



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,

December 3rd, 1939

I pen this note to you quickly. Our ship has docked in Buenos Aires, and I have slipped in the bustling harbor city. I do not speak the language here, but I think I can manage to get a letter posted.

I think when I last wrote I was on my way to France, and then England. I had just learned that the Germans were working with the Vril-Ya to perform some kind of action in Antarctica which will loose the dread entity known as Hastur upon the world. Much has happened since then.

Oh, Thomas. It's been, what? Almost 10 years now. Back in 1930. Or was it 31? It was that long ago that I ran afoul of the "Dark Man." Nyarlathotep. The Crawling Chaos, as the Necronomicon calls him. I remember his awful eyes. I wish I could forget.

I have encountered him again, in the most curious of ways. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

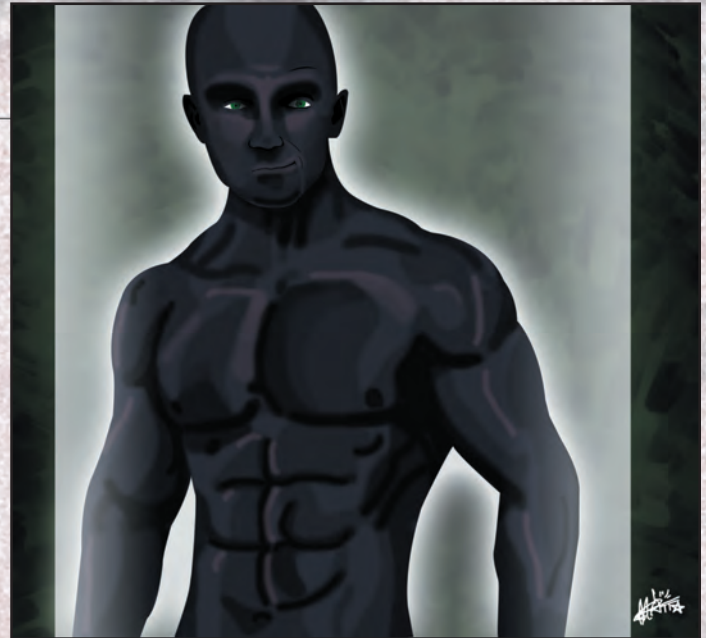
Obviously, I did not go back to England. Thanks to my new mastery of the German language and the forged papers I had obtained from the growing resistance in Moravia, I went instead to Berlin, and reached the city without incident. It took me a couple of weeks of investigation, but I finally learned that there was a group of men leaving by ship, headed to South America. More significantly, when I discovered that this mission was sponsored in part by an organization that called itself the Vril Society, I figured that they weren't really going to South America, but would be continuing on to Antarctica. They would not be taking a military vessel, but a civilian ship, traveling incognito once they left Germany.

I attempted to book passage on the ship, The Eagle, but was unsurprisingly denied. Then, under a different name, I attempted to hire on as a member of the crew. I could swab a deck if need be. This plan, however, also did not pan out.

As the departure date approached, I got desperate, and simply observed the ship in secret. They loaded a great many swastika-marked crates and strange machinery into the hold, and the vessel had a prominent number of soldiers guarding it, both from the dock and on board the craft itself. Finally, the night before they were to leave, I gathered up some supplies with what little funds I had left and slipped aboard. Months of hiding from German soldiers made this relatively easy. Frankly, I think they were lax - why would anyone be trying to stowaway on this ship?

The first few days on board, I kept very still and quiet in the deepest portions of the hold. But with no incidents or even close calls, I grew bold and began to explore a bit. I saw more of the machinery that I did not understand, but on a higher deck I found something very, very strange.

In the central hold sat a glass cylinder about eight feet high and four feet across. Within it was a man so perfectly proportioned and so elegantly chiseled that I thought it was a statue carved from obsidian. This man, black as night as naked as a baby, stood upright in the cylinder, frozen.



I spied on this from behind a tall stack of crates. As I watched, two people came to check on the cylinder. One, a severe-looking civilian woman. The other, a man in a uniform that marked him an officer of the SS. I don't know if you know what the SS is, Thomas, but suffice to say they are frightening figures. They referred to the man in the cylinder's and used the word "stasis." They didn't name him, but by then I knew who I was looking at. Or rather what. This was no man, but the eldritch, ageless entity I had briefly encountered so long ago. Nyarlathotep. The people I eavesdropped upon also did not refer to him as a man, either. In fact, the woman called him the "power source." I didn't know what that meant, but as she said it, I saw his eyes move. I was sure of it. Neither the woman (some kind of expert in strange energies, perhaps, by the way she talked) nor the officer noticed. They seemed certain that he was frozen and unaware. The two of them turned to leave.

Then his eyes moved again. He was not frozen or in "stasis." These Nazis didn't know what they had!

Then, most chilling of all, I saw a very slight smile creep across his face. He wasn't frozen. He was no prisoner. He wanted to be there.

I wanted to say something, but of course I could not without giving away my presence, and most likely signing my own death warrant.

So for the rest of the journey, I have found myself in the hold of the ship, trapped alongside this horrible thing from my past, who is decidedly not as trapped as he lets on.

The Eagle leaves again soon, headed further south, so I must end this letter now. I've heard people on board talking about it, so I know that eventually we're headed to Antarctica. I don't know what happens when we get there. I don't know if I'm ready.

Sincerely,

Phillip