



# 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, January 20, 1940

I believe the last time I managed to put pen to paper in any sort of legible way, I had just witnessed – or rather caused – the death of the two Vrill-Ya, both of whom I believed to have been utterly under the thrall of Nyarlathotep.

Unleashing the power to do so apparently activated something that had been lingering within the star of unseen stars for a long time. I hate to admit it, but that power overwhelmed me for a time. I am not entirely sure what happened next.

Eventually, I found myself stumbling across the snowfields. Some kind of greenish-yellow gore covered my coat and my left arm ached. The piping music and swirling colors of Hastur were all around me, neither seeming like a sensation that Earthly ears and eyes had ever perceived. The colors moved through the air like swarms of insects.

What shocked me back to myself – back to awareness at all – was a simple tugging at my leg. I looked down, and saw that a hand clutched at my boot. The dark grey cuff below the hand bore the swastika emblem the Nazis all bore. I thought of Fleming, and of Crowley, and their fight against the Nazis and the Thule Society. It brought me back somehow.

But I didn't have much time to think about it. The hand was that of Major Holtz, who lay in the snow at my feet. I pulled my leg back and his arm came with it, but not the rest of him. But there was no blood despite the terrible wound. The officer looked up at me and I saw that his face was desiccated and drawn – he was a corpse entirely drained of fluids, but somehow still alive, if that was the right word. A terrible, rasping hiss escaped his taut lips and bared teeth. Using his other arm to pull himself upright, he lunged awkwardly at me.

I kicked at him, and the blow sent him reeling backward. His arm still clutched my other leg. I tried to shake it loose, but could not. I bent down to pry it free and saw the fingers adjust for a better grip. The severed arm still seemed to have life. Worse, the rest of Holtz was clambering toward me again. I pushed him away and pulled at the arm. Part of it broke free like brittle wood, but the hand still clenched. As he came at me again, I smashed the portion of his arm and shoulder that I held into his face, which collapsed inward, revealing a hollow cavity behind it. Again he collapsed onto his back.

With desperate strength, I pulled the dry fingers one at a time from where they gripped my



ankle and tossed them, individually, into the snow. Only then did I see that the remains of Holtz were getting up yet again!

I ran off, my direction entirely random. Luckily, the Nazi corpse-thing couldn't possibly gather the speed to keep up with me. I soon escaped.

As I stopped to catch my breath, the cold air tearing at my lungs, I had a chance to think. I didn't know how much time had passed, or what had happened. But I knew that the jewel was to blame.

I knew that the star of unseen stars could not be used to control or harm Hastur. That was the trap that Ariana fell into, and likely others as well. And the jewel had been convincing me of that as well. I had thought that with it I could fight against the encroaching Great Old One now loose on our world.

But I remembered everything I had witnessed over the last two years. The jewel was not a weapon against the things from the Outside, it called to them. The words it had spoken to me that night so long ago were not a warning, they were a promise. It had said, "The veil shall be rent at the bottom of your world by the Teutonic Knights and their Vrill-Ya allies." And that is exactly what had happened.

The jewel was not my ally. It was as much an enemy as any of them.