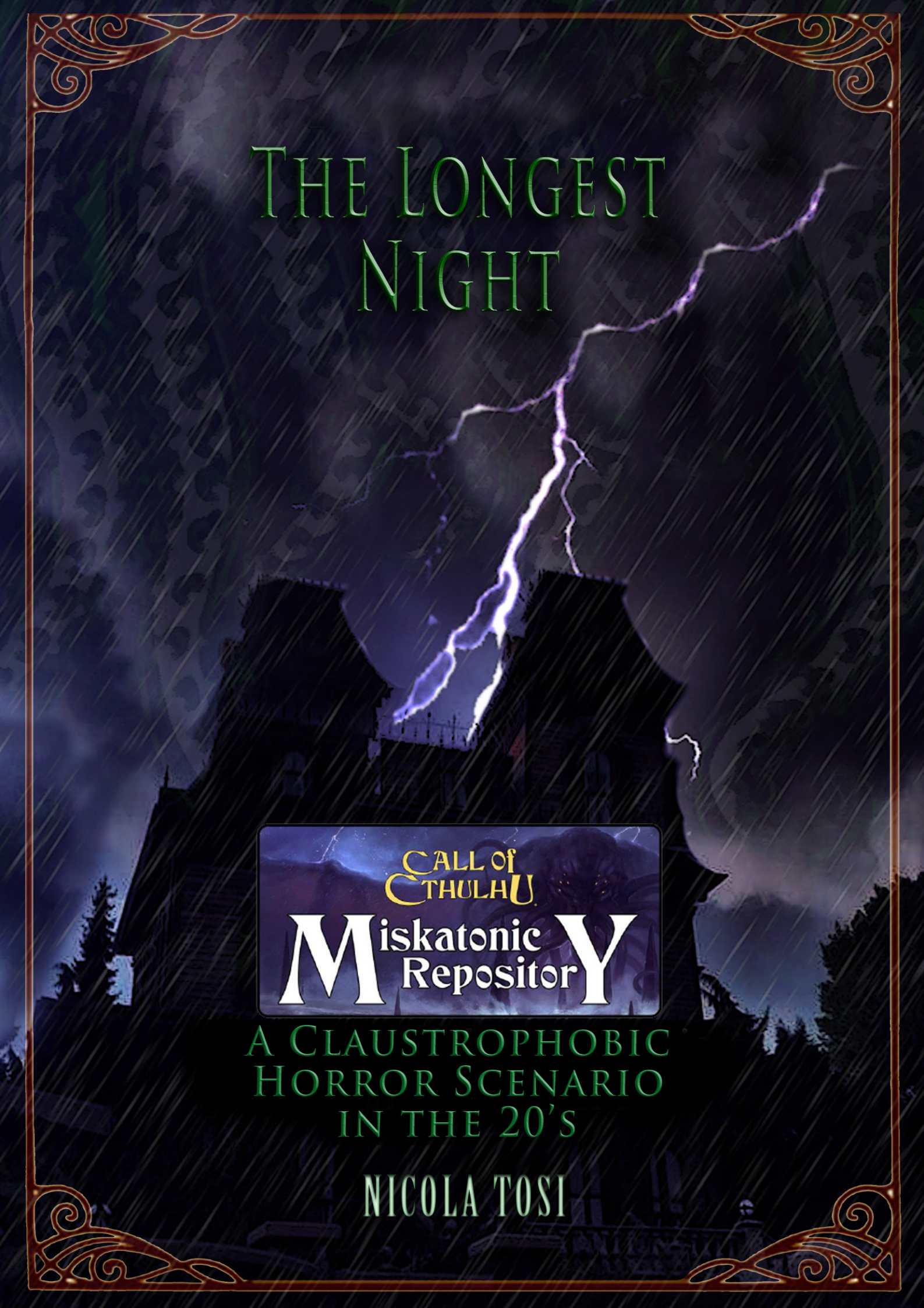




THE LONGEST NIGHT



A CLAUSTROPHOBIC
HORROR SCENARIO
IN THE 20'S

NICOLA TOSI



TRANSLATED WITH
THE HELP OF
GIOVANNI TOSI

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La Notte più Lunga, 20/11/2019, Nicola Tosi

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INTRODUCTION

This scenario is especially suitable for a group of 4-5 investigators with an academic background, even though the current profession is irrelevant as far as the scenario goes. Some combat skills may be useful but the NPC cast can help compensate for shortcomings in that particular field.

The story takes place entirely on the isle of Santa Dinfa but at the discretion of the keeper it can begin even before the investigators arrive there if the need to make some presentations between characters arises. It is advisable for each investigator to know at least one of the other investigators and /or NPCs besides Professor Grimaldi. The scenario contains some potentially lethal fights and the keeper may want to make some changes if he decides to insert the scenario into an ongoing campaign.

PLAYERS' INFORMATION

On the sunny afternoon of Wednesday, May 30, 1923, investigators find themselves invited for a couple of days in the luxurious villa of their wealthy former professor of Archeology at the University of Rome, Giancarlo Maria Grimaldi, on the islet of Santa Dinfa near Capri. Together with other old students they prepare for a pleasant mini vacation of a couple of days in the Adriatic that they will not easily forget. In fact the investigators were contacted by the professor in question via a letter (Handout # 1) in which he explains that he received numerous anonymous death threats and that he fears for his life. The day May 30 is just what the letters allude to as the day when the professor's death will take place and Grimaldi implores the investigators to help him to prevent these horrendous threats from turning into grim reality.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION THE EVENTS UNTIL NOW

In this scenario the investigators will find themselves unaware victims of the machinations of a dangerous sociopath and the failed use of an extremely dangerous occult tome capable of bending the laws of physics and time itself. Everything is presented as a classic "protect the NPC" scenario but with a twist consisting in the fact that such NPC was the villain all along. There is also a cast of various NPCs that can be used as reserve investigators if one or more of them were to end prematurely (and possibly in a rather grisly fashion).

The story begins twenty years before the scenario events, when a then young professor of archeology, Giancarlo Maria Grimaldi, during one of his trips to Egypt, comes in possession of a horrible tome concerning the myths of Cthulhu, thanks to some artifacts smugglers that operated at Cairo.

The tome in question is none other than an imperfect copy of the Necronomicon, the "Livre des Morts", translated by order of the master templar Philippe Villiers of L'Isle-Adam before the Great Siege of Malta in 1565 perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, in a desperate (and blasphemous) attempt to use the secrets contained therein to defeat the invaders. This ghastly and poorly executed work could not be used and, after the arrival of the Spanish support army, the tome was lost until 1890 when Bedouin marauders found it in the possession of a French archaeologist made partially insane from the ghastly writings. The tome was taken from him along with all his earthly possessions and passed from hand to hand until it was sold to Professor Grimaldi. The imperfect transcriptions of the Gods and the great Ancients of myths are not sufficient to provide a complete view of the truth that lies beyond the stars, but are sufficient to give a fairly complete idea of the certain presence of forces that go beyond human understanding and permanently ruin the mental health of the reader. The professor's attention is captured by a particularly awkward passage translated into a portentous ritual capable of guaranteeing eternal life to anyone who is able to carry it out. A fatal error of translation in truth, since the only effect of the ritual is that of summoning a terrifying creature of the myths in our plan of existence, the unclean Aži Dahāka. The appearance of this semi-divine being through the spell has the consequence of creating a space-time loop that will end only when the performer is destroyed with a precise ritual or when the request made to Aži Dahāka is granted. At that point the being will abandon the earthly dimension causing a formidable cataclysm that will devastate a large area, propagating from the point where it has been summoned and potentially killing everyone nearby (or making him completely insane).

Unaware of the veracity of this text, the professor, horrified and frightened more than he could have foreseen, dismissed the text in a trunk in his attic, swearing never to lay his eyes on that blasphemous work again. Unfortunately however, in the winter of 1921, Professor Grimaldi is diagnosed with a congenital kidney disease that will lead to a particularly painful and undignified death within a few years. The idea of being doomed to endure such an ignoble and demeaning end, destroys him emotionally and leads him to plan his own suicide. On the very day he decides to carefully inspect the solid beams of his attic to hang himself, his eyes catch the trunk in which the Livre des Morts is stowed away. It is largely known that a desperate man is capable to try everything to escape his predicament, so the professor dusts off the tome and tries to confirm his veracity. Through one of the

simplest spells enclosed in the volume (and one of the better translated ones at that) he manages to conjure up a simple spell, creating an enchanted knife through the sacrifice of his old dog, a mastiff called Cavour. Intoxicated by his incredible discovery he begins to strike up a complicated plan to carry out the far more complex ritual to obtain immortality by summoning the creature described in the book as "The Wishgiver", an incorrect translation of the name Aži Dahāka.

Obviously Professor Grimaldi does not suspect in the least that, due to the inaccuracies in the text of the spell, all those present on the island will be trapped in a time loop, including the same semi-divine being that he shall so recklessly summon.

Following the instructions of the ritual that he later translated into Italian, Professor Grimaldi decides to use his young former students as sacrifices for Aži Dahāka, believing that their brilliant minds shall be an appropriate sacrifice for the evil entity.

Guests arrive at the chosen place in the afternoon in what appears to be a perfect spring day, sunny and warm, while the flowers of the beautiful Santa Dinfa island show their varied chromatic and olfactory show.

But something will go wrong and at night, around 6:00 AM, while the investigators leave the house to assist a troubled NPC, the professor will fall prey to a fit of madness after summoning the unclean Aži Dahāka, shocked by the nature of the demigod, alien beyond any human understanding. The being will ask him telepathically what the object of his desire is, a question to which the now insane professor will not be able to answer. Unnerved by the erratic behavior of his summoner, Aži Dahāka will decide to end his existence, erasing him from creation with a simple nod of one of his horrible limbs. The professor will begin to melt into a disgusting black slime but, before expiring, he will be able to whisper in a shining moment of lucidity "Take all those who are at home, I sacrifice them, grant me eternal life!".

Since this is the first time that this strange spell will be completed, not even the ineffable demigod will be aware of its effects and will remain unknowingly a victim of it along with everyone else on the islet.

Finding himself trapped, the being will begin wondering how to get out of this annoying predicament and will come to the (partially incorrect) conclusion that the key to his imprisonment is none other than the miserable human who had the guts to perform the summoning, and will decide to destroy him to end the spell. The problem will fall into the fact that not only will his powers be limited as long as he doesn't fulfill the professor's wish but, to make things worse, every time the professor dies, the timer will reset and the memories of all those afflicted by the spell will be erased, including those of the

professor and Aži Dahāka himself. The entire island will thus be trapped in a three-hour loop that will be repeated from the moment the investigators wake up randomly during the night due to a very noisy thunder until the professor is struck by one of the various deaths caused by the be extra dimensional being or either until the time the ritual was completed or until 6:00 AM, the very time of the professor's death.

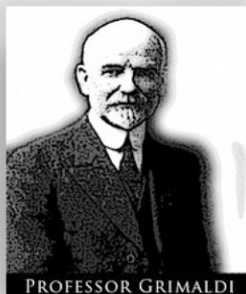
Due to the way in which the desire will be formulated however, the pact will not include the investigators (and the already mentioned troubled NPC) who will be outside the house when the wish is made, partially excluding them from the cycle. Even if the timer is reset, the investigators will keep all the memories of the previous loops and will therefore find a solution to the mystery. Be careful though! Only the professor will be virtually immune to the threat posed by Aži Dahāka while all the other guests will be subjected to a more natural and very permanent good old death. In the case a PC or NPC should die in one of the cycles, he will be lost forever, disappearing from existence and everyone will forget about him (except the investigators and Aži Dahāka himself, who will be the only ones to remember the deceased).

The investigation will therefore be a literal race against time to prevent Aži Dahāka from finding a way to break the loop in his own way and free himself from his time prison, thus causing the premature demise of all those present on the island and, if left free to act, ensure an extremely short and dark future rest of humanity.

PROFESSOR GRIMALDI

Born in Naples in 1857, the elderly professor Giancarlo Maria Grimaldi is a world wide renowned academic phenomenon. His studies on Premesopotamian civilizations and the discoveries found in Egypt have made him famous all over the globe and his numerous books and essays are translated and used in the best universities and colleges, in Oxford, Harvard and, of course, in Miskatonic University to name a few. The professor was loved by the students and respected by the colleagues, affable, jovial and excellent conversationalist; he made several friends especially between the students of his Archeology class at the University of Rome, with whom he has maintained contact over the years even after they completed their studies. During his forty years of teaching, the investigators have attended at least one of his classes (not necessarily together) and should retain a very pleasant memory of their old professor.

All this is ruined, however, when the diagnosis of a terrible congenital kidney disease definitively marks the fate of the professor. Little by little he loses weight, can't sleep at night and his numerous relationships are left to fall into disgrace. He remains a lonely man, lost and desperate without a single friend in the world, excluding his old and faithful mastiff, jokingly called Cavour.



PROFESSOR GRIMALDI

THE RITUAL

Despair pushes him to commit a horrible act, dusting off the blasphemous *Livre des Morts* the he had sworn never to touch again, takes the life of his only companion, poor Cavour, and enchants a knife that will serve him for the much more complicated ritual to obtain immortality. To this end, the professor will have to summon Aži Dahāka at dawn (scheduled for 5:55 am), make his wish and point "nine brilliant minds" to the demon to be taken as sacrifices. This ritual would in truth just require the sacrifice of one or more people without any particular ability, with the sole purpose of summoning Aži Dahāka in the material world and confining him in a space-time loop until he agrees to fulfill a single wish from his summoner. Normally this would end with a simple assent on the part of the being that, after consuming his chosen victims, would simply grant the wish distorting it in some unpredictable way to cause the greatest possible suffering to the madman who dared to turn to him. Alas, because of the professor's madness fit, the annoyed Aži Dahāka will destroy him just as he expresses his desires. This will cause a glitch in the ritual that will have the effect of resetting the memory of the demigod every time the loop repeats itself, causing it not to remember what keeps it trapped in the loop.

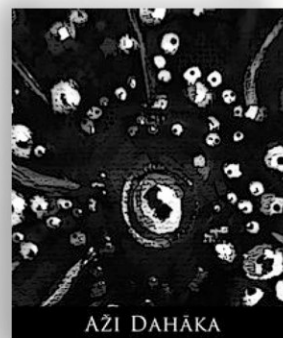
AŽI DAHĀKA

Worshiped in antiquity by the Iranian tribes before the formation of what would later be known as the Persian Empire, Aži Dahāka is a cruel semi-divine creature, akin to the great ancients and of unknown provenance. While not presenting the same level of threat as its cousins, this entity is nevertheless endowed with incredible abilities, capable of performing miracles and, although it is not exactly easy to persuade it to, fulfilling wishes. This being is probably the origin of the myths concerning the

genies known as Djin, which have become part of the Middle Eastern folklore. As an extremely malevolent and violent being, Aži Dahāka fortunately resides in the Dreamland and, except for some nightmare that could be projected into the minds of mortals, the demigod is generally harmless as long as it resides in its domain. To summon it in the material world could turn out to be a very risky endeavor and probably destined to end in misery and destruction for all involved.

This horrible creature of myths can present at first glance a considerable resemblance to the more famous Yog Sothoth but its bulbous body is formed by organs and entrails swollen with nauseating gases and liquids that ooze a rather ghastly smell of ammonia. The eyes that cover his formless figure emit a malign and alien light that could drive mad all but the strongest willed of men.

The unclean being will remain trapped in Professor Grimaldi's attic because of the spell and he will not be able to move from there until he is freed by someone or until he has fulfilled his summoner's wish. In this weakened state, Aži Dahāka is unable to cast particularly complex spells unless he renounces a large part of his POW (an action that would cause him great pain and which he therefore tries to avoid unless cornered). The only way he has to influence those who find themselves in the house is to use its ability to emanate from its horrible mass a small but effective parasite, capable of penetrating the brains of unconscious or dormant victims, passing through their orifices and controlling their minds. This will be the method he will adopt to eliminate the professor and, once he becomes aware of their vulnerability, kill the guests.



t h i s s H a l l b e Y o u r l a s t
 n i g h t o n T h i s W o r l d
 B e s u r e T o m a k e e n d
 f o r y o u r s i n s

HANDOUT #2

THE FIRST CYCLE

Investigators and other guests arrive at the island at 6:00 PM with a boat they took from Capri. The afternoon is sunny, the air is warm and guests wear elegant summer clothes even though it is spring. Professor Grimaldi warmly welcomes everyone into his large flower garden and invites the guests into the house for dinner, organized as an extremely well-stocked buffet filled with refined fish and fruit dishes. The most careful investigators might realize that there is no servitude in the villa but if this fact is brought to the attention of Professor Grimaldi, he will simply apologize profusely and explain that he was forced to dismiss the butler and the maid a few days ago for having caught them stealing silverware. He was just unable to find replacements in time and the dinner was prepared by a catering service in the afternoon. They left the island just ten minutes before the investigators arrived. The real reason for the absence of personnel is that Professor Grimaldi fired them when they expressed doubts about the disappearance of the dog. The presence of an empty kennel can be noted on the back of the house and will be justified by the professor with the premature death of his beloved dog Cavour due to a bowel cancer. Investigators may also note that the professor does not appear to be in a great shape with **Spot Hidden** roll but his true conditions are not discernible without a thorough medical examination and the symptoms could easily be mistaken for lack of sleep or stress (which he actually suffers from). If compared to the threatening letters, he will show to be worried but

will ask the interlocutors to postpone the conversation until the conclusion of the dinner. A **Spot Hidden** or **Listen** roll will reveal that the weather is rapidly getting worse and that there will probably be a storm during the night.

The evening goes by peacefully, giving investigators the chance to meet classmates they hadn't seen for a long time or to introduce themselves to those who had never had the pleasure of meeting. After the dinner, Professor Grimaldi will summon the investigators to his office and, after offering them a glass of liquor (or whatever they like, the important thing is that they drink it, you know, for drugging reasons), he will show them the last fake threatening letter that he himself forged (Handout # 3). He will lie saying that he found it on the doorstep that morning and that he seems to have seen a boat leave just before finding it. By examining it, investigators can determine that:

- The letter was made with newspaper pieces from the magazine "La Domenica del Corriere" with a difficult **Library Use** roll but cannot be traced back to the date of publication.
- The used glue has not yet completely dried up with a **Spot Hidden** roll, which reveals that the letter has been manufactured for less than 12 hours.
- The card is smooth enough to allow the find of fingerprints with a **Biology** roll. This will not be of great help for the moment but it could be useful for the police when the scenario is over.
- The words used are particularly sought after, which would suggest that the sender is an educated

individual, with a successful roll on INT.

In any case, this will not restrict the field of the investigation particularly until the revelation that the professor has in store: He will tell them that he suspects one of the dinner guests to actually be the sender of the message and that he wanted to gather everyone here to attempt to catch him bloody handed. This clearly risky plan could sound bad to the investigators and if they point it out to the professor, he will just answer "I hadn't thought of it. Luckily you are here to aid me in this dangerous predicament. I would truly be lost without you lot."

He will also tell them that he has assigned them the rooms on the floor directly above that allow a clear hearing of what goes on in the lower floors, so that the investigators can run in his help if need arises during the night.

After this briefing, the investigators will be free to return with the other guests until midnight, which the professor and most of the guests will decide to go to bed. Investigators can follow their example or not, but after about twenty minutes they will begin to feel very tired from the journey and feel a strong need to go to sleep. This is actually the effect of a strong sleeping pill that the professor has given to all guests through the drinks he served them. The drug is starting to take effect and investigators will have to pass a POW shot every five minutes to fight the need to go to sleep.

Even if some investigators decide to stand guard, it is highly improbable to endure the drug onslaught.

A powerful thunderstorm will break loose during the night and at 3:00 AM a branch struck by lightning will damage the wires that connect the electricity generator to the villa. The roar, easily mistakable for a particularly noisy thunder by a sleeping investigator, will have the effect of waking them up momentarily but, once it is clear that everything is in place, sleep will prevail and they will resume dreaming. A few minutes from 6:00 AM, however, they will be woken up again, this time by a scream. This is Rambaldo Gasperini, who came out on the porch to get some fresh air (by this time the thunderstorm has subsided and only a gentle rain is wetting the islet), but he will slip on a wet rock hidden in the darkness and sprained an ankle. Given the location of the rooms and the thick walls, only the investigators and the professor (who is in the attic finishing the ritual at this time) will be able to hear him and, in the very moment the investigators set foot outside the villa to rescue him, Professor Grimaldi will complete his ritual and then be killed by the being he summoned. At that point the time will go three hours back and the loop will begin.

THE SECOND CYCLE

Investigators wake up in the middle of the night because of the noise made by the exploding generator. Adrenaline keeps them awake long enough to understand that something is wrong. Because of the loop, the sleeping pill is always circulating in their bodies so the investigators will have a penalty die for any roll that requires special attention or precision until they can find a way to recover lucidity. A **Medicine** roll can reveal that the investigators are under the influence of a drug and an additional **First Aid** roll can provide a solution to their current status (throwing up, stimulant drugs, large doses of coffee etc.).

Once they find each other they will be able to start revaluating the situation. Unless they have expressly checked it previously, making sure of what time it is will not give them any clue but they will still be able to note that the storm is still in progress. Electricity is out but there is a candle in every room just for situations like this and each floor has a flashlight inside a closet fixed to the wall. Investigators' equipment resets with each loop unless they have it with them as time rewinds, in which case it remains as it was left, candles and batteries wear out, bullets run out, etc. If the investigators decide to wake up the other occupants of the house in search of help or to warn them that something is wrong, they will find them extremely sleepy (except the professor who is well awake and about to prepare the ritual) and amazed by this sudden and unwanted night invasion (especially the professor!). Many could react in a hostile manner depending on the brutality of the investigators or even fight, frightened by intruders in the dark, but surely they will not be very cooperative because of the bizarre fantasies that will be blabbering in their faces. The professor in particular will be very disturbed by this bizarre eventuality and could decide to postpone the ritual until the waters are calm (although, of course, it is now too late since the ritual has already happened, he just doesn't know it yet).

An alternative way that the investigators could follow is to personally ascertain what is actually happening and decide to explore the villa in search of clues even if it is swallowed by darkness.

However, after investigators have investigated four rooms (this includes the guests' ones), Azi Dahāka will decide to strike. Unable to leave the attic, he decides to magically possess one of the NPCs who are sleeping upstairs and use it to kill the unsuspecting professor. The first to be possessed will be Carlotta Manfredi (Adele Esposito in the event that investigators were in the company of Carlotta), who will descend the stairs in total darkness while still in nightwear, pick up a large butcher knife from the kitchen and attempt to use it to assassinate the

Carlotta Manfredi



professor. Investigators intent on looking for clues or in one of the guest rooms will have to perform a hard **Listen** roll to hear the gentle steps of the girl's bare feet on the floor while a storm is raging outside. If the investigators were to cross her path instead, she will simply ignore them, passing slowly through them with a blank expression on her face (very disturbing in the feeble light of the candles). Seeing a completely dressed in white, pale as a corpse knife wielding doll faced girl with such a ghastly expression emerge from the dark, will make the investigators lose 1/D6 **SAN**. Any attempt to reason with her will be pointless and attempts to stop her by force will result in a clash in which the girl will fight with the fury of madness, attacking the closest enemy and resulting extremely dangerous and difficult to subdue or kill. She will be able to ignore all but the most lethal wounds while pervaded by an incredible strength and will stop at nothing to kill the designated victim, even if the action will result in her death (like throwing herself down a window along with the professor).

At this point various scenarios may arise:

- If the possessed girl manages to kill the professor, the timer will be reset and the night will restart from the moment the lightning damaged the electrical system, with the difference that Carlotta will be immediately possessed by Aži Dahāka.

- In the event in which the investigators or guests succeed in subduing her, the night will continue to proceed until 6:00 AM when the timer will be reset again. It is up to the caretaker to determine how much time has passed before time runs out and to prevent the game from running too long or too little, the complete exploration of six more rooms should be an acceptable compromise.

- In the unlikely event in which the possessed girl kills all the other guests before being defeated, the timer will not reset and Aži Dahāka will be able to free himself from his time prison and the investigators will probably face a premature end.

- Finally, if professor manages instead to get free access to the attic (for example in the case in which the girl is incapacitated without killing her and without alerting the professor), he will find a rather-angry Aži Dahāka that will not lose the opportunity to personally eliminate him in a horrible way. However, this will not change anything and the cycle will repeat itself as if the professor had been killed normally.

NEW SPELL: EMANATE MIND WORM

Whatever crazy and evil madman, brave enough to decide to cast this spell, is able to emanate from its own body a small parasite similar to an indigo worm about 5 inches long. This small being is curiously fast and can penetrate the brain of a sleeping or

unconscious human, taking control of his mind with an opposing **POW** roll. If the victim succeeds the roll, the human will be temporarily saved by the effect of the worm but will have to repeat the roll every ten minutes until the worm is removed from his brain. A human possessed in this way loses temporarily all his **SAN** and finds himself under the complete control of the caster. The victim gains 10 bonus HP along with an increase of one step in his Bonus Damage for the duration of the spell. The possessed person cannot be stunned but only killed (but this does not prevent from incapacitating her in other ways, like tying her) since it is the worm that controls the brain impulses, the guest's conscience is not necessary. Someone possessed by this spell does not need eat or sleep. To cast this spell one must sacrifice 5 POW and spend 1 magic point per hour of use. Whoever cast this horrible spell, loses D10 **SAN**.

THE NEXT CYCLES

The loop will continue to repeat itself until a guest or the person possessed by Aži Dahāka is killed. At that point the unclean being will realize that one of the humans is missing in the new loop and will try to investigate this weird phenomenon, taking control of another guest to try to kill one (or more) of the occupants of the house, including the investigators, that are not the professor.

If only one of them were to remain alive in one of the cycles, Aži Dahāka will be able to choose whether to kill him forcing him to commit suicide through mind control or (probably the most fun option for the right play group) to possess one of the investigators randomly selected to finish the job. In this case the Keeper will have to strive to secretly communicate with the player without arousing too much suspicion in the others.

In the event that the unclean Aži Dahāka feels cornered or if it just notices that the investigators are preparing for some strange ritual, he may decide to sacrifice part of his power to summon a Star Vampire, sacrificing 20 MAN to call and control the creature.

THE VILLA

The ancient building called Villa Grimaldi belonged to the professor's family for generations and its foundations have existed since 1200 AD. A roll on **History** or on **Arts (Fine Arts)** may reveal that the villa has undergone numerous renovations and that its layout has been probably changed a couple of times since one of the two towers (the one where the ritual was performed) is not accessible.

Investigators will have free access to all the rooms of the villa unless this disturbs any of the guests or Professor Grimaldi. The tower containing the room where Aži Dahāka is currently located is accessible

only from the professor's bedroom. If the investigators ask the professor about the inaccessible tower, he will lie saying that it is not accessible from well before he was born. Carlotta will be able to support the professor's excuse by showing investigators a passage to access the tower now sealed by ancient bricks, located outside the villa and now inaccessible.

The interior of the villa has an elegant and vaguely eccentric decor, with many tones recalling antiquity and neoclassical art.

THE GROUND FLOOR

Entrance: This room is richly decorated with valuable paintings and antique tapestries and is where most of the dinner takes place. There are various sofas and chairs as well as a few tables to sit and converse with guests. There are two reproductions of medieval armor holding swords. Although these are not very sharp, they can still be a dangerous offensive tool.

Study: This is Professor Grimaldi's study. There are various ancient volumes and even some esoteric tomes in his private collection but nothing related to myths. Hanging on the wall is a photograph of the professor with his mastiff, Cavour. A **INT** roll may reveal that it was taken a few months ago. A loaded .38 revolver can be found in the drawer of his large desk and a handwritten copy of the ritual to recall Aži Dahāka is there as well. The drawer is locked by a very strong padlock that can only be cracked with an extreme **Locksmith** roll but investigators may want to avoid tinkering with the professor's personal effects while he observes them. Unless he gets momentarily distracted by the investigators, Professor Grimaldi will always follow them if they enter his study.

Anteroom: Hanging above the fireplace in this well-appointed room is a 12 gauge double barreled shotgun which is momentarily out of bullets. The professor had, ironically, no love for hunting.

Living Room: Here the professor holds his collection of ancient artifacts. Among the various urns, display cases with fragments of pages and vases, there are five bronze Hittite daggers, which could be used as a weapon, and a particularly disturbing mask that the professor will explain to be connected to a mysterious figure of ancient Egypt called the Black Pharaoh. The Keeper has the choice whether to let this story have a base of truth or not.

Library: An incredible number of volumes and ancient tomes are carefully placed on the large

shelves of this room. In the room are also various reading tables that could be used by the most academic investigators to carry out research. The volumes contained here are extremely exhaustive on most of the legends and stories of ancient civilizations and even on some aspects of mythos but there are so many that the research could prove to be very dispersive. All the **Library Use** rolls done here are more difficult by one step (normal becomes hard, etc.) unless the researcher is assisted by the professor. In section 6 of shelf 44 a fake tome dealing with the pre-Columbian art can be found and in it is hidden the "Livre des Morts" and the ritual to exit the loop and end the ritual (Handout # 3), see the Ritual of Aži Dahāka for more information.

Kitchen: The kitchen of the villa is rustic but very well equipped. A wide variety of sharp and pointy objects can be found here.

MYTHOS TOME: LE LIVRE DES MORTS

Old French, translated by order of the Templar Master Philippe Villiers of L'Isle Adam in 1565

This grimoire filled with disturbing Baroque imagery dates back to the Renaissance and is an imperfect reproduction of a well more ancient and mysterious tome: the Necronomicon of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred. Although poorly translated and quite inaccurate, this volume contains various information on the mythos (probably changing some names and notions). It also contains the specifics of Professor Grimaldi's ritual and how to stop it (See "How to stop the Loop.")

SAN Loss: 1D10 Cthulhu Mythos: +2% / + 5%
Mythos Value: 21 Study: 30 weeks

Spells: three casual spells, emanate mind worm and the incorrect ritual for immortality.

THE FIRST FLOOR

Every room on this floor has a candle and generic supplies like napkins, towels etc. A flashlight can be found in a closet located in the corridor.

Professor Grimaldi's Room: The secret passage leading to the tower where Aži Dahāka is kept prisoner can be found in this luxurious room. The passage is well hidden behind a large wall mirror which, if carefully examined, can reveal with a roll on **Spot Hidden** that the glass is slightly translucent and does not reflect the images well. In the drawer of the bedside table, the investigators can find the enchanted knife created by the professor when he does not bring it along. There is also a desk in the room with various papers and documents stacked on it. Examining it with a **Spot Hidden** roll can reveal

GROUND FLOOR



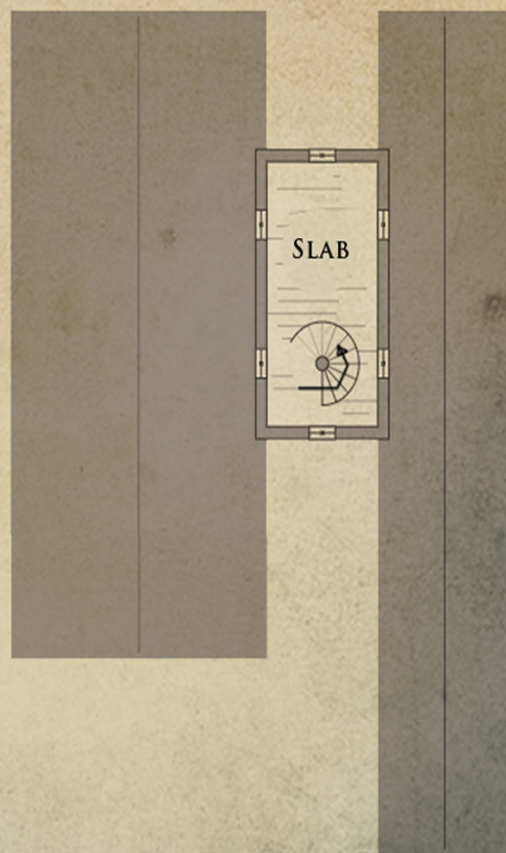
FIRST FLOOR



VILLA GRIMALDI



SECOND FLOOR



THE ATTIC

that there is a secret drawer of which the professor has the key (but it is possible to open it with a **Locksmith** roll). The professor's diary can be found in it and if read it will reveal his descent into depression due to his terminal disease and hints to a "plan" to solve the problem definitively, indicating the *Livre des Morts* as a solution, while not explaining the connection with Aži Dahāka. He noted the number 44.6 (Handout # 4): the shelf and the section where the fake book containing the "*Livre des Morts*" is located.

44.6

Hard cover

HANDOUT #4

THE SECOND FLOOR

Every room on this floor has a candle and generic supplies like napkins, towels etc. A flashlight can be found in a closet located in the corridor. Also the floor and walls are thinner here and people can hear what is happening on the first floor or outside the villa a bit more easily.

THE ATTICS

If the professor notices that the investigators are trying to access the attics (the attic as far as they know) he will try to stop them with the excuse that the stairs are quite unsafe and that it is not a good idea to venture there in the dark. If the investigators persist in their attempt, the professor will have to be distracted in some way to be able to access the stairs without being stopped by him.

Slab: The professor has accumulated a large quantity of memorabilia and mementos of his research in this dusty room full of junk. A **Spot Hidden** roll and ten minutes of rummaging can reveal one of the following items (rolls can be repeated even if something is found):

- An African tribal spear.
- A faithful reproduction of a tomahawk.
- An Eskimo harpoon broken in half (a penalty die on attacks made with it).
- The reproduction of a medieval spiked club.
- A lantern filled with very old oil which may or may not work.
- The custody of the "*Livre des Morts*" located inside the Egyptian trunk where it had been stored for years.

This last object also contains a photo of a young professor in Cairo with the terrible grimoire in his hands.

Also in this room a cask with six 12 gauge shotgun shells can be found on a table.

This is also the only area on the island where you can have a good view of the only window of the room where Aži Dahāka is located. Looking for too long into the darkness of the room could attract the creature's attention and cause undesirable interest in the investigators from the demigod.

The ritual room: The horrible Aži Dahāka can be found here once summoned. The air in this room is cold and dark, presenting an unpleasant and very strong smell of ammonia and blood, causing all those who try to enter a sense of extreme discomfort. This hint can also be smelt by those who try to open the door.

The room was prepared with a pentacle drawn with the professor's blood, there are opium candles lit basically everywhere (although they can't cover the smell), shreds of animal flesh hanging from the ceiling and there is a strange altar with numerous photos of the investigators and the other guests, taken unbeknownst by the professor in the past months preparing for the ritual, sprinkled with blood and incense oils after being stuck on a mirror.

Being in front of this macabre show costs investigators 1/D4 SAN points but, if they come here after the ritual, this will be the least of their problems. In fact, Aži Dahāka will not hesitate to attack anyone who invades his prison, consuming one victim at a time within three rounds and then moving on to the next (unless they have escaped). From here it also emits the worms it uses to control the minds and the body of the guests, as well as the Star Vampire which it will summon if the need arises.

Note to the Keeper: most likely the investigators will want to find a way to access and explore Aži Dahāka's room, a gesture that could result in the premature demise of one or more of them. For this reason, it might be a good idea to emphasize the alien and disturbing atmosphere that the air in this place presents. They probably won't listen to the advice but nobody can say that they haven't been warned!

THE ISLET OF SANTA DINFÁ

Pier: investigators and guests arrive at this pier in the afternoon but venturing there at night during the storm could be very dangerous. If someone should stick out on a pier during the night, a **DEX** roll will be necessary to avoid being thrown off balance by the strong wind and fall in the turbulent waters surrounding the island.

SANTA DINFA ISLET



Tool shed: In this shed are present various gardening tools (of which some are quite sharp) at the Keeper's discretion. There is also a toolbox hidden under a counter but investigators will need to get on the floor and actively look under the counter to find it.

Generator shed: This shed will be damaged during the night by a large branch broken by a lightning and the petrol generator will stop working. It is possible to restart it with an extreme **Mechanical Repair** roll (a hard roll if you have the right tools) but it will break again in the next cycle. There are also three ten-liter petrol cans in the shed.

Flower Gardens: The corpse of the dog was buried in the smaller of the two gardens and finding it without the help of the professor could be quite complex. Unless the investigators are actively looking for the area of loose dirt where the dog is buried (and even then it will require a hard **Spot Hidden** roll to find it) it will not be possible to notice the small piece of loose soil. All that remains of the dog are some bones, the big skull and the heart, disturbingly still intact. Exhuming Cavour will cost the investigators 0/1D3 SAN.

Pine-tree Woods: These small patches of Mediterranean scrub are relatively harmless, but the southern one contains the Roman ruins where Professor Grimaldi started his journey towards madness.

Roman Ruins: These ruins are what remains of an ancient temple dedicated to the god Mercury. Professor Grimaldi will have to be sacrificed in this place to be able to stop the loop and banish Aži Dahāka.

THE RITUAL OF AŽI DAHĀKA:

This ritual is described with detailed morbidity in the *Livre des Morts* and presented as a sure method to obtain immortality through the intervention of an angelic entity called "The Wishgiver". In reality this ritual has the effect of evoking Aži Dahāka and confining it in a space-time loop until it has fulfilled a wish from the summoner (while also including an ironic and dramatic punishment in the gift). The colored paragraphs describing the steps of the ritual can be reduced to these essential instructions:

- Sacrificing a creature with a **SIZ** of at least 65, through the spell "Enchant Knife" described in the ritual, in an ab-out location and surrounded by trees.
- It will be necessary to draw a complicated arcane symbol similar to a strange pentacle with the blood shed in the sacrifice in a closed place where Aži

Dahāka will later be summoned.

- The skulls, heart and femur of the creature will be buried within 30m from the summoning point.
- The sacrifices for Aži Dahāka (the number is not specified but it is supposed to be at least two) must be in the building where the demigod will be summoned overnight.

- Immediately before dawn, the summoner will have to sacrifice his own blood and power, permanently renouncing 4 STR and POW points, reciting the manthra for five minutes, after which Aži Dahāka will appear, marking the fate of the victims.

The process of stopping the ritual is similarly described:

- The skull, heart and femur of the sacrificed creature will have to be exhumed and placed in the shape of a perfect triangle around the point where it was sacrificed. The manthra to summon Aži Dahāka will have to be recited backwards for five minutes, which will cause the victim to resurrect as a zombie and make him attack those present.

- At the end of the five minutes, the person who started the ritual must be sacrificed with the enchanted knife, removing his heart and offering it as a sacrifice to heaven, so that Aži Dahāka can consume it and then leave.

HOW TO STOP THE LOOP

The most direct way for investigators to stop the loop and banish Aži Dahāka is to complete the reversing ritual contained in the "*Livre des Morts*", but this does not mean that it will be easy.

Deciphering the ritual in verse on the grimoire requires a **INT** roll but this will only be the beginning of the problems:

- Following the instructions, the investigators will first have the professor tell them where he buried the dog (which he will not admit easily) and take the enchanted knife he used for the ritual.

- Exhume the carcass of the dog, after which they will have to take him to the Roman ruins where he sacrificed Cavour.

- Tie the professor to the altar without killing him (which is not easy given that at this point the professor will have guessed the intentions of the investigators) or drag him forcefully if he had been informed of their plans.

- Arrange the remains of the dog (skull, heart and femur) in the form of a triangle around the professor.

- At this point the investigators will have to recite the text of the ritual for five minutes, resisting the attacks



THE MOST UNCLEAN AŽI DAHĀKA

of the revived Cavour who will slowly recompose and then attack them wildly with his skeletal maw to defend his unworthy owner (and possibly while fending off the star vampire, not to mention the person possessed by Aži Dahāka).

- After this period of time, the investigators will have to extract the professor's still beating heart from his chest using the enchanted knife, killing him in the process and offering it to the sky.

This last gesture will mark the end of the spell and with an incredible storm of power and the appearance of a vortex that will suck up the whole villa, Aži Dahāka will be dragged into its original dimension.

Giving way to this ritual has a 50% chance of making the demigod nervous and having it summon the star vampire. The probability increases by 10% for each guest killed by the demigod in one way or another.

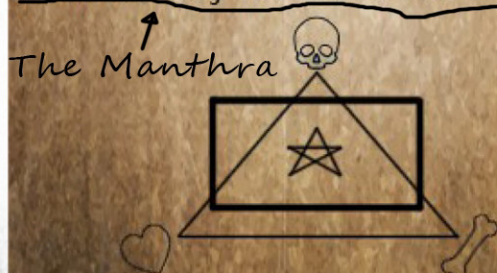
Carrying out the ritual will cost investigators and anyone assisting them 1D6/1D10 SAN or 1D6/1D20 SAN (not to mention the SAN loss for seeing Aži Dahāka leaving our dimension. As always, averting thy eyes is a good plan of action.) for the investigator that will make the sacrifice, but will end the nightmare for those who survived.

Another way, which is even less probable so succeed, is to destroy the physical body of Aži Dahāka to banish it in its dimension. This can be accomplished by force of arms but it will be extremely difficult and the investigators could see themselves swept away by the demigod in a few rounds of combat. Another,

*Con la benedizione del
Signore dei Desideri e nel
nome del Serpente
Il rito del confinamento può
avere fine per cacciare il Djin
e reclamare la vita dei sacrifici.*

*Il corpo usato per il coltello
sacrificale deve essere riesumato
e disposto come segue attorno
al luogo del sacrificio. Colui
che ha richiamato il Signore
dei desideri deve dare il suo
cuore in sacrificio sull'altare
del rituale al canto ripetuto
di:*

*"lā lā, Aži Dahāka, cherlos
marahs lorj malakaram"*



HANDOUT #3

more destructive but effective way would be to somehow destroy the tower with Aži Dahāka inside it but such a mundane method will hardly be able to defeat it.

CONCLUSION

If investigators succeed in banishing Aži Dahāka from his prison, a formidable cataclysm will break out on the island of Santa Dinfa. All the people still present in the villa will have a minute to get out of it before it is sucked together with the unclean demigod by a huge space vortex and catapulted into an alien and uninhabitable dimension. All those who will not be able to save themselves can be considered as good as dead (although in truth, the existence in Aži Dahāka's nightmarish and timeless dimension is easily considered as a fate far worse than death!). The Roman ruins in the grove will suffer the same end and, every supernatural being present on the island will return to their own plane of origin, including the mind worms of Aži Dahāka. The surviving investigators will recover 2D6 SAN for banishing the evil demigod and another D4 SAN for each guest who survived the affair. Discovering the motivations of his gesture by good or bad from Professor Grimaldi before sacrificing him will reward investors with an additional D6 SAN. The upheaval caused by the interruption of the ritual will be enough to attract the attention of the coastal guard who will rescue survivors and wounded, not failing to ask some questions to the investigators, but all beyond the concept of "an out-of-season natural disaster" will be easily labeled as raving or collective hallucination. Particularly insistent supporters of the existence of supernatural beings or of Professor Grimaldi's plan, could easily find themselves forcibly hospitalized in some institution for mental patients (with very unpleasant consequences). In any case, the survivors will be taken to Naples to receive the necessary care. If the scenario is used as part of a larger campaign, the Keeper could consider not having the villa completely destroyed by the departure of Aži Dahāka to provide the investigators with an operational base that will hardly be claimed by someone and where they could conduce, if they wanted to, activities at the borders of legality without risking being disturbed. If the investigators managed to make friends with some surviving guest (considering that they saved his life, the NPCs should at least be well disposed towards them unless there were particular disagreements during the investigation) they could have earned a contact, an assistant or even a new investigator to replace a fallen mate.

NPC LIST

PROFESSOR GIANCARLO MARIA GRIMALDI,

Insane Professor, A cautious Liar

STR 40 CON 60 SIZ 60 DEX 40 INT 80
APP 50 POW 75 EDU 90 SAN 15 HP 12

BD: 0

Structure: 0

MOV: 4

Attacks in combat: Professor Grimaldi has the usual range of close attacks available to humanoids. If he carries the enchanted knife with him, he will use it to defend himself.

Combat (Brawl) 25% (12/5), 1D3 damage

Enchanted knife 50%, damage 1D4 + 2

Dodge 40% (20/10)

Skills: Archeology 80%, listen 50%, Library Use 75%, Disguise 40%, Stealth 50%, Spot Hidden 50%, French Language 60%, Latin Language 70%, Occultism 80%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 60%, Fast Talk 75 %, History 85%, Credit Rating 75%, Appraise 45%

CARLOTTA MANFREDI,

Museum Curator, Shrewd and Smart

STR 50 CON 55 SIZ 45 DEX 70 INT 70
APP 80 POW 50 EDU 70 SAN 50 HP 10

BD: 0

Structure: 0

MOV: 8

Attacks in combat: Carlotta possesses the usual range of close attacks available to humanoids. If possessed by a worm of Aži Dahāka it will steal a butcher knife in the kitchen.

Combat (Brawl) 30% (15/7), 1D3 damage

Butcher knife 60%, damage 1D4 + 2 + DB

Dodge 60% (30/15)

Skills: Archeology 50%, Listen 60%, Library Use 50%, Stealth 60%, Spot Hidden 50%, Persuade 75%, Psychology 30%, Fast Talk 50%, History 60%, Credit Rating 45%



CARLOTTA MANFREDI

RAMBALDO GASPERINI

University Researcher, Brave and Honest

STR 75 CON 50 SIZ 70 DEX 35 INT 60
APP 60 POW 45 EDU 70 SAN 75 HP 12

BD: + 1D4

Structure: 1

MOV: 8

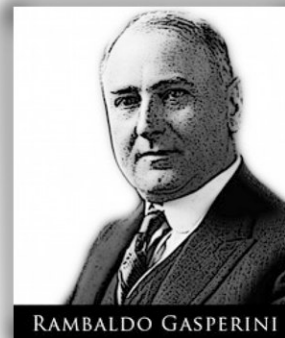
Attacks in combat: Rambaldo possesses the usual range of close attacks available to humanoids. If possessed by a worm of Aži Dahāka or in danger he will use his automatic pistol .38 (which, however, he usually keeps in a case).

Combat (Brawl) 50% (25/12), damage 1D3 + 1D4

Firearm (automatic pistol .38) 60% (30/15), damage 1D10

Dodge 20%

Skills: Archeology 50%, Listen 40%, Library Use 75%, Stealth 30%, Spot Hidden 60%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 50%, Fast Talk 30%, History 60%, Credit Rating 40%



RAMBALDO GASPERINI

FRANCO MAZZANTI,

Psychologist, Quiet and Acute

STR 70 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 50 INT 70
APP 50 POW 50 EDU 70 SAN 50 HP 12

BD: + 1D4

Structure: 1

MOV: 4

Attacks in combat: Franco has the usual range of close attacks available to humanoids. If possessed by a worm of Aži Dahāka it will go to pick up a wood axe in the tool shed at the back of the villa.

Combat (Brawl) 60% (30/15), damage 1D3 + 1D4

Wood ax 65% 1D8 + 2 + 1D4

Dodge 30%

Skills: Archeology 40%, listen 60%, Library Use 70%, Stealth 30%, Spot Hidden 50%, Persuading 70%, Psychoanalysis 80%, Psychology 80%, Fast Talk 50%, History 30%, Credit Rating 50%



FRANCO MAZZANTI

ANTONIO PETRI,

Forger, Charismatic and Skillful

STR 50 CON 60 SIZ 65 DEX 70 INT 65
APP 70 POW 40 EDU 70 SAN 40 HP 12

BD: 0

Structure: 1

MOV: 8

Attacks in combat: Antonio has the usual range of close attacks available to humanoids. If possessed by a worm of Aži Dahāka or in danger he will use his revolver .38.

Combat (Brawl) 50% (25/17), damage 1D3 + 1D4

Firearm (Revolver .38) 70% (35/15), damage 1D10

Dodge 40%

Skills: Archeology 70%, listen 60%, Library Use 45%, Stealth 70%, Spot Hidden 70%, Persuading 50%, Psychology 50%, Fast Talk 80%, History 60%, Credit Rating 20%



ANTONIO PETRI

ADELE ESPOSITO,

Dilettante, Poetic and Naive

STR 60 CON 50 SIZ 50 DEX 60 INT 65
APP 75 POW 70 EDU 60 SAN 70 HP 10

BD: 0

Structure: 0

MOV: 8

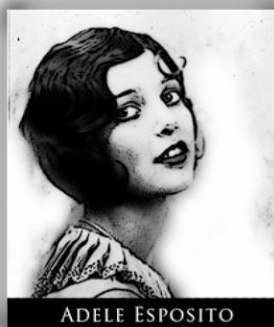
Attacks in combat: Adele has the usual range of close attacks available to humanoids. If possessed by a worm of Aži Dahāka it will steal a butcher knife in the kitchen.

Combat (Brawl) 50% (15/7), 1D3 damage

Butcher knife 70%, damage 1D4 + 2 + DB

Dodge 50% (30/15)

Skills: Archeology 60%, Arts craft (Fine Arts) 60%, listen 30%, Library Use 40%, Stealth 70%, Spot Hidden 50%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 50%, Fast Talk 30%, History 40%, Credit Rating 80%



ADELE ESPOSITO

AŽI DAHĀKA (weakened),

Antediluvian demigod

STR 400 CON 250 SIZ 200 DEX 40 INT 300
POW 25

HP 200

BD: + 7D6

Structure: 11

MP: 25

MOV: 0

Attacks per round: 1

Attacks in combat: If Aži Dahāka hits and deals damage, every enemy within 10 meters will take 3 damage due to the necrotic aura of the demigod. This can happen only one per combat round.

Combat (Tentacle) 80% (40/20), damage 4D6+DB

Emanating Mind Worm: Once per cycle, Aži Dahāka can emit from his horrible body a small parasite similar to a blue-colored worm about 10cm long. This little being is curiously fast and can enter the brain of a sleeping human to take control of his mind with an opposing **POW** roll. In case of success the human will be temporarily safe from the effect of the worm but he will still have to repeat the roll every ten minutes until the worm is removed. A human possessed by Aži Dahāka automatically loses all his **SAN** points and, should the loop reset again without the possessed being killed, he will automatically be possessed by Aži Dahāka. The possessed person receives 10 bonus HP and his Bonus Damage increases by one step. The possessed person cannot be stunned but only killed (this does not prevent other people to incapacitate her in other ways, like tying or pinning) since it is the worm that manages the brain impulses.

Armor: Ignore the first 5 damage from any source. If brought to 0 HP, Aži Dahāka returns to its size where it will remain in a comatose state for 100 years.

Spells: Normally Aži Dahāka knows all the Contact and Summon spells but in his weakened state he can only cast Summon Star Vampire and Emanate M Worm.

SAN Loss: 1D10/D20 **SAN** for the sight of Aži Dahāka.

STAR VAMPIRE

Space predator

STR 130 CON 65 SIZ 130 DEX 40 INT 50
POW 75

HP 19

BD: + 2D6

Structure 3

MP 15

MOV 6/9 flying

Attacks per round: 3

Invisible: Anyone who tries to hit a Star Vampire suffers a penalty die, even if the creature is grinning. After feeding, the Sidereal Vampire remains visible

for six rounds, while fresh blood is metabolized into a transparent substance. When visible, attacks against it are not penalized.

Attacks in combat: he can use his claws to attack.

Bite: It can be used on victims, whether living or dead, with living creatures losing 3D10 **STR** points per round due to blood loss. If she does not die, the victim recovers this loss quickly, in three days or less.

Grab with claws (maneuver): Once a victim is withheld, the following round, the Star Vampire can use the bite attack to suck the subject's blood.

Combat 45% (22/9), give 1D6 + BD

Grab with claws (mnvr): no damage, target held back. Retained targets can be bitten the following round

Bite: automatic success on the grabbed targets, give 3D10 blood suction for the round

dodge 23% (11/4)

Armor 4: leather. The bullets deal only half damage on the extraterrestrial lining of the Star Vampire.

SAN Loss: 1/D10 **SAN** for the sight of a Star Vampire or being victim of his attack.



CAVOUR

Undead mastiff

STR 65 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 40 **DEX** 65 **POW** 50

HP 9

BD: + 1D4

Structure 0

MOV 12

Attacks per round: 1

Attacks in combat: Fangs and rending

Fight 50% (25/10), give 1D8 + BD

Dodge 32% (16/6)

Armor: 4 hardened bones

Skills: Spot Hidden 60%, Tracking (Sniff) 80%

SAN Loss: 1/D6 **SAN** for the sight of Cavour's corpse recomposing itself and its subsequent attack.



44.6

Hard cover

HANDOUT #4

I am frankly desolate of having to disturb your quiet with these macabre news but I have recently received death threats to my person I have reason to believe that they could be founded. If you were kind enough to join me in my villa at Santa Dinfa to help me solve this unpleasant predicament, I would be eternally cgrateful. I hope this message will find you in good health.

Professor Giancarlo Maria Grimaldi

HANDOUT #1

Con la benedizione del Signore dei Desideri e nel nome del Serpente Il rito del confinamento può avere fine per cacciare il Djin e reclamare la vita dei sacrifici.

Il corpo usato per il coltello sacrificale deve essere riesumato e disposto come segue attorno al luogo del sacrificio. Colui che ha richiamato il Signore dei desideri deve dare il suo cuore in sacrificio sull'altare del rituale al canto ripetuto di:

"Tä lä, Aži Dahāka, cherlos marahs lorj malakaram"



HANDOUT #3

t h i S s H a L L b e Y o u R l a s t
n i g h T o N T h i s W o r l d
B e s u r e T o m A K E e N D
f o r y o u r S i N s

HANDOUT #2

GROUND FLOOR



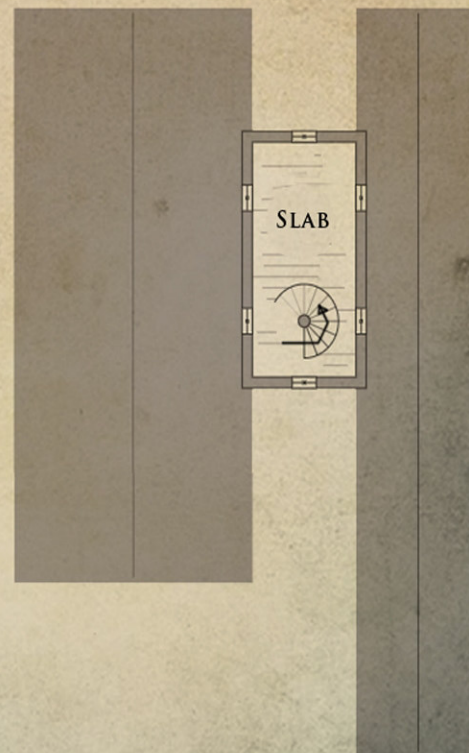
FIRST FLOOR



VILLA GRIMALDI



SECOND FLOOR



THE ATTIC

PLAYERS MAP

GROUND FLOOR



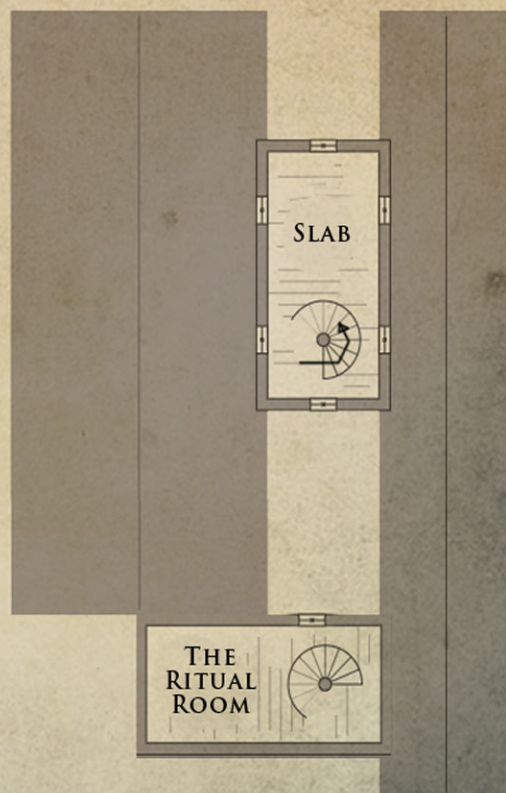
FIRST FLOOR



VILLA GRIMALDI



SECOND FLOOR



THE ATTIC

KEEPER'S MAP



