

DEAD LIGHT & OTHER DARK TURNS

TWO UNSETTLING ENCOUNTERS ON THE ROAD

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This supplement is best used with the *Call of Cthulhu* (7th Edition) roleplaying game, available separately.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEAD LIGHT	5
Introduction	5
Keeper's Information: Events So Far	5
Dramatis Personae	8
Start: The Encounter on the Road	12
Orchard Run Map	13
What Happens Next?	14
Orchard Run Gas Station & Café Map	15
Greenapple Acre Cottage Map	19
Driving the Action Forward and Maintaining Suspense	22
Reaching a Conclusion	24
Characters & Monsters	25
SATURNINE CHALICE	31
Introduction	31
Keeper's Information: Events So Far	31
Dramatis Personae	35
Start: Out of Fuel	38
Outside the House.	39
Weyland Estate Plan.	39
First Floor and Basement	40
Weyland House Plan	43
Second Floor and Cupola	47
Scenes	51
Conclusion.	56
Characters & Monsters	57
APPENDIX: STORY SEEDS	60
COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS AND MAPS	64
INDEX	82

INVESTIGATOR DOWNLOAD

Six ready-to-use investigators are available for use with both *Dead Light* and *Saturnine Chalice*. The PDF pack of characters can be downloaded from Chaosium.com.

Sample file



DEAD LIGHT

Surviving One Night Outside of Arkham

INTRODUCTION

Dead Light is a short, encounter-based scenario for *Call of Cthulhu* set in the Arkham countryside during the 1920s. It involves the investigators quite literally running into a chain of unnatural and nightmarish events that are a threat both to the lives and sanity of all who are entangled in them. Essentially an exercise in Lovecraftian-flavored survival horror, the scenario takes place during a dark and stormy night on a lonesome road outside Arkham, and its course (in narrative time) lasts for the duration of that storm—some several hours at the least or until the dawn at most. Although there is an option to investigate the whys and wherefores of what is happening, ultimately the investigators' chief goal will be to survive the night. Engaging with the unfolding events, rather than fleeing from them, will likely be the best path to ensuring survival.

Dead Light is intended to be used in multiple ways. One is as a short play adventure of the type that can provide a change of pace for an on-going campaign—particularly if inserted as the investigators are traveling on to somewhere else, thus encouraging them to resolve the situation as swiftly as possible so they can continue their journey and return to the main plot. Alternatively, it could be used when not all the players are available, possibly as a sidetrack adventure. It will also work perfectly well as a stand-alone scenario for one night of play.

This scenario, albeit brief, has the potential to be quite deadly. The threat is embodied almost entirely in a factor under the Keeper's direct and absolute control: the eponymous "Dead Light" itself. So, in the case of campaign play the Keeper can, if they wish, keep the worst ravages of this entity directed against non-player characters (NPCs), preserving the condition of their investigators. While for one-off games, the gloves can come off more readily!

The scenario is intended for use with groups of between two and five investigators. Note that pure manpower is not likely to avail in the situation presented, as experience and old-fashioned guesswork will likely provide more value in this case. Thus, any investigator occupations are acceptable. Social interaction and observational skills are likely to be of the greatest use here, while an average to good POW characteristic will provide some measure of defense—at least for a time—against the Dead Light itself.

Once the investigators have become embroiled in the situation, it is up to the Keeper to handle the reactions of the NPCs and the Dead Light itself, while the actions of the players, and their reactions to what is happening, should drive events forward. There is no set order or timeline for them to follow. The players' first reaction to the unfolding situation is likely to be a mixture of suspicion, wariness, and curiosity, which may readily give way to a determined desire to flee or to get to the bottom of things. Regardless, it should dawn fairly rapidly that the investigators (and everybody else) are in imminent danger, and their survival is far from certain.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

EVENTS SO FAR

In this scenario, the investigators encounter a Mythos incident as it happens. In order to represent the course of events leading up to the investigators' involvement, the following Keeper information is presented as a narrative.

The Keeper may choose to extrapolate such evidence and explanation they wish from this narrative for the investigators as they uncover its aftermath. This same information can

Opposite: The Dead Light

DARK TURNS

also be recounted in relevant parts by the NPCs involved, as desired.

On the high hill above Orchard Run, set back amid the trees, sits a cottage known as Greenapple Acre. A solid, unpretentious and pretty rural retreat, refurbished and rented out from a Bolton realty firm. For the last few years, the cottage has been the residence of one Godfrey Webb, a retired local doctor in his seventies, and his granddaughter, Emilia. A fixture of life in the surrounding area for more than 40 years, Webb was a very well regarded family physician, known to generations hereabouts and from a long line of his kind. He was a New England rural doctor of the “old school”—which is to say, one that knew how to keep secrets. There were certain old families who relied on Webb’s discretion; he was also the kind of doctor who would provide certain private and unrecorded medical services... for a price. So it was that when Webb retired due to failing health, he did so with more than enough money to live in comfort, giving over his practice and townhouse in Bolton, and renting the beautifully appointed Greenapple Acre Cottage. His accumulated wealth also extended to paying for his last remaining kin, his granddaughter Emilia (herself having had a somewhat troubled life), to move in with him to keep him company. He supplied her with a generous allowance for her maintenance and a brand new automobile for her to get around in. Their

supplies and sundries were delivered by order and paid for in cash. They wanted for nothing. However, their wealth and the vulnerability of an old man and his pale, skittish granddaughter, both living alone and hidden from the world by the surrounding woodland did not go unnoticed.

Down at the Orchard Run Gas Station and Café, the young Mary Laker was stuck waiting tables for truck drivers and commercial travelers. She would regularly watch the shining black ford roadster and its young lady driver, Emilia Webb, pass by, sometimes stopping for gas and paying her boss, Sam Keelham, with folding bills. Mary’s astonishment at this young woman, who was no more than her own age and already had more than money than she would ever see in a lifetime’s earnings, grew quickly into jealousy and resentment; which in time, blossomed into something like hate.

Mary’s hate spilled over to her boyfriend, the feckless Clem Tailor, and through him, to the crowd he ran with—a bunch of local hoodlums—the extent of whose larceny usually ran to petty theft, running moonshine, and drunken bar fights. Thus, the Webbs became the subject of the gang’s schemes for a “big score,” schemes that might have come to nothing more than moonshine-laced dreams if it wasn’t for the mettle of Mary Laker’s jealousy and the desire to break the chains of her downtrodden life. She laid the plan for the robbery of the Webb’s house and waited for the right opportunity.



The rural road to Orchard Run