total of eight feet from the base. The interior is barren, save for a large circular

ring, thirty feet in diameter in the center of the floor.



The temple is now mostly sunk into the lake; only the roof and the uppermost portion of the pillars remain above water. A **SWIM** roll is required from anyone seeking entrance to the temple, which is composed of dark gray granite – much like the monolith on the island. Strange runes decorate the area above the doorway. Those making a successful **ELDRITCH LORE** roll determine that these runes are directly related to Cthulhu and his servants, and seem to indicate that this structure hosts some sort of magical portal.

The interior of the temple is dark and almost wholly submerged. The circular area in the floor once held a reflecting pool which is also submerged but still serves as a gate of sorts; it is coterminous with the sunken city of R'lyeh, and anyone illuminating the waters in temple – keeping in mind that any light source will have to function under water – sees murky images of that most terrible of places through the pool. Strange pillars and twisted staircases, bizarrely shaped entrances, and stones twisted and shaped into impossible curves and angles are among the first things noticed; those who wish to continue observing stand a 10% chance per

round of glancing something truly hideous – a white, bloated Cthulhu-Spawn. Failing a **FATE** roll indicates that the Cthulhu-Spawn notices that it is being observed; it bangs up “against the glass,” so to speak, startling the observer for a 1D6/1D20 **MENTAL HEALTH** loss. Luckily, the creature cannot pass through on its own; the Minion, however, has the ability to call it forth.

Cthulhu-Spawn

Strength	82	Endurance	85
Size	90	Intelligence	21
Willpower	21	Agility	11
Hit Points	108		

Move 20/20 swimming

Damage Modifier: +10d6

Weapons: 1D4 Tentacles 80%, 5D6

Claw 80%, 10D6

Armor: 10 point hide & blubber; regenerates 3 Hit Points per round

Mental Health Loss: 1D6/1D20

Grotesque and Arrogant

Because the Minion has lived in the lake for many years, it is able to quickly navigate underwater, slipping quickly between the submerged tree stumps and pillars of the temple which it can use to hide behind. Any characters in the water are at a great disadvantage; they may be subject to the claw attack of the Minion or it may attempt to grapple them and pull them under the water. Assuming the characters are in a small boat, the Minion may attempt to overturn it. Given time, the Minion may also attempt to summon a Cthulhu-Spawn through the portal. As the Minion is far faster and much more capable in the water, it attempts to stay in the lake and avoids venturing on land, especially to engage in combat.

Cèsar Gallier, Minion of Cthulhu

Strength	17	Endurance	16
Size	19	Intelligence	17
Willpower	19	Agility	11
Charisma	n/a	Education	n/a
Mental Health	00	Hit Points	18

Move: 6/10 swimming

Damage Modifier: +1D6

Weapons: Claw 30%, 1D6+2+DM

Armor: None, but Minions regenerate Hit Points at the rate of 1D6 points per round. They are vulnerable to magical attack.

Spells: Call Cthulhu, Call Deep One, Call Cthulhu-Spawn, Clutch of Cthulhu, Create Mist, Journey of the Spirit, Summon & Bind Nightgaunt

Skills: Anthropology 50%, Astronomy 20%, Eldritch Lore 45%, French 70%, History 40%, Listen Under Water 65%, Occult 60%, Psychology 45%, Swim 65%

Mental Health Loss: 1/1D8

The Minion, having lived in the lake for many years, is now ready to pass through the gate in the temple one last time, to swim with its Deep One cousins in fantastic R'lyeh forever. In time the cultists come to perform one final celebratory ritual, after which the Minion departs to serve Great Cthulhu directly.

Gallier retains a flickering memory of his previous life but he has become so utterly insane that it is nearly meaningless to him; his humanity is but a shadow. Gallier has made ample use of the gateway in the sunken temple to journey to R'lyeh and to learn some of the secrets of his master. While not deep in meditation in the temple, he spends time swimming through the dark waters of the lake.

Ending the Adventure

Successfully concluding this adventure involves the destruction of the cult, a difficult challenge for even the best-prepared group. Whether Legrasse offers to aid the characters or not (see *Enlisting Legrasse's Assistance*, above), the climax of the adventure ultimately involves the characters navigating

through the bayou on a mission to destroy the temple. It is not difficult for Legrasse to call in favors and round up a small posse of men – mostly retired colleagues – along with some dynamite; several local Cajuns might also be pressed into service if need be. Along the way, the Brotherhood of the Sea must be dealt with, and any cultists who survive that encounter will surely be out for vengeance in the bayou. The final threat, the Minion, may be the most difficult task because of its resistance to non-magical attacks – unless Cecile Tabron has employed her Enchant Blade spell to provide the characters with an blessed dagger.

Mental Health Rewards + Penalties

There are a number of possible rewards and penalties at the conclusion of this adventure:

- Killing the Minion earns a bonus of 1D8 **MENTAL HEALTH**, but allowing it to escape costs 1D4 points.
- For each “unseen master” killed or arrested, the characters gain 1D2 **MENTAL HEALTH**, but they lose 1D2 for each that escapes.
- Scattering the cultists (possibly including the destruction of their warehouse) brings a reward of 1D4 **MENTAL HEALTH**.
- If the adventure ends with the cult in possession of the Cthulhu statuette, the characters suffer a loss of 1D6 **MENTAL HEALTH**.
- If Inspector Legrasse is killed, the characters lose 1D2 **MENTAL HEALTH**.
- Destroying the temple gains a reward of 1D6 **MENTAL HEALTH**.
- Recovering or releasing Galvez’ soul warrants a reward of 1D3 **MENTAL HEALTH**.

New Spells

Create Drawing Powder: This spell imbues powdered lodestone or magnetized iron filings with the power to attract love, money, power or general good fortune. It requires the expenditure of two Magic Points but no Mental Health points. The powder increases the owner's **WILLPOWER** by one (and therefore, his or her **FATE** by 5%). It is typically kept in a pouch and, to be effective, should be worn around the neck, like an amulet.

Create Goofer Dust: This spell enchants earth taken from a freshly dug grave. It requires two Magic Points and no Mental Health points. The use of Goofer Dust allows the Dreamlands-only spell Burst Heart to be used in the waking world.

Dance of the Loa: The *loa* are, collectively, the gods and spirits of the voodoo religion; they seemingly correspond to some of the Elder Gods. This spell invokes the spirit of one or more *loa* to possess the caster, but the ceremony is long and strenuous. Throughout, assistants beat the ritual drums and the caster shakes the *asson* (sacred rattle). The spell requires the expenditure of 1 Magic Point per 10% chance of success; a roll of 96-00 is always a failure. No Mental Health points are required.

The dance itself begins with a slow, jerky rhythm that slowly accelerates into a lewd and writhing whirl of frenzied, uninhibited gestures. When the climax of the dance is reached the caster goes limp, head drooping, arms and legs lurching drunkenly. As the god takes possession of the caster, tremblings and convulsions begin; very often the possessed individual thrashes about wildly, as though having a seizure.

The *loa* are often temperamental and narrow-minded; if ignored or slighted, they are likely to avenge themselves. Events during the possession depend on the nature of the *loa* summoned. Benign *loa* may freely offer enlightenment or assistance, while those of malevolent demeanour may threaten

or attempt to frighten, or perhaps merely expect some favour in return. Possession may last from a few seconds to the length of the entire ceremony. When it is all over, the caster remembers nothing of what he said or did. Witnessing the Dance of the Loa for the first time costs the viewer 1/1D6 points of **MENTAL HEALTH**.

Enslave the Soul: This is a potent voodoo enchantment. The intended victim must be human, and the spell requires seven drops of his blood. A blood sacrifice (typically a chicken or goat) is also required; the intended victim's blood is poured over the hot, quivering heart of the sacrifice, an incantation is made, and the offering is burned. The spell takes about a minute to complete and the caster loses 1D6 **MENTAL HEALTH** points.

Success is automatic, but the name of the intended victim must be known to the caster. The victim is subject to the whim of the caster and powerless to resist his commands, even to the extent of self-destruction. The victim will not knowingly harm the caster directly or indirectly and he will always seek to protect the caster from harm caused by others. Many times, the victim never realizes that his soul has been imprisoned.

The ashes representing the soul of the victim must be kept in a container of some sort, typically a sealed ceramic jar. This container is usually stored in a secret place known only to the caster. The effects of this powerful spell are permanent until dispelled by one of several methods: the death of the caster; the destruction of the ceramic jar containing the imprisoned soul; or, at the GM's discretion, the use of some form of magical exorcism. The death of the victim does not negate the effects of this spell; the victim awakens 1D3+1 nights after death and claws his way from the grave, a mindless corpse still enslaved by the caster – treat the victim as a zombie.



Statistics

JOHN RAYMOND LEGRASSE

Retired Police Inspector, age 58

Strength	12	Endurance	14
Size	11	Intelligence	14
Willpower	15	Agility	13
Charisma	11	Education	17
Mental Health	70	Hit Points	13

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: .38 revolver 45%, 1D10

Skills: Climb 35%, Convince 15%, Detect 59%, Eldritch Lore 02%, English 72%, Evade 34%, French 44%, History 27%, Interrogate 85%, Law 35%, Listen 80%, Photography 22%, Psychology 70%, Reputation 30%, Research 31%, Ride 45%, Stealth 39%, Spanish 18%, Track 40%

EDOUARD CARREFOUR

Union President and Cult Priest, age 47

Strength	17	Endurance	14
Size	17	Intelligence	13
Willpower	15	Agility	18
Charisma	16	Education	11
Mental Health	00	Hit Points	16

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Bowie knife 55%, 1D4+2+DM
.38 revolver 40%, 1D10

Skills: Bluff 40%, Camouflage 30%, Climb 50%, Convince 95%, Creole 70%, Detect 55%, Eldritch Lore 10%, English 85%, Evade 45%, French 90%, Hide 60%, History 50%, Jump 40%, Listen 45%, Navigate 60%, Occult 80%, Psychology 35%, Stealth 60%, Throw 40%, Track 35%

Spells: Call Cthulhu, Call Deep Ones, Clutch of Cthulhu, Create Drawing Powder*, Dance of the Loa*, Enslave the Soul*

TYPICAL CULT THUGS

These degenerate thugs are typically found in or around the Brotherhood of the Sea building on the waterfront. They may also be encountered in the bayou, near the temple. Most are sailors of dubious heritage; few have anything more than a few years' education. They are bad-tempered and foul-mouthed, and serve the cult faithfully, in anticipation of the day when they will be "gods among men."

Four Thugs

	One	Two	Three	Four
Strength	12	13	14	13
Endurance	11	12	13	13
Size	13	13	12	13
Willpower	13	14	11	11
Agility	12	14	13	12
Hit Points	12	13	13	13

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: .32 revolver 50%, 1D8

Skills: Eldritch Lore 05%, English 25%, Evade 30%, Heavy Equipment 45%, Hide 40%, Intimidate 35%, Listen 40%, Occult 20%, Pilot Boat 35%, Stealth 40%, Track 30%

MARIE GALLIER

Aging Seductress, age 44

Strength	11	Endurance	15
Size	10	Intelligence	14
Willpower	15	Agility	14
Charisma	11	Education	14
Mental Health	00	Hit Points	13

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: .22 Automatic 24%, 1D6

Skills: Anthropology 25%, Bluff 35%, Bookkeeping 25%, Convince 55%, Detect 45%, Eldritch Lore 20%, First Aid 45%, French 55%, Hide 30%, Listen 45%, Natural Lore 45%, Negotiate 45%, Occult 35%, Psychology 45%, Reputation 55%, Stealth 40%

CECILE TABRON**Voodoo Priestess, age 28**

Strength	12	Endurance	15
Size	10	Intelligence	17
Willpower	16	Agility	15
Charisma	17	Education	14
Mental Health	60	Hit Points	13

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: Knife 45%, 1D4+2 plus poison POT 10

Skills: Astronomy 15%, Chemistry 70%, Convince 60%, Creole 75%, Dance 70%, Detect 45%, Eldritch Lore 07%, English 55%, French 45%, Hide 50%, Listen 45%, Medicine 55%, Natural Lore 35%, Negotiate 50%, Occult 60%, Pharmacy 40%, Psychology 45%, Sing 50%, Stealth 75%, Spanish 25%

Spells: Beguile Victim, Call Ghoul, Cause Fear, Cause Nightmare, Create Drawing Powder*, Create Goofer Dust*, Create Ordinary Zombie, Dance of the Loa*, Domination, Enchant Blade, Enslave the Soul*, Exorcise Devil, Fog Memory, Heal, Nyambe Willpower, Burst Heart**, Suggest, Summon Ghost

* = new spell

** = alteration of existing spell

LIL JOHNSON**Worried Housekeeper, age 29**

Strength	12	Endurance	12
Size	09	Intelligence	12
Willpower	10	Agility	13
Charisma	15	Education	10
Mental Health	47	Hit Points	11

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: Small Knife 40%, 1D4+DM

Kick 45%, 1D6+DM

Skills: Bluff 25%, Cooking 50%, Evade 45%, First Aid 45%, Hide 40%, Listen 55%, Natural Lore 40%, Negotiate 35%, Stealth 40%, Voodoo 25%

T. PAUL**Brave Sharecropper, age 27**

Strength	14	Endurance	15
Size	08	Intelligence	14
Willpower	14	Agility	16
Charisma	12	Education	10
Mental Health	67	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: Hoe 65%, 1D6+1+DM

Knife 24%, 1D4+DM

Skills: Bluff 25%, Camouflage 35%, Climb 75%, Detect 60%, Evade 40%, Hide 45%, Mechanics 40%, Natural Lore 20%, Stealth 40%, Swim 45%, Throw 40%, Wood Carving 45%

MARCELLUS LABAPTISTE**Cultist and Cruel Overseer, age 37**

Strength	16	Endurance	14
Size	17	Intelligence	09
Willpower	11	Agility	12
Charisma	13	Education	07
Mental Health	00	Hit Points	16

Damage Modifier: +1D6

Weapons: Punch 70%, 1D3+DM

Club 55%, 1D6+DM

12 Gauge Shotgun 45%, 4D6/2D6/1D6

Skills: Bluff 45%, Detect 55%, Drive 40%, Listen 45%, Natural Lore 40%, Occult 15%, Track 45%

EDDIE LAROCCA**Feckless Pervert, age 53**

Strength	12	Endurance	11
Size	15	Intelligence	13
Willpower	13	Agility	14
Charisma	11	Education	14
Mental Health	21	Hit Points	13

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: .32 Revolver 35%, 1D8

Heavy Walking Stick 40%, 1D8+DM

Skills: Anthropology 10%, Bluff 50%, Bookkeeping 40%, Camouflage 35%, Drink to Forget 65%, Eldritch Lore 08%, French 30%, Law 40%, Negotiate 55%, Occult 25%, Sing 35%, Spanish 40%

ZEPHERIN COMEAUX

Grizzled Cajun Guide and Raconteur, age 64

Strength	11	Endurance	15
Size	10	Intelligence	14
Willpower	13	Agility	13
Charisma	09	Education	08
Mental Health	65	Hit Points	13

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: 20 Gauge Shotgun 45%, 2D6/1D6/1D3
Machete 50%, 1D6+DM

Skills: Camouflage 30%, Climb 50%, Detect 42%,
English 40%, First Aid 50%, Listen 45%,
Mechanics 40%, Natural Lore 60%, Navigate 50%,
Negotiate 35%, Occult 15%, Stealth 35%, Swim
37%, Track 50%

FOUR STURDY POLICEMEN

Former colleagues of Inspector Legrasse, who may be called upon to recreate the raid of 1907. If more policemen are required, repeat the statistics as necessary.

	One	Two	Three	Four
Strength	16	15	16	15
Endurance	14	18	16	15
Size	15	17	15	16
Willpower	10	12	13	15
Agility	14	13	14	13
Hit Points	15	18	16	16

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Nightstick 75%, 1D6+DM
Punch 55%, 1D3+DM

12-gauge shotgun 30%, 4D6/2D6/1D6
.38 revolver 60%, 1D10

Skills: Bluff 40%, Climb 60%, Detect 50%, Drive
45%, First Aid 40%, Hide 30%, Jump 40%, Law
40%, Listen 55%, Psychology 25%, Stealth 25%,
Track 25%

The Usurpers

Wherein the characters find themselves on the horns of a terrible dilemma

*The world is the womb, and the children of the kingdom
are the seed of the wicked.*

– Chibcha Indian proverb

The characters become involved in this adventure when Karen Clifford, a Miskatonic University sophomore, disappears. Karen might be a friend or relative of one or more of the characters, as the GM sees fit. If any of the characters are students, Karen might be a classmate or old flame; faculty characters might be approached by Leonard MacTier, Karen’s archaeology professor, and asked to assist in the search for the missing girl. Optionally, Karen Clifford’s parents may contact the characters to enlist their assistance.

Gamemaster’s Information

In 1934, the Miskatonic University Expedition to Costa Rica brought back a living specimen of a humanoid race unknown to science. This specimen was a male *xo tl’mi-go*, and it escaped into the tunnels beneath the campus before any scientific study could be undertaken. Over the decades the creature – and its offspring – have assaulted and impregnated a number of unfortunate Arkham women, and now there is a small clan of *xo tl’mi-go* living beneath the city.

Recently, while exploring the tunnels beneath the campus with the Infiltrators, a loose-knit group of urban explorers, MU sophomore Karen Clifford was observed by the *xo tl’mi-go* and followed back to her dormitory. The *xo tl’mi-go* watched her movements for a few days and, when the opportunity arose, broke into her room and

proceeded to assault her in a manner most unspeakable.

The incident so traumatized Karen that she blocked it from her mind. Only when Karen later discovered she was pregnant did the memory of that night return to her, in the form of vivid but disjointed flashbacks. Karen never revealed her pregnancy, or her memory of the incident, to anyone. Now close to term, Karen has been taken by the *xo tl’mi-go* to their lair below the campus to give birth. Locating her is the least of the characters’ worries; dealing with the moral and ethical issues surrounding her unborn child may prove a much greater challenge.

The Infiltrators

This is a loose network of individuals in Arkham whose hobby/obsession is urban exploration – the noble art of going where you’re not supposed to, such as sewers, subways and abandoned buildings. Contemporary urban exploration traces its roots to the 1920s, when steam tunnels beneath colleges across the country, and the often apocryphal tales of what might be found within, began appealing to curious (or foolhardy) students.

Most Infiltrators are of high school or college age; a few exalted veterans are older but, by their mid-twenties, most members have moved on to other things. While most Infiltrators are content to explore abandoned or uninhabited sites, others seek more “interactive” challenges, such as, finding ways of using the swimming pool at a posh hotel or the facilities of an exclusive health club without being a guest or member. Most do it for the thrill of

bucking the system and exploring unknown realms, preferably without being caught. Infiltrators often take along cameras to obtain evidence of their successful infiltrations; these photographs are often shared electronically through the Internet.

Most Infiltrators abide by an unwritten code which prohibits vandalism. They merely seek to infiltrate, obtain proof of their visit, then leave. A vainglorious few might leave some token of their visit, a point of pride to tell future urban explorers “I was here first.” They seldom use their real names, preferring code names and monikers reminiscent of hackers, with whom they share a common ideology. There are groups of varying size, resources and ingenuity dedicated to urban exploration throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia; through the Internet, it’s possible for many of these groups to be in contact with one another. Arkham’s Infiltrators do not, however, have a web presence as yet.

The leader of Arkham’s Infiltrators, Chauncey (“BagMan”) Dowd and his girlfriend, Melissa (“Persephone”) Whalen, are detailed elsewhere. Two other members who may be brought into play are typical examples of the Infiltrators’ demographics:

Craig (“Boothboy”) Lee

Seldom seen without his Doc Martens, Lee is the techno-geek of the Infiltrators. Like Dowd, Lee is a Computer Sciences student, but he is more comfortable interacting with computers than people.

Charlie (“Sgt Rock”) Van Allen

A National Guard reservist notorious within the group for his gung-ho commando tactics, Van Allen is the Infiltrators’ expert at map-reading and operation planning.

The Police

Having been notified of Karen’s disappearance by campus security, Arkham’s police department is currently investigating her disappearance. Newly-promoted detective Blake Jerome is in charge of the investigation. He gladly meets with the characters in his office, which is really little more than a cubicle adorned with photographs of the police softball team. A well-worn ball and glove sit on a shelf above his desk; Jerome is in the habit of working the glove in while deliberating. He’s happy to have the characters search for Karen but doesn’t have much information to offer in return. Plenty of students routinely go missing, only to return or turn up elsewhere, so the police aren’t making a big deal out of it. If there’s some evidence of foul play, things start to heat up – but otherwise, it’s an open file consigned to a bottom drawer of Jerome’s desk.

According to the detective’s notes, Miss Clifford was last seen by her roommate, Jemma Vreeland, at approximately 8:30 PM on the evening of her disappearance. Miss Vreeland contacted campus security the following evening, at 8:05 PM. A search of the campus was conducted the next day; when Miss Clifford hadn’t been located by 5:00 PM, campus security notified the police. The file also contains a photograph of a mark found scratched in the wall near Miss Clifford’s window. The mark resembles a five-pointed holly leaf, and Jerome suspects it’s simply graffiti or a previous tenant’s idea of art. He attaches no occult connection to it, nor is he likely to do so without evidence. An **ELDRITCH LORE** roll suggests that it is a print made by a lesser entity (in this case, the flipper fin of a *xo tl-mi’go*).

Detective Jerome has interviewed Miss Vreeland and Karen’s ex-boyfriend, Chauncey Dowd. Jerome doesn’t know about Karen’s home pregnancy test but if he finds out, Dowd suddenly becomes a prime suspect. Despite a pretty intense grilling there isn’t enough evidence to charge Dowd with anything, and he is immediately released.

Chauncey Dowd

Chauncey Dowd is a clean-cut fellow with freckles and sandy brown hair. Chauncey is a sophomore, majoring in Computer Science. He is the *de facto* leader of the Infiltrators – his handle is “BagMan” – but is reluctant to talk about his subterranean explorations if he thinks it’ll land him in hot water with the university or the police. The close-knit group thrives on secrecy, but Chauncey acknowledges that he brought Karen along on a couple of outings even though she wasn’t really into it. If the characters inquire specifically about the day of the Badgers-Yale game last September – as alluded to by Jemma Vreeland – Chauncey recalls the explorations that night as being uneventful.



Chauncey Dowd

Chauncey and Karen broke up a few months ago, mostly at his instigation. According to Chauncey, Karen was “acting weird”: she often seemed lost in thought and began losing interest in going out, preferring to stay in her room alone. Chauncey couldn’t take Karen’s strange behavior anymore. For her part, Chauncey says, Karen didn’t object to the break-up. The last time he saw Karen was about a month ago, in passing. Chauncey is extremely reluctant to discuss the details of his relationship with Karen but, if pressed, acknowledges that they were intimate on a few occasions. Each time, Chauncey used protection. If the police learn that Karen may have been pregnant, Chauncey temporarily becomes a focus of their investigation and more emphasis is placed on the possibility that

Karen ran away – or even committed suicide – out of despair.

Chauncey can show the characters how to access the tunnels beneath the campus and is willing to provide a brief tutorial on the art of urban exploration. He could be a useful guide in any such undertaking, but the characters must succeed in a **CONVINCE** roll or appeal to the starving student in him – \$50 ought to suffice – in order to convince him to accompany them.

Melissa Whelan

Chauncey’s new girlfriend is also an Infiltrator (her handle is “Persephone”), although she wasn’t with them on the night in question. Melissa is a high school girl, a willowy blonde with braces who gloats in her ability to land a college guy. She disliked Karen right from the start, mostly because of Karen’s previous relationship with Chauncey, and describes her as “really weird.” Now that Chauncey is hers, Melissa has put Karen out of her mind, but a **PSYCHOLOGY** roll reveals traces of her former jealousy.



Melissa Whelan

Miskatonic University

Much of the investigation occurs in and around Miskatonic University – from Karen Clifford’s room in Dorothy Upman Hall to the Armitage Library (where records of the 1934 expedition which brought the xotl’mi-go specimen to Arkham are housed), to the tunnels below the campus. Characters who are students or faculty may find it easier to access certain facilities, but discreet

characters of any background can negotiate the university without attracting undue attention.

Dorothy Upman Hall

Karen Clifford's room is 212, on the second floor of this women-only dormitory. She shares it with Jemma Vreeland, a third-year Psychology major. Each girl has her own bedroom at opposite ends of the apartment and they share a living room and kitchen in the middle. There is a small balcony. The apartment is neat and tidy and tastefully decorated with thrift shop bargains.

Jemma Vreeland

Karen's roommate is from Concord, New Hampshire. A short girl with dimples, Jemma last saw Karen on the evening of her disappearance, a Friday. Jemma had gone to a movie with a few friends (all of whom can independently verify Jemma's claim), but Karen declined an invitation to tag along: she claimed she was tired and going to bed early. When Jemma came home that night, around 11 PM, she assumed Karen had already gone to bed. The next morning, Karen wasn't there; Jemma thought she'd already gone out. It wasn't until later that evening, when Karen didn't come back to the dorm, that Jemma began to worry. She contacted campus security at around 8 PM.

Jemma has no idea what happened to her roommate but recalls that Karen had been acting strangely in the months leading up to her disappearance. Jemma recalls precisely when Karen began acting strangely. It was a Saturday night last September, the night the Badgers rallied from a ten-point fourth-quarter deficit to tie Yale on a last-second field goal. Jemma went to the game, but Karen had gone off with her boyfriend and the rest of the Infiltrators.

Jemma had been home for almost an hour when Karen came in, shortly after midnight. After filling each other in on the evening's activities – Karen had seemed disappointed in hers, which she described as “cobwebs and dusty steam-pipes” –

they went to bed. Around 3 AM, Jemma was awakened by the sound of Karen's screams. By the time she reached Karen's room, her roommate had stopped screaming. Jemma found Karen in bed, curled up in a ball under the sheets, hyperventilating and with a wild look in her eyes, like she didn't know where she was. Jemma calmed Karen down and made her some tea. By this time, other students had come to see what was happening; Karen apologized and said she'd had a nightmare. Jemma didn't want to press her and Karen seemed unable – or unwilling – to recall any details.

The next day Karen seemed a little distant, a little aloof. As time went by her behavior became increasingly erratic. Karen took to leaving her window open, no matter the weather. She often skipped classes, spending hours alone in her room. In the evenings she would often take long walks, sometimes not coming in until the middle of the night.

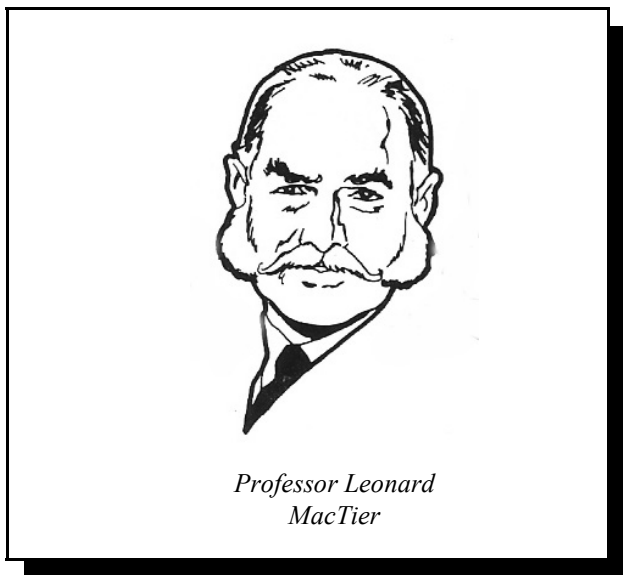
Karen's Room

Karen's bedroom is small, about eight by ten, with one window. The room is furnished with a single bed, a small desk with a chair, and a dresser. A computer with an inkjet printer sits on the desk and there is a portable CD player on the dresser. An unframed Picasso print hangs on one wall.

At first glance, there is nothing unusual or incriminating in Karen's room. A **DETECT** roll, however, discovers the torn half of an instruction sheet from a home pregnancy kit – overlooked by police – under the dresser. A second **DETECT** roll reveals a small mark on the wall just above the window; upon close examination, the shape resembles the outline of a crude, five-pointed holly leaf scratched into the paint. An **ELDRITCH LORE** roll suggests that it's the print made by a lesser entity (in this case, the flipper fin of a xo t'l-mi'go). The police have already photographed this mark but are unaware of its significance.

Leonard MacTier

Archaeology professor Leonard MacTier became concerned when Karen missed an entire week of classes and failed to show up for a tutorial. Unable to reach Karen at her residence by telephone, MacTier visited her in person the evening before her disappearance. Although no one answered the door, Professor MacTier could hear someone snoring inside. He assumed it was Karen, and didn't want to disturb her.



Karen was one of Professor MacTier's favorite students. She was hard-working, diligent, and thorough – until a few months ago, when her commitment to her studies began to decrease markedly. Professor MacTier is unaware of any reason for this behavior.

Research

Relevant newspaper articles, all from the *Arkham Advertiser*, may be discovered by searching back issues on microfilm at either the Arkham Public Library or MU's Armitage Library. Allow each character a **RESEARCH** roll for every four hours spent searching back issues for articles containing two or more of the following keywords: sexual

assault, pregnancy, abortion, multiple births, multiple fetuses, suicide, and/or Miskatonic University. These articles span a number of decades and bear certain similarities to the case at hand. They are presented here in reverse chronological order but may be discovered in any order, depending on the decade(s) searched. Followup research on each article is discussed below. At the GM's discretion, there may be additional articles in a similar vein.

- Player Aid #1 (October 10, 1994)

STUDENT ASSAULTED IN DOROTHY UPMAN HALL

A Miskatonic University sophomore was sexually assaulted late last night while doing laundry in the basement of her dormitory, and her attackers are still on the loose.

Judy Masterson, 19, was alone in the laundry room of Dorothy Upman Hall at about 11pm when someone turned out the lights and attacked her. Masterson's cries for help eventually brought fellow students to her aid, but not before her attackers had fled. She was taken to hospital for observation and released.

News of the attack is traveling fast, and it's causing concern in this small college town, where most students generally feel safe.

Masterson has been unable to provide a detailed description of her assailants, but police are looking for three or four white males of slender build. Police ask anyone with information to contact them.

A subsequent **RESEARCH** roll determines that, because of the location and nature of the assault, as

well as the number of assailants involved, the police investigation focused on MU fraternities and dorms. No charges were ever laid, however.

Judy graduated in 1996 and married Jim Shepard in 1998. They still live in Arkham and have a three year old daughter. Recalling the incident brings back many unpleasant memories, so Judy prefers not to discuss it. No **PSYCHOLOGY** roll is required to determine that it was a very traumatic experience that took her several years to overcome; even now she's wary of basements.

If the characters can persuade Judy with a **CONVINCE** roll that they're attempting to apprehend the gang that assaulted her, and thereby prevent any future assaults, she consents to talk. She corroborates the information contained in the newspaper article, which is essentially what she told the police, but can add no additional details. If Judy is shown Dr. Raleigh's sketch of the *xo tl-mi'go*, however, a wave of recognition washes over her and she breaks down, sobbing "*That's him! That's him!*" The unfortunate woman is of no further use to the characters and suffers a nervous breakdown in the days to come as the horror of that night is re-lived over and over in her mind. If the characters learn that she suffered a breakdown as a direct result of their visit, each loses 0/1 points of **MENTAL HEALTH**. Judy's husband warns against any further contact: "You've done enough harm already. Stay the hell away from my wife!"

- Player Aid #2 (September 3, 1985)

Although no further details about the actual incident can be found, a subsequent **RESEARCH** roll reveals that Annie voluntarily conceded custody of the children to her ex-husband, David Collins, a ski instructor in Vail, Colorado.

David Collins and his three children still live in Vail, but have no information to provide. Sully's Bar & Grill went out of business in 1992, but was located on West Pickman Street near the MU campus.

PREGNANT WOMAN COMMITS SUICIDE

Yesterday afternoon, horrified onlookers at Arkham's train station watched as a woman threw herself in front of the 5:15 train from Boston. The body of Annie Dorward, 29, was pulled from under the train. Paramedics pronounced her dead at the scene but made a further grisly discovery: Dorward had been pregnant with quintuplets, and was even perhaps in labor at the time of her suicide leap.

Dorward, a divorced mother of three, moved to Arkham last year from the west. She had been employed as a waitress at Sully's Bar & Grill. Her ex-husband has custody of the children.

Police are appealing for witnesses to the incident to come forward.

- Player Aid #3 (November 3, 1975)

Subsequent research turns up nothing. It appears that no one was ever charged in connection with the case. Sandra Fotheringham was a runaway who ended up living on the streets and in abandoned buildings.

WOMAN DIES OF COMPLICATIONS AFTER BACK-ALLEY ABORTION

The body of Sandra Fotheringham, of no fixed abode, was discovered by police in an alley early this morning. A spokesman for the Arkham Police Department announced that the woman appeared to be the victim of an illegal back-alley abortion, and had died of massive hemorrhaging. According to police, this type of procedure is highly dangerous but remains popular among certain unwed mothers. It is believed that Miss Fotheringham, 23, had been about three months pregnant with triplets.

Medical authorities have generally reported a decline in "back-alley" abortions since *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court case that legalized abortion throughout the country, but today's incident serves as a grim reminder of the hazards of these illegal procedures.

Police have no leads in the case and are asking anyone with information to come forward.

- Player Aid #4 (August 11, 1953)

A subsequent **RESEARCH** roll reveals that Luella Marsden was found not guilty by reason of insanity and committed to Arkham Asylum, where she died in 1972. Her lawyers were court-appointed and she never made a coherent statement regarding the terrible incident. The Ace Insurance Company went out of business in 1978 and was located on West Church Street near the MU campus. Luella Marsden's medical file at Arkham Pyschiatric Hospital is confidential, but describes a manic-depressive patient who died of heart disease.

WOMAN KILLS BABIES

Infants' Deaths Shock City

In one of Arkham's most terrible tragedies, four newborn children are dead and their mother, Luella Marsden, is in custody. According to Arkham Police, Miss Marsden – a single woman formerly employed as a secretary with the Ace Insurance Company – gave birth to quadruplets in her apartment sometime after midnight last night.

Neighbors, who describe Miss Marsden as a quiet, solitary woman, did not know she was pregnant but responded to the dripping of water from the ceiling of their apartment, apparently originating in Miss Marsden's room above. When no one answered their knocking, the neighbors summoned the building superintendent who forced the door. Inside, to their horror, they found the source of the leak: Miss Marsden's bathtub was overflowing and inside floated four tiny bodies. Miss Marsden herself was unconscious on her bed with an empty bottle of sleeping tablets by her side.

An ambulance was summoned and Miss Marsden was rushed by ambulance to hospital where she was successfully roused and subsequently charged with murder.

- Player Aid #5 (November 27, 1935)

A subsequent **RESEARCH** roll discovers that Albert Bishop was charged with first degree murder. Shortly after his indictment, he hanged himself in his jail cell without ever making a formal statement.

HUSBAND KILLS PREGNANT WIFE

Tragedy Shakes Quiet Neighborhood

Last night, in a fit of rage, Arkham resident Albert Bishop attacked his wife with a kitchen knife while she slept. Neighbors awoke to the sounds of a woman screaming, and Arkham Police were called to the scene. They arrived to find Mamie Bishop on the bed, lying in a pool of her own blood. Her husband, still holding the bloody kitchen knife, made no effort to resist arrest.

An ambulance arrived within minutes and carried Mrs. Bishop to hospital where, despite the efforts of a team of surgeons, she died shortly thereafter. During emergency surgery, it was determined that Mrs. Bishop had been five or six months pregnant with triplets.

Mrs. Bishop had been employed as secretary to Dr. Richard Raleigh of the university's Anthropology Department. Albert Bishop is being held without bail.

Latin American Collection

The Richard Raleigh Papers in the Latin American Collection at Armitage Library were written or collected by Raleigh during the 1934 Miskatonic University Expedition to Costa Rica which brought back the xo tl'mi-go. Upon Raleigh's death in 1967, his widow (also now deceased) donated to his papers to the library. They are contained in two boxes which may be examined by request during library hours. Of particular interest is his diary of anthropological field notes.

The 1934 Miskatonic University Expedition to Costa Rica

Dr. Richard Raleigh led the 1934 Miskatonic University anthropological expedition to the central highlands of Costa Rica. The expedition, the members of which included Lawrence Bristow, who served as the expedition's doctor, Webster "Mac" McCarthy, Rosario Aguilar, and Victor Healy, conducted anthropological studies that included archaeology, ethnology, linguistics, and physical anthropology (anthropometry). Information on the expedition and its members is readily available at MU's Armitage Library, but only the Richard Raleigh Papers in the Latin American Collection are relevant to the investigation.

Box 1: Diaries and Field Notes

1. A leather notebook containing Raleigh's original field notes taken 15 February to 11 April 1934. It includes notes on various ruins, observations of Indians, rough sketches and maps, and a few daily notations. The notebook contains a few mentions of the xo tl'mi-go, the most significant of which notes: "the Chibcha called them *Xo Tl'mi-go*, 'The Thrice Accursed' – but the local natives call them *usurpadores*, 'usurpers'. Whatever the name, they were much feared."

One of the sketches is captioned "The head of a usurper" and it depicts a creature with the head of a tapeworm and alien proportions of the face, with two tiny eyes set deep inside a pair of indentations, and a round puckered mouth with rows of hooklike teeth. A second sketch, captioned "The paw of a usurper" depicts a limb which resembles a swim-fin. An **INTUITION** roll made while comparing the second sketch with the crude, five-pointed holly

leaf found in Karen Clifford's room reveals an uncanny similarity.

2. A typescript copy, date 14 May 1934, of Raleigh's Field Diary, 15 February to 11 April 1934. All mentions of the xo tl'mi-go that appeared in the original manuscript (*Item 1*, above) have been removed from this copy.

3. A calendar pad for the year 1934 with a few notations. The date the expedition captured the creature – April 3, 1934 – is noted without elaboration.

4. Raleigh's personal diary, written in pen and pencil, of events from 01 February to 16 April 1934. It includes a few drawings, and a letter to his wife is written on the back of the first four pages. The diary contains several mentions of the xo tl'mi-go.

Box 2: Other Papers

Folder 1. A report on the expedition of 1934, "The Raleigh Expedition," which appeared in the *Miskatonic News Bulletin*, vol. 10, no. 7, May 1934. In it Raleigh describes the daily routine and responsibilities of the members. There is no mention of the xo tl'mi-go in the report.

Folder 2. Three gun permits issued to Raleigh, McCarthy, and Healy in 1934 in Limón, and a travel pass issued to the expedition by President Ricardo Jiménez Oreamuno.

Folder 3. The news sheet *El República* published 16 March 1934 in San José, Costa Rica, which tells of the Miskatonic scientific expedition. The Spanish-language news sheet is enthusiastically supportive of the expedition. There is no mention of the xo tl'mi-go.

Folder 4. An undated map of Central America with pencilled markings which appear to trace the route of the expedition of 1934. In combination with Raleigh's original field notes (*Box 1, Item 1* above, not the bowdlerized typescript version *Box 1, Item 2*), this map can be used with a successful

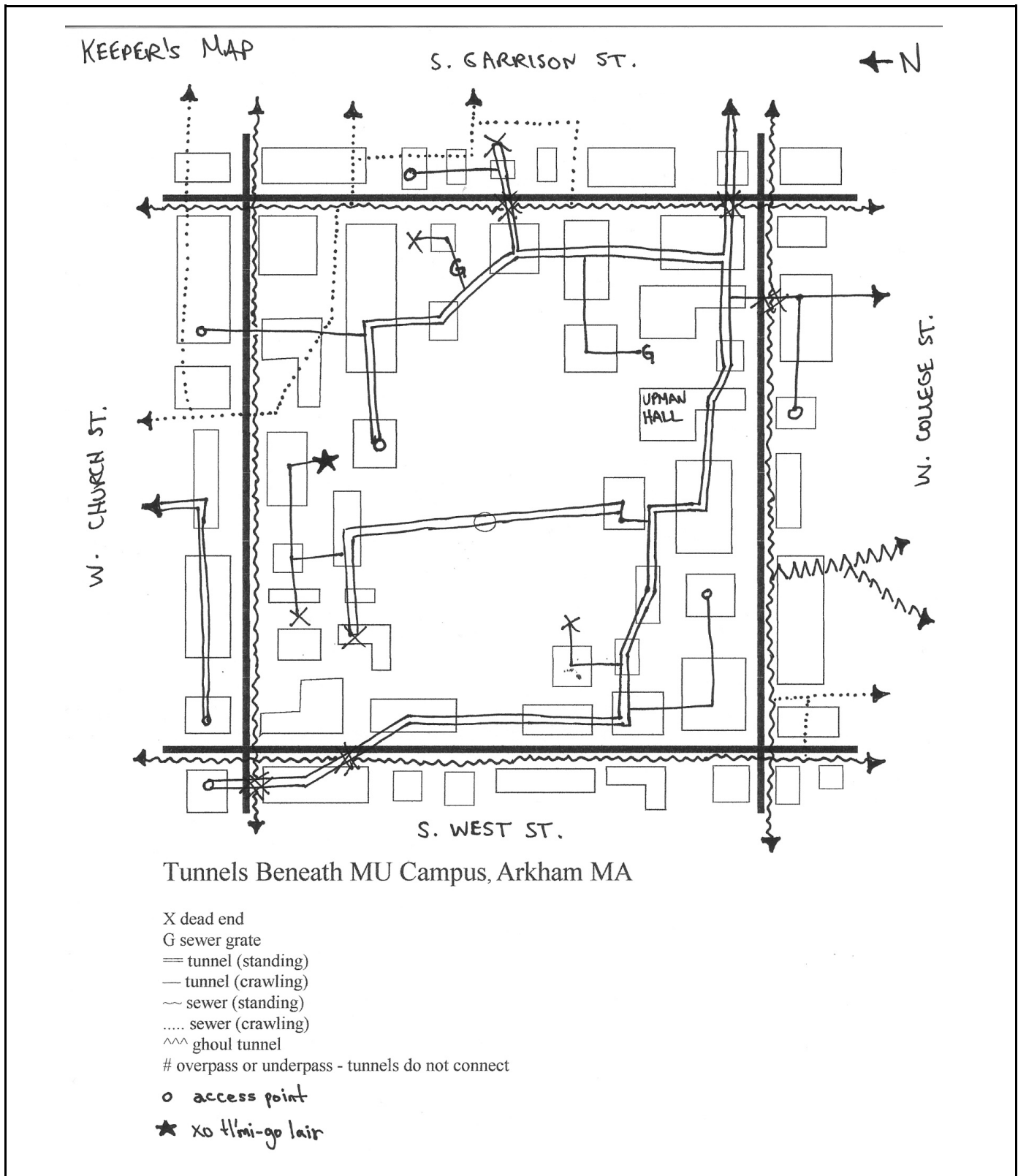
CARTOGRAPHY roll to pinpoint – within a few miles – where the expedition captured the xo tl'mi-go. Intrepid characters may wish to mount their own expedition into the jungles of Costa Rica, but any such journey is beyond the scope of this adventure.

The Chibcha Indians

Once classified as a highly advanced civilization as great as the Aztec, Inca and Maya, the Chibcha lived on the high plains of the Central Colombian Andes. The only known sources of information about them are archaeology and Spanish records. The Chibcha worked gold, drilled emeralds, made pottery and basketry, and wove textiles, although their craftwork was not as highly developed as those of other Indian cultures in Colombia. They engaged in some farming in the lowlands and on terraced hillsides, but had only small villages. The Spanish conquered them in the 16th century, and Chibcha culture changed quickly. Their language became extinct in the 18th century.

The Tunnels

The network of steam tunnels beneath Miskatonic University ultimately connects with Arkham's sewer system and the ghoul warrens that honeycomb the old burying grounds. It is possible – but hardly advisable – to use this chaotic labyrinth of subterranean passages to get from one end of Arkham to the other without ever setting foot above ground. Such a journey, however, is fraught with danger and the chance of survival is remote. In addition to ghouls, there are the more mundane but no less deadly dangers of superheated steam, electrical wires, low oxygen levels and odorless but deadly gases. Students are routinely warned to keep out with threats of suspension, expulsion, or even



arrest. Students who have explored some of this subterranean world refer to it as the Kingdom, and there are shadowy tales hinting at creatures that stalk these tunnels. These yarns are generally considered apocryphal but they are unfortunately

true: the tunnels are home to the xo tl'mi-go.

The tunnels may be entered through various access points around the campus. Certain basement doors – marked “O” on the map – are invariably locked

and usually posted “*Authorized Personnel Only*”, but may be forced (Resist: **STRENGTH 15**) or opened with a successful **OPEN LOCKS** roll; sewer grates – marked “G” on the map – can be pried open with a crowbar or similar tool (Resist: **STRENGTH 12**).

Attempts to map this subterranean world are doomed to failure; dozens of passages crisscross and weave their way below the city, passing over and under each other and rendering traditional two-dimensional cartography all but useless. A **CARTOGRAPHY** roll permits a character to create a map allowing him to retrace his steps without getting lost, and to find a specific location or follow a specific route on subsequent visits: provide the players with the map labeled “*MU Campus – Players’ Map*” and allow them to embellish it as they explore.

Luis Melendez

Luis Melendez, a Salvadoran immigrant, works as a night custodian in Physical Plant Services. He is likely to be encountered by anyone exploring the tunnels overnight. Luis speaks little English but can warn of the dangers in the tunnels of steam, asbestos, and the like. He doesn’t know anything about the Infiltrators, nor has he ever seen Karen Clifford. Luis is from San Miguel, El Salvador; he has been working at the university for well over thirty years and has an excellent employment record. Although some might dismiss Luis as superstitious, he has good reason for avoiding certain remote parts of the tunnels. When venturing into some of the more remote tunnels, Luis always crosses himself and exchanges his broom for a heavy wrench. “Is bad place,” he says. “Very dangerous. Everywhere steam, hot steam.” Just how much of a defense a wrench would be against hot steam is anyone’s guess.

Anyone who converses with him in his native Spanish learns that Luis knows that students sometimes trespass in the tunnels below the campus. He has also had, on occasion, fleeting glimpses of skinny, pale furtive figures and

sometimes doors are left ajar, tools are misplaced and valves are open when they should be closed. Luis blames this mischief on “*los niños*” (the children) but refers to something much more dangerous than the Infiltrators. He insists that the troublemakers are indeed children, but children “God made wrong.” Pressed for details, Luis crosses himself and refuses to elaborate.

It’s possible that Luis disappears or turns up dead, the victim of the xo tl’mi-go.

The Xo Tl’Mi-Go

The xo tl’mi-go dwell within the darkest, most remote corners of the tunnels below Miskatonic University. They shun human contact except when their urge to reproduce awakens; so overwhelming is this urge that the xo tl’mi-go often venture above-ground under cover of darkness in search of human mates. Although males of the species lack external organs, they are able to reproduce by manually inserting their seed. They have an uncanny knack for locating human females, but their heightened senses do not seem to assist them in determining those that are fertile: pre-pubescent girls and post-menopausal women are just as likely to be attacked.

As a race, the xo tl’mi-go face an uphill battle against extinction. Only a small percentage of xo tl’mi-go babies ever come to term; most are lost due to miscarriage or abortion, especially if the human mother realizes the nature of the child she carries. Approximately half of those born are female, and they are barren. To make matters worse, their numbers are kept in check by ghouls, who delight in torturing them; no self-respecting ghoul, however, would ever eat one of the xo tl’mi-go.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that, roughly every ten years since 1934, Arkham has seen an increase in the number of pregnancies, particularly among MU students. There has also been a corresponding increase in the number of abortions, births and stillbirths. Records at the hospital or any of the city’s clinics corroborate this trend, but compiling the data and analyzing the results would be a truly

herculean task. Most of these were unwanted pregnancies and few seem to have come to term; in some cases, the mothers disappeared before, or shortly after, the birth of their children.

Those sexually assaulted by the xo tl'mi-go lose 1/1D6 points of **MENTAL HEALTH**. The realization of pregnancy costs another 1/1D6 points, and actually giving birth to the terrible offspring costs a further 0/1D6 points.

Karen's Flight

When Karen was assaulted by the xo tl'mi-go, the trauma caused her to repress the memory of the event. When her period was late Karen wasn't overly concerned, as she had not been sexually active after she and Chauncey broke up a few months earlier. By the time her next period was late, Karen began to notice that she had been putting on weight and was feeling nauseous. It was her sudden craving for odd foods – dill pickles, something that had never appealed to her – that brought Karen to the seemingly impossible but inevitable conclusion: she might be pregnant. Obtaining a home pregnancy test confirmed her fears, and brought back a sudden rush of repressed memories. She began to understand, through a horribly intense flashback, what had happened to her that night. Karen isn't entirely sure who – or what – the father is, or how she became pregnant, but she knew that she had been visited in the night by several pale and lanky figures who didn't speak but made a raspy sound like snoring. The next thing she recalled was waking up – or coming to – on the floor, her belly and thighs covered in a sticky, noxious goo.

Karen began reliving the trauma through persistent thoughts, dreams, and flashbacks. She lost interest in daily activities. Karen took pains to conceal her pregnancy, wearing loose clothing whenever she had to venture out of her apartment. Her shattered psyche began to rationalize the situation and, as time went by, Karen actually came to treasure the new life growing within her; she felt “special,” that she had somehow been chosen for such an

incredible “gift.” Karen adored her unborn child, and longed to see its father again. To that end, she left her window open at night and often wandered the neighborhood in the dead of night hoping to meet up with the strange men, but to no avail. Karen had not seen a doctor since discovering her pregnancy, guarding her unborn child jealously, paranoid that someone might try to take it from her.

The xo tl'mi-go, however, have no interest in Karen beyond her ability to bear a child. Once the child is born, they have no further use for her. Until such time, however, they have kept watch over her. During the day, their surveillance was greatly restricted, but at night they often emerged from their tunnels to observe her from a safe distance. As the day of delivery drew near, they began visiting her with increasing frequency, until the hour of birth – which is now at hand.

At this point, Karen is infatuated with the creatures and has come to regard them as benevolent, almost god-like beings. They have guided her to the tunnels to give birth. Giving birth to the child costs Karen the remainder of her shattered sanity. The xo tl'mi-go may release Karen, intending to visit and impregnate her again, but her mental health is so eroded that she may not survive another breeding cycle.

Concluding the Adventure

With a bit of luck and a lot of perseverance, the characters find the lair of the xo tl'mi-go – or, rather, one of their lairs. This lair is marked ★ on the map, but there may well be others below the campus or elsewhere under the city. Here, they find Karen Clifford. She appears to be pregnant and unresponsive. Her gaze is vacant and she sits with her back against the wall, rubbing her swollen belly and humming mindlessly. There are scraps of bones, cans and boxes strewn about – food for Karen provided by the xo tl'mi-go.

Although there are no xo tl-mi'go in the lair when the characters arrive, they aren't very far away and

arrive soon thereafter. They observe the characters for a while but attack as soon as Karen is disturbed. The creatures attempt to isolate and kill off individual characters; if that tactic proves untenable, they attack in swarms. In any event they fight fiercely to protect the unborn spawn but flee once they've lost half their number. Amid the noise and confusion of the melee, Karen's water breaks and she goes into premature labor. A **MEDICINE** or **FIRST AID** roll recognizes the condition and suggests that she requires immediate medical attention.

Karen's labor is long and difficult. Unless the characters take her to a hospital, or another similarly-equipped facility, Karen loses 1D3 Hit Points each hour she's in labor, and her labor lasts 3D6 hours. At a medical facility, Karen may be given an epidural anesthesia and other precautions may be taken. Although her labor still lasts 3D6 hours, Karen only loses 1 Hit Point per hour and, if she's in danger of dying, a caesarean section will be performed.

The characters, of course, won't be allowed into the delivery room, unless one of them presents himself as Karen's husband or boyfriend. A female character might present herself as Karen's labor coach. In any event, no more than one character is allowed to witness the birth – and he or she is hustled out if a caesarean section, or other surgical procedure, needs to be performed. It may be a long and anxious wait indeed for the other characters.

Should Karen die in labor – either in the hospital or elsewhere – her baby may still survive. At the hospital, there is a 75% chance the child survives; elsewhere, a character must make a **MEDICINE** roll to save the child's life (if no character has that skill, a charitable GM might allow a critical **FIRST AID** roll to suffice).

The thing in the incubator is not entirely human, nor is it wholly monstrous. It is, rather, a blasphemous hybrid of the two, a shrunken, foul-smelling albino of indeterminate sex. (Although there are no external genitalia, the creature is male.) Karen Clifford, driven over the brink of madness by

the birth, is unable to function beyond the instinctive urge to care for her newborn child. She appears to be in a world of her own, content only when holding or nursing the infant. She doesn't speak or respond to external stimuli other than those which affect her baby. The doctors are not only baffled, they're horrified that such a thing could spring from the womb. Born prematurely, the infant will die "of organic causes" without medical intervention. The doctors are therefore in a quandary: as much as they'd like to see this blasphemy die, they are loathe to flout their Hippocratic Oath. The characters can make it easier on them by convincing (with a **CONVINCE** roll) the doctors that the creature isn't human. The more "evidence" they present, the stronger their case. Still, even if they fail to convince the doctors, the characters themselves may elect to "pull the plug," thereby causing the infant to die. The flabbergasted doctors won't intervene, but each character loses 0/1 **MENTAL HEALTH** – the creature was, after all, at least partly human. If the characters do nothing, the creature is able to live without medical intervention after two weeks. During this time, Karen is kept restrained and heavily sedated. The night the infant is removed from the incubator, the xo tl'mi-go sneak into the hospital and remove it.

Rewards and Penalties

If the xo tl'mi-go child does not survive because of intervention by the characters, they gain 1D6 points of **MENTAL HEALTH**. If the child survives and escapes, the characters lose 1D6 points. If the child dies on its own, there is no bonus and no penalty. If Karen Clifford survives, the characters gain 1D3 points; if she dies, they lose 1D3.

Statistics

BLAKE JEROME

Newly-Promoted Detective, age 28

Strength	18	Endurance	16
Size	15	Intelligence	14
Willpower	11	Agility	11
Charisma	12	Education	19
Mental Health	56	Hit Points	14

Damage Modifier: +1D6

Weapons: Punch 60%, 1D3+DM

Glock 9mm Automatic 55%, 1D10

Grapple 65%, special

Mace Spray 55%, stun 2D10 minutes

Baseball Bat 44%, 1D8+DM

Skills: Bluff 45%, Bookkeeping 30%, Computers 30%, Convince 50%, Detect 45%, Forensics 50%, History 40%, Impress Kids 67%, Jump 45%, Law 60%, Listen 40%, Mechanics 30%, Negotiate 45%, Psychology 65%, Reputation 30%, Spanish 20%, Stealth 35%, Throw 45%

KAREN CLIFFORD

Student in Peril, age 19

Strength	10	Endurance	12
Size	09	Intelligence	15
Willpower	13	Agility	14
Charisma	14	Education	13
Mental Health	65	Hit Points	11

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: none

Skills: Bluff 20%, Computers 10%, Convince 25%, First Aid 30%, Listen 35%, Psychology 20%, Research 30%, Ride 25%, Sing 50%, Swim 45%

JEMMA VREELAND

Student, age 20

Strength	08	Endurance	14
Size	09	Intelligence	14
Willpower	14	Agility	13
Charisma	15	Education	14
Mental Health	70	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: none

Skills: Bookkeeping 20%, Biology 15%, Computers 40%, Convince 40%, Detect 35%, History 40%, Law 35%, Psychology 25%, Research 50%, Sing 25%, Swim 30%

CHAUNCEY (“BAGMAN”) DOWD

Infiltrator, age 20

Strength	14	Endurance	15
Size	13	Intelligence	14
Willpower	12	Agility	13
Charisma	12	Education	15
Mental Health	60	Hit Points	14

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Punch 64%, 1D3+DM

Grapple 46%, special

Skills: Climb 73%, Detect 49%, Drive 42%, Evade 29%, Hide 54%, Jump 25%, Listen 49%, Open Locks 63%, Stealth 52%, Throw 63%

MELISSA (“PERSEPHONE”) WHALEN

Infiltrator, age 17

Strength	10	Endurance	13
Size	10	Intelligence	13
Willpower	12	Agility	13
Charisma	14	Education	13
Mental Health	60	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: none

Skills: Bluff 62%, Camouflage 57%, Climb 54%, Computers 10%, Detect 67%, Hide 46%, Listen 61%, Open Locks 48%, Stealth 44%

CRAIG (“BOOTBOY”) LEE**Infiltrator, age 20**

Strength	10	Endurance	11
Size	13	Intelligence	16
Willpower	10	Agility	10
Charisma	11	Education	15
Mental Health	50	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: none

Skills: Astronomy 15% , Chemistry 20%, Chinese (Mandarin) 40%, Computers 45%, Electronics 40%, English 75%, History 25%, Mathematics 40%, Physics 40%, Research 40%

CHARLIE (“SGT ROCK”) VAN ALLEN**Reservist and Infiltrator, age 23**

Strength	15	Endurance	16
Size	15	Intelligence	13
Willpower	11	Agility	15
Charisma	12	Education	15
Mental Health	55	Hit Points	16

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Punch 55%, 1D3+DM

Kick 45%, 1D6+DM

Grapple 50%, special

Fighting Knife 50%, 1D4+2+DM

M16A1 40%, 2D8

Skills: Camouflage 35%, Cartography 40%, Climb 50%, Detect 45%, Drive 40%, English 75%, Evade 45%, German 20%, Hide 35%, Jump 45%, Law 15%, Listen 55%, Mechanics 30%, Navigate 30%, Open Locks 35%, Stealth 30%, Swim 35%, Throw 35%, Track 25%

LUIS MELENDEZ**Custodian, age 62**

Strength	13	Endurance	13
Size	13	Intelligence	12
Willpower	12	Agility	13
Charisma	10	Education	10
Mental Health	65	Hit Points	13

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Broom 60%, 1D4+DM

Skills: Climb 45%, Detect 40%, Electrical 35%, English 40%, Heavy Equipment 15%, Listen 40%, Mechanics 35%, Open Locks 35%, Spanish 50%, Stealth 30%

LEONARD MACTIER**Archaeology Professor, age 48**

Strength	12	Endurance	12
Size	11	Intelligence	15
Willpower	15	Agility	11
Charisma	12	Education	21
Mental Health	75	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: none

Skills: Archaeology 75%, Detect 40%, History 80%, Latin 85%, Negotiate 30%, Reputation 25%, Research 90%

FOUR XO TL’MI-GO**Children of the Kingdom**

Repeat as needed.

	One	Two	Three	Four
Strength	15	14	15	14
Endurance	14	19	15	18
Size	13	11	13	12
Willpower	10	12	10	11
Agility	10	11	12	09
Hit Points	14	15	14	15

Move: 9

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Claws 30%, 1D6+DM

Bite when holding opponent with claws 25%, 1D6

Armor: 1 point of rubbery skin

Spells: none

Skills: Hide 72%, Jump 56%, Listen 76%, Stealth 83%

Mental Health Loss: 0/1D6

Widdershins

Wherein the characters find a secret so terrible no one is talking about it

*These are the clouds about the fallen sun,
The majesty that shuts his burning eye.*
– W.B. Yeats

Adventure Considerations

Sixteen-year-old Amy Duncan has run away from her home in Brichester. The characters are enlisted by the girl's parents, Stuart and Irene, to find her and bring her home safely – but an unspeakable family secret stands in their way.

This past summer, Amy vacationed at her Auntie's cottage in Old Severnford on the River Severn. In nearby Severnford, she met a friendly woman who took her to a party at the home of a reclusive rock star on Severn Island, where she learned the identity of her real father (see *A Terrible Secret*, below). Amy's experiences on the island so profoundly affected her that she has now run away to rejoin her new friends on the island.

Gamemaster's Information

If possible, the GM should arrange for the characters to become acquainted with the Duncans in an earlier adventure. Failing that, their relationship with the characters may be implied, with any necessary details furnished by the GM. Stuart and Irene, who have been together since their teens, might be business associates, former classmates or even bridge partners of one or more of the characters; likewise, Amy herself might be a babysitter for a character with young children. Any

affiliation that provides the characters with incentive to assist the Duncans will suffice; as a last resort, the GM might have the Duncans hire the characters based on their reputation alone.

Characters' Information

One day in early autumn, the characters are contacted by telephone by Stuart and Irene Duncan of Brichester. The Duncans are distraught over the disappearance of their teenage daughter Amy. "*Ran away* is more like it," Stuart explains, while Irene chimes in: "And the police won't do a thing about it!"

Over the telephone, the Duncans can provide the basic details. This morning, they woke to find a note from sixteen-year-old Amy, coolly informing them she was leaving. Stuart and Irene spent the day scouring the city and contacting Amy's friends, to no avail. They even contacted the police but were rebuffed. The Duncans are exhausted and at their wit's end. They are grateful for any assistance and, for more details, the characters are urged to visit – tonight, if at all possible.

The Duncan Home

The Duncans live on a quiet street in an orderly residential neighborhood of Brichester. Their house is tidy, with a carefully-tended rose garden in front. Stuart greets the characters at the door and bids them welcome. Irene awaits them in the sitting room, with its bay window and upright piano.

A Terrible Secret

When she was 17, Irene went to a rock concert on Bodmin Moor without her parents' permission. She left home in the middle of the night and hitchhiked to the moor. Even Stuart, her childhood sweetheart, didn't know where she'd gone. The concert was headlined by Tell-Tale Hearts, a group featuring former Widdershins drummer Guy Salisbury – who was killed by lightning just prior to performing.

Salisbury's manager, Nigel Comstock, took Irene to see Gabriel Ratchets, the former singer of Widdershins, who was then living incognito on the moor in a caravanserai. Ratchets plied her with drugs and drink, and seduced her. Unbeknownst to Irene, when she returned from Bodmin Moor, she was pregnant with Ratchets' child. When she eventually realized she was pregnant, Irene let Stuart assume he was the father. Irene knows in her heart that Amy's father is Gabriel Ratchets, but refuses to acknowledge it. If the characters confront her with the true identity of Amy's father, Irene breaks down and admits the truth. She has no idea where Ratchets is, however, and can offer little information about him.

A DNA test would prove that Stuart is not Amy's father and could, in theory at least, determine that Gabriel Ratchets is.

Further information on Widdershins appears below in the boxed section *Out of the Woods* and in *Researching Widdershins*.

Formerly only a casual smoker, she chain-smokes Dunhills in a futile effort to calm her nerves.

Stuart and Irene show the characters the note Amy left behind. Irene found it on Amy's bed first thing this morning, pinned to her favorite teddy bear. This

note appears as Player Aid #1. The Duncans have no doubt that the handwriting belongs to Amy.

Player Aid #1

Mum,

Please don't worry about me, I'll be all right. There's just somewhere else I need to be now.

Love,

Amy

According to Irene, Amy's overnight bag – which hasn't been used since she visited her Auntie Jean in the summer – is missing, along with a few changes of clothing (including her favorite pair of jeans), her toothbrush and some toiletries.

Stuart informs the characters that Amy has always been a good student but has struggled this year. For no apparent reason, Amy's marks have been sliding. He says her teachers have suggested that she hasn't been applying herself; a visit to Amy's school will corroborate this.

Amy has a part-time job at Bascombe's, a local sweetshop. Amy's employer has informed the Duncans that their daughter's work has been suffering in the past month or so: "She always used to be so bright and cheery, a real favorite with the customers," Harry Bascombe told the Duncans (and will reiterate it for curious characters), "but lately, she seems to be just going through the motions." Amy's modest savings from that job were withdrawn from her bank account two days ago. A piggy bank that Amy kept under her bed has also been emptied.

Amy's friends have also noticed a change in her since school began. She hardly laughs anymore, they say; in fact, she hardly even smiles. Increasingly, Amy has come to prefer her own

company to that of her friends: “It’s like she’s in her own little world,” one of them grumbled to the Duncans, “and we’re not part of it.”

Anyone – parents, teachers, friends – who asked Amy about the change in her personality had been reassured, unequivocally, that everything was fine. Stuart and Irene are understandably worried: despite the note, it’s not like Amy to run away. They’ve seen no evidence of drug or alcohol abuse, nor does Amy have a boyfriend. At sixteen, she’s still shy and awkward around members of the opposite sex.

Amy’s Room

Soft pastels dominate Amy’s room, from the lavender sheen of the walls to the rose-colored bedspread. A shelf holds a collection of teddy bears, including an oversized Paddington Bear. At first glance the room is typical of a 16 year-old girl. Upon closer inspection, however, several incongruous items may be found:

Amy’s Cassette: An unlabeled 90-minute cassette sits beside a small cassette player on Amy’s desk. On the insert, someone has written in ink: “*Amy – Until we meet again, something to remember us by. Fiona.*” This cassette contains eerie music reminiscent of the soundtrack of a horror movie, steeped in occult themes and more than a little disturbing. The singer’s voice is feral and sounds like it was recorded in a tomb.

Book of the Law: On Amy’s bedside table, there is a copy of Aleister Crowley’s *Book of the Law*. The *Book of the Law* is an occult text allegedly dictated to Crowley in Cairo in 1904 by a preterhuman intelligence called Aiwass. It is the central text for Crowley students and familiar to any occultist.

Opening the book causes a slip of paper to drop out. This is a cash receipt from Good Books, a bookshop on the Highway, dated two weeks ago and detailing the purchase of Crowley’s *Book of the Law* and another by the name of *Out of the Woods: The Story of Widdershins*. The latter volume is nowhere to be found in the Duncan household.

Occult Paraphernalia: In the top drawer of Amy’s dresser, characters may find occult paraphernalia – including a black candle, a red velvet pouch containing small bones (revealed, with a **NATURAL LORE** roll, as those of a cat), and a notebook filled with strange signs and symbols. An **OCCULT** roll identifies them as components of occult rituals and divination. Neither Stuart nor Irene can identify any of these items, and they’re astounded that Amy would have such things in her possession.

A Crumpled Note: Among crumpled candy wrappers and crisp packets in Amy’s wastebasket there is a crumpled note. This is Player Aid #2. It appears to be an aborted first attempt at writing a note to explain running away. Although the handwriting is unmistakably Amy’s, there are several discrepancies between this note and the one she left for her parents. Unlike the “real” note, this draft is addressed to both parents. Stuart and Irene have no idea why Amy would have left her father out of the “real” note, nor can they explain what Amy means by wanting to be “whole” or “a part of something bigger.” Taking this note in conjunction with the occult paraphernalia in her dresser and the book by Aleister Crowley on her bedside table, however, the Duncans fear that Amy may be referring to some kind of occult ritual in the aborted draft. (Amy left Stuart out of the “real” note, of course, because – as she discovered on Severn Island – he is not her real father.)

Player Aid #2

Mum & Dad,

Please don't worry about me, I'll be all right. There's somewhere I need to be if I want to be whole

a part of something bigger

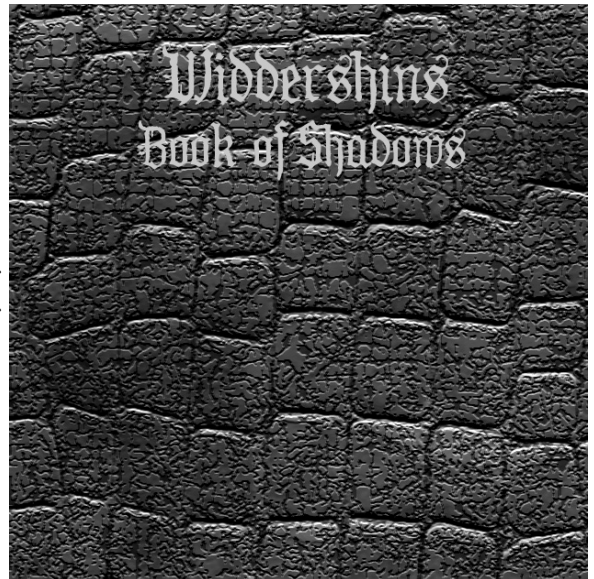
Whither Widdershins?

Although the characters are unlikely to realize it, at least initially, the music on Amy’s cassette is a compilation of songs by Widdershins, an obscure 1970s hard rock group with a diabolical bent not unlike Black Sabbath. Widely ignored in their own time, Widdershins have gained cult status among the more jaded members of the Goth movement who crave “the real thing.” The band’s singer, Gabriel Ratchets, is a hero to them.

Widdershins’ music has been out of print for a number of years, but pirated copies occasionally surface. Rarely, items appear on online auction sites. Because very few people have ever heard of Widdershins, it’s highly unlikely the characters can identify the music on Amy’s cassette. Playing a sample at a used record store in a large city (population 50,000+) yields results with a **FATE** roll: the owner accurately recognizes the music. An additional **FATE** roll indicates that he just happens to have an old Widdershins album – *The Book of Shadows* – on hand, but it’s in such poor condition that it’s destined for the dustbin. The owner, who gladly gives the album to the characters if they make a purchase, believes it might have been part of an old estate sale. He doesn’t know much about Widdershins himself, but cautions that “Black Sabbath was just fooling around, mate. These guys were the real deal.”

The album appears to have been deliberately damaged, as though someone dragged the needle across the playing surface on both sides. The image on the cover – blood red lettering on a background of mottled black – is faded and flaking to reveal unwholesome spores infesting the cardstock beneath. Playing it on a turntable reveals – behind a cacophony of pops, cracks and scratches – diabolical music similar to the harrowing contents of Amy’s cassette; indeed, a close listen reveals that two of the songs from the album (“Drawing Down the Moon” and “The Way of Reversal”) are also on the cassette itself. Playing the album backwards has no particular effect.

On the back of the album cover, Widdershins’ manager is identified as Nigel Comstock, and a London address is listed. The Camside address of The Evil Eye, the group’s fan club, is also provided.



A rare find indeed!

Brixton Police

The police dutifully canvassed the neighborhood, including the bus and rail stations, but to no avail. Although Inspector Clive Corbin hopes for a swift resolution and a happy outcome, he isn’t treating Amy’s disappearance as a crime. There’s no

evidence of foul play and Amy’s note is pretty self-explanatory. The fact that Amy withdrew all the money from her bank account two days before she ran away indicates that it was planned. If the characters want to search for Amy, then more power to them. As long as they don’t interfere with police work or overstep their authority, Inspector Corbin is happy to have them involved.

Researching Widdershins

Any decent library or bookshop has a copy of *The Complete Guide to Rock Music*, an alphabetical directory of artists “from Adam and the Ants to ZZ Top” published by Paraffin Press. The entry for Widdershins appears as Player Aid #3; perceptive characters may note that it is attributed to Ewen MacPherson, author of *Out of the Woods: The Story of Widdershins*.

Written by former New Musical Express (NME) writer Ewen MacPherson, *Out of the Woods* was originally published in hardcover in 1982. Long out-of-print, the book was recently reprinted in paperback by Discordia Press of London.

Although Good Books did not stock *Out of the Woods*, they ordered a copy at Amy Duncan’s request along with an additional three copies, all of which continue to gather dust – and take up valuable shelf space – between well-thumbed biographies of The Who and Yes in the Popular Music section. The characters may purchase or peruse a copy here. It appears as Player Aid #5. The staff know nothing about the book or Widdershins.

Out of The Woods: The Story of Widdershins – by Ewen MacPherson, 1982. A biography of the rock group Widdershins. *No Mental Health loss; Occult +1 percentile.* No spells.

On the Internet

Hundreds of old rock bands have been rescued from obscurity by the Internet, which provides free publicity for residents of the “where-are-they-now?” file. In many cases, the wave of renewed interest has brought about lucrative reunion tours, new albums and the re-release of old recordings in digital format. Not so with Widdershins. There is

no official website for the band and only a handful of fan sites. A **RESEARCH** roll made while surfing the Internet permits characters to locate a website (www.geocities.com/widdershinsfan) located on a free hosting service that contains the following:

- A few murky black and white photographs of the band, circa 1973
- A guestbook (sadly neglected) which allows visitors to post comments
- Brief biographical data on the band members (virtually identical to the article in *The Complete Guide to Rock Music*, excerpted in Player Aid #3)
- A few poorly-recorded (and possibly illegal) streaming audio excerpts of songs.

The webmaster, a “Dr. Dee,” may be contacted through an e-mail link but he is simply a fan with no information beyond what’s on the website. If the characters somehow manage to track him down, he turns out to be a thirty-something slacker living in his parents’ basement in Dayton, Ohio.

Ewen Macpherson

Former New Musical Express (NME) writer Ewen MacPherson wrote *Out of the Woods: The Story of Widdershins* and contributed an article to *The Complete Guide to Rock Music*. MacPherson lives in Glasgow and can be contacted through his London publisher, Discordia Press. Neither the NME nor Paraffin Press has a current address for him but can refer characters to Discordia Press.

If MacPherson knows Ratchets’ whereabouts, he isn’t saying. A **PSYCHOLOGY** roll suggests that he is being evasive (but MacPherson knows only that Ratchets is rumored to be living somewhere in the Severn Valley). MacPherson can, however, furnish a current address for Ratchets’ manager, Nigel Comstock, in London. He can also inform the characters that John Buxton, the band’s keyboard player, is a patient at the psychiatric

Player Aid #3

WIDDERSHINS – Led by Gabriel Ratchets (vocals; b. Goatswood, 1948), Widdershins was one of the most notorious rock groups of the 1970s. The members of Widdershins – Roger Mosley (lead guitar; b. Lower Brichester, 1950 – d. London, 1978), Simon Fennell (bass guitar; b. Lower Brichester, 1949 – d. New York City, 1984), John Buxton (keyboards, flute; b. Camside, 1950) and Guy Salisbury (drums; b. Severnford, 1950 – d. Bodmin Moor, 1986) – whose music blended the sinister motif of Black Sabbath with the cosmic themes of Pink Floyd, carved out a niche for themselves but never attracted the mass audience of their contemporaries.

Ratchet's complex lyrics centered around strange rites, and the band gave remarkably eerie performances, often simulating human sacrifice on stage. Each concert began with what was billed as an authentic magical ceremony – so authentic, in fact, that it prompted one prominent clergyman to proclaim that Widdershins were "in danger of raising forces beyond their control." One critic responded that the band's antics were evidence not of diabolism but of diabolically bad taste. Nevertheless, many towns in the southern and midwestern United States prohibited Widdershins from performing and a 1974 tour of Canada ended in disaster: The final performance resulted in the ritual suicide of a fan and a riot causing \$30,000 in damages. Although the band was later cleared of any wrongdoing, a tour of Japan had to be called off. In 1976, Ratchets disappeared; the band carried on under the moniker Strange Eons but failed to release an album. Tragedy struck the survivors and, within ten years, all but Buxton were dead: Mosley of a drug overdose in 1978; Fennell of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in 1984; and Salisbury under mysterious circumstances on Bodmin Moor in 1986. In 1981, an anonymous package arrived at the New York offices of Vixen Records. The package contained a note – in handwriting suspiciously similar to Ratchets', who was presumed dead – which claimed that the enclosed tape was "the work of Gabriel Ratchets, a transformed man." Vixen subsequently released the untitled, ten-song recording as "The Transformed Man." This album chronicled Ratchets' self-destructive descent into a private hell. He apparently believed so strongly in occult prophecy that he had retired to Cornwall to avoid a catastrophe he believed to be imminent. The album prompted critic Lester Bangs, writing in *The Village Voice* to remark: "Side One is Doom & Gloom – familiar territory for Widdershins, admittedly – but conveyed with a passion eschewed by the original configuration. This is truly music to slit your wrists by. Side Two, however, marks a dubious first in the annals of recorded music: Twenty minutes of grunting and heavy breathing, like a drunken, obscene phone call. All of this begs the question: If Gabriel Ratchets is the transformed man, *what on earth has he transformed into?*"

– Ewen MacPherson

DISCOGRAPHY:

*** WIDDERSHINS [Londinium #3588, 1970] – Seven Whistlers (1:23), The Evil Eye (5:41), The Unquiet Dead (9:57), Tearers of Flesh (4:51), The Spaces of the World (19:37)
 ** THE BOOK OF SHADOWS [Polyglot #25890, 1971] – Drawing Down the Moon (9:36), The Way of Reversal (9:50), Names of Power (4:58), Oriax and Agares (15:34), The Way of Reversal, Part Two (1:35)
 * STRANGE TUMULTS [Polyglot #39594, 1973] – The Man with Cropped Ears (16:33), Roasted Monk (2:13), Thirteen Needles (8:43), Master of the Forest (11:02)
 * LUST AND BLASPHEMY [Polyglot #59348, 1975] – The Serpent of Desire (5:21), Pagan Slanders (4:22), Golden Dawn (3:44), Brimstone Boys (4:39), Cantharides (4:01), The Mortuary Mass (10:17), The Whistling Demon (3:12), Gnawers of the Dead (10:05)

Gabriel Ratchets Solo

* THE TRANSFORMED MAN [Vixen #290, 1981]: I (21:15), II (19:39)

Out of the Woods

According to the brief biography of the author, MacPherson went on tour with the group in 1973 and reports on the debauchery firsthand. Singer Gabriel Ratchets is described as “an imposing figure, charismatic with hypnotic eyes and a commanding presence both on and off the stage.” A photograph in the book shows Ratchets, a hulking figure in dark robes standing next to a beautiful, long-haired hippie girl (identified only as “Fiona”), circa 1973. Other photographs depict various members of the band and their manager, Nigel Comstock. There is also a photograph of MacPherson backstage.

According to the book, which is not indexed, very little is known about the early life of Gabriel Ratchets. He was born in Goatswood, apparently, and received little formal education. His parents reportedly died when he was young. Apart from Ratchets, the members of Widdershins all came from working class backgrounds. Guitarist Roger Mosley once said “If it weren’t for rock and roll, I’d have ended up in a factory, on the dole or in a prison.” Several members (but not, apparently, Ratchets) had been arrested in their youth, mostly on theft-related charges. None of them served time in prison.

The band’s decadence was mythic. Much of the time, they seemed to be fueled by alcohol, drugs and sex – and none more than Ratchets himself, whose consumption of all three was legendary. The band rarely gave interviews but Cameron Crowe managed to wrangle one for Rolling Stone in 1973. Crowe asked Ratchets if he was concerned that his excesses might one day cause him to join the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison – to which Ratchets enigmatically replied “They flew too close to the sun, dear boy. I *am* the sun.” Crowe responded by asking Ratchets if that meant he wanted to live forever; Ratchets answered “I’m afraid I have no choice in the matter.”

The band had a well-deserved reputation for trashing hotel rooms, although The Who’s Keith Moon – himself a hotel wrecker of no small renown – once labeled their antics as “amateurish, spiteful and dull as dishwater.” Ratchets appears not to have taken part in much of the demolition; on the road, he was rarely seen except on the stage. The other members of the band seemed to fear Ratchets. Although every member had an equal vote in band affairs, no one would vote against Ratchets if it meant his side lost. MacPherson witnessed on several occasions band members changing their votes in order to give victory to Ratchets’ side. Ratchets, apparently, never overtly attempted to sway these votes.

In the studio, Ratchets would provide the lyrics, which the band would set to music. The band never contributed to the lyrics but Ratchets almost always had a hand in the music, changing the tempo, altering the key and switching the chords to better reflect his “vision” for the songs.

hospital in Mercy Hill – but MacPherson advises caution in visiting: “He’s a total loonie, and a dangerous one at that.” If they lack a copy of *Out of the Woods*, the characters can obtain one from MacPherson himself.

The Evil Eye

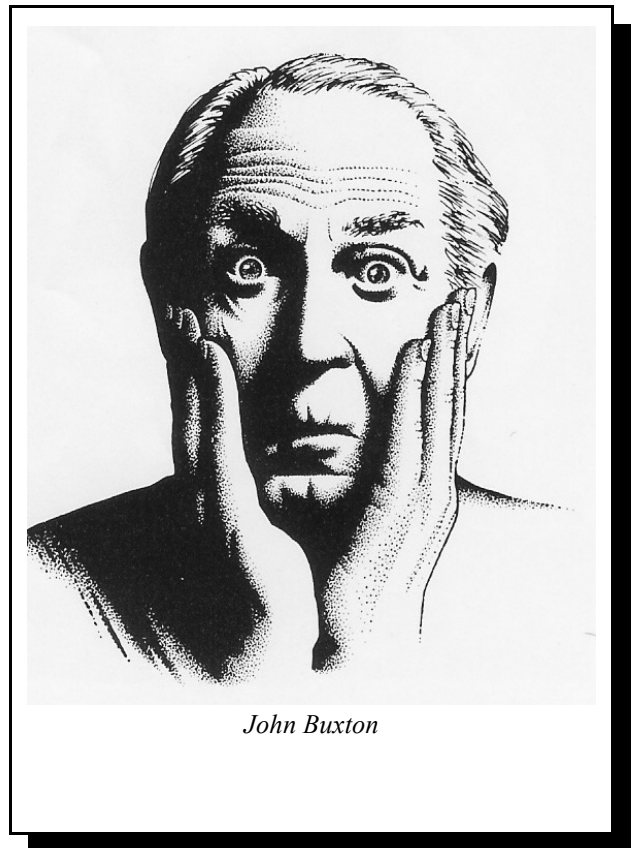
The Camside fan club address is now owned by Terry and Denise Gillard, a young couple with an energetic toddler named Matthew. The Gillards moved into the small row house a couple of years ago and know nothing about a former resident named Fiona. According to the Gillards, they bought the house from an old widower named Archie Leighton, who now resides in a local nursing home.

Archie can be visited at Camside Terrace, a pleasant facility overlooking the Cambrook. Archie is in frail health and suffers from Parkinson’s Disease. He hasn’t seen his daughter Fiona in nearly 30 years. As a teenager she started up a fan club “for that bloody rock and roll group” – Archie forgets the name, but recognizes it as Widdershins if prompted. Before long, and despite her parents’ disapproval, Fiona started hanging out with the group. Archie suspects his daughter became involved in drugs and witchcraft. Then Fiona announced that she was going “on the road” with the band. Her parents never saw her again, although she occasionally telephoned or sent postcards. Around 1976, the phone calls and postcards stopped.

Archie’s wife died in 1992, heartbroken over a daughter who had forsaken her family for “the music of the devil.” Archie has no interest in locating Fiona and discourages the characters from doing so. Any back issues of fan club’s newsletter were destroyed long ago by Archie himself: “I cast that rubbish into the fire,” he says bitterly. “Every last one.”

John Buxton

Apart from Gabriel Ratchets, John Buxton is the sole surviving member of Widdershins. He was not an original member, but joined after the band’s second album. He had been a member of The Changelings, a blues-influenced acid rock group comprised of former Brichester University students. When Widdershins decided to add a keyboard player, Buxton left The Changelings and joined Ratchets’ outfit in 1972. The Changelings disbanded shortly thereafter, never having released an album.



John Buxton

Unfortunately, Buxton was heavily into LSD and any number of other mind-altering substances. After a while, the line between fantasy and reality was so blurred he made Syd Barrett look like a model of psychological stability. When Widdershins broke up, Buxton declined to join the other members in Strange Eons, retiring instead to

a cottage in Camside, where he was frequently spotted tending his mushroom garden by moonlight, dressed only in a bathrobe. He was belligerent toward his neighbors and, following a vicious assault on an insurance salesman, Buxton was diagnosed with severe dementia and therefore incompetent to stand trial on criminal charges. He was remanded to Brichester Psychiatric Hospital.

Buxton's presence at Brichester Psychiatric Hospital is not public knowledge. The characters may be led here through Widdershins biographer Ewen MacPherson or former manager Nigel Comstock. Otherwise, perusing the Camside telephone book might turn up a distant relative of Buxton's who can direct the characters to the hospital.

Characters with legitimate medical credentials may visit Buxton at the hospital on top of Mercy Hill; others require permission from the clinical director, Dr. Neal DeSanti, obtained only by successful **REPUTATION** and **CONVINCE** rolls. A violent patient, Buxton is kept almost continuously restrained and under sedation in a seclusion room. He sleeps in a waist-belt restraint and is kept in ankle and wrist restraints during the day. Buxton suffers from nearly constant hallucinations. He sees faces in the air, insects crawling on the bedclothes and mistakes people for old friends or enemies. He has no idea where he is and is disoriented with regard to time. His memory is disordered and his restlessness is persistent.

Attempting to interview Buxton is hopeless. If the characters specifically mention Gabriel Ratchets and succeed in a **PSYCHOTHERAPY** roll, however, a brief flicker of recognition dances in Buxton's eyes. He smiles, lifts his gaze to the ceiling, and hisses: "Without modification to me do not think that I have a choice in the matter. Its meat is more monster than humans. It is so much bad, if I do not find it, if I speak to me for us, loneliness and loneliness are the price which it must pay, as the god did to us."

The exact meaning of Buxton's babbling is open to interpretation, but an **INTUITION** roll recognizes

the insinuation that Gabriel Ratchets is not entirely human. Other inscrutable allusions are to Ratchets' birthplace of Goatswood; "without modification" and "as the god did to us" refer, specifically, to the Keeper of the Moon Lens and his ability to transform his worshipers into monstrous beings. Buxton, of course, is thoroughly insane and the clinical director scoffs at any "insights" the characters believe they may have obtained.

Nigel Comstock

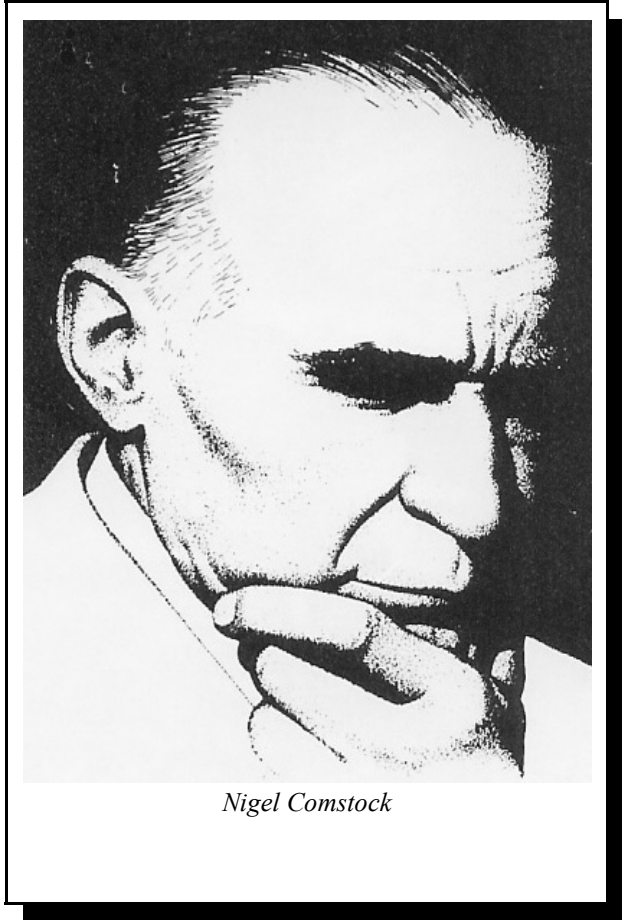
The address on the back of the Widdershins album no longer exists, having been torn down in 1985 to make way for a block of flats. Nigel Comstock may, however, be traced to his London flat or his office in Wardour Street via telephone directories, business directories, recording industry contacts or through Ewen MacPherson.

Comstock's property management company, Goldhawk Estates Ltd, has been quite lucrative, affording him an upper middle-class lifestyle. The company manages properties around London and the southwest. His secretary, Bridget Deacon, knows nothing about Gabriel Ratchets and, as far as she's concerned, Comstock is a generous employer: she gets her birthday off, in addition to the standard vacation allowance, and a nice Christmas bonus each year.

Nigel Comstock would be considered a flashy dresser if this were the 1970s but as it is, he's an anachronism. Velvet jackets, flared trousers and double-wide ties may no longer be in style, but Comstock belongs to the world of the amiable eccentric. Comstock is homosexual and makes only a token effort to keep his lifestyle discrete. He is a doyen of London's gay subculture and has been known to frequent lower-class bathhouses. He refers to men as "dear boy" and women as "darling" – but this is a product of his upper-crust pretensions, not effeminacy.

Nigel Comstock was Widdershins' manager in the 1970s. He claims that his affiliation with the band came to an end when Gabriel Ratchets disappeared

in 1976. Comstock gladly informs the characters that John Buxton is a patient at Brichester Psychiatric Hospital, but he claims not to have had any contact with Ratchets since his disappearance. A **PSYCHOLOGY** roll, however, suggests that he might not be telling the truth regarding the latter. Comstock genuinely does not recall meeting Irene Barclay at the festival on Bodmin Moor or introducing her to Ratchets.



Nigel Comstock

Comstock helps maintain Ratchets' privacy. Under no circumstances does he disclose Ratchets' location. If surreptitiously followed, however, Comstock can be seen to make monthly trips to the Severn Valley – Severn Island, to be exact – in his Bentley.

Royalty checks are issued monthly to the estates of the musicians. In the case of Gabriel Ratchets, his checks go to Nigel Comstock. Anyone in the Accounting Department at Vixen – which bought out Polyglot in 1978 – can provide this information

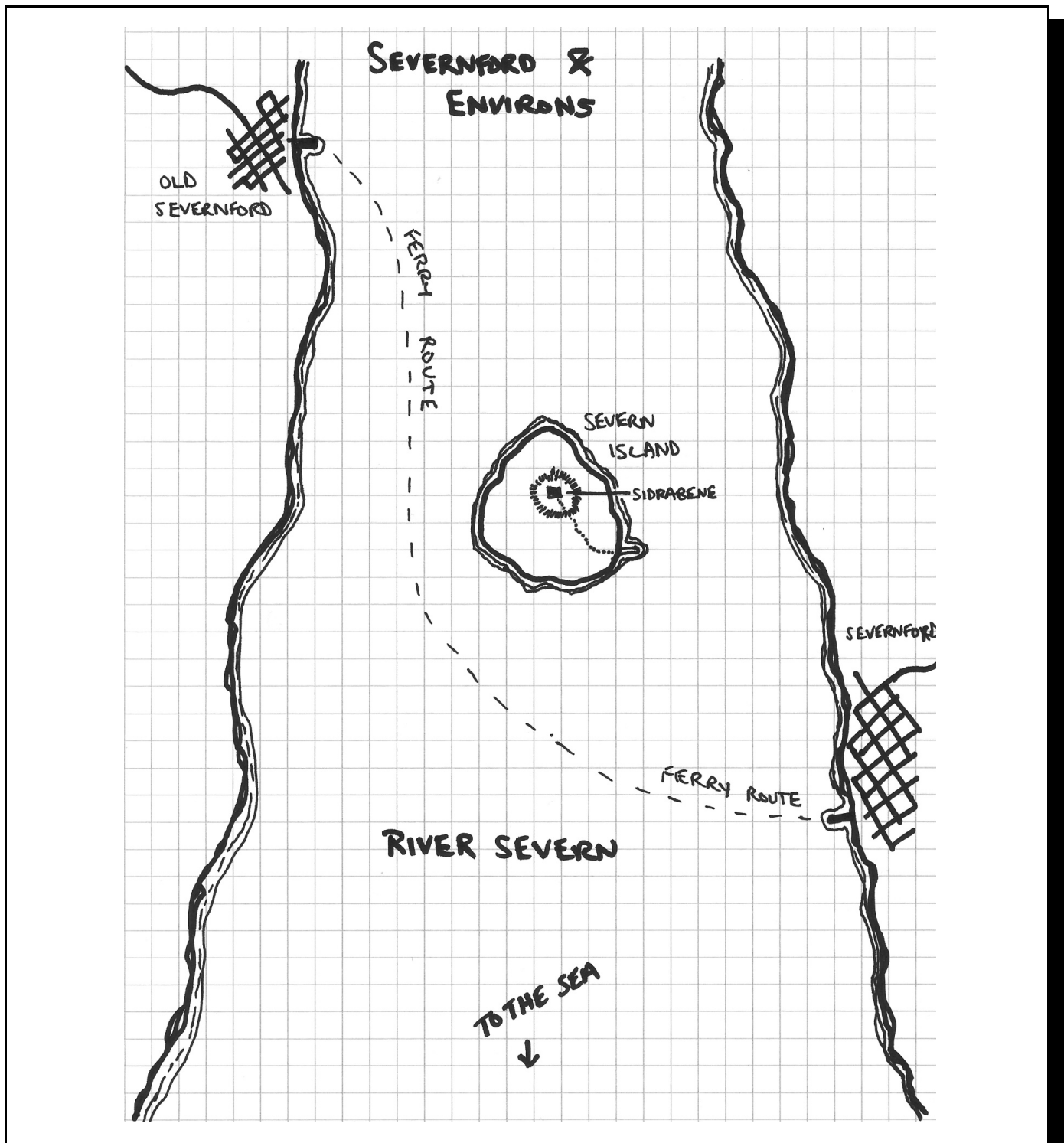
by telephone if the characters make a **BLUFF** roll. Fax and e-mail communications are either ignored or met with a curt reply indicating that the information is private.

Comstock's office in Wardour Street contains the deed to Severn Island, purchased from the National Trust in the 1980s, in the name of his company. There is also a file of canceled checks from Vixen, one a month, for the past few years. A **BOOKKEEPING** roll indicates that Comstock has been drawing a 20% commission on these checks; portions have gone to pay bills associated with the maintenance of property and the remainder, roughly 50% of the original total, is unaccounted for (this is the money that Comstock delivers to Ratchets each month).

Old Severnford

Old Severnford lies across the River Severn from its larger cousin, Severnford, about half an hour by car from Brichester. The two communities are connected by a ferry capable of holding up to six vehicles and their passengers. The ferry makes the round-trip three times daily (morning, afternoon and evening) except on Sundays and holidays (when trips occur only in the afternoon). A round-trip ticket costs £10 and reservations are not accepted. A group **FATE** roll is required for their to be space on the first ferry the characters attempt to board; failure indicates that they must wait for the next one.

Folks at Severnford and Old Severnford don't know much about Severn Island – and what they do know, they don't like. The island, they say, has been a place of pagan worship throughout history. Locals are keen to regale the characters with vague stories of how a pre-Roman nature deity may have been worshiped there, how the house atop the hill was built over the ruins of a Roman temple to an unnamed deity, and how the island has been the home of witch covens throughout the centuries.



When visitors arrive on either shore of the river, they honk their horns or flash their headlights to announce their arrival and someone from the island takes a boat over to fetch them.

Occasionally, parties at Sidrabene – the estate on the island – get a little out of hand, and there are often comings and goings late at night, but there has

been no real trouble. The locals aren't sure who lives on the island, but a surly Glaswegian by the name of Geordie is a frequent visitor and a woman by the name of Fiona is occasionally seen shopping in Severnford. A flashy dresser from London (Nigel Comstock) appears monthly. The residents of Severn Island otherwise keep to themselves.

Auntie Jean

Amy spent two weeks at Old Severnford this past summer with her mother’s aunt, Jean Barclay, known affectionately as Auntie Jean.

When the characters arrive at her little cottage, they find a police car parked out front. Inside, Auntie Jean is in a tizzy. During her shopping trip across the river to Severnford this morning, someone got into her cottage and stole some money she had tucked away in a biscuit tin “for a rainy day.” She believes the amount was about £35. “Who would do such a thing to an old pensioner?” she asks, incredulous. (It was, in fact, Geordie Haldane, acting on information provided by Amy. When the supply of cash at Sidrabene ran low, pending Nigel Comstock’s next visit, Amy remembered her Auntie’s stash.) The police constable, a politely respectful young man, tells Auntie Jean that the police will do their best to apprehend the culprit, but privately does not hold out much hope for the money’s recovery.

Despite the theft, Auntie Jean is a friendly woman who invites the characters in for tea and biscuits after the constable departs. A widow for some fifteen years, she appreciates the company. Jean is still quite spry for a woman in her seventies, and lives for her herb garden out back.

Jean met Amy at the bus station in Severnford upon her arrival, and saw her off there a week later. She thinks Amy is “such a sweet girl” and has nothing bad to say about the girl. Jean didn’t notice a change in Amy’s behavior during her visit, although she was very quiet on her last day: “The poor girl didn’t want her holiday to end!”

Auntie Jean isn’t terribly concerned that Amy has run away. Young people do it all the time, she says; besides, Amy’s mother also ran away when she was young. If the characters inquire about this, Auntie Jean informs them that, when Irene was 17, she had been forbidden to attend a rock concert on Bodmin Moor – so she ran away and hitchhiked to the moor for the weekend.



Auntie Jean

If the characters express interest, Auntie Jean can show them a newspaper clipping she keeps in a scrapbook. The clipping appears as Player Aid #4. A photograph accompanying the article clearly shows a younger Irene chatting with a middle-aged man in flashy clothes who has his hand on her shoulder. If the characters have met Nigel Comstock, an **INTUITION** roll identifies him in this photograph. The caption below the photograph reads “The three-day festival attracted thousands of music-lovers but ended in tragedy.”

Player Aid #4

TRAGEDY STRIKES MOOR POP FESTIVAL

A controversial pop music festival on Bodmin Moor ended in tragedy yesterday when one of the musicians was struck by lightning. Guy Salisbury was preparing to take the stage with his band, Tell-Tale Hearts, when a freak storm blew across the moor. Witnesses report hearing a loud clap of thunder, then watching in horror as a lightning bolt struck Salisbury, killing him instantly.

Salisbury, 36, was the drummer for notorious 70s rock group Widdershins; when they disbanded in 1976 following the disappearance of lead singer Gabriel Ratchets, Salisbury and the other members carried on as Strange Eons. A series of tragedies befell the other musicians and Salisbury, the only surviving member of Strange Eons, formed Tell-Tale Hearts earlier this year.

The concert on Bodmin Moor had been opposed by locals over concerns for their property and their safety. Ironically, the three-day event had been peaceful, with police reporting only a few arrests, mostly for possession of narcotics.

and Old Severnford. There is little vegetation except short grass and a few sparse trees. In the middle of the island, a small home sits atop a slight hill offering a commanding view. *NO TRESPASSING* signs have been posted around the perimeter of the island.

Access to Severn Island is gained only by water. A small boat may be hired for a modest fee at Severnford or Old Severnford. A stone jetty provides a secure landfall, and there is often a small skiff tied off here.

A title search in the Land Registry Office in Brichester reveals that the island has been owned by Goldhawk Estates Ltd since 1986. The formerly-uninhabited island was bought at public auction, having been sold by the National Trust in an attempt to raise funds during the recession of the 1980s. Goldhawk Estate Ltd's president is Nigel Comstock of London, an entrepreneur who managed the rock band Widdershins in the 1970s.

Sidrabene

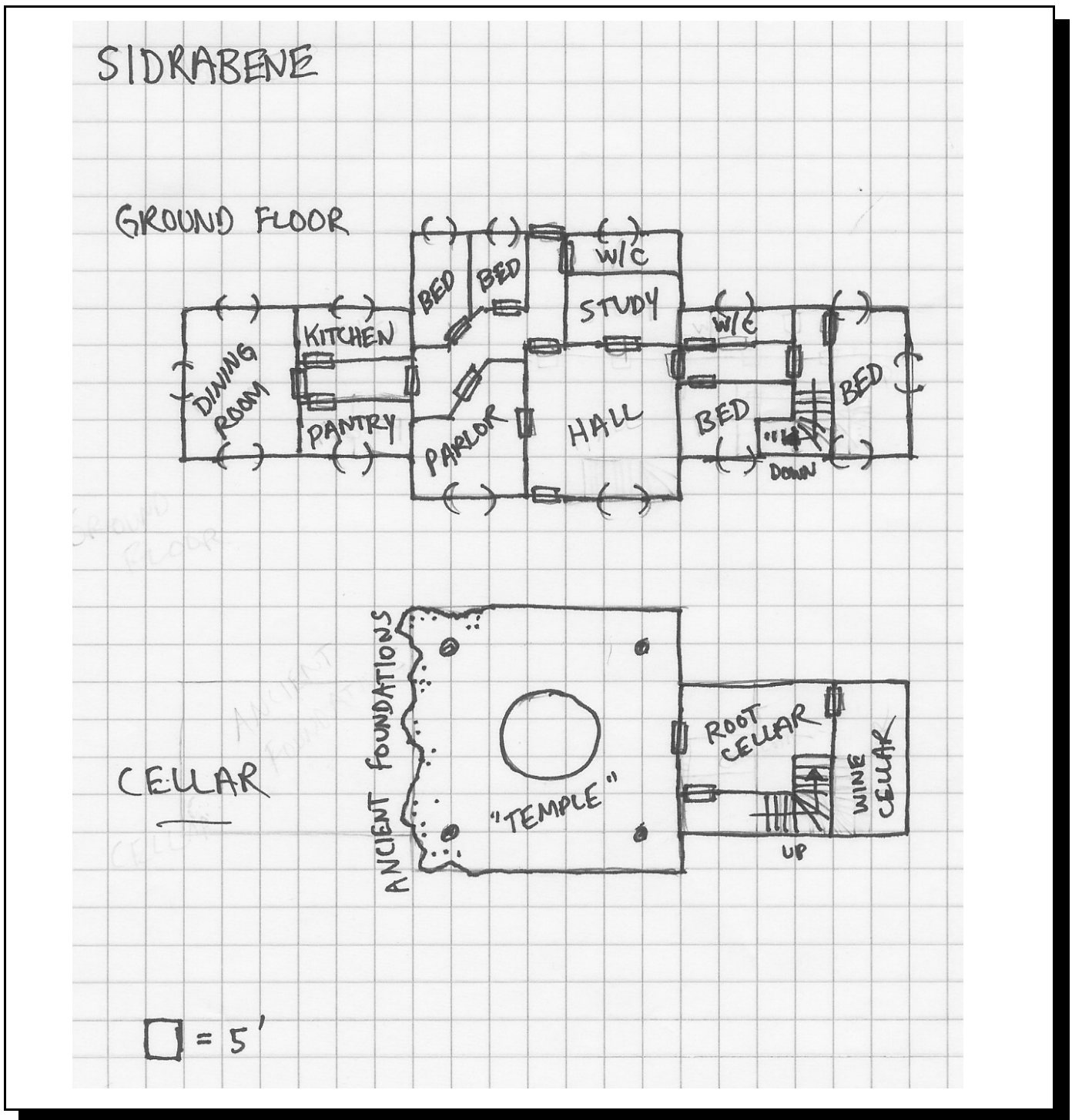
A large single-story building of 20th-century construction, Sidrabene's mellow golden stone is obscured in places by clinging ivy. The steeply-pitched roof overhangs the mullioned and heavily shuttered windows, giving the manor a brooding appearance. Within, oak paneling and enormous log-burning fireplaces fail to defeat the chill draftiness of the high-raftered ceiling; nor do the antique oriental rugs lend anything but a pretense of warmth. The various rooms are cluttered with shelves of china and old books; old prints and oil paintings nearly cover the walls. At first glance these amenities may appear luxurious but close inspection reveals them as the cheap imitations and vulgar forgeries they are.

Severn Island

This roughly circular island, about 200 feet across, is located in the Severn River between Severnford

Confronting the Residents

Confronted by the characters, the residents of Sidrabene feign ignorance. They claim not to know Amy Duncan. Characters are reminded of the *NO*



TRESPASSING sign posted near the jetty and asked to leave. Fiona Leighton does most of the talking, with Geordie Haldane providing some intimidation when necessary.

Fiona is forty-ish and bone thin. Her long dark hair frames her gaunt face. Years of hard living have laid waste to her former beauty, but even now she

is not entirely unattractive.

Geordie Haldane is Ratchets' henchman. A burly, silver-tongued Scot with a bushy beard and receding hairline, he's also Sidrabene's caretaker, handyman and all-around thug. He's responsible for keeping Sidrabene supplied with girls and drugs, both of which he usually obtains locally – and both of which he samples freely.

Faced with incontrovertible evidence of their complicity – Fiona’s identity and her note to Amy on the cassette, for instance – the residents of Sidrabene switch tacks. They welcome the characters, saying they have nothing to hide: Yes, Amy was here last summer and made friends with Fiona, whom she met while shopping in Severnford; yes, she visited the island, briefly, on a couple of occasions; and yes, Fiona gave her the cassette as a souvenir until her next visit – but they haven’t seen her since. **PSYCHOLOGY** rolls are mostly useless; the residents all appear to be under the influence of narcotics, to varying degrees.

The Cellars

The foundations, built upon the ruins of a pre-Roman temple, are damp with mold. There are no electric lights down here but a number of candles or flickering torches are burning at any given time. The floor and some of the older walls are covered with odd carvings worn by the eons to indistinct but disturbing scratches.

The cellar is home to Gabriel Ratchets and it is here that the characters also find Amy Duncan – but might wish they hadn’t.

Gabriel Ratchets – and Amy Duncan

Gabriel Ratchets looks nothing like the photographs in *Out of the Woods*. He is now a bloated monstrosity with grotesque toad-like features; his swollen paunch quivers like gelatin, mercifully concealing more obscene attributes. Ratchets’ rubbery skin glistens like wet leather; these foul secretions cling to the matted, fur-like hair which covers much of his corpulent mass. Worse still, the pulpy features of Amy Duncan grow out of Ratchets’ flabby bulk like some terrible Siamese twin: Amy and her father (both Foster Children of the Old Ones) have begun growing together to become one entity. Because Amy has less Old One blood, she is actually being absorbed into her father; most of her face and part of her torso and one arm are all that remains visible. **MENTAL HEALTH** loss for viewing this sickening process

is 1/1D4. The GM might add an additional point for those characters who know Amy personally.

Gabriel Ratchets, a big mountain of a man, won’t discuss Widdershins – “Old records are mud in the morass of time” – or anything that might implicate him in criminal activity. He lives here quietly, he says, with a few friends for company. All he wants is to be left alone.

Amy, alas, is entirely beyond salvation. She cannot speak, her mouth already having been absorbed into Ratchets’ mass, and seems only vaguely cognizant of her surroundings. Her eyes roll wildly and her arm twitches spasmodically. If a character gets close enough, Amy’s hand might suddenly strike out and grasp him, seemingly attempting (in vain) to pull him into Ratchets’ wobbly bulk: **MENTAL HEALTH** loss for this unpleasant incident is 0/1.

Ratchets is a commanding figure – both physically and intellectually. In this incongruous setting, he discourses on all manner of topics and impresses visitors with his “deep” conversation. His groupies, however, are mostly runaways keen on the seemingly bottomless supply of drugs. These groupies vie for the dubious honor of sitting at Ratchets’ feet while he holds court; only the truly deranged look forward to sharing his bed. Two are obviously pregnant but there are no children in evidence; any offspring are sold to black market adoption rings, further propagating Ratchets’ inhuman pedigree.

Ratchets is an extremely dangerous opponent but he only jeopardizes the pregnant groupies’ safety as a last resort. Attempts at stroking his ego fail miserably; Ratchets has long since left his rock ‘n roll past (and his humanity) behind.

Concluding the Adventure

The very nature of the horror awaiting them on Severn Island prevents the characters from accomplishing their primary objective of rescuing Amy Duncan. The goal instead becomes destroying Gabriel Ratchets: Award the characters 1D10 points of **MENTAL HEALTH** for exterminating him, despite the inevitable loss of Amy as well. Each groupie (including Fiona Leighton) they can successfully bring off the island and into rehabilitation nets them 1 point of **MENTAL HEALTH**; for each one that is killed (either as a direct or indirect result of the characters' actions), the loss is 1 point.

Involving the police is of dubious value. Inspector Corbin has no jurisdiction on Severn Island, and the Severnford Constabulary is unlikely to take seriously accounts of half-human monsters. Informing the police about real or fabricated crimes committed on the island might bring about a raid but by the time the authorities arrive, Gabriel Ratchets may have been spirited off the island by his entourage. He may also have completely absorbed Amy, as the GM sees fit.

The characters must also determine what to tell Stuart and Irene Duncan. The loss of their daughter is devastating, doubly so to Irene should she learn the terrible truth behind Amy's fate, but they (and probably the police) are surely owed some sort of explanation. Ultimately, the characters must consider whether they want to make Stuart and Irene aware of Irene's own hand in Amy's demise, or leave that terrible revelation a secret. At the GM's discretion the characters may be rewarded or penalized with up to 1D4 **MENTAL HEALTH** points each, depending on the sensitivity (or lack thereof) of their approach. A particularly diplomatic strategy that resolves the matter while minimizing the impact on the Duncans, sparing them a lifetime of regret and contrition, would perhaps warrant a bonus of 1 or 2 points of **MENTAL HEALTH**.

Statistics

GABRIEL RATCHETS

Foster Child of the Old Ones

Strength	27	Endurance	27
Size	29	Intelligence	19
Willpower	17	Agility	15
Hit Points	28	Move	08

Damage Modifier: +3D6

Weapons: Crush 75%, 1D6+DM

Armor: none, but takes minimum damage from non-enchanted weapons

Spells: Azathoth's Curse, Dominate, Fog Memory, Summon & Bind Walker Between the Dimensions, Sign of the Voors, Wither

Mental Health Loss: 1/1D10

FOUR GROUPIES

Gabriel Ratchets' groupies range in age from about 14 to 40. The youngest are runaways, many of whom come and go; the rest are long-time residents. All are fanatically devoted to Ratchets. Numbers One and Two are pregnant with Ratchets' children; they engage in physical violence only as a last resort.

	One	Two	Three	Four
Strength	10	14	11	13
Endurance	11	09	11	11
Size	14	10	13	09
Willpower	11	11	10	13
Agility	14	16	08	13
Hit Points	13	10	12	10

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: Claw With Finger Nails 50%, 1D3+DM

Skills: Detect 35%, Eldritch Lore 10%, Hide 35%, Listen 30%, Occult 30%, Stealth 40%

EWEN MACPHERSON

Journalist, age 52

Strength	10	Endurance	12
Size	15	Intelligence	15
Willpower	12	Agility	13
Charisma	12	Education	18
Mental Health	50	Hit Points	14

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: none

Skills: Bluff 35%, Convince 55%, Detect 30%, Eldritch Lore 05%, History 40%, Listen 40%, Music Knowledge 75%, Negotiate 30%, Occult 30%, Photography 40%, Psychology 35%, Research 35%, Stealth 20%, Write 60%

GEORDIE HALDANE

Thug, age 23

Strength	15	Endurance	13
Size	16	Intelligence	11
Willpower	13	Agility	13
Charisma	13	Education	10
Mental Health	45	Hit Points	15

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Punch 55%, 1D3+DM

Chain 35%, 1D6+1+DM

Kick 40%, 1D6+DM

Skills: Bluff 65%, Climb 50%, Detect 40%, Eldritch Lore 05%, Jump 40%, Heavy Equipment 15%, Listen 60%, Mechanics 50%, Negotiate 40%, Psychology 45%, Stealth 30%

FIONA LEIGHTON

#1 fan, age 39

Strength	09	Endurance	16
Size	12	Intelligence	14
Willpower	12	Agility	15
Charisma	14	Education	11
Mental Health	30	Hit Points	14

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: Claw With Finger Nails 50%, 1D3+DM

Skills: Bookkeeping 40%, Negotiate 75%, Eldritch Lore 10%, Evade 50%, First Aid 50%, Listen 60%, Stealth 75%, Swim 40%

CLIVE CORBIN**Police Inspector, age 49**

Strength	13	Endurance	14
Size	12	Intelligence	14
Willpower	14	Agility	13
Charisma	12	Education	15
Mental Health	70	Hit Points	13

Damage Modifier: +1D4

Weapons: Punch 65%, 1D3+DM

Trucheon 50%, 1D6+DM

Skills: Bluff 35%, Climb 30%, Detect 45%, Drive 40%, Evade 40%, First Aid 45%, Law 45%, Listen 55%, Mechanics 30%, Negotiate 45%, Photography 30%, Reputation 45%, Research 35%, Stealth 30%, Track 20%

NIGEL COMSTOCK**Manager, age 62**

Strength	10	Endurance	12
Size	11	Intelligence	16
Willpower	13	Agility	14
Charisma	12	Education	16
Mental Health	30	Hit Points	12

Damage Modifier: none

Weapons: none

Skills: Bluff 60%, Bookkeeping 70%, Convince 50%, Drive 45%, Eldritch Lore 10%, Law 40%, Listen 70%, Negotiate 60%, Reputation 30%, Stealth 30%

Player Aids

Blight Player Aid #1

Not all of the native peoples were eager to be converted; the church at Lucero was said to have been built over the ruins of an ancient, eldritch temple where monstrous rituals had once been performed and where certain gates, if opened by now long-forgotten and alien incantations, would gape to let elder demons pass from other spheres.

Blight Player Aid #2

Somewhere in the vast wilderness near present-day Silver City was said to be a meeting-place for worshippers of strange gods. The Indians say that subterranean passages burrow down to the very bowels of the earth, and hint that not all who crawl down these tunnels to worship are human.

Blight Player Aid #4

GRANT COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

~{}~

251 E. Broadway
Silver City, New Mexico

Second Coming Player Aid #3

TULANE STUDENT MISSING

Police Request Public Assistance

Tulane University staff have reported that Stephan Landreaux, a graduate student, has been missing for several weeks. Alerted by several students and faculty the University contacted police who in turn are requesting the assistance of the public.

Landreaux, a native of Baton Rouge, has been attending Tulane for five years. He is described as approximately six feet tall, of average build, with blond hair and blue eyes. Persons with information regarding Stephan Landreaux are asked to contact the New Orleans Police Department as soon as possible.

Blight Player Aid #3

11 May, 1733 ~ Having secured two sturdy mounts and the blessing of the Governor, I bade farewell to my darling Ysobel and set out with my companion de Vargas at dawn this morning from Santa Fe to explore the Great Wilderness that lies some fifty leagues to the southwest.

15 May, 1733 ~ De Vargas and I have followed the Rio Grande south for four days; we have been travelling about eight leagues each day. Tomorrow we turn west, to skirt the San Mateo Mountains. We should reach the Great Wilderness within two days.

18 May, 1733 ~ We are lost. This vast forest of pine that stretches as far as the eye can see must surely be the fabled Great Wilderness, but without the benefit of an accurate map, de Vargas and I have lost all sense of direction and distance. Our best estimates place us about twenty leagues west of the Rio Grande.

20 May, 1733 ~ Our food supply runs low. Many of the indigenous plants of this land are said to be edible, but de Vargas and I would rather trust to game than risk possible poisoning. We must continue in what we believe to be an easterly direction.

21 May, 1733 ~ This morning, we consumed the last of our food. Game is scarce and I fear we shall perish for want of food. As the day drew to a close de Vargas, by keen sight and the Grace of God, espied a cluster of adobe structures of Spanish design in the distance; we thanked God for this good fortune, and will make for the colony at dawn.

Blight Player Aid #5

**ROMANCE OF SEVEN
CITIES STILL ALIVE**

Did seven Portuguese bishops, fleeing from the Moslem invasion of their homeland, embark their congregations in the year 714 and set sail for the New World? Since the days of Coronado, rumours have abounded that the bishops founded seven cities of immense wealth, cities that many believe lay somewhere in New Mexico. Many a Spaniard and American have searched for the fabled Seven Cities without success; if they actually exist, the cities have eluded treasure-seekers for centuries.

Blight Player Aid #6

**THE OLDEST LIVING
RESIDENT OF GRANT
COUNTY**

Although Silver City boasts a number of long-lived citizens you won't find the oldest resident of the county here - or in any other town for that matter - according to the Indians who sell their handiwork at the market in Silver City; the county's oldest resident is apparently a medicine man, well over one hundred years of age, who lives alone in the hills west of town. When his tribe was resettled around the turn of the century, the Indians say, the medicine man refused to go. They claim that spiritual cleanliness is the key to his long life, but although he is rumoured to possess much knowledge and Indian lore, the medicine man - if he exists - must offer proof of his alleged age if he wants to lay claim to the title of "oldest resident of Grant County".

Blight Player Aid #8

**RADIOACTIVE HUMAN THIGHBONE
FOUND IN NEW MEXICO**

Researchers at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque have discovered that a human thighbone found half a century ago in the Gila Wilderness contains radiation levels an astonishing fifty times normal. Using the latest technology, researchers were able to detect an aura of intense radiation surrounding the femur, which is the property of the Grant County Historical Society in Silver City, New Mexico. Scientists are baffled at this astounding discovery. Following the examination, the femur was returned to the Historical Society.

Widdershins Player Aid #1

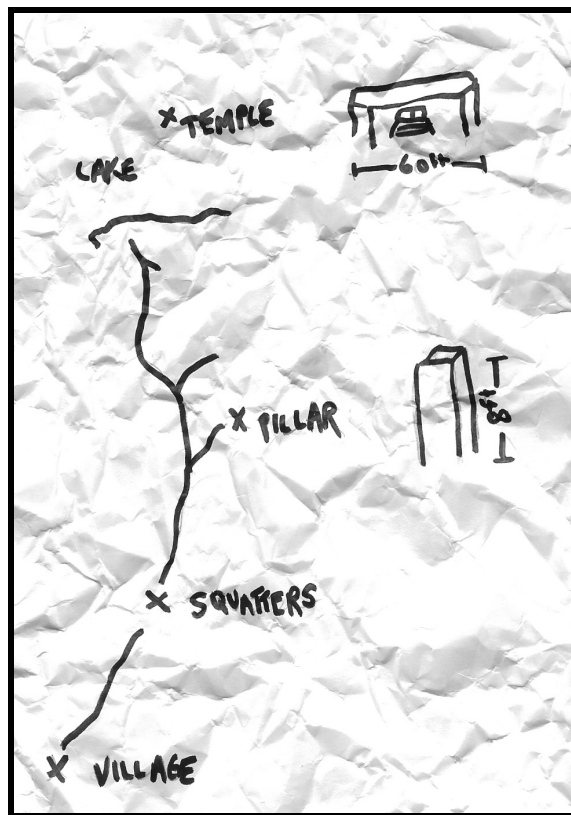
Mum,

Please don't worry about me, I'll be all right. There's just somewhere else I need to be now.

Love,

Amy

Second Coming Player Aid #5



Usurpers Player Aid #4

WOMAN KILLS BABIES

Infants' Deaths Shock City

In one of Arkham's most terrible tragedies, four newborn children are dead and their mother, Luella Marsden, is in custody. According to Arkham Police, Miss Marsden – a single woman formerly employed as a secretary with the Ace Insurance Company – gave birth to quadruplets in her apartment sometime after midnight last night.

Neighbors, who describe Miss Marsden as a quiet, solitary woman, did not know she was pregnant but responded to the dripping of water from the ceiling of their apartment, apparently originating in Miss Marsden's room above. When no one answered their knocking, the neighbors summoned the building superintendent who forced the door. Inside, to their horror, they found the source of the leak: Miss Marsden's bathtub was overflowing and inside floated four tiny bodies. Miss Marsden herself was unconscious on her bed with an empty bottle of sleeping tablets by her side.

An ambulance was summoned and Miss Marsden was rushed by ambulance to hospital where she was successfully roused and subsequently charged with murder.

Usurpers Player Aid #5

**HUSBAND KILLS
PREGNANT WIFE**

***Tragedy Shakes Quiet
Neighborhood***

Last night, in a fit of rage, Arkham resident Albert Bishop attacked his wife with a kitchen knife while she slept. Neighbors awoke to the sounds of a woman screaming, and Arkham Police were called to the scene. They arrived to find Mamie Bishop on the bed, lying in a pool of her own blood. Her husband, still holding the bloody kitchen knife, made no effort to resist arrest.

An ambulance arrived within minutes and carried Mrs. Bishop to hospital where, despite the efforts of a team of surgeons, she died shortly thereafter. During emergency surgery, it was determined that Mrs. Bishop had been five or six months pregnant with triplets.

Mrs. Bishop had been employed as secretary to Dr. Richard Raleigh of the university's Anthropology Department. Albert Bishop is being held without bail.

Widdershins Player Aid #4

**TRAGEDY STRIKES MOOR
POP FESTIVAL**

A controversial pop music festival on Bodmin Moor ended in tragedy yesterday when one of the musicians was struck by lightning. Guy Salisbury was preparing to take the stage with his band, Tell-Tale Hearts, when a freak storm blew across the moor. Witnesses report hearing a loud clap of thunder, then watching in horror as a lightning bolt struck Salisbury, killing him instantly.

Salisbury, 36, was the drummer for notorious 70s rock group Widdershins; when they disbanded in 1976 following the disappearance of lead singer Gabriel Ratchets, Salisbury and the other members carried on as Strange Eons. A series of tragedies befell the other musicians and Salisbury, the only surviving member of Strange Eons, formed Tell-Tale Hearts earlier this year.

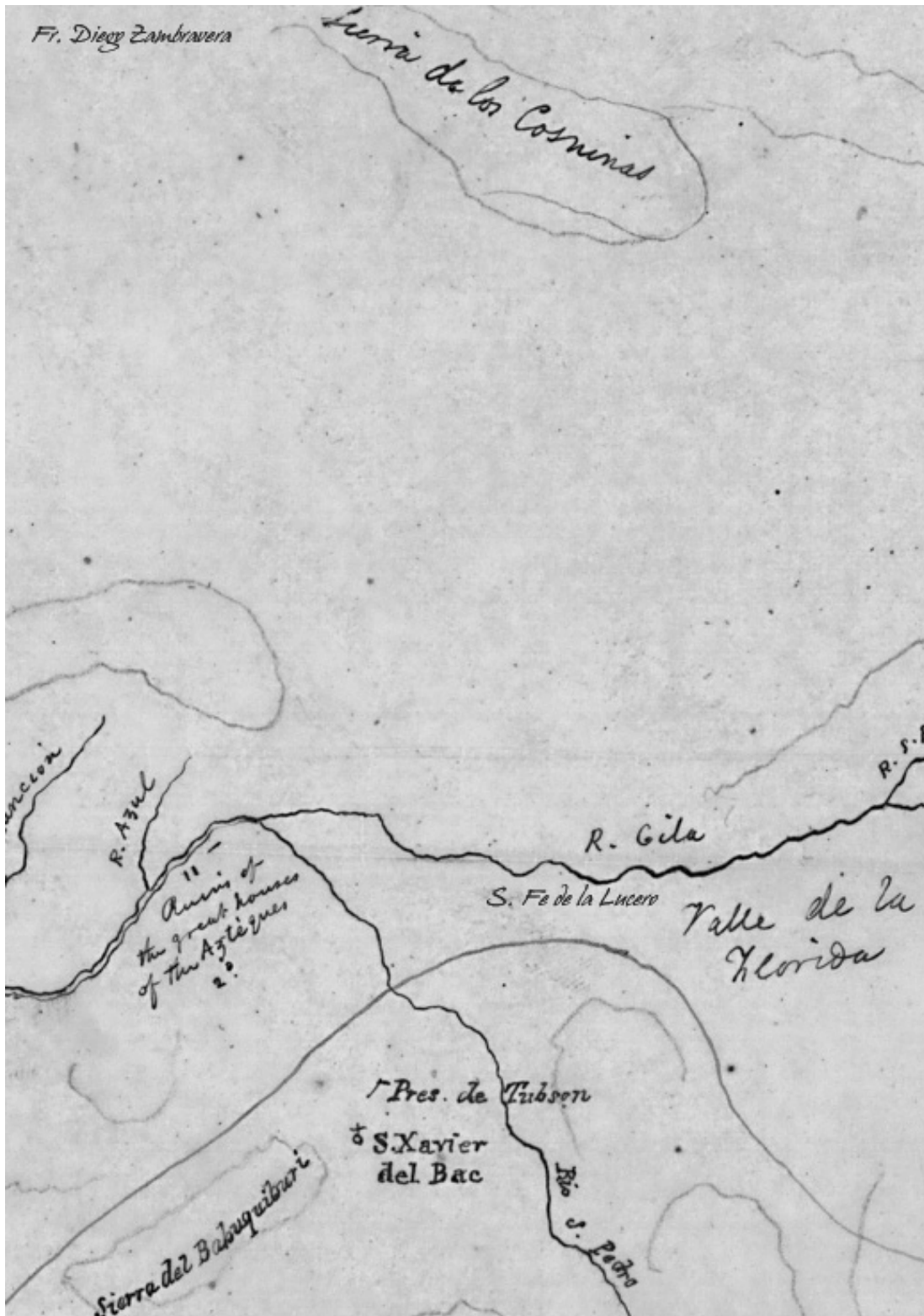
The concert on Bodmin Moor had been opposed by locals over concerns for their property and their safety. Ironically, the three-day event had been peaceful, with police reporting only a few arrests, mostly for possession of narcotics.

Widdershins Player Aid #2

Mum & Dad,

Please don't worry about me, I'll be all right. There's somewhere I need to be if I want to be whole

a part of something bigger



Second Coming Player Aid #1

spoke quite favorably of the facilities offered, and thanked the committee for its diligence.

One of the more interesting incidents was the visit of Inspector Legrasse of the New Orleans Police Department, who brought with him a stone idol of unknown origin. The exquisitely crafted statuette had been recently confiscated from the site of a supposed voodoo gathering. The idol's workmanship was surpassed only by its repulsiveness, depicting as it did a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head. The artifact was of such antiquity that none of the assembled men of science were able to help the inspector identify its source. Its origin remains a mystery.

Because of a hail storm, the trains arriving from the west were delayed by several hours, causing some members to miss the registration and part of the first lecture.

Usurpers Player Aid #3

WOMAN DIES OF COMPLICATIONS AFTER BACK-ALLEY ABORTION

The body of Sandra Fotheringham, of no fixed abode, was discovered by police in an alley early this morning. A spokesman for the Arkham Police Department announced that the woman appeared to be the victim of an illegal back-alley abortion, and had died of massive hemorrhaging. According to police, this type of procedure is highly dangerous but remains popular among certain unwed mothers. It is believed that Miss Fotheringham, 23, had been about three months pregnant with triplets.

Medical authorities have generally reported a decline in "back-alley" abortions since *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court case that legalized abortion throughout the country, but today's incident serves as a grim reminder of the hazards of these illegal procedures.

Police have no leads in the case and are asking anyone with information to come forward.

Second Coming Player Aid #4

MR. CESAR GALLIER DIES.

On June 7, after an extended illness, Mr. Cesar Gallier departed this life in his 27th year. The father and mother of the departed both preceded their son into eternity. Mr. Gallier is survived by his devoted wife. The body was laid to rest yesterday in the family tomb in St. Louis Cemetery No. 3, following funeral services at the home.

Usurpers Player Aid #2

PREGNANT WOMAN COMMITTS SUICIDE

Yesterday afternoon, horrified onlookers at Arkham's train station watched as a woman threw herself in front of the 5:15 train from Boston. The body of Annie Dorward, 29, was pulled from under the train. Paramedics pronounced her dead at the scene but made a further grisly discovery: Dorward had been pregnant with quintuplets, and was even perhaps in labor at the time of her suicide leap.

Dorward, a divorced mother of three, moved to Arkham last year from the west. She had been employed as a waitress at Sully's Bar & Grill. Her ex-husband has custody of the children.

Police are appealing for witnesses to the incident to come forward.

Usurpers Player Aid #1

STUDENT ASSAULTED IN DOROTHY UPMAN HALL

A Miskatonic University sophomore was sexually assaulted late last night while doing laundry in the basement of her dormitory, and her attackers are still on the loose.

Judy Masterson, 19, was alone in the laundry room of Dorothy Upman Hall at about 11 pm when someone turned out the lights and attacked her. Masterson's cries for help eventually brought fellow students to her aid, but not before her attackers had fled. She was taken to hospital for observation and released.

News of the attack is traveling fast, and it's causing concern in this small college town, where most students generally feel safe.

Masterson has been unable to provide a detailed description of her assailants, but police are looking for three or four white males of slender build. Police ask anyone with information to contact them.

Second Coming Player Aid #2

I have found something that I think will prove to be most useful. The bookseller tells me he bought it from a down-and-out sailor who claimed to be a Bokor – but the bookseller seemed nervous and in quite a hurry to part with the item, and hence I was able to purchase it at a most agreeable price. I rushed home with it, and tore its wrappings off, so eager I was to compare it to what the book described.

I have met the man to whom the statue originally belonged – the man who sold it to the bookseller may indeed be a Bokor, by the name of Carrefour. I have explained my interest to him in regards to the statue, and he seems to be quite intrigued. We spent many hours talking – it would seem that we both learned much from the other. At first when he appeared at the door, I feared that our confrontation would be less than pleasant – but it would seem we were meant to find each other, for I believe we share the same purpose, and indeed the same master, just under a different guise.

Marie has finally ceased to interrupt my study with her requests. I believe she has taken a liking to the new servant girl. Hopefully this will keep her amused until it is time for the ritual. She cannot come where I am going, and I believe she once resented it, but now I sense it bothers her less. It is of no matter to me, as long as she continues to serve me.

The rituals progress well. I have felt his power flow through my body. I can feel him taking hold. Already I am perceiving things differently – even the smallest things – smells, colors, sounds – it all seems so different. The pain has brought me a great many visions. I have told the others what I have seen and what they will have to do.

It pains me to not have written in some time. The transformation is consuming most of my strength. Soon it will be time to go to him, in the tomb where he sleeps. They will take me to the lake, and it is there I will meet him. I hope this will be my last entry. It takes every bit of my concentration & strength to lay these words down, but I do this to provide a map of my journey to those who will follow afterwards. Iâ!

Widdershins Player Aid #3

WIDDERSHINS – Led by Gabriel Ratchets (vocals; b. Goatswood, 1948), Widdershins was one of the most notorious rock groups of the 1970s. The members of Widdershins – Roger Mosley (lead guitar; b. Lower Brichester, 1950 – d. London, 1978), Simon Fennell (bass guitar; b. Lower Brichester, 1949 – d. New York City, 1984), John Buxton (keyboards, flute; b. Camside, 1950) and Guy Salisbury (drums; b. Severnford, 1950 – d. Bodmin Moor, 1986) – whose music blended the sinister motif of Black Sabbath with the cosmic themes of Pink Floyd, carved out a niche for themselves but never attracted the mass audience of their contemporaries.

Ratchet's complex lyrics centered around strange rites, and the band gave remarkably eerie performances, often simulating human sacrifice on stage. Each concert began with what was billed as an authentic magical ceremony – so authentic, in fact, that it prompted one prominent clergyman to proclaim that Widdershins were "in danger of raising forces beyond their control." One critic responded that the band's antics were evidence not of diabolism but of diabolically bad taste. Nevertheless, many towns in the southern and midwestern United States prohibited Widdershins from performing and a 1974 tour of Canada ended in disaster: The final performance resulted in the ritual suicide of a fan and a riot causing \$30,000 in damages. Although the band was later cleared of any wrongdoing, a tour of Japan had to be called off. In 1976, Ratchets disappeared; the band carried on under the moniker Strange Eons but failed to release an album. Tragedy struck the survivors and, within ten years, all but Buxton were dead: Mosley of a drug overdose in 1978; Fennell of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in 1984; and Salisbury under mysterious circumstances on Bodmin Moor in 1986. In 1981, an anonymous package arrived at the New York offices of Vixen Records. The package contained a note – in handwriting suspiciously similar to Ratchets', who was presumed dead – which claimed that the enclosed tape was "the work of Gabriel Ratchets, a transformed man." Vixen subsequently released the untitled, ten-song recording as "The Transformed Man." This album chronicled Ratchets' self-destructive descent into a private hell. He apparently believed so strongly in occult prophecy that he had retired to Cornwall to avoid a catastrophe he believed to be imminent. The album prompted critic Lester Bangs, writing in *The Village Voice* to remark: "Side One is Doom & Gloom – familiar territory for Widdershins, admittedly – but conveyed with a passion eschewed by the original configuration. This is truly music to slit your wrists by. Side Two, however, marks a dubious first in the annals of recorded music: Twenty minutes of grunting and heavy breathing, like a drunken, obscene phone call. All of this begs the question: If Gabriel Ratchets is the transformed man, *what on earth has he transformed into?*"

– Ewen MacPherson

DISCOGRAPHY:

- *** WIDDERSHINS [Londinium #3588, 1970] – Seven Whistlers (1:23), The Evil Eye (5:41), The Unquiet Dead (9:57), Tearers of Flesh (4:51), The Spaces of the World (19:37)
- ** THE BOOK OF SHADOWS [Polyglot #25890, 1971] – Drawing Down the Moon (9:36), The Way of Reversal (9:50), Names of Power (4:58), Oriax and Agares (15:34), The Way of Reversal, Part Two (1:35)
- * STRANGE TUMULTS [Polyglot #39594, 1973] – The Man with Cropped Ears (16:33), Roasted Monk (2:13), Thirteen Needles (8:43), Master of the Forest (11:02)
- * LUST AND BLASPHEMY [Polyglot #59348, 1975] – The Serpent of Desire (5:21), Pagan Slanders (4:22), Golden Dawn (3:44), Brimstone Boys (4:39), Cantharides (4:01), The Mortuary Mass (10:17), The Whistling Demon (3:12), Gnawers of the Dead (10:05)

Gabriel Ratchets Solo

- * THE TRANSFORMED MAN [Vixen #290, 1981]: I (21:15), II (19:39)

Widdershins Player Aid #5

Out of the Woods

According to the brief biography of the author, MacPherson went on tour with the group in 1973 and reports on the debauchery firsthand. Singer Gabriel Ratchets is described as “an imposing figure, charismatic with hypnotic eyes and a commanding presence both on and off the stage.” A photograph in the book shows Ratchets, a hulking figure in dark robes standing next to a beautiful, long-haired hippie girl (identified only as “Fiona”), circa 1973. Other photographs depict various members of the band and their manager, Nigel Comstock. There is also a photograph of MacPherson backstage.

According to the book, which is not indexed, very little is known about the early life of Gabriel Ratchets. He was born in Goatswood, apparently, and received little formal education. His parents reportedly died when he was young. Apart from Ratchets, the members of Widdershins all came from working class backgrounds. Guitarist Roger Mosley once said “If it weren’t for rock and roll, I’d have ended up in a factory, on the dole or in a prison.” Several members (but not, apparently, Ratchets) had been arrested in their youth, mostly on theft-related charges. None of them served time in prison.

The band’s decadence was mythic. Much of the time, they seemed to be fueled by alcohol, drugs and sex – and none more than Ratchets himself, whose consumption of all three was legendary. The band rarely gave interviews but Cameron Crowe managed to wrangle one for Rolling Stone in 1973. Crowe asked Ratchets if he was concerned that his excesses might one day cause him to join the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and Jim Morrison – to which Ratchets enigmatically replied “They flew too close to the sun, dear boy. I *am* the sun.” Crowe responded by asking Ratchets if that meant he wanted to live forever; Ratchets answered “I’m afraid I have no choice in the matter.”

The band had a well-deserved reputation for trashing hotel rooms, although The Who’s Keith Moon – himself a hotel wrecker of no small renown – once labeled their antics as “amateurish, spiteful and dull as dishwater.” Ratchets appears not to have taken part in much of the demolition; on the road, he was rarely seen except on the stage. The other members of the band seemed to fear Ratchets. Although every member had an equal vote in band affairs, no one would vote against Ratchets if it meant his side lost. MacPherson witnessed on several occasions band members changing their votes in order to give victory to Ratchets’ side. Ratchets, apparently, never overtly attempted to sway these votes.

In the studio, Ratchets would provide the lyrics, which the band would set to music. The band never contributed to the lyrics but Ratchets almost always had a hand in the music, changing the tempo, altering the key and switching the chords to better reflect his “vision” for the songs.

