



# THE SHANDLER CHRONICLES

New Cthulhu fiction! Supernatural skullduggery runs amok in this continuing series of writings culled from the archives of occult investigator Phillip Shandler, as transcribed by Call of Cthulhu author Monte Cook.

*From the Desk of  
Thomas Bode*

Dear Mr. Fister

July 9th, 1930

I hope this finds you well. The train trip to Boston was uneventful, though quite warm, and I arrived safely last night. I intend on going to the hospital here today.

You see, Phillip has been in contact with a young lady there named Fiona Carlisle. She is the great granddaughter of Simon Carlisle, the man who previously owned Phillip's copy of the *Necronomicon*. The "man" who may or may not have kidnapped Phillip away in his deranged state.

Despite all that has happened, I am not sure I believe in ghosts. At least not in the commonly-accepted sense of campfire ghost stories. What is the occult except for a science we do not yet understand? My experiences with the Great Race of Yith have led me to believe that what we would call supernatural, others might look upon with a greater understanding of the true nature of the universe and call the laws of reality. Still, if Yithians can reach forward in time from their own primordial epoch, if Simon Carlisle can walk the earth a hundred years after his apparent death, and if my friend Phillip can contact a woman lying in a hospital bed in a coma through his dreams, perhaps the true nature of the universe is something far darker than most of us truly ever wished it to be.

I shall contact you again and let you know if my visit to Fiona bore any fruit.

Yours truly,

*T. Bode*

Dear Mr. Fister,

July 9th, 1930

This is of course my second letter to you today. I mailed the previous missive on my way to the hospital, and now I sit in a coffeeshop here in Boston, having just come from Fiona Carlisle's bedside. My attempts met with complete failure. I feel the utter fool. Despite the fact that the image of Phillip appeared to me and spoke her name in the parlor of Madam Zabim just two days ago, I now look back on the last 48 hours and wonder at my frame of mind. Of course my crazy plan was based on insane hopes. I see that now. Midmorning today I arrived at the hospital where kindly nurses have cared for the comatose Fiona for months. All that time, she has been unresponsive. The head nurse, a Miss Appleton, was

very suspicious of me and did not understand why I would want to visit Fiona. Unfortunately, I had no good answer for her. I never thought anyone would try to keep me from her. Though small in stature, Nurse Appleton had a dark-eyed, unwavering stare through thick glasses that forced me to retreat. I knew that subterfuge would be the order of the day, though it is not something I excel at. I maintained a vigil in the reception area of the hospital, pretending to read *The Globe*. I watched for signs of Nurse Appleton. Eventually, around 2 PM, I saw her leave, carrying her handbag. She did not notice me. Success! I made my way back up to the ward on the 3rd floor where Fiona lay. Unescorted, I slipped past any other nurses I saw and checked the charts of the bedridden patients until I found the correct one - until then, I did not even know what she looked like. Fiona was once likely an attractive girl, with long blonde hair. Today, however, she appears a shriveled thing, wasting away in a bed whose sheets and blankets appeared to swallow her. Even sitting at her bedside, she seemed to fade into the distance. Whatever put her in this state is a terrible thing. I swallowed deep and grasped her hand, which was cold and light. I whispered to her: "Miss Carlisle? I am Thomas Bode. I am a friend of someone I believe is an acquaintance of yours. His name is Phillip Shandler. "Somehow, I hoped to see a response at the mention of Phillip's name. But there was none. "Miss Carlisle?" I continued. "Fiona? Phillip is in trouble. Your great grandfather, Simon Carlisle, has done him harm." I hoped deep within my heart that perhaps the name of her great grandfather could perhaps provoke a reaction, if out of nothing else but fear. Nothing.

"Fiona, I think you are the only person who can help Phillip. You seem to have some connection to him. And you seem to have some power or knowledge that allows you to reach into a spiritual realm. I think that is where Phillip is now. I think Simon has taken him away to some otherworldly place where I cannot go." I lowered my head, and grasped her frail hand with both of mine. "Please, Miss Carlisle. Phillip himself reached out to me two nights ago. He spoke your name. "Phillip is my best friend. We've known each other since our days at Miskatonic University. He is a good man, Fiona. I think you somehow know that. You have been in contact with him on two occasions that he has told me about. If there is anything that you can do, please, do it." I looked up into her face. There was no change. No move-

*From the Desk of  
Thomas Bode*

ment. I took a different tack. I held onto her hand, but closed my eyes. I said nothing, but concentrated. I thought about the strange city of Ulthar, described to me by Phillip as the place near where they had met in the Dreamlands. I concentrated on Phillip's face. Then I imagined what Fiona would have looked like before her bedridden state. I concentrated on all these mental images and mentally beseeched Fiona for help. Suddenly, I heard a woman's voice. I opened my eyes and looked at Fiona's face. I saw no change. Was it a mental communication? I heard it again, and looked at the source—not Fiona at all. "Sir, you have to leave this instant. I already told you that non-family visitors are not allowed in this ward." It was, of course, Nurse Appleton. She grasped my arm as I stood, and escorted me all the way out of the hospital. She said that if she saw me disturbing her patients again, she would call the police. I tried to word some sort of apology and excuse, but I do not believe she heard any of it. As the door closed behind me, I walked away and came to this shop for a cup of coffee. I no longer know what course of action to take next. I will attempt to check with the authorities here at least one more time, and then perhaps I will return home. I expect I'll be seeing you soon.

Yours truly,

*T. Bode*

Dear Mr. Fister

July 10th, 1930

I was wrong! My visit to Fiona Carlisle's bedside was not fruitless. Instead, it produced results I could have never anticipated. Last night, after a quick dinner in the coffeehouse, I retired early. I have taken up a room at a small hotel downtown. I then had the most amazing dream. In my dream, I was in the hotel room, in my bed, and heard a knock at the door. I rose to answer it, asking who it was before opening the door. There was no reply. I backed away from the door and decided that I must have dreamed the knock. Only as I climbed back into my bed did I hear another knock! I went to the door quickly this time and opened it.

Instead of the hotel hallway, I saw an ornately carved marble staircase descending into utter darkness. Standing at the top of the stairs, in front of my door, was Fiona Carlisle. Or rather, Miss Carlisle as she would look if she had not spent months wasting away in a coma. She was a beautiful woman with flowing golden hair and a long white gown. She held a finger to her lips to



silence the questions I was about to utter. She spoke to me in a soft whisper: "Tomorrow night, be ready. I shall come here and lead you past the Cavern of Flame and the Gates of Deeper Slumber. We shall find Phillip."

Then she smiled. "Do not go home yet, Thomas."

The door closed of its own volition and I woke with a start. It was 3 o'clock in the morning, and I have not been able to get to sleep since. I know, it sounds utterly insane to believe in what might very well be a simple dream, a wish-fulfillment dream — I have read a fair bit of Psychology — but it was so vivid and real, Mr. Fister. And not unlike the peculiar dreams that Phillip described to me where he had contact with Fiona himself.

I am not leaving this hotel room until after tonight. I know that she will come back, as she promised.

Yours truly,

*T. Bode*