

Dark Adventure Radio Theatre: The Shadow Out of Time

by  
Sean Branney  
With  
Andrew Leman

Based on "The Shadow Out of Time" by H.P. Lovecraft

A Read-along Companion to the Recorded Performance

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Sound effects: static, radio tuning, snippet of 30s song,  
more tuning, static dissolves to:

\*

Dark Adventure Radio theme music.

ANNOUNCER

Tales of intrigue, adventure, and  
the mysterious occult that will  
stir your imagination and make your  
very blood run cold.

Music crescendo.

ANNOUNCER

This is Dark Adventure Radio  
Theatre, with your host Chester  
Langfield. Today's episode: H.P.  
Lovecraft's "The Shadow Out of  
Time".

Music diminishes.

CHESTER LANGFIELD

A strange case of amnesia strikes  
down a university professor: five  
years of his life vanish under a  
mysterious cloud. He recovers and  
embarks on an investigation to  
piece together his strange  
activities and nefarious  
associations while afflicted. His  
bizarre dreams collide with reality  
when an archeological dig uncovers  
astonishing ruins in the remotest  
deserts of Western Australia.  
Finally he confronts the ultimate  
terror of the universe's master  
race in "The Shadow Out of Time".  
But first, a word from our sponsor.

A few piano notes from the Fleur de Lys jingle.

CHESTER LANGFIELD

You know folks, a man just isn't  
safe anymore...not if he has Fleur  
de Lys cigarettes in his case. For  
the young ladies of the land, with  
their usual penetration, have  
discovered the excellence of this  
mild and soothing smoke.

(MORE)

CHESTER LANGFIELD (cont'd)  
 So that nowadays, whenever a male  
 voice is heard to say, "Have a  
 Fleur de Lys," echo answers in a  
 soft but prompt soprano:

FLEUR GIRL  
 (insanely sultry)  
 I'd love to.

CHESTER LANGFIELD  
 Fleur de Lys: a boon for a  
 breathless age.

Dark Adventure lead-in MUSIC.

CHESTER LANGFIELD  
 And now Dark Adventure Radio  
 Theatre presents: H.P. Lovecraft's  
 "The Shadow Out of Time".

2 ALL ABOARD

2

The HORN of a large passenger ship sounds.

CONDUCTOR  
 (over loudspeaker)  
 H.M.S. Empress, now embarking for  
 Liverpool. All passengers should be  
 aboard.

Crowds CHEER and bid farewell as mighty engines ROAR to life.  
 The ship cuts a wake through the sea.

Radio SQUELCHES and MORSE CODE fill the Radio Room with  
 noise. The ship's crewmen are British.

WIRELESS OPERATOR  
 Sir, another message. Addressed to  
 Peaslee, one of the passengers.  
 It's coded as extremely urgent.

RADIO CHIEF  
 Let me see it. Give me the  
 passenger manifest. Let's see...  
 Peaslee. There he is. Get this to  
 the purser on the double.

The Purser HUMS to himself as he walks down the ship's hall.  
 He pauses and KNOCKS.

PURSER  
 Mr. Peaslee? Ship's Purser.

STUMBLING from behind door. Another KNOCK.

PURSER  
Mr. Peaslee?

The door OPENS.

PEASLEE  
Yes? What is it?

PURSER  
Telegram for you sir.

PEASLEE  
I don't have my spectacles. Would  
you read it for me?

~~PURSER  
You sure, sir?~~

~~PEASLEE  
Read it!~~

PURSER  
"Father. Interesting discoveries  
unearthed to the northeast. Team  
moving to excavate in that  
direction. Realize this contradicts  
your requests but great discoveries  
seem inevitable. With apologies.  
Wingate". Mr. Peaslee, are you  
alright?

PEASLEE  
NO.

Door SHUTS.

3

BREAKDOWN

3

Later, a couple LAUGHS as they make their way towards their  
cabin. They are happy, drunk and Australian.

MRS. FIFE  
No, you didn't.

MR. FIFE  
I did! And so he drinks it down,  
and I say, "Mate, that wasn't  
champagne!"

She CACKLES as he FIDDLES WITH THE KEY to their stateroom. A terrified MOAN comes from the stateroom next to theirs. It's followed by some RUSTLING noises.

MRS. FIFE  
Barry, did you hear that?

MR. FIFE  
Hush, Gwen.

MUMBLING comes through the door of Peaslee's stateroom.

MR. FIFE  
Probably had too much to drink.  
C'mon.

He opens the door to their room. A terrified SHRIEK comes from Peaslee's door.

MRS. FIFE  
(whisper)  
Go get help.

MR. FIFE  
(through Peaslee's door)  
Um, everything alright in there,  
mate?

Quiet.

MR. FIFE  
I say, is everyone OK?

PEASLEE  
(screams)  
Good god, no! The wind, that wind!

MRS. FIFE  
Barry?

MR. FIFE  
I'll get the ship's purser. Wait in  
our cabin, lock the door.

The Fife's door CLOSES as Mr. Fife hurries down the hall.

TRANSITION MUSIC

Fife returns with the ship's Purser and Dr. Chambers in tow.

MR. FIFE

It's that one, stateroom sixteen.  
Sounded like there was some kind of  
struggle.

PURSER

Sounds quiet now.

MR. FIFE

Yeah, well, before it was...

PEASLEE

(a horrified shout from  
within)

The trap-doors are all open!

MR. FIFE

That's it.

PURSER

Mr. Peaslee? It's the ship's  
purser. Is everything all right?

PEASLEE

(loudly)

No, no, no!

PURSER

What do you think, doctor?

DR. CHAMBERS

We should go in. Thank you, Mr.  
Fife, we'll take it from here.

PURSER

Mr. Peaslee, I've got a key. I'm  
going to open your door.

He OPENS the door and enters.

DR. CHAMBERS

Flip on the light.

Peaslee THRASHES on his bed.

PURSER

What a mess! Mr. Peaslee, can you  
hear me?

DR. CHAMBERS

Shhh. I think he's asleep.

PURSER

What?

DR. CHAMBERS

Shh.

(gently)

Mr. Peaslee.

PEASLEE

Don't you see? The metal straps are gone, the trap door is wide open!

DR. CHAMBERS

Mr. Peaslee, wake up. You're having a nightmare. You need to wake up now.

Peaslee GASPS.

PEASLEE

Who are you? What are you doing here?

DR. CHAMBERS

I'm Dr. Chambers, the ship's doctor. Edward Chambers. This is Mr. Wilkins, the purser.

PEASLEE

Oh.

DR. CHAMBERS

You were having a nightmare. Other passengers heard noises and were concerned.

PEASLEE

I see. I'm terribly sorry.

PURSER

No, no, I'll let them you're fine. I'm sure they'll be relieved.

PEASLEE

I'm fine?

PURSER

Aren't you? Is he?

DR. CHAMBERS

I think we'll be alright.

PURSER

Right then, I'll leave him with you. Not to worry. Good night, sir.

Purser departs, SHUTTING DOOR QUIETLY.

DR. CHAMBERS

I have some tablets. They'll help you sleep better.

PEASLEE

Tablets? Sleeping tablets? Yes, thank you.

He takes the tablets and washes them down with water.

DR. CHAMBERS

Feeling better?

PEASLEE

A bit.

DR. CHAMBERS

Sometimes the motion of the sea affects people's sleep. If you don't mind, Mr. Peaslee, would you pay me a visit at the ship's infirmary tomorrow? Just a routine follow-up?

PEASLEE

Certainly.

DR. CHAMBERS

Right then. I shall see you tomorrow. Two-ish?

PEASLEE

~~Two.~~ Two is fine.

DR. CHAMBERS

Good night, sir.

He goes to leave and then stops and turns back. Hesitant FOOTSTEPS.

DR. CHAMBERS

Mr. Peaslee....

PEASLEE

Yes?

DR. CHAMBERS  
Do you have a history of problems  
sleeping, nightmares, that sort of  
thing?

PEASLEE  
You have no idea.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

4

THE EXAMINATION

4

Peaslee CLEARS HIS THROAT and KNOCKS on the door of the  
Infirmary.

DR. CHAMBERS  
(from within)  
Enter.

Peaslee ENTERS.

PEASLEE  
Hello, doctor.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Have a seat. How are you feeling  
today, Mr. Peaslee?

PEASLEE  
Much better, thank you.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Sleep well?

PEASLEE  
Mmm, better, thank you. Your  
tablets may have helped.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Marvelous things, aren't they? And  
how have you been feeling overall?  
Any troubles breathing? Heart  
racing, poor appetite? Anything  
like that?

PEASLEE  
No, no, I'm quite alright.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Headaches? Nausea?

PEASLEE

No.

DR. CHAMBERS

Good. Well then, if you have any more sleeping troubles, come see me.

Peaslee RISES to go.

DR. CHAMBERS

The purser mentioned you received a telegram yesterday. Everything alright?

(silence)

Mr. Peaslee?

PEASLEE

(slowly cracking open)

I told them not to go on with the dig. I begged him, warned him, all of them.

DR. CHAMBERS

I'm sorry?

PEASLEE

It's out there. I found it. It was no dream.

DR. CHAMBERS

I don't understand.

Peaslee draws a deep an agonized breath.

PEASLEE

I saw something in the Australian desert on the night of July 17. I hope my experience was an hallucination. But it seemed so impossibly real.

DR. CHAMBERS

What did you see?

PEASLEE

If it did happen, we all must be prepared to accept notions of the cosmos, and of our place in the seething vortex of time.... And we must be on guard against a lurking peril which may impose monstrous and unguessable horrors.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)  
That's why I begged them to stop  
digging and abandon our expedition.

DR. CHAMBERS  
There was an expedition?

Peaslee heaves a pained SIGH.

PEASLEE  
I don't imagine you know who I am?

DR. CHAMBERS  
The passenger manifest lists you as  
"Peaslee, Nathaniel W. - U.S.A."

PEASLEE  
Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee, of  
Massachusetts. You may know of me.  
Do you read the British Medical  
Journal?

DR. CHAMBERS  
Of course.

PEASLEE  
In 1929 an article by Dr. J.P.  
Lockhart-Mummery described an  
unusual case study of amnesia?

DR. CHAMBERS  
I'm afraid I don't recall that.

PEASLEE  
Ah. I was the case study. I'm  
afraid mine is rather a long story,  
Dr. Chambers.

DR. CHAMBERS  
We're fortunate then.

PEASLEE  
How so?

DR. CHAMBERS  
It's rather a long voyage to  
Liverpool.

PEASLEE  
I'm sure you have patients to  
attend to...

DR. CHAMBERS

While you are aboard this vessel,  
you sir, are my patient. Please  
continue.

PEASLEE

Where to begin?

DR. CHAMBERS

Take it from the top, why don't  
you?

PEASLEE

I was a professor of political  
economy at Miskatonic University.  
My life ran smoothly and happily. I  
had a wife, Alice, and three  
children, Robert, Wingate and  
Hannah. Now, you must realize at no  
time had I the least interest in  
either occultism or abnormal  
psychology.

DR. CHAMBERS

Yes. Of course.

PEASLEE

It was on Thursday, 14 May 1908. I  
was conducting a class, Political  
Economy VI.

FLASHBACK MUSIC. Crossfade to:

5

AMNESIA

5

Inside a Miskatonic lecture hall, Peaslee addresses the  
class.

PEASLEE

...as laid out in Smith's *The  
Wealth of Nations*. Yes, Mr. Tyler?

TYLER

So the market is fueled by self-  
interest?

PEASLEE

Think of Alfred Marshall's notion  
that marginal utility relative to  
the pri...akkh... asgahhff... item  
gh'ha...

Students MURMUR their concern as Peaslee clucks a CLACKING NOISE before TUMBLING TO THE GROUND. Students GASP.

TYLER

Professor? Quick somebody run for help! I think he's unconscious.

A student RUNS out the door.

TYLER

My god, look at his eyes! There's something strange....

PEASLEE

(to Chambers)

*After examining me, doctors thought it best that I be taken home to recover.*

Student MURMURING fades to the TICKING of a bedroom clock.

ROBERT

Mother, Dr. Creighton thought daddy would be more comfortable here.

ALICE

Robert, I still say they should have kept him in the hospital overnight.

ROBERT

Dr. Creighton's an expert, mother.

ALICE

There's something strange about his breathing.

ROBERT

Shh...

YITHIAN PEASLEE

Fff...fah...fahl.

ALICE

Nathaniel, can you hear me?

As Peaslee's voice returns, it is no longer the Peaslee we've heard before. The rhythms, cadences and very nature of his speech is quite alien.

YITHIAN PEASLEE

Felicitations.

ROBERT  
(worried)  
Dad?

ALICE  
Oh Nathaniel, you're awake. How are  
you feeling?

YITHIAN PEASLEE  
I am of robust constitution.

ROBERT  
Dad? What are you doing with your  
hands, dad?

ALICE  
Shh, Robert. Nathaniel, it's me,  
Alice.

YITHIAN PEASLEE  
Salutations, Alice.

ALICE  
Nathaniel? Do you recognize me?

YITHIAN PEASLEE  
With certainty. Your familiarity is  
abundant.

ROBERT  
(terrified)  
That's not dad!

ALICE  
Robert, hush now.

ROBERT  
That is not my father!

He RUNS out of the room.

ALICE  
Nathaniel, you had some kind of fit  
while teaching your class. Dr.  
Creighton says it's probably  
fatigue. I've told you that you've  
been working too hard.

YITHIAN PEASLEE  
Yes, you have told me that I have  
been working too hard.  
(slightly mispronouncing)  
Alice.

ALICE

Alice. And what's your name?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

(stilted)

I am called Nathaniel.

ALICE

Yes, that's very good. And what's your last name?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

Do you mean the most recent? Or do you refer to my present cognomen?

ALICE

What? You don't know, do you? Do you know what day it is?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

Dies Veneris?

ALICE

No, it's Friday, Nathaniel. What are our children's names?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

I am beset with enervation. I crave slumber.

ALICE

Yes. You rest. I'm going to ring Dr. Creighton.

4a EXAMINATION CONT'D

4a

PEASLEE

(narrating to Chambers)

Now, of course, I have no recollection of any of this. Everything I now know about myself during the years of my affliction was learned after-the-fact.

DR. CHAMBERS

Of course. Now this must have been very difficult for your family.

PEASLEE

Oh it was.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

5a AMNESIA CONT'D

5a

Peaslee MURMURING can be heard through the nearby door.

ALICE

Dr. Creighton, what's happened to him? He can't remember anything. He can hardly use his arms and legs, even his face...his expression, it's not *his* face.

DR. CREIGHTON

He's clearly suffering from amnesia, a deep disturbance of the brain's memory systems. Tell me, is he able to form new memories? Does he seem to be learning things?

ALICE

He's like a sponge, soaking up everything we can tell him. Wingate's in there now going over arithmetic with him.

DR. CREIGHTON

Good, that may be a first step in his recovery.

ALICE

That's not all. He knows things he didn't used to know.

DR. CREIGHTON

Such as?

ALICE

He was talking about ancient Romans or somesuch in great detail - Nathaniel doesn't know anything about Rome.

DR. CREIGHTON

That is unusual, but not unheard of.

ALICE

He's hiding something. He doesn't want me to know who he is.

DR. CREIGHTON

This kind of experience is very disorienting for the patient.

ALICE

No, he's a different man. That is not my husband.

DR. CREIGHTON

He may seem that way, but I assure you, it's him. In many of these cases the patient makes a full recovery.

ALICE

How long does it take?

DR. CREIGHTON

The human mind is a mystery, Mrs. Peaslee. We just have to be patient. I'd like to look in on him before I return to the hospital.

They OPEN THE DOOR and enter Peaslee's room. Eight year old Wingate is with him. The murmuring becomes clear speech.

YITHIAN PEASLEE

...equals the line integral of the vector field over the curve bounding the region.

YOUNG WINGATE

Um, Ok. Thanks, Dad. Feel better.

ALICE

Run along, Wingate.

He RUNS.

YITHIAN PEASLEE

Greetings, Dr. Creighton, wife.

ALICE

(chilly)  
Nathaniel.

DR. CREIGHTON

How are you feeling today?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

I experience increasingly fine fettle.

DR. CREIGHTON

Nathaniel, how many fingers am I holding up?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

Three.

DR. CREIGHTON

Good. What color is Alice's dress?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

Her vestment is lovely.

DR. CREIGHTON

Mm-hm, and what is the square root of five?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

Two point two three six oh six seven nine seven seven four nine nine seven eight nine six....

DR. CREIGHTON

That's fine, thank you. And who is the President? Of the United States?

YITHIAN PEASLEE

With regret, I cannot recall.

ALICE

It's Theodore Roosevelt!

DR. CREIGHTON

Can you squeeze my hand? Yes, that's enough! Good. Well, I see your strength is returning. I'll come by to see you Monday. If you need anything, just telephone.

He LEAVES the room with Alice.

DR. CREIGHTON

You'll keep him going with those exercises? Can he feed himself?

ALICE

He does well with fruit, but I'd swear he still doesn't understand the purpose of a fork. He's just not...him...

She sobs.

DR. CREIGHTON

It's a terrible ordeal for you, Alice. Things will get better.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

6

THE MISSING YEARS

6

DR. CHAMBERS

So the doctor was right. Clearly  
you did make a recovery?

Peaslee SIGHS.

PEASLEE

I did not truly look out upon the  
daylight of our normal world for  
five years, four months, and  
thirteen days.

The amnesiac me tried to hide my  
condition, but when I saw that my  
attempts to conceal the lapse  
failed, I admitted it openly, and  
became eager for information of all  
sorts. It seemed that I lost  
interest in my proper personality  
once I found my amnesia accepted as  
a natural thing.

DR. CHAMBERS

What sort of information?

PEASLEE

My new self was eager to master  
certain points in history, science,  
art, language, and folklore -- some  
of them tremendously abstruse, and  
some childishly simple. Indeed, I  
seemed eager to absorb the speech,  
customs, and perspectives of the  
age around me, like a student from  
a far, foreign land.

As soon as I could, I haunted the  
college library at all hours; and  
began to arrange for odd travels  
and special courses at American and  
European Universities. Those around  
me noticed that I had an  
inexplicable command of many highly  
obscure sorts of knowledge.

DR. CHAMBERS

Did your family become accustomed  
to the new you?

PEASLEE

From the moment of my waking my wife regarded me with extreme horror and loathing, vowing that I was some alien persona usurping the body of her husband. She divorced me and would never consent to see me even after my recovery. These feelings were shared by my elder son and my small daughter, neither of whom I have ever seen since.

DR. CHAMBERS

What an ordeal. I'm terribly sorry, old chap.

PEASLEE

I don't blame them for their horror -- the mind, voice, and facial expression of the being that awakened were not mine.

DR. CHAMBERS

You have a second son, right?

PEASLEE

Yes. Wingate too felt that I was a stranger, but though only eight years old, he had faith that my proper self would return. When it did, he sought me out and the courts gave me his custody. He has since helped me with the studies to which I was driven, and today, at thirty-five, he's a professor of psychology at Miskatonic.

DR. CHAMBERS

Mmm. Did you do anything besides study during the years of your affliction?

PEASLEE

I still don't know much of my life from 1908 to 1913. What I know I pieced together mostly from old newspapers and scientific journals. My travels involved long visits to remote and desolate places.

DR. CHAMBERS

Such as?

PEASLEE

In 1909 I spent a month in the Himalayas, and in 1911 I embarked on a camel trip into the deserts of Arabia. In 1912 I chartered a ship and sailed far into the arctic. Why I went or what I did on these trips I have never been able to learn.

DR. CHAMBERS

A thirst for adventure, perhaps?

PEASLEE

Perhaps. I spent weeks exploring the vast limestone cavern systems of western Virginia.

DR. CHAMBERS

But you recall none of this?

PEASLEE

Not a moment of it.

DR. CHAMBERS

And you don't remember yourself at all during this time?

PEASLEE

I wasn't myself. My "secondary personality," as the doctors liked to call it, had an intelligence enormously superior to my own. Apparently my rate of reading and solitary study was phenomenal. I could master every detail of a book merely by glancing over it as fast as I could turn the pages.

DR. CHAMBERS

Fascinating... What did you do on your travels?

PEASLEE

Apparently I contacted several leaders of occult groups. And of course, my consultation of rare books at libraries was well documented.

DR. CHAMBERS

Were these rare books also related to occult matters?

PEASLEE

Quite. I read the Comte d'Erlette's *Cultes des Goules*, Ludvig Prinn's *De Vermis Mysteriis*, the *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* of von Junzt, the surviving fragments of the *Book of Eibon*, and the dreaded *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred.

DR. CHAMBERS

They sound rather fiendish.

PEASLEE

They are. More fiendish than you can imagine.

DR. CHAMBERS

Now when you regained your "old self," did you simply collapse again?

PEASLEE

In the summer of 1913 I returned to Arkham and re-opened my long-closed house in Crane Street. Here I installed a mechanism of the most curious aspect.

DR. CHAMBERS

A mechanism? What was it?

PEASLEE

I don't really know. Sally, my housekeeper, described it as a queer mixture of rods, wheels, and mirrors, about two feet tall, one foot wide, and one foot thick. The central mirror was circular and convex.

DR. CHAMBERS

Good lord.

PEASLEE

On September 26th, I dismissed Sally for the evening, but lights burned in the house until late, and a dark, foreign-looking man called in an automobile. It was about one A.M. that the lights were put out.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

At 2:15 a policeman observed the place in darkness with the stranger's motorcar still at the curb, but by four o'clock it was gone. Around six o'clock a foreign voice on the telephone asked Dr. Creighton to call at my house.

He found me unconscious in an easy-chair with a table drawn up before it. On the polished top were scratches showing where some heavy object had rested. The queer machine was gone, and no trace of it was ever found.

DR. CHAMBERS

I'll be that dark chappie took it away with him. Probably the same one who called your doctor.

PEASLEE

Mmm. In the library grate that morning my housekeeper found a mountain of ashes....

TRANSITION MUSIC.

7 COMEBACK

7

SALLY

Dr. Creighton, his desk and files have been emptied. It looks as though he burned every scrap of paper he's written on in the last five years.

DR. CREIGHTON

Sally, look at his face. He looks like his old self.

SALLY

Indeed, sir, it's him again. Mr. Peaslee? It's me, Sally.

Peaslee MUTTERS incomprehensible syllables.

SALLY

What's he saying, doctor?

Peaslee begins to THRASH about in his chair.

DR. CREIGHTON  
Mr. Peaslee, can you...

PEASLEE  
...consumers will equate the  
marginal utility per dollar spent  
across all goods, as noted by  
Jevons. Now remember, there will be  
a quiz on chapter eleven Thursday.

SALLY  
Merciful heavens!

PEASLEE  
Any questions?

MUSICAL STINGER.

6a MISSING YEARS CONT'D

6a

PEASLEE  
Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee had come  
back -- the man for whom it was  
still a Thursday morning in 1908.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Yes. What a story!

PEASLEE  
I'm afraid that's just the  
beginning of my story.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Why, what happened then?

PEASLEE  
Perhaps we can continue our talk  
later? I'm rather peckish.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Our pub on the Prince Albert deck  
serves a handsome brandy. Shall we  
say ten o'clock?

PEASLEE  
Ten o'clock then.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

8

HOMECOMING

8

BAR AMBIANCE. A GLASS is set on a table.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Your brandy, Mr. Peaslee.

PEASLEE  
Please, call me Nathaniel.

DR. CHAMBERS  
To your very good health,  
Nathaniel.

The CLINK of glasses.

PEASLEE  
Mmm, that is nice.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Your return, your reintegration to  
society must have been a great  
challenge: not knowing what you'd  
been doing, who you'd been.

PEASLEE  
It astonished and disturbed me, of  
course, the loss of my family, but  
I tried to view the matter as  
philosophically as I could. I  
regained custody of my son,  
Wingate, I settled down with him in  
the Crane Street house. He was a  
great comfort to me. I resumed my  
teaching -- my old professorship  
having been kindly offered me by  
the college.

DR. CHAMBERS  
It's hard to imagine you were ready  
for that.

PEASLEE  
I wasn't. Vague dreams continually  
haunted me. I found myself thinking  
of periods and events in the oddest  
possible fashion. My conception of  
time seemed subtly disordered, and  
I formed odd notions about living  
in one age and casting one's mind  
all over eternity for knowledge of  
past and future ages.

DR. CHAMBERS

Mm, like Dr. Einstein with his relativity. Time itself, reduced to the status of a mere dimension.

PEASLEE

My disturbed feelings gained on me, so that I had to drop my regular work in 1915. Certain impressions were taking shape -- giving me the persistent notion that my amnesia had formed some unholy sort of exchange; that the secondary personality had...

Peaslee pauses, choked up.

DR. CHAMBERS

There, there.

(to the barman)

Mr. Mitchell, two more brandies if you please.

PEASLEE

I'm sorry, it's just that...

DR. CHAMBERS

Nathaniel, mental traumas are among the most extraordinary events we experience. My profession hardly has the means to discuss them, let alone treat them.

PEASLEE

I had these dreams... They seemed to grow in vividness. I seldom mentioned them to anyone, but eventually I commenced a scientific study of other cases in order to see how typical such visions might be among amnesia victims.

DR. CHAMBERS

Was there anything to draw on? Dreams of amnesiacs - a rather obscure topic.

PEASLEE

I combed through works of psychologists, historians, anthropologists, mental specialists.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

My study included all records of split personalities from the days of demonic-possession legends to the medically realistic present. At first the results bothered me more than consoled me.

DR. CHAMBERS

Because?

PEASLEE

My dreams had no counterpart in the overwhelming bulk of true amnesia cases, but there remained a tiny residue of accounts with parallels to my own experience. It appeared that, while my special kind of affliction was very rare, instances of it had occurred at long intervals ever since the beginnings of history.

The essence was always the same - a person seized a strange secondary life and led for a period an utterly alien existence typified at first by vocal and bodily awkwardness, and later by a wholesale acquisition of knowledge with an abnormal absorptive power. Then a sudden return of rightful consciousness, intermittently plagued ever after with vague unplaceable dreams suggesting fragments of some hideous memory elaborately blotted out.

DR. CHAMBERS

I say, that's your case in a nutshell.

PEASLEE

Even the nightmares resembled my own -- down to some of the smallest particulars. One or two of the cases had an added ring of familiarity... as if I had heard of them before. In three instances there was even specific mention of an unknown machine like the one that had been in my house before the second change.

DR. CHAMBERS

What happened in the dreams?

PEASLEE

Forgive me, but I'm still hesitant to speak of them. They savor of madness, and at times I believed I was going mad.

DR. CHAMBERS

It's not madness. It's probably some kind of neural disorder brought on by your trauma. Perhaps your subconscious mind tried to fill its perplexing blank with pseudo-memories and strange imaginings.

PEASLEE

It was a long time before I correlated any of these feelings with the fleeting, visual impressions which began to develop.

DR. CHAMBERS

Visual impressions? You mean your dreams?

PEASLEE

The dreams, and the images that came into my mind, like vague memories.

DR. CHAMBERS

What exactly did you see?

Strange alien MUSIC underscores the description of the dreams, occasionally punctuated by HAUNTING ECHOES.

PEASLEE

I would seem to be in an enormous vaulted chamber whose lofty stone joints were lost in the shadows overhead.

There were colossal, round windows and high, arched doors, and pedestals or tables each as tall as the height of an ordinary room. Shelves of dark wood lined the walls, holding what seemed to be volumes of immense size with strange hieroglyphs on their backs.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

The exposed stonework held curious carvings, always in curvilinear mathematical designs, and there were chiselled inscriptions.

The tops of the vast pedestals were littered with books, papers, and what seemed to be writing materials - oddly figured jars of a purplish metal, and rods with stained tips. Tall as the pedestals were, I seemed at times able to view them from above.

DR. CHAMBERS

Was it some kind of library?

PEASLEE

Part library, part prison. Later I had visions of sweeping through Cyclopean corridors of stone, and up and down gigantic inclined planes of the same monstrous masonry. There were multiple levels of black vaults below, and trapdoors, sealed with metal bands and holding suggestions of some special peril. I seemed to be a prisoner, and horror hung over everything I saw.

In certain places I beheld enormous dark cylindrical towers which climbed far above any of the other structures. They were built of a bizarre type of square-cut basalt masonry, and tapered slightly toward their rounded tops. There hovered an inexplicable aura of menace and concentrated fear.

DR. CHAMBERS

You paint a vivid picture.

PEASLEE

When the night sky was clear, I beheld constellations which were nearly beyond recognition. From the position of the few groups I could recognize, I felt I must be in the earth's southern hemisphere, near the Tropic of Capricorn.

DR. CHAMBERS

Extraordinary. But these dreams don't sound terrifying especially.

PEASLEE

You must understand I had never before been an extravagant dreamer. And in the course of some months the element of terror did figure with accumulating force. This was when the dreams began to have the aspect of memories, and a sense of a loathsome exchange with my secondary personality. As certain details began to enter the dreams, their horror increased a thousandfold. That was when I began an intensive study of other cases of amnesia and visions, feeling that I might thereby objectivize my trouble and shake clear of its emotional grip. ~~The result was at first almost exactly opposite. It disturbed me vastly to find that my dreams had so closely been duplicated.~~

DR. CHAMBERS

So what did you do?

PEASLEE

I studied psychology, and my son Wingate did the same. Meanwhile, I ceaselessly perused medical, historical, and anthropological records and traveled to distant libraries to read the hideous books of forbidden elder lore in which my secondary personality had been so interested.

DR. CHAMBERS

You retraced your own footsteps? Where did you go?

PEASLEE

One of my first trips was to Sweden. My other self had gone to a library there.

DR. CHAMBERS

A Swedish library's hardly a place for occult horrors.

PEASLEE

Clearly you've never been to the  
Universitetsbibliotek in Uppsala.

TRANSITION MUSIC

9

UNIVERSITETSBIBLIOTEK

9

Peaslee ENTERS the university library in Uppsala.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

Kan jag hjälpa Er?

PEASLEE

I'm sorry, I don't speak Swedish.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

(in cultured English)

How may I be of assistance?

PEASLEE

I've come from the United States,  
my name is...

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

(coldly)

Mr. Peaslee. Yes. I know who you  
are.

PEASLEE

How do you know my name?

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

You made quite an impression on  
your last visit here.

PEASLEE

Oh.

(pause)

I'm very sorry. I wasn't quite  
myself then. I was unwell.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

I hope you're better now. You do  
look different than you did before.

PEASLEE

I suffered a bout of amnesia. I  
actually don't recall my previous  
visit here.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN  
How convenient. You spent time in  
our Särskilda samlingar.

PEASLEE  
I'm sorry?

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN  
The Special Collection.

PEASLEE  
Do you know what books I looked at?

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN  
Of course. We kept records. I will  
take you there.

PEASLEE  
Thank you so very much.

They WALK through the library.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN  
I've never met anyone with amnesia.  
Clearly you remember who you are.

PEASLEE  
I do. In my case, I have no  
recollection of the years of 1908  
to 1913.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN  
None whatsoever? For five years?  
(taking out her keys)  
You said earlier you didn't speak  
Swedish.

PEASLEE  
That's right.

She OPENS the door.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN  
We spoke in Swedish last time you  
were here. You were fluent.

PEASLEE  
Are you certain?

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN  
Your Swedish was excellent, though  
your dialect was unusual. Please be  
seated.

PEASLEE

I've never spoken Swedish.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

Curious. Let me see... you read very quickly, but you spent the most time with von Junzt's *Von Unaussprechlichen Kulten*.

PEASLEE

May I see it, the book?

She goes and OPENS a locked cabinet.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

Yes, but I must tell you, Mr. Peaslee, you may not make marking in it this time.

PEASLEE

Marking?

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

Notes, corrections. Here. You see? You wrote extensive notes in the margins. "Corrections" as you called them.

PEASLEE

But these notes are in Swedish.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

That's German, actually.

PEASLEE

I can't write in German. Or Swedish. Are you sure I made these notes?

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN

You wondered why I remembered your name? You argued the matter quite forcefully, several times. In Swedish.

He thumbs through the pages.

PEASLEE

What about these? These symbols are...

Peaslee burst out a startled GASP.

SWEDISH LIBRARIAN  
Mr. Peaslee? Are you alright?

MUSICAL STINGER.

8a HOMECOMING CONT'D

8a

PEASLEE  
(to Chambers)  
There were curvilinear hieroglyphs  
in the same ink as the German  
notes. They were the characters I  
constantly saw in my dreams.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Perhaps your mind saw the  
characters and modified the images  
from your dreams to match them.  
Another brandy?

PEASLEE  
Please. Well that begs the  
question: do dreams shape our myths  
or do myths shape our dreams?

DR. CHAMBERS  
Myths?

PEASLEE  
During my memory lapse, I -- the  
other me -- read occult legends and  
myths. Perhaps my subsequent dreams  
and emotional impressions were  
colored and molded by what my  
memory subtly held over from my  
secondary state.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Yes, of course! But what myths?

PEASLEE  
Mainly primal Hindu tales now  
forming the lore of modern  
theosophists. They held that  
mankind is only one of the dominant  
races of this planet's long and  
largely unknown career.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

Things of inconceivable shape had reared towers to the sky and delved into every secret of Nature before the first amphibian forbear of man had crawled out of the hot sea 300 million years ago.

Some had come down from the stars; others had arisen swiftly from terrene germs. ~~Spans of thousands of millions of years, linkages to other galaxies and universes.~~ Most of the tales and myths concerned a race of an intricate shape, resembling no life-form known to modern science, which had lived here till only fifty million years before the advent of man. This was the greatest race of all because it alone had conquered the secret of time.

DR. CHAMBERS

The secret of time?

PEASLEE

It had learned all things that ever were known or ever would be known on the earth, through the power to project itself into the past and future, even through gulfs of millions of years, and study the lore of every age. This race's vast libraries held the whole of earth's annals -- histories and descriptions of every species that had ever been or that ever would be, with full records of their arts, their achievements, their languages, and their psychologies.

With the aid of a special device, a mind of this race would project itself forward in time until it approached the desired period. Then it would seize on the best discoverable representative of that period's life-forms.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

It would enter the organism's brain and set up therein its own vibrations, while the displaced mind would be forced back to the period of the displacer, remaining in the latter's body till a reverse process was set up.

The projected mind, in the body of the organism of the future, would then pose as the being whose outward form it wore, learning as quickly as possible all that could be learned of the chosen age and its massed information and techniques.

Meanwhile the displaced mind, thrown back to the displacer's age and body, would be carefully guarded. It would be kept safe and would be drained of all its knowledge.

~~If the mind came from a body whose language the Great Race could not physically reproduce, clever machines would be made, on which the alien speech could be played as on a musical instrument.~~

DR. CHAMBERS

And you believe this happened to you?

PEASLEE

I'm only saying this is the general pattern of myths laid down by people with similar experiences.

DR. CHAMBERS

And this "Great Race." What, what do they look like?

PEASLEE

Their bodies are like immense cones ten feet high, and with head and other organs attached to foot-thick, distensible limbs spreading from the tip.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

They spoke by the clicking or scraping of huge paws or claws attached to the end of two of their four limbs, and walked by the expansion and contraction of a viscous layer attached to their vast, ten-foot bases.

DR. CHAMBERS

Cones, you say?

PEASLEE

A captive mind was permitted to study its new environment, and usually allowed to delve into the libraries containing the records of the planet's past and future. This reconciled many captive minds to their lot; to these keen minds the unveiling of hidden mysteries of earth, despite the abysmal horrors often revealed, formed the supreme experience of life.

~~Certain captives were permitted to meet other captive minds—to exchange thoughts with beings living a hundred or a thousand or a million years before or after their own. And all were urged to write copiously in their own languages. These writings filled the great central archives.~~

When the displacing mind learned all it wished in the future, it would build an apparatus and reverse the process of projection. Once more it would be in its own body in its own age, while the lately captive mind would return to that body of the future to which it properly belonged.

DR. CHAMBERS

Like you.

PEASLEE

When a captive mind was returned to its own body in the future, it was purged by an intricate mechanical hypnosis of all it had learned in the Great Race's age. ~~Nearly all memories were eradicated;~~

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

~~only a dream shadowed blank-~~  
~~stretched back to the time of the~~  
~~first exchange. Some minds recalled~~  
~~more than others, and these~~  
~~recollections brought hints of the~~  
~~forbidden past to future ages. Some~~  
 groups and cults would assist the  
 persons inhabited by the Great Race  
 in exchange for revelations from  
 the distant past or future.

The Great Race sought to fathom the  
 origin of the dead planet they came  
 from, for the mind of the Great  
 Race was older than its bodily  
 form.

DR. CHAMBERS

The cone-shaped bodies?

PEASLEE

Their world dying, they looked  
 ahead for a new world and species  
 wherein they might have long life.  
 They sent their minds en masse into  
 a future race best adapted to house  
 them -- the cone-shaped beings that  
 peopled our earth a billion years  
 ago. Thus the Great Race came to  
 be. ~~Later the race would again face~~  
~~death, yet would live through~~  
~~another forward migration.~~

DR. CHAMBERS

So they weren't originally cone-  
 shaped.

PEASLEE

Is that a hint of incredulity,  
 doctor?

DR. CHAMBERS

I believe how you felt, but my good  
 man, there are rational  
 explanations for the phenomena you  
 describe. Chance might have turned  
 your mind to occult studies during  
 your amnesia. You read those  
 ancient legends and met cult  
 members who believed in them. They  
 fueled your dreams and disturbed  
 feelings which followed.

PEASLEE

Chance.

DR. CHAMBERS

The hieroglyphs were doubtless coined by your imagination from descriptions in myths, and then woven into your dreams. During your heightened intellectual phase, you might have learned some Swedish and German.

PEASLEE

Perhaps.

DR. CHAMBERS

I'm sure learning of similar cases worried you. The other victims likely had a long and familiar knowledge of the tales you learned in your secondary state. These victims associated themselves with the conical creatures of mythology and thus embarked upon quests for knowledge which they thought they could take back to a fancied, non-human past. Then, when their original memories returned, they reversed the associative process and thought of themselves as the former captive minds instead of as the displacers.

PEASLEE

I came to a similar conclusion myself.

DR. CHAMBERS

Echoes of myths absorbed in your secondary state. You see, I do have some background in psychology. Your dreams, your feelings, they were of no actual significance whatsoever.

PEASLEE

Fortified by such philosophy, I greatly improved, even though the visions became more frequent and detailed.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

By 1922 I felt able to undertake regular work again, and put my newly gained knowledge to practical use by accepting an instructorship in psychology at Miskatonic.

~~My son suggested that I keep a careful record of the dreams. Within the dreams I seemed gradually to acquire a greater freedom of wandering. I floated through many strange buildings of stone, going from one to the other along mammoth underground passages. Sometimes I encountered those gigantic sealed trap doors in the lowest level.~~

DR. CHAMBERS

And all this time, you never dreamt of other people? Not even the cone creatures?

PEASLEE

(clearly uncomfortable)  
It's getting late doctor, I should retire.

DR. CHAMBERS

What? Oh, yes, by Jove, it is.

PEASLEE

Thank you for the brandies.

DR. CHAMBERS

Might we resume tomorrow?

PEASLEE

Good night, Dr. Chambers.

DR. CHAMBERS

Nathaniel, here. Take this tablet. It'll help you sleep.

10 FIFES AGAIN

10

MUSICAL TRANSITION. The Fifes LAUGH their way back to their cabin after a bit too much champagne.

MR. FIFE

Oh go on, now!

MRS. FIFE  
 So I told him, "No, mate, I said  
 'shuffleboard puck'!"

They LAUGH and FUMBLE for their keys. Peaslee SHRIEKS through  
 the door of his cabin.

MRS. FIFE  
 Oh god, not him again.

MR. FIFE  
 Right, knock it off in there, you!

He BANGS on Peaslee's door. A terrified GROAN and STUMBLING  
 comes from within.

MRS. FIFE  
 Total nutter. The ship's doctor has  
 been giving him pills.

MR. FIFE  
 I'll get the purser.

MUSICAL STINGER. Later, Dr. Chambers sits at the side of  
 Peaslee's bed.

11 NIGHTMARE

11

DR. CHAMBERS  
 Nathaniel, it's me, Dr. Chambers.  
 What happened?

PEASLEE  
 The vast hall was filled with them,  
 all writing like a horrid parody of  
 students at exams.

DR. CHAMBERS  
 So you saw them tonight? These  
 dream creatures?

PEASLEE  
 Tonight? I've seen them in dreams  
 and visions for nearly twenty  
 years!

DR. CHAMBERS  
 Do they pursue you in these dreams?  
 Are they out to get you?

PEASLEE

No, never. It's their actions. They move about the great rooms, getting books from the shelves and taking them to the great tables, and sometimes writing diligently with a peculiar rod gripped in their greenish tentacles. The huge nippers were used in carrying books and in conversation -- speech consisting of a kind of clicking and scraping. I saw them everywhere; ~~swarming in all the great chambers and corridors, tending monstrous machines in vaulted crypts.~~

DR. CHAMBERS

Mostly reading and writing in this library building?

PEASLEE

The ones I spent the most time near wrote a great deal in a vast variety of characters -- not the curvilinear hieroglyphs of the majority.

DR. CHAMBERS

Did you ever see yourself in your dreams?

PEASLEE

Yes, god help me. I avoided looking down at myself, until one night I could not resist it. At first my downward glance revealed nothing whatever. A moment later I realized that this was because my head lay at the end of a flexible neck of enormous length. Retracting this neck and gazing down very sharply, I saw the scaly, rugose bulk of a vast cone. That was when I waked half of Arkham with my screaming.

DR. CHAMBERS

You were one of the creatures.

PEASLEE

In its body, yes. I read terrible books from the endless shelves and wrote for hours at the great tables.

DR. CHAMBERS

What were you reading?

PEASLEE

The histories of other worlds and other universes. There were records of strange types of beings which peopled the world in forgotten pasts, and chronicles of intelligences which would people it millions of years after the death of the last human being. I read of unimaginable chapters of human history. ~~Most of these writings were in the language of the hieroglyphs; which I could understand with the aid of droning machines. Very few were in languages I knew. Extremely clever pictures aided me immensely.~~

DR. CHAMBERS

And you wrote these books too?

PEASLEE

In one: I was authoring a history of my own age in English. A few of the other strange bodies around me housed captured minds, similar to my own. I seemed to talk, in some odd language of claw clickings, with exiled intellects from every corner of the solar system.

DR. CHAMBERS

Were they other people like you?

PEASLEE

Some were. There was a mind from the planet we know as Venus, which would live in incalculable epochs to come, and one from an outer moon of Jupiter six million years in the past. Of earthly minds there were some from a winged, starheaded, half-vegetable race of palaeogean Antarctica;

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)  
 three from among the furry pre-  
 human Hyperborean worshippers of  
 Tsathoggua; and five from the hardy  
 beetle-like species immediately  
 following mankind.

DR. CHAMBERS  
 You spoke with space-men and  
 insects?

PEASLEE  
 (irritated)  
 If you wish to put it that way. I  
 spoke with other humans too.

TRANSITION MUSIC.

12

WOODVILLE

12

PEASLEE  
*I was writing furiously when I  
 noticed I was being watched by a  
 fellow prisoner.*

CLAW CLICKING language continues quietly under the dialogue,  
 which takes on an echoing, cavernous quality.

PEASLEE  
 May I help you?

WOODVILLE  
 Terribly sorry, I just happened to  
 note you were writing in English.  
 Methinks precious few of us do.

Woodville speaks in a warm Suffolk dialect, but in a  
 vernacular that died out by 1700. He's slightly pompous, but  
 affable.

PEASLEE  
 You, you're, you speak English?  
 You're from England?

WOODVILLE  
 James Woodville, Esquire, of  
 Suffolk.

PEASLEE  
 Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee of  
 Massachusetts.

WOODVILLE  
 The Commonwealth? Good show!

PEASLEE

Yes. Yes. I live, lived...uh, in 1908.

WOODVILLE

Ah, I see. They took me in 1662. You must tell me all about what becomes of the colonies.

PEASLEE

Yes. A lot has happened.

WOODVILLE

I doubt it not. I daresay you shall be agog when you learn of the 25th century. Positively beastly.

PEASLEE

25th century? I thought...

WOODVILLE

Of course, you haven't met Neville Kingston-Brown yet. He's a scientist from that era. Apparently Terra Australis goes on to become quite civilized, though there's a plague undoes much of that.

PEASLEE

So there are others? Like me?

WOODVILLE

We are all like you, in a manner of speaking. I shall introduce you to our community. There's a twelfth-century Florentine monk named Bartolomeo Corsi; Yiang-Li, a philosopher from China's distant future; Khephnes, a fascinating chap from Egypt's 14th dynasty; and I daresay a good many others from epochs and civilisations far more distant.

PEASLEE

(to Dr. Chambers)

I shivered at the mysteries of the past, and trembled at the menaces the future.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

After man there would be the mighty beetle civilization, the bodies of whose members the Great Race would seize when the monstrous doom overtook the elder world. Later, as the earth's span closed, the transferred minds would again migrate through time and space to another race of beings.

DR. CHAMBERS

Beetles.

PEASLEE

I wrote my history of my own age for their archives. They were in a colossal subterranean structure near the city's center, which I came to know well through frequent labors and consultations. I wrote on great sheets of a cellulose fabric that were bound into books stored in tiers of closed, locked shelves. My own history was assigned a specific place in the vaults of the lowest or vertebrate level.

DR. CHAMBERS

Were there creatures in this world besides the cone-beings?

PEASLEE

~~Clumsy reptiles floundered in steaming morasses, fluttered in the heavy air, or spouted in the seas and lakes; and among these I~~ fancied I could recognize archaic prototypes of dinosaurs, pterodactyls, ichthyosaurs... I never saw any birds or mammals.

DR. CHAMBERS

Dinosaurs? So all your dreams took place back in time?

PEASLEE

My dreams, yes. Apparently somewhat less than 150,000,000 years ago, just before the Mesozoic.

DR. CHAMBERS

I've never heard tell of any fossilized remains that correspond to your cone creatures.

PEASLEE

No, you haven't. The bodies occupied by the Great Race were of a peculiar and highly specialized organic type, as much vegetable as animal. It would seem there was no osseous tissue to fossilize.

DR. CHAMBERS

I see.

PEASLEE

Do you? Much of what I learned of them I gleaned from my study of old legends and other cases rather than from my own dreaming. They had no need for sleep. They engineered a liquid food. Sight and hearing were the only of our senses they possessed, though they had many others beyond our comprehension. They governed themselves by a sort of fascistic socialism. They disposed of individuals displaying any significant defects. Their dead were incinerated in a solemn ceremony. Their mastery of industry and technology ensured abundant leisure time. The sciences were carried to an unbelievable height of development. Art was a vital part of life, though at the period of my dreams it had begun to decline. They kept an enormous army, using camera-like weapons which produced tremendous electrical effects.

DR. CHAMBERS

To fight whom?

PEASLEE

Long before, there had been civil wars, and they had fought against the star-headed beings of the Antarctic. But the Great Race lived with a subtle yet profound fear.

TRANSITION MUSIC. The sound of WRITING in a vast chamber.

13

WOODVILLE 2

13

WOODVILLE

Are you absolutely certain the colonies defeated England?

PEASLEE

Yes. James, I notice two of the "soldier types" by the downward ramp.

WOODVILLE

With their harquebuses? Yes, I saw them as well.

PEASLEE

What are they there for?

WOODVILLE

(sotto voce)  
They are afraid.

PEASLEE

Of what?

WOODVILLE

The only thing of which the Great Race will neither speak nor write: the windowless elder ruins and the great sealed trap-doors beneath the city.

PEASLEE

Why do they fear the buildings?

WOODVILLE

They hold them in.

PEASLEE

Who?

WOODVILLE

Khephnes, the Egyptian, spake of half-polypous entities which came from among the heavens hundreds of millions of years ago.

PEASLEE

What are they?

WOODVILLE

Beings, but not of matter akin to us nor them: horrid flying things barely having form at all. They built dark basalt cities long before the Great Race came. They fought vast battles but the sparking cannons of the Great Race subdued the flying thynges and they drove them into the dark caverns beneath the city. The entrances were sealed and the thynges left to their lightless fate.

PEASLEE

Then why the soldiers?

WOODVILLE

There have been signs that those flying thynges have grown strong and numerous in the dark. The Great Race sealed many of the paths into the caverns. A few trap-doors remain for strategic use should the thynges ever break forth.

PEASLEE

I've never known the Great Race to show fear.

WOODVILLE

They fear nothing but those that dwell below. The Egyptian spake that they could call great winds for use in war. So too he spake of their whistling sounds and colossal footprints. It is known these formless thynges shall come for vengeance upon the Great Race whose only hope is to flee to the future.

PEASLEE

So the soldiers guard against them?

WOODVILLE

Aye. If the Great Race are afeared, so too am I.

MUSICAL STINGER.

11b NIGHTMARE CONT'D

11b

PEASLEE

And that, good Dr. Chambers is the world of which my dreams brought me dim, scattered echoes every night.

DR. CHAMBERS

When we first met, you made reference to an expedition?

PEASLEE

Did I? Hmm. Well then, on July 10, 1934, a visitor came to my office at the college.

MUSICAL TRANSITION. KNOCKING.

14 MACKENZIE

14

PEASLEE

Enter.

BOOT STEPS cross the floor.

PEASLEE

May I help you?

Mackenzie speaks with a warm Australian dialect colored by a lifetime of hard work in the outdoors.

MACKENZIE

Are you Mr. Peaslee?

PEASLEE

Yes.

MACKENZIE

The one what the psychology articles was about?

PEASLEE

Yes.

MACKENZIE

If you'll pardon my intrusion, sir, I need to speak to you.

PEASLEE

You'll need to make an appointment...

MACKENZIE

I've seen the things from your dreams. Great stone blocks with writing on 'em.

PEASLEE

What do you know about my dreams?

MACKENZIE

After I seen the stones, I went to tell the professors at the uni about them, you know, archaeology and all that. One of 'em, Dr. Boyle, said he'd seen something just like what I seen, but it was in them magazine articles you wrote.

PEASLEE

(skeptical)

So, Mr...

MACKENZIE

Mackenzie, Robert Mackenzie.

PEASLEE

So, Mr. Mackenzie, you expect me to believe you've seen titanic stone blocks covered with hieroglyphic writing exactly like the ones I dreamed of?

MACKENZIE

Yeah.

PEASLEE

Well, thank you. You're not the first prankster to read my work. Good day, sir.

MACKENZIE

I know it sounds impossible. I was amazed to find the stones, let alone that some bloke dreamed something just like 'em. Dr. Boyle thought it was a joke until I showed him the Kodaks.

PEASLEE

(breathless)

Kodaks? You have photographs?

MACKENZIE

Yeah. I got a load of them. Here.

He UNZIPS his bag and hands Peaslee and envelope with a number of photos in it.

MACKENZIE

Looks just like your drawings,  
don't it?

Peaslee GROANS.

MACKENZIE

Have a chair, mate.

PEASLEE

(stammering faintly)  
Where?

MACKENZIE

I led a gold dig in the Great Sandy  
Desert, Western Australia. It's  
about four days travel from  
Pilbarra, if you know where that  
is. It was about two years ago now,  
I was out prospecting with one of  
our blackfellows.

15 AMAROO

15

TRANSITION MUSIC. Followed by a pick and shovel DIGGING IN  
THE SAND. A shovel CLANKS as it strikes stone.

AMAROO

It's hard rock, boss.

MACKENZIE

That doesn't make sense. Amaroo,  
try the pick over here.

The pick CLANGS into stone.

MACKENZIE

What the hell? Let's see here.

He kneels and BRUSHES dirt and sand from a giant stone block.

MACKENZIE

Christalmighty, it's a huge block.  
Amaroo, look at this, it's curved  
on top.

Amaroo CURSES in Wororan and runs.

MACKENZIE

Hey! Hey, come back here.

Mackenzie CHASES after him.

MUSICAL STINGER. Later: they continue to RUN, breathless and exhausted.

MACKENZIE

(panting)

For chrissakes will you stop?  
You'll run us both to death out  
here.

AMAROO

That stone's evil, boss. I'm not  
going back.

MACKENZIE

Whatcha mean, evil? It's a rock.  
It's like a huge brick.

AMAROO

It's from the house of the Buddai.  
It's a bad thing, boss.

MACKENZIE

What are you going on about?

AMAROO

Great building rocks with curving  
writing, they are from the hut of  
the Buddai -- the giant old man who  
sleeps underground with his head on  
his arm. One day he'll awake and  
eat up the world.

MACKENZIE

Crikey, it's just one of your old  
myths.

AMAROO

Grandfather told of the enormous  
underground huts of great stones  
and tunnels that led down and down.  
Ages ago horrible things happened  
there. Once two warriors were  
losing a battle and they ran down  
into one and the Buddai woke up.

(MORE)

AMAROO (cont'd)

He roared and the wind from his  
roar was so terrible that warrior  
fell down dead.

MACKENZIE

So what about the other one?

AMAROO

He came back, but to his people...  
who, soft in the head, you know?

MACKENZIE

It's just a rock. I didn't even see  
any writing on it.

AMAROO

It's there, boss, you'll see.

MACKENZIE

Will you come on back to camp?

AMAROO

No boss, ain't a thing in the world  
make me go back there.

14a MACKENZIE CONT'D

14a

MACKENZIE

(to Peaslee)

I went back. At first I didn't see  
any marks, but when I looked close  
enough I could make out some deeply  
carved lines. There were strange  
curves, just like what Amaroo tried  
to describe. There must have been  
thirty or forty blocks, some nearly  
buried in the sand, and all within  
a circle perhaps a quarter of a  
mile in diameter. I made a careful  
reckoning of the place with my  
instruments and took these photos.

PEASLEE

Australia?

MACKENZIE

Dr. Boyle became quite excited when  
I shewed him my snapshots.

PEASLEE

I can see why.

MACKENZIE

Mr. Peaslee, I'm a mining engineer by trade and I know my geology. These blocks are so ancient they damn near scare the pants off me. Mostly sandstone and granite, though I saw one that was a queer sort of concrete.

PEASLEE

You're certain they could not have formed naturally?

MACKENZIE

Nothing natural about 'em. They're perfect blocks, sir, about two by three by three, with evidence of water action, as if they'd been submerged and come up again after long ages -- they were made millions of years ago.

PEASLEE

Some thing must have made them.

MACKENZIE

Yeah. I reckon they're from some undiscovered civilization.

PEASLEE

No civilizations in Australia ever built anything like this. Who else knows about this?

MACKENZIE

Just you, me, Dr. Boyle and Amaroo. We've kept it quiet, feeling you ought to be the first to hear.

PEASLEE

Great god...

MACKENZIE

Dr. Boyle and I thought because of your experience, you might want to form an expedition to make some archaeological excavations.

PEASLEE

An expedition...

MACKENZIE

To find out what it is, what it means...

PEASLEE

(quietly reeling)  
Of course. Yes, yes, of course.

MACKENZIE

Boyle and I are prepared to help assemble a local team if you -- or your university -- can furnish the funds.

PEASLEE

Funds...

MACKENZIE

Sir, I read your articles. I understand what this means.

PEASLEE

Do you?

TRANSITION MUSIC.

11c NIGHTMARE CONT'D

11c

DR. CHAMBERS

*So this, this was the expedition you spoke of?*

PEASLEE

*It was shockingly easy to assemble a team. Academic curiosity was completely piqued by the photos. Miskatonic provided funding and several of my colleagues were soon in communication with Dr. Boyle. In less than a year our expedition steamed its way to Perth.*

16 WELCOME TO AUSTRALIA

16

CROWD NOISES of passengers disembarking.

MACKENZIE

Peaslee, Peaslee, over here! Good to see you, mate. May I introduce Dr. E.M. Boyle, University of Western Australia.

Boyle is an elderly Australian of bright intellect.

BOYLE

Pleased to meet you in person, Mr. Peaslee.

PEASLEE

Allow me to introduce my colleagues.

DYER

Professor William Dyer, geologist.

BOYLE

Dr. Dyer, yes. You were on your Miskatonic's Antarctic expedition in '30, no?

DYER

(grim)  
I was.

BOYLE

Nasty business. What say we have a better time of it here, eh?

Half-hearted CHUCKLES.

ASHLEY

Ferdinand Ashley, Chair of the Department of Ancient History.

BOYLE

How do you do?

FREEBORN

Tyler Freeborn, Department of Anthropology.

BOYLE

Dr. Freeborn.

PEASLEE

And this is my son, professor Wingate Peaslee.

WINGATE

Dr. Boyle, Mr. Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE

Everything's in order. I've got four tractors waiting for us at Pilbarra.

(MORE)

MACKENZIE (cont'd)  
 We'll take a small steamer up the  
 river to get there. Welcome to  
 Australia, gents.

A caravan of noisy TRACTORS comes to a halt before a small  
 river. Mackenzie WHISTLES and the ENGINES ARE CUT.

MACKENZIE  
 (loud)  
 Right. This is the De Grey river.  
 You might want to dip your toes --  
 it's the last flowing water we'll  
 see for a while.

Expedition members SPLASH a bit, fill canteens and the like.

BOYLE  
 Wingate, your father, is he  
 alright? He seems nervous.

WINGATE  
 The further we come, the more  
 frightened he seems.

BOYLE  
 Keep an eye on him, will you lad?

PEASLEE  
 (to Dr. Chambers)  
*It was on Monday, June 3rd, that we  
 reached our camp.*

MACKENZIE  
 Right. Gentlemen, while the lads  
 pitch the tents, follow me up over  
 this ridge.

They TRUDGE through the sand.

MACKENZIE  
 If the sands haven't shifted too  
 much we might be able to see some  
 of...

DYER  
 Look, over there! The blocks.

FREEBORN  
 Good lord!

The professors RUN down into the sand AD LIBBING  
 enthusiastically. Short of breath, Boyle approaches Peaslee.

BOYLE  
 What do you think, Nathaniel? Are they the same?

PEASLEE  
 (stunned)  
 They're...it's not possible.

BOYLE  
 You're sure?

PEASLEE  
 (faintly)  
 The carving...I've seen this.

BOYLE  
 Here, have some water.

PEASLEE  
 I lived in buildings made of these stones. In my dreams.

11d NIGHTMARE CONT'D

11d

PEASLEE  
 (to Chambers)  
*A month of digging revealed some 1250 blocks in varying stages of wear and disintegration. Most of these were megaliths with curved tops and bottoms while a few were singularly massive and curved or slanted in such a manner as to suggest use in vaulting or arches.*

DR. CHAMBERS  
*Where did they come from?*

PEASLEE  
*We puzzled over that.*

17 IN CAMP

17

The scientists EAT DINNER at the camp.

FREEBORN  
 I was studying block 122-B. Some of the markings looked like the symbols the Papuan Polynesians use to denote the beginning of time.

DYER

Beginning of time is right.  
Geologically, these blocks pre-date  
life as we know it.

ASHLEY

That doesn't make any sense, Dyer.  
Someone or something had to make  
them.

DYER

Let me put it this way: we've only  
uncovered a very small portion of  
what's happened on this planet. I  
think we're about to discover a  
whole new chapter.

The conversation lulls awkwardly.

WINGATE

I took the airplane back up today  
to look for those outcroppings to  
the northeast.

MACKENZIE

How'd they look?

WINGATE

Gone. I guess the sand covered them  
up again. It's hard to imagine that  
much wind though...

MACKENZIE

Yeah... Pass the sauce, will you  
Nathaniel?

(pause)

Nathaniel?

WINGATE

Dad!

PEASLEE

(dazed)

Not the northeast. You mustn't. I  
remember...

WINGATE

What are you talking about, dad?

BOYLE

Shh. Let him be.

PEASLEE  
I've been there.

MUSICAL STINGER. Camp: late at night. ATMOSPHERE.

MACKENZIE  
You're up late, Dr. Boyle. Smoke?

BOYLE  
Ah, Fleur de Lys. Thanks, mate.

Mackenzie LIGHTS CIGARETTES.

BOYLE  
Any sign of Peaslee?

MACKENZIE  
Not yet. Last couple nights he's  
left the camp. Becoming a real  
Australian: gone walkabout, eh?

BOYLE  
To reconcile one's dreams with an  
impossible reality...

Distant FOOTSTEPS.

MACKENZIE  
Hell of a thing. Shh, I think  
that's him. I'm away off to bed.

BOYLE  
Good night, Robert.  
(to Peaslee)  
Is that you, Nathaniel?

PEASLEE  
Evening, Dr. Boyle.

BOYLE  
Insomnia?

PEASLEE  
My dreams here are nearly  
unbearable.

BOYLE  
I should imagine. Gone for a  
stroll?

PEASLEE  
Yes.

BOYLE  
Which way'd you head out?  
(pause)  
Northeast again?

PEASLEE  
There's something out there. I...  
I... I just can't quite remember  
it.

BOYLE  
It'll come to you.

PEASLEE  
I think we should dig out that way.

BOYLE  
So you said. Wingate hasn't seen  
much out there from the aeroplane  
though.

PEASLEE  
It's there. Below. Or maybe we  
shouldn't.  
(to Dr. Chambers)  
*On July 11th I made another  
discovery which frayed my nerves.*

Peaslee comes RUNNING into camp, breathless. He UNZIPS Dyer's tent in a frenzy.

PEASLEE  
Dyer! Dyer, get up! I've found  
something.

DYER  
Peaslee? What is it? Are you  
alright?

PEASLEE  
A stone, a great stone, a different  
one.

DYER  
What do you mean?

PEASLEE  
It's not like the others; this one  
was perfectly square-cut, with no  
convex or concave surface. It's a  
dark basaltic rock.

DYER  
Yes, well...

Boyle and Wingate HURRY to Dyer's tent.

WINGATE  
(off)  
Dad?

BOYLE  
What's happened?

PEASLEE  
(terrified)  
The Great race was terrified of the  
basaltic elder masonry, it...

DYER  
Right. Wingate, why don't you help  
your father back to his tent. After  
sun-up we'll go and have a look.

WIND TRANSITION.

11e NIGHTMARE CONT'D

11e

PEASLEE  
(to Chambers)  
The next morning Dyer, Freeborn,  
Boyle, my son and I set out to view  
the anomalous block, but the  
night's wind wholly altered the  
hillocks of shifting sand, and we  
couldn't find it.

Peaslee hesitates, deeply disturbed by the conversation.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Maybe that's enough for tonight.  
I've got a sleeping tablet.

PEASLEE  
No! This is the crucial and most  
difficult part.

DR. CHAMBERS  
Why is it difficult?

PEASLEE  
Because I cannot be certain of its  
reality!

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

~~At times I feel sure that I was not  
dreaming nor deluded, but the  
implications are...~~

DR. CHAMBERS

Just tell me what happened.

PEASLEE

On July 17th, shortly before  
eleven, I set out.

17a IN CAMP CONT'D

17a

DESERT, NIGHT, WIND blowing lightly.

MACKENZIE

Evening, Mr. Peaslee.

PEASLEE

Mackenzie.

MACKENZIE

Out for your nightly  
constitutional?

PEASLEE

Can't sleep.

MACKENZIE

Here, take an electric torch to  
keep an eye out for brown snakes.  
They like a night with a full moon,  
no wind, helps 'em hunt.

WIND.

*PEASLEE*

*(to Chambers)*

*About 3:30 a.m. a violent wind blew  
up, waking everyone in camp.*

The WIND INCREASES to a dry gale. Debris BATTERS the camp.  
Men SHOUT out.

ASHLEY

Bloody hell, my tent.

MACKENZIE

It's a blower! Stay calm men!

The wind RAGES then continues to GUST HARD.

MACKENZIE

Everyone alright?

DYER

Three of the tents came down,  
nothing serious though. The moon's  
so bright we'll have them fixed in  
no time. We had it much worse in  
Antarctica.

BOYLE

It's a sinister night. Everyone  
accounted for?

MACKENZIE

Crikey! Peaslee was out on one of  
his night rambles. It's a bad omen.

FREEBORN

What do you mean by an omen?

MACKENZIE

Just blackfellow folklore. Amaroo,  
a bloke who worked for me, said  
these winds blew out of the great  
stone huts under the ground, where  
terrible things happened. These  
winds only come near places with  
these blocks.

~~FREEBORN~~

~~Curious...~~

PEASLEE

*The night wore on, and the strange  
wind lashed at the camp and then  
abruptly stopped.*

BOYLE

Still no sign of Peaslee,  
professor?

Dyer STRIKES A MATCH and PUFFS his pipe.

DYER

Wind's died down. We'll search for  
him once the sun comes up.

BOYLE

Not a good night to be out there  
alone.

DYER

Not in his shape. Well, I mean,  
clearly his nerves are on edge.

BOYLE

He's been through a lot.

DYER

But just what has he...

BOYLE

There he is! Peaslee?

They RUN to him.

DYER

Good God, man, what the hell  
happened to you?

PEASLEE

Oh, you mean these scratches? I  
stumbled. I...

BOYLE

Sh, sh, sh... Nathaniel, come back  
to your tent. You should lie down.  
(sotto voce)  
Get Wingate, bring him to the tent.

PEASLEE

(deranged)  
I'm quite alright really, I don't  
need to lie down.

UNZIPPING tent. Boyle OPENS A FIRST AID KIT and sets to work  
on Peaslee.

BOYLE

Of course. Still, some of those  
scrapes look a bit nasty, we should  
have a gander.

WINGATE

Father? Are you alright? You were  
gone all night.

PEASLEE

(unconvincing)  
Never better. I walked and walked  
until I became a bit fatigued so I  
laid down for just a quick nap when  
the winds woke me up.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

My nerves were on edge and I fled in a bit of a panic and you know how easy it is to trip over those stones, half buried in the sand and I must have scraped myself.

DYER

Mmm.

WINGATE

You were gone all night, dad.

BOYLE

Your pulse is racing, Nathaniel.

PEASLEE

Is it? I hiked quite some distance.

BOYLE

Of course.

PEASLEE

You know, while I've got the three of you here, I've been thinking. Let's not go to the northeast. I don't think we're likely to find much out there. I've looked and looked and really, there's not much to see. We've found plenty of specimens here. Really, we've succeeded quite well. Our work here is really all but done. Northeast, well, there's hardly any blocks out there. Our funding will dry up and what will we have to show for it? Besides, the miners don't like it, think it's bad luck out that way. Not a good place to dig. Full of snakes too.

WINGATE

Dad?

BOYLE

Nathaniel, you should get some fluid in you. Professor Dyer and I will get you some tea. Wingate, keep your father company.

Boyle and Dyer LEAVE the tent. Sound of Peaslee MURMURING to Wingate in the background.

DYER

I'm no psychologist, but I'd say  
he's off his rocker.

BOYLE

The man just went through some kind  
of intense psychological trauma.

DYER

What do we do?

BOYLE

Try to keep him calm, see if he  
recovers.

MUSICAL STINGER. The men gather for BREAKFAST the next  
morning.

MACKENZIE

Morning, lads. Beautiful day! Who  
wants some coffee?

MUMBLES of assent and AD LIBS of dining follow.

PEASLEE

(whispering)

Wingate. I can't stay here. I have  
to go home. I need you to fly me to  
Perth.

WINGATE

Perth? That's a thousand miles.

PEASLEE

I can't stay here. I need to go. I  
need to go soon.

WINGATE

Well, alright Dad. I'll take you.  
But what we're doing here is  
important. I can't just abandon it.

PEASLEE

Then fly me to Perth. I'll book a  
ship home myself. You can do what  
you please.

WINGATE

Are you sure?

PEASLEE

Absolutely. One more thing: you have to take the plane and scout to the northeast.

WINGATE

Dad, the main dig is to the west. I promised Mackenzie I'd...

PEASLEE

You need to do this for me. Fly and tell me what you see.

WINGATE

Sure, Dad. I'll have a look.

The sound of an AIRPLANE flies over and fades out.

18

BACK AGAIN

18

PEASLEE

(to Chambers)

Humouring me, my son made the survey, flying over all the terrain my walk could possibly have covered. Nothing of what I had found remained in sight. Shifting sand wiped out every trace.

Wingate flew me to Perth on July 20th, but decided to return to the expedition. He stayed with me until the 25th, when I boarded your fine vessel.

DR. CHAMBERS

What happened that night in the desert?

Peaslee's FEET track through the wastes of sand. MUSIC builds below the narration.

PEASLEE

I hiked northeastward. Here and there I saw those primal Cyclopean blocks. And yet I plodded on as if to some eldritch rendezvous. Something was fumbling and rattling at the latch of my recollection, while another unknown force sought to keep the portal barred. ~~The night was windless.~~

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

~~Each sand embedded megalith seemed part of endless rooms and corridors of pre human masonry, carved with symbols that I knew too well from years of custom as a captive mind of the Great Race.~~

At moments I fancied I saw those conical horrors moving about, and I feared to look down lest I find myself one with them in aspect. Yet all the while I saw the sand-covered blocks as well as the rooms and corridors. I was awake and dreaming at the same time. Eventually I spied a heap of blocks. It was the largest group in one place that I had seen so far, a low, irregularly round mass of megaliths and smaller fragments some forty feet across and from two to eight feet high. For the first time in this aeon-shaken waste I had come upon masonry in its original position.

He toils to CLIMB up and onto the great stones.

I clambered over the heap. This was once a colossal corridor thirty feet tall. ~~There would have been rooms opening off on the right, and a strange inclined planes would have wound down to lower depths.~~

How did I know that this level should have been far underground? How did I know that there would be one of those horrible, metal-banded trap-doors at the very bottom four levels down?

DR. CHAMBERS

Go on.

He TEARS at the rocks, prying and opening between them.

PEASLEE

As if in the clutch of some compelling fate and with the strength of a man possessed, I wrenched aside one titan fragment and then another.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

A black rift began to yawn, and when I had pushed away every fragment small enough to budge, an aperture opened large enough to admit me.

I drew out my torch and cast a beam into the opening. Below me was a chaos of tumbled masonry, sloping roughly down, evidently the result of some bygone collapse from above.

DR. CHAMBERS

You didn't...

As he enters, only his ECHOING FOOTSTEPS break the silence.

PEASLEE

It seems like the utter apex of insanity. Perhaps it was -- yet I commenced a mad scramble down the sinister incline below. Walls of crumbling stonework loomed dimly under the direct beams of my torch. Ahead, however, was only unbroken darkness.

Physical sensation was dead, and even fear remained as a wraith-like, inactive gargoyle leering impotently at me. I reached a level floor strewn with fallen blocks ~~shapeless fragments of stone, and sand and detritus of every kind.~~ On either side -- perhaps thirty feet apart -- rose massive walls, exactly what I had seen in countless dreams of the elder world.

~~The littered floor was nearly as hard to traverse as the downward heap had been, but I managed to pick my difficult way.~~ I cast the torchlight slowly and carefully over worn remnants of carving. But the carvings... they were the strange designs I'd dreamed of for more than a score of years!

DR. CHAMBERS

Perhaps they merely seemed familiar?

PEASLEE

No, the ancient corridor in which I stood was the original of something I knew in sleep as intimately as I knew my own house in Arkham. I knew this place. Would the way to the central archives still be open? The awesome records that once lay cased in those rectangular vaults of rustless metal?

There reposed the whole history, past and future, of the cosmic space-time continuum -- written by captive minds from every orb and every age in the solar system. I thought of the locked metal shelves, and of the curious knob twistings needed to open each one. It was then that madness took me utterly. An instant later, and I was leaping and stumbling over the rocky debris toward the well-remembered incline to the depths below.

DR. CHAMBERS

Nathaniel, it was just an especially vivid dream.

PEASLEE

I hope so, yes, some daemonic dream or illusion born of delirium. The ultimate apex of nightmare, made worse by the blasphemous tug of pseudo-memory.

Onward through the blackness of the abyss I leaped, plunged, and staggered -- often falling and bruising myself, and once nearly shattering my torch. I found the downward incline and descended to a gaping, ragged chasm where the stonework had fallen through, revealing incalculable inky depths beneath. I leaped across the void and pressed on.

~~I stumbled past a room of machines with fantastic ruins of metal, half-buried beneath fallen vaulting.~~

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

Everything was where I knew it would be as I pressed on to the central archives.

I felt a curious surge of weakness as I steered my course through the crypt of one of those great windowless, ruined towers of alien, basalt masonry. This primal vault was round and fully two hundred feet across. The floor here was free from anything but dust and sand, and I could see the apertures leading upward and downward.

In the dreams, the downward aperture had been tightly sealed and nervously guarded. Now it lay open -- black and yawning -- and giving forth a current of cool, damp air. It was sheer madness that impelled and guided me.

DR. CHAMBERS

Nathaniel, perhaps we should stop...

PEASLEE

I came to a low, circular crypt with arches opening off on every side. ~~The walls were densely hieroglyphed and chiselled with curvilinear symbols.~~ This was my fated destination. This vast, earth-protected pile, built with supernal skill and strength to last as long as the earth itself.

~~I was past being astonished by the familiarity of what I saw.~~ On every hand the great hieroglyphed metal shelf-doors loomed monstrously. I raced through unending tangles of aisles and corridors.

DR. CHAMBERS

What were you looking for?

PEASLEE

I had no idea, but some force of evil potency pulled at my dazed will, so that I felt I was not running at random. I wanted to unlock something.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

Eventually, I reached the lowest level and struck off to the right of the incline. For some reason I tried to soften my steps. I recalled the presence there of one of the metal barred trap doors. Soon I found it, yawning widely open.

A dread faint RUMBLE oozes from the hole.

Something about the dust on the level floor troubled me. In the light of my torch it seemed as if that dust were not as even as it ought to be -- there were places where it looked thinner, as if it had been disturbed not many months before. When I brought the torchlight close I saw lines of impressions -- tracks of a sort, each slightly over a foot square, and consisting of five nearly circular three-inch prints. They appeared to lead in two directions, as if something had gone somewhere and returned.

DR. CHAMBERS

You should have run, right then.

PEASLEE

I should have, but before I knew it I was past the heap of fallen cases and running on tiptoe through aisles of unbroken dust toward a point which I seemed to know horribly well. Would the shelf be reachable by a human body? Would the lock be undamaged and workable? And what would I do -- what dare I do with what I both hoped and feared to find?

Soon I was standing still, staring at a row of shelves. They were in a state of almost perfect preservation. I put the torch in my mouth and began to climb. I used both the swinging door and the edge of the aperture itself in my ascent, and managed to avoid any loud creaking.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

Balanced on the upper edge of the door, and leaning far to my right, I could just reach the lock I sought. My fingers were clumsy at first; but the memory-rhythm was strong in them. After less than five minutes of trying there came a click whose familiarity was all the more startling because I had not consciously anticipated it. In another instant the metal door was slowly swinging open.

Just within reach of my right hand was a case covered in the hieroglyphs. I dislodged it amidst a shower of gritty flakes. I shifted it to my back, and let the hook catch hold of my collar. I awkwardly clambered down to the dusty floor.

Kneeling in the dust, I swung the case around and rested it in front of me. My hands shook. I do not know how long it was before I dared to lift that metal cover. I shut off the torch to save the battery. Then, in the dark, I lifted the cover without turning on the light. Last of all, I flashed the torch upon the exposed page -- steeling myself in advance to suppress any sound no matter what I should find.

DR. CHAMBERS

And was it...?

PEASLEE

I looked for an instant, then collapsed. What I dreaded and expected was there. Either I was dreaming, or time and space had become a mockery.

DR. CHAMBERS

Dreaming?

PEASLEE

I must be dreaming -- but I would test the horror by carrying this thing back and showing it to my son.

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

Torch in hand, and ominous case under one arm, I tiptoed in silent panic past the abyss and those lurking suggestions of prints. I lessened my precautions as I climbed up the inclines, but I dreaded having to cross through the black basalt crypt. ~~I thought of that which the Great Race had feared.~~

It was harder and harder to be quiet as I stumbled among debris and fragments. Then I came to the mound of debris through which I would have to squeeze. In my descent I had made some noise, and I now dreaded sound above all things. I clambered up the barrier as best I could, and pushed the case through the opening ahead of me.

As I tried to grasp the case again, it fell some distance ahead of me down the slope of the debris, making a disturbing clatter and arousing echoes which sent me into a cold perspiration. I lunged for it at once, and regained it without further noise -- but a moment afterward...

STONE BLOCKS SLOWLY FALL in a growing crescendo of stone. After the ECHOES die away, an unearthly SHRILL WHISTLING sounds from far away in the subterranean labyrinth.

PEASLEE

God no!

He GRABS the case and torch and FLEES.

PEASLEE

I reached the mountain of debris which towered into blackness beyond the caved-in roof, and bruised and cut myself repeatedly scrambling up its steep slope of jagged blocks. Just as I blindly crossed the summit....

Peaslee SHOUTS and the blocks below him GIVE WAY and he falls in a mangling AVALANCHE of sliding masonry whose cannon-loud UPROAR split the black cavern air in a deafening series of EARTH-SHAKING REVERBERATIONS.

PEASLEE

I plunged ahead, tripping and scrambling. Then, just as I approached the basalt crypt...

Distant ECHOES of the avalanche die away. But another blast of the frightful alien WHISTLING sounds, this time from another direction.

PEASLEE

This time there was no doubt about it -- and what was worse, the whistling came from a point not behind, but ahead of me.

He SHRIEKS. The PIPING still comes from ahead of him and a more distant version of it sounds far behind. A ghastly, howling WIND blasts through the tunnels.

PEASLEE

I flew through the hellish vault. A torrent of wind and shrieking seemed to curl and twist purposefully around. Like a noose or lasso thrown around me, it pulled me back. I clattered over a great barrier of blocks and was again in the structure that led to the surface.

(muttering to self)

*It's just a dream - I will wake up. I'm in camp. I'm home in Arkham...*

I began to mount the incline until I reached the four-foot chasm across the tunnel floor. Descending, the leap had been easy - - but could I clear the gap when going uphill, hampered by fright, exhaustion, the metal case, and the tug of that daemon wind?

A chill blast of WIND and nauseous WHISTLING pummel Peaslee's senses.

PEASLEE

My torch grew feeble. The chill blasts of wind and the nauseous whistling shrieks behind me were for the moment like a merciful opiate, dulling my imagination to the horror of the yawning gulf ahead. And then I became aware of the added blasts and whistling in front of me, surging up through the cleft. Sanity departed -- I leaped with every ounce of strength I possessed, and was instantly engulfed in a pandaemoniac vortex of loathsome sound and utter, materially tangible blackness.

It SOUNDS just like that.

DR. CHAMBERS

You fell? What happened?

PEASLEE

This was -- is the end of my experience. Dream, madness, and memory merged wildly together in a series of fantastic, fragmentary delusions.

A bizarre sonic journey of MUSIC AND EFFECTS accompanies Peaslee as he plunges into the gulf, buffeted by the hellish WIND and WHISTLING.

PEASLEE

I fell through incalculable leagues of sentient darkness. Dormant, rudimentary senses seemed to awake in me, telling of pits and voids peopled by floating horrors and leading to crags and oceans and cities of windowless, basalt towers upon which no light ever shone.

Secrets of the primal planet flashed through my brain, and there were known to me things which not even the wildest of my former dreams had ever suggested. Cold fingers of damp vapor clutched and picked at me. There were visions of the Cyclopean city of my dreams.

(MORE)

## PEASLEE (cont'd)

I was in my conical, non-human body again, and mingled with crowds of the Great Race.

Then, superimposed upon these pictures, were frightful flashes of a non-visual consciousness involving desperate struggles, a writhing free from clutching tentacles of whistling wind, an insane, bat-like flight through half-solid air, a feverish burrowing through the cyclone-whipped dark, and a wild stumbling and scrambling over fallen masonry. Then climbing and crawling into a blaze of moonlight through a jumble of debris which slid and collapsed after me. Moonlight marked my return of the waking world.

The WIND, now more earthly but no less violent, roars and then slowly ebbs into stillness.

## PEASLEE

I clawed through the sands, and around me shrieked such a tumult of wind as I had never known. My clothing was in rags, and my whole body was a mass of bruises and scratches.

My flashlight was gone, so too was the metal case. Raising my head, I looked behind me, and saw only the sterile sands of the desert. I lurched to my feet and began to stagger southwestward toward the camp. What in truth had happened to me?

If that abyss was real, then the Great Race was real. Had I been drawn back a hundred and fifty million years in those dark, baffling days of my amnesia? Had my body been the vehicle of an alien consciousness from palaeogean gulfs of time? Had I, as the captive mind of those shambling horrors, known that accursed city of stone in its primordial heyday?

(MORE)

PEASLEE (cont'd)

Had I talked with minds from corners of time and space, and written the annals of my own world for those titan archives? And were those others -- those elder things of the mad winds and daemon pipings -- in truth a lingering, lurking menace, waiting in the dark?

DR. CHAMBERS

Nathaniel, you know...

PEASLEE

I do not know. If it was real, there is no hope. Then there lies upon this world of man a mocking and incredible shadow out of time. But, mercifully, there is no proof. I did not bring back the metal case, the buried city has not been found. If the laws of the universe are kind, it will never be found.

The awful truth behind my tortured years of dreaming hinges absolutely upon the actuality of what I thought I saw in those buried ruins. I can hardly bring myself to speak that crucial revelation, though doubtless, Dr. Chambers, you can guess.

DR. CHAMBERS

(convinced)

The book, that book you found..?

PEASLEE

No eye had seen, no hand had touched that book since the advent of man to this planet. And yet, when I flashed my torch upon it in that frightful abyss, I saw that the letters on those pages were not nameless hieroglyphs of earth's youth. Not the fantastical scrawl of some alien race. They were the letters of our familiar alphabet, spelling out the words of the English language in my own handwriting.

19 CLOSING

19

Dark Adventure closing THEME.

CHESTER LANGFIELD

You've been listening to H.P. Lovecraft's "The Shadow Out of Time", brought to you by our sponsor, Fleur de Lys, -- the cigarette made from the finest tobaccos. Fleur de Lys -- a boon for a breathless age. Until next week, this is Chester Langfield reminding you to never go anywhere alone; if it looks bad, don't look; and save the last bullet for yourself.

ANNOUNCER

"The Shadow Out of Time" was adapted for radio and produced by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman. Original music by Troy Sterling Nies. The Dark Adventure Ensemble featured: Leslie Baldwin, Aidan Branney, Sean Branney, Kacey Camp, Mark Colson, Dan Conroy, Steve Coombs, Matt Foyer, McKerrin Kelly, Andrew Leman, Anna Lerbom, Barry Lynch, John McKenna, Josh Thoemke and Noah Wagner. Tune in next week for "The Wailing Octopus" -- a Zeke Ford adventure. Dark Adventure Radio Theatre is a production of the HPLHS Broadcasting Group, a subsidiary of HPLHS, Inc., copyright 1931...plus seventy-seven.

Radio STATIC and fade out.