

Send all game submissions to: davidmcjames@gmail.com

Blurb information

This section is the “front page” information for the game. The blurb will be on the website, and the information will also be part of the download package.

Game name: **Til Human Voices Wake Us**

The Author: **Andrew Smith**

Blurb:

London 1923: an October of dank fog-shrouded streets and bitter tattered memories: smoke, mud, flesh, a mansion, love.

Tragedy strikes many. But gnostic wisdom has it that Tragedy has elder siblings from whom justice (or mere revenge) can be sought.

If you could, would you want things to be better? Would you make Tragedy take back Her insults?

Would you pay the price?

Five occultists and dreamers are about to find out. A single session Call of Cthulhu game (original or D20 or systemless).

Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth. He knows where the Old Ones broke through of old, and where They shall break through again. He knows where They have trod earth's fields, and where They still tread them, and why no one can behold Them as They tread.

— Canto III, lines 106–109, Al Azif ('The Necronomicon'), [1898 Cawdor translation]

The Phenomenonline Games Rating System	
What's the game again?	Five accidental occultists discover what their ambitions actually mean.
Seriousness?	On the melancholy side. Scope for black humour.
Genre/Setting	1920s London.
Movie Rating	MA (adult themes, violence, potential for supernatural elements)
System	Systemless, Call of Cthulhu (or D20). There was a small mechanic added to track the increasing supernaturalness of the PCs (as distinct from their Sanity stats).
GM Style	This is on the meditative end of Call of Cthulhu games, and the shotguns really only come out at the end.
Number of players	5.
Previously run at	Phenomenon 2007

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Download package

This section includes all the information and materials the GM will need to run the game.

Title page

A single page with the name of the game and the authors. The layout person will set up the download title page using the blurb information.

Character sheets

Include the character sheets formatted for printing as they would be for the con.

Other player-facing materials or printables

Again, anything the players will need to see.

GM notes

GM notes should be in plain text. They don't need to be fancy.

This is the tricky bit, because most of this stuff probably exists mostly in your head. The GM notes should be as comprehensive as reasonably possible, describing how you would run the game. The GM notes should cover:

PLOT - what happens in the game. Plot points, key scenes, decision points, story beats.

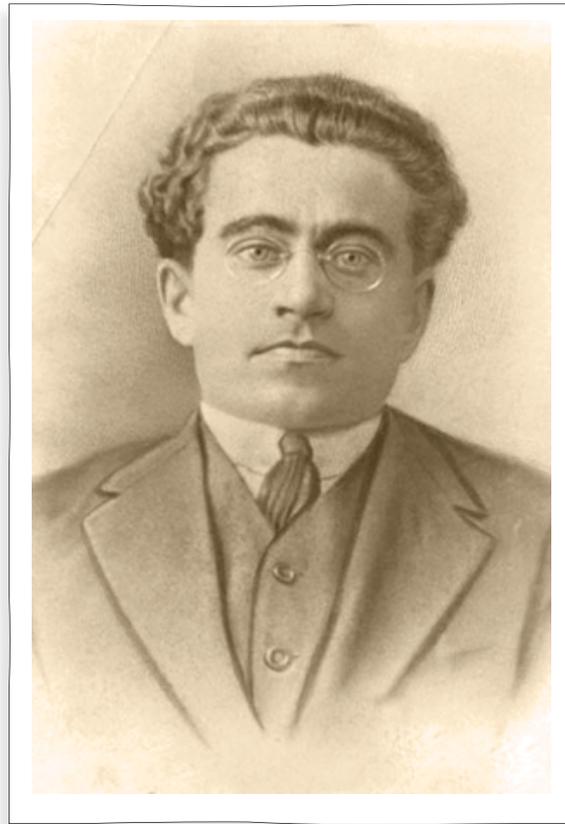
STAGING - how the game is delivered. Everything relevant to the game: how characters should be selected and introduced, how to manage different player responses, where the game might go off the rails.

TIMING - where each part of the game fits in, assuming a standard Pheno three hour slot.

ANYTHING ELSE - look, games are complicated. If there's anything you think is relevant to the running or playing of the game, put it in.

You can assume the reader has read the character sheets. You should not assume the reader has played the game!

Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent



MR HARRY MATTHEWS

Private Investigator • Great War veteran • No stranger to death

BLOOD, MUD, AND THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS

Born a Jew from the East End and orphaned when I was twelve, I lived with my Uncle Ernie and apprenticed in his repair shop. He was murdered in a burglary gone wrong when I was 17. They beat him to death one night when he was in the shop alone. I hated that. If only I had been there, we might have been able to fight them off together. I joined the police force because of it. I'd still be a plod now except the Great War happened. Young men like me joined up without a second thought. It was all a big adventure: basic training, the boat to France, the train to the Front. The adventure turned to nightmare minutes after that.

Blood and mud. The stinking mud in the trenches made up of pulverised fields and trees, shit, sweat, and bodies pounded into paste. There are so many ways a bullet can cut through soft flesh and blow out what lies underneath. But a bullet is Mercy Incarnate compared with an artillery shell. They're like... *Oh God...* they're like the Wrath of God. A moment torn in two by the hammer's fall, the shrapnel scything through everything, the looks on the lads' faces as they discover they're

blown apart. The stinking smoke and the churned up mud. *Oh, God.*

In my squad the four of us joined up together: me, Corbett, Bransley, and Mad McFee. Our band of bullet dodgers was bonded in comradeship more strongly than love binds a man and a woman, or a mother and her child. We faced Death shoulder to shoulder and each spat in His eye. We lasted a miracle's age: all of months. Then they died and I didn't. A direct hit on the wrecked chateau we were using as a shelter. I was in another part of the grounds with a bullet through my right shoulder. I watched the Bosch shell fall and pulverise our shelter and all of them into smoke and mud. There were no bodies found: just shreds of flesh and bone, wood and cloth, a few teeth, a twisted bayonet. My squad was gone, erased to grease and memory, leaving me all alone.

I demobbed soon after that, my nerves shot. I rejoined the police but quit again: something about the faces and the uniforms got to me. I obtained a Private Investigator's licence and went into business for myself. It keeps me in drink, but little more.

A STUDY IN YELLOW

The sunrises this time of year are smoky red and sullen. They often make me wonder for a few moments if I'm back in France at the Front. Sometimes it takes me a few moments to remember that we won the Great War and I demobbed in one piece, unlike my mates Corbett, Bransley and McFee. I sometimes feel they're right there, standing still at my shoulder, waiting for the call. But whenever I give in to my nerves and look, the space at my shoulder is empty. I miss them.

The morning sun rises and the light gets greyer and flatter — and so go my days. Usually there's an empty bottle on my desk. Sometimes I remember emptying it. Middays pass with cheese sandwiches and stretch into long grey afternoons. I drink too much coffee. I go down to the shop and buy a newspaper, hoping to find a lead on the case that will put me on easy street. Instead I find the open air is tense, as if waiting to be raped by a hundred-pound shell thrust through it by some distant artillery. I try not to scurry from wall to wall, shadow to shadow, like a rat in a dog-yard. Death is all around me.

My shoulder aches where the bullet went through it. There are ghosts all about me.

Once every so often, just when I'm about to decide to pack it in, the telephone rings and I'll find myself investigating 'financial irregularities' and the new bookkeeper at some firm of engineers or estate agents, and discovering the sordid details of secret mistresses or Mistress Opium, or just plain old thievery. For that time, each time I'm on a case, I am distracted from my ghosts and my own hopelessness and I feel like Sherlock Holmes. But it never lasts.

I do my work. I am paid by a cheque in guineas or a handful of crumpled pound notes. I buy a cheering bottle of brandy to go with the fish and chips and the evenings smear out into drunken forgetfulness. There is always another morning afterwards.

This isn't living. It's just *being*. I dreamed once I was actually dead and this was some kind of dreary afterlife of tedium. But that would mean this life has a meaning, and possibly an ending, and I fear my life has neither.

SECRET WISDOM

One of my more interesting cases involved the finances of an occult society, the Palmers Green Lodge of Theosophy. In order to detect the embezzlement I enlisted as a member – I attended the lectures and read the pamphlets. I was certainly sceptical at first, or at least disinterested, but over the first few weeks I discovered my mood improved when I followed the prescribed mental exercises. The discourses in the pamphlets were

like riddles to solve and so I persevered with them, to some agreeable effect.

I found the culprit for the financial irregularities and he was ejected: a sneering, arrogant would-be gentleman, Mr Alistair Crompton. The Lodge preferred no criminal charges against him, however, and I wondered what hold he still has over the senior cabal.

THE OTHERS

I have informally joined a cabal of my own within the Lodge – we are mostly beginners at Theosophy, although Reverend Waterman seems more advanced than the rest of us. We see each other once a month to discuss our progress through Theosophy's secret teachings. Of late the Reverend has become the star performer. He has raced ahead of Ms Rossi and myself, who joined several months before the Barretts.

MONIQUE ROSSI – I saw her once on stage at the Empirion. Her voice was truly remarkable. She had some kind of break-down though, and wasn't able to sing any more. Sad. For a former diva she has remained very free of arrogance and pretension, and without good reason, I find myself wanting to trust her. I hope she finds a better destiny than she thinks she deserves.

THE REVEREND THOMAS WATERMAN – for the vicar of some lost village somewhere, he is very well-read and erudite, and his skills at Theosophy have blossomed in recent months into some frankly astonishing power. Sometimes when he comes down to London for our monthly meetings he stays with me to save hotel costs. He's an odd fish: it's like he doesn't sleep. I hear pacing and him praying

at all odd hours. Sometimes he seems gravely ill but he never says.

THE HON. EMILY BARRETT – I am slightly in love with Ms Barrett. I have always liked strong women. Ms Barrett is a passionate political idealist, and far better educated than me. When I was on the force I arrested young women like her in the riots and they spat in my face. Fortunately, Ms Barrett has been nothing but polite to me. I feel that despite the arrogance of her upbringing and the desperation of her political mission, she remains a deeply compassionate woman. But she is far above my station and I would be a fool to myself and an intolerable burden to her to even mention my feelings for her.

THE HON. FREDERICK BARRETT – The younger brother of Viscount Aldeburgh, and Ms Barrett's younger brother. A venomous wastrel, decadent and shiftless. I fear that his presence among us is equal parts idle amusement and some kind of cruel joke on his sister. I expect at any moment for him to start teasing us for our hopes to better ourselves. He could have been a great man. So sad to see a man of such gifts waste them all.

THE MEDITATION

The Reverend's tutoring has brought a certain psychic talent out in me. If I really try to clear my mind and send my perceptions into "Yog Sothoth", the spirit-world, I believe I can see ghosts and other evidence of our mortality. I tried it once, in my flat. There were presences standing behind me, like I had sometimes felt before. I hoped they were Corbett, Bransley and McFee but I was too afraid to look. I let the Sight lapse and I cried for them again all the way back into the bottle.

I felt drained and somewhat odd for a day afterwards, as if I had stepped across the threshold of a greater world and its mud was still on my boots.

IMPORTANT SKILLS

- **DETECTION** (I'm pretty good at spotting things, following clues and detecting evidence...)
- **RIFLE** (I had a dead-eye at the Front. I still have a Lee-Enfield rifle)
- **FISTICUFFS** (I have a killer right hook)
- **BREAKING & ENTERING** (part mechanical repair, part Jewish dexterity)
- **ACCOUNTING** (...I can make ledgers tell me of their secret vices)

There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;



MS MONIQUE ROSSI

“The Parisian Nightingale” • Fallen star • The performance of her life

“THE PARISIAN NIGHTINGALE”

I was born Frances Hynes in a small village in Kent. You’ve never heard of it — trust me. I grew up in poverty and violence. We four children were the poor waifs the other families used as examples to make their own children behave. At fifteen I ran away to London. I hoped to become a maid in some rich man’s mansion but times were tough and I had no references. I ended up selling posies of flowers on the street — only one small step up from selling my body there. As a girl I had dreamed of London as a magical world of glittering crystal and smartly-dressed toffs who would (for some reason) adopt me and buy me pretty dresses. I discovered the real London was actually a smoky, grimy hell of poor scrubbers no better than me.

I took to singing popular songs to help me sell my flowers. Mr Henry Jago, the owner of the nearby Empirion Music Theatre, bought flowers from me often and encouraged me. After some months he invited me to audition for the chorus in his music hall, and soon I was a chorus girl.

I owe much to Mr Jago but he also took a lot. He paid for me to take singing, deportment and dancing lessons, and suggested I practice being French (or at least, foreign) to gain ‘mystique’ for when I made the

break to lead singer, something he was sure would happen as soon as the ‘country burrs’ were ironed out of my voice. But he paid me a pittance, and when I came of age, he seduced me. At the time it was not unwelcome, as I had become infatuated with him, but in hindsight I can see he took advantage of my innocence, like an octopus he had me in his charming tentacles.

As ‘Monique Rossi’ I rose as the dawn star of the Empirion. I was mysterious, a French noblewoman with the voice of a nightingale, in secret exile from her homeland. Records were made of some of my popular songs and my star shone brighter than the Empirion could contain. I had it all: fine dresses and perfumes, jewellery, champagne, admirers; even a motor-car — my beloved red Bentley 3-Litre, “George”.

But then I got greedy, and that gets punished by Fate. Although it took me months to pluck up the courage, I broke with Henry and signed a contract with the Odion chain of music halls, who wanted me to be their star at a much higher rate than Henry was prepared to pay. My fame and fortune were assured! I was tremendously excited: I was going to be the stage phenomenon of the modern era. They even talked about moving pictures!

A STUDY IN YELLOW

It should have been that easy. But on the first night to a packed house at the Odion, my star turn, I froze up. It had never happened to me before. I couldn’t sing more than a squeak. The manager gave me ten minutes to compose myself (and fortify myself with champagne) but it did not help. I could talk, but I could not sing a note — not even scales! When I tried it was as if my throat had grown shut.

This was the end of my career. I picked a fight with members of the audience and was dragged away by the

manager in tears. After that, I couldn’t even work in a chorus since I couldn’t sing. I lived off my savings — and they dwindled quickly. I even had to sell George (to Henry Jago — he did right by me in this, again, damn him). The French accent stuck, however. Even now, with me nearly destitute again, I am clinging onto Monique rather than going back to being poor Frances the posey-seller. Is it my fate to live out my life in the lie of Monique, a role, a hollow woman with no past?

Where did Frances go?

SECRET WISDOM

The public soon forgot Monique Rossi; they even forgot my very public catastrophe. I tried several cures to help me with my ‘hysterical condition’ with little success. My friends and admirers proved fickle and moved on, and soon I was very lonely. I came so close to stardom! Unless I can unlock my voice once more, I am lost. I shall end up a char-woman or a prostitute. One bad night I thought even to kill myself with sleeping pills, but passed out before I could swallow enough. I’m glad of that, but the unfairness of it all still eats at me.

In a mood of desperation I visited the Palmers Green

Lodge of Theosophy one lonely evening and found, miraculously, that its teachings resonated in me. When I meditate according to the theosophical practices of the Lodge, I feel closer to being able to sing again. When I enter the trance the pressure in my throat becomes acute, and I feel like I should nearly be able to cough up whatever the obstruction is.

The one thing I still fear is that the fear of success undid me. What if I learn to sing again and fail once more because I still do not deserve to sing? Could I ever go back to being poor Frances? I don’t think so.

THE OTHERS

I have become close to just four other members of the Lodge: we are like a secret society within a secret society. The Reverend has shown us some of the secrets that we are supposedly ‘not ready yet to receive’, which is twaddle. The power is there to be used.

MR HARRY MATTHEWS – he’s common as muck like me, but he thinks he’s better because he went to the War. He’s polite enough but he must think I’m no better than a prostitute or something! He’s always making eyes at Ms Barrett – as if she’d have him.

THE REVEREND THOMAS WATERMAN – our teacher, a man of great learning of the secrets we delve into. In a way he reminds me of Henry Jago, or at least, the good parts of his character. He has wisdom, and some miraculous power.

THE MEDITATION

The Reverend’s tutoring has brought me to the brink of being able to sing again. When I follow the meditations, setting my mind into the calm mental space that Theosophy calls “Yog Sothoth”, and then try to sing I feel the choking sensation succumb to something like panic, as if it is as scared of allowing me to sing as I am of it preventing me from doing so!

I am so close, I know it. When I am free of this curse I will sing like the world has not heard, and everybody will love me again.

The meditation still scares me a little, as I feel so drained, so eerie, after I meditate and then try to sing.

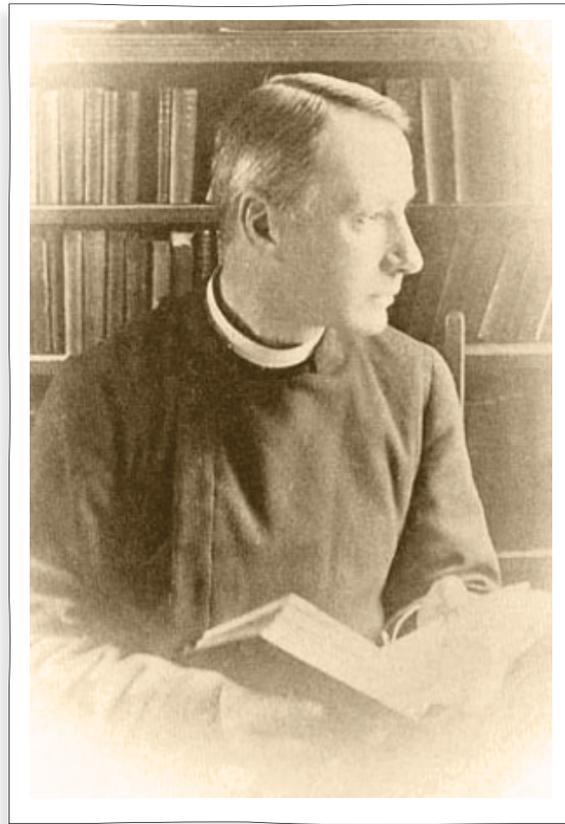
THE HON. EMILY BARRETT – She’s so brainy that she makes me feel like such a simpleton when I’m around her. She patronises me terribly but I could not get up the courage to tell her off – she’s a virago, like a man in a woman’s body. She wouldn’t be so lonely if she only understood that men don’t like to be made to feel inferior.

THE HON. FREDDIE BARRETT – Where his sister is pure vinegar, Freddie is a fine champagne! Although he’s still young and sowing his wild oats, he’s a gentleman through and through and he has always been kind to me. If he were to ask I would consider any offer he made. *Ah, Monique. What would a fine gentleman like Freddie want with a washed-out singer like you?*

IMPORTANT SKILLS

- **SINGING** (when I get my voice back!)
- **ACTING** (it’s where I started, and I’m great at accents)
- **DRIVE MOTOR-CAR** (really fast – that’s the best fun ever!)
- **PERSUASION** (my reputation has faded but I can still do the ‘Little Girl Lost’ act, at least)
- **FOLKLORE** (my gran was a wise-woman and she taught me a lot about herbs and ghosts and cross-roads. I sometimes wonder if I’ve been hexed!)

Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
“That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all.”



THE REVEREND THOMAS WATERMAN

The Vicar of Foulness • The Hierophant • Hopes for a merciful God

THE VICAR OF FOULNESS

In the estuary of the Thames there is a low island of saltmarsh and reeds, Foulness. At its north end is the only village with a pub on the island, Churchend. It is the last and least of the parishes of England, and I am its vicar. Perhaps it's in my blood. My father was the vicar of Stamford (a far more important parish) and perhaps I imbibed piety with my gruel. Inevitably I followed his path to seminary school and thought to hear The Call to the ministry. Perhaps all I heard was my own hope.

I was lucky to get even poor Churchend. My family did not have the connections to the old families and the rich parishes. I considered missionary work but discovered I was afraid that I would actually be sent abroad, among foreigners. And so I came to Churchend.

At least I had ample time for my own pursuits. The parishioners were barely civil to the new stranger in their midst, even if he was their priest. I did discover that my neighbour the squire had inherited an ample library of historical and archaeological works and I befriended him to the point where he would let me borrow books. I read through them all through the lonely winter nights when all was damp and cold, with the tang of salt and the stench of mud and smoke from the smoke-houses preserving herring. The Great War passed Foulness by as if it was a pantomime, and I was never even tempted to volunteer to fight the Bosch.

I took up travelling to London to visit the libraries there, to spend idle afternoons in second-hand

bookshops. My parishioners scarcely cared so long as I returned to read them their sermon on Sundays. When I couldn't travel I had pleasure in correspondence with eminent historians and archaeologists such as Professor Desmond Templeton at the University of London and Doctor James Beamish at Glasgow. I hesitate to assert that I became an expert on the history of the estuary and its canny, secretive people.

But somewhere in these years, I lost sight of God. I came to doubt I had heard The Call at all. Perhaps it started when my cousin Jocelyn declined my tepid courtship and married an accountant from Hull instead. I had no other romantic opportunities. My service to the Church was stalled in obscurity: I would serve in Churchend until I died alone and cold and drunk, like Father Grayling before me. The Foulness-folk barely tolerated me. I had no vices to distract me.

As the year passed out of summer and yet another winter of endless cold and damp loomed, I took the only important decision of my life. One night as the moon rose along its road out of the idling sea, I stripped down to my flannels and swam out along the path, intending to drown when I achieved exhaustion too far from shore for salvation. I commended my miserable soul to the deeps.

But as I slipped in fugue under the waves, I was rescued.

A STUDY IN YELLOW

My saviour names himself Lindrum. He is a small, dark man, always curiously dressed in fashions that are generations out of date. He brought me back to my parsonage at Churchend and stayed with me while I recovered from the fever brought on by my exertion and near-death. He comes and goes at his own devices, but always visits after dark. He is very curious about my faith (or failure thereof), and of the world around me. When he visits, he leaves behind him the smell of the sea. It's not unpleasant: just noticeable, as if he sweats sea-water rather than musk.

I have come to fear Lindrum as much as I like him. I fear he is a supernatural entity, or worse, a figment of my own mind (this is why I haven't told the others about my dialogues with him). But I long for his visits, for he

is deeply wise and kind to me, and he shares with me the wonders that he has seen. He is a font of ancient folklore, and encouraged me to seek out like-minded folk in London: not among the academics, whom he describes as 'grave-robbing ghouls', but among the seekers after truth. Occultists. The despairful. Like me.

And I have been happy enough to do so, for apart from Lindrum's teachings, my life is still utterly empty. I hear no God. But perhaps if Lindrum is a servant of the Devil, there might be Evil, and that might just mean that God exists too, even if I am lost to Him. That might be enough for me.

I don't sleep as much as I used to, nor do I eat very much. The wisdom that Lindrum teaches me drives me, and I am thankful for that in itself.

SECRET WISDOM

At Lindrum's behest I joined the Palmers Green Lodge of Theosophy — one of a number of similar occult societies across London. At first I found its Theosophical teachings alien, based as they were in the lore of the Vedics, but with Lindrum's help I have begun to see that the underlying wisdom is the same as the Truth that hides in the folklore I am most familiar with, and the stirrings of what is left of my soul. There is power there. Lindrum has shown me how to tap it. But there is also a price, for the miraculous events that can be achieved

through the meditations can be wielded for ill as well as good. There are evil men athirst for power in my future, that I must thwart or there will be great misery unleashed. Lindrum tells me that at my current level of power I must needs find allies, and so I have assembled a cabal within the Lodge to help me resist the evil.

There is a fight ahead. If Lindrum is real, and to be trusted, I will be a soldier on the Side of Right. And that is worth a great price to me: the opportunity to make a difference, even in the life of just one other person.

THE OTHERS

HARRY MATTHEWS — a man suffering from spiritual rigor mortis as if he anticipated the grave. I've seen that look on many men's faces who saw the Great War, but few were so deeply touched. He carries death with him — his occult power is there too. I would fear to make him angry. Were I still a man of God, I would feel great pity for the shell he has become.

MONIQUE ROSSI — alas, I am yet a poor man of flesh. She glitters like the stars and provokes me to most base emotions. I want, shamefully, to *take* her. But what would I do with her? I do not know. Her power is locked in her voice, which is still unusable.

THE HON. EMILY BARRETT — I see in Emily's bitter disillusionment with the ways of

mankind a kindred spirit to my own. She is immensely kind underneath her barbed-wire defences and I trust her judgement. But there is something about her that makes me feel bitter and ill-used even though she is nothing but civil to me. Her power is in life and healing.

THE HON. FREDERICK BARRETT — has this man ever used his gifts of heritage, breeding, looks and considerable charisma for ought but idle pleasure? Why does he make me angry so? Is it that he represents everything I was and am not now, set to base purpose where I labour for distant good and no reward in this life or the next? And most damnably of all, he seems not to be aware of the gifts he squanders. His power is in sly persuasion, but it could easily be majestic leadership if he wanted it so.

THE MEDITATION

Lindrum has taught me there is a world apart from this one we know of steel and concrete and pallid faces. It is a place of significance, power, and it can be induced to lend its influence into this one through effort of will: this is the essence of the exercises I am teaching to my allies.

But I have taught them nowhere near what I have learned. With mere words, and by accepting the power of the realm Lindrum calls The Other (and the Theosophists, *Yog Sothoth*) into my soul before expressing it forth, I can influence the minds of normal folk or animals (though the beasts perceive the touch and react normally in fear). I can wreak small miracles of motion, heat and cold. I can protect my mind from similar influence and lend strength to my allies. Lindrum says that at the height of his own power (long since waned) he could turn entire armies to trees or swine, or raise castles from the rocks with a gesture.

One thing I have learned, however, that Lindrum has been somewhat terse about: for every exercise of power,

there is a price. The passage of Yog Sothoth through me leaves its mark, and I feel oddly weary, drained, *etiolated*, when I essay my power. It's nothing I can't manage but I wonder sometimes what would happen if my will failed.

IMPORTANT SKILLS

- **FOLKLORE/ARCHAEOLOGY** (a great passion of mine)
- **ENDURANCE** (my faith gives me strength to persevere even when my faith is gone)
- **RESEARCH** (another passion to wile away the long winter nights)
- **OCCULT LORE** (Lindrum and my academic correspondents have taught me much)
- **SWIMMING** (a bit of an irony, really)

Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.



THE HONOURABLE EMILY BARRET

Upper-class anarchist • Frustrated feminist • Unattainable utopia(n)

BRONTE TERRITORY

The village of Dunwich in Suffolk used to be much larger, but over the centuries the North Sea has eaten into the sandy cliffs about it and dragged many of its buildings into the deeps. The old fishermen say there's supposed to be a city down there, Dunwich Magna, and forests and fields to support its inhabitants. Dunwich is an isolated place, an hour's journey by cart from the railway station at Darsham. My family's ancestral home, Heathward, is to the north of Dunwich, up against the ancient Dunwich Forest. I was the middle child behind my brother Oswald and before my brother Freddie. When I was seven our mother died of a fever. Daddy (Edmund, the Viscount Aldeburgh) become very stern and proper. He was strict with all of us but he was harder on Oswald than on Freddie or myself. I think we have both had the space to escape Daddy's authority where Oswald could only obey. When Daddy died Oswald became his copy. There is nothing left for me in our dank mansion in dank Dunwich.

This said, something of Daddy's stern devotion to duty and the common good has coloured my own

character, I suppose. I was always fond of books. When I found out that young women were expected to be merely adornments rather than intellects in their own right I became angry. I have stayed angry for a very long time. It was not fair that because I was a woman, I was expected not to pursue a career in academia, the law, medicine or (heaven forbid!) engineering. I did what I could. Through exercise of my allegedly female temperament I eventually forced Daddy to allow me to attend a school in London where I would learn enough to allow me to pretend to intellect, to grace a conversation, without making any of the men in it feel stupider than they undoubtedly were. But this was a charade. As soon as I settled in London (our family's town-house in Portman Square) I enrolled at the university. I joined the Pankhursts' Suffragette Movement in time for us women to win the vote in 1918 — at least, some of us. Injustice yet prevails. I discovered Marxist Socialism, and in its simple declaration of universal rights, justice, wealth and law, I thought I had found Utopia.

A STUDY IN YELLOW

If only it were that simple, of course. The masses must be awakened before they can stand to fight for their rights. They stagger like zombies, gorged on the lies the bourgeois industrialists and the so-called aristocracy have forced on them over the centuries to keep them meek and obedient. The men are the worst, for they have never had to fight for their rights as we women have. They call me horrid names and tell me that 'a good man would sort me out'. The various Marxist clubs are no better. Universally they are ruled by simpletons or rogues, or often both, whose agendas are not aimed at the service of the masses but towards their own fortune. The Bolsheviks in Russia are the worst examples of the species, but they are far from unique.

Worse than my guilty contempt for them is my hatred for the masses' slovenliness, for in putting myself into the proximity of these people I have contracted tuberculosis. It is an early stage as yet: only chills, night sweats, unending fatigue and pallid skin. Our family physician at

Harley Street, Dr Hubert Davies, is hopeful that I might be cured if I can find a place to rest in the sun and fresh air. I fear otherwise. It's because I would not rest in such a place: our dominions overseas are dens of injustice and oppression. The other places are ruled by foreigners who have no concept of the Rule of Law.

There is so much left to do here in London, in England. Once a green and pleasant land. Now, a hell of exploited workers and cynical materialism. If only the masses could see that I only want the best for them. That would be something: to make a difference in their lives before the White Plague finally drags me down to death. I do not fear the afterlife: I tell myself I am an atheist and there will be mere oblivion hereafter. Even if I am condemned to Purgatory or Hell it could be scarcely worse than the hell we live in.

In the dreary, smoky greyness of October, amid my tired spells, utopia seems very far away.

SECRET WISDOM

Freddie joined the Palmers Green Lodge of Theosophy out of idle boredom, I think. After a few meetings, however, he became a noticeably better person. I read some of the pamphlets he brought home. Between the usual superstitious claptrap there were hints of a philosophy and a morality that seemed more pure, more fundamental to the nature of mankind, than Socialism. I accompanied Freddie to a few meetings and found that

Theosophy taught a system of mental exercise that was most edifying. I would have liked to have delved more deeply into this, but Freddie has become the protégé of one Reverend Waterman, and I fear I must follow in order to protect my brother from the man's influence. The Reverend has wisdom beyond what the Lodge teaches. But although I fear him — and his occult power — I have also begun to desire to know what he knows.

THE OTHERS

FREDDIE — My little brother. It breaks my heart that Freddie has become a loathsome man. He objectifies all that is worst about our miserable 'ruling' class: he is a wastrel, a drunkard, a gambler and a lecher. Since he has come to London our home has seldom been without the stench of cigar-smoke and drink; of the shrill laughter of loose women and the inane guffaws of Freddie's boorish friends. I remember as a boy he was always very kind and chivalrous to everyone, a little King Arthur. I want him to be that Freddie again, not the cynical roué he has become in London.

I haven't told Freddie of my tuberculosis yet. I want him to be there to support me in the dark times to come but I fear he will just walk away.

MR HARRY MATTHEWS — Such a tragic figure of a man. His eyes, such dark eyes, contain images of the horrors he saw at the Western Front and he is burdened with the memories. I want to help him

put down his burden and let him live once more as a man should, but he is the soul of propriety and reserved strength. When he is in a less brown mood I find him congenial company: he is very gentle.

THE REVEREND THOMAS

WATERMAN — Despite the marvellous things he knows, he seems to me a bitter man, one lost to the God he professes to worship. He has power: great power. I only hope that he remains a good man in the absence of God, for his potential for evil and chaos must surely be great indeed.

MS "MONIQUE ROSSI" — a show-girl's trick to pretend to the mystery of a foreign name, but I can still hear the country burr in her voice! She's a fake and an adventuress, sadly the victim of the unjust role that our male chauvinist society forces upon women like her. She needn't have taken to her role, little better than whore, so gleefully!

THE MEDITATION

The Reverend's tutoring has given me the power to draw strength from the spirit realm that he calls the Other (the Theosophists call it "Yog-Sothoth", a word from ancient Mu) to bolster my own flagging energies. But every time I do so I feel odd, as if I were exchanging part of myself for the Other's strength. The feeling passes quickly, and eventually so does the borrowed strength and I am fatigued once more.

I've noticed too that when I have just meditated and I am suffused with the Other, the world around me seems brighter and cleaner. Cut flowers don't die as quickly. Truly, if this is a real effect, this could revolutionise medicine.

IMPORTANT SKILLS

- **POLITICS** (men are often put to shame by what I know about rights, will and diplomacy)
- **PERCEPTION/EMPATHY** (I do really like people: I just wish they wouldn't be so stupid about what they want all the time)
- **PERSUASION** (and I'm cultured, persistent and rational, except of course when temper tantrums might work better)
- **FIRST AID** (I took a course because I can't stand to see dumb beasts — even men — in pain)
- **FINE ARTS** (I adore the Old Masters — the works of Michelangelo and Da Vinci particularly)

I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.



THE HONOURABLE FREDERICK BARRET

- Gentleman of leisure • Feckless second son
- Things were simpler in King Arthur's day •

ONCE UPON A TIME

The village of Dunwich in Suffolk used to be much larger, but over the centuries the North Sea has eaten into the sandy cliffs about it and dragged many of its buildings into the deeps. The old fishermen say there's supposed to be a city down there, Dunwich Magna, and forests and fields to support its inhabitants. Dunwich is an isolated place, an hour's journey by cart from the railway station at Darsham. My family's ancestral home, Heathward, is to the north of Dunwich, up against the ancient Dunwich Forest. I was the third child behind my brother Oswald and sister Emily. When I was four our mother died of a fever. Our father (Edmund, the Viscount Aldeburgh) became stern and proper. He was harder on Oswald than on Emily or myself. I think we have both been able to rebel against his authority where Oswald could only obey. When Father died Oswald became his copy. Going Home is like a sentence to a work-house: lecture after lecture from a man who has nothing but contempt for me. It's little wonder that Oswald has not married. Who would want him?

A STUDY IN YELLOW

Eventually even I succumbed to Sir Time's assault, and that of his perfidious Lady Adulthood. The Round Table was broken and its brother-knights dispersed. My knights became footmen and tenant farmers like their fathers before them. I became a man and Father asserted that I should find something to occupy my hours, something *productive* and *serious*. I lasted a year at Cambridge before being sent down for drunkenness. Father was unable to turn my head towards a military career or the civil service in any degree. Perhaps out of disgust he sent me to reside in London at our town-house in Portman Square in Westminster, hoping to keep me out of sight, or perhaps to allow me to work out of my soul the 'wastrel tendencies' he endlessly lectured me about.

I was too young to enlist for the Great War, and too cowardly to lie about my age. I sometimes wonder how I should have done as a second lieutenant on the Western Front, or a pilot in the Air Corps. Probably I should have just ended up dead or maimed, like so very many other men did.

No, there is nothing for me in our dank family mansion outside dank Dunwich.

It's sad because Heathward was the ideal place to be a boy. I was King Arthur, my court made up of the sons of the staff and of the local tenant farmers. We Knights of the Round Table quested into the ruins along the beach, or deep into the shade of the forest. We held tourneys of prowess in the autumn stubble with stick swords and grain-bin cover shields. Our deeds were mighty and I remember them fondly. But without Merlin, our Camelot fell not to Sir Mordred, but merely to Sir Time, the Ashen Knight *sans pitié*.

One by one my knights grew into young men and put aside their swords and quests for sensible things: helping their fathers in the fields, in the smithy, and in the buttery. Such is the way in far Suffolk: the sons learn to become their fathers and the old skills are kept alive. Only the Glory of Camelot is forgotten, by all but myself.

Without occupation, feckless, directionless and lost, all I seem to be able to do is drink, gamble and fuck prostitutes. I've run up a fair debt too, that would be a scandal if it were made public. My debtor is one Mrs Millicent Pierce, who is the madam of the Lysistrata Club, a 'gentlemen's ease' in an alley behind The Strand. I was foolish to assume that a 'mere woman' could never be a demon gambler. The damnable thing is that I am still infatuated with her: she is strong, determined, open-minded, and deliciously cruel.

And that's my life. While some of the nights are wild, the mornings after are always dreary grey and sour. But I can't think of anything better to do with myself. It's hateful, and so very, very far from Camelot.

Until recently I often dreamed in nostalgic fondness of my olden kingship. My dreams of late have been darker. I am more like King Lear, a powerless dotard on my dusty throne. I am too young to feel so old.

SECRET WISDOM

Out of nothing more than idle curiosity one night I joined the Palmers Green Lodge of Theosophy. At first I attended its meetings merely to heckle the speakers, but I found after a few meetings, to my surprise, the lectures taught answers that filled the aching voids in my soul. The philosophical and meditational exercises developed by the lodge gave me peace from my soul's emptiness. It was not a substitute for Camelot but it gave me solace in exile. On the strength of my new contentment my sister Emily, who had also come to London to escape our bleak home-life, came with me to meetings.

She has taken to Theosophy's teachings even more happily than I have: she dreams of bringing the ancient wisdom of the lodge to society at large, to bring on her tedious Socialist Utopia.

At the Palmers Green Lodge I met Matthews, Ms Rossi and the Reverend Waterman, and we have become something of a cabal. The Reverend is a gifted teacher in his own right of the ancient mysteries. We have all spurned our previous mentors for the secrets the Reverend already seems to know.

THE OTHERS

EMILY – my dear sister. My dear, lead-faced, straight-laced, kill-joy sister. She escaped from our father's tyranny into the tyrannies of socialism, feminism and utopianism. I envy her passion and her principles. I just wish she would talk about anything else sometimes. *Ugh*, to be so serious across the breakfast table that early in the morning.

HARRY MATTHEWS – a man I very much admire even as I pity him. He went to the War. He faced death. It has broken him, he drinks even more than I do, but I believe he could be healed in time. I regret that he was not among my knights at Camelot. He would have been be Gawain or Kay, I think: my champion.

MS MONIQUE ROSSI – “La Belle Dame Sans Mercie.” Underneath her streetwise, jaded, and wounded public face, there is a maiden that needs only some kindness in order to bloom once more. Mixed metaphor. Damn. I find her attractive enough, but I fear that she likes me only for my thick blue blood and aroma of old money. Alas.

THE REVEREND THOMAS WATERMAN – the leader of our little cabal. Apparently his vicarial duties give him ample time for occult research and he has recovered much ancient wisdom for us. I used to think it was all guff, until the Reverend showed us the potential inside all of us that can be attained through meditation.

THE MEDITATION

The Reverend's tutoring has unlocked something in me: a passion I have kept in darkness since I was a boy. By drawing on the spirit realm that he calls The Other (and the Theosophists call “Yog Sothoth”, which is far superior mumbo-jumbo in my opinion) I can increase my own considerable powers of persuasion to a marked degree – I speak with the voice of royal command. It's a useful trick with policemen and shopkeepers to be sure, even if it does take a moment of stillness to summon the strength.

I've noticed however, that when I do assume this regal air I begin to feel odd, as if I were exchanging part of myself for the Other's strength. The feeling passes quickly, however. Perhaps it's just a warning not to assume to much. But then, I have never made moderation my motto!

IMPORTANT SKILLS

- **PERSUASION/LEADERSHIP** (I have an easy charm and the appearance of a great deal of money)
- **HAVING A GOOD TIME** (cards, dancing, carousing, whoring, partying – it's all good fun)
- **FENCING** (including walking-stick defence – I'm a bit ashamed of this one: it's a holdover from my childhood games of chivalry)
- **HUNTIN', SHOOTIN' AND FISHIN'** (only in season, of course)
- **DRIVE MOTOR-CAR** (too fast down country lanes!)

Excerpt from *Occult England: a Primer* by Quentin Weamish, Heron Press, 1895

John Dee was accounted the foremost magician of his age. A mathematician, occultist, geographer, astronomer and astrologer, and possibly a spy-master, he was a confidant of the Queen Elizabeth (for his services she granted him an estate, 'Seaward', at Mortlake) and her adviser on matters mathematical and occult. He was a visionary who dreamed of world-wide dominion for the English; he was the first to use the term 'British Empire'. [...] It is suspected that Dee's occult legacy was perpetuated in secret by the Crown, and this Order, the *Angel Britannia*, still protect Britain from Her enemies.

Excerpt from *Occult England: a Primer* by Quentin Weamish, Heron Press, 1895

Edward Kelley (born Edward Talbot c. 1555 in Churchend on Foulness) was an occultist, self-declared spirit-medium and seer, and most likely a confidence-man, often connected with John Dee. Kelley's flamboyant manner and materialistic concern with pomp and opulence mark him as a charlatan, to whom succeeding generations have attributed a number of startling feats.

Translation, excerpt from Dee's *Mysterium Liber Quartus* (Sloane MS. 3190 in the British Library)

E.K: The Darkness obtends still and mine eyes are closed to its import. I hite there be a figure in it but I see him not clearly. His hand is outstretched to me with its forefinger closest. I am accused:

Thou hast disturbed my rest and the bells toll for thee. The land is rent and washed with the flux of the sea. The cries of the drowned are thine to bear to Heaven. This hast GOD work'd for thy sacrilege and sin of greed. This thou shalt pay for in this world and the hereafter. My ransom shall be pay'd. The Lords of YOG-SOTHOTH shall not be deny'd.

J.D: We two byrds, that flew so high in Art, art kin to Icarus and we are burnt. The stone we stole shalt remain at Seaward and the gateway shalt be blocked; no more shalt Mortlake know the tread of He Whom We Have Wronged. GOD help our soules.

A scrap of letter from Edward Kelley to John Dee, c. 1581

...it be my believe styl that the Stane ought be used for grayte goode by goode men! Sir, I beseech thee, as thy companion in the Arte — sette down thy dysmaye for the Grayt Floode that waz and burthens on oure soules still and tayke up the madstane to make All Ryght agayne! In thy baysement restes a grayt mystery. Godde would not have putte that Stane in thy handes unless He wish'd that thou ought use it...

Card attached to a brownish lump of amber, British Museum collection, Cupboard 55:

1081 = An occult talisman or madstone also named the Lindrum=stone,
said to have belonged to John Dee. Montagu Collection,
from the estate of John Cotton, 1763

Excerpt from *Historical Catastrophes of the British Isles Explored*, by Sir William Twomey, 1903

The Great Earthquake at 6p.m. on 6 April 1580

This better known event has been studied by a number of researchers, and its focus has been attributed to a wide area from London to the North Sea. There are about 130 records, mostly contemporary, for this event. Folklore has it that the earthquake was the direct consequence of 'sorcerous activities' by the notorious Elizabethan occultist, John Dee, and he was widely condemned, but escaped sentence to the Tower.

Devastation was widespread. Sections of wall fell in Margate, including the loss of a piece of the cliff and castle wall. At Ramsgate people reported hearing a loud noise, which seemed to come from somewhere in the estuary. A gable end fell from the north wing of St Peter's church, four arches cracked in St Mary's church and part of a chimney fell down. Damage also occurred at Richborough Castle, Herne Bay, Whitstable and Leysdown-on-Sea churches. The tower at St Peter's in Broadstairs still bears a large crack which has been attributed to this event.

In Suffolk, the tremors lasted for about a quarter of an hour with damage caused both by the earthquake and by a tidal wave (a 'deluge') that engulfed vast swathes of the county's coastal land. Several people and a large number of cattle were drowned. Town walls and houses collapsed, killing and injuring dozens of people and animals. After shocks were reported at several locations in east Suffolk during the nights of the 6th of April and the 1st of May 1580 that caused further panic and fires.

Further afield, stones fell from the cathedral at Ely. Part of Stratford Castle in Essex collapsed. About half dozen chimney stacks came down in London, a pinnacle on Westminster Abbey was damaged and stones falling from the roof of Christ's Church Hospital killed two children, The top of the bell tower of St Margaret's church at Stoke Golding, Leicester collapsed.

A great sea swell arose in the North Sea sinking 25 to 30 English, French and Flemish vessels. A passenger on a ship leaving Margate reported that his vessel had touched the sea bed five times and that the sea had risen into the air more than 45 feet higher than his vessel. About 12 hours later, on 7 April, between 4 and 5 o'clock, some 30 houses fell down near Ramsgate and a second deluge was reported to have drowned 120 people. There is a report of 100 vessels being lost off the English coast, with a further 15 near to the Zealand coast.

Rotterdam is said to have been flooded and buildings are said to have shaken like leaves. Wine casks rolled off their stands, furniture was overturned and tables were lifted into the air.

Further to the north at The Hague the cathedral suffered breakage of windows and the falling of stones from the vaulting. Several churches and buildings were damaged at Leiden. Churches and houses at Haarlem were shaken and the bishopric clock struck several times as though sounding the alarm. The quake is said to have lasted for half a quarter of an hour.

In the Spanish Netherlands, cracks occurred in the city wall at Bruges and many people were killed. Chimneys fell and damage was caused to the ridges and gables of houses in Ypres. A tower collapsed in Brussels. Chimneys fell and walls were cracked in Ghent. Several people were killed and injured by falling chimneys and ridge tiles at Antwerp. Peasants working in the fields reported hearing a loud rumbling noise moving from west to east and saw the ground roll in 3 or 4 successive waves. There were no aftershocks reported on the continent.

The adoption of an epicentre in the Thames estuary is supported by the location of the maximum intensities, the after shocks and the tidal wave. However it does not account for some continental intensities, apparently of the same order as those in Kent and Suffolk but located far from the North Sea coasts. Wherever the focus of the earthquake actually was, it is seen as having a deep focus, probably in the lower crust, associated with the reactivation of a crustal fracture, probably within the Shivering Basin shear zone. This great depth justifies the reported effects a long way from the epicentre.

THE KING AND THE PRINCE OF THE SEA

In the Time Before, there was a King in Loegres, Leull, son of the Sons of Brutus. His laws were stern but just. He and his champion and friend Sir Brennus the Raven led the knights of Loegres against the bandits of the forest and the robbers of the hills and the cutpurses of the towns until there were no ruffians left in Loegres and peace prevailed.

And as King Leull had dealt with the ruffians, he dealt with his unruly neighbours. He never started any war with Dalriada nor Powys nor Guent nor the Picts, but finished every one of them, slew their kings and made them into peaceful realms like his own.

So twenty years passed in peace and without the wolves of war to thin them, the people of Loegres waxed most numerous. So many were they that the land itself groaned under the weight of all their feet, and the fields were hard-pressed to fill their many bellies. Leull, a man of peace, was loath to butcher his good neighbours merely to give more land to his own people – or to thin them out with the steel of war – and he found himself at a loss as to what to do.

His wizard Lindrum the Wise, first apprentice of the Wizard Merlin, counselled him thus:

“My King, your realm is rich and bounteous beyond all measure of the past, but it is the nature of such things that ‘enough’ is never ‘enough’. Your people must eat and so must needs sow seed in the fields, but the fields are full, and we dare not linger among the trees of the forest for the ancient folk that dwell there, whose wrath not even my master dared.

“So say I to you, there is another from whom you might win land for your people and so for a time put off the reckoning for your wealth, perhaps even until your son or his own son is set upon the throne and you are long blessed in Paradise.

“Look you to your East. There is a Prince there, whose realm is greater than your own, who might be persuaded to deed some little land to you along your marches out of kindness perhaps, or out of trickery otherwise.”

And the King said, “Look you, Lindrum, there is no land to Loegres’ east save that covered by the Sea.”

“Indeed, my liege,” said the wizard in his cunning way, “and this land is ruled by Drachon, Prince of the Moryow and son of the Great Catullus, Lord of All the Oceans.”

And the King said, “So be it: I shall send to Prince Drachon an embassy.”

In time the embassy returned to Loegres with the news that Drachon would cede such lands as he could spare along the marches only to his father-in-law. In short, he proposed to marry one of the daughters of the King. But the King’s knights had done a disservice to his needs, and had described to the princesses Sollace and Gwynwen how the Prince Drachon was kin to the beasts of the deep sea more than he was kin to the Sons of Adam, with finny limbs and tentacles for a beard, and they were full of fear for their fate.

“O Father, do not make me enact marriage with this monster!” pleaded Sollace and Gwynwen in turn. “For his skin is clammy and dank, his breath akin unto a dead squid in the sun, and his manly attributes... it is said he puts the lampreys to shame!”

And the King was full of pity for his beauteous daughters, and so learned there was no kindness in the deed. And he learned that the proposed alliance with the Deep Lord advanced his wizard’s schemes as well as his own needs, or better, for the marches contained many sunken treasures of lore and power that Lindrum would soon plunder for his own uses, were the lands raised above the waves. And so he set his soul to trickery: not against the Prince, whose chivalry was reproachless, but against his deceitful wizard!

And so the King sent a second embassy to the weedy court of Prince Drachon and proposed to him another price: the wretched wizard. And *lo*, the Prince acceded, and the King had his knights led by his champion Sir Brennus the Raven, take the wizard in bindings of cold iron and sent him bound into the depths, which soon rose out of the sea to become dry land on which crops would grow and cattle could graze.

The wizard was not heard from again. And the King’s two beauteous but spoilt princesses married rival sons of rival houses, and tore the old king’s realm apart as he lay on his death-bed, and the lands that were populous became as deserts filled with the graves of the slain.



THE WIZARD AND THE PRINCESS

In the Time Before, there was a wizard named Lindrum, who was accounted the eldest of Merlin's sons in sorcery, and he was himself no mean wizard! As an apprentice he was with King Arthur's army that sacked Constantinople and the capital of the Romans, and he won great acclaim for his foresight and canny sorceries that sowed confusion among the legions of the eternal city.

And after he returned to Britain Lindrum disappeared into the caves of Ench and slumbered until sons became fathers three times, and so was absent from Camlann where his liege fell. When he awoke he made his services known to the nephew of the grandson of Arthur, Bryttys, and his son Leull, King of Loegres. Under these Kings of the Lesser Britons Lindrum was welcomed for his counsel and he grew sleek and proud once more, for wizards feast upon the esteem of their lessers.

But never was he more than a faithful and dutiful servant, or so he appeared for the reigns of two kings, right until his end.

King Bryttys was the second of that name and he married Duncel, daughter of the King of the Blue Men of far Mauritaine. His son Leull also took a foreign bride and married Maude, daughter of the Burgundian King. She gave him two daughters, Sollace and Gwynwen, and then died of homesickness. The princesses grew up healthy and beautiful.

Sollace took after her mother's people and had long tresses of butter-yellow, where her sister Gwynwen took after the raven-haired beauties of her father's people and was accounted perhaps the more beautiful of the two. Sollace's voice was accounted sweeter than the very nightingales with whom she sang cantos of courtly love in the castle gardens at evening. The songs brought the very trees and stones to pause to listen, and with the end of every song there would be a sigh from the world itself.

Gwynwen's kindness was said to match her beauty and her piteous tears were said to cure the ills of men. But so good was her heart that she did not dwell in sorrow for the miserable lot of mortal man but joy for his capacity for grace and good and beauty, and she was loved by all.

As the Princesses grew into maidens full fair, Princes of foreign courts came in ones and twos to win the

esteem of the King of Loegres and marry one of his beautiful daughters. Their contests with each other waxed full of wrath and eagerness and the King began to fear that his peaceful realm would be wrought asunder by the lovesick fury of the swains who were otherwise noble guests in his court. He forbade either daughter to encourage the swains while he sent these out on perilous quests to prove their worth to marry, and in this way was the cause of death of over half the eligible sons of Europe.

But his attention was blind to the real competition occurring in his own court. Fair Gwynwen was beloved of Sir Brennus the Raven, the Champion of the King, whose right hand was ever clenched in the Lands of the Dead. She was not ignorant of his noble esteem nor scornful of it, and perhaps she would answer it in time. But at the time, neither one of them considered it a felicitous match for reasons political and metaphysical. Neither wished to vex King Leull, whom they loved as liege and father.

The wizard Lindrum was also possessed of a growing lust for the princesses, particularly Gwynwen, and found himself following her steps through lidded eyes with increasing fervour. But she spurned his company and politely evaded his conversation, which served only to further inflame his ardour. His mortal means of wooing soon exhausted, Lindrum resorted to base sorcery to win his prize, and enchanted and flattered Gwynwen's maid Wynne to slip into her wine a love potion, so that she would fall abjectly in love with the first man she met afterwards, which the wizard intended would be him. But Wynne sipped of the wine before her mistress could and so fell into a swoon of love, latching upon Sir Brennus, who was running an errand for his master to the princess. She explained the plot to him and Sir Brennus would have struck the sorcerer down then and there, except that Wynne prevailed upon him to circumspection, since a wizard's murder is a mortal curse for the realm in which it happens.

Soon after Sir Brennus was given leave to bring the wizard in chains before the King and send him into exile in the sea. Lindrum said no curse on him for this but Sir Brennus never benefited from his role, for Gwynwen married another, and within a year of that, Sir Brennus was exiled from Loegres for practising wizardry of his own to get her back.

'TIL HUMAN VOICES WAKE US

by Andrew Smith

Ia! Yog Sothoth!

Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth. He knows where the Old Ones broke through of old, and where They shall break through again. He knows where They have trod earth's fields, and where They still tread them, and why no one can behold Them as They tread.

— *Canto III, lines 106–109, Al Azif ('The Necronomicon'), [1898 Cawdor translation]*

LONDON 1923: an October of dank fog-shrouded streets and bitter tattered memories: smoke, mud, flesh, a mansion, love.

Tragedy strikes many. But gnostic wisdom has it that Tragedy has elder siblings from whom justice (or mere revenge) can be sought.

If you could, would you want things to be better? Would you make Tragedy take back Her insults?

Would you pay the price?

Five occultists and dreamers are about to find out. A single session *Call of Cthulhu* game (original or D20 or systemless).



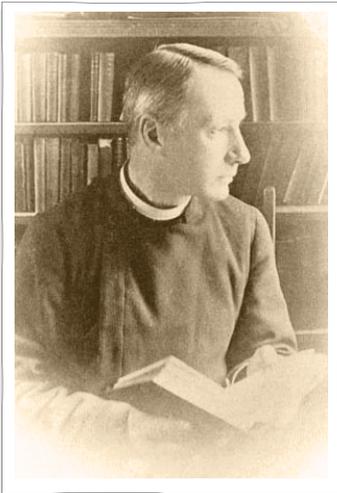
MR HARRY MATTHEWS

Private Investigator • Great War veteran • No stranger to death



MS MONIQUE ROSSI

- “The Parisian Nightingale” • Fallen star •
- The performance of her life •



THE REVEREND THOMAS WATERMAN

The Vicar of Foulness • The Hierophant • Hopes for a merciful God



THE HONOURABLE EMILY BARRET

- Upper-class anarchist • Frustrated feminist •
- Unattainable utopia(n) •



THE HONOURABLE FREDERICK BARRET

- Gentleman of leisure • Feckless second son •
- Things were simpler in King Arthur’s day •

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by Andrew Smith

Ia! Yog Sothoth!

Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth. He knows where the Old Ones broke through of old, and where They shall break through again. He knows where They have trod earth's fields, and where They still tread them, and why no one can behold Them as They tread.

— *Canto III, lines 106–109, Al Azif ("The Necronomicon"), [1898 Cawdor translation]*

LONDON 1923: an October of dank fog-shrouded streets and bitter tattered memories: smoke, mud, flesh, a mansion, love.

Tragedy strikes many. But gnostic wisdom has it that Tragedy has elder siblings from whom justice (or mere revenge) can be sought.

If you could, would you want things to be better? Would you make Tragedy take back Her insults?

Would you pay the price?

Five occultists and dreamers are about to find out. A single session *Call of Cthulhu* game (original or D20 or systemless).

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THE LAND FROM THE SEA

Once upon a time a region of south-eastern England including Norfolk, Suffolk, the Thames estuary and part of Kent, was covered by the waves of the North Sea. The stones themselves, the chalk and limestone, tell that tale. They do not tell that this land's emergence from the briny depths was more recent than geological analysis might suggest: it occurred in the reign of **King Leull**, one of the semi-mythical kings of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regnum Britanniae*. A great gift was made to him by **Drachon, Prince of the Moryow**, in the manner of a spell: the land was raised and created in our world, the World of Men, but in the *real* world, **the Other, Yog Sothoth**, the region is still underwater. The pact between King Leull and Drachon keeps the World of Men from reverting to its true state: the borrowed land under the waves, home for crabs and fishes.

The pact was sealed with the body of the King's wizard **Lindrum**. He was not a willing sacrifice, but it is perilous to displease a king. Some say his greed and ambition began to worry the king. Others say it was for the glances he stole of the King's daughters, **Sollace** and **Gwynwen**, that he was punished. For whatever reason he was wrapped in chains of cold iron by the King's Champion, **Sir Brennus the Raven**, whose power over life and death gave him great resistance to the wizard's ways. He was taken into Drachon's realm and incarcerated in the **Shivering Gaol** not a bow-shot from the Prince's own coral palace.

Lindrum is yet held enchained in the Shivering Gaol, guarded by merrow-knights of fiercest aspect. Although his body is held there, Lindrum has managed to disembodily his soul (thanks to Elizabethan occultists **John Dee** and **Edward Kelley**, see below) and so seeks to free himself. Little does he know that the power to do so has been loaned to him insidiously by Yog Sothoth itself, arousing in a drowsy semi-aware state to reunite its sundered sides and bring chaos to the World of Men.

Lindrum's (or Yog Sothoth's) plan has been in operation for some decades now. He has caused the souls of Leull, Brennus, Sollace and Gwynwen to be reincarnated (PCs Freddie, Harry, Monique and Emily respectively) and brought to London. He has reanimated the body of a vicar (Thomas) whose failure of faith resulted in an attempted suicide by drowning. He has used 'Thomas' to befriend the souls and lead them towards what they must do to rescue his body and so refute Drachon's pact for all time. He has leaked them little tastes of the power of Yog Sothoth to bind them to his purpose and fuddle their destinies.

The game starts assuming that the PCs have known each other for at least a few months, and have begun to reap the benefits of their first steps into 'magic'. Yog Sothoth, acting through Lindrum acting through Thomas, is going to set them to the task of acquiring Lindrum's legendary **madstone** and bringing it to **St Michael's of Seaward Church in Mortlake**, which was built on the foundations of John Dee's house.

The madstone will be able to open Dee's gate to Drachon's realm. Once there 'Thomas' hopes to lead them to the Shivering Gaol and convince them to release Lindrum's body. If this occurs, at that point Thomas's body will fall empty and dead as the wizard reanimates his body and attempts to bunk out. This will break the pact and raise the ire of Drachon, who will also waken from his slumber: Cthulhu off Margate.

Lindrum is a possible *deus ex machina* for the climax if there is enough humanity in him to want to resist the wiles of Yog Sothoth and his own lust for vengeance.

THE CABAL OF ANGEL BRITANNIA

John Dee's occult descendants are a long-lived order that supports and protects the Crown through supernatural means. They are the people who would otherwise be the PCs in a typical Call of Cthulhu story. They include **Detective Inspector Alistair Crompton of Scotland Yard**, **Professor Desmond Templeton of the University of London**, **Doctor Hubert Davies** (a Harley Street GP), **Mr Henry Jago**, music hall impresario, and **Mrs Millicent Pierce**, who runs a gentlemen club behind The Stand partially as a front for Foreign Office chicanery.

These investigators will force the PCs along by chasing them, drive them to follow when they get bogged down by getting to plot points first, and provide some ready corpses at the climax to show how

the monster works. They can throw fairly impressive amounts of government-issue men, materiel and influence in the path of the PCs: I have this vague desire to get the battlecruiser *HMS Repulse* into a fist-fight with Drachon at the climax at the behest of this cabal, but that's just me.

Through the machinations of Yog Sothoth, each Angel is connected with one of the PCs. They have been using these connections to impede the PCs' progress: Compton infiltrated the Palmers Green Lodge and tried to bankrupt it. Henry Jago has attached an Other octopus to Monique's throat to stop her singing (as petty revenge for leaving his employ). Mrs Pierce is looking to enslave Freddie. Dr Davies is trying to get Emily to leave London for good. Prof. Templeton will try to steer Waterman into dead-ends if he goes to him for advice.

YOG SOTHOTH

Shonky reading of Alhazred's words have lead many Cthulhu cultists to assume Yog Sothoth is an entity. It's not really: as Azathoth is a personification of cosmic chaos, Yog Sothoth is a way of looking at the Other, the realm of meaning and possibility. Out of Yog Sothoth comes potential, creation, chaos, madness and enlightenment. There are things living in Yog Sothoth: this is where the faeries went when they left their places in the World of Men.

It is possible to enter Yog Sothoth from the world, and for entities to step from Yog Sothoth to the World of Men. The last half of the story should occur mainly in **London the Other**, in Yog Sothoth's counterpart to the London of Men. London the Other does not reflect the above-sea land of London of Men. In Yog Sothoth, the city is a complex reef of coral and rock under some fathoms of milky, faintly phosphorescent water. The smoke and grime of London of Men become kelp and silt drifting in the tides. Vehicles pass as crabs (hansom crabs, anyone?) and fishes. The water is as breathable as air, if a little disconcerting.

Drachon slumbers in his palace in the Other Thames estuary. Even He is little aware that his deal with King Leull has injured Yog Sothoth enough to rouse it to chaos.

Despite being primarily a passive aspect of reality, Yog Sothoth is capable of self-creating an aware or semi-aware version of itself: this is the reality behind **the Black Man** of the witches, or Nyarlathotep, or the ancient names of al-Aswad or Khephren. This time Yog Sothoth has been roused to dreaming semi-consciousness by the stresses of Drachon's deal. It is acting to heal the rift by taking back Drachon's gift. It has lent power to Lindrum and to the Angel Britannia in order to do this. In essence, both parties are working for the badguy. How can it lose?

MAGIC

Motes of significance in Yog Sothoth — its creatures and moods — can wreak effects in the World of Men if directed by the will of a wizard. For instance Other auger-worms could be set into a person to give them tuberculosis, or an octopus wrapped around their throat to prevent them singing. Octopuses are also really good at opening locks. Everybody loves octopuses.

There is a price for these workings, of course. Yog Sothoth must work through the wizard, and with every mote the wizard utters, the pull of the Other grows stronger on the wizard himself. Eventually he will be dragged into Yog Sothoth, and unless he is very strong-willed, irrevocably changed into a Other inhabitant of some sort. In the vicinity of London this is a sea-change: merrows or kraken or sorcerous crabs. Many of the subjects of Prince Drachon once walked on land.

System-wise, use of magic by the PCs is represented by puaa shell bits. Each PC except the Reverend will start with 1; he starts with 3. The rest go in a pile in the middle. In order to use their 'meditations', they draw an additional counter from the pile — not give back any that they already have!

As the number of tokens in front of each player grows, their character become more attuned with Yog Sothoth. At 3, they will start to perceive elements of Yog Sothoth (see the list of random weirdness, below).

At 7, they will start to physically manifest elements of the Other: scaly patches on the torso, webbing growing between the fingers, ears growing into fins, etc. In the Reverend's case, he will begin to show more of the signs that he is actually a drowned corpse.

At 13 (which will take effort and callousness, I think), they will be drawn inextricably into Yog Sothoth and complete their transformation into a merrow.

But before this transition occurs, the passage of a full day without use of the powers reduces a player's token pile by 1 down to a minimum of 1 (3 for the Reverend).

JOHN DEE AND EDWARD KELLEY, AND THE GREAT MARGATE EARTHQUAKE OF 1580

Yog Sothoth's previous attempt to destroy the London of Men was in 1580. It acted primarily through **Edward Kelley**, an occultist and charlatan, who inveigled Queen Elizabeth's astrologer **John Dee** into performing an occult ritual that created a permanent gate between London of Men and London the Other. This gate still stands at **Seaward House in Mortlake**, in London's southwest, in the grounds of what was Dee's residence there.

The magicians passed together into the realm of Drachon and stealthily made their way into the Shivering Gaol, where Kelley stole Lindrum's legendary **madstone** from his body. Lindrum's struggle alerted the merrow guards, who attempted to waken Drachon. Drachon indeed stirred as the magicians fled back to the London of Men under Dee's spell of invisibility. Drachon's waking was felt as an earthquake of magnitude 6 or so with an epicentre in the estuary of the Thames. It collapsed buildings in the region (and as far away as Dover and Norwich), rattled church bells as far away as Oxfordshire and France, and sent tsunamis ('deluges') seething up the Thames. There were dozens of deaths, and reports of occult phenomena like 'men in the sea' and (by one sailor) the sea rising up into a titan. Flood-tides were also experienced in France and the Netherlands.

Horried by these consequences of his hubris, Dee sealed the gateway behind them with the madstone and swore never to use it again, despite Kelley's attempts at persuasion. The madstone remained part of Dee's occult paraphernalia until he died, and it came by various means into the possession of the British Museum.

Dee's house burned down in 1760 or so and a church, **St Michael's of Seaward**, was built on its foundations.

REINCARNATIONS

The PCs are reincarnations of the principle actors in the original stories of King Leull and his daughters and knights, Drachon and Lindrum. Lindrum and/or Yog Sothoth have caused this to happen in order that their wakening of Lindrum's body and repudiation of the pact between King Leull and Drachon is irrevocable, since it would be the original actors reneging.

The PCs' initial 'meditation' magics are aligned with their folkloric powers, and as the game progresses it should be made more obvious through weirdness that they are ever more strongly realigning with their previous selves.

Harry = Sir Brennus the Raven. He has great power to kill things, particularly with his right hand. In Yog Sothoth he can also drag back out of the dead places his army mates **Corbett**, **Bransley** and **Mad McFee** to fight at his side. Build up for him the sensation that his friends are standing at his right shoulder. Once in Yog Sothoth, he can see them clearly and speak with them – they stand by to fight at his orders.

Monique = Princess Sollace. Until she makes it into Yog Sothoth her magical voice is silenced by a strangling octopus. Afterwards, she sings like a siren and can charm all manner of things, even inanimate things. Lindrum is immune (he was heart-broken), but Drachon and even the Black Man might give her pause to finish, even if they can not be directly controlled by her song.

Emily = Princess Gwynwen. She can heal any hurt with a touch. Alternatively, she can gently kill anything by sending it into the Long Sleep.

Freddie = King Leull of Old. He is vastly competent in combat (but not as lethal as Sir Brennus) and has the charisma and leadership of a fairy-tale king. When he commands, he is obeyed. Even Drachon will treat him as an equal, a monarch in his own right.

THE CHARACTERS

1. MR HARRY MATTHEWS

A private detective and Great War veteran haunted by his time on the Western Front

Good at detective stuff and fighting (when he becomes Sir Brennus again he's nigh unbeatable, and his right hand just kills things).

Give him breaks at gunshoe stuff: primary investigation, primary biff, tertiary research.

2. MISS MONIQUE ROSSI

AKA 'The Parisian Nightingale', a music hall singer whose star has dimmed

I am concerned that her octopus problem at the start of the game and the restrictive roles of women at the time make her a bit of a side-kick, so encourage her to do stuff by herself. She is a superlative driver, so give her opportunities to nick George back from Henry Jago, or borrow one of the Barrett's motor-cars. Encourage a car chase.

Equal primary interpersonal. Tertiary action.

3. THE REVEREND THOMAS WATERMAN

A churchman with an interest in archaeology, who despairs of the goodness in Man

The evil mage who betrays the party. It's a possibly problematic setup having him as the (initially) sole conduit to Lindrum. In the end he has nothing left to lose, since he's dead already. It's an anticlimactic end, so be gentle.

Primary researcher, primary magician and oddly durable in a fight.

4. THE HON. EMILY BARRETT

A fiery Marxist-Feminist-Utopianist from a good family who associates with anarchists

Hopefully less crippled than Monique but do make sure she suffers if she does anything strenuous due to her tuberculosis. Perhaps ideally set up for the Tragic Goth Princess death at the end.

Secondary researcher, secondary interpersonal.

5. THE HON. FREDERICK BARRETT

A wastrel lordling who dreams of fairy-tale chivalry between whores and bottles of champagne

A little bit comic relief that should hopefully have a chance to become majestic by the end.

Equal primary interpersonal, secondary biff, secondary investigation.

THE STORY

SCENE 0: WHEN SHALL WE FIVE MEET AGAIN?

London, October 1923. You have passed through grey avenues of stone lit by dim streetlights that barely shine through the yellow fog that rubbed familiarly around your overcoats. The Palmers Green Lodge is dark, empty, and there is a greatcoated police constable standing alone outside.

It seems the opposition have already been here.

How did it come to this?

0.1 FREDDY AND MRS PIERCE

The previous morning. Mrs Pierce's boudoir at her club, the Lysistrata. She is lounging in underclothes as Freddie dresses, post-coitally languid, and trying not to fall for Freddie's charms as he has for hers. She mentions that there is something that Freddie can do for her rather than pay his debt this month. She says that she has a new 'business contact' who collects occult paraphernalia. She knows Freddie belongs to the Lodge – could he keep an 'eye out' for new items?

0.2 MONIQUE AND HENRY JAGO

The previous forenoon Henry calls upon Monique to offer her work as a seamstress in the Emporium. Whether she accepts or spurns his charity with a curse, as an odd parting remark, Henry confesses he knows about Monique's connection with the Theosophists and warns her that the occult can easily take over one's life.

0.3 EMILY AND DOCTOR HUBERT DAVIES

The news is not good for Ms Barrett, declares her doctor Dr Davies in the early afternoon. The tuberculosis has spread to her other lung. He strongly asserts she needs to get out of London and the dampness: she should go somewhere hot, like California.

04 HARRY AND DETECTIVE INSPECTOR CROMPTON

The Inspector turns up early this morning at Harry's office – Harry recognises him from the Palmers Green Lodge. He spends some time idly intimidating Harry, including describing the case of a dodgy PI who gets the book thrown at him for aiding 'unsavoury activities'. He warns Harry to cut ties to the Palmers Green Lodge, before 'something bad' happens. He asks to see Harry's PI licence (it's all good right now, but due to expire in the new year). The implied threat should be obvious.

Crompton has a sidekick waiting in an unmarked car parked outside if there is trouble.

0.5 THE REVEREND IN REVERIE

The Reverend is at Harry's flat, down for the weekend to meet with his friends at the Lodge. During the week Professor Templeton sent him a letter inviting him to tea on Sunday afternoon.

The Reverend is visited by Lindrum. Lindrum tells him:

- There is a cabal of sorcerers, the Angel Britannia, intent on exhuming his sleeping corpse for the power it contains.
- If they do this, there will be a terrible catastrophe, like the Margate Earthquake of 1580, or larger, that was raised by magicians named 'Dee' and 'Kelley'.
- He tells the Rev that he needs to return his 'madstone', a powerful talisman, to his sleeping body.
- The madstone is currently contained in 'a place of ancient treasures from many lands'. Where this is, Lindrum doesn't know, but suggests that the Reverend could ask his pupils to join him in a sorcerous Scrying that would give them a clue.
- Lindrum warns the Reverend again that the Angel Britannia are powerful, but not wise enough to know what harm they could do if allowed to complete their raid.

Lindrum leaves, his footprints sea-wet as always, and The Rev realises he can hear voices in Harry's office downstairs. It's the conversation between Harry and the detective.

0.6 GATHERING FORCES

Encourage The Rev and Harry to collect the other PCs and meet at the Lodge to perform their scrying and raid the British Museum.

COMPLICATIONS

- *What if the players don't want to get together?*

Use Crompton's police to increase the threat. Other Palmers Green Lodge members get arrested or disappeared (witnesses might describe police cars). Messages are left at PCs' lodgings. At this stage avoid having the PCs themselves arrested or they will likely spend the entire session in prison and drown at the end with everybody else.

SCENE 1: SCRYING THE HEIST

1.1 THE PALMERS GREEN LODGE OF THEOSOPHY

Return to the introductory paragraph. Describe the lonely, bored, cold constable. It should be easy enough to get into the Lodge past him.

The Lodge inside is a shambles – DI Crompton’s men have searched it roughly, and taken the safe. Books are recoverable if anyone wants to do some quick research. The ritual chamber is easily cleaned up if the PCs want to do the scrying with all the trimmings.

Get them to describe how they’re going about the ritual and ask questions like the nuances are important. If they’re not complete muppets, give them enough hints of the British Museum to get them to go there.

If the players look like time-wasters, have Emily, Harry or Waterman realise the scrying has been scryed in turn by a sentinel-spell...

The other Lodge members are not present, and are, at your option, already arrested or injured. Play up the suggestion that the police are exceeding their authority and so must be answering to a thoroughly more scary level of power.

1.2 THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Time is probably now short, so the PCs will have to get into it outside normal viewing hours. If you’re feeling compassionate, suggest the Reading Room is open in autumn evenings until 10pm. Otherwise cue the ‘Mission Impossible Rag’ and check out the lockpicks, blackjacks and magic.

The scrying will guide the PCs to the **Secretum**: Cupboard 55 in the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities. This is a behind-the-scenes store where risqué and dubious items are kept rather than put on display. There are Pompeian pornographic frescoes, some of the more suggestive works from New Guinea, witch-cult paraphernalia, and so on.

The card with the madstone describes it as *‘1081 - An occult talisman or madstone also named the Lindrum-stone, said to have belonged to John Dee. Montagu Collection, from the estate of John Cotton, 1763’*.

COMPLICATIONS

This is fairly free-form and can run for gun-bunnies as well as more sophisticated groups. If the scene looks like it’s going on too long then the League can be seen exiting the building, presumably with the madstone and a chase (by car or foot through London) can occur. If it’s over too quickly then the Angels or their police allies can arrive to impede the PCs, and the chase occurs.

It doesn’t matter who ends up with the stone – either team can open the gate.

HANDOUTS

- *Dee & Kelley notes*
- *The Great Margate Earthquake of 1580*
- *The madstone tag*
- *If the name ‘Lindrum’ comes up, mention that the name is vaguely familiar to the Barretts or even Monique (if she mentions her Kentish roots...)*

SCENE 2: FALL BACK AND LOOK FOR LANDMARKS

The objective of this scene is to get the PCs to John Dee's old house, **Seaward** in **Mortlake**.

The problem is that Lindrum doesn't know where Dee's gate was, nor can it be scryed until it is opened. This will hopefully provoke some library research (...in a perfect world, back at the British Museum Reading Room) on the basis of Dee and Kelley, or the Margate Earthquake of 1580, or even Lindrum.

The Palmers Green Lodge has an occult library that includes the Dee & Kelley notes and possibly the folkore items. Depending on time, the Lodge has nothing on the earthquake except a note that Dee was held to blame for it. Suggest the British Museum Reading Room or university resources to chase that down.

The Barretts' library at Portman Square includes a book, *Folktales of Old Suffolk*, that includes the two folklore stories.

Another possibility is to search out any of the League that got spotted in scene 1 and follow them around. They will either head to St Michael's of Seaward to open the gate (if they have the madstone) or to stake it out to watch for the PCs to show up.

Whatever course this takes, don't let research eat up too much time — it's a trope of the Cthulhu genre and an opportunity to reward clever question-asking.

HANDOUTS

- *Dee & Kelley notes — Lodge or Brit. Museum*
- *Excerpt from Dee's Mysterium Liber Quartus — Lodge or Brit. Museum*
- *The Great Margate Earthquake of 1580 — Brit. Museum or 2nd-hand bookshop*
- *(Folklore 1 and Folklore 2) — Barretts or Brit. Museum or 2nd-hand bookshop*

COMPLICATIONS

- *They're wasting time!*

If the police aren't threatening enough, have a series of earthquakes begin, starting with a rumble, then a rattle, then some minor damage. This is due to the Angel Britannia using brute force to open the gate into Yog Sothoth (if they don't have the madstone), or as a perfectly natural consequence of harnessing cosmic forces (if they do).

- *They can't read!*

Summarise verbally and then let them catch up on their reading later.

SOME RANDOM WEIRDNESS FOR OUT AND ABOUT IN LONDON

1. An easterly breeze from the estuary disturbs the yellow fog and brings a strong smell of briny decay.
2. The light on the wet cobbles ripples and glitters like light on the surface of water.
3. A street is awash from an overflowing drain. There are little fish gasping in the shallow water.
4. A sudden downpour drenches everything.
5. There is a strong fishy stench from a side-street or alley. Maybe a flickering pale shape withdraws further into the shade, like an octopus's tentacle.
6. For a moment, the passers-by seem to resemble a shoal of fish.

SCENE 3: ST MICHAEL'S OF SEAWARD

Mortlake is a semi-pastoral area in London's west, just east of Kew and the famous Botanical Gardens. It often smells of hops courtesy of Watney's Stag Brewery.

St Michael's of Seaward is an odd-looking church with a squat 16th-century tower (the remains of Dee's manor, that burned down in 1760) and an 18th Century body. The **Reverend William Morrissy** is the vicar here. He lives with his wife **Beryl** in the parsonage behind the church. There is yew-hedged graveyard overhung by some gaunt-branched ancient linden-trees.

The church is oddly damp and somewhat depressing. Its stained-glass shows St Michael contending with a kraken-like Leviathan. Leviathan somehow looks happier about it than St Michael does. In one of the transepts there is a narrow spiral stair that leads down into the crypt. There is a wrought-iron gate at the top. In the crypt are the sepulchres of the Arbours, the local squireocracy from 1780 to 1870 or so.

There is the sound of the sea rushing back and forth over a rocky shore here. It seems to come from the very walls themselves.

In the centre of the crypt there is a pool of still (sea) water lined with dark stone that is quite distinct from the pale portland stone of the walls and sepulchres. Its rim is carved with occult symbols. Bringing the madstone near to the pool and willing it open produces an explosion of water that drenches everything and apparently fills the crypt as if by a storm-wave through a sea-cave. It passes quickly, before the PCs can react properly, and they will notice that air and water are not distinct any more. They feel as if they are submerged but they can still breathe. There is a silvery, even iridescent, sheen over every surface.

Alternatively the League will already have activated the gateway and have already passed into London the Other and the realm of Drachon, and so invite further pursuit.

COMPLICATIONS

Best not to waste time here. If the PCs are reluctant to pass into London the Other then besiege them with unmarked policemen carrying tommy-guns, courtesy of Detective Crompton. If they surrender then let them moulder in gaol until they do something. If they let it happen through inaction or stupid 'one move and the idiot gets it' assaults on NPCs, the League reach Lindrum's body and inadvertently rouse Drachon. London gets destroyed by the North Sea.

Continue the random weirdness as you will.

SCENE 4: PASS INTO YOG SOTHOTH

Opening the gateway is, as above, like being swept away by a wave. It's cold and wet, but doesn't soak into things much. Yog Sothoth's fluid can be breathed by the PCs. It is slightly milky (in a blue-green sort of way) and acts like a fog as distance increases. Overhead the sun or moon appears as a vast pale green disk (the church is largely absent).

The passage into the Other is worth one paua piece to each person that makes it.

It is possible to swim vertically or horizontally in this ocean but it is tiring. Walking is easier.

Guns can be enchanted through magic to work in Yog Sothoth.

Monique will notice immediately Jago's spell-octopus wrapped around her throat. It will notice that it's been noticed and immediately attempt to flee into the nearest dark hole — her mouth. There will be an inking, and PCs struggling with dextrous, sticky but fairly puny tentacles before the wee beastie gets a stompin'. Once this is done Monique can sing once more, and a faint ghostly princess's circlet appears at her brow.

Emily's lungs are full of borer-worms that flash feathery feeder-tendrils into the milky water through riddle-holes in her chest and shoulders. These number a dozen or so and can be removed with a little effort. She will feel better immediately. A faint ghostly princess's circlet appears at her brow.

Harry's right hand constantly generates a globe of dead water — icily clear and cold — about it. Anything he touches with it dies. There are three shades or ghosts at his right shoulder.

The Reverend looks more like a drowned corpse, and a little like Lindrum.

Freddie becomes taller and more regal, with a ghostly crown at his brow and ghostly armour on his body. Anything they talk to from here will recognise him particularly as a king and will behave with due respect.

If the PCs have performed enough magic to earn some mutations, these will show up too.

In Yog Sothoth, London the Other is an extensive and complex reef of cold-water coral and rock. There are fish, sharks, great crustaceans, octopuses, nudibranchs and the rest. There are vague similarities between London the Other and the World of Men: the Thames is a canyon. The bridges are rock-bridges over this. Museums are sunken treasure-ships; garrisons are sunken warships. Palaces are strongholds for the merrow and a probably best avoided.

If there is time to toss in some random encounters. Otherwise Lindrum will be able to easily direct the PCs down the gently sloping terrain towards Drachon's cyclopean citadel on the flats at the bottom: in its shadow there is a smaller accretion, the Shivering Gaol.

Again, motivation for this scene will be fleeing from or pursuing the (surviving) League members.

SOME LONDON THE OTHER ENCOUNTERS

1. A school of sardines use the PCs for cover from a hunting shark. The sardines are each a snippet of sensation or memory: a red bicycle, a tree by a beach, the touch of silk. The shark is Lethe, and eats memories. If the shark hits a PC get them to describe a memory, which is now gone.
2. Really, really clingy kelp. It's the kelp of obligation that causes paralysis with knowledge of loose ends and things left undone.
3. Drowned pirates. No metaphor here, just an excuse to go Arrrr!
4. Cuttlefish with hypnotic pattern displays. Shiny distractions. They look like they mean something neat but try to lead the unwary into the lairs of the hunting lobsters or krakens. They eat the scraps.
5. A hunting lobster. A brutally strong, bus-sized, persistent and belligerent predator. This is Fate.
6. A kraken. Although bear-sized, powerful beasties, the kraken are somewhat like crazy old Taoists and tend only to attack if attacked. Of course, stamping through a kraken's zen sand-garden might be interpreted as an attack...

THE MERROW

In various places around London the Other, and more thickly as one gets closer to Drachon's palace, there are settlements of merrow (or moryow). These are out of myth: sinuous sea-reptilian or piscine creatures with human-like upper torsos and the tails of morays. The males often sport spiny fins, bits of octopus tentacle or crab armour as well, but the females are often hauntingly beautiful in an alien sort of way. The Naga from *Warcraft III: Frozen Throne* and *WOW* do pretty well for comparisons.

The merrow are capricious, proud and tricky: much like their faerie kin of the forests. They test those they meet to beat them in contests of various kinds and take the losers as slaves, transforming them into the servile se slug- and crab-people that can also be found in their coral palaces. Accepting their hospitality is also risky, as their food and drink is a potent source of Other magic and thus, transformation. There are worse fates, however, and it gets one off the land when the big wave hits.

If there is plenty of time a diversion courtesy of a merrow lady and her court of knights might be fun, but they are otherwise to be avoided.

COMPLICATIONS

Easy enough to slow things down if you have time to burn. Having the Angel Britannia agents already in and ahead of the PCs speeds things up. In fact, both playtests had the PCs pursuing the Angels down to the Shivering Gaol.

SCENE 5: THE SHIVERING GAOL

The Shivering Gaol is a roughly pentagonal outcrop that has been given crenulations and a cruelly portcullised gateway — despite that just about everybody around here can swim over the top. It's high gothic with an undersea theme: Giger as heck.

Behind it the palace of Drachon looms into the upper waters only a league away, dominating the scene as only the sepulchre/couch of a young Old One could. Dim, pale green light of unpleasant hue leaks from this, staining the scene in pallid, corpse-like hues. Everybody starts to look more like the Reverend... **Give them all another paua piece.**

The merrow knights on duty at the Shivering Gaol are Not Your Friend, and will have to be dealt with. They are few in number and their reinforcements are far away, so getting past them is not impossible.

In the cavernous basement cell is a stone bed on which lies a seaweed-draped human body, held down by chains of thick rusted iron. This is Lindrum. On his breast is a circlet of arcane gold; at his side is a staff of dark iron. Somebody already has stolen his madstone, of course!

All that is needed for him to wake is for the Reverend (or the madstone) to touch him, or if necessary just for the Reverend (or the madstone) to get close enough to him. As this happens Thomas will empty of life and so will realise he is in fact just another drowned corpse. Luckily, he has enough residual magic to act through this scene, although his strength is ebbing and he will need to make some new pact in order to escape his doom — or make the best of it with a last heroic act of sacrifice or defiance.

When Lindrum wakes he will have the power to break the chains and free himself. At this moment Drachon will awaken: there will be a vast low roar, the gaol will shake, and the pallid green light will brighten. In short, it should be obvious that bad stuff is about to occur.

COMPLICATIONS

The remaining Angel Britannia members make it here to force the climax through confrontation. Sooner or later there should occur an excuse to waken Lindrum. The Angels might have found merrow or kraken allies. They might have brought a couple of boxes of gelignite to destroy Lindrum and the entire Shivering Gaol. Everybody likes gelignite.

In a fight, the Angel Britannia do stuff like this:

- DI Crompton is an armoured lobster-knight. He will defend his allies against Harry or Freddie with a strong offence. His weakness is heaviness — he is not fast in pursuit.
- Henry Jago is a cloud of octopuses. He has speed, swarm attacking, ink and magical deception. His weakness is focus — once the head octopus is gone, he is pretty instinctive.
- Mrs Pierce is a siren. She will summon sharks or krakens to do her fighting for her, or sing counters to Monique's assaults. She also flees as soon as things go bad for the Angels.
- Professor Templeton is a catfishy mage, and wields lightning balls, summons and weird effects.
- Doctor Davies the manatee is not fond of combat and will clumsily try to beat the PCs unconscious.

The Black Man might be forced to manifest himself or directly possess Lindrum's body in order to bring about the collapse of the bargain. If forced to instantiate, the Black Man is a shadow in the shape of a 7' man through which iridescent motes constantly flow.

Lindrum, once free of Yog Sothoth's influence, will do what he can to protect the PCs, whom he has grown fond of. All he wants is to be free of his bonds. He is sorry. Nobody has to die for this: surely two thousand years in prison is enough penance for his crime?

SCENE 6: ANTITHESIS

Although the Angels and Lindrum (and the merrow and the krakens) are on the human scale and are thus possible to deal with, Drachon is not. When Lindrum's body rouses, Drachon does too, and he will rise from his couch (cut-scene back to the World of Men, and a vast wave building in the Thames Estuary) and step towards the Shivering Gaol to prevent the escape of Lindrum. He has a host of merrow knights and wizards with him.

There are several possible ways this might go:

1. Lindrum succeeds in dying (or fleeing) and the PCs fail to achieve anything. Drachon recalls his realm and eastern England slides under the sea. The PCs will probably drown as Yog Sothoth and the World of Men coincide once more and real water smashes down on them. Yog Sothoth is healed.
 - 1a. Lindrum's body is destroyed by explosives or the efforts of the Angels or the Black Man. Lindrum's spirit might take refuge again in Waterman's body. Go to 3.
2. The PCs catch Lindrum. There is an epic showdown in which Lindrum will try to get them to kill him. If he succeeds in dying, go to 1, or 3 if the PCs are fast talkers. If Lindrum pleads successfully for mercy from King Leull, go to 3 as a new deal will have to be struck. Lindrum fades gently into death with Waterman not far behind.

If the Black Man is manifested, he will try to kill Lindrum in the expectation that this will force Drachon to revoke the deal. Again, fast-talking PCs might get him to accept a different price for the deal's continuation (3).
3. The PCs might try to make a deal with Drachon along the lines of the original story. Drachon will accept either princess as his bride. He will accept King Leull in place of Lindrum. He will beat either man in single combat with contemptuous ease. If they all attack him, the merrows and kraken in Drachon's train will net them and take them captive. Go to 3.

All in all, Thomas should probably die at the end of this scene unless he makes some kind of pact with Drachon or the Black Man. Try to give him the excuse for a heroic exit.

COMPLICATIONS

- *“One move and the idiot gets it”*

Let the idiot get it. This includes attacking Drachon or the dream of Yog Sothoth: either are nigh unvanquishable.

SCENE 7: AFTERMATH AND EPILOGUE

If the PCs placate Drachon they will be escorted back to the gateway by merrow knights (or allowed to settle in his realm if they want). Life gets back to normal. Things are likely to be better than they were, since Monique can sing, Emily is cured, Freddie is no longer in debt to Mrs Pierce, and Harry's dead friends got to tell him goodbye (in all likelihood).

Thomas can have a funeral.

Do a "And they all lived happily ever after" bit if you like and there's time.

EPILOGUE 1

October, 1987. Do you remember the Great Storm of October 1987? The PCs' children and grandchildren are 80s skinheads and post-punks who watch as England's east coast is battered by a powerful storm and storm-surge that floods large areas of Suffolk and Norfolk, and drags the ancient village of Dunwich back into the sea.

Survivors from the region tell garbled stories of a 'titan' striding out of the sea with a maiden in his arms. He lays her down in the ruins, and then turns to return to the sea. Some say a white-haired woman's body was numbered among the dead at Dunwich. They say her dress was a simple shift of something like moon-pale silk, that evaporated in the air of the morgue.

Scuba-divers keep reporting seeing mermaids in the sunken remains of Dunwich.

If the PCs failed, then eastern England is sunk. If they make it alive to the surface of the new sea, they might get to witness the punchup between Drachon and HMS *Repulse*...

EPILOGUE 2

October, 1987. A scuba-salvage team discover a batch of skeletons in a pentagonal coral-overgrown ruin. Clutched in one boney hand is the madstone. Somewhere behind the group of divers, a vast shadow reaches out one hand that has tentacles for fingers...

OTHER CHARACTERS

THE LEAGUE OF CONCERNED CITIZENS

Mr Henry Jago

A music hall impresario, the owner of the Empirion and Monique's former employer and lover. He's gone deeply into Yog Sothoth's magic and even in the World of Men, his body is marked. He's turning into a kraken: tentacles for fingers etc. His magic is about deception and curses.

Detective Inspector Alistair Crompton, London Metropolitan Police Special Branch

Mostly ruthless but with a chivalrous streak: he likes to warn folks off, but if they fail to be warned, he tries to kill them. He has access to Special Branch resources including plainclothes lads, Model A roadsters and tommy guns. In Yog Sothoth he's growing chitinous armour and nipping claws. His magic sets him on the track of prey and allows him to kill it more effectively.

Professor Desmond Templeton, University of London Department of Antiquities

Although his speciality is the Middle East, Templeton has a fair grasp of folklore. He's also coldly ruthless, which many of his enemies have failed to notice until it's too late. He has gill-slits and a fishy mouth in Yog Sothoth — his walrus moustache is more like a catfish's barbels. His magic is closest to Lindrum's: big special effects.

Doctor Hubert Davies

A Harley Street physician whose practice is a source of information on the goings on of the upper classes. Patronising. He is vaguely manatee-ish in Yog Sothoth. His magic heals, but he distrusts it.

Mrs Millicent Pierce

Sensuous, sinuous and beautifully powerful, the madam of the Lysistrata Club behind The Strand. Her establishment specialises in honey-traps for the Foreign Office, and she is connected to certain committees of the House of Lords somehow. Think Diana Rigg crossed with Amanda Donahoe. In London the Other she is most of the way towards becoming a merrow siren, with a long eel's tail, daintily scaly skin and sharp teeth. Her magic is about temptation and enticement.

“Mr Pierce”, her absent husband, is probably a fiction.

THE PALMERS GREEN LODGE OF THEOSOPHY

These are an assortment of hungry spiritualists who are primarily useful for showing how the Angel Britannia monster works. They're not much chop as advisors since they don't have the Reverend's supernatural connexions, and most of them are frankly jealous of his erudition and prowess.

In addition, they're likely to be put out of the PCs' way very early in the session by the police.

Colonel Thomas Neumark-Jones — a veteran of army life in India, where he saw many odd things. Often drunk. Fluent in Sanskrit.

Henry Olcott — a solicitor in daylight hours and a pulp fiction writer after hours. Custodian of the Lodge's occult library.

Mrs Anne Besant — a spiritually ambitious woman (i.e. new age flake) who conducts seances.

Arthur and Winifred Hobhouse — A wool and cloth exporter and his brassy American wife.

OTHER NPCS

Oswald Barrett, Viscount Aldethorpe

Like an older and craggier Freddie in appearance. Oswald was in Army Intelligence in the Great War but retired out after breathing too much mustard gas. His health is still fragile, and it's unlikely he will marry, let alone father an heir.

Oswald is a tiresome prig and tyrant. If the PCs go to Heathward he will make them miserable for their stay.

Mr & Mrs Benham, Cook and Mary

The Barretts' household staff at the Portman Square house. Benham is the famous long-suffering butler. Mrs Benham is a bit mothering and says 'Lawks!' a lot. Cook is large and giggly. Mary, whose real name is probably not Mary, is a lissom young thing who scurries from shadow to shadow and barely says anything other than "*Y'sm'm!*"

Drachon, Prince of the Moryow

Cthulhu lite.

The Reverend William Morrissy and Mrs Beryl Morrissy

The middle-aged, middle-class vicar of St Michael's and his sensible middle-class wife.

Mrs Macready

Generic Scottish Landlady.

Professor William Ponsonby

Generic British Museum staffer with an office; custodian of the Secretum.