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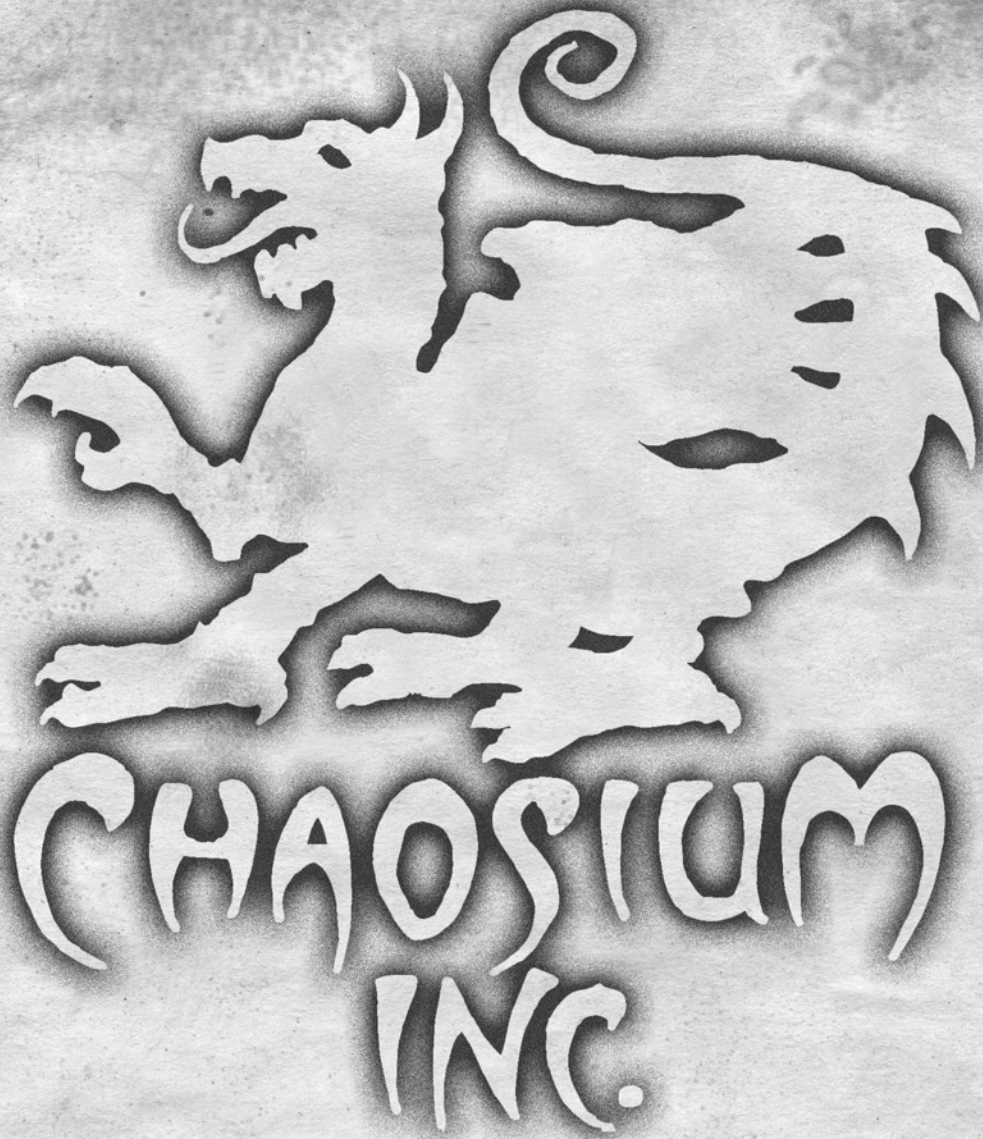


THE SEVENFOLD PATH



**A Sourcebook & Campaign
for 1920s Iceland**





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Kärtchen von Island.

Introduction and Author's Notes

The *Sevenfold Path* is a sourcebook and campaign for Classic-era Call of Cthulhu, set in Iceland. Much of the following will be familiar to the experienced Keeper, but it bears repeating:

- Read the entire module before starting to run it.
- Know your recurring characters, what motivates them, and what their plans are.
- And in particular, understand what the central antagonists, Olaf Ulfsson and Freyja Gallai Sanctum, are about.

Olaf is a very powerful Mythos sorcerer. He is utterly ruthless, and a lying sneak to boot. Although he would never admit it, he is desperate to move on to the next stage of his existence. He is patient, and has social skills as well as a code of honor that he will adhere to unless pressed hard, but these ultimately fall by the wayside when they get in his way. And there is no way that the investigators will be able to positively identify him until very late in the campaign. He will use cat's paws, witting and unwitting, and not until that time will the investigators have enough information to point them to Olaf's current identity.

Freyja Gallai Sanctum is Olaf's reluctant ally, at least until he murders her, but they are not on the same page. An ancient, transformed, essentially immortal eunuch priest of Shub-Niggurath (in her guise as the Magna Mater), Freyja would just as soon be left alone. She has been the head of her branch of the cult for 1,000 years, and likes things the way that they are.

Freyja will be conflicted between her desire to help the returned Olaf, a very important figure in her cult's theology, and her desire to work for the Magna Mater in a low key way. Freyja is not at all interested in proselytizing, forcible conversions or loosing monsters into downtown Reykjavik of the 1920s. And she does not know exactly what Olaf is up to, let alone the

blasphemous way he intends to go about it. The tension between these two villains and their rather uneasy alliance is central to the campaign.

The "License Plate Rule" and the Nature of a Pulp Campaign

This campaign is very pulpy. While there are strong investigative and Lovecraftian elements, there are also gun-happy proto-Nazis, ancient sorcerers, lost worlds, and big sections of the campaign inspired by Arthur Machen, Robert E. Howard and (of all things) the weird fiction of Bulwer-Lytton. At one point, to realistically portray the villains as competent, an ambush meant to deter pursuers should be portrayed as well thought out.

In the pulp fiction genre, the heroic narrative generally requires that the protagonists die meaningful deaths. As a result, please consider utilizing the "License Plate Rule." At character generation, each investigator gets one token, amounting to a second chance. The token can be used to automatically succeed in any one dice roll where success or failure is the consequence, and can be used after a failure to change the outcome to a success. Hence, a crucial *Spot Hidden* succeeds, a SAN roll succeeds, or a combat roll succeeds (including a fortuitous *Dodge*).

The token cannot be used to affect the degree to which a roll succeeds (hence, a success cannot be turned into a critical success, nor can the amount of a damage roll be altered). An additional token can be awarded by the Keeper if, in his opinion, an investigator successfully imposes a major setback upon the Mythos. Alternatively, you might want to keep things nihilistic and have replacements readily at hand.

It is always difficult to strike a balance between drafting up "the complete campaign," where nearly every move that the investigators might make is addressed and the resulting course of events spelled out in detail, and leaving the Keeper to figure out matters on his own. I have erred, as usual, on the side of giving general settings and advice.

This campaign, unlike my prior work [The Primal State](#), is rather monolithic. [The Sevenfold Path](#) is one very long scenario set entirely in Classic-era Iceland (with a side trip to Shambhala, the "Inner City at the Magnetic Poles") plus a "Mysteries" style sourcebook on Classic-era Iceland. ***Turn to Stone*** can be played by itself, but the rest builds upon it. If you want to call this book "Mysteries of Iceland" plus a mid-sized campaign, I won't argue the point. If a detailed sourcebook plus a discrete adventure path that should take upwards of 40 hours to play is not what you are looking for, then this may not be for you.

There are a variety of villains in this campaign. They are various shades of grey.

None of them is intended to be portrayed in a positive light. The investigators may determine to kill them all and let God sort them out. That is certainly a possibility. Other possibilities are presented, however. The central theme of this campaign is choices, and what is an acceptable price to pay to accomplish a goal.

And, as usual, while the author detests the lurid, this is written for adults. This work has cross-dimensional breeding programs, crazed eunuch cultists, brutal murders, bohemian theosophists, occult-chasing Nazis, and some bad villains whom the investigators might have to compromise with in order to stop one who wants to blot out the sun and toss the world into a volcanic nuclear winter. Caveat lector.

A hearty ode to Logan Horsford, who has play-tested ***Turn to Stone*** on his weekly podcast, at:

<http://heroicctulhu.mypodcast.com>

And please visit my publishing Facebook page; search Swefna Cyst.

Jeff Moeller, June 2011.



It's all about the winding path...some go up, some spiral down.

The Big Picture of the Campaign

Olaf Ulfsson is having a mid-life crisis. He was born in 951 A.D. into the medieval Norse culture of rural Iceland, and has lived quite a memorable life. But now, in the late 1920s, things need to change. After almost 1,000 years of existence, Olaf has become bored with what this world has to offer.

Olaf is only $\frac{1}{4}$ human, although he superficially appears normal when clothed and can change his appearance. His mother, Helgi Alfsdottir, was the half-human spawn of the “Hidden People”, near-dimensional Mythos horrors known to the people of Iceland as “elves, trolls, and dwarves”. His father, Ulf, was a troll himself.

Olaf is potentially immortal. While not unkillable, he has ceased aging and will not die of natural causes. He has been a lot of things over 1,000 years of time, and one of the first things that he became is a powerful Mythos sorcerer and devotee of the Magna Mater. Olaf wants to end his life, but do so in a way that will guarantee his ascension beyond “mere” immortality.

Between 950 A.D. and 1010 A.D., Olaf studied sorcery, traveled, and worked hand in hand with the *Third Cloister*. The Third Cloister was (and still is) a small, secretive, and careful cult that worshipped the Magna Mater, hidden within Catholic trappings and having a generally inward view. It operated in rural Iceland for centuries, but is now (mostly) dormant.

Olaf was born at the Third Cloister’s “nunnery”. His mother was seen by them as a sort of saint, as Olaf was seemingly the messiah: immortal son of an immortal woman, conceived by no natural means. Eventually, however, Olaf got bored with being their messiah and left. He dropped out of the Third Cloister’s sight for 900 years.

While he was away, the Third Cloister quietly persisted, always avoiding making waves and patiently advancing the cause of the Magna Mater. Led by their equally

immortal “mother superior”, the eunuch *Freyja Gallai Sanctum*, the Third Cloister abandoned their rural stronghold, pretended to go to the New World, and went underground circa 1550 A.D. The anarchic conditions in Iceland that had allowed them to operate with comparative impunity as long as they did not annoy the neighbors faded with the Reformation, so they slunk deeper into the fabric of Icelandic society.

Now Olaf is back in Iceland, and has enlisted the less-than-enthusiastic remnants of the Third Cloister to assist him in a new plan. Olaf intends to delve into the secrets of ancient Atlantis, a society whose fall precipitated the rise of modern civilization, ostensibly to learn the last bit of sorcery that he needs to ascend to the “next plane of existence.”

However, Olaf has not been entirely straight with the Third Cloister about what his plan entails: physically raising part of Atlantis and unleashing the forces of the Mythos onto an unsuspecting world. He also intends to sacrifice the rest of the world as the price of his ascension, instead of sacrificing himself, and this is blasphemy to the Third Cloister. Too bad that they do not know the whole plan. Olaf is using them.

For most of the campaign, Olaf will be in the background, under an assumed identity, acting through cells and manipulating pawns to do his bidding.

a. The Cult of the Third Cloister and The Icelandic Society for Theosophical Inquiry

The Third Cloister is a 1,000+ year old cult devoted to the worship of Cybele, the Magna Mater, here treated as an aspect of Shub-Niggurath. It is led by the immortal, not-entirely-human Freyja Gallai Sanctum, a 10th century Norseman who castrated himself at the feet of the Magna Mater, was

transformed by her, and rose through the ranks to head the cult over time.

The Third Cloister began in the 9th Century A.D. with a group of Byzantine refugees who settled in Iceland to escape scrutiny and persecution. They dressed their Magna Mater worship in Byzantine Church trappings, appearing at first glance to be a simple Marian cult. The history of the cult as (comparatively) non-violent refugees seeking a low profile colors all their actions.

Freyja is smart, cautious, and a major *potential* threat, but most of all, she is *content with the status quo*. For 600 years, she ran a quiet shop out of a cloistered convent in rural Iceland. Cult membership was recruited, *not forced*. Sacrifices to the

Magna Mater were either volunteers, or cult members who had to be eliminated because they did not fit in with the cult's "live and let the humans live" approach. The Third Cloister took in outlaws, women and children, and (aside from pressuring any males to castrate themselves and some inhuman breeding experiments) generally treated its own members well.

When the Reformation reached Iceland circa 1550 A.D., Freyja realized that the Third Cloister had to change its mode of operation. No longer would they be able to simply live in a cloistered environment free from the scrutiny of a disorganized church.

Freyja Gallai Sanctum, High Priest(ess) of the Magna Mater

Nationality: Icelandic.

STR 12	DEX 12	INT 18	CON 20	APP 15	POW 25
SIZ 13	EDU 25	SAN 00	Luck 99	Hits: 16	Age: 1,000.

Damage Bonus: +1d4.

Education: 1,000 years of sorcery and life experience credit; looks 25.

Skills: Accounting 75%, Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 25%, Astronomy 75%, Bargain 80%, Credit Rating 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Drive Auto 25%, History 90%, *Icelandic Witchcraft (new)* 99%, Library Use 90%, Listen 55%, Natural History 70%, Navigate 90%, Occult 75%, Persuade 50%, Pilot Boat 90%, Psychology 65%, Ride 90%, Spot Hidden 60%, Rifle Attack 95%.

Languages: English 55%, Latin 99%, Greek 99%, Icelandic/Old Norse 99%, Danish 90%, Turkish 90%.

Attacks: Enchanted sword decorated with ravens, 95%, 1d8+1+db, damage is magical, can parry and impale.

Defenses: Freyja wears a purplish-black stone, carved necklace under her shirt at all times. This deflects the first 5 points of any non-magical attack. Only works for a *gallai sanctum*.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath (as the Magna Mater), Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Create Lions of the Mother, Contact Cold Ones, Augur, Blight/Bless Crop, Candle Communication, Cloud Memory, Consume Likeness (variant), Enchant Knife, Evil Eye, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Flesh Ward, Heal, Levitate, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi.

Notes: One of the more polite cult leaders that the investigators will ever come across. Freyja wants to legitimize worship of the Magna Mater by the faithful, but has no interest in forcibly converting the faithless. True devotion is not imposed, she reasons.

As a result, they closed down the Third Cloister as best they could, given their overarching desire not to make undue waves. This meant abandoning some important cult relics and creating the impression that they had left in a comparative hurry for the New World. (Had they taken all of their less-than-discrete beasties, books and the like with them, the cover story about having left Iceland would not have withstood scrutiny).

In fact, they *never* left Iceland. They recreated themselves as a succession of low-key, *au courant* religious and/or quasi-religious organizations, recruiting when they could with the utmost caution

As the campaign opens, the cult consists of a few immortal *gallai sanctum* like Freyja, and about a dozen mortal women and eunuchs who are “in the know.” They have, over the centuries, manipulated Icelandic society from the shadows, all with a goal of continuing to worship the Magna Mater in privacy. They presently exist as the inner circle of a theosophist movement known as the Icelandic Society for Theosophical Inquiry (“ISTI”).

Freyja currently poses as *Sif* (pronounced SIFE) *Eiriksdottir*, a precocious seer and fortuneteller held in high esteem by the ISTI. (Freyja used a variant *Consume Likeness* spell to merge with and adopt the appearance of the real Sif several years ago). They meet regularly, in a koffee klatsch format, at a University district coffeehouse in downtown Reykjavik. The inner circle remains in contact covertly through the *Candle Communication* spell, which they all also know.

b. Theosophy 101

Theosophy was a big deal in Classic-era Iceland, as well as in Germany. A real-life theosophical society was founded in Reykjavik in 1926 and continues to this day. Their journal, the *Gangleri*, quickly achieved 1% initial circulation (i.e., 1% of all Icelanders bought the journal, and circulated it from there). In sum, in the late

1920s, even in a small country like Iceland, there were a few hundred hardcore Theosophists to be found, and a great many of the educated literati were involved in it.

The “modern” theosophy movement (at least as of the 1920s) originates with the occultist teachings of Helena Blavatsky (commonly “Mme. Blavatsky”). Together with several adherents, she founded the Theosophical Society in 1875. Mme. Blavatsky wrote several books espousing her theories, the most important of which for purposes of this campaign is The Secret Doctrine.

To understand the theosophical movement for the purposes of this campaign, it is necessary to distinguish between theory and practice.



Mme. Blavatsky

In theory, the basic tenet of theosophy is that there is a universal truth, of which all existing religions are equally valid (or invalid) efforts to understand. Theosophists believe that religion and philosophy are tools to get at this universal truth, which is ultimately achieved by *unmediated individual enlightenment*. Hence, much like the historical cult of the Magna Mater, discussed in more detail in *Turn to Stone*,

priests are unnecessary and everyone is on their own journey to understand the godhead. It is a modern mystery religion, complete with initiation rituals and “secrets” known only to initiates and revealed through ritual and allegory.

In practice, a bunch of eclectic people get together in a club (or “lodge”) and dabble in comparative religion, philosophy, and more than a dollop of Eastern meditation, formal ritual, and Western occultism. It mixes and mashes a variety of traditions, and gives those given to esoteric rumination a common forum. Picture the local Masonic Lodge meeting a New Age festival.

Nonetheless, there are a few doctrines at the heart of the Theosophist movement that are important to understand for purposes of this campaign. One is an egalitarian streak: everyone is welcome regardless of race, creed or color.

Second is a belief in reincarnation. Humanity occupies a high rung in a karmic ladder of reincarnation, but is not the final step. It is possible for human beings to further “ascend” in the chain of reincarnation, with the next step being that of the “ascended master”, someone revered for their wisdom by all or most of their culture.

Third is the “*sevenfold path*”. *Everything*, theosophy posits, goes through seven reincarnation cycles, from people to rocks to societies. One’s degree of achieved enlightenment dictates the end result of a particular entity’s current incarnation.

As applied to civilizations, theosophy posits that modern society (like modern humanity) is in its “Fifth” epoch, by reference to certain “root races” which have come and gone in history. In the First Age, pre-human society was primordial and pure in spirit (“ethereal” or “Thule”). It evolved through the Second Age (Hyperborea), Third Age (Lemuria), and the Fourth Age (Atlantis).

Each of these ages went through sub-cycles of its own, finally culminating in a cataclysm that threw society back into a

state of comparative barbarism but laid the foundation for further ascension.

The “Fifth Age” (modern society) is seen as being in a spiritual “up cycle.” The Sixth Age will be a better time when people live in together in harmony and brotherhood.

The humans of the “Fifth Age” are referred to by theosophy as Aryans. Originally, this term did not have its current innuendo of Teutonic. (There are, nonetheless, passages in *The Secret Doctrine* which are difficult to describe as anything but pathetically racist). Some Aryans (modern humans) are alleged to be further along the cycle than others, and white Europeans are conveniently among the more advanced. As one might expect, and as discussed below in the section on the *Thule Gesellschaft*, the proto-Nazi occult movement of the late 1920s rapidly adopted the term to refer to their “ideal.”

Reincarnation cycles for individual souls likewise follow a sevenfold path:

Sthula-sarira: an unrefined state in which matter has only taken on its basic pattern;

Linga-sarira: a transitional, “ethereal” state;

Prana: Life and self-awareness;

Kama: self-determinism, in which a person is good or evil based how he exerts his will;

Manas: Consciousness, the state at which most humans are at. Evil drifts an entity back toward kama when reincarnated; good drifts one forward toward buddhi;

Buddhi: the state at which the individual is able to intuitively discern between good and evil, because of their accumulated wisdom. Such a person loves and forgives universally, and is loved and forgiven universally; and

Atman, or pure consciousness: a stage which, when achieved, results in cosmic unity of mind and soul with all others.

Thus, in order to transcend to status as a buddhi, or an “ascended master”, Olaf must somehow achieve iconic status, universally loved and forgiven. Fat chance, right? But

he has a cunning plan, and it does involve an explosion.

The term “ascended master” did not come into use until 1934. In the 1920s, Mme. Blavatsky’s term “mahatma” was used by theosophists instead. Recognized “mahatmas” of that time include Jesus, Confucius, the legendary occultist and alchemist the Comte de St. Germain, Buddha, and the Virgin Mary.

Mme. Blavatsky claimed that she received her enlightened knowledge from hidden remnants of the fallen Atlantean civilization, dwelling in the subterranean city of *Shambhala* and guarded by a “White Lodge” of mahatmas.

Like all preceding civilizations, the Atlanteans had largely perished in a cataclysm, but were (when they fell) a highly advanced civilization with advanced science and profound philosophical insight. Some Atlanteans, she claimed, continued to exist, albeit in hiding, and these transmitted their wisdom to her by allowing her to read the fabled Books (or Stanzas) of Dzyan.

Like any good mystery religion, the Secret Doctrine does not give it all away for free; Mme. Blavatsky only discloses three of the Stanzas of Dzyan, leaving the rest for “future enlightenment”.

The Inner City at the Magnetic Poles: The theosophists posited that an entrance to Shambhala was hidden in the mountains of Tibet, although there are many rumored entrances to the “Hollow Earth” in which it was said to lie, including somewhere near the North Pole. Shambhala is said to be both a physical as well as a spiritual place, achievable through a combination of physical travel and spiritual enlightenment.

The remaining Atlanteans of Shambhala are said to be aloof and more interested in letting humanity develop on its own, although they occasionally offer “constructive criticisms” to lucky wise men or women. (Otherwise, Mme. Blavatsky would never have communed with them).

The notion that enlightened humans might be able to find entrances to a “Hollow World” at or near the magnetic poles or other well-hidden places, and plumb the secrets of the universe so appealed to the early Nazi movement that it sponsored several archaeological expeditions to Tibet, starting in 1930. They were looking for clues to the location of its access points.



c. Olaf Ulfsson, Norse Wizard and Jerk

Obviously, a semi-human Mythos wizard stands little chance of achieving this touchy-feely status as a paragon of virtue, and Olaf understands this.

Olaf figures that if he cannot go to the mountain, then the mountain needs to come to him. Olaf plans to remake the Earth (or at least enough of his own culture) in such a way that he becomes the ideal, without having to change anything about himself. He’s going to drag everyone down to his level, and a notch or two below it, and ascend by comparison.



I'm on the road to Shambhala....

Yes, this is cheating (in the sense that prior ascended masters achieved their goals through dint of their own personal karma). Yes, it is also the grossest imaginable blasphemy to the Magna Mater (since everyone sacrifices himself *to her* to be transformed, *not* the other way around). No, Olaf does not care; he's that kind of guy.

Olaf is also $\frac{3}{4}$ near-dimensional being/Mythos monster. This alien heritage gives Olaf both strengths and weaknesses. He looks normal to casual observation, but naked, he looks more like a misshapen, unnatural hybrid orangutan than a man. Olaf takes only minimum possible damage from all non-enchanted sources; however, this invulnerability *only* applies if he is not in normal sunlight. He views venturing outdoors during the day as a calculated risk as a result, and rarely does so.

Although Olaf has a code of sorts, he is a vicious rogue through and through. He lies glibly and well. He kills people who get in his way without much of a thought and with no remorse. He uses people. He pays any price to get what he wants, although he prefers to have others pay the price for him. There are only three things that give him any pause.

First, he likes children. He goes to great lengths to avoid directly hurting children if at all possible. He's O.K. with them getting blown up with the rest of the world; he just does not like to watch.

Second, if he gives his word, he keeps it. He will not keep the spirit of an agreement, but will keep the letter of it. He rarely gives his word, however.

Third, he has a dopey, medieval Norse sense of honor and chivalry. He's the kind of guy who will agree to settle the fate of the world on a duel, or let an enemy go to fight another day if they acted bravely or showed no fear.

Other than these things, however, anything goes. He would kill his own mother, betray his own goddess, or wipe out a city (after arranging for the children to be off on a picnic, if possible) if it would get him something that he wants.

d. What Olaf Wants to Do

What Olaf wants to do will depend on whom you ask, Olaf or everyone else involved? If Olaf was going to tell the truth, he would tell you that he has turned his back on the worship of the Magna Mater, as it has taken him as far as he feels that it can. He has no desire to sacrifice himself to move to a higher plane of existence.

Rather, he intends to regress society to a lower state, and ascend to a higher existence through the back door. He will become a true folk hero by dragging the rest of society down to his level, remade in his image.

At the outset of the campaign, however, he is not totally sure exactly how to go about

this. He knows that he must sacrifice society somehow, but is not sure precisely what needs to be done. He has some understanding that new civilizations arise out of the ashes of the old, when the civilization preceding the current one tries to live again.

He knows that the civilization preceding ours was Atlantis, but he is still trying to figure out how to bring Atlantis back. To this end, he means to find, and then go to, the last bastion of Atlantean civilization, Shambhala. Once he finds out from the Atlanteans how to bring Atlantis back, he

will then know what he needs to do to actually go about it. But first he has to find the remnants of lost Atlantis.

To everyone else, Olaf merely portrays himself as tired of this life. He supposedly wants to ascend and become one with the Magna Mater. He portrays himself as seeking the means to do so, and believes that the answer can be found at Yggdrasil, the Tree of Knowledge. Olaf, as well as the Third Cloister, understands that the Norse myth of Yggdrasil is a metaphor for sacrificing for knowledge.

Olaf Ulfsson, Norse Wizard and Jerk

Nationality: Icelandic.

STR 18	DEX 16	INT 18	CON 18	APP 09	POW 30
SIZ 18	EDU 25	SAN 00	Luck 99	Hits: 18.	

Age: approximately 1,000 (looks 25).

Damage Bonus: +1d6.

Education: 1,000 year old sorcerer, well-read and widely traveled.

Skills: Accounting 25%, Anthropology 65%, Archaeology 25%, Astronomy 65%, Bargain 90%, Climb 75%, Credit Rating 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 28%, Drive Auto 35%, Fast Talk 95%, First Aid 95%, History 80%, *Icelandic Witchcraft (new)* 49%, Library Use 90%, Listen 55%, Natural History 90%, Navigate 90%, Occult 90%, Persuade 50%, Pilot Boat 95%, Psychology 75%, Ride 90%, Spot Hidden 70%, Rifle Attack 95%.

Languages: English 99%, Latin 99%, Greek 99%, Icelandic/Old Norse 99%, Danish 99%, Swedish 99%, Norwegian 99%, Turkish 99%, French 99%, Italian 99%, Aklo 50%, Arabic 99%, Russian 99%, Abenaki 25%.

Attacks: Enchanted Spear, 90%, 1d8+1+db, damage is magical, can parry and impale. The spear, an Atlantean artifact, also stores 20 Magic Points; Olaf keeps it fully charged.

Thompson SMG, 90%, 1d10+2, 20 yards, 1 or burst, 50 round drum, jams on 96-00%.

Defenses: Olaf takes only minimal damage from non-enchanted sources. This protection does not apply in natural sunlight. He often augments this with Flesh Ward.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath (as the Magna Mater), Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Contact Cold Ones, Summon/Bind Nightgaunt, Summon/Bind Fire Vampires, Augur, Blight/Bless Crop, Blight/Bless Crop, Cloud Memory, Enchant Knife, Evil Eye, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Flesh Ward, Heal, Levitate, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi.

After the events of *Yggdrasil*, Olaf will also have learned Raise Atlantis during his journey to Shambhala.



Yggdrasil (in myth) is a tree of knowledge, from which Odin hung for nine days to gain magical wisdom. The Third Cloister believes, however, that there is some hidden site of power at which sacrifices for knowledge can be made; hence, it is not entirely a metaphor. As will be discussed in the *Yggdrasil* scenario, Olaf already knows what this place is: Shambhala, in the Hollow Earth. He just needs to figure out exactly how to get there.

What Olaf, then, is lying to his allies about is the degree of his uncertainty about how to get the knowledge he wants, and the details of what he intends to do with the knowledge once he finds it.

Ultimately, what Olaf will discover in Shambhala is this: Atlantis sank beneath the waves as a result of a great volcanic cataclysm. To *Raise Atlantis*, Olaf must find a spot where both the tectonic plates as well as the veil between realities are weak. Then he must cause a cataclysm, raising the ruins of Atlantis from the sea. This will break the world, blot out the sun, and rip open a portal that will, incidentally, loose Yibb-Ts'till on the Earth to spread madness and death, as well as open all of Iceland to

the privations of his relatives, the trolls. With everyone who does not like him worse off than he is, he will ascend.

And once he knows how to *Raise Atlantis*, he will realize exactly where he needs to go to get the job done: back home at the old site of the Third Cloister.

e. How Olaf Intends to Go About It

Olaf is going to use everyone that he can as cat's paws, while avoiding exposing himself and getting his hands dirty.

First, the only one who knows his history and all the (fake) details of his (cover story) plan is Freyja Gallai Sanctum. She does not know, however, that Olaf is posing as (of all things) a reporter for the Reykjavik newspaper *Morgunblaðið* (founded in 1913) named Kristjan Kristjansson. (Always one for a joke, that Olaf). She knows that he is back, presumably posing as someone, and occasionally needs favors. She communicates with him via magic, code and intermediaries. She knows that he wants to ascend, but initially assumes that he intends to do through legitimate self-sacrifice.

Olaf's guise puts him in a position to keep an eye on newsworthy events occurring around the country, without people wondering why he is taking interest.

Second, Olaf will be having two cells of operatives do his dirty work. To the extent that he thinks that they can handle it, he will be manipulating a team of German political operatives from the *Thule Gesellschaft* (details below) to uncover the occult secrets he is looking for. To them, Olaf portrays himself as a Nazi sympathizer. He has convinced them of his bona fides as a magician and source of occult knowledge, but, like Freyja, keeps them at arm's length through drop boxes and coded communications in the newspaper until late in the campaign.

Other tasks will be accomplished through the Third Cloister, with Freyja Gallai Sanctum issuing the orders. Olaf plans to

eliminate Freyja Gallai Sanctum if and when needed to protect his plans.

As the campaign opens (*Turn to Stone; Higher than Truth*), Olaf will be using his proto-Nazis to perform legwork, searching Iceland for likely sites for Atlantean ruins and entrances to the “Hollow Earth.” They will be snooping around and infiltrating occult circles in Iceland (including both theosophy societies), picking their brains for clues. He will have turned ten of the proto-Nazis into immortal *gallai sanctum*. Seven of these he will keep hidden and out of the way, using the rank and file to do his legwork. He needs these seven for later.

Eventually, during the events of *Desire Made Manifest*, Olaf will conclude that he must journey to a given point in the interior of Iceland and seek out the subterranean ruins of the Atlantean city of Shambhala there. Accompanied by most remaining members of the Thule Gesellschaft, he will plumb the “Hollow Earth” (*Yggdrasil*), and bargain for knowledge as to how to cast *Raise Atlantis*. He will sacrifice seven of the unwitting rank-and-file Nazis accompanying him to pay the price for this knowledge.

Finally, Olaf will return to his boyhood home at the Third Cloister ruin site, and powered by the (unwilling, surprised) immortal sacrifices of his inner circle of Nazi eunuch followers, he will *Raise Atlantis* by invoking a cataclysmic volcanic eruption (*Twilight Time*).

Casualties will be significant, but the madness and panic that ensues will open the minds of the entire populace of Iceland to intrusions by the “Hidden People.” All of Iceland will become attuned to the trolls like Olaf is, and he will then ascend to another plane of existence as the exemplar of his hellish, remade “society”.

f. The Reykjavik Theosophy Society (a.k.a. the “White Hats”)

Unlike the ISTI, who actually are cultists (plus a few innocent fellow travelers), but ones that do not seem like they are trouble, the Reykjavik Theosophy Society virtually screams “illuminati.”

The Reykjavik Theosophy Society has a temple in Reykjavik replete with occult trappings, passwords, vetting of would-be initiates, a membership including many prominent citizens, and openly globalist political views.

They shamelessly discuss how to change and influence Icelandic society toward enlightenment. They give lectures on theosophist teachings to just about anyone who will listen. There are proto-Nazi infiltrators keeping an eye on them and trying to manipulate them toward their own ends. But they are not cultists. Rather they are a cross between a politically active social network and a bunch of overeducated nerds interested in the occult.

In *Higher than Truth*, the investigators will learn that their main Icelandic contact, Arne Sigurdsson, is a high-ranking member of this Society. He is in a position to pull strings and keep the investigators in the country and out of jail, within limits.

g. Mythos Tomes and Bestiary

In this campaign, there are two versions of a new Mythos tome, two recurring Mythos beasts, and one unique spell that the Keeper should be familiar with up front. Others will be discussed as they arise.

One of the Mythos tomes is intended to be found by the investigators in the first adventure; the other (*Olaf's Saga*) will be in their possession from the outset and is described in *Turn to Stone*. The two recurring Mythos beasts are cult enforcers for the Third Cloister, available in limited numbers and at a steep price to the cult.

Finally, finding, learning and casting the *Raise Atlantis* spell is Olaf's ultimate goal.

Dagbok Cybele (Mythos tome): The *Dagbok Cybele* is a running diary of the activities of the Third Cloister, a holographic (hand-written) combination of diary, ledger, correspondence record, day planner, and Mythos grimoire.

Two versions of the tome can be found: a version abandoned circa 1550 A.D., which has had one spell (*Create Lions of the Mother*) removed prior to being left behind; and the version that has been maintained by Freyja up through today. The first *Dagbok* that the investigators will find was maintained by Freyja Gallai Sanctum from the time of her ascension to leadership of the Third Cloister circa 950 A.D. until about 1550 A.D. The later version, which the investigators will not easily find, is completely up to date. It is written in saga era Old Norse (or antiquated Icelandic, depending on how you choose to look at it).

The *Dagbok* is not a traditional grimoire in the sense of being written as a guide for wizards, being written in code, or being especially incomprehensible. Rather, Freyja has periodically included copies of certain important devotional writings and kept a file of correspondence and research notes, almost in scrapbook or blog format. Further details about the *Dagbok Cybele* are discussed in the scenarios.

Cult Enforcers, part 1: The Lions of the Mother: If the investigators (or someone else) start causing too much trouble to the Third Cloister's or Olaf's plans, they may find themselves hunted down and assaulted by a variety of cult enforcers. Olaf's enforcers of first resort are either his proto-Nazi fellow-travelers of the Thule Gesellschaft or poorly informed but well-paid thugs.

Freyja has no enforcers of first resort; the investigators or others would have to threaten to expose her personally, or defile the ceremonies of the Magna Mater, for her to resort to violence against them. For the

most part, their efforts to interfere with whatever Olaf is up to on any given day are Olaf's problem. However, if the investigators (or anyone else) do something blasphemous that demands a response in the name of the Magna Mater, they will face a pair of the *Lions of the Mother*. The Lions are specialized golems, or magical automatons, that only Freyja knows how to create. They always come in pairs.

The Dagbok Cybele

This is a "family bible" of sorts for the Third Cloister, detailing important events, lines of descent, cult activities, correspondence, philosophy, schemes, and the like. Nowhere in it will the name "Shub-Niggurath" be found; the goddess is always referred to as the Magna Mater or Cybele. It covers important events from circa 930 A.D. when the Nunnery was founded by Byzantine refugees, through about 1550 A.D., when they *apparently* packed up house for the "Indies" under pressure from increasingly organized Icelandic religious authorities.

The 1550 A.D. version of the *Dagbok Cybele* requires an average of 8 weeks to read, 50 hours to skim, +8% to Cthulhu Mythos, -1d6/2d6 SAN, and a successful *Read Old Norse* roll to comprehend. It has the following spells potentially available: Call/Dismiss the Magna Mater; Summon/Bind Child of the Magna Mater (Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath); Augur; Blight/Bless Crop; Cloud Memory; Enchant Knife; Evil Eye; Levitate; Powder of Ibn-Ghazi.

The up-to-date version requires 16 weeks to read, 100 hours to skim, +10% to Cthulhu Mythos, -1d8/2d8 SAN, a successful *Read Old Norse* roll to comprehend and has the following additional spells available: Candle Communication, Create Lions of the Mother, Consume Likeness (variant), and Contact Cold Ones.

To make a set, one must begin with a pair of expertly carved, life sized marble lions. These, then, are enchanted by a spell that chiefly requires the sacrifice of (a total of) seven sentient beings.

This expense means that the investigators do not have to worry about encountering too many of these nasty creatures. There are only two sets of them “pre-installed” in the

campaign: one set at the “Third Cloister” in *Turn to Stone*, and the set standing watch at the Reykjavik Theosophy Society’s (yes, the “white hat” theosophist) temple door. If hard pressed or really angry, it would take Freyja about two weeks to come up with a third set (she keeps a spare set of statues, but has not enchanted them yet).

Lions of the Mother, Guardian Beasts of Cybele (x2)

STR 19 DEX 19 INT 10 CON 11 POW 13 SIZ 17
 Luck 65 Hits: 15

Damage Bonus: +2d6.

Move: 10”.

Armor: All non-enchanted physical attacks do minimum possible damage.

Skills: Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track Unbeliever 50%.

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1d10.

Claw 60% (in addition to Bite attack each round), 1d6.

Neutering, 100%, if both claw and bite hit the same target in the same round, or if a target is incapacitated, the Guardian Beast automatically does 1d10 in the following round, all via bite below the belt. This attack is only used against males (or specifically targeted infidels). The target of this attack is traumatically castrated.

SAN Loss: 0/1d6 for viewing each Guardian Beast of Cybele.

Notes: The Guardian Beasts appear to be gargoyle-like creatures, generally leonine in appearance, but when active their shape constantly flows shifts between varieties of large carnivorous predators. They are magical constructs and hence resistant to non-magical attack. They are programmable and follow their programming; typical instructions are to kill a specific person and any witnesses, guard a particular area against intrusion, or track down and eliminate a particular blasphemer. If they succeed in killing or disabling a male, they will forcibly remove his genitals regardless of their other programming.

Cult Enforcers, part 2: Cold Ones: Remnant servitors of the Great Old One, Rlim Slaikorth, from bygone Hyperborea, a few of these independent entities still lurk in the remotest parts of Iceland. They are native to Clark Ashton Smith’s and Lin Carter’s tales of ancient Hyperborea.

Also known as the *ylidheem*, they do not serve either the Third Cloister cultists or Olaf, but both Freyja and Olaf each have ways of **Contacting** them and making bargains for their services. Again, this involves a large expenditure of resources,

and the Cold Ones will generally only strike in the remotest, coldest areas of Iceland, unless the stakes are high or a message is trying to be sent.

This means that the investigators will likely only encounter them while searching for the entrance to Shambhala in the interior of Northern Iceland in the scenario *Desire Made Manifest*; or, more likely, when they make a pivotal, broad daylight attack in downtown Reykjavik in that same scenario.

Ylidheem, Free Agent Hyperborean**Horrors**

STR NA	DEX 21	INT 13
CON NA	POW 16	SIZ 13
Luck 65	Hits: 16.	

Damage Bonus: N/A.**Move:** 50" flying.**Armor:** Immune to all physical attacks. Fire harms them at a rate of 2d6 for a torch-sized strike (more for larger fires).**Skills:** Dodge 42%, Hide in Snow 90%, Sneak in Snow 90%.**Attacks:** Freezing Touch 30%, damage frostbite/special. Each successful hit causes the loss of 1d2 CON and 1d2 hit points. For each 5 points of combined CON and HP lost, the victim also loses 1 APP and 1 STR due to frostbite.Survivors require medical attention; a successful **First Aid** roll heals a single point of CON, STR and HP but no APP. A Medicine roll heals 1d3 points each of CON, APP, STR and HP. Only one roll each per victim; regaining further health is accomplished only at the rate of 1 week of hospitalization per hit point and attribute lost.**SAN Loss:** 0/1d6 to see a Cold One, 0/1d3 to hear the howl of one on the hunt.**Notes:** The Cold Ones, or *ylidheem*, once served the Great Old One, Rlim Slaikorth, the White Worm who brought frozen doom to Hyperborea in the Clark Ashton Smith mythos.They appear as ghostly, humanoid outlines of swirling snow, and can slip into the smallest opening. The *ylidheem*, and how to fight them, are discussed in most Hyperborean era tomes.**Spell:** *Raise Atlantis:* Somewhat misleadingly named, this spell does not directly raise the sunken land of Atlantis.

Rather, it does so indirectly, by causing an enormous and apocalyptic volcanic eruption that incidentally drags some sunken ruins to the surface while creating a new volcanic island. The eruption of a massive volcano wreaks a great deal of death and havoc, and twists the global climate, resulting in widespread famine and economic disruption.

The volcanic site needs to be somewhere near where there are sunken Atlantean ruins as well as a portal to nearby dimensions. In this campaign, the part of the ruins that happens to be nearby plays host to a temple to Yibb-Ts'tll. The cataclysm will sunder the temple, tearing open a rift to the evil, rotating god, and the Black (or perhaps volcanic ash and gases, what's the difference?) will blot out the sun and descend upon Iceland. The ensuing terror and madness opens people to the privations of the "hidden people"/trolls en masse.

Raise Atlantis is only available from the oracle in *Yggdrasil*, upon payment of the proper sacrificial price; it appears in no Mythos tome. Its casting requires intoning the words of the spell for five **uninterrupted** minutes where the bounds of reality are thin; it also requires the sacrifice of seven immortal lives. There is no "reverse" version of the spell. The volcano begins to rise at the beginning of the spell, and massively erupts when the spell is complete. The eruption of the volcano is accompanied by the breakdown of dimensional barriers. In short, once the volcano erupts, havoc and massive carnage ensues from both natural and supernatural causes.

h. The Thule Gesellschaft

Rather bizarrely, and until further notice, everything that you read in the following section is historically accurate.

The *Thule Gesellschaft* (Thule Society) was founded in 1918 by one Rudolf von Sebottendorff. (Sebottendorff was actually one Rudolf Blauer, a Turkish national and noted anti-Semite). Blauer had been schooled (if that is the right word?) in occultism, Islamic mysticism, and alchemy

in Turkey, and was (incongruously) also a Freemason.

The Gesellschaft started out as a splinter group of the Blavatsky theosophy movement, with (greater)? anti-Semitic leanings and racial purity tests for admission, but did not stay that simple for long. (It is interesting to note that Blauer, with his Turkish passport, probably would have failed his own initiation test).

Based in Munich, the Society quickly attracted a number of listless politicians who were interested in the occult as a hobby. These politicians took over the movement and combined its occult interests with their own fascist and anti-Semitic leanings.

The Society ran in parallel to the early Nazi political party beginning in the early 1920s; while Adolf Hitler was not a member of the Thule Gesellschaft, a number of top-ranked Nazis, including in particular Rudolf Hess, were top-ranking members.

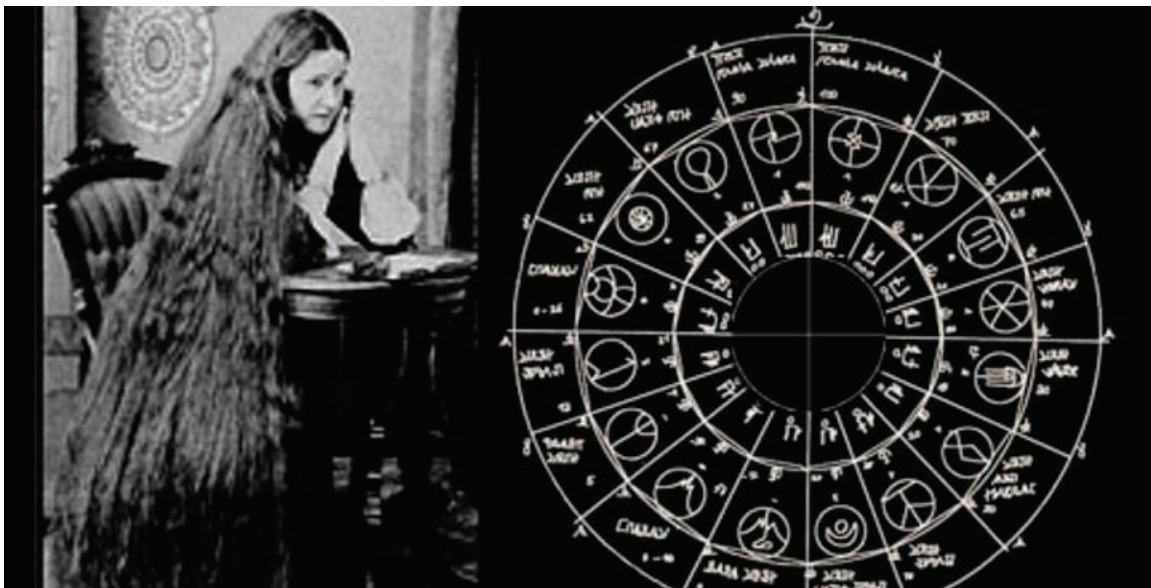
The Gesellschaft, in its early days, was a secret society with mystery religion aspects, initiatory rituals, and a fraternal structure similar to Freemasonry. The core occult beliefs of the Gesellschaft were extremely similar to mainstream theosophy, with a racist, anti-communist twist. Theosophy

held that "Thule" was the first iteration of civilization: an ancient, lost society located in the far north that eventually fell and was reborn as Hyperborea, the "Second Age."

To the Gesellschaft, Thule was also a legendary island in the far north. Like the theosophists, they believed that remnants of the Thule civilization still existed, and the secrets of Thule were held by ancient, immortal, "ascended beings" living in a "Hollow Earth" (similar to the "ascended masters" of theosophy).

The Gesellschaft likewise believed in gradual ascension, via initiation into a series of mysteries, to "ascended master" status. They also believed that if someone could ascend, they would learn the secrets of how to dominate society. The fully initiated were also thought to be able to establish contact with the dead and learn their secrets.

One place that they parted company with mainstream theosophy, of course, is what they hoped to do with this knowledge. Once ascended, they hoped to use the power that came with ascension to create a race of supermen of "Aryan" stock who would exterminate all supposedly "inferior" races.



They also equated “Aryan” with “Teutonic,” based on a belief that Atlantis had been geographically situated in the North Atlantic. *Iceland, not Germany*, was seen as the ancestral home of the “Aryan” “root race”. The Gesellschaft hoped to find their lost ancestors, learn their secrets, and use them to drive the communist and foreign elements from Germany. Not making this up.

The Gesellschaft’s links to the Nazi party resulted in membership cross-trade. A fair number of decommissioned, aimless veterans and fringe political thinkers became involved with the movement. *In theory*, only persons who could document that they were of pure “Aryan” descent were permitted to be initiated. *In practice*, anyone who sympathized with the Nazis received little scrutiny.

The Thule Gesellschaft evolved over time from an occultist fraternal organization with variant theosophist core beliefs to gain a secondary function as a Nazi cell structure. It was used by the Nazis as an espionage network, a social network, and it smuggled arms between lodge chapters. Although the Nazi party (in the 1930s) eventually distanced itself from and denounced these occult circles, that was not the case at first, and Rudolf Hess remained involved until his death following World War II. Still not making this up.

Attached to the Gesellschaft *may* have been a second esoteric movement, known as the Luminous Lodge or the *Vril Society*. (Whether an organized society or inner circle of the Thule Gesellschaft devoted to this idea actually existed is disputed among scholars. Rumors and conspiracy theories to that effect certainly existed, and some theosophists certainly claimed to embrace the notion that the Vril were real). Most modern scholars have concluded that the Vril Society was an urban legend, however.

Based in Berlin (if it existed), the Vril Society’s objective was allegedly to determine the origins of the “Aryan” race and to perform exercises to awaken the

forces of a mysterious race known as the “Vril.” Like Thule, which the Gesellschaft believed to be overlapping with modern Iceland, the Vril Society likewise believed that the “Vril” could be found in the “Hollow Earth” underneath Iceland.

At risk of offending any readers who might take this “Hollow Earth” or “Vril” stuff seriously, Nazi interest in finding the “Vril” was remarkably silly, even for them. The “Vril” (or “Vril-ya”) were a *fictional* race of beings said to dwell in a “Hollow Earth” in an 1870 early *science fiction novel* entitled *The Coming Race*, written by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. (He of the “it was a dark and stormy night” fame).

The Vril were said to be energy beings that resembled angels, and to be the remnants of a fallen prehistoric civilization that continued to exist and evolve in their subterranean caverns. The Vril were said to be incredibly powerful; a few of them could easily wipe out a city if they were of a mind to. The Vril also wielded a sort of “death-staff”, which could supposedly destroy, heal, cure or rend matter.

The narrator of Bulwer-Lytton’s novel makes an offhand mention that the language of the Vril-ya seems to be Indo-European in nature, and speculates that they and modern men had a common ancestor as a result. Unfortunately, Bulwer-Lytton used the *au courant* term “Aryan” for “Indo-European” when discussing these (fictitious) ur-language similarities. Nowhere in the novel does he suggest that the Vril-ya are Atlantean or Teutonic, let alone even real.

Bulwer-Lytton’s novel was wildly popular in the late 1800s, on a contemporary par with *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*. A splinter sect of the theosophy movement (possibly represented in Germany by the Vril Society) somehow got it into their heads that the Vril were real. This did not happen all at once.

A French author by the name of Louis Jacillot, who lived in India and delighted in mixing fiction and non-fiction, authored a series of novels in the late 1800s in which he

claimed to have met some Vril in remote India. (This would be the modern equivalent of a second-tier fantasy author writing a book in which he claimed that the Force was real and that he had met a Jedi Knight in the Amazon jungle. Some odd people are going to act as though they believe in such things to stand out from the crowd, and a few crazy people actually will believe in such a thing if it circulates widely enough. But then again, some people online were already claiming to be in real spiritual communion with the blue aliens from Avatar, a few months after the movie came out).

As this silliness started to creep into the edges of society as purported reality, the “existence” of the Vril was seized upon by Mme. Blavatsky in her theosophist writings. Indeed, later theosophist writers proposed that the fallen civilization of Atlantis ran its “miracle machines” (including flying saucers) on Vril energy.

(Following on the analogy, this would be the equivalent of modern Kabbalah practitioners coming out and proclaiming that they had had a revelation that the Star Wars movies were a display of some great, enlightened truth, and that the Force was real and could be channeled. Some people are going to run with the idea, simply because of the number of famous and wealthy people associated with the movement that is adopting it as doctrine. And some whack-jobs somewhere will believe it, at least in their own fevered minds).

(This is all still historically accurate, by the way. The fictional gloss is yet to come).

As soon as the Nazi movement had sufficient funds, it began to organize a number of expeditions to Tibet and other places supposedly redolent with occult secrets. This included Iceland. Apart from the various legends associated with Thule and the Vril, and Iceland’s largely insulated, Nordic, “pure” population, the Nazis were interested in Iceland for more rational, strategic reasons as well. Starting around 1930, a fair number of German

“genealogical researchers” (a.k.a. Nazi spies, occultists and propagandists) took up residence in Iceland to try and influence political events, including by agitating against the popular socialist labor movement of early 1930s Iceland. (Nazis were profoundly anti-communist and anti-union, among their other predilections).

(Now, finally, here comes the fictional gloss).

For purposes of this campaign, there is indeed a Vril Society operating as an “inner circle” within the Thule Gesellschaft. They actually believe that the “Vril” are real. However, while there are indeed remnants of fallen Atlantis lying in caverns beneath Iceland, they are not exactly, or at least not necessarily, the happy, advanced, enlightened people that the Thule Gesellschaft expects. And they are certainly not a bunch of blond-haired, blue-eyed Teutons ready to sign up in support of a Greater Germany. Yet the Thule Gesellschaft is not necessarily in for a rude awakening when its operatives arrive in Shambhala, either, because how Shambhala is perceived by the limited human mind is largely subjective.

Members of the Thule Gesellschaft will be working closely with Olaf Ulfsson during the course of this campaign. To the extent that they have any loyalty to anyone, their loyalty runs to Olaf. They have little use for, and only thinly disguised contempt for, the Third Cloister and its worship of a debased Middle Eastern fertility goddess. Olaf, by contrast, is seen by the Gesellschaft as pursuing “racial purity.” They think that Olaf is a proto-typical Norseman and that, as a result, his quest for “racial purity” and occult knowledge makes them fellow travelers. They do not grasp that Olaf’s viewpoint of “racial purity” involves leaving the Earth a wasteland crawling with troll-spawned hybrids, or that he means to sacrifice them all, a fact he keeps concealed from them. He plays them like a violin, in short, at least until the end of the campaign.

For most of the campaign, then, the Thule Gesellschaft serves as Olaf's source of henchmen. There is a cell of about 30 proto-Nazis operating in Iceland during the campaign. These consist of "heavies" (disgruntled former German soldiers), nine academicians/occult researchers/wannabe wizards, and one political operative/cell leader.

The cell leader, *Horst Schmidt*, is aware that the Third Cloister survived, faked its departure from Iceland, and went underground. He also knows the basics of their beliefs (i.e., worship of the Magna Mater), that they can work true magic, and that they are immortal eunuchs. Indeed, he has become one himself. And he is a member of the Vrill Society. Incidentally, he is not an ideologue; he could care less about the Nazi agenda (although he pretends otherwise). He knows that Freyja Gallai Sanctum is still around, is in contact with Olaf Ulfsson, and that there is some tension between them. But they have been kept separate; Horst could not identify her.

The cell members have their own agenda, of course. They want to gain occult power and knowledge, especially along the lines of how to "purify" the races, and report it back to their proto-Nazi handlers in Munich. To this end, he (and nine of his more scholarly associates) have sacrificed themselves to the Magna Mater and been reborn as immortal *gallai sanctum*. This has qualified them to be sacrificed for Olaf's purposes.

They will follow Olaf to the ends of the Earth, especially when he reveals himself to them and tells them (truthfully but incompletely) that he has found a hidden city of Atlanteans within the Earth under Iceland, and intends to go and trade for magic secrets that will help him purify the races to be more like him. Horst and the others will not be happy, though, if and when he learns that Olaf intends to sacrifice him and his fellow proto-Nazis to *Raise Atlantis* at the end of the campaign. Half-troll racial purity and laying waste to Iceland are *not* what they have in mind.

**Horst Schmidt, Leader of the
Icelandic Thule Gesellschaft Cell**

Nationality: German.

STR 14 DEX 14 INT 16 CON 16
APP 15 POW 18 SIZ 15 EDU 15
SAN 00 Luck 90 Hits: 16 Age: 35.

Damage Bonus: +1d4.

Education: Bachelor's Degree, Eugenics, University of Berlin; former Army officer; espionage training.

Skills: Accounting 30%, Climb 80%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Cryptography 25%, Disguise 50%, Dodge 66%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 55%, First Aid 60%, Hide 88%, *Icelandic Witchcraft* 45%, Jump 75%, Library Use 50%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Occult 50%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 66%, Sneak 75%, Track 66%.

Languages: German 90%, Icelandic 80%, English 25%, Latin 25%, Danish 25%, Turkish 25%, French 25%.

Attacks: Handgun Attack, 75%. Horst does not have a handgun in Iceland.

Rifle Attack, 75%, .30-06 bolt action, 110 yards, 1/2 round, 5 capacity, 2d6+4.

Knife Attack, 75%, 1d4+2+db, knife is enchanted.

Martial Arts, 50%.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath (as the Magna Mater), Enchant Knife, Heal, Powder of Ibn-Ghazi.

Notes: A tall, muscular, good-looking redhead who speaks Icelandic with only a hint of an accent. He has sacrificed his gender to the Magna Mater and is now a *gallai sanctum*. Horst only cares to a limited extent about the Nazi agenda, it's more of a bridge that he has not burned just yet.

SAN loss: Seeing Horst unclothed and bizarrely genderless costs 0/1d3 SAN.

i. Campaign Overview

In *Turn to Stone*, the investigators will travel to Iceland, be introduced (or reintroduced) to the legend of Olaf Ulfsson, and investigate the ruins of the (largely) abandoned Third Cloister.

They will meet some recurring NPCs, and should come into possession of the 1550 A.D. version of the *Dagbok Cybele*. This will give them considerable insight into the workings and philosophy of the Third Cloister.

They should come away with a number of unanswered questions about what happened to the denizens of the Third Cloister, and to Olaf Ulfsson.

A short interlude follows, where the investigators can follow up on missed research, or brief side adventures can be run.

In *Higher Than Truth*, the investigators encounter rival lodges of the theosophy movement in Reykjavik. They should discover that veneration (and maybe even outright worship) of the Magna Mater persists in Iceland. They will be unable to easily find any obvious evidence of illegal activity on their part.

They will notice both subtle and not-so-subtle similarities between some of these lodges' beliefs and the tenets of the Magna Mater, and hopefully pick up on a central point: the importance of self-sacrifice to advancement in the Cult of the Magna Mater.

In addition, they will get a chance to butt heads with some of the proto-Nazis of the Thule Gesellschaft, one of whom has been murdered by Freyja Gallai Sanctum for an indiscretion. They also learn that neither Freyja Gallai Sanctum nor Olaf Ulfsson has died, that they have resurfaced in Reykjavik, and that Olaf is up to something involving "ascending".

In *Desire Made Manifest*, the investigators travel to rural Iceland in pursuit of Olaf, and discover the subterranean city/mindscape of Shambhala.

In *Yggdrasil*, the investigators continue on through Shambhala and follow Olaf to a metaphoric Yggdrasil. Here, they have a chance to bargain with dark powers for knowledge about what Olaf is up to. Unable to transcend his immortality by himself, Olaf has a different idea, one that his allies are unaware of and will not approve of. He must recreate society itself in his image. Only by dragging society to troll-infested, horror-ridden despair, making himself look good to the reshaped society, can Olaf himself ascend. And to recreate society, Olaf must cause a cataclysm.

What price will the investigators pay for this knowledge? And can they (or will they) temporarily ally themselves with the Thule Gesellschaft to stop Olaf?

And finally, in *Twilight Time (Or, One Step Back For Two Steps Forward)*, Olaf returns to the site of the Third Cloister and tries to *Raise Atlantis* by triggering an enormous volcanic eruption, knowing that the result will be the destruction of Iceland and corruption of its surviving population at the hands of the trolls.

If Olaf succeeds, he will have reshaped his society into one of sorcery and madness, and thereby opened everyone to the privations of the "Hidden People." He will have sacrificed his (and everyone else's) humanity, but by making himself a paragon in the eyes of what's left (trolls), will have transcended his present existence.

Optional Subplot—Lani Jonsdottir

Lani Jonsdottir, a little Icelandic girl, went missing a long time ago. How long ago is up to you. Years? Decades? Centuries? In any event, the case is a cold one, in the realm of folklore.

The investigators will have an opportunity to find her near the end of the campaign, and she can be of use to them in defeating Olaf Ulfsson. Tease them; have them keep stumbling on her name as they do historical research.

A Classic-era Iceland Sourcebook (Or, Mysteries of Iceland)?

Geography, History, Culture, Politics, and Economy (1920s Iceland 101)

Geography: Iceland (*Island* in Icelandic), is an island in the North Atlantic, roughly 300 miles from east to west and 200 miles from north to south. The climate is maritime and sub-arctic, and the island's northernmost reaches poke over the Arctic Circle.

Iceland is a largely uninhabitable volcanic plateau, with a ring of inhabitable valleys and fjords scattered around the coastal areas. These inhabitable areas comprise about 7% of the island; the rest (including almost the entire interior) is cold, barren, volcanic desert or glacier.

There are numerous geysers, hot springs and active volcanoes throughout the country. Volcanic activity makes the already difficult local agriculture business that much harder, since the ash kills the pasture plants, leading to livestock failures. A particularly unpleasant eruption in Laki (near the site of **Turn to Stone**) in 1783 killed 2/3 of the livestock on the island. The resulting famine killed 10,000 people.

Iceland's climate is, surprisingly, not all that bad given how far north it is, but there are wide variations across the island. In the south and west (Reykjavik and its region) it is grey, windy and very rainy, but not bitterly cold (mean annual temperature is about 40 F). The interior is dry, windy and extremely cold (mean annual temperature about 30 F). The northern coast is usually shut in by pack ice; it is accessible by sea once every four to five years on average.

Even in the inhabitable areas, the soil is poor. It can sustain northern-adapted root vegetables and raise a hay crop with careful management, but erosion is a constant

threat. There are very few stands of trees. Wild ground cover consists of heather fields, short willows and dwarf birch in the warmer valleys.

There are few native animals. Apart from many seabirds, there are foxes, imported mice, reindeer and rats, and some escaped feral goats. Seals, walruses and other marine mammals are commonplace, and Iceland has some of the richest cod fisheries in the world.

People: Iceland's population is booming in the 1920s and its society is rapidly modernizing. Reykjavik, the largest town and capital, has 15,000 people in 1920, increasing to 30,000 by 1930. Almost all of the public institutions of the country are in Reykjavik in this era, including universities, library, parliament (the *Althing*), archives, jail, police, coast guard, embassies, and business headquarters.

Other significant towns include Isafjoror (1,000) on the northwest peninsula, Akureyri (1,000) in the north and Seydisfjoror (800) in the east. More common are small market towns of a few hundred people in those areas which are particularly arable or near good fishing grounds; these are scattered along the coast.

Commerce: The two principal industries in Classic-era Iceland are fishing (especially fish exporting) and animal husbandry (particularly sheep). In the past couple of decades, Iceland's fishing fleet has grown to include modern steam-powered trawlers, enabling them to effectively fish many miles out from shore.

Traditional agriculture is limited to cold weather crops like root vegetables and berries; grain is not typically grown. Many popular foods are imported into Reykjavik, but their availability outside of the city is

quite limited. Trade is almost entirely conducted with Denmark, Norway and Great Britain. If you want a good fish dinner, some potatoes, and a nice wool sweater or tweed pants, you are in luck. If you want pancakes and a cup of coffee, or many types of manufactured goods, they are going to be available, especially in Reykjavik, but will be both imported and expensive.

The local currency is the *krona*, the same as the Danish currency. As a quick rule of thumb, use guidebook prices for locally produced things (local food, local clothes, services and lodging) in Reykjavik, and double that for anything imported (including alcohol, coffee, tobacco, beef, petroleum products, and most books).

Travel: Getting from one part of the country to the other is a dicey proposition by land in the 1920s. Horse and wagon remain important parts of the transportation infrastructure, but by the late 1920s there are a fair number of trucks in the country, and automobiles are not uncommon in Reykjavik itself.

A ring road is being built around the coast of the entire island, but it is not complete even by 1930. In particular, one cannot get from Reykjavik to the south coastal town of Vik (a comparatively short drive) by road without going the long way around the island. It took several more decades to get a road through the lava plains to the east of Reykjavik. There is, however, regular steamer traffic to ports around the coast (except the northern coast when it is iced in).

Getting to Iceland from abroad is best accomplished by sea. Most sea voyages (as well as mail and cargo shipments) originate in Copenhagen and often stop in Leith (the port of Edinburgh) en route.

Laws and Their Enforcement: An oddity about Iceland in the Classic era is the extremely low level of police presence. In 1930, there were a total of 15 police officers employed by the City of Reykjavik for a population of 30,000. In the mid-1920s,

despite its size, Reykjavik had a grand total of 3 police officers. There is no national police, and outside of Reykjavik, towns have at most an officer or two. Although the police have access to guns, they do not habitually carry them, instead relying on billy clubs or persuasion.

This state of affairs did not change until 1932, when the entire Reykjavik police force was thrashed by an unruly mob of labor protesters, finally prompting the *Althing* into doing something about the low police levels. Serious disorder would require the response of the (limited) Icelandic Coast Guard, or mobilization of the Danish regiment near Reykjavik from bivouac.

Because of this manpower shortage, misbehaving foreigners and firearms each will be tolerated only to a very limited extent. Iceland does have a customs service, which has discretion to admit foreigners, exclude foreigners, and/or confiscate dangerous contraband. Duties are levied on alcohol, tobacco, coffee and sugar, but they are fairly low.

Anyone trying to bring a firearm into Reykjavik through customs had better have a very good reason. About the only good reason that would be accepted would concern a long arm (rifle or shotgun), and a story about hunting or venturing into the back country. Customs officials are certain to confiscate any handguns, automatic weapons, explosives or things of that nature—at least that they manage to discover.

Hunting weapons, and ammunition for same, can be obtained in Reykjavik as well as elsewhere; handguns and the like are strictly the province of the police and military.

Investigators audaciously carrying loaded firearms around Reykjavik, let alone shooting or menacing anyone with them, will face prompt confiscation, jail, fines and/or expulsion from the country.



Looking out to Reykjavik's harbor, circa 1925

Finding a Translator: Unlike today, there are few foreigners resident in Classic-era Reykjavik. Unlike today, most Icelanders speak only Icelandic and/or Danish. Finding someone who speaks more than a few words of English will be difficult outside of an office that does regular business with Great Britain. Those who do will be international merchants who have to deal with English fish buyers (who might well speak decent English), dockworkers who might speak a smidgen, or academics.

The sort of “guide” or “translator” that the investigators are going to want (someone who can accurately translate from English to Icelandic and have any interest in translating musty old books) will be an academic from the University of Reykjavik.

Religion, Government and Institutions: The state religion is Lutheranism, and nearly everyone in the country in the 1920s is either actively or at least nominally Lutheran. There is a Lutheran seminary in Reykjavik, but many of the clergy (and

indeed, many of the older academics) are graduates of the University of Copenhagen.

Medical care is decent by 1920s standards. There are physicians in every major settlement, a medical school in Reykjavik, and a surgeon general who regulates the practice of medicine in the country (again, as with everything else, based in Reykjavik). There is a leper asylum in Reykjavik, and probably a psychoanalyst to be found, but lunatics would either be imprisoned or (in the case of a foreigner) expelled for expediency.

Iceland is effectively governed by the *Althing* (parliament) and appointed ministers, all based (as usual) in Reykjavik. Local government is hierarchical: there are two regional governors, southwest and northeast. The island is further divided into 18 *sýslur* (counties), and these again into 169 *hreppur* (districts). Each district is overseen by a sheriff (*sýslumenn*), who acts as tax assessor, notary public and justice of the peace. Each district also has a committee that administers Iceland's social

welfare laws; even in the 1920s, Iceland had an elaborate system of poverty relief.

People unhappy with the decision of a local justice of the peace can appeal to a Court of Appeals in Reykjavik, and from there (in criminal cases) to the Crown's court in Copenhagen.

Education and books, books, books: Although the country is still quite agrarian outside of Reykjavik, education and literacy levels are very high throughout the country. Every town of any size has a public elementary school; beyond that, the Lutheran clergy operates secondary schools (including one taught in Latin) or assists with home schooling. There is (and still are today) a grossly disproportionate number of books, periodicals, and publishing houses in the country, all printing in Icelandic. There are also about two dozen weekly or biweekly newspapers, the largest of which is the *Morgunblaðið*.

The national library at Reykjavik contains some 40,000 volumes and 3,000 manuscripts, including (after Copenhagen gave them back in the late 1920s) numerous original Icelandic saga manuscripts.

There was (I was surprised to learn) a sizable archaeological academic community, based at the University of Reykjavik and largely educated (for the senior members) at Copenhagen or in Germany. Numerous scholarly and eclectic societies exist, including the Icelandic Literary Society (*Bokmentafjelag*), the Society of the Friends of the People, Freemasonry lodges, theosophical movements, and the Archaeological Society of Iceland.

Chess is an extremely popular sport, even in the Classic era, and Icelandic chess masters competed at the highest international levels.



Looking from the southwest at the *Althing* (left) and into the central hotel/business district, Reykjavik, circa 1920

Public History: There were no indigenous inhabitants of Iceland (at least in this cycle of civilization). Iceland had been inhabited by small numbers of Irish monks prior to 850 A.D., but did not become heavily settled until thereafter.

Between 850 A.D. and 910 A.D., a large stream of immigration by various Scandinavian peoples began, culminating (by 910 A.D.) in roughly 4,000 farmsteads clustered in the various (limited) arable portions of the country. Often these were members of the Norwegian royal family or other noblemen, together with their adherents, who decided that they would be safer from court intrigues with an ocean between them and the king. It was a haven for exiles, unwanted second sons, and outlaws from the Scandinavian court.

No one (excepting some empty and unenforceable claims by the King of Norway) had any *de jure* authority over Dark Ages Iceland. Rather, there were extended clans and family alliances, which feuded frequently until a sort of equilibrium was reached. This equilibrium gradually developed into loose institutions and “codes of laws” to solidify it. Chief among these was the *Althing*, originally a truce period where representatives of the various factions would come annually, have someone recite the laws previously agreed to, and negotiate and resolve disputes. Laws were largely expressions of custom, however, and one’s ability to twist the *Althing* to one’s advantage was seen as a heroic character trait.

Christianity was introduced to Iceland around 1000 A.D. from Norway, but took nearly a century to really take hold. Tithes were not introduced until 1096 A.D., and an ecclesiastical code not introduced until about 1125 A.D.

There is a huge volume of contemporaneous written history on medieval Iceland, in the form of the sagas. Sagas are poetic histories of the fortunes of individuals or families, and/or recountings of various feuds. They tend to be largely factual, but are

occasionally embellished and occasionally outright semi-fictional.

Iceland was an almost exclusively pastoral/fishing economy until the turn of the 20th century. Life in Iceland was largely about farms growing hay and raising sheep, with some fishing depending on where one lived. Winter would be taken up with indoor tasks like weaving and tool-making, and important social events (like the *Althing*) would happen in the spring.

In the 13th century, the island submitted to the formal rule of Norway, and what had been a decently prosperous medieval society with a reasonable amount of wealth went downhill. Iceland became a backwards, isolated colony pressed under the thumb of the Norwegian crown. The crown imposed an oppressive trade monopoly; a Norwegian governor ran the day-to-day affairs of the island; and the crown confiscated the estates of the more wealthy Icelanders. In 1280 A.D., a political union transferred control of the island to the Danish crown, but this did nothing to improve matters in Iceland.

A dark ages of several hundred years ensued, during which Iceland was an extreme backwater of European civilization:

But for an English trade, which sprang up out of the half-smuggling, half-buccaneering enterprise of the Bristol merchants, the island would have fared badly, for during the whole of the 15th century their trade with England, exporting sulphur, eiderdown (of which the English taught them the value), wool, and salt stock-fish, and importing as before wood, iron, honey, wine, grain and flax goods, was their only link with the outer world.

This period of Iceland's existence is eventless: she had got peace but with few of its blessings; all spirit seemed to have died with the commonwealth; even shepherding and such agriculture as there had been sank to a lower stage; wagons, ploughs and carts went out of use and knowledge; architecture in timber became a lost art, and the fine carved and painted halls of the heathen days

were replaced by turf-walled barns half sunk in the earth; the large decked luggers of the old days gave way to small undecked fishing-boats.

Encyclopedia Britannica, 1911 edition, "Iceland" entry.

Things got little better in the next few centuries, either. Iceland suffered frequent raids by pirates (some far as far away as the Barbary Coast of Africa!) in the 16th and 17th centuries, which the Danish crown did little to curb.

Iceland was devastated again and again, by the plague in 1579, 1613-1616 and 1627, by smallpox outbreaks, and by periodic volcanic eruptions in heavily populated areas. Each time, it took society decades to recover.

Big Nasty Volcanoes: Historically, big nasty volcanoes blew up and knocked Iceland back a few centuries every now and then. The most recent major eruption, from

a "sociological destruction" standpoint, occurred in Laki (near the scene of *Turn to Stone*, the opening scenario) in 1783.

The Laki volcanic eruption of 1783 had profound sociological implications not only for Iceland, but for Europe as a whole. The eruption, also known as the *Skaftáreldar* ("Skaftá river fires") produced an enormous ash and gas cloud which altered the climate across Northern Europe and North America for a couple of years.

This cataclysm (which went on over a course of *eight months*) resulted in what British pundits called "the sand-summer" due to ash fallout. The outpouring of gases, including 8 million tons of fluorine and 120 million tons of sulfur dioxide gave rise to what has become known as the "Laki haze" across Europe. In Iceland, the results included a 21% population extinction, along with a two-year famine, and the loss of 80% of sheep, 50% of cattle and 50% of the horses.



The sulfur dioxide cloud drifted southeast to Europe, hitting Norway, Prague, Berlin, Paris, and London in a couple of weeks. Navigation was frozen, and the sun was described as “blood-colored.” 23,000 British died from poisoning in August and September of that year, as the gas cloud drifted over.

The greenhouse effect from the haze resulted in severe thunderstorms throughout the summer, killing livestock throughout Europe, followed by a sort of “nuclear winter” in the winter of 1783-84. The extreme winter precipitated famine in France...the same famine which, in turn, precipitated the French Revolution in 1789. Let them eat cake.

In North America, as a result of the “Laki haze,” people ice skated in Charleston Harbor, and the river froze over in New Orleans. Ben Franklin noted:

During several of the summer months of the year 1783, when the effect of the sun's rays to heat the earth in these northern regions should have been greater, there existed a constant fog over all Europe, and a great part of North America.

This fog was of a permanent nature; it was dry, and the rays of the sun seemed to have little effect towards dissipating it, as they easily do a moist fog, arising from water. They were indeed rendered so faint in passing through it, that when collected in the focus of a burning glass they would scarce kindle brown paper.

Of course, their summer effect in heating the Earth was exceedingly diminished. Hence the surface was early frozen. Hence the first snows remained on it unmelted, and received continual additions. Hence the air was more chilled, and the winds more severely cold. Hence perhaps the winter of 1783-4 was more severe than any that had happened for many years.

The Napoleonic Wars are what finally put Iceland on a course toward modernity. England imposed a blockade on Denmark, breaking the Icelandic trade monopoly.

Iceland was treated as a neutral exempt from the blockade, and suddenly other nations were trading with Iceland for the resources (wool, fish) that had been going almost exclusively to Copenhagen (for monopolistically low prices) for several centuries. Things were still harsh--about 15,000 Icelanders emigrated to Canada in the mid-1800s--but things were finally on the upswing.

Iceland was finally allowed home rule in 1874, and thereupon rapidly caught up to the rest of the world. Modern government and social institutions, newspapers, periodicals, schools, universities, libraries, and museums, were all founded in one place, lending Reykjavik a nouveau cosmopolitan flair--an island in a sea of pastoralism.

Language: This long isolation kept the Icelandic language largely unchanged from the times of the sagas; it is essentially medieval Norse. With the rise of nationalism came a linguistic purity movement, further resisting the adoption of loanwords from other languages. Many people, however, still speak Danish as a second language in the Classic era.

Reykjavik, the Key to Independence: Prior to 1900, there was nowhere to speak of in Iceland to administer an independent, centralized government from. Reykjavik started as one of the larger and wealthier farm aggregates, supporting one of the larger monasteries. Commercial buildings were not erected at the site of Reykjavik until 1780, however. It grew slowly, finally getting significant road improvements and a town square a century later, in 1874.

With rising population and industrialization, infrastructure projects finally started to be undertaken. The office of mayor was instituted in 1908. The first major project was the provision of a plumbed water supply in 1909. A system of drains was also laid, and hygiene improved dramatically.

In 1910, the Reykjavik gasworks were founded, giving Reykjavik electricity. This was followed by the *Ellidaár* hydroelectric

plant in 1921. In 1912, tarmac was laid on *Austurstræti* (the main through street in Reykjavik) and the first sidewalks were constructed. A modern harbor was finally constructed in Reykjavik in 1913-17.

In the interwar years, most of Iceland's trawler fleet sailed from Reykjavik. The bulk of the catch was processed as saltfish, and as before, saltfish processing was a central feature of life. Only now, it was modern processing, with a modern harbor, electricity, a modern fleet and enough resulting wealth to permit culture to flourish.

In the 1920s, plans were begun to utilize the natural hot water resources near Reykjavik. Geothermal heating was supplied to about 70 houses in Reykjavik in 1930, using hot water piped from the springs in Laugardalur, which had been used for centuries for washing laundry.

During World War II, geothermal heating was extended to most of the town, using water pumped from Mosfellssveit north of Reykjavik. This meant the end of smoke from coal fires in town. In the Classic-era, however, this is still a work in progress

Most places in Reykjavik have electricity in the Classic era, and there are nice hotels. However, coal-fired boilers are the rule until World War II, with geothermal heat being a popular topic of discussion more than anything else. Motor vehicles were not imported into Iceland in any quantity until after 1913. Throughout the 1920s, including in Reykjavik, a combination of automobiles and horse-drawn vehicles, as well as many bicycles, were used. Even into the inter-war years, motor vehicles were primarily commercial vehicles: taxis and trucks.



Another way to use volcanism to cleanse society....

Commerce in Reykjavík evolved in the 1920s from large general stores to a range of specialist shops. By 1930, small grocery stores were located almost on every corner, and the more ambitious shopkeepers started chains. There were also special dairy and meat shops. Fishmongers sold their wares from carts and barrows in the street.

Shops selling high-quality merchandise such as clothing, shoes, domestic equipment and appliances (often imported) were mainly located in the town square and on *Laugavegur* (street). *Austurstræti* (street) was the elite shopping district.

To sum up, there was modern shopping in the country, just only on two streets for the most part. Buildings and infrastructure were going up at a rapid pace, but even Reykjavik was a patchwork. (See the photo on p. 25, showing how abruptly a nice, modern downtown section drops off into dirt roads and fields).

In the spring of 1940, the British military occupied Iceland. In Reykjavik, there were almost as many British troops as the whole population of the town. In 1941, the United States took over Iceland's occupation. The occupation brought plenty of work and new technology, and the unemployment and socialist unrest of the 1930s quickly evaporated.

b. Legends, Folklore and the Occult

Following is some information on general Icelandic supernatural legends and occult practices, as well as Mythos or other weird stories set in Iceland. Iceland is a Northern Scandinavian culture, and shares many of the fairy tales and folk legends common to that culture. Here however I focus on things that are peculiarly or particularly Icelandic.

Zombies: Zombies are perhaps the quintessential Icelandic monster. In Icelandic tradition, they are known as *afturganga*. They result either from a magical curse, or when individuals rise from their graves to wreak revenge on those who

have wronged them. Common story threads are that the *afturganga* does not realize that it is dead, or that those encountering it learn later that the person had died not long before.

Afturganga Template

A character who becomes an *afturganga* undergoes the following stat adjustments: STR 24, CON 26, -1d6 DEX, -1d6 APP (if plausibly alive, otherwise 0), POW 1. **Intellect is unaffected.** They lose -1d20 SAN upon learning that they are among the living dead. If this renders them insane, they tend toward obsession with revenge against whoever was responsible for their death.

Afturganga do not need to eat, drink, sleep, breathe or engage in other bodily functions. Per normal zombie rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage.

They appear pale, cannot utter the name of God, and tend to repeat themselves when speaking. They lack breath or pulses, but can speak. Otherwise, they may pass quite well among the living.

They do not heal damage normally, but can be healed magically. If reduced to zero hit points, they continue to exist as an incorporeal and ineffective presence until their empowering magic is dispelled or their vengeful purpose is satisfied.

No SAN loss for seeing a plausibly alive *afturganga*. Realizing that one is, in fact, a zombie, however, results in a SAN loss of 1/1d8.

Most *afturganga* tend to be very lifelike to casual observation. They do not rot over time, eat brains, spread their affliction, or do anything of that nature. Nor do they eat, breathe, sleep, age, or stop going about their business. If they cover up any wounds (or have no obvious ones), then they can pass

for living, absent either careful medical examination or some non-survivable catastrophe that they walk away from.

Hit points lost by an *afturganga* cannot normally be regained, and physical damage sustained at the time of death remains. Only magical healing can repair an *afturganga*. Rather like very human-seeming, corporeal ghosts, they continue to exist, with their consciousness, memory and personality intact, until whatever magic or purpose sustaining them ceases. Visualize the characters in the movie Death Becomes Her, or the Reapers in the TV series Dead Like Me, rather than a Night of the Living Dead type of creature.

Lani Jonsdottir, who the investigators may encounter in the *Yggdrasil* scenario, is an example of an *afturganga* zombie.

Lake monsters: Loch Ness type cryptids are another popular Icelandic legend, where they are known as *skrimsl*. Large, never caught, often seen but never captured, sometimes photographed but never photographed well, they make for popular scapegoats for mysterious disappearances.

They are said to inhabit a number of cold, deep, large, isolated bodies of water in the Northern hemisphere, including Loch Ness, Lake Champlain in Vermont, and numerous Icelandic fjords.

Skrimsl could be any number of things from a fictional perspective. These include a hoax, a mass hallucination, or any number of vaguely aquatic Cthulhoid menaces (from Deep Ones to Lloigor to Star Spawn to shoggoths).

The author prefers a cryptozoological answer as “canon.” Dutch cryptozoologist Antoon Oudemans, a 70ish, retired (in the 1920s) former head of the Dutch Royal Zoological Gardens wrote what is still considered the seminal work on lake monster cryptids, The Great Sea Serpent, in (1892) (*grants check in Natural History*). Oudemans’ theory posited that all of the various lake monsters residing in various large, deep, coldwater Northern Hemisphere

lakes are early proto-whales known as zeuglodons, which became isolated when these lakes--all of which are the result of fjord isolation during the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago--were formed.

***Skrimsl*, Legendary Lake Monsters**

STR 30	DEX 08	INT 03
CON 20	POW 11	SIZ 30
Luck 55	Hits: 20	

Damage Bonus: +3d6.

Move: 5”/8” swimming.

Armor: 5 points of fur, hide and proto-blubber.

Skills: Listen 20%, but Sense Vibration or Movement 80%; Sneak Along Shore 60%; Hide 80%; Swim 100%; Avoid Clear Photograph 100%.

Attacks: Bite 60%, 1d10 +db.

Grab 60% (will retreat and drag prey under water to drown).

SAN Loss: 0/1d3 for viewing a *skrimsl*.

Notes: An ambush predator, a *skrimsl* is quicker than he looks. His effective **Listen** check is excellent. While his hearing per se is not particularly good, his lower jaw functions as an evolving, vibration sensitive echolocation system. This enables him to sense movement and vibrations very well.

A *skrimsl* about as smart as a dolphin, which is to say, pretty smart. His fur and proto-blubber enables him to easily deal with cold water and adverse weather.

Zeuglodons are primitive, carnivorous, ancestral whales, long and sinuous in form, with (depending on their degree of evolution) functional hind legs. As mammals, they would be warm-blooded, and they filled a niche similar to that of an immense alligator: a heavily aquatic ambush predator, which can and would snatch unsuspecting prey off a bank or from

shallow water.

Zeuglodons, based on the fossil record, were streamlined and serpentine, ranging from 45 up to 70 feet in length. Earlier proto-whales (such as ambulocetis) were smaller (about 10 feet in size), more crocodylian in shape, and certainly amphibious, with two pairs of functional legs.

Proto-whales are believed to have evolved from primitive even-toed ungulates, branching off from pigs and hippopotami. Their head was wedged-shaped, and up to five feet long, with both seizing and rending dentition (much like a dog's).

A *skrimsl* will be somewhere midway between ambulocetis and the later zeuglodons. Roughly 20 feet long, they will be primarily aquatic but with functional limbs and the capability of landing; essentially an enormous, furry, vaguely serpentine, warm-blooded alligator.

They will have large ranges, tend to flee from humans, and be naturally camouflaged in their home environments. A *skrimsl*'s behavior will also be basically that of an alligator: a shy, concealed ambush predator and scavenger, only smarter. They are smart enough to wait until someone is seemingly alone before striking.

Given how isolated parts of Iceland are, if there is a sizable population of *skrimsl* anywhere, then Iceland with its rich fisheries and many hidden fjords would be a prime territory for them.

Trolls and other "Hidden People": In Icelandic, these are collectively known as the *huldufolk*. In Icelandic tradition, they are confined to the darkness and turn to stone if exposed to daylight.

There is also the rich Scandinavian tradition of elves, dwarves, little people and even semi-human fish fiends.

Roads are placed so as to circumvent traditional "elf-hills", under which the elves and others are said to live. *Alfholsvegur*, or Elf-Hill Road, is a major avenue in Reykjavik itself.

Trolls are covered extensively in *Turn to Stone*.

The Hollow Earth?: One of the most famous stories in all of twentieth-century weird fiction is set in Iceland: Jules Verne's Journey to the Center of the Earth.

Before the heroes in that story wind up in a weird subterranean world of giants and dinosaurs, they travel to Iceland to find the hidden entrance, which only appears in the location given by a legendary text, where the shadow of a particular mountain falls on a particular day. The hidden entrance is in the crater of an (inactive) volcano in Iceland's interior. This ties in, quite closely, with the Vril stories, who are said to be secreted away in vast underground caverns.

Some post-World War II conspiracy theorists posited that some of the more occult-connected Nazis may have escaped to this Hollow Earth, by virtue of a polar region entrance.

Norse-style wizards: Although not something to be proud of, many sagas and stories from the Viking era feature villains or anti-heroes with various sorts of magical powers. Typically these individuals studied under Lapp or other foreign wizards.

The prototypical Norse wizard is more of an enchanter and less of a fireball-throwing artillery piece. They lay curses, enthrall people, change their shape, summon up the dead, brew potions, tell fortunes and make charms.

Egil Skallagrimmson is perhaps the prototypical Icelandic wizard. Born in the tenth century, he is said to have been part-ogre and inherited an ogre's ugly looks and bad temper. He kills with little hesitation, and curses his enemies with black sorcery. At the same time, he is unflinchingly brave, and accounted among the greatest of Norse poets.

Nið-poles: A common sort of curse, many sagas or other Icelandic sources that discuss sorcery will discuss *nið*-poles. A *nið*-pole is a powerful, essentially unbreakable, curse,

usually created to wreak revenge. The revenge tends to be ironic. A *níð*-pole may or may not be aimed at a particular person, but it is directional (it covers a specific area).

A *níð*-pole is created by erecting a horse's skull on a pole, with appropriate runes and incantations. A classic use of a *níð*-pole, as discussed in the saga of Egil Skallagrimmson, would condemn a particular person not to leave from or return to a particular place (in the direction the horse's head faced) until certain conditions were met.

Volva: A *volva* is an Icelandic seeress and prophetess, who both told fortunes as well as administered herbal remedies to the sick. They were highly respected, highly reliable (in folklore) and highly expensive. In some Norse subcultures they also oversaw important funerals and sacrifices.

The archetypal *volva* dressed in white, with a black cap, and was usually an old woman who traveled the land with a retinue of students and attendants. They often wield rune-carved staffs said to possess magical powers, and are summoned (or tend to mysteriously appear) at times of great societal peril.

The investigators will encounter Freyja Gallai Sanctum posing(?) as a *volva* named Sif Eiriksdottir in *Higher Than Truth*.

Staves of Power and Icelandic Witchcraft: A *staff of power* is not a staff in the sense of a big wooden stick, necessarily. Instead, they are complicated sigils (sometimes carved onto a big wooden stick) that are reputed to have magical powers.

Common ones include symbols to scare enemies, ensure victory in some venture, protect against ghosts, and the author's personal favorite, to ensure that butter is not counterfeit.

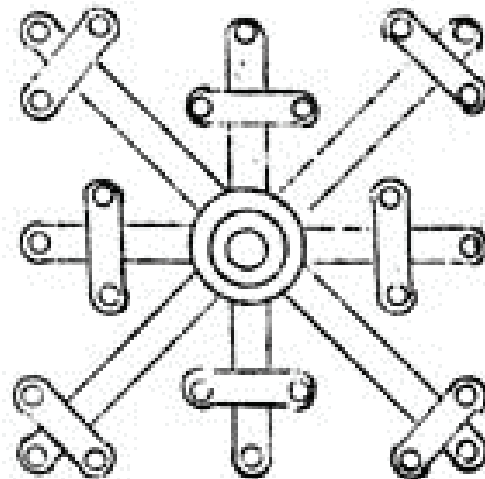
For purposes of this campaign, carving effective staves of power is included as part of a skill referred to as *Icelandic Witchcraft*. This skill also includes general knowledge

of staves of power as well as all traditional Icelandic methods of divination. Knowledge of a particular staff of power can be used in one of two ways, for purposes of game mechanics:

1. Creating a staff will give a +5% bonus per 5 magic points invested by the caster to the *next* serious effort to accomplish the particular task (*i.e.*, the next time a die roll must be made). Each +5% increment also requires the sacrifice of 1 POW, either by the caster, by the recipient, or by some other "volunteer."

Hence, a staff of power to aid in crossing a dangerous river invested with 15 magic points and 3 POW would give the person a +15% bonus to his next roll (only) when crossing a dangerous river. Hardly seems worth it, but keep reading. A staff intended to, say, *Raise Atlantis* repeatedly invested with all the POW from seven immortal *Thule Gesellschaft* flunkies would be a scary thing, on the other hand. Of course, your opponent might have his own staff as well.

2. Magical staves are more often used as reusable keys or failsafes. Such a staff is usually only requires 1 POW and 5 magic points. It might trigger a *Gate*, allow or increase the chance of something magically hidden to be seen, or mark someone as "safe" to a guardian. The investigators will encounter one such staff, the *holast*.



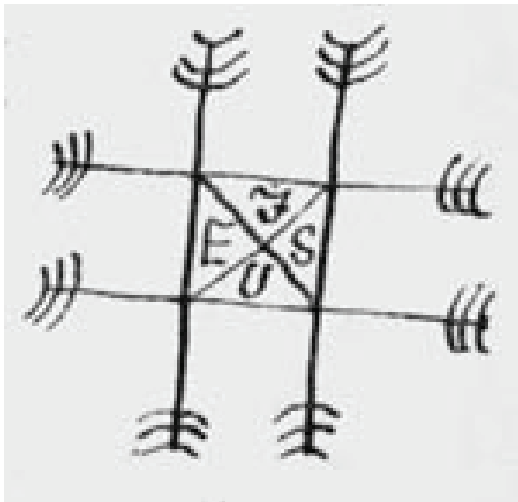
The *holast* staff

The *holast* (“hill opener”) is carved on a stick of rowan and painted with blood from under one’s tongue. If one knocks with the stick on the side of a hill, any magically hidden elf-doors in the hill will open. This is an example of a “failsafe” use for a staff of power. It requires 1 POW, 5 M.P. and a successful *Icelandic Witchcraft* check to create one.

As a gloss for this campaign, sympathetic magic elements will be added. Hence, a particularly powerful *holast* staff might be made from blood under the tongue of the wisest man in the land. Opening a magical door at an ancient site would be helped by blood from a sage on ancient sites. Yes, this bodes ill for an NPC in the campaign.

Other staffs of power that the investigators might encounter, given their practical use in a *Call of Cthulhu* campaign, include:

Máladeilan: Carved on lignite and inscribed with blood from the septum of your nose, this staff helps ensure victory in court proceedings. Helpful to tweak those clutch *Law* rolls or *Persuade* rolls with customs officials.



Máladeilan

Gegn galdri: A ward against witchcraft. This staff of power simply needs to be carried in some fashion on one’s body. Helpful with those clutch POW vs. POW checks when targeted by unpleasant wizardry.



Gegn galdri

c. The Secret History of Iceland

With that bit of historical background out of the way, following is some additional, fictitious “truth” for purposes of this campaign:

1. The Fall of Hyperborea, Lemuria and Atlantis (or, Those Dratted Volcanoes):

The island of Iceland has been a part of each of these ancient and fallen civilizations, and perhaps a few before them. Each preceding civilization went through a cycle, which is fixing to repeat itself as the campaign opens:

- Society makes a slow advance, hampered by the climate and resources available, only to experience explosive growth and sudden good fortune;
- Wizards who have been operating for long periods of time in the shadows sense an opportunity to ascend to a higher plane of existence;
- They travel to the ruins of the preceding civilization and, through sorcerous means, bargain for knowledge as to how to ascend;
- They go to a place of power and, through dark magic and hideous sacrifices, try to raise the preceding civilization from its ashes;
- In doing so, they both release Yibb-Ts’tll onto the Earth and trigger a

massive volcanic cataclysm. The lines between the release of Yibb-Ts'tll and a massive release of the Black, and a mammoth volcanic eruption blotting out the sun with ash and kill clouds of gas, are blurry;

- Society is ruined, the sorcerer becomes the paragon of the sorcery-blasted society, and he ascends. Actually, Yibb-Ts'tll absorbs his soul, but that qualifies as a different state of being, one supposes.
- Remnants of the immediately preceding society, blasted into ruin by sorcerous energies, cling to a ghostly, hyper-geometrical sort of eternal existence in well-sheltered areas (underground, near the magnetic poles);
- Rinse, lather, repeat.

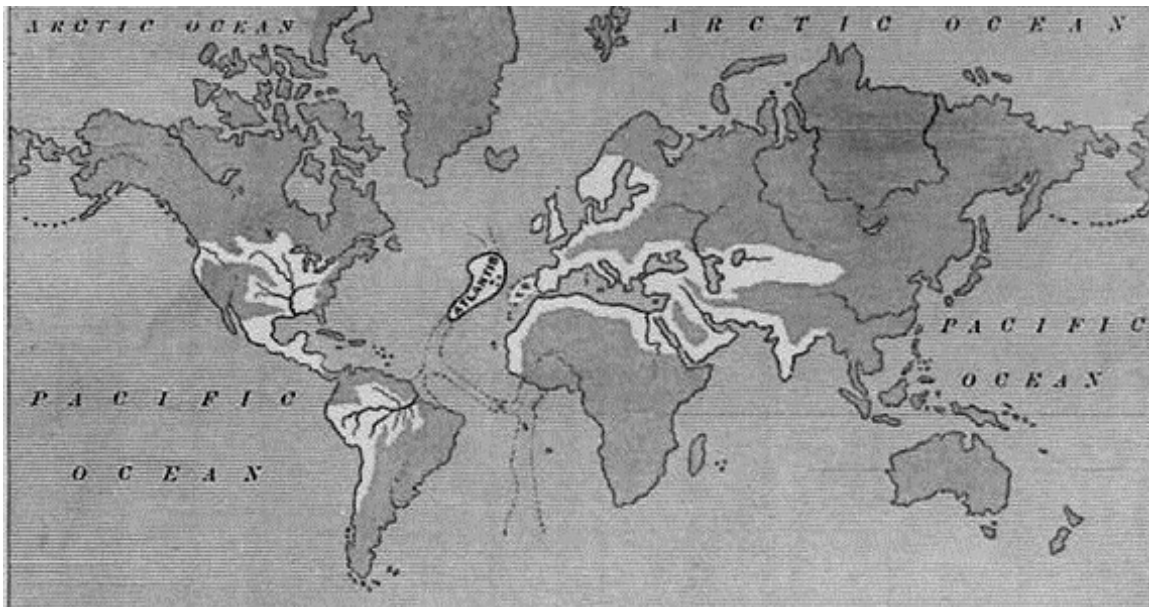
2. *The Ruins Beneath the Waves:* One constant in this cycle is Yibb-Ts'tll. Yibb-Ts'tll is a horrible Dreamlands entity that features in several of Brian Lumley's Mythos stories. He resides and slowly rotates in place in the Jungle of Kled, waiting for entreaties from wizards who desire radical change.

An agent of destruction and recreation, Lumley's stories deal with Yibb-Ts'tll in two contexts. One concerns his touch. His touch always brings great change (his dread "Reversals"), often harmful, sometimes helpful, but always profound.

The second is his blood, called the Black. Called by wizards to smite their enemies, the Black appears in ash-like black flakes which snow down upon the area. They adhere to the victim(s), smother them, and send the victim's soul back to join with Yibb-Ts'tll. Sounds like a massive volcanic eruption, doesn't it?

In Lumley's "Rising with Surtsey" (1967), the emergence of the new volcanic island, Surtsey, off the coast of Iceland brings with it ancient, mind-shattering, prehistoric ruins from beneath the waves. The ruins are connected with a variety of Mythos entities, including Yibb-Ts'tll.

This campaign accepts the existence of these submerged ruins as canon. Not far off the shore from the "Third Cloister's" ruins lies an outpost of Atlantean civilization, a particularly horrible portion containing a temple of sorcery with a portal to the Jungle of Kled, where Yibb-Ts'tll rotates and waits for his opportunity again.



Circa 5,000 B.C., the efforts of an Atlantean wizard to ascend caused him to conduct a mass sacrifice at the site of temple of Yibb-Ts'tll and attempt to *Raise* (the previous civilization), *Lemuria*. Some of what is now Iceland was created when, in the course of dragging to the surface certain submerged Hyperborean ruins, a volcano erupted off the shore of Atlantis. The ensuing tsunami, gases, volcanic ash/the Black/what have you wiped out Atlantis and submerged it beneath the sea.

The rest of the world didn't enjoy things, either; the "Great Flood" of Biblical reference was the result of the tsunami and overall flooding following the effort to *Raise Lemuria*.

3. Human Resettlement circa 850 A.D.: Iceland remained depopulated for several millennia, at which point the cycle began anew. Persons of a spiritual bent, who wanted isolation and solitude, were subtly pulled toward Iceland. The fabric of reality is still thin in places (and has been in every cycle) around Iceland. This is particularly true at certain ancient places of power, where there are even a few Atlantean (or Hyperborean) ruins still standing.

One of the weakest dimensional fractures is at the site of the Third Cloister. There is a circle of truly ancient standing blue stones in its shadow, conveniently located both near a very weak spot in the fabric of reality as well as a weak spot in the Earth's crust. "Trolls", visions, and other extradimensional incursions are comparatively commonplace in this area.

While the area around the Third Cloister is capable of supporting some limited agriculture and human habitation, it is not the most habitable place in Iceland by a large measure. Nonetheless, people keep settling there, especially clerics. Circa 850 A.D., a group of Irish monks settled in the area, starting a monastery. It just felt like the right place to do it. A nunnery followed later.

Both institutions were ill-behaved even by medieval standards. The warped nature of reality in the area played merry hell with the minds of the sensitive, and maintaining discipline (and in particular gender separation) proved difficult.

4. The Cult of the Magna Mater: As discussed in detail in *Turn to Stone*, not long after the Irish monks arrived, so did a flight of refugees from Constantinople, seeking freedom from religious persecution. Ostensibly, while operating in the Byzantine Empire, they were worshippers of the Magna Mater, by then a highly persecuted minority religion.

There were some decent reasons to persecute this pocket of Cybele followers, however. Their branch of the religion had so conflated the worship of Cybele and Attis with that of Shub-Niggurath and her Dark Young that even they did not know which was which, or that there even was a difference. Like many other people in the era who were politically unpopular and who had some exposure to Norse elements (the Varangian Guard of the Byzantine court were Norse mercenaries), they fled to exile in Iceland.

Moreso than a few mystically-oriented Irish priests, the initial round of cultists felt inexorably drawn to the area of the Third Cloister, and in particular its standing stones there. They sensed that the barriers between dimensions were weak here. Their successful summonings of the Magna Mater, with comparative ease, confirmed this.

In any case, having learned their lesson about annoying the Christians, they adopted Christian trappings and titles and put up a front as a Cult of Mary. The "leave alone, left alone", govern by consensus and alliance nature of Icelandic society appealed to them as much, if not more, than it did to the other dispossessed immigrants.

5. Helgi Alfisdottir and Olaf Ulfsson, 935-1010 A.D.: The Third Cloister underwent a change in course, and picked up a distinctly Icelandic flavor, in the early 10th Century.

The original Byzantine refugees had by then begun to carefully recruit from the disadvantaged and dispossessed of rural Icelandic society. In 935 A.D., they hit the recruiting jackpot.

Helgi Alfisdottir, a young woman who seemed to be a rather barmy, unwed mother-to-be, sought refuge at the Cloister. She was not entirely in her right mind, but she quickly proved her value. She was able to see the weaknesses in reality (although she referred to them as “doors” to the “Hidden Folk”) and to openly converse with things that the most adept members of the Third Cloister could only detect hints of. This included her baby’s father, whom she described as a “troll” named Ulf.

Tests run on Helgi by the members of the Third Cloister determined that she was not entirely human. And later that year, when she gave birth to her son, Olaf Ulfsson, he was obviously even less so.

Consensus in the Cloister was that Helgi and Olaf were sendings from the Magna Mater, reflections of Cybele and Attis, and a seeming virgin birth. Helgi became venerated as a sort of saint, and Olaf became seen as a messianic figure. He would, it was thought, bring forth a new age where worship of the Magna Mater would hold sway over the Earth, and false gods of more recent vintage would fall to the wayside.

During this period, Freyja Gallai Sanctum rose to power as the leader of the cult. Olaf wandered frequently and proved to be too fickle and intemperate to lead anyone, but dealing with a womanizing, reckless, egotistical messiah who would come back to the Cloister when he was under duress was something that Freyja simply had to deal with.

Until 1010 A.D., Freyja simply practiced quiet isolationism. She and hers took in only the willing, converted only the willing, and generally left others alone.

6. *The Interregnum (1010-1550)*: Olaf left the Cloister for extended travels in 1010, not coincidentally around the same time that

Christianity began to gain a serious foothold in Iceland. Being rid (for a happily extended period of time) of their troublesome messiah enabled Freyja to expand her operational strategy.

Over the next 540 years, Freyja reinforced her position and participated in Icelandic politics. She corresponded with other wizards and sorcerers throughout the world, trading secrets and favors in exchange for sanctuary from persecution. Wizards who needed to disappear from Europe for a while would slip away to the remote and isolated Cloister, and stay pending their good behavior.

This was not without a price, of course. Some converted to the worship of the Magna Mater; others paid more conventionally, with gold, favors or knowledge.

Freyja’s stockpile of favors and wealth was used for one simple thing: buying peace. As Icelandic society grew and developed, rumors and stories of what went on at the Third Cloister continued to circulate. Church and other local officials had to be bought off, bribed, cajoled and occasionally gotten rid of.

Like it or not, over time the Third Cloister was reluctantly drawn into feuds and politics of a more mundane nature. It became too dangerous to recruit from among the limited local populace as centuries went by, and recruits had to be shipped in. But still, the Cloister endured, with Freyja and the *gallai sanctum* who did not die violent deaths reinventing their names and identities every generation to explain away their immortality.

This state of affairs ended in 1550 A.D., with the arrival of the Reformation in Iceland. It was no longer plausible for an operation that had masqueraded as a Catholic, Marian monastic community to mind its own business as Catholic influence was being swept away.

Reluctantly, the dozen or so *gallai sanctum*, plus the other adherents still at the Third

Cloister in that year, decided that they had to scatter, and appear to have left Iceland for good. They abandoned the Cloister and left it to go to ruin.

Some things they took with them; at least, those things that were not too suspicious or could be easily concealed. Others they meant to come back for later, but never quite made it. (An emphasis was placed on taking no chance at being connected to the place). This meant that some things that would be difficult to explain to baggage inspectors, like Helgi and the *Dagbok Cybele*, simply had to be left.

The Cloister's ruins were left relatively unmolested after their abandonment, picking up something of a reputation for being haunted. While this kept most people from poking around the ruins, it did not keep the local farmers from expanding their fields right up to the edge of it.

7. *The Cloister Sleeps, or Does It?* Many of the Magna Mater worshippers from the Third Cloister scattered across the globe. A few, including Freyja herself, remained in Iceland. Able to merge with, absorb the memories of, and dominate the forms of others through a variant *Consume Likeness* spell, Freyja took on a surprising role in Icelandic culture, passing through a series of identities. Freyja became, generation after generation, an agitator for Icelandic nationalism. Iceland comes first; Icelandic traditions come first.

She portrayed herself as a keeper of Icelandic tradition and folklore (including whatever pagan traditions she could get away with under the eyes of the dominant Lutheran Church). She would argue for Icelandic independence from the tyranny of foreign kings and trade monopolies. "Keep the old ways in mind, and remember the better days when neighbor helped neighbor, when we decided our own affairs, and when foreign kings did not starve us" was her consistent message.

Her reasons for falling into this role were complicated. First, she genuinely did resent

the meddling (as she saw it) of a centralized Church and abusive foreign rulers. Second, she hoped that if she could topple the Church, or at least steer it to be a very *laissez-faire*, independent sort of institution, alternative religions might again be able to operate a little more openly. She was playing to her strengths as an occult expert and sorceress by posing(?) as a keeper of the old ways. By making herself popular with the masses and the local power centers, she helped insulate her role from religious repression. And it helped her recruit, as rebels and those wishing to follow the old ways were drawn to her.

But finally—and this may be difficult to understand in the context of your "typical" Call of Cthulhu cult leader—she sees herself as the head of a legitimate faith with some level of responsibility to the general population. Although she knows that the Magna Mater has been venerated under a number of guises—some of them (including hers) horrific—and knows of the Cthulhu Mythos at least as it pertains to dark fertility beings, she sees the people of Iceland as her flock.

Indeed, Freyja's various, slightly adapted roles over the centuries have literally led to the creation of a national symbol echoing her role, the Lady of the Mountain. The Icelandic equivalent of Uncle Sam or John Bull, the Lady of the Mountain (*Fjallkonnan*) symbolizes a desire for Icelandic independence, both political and social. She appears as an archetypal Icelandic wise woman (*volva*), with additional symbology. Ironically, Freyja was not born a woman, nor does she have much fondness for the mountains.

8. *The Laki Eruption of 1783 and Why it Really Happened:* The 1783 eruption was the result of a foreign wizard, one Aja Khanar of Dacia, trying to *Raise Atlantis* and ascend to another level of consciousness.

The partly successful efforts of Khanar are discussed, in a fragmentary and disjointed fashion, in an annotated version of the lesser

Mythos tome *Liber Miraculorum* (statistics follow).



The Lady of the Mountain, with magic scrolls.

In the *Liber Miraculorum*, the author, Herbert of Clairvaux, discusses the histories of Mu and Atlantis, how each are connected with Iceland, and how each civilization both rose and fell incident to a volcanic cataclysm (referred to as The Great Rising).

Included in the basic version of the book are discussions about how remnants of the preceding civilization were later found, hidden away in vast underground caverns referred to as ***“The Inner City at the Magnetic Poles.”*** The Inner City can be located through a complicated ritual referred to as the ***Dho-Hna Formula***.

An annotated version of the tome includes an added chapter, in Icelandic, on the Laki Eruption. To make a long story short, Khanar apparently believed, according to the testimony under duress of one of his lackeys afterwards, that he could ascend to a higher

plane of existence if he was the one who forced the world to transition from one stage of existence to the next. The way to do this was to replicate the prior cataclysms which sank Lemuria and Atlantis, and created in turn Atlantis and the modern world.

Dho-Hna Formula (new spell): This is a powerful divination ritual that can reveal the whereabouts of places where dimensional barriers between this world and others are weak. Once successfully cast, it mentally tugs the caster in the direction of the nearest significant weak spot. Weak spots include such things as **Gates**, ley lines, time anomalies, entrances to the Dreamlands or other realms, and the like.

The Dho-Hna Formula lasts until the caster comes within eyeshot of the weakness, which will appear to him as an area of distortion, on top of however else it appears.

This tugging can be annoying if the caster decides not to want to go. Dreams of the nearest weak spot assail him, and the Formula itches at his brain, causing the loss of 1 SAN per day until the weak spot is found.

The Dho-Hna Formula involves inscribing a complicated, non-Euclidean symbol onto a thin sheet of silver. Casting takes 1 hour, and costs 1d4 SAN, 4 magic points and 1 POW.

Khanar botched it, or the disaster would have been even worse. He attempted to use the Dho-Hna Formula but failed to locate The Inner City at the Magnetic Poles, instead happening upon another anomaly. Arrogantly deciding that finding the “Inner City” (the purpose of which is not clear from the text) was unnecessary, he attempted to simply perform “The Great Rising” with other information in his possession, at the biggest volcano in the area that he could find.

Liber Miraculorum (Mythos Tome)

This minor Mythos tome dates from 1180 A.D. and was written by a French monk, Herbert of Clairvaux. It is a review and Mythos-informed synthesis of cataclysm stories, from Mu to Atlantis to the biblical Great Flood, and draws on several lost historical and pseudo-historical sources, including ancient Sumerian texts and Hyperborean “histories” of nameless origin. The whole book is rather dubious given how vague Herbert is with his attributions, but it is (for purposes of this campaign) distressingly accurate.

The book is an excellent source for the basic facts about and history of fallen empires of the past, including Commoriom, Atlantis, Mu, Hyperborea, ancient Theemdhra. It suggests that remnants of each of these civilizations continue to exist, slightly “out of tune” with our world, and that the “Dho-Hna Formula” can reveal their sanctuary at “The Inner City at the Magnetic Poles.”

Herbert, on one occasion, performs a ritual over certain ancient remains from Mesopotamia and holds a conversation with a long-dead wizard/survivor of the Great Flood, by speaking with worms from his grave.

The basic version requires 4 weeks to read, 30 hours to skim, +4% to Cthulhu Mythos, -1d3/1d6 SAN, and a successful **Read Latin** roll to comprehend. It has the following spells available: **Dho-Hna Formula**, **Command Ghost (variant, called Interrogate Wizard)**.

The annotation dealing with Khanar’s shenanigans requires 8 hours to read, +1% to Cthulhu Mythos, -1 SAN, and a successful **Read Old Norse** roll, to get the real story of the Laki eruption of 1783.

Khanar set off quite a volcanic eruption, with the assistance of a large number of

unwilling sacrifices, but succeeded “only” in causing worldwide havoc and dying in the ensuing toxic gas cloud.

9. A General Breakdown in Diplomatic Relations: After crawling into the woodwork coincident with the Reformation, the Third Cloister gradually dismantled its relationships with other Shub-Niggurath cults across the World, not to mention sorcerers of other stripes. They stopped providing sanctuary, and mostly stopped corresponding, to maintain their cover. Indeed, the Third Cloister became actively hostile to other cult or Mythos incursions into Iceland. An example from actual history, with a Mythos-friendly spin, follows.

Circa 1627, Barbary pirates (yes, from as far away as North Africa) raided Iceland. Not finding much beyond fish and hides, they decided to enslave a chunk of the Icelandic population and cart them back to Algiers. Estimates of the number of people enslaved vary from a few dozen to a few hundred.

At (the then farm settlement of) Reykjavik, the pirates locked the old and infirm in a church and torched the place, killing all those inside. The pirates were eventually thwarted at the town of Bessastaðir (the colonial era royal capital, near Reykjavik) by a group of men-at-arms.

This vignette from Icelandic history is actually true, but to add a Mythos gloss to the whole affair, the Barbary pirates were actually cultists and their hirelings worshipping Nyarlathotep. The raid was an effort to find and appropriate the holdings of the Third Cloister, which had mysteriously dropped off the occult radar some 75 years earlier. The burnings were made partly as sacrifices, and partly to loosen the tongues of the others about what they knew. Irritated at their effrontery, Freyja Gallai Sanctum (then posing as a more run-of-the-mill noblewoman) led the efforts to beat them back.

An optional reference that enterprising investigators might happen upon, that offers

a clue as to the continuation of the post-Reformation Third Cloister, appears nearby as *Mysteries of Iceland Handout #1*.

10. *The Cloister Reawakens (c. 1900):* With the full-on urbanization of Reykjavik, and the emergence of a larger, urbane professional class, came a renewed interest in (and tolerance of) mysticism. The proliferation of lodges, inquiry societies, Theosophist publications and bubbling up of “traditional” practices, free of active church suppression, have created a new environment. They have also created new opportunities for the Third Cloister.

Mysteries of Iceland Handout #1—
Excerpt From Occult
Correspondence dated 1627 A.D.,
From an Unnamed Pirate Captain to
One “Hierophant of the Black
Sphinx” (in Arabic)

[T]he site of the Third Cloister proved to be in ruins, though some saw shadows from the corners of their eyes...we did not dare to desecrate the site, lest the Lions awaken, and so we progressed to the farms at Reykjavik...the fishermen claimed to know nothing of any eunuchs or strange nuns, and burning their children and elderly failed to produce different responses....

Nonetheless, sorcery was unmistakably aiding in the defense of Bessastaðir, the royal fortress...a raiding party sent out under cover of mist and illusion failed to return, but one of their bodies floated back to our ship. The man bore the unmistakable savagery of the Magna Mater’s displeasure and rage, his manhood bitten off as though by a wild beast...Some are surely there, though well hidden among the Icelanders, so well that they seem honestly unaware of what lives among them....

Freyja Gallai Sanctum, in her guise of traditional soothsayer Sif Eiríksdóttir, has become, in the Classic era, a well-known

and popular figure in Icelandic occult society. She belongs to all of the lodges that will allow women as members, be they Theosophist, appendages to Masonic lodges, or “heritage societies” seeking to learn about the “old Icelandic ways.” She holds koffee klatsches to which she invites people for fake mumbo-jumbo and real network building.

There are (not seriously believed) rumors that she actually can work magic. She plays the role of the over-the-top psychic to the stars of Icelandic society. She is, not surprisingly, extremely convincing in this role. She even gives talks about the Magna Mater and the value system of that faith, and no one bats an eye. Even those movers and shakers in Icelandic society who do not take the witchcraft stuff seriously listen to her. “Sif” displays wisdom well beyond her apparent 25 or so years.

She is well-connected and, what many find most endearing, fiercely outspoken in favor of Icelandic independence—cultural, financial, political, military, and every other sort. If one who knew the truth were to ask her, she would say that this is because of the lessons of old: the only place where the worship of her faith is safe is an isolated country where no one asks too many questions or issues too many orders. And while this is certainly true, the boundary between the front she puts on and the whole truth of the matter has become a bit blurry.

At a secret farm far outside of Reykjavik, there is a darker place. This is a place where she takes in carefully cultivated, willing recruits, to learn the worship of the Magna Mater. But only if they are willing. A few recruits have made the sacrifice necessary to see the true face of the Magna Mater. A few of these have even been reborn. From among the wretched willing, more (but not too many) can be illuminated, and help Freyja put society on the “right” course.

And then Olaf showed up and started in with his hare-brained scheme to “ascend”. If only he weren’t the beloved of the Magna Mater, things would be *so* much easier.



Turn to Stone, the First Scenario

Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me.

I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in.

Hamlet, scene i.

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1. Introduction

Turn to Stone is a Classic-era scenario for Call of Cthulhu, set in late 1920s rural Iceland. It is related to the events of *Home, Sweet Home*, published in the Chaosium monograph The Primal State, but can be played either alone, or as the introductory scenario to The Sevenfold Path campaign.

2. Keeper's Overview

The investigators will be drawn to Iceland by rumors of a virgin birth about to occur near a mysterious, ruined medieval nunnery in the rural, southeastern part of the country. An Icelandic speaking guide will be provided upon their arrival in Reykjavik.

The nunnery (the "Third Cloister") is the childhood home of the infamous Olaf Ulfsson, an 11th Century Icelandic sorcerer and saga anti-hero. The Nunnery has been a largely dormant threat to the peace and stability of Iceland for centuries, but recent and ill-advised exploration of the ruins has stirred things up.

Turn to Stone owes a debt to such near-dimension intrusion stories as The Great God Pan by Arthur Machen.

The investigators will be contacted either by one of their acquaintances in the archaeological or occult community. They will be asked to investigate a baffling

pregnancy at a remote farm in Iceland.

A young farm girl, Lini (“LEE-nee”) Sveinsdottir, was found catatonic several months ago in a field near Kirkjubæjarklaustur (“Kirkja”, pronounced “KEERK-ya”, for short). Kirkja is a town in Southeast Iceland, about 20 miles each from the ruin sites of both a medieval nunnery and a monastery, lying roughly halfway between them. The girl cannot be roused from her catatonic state, but is able to eat and drink and sometimes respond to simple questions.

Strangely, since being found, Lini has become obviously pregnant, despite her virginity being intact to medical inspection, and is close to giving birth.

Not coincidentally, Lini was found near a third set of ruins, lying midway between the known nunnery and the monastery. This set of ruins had been preliminarily explored by Arne Sigurdsson, an archaeologist/curator at the Icelandic National Archives in Reykjavik, roughly one year before the scenario begins. Lini was found catatonic at the edge of the ruins, not long after Arne had finished his initial survey.

Arne believes that he has discovered a second nunnery, apparently dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The site of this “nunnery” corresponds to the reputed birthplace of one Olaf (“OH-loff”) Ulfsson, an obscure, semi-mythic saga anti-hero of medieval Iceland. (Unknown to most, Olaf was also a dark sorcerer and devotee of the Mythos, particularly the Byzantine cult of Shub-Niggurath worshiped as Cybele, the Magna Mater).

The Third Cloister (as it will be referred to here) actually predates Olaf, and is involved in his origin. Originally founded circa 930 A.D., it started as a small community of refugee, Byzantine Magna Mater worshippers. They recruited new members from the willing ranks of local unwed mothers and orphans. One such recruit was Helgi Alfsdottir, an odd young woman from the southeastern farms who appeared,

confused and distant, at the doorstep of the Nunnery circa 950 A.D. (Alfsdottir, or “elf’s daughter”, was an appellation in her case rather than a known patronymic. However, as it turns out, it was also a fair patronymic).

Helgi was an odd sort, given to daydreaming and talking to unseen friends. Upon arriving at the Third Cloister, she was found to be pregnant, despite being (to all knowledgeable examination) a virgin. When asked how this had occurred, Helgi blushed and said that the child belonged to her friend, Ulf. When asked where this “Ulf” was, Helgi pointed into a dark corner and said “why, he’s right there.” No one was in the corner; at least, no one that anyone else could see easily.

The Third Cloister lies at a nexus point, a place where the barriers between this dimension and the next are very thin. Things lurking in a nearby dimension, and sensitive people in ours, can meet in the middle. Folklore has woven stories around these occasional intrusions, of which both Lini and Helgi are victims. Both were sensitive, and when each ventured to especially weak places near the Third Cloister, they were semi-corporeally violated by their invisible “imaginary friends.” This left them each pregnant but physically intact to medical inspection.

Icelandic lore calls them trolls; other cultures have called them elves, dwarves, faeries, or worse. For purposes of this scenario, they will be called trolls, but this is only a convenient label. They are extra-dimensional Mythos horrors able to affect the world, under normal circumstances, only in slight ways.

Trolls are normally invisible, but can be seen and felt by daydreamers, madmen, those whose blood is tainted already by the Mythos, or by people who have sustained certain kinds of brain injuries. Lini falls into the first and last categories. They are shapeshifters, and can sometimes (especially at night) make themselves physical enough to interact with our world in limited ways,

even with respect to those cannot fully interact with. They can affect people who can see them in much more profound ways. They are mischievous and unpredictable, and very fond of hybridizing with humans.

If caught in the sunlight, trolls are trapped between dimensions, and seem to turn to stone. Popular Icelandic folklore attributes the many basalt volcanic columns in the area to trolls who stayed in our world past dawn. Disturbingly, for purposes of this scenario, this is not just a story.

Helgi's first son, born circa 951 A.D., was Olaf Ulfsson. He grew up at the Third Cloister, able like his mother to hear and commune with the nearby world. He "learned things" from his father's family, and when he came of age, set off (at the guidance of his father) to learn more, starting in Constantinople and the larger cult of Cybele, the Magna Mater.

When he returned to Iceland a few years later, Olaf brought a number of more advanced adherents of the Magna Mater with him. Many of these were ancient, life-extended, intergendered or genderless devotees who had been transformed by their goddess into the "Gof'nn Hupadgh Shub-

Niggurath". These cultists joined the existing, undercover Shub-Niggurath cultists residing at the Third Cloister, adding more sorcerous power and further Byzantine flavor to the mix.

As a joke, but also as a distraction, the Third Cloister encouraged the formation of a Catholic monastery and a convent 20 miles on either side of it (making them a house of worship populated largely by eunuchs and situated "between" a nunnery and a monastery). The Third Cloister grew into a major place of worship for the Magna Mater, but one very cautiously operated.

Helgi herself was more than a little different, as well. Olaf was actually a second-generation monstrosity; Helgi herself was a spawn of the trolls. Over the years, the Third Cloister continued to allow Helgi (essentially immortal as the spawn of a troll) and Ulf the troll to give birth to regular litters of half-troll monstrosities, who were then raised to serve the Magna Mater.

To diversify the breeding stock, some human female followers of the Magna Mater were subjected to certain brain alterations that attuned them to Ulf and made them susceptible to his attentions.



Eventually, the Third Cloister was *apparently* abandoned, a few hundred years before the volcanic activity that devastated the area in 1783.

The Third Cloister was rediscovered, in a scientific sense, in a ruined condition by Arne Sigurdsson. Arne managed to retrieve an original manuscript of *Olaf's Saga* from the ruins. Arne did not tarry long at the site during his initial investigation, and did not venture below ground (although there seemed to be more beneath the surface).

Unfortunately, Arne's poking about in these ruins has disturbed a slumbering status quo. When Helgi's human form grew too old, her part troll nature took over and she was confined to live trapped beneath the Third Cloister. Now others have begun poking about the ruins, and one of them, Lini, is regretting it. She has been impregnated by Ulf, the same troll that impregnated Helgi, and dark forces may be set to be unleashed again upon the Earth.

3. Getting Started

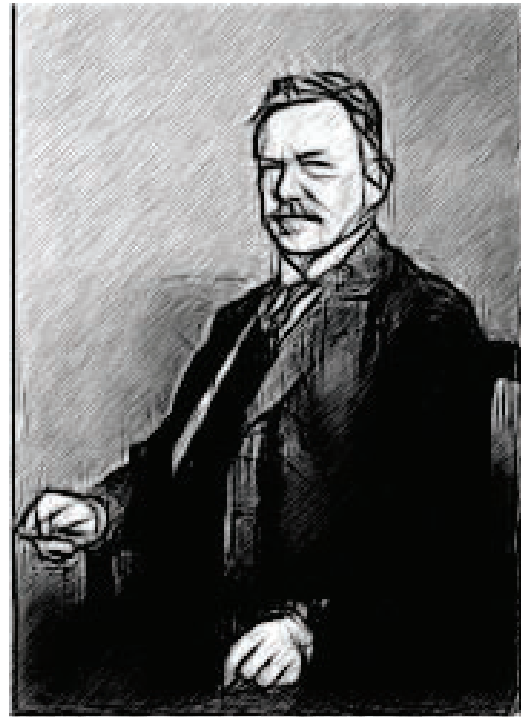
One or more of the players who have reputations as skilled investigators of the unusual will be contacted by Arne Sigurdsson, the head of the National Archives in Reykjavik, Iceland. Anyone with a reputation in scholarly or international circles as an investigating archaeologist or expert on the paranormal will do.

Once they make contact with Arne (whose English is passable but not great), he or a translator, Tor Halvorsson, can fill the investigators in. About a year ago, Arne briefly explored some ruins in remote southeastern Iceland, about 20 miles southwest of Kirkjubaejarklaustur (Kirkja, pronounced "KEERK-ya", for short). Arne did not perform a complete or thorough site investigation, but it appeared to him to be a ruined, previously unexplored, long disused medieval nunnery.

Arne found this discovery extremely odd. Iceland did not support a large population in

medieval times. While there were (and are) farms in the area, the area had already been home to two well-known cloistered communities: a Benedictine nunnery in the town of Kirkjubaejarklaustur itself, and a monastery 40 miles to the southwest of the Benedictines. The idea that there would be two nunneries so close to each other in Iceland is highly improbable from the standpoint of support.

In addition, the Benedictine nunnery known to be in the area was founded in 1186, and this ruin seems to have predated that by at least two hundred years. This was a time when only a few Christian missionaries and Irish monks lived in the area. Arne has been planning to send a full-scale archaeological expedition to the area if and when the *Althing* (Icelandic legislature) appropriates funds for the purpose.



Prof. Arne Sigurdsson

While surveying the ruined nunnery site, Arne uncovered a cache of Viking silver (sadly, appropriated by the *Althing*), as well as a vellum manuscript. The manuscript contained the *Saga* of Olaf Ulfsson, an Icelandic anti-hero of circa 1000 A.D. Although Olaf's name had been slightly

known to Icelandic folklorists as a particularly cruel man rumored to dabble in sorcery, no contemporaneous writing devoted to him had ever been found.

Arne has had the distinct displeasure of reading *Olaf's Saga*, which he can describe as disturbing and heavily laden with kenning and metaphor. He has tentatively concluded that Olaf was fond of conducting questionable alchemical experiments, and the author of the *Saga* claims that he was a sorcerer of no small repute.

The *Saga* also claims that Olaf was born to a sister at a nunnery that was located at a place between the eventual Benedictine nunnery at Kirkjubæjarklaustur and the monastery to the southwest. Olaf eventually retired back to that area after many adventures. This would correspond to the ruins where Arne found the *Saga*.

Arne volunteers that he found that certain aspects of the *Saga* particularly weird. Usually, Icelandic sagas drone on at length about the central characters' lines of descent. *Olaf's Saga* does not. His mother is unnamed, and **nothing at all** is said about his father, other than by inference from Olaf's patronymic that the father's name was Ulf. (If his father was unknown or uncertain, he would have been named after his mother).

Recently, Svein Torsson, the farmer on whose land the ruins are, and with whom Arne stayed while surveying them, contacted him with a worrisome story. Svein's daughter Lini, age 16, had briefly gone missing shortly after Arne's expedition left. Svein found Lini at the edge of the ruins, unconscious and with a head injury above her right eye. She regained consciousness, of a sort, but is now mostly catatonic and can only answer simple questions.

Lini is obviously pregnant, although the local doctor swears that her virginity is intact. When asked who the father was, Lini said that it was "her friend Ulf." No one

named Ulf lives in the area.

Arne can offer the investigators passage to the area and board with Svein Torsson if they can look into the situation. If they would like, he can authorize them to perform a thorough archaeological exploration of the ruins as well.

Arne concludes by noting the similarity of the name of Olaf's father, Ulf, and the "Ulf" allegedly involved in Lini's pregnancy. He wonders if it is a coincidence. (It is not, it is the same troll).

4. Getting to Iceland; Reykjavik

Likely, the investigators will first want to go to Reykjavik, meet with Arne and conduct some preliminary research, and then travel on to Kirkjubæjarklaustur.

In the Classic era, the investigators will be traveling by sea via charter ship to Reykjavik. Most voyagers to Iceland either embarked from Copenhagen, or picked up a Danish vessel en route in Leith (the port of Edinburgh).

It will take one to two weeks to travel from North America to Reykjavik.

Iceland and its capital city, Reykjavik, are undergoing rapid change and modernization in the 1920s. In the preceding 20 years, Reykjavik has gone from a Danish-governed (and rather neglected) agricultural town to a small, largely modern city of about 15,000 (1920), growing to 30,000 (1930).

The economy has become dominated by commercial cod fishing and fish processing. A large, modern fishing fleet has recently emerged, industry is on the rise, and a lot of construction is ongoing.

The rest of Iceland is still **very** rural prior to 1930, and that includes the Kirkja area. The Keeper should play up how hard it is to get from Reykjavik to Kirkja, since its isolation is an important plot point.



Throughout the 1920s, Iceland is a newly independent republic, though technically still in a political union with Denmark (and hence known as the “Kingdom of Iceland” although this is a bit of a misnomer).

Icelandic nationalism is on the rise, trade unions are forming, and industrialization is rapidly ongoing. This is the era in which modern universities, museums, and the like were opened in Reykjavik.

Icelandic (almost indistinguishable from medieval Old Norse) is spoken, but unlike today, finding someone who also speaks English is more of a challenge. A few dockworkers, international fish traders, and academics might speak some English, but are not going to be of any real use to the investigators. Danish is widely spoken as a second language during this time period. There are very few foreigners in residence of any stripe, beyond some Danes.

Arne speaks only passable English, and is an old man who will not be accompanying the investigators on extended field work.

However, he does offer them the services of his graduate assistant, Tor Halvorsson, as a guide. Tor is a multilingual, classically educated young archivist who is familiar with the area around the Third Cloister. Tor has also read *Olaf’s Saga*, and can relate the pertinent research in the *Saga* itself to the investigators.

5. Research

Much of the research that needs to be accomplished can be accomplished in a few days in Reykjavik, prior to embarking to Kirkjubaejarklaustur. The one exception is research bearing on Helgi Alfsdottir. Although this research can be done in Reykjavik (assuming access to pertinent Mythos tomes and other sources), the investigators will *not* be exposed to her name until *after* they explore the Third Cloister’s crypt. Olaf’s mother is *not* named in his *Saga*. They will also probably have little reason to do any research about Icelandic trolls in any kind of depth, until after an initial exploration of the ruins.

A Note on Icelandic Naming Conventions

Icelanders do not typically use running family names. Instead, they have a given name (and often a middle name) and a patronymic (a compound of their father's given name and either "son" or "dottir" depending on their gender). Hence, Arne Sigurdsson is literally Arne, son of Sigurd, while Lini Sveinsdottir is Lini, daughter of Svein. The occasional Icelandic will have also have an appellation (nickname), used even in comparatively official settings.

Children born out of wedlock and whose fathers are not involved in their early lives sometimes form their patronymic out of their mother's name (e.g., Linisson).

Even in formal settings, given names are used as the proper form of address. (Hence, even though he is a respected academic, Arne is properly addressed as "Arne". "Mr. Sigurdsson" is wrong). All Icelandic characters will therefore be referred to by their first names, unless further distinction is needed.

a. Olaf Ulfsson & his Saga

Olaf Ulfsson (*Critical Occult* roll, or asking an expert like Arne or Tor) is a poorly known Norse saga anti-hero. Occasional references to him in other sagas or historical documents consist of throwaway mentions in other sagas and the occasional medieval or post-medieval tome, usually in hushed tones and offering no detail beyond his reputation as a cruel sorcerer.

The only place in which much discussion of Olaf is had is in Olaf's own, recently unearthed Saga. Only one manuscript has been found, and it is in the possession of Arne at the Icelandic National Archives. It is in saga era Old Norse, and not readily susceptible of exact translation into English. Both Arne and Tor have read it, however, and can answer general investigator questions about its contents. See *Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #1*.

Although it is short, the Saga is written in a complex kenning and requires 1d3+2 weeks and a successful *Read Old Norse* roll to understand. (Kenning is a poetic form that makes heavy use of metaphor and allusion). Because it is written in kenning, a precise translation into English really is not possible with losing much of the innuendo. If the investigators want to make a longhand copy, this should take about 3 weeks.

The Saga is a short Mythos tome, granting

+2% to Cthulhu Mythos, and costing -1d6 SAN to read. It has one spell available: *Heal*.

The *Heal* spell allows a normal person to heal at the rate of 3 hit points per week, 6 with *First Aid* and 9 with *Medicine*. It costs 3 magic points and 0 SAN, and takes 25 rounds to cast. It will also allow *afturganga* zombies to regain hit points at the rate specified, even though they normally would not heal at all.

If the investigators do not pick up on the extreme logical incongruity of a male, Mythos oriented sorcerer happily retiring to a (presumably) Catholic cloistered nunnery, call for an *Idea* roll.

b. The "Magna Mater"

Information about the "Magna Mater" can be obtained either from commonplace historical or occult sources (*History, Occult*, or *Library Use* rolls) or from less conventional sources (*Cthulhu Mythos* roll or research in an appropriate Mythos tome).

Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #2 provides readily available information about the "Magna Mater."

Appropriate Mythos sources provide more disturbing information. These sources are summarized in *Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #3*.

Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #1, An Odd Saga Indeed.

Olaf's Saga is a general recounting of the legend (life)? of Olaf Ulfsson, a late 10th-early 11th century Norse wizard in the mold of Egil Skallagrimsson. Olaf is brave, strong, a crafty liar, and a tricky merchant, with a black sense of humor and a quick temper. These traits stand in odd juxtaposition to a sense of fair play, a fondness for children, and a respect for clever opponents.

The *Saga* claims that Olaf was a sorcerer of no small repute, but sacrificing not to the Norse gods (and certainly placing no truck in Christianity). Instead, disturbing references are made to a youth spent in the Varangian Guard in Constantinople and tutelage there by the forbidden cult of the "Magna Mater". A *Cthulhu Mythos* roll equates the cult of the Magna Mater to Shub-Niggurath worship in the Roman/Byzantine world. Mention of Olaf's general penchant for elaborate curses is made, as well as a penchant for creating ingenious magical devices.

Although the *Saga* follows many of the saga conventions (essentially covering the entirety of Olaf's known life, up until his retirement in 1010 A.D.), it is odd in several respects in terms of what is not discussed.

Most Icelandic sagas discuss in great detail the family connections of the various principal characters: who they are descended from, who their kinsfolk are, what families are associated with them, etc. Although that kind of information is presented for many of those whom Olaf Ulfsson interacts with, that information is distinctly absent for Olaf himself. Indeed, all that we know about Olaf is that his father's name is Ulf (and that only by inference from his patronymic), that he was born to a sister at a nunnery southwest of Kirkjubaejarklaustur, and that there is a rumor repeated in the *Saga* that Olaf was a virgin birth.

Olaf's mother is not identified by name, although he apparently retired to her nunnery at the end of his life to conduct his sorcerous experiments. Indeed, Olaf kills several men without blinking for simply *asking* about his heritage.



Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #2—The Magna Mater.

The Cult of the “Magna Mater”, historically, was very popular in the several centuries pre- and post-Christ in the Mediterranean and Middle East. “Magna Mater” was traditionally a reference to the goddess Cybele (“KY-buh-lee”), the “Great Mother.”

Cybele is a chthonic earth goddess, worshipped since before recorded history. She is associated with the fertile earth, nature and wild animals (particularly lions). Hers is a mystery religion purporting to teach the cycle of life, death and rebirth through allegory and ritual. It was an unmediated religion; each worshipper was responsible for finding his own degree of enlightenment and had a direct relationship with the goddess. While there were priests, priestesses and celebrants, their function was to guide, mentor and recruit; one’s relationship with the goddess was a personal one.

Etymologically, the name Cybele is believed to originate from Phrygian inscriptions reading “matar kubileya”, meaning Mother of the Mountain.

“Priestesses” of Cybele were either women, or men who ritually castrated themselves and adopted feminine guises in symbolic reenactment of the central myth of the “Magna Mater.” Her son and lover, Attis, was castrated and then resurrected by his sacrifice as her immortal servant.

These eunuch priests were referred to in the feminine as “gallai.” (“GOLL-ay.”) Cybele’s gallai led loud orgies of wine, song and licentiousness in her honor, all conducted at night.

With the rise of the Eastern Roman Empire in the early centuries A.D., the cult was fervently stamped out and driven underground, although it is known to have persisted openly in isolated areas as late as the sixth century A.D. It was one of the leading religions of Rome starting in the second century B.C., however.

The Byzantine Church in particular despised the religion, both as a threat to the social order but also because it advocated a direct relationship with its goddess, unmediated by true priests or priestesses.

Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #3, Mythos Sources on the “Magna Mater”

The “Magna Mater” is rumored to be either a representation, or perhaps even an avatar, of Shub-Niggurath. These sources claim that at least some of the gallai went one step further in their devotion to their goddess: flinging not only their manhood, but themselves, into the goddess to be “reborn” as immortals, as was Attis.

Referred to as “gallai sanctum”, they are said to be genderless, part human, part lion and extremely long-lived.

Some Mythos sources may speculate on connections between the “gallai sanctum” and certain other fertility and resurrection cults, such as the Russian Skoptsi cult, certain rumored practices in England’s Severn Valley, and certain southern French heretics living around 1000 A.D.



Statue of Cybele, Plaza de Cibeles, Madrid

Tor Halvorsson, Your Guide

Nationality: Icelandic.

STR 13	DEX 13	INT 14	CON 13	APP 13	POW 14
SIZ 13	EDU 18	SAN 68	Luck 70	Hits: 13	Age: 25.

Damage Bonus: +1d4.

Education: B.A., Literature, University of Reykjavik.

Skills: Accounting 25%, Anthropology 25%, Archaeology 25%, Astronomy 25%, Bargain 40%, Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 02%, Drive Auto 25%, History 60%, Library Use 90%, Listen 35%, Natural History 50%, Navigate 30%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Languages: English 60%; Latin 25%; Greek 25%; Icelandic 90%; Danish 70%.

Attacks: None over base.

Notes: A multilingual, well-educated, somewhat shy young graduate student who works at the National Archives in Reykjavik. Tor will be assigned to guide and translate for the investigators. He speaks English and Icelandic, has some archaeology training, has been to the site before, and is versed in the classics. He is thus the best man in the world for the job.

c. The Church & Medieval Iceland

Appropriate research (*Critical History* or *Library Use* rolls), or asking an appropriately knowledgeable authority on Icelandic history, can lead to some interesting background information on the nature of medieval Icelandic society and the church's role in it.

Circa 1000 A.D., Iceland was a well-settled but almost exclusively agrarian country. There were *no* towns or cities to speak of; rather, there were clusters of farms of varying sizes spread across the island.

Governmentally speaking, Iceland was a functional anarchy. There was no local top-down government. Rather, the farmers and landholders largely governed themselves. Disputes were settled either by feuds or by the *Althing*, an annual gathering of freemen that passed laws and heard legal disputes. The amount of political stroke that one had depended upon the size and strength of one's family and friends, and one's ability to wheel and deal.

The Catholic Church was loosely appended to this system, rather than running it. Although bishops would be sent to "run the Church", the extent to which they actually did so was limited for centuries. Rather, having a priest and chapel was more of a status symbol and tool for influential factions to mobilize support for a wealthy local chief, rather than a source of freestanding, top down authority.

The clerical population was also extremely limited. Iceland only had one known convent at Kirkjubaejarklaustur (established 1186 A.D.), and about a half dozen monasteries, including one about 40 miles to the southwest of the convent.

The point is that medieval Iceland had the potential to be a "live and let live" kind of place for an odd religion. If a cult played its cards right, was a good neighbor, was strong enough to deter attack, and maintained a plausible veneer of Christianity, the kind of

community consensus needed to bring it down might be hard to achieve. This is particularly the case if, as in the case of Kirkjubaejarklaustur, the area was isolated even by Icelandic standards.

Another important point, however, is that Iceland did not even convert to Christianity until circa 1000 A.D. It was pagan Norse prior to that, and fitfully Catholic for some time after that. Prior to 1000 A.D., there were only a few missionaries and Catholic settlers in Iceland, mostly located in the Kirkjubaejarklaustur area.

Thus, while it might be fair to say that there were Catholic religious enclaves in that area prior to 1000 A.D., they were hardly powerful or highly organized. *In particular, conventional historical sources make it clear that there was no female religious institution sufficiently squared away to be called a "nunnery" prior to 1186 A.D.* There is, thus, a seeming conflict between the conventional records and the records they will find in the Third Cloister's ruins.

Astute investigators will quickly pick up on the fact that the dates are wrong. If there was no organized Catholic nunnery in the area until 1186 A.D., then how could Olaf have been born at a nunnery catering to wayward women circa 951 A.D., in the early days of Icelandic settlement?

Of course, *Olaf's Saga* says nothing about it being a *Catholic* nunnery at which he was born...In fact, it says nothing about the devotions of the sisters at the Third Cloister.

d. Helgi Alfsdottir (after her name is uncovered)

References to Olaf's mother, Helgi Alfsdottir, can be found in and around the ruins of the Third Cloister. The records available there make clear that she was Olaf's mother, and that his father was a normally invisible being she called "Ulf".

Outside research in conventional sources (*Library Use* roll, perhaps modified if the investigators are pursuing a logical path of inquiry, such as local sagas or church

records) reveals that a foundling was discovered in the Kirkjubaejarklaustur region, circa 935 A.D., literally on a farmer's doorstep. A mention of this fact might be found in a minor saga of the period. She was taken in by the family and named Helgi.

Helgi was an odd girl, given to daydreaming and talking to the "little people" as though she could see them. She was expelled from her adoptive family as a madwoman at the age of 14, when she turned up mysteriously pregnant and insisted that the father was one of the "little people" that only she could see. The poet comments that Helgi was likely the changeling of an elf herself.

e. Icelandic trolls and other "little people"

Calling Icelandic near-dimensional creatures "little people" is again a bit of a misnomer. They come in all sizes, including small (dwarves), medium (elves) and gigantic (trolls). "Hidden people" is perhaps more apt. A summary of troll lore follows as *Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #4*.

f. Kirkjubaejarklaustur (the Third Cloister)--public history

The amount of history publicly available on the nunnery of Kirkjubaejarklaustur depends on which nunnery one is inquiring about; the one at it or the one 20 miles from it.

Public histories only discuss the existence of one monastery and one convent in the area, but attribute a dark reputation to both.

Easily available information about the Benedictine Kirkjubaejarklaustur convent is contained in *Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #6*, below.

g. Mythos sources for the Third Cloister

Appropriate Mythos sources may also contain some very disturbing references to the Third Cloister (apart from those Mythos

sources to be found at the Third Cloister itself). These are summarized in *Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #5*, below.

Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #4—The "Hidden People" of Iceland

They come in all sizes, including small (dwarves), medium (elves) and gigantic (trolls). All share similar characteristics: quixotic natures; being strictly nocturnal or confined to darkness; sometimes helpful and sometimes malicious; and invisible except to those prone to daydreaming, who are mad, who have suffered head injuries, or who share their blood.

They are also very fond of mating with humans, both male and female.

Trolls in particular are said to frequent southeast Iceland, including the Kirkjubaejarklaustur area. They are gigantic but (legend has it) able to change their size and shape. When caught in the sunlight, they turn to stone; as a result, they tend to avoid the chance of getting caught in it.

The volcanic basalt pillars in the area of Kirkjubaejarklaustur are said to be trolls who got caught in the morning light.

h. Mythos sources for Helgi Alfsdottir

Apart from the unpleasant records to be found at the Third Cloister, some records from medieval Mythos sources concerned with Shub-Niggurath worship might have very limited information on Helgi. Often these sources mention her as "both simple but profound in her connection to the Great Mother." Some undertook pilgrimages to "commune" with her. None of these pilgrims ever seem to return.

With careful research in a variety of sources, the investigators might find present tense references to Helgi Alfsdottir as late as 1240 A.D.



i. Inexplicable Pregnancies

The inexplicable pregnancy attaching to the mother of the culture hero is archetypal. For purposes of this scenario, however, there are two parallel myths that bear mention, and one curious, Mythos related story.

First, in Icelandic tales, many babies whose paternal origins are difficult to explain are conventionally attributed to mysterious visitations by the “little people”, be they elves, dwarves or trolls (*Occult* roll or just asking any Icelander).

Second, one of the earliest attributions of an inexplicable pregnancy, often believed to have started the ball rolling on the parallel

myth, is that of Cybele and Attis. (*Occult* roll or *Library Use*)

Attis was not only the lover of Cybele, but her son. Cybele (initially both male and female in her primordial state) was castrated, and the severed organ grew into an almond tree. When a maiden held a fruit from the tree against herself, she miraculously became pregnant with Attis.

The various references to primordial beings, trees, mysterious pregnancies and cyclical rebirth should ring the correct bells in the heads of experienced investigators. If the investigators are already on the “Magna Mater” line of inquiry, this should give them an intended sense of everything fitting together.

Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #5—Mythos Sources on Cults in the Kirkjubaejarklaustur Area

- Sometimes known as the “Third Cloister”, because many of the “sisters” were actually of the “third sex”, numerous medieval texts associated with Shub-Niggurath cults will make mention of the place.
- It was known (to those in the know) as a covert temple to the Magna Mater, where shattered cult remnants and other refugees could flee and find sanctuary, due to the anarchic political climate, lack of a pervasive Church, and network of well-mollified locals.
- The “sisters” worshipped the Magna Mater in her traditional Asiatic form as Cybele.
- Any Shub-Niggurath cult documents dating from circa 950 A.D. to circa 1550 A.D. may well include correspondence between the “Mother Superior” at the Third Cloister, Freyja Gallai Sanctum, and cult functionaries throughout Europe and the Mediterranean, negotiating the terms of and/or compensation for information exchanges and/or asylum in Iceland for wanted fugitives.

Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #6—History of the Benedictine Nunnery at Kirkjubaejarklaustur

- The area was originally settled by Irish monks, who lived in isolation in the area for many centuries. A religious community, segregated by gender, was soon formed. The name of the town means “church farm cloister.”
- The history of the community is murky until 1186 A.D., when a Benedictine nunnery was founded.
- The Benedictine establishment was closed in the 16th Century, during the Reformation.
- The nuns of Kirkjubaejarklaustur had a checkered reputation. Two were burned at the stake (one for sleeping with the Devil), and stories surrounding regular sleepovers between the sisters and the brothers at the monastery to the southwest are frequently mentioned.
- The stories are vague as to when this debauchery and devil worship occurred.
- There is *no* conventional, public record of a second nunnery lying *between* the Benedictine cloisters; the absence of any mention of a third, nearby religious institution is, to say the least, odd.

6. Getting to the Third Cloister & Lini Sveinsdottir

In order to get to Kirkjubaejarklaustur from Reykjavik, the investigators are best off traveling by sea to the fishing town of Vik, about a day’s voyage east, and then heading inland on an (unpaved) road network about 30 miles east and north along a fjord to a glacial valley nestled into a volcanic desert.

There are a fair number of farms in the fjord’s valley, but only small farming villages with (in the Classic era) few services. (Today it is a tourist resort). The investigators can probably hire, or hitch a ride, on a farm truck in Vik to take them to Svein Torsson’s farm and the Third Cloister ruins.

Seekers of inns and creature comforts will be sorely disappointed. The ruins and

Svein's farm are 20 miles southwest of the Kirkjubaejarklaustur townsite. Even in town, the investigators are talking about rental rooms that are worse than the accommodations available at Svein Torsson's farm.

Svein Torsson's farm is large, isolated and devoted to sheep and turnips. Svein is a burly, Viking-looking sort who speaks *not a word* of English. Nor do any of the members of the rest of his family, consisting of his wife, one other older daughter, three sons, and Lini.

The investigators, as representatives of Arne Sigurdsson, will be expected and welcome to the farm's gaslight, shared room and farm cooking hospitality.

The Torsson family can offer little insight into Lini's situation, which distresses them greatly. She was a vibrant, if somewhat scatterbrained and daydreaming, girl.

Lini is currently bedridden on the top floor of their farmhouse. She has a large, noticeable scar over her right eye, looking like she was struck by something large. She is catatonic, though responsive to stimuli and able to drink liquids. Occasionally she babbles to herself in sing-song, meaningless nonsense. Sometimes she answers a question or two. She is about nine months pregnant when the investigators arrive, and will give birth in about two weeks.



Lini Sveinsdottir, Alda Torsdottir (mother) and Gudrun Sveinsdottir, in happier times

If a physician, midwife or some other plausible volunteer is able to convince her parents to allow a physical inspection, she does indeed appear to still be a virgin.

Successful *Psychoanalysis* can get Lini to talk a bit. She will reveal that she is having a baby with her friend Ulf, who nobody else can see. He's large and scary sometimes, but nice to her.

She doesn't know how she hit her head, but can point to a small scar over her right eye. Mostly, however, Lini just babbles and stares.

Svein (through an interpreter) can discuss what he knows of the history of the farm and the area. A summary of his testimony can be found below as *Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #7*.

Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #7, Interview—Svein Torsson

- His family resettled the farm after the Laki volcanic eruption in 1783. The site of the farm had been fertile before, but it took several years to recover after the ash fallout from the eruption.
- There are superstitious legends that the many basalt lava pillars in the area are trolls that stayed out too long after dawn, but he thinks that these are silly stories. Trolls turn to stone if caught in the sunlight, you know.
- There is a set of crumbling ruins that have been there long before his family. They have never been of any concern to him, although his family has always kept the children away because they are crumbling.
- Lini was out weeding in the hayfield near the ruins, when she did not come back for lunch. He found her. She appeared to have wandered over to the ruins and been hit in the head by a falling rock from the crumbling tower. She had a visible gash and knot on her head, and the doctor thought that she had a concussion. However, she never fully recovered.
- Svein has no explanation for her pregnancy. If he were a superstitious man, he might say that maybe she met a troll or an elf in the field. The doctor insists that her virginity is intact.



7. Exploring the Third Cloister

A map of the Third Cloister/Temple of the “Magna Mater” can be found at the end of the scenario. It is visible from Svein’s house and about 100 yards away.

The Third Cloister seems rather unremarkable to the casual observer. There are crumbling ruins, quite old, built mostly of local grey stone. Sections of wall (10’ high) still stand where indicated on the map. Svein has planted his hay crop right up to the edge of the rubble field. One tower is still partially standing, although it looks very unstable.

The scene is quiet, and most casual observers will see nothing out of the ordinary except some partially standing stone ruins, occasional overgrown stone flooring, and debris of no value. There are no free-range, active monsters that most people will be able to perceive.

There are occasional carvings, bas reliefs, and the like adorning the stones on the

surface level that are still standing, but they are, for the most part, unremarkable. They appear to all be ordinary Catholic representations appropriate to the era in which the Third Cloister stood. Birds use the ruins as nesting grounds, as do field mice. Foxes are not an uncommon sight. It all seems to be a quiet, bucolic setting.

That is not to say that *some* people will not see things differently, or that there is nothing unusual. This is both a Temple to the “Magna Mater” (albeit one that has fallen into disuse and was designed to look like a Catholic convent), as well as a nexus point with a nearby world. And there is a monster or four inhabiting the area.

Ulf: People who are either insane (temporarily or otherwise) or who (at the Keeper’s option) have sustained brain trauma of some sort will see the ruin site a little differently at times. So will anyone whose blood has been tainted by some non-human or Mythos creature, or anyone who is just plain dotty enough.



At night only, these people may see fleeting glimpses of something moving in the shadows. SAN loss for a fleeting glimpse of something large and obviously not entirely human is 0/1.

This thing will be Ulf, an immortal, extra-dimensional being that will be referred to here as a troll. This is the same Ulf who fathered Olaf Ulfsson, Lini's baby, and many, many others. It will be difficult for even these people to see Ulf; he will best be seen by not looking directly at him (*Spot Hidden* for sensitive people to notice).

Ulf appears to be a large (10' tall), muscular, naked semi-man, with a variety of animal attributes (horns, hooves, wings, stripes, tail, claws) that constantly shift and change. (This is only one of his many forms).

Ulf is friendly and charming to women, and might respond to female-led efforts to converse with him. He will be shocked and unhappy that a man can see him, and retreat while he plans how to brutally kill the offender.

Ulf will not consciously or purposefully venture out of the shadows, but if any females can see him, he will do his best to seduce them over a course of time, preferably beginning by luring them away from the rest of the group to a dark, secluded spot.

Unconscious women who might be able to perceive Ulf are in grave danger of being assaulted in a semi-corporeal way, as was Lini.

As discussed in a following section, just because Ulf is mostly invisible and in a nearby dimension does not mean that he cannot affect the real world in limited ways if he wants to. Fortunately, Ulf is the only troll regularly frequenting the Third Cloister.

The following numbered paragraphs *key to the map* of the area.

1. Stairs: Probably the first thing that will get the investigators' attention is the *dark, ruined flight of stairs heading down* into unknown depths. Unfortunately for the

investigators, the stairs only go down about 4 feet before ending in soil and rubble, a completely filled in collapse.

Several things about the stairs are noteworthy. *First is the mere fact that there are stairs.* The investigators might rightly wonder what lies beneath the surface, and whether there is not some other way of getting there.

Second, the inscriptions and carvings are somewhat less vanilla on the sides of the stairwell. The side walls are covered with a partially intact fresco (wall painting on a plaster surface). The visible portion depicts seemingly female figures in long robes and Phrygian caps, dancing with a variety of musical instruments. One such figure, blowing a coronet and larger than the others, is labeled "Freyja Gallai Sanctum" in Greek letters.

(Note: Tor can easily read a simple Greek inscription with his 25% skill, even if no one else can. Freyja is a common Norse woman's name).

As noted above, Mythos sourced research into the "gallai sanctum" reference leads to the Magna Mater, as well as to Byzantine Shub-Niggurath worship, depending on the source consulted.

Third, halfway down the stairs and on the left, in an area devoid of fresco, is a *burial vault* set into the wall, with an image of one of the seemingly female dancers recumbent with crossed arms carved into the stone. An inscription in Greek (which should pique the investigators' suspicions) translates to "Here Lies Maria Gallai Sanctum, Awaiting the New Spring." (Tor's 25% in Greek is again more than adequate to read the names off of the various inscriptions at the site if no investigator has any facility in Greek).

Should the investigators open the burial vault, they find a 3' x 3' x 3' scone containing a mummified body, dressed in mostly decayed black robes with a tarnished silver chain belt, decorated with lions.

Examination of the mummy is best done by a professional of some sort. A successful *Medicine* or *Anthropology* roll identifies the mummy as indisputably male by reference to bone structure, despite the feminine dress and name. The complete absence of genitalia (not just removed, *completely absent*) and elaborate lion tattoos where *something* ought to have been is both informative and good for a 0/1d3 SAN loss.

It should be mentioned that *disturbing Maria Gallai Sanctum's mummy is a bad idea*, since disrupting her path to reincarnation is one of the ways to activate the "Lions of the Mother" at *Map Area 4*.

Fourth, they may well decide to try and *excavate the stairwell*. It has collapsed and is not structurally sound. However, they can clear away the rubble and dirt to some degree. The best that they will be able to readily manage is about a 3' by 3' tunnel slanting down with occasionally intact sections of fresco and wall.

This assumes that they dig carefully. Digging carefully assumes 10 man-days of skilled archaeological work and at least one trained archaeologist (at least 25%) on site full-time. A man-day is eight hours of work by one person. (Tor qualifies, but he will likely be busy skimming the *Dagbok Cybele* once it is found). Unprofessional digging labor can contribute at ½ rate. (Thus, one professional archaeologist and two digging assistants can carefully excavate the stairs in five days).

The stairs continue down a few more feet once cleared by excavation. Two things of interest can be uncovered by excavating the stairs.

First, there is a *small, intact section of fresco near the bottom of the stairs*. This fresco depicts a man (the only favorable depiction of a man *anywhere* at the site), dressed in black, with bushy black hair and a beard and a golden circle about his head (a Byzantine depiction of sainthood). This figure is labeled (in Greek) as "Olaf Ulfsson." He is standing with his hand on a

chair with head, arm and leg restraints, while a woman is secured in the chair.

An adjoining image shows the same woman with a small wound above her right eye, her arms flung wide in joy and surrounded by the Magna Mater, Attis, lions, and angels. The female figure now likewise has a golden circle about her head. (This foreshadows the lobotomy chair in the crypt level).

Second, *the stairs open into and connect with the west end of the crypt sub-level*, potentially avoiding having to go down the offal pit to access the crypt.

2. Archaeological site/blue stones: There are two things of note in this corner of the rubble field. First, archaeologists have been obviously been working in the area in the not too distant past. Site stakes and flags have been left in place, and a tarp covers a small, shallow excavation. This is where the chest containing a silver horde and a copy of *Olaf's Saga* was recovered a year earlier by Arne Sigurdsson.

In addition, the excavation is at the foot of a ring of Neolithic standing stones, similar to those at Salisbury Plain. There are seven pillars, each about seven feet high, arranged in a circle about seven feet across. They are devoid of inscriptions, but the stones (successful *Geology* check) are not native to the area.

With sufficient research, the investigators might be able to narrow their point of origin to somewhere in Asia Minor (the origin of Magna Mater worship). These stones, however, have been here for thousands of years (*Archaeology* check). They are marker stones for the place at which the veil between this world and that of the trolls is thinnest; they have no independent power of their own.

Anyone who is psychically sensitive may feel odd or see glimpses of something in amongst the stones. Opening a *Gate* or other trans-dimensional spell at this area is a bad idea with consequences left to the Keeper's imagination, other than to say that it will involve trolls. Lots and lots of trolls.

3. Sinkhole?: At first glance, this appears to be a simple hole in the ground, round and roughly four feet in diameter, dropping out of sight. Closer inspection, however, reveals that it is artificial. A few stones still line the lip of the hole, and the hole itself is sporadically lined with paving stones, as close inspection with a bright light can reveal. In addition, the ground slopes slightly inwards all around the hole.

This area has not withstood the test of time very well, but it was once the grand celebratory chamber of the temple. This is where the mystery ceremonies would occur, where Shub-Niggurath would be summoned, and where new adherents would castrate themselves, flinging the removed body parts into the hole. More clues as to its function appear in the mosaic at *Map Area 5* (Tower).

If the players have seen the mosaic at *Map Area 5*, call for an *Idea* roll, since this looks much the same as the hole detected in the mosaic.

This area is noteworthy in that it is the only practical access to the buried sublevel of the Temple, unless and until the stairs are excavated. Also, it is where the “Lions of the Mother” will dispose of any incapacitated investigators prior to returning to a torpid state.

4. Sanctum ruins and collapsed statue: This area contains the most intact part of the ruins. This includes an extensive, partly overgrown stone floor, several sections of more or less intact stone walls and empty window placements, and a large, crumbled statue. The statue is made of marble, and was once a chariot, drawn by two lions, with two riders, a young man wearing a pointed cap and a woman in a crown. The statue of the woman has no face; it is life-sized in every detail.

A couple of rolls would be appropriate here. An *Occult* or *Critical History* roll can identify the statue as depicting Cybele, the Magna Mater, and her consort/son Attis, in a

very traditional representation. (Refer to the statue illustration, *ante*).

However, a *Cthulhu Mythos* roll is also appropriate here. On a success, the investigator realizes that the faceless statue is not quite right. Traditional representations of Cybele sometimes depicted her as having a black face, or wearing a veil, but not as having *no face at all*. Careful inspection of the statue reveals that this facelessness is not the result of decay. Rather, this depiction of the Magna Mater is said to have been the symbol of a corrupt, pseudo-Cybelian cult actually devoted to the worship of Shub-Niggurath.



Note that under the right circumstances (discussed below), the “Lions of the Mother” (the two statuary lions drawing the chariot) may not be as inert as they normally are.

5. Crumbling tower: This is what is left of a crumbling stone tower, made of native stone, about 20’ across and originally of indeterminate height. It has now largely

collapsed, such that only the first story (10' high) and parts of the second story are standing. It does not look at all stable; there are many fallen stones all around its base, and numerous holes in the walls. The second story appears, from ground level at least, to be open to the air.

The first floor is noteworthy for two main reasons. First, despite its poor condition, there is a Byzantine style mosaic partially remaining, decorating the interior of the first floor walls. Although large sections have crumbled away, a few sections remain intact enough to be intelligible.

One such section depicts a group of black robed sisters, wearing pointed Phrygian caps and silver belts, standing in a ring around a stone floor. A naked, bleeding man is hurling what appear to be his own missing genitals into a circular pit. (This should give the investigators an idea as to the purpose of the offal pit at *Map Area 3*). SAN loss 0/1.

Another section depicts a pair of lions devouring what appears to be a male knight in armor, tearing in particular at his lower abdomen. An inscription in Greek reads "The Lions of the Mother."

A third section depicts a blond haired, blue eyed woman clothed like the other figures, but without the cap. Instead, she has a golden circle about her head (a Byzantine mosaic representation of sainthood). She is surrounded by dozens of representations of lion cubs, and an inscription in Greek reads "Helgi Alfisdottir, mother of Olaf Ulfsson." This gives the investigators the research prompt they need to investigate Helgi.

At one time, there was a staircase attached to one wall of the tower, leading up through a hole in the ceiling, but the staircase lies in ruins. The first floor is covered to the sky.

It will take some *Climb* checks and/or some ingenuity to safely access the second floor of the tower. Once there, they can see that only about a quarter of the second story exists, but for its floor. Only about 90 degrees of the round wall still stands, with its roof still on. Although this would not

bode well for the survival of much of anything from the elements, if the investigators poke around long enough (*Spot Hidden*, one check per hour of investigation) they will discover a hidden floor cache underneath a paving stone in the still standing part of the tower.

This is the proverbial jackpot: inside is a fairly well preserved vellum document in Old Norse. It is a "family bible" of sorts for the Third Cloister, detailing important events, lines of descent, cult activities, correspondence, philosophy, schemes, and the like. Nowhere in it will the name "Shub-Niggurath" be found; the goddess is always referred to as the Magna Mater or Cybele.

The tome covers important events from circa 930 A.D. when the Third Cloister was founded by Byzantine refugees, through about 1550 A.D. when they apparently packed up house for the "Indies" under pressure from increasingly organized Icelandic religious authorities.

The *Dagbok Cybele* (Cybele Diary) requires an average of 8 weeks to read, 50 hours to skim, +8% to Cthulhu Mythos, -1d6/2d6 SAN, a successful *Read Old Norse* roll to comprehend, and the following spells potentially available: *Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath; Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath; Augur; Blight/Bless Crop; Cloud Memory; Enchant Knife; Evil Eye; Levitate; Powder of Ibn-Ghazi*.

A summary of the information available in the *Dagbok Cybele*, as it pertains to this scenario, can be found in *Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #8*.

6. Floor crypts: Over in this end of the main standing structure are a number of floor crypts. (If the investigators were to dig up several inches of overburden beyond the edges of the intact floor, they would find additional stone flooring and additional floor crypts). Each floor crypt is a 2' deep, coffin-sized recess in the stone floor, covered with a one-piece slate stone bearing a depiction of the person lying within; their name, both in runic Old Norse as well as

Greek; and the date of their deaths (using the Julian calendar). There are dozens and dozens of them, arrayed in a tightly-packed grid. There are a number of disturbing things to be noted simply from a cursory examination of the floor crypts:

1. On an *Anthropology* roll, the investigators can determine that the names and physical depictions of the interred correspond to a wide variety of ethnicities. Indeed, their names are written in a variety of different languages. Many are Norse or Byzantine Greek, and quite a few are Turkish. However, others are quite diverse: sub-Saharan Africa, China, and even one name seeming to be Native American.
2. Many crypts (dozens of them) have someone named Ulfsson or Ulfsdottir in them, with dates of interment stretching over a course of hundreds of years. None of these are named Olaf, however. (Again, on an *Idea* roll if the players are not picking it up on their own, this means that either their father had the same uncommon given name, or that their father is the same entity).

Should any of the “gallai sanctum” tombs be opened, they will be mummified in a manner similar to the mummy at the stairs in area 1, including similar tattoos and disturbing anatomical anomalies.

Opening up the other floor crypts reveals some additional disturbing facts. First, the bodies in many of the floor crypts (particularly the ones with Greek or Turkish names) are semi-human, revealing bestial aspects to the skeletons. (These are Byzantine “transformed” Shub-Niggurath followers. SAN loss 0/1d3).

Second, *all* of the Ulfssons and Ulfsdottirs are much the same: semi-human. (SAN loss 0/1d3). Further, *all* of the semi-human skeletons show signs of having died extremely violent deaths (hacked to bits). (SAN loss 0/1).

Opening the crypts also reveals that about half of the truly female, human occupants have a matching, healed over puncture fracture about an inch over their right eye. This is only found on genetically female skeletons, not on gallai. It corresponds to the injury site inflicted by the lobotomy machine in the crypt level and depicted on the stairway mural.

(The explanation is that the semi-humans did not need any brain surgery to fully perceive what the Third Cloister had to offer. The ordinary gallai would not benefit from it. The gallai sanctum would not either. Instead, some truly female followers were subjected to certain brain alterations so they could perceive Ulf and thereby further the cult’s breeding experiments, discussed in more detail below. And since the semi-humans were effectively immortal, when it was deemed time for them to return to their goddess, they needed considerable extra assistance).

8. Threats to Exploration, and Under What Circumstances

The *surface* level of the ruins is generally safe, for most people. There are two exceptions. The first exception has to do with anyone *defiling the temple*. “Defiling the temple” would include any of the following acts:

- *starting any anti-Mythos spells;*
- *bringing an Elder Sign onto the premises;*
- *opening any tomb belonging to a gallai sanctum* (as distinct from the rank and file);
- *attempting to consecrate the ground in the name of some other religion;* or
- *any (intact) male attempting to climb down the sacrificial offal pit at Map Area 3.*

The most likely temple defilement event will be some intact male climbing down the offal pit.

Turn to Stone, Investigator Handout #8—Skimming the *Dagbok Cybele*

The *Dagbok* is authored by one Freyja Gallai Sanctum. Freyja starts off as a Norseman circa 930 A.D.; converts to the worship of the Magna Mater by castrating himself and pledging service as a *gallai*; and later, for exemplary service, is “reborn” by the Magna Mater as a *gallai sanctum*—immortal but genderless.

Freyja continues the *Dagbok*, more a diary than a traditional grimoire, until 1550 A.D.(!) At this time, the Cloister, under pressure from increasingly effective Church authority in Iceland, decides to relocate to the New World. Some “treasures” and “relics” were hidden and buried nearby when they uprooted in 1550. They could not take them all with as they would be, in some cases, “indiscrete” to transport, including this book.

The outpost in Iceland is known to the Magna Mater’s faithful as the “Third Cloister.” It was founded by refugees from Byzantium circa 930 A.D. Given the level of persecution that they suffered in Constantinople, their prime directive was “avoid conflict with the locals.” The plan was to establish a sort of safe house where the faithful could go into exile when under duress. This plan required that the *gallai* (eunuch servants) be selected from people who were able to understand that angering the local populace would endanger the entire community. Some of the original cultists had to be sacrificed to the “Lions of the Mother” for the greater good of the community when they could not reign in their behavior. Discipline was paramount. Sacrifices to the Magna Mater were garnered from the willing, or from lost souls or outlaws whom no one would miss. Recruits were generally drawn from refugees desperate enough to behave themselves according to the rule of the Cloister.

The *Dagbok* is full of copies of outgoing correspondence and incoming correspondence with other worshippers of the Magna Mater, negotiating personnel exchanges and grants of temporary asylum in exchange for valuable consideration. Anyone who would stay at the Cloister had to either “sacrifice to the Mother and join the *gallai*,” be a woman, or “be taken by the Lions.” Many exiles joined up and stayed.

The “safe house” mission of the Cloister restricted what activities the cult could undertake in service to the Magna Mater. It focused its attention on one of the central mysteries of the Magna Mater: giving birth despite the sacrifice of one’s procreative capability. The *gallai* were aware that the Cloister site was a nexus to a “nearby field”, which was inhabited by what the locals called the “hidden people.” Although Freyja had initially seen hints of them around the Cloister, they appeared to have little interest in the *gallai*. Circa 950 A.D., though, the Third Cloister took in a seemingly daft, newly pregnant woman named Helgi Alfsdottir as a potential recruit. Helgi immediately mentioned seeing the “hidden people” around, something that only the most magically gifted *gallai* were even slightly aware of. She even claimed that she had befriended one, named Ulf, and that he was her baby’s father.

Helgi’s son was named Olaf Ulfsson. Olaf displayed a frightening aptitude for both sorcery and service to the Magna Mater. This seemingly parthenogenic birth marked Helgi as a saint and Olaf as an incarnation of Attis, son of the Magna Mater. Once grown, Olaf left to dwell in Constantinople, bringing back additional Byzantine refugees from time to time. Ultimately, around 1010 A.D., he retired back to the Third Cloister. His final fate is unmentioned.

Helgi, however, continued to regularly birth children with Ulf, until circa 1240 A.D. This would have made her about 300 years old. In fact, Helgi is mentioned in the present tense all the way up to 1550 A.D. After 1240 A.D., though, mention of Helgi only comes up in one context. Helgi had become “indiscrete” and had to be “shut away” after that. *Gallai* or the occasional *gallai sanctum* who had grown tired of living often chose to meet their end via what is called “intimate communion with Helgi.” What this entailed is undescribed.

Defiling the temple activates the two statuary lions (the “Lions of the Mother”) in *Map Area 4* (statistics below). Although they will generally charge forth in righteous indignation, they are capable of biding their time until the moment is right to strike.

The second potential threat to exploration is Ulf, but again, only under certain circumstances. It is necessary to distinguish between people who are attuned to Ulf, and those who are not, since his capacity to interact with our dimension depends on this variable.

People who are attuned to Ulf would include anyone who is currently insane; anyone whose bloodline is tainted by the Mythos; anyone who is psychically sensitive; people who have sustained significant head trauma; or people particularly given to daydreaming. These people will be able to hear Ulf (although he tries to be quiet) and to see him (but only if they are not looking directly at him; they will need to look at him in a reflection or out of their peripheral vision). They can definitely feel him by touch and smell him (they may ask if anyone smells burning sugar). He can also be made visible through appropriate magic, such as the *Powder of Ibn-Ghazi*.

If one or more investigators are attuned to Ulf, they may be able to track him down. Generally, he stays in the tower (*Map Area 5*), but always in areas completely out of the sunlight. He also sometimes hangs out in the crypt level beneath the sacrificial offal pit at *Map Area 3*.

What Ulf will do depends on the gender of the person able to sense him. If the viewer is female, he will play at being an “imaginary friend” with a romantic spin. He will shyly introduce himself, be generally polite, answer questions within his knowledge that do not threaten him, and flirt. He appears, under these circumstances, as a large, elf-like, partly bestial man (about 10 feet tall), quite handsome and fit.

Guardian Beasts of Cybele, Leonine Man-eaters (x2) (“Lions of the Mother”)

STR 19 DEX 19 INT 10 CON 11
POW 13 SIZ 17 Luck 65 Hits: 15.

Damage Bonus: +2d6.

Move: 10”.

Armor: All non-enchanted physical attacks do minimum possible damage.

Skills: Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track Unbeliever 50%.

Attacks: Bite 40%, 1d10.

Claw 60% (in addition to Bite attack each round), 1d6.

Neutering, 100%, if both claw and bite hit the same target in the same round, or target is incapacitated, the Guardian Beast does 1d10 in the following round, all via bite below the belt. Only used vs. intact males. The target of this attack is traumatically castrated.

SAN Loss: 0/1d6 for viewing each Guardian Beast of Cybele.

Notes: Guardian Beasts appear to be gargoyle-like creatures, generally leonine in appearance and manner, but their shape constantly shifts between varieties of large carnivorous predators. They are magical constructs and resistant to non-magical attack.

These two are programmed to attack non-eunuch males in the temple area if they are activate by a temple defilement. They can pursue offenders outside of the rubble field, but will only attack women or eunuchs if first attacked by them or they did something quite bad.

If they succeed in killing or disabling a male, they will use their Neutering attack and throw both the carcass and the genitals down the sinkhole at *Map Area 3*.

However, he is quick to assault an incapacitated or injured woman if he thinks that he can get away with it. SAN loss for someone perceiving a “friendly” Ulf is 1/1d3.

Ulf will kill any men who seem to be able to perceive him at his first safe opportunity. Note that if he is in control of his faculties, he does not consciously risk exposure to sunlight. So as long as the males in question do not go into the sheltered areas or get too close to any of the standing walls at the rubble field, Ulf will not directly attack them. He might drop rocks on them though. Ulf is capable of hurling or dropping a rock of sufficient size to easily crush a man (4d6 damage).

An angry Ulf looks like a very bestial, deformed, 10 feet tall giant, whose form is unstable (shifting and swimming). SAN loss for viewing an angry Ulf is 1/1d8.

Obviously, part of the fun of the scenario is to have someone be able to perceive Ulf. If none of the players would fit the bill for whatever reason, then that lot falls to poor Tor Halvorsson or another NPC.

Ulf will stalk, taunt and tease a male target, wearing his sanity down before ultimately ripping him limb from limb if he strays out of the sun. He will relentlessly try to seduce a female target. Preferably Ulf will do that when the investigators are not directly looking, but eventually he will do it in front of them if left with no alternative. SAN loss for viewing an invisible rending is 1/1d8.

Those who cannot perceive Ulf really have little to worry about, with some exceptions. Ulf can directly affect the part of the world that cannot perceive him, but only to a limited extent. He can pull harmless poltergeist like pranks, but that is about it. There are two caveats to this, however.

First, there is no guarantee that unattuned investigators will stay that way. Any significant enough head trauma to render someone unconscious, or the changes to brain chemistry accompanying the terror of insanity, will temporarily put the

investigators in tune with Ulf’s dimension for the duration of the trauma. **Then** he can assault them.

Ulf, Near Dimensional “Troll”

STR 23 DEX 13 INT 09 CON 14
POW 13 SIZ 26 Luck 65 Hits: 20.

Damage Bonus: +2d6.

Move: 10”.

Armor: People who are attuned to Ulf must deal with 5 points of non-terrene composition; magic weapons do full damage.

People who are not attuned to Ulf are at -50% to hit with targeted attacks due to his invisibility, and only magic has any effect for them.

Skills: Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 50%, Seduce Human 50%, Sneak 60%.

Attacks: Pummel and Rend 50%, 1d10 +db.

Big Rock Throw, 55%, 4d6, range 30 yards.

SAN Loss: 1/1d3 for viewing “happy face” Ulf; 1/1d8 for true form.

Notes: Normally invisible and only able to interact with our dimension to a limited extent; certain people are more attuned to his dimension and able to fully interact with him. **Vulnerable to sunlight** (instantly turned to stone and destroyed).

The other thing that they have to contend with is spillover. Even though they cannot see Ulf, one of their companions might be able to. If Ulf throws a rock at that companion, the rock might miss and hit one of them. If he attacks, they will see the fight, just not be able to do much to help.

Ulf can also be affected by magic, even when wielded by those who cannot see him. Apply a -50% chance to hit if someone who knows where Ulf is located is telling them where to aim. Ulf will recoil before and be

driven by the *Elder Sign*, and is affected by the *Powder of Ibn-Ghazi*.

9. The Crypt

Anything dropped down the sacrificial pit at *Map Area 3* quickly hits dry bottom and echoes. That, combined with the collapsed stairway, should provoke someone into climbing down on a rope. *Note that if an intact male goes down, improperly attached to his sacrifice, this is a “temple defilement violation” and activates the “Lions of the Mother” in Map Area 4.*

The pit is about 10’ in diameter and about 10’ deep. It is walled off from the adjoining corridor. There is a small access hatch at the bottom, stuck due to hundreds of years of exposure. (*Crypt Map 1*). It is not a doorway intended for regular use, more like a crawl opening that can be used to clean out the offal pit periodically. However, once forced open, it can be crawled through without difficulty by anyone SIZ 15 or less.

The air in the tunnel beyond is very stale and the investigators would be well-advised to let it air out for a couple of hours prior to proceeding. This hidden sub-level of the complex is very different than the quasi-Catholic medieval construction above. Architecturally, this level resembles a pagan

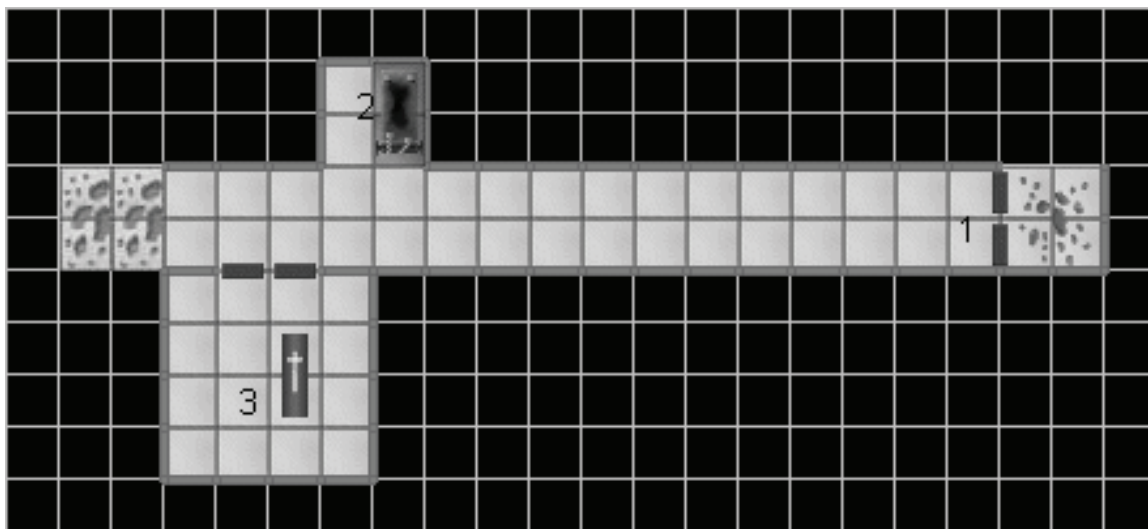
Roman temple. It is lined in marble, with statues in niches depicting a variety of scenes related to the Magna Mater (including lions, Attis, *gallai* frolicking, orgies in which hints of non-human participation can be gleaned on close inspection, etc.).

There are also wall vaults similar to the one at *Map Area 1*, and containing similar *gallai sanctum* mummy contents. (Opening these is likewise a temple defilement violation).

10. The Tomb of Helgi Alfsdottir

At the end of the hallway from the offal pit are two areas of note. The rubble to the west, if cleared, connects to the blocked stairway at *Map Area 1*.

Crypt Map 2 is a 20’ x 20’ chamber, separated from the hallway only by an open archway. The walls are decorated with extremely disturbing and unrestrained mosaics. These mosaics depict the miracles of love and childbirth in graphic and occasionally gory detail. Additionally, the participants depicted are not well matched, either from a gender perspective, species perspective, or even same dimensional perspective. Graphic and accurate depictions of Mythos beasts getting frisky with humans are plain. SAN loss 0/1d3.



Map of the Crypt Sub-level. 1: Sacrificial Pit and Access Hatch; 2: Breeding Chamber; 3: Tomb of Helgi Alfsdottir (Behind Sealed Door). Clogged stairway to the surface is on the left. 1 sq.=10 feet.

In the far right hand corner of this chamber is something that looks like a torture device. It is a (now rusty) wrought iron chair with arm and leg clamps, a restraining neck collar, and a basket frame to put around the head. These are all rusty as well, but attached to the basket frame and made of some kind of strangely untarnished, silvery metal is a pointy awl.

The awl is about the size and shape of a large gauge hypodermic needle, and is attached to a thin, flexible strip of the same kind of metal, which in turn is attached to a winding ratchet with a trigger. It looks exactly like the device pictured in the buried section of the stairway at *Map Area 1*, from which the investigators might infer that it somehow opens one to greater sensory perception. The investigators can “twang” it and easily observe that is intended to spring the awl at high velocity into an area above the right eye of anyone sitting in the chair and secured with the various bindings and frames. The frame adjusts to head size and positions the recipient just right.

This corresponds exactly to the wounds in the heads of many of the female skeletons in the floor crypts at *Map Area 6*, from which the investigators might deduce that there is a high survivability rate associated from its use. (Many of the skeletons bearing the scar from the device show signs associated with old age, not death from an awl to the head).

In case the investigators are mystified, this is a self-lobotomy chair. The room was an initiation chamber for the true females taken in by the Third Cloister. The metal forming the “business end” of the device is not of earthly origin, and despite the rustiness of the frame, the device still works. It performs an acceptably functional partial lobotomy, with the result that the recipient becomes attuned to and able to perceive Ulf and his ilk in their nearby dimension, and to fully interact with them.

(This is the explanation for the plethora of semi-human Ulfssons and Ulfsdottirs over the ages, who had to suffer violent deaths to shuffle off the mortal coil).



Feel free to inflict -1d6 SAN, -1 APP and 1d2 points of damage on any volunteers. Cruel Keepers might also inflict INT losses on recipients, although the design of the machine is so precise that it should not ordinarily cause INT loss of more than a point or so, barring a fumble of some sort.

It is entirely possible that clever and heroic investigators, in an effort to confront Ulf and rid the world of him, will voluntarily expose themselves to this experiment. (It happened in play-testing, every single time).

The area at *Crypt Map 3* poses one of those awkward decisions that occult investigators have to make from time to time. There is an obvious archway and door at this location, but it has been sealed up. And (on a successful *Cthulhu Mythos* roll, or obvious to anyone who knows the spell), there is a big, fat Elder Sign adorning the door.

What to do, what to do.

(This was created as part of the mothballing process by the departing cultists in the 16th century, to keep Helgi contained until they could somehow return for her).

The story, as the investigators may have been able to piece together, was this. Helgi was herself the spawn of a human woman and the “hidden people.” For this reason, she was effectively immortal barring a violent death, and able to perceive Ulf without any assistance.

Helgi lived and bred monstrosities to populate the world for several centuries, but finally her faculties deteriorated and her humanity evaporated until she was no longer fit company even for the cultists. They then shut her up in a crypt. But unlike the later Ulfssons and Ulfsdottirs who were simply euthanized when their humanity devolved below the level of capacity for quiet coexistence with the outside world, the Third Cloister could not bring themselves to kill someone they perceived as a sort of saint.



So instead, they venerated her, and occasionally, people that they needed to get rid of were sent down to “keep her company”. The cult hoped to someday, somehow, come back and move her, but since she is a ravaging monster now, the opportunity never materialized.

And so, the investigators are confronted with the dilemma of a poorly secured Mythos site in rural Iceland, and a nasty thing ensconced behind a wall, but one which could be liberated without too much difficulty.

Burying the site under is probably a good solution, although there is no guarantee that some Nazi scientist or another will not come along and excavate at some point. Leaving things alone is the same as burying it under, except that it remains easy to access.

Of course, the investigators could also just screw up their courage and break in. It will take about one man-hour with appropriate tools to do so.

Inside is bad news. The investigators will be confronted with human skeletons piled two feet high, and a nauseating stench both of decay and of animal spoor. (SAN loss 0/1d3).

Rousing herself (?) from the pile is a naked, filthy, though plainly female, form, shifting in appearance constantly from one female carnivorous animal form to another (mixing in human). Her eyes are glassy and she thirsts for human blood. (SAN loss 1/1d8).

She launches to the attack as soon as she can see an investigator, and since her form is malleable, she can squeeze out into the hallway through any decent sized hole.



Note that Helgi is only minimally affected by non-enchanted weapons. She does, however, recoil from, and is barred by an intact Elder Sign. The one on the door won't be intact any more by the time that the investigators get the door open.

What's Left of Helgi

STR 23 DEX 18 INT n/a CON 14
POW 13 SIZ 10 Luck 65 Hits: 12

Damage Bonus: +1d6.

Move: 10".

Armor: Non-enchanted weapons do minimum possible damage.

Skills: No relevant skills.

Attacks: Rend 70%, 1d10 +db.

SAN Loss: 1/1d8 for viewing Helgi.

Notes: Repelled by the Elder Sign, somewhat vulnerable to sunlight (negates her armor).

11. The Big Picture

In all likelihood, the scenario will play out something like this:

The investigators will do a lot of research in Reykjavik prior to embarking. They will putter around the ruins for a while, taking notes and digging in the stairwell.

Eventually, they will get the idea that this was a temple to the Magna Mater/Shub-Niggurath and that creepy and unwholesome breeding experiments involving trolls had been going on. They may or may not do something (climb down the offal pit, open up one of the *gallai sanctum* tombs) that activates the "Lions of the Mother."

Desperate combat will ensue at the point that they do "defile the temple." Hopefully the players thought to bring guns, and have them with them. Alternatively, they may have the sense to run.

Note that the lions are physically SIZ 17; there are several places in the complex that

they cannot access. They cannot easily go down the offal pit itself, and certainly cannot get through the access hatch into the crypt hallway (maximum SIZ to go through the cleanout hatch: 15. Lions: 17). Nor will they likely be able to scamper down any excavated tunnel at the stairway. Nor will they be able to climb up to the second floor of the crumbling tower, from which they can be shot at or have stones dropped on them.

In other words, even as statted, the Lions of the Mother are escapable and fightable, but not something you want to get caught and torn apart by. Show a little mercy to investigators who have a thought about going to ground and are just trying to get there with all due haste.

If the Lions are going to kill too many investigators, given the way that your players are, scale them down by changing their armor structure. Alternatives include only having them take half damage from non-magical sources instead of minimum damage, or just having a stated amount of armor that magical attacks ignore. The Lions also could always settle for neutering and tossing victims down the pit; they do not have to go out of their way to kill any incapacitated investigators.

Important Campaign Note—The Lions Ought To Get Someone

If you are planning to run *Turn to Stone* as the first scenario of the larger campaign, it is important that the Lions of the Mother neuter someone, or come perilously close. It is almost impossible to complete the scenario without activating them, and once they are activated, someone needs to meet or almost meet an unpleasant fate. Bring along some NPC porters, dig assistants or the like to have available if need be. This is because the singular nature of the lions' Neutering attack is the McGuffin for involving the investigators in the second scenario, and an adjustment is needed otherwise.

Ulf is a wild card. He may tear apart someone loony who claims to see “the hidden people”, but most people will have to either go insane or lobotomize themselves to even be potentially threatened by him. The main point with Ulf is that he is *not* very smart or at all disciplined; he is easy to trick into wandering into the sunlight.

The Keeper might also decide that Ulf just does not feel like killing anyone on any given day, at least until the investigators have a plan in hand to lure him out into the sunlight and deliberately provoke him into violence.

Eventually, the intent of the scenario is that the investigators will stabilize the site against the threats of the Lions of the Mother and perhaps Ulf. They will have thoroughly surveyed the site and recovered the *Dagbok Cybele*. Tor will probably be tasked with skimming the *Dagbok*, which will overlap with the time needed to clear the excavation at the stairway.

The *Dagbok* sticks the last pieces of the puzzle together for the investigators: Helgi Alfsdottir survived until at least 1550 A.D.; they had to shut her away somewhere before that; there were “indiscrete” things that they had to leave behind, and Helgi herself, toward the end, was “indiscrete.” They had to “shut her away”, and *gallai* who went to see her did not return.

And there will be only one place for the investigators still to explore, in all likelihood: the room behind the Elder Sign.

The investigators may conclude that there is little to be done about the ruins once the Lions and Ulf are neutralized. They are right in the sense that no major menace is going to blot out the sun any time soon, but inaction is not without its consequences.

Someone, perhaps Arne, perhaps Nazi researchers, perhaps new cultists, will eventually explore the ruins and discover the secrets of the Third Cloister. They will find the sealed off room imprisoning Helgi, and some idiot will, eventually, open it up. If they are obsessed with eugenics (like, say,

the occult-obsessed Nazis who started infiltrating Iceland around 1925), they might even come with a view toward renewing the Third Cloister's experiments. Someone less cautious than the investigators might even loose Helgi Alfsdottir on an unsuspecting countryside, to pillage and slay. Someone is certainly going to get hurt in the future.

Charge people who leave the horror unchecked with a 1d6 SAN loss.

12. By the Dawn's Early Light

Destroying both Lions of the Mother earns each investigator 1d6 SAN.

Ulf is likely unable to even affect many of the investigators, although that is certainly not a static situation. If anyone is able to see Ulf, they may notice that he only ventures out at night, and during the day sticks to fully shadowed or interior spaces. Research into "trolls" likewise discloses their vulnerability to sunlight.

The reason is simple: if Ulf is caught in the sun, he turns to stone, instantaneously. He knows this, but he is not too bright and has a quick temper. He might, in the throes of bloodlust, forget what he is doing and be tricked either into a sunny area, or into somewhere that the sun can suddenly be exposed (a mirror, a tarp, collapsing a section of wall at the right time). If this happens, scratch one troll and the investigators gain 1d6 SAN each.

Permanently ridding the planet of Helgi Alfsdottir is likewise worth 1d6 SAN per investigator. Helgi is slightly vulnerable to sunlight, as well; it negates her resistance to non-enchanted weapons as she solidifies into whatever form she had immediately prior.

Ultimately, however, she simply has to be put down. She should *never* be scaled down as an undue threat, in the opinion of the author. One does not seal up weak monsters behind Elder Signs, and anyone who bravely takes one down to confront what lies behind it gets their own reward.

This adventure leaves, and is intended to leave, a number of uncomfortable loose ends:

1. What ever happened to Olaf Ulfsson? The investigators should be able to deduce that he would not have simply expired of old age, especially given that he was $\frac{3}{4}$ near-dimensional being. There are no easy answers to this. The *Dagbok* simply quits talking about him circa 1010 A.D. And his tomb is not on the premises.
2. Where did the Third Cloister go? What happened to them? Why did they never return for their relics? Are they still alive somewhere?
3. How many successful Third Cloister breeding experiments are running around out there?

13. What about Lini (or, Nature vs. Nurture)?

Perhaps the most immediate loose end is that of Lini Sveinsdottir, pregnant, half-comatose and about to give birth to *something*. Again, there are no easy answers, only possibilities. How to play this out depends on how you feel about clean and/or happy endings.

The investigators can do nothing and simply let nature take its course. In this case, a *seemingly* normal infant is born in due course, and Lini dies shortly thereafter.

The baby is named Tor Linisson. Whether the baby is a normal human, or bears the taint of the "hidden people", is a question that should be left unanswered. There is no scientific way to "test" such a young changeling; they tend to devolve over time into inhumanity.

(The author suggests that the "canonical" answer is that the baby is indeed the immortal spawn of the trolls, and a potentially great sorcerer, able to hear and see into other nearby worlds. If left alone, he will probably be subtly or not-so-subtly influenced by his father's kin, and slowly

corrupted despite the best efforts of Lini's family).

Or, the investigators can attempt to do something to affect the course of events. Placing Elder Signs around the room prior to the birth, casting exorcisms, inscribing the *Eye of Light and Darkness* or other powerful ward, or similarly atomic means of Mythos swatting might, if the Keeper is feeling kind, have the beneficial effect of rousing Lini from her stupor. It will not, however, cause little Tor Linisson to be something other than what he is.

The downside of this, of course, is that Lini remembers what happened to her and is now horrified that she is pregnant with a troll spawn. Nonetheless, none of these actions prevent the birth, which proceeds as stated above, except that this time Lini lives. The Keeper might award 1d4 SAN for saving Lini's life if the investigators' approach to troll-busting is logical and inventive enough.

Whether Tor Linisson ends up as good or bad if Lini survives is something that the investigators can lose sleep over. (The author would suggest that Lini's survival might tip the balance between Tor growing up as a force for good, or a force for evil).

If your players must have a happy, fluffy ending, then one might allow the killing of Ulf to result in Lini's miraculous recovery and the cleansing of any taint from little Tor. But such an outcome is hardly Lovecraftian style nihilism.

Baby killers are not going to be tolerated by the local authorities, period, no matter how persuasive they might be. (Although it should be noted that arguing that a newborn baby had to be killed because he was some kind of troll-spawned monster will be placed in the category of "lunacy").

The good news for baby killers is that Iceland does not have the death penalty in the Classic era. The bad news is that the prison where the investigators will spend the rest of their lives, after a short but fair civil law trial, is unpleasant. Hegningarhusid Prison, built in 1874, had no sinks or toilets

in cells as late as 2001, and got the Icelandic government some unpleasant human rights notices as late as that.

14. Linking to Home, Sweet Home

This scenario was originally written to be a follow-up to *Home, Sweet Home* in my Chaosium monograph, *The Primal State*. Investigators who survived that scenario would know the name Olaf Ulfsson, be alarmed that something was happening at his "ruined and abandoned" homestead; and come running.

If one is running this first, and wants to follow up with *Home, Sweet Home*, however, then once they learn that the University of Vermont team had transcribed *Olaf's Saga*, they will already have a lead-in to the Icelandic research. The author would suggest leaving out any explicit mention of the "Black House" in this scenario, as it does not directly pertain to events in Iceland and may set the investigators off on a wild-goose chase (it is another entrance to Shambhala).

15. Research Tree

The critical research path in this adventure can be a bit difficult to follow, so a summary of what leads to what follows:

Ultimate Fact: the Third Cloister is the site of Mythos worship of the Magna Mater, who is noted for "transforming" humans into semi-human, immortal forms.

- a. Olaf Ulfsson worshipped the Magna Mater (*Olaf's Saga*).
- b. The Magna Mater is the goddess of a mystery religion involving self-sacrifice for rebirth into immortality (**Ocult** research).
- c. The Magna Mater is an avatar of Shub-Niggurath, who likewise rebirths the faithful (**Cthulhu Mythos** research).
- d. Confirmed by statue of Magna Mater at site, *Dagbok Cybele*, mosaic in tower, tomb inscriptions, and other evidence

showing concern with transformation.

Ultimate Fact: Helgi Alfsdottir, an immortal, semi-human monster/spawn of the trolls, is sealed behind a poorly secured Elder Sign.

- a. Site exploration discovering poorly secured, Elder Sign sealed room, what is unaccounted for?
- b. *Dagbok Cybele* discloses that Helgi was immortal, had to be sealed up before they left, and was left behind.
- c. Icon in tower depicting Helgi as a saint with many non-human children.
- d. *Dagbok Cybele* discusses importance of discretion and how they had to leave indiscrete things behind.
- e. Helgi was herself odd: local sagas once her name is uncovered.

Ultimate Fact: Lini Sveinsdottir was attacked and impregnated by Ulf the troll.

- a. Interview with Lini. (Lini).
- b. Icelandic legends about troll impregnations. (Svein, Tor, any knowledgeable person).
- c. Evidence of long-running troll incursions at the site, all by “Ulf”. (*Dagbok Cybele*, plethora of immortal, inhuman Ulfssons and Ulfsdottirs in floor crypts).

Ultimate Fact: Ulf can be killed by exposure to sunlight.

- a. He avoids sunlight like the plague (observation at site).
- b. Icelandic legends about trolls (Svein, Tor, any knowledgeable person).

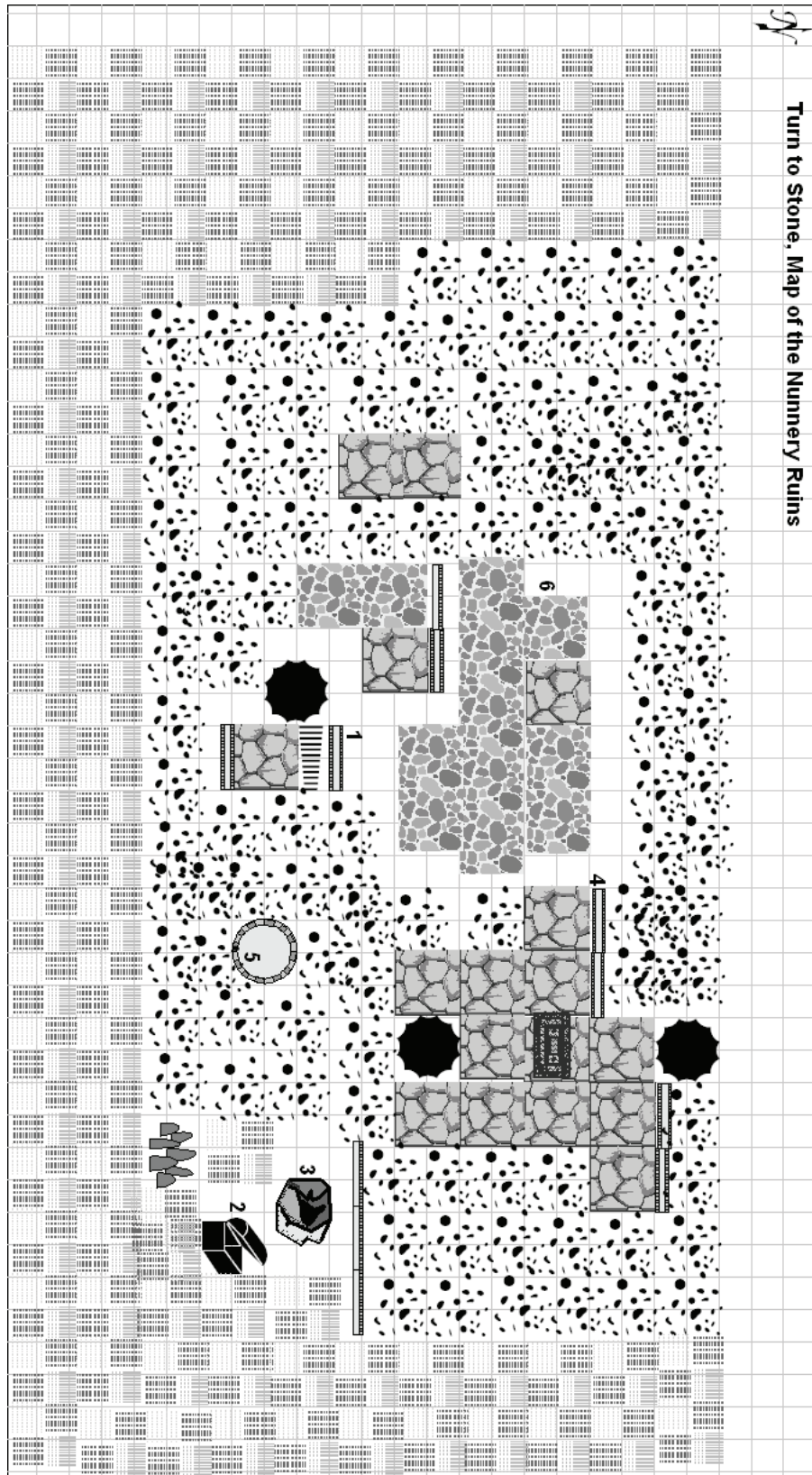
Ultimate Fact: Ulf can be spotted only under certain circumstances, including by those subjected to the lobotomy machine.

- a. Icelandic legends about trolls (Svein, Tor, any knowledgeable person).
- b. Lini could see him and had suffered a head injury (Lini, Svein).
- c. Fresco depicting purpose of the lobotomy machine as expansion of one’s consciousness.
- d. Female bodies with matching lobotomy holes in floor crypts.

Ultimate Fact: An intact male climbing down the offal pit is a sacrilege that triggers an attack by the “Lions of the Mother.”

- a. Mosaic in tower depicting Lions castrating invading knight.
- b. Mosaic in tower showing the purpose of the pit being for a very specific kind of sacrifice.
- c. Background research on how only women or *gallai* (eunuchs) served the Magna Mater.





Scale: 1 square=10' x 10'. 1: stairs down; 2: staked excavation; 3: offal pit; 4: main ruin/statue; 5: crumbling tower; 6: floor crypts.

Higher Than Truth, the Second Scenario

This scenario exposes the investigators to the continued existence of both the Third Cloister in Classic-era Iceland, as well as to the continued existence of Olaf Ulfsson. They will learn that he is trying to “ascend”, with the uneasy assistance of the surviving members of the Third Cloister and the more devoted assistance of the Thule Gesellschaft. They will not be able to figure out who exactly Olaf is yet, or how he plans to ascend, but that is not important for present purposes.

What is important for present purposes is that they learn that Olaf is up to something involving “ascending” and that sacrificing others for one’s self-aggrandizement is a big “no-no” from the Third Cloister’s perspective. They will also learn the basic tenets of Theosophy, and perhaps, if they are successful, recover some valuable Mythos artifacts.

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1. Keeper’s Overview

Hans Gruber, one of Horst Schmidt’s rank and file Thule Gesellschaft operatives, lost his patience. Tantalized by the sorcerous things he has seen hinted at in his dealings with Horst Schmidt, he decided to take matters into his own hands and make a grab for personal power.

Kidnapping a young farmgirl, and drawing on his rudimentary knowledge of magic and exposure to the mysteries of the Magna Mater, Gruber tried to transform himself into an immortal *gallai sanctum*. He tried to do this “his own way”, without sacrificing a part of himself.

Instead, combining Icelandic witchcraft, Mythos magic and a horrible perversion of ancient Cybelian ritual known as the *taurobolium*, he tried to rebirth himself by sacrificing someone else. In this case, the farmgirl.

It may or may not have worked. That is beside the point of this scenario. The point of this scenario is that Freyja Gallai Sanctum, Olaf’s uneasy ally, found out what Gruber meant to attempt at the eleventh hour. Since sacrificing someone else to advance in the service of the Magna Mater is blasphemy, she purged Gruber.

Freyja's Reykjavik-based pair of Lions of the Mother were dispatched to find the heretic. They caught up with him returning to town after having completed his grisly task, and neutered him involuntarily. Gruber did not survive the process.

As this will seem all too familiar to the academics and/or law enforcement officials involved with the events in *Turn to Stone*, the investigators will be called in to assist in the proceedings. *Higher Than Truth* is structured as a murder mystery: The investigators will be able to surmise what happened early on, but will need to uncover whodunnit and why. They will be assisting the Reykjavik authorities, whose numbers and expertise in such matters are too limited.

Whether they actually capture the perpetrators is irrelevant; in fact, it is entirely possible that Freyja Gallai Sanctum escapes capture. What is important is that they figure out that both the Third Cloister and Olaf Ulfsson are somewhere nearby, that Olaf is up to something, and that Freyja is outraged by anyone who would sacrifice someone else for their own personal aggrandizement. That's just not how things are done.

2. Interlude

Some time should be allowed to elapse between the events of *Turn to Stone* and the rest of the campaign. The investigators might even have left Iceland temporarily. However, they should be given a reason to return, and be present in Reykjavik, when the bodies are discovered. Several suggestions for one shot adventures or momentary distractions are offered in the background material.

Ideally, the investigators will have a few low-grade encounters with Horst Schmidt and/or his Thule Gesellschaft operatives. They may be seeking occult knowledge, running parallel investigations into the weird, and generally causing trouble. Kristjan Kristjansson might also be introduced as an NPC, pestering the investigators for quotes or snapping pictures

that they would rather not have snapped. Ultimately, the idea is to position the investigators in Iceland when Herr Gruber makes his grisly move.

If this just will not work, the investigators can still be summoned from abroad, but will have to go from crime scene photographs and after-the-fact tracking efforts. Modify the area descriptions accordingly. Ideally, Herr Gruber stages his ritual on a March 16th, the date when the *taurobolium* was historically performed.

The investigators will again be contacted by Arne Sigurdsson, this time to assist the (very limited) Reykjavik police force in investigating a double murder with obvious occult significance.

Arne will not be shy about describing how the bodies were found. One, a young woman, was found sacrificed on top of a hill outside of Reykjavik in an extremely bizarre manner. The other, apparently the murderer of the young woman, had his manhood rudely removed by some sort of a large animal or animals. His wounds are distinctly reminiscent of those sustained at the Third Cloister dig site by any intact male who was caught by the Lions of the Mother. Also, there are large predator tracks at the scene—of a variety of large carnivores.

3. The Horrific Crime Scene

Arne's description is pretty accurate. A map and key follow. The investigators will be accompanied to the scene by a full one third of the Reykjavik police force, that is to say, one guy. Officer Sigurd Jonsson speaks only broken English (10%) so Arne will supply one of his graduate students (Tor if he's still around) to translate.

The scene is located both on top of, and at the foot of, *Öskjuhlíð*, a large, 200 foot high, fairly steep hill about a mile southwest of the downtown center. The hill commands a view of the entire city, harbor and region, and (very rare for Iceland) is forested.

An unimproved road runs along the foot of the hill, leading (in both directions) to

different parts of the downtown area. The road east swings north and heads directly into downtown. The road west swings northwest and heads into the University of Iceland area. (An area map appears at p. 85).

1. Gruber: These are the remains of Herr Gruber. He carries no identification. He is wearing only a hooded cloak (nothing underneath) which has been shredded. While the cloak is (comparatively) blood free, Herr Gruber is covered in blood from head to toe, as though he bathed in it. (He did). The blood on him is dried.

Herr Gruber has a number of bruises and superficial battering injuries, but none of them would account for being covered from head to toe (literally) in blood.

The one gory wound that he has is where his entire genitalia have been crudely severed and ripped from his body. It is obvious from the large pool and splatters of blood around his lower torso that this caused him to bleed out, and that it happened here. This should prove disturbingly familiar to survivors of *Turn to Stone*, assuming that things went reasonably according to script. If not, they will figure it out once they follow the trail.



Officer Sigurd, not Officer Jonsson

Officer Sigurd

Nationality: Icelandic.

STR 14 DEX 13 INT 14 CON 14 APP 13 POW 14

SIZ 14 EDU 13 SAN 65 Luck 70 Hits: 13 Age: 35.

Damage Bonus: +1d4.

Education: High School.

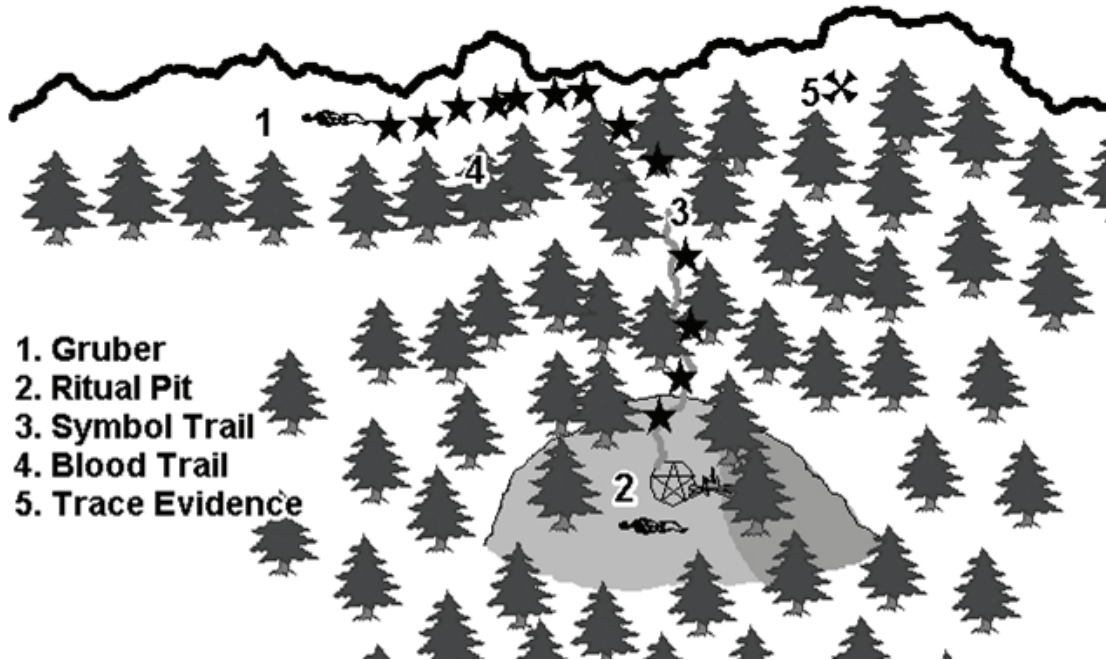
Skills: Accounting 25%, Credit Rating 50%, Drive Auto 25%, Drive Carriage 50%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 50%, Law 40%, Library Use 40%, Listen 55%, Natural History 50%, Navigate 30%, Persuade 50%, Pilot Boat 50%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Languages: English 10%; Icelandic 70%; Danish 40%.

Attacks: Rifle Attack, 75%, .30-06 bolt action, 110 yards, 1/2 round, 5 capacity, 2d6+4.

Grapple, 75%.

Nightstick, 60%, 1d6 +db.



Nearby in the underbrush (any serious effort at looking locates it) is an ancient, pugio-style dagger dating from Roman times. It is likewise covered in blood. (1d4+2+db, HP 15, base chance 25%). The blade is enchanted, and engraved with a peculiar sigil, reproduced below. An *Occult* roll, or appropriate research, recognizes the sigil as one associated with the Byzantine sect of the Magna Mater.



SAN loss for Herr Gruber's mutilated remains is 0/1.

Gruber has the Thule Gesellschaft symbol tattooed on the back of his left shoulder. This is a sword imposed on a circular, flowing swastika, charged with a sunburst. As depiction of it is a good way to get into hot water in Germany, you will have to Google it.

2. The Ritual Pit: Atop the hill, overlooking the city after passing through a (rare) forested area, a campfire has recently been extinguished. A 10' x 10' square platform has been raised out of lumber, 8' high (so that someone can stand under it).

Atop the platform are the unfortunate remains of a missing farmgirl, tied faced down and with her throat cut. She has been thoroughly exsanguinated, with the blood running through a hole in the platform. SAN loss for this horrific, stomach-turning scene is 1/1d3.

The area underneath is splattered with gore, and bloody footprints, handprints and a bloody sponge remain behind. The same

sigil on the knife is crudely carved into the victim. Discarded at the bottom of the pit is a gilded crown of laurel leaves, befouled with gore.

An **Occult** roll, or appropriate research, identifies the set up as a perversion of a controversial Cybelian ritual. (Controversial even by Cybelian standards). In the latter few centuries of the sect, in an effort by some adherents to match Christianity's promises of resurrection and an afterlife, some Cybelians introduced a ritual known as the *taurobolium*. The *taurobolium* was literally a blood bath. A bull would be ritually slaughtered atop a platform and the faithful would be stationed underneath and be showered in blood. The thought was the bull's vitality would transfer to the recipient.

This was a schismatic practice at odds with older forms of Cybele worship. It markedly departs from the mystery religion and unmediated relationship with the goddess aspects at the core of the religion.

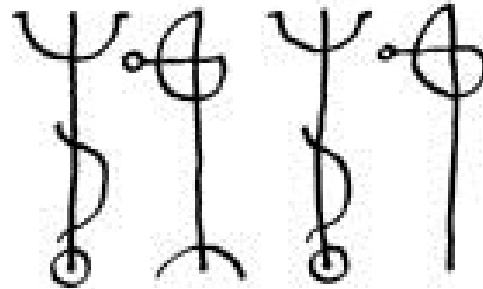
Obviously, substituting a human being was not even standard schismatic practice. Indeed, (**Occult** or appropriate research) allegations of human sacrifice were among the accusations leveled by the Byzantines in their final efforts to stamp out the sect.

The victim is dressed in silk and covered with fresh flowers. Silk, large quantities of fresh flowers and gilded laurel crowns are not common things in Classic-era Reykjavik, and tracking down their sale and delivery will lead the investigators to Herr Gruber's identity and address.

3. The Symbol Trail: Marked in blood periodically on trees along the trail up the hill is a bizarre symbol, reproduced below.

A **Critical Occult** or non-fumbled **Icelandic Witchcraft** roll (or appropriate research) identifies this as a Staff of Power known as *draumstafir*, or dream staves. Normally carved on silver or white leather and slept with on Midsummer's Night, they help you achieve your dreams. They are not usually carved on trees in the blood of innocents, but one might surmise that they are

generally beneficial in terms of obtaining one's ends.



Draumstafir

4. Blood Trail: Officer Sigurd can, on request, round up a gentleman named Siggie who has a scent hound. The scent hound ("Alda") will be able to follow blood and scent trails as noted in the scenario.

Initially, the blood trail from Gruber's body visibly leads east along the trail to the point where it forks off and starts uphill. From there, it visibly (without the aid of Alda) continues both up the hill and (to a lesser extent) to the east as well.

Along the way, **Spot Hidden** rolls will note an occasional bloody animal track. It appears to be that of some sort(s) of large predator(s), but is impossible to identify. A **Track** roll is not necessary to see these, but a successful **Track** roll leads to the bizarre conclusion that none of the tracks is exactly the same. This may not be a surprise to investigators who have previously encountered the shifting shapes of the Lions of the Mother. These tracks lead to the east of the turnoff up the hill, heading away from the hill toward town.

5. Trace Evidence: Here, casually discarded in the middle of the trail as though something spit them out, are Herr Gruber's missing genitalia. The point is that this is east of the fork in the road, suggesting that the assailants headed off that way when they were done. See **Tracking from the Crime Scene**, below for where the trail leads.

4. Further Research

a. The Thule Gesellschaft Tattoo: An *Occult* or *Library Use* roll identifies the group to which the symbol belongs. Give the investigators *Higher Than Truth, Investigator Handout #1*, which summarizes what is known of the Gesellschaft in reasonably well-informed circles in late 1920s terms.

b. Lion Statues in Reykjavik: Without too much effort, should the investigators think to ask the locals about any pairs of lion statues, they find the answer. There is only one pair of life-sized lion statues in the area that anyone knows of. They “stand guard” at the front door of the Reykjavik Theosophy Society, at the edge of downtown.

c. Tracking from the Crime Scene: The trail becomes less obvious east of the turnoff up the hill, but a faint trail does continue back east, on into downtown. A successful *Track* roll (or “Alda”) can follow the trail back to the edge of downtown. Whatever it was came right back into the busy downtown section of Reykjavik. (This happened in the dead of night, and went unobserved). “Alda” is able to easily follow the trail all the way back to the lion statues out in front of the Reykjavik Theosophy Society. The statues there appear to simply be ordinary, life sized stone lion statues except for their slightly bloody mouths, and bloody, muddy feet. SAN loss is 0/1 for someone who has put the whole picture together from crime scene to here.

There are also some (non-bloody) tracks to the west of the victim, heading toward the western edge of downtown. These (*Spot Hidden* or non-fumbled *Track*) can only easily be followed a short way, but are clearly headed from west to east, where they eventually catch up with Herr Gruber. Extremely persistent trackers who keep heading in that general direction might pick up some tracks much closer to town, in the vicinity of the cemetery. This is discussed in a following section. (This is where the

Lions went to receive their instructions on their way to get Gruber).

d. The Identity of the Victim: This is largely a dead end, but not completely. The deceased is one Hanni Stefansdottir, age 20. She lived with her family on a farm on the outskirts of town, but travelled into town occasionally to pick up odd work. She vanished a day earlier when she failed to return home. Her worried family does not know where exactly she was going to pursue work, other than she typically went looking for work cleaning, mending, cooking or doing other chores at boardinghouses in the City. Canvassing them advances the investigation.

One thing that will doubtlessly frustrate the investigators is the futility of their efforts to keep the details of the crime, or even their involvement, any kind of secret. Word will spread like wildfire once the bodies are removed from the scene and taken back to town. Hanni’s family will come into town looking for her, go right to the police for help, and Hanni will be quickly identified. The crime (less the gory details) will make the newspapers, and the investigators will be pestered for details and perhaps even followed around by Kristjan Kristjansson, a young, blond reporter for the *Morgunblaðið* newspaper. (This is, of course, really Olaf Ulfsson in an assumed shape).

The Lani Jonsdottir Subplot

There are a couple of opportunities in this scenario to work in the subplot of long vanished Lani Jonsdottir. One is while the investigators are beating the bushes to try and figure out who the sacrificial victim is, or when talking to those who knew her. It may remind them of an old story about Lani, a girl who was always disappearing, looking for her dog, until one day, she disappeared and never came home. Alternatively, during the newspaper research portion of this scenario, the investigators might find an old newspaper article or tale.

e. *The Identity of the Newly Neutered:* By contrast, even in as tightly knit a society as this, no one comes forward to claim or identify the body of Herr Gruber. This suggests (*Idea* roll) that he was a foreigner.

The Thule Gesellschaft tattoo suggests that he was German. Only after several weeks, if the investigators are truly stumped, does the house mother at the boardinghouse he was staying at come forward to report one of her rooms abandoned by its tenant.

The investigators' best bet is to canvass the local boardinghouses and hotels, with his photo and/or that of Hanni. This eventually leads to Gruber's boardinghouse room, described below.

f. *The Provenance of the Dagger:* An *Archaeology* roll reveals that the dagger is of Byzantine manufacture and seemingly dates (based on style) from the early centuries A.D.

Further research (which will take time, such as by circulating pictures of the dagger around to academics) will eventually reveal that it is a ritual blade used for sacrifices to the Magna Mater. It was confiscated by the Byzantine Church from a cell of Magna Mater worshippers circa 300 A.D., and eventually made its way to the Vatican. It is believed to still be there, and the curators of the Vatican's occult holdings will be dismayed to learn that it is missing.

Extremely clever investigators might inquire of the Reykjavik customs officials, particularly if they had their own chests and luggage pawed through for weapons. The dagger was noted in the possessions of one Hans Gruber, a German who last entered the country about a month ago in the company of four others, for unspecified "business." It was not illegal, so they let him keep it.

If the investigators take a generalized interest in the coming and going of Germans within the past several months, they will learn that a total of 32 came in, with 28 of them not having left. (Make that 27 now). These are the 9 *gallai sanctum* and now 17

remaining rank and file Thule Gesellschaft members, plus Horst Schmidt.

g. *The Meaning of the Draumstafir, As Modified:* No one readily at hand is going to be able to offer some kind of meaningful explanation about the occult significance or presumed intentions of the abuse of the staves of power along the trail.

However, everyone will suggest that the place to go and ask around about such things is the Reykjavik Theosophy Society. In addition to being a theosophy lodge, most of the members of society "interested in that sort of thing" hang out and socialize there, because it is a nice club. Prof. Arne from the University belongs and can arrange for an introduction.

A Movie's Worth A Million Words

By all means force your investigators to watch the following Burton Holmes travelogue reel of a trip to Reykjavik in 1926.

The reel gives a five minute silent overview of what things were actually like in Reykjavik, from dress to shops to street views to the mix of cars, bicycles and horse-drawn carriages available for transport.

Holmes even gets in a shot of the entire Reykjavik police force—all three of them. (They hired a few more officers not long after).

The downtown scenes appear to be the area of the main shopping district (*Laugavegur*), to the east of the *Althing* parliament building (visible in the distance at the end of the avenue).

This is the area where the hotels are, and where the lodge portions of this scenario play out.

The YouTube link follows:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhgC1Fy2DVA>



The *taurobolium*

Higher Than Truth, Investigator Handout #1--The Thule Gesellschaft

The *Thule Gesellschaft* (Thule Society) was founded in 1918 by one Rudolf von Sebottendorff. The Gesellschaft started out as a splinter group of the Blavatsky theosophy movement, with anti-Semitic leanings and racial purity tests for admission, but things did not stay that “simple” for long.

Based in Munich, the Gesellschaft quickly attracted a number of listless politicians who were interested in the occult as a hobby. These politicians took over the movement and combined its occult interests with their own fascist and anti-Semitic leanings.

The Society runs in parallel to the Nazi political party in the 1920s. While Adolf Hitler was not a member of the Thule Gesellschaft, a number of top-ranked Nazis, including in particular Rudolf Hess, are top-ranking members.

The Gesellschaft is a secret society with mystery religion aspects, initiatory rituals, and a fraternal structure similar to Freemasonry. The core occult beliefs of the Gesellschaft are extremely similar to mainstream theosophy, but with a more racist, anti-communist twist.

Mainstream theosophy holds that “Thule” was the first iteration of civilization: an ancient, lost society located in the far north that eventually fell and was reborn as Hyperborea, the “Second Age.” To the Gesellschaft, Thule was also a legendary island in the far north. Like the theosophists, they believe that remnants of the Thule civilization still existed, and the secrets of Thule were held by ancient, immortal, “ascended beings” living in a “Hollow Earth” (similar to the “ascended masters” of theosophy).

The Gesellschaft likewise believes in gradual karmic ascension, via initiation into a series of mysteries, to “ascended master” status. They also believe that if someone could ascend, they would learn the secrets of how to dominate and remake society. The fully initiated are also thought to be able to establish contact with the dead and learn their secrets.

One place they part company with mainstream theosophy, of course, is what they hope to do with this greater knowledge. Once ascended, they hope to use the power that comes with ascension to create a race of supermen of “Aryan” stock who would exterminate all supposedly “inferior” races.

They also equated “Aryan” with “Teutonic,” based on a belief that Atlantis had been geographically situated in the North Atlantic. *Iceland, not Germany*, was seen as the ancestral home of the “Aryan” root “race”. The Gesellschaft hoped to find their lost ancestors, learn their secrets, and use them to drive the communist and foreign elements from Germany.

The Gesellschaft’s formal links to the Nazi party have resulted in membership cross-trade. A fair number of decommissioned, aimless veterans and fringe political thinkers have become involved with the movement. In theory, only persons who can document that they are of pure “Aryan” descent are permitted to be initiated; in practice, anyone who sympathized with the Nazis receives little scrutiny.

Rumors exist in the late 1920s that the Gesellschaft’s exploration, archaeological and occult research functions serve as a “beard” for Nazi party political recruitment, espionage and general skullduggery.



Old Town Reykjavik. 1: Old Cemetery; 2: Main Business District (Hotels, Boardinghouse, Reykjavik Theosophy Society); 3: Öskjuhlíð (Crime Scene); 4: University District (University/Arne's Offices, Iceland Society for Theosophical Inquiry's Meeting Place).

5. The Boarding House and the Handwritten Note

Eventually, with enough legwork and photos of the two decedents, the investigators will arrive at the boardinghouse where Herr Gruber was keeping his rooms. Tracking down merchants and deliveries of some of the things found at the crime scene (flowers, silk, gilded laurel crown, the latter two of which were imported) likewise leads to the boardinghouse. (While a couple of other Gesellschaft agents had been staying there as well, they cleared out immediately as soon as Gruber went missing).

The house matron can confirm both that one “Heinrich Schmidt” was renting a room there, and that poor Hanni cleaned the house the day she disappeared but never claimed her pay. Schmidt’s Icelandic was quite good, although he had an accent. He was seen in the company of a few other Germans, who moved out in a hurry once the story about Hanni began to spread.

Investigators working with the authorities can search “Heinrich Schmidt’s” room as well as those of the other Germans. The other Germans have thoroughly cleaned their own rooms, but did not force the lock on Herr Gruber’s to avoid drawing too much attention to themselves.

Herr Gruber’s room contains a number of interesting clues, and it is quickly obvious that the investigators have found the murderer’s lair. On the floor slipped under the door is an envelope sealed in black wax. This contains a handwritten note, in Icelandic. The contents of the note are provided in *Higher than Truth, Investigator Handout #2*.

Freyja Gallai Sanctum assumed that the Germans would find and remove the note, delivering it to its intended recipient, with its nature serving as an implicit threat of exposure. She miscalculated, as the Germans beat a very hasty retreat. *Comparing the handwriting on the note to the handwriting in the Dagbok Cybele (either the version found at the Third*

Cloister, or the one at the cult’s seaside sanctuary (below), reveals that the handwriting matches. This strongly suggests that the presumably late and perhaps not lamented Freyja Gallai Sanctum is the author.

Investigator Handout #2— Handwritten Note to “Olaf Ulfsson” from “F.G.S.”, in Icelandic

Olaf Ulfsson—were these dogs anyone but yours, I would feed each of your manhoods to the Goddess. Instead, I have only neutered this cur; pray put the others on a tighter leash. I will not have them befouling my yard with their blasphemous efforts to ascend on the sacrifice of others. Next time, I will not be so forgiving. F.G.S.

This should get the investigators chatting on the topic of why they assumed that apparently long-lived beings were no longer living, and wondering where they are. It also serves as a handy confession to the murder of Herr Gruber, if only they can find the perpetrator.

Other noteworthy things in the boardinghouse room include:

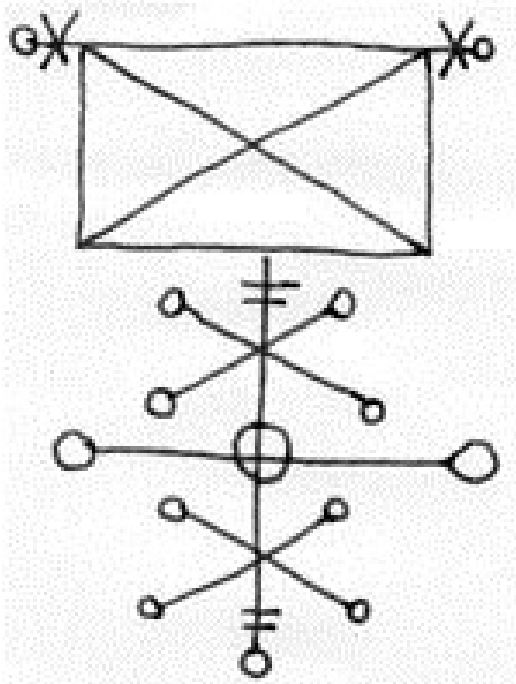
1. The smell. Those familiar with the smell of chloroform easily identify it. An open bottle has rolled under the bed.
2. Much of the room is askew, as though there had been a struggle. The room has not been cleaned (since Hanni was ambushed and chloroformed before she had a chance to clean it).
3. A journal (well concealed in a pouch taped to the roof of the closet; *Spot Hidden*). The journal is in German and its content is summarized in *Higher Than Truth, Investigator Handout #3*.
4. Dual sets of German identity documents, one in the name of Heinrich Schmidt (forgery) and another in the name of Hans Gruber (real).

5. Finally, an odd black candle. About the size of a beer bottle, it is inlaid with a variety of unidentifiable symbols and runes. When lit, it produces a heady, consciousness-expanding smoke. (This is used in the *Candle Communication* spell, allowing secure remote communication between holders of matching lit candles).

The candle matches numerous others that are typically lit at a prearranged time by the various cabal members to meet and discuss matters privately. This one will not be of any use to the investigators until later in the campaign, as the Gesellschaft will switch to another “frequency” once Gruber’s cover is blown.

Research into the “Vril Society” requires a successful *Critical Occult* roll, either on the part of the investigators or on the part of a knowledgeable occultist that they might consult with (such as at the Reykjavik Theosophy Society). What they might know or be able to glean is discussed in *Higher than Truth, Investigator Handout #4*.

By the time they are finished with Gruber’s room, the investigators should have a broad overview of what the campaign is about.



Higher Than Truth, Investigator Handout #3—Hans Gruber’s Journal

Herr Gruber is a frustrated German army veteran with a racist worldview and delusions of grandeur. He fancies himself a wizard, but consistently fails at his various projects. Gruber is in Iceland in the company of thirty or so others, all members of something called the “Thule Gesellschaft.” The group believes that there are mystical secrets to be plumbed from the “remnants of Atlantis”, which remnants lie in “the Inner City at the Magnetic Poles.” Gruber seems convinced that the “ancient Atlanteans” are the “true forbearers” of the German people and will “support their glorious cause.”

It is evident that Gruber is a junior member of the organization. The leader, Horst Schmidt also belongs to a subgroup known as the “Vril Society”, of which Gruber says nothing specific. They have aligned themselves with one “Olaf Ulfsson”, and are seeking the Inner City together. So far, they have had no luck, and are “missing a piece to the puzzle.” Other, more senior members are in “Ulfsson’s confidence” and have “learned ancient theosophist lore” from him, although at an unspecified “horrible price.” Gruber is angry and bitter that he was not offered the chance. He has been studying “the rites of Ulfsson’s Goddess” to “grab immortality like Ulfsson’s favorites without paying the price himself.” He plots to merge Icelandic witchcraft with perversions of Cybelian rituals to achieve immortality, and is convinced that this will work (for a change).

The journal takes 8 hours to read, and a successful *Read German* roll. +1% to *Cthulhu Mythos*, +5% to *Icelandic Witchcraft*, and one spell available: *Steal Life* (variant, requiring the entire hilltop ritual to be recreated).

**Higher Than Truth, Investigator
Handout #4, "The Vril Society"**

A few, very knowledgeable persons running in late 1920s occult circles may have heard rumors about something called the Vril Society. Based in Berlin, the Vril Society's objective is to awaken the forces of a mysterious race known as the "Vril." Like Thule, which the Gesellschaft believed to be beneath modern Iceland, the Vril Society likewise believed that the "Vril" could be found in the "Hollow Earth" underneath Iceland.

The "Vril" (or "Vril-ya") are a fictional race of beings said to dwell in a "Hollow Earth" in an 1870 science fiction novel entitled The Coming Race, by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. The Vril were said to be energy beings that resembled angels, and are the remnants of a fallen prehistoric civilization that continued to exist and evolve in subterranean caverns. The Vril were said to be incredibly powerful; a few of them could easily wipe out a city if they were of a mind to. The Vril wielded a sort of "death-staff", which could supposedly destroy, heal, cure or rend matter.

The Vril Society believes that the Vril are not fictional at all. The "existence" of the Vril was seized upon by Mme. Blavatsky in her theosophist writings to support her claims of mystical guidance. Indeed, later theosophist writers proposed that the fallen civilization of Atlantis had run its supposed "miracle machines" (including flying saucers) on Vril energy.

The Vril Society is rumored to be undertaking expeditions in Tibet and Iceland in the hope of finding an opening to the "Hollow Earth." They believe that the Vril will grant gifts of great power to those who gain their favor. The occult mainstream thinks that the Society is completely daffy.

6. *The Reykjavik Theosophy Society:*

Many of the investigative trails inexorably lead to this building. The Society owns a building in the main commercial district, with shops below and the lodge rooms above. One room (the lodge room itself, on the third floor) is only open to members; several other rooms on the second floor are open to guests and amount to a private club with a coffeehouse on premises.

Since the investigators have official sanction, they will not have any difficulty in gaining access to the club level rooms. The odd collection of national and municipal political figures, intellectuals and occult oddballs that mingle here will be generally cooperative. Some know more about theosophy than others, and some take it more seriously than others.

The first thing that will doubtlessly get the investigators' attention is *the life-sized statue* to the side of the main entrance. It depicts the Magna Mater, Cybele, enthroned with her usual attributes (including two life-sized stone lions). The feet of the lion statues are muddy and the mouths of the statue are stained with gore.

Nothing that the investigators can do will cause them to activate, even if they attempt to smash the statues (which the police and power elite that frequent the Society will not approve of). These are only activated by the command of Freyja Gallai Sanctum.

If the investigators are slow on the uptake, or if you chose not to run *Turn to Stone* before this, one of the more knowledgeable members of the Society (or an *Occult* roll) can divulge rumors that the most blasphemous affronts to the Magna Mater were sometimes dealt with by setting lions on the offender, and that to devote oneself to the Magna Mater and rise in her service, men would sacrifice their manhood to be figuratively reborn.

No one readily at hand knows where the statue came from originally, only that it was a gift that came with the erection of the building around 1880.



Some of the more oddball members of the Society can assist the investigators with any missed *Occult* or *Archaeology* rolls previously referenced in the scenario. These include those associated with the faux *taurobolium*, the staves of power, the Thule Gesellschaft, Vril Society, “Hollow Earth”/Inner City at the Magnetic Poles, and the provenance of the sacrificial dagger. No one knows where any entrance to the “Hollow Earth” might actually be—that’s all just speculation, after all.

One thing that no one will have any concrete idea about, however, is what Herr Gruber might have been trying to do with his mish-mash of rituals. In particular, the significance of the abused *draumstafir* will elude this polite society. However, they will know someone who the investigators might ask. In order to get this information, however, under the laws of the lodge, they will have to become at least initiate members, since this would involve disclosing the identity of a lodge member who is not present.

The investigators might be surprised at how seriously this lodge rule is taken, even in the face of a murder mystery. The lodge members are quite insistent, and their attitudes quickly turn uncooperative and/or downright offended as to investigators who pooh-pooh or resist the idea.

Assuming that one or more investigators play along, an initiation can be quickly arranged. This is a vital piece of insight into the motivations of the various players in the campaign, so bend events to ensure that at least one investigator joins.

The investigator is changed into a sackcloth shift and has his (or her) face painted with ashes. Blindfolded, he is made to crawl (with the assistance of a friendly guide) up to a closed door. The guide vouches at the door for the bona fides of “Brother” (or “Sister”) (first name of the investigator). The candidate is asked if they seek true enlightenment and will keep the secrets of the Lodge, on pain of death.

Assuming that they agree, the candidate is allowed to stand, and is guided around the lodge to six stations, where similar challenges are made. Ultimately, the candidate is guided to the seventh station at the center of the lodge floor, where an altar with a number of symbolic items (Bible, three lit candles, copy of *The Secret Doctrine*, etc.) are stationed. The candidate swears again to keep the secrets of the Lodge and, if all goes well, is admitted to initiate status by unanimous acclaim. (If anyone objects, the candidate is re-blindfolded and removed).

Each successful candidate is taught the password for a first level initiate (“one path, seven steps”) and a secret handshake. They are then given a “Theosophy 101” lecture by the lodge’s master. The initiation lecture (which is secret and not to be discussed with non-initiates) is summarized at *Higher than Truth, Investigator Handout #5*.

Higher Than Truth, Investigator Handout #5—Initiation Lecture

The basic tenet of theosophy is that there is one universal truth, of which all existing religions are equally valid (or invalid) efforts to understand. Theosophists believe that religion and philosophy are tools to get at this universal truth, which is ultimately achieved by **unmediated individual enlightenment**. Priests are unnecessary but are helpful guides; everyone is ultimately on their own journey to understand the godhead.

Theosophy is egalitarian: everyone is welcome regardless of race, creed or color. Theosophy believes in reincarnation. Humanity occupies a high level in a karmic chain of reincarnation, but it is not the final step. It is possible for human beings to further “ascend” in the chain of reincarnation, with the next step being that of the “ascended master”, someone revered by all or most of their culture.

Everything, theosophy posits, goes through seven reincarnation cycles (the “sevenfold path”), from people to rocks to societies. Degree of enlightenment dictates the end result of a particular entity’s current incarnation.

As applied to civilization, theosophy posits that modern society (like modern humanity) is in its “Fifth” epoch, by reference to certain “root races” which have come and gone in history. In the First Age, pre-human society was primordial and pure in spirit (“ethereal” or “Thule”). It evolved through the Second Age (Hyperborea), Third Age (Lemuria), and the Fourth Age (Atlantis). Each of these ages culminated in a cataclysm that threw society back into a state of comparative barbarism but laid the foundation for further ascension.

Reincarnation cycles for individual souls likewise follow a sevenfold path: **Sthula-sarira**, an unrefined state; **Linga-sarira**, a transitional, “ethereal” state; **Prana**, life and self-awareness; **Kama**, self-determinism, in which a person is good or evil based how he exerts his will; **Manas**, consciousness, the state at which most humans are at. Evil drifts an entity back toward kama when reincarnated; good drifts one forward toward buddhi; **Buddhi**, the state at which the individual is able to intuitively discern between good and evil, because of their accumulated wisdom. Such a person is loved universally; and **Atman**, or pure consciousness, a stage which when achieved results in cosmic unity of mind and soul with all others.

Thus, in order to transcend to status as a **mahatma**, or an “ascended master”, one must achieve profound, iconic status within one’s society. “Mahatmas” include Jesus, Confucius, Comte de St. Germain, Buddha, and the Virgin Mary. This is what everyone is consciously or unconsciously striving for, particularly the enlightened of the theosophy movement.

Hidden remnants of the fallen Atlantean civilization are said to dwell in the subterranean city of **Shambhala**, (also known as The Inner City at the Magnetic Poles, or the “Hollow Earth”) guarded by a “White Lodge” of mahatmas. Like all preceding civilizations, the Atlanteans largely perished in a cataclysm, but were (when they fell) a highly advanced civilization with advanced science and profound philosophical insight. An entrance to Shambhala is believed to be hidden in the mountains of Tibet, and another somewhere in Iceland. Shambhala is said to be both a physical and a spiritual place, achievable only through a combination of physical travel and spiritual enlightenment.

Assuming that at least one of the investigators allows himself to be initiated, he is invited to a private gathering at which “more controversial” topics of theosophy are debated. This happens every Saturday

evening at (yet another) coffeehouse in the University District.

This subgroup of the lodge, calling itself the **Icelandic Society for Theosophical Inquiry**, is comprised of some of the most oddball

occultists in the lodge, and is headed by Sif Eiriksdottir, a young medium and spiritualist.

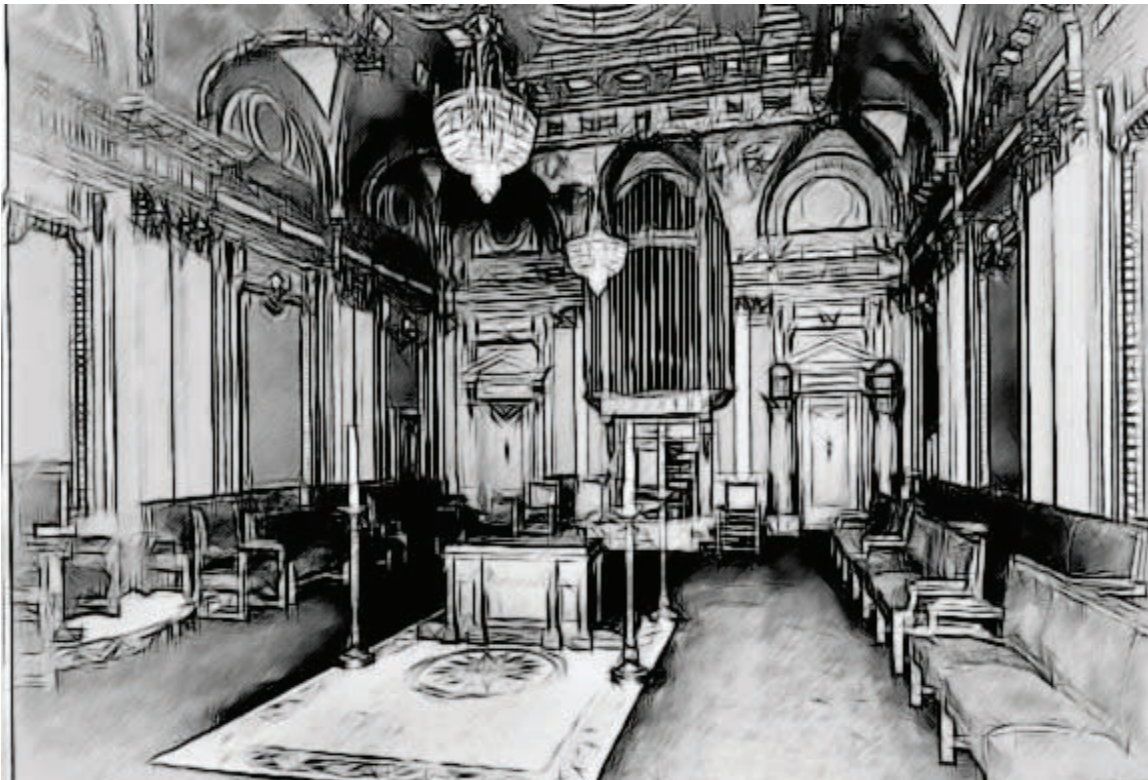
While the more mainstream members of the lodge think that this splinter group is weird and off-base, everyone is impressed by Sif. Some of the occultists in the lodge think that Sif is the “real deal” in terms of having psychic abilities, and note that she comports herself as a traditional Norse *volva*, or soothsayer. The more mainstream members describe her as being very smart, well-mannered, and well spoken. It is clear that she is politically active and in the good graces of many important Icelandic political figures, who see her as a source of general good advice.

7. The Icelandic Society for Theosophical Inquiry (Black Hats)/Interview, Sif Eiriksdottir

The public meetings of this Society occur at a public coffeehouse in the University

District. The private meetings of some of the most knowledgeable members of this Society occur at a remote seaside hideout, accessible via a *Gate* in the Old Cemetery in Reykjavik, but the investigators will not be invited guests at those.

The crowd at either of these sorts of meetings is quite different than the blue bloods, academics and poseurs at the “downtown lodge,” as they derisively refer to it. Sif Eiriksdottir (a member of both lodges) leads this scene, accompanied by a few of the other “serious” occultists. The rest are comprised of rebellious youth, cigarette smoking Communist agitators, self-professed witches, and a clutch of (undercover) Magna Mater worshippers. These include women, men, a couple of *gallai* and a *gallai sanctum* or two. Each lives a life as some sort of spiritual or social thinker: professor, philosopher, fortune-teller, *etc.* There are typically a couple dozen people at the public meetings. Secret cult meetings are discussed below.



The Lodge Room of the Reykjavik Theosophy Society

The ostensible function of the public meetings is to discuss “more serious topics” than are discussed at “downtown lodge” gatherings. While they serve that purpose, they are also networking events for the Magna Mater worshippers as well as recruitment grounds for the “real” cult.

Sif is a striking young woman (seemingly), and is clearly very confident and self-assured. She is expecting the investigators, and the investigators receive a cordial reception. (Recall that this is actually Freyja Gallai Sanctum, high priestess of the Magna Mater, in a borrowed form).



Sif Eiriksdottir

The investigators have questions, and she will answer them...for a price. She is a *volva*, she explains, and *hidden knowledge is never free*. This is a valuable lesson for society to learn, she insists, and she makes no exceptions. Fortunately for the investigators, in public, she only asks for significant sums of cash or a “favor” to be repaid later.

Potential subjects of inquiry follow (over and above those already discussed above). Sif can answer any of the questions that might have been put to other people previously, and can provide thoughtful and

detailed answers on such things as the worship of the Magna Mater.

She publicly denies ever having heard of medieval era Magna Mater worship in Iceland, the Third Cloister, Olaf Ulfsson, the Cthulhu Mythos, or anything else directly incriminating. She does not deny venerating the Magna Mater, but will defend this with a typically Theosophist recitation of the validity of all religions as efforts to understand the truth from different angles.

What is the significance of the draumstafir done in blood? “Some fool was trying to cheat his way to ascension”. (She puts it just like that). The only way to truly ascend is to become a paragon of virtue. Some people think that by sacrificing the souls of others, one can aggrandize oneself by comparison and thereby advance. Perhaps you become more powerful for a while, but eventually, karma catches up with you, and when you die, you regress that much farther from true enlightenment.

The *draumstafir* is a rune intended to help make dreams come true. Sif supposes that whoever did this thought that doing it in sacrificial blood would increase its power.

What is the significance of the human taurobolium? Sif imagines that it is much the same as the *draumstafir*. “Some fool was trying to take a dubious, heretical ritual reflecting a perversion of Magna Mater worship and pervert it further in an effort to enhance his life”. (Again, she puts it just like that).

What do you know about the Thule Gesellschaft, Vril Society, or their activities in Iceland? She can provide the information about the Gesellschaft in *Higher than Truth, Investigator Handout #1*, and about the Vril Society in *Higher than Truth, Investigator Handout #4*. She believes that the Gesellschaft exists; she (honestly) does not know if the Vril Society is real (and if they are, they need to read more history and less science fiction).

It “would not surprise” her to learn that German operatives are working in Iceland

for a variety of purposes, but as far as she is concerned, “Iceland is for Icelanders.” (While she knows that Olaf is employing some German flunkies, she does not know exactly what he is up to, and as demonstrated by her elimination of Herr Gruber, sees them as lowly guests who had better not overstay their welcome. She knows Olaf means to ascend but assumes that he is acting legitimately and that Gruber was a rogue operative. She is not dumb, though, and is beginning to get suspicious, which is why she is helping the investigators, within limits--she needs cat’s paws).

Do you know how to find the Inner City at the Magnetic Poles/Shambhala/the “Hollow Earth”? She does not, nor does she wish to learn. If such a place existed, she wonders aloud, what would I possibly learn there? How to make this society more like that of fallen Atlantis? Why should anyone want to learn that? After centuries of oppression and poverty, *Iceland* is ascending. Centuries of patience and right thinking have borne fruit. If you learn nothing else, she cautions, remember that there is always a steep price for hidden knowledge. What do you think the price would be for some magical “death staff,” of the sort written about by Bulwer-Lytton in his story?

8. Interview, Kristjan Kristjansson or Newspaper Research

“Kristjan”: While all of this is going on, “Kristjan”, intrepid reporter for the *Morgunblaðið* daily newspaper, will be pestering the investigators for comments, showing up at investigation scenes, and generally following them around. Olaf Ulfsson, posing as “Kristjan,” has (verifiably) been employed at the paper for a few years; this provides him a platform from which to nose around the affairs of society without seeming out of place. He presently appears as a typically Icelandic looking blond, seemingly in his mid-20s, clean

shaven. This is, incidentally, not his true appearance. His true form is as depicted in the icons at the Third Cloister: dark, scruffy, ugly and bearded.

Subtly have Kristjan/Olaf only tend to show up when he can do so without stepping into direct sunlight. He finds the investigators’ interest in Sif/Freyja’s having cleaned up his “loose cannon” amusing, and so will actually (albeit cautiously, and while maintaining his cover) nudge them in the right direction. He is curious to see what they do with her, if and when they realize who she might be.

Archives: While the *Morgunblaðið* was only founded in 1913, the paper keeps archives of other Icelandic publications from earlier, including news reported in other, international papers. This includes the mid-to-late 19th Century weekly publication *Þjóðólfur*, which (**Library Use** roll while in the archives, assuming competency in Icelandic) contains an 1880 article about the dedication of the lodge building. Of course, Kristjan is a helpful guy when he puts his mind to it, and might just stumble across it.

Initially strictly a Masonic affair, the dedication article (in Icelandic, of course) gives the origin of the statute of Cybele out front. There is a group photo of some people at the ribbon-cutting, including a youngish woman identified as Cecilia Haakonsdottir, a secretary to the regional bishop. Cecilia’s organization, the Daughters of the Mountain, are credited with the donation, which is described not as Cybele but a representation of the Icelandic national emblem, the Lady of the Mountain.

Further research in newspaper archives may (**Library Use** rolls, again assuming competency in Icelandic) leads to some interesting discoveries. The Daughters of the Mountain were a respected charity/pro-Icelandic independence movement active in for about 20 years in the late 1800s. A few years beforehand, there is a reference to a police investigation for one Cecilia Haakonsdottir, a rebellious child and suspected runaway. She was missing for

about a week before she was found along the side of the road, dirty and dishevelled, and reporting that she had been lost in the mountains.

Strangely (and not coincidentally), around 1914 (*Library Use* in *Morgunblaðið* archives, Icelandic competency required) the exact same thing happened to a rowdy young teenager named Sif Eiríksdóttir. And circa 1860 (*Library Use* while in the *Þjóðólfur*, archives, assuming competency in Icelandic) to a young wastrel named Krista Lonsdóttir, who later became a newspaper writer and agitator for left-wing political movements. Sadly, news sources earlier than this are irregular.

9. Tracking the Other Direction (RTS to Cemetery) & Other Clues

On a hunch, the investigators might decide to have a general look around town (either with the scent hound, or without) to see if they can pick up either blood or shifting carnivore tracks elsewhere. They have no look with blood, but on a successful *Track* roll, looking west from the statue's base at the Reykjavík Theosophy Society, they might find some headed toward the old 19th century cemetery just north of the University District.

Looking around the cemetery, they might (*Track* roll) find a considerably well-tracked area within the cemetery, and leading on out to the southeast (toward the crime scene). The portion of the cemetery where the heavily tracked area lies is heavily, darkly forested and well out of sight and sound of the streets. (The Old Cemetery in Reykjavík is mostly full by the late 1920s and is truly a dark, creepy place. Whereas most of Reykjavík is open space, open hills or scrub forest at most, the cemetery is roughly a square kilometer of old growth, primeval forest, cut through with narrow winding footpaths and clashing styles of ground tombs, cairns and monuments).

Putting a tail on Sif Eiríksdóttir is perhaps not the best idea; she is cagey and a thousand or so years old. Putting a tail on

one of her rebellious, scowling, youthful followers is much easier. Assuming that Herr Gruber met his demise on March 16th, the best day to track members of Sif's inner circle is March 24th. (An *Occult* roll reminds the investigators that March 24th is the high holy day of the Magna Mater, when new worshippers are initiated). This leads the investigators to this same part of the cemetery. See the *Grotto in the Cemetery* section, below, for what awaits them there.

Should the investigators stoop to some kind of ruse to obtain a sample of Sif's handwriting (without her being aware of their efforts), it will match both the note under Gruber's door and the *Dagbok Cybele*. As will that of her various former identities, should legal documents or other exemplars be cleverly located.



10. The Grotto in the Cemetery

The investigators will eventually determine that the old cemetery is being used as a rendezvous. The tracking effort is the primary clue; discretely tailing some of Sif Eiriksdottir's adherents leads to the same result. In case the investigators are still not grasping how the cult functions, trailing one of the few (apparent) women in the circle is by far more likely to bear fruit.

The still functioning cult of the Magna Mater still meets and worships their dark goddess. The meeting site is far away from prying eyes, hundreds of miles north of Reykjavik, at an isolated seaside homestead.

The hideout is accessed by a *Gate* located in a crypt in the cemetery. The crypt is one of many in the general vicinity of the heavily tracked area. In order to access the *Gate*, one must meet a number of qualifications. First, one must be female or a eunuch, or accompanied by one (holding onto them). Second, one must have been initiated into, and pledged to keep the secrets of, the theosophical movement. (Fortunately, one or more of the investigators should qualify). Finally, one must be carrying (or

accompanied by someone carrying) a *holast* staff (door opener). See pp. 33-34.

Investigators lying in wait as people that they have been following approach and enter the crypt will see them produce a silver charm with the sign engraved on it, so all that they have to do is mug one of them, or grab someone and force them to allow the investigators to tag along. They will also, regardless of the state of the weather in Reykjavik, be dressed for cold conditions. Any intact men will have to be led by the hand by a woman or eunuch. As long as they do not mug someone about to go through a rite of passage, the mugging victim is not likely to be missed, since attendance is not required.

Inside, the crypt appears rather ordinary, but it is difficult to see through to the back (if one is qualified to transit the *Gate*). One walks along fumbling for the back wall, only to suddenly get very cold and emerge at the edge of a cold, windswept, dark shoreline, coming out of a standing circle of stones. Ahead, just at the edge of sight near the shore, is a small farmstead. Transiting through the *Gate* costs 1 SAN and 2 M.P.s. One can (under the same conditions) turn around and retreat back through the *Gate*.



There is a great deal of statuary in the cemetery. None of it is magically animated, but the investigators do not need to have that explained to them.

Sif Eiriksdottir maintains an apartment in Reykjavik, but should the investigators somehow manage to gain access to it, it is rather unremarkable. Her country home is where the more interesting things lie.

Assuming that the investigators have trailed some celebrants or accompanied a captured celebrant, what kind of ceremony they find getting underway depends on how badly you want to shock them. Possibilities include:

Initiation Ceremony, Aborted: There is a great deal of drinking, dancing, shouting and self-flagellation around a bonfire, combined with a lot of shouted prayers to the Magna Mater and Attis, in Icelandic, Greek or both.

Finally, one of the men present (who would have been led through the **Gate**) is asked if he wants to pledge himself to the service of the Magna Mater. He initially agrees, but after he is disrobed and handed a sharp stone, he balks. Sif Eiriksdottir is disappointed, but simply allows him to leave.

(This may come as a shock to the investigators, but it is completely on the up and up. Having this occur helps blur the lines of morality nicely, especially if the ceremony continues with another initiate).

Initiation Ceremony, Completed: Things progress as above, but this time, among much shouting and praising, the initiate castrates himself with the aforementioned sharp stone, and flings the removed bits into the fire pit. The others present administer medical treatment. SAN loss 0/1. (It is of course possible to combine the foregoing, which will have both a shocking effect as well as lending a morally ambiguous cast to the whole affair).

Gallai Sanctum Ceremony: This is the horrific ceremony that will probably force the investigators into action. (It is possible to combine it with the preceding for a really gruesome package). After all other celebrations are complete, many of the celebrants leave back through the **Gate**; only a few hardcore faithful (all *gallai sanctum*) and one who is about to become hardcore remain.

All remaining celebrants strip (all but one of whom is bizarrely genderless and lion-tattooed) and the debauchery reaches a new level of frenzy. (SAN loss 1/1d3). The candidate is lost under a squirming, gnashing, frenzied pile of screaming flesh, and the celebrants begin to rend and devour him or her alive (SAN loss 1/1d6). At which point, sadly for the investigators, a foul, sickly sweet smell begins to permeate the entire area, and **Shub-Niggurath herself swirls and manifests in the clearing**. SAN loss 1d10/1d100.



The scattered pieces of the new initiate are lovingly vacuumed up by the goddess' maws, except for the genitalia, which are cast into the bonfire. After a minute of gurgling and churning, the new *gallai sanctum* is vomited forth in a mostly reassembled fashion, and "unmediated" congress with the goddess continues for a while longer. Eventually the goddess fades away, and then the tattooing kit is broken out by Freyja Gallai Sanctum. (SAN loss for the latter part of the ceremony is 1/1d6).

If the investigators manage to hide in the rocks until it is over and everyone leaves, they can have a look around. What appears on the outside to be a summer cottage is actually decked out as a shrine and temple to the Magna Mater. The iconography is much the same as at the Third Cloister, and the

current, up to date version of the *Dagbok Cybele* is on a table to the side of the inevitable statue of Cybele. Pertinent notes on the modern *Dagbok* appear in ***Higher than Truth, Investigator Handout #6***.

Other noteworthy features include: a supply of the silver *holast* charms; a set of Lions of the Mother statues (not yet enchanted); a selection of ***Icelandic Witchcraft*** texts and raw materials (grants skill checks in ***Occult*** and ***Icelandic Witchcraft***); and a variety of semi-improved residence attributes in the side barn (cots, portable stove, a fishing skiff, durable supplies, a medical kit, a short-wave radio, etc.).

While there are also some of the black communications candles, these are carefully hidden in a hollow down by the shore, well away from the property.

Higher Than Truth, Investigator Handout #6—Additional Information From the Updated Version of the *Dagbok Cybele*

This version picks up from the abandonment of the Third Cloister c. 1550 A.D. and continues to the modern day, all in the same handwriting of "Freyja Gallai Sanctum". It is apparent that:

- While some members of the Third Cloister scattered out of Iceland, Freyja Gallai Sanctum and a small core of adherents did not;
- Freyja Gallai Sanctum has quietly carried on in the intervening centuries;
- She continues to be an advocate for free will and freedom of religion, which has translated into support for Icelandic nationalism and independence over the centuries;
- She has worked within society as some era-appropriate, quasi-religious firebrand, adopting a new guise every generation or so;
- She continues to recruit both new *gallai* and new *gallai sanctum* to the fold of the Magna Mater, but only those who join of their own (relatively) free will;
- The guises that she adopts each generation are those of willing worshippers. The ritual is described: both Freyja and her new body are torn apart by the celebrants, devoured by the Magna Mater, and a combined being (with the memories of the new addition, but thoroughly dominated by Freyja), is "reborn" from the goddess;
- Olaf Ulfsson returned to Iceland several years ago. She is in regular correspondence with him, but does not know "how he presently appears";
- She has only a vague idea of what he is up to. He claims that he is tired of his existence and wishes to "ascend." He has formed his own circle of Magna Mater worshippers, all men, mostly Thule Gesellschaft adherents from Germany. Several of these have become *gallai sanctum*. She isn't thrilled with this.
- She does not trust Olaf Ulfsson, but because he is the "blessed of the goddess", feels like she must help him as she can. Her distrust of Olaf has grown recently as a result of how "that Gruber fellow blasphemed against the goddess, trying to ascend at the expense of another."

Note that nothing that the investigators might find in the cabin is hard evidence of a court-friendly sort, although the *Dagbok* is certainly suggestive of past assisted suicides and general icky goings-on and that Freyja knew of Gruber and had a motive to kill him.

Should the investigators decide to attempt to return to Reykjavik through conventional means of travel, they discover that they are on the extreme northwest coast of Iceland. The Ring Road is 20 miles southwest by sea or overland, with no connecting road or even trail. The nearest small farming village is another 20 miles, and Reykjavik is about 200 miles south. On the plus side, that means that the cultists are not really expecting any company coming from anywhere other than through the *Gate*, and they think that base is well-covered.

11. Confrontation?

And so, at the end of the clue trail, the investigators will know that Herr Gruber was a no-good wizardly schnook, and that someone has saved the state a prison bill.

They will know how it was accomplished (via magic lion statues), and have a strong case (including a written confession) that an ancient sorceress named Freyja Gallai Sanctum was responsible. They will also have a strong case (to those with open minds) that Sif Eiriksdottir is, somehow, Freyja Gallai Sanctum.

Legally, though, it is a poor case. Apart from the handwriting evidence, there is very little that will hold up in court, and even that is more embarrassing than jury-friendly.

And so, once again, the investigators have a difficult choice to make. Do they eliminate Freyja Gallai Sanctum? Good luck with that. However, if they appear to be winning some kind of assault (or realistically capable of winning), she and her adherents surrender(!) putting the investigators into a very awkward position. She allows herself to be taken into custody for as long as is necessary to use her sorcerous powers to

escape. Then she does escape, changes her identity again, and goes underground.

Do they persuade the police to arrest her on suspicion of murder, while downplaying the whole ancient sorceress thing? Again, she nominally denies her guilt. She hires a lawyer to mock the idea that she magically animated statues to kill some foreign wizard, produces people who have known her as Sif Eiriksdottir for her whole life, and dismisses the handwriting as a coincidence. If somehow confronted with a “pre-merger” sample of Sif Eiriksdottir’s very different handwriting (old school papers?), she escapes from custody, adopts a new identity, and goes underground.

It is possible that the investigators may simply ask to have a private chat with her. “Sif’s” bottom lines, barring assault or efforts at arrest, are:

- 1) what clever investigators you fellows are;
- 2) you cannot prove anything;
- 3) this “Freyja Gallai Sanctum” has not done anything to anyone against their will, except for a blasphemous murderer of innocent girls; and
- 4) assuming, for the sake of argument, that I am some ancient sorceress who eliminated some murdering, blaspheming cretin, who are you to judge me—what kinds of monsters have you killed in your careers?
- 5) And as to Olaf Ulfsson, she is not sure (for the sake of argument) what that one is up to, but he’s far worse than you think me to be. That one has no compunctions about anything. He probably looks little like himself, and she has no idea where he is, other than in Reykjavik somewhere. Assuming that he ever existed, of course.

Rewards and Repercussions: If the investigators do manage to figure out who killed Herr Gruber and why it was done, award each 1d6 SAN. If they smash the Lions of the Mother statues, award another 1d6 SAN. Finally, despite her rhetoric, Freyja Gallai Sanctum is creating immortal monstrosities, and one can certainly argue

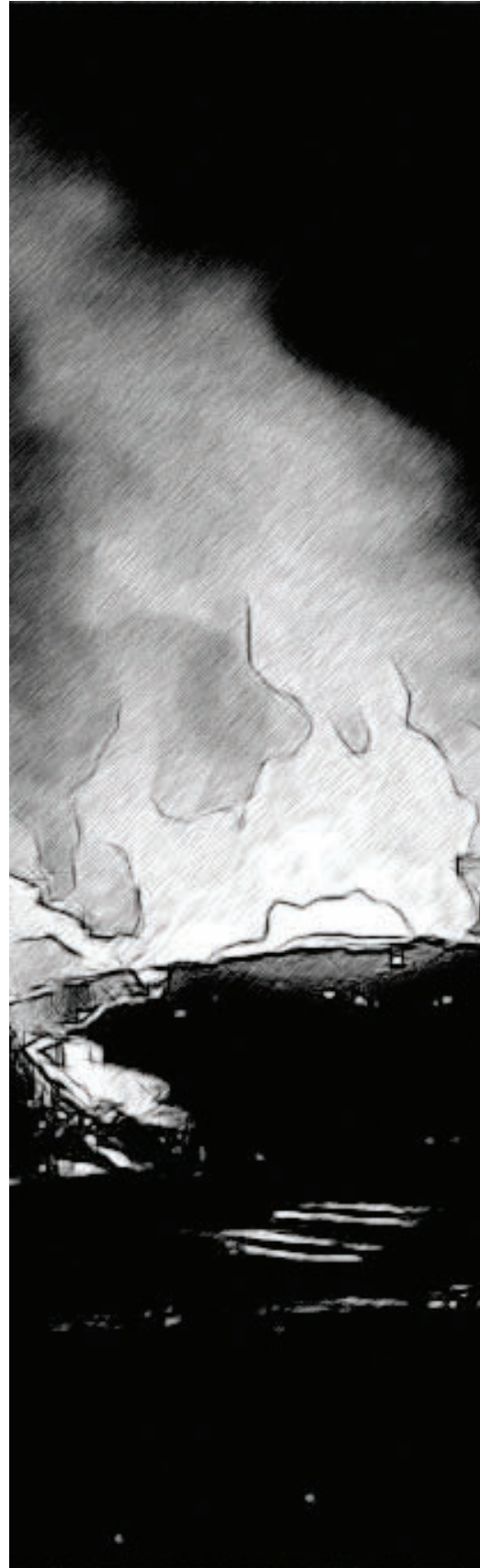
that young women being lured in by ancient sorcerers and submerging their identities are dealing at less than arm's length. Award 1d6 SAN for any serious effort to eliminate or incarcerate Freyja Gallai Sanctum, even if (as is likely) she escapes or talks her way out of being eliminated.

12. Foreshadowing the Future

One of the themes of this campaign concerns reincarnation cycles, and there are structural themes to each scenario which are deliberately repetitive:

- The investigators are confronted with something connected with the worship of the Magna Mater;
- The investigators have to undergo a transformation of sorts to obtain the answers that they seek;
- Whether or not the threats that they encounter are dangerous depends upon their point of view;
- Avoiding direct conflict with the Magna Mater advances them toward their goal;
- At the end of their journey, they are confronted with a door (both metaphorical and literal);
- Beyond the door lies enlightenment, but there is a price to be paid;
- The investigators have a real choice to make about what to do with what lies beyond the door.

Feel free to reinforce the repetitive, cyclical nature of the scenarios in a more detail-oriented way. Have it rain (a nice symbol of change) when the scenario begins. Have the same NPC crop up at the same point in each scenario. Have the same waitress serve them coffee on the first day, and then be missing on the second. Bother them with the same dream, involving a spiral staircase. Pester them with recurring images of wheels, swirls, clouds, and stories about the same, long missing girl named Lani Jonsdottir. Do it until they get the point.



Desire Made Manifest, the Third Scenario

In this scenario, Olaf Ulfsson makes his move to find and plumb the secrets of Shambhala. It is transitional and action oriented. The ambush scene in Kirkja is potentially very deadly, so give some thought as to how to approach it, in particular, how the investigators might spot it and turn the tables.

1. Keeper's Overview

The investigators will be invited to a soiree at the Reykjavik Theosophy Society. Prof. Arne Sigurdsson has a grand revelation that he wants to announce to assembled members of the Lodge at 8 P.M. on June 17th. It is important that the soiree be on June 17th, although the year is not important. As a result, some time may have elapsed between segments. (The preceding one, if you stuck to the calendar, occurred in March). The matter is highly confidential and Arne will not discuss it outside of the Lodge.

Arne fails to show up. He is murdered en route, in the middle of the street, by Olaf Ulfsson via several summoned *ylidheem*, Hyperborean-era cold elementals. Olaf gives himself a perfect alibi, as the *ylidheem* are summoned from the restroom of the Theosophy Lodge. Meanwhile, Ulfsson's rank and file Thule Gesellschaft goons ransack Arne's office and steal the *Liber Miraculorum*.

Arne foresaw danger and mailed some papers to the investigators via a blind drop. These include a hand copy of the *Liber Miraculorum* and some work-notes on his presentation. Arne has deciphered the *Liber Miraculorum* and the *Dho-Hna Formula* contained within it.

In the immediate aftermath of the murder, Olaf will probably abduct, torture (unsuccessfully) and murder Freyja Gallai Sanctum a.k.a. Sif Eiriksdottir and any remaining members of her inner circle that he can find. This is partly to drag any helpful information out of them about how

to find the Inner City at the Magnetic Poles. This is not the end of Freyja, however, as she is now determined to foil Olaf from beyond the grave. With the variant *Command Ghost* spell (*Interrogate Wizard*) in the *Liber Miraculorum*, they may have a séance with Freyja, who will cooperate with them in finding the Inner City to get even with Olaf.

From there, the investigators travel overland through Iceland, trailing behind Olaf Ulfsson but arriving at the entrance to the Inner City on or near the summer solstice. Olaf may leave behind operatives, both human and not-so-human, in an effort to dissuade any pursuers.

2. Getting Started

It may have been some time since the investigators were last in Iceland. In any case, they receive a written or telegraphed invitation to a speech to be given by their old friend, Prof. Arne Sigurdsson, at the Reykjavik Theosophy Society. To most closely track prior "Hollow Earth" mythos stories, this event should be scheduled to occur on June 17th. Be sure to allow the investigators enough time to travel to Reykjavik, if necessary.

Arne's invitation only mentions "the need for secrecy" and that he has made an "important breakthrough in the matter of the Third Cloister." He is in hiding and his office staff does not know where he is. They know that he had been working on reviewing and copying (personally) an ancient book, spending long hours alone in his office. It is possible that the investigators will somehow find and insist on confronting Arne upon arrival in Reykjavik. He insists on revealing his discovery only at the Lodge, and seems concerned that there is nowhere else safe that he can talk. If the investigators are body-guarding him on the walk there, they get to witness his murder, and/or be victims themselves.

3. The Horrific Crime Scene, Part 2

Whether the investigators are with Arne Sigurdsson, shadowing him, or waiting for him at the Lodge as asked, Arne is murdered in broad daylight on his way to the Lodge by a pack of *ylidheem*. (Yes, it is still daylight at 8 P.M. in Reykjavik in June, and in fact, for most of the clock).

How many *ylidheem* are there? However many you think that you need to get the job done in light of potential investigator interference. This is a plot device, not a fair fight, but if the investigators are able to somehow save Arne and/or some bystanders, it does not meaningfully derail matters. There are at least six of them, though, and probably a dozen, and they all go primarily and relentlessly for poor Arne.

The Cold Ones are not the least bit shy about matters: they howl (with multiple resulting SAN checks), swoop right in (with multiple resulting SAN checks), freeze him solid (on a nice night with a temperature around 55 degrees F.), and leave his icy, clutching corpse lying on the sidewalk for all to see. There are numerous terrified witnesses to the freak storm, and the faces and claws within it. They give chase, follow people inside, seep under door cracks, and generally make an all-out assault.

SAN loss (apart from the *ylidheem* themselves, which maxes out at 3 for the howling and 6 for the sight of them) is 1/1d6 for seeing Arne's body. There is nothing of any significance on Arne's person.

Cthulhu Mythos rolls, or appropriate research in Hyperborean-era focused Mythos tomes (e.g., the *Book of Eibon*, the *Liber Miraculorum*) should be allowed to identify the likely attackers, and how to deal with them.

4. Further Research, Part 2

The investigators should be able to quickly deduce that whatever Arne had to say, somebody knew what it was and badly did

not want it out. They took a huge risk to silence him publicly.

Logical courses of investigation include: visiting Arne's office; and asking around the Lodge. Since the Gesellschaft agents find what they are looking for at Arne's office, his home is quiet and undisturbed. Nothing of interest can be found there.

Ylidheem, Free Agent Hyperborean Horrors.

STR NA DEX 21 INT 13 CON NA
POW 16 SIZ 13 Luck 65 Hits: 16.

Damage Bonus: N/A

Move: 50" flying.

Armor: Immune to all physical attacks. Fire harms them at a rate of 2d6 for a torch-sized strike (more for larger fires).

Skills: Dodge 42%, Hide in Snow 90%, Sneak in Snow 90%.

Attacks: Freezing Touch 30%, damage frostbite/special. Each successful hit causes the loss of 1d2 CON and 1d2 hit points. For each 5 points of combined CON and HP lost, the victim also loses 1 APP and 1 STR due to widespread frostbite.

Survivors require medical attention; a successful **First Aid** roll heals a single point of CON, STR and HP but no APP. A **Medicine** roll heals 1d3 points of CON, APP, STR and HP. Only one roll each per victim; regaining further health is accomplished only at the rate of 1 week of hospitalization per hit point and attribute lost.

SAN Loss: 0/1d6 to see a Cold One, 0/1d3 to hear the howl of one on the hunt.

Asking around the Lodge: The information available at the Lodge depends on when the investigators arrive, and whom they ask.

If they are at the Lodge, waiting for Arne to arrive, they may notice (**Idea** roll, or **Occult**

roll for any non-initiates) that the Lodge is “open”. (The Lodge apes several Freemasonry rituals, and before official Lodge business is discussed, an opening ritual is performed and all non-members are asked to leave. This is called being “tiled”). However, the Lodge is open, which any of the Lodge members can explain is because certain non-Lodge members have been invited.

This may strike the investigators as odd, since most of the Reykjavik illuminati are members. The investigators may not all be Lodge members, but they probably do not know the entire membership. If they ask around, though, anyone can point out the non-members to them.

There are a few foreign academics present (occult bigwigs from Denmark, London and elsewhere), some of whom might be known to the investigators. Conveniently, the police forces (all three of them) are also present, as well as good old Kristjan Kristjansson, covering the news of the sensational and weird.

Kristjan is in the bathroom at the exact moment of the *ylidheem* summoning and assault, if anyone thinks to sleuth this out. The bathroom is unusually cold for quite some time after the summoning.

It may come up that Kristjan has asked all of the academics similar questions as the investigators will be asking, supposedly as background for a story he is planning on writing about this meeting. In fact, Kristjan arrived an hour before the soiree and was buttonholing everyone he could, once he got wind of the occult-expert heavy guest list.

At the first sound of anything amiss (a scream from the street, word arriving that something has happened to Arne), Kristjan is off to “cover the news story.” In fact, he quickly makes himself scarce no matter what.

Rumors going around the various occult academics in attendance (a likely source for replacement PCs or NPC tagalongs) are that Arne had discovered another archaeological

site of occult significance. (Recall that Arne is an archaeologist, not an occult expert).

One English occult expert that the investigators should be permitted to question, James Allardyce, has information of particular interest. Arne prevailed upon him to use his connections a few months ago among some of the “less reputable” occult circles. Allardyce was able to put Arne in contact with an anonymous group of French mystics calling themselves the “Guild de St. Brendan”, and acted as a go-between. He does not know who the members of the Guild are, only ways to leave messages for them through several go-betweens. (Tracking them down is beyond the scope of this campaign and would take months).

Arne traded a copy of the *Dagbok Cybele* and of *Olaf's Saga* for a rare copy of a book called the *Liber Miraculorum*. This tome dates from 1180 and was written by a French monk, Herbert of Clairvaux. Allardyce has not read it, but knows from his go-between that it is a summary of cataclysm stories, from Mu to Atlantis to the biblical Great Flood, and draws on several lost historical and pseudo-historical sources, including ancient Sumerian texts and Hyperborean “histories” of nameless origin.

And why yes, he was discussing this information with the others in attendance, as early as an hour ago, including that pesky Kristjan reporter fellow. Allardyce's understanding is that Clairvaux attributed the fall of Atlantis to an ancient cataclysm occurring in Iceland, which Clairvaux thought was the site of that fallen empire. He speculates that Arne had discovered an archaeological site bearing on Clairvaux's speculations.

Arne's office: Arne's office is a second crime scene by the time that the investigators arrive. It has been thoroughly trashed and looted by human forces. Anyone present at the time (students, assistants, what have you) have been quietly but messily killed—cut throats and the like.

It has been thoroughly looted of anything and everything of any potential occult value.

On an *Idea* roll, or through careful observation, the investigators may deduce two things. First, they might deduce that a sizeable group of people was involved: heavy furniture has been tossed aside, and the amount of damage would have taken a small group an inordinate amount of time. Second, they might deduce that they did find what they were looking for. This is because holes have been knocked in the walls, carpets pulled up and shoved to the side, floorboards smashed in, and the place generally given a thorough going over for secret compartments. A floor safe has been left open. Money, old silver coins, and other obviously valuable things were left on the floor. A surviving staff member can relate that this is where Arne keeps valuable works in progress, likely including whatever that book was that he had been copying.

5. A Drop Off

The next morning (the 18th), the bell desk at the Hotel Borg (or, if they are staying there, another hotel where they are *not* staying) contacts them. The runner has a written note, mildly pissy in tone, wanting to know whether or not the investigators are going to be honoring their reservation.

When the investigators go to look into this phantom reservation, they discover that Arne has reserved them one room at the hotel, no matter how many of them were expected. The reservation was made early on the day of his death, regardless of whether the investigators had already checked in with him.

The room is empty of anything obviously unusual, but left at the reservation desk for them is a package. (Arne assumed that the safest way to keep this hidden was in plain sight at a very public place). Inside the package are a hand copy of the *Liber Miraculorum* (with Norse annotations) and some further notes in imperfect English from Arne. Statistics for this version of the tome are at pp. 40-41. Arne's notes are what need to immediately concern the investigators.

Note that Arne had (or at least betrayed) no idea that Olaf Ulfsson is alive in Reykjavik or has any particular plans. His security concerns were more focused on the Thule Gesellschaft, which he knows to have agents in Iceland from previous chapters.



The Hotel Borg, Reykjavik

Arne's (English) notes and annotations require 3 days to read. The reader gains +2% to Cthulhu Mythos, -1d3 SAN, but they require a successful *Read English* roll (his English is still not the best, but he gets his point across). The following spells are *automatically* learned: *Dho-Hna Formula*, *Interrogate Wizard*. What the investigators are able to glean from Arne's analysis can be found in *Desire Made Manifest, Investigator Handout #1*, nearby.

**Desire Made Manifest, Investigator Handout #1—Summary of Arne’s Analysis of the
*Liber Miraculorum***

The author of the *Liber Miraculorum*, a French monk named Herbert of Clairvaux, posits that civilization has been through numerous cycles, on a spiraling ascent toward ultimate enlightenment (echoing the themes of theosophy). Each cycle ended not just in a cataclysm, but in a *sorcerer-induced cataclysm*, clearing the Earth for a new civilization and resulting in the sorcerer ascending to another plane of existence. (This again parallels basic themes of theosophy, although theosophy would ascribe the ascension of a mahatma to more positive factors than wiping out the world).

Remnants of the preceding civilization always survive, according to Clairvaux, hidden away in vast underground caverns referred to as “Shambhala” or “The Inner City at the Magnetic Poles.” The entrances to Shambhala can be discerned through a complicated ritual referred to as the *Dho-Hna Formula*, which attunes a pilgrim to its emanations. Clairvaux believes that parts of the civilization preceding modern times (Atlantis) were located near what is now Iceland, and that the volcanic island forming Iceland is what spewed forth when the cataclysm that sunk Atlantis was triggered. Clairvaux is deliberately ambiguous about whether Shambhala is a literal “lost city” or a difficult to achieve state of consciousness.

This copy of the tome includes an added chapter, in Icelandic, on the Laki Eruption of 1783. To make a long story short, a medieval wizard named Khanar apparently believed (according to the testimony, under duress, of one of his lackeys afterwards) that he could ascend to a higher plane of existence if *he was the one* who forced the world to transition from one stage of existence to the next. The way to do this, Khanar thought, was to replicate the prior cataclysms which sank Lemuria and Atlantis, and created in turn Atlantis and the modern world. He apparently did not trigger a big enough cataclysm in 1783 to fully get the job done. One of his lackeys confessed that Khanar “did not want to pay the full price asked for.”

Assuming that the *Dho-Hna Formula* leads to a physical place, it is clear from the interrogation of Khanar that the entrance to Shambhala is somewhere near the Laki lava field, in a valley at its western foot. Khanar was apparently able to find it by following the “pull” of the *Dho-Hna Formula* exactly on the summer solstice (June 21st). Arne speculates that other supplementary assistance might be necessary to “find” Shambhala at other times of the year; Clairvaux refers to the “Inner City” as being “out of tune” for much of the year, and “most easily” accessible on the summer solstice. In a pointed note to the investigators, Arne points out that many theosophist writings posit that the Atlantean remnants in Shambhala are fickle, not friendly to the unenlightened, and only deal with people or grant knowledge for a heavy price. The purpose of the soiree at the Lodge was to announce his findings and propose an archaeological expedition to the Mt. Laki area to see what could be found. He expected to find only an archaeological site (somewhere) to dig at, but with all that had happened, was not sure what he might find. He had left himself just enough time, assuming a prompt departure on the 18th, to arrive on the solstice. He was afraid that he was in danger, hence the tradecraft.

The *Dho-Hna Formula* reveals places where dimensional barriers between this world and others are weak. Once successfully cast, it mentally tugs the caster in the direction of the nearest significant weak spot. It lasts until the caster comes within eyeshot of the weakness, which will appear to him as an area of distortion on top of however else it appears. Casting it involves inscribing a complicated, non-Euclidean symbol onto a thin sheet of silver. It takes 1 hour, 1d4 SAN, 4 magic points and the permanent sacrifice of 1 POW. Arne notes that it seems similar to the complicated Staves of Power of Icelandic witchcraft. Out of amusement, Arne also transcribes a ritual for communing with the ghosts of wizards.

The three days that it will take the investigators to read through Arne's notes might give Olaf a three day head start on a race to Mt. Laki. This will have them leaving on the 21st (the solstice) and arriving late on the 23rd (at which point, the entrance to Shambhala may be difficult to find).

This all assumes that they wait, that is, until they are done reading. Without further research, Olaf Ulfsson's involvement is speculative, but this may not deter them. The three days of reading time is the amount of time that it will take to fully read and comprehend Arne's notes and be able to acquire the spells. Cautious investigators will probably wait until their research is complete before blindly striking off to Mt. Laki. Others may rush off to Mt. Laki, ill prepared, reading along the way.

Either approach is a legitimate one. If they prepare cautiously, the investigators may need extra assistance in finding the entrance to Shambhala. Or, you may just decide that they get there "close enough", or that the bodies they will find near the entrance to the cave puts them close enough to stumble onto it.

In any event, the use of conventional travel means that they will not be able to arrive there before Olaf and his flunkies are done with their business. But if you do decide to be a stickler for needing to be there exactly at the solstice without assistance, you should leave enough breadcrumbs to lure them into using *Interrogate Wizard* to interrogate someone smart but dead as to how to stretch the timeframe. This is discussed under *Icelandic Witchcraft, Revisited*, below.

If they immediately take off for Mt. Laki, reading en route, they will arrive in due course late on the day of the solstice, just in time to find the entrance to Shambhala with the *Dho-Hna Formula* standing alone. Holding séances with dead wizards becomes that much more optional. But it can be quite fun and memorable, so you might wish to encourage a "research session" with either Freyja Gallai Sanctum or a random Gesellschaft operative.

Interrogate Wizard (variant spell)

Command Ghost summons forth the spectral spirit of a particular deceased person. The spirit is generally uncooperative, so casting the spell requires that the target's POW be overcome with the caster's magic points. The ghost may, if successfully summoned, be questioned about events that it knew about when alive. Each question costs the caster 1 M.P. and requires another resistance table check (ghost's POW vs. caster's magic points). When the spirit wins or one game hour elapses, the spell ends. It costs 10 M.P.s and 1d3 SAN to cast initially.

The variant in the *Liber Miraculorum* is called *Interrogate Wizard*, and has both benefits and restrictions. First, it only works on "wizards", a term which the author is deliberately leaving undefined. It would certainly include any spell-wielders, such as Freyja Gallai Sanctum or the senior-most Gesellschaft members. At the Keeper's option, it might include any dead Gesellschaft operative that they encounter—including the spirit of the late and unlamented Hans Gruber. Second, one must spill the caster's own blood, not just any old mammal blood. Furthermore, the blood must be spilled onto some part of the body of the deceased to be contacted, although this can simply be a piece of hair.

The spirit contracted has the right to waive a POW vs. magic point struggle over any given question. As a result, it can cooperate to the extent it wishes to, and there is an art form to asking questions that the spirit might want to answer. Also, any number of persons who know the spell can contribute magic points to the initial casting and initial resistance table struggle, at the same SAN cost, séance style. Only the lead caster can ask questions, however.

There is one final option that needs to be discussed, and that is the use of extraordinary means of transportation, such as summoned Byakhee, use of a *Gate*, somehow rounding up a plane and parachuting over Mt. Laki, or similar craziness. (Although perhaps it is not so crazy, since a *Gate* is exactly how Olaf and his minions went on the evening of the 17th, right after they were done looting Arne's office). They created the *Gate* several miles outside of Reykjavik, where the investigators would not locate it, and had it open about a mile away from the entrance to the valley.

Airplanes are not readily available in Reykjavik, and there is no such thing as one that will fly you directly to Mt. Laki. First, this is because "Mt. Laki" is a bit of a misnomer. This is how non-Icelanders refer to a large, barren, rocky, active volcanic field, which stretches for miles and miles.

The major eruption of 1783 was actually a vent fissure. There's nowhere in particular to land, and "a valley west of Mt. Laki" could mean a pretty large area, none of which is hospitable to human life. And it is not the kind of terrain you would want to parachute down onto; a mishap could land you in a volcanic fissure, or in the hospital with a broken leg or two.

Second, assuming that the investigators could round up a plane (a process which will take at least a day), it really will not save them any appreciable amount of time. The best that the plane would be able to do is to fly them to Kirkjubæjarklaustur (yes, the same town as in *Turn to Stone*). The Laki volcano field is due north of Kirkja, about 20 miles. They could just as easily hop a boat and retrace their steps from *Turn to Stone*, and then keep going north, and boats for hire take no time at all to find down in the harbor.



The Laki lava field

But, even assuming that they magically transition themselves somehow to the Mt. Laki volcanic field, unless they already know the *Dho-Hna Formula*, they are unlikely to find Olaf *et al.* in the vast rubble field until they know where to look.

6. Equipment and Transformation/Interview— Freyja Gallai Sanctum

The investigators are going to want to buy some equipment. Even though (assuming the use of the suggested calendar) it is mid-summer, the volcanic desert north of Kirkja is extremely windy and cold at night. They will want moderate cold weather gear, climbing supplies, rations, lights (they might assume that some spelunking will be involved given the talk of “Inner Cities”) and the like. These can all be obtained at an outfitter’s store in Reykjavik on short notice.

Adventuresome investigators may also decide to suck it up and attempt to interview, or confront, Freyja Gallai Sanctum at this point. This depends, of course, on how the events of *Higher Than Truth* left both her and their relationship. If they killed her, then neither she nor her adherents are likely to want to talk to them, from beyond the grave or otherwise, at least not without some serious role-playing.

If, however, Freyja was left alive, either in prison, in hiding, or just operating openly, the investigators might be tempted to seek either her or her bohemian adherents out. They know where to look—the coffeehouse in the University district. However, in any of these circumstances, they will not find anyone easily. Her adherents have scattered and are in hiding, although diligent search might uncover one.

Freyja herself is now dead. If she was securely in prison somewhere, she has been murdered by a pack of *ylidheem*. If not, she has been tortured for information by Olaf and his operatives, realized what he is up to, and *then* killed by an enormous pack of *ylidheem* (summoned by the ritual sacrifice

of any followers that could be caught). Her bodies and theirs will be found, eventually, at her secret seashore hideaway (see the ending sections of *Higher Than Truth*). Either way, she is dead and Olaf got nothing that she had to offer (pointers on using *Icelandic Witchcraft* to find hidden things).

If the investigators are not thinking this way, but you want to lay some exposition on them, one way to accomplish this is to have one of Freyja’s lower-ranking college student adherents seek them out. If she was in jail or previously killed, this messenger would seek them out at the Lodge, and give them an envelope with a lock of Freyja’s hair. If she was in hiding, one of her adherents might leave a note for them at their bell desk, the Lodge, or in the newspaper, advising them to “light the black candle from Gruber’s room at midnight”. The adherent will then simply tell them (via candle) to go to the seashore hideout and how to get there via the *Gate*, if necessary, as “Freyja would have words with them.” A failsafe key will be left with the note. Of course, she is dead when they get there, left for the crows.

Either way, though, they can attempt to use the *Interrogate Wizard* ritual on Freyja herself. They would be wise to have a big group of participants, since the initial resistance table struggle cannot be waived by the target (Freyja’s POW is 25).

If Freyja’s spirit is successfully summoned, the investigators get a bit of a surprise. Freyja does not look anything like Sif Eiriksdottir, someone whose form she merged with several years ago. The ghostly apparition that appears, rather, is depicted (complete with Byzantine dress) on p. 43. Freyja’s spirit will waive any resistance table struggles for questions that would appear to her as being intended to foil Olaf and/or find out what he is up to. In keeping with the spirit of an investigative game, her answers may be cryptic. Assuming that she was killed only recently, Freyja now has a pretty good idea what is going on now, given the information that Olaf decided to

burn her as an asset for. Among the things that she knows, and will cooperatively answer, are:

- Olaf is trying to find Shambhala, the Inner City at the Magnetic Poles;
- He is trying to do so to trade for knowledge with the remnants/ghosts of fallen civilizations;
- Shambhala is both a place and a state of elevated consciousness;
- Physically, it is located somewhere north of Kirkja, in a valley to the west of Mt. Laki. She is not certain exactly where, and rumor has it that it moves around in that general area;
- The great eruption of Mt. Laki in the 18th Century was caused by a wizard who had found Shambhala and traded for knowledge about how to ascend to a higher plane. He fell short of his goal, however;
- Yes, she had a hand in foiling his efforts. He was a blasphemer;
- Some heretics believe that one can advance one's spirit to a higher plane by default—destroying the world and dragging everyone else down beneath your level;
- One way to effectively do this is to cause a cataclysm and resurrect the ghosts of the prior cycle (Atlantis);
- All right thinking people know that one can only advance one's spirit to a higher plane through self-sacrifice, learning and dint of perseverance;
- She is helping the investigators because Olaf appears to be headed down a blasphemous road;
- Unfortunately, Olaf's plan is well-conceived; that is how Atlantis fell, when a wizard ascended to a higher plane by resurrecting Lemuria;
- The ghosts of Shambhala will be knowledgeable about all prior cycles of civilization, the many mysteries of the universe, and all sorts of arcane lore;
- They will bargain for knowledge, but they always apply the rule of the sevenfold path: one must pay seven

times for knowledge, judged by the worth of the knowledge to you;

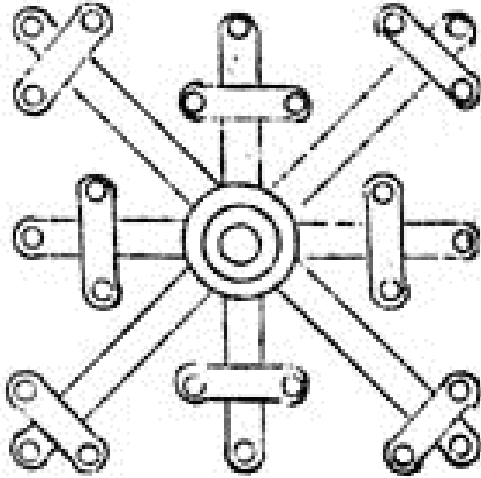
- Shambhala can usually only be found by being in the right place on the summer solstice;
- Mostly forgotten Atlantean knowledge known as the ***Dho-Hna Formula*** will enable one to find Shambhala on the solstice;
- The wizard involved in the 18th Century eruption is believed to have found and used the ***Dho-Hna Formula***;
- One might be able to find the entrance to Shambhala other than on the summer solstice with the use of other finding magicks in connection with the ***Dho-Hna Formula***;
- She does not know the ***Dho-Hna Formula***;
- All prior cycles of man, including Atlantis and Hyperborea, were based in what is now Iceland; the current island is the cooled volcanic slag that resulted when Atlantis was destroyed;
- She will teach the virtuous the Icelandic witchcraft that will supplement the ***Dho-Hna Formula***. She is the judge of what amounts to virtue. (Note: Freyja greatly prefers to deal with either women with Mythos knowledge, or neutered males with the same).

7. Icelandic Witchcraft, Revisited

Freyja's last act during any interrogation is to teach one of the investigators the *holast* staff (grant a check in ***Icelandic Witchcraft***). To recap, the *holast* ("hill opener") is carved on a stick of rowan and painted with blood from under one's tongue. If one knocks with the stick on the side of a hill, any hidden elf-doors in the hill will open. A particularly powerful *holast* staff might be made from blood under the tongue of the wisest man in the land.

Opening a door at an ancient site would be helped by blood from a sage on ancient sites. Hence, the investigators have a legally awkward and morally dubious task ahead of

them: procuring some blood from under the tongue of the late (and quite frozen) Prof. Arne. Such a staff will give them a several day cushion to gain access to Shambhala if used in conjunction with the *Dho-Hna Formula*.



The holast staff

8. Interview, Kristjan Kristjansson?

One person who will not be buzzing around the scene will be Kristjan Kristjansson. Although he was clearly at, and clearly interested in, Arne's talk, the investigators will not be able to find him. Nor will his employers at the newspaper have seen him since the evening of the soiree.

Should they locate his apartment (near the newspaper, in a downtown walkup), it will look lived in and not as though someone vacated it. (Olaf was in too big of a hurry to pack anything other than his personal occult goodies). His neighbors and/or landlady can relate that he had a lot of male visitors in and out; many of them were German.

The investigators will probably notice that something is amiss in this regard when some other reporter from the newspaper shows up to pester them with questions about the sudden crime wave. In any event, Olaf/Kristjan and the Thule Gesellschaft members are gone as fast as possible, as soon as they are done ransacking on the 17th.

They *Gate* (if Freyja is still alive) to her seashore hideout, quickly wipe her out, and then *Gate* to the area of Mt. Laki.

To Posse, Or Not to Posse?

One thing that the investigators might well consider is trying to raise a posse. No one is going to be interested in forming a posse to stop a part-human wizard from delving the secrets of Shambhala(!?), but a gang of proto-Nazi murderers fleeing to the interior of Iceland is another story.

It is possible to round up a posse of a dozen or so. However, it will take a day to do so, and this could delay departure depending on when the effort starts. Combat-pertinent stats for a typical posse member appear below. Note that these are not elite mercenaries by any stretch of the imagination. These will be Lodge members, angry occultists annoyed at the murders of Arne and/or Freyja, distant relatives, part-time law enforcement from Kirkja, and the like.

The posse might be handy in dealing with the Gesellschaft forces, but their presence eliminates any pretense of a stealthy approach to Shambhala.

Nationality: Icelandic.

STR 13 DEX 13 INT 13 CON 14
APP 13 POW 13 SIZ 14 EDU 13
SAN 65 Luck 65 Hits: 14 Age:
various.

Damage Bonus: +1d4.

Skills: Drive Auto 25%, Drive Carriage 50%, First Aid 50%, Listen 55%, Natural History 50%, Navigate 30%, Pilot Boat 50%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Languages: Icelandic 70%; Danish 40%.

Attacks: Rifle Attack, 50%, .30-06 bolt action, 110 yards, 1/2 round, 5 capacity, 2d6+4.

Grapple, 50%.

9. Journeying to Mt. Laki, and Watching for Trouble

In order to get to Kirkjubaejarklaustur from Reykjavik, the investigators are (again) best off traveling by sea to the fishing town of Vik, about a day's voyage east, and then heading inland on an (unpaved) road network about 30 miles east and north to a glacial valley nestled into a volcanic desert.

It is a day and a half to Kirkja (including sea travel time from Reykjavik), and then another full day on foot over very rough and difficult volcanic terrain to the valley entrance, following the tug of the *Dho-Hna Formula*. The farm road from Vik gives out in the direction that they are heading (right to left on the map on p. 113) shortly after the Kirkja village site.

Regardless of whether they know that pursuit is coming or not, ten of the rank and file Thule Gesellschaft operatives have commandeered the village (about 50 inhabitants in the town proper, not counting nearby farms) and set up a rear guard ambush against anyone seeming intent on heading north of town. The town site (as depicted) lies on a narrow alluvial plain between a ~500 high cliff face and the tail end of a small inlet.

Three of the operatives (armed with .30-06 rifles, operating at four times base range (1/8th chance to hit, or 7%)) (*Ambush 1*) are in position at the top of the cliff. They have plenty of ammo and signal mirrors. Their job is to watch for approaching convoys, signal with their mirrors when they see someone coming, and get their attention with long range rifle fire. (If they hit someone, great, but they're not worried about that).

The other seven operatives (*Ambush 2*) have formed a skirmish line behind a 3 foot high silt ridge about 100 yards from the crossroads (a spur road leading down to a boat landing). They open fire when the front of any convoy reaches the crossroads, waiting for people to react and position

themselves in response to the long-range fire from the ridge top.

There are a number of things that might tip off the investigators as to the possibility of an ambush. They might (*Spot Hidden*) see the signal mirror being used. They might (*Spot Hidden*, or just plain paying attention) notice that the town and surrounding farms are much too quiet for a midsummer's day. They might be able to set up a counterattack, or stage a diversion to flush out the ambush before responding to it.

Rank and File Thule Gesellschaft Cell Members (x10)

Nationality: German.

STR 14 DEX 14 INT 12 CON 14
APP 11 POW 12 SIZ 15 EDU 12
SAN 00 Luck 60 Hits: 14 Age: ~35.

Damage Bonus: +1d4.

Education: High school; Army veteran; basic espionage training.

Skills: Accounting 30%, Climb 70%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Cryptography 25%, Disguise 25%, Dodge 50%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 25%, First Aid 60%, Hide 60%, Jump 70%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Occult 30%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 50%, Sneak 50%, Track 50%.

Languages: German 60%, Icelandic 40%, English 10%.

Attacks: Rifle Attack, 60%, .30-06 bolt action, 110 yards, 1/2 round, 5 capacity, 2d6+4.

Knife Attack, 60%, 1d4+2+db.

Martial Arts, 50%.

Getting at the people on the ridge (at least without magical assistance) will be very difficult, as they have an excellent view of the entire plain and there is nothing behind them but rugged volcanic terrain.

These men should be played as smart and experienced German army veterans. If hard pressed, they will try to retreat--the men atop the ridge going overland, the others falling back to a shallow-drafted skiff they have moored at the public landing.

Note that it is entirely possible that the shotgun toting local farmers will screw their courage to the sticking post if the investigators seem to either be winning, or are about to be slaughtered. This encounter is, strangely enough, perhaps the most dangerous scene in the whole campaign, but total party kills should be deftly avoided through the use of NPCs.

10. The Entrance to the Valley & The Road to Shambhala

Apart from the rear guard, Olaf will have moved on with a further ten rank and file Gesellschaft operatives as well as nine wizard-level operatives, plus Horst Schmidt. Wizard-level operatives have similar statistics to the rank and file members, but are *gallai sanctum*, have EDU of 15, POW of 16, 25% in *Icelandic Witchcraft*, and the standard repertoire of *gallai sanctum* spells: *Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath* (as the Magna Mater); *Enchant Knife* (useful for inducting others and defending oneself against trolls); *Heal* (useful for inducting others); and *Powder of Ibn-Ghazi* (useful for seeing trolls). Horst Schmidt, by this point, will also have added the *Dho-Hna Formula* to his list from the original *Liber Miraculorum*.

Depending on what day it is, the investigators will find different things as they follow the tug of the *Dho-Hna Formula* on the western side of Mt. Laki. Olaf finishes with his business in Shambhala late in the day on the 21st. Until then, he posts three additional Gesellschaft soldiers at the mouth of the valley, with instructions to snipe and kill anyone who comes that way. He collects these three (if they are still breathing) on his way out, so if the

investigators are lagging behind (as is likely), they have no trouble with these three until the end of the campaign.

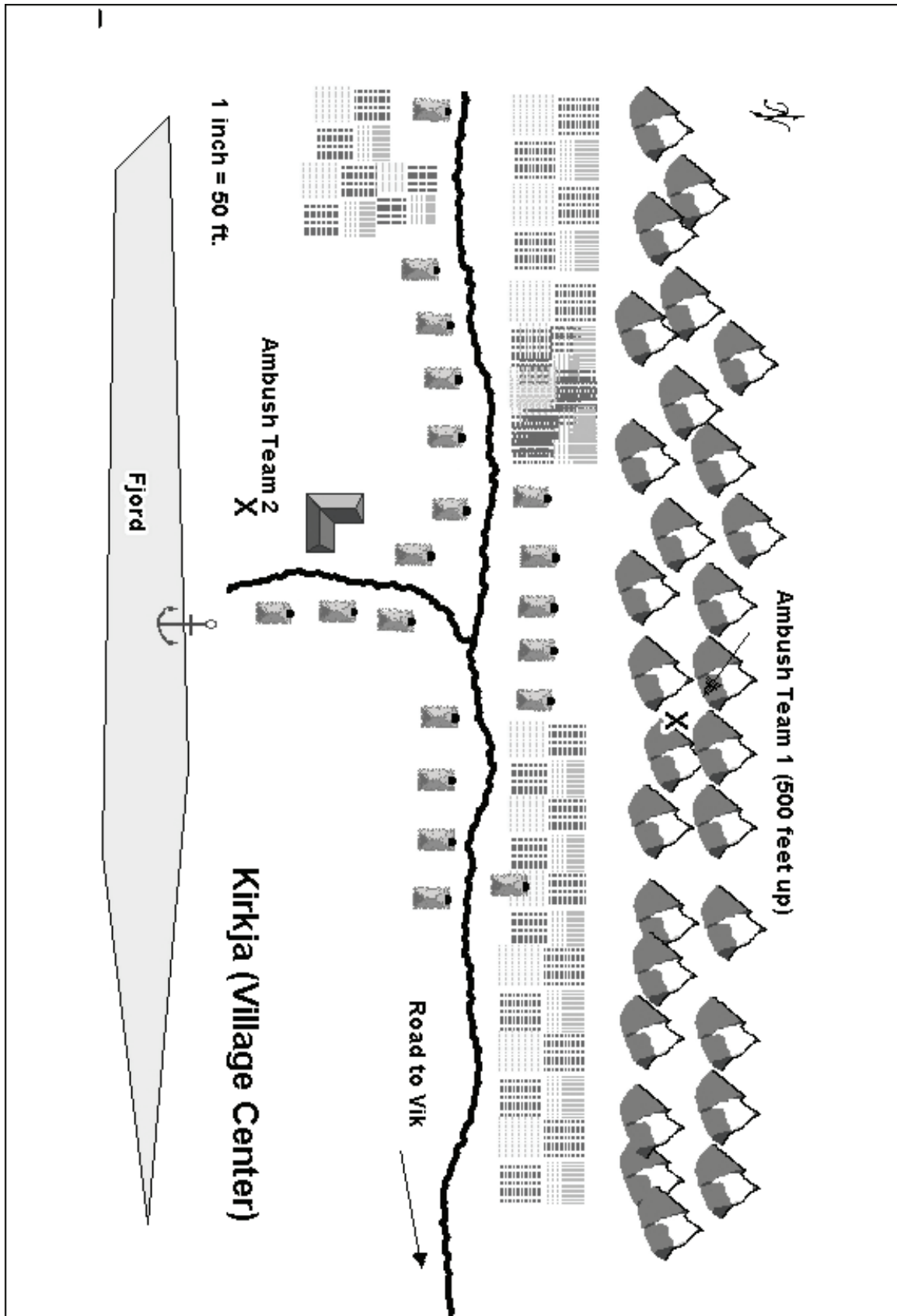
Once cast, the tug of the *Dho-Hna Formula* drags the investigators to a random spot in the valley. Where exactly is unimportant. What is important is that, if it is before Olaf is done, then they simply must follow the tugging to a particular spot, where they will find what appears to be an abandoned camp. (Shambhala being a state of consciousness as much as a physical place, they have no chance of encountering Olaf “inside”). Immediately adjacent to the campsite, they see a set of cyclopean stairs in the ground, spiraling down into the darkness.

Assuming that they arrive after Olaf has left, they find an abandoned campsite—all gear has simply been left. The stairs are not immediately visible—the *holast* staff may be needed to see them, in addition to the Formula. In addition, however, seven rank and file Thule Gesellschaft members have been ritually sacrificed and their bodies left for the crows.

“Interrogating” a “Captured” Gesellschaft “Wizard”

Another, less adventuresome use for the *Interrogate Wizard* spell than chatting with Freyja Gallai Sanctum would be to attempt a séance with one of the sacrificed Gesellschaft operatives. Are they “wizards”? That’s up to you.

Having been betrayed, they are willing to squeal. They know as much about Olaf’s general plans as the shade of Freyja did, but not the details of where he intends to carry things out. They also know that the price of Olaf’s learning how to destroy the world and ascend to a higher place “was paid sevenfold” by their souls. They believe that everything learned in Shambhala must be “paid for sevenfold,” however that may be interpreted.



Yggdrasil, the Fourth Scenario

“**H**ow does your light shine, in the halls of Shambhala?”—Three Dog Night.

In *Yggdrasil*, the investigators are following Olaf Ulfsson’s trail into *Shambhala—the Inner City at the Magnetic Poles*. What they find there can be somewhat variable. This is intended as an opportunity for the Keeper to wing things a bit and add his own interpretation or elements to the campaign. Indeed, it is entirely possible that members of the same investigative party will see similar events through a different perceptual filter.

1. What to Expect, and Various Literary Treatments of the Inner City at the Magnetic Poles

The Inner City goes by many names in literature and esoterica, including: the Inner City at (or Between) the Magnetic Poles, Vrilya, Shambhala (under numerous spellings), the “Deep School” of Manly Wade Wellman’s stories, the Center of the Earth in Jules Verne’s stories, and the Hollow Earth. This work will refer to it as “Shambhala”, but use whichever label you are most comfortable with.

All posit a similar concept: a place which is difficult to find; a place that may not entirely or strictly be a place at all; inhabited by lost enlightened races possessing ancient wisdom. Some traditions hold that it is a physical place (albeit hard to find), but most attribute at least some element of either extra-dimensionality or karmic achievement involved in accessing it:

As the 14th Dalai Lama noted during the 1985 Kalachakra initiation in Bodhgaya, Shambhala is not an ordinary country:

Although those with special affiliation may actually be able to go there through their karmic connection, nevertheless it is not a

physical place that we can actually find. We can only say that it is a pure land, a pure land in the human realm. And unless one has the merit and the actual karmic association, one cannot actually arrive there.

For our purposes, Shambhala is a physical place in the sense that it can be accessed at certain places on Earth, and one perceives oneself as moving about once there. But it is more akin to a state of elevated consciousness that one must find through enlightenment. There are several entrances, but only the chosen/enlightened can find it. It might also be seen as a slightly different or higher dimension, partially overlapping and accessible under limited circumstances with ours. In Mythos literature, the *Dho-Hna Formula* is sometimes mentioned as a way to achieve the necessary enlightened state.

For our purposes, Shambhala is also a nexus through which people can commune with extra-dimensional beings. The beings that can be bargained with are not omniscient or omnipotent, but they tend to be powerful entities with broad knowledge. Their prices for knowledge are steep. But because people doing the communing will perceive the alien, extra-dimensional nature of Shambhala in ways that their own puny brains can handle, they are going to see things differently.

It should be stressed, and made apparent to the players, that *what they are seeing in Shambhala is the product of their limited three-dimensional minds trying to make sense of things, and that things are probably actually quite different*. The best way to handle this, in the author’s experience, is out and out parallel narrative. Think about the point of each interaction that the investigators have, and then describe it to them in terms they would best understand. If they are attacked by Horst

Schmidt, that is fairly straightforward no matter how their minds are structured: a big, red-headed proto-Nazi and his associates are trying to kill them. If they are encountering a more obtuse obstacle, they might see it as a Norse dragon, Vril death-machine, or a Tyrannosaurus Rex. “Player A, you see this, but Player B, instead *you* see....” Similar types of things will occur or be seen, but will be described differently.

Three Filters For Your Consideration: For purposes of illustration, three of the most likely and popular perception filters will be covered for each planned encounter: the Norse Afterlife version (“*Norse*”); the Jules Verne Lost World version (“*Lost World*”); and the Bulwer-Lytton fantasy version (“*Vril*”). Use any, or (what the author suggests) mix and match them. Each filter is detailed in Section 4, below.

Regardless of the filter used, there are three planned encounters in *Yggdrasil*: a *psychopomp/guide*, a *guardian at a gate*, and *the Bargainer*. These are detailed below. There can and perhaps should be any number of other unplanned encounters, and some cat and mouse games with Horst Schmidt and his two associates.

Once investigators reach the end of their journey, they will have an opportunity to strike a bargain for knowledge with....something.

2. The Stairs Into The Earth

The stairs heading down from the surface are of Viking-era stone construction and (*Occult* roll) covered with a variety of Viking magical runes intended to ward against the spirits of the dead. (“Viking-era stone construction” will be rough-hewn, square-cut, and frankly somewhat inexpert, native stone blocks with a lot of mortar used to fill in). Viking-era stone construction stairs will stomp through and over each descending layer, providing some limited uniformity to the journey.

About five feet down the stairs, a door (likewise covered in Norse-era warding

runes) has been left open. It had been physically sealed, in this case by molten lead having been poured around the seams. (This is a commonplace medieval method of tomb sealing). It shows signs of recent unsealing, however.

3. Going Down--The Objective Level

The stairs proceeds down into the Stygian depths. It is dark down there. *Very dark*. Light sources are of some use, but the darkness is unnaturally cloying and not even a spotlight will illuminate more than about 5’ ahead. This is obviously not natural.

If you intend to use the optional Lani Jonsdottir subplot, you might drop small hints: the skeleton of a dog, a little girl’s stuffed toy appropriate to whatever era you decided to have her disappear from.

It is very slow going, and the stairs spiral downward. Preexisting stairs at every level have been “improved” to medieval-level construction. Every 30 to 40 feet down or so, the type of construction changes to that of another, older culture.

The players will descend through a series of abandoned temples erected by dead cultures and stretching back for many millennia. All temples are oriented to themes of divination, gods or demons of magic and secrets, and the like. Most layers, likewise, are separated from the layer below by a physical door, reinforced with magical warding intended to protect against spirits. Brief (and historically accurate, within the reach of artistic license) descriptions of each layer and the door between it and the next follow. Except as noted, the temple layers consist of one open room, roughly 50’ x 50’ and 10’ high:

Carolingian (circa 900 A.D.): a Gothic style cathedral apse with soaring arches has been worked into the natural stone. A door is inscribed with the Lord’s Prayer in Latin, repeated over and over again.

Merovingian: (circa 500 A.D.): a natural cave, shored up with pillars. There is a fair

amount of graffiti on the walls, some in Latin and some in Gothic.

There is a “Pater Noster” square warding the door down to the next level. This is a “magic square” consisting of the opening lines of the Pater Noster, a classic Merovingian era ward against the dead (*Occult* roll):

R	O	T	A	S
O	P	E	R	A
T	E	N	E	T
A	R	E	P	O
S	A	T	O	R

Byzantine (circa 300 A.D): a domed chamber depicting a variety of scenes from mythology concerning bargaining and temptation, picked out in Byzantine mosaic. Scenes include Satan tempting Christ in the wilderness; and Demeter bargaining with Hades to return Persephone to life.

The door has a number of coins of great figures (Alexander, Julius Caesar) embedded in the door, a classic Byzantine ward against the dead. Usually, one or so was seen as quite effective (*Occult* roll); someone was frightened enough to stud this door with dozens.

(Estimated total value for looters: \$10,000. Possibility of a curse of the Keeper’s choice descending upon looters of said coins: fair to middling. Possible nature of such a curse: the coins cannot be gotten rid of, no matter what. Amusing legal complications ensue when the investigator sells such a coin: it goes missing from the buyer and is discovered by the police to be back in the investigator’s pocket. The coin ends up, as a result, being worthless).

Roman (circa 100 B.C.): A Roman temple to Pluto, god of buried secrets. A statue of

Pluto dominates the room. Occasional inscriptions in Latin imploring Pluto to grant their heart’s desire are inscribed on the walls. The door depicts a carved scene of winter, with spring (when things return from the dead) nowhere in sight.



Sit, Pluto, Sit!

Etruscan (circa 300 B.C.): This layer is fairly primitive and undeveloped in terms of construction, being little more than crudely supported and carved bedrock. A *large* number of rusted away wall-restraints remain, many with skeletons still associated with them.

The central feature of the room is a scrying font, about 3’ across and 3’ deep, stained dark with something (lots of blood). An *Occult* roll reminds the players that Etruscan divination focused on blood sacrifice and examining entrails and organs in an effort to gain wisdom. A corroded bronze seal depicts a demonic figure with ram’s horns and a goddess with a cornucopia, each wielding hammers. (*Occult* roll: these are

Xaru and Vanth, respectively, the Etruscan guardians of the underworld).

Sumerian: This layer has no seal or door. Numerous cuneiform inscriptions adorn the baked clay brick, faience walls, telling the story of brave heroes (chiefly Gilgamesh) venturing to the underworld to wrest the secrets of the dead from the gods. (**Occult** roll: the Sumerians saw wizards seeking out the dead as brave heroes and something to be encouraged, not discouraged).

Archaeology rolls or **History** rolls with varying modifiers should be applied to identify the precise culture associated with each layer. By all means, feel free to add more layers reflecting your favorite bygone culture.

Eventually, the investigators will follow the stairs down until they reach three very well developed, prehistoric layers:

Atlantean: This appears to be a strangely well-preserved Grecian temple. The walls are sheathed in white marble; the roof is supported on Doric pillars, and the floor has an enormous inlaid “bull’s-eye” pattern. Images of dolphins, tritons, and various ancient occult symbols (including swastikas) adorn the room.

Distressingly, there is a skeleton of...something...lying at the foot of the stairs. It is about 10 feet tall, about twice as wide as a human, and had very thick bones and horns. An **Occult** roll reminds the players that some scholars believe that the legend of the Minotaur predated Greek myth and came from an earlier culture. SAN loss for the skeleton is 1/1d3.

The exit out of this room is not a door, but rather a well-constructed, unsealed spiral staircase going down. A carving of a serpent (starting at the tail) spirals downward. When viewed from above, it appears that the serpent is swallowing itself (an ouroboros). An **Occult** roll reminds the players that this is a symbol of reincarnation and resurrection.

Not far below the Atlantean temple is a **Hyperborean** chamber. The construction of this chamber is of smooth mortarless stone. Figures of humanoid creatures in robes are depicted engaging in commerce, studying the stars, and worshipping...things, including an enormous white dragon. The humanoid figures are proportioned wrong: the figures are too tall, too skinny, and their limbs are too long. At least sometimes they are oddly proportioned, anyway; there is also an occasional, correctly proportioned figure, usually depicted in some servile posture.

Although there is a great deal of writing on the walls, none of it is in a language the investigators will likely be able to decipher. A **Cthulhu Mythos** roll might identify it as Hyperborean Tsath-yo. (If it could be understood, it would consist of a variety of magical incantations intended to prevent scrying, location, or possession).

This layer had (until recently) been sealed shut with a floor hatch of some odd, unearthly crystalline substance. Into the crystal had been driven cold iron nails spelling out certain symbols. A **Cthulhu Mythos** roll (or consultation with a good Hyperborean era Mythos tome, such as the *Book of Eibon*), might partially translate this as an invocation to the White Sybil of Polarion, a legendary (even by Hyperborean standards) prophetess of the far North.

The final “objective” layer dates from the days of the **Elder Things**. The Viking-era preoccupation with stairs finally begins to make some sense at this level, since the previous way down was an enormous, slippery, steep ramp designed for descent by things without feet.

Although it appears as though there may have been more in this area at one time, it almost appears to have been looted. (Visualize walking into an Elder Thing laboratory that a bunch of monkeys have invaded repeatedly over the millennia and thoroughly looted and defaced. There are oddly obliterated sections of walls; places on

the floor where it looks like something heavy might have been, etc., but little else).

A large, open archway (15 feet high, 10 feet wide) provides the only exit. A large (5 feet in diameter) Elder Sign surmounted the arch, but it has been long since smashed and defiled. The area beyond the arch is oddly misty and luminescent, although more of the Viking-era, crappy, cobbled-work stairs continue.

Cthulhu Mythos rolls would be needed to identify the foregoing pre-human civilizations with any precision. Minor SAN losses (0/1) might be appropriately applied to the discovery of each layer of pre-human civilization

4. The “Subjective” Level

Once the Elder Thing archway is passed, the players will begin to struggle to perceive things accurately. Things will shift and swim and be indistinct before they ultimately stabilize. What they ultimately see is the closest that the human mind can approximate to the surroundings.

Take as much time as you wish leading them around this part of Shambhala. A general survey of what they can expect, with respect to each “filter” (Norse, Lost World, Vrll) follows.

Horst Schmidt: One thing that will be constant is that ***Horst Schmidt (the Thule cell leader and Olaf’s second in command) will have gotten separated and still be on the loose.*** He, along with two other wizard-level Thule members (Heinrich Gruner and Andreas Bell), will have wandered off from the rest of Olaf’s group and still be in Shambhala.

These three worthies will be studying the phenomenon, wandering about, and trying to figure how to turn something they find there to their advantage. They will also (after a few days) be starting to get a little uneasy and begin trying to make their way back to the exit without running afoul of any of the locals.

Horst should (at some dramatically appropriate time) spot the investigators (or be spotted by them, or have some sign of him and his fellows be noticed by them. His reaction to an encounter or possible encounter with the investigators will be a studied one. He does not care if they live or die, initially. He will not necessarily be violent (remember, he is primarily out for himself), although he will not hesitate to kill if it seems like a good idea at the time, either. He and his fellows are outnumbered, and capable of either temporary civility or long-term treachery.

However, Horst does not know what (exactly) it is that Olaf Ulfsson learned from the Bargainer. He did get that far before getting separated. Should Horst be convinced (either on the way out, or after calling a temporary truce with the investigators and accompanying them for a while) that Olaf intends to destroy the world in order to ascend, the investigators may find themselves with an odd, temporary, very untrustworthy ally.

(Note that Olaf still has the seven wizard-level Thule members that he needs to sacrifice when he leaves Shambhala).

Norse, General Description: Everything is gloom, mist and fog, all in shades of black, white and grey. Vision is extremely limited beyond 10’ out or so. The investigators will proceed along a narrow forest path through a dark, dank, foggy wood. Rotting corpses and snakes dangle from the branches, and the trees ooze venomous sap. SAN loss 0/1d6.

They may or may not be in some sort of cavern, but they cannot see the ceiling or walls for all the fog and gloom. People who charge into the venomous forest might be afforded a couple of warning snaps from the biggest vipers that they have ever seen, or a few swipes from zombie-like hanging corpses, but anyone who persists in this course for long is forever doomed.

An *Occult* roll recognizes this landscape as a representation of Niflheim, the Norse land of the dead.

Random encounters should be of dead things appropriate to Norse mythology. Chiefly trolls. If previously killed, Helgi Alfisdottir is probably down here somewhere, if the investigators need a challenge.

Lost World, General Description: This is probably the version of events that most investigators will be expecting.

The investigators emerge into a hot, humid, oxygen-rich land comprised of a series of vast caverns. It is well-lit and daylight (in effect) all the time, the light being reddish and powered by volcanic vents and glowing ionized gas at the tops of the caverns. The scene is something out of the Cretaceous, with growth run amok: dinosaurs, pterodactyls, enormous bugs the size of a man, enormous ferns, and building-sized mushrooms.

The investigators, in order to move around, will likely want to build a raft and head down a river which passes immediately by the entrance. In fact, they can use the one that Olaf, in his haste to leave, will have left beached not far away if they like.

Random encounters in the Lost World filter will, again, be confined to people who stray away from the river, and will be of the large predator variety. T. Rex, hordes of velociraptors, enormous legged proto-serpents with venom-dripping maws and the like would be appropriate.

There are also enormous, hairy, ape-like humanoids in the Lost World (use Gorilla statistics with an INT of 1d4+4), but they are very scarce and should only be encountered if they are specifically sought out. This process should take a long time and would take the investigators far off course.

SAN loss for viewing the Lost World is, again, 0/1d6.

Vril, General Description: The investigators emerge into a well-lit, vast

series of caverns, looking quite like the “Lost World” filter. Giant plants, mammoth ferns and mushrooms, and the like proliferate. The fauna, however, are (generally) less saurian and more Eocene-era: giant elk, mammoth crocodiles, and the like prevail. Nonetheless, Bulwer-Lytton could not resist putting pterodactyl-like creatures, only slightly more avian, in the sky as well.

The caverns are connected by tunnels, and the whole land is well-lit with a pinkish light seemingly from everywhere and nowhere. It is, in short, never a dark and stormy night. Everything runs on *vril*, the pinkish, luminous aether suffusing the caverns. Here and there are cisterns filled with a bubbling, viscous pinkish fluid, the wellsprings of vril energy from deep below. As described by the ineffable Bulwer-Lytton:

In the centre of the floor were a cistern and a fountain of that liquid light which I have presumed to be naphtha. It was luminous and of a roseate hue; it sufficed without lamps to light up the room with a subdued radiance. All around the fountain was carpeted with a soft deep lichen, not green (I have never seen that colour in the vegetation of this country), but a quiet brown....

Periodically, a small (20' diameter) flying saucer or other robotic device happens by, largely ignoring the investigators other than to perhaps peruse them momentarily.

The land is sparsely populated by Vril-ya. None live especially nearby the entrance, so the investigators will have to journey for a bit, at least, before encountering them. Initial encounters will find them living in clumps of several families in marble temple-like structures looking for all the world like an ancient Greek movie set. Farther in (after the investigators encounter their guide), they will be conducted to a town.

The Vril-ya are flawless, beautiful, well-formed beings, near-human in appearance, only longer of limb and unusually flawless. They are slightly taller than normal, and light or auburn-haired and light-complected.



The Lost World, by Edward Riou (public domain). Add faeries in the background for Vrill version.

They have unusually large, dark eyes and slightly oversized heads.

The Vrilya are served by numerous vril-powered robots (“automatons” in Bulwer-Lytton’s parlance), ranging from stereotypical flying saucers to rampaging death machines to supermodel-looking, servant-caste androids. They fly about on shimmering, pink faerie-type wings, which power down to form a sort of cape when on the ground.

No industry is apparent; the Vrilya simply conjure up what they need other than food

and water (including their robots and flying saucers).

Because there are seemingly beings in this filter that theoretically might be engaged in hostilities, a brief comment about belligerence is needed. Engaging in combat or belligerence of any kind with the Vrilya will lead quickly and inexorably to the deaths of all belligerents. Each Vrilya (including the children) wields a staff capable of channeling vril energy, able to destroy or heal. You can use the statistics provided below for Zee, the investigators’ guide, as a model.

Some Pulp Lost World Beasties For Your Random Encounter Amusement

Giant Alligator: STR 36 DEX 07 INT 03 CON 26 POW 11 SIZ 26 Hits: 30; **Damage Bonus:** +3d6; **Move:** 8”/10” swimming; **Armor:** 5 point scales; **Skills:** Hide 50%, Sneak 75%, Swim 100%; **Attacks:** Bite 50%, 1d10 +db.

Giant Atavistic Tree Snake (with rear legs and foot-long fangs): STR 30 DEX 13 INT 03 CON 18 POW 11 SIZ 30 Hits: 24; **Damage Bonus:** +3d6; **Move:** 6”/4” swimming; **Armor:** 4 point scales; **Skills:** Climb 85%, Dodge 60%, Hide 75%, Sense Prey 75%, Sneak 90%; Swim 50%. **Attacks:** Bite 65%, 1d4 +1/2 db +POT 20 Venom, 5 minutes onset (yeah, POT 20, deal with it); Constrict, 40%, 1d6 +db (can both bite and constrict in same round; if constriction hits, damage is automatic in ensuing rounds); Swallow Unconscious or Dead Prey 100%, damage suffocation.

Sabretooth Tiger: STR 23 DEX 19 INT 05 CON 11 POW 11 SIZ 20 Hits: 22; **Damage Bonus:** +2d6; **Move:** 12”; **Armor:** 2 point fur; **Skills:** Dodge 45%, Hide 80%, Jump 55%, Sneak 75%, Track 50%; **Attacks:** Bite 45%, 2d6 + 1/2db; Claw 70%, 1d8 +db (two claws plus bite 5 DEX ranks after claw attacks). If both claws hit, tiger hangs on and rends with rear claws in subsequent rounds--80%, 2d8 +db.

Velociraptor (encountered in packs of six): STR 13 DEX 13 INT 05 CON 11 POW 11 SIZ 12 Hits: 12; **Damage Bonus:** +1d4; **Move:** 10”; **Armor:** 3 point scales and feathers; **Skills:** Dodge 45%, Hide 80%, Jump 55%, Sneak 75%, Track 50%; **Attacks:** Bite 45%, 1d10 + 1/2db, Kick/Claw 70%, 1d8 +db.

Pterodactyl: STR 23 DEX 16 INT 03 CON 11 POW 11 SIZ 17 Hits: 14; **Damage Bonus:** +1d6; **Move:** 2”/12” flying; **Armor:** 3 point scales; **Skills:** Spot Hidden 90%; **Attacks:** Bite 45%, 1d8; Claw 45%, 1d6 +db—may attempt to carry off to its nest high in the giant mushroom forest.

Giant Venus Flytrap (wife insisted): STR 23 DEX 11 INT 01 CON 11 POW 01 SIZ 17 Hits: 14; **Damage Bonus:** +1d6; **Move:** 0” (can reach 10 feet); **Armor:** 3 point woody fiber; **Skills:** Pretend Not To Be Carnivorous (Pretty Flowers!) 95%; **Attacks:** SNAP! 45%, victim is grappled and takes db damage until escapes with STR vs. STR check or plant is killed. SAN loss 0/1 to see someone snatched up. Grows in clusters.

(Yes, all of the Vrilya people carry a vrilya-powered energy staff. No, ordinary humans cannot make use of them, as they lack a necessary nerve complex—at least, that is what Bulwer-Lytton wrote).

Persistent attacks that are not immediately dealt with by the Vrilya themselves result in Vrilya Death Ray Machines joining the party. Use statistics for the Vrilya Death Ray Machines, below, if the investigators decide to try and shoot one down. Most likely, their bullets just bounce off, but if they resort to magic or get a lucky enough shot in, they might do some harm to one of the saucers. In which case, they are probably all killed in very short order.

SAN loss for getting introduced to and oriented to the mind-numbing wonders of the Vrilya is 0/1d6.

Regardless of what filter or filters the investigators perceive things through, Horst Schmidt and his compatriots are convinced that they are in the midst of the Vrilya. They will have slipped away into the wilderness before meeting up with Zee, and will have not had the temerity to approach any of the Vrilya yet. They will have seen both them in the distance, however, as well as various wonder machines.

Depending on the internal makeup of the investigators' group, this may be the investigators' primary exposure to the subjectivity of the Hollow Earth, and they may well think that the Thule cell members are hallucinating.

Random encounters seen through the Vrilya filter should be similar to the Lost World filter. However, once they have encountered their guide, they cease to be any threat, since Zee simply blasts them with a casual wave of her staff.

5. First Planned Encounter: Psychopomp

The investigators will eventually encounter a guide/psychopomp. This should occur after you have gotten tired of leading them around the wonders of Shambhala, playing

cat-and-mouse games with Horst Schmidt, and exhausted either their patience or your stock of planned cinematic threats and distractions.

A psychopomp is an archetypal figure that guides souls through the land of the dead, and ensures that they get where they are supposed to be going. Typically, they want some symbolic pledge or ask for some small sacrifice (an allegorical symbol of change). Examples follow with respect to each filter:

Norse: Waiting for them in the path that they have been following is a Valkyrie, a chooser of the slain. She will ask (speaking Old Norse, but the investigators will understand) their names, and what heroic deeds they will be remembered by. Assuming some appropriately bold answer, she will ask them to don a shroud and follow.

If they fail to impress the Valkyrie, she will sigh and tell them that Niflheim is no place for cowards. Any such people find themselves ejected all the way to surface, unable to re-enter.

The others will be taken off on a side path, into the heart of the viper forest. Random encounters should be over at this point, as long as they stay with the Valkyrie. The Valkyrie is not very chatty and does not ask or answer questions.

Lost World: Waiting for them in the path that they have been following is a young woman of Mediterranean appearance, scantily clad in pulp-era silks and chainmail bikini. She wields a sword, and identifies herself as Ulla, a guardian and servant of the Last Sorcerer of Atlantis.

Ulla will ask (speaking ancient Atlantean, but the investigators will understand) their names, and what it is that they seek. Assuming some appropriately civil answer, she will give them a silver necklace bearing an image of a labyrinth and ask them to follow her. (A successful **Occult** roll suggests that the labyrinth is a symbol associated by some esoteric authors with fallen Atlantis). She will take them off the

river and along a path into the mammoth jungle.

If they fail to impress Ulla, she will sigh and tell them that the remnants of Atlantis are no place for cowards. Any such people find themselves ejected all the way to surface, unable to re-enter. Random encounters should be over at this point, as long as they stay with Ulla.

Ulla is polite but not especially chatty; she will tell them that she is taking them to see the Sorcerer who might—if he chooses to receive them—answer any of their questions. But they will, of course, have to pay. If asked what Olaf was here seeking, she will sigh, shake her head, and point out that “he paid a large price.”

Vril: Waiting for them in the path that they have been following is a stunning young Vril-ya woman, dressed in black, with sparkling pink wings/mantle. She carries an innocuous looking metal staff, and identifies herself as Zee, a scientist/philosopher of the Vril-ya. The Vril-ya speak some vaguely Indo-European sounding tongue among themselves (*Archaeology* roll), but Zee speaks every modern human language flawlessly.

Zee will identify herself, greet them, and ask them to state their business here in the land of the Vril-ya. Assuming some appropriately civil answer, she will ask them to swear an oath of friendship to the Vril-ya. If they refuse, she will sigh and tell them that she has no patience for cowards or fools. Any such people find themselves ejected all the way to surface, unable to re-enter. Random encounters should be over at this point for the investigators, as long as they stay with Zee. Although you might have her casually dispatch some annoying monster with a casual flourish of her staff. Zot!

Zee will take them towards a town of several hundred Vril-ya, after completely healing any wounds that they may have sustained, assuming some modicum of civility. She does not like to be touched, and anyone

trying to touch her gets one warning before they are obliterated. This *complete* healing may be a *very* welcome source of relief for any male investigators still bravely soldiering along after a run-in with the Lions of the Mother at some point, or still dealing with Cold Ones frostbite.

Zee is friendly and chatty, but insists that the investigators and any others with them must stay with her and not annoy the others. She displays a preternatural knowledge of exactly who the investigators are, and what they seek.

Keepers using this option are well-advised to take the hour or so it will take to read Bulwer-Lytton’s The Coming Race, available at Project Gutenberg, to get Zee’s esoteric jibber-jabber as correct as possible. But generally, they are an enlightened, utopian society, and everything runs on vril. Vril is the “luminous aether” that suffuses all things; they tap into wellsprings within the earth. Zee is also deeply versed in all things theosophist, treating its various beliefs as unchallengeable fact. The Vril-ya people are the few surviving, combined descendants of all prior civilizations: Hyperborean, Atlantean, you name it. She may well tell (harmless, non-instructional) stories about these fallen realms.

Zee acknowledges that Olaf Ulfsson (she calls him that despite his penchant for aliases) came through recently with several other human wizards and was conducted by her to “the Tur”. All more substantive questions (such as requests for arcane knowledge, or insight into what Olaf is up to) must await an audience with the Tur, the philosopher-king of the Vril-ya, however.

Note: *Attacking the psychopomp herself in any filtered version results in that investigator being summarily ejected, unable to reenter.* They are supposed to be there to make a deal, and if they get out of that frame of mind, then they are not there. Stats for Zee are nonetheless provided, as they are suitable for use when getting into trouble with the “typical” Vril-ya. (Plus, the author has always wanted to stat out Zee).

Zee, Scientist-Philosopher of the Vrilya**Nationality:** Vrilya.STR 18 DEX 18 INT 18 CON 18 APP 18 POW 30 SIZ 12 EDU 25 SAN ??
Luck 99 Hits: 15 Age: many millennia (but looks like a young adult).**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.**Move:** 8"/16" flying.**Education:** Being many millennia old and a part of a utopic society's scientific elite.**Skills:** All scientific, history or learning based skills at 100%; Occult 100%; Cthulhu Mythos 50%; others at the Keeper's discretion.**Languages:** All human languages 100% (past or present).**Attacks:** Vrilya Staff, 90%, 100 yards, 1/round, damage: variable up to 10d6. Shoots a viscous beam of glowing, roseate energy. Infinite charges while in the Hollow Earth; otherwise, uses 1 M.P. per 1d6 of effect. Can also heal up to 10d6 of damage per round, including regenerating lost limbs or other body parts, or heal insanity with a wave (treat as a successful *Psychoanalysis* roll).**Defenses:** Zee's infusion and long contact with vrilya energy and protective vrilya wing mantle operate to reduce damage from non-enchanted sources to the minimum possible.**Spells:** Can use vrilya to duplicate any spell effect within the Keeper's discretion.**SAN loss:** 0/1 SAN for seeing what amounts to a faerie.**Welcome to the Land of the Vrilya....**

6. Second Planned Encounter: Guardian of the Gate

Most “underworld” myths have a fearsome guardian at a point of no return, whose job it is to keep the dead in.

Regardless of filter, after an indeterminate amount of time, the psychopomp will stop and guide them no further. She will warn the investigators that this is a point of no return, and that she cannot assist them further. They must choose their fate of their own volition, and points them in the direction to proceed.

An oppressive feeling of crowdedness permeates this area. The reason soon becomes apparent: wafting, miserable, insubstantial spirits, all clustered around this final destination. The psychopomp will explain that these are the spirits of those who either made foolish bargains, who were sacrificed by those who did, or who otherwise perished in Shambhala while sojourning here.

Encountering spirits: The spirits will be a rather motley, but still not terribly diverse, group of sentient beings. They are mostly wannabe wizards and/or their porters, assistants, slaves, or other victims, from throughout the ages. There are thousands of them. SAN loss is 1/1d6 for the entire experience of viewing what amounts to a huge pile of ghosts, most pitifully and endlessly begging for attention and help.

This is a fabulous opportunity for role-playing, to tempt, harass, worry and tug at the heartstrings of the investigators. The spirits all want out. Most will promise just about anything to get out. Some may be able to deliver what they promise, if they do get out. Most cannot. Some possibilities are:

- An investigator or friendly NPC who was killed in Shambhala reappears in spectral form. The party is obviously going to want to try to restore such a person to life, with little prompting. Let them accompany the party to the

Bargainer and role-play out their reaction to the price sought for their resurrection and their friends’ willingness (or lack thereof) to pay it.

- Should you be using the subplot, the spirit of Lani Jonsdottir, a frightened and truly innocent ten-year old Icelandic child who got lost in the mountains ten(?), a hundred(?) or a thousand(?) years ago, will attach themselves to an investigator. She speaks only Icelandic, but the investigators can understand her for a change.

Lani is particularly easy to see and understand, being only slightly wispy and slightly echoing. She will tell him her name, where she’s from, that she is lost and scared, and can’t they please help her go home to her mom and dad? And find her dog? Please?



Lani Jonsdottir, Scared Little Ghost

Lani should be the one spirit that they encounter who is genuine, displays good

manners, and has a sense of morality. Others may be accomplished whiners, however. Also, Lani will follow them, all the way to the Bargainer, whereas the others (barring deceased PCs and important NPCs) will not dare venture that far.

Norse: The investigators will perceive themselves as having arrived at the doorway of a Viking-style longhouse made entirely of bones. (An **Occult** roll recognizes this as a representation of the house of Hel, dwelling place of the ignoble dead). The longhouse lies at the base of an immense ash tree, hundreds of feet in diameter and stretching out of sight into the sky. Standing guard in front of the door is an almost equally immense, wingless brown dragon, gnawing at the tree's roots (**Occult** roll: this is Nidhogg, gnawing at the roots of Yggdrasil, the World Tree. Yggdrasil symbolizes knowledge obtained at a price).

Nidhogg will challenge the investigators who perceive him, asking who they are, why they come, and what they have to trade. SAN loss for viewing Nidhogg is 0/1d6.

Any generally truthful answer indicating that they actually do want something and are prepared to pay for it suffices. Anyone wishing that they had not come this far finds themselves "bounced" back to the entrance and unable to re-enter. Anyone attacking Nidhogg is not bounced out, but will soon wish they had been.

Lost World: There is simply a cave visible in the distance, with an eerie light coming from it. An enormous T. Rex rambles about, seeming to patrol the area. It has no questions for anyone, obviously.

Anyone displaying fear does not belong here and is "bounced." This includes anyone who fails the SAN check for seeing the T. Rex and reacts with fear. Anyone proceeding boldly with purpose in mind has to walk very near the T. Rex, but it simply fixes them with a stare as they pass. Anyone who attacks the T. Rex is probably shredded.

Vril: Substitute a Death Ray Machine for Nidhogg, and an immense, open-air Grecian style columned temple for the longhouse. Things otherwise proceed as they do through the Norse filter.

Lani displays no fear; she's used to these things.

7. Third Planned Encounter: The Bargainer

Norse: Once past the Guardian of the Gate, the investigators find themselves in a semblance of a traditional Viking longhouse. Long feasting tables stretch farther than the eye can see off into the distance. A variety of old men, women, children, and sick looking people sit listlessly at the tables, looking thoroughly lost and depressed. (These are all people who are not remembered as heroes). None of them have anything to say beyond "leave me alone"; since no one remembers them except in abstraction, they have no personality.

Eventually, at the end of the longhouse, sitting on a raised platform, is an old woman dressed entirely in white, with a black cap and black cloak. An **Occult** roll recognizes this as a representation of a *volva*, a Norse witchcraft practitioner who filled roles both as a seer as well as a superintendent of funerals. They had a reputation for being both reliable and costly to employ.

Her platform comes equipped with a table and a variety of traditional divinatory devices, including rune-carved knucklebones and a tried-but-true crystal ball. (Sif Eiriksdottir was dressed much the same at her coffee klatsch gathering).

In the **Lost World** filter, the Bargainer's cave looks like a stereotypical ancient wizard's library/laboratory. Decorate it with bubbling vats, alembics, tomes, astronomical charts, and any other mystical trappings that you wish.

The Bargainer here looks however you think the investigators would anticipate an ancient Atlantean wizard looking.

Big Scary Guardian Monster (Alternatively, a Tyrannosaurus Rex, a Vrtil Death Ray Machine Powered by Luminiferous Aether, or a Horrible Norse Dragon)

STR 67 DEX 16 INT varies (T. Rex, 03; Vrtil Device 18, Norse Dragon 18) CON 35
 POW varies (T. Rex 13, Vrtil Device 18 Norse Dragon 18) SIZ 53 Luck POW x5
 Hits: 44.

Damage Bonus: +6d6.

Move: 12”.

Armor: 10 points.

Skills: Listen 50%, Spot Hidden 50%.

Attacks: varies by creature

T. Rex: Bite 50%, 2d6 +db.

Foreclaw x2: 35%, 1d4 +1/2 db.

Kick 45%, 1d6 +db.

The **T. Rex** is a predator. Play it like a really big hawk. It first bites. If it hits with its bite, 5 DEX rounds later it attacks with both foreclaws for rending purposes. Bigger targets are instead either attacked with a single kick, or jumped on and subjected to a bite and two kicks in the round after pouncing.

Vrtil Death Ray Machine: Tentacle Swats x2, 60%/60%, 1d6+ db.

Grapple, 60%, special.

Vrtil Roseate Luminous Aether Death Ray, 1/round, 100%, damage: 6d6+10 (can be Dodged). Range: 400’. Can use in addition to Tentacle Swats.

Trample, 45%, 1d6 +db.

The **Vrtil Death Ray Machine** is a highly sophisticated robotic device, looking like a 15’ diameter shiny metal sphere on a tripod of legs. It has two flexible grappling tentacles and a 360 degree range of fire death ray turret on top of it. It can see and fire in every direction except directly beneath it. If its patience is tried, it resorts to Tentacle Swatting (with any free tentacles, it needs one each to Grapple a man-sized being) or Trampling.

If it is damaged and it can find the perpetrator, then that is when the Vrtil Roseate Luminous Aether Death Ray gets broken out.

Nidhogr, Horrible Norse Dragon: Bite, 65%, 3d6+ db.

Tail 50%, 1d6 +1/2 db.

Brown, wingless and does not breathe fire. Can bite and sweep with tail in same round.

SAN Loss for all versions of the Guardian Monster: 0/1d6.

Anyone killed by the Guardian Monster joins the spirits haunting Shambhala, forever.

In the *Vril* filter, the Bargainer refers to himself as the Tur, leader of the Vril-ya. He lives in an opulent temple, and is attended to by a number of shapely, nubile, scantily clad androids of both genders.

Once all have entered, the Bargainer offers everyone tea or some other refreshment, and a seat. He or she thanks them for coming, and asks them what they have in mind. Knowledge? Secrets?

Attacking the Bargainer, again, results in summary expulsion without reentry privileges for the offender. Either the investigators want to make a deal, or they don't.

8. Making A Deal And The Sevenfold Rule

Whatever it is they want to know, be it how to restore the lives of their friends, finding out what Olaf Ulfsson is up to, a way to help Lani, or just plain old sorcerous knowledge, with only a few exceptions the Bargainer can oblige them.

However (since they are newcomers), the Bargainer will assume that they are not familiar with the ground rules. The ground rules are as follows:

1. *The Bargainer can, with few exceptions, only offer knowledge.* He cannot offer raw power, or magical items, or grant wishes. If asked why, he explains that free will is important in the grand scheme of things. People have to know what the price is, and then willingly pay it. Simply handing out power leads to claims of ignorance on the part of the recipient, and that offends his/her sensibilities. One important exception to this knowledge only rule is that he can allow the dead spirits trapped here (like Lani) to depart.

2. *You must “pay sevenfold” for what you learn.*

3. *There are a “couple of minor things” that the Bargainer will not divulge.*

This should all be played out through the appropriate filter, of course. The *volva* will

be curt, businesslike and focused on payment and prop use. The Atlantean sorcerer will be creepy, cunning and full of vague, dire warnings. The Tur of the Vril-ya will be pleasant, chatty, and might try to dissuade foolish requests, but will reluctantly accede if begged.

The investigators will doubtlessly want exacting details on how one counts seven times the value of a piece of knowledge. The Bargainer explains that knowledge has no intrinsic value; rather, it is how that knowledge is used that determines its value. Knowing where a chest of gold is buried is less valuable to someone who can never get to it, than it is to someone who can. *As a result, one pays as one goes, as one makes use of the knowledge.* The Bargainer will be totally up front with the investigators in this regard. He will also tell them exactly what price will be extracted from them in exchange for making a particular hypothetical use of a particular piece of knowledge.

For example (ahem), if they wish to learn what Olaf Ulfsson is up to, the initial price for simply being told is nominal: seven secrets belonging to the investigator becoming known by those they least wish to know them, or the loss of seven dearly held memories. When they get put in a place to use that knowledge to stop Olaf Ulfsson, likely foiling his dearly held plans, seven disasters will eventually befall the questioner, or those close to them.

Asking specifically how to best to kill Olaf Ulfsson will initially cost someone seven injuries (or seven injuries to those close to them). Using that knowledge will result in seven innocent deaths.

Asking how to become a true immortal (which is what Olaf, in essence, did) costs seven lives initially, since it is knowledge that can be used to greatly advance one's life. This is the explanation for the seven dead Thule members at the entrance to Shambhala. Actually successfully making use of that knowledge, which is what Olaf intends to do, will cost seven potentially

immortal lives. This is why Olaf indoctrinated the seven Thule wizards that have been palling around with him. Horst Schmidt will not be thrilled to hear about Olaf's planned betrayal.

The answer as to what Olaf is up to (initial price: seven secrets), is set out in a nearby box (*Yggdrasil, Investigator Handout #1*).

**Yggdrasil, Investigator Handout #1—
the Bargainer's Answer to the
Question "What Is Olaf Ulfsson Up
To?"**

Olaf means to ascend by default. To become a *mahatma*, one must become an idolon of perfection: loved and viewed as perfect. One way to do this is to be at perfect peace and spread harmony. The other way is to drag your people into a condition of despair so profound, that you look great in comparison. This is how Atlantis fell, how Hyperborea fell, and how your civilization will ultimately fall, clearing off the Earth for the next cycle of being.

Olaf will seek to ascend by raising Atlantis—a time and place where sorcerers were revered. This is what he bargained for. He will raise it from its watery grave by tearing open the fabric of reality. He will blot out the sun, and bring forth both the spirits of the dead and those of his father's kin—remaking the world into one where such as he can be revered. Yibb-Ts'tll will be loosed, imposing his Reversals across Iceland.

To do this, he must strive at a place where he is most revered now, in the presence of those who most revere him now, for the magic will be easiest then.

It would also aid his task to be at a place where the boundaries between this world and others are already thin, for the effort would be less.

I do not know where he plans to go with certainty, as he did not seek my advice. He seemed to already know—"home".

It should go without saying that the way to foil Olaf is to kill him. The way to best kill him is to catch him in daylight and take advantage of his sappy ethical code.

Resurrecting someone will result in seven deaths (or cost seven sacrifices). And no, the price would not truly be sevenfold if it were seven enemies, or seven strangers. It will be seven innocent sacrifices, or (if seven innocent sacrifices are unavailable at the time) seven people of comparable value to you.

In addition, although the Bargainer is willing to negotiate or debate what would amount to a sevenfold payment for a particular use of particular knowledge, sacrificing seven souls is always sufficient to do something that amounts to saving, restoring or significantly advancing a life.

Entering into a Faustian bargain which directly results in the death of, or serious harm to, seven innocent people is worth a penalty of 2d8 SAN to each participant. Shame, shame. Just bargaining for knowledge that does not directly kill anyone (such as what Olaf is up to, and stopping there) costs 1d3 SAN.

Once the investigators are done with their bargaining, they find themselves back at surface, amidst the volcanic desert and sacrificed Thule members.

9. Three exceptions to the 7:1 rule

If the investigators want to know the meaning of life, or if God exists, why, the Bargainer is more than happy to oblige, *without charge*. He/she does not suffer fools well, and is glad to rid the world of one. He tells the investigator to simply look outside his (drawn) curtain, or gaze into his crystal ball, or what have you. Pick an appropriate, deliberate glimpse into or through something appropriate to the Bargainer's cultural filter. SAN loss is 1d10/1d100 for glimpsing the madness at the center of our empty, meaningless universe.

The Bargainer will not trade or divulge any knowledge that might be used to destroy Shambhala. That would put him out of business, and is the primary one of the “few things” that will not be disclosed under the ground rules.

Finally, some wise guy might decide to try and whine, wheedle and/or **Bargain** with whatever it is that they are bargaining with. Role-play such efforts out. The Bargainer might—*maybe*—make them some kind of a “special deal”. (This is, however, the “canonical outcome”).

The “special deal” will be worse—far worse—than merely a sevenfold payment. The deal just will not be as **obviously** destructive, and will be much more **obscure** in terms of price. This is where the Bargainer might produce a formal contract requiring the investigators, on pain of their souls, to take some seemingly innocuous act with profound, long-reaching consequences. The investigators may leave thinking that they have tugged at the heartstrings of the Bargainer. They will have it backwards.

If you require a specific suggestion with untold but horrible consequences, have them be handed a letter, and have them all sign a contract to simply deliver said letter within seven weeks (seven times seven days) to the addressee. Under no circumstances are they to open it or interfere with the recipient after delivering it. The price for failure or interference will be their souls. They and any friends who died in Shambhala are granted free passage away from Shambhala (with dead PCs and dear NPCs being placed in *afturganga* status) in exchange for this “small service”, and find themselves abruptly at the surface.

They can even take Lani (but only Lani among unfamiliar deceased spirits) with them. (Her unflagging selflessness makes the Bargainer “uneasy”; he will throw her in as a gratuity to seal a deal. He’s “tired of her cheerfulness.” He swears that she is not evil at all). Smart investigators will remember that Olaf is a sap for children, and

realize that she might be useful to have around.

This is the extent of the “bargaining” that will be engaged in and the best deal they can get, however: deliver this letter with no questions asked, and I will answer your question for that price. Lani and any friends who died in Shambhala (as *afturganga*) can leave. Do not be this nice(?) to them without some serious role-playing, however.

If an investigator opens the letter or interferes with the recipient, at least in the near term, do something truly horrible to them, resulting in painful oblivion.

The addressee of the letter (which, when opened, merely says something innocuous like “your time is up” or “now is the time”) calmly puts his affairs in order and, whatever life he bargained for having expired, does something--possibly violent, possibly not--that results in mass chaos and death resulting in the loss of hundreds or thousands of lives. At a minimum, the price paid should be at least 49 (7 times 7) times the value of the information extracted.

Keepers interested in tying this into some historical event in the 1920s or 1930s might research the following real-life events:

- The Bath, MI school disaster of 1927 (addressee: Andrew Kehoe);
- The race-based massacre in Rosewood, FL in 1923 (addressee: Sheriff Walker);
- The Bonus March in Washington, D.C., 1932 (addressee: Chief of Police);
- The first Columbine massacre, Serene, CO, 1927 (addressee: Louis Scherf).

Or, for even more fun, have them deliver the message (which might say “wear your galoshes”!) to a wholly random person, who not long thereafter is the cause of an enormous disaster or transportation accident. In this way, there is not even anything for the investigators to really interfere with.

Sample disasters of the Classic era United States include:

- The Vermont flood of November, 1927.
- March 12, 1928: St. Francis Dam collapse in Los Angeles, 400-500 casualties. The recipient is a dam inspector who gets sick on the day of the disaster.
- 1935 Labor Day Hurricane, Upper Keys, Florida, 400-600 fatalities.
- Crash of the zeppelin U.S.S. Akron in severe weather, April 4, 1933, killing 73 (3 survivors). The crew forgot to pack their lifejackets, as the zeppelin hit the Atlantic just off the New Jersey shore. Perhaps the note tells the crewmember that is in charge of lifejackets to stay home.
- The SS Morro Castle fire off Cape May, New Jersey, September 8, 1934, killing 137. The Coast Guard station at Cape May failed to launch its float planes (apparently receiving no distress call) until a local radio station reported bodies washing up on shore. Where was the ship's radioman? Or the station's radioman?
- The Mowequa Mine Disaster in Mowequa, IL, December 24, 1932; a

methane explosion killing 54. Maybe somebody lit up a smoke after the recipient forgot to take the canary down on his shift.

A 2d6 SAN loss should be suffered by any investigators who belatedly realize that, in fact, they did not cheat the Bargainer.

Lani, if released to their custody, will be an *afturganga* unless a further deal is made to restore her fully to life. This, as noted above, will be an expensive deal. *Afturganga* rules are noted in the sourcebook chapter, and summarized in her statistics.

You may notice that there is nothing hard and fast to stop greedy investigators from repeatedly returning to Shambhala and repeatedly bargaining with dark powers. This is correct. The prices of the deals tend to be a bit steep on innocent people, but so what? There are always innocent people around. Someone could even make a career out of bargaining for black magic. We call them "sorcerers", and they usually end badly, but not without wreaking a lot of havoc first.

And then, of course, there is Lani's first day of school to consider.



"Uncle", I don't want...don't want....to go to bed. I'm not...I'm not...tired. I'm NEVER tired!!!

Lani Jonsdottir, Creepily Cheerful Little Dead Girl

Nationality: Icelandic.

STR 24	DEX 08	INT 14	CON 26	APP 11	POW 01
SIZ 09	EDU 11	SAN 99	Luck 05	Hits: 18	Age: ??

Damage Bonus: +1d6.

Education: Completed the fourth grade with top marks, sir! And I also spent a long time talking to all those dead folks, too!

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Occult 25%, History 25%, Natural History 25%, Persuade 50%, Sneak 50%, Look on the Bright Side 99%.

Languages: Icelandic 55%.

Attacks: None over base, but she packs quite a wallop. That kick in the shin is going to hurt.

Special Defenses and Issues: As per normal zombie rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage. Lani does not eat, sleep, breathe, age or die from natural causes. She only recovers hit points with magical assistance (including the *Heal* spell). Lani is dead to all forms of careful medical examination. She cannot say the word “God,” and tends to repeat herself a bit.

SAN loss: 1/1d8 if someone realizes that she is dead (unlikely without medical examination, or prolonged enough observation to note that she does not eat, drink or sleep. She can fake it, though, by pretending to be asleep, or hiding her food). Otherwise, no SAN loss. Migraines resulting from her unflinching cheerfulness are another matter, of course.

Notes on Playing Lani: Keepers unfamiliar with the Pollyanna stories and the demeanor of the lead character might wish to refresh their recollections prior to using Lani as a recurring NPC. Personal hardships just do not get this girl down, but she falls apart at the sight of someone else’s suffering. Keepers unfamiliar with the Pippi Longstocking stories might wish to review them to get an idea of how incredibly strong she is, and the comedic implications of her strength. Keep your tone bright, your manners hyperformal, and end sentences with exclamation points, sir!

Lani is a small, pretty, blonde haired girl with a formal, overly polite way of speaking and an unflinchingly cheerful and helpful demeanor. She lived in the area of Kirkja (precise year in the Keeper’s discretion) and got lost in the lava flows looking for her dog one midsummer’s day. Then she got cold and hungry and went to sleep, and then she was with all those other people in heaven, she guesses, for a long time. She never did find her dog, and just was not ready to let go. Her dog needed her, you see.

Lani in the surface world is rather pale, rather slow moving, and just looks slightly--off. *But only slightly.* Like most completely intact *afturganga*, she appears to casual observation to be passably normal. Her mood is cheerful despite the fact that she is dead, an *afturganga* zombie kept alive indefinitely by magic or something like it. How long ago she disappeared, whether or not she has any family still remaining, and whether they would know what to do with a long-lost and zombified family member are questions to be resolved in the discretion of the Keeper.

Whether or not the Bargainer let her go for some nefarious reason may be addressed in a future scenario; however, Lani herself is totally innocent and well-intentioned. She will be distressed if she learns that a terrible price was paid for her to come back to “life.”

Twilight Time (or, One Step Back for Two Steps Forward), Finale

T*wilight Time* is the final showdown between the investigators and Olaf Ulfsson. Having figured out what he is up to, and gotten a big hint about where he means to go about it—his home—the investigators' tasks are comparatively straightforward: go there and stop him, if possible. It is also somewhat difficult to script in exacting detail, for reasons that will soon be apparent.

Olaf's home is the site of the Third Cloister, scene of events in *Turn to Stone*. In keeping with the cyclical theme of the campaign, things end here. It takes the investigators six hours to proceed with all haste from the entrance to Shambhala to the Torsson's farm and the Third Cloister's ruins. Pay careful attention to what time it is when they arrive. During midsummer in Iceland, it is light out, to one extent or another, beginning around 4 A.M. and lasting until 1 A.M. Because Olaf is vulnerable in the sunlight, and because he needs his troll buddies/kin on hand when he tries to *Raise Atlantis*, he will be planning to wait until sundown (the next 1 A.M.) after he arrives.

The amount of time that passes in the "real world" while the investigators are in Shambhala is variable. The author suggests that, assuming they have been acting with due haste all along, the investigators be permitted to arrive at the Third Cloister site around midnight—*i.e.*, with an hour or so to spare before the sun goes down.

When they arrive, Olaf and any surviving Thule Gesellschaft adherents will have set up camp at *Map Area 2* (the standing blue stone ring) on the *Turn to Stone* area map. Left unmolested, Olaf's plan is as follows:

- Olaf, accompanied by the remainder of his flunkies, sets up camp at the edge of the standing stones. They openly start a fire and do nothing to obscure their

presence. Olaf will have with him, at a minimum, seven wizard/*gallai sanctum* level Thule members.

- Olaf immediately dispatches any rank-and-file level Thule members (use typical stats) to the Tor family's farmhouse. Barring unforeseen casualties, this should be the three he left at the mouth of the valley entrance in *Desire Made Manifest*, plus any who escaped from the ambush in Kirkja and caught up with him. Olaf instructs them not to harm any children there. He does not care one way or the other about the adults. Use your discretion about whether the adult members of the Tor family get tied up or shot. The children get tied up.
- The farmhouse occupiers then take up sniper positions at windows in the farmhouse and keep a lookout for approaching trouble. Their job is to fire upon *anyone* that they see approaching (thereby alerting Olaf). The farmhouse, again, is 100 yards off the corner of the ruins map, to the southwest. Tor is growing root crops, which sadly provide little effective cover. However, it is gloomy by the time the investigators arrive, and although Olaf sees very well in the dark and gloom, the farmhouse snipers do not.
- Olaf and the seven wizard-level Thule members wait. As soon as twilight arrives, Olaf calls out to his family members. Ulf (if he is still alive) and 4+ 1d4 other trolls (use the same statistics as Ulf) arrive at the ceremony and immediately slaughter the Thule wizards, bleeding the blue stones.
- If Olaf is tipped off to the investigators' approach before nightfall, he immediately opens fire and kills all of the wizards himself in fairly short order,

before they can effectively react. (Note that Olaf will stay in the shade of one of the blue stones if at all possible, rendering him very hard to hurt, and that he is carrying his Thompson submachine gun in addition to his magic spear). The investigators will hear the burst of autofire quite clearly if he must resort to dirtying his own hands.

- With the blue stones blooded, and with his troll kin in attendance, Olaf uses all 20 magic points stored in his spear, plus all but one of his personal magic points, plus all of the POW of the seven sacrificed immortal wizards, to cast **Raise Atlantis**. The magic points are not spent until the end of the ceremony, and as noted below, it is entirely possible that the ritual gets started, and interrupted and re-started, several times.

Raise Atlantis is bad news. It takes Olaf five uninterrupted minutes to cast, from within the ring of blue stones. When he finishes, it is irreversible; killing him in the middle of casting prevents anything from happening.

When finished, an eerie howl and glow erupts from the standing stones. A rift in the fabric of reality is torn, occupying the standing stone ring. The Earth for hundreds of miles around rumbles, shakes, and heaves up. Mammoth volcanic explosions are triggered at several points nearby, including offshore. The entire sky for hundreds of miles is blotted out by volcanic ash. Gases and soot fall over every square inch of Iceland.

Out of the newly opened rift, and taking full advantage of the blotting out of the sun, hundreds of trolls and other extra-dimensional horrors pour out of the rift and disperse across the countryside. A chain reaction is started and other rifts throughout Iceland, including one in Reykjavik, are opened. Trolls ravine, slay and generally do their thing with the entire Icelandic populace. A nuclear winter, far surpassing that of the great Mt. Laki blast of 1783, affects the Earth, causing famines, social

upheaval and a fair share of death. Eventually, the sun makes it back through the ash cloud, but there is precious little left of Iceland by that point.

The volcanic upheaval offshore causes parts of sunken Atlantis to rise from the deep, all slime-encrusted temples and worse. A portal to the Jungle of Kled is opened within one slime-encrusted temple formerly beneath the waves, and Yibb-Ts'tll gets to come out and play for a while, inflicting his Reversals willy-nilly for miles around.

And Olaf, the guy who made this all possible, moves on to some other plane of existence, just like he wanted. Specifically, Yibb-Ts'tll absorbs his soul, such as it is. Whether things are pleasant for him there is unknowable, but at least it's something new for him.

If the investigators somehow escape, SAN loss for witnessing all of this is $2/2d10+1$ for the events, plus a flat 6 for seeing so many, many trolls that eventually, six SAN losses occur. (Allow credit for prior SAN losses due to seeing trolls for this part of things).

There are, of course, some obstacles in Olaf's way:

Those meddling investigators: Depending upon how they stage their approach to the Third Cloister site, the investigators might get the drop on Olaf. (Olaf is smart enough to keep the Thule wizards in the neighborhood of the blue stones, such that if they are inadvertently killed by investigator gunfire, they still count as sacrifices).

It will be difficult to take the Torsson farmhouse quietly, although it could happen. If it does, they have a much better chance of sneaking up on the blue stones. As noted below, however, there are any number of possible distractions that could aid them.

The investigators might decide to call Olaf out, maybe wielding Freyja's raven-decorated sword, insult his status, challenge him to a duel, or the like. He is somewhat prickly, but unlikely to be easily goaded into risking everything on a throw of the dice.

One exception to this is if the investigators challenge him once darkness has fallen and the trolls have been coaxed forth (i.e., before or during *Raise Atlantis*). This tactic puts Olaf into a difficult spot and forces him to somehow respond. Casting *Raise Atlantis* while being perceived by his troll relatives as a coward might not work, since he will not be perceived as a paragon by the survivors when the world goes to hell. He might then be conned into a single combat. Good luck with that, although perhaps, the investigators can use the distraction to leverage some of the following potential reinforcements.

Note that Olaf will momentarily hesitate at directly harming Lani, thinking her to be a child. Once he figures out that she is an *afturganga*, he will not hesitate to kill her. He will try to have his flunkies remove children from the immediate scene, which might buy precious time for the investigators to maneuver. Olaf is just dopey that way, even though he knows that thousands of children will be killed when Atlantis rises again. (Note that Olaf's half-brother, Tor Linisson, at the very least, should be nearby for the festivities).

The Torsson family: Whichever ones are left alive are not cowards. If quietly liberated, they can help the investigators by suggesting that they take advantage of a wide path around the ruin field, or pick up rifles. This path takes advantage of natural depressions and covers and brings the investigators out (otherwise unseen) at the northeast corner of the map, after about 10 minutes of skulking. They are also willing to participate in any attacks if given rifles. Remember, they do not speak any English.

Rounding up conventional backup? There really is not any time to obtain any from nearby farms, towns or villages.

Helgi Alfsdottir or the Lions of the Mother?: The intended "*grande jete*" of the campaign is that the perfect distractions may be at hand, depending on what the investigators left behind them during the course of *Turn to Stone*. Or not.

**A General Note About Effective
Storytelling, and Nazis Are Always
Bad Guys**

Role-playing games cease to be fun when the players cease to be either the heroes, or the centers of attention. Under no circumstances should a clutch of NPC "cavalry" come riding over the hill to save the day, or some NPC be allowed to develop into a "Mary Sue" that saves the day while the investigators look on. These various distractions and allies are resources for the *investigators* to seize upon and *decide* whether or not to utilize, and how to utilize.

The Lions are a bit of an automated security system, but they should not get through the trolls or otherwise meaningfully disturb Olaf himself, vs. clear a path to him. All of these resources are best used to "soak off" Olaf's various defenses and allow the investigators to get at Olaf themselves.

And even proto-Nazis are bad guys. They should be reluctant to help, be killed while killing trolls, run away when the going gets tough, and/or end up in jail even if they somehow survive.

Helgi may still be shut up behind her Elder Sign emblazoned door, and she is an ideal distraction—rather bulletproof, and a crazed killer that will make a direct move for anyone not running away (e.g., Olaf). She is long past any maternal instincts at this point, although Olaf may hesitate to harm her. If the investigators choose to let her out, Olaf must deal with her as she assaults and/or gets frisky with him.

Note again that it takes Olaf an *uninterrupted* five minutes to cast *Raise Atlantis*, so the investigators will have a bit of time to be trying to do things while he is distracted, needing only then to dodge or distract guardian trolls. As noted in *Turn to Stone*, they are not too bright.

As for the two Lions of the Mother, the Keeper should review what triggers them, if they are still in one piece. Attempting to *Raise Atlantis* is counted as a temple defilement of the worst sort, and any Lions still extant will do their level best to battle past trolls and get to Olaf, who finally stands revealed (in their “minds”) as a blasphemer.

Horst Schmidt: Assuming that Horst was permitted to accompany the investigators to the Bargainer in Shambhala, he will have heard, from a source he deems above reproach, that Olaf intends to kill his fellow Thule wizards and blow up Iceland. He is not in favor of this.

Horst does not want to die at the hands of a bunch of trolls or whatever lies beneath the waves in sunken Atlantis. Horst will now want to stop Olaf’s plans without risking his own life unnecessarily. He might try to warn the seven wizards with Olaf that he means to sacrifice them. He can sway the Thule members in the farmhouse to switch sides, resulting in the farmhouse being taken quietly and the investigators getting both the drop on Olaf and a clutch of competent riflemen as odd allies.

While such persuasive efforts coming from the investigators will not likely be taken seriously, Horst will be. This chain of events (the canonical solution) results in chaos and a much fairer fight; it will not be a simple matter of mowing down the seven wizards with a Thompson SMG unawares at that point. Give Olaf one round of surprise to shoot some ducks in a barrel before the surviving wizards scatter and run or futilely try to defend themselves, forcing Olaf and any supernatural assistants to run them down in an effort to salvage matters. Note that Olaf needs the blood of seven sacrificed immortals, and Horst will do.

Rewards and Repercussions

Killing Olaf and preventing Atlantis from rising garners each surviving investigator 2d8 SAN. If Olaf somehow escapes but Atlantis does not rise, charge them with 1d6 SAN. They can dynamite the blue stones, but this will not do any good. Eventually, Olaf will try again to recruit seven new immortals and try again somewhere else. Let them lose some sleep while they try and find him.



Raise Atlantis, In Progress

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