

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

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Dear Thomas,

Greetings from Arkham! Hope this finds you well. As I told you last letter, I am back in Arkham investigating a missing persons case at the University here. As we both know, Miskatonic has had its share of strange occurrences in the past, and I am afraid this might be yet another. Still, I will not give up hope yet. You know me, ever vigilant, ever optimistic.

The university is still the place we knew. The ivy-covered old buildings with young people and bookish professors bustling about to and fro. It is good to be back here, I must say. You always felt that there was some dark, almost gothic ambiance here, but I never really saw it that way.

Of course, the Orne Library remains the cornerstone of the institution. Remember when we spent some time here before to get access to the Restricted Collection so that you could read that portion of... What was that old occult book again? I cannot recall. Nameless Cults, or something like that, right? Well, apparently they are creating a new vault for the collection. As you remember, they are quite proud of that collection of strange tomes. Perhaps the best outside of Europe, they say.

As I said, I am here on a missing persons case. The missing girl, Donna Everhart, was last seen around the Quad here on Campus. I have cased the area, and noticed an odd fellow who lingers around a bit toward dusk. I think I am going to follow this gent and learn his story.

Sincerely,

*Phillip Shandler*

Dear Thomas,

Events have taken a curious shape here, to say the least. All my time on the case has been spent here at Miskatonic University, and I've seen some strange things. The fellow I was following appeared to be in some sort of trance. His eyes were glassy and his face nearly void of emotion. When I followed him, I watched as he followed and eventually attacked a young fellow. Well, as you can guess, I would have none of that. In a flash, I was at the student's side, and gave the attacker what for. My foe was a brawny fellow, but no match for a scrapper who had been in the Great War. After one good punch to the jaw, his legs gave way and he began to gibber like a madman. I dragged him to his feet, and the glassy-eyed stare was gone. He had lost all his wits. The young man he was trying to snatch told me the ruffian was an upperclassman and a member of the Badger football team by the name of David Gordon. He helped me drag Gordon off to St. Mary's Hospital and went to fetch the police while I saw if I could get any sense out of the boy. When he could finally answer my questions coherently, he claimed he could not remember any of it. Like he was in some sort of trance before.

Stranger still, I was sure I saw an odd figure watching the scuffle from some trees near the Sciences Building. But when I went to check, he was gone. How could he have disappeared so quickly? It was as though he just sunk away into the very earth. Remember how we used to hear of the tunnels under the campus? Do you think it is true?

Now, Thomas, I need some of your expertise. Remember when you spoke to me of the Witch Cult of Western Europe? I have found clues to suggest that there is a coven of the Witch Cult right here in Arkham. That's no news to you; I am sure, as Arkham's history has its share of witchery. There is an odd pillar of white stone, for example, in a desolate gorge north of Meadow Hill that they say is "older than the Indians." However, in Gordon's ramblings he said something about meeting out by that very pillar with "the others." Local inquiries tell me some "strange people"



meet out in that gorge on various nights. A cult? Well, I know enough about the occult to know that Samhain approaches. If this cult is involved, I fear that young Donna may be the victim of a kidnapping used to garner a new sacrifice.

In any event, what I need from you Thomas is some information on a name that I came across while in the library. When I looked into the witch cult it mentioned a "horned man" also known as "Nyarlathotep," who acts as some sort of mentor. Almost a go-between for the cultists and some more ominous, darker powers. I do not know how much of this nonsense I believe in myself, but it is clear that someone does. I need to know more about this figure, and how it ties into any Samhain rituals.

Please reply with haste. There is not yet much time.

Sincerely,

*Phillip Shandler*

