



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.

From the Desk of Thomas Bode

Dear Mr. Fister, July 3rd, 1930

As I explained in my last – unfortunately brief – message to you, I have traveled to Providence in order to help an ailing friend. Much of what I am going to tell you will sound very strange, but I assure you it is all true.

My friend, Phillip Shandler, is a private investigator. His inquiries of late have taken him to some odd places, to be sure. Within just the last few weeks, however, he has apparently been reading a strange occult tome called the Necronomicon. Modern scholarship says that this dreaded book was originally penned by an Arab named Abdul Al-Hazred, although this seems as unlikely to me as that “Arabic” name. I am not sure how many of the strange tales about the book one should believe, but it is interesting that some have described passages in the tome to be so terrible as to tear at one’s sanity. As you know, ever since I graduated from Arkham, I have had an interest in occult studies.

Those interests have gotten me into trouble in the last year, and it is in fact my friend Phillip who aided me in my time of greatest need.

But now it is Phillip – whom I regard to be a stable and trustworthy chap to say the least – who is in need. Apparently, my friend has read some or all of the Necronomicon and now has had some kind of psychological breakdown. It could all be coincidence, but our good friend William of Occam might suggest otherwise.

Worse still, Phillip was not in his offices here in Providence, which he has been using as living quarters for the last few months except for the time spent on out-of-town cases. Phillip keeps me apprised of his investigations, some of which may be relevant to the problem at hand, but I will not bore you with all of the details.

Phillip’s office door was unlocked when I arrived. I took the liberty of entering, and found the place to be in complete disarray. Assuming that burglars had entered while Phillip was out, I entered the room with caution. Upon closer examination, I wondered if the office had



not been the site of a struggle. Objects seemed tossed about haphazardly. A coffee cup, filled with coffee, lay shattered near a wall against which it had obviously been hurled. And it was clear that this had happened at least a few days ago, if not longer.

I examined the door and windows and found no evidence of a forced entry, although I admit that I was feeling quite proud of myself at the time for thinking to do so. Perhaps all that Arthur Conan Doyle I read when I was a lad was finally paying off. The more time I spent in the office, the more I got the sense that this was not the work of intruders or even the scene of a fight. I began to see images in my brain, I am sorry to admit, of my friend Phillip perpetrating this “crime” all by himself in a raving fit of mania. I wanted that to not be true, but I feared (and now assume) that it was.

In his most recent, nearly incoherent letter to me, Phillip mentioned that a figure from his investigations, a certain Mr. Simon Carlisle, had arrived in Providence and that someone – presum-

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ably Carlisle - had taken a dire interest in Phillip. Upon searching his desk, I found another rambling, disjointed missive intended for me that Phillip never sent. I have no doubt that he did not because he no longer possessed the clarity or capacity to do so.

I shall relate to you what the letter on the desk said as I found it, so that you can see his state of mind:

Tomas Idont no wat too do., dead simon is here must fund jenny must dfs hide. Cnt stay hear. Dead smon revenge. SPlells in the bok. magic to fghts mgic. Cannt do alone.

I know you must be thinking that I am relating to you the mutterings of an imbecile or the work of a small child. I must assure you that Phillip is neither. Until recently, he was an intelligent and insightful fellow. Clearly, recent experiences have driven him into a terrible state. Now you understand why I am here.

This latest message referred to "jenny." I knew he was friends with a lady here in Providence named Jennifer Addison, and hoped that perhaps he might be found with her. Although it was late, I determined that my situation perhaps made a late call appropriate. I found her address in Phillip's desk and walked to it, leaving the office still unlocked as I had no other recourse.

Miss Addison lived above her own antiques and imports shop, not far from Phillip's office. The night was clear and warm. Miss Addison answered the door and when I introduced myself she seemed to immediately know who I was. Apparently, Phillip had spoken of me.

I learned, through her rapid disclosure of details, that Phillip had indeed been to visit her, two nights previous. She told a disturbing tale of Phillip's raving manner and actions. Apparently, he claimed that there were evil spirits following him, given an extension back into the real, living world by the power of beings Phillip called the Old Ones. She told me that, of course, she did not believe him, but brought Phillip in because he clearly needed help.

That is when, she said, things began to grow extremely odd. First of all, after she had settled Phillip down and was brewing some coffee, the electric lights began to flicker. Then, they went out altogether. She went to light a lamp, and Phillip began to tell her that someone named "Simon" was soon to arrive. He apologized then, apparently, in his rambling way, for bringing him to Miss Addison's home.

Still, Miss Addison just believed that there was something amiss with the power and tried to concentrate at the task at hand rather than give any credence to Phillip's words.

Then, she told me, the air in her home became strangely cold—far too cold, she thought, for a July evening. Suddenly, there came a rattling noise from the shop below. She feared a break-in, and finally managed to light the lamp.

In the light of the flickering kerosene flame, Miss Addison saw not one man in her living room, but two. Phillip struggled in the darkness with another figure, only two-thirds his size. The strangest thing about the scene, she said, was that there was no sound. Neither man made a whisper of noise, and even their struggles were silent. It was as though, she said, she was watching them through a thick window, or in a film. She seemed to particularly take to the second metaphor, stating that watching them, even for a few seconds, gave her the impression that she watched something not actually entirely "there." As if she were viewing something projected from somewhere else.

All went black. Her light had gone out in a gush of chilled air. After but a moment, the electrics flickered back to life.

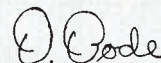
And to her amazement, both Phillip and his assailant were gone.

I questioned her extensively, of course, almost to the point of impropriety. How could such a thing be? Where did they go? How did they get out? Miss Addison had no answers. She reported the incident to the police, who - in her opinion - gave the whole event little heed. Nothing was amiss with her electrics, and there was no sign of a break in attempt or struggle in the house.

Miss Addison seemed quite coherent and sensible. She did not seem the type to tell falsehoods or embellish on the facts. I could only conclude that indeed, someone was after Phillip and had abducted him from her home. Miss Addison told me only one other thing, and that was, when he arrived, Phillip had a book with him, with a black leather cover. It seemed to disappear with him. I thanked her and bid her goodnight.

I plan on continuing my search. I have one other avenue of investigation, although I admit it is a bit of a "long shot," as they say.

Yours truly,



Thomas Bode