True story: back in 1997, someone broke open HP Lovecraft’s grave, the one that just says I AM PROVIDENCE, for unknown reasons. The crime was never solved. What would anyone want with a few scraps of worm-ridden flesh from an obscure fantasist?

Of course, in the Laundryverse, Lovecraft was right.

Not completely right. He was right about the existence of prehuman monstrosities, with all their naughty tentacles and those squamous, rugose, batrachian horrors, but a bit vague on the specifics. Most of his information came from his grandfather’s book collection, but his psyche got cracked open by a traumatic encounter in childhood with a magic unicorn, and Mythos lore seeped into his brain after that. He filled in the gaps through research and hanging around with suspicious sorts. No one spends that much time living down the street from the second incarnation of the Black Chamber without learning Things That Man Was Not Meant To Know, But Nonetheless Has Opened An Official File On Them Against All Sanity. By the end of his life, Lovecraft knew things that other people would kill to know.

And they did. It’s easy to cause intestinal cancer with the right entropy manipulation.

Lovecraft died in 1937, penniless and depressed, unappreciated in his own lifetime except by a small circle of friends.

Fast forward to the present day.

Lovecraft just walked into the United States Embassy in London.

What’s Going On?

Hey kids! With the right spell, you can raise up the dead from their essential saltes, as described in The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward. Back in the 1920s, you needed all the remains, or you only got Ye Liveliest Awfulness, but in this modern age of computational demonology, DNA recombination and inference algorithms, you can get a reasonable approximation of a resurrected human from just a pinch of grave dust. The resurrectee will have a portion of their original knowledge, and may even be sane enough to talk instead of gnawing their own tongue out with the shock of resurrection.

In other, wholly unrelated news, an American pharmaceutical company called Cob Chemicals recently opened a research facility in England. Through a labyrinth of shell companies and holding firms, Cob Chemicals is owned by the Uzaran Brotherhood, a sect of occultists and sorcerers who worship the Great Old Ones. The Uzarans possess an incomplete copy of a rite that they believe can open the way for Horrible Tentacled Things to come forth into our reality. Unfortunately, the last complete copy of the rite was lost in the 1920s.

Lovecraft saw the complete version of the rite during his travels. The Uzarans brought Lovecraft back from the dead to fill in the gaps.

Of course, since they couldn’t be sure that the Aitch Pe Ell that they brought back would get it right, they decided to crowdsource their solution…

The Uzaran Brotherhood

It’s never a good sign for a cult when you include the phrase “at the zenith of the cult’s power”.

The Uzaran Brotherhood started out as a heretical sect of Zoroastrian fire worship. According to the cult’s origin myth, Uzaran the Prophet stared into a sacred flame, and lo, the flame spoke back to him. Uzaran had inadvertently made contact with a nameless alien god-thing that was stuck on a lifeless, scorched world somewhere closer to the core of this galaxy.

Aided by the eldritch wisdom and magical power granted by the entity, the sect grew in wealth and influence. Notably, they possessed a form of summoning that was – by the
standards of traditional sorcery – pretty cost-effective, and used that to send swarms of Fire Vampires to zap their foes. Some historians claim that the invisible monster that famously ate Abdul Al-Hazred in broad daylight was a cult conjuration.

Anyway, at the zenith of the cult’s power, see, they built a great temple complex at Ul-Chabar, and attempted to bring the god to Earth.

It turned out that the god couldn’t exist under the conditions of our local reality. You know when you bring a creature up from the depths of the ocean, and it turns out that it’s adapted for the extreme pressure of the ocean floor and it explodes violently when brought to the surface? Yeah. It was like that. The god went squelch with the force of a thermonuclear explosion. The Ul-Chabar temple was destroyed, along with most of the cult, and the survivors persecuted.

The cult’s original sacred text – the Namak Dvara Thwasha or Book of the Starry Door – was destroyed in the explosion, although fragments survived in both occult lore and in the ruins of the temple.

Fast forward to the 1950s, when a new branch of the cult started up in the United States, first among Iranian immigrants and later among certain ex-oilmen and engineers. Today, the cult owns the petrochemical company, Cob Chemicals.

Just as a fire may smoulder for hours before bursting into new life if the right fuel is added, so too can a cult slumber for centuries before returning to glory. The temple at Ul-Chabar may have been ash and dust for centuries, but now the cult has the tools to bring their god back to this world. Without him going squelch, that is.

Adventure Synopsis

The Laundry sends the agents to investigate a report that Howard Philips Lovecraft was seen at the American Embassy in London. They discover that Lovecraft was indeed there – he escaped from a tour bus when it stopped at a nearby supermarket, and was later bundled into the back of a white van. The van is a dead end, but the tour bus leads the characters to a private museum, where they meet another clone of Lovecraft.

The museum staff were geased to forget about the recent visit, when fifty identical clones of Lovecraft came to look at their copy of the Ul-Chabar Tablet, a fragment of the infamous Book of the Starry Door. The tour was organised by a fake charity, the Hermetic Society, and investigating that society leads the investigators to Cob Chemicals.

By the time they get there, though, it’s too late. The summoning has already started. The investigators have to follow the cultists through a gate to a dead world and stop them from calling forth their alien god onto a Beowulf cluster of Lovecrafts.

The mission takes a sharp turn once the characters get from Cob Chemicals. It’s relatively low-key until the gate and the alien god show up. Watch for player whiplash.

1. Madman at the Gate

The Laundry routinely monitors Metropolitan Police radio traffic and reports, scanning them for keywords: cult, ritual, Turing, tentacle and so on. Lovecraft’s also on that list of target words, so when the police get called to deal with a public disturbance outside the US Embassy by a man calling himself Lovecraft, the Laundry knows about it – eventually.
Four hours after the incident took place, the characters get an email from Monitoring. It sounds like nothing, but protocol dictates they check it out. Give the characters a chance to requisition any items they feel might be useful from the Armoury before heading out.

Checking with the Police

Contacting the police puts the characters in touch with WPC Nadia Laytham. She was the officer called to the US Embassy to take custody of some troublemaker. IC1 – White Caucasian, introduced himself as Howard Lovecraft, claimed to be an American citizen, but had no passport or other documentation and seemed confused.

By the time she got there, this ‘Lovecraft’ was gone. She questioned passers-by, and got a description of Lovecraft: gaunt, thin-faced, dark hair, wearing a sweatshirt and tracksuit leggings. He left the embassy and went back to a nearby Tesco Express, where he argued with the spotty teenager behind the counter over the price of ice cream.

Laytham’s happy to turn the case over to the Laundry; anything involving embassies means a lot of paperwork.

Visiting the Embassy

The characters have to tread carefully here: the US Embassy is, obviously, US territory. The characters shouldn’t even dream of entering without a letter from the ambassador, but they can bend the rules and ask a few questions. The embassy receptionist was the one who called the police. She describes the intruder as being very polite, but clearly disturbed. He spoke with a Boston accent. To get rid of him, she made him fill out a form. He couldn’t answer most of the questions on it, got frustrated, and left. The signature on the form is identical to Lovecraft’s.

If the characters ask too many questions, then a cold-eyed fellow who’s clearly a Black Chamber remote-controlled zombie shows up and politely requests that they leave. Now.

Security Cameras: Checking security cameras (the characters can get access to CCTV easily) reveals the following:

- TA tour bus with tinted windows pulls up outside a Tesco Express within a few minutes’ walk of the embassy. The driver gets out and hurries inside. Registration number: XLX7663.
- While he’s inside, the door opens again, and Lovecraft gets out. Lovecraft wanders off down the street. He’s wearing a sweatshirt with the letters C O B on it. He seems drugged or sleepy.
- The driver comes back out, wolfing down a sandwich. He gets back in and drives off.
- Following Lovecraft on CCTV, the characters watch him enter the American Embassy. He’s in there for around 45 minutes. He then leaves and goes back to the Tesco.
- A white van arrives, two men get out, and escort Lovecraft into the van. They then drive off. Both men are in their mid-20s, wearing dark clothes and shades. One of them has something around his neck, like an amulet. The other may be armed – his hoodie rides up as he pushes Lovecraft into the van, and he has something tucked into his waistband that may be a gun or possibly a taser.
- The van’s plates are LC04 GNC.

What Really Happened?

Cob Chemicals and the Uzaran Brotherhood want Lovecraft to provide them with the full Ul-Chabar Rite of the Unseen Mouth. The only known copy of the rite is an incomplete manuscript, held in a private museum in London. They whipped up a bunch of Lovecraft clones, loaded them on a bus, and took them on a field trip to the museum. The museum staff were geased to ignore the fact that fifty identical New England eccentrics, all dressed in Cob Chemicals sweatshirts, came in to look at their collection of obscure 8th Century Persian manuscripts.

When the driver of the bus, stressed from having to babysit fifty Lovecrafts, succumbed to hunger and stopped for a snack, one of the Lovecrafts wandered out of the bus. The van was sent to find the errant Lovecraft and bring him back to the Cob Chemicals facility.

However, when they finally did a head count back at Cob, they discovered they were missing a second Lovecraft. The Cob Chemicals security team assume that both Lovecrafts got off at the Tesco. In fact, one of the Lovecrafts is still in the museum.
Research

Lovecraft Biography: The Laundry has an extensive file on him (see Handout #1). In short, Lovecraft knew a lot about the occult, and some of his stories were suppressed after his death for security reasons.

Notably, someone broke into Lovecraft’s grave in 1997. Paranoid players may recall The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward and how Joseph Curwen raised the dead from ye essential saltes; that method was accurately described in the story, especially the bit about bringing back Ye Liveliest Awfulness if you screw up.

Running the Number Plates:
The bus’s plate of XLX7663 resolves to a bus hire company, Abbot Coaches. The van’s plates are fakes.

2. Tracking the Vehicles

The obvious next step is to follow the bus that dropped Lovecraft off, and the van that kidnapped him.

The Van

The characters can find the van:

- By hitting the streets.
- By scanning the live CCTV feed via SCORPION STARE.
- By getting WPC Laytham to put out an alert on police radio for it.
- Through divination. The white van scraped against the kerb when they jumped Lovecraft, and they can use this fleck of paint to trace their target.
- Or just by hanging around the Tesco where the first Lovecraft escaped the van.

Driving the van are two Cob Chemicals security guards, codenamed DERLETH and PRICE. They’re also low-ranking cultists of the Uzaran Brotherhood. They’re under orders to find the missing Lovecrafts and return them to Cob Chemicals. Right now, they’re driving around the streets near that ill-omened Tesco looking for the missing Lovecraft.

At the first sign of trouble, they try to pull back, using evasive driving techniques – turning down alleyways, racing red lights, sudden turns and so on. If pursuit continues, then they’ll stop the van and release the insurance policy in the back.

They’ve got a hot summoning circle in the back of the van, which can summon two Class II exonomes (souped-up Fire Vampires) to incinerate any pursuers. To summon the vampires, the pair need to bleed on the summoning circle, so the characters may see them fumbling with a pocket-knife while driving.

So, the most likely scenario here is that the PCs start following the van, there’s a chase scene with lots of opposed Drive vs. Drive rolls (possibly livened up with some shooting), then the van ends up driving down a narrow alleyway and a pair of Fire Vampires explode out of the back.

Fire Vampires & Sympathetic Summoning

Fire Vampires are extradimensional buggers who ‘think’ by channelling loops of superheated plasma through loops and folds in spacetime. That means they’re very, very hot and very radioactive in their natural state. When brought into our reality, they start to cool off rapidly, which means they go mad and ‘drown’ in the ice wastes of our world. To survive, they desperately try to possess humans or anything with a nervous system so they can downshift their thought processes. Of course, seeing as they’re made of fire, they just end up incinerating the human instead of using it as a computing substrate.

Now, the Uzaran Brotherhood came up with a nasty little hack when it came to summoning Fire Vampires. They developed a summoning rite that incorporated a sympathetic link between a victim and the summoned vampire, which allowed the vampire to use the victim’s brain without physical contact. So, the victim doesn’t get burnt to death, they just go mad instead as the vampire eats their thoughts from within. The vampire gets to hang around longer, albeit in whatever the equivalent of constant freezing agony is for a Fire Vampire.

If the van survives, the player characters can use Occult, Sorcery and/or Science (thaumaturgy) rolls to reverse-engineer the summoning technique, and can recognise it as the rite used by the Uzaran Brotherhood.
The summoning rite used by the Uzarans binds the caster to the summoned creature, so if a Fire Vampire dies or gets banished, it takes the soul of DERLETH or PRICE with it. Similarly, if one of the goons dies, the matching vampire loses its handy computational engine and goes poof in a few rounds unless it can possess one of the player characters.

The cultists are both geased with security measures – if captured, their brains shut down. The Laundry can unpick these geases given lots of time and some careful psychic surgery (or, if the players are stuck, the Laundry can overpower those geases to get a few seconds of questioning time before the cultists explode).

**DERLETH and PRICE, Occult Rentagoons**

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<th>Attribute</th>
<th>DERLETH</th>
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<td>HP</td>
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**Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Pistol 55%, damage 1d10.

**Skills:** Drive 60%, Hide 40%, Knowledge (Tradecraft) 20%, Knowledge (Occult) 40%, Spot 40%, Stealth 50%.

**Artefacts:** Class Two Ward, Wand of Geasing (Casts a Level Three Geas, 3 Charges left).

**Fire Vampires, the Toasters from Beyond**

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**Weapons:** Touch 80%, damage 2d6 burn +1d10 temporary POW damage (POW is regained at a rate of 1 point/hour).

All the characters have Class Two Wards. That means that the Fire Vampires can't touch them - but each time the vampire attacks, the character has to make a Luck roll. If the Luck roll fails, the vampire burns out the ward, so it can attack next round.

**Skills:** Dodge 60%, Dart Menacingly 70%.

**Armour:** Material weapons cannot harm a Fire Vampire. A fire extinguisher deals 1d6 damage to the incandescent creature; large volumes of water or extremely low temperatures can also damage the entity. A successful Computer Use (magic) roll using a Necronomiphone can banish a Fire Vampire, but you need to be up close to do it.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1d4

**Searching the Van**

We'll assume DERLETH and PRICE are dead or brain-dead. Checking the van reveals the following clues:

- Two sets of handcuffs, one syringe loaded with a sedative. Searching through a bag of rubbish in the passenger side footwell turns up a second, empty syringe.
- A map, showing the route from the Tesco to the Armsby-Britt Museum.
- The amulets worn by the two goons match the holy symbol of the Uzaran cult.
- A summoning circle, engraved on a slab of gorilla glass, wired to a pretty basic computational demonology engine. That suggests a cult or faction that's well-funded and technically adept, but not one of the big players - that engine's ten or fifteen years behind cutting-edge.
- There's a suspicious lack of other clues. No IDs, not even any pocket chaff. The two goons aren't wearing uniforms. The car's been wiped clean of fingerprints, and the summoning circle threw off enough thaumic radiation to mess with divinations. Fake licence plates; if the characters bother to run the serial number off the engine block, they discover that the van was registered as stolen six months ago.

**Researching the Uzaran Cult**

Digging into Laundry archives with a Research roll (or spending some mission budget on a call back to the Stacks) gets the characters Handout #2.

**The Bus**

Again, the investigators can find the bus:

- By hitting the streets.
- By scanning the live CCTV feed via SCORPION STARE.
- By getting WPC Laytham to put out an alert on police radio for it.

The bus's current location is a mystery, but the investigators can find out where it's been - it drove into London from outside the city (and outside the region blanketed by CCTV), visited the Armsby-Britt museum, then went back the way it came. Contacting the bus rental company reveals that they rented the bus to the Hermetic Trust for a week.

**Tooling Up**

After running into Fire Vampires, the characters may pop back to the Laundry to grab improved gear. They’ll be assigned a mission budget of 25 – and Class Three wards are Difficult (1/2 Status check) to obtain. They’re unlikely to obtain wards for the whole team with that low budget, unless they start tapping their Departmental Budgets...
3. School Tour of the Night

Either by following the map in the van, or by retracing the bus’s route, the investigators arrive at the Armsby-Britt museum. Some of them have probably been there before – Major Armsby-Britt was a British cavalry officer, explorer and ‘antiquarian’, which is a polite way to describe a tomb robber who looted graves and temples from Egypt to Beijing. Most of his collection was donated to the British Museum or quietly returned to the country of origin, but other items are still displayed in the small private museum founded in his name. The museum’s like stepping back in time to the 1930s, and is crammed full of nostalgia for Empire and casual racism. Lots of portraits of stern moustachioed men machine-gunning African tribesmen or showing those Asiatics what-for, lots of tribal masks and spears and stuffed zebra heads on the walls.

The curator and manager of the museum is Mr Pratt; there’s also a small café attached to the museum, run by a Ms. Jennings. From talking to Pratt (see Questioning the Staff) the investigators notice that Pratt’s been geased – he’s glassy-eyed and speaks in a slurred voice. They’ve also zapped Ms. Jennings.

However, the one customer in the café is unaffected, and he’s taken advantage of Ms. Jennings’ stupefied state to clean all the ice cream out of the fridge. The investigators find Howard Philips Lovecraft sitting and eating ice cream while reading a stack of newspapers.

Exploring the Museum

The museum’s full of spooky exhibits and curiosities from across the world. Notably, there’s a glass display case containing the damaged and incomplete tablet from the Uzaran temple at Ul-Chabar, with part of the Book of the Starry Door engraved on it.

A successful Occult roll remembers that not even the Laundry has a complete copy of the book, but that the book is mentioned in one of Lovecraft’s suppressed stories, The Light in the Tomb. That story describes how the unnamed narrator sees a light in a graveyard in Providence on certain nights, and finally plucks up the courage to investigate. He learns that the tomb is reputed to be that of a sorcerer, and the old mute gravedigger places a lantern there on certain nights. Examining the tomb, he finds there is a metal grate in the floor, which would act as a window, letting the light into the tomb below. Greatly daring, he lights the lamp and looks down… and sees an impossible library.

Cthulhu Mythos or Sorcery: The tablet is broken and incomplete, but it looks like a partial description of a Gate spell. Without the full tablet, though, the formula’s useless. Checking the museum catalogue reveals that the Ul-Chabar tablet is not normally on display; whoever was on the tour bus must have arranged for the tablet to have been taken out of storage and put in the case.

History recalls information about the Uzaran cult; either Pratt or Lovecraft can fill the player characters in on the history of the cult if the players don’t ask.

Museum Records

There was an attempted break-in several weeks ago, but the intruders were interrupted by a passing police patrol. The police gave chase, but failed to catch the intruders. Around the same time, there was a report of an attempted arson two streets away. One eyewitness claimed to have been “buzzed by a small UFO”.

The museum was booked out for several hours by the Hermetic Trust. They paid by credit card, and the address of the trust is a small office in East London.

Questioning the Staff

Oh dear. The most the characters can safely get out of Pratt is that museum was booked by a private tour group belonging to a charity called the Hermetic Trust. The woman who booked the museum – Barker or Barking or something – explained that the trust’s members are very shy, so they booked out the whole museum and asked that Pratt close the doors for three hours. It seemed like a reasonable request. Pratt can’t recall anything about the visitors, and seems incapable of recognising the fact that there’s a Lovecraft in the lobby. The characters can expect to have a lot of frustrating conversations like this:

Laundry Officer: Who visited the museum?

Pratt: Oh! Some people.

Laundry Officer: Describe them.

Pratt: Um… you know, people. People with… legs!

Laundry Officer: Sir, I’m legally allowed to degauss your nervous system if you annoy me.

It’s clear that Pratt and Jennings have been geased, and it’s a deep-seated one. If the characters keep asking questions of them, their brains will spontaneously combust. The geas probably also has a self-destruct code, so if you try to dispel
When playing Lovecraft, keep the following in mind:

- Be immensely polite and long-winded about things.
- Praise the old, the historical, the mystical, the beautiful, the gothic.
- Complain about foreigners, women, modern culture and anything that isn’t, well, the last bastion of New England.
- Be fascinated or horrified by the modern world. Gadgets and scientific discovery – yay! Culture, music, the rush of modern life, architecture – boo! Non-white people, women and fish? Aaagh!
- Depreciate your own writing. You can, at best, by mustering all your strength, produce some pallid, weak and flawed tales of the weird that can, perhaps, evoke some slight reflection of true cosmic horror.
- Refuse to admit that anything in your stories is real. You have some small knowledge of the occult, and you corresponded with certain learned experts, but certainly there is no hidden message in your works. Why, you tried to hint at that, by having your Abdul Al-Hazred character – a character you invented as a boy – say there are no shoggoths except in the minds of those who have eaten a certain alkaloidal herb.
- If pressed, admit that ever since you were a boy, you have had weird nightmares. From the sounds of those nightmares, anyone with a good knowledge of Occult or Sorcery can guess that HPL’s a leaky tap, cosmically speaking. Things from Outside have oozed in through his febrile brainmeats, hence all the visions of alien gods and sunken cities. It’s even likely that Lovecraft was unconsciously responsible for the madness and death of his parents – the boy would have been the thaumic equivalent of nuclear waste, throwing off possessors and lesser exonomes when agitated.
- You have no idea why you’re alive, and you’re not sure you want to be. Back in the 20s and 30s, the only thing that kept you going was your writing and your circle of correspondents. These days, in this strange raucous, tainted world, who has an interest in the particular quality of the weird you sought to evoke? And all your correspondents are dead, unless someone else brought Bob Howard back from the dead…

Some choice quotes to get you in the mood:

I am only about half alive – a large part of my strength is consumed in sitting up or walking. My nervous system is a shattered wreck, and I am absolutely bored and listless save when I come upon something which peculiarly interests me. However, so many things do interest me, and interest me intensely, in science, history, philosophy, and literature; that I have never actually desired to die, or entertained any suicidal designs, as might be expected of one with so little kinship to the ordinary features of life.

I am essentially a recluse who will have very little to do with people wherever be may be. I think that most people only make me nervous – that only by accident, and in extremely small quantities, would I ever be likely to come across people who wouldn’t. It makes no difference how well they mean or how cordial they are – they simply get on my nerves unless they chance to represent a peculiarly similar combination of tastes, experiences, and heritages; as, for instance, Belknap chances to do. Therefore it may be taken as axiomatic that the people of a place matter absolutely nothing to me except as components of the general landscape and scenery.

Let me have normal American faces in the streets to give the aspect of home and a white man’s country, and I ask no more of featherless bipeds. My life lies not among people but among scenes – my local affections are not personal, but topographical and architectural.

However, the crucial thing is my lack of interest in ordinary life. No one ever wrote a story yet without some real emotional drive behind it and I have not that drive except where violations of the natural order – defiances and evasions of time, space, and cosmic law – are concerned. Just why this is so I haven’t the slightest idea – it simply is so. I am interested only in broad pageants – historic streams – orders of biological, chemical, physical, and astronomical organisation – and the only conflict which has any deep emotional significance to me is that of the principle of freedom or irregularity or adventurous opportunity against the eternal and maddening rigidity of cosmic law, especially the laws of time… Hence the type of thing I try to write.
Howard Philips Lovecraft,
Writer of Weird Tales

STR 10  CON 6  SIZ 11  INT 17  POW 15
DEX 12  CHA 9  EDU 18  SAN 40  HP 8

Damage Bonus: +0
Weapons: None
Skills: Art (Weird fiction) 75%, Obsessive Letter Writing 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Knowledge (Occult) 60%, Knowledge (History) 70%.

What the Writer Saw

So, what does Lovecraft remember? It’s all a blur, but he recalls the following information. What was really going on is in brackets:

• Sitting in a room with a typewriter. A gentleman had commissioned a story from him. He felt like he had written that story already, under the title of *The Light in the Tomb*, but the gentleman wanted him to expand on certain minor details. (All the clones are stored in rooms at Cob Chemicals, trying to recreate the ritual from the Ul-Chabar Text. It’s the thousand monkeys with typewriters, only it’s Lovecraft’s instead of monkeys. It’s crowdsourcing.)
  ◦ If questioned about this story, Lovecraft admits that it is partially based on an experience he had when he was a child. His grandfather, an antiquarian, showed him a copy of a Persian manuscript that he kept stored in a fireproof vault under his house. He can recall little about it, but it did inspire the story.

• A nightmarish din, a place of steel cylinders and crashing noises and flashing lights, and then a strange oblivion. His arm hurt. (They brought him out into the factory and drugged him.)
  ◦ Anyone with Chemistry who makes a successful Idea roll suspects that Lovecraft’s describing a modern chemistry plant.

• A dream of an alien landscape, seared by some tremendous heat where the sky was a seething torrent fire, and there was a strange black basalt city rising from the baked earth. Something terrible dwelt in that basalt city. (A vision of the alien world where the cult’s god is trapped.)

• Then he found himself in this museum, looking at the Persian tablet. He felt dizzy and dreamed that he saw himself everywhere, as if he was unstuck in time and could see his past and future selves. It upset him so much he felt sick, and took refuge in a bathroom. (He was, indeed, surrounded by forty-nine clones of himself, and did in fact take refuge in a bathroom.)
  ◦ He does remember there being another man there, who said he was from the Hermetic Trust. He seemed to be in charge.
  ◦ The description of this man matches the CCTV image of the driver of the bus who stopped at the Tesco.

The characters can keep Lovecraft with them for the rest of the mission – he’ll bumble along with them, making sesquipedalian asides about all the swarthy foreigners they have in London these days, and so on – or they can stash him back at the Laundry.

Job Done?

If the characters think that by finding Lovecraft at the museum, they’ve completed their assignment, point out the following:

• Lovecraft hasn’t left the museum. He can’t have been the same person who got kicked out of the US embassy... unless time travel is involved. Hmm... he is from 1937, and he was talking about seeing duplicate images of himself. Maybe he did time travel.
  ◦ Even if it is the same Lovecraft, maybe you should find out why he’s here and what the hell is going on?

Poking at Lovecraft

• Physically, this is a man in his late 40s, suffering from stomach cancer and malnutrition, which matches Lovecraft’s condition just before his death.

• There’s a low-level thaum field, consistent with the afterglow of necromancy.

• He’s got several drugs in his blood system. There’s a sedative, but also a lot of caffeine and methylphenidate, aka Ritalin. Someone was trying to overclock his brain.

• Anyone sticking Lovecraft in an MRI scanner or who puts him through a standard sorcery aptitude test notes that he’s got the makings of an excellent medium. Lovecraft’s lifetime of prophetic dreams suggests that there’s a hole in his consciousness through which Things from Outside communicate. That talent could be enhanced and channelled with the right training.

• He’s wearing a cheap sweatshirt and tracksuit bottoms, identical to those worn by the Lovecraft at the embassy.
The sweatshirt has the letters C-o-b on it.
- A successful Research check matches the style of this logo to that of Cob Chemicals, a small privately owned chemical manufacturer based outside of London.

**Using Lovecraft**

You can use HPL as a clue stick if needed. He’s got a convenient subconscious mental link to the other Lovecrafts, and has fragmentary memories of his occult research. If the players are stuck, then Lovecraft can have an idea or pass on a hint.

### 5. The Hermetic Trust

Call for Know rolls from any character with an Occult skill of 25% or more. Those who succeed have heard, vaguely, of the Hermetic Trust. They’re some minor occult group. The Laundry has a file on them – it’s a small, privately funded organization, nothing too significant. They’ve bought a few occult grimoires, held a few lectures about spiritualism and imported various ritual items that are on the Laundry’s watch list – stuff like mummy dust, candles from a particular chandlery in Brazil that uses human blood in the mix, and oil of Ulthar. These are things that could be used in genuine ritual magic, but are just as likely to be used in impotent, clueless mummering. Notably, several of these ritual items could be used in an Ul-Chabar invocation.

The Trust is run by a nebbish named Agnes ‘Galadriel’ Barket; the Laundry vetted her secretly, and she’s just an enthusiast with no clue about the true nature of magic.

At least, that’s what the Laundry knows.

In truth, Cob Chemicals funded the trust as a blind. They used the trust to import those ritual items. They know that, one day, they’d draw the attention of the Laundry or some other rival group, and wanted to make sure that attention was focussed on the Hermetic Trust instead of the chemical facility. And on that day, they wanted the trust to go out with a bang.

#### The Trust Offices

Currently, Agnes ‘Galadriel’ Barket’s sitting in her chair in the trust’s poky little office, which is located above an Indian takeaway. The Indian takeaway also isn’t quite what it seems – see **Our Man in Iran**, below, if the PCs pop in for a curry. A little side door marked with a laminated sheet of paper leads up a narrow, dusty staircase to the two-room offices of the Hermetic Trust.

Upstairs, the characters find Agnes Barket surrounded by her collection of crystal unicorns, her books and files on the occult – oh, and a summoning circle. She’s the bait in a magical trap. Hidden in the walls, floor and even on the ceiling of the little office, and concealed behind dodgy 70s wallpaper with a fresh coat of paint are more engraved-glass summoning circles, like the one from the van. The laptop that runs the computational demonology engine running the summoning grids is hidden in a fireproof box in Agnes’ desk.

Agnes has been nailed to her chair. She’s drugged and unconscious when the investigators find her. Should they remove her from her chair without first checking for traps, then her blood spills on the floor, triggering the trap. One of the summoning circles flares red, burning through the carpet, and a Fire Vampire manifests in the little office. The presence of the vampire sets the office’s papers and furnishings on fire. It also superheats some of the crystal unicorn figurines, which explode like sparkly nailguns, sending shards of hot glass flying across the room. All the player characters present need to make Luck rolls to avoid taking 1 point of damage from the flying glass.

Now, normally losing a single Hit Point wouldn’t be a big thing, but that’s when you’re not standing in the middle of a summoning circle. PC bleeds, blood hits floor, and suddenly you’re the binding node in a Class II+ Summoning. The characters who fail the Luck check find themselves bound...
to angry Fire Vampires, who pop into existence in the room nearby. The heat from these new Vamps blows up more crystal unicorns, which may draw more blood, which may call more vampires and so on.

**Fire:** Everyone in the office takes 1d3 damage in the first round of the fire, then 1 point per round thereafter, rising to 2 points per round after a while, then 3 points per round as the fires grow. Smoke makes most rolls Difficult. There aren’t any fire extinguishers (there are mounts for them on the walls, but the Uzaran cultists removed them. No sense in having a fiery deathtrap and leaving fire suppression equipment around).

Entropy Manipulation spells make for occult fire extinguishers, in a pinch; the characters can also put up Defensive Bindings against heat.

**There’s A Fire Vampire In My Head:** So, what does a sympathetic summoning feel like from the inside? Firstly, the PC is instantly aware there’s something wrong, that something’s grabbed hold of what we’ll call his soul for the purposes of this discussion. There’s an undeniable connection between the PC and the vampire – he gets flashes of the vampire’s perceptions, and can feel the vampire’s thoughts running through his brain as the entity desperately tries to seize control of his nervous system. SAN Loss is 1/1d10.

Now, for a normal victim, that’s pretty much it. The vampire roots the boxen of your soul, and you’re basically turned into a processor for the thought patterns it can’t run in these cold conditions. The vampire eats your brain. If the vampire dies, you die, and vice versa.

The player characters, though, have protective wards. (They are carrying their protective wards, right?) The wards can’t block the connection completely, not while there’s a blood-splattered summoning circle running, but they can block the vampire’s death from taking the PC with it. If the vampire’s killed or banished within half a minute (five rounds) of being summoned, the PC is safe. If it takes between six rounds and a few minutes, then the PC gets to make a Luck check.

If successful, then the ward burns out but the character is unharmed. If the Luck check fails, then the ward burns out and the character loses another 1d10 SAN and takes 1d6 temporary POW damage. Anything beyond that and the ward can’t defend against the vampire’s insidious tendrils.

So, all going well, the PCs end up in a burning room with an unconscious, semi-crucified witness, surrounded by exploding crystal tchotchkes of occult doom and symbiotically tied to a swarm of Fire Vampires. What else can go wrong?

**Stopping the Vampires:** First thing to do is get out of there – while the vampires can’t get through the PCs’ wards immediately, that many vampires will quickly overwhelm a ward. Even if the PCs have upgraded to Class III wards, several vampires acting in concert can burn through. Once clear, the characters can either break the sympathetic connection by destroying the summoning grids, or throw a banishment pentacle around the whole building.

Naveed can help out by chucking a grenade through the window, but only once the PCs are clear.

**Our Man in Iran**

The Iranian equivalent to the Laundry is the VEVAK. They’re twenty years or more behind most Western OCCINTEL groups (especially since the Black Chamber hit them with the computational demonology version of stuxnet), but if there’s one thing they know, it’s crazy Zoroastrian heretics who worship the Green Flame. The Uzaran Brotherhood tried to gain access to the temple where the Ul-Chabar rite was originally discovered, but were intercepted and killed by VEVAK. They traced the attempt back to London and the Hermetic Trust.

The guy behind the counter of the Indian takeaway downstairs is Naveed Rostami. He’s a VEVAK agent. Along with his partner Reza Attar, he was sent to keep an eye on the Hermetic Trust and find out who’s backing it. This morning, they saw a white van arrive at the Hermetic Trust. Two men got out and went upstairs, and spent about an hour up there before leaving in a hurry. Reza followed the van, while Naveed kept watch on the trust.

You can use Naveed as an added threat, or as a way to rescue the player characters if they can’t cope with the Fire Vampire swarm.

**Naveed Rostami,**
**Iranian Occult Spy & Fry Cook**

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**Damage Bonus:** +1d4

**Weapons:** Shotgun 60%, damage 4d6/2d6/1d6; Grenade 50%, damage 4d6.

**Skills:** Athletics 40%, Craft (Fry cook) 40%, Disguise 50%, Drive 70%, Fast Talk 65%, Grapple 40%, Knowledge (Occult) 50%, Knowledge (Tradecraft) 60%, Stealth 60%, Sorcery 20%, Spot 60%.

** Artefacts:** Ring of Fire Warding (10-point defensive binding against fire), Banishment Rounds loaded in pistol.

**Playing Naveed:**

- Your mission is to stop the Uzaran Brotherhood from doing anything that might, y’know, doom the world.
You’re not wild about the whole idea. This is the Laundry’s problem.

• You have a basic understanding of computational demonology, but when the going gets tough, you put your faith in Allah and your trusty shotgun.

• That said, if the Uzarans did manage to summon their god, and you could somehow disrupt the summoning ritual, that would possibly result in the same cosmic squelch-boom that wiped out the Ul-Chabar temple. Deniably nuking London has a certain nihilistic appeal.

• You’re very cranky. Going from an elite spy to serving kebabs to drunk Londoners does that to a man.

**Questioning Naveed:** Naveed’s answers are always curt or evasive – he only reveals what he feels is necessary to further his mission. He can inform the characters about the involvement of the Uzaran brotherhood, the specifics of sympathetic summoning, and the connections between the brotherhood and the Hermetic Trust. If threatened, he threatens back, hinting at a larger Iranian presence. Geasing him won’t work – he’s got his own loyalty geases. If pushed, he suggests an alliance.

Optionally, he can tell the characters about his partner, Reza Attar, who hasn’t reported in since he went to follow the white van this morning. (Reza found the Cob Chemicals factory, but was captured by their guards.) However, Reza’s mobile phone still works; if Naveed gives the characters the number, they can get a location fix on it.

**Agnes Barket**

Poor Galadriel. All she wanted was to play Harry Potter in real life. The Hermetic Trust existed before her; it was set up in the 20s as a branch of the Theosophical Society, but was moribund until she joined. Even then, it was just a small society of eccentrics and magic geeks. Cob Chemicals took over and hollowed the trust out.

Initially, Agnes was more than happy to co-operate with Cob; she believed they were simply philanthropic philosophers. By the time Agnes suspected there might be more to the situation, it was too late.

**Questioning Agnes:** It’s unlikely that Agnes survives the trap in the Hermetic Trust. Hell, it’s unlikely that the player characters all survive that trap. Still, if they do, then Agnes can point the finger at Cob Chemicals.

**Finding Cob Chemicals**

There are multiple routes for the characters to find out about Cob Chemicals:

- **Accounting:** If the characters salvage the books, or Agnes, from the Hermetic Trust or do a bit of background digging, they learn that Cob Chemicals was funding the Trust.
- **Reza’s Mobile Phone:** Tracking the phone leads the characters to the Cob facility.
- **Lovecraft’s Memory:** Using hypnosis or divination on Lovecraft can bring the characters to the chemical works.

**Who’s Who at Cob Chemicals**

Almost everyone at the company is a cultist. It’s hard to build a business case for resurrecting Lovecraft and using him to summon an alien god. The CEO is Ransom Cob; American, but with an Iranian grandfather. Most of the other senior staff are from the American branch of the cult or Iranian ex-pats; they also recruited several people in England, most of whom were ex-military or eccentrics from the roster of the Hermetic Trust. There’s a distinct lack of chemical engineers on the company roster. In total there are 15 members of staff.

**The Final Phase**

**Steps:**

1. Clone Lovecraft and get him to recreate the gate formula from the Namak Dvāra Thwasha.
2. Open the gate. Go through to the world ruled by their dead god.
3. Summon the god using sympathetic summoning. Now, one human doesn’t have the processing power to support an entity like the god. A single human might be able to run the mental processes of a Fire Vampire, but not a god. What if, though, you had a rather special human, one who’s used to having things squirming in and out of his brain? And what if you had, say 49 instances of this individual? And what if you networked them together into one virtual platform for your god?
4. Come back through the Gate with the resurrected god. Rule world.

The Cob Chemicals plant is a small chemical works, consisting of a long low factory and a warehouse, surrounded by big metal tanks and a plumber’s fever-dream of pipes. There’s no one at the security checkpoint at the front, or at the main reception desk. All the lights are on, but it seems that no one’s home.

Looking around, the facility is structured very strangely. There’s a newly built warehouse attached to the main building, and there’s some large domed metallic structure at the back. A successful Idea or History roll confirms that this chemical factory replicates the layout of the temple at Ul-Chabar.

Security Systems: The usual array of security cameras, burglar alarms and keycard-locked doors that you’d find in any modern-day industrial facility, especially one that’s also run by a demon-worshipping cult. Under normal circumstances, there’d be a dozen or so security guards, but they’ve gone through the gate (see below) to the alien world. There is only one guard left to watch over the gate and monitor the security camera feeds. When he spots the player characters, he’ll release the rejects – see Ye Liveliest Awfulness below.

The Cells: Exploring, one of the first things the characters find is a warehouse that’s undergone a weird conversion. They’ve built fifty small cells inside the warehouse, all identical. Each cell’s decorated to look like the bedroom Lovecraft slept in at his aunt’s house in Providence, where he wrote much of his weird fiction. In each cell is a typewriter; 49 of these typewriters have been used. All of them were used to write a description of the Ul-Chabar rite, complete with the incantations. The descriptions, including the precise wording of the chant used to align the Gate, vary somewhat.

The Server Room: Technically minded Laundry agents are drawn to the server room like, well, IT geeks to a big humming server. The hardware’s nothing special, but it’s been reconfigured for computational demonology – so, dismembered human fingers stuck in the USB slots, arcane runes glowing on the keyboard, a screensaver that’s a looping animation of a sacred fire, weird blue energy dancing around the processors. Y’know, another day at the office.

Checking the system with a Computer Use roll, the PCs learn that this computer recently ran a gate-opening spell. There’s an active gate somewhere nearby – class three, which is enough to allow a few people access to another world or dimension. The computer was only used to open the gate – it’s being maintained from the far side somehow, maybe by a portable system or some other occult power.

There’s another odd clue in the server room – there are lots of books on networking, especially on Beowulf clusters. As any fule kno, a Beowulf cluster is when you stick a bunch of ordinary computers together so they can work in parallel, making one big number-crunching supercomputer. Poking around the Cob Chemicals network, though, there doesn’t seem to be any Beowulf clusters on-site, so why all the manuals?

The Cloning Floor: Next comes the cloning floor – hundreds of Petri dishes, each containing a pinch of Lovecraft. Engraved on a pair of freestanding glass slabs are the two halves of a weird poem or chant; anyone with Sorcery recognises it as the formula for raising or putting down the resurrected. Every few seconds, a laser connected to a desktop computer stabs out and scans one of the slabs, casting the resurrection spell over and over again. There aren’t any essential salte Petri dishes on the computer’s target sigil, though, so nothing happens. It’s still uncanny to hear a synthesised voice going “Y’AI ‘NG’NGAH, YOG-SOTHOTH H’EE-L’GEB F’AI THRODOG UAAAH!”
According to the lab notes, they raised up more than four hundred Lovecrafts in order to get fifty viable specimens, then interpolated the data from them to get the correct gate formula.

Looking around, the characters see several metal gratings in the floor, covering shafts leading to an underground waste storage tank. That’s where the rejects go. Reza’s phone is down there, by the way, after he got eaten by the guards. The gratings can be remotely controlled from the security office. At the back of the lab is a large metal door leading to the gate room. As soon as any of the characters get close to that door, the guard remotely opens the grates. A few combat rounds later, the Misshapen Ones rise.

**Calling In Backup**

Paranoid or cautious player characters can try calling in backup from the Laundry, especially once the scope of the threat becomes clear. Depending on the circumstances and the whim of the GM:

- **There’s no time**—by the time the SAS mobilise, the Uzarans will have completed their evil scheme. The PCs are the ones on the scene—they have to deal with it.
- **We’ll back you up**—bring in the SAS, and have them deal with the swarm of Lovecraft clones, or the Fire Vampires on the far side of the gate.
- **We’ll take it from here**—allow some or all of the players to swap out their regular characters for SAS headbreakers.
- **In playtest, the players lured the zombie mob to the nearest motorway, and let the SCORPION STARE traffic cameras do the heavy lifting.**

**Ye Liveliest Awfulness**

What do you get when you try to raise something up from incomplete salts? How would Lovecraft describe it? *What the thing was, he would never tell. It was like some of the carvings on the hellish altar, but it was alive. Nature had never made it in this form, for it was too palpably unfinished. The deficiencies were of the most surprising sort, and the abnormalities of proportion could not be described.*

So, three hundred and fiftyish shambling horrors, some of which bear a vague resemblance to the Sage of Providence, but most of which look more like inside-out zombies or shambling masses of loosely associated organs. They’re replication errors—some are just the same body part repeated over and over and over, others are reshuffled horrors where one organ tries to do the work of another, so you’ve got things that walk on legs made from ribs, and stare blearily through eyes that beat like hearts. A seething tide of wriggling, twitching, eternally restless, eternally hungry, eternally agonised, misshapen flesh; a vile torrent of Lovecraft-bits.

Basically, there’s every chance that one of the player characters gets bludgeoned to death by a monster that’s made entirely out of HP Lovecraft’s long-jawed chin, repeated thousands of times to make a thing like a spiny echidna of chins.

SAN Loss for seeing Ye Liveliest Awfulness is a whopping 1d6/2d10.

**The Stumbling Horde:** There are so many of these things that it’s best to treat them as an environmental hazard. Every round, each player character needs to do *something* to avoid being eaten—running, dodging, climbing, shooting, whatever. If the evasion attempt fails, the character gets nabbed and takes 1d6 damage. Failing multiple attempts in a row up the damage (2d6 for two fails in a row, 3d6 for three and so on). Player characters can rescue other characters from the effects of a failed evasion, and if at least half the characters inflict serious damage on the zombies, they can buy the whole group some breathing space.

Use zombie stats for individual things.

**Dealing with Ye Liveliest Awfulness:** Fighting the swarm of things isn’t the best option. Possible solutions:

- **Run Away:** Rather than get surrounded in the cloning room, the characters can pull back into the factory. A lot of the Lovecraft-things can’t walk or crawl very quickly at all, so the player characters can deal with the more mobile ones first, you know the ones with functional legs, then the great stumbling mass of the rest.

- **Escape into the Gate Room:** The doors are sealed, but can be pried or blown open, or the electronic lock can be overridden. That does put the player characters between a rock and a hard place—or rather, between an armed guard and a swarm of monsters.

- **Putting Them Down:** Anyone with Sorcery can try reciting the second phrase on that glass slab, the formula for putting down that which you’ve called up. Alternatively, re-aiming the laser or reprogramming the computer to use the other formula will zap a bunch of zombies every round.
• **Closing the Grates**: This stops the flood of fresh Lovecraft-bits, although the PCs still need to deal with the ones in the room with them.

• **Warrant Card Geas**: This gets hilarious. Technically, the resurrected things are human, which means they can be geased with a Warrant Card.

• **Basilisk Gun**: When all else fails… FWOMP!

### The Gate Room

The gate room is the heart of the Uzaran complex. It’s a big circular chamber, almost completely empty.

The first thing the characters see is the gaping hole in reality in the middle of the room. In front of it is a corpse, clearly killed as part of a human sacrifice. These are the remains of Reza Attar, the VEVAK agent and Naveed’s partner.

The second thing is the small security office at one side. It’s more like a pillbox than an office, really, and there’s a terrified young cultist there with a machine gun and a hot summoning grid. His name is Brian. He’s under instructions to summon a Fire Vampire if anyone gets past the guardians. The Fire Vampire would then warn the cultists on the far side of the Gate, while he holds off the intruders with machine gun fire. That would result, of course, in his soul being eaten by the vampire. While cult doctrine claims that his soul would actually join with that of the vampire and he would dwell in eternal fiery joy, Brian’s not convinced of this. He'd much rather hang on until the god comes through in person and conquers the world; as one of its acolytes, Brian’s hoping for a big reward like being made King of Australia. He likes Australia – he went there on his gap year before joining Cob Chemicals. (His diploma in chemical engineering did not prepare him for all this, but the two guys who were supposed to be doing rearguard action died in a white van this afternoon…)

### Playing Brian:

- Aaaaaaaaaagh!

- Ok, breathe. Everything’s going to be fine. The Uzars have the backing of a real life god. They’re going to rule the world, and you’re going to be on the winning side for a change!

- You were supposed to have backup. You were supposed to have training. You were supposed to have a supervisor. For God’s sake, you’re the cult’s intern!

### Dealing with Brian:

The worst outcome here is that the characters force Brian to summon a Fire Vampire with sympathetic summoning, and the vampire raises the alarm through the Gate. If, however, the characters storm Brian’s position before he can shoot back, or take him by surprise, or talk him down, they can get through the Gate without the cult having advance warning of the intruders. Playing on Brian's confidence with Fast Talk or talking him down with Persuade works.

If they go for the violent option, it takes Brian one round to trigger the summoning grid; the Fire Vampire arrives in 1d3 rounds, and it takes another 1d3 rounds for the vampire to dart through the Gate. Brian can still shoot while cutting his hand for the blood sacrifice, but his skill is halved that round.

If captured and questioned, Brian doesn’t know the details of the cult’s plan, but he knows they’re going to bring the god back to our side.

**Brian**

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**Damage Bonus**: +0

**Weapons**: MP5 40%, damage 1d10.

**Skills**: Computer Use (Networking) 60%, Trivia 40%.

### The Gate:

Well, that’s a genuine class three static dimensional gate, and no mistake. It was generated by a computational demonology rite on this side, but is being maintained from the far side, so the characters can’t easily close it here. Looking through the gate, the investigators can dimly make out a desert-like landscape beneath a fiery sky. The dunes glisten weirdly in the alien light. A black structure looms out of the sand nearby – it’s the original temple, the one that the Ul-Chabar temple was the merest shadow of. The cult have gone to the world of their god.

- If Naveed or Lovecraft is with the investigators, he observes that the cult’s god cannot exist in our world, so this attempt by the cult to summon their patron must be futile. It can only result in the same devastation as the Ul-Chabar temple incident.

### 7. Through the Gate

The sand crunches underfoot – it’s been partially melted into glass. The air is hot enough to burn your lungs; it fills your nose with the smell of your own scorched nose hair and stings your eyes. The sky overhead looks like a torrent of fire; an Idea roll confirms that the ‘sky’ is actually a swarm of Fire Vampires. There must be millions of those things up there. Beyond them are the hot, densely packed stars of the galactic core. Staying here more than a few minutes would be extremely unwise – this world is drenched in radiation. Radio signals don’t work here either, drowned out by the howl of stars being dismembered and devoured by nearby black holes.
Looking at the footprints in the sand, a lot of people passed this way recently, emerging from the Gate and heading towards the black basalt structure.

There’s no sign of any computer system maintaining the Gate, but it must be nearby.

**Welcoming Committee**

If the investigators failed to stop the Fire Vampire from getting through the Gate, then the cult has a welcoming committee waiting for them – another three armed goons. These guys come over the dunes just as the player characters arrive, and start shooting. This close to their patron deity, they’ve got magical protection in the form of 10-point defensive bindings and entropy-manipulation cloaks that give a -25% penalty to any ranged attacks made on them.

**STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 13**

**DEX 12 CHA 10 EDU 15 SAN 0 HP 14**

Damage Bonus: +1d4  
**Weapons:** MP5 70%, damage 1d10.  
**Skills:** Look Menacing 70%, Devotion to the Green Flame 90%, Hide 60%, Spot 50%, Strategy 65%.  
**Artefacts:** 10-point defensive binding, Class I ward, Cloak of Disguise.

**The Alien Temple**

Actually, it’s not a temple. It’s a tomb, a casket twenty metres high and a hundred long. No doors, no windows, just high walls of black basalt marked with alien hieroglyphics. The only aperture in the whole structure is a crack about fifteen metres up.

The Uzaran cultists have set up along the nearest wall. Twelve cultists, half of whom are armed and the rest of whom have some mojo to throw around. And, of course, forty-nine Lovecraft clones. The Lovecrafts sit in a big circle, holding hands, while the cultists move around outside the circle, chanting and making adjustments on their laptops. As the investigators watch, a flame kindles and grows in the middle of the circle, burning without fuel. The hieroglyphs on the basalt structure glow in time with the flickering of the flames. The fire grows bigger and bigger, then flows into the Lovecrafts.

Off to one side of the circle is another computer setup – a laptop hooked up to more occult peripherals and a pair of dismembered corpses, their intestines pulled out and arranged into a pulsing wet glyph. That’s the gate generator.

If the characters do nothing, then here’s what happens: The cult network the Lovecrafts together into a Beowulf cluster. The god sideloads onto the cluster. Everyone marches through the Gate, and the god takes over the world, protected from the crushing weight of our reality by the Lovecraft network.

So, what can the player characters do? Fortunately for them, the god’s currently occupied with squeezing itself into its human host network, so the characters need only deal with the cultists.

- **Direct Attack:** Well, the player characters are severely outnumbered and outgunned, but they have surprise on their side, right? Well, at least they can die heroically. Better yet, if they geased the swarm of Ye Liveliest Awfulness, they can sic the rejects on the cult.

- **Hack the Network:** Do the characters have a Lovecraft with them? If so, then they’ve got a back door into the Beowulf cluster. They can get their Lovecraft to run a Banishing spell, or stick a virus into him with Computer Use (hacking).

- **Put Them Down:** They’ve got the anti-necromancy formula from the cloning room (or, failing that, can fire an Exorcism spell to disrupt the thaum field and return
a Lovecraft to dust). They can disrupt the network by dusting all the clones.

- **Close the Gate:** If they take out both the gate generator and the computer being used to set up the Beowulf cluster, then the cult are stuck here. Alternatively, they could wait until the cult are on their way back to the gate, then sneak around and deactivate the generator when half the Lovecrafts are on the wrong side, removing the god’s host and causing a small version of the Ul-Chabar effect on both sides of the Gate.

**Other Complications**

- Those armed cultists use the same stats as the welcoming committee.

- After a few rounds, the god inhabits the Lovecrafts; all their eyes start glowing and they become capable of deity-level spells. That’s bad.

- Know what’s worse? While the god can’t exist in our reality without help, it’s perfectly fine here. If the characters take out the Lovecrafts, their next action has to be run like hell as that big basalt tomb opens and a blazing, stumbling god-thing comes out…

**Aftermath**

If the cult succeeds in bringing their Lovecraft-supported deity through into our reality, then… well, awkward questions get asked in Parliament, which is now held in Manchester. The first question being “would the acting Prime Minister please tell the house what ate London?”

A kinder GM might have an OCCULUS raid foil the cult before they can establish a beachhead in our reality (resulting in great loss of life, heroic sacrifices, dulce et decorum set to have one’s brain eaten by Fire Vampires etc.).

If the player characters stop the cult, they get 1d3% Status. Add on another 1% if they can provide a full accounting of the cult’s plans, another 1% if they kept a Lovecraft or two alive for debriefing, and another 1% if they bring Naveed Rostami in alive. Should Lovecraft survive, the Laundry recruits him after fully interrogating him.

Further investigations can follow up on the owners of Cob Chemicals, or explore the vaults under the chemical plant. Plus, there’s still the matter of the angry god in the giant space coffin; any player characters who thwarted the god’s return feel palpably hot waves of heat emanating from a distant star every time they look up at the night sky.
Howard Philips Lovecraft (20th August 1890 – 15th March 1937) was a writer of weird fiction. His father died in a madhouse (probably complications arising from syphilis), and his mother also went insane in 1919. Lovecraft himself had a breakdown in 1908. He married Sonia Green in 1924, but the marriage did not last. He returned to Providence several years later, and remained there until his death from bowel cancer.

Lovecraft is best known for his ‘weird fiction’ – stories of alien gods and magic. As far as most people know, these stories are not based on any real-world events, although they do mention real-world locations like Arkham or Miskatonic University.

In the occult intelligence community, Lovecraft is somewhere between Ian Fleming and Kim Philby, between the Great Security Leak and the running joke. He drew on real-world sorcery and occult lore to inspire his stories, and some of them give the game away entirely. Stories like *The Call of Cthulhu* or *The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward* mix Lovecraft’s inventions with genuine events; others, like *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* or *The Mountains of Madness* should be filed under ‘non-fiction’ almost in their entirety.

So, how did one obscure writer learn so much about the secret history of the world? The Laundry isn’t sure, but it’s probably a combination of the following:

1. His grandfather possessed a large occult library, including several rare tomes.
2. There are several odd gaps in Lovecraft’s life, which he may have spent researching and travelling.
3. He corresponded widely with other writers, fantasists and occult experts.
4. He lived down the road from the Black Chamber’s office in Providence, and may have been employed by them as a researcher.
5. He possessed some level of psychic ability, and his dreams were at least partly accurate.
The Uzaran cult was an offshoot of the Zoroastrian religion in Persia (modern-day Iran). Around 450BC, the prophet Uzara “heard the voice of the fire” and was inspired to write the sacred text of the cult, the *Namak Dvara Thwasha (Book of the Starry Door)*, which claimed that their god dwelt “on the other side of the flame” and would soon join them. *Namak Dvara Thwasha* also included a wealth of occult lore, including instructions on creating interdimensional Gates and summoning rites.

The cult grew in power. Enemies of the cult tended to burst into flames or go insane. Analysis of the surviving fragments of the *Namak Dvara Thwasha* suggest that the cult was able to summon Class III exonomes with relative confidence.

By 300BC, the Uzaran cult’s influence had grown to such an extent that they were able to build the Great Temple at Ul-Chabar, where they intended to summon their god to Earth. What happened next is a matter of conjecture – some historians believe the temple was sacked by deserters from the army of Alexander the Great. Others blame the temple’s destruction on an earthquake. However, the most likely explanation is that the cult successfully invoked their deity – but that the alien Great Old One was unable to survive in our local reality, and exploded. The temple was utterly destroyed, and the cult’s power broken.

While the cult still has a few adherents, mostly in Iran and Turkmenistan, there are no known surviving copies of the complete *Namak Dvara Thwasha*. The *Book of the Starry Door* has passed into legend as one of the great missing grimoires, and there are numerous fakes and partial reconstructions floating around the occult underground.