

Chapter 6: The Call of Cthulhu

Joseph's palm pilot went off at 2pm waking him up. He really felt like crap, Cassandra wasn't kidding about getting up before dark. Joseph felt hung over and exhausted at the same time. Joseph got up from her bed and clumsily fiddled around in his coat until I found it. With bleary eyes he looked at it and it said "Remember RP today, 4pm at your house." Then he said aloud

"Ah shit I totally forgot about Role-playing today."

Cassandra just rolled over and mumbled "Just leave me a note darling, I need to drink a little tonight so I won't be back until 11 or later."

Joseph said "Ok love I should be home around 11:30 or 12"

Joseph wrote a quick note saying "Gaming with friends tonight. I figure it's easier to go than explain about cancelling at the last minute. Plus I still want to role-play; you know that from our blood link anyway. I should be back around 12"

Joseph thought that there are benefits to being super-organized and obsessively planning ahead, if not for this reminder people would have showed up at his house without him being there. He quickly showered and dressed and headed out the door. While driving home he had to fight to stay awake and hoped that sugar still did something for a vampire. He thought that he still hadn't tasted living blood so maybe he wasn't 100 percent turned yet.

As he pulled into the driveway it was just 3pm and he immediately took some painkillers from the small bottle that I kept in his coat. Again he wasn't sure how this would react to his undead physiology but he had to try something. He quickly fed Ginger, gave her fresh water and changed her kitty litter. She ate the food hungrily and I found his fangs come down as I briefly thought of draining all the blood from her. He turned away and said aloud "No I will not do it. I'll just load up on chocolate and oranges."

While he ate about 6 bars and oranges he remembered reading somewhere that salt water was the closest substance to blood. He had worked at a convenience store over the summer and they had thrown out three boxes of chocolate bars. Rather than throw them in the dumpster I just put them in his car when I took them outside. He did enjoy the sweetness of them and they were blocked with sugar. I

threw away the wrappers and quickly headed down to the beach with an empty water jug. It was almost 3:30 PM and at least his headache was starting to die down. His parent's land went right to the beach so I didn't even need to go on the main road. The wind had picked up this afternoon and fortunately no one was on the beach. He filled up the jug and sat back down on a rock to drink it. As he suspected it was horrible and he coughed and spit the first mouthful out. Then something inside him felt a longing for the salty taste of it and this time he managed to get down a mouthful. He still gagged and spit some out but little by little he drank the jug down. The second jug went down a little easier and while Joseph still felt very tired he did have fullness in his stomach which he hoped would at least do him until role-playing was over. He noticed the time was 3:45PM so he headed back up to the house.

He just had time to get his role-playing bag out and put out some snacks with Shawn and Dennis arrived. Shawn was usually one of the first to arrive and also like him was an obsessive role-player. Some explanation of what role-playing means is necessary here. Basically it is like a movie where you imagine everything in your head based on what the head storyteller, or Game Master, describes. The big difference between role-playing a movie is that you can do pretty much whatever you want and the story will often change depending on what each character decides. Each person gets to play a different kind of character and your abilities are determined by skill numbers and statistics. The game also usually involved combat with monsters or other people and often dice would be used that point to determine whether you hit and how much damage was done.

The game we were playing tonight was called Call of Cthulhu and was based on a story of the same name by H.P. Lovecraft. Each character got better at their skills, given in percentage form and tried not to go insane. Cthulhu was a horror game which often involved seeing terrible monsters and gruesome sights. Often if your character didn't die from fighting, he would often just go insane from lack of sanity. The really strange part of the game was that you to actually master arcane knowledge and even cast spells your character had to slowly go insane. For him he had always loved role-playing since he was 13 because it engaged his imagination and it allowed him to act in ways he never would in real life, or so he thought. Shawn came right in and he looked up from the green living room chair and said

"Hi Shawn, come on in."

He replied

"Hi Joseph"

Dennis said "Hi Joseph, how are you?"

He replied to Dennis "I'm fine, thanks for asking"

He had known Shawn since the beginning of university about 8 years ago. He was a good friend that he enjoyed talking to on the phone and was always there for a run home. For a few years he often went to math mixers and pub crawls at Memorial and since Shawn never drank he would always bring him and some other friends home. The math mixer just involved people standing around a math classroom at MUN and getting drunk on cheap beer and mixed drinks. There were usually the same people there and I never made much effort to talk to anyone new. The pub crawls were more fun as we divided up into teams and basically drank as fast as we could while going from bar to bar. It usually ended up with him being loaded drunk by 6:30 or 7 PM at night and then spending the rest of the night sobering up or possibly going to a movie. He thought of how in particular one night we went to the movie Elizabeth and he was enjoying it until he sobered up. Shawn had always found it funny that he would later judge a movie by drunk or not drunk standards. He lived in Keligrews, about 15 minutes from his house, and so he was going past his home anyway. He was a little shorter than him, about 5'10 and had recently lost a lot of weight walking. He wore glasses like him and usually brought some kind of snack for everyone. Tonight he had broken up Oh-Henry bars from the supermarket.

He said as he sat down on the couch, "Decided to add to the bar collection huh?"

Shawn laughed a little and said

"Oh yeah I forgot you got those boxes from Marie's. Are they any good?"

Joseph handed him the box of Hershey Caramel type bars and said "Yeah not bad, help yourself"

Dennis he had known longer, since I started high school at 14. He was very quiet and there had even been a joke at high school that he was mute. Of course he wasn't and this showed how stupid people were in our school more than anything else. He also around 5"10 and was slim at athletic. He also did Philosophy at MUN and also Mathematics. His plan was to go to Halifax and do a course in teaching English as a second language. He was also a big nature and animal lover like him but not a vegetarian. We also would have nice talks on the phone and would often go for walks together around his house and his. We often discussed the meanings of good and evil and of course women and relationships. He had spent many a night at his parent's house drinking with friends and had even slept on the floor at his house several times when he was too drunk to drive home. We also had similar tastes in music and were both big Beatles and John Lennon fans. He was another good friend and he was lucky to still be in contact with people I had known since high school.

Dennis also came in and sat in another chair which was located near the coffee table. He said

“So how are your parent’s doing in Florida?”

Joseph replied, “I only heard from them once when they got there last week. My grandmother and great Aunt are with them as well so I’m sure they’re fairly busy. It’s too bad they went know when I’m still in school and couldn’t go.”

Dennis said, “You could have missed the first week or so of classes, not much usually happens then.”

He nodded and said, “Yeah but I hate to miss any class time for my last semester and I will be going to Florida again after Christmas, so it’s not really a big deal.”

His parents owned a house in Jupiter, Florida. It was an old mobile home in a retirement park but it was warm and like a second home to him. He had even spent 6 weeks there once when he decided not to go during the winter at MUN and instead went in the spring semester. It was a little long and he did get bored but he certainly got a lot of fresh air and exercise. One of the reasons his parents brought down his grandmother was because the house in her name. It looked good to bring her down sometimes just to prove to the park manager that she existed.

Next Terry and Sara came in, Terry was tall, about 6”0 and had a long shaggy beard a woolly head of long greyish, white hair. He had premature grey for about as long as he’d know him, which meant it started to show up sometime in high school. Sara was shorter, about 5”5 and had long black hair which she kept in a ponytail. Sara was athletic like Dennis and had played soccer. Now she mostly rode her bike and went to the gym. They both wore glasses, it was almost the rule with our group, and had been dating since the winter of ’95. Terry was about to back to Regina to continue his Masters in Mathematics and tonight was sort of a going away party for them. Sara was going along with him as she was now starting her Masters also in Math. He had known Terry since he was 14 and we had spent many hours on the phone arguing over the years. He loved to argue and Terry was usually up for one as well.

Joseph turned again and said “Hi guys, just me and Shawn here for now, come on it. We’ve got lots of bars!”

They also came in the living room and sat on another coach. Terry said, “Oh boy more bars! Nothing I like better than expired Marie’s chocolate”

We all laughed, Terry had always had a great sense of humour and could always make him laugh. After our chuckle Sara asked, "So how is life in residence?"

He smiled and said "My roommate seems kind of annoying but I really nice girl at a party Friday night. We actually went out for a walk together last night it was really nice."

Sara smiled back; she always made a point of asking about whatever I was doing in his life which was nice of her. She replied, "I see, that sounds exciting. Maybe we'll get to meet her sometime?"

He opened up the package of broken bars and ate one. "Yes hopefully sometime in the next few weeks."

No sooner were the words out of my mouth did Saul and Vance came in. He had known the two of them the longest, since he was about 4 years old. Vance lived behind my parent's house and Saul lived at the end of Cherry Lane. Saul was also about 5'10 and had short red hair. Vance was about 5'9 and had very short brown hair, practically a shaved head and piercing blue eyes. Saul worked at a ship building company downtown and worked as a safety inspector. Vance had completed his police training in May and was now a constable with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

He called out jokingly "Better put my sword away the cops are here."

Vance replied also jokingly "That's right the pigs are here."

Saul replied a little more seriously "Remember we said no more bring your sword to role-playing anyway Joe."

Joseph nodded and said "Yes I remember, come on in guys. We're just waiting for the last few to show up."

Saul and Colin also came into the living room filling up the coach Shawn was sitting on.

Terry said to Vance "Congratulations on getting with the RNC that must have been a great relief for you."

Vance replied "Yes I had volunteered for a mission in Bosnia but now I won't be going, which is good."

Vance was also a Corporal in the Canadian Army Reserves and had already been in Eritrea, Africa on a tour. He was in the best physical shape of all of us and certainly the toughest with his police and military training. I said

"I'll get some pop and glasses for everyone" and I went into the kitchen. There was a glass door which leads directly into the kitchen from the living room that made it convenient. While getting the drinks Ginger looked up at him and meowed in the annoying way she often did. He showed his fangs and glared at her, she ran away with another strangled meow and he immediately put his hand to his mouth catching myself. He felt bad for scaring her, being a vampire obviously made me a little animalistic and he had just responded instinctually. He could see that he would have to be very careful tonight when she came into the room. He made one trip with the pop and another with the glasses. On the second trip he heard the door open again and this time Will and Patrick showed up.

For both of them to show up the same time probably meant that Will was having problems with his 1980 Camaro again. He had known Will also since I was 14 and he was a good friend and he spent fair bit of time with. We both loved video games and he often went to his house to see what new games and system he had. He liked buying and selling things and he often would have two or three different video game consoles in the span of a year. He knew his grandmother well enough that he even went to his house when Will wasn't even home so he could play his 3DO. It was a video game system that was discontinued in 1997 but he had a particular racing game that he loved to play. He was good at fixing computer, electronics and cars. When he was given a 1980 Camaro he knew that it would require some upkeep. It seemed like now, however, that the Camaro spent more time being fixed than it did on the road. It was a nice car and he liked riding in it, he just hoped it didn't give out while he was getting a ride somewhere. Now he was living in a house near MUN with a couple of friends.

He had met Patrick in '94 when he started university. He was 6'0, with a regular build and had glasses. He was a huge Doctor Who fan and maintained a well-known Doctor Who webpage. He lived on Waterfordbridge Road with his parents and we had all been there for role-playing before. He was finishing his degree in Mathematics at MUN as well and he would also be at the same mixers and pub crawls that he went to. He was also an amateur movie critic and would post reviews to movies he saw on another website. He enjoyed reading his reviews and we would talk to him about movies and television, he also watched Star Trek, from time to time. He was the game master for Call of Cthulhu that night and he liked to do longer adventures which had a long of investigating involved. We were a serious bunch when it came to role-playing and we had even named our group the Aspiring Lords of

Chaos. Patrick would take attendance each session and would tally the votes, we voted for what game we would play each time. Often, though, we made a point to finish smaller adventures so he was fairly certain that Cthulhu would win tonight.

He said "Hi Patrick and Will" as he came back in the living room.

They were settling into chairs and Patrick was getting papers out.

Will replied "Hey Joe, sorry we're late. I had more trouble with the Camero again."

"That's ok. It only a little after 4 and it's an early start for us."

Patrick replied taking out dice and pencils "Hi Joseph, thanks for hosting."

He said "Oh no problem. I'm always happy to host."

After that we got down to voting, by way of secret ballots. Shawn was the ballot provider and handed them out. As he suspected Cthulhu won, which was fine. At this point he wasn't running any campaign at all. They got started with Cthulhu and he got my character sheet and dice out. He played a police constable named Mike Dorvan, not a very nice guy at all. The setting was the fictional town of Arkham, Massachusetts and the year was 1926. The way the game worked was that we were always contacted by a mysterious figure and then told to meet at a certain place where we would be given further instructions. The reasons we would help to fight and solve these mysterious crimes were always different but they always were connected to the characters in some way.