



H.P. Lovecraft
1890-1937



For my Father.

It was he who took me to those early movies that gave me so many nightmares.

—Keith Herber.

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H. P. Lovecraft's
ATRIUM



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Introduction

WELCOME TO ARKHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, the New England town created by H.P. Lovecraft as a setting for many of his stories. Located on the banks of the dark and muttering Miskatonic River, the town was first settled in the latter 17th century, and has become home to Miskatonic University and its renowned library.

In this book I have tried to faithfully introduce Arkham in a form suitable to a *Call of Cthulhu* campaign setting. Although the information herein reflects nearly everything Lovecraft ever wrote about Arkham, I have taken the liberty to fill in blanks, to complete descriptions where only names existed, and I have also added Lovecraftian-style locations of my own. Many entries are intended purely for gaming, though the likelihood of their existence is clear enough.

Some character names and place names also appear here from the writings of August Derleth, although these references are by no means as systematic as those drawn from Lovecraft. Additional references derive from stories by Brian Lumley, Ramsey Campbell, Lin Carter, Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch, and Clark Ashton Smith.

Pinpointing Arkham's exact location on the map is difficult, and does not seem that Lovecraft ever had a definite location in mind, and, in fact, it can be argued that Arkham tends to move around over the years, appearing in different places at different times. For the purposes of this book I have located the city along highway 1A in the area of Wenham and Hamilton, about six miles north of Salem, Massachusetts. This seems to satisfy much of what Lovecraft wrote and offers the fewest contradictions.

After rereading the stories, I chose the month of October, 1928, a period immediately after Armitage's adventure in "The Dunwich Horror," shortly after Wilmarth's encounters with the Vermont Fungi in "The Whisperer in Darkness" as the time which offered the best dramatic opportunities for scenario design. The prevailing situation at the University in regards to the Cthulhu Mythos appears in the "Guide to Arkham" section, in entry 620, especially under the subhead "Mythos Holdings in the Library."

Liberties have been taken with some dates given in Lovecraft's stories. Although by strict chronology Walter Gilman ("Dreams in the Witch House") would at this time already be dead, the situation described in this book has the brilliant and sensitive young mathematician just moving into the accursed house on E Pickman Street. Likewise, the events of "The Thing on the Doorstep" have also been integrated: Edward Derby has already married Asenath Waite, and the two live together in Crowninshield Manor.

And, although the raid on Innsmouth would have occurred by this date, the actuality is left to the keeper. Future publishing visits to Lovecraft Country may include materials for Innsmouth, Dunwich, and Kingsport, and perhaps other locations as well. A chronology deriving only from Lovecraft's stories is appended to the chapter, "A Brief

History of Arkham" outlining the events that took place in and around Arkham as Lovecraft reported it. Keepers, understanding the choices, should choose and adapt as desired.

Stores and professional services useful to or likely to be needed by investigators have been offered at least once. Where competition or choice exists, a description of its nature usually appears. Much of Arkham has not been described; do not expect to conduct walking tours of the town even after making a thorough study of the entries. Keeper care and involvement are the only useful ways to enlarge or complete the town; individual style and interests dictate the creation of as many different Arkhams as there are keepers.

Plenty of room exists on the bound-in maps for keepers to add whatever they wish. The handout map is intended for player orientation and enjoyment, not for precise movement and positioning. No easily-obtained street maps of Arkham in fact exist at this time. Investigators who want one must go to the Town Hall and laborously copy the big map on the wall of the room where the selectmen meet.

The maps of Arkham published herein pretend to show only the center of town; it is up to the keeper how much more of Arkham exists beyond the borders of the maps. And this is a good place to point out that Chaosium maps of Arkham diverge considerably from Lovecraft's notes and drawing in *Marginalia*. Please consider this new Arkham map as official to the game if not to Lovecraft; succeeding versions of *Call of Cthulhu* will reprint it.

The total population of Arkham is left unstated. Most players and keepers already have mental images of Arkham, so inventing a precise total can only annoy or hinder. Lovecraft is unspecific, but in one story a character visits "a cheap cinema", intimating that the town is at least large enough to have several movie theaters. Try this rule: Arkham is big enough that no one knows everyone, but just small enough that folks feel as though they could. Salem's population in 1928 was about 45,000; Arkham's population is almost surely only a fraction of that.

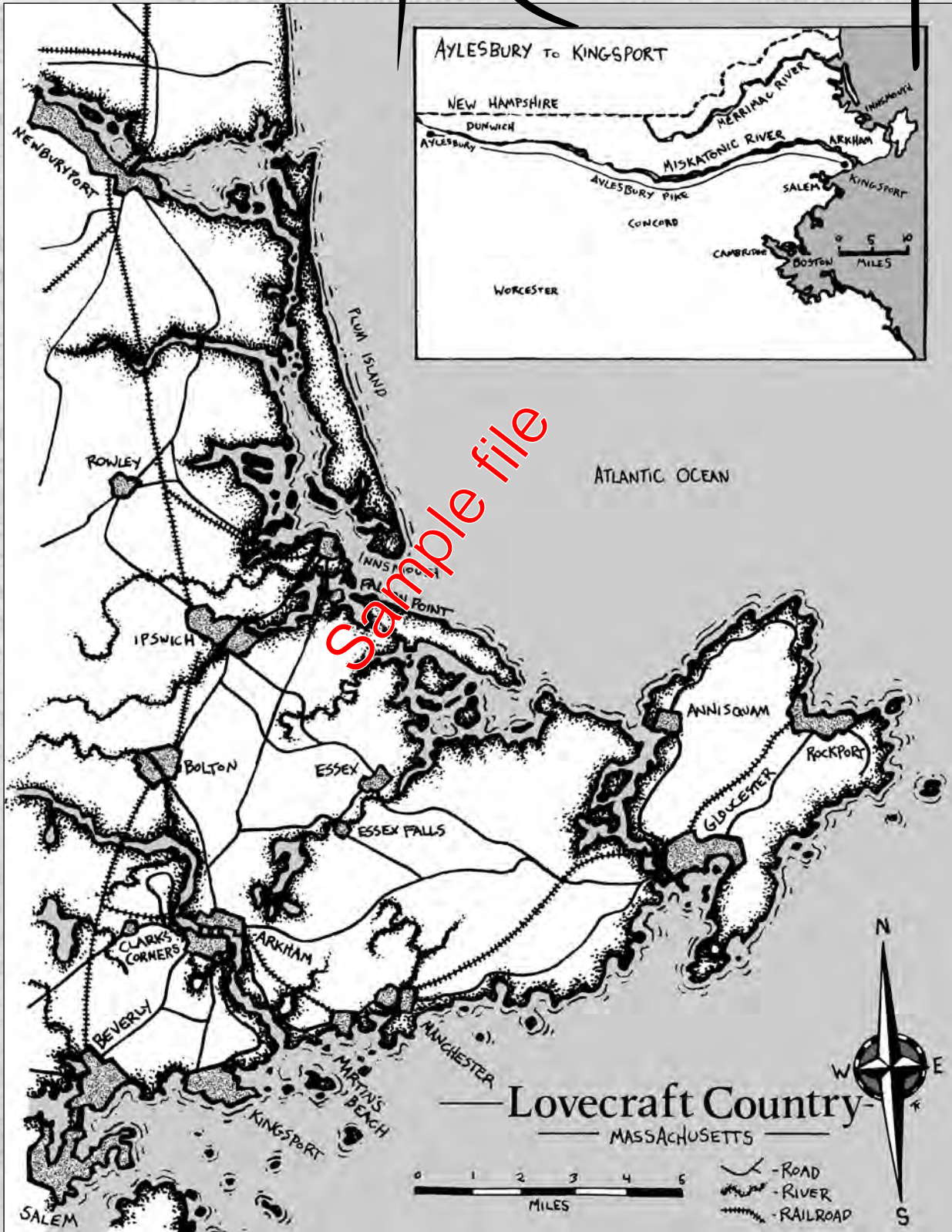
Neither are Miskatonic's enrollment and staff quantified—there are more faculty members than the University Directory shows, just as there are more stores and other businesses than the Town Directory shows. But remember, *in this book there is as much to Arkham or of anything in it as the keeper desires*, no more and no less.

I urge keepers to read or reread the following tales before beginning an Arkham campaign: "Herbert West-Reanimator," "The Unnamable," "The Dunwich Horror," "The Whisperer in Darkness," "The Dreams in the Witch House," and "The Thing on the Doorstep".

Finally, a number of people, including Tom Esposito, Richard Watts, Lee Estes, Lynn Willis, Steve Nardella, Sharon Herber, Gahan Wilson, and Kevin Ross, were particularly helpful to me on this project. I also thank Dawn Treader Bookshop in Ann Arbor, Necronomicon Press, and *Crypt of Cthulhu* and *Dagon* magazines.

—Keith Herber

Lovecraft Country



Sample file

Lovecraft Country is a land located in the northeast of Massachusetts. The most important portion stretches along the Miskatonic river valley, from Dunwich in the far west to where it enters the Atlantic Ocean, between Arkham, Kingsport, and Martin's Beach. References to other books in the Lovecraft Country series are noted when they contain central information.

Annisquam—A summer resort community that is located within Gloucester (see below).

Arkham—pop. 22,562, settled in 1692, incorporated in 1699. Textiles form the bulk of the present industry. Home of Miskatonic University. Mysterious sightings have occurred in the nearby Billington's Woods and at Nahum Gardner's farm, both located west of town. Detailed in *H. P. Lovecraft's Arkham*.

Aylesbury—pop. 16,539, founded in 1802 on the site of the former village of Broton. A planned industrial city financed by Arkham and Boston industrialists. Textiles are the main industry.

Beverly—pop. 27,478, settled in 1626 as part of Salem, incorporated in 1688. Home of the first cotton mill in the U.S. (1788). Shoes and shoe manufacturing machinery are its main industries.

Bolton—pop. 15,539, founded in 1650. An industrial town specializing in shoes, leather goods, and textiles.

Boston—pop. 782,623, first settled in 1630. The capital of Massachusetts. Site of Bunker Hill, Faneuil Hall, the Boston Massacre, and the Boston Tea Party. Important libraries include the Boston Public Library with over a million volumes, The Boston Athenaeum, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New England Historical Genealogical library, and the the Boston Society of Natural History. Major industries include printing and publishing, men's and women's clothing, and shipping. Boston is an international port.

Cambridge—pop. 124,451, first settled in 1630. Home of Harvard University, Radcliffe college, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Cambridge is the site of the first printing press in America. Industries include printing and publishing, and the manufacture of soap, candy, and electrical apparatus.

Concord—pop. 70,566, founded 1635. Site of "the shot heard round the world." Home of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau, and Louisa May Alcott.

Danvers—pop. 11,893, located approximately three miles west of Beverly. Settled in 1626 and until 1757 known as Salem Village. The center of witchcraft activity in 1692 and the birthplace of Israel Putnam. Nearby is the Massachusetts State Hospital for the Insane.

Dean's Corners—pop. 83, settled in 1821. A small town on the Aylesbury Pike, last stop before Aylesbury. Originally a stop on the stage line, now Dean's Corners occasionally trades with motorists on their way to Aylesbury. A combined Boston Society for American Indian Research and Miskatonic University archeological Dig is being conducted just a few miles southeast. Detailed in *Tales of the Miskatonic Valley*.

Dunwich—pop. 373, settled in 1692. A small farming community. Formerly the site of several large

lumber mills. Dark forces seem ascendent among the decadent inhabitants of Dunwich detailed in *H. P. Lovecraft's Dunwich*.

Essex—pop. 1654, first settled in 1634, incorporated in 1819. Famous for its small shipyards and its clam beds.

Falcon Point—pop. 56, settled in 1696. A small fishing village just south of Innsmouth. Detailed in *Escape from Innsmouth* and *Adventures in Arkham Country*.

Fitchburg—pop. 45,448, located ten miles southeast of Dunwich, past the Aylesbury Pike. Incorporated in 1764. It is a large paper manufacturing industry and a Worcester county seat.

Framingham—pop. 25,118, located fifteen miles west of Boston. first settled in 1640, incorporated 1700. Industries include straw hats, boots and shoes, rubber goods, boilers, and patent medicines. It is the seat of the state arsenal and the location of the state reformatory for women.

Gloucester—pop. 25,101, first settled by English fishermen in 1623, incorporated 1642. A popular summer resort and the greatest salt-water fishing port in the U.S. Within the city limits is the summer resort community of Annisquam.

Innsmouth—pop. 367, founded in 1643. Originally active in the China trade. Launched many privateers during the Revolutionary War and was active in 1812. Fishing is the main industry. A small gold refinery is still in operation. Innsmouth is being controlled by the decadent Marsh family, and over years there have been hints of a malevolent force living beneath the sea, at nearby Devil's Reef. Detailed in *Escape from Innsmouth*.

Ipswich—pop. 1,058, first settled in 1633 as Aggawam, incorporated in 1634. A popular summer resort and site of the oldest arched bridge in America. The name to the Rev. Nathaniel Ward.

Kingsport—pop. 7834, founded in 1639, incorporated in 1651. Home port of numerous privateers during the Revolutionary War. A summer resort and artist colony, fishing is the main industry. Rumors abound of a strange fire cult worshiping beneath the streets of Kingsport. Detailed in *H. P. Lovecraft's Kingsport* and *Tales of the Miskatonic Valley*.

Lexington—pop. 7785, located five miles northwest of Cambridge along the 3. Founded 1642. Site of the first armed conflict of the American Revolution and the destination of Paul Revere's ride. Truck gardening and dairying are the principal industries.

Lowell—pop. 114,759, located ten miles north of Concord on the Merrimack River. Incorporated in 1826. Home to many textile mills and the birthplace of James McNeil Whistler. A Middlesex county seat.

Lynn—pop. 106,081, located five miles southwest of Salem. Founded 1629. An industrial city famous for its shoes and boots, an industry it began in 1636. The first smelting works in New England were established here in 1643.

Manchester—pop. 2599, settled 1630. A resort area thought by some to be the most beautiful on the Atlantic coast and a favor to summer residence with many foreign diplomats.

Marblehead—pop. 8414, located just southeast of Salem. Settled in 1629, separated from Salem in

1649. Launched many privateers during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. A popular summer resort and a yachting center. Principal industries include the manufacture of children's shoes, fishing, and yacht and launch building. Claimed by some to be "the birthplace of the American Navy."

Martin's Beach—pop. 867, first settled in 1644. A small fishing village and vacation spot. On occasion, a strange creature has been seen in the ocean. Detailed in *Dead Reckonings*.

Mayotteville—pop. 1,997, founded in 1667 by settlers from Bolton, located just a few miles down the road. Recently the source of a strange winged apparition. Detailed in *Adventures in Arkham Country*.

Newburyport—pop. 16,618, settled in 1635, separated from Newbury in 1764. A manufacturing town and shipping port, Newburyport was active in privateering during the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. The town was also famous for its smugglers and before the Civil War an active fishing, whaling, and trading port. An Essex county seat.

Peabody—pop. 21,677, located just west of Salem, which it was originally part of. It was incorporated in 1855. The town specializes in the manufacture of leather, leather-working machinery, and cotton goods.

Quincy—pop. 67,655, originally settled in 1625 as Merry Mount, a community reputed to have danced around maypoles and worshipped Dagon. The original settlers were finally driven off by members of the nearby Puritan communities. Now the home of modern naval shipyards. The birthplace of John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and John Hancock.

Rockport—pop. 2345, originally settled in 1690, separated from Gloucester in 1840. A summer resort famous for its large artist colony.

Salem—pop. 44,688, founded in 1626 by Roger Conant. Site of the Salem witch trials of 1692 and birthplace of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Salem was once very active in the China trade and was home of America's first millionaire, Elias Haskettt Derby. The town launched many privateers during the Seven Years War, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. Home of the Essex Institute, the Peabody Maritime Museum, and the Salem Athenaeum.

Waltham—pop. 38,144, located ten miles west of Cambridge along the 117. Incorporated 1738. Home of the world's largest watch factory and the site of the first cotton power mill in America (1814).

Worcester—pop. 197,788, first settled in 1657 but twice abandoned due to Indian attacks, first in 1675 then in 1702. Incorporated in 1722. Industries include wire and wire products. The home of Clark University, Worcester Polytechnic, the Jesuit College of the Holy Cross, and Assumption college. Site of the American Antiquarian Society, the Worcester Natural History Society, and the Worcester Historical Society, all with museums and libraries. Home at one time or another to Elias Howe, Eli Whaley, Dorothea Lynde Dix, and Clara Barton. ■

H. P. Lovecraft's Arkham

Impressus

Sample file

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The Dreams in the Witch House

by H. P. Lovecraft

Whether the dreams brought on the fever or the fever brought on the dreams Walter Gilman did not know. Behind everything crouched the brooding, festering horror of the ancient town, and of the mouldy, unroofed garret gable where he wrote and studied and wrestled with figures and formulae when he was not tossing on the meagre iron bed. His ears were growing sensitive to a preternatural and intolerable degree, and he had long ago stopped the cheap mantel clock whose ticking had come to seem like a thunder of artillery. At night the subtle stirring of the black city outside, the sinister scurrying of rats in the wormy partitions, and the creaking of hidden timbers in the centuried house, were enough to give him a sense of strident pandemonium. The darkness always teemed with unexplained sound — and yet he sometimes shook with fear lest the noises he heard should subside and allow him to hear certain other, fainter, noises which he suspected were lurking behind them.

He was in the changeless, legend-haunted city of Arkham, with its clustering gambrel roofs that sway and sag over attics where witches hid from the King's men in the dark, olden days of the Province. Nor was any spot in that city more steeped in macabre memory than the gable room which harboured him — for it was this house and this room which had likewise harboured old Keziah Mason, whose flight from Salem Gaol at the last no one was ever able to explain. That was in 1692 — the gaoler had gone mad and babbled of a small, white-fanged furry thing which scuttled out of Keziah's cell, and not even Cotton Mather could explain the curves and angles smeared on the grey stone walls with some red, sticky fluid.

Possibly Gilman ought not to have studied so hard. Non-Euclidean calculus and quantum physics are enough to stretch any brain; and when one mixes them with folklore, and tries to trace a strange background of multi-dimensional reality

behind the ghoulish hints of the Gothic tales and the wild whispers of the chimney-corner, one can hardly expect to be wholly free from mental tension. Gilman came from Haverhill, but it was only after he had entered college in Arkham that he began to connect his mathematics with the fantastic legends of elder magic. Something in the air of the hoary town worked obscurely on his imagination. The professors at Miskatonic had urged him to slacken up, and had voluntarily cut down his course at several points. Moreover, they had stopped him from consulting the dubious old books on forbidden secrets that were kept under lock and key in a vault at the university library. But all these precautions came late in the day, so that Gilman had some terrible hints from the dreaded *Necronomicon* of Abdul Alhazred, the fragmentary *Book of Eibon*, and the suppressed *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* of von Junzt to correlate with his abstract formulae on the properties of space and the linkage of dimensions known and unknown.

He knew his room was in the old Witch House — that, indeed, was why he had taken it. There was much in the Essex County records about Keziah Mason's trial, and what she had admitted under pressure to the Court of Oyer and Terminer had fascinated Gilman beyond all reason. She had told Judge Hathorne of lines and curves that could be made to point out directions leading through the walls of space to other spaces beyond, and had implied that such lines and curves were frequently used at certain midnight meetings in the dark valley of the white stone beyond Meadow Hill and on the unpeopled island in the river. She had spoken also of the Black Man, of her oath, and of her new secret name of Nahab. Then she had drawn those devices on the walls of her cell and vanished.

Gilman believed strange things about Keziah, and had felt a queer thrill on learning that her dwelling was still standing after more than 235 years. When he heard the hushed Arkham whispers about Keziah's persistent presence in the old house and the narrow streets, about the irregular human tooth-marks left on certain sleepers in that and other houses, about the childish cries heard near May-Eve, and Hallowmass, about the stench often noted in the old house's attic just after those dreaded seasons, and about the small, furry, sharp-toothed thing which haunted the mouldering structure and the town and nuzzled people curiously in the black hours before dawn, he resolved to live in the place at any cost. A room was easy to secure; for the house was unpopular, hard to rent, and long given over to cheap lodgings. Gilman could not have told what he expected to find there, but he knew he wanted to be in the building

where some circumstance had more or less suddenly given a mediocre old woman of the seventeenth century an insight into mathematical depths perhaps beyond the utmost modern delvings of Planck, Heisenberg, Einstein, and de Sitter.

He studied the timber and plaster walls for traces of cryptic designs at every accessible spot where the paper had peeled, and within a week managed to get the eastern attic room where Keziah was held to have practiced her spells. It had been vacant from the first — for no one had ever been willing to stay there long — but the Polish landlord had grown wary about renting it. Yet nothing whatever happened to Gilman till about the time of the fever. No ghostly Keziah flitted through the sombre halls and chambers, no small furry thing crept into his dismal eyrie to nuzzle him, and no record of the witch's incantations rewarded his constant search. Sometimes he would take walks through shadowy tangles of unpaved musty-smelling lanes where eldritch brown houses of unknown age leaned and tottered and leered mockingly through narrow, small-paned windows. Here he knew strange things had happened once, and there was a faint suggestion behind the surface that everything of that monstrous past might not — at least in the darkest, narrowest, and most intricately crooked alleys — have utterly perished. He also rowed out twice to the ill-regarded island in the river, and made a sketch of the singular angles described by the moss-grown rows of grey standing stones whose origin was so obscure and immemorial.

Gilman's room was of good size but queerly irregular shape; the north wall slanting perceptibly inward from the outer to the inner end, while the low ceiling slanted gently downward in the same direction. Aside from an obvious rat-hole and the signs of other stopped-up ones, there was no access — nor any appearance of a former avenue of access — to the space which must have existed between the slanting wall and the straight outer wall on the house's north side, though a view from the exterior shewed where a window had been boarded up at a very remote date. The loft above the ceiling — which must have had a slanting floor — was likewise inaccessible. When Gilman climbed up a ladder to the cobwebbed level loft above the rest of the attic he found vestiges of a bygone aperture tightly and heavily covered with ancient planking and secured by the stout wooden pegs common in colonial carpentry. No amount of persuasion, however, could induce the stolid landlord to let him investigate either of these two closed spaces.

The Dreams in the Witch House

As time wore along, his absorption in the irregular wall and ceiling of his room increased; for he began to read into the odd angles a mathematical significance which seemed to offer vague clues regarding their purpose. Old Keziah, he reflected, might have had excellent reasons for living in a room with peculiar angles; for was it not through certain angles that she claimed to have gone outside the boundaries of the world of space we know? His interest gradually veered away from the unplumbed voids beyond the slanting surfaces, since it now appeared that the purpose of those surfaces concerned the side he was already on.

The touch of brain-fever and the dreams began early in February. For some time, apparently, the curious angles of Gilman's room had been having a strange, almost hypnotic effect on him; and as the bleak winter advanced he had found himself staring more and more intently at the corner where the down-slanting ceiling met the inward-slanting wall. About this period his inability to concentrate on his formal studies worried him considerably, his apprehensions about the mid-year examinations being very acute. But the exaggerated sense of hearing was scarcely less annoying. Life had become an insistent and almost unendurable cacophony, and there was that constant, terrifying impression of *other* sounds — perhaps from regions beyond life — trembling on the very brink of audibility. So far as concrete noises went, the rats in the ancient partitions were the worst. Sometimes their scratching seemed not only furtive but deliberate. When it came from beyond the slanting north wall it was mixed with a sort of dry rattling — and when it came from the century-closed loft above the slanting ceiling Gilman always braced himself as if expecting some horror which only bided its time before descending to engulf him utterly.

The dreams were wholly beyond the pale of sanity, and Gilman felt that they must be a result, jointly, of his studies in mathematics and in folklore. He had been thinking too much about the vague regions which his formulae told him must lie beyond the three dimensions we know, and about the possibility that old Keziah Mason — guided by some influence past all conjecture — had actually found the gate to those regions. The yellowed county records containing her testimony and that of her accusers were so damnably suggestive of things beyond human experience — and the descriptions of the darting little furry object which served as her familiar were so painfully realistic despite their incredible details.

That object — no larger than a good-sized rat and quaintly called by the townspeople "Brown Jenkin" — seemed to have been the fruit of a remarkable case of sympathetic herd-delusion, for in 1692 no less than eleven persons had testified to glimpsing it. There were recent rumours, too, with a baffling and disconcerting amount of agreement. Witnesses said it had long hair and the shape of a rat, but that its sharp-toothed, bearded face was evilly human while its paws were like tiny human hands. It took messages betwixt old Keziah and the devil, and was nursed on the witch's blood — which it sucked like a vampire. Its voice was a kind of loathsome titter, and it could speak all languages. Of all the bizarre monstrosities in Gilman's dreams, nothing filled him with greater panic and nausea than this blasphemous and diminutive hybrid, whose image flitted across his vision in a form a thousandfold more hateful than anything his waking mind had deduced from the ancient records and the modern whispers.

Gilman's dreams consisted largely in plunges through limitless abysses of inexplicably coloured twilight and bafflingly disordered sound; abysses whose material and gravitational properties, and whose relation to his own entity, he could not even begin to explain. He did not walk or climb, fly or swim, crawl or wriggle; yet always experienced a mode of motion partly voluntary and partly involuntary. Of his own condition he could not well judge, for sight of his arms, legs, and torso seemed always cut off by some odd disarrangement of perspective; but he felt that his physical organisation and faculties were somehow marvellously transmuted and obliquely projected — though not without a certain grotesque relationship to his normal proportions and properties.

The abysses were by no means vacant, being crowded with indescribably angled masses of alien-hued substance, some of which appeared to be organic while others seemed inorganic. A few of the organic objects tended to awake vague memories in the back of his mind, though he could form no conscious idea of what they mockingly resembled or suggested. In the later dreams he began to distinguish separate categories into which the organic objects appeared to be divided, and which seemed to involve in each case a radically different species of conduct-pattern and basic motivation. Of these categories one seemed to him to include objects slightly less illogical and irrelevant in their motions than the members of the other categories.

All the objects — organic and inorganic alike — were totally beyond description or even comprehension. Gilman sometimes compared the inorganic masses to prisms, labyrinths, clusters of cubes and planes, and

Cyclopean buildings; and the organic things struck him variously as groups of bubbles, octopi, centipedes, living Hindoo idols, and intricate Arabesques roused into a kind of ophidian animation. Everything he saw was unspeakably menacing and horrible; and whenever one of the organic entities appeared by its motions to be noticing him, he felt a stark, hideous fright which generally jolted him awake. Of how the organic entities moved, he could tell no more than of how he moved himself. In time he observed a further mystery — the tendency of certain entities to appear suddenly out of empty space, or to disappear totally with equal suddenness. The shrieking, roaring confusion of sound which permeated the abysses was past all analysis as to pitch, timbre, or rhythm; but seemed to be synchronous with vague visual changes in all the indefinite objects, organic and inorganic alike. Gilman had a constant sense of dread that it might rise to some unbearable degree of intensity during one or another of its obscure, relentlessly inevitable fluctuations.

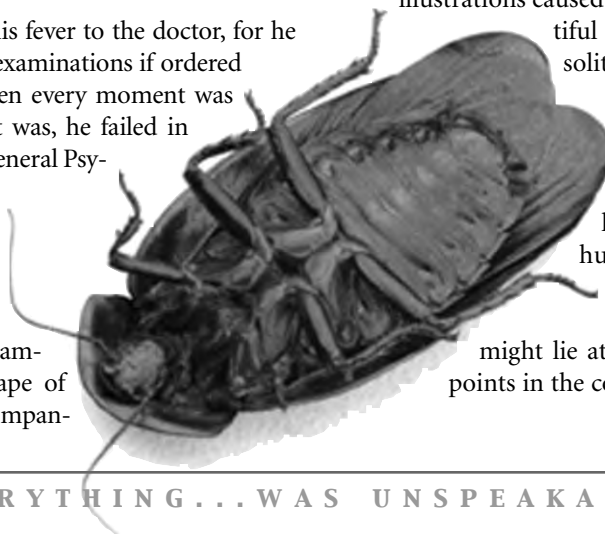
But it was not in these vortices of complete alienage that he saw Brown Jenkin. That shocking little horror was reserved for certain lighter, sharper dreams which assailed him just before he dropped into the fullest depths of sleep. He would be lying in the dark fighting to keep awake when a faint lambent glow would seem to shimmer around the centuried room, shewing in a violet mist the convergence of angled planes which had seized his brain so insidiously. The horror would appear to pop out of the rat-hole in the corner and patter toward him over the sagging, wide-planked floor with evil expectancy in its tiny, bearded human face — but mercifully, this dream always melted away before the object got close enough to nuzzle him. It had hellishly long, sharp, canine teeth. Gilman tried to stop up the rat-hole every day, but each night the real tenants of the partitions would gnaw away the obstruction, whatever it might be. Once he had the landlord nail tin over it, but the next night the rats gnawed a fresh hole — in making which they pushed or dragged out into the room a curious little fragment of bone.

Gilman did not report his fever to the doctor, for he knew he could not pass the examinations if ordered to the college infirmary when every moment was needed for cramming. As it was, he failed in Calculus D and Advanced General Psychology, though not without hope of making up lost ground before the end of the term. It was in March when the fresh element entered his lighter preliminary dreaming, and the nightmare shape of Brown Jenkin began to be compan-

ioned by the nebulous blur which grew more and more to resemble a bent old woman. This addition disturbed him more than he could account for, but finally he decided that it was like an ancient crone whom he had twice actually encountered in the dark tangle of lanes near the abandoned wharves. On those occasions the evil, sardonic, and seemingly unmotivated stare of the beldame had set him almost shivering — especially the first time, when an overgrown rat darting across the shadowed mouth of a neighbouring alley had made him think irrationally of Brown Jenkin. Now, he reflected, those nervous fears were being mirrored in his disordered dreams.

That the influence of the old house was unwholesome, he could not deny; but traces of his early morbid interest still held him there. He argued that the fever alone was responsible for his nightly phantasies, and that when the touch abated he would be free from the monstrous visions. Those visions, however, were of abhorrent vividness and convincingness, and whenever he awaked he retained a vague sense of having undergone much more than he remembered. He was hideously sure that in unrecalled dreams he had talked with both Brown Jenkin and the old woman, and that they had been urging him to go somewhere with them and to meet a third being of greater potency.

Toward the end of March he began to pick up in his mathematics, though other studies bothered him increasingly. He was getting an intuitive knack for solving Riemannian equations, and astonished Professor Upham by his comprehension of fourth-dimensional and other problems which had floored all the rest of the class. One afternoon there was a discussion of possible freakish curvatures in space, and of theoretical points of approach or even contact between our part of the cosmos and various other regions as distant as the farthest stars or the trans-galactic gulfs themselves — or even as fabulously remote as the tentatively conceivable cosmic units beyond the whole Einsteinian space-time continuum. Gilman's handling of this theme filled everyone with admiration, even though some of his hypothetical illustrations caused an increase in the always plentiful gossip about his nervous and solitary eccentricity. What made the students shake their heads was his sober theory that a man might — given mathematical knowledge admittedly beyond all likelihood of human acquirement — step deliberately from the earth to any other celestial body which might lie at one of an infinity of specific points in the cosmic pattern.



Such a step, he said, would require only two stages; first, a passage out of the three-dimensional sphere we know, and second, a passage back to the three-dimensional sphere at another point, perhaps one of infinite remoteness. That this could be accomplished without loss of life was in many cases conceivable. Any being from any part of three-dimensional space could probably survive in the fourth dimension; and its survival of the second stage would depend upon what alien part of three-dimensional space it might select for its re-entry. Denizens of some planets might be able to live on certain others — even planets belonging to other galaxies, or to similar-dimensional phases of other space-time continua — though of course there must be vast numbers of mutually uninhabitable even though mathematically juxtaposed bodies or zones of space.

It was also possible that the inhabitants of a given dimensional realm could survive entry to many unknown and incomprehensible realms of additional or indefinitely multiplied dimensions — be they within or outside the given space-time continuum — and that the converse would be likewise true. This was a matter for speculation, though one could be fairly certain that the type of mutation involved in a passage from any given dimensional plane to the next higher plane would not be destructive of biological integrity as we understand it. Gilman could not be very clear about his reasons for this last assumption, but his haziness here was more than overbalanced by his clearness on other complex points. Professor Upham especially liked his demonstration of the kinship of higher mathematics to certain phases of magical lore transmitted down the ages from an ineffable antiquity — human or pre-human — whose knowledge of the cosmos and its laws was greater than ours.

Around the first of April Gilman worried considerably because his slow fever did not abate. He was also troubled by what some of his fellow-lodgers said about his sleep-walking. It seemed that he was often absent from his bed, and that the creaking of his floor at certain hours of the night was remarked by the man in the room below. This fellow also spoke of hearing the tread of shod feet in the night; but Gilman was sure he must have been mistaken in this, since shoes as well as other apparel were always precisely in place in the morning.

One could develop all sorts of aural delusions in this morbid old house — for did not Gilman himself, even in daylight, now feel certain that noises other than rat-scratchings came from the black voids beyond the slanting wall and above the slanting ceiling? His pathologically sensitive ears began to listen for faint foot falls in the immemorially sealed loft overhead, and sometimes the illusion of such things was agonisingly realistic.

However, he knew that he had actually become a somnambulist; for twice at night his room had been found vacant, though with all his clothing in place. Of this he had been assured by Frank Elwood, the one fellow-student whose poverty forced him to room in this squalid and unpopular house. Elwood had been studying in the small hours and had come up for help on a differential equation, only to find Gilman absent. It had been rather presumptuous of him to open the unlocked door after knocking had failed to rouse a response, but he had needed the help very badly and thought that his host would not mind a gentle prodding awake. On neither occasion, though, had Gilman been there — and when told of the matter he wondered where he could have been wandering, barefoot and with only his night-clothes on. He resolved to investigate the matter if reports of his sleep-walking continued, and thought of sprinkling flour on the floor of the corridor to see where his footsteps might lead. The door was the only conceivable egress, for there was no possible foothold outside the narrow window.

As April advanced Gilman's fever-sharpened ears were disturbed by the whining prayers of a superstitious loomfixer named Joe Mazurewicz, who had a room on the ground floor. Mazurewicz had told long, rambling stories about the ghost of old Keziah and the furry, sharp-fanged, nuzzling thing, and had said he was so badly haunted at times that only his silver crucifix — given him for the purpose by Father Iwanicki of St. Stanislaus' Church — could bring him relief. Now he was praying because the Witches' Sabbath was drawing near. May-Eve was Walpurgis-Night, when hell's blackest evil roamed the earth and all the slaves of Satan gathered for nameless rites and deeds. It was always a very bad time in Arkham, even though the fine folks up in Miskatonic Avenue and High and Saltonstall Streets pretended to know nothing about it. There would be bad doings — and a child or two would probably be missing. Joe knew about such things, for his grandmother in the old country had heard tales from her grandmother. It was wise to pray and count one's beads at this season. For three months Keziah and Brown Jenkin had not been near Joe's room, nor near Paul Choynski's room, nor anywhere else — and it meant no

Sample file

good when they held off like that. They must be up to something.

Gilman dropped in at a doctor's office on the 16th of the month, and was surprised to find his temperature was not as high as he had feared. The physician questioned him sharply, and advised him to see a nerve specialist. On reflection, he was glad he had not consulted the still more inquisitive college doctor. Old Waldron, who had curtailed his activities before, would have made him take a rest — an impossible thing now that he was so close to great results in his equations. He was certainly near the boundary between the known universe and the fourth dimension, and who could say how much farther he might go?

But even as these thoughts came to him he wondered at the source of his strange confidence. Did all of this perilous sense of imminence come from the formulae on the sheets he covered day by day? The soft, stealthy, imaginary footsteps in the sealed loft above were unnerving. And now, too, there was a growing feeling that somebody was constantly persuading him to do something terrible which he could not do. How about the somnambulism? Where did he go sometimes in the night? And what was that faint suggestion of sound which once in a while seemed to trickle through the maddening confusion of identifiable sounds even in broad daylight and full wakefulness? Its rhythm did not correspond to anything on earth, unless perhaps to the cadence of one or two unmentionable Sabbath chants, and sometimes he feared it corresponded to certain attributes of the vague shrieking or roaring in those wholly alien abysses of dream.

The dreams were meanwhile getting to be atrocious. In the lighter preliminary phase the evil old woman was now of fiendish distinctness, and Gilman knew she was the one who had frightened him in the slums. Her bent back, long nose, and shrivelled chin were unmistakable, and her shapeless brown garments were like those he remembered. The expression on her face was one of hideous malevolence and exultation, and when he awaked he could recall a croaking voice that persuaded and threatened. He must meet the Black Man, and go with them all to the throne of Azathoth at the centre of ultimate Chaos. That was what she said. He must sign in his own blood the book of Azathoth and take a new secret name now that his independent delvings had gone so far. What kept him from going with her and Brown Jenkin and the other to the throne of Chaos where the thin flutes pipe mindlessly was the fact that he had seen the name "Azathoth" in the *Necronomicon*, and knew it stood for a primal evil too horrible for description.

The old woman always appeared out of thin air near the corner where the downward slant met the inward slant. She seemed to crystallise at a point clos-

er to the ceiling than to the floor, and every night she was a little nearer and more distinct before the dream shifted. Brown Jenkin, too, was always a little nearer at the last, and its yellowish-white fangs glistened shockingly in that unearthly violet phosphorescence. Its shrill loathsome tittering stuck more and more in Gilman's head, and he could remember in the morning how it had pronounced the words "Azathoth" and "Nyarlathotep."

In the deeper dreams everything was likewise more distinct, and Gilman felt that the twilight abysses around him were those of the fourth dimension. Those organic entities whose motions seemed least flagrantly irrelevant and unmotivated were probably projections of life-forms from our own planet, including human beings. What the others were in their own dimensional sphere or spheres he dared not try to think. Two of the less irrelevantly moving things — a rather large congeries of iridescent, prolately spheroidal bubbles and a very much smaller polyhedron of unknown colours and rapidly shifting surface angles — seemed to take notice of him and follow him about or float ahead as he changed position among the titan prisms, labyrinths, cube-and-plane clusters, and quasi-buildings; and all the while the vague shrieking and roaring waxed louder and louder, as if approaching some monstrous climax of utterly unendurable intensity.

During the night of April 19-20 the new development occurred. Gilman was half-involuntarily moving about in the twilight abysses with the bubble-mass and the small polyhedron floating ahead, when he noticed the peculiarly regular angles formed by the edges of some gigantic neighbouring prism-clusters. In another second he was out of the abyss and standing tremulously on a rocky hillside bathed in intense, diffused green light. He was barefooted and in his night-clothes, and when he tried to walk discovered that he could scarcely lift his feet. A swirling vapour hid everything but the immediate sloping terrain from sight, and he shrank from the thought of the sounds that might surge out of that vapour.

Then he saw the two shapes laboriously crawling toward him — the old woman and the little furry thing. The crone strained up to her knees and managed to cross her arms in a singular fashion, while Brown Jenkin pointed in a certain direction with a horribly anthropoid fore paw which it raised with evident difficulty. Spurred by an impulse he did not originate, Gilman dragged himself forward along a course determined by the angle of the old woman's arms and the direction of the small monstrosity's paw, and before he had shuffled three steps he was back in the twilight abysses. Geometrical shapes seethed around him, and he fell

dizzily and interminably. At last he woke in his bed in the crazily angled garret of the eldritch old house.

He was good for nothing that morning, and stayed away from all his classes. Some unknown attraction was pulling his eyes in a seemingly irrelevant direction, for he could not help staring at a certain vacant spot on the floor. As the day advanced the focus of his unseeing eyes changed position, and by noon he had conquered the impulse to stare at vacancy. About two o'clock he went out for lunch, and as he threaded the narrow lanes of the city he found himself turning always to the south-east. Only an effort halted him at a cafeteria in Church Street, and after the meal he felt the unknown pull still more strongly.

He would have to consult a nerve specialist after all — perhaps there was a connexion with his somnambulism — but meanwhile he might at least try to break the morbid spell himself. Undoubtedly he could still manage to walk away from the pull; so with great resolution he headed against it and dragged himself deliberately north along Garrison Street. By the time he had reached the bridge over the Miskatonic he was in a cold perspiration, and he clutched at the iron railing as he gazed upstream at the ill-regarded island whose regular lines of ancient standing stones brooded sullenly in the afternoon sunlight.

Then he gave a start. For there was a clearly visible living figure on that desolate island, and a second glance told him it was certainly the strange old woman whose sinister aspect had worked itself so disastrously into his dreams. The tall grass near her was moving, too, as if some other living thing were crawling close to the ground. When the old woman began to turn toward him he fled precipitately off the bridge and into the shelter of the town's labyrinthine waterfront alleys. Distant though the island was, he felt that a monstrous and invincible evil could flow from the sardonic stare of that bent, ancient figure in brown.

The southeastward pull still held, and only with tremendous resolution could Gilman drag himself into the old house and up the rickety stairs. For hours he sat silent and aimless, with his eyes shifting gradually westward. About six o'clock his sharpened ears caught the whining prayers of Joe Mazurewicz two floors below, and in desperation he seized his hat and walked out into the sunset golden streets, letting the now directly southward pull carry him where it might. An hour later darkness found him in the open fields beyond Hangman's Brook, with the glimmering spring stars shining ahead. The urge to walk was gradually changing to an urge to leap mystically into space, and suddenly he realised just where the source of the pull lay.

It was in the sky. A definite point among the stars had a claim on him and was calling him. Apparently it

was a point somewhere between Hydra and Argo Navis, and he knew that he had been urged toward it ever since he had awaked soon after dawn. In the morning it had been underfoot; afternoon found it rising in the south-east, and now it was roughly south but wheeling toward the west. What was the meaning of this new thing? Was he going mad? How long would it last? Again mustering his resolution, Gilman turned and dragged himself back to the sinister old house.

Mazurewicz was waiting for him at the door, and seemed both anxious and reluctant to whisper some fresh bit of superstition. It was about the witch light. Joe had been out celebrating the night before — it was Patriots' Day in Massachusetts — and had come home after midnight. Looking up at the house from outside, he had thought at first that Gilman's window was dark; but then he had seen the faint violet glow within. He wanted to warn the gentleman about that glow, for everybody in Arkham knew it was Keziah's witch light which played near Brown Jenkin and the ghost of the old crone herself. He had not mentioned this before, but now he must tell about it because it meant that Keziah and her toothed familiar were haunting the young gentlemen. Sometimes he and Paul Choynski and Landlord Dombrowski thought they saw that light seeping out of cracks in the sealed loft above the young gentleman's room, but they had all agreed not to talk about that. However, it would be better for the gentleman to take another room and get a crucifix from some good priest like Father Iwanicki.

As the man rambled on Gilman felt a nameless panic clutch at his throat. He knew that Joe must have been half drunk when he came home the night before, yet this mention of a violet light in the garret window was of frightful import. It was a lambent glow of this sort which always played about the old woman and the small furry thing in those lighter, sharper dreams which prefaced his plunge into unknown abysses, and the thought that a wakeful second person could see the dream-luminance was utterly beyond sane harbourage. Yet where had the fellow got such an odd notion? Had he himself talked as well as walked around the house in his sleep? No, Joe said, he had not — but he must check up on this. Perhaps Frank Elwood could tell him something, though he hated to ask.

Fever — wild dreams — somnambulism — illusions of sounds — a pull toward a point in the sky — and now a suspicion of insane sleep-talking! He must stop studying, see a nerve specialist, and take himself in hand. When he climbed to the second story he paused at Elwood's door but saw that the other youth was out. Reluctantly he continued up to his garret room and sat down in the dark. His gaze was still pulled to the southwest, but he also



found himself listening intently for some sound in the closed loft above, and half imagining that an evil violet light seeped down through an infinitesimal crack in the low, slanting ceiling.

That night as Gilman slept the violet light broke upon him with heightened intensity, and the old witch and small furry thing — getting closer than ever before — mocked him with inhuman squeals and devilish gestures. He was glad to sink into the vaguely roaring twilight abysses, though the pursuit of that iridescent bubblecongeries and that kaleidoscopic little polyhedron was menacing and irritating. Then came the shift as vast converging planes of a slippery-looking substance loomed above and below him — a shift which ended in a flash of delirium and a blaze of unknown, alien light in which yellow, carmine, and indigo were madly and inextricably blended.

He was half lying on a high, fantastically balustraded terrace above a boundless jungle of outlandish, incredible peaks, balanced planes, domes, minarets, horizontal discs poised on pinnacles, and numberless forms of still greater wildness — some of stone and some of metal — which glittered gorgeously in the mixed, almost blistering glare from a polychromatic sky. Looking upward he saw three stupendous discs of flame, each of a different hue, and at a different height above an infinitely distant curving horizon of low mountains. Behind him tiers of higher terraces towered aloft as far as he could see. The city below stretched away to the limits of vision, and he hoped that no sound would well up from it.

The pavement from which he easily raised himself was of a veined, polished stone beyond his power to identify, and the tiles were cut in bizarre-angled shapes which struck him as less asymmetrical than based on some unearthly symmetry whose laws he could not comprehend. The balustrade was chest-high, delicate, and fantastically wrought, while along the rail were ranged at short intervals little figures of grotesque design and exquisite workmanship. They, like the whole balustrade, seemed to be made of some sort of shining metal whose colour could not be guessed in this chaos of mixed effulgences; and their nature utterly defied conjecture. They represented some ridged, barrel-shaped object with thin horizontal arms radiating spoke-like from a central ring, and with vertical knobs or bulbs projecting from the head and base of the barrel. Each of these knobs was the hub of a system of five long, flat, triangularly tapering arms arranged around it like the arms of a starfish — nearly horizontal, but curving slightly away from the central barrel. The base of the bottom knob was fused to the long railing with so delicate a point of contact that several figures had been broken off and were missing. The fig-

ures were about four and a half inches in height, while the spiky arms gave them a maximum diameter of about two and a half inches.

When Gilman stood up the tiles felt hot to his bare feet. He was wholly alone, and his first act was to walk to the balustrade and look dizzily down at the endless, Cyclopean city almost two thousand feet below. As he listened he thought a rhythmic confusion of faint musical pipings covering a wide tonal range welled up from the narrow streets beneath, and he wished he might discern the denizens of the place. The sight turned him giddy after a while, so that he would have fallen to the pavement had he not clutched instinctively at the lustrous balustrade. His right hand fell on one of the projecting figures, the touch seeming to steady him slightly. It was too much, however, for the exotic delicacy of the metal-work, and the spiky figure snapped off under his grasp. Still half-dazed, he continued to clutch it as his other hand seized a vacant space on the smooth railing.

But now his oversensitive ears caught something behind him, and he looked back across the level terrace. Approaching him softly though without apparent suaveness were five figures, two of which were the sinister old woman and the fanged, furry little animal. The other three were what sent him unconscious — for they were living entities about eight feet high, shaped precisely like the spiky images on the balustrade, and propelling themselves by a spider-like wriggling of their lower set of starfish-arms.

Gilman awaked in his bed, drenched by a cold perspiration and with a smarting sensation in his face, hands, and feet. Springing to the floor, he washed and dressed in frantic haste, as if it were necessary for him to get out of the house as quickly as possible. He did not know where he wished to go, but felt that once more he would have to sacrifice his classes. The odd pull toward that spot in the sky between Hydra and Argo had abated, but another of even greater strength had taken its place. Now he felt that he must go north — infinitely north. He dreaded to cross the bridge that gave a view of the desolate island in the Miskatonic, so went over the Peabody Avenue bridge. Very often he stumbled, for his eyes and ears were chained to an extremely lofty point in the blank blue sky.

After about an hour he got himself under better control, and saw that he was far from the city. All around him stretched the bleak emptiness of salt marshes, while the narrow road ahead led to Innsmouth — that ancient, half-deserted town which Arkham people were so curiously unwilling to visit. Though the northward pull had not diminished, he resisted it as he had resisted the other pull, and finally found that he could almost balance the one against the other. Plodding back to town and getting some coffee at a soda

fountain, he dragged himself into the public library and browsed aimlessly among the lighter magazines. Once he met some friends who remarked how oddly sunburned he looked, but he did not tell them of his walk. At three o'clock he took some lunch at a restaurant, noting meanwhile that the pull had either lessened or divided itself. After that he killed the time at a cheap cinema show, seeing the inane performance over and over again without paying any attention to it.

About nine at night he drifted homeward and stumbled into the ancient house. Joe Mazurewicz was whining unintelligible prayers, and Gilman hastened up to his own garret chamber without pausing to see if Elwood was in. It was when he turned on the feeble electric light that the shock came. At once he saw there was something on the table which did not belong there, and a second look left no room for doubt. Lying on its side — for it could not stand up alone — was the exotic spiky figure which in his monstrous dream he had broken off the fantastic balustrade. No detail was missing. The ridged, barrel-shaped centre, the thin, radiating arms, the knobs at each end, and the flat, slightly outward-curving starfish-arms spreading from those knobs — all were there. In the electric light the colour seemed to be a kind of iridescent grey veined with green, and Gilman could see amidst his horror and bewilderment that one of the knobs ended in a jagged break corresponding to its former point of attachment to the dream-railing.

Only his tendency toward a dazed stupor prevented him from screaming aloud. This fusion of dream and reality was too much to bear. Still dazed, he clutched at the spiky thing and staggered downstairs to Landlord Dombrowski's quarters. The whining prayers of the superstitious loomfixer were still sounding through the mouldy halls, but Gilman did not mind them now. The landlord was in, and greeted him pleasantly. No, he had not seen that thing before and did not know anything about it. But his wife had said she found a funny tin thing in one of the beds when she fixed the rooms at noon, and maybe that was it. Dombrowski called her, and she waddled in. Yes, that was the thing. She had found it in the young gentleman's bed — on the side next the wall. It had looked very queer to her, but of course the young gentleman had lots of queer things in his room — books and curios and pictures and markings on paper. She certainly knew nothing about it.

So Gilman climbed upstairs again in a mental turmoil, convinced that he was either still dreaming or that his somnambulism had run to incredible extremes and led him to depredations in unknown places. Where had he got this outré thing? He did not recall seeing it in any museum in Arkham. It must have been somewhere, though; and the sight of it as he snatched

it in his sleep must have caused the odd dream-picture of the balustraded terrace. Next day he would make some very guarded inquiries — and perhaps see the nerve specialist.

Meanwhile he would try to keep track of his somnambulism. As he went upstairs and across the garret hall he sprinkled about some flour which he had borrowed — with a frank admission as to its purpose — from the landlord. He had stopped at Elwood's door on the way, but had found all dark within. Entering his room, he placed the spiky thing on the table, and lay down in complete mental and physical exhaustion without pausing to undress. From the closed loft above the slanting ceiling he thought he heard a faint scratching and padding, but he was too disorganised even to mind it. That cryptical pull from the north was getting very strong again, though it seemed now to come from a lower place in the sky.

In the dazzling violet light of dream the old woman and the fanged, furry thing came again and with a greater distinctness than on any former occasion. This time they actually reached him, and he felt the crone's withered claws clutching at him. He was pulled out of bed and into empty space, and for a moment he heard a rhythmic roaring and saw the twilight amorphousness of the vague abysses seething around him. But that moment was very brief, for presently he was in a crude, windowless little space with rough beams and planks rising to a peak just above his head, and with a curious slanting floor underfoot. Propped level on that floor were low cases full of books of every degree of antiquity and disintegration, and in the centre were a table and bench, both apparently fastened in place. Small objects of unknown shape and nature were ranged on the tops of the cases, and in the flaming violet light Gilman thought he saw a counterpart of the spiky image which had puzzled him so horribly. On the left the floor fell abruptly away, leaving a black triangular gulf out of which, after a second's dry rattling, there presently climbed the hateful little furry thing with the yellow fangs and bearded human face.

The evilly grinning beldame still clutched him, and beyond the table stood a figure he had never seen before — a tall, lean man of dead black colouration but without the slightest sign of negroid features; wholly devoid of either hair or beard, and wearing as his only garment a shapeless robe of some heavy black fabric. His feet were indistinguishable because of the table and bench, but he must have been shod, since there was a clicking whenever he changed position. The man did not speak, and bore no trace of expression on his small, regular features. He merely pointed to a book of prodigious size which lay open on the table, while the beldame thrust a huge grey quill into Gilman's right hand.

