

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

May 15, 1930

Dear Thomas,

It's been a month since I last wrote. I've been recovering from the ordeal in Wyoming. Once again, I am back home in Providence, and I am attempting to assimilate everything that happened.

Clearly, as I'm sure was evident from my past letters, I must have had some kind of mental breakdown while I was in Fairfield. Driving that truck filled with gasoline cans into that barn just wasn't like me. The stress, I think, had gotten to me.

Through it all, no matter how wild my story became, your responses always showed that you believed in me, Thomas, and I wanted to let you know how much I appreciate that. The doctors told me not to discuss or even think about what was in that barn that day, at least not for a while. I'm taking that advice. Since I left Wyoming, everything has calmed down. No more strangeness.

Your letter regarding the history of the Necronomicon was helpful, although to be honest, I haven't really read it all over or digested it much. I need to rest for a while. I need a break. If you sent any other correspondence, it is likely still being forwarded from the hospital in Wyoming and I have not yet seen it.

I haven't so much as opened the black-bound book. It's in a drawer here in my office, wrapped in some cloth.

Thanks again for everything - your help and your support. Enclosed with this letter is the money I need to repay you for the funds you wired to me.

Sincerely,

Phillip

May 29, 1930

Dear Thomas,

After a nice long rest, I've finally decided to get back to work. I've read through your letter of April 20th again - the one with the background on the Necronomicon. "The Book of Dead Names" is certainly a disturbing title. If, as you say, the book was originally written

by an Arab, and translated into Latin, how then do I hold a copy of the book in English?

Is this book indeed the "black leatherbound book" that people claimed Simon Carlisle, the cult leader, carried around before he and the rest of the Fellowship of the Risen God disappeared in a freak storm in Lastbridge, Wyoming? I don't know. When I saw, well, whoever that old man was in the Webber farmhouse - Carlisle or not - he was obviously after this book. It does all seem to fit together.

Even though my doctors have told me not to think about such things, I think that Carlisle, as a ghost or revenant of some kind is still active today. Perhaps in that storm the cult did not die, but were transformed into something else. Perhaps Carlisle and the others, whom I saw chanting in the hills that night, are possessed by some new form of being. One that does not perish. Webber, for some twisted reasons of his own, served Carlisle and the cult.

And the thing in the barn.

Although it grips me in a cold sweat to think about it, I believe that Webber, working perhaps with the supernatural manifestation of Carlisle, brought some form of Nyarlathotep to Earth. I think that's what was in the barn.

But now that I have begun reading the Necronomicon, I realize that there are even worse implications than these.

I understand your trepidation at my reading the book. It is profoundly disturbing. Much of the text is annotated in various hands. These notes are as terrible, if not more terrible, than the text itself. And there are even sketched illustrations of things better left undescribed. The Necronomicon describes a facet to the world, or rather, to all the universe, of which most people have no idea. Its version of the history of the world goes back aeons before anything else. It includes tales of primordial beings and warring races that existed far before mankind. It speaks of a blasphemous cosmology in which humanity is an insignificant footnote in the vast scheme of things. The gods, it says, do not care for men. In fact, most are likely unaware of our existence.

It of course mentions Nyarlathotep. But it says that he, or it, is only a harbinger of a far worse fate to befall us. The appearance of the crawling chaos merely signals that "the

stars are right" and the Old Ones shall return. Their coming would of course herald the very end of the world, at least as we know it. Certainly the end of mankind.

I haven't yet read the entirety of the book. Not by a long shot. There are portions which are very difficult to decipher. These sections have whole passages using words I do not understand. Some are certainly not English. Others use more common words but make no logical sense, as though someone transcribed the ramblings of a madman. Perhaps it is some kind of code. You once told me that a lot of these old occult books are written so that only the writer, and perhaps a select other few, can understand them. There are clearly multiple authors at work here. I think that as each translation occurred, someone added their own portions. Some is written from the point of view that the Old Ones are to be feared, but other parts seem to indicate that they should be worshipped.

There is so much to digest, here, Thomas.

I'll get back to you once I have figured out more.

Sincerely,

Phillip

June 11, 1930

Dear Thomas,

I must make this letter short, because I can't stay in one place too long, as I'm sure you understand. You can still send mail to my office, I stop by there most days to check on things, but never at the same time. I can't do that.

I think that the Cult of the Risen God has more living members, like Webber. I think that some of them are here, and they are looking for me. I'm attempting to use every trick I know to make it hard to follow me, or track my actions.

The Necronomicon is consuming my days. I'm keeping my own notes in my own notebook, as I didn't want to write in the margins like others. The pages seem too old for that now. Reading it, and figuring out all its secrets is all I can think about. All the formulas within these pages are incantations and spells. I think they might actually work, Thomas. Spells to call on the attention of the Old Ones and their servants. But more importantly, spells that can drive them away. Weapons to use against them! This is the kind of breakthrough I've been looking for. Perhaps we don't have to sit idly by while they come for us. It's what we've been looking for.

Phillip



June 20

Thomas,

I was right they are after me I think that Simon Carlisle is here in Providence I haven't seen the doctors in weeks I think that they are in on it and they don't want me to know the truth but the Necronomicon I have learned so much and now I understand even some of the spells that I know about now I think that I was right about it all in Wyoming it's all clear to me now you should read this two because then if something happens to me, there will still be someone to fight perhaps you should.

29 June, 1930

Dear Mr. Fister,

I am writing to inform you that I shall be away on business for a trip of indeterminate length. I have an unwell friend that I must find and care for. You may contact me care of Phillip Shandler, 188 Gibson Lane, Providence, Rhode Island.

Thank you for your patience. I shall try to stay in touch.

Yours truly,

T. Bode

Thomas Bode