



# 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**

Phillip Shandler  
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Dear Thomas, July 17, 1931

The light of a new morning, even one after a night of little sleep, seems to shed illuminations on earlier terrors. I now question myself as to whether it could really have been Fiona Carlisle I saw in the basement below Westbrook manor last night. Don't mistake me - I have no question that something quite sinister is going on, and that there were indeed aged corpses sitting in chairs around me, but I think the rest could have easily been supplied either by my fear-fevered brain or some act of trickery on the part of Harriet Westbrook or others involved with the Starry Wisdom.

It is clear, after all, that they at least once had some connection to Simon Carlisle, an undeniably malevolent figure, to say the least. But was there something actually supernatural going on? I don't know.

And yet, even as I write this, I think about how many times I've been down this road before. I encounter something horrific, and then my mind attempts to compensate - to rationalize the experience. And yet in the end it always seems that I was correct in my original assumption, and that something beyond the ken of the mortal mind is actually at work behind the occurrences. Could it be that what I am experiencing is merely endemic of the human experience? That in order to keep our frantic, if tenuous, grasp on our sanity we redefine our memories and our very perception of reality? If so, does this give us the advantage or the disadvantage against the malicious forces that marshal against us (or if not against us, certainly against what we call a rational, habitable world).

These thoughts are beyond me. They are better suited to someone more intelligent like you, Thomas. I am, ultimately, an investigator, not a philosopher. One that's been lead to believe that so much of what I've been investigating almost two years now all points to this Starry Wisdom organization here in Boston.

I've decided not to return to Westbrook manor and take a different, perhaps even more direct path. The Starry Wisdom has a temple near the waterfront here. Today I'm going to see what I can find out about the place, and then I'm going there myself tomorrow.

Sincerely,

*Phillip*

Dear Thomas,

July 18, 1931

I was able to find out a few interesting things from the newspapers in the library regarding the Starry Wisdom. It seems that the group has operated its temple for the last fifteen years or so. Most people in the city see them as a philosophical social club, with an exclusive membership. They've even won awards for their philanthropy, having sponsored orphanages and soup kitchens in the area for years.

Five years ago, however, apparently a 12-year old boy who had been at a Starry Wisdom orphanage came to the police with a grisly story of strange religious rituals and blood sacrifices. At some point, however, the boy ran from police custody and disappeared. He was never found. The Starry Wisdom were fully investigated, but the police found no evidence that the boy, who reportedly had a "troubled history," was telling the truth. The case was dropped.

Two years ago, strange red and violet lights were seen over the course of three nights in mid October around the Starry Wisdom Temple. There were multiple eyewitnesses. Again, the police investigated, but no explanation was found. The authorities wrote it off as an electrical disturbance. The Globe, however, reported that a man described the lights as something "being drawn down from the stars, and into that weird building. The walls lit up when the lights touched it, and for a moment I could see through them like an X-Ray, and saw a lot of glowing, crisscrossing lines, like a cage."

This matches up with something that I learned visiting the public records office. The building was designed by Ronald Carlisle, a member of the order. Ronald was Fiona's father and Simon's grandson, and apparently a semi-professional architect, as well as a financier. As I wrote to you once before, he was imprisoned about ten years ago after modifications he had added to a building caused it to collapse, killing a great many people. He died in prison, although I was never able to clearly ascertain how - either suicide or murder, it appears, but no one seems willing to talk about it. The Starry Wisdom temple, it seems, has some very strange architectural features, including a latticework of metal fibers running through the roof and walls of the place like a huge metal net or web.

It's with some reluctance that I tell you, with all this about the Carlisles, I could not help myself and thus I also stopped by the hospital here, which was something I had promised myself

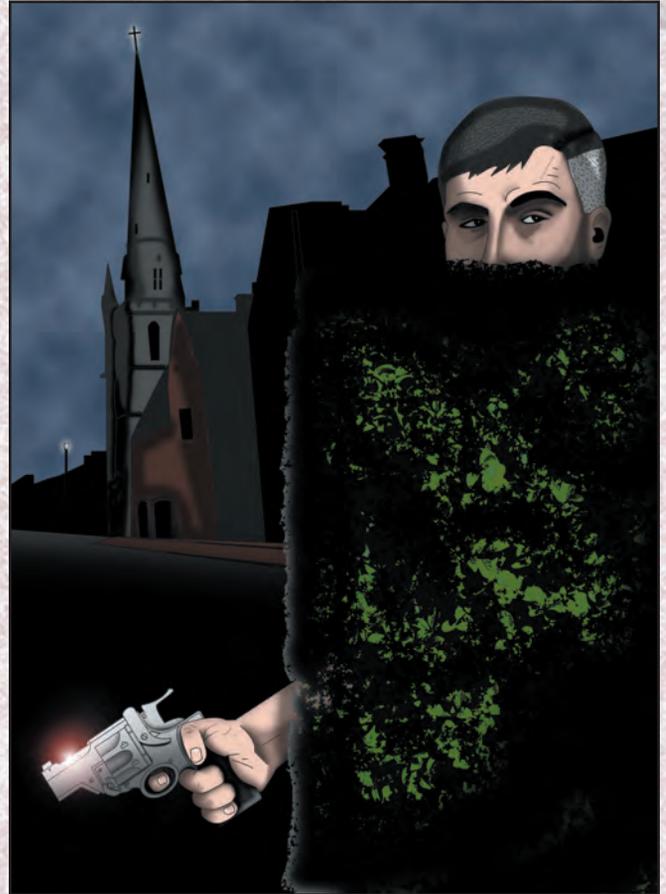
I would not do. You know very well why. Yes, I went to see Fiona, laying comatose in her bed.

Was I surprised to learn that she was gone? I cannot truthfully say. But she was. Months ago. Perhaps a year, they said. One morning, and she was just gone. I feel terrible that after all this time I never knew, but as you know, since my experiences last year, I had been following my doctor's advice and avoided having any contact with her. He referred to it as an obsession. Now, I see that I was correct to obsess. It was her the other night. She's up and around and in the clutches of her great-grandfather, the devotee of Nyarlathotep. There is no more room in my mind for rationalizations. There are forces of supernatural evil at work here, and I have got to quit denying it.

After the hospital, it was not yet 6 PM, so I went to the police to see if I could find any information about the Starry Wisdom or those strange events I had read about. I talked to a Detective Carter there, and he was a fairly friendly chap, which was nice since more than half the time I get nothing but the cold shoulder when I try to get any information from the police. He wasn't surprised that I was looking into the Starry Wisdom cult (his word). There have been more odd reports than those that have made it into the paper, he told me, but the police have never been able to pin anything actually illegal on them. Plus, he told me, occasionally they get pressure from the police commissioner to drop cases and generally lighten up on the organization, since so many important and influential people belong to it. He was even willing to tell me who some of those people were, although not being a resident of Boston, none of the names (other than Harriet Westbrook) meant anything to me. I asked him about the Carlisle family, and specifically Fiona's disappearance, but he didn't know anything about it. He didn't seem to think that her disappearance was all that out of the ordinary, though. When I pressed him on that, he confided that sometimes long-term care patients disappear from the hospital. The police have no leads, and often the patients have no close family members or friends willing to press the issue (and hire a private investigator, like me, he implied - I think he believed that a relative of Fiona's had hired me for the investigation, and I didn't disabuse him of the notion).

What was interesting, though, was that he saw nothing strange in my inquiring about the Starry Wisdom in the context of Fiona's disappearance. This lead me to believe that he, and perhaps others, suspected that the Starry Wisdom might be involved with the disappearances at the hospital, and perhaps elsewhere. He was unwilling to provide me with further details, but the picture was beginning to come clear in my mind.

The Starry Wisdom cult lies at the very center of the veneration of Nyarlathotep, and they



perform dire, blood-filled ceremonies in his honor, attempting to entice him to come to earth. According to the *Necronomicon*, Nyarlathotep is the harbinger of the Great Old Ones, so in effect the Starry Wisdom is doing nothing less than holding unholy rites to bring upon the end of the world. From everything I've learned over the past couple of years, it seems that this religion, whether it is called Starry Wisdom, the Fellowship of the Risen God, or even the Witch Cult (and perhaps even the Black Goat cult), is a unified cabal of madmen that has operated for hundreds of years to undermine not only mankind, but the very reality in which we live.

I've got to do what I can to expose them, or to stop them. And I've got to find Fiona.

I must.

I'm off now to the Starry Wisdom temple. Considering that they are an "exclusive social club," I doubt that they will let me in or give me the time of day, but perhaps I can learn something. I'll also be casing the outside of the place for a while to see if there's a way to break into the place.

Thomas, I've got to do whatever it takes.

Sincerely,

*Phillip*