



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,

Date Unknown

She is here.

I saw Adriana earlier today. I found where she is living here in this empty city, somewhere outside the bounds of Earth. I had thought I was alone here, other than a few shadows that dogged the edges of my vision, flitting about from time to time but always keeping their distance. But now I know that the one I had followed to this place is indeed still here. And if she is here, is the Star of Unknown Stars that she stole from me not also likely to be here? I hope so. I believe so.

I do not know how long I have been wandering the deathly quiet streets of this place – the sun here passes through the sky in a far less understandable fashion than I am accustomed. When I first arrived, I had thought this a world of eternal night. Then, occasionally a pale sun peeked above the horizon, but only for a short time. Now, I see that there are days on this world – hot, cloudless days of unrelenting heat despite the fact that the sun is fainter and weaker here than on Earth. These days last for, well, I begin to lose words that make sense in this context. I was going to say for days. But the sudden appearance of these long days seem random to me. There are still even longer nights, and still “days” lasting just minutes that amount to little more than a brief, pale dawn.

In any event, Thomas, it is currently one of these long, pale days and earlier as I wandered, I saw Adriana, her long black hair moving lightly about her head, a long, red and gold gown trailing behind her. Things, squat and misshapen, like deformed apes with little hair and bleached flesh, flanked her like guardians. These beasts numbered four, and each carried a staff more than twice their height made of dark, straight wood. I hid as they marched in this formation down the street, and I followed them from a great distance and watched as they entered a large structure. I watched that grand building for what must have been hours, but I saw no further activity, so I returned to my own camp for food and water. I am going to go back there later.

I will write more afterward. I must make a plan, but first I must learn more.

Sincerely,

Phillip

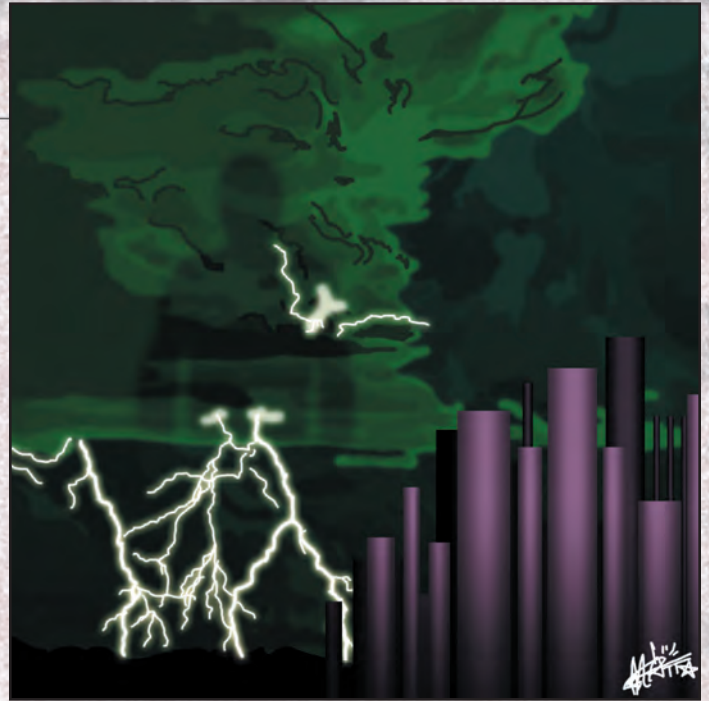
Dear Thomas,

Date Unknown

As I reckon, it must be at least two days since I last wrote, but I have slept only briefly in that time. And, I fear, my sense of time might have eroded considerably since my transition to this place.

Adriana seems to be biding her time here. I don't really understand her motives. She fled here from Chanov Castle with the gemstone when Fleming and his men accompanied me and stormed the place. I still have the device that Crowley gave me to protect me from her seemingly sorcerous abilities during that raid. I had assumed, however, that this place would either be her true home, or there would be some further mission for her here. But by all appearances, she just sits in wait in a lavishly decorated home in this empty city, attended by the ape-things.

I do not understand. I watched her through a window for hours, and she read, she ate, and she slept, but mostly she



just seemed to be waiting for something. But what? And where is the jewel that she stole from me? I have not seen it. She must have it secreted away somewhere in that house.

After some sleep, I am going to go back.

Sincerely,

Phillip

Dear Thomas,

Date Unknown

(at least a “week” as reckoned on Earth, since my last letter)

I fear I finally have my answer. Even as I write this, I watch from a high balcony as a terrible storm gathers on the horizon. I have relocated permanently to a towering structure not far from Adriana's mansion so that I can observe her and her servants. I still have seen nothing but her waiting for something. But now I believe I know what it is.

Never has there been such clouds and the rumbling of such thunder in my time here. This event is no typical storm, not on any world. The mountain of rolling stormclouds possesses a strange, bluish-green color, punctuated by flashes of brilliant lightning.

But it is worse than that. As I scribble this down, I see something of substance within the stormclouds. Something looming there. Something... walking. I know of no other way to phrase it. It is as though something terrible and mountainous – monstrous – strides from over the horizon towards me, and the storm is just the evidence of its presence. The clouds and lightning are simply a cloak around it. A sheath of disrupted air screaming in protest at what moves through it.

What can it be, Thomas? I am suddenly afraid as I have not been for a very long time.

And now I see on the streets below, a gathering of shadows. What is it? Slinking shadows. Graceful. Lithe. Could they be cats? Hundreds of unearthly cats, reacting to the coming storm?