

head of the family. Though this interrupted his studies, he had been anxious to return home and re-examine his Mesopotamian artifacts. Of special interest were the hundreds of clay tablets which turned out to be a fount of knowledge on Sumerian religion and magic. One of his greatest frustrations was his inability to read them. If he had been able to, his knowledge of the black arts would have increased dramatically in a short span of time.

Another main event in Gallery's life in 1858 was his marriage to Joanna Clarkson, the only daughter of a wealthy plantation owner near the Gallery estate. The romance seemed to the public to be idyllic. The reality is Gallery simply wanted access to Phillip Clarkson's wealth. Joanna was the sole heir to his estate.

The couple quickly had two children, Charles in 1859 and Samantha in 1860. When Phillip Clarkson died on September 9, 1860, Gallery found little reason to keep Joanna around. She was a willful woman who he could not easily control. Among his concerns were that she would provide information about his unusual interests and activities to Virginia society. She became his first sacrifice to the dark gods.

Her sacrifice was the first step toward true power. His ability to benefit from it was severely limited because of his ignorance of Sumerian mythology, magic, and language. In a failed attempt to gain the favor of dark gods and demons, he sacrificed his children at the base of a statue of the plague-demon Ura. Nothing was gained by this though Harold sensed that he was on the right track.

Gallery's second marriage was to Sarah Anne Gatewood in 1863. Sarah was a pliant, submissive, and easily controlled woman. Before her death from liver cancer in 1905, she gave birth to two sons and one daughter. Her daughter, Marka, died of influenza shortly after her first birthday. Her sons, Noah and Stephen, lived to adulthood.

Harold Gallery maintained a respectable public front. He managed the family's assets well and in the 1870s and 1880s succeeded in diversifying his wealth. Departing from the family's tradition of agriculture and land speculation, he invested in businesses and banks. The family's finances are in the peak of health by 1922.

Privately, Harold continued his pursuit of knowledge about Sumerian lore and language. By 1900, scholars had largely mastered the language though there remains some areas of difficulty even to this day. Harold was able to obtain a strong personal knowledge which enabled him to finally read many of the tablets he looted from the ruin site in Erech.

After gathering much knowledge of Sumerian lore from his personal library of clay tablets, Harold was able to properly contact and converse with the plague-demon Ura. He even permitted the entity to possess him at times. He has no memory of what transpired during these episodes, some of which lasted for days, but benefitted by gaining near total fluency in Sumerian. In the autumn of 1899, he decided to commence human sacrifices once again.

Believing that the only proper sacrifice to Ura was one's own blood relations, Harold demanded that his sons give some of their children to him for the purpose. Aside from wanting to please his god, Harold was testing his family's loyalty. He

had long ruled over them as a despot, controlling virtually every aspect of their lives. He approached his most strong-willed son, Stephen, and demanded the life of his oldest daughter, Victoria. Stephen and his wife Louisa understandably balked at this idea. Unlike his older brother Noah, Stephen was not a complete toady. After some consideration, he flatly refused his father's demand on Christmas Day, 1899. Before the end of the day, both Stephen and Louisa were dead, killed by Noah and a servant, Edwin Qualls, at his father's command.

Harold believes that to best please Ura, children related to the priest must be slain before the great statue during the time of a total solar eclipse. Victoria was the first child to die, being sacrificed on May 28, 1900. Since then, a child has been murdered during every solar eclipse to date. A complete list of when sacrifices took place and who was killed is given on page xx.

Since commencing this cycle of death, Harold has grown in knowledge and power. Now ninety-four years old, Harold is in failing health. His veneration of Ura has made him immune to disease and has slowed the aging process, but it is only a matter of time before his body finally gives out. Now that he has proven himself a devoted disciple, the entity has provided its priest with a possible solution to the problem. Though immortality and rejuvenation are not possible, the transfer of one's life essence into another body is. The transfer is easiest if the living body of a blood relative is used. Harold has chosen as his new host three year old James Wilcott Gallery. James is actually his own son whom he fathered through his granddaughter, Penny.

The transference is scheduled to take place during the next total solar eclipse (September 21, 1922). It will involve the sacrificial murder of the twin daughters of his grandson, William. If the sacrifice cannot take place at this time, it can be postponed to any future total solar eclipse. A timetable of past sacrifices and potential future sacrifices is provided on page xx.

Part I: Alicia's Plight

Alicia will work to convince one (or perhaps two) PC survivors of *The Vengeful Dead* to escort her to Gallery House. Her companions can meet her in Williamsburg where she has reoccupied her old apartment in preparation for the upcoming semester. If this is inconvenient, they can meet her at the Welcome Hotel in Cumberland, the nearest large town to the Gallery family estate. She wants to get this out of the way as soon as possible, preferably before the end of July. Except for her initial calls on July 3 and the sacrifice scheduled for September 21, there is no firm timetable for this scenario. It is intended to be run in a fairly freeform manner within a loose structure.

An investigator who wants to be of greatest assistance to Miss Bardsley will immediately drop everything and rush to

her at the earliest possible time. However, some may want to delay departure by a few days in order to do a bit of background research or perhaps settle personal affairs. Research is inappropriate for most characters since there is little or no reason to be suspicious. However, some who are more paranoid or jaded might take this precaution.

Research

From a conversation with Alicia, all that is known is that she was to marry Robert Owen Gallery. Most investigators will likely be satisfied with this cursory information, but unusually thorough ones might attempt a bit of research prior to meeting Alicia. Time constraints will limit what they can do before the trip to Cumberland County.

Checking prominent business figures, society pages in newspapers, and the like reveals little beyond the superficial. Robert Gallery is barely mentioned anywhere. The Gallery family is well known. They own several banks in Richmond, Norfolk, Baltimore, and Philadelphia and the Gallery Machine Tool Company of Pittsburgh. Less known is their ownership of large amounts of stock in coal mining firms in Pennsylvania and West Virginia and a cloth manufacturer in New York City. In addition to their Virginia plantation, they own a fair amount of range land in Texas and Oklahoma. All of their business dealings are legitimate and aboveboard. Tracking down all of their holdings requires a sizable amount of research time and expertise probably beyond the ability of most investigators. As far as the public is concerned, the head of the Gallery fortune is fifty-eight year old Noah Gallery. Were there time for detailed research, it might eventually be learned that there is no record of Noah's father's death. Even if this were learned, it would only suggest that the elder Gallery may have retired from public life.

Cumberland County

An hour of library research can turn up the basics about Cumberland County. The county's population is around 8,000 and Cumberland has a population of around 2,500. Approximately two-thirds of the population is of European ancestry. Most of the remaining citizens are of African descent. Most area residents live on modest incomes and perhaps twenty percent could be characterized as being impoverished. The F&P Railroad serves the county and parallels the main county road. Cumberland is the county seat and is the county's only significant town. It contains the county courthouse, sheriff's department and jail, post office, railroad station, and an assortment of merchants.

The area is hilly and forested except where land has been cleared for agriculture. It is well watered and contains numerous creeks. The Appomattox River forms its southeast boundary and the James River is its northern boundary.

Meeting Alicia

Any reunion with Alicia should be tempered by the serious-

ness of the current situation. She is eager to end the affair as quickly and quietly as possible. Her personal reputation is on the line and already rumors abound about the breaking of the engagement.

Alicia is understandably reluctant to divulge any details of the matter. Normally, she is open and forthright on virtually every issue so her current demeanor seems a bit out of character. No amount of persuasion will get her to discuss anything more than the superficial. She will only explain that she needs to visit Gallery House one final time to recover some personal belongings, settle some personal affairs, and see Robert one last time. She cannot be deterred from this.

Assuming the investigator(s) are supportive friends, he/she/they will escort her to Gallery House. The trip will involve a drive to Cumberland. The plantation is a little more than five miles south-southwest of town (about seven road miles). Perhaps two-thirds of the drive is via the main county road, but the remainder is by a single lane dirt road.

Of course, it is possible that no player character will agree to escort her. In this (hopefully unlikely) event, Alicia will proceed on her own to Gallery House, never to be seen again. This option is discussed later.

Gallery House

Once an operating tobacco plantation, the Galleries' land has been idle for some thirty years. Much of it is wooded, but there are pastures where the family keeps a few dozen saddle horses.

Gallery House is three story antebellum mansion with a full basement. It lacks telephone service and electricity, but has internal plumbing. Water is provided by a water tower which is fed by a nearby well. In a concession to modernity, a gasoline powered pump is used to keep the tank filled.

Though many farms and plantations are fenced, this one is unusual in that the house and its grounds are surrounded by a twelve foot high stone wall. The main gate consists of a pair of heavy, ironbound doors which, when open, can admit most any size vehicle. A small guard shack is near the gate, but is rarely occupied. The gate is always closed and locked with a heavy oak bar, chains, and a pair of padlocks. The chains and locks secure the gate on the inside, making them inaccessible to those who might want to employ blotters on them. A tarnished brass bell suspended from a post next to the gate can be rung to summon a servant from the house.

The rear gate is set up much like the main gate, but lacks the bell. There is no direct access to it from the county road. It is intended to permit the house's occupants to reach the pastures and outbuildings behind the grounds.

Arrival at Gallery House

The drive from Cumberland to the plantation is mundane. The terrain flanking the county road is fairly heavily wooded. The single lane, dirt secondary road leading past Gallery House provides access to perhaps a dozen farms before it finally ends. Gallery House is located at the end of a one hundred foot gravel

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