



THE SHANDLER CHRONICLES

New Cthulhu fiction! Supernatural skulduggery 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

Phillip Shandler

188 Gibson Lane

Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Thomas Bode,

Dec. 27, 1939

Greetings, and happy holidays. I represent an organization called the Thule Society, dedicated to the advancement of mankind and the betterment of all humanity.

We are writing you to enquire about the whereabouts of one Mr. Phillip Shandler. We have urgent business with Mr. Shandler, but have been unable to reach him for some weeks. We have tried reaching him by post, by telephone, and have visited his home and office personally. He appears to have been away for well over a year, according to his neighbors. As an aside, apparently his landlord is interested in finding him as well, as there is a matter of back rent and some damages. If you have information as to how we might get in contact with him, please contact us at our earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Yours truly,

Theodora Smith

Dear Thomas,

Dec. 28, 1939

These have been a difficult few days.

As suspected, the Nazis here have been looking for me with a fierce intensity after I killed two of their guards. Last night, they searched the ship where I had been holed up. Terrified that I would be trapped in the boiler room with no way out, I left as soon as I heard footsteps on the deck above me. I grabbed my coat, which had the Star of Unseen Stars in the pocket, and ran. As they came down to the hold, I made my way to the rear of the vessel and climbed another set of stairs. In the open air, the light of Antarctica's long summer twilight lighting my way, I crept around the main deck. Soldiers were everywhere, and so I crawled into a lifeboat covered by a tarp.

I could hear them talking. Major Holtz was there, barking orders at his men, and some of the soldiers were talking amongst themselves on deck later. As I listened, I quickly confirmed that they were indeed looking for the one who killed the guards in the storehouse. But much to my surprise, Thomas, I heard them say my name.

"Find Shandler," Holtz shouted in German. "And remember, bring him to me alive."

The soldiers talking mentioned that they had already searched their entire camp and much of the surrounding area. When I heard that, I waited for an opportune moment, daring to take quick peeks out from under the tarp. When I could see no soldiers, I darted across the deck and got off the ship entirely. Slowly and quietly, I crept up the path to the camp, hoping to find somewhere they had already searched to hide for the rest of

the night. But the entire installation was lit up and full of activity, and I could not risk getting closer. Instead, I fled away from the camp.

I spent last night in the elements, without a fire. I must tell you, if that is what a summer night is like in Antarctica, I do not ever want to experience a winter night. It was a sleepless, frigid experience, but after about ten hours I made my way back to the ship. Their search complete, the ship was guarded as before, and I had become well accustomed to knowing how to slip by them and get back to my hiding place there.

While I warmed myself in the relative heat, I pondered how they knew my identity. My first thought, of course, was the Dark Man. After getting some sleep, I took my coat, the jewel, and some tools I scrounged from the ship and skulked back off the ship and toward the camp – specifically, the building I knew to be the place where Dr. Stein kept Nyarlathotep. The camp was still clearly on alert, so I had to be even more careful than usual. No light came through the small building's one window, but when I tried the door, I found it locked.

You know that no private eye worth his salt is going to be stopped by a simple lock, of course, and this one was very crude. I jimmied it quickly and darted into the building. A lab with a lot of strange equipment filled the place, and at its center, the Dark Man himself, supposedly comatose, but I knew differently. I did not dare to try to find a light for fear of drawing attention, but in the thin illumination from outside I could see that the electronics and machinery were covered in strange symbols I could not recognize. Some were on very old looking cloths draped over the devices, but others were stamped or even burned right into the metal components. Curious.

If Dr. Stein and the others believed the Dark Man to be in "stasis" then he did not reveal anything to them about me. What I thought, instead, was that the two vril-ya working with the Nazis here must have used some kind of occult manner of divining my name. It seemed all too real a possibility that creatures such as they wielded powers that involved gathering information about a corpse. Particularly a corpse slain through some kind of supernatural means. Perhaps, in fact, it was the jewel that was giving me away.

My plan still involved destroying it and the others like it that the Nazis possessed, but for now I needed it to protect me from the will of Nyarlathotep. Even then, in the dark lab, I could feel his presence clawing at me. I got out as quickly as I could.

I know I have to enact my plan quickly, before I am discovered, either by the searching soldiers or the divinations of the vril-ya. I pray I have the courage and fortitude needed.

Sincerely,