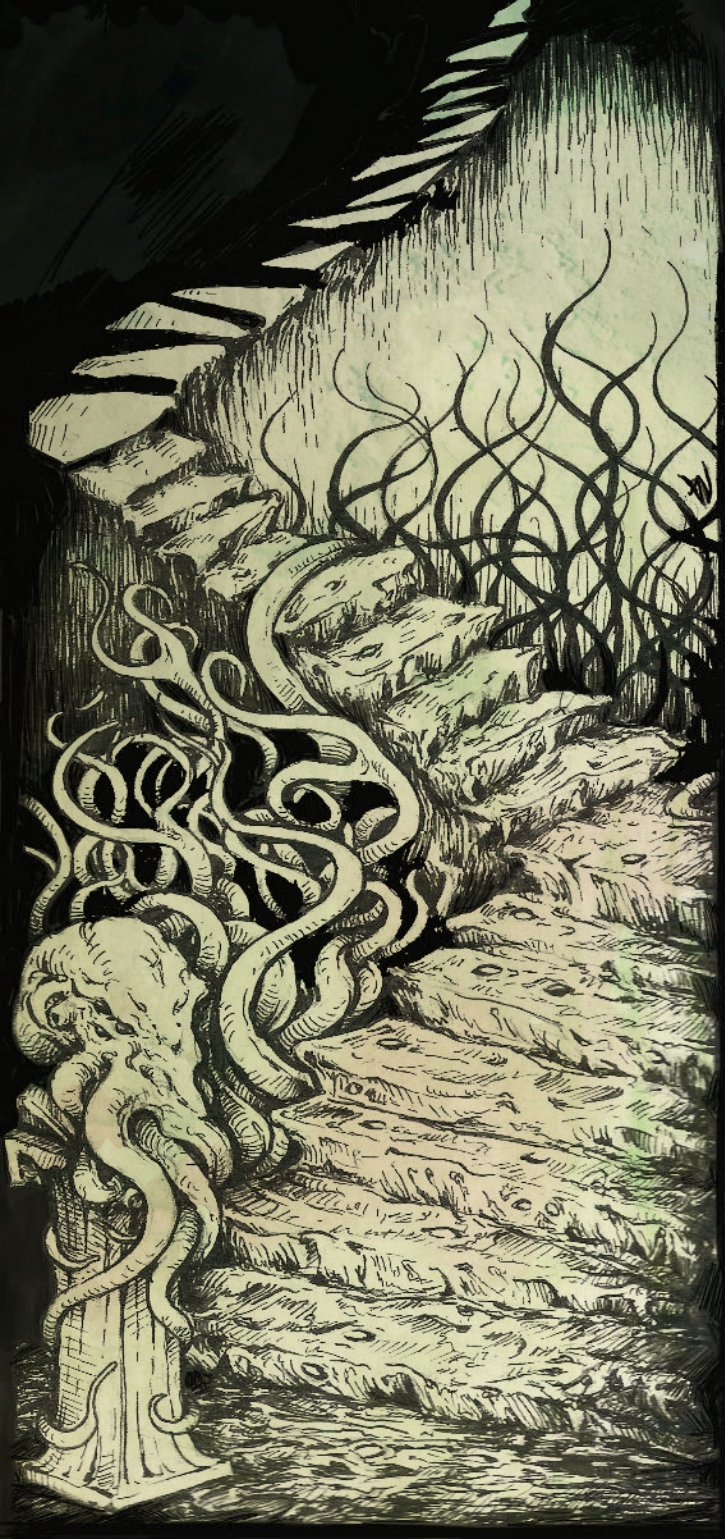


LA BAS CHARTREUSE



WELCOME TO MY NIGHTMARE

Welcome to an adventurous fragment, tools of a highly suggestive nature, and bits of evocative location the GM may bring to life. Ideally, *La Bas Chartreuse* should be used in conjunction with the investigative horror and eldritch pulp RPG *The Outer Presence*.

Many are the times I've run a store bought or home-made scenario only to realize that it started to drag after that initial burst of energy. A dull middle and/or lackluster ending can poison an entire session, if the GM isn't careful. Rather than plod through the boring scenery, throw this at them!

Perhaps the investigators find a message in a bottle. Maybe they're visiting a former colleague who's been committed to the local sanitarium; in the black-painted community room, they hear another inmate ranting and raving about his experiences in the Orient. Or this could be "session zero" for intrepid cultural archaeologists studying the impact of refugees fleeing war-torn Burma.

La Bas Chartreuse could be the very reason they begin investigating strange occurrences. Just be sure to have a lot of back-up characters at the ready!

TERROR OF THE SITUATION

I want to state this upfront - clearly and distinctly - I am not mad!

When you hear my tale, I'm sure you'll make up your own mind as to my sanity. But for now, take my word for it - there's something hideously unnatural in that south-east Asian jungle, something from a nightmare, something I was not meant to stumble upon. And now that I do know of its existence, I'm sure my nights will forever be haunted by loathsome remembrances... unheard screams lost in the outer darkness!

We heard rumors about it while staying at Arankele, from the monks living in that Sri Lanka monastery. The monks know better than to explore such places. But years ago, a Frenchman wandered into their monastery, going on about an infernal gateway descending into a pit of yellowish-green. He called it *La Bas Chartreuse*... the stairway leading down to Hell itself.

It is real, my friends. The entrance is adorned by a stone arch carved with lascivious demons committing lewd acts under a horned moon.

But before I go into detail about that accursed stairway, I must tell you about the thing marking the place, so that cultists and cannibals and sinister creatures can easily locate it and descend its black steps to that chartreuse inferno!

Not more than 30' from the stairway's entrance is a monolith. Dear God, I would love nothing better than to exclude my account of the monolith from these ravings. It cannot be so, alas, for I have witnessed the strangeness that beats at the heart of malevolent creation - and that heart is pierced by the unrelenting phallus towering over the feeble and flawed creature known as man.

The monolith was impossibly tall, probably so that winged entities may spot it above the thick jungle canopy. Its surface was slimy and green, though I could not tell if the coloring was from the slime or its own substance. There were queer markings embedded upon the monolith - symbols that seemed to curve and angulate simultaneously, while recalling more than a suggestion of demonology, folklore, and witchcraft that has long plagued this remote land.

And then there were the eyes! They seemed more like colorless berries at first glance... milky orbs faintly luminous in the night. At least a thousand eyes regarded my presence without curiosity or disdain, but a kind of satanic hunger.

Lastly and most horrific of all were the nigrescent gulfs upon the monolith's surface - they were warm and moist to the touch, and seemed to go on forever. A member of the expedition dared stick his arm into one of those squamous voids - only to be absolutely sure of frightful sensations - spiders crawling upon his outstretched appendage and burrowing deep into the forearm of his flesh. However, when withdrawn, his arm seemed perfectly fine.

The monolith is where men and women are brought for sacrifice to some obscure deity the natives worship. We skulked in the underbrush as various primitive tribesmen approached with several people - be they from a neighboring tribe or unlucky foreign

adventurers, I don't know. One of the natives wore a tentacled mask; he gestured and ululated, as his fellow tribesmen slit the throats of those brought to the dread monolith.

But it wasn't until first light that we explored the stairway and what lurked in its mysterious depths.

Let it not be said that I abandoned the expedition. The others either died or lost their mind to the wondrous horrors contained deep below the earth.

If you are fool enough to explore such an eldritch destination, prepare yourself to know a truth more insidious and bizarre than anything previously understood by religious, scholarly, or scientific belief.

WANDERING ENCOUNTER

Investigators poking around the jungle will likely run into one or more adversaries. Roll on the following random tables once per night.

Roll	Result
1	Guerilla fighters: machine gun-toting rebels crawling around the jungle shoot first, asking questions only after looting the bodies.
2	Restless natives: undiscovered tribes live throughout this region, many of them practice cannibalism.
3	Drug cartel thugs: the jungle produces great quantities of narcotics for the criminal element.
4	Insane cultists: nightly visits to the monolith and stairway make it likely that PCs will run into robed celebrants with embroidered tentacles.
5	Tentacled dripping lurker: this is one of the disgusting creatures loping about the jungle. Its noxious form has loose-hanging skin and mucculent maw where its face should be, as well as, thick tentacles capable of crushing a man's skull in seconds.
6	Expedition: a small gathering of explorers and/or investigators are wandering about the jungle, no doubt searching for either the monolith, the stairway, or both.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Who runs into whom? This random table will determine surprise, if any.

Roll	Result
1	The PCs are completely taken by surprise.
2	Both the PCs and whatever they're encountering are equally surprised to run into each other.
3	Neither side is taken by surprise. Both sides are aware of each other before engaging.
4	The PCs take that which is encountered by surprise.



'Its surface is slimy with a phosphorescent, almost radioactive emerald-green coloring that betrays its eldritch origin.'

THE MONOLITH

The monolith is more than a mere marker, denoting the location of La Bas Chartreuse. It's a beacon for otherworldly horror, a siren song of nameless fascination leading towards the unknown.

In ancient times, women accused of sorcery and witchcraft were chained near the monolith - occasionally waiting ritual sacrifice, feeding some monstrous beast, or the pleasure of tribesmen who accused them of black magic. It's possible that any tome containing lore of the mythos would have record of the salacious deeds committed in the presence of the monolith.

Its surface is slimy with a phosphorescent, almost radioactive emerald-green coloring that betrays its eldritch origin. The slime is generated by the vagina-like mouths covering the monolith's viscous surface. When the dead-eyes gaze upon a mortal willing to risk his soul in exchange for a glimpse of the infinite, the monolith's delicate voids open up to swallow those ready for a Devil's bargain.

Walking into that yawning gulf reveals a strange, dark universe wholly separate from our own. This is the place where wizards go whilst casting their spells. This is where madmen return night after night during their fitful sleep. This universe is the High Priest's dream, the demon's parlor, and the seeker's truth.

Non-Euclidean geometries infuse that realm with an atmosphere of wrongness - it feels outside the parameters of normal space and time.



The dark place, as it's sometimes referred, contains trans-dimensional portals. Many are the occultists who've entered gateways to other dimensions, only to find themselves here. This is an unforgiving realm of starry chaos, a shadow reality, an intermediary zone where monstrous things give pause, biding their time somewhere between the Great Old Ones and our own naïve abode.

The entities waiting for mortals to join them occasionally grow bored between scheming with other entities residing in the dark place. Some of these mortals provide new entertainment, others have useful information or skills or connections that can be used on the behalf of black robed demons... assuming the mortal is ever released.

WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU?

Roll	Result
1	You become a sort of pet for one or more entities in that other universe.
2	You're lost forever, wandering fruitlessly without hope of returning home.
3	You are returned to the world, but forced to become host to a demon from that realm.
4	You betray trusts by revealing forbidden secrets to one or more entities in the other universe (roll again).
5	You agree to do a favor for one or more entities before returning to your universe.
6	After several hours (days?) exploring this weird universe, you managed to escape the entities that roam the empty blackness and find a way home.

SILVER LINING?

There could be an up-side to being thrown in the deep end of reality's dark reflection. Roll on this random table in order to discover what, if anything, you've gained...

Roll	Result
1	The wrong kind of wisdom – you know more than any person should ever know about that bizarre realm, the demon-haunted Ezkadren. Once per session, you get advantage when dealing with nightmarish dimensions.
2	You've learned nothing... except for the intimate, gore-strewn caress of unadulterated horror. Once per session, you get advantage when dealing with gruesome situations.
3	You've gleaned no knowledge, and sometimes that's for the best.
4	You've picked up a thing or two about the black arts. Once per session, you get advantage when practicing sorcery.
5	Your experience has sharpened the mind. Once per session, you get advantage when attempting to use psionic powers (such as telepathy, telekinesis, clairvoyance, etc.)
6	Somewhere along the way, you overheard information pertaining to the real world – secrets revealed that may help your investigation in some way.

'You've gleaned no knowledge, and sometimes that's for the best.'

PROPERTIES OF ALIEN METAL

Think you know what will happen if you hang around that unearthed tomb, cyclopean monolith, or meteor fragment?

After releasing the eldritch-fantasy adventure *Dead God Excavation*, it occurred to me that the world could use a random table for determining the strange properties of alien metal.

So, here it is! Roll 3 times each time a new alien metal is encountered...

Roll	Result
1	Stores and concentrates nearby magical energy.
2	Thoughts become warped, intentions twisted, and concepts darkened until all that remains is confusion, hatred, fear, frustration, and rage.
3	Discolors everything that spends several minutes near it - obscenely garish combinations of yellow, orange, teal, and magenta!
4	The monolith's presence corrodes memory. Important names, dates, places, phone numbers, etc. begin erasing themselves from the mind after several minutes of standing nearby.
5	Infects those who spend an hour near it with the "pink puss plague."
6	Those nearby suffer dream-like hallucinations, seeing giant bearded worms inside the walls that whisper of devouring space and time.
7	Affects gravity so that everything feels alternately heavy and/or weightless.
8	Gives off excessive heat (1-2), cold (3-4), or both simultaneously (5-6).
9	Plays back images and sounds from previous moments in time, like ghosts.
10	Reverberates sub-audible dark ambient vibrations causing humanoids to lose hope.
11	The alien metal becomes incorporeal when interacting with magic.



Roll	Result
12	Causes humanoids to be rapidly exhausted, draining their life force when near it for more than several minutes.
13	Causes nearby individuals to become unstuck in time... 1) distant past, 2) recent past, 3) near-future, or 4) far future.
14	Physical contact with the alien metal causes dizziness, nausea, and vomiting.
15	Spectral forces (usually demonic) move through those near the alien metal, possibly latching on for several minutes and trying to communicate through the host's body.
16	Physical injuries are healed at an accelerated rate - even impairments that wouldn't heal on their own, such as a missing eye.
17	The strained tones of a pan-flute are heard in the distance (to the improbable tune of "Kill Doug Szathkey" by Ice Man McGee).
18	An evil influence commands people to destroy those who are not like themselves (saving throw to resist).
19	All vegetation nearby turns gray, shriveled, and lifeless.
20	Objects near the alien metal move about of their own accord.



THERE WILL BE BLOOD

How much blood can be found around the monolith (or any structure of occult significance in the jungle, woods, caves, etc.) depends on the time of year, restlessness of the natives, availability of sacrificial victims, interference by supernatural forces, and rightness of the stars.

Roll on this random table to determine the result of PC investigation.

Roll	Result
1	Faintest trace of dried blood.
2	Vast amounts of dried blood.
3	Light blood spatter.
4	Quite a bit of spilled blood – 1d4 pints.
5	Standing-water levels of fresh blood.
6	(Roll again), plus something else... a chartreuse ichor that glows like the beating of a heart, pulsating luminescence.

DOWN THERE

There are 700 steps. By the time anyone reaches the end, the horrors of the pit have already shown themselves.

First, those descending the stairs hear the faint sounds of licking, tasting, and breathing, like several giant tongues running themselves over the length of the walls. Soon after - barely audible whispering in an unknown tongue.

The darkness is betrayed by a hideous chartreuse luminosity coming from below. Disquieting shadows play against the cavernous walls.

Tentacles reach up from below and from every side. The tentacles are wet and suckered. They undulate slowly - almost seductively.

Some kind of bloated abomination drags itself upon the shimmering, yellow-green floor. It rises, gargantuan, writhing, offering itself, opening its pustule-covered, oozing flesh in unexpected ways revealing only the suggestion of a face amidst numerous tentacles, unmasked in all its blasphemous glory... as if God had mutated from the infernal

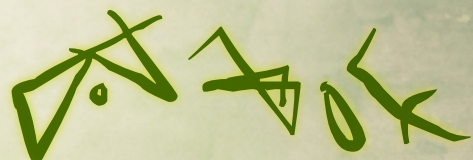
energy of Hell and what was left could only mock reality in a sad parody of the natural order.

And the rest is probably best left to the imagination. Sometimes, hazy recollections are the only way we can go on, stumbling into the light of day, unsure about what exactly happened to us.

The following random table determines the lasting effect it has on individuals foolish or brave enough to venture below...

THY DESTINY AWAITS

Roll	Result
1	Death!
2	Females are impregnated; males impregnate something down there. Afterwards, humans are released on their own recognizance.
3	Obtain such an understanding of the universe that you go stark raving mad.
4	Transformed into some warped obscenity of slime and tentacles, a servitor of the thing in the pit.
5	Devote the remainder of your life to the worship of abhorrent gods.
6	Transported to another world...



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