



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,

Jan. 1, 1940

Well, the good news is, I escaped my captors, and am now safe for the moment.

The bad news is, I think the world is likely to come to a horrible end very, very soon.

Now you may think me attempting to inject some levity into this moment, but if I am, it would be to induce the laughter of the damned. It seems unlikely that you or anyone else will ever read this, because the Thule Society arrived here in Antartica, and with their Vrill-Ya allies, have opened up a doorway to allow what that hoary old Necronomicon would have called a Great One into our world.

If there is any consolation, it is the knowledge that most of the Nazis and their ilk here are dead.

Allow me to explain.

Major Holtz came into the shack where I was being held, and two of his soldiers hauled me out into the short, chill air. They took me to the Vrill-Ya, who stood looking particularly smug.

"We want you to witness this," the male Vrill-Ya said to me. And then, without further word, we all went up to the cleared field with the tower that they had erected, covered in strange gemstones similar to the Star of Unseen Stars. All around were others whom I had not yet seen before. I assumed that these were the Thule Society members I'd heard about.

They brought me before a man in a white fur coat. His broad, pale face and nose seemed to hang loosely on his skull. "Mister Shandler," he said to me. "I have heard of your exploits in recent months as well as many years ago. You seem to be a professional troublemaker." He spoke English with a thick German accent.

Beyond him, I saw Dr. Stein talking to some other newcomers, and behind all of them, the "unconscious" Dark Man himself, in the contraption of Dr. Stein's design. I glanced at my captors and saw that the two Vrill-Ya followed my gaze. I saw... hesitation in their faces. Or perhaps doubt or confusion. It was hard to tell. I had told them that the entity known as Nyarlathotep was not in "stasis" and was a great danger to them. Did they believe me - even a little? I wasn't sure. No one else seemed to pay him any attention.

The man before me, whom I will call the Pale Man, glowered at me. "Where is the Star of Unseen Stars?"

I shook my head. "I have no idea." It was the truth. And to my surprise, he appeared to take me at my word.

"Kill him," he said with an awkward wave of his gloved hand.

Holtz's men pulled me roughly backward.

The Vrill-Ya approached Holtz. In German, they told him in unison, "We would like him to watch the summoning."

I saw the Major's face contort in indecision. Clearly, this was a man used to following orders, but he didn't know which of his odd, non-military companions' instructions to follow. The Pale Man had already turned his attention away, however, and so Holtz finally nodded to the Vrill-Ya and told his soldiers to just hold me for the moment.



Then the Vrill-Ya looked at me, and then at Nyarlathotep, and then back at me.

Only then did I realize, this strange pair were being controlled by the Dark Man, like puppets on strings. And he wanted me to know. He was gloating. What I'd seen before - perhaps that was resistance. I wasn't sure.

Moments later, with pale sunlight fading on the distant horizon (the closest thing to nighttime here this time of year), a strange ritual began. The newcomers all stood around the tower and began to hum, which rose to become a chant repeated over and over. The words were neither English nor German, but they sounded ominous. Dire. They hurt to hear them to be truthful. The soldiers, the Vrill-Ya, and Dr. Stein all just watched.

The stones on the tower began to glow with an unearthly radiance there at the bottom of the world. A wind rose, seemingly coming from the tower itself. With that, I saw the sight that chilled my everybone - the Dark Man's horrible yellow eyes were open.

There was a flash of light and I looked to the tower, which was now alive with a violet play of lightning. I heard a baritone laugh echo in my skull and suddenly the lightning reached out like tendrils or claws, and tore at the chests of all those around the tower - chanting Thule members and Nazi soldiers alike. Each died screeching as hearts burst from within chests. The men holding my arms let go and ran screaming.

I ran as well. I ran as fast as I could and did not look back. I had wanted to have a plan. I had wanted to stop it all from happening, but dammit, Thomas, I ran.

I write this huddled alone in the main building of the Nazi encampment. Unable to stop it, I just thought to leave some kind of record of what happened here.

But as I wrote above, my guts tell me no one will survive what happens next for this to ever be read. A dark and horrible god stands upon the bottom of the Earth.

Goodbye my friend.

Sincerely,

Phillip