

A Shoggoth on the Roof



THE MUSICAL

"Wow! I'm still recovering. Wow! Whoever wrote this is a brilliant - albeit highly demented - genius. It's definitely the coolest, most twistedly brilliant thing I've ever seen/heard."
-Chris, Berlin

"...mind-erasingly fantastic..."
-Scromp, Kentucky

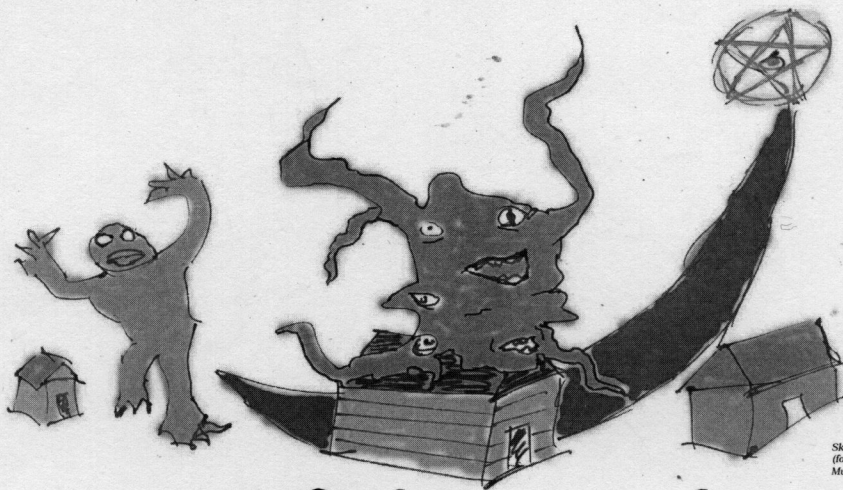
"...insanely brilliant."
-Don, British Columbia

"Most amusing!"
-S.T. Joshi, Seattle

"I had nothing to do with it."
-Stuart Gordon, Hollywood

Book and Lyrics by HE WHO (for legal reasons) MUST NOT BE NAMED
Restored and Digitally Remastered by SEAN BRANNEY and ANDREW LEMAN

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Sketch by He Who
(for legal reasons)
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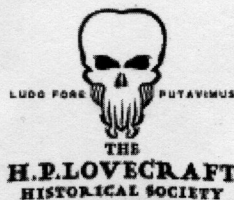
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SEAN BRANNEY and ANDREW LEMAN

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www.cthulhulives.org

A Shoggoth on the Roof

AN INTRODUCTION

The volume in your hands has had a strange and murky history. Its writing and previous attempts at production have been accompanied by tragedy and madness, and it is not without some trepidation that the current editors have undertaken to publish it today. The reader should be forewarned and continue with caution.

“A Shoggoth on the Roof” is a musical unlike any other. Like a mad liberal arts experiment gone horribly wrong, it is a perverse hybrid of the Cthulhu Mythos of 1920s gothic horror writer H.P. Lovecraft and the plot and music of “Fiddler on the Roof,” an enduringly popular mainstay of high school theatre groups since 1964.

The script seems to have been written some time in the late 1970s by an author who, for legal reasons, must not be named. A former member of the H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society — and frequent contributor to the Society’s journal, *Strange Eons* — sent an original autograph libretto of the show to the editors of *Strange Eons* in late 1986. The manuscript was virtually unintelligible, and it was filed away with other peculiar submissions received by the Society (although Society members did find themselves singing one or two of the songs that they could make out). In 1987, the author wrote to the editors again to say that he would no longer be contributing to, nor reading, *Strange Eons*, as his doctors had forbidden him to have any further contact with the Society. He was committed to a psychiatric hospital, and has not been heard from since.

“A Shoggoth on the Roof” would likely have been forgotten by the world, except that in 1999 a videotape surfaced at a well-known online auction site which purported to be footage of a rehearsal of the show. This videotape was acquired by the HPLHS, and subsequent analysis suggests that it is a video dub of an authentic 8mm home movie. After a year of research, Society members confirmed that there had been an attempt to produce the show in 1979 by

The Other Gods, a Los Angeles theatre company. That production never opened, and some people associated with it died or disappeared under suspicious circumstances. The investigation into that doomed production is chronicled in the film *A Shoggoth on the Roof: The Documentary*. Many unanswered questions remain.

The documentary has been received with enthusiasm by the Lovecraft community, and stirred up new interest in the musical itself. After the release of the film, the HPLHS negotiated to acquire publication rights to “A Shoggoth on the Roof.” The author’s family, concerned for its privacy, has at last relinquished all rights to ASOTR on the condition that the author’s identity be vigorously protected.

Preparing the manuscript for publication has taken many months of sustained effort. The original handwritten text is all but illegible, with numerous interlinear emendations, scrawled doodles, and no real structure to speak of. Although every effort has been made to preserve the intent of the author, it has been necessary to exercise fairly broad editorial discretion in some cases. Thanks are due to the brave Los Angeles actors and musicians who assisted in exploring and shaping this material.

Prior to this publication, certain theatre groups in the United States and abroad have received advance copies of the script. At the time of this writing, theatre companies are contemplating the grave and horrible possibility of at long last producing the world premiere of this most eldritch embodiment of the musical theatre tradition.

The HPLHS is pleased to be able to bring you this work, and will continue to investigate the show and its history, and promote its future development. Updated information will be posted on the Society’s website at <http://www.cthulhulives.org/Shoggoth>.

—SB & AHL

A Shoggoth on the Roof

The Characters:

HENRY ARMITAGE.....	45, librarian at Miskatonic University
MARION ARMITAGE.....	45, his wife
PRUDENCE ARMITAGE.....	21, his eldest daughter
ASENATH ARMITAGE.....	20, his second daughter
JILL ARMITAGE.....	17, his youngest daughter
HERBERT WEST.....	35, dangerous maniac, beloved of Prudence
HEAD CULTIST.....	30, studly Cthulhu worshipper, beloved of Asenath
OBED MARSH.....	85, late-blooming Deep One, beloved of Jill
RANDOLPH CARTER.....	35, nervous investigator
HARLEY WARREN.....	35, shovel-wielding zealot
WILBUR WHATELY.....	22, Dunwich creep
DR. HALSEY.....	40, Miskatonic Dean, later a zombie
GRANDMA PRUDENCE.....	90, Marion's grandmother, a ghost
LAVINIA WHATELY.....	50, Wilbur's mother, a ghost
GREAT CTHULHU.....	2,560,000,003, A Great Old One, very large
A SHOGGOTH	
A BYAKHEE	
A MI-GO	
Numerous DEEP ONES	
Numerous GHOULS	
Numerous CULTISTS	
Numerous VILLAGERS/VICTIMS	
Several ZOMBIES	

The Place: Arkham, Massachusetts

The Time: 1926

A Shoggoth on the Roof

Musical Numbers:

Act One

Prologue. . . TENTACLES!	Armitage, Chorus
Scene 1. . . ARKHAM, DUNWICH	Armitage, Marion
Scene 4. . . BYAKHEE, BYAKHEE	Asenath, Jill
Scene 6. . . SHOGGOTH PRAYER.	Head Cultist, Chorus
IF I WERE A DEEP ONE	Old Man Marsh
Scene 7. . . ARKHAM, DUNWICH (reprise).	Armitage, Wilbur Whately
TO LIFE	Herbert West, Prudence, Armitage, Halsey, Zombies

Act Two

Scene 3. . . THE NIGHTMARE.	Grandma Prudence, Ghoul, Armitage, Marion, Lavinia Whately, Chorus
Scene 5. . . VICTIM OF VICTIMS	Head Cultist, Asenath
Scene 6. . . VERY FAR FROM THE HOME I LOVE	Jill
Scene 7. . . ARKHAM, DUNWICH (2nd reprise)	Head Cultist, Wilbur Whately
DO YOU FEAR ME?	Cthulhu, Armitage, Chorus
MISKATONIC	Marion, Herbert West Prudence, Armitage, Chorus

*A Shoggoth
on the Roof*

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

The exterior of the library, Miskatonic University.
A SHOGGOTH is writhing and pulsating
grotesquely on the roof. Enter ARMITAGE, the
librarian.

ARMITAGE

A shoggoth on the roof. Sounds crazy, no? Certifiably insane. But here in our little village of Arkham, Massachusetts, you might say every one of us has a shoggoth on the roof. And I'm not speaking metaphorically. It's not easy, having a malevolent shapeless monster like that hanging over your head. But there it is. Arkham is the home of many strange things. A big monster like that on such a pointy roof. You may ask "How does it stay up there if it is so difficult?" That I can tell you in one word: tentacles!

VILLAGERS

(enter singing)

Tentacles, tentacles...tentacles!
Tentacles, tentacles...tentacles!

ARMITAGE

Here in Arkham, tentacles get into everything eventually. Changeless, legend-haunted Arkham, where the clustering gambrel roofs sway and sag over attics where witches hid from the King's men in the dark, olden days of the province. Well the King is gone, but the witches are still here. And the cultists. And the monsters. And regular folks, just trying not to notice. We try not to think about the scariest one of all. The gigantic half dragon, half octopus, half humanoid Great Old One himself. Cthulhu! Waiting to return from his city beneath the sea.

(sings)

["Tentacles!"]

Who day and night must slumber in R'lyeh,
wave his tentacles, having nasty dreams?
And who has the might, as master of R'lyeh,
to drive humanity insane?
Cthulhu! Cthulhu! Tentacles!
Cthulhu! Cthulhu! Tentacles!

CULTISTS

Who must bow and kneel and scrape and slave all day,
to raise R'lyeh Cthulhu's way?
Who must live in ignorance until the day
they find they've read too many nasty books?
The Cultists! The Cultists! Tentacles!
The Cultists! The Cultists! Tentacles!

THE DEEP ONES

At nine I started growing gills and swimming in the sea.
And soon I'll know the wonders of the sunken city.
The Deep Ones! The Deep Ones! Tentacles!
The Deep Ones! The Deep Ones! Tentacles!

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THE VICTIMS

*Who's always last to know?
Who fills the air with cries?
Whose sanity is blasted and then who usually dies?
The Victims! The Victims! Tentacles!
The Victims! The Victims! Tentacles!*

ALL

(Repeat the song as a round.)

ARMITAGE

We have the shoe factory and the brick works, and a wonderful insane asylum we are all mighty proud of. But the heart of the town is Miskatonic University. It may not be the biggest school in New England, but there is no finer place in the world to study medieval metaphysics. It is my honor to be its head librarian. You see many folks from the university as you walk through Arkham's streets. And in our small community, we have always had some special types as well. For instance, Herbert West, the mad scientist....

HERBERT WEST and DR. HALSEY step out of the crowd of villagers.

WEST

Those small-minded doctors have needlessly and irrationally delayed me in supremely great work. The reanimation of dead tissue is within my grasp!

HALSEY

Herbert, your perverse experiments are the vagary of a demented maniac, and cannot be allowed to continue. Your request for the use of human cadavers is completely denied.

WEST

I warn you, Doctor Halsey, you'll regret this decision!

All dance.

ARMITAGE

And Randolph Carter, the writer with the weird dreams who keeps showing up everywhere....

RANDOLPH CARTER steps out.

CARTER

I repeat to you, gentlemen, that your inquisition is fruitless. Question me forever if you want. I do not know what has become of Harley Warren, though I think, almost hope, that he is somewhere in peaceful oblivion if there be anywhere...

HELPFUL VILLAGER

Mr. Carter? There's a telephone call for you.

CARTER

Oh, thanks.

Carter exits. All dance.

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ARMITAGE

And Obed Marsh, the cursed old man from nearby Innsmouth....

OBED MARSH steps out.

MARSH

What are ye looking at? What, ye think I'm ugly? Is that it? I'll be showin' ye ugly!

VILLAGERS

Aaaaah!

*Die die die die,
die die die die,
die die die die
die die die die die.*

*Die die die die,
die die die die,
die die die die
die die die die die.*

All dance.

ARMITAGE

Then there are others in Arkham. Some live here. Some just visit.

The HEAD CULTIST, a MI-GO, and others cross the stage. Villagers avoid them.

ARMITAGE (cont'd)

The head of the local cult, some kind of horrible monster, I do not even want to know what that is. We normal folks just look the other way and try not to lose our minds. And among ourselves, we get along just fine. Well, of course there are some who think that the magical Elder Sign is shaped like a star, and some who think it is shaped more like a tree, but that is all settled now. Now, we just try to....

Two MEN take up an argument which expands to the entire group.

FIRST MAN

It's shaped like a star with a little flame inside.

SECOND MAN

No, it's like a tree. It's got branches coming off it.

FIRST MAN

I'm telling you it's a star.

SECOND MAN

Use the star one and you'll be fighting off the Old Ones with your bare hands. It's a tree.

FIRST MAN

Star!

Tree! SECOND MAN

Star! SOME VILLAGERS

Tree! OTHER VILLAGERS

Star! SOME VILLAGERS

Tree! OTHER VILLAGERS

Star! SOME VILLAGERS

Tree! OTHER VILLAGERS

ALL
(singing)
Tentacles, tentacles...tentacles!
Tentacles, tentacles...tentacles!

ARMITAGE
Tentacles. Like I said, you cannot live in Arkham without coping with the
Shoggoth on the Roof!

Villagers exit. Library steps fly out to reveal
Armitage home.

SCENE ONE

A charming 1920s bungalow. Discover MARION, the mother, wearily polishing living room furniture. PRUDENCE, the oldest daughter, sweeping the carpet. ASENATH and JILL, the youngest, knitting on the couch.

JILL

Mother, when will Papa be home?

MARION

Oh, you know your father, dear. No doubt he is busy cataloging some obscure volume of forgotten lore and has completely lost track of time.

JILL

But it will be dark soon.

MARION

He will be fine, sweetheart. Do not worry.

ASENATH

What are you afraid of? That he'll be attacked by ghouls?

JILL

Oh!

MARION

Asenath, that is enough! I will have no such talk in this house. I am sure there is a perfectly rational explanation for your father's delay. Maybe some heavy book shelves fell on him. Perhaps through pure random chance he was hit by a truck. It is possible he was overwhelmed by the bleak pointlessness of life and is even now drinking himself into a stupor in a speakeasy on Federal Hill. Whatever it is, Jill, honey, it is perfectly natural. There are no ghouls in Arkham.

ASENATH

Right.

MARION

Asenath, sit up straight. Why can't you be more like Prudence here? Respectable. Ladylike.

ASENATH

Lonely....

MARION

Asenath! What am I going to do with you? Prudence, dear, pay her no mind. You will find someone.

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PRUDENCE

It's all right, Mama.

MARION

Such a good girl. When you are finished here I need your help making the Parker House rolls for dinner.

Marion exits to the kitchen.

ASENATH

Sorry, Pru.

PRUDENCE

It's all right, Asenath, I'm not as lonely as you think.

ASENATH

What? What are you talking about?

PRUDENCE

I haven't told anyone yet, but last month I met a wonderful man. At the library. He's a genius! And very handsome. Blond hair, penetrating blue eyes....

ASENATH

Well I never! What's his name?

PRUDENCE

Herbert. Herbert West. He's an assistant professor at Miskatonic medical school!

ASENATH

Have you played doctor with him yet?

PRUDENCE

Asenath, not in front of Jill!

ASENATH

Oh, Prudence, don't be so... predictable. Get with it! She's seventeen. And she'll never learn the facts of life from our parents.

ARMITAGE enters through the front door. He sets down an armload of books and a big key.

ARMITAGE

Good evening, girls.

JILL

Papa!

PRUDENCE

Good evening, Papa.

Marion enters from the kitchen.

MARION

Hello, dear. Dinner is almost ready.

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ARMITAGE

Gee that is swell. I am quite hungry.

MARION

You girls go in and set the table, please. I wish to speak with your father.

The girls exit to the kitchen.

MARION (cont'd)

Henry, I am concerned about Prudence. She is still terribly lonely. College may have filled her head with education, but she never met a suitable man.

ARMITAGE

That is true. The boys at Miskatonic are really a bunch of hopeless Poindexters.

The girls peek out the kitchen door,
eavesdropping.

MARION

She is our eldest, Henry. I do not want her to end up like my sister Edna.

ARMITAGE

No, certainly not. The family does not need another stereotypical New England spinster.

MARION

I think we need to help things along.

ARMITAGE

What do you suggest?

MARION

We certainly do not want her consorting with those ignorant he-man types from the shoe factory or some foreigner from the brick works.

ARMITAGE

I suppose not.

MARION

She needs someone on her own level. The Whately family has a boy that might be just right.

ARMITAGE

You mean young Wilbur? Of the Dunwich Whatelys?

MARION

Yes. You know him?

ARMITAGE

Sure. He comes to the library all the time. Dresses funny, but very very bright. Almost preternaturally so. Of course, there are the rumors. One hears strange things about Dunwich folk...

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MARION

We pay no mind to rumors, Henry. People are jealous and morbid and that is all there is to it. He is an orphan boy, on his own. He needs a wife as much as our Prudence needs a husband. I would like the four of us to have a "get acquainted" luncheon.

ARMITAGE

Well that sounds like a fine idea. We can have coffee and sandwiches, and a bit of cake.

Music starts.

MARION

Splendid. Our sweet Prudence, a bride at last.

ARMITAGE

["Arkham,
Dunwich"]

(sings)

She is our daughter and we love her.

MARION

*We want her happiness and joy.
But here in Arkham it is hard to find a boy.*

ARMITAGE

*Even in Dunwich it's a problem.
Suitable lads are seldom seen.*

BOTH

We've looked since Prudence here turned sweet sixteen.

*Arkham, Dunwich, Arkham, Dunwich,
filled with haunting fears;
Neighbors who hide up in the attics,
inbreeding happily for years.
Arkham, Dunwich, Arkham, Dunwich,
ancient haunted grounds;
Finding a normal man's a challenge
in these benighted little towns.*

MARION

*Wilbur is from a well-known family;
powerful, prominent and rich.*

ARMITAGE

And like the residents of Innsmouth, smells like fish.

MARION

*His taste in clothing is peculiar.
It's true he doesn't have good looks.
But he's a scholar, always reading books.*

BOTH

*Arkham, Dunwich, Arkham, Dunwich,
ancient haunted grounds;
Neighborhoods hiding many secrets,
strange and oppressive little towns.*

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*Arkham, Dunwich, Arkham, Dunwich,
pickings here are slim;
Prudence might not like Wilbur Whately,
but we think she should marry him.*

ARMITAGE

(speaking)

I will go dress for dinner.

MARION

I will assist you.

They exit to the bedroom. The girls enter from
the kitchen.

ASENATH

Oh, Prudence! Wilbur Whately? He's disgusting! Give me a he-man from the
shoe factory any day! What are you going to do?

PRUDENCE

I'm going to go see Herbert. He'll know what to do.

Prudence bundles up and runs out into the night.

JILL

Watch out for ghouls! Oh, Asenath. What next?

SCENE TWO

An Arkham graveyard at night. Enter RAN-
DOLPH CARTER and HARLEY WARREN, carry-
ing shovels, flashlights, and heavy telephone
equipment.

CARTER

They say ghouls haunt these Arkham graveyards by night, Warren.

WARREN

If we find what I'm expecting to find, Carter, ghouls will be the least of our troubles.

CARTER

Somehow that's not the reassurance I was hoping for.

WARREN

We're almost there. Get ahold of yourself, man.

CARTER

I don't know, Warren. I've never actually defiled an ancient graveyard.

WARREN

We'll take it from me, it's not as difficult as you think.

CARTER

That's good to know.

WARREN

It's talking to the corpses that can make your hair stand on end.

A strange meeping noise offstage.

CARTER

What was that?

WARREN

Probably nothing. I think we're close.

(consults a scary book)

Yes, it should be just about... here!

Lights up on an ancient tomb with an elder sign
on it. Musical chord.

CARTER

Warren, the elder sign! Well, one variant of it.

WARREN

The man buried inside that tomb was a powerful and dangerous sorcerer in his day. They were wise to take precautions.

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CARTER

But Warren, it would be madness to break that seal! God only knows what forces would be unleashed!

WARREN

Carter, it's the only way to prove my theory.

CARTER

No Warren! That arcane symbol may be all that's holding back untold horrors!

WARREN

Carter, we must know the truth!

CARTER

Why? Some things are better left unknown!

WARREN

There's only one way to conquer fear, Carter, and that's to stare it in the face.

Warren takes a tool and begins to chip away at the seal on the tomb. After a moment, Carter joins him. A ghoul spies on them unnoticed from behind a tombstone. More meeping sounds off-stage.

SCENE THREE

That night, Prudence and HERBERT WEST clasp hands outside the Miskatonic University library.

PRUDENCE

Oh, Herbert! What should we do? My parents want me to marry Wilbur Whately!

WEST

Whately? That tall, ugly guy? That will never happen, Prudence. I need you too much.

PRUDENCE

Oh, Herbert! You need me?

WEST

More than you can possibly imagine.

PRUDENCE

Oh, Herbert!

WEST

I will speak to your father. I will convince him that, with you by my side, I can reach undreamed of heights, and make the medical establishment bow down to my greatness!

PRUDENCE

Oh, Herbert, Herbert, Herbert!

They embrace.

SCENE FOUR

Later that night. Jill and Asenath's bedroom.
They have the covers pulled up to their chins.
Marion is at the door.

MARION
Good night, girls. Do not let the bedbugs bite.

JILL
Good night, mama.

There is an odd scratching noise from above.
Through the window we can see a tentacle from
the Shoggoth on the roof tapping at the glass.

JILL (cont'd)
What's that noise?

MARION
It is nothing, dear. Pay no attention.

ASENATH
That shoggoth's on the roof again.

MARION
It is just the wind moving through some tree branches.

ASENATH
(pointing at the window)
Look! There it is!

Marion goes to the window and closes the curtains.

MARION
There, it is gone.

Still the scratching noise. The tapping.

JILL
I can still hear it.

MARION
Well, let it lull you to sleep. Good night.

JILL
Sweet dreams, mama.

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MARION

Girls, for me sleep holds the shocking final peril which gibbers unmentionably outside the ordered universe, where no dreams reach.

Marion exits. The girls climb out of bed, revealing that they're still fully dressed.

ASENATH

All right, Jill, are you ready?

JILL

I don't know Asenath, now it doesn't seem like such a good idea.

ASENATH

C'mon, we can sneak in and out in no time. Dad will never know the difference!

JILL

But Asenath, some of the books in the library are dangerous. Papa has warned us so many times!

ASENATH

Jill, they're just books. How dangerous could they be?

JILL

Oy.

ASENATH

Listen, Prudence has her mad scientist. She met him in the library. I want an incubus of my own to take me in his hot, powerful arms.

JILL

Well...

ASENATH

Come on. It will be fun.

JILL

Okay.

The girls sneak to the front door and take the library key their father left when he entered. They sneak out of the house and pantomime walking as the set changes to reveal the Miskatonic Library Rare Book Room. Behind the counter, there is a cage the size of a jail cell filled with books. Very moody lighting.

ASENATH

Here is the vault of the rarest and most esoteric books in the library.

JILL

Oh Asenath, be careful.

Asenath opens the cage door with the key. Lights up dim on bookshelves full of creepy volumes.

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ASENATH

Look, Jill, here they all are. The Eltdown Shards. Cultes des Goules. Liber Ivonis. Unausprechlichen Kulten. All seven cryptical books of H'san!

JILL

Wow, look at that one!

Spotlight up brighter on THE NECRONOMICON.
Musical chord.

ASENATH

The Necronomicon!

JILL

Oh, Asenath!

Asenath reaches out to touch it. Jill stops her.

JILL (cont'd)

No! Not that one, Asenath. Any one but that one. The Necronomicon is not a toy.

ASENATH

Oh, all right.

(she takes a different book)

The Liber Ivonis. Also know as the Book of Eibon. Very old and powerful. Now I'm thankful that dad made us take Latin as our elective.

JILL

Amor vincit omnia et nos cedamus amor!

Asenath checks the index at the back of the book.

ASENATH

Let's see. Summoning, summoning... Ah, here it is. Hmmm. No incubuses.

JILL

Oh, darn.

ASENATH

Dimensional shambler...

JILL

Too rugose.

ASENATH

Hunting horror...

JILL

Mmmm, no arms.

ASENATH

Nightgaunt...

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JILL

They're good for a laugh but in the end they always dump you in the middle of nowhere. I've heard.

ASENATH

Shoggoth...

JILL

Ewww!

ASENATH

Byakhee...

JILL

Byakhee? What's he like?

ASENATH

(reads)

"An interstellar race, tame, trained, blah blah blah, capable of flying through the vacuum of space and carrying a rider." Cool! Light some candles and we'll check him out.

Jill and Asenath light candles and quickly prepare a magic circle.

ASENATH (cont'd)

Yesh shir uma yalkey.
Utuk xul ta ardata.
Kakht aktamen ias selah.
Kakht aktamen ias selah.

Music starts.

ASENATH (cont'd)

Bara na zu absu Byakhee.
Byakhee byakhee tu ama xul.

(she begins to sing)

["Byakhee
Byakhee"]

*Byakhee byakhee fly me through space
Take me away, far from this place.
Byakhee byakhee what can I do
To go for a ride with you?*

JILL

*Byakhee byakhee now heed my call.
I've done the spells. I've done them all.
Out of tartarean darkness appear
And fly me away from here.*

ASENATH

The boys we meet are so dreary.

JILL

So boring, and we both want a thrill.

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BOTH

*We're really terribly weary
At least that's the theory, we're virgins still.*

*As for real dating we're both quite repressed.
Boys here in town
don't pass the test.
We want to go on a dangerous spree.
Yes, we want to try byakhee.*

Music continues under.

ASENATH

(speaks)

Jill, I had no idea you were so interested in boys.

JILL

Well sure. I'm about to graduate high school. It's 1926. I'm a modern girl. But I don't want just any boy. I'm looking for someone special.

ASENATH

Sure. Aren't we all?

JILL

(sings)

*Sister, dear sister,
The boy that I want to find
Is wild, intense,
He'll make me lose my mind!
But still a nice man, a good man. Yes? Sure!*

*I want a man who's thrilling,
Who's deeper than the sea,
Loyal and fulfilling,
Who's thrilled with me!*

ASENATH

*Sister, dear sister,
Your goals are a bit too high.
Men, my dear, are monsters.
But please don't ask me why.
There is no nice man, no good man. It's true.*

*So if I must have monsters,
I'm damned if I'll despair.
I'll summon up a real one,
And go from there.*

JILL

Wait, I hear a flapping sound.

ASENATH

*Jill, there's something going on.
Well now who would have guessed it:
my little black book is *The Book of Eibon!**

A Shoggoth on the Roof The Musical

A hideous BYAKHEE descends to the stage from above.

ASENATH (cont'd)
Byakhee byakhee I hear your wings.

JILL
I smell... a smell.

ASENATH
What are those things?

BOTH
*Byakhee byakhee
What have we done?
This suddenly isn't fun.*

ASENATH
I don't know how to describe you.

JILL
To see you is a mind-blowing thing.

BOTH
*Not moles, crows, nor ants are quite like you,
Nor partially decomposed human beings.
Aaaaaah!!
Byakhee byakhee now that you're here
I've changed my mind, I'm filled with fear.
People who go with you don't reappear.
So leave me alone.
I'll stay at home.
I will forget we ever met.
I must not and won't recall!*

They blow out the candles.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE FIVE

The graveyard. A ghoul still spies on Carter and Warren, who have finished chipping at the tomb and are about to lift it.

WARREN

All right, Carter. Now heave with all your might.

CARTER

Warren, are you sure....

WARREN

Yes, dammit, yes!

CARTER

OK.

With great effort, they remove the lid of the tomb. Musical chord. Vapors waft up from below. Carter steps back.

CARTER (CONT'D)

My god, the stench!

WARREN

Bracing, isn't it?

Warren readies the telephone equipment. Carter approaches the open tomb again.

CARTER

My god, are those steps leading down?

WARREN

Yes. Built over two hundred years ago.

CARTER

What's down there?

WARREN

I can't tell you.

CARTER

Why not?

WARREN

You couldn't handle it.

A Shoggoth on the Roof The Musical

CARTER

I think I could. Probably.

WARREN

No, not this. It's too terrible. You've been brave, but you're still not ready. You must stay on the surface while I face eldritch nameless horrors that defy description.

CARTER

But I can't stay up here all alone!

WARREN

I'll keep you informed of every move. That's what all this telephone gear is for. You won't be alone, Carter. After all, there are probably ghouls all over the place.

CARTER

That's not funny, Warren.

WARREN

All right, forget it. Let's pack up and go. I'm sorry I even brought you this far.

CARTER

No, no. I'll be all right. I'll stay up here. I'll watch your back.

WARREN

Yes, that's it. I need you on the surface. Watching my back.

CARTER

Through the phone.

Warren takes his telephone and a flashlight. He readies himself to descend.

WARREN

All right, I'm going down.

CARTER

Okay.

WARREN

I'll tell you what I see.

CARTER

Right.

WARREN

You'll be here, right?

CARTER

Yeah.

WARREN

Okay, I'm going down.

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CARTER
Okay. Good luck.

WARREN
Okay, here I go.

CARTER
Uh huh.

WARREN
Into the unspeakable abyss.

CARTER
To prove your theory.

WARREN
Yes.

CARTER
That you've been working on for years.

WARREN
Exactly.

CARTER
The answers are down there.

WARREN
In the dark. And the stench.

CARTER
It's fiendish work. But you're the guy.

WARREN
Right. I'm the guy. Okay, here I go.

Warren doesn't move. Carter steps forward and pushes him down the stairs.

CARTER
Don't forget to call me.

WARREN
Aaaah!

SCENE SIX

The church of the Esoteric Order of Dagon. The HEAD CULTIST reads to himself from a scary looking book. Members of the congregation enter and sit on benches. About half of them wear robes with cowls that cover their faces. OBED MARSH lights candles. Enter Jill and Asenath, who sit.

JILL

Asenath, we really shouldn't be doing this.

ASENATH

Don't be a fuddy-duddy. It'll be fun. Besides have you seen the head cultist? He's dreamy. And what a body!

JILL

But Asenath, Papa grounded us for using the Book of Eibon to summon that Byakhee. If he finds out we attended a cult ceremony, I don't know what he'll do. You know how he feels about cultists.

ASENATH

Well, he won't find out, will he? Besides, it's not like we're here to worship the powers of darkness. We're just hoping to meet guys.

JILL

But even if you meet someone, what can you do with him?

ASENATH

Watch and learn, little sister.

JILL

(blushing)

Oh, Asenath! You are wicked. I mean, sure, premarital — you know — sounds promising, but I want something more. Someone mature. A family man, someone with really old fashioned values. Someone with a dream. Someone who...

ASENATH

Shhh, it's starting.

The Head Cultist stands.

HEAD CULTIST

It is time, let us begin.

(reading)

That is not dead which can eternal lie...

ALL

And in strange aeons even death may die.

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The Head Cultist doffs his robe, revealing his muscled body wearing only a sparkly rhinestone codpiece. Other cultists throw back their hoods, revealing their horrid fish-like visages. As the Head Cultist sings, he chains a female Victim to his altar, and disembowels her with a huge dagger.

HEAD CULTIST

["Shoggoth Prayer"]

(sings to the Deep Ones)

*May Cthulhu come to collect you,
May He bring you madness and pain.
Rising from the sea,
To drive humanity insane.
May you be like Dagon and Hydra
May you finally live 'neath the waves.
Kill humanity
And speed them to their charnel graves.*

ALL

*Come Cthulhu,
And shorten their lives.*

DEEP ONE TENOR

May Cthulhu fill our shoggoth prayer for you.

ALL

*Iä Cthulhu,
Wgah-nagl fhtagn.*

DEEP ONE TENOR

May He send his horrible nightmares to you.

HEAD CULTIST

*May Cthulhu waken from slumber,
Bringing mankind horror and woe.
Hear us Cthulhu!
Accept our sacrifice.
O hear our shoggoth prayer.*

ALL

*Great One!
Die die die die die die die die die die die...etc.*

The Deep Ones perform a horrid blasphemy of a dance. After the dance concludes, Cultists and Deep Ones alike begin to shuffle out of the church.

HEAD CULTIST

Thank you everyone, we'll see you on Tuesday. Remember to bring your items for the bake sale...

ASENATH

Oh Jill, just look at him. What a hunk, what a voice. C'mon, let's follow him down to the beach.

A Shoggoth on the Roof The Musical

JILL

I'll catch up with you.

Marsh cleans up the mess made by the human sacrifice. Jill watches from behind a column.

MARSH

Them's is a goin' to swim out to sea. Them Deep Ones. Them's 'neath the waves, not stuck shuffling around Innsmouth's rotten wharves. Great Cthulhu, you drive many, many cultists crazy. I realize ain't no shame to be a crazed blood-thirsty devil worshipper, but it's no great honor, either. So what would have been so terrible if'n I was one of them fish things?

He begins to sing.

["If I Were a Deep One"]

*If I were a Deep One,
Blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub,
blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub.
All day long I'd swim beneath the sea.
If I were a De-ep One.
Terrify the tourists.
Blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub,
blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub.
If I were an icky icky fish,
Scaly, slipp'ry frog-eyed kind of man.*

*I'd make my lair a deep dark cave with some fungus,
Right in the heart of Devil's Reef.
A foul abode of pestilent coral walls.
The ramulose and arabesque floriation
Spiralling so far beyond belief
With ichor seeping from my chamber halls.*

*I'd fill the reef with wrecks and corpses and ships,
And men for my friends to see and hear.
Begging mercy as water fills their lungs.
And each loud "ahhh" and "eek" and "help" and "God no"
Would scare off the townfolk far and near,
As if to say "There live the Deep Ones."*

*If I were a Deep One,
Blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub,
blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub.
All day long I'd swim beneath the sea.
If I were a Deep One.
Drag away some tourists.
Blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub,
blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub.
If I were an icky icky fish,
Scaly, slipp'ry frog-eyed kind of man.*

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*I see my kin, the Marshes, hopping like some fish-frog things
With their bulging milky eyes,
Worshipping Dagon with the unholy rites.
I see them putting on crowns and shuffling like a shoggoth
Ahhh, what a hellish sight they are.
Croaking at the sea both day and night.*

*The most psychotic men in town would come a lookin' fer me!
They would ask me to adjure them,
Like the Mad Arab himself.
"If'n you please, Old Man Marsh..."
"Oh tell me Old Man Marsh..."
Asking questions that would drive the mad insane!
Blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub.*

*And it won't make one bit of diff'rence
if'n I answer right or wrong.
When you're deep, they think you really know!*

*If I were fish, I'd have the gills that I lack
To swim down below to deep R'lyeh.
And maybe have a seat on Cthulhu's tomb.
And I'd discuss the R'lyeh Text with some Deep One friends
Countless hours every day
Fixin' fer the humans' final doom.*

*If I were a Deep One,
Blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub,
blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub.
All day long I'd swim beneath the sea
If I were a Deep One.
Get to eat the tourists,
Blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub,
blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub, blub.
Cthulhu you make the people run,
You saw fit that flippers have I none.
Don't you reckon that I'd get more done,
If I were a Deep One?*

Old Man Marsh spots Jill.

MARSH (cont'd)
What are ye lookin' at, girly? Eh?

JILL
That was...wonderful.

MARSH
'Twere?

JILL
Oh yes. Sometimes I dream about intermingling with the Deep Ones.

MARSH
Ye do?

A Shoggoth on the Roof The Musical

JILL

Well, sometimes. I'm Jill, Jill Armitage.

MARSH

Obed Marsh. But you can call me Old Man Marsh. Ye shur are purty. Nice broad hips fer breedin'.

JILL

Um, thanks.

MARSH

Don't hold much with courtin' myself. What say ye foller me down to my shack by the wharf?

JILL

Oh that would be lovely, but I'm not sure we're well acquainted enough for me to visit without a chaperone. I really should go now. My sister's waiting for me.

MARSH

But....

JILL

See you around, Mr. Marsh.

She leaves.

SCENE SEVEN

Miskatonic library, a few days later. Armitage stands at the rare book circulation desk. WILBUR WHATELY enters, with books. He is extremely ugly and very very tall.

WHATELY

I have come to return these books, Professor Armitage.

ARMITAGE

Ah, Wilbur. I am glad that you are here. I have something I wish to discuss with you.

WHATELY

If you are concerned about the overdue copy of the Pnakotic Manuscript, I assure you I will return it next week.

ARMITAGE

You have been saying that ever since the solstice, Wilbur. But that is not it. You know I have a daughter, Prudence?

WHATELY

Yes, I have seen her here before.

ARMITAGE

She is an educated girl, Wilbur, with many fine qualities. Perhaps you would like to ask her for a date?

WHATELY

A date?

ARMITAGE

You know, show her a good time.

WHATELY

Ah, yes. I could show her many interesting times indeed...

ARMITAGE

Excellent. You should call on us this weekend for lunch, and we will arrange an introduction.

WHATELY

That is acceptable.

Music begins.

A Shoggoth on the Roof The Musical

ARMITAGE

Wonderful.

["Arkham, (he begins to sing)
Dunwich" *She is our daughter and we love her.*
reprise]

WHATELY

I do not sing.

Music comes to a grinding halt.

ARMITAGE

Ah, no, of course not. Well, that is fine. My wife and I will expect you.

WHATELY

Good day.

Wilbur exits. Armitage checks in the library books. Enter Prudence and Herbert West, holding hands.

ARMITAGE

Prudence. You just missed Mr. Whately. What a shame. I had hoped to introduce you.

PRUDENCE

Papa, this is Herbert West. We have something to tell you.

ARMITAGE

Herbert West? Yes, I have heard of you. Doctor Halsey says you are a dangerous maniac.

WEST

I think you'll find Doctor Halsey is singing a different tune these days.

ARMITAGE

But what is it you wanted to tell me?

PRUDENCE

Herbert isn't a dangerous maniac, Papa. He's a genius. And we are in love!

ARMITAGE

What?

WEST

Professor Armitage, I would like your consent to marry your daughter.

ARMITAGE

This comes as quite a shock.

WEST

Prudence is my ideal subj... companion for the great work I have yet to do.

ARMITAGE

Your great work? What is that?

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WEST
Let me show you.

They pantomime walking as the library set changes to Herbert's secret laboratory. There are several gurneys with CORPSES on them and lots of elaborate machinery.

ARMITAGE
Where are we?

WEST
This is my clandestine laboratory, which I built with my own hands after Doctor Halsey forbade me to use the university's meager facilities.

PRUDENCE
Isn't it wonderful, Papa?

Music starts.

ARMITAGE
Good heavens, are these human cadavers?

WEST
Indeed they are.

ARMITAGE
What on earth do you plan to do with them?

WEST
(sings)
["To Life"] *To life, to life, I'll bring them!
I'll bring all these dead men to life!*

PRUDENCE
He's learned a way for surviving them.

WEST
Really reviving them.

PRUDENCE
*He can do it!
To life, to life, he brings them.*

WEST
*I really do bring them to life.
I have a genius with chemicals.*

PRUDENCE
Also polemicals.

WEST
Yes, it's true there's been strife.

A Shoggoth on the Roof The Musical

ARMITAGE

*This is really the most shocking
thing I've ever heard, and I have heard a few.*

PRUDENCE

*Oh it's really not so shocking.
If you were a dead man you might like it too.*

WEST

*To life, to life, I'll bring them!
With one small injection,
like this.*

PRUDENCE

*Think of it, Papa, we'll never die.
Live for forever!*

ARMITAGE

My!

WEST

'Cause I bring them to life!

Music continues underneath.

ARMITAGE

(speaks)

Well, I must say, this is amazing.

West holds up a syringe of glowing green fluid.

WEST

I began experimenting on small animals of various kinds, and perfected a solution which reanimates dead tissue.

PRUDENCE

See, Papa?

She reveals several monstrous hideously deformed creatures writhing on a table.

ARMITAGE

Yes.

WEST

When I was sure my solution worked, I began to test it on human subjects.

PRUDENCE

Here, Papa.

Prudence reveals a disembodied human hand which walks around on its fingertips. Also disattached eyeballs which look around and blink.

ARMITAGE

That is fascinating.

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WEST

And in the end, I was even able to convince Doctor Halsey that my methods were sound.

With a proud smile, Prudence reveals Doctor Halsey, now a terrifying zombie with a gaping bullet wound in his forehead. As the music swells again, he sings horribly....

HALSEY

(sings)

To life, to life, he brings them!

WEST

*I brought Doctor Halsey to life.
Of course I first had to kill the man
With some ingenious plan.*

PRUDENCE

He just shot him!

WEST

*Okay, it's true, I shot him.
I shot him, but brought him to life!
He has no reason to want to live,
I do: she's yours to give.
Prudence here as my wife!*

PRUDENCE

*Oh Papa dear I want to marry Herbert,
Since he has a power
Once reserved for God.*

ARMITAGE

*I never could say no to you my darling,
Even though young West should
face a firing squad!*

ALL THREE

To life, to life, we'll bring it!

PRUDENCE

A marriage

WEST

For better

ARMITAGE

Or worse.

ALL THREE

*And if that life has no quality,
Still there's the quantity.
We will bring it to life!*

A Shoggoth on the Roof The Musical

HALSEY

Die die die die die die die die die die die die die die die die....

Prudence, Armitage and Zombie Halsey continue singing and dancing around, while West injects all the corpses on the gurneys with the glowing fluid. One by one they come to life and become zombies, staggering around the stage with weird fantastic dancing and singing. The others stop to watch.

HALSEY (cont'd)

*Wa ga nagh! f'thagn
Death is sweet to some f'thagn
Dance and know that even death can wither and die.*

*Wa ga nagh! f'thagn
Death will surely come f'thagn
Dance and know that even death can wither and die.*

HALSEY & ZOMBIES

*Even life eternal is not time enough to see
All the folly and despair of poor humanity.*

*Wa ga nagh! f'thagn
Death is sweet to some f'thagn
Dance and know that even death can wither and die.
Hey!*

The Zombies do a danse macabre, and the living people join in. All dance to a wild conclusion.

ALL
To life!

BLACK OUT.

END ACT ONE.

*A Shoggoth
on the Roof*

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

The old graveyard. The open tomb. Crickets.

Offstage, Carter screaming. It gets louder. Suddenly he rushes across the stage, chased by a ghoul.

CARTER
Aaaaaahh! Leave me alone!!

They exit the other side.
Silence. The crickets resume.

The offstage screaming. Then, way upstage, the ghoul chases Carter across again.

CARTER (cont'd)
Knock it off! I'm not kidding!

They're gone. Silence. Again the crickets.

Third time. Downstage. The screaming. Carter enters running. He trips and falls down. The ghoul is right behind. He lunges, flies over Carter, hits the ground, rolls and comes up on his feet.

CARTER (cont'd)
All right, that's enough. Let's go.

Carter picks up a shovel. As the fight starts, the telephone rings. Carter answers and carries on the conversation while fighting the ghoul.

CARTER (cont'd)
Hello? Warren, is that you?

Lights up on Warren, in a crypt. He has his end of the phone. Lights fade on Carter and the ghoul.

WARREN
My god, if you could see what I am seeing.

CARTER
Warren, what is it?

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WARREN

Carter, it's terrible! It's... a total bust. There's nothing here but some old bottles and cigarette butts.

CARTER

Oh, I'm sorry to hear it. Ouch. I guess that's not what you were expecting.

WARREN

Wait! I see an inscription cut into the living rock of the tomb itself.

(Reads.)

"Asenath was here"... Damn!

CARTER

Uh huh. Oooof! That's OWWW! Sorry.

WARREN

Carter, what's going on up there?

CARTER

Ummm, well, AAAAH. Quit it!

WARREN

Carter? Carter?

CARTER

Curse this hellish thing! My god!

Warren starts to run back toward the surface.

WARREN

Brace up, Carter! I'm on my way!

CARTER

Yeah, about damn time!

Lights crossfade as Warren emerges from the tomb to see Carter at the mercy of the ghoul.

WARREN

Carter!

Carter swings his shovel accidentally clocking Warren in the head. Warren tumbles back into the tomb. Carter presses on until the ghoul is defeated and scampers off. Warren again emerges from the tomb bleeding from the head.

WARREN (cont'd)

Ow.

CARTER

(mocking)

"Probably ghouls all over the place." Yeah, no kidding!

WARREN

Well, um... Are you all right?

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CARTER

No thanks to you. Leave me alone in ghoul central while you go down to look at some teenage hangout.

WARREN

Sorry about that.

CARTER

Could have been killed.

WARREN

Sorry.

CARTER

Jerk.

WARREN

I thought there would be forbidden secrets down there. It's this accursed book. It's actually very hard to read.

CARTER

Yeah yeah yeah.

WARREN

Well it is.

CARTER

Whatever. Come on, let's go.

SCENE TWO

Arkham street. Armitage walks home alone.

ARMITAGE

Well, Herbert West is certainly an odd fellow, but it is clear my daughter loves him. And he does have a certain compelling power. A little misguided maybe, but at least he is not a cultist. The main thing is for Prudence to be happy. But what will I say to Marion? She has her heart set on Wilbur Whately! Somehow I doubt she will be as impressed by the zombies as I was. I must convince her Dr. West is the right man.

Enter two ghouls.

ARMITAGE (cont'd)

Aaaah! Begone, foul apparitions!

The ghouls attack Armitage. Enter Carter and Warren, still with the shovels, flashlights, etc.

WARREN

Carter, ghouls are attacking that dignified old gentleman!

CARTER

Geez, not more!

Warren and Carter fight off the ghouls with their shovels. They run off whimpering into the night.

ARMITAGE

Thank you very much, Mr. Carter. Streets are hardly safe at night anymore.

Carter accidentally creams Warren again in the head with his shovel. Warren lets out a blood-curdling yowl.

CARTER

This freakin' town is crawling with ghouls! Something bad is coming. I can feel it. I'm going to have nightmares for weeks after tonight.

ARMITAGE

Nightmares? Say, Marion always wants to hear about a nightmare. That's it! Thanks again for your help.

Armitage exits.

CARTER

Whatever.

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WARREN

Oh, my head. Come on, Carter. Let's go. Where did you put the car?

CARTER

It was right here, on Aylesbury.

WARREN

I thought it was on Gainsville.

CARTER

Was it? I can never remember.

They look around, stumped. As the lights fade to black, Carter and Warren turn on their flashlights and exit.

SCENE THREE

The Armitages' bedroom. Complete darkness.
Armitage cries out.

ARMITAGE

Ah! Lavinia Whately! The old witch!

MARION

What? What is it?

ARMITAGE

No! Stop! Help!

MARION

Henry, wake up!

Marion turns on the bedside lamp, revealing
Armitage thrashing in bed.

ARMITAGE

Get away from me!

MARION

(shaking him)

Henry! What is the matter with you? You are having another bad dream.

ARMITAGE

(opening his eyes, frightened)

Where is she? Where is she?

MARION

Who? What are you talking about?

ARMITAGE

Vinny Whately. Wilbur's strange albino mother, Lavinia Whately. She was standing here a moment ago.

MARION

Henry, do not be ridiculous. Vinny Whately died last year.

ARMITAGE

To be fair, Marion, no one knows that for sure. It is true she has not been seen since that night the whippoorwills came down on Sentinel Hill, but there never was a funeral for her.

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MARION

Henry Armitage! I do not want you paying heed to those Dunwich rumors. "Lavinia is still alive." "Wilbur's brother is a foul mutant they keep locked in the attic." "The father of the Whately boys is the unholy god of madness, Yog Sothoth." Trust me, Henry, Vinny Whately is dead. You had another of your typical nightmares. Tell me what you dreamt.

ARMITAGE

It was terrible.

MARION

Tell me.

ARMITAGE

Okay, but do not say I did not warn you.

MARION

As if a nightmare of yours could scare me after the things I have seen in this town!

ARMITAGE

All right, this was my dream. In the beginning, I was walking through an old graveyard near Big Cypress Swamp. It was a celebration of some kind. Everyone we knew was there, and Paul Whiteman and his orchestra.

As he speaks, MEN, WOMEN, and THE PAUL WHITEMAN ORCHESTRA enter the bedroom. Henry, wearing his pajamas, gets out of bed and joins them.

ARMITAGE (cont'd)

In the middle of the graveyard, in walks your grandmother Prudence, may she rest in peace.

MARION

Grandma Prudence!? How did she look?

ARMITAGE

Well, we have seen worse. Naturally, I went up to greet her. She said to me...

GRANDMA PRUDENCE enters, escorted by a GHOUL.

GRANDMA PRUDENCE

(sings)

["The Nightmare"] *You thought that I was dead.*

GHOUL

Knock it off, knock it off.

GRANDMA PRUDENCE

But you were quite misled.

GHOUL

Nothing more than a cough.

GRANDMA PRUDENCE
*I've had a lovely rest
Since I met Herbert West
The great reanimator.*

MARION
Herbert West?

GRANDMA PRUDENCE
He's really very bright.

GHOUL
He's a prof! He's a prof!

GRANDMA PRUDENCE
If you don't mind a fright.

GHOUL
Nerves will be badly off.

GRANDMA PRUDENCE
*For Pru it would be best
To marry Herbert West
The great reanimator.*

MARION
Marry Herbert West?! She must have heard wrong. She meant Wilbur Whately.

ARMITAGE
*You must have heard wrong, Grandma,
It's not Herbert,
It's Wilbur Whately, Grandma,
That dear Pru is gonna wed.*

GRANDMA PRUDENCE
*No!!!!
It must be Herbert, Henry,
My great grandchild,
My little Prudence, who you named for me,
Herbert's wife was meant to be.
She'll never have to die.*

CHORUS
Walk it off, walk it off.

GRANDMA PRUDENCE
Or even say good-bye.

CHORUS
That's a thing not to scoff.

GRANDMA PRUDENCE
*I'm really quite impressed
with darling Herbert West,
The great reanimator.*

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MARION

But we already took out an ad in the social register. We already agreed to have lunch with Wilbur!

ARMITAGE

*But we announced it, Grandma,
in the papers.
And Wilbur Whately, Grandma,
we were gonna meet for lunch.*

GRANDMA PRUDENCE

*No!!!!
So you announced it, Henry,
That's your problem.
As for that Whately kid I say to you,
Henry, that's your problem too.*

CHORUS

*You thought that she was dead,
Knock it off, knock it off
That's not what Herbert said!
Walk it off, walk it off.
With just a small syringe,
And research on the fringe,
He's a reanimator!*

ARMITAGE

But what about Wilbur?

CHORUS

A great reanimator!

ARMITAGE

I never liked him anyway.
A great reanima...

CHORUS

*Shhhh! Shhh!
Look, who is this?
Who is this? Who comes here?
Who who who who?
What woman is this, all furtive and misshapen?*

GHOUL

Could it be?

FIRST GUEST

Sure.

SECOND GUEST

Smells like fish.

PAUL WHITEMAN

I'll say!

A Shoggoth on the Roof The Musical

GHOUL

Who could be mistaken?

CHORUS

It's the wizard's girl come from beyond the grave.

It's the wizard's strange creepy albino girl.

Vinny Whately! Vinny Whately! Vinny Whately....

The ghost of LAVINIA WHATELY rises up from a grave.

LAVINIA

Armitage! Armitage! Armitage!

What is this about your daughter marrying my Wilbur?

CHORUS

Her sweet Wilbur!

LAVINIA

Don't you know she's destined for his fearsome older brother?

CHORUS

Older brother!

LAVINIA

If you think your stupid daughter Prudence will escape me,

CHORUS

Will escape her!

LAVINIA

Then you're also very stupid and you will be sorry.

CHORUS

Very sorry!

LAVINIA

Plans! For her we have big plans!

They plan to take your daughter in their arms,

Their many mouths, their tentacles,

To feed their twisted lust!

CHORUS

Her sons plan to take your daughter

Into their arms!

LAVINIA

Tentacles!

CHORUS

Mouths!

LAVINIA

Tentacles!

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CHORUS
Lust!

LAVINIA
Tentacles!

CHORUS
Tentacles!

LAVINIA
Tentacles!

CHORUS
Yes!!!

LAVINIA
Armitage!

CHORUS
Armitage!

Stage business: Armitage tries to escape from Lavinia.

LAVINIA
Prudence has to marry Wilbur for his older brother.

CHORUS
He's a monster!

LAVINIA
Then my boys will have your daughter in their evil clutches.

CHORUS
Evil clutches!

LAVINIA
They'll consume her soul and feast upon her naked body.

CHORUS
Naked body!

LAVINIA
Then up on the hill the boys will call upon their father.

CHORUS
Yes, their father!
Shhhhh!

Lights change, very dramatic and ominous.

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LAVINIA

*When Prudence marries my sweet son,
The horror will start.
She'll live about three weeks,
'Cause when three weeks are up,
He'll take her straight upstairs,
The tentacles will uncurl, and...
This they'll give your Prudence
That they'll give your Prudence
This they'll give your Prudence
That's what will happen when she marries my sweet Wilbur!*

The Chorus screams and runs. Lavinia chokes
Armitage and then leaves. Armitage climbs back
into bed with Marion.

MARION

Merciful heavens! What an awful dream. We should have known there was something wrong with Wilbur. He comes from the more decadent side of the Whately family.

ARMITAGE

Yes, that and the strange lumps under his clothing.

MARION

Well, ordinarily I put no stock in dreams, but if my grandmother Prudence came all the way back from the dead to tell us to avoid Wilbur Whately, then I think we ought to pay attention.

ARMITAGE

Me too.

MARION

(sings)

*If Grandma Prudence said knock it off, knock it off,
It's Herbert Pru will wed, he's a prof, he's a prof.
She'll never have to die,
Or even say good-bye,
With her reanimator.*

ARMITAGE

To Wilbur I'm averse.

MARION

Always thought he was off.

ARMITAGE

His brother's even worse.

MARION

And their father's no scoff.

ARMITAGE

*Our worries are addressed,
She'll marry Herbert West,*

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MARION
The great reanimator.

BOTH
The great reanimator.
The great reanimator.
The great reanimator.

Marion goes back to sleep.

Whew!
ARMITAGE

SCENE FOUR

Marsh's shack. Dim. The smell of rotting fish. A foghorn wails and gulls screech. Enter Jill, escorted by Marsh.

MARSH

Here ye be, girly. Be watchin' yer step.

Marsh lights a lantern, revealing a den of foulness and iniquity. Crudely drawn pictures of Deep Ones decorate the walls.

JILL

Oh my, it's so... cozy.

MARSH

It keeps the sun out.

An awkward pause.

MARSH (cont'd)

Well, suppose ye'll be wantin' to git it over with. Ye kin scream if'n ye want to. Ain't no one to hear ye.

JILL

I'm in no rush.

MARSH

What?

JILL

Couldn't we just talk for a while?

MARSH

What?

Jill pushes aside some dead fish and finds a weird gold bracelet.

JILL

What's this? It's beautiful.

MARSH

That's from the Deep Ones. Me Pappy give it me.

JILL

Oh. That's sweet.

(she points to the pictures)

Is that your family?

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MARSH

Aye. I'll be a-joinin' 'em one o' these days.

JILL

That's nice.

MARSH

Or they'll kill me.

JILL

Gosh, my family would never do anything like that for me.

Marsh begins a lecherous advance.

JILL (cont'd)

Why, Old Man Marsh, what are you doing?

MARSH

Ain't ye afraid o' me, girly?

JILL

Jill. My name is Jill.

MARSH

Jill. Jill. Ye know how the Deep Ones 'ud say that?

She shakes her head. He makes a horrible croaking belch noise.

JILL

That's my name?

MARSH

Yep. It be.

JILL

Let me try.

She does a horrible croak-belch. He giggles obscenely. She giggles sweetly.

MARSH

That were mighty fine.

JILL

'Twere?

They stare into each other's eyes and clasp hands. He croaks again. Then she croaks. As they croak back and forth at each other, Marsh extinguishes the lantern.

SCENE FIVE

At the beach, the Head Cultist stands before the sea, deliberately tossing in pebbles.
Asenath enters.

ASENATH

Hi, I'm Asenath. Mind if I join in?

HEAD CULTIST

Our cult?

ASENATH

No, I just meant the rock skipping.

HEAD CULTIST

Actually, I'm throwing in these pebbles to summon some more Deep Ones from Devil's Reef.

ASENATH

Oh. Well that's OK too.

She too starts tossing pebbles.

HEAD CULTIST

I saw you at our occult ritual the other day.

ASENATH

You did?

HEAD CULTIST

Well it's not every day I see a girl like you every day down at the Esoteric Order of Dagon Hall. I mean, most of the girls around here have that Innsmouth look. But you, you're...

ASENATH

Go on.

HEAD CULTIST

Shucks, I dunno know. I mean, have you ever looked at someone and realized in an instant you feel...

ASENATH

Sanity fleeing your skull?

HEAD CULTIST

Uh, no.

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ASENATH

A sense of lost time and vague recollections of cyclopean architecture?

HEAD CULTIST

Um...

ASENATH

That you're living on a placid island of ignorance amidst the black seas of infinity from which it was not meant we should voyage far?

HEAD CULTIST

Asenath, I'm trying to tell you something.

ASENATH

Could you sing it? I can't get enough of the sound of your voice.

HEAD CULTIST

(sings)

["Victim of
Victims"]

*Victim of victims, Asenath, oh Asenath,
I saw you sitting in that pew,
Looked in your eyes and Asenath, oh Asenath,
Loved you more than Cthulhu.*

*Victim of victims, Asenath, oh Asenath,
I knew that you would fit the bill,
But since Cthulhu must come back and attack
I love one whom I must kill.*

*When Deep Ones die for Great Dagon,
That is a sacrifice.
When Whately reads the Necronomicon,
That is for sacrifice too.*

*But of all my sacrifices large and small
The most nihilistic one of all
Is when I fin'ly thrust the knife inside
It will be inside my bride.*

ASENATH

*Cultist of cultists, paradise oh paradise,
You look at me and raise your knife,
Cut off my clothes and paradise oh paradise
You take me to be your wife.*

*When you rip off that codpiece, yes!
I'll be your sacrifice.
When I, in my passion, finally get undressed,
'Twill be my sacrifice, ooh.*

BOTH

*But of all our sacrifices small and great
The one that will fin'ly seal our fate
Is the one that blasts our sanity -
I want you to marry me.*

They make out ferociously and begin to disrobe.

HEAD CULTIST

Wait. No, stop.

ASENATH

What is it?

HEAD CULTIST

Don't you think we should ask your Papa's permission and get married first?

ASENATH

Tomorrow. We'll ask him tomorrow.

They resume the consummation of their passion
as the lights fade out.

SCENE SIX

In the Miskatonic Library, Jill and Old Man Marsh approach Armitage.

JILL
Hello, papa.

MARSH
Perfesser Armitage.

ARMITAGE
Why hello, Jill. And Mister Marsh. We don't often see you Innsmouth folk here in the library.

MARSH
Never did hold much stock in books. Damned things fall apart when they get wet.

JILL
Papa, Obed has a question for you.

ARMITAGE
Oh yes?

MARSH
I were wonderin' if'n ye have any books on squid.

JILL
Obed! What Obed means to say Papa, is that we are in love and want to get married.

MARSH
Reckon ye can abide that?

JILL
Papa?

ARMITAGE
Well, it is a bit of a shock.

JILL
We're in love, aren't we Obed?

MARSH
Aye, we be.

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ARMITAGE

Jill, you are my youngest daughter. Old Man Marsh here is a decrepit degenerate octogenarian. No offense.

MARSH

None taken.

ARMITAGE

Not only that honey, he has got the Innsmouth look. Why if one were to put any stock in the old folklore of the region, you would know that it is a well-established rumor that Marsh and his kinfolk have been interbreeding with horrid fish frog monsters for centuries.

JILL

I know Papa. I know all about the Deep Ones. After the wedding, we plan to move to their sunken city of Y'ha-nthlei and so I can interbreed with them and spawn foul progeny too.

ARMITAGE

Oh. According to the copy of the Ponape Scripture I keep under lock and key, Y'ha-nthlei is mighty far from Arkham. Will you come home for Christmas?

MARSH

Don't reckon.

ARMITAGE

(aside)

This plan is madness. How can I acquiesce to such perversion?

JILL

(sings)

["Very Far
From the
Home I
Love"]

*How can I hope to make you see my way
Hear me, Dad, I've gone mad
Why I must travel to Y'ha-nthlei
Very far from the home I love.*

*Once I was happily content to stay
Here in town on dry ground
Far from the monsters who would come to prey;
Prey on the home I love.*

*Who could see that Old Marsh would come
Who would add foul shapes to my dreams?
Lovestruck now I stand with him,
Watching wholesome dreams go dim.*

*Oh, what a psychopathic choice I make,
Swimming far, growing gills,
Breeding with Deep Ones just for Obed's sake
Very far from home I love.*

*I just decided on this yesterday,
I will stay, far away,
Who could imagine such a horrid thing
Very far from the home I love,
Yet with Old Man Marsh I'm home.*

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ARMITAGE

No. I cannot and must not permit this.

JILL

Papa, we're not really asking for your permission. But we would like to go with your blessing.

ARMITAGE

(aside)

My blessing? Bless the union of my youngest with an ancient malodorous batrachian? Unthinkable! Swimming off to join an undersea colony of Deep Ones? You know what it is? It is those tentacles I told you about. Tentacles! But look at them. She loves him. Ah well.

(to them)

You have my blessing to marry.

JILL

Oh, Papa, thank you!

MARSH

Thankin' ye, Papa.

ARMITAGE

Professor Armitage to you.

JILL

C'mon, Obed, let's go pack.

They leave.

ARMITAGE

What else could I do? One wants a mad scientist, the other wants an old man who smells like cod. What next?

Asenath enters arm in arm with the Head Cultist.

ASENATH

Papa, the Head Cultist from the Esoteric Order of Dagon Hall and I are going to get married.

ARMITAGE

A cultist? Marry a cultist? Asenath, do you realize what that man is?

ASENATH

He has a name, Papa.

ARMITAGE

All these cultist types have names. He just wants you for your body.

ASENATH

And I want him for his. It's incredible.

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ARMITAGE

No, I mean really for your body. These cultists, they treat you like a queen one day and the next thing you know you are on their altar, hands and feet bound, a sacrificial dagger stuck in your heart, blood cascading onto the floor and your entrails strewn all around the room as a detestable offering to some grotesque and noisome Great Old One!

ASENATH

But Papa —

ARMITAGE

No, Asenath! No! Never talk of this again! Never speak his name to me again! Never! Do you understand?

ASENATH

Papa, I beg you to accept us.

ARMITAGE

(aside)

Accept them? How can I accept a cultist? Can I deny my crusade against the return of the Great Old Ones? On the other hand, can I deny my daughter? On the other hand, can I expedite the destruction of mankind? On the other hand... the other hand is a tentacle!

(to them)

No, Asenath, no, no, no!

The residents of Arkham appear behind a transparent curtain as Asenath and her Cultist slink off.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(sing)

Tentacles. Tentacles. Tentacles.

SCENE SEVEN

Outside the library. Prudence and Herbert's wedding is underway. The villagers in attendance. Enter Carter and Warren.

WARREN

I'm telling you, Carter. We were in the wrong graveyard. If we just dig right through....

CARTER

Warren, let the hellish legions have the day off for once. It seems like a nice wedding of some kind. A nice buffet table. Why don't we try to relax and enjoy the party?

Carter goes to the buffet table and gets a drink.

WARREN

(appreciating the buffet)

It's fiendish work, but it has to be done.

He drops his gear and also goes to the buffet table.

A PRIEST

I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride.

Herbert kisses Prudence. Cheering.

VILLAGERS

Congratulations! Best wishes! Mazeltov! etc.

ZOMBIE HALSEY

Congratulations, Herbert. She's lovely. It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy.

WEST

Thanks for being my best man, Doctor Halsey.

A small band strikes up 1920s dance music. People do the Charleston. Prudence goes to her parents. Marion is weeping.

PRUDENCE

Oh Mother! Oh Papa! This is the happiest day of my life!

MARION

My little Prudence!

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ARMITAGE

We wish you all the best, my darling.

MARION

Oh Henry, how I wish that Asenath and...

ARMITAGE

No, do not speak her name. We have two daughters left, let us be happy for them. No more of this talk!

Jill and Marsh come over.

JILL

Congratulations, Prudence. You're so lucky.

PRUDENCE

Thanks, Jill.

Marsh shakes Herbert's hand, leering at Prudence.

JILL

Welcome to our family, Dr. West.

WEST

Herbert. Thank you Jill.

MARSH

Hey, Herb, if'n ye die, can I have yer bride too?

WEST

I'm certain that won't be necessary.

ZOMBIE HALSEY

Hey everybody, it's time for dancing and food!

The dance band plays louder, everyone does the Charleston. Warren goes back for seconds at the buffet. There are two ghouls eating cake. He joins them.

Asenath and the Head Cultist enter, followed by other cultists and Deep Ones. The music stops.

JILL

Asenath!

PRUDENCE

Asenath! What are you doing here?

ASENATH

I couldn't let my older sister get married without wishing her the best.

PRUDENCE

But Papa....

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ASENATH

I wanted him to see. The cultists are good people. Yes, they kill without mercy and are allied with the forces of darkness, but they have feelings too. And amazing power. The Deep Ones have an ancient culture. And I love them.

ARMITAGE

No, begone, all of you! You have no place here!

HEAD CULTIST

That's where you're wrong, sir. We're a part of this community just like you. We breathe the same air, feel the same sun, and yes, we have that same shoggoth on our roof. It's the tentacles. Good and evil, cultist and victim, the tentacles hold us all together in balance and harmony.

Music swells.

(sings)

["Arkham,
Dunwich"
second reprise]

She is your daughter and you...

Suddenly Wilbur Whately emerges from the library. He is holding the Necronomicon. He stands at the top of the steps where all can see. Music comes to a grinding halt.

WHATELY

Cease that singing! People of Arkham! Prudence was to have been my wife. Now she is given to another. And I was not even invited to the wedding!

Armitage looks embarrassed.

WHATELY (cont'd)

Now you will feel wrath. Now you will know regret.

ARMITAGE

Wilbur, no! Never read aloud from the Necronomi...

WHATELY

(reading from the book)

Ia, Ia, Cthulhu! Cthulhu R'lyeh wagh nag'l f'tagn!

HEAD CULTIST

Noooooo!!!

A terrifying rumbling sound. An earthquake. Panic spreads.

MARION

Henry, what is happening?

ARMITAGE

Oh my god, Marion, I fear the worst!

PRUDENCE

Papa!

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WEST

Prudence!

ASENATH

Honey?

HEAD CULTIST

This is going to be really bad. Wow, I have such mixed feelings.

Old Man Marsh suddenly begins to transform into a Deep One.

JILL

Obed!

MARSH

Great Cthulhu! I'm a' changin'!

VILLAGERS

Aaaaaaahh! Nooo!!! Heeeeelp! etc.

CTHULHU himself rises up behind the library. He is enormous. He steps on a house. He reaches down and picks up members of the dance band and eats them. He picks up the priest and eats him too. People scramble. West takes Prudence and they try to run. Cthulhu steps on them. Cthulhu sees Wilbur Whately on the library steps. He picks him up.

WHATELY

Great Cthulhu! No! It was I who awakened you! Aaaaaah!

Cthulhu eats him.

CTHULHU

What's going on here?

Silence.

CTHULHU (cont'd)

Well?

ARMITAGE

It... it is a wedding, Great Cthulhu. We were just trying to have a little wedding ceremony for my daughter.

CTHULHU

I didn't bring a gift.

ARMITAGE

That is all right. We were not really expecting you.

CTHULHU

Good.

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ARMITAGE

In fact, I kind of wish you had not come at all.

CTHULHU

What?

ARMITAGE

Well, for one thing the buffet table is clearly not big enough now.

CTHULHU

Human,

(begins to sing)

["Do You
Fear Me?"]

Do you fear me?

ARMITAGE

Do I what?!

CTHULHU

Do you fear me?

ARMITAGE

Do I fear you?

You just killed my eldest daughter

And then crushed her fiance.

Ate the band. Ate the priest,

Like they were fish filet!

You have some real aggression.

Cthulhu lifts Armitage into the air.

CTHULHU

Human, let me rephrase the question.

Do you fear me?

ARMITAGE

You're a god!

CTHULHU

Yes...

But do you fear me?

ARMITAGE

Do I fear you?

For such a big guy it seems absurd

You would need to be assured.

The earth is yours, you rule the sea.

If you're such a big guy, why talk about

Fear to me?

Cthulhu drops Armitage. Scream. Thud.

CTHULHU

*When you have a reputation
As this horrible thing,
You don't know, do they fear?
Is their cringing quite sincere?
Or do people simply tell you
What they think you want to hear?
And so I'm asking, really,
Do you fear me?*

ALL EXCEPT CTHULHU

That's insane!

CTHULHU

Perhaps...

But do you fear me?

ALL EXCEPT CTHULHU

Do we fear him?

THE CULTISTS

For millions of years we've worshipped him

THE VICTIMS

Dreamed of him

THE DEEP ONES

Killed for him.

ALL EXCEPT CTHULHU

*Millions of years, our souls are his.
If that's not fear, what is?*

CTHULHU

Then you fear me?

ALL EXCEPT CTHULHU

Yes of course we do.

CTHULHU

*Aaaaaaah. Now it's time to vanquish you.
Yes, now that I'm awake...*

CTHULHU

You must succumb.

ALL EXCEPT CTHULHU

We must succumb.

ALL

After millions of years,

CTHULHU

My time has come.

ALL EXCEPT CTHULHU

Your time has come.

*As the music swells in a beautiful reprise,
Cthulhu destroys the university and the city. The
walls tumble, everyone is crushed or stepped on.
Everyone is dead.*

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CTHULHU

Phnglui mgwah nahf, Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah nagl ftagn!

Cthulhu crushes the orchestra itself and continues his rampage as he exits.

All is silent for a moment. The Byakhee flies through. Suddenly Herbert's hand emerges from the rubble, holding a glowing green syringe. He injects himself and staggers to his feet, zombified. He finds Prudence and injects her. They inject Armitage. West gives Armitage a syringe and he injects Marion. The zombies survey the devastation.

ARMITAGE

Well Herbert, it looks like your work is cut out for you.

WEST

Why bother, Professor? I mean, thanks for the vote of confidence, but the Great Old Ones will be returning.

PRUDENCE

Yes, Papa. He can't keep reanimating the entire world over and over again.

MARION

And even if he could, what is left for us now? Nothing but to flee to the peace and safety of a new dark age.

(sings)

["Miskatonic"] *Cthulhu has returned,
The Old Ones will be back.*

WEST

They'll kill.

PRUDENCE

And crush.

MARION

And still attack.

WEST

(speaks)

It's over. There's nothing we can do to stop it now.

ARMITAGE

Oh yes there is.

PRUDENCE

You have a plan?

MARION

Or a dream?

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ARMITAGE

(speaks)

They can destroy the town, and the library building, they can even kill all of us. But they can't kill knowledge. And as long as the knowledge survives, there will always be a Miskatonic.

Armitage takes his syringe and begins to reanimate corpses.

WEST

A memory.

PRUDENCE & MARION

The ancient lore.

ALL

What do we have?

Just a chance.

We have Miskatonic.

West also begins to reanimate corpses. More syringes are passed out, and as the song continues, the whole cast is gradually reanimated and joins in singing.

ALL (cont'd)

Miskatonic, Miskatonic,

Ivy-league wanna be Miskatonic,

It fills the brain and chills the heart.

Miskatonic, Miskatonic,

Paranoid, desperate Miskatonic,

The knowledge gained here is the start.

Somehow I will find a way to persevere,

Using what I learned while I was here

At Miskatonic.

I believe in Miskatonic

Personal, mystical Miskatonic,

Dear little college, little school of mine.

Music repeats/segues into a curtain call. The cast members bow and leave in the reverse order in which they were reanimated. Armitage is the last to leave, and as he exits he sees the SHOGGOTH climb back up onto the roof of the demolished library building and writhe grotesquely.

END ACT TWO.