

LOVECRAFT

by

Hans Rodionoff



*"Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things
which escape those who dream only by night."*

- Edgar Allan Poe



1



LOVECRAFT

OVER BLACK

Slithering sounds, wet and loathsome. Something is moving slowly in the darkness. And now other diabolical sounds join in; whispers, susurrations, low and desperate moans.

Slowly, we fade in from black and find ourselves...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (1893)

In the middle of a frantic coupling. The man and the woman involved are tearing at each other like wild animals, sweat coating their bodies. The man is in his mid-thirties, the girl is roughly ten years younger.

The man rolls the woman over onto her back and thrusts into her, his black hair plastered to his forehead. The sweat drips down his cheeks and nestles in his thick handlebar moustache. This man is WINFIELD.

The girl, a CHAMBERMAID in the hotel, arches her back and moans in encouragement. Winfield shuts his eyes tight, straining to keep something from his mind. She looks up at him, reaches up with her hands to caress his face.

CHAMBERMAID

Look at me, Winnie. Look at me. See me.
See me.

Winfield turns his face out of her hands, not wanting to indulge the girl for whatever reason. But she persists.

CHAMBERMAID (cont'd)

Oh Winnie! Look at me! Please, look at me!

With the greatest dread and hesitation. Winfield opens his eyes and looks down at his partner.

That's when his mind snaps.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

It's late, and the lobby of this semi-elegant hotel is all but deserted. The decor is fitting of a higher end place of lodging, situated in the growing metropolis of Chicago around the end of the 19th century.

The hotel MANAGER is a small, fastidious man with his hair meticulously parted in the middle. He is attempting to do the last of his business before he retires. Then, a horrifying shriek comes from upstairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reacts, pulls a small PISTOL from beneath the front desk and heads toward the staircase.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A series of bangs on the door, presumably the hotel manager. But Winfield is in no shape to answer. He is crouched in the far corner of the room, huddled in total fear. His head turns to the side, trying to pry his eyes off...

The CHAMBERMAID, who is now transformed into something only partially human. The upper part of her body is still the voluptuous young lady, but her eyes are stark white, no pupils at all. As terrifying as this is, it's the rest of her that has poor Winfield screaming.

Below her waist, she is nothing more than a cluster of writhing, slimy tentacles. The tentacles slowly probe out from her base and pull her along the floor toward Winfield.

WINFIELD

Stay away! For the love of God! Stay away!

CHAMBERMAID

Look at me, Winfield. Look at me and despair! See me! See your death!

WINFIELD

Noooo! Please... noooooo!

CHAMBERMAID

See me. See me.

Winfield is completely unhinged. His bladder lets go and a flood of his own urine seeps around him. He crouches down lower and begins to sob in total abandon.

WINFIELD

Please. God. Please.

And then the door bursts open. The manager hurries in, his pistol at the ready.

He takes in the scene, then slowly lowers the gun. There's no danger here. Only a man, whimpering in the corner and a frightened chambermaid, clutching the sheet to her naked body.

The chambermaid rushes to the manager's side and cries hysterically.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BUTLER HOSPITAL - DAY

SUPER: BUTLER HOSPITAL, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.

A clouded, grey sky looms over the Butler Hospital; A grim work of architecture, constructed of cold stone and wrought iron.

INT. BUTLER HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In the waiting room is an attractive, although distracted looking woman in her early twenties. She is SARAH. Sitting dutifully next to her is her 5 year old son, HOWARD.

Howard clearly has male features, but at first glance most would mistake him for a female. His fine, blonde hair is long, hanging past his shoulders and he's wearing a dress.

They look over as a DOCTOR enters the room and calls out.

DOCTOR
Lovecraft?

Sarah stands and nervously collects herself and her son. They head toward the doctor.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
Hello. I'm Doctor Matheson. Are you Mrs.
Lovecraft?

SARAH
Yes.

The Doctor shakes her hand gently, then looks to the boy and tries a smile.

DOCTOR
And you must be...

SARAH
This is Howard.

At this, Howard pipes up in a shrill voice.

HOWARD
I'm a little girl!

The Doctor looks confused and a little embarrassed.

DOCTOR
(to Sarah)
The imagination of the young.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Howard, go and sit down please. Read quietly.

HOWARD

Yes ma'am.

Howard returns to a chair in the waiting room and sits down with a book from under his arm.

DOCTOR

Does he read already?

SARAH

Yes. He writes as well.

DOCTOR

Remarkable. He's only five years old, am I right?

SARAH

Yes, Doctor. Please, I'd like to see my husband.

DOCTOR

Of course.

INT. BUTLER HOSPITAL, VISITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

This is a slightly larger room. Bars on the windows, a long wooden table runs down the center of the room. One side for patients, one side for visitors.

Winfield is sitting on one of the chairs across from Sarah. He is wearing the hospital's patient wear, white starched shirt, white trousers. His eyes have red rings underneath them, as if he hasn't slept in days.

SARAH

Winfield, I forgive you. I wanted you to know that.

WINFIELD

You are... too good to me, Sarah.

SARAH

I want you to rest. Restore your health so that you can return to us.

WINFIELD

Howard, is he alright?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Yes. Howard's fine. He's too young to understand all of this.

WINFIELD

You must see that he does! You must see that he understands, Sarah.

Winfield's shout makes one of the burly ORDERLIES look over. He tries to subdue his tone.

WINFIELD (cont'd)

You must tell him. The time is near. The walls, the barriers are thinning. They're closer than ever, and he will see them. He has the gift, as I do. You must let me speak with him.

SARAH

Please dearest, this is not the time. You're distraught and tired. You must rest, and then...

WINFIELD

Rest! I cannot rest! They're coming, Sarah! They're right outside, pushing in! I've seen them! The book is the gate! You must burn it!

The orderly looks over again and starts to head over.

SARAH

Winfield, please...

WINFIELD

Burn it, Sarah! Burn it immediately!

Now the orderly gets to the table and grabs Winfield by the arms.

ORDERLY

That's enough, Mr. Lovecraft. Let's just stay calm.

Winfield's spins and punches the orderly right in the mouth. The orderly falls backward, two more ORDERLIES start to rush over with a straightjacket.

He leans in desperately towards his wife.

WINFIELD

Burn it, Sarah. Promise me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The other orderlies get to Winfield, grab him and start to put him into the straightjacket.

SARAH
Winfield...

WINFIELD
Promise me!

Sarah looks at her crazed husband, then sighs and bows her head.

EXT. PHILLIPS HOME - DAY

A coach pulls up outside a well kept two story home deep in the heart of Providence, Rhode Island. Sarah gets out, then turns and helps Howard out of the coach.

Howard turns and runs toward the house, screaming with joy.

HOWARD
Grampa! Auntie Lillie! Father is mad!
Father is in the madhouse!

Standing on the porch of the house is Sarah's family, the Phillips; a distinguished looking man in his early sixties, Sarah's father, WHIPPLE PHILLIPS. He's standing next to one of Sarah's sisters, LILLIAN (35).

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, SITTING ROOM - LATER

The sun is starting to set, the light outside is getting soft and violet colored. Lillian is sitting across a small table from Sarah, they are sharing tea.

Howard is outside and can be seen through the window, sitting on the front porch with his Grandpa Whipple.

SARAH
I just feel horrible making such an imposition.

LILLIAN
Don't be silly. I'm sure it won't be long at all before Winfield is back.

SARAH
If you had seen him, Lillian, you might be less sure. He looked so... so on the brink. And the things he was saying...
(starting to break down)
He sounded so insane...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sarah starts to cry, but stifles it. She puts on a brave smile, wipes a tear and looks out at her son.

SARAH (cont'd)

What will become of him. Without a father. A lonely, wretched little boy with no father.

LILLIAN

He'll be fine, Sarah. He has his Grandpa Whipple.

They both turn and look at the child as he talks in excited tones with his grandfather.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HOWARD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard is lying in a bed that's far too big for him, stroking a black cat named NECROMAN. Whipple is sitting on the edge of the bed, holding the boy's attention with a ghost story.

GRANDPA WHIPPLE

Then, at the window, there was a sudden long screeching sound! He turned, and there at the window was the most fearsome apparition ever seen! Black and sinewy, with huge, bat-like wings and a terrible visage with no eyes, nor nose, only a gaping maw filled with razor-like teeth. The creature reached out for him...

Suddenly, a KNOCK on the door! Howard jumps in fright. Whipple actually starts too. Sarah walks in.

SARAH

Sorry to interrupt. Howard, it's time for bed.

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am. Good night, mother. Good night, grampa.

GRANDPA WHIPPLE

Good night, my boy. Don't let the night gaunts get you.

Howard smiles slightly, but somewhere inside there's a bit of worry. Howard strokes Necroman and tries to go to sleep as Whipple turns the light off.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HOWARD'S BEDROOM - LATER

It is later in the evening and Howard is fast asleep. Necroman is sleeping happily on his chest.

Without explanation, Necroman wakes and hisses at the window. The cat stands and arches it's back, hissing again. Then, it jumps off Howard's chest and runs under the bed.

The reason becomes evident soon enough when a dreadful SCREECHING, scraping sound grinds on the windowsill. The sound is loud enough to wake Howard.

The boy turns his head toward the window. His fear has made him instantly wide awake. He slowly pulls the covers away and climbs out of bed.

Fear makes his eyes go wider as he gets near the window, afraid to look, but unable to resist.

POV - THE WINDOW

As we slowly come around through Howard's POV, we see what's at the window. It is the horrifying creature from his uncle's tale, a NIGHT GAUNT!

It's a skeleton with black, rubbery skin stretched tight over the bones. The face nothing but a featureless ebony mass, a pair of gigantic bat wings keep the creature aloft.

BACK TO SCENE

Howard backs away from the window, his eyes and mouth open wide in shock.

The creature scrapes at the window again with it's hand, long TALONS squeal against the glass.

Strangely, Howard is compelled to move toward the hideous thing. His tiny hand moves out and unlocks the window.

He pushes the window up and the monster slides into the room.

As if realizing his mistake, Howard turns and tries to run. But it's too late, the thing is on him. It takes the boy up in it's rubbery, bony arms and rushes back toward the window.

Howard screams in terror.

With one quick flap of it's wings, the pair rushes out the window like a gust of wind.

EXT. SKY OVER PROVIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

The night gaunt flies over the darkened streets of Providence, the screaming child clutched tight in it's arms.

EXT. FANTASTIC LANDSCAPE - MOMENTS LATER

Howard is carried by the horrible, bat like thing far away from Providence, over the sea to a land born from nightmares.

Below them is a series of endless chasms that stretch into infinite blackness, and ranges of needle sharp mountains reaching up toward them like some gigantic, hideous mouth.

Howard screams again. The night gaunt seems to laugh, a strange bird-like chirping, then it releases it's hold on the boy! Howard falls through dark space, about to be impaled by the monstrous mountains below!

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HOWARD'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A terrified scream from Howard as he bolts upright from this nightmare. All is the same in the room, only Howard is a boy of 10 now.

His hair has finally been cut to a normal length, and he looks like any other boy of his age, except that he seems a little gaunt.

Sarah rushes in with a glass of milk.

SARAH

Howard?

HOWARD

Yes, I'm alright mother. I'm sorry.

SARAH

More nightmares. You need to go to sleep earlier, stop staying up half the night. You would probably sleep better.

HOWARD

What time is it?

SARAH

Nearly noon. Now, why not get dressed and go outside. It's a beautiful day.

HOWARD

Alright.

EXT. PHILLIPS HOME - DAY

A pair of cute young girls, around Howard's age, start to pass the Phillips home on their way somewhere. As they get near, they look up toward the house with a little fear.

Then, suddenly, Howard jumps out from behind a bush! He's dressed in a weird looking pair of knickers with a turban on his head. He's got a homemade wooden SABRE in his hand!

HOWARD

Rrraaaar!

The two girls scream and take off running, startled out of their wits.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Flee! Flee for your lives, pathetic mortals! It is I, the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred!

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, SITTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sarah is watching Howard through the window again. Lillian comes in and watches alongside.

SARAH

He doesn't even know how to swing. Look at him. He doesn't even use the swing, just jumps out and frightens passers by.

LILLIAN

Too much of his grandfather's influence I think. All those ghost stories he reads. Edgar Allan Poe, Ambrose Bierce. A boy like that should be reading Arabian Nights.

POV - THROUGH THE WINDOW

Howard gets himself set up behind the bush again, preparing to scare another victim.

EXT. PHILLIPS HOME - DAY

A couple in their mid-thirties walks along the street. The woman jumps as Howard pops out from behind the same bush with his sabre!

HOWARD

Raaar! Flee for your lives mortals! Flee from the mad Arab! I am Abdul Alhazred!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The couple smiles and hurries on, but Sarah comes rushing around the corner. Her face is twisted into a mask of fright and anger. She grabs Howard roughly by the arm.

SARAH

What did you say?! Howard! What did you say!

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HOWARD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Howard is sitting on his bed, crying. His mother is standing over him, speaking to him in the tones that parents save for the most serious of moments.

SARAH

Howard. The name. The name you used. What did you say.

HOWARD

I said I was the mad Arab. Abdul Alhazred.

SARAH

Where did you learn that?

Howard hangs his head. Sarah gets right up close to him and physically shakes him.

SARAH (cont'd)

Howard! Where did you learn that name!

HOWARD

One... one of father's books.

This is not what Sarah wanted to hear. Her worst fears are becoming a reality.

SARAH

Which one. Which book of your father's?

HOWARD

It's called Al Azif. I think. It was written by Abdul Alhazred.

SARAH

The Necronomicon. Oh God, Howard, please say it wasn't the Necronomicon.

HOWARD

But mother, why? I thought I was allowed to read anything in father's library.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Oh god. Oh god. No. You... where is it,
Howard? Where is that book now?

Howard looks up at his mother through his tears.

HOWARD

Under the bed.

Sarah wastes no time. She rushes over to the bed and starts to get down on all fours to reach underneath. Howard springs off the opposite side and manages to scramble under the bed before her.

He gets the book and backs away toward the window. It's a large volume that has the thickness of a dictionary and is bound in some kind of bizarre looking leather.

Sarah stands up and walks toward Howard.

SARAH

Howard. Give me the book.

HOWARD

Why? What are you going to do with it?

SARAH

What your father told me to do long ago.
I'm going to burn it.

HOWARD

No! You can't! I won't let you!

SARAH

Howard, give me the book! It's a thing of
evil! A thing that was not meant to be
read! Give it to me!

HOWARD

No!

Howard takes off running and manages to get past his mother. He bolts out the door and takes off running.

SARAH

Howard!

EXT. PHILLIPS HOME - DAY

Howard comes running out of the house, looking totally frantic. He's got the leather bound volume clutched tightly to his chest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His mother appears from the house a moment later, but she can't catch the boy and she stops at the end of the walk. She yells after him, to no avail.

SARAH

Howard, please! The book is evil!

EXT. STREETS OF PROVIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Howard rushes away from his house, seeking a place to hide. In his haste he nearly knocks over a couple of ELDERLY MEN. They shout admonishing remarks as he runs on.

The boy reaches a bridge, leading over a slowly moving stream. He turns off the main road, and starts running down the embankment.

Nettles tear at Howard's clothing as he plummets down the hillside.

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - DUSK

The boy reaches the bottom of the embankment, rights himself. He slowly starts wading through the stream toward the underside of the bridge.

Once he's under the bridge, hidden by the shadows, he settles down on the bank and pulls out his treasured tome.

He looks around his gloomy surroundings for a moment, then opens the book and reads aloud.

HOWARD

Nor is it to be thought that man is either the oldest or the last of earth's masters. The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be. Not in the spaces we know, but between them. Ia Shub-Niggurath, the black goat of the woods with a thousand young!

Just as he utters this last sentence, something slithers nearby. The sound of dew-coated flesh sliding on dank earth.

Howard peers toward the place where the sound came from. It's a dark corner under the bridge, where brush and trash has collected into what looks like a nest.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Who is it? Who's there?

No answer. Howard gingerly puts the book down and stands. He cautiously starts to creep toward the direction of the sound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The boy finds a strange, viscous trail leading into the dark tangle. He stoops and starts to follow, when...

K-SPLASH! A rock lands in the water right next to him. Howard leaps out of his skin and screams.

He turns to see three boys about his age, standing on the bank. Their leader, a bully named THEO, steps forward.

THEO

What are you doing down here, Lovey? This isn't the place for queers.

Snickers from Theo's two cronies.

HOWARD

Don't call me that.

THEO

What, you mean Lovey? And who's gonna stop me? You, Lovey?

Theo takes another step toward Howard. Howard instinctively tries to shield the book, but Theo shoves him aside.

THEO (cont'd)

What's this, Lovey?

The bully grabs up the book. Howard tries to stop him, but the two cronies restrain him.

HOWARD

Don't touch it! Give it back! By God, I'll...

THEO

You'll what?

Howard backs down, but continues to struggle against the two boys holding him. Theo opens the book and tries to read some of it.

THEO (cont'd)

This is a bunch of crap. It's not even real words. Just a jumbled up bunch of letters. Listen to this, you guys.

HOWARD

Don't read it, Theo. Please, just give it back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THEO

Shut up!

(reading)

That is not dead which can eternal lie,
in with strange aeons, even death may
die. In his house at R'lyeh, dead Cthulhu
waits dreaming.

(beat)

What kind of mamby pamby crap is that?

HOWARD

Don't read that out loud, Theo. You don't
understand what kind of book that is.

THEO

Sure I do. It's a queer book. You know
what I think, Lovey? I think you're as
crazy as a bedbug, and I think I better
take this away from you before you get
any crazier.

HOWARD

No! Give it back!

Howard breaks loose of the two boys and rushes at Theo.

The bully punches him in the nose, sending him to the floor.
Howard looks up at Theo with total hatred. Theo and the two
boys laugh.

Then, the slithering sound returns, louder than before. The
boys stop laughing. Their eyes turn from the crumpled form of
Howard to something in the darkness behind him.

Theo drops the book in horror and starts to back away. The
other two boys do the same, their faces twisted in fear.

Howard turns reluctantly to see whatever has his enemies
scurrying away.

IN THE DARKNESS

An ominous SHAPE moves out of the nest. It starts to rise up
to it's full height, blocking out all light from above.

Weakened sunlight silhouettes the monstrous form. All that
can be made out is that it is coated with some hideous black
slime, and has numerous eyes that glisten in the darkness.

BACK TO SCENE

Howard's mouth drops in awe and fear. The other boys turn and start bolting for the faltering sunshine, screaming in terror.

Keeping one eye on the creature, Howard reaches out and grabs his treasured book, then starts to crawl up the embankment.

EXT. ARKHAM BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Howard finishes the climb, panting and covered with grime. He's expecting the familiar streets of Providence, but this is not what he finds.

The town, while sharing some basic geography with Providence, has an entirely different feel. This place is darker, more sinister. This is ARKHAM.

Howard looks around, disoriented. He's starting to feel slightly panicked, then he spots the two ELDERLY MEN he bumped into before. Slightly relieved, he runs toward them.

But his relief is short lived. He stops in shock as he gets near them. These are not the men he bumped into, they only appeared that way from afar.

On closer inspection, the men look more like poor representations of human beings, molded by some mad sculptor, eyes glowing with hellfire. Howard's breath sticks in his throat.

HOWARD

Ex... excuse me. I hate to bother you.
But I seem to have lost my way. Could one
of you help me find Angell Street?

One of the ELDERLY MEN fixes Howard with an evil glare. His voice comes out in unnatural growl.

ELDERLY MAN

Angell Street, you say? There's no Angell
Street in Arkham.

HOWARD

Arkham? No. This is Providence.
Providence, Rhode Island.

The two old men share a malicious laugh.

ELDERLY MAN

My boy, I'm afraid you're mistaken. You
are in Arkham, Massachusetts. Now, why
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELDERLY MAN (cont'd)
don't you come with us. We'll take you
home. Come.

The elderly man reaches out for Howard. Howard is lulled into an almost hypnotic state. The elderly man reaches out for him with a loving hand.

At the last possible instant, the boy comes to his senses. He jolts and ducks away.

ELDERLY MAN (cont'd)
What is it, boy? Come here, let us help
you. Come here, boy.

Howard starts to stumble away, then turns and flees at top speed..

EXT. ARKHAM STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

The youth rushes through the unfamiliar streets of Arkham, past more strange and malignant looking inhabitants.

He turns down a sinister looking alley.

EXT. FEDERAL HILL - MOMENTS LATER

Howard exits the alley, still running. He ascends a small hill, following the narrow road until it ends at...

EXT. DARK CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

A dark, looming church with a great tower and tapering steeple. This vacant building is in a state of great decrepitude. Some of the high stone buttresses have fallen.

The sooty Gothic windows are largely unbroken, but look as if they've been painted black from inside. A rusty iron fence encloses the grounds.

Howard cautiously walks up to the visibly padlocked gate and squeezes through, into the churchyard.

The boy walks around to the back side of the church, finds one of the windows broken. He peers in cautiously.

INT. DARK CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Howard clammers through the window, still holding on to his precious volume. He lands on the dust covered floor and takes in his surroundings.

The gloomy interior of the church is foreboding and silent. Above the altar, a huge crucifix hangs upside down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, from above, there's a long scraping sound. Howard starts. He looks up to where the steeple of the church is. The sound gets worse.

Howard looks around for a place to stash the book, spots a bookcase off to one side. He hurries over.

As he places his book with the other volumes. His hand falters, and he considers taking the book back. Then, the sound from above returns. Much louder this time, as if something is clambering down toward him.

And it's this feeling of impending doom that sends Howard running out of the church, back into the gloomy streets of Arkham.

EXT. DARK CHURCH - DUSK

Howard bolts away from the foreboding structure, back down Federal Hill. He looks terrified.

EXT. ARKHAM STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

The sun is starting to set, and the dark streets of Arkham are taking on an even more sinister look. Howard looks around desperately for something familiar in this alien city.

Fear settles heavy on the boy, and he starts to cry. He runs for the Arkham bridge.

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Howard hugs himself, wrapping his arms tight around his torso. His red eyes search the underside of the bridge for the nest or it's evil inhabitant.

There's nothing, only the sound of cicadas and frogs. Reeds blow in the wind.

Howard climbs up the side of the embankment.

EXT. STREETS OF PROVIDENCE - NIGHT

The boy gets to the top of his climb, finds himself back in Providence. The familiarity of it makes him sob in relief. He turns and runs in the direction of home.

EXT. PHILLIPS HOME - NIGHT

Howard runs up the drive to his warmly lit house.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The front door opens and Howard comes rushing in. In the other room, Sarah, Lillian and Grandpa Whipple spring up from their seats.

SARAH
Howard? Howard?!

Sarah runs into the entryway, grabbing Howard in a fierce hug. Howard cries in relief.

SARAH (cont'd)
Oh Howard, you rascal... where were you!?
You scared mother! Where were you?!

Howard replies between sobs.

HOWARD
I was lost, mother.

SARAH
194 Angell Street, Howard. You know where we live. You just ask anyone and they'll tell you. Providence isn't that big.

HOWARD
But I wasn't in Providence.

SARAH
What? Stop talking nonsense. Where else could you have been?

HOWARD
Arkham.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HOWARD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard is sleeping soundly. Sarah, sitting on the edge of the bed, strokes his cheek gently. She rises and walks to the door. Whipple waits out in the hallway.

As soon as Sarah steps out into the hall and closes the door, Howard's eyes pop open.

Outside, the distinctive cry of WHIPPOORWILLS starts to rise.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sarah pulls Whipple away and speaks to him urgently.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Do you see now? Do you see the damage
that your horrible stories do?

GRANDPA WHIPPLE

Don't be such a worrywart, Sarah. He's a
boy, taken to flights of fancy and
imagination. There's no harm in it.

SARAH

No harm?! Disappearing for practically a
whole day?

GRANDPA WHIPPLE

Probably off in his beloved churchyard,
playing the Mad Arab.

SARAH

He said he was in a place called Arkham.

GRANDPA WHIPPLE

Arkham is a town that I use in my
stories. It's no more real than the Night
Gaunts for goodness sake.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HOWARD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard sits wide awake in his bed, covers held up tight
against his chin as if to ward off what he's looking at.

Across the room is Howard's window, and outside the window is
ebony blackness. Strange scraping sounds are coming from
outside, as if something is clambering up the side of the
house to Howard's room.

The boy is frozen in fear, staring at the thin piece of glass
that separates him from nameless horrors.

Then, a shadow falls over the window, as if the very night
had somehow gotten darker. THWAP! A fleshy sound as an albino
white tentacle slaps against the window.

The screeching of the whippoorwills gets louder.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, WHIPPLE'S LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Whipple stops reading, as if hearing something upstairs.

He closes the book, places it in his lap, and cocks his head
to the side. He listens.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HOWARD'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Howard stares in awe as the creature climbs up the side of the house. A slime-coated writhing mass of malformed flesh blocks the moonlight from view.

The boy chokes out a cry for help.

HOWARD

Muh.... mother. Mother! Grandpa!

The door flies open, and Whipple enters, just in time to see the slithering mass push it's way into the room through the now open window.

The cry of the birds outside is now an unbearable cacophony.

GRANDPA WHIPPLE

My god...

Whipple grabs his chest and grimaces. He falls to his knees in agony. Howard screams!

HOWARD

Grandpa!

Howard looks at his fallen grandfather. Whipple lies face down and wheezing on the floor. The sight of this changes Howard's attitude. He sets his jaw and turns toward the creature.

The horrid mass is now completely in the room. It thumps and slides toward the old man. The boy makes a bizarre symbol with his left hand and speaks in an alien tongue.

HOWARD (cont'd)

N'gai, n'ghaa'ghaa, bugg-shoggoth, y'hah!
Yog-Sothoth! N'gai!

The beast howls an unearthly cry of agony, a sound born in the deepest bowels of hell.

HOWARD (cont'd)

N'gai! Y'hah, n'ghaa'ghaa!

A whooshing sound, a quick glimpse of a tentacle as it slides out the window, and the creature vanishes. Howard holds his left hand in the same position, making the Voorish sign.

Sarah and Lillian rush in. Sarah runs right to Howard's bed, Lillian crouches down at Whipple's side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Howard! What is it?

Howard doesn't move, just keeps his attention pinned on the window, his hand still holds the sign.

HOWARD

A shoggoth.

SARAH

What?

LILLIAN

Sarah, call the doctor! His heart!

Sarah looks over at Lillian and Whipple, then runs for the door. Howard turns from the window for the first time, sees his grandfather lying on the ground.

The boy climbs down off the bed and goes to Whipple's side. He gently takes his grandpa's hand.

HOWARD

I didn't stop it in time.

Whipple's breathing has stopped completely. Outside, the whippoorwills suddenly fall silent.

Howard looks at his grandfather, a sad smile on his face.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Don't worry, Aunt Lillie. The whippoorwills didn't get his soul. See how they're silent now? They didn't get him.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. PROVIDENCE GRAVEYARD - DAY

A priest gives last rites over the open grave of Whipple Phillips.

Sarah holds Howard's hand, Lillian and other family members stand nearby. They look on in somber silence as the casket is lowered down into the earth.

FATHER

Lord, we ask that you would welcome your child home. This man, Whipple Phillips, who was loved so well here on earth, is now returning home to you, dear Lord. Bless his family with understanding and
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER (cont'd)
peace. We ask these things in name of the
Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

A few murmured prayers, and the mourners start to head away.
Some family friends giving Lillian and Sarah hugs of
encouragement.

Howard takes a step toward the open grave and looks down at
the casket. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small
piece of wood.

On the wood, the boy has drawn a small symbol, THE ELDER
SIGN. It is a five pointed star with an eye in the center.

Howard drops the tiny piece of wood down into the grave, then
makes the Voorish sign briefly with his left hand.

His mother steps up to his side and takes his hand again.

SARAH
Come, Howard. Let's go home.

EXT. PHILLIPS HOME - DAY

A horse drawn buggy drops off Sarah, Lillian and Howard. The
three black clad figures get out and head for the house.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, SITTING ROOM - LATER

Howard wanders around the house aimlessly, picking up odds
and ends and eavesdropping on his mother's conversation with
his aunt.

SARAH
I'm sorry, Lillian. I simply can't talk
about this now.

LILLIAN
When, Sarah? When it's too late? With
father gone we won't be able to support
ourselves. We have to move to a smaller
house or we stand to lose everything.

SARAH
This is everything. This is all I have
left, Lillian. My beloved Winfield died
in that horrible asylum, now father is
dead. You and Howard and this home.
That's all I have left. If I lose
anything more, I may go mad myself.

Howard turns away glumly and heads upstairs.

INT. PHILLIPS HOME, HOWARD'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Howard comes in and walks over to his desk. He sits at the chair, opens the desk and pulls out a stack of paper, inkwell and quill pen.

The boy takes a moment to situate himself, then picks up the pen and starts writing.

ANGLE

On the top page of Howard's stack of paper, the boy has written:

THE SHOGGOTH
by Howard Phillips Lovecraft

BACK TO SCENE

Howard continues to write, the scratching sound of his pen getting more frantic as he gains momentum.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, HOWARD'S ROOM - DAY

This is a smaller bedroom, in a smaller house. An older HOWARD (30) sits at his childhood desk, scrawling words on a stack of paper.

Howard has grown into a lean young man. His hair is fastidiously parted, his pants and shirt ironed and spotless. His manner and appearance bring to mind old world sensibilities.

The writer pauses only briefly at a knock on the door.

HOWARD
Yes, come in.

Howard's mother, Sarah, enters. She is now nearly 50, and looks like the years have been full of painful secrets.

SARAH
I brought you some milk.

Sarah sets down the glass of milk on Howard's desk.

HOWARD
Thank you, mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

You look tired. Let me know if you want anything to eat.

HOWARD

I will.

Howard stands and starts collecting the pages together. He puts the finished manuscript in an old leather satchel.

SARAH

What are you writing?

HOWARD

My poorest work to date, stuff done to order for a vulgar magazine and written to the herd's level. I've become a Grub Street hack, mother.

SARAH

What do you call this one?

HOWARD

Herbert West, Re-Animator. A series of stories about a doctor who discovers a serum to reanimate the dead.

SARAH

Oh Howard, why do you persist with such morbid subjects?

HOWARD

These are the stories that present themselves to me, mother.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The editor of a pulp magazine; EDWIN BAIRD bears his fifty years with dignity and pride. Baird gathers together Howard's latest work as the author stands nearby.

BAIRD

Yes, yes, Howard. Weird Tales will buy it, as usual. You're fast becoming one of the premier practitioners of fantastic literature, right alongside Burroughs and your friend, Robert Howard. I dare say, at times your writing reminds me of your hero, Mr. Poe.

HOWARD

I make no claim to membership in the first rank of weird writers, Edwin. It is
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD (cont'd)
enough for me if I can make a good
showing amongst the smaller fry
represented in these cheap magazines.

BAIRD
Go easy, Howard. These cheap magazines
are paying the rent. Which brings me to
my next point. I wonder if you'd be
willing to make your writing a bit more
accessible.

HOWARD
You mean write something that would
appeal to a larger class.

BAIRD
No. I mean this.

Edwin pulls a small case from under his desk and slides it
toward Howard.

BAIRD (cont'd)
A typewriter. Your handwriting is
atrocious and it's costing me a fortune
in transcription.

Howard reluctantly takes the case and opens it. He grimaces.

HOWARD
I shall give it a try. But I can't
promise anything. I hate the hard
clicking of these damned machine-age
spawn.

BAIRD
Now that you've brought it up though, I'd
like you to consider writing something a
bit more commercial.

HOWARD
I have no wish to make such an appeal,
Edwin. There are reasons behind my choice
of subject matter.

BAIRD
I don't doubt that, Howard. But if I have
one criticism of your work outside of
your penmanship, it's that your mythology
is so vague and fanciful. I sometimes
doubt if it inspires fear in our average
reader. Let's take this Kuthuloo
creature. This is some kind of lizard
with the head of an octopus?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

Shuthoolhoo. It's pronounced Shuthoolhoo.

BAIRD

But it's spelled... C.t.h.u.l.h.u.

HOWARD

The first sound cannot be replicated by the human tongue. It is meant to be a cross between the "ch" sound and the "th" sound.

BAIRD

Again, you make my point for me. Where do you come up with these names and why are these monsters always unnameable, eldritch, unspeakable, or indescribable? A man with your vocabulary should be able to come up with better adjectives.

HOWARD

Some things are too horrible to describe, Edwin.

BAIRD

So you say. But I've been witness to some true atrocities and would be able to describe them in full detail.

HOWARD

Evidently, we've witnessed different kinds of atrocities.

BAIRD

You're a stubborn man, Howard. Stubborn as a mule. Which is why I think you'll be perfect for this assignment.

HOWARD

What assignment?

BAIRD

Have you heard of Harry Houdini?

HOWARD

Yes. The illusionist.

BAIRD

Well, he's expressed interest in putting together a few stories for Weird Tales. He's got some interesting ideas, and I think a collaboration might be beneficial for both of you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HOWARD

I don't want to collaborate with anyone, and I don't want to stay in New York any longer than is absolutely necessary. I need to get back home.

BAIRD

One day, Howard. It won't kill you. Meet Mr. Houdini this evening, you can catch a train back to your beloved Providence in the morning. I'll arrange a good room for you.

HOWARD

I'd really rather not.

BAIRD

Did I mention the gourmet ice cream shop around the corner?

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY

Howard finishes a chocolate sundae. Edwin takes a gulp of coffee and pulls out his pocket watch.

BAIRD

Well Howard, I have another appointment. You know where the hotel is. I've put you on the list to attend Houdini's show this evening.

HOWARD

Fine. Thank you for the sundae. It's one thing we don't have in Providence is a proper ice cream shop.

BAIRD

My pleasure. Let me know how the meeting goes. And Howard... try to enjoy yourself.

Baird gets up and leaves. Howard watches him go, then turns back to his sundae.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

The year is now 1920, automobiles have taken over the streets where horse and buggy used to be the norm.

Howard walks down the street in a strange, hunched over way, carrying the heavy typewriter case in one hand. He seems nervous and a little wary of the people he passes by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Unnoticed by the writer, a DARK FIGURE begins to follow him.

The dark figure sticks to the shadows and trails Howard all the way to the hotel.

The writer readjusts the satchel on his shoulder as he sees the hotel. It's one of the premiere hotels in old New York, and Howard is impressed.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Howard enters and walks across to the small desk by a window. He sets the typewriter case on the desk and pops the latches.

The writer hesitantly pulls the cumbersome machine out of the case and clears a place for it on the desk. He extends a bony index finger and punches one of the keys.

Howard makes a face and sits down on the bed. He looks around the room briefly, then goes to the window and takes in the view.

Suddenly, from behind him, the sound of a door CREAKING open. His door.

Howard turns around, expecting to see a bellboy perhaps. Nothing there.

HOWARD

Hello?

Cautiously, the writer opens the door wide and looks out into the hallway.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Howard looks up and down the corridor. No one there. He ducks back into his hotel room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A little spooked now, Howard returns to his hotel room. He surveys the room. Same as before, no one here. He reaches back behind him to close the door.

As he pushes it closed, he reveals the INTRUDER hiding behind the door! It is a man clad entirely in black, his head shaven clean.

Howard unknowingly starts to walk back toward the bed as the intruder unsheaths an evil looking CRESCENT KNIFE, and raises it over his head in attack position.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a fierce cry, the intruder charges.

INTRUDER

Heretic!

Howard spins and sees the attack just in time. He is able to get his arms up to catch the intruder mid-stride.

The intruder's momentum carries them both back into the room, where he slams Howard against the wall. Howard winces in pain, but manages to hold the attacker at bay.

INTRUDER (cont'd)

Infidel! You dare to speak of Cthulhu!
Die, treacherous dog!

Howard struggles on, his hand grabbing the neck of the attacker's shirt. He pulls it away, revealing a tattoo on the man's breast of an OCTOPUS-LIKE creature.

Lovecraft looks at the tattoo, then back at his attacker. Then, suddenly, the man's features change. In the blink of an eye, his face morphs into something altogether alien and sinister.

Howard gasps in terror and fights on, but his strength is clearly waning. The intruder continues to change, his face becoming a boiling mass of purplish flesh and razor sharp fangs.

INTRUDER (cont'd)

Ia! Ia! Cthulhu fhtagn!

The thing in Howard's grasp pushes the blade closer, until the cold steel touches skin. Howard desperately reaches over and manages to get a hand on his satchel.

With all his remaining energy, the writer swings the satchel as hard as he can. The heavy leather bag hits the intruder in the back of the head, but he remains unaffected.

The blow causes the satchel to open and a heavy book falls out onto the floor. The intruder looks down briefly and spots the book.

INTRUDER (cont'd)

The Necronomicon.

The thing loses all interest in Howard for a moment. He lets go of Howard's throat and moves toward the book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

INTRUDER (cont'd)

You are a fool, Carter. And you will die
a fool's death.

Howard uses the moment to seize the typewriter off the desk. The hefts it up with both hands and takes a step toward the intruder.

The thing senses his approach, turns and hisses savagely. Too late though, Howard brings the machine down on the beast's head with a sickening THUNK! The thing slumps to the floor.

It takes a moment for Howard to realize what he's done. A sickly green slime starts to ooze out of the thing's head.

Howard quickly gathers up the book and rushes out the door.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Howard runs out of the elevator to the front desk, gasping and haggard looking. The hotel MANAGER looks up curiously.

MANAGER

Mr. Lovecraft?

HOWARD

I've just been attacked! Please, come quickly!

The manager looks at the pasty, gangly man in front of him. Howard holds the Necronomicon tight to his chest.

MANAGER

Attacked? By whom?

HOWARD

A... man. He's in my room now! I think I may have... Please, call the police!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The manager, a POLICEMAN and Howard open the door to an empty room. There is sign of a struggle, Howard's typewriter lays smashed on the floor near a puddle of thick green ooze.

The three enter the room. The policeman places his hand on his revolver and cautiously makes his way around. The manager goes straight to the puddle.

MANAGER

What in God's name? Mr. Lovecraft, I'm sure I don't need to tell you that you will be held responsible for this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Howard looks around the room quizzically. The manager turns to the policeman.

MANAGER (cont'd)

I'm sure that will be all, officer. I'm sorry to have troubled you.

HOWARD

No! No, please! There was a, a man here. I swear it! He tried to kill me!

The policeman seems to take a moment, but the manager urges him toward the door.

MANAGER

Mr. Lovecraft is a writer of horror and macabre fantasy, officer. I'm afraid his artistic temperament seems to have gotten the better of him.

This seems to explain it well enough and the policeman heads out. The manager looks back in on Howard with a disdainful look.

MANAGER (cont'd)

I'll send a maid up to tend to that... spill, Mr. Lovecraft.

Then the manager is gone too, leaving Howard alone. Not wanting to spend another minute here, he gathers up his satchel, throws the book inside it, and rushes for the door.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

On stage, an eight foot tall changing screen with the face of a devil painted on it's surface. To one side, an oversized stopwatch ticks relentlessly.

The theater is packed. The onlookers watch the second hand moving slowly around the face of the giant clock. There is some concern as the second hand passes the three minute mark.

In the back of the theater, Howard stands in the shadows. He watches with macabre interest. The crowd seems tense and nervous.

Back on the stage, a scantily clad Magician's Assistant watches the clock intently while pacing back and forth. She is BESS, 40 years old, timeless beauty.

Bess looks off stage as a male ASSISTANT comes forward bearing an AXE. There is a slight commotion as Bess walks

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

forward and forces the axe away from the man. She urges him away, then takes a faltering step toward the screen.

The audience watches in silence as Bess looks back and forth, indecision scrawled on her face. Then, she lifts the axe, preparing to smash through the screen.

Howard bends forward, showing alarm.

Then, suddenly, the screen bursts open! A soaking wet MAN in a torn bathing suit stumbles out and falls on the floor, gasping for air. Behind him is a giant farmer's milk can which spills water all over the stage.

Bess sighs in relief, drops the axe and kneels by the man's side. He is her husband, 45 year old HARRY HOUDINI, constructed entirely of muscle and sinew.

Howard can't help but smile slightly.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Houdini and Lovecraft sit, finishing a meal. Howard picks at his food while Harry ravenously attacks a swordfish steak.

HOWARD

I have to admit, Mr. Houdini, I was impressed by your performance this evening.

HOUDINI

Thank you. Unfortunately, I wish I could say the same of your writing.

Howard recoils from the insult slightly, but Houdini continues sawing his steak as if nothing's wrong.

HOUDINI (cont'd)

Not that your style or technique are lacking. You seem to have a fair command of English. But in general, I think your subject matter ludicrous.

HOWARD

I apologize for wasting your time.

Lovecraft sets his napkin down on the table and starts to get up. Houdini stops him.

HOUDINI

Please, sit. It was not my intention to offend you. Please forgive my candor. It's just that I've dedicated my life to dispelling the kind of supernatural mumbo

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOUDINI (cont'd)

jumbo that seems to be the cornerstone of your stories. I understand that you've been trapped in this genre by Edwin's magazine. My goal is to pull you and Weird Tales out of that rut, and to create something of substance.

(beat)

Would you like a bite of swordfish?

HOWARD

No, thank you. I don't care for seafood. I cannot stomach the god damned stuff.

HOUDINI

Suit yourself.

HOWARD

And how would you propose to create these more substantial works?

HOUDINI

A series of stories that would recall my trips around the world, debunking the myths and superstitions from every corner of the globe. Together, we will be the shining light of reason, by which people will see the truth.

HOWARD

Then your goals are the same as mine. I merely wish to show people the truth. The truth that I live with.

HOUDINI

That's ridiculous. Do you really expect me to believe that you live in a world inhabited by the creatures you describe?

HOWARD

I live in the same world you do. I just see things that are outside your realm of understanding.

HOUDINI

Mr. Lovecraft, while I enjoy your imagination tremendously, your statements lead me to believe that you are either completely absorbed by your own fantasy, or...

(beat)

Or that you are insane.

Howard's eyes flare up for a moment. He leans in to Harry and challenges him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

Mr. Houdini, before you make any lasting judgements, I'd like to show you something.

INT. HOUDINI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

This is a good sized apartment for New York. Elegant and decorated with Houdini's collection of magic act items and escape artist props.

Harry walks to where Howard sits and sits across from the writer. Bess enters and gives them each a cup of tea. Howard smiles.

Howard reaches into his satchel and pulls out the dreaded Necronomicon. Houdini takes a moment, then accepts the large leather bound tome. He opens it.

HOUDINI

Al Azif. The book of the dead, written by Abdul Alhazred.

HOWARD

Also called the Necronomicon.

The briefest flick of recognition in Houdini's eyes.

HOUDINI

Yes, yes of course. I've heard of the book. I wasn't aware it really existed. Supposedly written by an Arab who went insane after completing it. A book full of incantations and spells for bringing forth nameless untold horrors from an outer dimension.

HOWARD

How do you know so much about it?

HOUDINI

As I said, I've read your stories. A good number of them feature this ill-regarded book.

Houdini leafs through the pages.

HOUDINI (cont'd)

It does appear to be wonderfully old. Quite an ingenious forgery, Howard.

Howard slams down his tea cup. It rattles on the dish.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

It's not a forgery!

Lovecraft stands and walks over to where Harry sits. He reaches down, turns a few pages over Houdini's shoulder, then points at the page he's opened it to.

HOWARD (cont'd)

There. Read that.

Houdini sits back and clears his throat, then starts to read.

HOUDINI

The Summoning of Yog-Sothoth and the
Opening of the Gate. N'gai, n'gha'ghaa,
bugg-shoggog, y'hah; Yog-Sothoth, Yog-
Sothoth...

Howard slams his hand on the book.

HOWARD

Enough! Stop, or the gate will open.

HOUDINI

The gate to what?

HOWARD

The gate that keeps them out, the gate
that separates our world from theirs. Yog-
Sothoth is the gate, he is the crossroads
between our two worlds.

HOUDINI

Mr. Lovecraft, I think that my suspicions
about you were correct. You are
completely delusional.

HOWARD

And you'll forgive me, but I find you
supremely egotistical and bound by
convention. Those are bonds which you may
never escape until it is too late.

HOUDINI

Please feel free to contact me if and
when you decide to return to rational
thought.

Howard proudly collects his book from Houdini. He somberly
replaces it in his satchel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

And you, Mr. Houdini, are free to contact me if and when you see what really lies beneath your thin grasp of reality.

(beat)

Please thank Mrs. Houdini for the tea.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Howard, embittered and angry, fights his way back towards his hotel. He's not paying much attention to his surroundings, and it isn't until a RAT runs across his path!

He looks up, startled. The rat runs into a nearby pile of rubbish. Howard smirks and is about to continue on when he's stopped by the horrible MEWLING sounds that the rat is making.

These are not the normal sounds of a rat, it sounds more like the twisted, tortured scream of a soul trapped in limbo.

Howard looks over into the pile of rubble, and then sees IT; not a rat, but some sort of sick parody.

The proportions are all wrong; it's the size of a small dog and instead of claws it has hands on it's front legs. It's face is that of an old bearded man, elongated into a rat-like profile.

HOWARD

What in god's name...

The sight of the horrid thing makes Howard realize what's going on. He is no longer in New York.

EXT. ARKHAM STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

No longer the cosmopolitan streets of the big city, Howard is now back in the eerie gloom and gambled roofs of Arkham.

The rat-thing fixes Howard with one of it's hideous glowing yellow eyes, and it makes another ghastly screeching sound. This thing is called BROWN JENKINS.

Howard turns and runs down the cobbled street in his awkward, gangly way.

Every building seems to lean toward him with hateful intent. The rat creature chases Howard, and behind the rat someone or something else. Howard ducks down an alley.

EXT. ARKHAM, ALLEY - NIGHT

The alley is narrow and Lovecraft has to negotiate it carefully. The rat and the other pursuer are right on his heels.

The chase seems to be over as Howard reaches a dead end in the alley. He looks around frantically as he hears his pursuer approaching, not with footsteps... the sound of hooves falling on cobblestone.

Howard looks in fear at the open end of the alley. The fog rolls into the narrow space, making it impossible to make out the figure that approaches.

The first thing to come out of the fog is the rat beast. Shortly after though, the pursuer can be seen, walking forward in a strange, halting way.

He looks like a man, more or less. He stands nearly seven feet tall and wears a long coat that hides his whole body. The man has a full beard, a goatlike face and his eyes have two pupils each.

PURSUER

Carter. We've waited for your return. You've betrayed the Old Ones. You've tried to warn the outsiders of our presence and now you will pay dearly for your trespasses.

HOWARD

Stay away from me, you foul, disgusting beasts! Stay back!

PURSUER

Careful. I don't mind being called a beast, but you wouldn't want to insult Brown Jenkins.

The rat-thing hisses with it's bizarre human head, baring a set of needle sharp fangs.

EXT. NEW YORK, THEATER ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

This is a similar alley to the one Howard is trapped in, but it is well lit and much less foreboding. As a matter of fact, a show is just letting out.

The theater door opens and dozens of happy THEATER PATRONS exit. They talk excitedly of the performances and so on.

CONTINUED:

Among them is SONIA GREENE (37), a woman who is beautiful and strong looking. She is leaving the theater with a younger gentleman named RHEINHART KLEINER(32).

SONIA

For my part, I thought it was marvelous.

RHEINHART

Marvelously boring you mean. I fell asleep after the first act.

SONIA

Oh Rheinhart, you can be such a pill sometimes.

RHEINHART

It's called artistic discernment, Sonia. Something that you...

(beat)

What on earth?

They both stop walking as they see Howard, backing down the alley with his hands spread before him to ward off an unseen enemy. Howard makes the peculiar Voorish sign with his left hand.

HOWARD

N'gai! N'gai! Y'haah, shog-yoggoth!

Sonia looks at him curiously.

SONIA

What's he saying?

RHEINHART

Nothing. Gibberish. He's probably drunk.

EXT. ARKHAM, ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Howard backs away from the approaching Brown Jenkins. Here, in Arkham, Sonia and the other theater patrons are nowhere in sight.

EXT. NEW YORK, THEATER ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Sonia takes a step toward Howard. Rheinhart starts to restrain her.

RHEINHART

Sonia, what are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA

Can't you see? He needs help. Look how lost and frightened he is.

RHEINHART

He's drunk. It's a job for the police, come let's get you home.

But his appeals go unheard. Sonia jerks free of him and heads away from the theater, toward Howard.

EXT. ARKHAM, ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The horrible rat creature gets to Howard and leaps! Howard tries to fend off the attack, but Brown Jenkins clasps Howard's shoulder with his hands.

EXT. NEW YORK, THEATER ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Sonia nears Lovecraft. Howard has a look of total terror on his face as he reaches up and grabs an invisible attacker at his throat!

She puts out a comforting hand, but Howard doesn't seem to see her at all. In fact, he looks right through her, at something only he can see.

SONIA

There, there. It's alright. I'm going to help you...

EXT. ARKHAM, ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Howard reaches up reflexively and tries to pry the monster off him, but the thing rears up and sinks his awful teeth into Lovecraft's neck!

EXT. NEW YORK, THEATER ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

As Sonia is just about to touch Howard's shoulder, his neck suddenly erupts in blood!

The crimson flow shoots out of a bite wound on his neck and splatters all over Sonia's face... she screams! Howard falls to the ground, clutching his neck.

EXT. ARKHAM, ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

As Howard struggles with the fearsome rat-creature, the dark pursuer stalks toward him. Instead of footfall, each step has the hollow clack of hooves on stone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PURSUER

Look on me and despair, Carter.

Then the tall man opens his coat and reveals the horrors beneath; a torso covered with a dozen fleshy tentacles ending in sucking mouths. His legs are those of a black goat with cloven hooves for feet.

Howard screams again as the horrible thing reaches for him.

EXT. NEW YORK, THEATER ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Sonia reaches out for Howard in the same way, although she means merely to help him. Her fingers close on his shoulder and his fear takes over completely and Howard faints dead away.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Howard blinks his eyes open and tries to adjust to the bright morning light. He awakes and finds himself lying in a downy bed. Sonia sits in a chair by the bed.

SONIA

Well, good morning. Did you want me to have the nurse bring a cup of tea for your hangover?

HOWARD

Hangover? Begging your pardon miss, but I'll have you know that not only do I fully support prohibition but I am nauseated even by the distant stink of any alcoholic liquor.

SONIA

Please forgive me. It's just that last night you seemed to be quite beside yourself. I assumed... wrongly. I'm sorry.

Remembering the night before, Howard reaches up and touches his neck.

HOWARD

Where am I?

SONIA

In the hospital. Reinhart and I brought you here last night after you passed out

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA (cont'd)
in the alley. I stayed until I was sure
you'd be alright.

HOWARD
Then clearly it is I who should be
apologizing for being such a burden.

Howard bows his head in shame. Sonia senses the awkwardness
of the moment, takes the opportunity to extend her hand to
him.

SONIA
I'm Sonia. Sonia Greene.

HOWARD
It's a pleasure, Sonia. My name is
Howard. I wonder if you'd be willing to
let me repay you by taking you out to
breakfast.

Sonia smiles sweetly.

SONIA
I'd like that very much. But I imagine
the doctor will want to talk to you about
that cut on your neck first.

HOWARD
Oh. Yes. Tell me, did you happen to
see... how I sustained this injury.

SONIA
Well, that's an odd story. I'd thought
that you'd done it. It looked to me as if
you'd scratched yourself somehow. But the
doctor is convinced that you were bitten
by something.

A look of terror crosses Howard's face, only for a moment,
then it's gone. He replaces it with an uncomfortable smile.

HOWARD
That is odd.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Howard, carrying his satchel and typewriter case, stands on
the platform with Sonia.

HOWARD
Well, Sonia, I have enjoyed meeting you
tremendously. I'm only sorry that the
circumstances had to be so peculiar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA

The feeling is mutual, Howard. I'll be heading your way for business in a month or so, maybe I can stop by for a visit.

HOWARD

I'd like that.

There is an uncomfortable moment of silence between them. Clearly, they're attracted to each other.

Howard looks awkwardly at the train. Sonia, sensing his discomfort again, sticks her hand out for a handshake.

SONIA

In a month's time then.

Howard takes her hand and kisses it. As soon as he's done that, he blushes uncontrollably and tries to cover it.

HOWARD

In a month's time.

INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT - DAY

Howard watches the scenery go by, his mind elsewhere. He is smitten. In fact, he doesn't look up at all as another PASSENGER comes into the compartment.

This newcomer looks unsettlingly familiar. His face matches that of Howard's pursuer the night before. The same goatish features, only without the double pupiled eyes.

The man also wears a coat similar to that of Howard's pursuer. In his right hand, he holds a PET CARRIER. He sets the pet carrier down on the floor and takes a seat across from Howard.

PASSENGER

Going all the way to Arkham?

Howard looks over for the first time and can't help but show his alarm.

HOWARD

Wha... what?

PASSENGER

Sorry. Didn't mean to startle you. I was just wondering if you were going all the way to the end of the line. To Rhode Island.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

Oh. Ah. Yes. Yes, I am.

PASSENGER

Ah. I am as well.

Then, a scurrying noise from the pet carrier. The passenger taps the case.

PASSENGER (cont'd)

Quiet now.

Howard looks at the carrier in terror. He reaches up to his neck and feels the bandage there.

PASSENGER (cont'd)

It's hard enough to let them bring pets on with you. I had to convince the conductor that he was well behaved.

(to carrier)

You're not going to make a liar out of me, are you old boy?

More scurrying sounds from inside.

PASSENGER (cont'd)

I think he'd like to be let out for a spell. You don't mind do you?

Howard is speechless in fear. He can do nothing but watch as the passenger reaches down to unlatch the door of the carrier.

The scurrying intensifies. Howard's eyes roll in fear, showing too much white, but he is unable to turn away.

The door of the carrier is opened all the way, some more scurrying and the animal comes out...

A Pomeranian. The dog runs out of the carrier and starts jumping around excitedly.

Howard looks down at the dog, confused and still a little scared.

PASSENGER (cont'd)

Now, now Jenkins. Don't jump all over the poor man.

The dog pays no attention, jumps up on the seat and starts kissing Howard's face. Howard, unable to help himself, laughs heartily.

EXT. 598 ANGELL STREET - DAY

The exterior of Howard's new home, quite a bit smaller than the house that he lived in with his grandfather Whipple.

Still, it's home, and Howard is glad to be here. He stops briefly at the gate, then heads in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, HOWARD'S ROOM - DAY

Howard sits at his desk, a stack of paper before him. The typewriter sits on one corner, gathering dust.

He scrawls at a fevered pace with his pen.

A slight knock on the door. Howard doesn't look up from his work.

HOWARD

Come in.

His mother, Sarah, enters with a glass of milk.

SARAH

Howard?

HOWARD

Yes, mother?

SARAH

You... you have a caller. She's waiting for you downstairs.

Howard's face literally lights up and he nearly springs up from the desk.

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sarah and Howard come down the stairs and find Sonia waiting in the living room patiently.

Howard rushes across the room like a long lost love, but then stops short.

HOWARD

Sonia!

Always the shy, unsure one, Howard stands with his hands in his pockets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA
Hello, Howard.

HOWARD
Sonia, I'd like you to meet my mother,
Sarah Lovecraft.

SARAH
Yes, we've met already.

HOWARD
Oh. Right. Well, welcome to Providence!

SONIA
Thank you. I'd love to see more of it.
Mrs. Lovecraft, do you think I might be
able to steal your son for a little
while? Just long enough to get a walking
tour of your city.

Sarah doesn't look too pleased about it, but nods curtly.

EXT. STREETS OF PROVIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Howard leads Sonia down the street, pointing out things of
interest.

HOWARD
It's a wonderful place, Providence.

SONIA
Yes, it is. But I tell you, I read some
of your writings since last I saw you,
and I feel like maybe a tour of Arkham
would be more fitting.

This makes Howard uncomfortable.

HOWARD
Sonia, Arkham is fictional.

SONIA
But your descriptions are so detailed,
one would think that you had actually
been there.

HOWARD
In a manner of speaking I suppose I have
been there. It's a dark place that I used
to visit in my dreams. I used to actually
sleepwalk around Providence, believing
that I was in Arkham.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA

Sleepwalking? Is that what you were doing when we found you in New York?

HOWARD

As embarrassed as I am to admit it, yes. It would appear so.

SONIA

That would explain the way you seemed to look right through me. But it must have been such a frightful dream, to make you claw at your neck that way.

HOWARD

Arkham is not a pleasant place. And for the last twenty years, it's been my sole source of inspiration. But Sonia, since our meeting, I've had not one dream, not one nightmare. In fact, I've taken to ghostwriting of all things.

SONIA

Ghostwriting, with whom?

HOWARD

Harry Houdini. It's called "Imprisoned with the Pharaohs". I let myself loose and coughed up some of the most nameless, slithering, unmentionable horrors that ever stalked cloven-hoofed through the tenebrous and necrophagous abysses of elder night.

SONIA

It sounds like it may be some of your best work.

HOWARD

It's garbage. It's not real. I didn't see any of it. I fabricated all of the creatures, so that they come across as totally contrived and flat. At Houdini's request, I even tacked on the "it was all a dream" bromide. My heart is just not in it.

SONIA

Where is your heart then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

Isn't it plain? It's with you. Were I a poet, I would just sit and write you sonnets all day.

Sonia reddens slightly, but reaches out and gently takes Howard's hand. He stiffens, but then continues walking, a slight smile creeps onto his face.

SONIA

But what of all your weird writings, the things that you've built your career on?

HOWARD

Weird writings be damned. I'll never reach the heights of Edgar, the one real literary figure of America.

SONIA

But surely you cannot just stop your extraordinary imagination.

HOWARD

None of it is imagination, Sonia. That's what I've been telling you. Arkham was a real place for me, a place of dreams or nightmares, until just recently.

SONIA

Are all of the things in your stories just fantasy then? What about the book you wrote of, the Necronomicon?

Howard blanches a little at the mention of this book, but recovers and squeezes her hand.

HOWARD

The Necronomicon. No, it's not fantasy. Not entirely anyway. It's a real book, one that my father left me, full of hokum and mystical drivel. Entirely innocuous, unless you're an impressionable boy of ten. I'm afraid that reading it had a disagreeable effect on my young mind.

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, HOWARD'S ROOM - DAY

A slight push on Howard's door, and Sarah enters. She looks around timidly before her eyes set on Howard's satchel, lying on the desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She cautiously approaches the desk and reaches out. Her fumbling fingers find the latch on the bag and she opens it, then pulls out the contents; the dreadful Necronomicon.

Her hands shake as she carries the book out of the room.

EXT. PROVIDENCE GRAVEYARD - DAY

Howard shows Sonia the grave of his grandfather. Crows gather to watch.

HOWARD

He was the one who gave me my taste for the macabre, I think. He would tell me stories late at night of the most fearful sort, filled with hideous apparitions.

SONIA

And your father let this go on?

HOWARD

My father... died when I was eight years old.

SONIA

Oh, I'm sorry. How insensitive of me.

HOWARD

No, no. It's fine. As I said, my grandfather was really more responsible for my upbringing. He and my mother and aunt. I never really knew my father. The last time I saw him was when I was four.

SONIA

He abandoned you?

HOWARD

No. He was institutionalized. At Butler Hospital for what the doctors called nervous exhaustion. He died there four years later.

SONIA

Oh Howard.

Sonia squeezes his hand.

SONIA (cont'd)

Tell me a story, Howard. Like the kind your grandfather used to tell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Howard looks up from the grave, into Sonia's face. There's a trace of the devil in his eyes.

HOWARD

Very well. I'll tell you about the old groundskeeper of this place. A man named George Birch.

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Sarah sits in the living room. A fire rages in the fireplace. She holds the Necronomicon in front of her, summoning the courage to throw it in the flames.

HOWARD (OS)

I suppose one should start on the afternoon of Friday, April fifteenth, when Birch set out to transfer nine bodies from the tomb to their respective graves.

EXT. PROVIDENCE GRAVEYARD, AT THE TOMB - DUSK

Howard has brought Sonia to the front of a large tomb. The door is slightly ajar. The darkness inside seems alive with movement.

HOWARD

One of the bodies was Asaph Sawyer, a man known for his almost inhuman vindictive nature. George had given Asaph a cheaper, smaller casket meant for another man. As George recalled this grim act, the door to the tomb slammed shut in the wind, leaving him in a dusk even deeper than before.

SONIA

Oh, Howard. Locked in a tomb with nine corpses! Dreadful.

(beat)

Shouldn't we head back? It's nearly dark.

Sonia puts on a brave face, but she is clearly starting to get spooked by her surroundings, and by the fervor that Howard is telling his story with.

HOWARD

In the funereal twilight he rattled the rusty handles, pushed at the iron panels and began to shout loudly as if his horse outside could do more than neigh an unsympathetic reply. Over the door,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD (cont'd)
however, a high window gave promise of a possible escape. There was nothing like a ladder in the tomb. Only the coffins themselves remained as potential stepping stones.

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah sits in front of the fire still, as if entranced. She recoils from the flame slightly, and opens the book.

Her eyes grow round as she reads.

HOWARD (OS)
So George piled the caskets one on top of another. The final casket being the one containing the body of Asaph Sawyer, because it was smaller than the rest and easier to leverage. And then, his means of escape constructed, the graveskeeper began to climb.

EXT. PROVIDENCE GRAVEYARD, AT THE TOMB - NIGHT

Sonia is now sitting uncomfortably on the steps of the tomb. She holds herself in fear. Howard is truly in his element though, and he is acting out his story with great enthusiasm.

HOWARD
When he reached the top casket, as he wriggled his way through the small window...

Howard suddenly grabs Sonia's leg. She screams and jumps up.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Something grabbed his legs from below!

Sonia has had it with this. She turns and starts walking briskly away from the tomb.

Howard chases after her.

HOWARD (cont'd)
And try as he might, the graveskeeper could not shake clear of the unknown grasp which held his feet in relentless captivity!

SONIA
Howard stop it! You're frightening me!

Sonia begins to run now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

Horrible pains, as of savage wounds, shot through his calves! His mind was a vortex of fright, yet still he tried desperately to rationalize the injuries by thinking of splinters, or rusty nails. But deep inside his mind, he knew the truth!

EXT. PROVIDENCE GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Sonia is now at a full run, despite her dress and shoes. Howard is right on her heels.

HOWARD

Asaph Sawyer, angered by the graveskeeper's slighting of him, had returned from the grave! For revenge! The corpses's evil nails dug deeper into his legs!

EXT. STREETS OF PROVIDENCE - NIGHT

Howard chases Sonia down the now deserted streets of Providence, back towards Angell Street. Sonia is not enjoying this, her face shows total fear. She gasps for breath and runs on.

Not in the greatest shape himself, Howard is having trouble catching his breath, but still continues with his story.

HOWARD

The graveskeeper... let out a final cry of despair! Fell backwards... into the waiting claws of Asaph Sawyer!

EXT. 598 ANGELL STREET - NIGHT

Sonia runs up to the front of the house and stops. She nearly faints and falls to the steps. She looks up at Howard's approach.

Howard wears a strange look, a smile that seems almost triumphant.

HOWARD

Did you like the story?

SONIA

You wretched, wretched beast! You frightened me half to death.

HOWARD

So you liked it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA

Oh Howard, there you have the setting for a really strange and mysterious story.

HOWARD

I've been without inspiration for a month. Then you come into town and I am renewed.

SONIA

Oh Howard, stop. You make me into a muse of some sort.

HOWARD

But that's what you are, don't you see?

Sonia, moved, gets up and kisses him impulsively on the mouth. Howard blushes uncontrollably.

HOWARD (cont'd)

I've not been kissed since infancy.

SONIA

We shall have to work on that.

His body stiffens, his breathing becomes shallow. Sonia kisses him again, this time longer and deeper.

Howard starts to relax and give in to it, when...

A SHRILL SCREAM erupts from the house! Howard and Sonia break, Howard looks toward the source of the noise.

HOWARD

Mother.

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The front door flies open and Howard rushes in to find his mother, Sarah, huddled in the corner of the room. The open Necronomicon lies in the middle of the floor.

HOWARD

Mother! Mother, what is it?

His mother cannot explain, she just points at the Necronomicon.

Howard turns and looks in the direction of the book, and for a moment, he sees IT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A slithering abomination, crawling it's way along the floor toward her. Only half human, the rest of it is some bizarre amalgamation of arachnid and gastropod.

Then, Sonia rushes into the house.

SONIA

Howard? Mrs. Lovecraft? Is everything alright?

Howard shakes his head clear and rubs his eyes. The thing is gone, but his mother is still screaming and shaking in the corner.

HOWARD

It's not real. It's not real, mother.
Please, stop screaming. Please.

But Sarah can't stop. Howard looks up at Sonia helplessly, then looks back at his hysterical mother.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Mother, please. Stop it! Stop!

EXT. BUTLER HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The full moon gives Butler hospital an unsettling look. Lights inside give the place the look of an evil visage.

INT. BUTLER HOSPITAL, WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Howard sits on a chair, next to Sonia. He is unhappy to have returned here. He stands as a young DOCTOR approaches.

DOCTOR

Mr. Lovecraft?

HOWARD

Yes.

DOCTOR

Is there anything further you can tell me about her condition? Was she under a great deal of stress, or had something traumatic happened to her recently?

Howard hesitates, remembering the open book before his screaming mother.

HOWARD

Not that I'm aware of. She seemed perfectly fine this afternoon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

And she'll be fine again, soon enough.
Meantime, we'll keep her safe and tend to
her every need. Let me assure you, we
take excellent care of our patients, Mr.
Lovecraft.

HOWARD

My father was here some years ago.

DOCTOR

Ah. We have all of your information on
file then, I imagine.

HOWARD

You should.

DOCTOR

We'll keep you posted of any changes.

HOWARD

Thank you, doctor.

Sonia loops her hands around Howard's arm and pulls him close
to her as they leave the hospital.

The doctor watches them go for a moment, then turns and heads
deeper into the hospital.

MOVING THROUGH THE HOSPITAL

We follow the doctor through the main body of the hospital,
passing other hospital staff members; orderlies and nurses.

The doctor continues on, moving through a high security door
into a long hallway of featureless doors.

He continues on and stops outside a specific door. He reaches
to his belt loop and pulls a key from his retractable key
wire.

INSIDE SARAH'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER

The door swings open and our young doctor walks in. Sarah,
who is now wearing a straightjacket, cowers on a cot.

The doctor swings the door shut behind him. Sarah gets up
from the cot and attempts to back away into the corner.

Smiling benevolently, the doctor reaches into his coat and
pulls out a syringe, filled with a fluorescent green liquid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sarah turns her head around frantically, looking for escape as the doctor moves toward her. Seeing no refuge, she starts to whimper.

DOCTOR

Oh now, now, now, Mrs. Lovecraft. Why don't you just sit down and relax. And tell me...

Then, the doctor's features change and shift right before Sarah's eyes. His face becomes a heinous mask; a disgusting, demonic veneer of hate. His voice changes too; deeper, more guttural.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

...what seems to be the problem?

Sarah takes one look at the ebony eyes, the crowded, razor sharp teeth, and screams. The doctor advances, syringe held at the ready.

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Howard and Sonia have returned to the house at 598 Angell. Sonia sits on the couch next to a distraught Howard, trying to comfort him.

SONIA

Dearest, you shouldn't torment yourself about this. It's not your fault.

HOWARD

I'm afraid it is. I left her alone with that accursed book. I never should have done that.

SONIA

Oh Howard, listen to what you're saying. You told me that the book was nothing more than nonsense.

HOWARD

It is. Or it was. Or... I don't know anymore, Sonia. I don't know. I feel as if I'm going mad myself.

Just then, Howard's black cat, Necroman comes into the room and curls up around Howard's feet.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Here now. That's a fine fellow. Necroman, say hello to Sonia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Howard picks Necroman up and starts to stroke the cat. Sonia looks at him oddly.

SONIA

What a lot of perfectly good attention to waste on a mere cat, when a woman might highly appreciate it.

He looks up from the cat and stares at Sonia nervously.

HOWARD

How could any woman love a man like me?

SONIA

A mother could. And some who are not mothers would not have to try very hard.

She leans in to kiss Howard, he sits there frozen in fear. Once again, Sonia has taken the role of aggressor. Howard closes his eyes and puckers.

Sonia hits him with the most aggressive kiss ever. Then her hands are on his chest and she's pushing him backward onto the couch.

Necroman, now forgotten, jumps down off the couch and starts to sulk around the living room.

The cat sees something it does not like, and hisses ferociously. From it's low vantage point, we can see a rat-like thing crouched just outside the light of the entry way.

Now the cat moves toward it, and we can see that it's not actually a rat, but Brown Jenkins! The rat thing wags a finger at the cat, and Necroman hisses again. This time, Brown Jenkins flees under a dresser.

Back in the living room, things are getting more heated. Sonia has pushed Howard all the way back and is straddling him. She takes his hands and maneuvers them onto her breasts.

Howard looks at her with total adoration and helplessness. She moves his hands around her body and he moans softly.

In the corner, Necroman hisses at the thing under the dresser, but the warning goes unheeded as Sonia gently unbuttons his shirt.

She covers his chest with soft kisses. His pent up longing finally getting the best of him, Howard succumbs to his overwhelming desire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He kisses her neck, her breasts. He ravages her with untamed lust. They tumble off the couch, grasping at each other, tearing at clothing, sweating, panting.

And somewhere, deep in the walls of the house, the awful Brown Jenkins rat-thing cackles softly.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. 598 ANGELL STREET, HOWARD'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's later now, Sonia sleeps peacefully in the bed next to Howard. Howard stirs, sits up in bed and looks around as if sensing something.

There is the sound of fingernails SCRATCHING outside his bedroom window. Howard goes rigid.

He gingerly steps out of bed, attempting to leave Sonia undisturbed as he goes. He takes a few faltering steps toward the window, remembering the night gaunts from his grandfather's tales.

Again, a high pitched scrape on the window and Howard nearly jumps out of his skin. He takes a deep breath and takes a few more steps toward the window.

The window gets closer, step by step. He's now no more than a couple of feet away. Howard is silently expecting to hear another scrape and see the night gaunt at any moment.

He takes one more step toward the window and sees...

SCRAAAPE! A tree branch outside scrapes against the glass. Howard can't help but let out a tiny yelp of fear.

Sonia hears this and stirs. She clutches the blanket to her naked body and gets out of bed, padding across the floor to join Howard at the window.

SONIA

Howard?

No response from Howard. He just stares out the window, as if he still expects to see something.

SONIA (cont'd)

What is it, dearest? You seem so distant.

HOWARD

Have you ever felt as if you were being watched, your every step followed?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA

Oh Howard, please. No more stories. Not tonight.

HOWARD

No. No stories. This is just a feeling.

SONIA

Fear is not exactly the feeling I was hoping to inspire.

Howard reaches out and takes her hand, they embrace.

HOWARD

Sonia. Darling Sonia, you don't inspire fear. Quite the opposite. I suppose I just can't get used to...

(beat)

All of my life, I've been haunted. I've... seen things. Until now.

SONIA

Howard, if you truly care for me as you say you do, then let me in. I'm not afraid. Whatever horrible things you see, or whatever dark secrets you have... you can tell me.

He looks over at Sonia, his face showing consternation. It's clear that he's trying to decide how much to tell her. She waits in silence.

HOWARD

I never know when it's going to happen, when I'll see... Things that no one else can see. Places where no one else has been.

SONIA

I'm not sure I understand, Howard. You mean the sleepwalking?

HOWARD

Yes. And no. It's as if I'm transported to another reality. A reality filled with the most unspeakable things.

SONIA

Just bad dreams. That's all.

HOWARD

Nightmares. Maybe. But they're so vivid, in many ways they are more real to me
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD (cont'd)
than the waking world. The only thing
that ever stopped them...

SONIA
Was when you wrote them out in your
stories.

HOWARD
Yes. Until you came into my life. You've
brought a light that has driven the
shadows from my mind.

Sonia kisses him, and Howard returns it with equal passion.
When they break, they each have stars in their eyes.

SONIA
I think you should come back to New York
with me. We'll begin to collect your
works into a book, and send it around to
publishers.

HOWARD
There's nothing in Providence for me now.
I will follow you to New Amsterdam, my
muse.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Edwin Baird, the stuffed shirt editor of Weird Tales, hands a
copy of his magazine; a small, pulpy novel-type publication
across the desk to Howard.

Howard picks it up daintily and looks it over. On the cover
is the picture of a giant alien of some kind looming over a
female astronaut.

BAIRD
There you are, Howard. The latest issue
of Weird Tales, in which "Imprisoned with
the Pharaohs" appears right after
Howard's latest Conan story.

HOWARD
How is Two Gun Bob? I haven't spoken with
him in ages.

BAIRD
He's doing well. As well as one could
expect, out in the middle of Texas.

HOWARD
A writer can write from anywhere. Or so
I've been told.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAIRD

Moving out of Providence seems to have done wonders for you. Honestly Howard, I've never seen you look so rested and healthy. Be careful, you'll ruin your chances at being a decadent like Poe.

HOWARD

I am no true decadent, for much that decadents love seems to me either absurd or merely disgusting.

BAIRD

Now you're really worrying me. First your writing stops being overly fantastic, and then you actually get some color in your cheeks and disavow Poe.

Howard laughs, a little uncomfortably.

HOWARD

Edgar is still my God of Fiction. I just haven't been inspired by that kind of subject matter for a while.

Edwin cocks an eyebrow, then smiles knowingly.

BAIRD

I take it Sonia is well.

Howard brightens at the mention of her name. He can't help but smile.

HOWARD

Yes. Very well. She truly is a wonder. You know, she typed that whole manuscript, Imprisoned with the Pharaoh's, from my dictation. We stayed up the whole night doing it.

BAIRD

Ha! And here I thought you'd finally learned how to type. Howard, when you stay up all night with a young lady, you're supposed to be doing a different kind of hunt and peck.

Baird laughs heartily at this. Lovecraft smiles, but is not used to this kind of male camaraderie.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Howard rows a small boat with Sonia sitting in the bow. She tilts her head back and smiles into the sun.

She lets her hand trail in the water for a moment and then splashes it up onto Howard. He laughs happily along with her. Their love has created an almost tangible cocoon around them.

Howard genuinely looks like a new person. His smile makes him seem ten years younger. He's vibrant and alive.

EXT. PATH AROUND LAKE - DAY

The two lovers walk next to each other by the lake. Sonia reaches out to take his hand, but Howard clumsily reaches into his coat pocket.

He pulls out a small jewelry box. Sonia watches his every move, lovingly. He opens it and presents a small ring to her.

HOWARD

Since I don't really know how to say this, it behooves me to say it as tastefully as possible.

(beat)

Will you?

Sonia takes the ring, choking back tears of happiness. She smiles.

SONIA

Howard, do you love me?

HOWARD

My dear, you don't know how much I appreciate you.

SONIA

And you don't mind marrying a woman seven years older?

HOWARD

Nothing could please me more than our age difference. Sarah Whelan Whitman was older than Poe, and poor old Edgar might have met with better fortune had he married her.

SONIA

Then yes, Howard. Yes! I will be Sonia Lovecraft!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She rushes into his arms and kisses him on the mouth. Howard seems uncomfortable with the public display of affection, but despite that he has a happy twinkle in his eyes.

INT. SONIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Howard is sitting at a desk in the living portion of this good sized apartment. He is attempting to write, but nothing's coming.

Sonia appears in the doorway to her bedroom, wearing what would be considered a pretty enticing nightgown for the time.

SONIA

Are you coming to bed?

Howard doesn't look up, he just twirls his pen in his hand once and starts to write again.

HOWARD

Yes, dear. Later.

SONIA

Howard, I understand that your writing takes precedence over most things... but I'm your wife for goodness sake! And this is our wedding night!

HOWARD

I know, dear. I promise I'll be in soon.

SONIA

Don't you love me anymore? You haven't even touched me for months! You approach sex as if you don't like it.

HOWARD

No conservative man or woman expects such extraordinary physical exaltation except for a brief period in extreme youth.

SONIA

What? What in God's name is that supposed to mean? Howard, what's happening to you!

HOWARD

I'm frightened, Sonia. Of the silence, of you, of this life. Everything seems so perfect. I feel as if all the horrible things I used to see are still there... just waiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONIA

The only thing that's waiting for you...
is me.

Sonia turns and heads back into her bedroom. Howard thinks a moment, pain clear on his face. The last thing he wanted to do was hurt Sonia.

INT. SONIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door opens, and Howard enters wearing a full length sleeping gown. He looks ridiculous as he tiptoes to the bed.

He climbs in next to Sonia and gently runs his pinky finger along her cheek.

HOWARD

Forgive me, my love. How can I mend the
wounds I've made?

SONIA

With your lips. With your hands.

For the first time, Howard is the aggressor. He kisses her desperately, hungrily. His hands clutch at the fabric of her nightgown like a drowning man holding a life preserver.

They grasp at each other's clothing, Sonia yanks Howard's nightshirt up over his head and pulls him down on top of her.

Howard closes his eyes and lets Sonia guide their lovemaking. She runs her nails down his back and sighs into his ear.

SONIA (cont'd)

Oh Howard... Howard, look at me. See me,
my love. See me.

Her encouragements get Howard to relax even more into their rhythm. But he still keeps his eyes closed. Then suddenly, his head jerks sideways spasmodically as he sees a horrible vision...

INT. BUTLER HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Howard's mother, Sarah, is walking down a deserted hallway in the hospital, still bound in the heavy straightjacket. Her eyes look wild, insane.

SARAH

Howard...

BACK TO SCENE

Howard tries to shake his head clear of the vision without breaking stride. Sonia locks her ankles behind his back and pulls him to her.

She whispers to him again.

SONIA

Look at me, my love. Please.

Howard shuts his eyes tighter as his mind's eye shows him another awful sight.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Howard's father, Winfield is sitting naked on the edge of the hotel bed, holding the Necronomicon.

WINFIELD

Howard, the book... the book will open
the gate. Destroy it. Destroy Al Azif
before the Old Ones can come back
through...

Behind Winfield, the heinous chambermaid creature from the opening scene rears up, tentacles reaching out for Winfield.

CHAMBERMAID

Look at me, my love...

Winfield turns as the creature opens her mouth and charges him!

BACK TO SCENE

Howard's eyes pop open and he screams!

He half falls, half stumbles off Sonia and scurries to the side of the bed. Sonia looks at him, concerned and a little hurt.

HOWARD

Oh dear Lord... oh my God.

SONIA

Howard? What is it?

Howard doesn't answer. He rubs his hands over his face and tries to get his bearings.

SONIA (cont'd)

Dearest... what's wro--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She is cut off mid-sentence by the sound of CLATTERING from the other room.

Howard looks up, alarmed.

SONIA (cont'd)

That sounded like it came from the kitchen.

INT. SONIA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

In the darkened kitchen, the cupboard is open and a sack of flour has been tossed out onto the floor.

More rattling from inside the cupboard, more packages fall out and hit the floor.

INT. SONIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard and Sonia are sitting on the bed, listening to the sounds in the kitchen with bated breath.

Trying to be brave, Howard scoots forward on the bed and pulls on his nightshirt.

HOWARD

It's nothing. Probably a mouse. I'll go take a look.

SONIA

I'm coming with you.

Howard doesn't object.

INT. SONIA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The sound of tiny claws scraping on tile, a bottle of spice is tipped out and shatters on the floor.

INT. SONIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard and Sonia freeze as they hear the noise. Then, they both summon all their courage and head for the kitchen, Howard a few steps ahead.

INT. SONIA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lovecraft leads his wife into the kitchen, just in time to see something run across the floor. Sonia shrieks.

Howard tries to control himself and turns on a light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The kitchen is a wreck. Everything has been thrown out of the cupboards and onto the floor. A thin dust of flour, sugar and spices coats the floor.

Sonia looks around in dismay as Howard bends down to look closer at the mess on the ground.

ANGLE

On the floor. In the flour, a distinct set of small FOOTPRINTS can be seen.

Some of the prints belong to a small rodent, but some of the prints look more like miniature HANDPRINTS.

BACK TO SCENE

Howard quickly sweeps the prints away. Sonia looks down at him.

SONIA

Howard? What is it?

HOWARD

Nothing. It's as I thought. Just mice.
I'll have the exterminator come around tomorrow.

Sonia looks semi-relieved, and she starts to clean the kitchen up.

Howard's uneasy eyes dart into the dark corners of the apartment, searching.

INT. SONIA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sonia is already awake and dressed. She bends over and gives Howard a kiss on the cheek.

SONIA

I'm off to the shop, dearest. I've left you some money on the dresser. Come by and visit if you have the chance.

HOWARD

Yes. Yes, I will.

SONIA

Only if you get the chance and you want to take a break from your writing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

I... do have some writing to do. And I'm to meet with Harry at some point.

SONIA

Really? Are you two going to do another story together?

HOWARD

No, actually, we were thinking of doing a more journalistic endeavor.

SONIA

I'm sure whatever you two do, it'll be wonderful. You're both so talented.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

Howard sits across from Harry Houdini, drinking coffee.

HOUDINI

I came up with a great title the other day. What do you think of "The Cancer of Superstition"?

HOWARD

It's a perfectly good title. Only... I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to work on it with you.

HOUDINI

What? But you just said that you hadn't had any responses from your last ad. Howard, I know you need the money.

HOWARD

I don't need the money! I write because I must, because my sanity depends on it.

HOUDINI

Come on, Howard. You're starting to sound like the old Lovecraft. Superstitious and prone to flights of fancy. I thought Sonia had weaned you off that.

HOWARD

I've begun to see things again.

HOUDINI

Howard, there are physicians who may be able to help you. Many of them here in New York.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

No. No one can help me. Something is calling me and I must heed it, or...

Howard lets his sentence trail off. Houdini gives him a weary look.

HOUDINI

Or what, Howard. Or you might become a successful writer and give up your romantic notion of being a starving artist?

HOWARD

There is a reality beneath this one, filled with indescribable horrors that wait just outside with hideous intent. The barrier between the worlds is thinning, Harry. And I fear that I am the only one who can stop it.

HOUDINI

This is intolerable. I can't stand to see a friend of mine, a man I respect, become another bumbling believer of superstition and hokum.

Harry gets up abruptly, angrily.

HOUDINI (cont'd)

There is no spirit world, Howard! This is the only reality! Everything else is just slight of hand.

(beat)

There is no magic.

And then Houdini is gone, storming out into the streets of New York.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Howard makes his way through the mid-day bustle of the city. He has reverted to his nervous, paranoid gait, looking over his shoulder constantly.

He suddenly stops, transfixed.

Ahead of him, he sees the two ELDERLY MEN from his childhood. They don't appear to have aged at all since that day at the bridge. Their faces are disfigured and demonic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Between them stands the horrible PURSUER with the goatish face. He wears his coat, hiding the horrible tentacles and cloven feet. In his right hand, he carries a pet carrier.

From inside the pet carrier, the fiendish face of BROWN JENKINS peers out.

Howard wills himself into motion and runs from the appalling group.

INT. HAT SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Sonia, the owner of this tiny yet fashionable hat shop, is helping a heavy-set female CUSTOMER (mid-40's) try on evening hat.

CUSTOMER

What do you think?

SONIA

It's very flattering.

CUSTOMER

Not too flashy, it doesn't make me look like a flapper?

SONIA

Not at all. It gives you a very confident, controlled look.

Just then, Howard bursts through the door, looking the opposite of confident and controlled. He slams the door behind him and peeks out the window.

SONIA (cont'd)

Howard?

CUSTOMER

Young man! This is a place of business!

HOWARD

Sonia, they've returned. They've come back for me! They've come back for the book!

SONIA

(to customer)

I'm sorry. You'll have to excuse me.

The customer shoots Sonia a disapproving look. Sonia smiles, trying to make light of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUSTOMER

Well, I shall just take my business
elsewhere. Where it will be appreciated!

And the heavy-set woman storms out, right past Howard,
practically barreling the man over.

As soon as she's out the door. Sonia walks over to comfort
him. He practically falls into her arms, his eyes huge with
fear.

HOWARD

I thought I was rid of them. But they've
returned! Oh god, Sonia. They've come
back for the book.

SONIA

(feeling his forehead)
Dearest, you have a fever. Come on, let's
get you home and into bed.

HOWARD

No. No, there's no time for that. No
time... I have to go back, Sonia... back.

SONIA

Back? Back where, Howard? To Providence?

No response from Howard, he just stares glassy-eyed at the
ceiling.

INT. LONG HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A group of young men have gathered in the sitting room of the
Long family, the host is 20 year old FRANKLIN BELKNAP LONG.
Franklin sits on a sofa next to Rheinhart Kleiner.

Howard sits in an armchair, looking pallid and weak.

Center stage, leaning slightly against the fireplace is JAMES
MORTON. James is ruggedly good looking, early thirties. He
reads from a small stack of handwritten pages.

JAMES

The bones of the tiny paws, it is
rumored, imply prehensile characteristics
more typical of a diminutive monkey than
of a rat, while the small skull with it's
savage yellow fangs is of the utmost
anomalousness, appearing from certain
angles like a miniature, monstrously
deranged parody of a human skull. The
workmen crossed themselves in fright when

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMES (cont'd)

they came upon this blasphemy, but later burned candles of gratitude because of the shrill, ghostly tittering they felt they would never hear again.

James places the last sheet on the bottom of the stack and takes off his reading glasses.

FRANKLIN

Well, Howard. You've outdone yourself again. I don't know how you come up with these things, but you've got my hair standing on end.

HOWARD

(wearily)

Would that be your tiny collection of lip hairs, Belknapius?

Franklin blushes a little bit and self-consciously runs his finger along his upper lip. James speaks up.

JAMES

Don't listen to him, Frank. It's growing in just fine.

RHEINHART

With assiduous care it may help to enhance your resemblance to your one chief idol, Edgar Allan Poe.

FRANKLIN

My idol? I think you've got me mixed up with someone else. Especially with the way Howard began that last selection.

HOWARD

True enough. Since, like you, Poe affected me most of all horror writers, I can never feel that a tale starts out right unless it has something of his manner. But I'd as soon think of wearing a nose ring as growing a moustache.

RHEINHART

You might look good with a nose ring.

Good natured laughs all around.

FRANKLIN

Well, it did it's job. If fear was your intended response, it worked.

Howard's expression changes from mirth to stern solemnity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

The intended response... is caution, my friends. I intend these stories to be a warning.

JAMES

Against what, small rat creatures with human faces?

HOWARD

A warning of what is to come, should I fail.

RHEINHART

Howard, we all enjoy your flair for the dramatic, but what in Heaven's name are you talking about?

HOWARD

I am going away. I don't know when I'll return, if ever.

FRANKLIN

What do you mean? You're going away, to where?

Howard hesitates before answering.

HOWARD

To Arkham.

JAMES

(laughing)

Arkham?! You mean your fictional town? And what will you be doing there, Howie, studying the Necronomicon at good old Miskatonic University?

RHEINHART

What does Sonia have to say about this?

HOWARD

She'll be coming with me. We leave tonight. My dear friends, I pray that I will return safely to see another meeting of the Kalem Club.

The group looks at Howard, unsure how to take this news, but the man himself remains unemotional and resolved.

INT. SONIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sonia is sitting in the living area, dressed in her travelling clothes. Howard enters, and she looks up at him with as much enthusiasm as she can muster.

SONIA

Did everything go alright?

HOWARD

They all think I'm mad. But I did get to say my farewells.

SONIA

Well, I'm ready as well. Whenever you want to leave, I'm all packed.

Howard looks over at her packed suitcase and smiles ruefully. He almost laughs at the irony, but stifles it.

HOWARD

You didn't need to pack a bag, my dear. We won't be going further than this room, really.

SONIA

Howard. Stop kidding me. You told me we were leaving tonight.

HOWARD

Yes. But, I need to tell you something first.

He walks over to her, kneels and takes her hand in his. He wraps his pinky finger around her pinky and moans slightly.

HOWARD (cont'd)

You are my one true love. We are going to journey through a portal into the darkest realm you will ever see... if anything were to happen to you... I want you to know that you don't have to come with me.

(beat)

You just can't realize how much I appreciate you.

SONIA

But your way of demonstrating it is so unheard of! All these mysterious, cryptic warnings! I swear Howard, if you don't tell me what's going on, I think I may be the next one in your family to go insane!

CONTINUED:

This strikes home for Howard, and Sonia knows she's hurt him immediately.

She reaches out and strokes his arm.

SONIA (cont'd)

Oh dearest. I'm sorry... I didn't think before I spoke.

HOWARD

No. Don't be sorry. You're right. I owe you an explanation. Only, once you know... you may wish you didn't.

Howard gently takes her arm and leads her over to the writing desk, where his satchel lays. He opens the leather case and pulls out his infamous volume, the Necronomicon.

He opens the book, Sonia leans down and looks at the pages for the first time.

ANGLE

The open book shows a series of tightly handwritten columns, interspersed with strange DIAGRAMS and symbols.

BACK TO SCENE

Sonia looks intrigued. She points down at the book.

SONIA

Look how intricate the work is, the detail in these diagrams.

ANGLE

On one diagram in specific. It is the five pointed star with an eye in the center, the ELDER SIGN. This is the symbol that Howard carved on a piece of wood and threw into his grandfather's grave when he was a boy.

SONIA (OS)

What's this one here?

BACK TO SCENE

Howard gently guides her hand away from the book as he turns the page.

HOWARD

That's the Elder Sign. It's one of the emblems that binds them. One of the only things that we have to defend ourselves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wooden amulet, engraved with the Elder Sign. He carefully loops it around her neck.

SONIA

Oh dearest, did you make it yourself?
It's charming.

HOWARD

Let's hope so.

Howard opens the book to a specific place. Sonia looks over his shoulder.

SONIA

What is Yog-Sothoth?

He spins on her so quickly that she jumps back in alarm.

HOWARD

Don't read it! You mustn't read it. Let
me.

Sonia closes her mouth, but she looks a little annoyed. Howard begins to read, but then seems to know the passage by heart. He closes his eyes and begins to chant.

HOWARD (cont'd)

N'gai, n'gha'ghaa, bugg-shoggog, y'hah;
Yog-Sothoth. I call on you, the gate, the
keeper of the gate. N'gai, y'hah, in the
name of the Old Ones, open the gate and
let the worlds be joined. Ia, Ia! Yog-
Sothoth!

A low murmuring RUMBLE from all around them. Sonia looks around apprehensively. Then, just as quickly as it began, the sound is gone.

Howard opens his eyes and looks at her. Sonia can't help but chuckle, but Howard doesn't show any sign of humor.

Then, in the distance, from an apartment nearby... the sound of MUSIC filters through the wall. Something mysterious and vaguely middle-eastern.

SONIA

That's odd. I had no idea we had a
neighbor with a musical inclination.

HOWARD

Erich Zann.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SONIA

Such strange, haunting notes. They
conjure up the most ghastly images. No
wonder you write about such ghoulish
things, listening to that all the time.

HOWARD

The music is unimportant. I write what I
see.

He walks directly to the window and looks outside. He stands
there, transfixed and staring.

SONIA

Dearest, what is it?

HOWARD

Arkham.

Something in Howard's tone makes Sonia feel cold inside. He
seems apprehensive, almost frightened. She goes to join him
at the window.

POV - THROUGH THE WINDOW

The scene below is not what Sonia had expected to see. Gone
are the bustling streets of New York in 1920.

Instead, the street below is cobbled with stone, the houses
and shops that line the promenade are constructed in an old
Victorian style. The poorly shingled roofs sag with age, the
windows are filthy and impossible to see through.

BACK TO SCENE

Sonia backs away despite herself. Her hands go up to her
mouth in fear.

SONIA

My god, Howard. What's happening.

HOWARD

We've arrived.

Howard picks up his satchel, walks briskly away from the
window and heads for the front door.

Sonia starts to grab the Necronomicon.

SONIA

Don't you want to take this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

No! Don't touch it! Leave it.

She retracts her hand, unsure of his vehement response.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Now, come quickly. We have to get away from here.

SONIA

To where? Where are we going?

Howard opens the satchel and pulls out a REVOLVER. He discards the leather bag.

HOWARD

Outside.

And Howard opens the door.

EXT. ARKHAM, MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The door to an older Victorian house opens, and Howard steps out cautiously. He looks around quickly, then motions for Sonia to follow.

She pokes her head out of the house, looks around wide eyed at the world she sees now.

SONIA

I don't like this. I don't like this at all.

HOWARD

There's nothing to like about it, but save your reaction for later. Right now we must get away from here.

Howard leads Sonia out of the house, she follows him down the street, huddled close to him for safety.

She tries to lag back, but Howard pulls her along as they talk.

HOWARD (cont'd)

As soon as they know I'm here, they'll begin to look for the gate.

SONIA

What gate? What they? Explain this to me, please! Please, I've got to make sense of this somehow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

The book is the gate, or more accurately, the key to the gate. And they are the Old Ones. They're real, Sonia. It's all real. Every slithering, horrible abomination that I ever wrote about, they're all real. They exist here, in this nether world, waiting for their chance to cross over.

SONIA

But why you?

HOWARD

My father. He found the book, god knows how. He read from the accursed thing and opened the gate. He was lucky enough to close it again before they could get through, but they haunted him his entire life. He urged my mother to find the book and burn it, but I got to it before she could.

SONIA

And then you opened the gate by reading it.

HOWARD

When someone from our realm summons Yog-Sothoth, the gate is opened at the place where the book is. The first time I opened it, I hid the book in a church here... in Arkham. That night my grandfather was killed by the beast that came looking for it.

Sonia tries to take all this in, but the strain is too much for her, she starts to drag her feet and breathe heavily.

SONIA

Howard... wait... please. I have to catch my breath. This is... too much.

HOWARD

Just a bit further. We have to get to where mother is. She's in danger. They think that she can lead them to the gate.

SONIA

Your mother... is here? Where?

Howard points towards a hill that looms in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

There...

ANGLE

On the hill is a grotesque facsimile of Butler Hospital. It looks warped and evil, the institution from Hell.

HOWARD (OS)

In Arkham Asylum.

EXT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - NIGHT

Howard pulls Sonia by the hand up the hill toward the asylum. The walk through a large wrought iron gate. Thunder rolls.

A lightning flash illuminates a strange FIGURE, dressed in white hospital scrubs. He is digging a hole off to one side.

Sonia clutches Howard's arm tighter as the figure stops digging and sets the spade in the dirt. He stares directly at the two newcomers.

Another lightning flash, and the man's face is lit up; hideously deformed with eyes that have no pupils at all. He smiles wickedly, revealing rows of bloody teeth.

SONIA

Oh my god...

Howard, as calmly as he can, guides Sonia on.

HOWARD

Keep going. He won't hinder us. We are expected.

The digging man watches them go with hateful eyes for a moment, then turns back to his chore.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM, ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The front door is pushed open. No one is in sight. What little light there is in the room is provided by a faltering electric fixture.

The horrible SCREAMS and MOANS of patients can be heard echoing through the empty corridors.

Howard pulls out his revolver with his free hand, squeezes Sonia's hand with the other. They continue on, going deeper into the asylum.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The two carefully pick their way down a dimly lit corridor, trying not to look into the various open doors that line the way.

Unfortunately, morbid curiosity causes Sonia to look in to one. She sees...

INSIDE THE ROOM

An electroshock therapy setup. Two MEN in hospital scrubs are poised on either side of the table.

On the table, a writhing OLDER MAN. He screams in fear as the two men move toward him. One of them lifts a SCALPEL, the other a nasty BONE SAW.

BACK TO SCENE

Sonia backs away and screams in terror.

INSIDE THE ROOM

The two men stop and turn, revealing their awful faces... which are actually not faces at all.

Instead, they have masses of horribly smooth flesh with jagged mouths that seem too large. No eyes, no noses, no features at all except their dreadful jaws.

BACK TO SCENE

Howard pulls Sonia along, further down the hall. She starts to sob in fear and looks ready to faint, but Howard holds her up.

As they go further down the hall, the two men step calmly out of the electroshock room. They seem to watch the two leave, despite their lack of eyes.

Howard stops outside one door in particular. He looks into the small barred window, then pushes the door open.

INSIDE SARAH'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Howard's mother, Sarah, is standing rigidly in the corner. Her eyes have black circles around them from lack of sleep, her hair is matted and filthy.

She looks up in dread, and then seeing her son, smiles in relief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Howard?

HOWARD

Yes, mother. It's Howard.

Sonia comes in after Howard. He moves into the cell, and as he gets to her, Sarah collapses in exhaustion. He kneels and helps her sit on the floor.

SARAH

And Sonia. Is it really you?

HOWARD

I've come to take you back through the gate. To the other side.

SARAH

You shouldn't have come here. They won't let you leave now. We're damned. We're all damned.

HOWARD

No. We're going to escape this place, and we're going to seal the gate closed for all time.

Suddenly, a dark shadow falls in the hallway, followed by the hollow clacking sound of hooves on concrete.

Sonia looks out of the cell and blanches. She yells at Howard.

SONIA

Howard!

(whispering)

Some... one is coming.

Howard gets up, helping his mother to her feet. He hurries to the cell door and looks out into the hallway where Sonia is.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Someone is coming down the hallway, a figure that Howard knows all too well.

It is his PURSUER. Although it is dark in the corridor, Howard can still make out the horrid abdominal tentacles and the hind legs of a goat.

Scurrying along the floor is his heinous familiar, Brown Jenkins. The rat thing hisses and shows it's appalling Cheshire cat grin of razor sharp teeth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PURSUER

Carter. We've been expecting you.

SONIA

That man... he's the man you wrote about
in the Dunwich Horror. He's Wilbur
Whateley, the demon son of a woman and
Yog-Sothoh.

Sonia starts to hyperventilate and backs into the cell, Sarah
clutches to her.

Howard points the revolver at his goat-faced enemy. The man
laughs.

PURSUER

Come now, Carter. It will go easier on
you and your loved ones if you surrender
the book to us without hardship.

Sonia turns to Howard's mother.

SONIA

Why... do they call him that?

SARAH

They don't know him by his Christian name
here. In this place they call him
Randolph Carter.

PURSUER

The book, Carter! Surrender it to me.

HOWARD

I don't have it.

The pursuer looks at the blood and dirt under his nails.

PURSUER

Pity.

Brown Jenkins starts to titter, it's high pitched laugh
sounds like nails on a chalkboard.

The pursuer takes one more step forward then raises his left
hand and begins making curious symbols with it.

PURSUER (cont'd)

Y'haah. Y'hai n'ghaa ga'hai... Ia, Ia
Shub-Niggurath!

Howard whips around and grabs Sonia by the shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

Take mother, go! Go quickly!

SONIA

Go where? I don't know this place!

HOWARD

Just go! Now!

Sarah helps her son by ushering Sonia away, they start to walk down the hall away from Wilbur and the rat thing.

Wilbur smiles and steps to one side of the corridor, he looks down at the far end of the hall behind him. He's expecting something.

Then, it's as if the night has taken shape and is coming through the door.

A dark, shapeless form pushes into the doorway. The thing is like a giant amoeba of darkness; it's whole body is in constant flux, sprouting eyes, tentacles, arachnid-like limbs and sucking mouths.

The SHAPE grows two huge lobster-like claws and pulls it's cumbersome mass further into the hallway. It sprouts a face-like structure on it's front, two glassy eyes and a wolf snout.

The snarling dog mouth opens and the shape spits some of it's own body further down the hallway. The piece hits the floor and turns into a writhing, protean creature that resembles a bat.

The bat thing extends it's wing shaped structures, flapping them until dry. Then it takes flight and goes directly for Howard.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Run, Sonia! Run!

Sonia finally listens. She grabs Sarah by the arm and runs away down the hall, choosing the unknown ahead over the evil creature creeping toward them.

Howard fires his revolver twice! BLAM! BLAM!

One of the bullets hits the bat-thing and it falls to the floor, squirming and screeching.

FURTHER DOWN THE HALL

Sonia and Sarah run doggedly down the corridor. Sonia sneaks a look back.

BACK TO SCENE

Howard holds the gun at the ready, the beast still moves forward, not hindered at all.

Wilbur Whateley, the pursuer, laughs loudly.

PURSUER

Carter, you amuse me. Your puny weapons have no effect here, you know that. Now, behold...

Brown Jenkins scuttles over to the fallen piece of black goo. He pokes it gingerly with one of his paw-hands. Instantly the thing comes back to life and attacks!

The rat thing struggles, but the bat has it's jaws firmly in his neck. Brown Jenkins tries to free himself from it, but too late.

The mass at the end of the hall opens a giant mouth in it's front and a long, serrated tongue uncoils. The tongue rolls across the floor until it touches the bat... then the two things become one, the tongue absorbing the bat.

Brown Jenkins is drawn, screaming, toward the mouth of the appalling black body.

PURSUER (cont'd)

Nothing can escape Shub-Niggurath! The black goat of the woods with a thousand young! You will die slowly in it's stomach Carter. Unless you give me the key.

HOWARD

You'll never have it, Whateley! You'll never cross over!

Howard empties his gun into the thing, Shub-Niggurath. The body just absorbs the bullets like a thick black jelly would, then spits out the slugs. They clatter to the floor.

Lovecraft has seen enough, he turns and runs after Sonia and his mother.

Wilbur Whateley laughs mirthlessly. The black gelatinous beast behind him slithers and stumbles closer.

FURTHER DOWN THE HALL

Howard races down the corridor, trying to catch up with his mother and Sonia.

They get to a point in the hallway where it forks left and right. Howard runs up and guides them left.

The thing behind them continues to move relentlessly, it starts to morph into something resembling a giant SCORPION with far too many eyes.

Wilbur Whateley's laugh echoes off the walls as they flee.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM, A NARROW CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Our three heroes are literally running for their lives. This corridor is considerably smaller than the others.

The deeper they go into the corridor, the narrower it gets. Soon, they are forced to go through one at a time.

Sonia leads, Sarah's second and Howard brings up the rear. He urges them on.

HOWARD

Hurry! Sonia, keep going!

He chances a look behind him and sees the dark shape of Shub-Niggurath closing in on them. It continues to morph and change into a series of lurid creatures.

Claw clatter on the floor, eyes of every shape and description roll in sockets that then become mouths. The whole shape continues to eat itself and then regenerate into a new horror.

Howard pushes them on, starting to panic. Suddenly, Sarah stops in front of him.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Mother? What is it?! Keep going!

SARAH

I can't! Look.

Sarah stops and sees what has hindered their progress. The corridor ends abruptly with a small steel door, no taller than four feet.

HOWARD

Go! Go in!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sonia yanks open the door, revealing a set of stone stairs that descend into absolute darkness.

She hesitates, but Howard sees the unspeakable thing behind them. He pushes his mother and Sarah down into the abyss.

INSIDE THE STAIRWAY

Complete and utter darkness. The three trample down the stone stairs, unable to see what they're doing. They cling to each other in fear.

HOWARD

Look. There. Go toward that light.

Then, far below them, a dim yellow light can be seen. Since it is their only salvation, they continue down.

INT. CAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

The stairs end in a giant underground cavern. The light is provided by a half dozen torches that line the walls.

In the center of the room is a giant circular pit that leads down into untold depths. Whispering, moaning sounds issue up from it's dark mouth.

SONIA

What is this place?

HOWARD

The catacombs beneath Arkham. Dwelling place of ghouls that never see the sun and nourish themselves with human flesh.

From above them, the sound of CLATTERING on the stone steps.

SARAH

It's coming.

IN A CAVERNOUS TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

Howard leads them through a rocky tunnel, holding a stolen torch out in front of them. Sonia and Sarah stay as close as they can.

The light thrown out by the torch provides only a small circle of light in this dark place, and progress is slow.

Behind them, they can hear the gibbering, awful mass closing in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Howard negotiates the twists and turns in the tunnel, choosing different directions when the tunnel forks.

Finally, he comes to a last turn in the tunnel.

HOWARD

Here. This one should lead us back up to the surface.

INT. TOMB - NIGHT

Inside a dimly lit tomb, lined with caskets. Silent and deathly still.

Then, a casket lid is raised from something inside it.

A moment later, Howard's head appears with the torch held high. He climbs out of the casket all the way and looks back down into the casket.

ANGLE

On the open casket. The bottom has been broken out, and Howard can see Sonia and Sarah in a cavernous space below.

BACK TO SCENE

Howard reaches down into the casket and pulls his mother up. Sonia follows, soon they are all inside the tomb. Howard points up at the tiny window above them.

HOWARD

That's the only way out.

SONIA

Of course it is.

HOWARD

Sonia, you go first, then try to help mother down once you get outside.

They start to climb up the sides of the caskets to the tiny window above. Sonia climbs up to the top casket and wriggles through the small window.

EXT. ARKHAM CEMETERY - NIGHT

Sonia clambers out and hangs from the window for a moment before dropping to the ground beneath.

She rights herself as quickly as possible, dusting herself off from the fall.

INT. TOMB - NIGHT

Howard supports his mother as she tries to get a grasp on the window.

An appalling sucking sound comes from the open casket beneath them. The dark hole in the bottom of the coffin seems to grow suddenly. Then, a long segmented leg extends out of the crevice.

Howard's eyes get huge with fear and panic. His voice cracks as he whispers urgently.

HOWARD

Hurry, mother. Please, hurry.

Sarah, sensing the danger, turns back to look.

A second leg extends through the opening, and then another. Within moments, eight arachnid legs are poised around the hole. They flex, readying to pull the mass of the beast upward.

Howard's mother screams!

EXT. ARKHAM CEMETERY - NIGHT

Sonia hears the scream from inside. She looks around the cemetery for anything to help her. Nothing.

SONIA

Hooooowaaaaard!

She runs to the front of the tomb and starts pulling on the heavy doors. It's futile, the doors don't budge an inch.

INT. TOMB - NIGHT

Shub-Niggurath pulls itself up through the tiny opening, causing the remaining pieces of the casket to splinter and disintegrate.

It looks now like a spider or a scorpion with horrendous tumors and growths all along it's spine. It ROARS in fury as it spies the two of them escaping.

Out of it's roaring mouth, a purplish mottled tongue whips out and starts flailing around the room like an agitated cobra.

The tongue lashes out and wraps around Sarah's ankle. Upon contact with her flesh, acid from the beast starts to eat through Sarah's leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sarah screams! Howard pulls a wooden AMULET with the Elder Sign out of his jacket with his left hand and starts to utter incantations.

HOWARD

Back, I command you back! In the name of the Old Ones, back!

Shub-Niggurath howls in what must be pain. It starts to recede back into the casket.

EXT. ARKHAM CEMETERY - NIGHT

Sonia is beside herself with fright. She tries the handles of the door again to no avail.

SONIA

Howard! Please! God... help us.

She starts to cry in total exhaustion. Unable to even think clearly, she backs away from the tomb, right into...

PURSUER

Hello, my dear. I'm afraid God can't hear you now.

INT. TOMB - NIGHT

Howard hears Sonia SCREAM from outside. It causes him to lose concentration for a moment. He looks toward the door.

HOWARD

Sonia.

One of Shub-Niggurath's horrible arachnid legs grows a serrated claw and slices into Howard's arm.

He cringes in pain and drops the amulet. Now all bets are off. The beast renews it's evil grip on Sarah's leg, her flesh burns.

Howard clambers up one more casket and tries to pull his mother up with all his strength. It's a losing battle though, and he knows it.

Sarah grits her teeth against the pain, looks up at Howard with her last bit of clarity.

SARAH

Go, my son. Go and seal the gate forever.

HOWARD

No mother. I won't leave you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Howard, the gate must be closed! The horror is upon us! If you fail, there will be nothing to stop them! Nothing!

The thing's tentacle tongue digs deeper into Sarah's skin. She chokes back the pain and yells out to him.

SARAH (cont'd)

There's no time! Your father, your grandfather! Don't let our deaths be for nothing! Go!

HOWARD

Mother...

SARAH

Go! Please, Howard...

Another tentacle-like whip lashes out from Shub-Niggurath's mouth. It wraps around Sarah's neck, silencing her.

Wisps of smoke come up from her burning neck. Her eyes plead with Howard to run.

HOWARD

Mother! No! Nooo!

And then she is dragged out of his grasp by the black beast. Howard cries out in agony.

He uses his last bit of will to climb up the last casket, then shoves his body out the window.

EXT. ARKHAM CEMETERY - NIGHT

Howard drops out of the window onto the muddy earth beneath. As he gets up, he hears Sonia's voice, coming from not far off.

SONIA (OS)

Howard! Hooowaaard!

He is on his feet instantly and running for the outskirts of the cemetery, towards where he knows she must be...

EXT. SHUNNED HOUSE - NIGHT

This decrepit two story Victorian house stands on a hill above the cemetery. A gnarled tree guards it, the bark bringing to mind images of twisted bodies and faces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another lightning flash, rain starts to pelt down. Howard makes it to the top of the hill, rushing straight for the house.

He gets to the front door and kicks it in.

INT. SHUNNED HOUSE, ENTRY - NIGHT

Howard looks around. Some meager light makes it through the boarded up windows, the rest of the place is poorly lit by a few candles.

HOWARD

Sonia!

No response. Howard heads deeper into the house.

INT. SHUNNED HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The living room is quiet and dark. In the corner, a rocking chair gently sways back and forth.

Howard looks around frantically for a sign of life, but there is nothing.

Then, Wilbur Whateley the pursuer's voice seems to come from all around him.

PURSUER (OS)

Welcome home, Carter. Surely you know this place. The shunned house. This is the place where all of your horrors, your unmentionable terrors reside.

Howard pulls out his revolver and starts to reload the chambers.

HOWARD

Sonia?

Mirthless laughter from all over the house, reverberating through the walls.

PURSUER (OS)

Yes Carter. Sonia is here. Come and find her. She's waiting for you.

Howard slams the revolver closed and heads through the living room, into...

INT. THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

There is something altogether evil about the kitchen. Blood stains the rims of the sink and is pooled on the floor.

Some unknown black slime bubbles out of the drain and starts to crawl up the sides of the basin, seeming to feed on the blood.

PURSUER (OS)

All the miserable trappings of your other life are here, waiting to be discovered.

On the kitchen table, a book lays open. Howard steps forward and glances at it.

ANGLE

On the book, open to a specific illustration which shows a CANNIBAL'S BUTCHER SHOP. The limbs and quarters hanging about the shop are ghastly. The butcher leers over a fresh kill.

BACK TO SCENE

Howard, repelled by the book, takes a step back. Then, he notices as a DROP OF BLOOD falls on the open page.

Slowly, reluctantly, Howard's gaze moves up from the book and settles on the loose plaster of the ancient ceiling.

There is a large, irregular spot of wet crimson which spreads even as Howard looks. He backs out of the kitchen.

PURSUER (OS)

That's the idea. You know the answer.
Aren't all the putrid, terrible creations
of your diseased mind always upstairs?

INT. SHUNNED HOUSE, STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Howard takes the stairs two at a time, rushing to save Sonia's life.

HOWARD

Sonia!

PURSUER (OS)

Yes. Come and find us, Carter. Up the stairs toward the unspeakable, unholy things that wait in the darkness for you.

INT. SHUNNED HOUSE, UPPER LANDING - MOMENTS LATER

Lovecraft makes the top of the stairs, holding the revolver at the ready. He looks left and right, then makes a decision and heads to the right.

PURSUER (OS)

You see? You know deep down inside which way to go. Come to me, Carter. Come to me.

Howard hits a door at the end of the upstairs hallway. He readies himself and pushes the door open.

INT. SHUNNED HOUSE, BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is plain enough, no hideous mass of undulating flesh is inside. There's only one MAN in here, sitting at the writing desk by the window.

He is in silhouette, but speaks with the voice of the pursuer.

PURSUER

Here I am, Carter. Right here. I've been waiting for you.

The pursuer's hand reaches out to turn on an electric lamp on the desk.

PURSUER (cont'd)

Look on me and despair...

The light pops on, revealing ANOTHER HOWARD, sitting placidly at the desk. The pursuer has somehow taken *his* shape. He smiles slightly.

PURSUER (cont'd)

I am your doom.

Lovecraft stands there, dumbstruck.

PURSUER (cont'd)

Well. What did you expect, Carter? A devil? A demon? An eldritch horror? There is no demon.

(beat)

Only an untalented, second-rate writer named Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

Howard holds the pistol pointed at his pursuer, but is unable to pull the trigger. The prospect of shooting himself is too hard to comprehend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

Where... where is Sonia?

PURSUER

Sonia? You mean your estranged wife? Same place she's been for the last five years, my friend. Living in Cincinnati, Ohio. She owns a fine shop there, and has done quite well since divorcing you. Or should I say, since divorcing us.

HOWARD

That's a lie!

PURSUER

No. You are the lie. Your life is the lie! You've convinced yourself that you are the savior of the human race, when in fact you're nothing but the uneducated offspring of clinically insane parents.

HOWARD

It was this place. Arkham drove them insane.

The other Howard, the pursuer, rises angrily from the desk and starts to circle Lovecraft.

PURSUER

There is no Arkham, you fool! Arkham is in your mind. Haven't you realized that yet? Your mother didn't die at the hands of some nameless horror. She died, just as your father did, in a mental institution. They died, screaming at the walls and ceiling, crazy as bedbugs. Just as you will.

Howard tries to answer, but doesn't sound all that convinced.

HOWARD

I'm not crazy.

PURSUER

It's alright, really. No one could possibly blame you for your mental condition. Being raised by a mother who, in her heart, always wanted a girl. Being made to wear a dress. Your father, committed to a mental institution when you were but four years old.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Howard starts to break down. His grip on the gun falters and he starts to lower it as the pursuer circles him.

PURSUER (cont'd)

Your grandfather, telling you all kinds of gruesome stories as a child. Then your overprotective mother pulls you out of school and keeps you locked up in your room until you're well into your twenties. Yes, my friend, no one could possibly blame you for your madness. Some would even try to cure you.

HOWARD

Sonia.

PURSUER

Yes, sweet Sonia. She tried so hard. She had hoped to lift you out of your abysmal depths with true love. But in the end, your insanity drove even her away.

The pursuer gently guides Howard over to the desk and sits him down.

PURSUER (cont'd)

And now, here you are, sitting at your writing desk, trying desperately to convince yourself that none of the events of your life are your fault. You want to blame all of your inadequacies as a son, as a husband, as a human being, on these horrific monsters that lurk just outside the realm of human consciousness.

Then, the pursuer kneels down and puts his face right up to Howard's.

PURSUER (cont'd)

The truth of it is... there's no one to blame but yourself.

HOWARD

I... am the monster.

Howard breaks down. His head slumps and tears start to come. He lets his gun hand fall to the floor. The gun makes a clunk sound as it hits the ground.

PURSUER

Don't be so hard on yourself. It's not your fault. The cards were stacked against you. A precocious boy who found
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PURSUER (cont'd)
his way into his father's library, and
read a book that gave him all kinds of
ideas. It's not your fault.

The pursuer reaches out and strokes the back of Howard's
head.

PURSUER (cont'd)
In fact, I imagine if it weren't for that
book, you might have had a normal life.
That book has done nothing but bring you
pain, my friend. I think we should find
that book and destroy it. Don't you?

HOWARD
Find it.
(realizing)
But if you and I were truly the same
person, you would know where it was.

Howard stands and picks his gun back up. He points the
revolver at the pursuer's head.

PURSUER
Not necessarily. Think this through,
Carter. You can't kill me. If you kill
me, you kill yourself.

HOWARD
I'm not Randolph Carter. And you... are
not me.

K-BLAM! Howard fires point blank into the pursuer's chest.
Then twice more... BLAM! BLAM!

The pursuer falls backward, and as he falls his shape goes
back to that of Wilbur Whateley, the goat-faced man-thing. As
Whateley dies, his body turning into a frothing green slime,
the whole room starts to shift.

The desk, everything in the room, starts to lose shape around
Howard until the illusion is totally gone...

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, NEWSTAND - NIGHT

Howard stands in basically the same position that he'd been
in when he was in Arkham just moments before. It takes him
only a moment to realize where he is, he quickly puts the
pistol away.

The streets of New York are deserted at this time of the
night. There is a closed newstand nearby, and lying in a pile
of old newspapers awaiting collection, is Sonia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Howard rushes over to her. He looks her over without moving her at first. Then he gently runs his finger along her cheek.

HOWARD

Sonia. My love.

Sonia stirs only a little, her eyes stay closed.

SONIA

Howard... it's coming. It's... coming.

HOWARD

No, dear. Nothing's coming. It's just a nightmare, that's all. We were just... sleepwalking.

Howard picks her up and carefully carries her away.

INT. SONIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sonia sleeps fitfully on the couch. Howard walks over to the table where the Necronomicon lies. He closes the book, carries it over to the fireplace.

As he starts a fire, Sonia bolts upright.

SONIA

Howard! The black goat, it's coming!

It takes her a moment to figure out where she is, but then she is up and rushing around the room. Her eyes are wide and she looks like she's coming unglued.

Howard stands and goes to her. He holds her tight.

HOWARD

It's alright, Sonia. We're back now.

SONIA

The book, Howard! You have to burn the book! Close the gate!

HOWARD

I'm going to. I'm going to close the gate for all time. And I'm going to keep it locked long after we're gone.

SONIA

Yes. Good. Good. But how?

HOWARD

The Elder Sign, the incantations that bind the Old Ones and keep them out of
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD (cont'd)
our world... I'm going to put them in my writing. That way, every time someone reads the words, the gate will be strengthened. I only pray that my work will not die with me or fall into obscurity. Once I burn the Necronomicon, my writings will be the only remaining source of those incantations.

SONIA
Oh, yes. Yes, Howard! Burn it, quickly, burn it!

HOWARD
I will, dear.

Howard gives her a quick kiss, then walks over to where he left the book on the floor.

HOWARD (cont'd)
After I read one more spell.

SONIA
No, Howard! No!

HOWARD
It is bad enough that I have witnessed the horrors of the Old Ones. I love you too much to let you bear that burden with me, Sonia. So now you must forget.

He lifts the book to a pre-marked page and makes a peculiar symbol with his left hand.

SONIA
Howard, no... I...

Sonia starts to say something more, but then gets a dreamy, docile look on her face as he whispers a chant.

HOWARD
(softly)
N'gai n'gaa, y'hai y'haa. Sh'gai nog
azathoth y'hai n'gaa...

As Howard continues, Sonia sits back down on the couch, looking more and more at peace. Finally, she lies down to sleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Sonia is dressed in her travelling clothes. Howard stands on the platform with her, also dressed in his best suit.

She looks uncomfortable and unsure as to whether or not she should hug and kiss him. Clearly, this is a goodbye.

SONIA

Howard, come with me.

HOWARD

I can't, my dear. Your future lies in Cincinnati. As for me, Providence is part of me. I am Providence.

SONIA

But I love you, don't you know that? I'll go back with you. I'll do anything. We don't have to part.

Howard loops his pinky finger around hers.

HOWARD

My dear, you have no idea how much I appreciate you.

SONIA

No. You're right. I don't. You will forever be a mystery to me, Howard.

HOWARD

It is, perhaps, better that way.

Then, Howard shows his affection in public for the first time. He grabs Sonia in his arms and kisses her passionately, sweetly.

They break finally, and Sonia's eyes are filled with longing and sadness.

Howard is unable to hold her gaze. He takes a step back, smiling uncomfortably, and puts a hat on to hide his eyes.

Sonia tries to hide her tears. She turns, and walks briskly for the train.

The smoke belches out of the smokestack and rolls heavily onto the platform. Howard raises his hand in a weak goodbye. From her train compartment, Sonia does the same.

HOWARD (cont'd)

My love. My one true love. Farewell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The train pulls out of the station, leaving the sole figure of Howard alone on the platform.

He looks after the train remorsefully, then pulls his hat down as the smoke from the train engulfs him.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE:

Howard Phillips Lovecraft returned to Providence in 1925 and stayed there until his death in 1937.

Lovecraft is one of the world's most widely read horror authors, and thought to be one of the greatest single influences on horror fiction. Collections of his stories have been translated into every language, and many of them have been adapted into feature films.

For time being, the gate remains closed...

FADE TO BLACK.

T H E E N D

