

Arkham Horror

the Boardgame : By Fantasy Flight Games



The Story So Far.....

Mandy Thompson came to Arkham several years ago looking for work as a researcher for Miskatonic University. Since then, she has worked with many of the University professors, delving into esoteric tomes filled with scientific information, historical reports, and sometimes even occult ramblings.

It was while reading an old book of prophecies last week that she first felt that she had stumbled onto something big. Mandy came to believe that certain signs and portents described in the book (she was reading) were taking place in Arkham right now – omens that indicated the return of a terrible being referred to as an Ancient One, which would grind the cities of Man beneath its loathsome tread.

Tonight, the full moon has turned blood red, which is a final omen of the return of the Ancient One.

Slipping into the night, and armed with her knowledge of prophecy, Mandy has decided to see if she can defy fate and stop these events from taking place.

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I sped across town as fast as dignity and my most comfortable walking shoes would allow; gliding through the dimly lit streets of Arkham like a spectre in the night. My mind was careening with fresh fears and frightful revelations I had gleaned from the cracked pages of the ancient manuscript I had been pouring over most the evening within the University Library... horrific revelations which made my skin crawl as I went over these things again and again in my mind as I hurried through the sanguine streets of the old city; for the sky was one vast mantle of blood, and had an altogether unhealthy hue - the colour of foreboding death!



Through the University I fled, as though the action of moving would chase away my deepest trepidations and keep my mind focussed on the task at hand. Along the dimpsy, sickly, yellow pallid street-lit sidewalks and into the dilapidated Merchant District. Further... further still I meandered, across the steel covered yawning throat like bridge which let into the Rivertown district, as I made my way step by step towards the old Graveyard, which was my immediate goal, and perhaps the ultimate fruition of all my labours. This, I hoped, would help me unravel the insane events I had stumbled upon by unhappy chance, all of which were transpiring within my home town this very night? If I was correct in my assertions, there among the fragile and crumbling grave stones, I would discover my first clue! Written in Latin, I hope to discover the true words written there... the warning, laid down many several generations before, by the deplorable family who had become so embroiled and ensnared by the foul corruptions of Azathoth.

I remember thinking to myself how quiet and desolate the city seemed, how devoid of humanity. Almost as though the oppressive air was keeping all good citizens with proper domestic sensibilities behind their closed doors... perhaps unspoken warning, whispered intuitively into their hearts from Angelic Heralds, to stay inside this Godless night... if indeed, Angels dared to walk these vile times in such close proximity to this tainted evil incarnate. Only miscreants, unsavoury rogues, the foolish, and the desperate homeless dared the dire carnival of this most hateful festering night. My footsteps echoed too loudly in my ears, ringing out like the discordant chimes from some unholy bell. But I eventually reached my destination.

The dilapidated Graveyard on the east side of town was strangled... overgrown with weeds and tangled knots of unsavoury looking bushes and shrubs. Amongst the anarchic jungle lay dark grey sentinels of stone, standing at crooked angles but mostly hidden under the perfusion of suffocating greenery. Like a gigantic skull staring... screaming open mouthed at the sky, its crooked and discoloured teeth pierced up from the earth in jagged lines, which dissected the ancient enclosure at intervals where ever the stones had not wholly succumbed to the onslaught on time and the relentless march of the undergrowth.



Here, among this macabre and terrifying scene, I searched frantically about the graveyard; allowing my flashlight to eliminate the stones in search of my goal.

A ruined tomb surrounded by rusty iron railing lay at the heart of this dour location, and twisting my way through the half hanging broken hinged gate, I approached the dark yawning portal with some trepidation.

But I soon found what I was looking for. A cob-webbed plaque of stone rested ominously perched above the chain and padlock entranced doorway of the old family crypt. A spider`s crawl of spiked letters in esoteric Latin warned: “Condemnant Quod Non Intellegunt” *they condemn because they do not understand.* But I knew what I was looking for, the Library tome had taught me where to look, and I spotted my goal almost immediately, and yet my heart went cold at the sight of it. Hidden among the masonry, almost like a foliate mask upon a Church face, lay strange and ugly symbols easily mistaken for Gothic decoration and a long dead stone mason`s attempt at individuality and immutable immortality. But I knew the flourishes of this long deceased hand, and knew with a chilling certainty that I was indeed looking first hand at Cthulhuan script, just like the passages I had glimpsed in the most hateful and dreaded Necronomicon.

I pushed and simultaneously twisted the nose piece in the centre most gargoyle, amidst the Latin and barely disguised alien script, and felt a section of the stone slide away with hardly as murmur of sound. Reaching cautiously within, I pulled forth an oil wrapped parchment which I hurriedly pocketed.

Returning the nose piece to its proper position in the wall, I hastened out of the Graveyard as speedily as I could, and when some distance lay between me and that dire place, I stopped to get my breath and re-gather my senses. Reaching inside my coat pocket, I pulled out the small sleeve of papers, removed the outer casing, and by the light of my flashlight, I began to read:

“A thick layer of dust coated the hall, pressed into the bare stones by a heavy silence. The hall was vast and dark, the lightless torches resting cold and dead in their sconces. Only the faintest trickle of light was able to creep in from the hall`s many doorways, offering only hints of the room`s details. The hall was shaped like two joined rings; and winding staircases led up and away to the hall`s second level and beyond, disappearing into the shadows of the ceiling... offering a promise of enduring nightmares to any who dared endure that morbid ascent.

Suddenly, the silence was broken! Echoing from some distant chamber, the sounds of men`s screams burst to life, growing first clearer, then fading in a gurgling rattle of misery and anguish - death was near to him. Once again the cries rang clear, and then faded away to utter silence. The walls swallowed pain like a sponge. Again, a scream was heard, nearer now, but ending on a high note. The last scream came from directly behind the massive double doors which led into the vast hall. That scream died suddenly, matched by a jarring impact which shook the dust from the doors` ancient timbers. Two suits of plate armour were mounted to either side of these great doors, posed as if standing watch. The thick coat of dust covered these suits of armour as thickly as the floor, betraying the guards as simple displays, and if they took notice of the macabre struggle outside their doors, they showed no sign.

One of the massive doors shuddered again. This time, it continued to move, slowly opening... its rusty hinges protesting every inch. When the door had opened barely more than a foot, three intruders slipped through the gap, panicked and splattered with fresh blood. The three newcomers entered the hall with extreme haste, their lanterns doing little to dispel its shadows. No sooner had they all pressed through the portal, than they threw their shoulders against the twin doors again and slowly pushed them shut, straining against the weight. As the gap narrowed to just a few inches, an arm reached through, blindly grasping for anyone it could snatch. The arm was shrivelled and rotten, pale bones exposed by tears in the withered skin. The arm was that of a Gollum, and an instant later many more reached through the gap to join the first. Although at least a dozen shambling ghouls were now scrabbling outside the door, they made far less noise than the three living intruders within.

“This is madness!” cried the man closest to the hinges. He was dark and spindly, and his eyes squinting even in his terror.

“Kazandra told us nothing of walking deadless madness! Look at us! We’ve barely gotten inside, and we’ve lost half our number!”

The intruder pressing against the middle of the door was a fey woman with flowing red hair; elegantly garbed in flowing gowns of blue silk. She continued her neighbour’s lament.

“Kazandra told us the guardians followed strict patterns! She told us we could avoid them completely! We have been betrayed!”

Both the dark man and the fire-haired female had directed their complaints at the third intruder, a broad shouldered man with a strong jaw, straw-coloured hair, and small eyes with more than a touch of ice. He was closest to the gap, and although decayed hands were clutching at his sleeves and collar, he remained calm and determined.

“Dinchara,... Blubella,” he began, addressing his companions with a chill in his voice,

“I will not hear talk of betrayal. Remember who you serve! Remember the cause! Focus on getting this accursed portal shut, and then we can talk about what went wrong and who to blame!”

Blubella, the fey touched woman, grumbled and pressed all the harder against the door. Dinchara did likewise, although a moment later he heard something which made his skin crawl. A rasping hiss, the sound of metal sliding on metal. It wasn’t the squealing hinge, he was sure of that; it was too quiet, and coming from the wrong direction. Glancing at his companions, Dinchara saw that neither of them was reacting; only he could hear it over the hinge.

Craning his neck, he twisted to peer at its source. It was the suit of armour. Slowly... mechanically... the helmet was turning. Turning to look at him. The light from Dinchara’s low-slung lantern shone up into the helmet, showing thick cobwebs and a cavernous blackness where it’s face should have been. The entire suit of armour turned to face him, mutely bringing its heavy, spiked mace to bear. Numb with terror, Dinchara stepped back

from the door, meekly bringing his upraised, spidery hands up before his face. The pale-eyed man felt the sudden extra weight on the door, and without turning to face the others he started to bark a warning—but he was cut off by Dinchara's sudden shriek, quickly ended by a wet smack not unlike a dropped ripe melon. Blubella and the pale-eyed man leapt back from the door, spinning to look at Dinchara, just as the latter's ruined corpse slumped to the floor, his blood quickly sopped up by the thick layer of dust. The soulless thing which had killed Dinchara turned its helmet to stare at them, and raised its mace again, the weapon still dripping with crimson gore. Blubella and the pale-eyed man backed away in utter shock.

When the second suit of armour also stepped forward, the clang of its metal feet against the dead stone echoed through the hall like an omen of death. The two intruders scrambled away, backing further into the hall. Blubella grabbed the arm of her companion... her husband.

“What are we going to do?” she screamed.

His cheeks ashen, the pale-eyed man raised his lantern high to search for escape; what he saw brought vigour back to his face.

“Look,” he commanded, “Look at the walls!”

The curved walls of the vast hall were covered with paintings. Although the darkness and the dust dimmed their colours, all were clearly portraits of men and women: no two were alike.

The pale-eyed man looked to his wife... grinning widely.

“This is as Kazandra told us! Do not doubt our mistress! All we have to do is search for the man with the monocle!”

Blubella nodded, seeming to regain a bit of her own confidence.

In just a moment, they had found the portrait they sought, but in that time the double doors had been left undefended to long.

Here the writing stopped abruptly. But the pen was taken up again... possibly by the same hand. Yet the script was altogether different this time, and the quill which had written it was narrower and the ink more fluid in its motion.

The pack of fiends had pushed the doors wide enough for them to start pouring through the opening. As the two intruders examined the portrait, the two suits of armour and the mob of rotting, walking corpse like entities closed the gap between them - their staggered steps slow and methodical.

The portrait the intruders sought showed a handsome and dashing man, dressed in frills and finery. He was tall and well-muscled, with perfect proportions. He had thick, wavy black hair and a finely trimmed beard. A twinkle in his eye told of his zest for life... and something more sinister, perhaps. His other eye was hidden by a monocle, and he wore an ornate sword on his belt. With one hand, he held an elaborately carved harp, and the other rested on the shoulder of a young girl. No more than thirteen years of age, she was a dark beauty, like the man.

The pale-eyed man gave this portrait one cursory glance before flinging it from the wall. A black, round stone was set in the mortar, kept free of dust by the painting. The stone was the size of his hand, and he cupped his palm against it, pressing hard. The stone slid into a niche; and immediately the entire section of wall started slowly and silently to swing outward, revealing a wide, short passage beyond.

The two intruders ran into the passage, grabbing the handles to the double doors at its end. But to their horror, they discovered the doors were locked. The pale-eyed man looked back at the approaching creatures, and then turned to his frightened wife.

“It will take me several minutes to pick this lock. Find a way to keep those things away!”

As the man started in on the lock, Blubella looked about. Spotting a torch sconce twisted askew, she smiled with sudden dazzling realization. Twisting it, the walls started to swing shut again.... very slowly. She watched the walls shut, but as she did so her smug grin dissolved.

“It’s too slow,” she murmured half to herself, shaking her head in despair.

Backing away from the closing walls, she said it again more loudly. “It’s too slow! Those things will reach us before the walls shut! All we’re going to do is seal them in with us!”

“No we won’t.” The pale-eyed man’s stony statement cut off Blubella in mid panic. While she’d been looking away he’d walked up directly behind her.

“We only need to buy a few moment’s time.” Blubella’s eyes flashed wide as she realized his intention, but it was too late. In that instant, the man grabbed her belt and her long lush hair with his strong hands, and hurled her forward... through the narrowing gap... and into the vast portrait hall. She tumbled to the floor, landing at the feet of the unnatural mob. She simply stared back at her companion... her husband... stunned with surprise and horror.

“It’s for the cause,” the man coldly assured her, raising a hand to point at her. “And you should not have doubted Kazandra.”

Blubella’s fear shifted into a blazing anger. She was hurling curses at her husband when the first of the ghouls fell upon her, and she was still hurling them when the walls shut, leaving

the pale-eyed man alone to work. In a moment, the lock opened to his tools, and he cautiously entered the room beyond. It was a library. He stood in one corner, amid the stacks. His greedy eyes danced along the titles of the endless display of books.

“May I be of assistance?”

The pale-eyed man jumped, spinning to find the source of the hollow, clipped voice. A figure glided into his lantern’s light. It was pale and shade like! Yet it was obviously human, though ill proportioned and squat. The imp moved towards the voice of the newcomer.

“W-what are you?” the intruder stammered.

The imp flickered with a smirk, a horrid little tic that was more spasm than smile.

“I” said the imp “am the librarian.”

The pale-eyed man pondered this answer for a moment. His next words showed more confidence than his last.

“Very well, if you are the keeper of this library, then give me the knowledge I seek.”

The imp frowned.

“And who are you to offer such a command? You stand in the castle of my master, and I am his servant.”

The pale-eyed man grinned. “I am Ludvig Floss von Eislund. I am Kargatane, as were my... companions, and we loyally serve our mistress, Kazandra of the Kargat! We serve the same master, and I have come to Avernus to learn his fate!”

The imp’s eyes narrowed.

“von Eislund, eh? Kargatane?” It pursed its lips as it pondered its reply.

“Very well, Kargatane. You say you wish to learn the fate of our master? You have come to the right place. This is the Hall of Records. The knowledge you seek, all the knowledge, surrounds you! In these chambers, Azalin collected all that was ever written about these lands. Biographies, histories, romances, tragedies, all this and more . . . Of course, it can sometimes be difficult to discern the truthful works from the propaganda.”

Ludvig cut the imp off. “Yes, but what of Azalin!?”

What happened to him in Il Aluk? Answer me!”

The librarian sighed. "So impatient. As I once read in one of these books, 'One measures a circle beginning anywhere.' If you wish to know my master's plans, you must share in his knowledge. In short, pick a book and begin reading." The librarian reached to a shelf and plucked out a tome.

"Start with this one, for instance. Think of it as a way to expand your horizons . . ."

Behind the pale-eyed man, the door he had entered swung closed with an almost inaudible click. A key turned rustily in the lock. The house had passed its sentence, and Ludvig sensed he would have a very long time to read his newly discovered treasure trove of books.

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This was the missing piece of the jig-saw I needed.

So, the family vaults back in that fearful graveyard whence I plucked the old manuscript were indeed the forefathers of the Templar Knights, the Kargatane House who fought so hard for Christendom in the Holy Lands during the Third Crusade, yet who lost their souls somewhere along that accursed path among the demonic heathen hordes.

Avernus! So the place *does* exist? Yet no clue as to its whereabouts could I glean from within the narrative of that fearful text. For if I could locate Azathoth's true abode, it is here I would find the monster's still beating heart, locked within a sea pearl chest... and the way to rid the world of this Ancient One forever lies within the grasp of any who can find and crush that botched beating drum.

I made my way through the streets towards East-town, taking a few minutes to gather my failing wits at Hibb's Roadhouse. I knew I needed to continue my search within Arkham for clues; but the sky had only moments earlier caused me deep emotional unease; for the constellations were not right... were strange... were alien to me. I could feel evil was gathering, pressing in from all around, and time was valuable, but my nerves were frayed to breaking point, and I needed a heavy coffee to recharge my energies.

I stayed in that establishment a matter of minutes; yet moments after I left Hibb's Roadhouse, the building collapsed behind me! It literally imploded in on itself, and in its place a wild statically charged gate to some other world opened up, like a giant spinning sphere of translucent light and energy: a yawning mouth into which I was invited to travel and explore. But my destination lay in another direction. I knew gates would be opening up all over Arkham, and it was my job to close these where ever I found them... before to many monstrosities spilled over into our world and their unearthly jabbering destructive intent woke the Ancient One from its deep slumber.

My next clue led me towards an evil place, and with a heavy heart I meandered my way through the neon lit streets towards my next goal. Even now, when I try to look back coherently at that fateful night, my mind refuse to focus on all the details, and the gaps in my

memory serve as a safety buffer between the fine thread of sanity I currently enjoy, and the stark madness which rests just behind my eyelids, should full realisation dawn on me, and all the terrible things I have witnessed come crashing back into my mind.

I hid from a monster lurking near the Miskatonic University... no doubt spawned on the other side of some dread ethereal gate; and by some miracle I managed to evade it and continued on my way to a terrifying...bleak... Unnameable house, near the Merchant District of Arkham and which contained a newly opened gate. As I entered the derelict building, I was immediately sucked through the strange portal and travelled for some indefinable duration through a vast, twilight, alien landscape on the wrong side of madness. Eventually, after what seemed a life age... but which was in fact only seconds; I returned to Arkham through this same gate and managed, by a token of elder wisdom and by applying my academic skills - to seal this eldritch entrance forever.

But this was only one gate - a minor victory. More gates were opening throughout the city every hour, and I knew with almost explicable certainty that I was losing the battle against time... my sanity... and all hope.



Through rifts in the very essence and fabric of space I was thrown or pulled, entering through necessity, and I explored each dimension in turn as I attempted to find the secrets to closing each gate. I encountered the most horrific monsters, things the mind could not conjure in its worst nightmares... evading them where ever I could. But occasionally, I was forced to stand and face the terrors of the night, relying upon my arsenal of weapons and spells, even holy

relics (which, incongruous as it may seem, appeared to be harmful to many of these alien like entities).

As I rushed to close and seal gates throughout the city, more would spring up; and I was forced to traverse much of the city in what seemed an eternal carrousel... hither and thither through the almost deserted, dreary, unwholesome streets. I found myself entering crypts, mausoleums, the haunted mansions of the damned and possessed, ever evading encounters where possible, yet dispatching any who violently opposed my determined charge to rid the city of evil.

My efforts must have been successful, or I would not now be here to tell this tale. Though memory of that fateful night is still a murky veil in front of my eyes, and my recollections are sketchy at best.

I awoke in an Arkham Asylum bed, my arms and legs strapped to the sides... sedated so as not to hurt myself or (as the doctors feared) the others whose kind endeavours were focussed on trying to nurse me back to good health. How I got to this dreadful mad house is unclear, and the men and women trying to heal my mind are reluctant to stir the vivid thought processes involved in my recollections of that night. For I am wont to become agitated, depressed, and self mutilating at such times.

I hope for the day I am deemed well once more, for I greatly desire to return to the world outside this incarcerated lunacy. They tell me it was all just a vivid dream... all of the events I describe, merely made up in my head; and until I can let the nightmares go, and my doctors are satisfied I am no longer a danger to society, I must remain here and allow them to treat me. I am losing myself to their dutiful attentions. The pills, the daily injections, the freezing baths... the shock treatments are the worst, for I lose a bit more of my individuality each time.

So I will continue to write my memories while I still can, before everything is wiped entirely from my mind.

I am vigilant to keep these pages hidden... secret, tucked neatly within the air vent above my bed, having loosened the screws to the small space within, and secured for myself a safe haven for my thoughts.

They cannot take that away from me. They can not steal what is mine. They can not... they can not... they can not... can they?



A (solo) Game of Arkham Horror in motion