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Clutching at Ignorance

A One-Round d20 SYSTEM *Call of Cthulhu* Adventure

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Occult treatises have been disappearing from the hidden collections of the local university library. Perhaps some of the employees should be watched a bit more thoroughly. Or perhaps there are stranger forces at work.... An adventure for 1st-level investigators.

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This adventure uses the d20 System *Call of Cthulhu* rules, designed by Monte Cook and John Tynes, and based on the work of Lynn Willis and Sandy Petersen, and inspired by the works of H.P. Lovecraft. This d20 SYSTEM game product utilizes mechanics developed for the new *Dungeons & Dragons* game by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, and Peter Adkinson.

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This is a RPGA adventure for the d20 System *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* optimized for a group of four 2nd-level investigators. A typically a four- to five-hour time block is allocated for playing this adventure. If you play this adventure at an RPGA-sanctioned event, the players who are part of that program are eligible for 2 DUNGEONS & DRAGONS PLAYER REWARDS points. See the RPGA website (www.wizards.com/rpga) for more information about D&D PLAYER REWARDS and RPGA adventure sanctioning.

PREPERATION

You should have a copy of the d20 System *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* rules to play this adventure. You should also have a set of dice, scrap paper, pen or pencil, and tools to track combat.

If you are running this adventure at an RPGA-sanctioned event, you should also have RPGA Table Tracking sheet (you can find one and the directions on how to complete it at the end of this adventure), and fill it out by the end of play. When the game is completed, turn in the RPGA Table Tracking sheet to your senior GM.

Before running this adventure, read through it at least once. Then you may want to familiarize yourself with the creature called the rat-thing (*Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* page 179) and the following spells: *deflect harm*, *detect magic*, *create time gate*, *curse of the rat-thing*, *obscuring mist*, *pose mundane*, and *shriveling* (all found in the spell section of the game rules).

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

You will find six pregenerated characters at the end of this adventure. For most events, and all tournament play (see below), use these characters for this adventure. Notice that these characters are not provided with extensive backgrounds. This is a change from older RPGA “classic” adventures.

If you are playing this adventure as a tournament, one of your jobs is to judge players on their ability to create an interesting, consistent, and ultimately game-effective character from a stat block and brief personality descriptors.

If you are not playing this adventure as a tournament, the senior GM can allow players to bring their own characters to play in this adventure. Those characters must follow the current Call of Cthulhu character creation guidelines. You can find those guidelines on the RPGA website (www.rpga.com).

Spell Modification: Allow one character to know the *detect magic* spell. This should go to one PC in the group whether or not anyone has chosen the spellcaster defense

option. If there is a PC in the group that has chosen the spellcaster defense option, that character should gain access to both *detect magic* and *healing touch*. If there is more than one PC with the spellcaster defense option at the table, randomly choose which one gains the spells for the adventure.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure takes place in the modern day. The setting is as close as you want it to be. This brief adventure is set near the campus of a university, and a few of its scenes involve the university library. Although the story refers to the city of Providence, it can easily be adapted to any place you know better. One obvious is to use your hometown. Of course, if the setting is a university the players know well, the fictional university doesn't have to be exactly like the real one. The world of *Call of Cthulhu* resembles ours in many ways, but it has some strange twists, and is, of course, far more dangerous than our own.

Although the investigators don't need to know this adventure's origins, it's a sequel of sorts to an introductory d20 SYSTEM *Call of Cthulhu* adventure titled *Jenkin Lives!* available at the Wizards of the Coast website (www.wizards.com/cthulhu.) Knowledge of that adventure is not necessary for playing or running this one. At the same time, that adventure makes an excellent introductory adventure, and can be easily modified to run at RPGA-sanctioned events, especially home events, so it is worth looking into if you want to make a long night of *Call of Cthulhu*.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Asa Olcott is an eccentric gentleman employed by a university library. Years of diligent work have earned him a position of authority, but outside his profession, he has been even busier. His voluminous correspondence has resulted in his acquaintance with a fringe element of society: visionaries who seek evidence of the supernatural. Six investigators (the PCs) have received an invitation to visit him in Providence (or whatever city you use as the setting for this adventure). As one would expect, they are the protagonists of this misadventure.

Olcott has arranged a meeting with the investigators at noon. And the adventure starts with the PCs showing up for the meeting.

Act 1: An Interview with Asa Olcott

The PCs meet Olcott. The eccentric academic explains to them the reason why he has called them to his university—to retrieve a pair of books stolen from him. He sets the investigators on the trail of the books, and grants them the aid of a young research assistant named Edward Eaton.

Act 2: Bookwork and Footwork

This is an open-ended act where characters can research Olcott and the missing books, as well as prepare for the perilous parts of the adventure.

Act 3: The Scene of the Crime

Eventually the PCs will want to investigate the “crime scene”—Olcott’s home. This act details his house prior to the characters opening the mysterious green trapdoor in the scholar’s walk-in closet. Once that door opens, the action moves to Act 4: Unleash Hell.

Act 4: Unleash Hell

After the PCs open the Green Door, Mythos factions converge. In this act PCs may battle rat-things, cultists, and probably both. In this act characters also have a chance of discovering the fate of the missing books, and the fate of Olcott the librarian.

Act 5: Ending the Adventure

For weal or woe, the adventure ends. The PCs will either find out the entire mystery of the missing tomes, or they will fall victim to rat-things and cultists.

INVESTIGATOR INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players before the start of play, and then allow them to describe their characters to each other. The characters don’t start with guns or cell phones, but all have had at least one run-in with the Mythos, and at least suspect its strange existence.

You know Asa Olcott only by his letters. This insightful librarian in charge of his university’s special collection has helped in the research stages of a number of—shall we say, esoteric—investigations. His letter to you was a simple request to meet him today at noon at his university office. While his reason for having you travel to his university was less than vague, you have always had a very good and professional relationship with him, and don’t imagine he would make the request frivolously. You have accepted his mysterious summons.

It is supposed that each PC received his or her summons individually, but, based on the character concepts each player comes up with, feel free to modify that assumption.

ACT 1: AN INTERVIEW WITH ASA OLCOTT

Olcott’s office is on the ground floor of the library. Each investigator has come from a different locale, arriving by bus or taxi from the airport. None of the investigators are from Providence, and none of them know each other. All of them are in the lobby within thirty minutes of the appointed hour.

As a creature of habit and formality, Olcott has asked his visitors to sign in at the front desk to confirm their appointment. The receptionist who greets them in is a well-meaning, dowdy woman named Miriam. She’s exceptionally flighty, repeatedly forgets peoples’ names, and takes great pride in the unbearably cute pictures of kittens she keeps by her computer. She keeps two logbooks on her desk. One is for signing employees in and out; the other is for guests, listing a name and time for each visitor, along with the name of the person visited.

Begin the adventure by asking the players, one by one, their characters’ preparations for the meeting. Miriam would introduce them all, but she doesn’t remember names or faces. At this point, the door to Olcott’s office is locked. The hallway outside it has no chairs, but it does have some rather dull pictures of the city’s history. Anyone who wants to track down a fellow investigator can wait by the front desk for another character to sign in before twelve o’clock. It should only take a simple Spot or Sense Motive check (DC 10) to notice someone suspicious lurking outside Olcott’s door or the front desk.

Investigators who find each other before the meeting may want to talk about their past exploits openly, but there are students present. Discussing events in the supernatural world without alerting passers-by (or people with prurient interests) may require an Innuendo check. (The roll is opposed by a Wisdom check from a random passer-by, usually at +0). Failing the roll results in a crackpot student asking annoying questions about Tibetan yeti, the Bermuda triangle, or whatever bizarre subjects he believes the investigators’ “secret” conversations are really about.

Veteran *Call of Cthulhu* players may declare their investigators are doing some research, either by wandering through the stacks or bolting straight for the reference desk. Half an hour is enough time to find trivia about the university, the surrounding city, or Asa Olcott. (Research, DC 10; more in-depth research typically takes 1d4x10 minutes per roll.) The Bookwork and Footwork section in the next scene has more details. There isn’t enough time to make checks against a DC higher than 10, however.

Once the players have a feel for their characters, the clock tower of the university tolls twelve times. At the sound of the first bell, Asa Olcott steps off an elevator

into the hallway. By the time the twelfth bell tolls, he punctually opens the door to his modestly furnished office.

Asa is an elderly man wearing a neatly kept suit that's at least thirty years out of fashion. He formally shakes the hand of each gentleman, thanking him profusely for visiting. A confirmed bachelor, he is somewhat stilted when dealing with any women present. He is kind enough to stand when a lady enters the room before politely kissing her hand. If men are from Mars, and women are from Venus, Asa is from Pluto.

Olcott motions to seven chairs he has arranged in front of his desk, and then slowly walks to his padded chair behind it. The colorful Macintosh computer sitting in front of him is as out of place here as a fusion reactor. An antique Underwood typewriter and a stack of index cards feature just as prominently on a shelf nearby. He is clearly an anachronism of academia patiently waiting for retirement. On the wall behind his desk diplomas from Brown University show that he has degrees in archaeology and library science. He does not hold a doctorate, however, and he is not a professor at the university.

After Asa welcomes the investigators, read (or paraphrase) the following text.

Thank you so much for coming here. I trust you have had a pleasant journey. You needn't worry about finding a place to stay. I've rented some rooms for you at a modest bed and breakfast not far from the campus. A bit extravagant, I must admit, but considering my reasons for inviting you here, it's the least I can do.

Perhaps some of you are already acquainted. Perhaps not. If there is one commonality that unites you, it is your common interest in the unusual, the macabre—dare I say it? The occult. You have been kind enough to write to me of what you have seen and done. In the past, you have each asked me to assist you in simple bits of research, but I am afraid I have not been as honest with all of you.

During the course of my voluminous correspondence, I have come to possess certain... items... that could have been of use to you, books that could have aided you in your investigations. Because of concerns for your safety and sanity, I dared not share them with others. Now I am afraid I no longer have that choice, for two of them have been stolen.

Three books sent to the library's Special Collection Department were rejected for their obscene and outré content, yet through my influence, I have... attained them... for my personal use. Rank hath its privileges, after all! After I saw what was within them, I secured them within my own home under lock and key, telling no one. For a while, I even tried to decipher a few of the more

elementary passages. Some of the more shocking ideas disturbed me, troubling me even in my dreams.

My friends, I fear these tomes may have fallen into the wrong hands. I should have entrusted them to worthies such as yourselves. I first noticed their absence a week ago, and every day since then, I feel as though I have been watched. Now I implore you to aid me in their recovery.

Brace yourself for questions. The tomes concern what he calls a "pantheon of obscene and forgotten gods," which he refers to as The Mythos.

The first book is a treatise on "black magic" relating to the darker side of New England's occult history: *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New England Canon*. If anyone asks, the book was contributed anonymously. Ten years ago, he received a package wrapped in brown paper and lacking a return address. When he realized the value of this book, he locked it in a fire safe in his home and eradicated all records of its existence. Perhaps that was not a legal course of action, but considering the dangerous knowledge contained within, it was a wise one.

The second book is a little known text of dubious origins. *Devilry Down East* is a salacious book from the 70's about "modern witchcraft" in New England. It focuses mainly on Maine and Massachusetts. Olcott owns a lithograph of the cover. The art features scantily clad women (presumably witches) cavorting in front of a psychedelic landscape. The paperback would have mercifully lapsed into obscurity, save for a chapter on modern interpretations of Egyptian and Sumerian mythology. Disturbing parallels between these pantheons and the Mythos run rampant. For many years, the book lingered on the shelves of an esoteric bookstore in San Francisco. When the business went bankrupt, Asa flew out personally to review the collection. Many books went straight into the library, but when Asa realized what was in this one, he quickly altered his paperwork.

There are some minor omissions in Olcott's story, of course. One of the players may notice that Olcott mentioned three books that were rejected, but only two of them have been stolen. (A character making a Sense Motive check to verify the truthfulness of Olcott's story notices this on a check result of 15 or more.) Olcott is also concerned for the safety of this third tome. It was fantastic enough that it was originally catalogued as a fantasy novel. *The Book of Eibon* concerns a legendary sorcerer from an antediluvian land called Hyperborea. Asa insists that he has it hidden in a "safe place." He's more concerned with retrieving the books that have already been stolen.

Special Collections: Asa's department in the library deals with the acquisition and preservation of rare books. It is located in the basement of the building, an area with a carefully controlled temperature and humidity. Books are available by special request, although some require written permission from faculty members. The librarians in his

department are quite vigilant, insisting that they watch all researchers in a common room. Flash photography is forbidden, and researchers get a stern lecture when they handle a book incorrectly. This department has the highest security of any place in the building. Asa can confirm that there have been no attempts at a break-in there for almost twenty years.

The Safe: Asa mentioned that two of the books were kept under lock and key in his home. The safe was in a closet on the second floor. Direct questions reveal that it didn't have a combination. It was a fire safe with a fairly standard lock, which required the key that came with it. Precisely one week ago, he found his key missing, the safe open, and the books gone. He kept the key with him at all times, although he typically put it on his nightstand (along with his other keys) before he went to bed.

The University: Asa says he is well known on campus, particularly since he has been there for over fifty years. He does not know of anyone on the faculty who bears a grudge against him, although he seen a few disgruntled employees leave in protest over various trivial matters. He would not be offended in the slightest if his "visiting scholars" chose to ask around about him. Hopefully, the years he has spent doing research for them is enough of a testament to his trustworthiness.

Suspicious Characters: If someone presses him for details about "being watched," he tries to change the subject, dismissing such concerns as trivial. If one of the players requests a Sense Motive check, ask for a roll, but don't reveal the DC. (Some GM's prefer to make this roll secret; either way, the difficulty is DC 20.) If the check fails, Asa's concern seems like simple paranoia. After all, he has done research for independent investigators for decades. A successful check confirms that his story is mostly true, but he is hiding something.

Although the investigators have all disclosed their involvement in the occult, Olcott has not revealed his. It takes a Diplomacy check (DC 15) to get him to talk about certain recent events. On a failed check, he simply says, "I can't look at ordinary people in the same way anymore. Any one of them could be stalking me." If the check succeeds, he begins to rant about the presence of "tramps and bums" on campus, referring to them as "less than human." He says that some of them are overly aggressive, and then carelessly drops words like "extermination." Then he bluntly states, "Forgive me. The strain is getting to me. I will give the books to you, if you can find them." It doesn't take much insight after these statements (Sense Motive or Psychoanalysis, DC 15) to realize that this troubled old man is bordering on paranoia. He apologizes, makes an excuse about returning to his cataloguing, and bids them good day.

On any one of these Sense Motive rolls, a truly insightful character (DC 25) may harbor further suspicions. Asa is also clearly reluctant to part with these books, as he knows the knowledge within them is dangerous. Despite this, he has been driven to extremes

by (what he calls) the unsavory individuals who are following him. In deciphering these books, he may have been corrupted by the very knowledge he kept hidden, especially with his stress and haste.

Another Theory: If the investigators are kind enough to not press him for unpleasant details, Asa ends the interview on an amusing note. The thought has crossed his mind that this may all be some elaborate student prank. As far as he knows, however, his reputation among the students is exemplary.

MEETING MR. EATON

As the interview concludes, a sheepish young man with ruffled dark hair, a thick sweater, and thick-rimmed eyeglasses appears in the doorway. Olcott introduces Edward Eaton, a capable graduate student who can show them around campus if they need a guide. Asa gives profuse thanks to the investigators for their assistance (or half-hearted excuses as to why he must get back to his work), escorts them from the room, and returns to his work. He says that he has some books to process and catalog today.

"If I'm out," Asa says, "this infernal device can take a message." He motions to a relatively modern office telephone on his desk. Asa eschews the use of pagers, cell phones, or other such nonsense. Edward Eaton has a pained but polite expression on his face as Asa mutters about modern technology, then politely holds the door open for the investigators.

Edward Eaton, Capable Graduate Student; male 1st level (defense option); HD 1d6-1; hp 5; Init +1; AC 13; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +0 melee (1d3 subdual, fist) or +1 ranged; SV Fort -1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13. SAN 70. Age 20.

Skills: Concentration +3, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (archaeology) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Hide +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Open Locks +6, Research +6, Speak Language (Latin) +6, Search +6, Spot +5.

Feats: Dodge, Run.

Possessions: Cell phone, PDA, excellent running shoes.

Edward's most notable contributions to the PCs are his familiarity with the area (through the Knowledge [local] skill), and his extracurricular interests. Two years ago, he attained an internship at the library after he was caught breaking into it. It is a story he does not like to divulge (Diplomacy, DC 20, to dredge it out). Olcott discovered that the young Mr. Eaton wasn't there to steal books, but instead to do a little research "after hours." He immediately took the troublesome student under his wing, and Eaton has remained indebted to him ever since. Since some visitors would find Eaton's criminal background suspicious, he prefers to say that Olcott is a mentor to him, teaching him some of the more traditional methods of research.

Eaton's presence prevents the bothersome problem of asking for directions from passing students. When presented with danger, he hides. When presented with extreme danger, he flees. As a young boy, he used to sneak into the attic of his family's home to read, with a flashlight in hand. He hasn't changed much since, as he is far too insular to deal with the unpleasant problems of an unkind world. At the same time, he can become strangely impatient at time. While a focused researcher and scholar, he gets board at times acting as the PCs guide, and becomes outwardly pushy. His outbursts are useful in guiding the characters from act to act when need be.

ACT 2: BOOKWORK AND FOOTWORK

Even if the players are completely unfamiliar with the *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game*, a library should be an obvious place for some PCs to use their Research skill. Other players may want their investigators to ask questions around campus, favoring Gather Information instead.

When players use Gather Information, avoid simply stating facts baldly. Feel free to embellish each revelation with a brief roleplaying scene. If the investigators do this exclusively, make each of these "footwork" scenes progressively longer. Wise gamers will soon realize they are burning valuable time seeking progressively peripheral knowledge.

When characters use Research, it is entirely possible that they may want to investigate something that seems tangential or even irrelevant to this story. Let them. Invent as much or as little detail as you like, as long as it is consistent. The most salient facts are contained within this section, but ultimately, as long as the characters eventually go to the scene of the crime, they should be able to conclude this adventure.

The remainder of this act is split into five sections. The first four sections are Asa Olcott, Missing Tomes, William Jared, and Exploring Campus. Each of the preceding sections gives the most useful information characters can find during the research and footwork, and guidelines on how PCs can gain the information. The last section, titled Other Errand, details what characters need to do to purchase weapons and equipment.

ASA OLCOTT

Some suspicious investigators may want to learn more about the reclusive librarian. All the PCs know he has been very professional in his correspondence, focusing on what he has learned of the occult and supernatural. By spending time asking questions (either at the library or around campus), the investigators can learn some more personal details about him. The DCs are for Gather Information checks.

DC 10 Basic questions reveal that Olcott has a reputation as an eccentric. His fellow professors or anyone working in the library can attest that he is slow to answer his e-mails, giving preference to written memoranda and typewritten letters. He's very bad about returning his voice mail. Save for this stubbornness, he is well respected.

DC 15 More in-depth questioning results in some less-flattering facts. Some dissatisfied librarians say that he has served as the Director of Special Collections for so long that he has come to consider it his own private domain.

Olcott is well known within the archaeology and anthropology departments, although some of the younger teachers find him somewhat annoying. When discussing certain areas of archaeology, he has a bad habit of referring to sources like *In Search Of*, *Fortean Times*, and Time-Life books on the supernatural. Although an expert at research, he's a lightweight in the arena of archaeology.

DC 17 A few of the older women on campus may have more personal facts to confide. They find him endearing, but he is too reclusive a man to ever marry. He has a habit of wandering the campus in the evening talking to himself about his latest academic fascinations. (Women investigators get a +2 circumstance bonus to this check.)

DC 20 If an investigator is particularly adept at interviewing librarians, he may learn a few stories about a former employee who bears a grudge against him. William Jared was a struggling grad student who worked in Special Collections for a few semesters. He took his work a bit too personally. On a few occasions, he accused Olcott of actually trying to censor the collection, since William's superior insisted on personally reviewing materials before they were added to the stacks. Eventually, Jared was fired for taking home books without checking them out. Jared accused Olcott of the same crime, but could prove nothing.

The investigator's source is reluctant to talk about Olcott's personal acquisitions, since she thinks

she might lose her job. A bit of Diplomacy (DC 20) can put her at ease. A successful check reveals that all of the books dealt in some way with the folklore of New England, particularly stories of the supernatural.

If this check fails, she instead discloses that this esteemed academic likes the turgid writing of old fantasy novels, so he has the bothersome habit of borrowing pulp novels. Some of the women in the department secretly refer to him as Conan the Librarian. With this witticism, the confidant then snorts derisively until she has to adjust the taped glasses perched on her nose.

Consulting Asa: Stymied investigators may go back to Asa to ask further questions. After the interview he spends about half an hour typing on his antique Underwood. He then leaves for lunch, signing out at the front desk. On the off chance that the characters catch him back at the office before he leaves, he insists that he must get work done (and is visibly annoyed with the PCs—though always polite to them), but suggests getting together for an early (4 p.m.) dinner at his home, and gives the characters the address. This also works to get characters to his house before hell is unleashed (see Act 4).

For reasons that will later be apparent, when signs out for lunch, he also signs back in, writing that he returned at 1:00. Miriam, deeply engrossed in yet another cat book, doesn't notice his absence. Later she does not remember the exact time he came back from his afternoon stroll. Asa Olcott does not return.

LOCAL EVENTS

Anyone doing preliminary investigation about the neighborhood should find a few red herrings about minor scandals. Searching through newspapers for in-depth information typically takes about 1d4x10 minutes for each Research roll. Some of this information is also on the Web. The first two blocks of the following information can also be found on the Web with a successful Computer Use check.

DC 10 If you're basing this adventure in a town you know well, you can easily seed in local events here; most should have nothing to do with the plot. Otherwise, feel free to invent the usual university nonsense about the threat of raising tuition, fanaticism for the outcome of lacrosse matches, animal activists in laboratories, and so on.

DC 15 Some more unusual items in the paper require a bit more digging. They deal

with the disqualification of a player from the football team for misconduct, recent attacks on homeless people in the neighborhood, and a protest led by a religious group about the teaching of evolution at the university. A well-written series of articles deals with further attacks on "unfortunates" near the campus, segueing into a puff piece about "the homeless problem." The pictures of local victims are well done, particularly one of a local itinerant who was killed by a drunk driver recklessly speeding across campus.

DC 20

Two separate rolls are necessary for the last two incriminating bits of evidence. The first concerns a series of assaults actually committed by "transients" late at night. The incidents occurred within the last six months. A bit of insight (Sense Motive, DC 15) suggests that the reporter is trying to assign blame to a segment of society that is easily stigmatized. He has little proof, but he does skillfully refer to a series of maudlin articles the lead editor is writing.

The second successful check uncovers a humorous story from six months ago about a student named Eaton who was caught breaking into the library to study.

MISSING TOMES

Finding references to the missing tomes is difficult, at least for the casual researcher. The following are Research checks.

DC 15

Thaumaturgical Prodigies is something of a collector's item. Two versions of the book exist; the rarer version actually has a misspelling in the title. There's a copy of *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New England Canaan* at Miskatonic University in Arkham, Mass. (If you've adapted this story for Arkham, the book is on loan to the John Hay Library in Providence). According to academic papers, the rare edition deals with the evolution of witchcraft in New England. Some of the covens discussed have rather unusual interpretations of local folklore. The author begins the treatise by affirming his faith and condemning heathen practices in the introductory chapters. By the end of the book, he documents

actual practices, even detailing rituals he has witnessed as “evidence.”

DC 15 The second book, *Devilry Down East*, is conspicuously absent from even passing references. An observant scholar may notice that the sorts of books that would mention it have been damaged or defaced. Pages have been torn out, books have been lost or misplaced, and computer records have been expunged. The fifth floor of the library has an old paper card catalog; this relic of the 70’s holds rows of index cards in wooden drawers. Anyone looking for the title of the book, or even its subject matter, can find evidence that cards have been hastily torn out.

DC 10 The *Book of Eibon* was originally catalogued for PZ2001, the Library of Congress classification for science fiction and fantasy. The library acquired it a year ago, but the false data still hasn’t been removed from the library’s computers. A note in a text field includes cross-references to the stories of Robert E. Howard, Lin Carter, and Clark Ashton Smith.

DC 15 More thorough investigation of this last book involves going through some secondary sources. Hyperborea is not only mentioned in the *Book of Eibon*, but also several *Conan* stories. Carter and Smith sometimes referred to it as Thule.

DC 20 Fanatic researchers find a ‘zine in Special Collections with a paranoid theory about Eibon and Thule. The author accuses several writers of fabricating fantasy stories to cover up real events. He cites Lin Carter as the worst culprit. William Jared wrote the article.

WILLIAM JARED

Mr. Jared’s address is listed in the phone book (Research, DC 5, if no one thinks of this). He lived alone in a boarding house four blocks from campus. Calling the phone number yields no response. Visiting the old rumor-ridden brick apartment complex reveals that William left town a few months ago. The place is a rat-infested hellhole. The landlord is furious, since William was always late paying his rent. Mr. Jared eventually broke his lease by leaving suddenly. After he left his apartment, his meager belongings left behind were sent to charity. His

extensive collection of rare books was donated to the university library.

DC 10 Several publications bear a picture of Olcott’s rival. Jared was a tall, thin man with a hawk-like nose. The many clubs he belonged to on campus tolerated his participation, despite his lack of social skills.

EXPLORING THE CAMPUS

Wandering about the college campus reveals that it is a fairly typical institution. A few college radicals hand out literature, and a few of the local homeless find refuge in the surrounding neighborhood. Improvise whatever collegiate encounters you like. Make them banal enough to suggest that repeated perambulations are counterproductive.

At one point, a shuffling overweight man approaches an investigator with an outstretched hand. He gestures for change, but says nothing. Regardless of whether his panhandling is successful, he wanders on after about fifteen seconds, mutely gesturing for change. He communicates in a series of grunting noises

OTHER ERRANDS

Eaton can also give directions to anyone wanting to run other errands (such as bookstores, hardware stores, or gun shops).

Using bookstores to garner other bits of information cost the character time (at least 2d20 minutes), and are ultimately fruitless. Allow PCs that want to go shopping to do so (even for pistols, rifles, or shot guns), and for simplicity assume that there is no waiting period to get such hardware, but getting a license for such a weapon does, and the characters will not be able to get one before the adventure is over. Handguns and shotguns are not essential to the resolution of this adventure, and their possession may cause characters trouble in later acts.

If the investigators go off on wild tangents, Edward Eaton suggests that they perhaps check out Olcott’s home, where the break-in took place. He produces a house key to try to convince them. It’s the wrong key, but when the investigators get to Act Three: The Scene of the Crime, he offers to pick the lock himself.

ACT 3: THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

To resolve this mystery, the investigators must examine Olcott’s home. The house is a weathered two-story wooden structure that looks like it hasn’t changed much since the 1950’s. Each side of the house has two windows on the ground floor. Search checks (DC 10) confirm that the crumbling paint around each one hasn’t been

disturbed in decades. The doorframe to the front and back doors are intact. Climbing up an ivy-laden trellis (Climb, DC 10) to check the windows on the second floor reveals that they won't budge. The frames around them have been painted shut. Anyone climbing the side of the building should make a Hide check (see below).

In case anyone looks for windows set near the ground, the building has no basement. Anyone with Knowledge (architecture) may realize immediately (DC 10) that this quaint home was built several decades ago, so its design is different from other homes around it. There's a crawlspace under the front porch, but it would be hard for anything larger than a housecat to enter it. Halfway along each side of the house, there's a vent near the ground. It's presumably been placed there to keep stray cats or other animals from sleeping under the warm building (Knowledge [architecture] DC 15 to figure this out).

The investigators may have had the foresight to ask for the key (and permission) to enter the home. If they didn't, Asa forgot to offer it. Unprepared investigators find that the lock is quite secure (Open Lock, DC 20). For each failed roll, an investigator trying to break in should make a Hide check (DC 15) to be subtle about breaking and entering. If the check fails, campus police drive by the house fifteen minutes later to make sure everything is all right.

One of the characters may try some kind of scam (with a Bluff check) to talk his or her way into the house or away from the police. Assume the average neighbor or campus police officer has Wisdom 10. Gunfire summons a group of 1d4+1 campus police officers in 1d10 minutes.

POLICE INTERFERENCE

Keep in mind that in *Call of Cthulhu*, the authorities are often adversaries for investigators. Some Gamemasters choose to handle encounters with the police very differently. If you're one of them, consider how officers would respond to various scenarios before running the adventure. This choice is simply the most direct one.

In case you need them, typical police officer stats are given below. Campus police usually lack the bullet resistant vest, so changes to the stat block to reflect this is given below.

Police Officer: male or female 2nd-level (offense option); HD 2d6+4; hp 13; Init +1; AC 17 (or AC 14 for rifles, arrows and knives); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +4 melee (1d4+3, nightstick), or +3 ranged (1d10/x3, handgun); SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 8. SAN 45.

Skills: Climb +7, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Listen +5, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (melee weapon), Weapon Proficiency (Pistol).

Possessions: Uniform, bullet resistant vest, nightstick, handgun, police radio, handcuffs.

Campus Police Officer: AC 13; *Skills:* Jump +7.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

Living Room: A large bay window faces in the direction of the setting sun, offering a magnificent view of the city at sunset. (You can find Lovecraft's descriptions of Providence's sunsets in *Selected Letters*.) The room's patterned wallpaper is barely visible behind rows and rows of bookcases that reach almost up to the ceiling. A stone fireplace has dozens of dated photographs resting on its mantle.

A thief could have easily smashed through the window and began rifling through the books within minutes, but there are no signs of a disturbance. A casual scan of the books reveals an eclectic collection of history and horror fiction, mixed with basic books on archaeology and anthropology. A staircase leads from here to the second floor, while doors nearby lead to the dining room and kitchen.

A few tame books on the occult are prominently displayed on the shelves, including Frazier's *Golden Bough*, the complete works of Charles Fort, and curiously enough, the entire Time-Life books series on the supernatural. Investigators should be able to search this casual library as much as they want, but it is a waste of time. Olcott put this innocuous collection out in the open to make himself look a little more harmless than he actually is.

Along the length of the stairway and the upstairs wall, several very dated lithographs in cheap frames feature prominently. Most are reproductions of covers from pulp novels, favoring fantasy. A theme of hirsute barbarians rescuing scantily clad maidens recurs. The average library worker doesn't know that Olcott first obtained his position in his department because the university had a sizeable collection of pulp fiction within Special Collections. Those who know this fact savor it as material for gossip.

Dining Room and Kitchen: Investigators who make simple Search rolls in the kitchen (DC 10) find a wide assortment of herbal teas, staple ingredients for making cheap food, kitchen knives that do minimal damage in a scuffle, and other inconsequential items. A milk carton in the refrigerator bears the image of a missing child.

More thorough checks (DC 15) uncover a box of rat poison under the sink and a mammoth, loaded rattrap near the refrigerator. It is obvious that Olcott has a cat, as there are several tins of cat food and a can opener on the counter. A bowl of rotting meat sits in a bowl near the refrigeration, swarming with flies. A diligent search

(Search, DC 20) uncovers several large mouse holes in the wainscoting and within the cupboard.

The dining room holds nothing of interest. Large swinging doors mounted on two-way hinges connect the three rooms on the ground floor. Presumably, a housewife in the 1950's could carry food from room to room in this house without having to bother with opening doors.

Upstairs Bedroom and Bathroom: A guest room has been tidily prepared. It's the sort of spartan accommodations that would suffice for a student. The bed hasn't been used recently. If anyone asks, Eaton never stayed here. He's been to Olcott's home twice: once for dinner, and once to drop off some papers.

The master bedroom looks rather comfortable. Its inventory includes a padded chair, a writing desk, and a lonely king-size bed. A nightstand by the bed has a few books and a pitcher of water. An ashtray by the padded chair holds a worn pipe, a few yellowing books rest on various surfaces, and some discolored photographs from decades ago are displayed in simple frames. Most of the photos are arranged near a scrapbook on the desk. Diligently searching the scrapbook (Search or Research, DC 15) uncovers articles about Olcott's public service work in the community, including a recent and sizeable donation of many paperback books to a local homeless shelter. Nothing here documents that most of those books used to belong to a former employee of the library named William Jared.

The desk also has a relatively modern electric typewriter (that is, more current than 1950). The drawers of the desk are filled with reams of stacked typewritten papers and crudely bound manuscripts. A casual perusal reveals that when Olcott wasn't answering research questions for the investigators, he secretly wrote fantasy stories. Most are as unoriginal as the lithographs in the hallway. They concern a hulking half-human barbarian who wanders the world seeking fortune, adventure, and scantily clad women in need of rescue.

Reading the Manuscripts: Clues are hidden within Asa's rambling prose. After a few minutes of reading the rambling manuscripts, a casual reader can easily tell (Intelligence, DC 10) that Asa is a dreadful writer. His vocabulary is extensive, and his grammar is impeccable, but the stories are highly derivative. Skimming most of the manuscripts takes about an hour. Reading them could take all afternoon.

After skimming the manuscripts, a skilled writer (Craft [writing] or Intelligence, DC 15) could give a better critique of Asa's use of narrative, which often rambles like the events of a dream. The locations are internally consistent, but the characters aren't.

Thoroughly examining the manuscripts (Craft [writing] or Research, DC 20) uncovers several abortive attempts to introduce a "sidekick," a dark-skinned slave

the barbarian rescues on at least five different occasions. Each time, the supporting character gives a different name, teaches the hero his language, and then frightens him with revelations of forbidden knowledge. Asa seemed to be playing with this idea, but never developed it fully.

Reading the stories for at least an hour also reveals a recurring villain: an elderly female sorceress named Keziah. A Cthulhu Mythos check (DC 10) is required to identify her as a pastiche of several of the witches described in *Thaumaturgical Prodigies*, including one named Keziah Mason. If you are running this adventure as a sequel to "Jenkin Lives!" players will recognize the name. Players who have read Lovecraft may already know of her role in "Dreams in the Witch House," even if their characters don't.

Across the Street: While the heroes are making these preliminary investigations, they may get the sense that they are being watched (Spot check, DC 15). A homeless man sits in an empty lot on the opposite side of the street. Nothing about his presence is suspicious, save for the fact that he is staring blankly at the front of the house.

The derelict may notice he is being watched (Spot +4, opposed by an investigator's Hide roll, if necessary). If so, he turns away, sipping some vile alcoholic fluid from a container in a paper bag. If confronted, he shuffles away. If followed, he ducks into an alleyway (Hide check to follow him, DC 15; he takes ten with his Hide skill of +5). Should this interlude degenerate into a brawl, the man doesn't put up a fight. He reveals nothing if subdued. He does not understand English. A closer examination reveals his tongue has been severed.

For each hour that passes, add another "transient" to the empty lot. Each one brings a bottle of cheap alcohol, which he passes around to share with his fellow...cultists. These are the desperate souls who have forced Asa into action. A keen-eyed investigator (Spot check, DC 20) may notice that they all have very nice shoes, and one wears a wristwatch. They are patiently waiting to see what the investigators find. Their slovenly clothes hide concealed pistols. For more details, see Act Four: Unleash Hell.

Gardening Shed: The back of the house has a lovely garden and a woodpile. A small locked shed (Open Lock, DC 10) contains fertilizer, a hoe and shovel, a set of gardening shears, and a small gas-powered chainsaw (Medium-size, 2d8 dmg, x4 crit). Examining the oak tree in the backyard shows that Olcott used this last item to remove a tree limb. He then chopped the branch into cordwood, which he stacked by the back door.

Walk-In Closet: The guest room and bathroom are on the east side of the hallway on the second floor. The master bedroom and a linen closet are on the west side. The closet is somewhat cramped, roughly taking up a five-by-five-foot area. It is curiously devoid of sheets or towels. The closet does have many books, however. The door

locks from inside with a deadbolt. Twenty or thirty reliable books about the supernatural lie scattered on the floor. A padded reclining chair sits in the middle of the closet. Shining a flashlight in here reveals a few musty pulp novels, a single candle, and a fountain pen. One of the books has a blank spine and cover. It is a journal of sorts (see “The Journal,” for more details).

On the floor of the linen closet, right behind the chair, there’s a fire safe. Its door is slightly ajar. Instead of a combination, it locks with a simple key. Examining the lock (Open Lock, DC 10) reveals a series of alphanumeric digits that could be taken to a hardware store for a replacement key. Asa wasn’t very handy with gadgets, after all.

It is unlikely that anyone will initially use *detect magic* on this room, but if they do, they’ll find a moderate aura in the room emanating from the eight corners of this cubical closet and the ceiling. Since none of the investigators know the spell that was cast here, they cannot use Spellcraft to determine that the room’s dimensions have been altered by *pose mundane*. (The Spellcraft check would normally be DC 20.) Olcott cast the spell himself this morning; its duration lasts until three o’clock. (The aura lingers 1d6x10 minutes after the spell fades.) After that time, it becomes obvious that the angles of this closet are not quite right. They should meet at right angles; instead, each one is slightly obtuse (SAN check, 0/1). Anyone insistent on measuring the dimensions of this closet should get a slightly different result each time.

Directly above the chair, shadows hide a dark green trapdoor to the attic. The door is normally opened with a pull-string, but the string has been cut. Curiously, the door has been jammed shut. Anyone can make a Craft (woodwork) or Intelligence check (DC 15) to figure out that it’s probably been nailed shut *from inside the attic*. By standing on the chair, an investigator can make a Strength check (DC 18) to smash open the door. Failing that, they’ll need a method of overcoming its reinforced bulk (hardness 5, hp 15.)

The Journal: This small book contains pages and pages of notes written in fountain pen. It alternates between reviews of decades-old pulp stories and rather tame ideas for new ones. Olcott rambles on for pages about possible plots for fantasy short stories. Most are predictable variations on a handful of themes. Many ideas come from his dreams, which he also summarizes in detail. It takes about an hour of skimming to find anything useful in this rambling would-be literary journal. For an investigator who takes the time, the results are worth the search.

[Research, DC 10] A handful of archetypes recur throughout Olcott’s dreams. In some, he encounters strangers who speak in a language he does not understand. At several key moments, a dark-skinned man offers to act as his interpreter. In one breakthrough dream, the dark-skinned man actually begins teaching him

his language. Many of his dreams are troubled by the presence of a nemesis, usually an elderly sorceress. Most of these scenarios take place in fantastic locales, although a few are set in the mundane world.

[Research, DC 15] At one point, Olcott writes the word “Thule,” surrounded by multiple asterisks and exclamation points. He praises the contents of his latest read, the *Book of Eibon*, but criticizes it for its deviation from the usual style of Howard, Carter, or Smith. He writes, “*I am annoyed by lengthy passages in the author’s artificial language.*” Within a matter of pages, he then begins copying fragments of Hyperborean, followed by a marginal note: “*My God, Is it Real?*” Some of the crudely translated passages look like they were scribbled down in the middle of the night, presumably by candlelight behind a bolted door.

Anyone with the Spellcraft skill can easily tell (DC 10) that Olcott is actually attempting to decipher occult rituals. If an investigator who knows the spell *create gate* (or one of its variants) can make a Spellcraft check (DC 15), she can identify this ritual as a variant of that spell. It seems to be combined with another spell, possibly involving another form of travel. A highly insightful mystic (DC 20) should realize that by combining the two spells, the caster has greatly reduced their chance of succeeding.

[Research, DC 20] Skimming the journal eventually reveals its most incriminating entry. Present the players with Handout 1.

The next four pages after this entry have been written in fluent Hyperborean. An investigator succeeding at a Cthulhu Mythos check (DC 10) should recognize the dark figure appearing in Olcott’s dreams as an avatar of Nylathotep (see page 295 of the *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* rulebook for more details). Of course, a player fluent in the works of Lovecraft may suspect this right away, even if his character doesn’t.

A wise investigator may flip to the last entry of the journal. That’s Handout 2.

Beyond the Green Door: If the investigators find the Green Door in the ceiling of the linen closet, but delay before opening it, make your descriptions of the house a little more colorful. Mention other signs of infestation in the building. When someone is searching an area, casually describe shadows that seem to shift for no apparent reason, scents that defy description, or tiny scratches on the woodwork. When someone is alone in a room, ask for a Listen check (DC 15); if it succeeds, describe a scratching sound coming *from within the walls*.

Once the Green Door is open, illumination from the closet creeps in, barely penetrating the darkness. The attic has a low ceiling, and one small boarded up window. Small nails and a hammer lie scattered around the trap door. Chalk marks are barely visible on the floor, forming

a circular pattern. Dozens and dozens of scraps of shredded paper are scattered about the attic.

A Spot check (DC 12) discloses the location a tiny white-furred rat cowering in the corner, resting in a nest of paper. More observant eyes (DC 15) notice that the spine of a shredded book is there as well. Acute vision (DC 20) allows one to notice dried blood on the rodent's curiously deformed snout. At an inopportune moment, the tiny creature lunges for the investigator's exposed face. It attempts to attack with surprise, then bolts into the woodwork seconds later. If you're feeling vicious, it may latch onto the investigator's nose with a successful hit; see the Special Quality: Jaw Lock for more details (page 179 of the *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* rulebook).

The moment the rodent springs from the shadows, the victim notices that the animal's face is deformed. The creature has *human face, and it scratches at the intruder's exposed eyes with the nails of tiny human hands.* (Sanity check, 0/1d6). If the investigator is too frightened to defend his or herself, the results may be brutal. A full description of rat-things is on page 179 of the *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* rulebook. At any point beyond this one, you may proceed to Act Four: Unleash Hell.

Rat-Thing: Tiny magical beast (lesser servitor race); HD 1/2d1; hp 2; Init +8; AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; Atk +6 melee (1, bite); SQ Jaw lock; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 5. San loss, 0/1d6 (0/1d8 if knew in life)

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +14, Escape Artist +12, Hide +20, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Spellcraft +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Lock Jaw (Ex): Once a rat-thing has successfully attacked, it can lock its jaws and hold on, automatically dealing 1 point of damage each round as swallows dollops of flesh washed down with fresh blood. Tearing one loose causes an additional 1d3 points of damage to the victim.

Once the creature has been dispatched, the heroes may examine it more closely. The face bears an amazing resemblance to a homeless man who was killed by drunk driver, one of the "unfortunates" featured in a series of articles by the editor of the school paper.

There isn't enough room to stand in the attic, but someone could climb in on his or her hands and knees. While inside, one of the investigators who knows *create gate* may figure out (Spellcraft, DC 15) that the chalk marks were part of a variant of that spell, which Olcott practiced here. Searching around the attic window (Search, DC 15) reveals traces of the same marks, which have mostly been eradicated. Closer examination shows further clues (Craft [woodwork] or Intelligence, DC 15): When the window was boarded shut, Olcott used very large nails. The nails used to secure the trap door were much smaller. Thus, two different individuals probably did the work.

THE TERRIBLE TRUTH

Asa Olcott is not as gentlemanly as he seems. He has made arrangements to leave town, for he knows he is being watched by a cult of madmen. They have disguised themselves as local homeless men, taking advantage of a recent controversy over the plight of the "disadvantaged." The eight members actually have a home, but Asa cannot find it, and does not want to do so. He suspects who they are. They suspect he has been secretly studying magic and the occult for decades. They're right.

Asa Olcott, Academic Librarian and Occult Researcher: male 6th level (defense option); HD 6d6-6; hp 17; Init +0; AC 13; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1 subdual, fist) or +3 ranged; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14. SAN 53. Age 60

Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +8, Cthulhu Mythos +5, Craft (writing) +2, Diplomacy +13, Innuendo +11, Gather Information +13, Knowledge (archaeology) +6, Knowledge (anthropology) +6, Knowledge (occult) +14, Listen +11, Research +14, Speak Hyperborean +1, Spot +11.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [occult]), Skill Emphasis (Research), Trustworthy.

Spells: *create gate to Thule, create time gate, pose mundane.*

Possessions: old suit, index cards, fountain pen, key to his house, *Gor* novel in his jacket pocket.

Fearing for his life, Asa has planned to leave town. He invited eight investigators to visit him before his departure. He knew that even if only half of them showed up, he could use their activities as a diversion for his own escape. Two of his most valuable tomes have disappeared, but if the heroes can find them, Asa is happy to part with them. He'd rather save his skin.

Long before this madness started, Asa was foolish enough to begin deciphering the most dangerous passages of his "acquired" books. He was wise enough to limit his studies of *Thaumaturgical Prodigies*, but his fascination with pulp fantasy lured him into translating the *Book of Eibon*, which he originally mistook for a fantasy novel.

During his studies, Strange Events (see *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game* rulebook page 119) compelled him to keep reading. Olcott dreamed he was the barbarian hero of his own personal (and unpublished) stories. The "dark-skinned man" who helped him decipher the book's "artificial language" was an avatar of Nyarlathotep himself. Aided by the Mighty Messenger, Olcott deciphered three of the spells contained within Eibon's tome.

Olcott has tried to not make enemies over the years, but as experienced investigators go, he's had his share. The former owner of an occult bookstore in San Francisco has a grudge against him, and a former

employee named William Jared has taken desperate measures to ensure his own revenge. Through nightmares and covert investigation, Jared has uncovered a cult operating in Providence. They worship the ghost of an ancient sorceress named Keziah. After Jared revealed Olcott's methods of acquiring occult tomes, they began stalking Asa Olcott. Now the arrival of several investigators in town has forced their hand.

When Asa realized he was being stalked by a cult, he attempted casting some of the spells he had learned. Unfortunately, the strange lights flickering in Asa's attic intrigued the cultists even more. To defend himself against agents of the Mythos, Asa has been practicing two spells: *create gate to Thule* and *create time gate*. Through a failed translation, he tried to combine the two spells into one, a mistake that has cost him bitterly. When he failed to cast them properly on the trap door to his attic, he warped the dimensions of the closet beneath it. The third spell, *pose mundane*, has given him a means of concealing these distortions.

When he attempted to cast the spell on the attic window, the consequences were even worse. Creatures from outside space and time crawled out of the nether to infest his home. Relatively speaking, there are deadlier dangers in the world than rat-things. Unfortunately, the beast that spawned them is Black Jenkin, a cunning and conniving creature who once served as a familiar to Keziah. He betrayed her and stole her knowledge to create gates between this world and others. His ceaseless quest for magical knowledge has brought him to Providence. (For more information on this recurring villain, see "Jenkin Lives!" on the Wizards of the Coast website.) Black Jenkin has recently begun instructing a few of his children in the arts of magic. If Keziah's ghost could find him, she (or her cult) would destroy him.

Olcott thought that nailing the window shut would contain what he had summoned, but the rat-things have created others in their own image, stolen two of Olcott's more valuable books, and hidden them within the house. With a cult practically on his doorstep and extradimensional skulkers in his home, he has turned to the investigators for help. He is willing to let them keep two of the tomes if they can find them. He has had a change of heart over the third. While the investigators confront skulking rat-things and insidious cultists, he plans on leaving town with his copy of the *Book of Eibon*. The investigators make for an effective diversion.

ACT 4: UNLEASH HELL

After the Green Door opens and the rat-thing attacks, the walls surrounding the closet and attic surge with activity. A Listen check (DC 15) verifies that a nest of rodents has just bolted from the attic. At least four rat-things now know that someone has found Olcott's private study. They don't want anyone learning of their infestation, so

they immediately harass the investigators with hit-and-run attacks.

If one of these attacks is especially successful, a pack of four white-furred rat-things swarm the injured victim. If none of these initial attacks succeed, proceed to "Dinner Time" (listed below). Three hit-and-run attacks, followed by a pack attack from four creatures, should be sufficient for a four-hour tournament adventure. Whether further attacks are required is purely at the GM's discretion.

Each sighting of a rat-thing forces a Sanity check (0/1d6, 1d8 if known in life). An investigator who loses 6 Sanity cannot lose any more from seeing rat-things in this investigator. (If the investigator recognizes the rat-things, he can lose a maximum of 8 Sanity.)

The Staircase: Two rat-things hide near the top of the staircase (Spot check, DC 22; the rat-things take 10 on their Hide checks). When one or two investigators descend the stairs, the rat-things scurry by, then lunge for ankles and pant legs. Any investigator who fails a Balance check (DC 10) while trying to fight on the stairs takes a nasty tumble (Reflex, DC 15, to avoid 1d6 damage). This is a classic rat-thing ambush.

The Kitchen: An investigator frantically searching the kitchen may be alarmed to find that all the kitchen knives are missing. Should he go near the refrigerator, a cupboard opens up, raining cutlery (Reflex, DC 15, to avoid 1d4 damage). A second rat-thing shoves a mousetrap at the investigator's feet to throw him off balance (Dexterity, DC 10, to avoid falling). Rat-things get a +4 to attack a prone investigator (another classic rat-thing tactic). If the investigator slays one of the little beasties, it has a familiar face. The likeness matches a photo on a milk carton in the refrigerator (San check, 0/1d8).

The Garden: Anyone exiting the back door is ambushed by a rat-thing from the woodpile. It makes one attack before scrambling up into the oak tree. About five seconds later, it attempts to leap from the tree to the roof. It seems surprised to find out that someone has used a chainsaw to remove a tree limb leading from the tree to the house. It falls on the gardening shed, taking 1d6 damage.

Dinner Time: Investigators running madly about the house may set themselves up for further hit and run attacks. At the first sign of danger, Edward Eaton runs. Throwing open the front door, he sees the cultists across the street, then slams the door and runs for another room. He prefers one where he can be alone. The dining room is an excellent choice.

By the time the investigators find him, a pack of four rat-things feast off his dead body. Dozens of tiny scratches weep blood, pooling viscous fluids that stain the wooden floors of the house. One of the rat-things looks

up with an eyeball in his mouth, and then scampers away (San check, 0/1d6).

Pack Attack: If the pack of four rat-things chooses to attack an investigator instead of Eaton, they'll use their jaw lock extraordinary ability to inflict extra damage. One useful tactic to counter this kind of attack this involves grappling. While grappling an opponent, a rat-thing loses its Dexterity bonus to its AC against opponents that isn't grappling.

IT'S WORSE: THE CULT MOVES IN

Within one hour of the start of the investigation (game time, not real time), a homeless man approaches one of the investigators for spare change. A second man watches Olcott's house from an empty lot across the street.

Within two hours, Miriam, the receptionist at the front desk of the library, makes frantic phone calls to the investigators. It takes her a while to find the number for the bed and breakfast where the investigators are staying. The investigators only get this message if they check their messages at the B&B or contact Miriam directly. Failing that, Edward may call her to check in near the end of the adventure.

Miriam has rather dire news: Asa left work early to take one of his circuitous strolls. Campus police entered the library ten minutes later to ask a few questions. Asa had been badly beaten and rushed to the local hospital. Witnesses attest to the actions of a large, shuffling homeless man, who flew into a frenzy when the professor refused a mute request for spare change.

Three hours after the investigation begins, the effects of *pose mundane* wear off around Olcott's secret room. Another cultist arrives at the empty lot across the street. Each hour thereafter, another cultist arrives. The first four masquerade as local homeless men and women, taking advantage of a local controversy. They keep pistols hidden under their thick clothes.

Five hours into the adventure, a van parks across the street from Olcott's house. The three cultists inside are armed with shotguns. The cult is content to let the investigators deal with the dangers within before going in themselves. Near the end of the adventure, they move in.

🗡️ **Mason's Novitiate Cultists (3)**, Alleged Itinerants; male 1st level (offense option); HD 1d6+2; hp 8, 7, 5; Init -1; AC 9; Spd. 30 ft.; Atk -3 melee (1d6, wooden plank) or +1 ranged (1d10/x3, handgun), or -4 ranged (3d6/x3, shotgun); SQ Mad certainty; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +1; SZ M; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13. SAN 65.

Skills: Bluff +4, Disguise +5, Gather Information +5, Innuendo +4, Knowledge (occult) +6, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +4.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (pistol), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

The followers of this deviant group all share a common dream. In it, a kind elderly woman promises an end to their suffering. All of them are dropouts from society in one way or another, whether from poverty, alcoholism, or other addictions. The spirit that compels them can supply their needs, as long as they supply her with what she requires. Strengthened with her blessings, they bring weaker humans to her, offering them up as sacrifice.

Her cult first came to Providence to acquire a copy of *Thaumaturgical Prodigies*, hoping to use it as a textbook for instructing faithful cultists. The elderly woman they've seen in their vision is the ghost of a woman mentioned within the tome, an ancient sorceress named Keziah, who bears a powerful grudge against an initiate who betrayed her. Her former familiar, Black Jenkin, has sent his children out to retrieve the same book. Keziah wants the book destroyed, along with the treacherous rat-things who stole it. Since the investigators are in the middle of this conflict as witnesses, they must be destroyed as well.

FINDING THE TOMES

Olcott's two missing books are still hidden in the house. The first one lies shredded in the attic. A rat-thing has made a nest out of the spine of the book. After it lunges at the investigator who opens the door, it scurries away to alert the other rat-things. Pages are scattered around the attic. There's enough room to crawl, but picking up all the pages takes about five minutes. If you're feeling vicious, that's an excellent opportunity for a pack of rat-things to attack, since fighting in a confined space has its disadvantages.

Crawling Around: Beginning *Call of Cthulhu* Gamemasters may choose to omit these extra tactical details. Veteran *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* players should expect them.

Investigators move at half normal speed when crawling. When fighting in a confined area, they suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to attacks with Small or smaller melee weapons (like knives) or a -4 circumstance penalty to attacks with Medium-size weapons (like hatchets and axes). Weapons greater than Medium-size can't be used in such a cramped space. Any piercing weapon that isn't swung is treated as one size smaller.

Firearms have no penalty in such situations, although gunshots will obviously attract the police. Firing one from a prone position confers a -4 circumstance penalty to the attack.

Fighting in a crawlspace or attic makes it difficult for multiple characters to engage their opponents. Remember that if another character blocks your line of sight, your target gains the effect of cover (usually one-half cover,

which grants a +4 cover bonus to AC). This also applies to characters using reach weapons to attack past an ally.

Devilry Down East: Only a few pages can be saved. Some of them mention Keziah Mason and her hyper-intelligent rodent familiar. A Search check (DC 15) in the attic, or over the pages, yields a particularly salient fragment of text. Hand the players Handout #3. (It's actually a segment of text from "Dreams in the Witch House", but it should suffice.)

An ambitious Gamemaster may decide to photocopy additional pages from that story, particularly those that give more of the origin of Keziah and her original familiar, Brown Jenkin. The rat-things can use these additional fragments as bait for the investigators. When you need to lure the heroes near a particular location, feel leave a fragment of text there.

The Crawlspace: The copy of *Thaumaturgical Prodigies* is in the crawlspace under the house. It's almost intact, but it's more cautiously guarded. *Detect magic* reveals the emanation of something magical directly under house in the very center. The tome and an artifact are in the possession of one of Black Jenkin's initiates. This white-furred, red-eyed "Jenkin" has spells, and as soon as someone crawls more than five feet into the crawlspace, it starts using them.

☛ **White Jenkin:** 4th-level cultist; Tiny magical beast (lesser servitor race); HD 1/2d10+4d6; hp 18; Init +8; Spd. 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.; AC 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex); Atk. +9/+4 melee (1, teeth); SA Swarm, jaw lock, spells; SQ Scent (can detect foes within 30 ft by smell alone), low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +3, Ref +7; Will +5; Str 4, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 8. SAN 52. San loss (0/1d6).

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +14, Concentrate +9, Escape Artist +12, Hide +20, Knowledge (occult) +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Spot +8, Spellcraft +9, Survival +6

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (teeth).

Mad Certainty (Ex)—Cultists can act while temporarily insane, instead of going into of the states described on page 49 of the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*. Their Sanity score is still damaged normally, however.

Spells: *curse of the rat-thing*, *deflect harm*, *obscuring mist*, *shriveling*.

This spell-casting rat-thing responds to defensive investigators with *shriveling*, or offensive investigators with *deflect harm*. It tries to escape with the tome, but failing that, it fights to the death. If it manages to kill an investigator, it violates the body with *curse of the rat-thing*. If the fight goes badly, it can cast *obscuring mist* before

attempting to escape from one of the four exits under the house.

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

After the Assault: It is possible an investigator may be in the library around the time of the assault on Asa. Talking to Miriam personally after 2:00 p.m. allows a personal investigation into the matter. For about an hour after the attack, two policemen, three reporters, and many students congregate around the area where the incident took place. In about fifteen minutes (Gather Information, DC 15), an investigator can collar an eyewitness. One of the students claims that a "shifty-looking homeless man" leaped out from behind some bushes and battered Olcott to death in broad daylight. Save for some grunting, the assailant said nothing before running off. The witness didn't notice any evidence of a robbery, since the assailant didn't even stop long enough to search for a wallet.

Calling the Police: Any solution that involves contacting the police should end badly. As soon as anyone mentions Asa's name, the policeman mentions an assault that occurred earlier that day. Any phone call or interview rapidly proceeds to the question, "Where are you?" It should go downhill from there. Whether working for the campus or the city, an officer tries to take the investigator down to "the station" for questioning, effectively removing him from the rest of the adventure. Should this happen, Edward Eaton makes for a handy back-up character.

ACT 5: ENDING THE ADVENTURE

This misadventure may end in triumph or tragedy. If the characters stay focused on an effective investigation, move quickly, and avoid confrontations, they may even come out ahead.

TRAGEDY

At sunset, an armed mob of cultists rushes inside Olcott's house to take what they can find by force. They start by tearing apart bookcases in the living room. If the investigators stand and fight, the body count mounts. Rat-things attack cultists, cultist shoot at rat-things, and everyone attacks investigators. A fallen cultist may provide a cheap pistol for an investigator. Sirens are soon audible in the distance. Players who run out the clock in this four-hour tournament adventure will probably end it violently.

Should the heroes flee before sunset, the cultists move in to take the tomes anyway. Gunfire ensues. Neighbors call the police, who show up within ten minutes. By the time the police get there, seven cultists are dead or missing, and the house is rapidly cordoned off

as a crime scene. Any chance of retrieving the tomes is gone. Investigators returning to the scene of the crime are questioned thoroughly, identified by neighbors, and then taken down to the station house for questioning.

ESCAPE!

It is entirely possible that the investigators will still be in the house at the end of the tournament. If they haven't gone into the crawlspace (or simply won't go), call for a Listen check (DC 15). The inhuman sound of a sinister creature laughing at the investigators' misfortune is barely audible beneath the house. Brave investigators will seek out the crawlspace and attack. Experienced investigators will probably flee.

At the end of the adventure, any investigator running out of the front door sees an armed band of cultists. If the players have run out the clock, their characters get cut down in a hail of gunfire. Fleeing out the back door, an investigator should get a Spot check (DC 15) to notice the snout of a rat-like creature poking out a vent in back of the house. The slowest investigator running out the back door is hit with a *withering* spell. That's 4d4 damage, with a Reflex save (DC 12) for half damage.

The third choice, the gate in the attic, is a deathtrap. An investigator can't see where the gate leads without prying off the boards and crawling through the window. Investigators who go in don't come out. A long tunnel slides into inky darkness, ending in a dimly lit octagonal room. In the center, the spectral form of an elderly sorceress strangles the life out of a captured rat-thing. She tosses it aside, slowly raises a hand, and then casts *fiist of Yog-Sothoth* at the intruding investigator. Inflict 10d8 subdual damage (Reflex save, DC 14, for half damage). Fade to black.

It's a long shot, but one of the characters written for this adventure has another way to end the story: a spell called *create gate to Antarctica*. (Without it, the investigators can't use Spellcraft to figure out that Olcott has cast *create gate* in the attic.) Casting the spell takes ten minutes of uninterrupted effort and a permanent drain of 3 Strength. The gate leads to a series of tunnels hidden below a subzero wasteland. It's a pitch black labyrinth, rather like the one in Lovecraft's novella "The Mountains of Madness." In it, intrepid investigators were hunted by a shoggoth in a subterranean labyrinth just like this one. Unleash the shoggoth and kill them quickly.

TRIUMPH

Asa wanted to use the investigators as a diversion while he skipped town. Unfortunately, he was assaulted by a lone cultist. His attacker was surrounded by witnesses, so the cultist ran away before he had a chance to search the body. As for Asa, he was rushed to the hospital, where he lapsed into a coma.

At sunset, a good Samaritan delivers a briefcase to the front desk of the library. He found it in the bushes

not far from the scene of the earlier attack on campus. Since it has the initials "A.O." he believes it to be a personal effect of the late Mr. Olcott. The receptionist reverently places in the professor's office, then attempts to call the investigators again. The receptionist leaves a message at the bed & breakfast about a valise waiting in Olcott's office. Eventually, if all else fails, she finds Edward Eaton's cell phone number. Unfortunately, the library closes shortly after the package arrives. Going for this third tome is strictly extra credit.

Unless a fire erupts in the street, one of the cultist tries to shadow the group from the house to the library. He uses Hide +5; the characters can notice him with a Spot check. Should the investigators head towards the library, he runs off to summon help (Spot check, DC 15, to notice him fleeing). Breaking into the library requires an Open Lock check (DC 15) and Move Silently checks (DC 15). A capable graduate student could do it, in a pinch.

Entering the building, an astute investigator recognizes the stench of a decaying body (Listen or Spot, DC 15). Miriam's bloody body has fallen behind the front desk. A pool of blood has oozed from the body, staining the many shredded cat books that surround her like flower pedals. Bloody pawprints have scampered from the dead body in the direction of Asa's office. The door to Asa his office is open. Inside, a locked briefcase lies on the desk. The room is a shambles. Although the rat-things are quite dexterous, they have no ability to pick the valise's combination lock. The case is too heavy for them. Anyone who can foil the combination (including the Capable Graduate Student) can open the briefcase and retrieve Asa's mint-condition copy of the *Book of Eibon*.

CONCLUSION

Within a few days, the rat-things vacate the house, and another pack of cultists burns it to the ground. If the characters have one of the tomes by the end of the tournament, ask if any of the investigators want to actually start studying it.

For those who do, Strange Events follow. A student of *Thaumaturgical Prodigies* has dreams of an elderly woman suckling a bloated rat-like familiar at her withered breast; he is then awakened by the sound of rats scurrying through the walls of his home. As for the reader of *Book of Eibon*, a dark-skinned man with a regal bearing may approach him to offer basic instruction in Hyperborean.

With the promise of forbidden knowledge readily at hand, the investigators have triumphed... for a short while, at least.

The End

NPCS AND CREATURES

👤 **Edward Eaton**, Capable Graduate Student; male 1st level (defense option); HD 1d6-1; hp 5; Init +1; AC 13; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +0 melee (1d3 subdual, fist) or +1 ranged; SV Fort -1, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13. SAN 70. Age 20.

Skills: Concentration +3, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (archaeology) +6, Knowledge (local) +6, Hide +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Open Locks +6, Research +6, Speak Language (Latin) +6, Search +6, Spot +5.

Feats: Dodge, Run.

Possessions: Cell phone, PDA, excellent running shoes.

👤 **Asa Olcott**, Academic Librarian and Occult Researcher; male 6th level (defense option); HD 6d6-6; hp 17; Init +0; AC 13; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1 subdual, fist) or +3 ranged; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 14. SAN 53. Age 60

Skills: Bluff +10, Concentration +8, Cthulhu Mythos +5, Craft (writing) +2, Diplomacy +13, Innuendo +11, Gather Information +13, Knowledge (archaeology) +6, Knowledge (anthropology) +6, Knowledge (occult) +14, Listen +11, Research +14, Speak Hyperborean +1, Spot +11.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Knowledge [occult]), Skill Emphasis (Research), Trustworthy.

Spells: create gate to Thule, create time gate, pose mundane.

Possessions: old suit, index cards, fountain pen, key to his house, *Gor* novel in his jacket pocket.

👤 **Mason's Novitiate Cultists (3)**, Alleged Itinerants; male 1st level (offense option); HD 1d6+2; hp 8, 7, 5; Init -1; AC 9; Spd. 30 ft.; Atk -3 melee (1d6, wooden plank) or +1 ranged (1d10/x3, handgun), or -4 ranged (3d6/x3, shotgun); SQ Mad certainty; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +1; SZ M; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13. SAN 65.

Skills: Bluff +4, Disguise +5, Gather Information +5, Innuendo +4, Knowledge (occult) +6, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +4.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (pistol), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

👤 **Police Officer:** male or female 2nd-level (offense option); HD 2d6+4; hp 13; Init +1; AC 17 (or AC 14 for rifles, arrows and knives); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +4 melee (1d4+3, nightstick), or +3 ranged (1d10/x3, handgun); SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 8. SAN 45.

Skills: Climb +7, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +6, Listen +5, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (melee weapon), Weapon Proficiency (Pistol).

Possessions: Uniform, bullet resistant vest, nightstick, handgun, police radio, handcuffs.

👤 **Campus Police Officer:** AC 13; *Skills:* Jump +7.

👤 **Rat-Thing:** Tiny magical beast (lesser servitor race); HD 1/2d1; hp 2; Init +8; AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; Atk +6 melee (1, bite); SQ Jaw lock; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 5. San loss, 0/1d6 (0/1d8 if knew in life)

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +14, Escape Artist +12, Hide +20, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Spellcraft +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Lock Jaw (Ex): Once a rat-thing has successfully attacked, it can lock its jaws and hold on, automatically dealing 1 point of damage each round as swallows dollops of flesh washed down with fresh blood. Tearing one loose causes an additional 1d3 points of damage to the victim.

👤 **White Jenkin:** 4th-level cultist; Tiny magical beast (lesser servitor race); HD 1/2d10+4d6; hp 18; Init +8; Spd. 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.; AC 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex); Atk. +9/+4 melee (1, teeth); SA Swarm, jaw lock, spells; SQ Scent (can detect foes within 30 ft by smell alone), low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +3, Ref +7; Will +5; Str 4, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 8. SAN 52. San loss (0/1d6).

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +14, Concentrate +9, Escape Artist +12, Hide +20, Knowledge (occult) +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Spot +8, Spellcraft +9, Survival +6

Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (teeth).

Mad Certainty (Ex)—Cultists can act while temporarily insane, instead of going into of the states described on page 49 of the *Call of Cthulhu Rulebook*. Their Sanity score is still damaged normally, however.

Spells: curse of the rat-thing, deflect harm, obscuring mist, shriveling.

PLAYER HANDOUT 1

My dreams have been unusually vivid lately. Last night, I had a great idea for a story, a yarn about a dark-skinned slave chained in the temple of Nephren-Ka. He has the look of a nobleman, and he speaks of forbidden magic practiced in distant realms. Once he was arrested for sorcerous crimes he dares not reveal, but a hot-headed barbarian soon elicits his help. Together, they attempt to open the gate to Thule and escape. When the spell fails, disastrous consequences ensue.

Sleep now eludes me. Perhaps the problem lies in this passage...

PLAYER HANDOUT 2

By the time you read this, I will be gone. I hope you can forgive me, my friends. You may keep Thaumaturgical Prodigies and the paperback, if you can find them. Personally, I do not think they are worth the effort. I shall keep the Hyperborean book for myself, however. Thank you again for your assistance.

*Best of luck in your endeavors,
—A.*

PLAYER HANDOUT 3

That object—no larger than a good-sized rat and quaintly called by the townspeople ‘Brown Jenkin’—seemed to have been the fruit of a remarkable case of sympathetic herd-delusion, for in 1692, no less than eleven persons had testified to glimpsing it. There were recent rumors, too, with a baffling and disconcerting amount of agreement. Witnesses said it had long hair and the shape of a rat, but that its sharp-toothed, bearded face was evilly human while its paws were like tiny human hands. It took messages betwixt old Keziah and the devil, and was nursed on the witch’s blood—which it sucked like a vampire.

PREGENERATED INVESTIGATORS

Richard Vaughn, Struggling Writer: male 1st level (defense option); hp 8.; Init +0; AC 12; Spd 30 ft.; Atk -1 melee (1d3-1 subdual, fist) or +0 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 12. San 60.

Skills: Computer Use +2, Craft (writing) +6, Cthulhu Mythos +1, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Innuendo +3, Knowledge (occult) +6, Knowledge (psychology) +4, Listen +5, Research +6, Sense Motive +7, Search +8, Spot +5.

Feats: Run, Sharp-Eyed.

Character traits: Caustic, wisecracking, insecure, but a guarded romantic.

Starting Possessions: Clothes, notebook, pen, film, \$150 cash.

Leslie Vargas, Independent Reporter: female 1st level (defense option); hp 5; Init +1; AC 13; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +0 melee (1d3 subdual, fist) or +1 ranged; SV Fort -1, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 15. San 60.

Skills: Bluff +6, Computer Use +6, Craft (writing) +4, Cthulhu Mythos +1, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +7, Heal +3, Innuendo +3, Knowledge (occult) +4, Listen +5, Research +6, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Diplomacy), Trustworthy.

Character traits: Charming and friendly, but unorganized and sometimes befuddled.

Starting Possessions: Clothes, a change of clothes, another change of clothes, pocket notebook, pen, laptop computer, camera, film, \$250 cash.

Kyle Smiley, Penny-Ante Thief: male 1st level (offense option); hp 6; Init +2; AC 12; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +2 melee (1d4/19-20, knife) or +3 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 13. San 35.

Skills: Bluff +8, Cthulhu Mythos +1, Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Innuendo +1, Knowledge (architecture) +4, Knowledge (streetwise) +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Open Lock +6, Search +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +1.

Feats: Run, Skill Emphasis (Bluff), Weapon Proficiency (melee).

Character traits: Slick, acts very macho, but ultimately a coward.

Starting Possessions: Clothes, knife, deck of playing cards, lucky gold coin, gold chains (worth \$200 total), \$50 cash.

Jonathan Kofuri, Troubled Mystic: male 1st-level (defense option); hp 17; Init +1; AC 13; Spd 30 ft.; Atk -1 melee (1d3-1 subdual, fist) or +1 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 14. San 66.

Skills: Concentration +1, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (occult) +4, Heal +4, Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Search +2, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +3, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Dodge, Mobility.

Spells: *healing touch, detect magic, create gate to Antarctica*

Character traits: A source of inspiration, nurturing, but haunted by nightmares and bouts of vertigo.

Starting Possessions: Cloths, rosary, \$100 cash.

Renee Porter, Security Guard: female 1st level (offense option); hp 10; Init +2; AC 12; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 subdual, fist) or +3 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; SZ M; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10. San 57.

Skills: Balance +4, Climb +4, Craft (woodwork) +1, Hide +6, Jump +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Search +3, Spot +5, Swim +2, Use Rope +2, Wilderness Lore +1.

Feats: Weapon proficiency (melee), Alertness, Toughness.

Character traits: Physically capable, outdoors person, but extremely impulsive.

Starting Possessions: Clothes, hiking boots, woodworking kit, pocket knife, \$120 cash.

Thomas Hambley, Scandalized Archaeologist: male 1st level (offense option); hp 6; Init +1; AC 11; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19-20, knife) or +2 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; SZ M; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 8. San 63.

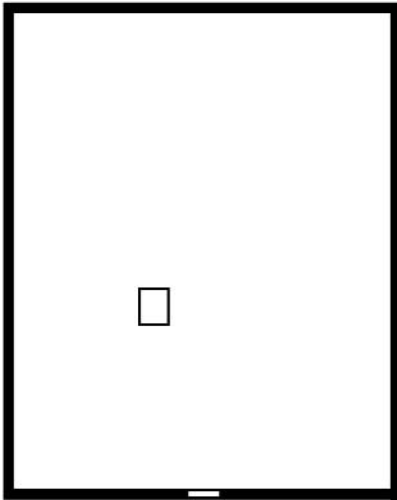
Skills: Appraise +3, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (archaeology) +6, Knowledge (anthropology) +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (occult) +6, Listen +6, Research +9, Search +6, Speak Latin +4, Spellcraft +3, Spot +6.

Feats: Weapon Proficiency (melee), Skill Emphasis (Research), Weapon Focus (knife).

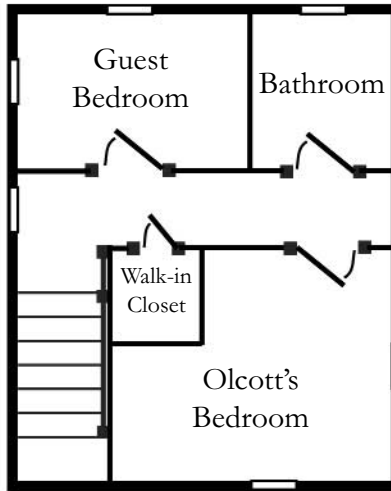
Character traits: Inquisitive, excitable, but dismissive of other opinions.

Starting Possessions: Cloths, notebook, pen, magnifying glass, \$80 cash.

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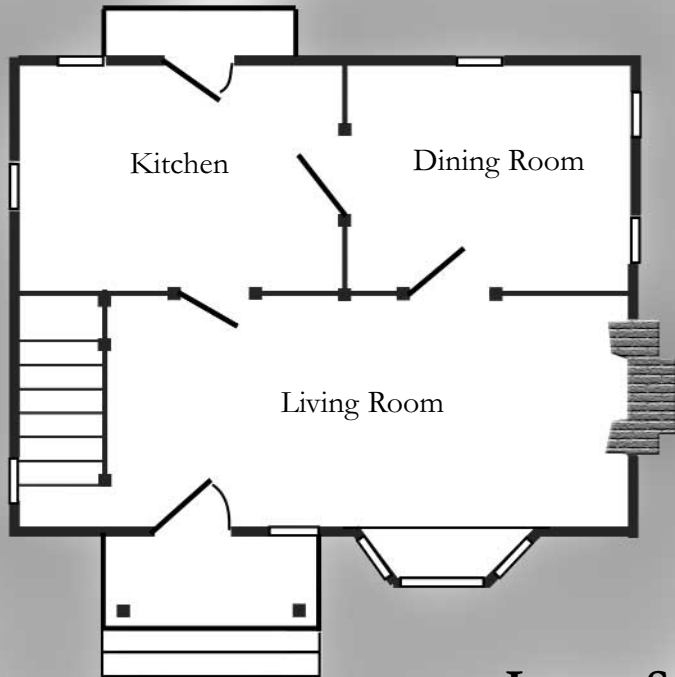
Second Story



Olcott's Home



Gardening Shed



Lower Story