



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,

Dec. 31, 1939

"The veil shall be rent at the bottom of your world by the Teutonic Knights and their Vrilya allies." That's what the Star of Unseen Stars whispered to me one night more than a year ago. And now, here I am, at that very spot, with those very people. If "people" is the right word.

"How did you know to come here?" the Vrilya woman asked me in English. They held me in a storage shed in their Antarctic compound. I still didn't know the Vrilyas' names, but despite their androgyny (a trait not shared by the Vrilya that I had met before, Adriana), it seemed as though one was male and one female. They could have easily passed for human, except that the cold here did not seem to phase them.

They had been interrogating me for hours, and Major Holtz seemed to enjoy inflicting pain. I've been beaten before. Still, while at first I tried to keep my silence, I now decided that there was no reason not to tell them the truth. "The jewel told me."

"That makes very little sense, Mr. Shandler," Holtz said.

"Actually, perhaps it does," the male Vrilya said. "Adriana believed that the jewel he had was no simple Carcosan Stone, but the Master Stone."

"Mr. Shandler," the female asked, "does the name Joseph Curwen mean anything to you?"

You'll remember, Thomas, that Curwen was linked to Charles Dexter Ward, and it was on Ward's property that I'd found the jewel one night, in a lightning storm. But I didn't mention that. Instead, I said, "Does the name Nyarlathotep mean anything to you?"

The two Vrilya glanced at each other. Holtz made a move toward me to hit me again.

"You brought him here. You think he's in 'stasis,' but don't you get it? He's the harbinger of the end. He's not here to help you. You think you're going to do your thing with the stone and summon something - yes, I know all about Hastur, too - that you think you can control. But he's not going to let that happen."

Holtz looked at his companions and said, in German, "he knows quite a lot."

I tipped my hand that I understood German now. "Of course I do. I was with Adriana in Vadoma." I enjoyed the surprised looks on their faces, so I continued into a bluff. "I worked with Crowley and British Intelligence. They know all about what you're doing here. They'll be here any moment and shut this all down."

The little shack was silent for a moment.

"Now we know he's a liar," Holtz said. "The Thule Society is keeping close tabs on Fleming and the British. They don't know we're here." He punctuated his sentence with a sneer and a cuff to the side of my head.

It was a lie, of course, at least in part. I had told Fleming and Crowley what the stone had told me.



We talked about the references to Antarctica, the Nazis, and the Vrilya. So they knew, but I didn't think they were on their way here now any more than Holtz did.

"Doesn't matter what you believe," I said quietly. "You've sown the seeds of your own destruction by bringing the Dark Man here. You've sown the seeds of the destruction of everything. You should ask yourself, Holtz, do you think your inhuman friends here even care? Did you consider that maybe that's their plan all along?"

I glanced at the faces of the two Vrilya. They looked intensely interested at what I had to say. They were less contemptuous and less dismissive than Holtz, for certain. But I don't think what I just said was actually true. I think they believed, just as the Nazis did, that they were going to control Nyarlathotep and Hastur. My only goal was to spread some dissent among their ranks, though.

And perhaps it worked. "We should talk outside," the female said.

"Do you think there's something to what he's saying?" Holtz laughed.

"We should talk outside," the male said, and opened the door. Daylight came into the dim storage shed.

And then they left me alone, locked in here on my own once again. As I write this, it's been hours, and I haven't heard anything. I know that the ship with more Nazis - more Thule - arrives tomorrow, and I assume that means that they'll do whatever they need to "rend the veil," then. I had to come up with a new plan, but I needed to find out what had happened to the Star of Unseen Stars first.

Sincerely,

Phillip