



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.

SHANDLER INVESTIGATIONS

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Dear Thomas,

Date Unknown

I have no idea how long I have been here. This place does not have night and day in the way that you and I would define it. But that is hardly the strangest thing about it. This place, well... first things first.

I am no longer on Earth.

You remember, I hope, that I stepped through some kind of doorway – or what I thought was a doorway – in Chanov Castle. I followed Adriana, who still possessed the Star of Unseen Stars that she had stolen from me. The doorway was not a two-way affair. Nothing like it existed on this side. Now that I have had time to reflect, I would say that it was not so much a doorway, as, well... a sort of translator. I know that doesn't make much in the way of sense, perhaps, but I can find no other words for it. I didn't step here. I didn't physically travel in the way that one moves from room to room in a house, or even how one moves from America to Europe. I was translated from someone who was in Chanov Castle in the Carpathian Mountains to someone who was here.

But where is here? I appeared in a sort of plaza, in the middle of a city of utter stillness. The buildings were of no style I had ever seen before, but seemed more akin to structures out of ancient history than modern times. Most of these were windowless towers composed of large bricks of a muted violet stone. The doorways were all massive rectangular archways suggesting inhabitants of great size, or at least considerable grandeur. The entire place was opulent in the way that a grand ballroom is opulent long after the ball itself is over and everyone has gone home.

It was the night sky that made my mind reel, Thomas. I looked up and saw stars overhead, some brighter than I had ever seen. Constellations I did not recognize. But far more shattering were the moons that I saw – multiple moons. Or perhaps not moons, but entire worlds as near to this place as our own moon is near to us. I know so little of astronomy. The important thing, though, was that I was not looking at a night sky that could be visible on Earth. I was on some other planet, surely in orbit around some distant star.

I do not know how long I have wandered in the vacant city. Night here seems eternal, although every great once in a while – around every other time I feel compelled to sleep, at least for a few hours – a pale light appears on the horizon as if to bring upon a feeble dawn. This never gives way to a sunrise, however, or at least it has not yet.

Sometimes, a dark green mist makes its way on a gentle breeze through the streets and over the tops of the buildings. It moves like ink in water and smells of a putrid sweetness that I try to avoid when I can.

Of course I spent the first few days – I still insist on using that term – looking for Adriana, but I have found no sign of her. For the most part, I have found no sign of any living thing. Fortunately for me, the city is filled with gardens and parks with fruit-filled trees and berry-laden bushes, so I have not gone hungry. The fruits are unknown to me, but most



are palatable, and I've experienced little distress over them.

I have wondered, from time to time, if the city is truly lifeless. Occasionally, I have heard noises or seen movement in the shadows, that suggest something is here. Something small and quiet. Although rats come to mind, I have frequently thought perhaps of cats. But I have not seen any creatures directly. Still, one often knows when one is being watched, and that is precisely how I feel in this strange city with its multiple moons high above me.

I do not know if there is a way for me to return. I write this letter to you in the hopes that it will help keep me sane, for being alone in this place, far removed from my home and my people and all that I hold dear or even understand, is surely going to eventually drive me mad.

Today I stood in what I believed to be the plaza in which I originally appeared (it is difficult to tell, here, actually) and screamed and yelled, hoping that someone or something would hear me and come. Even if it was to kill or devour me, at least I would not be so utterly alone. I don't know if I have actually seen shapes moving in the shadows or if my mind simply wants to see such things. Some sign of something else. What if Adriana tricked me into coming here? What if I am trapped on a world ten million miles from home, utterly alone for the rest of my life?

Nothing answered my calls.

What am I to do then, Thomas? I do so wish you could somehow reply. Some kind of message or word from you, or anyone, actually, might keep me from descending into madness.

How can I possibly go on?

Sincerely,

Phillip