



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 19, 1939

More snow. And more of the strange sounds in the night. I asked the others if they heard anything, but everyone said that they did not. Still, Fleming is no fool. With everything that's happened, he took me seriously. With the storm having changed to merely a gentle snowfall with the arrival of morning, he and some of his men looked around the house. When they returned, he said that they found no trace of anything out of the ordinary.

In the afternoon, we began brainstorming ideas for how to get into Chanov Castle, where the "woman" Adriana held the stolen Star of Unseen Stars.

"She's not human," I told the men assembled around the crude wooden table.

They sipped at mugs of tea and coffee and waited for me to say more. It was telling that none appeared particularly surprised or interested in asserting denials. This group had been through many strange occurrences together.

"Crowley told me. She's one of the Vril-Ya. But I'm not entirely sure what that means."

Fleming stared at the table for a moment. Then, he said, "The German Thule Society believes them to be a race of superior creatures - smarter, stronger, and more adept than humanity."

"Hang on," Fitzsimmons said. "More adept?"

"They purportedly possess supernatural powers. Mind-control, destructive force, mind over matter, and so on."

"Might explain what happened to the truck," Fitzsimmons muttered. The others nodded somberly.

We talked further, but between such powers and the young hostages Adriana has taken, we were at a loss as to how to get into the old castle successfully. Speculation and discussion continued through the afternoon and into the evening. The wind picked up as the sun set and stirred the snow back into a storm. The mood of all assembled grew dire.

I am writing this now just before bed. I don't know how or when I can send these letters, but scribbling notes to you each night has simply become the way I organize my thoughts. I wish there was a way that I could hear from you. I am certain that you could come up with some kind of solution to our problem, Thomas. Do we try to sneak into the castle? Assault it? I don't know.

What I do know is, I need to retrieve the stone. I am finding it difficult to even consider sleep now, thinking about it.

Even as I finish this letter to you, though, I hear the strange moaning howl outside. It's not the wind, but it floats among the wind. I wonder if it could be a wolf or something like that. I can still see nothing, however. As long as whatever it is stays outside in the storm, however, I suppose it doesn't matter.

Sincerely,

Phillip

Dear Thomas, January 18, 1939

I did not sleep last night. I am trapped in a snowed-in house in the middle of the Carpathian Mountains with a man that I thought was Aleister Crowley, but that I now know is more accurately Crowley's spirit guide, Aiwass. It's Aleister's body, but Aiwass' consciousness. Yesterday he made that clear to me.

Last night, however, as I lay on my cot pondering this, I heard something in the winter storm raging outside the window. At first, I thought to dismiss it as the wind, but when I heard it a second time, I went to the frost-covered glass to see if I could see anything. Ice and snow, however, obscured all vision.

I can't describe the sound that I heard very well. It seemed almost a voice, but an incoherent one. A howl, but not quite. A moan, but louder, and distant. I saw nothing, so it could have been the wind.

Crowley/Aiwass just sits at the table. Fleming and the others ignore him. I try, but it is difficult. I can feel his gaze upon me no matter where I stand or sit, despite the fact that he moves neither his head nor his eyes.

I feel the loss of the Star of Unseen Stars, Thomas. Like a man who is denied cigarettes or a drink. At times, its absence feels almost like a hunger. I remember so clearly the whispered voice which spoke to me of the future. Despite its dire warnings, I miss that voice as well.

Sincerely,

Phillip