

Obelisk: The Howling

A One Page Adventure for Cthulhu Risus
by
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Setting: A cruise ship. The characters are all on board the Socratic Cruise Lines' ship *The Elenchi*, happily enjoying life (as either passenger or crew member) when a sudden storm hits. The ship is violently tossed to and fro; everyone holds on for dear life, and then as suddenly as the freakish squall came upon them it's over. As the officers and crew assess the damage, it quickly becomes apparent that some people are missing, and some are dead, killed accidentally during the storm. And then the weirdness begins.

First, the crew (and any perceptive passengers) realize that they are out of sight of land, and have no idea where they are. Communications and electronics seem to be working, but they can't get any signal or satellite link. It's like the rest of the world just *abandoned* the ship.

Second, the dead rise and start trying to kill everyone they can, by weapon or by strangulation or by whatever's convenient, *howling* after every successful kill. The recently killed then rise in turn and join them. This poses something of a problem.

Stats: Walking Dead (1)-(3); special: you need 2 degrees of success to hurt one ("Ya gotta get 'im in the head!"). It's already dead, after all :-)

Goals: The PCs need to figure out where they are and how to get back, while surviving the tender ministrations of the homicidal undead.

What's actually going on: A group of cultists obtained an evil magical *obelisk* which enabled them to cast a spell transporting them to Kadath, taking the ship with them. They also cast a spell to revive the dead, so that their bodies may serve the Old Ones. They believe that the sacrifice of the rest of the ship in this way will reward them with great power, that they can use to summon Yog Sothoth and rule

the world. When everyone else on board ship is dead, their ritual will be complete.

The PCs will need to figure out how to break the transport spell by reading enough of the Pnakotic Manuscripts without losing their sanity. Once they get a hold of the text, anyone reading needs to pass a sanity check each page, starting at a difficulty of 1 die and increasing by one each subsequent page. Every two pages they can check to see if they figured out how to break the spell, the difficulty starts at 8 dice and goes down by one per page read. They will have to obtain the obelisk and successfully cast the counter (using an appropriate magic or occult-related cliché) to reverse the spell and return the *Elenchi* to Earth. The difficulty of the counterspell is 8 dice, but every wound's worth of blood someone donates (voluntarily or...otherwise) yields a 1-die bonus. They will also need to stop the curse of the walking dead, either by the appropriate spell or by burning all dead bodies. A cultist has a copy of the manuscripts, as does an archaeologist on board.

Clues: Someone will have heard strange chanting coming from one of the maintenance decks before the storm hit;

During an attack of the Walking Dead, a PC notices that the dead ignore a particular passenger, who seems totally unafraid of them;

A PC sees someone chant, "Ia! Ia! Cthulhu Fhtagn!" as one of the dead reached for them, after which it turned away;

Either a PC with knowledge of the occult or an NPC will recognize the chant above and it's context (it will work for them too if they make a magic/occult-related cliché check against the dead when saying it);

One or more PCs come across strange symbols, written in blood, on a wall or door;

Either a PC with archaeology or an NPC with same will recognize the symbols as coming from the Pnakotic manuscripts.