

At The World's End

A Call Of Cthulhu 1990s Adventure

This scenario takes place in the 1990s, in central Vermont. The setting is in the summertime, when the Green Mountain National Forest is crowded with campers and tourists - the investigators among them. Suddenly all manner of strange spider activity strikes the Green Mountains, resulting in several mysterious deaths and a standoff between ecologists and a newly-opened major hydroelectric dam in the Forest.

"Beyond the fabric of time and space itself, lies a web of fascinating schemes and intrigue more literal to the word than thought. In the least likely places, in the distant lands, destiny and horror plague the dark, mysterious, forests of the God ..." -An old Indian folk tale

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KEEPER'S INFORMATION

Eight months ago, a multi-national corporation called HydroCorp invested in a program to create a dam blocking off the flow of water from a small reservoir in central Vermont. This program was richly funded by several private investors worldwide, and construction began immediately once the papers were signed.

Not known, however, were the actual motivations for the dam's construction. The anonymous donors were interested in the more "spiritual" value of the area - it was once a sacred place to American Indians in the region, a place forbidden and shunned. The private donors were interested in the occult, and were serious to invoke the powers of the area. Funding such a project would give them unrestricted access to the area, without the press giving too much attention to their activities. They sent a secret team of archaeologists and anthropologists to the area, and they haven't been heard from in a month. The donors are continuing to fund the project until they can find out what happened to the others and start another expedition. They do not know the secret of the area.

A large cavern complex nearby the reservoir holds the fabulous web and minions of the spidery Great Old One, Atlach-Nacha. A runoff of the reservoir came in through a hidden opening in the caves, draining down into the bottomless pit that Atlach-Nacha eternally attempts to cross. It is because of this flow of water that Atlach-Nacha is held at bay. The water creates a barrier that prohibits the Great Old One from completing his web, allowing him to cross the chasm. But with the construction of the MacPherson Dam (as it is known) by HydroCorp, this flow has been significantly reduced and soon Atlach-Nacha will cross the chasm ... supposedly signalling the end of the world.

The creature known as Atlach-Nacha is actually no more than a sentient creature that comes from beneath the depths of the earth. Due to the magnificent power of the Spider-God, it became feared by the prehistoric natives of Vermont centuries ago, and the area around what is now Branbury became "taboo". In time, the tales of the Spider-God were handed down to younger generations, and the roots of the legend were lost. Still, as it eternally hungers, Atlach-Nacha spins it's web to one day emerge and feed upon mortal man. The time is almost right ...

INTRODUCING THE INVESTIGATORS

The case may be brought to the investigator's attention in several ways. However, the scenario is generally laid out for the first alternative, but with few modifications, the others can be played easily.

- It is summertime in Vermont, and a vacation is in order. A trip to the Green Mountain National Forest seems as good a place as any to get away.
- Die-hard occultists hunt down Atlach-Nacha and pinpoint this area as the most likely place for investigation.
- A keeper who has let the investigators acquire an old tome may relate that the book relates central Vermont as the place where the Spider-God will arise when the time has finally come for the end of our world.

MORE NOTES FOR THE KEEPER

However the players arrive and for what motivations is up to you and the players. Still, a few facts must be said of the area in which the scenario takes place.

Vermont (Branbury to be exact) is one of the smallest states in the United States and is the least industrialized for its size. Most of the land is taken up by marshes, lakes, forests, and mountains, the Green Mountains (hence the name "Verd Mont", or Vermont) to be exact. Signs are written in both English as well as French because of the proximity to Canada. Berry picking and dairy farming are the biggest industries, as well as tourism and lumber.

The wildlife of Vermont is plentiful, though there are many endangered species. Most are protected by law, however. Still, technicalities will be technicalities, and multi-national corporations threaten these species with their building projects, despite the efforts of local and national environmental groups and agencies. Vermont has several loop-holes in its government on policies for industrial growth.

It should also be noted that Vermont has a large number of generally non-poisonous breeds of spiders, living in the forested mountains in caves. These spiders have always been abundant, and were given no undue attention until recently.

One of the investigators has a relative who keeps a cabin near the town of Branbury, Vermont, and is willing to lend them it for a month or two. This cabin is situated in the Moosalamoo Recreation Area, and is fully described later.

When the investigators arrive, have them pick up a copy of the local newspaper, the "Branbury News"; perhaps while getting directions or while stopping at a roadside cafe. Among tourist information such as the best ski areas for next winter, or the best places for fly-fishing, is an interesting article (see World's End Papers #1). This is only a hint of the events to come.

WELCOME TO BRANBURY, VERMONT

The players will find themselves in a small town called Branbury, a little vacation town for most of the summer months. Attention is shifted from Branbury to Middlebury during the autumn and winter months, and Branbury is virtually unknown in spring.

Branbury is a quiet town. Very quiet. The police in Branbury have no ties to Lake Dunmore or Salisbury authorities, and the town has one small police station and jail, made of wood and of the same architecture seen during the Civil War. Most houses in Branbury are log houses, few and far between, with little or no luxuries seen in big cities (except for the occasional souvenir shop or cafe). Branbury is in the middle of nowhere.

Lake Dunmore is popular for fly-fishing in the summer also, though the wildlife in the swampy lake is preserved by law. The whole area east of Branbury is wooded mountains, uninhabited except for the occasional camp ground or recreational area. These are large gatherings of tents and cabins, with perhaps a small restaurant. There are three recreational areas in the vicinity of Branbury: Robert Frost R.A., Texas Falls R.A., and Moosalamoo R.A.

THERE ARE SOME BAD NEWS

Upon arriving in Branbury and eating lunch in a restaurant, the investigators may overhear a conversation by some of the locals about the event described in the World's End Papers #1. In addition, investigators may wish to inquire about the article at the bar. Because of the somewhat xenophobic attitude of the Branburians, any investigator wishing to ask about the article must make a successful Fast Talk roll. If an investigator succeeds, read one of the statements described at the end of this scenario (see Fast Talk). Do not read the other unless they ask around again or later on.

MERLE BROM

Merle Brom was the son of a Swedish business man, who was very wealthy, dealing in oil and chemicals in the early sixties and seventies. When Merle saw how chemicals were polluting the earth, the effect on him was astounding. A new Merle emerged as he renounced his claim to his father's inheritance. Merle became an active member of Greenpeace in the eighties, and moved to Vermont in 1981. He had lived in the vicinity of Branbury with his American-born wife, Hanna, for 11 years before his death. Merle was killed by a horde of crazed spiders while he, his wife, and his two infants were camping at the Texas Falls Recreation Area. None of the four survived. The carnage was horrid, the bodies of the babies eaten away and covered in webs, and the parents little more than dry and brittle corpses with human limbs. The whole event was written off as a freak natural occurrence.

Merle had been actively opposing HydroCorp ever since it planned to construct MacPherson Dam up in the mountains, as it threatened the existence of a species of gold bass that migrates upstream to lay their eggs. Despite the court ruling that HydroCorp had the rights to the land, Brom was secretly collecting evidence that he planned to present to the state environmental agency, in the form of scientific studies and papers. These papers were lost after the accident, but no one knew about them in the first place, so a search wasn't conducted.

Merle's wife, Hanna, was an attractive blonde woman, and a student of Ecology. In addition, she was a native of Vermont. She was younger than Merle, with a certain unmistakable flair and love for life. She was a giver, the kind of person that donated to charities and wildlife funds. She too was a member of Greenpeace, as well as Amnesty International, though not as active as her counterpart, Merle. She had given birth to his two children only a few months before.

Hanna knew a little of what was going on in Branbury, and with HydroCorp, and her love for animals led her to hate MacPherson and his corporation. She vowed to aid her husband and all environmentalists in the area in their drive to kick HydroCorp out of the Green Mountains. She was always lively and full of vitality, and a constant support for her aging husband. The two were heroes to some of the more radical environmentalists in the area, and were considered by some to be the leaders of the ecological movement in Vermont.

At 30, Hanna was still alive and full of energy. The loss of her life, that of her husband's and their two babies has been a devastating blow to the environmentalists in Branbury and the surrounding areas.

The engineer who labored over the designs of the Dam is Walter MacPherson, a steadfast man of older years with wavy white hair and pale gray eyes. MacPherson created the dam, a project he saw as a way of producing cheap power and at the same time creating a small reservoir for the controlling of forest fires in the area. The dam was named after him in the early stages of planning, and he was given full funding by HydroCorp. Although he has a small suspicion as to why the corporation wants the dam built (they have

not directly answered his questions), he does not realize the truth.

MacPherson lives at the administration building at the dam site, which is isolated from Branbury. He oversees the construction of the dam, which is nearing completion (estimated within one month). He has heard of the environmentalist movement in the area, but cares little. He wants to make the dam work, and work it will. He has full backing from the state and local authorities, and he doesn't take kindly to vandals, trespassers, and vagrants.

MacPherson doesn't know that Atlach-Nacha is at work, although the investigators may not know this at first. His stubbornness and hard manner may convince the investigators he is in league with the enemy, though he is not. He is very unlikely to be persuaded to stop the dam, let alone destroy it, though if a demonstration were set up, he might change his mind. Note that MacPherson is well-versed in law also, and can't be conned into anything easily. He is quick to avenge wrong-doings done to him, the dam, and HydroCorp.

POLICE FILES AND REPORTS

Any characters wanting information on the accident of the Broms can attempt to persuade the police in Branbury to hand over any information. This can be done by Fast Talk or by simply having a police background. Note that the police will not have much to give, as they have already decided it was just an accident. The only thing of any use is a set of gruesome police photos, showing the remains of the Broms and their two children (show the players World's End Illustration #1; this is just one of many horrible photos). Anyone viewing these photos must make a SAN check or lose 1D4 SAN. If the check is made, they lose nothing, except perhaps their lunch.

The photos are stark black and white, with very minute detail. They show horrible images of half-drained bodies and brittle body parts, identified as the whole Brom family. The ghastly remains are coated with web strands and scraps of dead flesh and tissue are scattered everywhere from scavenging ants. Any sign of the children can be seen in two photos of small brown lumps of course matter (wrapped in cocoons), labelled "children". Indeed, what has happened here is a true "freak" accident. Officials are baffled at the behavior of the spiders, as it seems they have almost been possessed with a rage of frenzy unlike any ever recorded. The photographs are graphic and disgusting, and every so often a large spider is caught by the camera, coming out of a mouth, scuttling away or doing some other gross act. After the initial carnage inflicted by the spiders, ants carried away much of the remains.

Any character with Natural History that makes a check and passes, will realize that these spiders are of mixed breeds, some not found in Vermont, even in the U.S.A. Furthermore, any character with Natural History and Psychology will notice that the wounds inflicted could only be done if the whole swarm was in some kind of frenzy. This is extremely odd since spiders don't go around in packs (unlike ants), especially in this area where they stay in their caves or other habitats. In addition, a final History check will note that many of the spiders photographed have not been seen in existence for many years - some even match prehistoric species. The police will also add that there is no case, because it was just a freak accident.

Anyone asking will be told that the entire mountains and National Forest are dotted with nearly hidden caves and knolls where common spiders make their homes. The police still don't know why the little arachnids went on this frenzy, killing the family.

THE BRANBURY LIBRARY

As always, the library is perhaps one of the best places to read up on information dealing with the Mythos. A successful Oratory check may reveal one or more of the following clues to the investigators:

- A zoological magazine describing the ecology of native arachnids of New England. It reveals that Vermont is home to many species of relatively harmless spiders that are uncommon elsewhere. Although they are known to inhabit small caves hidden among the Green Mountain forests, most of these caves are never seen by man.
- An excerpt from "The Guinness Book of Animal Facts & Feats" that relates a frightening yet factual story of a minor earthquake in New Zealand that occurred in 1969. Hundreds of red-back spiders (also known as "Katipo" or "night-stingers") emerged from the crack in the earth created by the tremor, near the town of Raetihi - though only two children died in the nightmarish onslaught.
- A scientific journal written by a relatively unknown author that relates several theories on arachnid behavior. Though long and boring, one part of the book proves interesting - the author theorizes that it is quite possible for spiders to migrate in large amounts if water or food sources run low.
- A small black book written by an occultist in the late 1800s. Among the many fascinating stories is a short tale describing an ancient American Indian legend, pertaining to this area. The story is about a great "Spider-God" that is said to inhabit a forgotten cavern where it spins it's web over a great chasm. When this web is finally completed and the chasm bridged, the world will end by hordes of spiders enveloping the earth, laying webs across the face of the planet ... exterminating mankind.
- A cheap scientific journal written by a native American anthropologist who presents a more logical view of the Spider-God (though by the quality of the journal, it seems no one took him seriously). The author claims that perhaps this Indian diety was not a god, but perhaps just a very large and empathic being that dwelled beneath the earth in forgotten caves that delighted in performing cruel acts upon the frightened inhabitants of pre-columbian America. As such, it was worshipped out of fear, and many legends were made around it's existance as the bringer of final doom.

THE MACPHERSON DAM

MacPherson Dam is a symbol of modern architecture, standing some one-hundred and fifty feet above the river banks. It is not yet completed, lacking turbines for it's power generators, as well as other things. Thus, there still is a slight flow of water coming through. The whole area is cordoned off by a ten foot tall electric fence that is powered by auxiliary batteries in the Power Station.

Prior to the final confrontation (see "The Siege"), the guards at the gate will not permit anyone to enter the dam compound. Anyone trying otherwise will first be warned, than subdued by force.

GUARDHOUSES

The guardhouses are small "huts" equipped with powerful spotlights and a television set. There is a single fire-extinguisher in each of these small "huts".

STOREHOUSE

The storehouse is a white brick building built into the ravine wall. It is filled with rudimentary supplies such as building materials and preserved foods for the workers. There is an old bus parked by the storehouse, for transporting workers to and from Branbury. In several large drums there is a large amount of gasoline, for use in this bus. Large wooden crates hold vast amounts of explosives (such as dynamite and plastic explosives) for use in setting the foundation of the dam (by blowing holes in the bedrock).

HOUSING COMPLEX

The housing complex is made up of four large white wooden houses, with rows of bunkbeds along each wall. There is nothing of use in any of the bungalows.

POWER STATION

The power station is built like a fortress, and the top floor is pierced with reinforced windows that overlook the entire dam site. It is here that Walter MacPherson oversees construction of the dam. Ever since the first demonstrations by the ecologists, MacPherson decided to buy long coils of hose "just in case" he might need to defend against any rioting protesters. They can be hooked up to the station for use in projecting water.

THE LITTLE LOG CABIN

The investigators will be staying at a small, two-story log cabin near the Moosalamoo Recreation Area (near, that is, though still isolated). The cabin itself lies twenty yards from the dirt road.

The interior of the cabin is warmly appointed, with many antiques from the pioneer days as well as the Civil War. Furniture is quite comfortable, and there is a generator which provides electricity to the house when the electric lines are down.

HALL

The hall is quite comfortable, with a thick rug made of the skin of a black bear, several endtables beside a great big couch that dates back to who-knows-when. Several old picture frames hold black and white photos of relatives. There is a telephone on one of the endtables, though it does not work due to the fact that the wiring is completely destroyed (from the weather).

A closet connects with this room, where the investigators may store their heavier equipment and footwear, as well as hiking gear.

KITCHEN

The kitchen is panelled with white boarding, with large cupboards for storing canned goods. These cupboards are empty, except for a few cans of soup or bags of chips.

There is a small refrigerator and cooler in one corner of the room, though this is completely empty. It is in perfect working order. A small stove sits in the opposite corner; it is gas-operated and can be used to bake bread in addition to other things. It is an antique, like the silverware, pots, pans, and china. There is a whole shelf stacked with plates, cups, and bowls.

DINING ROOM

The dining room is more like a trophy hall; heads of different wildlife stare down at the large wooden table that dominates the room. There are shelves against the wall holding placemats and lace tablecloths, and an old grandfather clock stands next to the guest bedroom door. The table will seat twelve (though cramped).

GUEST BEDROOM

The guest bedroom is situated on the bottom floor, and is quite cozy. A large bed with a thick quilt sits in one corner; a large mirror hangs above an old wooden dresser and nightstand. A rocking chair sits by the door.

OUTHOUSE

The outhouse is about 30 feet from the house. It is made of panelled wood, to keep the smell in. Inside it is very cramped, and there is no light at night, except for the crescent-shaped hole in the door.

A shower booth is attached to the other side of the outhouse, with running water (it's cold of course), which is hand-pumped, and a metal plate to hold soap.

THE SECOND FLOOR

The second floor is smaller than the first, being pushed up against the back of the house in the traditional style. There is an overhang that slopes down over the front door.

RECREATION ROOM

The recreation room has a thick red rug that absorbs some of the heat in the room, making it cozy. There are two comfortable chairs and a small sofa, all facing a small color television set that is backed against the window. There is an old radio against the north wall as well, though it is broken. There is a large chest filled with board games set against the west wall.

BEDROOMS

There are three other bedrooms, each somewhat identical in appearance. They all have large beds and shelves filled with linens, a small table by the window with two wooden chairs; a dresser and mirror. There are porcelain bowls and pitchers by each mirror for filling with water for freshening up.

MASTER BEDROOM

The master bedroom has a larger bed, suited for two, with a canopy of mosquito-net for wet summers. It is warmer than the other rooms in the cabin, as it sits just above the kitchen. It is otherwise identical to the other rooms in the house.

LATER THAT NIGHT

At this time, the Keeper must make sure that at least a few of the investigators are in town, either at the police station (examining their photographs), or shopping for adequate groceries.

Read aloud the section labelled World's End News #1 to only those who stayed at the log cabin. This will give them an idea of the ecologic situation, as well as an idea to what is going on. Give each investigator there an IDEA (or Natural History) roll; if he or she succeeds, hint to them that the lack of water could be the cause of the spider infestations and pack movements.

At this time, choose one of the investigators by a random die roll. Whoever is picked results in the investigator in question having to go use the outhouse (give an excuse, such as bad chili he or she ate at the restaurant in town - and try to make it as casual as possible). After about five minutes, the other investigators in the main house will hear soft, shuffling noises from the kitchen.

At this time, the kitchen will be filled with spiders, as they crawl through an open window. They have attacked the investigator's cabin! Anyone present in the kitchen will be attacked by a single Mass of Spiders (see the end of this scenario for statistics).

Before they can react, read to the investigators World's End News #2. Remember, read this only to those investigators in the recreation room inside the cabin!

Meanwhile, the investigator who went to the outhouse will hear similar noises while still in the toilet. At the same time as the spiders crawl into the kitchen, they will have already carpeted the ground in the entire area. If the investigator looks through the hole in the door, he or she will see the spiders all around the outhouse, even as they pour into the house. At this time roll the normal Sanity for Masses of Spiders, but multiply the loss by two, for this investigator only.

The trapped investigator has few options. He or she may plug up the hole in the door with a shirt or a pair of pants, as the spiders begin to swarm over the entire outhouse. For effect, the Keeper should allow perhaps a single spider or two to crawl under the crack in the door, just to scare the wits out of the lone investigator. Or instead, the investigator may wish to flee the outhouse and make a run for the house. To accomplish this, the investigator must make a LUCK check, or be attacked by 1D6 Masses of Spiders.

Six rounds after the news broadcast (News #2), another spider swarm will crawl up to the second floor through an open window in the Master Bedroom (unless all windows have been shut by now). Thereafter, a swarm will appear every two rounds in a random room on either floor until the investigators flee the cabin or die. Note that characters going insane will be killed as they run off into the woods to be consumed by the spider masses.

The scenario can take two paths from here. Either the investigators run away (to their car in the driveway), or they try to close all the windows and doors and stay inside the house as the news broadcast suggested. Either way, it is crucial that they meet Colleen Summers (see below) at this time. Five minutes after the events above, all electricity will be cut as the spiders bring down the power lines (with the help of enraged termites), and render the generator useless by crawling all over it and clogging up the controls.

If any investigators run away (either through insanity or by choice), they will find that their car is no longer in working order. Investigation into the matter will reveal that hundreds of arachnids have gotten into the engine, making it useless. However, they will see a car coming down the dirt road towards their house. It is Colleen Summers, a local environmentalist. She will let the investigators in her car and drive away. If the investigators have chosen to stay, then have her knock fitfully on their front door until they let her in. She will say what she has to say and then leave with her car, whether or not they come.

The returning investigators from Branbury will find the road closed by forest rangers with flamethrower-equipped pick-ups. No one may enter areas blocked off (at least not by road or trail). They must wait until Colleen Summers arrives with the other investigators (they will have to drive down this road).

Colleen Summers will explain that she was a student of Ecology under Hanna Brom, and that she followed her here to Branbury this summer. Colleen is quite a charming girl, very straight-forward and compassionate. She will explain to them that she was studying the migrations of spiders up here in the Green Mountains when she thought of the idea of the dam cutting off the water supply to the cave systems that the spiders live in, forcing the spiders to leave their caves in search of alternative food and water supplies (she is close in her assumption, though not correct; Atlach-Nacha is controlling the spiders). The dam being as tall as it is, is enough to unleash that large a horde - imagine if it were complete. She tried to peacefully protest, but it did no good.

Colleen knows of a strange cave where she has set up some equipment for studying arachnid movements, and it seems to be the "home cave" where all the spiders are gathering. All characters may now make a Cthulhu Mythos roll. If they succeed, they will realize that this phenomenon has something to do with the Great Old One known as Atlach-Nacha, the Spider-God! Give no other information, unless they have a book (see Introducing the Investigators) or tome detailing the Spider-God.

COLLEEN SUMMERS

Colleen Summers is an outstanding student of Ecology and Zoology, and a fan of animal movies and the like. She is strikingly beautiful, with reddish-brown hair and black eyes, though the television doesn't do her justice. She is feisty when it comes to debating, though she often takes things too seriously, even to the point of getting angry over foolishness (especially in a time of crisis). She carries a full can of mace in her purse at all times.

Colleen knows that the Dam must be taken down, quickly. If she and the investigators can convince Walter MacPherson to blow it up, then her duties will be done. To do this, they must get some evidence; she suggests they go to the spider cave, and she will take a Polaroid camera with her. She won't go alone if they refuse, but will muster the same evidence Merle Brom had to stop operation of the dam (but it would take time). She is more likely to believe in the Mythos than MacPherson, and events will open her mind to their horror. Colleen will insist they go to the cave now, since she is the only one who knows where it is.

THE UNFATHOMABLE PIT OF ATLACH-NACHA

The spiders at the cave are in a frenzied orgy of worship, so they won't notice the investigators if they are stepped on as they go to the cave. Anyone viewing the writhing masses of spiders must make a SAN check or lose 1D10 SAN. Those going insane are subject to Arachnophobia, and 1D4 Masses of Spiders will attack him or her as he or she breaks from the group.

The sinkhole entrance to the caverns is forty feet deep, with smooth sides so that anyone coming within five feet of the hole must pass a DEX check or fall (unprepared) forty feet to the cavern floor, to a mass of spiders. Instead of the normal SAN roll, he or she loses at least one SAN point if he fails his check.

Each cavern is completely dark, and thus Colleen has brought torches and flashlights. She has also brought rappelling gear for the descent into the caves.

SINKHOLE

The sinkhole cave is filled with about three or four inches of water, seemingly boiling with spiders. The room itself is naturally round, with extremely smooth sides. There is nothing of interest here.

CRYSTAL CAVE

Reached by trudging through a tight passage filled with hip-deep water, stalactites and stalagmites, the crystal cave is a beautiful cave filled with rose and blue crystal formations, seemingly glowing off the light from an unknown source within the rocks themselves. The flowoff water from the connecting tunnel creates a small but fascinating cascade of mineral water that forms a mist at the bottom of the cave.

This mist hides a hole in the earth that leads on to other caves. Anyone within six feet of the hole will feel "breathing" from beyond.

This is the only evidence of the hole.

Anyone entering the crystal cave must make a LUCK check. A success indicates that the investigator spots a rotten human skeleton, picked clean by centuries of deterioration (which also happens to be the remains of an unfortunate spelunker). A strange sucking and blowing noise comes from the darkness below, perhaps tempting them to venture on (though Colleen will protest).

THE UNFATHOMABLE PIT

Beyond is the Unfathomable Pit itself, home of Atlach-Nacha and his minions. There will be 1D8 Masses of Spiders on the webs. Note that the webs are indestructable by all means save for water, which now only trickles down from above.

The great cavern is almost pitch-black, even with the lights provided by the investigators. Only a very dim light, red in color, comes from below. Sounds such as the shuffling of thousands of spiders echo throughout the fathomless confines of the pit. The ledge that leads into this chamber is crawling with the mindless beasts, and it will take courage to even come this far into the darkness as the arachnids will crawl all over the feet and legs of those entering.

From the dim reddish light, the shadow of the Great Old One can be seen as it carefully lays it's web of fine strands, and seems totally interested in it's work. The shadow, though it is dark and nearly formless, portrays the Spider-God in its frightening magnificence - even considering the distorted proportions of the situation, the creature must be at least as long as a bus! Seeing the spindly shadow of Atlach-Nacha inflicts a SAN loss of 1D10/1.

Colleen, although completely shocked, will start taking pictures at this moment, putting them in the pockets of her clothing.

Almost as soon as they enter this area, Colleen will strongly suggest they leave that instant, and regroup above. She will insist they drive to the MacPherson Dam site to buy them a few hours of relative peace, until something can be done. The Keeper must exercise extreme caution at this point, perhaps even advising the players not to proceed any further, for indeed, the wrath of a Great Old One is a terrible thing.

THE SIEGE

When the investigators arrive on the scene of MacPherson Dam, they will see a horrible sight. The dam seems to be under siege by hordes of spiders, and burning vehicles (placed in strategic places in defense) can be seen highlighting dam workers who are frantically trying to defend the compound.

OVERVIEW

Atlach-Nacha has sent almost an army of his swarming arachnids to kill everything in the dam area and to block the trickle of water which still flows down the river. All that stands in their way are MacPherson and his men.

The road that leads into the complex from Branbury is blocked up with hordes of spiders, and the opposite bank is almost covered entirely by the vicious arachnids. Each guardhouse is now manned by eight men (four guards and four workers), using their fire-extinguishers on the few spiders that make it through the electric fencing.

When the investigators come near, they will be illuminated by a spotlight from one of the guardhouses. When this happens, 1D3 Masses of Spiders will assault the car (though if it is securely enclosed, they will not be able to attack passengers). At the same time, the investigators will hear the workers calling for them towards the gates to the compound. Quickly pulling the gates open, while other workers spray the horde of spiders, they let the investigators in.

At this time, events will depend on what the investigators do. It is clear that the spiders are winning as the fire-extinguishers begin to run out. With only a little scrounging, sufficient weapons may be found in the compound to combat the spiders (such as the fire hoses at the power station, or the gasoline cans in the storehouse).

If the investigators use the tools that are present in the compound, they may be able to prevent the total onslaught of the spiders. After about ten minutes of being repelled, the spiders will fall back to the south (perhaps just in time as the gasoline begins to run low), where several of the aquatic species will enter the water en masse and head upstream towards the dam. Since there is no electric fencing in the water, there will be no way to prevent them from attacking the compound ... except by blowing the dam.

By now, MacPherson will listen to anything. With only a little convincing (by using the Polaroids Colleen took of the hordes of spiders and the mere shadow of Atlach-Nacha), they can persuade him to blow the dam. Using the explosives at the dam, the investigators will be able to destroy the dam within fifteen minutes (unless they used some of the explosives in the initial defense of the dam ...). They will have to evacuate all dam workers to either side of the dam, as the thousands of tons of water will rush down from above, crushing most of the buildings below, washing the spiders all the way to Lake Dunmore - but more importantly, it will flood the cave of Atlach-Nacha, destroying the finely laid web of the Spider-God.

REWARDS

If the investigators are successful, Colleen will be thankful, as she will be one of the only ones to believe them (other than MacPherson). They receive 2 SAN points for every Mass of Spiders they killed; convincing MacPherson earns 10 SAN. Defeating Atlach-Nacha in combat earns a reward of 15 SAN points. Defeating him by means of blowing up the dam earns them 20 SAN instead.

Events will eventually die down as the spiders return to their caves and remain docile for a long time.

If the investigators are unsuccessful, they are all eaten for certain. Despite the actions of the police and national guard, Branbury slowly turns into a giant ball of spiders, webs ... and cocoons of human beings.

STATISTICS

Walter MacPherson, architect, age 56 STR 9 CON 11 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 12 DEX 9 APP 8 EDU 22 SAN 60 HP 11 Weapons: None, all at base %. Skills: Electronics 75%, Law 85%, Make Maps 50%, Operate Heavy Machine 45%, Oratory 85%, Physics 100%.

Colleen Summers, zoologist, age 21 STR 10 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 18 POW 15 DEX 14 APP 16 EDU 18 SAN 85 HP 13 Weapons: Spray mace, at 60%. Skills: Biology 35%, Debate 65%, Electronics 35%, Fast Talk 50%, Pharmacy 35%, Natural History 85%.

MASS OF SPIDERS (ENRAGED ARACHNIDS)

This is somewhat like the "creature" in the Call of Cthulhu rulebook referred to as the Wasp Swarm, but it is made up of frenzied spiders of all types (ranging in species from common spiders to the most poisonous, some even prehistoric in origin, long thought to be extinct). There is no protection against them, unlike wasps. Roll Weapon Attack Damage 1 1D4 bites 100% 1 per bite 2 1D6 bites 100% 1 per bite 3 1D8 bites 100% 1 per bite 4 1D8 bites 100% 1 per bite Notes: Masses of Spiders have hit points equivalent to their number of bites. Physical weapons do only one point of damage each, though a shotgun does full damage. All other attack forms (fire, electricity, etc.) do full damage. SAN loss is 1D4/0. For the statistics of Atlach-Nacha, see the Call of Cthulhu rulebook.

WORLD'S END PAPERS #1

HAPPY CAMPERS DIE IN FREAK ANIMAL ATTACK!

Spiders attacked a family camping at the Texas Falls Recreation Area yesterday, killing them in a viscious frenzy before help could arrive. Among the dead were environmentalist leaders Merle and Hanna Brom. Park rangers were baffled by the strange behavior of the arachnids, since this is not their active season, nor have so many been seen at a time. Relatives and friends of the Brom family vow to still carry the protests against HydroCorp and the completion of the MacPherson Dam, which may threaten several species of endangered fish in the waters of Lake Dunmore.

FAST TALK

"You mean what happened to old Merle and his wife Hanna Brom? Two local environmentalists they were - fighting that HydroCorp over the Dam up in the mountains. Environmentalists - ha! See what they get for defending the animals? Get eaten up they did ... I hear their two kids were killed too. I suppose that's a shame. But serves them right for sticking their noses everywhere. Who gives a damn about fish, anyhow? Those spiders are more interesting don't you think? Nasty business." - Local Fly Fisher

"A shame what happened to Merle and Hanna. They were real heroes to the people of Branbury. The people with backbone, that is. People here are too afraid to fight HydroCorp. Some people lose their property for asking too much. What is one dam in comparison to a species of golden bass? That MacPherson ... I'd like to give him a piece of my mind!" - Local Environmentalist

WORLD'S END NEWS #1

East Middlebury Evening News Broadcast:

"... and today in local news, environmentalists protested at the MacPherson Dam, shouting peace chants and singing stanzas from Japanese poetry. HydroCorp representatives had nothing to tell our reporters but new environmentalist leader, Colleen Summers, told us that HydroCorp will pay dearly for neglecting their responsibilities as community leaders. She says that flow-water cut off by the Dam will reduce the waterlevel on Lake Dunmore, drying up valuable fish resources, and cutting off streamlets that feed the forests."

WORLD'S END NEWS #2

East Middlebury Evening News Emergency Broadcast:

"This just in: a large mass of spiders has been seen along Highway 125, and Robert Frost Wayside Recreation Area has been evacuated by Park Rangers because of reports of arachnid attacks. Forest Patrol helicopters report the mass moving south towards Moosalamoo Recreation Area and Rangers have closed off all roads leading in and out. Police in Branbury are working with rangers to evacuate those cabins they can get to; unfortunately, those cabins that are isolated are on their own. Close your windows, lock your doors, and stay inside your cabins."