



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
188 Gibson Lane
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Thomas,

I write to you from Czechoslovakia.

Specifically, a region known as Carpathian Ruthenia, near a city named Mukachevo. It was an arduous journey to get here. The tale is long, and not a little disturbing.

As I'm sure you remember, I was in the city of Danzig. I arrived with the British secret service officer Fleming and his men. Crowley was along as well, although he was acting very strange. More solemn, and somehow more... sturdy.

Danzig was under the sway of the Nazis, and the local police there kept a tight reign over the city. A group of British men - and one American - would be looked upon with suspicion to say the least, so we attempted to keep a low profile. Fleming had a contact here by the name of Schmitt that he hoped could provide us with some transportation. We met him in a dark tavern located in a narrow, cobblestone street. There was no sign marking the place, but enough people seemed to know of it to keep it in business.

As we spoke with Schmitt, a rotund man who smelled of spicy ham, our meeting was suddenly interrupted. Men in brown shirts, representing the local Nazi party, came in accompanying two uniformed police officers. The policemen wore sidearms, but the brownshirts bore short wooden clubs painted ominously black. The officers walked straight to the table where I sat with Crowley, Fleming, Schmitt, and Fitzsimmons, Fleming's right hand man. They spoke in German, and Schmitt did most of the talking for us, although I knew that at least Fleming could understand them. I never know what Crowley knows or does not know.

Schmitt showed the officers some identification papers, but this did not seem to satisfy them. While they spoke, I kept my eye on the men with clubs behind us, and I could see a strange eagerness in their eyes. One of the police officers said something that included the name "Aleister Crowley," although the English name seemed strange on his lips. He stared right at Crowley, but the man did not return the favor, and instead sipped at the stein of beer in front of him.

The police officer said his name louder, and there was still no response. I saw Fleming and Jones tense. Schmitt looked as though he might bolt for the door at any moment.

Suddenly, Crowley lifted his face to look at the police officer and spoke in what seemed to my uneducated ear to be fluent German. As had happened on board the ship coming to Danzig,



however, I could hear something else in Crowley's voice. It carried with it the strange, otherworldly quality of Aiwass, Crowley's spirit guide, who now seemed to be cohabiting Crowley's body along with the man.

The police officer stared for a moment, and then a look of shock, or perhaps horror spread across his countenance like a slow wave. He backed away, and spoke to his uniformed companion, who appeared confused. The brownshirts likewise shuffled their feet and looked around in apprehension. Most stared at the police officer, though, who then barked an order at the entire retinue, and turned on booted feet to leave. Reluctantly, those who came with him followed suit.

Once they were gone, I asked, "What did you say?"

Crowley did not respond, but Fleming said with a slight furrow to his brow, "He told the man that his dead mother, Esther, asked him to go home and see to his wife and unborn son."

I stared at Crowley for a moment. "How did you know his mother's name? How did you know his wife was expecting?"

Still nothing.

"By the look on his face," Fleming said, "I don't think the policeman knew his wife was expecting."

I let that sink in for a time, quietly sipping my drink. Eventually, I realized that I did not want Crowley answering my questions. I was afraid to speak with the man at all.

Sincerely,

Phillip