

# THE NORTHERN DARK



# THE SIGIL OF AHTU

BY DENNIS GUSTAFSSON

# The Northern Dark

Part 6



It's the 1920's. The western world is ripping through "The Roaring Twenties" in wild abandon. Unnoticed by the blight of "The Great War" the black forested backwaters and bleak poverty stricken cities of Sweden must soon face up to it's own terrors.

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The Sigil of Ahtu / Dennis Gustafsson

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**Chief constable,  
Rosendahl**

Helsingborg's  
detective police



**Dr Mats-Ludvig  
Berger,**

city pathologist



**Viktor Kasparsen**

years before he  
made his fame as  
Sweden's reluctant,  
yet most prolific  
detective of  
supernatural cases



**Göran Fransson**

Specialist- and  
dealer of antiques



**Birgit Mattson**

collector of rare  
manuscripts

**Helsingborg**, Sweden's  
gateway to the continent

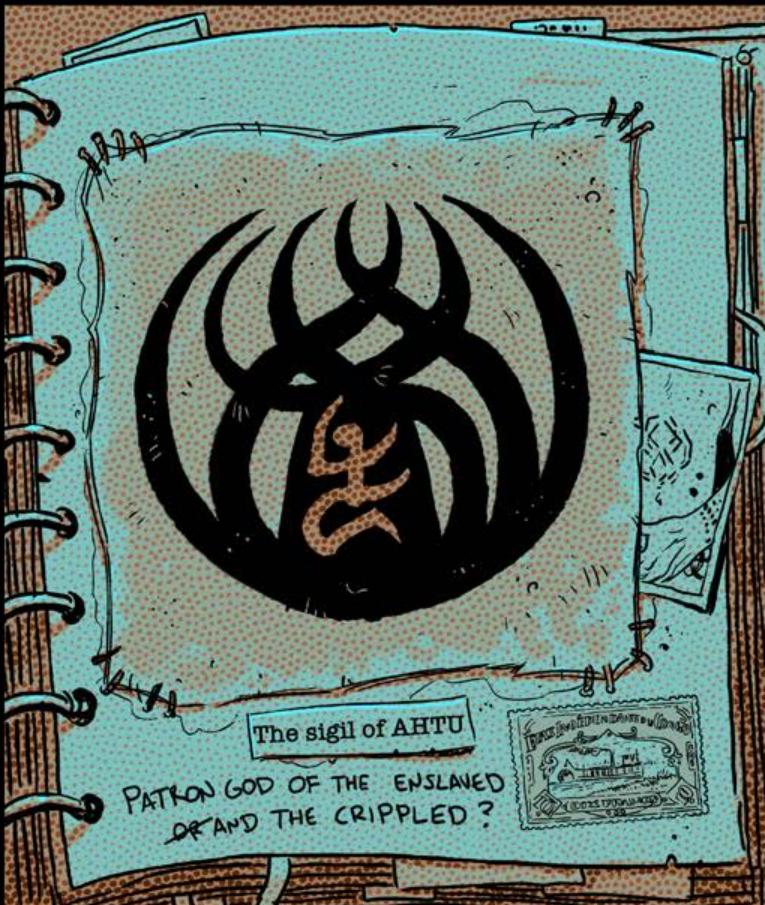




# THE SIGIL OF АНТУ



AUGUSTINE'S  
OLD JOURNAL\*...  
I DON'T REMEMBER  
LEAVING THAT LYING  
ABOUT...?





IT IS DIFFICULT  
ENOUGH AS IT IS...

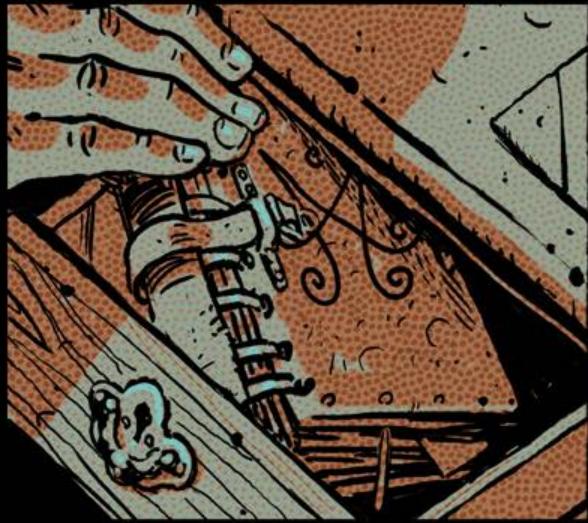


I READ SOME  
WHERE THAT IT WAS  
THE BLESSING  
OF MAN THAT THEY  
CAN FORGET...



TWEEEEEE E





IF IT WASN'T A  
WEEKEND I COULD AT  
LEAST TRY TO DISTRACT  
MYSELF WITH WORK...

OUR GROUNDS  
FROM ABOVE  
INQUIRE WITHIN

# LUNDONIST FOTO

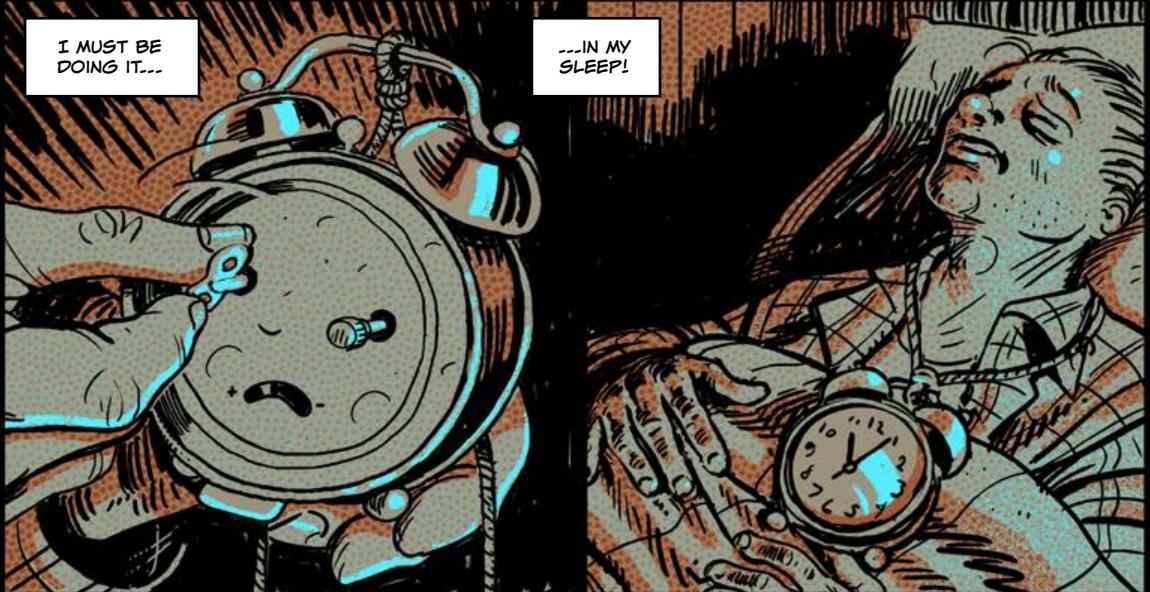


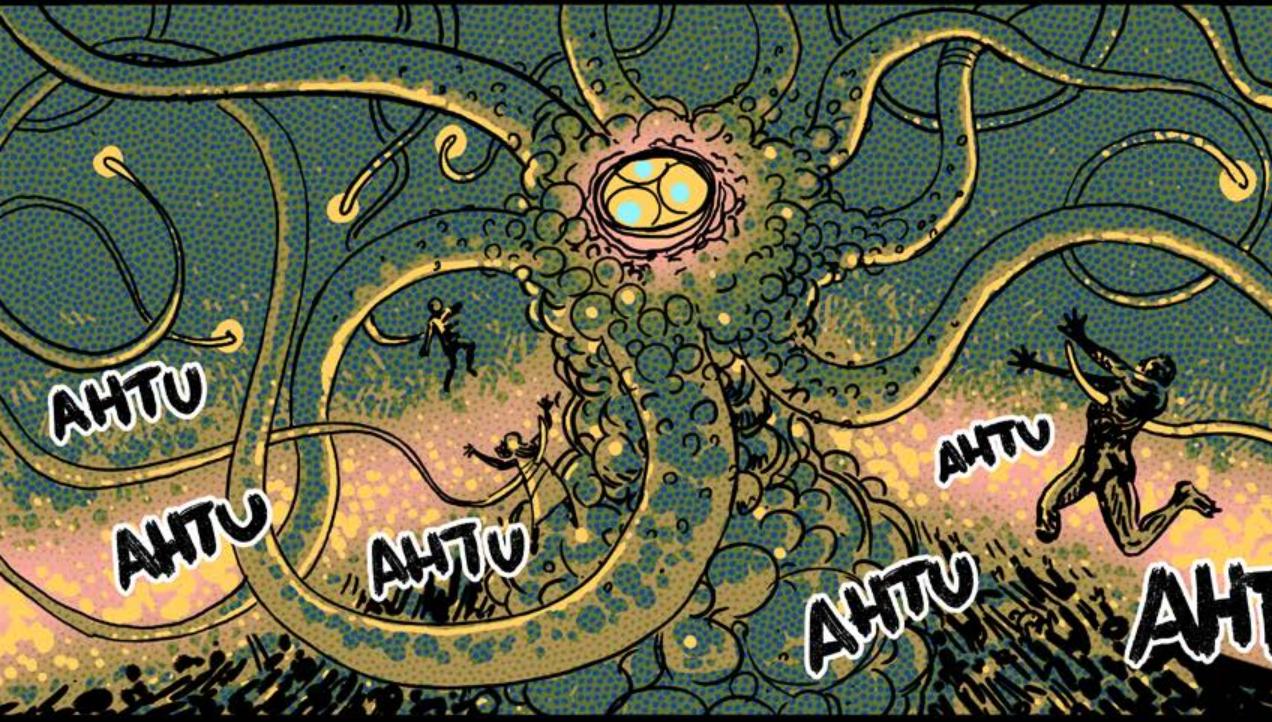
ONE MINUTE  
AT A TIME...

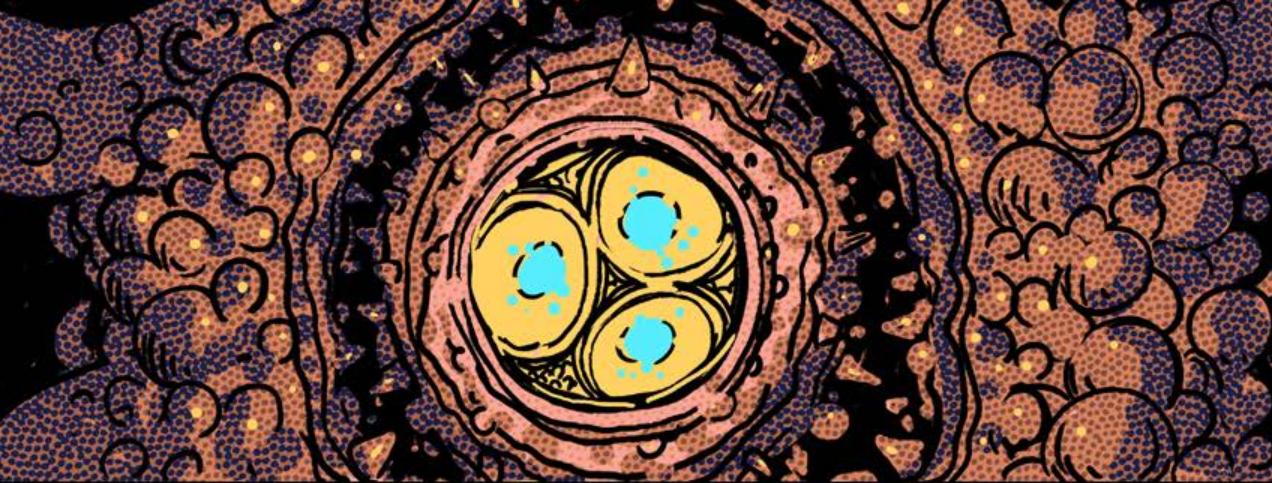


...THAT'S  
THE TRICK  
OF IT.









RRRRRRRING

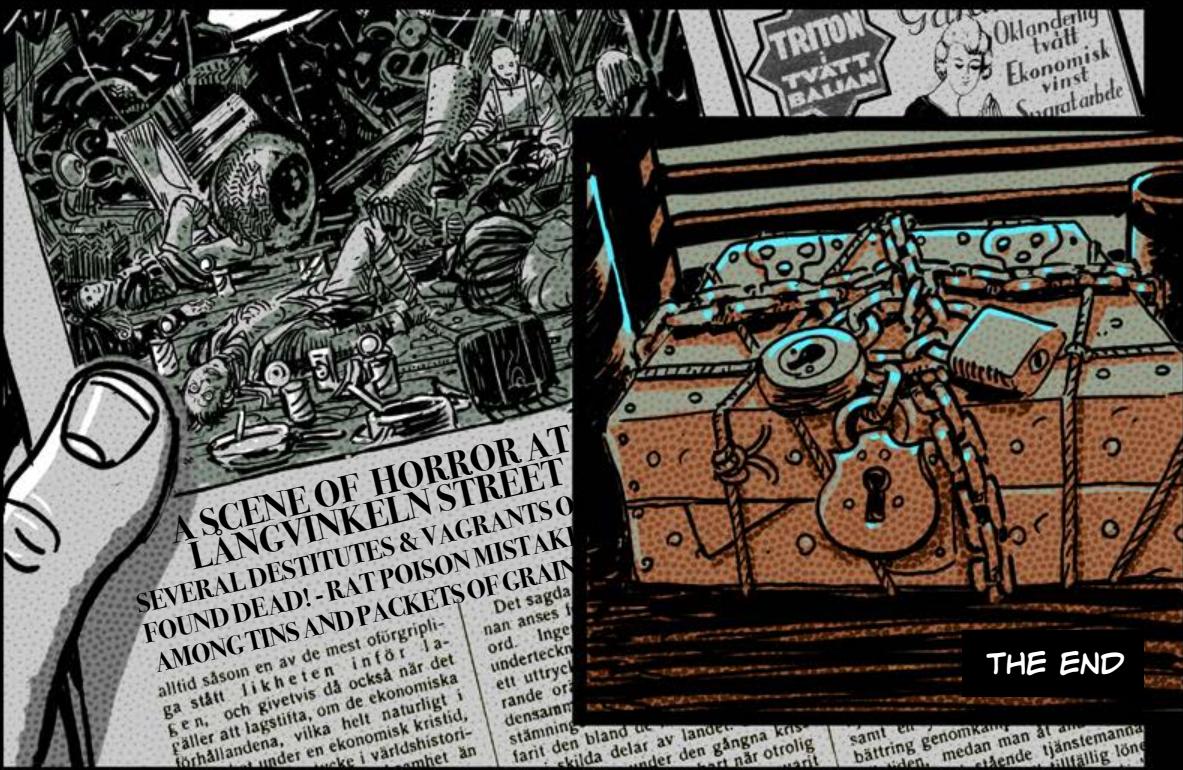






\* = SEE 'THE ANGEL OF FEAR'





# THE SILVER



Hello Viktor!

We have not seen you for a while! I hope you're not trying to break our tradition! This year me and Fredde will host our New-Year's at his uncle Harold's cabin! You remember, the tree nut? Harold had the good sense of timing to go missing recently and Fredde's family is looking after the place. Be at the railway station tomorrow at 9.30. See you there!

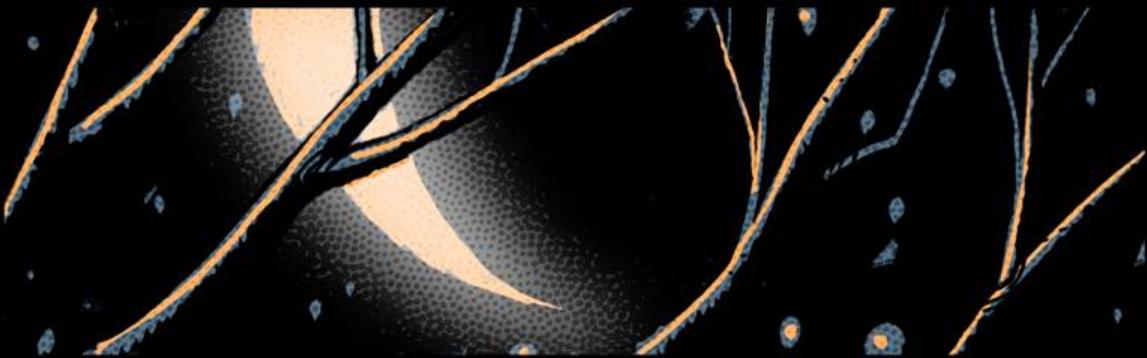
Jönsson

PS: Don't forget your camera.



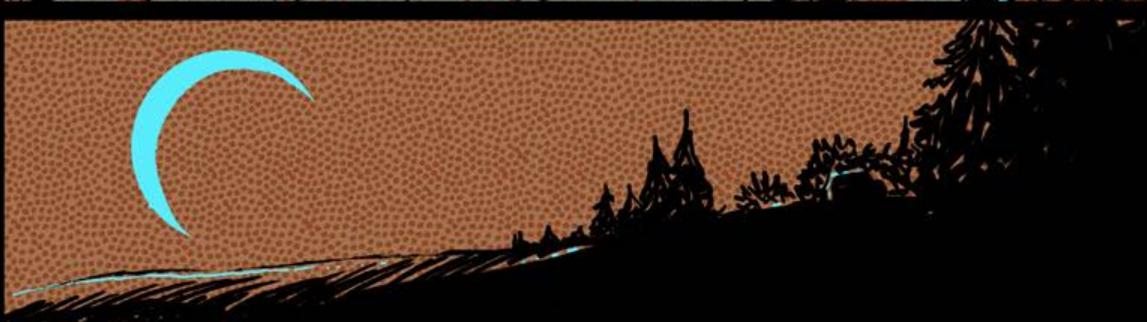
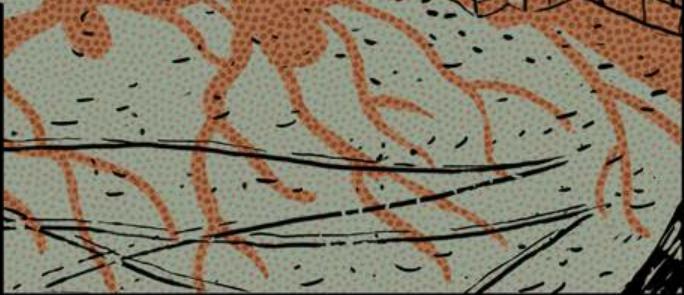






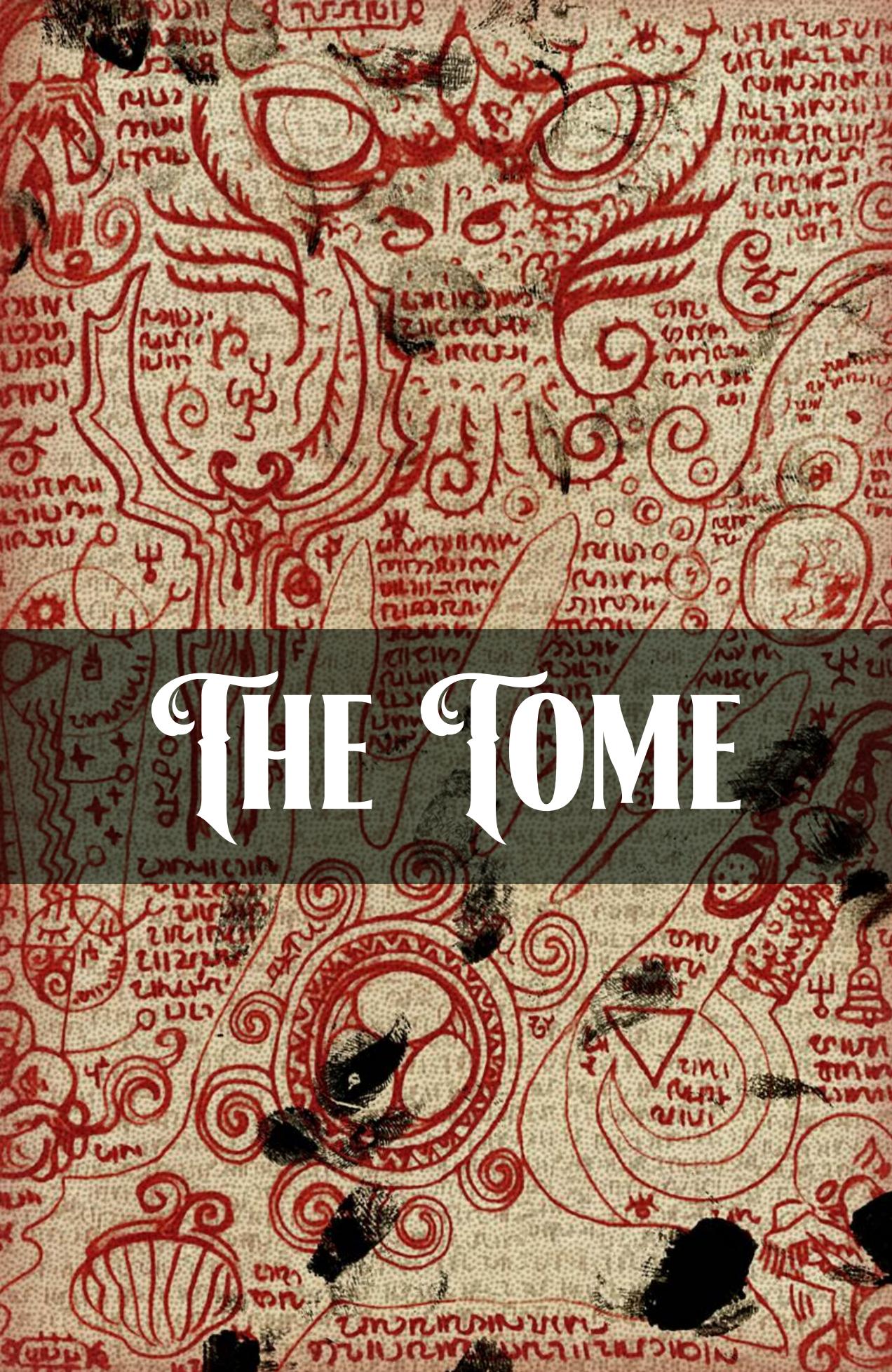






THE END

# THE TOME



DAWN, APRIL 30, 1924  
RÅ FISHING HARBOUR  
12 KM SOUTH OF HELSINGBORG.

IT WAS IN THE LAST TREMBLING MOMENTS OF VALPURGIS NIGHT THAT THE TOME ALLOWED ITSELF TO BE REDISCOVERED...

WRAPPED IN STAINED OILSKINS, NESTLED IN THE BLOATED ARMS OF THE UNSAVOURY CORPSE OF A FOREIGN SAILOR...

--WAS A THING OF OTHERWORLDLY BEAUTY, OF UNQUESTIONABLE ANTIQUITY, AND OF SOMETHING ELSE...

AN UNFATHOMABLE SINISTER ALLURE RADIATED FROM IT THAT COULD TURN EVEN THE MOST UNLETTERED OF MEN MAD WITH POSSESSIVE LUST.

SHORTLY AFTER IT'S DISCOVERY THE TOME DISAPPEARED. THE SPECIALIST TASKED WITH INVESTIGATING THE BOOK TO ASCERTAIN ITS VALUE AND RIGHTFUL OWNER ALSO VANISHED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH...

IT WAS BY RUMOUR WE FINALLY DISCOVERED HIM, THE SELECT CIRCLE OF SPECIALIST COLLECTORS OF WHOM I AM ONE...



WE ALL GAVE HIM OFFERS. KINGS RANSOMS ALL...



HE WAS GENEROUS ONLY TO DESCRIBE THE MIND-ALTERING QUALITIES OF THE TOME'S INDISCRIBABLE BRUSHWORK...



...IT'S ALIEN SCRIPT, IN-DECIPHERABLE BY THE MIND.

YET SOMEHOW READABLE BY SOME WYRDING WAY...



NO RECORD EXISTED OF THE TOME EVER HAVING BEEN BOUGHT OR SOLD. IT SOON BECAME PLAIN TO ME...

IT'S OWNER WOULD NEVER, PERHAPS COULD NEVER, PART WITH IT. THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY FOR ME TO ACQUIRE IT THEN...



I HAD TORMENTED MYSELF WITH BITTER SWEET FANTASIES OF READING THE TOME FOR LONG ENOUGH.

I HAD TO POSSESS IT!



FINALLY!

IT BELONGED TO ME!

I HAD MADE PAINSTAKING PREPARATIONS. COMMITTED A MOST HEINOUS CRIME. HOW CAN I EXPRESS MY FEELINGS AS I OPENED THE TERRIBLE VOLUME...



--ABSORBING THE BLASPHEMOUS SECRETS OF EACH PAGE SLOWLY AND WITHOUT INTERRUPTIONS. IT WAS...



--EACH UPTURNED PAGE WAS... ECSTASY.



I KNEW FULL WELL OTHERS WOULD COME FOR IT. BUT AS I PREVIOUSLY STATED; I HAD PREPARED MYSELF WELL...

THE PATH MOST SUITABLE FOR AN INTRUDER TO USE TO REACH MY STUDY UNDETECTED I HAD DELIBERATELY LEFT UNLOCKED AND ACCESSIBLE...





--EXCEPT FOR ONE SMALL DEADLY DETAIL AT THE VERY FINAL STEP ON THE WAY:

A WIRE-SPRUNG TRAP OF MY OWN MAKING--



A PUFF OF CYANIDE GAS FROM A DEFTLY RIGGED SODA SIPHON. DEATH WAS ALMOST INSTANT. IT ALLOWED ME TO SEE AND ENJOY THE BURGLAR'S DEATH THROWS...



IF ONLY "ALMOST INSTANT" HAD BEEN QUICK ENOUGH...

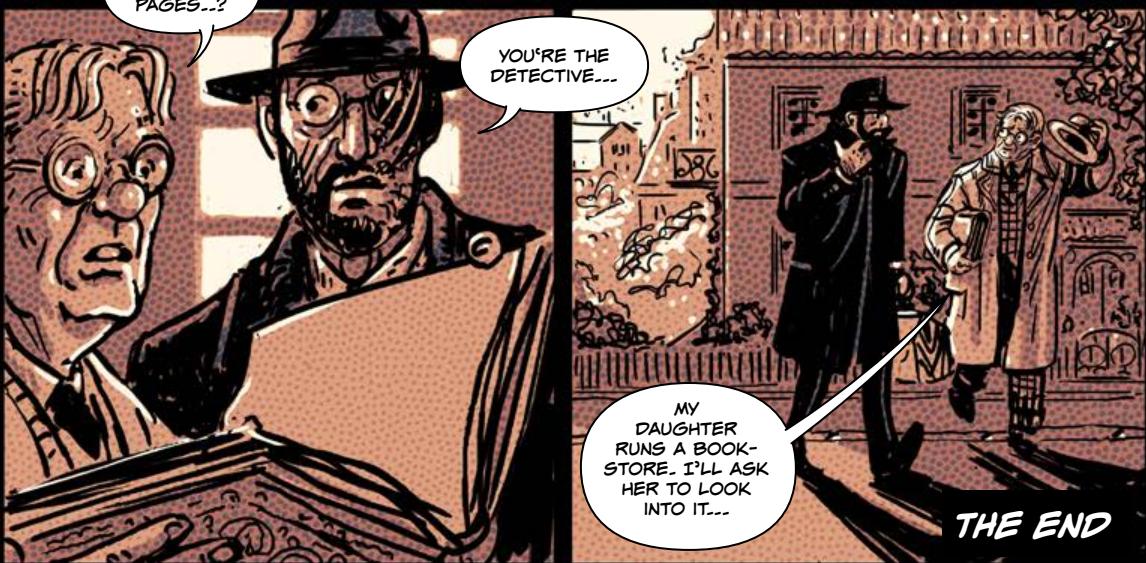


A close-up of a woman's face with a shocked expression, looking directly at the viewer.



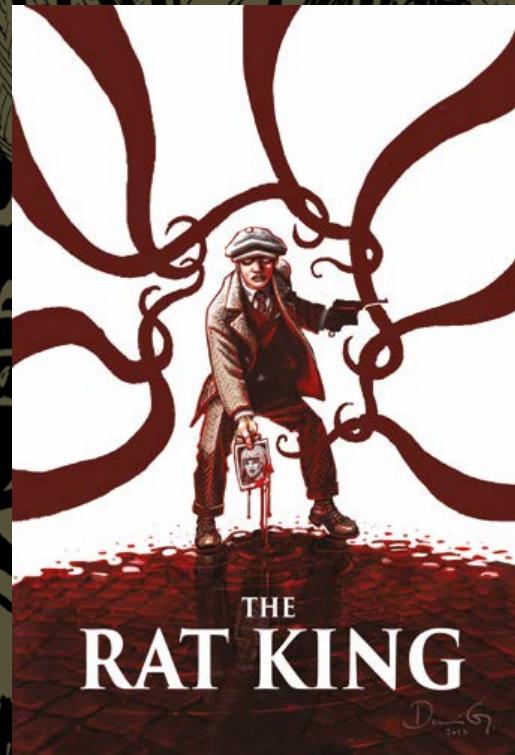
THE TOME...  
AS THE FOG RISES...  
MY TOME...





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from the northern dark:

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