

Two of Our Bodies are Missing

by J. G. Cadera

This is a 'Call of Cthulhu' scenario for 2-3 investigators, preferably with some experience. They will be friends or associates of Dr. Homer Stanton. The scenario is set in London in the year 1923 and the use of firearms is not recommended since the area that the scenario is set in is rather cramped with terraced houses.

Background Information

Dr. Stanton worked at Guy's Hospital in the Osteopathy Department where he studied cranial deformities. Although he was in possession of certain arcane information, he had little understanding of its significance until it was too late and he was murdered in the process of carrying out his own investigations. News of his death reaches the investigators when one of them reads the following report in a local newspaper.

"20th August 1923: The body of a man, identified as Dr. Homer Stanton, was found yesterday outside St. Mary's Church in Rotherhithe. He had been stabbed several times and police are looking for a 'foreign sounding' young man with whom Dr. Stanton had been seen with in 'The Scarlet Fish' public house on 18th August."

If the investigators decide to go to the police they will have to make a successful Fast Talk roll in order to find out more about Stanton's death. If they are successful they will be told that apart from three stab wounds the body also showed severe bruising and mauling as if a wild animal had been involved as well as a human attacker. In fact it seems that these injuries were the actual cause of death rather than the ineptly dealt knife wounds.

The rest of the scenario is set in the order that, hopefully, the characters will carry out their investigation.

The Scarlet Fish Public House

If the investigators make enquiries here about Stanton's meeting with the 'foreign sounding' man they will be treated with a certain distrust. This can be overcome with a successful Fast Talk roll and a pint of beer. One old man, who seems remarkably talkative, will tell them that he saw the two men leave the pub and head towards the nearby church.

St. Mary's Church

Should the investigators ask the local clergyman about Stanton, they will be told that the dead man had been found by one of the workers from the warves. They will be unable to trace this individual. Should they decide to wander about the church grounds, the investigators will, sooner or later, find a fenced off area within which is the tomb of someone called Lee Boo. The length epitaph tells them that Lee Boo was a prince of Palau and had died on 27th, December, 1784, aged 20.

Bernonsey Library

Here the investigators can dig up information concerning Lee Boo and a couple of newspaper cuttings. A successful Library Use roll must be made for each item.

1) A passage from a book on local history states that "Lee Boo was the second son of Abba Thule of Palau in the Caroline Islands. He accompanied a Captain Wilson back to England where he lived in Rotherhithe with the Wilson family. Lee Boo was said to have been a pleasant young man and made many friends in the East India Company. Unfortunately Lee Boo succumbed to small pox soon after his arrival and died of the disease on the 27th December 1784 aged 20. He was buried on the Wilson plot at St. Mary's Church in Rotherhithe."

If the investigators wish to consult an atlas to find out where the Caroline Islands are, they may do so without having to make a Library Roll. If any of the team makes a successful Idea Roll they will notice that the Caroline Islands group also includes Ponape Island.

2) A cutting from a local paper entitled 'A Ghoul at Guys' and dated 4th May 1923.

"Medical authorities at Guy's Hospital have admitted that over the past few months several bodies have mysteriously disappeared from the dissection rooms. As yet only one

of these has been recovered, this was found outside the vinegar brewery in Church Street, Bernadsey, on 2nd January 1923. Four bodies are still unaccounted for."

3) A cutting entitled 'Bodies at Hickman's Polly'. "Two bodies, thought to be among those that disappeared from Guy's Hospital in December 1922, were found yesterday at Hickman's Polly, Dockhead. Although in good condition they appeared to have been buried at some time and later exhumed. It is not known how they came to be there or where they had been kept until the discovery. Two bodies are still missing."

Dr. Homer Stanton's Office

Stanton's office is situated within Guy's Hospital and the investigators will have to make a few successful Fast Talk rolls before they convince hospital staff that they are former friends of the late Dr. H. Stanton. The office is a small one with a single grubby window overlooking a dingy back street.

Stanton's Desk: The desk is unlocked and if the investigators search through the untidy drawers and make a successful Spot Hidden Object roll for each item they will find the following:

1) a key to the filing cabinet.

1i) a hand written note asking Stanton to meet a certain 'L.G.' at the Paradise Gate of Southwark Park. This is dated 18th August 1923.

1ii) part of a report, still in note form and several years out of date. It is in fact dated for the year 1921. The rest of this article can be found in Stanton's filing cabinet. The report concerns the student Louis B. Garoux who appears to have sustained a nervous breakdown after apparently spending a night in one of the dissection rooms. This is the only information that these notes give concerning Garoux, the rest, as already stated is to be found in the cabinet.

The Filing Cabinet: This is divided into three sections, the upper two contain patient reports and files and it is among these that a successful Spot Hidden roll will reveal a file on Louis Bertrand Garoux. Apart from the usual background information such as date and place of birth (Troyes, France 2nd June 1901), there is attached to the report the following section which is dated 7th October 1921.

"The student Louis Garoux has been, until two days ago, a fine scholar of dedication and note. Somehow he was talked into spending a night in the dissection room by one of the other students - the end result of this ridiculous prank has been a total breakdown in Garoux's mental stability. He is now being treated in a psychiatric ward within the hospital and enquiries to find out who put him up to the dare have, as yet, drawn a blank.

I have interviewed the attendant who was on duty on the night of 5th October, but again with little result. He was found asleep or unconscious and has now given in his notice and is due to leave at the end of the week. He has developed an unreasoning fear of the dead, something that I cannot understand since he has been at the hospital since 1915 after being wounded during the late war.

I have also tried to interview Garoux himself, but all he does is talk utter gibberish and quote repulsive jargon from a book that he has read. There is obviously more to Garoux's illness than meets the eye."

The rest of this report is mainly concerned with Garoux's progress, the final entry being dated 2nd May 1923, the date of Garoux's discharge from the psychiatric ward.

The lowest section of the filing cabinet contains material that Stanton was compiling for a book on cranial malformations in Stone Age societies. There are several pictures of human skulls and a successful Idea Roll will show that at least one of them is a drawing of a specimen displayed in the office.

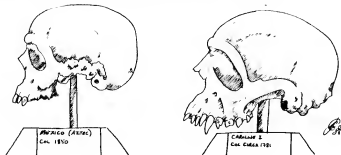
Dr. Stanton's Skull Collection

This is situated on the left hand side of the room and is housed on three shelves, each one holding six specimens. All the skulls are from various primitive societies and include examples from New Guinea, South America, Hawaii and some of the other Pacific Islands. While all the specimens are deformed in one way or another, one of them is particularly of a nauseous nature. It seems to be greatly overgrown and has badly damaged teeth. The label attached to it reads: "Caroline I. col. circa 1781". Drawings of this and other skulls can be found in the lowest drawer of the filing cabinet (see above). If a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll is made by any of the

investigators s/he will realise that this horrid object is the skull of a human being on the verge of transformation into a Deep One. A San roll must be made, failure of which will result in a 1d6 San loss for the unfortunate investigator/s who recognises the skull for what it really is. There is nothing else of note to interest the investigators here, except perhaps some therapy for those who go insane on the premises!

Having left Stanton's office one of the investigators (on a successful Idea roll) realises that they still have no idea where Garoux lives. Stanton, a remarkably untidy individual, had long since managed to misplace the address along with several others. The investigators are now faced with a new dilemma. They are obviously on the track, but their prey remains elusive. Their only hope is to go to the Student Records Office. They will have to make a successful Fast Talk roll to get the required information from the Registrar of Student Records. The investigators will be given an address in Maze Pond Terrace and told that it is not very far from the hospital.

If the investigators wish to go to the dissection room, they will have no trouble getting there. They will, however, have to make a San roll when they see several dismembered bodies lying on the slabs. There is a 1d6 San loss for those who fail their roll. No further information is to be gained from this area.



Garoux's House

When the investigators arrive at Garoux's dwelling they will find that he is out. An inquisitive neighbour will ask them what they want, if they succeed in a Fast Talk roll, Mr. Rawlins will tell them that the French gent has left a key with him in case any of his friends should turn up. If the roll is a failure Rawlins will become suspicious and the investigators will have to leave.

Unless old Rawlins gives them the key, the team is going to have a problem getting into the house since the old man will now be far more watchful. They can, on the other hand, try to bribe him, but if they fail their Bargain roll Rawlins will contact the police and the investigators chances of getting into the house will be even more remote. Once inside the house, the investigators will become aware of an almost overpowering smell of ripe meat.

The Lounge

This is a small, but tidy room holding little of interest for the investigators. The mantel has a few cheap ornaments while a bookshelf holds mainly medical books. However, a successful Library Use roll will reveal that one of these is, in fact, an occult work entitled 'Loup Garou' by H. R. Plumier and published in 1898. The book is in French and anyone reading it will lose 1d6 San. On the wall above the fire place there is a pair of rapiers (1d6+1 Dam.).

The Kitchen

If any of the investigators search the cupboards and make a successful Spot Hidden roll they will find a bloodstained knife tucked away among the other utensils. This is the knife that was used to stab Stanton.

The Bedroom

Another untidy room showing that Garoux is a fastidious person. The single bed has been neatly made and the room has been recently cleaned. On the bedside table is lying a large leatherbound volume called 'A Treatise on Necromantic Manifestations'

by Giles Wtaker. There is a bookmark about halfway through the book. If the book is opened at this point the reader will take 1d10 San loss. The book also has a x5 Spell Multiplier.

Linen Cupboard:

Holds nothing of interest whatsoever as far as the investigators are concerned.

The Study

This room holds a bureau, inside which are various medical papers, journals, letters from friends etc. The study also houses Garoux's occult collection along with what appear to be curios, these latter include a hand of glory (This was used to put the dissection room attendant to sleep), several human skulls - including one that has been converted into a drinking bowl, a flute made from a thigh bone and a shrunken head. If one of the investigators should try playing this flute there is a 30% chance that s/he will play the right notes and summon a Dimensional Shambler.

The Garden

The kitchen looks out onto a bramble and weed choked garden. A closer look will reveal a path that leads from the kitchen door to the back of the garden where there is a clearing. Part of this has been recently dug over and roughly leveled. A Spot Hidden roll will show - provided that the investigators have not tramped all over it - some prints of unshod feet. If anyone stands about for any length of time on this spot (The time is up to the Keeper) a hand coming up from the ground will grab the nearest ankle and attempt the unfortunate down into the soft soil. The victim takes a 1d20 San loss if he fails his/her roll and must roll on the Resistance table, to avoid being dragged down. If this roll is failed then the victim automatically takes a 1d20 San loss and must roll again on the Resistance table. A third failed roll results in the investigator being completely dragged under the soil. Should the unfortunate character be pulled free two zombies will also emerge to attack the investigators.

If the investigators decide to ignore the garden the zombies will emerge and attack them in the house. These, so to speak, are Garoux's watch dogs and are conditioned to react to any disturbance in the house. Whether the investigators are attacked in the house or the garden, it would be about this time that Garoux returns home. Garoux will be more than annoyed to find strangers upsetting his living dead and will join the attack. Depending on where the fighting is going on, he has several choices for his form of attack. He can grab one of the rapiers in the house lounge or a knife in the kitchen, failing this he will try to get to the bone flute in order to summon a Dimensional Shambler to help him.

Louis B. Garoux: Str 12, Dex 12, Int 16, Con 18 App 11, Pow 10, Mag 10, Siz 14, San 25, Edu 46, Hit Points 16.

Skills: Read/write French 80%, Read/write English 6%, Speak English 58%, Anthropology 50% Cthulhu Mythos 4%, First Aid 87%, Occult 5%.

Spells: Summon Dimensional Shambler, Bind Dimensional Shambler, Contact Ghoul, Enchant Item, Create Zombie, Resurrection.

Attack: Fist/Punch 6%, Head Butt 4%, Kick 3% Knife 42%, Rapier 4%.

Zombies: Str 14, Con 12, Siz 12, Pow 1, Dex 9, Maul 40% 2d8+1d6.



Dimensional Shambler: Str 19, Con 16, Siz 20, Int 6, Pow 11, Dex 4, Claw 3% -
Damage 1d8+1d6.

Conclusion

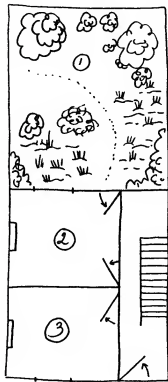
If the investigators kill Garoux they are going to find themselves in the middle of a murder enquiry their association with Stanton is likely to go against them since they are now likely to be accused of his murder as well as Garoux's. The noise that the fight will cause is bound to attract attention, especially in such a tiny street. If the investigators are captured, they will have to make a successful Fast Talk roll in order to be vaguely believed. If they stick to their story of having been attacked by zombies they will find themselves in the nearest psychiatric ward. The outcome of the team's capture is best left to the Keeper - these are merely suggestions.

If, on the other hand, they manage to capture Garoux alive, they will be hailed as heroes, providing that they do not overdo their descriptions of what they found in the house.

Authors note

This scenario was written on location and some of it is historically accurate!

THE GAROUX HOUSE



Key

1. GARDEN
2. KITCHEN
3. LOUNGE
4. STUDY
5. LINEN CUPBOARD
6. BEDROOM

