

Amidst Cycles Incomprehensible; Comprehension

“It is said the gods do not care for men, that the patriarchs and insipid xenos breeds think nothing for us. Yet, they continue returning to us, returning to all scuttling races on Earth and beyond. Why?”

“Why does a child pluck the wings off a fly? Why does a Janitor pick up a broken moth, holding it gently as it dies? The truth is that greater entities, celestial and terrestrial concern themselves as men do care for germs and insects and the petty creatures. That men lie and cower when faced by them, but are unwilling to confront their own greatness before the small things. Unwilling to confront the wasp that can break a man. This truth grows ever more apparent now the stars are right. The cosmos is choked and damp now, when the gods struggle and coil to their own ends, they must regard even ants.”

“So. Where do you stand in all this, little ant?”

{ Allegiance }

Yidhra the Undying, Mistress of Change and Memories

She who was wife to Yig and mother to Xothra and Y'hath has taken to her own roads in this strange age. Cutting herself away from the Outer Spheres that once bound her, she has kept her form hidden as she walks alone. Yidhra has developed a small but loyal following in her wanderings on Earth. Notable for her 'life-cycle', Yidhra upon losing one physical form absorbs another, taking its positive traits and keeping the form's memories as her own. Those positive traits kept as the multitude of prior traits gradually resurface in a feminine form. Perhaps that is why she pities humans and the other small denizens of Earth, why her form is largely benign compared to her Old One ken. Yidhra has an intimate understanding of humans, remembering so many of their lives. Indeed, some willingly seek her out as their end approaches, begging Yidhra to 'steal' their bodies, killing them but ensuring what was 'them' remains held within the God. A request she often grants.

The 'Children of Yidhra' are few and far between. Congregations are little more than handfuls even in the great cities of the world, but those who are tied to them are great movers. To mark one's self among their number is to stand for the most part alone, removed from the conflicts that wrack earth. Beating back those wretched things found along the roadsides and in the wastes without aid. Yidhra's children are uniquely inclined for this task however, their struggles and hardships firming them in a literal sense. Those pledged to the Old One Ever-Changing warp to suit their environment, bodies reforming in months into something that would take generations to achieve. Yidhra's children are naturally welcomed by vagrants and outsiders, Yidhra being the patron of those persecuted breeds. It is rumored her most devoted followers live and die and to be born again, indistinguishable from other men aside rare oddities and kept memories. Strange eyes and hands borne of truly grand struggles. Only the most devoted to Yidhra undergo terribly visible mutations, picking up traits wholesale from the broken foes behind them. A gift Yidhra rarely gives and never with happiness.

Being an outsider close to the soil, Yidhra is now largely removed now from the Intrigues of the Outer Spheres. Ironically her parting is largely the cause of her troubles, her division from Yig wholesale prompted some terrible slight against him. The Serpent Father now carries a terrible grudge against everything the Wandering Goddess stands for. Most contesting players and pawns of Earth hold her in ill regard but no more than any other 'neutral' party, the sole exception being Nyarlathotep. Some speculate Yidhra's machinations pulled the rug out from an uncountable number of the Black Pharaoh's schemes, and the Crawling Chaos is actively hostile to the Mistress of Dreams and Memories. Along with any who serve her.

Lythalia, Conquering Lady of the Dreamlands

The Widow of Nodens, Grief stricken mother of Yaggdytha and Vorvados. Lythalia has been perhaps closest of all the Old Ones to the new dawn. It was the calamitous murder of the Abyss Sovereign and his children that was the final great key to the Righted Stars. Leaving Lythalia alone in the young epoch, stained in the gore of her 'husband' and children. While her grief was terrible, so too was her rage. So murderous and great it drew the monsters which lived in the Dreamlands, binding them to her. Rousing the wolf shaped mountains and nightmare shaped groves to her will. The onslaught that began when Nodens' blood was not yet cold has led Lythalia to conquer even great Kadath. She is but a twisted memory of herself now. Lythalia and Nodens had perhaps been the closest to mankind in apparent figure. This is no longer the case, her form is now inhuman but prompts a terrible luridness in men and certain women, cloaked in filth and vine she rules over all those subjugated masses of the Dreamlands.

Lythalia cared little for mankind before this age began, and her disposition hasn't particularly improved. However she isn't like to turn away worshipers and assistance now that she has a goal so plain and simple any human could understand it. Vengeance, driven beyond the human capacity, beyond even the realms of most Old Ones. To make those that thrust this unwanted age upon her suffer to the fullest extent she can, those that would pursue this goal stand to rise in the Dreamlands. In this many have flocked below earth and through the dreaming veil to her banner, eager to serve a simple revanchist purpose, eager to be rewarded in turn through Lythalia's curses and visions. Binding her magic and strengthening themselves with stone, wood and leaf. Followers may even seek out denizens and hubs of the Dreamlands for more physical rewards. In the cloistered and hidden places there is safety, and in the Dreamlands now Lythalia's children ride about on the wolf shaped mountains freely. Though some others of a more esoteric breed seek to understand Lythalia, delving into her mysteries and directly entering her palace in spite of the risks. Those perverse men and women whisper she directly enjoys such. She is a force of nature, what else is there to do beside prostrate one's self before her?

The Conqueror has made many enemies in her time, burning bright and crushing those she believes to be her foes. Just about every rival Old One that claim sovereignty of this side of the cosmos would have her influence broken and will be actively hostile to her followers on their own territory. The lesser races, particularly Nodens exiled Gaunts despise the 'usurper' and will tear her followers apart tickling them all the while. But there is, admittedly little that they can do. Within the Earth-tied Dreamlands not even great Bokrug could oppose Lythalia. His destruction and subsequent consumption proof that, for now at least, none are able to oppose her dominion over the Dreamlands.

Great Father Dagon, Gilled Patriarch & Abyss Tyrant

Dreaded Dagon is one of the most familiar with Earth and it's currently most widespread species, less focusing on humans and more what might be derived of them. A cold dim view much like how men regard crude oils. His true nature is unknown, being either an entity that wrought his 'Deep Ones' into being or simply being the oldest and largest of them. Either way, he is patron and guardian of all other Deep Ones, enemy of all who seek to claim the ocean deep, Consort to Mother Hydra and the greatest foe of R'lyeh. While like all Great Old Ones his higher machinations step outside of human understanding, his lesser focus upon conquest of the sea is apparent. As is his focus on proliferating Deep Ones, above and below the waves.

Most of those who 'serve' Dagon don't actually do so directly, rather they serve the various cults that almost always worship Deep Ones, or the coastal communities of Deep Ones in a practical sense. Even Mother Hydra has a greater following than Dagon proper, her worship having returned to prominence in the Near Orient. Worship or partnership with Deep Ones is typically fruitful in a tangible sense. Sacrifice can restore prior depleted fishing stocks, provide calm waters for sailors, or just get valuable treasure to 'wash up' on the shoreline. Contrary to popular belief, human sacrifice is not needed to interact with Deep Ones. Solitude and a fresh chicken is all one really needs for an audience. Deep Ones though they have no natural end like humans are still mortal, they have their own personalities ranging from cruel and malevolent to quite benign and even friendly. It's entirely within the realm of possibility to befriend the Deep Ones, allowing safe passage over sea and in 'mingling towns.' Those locals that have struck bargains with Deep Ones or their parents. Unknown to most, many Deep Ones are in fact descended from humans, and in such places intermingling is quiet common. Looking upwards to those who worship Mother Hydra and Father Dagon, darker and significantly more powerful boons await loyal cultists. Transformation of the human form to be more 'accommodating' in watery locations, blasphemous magic's that beckon salt and tide. Allegedly the highest of Dagon's priests might even summon one of their monstrous parents, to bargain directly with or to unleash upon their foes.

Dagon once in recent memory swam alone and unchallenged in the seas, the old order favored him and his followers in a way it did for few others. Being more closely tied to physicality that men are borne too allowed Dagon to avoid the star-wrought deep slumber. Of course, the current has changed. The Sleeper in R'lyeh has risen, devouring his spawn and shattering what chains remained. The many serpents and horrors have roused themselves from their dreams and now a chill-bidden war is being waged within the deep. All borne of R'lyeh and all who claim the seas will fight against Dagon and the Deep Ones with a genocidal desperation familiar to any with an age old memory. Above the surface most look down upon the Deep Ones, their hybrids and associates. Typical petty discrimination is the norm throughout most of the world, aside the welcomed dark corners, Canada and the United States. Worshipers of Dagon and those tied to Deep Ones have a nasty habit of 'disappearing' in the US. The Opposite is true in Canada, the infamous 'Halifax agreement' brokered by Mackenzie King has seen the Cod Banks restored in full.

The Black Goat of the Woods, Mother of a Thousand Young

Oh, Shub-Niggurath, she is perhaps the most widely worshiped of all the Old Ones on Earth and some dare whisper her as the patron of human-kind. Her higher rights are still stained in blood, a mere fragment of her presence can still drive men to total lunacy, her creed praises the strong young devouring the weak. Yet, there are small things that contradict this, the odd selectiveness of her Dark Young's hunger, the patronage of life her priests would call 'weak' and a welcoming presence in her sacred groves none can explain. Regardless, hers is the propagation of life and in that the Black Goat is a major player on Earth. One with the strength to resist even the machinations of Outer Gods and high Old Ones within their own dominions. The cloven hooves, biting maws and slender tendrils of her summoned fragments are threat enough to pause the most ambitious cults. Her broad inclinations outside of maintaining her own power and creating new progeny are unknown to even her highest priests.

Contrary to common perceptions, most followers of Shub-Niggurath are not 'witches prone to dancing about bare naked and bugging in the forest every new moon,' though that sort can be found out in the countryside. Most are lay folk, yearning for healthy children and fruitful work. Slashing their palms gladly so their young will be borne healthy and won't suffer polio. Such tangible effects have contributed to Shub-Niggurath's rising popularity, along with the general isolation of roving Dark Young and the prior mentioned witches. Partaking in offerings of small blood for small guarantees can be the extent of one's worship, as it is for most. Unlike many of the Gods Shub-Niggurath doesn't press. But one can have more, as mentioned they dance about naked and filthy for a level of health a person wouldn't expect of a grimy nudist. There is magic to be found in her esoteric tomes, both the renewing sort and poisons vile as any rabid animal's bite. The loyal may call upon Shub-Niggurath's Young to help them or to hinder foes. And for those absolute devotees? There is the final rite; a ritual that sacrifices the body they were borne in, submerging themselves in the goddess and being reborn as Gof'nn Hupadgh Shub-Niggurath. Horned and Goat-Legged, the Gof'nn may live forever, sharing a special connection with their new mother. At the expense of near insatiable appetite, ferocious hunger and the... Specific Changes that come with one's body being reformed by a fertility focused entity.

While none dare to openly quarrel with Shub-Niggurath, many despise her current level of power and work to actively diminish it with slander and subterfuge. Likewise while the Black Goat openly despises many of the other 'players' on Earth she doesn't direct her followers to fight them. If they chose to do so they do so without their mother's blessings. The old followers of the more puritan 'before' faiths also take serious umbrage with the Cult, more so than other Old One cults. Something to do with orgies and the grimy-ass nudists I'd imagine.

The Great Race of Once-Yith, The Mental Time-Travellers

One would think that a race that scarcely avoided complete destruction once wouldn't be eager to venture out across time with all the dangers and horrors they'd faced. But it seems the hunger of the Once-Yith for knowledge was not satiated by their success. Indeed, the minds of Once-Yith still venture out into the past, and according to them the far future. For its own sake seemingly, in spite of epoch of security in all time directions a small devoted group of Once-Yith still eagerly interact with prior races. Perhaps their struggles grew them to enjoy those perverse alien times and places they found themselves in, perhaps their driftings are a habit that they cannot kick. Regardless they maintain a small but not insignificant presence in this time. Ever eager to witness and record the machinations of on-goings, terrestrial and celestial, they happily deal with any and all who journey to their outposts and gatherings.

The Once-Yith openly bargain to 'exchange' with humans and other smaller things, mentally hitch-hiking or exchanging minds wholesale if given the chance. Those who undergo the latter report existing as towering bugs or swarms of smaller but still significantly large insects. While the experience is disconcerting it is not necessarily terrible, for the Once-Yith are eager to mingle with past and future minds. Hitch-hiker Once-Yith tend to be subtler, entering a semi-dormant state and allowing their carriers to go about their business, occasionally offering snippets of advice and information for 'living in interesting times'. Associates of the Once-Yith and any human are open to such deals, though they also have more logistical concerns. Maintaining their temporal outposts requires effort and the Once-Yith are rather laconic when it comes to mundane tasks. One can acquire not insignificant information and pay for physical and logistical tasks under the Once-Yith, if one can stand to deal with disorientated Once-Yith in human form and disorientated humans getting used to two legs again. While certainly eccentric, the Once-Yith are nothing if not generous and amicable.

Their triumph completed, the Once-Yith and their allies are almost completely removed from intrigues of the current time, though they are oft viewed with suspicion. Some few carry grudges from the still technically ongoing quest for the Then-Yith to escape their doomed time, and for reasons unknown the Mi-Go hold what is a blatantly genocidal disdain for the Once-Yith.

Dreaded H'aaztre-who-is-Haïta, The Sickly King in Yellow

They call him unspeakable, for his name cannot be pronounced by mortal tongues. He has many given names however. Haïta, H'aaztre, Kaiwan and Xastur. All for this, the same entity who is the Sign. The Yellow Sign, mark of the Sickly king. He who is; Dreaded H'aaztre. Him who is place, king, stranger, mask, ancient and Sign. Of all the cruel and truly malicious entities that draw to the earth, H'aaztre is perhaps the cruelest. The Black Pharaoh though he delights in the suffering and foolishness of mortals lacks a certain intimacy H'aaztre possesses, a touch that flays men apart from the very foundations of existence, driving them to gibbering monstrous perversions with a glee unknown to all but those touched by cursed Carcosa. The only benefit of this new age is that Dreaded H'aaztre suffered grievously in its birthing. His unspeakable struggle with the Mi-Go and the deep dwellers sabotage has weakened him greatly. But such is temporal, for H'aaztre is as much a concept as a being. One cannot kill concepts.

In spite of the absolute sadism that drips from every altar and shrine to the Yellow Sign, the cult of H'aaztre are one of the most murderously zealous and active of the risen cults. His presents the quickest and most apparently devastating paths to 'magic' out of all the Old Ones interested in the Earth. Even the lowest apostles can find his tomes (though most do not survive their initial encounter) and learn of the equally reality and mind bending schisms that men might call upon. Byakhee may be called down from across space and time, though their disposition will depend on mastery of the summoning thoughts. Competition is fierce, more often than not one needs to worry about their fellow disciples and teachers 'proactively' eliminating rivals. The higher powers of the cult's ranks have access to ever-more devastating mysteries and incantations, but all pale before H'aaztre's ultimate 'prize'. His gaze, that which draws them to Him-Which-Is, the accursed city of Carcosa. Standing amidst cold figures, those who swear servitude at the seat of the pallid throne never truly die, they'll only waken in Carcosa to serve again. But- this is a lie. Such return is not the most sought of given gifts. Rather it is the path towards such. Sat upon the pallid throne is him, the Jade Lama. Him who does not wear a mask. Should one truly gain H'aaztre's favour, they might walk into Carcosa, stride upon the Pallid throne and rip away their own mask. Replacing the old hand of H'aaztre with a new one. Forgoing their prior pitiable existence to act as HIS presence here. The highest honour. To say all members of the Yellow Sign crave the face and the Sign alike would be an understatement.

H'aaztre has innumerable enemies. Within and without. The violence within his cult often dwarfs the violence inflicted from beyond. Entire covenants will butcher each other at the inclination one is closer to Carcosa. While the raw darwinistic cannibalism produces the hardest and most starchy minded sorcerers, any group cohesion is laughably difficult. For the moment the threat without is great enough one might hope to shepherd cats, with enough effort. The Mi-Go gladly reciprocate H'aaztre's obliterating contempt, Haïta's kin regard his followers as little more than cockroaches and treat them as such.

The Mi-Go, The Cruel Mental Cataloguers

Winged, legged and clawed are the convoluted ellipsoid figures so dreaded and despised by so many. The Mi-Go operated on Earth well before the stars became right. Pillaging ruins, stealing human minds and generally futzing about like Belgians futzing about in the Congo. Until, of course, the stars became right. In past ages the Mi-Go worshiped the Black Goat, the Thousand Faced God and Him-Who-is-Gate-&-Key. Those were abandoned in favour of the Mi-Go's reckless pursuit of knowledge and the King in Yellow. In the final moments of the age of slumber, some event shattered the last covenant the Mi-Go enjoyed. What followed obliterated two thirds of the Mi-Go Empire, entire worlds devoured in retribution by the Black Goat or cast into madness by the Black Pharaoh. The Mi-Go are a shell of their former selves, few worlds in their control with the only one this side of the cosmos being Pluto. Even Yuggoth has been devoured. Utterly friendless, the Mi-Go still retain an acute perseverance beside a twisted curiosity.

The situation of the Mi-Go has radically shifted their stance on humans. Prior to the waking the Mi-Go cared little for human morality systems and power structures. Blatantly abusing and doing what they deemed necessary in their pursuit of knowledge and relics. The few humans they 'enjoyed' were disemboweled with their brains being carted back to Yuggoth and beyond. The Mi-Go still don't care much about human morality, but their precarious situation on Earth and Pluto has forced them to acknowledge human interests. Their few outposts on Earth being overwhelmed with refugees has forced them to meet with human representatives, brokering some of their prestigious technology for conventional resources and pitiable expansions to their bases. Useful humans that assist the Mi-Go in their straightforward tasks and more esoteric needs may request physical compensation or technological gains. Truly loyal agents or those more inclined to the perverse 'morals' of the Mi-Go may even request the brain removal. The human body is limited, and the Mi-Go may construct a more adequate vessel for their allies, composed of grown or constructed parts. Such a forms are tailored for the wearers, and those who undergo the process will find their 'employers' much more receptive. After all, they've undergone the process most Mi-Go undergo, furthering themselves over a reality that cares nothing for them. It is the most natural and proper thing to do. Given the circumstances.

To say the Mi-Go have enemies would an understatement. The Aforementioned Shub-Niggurath, Yog-Sothoth and Nyarlathotep have dim views of their former apostles. But an even greater ugliness exists between the King in Yellow and the Fungoids, whatever transpired between the Yellow Sign and the Mi-Go triggered the deaths of tens of billions. The Mi-Go gladly sabotage and murder Haïta's followers with the same treatment held in return. The Mi-Go also hold a genocidal grudge against the Once-Yith for reasons that are kept hidden.

The Elder Things, Them the Broken Builders

Of all those former denizens of Earth, few were so badly broken by the passing ages. Before the slumber the Elder Things waged war against all of the Star-Spawn and Flame-Birthed. Suffering greatly before they were sent to sleep. Yet, again the Elder Things have returned. Some have already fled Earth, eager to be off, to outlast another era of obliteration and chaos. But most remain on this world, attempting to rebuild their ruined cities and citadels. A task of absurd proportions for some. The Elders are undaunted by their newfound surroundings, escaped slaves and freshly woken opponents from past ages. While they are many, those Elder Things on earth are firmly bent to the task of restoring and preserving what little they have. A task which has brought them many odd allies, and many more enemies, new and ancient.

There is an agreement among the Elder Things that their past ways are largely untenable, their slaves always breaking from them is something that has repeated itself time and time again. They cannot completely restore what was, but what will be remains up for debate. Some Elders wish to restore their dwellings and to revert to isolation. Others recognize the usefulness of the 'lesser races' and seek cooperation with humans and other denizens of the Earth. Some few even dream of restoring sovereignty over the Earth and beyond. Humans that serve the Elders are either treated with the barest amicability or a prodding curiosity. They are individuals at the end of the day, and each settlement of Elders will hold different receptions to those seeking employ. For help in restoring what was theirs, the Elders offer translations of ancient writings, retrofitted weapons of terrible strength, physical wealth and from those more... Xenophilic Elder's camaraderie, or perhaps even more. Humans may be incredibly fleeting beside the Elders, but in task and physical function they often outclass the Ancients. Those that have risen to stare down into the abyss the Elder's foolishly created in the distant past will be earn a respect not even the most Imperialistic Elder can deny. Burning lights they cannot ever forget.

The tasks of the Elder Things are fraught with danger, for them and their allies. Aside the monumental logistical and physical aspects of their reconstruction, wild Shoggoths, degenerated beasts and old enemies are active and incredibly dangerous threats. The Patriarch of R'lyeh and the Deep Tyrant have risen and have evidently not forgotten their past conflicts and will hamper the Elders in any ways they can. Aboth from whom the Shoggoths were warped from holds an insatiable hatred for the Elders. Any who claim their cities as sovereign dominion may attempt to seize what they view as 'theirs.'

Nyarlatotep, The God of Ten Thousand Forms & the Crawling Chaos

If there was but one God out there that could be called 'evil', it would be Doc Carcosa, the Black Pharaoh. Nyarlatotep. His is the infantasmal winding down consciousness that can understand everything a human would, allowing him to truly delight in the suffering of humans. In this perhaps one sees his kinship to his 'ken', wrought of forms as implicit as stone and shade. Well beyond the scope of concern for life, simple in a way. So too is the Black Pharaoh simple, ever reshaping himself to the level of his fellows, a looking glass that stares back pain and misery. From the lowest bug that can feel pain to even the Outer Gods, none lie beyond Nyarlatotep's schemes, none are free of his torment. His schemes, though shifted are not dimmed by the new age. His power has not yet waned and his hand in the return obliterated the Calamitous twins Nug and Yeb. The veil is ripped apart. There can be no going back now.

Followers of Nyarlatotep are little more than pawns to him, sacrificed for the slightest gains in the vast unfathomable schemes he weaves through time and space. Yet they still flock to him, in the hundreds of thousands. The Black Pharaoh for all his inhuman cruelty, Nyarlatotep retains a presence none but Yidhra have achieved. His gifts are the most tangible. Yet the most insidious. To listen to the ebon hided black stranger is to know greatness, to listen to the insatiable whisper in one's head the path to glory. Physical wealth, political power, furthered understanding of the obscene and immaterial. Everything one could want is attainable. For a price of course. Some are lucky enough to perish before the Bloody Tongue exacts his due, or that seems to be the case. Life for a human at least is short. The cult of the Thousand Faced god is filled with the ambitious, the hungry, the proud. Those who think they can enter Nyarlatotep's temple and rise within, attaining a position that is not so easily sacrificed, or to serve for a time. But there are also those who gleefully throw themselves into the fire, ever eager to serve the insatiable schemes of the masked face they claim to have seen full. Perhaps you have seen it as well, knowingly or not. There is great room to rise here, much magic to be learned, but all of it with the most dangerous of edges. Often, Nyarlatotep's servants suffer fates infinitely worse than death.

Aside the ever pressing danger brought by one's own 'fellow' worshipers and the sadistic god they worship, the world is fraught with danger for Cultists of Nyarlatotep. Those who payed attention or have a knowledge of what began this strange age know well how much of a hand the Black Pharaoh played, and there are many mortals who would happily slit the throat of a Cultist in broad daylight. His 'nieces' and 'nephews' hold him in contempt, knowing the depths of his ploys. Only the active quarrel with the Yellow Sign results in open violence, but all too often the hidden meeting halls of the Black Pharaoh 'catch fire' with their doors mysteriously barred. Such is the price for ambition.

Cthulhu, Patriarch and Sovereign of R'lyeh

Great Dreamer, High Priest of the Old Kind on Earth and dissident Flame of Ein. Cthulhu. The One who's dreaming mind so craved return it afflicted the dreams of distant men and half slumbering gods. It is doubtful that without Cthulhu's desperate WANT the return would not have come so fast and so violently. Such desperation has wrought chaos apparent to even the most idiotic of humans. R'lyeh has risen above the waves but now lies in ruin. The Great Dreamer has devoured all but one of his spawn, and in doing so lit a terrible flame in his once most treasured possession. Otherwise intangible machinations have been dragged down to terribly apparent struggle. The Sovereign of R'lyeh is now locked in a conflict between Great Dagon and Cthylla-Who-Is-Scylla. Made the butt of insatiable laughter from all watching eyes of cosmos. But only the most ignorant fool would assume this is a sign of weakness. Even now, broken to a tenth's tenth he is still a force to be reckoned with, in the mortal coil and the dreaming realm alike.

When most humans think upon the zealous cultists of Old Ones that now spring from every shaded corner, the image of Cthulhu's faithful is the archetype. Draped in moldy black robes wearing a mask that pallidly attempts to resemble the amorphous visage of R'lyeh's patriarch. Ubiquitous and spread wherever there is salt water, the Cult of Cthulhu tend to be zealous and feverish in their devotion. Even initiates to the order exhibit greater control of their dreams and are able to somewhat navigate the labyrinthine in-between of Earth and the Dreamlands. More learned members may eventually manifest these spectral visages in the Dreamlands proper, the highest manifesting on earth in once sunken R'lyeh. Flexile dark magic is freely given to cultists, concerning dreams, water, disease and breath. The physical resources of the cult are nothing to scoff at either. The Return of the Great Dreamer has allowed the followers of Cthulhu to expand rapidly and conservative estimates suggest his follower's number in the millions. In just about any place bordering the sea, a follower of Cthulhu that knows what to look for will be able to find safety and a place to stay. The higher priestly rungs and warlocks of Cthulhu can call upon the lesser Star Spawn to carry out tasks unfitting for mortal hands, though they are best arbitrary and will only carry out the loosest interpretations of orders. And for the brave, or stupid? They might peer into their Sovereign's woken dreams, risking madness for revelation.

The Flame of Ein is for the time being locked in conflict with those foes he had before his slumber and those new ones that contest his dominions. Every hand that claims the ocean claws at the innumerable petty limbs of the star spawn. Ferocious is the fray beneath the surface, while above the cult of Cthulhu rages against in equal form. Attempting to snuff out the Great Dreamer's foes with mixed success. Terrible subterfuge has slaughtered entire temples of Dagon's followers and in turn seen many individual cults of the Dreamer wiped out to the very last child. From the shadows and the space between places brayed knives and hungry mouths lie in waiting for unsuspecting members of the flock. In the inner spheres the followers of the Great Dreamer have not endeared themselves to their fellows, and are often the subject of government raids, bombings and lynching.

The Presence, Once Flora & Twister of Forms

While most of the Old Ones are at least given names by humans, some remain still unknown. Their natures such that they cannot be properly names. Still without presence in this existence, having transcended it. But still tied here. Such is the nature of 'Presence.' It is not understood by name, but by the feeling one gets when subjected to its 'interest.' A sensation that one's very nature is being severed, divided the higher senses from the primal and raw. It may be called down when the moon is right, when the blood it craves has been spilled and soddened soil and root. All but the strongest will perish, as have those things dwelling upon the Moon. High above the Earth upon Luna, one thing remains, that Beast whose form houses what remains of the Presence in this reality. Even those who worship 'That-Which-Was-Flora' know almost nothing of the Presence, other than its tug upon the sleeping mind, its ambivalence to the affairs of other Old Ones, and its insatiable hunger.

Those who worship the Presence are few and far between, viewing themselves as either predator's intent upon using the mental and physical bending of the Presence to hunt favorable prey, or avengers. It is no secret a small and brutal cult routinely invokes the Presence in 'corrupt' locals, rising the fever pitch to the point mothers devour their children and brothers rip each other apart with their bare hands. In these moments what mental capacity is driven from the body, the blood thickens with the ferality driven too boiling. Those who devour this blood divorce themselves from men, becoming something else. At the cost of severing their minds, often becoming as 'corrupt' as the innocents they call the presence upon. The dance of madness draws many though, and it is whispered that if one were able to retain their mind it would eventually be strengthened, hardened enough such a thing would be able to truly 'grow' beyond their own human nature. Some dare whisper this is what the Presence craves. But it is unknown. Like most things concerning the Presence. To walk the path of worship is to walk towards madness and likely an inhuman death. The Presence offers nothing but itself and its terrible being.

To say a pursuer of the Presence will stand alone is something of an understatement. Even the most devoted groups will eventually grow tired of each other, one's madness forcing him beyond the precipice and often parties of cultists will dwindle as the frothing white hot fever takes them. One by one. Few are so universally despised by Old Ones and Outer Gods alike, the Presence in its strange ephemeral state able to enter any temple and sanctum at the toll of its bell, bringing the place to the Ouboisian mania that claims all but the strongest. All but Shub-Niggurath's followers will kill the followers of the Presence upon being alerted to their presence. It is said some connection exists between the Black Goat and the Presence. In old days it is said more permanent worshipers of the Presence existed, keeping it grounded and warping the bodies and trees in its dominion. Some tie exists, for the stalking madness does not enter Shub-Niggurath's groves. There, the bell does not ring.

Darling Yhoundeh, Dweller of the Deep Woods

Almost all that was of the before age that was of diminutive stature fled Earth when the stars fell ill. Leaving for Yuggoth as the lands inhabited by their followers were devoured by the oceans. Most know of them, the Banks, Atlantis, Mu, Lemuria and Thule. Some have risen, their high points cast from the Ocean, but chaos has consumed many of their former masters. But One remained on Earth, when the others fled or fell into Slumber. The Goddess of Elk, Patroness of the deep wilds. Dear Yhoundeh. Once consort of the Black Pharaoh, remained in the shadows watching the passing of ages. Were all others lost their strength, when a death that was slumber claimed them, Darling Yhoundeh remained. Watching men grow strong. Yhoundeh is well beyond men, an isolationist who keeps the bulk of her presence hidden in the deep wood where she dwells. Her motives are unknown, her interest too. But it is clear she has some stake in humans, and her many black eyes watch them from afar. Silent.

Yhoundeh though she lacks malevolence is dangerous to worship. One must venture into those wild places not tamed by men to find her worshipers, those seeking her specifically will find their path paved in trouble. Beasts hunting and not will assault them, disease and parasites will blight them. Most will die. But those that survive will find the temples made of living wood and vine, from which black formless eyes grow. Simply arriving proves one is strong enough to be worthy of their time, and if one leaves they will be able to return without a fragment of the struggle they endured at their first journey. Yhoundeh herself keeps no words, but her followers do. One will be able to find tomes unweaving the nature of the forests, allowing them to call upon the hate so much Flora holds against man. Most of this information is practical however and given from tongue to ear. If one is patient and diligent, one can learn to survive in this strange day far from civilization. But of course, there is a further step. Those who seek dear Yhoundeh's highest favour must capture a wild beast of horn. An elk, a moose or a deer. It must be caught with hands alone, without the conventions of men like weapons or clothes. The beast must be dragged, alive and thrashing to the deepest groves, where Yhoundeh waits. What transpires there is unknown to all but those who have undergone the process. And they will say nothing of it. They will become impossibly strong, contemptuous of the clothes they once wore and the tools they once used. Upon their head a pair of antlers will gild them, kind to the beast they dragged to Yhoundeh, their eyes shifted to match. They become like Yhoundeh, enigmatic, powerful, quiet and always watching.

Yhoundeh's self-serving Isolation has largely removed her from the affairs of the other Old Ones. Most doubt the Outer Gods even know of her existence. Aside of course the one she once mated with. Yhoundeh's pairing with the Black Pharaoh bore no spawn, and they have long since ignored one another. Within the deep wood, the only ones to run across Yhoundeh are the followers of the Presence and the Worshipers of Shub-Niggurath. It is said that Yhoundeh's horned children drove off the settled followers of the Presence, her followers oddly resistant to the ring of mania brought by the Presence. Yhoundeh and the Black Goat have no quarrel with one another, their goals likely not clashing, allowing their followers to occasionally mingle. The Dark Young do not stalk Dear Yhoundeh's followers, and the Horned only watch the witches from afar. Ironically the few external threats are ambitious rival cultists and exploitative 'developers.'

Yog-Sothoth, Him-who-is-Gate-&-Key

It is said the wisest thing in all of existence is Yog-Sothoth, an entity that is so far removed from conventional existence that time and space do not necessarily apply to it. Him-who-is-Gate-&-Key is one that will yet be, yet one who has always been. Singular and intact, he is the distant one. Unwilling patron of all who seek knowledge, wizards, witches, warlocks and mad scholars alike. Few are as enigmatic as Yog-Sothoth. Fewer are capable of driving men to drooling uselessness. Merely looking upon his imposition fragments one's knowledge of existence, and those too firm, too reckless will always be driven over the edge. In spite of this, Him-who-is-Gate-&-Key is not at all malicious, nor does he desire any interference with things. He watches and waits, listening from his veil beyond being. Men and even Old Ones might call upon him, seeking answers to their questions, and occasionally in inscribed eyes Yog-Sothoth shall answer. Yet that is beyond the Outer God's concern. What is his concern? That may well never be known.

Followers of Yog-Sothoth are typically less cults, though such circles do exist, and more groups of like-minded associates. Some are certainly what could be described as seekers of magic in the classic sense, literal wizards and strange (but admittedly competent) oriental magicians. However in more recent years, clinical and scholarly groups have been drawn into the spheres of Yog-Sothoth. This has resulted in many fatalities as such groups tend to be stubborn and more prone to casualties, but the tide has not stopped. Witches now rub shoulders with biologists and geologists in the hidden libraries. Those who gain access to such hidden locals in traditional or modern groups have access to an almost endless supply of information. Regarding all matters from the outer spheres of distant gods to mundane matters of the inner sphere. It can be said in no uncertain terms that the best Honey Soufflé in the world lies nestled in the 'Pars Autem Vetitum Ovum.' Of course, information is as only good as one can understand it, moving too quickly can be hazardous to one's health, and any follower of Yog-Sothoth would be remiss to not take advantage of the human resources such circles offer. A keen ear and a quick word can get one's foot in the door at many universities across the world, an acquaintance access to the finest minds the New World and the Old have to offer.

Being so far removed from things, Yog-Sothoth has no true enemies. However his followers being very much a part of current events and in terms of intrigues have a serious set of issues with the Mi-Go. Ambitious followers will also voraciously pursue knowledge that they do not fully understand, putting them at odds with most major players who keep their secrets close to their chest. One should be careful in what they pursue. Many toes to step on and all that.

Aboth-who-was-Ubbo-Sathla, Primordial of Uncleanliness

Of all the Outer Gods, none are as nakedly vile as Aboth. The origin of the primordial entity is shrouded in mystery, like the Yellow Thing, Aboth is less a thing, more of a place. Tied between worlds, opening out in the dark depths of the Earth as it does in many other worlds. The greater form of Aboth is a vile incandescent blue ooze from which terrors are borne into the world. Some minute as bacteria, others veritable titans that often can't escape the chambers of their birth. All 'unformed' and lacking means to survive long on their own. Aboth typically devours his children, along with intruders. Aboth is not foolish though, his insidious machinations require hands, and he reaches out to dreaming minds of a like snide cruelty. It is said all lower life was borne of him, regardless if that is true or not, Aboth desires all lower life return to his teeming mass.

Serving Aboth is a tenuous proposition, but one that has great rewards. Aboth's followers are gifted telepathy between themselves and their vile master, allowing an almost unparalleled level of cohesion. He strengthens those pitiable deficiencies brought by 'unguided formation' if allowed, granting nocturnal sight, terrible strength and stamina. At the cost he intends take everything he 'upgrades.' Devout followers may make use of his terrible children for their own purposes. Though simple and only capable of following basic instructions the malformed beasts will act with a tenacity brought by desperation to exist. The most devout of Aboth's servants may even reach the point where they 'subsume' themselves as a part of Aboth, abandoning a good amount of themselves to directly augment their being, commanding their own evolution for a time. Such subsumption allows access to Aboth, and the secrets guarded within his depths. It is said he has secrets not even Yog-Sothoth has access to and that wizards have craved for all time, and indeed, the magic of Aboth's highest priests is near apocalyptic.

But for a price of course. Most often Aboth's followers perish at his innumerable maws or are simply devoured by his children. His high priests almost always drain back into him, their individuality devoured just as much as their forms. Aboth cares very little of mortals and delights in his own followers failing as much as he does in their success. It should also be noted that word of Aboth's intentions is spreading, and a rare unifying factor for disparate groups and lesser Old Ones. Should any cult of Aboth attract too much attention, it would be struck down with a fury unparalleled.

Rhan-Tegoth, Star Righter & Unwilling Sovereign

Sorrow is a rare celestial note, not often heard of the Old Ones. Grief is unbecoming of beings so titanic. So typically uncaring for all but their equals and betters, even then to a human there is a removal of concern. Convoluted sensations more mathematical than natural govern them, seemingly, far beyond mankind's reach. But when Rhan-Tegoth was roused from slumber, a terrible grief spilled from him. The Star Righter was the first of the Old Ones to fall into slumber so many ages ago, doing so against the interests of his 'fellows' if the Grief-Speakers speak truth. In doing so, Rhan-Tegoth sought to never truly waken instead seeking to slowly diminish until nothing but his dreams remained. Every follower the Unwilling Sovereign has ever had fell, every temple burned, even his distant birth home far away in the warm seas of Yuggoth are forever lost. Rhan-Tegoth still grieves, and will likely grieve for centuries. Cloistering himself away from the world on Kórkyra.

The 'Young of Rhan-Tegoth' are odd among the modern cults of the new era for their passivity. They are closely tied to their god, usually removing themselves from society at large, performing charitable work and assisting the 'doomed.' Such action does not become apparent in purpose until one delves into the hidden secrets of the Unwilling. Sense and feeling are the greatest focus of the magic taught by his 'Grief-Speakers.' The first time is always the nastiest, for there is no control yet learned. To feel the pain of a ripped blade of grass as it is cut like it was your own. One feels everything about them for a moment. Of course, some die, unable to handle the mental strain of Rhan-Tegoth's secret. Refining the knowledge, diffusing it, one eventually may develop an emotional form of telepathy, which extends outside of words so much so they might commune with beasts, flora and even those denizens of the outer depths. It goes without a saying such power visibly warps the user, and aside slow physical changes one is never really the same. Going beyond the body, beyond the soul to stand amidst so many others can destroy the ego like ocean sand grinds away glass. Until no edges remain. Is it a gift or a curse? Only time will tell.

Rhan-Tegoth's isolation beneath Kórkyra and the general removal of his followers has left them with few enemies. The only hostile entities focused on him or his ilk are the governments of Greece, Albania and Italy. All have laid claim to the island and have all attempted to seize it. Resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands as the Old One shared a glimmer of his grief with the would-be invaders. But that is more or less it, assaulting the followers of Rhan-Tegoth is a sign of weakness to most, of a deficiency in even 'barbarous' locals. One typically exploited by bigger fish.

Eihort, Lord of the Crumbling Labyrinth

Humiliation it a common song these nights and none are more familiar with its tune than the Labyrinth's Pallid Lord. Eihort, the Pallid God enjoyed a mired existence before the brightening of the stars. Beneath Earth, between the places sleeping and dreaming where corpse's lies buried are a mire of unspaced tunnels. The greatest of these winding passages was the 'Labyrinth,' those tunnels directly under Eihort's control. He retained a small loyal following, supplanting his vile spawn and spreading them far. Few ever returned, but that was just the natural order. The Stars drawing back and the slumbering end devastated Eihort's pleasant status quo. Every tunnel that drew to the Dreamlands was filled with monstrous fanged maws that devoured child and cultist alike, a maddened attempt on the life of the King-Emperor drawing the ire of the entire British Empire. Eihort's estranged surface tunnels were scorched and seized, the pale god driven back by men who bore his one weakness. He is hidden now, burned and master of a fragmented dominion. And ever so filled with what can only be *hate*.

The Cult of Eihort has been cut down to a tenth of its number, actively hunted from distant Calcutta to the heart of London. The Dreamlands are sealed away by the nightmares loyal to Lythalia. Only the most desiccated and hidden tunnels remain under Eihort's control, his massive scorched form slowly healing in the absolute Darkness. Tunnels to his depths lie mostly in America and Russia now, the Europeans having stolen away all of their near tunnels to abuse for colonial schemes. For now though, the worst of the storm has ended. Those followers of Eihort are able to use his labyrinth to travel what would be days to weeks in hours, at the cost of any colour in their skin and an unpleasant smell after use. Serving him is to bring ointments to speed his recovery and sacrifices to fill with Eihort's spawn. Eihort's magic is tied to the Labyrinth itself, drawing new winding tunnels to the surface and manipulating his vile spawn. He and his cult seek to take back the dark places betwixt things, to undo his humiliation. A long and terrible task, one that would see his followers restored and he returned to master of the depths.

Naturally, this puts Eihort and his followers against all the Colonial Powers, the Conqueror of the Dreamlands and those who have a decisive interest in keeping Eihort humiliated. Many of the lesser things and 'neutral' parties despise his parasitic reproduction habits, and will be more than unkind to his followers. Just about every formal agent of the British Empire is under orders to capture or kill followers of Eihort, most powers that be in Europe following the same.

Cthylla-who-is-Scylla, The Last Spawn

Great Old Ones and the Outer Gods alike did not begin as they were. Birthed from the Nuclear Chaos or mere spontaneousness, they began as pitiable writhing things that struggled to exist in a near songless existence. Aeons and the rise of pitiable uncountable civilizations has allowed them to be seen as they are and to come to it. But such timeless progressions and changes past are forgotten, much as their natures were before the stars became right. Such is the nature of Cthylla. The last of Great Cthulhu's spawn and ken. All of his descendants and his near ken were devoured in his return, his daughter's black womb one of many keys needed for his return. A pawn, that grew very weary of being a pawn. Her departure from R'lyeh one that dragged tens of thousands into the sea, many drowning themselves to silence the vicious song of betrayal that rang from the once sunken R'lyeh. Cthylla-Who-Is-Scylla has started upon a path that will raise her beyond comprehension or devoured.

Followers of the Final Child are often dissidents, the most notorious being those orphans of the Chinese and Mexican revolutions. Some made so by their own hands. After all, a dead parent can often be better than a living one. The screams of dissent and warping curses of Cthylla are the most freely given of the Old Ones on Earth, any subjugated soul with a lack of fear and a heavy grudge would be welcome and welcomed. There is no singular cult to Cthylla, rather her following is a loose coalition of proper cults, political organizations, secret societies and individual bomb throwers. Cthylla regards them with little interest, only really acknowledging those who actively hinder the efforts of Dagon, Cthulhu and the Outer Gods. Those who do know the richest of Cthylla's powers, touches that drive doggedly loyal cultists to madness, verses that disintegrate Star Spawn and Deepling alike and even rebirth from the black womb for those that make the ultimate sacrifice. They become Aethynagr, devouring vengeful worms that are privy to hear Cthylla's growing dream of revenge. The Song that comforts the dead and dying who struggled against the pillarous subjugators. Their day is coming. It can't be stopped.

As one would expect, the progenitor of Cthylla is her foremost opponent, but so too is Father Dagon who zealously seeks another Consort. True to her nature however, Cthylla has made no friends in her fledgling moments of independence, absently crushing the impudent Tsathoggua, devouring forgetful Byatis and flaying cruel Gla'aki before consuming him. Perhaps the only one who has been endeared by this behavior is the Black Pharaoh, but any who dwell near Cthylla's dreaming mind knows a deep disdain runs through the Daughter for him. The Song cares not for another manipulating coward. Of course, Cthylla does not care about the perceptions of would-be subjugators and her 'kin,' and any follower of her should steel themselves in the same right.

Yig, The Divorced & The Serpent Father

Archetypal is the Serpent Father, begetting snakes and myths of snake gods alike across human history. Yig suffered grievously amidst the return, his home hidden away in the Rockies was looted, his mate abandoned him and all across the Earth his innumerable children are slaughtered. But Yig remains, gathering his strengths in the isolated Rocky Mountains. His power is returning, beside his Cult. He patrons those who've suffered the most under the ruling powers, those sons of slaves and red-skins who've so long known the boot. Across the English Speaking areas of the new world, whispers of Yig grow. Serpent's prowls the night again, packs and paragons that dwarf the dreaded pythons. In the old world rumors of titanic man eating Cobra rumble near desert and jungle. Those most prolific snake hunters have a growing tendency to vanish. A long slithering night will come, sooner rather than later.

Those who venture out to the Midwest, to the locals now claimed by Yig's followers who pledge themselves to the Serpent Father will notice many things immediately. The most glaring a kinship with snakes. A true follower of Yig will be able to pick up a Black Mamba and it would treat them as a warm tree, but purposefully assaulting one will never be bitten by any snake. As time goes on a health and virility will emerge, hardening the body and focusing the mind at the cost of a glaring laconicism. More devout followers of Yig may exhibit glaring changes, eyes turning yellow and slit, skin suffused with scales. Female followers will occasionally be 'blessed' by Yig, becoming pregnant and bearing half-snake half-human creatures loyal to their parents and possessing terrible strength. Yig's magic governs transformation, procreation and serpents. Open to any of his followers, a mispronunciation might result in one turning into a literal rattler. But slow and proper learning opens all manner of venues and curses. Summoning teeming hordes of snakes to attack deliberate targets, taking on an infinitely superior form to your current one and the torpor to outlast ages are all within one's grasp. Besides the gifts of Yig, the Serpent Father's followers retain a tight cohesion. A familiarity as close knit as rattlers in a burrow.

Of course, for all Yig offers he also asks for much. He demands plainly those who harm snakes be punished, a task that in this day is almost impossible to keep up with. One that has made many enemies mundane and beyond. Not helped by Yig's hubris. Abandoned by Yidhra outright he zealously commands his followers hamper and attack Yidhra's children at any chance. Assaulting the slaves of Aboth and the skittering worshipers of the Yellow Sign is also a prerogative. To say nothing of the inevitable conflict in the new world. The Metis, Many Native tribes and those crushed by American boots have fled to Yig, even now American Authorities antagonize the Cult, running down entire cells when they can. Rumor has it they're even crossing the border to strike at Canadian groups as well, violating northern sovereignty. Something terrible is coming, something Yig eagerly awaits.

Ithaqua, Throne-Keeper & White Walker

The White-Walker of the Northern Winds, Ithaqua remains unbothered by the rightened stars. Towering and unnervingly lean, one might think he simply ignored the event with how little he's changed. The natives and the foreigner worshipers still sacrifice men and beasts to him when he wants, and Ithaqua still protects them. Any foolish thing, even Outer Gods that try to assert themselves in the far north are thrown back reeling and frozen. There is a timeless simplicity to Ithaqua, he is a basic entity that exists largely without malice. Not joyous or cruel. He simply is, dwelling in the north as he always had. Some even consider him deeply paternalistic, for those within his patronage have weathered these strange days and brightened nights without much change. He cares not for that outside his dominion, or those outside of it. All things shift and change but the Northern Wind shall howl on.

Be they Inuit, Sami, Finn, Norger, Cree, Metis or Mari, Ithaqua protects his followers from the harshest northern weather and ensures there is always food for them. Contrasting sharply with this, outsiders will endure blizzards in his dominion and starve more often than not. There is no racial or national binding to this however, and if one was willing to move to his dominion and pledge themselves to Ithaqua, he would take them. Such is a surprisingly easy task, marking oneself in his inks, making offerings of beasts and occasionally outsiders, a follower of Ithaqua can live a long happy life in the far north if they can handle the cold. Existing followers native or once colonial are oft suspicious of outsiders, but once proven they'll quickly welcome any new follower among their ranks. True friends are easy to make in the long lightless months.

Being so distant and merciless to intruders has earned Ithaqua many enemies. Dagon and Cthulhu intruded upon his territories in past ages and he threw them back to the depths. He has devoured the spawn of both and both deep beings will likely invade the North again. The followers of the Sickly Sign have also suffered terrible defeats at Ithaqua's hands, Eihort and Yig alike have lost countless children to the White Walker's hungry maw and seek revenge. But in his own dominion, not one could ever hope to best Ithaqua. For now they can only harass those followers of his that leave his sphere of influence, the only time when they are properly vulnerable.

The Rotten Banner, Union of Once Servitors & Broken Slaves

Much was not what the learned expected and prophesized about these days. The continuation of mankind within itself as the cosmos swirls with monstrous forms, the parallel continuations in other times and planets. The divisions and quarreling of the Old Ones, the dissent and conflict among the stars. One such oddity is the 'Rotten Banner,' the growing stateless band of those races that inhabited the space between places or were driven from their homes. The Night Gaunts grieving the loss of their great lord Nodens, the Ghouls driven with flame and gas from their tunnels, the scattered Chthonians who still weep for slain Shudde M'ell and Shiiia Halu formed the core of this banner. But even now they continue to grow. Those few ancient Serpent folk that precede Yig have found them, the thinking Shoggoth raise the plain molded banner high, the Orphaned hounds of Tindolos find them and rest at their hearths. Even humans now find their way to this Banner, craving a home that will not be stolen from them.

Composed of so many disparate and exiled groups, there are no masters among the Banner, but numerous adepts. The Secrets of Nodens, the powers of Ghouls, the sightless depths known only to Chthonians are all apparent. Ancient secrets older than man may be gotten, relics abandoned and even the dis-angling of the dread hounds might be learned in time. The wide options and general ease of knowledge produces well balanced and mentally firm agents, who excel in all manner of tasks. To say nothing of acquaintance. The Rotten Banner is less an actual mold bitten banner and more a unifier, a shared want, a unifying binding that hardens the bonds within. Who would have thought a Night Gaunt would ever guard playing human children? Who would have ever imagined the dreaded hounds resting upon the form of an orphaned Chthonian? The common binding of exile and loss has forged a chain amidst the Banner, binding it harder than any metal forged by men or gods. To be among their number is to be one and indivisible and there is a terrible strength to that.

Naturally, such a group is well and truly alone. Lythalia regards the Night Gaunts and the Banner they helped form as worthless diseased rats, they regard her as a tyrannical maddened god. The Orphaned Chthonians hold that their great Matriarchs and most of their number were slain by the Black Pharaoh's machinations, the orphaned hounds shrilly cry of H'aaztre-who-is-Haïta in a cord in as much hate as pain. The Ghouls grumble as they chew upon old bones of the day the masked men descended with flamethrowers and canisters of vile gas. They rove across the wild places now, looking ever for a land they can call home. A home that will likely need to be seized with force.

The Burgess of Ulthar, Keeper of the Crossroads

There is but one place in all of the Earthen Tied Dreamlands that Lythalia has not yet broken. A sleepy little town where Travellers lost and willingly estranged alike oft find themselves. Ulthar, the city of smoke and yellow eyes. Where one might willingly walk from dreams to the waking world and back again. Trouble has a funny way of avoiding Ulthar, so much so one might assume that trouble was rightly scared of the place. There is no mayor of Ulthar, no priests hold sway over her humble denizens and no vile God lays claim to this town. The only authority here is the Burgess of Ulthar, a strange crimson haired woman who lives a ways from town. Sly, knowing and engrossing, the Burgess delights in foreign company and welcomes all into her home. A disposition many would consider foolish, though her enthusiasm and welcoming behavior haven't hurt her yet.

Those who venture to Ulthar and pledge themselves to the Burgess can expect a peaceful life in a world that has largely been unhinged at the very bedrock of its existence. Most residents forget their lives before, by their own choice. Coming from all manner of places the common peace and constant companionship the innumerable cats has a rather pacifying effect. It is easy to ignore the rest of the world, events that make the chaos of a Three Kingdom romance look like a pathetic bar fight. Residents of Ulthar have a greater 'firmness' to things, being unshaken by sights that would drive lesser men to madness. The companionship of felines is as natural as it is for close kin, and if a person leaves their door open long enough a nursing cat will readily bring their kittens into their home. Of course, there is also the Burgess, whose more perverse eccentricities will glean through the longer one spends in her company. The glint of hunger in her green eyes growing on one if they spend time in her company. Her door is always open, of course. And a brave soul might endeavor to see just how deep the rabbit hole goes.

Ulthar is a place the Stalker Among the Stars takes care not to antagonize, it being the last holdout from Lythalia's wrath and a crossroad between the waking and dreaming world. Any would be Sovereign of course realizes that neutrality will not save Ulthar in the long run, no more than any world before a hungering sun. But even this temporal neutrality is enough for pause. To attack now would be a sign of desperation and weakness, a *causis belli* for any of their foes. Whispers of Lythalia's ken Istasha and Bastet abound, but there is nothing concrete to the rumors. For now, only the hateful kitten eating Zoogs glaring in envy from the wilderness trouble Ulthar.

The Old Powers, Nations and Legions

Some predicted the ancient hegemonies and states would collapse when the stars became right. Such predictions underestimated the tenacity of the masses and loyalty to old flags. The worn colonial powers and ancient nations that once broke upon each another in the Great War a decade ago remain, stranger than what they once were but still there. The battered Union of the Soviets survives even now, championing the Menshevik and the Bolshevik alike as they struggle against cults old and new. Perfidious Albion still rules the waves, playing between the struggles under the surface to maintain their above-water hegemony. The French Republic still guards Alsace-Lorraine, the Foreign Legion welcoming gugs and ghosts to their number. All of Europe looks on with nervous eyes as the Hamburg Republic inches ever closer to a bloody civil war, all factions dealing with the awakened powers in their attempts to gain victory. The American Eagle still rules the New World, claiming as much as it can. Eagerly quashing Latin republics and cultish enclaves alike with a renewed jingoism.

Service to the nation has all the benefits and issues one would expect. Wealth, honour, prestige and standing in human society. With the added glint brought on by this strange new age. Experts in the outer powers or simply those who hybridize their positions stand to go far and climb the ranks. Be it in military service, espionage or in Administration. Many holes that would have been filled are undone by the current status quo and a particularly ambitious sort could capitalize upon it to rise to the very top. To become a Judge, a General or even a National Leader is not out of the question.

But of course, these old structures must deal with the new powers. Some of which can be dealt with. The British punitive exhibitions into the Unspaced Labyrinth beneath the Earth and the French intervention in Risen Mu prove that the lesser Old Ones must regard the Hegemonic Nations as actual threats. However, in the same right such Old Ones and the Hegemonies of earth are little more than dust mites to the true powers. Some may be disturbed by this fact, but many now realize such powers are like the moon and the oceans, unchangeable and titanic facets of being. Things that savvy leaders may exploit.

Yourselves Alone, Invictus

You have witnessed the death of the old world and the birth of a new one that has peered into the abyss. One that has survived, knowing well at any moment the very planet could be ripped apart like distant Yuggoth. Many were driven to lunacy but many more remained, staring up at the titanic entities roused and struggling against one another. Touched by their descendants, preached by their simplified inclinations and caressed by their dreaming minds. But you were preached at before all this, spoken down to and degraded by those who claimed mastery over you as a part of 'their' group. One tyrant is as good as another, one vacant god is as worthless as a monstrous loan maker. You have seen all the terrible gods Outer and Old alike and found them wanting. You serve none but yourself, working towards your own goals as you see fit.

To stand alone does not mean you are ignorant to the gifts offered by this new age. But one doesn't need to serve the Gods to gain from them, or the shared wells they draw from. Talismans, incantations, cursed relics, cold cash and quick thinking can even the playing field against just about any human cultist. Explosives and potent curses can hinder or even kill servitors and 'higher' servants. Bar personally gaining the enmity of their patrons, one can create a lot of 'wiggle room' in their dealings with the many factions upon earth. Of course you don't even need to worry about that. Through proper tithes and forward thinking, a person could likely avoid trouble with or even befriend the lower rungs of the new order. Half a pig tossed to a Dark Young and one can walk freely through the evening woods untroubled and speak with the witches dancing. A few secrets payed and the libraries of Yog-Sothoth's followers can be unlocked for you. The world is still open, until the land is swallowed by the sea and the stars devour the night.

Much like before, there will always be some who cannot be reasoned with. Humans being the most pressing concern. If one puts themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, they'll still get a Glasgow smile for their foolishness. Monsters rove the unsettled places, ambitious cultists desperate for sacrifices stalk the night. The relentless beast of war between nations is rousing itself even now, careless for those innocents in its path. On a more celestial concern there are those Gods that specifically delight in tormenting inferiors like children plucking the legs from insects. Y'gononac the Defiler, Weakened Eihort, Insatiable Rlim Shaikorth and above all; The Thing in the Yellow Mask.

The Blind Idiot Sultan, Azathoth

For one who was before all others, driven to existence from the first death, it is he who will be until existence finally reaches its destination. Azathoth is not at all worshiped. Not even by his court. Those mindless and conniving intelligences that soothe the Blind Idiot Sultan do so out of an incomprehensible instinct or a very real terror of non-existence. His children are so grand they are almost incomprehensible, bound up almost as much as their progenitor, aside the Black Pharaoh. Azathoth wants for nothing, is incapable of gratitude, will never ask for anything of his followers and when he awakens even his most devoted servants will be nothing more than a fading fragment of a strange forgotten tapestry. Yet, humans and many of the lesser races are funny in that a few will always look to the center of creation and bow their heads. Without reason, without hope of reward. Something that infuriates the higher powers to no end.

There is seemingly nothing to be gained from worshipping Azathoth, for he takes nothing and gives nothing. One could not even hope to approach his court, for the noise of his retainer's many songs will melt the organs of any lesser being. At least, that is what one is led to believe. There are no temples, no altars to the Nuclear Chaos. No verses sing praise to him, no curses are cast down from his many maws. Yet, should one endeavor upon that path, in full and fevered, oddities will grow from the woodwork. They who swear to the Blind Idiot God will skirt past events that will shake the Earth for Millennia, the Cosmos for Epoch. Outside of it, estranged to it. They will be ever the outsider. Beasts will ignore them, humans will pay them the barest effort. After a time they fade from view. No one knows what happens to them and ultimately there is only one being that could answer the question. Him who is Gate-and-Key remains silent on the matter, in spite of the Black Pharaoh's dogged interest.

None will harm a worshiper of Azathoth on grounds of the act alone, even the Bloody Tongue will grumble into shadows when he realizes such loyalties. There is nothing to be gained of a fleeting fragment after all.

“ . . . ”

“What? Do you think I'll hold it against you? No. Oh no I'm much too old to begrudge fools.”

“Hmphf. Even when I find them unconscious, in the mud. One would think you had a death wish, being out this far from town. Alone. Or up to something foul.”

“Well, it's none of my business. Here, I think you dropped these . . .”

{ Possessions & Trinkets }

*[#]; Denotes Something that Must be Taken in its 'Set.' Set Items do not count towards total P&T.

{Pick up to 3}

***1 Set of Women's Shoes, (1) Woman's Coat, (1) Woman's Hat {Clothe Tam Style}**

Attire fit for a woman of some wealth. Or at least, some wealth in the past. You find your clothing fine if a little dusty.

***1 Set of Men's Boots, (1) Men's Jacket, (1) Men's Hat {Straw Boater}**

Attire fit for a man of some wealth, or taken from such a man. Looks like someone bled on your boater. Maybe you.

***[2](1) Elder's Cane {Oak}**

A Cane belonging to someone of venerable age, that someone being yourself. Good for scolding youths.

***[2](1) Youth's Scarf {Wool}**

A Scarf of well-beloved age. Perhaps it's older than you are, though that isn't a particularly impressive feat.

***[2](1) Set of Used Gloves {Leather}**

A Pair of gloves fit for grown hands. They slide onto the fingers comfortably and will serve as long as they are able.

***[3](1) Shoulder Holster, (1) Beretta M1915/17 Pistol, (1) Notepad & Pen, (1) Pack of Camel Cigarettes**

The workings of an investigator, be they overt or well hidden. It would be best to obscure this position in some locals.

***[3](1) Photography Set, Containing (2) Cameras and Developing Gear {1909 Swiss-Made}, (1) Notepad & Pen**

The workings of a reporter, polished to a shine. Be warned that such people have a diminished livelihood these days.

***[3](1) M1917 Enfield Rifle, (1) M1917 bayonet, (1) Colt M1917 revolver, (1) Pair of Trench Shoes w/ Leggings**

The workings of a soldier, dyed by French mud. Not as wholly effective as one would like to believe.

***[3](1) Set of Classified Orders, (1) Agency Badge, (1) M1911 Pistol, (1) Flask of Vile Liquid**

The workings of a federal agent, kept in secret. One should avoid capture, lest the flask become one's last option.

***[3](1) Suitcase of Reagents {Leather}, (6) Tokens of the Gods {Varied}, (1) Notebook of Maddened Scribbles**

The workings of an occultist, smelling of pitch and sweat. Tread lightly as if one were followed by hungering winds.

***[3](1) Beloved Dagger, (1) Set of Robes, (1) Mask {Wood}, (1) Black Icon, (1) Suitcases w/Steel Lock**

The workings of a follower. Better to serve the hungering ocean than to be dragged to it, right?

***[3](1) Set of Party Clothes {Your Taste}, (1) Purse Full of Americans, (1) Switch Blade {Well Hidden}**

The workings of a socialite, fit for this lie of a gilded age. The high life and its predators roll onwards.

***[3](1) Set of Workers Overalls, (1) Set of Tools {1889.H&K}, (1) Oil Stained Hat {Newsie}**

The workings of a worker, stained in blood, sweat and tears. There is no shame in honest living.

***[3](1) Dirtied Trench Coat {Leather}, (1) Scarf {Wool}, (1) Tin Cup, (1) Pair of Dog Tags, (1) Trench Knife**

The workings of a survivor, on both sides of the sea. To be nakedly despised is to be truly free.

***[3](1) Set of Brass Knuckles, (1) Box of Cigars {Hattian}, (1) Fine Overcoat {Silk}, (1) 'Trick' Suitcase**

The workings of a brigand, at least a modern one. Prohibition's rolling onward, caring little for the Stars.

***[3](1) Set of Reading Glasses, (1) Suitcase Full of Books, (1) List of Contacts, (1) Invitation to Miskatonic**

The workings of a scholar, formal or otherwise. Doors are open if one is willing to take that invitation.

***[3](1) Traveller's Cloak, (1) Sword {Oriental-Make}, (1) Pipe {Ivory}, (1) Tin of Smoking Herbs**

The workings of a stranger, from a stranger land. You've come very far and likely the road goes onwards still.

^{*[4]}**(1) Dark God's Sigil**

The Sign of an Old One or an Outer God. Your patron for what little it is worth in the grand scheme of things.

^{*[4]}**(1) Mark of a Fleeting Faith**

A mark of the old world, be it a Cross, a Spodek or a Quran. Keeping such things earns few friends.

^{*[4]}**(1) Icon of Man**

A symbol made wholly by man. Be it a hammer & sickle or a national emblem. Stand tall, even if you do so alone.

(1) Worn Copy of the 'Kitab al-Hikmah al-Najmiyya'

An enigmatic copy of the original 'Necronomicon.' In truth there is no such thing as the 'Necronomicon,' rather they are a collection of books carrying ever shifting truths about reality. Even before they hooked into something primal, yanking at the make of reality. Look upon one and see past, future, present and the dim spiral of space melting before the incapable eye. Taste the blood of your birth and the water of your end opening a dusty relic, being driven to breaking. One can become well and truly unhinged reading such books, but one can also learn much of the inner workings of the cosmic. This book in particular is potent. Opening it there is an intimacy in its script, though you certainly did not know how to read eighth century Arabic before reading. This work by the 'Mad Arab' Ali Abd-al-Hazra is magnificent and terrible, and one can understand the majesty of its author who walked through Irem and faced obliteration to write it. It pertains largely to the greater cosmos, providing true Astral wisdom in its star charts and decoding. However it tends to miss the more earthly concerns and avoids detail on the rituals of the Old Ones. Weeks will fade in reading, and one will shed stained tears for a stranger they never knew.

(1) Copy of the 'Codex Chrysostom'

The Second iteration of the 'Necronomicon,' written two centuries after the original. The work was ordered to be a translation by the Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, directly from the tongue of the Emperor. The Christian Scholar Chrysostom of Stymphalos its author. Chrysostom spent two decades in Caliphate lands, though he secured the Kitab in little over a year he spent much of his life delving into its truths and deepening its scope. Returning to Constantinople it is said Chrysostom spent three days in a lightless cell inscribing the Codec. He is said to have emerged covered in blood, the skin on his back flayed off by his own hand. He stumbled out, out into the streets bleeding all the way to the Méga Palátion and the seat of the Emperor. Handing the vile tome to his sovereign, Chrysostom fell dead at his feet. The Codex of Chrysostom had a hundred copies commissioned and distributed to members of the Imperial army and the Orthodox Church, kept under lock and key for all but the direst circumstances. The Codex itself is much more detailed and focused upon the natures of ritual. The exact nature of the Old Ones and their celestial counterparts delved into as much as Chrysostom could, though he was unable to reproduce Abd-al-Hazra's magnificent star charts. Rather than insultingly recreating them he cut them outright, attempting and failing to describe the machinations of the cosmos.

(1) Copy of 'Codec Mors Stella Coloratus'

The third iteration of the 'Necronomicon' written several decades after the split between the 'Patriarchs' of Rome and Constantinople. The Codec Mors Stella Coloratus was allegedly produced at the behest of the Pope who'd attempted to secure a copy of the prior Codex. Raimundus Mus, a Yiddish Catalan scholar was tasked with the creation of the text, forcing him to venture across the Mediterranean to seek out both pre-cursor texts. Mus realized early just how dangerous the Kitab and the Codec were, and in isolation on Sinuaria spent years producing a text that did not terribly strain the mind. His success was something of a mixed bag for the Pope, who upon being delivered the 'Migraine-inducing' tome discovered it to be seemingly blank. His mental constitution being too weak to understand the curving of the words. Furious the Patriarch ordered Mus confined to Sinuaria, something Mus had predicted and had long since prepared for. His Codec slowly circled throughout the west and Mus was the only author to live a peaceful life, ending in quiet. The Codec cannot be read by those of poor mind and even then makes little sense to those without wisdom. But it is the safest of the three, not having a radius of 'accidents' ever transpiring around it. While Mus kept certain specific details obscured for the readers safety (though true understanding of the tome will lead the reader to them), he faithfully recreated the Chrysostom's documentation and Ali's star charts. Mus also added the more refined basis to Ali's 'seven paths eternal,' decoding the terrible basis for unending life.

(1) Copy of 'Cultura et Lamiis'

The original 'Necronomica' were written in Arab, Greek and Latin and until the reformation were considered the end point of vile research. The advent of the printing press and the collapse of Catholic moral authority racked the Christian world, as it shifted the hidden societies beneath. In England with the deposition and expulsion of the Catholic orders, many in the English nobility of perverse inclinations sought out a home-bred tome of knowledge. The hidden and unnamed order tasked on of their own, the Baron William III of Charndale to write such a thing. Lacking any base knowledge aside from that brought by his vile heritage, the Baron set out into the Atlantic. Eventually hiring a number of Barbary pirates to aid him, the Baron passed through Gibraltar and relentlessly raided monasteries and villages searching for the precursor tomes. His monstrous brutality and crusade of torture eventually rewarded him with the Codec and the Codex, taken from a lifeless reddened monastery. The Baron betrayed his allies, leaving them locked in battle against Knights of the Cross. Speeding back to England, William's gleeful lack of humanity allowed him to quickly and flawlessly right the Cultura et Lamiis. Written in English despite its name, the tome forgoes the greater schemes and star charts and focuses on the lower occult with razor focus. Details of the hundreds of rituals are naked and apparent, the author quipping with delight often at his own experiences. It is perhaps the most practical of the Necronomica and the most coherently 'evil.' Copies of the book startle animals and seem to absorb light, accidents happen with worrying frequency around the Cultura. Indeed, centuries ago when William met with his order and presented his tome, fate found him. The surviving Barbarians and Knights snuck into the castle, butchering every man within. The Cultura was left there, waiting those orders to follow the Baron's example. A fitting reward for England.

(1) Copy of 'Das Buch der Toten Namen'

The Baroque period and the nightmares brought on by the Thirties Years' War made Germany ripe for what would be the final 'Necronomica.' 'Das Buch der Toten Namen' was written by a one H.H. Aletschhorn. Nothing is known about Aletschhorn besides his small note written in the front paste-down and his identity remains hotly debated. Aletschhorn apologizes in advance, warning prospective readers the tome is not to be taken lightly, being written with a century's research and 'the foot of blood drawn from Thionville.' Indeed, it is the single most expansive of the tomes, covering just about every field a prospective researcher could want, though never hitting the individual high notes of its predecessors. Aletschhorn often apologizes for this, most notably with page long note informing the reader he would rather blind himself again than attempt to recreate Hazra's star charts. The book goes on seemingly without end, and it becomes obvious the tome bends space somewhat, growing more painful to read and further distorting reality as it nears its end. If one manages to ignore the hopefully figmentive blood seeping from the letters, it is still possible to finish the tome. They will never forget the contents and will retain a clear understanding of the words, some part of them having been inscribed as much as words on the page. So long as the Buch der Toten Namen remains closed it is no more harmful than the Codec, but upon being opened it is the single most dangerous quintet.

(1) Copy of 'Dans l'obscurité'

One of the more perverse works produced by the 'Comte d'Guillot,' an enigmatic French writer who produced many works of extreme perversity during the rule of the Sun King. Decried by religious authorities and the Crown, most copies were captured and burned. But a few persisted, being stolen away to English collectors and the colonies. The tome in lurid detail catalogues many old European 'underpasses' into the space between dreams, the vile inhabitants of the spaces betwixt and other esoteric secrets. Despite its usefulness it becomes obvious in reading the 'Comte' was more caught up in his own indulgences with the denizens of the in between spaces than providing his reader's insight. While useful and far less dangerous than even the Codec Mors Stella Coloratus, it is very limited in use.

(1) Set of 'O Vasiliás me Kítrino Chróma' {Volumes 1 & 2}

A terrible pair of books that should have gone unnamed. Its author is unknown and should stay that way. The sightless pale tomes detail the ballad of fallen Carcosa, of Cassilda and Camilla's defiling and the end of the Shepherd. The first volume may be read without repercussions. Major repercussions. Nightmares, out of body experiences and epileptic episodes are common but go away after a time. Usually. However the second volume obliterates ego, only useful to a follower of dreaded Haïta. If read in succession with a mind that would eagerly give what was once given, one would find themselves at Carcosa's open gates. Drawing near, knowing well we wear no masks.

(1) Copy of 'Unaussprechliche Kulte'

'Unspeakable, unutterable, ineffable.' Such is the nature of the things described in the Unaussprechliche. Naturally a savvy German speaker will roll their eyes at such repeated dramaticisms, but will be unable to deny the vast clinical knowledge on just about every existing Cult that existed before the return. Written by an anonymous author a century ago in Munich, the tome goes into detail on the structure and practices of all major players and many minor and obliterated ones. The Church of Starry Wisdom, the Nine Hundred and Ninety Nine Tongues, the innumerable Esoteric Orders and Free Lodges, cruel oriental bands of murderers and the High Sisters of the Bleeding Moon. Referencing enough of the varying rituals to create a miasma of sickness about the tome but not enough to recreate them, as far as catalogues of Old One worshipers go you'd be hard pressed to find a more up to date list.

(1) Copy of 'Le Tome de Ver'

Another product of the Comte d'Guillot, this one mercifully written by the Comte when his perversions were sated. Detailing the numerous vile alchemical experiments of the Comte in his attempts to expand his natural lifespan, it seemed he experimented in numerous techniques both of the dreaming occult and the more mundane traditional methods. Like the other works of the Comte d'Guillot the text is infatuated with prose and its own inflated sense of self, but provides valuable information in the admittedly limited field of 'classic' alchemy. Someone more versed in modern chemistry, biology, astronomy and scientific method if they were willing to put up with the convoluted text and flashes of uncontrollable libido might be able to put the tome to good use.

(1) Copy of the recorded Guge Manuscripts

A heavy copy of the Transcribed Guge Manuscripts with translation, the whole thing weighs about as much as a small child and occasionally produces noises to match. The original Guge Manuscripts were written on scrolls and stored in the depths of a Kashmiri Buddhist monastery, describing much of the Tibetan Occult tradition that existed prior to the spread of Buddhism. Though upon its initial discovery and subsequent theft by British colonial authorities the text was considered incoherent, time and the stars have made the worth of the manuscripts apparent. The various gods worshiped around the Leng plateau, the intersections in the dreamlands and the art of dreaming are all covered in depth, though the latter section is what truly draws attention. When the very nature of reality becomes fleshy and tangible, what dreams may come have grievous power, in sleep and waking alike. But as the author of the Manuscripts advises such dreaming should not be taken lightly. To dream brightly is to shine like a flame. But in such dreams the moths are starved, delighted in their hunger. The manuscripts go into terrible detail about the fate of such bright dreamers.

(1) 'US Marine Corps, Occult War Manuals' Volumes 1-4

A set of extremely classified manuals commissioned last year by US Army and Naval command, on how to deal with new age threats. The manuals only go into deconstructive detail upon lower entities and cults with a very stern warning on avoiding the attention of the higher entities entirely. Limited though the scope may be, what it does it does surprisingly well, going into thorough detail on fortress-breaking, countering magic, large incoherent tactics depth, weak points in great entities of irregular anatomy and more. So much is here one wonders just how much the US Military knew about the Stars, and how long they'd prepared for the Brightening.

(1) Plain Journal & Slennt

A wordless book bound in plain leather, beside a Leaver fed fountain pen and tackle. This journal is empty for the time being. What you put in it is up to you. A useful grasp on reality can be found in writing, secrets kept by the hand and ones innermost thoughts kept. More useful than some would like to admit, as reality grows more deceptive and glib in its betwixting of the senses.

(1) Winding Glass

A plain green glass symbol of infinity, bound upon a necklace of moose leather. It is at best difficult to retain a sense of self and certainty these days, more so if one readily seeks out trouble. Drawing ones finger across the glass they find themselves calmed and driven back to a simpler place. Simply keeping the Winding Glass on one's person allows for a mental steadfastness, and while it cannot repair what is irrevocably broken it can draw back anything short of that. But of course, this comes at a cost. The Glass is old. Having stored centuries of errant nightmares within an unending loop. Should it be broken every terrible dream and mind altering phantasm would be released, like a spark in a munition factory.

(1) White Woad

A tin of balmy paste that never seems to run empty. It smells of what some describe to be 'long pork' fat and unknown herbs, likely created and bartered from a ghoul. The Woad if applied to an injury will instantly heal injuries, pausing what right well should be fatal strikes upon the body. However this shouldn't be used lightly, as with each passing use there comes a chance that fleshy growths will appear after healing. They might be amputated but that is merely the start of the ills brought by continued use. Should one not wish to vanish to the 'tween' places, the White Woad should be kept for emergencies only.

(1) Stygian Club

An arm's length club composed of nebulous grey metal and questionable magic. The Stygian club is a tool created by pursuers of the occult that care little for perpetual suffering, 'binding bone and spirit within a perpetual prison, shrouded in mercury and bronze.' Such a club exudes a feeling of dread in most bystander's aside Sadists who report an unhealthy attachment to the weapon. To man though, that is the extension of its property, it is no more or less effective than any other metal club. The true use of a Stygian club becomes apparent when confronting the denizens not quite bound up in existing. They are one of the few things the Polyps of the distant south flee from, sending Eihort's vile spawn fleeing from a body by any orifice they can find. Even Shoggoths flee from the weapon unless they are large enough to go around it and swallow up the wielder. Occultists will find their grasp of twixt and twain weaken in its presence, and alleged immortals will break and run. The greatest fear may well be that of the Unknown, but it is always shadowed by the fear of pain. Of course, such a tool twists the hand that wields it, a user will slowly grow crueler, reveling in the weapon. Developing a perverse attachment until the pain inflicted will be the only joy left.

(1) Zulqarnain's Handles

A pair of firm white horns kin to a mountainous beast's. Some whisper they were just bone protrusions once, while others say they were carved from marble by 'his' hands. It is impossible to say the truth of it, as much it is impossible to say what they are now. This relic was stolen away by scholars in Azerbaijan, taken to America before the prior owners killed one another fighting over them. They are enigmatic, much as their creator was. Those of western tradition name 'Zulqarnain' as Moses, Alexander the Great or Gilded Cyrus, while the Islamic tradition generally painted Alexander as the maker. Their nature, their purpose and their origins remain at best nebulous. But looking upon them, it becomes apparent one would know if they seized the Handles and pulled them to their brow. Of course, one also knows once this is done, it may never be undone. There will be Two of Means who Command the Lands. There shall be no Third.

(1) Pharaoh's Spoon

A simple spoon composed of what looks to be glinted Damascus steel, though esoteric scholars trace it back to the pre-unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Other than occasionally humming it seemingly is no different than any other spoon. At least until tapped upon papyrus or paper. Upon being tapped, the material shall be replaced by pitch black human skin. Of course the opposite is also true and tapping a human with the spoon will turn their skin into aged papyrus. An incredibly painful experience as one will swiftly begin to 'unwrap.' Good for torture, as one might undo the damage with another tap. Of course the original skin will never be recovered and the unfortunate 'tapped' individual will be stuck at their new shade.

(1) Broken Circlet

A simple black wooden circlet missing a chunk and scarred by flame. Upon physically inspecting the circlet one will note that wood is natural in its shade and incredibly durable. One will also find their blood will rush to certain parts of the body upon touching the object. Should one hold onto the object for too long reality will become hazy, an all-encompassing need taking control of them for what might be days. Only distant acceptance and fulfillment able to shorten the curse, though one will find their manic standards are all but non-existent. Wearing the circlet all but guarantees loss of control and allegedly producing a guarantee of conception if reports are to be believed. Those daughters of the Black Goat have an understanding of its true nature, and might safely handle such a thing. But delving deeper one finds the circlet is most powerful with the Gof'nn, who exacerbate the already potent effects to absurd bounties. The Circlet may be used as a conduit for magic, working well with the linking of Shub-Niggurath and Yig. But should it be overused or worn too long, the one handling it might find themselves... Warping.

(1) Shard of Other Worldly Dye

A dim razor sharp shard of stony material that glows with colours that exist for but a moment and are gone in an instant. It is said this is the last emblem of the blasted heath, a long since burned away farmstead where a meteorite crash landed forty years ago. Events are sketchy and the story has been actively repressed by the federal government, but it is generally agreed upon that an entity descended, poisoning and mutating the land before returning to the void. Leaving this lonely fragment. Unable to grow, unable to even taint its surroundings. Holding onto the shard, one feels a sense of isolation and despair, a feeling that fades if the shard is kept close. It would take years for a person to notice its effects, with only the clash of what would be aging showing it. The body does not fail, resisting age or even rewinding it at times. Enough for an extra few decades. Enough to keep the isolation from coming again. For a time.

(1) Strange Skull

A seemingly human skull that was cleaved almost in half by some monstrous force. Until of course one examines the skull, noting inhuman contours, holes and cavities where they should not be. The longer one examines it, the more apparent it becomes that the artifact is unnatural. Or... Is it? Some force warped this long dead creature beyond its bounds, driving it from what men would call human. Its final truth becomes apparent in dwelling, that the great cleaved dome holds signs of healing, whatever this was did not die of that injury. While the skull has no value outside itself and a few obscure rituals of Yog-Sothoth, the act of study opens one eyes to the perceptions of the world. True to form and bending like terrible mathematics.

(1) Seemingly Broken Compass

A compass of worn copper with a spinning set of needles. Left alone they shall errantly twirl, lightly in the day and furiously in the evening. But if held they shall slow, and point in what might seem to be a random direction. A scholar realized this curious trinket pointed towards entryways into the dreamlands and the spaces betwixt. He disappeared after a time, leaving only the Compass. Simple and benign though the path it leads one down is neither of those things.

(1) Weeping Stone

An unassuming red stone that holds a single curious property. When held in listening range of a lie the stone will begin to bleed thin red blood that drips clean from the stone's form. The stone also bleeds in the presence of the Black Pharaohs followers, the stream growing stronger until such a Starry Eyed individual touches it. Should it be touched by a servant of Nyarlathotep it will scream, loud enough bystanders and the Pharaoh's servants risk deafness. The origins of the weeping stone and its alignment remain a mystery, though the Bedouin scholar who passed the relic on referred to it as 'that thing held by the Lion of God and the Father of the Dust.'

(1) Molded Shuddering Dismembered Eye

A thing stolen by someone long since ripped from humanity, this Eye is still very much alive, pulsating and rolling if left to its own devices. Vile as it may be it has some use. Holding it, one will see the world for what it is, much as it might be. Petty obscurations and warded faces will be pulled aside to reveal what lies beneath the masks. Regardless of one's preparedness. In that the Eye is incredibly dangerous. It also has a mind of its own, actively attempting to escape its owner at the best of times. If kept long enough these attempts will cease, and the eye will turn to you often. It would be best that one did not sleep around the eye, or hold onto it too long. It might just make sure it can't be released again.

(1) Clouded Mirror

An old silver mirror of Venetian make, with the name 'Henricus Dandulus' engraved on the back. The mirror if wiped down with a bloody rag shall remain clean and for a moment clear. Where one stands events of that time shall play about in the mirror for them, allowing for a clear window into the past. However the mirror has an intelligence of its own, able to know when the user wishes to see. This is both a blessing and a curse, in that no complex rituals are needed to use the mirror. However events of the viewed scene will affect the user as if they were there, knives and sword swings will cut into them and arrows without form will lodge into their hide. The Clouded mirror hates. If one is not careful and quick they may end up being victim to the mirror and their own curiosity.

(1) Vial of Thick Blood

A vial filled with pulsing heavy fluid that is assumed to be blood. It is heavier than it should be, visibly moving inside of the vial as if it were alive and displeased with its captivity. The only clue to its origins is a small label upon the top that reads 'Armenian.' Rumors of such liquid persists in the Dark Continent, savage barbarous tribes that steal away the blood of 'gods' to drink. Abandoning their ancestry outright and becoming monsters. Each different in their growth, but often losing sapience and descending from the mental realm. The stuff of a monster. Should one lack surety in their willpower, it would be better to sell to a fool who lives a few hundred miles away.

(1) Vial of Pale Liquid

A vial filled with a milky fluid that glows softly in the darkness, its light shimmering like water. Holding the vial one almost feels the still liquid weighs almost nothing. Its motions come slowly when shaken like it isn't entirely there. The only clue to its origins lies in the note attached at the bottom. One line written by a firm hand reads; 'Forgive us.' The second beneath it reads; 'Make them suffer.' There exist almost no information on such a liquid, aside from a few tales scattered about in the old places of the earth. Where darkness and light have washed back and forth like a tide, the lands unshifted by the changing oceans and drifting stars. The details vary though there are some shared elements. An entity terrible yet beautiful and benevolent who is worshiped by those at the shore. Men come, either from the sea or inland, and some terrible thing happens, in spite of the worshipers throwing every able body they have to try and stop it. The entity dies, yet still dreams, weeping pale blood for the slain worshipers, like a mother for her children. A tale, told over and over again. Always ending in tragedy.

“ . . . ”

“There. Nothing lifted, see?”

“By the way, I saw someone passing up the road. Likely passed by whatever nasty thing that slung your skull into the bush. Odd company, headed up to Arkham. Yours I'll assume?”

{ Allies & Acquaintances }

{Pick up to 3}

- Miss Sally 'Gran M'Bwa' Wandrei



Ali; **The Presence, The Old Gods & Shub-Niggurath** | Age; 78 (Give or Take a few years) | [-]

A relic of another time, Old Miss Wandrei was born a slave, the child of a man taken from 'the river those Portuguese called Messalo.' In spite of her owner's attempts to stop and later beat the knowledge from her, she learned her father's tongue and the rites of his gods. She lost her father during the Civil War, being freed for the first time in her life as a young woman in the aftermath. Miss Wandrei set out across the Southern States, learning as much as she could of other African gods brought to America. She became something of a medicine woman for those former slaves and their children who couldn't afford care. Then later their children's children, Sally outlasted most of them, in spite of her efforts. It was said there was magic in her touch even before the Dreams roused themselves for she could save men who were moments from death. Eventually she 'retired' at the behest of those communities she'd served, enough wealth gifted to her she was able to go to school. Learning to read and write in her late sixties. The last few years of her life have been spent writing the 'true' names of the many gods almost forgotten in Chattel, identifying the avatars and spirits as they slowly woke again. Even that task is done now. Gran M'Bwa has done everything she's set out to do, her knowledge is safe and her words are passed on to the young. Now she waits for whatever may come, good or ill. Occasionally rousing up spells and curses for those who request them politely.

Miss Sally despite her advanced age endeavors to be a shrewd but welcoming sort. A firm figure even in strange and coldly terrifying dreams that overtake her local. Having Endured Slavery and all manner of abuses has given her hard skin and many scars. But given time and mutual trust she'll naturally line herself to support others, taking care of things, offering advice and cantrips. Particularly 'youngin's' who she openly dotes upon and pushes. Her blood is old, but she'll gladly offer it for the 'good'ns'.

"M' Obei, mi' father ti' ya', ea' taugh' mi' a home. Onna' d'las' men da' was' taken o'er. Roun' tha' Cape ta' 'is lan'. Anne' taugh' me a' ie'. A dream'a ie'. Bi' late 'isn'i? T' wanna' go ti' tha home a' neve' knew? Orissa' jussa' ol' dove's rantin'?"

- Shae O'Flannagann

Ali; 'Ersel'f ye' Sidhe-Fucker | Age; 23 | [ / ]

There are names for what Shae is. Most of them the sort that, were they said to her face, would prompt her to kneel the caller in the crotch. A tufted mess of woolly brown hair, freckles and vaguely Irish aggression. Shae is a would-be Druid that mostly regards the smaller Old Ones and the 'Sidhe.' The Spirits that dwell in the natural places, be they ghosts or monsters. A jack-of-all-trades, when it comes to miscellaneous archaic knowledge and dealing with the lesser entities, Shae is second to none. She's been more or less surviving on her own since the Return began, wandering around the West coast curing ills, wedding the unweddable, baptizing bastards and expelling unwanted presences. Something that's gifted her a convoluted way of speaking and a staunchness that seems inherent at this point. Entirely self-taught in the esoteric, Shae by all rights probably shouldn't be alive, having had multiple run-ins with Dark Young, Cthulhid Cultists and 'one very determined Hound of Tindolos.' Yet somehow she's not only alive, but healthy, able to support herself through 'Druid' work and largely cognizant. Coherent though? Not so much, to say nothing of her table etiquette. Her mannerisms also haven't exactly earned her any friends, and bar a few exceptions she largely works and lives alone. Constantly travelling, searching for something she will not speak of. More than willing to admit she'll happily die alone on the roadways.

Earning Shae's company and earning Shae's trust are two separate things. She'll stomach just about anyone's presence for work or for public 'politeness,' but actually going beyond that requires great effort and a deft touch. And no actual touching, she has at least three knives hidden on her person at all times. Under the woolen hair, molded clothes and fiery interior is a spirit that fears betrayal. Along with any sort of closeness. The world has grabbed her by the hair, pushed her into the mud, tried to do more. The nice ones always got it first. Leaving the jokes, the hungry shadows and her. Another joke but not a funny one, cruel, told to a deaf man who is alone in the dark. She'll entertain and work with the shadows and the jokes-that-look-like-men for a price, but anything else? That's a labour, one Shae hopes you'll find not worth the effort.

"Well? Was ye'expect'na kiss onna' cheek anna' handie' a' somethin'?"

- Zebadiah 'Zippo' Biggs

Ali; Himself, not one to judge lest he be told 'up yours' | Age; 26 | [D]

Young mister Biggs has lived through interesting times. Most of those times covered him in garbage and spat in his face of course, but there isn't much he can do about that. The son of a coal miner, his mother died in labour and Zebadiah lost his father at age five, forcing him into work at the very same coal mine just to survive. He left at twelve, breaking into the mining company's store and making off with 'due compensation' that got him out of Virginia. He saw what a damn racket it all was early, women slaving in a mill nine hours a day beside their kids, boys grumbling about 'real men's work' and still grumbling on in the vile black air. Slaving for scraps while the foremen smoked cigars upstairs. Since then Zebadiah or 'Zippo' to his few friends has drifted around the north-west USA as a handyman. Becoming adept in just about any small task that a home or shop-owner could have need of. Working on the cheap and still barely surviving at the best of times, Zebadiah prefers this over any tied down life, working for pennies and dimes as he is. He's a free man with his self-respect and that's worth just about any price. He's also one of the few who largely ignored the shifts in the outer world. Down in the mines, in the thin air with all the world ready to crash down on one's head, a person often saw things in the shadows. Things a person learned to ignore. That lesson still holds true for Zebadiah, who still ignores everything that isn't trying to actively eat someone. Leading him to work for people who most federal agents would very much like to 'talk' to and kept his head screwed on tighter than most. He intends to keep to his current course, after all, a man's gotta eat. End of days didn't change that.

A man of simple living and simple comforts, Zebadiah's easy to entertain. A meal, a warm seat and a nakedness in intentions more than enough for him. Supposing of course that those intentions are worth his time, he isn't interested in being a spectacle for a bunch of New Englanders who've never seen a negro before, nor is he going to comply with the sort of person who just wants their opinion validated. Someone who sees him as Zebadiah, or Zippo? That's enough, painfully rare as it is. In travel he's surprisingly flexible, finding work in even the briefest moments, it isn't uncommon for him to end up repairing suitcases and patches coats in transit on trains or on ferries. Good company, friends or otherwise and creature comforts are enough for him.

"Nigger this, negro that. Makes a man want to run off to the god forsaken fringes."

- Herman Masthau-Whateley



Ali; Nominally Yog-Sothoth | Age; A Spry 42 | [O / D]

Anyone in Dunwhich who knew Herman's full surname refused to speak to him. Though that was by and largely common throughout most of Massachusetts. Born in Germany and emigrating to America at age nine, Herman grew used to this behavior, acting as a messenger to the various sects of the Whateley clan in New England. He retained a largely cold relation for most of his family, including his birth parents and siblings. The only one he was close to was his 'Cous Lav,' a woman he describes as soft, cursed with albinism and her forefather's meddling in their own blood, passing their curses onto her. But still kind and like the sister he never had. Herman grew into a man without formal education, growing more and more estranged from everyone beside Lavinia, cutting his ties one by one as he grew more reliant upon his own hunting. The strangeness of the Whateley clan left him well prepared for the shifting stars, his first encounter in the dark woods ended with him gunning down two ghouls and cutting the head from a third. Amidst it all, the horrible end came. Lavinia perished, her 'spawn' calamitously stepped out into the world being promptly slain. Leaving Herman alone. With nothing but the clothes on his back, a single silver pendant and his hunting gear he left home. Stepping out into the wilderness of backwoods Massachusetts. Since then he's lived alone as a mountain man, keeping the secrets old Wizard Whateley hidden away and only occasionally venturing out to sell excess skins and trinkets of bone. He is quiet, contemplative and surprisingly gentle, albeit distant at the best of times. Isolation both physical and decades of the social sort have taken their toll on him. Still, only an idiot would think him soft. He's more than aware of what people say behind his back. To say nothing of the accursed munitions loaded in his worn Peacemaker and well-loved Krag-Jørgensen.

Herman is a man won or lost out in the wilds by the campfire. While one can drag him away it's painfully obvious he belongs to a breed of men that's been dying since the east and west coasts were bound together by the railroad. The shifting tides may have brought some small reprieve, but even now the archetypal pioneers are falling one by one. He can spot schuksters and snakes a mile off, uninterested in the sort of shadowy skullduggery that more settled locals allow to fester. He prefers the honest, those who can profess their intentions up front no matter what they may be. At least the Ghouls tell no lies. Herman is notably more tolerable than most around 'off-looking' sorts, be they deformities of flesh, the mentally distant or those of mingled heritage. Content to wait around on the fringes waiting for whatever work he's being held for before returning to the hills, unless of course he's working for a friend.

"You can tell the character of a man not by how he treats his friends, but by how he treats those 'beneath' him."

- Esanath White

Ali; **The Black Womb** | Age; **15 in Record Only** | [ / ]

Disconcerting was how Esanath White was always described back home in Arkham. Small, dark haired, with overportrudent eyes, wherever she went dogs growled and cats brayed. Losing her father at age eight, she was admitted to Miskatonic University at age twelve, possessing an intelligence unbefitting of a girl her age. This was because Esanath wasn't actually Esanath. Rather, her father stole her body from her, having accidentally perished in an occult encounter. For six long horrible years, Esanath was a spectator in her own body. Ephraim White was a man of hedonistic tastes and absolute ambition, producing Esanath out of Deep One Union and using her body as he wished, as the Stars grew right. But Ephraim never expected his daughter was waiting, biding her time and siphoning away small memories. On Esanath's fourteenth birthday, her father attempted to possess a man, tripping up for but a moment and casting the man's mind wide, himself not seizing fully on the stranger's body. Binding a single abominable demand, Ephraim was devoured wholesale by Esanath's mind, the blood of Dagon boiling from her body as her eyes burned. The house Esanath had lived in her whole life burned down around her, shaking screams not belonging to any mortal body echoed from the flaming building. From the fire, Esanath emerged. Only Esanath. The master of herself for the first time in her life and equipped with all the vile knowledge her father had spent his life acquiring, Esanath left Miskatonic and Arkham behind, venturing off to Boston. Since then she's lived a comfortable existence as a 'spiritual advisor' performing petty dabbling for exorbitant fees. She possesses much knowledge concerning the Black Pharaoh, his curses and hypnosis. If threatened she will gladly resort to inhuman use of such arts. Still a small dark-haired girl, she was never able to scrub the rings of soot that shroud her black receded eyes. Quick-witted, cynical and well-spoken, Esanath is content to keep to her status-quo as she considers her peace well earned.

Esanath's disturbing appearance and unnerving whit usually drives off most people, though she is only fifteen Esanath has experienced more than some do in their whole lives. At least, experience that matters, in her opinion. She enjoys the company of intelligent people and if someone interested in her makes it through her initial 'examinations of character' and is still willing to be anywhere near her, she'll allow a more relaxed stance with them. Something the simpletons might call 'companionship.' Not that anyone has really gotten through those 'examinations.' Should one endeavor, they could earn a very powerful friend. Or something else, Esanath will be frank about her Father's use of her body and her own wants. She makes it apparent she prefers to be on top.

"Believe me when I say I have more than enough experience on the matter."

- 'Thay' Theodora Webber

Ali; **Good Missus' Yidhra** | Age; **19** | []

Contrary to popular belief, not all those borne of Deep One blood become Deep Ones. In fact many just end up with glassy eyes and early hair-loss. The blood of Dagon requires more than simple presence. But even in ideal circumstances things go wrong. Things like 'Thay,' as she prefers to be called. Miss Theodora Webber was born wrong, possessing gills and a set of fangs that could take a finger off. Theodora grew up trapped between worlds, not human but certainly not of the Deep, her father resented her and her mother would have gladly snapped Theodora's neck given the chance. At nine she walked away from home and never looked up. Wandering down the coastline until she hit Boston. Theodora ended up living in a fishing warehouse, allowed to stay and work there by the foreman who took pity upon her. Repairing nets, inspecting the undersides of fishing trawlers and eventually small book-keeping earned her a little pay and food to eat. While far from idyllic, Theodora was probably happier than she'd ever been living there. An odd girl who became an odd woman, gruff and uncouth but well-liked by most of the fishing crews. A bright face in a world growing dark and strange. Such things do not last forever, and two years ago the Foreman who'd allowed Theodora to stay passed in a terrible accident, the new management immediately ordered her out. Thay didn't protest, though just about every trawler crew did. She'd saved up enough she was able to find lodging in the city. Since then she's struggled to find work, drifting from job to job attempting to avoid trouble. But her gills, teeth and Selachii eyes make this difficult. Still, Thay isn't one to complain, trying to always make the best of a bad situation, knowing well when to cut and run when things grow foul. She's got a nose for danger, quick reflexes and failing everything else a bite that can pull off a man's throat.

Rough around the edges but genuinely kind-hearted, Thay mostly wants to stay out of trouble and live as she wants. Working class, she's never been the sort of person to sit down idly and wait for what comes. While she prefers the company of the familiar Boston fishermen, she'll work with anyone who doesn't just glare at her gills and looks her in the eyes. Befriending her from there is pretty easy, so long as one gets used to the thick Boston slang she's naturally inclined to. She helps where she can, able to drive boats and cars and second to none in matters of trawler maintenance. Outside of those areas she's limited, but she does what she can and is quick to learn.

"Pissah. Shoudn'a ever come bahck."

- Ordixanê Xelîlê - Ordikhan Jalile

Ali; **Kin & Tawûsê Melek, the Peacock Angel** | Age; **22** | [-]

Ordixanê stepped off the boat at Red Hook aged fourteen, the final steps in a long escape prompted by the genocidal violence that was all too common during the violent collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Ordikhan's life hadn't exactly been pleasant prior to the flight from the Orient, nor did it become pleasant in America. He lost his parents to the Russian flu a year after arriving, leaving him alone to look after his three younger sisters. Despite the odds stacked against him, Ordikhan made it work. Working for a local import company that employed many exiles from the territories once belonging to the Sublime Porte, he rose to a small position of power being the only one to speak his people's tongue as well as Armenian, the common Kurdish, Arab and the company owner's native Dutch. Ironically his worst language is English, focus on work and family giving him little time to learn properly. New York these days is as much of a hot mess as it was before R'lyeh rose, in that you'll find an excellent guide in mister Jalile. If you need agents or supplies of occult nature, he can either see you supplied or point you in the right direction, if you want to know of the city and its intrigues as seen from the true depths he can supply information. Skilled in writing he can read in eleven languages, two of which cannot be pronounced by human tongues. Likely he could move beyond the place he currently is at or even stop working for a time now that his financial situation is secure. Ordikhan isn't the sort to rest though.

Endeavoring always to be a responsible sort, Ordikhan's primary concern is his sisters. So much so one wonders what he'll do with himself when they step out on their own paths. The oldest Lamiya is two years younger than him and due to leave home next year for college, interested in teaching work herself. Ordikhan's younger sisters, Dalal thirteen and Nadia at fourteen remain in schooling, at the moment enjoying youth. Something Ordikhan worked himself raw for. Anyone in his life with an intention of getting along with him would do well to understand that. Anything that would remove him with possible permanence from them and Red Hook is enough to drop that specific relation.

"Hma- forgive me please, my English rather bad. Would say this, Obsidian proper, or if not able to find? Marble."

- Ajit Jassa Singh

Ali; **Truth, Justice and Him the most Righteous & Shapeless** | Age; **65** | [D]

There are no more knights in shining armour, nor gentlemen heroes. The Great War burned and gassed such innocent naïve notions, along with so many soldiers. It is said in some towns in Russia, Britain and Germany not a single man returned home, only their shadows did. While America did not suffer so grievously as the old world there remains a cynicism in the air about heroics. Ajit is the sort of man who scoffs at that cynicism. Drafted back in 1880 a young man, Ajit defected to the Boers and assisted them in successfully repelling the British advance. Since then he's drifted with nothing but his swords and his dastar as his constant companions. Standing for those who cannot stand for themselves and becoming something of a legend to anti-colonial types. Despite being only a little over five feet and an old man now, Jassa remains to be tenacious individual. The only man to have engaged a flying polyp in unarmed combat and lived to tell the tale, some scarcely believe he's human with the swiftness of his blades. An expert in melee combat, he knows well how to fight against all manner of opponents, human or otherwise. Having secured a good amount of wealth he refuses to explain Jassa intends on spending his twilight years in America. Teaching his martial arts, swordplay and tactics to the 'worthy.' While it isn't his direct intention, he also has a nasty tendency to run in and subsequently cut into trouble. It's a known fact many ambitious cults seek to cut Jassa's heart from his chest. A fact that makes the older man preen.

Judicious and organized, despite owning very little and living simply Ajit seems constantly busy. Ever sharpening his blades, be they sword, dagger or chalikar. Ever inspecting his surroundings. So much so it seems as if he does nothing for himself. Perhaps that is the case, for in conversation he makes it apparent he knows not what to do with himself. Just about the only time he feels 'himself' is when blades are drawn and rifles unslung. Everything else is simply prelude, the space between and ensuring the skills and arts that got him so far are passed on. For all the stories he has to tell, none of them come from times of rest. Though openly friendly he hasn't the faintest idea of how to properly treat his friends. To say nothing of other relations.

"Excellent! I always prefer to be outnumbered!"

- Arin Bagarationi

Ali; **Herself** | Age; 17 | [🗨]

Arin's surname turns the heads of those familiar with Caucasian politics, and yes, she's one of 'those' Bagarationi. Technically the third and last in line to the crowns of Armenia, Georgia, Ossetia and Abkhaz, Arin is technically a princess though she absolutely despises the title. The collapse of the near east, the ethnic cleansing and annexation by the Soviets drove the few remaining members of the Bagarationi dynasty from the Caucasus to Britain. Her father though he'd been due to inherit the thrones of the loose coalition never did. A prince in perpetual incumbency. Trapped in England as the world slowly fell apart. Arin tried to ignore everyone aside her older brother and sister with mixed success, submersing herself in books and writing. An aspiring author, what little of Arin's life disintegrated four years ago when her father tried to force himself on her. Something snapped. She doesn't recall what happened, waking up covered in blood in a ditch a ways from London. Her father's body was found in her room without a head and rended to shreds, most of his blood gone. Arin fled England, and has spent the past few years in transit attempting to understand the affliction that taints her. Attempting to avoid situations that send her into 'the state.' According to her she loses consciousness, but her body remains animate, unhinged and moved to its very limits. One would not think a girl not even five feet would be particularly dangerous, but most haven't seen a red eyed girl rip a grown man's jaw off and subsequently beat him to death with it. Dark skin, dark hair and dark eyed, in normalcy Arin seems almost like she's going to fade into the shadows. Melancholic, straight-forward and ruthless when she wishes to be, Arin seems to be entirely joyless. But of course, what does she have to be happy about? That is the dominion of the cowardly optimists.

Arin attempts to isolate herself as best she can, knowing just how dangerous she is she endeavors to avoid putting people in danger. Even if there isn't an immediate threat, what good is there in getting to know someone when they'll run when they see 'her true self?' The devouring killer that can tear a person's arm with one swift yank. She doesn't believe anyone would willingly keep her company after such a sight, though a few try to prove her wrong in that. Though it isn't immediately apparent the thought of familiarity perturbs her and she forcefully attempts to avoid anything more. Viewing one's self as little better than a beast tends to lead one to act like one, and one might think she's more comfortable with that miserable state over the prospect of human companionship.

"I'm not under the delusion I'm human any more. It would be better if you left me alone, you know?"

- 'Repentance'

Ali; **Kind Mother Yidhra** | Age; 26 | [🗨]

Allegedly the bastard child of an unwed Romani couple who were travelling across the USA. Internal band politics led to her being abandoned somewhere in Utah at age four. A little girl who by rights shouldn't have survived. But she did, Repentance describes wandering, slowly wasting away until heat exhaustion finally dropped her to the dust. She woke in a tent, in the lap of a strange woman with pure inky black eyes. The woman said no words to her, bringing Repentance back from the brink. She brought Repentance with her, until she found a Sinti band who agreed to take her in. Still, the woman spoke no words, and after kissing Repentance on the head, left. Never to be seen again. Repentance knew that woman then as Yidhra, more her mother than the womb that brought her into this world. In spite of all the struggles she faced, Repentance grew into a fine lady. Eloquent, shrewd and humble to a fault, Repentance is a staunch worshipper of Yidhra. Something perhaps to be expected of someone from an inherently unbound people. She's better read than just about anyone expects her to be, her beliefs based in what she knows of the long agonizing road of her people and her own history. The vast majority of people will never regard people like Repentance, much as most of the older things. Yidhra is one of the few knowing, beside a few denizens of this land. One must do as they must in order to survive, particularly when they deal with those in comfortable positions of power who do not need to worry about retribution for their actions. Repentance travels on her own now, the clan she joined as a little girl voluntarily split to avoid raids by authorities. She wanders in her wagon from town to town with only her horse (Detroi) and her cat (Ohi) for company. One would be surprised how much a woman can make from fortune telling and a few compliments.

The Repentance speaking to a prospective customer and the Repentance behind a closed door are two different people, the former put on to avoid offending sensitive settled Americans. The latter is removed, bar those bound out of social folds and those she trusts. Prodding and frequently uncouth, Repentance sees no reason to lie about what she sees plainly, be it positive or negative. If she likes a person she makes it obvious, and after a while if hints are not taken she'll make the opposite equally apparent. While a content isolate, she does prefer to have company, particularly with kids and other women. Not to say she doesn't like men, she's just rather... Particular. Demanding and ungrateful, but someone able to accommodate her way of living she could certainly find it in herself to... 'Tolerate.'

"Perhaps the most honest thing one can be is to be born properly unwanted."

- Iosef Adzhiashvili

Ali; Family & Friends | Age; 16 | [🍷]

When listening on matters of Russia, Socialism and the Hebrews, mister Adzhiashvili tends to laugh. A Georgian borne Jew, the Russian civil war forced his family to flee to England. The naked truth of his people's condition became apparent. The Bolsheviks regarded Jews as a bourgeois class, the Tsarists considered them to be revolutionaries below even dogs. Anti-Semitism is rampant these days, and Iosef's family fled from country to country as borders closed one by one. The journey was arduous with only Iosef and his then flu stricken father arriving in New York two years ago. His father died and Iosef was left to himself on the streets of New York with only his clothes, nine Francs and his mother's fiddle. Iosef in spite of his situation and all the losses he'd endured refused to allow despair to take him, spending his nights and days searching out crowded street corners and playing away. One wouldn't even know he's self-taught with how well he plays, listening on a person can close their eyes and the world will be right for a time. His practice has allowed him to not only survive but to thrive. Dark shadows do not stalk the 'Grand Central Tevye' though the most recent 'Bowery Boys' have tried. Infectiously cheerful, content in life and unbending in his optimism. Iosef's ears remain low to the ground in his own New York and is likely to know any goings on in the mundane or occult dark. Speaking Georgian, Russian, Yiddish and English, he's also well received by most Ashkenazi sorts in New York and the North West. In matters of the outer spaces, there is something otherworldly in his music. Ghouls will not strike him, Shoggoths will flee from him. It remains to be seen if this is the result of the Fiddle or himself, but Iosef is not one to look a gift horse in the mouth. Or any mouth. He possesses an odd mental constitution, where one suffer headaches, bleeding of the facial orifices and waking nightmares, Iosef walks untroubled.

Barring blatant vitriolic Anti-Semitism or Nativism Iosef will entertain just about anyone and tries to make friends when he can. Not that he has many, people have their own lives to live and Iosef understands. It is funny, that sort of understanding, the sort that makes him cringe up when one hears the news from Germany or Russia, of Madagascar and Uganda. Spending time around him one might see the armour of confidence he's forged for himself, hiding the understanding young man. What can a person do when dealing with such things greater than themselves? According to Iosef, the answer is to play on, sticking beside those who would return the favour.

"Life is very good!"

- Dr. Erich Jose Saavedra

Ali; Himself | Age; ?? | [🍷]

In matters concerning the fields of Biophysical and Thermochemistry, Dr. Saavedra is second to none. Born in rural Galicia, Saavedra wandered the Balkans and North Africa for almost six decades if one extrapolates time from his stories. Working as a medical doctor and studying various folk beliefs concerning healing, Saavedra is one of the few who has read the Kitab al-Hikmah al-Najmiyya in its entirety. Doing so as a foolish younger man almost killed him, as it did his companions at the time. Wandering for a month across the Northern Sahara, he came to his senses slowly and while he managed to return to Galicia as put together as he could be, he never returned in full. Even now he admits some part of him is still trapped in a dusty Tunisian library beside Dr. Richta and Mister Jenid, still reading ancient pages that glow with star shine. He taught Thermochemistry in Madrid for a time, moving up to Paris before his health 'declined.' The specifics of his condition are purposefully kept to himself, but in his current state his illness forbids him from entering spaces above freezing temperature. Even now he is largely confined either to a specially modified carriage or his dwelling. Relying upon hand built cooling machines to keep the heat at bay. For now he's chosen to remain in America, though he imagines there will come a time when he'll need to immigrate to some god forsaken country that can more easily accommodate his 'condition.' But that is a dreadful venture he doesn't wish to consider, for now Saavedra wishes to remain accessible to reporters and neighbors who he remains quite attached to. Honest as a man like him can be, persuasive and ultimately inclined to teach, Saavedra also makes it no secret he has at least two mistress's he doesn't wish to be parted from. He is as much a gentleman as he can be, given his circumstances.

Dr. E.J. Saavedra provides as much as he can from his unfortunate position, be it advice, technical support, conversation or companionship. Understanding that others must come to him has done away with his more brash and impetuous thinking he often resorted to in youth. His condition making him appreciate the ties between individuals. Be they fashioned in friendship, work or romance.

"Believe me my friend, fear is a useful thing. It drives men to their greatest actions. Be they good or bad depends upon the quality and breeding of the man."

- Old Miss Kezzel & Iephretta O'Darby

Ali; Shub-Niggurath | Age; ??(?) & 20 | [☉]

An odder pair one would struggle to find. Old Miss Kezzel, slumped over from extreme age though there remains a mania and a hungry awareness in her gaze. Iephretta, young, sunny and unmoved by even the thickest fog. Both tinted in muck and smelling of the deep woods. If Miss Kezzel is to be believed she is the oldest living and able servant of Shub-Niggurath on the planet, having long since entrusted her body and soul to the Black Goat. Iephretta a bright witch who the elder decided to take on as an apprentice. Iephretta seems at times almost ignorant to the inner workings of the cult she's a part of in her chipperness, Kezzel's more lurid and disturbing quirks skipping right past her. Or at least it seems that way, Iephretta is of the new breed of witch that maintain a semblance of civility and mannerism lost on Kezzel's generation that resented their status. Kezzel is perverse, sarcastic but also genuinely bitter. If she's to be believed she was almost burned at Salem, played by Nyarlathotep and has had to rebuild her life time and time again. If so much as one hair on Iephretta's head were to be harmed she makes it no secret she would happily drag the offender through the corners of reality to a lightless place. There she would peel the skin from said offender. Slowly. Mercifully this has not yet transpired, the old witches' cold glare and paranoia have spared her and her apprentice any harm. But that is no reason for her to cease her cautions. It should go without saying that Miss Kezzel is extremely experienced with magic, having personally danced with the Black Pharaoh and returned her soul to the Mother of a Thousand Young. It would be correct to define her as 'no longer human' having perished three times now, each time replacing her lost parts with black wood. She can turn a man inside out with the click of her fingers, though she's also proficient in medicine and midwife. By contrast Iephretta has only barely become a proper witch and has much to learn, though she also takes care of mundane tasks Kezzel can't be bothered with.

If one can deal with the odd mannerisms of Shub-Niggurath's devoted, it would be easy to associate with Miss O'Darby. Though she's ecstatic to be the apprentice of such a legendary figure within the Cult she's starved for company. Back in the covenant she made friends easily and still gets frequent letters from them, but it doesn't stave off the loneliness. Another person around would be wonderful, a sister she could share secrets with would harken back to the covenant. But a man? She's at best inexperienced with men and hasn't the faintest idea what courting and shame are. This dynamic is further complicated by Kezzel, who despises puritan types but would stomach such if Iephretta was genuinely bound up to one. Someone who is wry and nakedly raunchy would get along easily with her. A woman who befriended Iephretta she might consider taking them on for tutelage. But if a man tried courting that nice girl? If he doesn't share, or doesn't let Kezzel watch she will snap something off.

"Pleasure to meet you sir!" & "Oh, yesss. A delightful 'pleasure' s'uh."

- Marie Charlotte 'Victorieux' de Brussel

Ali; Mère Hydre, Practical Relationship | Age; 25 | [☉]

Most American citizens are familiar with the German treatment of Belgians during the Great War. Brutish and paranoid, swatting the shadows for dissidents that did not exist. At first, Marie was born to a single mother in a small village north of Namur, and despite her bastardry lived a largely quiet life. Until, of course, the war found its way to her doorstep. During the German occupation Marie's mother was shot in the back. Killed her instantly. The Germans created those Francs-tireurs that would go on to haunt the occupation. Marie became a young woman with rifle in hand running across the Belgian countryside, jumping from network to network focused solely on making the Huns bleed. Until the war ended, the German army collapsing into chaos as the high command collapsed into insurrection. The King returned and Belgium was saved. M.C. 'Victorieux' de Brussel ended the war with thirty seven confirmed kills and nightmares, both those of violence and those borne of the waxing stars. In spite of her best efforts to settle she never could, eventually giving up on the attempt and leaving for America to teach shooting. Something that's netted her a small position of respect and a full purse. Daring, meticulous and when it comes down to it single minded in task, Marie when she enters a fey mood seems scarcely human. In quiet she admits she's stilted, not all their mentally at the best of times. You won't find a better sharp-shooter in civilian clothes, notably best in situations against human opponents she's well versed on dealing with stranger things.

Marie is difficult to talk with, being at the best of times distant. She admits plainly her mind never really returned to its place. That she feels most comfortable setting a shot with her 89 'Native' rifle. Finding herself 'short' on any 'relaxed' conversation, her best efforts will be put on just not engaging in conversation. The best way one would get along with her is to not talk. Depending on one's disposition this may not be so terrible. Some things need not be said, empty words are unneeded. Such a silence would, given time, allow a bond.

"Hm... A' must be sick to love that smell. Powder, it is better than the finest honey."

- Matthew 'Xerxes' Jay Rollington

Ali; Nyarlathotep, Until This Damned Sign Comes Off | Age; 33 | [-]

Few men have as much experience with the outer sphere as M.J. Rollington, Call sign 'Xerxes.' Back during the war before the United States entered the fray, Matthew joined the Army to escape a mundane farm life. Quick witted and naturally gifted in decryption he caught the attention of a still classified network in the US government. The nebulous group that had been put together to investigate the first signs of the 'end times' had him drafted and sent off to German Africa. Matthew was dropped into the fire, pursued by the fledgling cult of Xastur and German Colonial authorities, he scarcely escaped Cameroon alive and spent two months in a mental asylum, until the panic attacks stopped. They hadn't actually stopped, the agency needed him back. Matthew spent seven years running across the world as it slowly became apparent nothing could shift the celestial tides. The Agency was disbanded, but Matthews's voyage was far from over. Drifting from cult to organization to lodge he still ventures out seeking arcane lore. Pragmatic, coy and above all self-reliant, Matthew seeks to rise to such a position he might become something more. This isn't just about the United States anymore, it's about all of mankind. He keeps his exact plans in the dark and refuses to share them even on pain of death, instead preferring to focus on objectives. Stringing together the laylines to keys and playing the songs that bind words. Dexterous and a jack of all trades, there are few as well balanced in their arcane lore and none of them operating alone. Aside from a few inconveniences, a slurry of curses and an unpleasant binding the followers of the black Pharaoh wove into his spine he's a force to be reckoned with. Though he could use some help with that sign. It gets itchy and occasionally tries to seize his body, filling his mind with an unending abyss. Annoying to say the least.

Matthew doesn't trust easily, having seen well what some entities can do, having seen so many associates bite the dust in an instant. Trust comes with time and passage, you don't know a person's character until you've seen them terrified and panicked with their back to the wall. Until they reach the breaking point. So many people shattered when the mist finally rose up and the dreams merged with the waking world. But in truth that is just a mere fog before the hailstorms and tornados that may come. If someone were to prove themselves, one might be able to call Xerxes friend and to have the title be returned.

"Gods will not change for us anymore than the winds. Which is why we must adjust our sails."

- "Snake Vargas"

Ali; Father Cthulhu, Mother Hydra & Other Bums | Age; 84 | [>]

Whispers abound of a legendary expert of the Deep, devout of two warring sides tolerated by both for his service. Feared and wanted by the Federal Government, admired or despised by those aligned to the powers swirling about at the bottom of the oceans. One would not expect that figure to be a disheveled four foot ten vagrant. An enigmatic figure who when confronted in the flesh reveals little, he was a civil war veteran who fought for the Union and regarded Tecumseh Sherman as 'the only man he'd ever willingly served.' His life afterwards is made up of rumor and allegation, some of which he wonders if it wasn't dreamt up. Years spent wandering about North Africa and India, scouring for artifacts and perhaps incidentally beginning several cults to the Old Ones that dwelled beneath the depths. He returned to America before the last century was out, wandering errantly to the current date. Details on why are scarce, but if he is to be believed he realized long ago that his own happiness, even in an era ruled by leviathan nightmare, would only come from such a life. In his rare fully cognizant moments. Often unhinged, always rampant and proud of his own layer of filth. Snake Vargas has a long history with the occult and an intimate understanding of it, of the way dreams and nightmare meld with the physical. While he doesn't exactly teach this knowledge, just watching him and listening to his rantings can make sense of things. At the cost of one's own health potentially, as time goes on one notices the cracks, the lines and the chains, all of it hidden. It wears on a person, something Snake is familiar with. You'll get it. Eventually.

Snake can be won over with a nickel, a bottle of bourbon and a bowl of oatmeal. Keeping him around requires 'none of that fawning boloney, Dixie callocking cock gobbling.' He despises the way most cultists stand about in their idle placations, uninterested in the pointless and worthless groveling. No, he wants someone who stands when he stands and sits where he sits. Someone who listens with their eyes, hears with their ears and fills in the hole after they shit. That's enough for him to call that someone 'friend-oh-brother-mine' even that someone is a woman. Not at all a lecherous sort, only someone truly desperate to 'make a mistake' will get anywhere in 'that' regard.

"Best listen to me boi'o, else you'll be getting sodomized in churches an' molested by thirteen year ol' girlies."

- 'Fatimah Haliid'

Ali; **The First and The Last, Yog-Sothoth** | Age; 30 | [◉ / ☽]

Truth be told the 'Mad Arab' stereotype is overdone. Those familiar with Near Eastern occult history would know that Ali Abd-al-Hazra was half Turkish and spoke Persian more than he did Arab, but of course the westerners care little of histories intricacies. Much to Fatimah Haliid's utter disdain. That is not her birth name, nor the name she arrived in America with. It has served her well enough though, and for the foreseeable future it shall remain. Fatimah's history is cloaked in mystery. She speaks little of the past, only admitting she was born in the British Mandate and was at one point almost sacrificed by servants of the Yellow Mark. Her escape from the 'road to Carcosa' is one of the few things she'll speak freely of. Just another band of idolatrous dogs that revealed their true colours when the Stars turned foul. Just another band they may be, she admits she holds a grudge, unwilling to deal with even those who associate with the Foul Shepherds followers. That firms her admittedly shrouded beliefs and ties to the Gate and Key. Fatimah's goals remain nebulous at best, her search having long since forced her to learn English and consume seemingly nonsensical and disconnected literature across all fields. Some with an understanding of Arab might recognize her own tomes, fragments of Abd-al-Hazra's writing and the beloved copy of the Jävdännāme-ye kabir prominent. Humble yet unbowed, enigmatic at the best of times but still warm on occasion. Fatimah has an understanding of reality that allows one to unhinge it to their own ends. A mind's string might be plucked if need be, a set of knees made to be moved a few blocks away. It gives her no satisfaction, but she has come too far to be stopped now.

For someone who has spent their adult life looking with feverish intent for answers to questions she doggedly cannot share, Fatimah's heart isn't yet frozen. In spite of the world turning cold. Tipping where she can, shifting the tides. Americans still baffle her in some regard, the way they make servants in food places beg for scraps. It takes time to build comradery, more if you're a man, though reaching a place of... Equilibrium balances out in the end. Instinctive distrust is only the surface, if a person wished to know Fatimah beyond an extremely competent ally with shrouded goals, one would have to deal with a deeper darkness. Some places, in her mind, should never be revisited.

"Sir you would do well understand I'm intimately familiar with the 'risks' my work comes with. I've prepared. I've dealt with many short sighted men and errant things in my time."

- 'Rat'

Ali; **Cash & Warm Sleeping Space** | Age; 12'ish | [-]

Providence Rhode Island has always had a black acrid underbelly, some say it has been there since Williams stepped off the boat while others consider the more shifts in the cosmos the culprit. It makes no difference to 'Rat' as she calls herself, who remembers no golden days where the darkness did not coil on the corners of the eye. Born on the street to a mother who died shortly afterwards, Rat was taken in by a number of vagrants who dwelled in Providence. Her 'paps' as she calls them have imprinted a callous but frightfully capable way of being onto Rat who embraces the position of hoodlum like it was made for her. Able to filch a brides ring from her hand on her honeymoon, the true extent of her larcenist talents are usually hidden, as the wise (wo)man only takes what she needs. She lives comfortably, moving from empty building to rough dwelling to fringe as she needs to with the others. Well taught you won't find a better guide to Providence on its ground and subterranean leve. Rat has seven 'paps' in total; Cyclops Cully, Earnest, Big Lugh, Warckhohw, Tellygram, Edacious and Cincinnatus. All of whom are about what one would expect of endemic vagabonds and would happily spit on your face for looking down on them. However despite their roughness it's evident the company cares about Rat and wouldn't hesitate to kill someone threatening or manipulating her. Under them, Rat's turned sly, coarse as sand covered creemee and above all able. Cully hasn't been looking too hot for a while now, Lugh's smoking is finally catching up to him and Telly's always been hanging on death's door with his weak heart. But Rat? Rat'll go far, she knows how to make it. Whatever she does, she does on her own terms. One better than any of them worthless 'paps.'

Rat lacks a formal education and is at best at odds with 'unearned' authority figures. One has to get in on her level if they want to influence her or call her a friend. There's too much presumption and worthless grandstanding out there for her, the last thing she wants is for someone to come down and tell her to do things. Reverse psychology and bribes will only get a person so far either, Warckhohw made sure she knew what she was dealing with when it came to adults, men in particular. It requires getting ones hands dirty and showing they have some wisdom of the streets and the stench of shit. Proving that one might find Rat receptive to some things, as long as they can be proved valuable.

"Watch your fuckin' wallet better. Christ."

- Detective Connor Butler

Ali; **The Folks Living in the US of A Buster** | Age; 40 | [◯]

For thirty years Detective Connor Butler lived a by and largely normal life. Born to a couple of well-off middle class Dublin immigrants, Connor grew up in what was an idyllic childhood over in Staten Island. Coming to the city he worked as Police Officer in Red-Hook for some years before an altercation with a migrant ended his career early. And no, it wasn't at all what it sounds, a startled Italian girl without a lick of English panicked and went out a window, Connor trying to grab her got several tendons in his leg sliced. He recovered, the girl recovered too without much in the way of injuries. Truth be told it could have been much worse and he openly admits he's glad he didn't have to consider the war. Getting out he took up private investigative work. That was when it all came apart. There'd always been the nastiness of men in New York, aided and abided by ignorance of the tongue and desperation bought by poverty. Connor dealt with it all on the ground as a swelling tide, growing bitter as he saw it swell. Often finding himself trapped between authorities increasingly resorting to lethal force with nebulous overseers and communities dealing with growing shadows. Can't sell out a young man for murder when he wasn't in control of his own arms. Can't turn over a punk to the beater with hungry eyes. In spite of the impossibility of the work and the hellishness he so often encountered, Connor has yet to give in. Resourceful, plain-spoken, and observant, Connor has a nasty quick draw and a seasoned record in investigation, law and the urban occult. Not a master of language he knows how to get the gist out of most migrants and knows the stakes of the game. Can't win all the battles, probably won't win most and sometimes your life is in the wager. But is that any reason to quit?

Despite his accomplishments and the many contacts he's made in his investigative career, Connor by and largely keeps to himself. Though fondly regarded the only human beings he actively interacts with are his secretary and his crotchety land lady. Which is enough, honestly. These days you either get the mask you put on stuck to your face or understand yourself, and Butler's got an understanding of himself if nothing else. Knowing himself, still dealing with those moments where the water swims and the sky burns, it's better for everyone if he just keeps a professional face. To get properly acquainted one must prove Connor won't find their bloodless corpse at the back door. Basic self-awareness and survivability. Then you can talk on the down. About what though, that depends on the one arriving at the table.

"Tarantula hawk venom. Nasty stuff, isn't it senior?"

- 'Phillip'

Ali; **Yet Unknown** | Age; ?? | [-]

A strange seemingly timeless man who was found wandering the streets of Boston muttering to himself feverishly. Phillip refuses to identify himself as anything but Phillip, refuses to say anything about himself and is at best terribly paranoid. At worst he'll barricade his quarters or random water closets. Mercifully he is very bad at this, and can usually be dragged out kicking and wailing. Overbearing, squeamish in any matter pertaining carnality, nakedly paranoid of anyone besides New Englanders of 'good breeding' and prone to waking up screaming. Phillip is at best a pain to deal with, though small gains may be made by exposure. But one will soon find he's woven into the occult, and has a perverse understanding he can't fully explain. Perhaps he doesn't wish to explain it, as words will usually reduce him to a gibbering mess. Writing however has proven to be a useful outlet, if one is willing to glean through his thick wordings and poor understanding of metaphysics.

Despite having obviously been through a ringer prior to his... Return to New England, Phillip cannot speak of it. Not write of it. Be it pride, disdain, discomfort or an inability to face it he simply can't. Having enough upon his plate to deal with puts such an endeavor years out, if one even lives that long it likely wouldn't be worth it. But perhaps, 'worth' is subjective. What is 'worth' when all the world might be swallowed when Sol's eye finally opens? What is 'worth' when the great delver turns itself upon Earth to settle debts? What is 'worth' when the Sultan awakens? Time will tell, and perhaps some truth held.

"Forgive me Robert. Forgive me August."

- "Ink"

Ali; **The Rotten Banner** | Age; ??? | [-]

Night Gaunts are at the best of times disconcerting. Their oily forms and near absolute silence have earned them a reputation as demons and harbingers of death. But they are neither. They just are. Ink is a Night Gaunt that, for whatever 'his' reasons has decided to follow you. Always fluttering a ways behind or ahead. Ink cannot explain why he does so, if he knows how to write and read he has not demonstrated this ability. Not having discernable facial features, one does not see him eat anything or express, in fact his classification as a life form remains unfounded. It may be possible Night Gaunts derive energy from heat or residual star energy. Perhaps even dreams feed them.

Nothing will be learned of Ink, other than his odd affection for you. He will not tickle you, nor will he pay attention to other mortals. He won't even be seen that often, only intervening when your doom is certain. You have a feeling that no matter how deeply you search you'll never understand why Ink acts like he does. Or, is that needed? Perhaps to a Night Gaunt, existence is enough. No need for answers, no need for noise or words.

"..."

- "Tanios Emaphorai"

Ali; **The Great Race of Once-Yith & His Generous Host** | Age; ????? | [◯]

One must shudder when they consider that, in spite of a hectic Odyssey across time and space across multiple bodies and realities, Tanios wanted to return to this plain and was *fucking thrilled* to be let in your body. While most of the Once-Yith are oddly chipper, Tanios goes a step further. Having spent long dwelling in men, 'she' went out of her way to avoid dropping people in other times back before (in her own time) by more convoluted mental switching schemes. Other bodies, other minds, they are fascinating. As much as the times and a places that bore and wrung them. Occasionally this led her to trisecting around as lesser creatures for a time, ensuring that a doomed form was inhabited by a beast, but it was well worth it. Tanios cares for her hosts, preferring to spectate unless a host threatens her or 'lets her in.' Tanios was not hatched and grown as Tanios, rather Tanios was the name given to her by a little Romani girl Tanios wound up 'in' when she began wandering across time and mind space. The connection between them was such that Tanios admits it was impossible to tell where the Once-Yith ended and the human girl began. Though Tanios left that girl behind, she retained the concern and closeness left behind.

Tanios will stay inside your mind space as long as you allow her to, speaking as much as your comfort allows. She won't interfere with your body unless you are rendered incapacitate, preferring to watch and listen free from the controls. Unless of course you request it. Letting her in is an odd experience, in that one might dwell in memories millennia old and not yet passed for a time. The specifics of reality tend to degrade during such a binding. Making it difficult to tell where you begin and Tanios ends. Oh, one will still retain themselves, but once the door is open it can never really be closed. Tanios though she means well doesn't help, the body and the mind deserve to be explored after all.

'Is that a sea cow? I've wanted to see one of those!'

- 'Little' Princess Junebug

Ali; Her 'Kingdom', The Rotten Banner | Age; 891 | [[]]

Standing at 'only' Six-Two, Junebug is an oddity within an oddity. Ghouls tend to be made, not born. Wrought of degenerated cannibalistic humans that descended into the space between, births are rare and females are not at all maternal. Simple creatures that possess a near agelessness, Junebug's mother was a rare exception to the ignorant state the corpse eaters are known for. A witch that descended into man-eating, Junebug allegedly had no father and was simply born one day. Not quite as smart as her mother but still miles above other Ghouls and equal to a human, she never grew beyond her current size. Something that bothers her to no end as Ghouls slowly grow as long as they live, mutating and becoming more terrifying with age. Despite the mocking she receives from her kin, she's one of the few who commands near universal respect from them. King George, Duke Oppo and her own mother 'Queen' Jag perished when Lythalia's horde of nightmares poured into the space-between, men descending with knives and noise and fire. It is impossible to say how many Ghouls perished amidst the return, but their numbers count only a few thousand now. Despised and hated across most of the world, between and without it, Junebug despises the current status quo. Hating the fact she has to wear clothes and endure daylight. But she knows well it must be endured, being perhaps the last barrier between the total collapse and extinction of the current kind. She understands working with humans and Night Gaunts and the accursed tunnelers is her only hope. She makes it apparent she doesn't like it and every step towards some coveted darkness is her indignation paid. Prone to the stilted dialogue of ghouls, Junebug is ferocious, curious and diligent. Able to kill and devour a full grown man in less than an hour, she is terrifying in a fight and able to talk to flies and hyenas.

Regarding humans Junebug is able to shelve Ghoul cruelty and man-eating for those who support her. She like much of her kind enjoys 'work' and if given 'work' that deals in 'disappearing' persons and bodies she will be very happy. Fiercely defensive of what is hers, if she considers one her 'friend' she'll protect them like a cornered hyena. She'll also attempt to turn them into a ghoul, though she can be persuaded to stop if one assures them they'll invest in 'other methods' to avoid death. Junebug works hard, like all the boys do. She would hate to work on the corpse of a friend, or something else. She might never forgive that.

"Upstairs too far. Boys hate it. Know not how much to hate. I hate. Hate light. Hate noise. Go back. Show you. Above and Below is right. You see. One day."

- 'Brahna Kal'

Ali; Only Yog-Sothoth and Nyarlathotep May Know | Age; ??(?) | [-]

None have seen Master Brahna Kal's face, not the monks of distant Leng or the tribesmen of the Congo. He has voyaged from abandoned Kadath to the wastes of Antarctica to the highest peaks in the Andes. Searching ever for things without words to properly describe them. A stranger bound up in robes of purple silk and a black wooden mask without openings. None can identify his accent, some are not even sure if he's a man from the tone of his voice and the muffling of his mask. He sidesteps trouble like a bat in a lightless cave, holds the enmity of many a Cult but never their gods and plainly states he is above the laws of men. Subsisting off of trading strange and ancient relics he finds in his seemingly unending quest, he pulls near rotten food up from a gloved hand up his sleeve, preferring whole raw fish and tins of sweets. Ambiguous at the best of times, motivated and rhyming. Brahna has magic most men have never heard of, specifically to the realm of perception. He prefers to not harm, instead amplifying terror to send problems running for the hills. Starry eyed with emptied bowels. Occasionally he laughs to himself, and sometimes may even share a joke. Most don't make sense at first, but time always plays to them. You may find yourself on death's door, and that memory will become clear, earning a bloody chuckle.

Brahna Kal doesn't follow, rather he is founded upon the 'same path.' One of such path will often find him, at times frantic and relaxed, often working towards the same goals. Such things are beyond control, already being chosen as they are. Brahna makes it apparent he views your fates as already done, yet to be done in the same right. Unavoidable as trains destined to crash into one another. Time and space do not matter in that. What is done in the mean-time holds little weight though it can be at least enjoyed. To watch, to listen. Needing neither eyes nor ears for them. One might never understand Brahna Kal, but that is fine. Acceptance would have those meetings be warm.

"Your name and mine do not matter, nor do our true names and our true faces. Only what we do here matters, puppet."

- 'Old Sphynx'

Ali; **The Streets of Ulthar** | Age; **As Old as Great Djoser's Pyramid** | [-]

Looking in books of the occult, one will see a motif ever returning, never the centerfold. Rather, always on the fringe, a hairless cat on the corner of the page. Wrapped about the page number, eyeing the reader. Some Hypothesize all of this is born of 'Old Sphynx,' a seemingly immortal cat that has wandered idly through the pages of history as little more than an odd footnote. One that wandered into your place and sat itself upon your lap. Seemingly just a cat, its true nature only rears its head in the history books and when harm arrives at the doorstep. Sphynx vanishes, returning only when there is nothing of danger. She does not need to be fed, is seemingly unaffected by cold (though always seems to be interested in her 'chosen's' lap) and can vanish from sight in an instant. Separating truth from fiction is difficult, but if half of what has been recorded is true then Sphynx has sat upon the lap of Attila the Hun, Gilded Hatshepsut, the Yellow Emperor and even the Mohammeden's Prophet.

Yet, when Sphynx rumbles she bears no mind bending weight. She seems to be just a cat that craves your presence. Her appearance and captivation by occult authors seems nonsensical. Perhaps there is more to the Old Feline, or perhaps there isn't. Who is to say?

Purring

The Burgess of Ulthar

Ali; **Her Seat in Ulthar & Good Company** | Age; ??(?) | [ / ]

Sly, knowing and engrossing. The Burgess of Ulthar may always be found in in her home. But as some know, time and space are... Rather flexible to those with knowledge in some things and a resident of Ulthar for a time might find the Burgess following them about. She asks you don't dwell on the 'how' of it, as that is unimportant. It makes transient heads spin and she detests the thought of you fretting over the details. Able to restrain herself and appear as an enigmatic but still flame haired traveller, the Burgess does not take a name, though those she follows might call her 'Libya' if they wish. Why she goes as she does she does not explain any more than the how, but she tends to be of great assistance when she wishes. Of course, she often is little help, idly waiting on the sidelines and enjoying the show. She is beloved by cats and seems to understand them in a way, making friends with them more than she does with other humans. They are not so easily scared off, nor 'scared of themselves.'

Her interest differ depending on one's relationship with her, she will vanish should one prove an enemy to Ulthar, and such a sort would vanish soon after. Those willing to put up with her mannerisms or inclined to them in part would find a steadfast ally, always waiting behind the locked door. Always grinning. But for those able to reciprocate that... Perverse and fomented mind? Perhaps they might learn of the true nature of the Burgess. God have mercy on them.

"Darling, you shouldn't worry. A pretty little thing like you hasn't enough time for that."

“ . . . ”

“Well. I suppose you best be off. Leave the old forest woman in her pit and all that.”

“Unless of course you're interested in begrudging her a little while longer? I find it odd the likes of you would pass through this way. What exactly is your business? Nothing good dwells up this way. Dare I ask what it is you seek?”

{ Endeavors & Undertakings }

Sensation's Self

Is there a need to have long term goals, bar persisting comfortably? In a world that could vanish in a moment should one really bother with worry and restraint? No, no you live for yourself, close to the moment without hampering future wants unduly. Of course they'll still be hampered and the long road will be bumpy. But that's the joy of it! Highs and lows, ups and downs, all of it is taken, nothing skipped over and ignored. Life is too short for that.

Service & It's Served

There is something to be said about the notion of service. Some overbearing types too attached to their pride will dissuade the notion of higher powers. Cowards. To be a part of something greater, to find safety and cause in function is its own reward. Success prompting more. Men might not dance in their grand pond anymore now that the ocean has swallowed it. But there is nothing wrong with that, and nothing wrong with serving a higher cause.

A Quiet Existence

So much commotion, noise and suffering. Too much for you, all of it. You want for nothing but a small place of your own, a quiet place where you do not have to worry or fear about the revolving spheres overhead and celestial tunes. The interplay of men is also too much for you to agonize over. Politics, religion, debate and squabbling. In the end it all falls silent in death. You want for peace and gods be damned you will find it.

Continued Acquisition

There is still power to be had, wealth to be seized, prestige to be gained and pages of your story to be written. Regardless of what shroud covers it and what mask it wears, ambition remains the same. You remain the same. Your intentions and interests in a future under your own heel by whichever means still drives you. You are not ignorant to the greater spheres and the world at large. You just don't care, unless those distant events enrich you.

The Alchemist's Ambition

In the 'Necronomica' and books of a similar nature there lie methods with which one might transcend their pitiable mortality. In strange Aeons even death may die. In that, you seek to imitate those Great Old Ones. To cast aside whatever you need to in order to ensure you last. There are many methods, but all require great effort to see achieved. And of course, sacrifice. One cannot hope to transcend themselves without casting a portion of themselves.

The Bi-Horned Ambition

Kings, Presidents, Leaders and Gods would have men believe they cannot reshape themselves. That there is an order to things that cannot be shifted, on mundane and celestial scales. One looks to ancient history and sees this for the lie that it is. That something might be taken, all the world forged under a single indomitable will. Throw aside everything but that will, cast all hands upon the table and if the stars are right? A new light would brighten all history to follow.

The Orphan's Ambition

Though the great forms that abound the seas and the skies are known to men, they remain at best enigmatic. But there is something ken to your own motions, a shared song wrung of creation and woven by dreams. One might become more than what they are, drawing their minds too places they never imagined to go. Ever growing beyond their creation, surpassing the end. No beginning, no end. Forgoing themselves to create something new.

“...”

“Well. I wish you the best then. Stranger.”

“I pray you do not **REGRET** those decisions.”

By: Highlander