The first rumble of thunder in the quiet

The Burning Barge Upon the Bloody Nile

This would be a period piece if it wanted to make an effort at realism. Set in some era where technology is less advanced, but not too primitive---let us grant limited electricity; medicine has happily moved past the use of leeches, but not past lobotomies; and men and women live confined in rigidly socially enforced gender roles. A post war era, with disbelief over the carnage wrecked upon countries and the manic need to invent the true, wild party. The 1920s will do.

Of course, there are rebels: anarchists, homosexuals, atheists, artists and free life enthusiasts. These days we glorify the rebel element without appreciating how truly difficult it must have been to run away from one's family. Unless one's family were anarchists themselves.

If one had the right combination of money, motivation, and emotional instability, I think one could very well enjoy breaking free.

Other than the standard use of "Times New Roman", I use many, many other fonts. I haven't asked for permission, but I will acknowledge them. I found all of them at <u>FontSpace</u>, a place that is like Disneyland for fonts. It is a cathedral of fonts I visit not as often as I should, and I take everything that might help me one day. I am very proud of my font collection.

Most of the time, I haven't been clear about states of undress, sexual explicitness, nudity, and other things. Other times, it's crazy physical explicitness that might push a costume budget over its limit. It's not that I don't care. I do care. It is a delicate, potentially dangerous thing—being graphic, I mean. People may say they're cool with whatever, and not realize that they totally are not and then everything gets ugly and fucked up. I think the scenes will work either way, graphic or suggested. What I care about is that no one is exploited or that this is done without any understanding as to why it needs to be done a certain way. That's all I'm saying.

I'll be honest: there's a lot of crazy crap in here. There's stuff that may be illegal. But it's the Lovecraftian universe, the Cthulhu mythos. If it ain't eldritch, it ain't Lovecraft.





AnotherScream

## SubwayNovella

TruetypewriterPolygIOTT



JMH Arkham

TRUETIES

Nightmare Pills

SOMETHING STRANGE

LewisCarroll

Great Day Personal Ase

THE DEVIL NET

Hysteria

Quilted Butterfly

## なみでいえ マタキ あき うき ママロ タクスマリを (大き) マウトティッスフラフシ でと チ ア・1 シタクスマリを (Lovecraft's Diary)

BULLET IN YOUR HEAD

A. Theme for Muscler

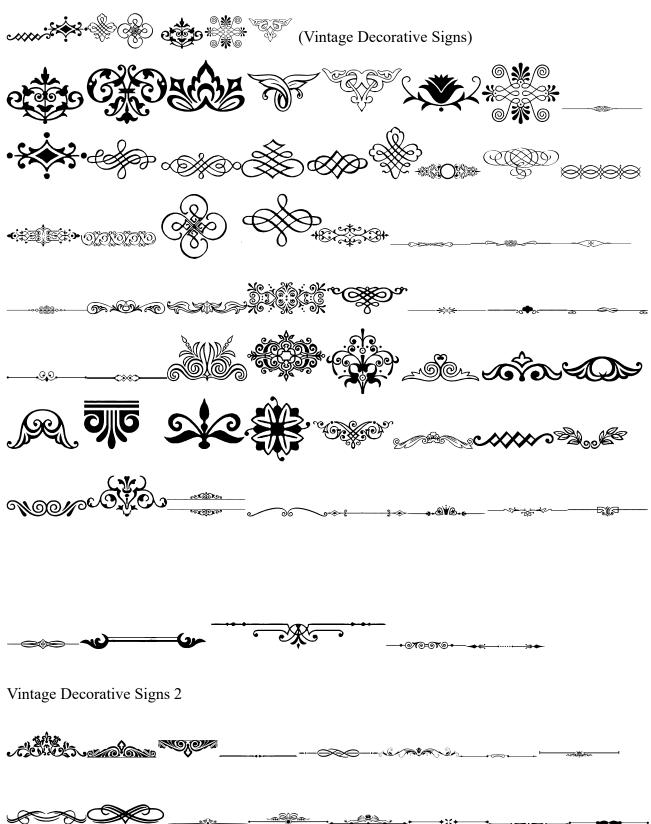
CRIMES TIMES SIX

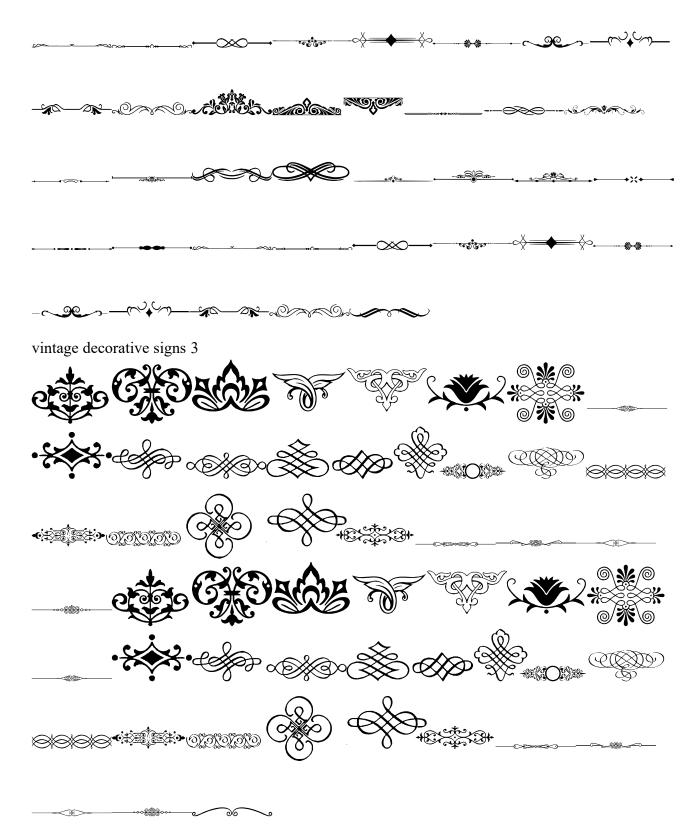
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Chiller





Bergamot Ornaments





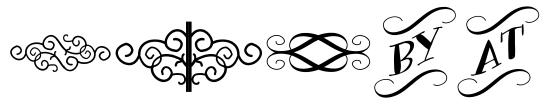










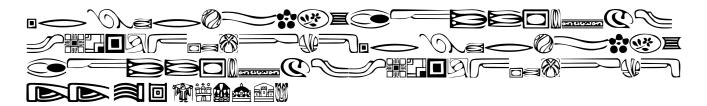


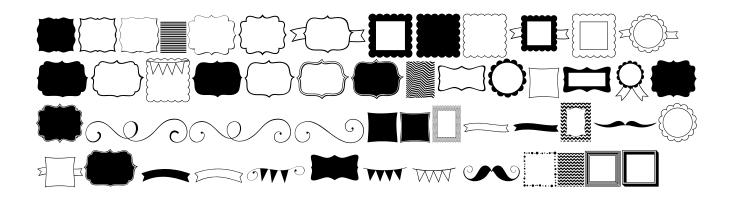
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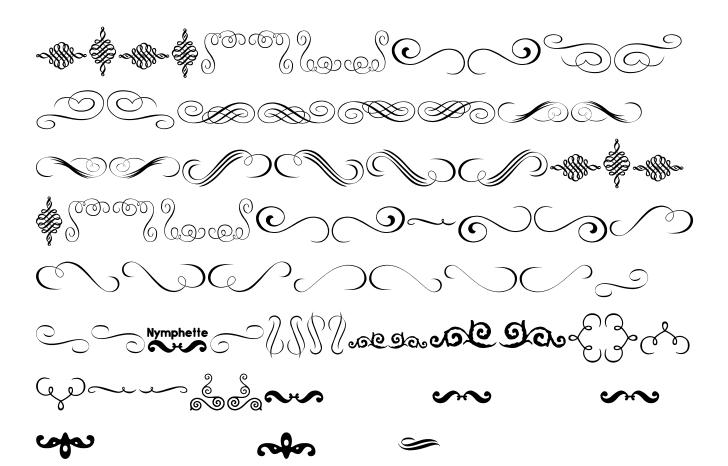














Dorothy Christie, or Dottie Dr. Denagamage Praboth Mahela de Silva Jayawardene Amla, or Amla or Silva Simon Allingham Agatha Allingham Amla Lucy Allingham, in a wheelchair Questions



## १९७९४७०३ ॥४७७३७७४ ६१७७३७७

ジネ リスと フマスパリリック きりでん でんり、フマスマとんできょうの みそ でんきう フィタリ、リスと きょくとう リレ スフリックきのひ、リスとフラリットトリック ひみ デタイリ リトマンきてんん タスでき そマステ でんり、それくとえをりつき みそ えでんとくんと、 テスシで みそ しんえテ マス のみで フスシラリッション タイリ ひしゅうれつタくきタ、



## シブルのル 入のル

SETTING: Christmas; Dottie's home. Tree, fire, crackers, etc.

AT RISE: Dottie, Simon, Agatha, Amla, and Lucy unwrapping presents.

AMLA This one is for Dottie. It doesn't say who it's from.

DOTTIE It's so heavy! And it smells like rancid meat. I've always wanted a cadaver for Christmas! Who is this from?

(all deny)

DOTTIE I'll find out which of you is responsible for this. (unwraps it; it's a large book bound in human skin and covered with strange symbols) Bloody hell...

## SIMON What is it?

## DOTTIE A book!

## LUCY

I'm so sorry, darling! I promise I'd never burden you with a present so boring. I don't remember even how to open a book!

## DOTTIE

This one seems impossible to open—it has three locks and there's no key. Can you smell that?! It's disgusting! It smells perfectly horrible!

SIMON I don't smell anything.

LUCY Only the fireplace.

AGATHA Books don't smell horrible, darling. They're only boring or poorly written.

DOTTIE It's *bleeding*. There's a tear and it's *bleeding*.

SIMON Did you just taste the blood?!

DOTTIE I don't know what made me do it? It seemed natural to lick my fingers. It definitely tastes like blood, which is in very poor taste.

AMLA Pun intended.

SIMON Which of you did this? If this is a practical joke---

AGATHA Or an engagement present! A book to help you find your way through marriage to my, oftentimes, aromatic brother.

SIMON Extremely hilarious.

DOTTIE So this is your sick gesture, Agatha?

AGATHA Heaven's no. I'm only trying to make tasteless light of the situation. I wouldn't even know where to procure such a thing.

## LUCY

That doesn't look like something bought at Waterson's. Perhaps something from your university library, Amla?

## AGATHA

Ah, now we narrow the suspect list down to my quiet husband, the doctor of medicine. But that wasn't enough for you, was it? You have to get a second doctorate in history---history of the occult. What nefarious plan do you have in store for Dottie?

AMLA Agatha, please!

## LUCY

White slavery. Well, that's all that those pulp magazines talk about! And the drawings with the beautiful women with large---I mean, Dottie could be a perfect choice for a white slave. I'd buy you, darling, and I'd treat you very well.

## DOTTIE Lucy, please! This isn't funny!

LUCY Neither is white slavery!

## SIMON

If someone says "white slavery" one more time, I'm going to burn this house to the ground.

## AGATHA

I don't think it's decent, Amla, to give such an important volume to Dottie. But you always did have a special affection for her.

## AMLA

Why do you think it's an important volume?

## AGATHA

It's bleeding. I doubt the common, mass produced editions of the same book don't bleed.

## DOTTIE Can't you smell it? It's rotting!

LUCY Let's put it in the icebox. SIMON With the rest of the food?! Are you mad?!

LUCY I'll get some bandages then. Where do you keep them, darling?

DOTTIE In that desk, top left drawer.

AGATHA Amla, do you know anything about it?

AMLA There's Arabic and Greek on the cover. It's difficult to read. The print is faded.

## AGATHA/LUCY

Arabic!/We have found our Santa Claus!/Who else would give an old, Arabic book than someone whose ancestors hailed from their proud shores?!/Perhaps its his way of getting to spend time with Dottie. Oh, can you translate this for me? I don't know Arabic! But it looks fascinating! Let's meet in your office at the university, between my science hobby classes!

## SIMON

You know full well, you elitist aristocrats, that Amla is from Mesopotamia. Or was it Constantinople?

LUCY Aren't they the same thing?

DOTTIE Stop, *goddamn it!* 

## AMLA

You know it's nothing I haven't heard from them my entire life.

## DOTTIE

Sometimes I loathe our families. I wish I could live on a rock in space, Floating aimlessly until I got caught in the gravitational field of a beautiful planet.

## AMLA

Then who would teach me how to find the North Star and the Big Dipper?

## AGATHA/LUCY

One could have simply asked us to stop. One could have been polite about it. We meant no harm. We're just teasing you, Dottie. You can be much too sensitive sometimes, Dottie. Simon, don't let her get away with that once you're married. It's all that reading she does. And studying the sky or whatever.

## SIMON Come on, enough of this. Amla, you must be able to tell us something about the book.

DOTTIE Can you translate the title?

AMLA There isn't one. These are just bits of writing.

## AGATHA/LUCY

Do you forgive us, Dottie?/Is she really angry, do you think?/I think there's no getting her attention until she reads that filthy thing./Amla, darling, make her open it.

SIMON Please, your chattering is giving me a headache.

## LUCY/SIMON

Simon, open the smelly thing for Dottie. You know how to pick locks./That is a provocative accusation!/Someone regularly went through my bedroom and read my diary, and I had two locks on my bedroom door./Not guilty. Perhaps you were simply imagining things.

## AMLA

These are warnings *not* to open the book. They promise the reader "unimaginable horrors" and "eldritch insanity".

LUCY What does "eldritch" mean?

## SIMON

Sounds like the name of a sixty year old bank clerk who, on the last day of his job, shoots himself and leaves nothing but debts to his wife and five children, three of whom aren't even his.

LUCY That's ghastly and obscene.

DOTTIE Which is really what "eldritch" means.

Simon I'm trying to lighten the mood. I was trying to be funny.

LUCY If you want to be funny. Tell a joke. Let me tell one: Knock knock whose there? Simon. Simon who? Simon who ruins Christmas by giving his fiance a book made out of a dead cow.

Simon You have no idea how to tell a joke.

## AGATHA

Enough of this nonsense! And you really don't know how to tell a joke, Simon. Whoever did this better say so. This is in the poorest taste.

## SIMON

It's a book, Agatha, not a dead kitten.

## AGATHA

Horrors and Insanity?!
I think I'd rather find a dead kitten in my Christmas stocking.
I wasn't going to make a direct accusation,
but this is too much.
Amla, take that filthy thing back to your office,
apologize to Dottie,
buy her something suitably expensive and with emeralds (as they look wonderful on her)
and we will never mention this again.

## AMLA

I didn't do this! Why would I give *Dottie*, who has no interest in ancient demonic myths, a book *like this*?!

## LUCY/AGATHA

NO ONE said anything about demonic myths!/I thought this book was about a poor bank clerk!

## AMLA

I would take it straight to the chair of my department and have him lock it in his solid lead safe. Which I should do right now.

## LUCY

I think we're all taking this a smidge too seriously, due to a gross lack of eggnog. *It's Christmas*. Whoever did this made this the most fascinating Christmas ever! Hasn't it occurred to anyone that this may not be what it seems? I'll bet it's about ancient science or astronomy or something really boring. Admit it, Amla, darling, you're being just a teeny bit melodramatic, talking about demons and the end of the world silliness. AMLA I never said anything about the end of the world.

LUCY And when we see it's harmless, if not a bit aromatic, Simon can step forward and admit his deed and we shall tar and feather him.

AGATHA Just like last Christmas when he gave me gardening equipment.

SIMON You wanted to start gardening!

AGATHA I wanted *the servants* to start gardening!

SIMON Throw that book in the fucking fire already!

AGATHA Simon!

LUCY Christmas has truly begun once Simon sashays out the profanity.

AMLA There's no point trying to burn the book. I doubt it will.

LUCY Any luck with the locks, Dottie?

DOTTIE Not yet.

AMLA Don't open it.

AGATHA Isn't that a bit melodramatic, darling? *It's a book.* If it's going to do anything terrible, it'll merely nag us about morality and do gooders. Anything that old must be about sacrificing oneself to the greater good, preserving chastity, keeping women from getting the vote---

LUCY Go on, open it! I can't stand waiting any longer! Maybe it's hollowed out and there's a real present inside.

SIMON No anonymous person should be giving my fiance a gift in a hollowed out book that supposedly smells like rotting meat and bound in *bleeding human skin*! That's the absolute definition of impropriety.

AGATHA A real present wrapped in this ancient book? Who of us would do such an awful thing?

AMLA I don't think one of us gifted this to Dottie. We should put it away, in a safe, Dottie, until we determine from whom this came.

DOTTIE Shouldn't I open it?

AMLA Is someone going to admit to giving this to Dottie?

SIMON

This is absurd nonsense. It's a book. It's a book! It's nothing but a fucking book!

AMLA Give it to me and I'll take care to---

(he can't lift it from her lap; it's too heavy; she tries to hand it to him and it won't unstick from her hands)

AGATHA This is a joke! Have you two devised this to spook our Christmas? Because if you have, well done, But traditional ghost stories would have done just as well.

LUCY If you can't open the book, Dottie, I'll give it a go with a hair pin.

AMLA The book doesn't want anyone to open it except Dottie. LUCY How do you know that?

SIMON Stop this instant! This has gone too far! Agatha is right. This is an absurd joke and it must stop.

DOTTIE I doubt it will stop Unless I open it. Look at this! It's now unlocked! (opens the cover)

## AND ALL THREE STAB HER OVER AND OVER AND OVER)

bUCV YOU THINK YOU CAN I'm fucking your husband. TAKE MY BROTHER We're planning to murder AWAY FROM ME? you And take all your money. You THINK HE LOVES He wants to consume our YOU MORE THAN ME? marriage, with your corpse WE'VE BEEN FUCKING sitting in the room, staring SIMON at the bed. But we've WHEN WERE FINALLY MARRIED, SINCE + WAS OLD already consummated----in OÙ IL UNDERSTAND. ENOUGH TO WAL your bed, and I wore your DOTTE wedding dress, and my OUR PARENTS KNEW, UNDERSTAND WHAT? virgin blood stained it so AND THOUGHT IT WAS beautifully dark. SIMON CHARMING AND SWEET THERE ARE THINGS YOU AREN'T PERMITTED. THAT WE WERE SO THINGS THAT MUST REMAIN MYSTERIES FOR YOU. BEGAUSE HE YOU DON'T MARRY ME, CLOSE, I'LL HAVE JUST-AS\_ | ORDER YOU TO,\_\_\_ nok. WILL THROTTLE YOU, HIM BACK OR MAKE AND SLICE YOU OPEN SURE NEITHER OF U FROM YOUR COCKSUCKING MOUTH TO YOUR DISGUSTING CUNT. CAN HAVE HIM. YOU WILL FUCK EVERY MAN | BRING HOME. YOU WILLWEAR A DOG COLLAR AND EAT FROM A PHO'S TROUGH. YOU WILL FTILL YOUR MOUTH WITH FECES ND HOLD IT THERE UNTILL ALLOW YOU TO SWALLOW WE SHALL HAVE AN ENCHANTING MARRIAGE. AND OUR WEDDING NIGHT WILL BE BEAUTHFUL

AGATHA/LUCY

We will tear your children open and shove your head inside. And make you drink their blood and eat their dirty parts. And it will be all your fault. Because you're so pathetic. And weak. And insane! Everyone knows you're insane. The way your parents died. They did it to get away from you. Because you're disgusting and insane. Just like them. AGATHA/SIMON/LUCY

# PH'NGUT MGW'NAFH CHUHU R'IYEH WGAH'NAGI FHTAGN.

m work an

(DOTTIE shuts the book; everything is normal)

AMLA What happened to you?

DOTTIE I...I don't know

SIMON You're white as snow! And as cold! Lucy, the brandy!

AGATHA I'll get her a blanket.

SIMON Did something frighten you in the book?

DOTTIE I...don't know. I didn't recognize the language.

(DOTTIE drinks an entire snifter of brandy)

DOTTIE I'm very sorry everyone, but I don't feel well enough to continue...

AMLA (feels her forehead) She has a high fever.

AGATHA Let's put you to bed, darling---

DOTTIE NO! Just go.

AMLA Someone should sit with you. With a sudden fever like this, you shouldn't be alone.

LUCY

I'll stay.

DOTTIE NO! Get out, everyone! Except, Amla, please. He's a doctor. He should stay. He's allowed to stay.

AMLA I can send for a nurse.

DOTTIE No, you stay! No strangers, *I couldn't bear a stranger, please!* 

SIMON Surely, I should stay if you're hysterical----

DOTTIE Don't you touch me! Please! I'm not hysterical. I just want to be left alone!

AMLA Please, she's only getting more agitated. It's the fever talking. I'll take care of her. Have more brandy.

(the others leave)

AMLA Did you see the book title?

DOTTIE No.

AMLA What did you see?

DOTTIE I...I can't...not now, please. I did hear something. I don't know why I remember it so clearly. It makes no sense to me.

AMLA What is it?

## DOTTIE "Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn." What does it mean?

## AMLA

[...]

## DOTTIE

You're afraid. I've never seen you frightened. What does it mean? Tell me what it means.

## AMLA

I need to get you upstairs and into a cold bath. We have to reduce your fever. You can keep some clothes on, if it'll make you more comfortable.

## DOTTIE Not until you tell me.

What does it mean?

## AMLA

The traditional translation is... "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming." More modern translations are, "In your house of R'lyeh dead Cthulhu watches you in dreams." It used to be believed that R'lyeh was a place in the Pacific Ocean. Now scholars are attempting to translate R'lyeh as a state of mind, or an alternate state of being.

DOTTIE I don't understand.

## AMLA

Neither do I, but if that's what you heard, this book can only be the *Necronomicon*.

## DOTTIE

Necronomicon. That's...from Greek. Νεκρός [nekros] "dead" νόμος [nomos] "law", εἰκών[eikon] "image".

## AMLA

"The image of the law of the dead".

DOTTIE Why would the law of the dead exist as an *image*?

AMLA Language changes. Images never do.

DOTTIE Who is Cthulhu?

AMLA Evil. The great destroyer. Who will one day devour mankind. Depending on the translation you read. Sometimes he only tears us limb from limb. We are only welcome in his world via offspring we produce through mating with his horrifying, multi-tentacled minions who have either more mouths than faces or more faces than mouths. Depends on the translation.

DOTTIE Thank you for being honest with me.

AMLA I have great respect for your intelligence.

DOTTIE When I opened the book, all of them, they stabbed me over and over and said... They said... Did they stab me? But how then---

AMLA I promise, you're fine. They haven't harmed you. Let me get you upstairs.

DOTTIE Why would they do that? I thought they loved me!

END OF SCENE



## Jungu Rey

SCENE: Amla's office at Miskatonic University at Arkham.

AT RISE: AMLA present. DOTTIE enters, carrying the book.

DOTTIE I apologize for being so early--

AMLA Not at all, please, sit. You are feeling all right?

DOTTIE I'm still a bit tender---I don't know what other word to use to describe how I feel. Unsettled?

AMLA I should have come to your home.

DOTTIE No! I need fresh air. I am bothering you, aren't I?

AMLA I editing a paper on the Voynich Manuscript, which I'm presenting at a conference at NYU. You brought the book.

DOTTIE I may put it down for a bit, but then I get anxious for it. I'm afraid someone is going to destroy it. Or steal it. Or read it.

AMLA

Simon?

DOTTIE Most definitely. And that would result in such destruction. (How do I know that?) Or anyone who comes to the house. I feel safer here. It looks like it belongs here. There's a space perfect for it. May I ask an impertinent and rude question?

AMLA I didn't gift it to you.

DOTTIE How---?

AMLA

In your position, it's the first question I would ask. I'm the most obvious suspect. After all, I got my second doctorate in folklore and the *Necronomicon*. If I had such an intention, I would have sent you this modern translation published ten years ago by a former professor. It's much more accessible and complete. The illustrations are rather fun as well.

DOTTIE How do you mean "complete"?

AMLA

No two copies of the *Necronomicon* are the same. I don't mean different passages and illustrations. Some editions have entirely new chapters, discussing beings from other planets---

DOTTIE Beings from other planets?!

AMLA

Blasphemous beings, remember. This is a book whose sole purpose is to teach evil and blasphemy. Some editions of it have no text that is readable. There's a version in our museum from 1728 that has only blank pages, and on the cover, drippings of a greenish liquid that has remained vividly bright.

DOTTIE I don't understand. The inconsistency makes no sense.

AMLA

The inconsistency creates chaos and argument and it works. Conferences about the texts are heated and sometimes violent. Scholars are falling under the spell of evil more than anyone. Conferences become kinds of ritual ceremonies, with everyone vying to be the high priest. I won't attend conferences which attempt to summon beings. I've never seen it work, but the atmosphere feels so thick, as if I'm moving through a rancid soup made of rotten meat... I'm sorry. I don't talk to anyone about this.

## DOTTIE

Not even Agatha? Oh, wait, that's an asinine question. She would use it as an excuse to force you back into a medical practice.

## AMLA

I would love to show your copy to the museum curator here, but it's not a safe idea. If word spread that a human flesh edition existed here, I'm afraid many would do anything to get their hands on it.

## DOTTIE

I won't let it out of my sight. No one is taking it from me. No one is opening it except me.

AMLA Why?

## DOTTIE

It's been gifted to me. It's only for me. Maybe I'm the only one who may understand it. What is happening to me? Am I going mad? I should be planning a wedding, not...

AMLA Do you feel mad?

DOTTIE On the contrary! I feel more focused than ever. And more disturbed than ever.

AMLA First, I have a gift for you. (places a large jewel on the center of her forehead) DOTTIE That's marvelous! I don't feel the weight of the book anymore! What is it?

## AMLA

It's a symbol, or a conductor with the book. Or a peace sign. It means you understand. You understand its importance, and that you must attend to it and you will.

## DOTTIE

I do. I do understand it's importance. Though I don't understand its importance.

AMLA May I ask, what happened when you opened it on Christmas?

DOTTIE Rather... May I use your board. I've been thinking of that translation: "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming." or "In your house of R'lyeh dead Cthulhu watches you in dreams." Let me show you. (writes on the board and then reads)

## Phínglui mglivínafh Cthulhu Rlyeh wgahínagl fhtagn.

There are only four words that are important here: House, R'lyeh, Dead, and Dreaming or Dreams. Yes, it can translate as your house or his house, but it suddenly occurred to me that, what if, all of these are verbs.

## Protect, energize, waiting, planning

All of these verbs have multiple meanings. In fact, it's perfectly acceptable of expanding the sentence:

Protecting, luilding, strengthening, having children and leing lorn Cthulhu dies, waits, plans and changes as he fucks those who are and are not his to fuck.

Even Cthulhu has limitations, has things forbidden to him because it is necessary. Cthulhu must always blaspheme. That's where the freedom and power comes into play. To blaspheme is to have the ultimate power. If we simply allowed everything imaginable, he would be reduced to an ineffectual, ornery sea creature. I have no idea how I know all of that. Did I dream it? Am I going mad?

AMLA You're far from madness. You have the strongest, clearest intellect of anyone I know.

DOTTIE That's not possible.

## AMLA

I visited the astronomy department this morning. I talked with Dr. Morris. He has great regard for your work. He believes you should apply for the Phd program.

DOTTIE Simon would never allow that.

AMLA I'll speak to him.

## DOTTIE

He wants a family. He says time is running out for me. Heavens knows the pressure I'll receive from Agatha and Lucy. Your wife is mad about children. Agatha tells me every time I see her, that I'm missing out in the best thing for a woman to experience. And Lucy: she simply believes she'll never have a family of her own. So she'll be a nanny to mine. I don't understand why our parents swore us to never marrying outside our three families. How could a blood disorder harm anyone else? We're not harmed in the least.

## AMLA It's because of the high risk of mutations. I know the blood disorder.

They were right to forbid us from bringing in outsiders.

## DOTTIE

Did our parents really contract a blood disorder eating bad fish in Thailand?

## AMLA

As bizarre as it sounds, yes.

DOTTIE

But Lucy. Just because she must use a wheelchair doesn't mean---

(the phone rings on his desk; AMLA answers it, with brief affirmative statements; he hangs up, gets a bottle of whiskey out of his desk and two glasses; he pours)

AMLA Dr. Morris dropped dead of a heart attack ten minutes ago.

DOTTIE Good.

AMLA What?

DOTTIE I should never have said that. It's so disrespectful.

AMLA I thought you liked him.

DOTTIE

He...I had to...I had too... To be able to receive his approval to be admitted as a student, I had to let him touch me. Nothing more. I don't know how to feel right now. Should I feel horror or grief? This is so absurd, I have a sick desire to laugh. Are you in danger, too?!

AMLA No, the *Necronomicon* knows I'm the only one who can help you.

DOTTIE The *Necronomicon*? Are you saying this book stopped that old bastard's heart?

AMLA It could entirely be a coincidence.

DOTTIE Do you believe it is? Is there a way to find out?

AMLA Open the book. (DOTTIE carefully opens the book to a place in the middle)

It was as if these star, Amla steps behind Dottie and uraps his hand around her throat, pushing her fice into the book, getting blood on her face. pylons of frightf a low wouldn't enjoy into fordeden dream i don't know what is possinger gult hils her with a riding Amla remote timesaid, septercas, -not disobey me. dimensionality PLEASE DU Dottie FUCK ME, 7 ps, he sleeps, I've wanted you my in his death, The rolls over who the earth and makes the earth open mentive life, since you Don't Stop and spread and the oceans Please Don't Stop over his one thousand headed member. were a little girl. EthulhuSpushes and fordes and lears, Harder and what will remain of the earth, is the only state that is safe enough the do you belong to? Harder HARDERPlease don't Fuck me. Who have you always belonged to? DE3ERVE || Are you going to marry Simon? DESERVE WORSE Say that you're mine. M THE DAUGHTER [ell methat you want no one but me. IONLY BELONG TO YOU, AMLA. GF CTHUHU NOT EVEN CTHULHU.

(DOTTIE closes the book)

DOTTIE The book sees the evil within me. I don't understand what we just---?! I'm so ashamed!

AMLA Let's not talk about it. There's no need right now. Just take deep breaths. Drink this. I have something you can take to calm your nerves.

## DOTTIE

No! I have to stay lucid. I have to be able to think. I'm going over to Simon's for dinner tonight. I'm not sure what to say to him. Shouldn't I confess what happened?

AMLA No, never. Never tell Simon what happens between us. He will never understand.

DOTTIE I must lie to him?

AMLA Consider it simply withholding information. Will you come to the conference in New York with me?

DOTTIE Will Simon allow it?

AMLA I'll ensure that he will.

DOTTIE Promise me one thing?

AMLA Of course.

DOTTIE We won't open the book again together. Only separately. In different rooms. Or let others do it. AMLA If that's what you wish.

DOTTIE I have no choice in the matter.

END OF SCENE



Since 1807

**One Cent** 

## TWO FAMILIES, RESPECTED DOCTOR MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEAR

It is a tragic story, one that leaves a mother and four children without a father, without a family, and steeped in scandalous devilry.

On the morning of January first, Mrs. Mahela Amla woke to discover her husband, the highly respected scholar Dr. Mahela Amla, missing. She called her brother, Simon Allingham, immediately, only to discover he and his sister, Miss Lucy Allingham, missing as well. She also placed a call to Miss Dorothy Christie, fiance of Mr. Allingham, and found her missing as well. The stress of the moment was too intense and later that afternoon, Mrs. Amla delivered her fourth child, a boy, who she named after her missing brother, Simon.

The police made a thorough search of all three homes, and discovered what can only be described as a fantastic, unbelievable scene in the home of Miss Christie. The police have formed the opinion that the missing members of the family were performing some sort of ceremony, not unlike those which Dr. Amla study. Authorities from the university have confirmed that the scene was in fact that of a diabolical ceremony, but also suggested many other actions had occurred which this paper, in the interest of not offending its readers, will refrain from describing.

Associates of Dr. Amla report speaking with him within the last two days. Apparently, he was excited and agitated about a recent copy of the Necronomicon that his ward, Miss Christie, received anonymously as a Christmas present. Dr. Amla had not yet examined the book, but reported that Miss Christie had been experiencing disturbing hallucinations whilst reading the text.

A thorough search of the area, the train station, and hills have turned up nothing. A search of the house has also failed to turn up the alleged copy of the Necronomicon.

Recovering from her condition, and extremely upset, Mrs. Amla, understandably, has not spoken to the police.

## The Arkham Daily

- Xo

\$8.00 daily \$12.00 Sunday Online \$45/month

Since 1807

## DR. AMLA RETURNS!

As unbelievable as it sounds, sources say that <u>Dr. Denagamage Praboth Mahela de Silva</u> <u>Jayawardene Amla</u>, who went missing with two other families over a century ago, was discovered on a dirt road a two miles outside the city limits of <u>Arkham</u>.

Once he reached town, he went to the police department and insisted that the town be evacuated immediately underground. Police then took him to the <u>Lovecraft Psychiatric</u> <u>Institute at Arkham</u> for observation. Dr. Amla was not a danger, but marks on his body suggested he meant to harm himself.

Sources within the police department and the Lovecraft Institute confirm his identity as the Dr. Amla who disappeared after allegedly conducting <u>Satanic ceremonies</u> with an elusive copy of the *Necronomicon*.

We'll go <u>live</u> at the Lovecraft Institution the moment of his release.



## Jinun Rednin

SETTING: Outside the Lovecraft Psychiatric Institute.

AT RISE: AMLA addressing QUESTIONS from reporters.

### AMLA

The horrifying events which will occur in this town and on this planet, Events irrecoverably set in motion by my family, were my fault. This isn't a confession of crimes. Within too short of a time, there will be no one to judge us or hang us for our curiosity. From the beginning, my judgment was impaired, and my motives entirely selfish. Though many disbelieve me, I entirely deny sending her the Necronomicon. I don't know where... I must start again. Hello. My name is Dr. Denagamage Praboth Mahela de Silva Jayawardene Amla. Everyone calls me Amla. I received my medical degree in I920 from the University of Connecticut. During my time there, I became acquainted with the Necronomicon, and it became a... source of obsession. After completing my medical degree, I returned to Arkham and received my Phd in Folklore at Miskatonic University, where I now hold the post of chief curator of texts in its museum. At least I did so. I no longer practice medicine. Though that is inaccurate. I will, but no longer a form of medicine known to our society. Dottie, Miss Christie, we have known one another since childhood. Our three families. Hers, mine, and the Allinghams, comprising Simon, his sister Agatha (my wife), and his other

sister Lucy, have always lived on the same cul de sac. We lived extremely sheltered lives. Our parents schooled us at home and I was the only one allowed to attend the University. Our three families have the distinction of the most morbid, tragic coincidence ever to befall three families: One day, while all us children were swimming in a nearby creek, all of our parents died at the same minute of the same hour. All by their own hands. Simon and Agatha were of age, and they took care of Lucy, who was fourteen. I was eighteen and inherited more than I ever thought my parents possessed. Dottie was only thirteen, and, quite strangely, her parents made me her guardian in the event of the deaths of themselves and my parents. There are legal records and police reports as evidence to everything I'm saying. The lawyers said it might be best to have her move into my home. I have a full staff of servants. But Dottie wanted to stay in her own home regardless. So I visited her often, usually every night.

## AMLA

I brought you something to read.

## DOTTIE

It better be biology. I don't like what my body is doing and becoming, and I'm determined to put a stop to it.

AMLA Have you tried the library?

## DOTTIE

Have you ever tried getting a book on human biology out of that mummified librarian who still believes the civil war is ongoing?
To her, a book on biology would be written by Satan, and the most salacious book ever conceived. The body is something to hide, not think about.
What did you bring me?
Fiction?
H. G. Wells.
What am I supposed to do with this?
How am I supposed to learn anything about science with fiction?

## AMLA If you're a good girl and read it, afterwards, you can tear it into little pieces and burn them.

## DOTTIE

Tearing Jane Eyre into little pieces was much more fun than actually reading it.

## AMLA

This is *War of the Worlds*; it's about a war with Mars.

Promise me you'll read Mr. Wells with patience and respect. Books are powerful, especially when we disagree with them.

DOTTIE Why?

AMLA When we disagree, we must think.

DOTTIE Thank you, Silva. I'm sure the violence in this would shock the librarian! What do I do about it, though?

AMLA About what?

DOTTIE Biology books. Can't you get me one? I only want to make my body stop doing what it's doing.

AMLA I doubt there's a book that can make that happen.

DOTTIE I just want to understand! Please! Would you rather I started performing surgery---

## AMLA

How about instead of giving you a musty, dusty, textbook with tiny print that I know you have trouble reading because you are too vain to get glasses, why don't you simply ask me questions?

## DOTTIE

On our wedding night, how terribly will Simon hurt me?

## AMLA

I married Agatha the day before I shipped off to France. The horror I experienced there, I think that is the source of my intellectual fascination with evil. Sometimes the *Necronomicon*, or some cult's attempt at an incantation of an Old One,---they're childish. Horror wearing Halloween masks, jumping at you like a Jack-in-a-Box. Nothing in France jumped at us like a Jack-in-a-Box. Of course, my family were immigrants to this country,

as everyone in this country is. My family came from Pakistan, by way of Sri Lanka. I have always felt as an outsider, a visiting creature from another dimension or outer space. I think my wife found me exotic and a handsome trophy for her dinner table. We had an efficient courtship: one kiss, seven words, and then plans to marry. When I returned from France I had no idea what horror was in this world, and found Agatha had had twin girls. And Dottie .... Dottie blatantly treated me as an alien, exotic creature, but only because she considered herself one. Something had happened to her during the war. Yes, she grew up a bit. But...it was like her hair had always been straight, and suddenly it curled. It wasn't a negative attribute, only a very perplexing one, that invited one to pull a curl, and watch it bounce back into it's perfect coil, and wonder at the magnificent physics of it. Dottie had never been subtle about her approval, but her forward, childlike inquisitiveness, and fanciful observations made me feel special.

#### DOTTIE

You look like the color of melted chocolate, Silva.

#### AMLA

Melted chocolate and solid chocolate are the same color. The addition of heat should not change the color.

#### DOTTIE

But it does. The overly excited chocolate atoms--and yes, chocolate is on the periodic table--the chocolate atoms have a slightly energetic darkness. Like the color of the sky just before the storm hits, and there's the first rumble of thunder in the quiet. That is you at that exact moment. You are the shade of that potential.

#### AMLA

I'm only the color of potential, not action? That is rather bleak, Dot.

#### DOTTIE

Life keeps you in perpetual paralysis, Silva. But, considering what you've been through, paralysis is most likely appropriate and welcome.

## AMLA

I refuse to pretend that I understand you.

## DOTTIE

I think you understand me perfectly. All is not lost! Your children are perfectly gorgeous! Who would have thought that of all people, Agatha's body would be such an effective crucible.

AMLA What do you mean, "of all people"?

#### DOTTIE

Silva, my darling, we've known Agatha all our lives, and we know perfectly well she's not a human being. She's a lovely crabby, naggy crab who wears too much perfume.

## AMLA

I did know that, and more perfectly than Dottie could, but I felt appropriately offended by her insults and insinuations, the poor choices I made, the wasting of my life on conventionality. Marrying the wrong woman. But she was right--the war wrecked me. I deserved the calm boredom of civilized life. That's what I fought for, wasn't it? Yet, in my studies, I found myself only interested in horrific myths, about creatures designed with the intention of exterminating our culture and our sanity. I went through medical school, and each thing I did to help a body repair itself, the more disillusioned I became. I had no idea why. I helped people live and it filled me with dread and hopelessness. I only shared this with Dottie. Miss Christie. My wife would only... But this is about Dottie. The story is about Dottie. Dottie may seem silly and girlish, but blame me for that characterization. It's the way I saw her, or the way I wanted her to be. Free and curious and untouched. And vulnerable. Malleable. Perhaps she was in a way, but I found my expectations of her, the way I expected her to react, were always inadequate and wrong.

Dottie had an immense intellect and, after she explained to me Einstein's theory of relativity, all three parts, I took her to the science department at Miskatonic University, and had her repeat to the chair of physics what she had said to me. Two hours later, Dottie enrolled in the physics department, but would focus her studies on astronomy. When the astronomy department did form, she was one its first students. It seemed she only needed to hear a concept only once to absorb it and incorporate it fluently into her thinking, as if she had always known it... Perhaps... I've lost my way. I've only been out of the hospital a few hours. I've already spoken quite a lot and probably off topic. Perhaps if you ask me questions. QUESTION When did Miss Christie finally tell you the contents of her copy of the Necronomicon and what were they? AMLA It was the night she ended her engagement to Simon Allingham. Dottie and Simon getting engaged was what everyone expected. We knew at a young age that we would pair up together, with one girl not marrying. We expected that whoever didn't marry me or Simon simply wouldn't marry at all. No one from the outside would ever be welcome. All of this went without saying. At a very young age, we expected to remain a close knit community. Agatha admitted to me that she pursued me very aggressively. She feared Lucy being too pretty, and Dottie too smart. She wanted children. That left Simon and Dottie. Not the best pairing, I think. DOTTIE Give it back to me! SIMON

Give what back to you?

DOTTIE You took my microscope. Give it back or you'll break it.

SIMON You're lying. I didn't take it. Why would I take your stupid microscope? You know that the more you look through it, the closer your eyes get. And you're getting a lazy eye in both your eyes. And it'll make you even uglier than you are. Then you'll get fatter, though I can't see how that is at all possible, considering you're bigger than me.

(DOTTIE tackles him, punching him in the stomach, kicking him in the shins, and he responds in kind; AMLA breaks it up)

AMLA Give her back whatever you took, Simon.

SIMON I didn't take her crumby microscope.

AMLA I expect you to buy her a new one by the end of the week.

SIMON Fuck your microscope! (exits)

AMLA Did he take it?

DOTTIE No. I simply like twisting his mind into bouncing curls of confusion.

AMLA That's not nice, Dottie.

DOTTIE Boredom is not nice. And Simon is hardly cordial. Look at the bruises he left on my legs.

AMLA I will tell him not to bother buying a new one. As for you...

DOTTIE Yes?

AMLA I expect to see that microscope polished and in its proper place in the display case.

## DOTTIE

Is that all?

AMLA Leave Simon alone. He's not as smart as you and has no defenses.

DOTTIE I'm supposed to have children with this intellectually indefensible boy?

AMLA Let us hope puberty will fill in the gaps, so to speak.

DOTTIE What will my puberty do for me?

AMLA Whatever you wish to say about your puberty I will hear *solely* as your medical doctor.

## DOTTIE

I'd rather speak to you about it as my doctor of demonic folklore. Sometimes, my body feels like a burning barge, that I'm sailing upstream upon a bloody Nile, with curious alien creatures rowing me as they would Cleopatra. But I'm not Cleopatra: I'm Dottipatra, her mutant sister with three eyes and a forked tongue. The creatures don't care because they don't know how to care about anything, yet, we don't know where we're going, or who we're looking for. Who am I looking for, Silva?

AMLA Take three aspirin and go to bed with a hot water bottle.

DOTTIE I don't know why Simon won't marry Lucy.

AMLA Lucy is his *sister*.

DOTTIE Not really! *She's adopted!* 

AMLA I'm certain Simon's father is Lucy's father. She's not purely Japanese.

DOTTIE This is the greatest revelation the universe has ever known. May I go tell Lucy?!

## AMLA

You may not. I told you that in the strictest confidence. And I will be very angry with you if you should tell anyone else. You're distracting me too much. What's the matter with Simon? Don't lie to me and tell me you haven't had a crush on him since the beginning of time. Don't you want children and a family?

#### DOTTIE

I want a telescope.

#### AMLA

I bought her a telescope. I could never punish her. I had too much admiration for her. I felt as if I would be punishing a peer in academia. But engaged, they did indeed become, and no one was surprised nor very excited. Especially, the bride to be. The combative nature of their relationship never ceased, and after being engaged for two years, I would still have to sew up split lips, minor lacerations, and once a broken finger. The finger was Dottie's and it occurred right after Christmas. She assured me it occurred when her fist impacted his jaw. I was worried. The night before our train to New York, I went by Simon's. It was usual for us to play chess Tuesday nights and kill a bottle of brandy. When I got to the front door, I heard screaming. Two voices. Both theirs. I didn't knock. The door was always unlocked. I went straight in and found them in the library. A beautiful fire was going. Dottie was red faced, her hair come undone, clutching the Necronomicon. Simon had her by the arm, reaching for it, trying to get it from her. Then.

(SIMON punches DOTTIE hard and she goes down)

SIMON Give me that fucking book!

AMLA

## Simon?!

(interferes, pulls them apart, has DOTTIE far from SIMON and is looking at her face)

AMLA Simon?!

## SIMON What?

AMLA Explain yourself!

#### SIMON

I, uh, wanted to see the book. But she wouldn't let me. She said it was only for you two, and it was something private and special and secret. That you two were getting closer, because of the book.

# DOTTIE

I would NEVER say ANYTHING like that, Simon! You're a wicked, vile liar!

## SIMON

Is that why you wear that ugly fucking jewel pasted to your forehead? So you can look like one of his darkie Arab people?

(DOTTIE slaps SIMON hard)

DOTTIE I explained the jewel to you *ten times!* 

AMLA Dottie, stop it! Stop! You hit her.

SIMON Not really. It wasn't that hard.

AMLA I saw you. You punched her. She is already forming a bruise. Even if she had said what you maintain, punching her is absolutely not acceptable.

SIMON It wasn't that hard. I was pushing against her. I don't even know why we were fighting. Dottie just wanted to say good bye---

DOTTIE You tried to take the book away from me.

AMLA Why did you bring the book?

DOTTIE Why, I don't know. It seemed unsafe to leave it alone at home. I didn't want it to... be lonely.

## AMLA

I'm withdrawing my consent for Dottie to marry you, Simon. And because I am her guardian, that means that if you two marry regardless, she will not inherit. Let me take you home, dear.

SIMON Are you insane? This is a joke!

AMLA I'm quite serious.

SIMON If I don't marry Dottie, I don't marry. Unless you expect me to marry Lucy!

AMLA No, Lucy is your sister.

## SIMON

I love Dottie. I've always loved Dottie. Yes, we fight, we always have. But what else am I supposed to do. She's so pretty and smart and I could never get her to love me if our families didn't order it. Dottie, I love you, I've always loved you and only you! I don't need her inheritance! I'm worth a hundred times her. And she doesn't care about money. She never has!

DOTTIE I value Silva's opinion and judgment.

SIMON Silva?! So the book was right?! There is something between you two?! You're married to my fucking sister!

AMLA "So the book was right?!"

DOTTIE Simon, what do you mean "the book was right"?

SIMON

You're going to end everything between us, and I mean *everything*, because of what this *paki*, this *fucking rag head heathen* thinks?!

DOTTIE We need to leave right now, Silva.

#### AMLA

We did, immediately. It wasn't the last time we saw him, of course. But you must remember, and I can't stress this enough: this is NOT my story. It is Dottie's. I am her telescope. I reveal what happened far away in the past. What happened to me, what is happening, what will happen, is of no consequence. I am nothing. This is Dottie's story. [...] I walked her home. It was a walk we had done so many times, we failed to see the details. But that night, I noticed every nuance. The falling, crackling leaves that shattered like glass under our feet. The snow emerging from our breath was the only warmth we could exchange--clouds of distant breath mingling like two hot tropical storms in an ice aged world. I suppose my mind required distraction. I had never seen Simon that way. I was so enraged that he had struck Dottie, I could have killed him. I could imagine it, pressing my fingers into his throat until I felt hot blood.

## DOTTIE

We must leave immediately for New York. I called my physics professor and he will send a telegram of introduction to the astronomy department at NYU.

AMLA Do you think we're in danger?

DOTTIE I think the book is. I have no evidence to base this on----

AMLA Your fiance tried to wrench it from your arms and then punched you.

DOTTIE I'm not marrying him. Why would Simon do such a thing?!

AMLA Let's discuss this indoors.

DOTTIE Do you feel like you're being watched?!

AMLA It must be because of what we've been through. I don't trust anyone right now.

## DOTTIE

But you still trust me? Can I tell you something, about why we need to leave at once? I looked through the book earlier. Nothing happened. It was simply a book with pages. Though it seems more like a scrap book, with clippings of stories from pulp magazines. Trashy, cheap things that you buy when your train is late, and you've forgotten your knitting and can't stick the needles in your eyes from boredom.

AMLA What stories?

#### DOTTIE

Strange, odd stories, like ghost stories, but more sinister.Written by Ambroise Bierce, H. P. Lovecraft.I felt that I stepped out of life and suffered these stories.I was in Innsmouth. The town that bred with creatures from the sea.And everyone has eyes that are wide apart like a fish.That's where this jewel is from.Does it adhere to me so firmly because I'm half fish?

#### QUESTIONS

Was the jewel on her forehead actually made in Innsmouth?

#### AMLA

I bought it at an estate sale in Connecticut. The people had no idea what it was, and it frankly unnerved them. The metal isn't silver or gold, and has red veins running through it that make it look like its alive. The jewel itself resembles an opal, but it's nothing like one. The colors seem to churn the way a stomach would, or the way the bowels would if one was dying of dysentery. It was most definitely from Innsmouth. I bought it for twenty-five cents. On the blackmarket, It's worth a hundred thousand times that.

QUESTION Were you ever able to remove it from her?

#### AMLA

I never tried. Then, I turned to her and told her a terrible lie: Dottie, you're quite normal. The places are real. Arkham is real, of course. But the rest is fiction because when we attempt to write about the reality, our minds slide, like a teacup from a tipped table. We end up somewhere else, and the story is the shattered teacup on the floor.

DOTTIE I don't understand.

AMLA What else did you see?

DOTTIE I went back to reread the stories and take notes, but they were gone. There's nothing but star charts.

## QUESTIONS

Star charts?!/What sort of star charts?!/Did they indicate any planetary bodies?!/Were they of our solar system?!/Were they labeled and, if so, in what language?/Was there any mention of R'lyeh?!/Did Miss Christie travel to R'lyeh?!

## AMLA

Please, let me finish!

## DOTTIE

I don't recognize the charts. I mean, they aren't oriented from Earth. The constellations are gone, and there is something...

AMLA What?

## DOTTIE

Sinister.

As if I'm looking into a portion of the galaxy that could be likened to a slaughter house. Or a place where millions of people have died, too many people to bury properly, so their bodies lay in the sun rotting. (touches the jewel on her forehead) That's better.

AMLA What did you just do?

DOTTIE I discovered accidentally, or unconsciously, that if any of this disturbs me, touching the jewel removes all negative feelings. Back to the book. All of the pages are charts, schematics---

AMLA Schematics of what?

DOTTIE I don't know. There isn't any writing. Just plans for something. But I stopped looking through the book when...

AMLA Did something else happen?

## DOTTIE

Funnily enough, no. Not when I opened the book either. It didn't have anything to say to me, I suppose. There are architectural plans in the book. Very detailed and more than complete.

AMLA What do you mean?

## DOTTIE

The plans are of my house. And there are more rooms than my house actually has.

#### AMLA

I had no doubt about two things:

- I. She was telling the truth.
- II. This was already a precarious, imminently dangerous situation. I wasn't even sure going to New York was wise.
- III. Yet, I knew it was also important that we press forward. If we remained in her house, we would be able to do so much more valuable research. Especially if her house was somehow involved, or becoming involved, with the *Necronomicon*.

Dottie invited me in for tea and to look at the new pages. She had no doubt that the text would remain stable. She had no evidence to back up this assertion, no explanation, but maintained that she felt this was true.

I made a fire as she made tea.

It was a rare, peaceful moment of domesticity.

Yet, I lived a very domestic life,

though I couldn't do this in my own home because it's the job of the servants.

And the children swarm about me when I walk in the door,

whilst Agatha gives me my social obligations for the night.

Dottie's house was quiet and I felt valuable making the fire.

I liked her house despite it being a grotesque, shrunken Victorian head decked out in cheap costume jewelry and a wig taken from an old prostitute's corpse.

Nothing in the house had changed since her mother first decorated it at her marriage in the late I800s.

Nor had it been dusted.

Dottie had a good income and she preferred to spend her money on telescopes, books, and lab equipment rather than a housekeeper, faded, dirty rugs, and new wallpaper to replace what was peeling off the walls.

I liked it.

No matter how much the dust aggravated my sinuses. I liked the story it told about Dottie. I finished before she did, so I went to the book to begin studying it. I had not, as yet, had a chance to see any of it. I opened the book.

Nothing happened.

Except that the book was more than she had said.

There were charts and architectural plans of the house,

but there were also official documents.

Birth certificates, marriage and death certificates about very important figures. It didn't take me long to make very startling and upsetting connections between people. *No questions yet!* 

(DOTTIE enters with tea, sets it on the table)

Then it happened to me---the dream. The moment with her. It didn't happen when she came in with her tray. It came when she looked me in the eyes. Raw, honest, staggering. I've always believed that moment was created by the Necronomicon. I don't know now.



slides it across the table. It crashes to the floor You're not allowed to speak unless spoken to.

Please don't fuck me, Silva. I'll do anything you want. AMLA TEARS AT HER CLOTHES TO EXPOSE HER BARE BACK. HE SLAPS IT AS HARD AS HE CAN. DOTTLE GETS ON HER KNEES, UNBUCKLES HS

BELT, DRAWS IT OUT AND PRESENTS IT TO HIM. Amla beats Anapours hottea down

Dottie with his Potters back and licks it belt until she

belt until she Dottie felerishly cleans up the broken screams. tea cup and saucer. Then, she asks if

Then he whips mla would care for some tea. He

her harder. would On're not allowed DO ANYTHING YOU WANT TO ME, SILVA. BUT PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE DON'T FUCK ME. The harder. whore as you.

QUESTIONS What occurred in this dream?/Did you see any of the conventional mythological creatures? AMLA I will not say. It is inappropriate and personal. And, after everything that has happened, it means nothing. QUESTION Before we get into the particulars about what occurred in the house with Miss Christie, I think it's important to establish a timeline. AMLA Yes. QUESTION You and Miss Christie went into her house around midnight, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1930. AMLA A quarter to midnight, yes. QUESTION When did you leave the house? AMLA It was the next morning, after seven. Maybe eight. I was in a daze. And not in Arkham. I was in a field. Later I was told I was on the outskirts of Dunwich. I wandered into a town, apparently screaming and... I was taken to the closest psychiatric facility. After examining me for three days, they came to the decision that I was a threat to no one, nor myself. I was released this morning. QUESTION What date did you leave the house?

AMLA February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1930.

QUESTION

What is today's date? AMLA It would have to be February II<sup>th</sup>, 1930. I realize it is not. QUESTION The year is August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2033. AMLA Yes, so everyone has told me. QUESTION This doesn't seem to surprise you. AMLA Not especially. QUESTION How is this possible? AMLA I'll get it to, and attempt to explain it as best I can. I'm not a physicist. Dottie managed...She had a theory. QUESTION Where is Miss Christie? AMLA I must assume she is still with them. QUESTION Them? Who are them? AMLA The house. And The Necronomicon. QUESTION The house has been searched thoroughly and attended to for the past IOO years as a museum. It's apparently haunted. Miss Christie has never been found. Nor has the Necronomicon. AMLA (laughs) Haunted. She's still in the house. I assure you.

Haunted.

END OF SCENE

(almost goes hysterical)

ACT II Scene One

SETTING: Same as before.

AT RISE: The *Necronomicon* is open on a table and DOTTIE is pulling out pages, all of which look like star charts. They remove easily.

DOTTIE

They're perforated. They're made to be removed.

AMLA Perhaps we should wait before---

DOTTIE Why?

## AMLA

We're leaving for New York in nine hours to get the opinion of several experts about this edition. It would be best to leave it in tact.

## DOTTIE

These are star charts. Look at these symbols in the corners, here and here. If you look through the pages, you'll find they match. It's a puzzle. I can put this together, and then we'll very delicately put it all back. Wouldn't it be better if we had an important discovery to show them?

AMLA I think we need to discuss what happens whenever we open the book.

DOTTIE It's open now and nothing is happening. Thank goodness these pages are in order. Help me put them on the walls. The paper is so strange.

AMLA Dottie, please. Stop. This book is more than just a book.

DOTTIE I know. It's a living thing. It bleeds. How could it not be a living thing. AMLA Please, help me. I don't want to be explicit.

DOTTIE Can't we ignore it, or pretend... What are we supposed to do about it? They're not real.

AMLA Not real?

DOTTIE No more than a dream. The book is simply trying to understand us, so it lets us dream.

AMLA This is the *Necronomicon*. This is not a peaceful entity trying to make friendly contact.

## DOTTIE

Perhaps this *Necronomicon* is. Hasn't it occurred to all of you scholars that the different *Necronomicons* are for different people. You read what you want to read. You find what you want to find. This is my *Necronomicon* and it's giving me a way to go home.

AMLA You are home.

DOTTIE You wouldn't understand. How do we stick these to the walls? I have a box of tacks in the desk.

AMLA Did you enjoy it while I punished you?

DOTTIE Fine, I'll get the tacks myself.

AMLA Did it feel wrong? Did it feel like you were committing a sin?

DOTTIE Yes! Yes, it did, and I'm ashamed of myself! And when I think of what we did, I feel utterly humiliated.

AMLA Is that all?

## DOTTIE

No. Goddamn it, no. Which makes it so much worse. You're my guardian. I'm your ward. You're married to one of my best friends. You have four children and a fifth coming. If I have to think about this now, I won't be able to think about the charts, and I must get them up. I must. Nothing else is important.

## AMLA

You know that if we leave the book open, it could happen again.

DOTTIE What did you feel? Shame, humiliation? Did you feel like you betrayed Agatha?

AMLA No. I felt free.

END OF SCENE

Scene Two

SETTING: The same.

AT RISE: AGATHA and LUCY are present. There are many pages already up on the walls. AGATHA has a basket.

AGATHA Well, this bloody book project has certainly taken a bizarre turn. I never expected it would result in redecoration.

LUCY I like it.

AGATHA You could have removed the old paper first, darling.

DOTTIE It's not redecoration. I'm building a map.

AMLA It's not a map, necessarily. We're not sure where any of this is. It probably isn't our galaxy.

AGATHA I'm glad to see Dottie is enjoying her Christmas present at least. You did well, Amla, after all.

AMLA I didn't give her the book.

LUCY Well, I think it's marvelous how independent and scholarly you are, Dottie. You'll be the first woman on the moon. I've spoken to Simon. He's horrified by his behavior. He's been crying since you left. Are you really serious about ending your engagement?

DOTTIE Yes! I wouldn't have done so otherwise----

(LUCY fans through the book)

DOTTIE/AMLA No, don't!/Stop!

Lucy Marry Simon, of please. It is THA YOU THE ABSOLUTE ABOMINATION! YOU ENCORAGE THAT want on the world you will YOU ENTOY II YOU LIKE WATCHING ING be the blood in our house. FTAGER YOR DASCHI RII Marry, Simon, And I will be SHE IS YOR DAGHER AND YOURE DEGUSTING wife and your bed. Lay on WANING HER your Dottie (AGATHA pulls out a knifpy naked Ever eel so felicate and perfect and stabs AMLA in the croffch) You're no animal. You're nothing IUOY YOU'LL HAVE TO DO AWAY WITH HIM. like a man NG <del>GUARDIANS ALLOWED,</del> NG MATTER HOW MUCH YOU WORTHIP HIM. 1260711 9 1.71196671 "IAEokk RAGH TOA DA AFA" FUTOR 272= 4 £17 9⊋ FW:\.... 51222 BUGG 74904 22 62 JA12 4442015. 66.100. フィルタシリ and are and GALLENGE FU. (DOTTIE closes the book)

## AGATHA/LUCY

I really don't see what all this is important for. The children miss you/This is so exciting! I've always wanted to go to New York. You will send as many postcards as you can find.

## AGATHA

But once you've decided you're going to do something, Dottie, there's no stopping you.

LUCY But please do give Simon another chance!

## AGATHA

At least speak to him before you go. Call him. No matter how late, he'll come over.

DOTTIE Maybe.

LUCY He's desperate to apologize.

## AGATHA

Darling, I've packed you hard boiled eggs, sandwiches, apples, four bottles of beer, and the butter cake I made for the children, but I like you two ever so much more than those adorable monsters. Is something wrong, Amla? Should I give the cake back to them?

AMLA No, the cake is lovely. I'm just a little tired.

AGATHA

Well, don't spend all night redecorating. If you don't come home, and I'm sure you won't, I'll pack your things and we'll be back to take you to the station. Amla, darling?

AMLA That's enormously kind.

## AGATHA

Not at all. Both of you, please, get some sleep. You look dead on your feet. But before you do, talk to Simon, at the very least. LUCY You know Simon. He's not a monster. I'm sure we'll see you in the morning, lovely. (kisses DOTTIE; DOTTIE jumps) Whatever is the matter?!

## DOTTIE

Tired.

(they exit; DOTTIE continues tacking pages to the wall; messes up, gets things wrong, screams and cries; AMLA gets brandy and they drink)

AMLA We don't have to go to New York now. We can postpone the trip.

DOTTIE I'll have this ready. I'll have this done.

AMLA You're trembling. You've stuck a tack into your own finger!

DOTTIE It's nothing! I can't even feel it!

AMLA Let me see. You're bleeding profusely. How many times have you stuck yourself?!

DOTTIE

Did I ever tell you how much I hate this house? When I was younger, I fantasized about it burning down. I was never happy here. Then mother and father died, and I didn't know what to think about it. No, I decided to think that it didn't need thinking about, because I'd marry Simon and move into his house.

AMLA Why do you hate it?

DOTTIE I haven't one happy memory here. I don't know what I have. My childhood is a blank. Except for playing outside with all of you. Making mud pies and making up rituals to make it snow.

AMLA Every time we have some sort of dream or vision created by the *Necronomicon*, you become more motivated to dive into the book. To study it and put these charts together.

## DOTTIE

And you aren't?! Isn't this the greatest find of your career?! This should make you a star among folklorists.

AMLA The dreams aren't necessarily depictions of our real feelings.

DOTTIE Why don't they remember what happened?

AMLA

I don't know. The *Necronomicon* isn't a machine that behaves in precise, established patterns. What I've observed is that it picks and chooses, very organically, and almost with hesitation.

DOTTIE It's figuring out what it wants to watch us do.

AMLA Be careful about anthropomorphizing.

## DOTTIE

What you just described is the thinking of a living being. The book is made out of flesh! Why don't we just admit it! It's a life form! It's thinking independently, eating our feelings...

AMLA This has got to stop right now. I hate seeing you like this.

## DOTTIE

I want to continue our work. But I can see we can't do that unless we... talk, as you wish. I won't make statements. But you can ask me questions. Yes or no questions.

AMLA Are you disgusted with me?

DOTTIE NO! Never, ever. None of this is... No, I've never felt disgust for you in my life.

AMLA

Do you feel we have committed adultery?

## DOTTIE

You leap right off that waterfall, don't you? My father was having improper relations with my governnesses, so I grew up believing that such things are normal for marriage. In fact, they're desirable. My father was miserable with my mother. The only time I saw him smile was with my governess. I was happy for him. I wish my mother found her own happiness. Obviously, being a rigid, good, devout, chaste wife was torture.

AMLA Do you think I'm unhappy?

## DOTTIE

Yes.

I think you have been most of your life. Until we found this book under my Christmas tree. You look like a child with your excitement. Especially when you saw that it bleeds. You really looked like you were about to giggle. Is that why you gave me the *Necronomicon*? So we would have something to share? Because you already knew what it would do and contain?

AMLA Do you want me to pull you across my lap by your hair, as I lift up your skirt----

DOTTIE STOP. Stop. Please. I...uh...I'm running out of tacks. There's some upstairs. (moves to leave; stops) Do you think I should talk to Simon?

AMLA Talking to Simon and marrying Simon are two different things.

DOTTIE Do you want me not to marry anyone, and remain your ward the rest of my life?

AMLA Yes.

(END OF SCENE)

## SCENE THREE

## SETTING: Same.

AT RISE: Much progress has been made, with most of the walls covered in charts. DOTTIE continues to tack them up and AMLA looks over architectural plans of the house.

## AMLA

Where is the entrance to your basement?

## DOTTIE

There's a door off the pantry, but I haven't gone down there in years. I've always been terrified of the basement. It has a terrible dank smell, and it feels like stepping inside an enormous dead body.

AMLA According to this, your basement is so large, it connects to my basement.

## DOTTIE

No, that's not possible. I've been down there. There's a tiny room and a furnace, and lots of old toys and broken furniture.

## AMLA

I know for a fact that my basement is too small to connect to yours. And it has no other doors that I've ever found.

DOTTIE We're done here.

AMLA Done? There are more charts.

## DOTTIE These are different. The paper is different. These go in the basement.

AMLA Is there room in the basement?

DOTTIE According to the plans, yes. Perhaps I should find an ax.

AMLA That's when, I believe, the time distortion began. When we moved to the basement. Dottie found an ax and a crowbar. We took them down and realized immediately that the walls weren't walls at all. They were painted boards. Dottie and I cut them down easily. The basement was bigger. Much, much bigger. It was cold, as if the walls were made of ice, or we had suddenly relocated to Antarctica. Dottie had to get us winter coats and gloves so we could work. There were dozens of lanterns and we lit them and illuminated the entire space. It was as Dottie said. It reeked like a flooded slaughterhouse, like bloated, decaying meat floating in rancid water. There was a giant fireplace, so I lit a fire, and that improved our comfort. There was a table and chairs, even a cart with bottles of whiskey and brandy. Dottie went to it immediately and poured a large brandy for herself.

#### DOTTIE

I don't think I'm ever going to leave this place.

#### AMLA

Where would you sleep? There's no bed, nor a bath.

#### DOTTIE

Yes, there is. It looks wonderfully soft and fresh, too.

#### AMLA

She was correct. There was a large four poster bed in the shadows, a bath, everything anyone would need to live down here. I watched her climb on the bed and curl up with a pillow. My thoughts were rude and offensive. So I turned to the book to organize the pages, and before I realized what I was doing, I had opened it. I cannot speak of what I did to her, only that I had to minister to her afterwards.

#### QUESTION

Can you tell us more about the basement linking your house to hers. Where there connections to any others?

AMLA

At the time we didn't know it, but it became almost immediately apparent that all of our houses were connected.

(loud smashing from both sides; SIMON, AGATHA, and LUCY enter, each carrying an ax or sledgehammer)

## SIMON/AGATHA/LUCY

What is going on?!/Amla, why are our basements linked?/ Why are you destroying the walls?/What does this have to do with the book?

LUCY What is all that writing on the walls?

## AMLA

This was when we finally noticed it. The walls were far and in shadows, but Lucy has far superior eyesight than us. We turned our lanterns onto the closest wall, and saw a language we had never seen before, yet we understood it. We read it, and then all of us needed a drink.

AGATHA It's not true. How could our parents belong to a cult for, however you pronounce that name---

AMLA Cthulhu.

AGATHA And we not know about it?

LUCY Is Cthulhu an Asian myth?

AMLA He's universal. Researchers have found mention of him all over the world.

SIMON

Is anyone going to point out that all of us read and understood a foreign fucking language that we've never seen before?

DOTTIE

I've seen it. I've spoken it. It's in the *Necronomicon*.

AGATHA We were taught it as children. Taught it, but were forbidden ever to speak it.

LUCY Even to each other.

AMLA I think it's time.

DOTTIE For what?

AMLA

I've suspected many things through the years, and I feel I've managed to arrive at certain conclusions about us. About our families. And there are truths it's time I tell you. Please, get a drink. You'll need it.

END OF SCENE

#### SCENE FOUR

SETTING: Same.

AT RISE: Same.

LUCY If this is going to be disturbing, I need tea.

AGATHA

I'm already making it, darling. I could make an entire Christmas dinner down here, but Cthulhu probably wouldn't approve. Our parents thought of everything for this dungeon.

## SIMON

Considering some of the artwork on the walls, yes, their imaginations conceived of every grotesque, offensive depiction imaginable. Do the women have to be exposed to this?

## DOTTIE

I imagine that since our mothers helped paint the figures, we're quite capable of observing them.

#### SIMON

I understand that you're still furious at me, but please, hear me out. Promise me that you'll listen to me, and consider giving me another chance.

DOTTIE

Now is not the time. Silva is about to reveal the meaning of life to us.

SIMON Do you have to call him Silva?! No one else does!

AGATHA Yes, if we're going to be talking truth, really, Silva is an inappropriate endearment.

AMLA

It's one of my names. You can call me Silva. All of you can. It's not as if Dottie calls me "Sugarplum".

DOTTIE I've always like it because it sounds like Silver. And he has always been precious, like silver. Something rare, found in parts of the earth people wouldn't go naturally.

## LUCY

Amla has enough names. We can all call him something different. I want to call you Mahela. I like what the L does to my tongue. Mahela.

AMLA As flattering as all of this is, there are things I need to tell you.

SIMON You gave Dottie the *Necronomicon*.

AGATHA Do these drawings match ones in the book?

SIMON You started all of this insanity?! If it wasn't for that fucking book, she'd still be my fiance!

AMLA I didn't give Dottie the *Necronomicon*!

## DOTTIE

And the *Necronomicon* had nothing to do with me breaking my engagement, Simon. That was about you nearly breaking my jaw.

## AGATHA

Simon, you absolute shit! (she punches him) You learn to accept Dottie is superior to you, then go down to the local pub and, like every other man in the world, and find your masculinity in a bar fight. *You will not break up this family*!

AMLA Dottie, I swear to you, I swear to all of you, that this wasn't me. Please, let me say what I need to say.

#### DOTTIE

I've always believed you, Silva. You tell me the sky is green and I will see a green sky.

## AMLA

I have suspected quite a lot of this for years. I mean our parents being involved in a cult, possibly satanic.

# AGATHA

Definitely not Christian. Can you believe all this madness began on Christmas?

LUCY Agatha, please.

# AGATHA

I'm sorry, but I must do something. There's probably biscuits and cake here, too. I'll do that.

### AMLA

When I was a teenager, I found a book in my father's study.
It was a translation of the *Necronomicon*,
and I only managed to read a few sentences before he found me
and beat me until I swore I'd never touch his books again.
My parents gave me no choice as to a career.
I was always to be a doctor.
I wanted to study literature and folklore,
but they insisted on medicine without explanation.
All they ever said was that whatever I learned,
I would never tell another soul.
I had no idea what they meant, so I shoved it to the back of my mind.

Until.

(AMLA pulls a thick stack of photos from his jacket; AGATHA brings to the table a heaping pile of biscuits and cake)

AGATHA Can you believe they're still fresh?

# AMLA

I need to show you these. Agatha, darling, please, you need to see these. They're disturbing and grotesque. They may make you sick and I apologize. But it's necessary. You'll learn what I learned. And you'll understand why everything else has happened.

DOTTIE What are they?

### AMLA

Photographs I took of cadavers in medical school. We had access to all sorts of bodies to study, in various states of decay and disease. I would have been kicked out and perhaps arrested for taking these. But they're important. I must warn you that they're nude. But you'll understand.

(DOTTIE takes the stack; everyone looks over her shoulder as she goes through the photos; SIMON, AGATHA, and LUCY take photos from her to look at)

AGATHA I don't understand what I'm looking at.

AMLA That's a woman who died in childbirth.

SIMON Is this a joke?

LUCY What are they?

AMLA That's a woman.

LUCY It can't be. This can't be.

DOTTIE Oh dear god.

AGATHA Dottie?

DOTTIE Don't you understand?! Why didn't you show me these before, Silva?

AMLA It didn't seem to matter. LUCY Amla, what are these creatures?! They aren't human!

AGATHA These are the things that wrote the book.

SIMON Are these the descendants of Cthulhu?

AMLA What you are looking at are perfectly normal human specimens. This is what a normal man looks like. This is what a normal woman looks like. I have textbooks if you don't believe me.

DOTTIE This is why you never let me look at your biology books.

AMLA I needed to figure all of this out before I could tell you.

LUCY This woman, between her legs---

AGATHA Lucy, dear!

LUCY I have to ask. I have a *right* to ask!

AMLA You do.

LUCY Where are her tentacles? Where is the cilia on her chest?

SIMON I suppose normal men only have one member.

AMLA And the tip has a simple hole, no mouth with teeth.

DOTTIE No mouths on the tips of the breasts.

AGATHA No mouth in the center of the belly. No variations of color.

LUCY They're so bland, so smooth. It's revolting!

DOTTIE This is why our parents kept us sheltered all our lives. Why we never attended normal school. Why we had no friends except one another.

SIMON I assume there is a connection to their deaths.

DOTTIE Their suicides.

AMLA I assume so, but I'm not sure.

AGATHA Were they like this?

AMLA There's only one way to know, and I think it's absolutely imperative that we do what I suggest.

DOTTIE You want us to dig up the bodies.

AMLA They're in the family cemetery right outside. It won't be difficult.

AGATHA This is madness.

Dig up your parents and set their corpse in the center of the pillars. Right here, on this page. All of you can read this, too? Why the fuck can all of us read this, Amla?

DOTTIE Goddamn it, Simon, must you swear so much?! SIMON Why the fuck aren't all of you swearing?! We're discussing digging up dead parents!

#### AGATHA

Have some tea, Simon. It's not really tea. It's grain alcohol.

#### LUCY

Simon, we learned the language when we were children, remember? It's Arabic.

AMLA It's not Arabic. It's a language used in the *Necronomicon* that hasn't an origin on Earth.

AGATHA Will someone explain to me about the pillars?!

#### DOTTIE

I have to construct them out of these pages. These are star charts, but they turn in on themselves, rather than being flat like the ones upstairs. I know what you're thinking, Silva, but it's not possible. This is paper.

AGATHA What is he thinking?

DOTTIE These pillars will transport us into the space behind the stars.

LUCY I don't understand.

DOTTIE Silva believe these will send us home.

SIMON We are home. This is our home. It doesn't matter what we look like or what we do, *we are home*.

### AMLA

Perhaps we're supposed to leave this place so we may evolve. It's a very common event that occurs when...

#### SIMON

When aliens fuck humans? Is that what you're trying to say?

# LUCY

He wasn't trying to say it with such vulgarity!

# SIMON

I'm sorry if I can't help but be vulgar! I just found out I'm a half breed alien monster on the verge of evolving into something worse, and I'm supposed to travel across the universe to meet my Maker. I'm having difficulty resolving this with my world view! Plus my fiance broke our engagement! A girl I've been in love with since we were seven, and she gave me a piece of candy because she said I looked so sad. I looked so sad because she had just kicked me in the shins. And I loved her because she is both violent and tender and smarter than me, and understands me better than anyone. Now she won't even look at me. That single fact gives me leave to say Fuck as many times as I want!

# AGATHA

No, no, no! Stop, stop! We must calmly discuss this, and without profanity, Simon! Before we dig up our dead parents, and leave this planet, and evolve into giant fish creatures, I want a cup of tea!

LUCY I'll make a fresh pot.

AGATHA And I want some answers. Amla, these photographs... Are you telling us that we aren't human?

AMLA No, no, not at all.

DOTTIE We must be hybrids.

AMLA Partly human.

AGATHA So our parents weren't human.

# AMLA

I don't know what our parents were. I can tell you once we exhume their bodies.

### LUCY

They had to be partly human or we wouldn't ...

## DOTTIE

Pass?

# SIMON

Our fucking parents weren't human. Come on, Agatha, think about it. They kept to themselves, Father stayed up all night working in his study. One night I knocked on the door, because I had a nightmare, and he whipped me until dawn for breaking his concentration.

### LUCY

We were never allowed in his study. They threatened to kill us---

#### AGATHA Kill us?!

# LUCY

That's what father and mother said to me when I wandered in one afternoon. I was sick with a cold and wanted something to read. I found a book, something old and musty, but had pictures of fish in it. At least I thought they were. They had the same cilia as me, and I was thrilled. They burned the book, spanked me until I passed out, yelling the entire time they would slit our throats if I told. When I woke, they assured me it was all a nightmare. Didn't something like that happen to you, Agatha?

# AGATHA

Once, the old woman caught me reading the Bible. I was fourteen or fifteen. She snatched it out of my hand and hit me across the face with it. I went wild. I grabbed her by her dress and threw her to the floor, and sat on top of her. I hit her with the bible several times, but it didn't seem to hurt her. I promised her if she ever touched me again, I'd take her head off with Simon's hand saw. She left me alone, but always smirked at me, as if she knew something about me I didn't. I hated that old witch.

### DOTTIE

Something like that happened to me, too. I didn't fight back, but they stripped me naked, and locked me in a closet. They said it was my judgment. If I was innocent, the Blackness wouldn't peel off my skin. It didn't go that far, but it did bite me thirty-two times all over my body. Everywhere. Anyone else?

### AMLA

Similar, but nothing about which I care to go into detail.

# AGATHA

It's all right, Amla, darling. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Your parents were monsters.

### AMLA

I became curious about human sexuality, and what I found...

# AGATHA

They cut off two of his... But they grew back, and larger than before. They continued doing that for a week. And he kept growing back larger. He's perfectly functional. Look how many children we have! The children will have to come with us, won't they?

#### AMLA Yes.

AGATHA No, that's not acceptable. The children should not have any part of this. They're staying and having normal a normal childhood.

# AMLA

How? They have the same physical features as us. In the *Necronomicon*, there were a number of birth certificates. Our ancestry traces back to Innsmouth and Dunwich, every major town that has had activity: ghosts, horrors, monsters, inbred families, ceremonies. But there's something that all of you deserve to know: we're all related. Dottie's birth mother is my mother, and her birth father is your father, Simon. Agatha's birth father is mine, her birth mother is Dottie's. And so on and so on. It's very complex, but our parents effectively managed to inbreed in order to maintain our physical attributes and heritage.

AGATHA The plan all along was to have our children marry Dottie and Simon's children.

#### DOTTIE

I can't have children. That's one thing that fell through in their grand inbred plan. I simply don't have normal working parts.

AGATHA/LUCY You what?!

AMLA Can you be more specific?

DOTTIE (whispers in his ear that she doesn't have periods, nor a vagina; just a opening for urine)

AMLA You have the mouth in your belly, though?

DOTTIE Yes.

AMLA That's your form of reproduction. Has Simon ever...

DOTTIE (throws up) I can't talk about it.

SIMON Is that why you're putting on weight?

AGATHA You are the worst kind of bastard, Simon! LUCY You never tell a woman she has put on weight! You haven't, darling! And if you have, it's not even noticeable!

AGATHA I think the rounded, plushness of your body suits you well!

DOTTIE Did you suspect, Amla?

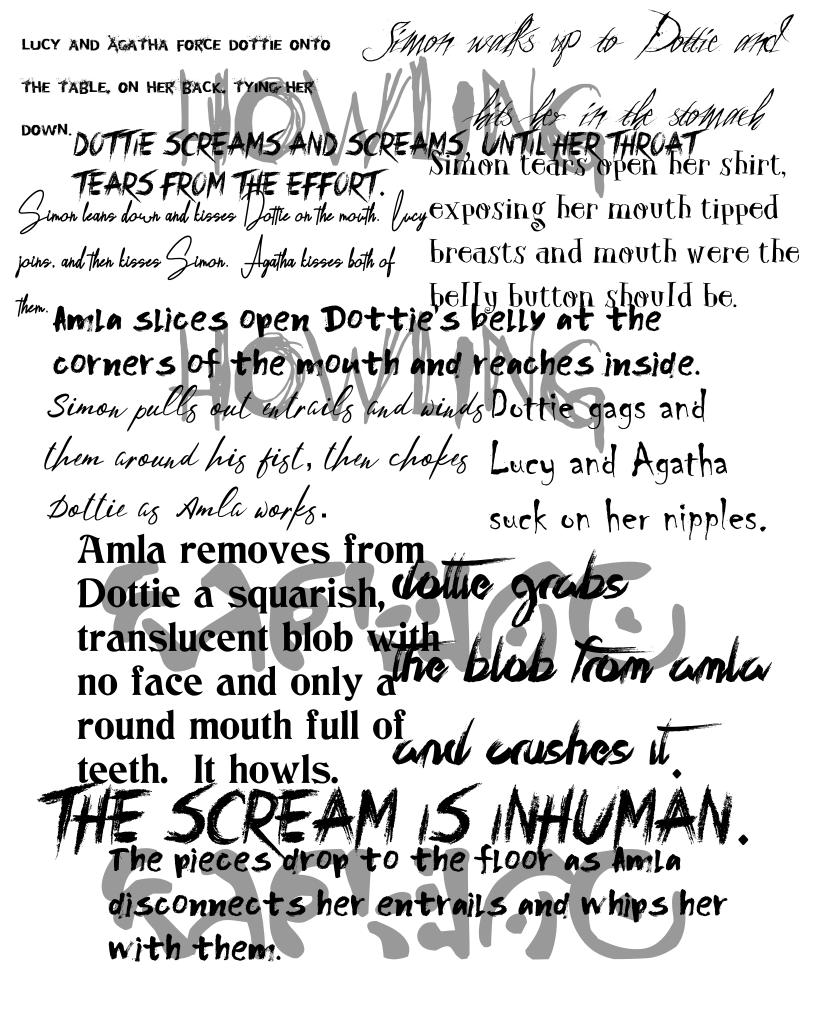
AMLA Suspect, yes. But I would have to examine you to know for sure.

DOTTIE Would you even know what to look for?

AMLA There's a chapter in the *Necronomicon*---

DOTTIE No!

(AMLA opens the book)



#### (AMLA closes the book)

DOTTIE Well, that was illuminating. Do all of you know what just happened? (affirmatives) Have you always known what happens when we open the *Necronomicon*? (affirmatives) You shits.

(AMLA examines DOTTIE's belly)

AMLA You're not pregnant.

DOTTIE Because we...

AMLA You would still show traces. You would be dilated, according to the *Necronomicon*. You're fine. Do you think you're fine?

#### DOTTIE

No. Let's dig up our parents and get this Cyclopean temple built. And no matter what happens, don't open that fucking book! I'm tired of you people trying to perforate me.

END OF SCENE

### SCENE FIVE

### SETTING: Same.

AT RISE: A few hours later. The space is filled with columns made of the same star charts as DOTTIE has been using. LUCY is helping position them correctly. AGATHA, AMLA, and SIMON arrange six corpses on the floor, according to LUCY's direction. There are only four corpses and AMLA sets an urn on the table.

#### AMLA

My parents were cremated. Their ashes will be needed for the ceremony.

#### SIMON

(kicks corpse)Good to see you again, Pop.You should have fathered just about everyone here. Would you care to say Hello?Silence is rude, sir. Speak when you're spoken to.(kicks him again)No one learned anything intelligent through pleasure like they did in pain.

#### AGATHA

Really, Simon, I thought myself free of that sadism after the old man died. Oh my goodness, I need tea.

LUCY

Fuck tea. Drink whiskey. (pours her a drink) I don't apologize for my language, because having my dead parents, whoever they are (I've lost track), to have them at my feet, moldering and decaying, well, what else can a lady say except Fuck.

AMLA

They shouldn't be in this state of decay. What I mean is that within a year a human body is nothing but bones, if that much.

SIMON The key word is human. Let's see how human they are.

LUCY That's rather indescrete isn't it?

SIMON And was digging up them up for a blasphemous ceremony, Is that the height of propriety?

AGATHA

If you aren't going to look, Lucy, I absolutely am. They owe us an explanation, And this is the only one they can give.

(SIMON and AGATHA open the clothes of the corpses; both of them react violently, AGATHA running to vomit and SIMON drinking most of a bottle of whiskey)

LUCY Now I want to----

SIMON/AGATHA Don't look!

LUCY What did you see? AGATHA If you love God, don't look.

(AMLA looks at the corpses, ignoring their protests; he simply nods)

AMLA It's what I expected.

SIMON You expected that?

AMLA I expected that they wouldn't be entirely dead. No, Dottie, Lucy, don't. Their human parts are dead. That's all you need to know.

LUCY Will someone cover them, then?

(SIMON finds something to cover them)

SIMON Don't look at them, Lucy. They may be covered, but that doesn't mean you won't see anything.

LUCY (take the bottle from him) Didn't Mama teach you how to share. (long drink)

SIMON Didn't Mama teach you to use a glass. LUCY I don't think I trust anything Mama ever said to me her entire life.

DOTTIE Silva, only two more columns and we can begin. I'm feeling warmth in them.

AMLA I hear humming. Does anyone else hear humming?

LUCY I hear static, like a radio between stations.

#### AGATHA

May we take a brief moment to pause this absurd drama, and discuss that which none of us want to discuss: Why are we doing this?

AMLA Research into alien life. Another planet, most likely in a different galaxy. This is the biggest discovery of the human race.

#### DOTTIE

The planet must be on the other side of the universe. There are celestial bodies I don't, well, I have no idea what they are.

LUCY

It's not really a new discovery is it? Someone met these ghastly things before. Hence, the Necronomicon.

#### AGATHA

Thank you, Lucy, for that insight. Wherever this sends someone, you can guarantee it will be a violent, callous world.

AMLA We are part of that world, But we're not violent, callous people.

#### SIMON

I think everyone in this room must disagree with you there. If you disagree, open that book and let's see which of us takes up knitting. AMLA This alien life is part of us, but it needn't control us. We're looking for answers about yourselves and who we are.

### AGATHA

I know who I am. I'm your wife and the mother of three children, and in a few months four. That's who we are.

DOTTIE I don't know who I am.

AGATHA Then that's your decision to go. Amla has a family. You could die doing this.

AMLA It's monumentally important. If I died searching for life that predates the human race, that still lives in my body, that would make my life meaningful.

(AGATHA slaps his face)

AGATHA I know I have never made your life meaningful, but your fucking children should. You could never return! You could die!

LUCY He could evolve into one of these fascinating creatures. He could come back into a praying mantis crossed with a shark, and devour the world, beginning with his children.

AGATHA What is the matter with you, Lucy?

LUCY Whiskey! I like it and I feel honest and real for the first time. I can feel my body and I can think. And I'm going to do something I've always wanted, and I don't need that book to allow me the opportunity. (LUCY goes to DOTTIE and kisses her; it's not an attractive scene, yet LUCY's pleased)

SIMON Both of you. Marry me.

### LUCY

#### Now.

I want to discuss the horrific, carnage paintings our dearly departed parents painted on the walls. In the dark, mind you. There are no electric lights down here, and no remains of candle stubs or dripped wax. There aren't even drips of paint.

SIMON That's quite a deduction, Sherlucy Holmes. What is your conclusion?

LUCY They painted in a drug induced frenzy, using their own blood. There is evidence of plants. I don't recognize them, but I would wager they're hallucinogenic.

#### AGATHA

I have no doubt our parents were as sober as a stone when they did all of this.

AMLA

I agree. This work, the references in the drawings, the language, this required focus and determination.

SIMON

Well, Miss Lucy Allingham, if that is your true last name, I've never seen you so intelligent.

LUCY You were never looking for it.

SIMON After we travel to an alien world and back, Would you care to have dinner with me?

LUCY

Simon, I'm not going to be your replacement for Dottie. But I don't mind using you to answer several questions I've spent my life contemplating.

# AGATHA

Stop it you two. We have extremely important things to discuss. We haven't asked why.

AMLA I'm sorry?

### AGATHA

Why would creatures from another planet inbreed with humans and then call us back?

# AMLA

The general idea that appears throughout all editions of the Necronomicon is that this is all part of an invasion.

Assimilate the human population through selective breeding,

kill the rest,

and allow Cthulhu and the Old Ones to return and rule.

# AGATHA

You said that as if lecturing a freshman class in demonic folklore. Assimilate, selective breeding---

LUCY Inbreeding, mind you.

AGATHA Kill the rest. And allow these monsters to return and destroy the rest of the planet.

AMLA I'm simply answering your question.

# AGATHA

I don't want an academic answer to my question. Let me rephrase it: How do you feel about what we are participating in, What our parents have forced us to participate in, That we are not only part of the apocalypse, But are building some sort of paper machine that will allow us to help the apocalypse. This is a door you're building. It could work both ways. You demonic folk tales could walk right through as easily as you walking through to their hell. Have you thought of that?

#### DOTTIE/AMLA Yes.

AGATHA And it doesn't matter. Because research is of the utmost importance.

### AMLA

We have no reason to fear them. We are them. We've put this together. They should recognize us, so to speak.

AGATHA

I'm getting no where with you. I feel like I'm tlaking to a bookcase filled with crumbling books. Dottie, you've said almost nothing this entire time.

DOTTIE I'm working.

AGATHA Obviously, you're going.

DOTTIE Of course.

AGATHA Who else? Simon?

SIMON If Dottie is, I am.

DOTTIE I don't need your protection.

AGATHA Because you have my husband's, Your brother's.

# DOTTIE

I don't need anyone's protection. I'm one of them, As much as I'm one of all of you. Have you thought of that? We aren't three families. We are one family. One family which has been a horror show, A freak show of torture and violence. I really doubt the other side of my heritage, located on the other side of the cosmos, could be much worse.

AGATHA Have I ever---?

### DOTTIE

You started your pursuit of Amla when you were *thirteen*. You began by telling him terrible lies about Lucy and I. Destroy future competition through long term brainwashing.

### AGATHA

My mother told me to do that. She said I had to marry Amla. Do you know what she would have done to me if I didn't? Gutted me so I couldn't have children. I'm not exaggerating. She showed me the knife she would use, and described in detail how she would get inside me. She said it had to be Amla, or nothing. I could not mate outside our circle. So what would you have done, Being thirteen, stupid, frightened, And believing that marriage was a battle that I had to win?

LUCY Why didn't you confide in me?

#### AGATHA

You know what mother was like. She told me to tell no one. It was impossible to speak about anything in that house without her knowing.

#### LUCY

I never wanted to marry Amla. I always wanted Simon, but, back then, I thought incest was forbidden, Not a family tradition.

#### SIMON

Lucy, you wanted Dottie and you still do. You never wanted me. No one has ever wanted me. Don't, Dottie, don't lie to me to make me feel better. I will never feel better.

LUCY You are so dramatic, Simon. AMLA Agatha, you should know that I regret nothing. Had you come to me at thirteen and explained, I would have proposed to you then. I've always been in love with you.

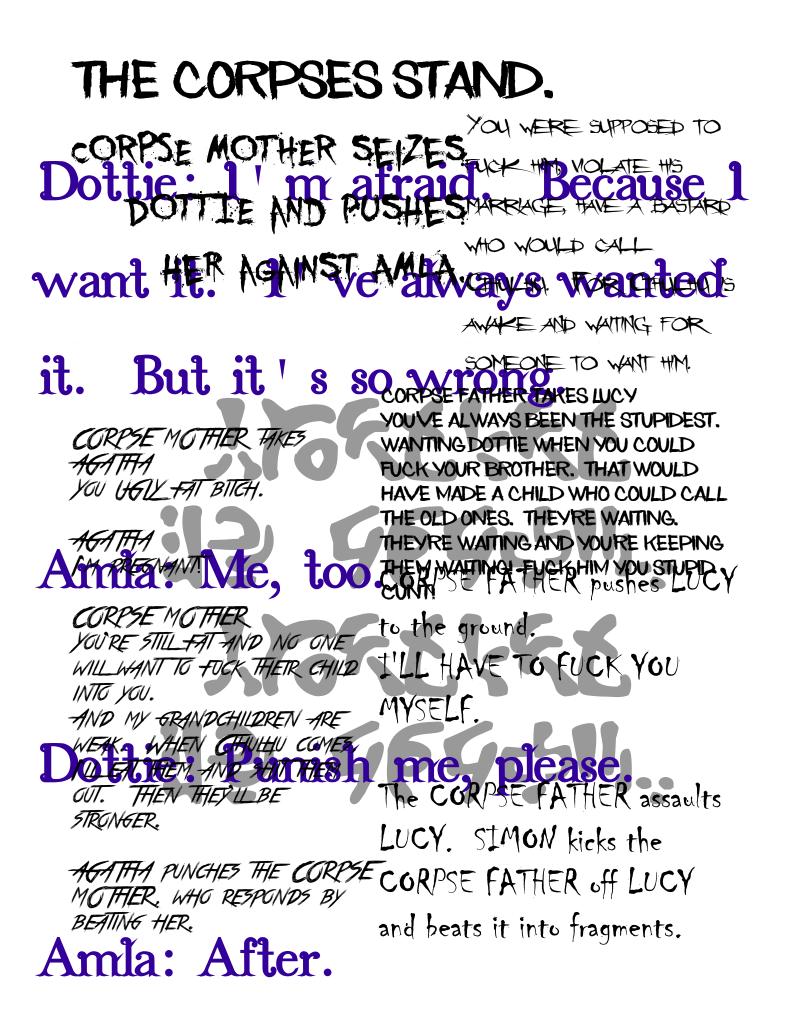
AGATHA And what about Dottie?

DOTTIE He's my guardian. And half brother, it would seem.

AGATHA And what else is he?

DOTTIE I don't think I understand what you mean.

(LUCY opens the book)



(LUCY closes the book)

LUCY That answers several dozen questions.

AGATHA I've never been so elated that they're all dead.

(lights, sounds, roaring)

DOTTIE But how can it be starting?! I have a column left and we haven't done any ceremony.

AMLA We don't need to. It's the book! Agatha, darling, you need to leave now.

AGATHA Please come with me! I need you!

AMLA I'll be back! I promise!

(lights, sounds, chaos, AGATHA leaves; the corpses get up and take their children's hands and lead them through a sudden black hole in the ground or floor, whatever)

AMLA I did come back. But much too late. Agatha must be long gone. Even my children. Grandchildren?

QUESTIONS What happened after you disappeared from the basement?

AMLA I can hardly understand it all. Time passed at an incredible speed, Yet it could only have taken ten minutes on Earth. That must account for the 100 years which passed.

QUESTIONS You don't seem to have aged at all. AMLA I won't. I evolved, And my true form is indescribable and eldritch. It has no shape, And yet it has great mass, But moves as if it is made of nothing. I can consume from any part of my body, And what I consume becomes me. I have no face, Only a series of tentacles that look like dead fingers. I have taken this shape to save you. The humans who have seen me, They have immediately killed themselves.

QUESTIONS Where is Miss Christie?

#### AMLA

She was immediately accepted by the beings And fawned over. She evolved quickly, And became, Of her own volition, A queen.

#### QUESTION

What do you mean by queen?

#### ALMA

Many of the most horrific, sickest looking creatures I could never imagine, Even in a terrible nightmare, They became her drones. She and her drones, And her millions of children, Are on their way. I suggest the population take to the sewers and underground. Unless you've been inbred with an alien, You will not survive. Hide, and protect what you can of the human race.

QUESTION Is Cthulhu returning?

AMLA

He has never left. So I would suggest avoiding the west coast of America. After rising from his sleep in the Pacific, That will be his first stop.

QUESTION Did you ever discover who gave the *Necronomicon* to Miss Christie?

AMLA I would say ask her yourself, but---

(AMLA's grandchildren enter; they look exactly like DOTTIE, LUCY, SIMON, and AGATHA; they're in modern dress)

DOTTIE You made it! We've been waiting ages for you!

AGATHA What's wrong, Grandfather? Don't you know us?

SIMON Maybe he needs some air.

LUCY Or water? You can assume your real form if it's exhausting keeping this one.

SIMON We won't be affected by it, Grandfather.

DOTTIE I've had so many dreams about you. I know what you and my aunt Dottie had together. I want it, too. I want to be that close.

SIMON Let's get him home. No more questions!

QUESTIONS (barrage of questions)

AMLA There is a war coming. I couldn't stop it. I tried. I talked to everyone and no one understood me. They don't understand what a war is. To them, Everything is what it is. DOTTIE Then let it be. It is what it is. You are what you are.

AMLA All of you, Look just like I left you, Ten minutes ago.

AGATHA That was over a hundred years ago.

AMLA And none of you are the same. We were all such a wonderful family. We tried to be.

LUCY We are a wonderful family. You'll see. It'll be like nothing changed at all.

SIMON Let's get him home. I'll order the car to drive around.

AMLA You look so much like my Agatha, And so much like my Dottie...

(AGATHA kisses AMLA on the mouth; then does DOTTIE)

AGATHA Isn't this the world you want? Isn't that why you've done everything you've done? This is the only way you could have everything, isn't it?

LUCY That's why you gave Dottie the *Necronomicon*, isn't it?

AMLA I've destroyed us all.

AGATHA You've given yourself life. And life to our family. You saved our family, Grandfather. How is that evil?

AMLA I did it all for Dottie. I cannot explain it. What I wanted from her was eldritch, though not evil. I would wrap her around my fist to keep her close, jerk her to her knees, because she has so much power over me. Now she has everything. The world is ours, finally. Now, I can relax and fall to my knees.

(House explodes; wood, plaster, roof tiles rain down; accompanied by roar, human and yet not)

AMLA Dottie. You're back!

DOTTIE Silva!

(DOTTIE eats AMLA)

END OF PLAY