

H. P. Lovecraft's
The Case of Charles Dexter Ward

by

Christopher Bradley

<http://www.chrisbradleywriter.com>

swordandlion@gmail.com

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"The Case of Charles Dexter Ward"

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- NIGHT
(GUARD, NURSE)

MIDDLE-SHOT on bed. There is a blue-gray dust. Look over to the window. The window is open and there is a breeze stirring the drapes; the window is barred on the outside. Pan to the door. It's a heavy door with a small window in it. Freeze there. There is a clunk as the door is unlocked and a nurse comes in pushing a cart. She's accompanied by a guard.

The nurse looks around.

NURSE

Mr. Ward?

The guard pushes by, pulling his baton as he does so. Look with him as he searches the room, quickly. He finds nothing. He pulls his radio handset and speaks into it.

GUARD

Emergency. Code one. Charles Ward
is not in room 415. Repeat,
Charles Ward has escaped room 415.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Roll main title credits.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

LONG SHOT of Dr. Marinus Willett, a man into his sixties but still strong of body, though he has tired and haunted eyes, sitting and staring into the blaze in the fireplace.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

Dr. Willett, what happened with
Charles Ward?

Willett turns to where we presume the voice came from and
ends up staring at the audience.

WILLETT

There were physical aberrations
that were noticed by the examining
physicians when Charles went into
the Greenwood Hospital.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

He was there for mental problems.

WILLETT

Yes.

(sighs with laugh-
ter)

He was there for mental problems.
It does not mean that why he was
there was what he should have been
there for. A close examining of
Char -- the patient was done at ad-
mitting. He no longer had the
birthmark on his hip, noted by ear-
lier physicals and he had a scar
above his left eye, and a discol-
oration or large mole next to his
left nipple.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

What kind of person was Charles
Ward?

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY
(CHARLES, WILLETT)

C.U. on the face Charles Ward as a boy. He is looking up with wide eyes fascinating by what he's seeing. Dolly around until we're looking from young Ward's POV looking up at vast arrays of books.

WILLETT

(V.O.)

Charles Ward, as I knew him, was a youth interested in learning.

INT. LIBRARY -- DAY
(CHARLES, LIBRARIAN)

MIDDLE-SHOT on young Ward. We're looking at young Ward over a huge desk in the library. He's looking in a book that's enormous, barely able to see the words.

Young Ward fades away. He is replaced by adolescent Ward, reading a different, massive tome on the same table. Adolescent Ward fades, too, and is replaced by adult Ward, a young man at a microfiche reader with a notebook at hand.

Charles Ward makes some notes. He looks at the microfiche reader. We cut as he stands to a . We dolly with him as he goes to the desk. We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of him walking to the desk. We cut to his POV as he looks at the librarian, who looks up from what she's doing. The librarian recognizes Charles.

LIBRARIAN

Yes, Charles?

Cut to MIDDLE-SHOT of Charles, notebook in hand.

CHARLES

Have you ever heard of Joseph Curwen?

Cut to MIDDLE-SHOT of librarian, who comes up to the counter where Charles is.

LIBRARIAN

I can't say that I have. Why do you ask?

Cut to MIDDLE-SHOT of the two of them talking.

CHARLES

Well, I was going through the microfiches, the new ones of all those old records that had been transferred here in the 1890s. I came across something that . . . well . . .

(consults notes)

One of my ancestors, Ann Tillinghast, changed her name on the grounds "that her husband's name was become a public reproach by reason of what was known after his decease; the which confirming an ancient common rumor, though not to be credited by a loyal wife till so proven as to be wholly past doubting." Her name had been Curwen before that, the wife of Joseph Curwen.

LIBRARIAN

Well, I've heard of the Tillinghasts. Very old name in Rhode Island -- but I'm sure you know that.

CHARLES

Yeah. But . . . Curwen. What could have happened so that, on one hand, she would want to change her name but, on the other hand, it wasn't in every paper from Boston to New York?

LIBRARIAN

(shrugs)

Beats me, honey. That was, when . . . ?

CHARLES

1772.

LIBRARIAN

That was a long time ago. To us, well, now we're all interested in that sort of thing -- the scandals and rumors, even when happening to our relatives, don't touch us directly. To them, it was probably a different sort of thing. Families have secrets, Charles, and we all cover for each other. How often have you known something personal about someone's family and not said a thing about it, out of respect for their privacy? It wasn't different then, I'm sure.

CHARLES

Well, it is two-hundred and thirty years later. I'm going to get to the bottom of this. I'm excited. A scandal in MY family.

LIBRARIAN

Charles, sometimes it's best to let sleeping dogs lie.

Cut to a C.U. on Charles. There is a hint of a powerful will in his eyes.

CHARLES

Not a chance.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

Middle-shot of Willett in his chair, looking at the fire in profile, his face thoughtful and hurt.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

How did you know Charles Ward?
There was great differences in your age.

WILLETT

I was his psychologist from a young age. His parents were always worried about his occupations and hobbies. His mind that was turned to the past and dark things hidden in it. They were worried. I was a friend of Charles's father and I was trusted with the mental health of Charles when his parents started to worry.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

Was Charles insane even as a youth?

Willett turns to face the droning voice so he is looking through the camera, perhaps at the audience.

WILLETT

He was never mad. Not in any sense recognizable by modern science, or even common sense. He stumbled into things beyond common experience -- but his mind was strong and he was always rational, even at the end. It was the world that became irrational, and I fear I will never be able to make sense of it again, and it was worse for Charles.

INT. WILLETT'S OFFICE -- DAY
(CHARLES, CURWEN, WILLETT)

Middle-shot of Charles sitting in a comfortable table in front of a large wooden desk. Willett's office is somewhat archaic, but in a warm and comfortable way.

Willett passes in front of Charles and the camera follows him. Willett sits behind the desk and puts on his glasses.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

I've discovered something amazing,
Dr. Willett.

Cut to a high-angle shot of Willett's desk and a heavy, rumpiled manila envelope being thrown onto the desk.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett's hand touching the envelope. Cut to a LONG SHOT showing both Willett and Charles, each on either side of the shot looking at each other over the breadth of the shot. Willett undoes the string holding the envelope closed and then takes out the papers from inside of it.

Cut to Willett's POV to show the material of the envelope in an INSERT. On top of the papers in his hand are several very old letters written in an archaic hand -- they're the letters of people like Curwen and his associates, and all the other people who populate the story from the 1760s and 1770s.

Cut back to the LONG SHOT showing the two of them facing each other.

WILLETT

(flipping through
the pages)

What is this? Another one of your projects, I'm taking it?

CHARLES

(giddy)

The project, doctor. The project.

WILLETT

I wasn't aware that a project had assumed such vital dimensions in your mind.

CHARLES

Well, it didn't, not at first, not until I found out something extraordinary. Did you know there was a scandal in my family?

WILLETT

I don't pay too much mind to scandals.

CHARLES

I imagine you wouldn't, you're above all of that. Much less a scandal that's two hundred and thirty years old.

WILLETT

Charles, are you going to get to the point.

CHARLES

I will, I will. I've found that one of my family members, a disgraced merchant by the name of Joseph Curwen, was driven out of Providence because it was thought he was a sorcerer.

DISSOLVE TO:

FADE IN:

EXT. PROVIDENCE, RI -- DAY
(CHARLES)

Establishment shot. It shows the city as it was in Lovecraft's writings -- a densely packed city of old cupolas and gables rising on hills.

CHARLES

(V.O.)

Joseph Curwen came to Providence from Salem, Massachusetts, after the witch scare, in 1692.

EXT. CURWEN'S PROVIDENCE HOUSE -- DAY
(CURWEN, MERRITT, SERVANT)

A LONG SHOT showing the first Curwen house. It's a many-gabled beast of a house with two stories with an unkempt garden packing the distance between the house and the street, where there is a low wall with an iron gate. The iron gate has astrological and alchemical symbols on it.

A horse and carriage, with liveried servants, drives up. The footman hops off the back of the carriage and opened up the door.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of John Merritt, dressed finely in the latest fashions of 1742 getting out of the carriage. The camera follows him as he walks up the stair. Merritt knocks on the door with the silver pommel of his cane.

Cut to Merritt's POV as the door swings open to show an incredibly ancient servant dressed in the French style of 1690s.

SERVANT

(with French accent)

Oui, monsieur?

MERRITT

(with English accent)

I'm Mr. John Merritt, here to see a certain Mr. Joseph Curwen. I presume I'm at the correct address?

SERVANT

Oui, monsieur.

The servant gets out of the way and opens the door for Merritt. We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Merritt entering the house. It looks like the house is swallowing him.

INT. CURWEN'S LIBRARY -- DAY
(CHARLES, CURWEN, MERRITT, SERVANT)

In a MIDDLE-SHOT, Merritt, sans his coat, is brought into the library by the servant. We follow servant showing Merritt to a chair. Merritt, with ceremony and grace, sits. We cut to a different angle MIDDLE-SHOT of the two men, showing the servant's face -- which should look somewhat sinister in the light that comes only from the open windows behind the servant.

SERVANT

Master Curwen will be with you in a few moments, monsieur. Is there anything I can get for you.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Joseph Curwen coming into the room. Curwen is physically identical to Charles Ward, save for instead of having a look of freshness and innocence on his face, Curwen's face is etched in the lines of horrific experience and soul-burning knowledge; he also looks older than Charles. He is also a person who is, from the onset, incredibly full of presence -- he commands other people with just a flicker of his nightmare filled eyes. Also, he has a scar on his left eyebrow that Charles Ward does not have -- it should be noticeable in many of the shots that follow without dwelling on it. Curwen should always speak with an archaic sounding accent, as should everyone from the 18th century.

CURWEN

Yes, Henri, open a bottle of port
and bring us some biscuits. Master
Merritt must be tired and hungry
from his trip.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of the servant nodding and Merritt still in his chair.

MERRITT

You're too kind, sir.

Cut to a LONG SHOT of Curwen walking over to Merritt. Merritt stands and the two men shake hands. Merritt sits down while Curwen sits on the edge of the library's desk. The dreamy golden light is behind Curwen, hiding the details of his features. Merritt is well lit.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

You have something of a reputation,
sir.

CURWEN

I do, at that, I admit. I admit,
it's all true.

MERRITT

(laughing)

I thought that might be the case, Master Curwen. You know how it is here in the colonies -- if you show the faintest erudition in any subject at all, you're accused of something foul.

CURWEN

Many in the colonies are that way, I don't deny it. But it is different with individuals.

MERRITT

Howso?

CURWEN

Well, Master Merritt, when people in groups came over to the New World it was because they wanted religious freedom, or were escaping debts or crimes in Europe, usually. There were others of us, individuals, who came over because we saw great possibilities in the New World for freedom to pursue our own studies without the sort of learned interference that we get in the Old World.

MERRITT

You're getting straight to the interesting parts, Master Curwen.

CURWEN

I'm a busy man, Master Merritt. While I can make time, other people are striving and working to perfect knowledge in ways most people can scarcely dream of. If I don't work hard, fast and very well, I will be left behind by history -- and more than history.

MERRITT

What kind of work would that be?

Curwen flings out a hand to his bookshelf. We cut to a montage of a camera going over the spines of ancient books in half a dozen languages.

CURWEN

(V.O.)

Paracelsus, Agricola, van Helmont,
Sylvius, Glauber, Boyle, Boerhaave,
Becher and Stahl -- all these men
have hinted at the true end of all
philosophy, but they never dared to
seize the fruit offered to them.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Merritt. He is both concerned and intrigued by this time.

MERRITT

You're an alchemist?

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Curwen, with the light still at his back. Curwen shrugs. He laughs.

CURWEN

Some people would call me that.

Cut back to Merritt, who shifts in his chair.

MERRITT

There are people who would hang you
for alchemy.

Cut back to the shadowy Curwen.

CURWEN

Are you one of them, Master Mer-
ritt?

Cut back to Merritt, who settles back in the chair -- which groans of wood and leather.

MERRITT

I am not a superstitious peasant.
I do not believe that God put
knowledge on this earth for us to
ignore it.

CURWEN

(O.S.)

What about those who would say that
some knowledge is of the Devil?

MERRITT

I can't rightly say I believe in
the Devil.

Cut to a C.U. of Curwen's shadowy face.

CURWEN

Some people would kill you for
that, as surely as they'd stretch
my neck for daring to study the su-
pernatural relation between chemi-
cal reactions and the elements they
embody.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Merritt taking a glass of wine.
He sips it, leans back in his chair and pauses.

MERRITT

I'm not sure I believe in the su-
pernatural at all. Perhaps it is
only things we cannot yet explain
and there is no magic to the world
at all, only human ignorance.

CURWEN

(O.S)

And human ignorance is curable, is-
n't it? Perhaps it is even in-
finitely curable.

Merritt opens his eyes.

MERRITT

What do you mean?

Cut back to Curwen, who leans forward and gets his own
glass of wine.

CURWEN

Some day you should take a trip to my farm house, on the Pawtuxet. I have my prime laboratory there. I would not mind a spin in your coach, too. The first in Providence. It would mean an improvement in my status.

Cut back to Merritt.

MERRITT

You're an unusual man, Master Curwen. Ask me this -- you came here in 1692, yes?

Cut to Curwen nodding his head. Then cut back to Merritt, who sips the wine.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

That was fifty years ago, almost to the day. You were a grown man when you arrived in Providence, and even now you don't look to be a day over thirty-five.

Cut to Curwen, who smiles broadly and slowly.

CURWEN

I come from a long-lived line, Master Merritt, and I have very healthy habits I got from my study of the ancients. Anyone gifted with my lineage and habits would reach or exceed my age.

Cut back to Merritt, who's eyebrow raises as he digests what Curwen tells him. Merritt doesn't precisely buy it, but what is he going to say? Something of his thoughts pass on his face.

MERRITT

I accept, then, your invitation, then, Master Curwen. I am interested to see your laboratory.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- DAY
 (CURWEN, MERRITT, OLDER BUTCHER, SERVANT)

It is raining hard. We start with an EXTREME LONG SHOT of Curwen's farmhouse. It's a more staid affair than his gabled townhouse, but large, with three stories. On one side, exposed to the trail that leads up to it, is a lean-to that dominates that side of the house -- there are several tin and brick chimneys coming out of the lean-to, far more than would be logically needed for a room that small; the smoke pouring from them is visible despite the rain.

In front of the house is wagon with a tarp covering the bed. There are two common people for 1742 standing in front of the wagon, holding the bridle of the horses.

Entering the scene is Merritt's carriage heading towards the farmhouse.

Cut to a LONG SHOT showing Merritt's carriage rolling up and stopping in front of Curwen's farmhouse. The footman hops off the back and opens a large umbrella. He opens the door.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Merritt stepping onto the flagstones, and then Curwen coming out. Then move over to the second wagon and the two butchers holding the horses' reins in the heavy rain.

Cut to the butchers' POV with Curwen breaking away from the footman and Merritt and stalking over to them. Cut to the butchers, who are tensing for a confrontation with an extraordinarily unpleasant man.

Cut to a LONG SHOT with the butchers to the left and Curwen entering the shot from the right.

CURWEN

What is this?

OLDER BUTCHER

(nervous)

Your servant said the meat wasn't fresh enough and the pigs were slaughtered just this morning, sir. We killed the pigs in good faith and your servant rejected the meat.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Merritt moving over to where Curwen was dealing with the butchers, his face curious.

Cut back to the LONG SHOT of Curwen and the butchers, with Merritt and his footman just in the background. Curwen walks to the wagon.

CURWEN

Show me the meat.

Cut to a high-angle shot of the wagon and the younger butcher throwing off the tarp covering the slaughtered pigs. There are three slaughtered pigs, not even skinned.

Cut to a C.U. of Curwen's face. Curwen is grim but he nods.

CURWEN (CONT'D)

I can smell the blood. It's fresh as I could hope. Send it around back and tell that useless Indian bastard to pay you ten percent over what we agreed or I'll whip the skin off his hide.

Cut to a C.U. of the butchers' faces. They relax a bit and the older nods.

OLDER BUTCHER

Thank you, Master Curwen.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Curwen turning away and walking towards the house. Merritt catches up, the footman still carrying the umbrella.

MERRITT

That's a lot of pork, Master Curwen. How many people are here?

Cut to a view from the porch, showing the two men and the servant with the umbrella behind them covering them. The servant stays on the stairs as Curwen and Merritt become sheltered by the porch.

CURWEN

Two servants and myself.

MERRITT

Three pigs for three people? You must eat a prodigious amount of pork.

Curwen stops. He smiles, a wicked smile.

CURWEN

Master Merritt, I like pig just fine, but most of the animal is used in my experiments.

MERRITT

What of your . . . interest in graveyards.

CURWEN

So you've heard of that. What of it?

The two men lock gazes for a while. It's clear that Merritt is already less than enamored of his host.

MERRITT

I had heard rumors of you engaging in unwholesome past times.

CURWEN

Well, out with it.

Another pregnant pause.

MERRITT

I heard you frequented graveyards with tremendous interest and now I learn you experiments use large quantities of pork.

CURWEN

Large quantities of beef, too, the bloodier the better. I've thought about raising the damn beasts, but I've no skill at raising stock. Is it an issue that I slaughter beasts bred for the slaughter? Or that I have an interest in genealogy, a past time many possess?

MERRITT

It's curious.

CURWEN

Master Merritt, if you're losing your nerve I could understand you wanting to return to the pampered manners of the Providence townsfolk and leaving the matters in which I deal for the harder of mind.

MERRITT

(bristling)

Master Curwen, I assure you I am hard of mind.

CURWEN

Then, Master Merritt, come into my house and be welcome. There are wonders and terrors within. It is my experience that neither wonder nor terror ever is what we think it will be.

INT. FARMHOUSE LIBRARY -- DAY
(CURWEN, MERRITT)

We are focused on a MIDDLE-SHOT of a door. It opens and Curwen enters and leaves the shot. Then Merritt enters and leaves the shot.

We cut to a fireplace that has a banked fire and watch as Curwen dispels the gloom by lighting a couple of oil lamps. The walls of the room are covered with books and arcane devices -- all the widgets used in science at the time, like astrolabes and microscopes -- that can fit on bookshelves. But overwhelming there are books with golden lettering on their spines so they shimmer with a half-real golden light.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Merritt going over to one of the bookshelves. After a moment he pulls a thick volume from the shelf and looks at it.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Merritt looking over at Curwen, who is blowing out a match.

MERRITT

This is Les Cultes des Goules.

Curwen flicks his match into the fire and reaches out and pulls a tome and throws it to Merritt. Cut to Merritt catching it and looking at the title. Horror grows in Merritt's eyes. He looks up.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

People have been burned at the stake for owning a copy of Unaus Sprachlichen Kul ten.

Cut to a C.U. of Curwen giving a slight smile.

CURWEN

But not me. I was not burned at the stake for owning that book.

Cut back to Merritt.

MERRITT

You would have died in Salem if they found this. You would have been hanged.

Cut back to Curwen.

CURWEN

Then it is good I was not in Salem to be hanged, wasn't it?

Cut back to Merritt.

MERRITT

It would have been inconvenient if you had, yes.

Cut to a MEDIUM SHOT of the two men in profile.

CURWEN

Do you still wish to see my laboratory?

MERRITT

Do you give these medieval books any merit?

CURWEN

Medieval? Most of them are far, far older than that, really. The early church was far more successful at repressing and destroying knowledge than the Renaissance church -- which is corrupt from the ground up with ancient lore. That is why we don't have the ancient texts that these books are the distillation of. And yes, I do give them merit. More merit than any other books I've read.

MERRITT

And you've read a great many books?

CURWEN

A great many books, indeed, Master Merritt.

MERRITT

And what of the Bible?

CURWEN

Some interesting poetry, some intriguing history, many lies and tremendous naivete.

MERRITT

Naivete? How do you think that?

Cut to a C.U. of Curwen, who turns to look in the fire so we can see the flames dancing in his eyes.

CURWEN

It is obvious to me the author of the Bible, particularly the New Testament, was wholly ignorant of the true order of the world -- an order known for thousands of years, even then. It is without pardon for such a manifestly untrue fantasy to become the dominate intellectual trend for seventeen hundred years. It has done damage that cannot be known to the real advance of knowledge, of which modern science and natural philosophy is but the palest of shadows only now coming out from the yoke of Christianity.

He looks up at, presumably, Merritt, though there is a great distance in his eyes.

CURWEN (CONT'D)

Do you know what natural philosophers in Europe are interested in, right now?

MERRITT

(O.S.)

No.

CURWEN

Steam engines! How much energy does it take to turn water to steam, or ice to water! This is what they call advance! It's a mockery.

Cut to a C.U. of Merritt, who is still holding the two books, almost as if they were poison snakes.

MERRITT

And you are performing real advances?

Cut back to the C.U. of Curwen.

CURWEN

Very much so. Come with me.

INT. TAVERN -- NIGHT

(MERRITT, WHIPPLE)

We start at the door, which is flung open. It is storming outside. A heavily cloaked man comes in and pushes back his hood: it is Merritt. He has a shaken look to him.

The camera goes with him as he makes his way to the a table and sits. We cut to a reverse angle showing Merritt with his hands in his lap, the shadows making him a cutout against a roaring fire in the background. He looks weary and ground down.

A youngish man enters the shot, dressed gaudily. He is Abraham Whipple, in 1742 a young man. He sits down.

WHIPPLE

Are you doing well, Master Merritt.
You look like you've seen the Devil
himself.

Cut to a C.U. of Merritt looking up at Whipple.

MERRITT

I didn't know you were in port,
Abraham Whipple.

Cut to Whipple shrugging.

WHIPPLE

Well, I am, as is clear to see.
What happened to you, Master Merritt?

Cut to a profile C.U. of Merritt, who turns to the camera so the firelight glistens in his eyes. He looks away from the flame so his face is cast in shadows.

MERRITT

I just came up from Joseph Curwen's
place.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of the two men. Whipple's face is curious.

WHIPPLE

Curwen? That name is ill-omened in Providence.

MERRITT

How old are you, Abraham?

WHIPPLE

Twenty-four.

MERRITT

In all that time have you seen Curwen age?

WHIPPLE

No, sir, I have not, and we attend the same church together.

MERRITT

He attends church?

WHIPPLE

Regular as Sundays. He never mixes, though, and everyone talks about him fearsome.

MERRITT

What do they say about him?

Whipple shrugs.

WHIPPLE

Evil things.

FADE
OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT
(CURWEN, WHIPPLE)

An EXTREME LONG SHOT of Curwen's farmhouse. The POV is from a hilltop nearby and in the foreground of the shot are two men with sweat stained shirts staring at the farmhouse. There is a crackle from the house and a faint sound like someone screaming.

CURWEN

(O.S. -- from the
house and faint)
Y'ai ng'ngah, Yog-Sothoth, h'ee -
l'geb f'ai throdog!

WHIPPLE

(V.O -- over Cur-
wen's chanting
which continues
over and over)
People hear strange noises and see
odd lights coming from the house at
all hours. More meat goes into the
house than could ever be used by
the people who live in it.

CUT TO:

EXT. BY THE PAWTUXET RIVER -- DAY
(STRANGE VOICE, WHIPPLE)

A couple of young boys are down in the bank by the river,
with a hill rising up over them. They come to a doorway
of ancient stone set into the hillside at ground level.
The older boy nears the door.

Cut to the bare stone of the door. The cheek of the elder
boy enters the shot as if he's listening for something.

STRANGE VOICE

(O.S. and a whis-
per)
Help me. Help me. Help me. Let
me die. Release me. Forgive me.
Help me.

Cut to the boy jumping away from the door and landing in
the shallow of the river with horror stricken eyes.

WHIPPLE

(V.O. -- the mum-
bling from behind
the door goes on)
I've heard people finding doors
into the hills under the farmhouse.
I've heard people say strange voic-
es come up from the hills, there.

CUT TO:

INT. TAVERN -- CONTINUOUS
(MERRITT, WHIPPLE)

Back to Whipple talking to Merritt.

MERRITT

Do you give any credit to these things?

WHIPPLE

Who's to know the truth of it? If it was one thing, or two, well, I could ignore it. But it is many things from many people and in my mind there's a pattern formed. I can't say I believe in magic or anything like that. I've been a lot of places and seen a lot of things and none of them, to my mind, were magic no matter how much they were claimed to be. But there is something queer about Curwen and that farm he has.

(beat)

What did you see at his place?

Merritt laughs. He gets up and we follow him, momentarily leaving Whipple out of the shot, as Merritt goes to the bar.

MERRITT

A pint of beer, sir.

The bartender nods and pours the pint. Merritt puts down a coin and we follow him as he comes back to his table and sits. He drinks a long draught from his cup and puts the cup down.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

Nothing I could put my finger on. He showed me his library and no more cursed a collection of books could I imagine. I saw many standard works for the modern chemist right alongside such tomes . . . I saw Hermes Trismogistus in Mesnard's edition, the Turba Philosopharum, Geber's Liber Investigationis; and Artephous' Key of Wisdom. They were all there, with the cabalistic Zohar, Peter Jamm's set of Albertus Magnus, Raymond Lully's Ars Magica et Ultima . . . I think in the Zetzner's edition. I saw Roger Bacon's Thesaurus Chemicus and Fludd's Clavis Alchimiae, Trithemius' De Lapide Philosophico crowding them close. There were Medieval Jews and Muslims in there, though I speak neither Hebrew nor Arabic, I recognized some of the titles. I saw a book labelled Qanoon-e-Islam but when I picked it up, the title plate said it was Al-Azif, know in English as The Necronomicon.

WHIPPLE

There was some business with that book up in Kingsport, eh, in Massachusetts-Bay?

MERRITT

Aye. I don't know the whole of it, but there were monstrous things whispered of the goings on there, and a copy of The Necronomicon was burned, there. I heard it said that the smoke from the book caused those who breathed it a disease, so foul was it.

WHIPPLE

How do you tell the truth from the superstition? I don't believe the smoke of any book to be worse than the smoke of any other.

(beat)

But all you saw were books?

MERRITT

Such books! I've traveled the length and breadth of Europe. Oh, I've seen these books a few times. One here, two there, scattered across the finest libraries in Europe. But to see them in one place was chilling.

(beat)

But . . . that's not the full of it.

WHIPPLE

Tell me.

MERRITT

Oddly enough, it was a detail. On the huge mahogany table that was central to his laboratory there was, face down, a badly worn copy of Borellus. Curwen's back was to me and I flipped it over to the page the book was open on. The book was open to about the middle, and one paragraph displayed such thick and tremulous pen-strokes beneath the lines that I committed the passage to memory.

WHIPPLE

What did it say?

MERRITT

"The essential salts of animals may be so prepared and preserved that an ingenious man may have the whole Ark of Noah in his own study, and raise the fine shape of an animal out of its ashes at his pleasure, and by the like method from the essential salts of human dust, a philosopher may, without any criminal necromancy, call up the shape of any dead ancestor from the dust whereinto his body had been incinerated."

WHIPPLE

My God. Do you think this is true?

MERRITT

Could it be? It is absurd and these medieval alchemists are fools, and they write in code furthermore. But this writing was in Curwen's hand.

INT. WILLETT'S OFFICE -- DAY
(CHARLES, WILLETT)

We cut back to a shot of Willett going through the papers Charles had handed him.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

As you can see, there were many ill rumors about Curwen.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett looking up at Charles.

WILLETT

I can see that, yes. Your parents, especially your mother, are starting to worry about the direction of your research, though I did not know why until now. Your family is very conservative and would not like sleeping ghosts stirred.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT showing the two of them.

CHARLES

Oh, please, doctor!

WILLETT

I'm just saying, Charles, that they're worried.

CHARLES

I don't see why they're so worried. I'm a grown man

WILLETT

You're nineteen and still living under their roof.

CHARLES

I'm doing well in school, as you know.

WILLETT

There's more to measuring life than by one's performance in school.

CHARLES

Oh, yes, you could measure life like father does, but income?

WILLETT

Charles.

CHARLES

Dr. Willett, I know you're bringing this up because you're paid to bring it up

WILLETT

I'm bringing it up because I'm your friend as well as the friend of your father.

CHARLES

I want to do this. With all the things I could be doing in school, why do my parents have a problem with genealogical research? I could be doing drugs and drinking a gallon of beer every Friday night and having unprotected sex with every cheap lay in Providence. And I bet you if I was doing that, Dad wouldn't care. He'd say, "Boys will be boys" and you wouldn't mention it, and he wouldn't bother me about it. But . . . he's bugging because I engage in, get this, genealogical research. Would he be happier if I got a heroin habit? C'mon! He's just looking for something to complain about.

WILLETT

When you say it like that, it does sound a trifle absurd.

Charles makes a face like he's trying to prevent himself from laughing.

CHARLES

Well, maybe it's because it is sorta absurd.

Willett starts laughing and Charles laughs, too. Then:

WILLETT

You should bring me what you find. It'll settle down your parents if I can tell them that you're not getting involved in Satanism or something equally ridiculous.

CHARLES

Do you have any interest in it at all?

Willettt looks at the folder in front of him and touches it lightly with his fingertips.

Cut to a C.U. on Willettt.

WILLETTT

It's fascinating.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETTT)

We cut back to Willettt in his sitting room, still talking with the strange interlocutor that we have not seen. Our shot starts with a C.U. on Willettt.

WILLETTT

The story slowly came out about Joseph Curwen.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

Did you believe it?

WILLETTT

No. How could I? Eighteenth century Providence wasn't a modern place. It could easily have been that Curwen was slandered for being a free-thinker, for believing in things the community did not find acceptable. Or perhaps he was an unsavory or even wicked man. I think the uncertainty of Curwen, of seeing Curwen only through the lens of people that were not him, was much of the fascination for Charles Ward. He wanted to find the real person behind what he uncovered.

INT. TAVERN -- EVENING
(DUTIE, MERRITT, WHIPPLE, WEEDEN)

This is the same tavern that Whipple and Merritt spoke in -- but it's now 1770 or so. While some of the details have changed, the place is roughly the same.

We pan through the crowd until we get to a table that is seating two men. One of them is middle aged and dressed in fashionable but slightly threadbare clothing, Dutie Tillinghast. The second person is a young man, Ezra Weeden. We stop, there.

WEEDEN

Sweet Jesus, Dutie, I can't believe you did this.

DUTIE

Ezra, I know you're heartbroken, but this is the way it has to be. Joseph Curwen is a very rich man and Eliza will have . . . prospects with him.

WEEDEN

Prospects! You're marrying her off to Satan's own serving man.

(beat)

What does he have on your, Dutie?

DUTIE

What are you saying?

WEEDEN

I'm saying he must have something on you, Captain Tillinghast.

Dutie's face goes red and sets into hard lines.

DUTIE

You're stepping farther than you should, boy.

WEEDEN

Boy, now? How long have I sailed with you? Who was it that saved your skin in Curacao? Now I'm just a boy, gone from almost your son to being your boy. You know the only reason I stayed on with you, despite that whore-son Curwen owning the ship, is for you. And Eliza. You and her -- the only reason I endured that ship of misery.

DUTIE

Ezra, get a hold of yourself.

WEEDEN

No! I will not get ahold of myself, Dutie Tillinghast. I am angry and I am betrayed, and I won't let you play the role of the injured in this. My God! How many times did I look the other way when ship hands vanished after an "interview" with Curwen? How many times did I look the other way when you loaded what only sweet Jesus knows onto a longboat and sailed up the Pawtuxet River. Curwen is damned and you've given Eliza over to him. To be touched by that monster. Eh? He's been in Providence eighty years, now, and doesn't look a day over forty, if that -- he's the Devil in him, you know it.

DUTIE

What's done is done, Ezra Weeden. I'm sorry that this has hurt you.

Cut to a C.U. of Weeden, the fire of the tavern flickering in his eyes and liming his face in ghastly yellow-orange light shifting like a disease.

WEEDEN

Sorry, is it? Poison on your eyes, Captain Tillinghast, and I pray the hand of God is over Eliza. She deserves better than you've given her. And I'll never set foot on a ship you're the captain of again, not even if you're at the helm of the only ship to Paradise.

Dutie stood up and storms out of the shot. Weeden lowers his head into his arms and stifles a cry.

EXT. TAVERN -- MOMENTS LATER

(SMITH, WEEDEN)

The street is broad and muddy near the docks in Providence. We're looking at the door with the Sign of the Unicorn and Stein above it with two torches, one on either side of the door. Lounging near the door is Eleazar Smith.

Weeden enters the shot by coming through the door. His face is angry. Smith pushes himself away from the wall.

SMITH

Ezra! I saw Old Man Tillinghast leave. He didn't look happy. Neither do you.

Weeden stops and turns to his friend.

WEEDEN

He's selling her to that . . . whatever Curwen is. What did you find out?

SMITH

I asked at the Sign of the Star and Crucible and . . . well, most of Curwen's wealth gets spent on all sorts of exotic materials and equipment. He goes through both supplies and equipment fast.

WEEDEN

(a bit distant)
It's not right, Eleazar.

SMITH

What's not right?

WEEDEN

Curwen getting Eliza. It's . . . perverse. I can't stop thinking of the two of them together.

SMITH

Ezra, the marriage is going to happen. Curwen owns his captains.

WEEDEN

Owens. Why do you use that word?

SMITH

Because he does. Everyone knows about his interviews and how he knows everything about everyone, every family. He raises demons from the hills and he uses them to bend people, or break them. Dutie Tillinghast has been broken by Curwen.

WEEDEN

I don't know what to do about him, Eleazar.

SMITH

We know he's wicked. We know he's the Devil's own claw in Providence. If you've got the mind for it, if you've got the guts for it, root him out, Ezra.

Cut to a C.U. of Weeden jerking upright at that and looking at Smith with a hard look in his eyes.

SMITH (CONT'D)

(O.S.)

It won't be easy. Curwen is canny and he's strong.

WEEDEN

It'll be worth it. It won't be just for me, or Eliza, either. Going against Curwen is good for everyone. You're right. I'm in for a penny, I might as well be in for a pound. With God as my judge, I'll expose Curwen for what he is.

EXT. WHIPPLE'S SHIP'S DECK -- DAY
(OFFICER, WHIPPLE, WEEDEN)

We start with a LONG SHOT of Whipple's cog at bay. It's daylight and there's a line of people getting on and off, working cranes to get things out of the holds and like activity. We zoom in on Ezra Weeden who wends his way through the people around and walks up the gangplank.

Cut to a C.U. of Abraham Whipple. He's in his late middle years, now, but fit and strong -- he's at that age where his body hasn't started a strong decline and when he's got more experience than ten normal men and it shows in everything he does. Whipple is cool.

In the background as we look at Whipple we see Weeden talking with an officer, who comes up behind Whipple.

OFFICER

Captain Whipple, there's a Master
Ezra Weeden.

We cut to a shot of Whipple turning around and addressing the officer.

WEEDEN

Bring him on over, midddy.

OFFICER

(saluting)
Aye, aye, captain.

The officer turns and gets Weeden while Whipple slowly walks forward. We stay with Whipple and the officer brings Weeden into the shot. Whipple sizes up Weeden and then looks Weeden in the eye; Weeden looks straight back.

WHIPPLE

You're Dutie Tillinghast's man, eh?

WEEDEN

(bristling)
No longer, Captain Whipple.

WHIPPLE

Why not, Master Weeden?

WEEDEN

He's one of Curwen's creatures, and
I can't abide that.

WHIPPLE

He's been one of Curwen's dogs for
years. Why now?

WEEDEN

Begging your pardon, sir, but I
think you know that, already.

WHIPPLE

(narrowing of the
eyes)

But I want to hear it from you,
son.

WEEDEN

I was betrothed to Eliza Tilling-
hast and her father gave her to
Curwen. That opened my eyes.

WHIPPLE

And what did you see?

WEEDEN

An abomination in the sight of man
and God.

WHIPPLE

If this is so obvious, why hasn't
anyone done anything about it?

WEEDEN

(put off by the
question)

I . . . I don't know, sir. I've
never really thought about it.

WHIPPLE

Well, maybe you should. What do
you want of me?

WEEDEN

You spoke with Master John Merritt,
didn't you, before he died?

WHIPPLE

Aye.

WEEDEN

What did Master Merritt see that
shook him so?

WHIPPLE

(shrugging)

He saw some books.

WEEDEN

Books? That's all?

WHIPPLE

What did you expect him to see, sir? Corpses laid out with giant pentacles around them? Old Scratch sitting down for tea?

WEEDEN

I . . . hoped for more.

WHIPPLE

Everyone in Providence knows that Curwen is a wicked man. We'd do something if we could, Master Weeden, but we can't because there's no proof, only the gossip of old women and the stories of young boys. If we started knocking down doors and dragging people to the noose every time some old woman told a story or every time a child got goosebumps no-one in the world would be safe.

WEEDEN

Are you saying that you'd help me if I had proof.

WHIPPLE

(wry smile)

Half of Providence would help you and the other half would applaud.

Cut to a C.U. of Weeden.

WEEDEN

I will get that proof, then, Captain Whipple.

EXT. BY THE PAWTUXET RIVER -- DAY

(CURWEN, SERVANT, STRANGE VOICE, SMITH, WEEDEN)

Start with a high-angle, LONG SHOT of Weeden and Smith picking their way along the bank of the Pawtuxet -- both are carrying picks and shovels. Then the camera moves ahead and shows a place where a stream that goes over a bank wends its muddy way through a great tumult of fallen earth. On either side of the stream are steep muddy walls that have collapsed.

Cut to a LONG SHOT of the two men coming into the valley.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of the two men standing near where the stream meets the river, their backs to us. Smith points to a place on the tumbled cliff face that has a stone tunnel jutting out of it.

SMITH

There.

He lowers his hand. We cut around to a shot of both of them with the river to their back. Smith puts down his tools and then Weeden does.

WEEDEN

There, then. How long has it been like this?

SMITH

Three weeks.

WEEDEN

Why didn't you dig down?

SMITH

I did, I uncovered the opening but it was full of tumbled down stones.

(beat)

Then night came. There's something down there, Ezra, and it was calling up to me.

Weeden takes his tools and in hand and steps forward. We cut to a reverse angle shot of him moving to where the cut stone outcropping is. Cut to a shot from Weeden's POV showing the mouth of the stone tunnel, which is blocked by tumbled stone. We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Weeden looking over his shoulder.

WEEDEN

Well, come on! The sun isn't getting lower.

Cut to Smith, who is looking up. Zoom out to include Weeden in the shot, who, seeing his friend, turns and looks in the same direction. Then the camera pans in that direction. On top of the hill is Joseph Curwen and the old French servant. Both of them have muskets in their hands. Curwen looks no different, save clothes, as he did in 1742, though it's now almost thirty years later.

CURWEN

Is that you, Ezra Weeden?

Cut back to a shot of Weeden and Smith. We cut back and forth between Curwen and his servant, and Weeden and Smith depending on who is talking.

WEEDEN

Aye, it's me, Master Curwen.

CURWEN

I'm finding an irony in all of this. Do you want to know what's ironic?

WEEDEN

Tell me.

CURWEN

I've done nothing but good for Providence the whole time I've been here. I helped rebuild the bridge when the October gale knocked it down, I've helped build churches, I employ hundreds of Providence folk, giving them good wages. I've never trespassed on my neighbor. I've never looked at another man with blood in my eye, like you're looking at me, now. I've never done anything but good for my community and my neighbors.

(beat)

But I'm the villain. And when it gets out that I chased you off my property without putting a bullet in you or your friend, though it's my right to do so, I'm still going to be cast as the villain though it was me who was trespassed upon, and the only thing I want is privacy.

WEEDEN

You've got the Devil in you, Curwen, and we all know it. No man has the right to live as long as you. You're a blasphemy before the site of God.

CURWEN

And you're speaking of things you know nothing about, Master Weeden.

(getting angry)

You're an arrogant pup. Is it your place to judge me, or God's? Get off my land, Weeden, and take your friend with you before I regret showing you basic Christian charity. And don't come back. You're not wanted here, not you nor your skulking friend.

Cut back to Weeden who licks his lips, considering options, and then deciding that to charge up the hill where two armed men were would just get him killed. So he relaxed a bit. He craned his neck to Smith.

WEEDEN

Let's take advantage of Master Curwen's boundless Christian charity.

In the background, over Weeden's shoulder, Smith nods emphatically. Then cut to a C.U. of the stones near Weeden's feet.

STRANGE VOICE

(O.S. -- whispered)

Come back. Save us. Stop him.
Save us.

Cut to a shot of Weeden stopping, looking down at the ground. Then he looked up at Curwen.

We cut to Curwen, who raises his musket to his shoulder. The servant follows suit.

CURWEN

Get yourself gone, boy, and leave me to my business.

Cut back to Weeden.

WEEDEN

You're a damned man, Curwen, and
it's only a matter of time before
what you're doing is found out.

Then Weeden walks out of the frame.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

(AHMED, OLD VOICE, SMITH, WEEDEN)

We start with a LONG SHOT of a group of five men on horse-
back. The light comes only from the full moon, silver
shafts coming down from the sky. Two more men ride into
the shot, slowly, facing the five.

We cut to a shot of Weeden and Smith on the new horses.
We cut to a reverse angle to show the five men -- they're
hard and scarred, dark skinned. All five of them are ei-
ther black, Indian, Asian or combinations of all these.
On their leader, Ahmed, will speak.

AHMED

We're here, Weeden. We've got what
you want.

Cut to Weeden who takes a sack and throws it to Ahmed.
Ahmed catches it. Ahmed opens it and takes out a gold
coin and bites it. He weighs the bag in his hand.

AHMED (CONT'D)

We just want to go home, you know.
We've been on Curwen's damned ships
too long. If you think it is bad
for you Europeans -- you do not
know how bad it is for us.

Cut to Weeden.

WEEDEN

Almost no one from Providence will
serve on one of Curwen's ships.

Weeden look back to Smith.

WEEDEN (CONT'D)

Right?

SMITH

That's the truth of it. His ships always make enough money, but no one cares for the man.

Cut to Ahmed.

AHMED

There is no way that we could have known that. But by the grace of God, soon they will.

Cut to Weeden and Smith, with Smith slightly behind Weeden, of course.

SMITH

You're a Christian?

Cut back to Ahmed, who laughs a bit.

AHMED

Yes, I'm a Christian. I am sorry to disappoint you that I am not a Muslim.

Cut back to Weeden.

WEEDEN

What happened?

Cut back to Ahmed, who looks back at his men, who shift in their seat. Ahmed looks to Weeden.

AHMED

The ship stopped first in New York, where it was to stay for two weeks, just as was planned. We got horses and rode here and sent the message to you as planned.

Cut back to Weeden. He's silent for a long moment. Finally:

WEEDEN

Is there anything?

Cut back to Ahmed, who nods.

AHMED

Yes. He stopped in Egypt where he picked up sixty coffins.

Cut back to Weeden and Smith.

SMITH
Coffins? Sixty?

Cut back to Ahmed, who nods. Then cut to back to Weeden and Smith.

WEEDEN
I am not surprised. He knows things no man should know. Maybe he gets them . . . I don't want to think about it.

Cut to Ahmed.

AHMED
The captain will pull up off the Pawtuxet River and load the coffins on longboats and take them to a place he has not disclosed.

Cut back to Weeden and Smith.

SMITH
Coffins, even corpses, are not contraband. There are no levies or duties on them. It isn't illegal.

WEEDEN
Bugger that. Not illegal to trade in dead human bodies? The only reason there are no laws against it is because no one has ever seen the need for laws against it. Curwen plans abominations with them!

SMITH
It's still not illegal.

Cut back to Ahmed.

AHMED
There's something else.

He takes a letter from his saddle bag. We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of him giving it to Weeden.

AHMED (CONT'D)

Good-bye, Master Weeden. May God protect you and yours from that magician.

Cut to a LONG SHOT showing the five riders turning their horses and going back the direction they came. While they turn, Weeden opens the letter.

We cut to Weeden's POV, a C.U. on the letter insert. When it opens, it's in a patch of strong moonlight -- strong enough to make out the writing.

OLD VOICE

(V.O.)

I delight that you continue in ye getting at old matters in your way, and do not think better was done at Mr. Hutchinson's in Salem-Village. Certainly, there was nothing but ye liveliest awfulness in that which H. raised up from what we could gather only a part of it. What you sent did not work, whether because any thing missing, or because ye words were not right from my speaking or your copying. Alone I am at a loss. I have not ye chymical art to follow Borellus and my own self confounded by ye seventh book of ye Necronomicon that you recommend.

(pause)

But I would have you observe what ye told to us about taking care whom to call up, for you are sensible that Mr. Mathers writ in ye Marginalia, and can judge how truly that horrendous thing is reported. I say to you again, **do not call up anything that you can not put down;** by the which I mean, any that can in turn call up something against you, whereby your powerfulest devices may not be of use. Ask of the lesser, lest the greater shall not wish to answer, and shall command more than you. I was frightened when I read your knowing what Ben Zaristnatmik had in his Ebony Box, but I was conscious who must have told you. And again I ask that you shall write me as Jedidiah and not Simon. In this community a man may not live too long, and you know my play by which I cam back as my son. I am desirous you will acquaint me with that ye Black Man learnt from Sylvanus Cocidus in ye vault, under ye Roman wall, and will be obliged for ye lending of ye manuscript you speak of.

Cut to a C.U. of Weeden's face.

WEEDEN

My God. This is it, Eleazar.

INT. TAVERN -- NIGHT

(BOWEN, JOSEPH BROWN, JOHN BROWN, MATHEWSON, MANNING, MOSES BROWN, SMITH, THEODORE, WHIPPLE, WEEDEN, WEST)

We open to a pan of the room. It is filled with the best people of Providence. There is Weeden, Smith and Whipple, as well as a laundry list of others: Captain Theodore Mathewson, Dr. Benjamin West, Reverend Theodore Manning, ex-Governor Stephen Hopkins, John Carter, all four Brown Brothers (John, Joseph, Nicholas and Moses) and Dr. Jabez Bowen. We come to focus on Whipple. The camera will move from face to face as they all speak.

WHIPPLE

(over the din of
voices)

Gentlemen, we must do something. We've read out the letter that Master Weeden got and it is the proof we need. He brings coffins into his home, and calls things up. He's doing the Devil's work and he must be stopped.

MATHEWSON

I agree with Captain Whipple. Curwen's been a plague on Providence for years. I don't think it matters a whit if there's no laws against what he's doing.

WEST

There's no jury in Rhode Island that would convict us, anyway, now when what we know comes out.

MANNING

I'm in agreement. The law of God is higher than the law of man, and it is better to err on the side of God's law, even if the secular authorities might see fit to punish us.

BOWEN

I don't know what kind of alchemy he's stirring up, and I don't know if it is of the Devil or a strange science, but my blood objects to the man. He's got the air of evil around him and needs to be put down.

JOSEPH BROWN

Like a dog, he needs to be put down. His lifespan isn't natural. Enough of us, here, are old enough to feel the winter in our bones while he runs about in the full bloom of youth since he arrived here eighty years ago. He's got more than a century but looks scarcely older than Master Weeden.

MOSES BROWN

He's most unnatural. My land abuts his and one day me and John were out hunting. Our dogs stopped following the scent. There was a light snow on the ground and when John and me came up, the dogs were milling about. We saw prints, then, clear as day -- a man's footprint, without a shoe, and twice the size of John's, and John isn't a small man. There were other prints, of dogs, and drag marks, and spots of blood. We couldn't make sense of it. The footprints were in one direction, the drag marks the other. The only way we could make sense of the tracks is if the man with bare feet escaped and the dogs were set on him, and then he was dragged back.

JOHN BROWN

We found boot prints, too. Normal ones, dragging the body it looked like.

MOSES BROWN

We did.

JOHN BROWN

We tracked the drag marks, too. They went straight into Curwen's land.

BOWEN

Why didn't you bring this to someone else?

MOSES BROWN

The snow melted and took the tracks with it. What were we supposed to do? There was no proof. No one was missing.

SMITH

Just like there was no proof the last time it flooded. We all saw strange things coming down the Pawtuxet but they rotted and vanished before we could pull them to shore.

WEST

A godawful stink it was, too.

WEEDEN

Gentlemen, we've waited too long for action, we agree on that. The time is over. We will cut Curwen from our community and let the Devil take him. Agreed?

The people present ad-lib agreement.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT
(WEEDEN)

We start with an EXTREME LONG SHOT of Curwen's house from a hilltop far away. From inside the house there are numerous cracklings of light that illuminate the scene in eerie luminescence.

We watch as a mist grows around the house. The mist catches the light in surreal colors -- but cold colors: blue and purples, mostly. The mist seems to coil into the sky.

WEEDEN

(V.O.)

He'll know we're coming. We're too many for him not to know. Many in Providence fear him, and rightly. He's got an evil power.

EXT. ROAD TO FARMHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER
(WHIPPLE, WEEDEN)

A pillar of men on horses and foot is moving up the road to Curwen's. They're lead by Whipple with Weeden behind. We focus on Whipple, who stops and turns to the people behind him. They come up with him in a mass -- there are more than a hundred of them.

We cut to a POV shot from the mass of men looking at Whipple up on his horse, flanked by "the best people" of Providence.

WHIPPLE

Men! We're close. Please, stick to the plan. Those of you with Eleazar Smith are to strike across the Pawtuxet to where the tunnels we know of come out, to cut off Curwen's escape from that route. The men under Captain Eseh Hopkins are to steal down to the valley behind Curwen's farm -- there's a wooden door there, too, and you're going to destroy it with ax or powder. Captain Mathewson's men will go around to the back of Curwen's house. My men to the front of it. Those with Doctor Bowen will remain in reserve.

(beat)

You know why we're here, men. Joseph Curwen dies tonight. Everything he was or will be burns, and burns tonight.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Another EXTREME LONG SHOT from the hill. Now, the lights in Curwen's house are dead -- the house is totally black. The mist is still there. We see the various bodies moving to their positions.

Then there's a blast of gunpowder, and a light to the east, over the horizon, if just barely. Men storm into Curwen's house.

We fade to the same shot, now with flashes from guns and other sources coming from within the house. From several places the very earth seems to ooze smoke, black and white together in strange patterns that seem to have faces in it.

Then there are screams, the babble of voices, and people come stumbling out of the house, sometimes blindly striking out with their muskets as clubs.

We fade to the same shot, even later, with dawn touching the sky, and Curwen's house aflame. The men from the raid stand in a circle around the house, watching it burn in grim silence.

INT. WILLETT'S OFFICE -- DAY

(CHARLES, WILLETT)

We start with a shot facing Willett. He's sitting in his chair with a slightly thoughtful look on his face. We move around until we get to Charles, who is sitting before the desk.

CHARLES

No one knows what they found in Curwen's house. They made vows of secrecy and kept them.

WILLETT

So, you've taken this as far as you can?

CHARLES

No.

WILLETT

No? Your investigations have followed your relative to the end of his life and exhausted the possibilities of further discussion, haven't they?

CHARLES

Not really. I mean, sure, they destroyed Curwen's Pawtuxet house, but he also had a house in Providence. I'm going to find it.

WILLETT

(light laugh)

On the surface of things, that seems harmless enough.

CHARLES

On the surface?

WILLETT

Yes. I'm sure your parents won't be terribly pleased to learn you're obsessed with a relative that was murdered because they thought he was a magician.

CHARLES

Surely you don't believe in sorcery?

WILLETT

Certainly not. But your parents are still worried over your . . . interest --

CHARLES

You were going to say obsession, weren't you?

WILLETT

But I didn't, Charles. I know you've got a good head on you, but I'm just your psychologist and can get a little objectivity. Your parents

CHARLES

Are worried over the silliest things. You know that, Dr. Willett.

WILLETT

Well, allow me to preserve some illusions. Your parents are my friends, and I don't think it's silly that they worry about their only child.

CHARLES

I feel stifled, like I'm too small for my skin, and something is holding me back. I only feel right when I'm doing research, you know. Like . . . I feel like parts of me are scattered in the past and by studying hard enough I can collect them together.

WILLETT

Young people often have feelings of restriction. In time you will learn to deal with it, and God knows that your research is safe. You're right -- you could be taking drugs or whatever, and you're not. I'll talk to your parents. We'll get it sorted out.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

Willett is in his sitting room, talking to the unseen speaker. We start with him in his chair. He gets up, agitated.

WILLETT

He was never insane. I fully believe that. He was driven. Focused. But insane? No, not in any real sense.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

You are not fit to determine that, Dr. Willett. Tell us what happened and I will decide the correct response.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett, whipping his head around to look directly at the camera. The shadows are falling around his face so his eyes glow with reflected light. He should appear powerful and wicked.

WILLETT

Soon we are going to have to have a session of clarification about all of this.

(beat)

Charles Ward proceeded with his investigations. All of what happened next is almost public knowledge, with reliable sources that can be cross-referenced for accuracy, a thing I have done.

EXT. CURWEN'S PROVIDENCE HOUSE -- DAY
(CHARLES, HANNAH)

It's the modern day. The flashbacks to the 18th century are behind us. Curwen's house looks much the same as it did two hundred years ago, save it needs some work on the gutters and a paint job. Now it's on a reasonably busy residential street and there are cars at the curb.

Charles walks into the shot, consulting a notebook. He closes the notebook. He sets a grim look on his face and walks up the path, to the patio, and knocks on the door.

We cut to a shot over Charles's shoulder looking at the door, which opens. A sort of frumpy woman with curlers in her hair and in a terry cloth robe, despite it being at least noon, with a cigarette in hand.

HANNAH

Yeah?

CHARLES

Um. Hi. My name is Charles Ward and I know this is going to sound pretty strange but, well, this house used to be owned by one of my relatives, until 1771.

HANNAH

Is this some kind of trick?

CHARLES

No!

We cut to a shot of Charles in profile with Hannah. He fumbles with his notebook and opens it. He turns it around and shows it to Hannah.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I've got a history of the deeds of this place that date back to Eliza Tillinghast, one of my ancestors. She was married to Joseph Curwen, who I'm really interested in.

Hannah takes the notebook and looked through it. She's still not completely convinced, but some of the suspicion leaves her.

HANNAH

Why isn't she Eliza Curwen?

CHARLES

Uh, she changed her name after Joseph died.

HANNAH

She didn't just remarry a Tillinghast?

CHARLES

No.

HANNAH

What happened?

CHARLES

Well, Curwen was murdered because it was rumored he was a sorcerer.

HANNAH

(beat)

Are you serious?

CHARLES

Yeah.

He flips some of the pages in the notebook to a particular place. He points to the page he's just opened. Hannah looks at it.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

That's the section about Curwen. Photocopies of letters between . . . Ezra Weeden, a Captain Whipple who was something of a hero during the Revolutionary War . . . go ahead, look. I mean, these are only copies, but this is all real.

Hannah flips through the stuff, suspicion being replaced by fascinating.

HANNAH

He was a wizard?

CHARLES

(scratches his
head)

People thought he was. He lived to
be over a hundred and had unusually
good health and memory.

HANNAH

Do you think he was?

CHARLES

(laughs lightly)

I don't believe in magic.

HANNAH

I do. Come in, Mr . . .?

CHARLES

Charles. Um, Ward. Charles Ward.

HANNAH

I'm Hannah Jones. Nice to meet
you.

He extends a hand and they shake. He takes the book back
and they go in.

INT. HANNAH'S LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER
(CHARLES, HANNAH)

Curwen's library has been turned into a living room for
Hannah. It's a cluttered but clean, with all sorts of
mystical bric-a-brac scattered around, along with a good
dose of Christian iconography -- pictures of Jesus, cruci-
fixes and the like.

Hannah and Charles walk into the scene.

HANNAH

Sit down, Mr. Ward. Can I get you
some coffee, pop?

CHARLES

(sitting)

No, no thank you, Ms. Jones.

HANNAH

(sitting)

So, how can I help you, Mr. Ward?

CHARLES

Charles, call me Charles.

HANNAH

Then I'm Hannah.

CHARLES

(smiles at her)

Alright, Hannah. Well, how you can help me is by allowing me to look through the house. I've got reason to suspect that my ancestor, Joseph Curwen, might have left something behind.

HANNAH

Why do you say that?

CHARLES

Well, because of some writings of a certain Mr. Merritt. He knew Joseph Curwen, in the 1740s, and saw several rare books in this house that were never mentioned, again.

HANNAH

What sort of books are we talking about?

CHARLES

Mostly Enlightenment and medieval manuscripts of, well, of alchemists.

HANNAH

I thought you didn't believe in magic?

CHARLES

I don't. Whether Joseph Curwen did is a different matter. Plus, well, I'm not sure the sort of alchemy practiced by Curwen could be exactly explained as magic. People then thought differently about magic and science, and their relationship to each other, than we do today.

HANNAH

Hmm. I've never thought of it that way.

CHARLES

(laughing a bit)

Well, it's my occupation. Or it will be. I'm studying anthropology at Brown.

HANNAH

So, this is a purely scientific research?

CHARLES

Well, mostly. I admit my interest started because Curwen is related to me. But the nature of the investigation is scientific, yes.

HANNAH

What happens if you find anything?

CHARLES

Well, that, of course, depends on what we find and the condition of things. By law, however, the owner of the house owns whatever we find here.

HANNAH

My husband and I own the house.

CHARLES

Then that would be you and your husband. So, for instance, if the best circumstances come about and there is a copy of a five hundred year old book here, the actual disposition of the book would be up to you and your husband.

HANNAH

And?

CHARLES

Well, if something of real value is found, someone will want to buy it. Many of the things Curwen owned would fetch small to middle sized fortunes if sold, today.

HANNAH

I think we can see fit to help you, then. I know there's a lot of stuff in the attic that hasn't been touched since time out of mind. That's where I'd start if I were you.

CHARLES

(laughs)

And if nothing else, you'll get your attic cleaned.

INT. ATTIC -- LATER
(CHARLES, CURWEN, WILLETT)

We see Charles move a big trunk out of a dusty corner. He kneels in front of it and jiggles the lock. It's old and rust encrusted. He stands. He finds a fireplace poker and uses that to break off the lock.

He opens the chest and kneels. He reaches in and picks up an ancient bundle of letters in an ancient envelope. We cut to an insert of the envelope. In an archaic hand it says, "Return'd Letters & Other Material." We cut back to Charles opening the envelope and pulling out the letters. He goes through them, slowly, finally settling on one to read.

WILLETT

(V.O.)

He even showed me the first set of letters.

Cut to a POV shot from the letter, looking up into Charles's eyes as they widen. He licks his lips.

Cut to Charles's POV, a C.U. of the letter, written in a crabbed and archaic script.

CURWEN

(V.O.)

Brother Simon Orne, my honored and antient friend, due respects and earnest wisdom to him who we serve for power eternal. I am just come upon that which you ought to know, concerning the matter of the last extremity and what to do regarding it. I am not disposed to follow you in going away on account of my years, for Providence hath not yet the sharpness of ye Bay in hunting out uncommon things and bringing to trial. I am tied up in shipping and goods, and could not do as you did, besides which my farm at Pawtuxet hath under it that which you know, that would not wait for my coming back as an other.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Charles crouched in front of the chest. He takes a deep breath and sighs. He keeps reading.

CURWEN (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

But I am not unready for hard fortunes, as I have told you, and have long worked upon ye way of getting back after ye lost. I last night struck on ye words that bring up Yog-Sothoth, and saw for ye first time that face spoke of by Bin Schacabac. And IT said, that ye third Psalm in ye Liber-Damnatus hold ye clavicle. With sun in fifth house, Saturn in trine, draw ye pentagram of fire, and say ye ninth verse thrice. This verse repeat each Roodmass and Hallow's Eve, and ye thing will breed in ye Outside Spheres.

(beat)

Aand of ye seed of old shall one be born who shal look back, and knowing not what he seeks, find it.

Charles sighs and swallows, and goes on.

CURWEN (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Yet this will await nothing if there be no heir, and if the salts, or the way to make the salts be not ready for his hands. And here I will own, I have not taken needed steps nor found much. Ye process is playing hard to come near, and it uses up such a store of specimens, I am hard put to get enough, notwithstanding the sailors I have from the Indies. Ye people are become curious, but I can stand them off. Ye gentry are worse than the populace, being more circumstantial in their accounts and more believed in what they tell. That Parson and Mr. Merritt have talked some, I am fearful, but no thing so far is dangerous. Ye chiminal substance are easy of getting, there being two good chemists in town, Dr. Bowen and Sam Carew. I am following out what Borellus saith and have help in Abdul al-Hazred and his seventh book. Whatever I get, you shall have. In the mean while, do not neglect to make use of ye words I have hear given. I have them right, but if you desire to see HIM, employ the writings on ye piece that I am putting in this packet. Say ye verses every Rood-mass and Hallow's Eve, and if your line run not out, one shall be in years to come that shall look back and use what salts or stuff for salts you leave him.

Charles almost puts away the letter, but is drawn back to it.

CURWEN (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

I rejoice you are again in Salem,
and hope I may see you not long
hence. I have a good stallion and
am thinking of getting a coach,
there being one in Providence al-
ready, though the roads are bad.
If you are disposed to travel, do
not pass me.

(beat)

Sir, I am your old and true friend
and servant in Almonsin-Metraton.
Josephus Curwen.

Charles goes through the other letters, and then starts
looking through the chest.

INT. THE WARDS' LIVING ROOM -- DAY
(CHARLES, EVELYN, THEODORE)

The Wards are very rich and the money is old. Their "liv-
ing room" is the size of a medium-sized apartment and is
filled with understated examples of wealth.

Theodore Ward and Evelyn Ward (first name invented, be-
cause HPL often did not give names to such small charac-
ters) are confronting Charles. Theodore Ward is standing,
a stern but loving father, concerned with his son but emo-
tionally distant and overbearing; Evelyn is seated, hands
folded in her lap, an attractive woman just past her mid-
dle years. She's quiet in the way a woman with a materi-
ally good but emotionally vacant person can be. Charles
is hovering between irritated and bored.

The camera is in a MEDIUM SHOT of the three.

THEODORE

Charles, it isn't right for you to
do this. It's a . . . waste of
money.

CHARLES

It's my money to waste, dad.
Grandfather left the trust fund to
me. I'm twenty-one. The money is
mine and Hannah doesn't mind if . .
. .

THEODORE

If you tear up her house looking for ghosts?

CHARLES

Why do you obsess about this, dad?

THEODORE

I'm not the one with the obsession, here! It isn't natural.

CHARLES

(standing)

This is so boring. This is tedious for me. I'm sorry if I'm not the kind of son you want, but I don't give a shit, anymore.

EVELYN

Charles!

CHARLES

Mom! Stand up for me, here.

EVELYN

Charles, Curwen was trouble and things in the past, these sorts of skeletons in the closet should not be disturbed

CHARLES

What? Are we in 1771, again?

We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Charles's eyes boring into his mother. She wavers. She looks away.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Repeat after me, mom. There are no ghosts. There are no magicians. Joseph Curwen was a nut, that's all. A nut ten generations removed, too.

Cut back. Theodore moves in front of Charles, between Charles and Evelyn.

THEODORE

Don't talk to your mother that way.

Cut to Charles and Theodore locking eyes.

CHARLES

I learned it from you, dad.

Theodore looks away.

CHARLES

Don't be a fool about this, father,
mother. I'm doing it. Accept it
or . . . disown me.

Cut back to showing all three of them, and Charles walking away.

INT. WILLETT'S OFFICE -- DAY
(CHARLES, WILLETT)

We start with a shot of Charles in a chair, leaning forward.

CHARLES

I don't know why they care so much,
Dr. Willett. I dunno. Why should
they care so much about why I'm do-
ing this.

WILLETT

(O.S.)

Have you tried asking them.

Charles leans back, looks around absently.

CHARLES

Not really. They haven't been open
to what I've said. You know. Ei-
ther confrontational, like dad, or
passive, like my mom.

WILLETT

(O.S.)

Why is this so important to you?

CHARLES

Part of it is, y'know, that I don't want them to order me around. They treat me like a child. It looks to me that they're against my research because I'm doing it independently of them. They're not against the research. They're against my independence.

WILLETT

(O.S.)

Where is your research taking you?

CHARLES

Hannah's house. I'm absolutely sure there's something hidden in there, so I'm going to hire some guys from Brown to search for it. They have experience and a lot of equipment to find hidden things, they do police work all over New England. Hannah -- she owns the house, and her husband, Asa -- don't care. They think it's exciting that a magician once lived in their house.

WILLETT

(O.S.)

What purpose will this research serve?

CHARLES

Well, I'm thinking of writing my graduate thesis on perceptions of magic in Colonial America. I think it might be interesting to contrast the way that people in the 18th century and earlier might have created presuppositions that affect our society and technology down to this day, perhaps pejoratively.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett behind his desk. He raises an eyebrow.

WILLETT

Pejoratively?

Cut to the shot of Charles, who shifts in his seat.

CHARLES

Yes. I think that . . . well, I was reading how through the so-called Enlightenment medical advance was seriously restricted because men of learning refused to listen to old wives' tales. They refused to accept, for instance, that willow bark could be used to alleviate pain -- though now we know its high in the active ingredient in aspirin. It wasn't until the French Revolution, when the common folks were put in charge, that medicine took off.

Cut back to Willett.

WILLETT

You're thinking that perhaps the . . .

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Mindset.

WILLETT

The mindset of people today, inherited from the Enlightenment . . .

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Also called the Era of Religious Wars. Something like nine million people were murdered for witchcraft, then. Interesting definition of Enlightenment, to kill so many over something that doesn't actually exist.

WILLETT

You think that Curwen was on to something that has legitimate scientific value?

Cut back to Charles. He hesitates.

CHARLES

Yes. I've been replicating some of his experiments. I mean to keep doing it. I'm throwing off the Puritan bias that's crippled real learning.

Cut back to Willett.

WILLETT

I think that's the reason your parents are upset, then. They see this passion in you. They're scared of it.

Cut back to Charles.

CHARLES

I'm going to do what I'm going to do, Dr. Willett. They can't stop me.

INT. DINING ROOM OF CURWEN'S PROVIDENCE HOUSE -- DAY
(CHARLES, CURWEN)

In the foreground is Charles, his back to us. In the b.g. is a young woman. She's got solvents, brushes, tiny picks, etc., on a ladder. She's slowly working on a fireplace mantle, the broad space above the shelf right above the actual fireplace.

Charles keeps his spot but the woman fades to a different position. But now the top end of what is clearly a painting is visible. The woman fades and reappears elsewhere -- the picture is forming. It's a portrait of a middle aged man. She fades again, working on the bottom of the painting. Then she fades away and the picture is revealed.

The portrait is of Joseph Curwen. He's dressed in the fashion of an 18th century colonial gentleman -- the scar above Curwen's eye is quite noticeable. Charles turns towards the camera, pauses for a moment so we can note for certain that they're almost doubles, and then Charles walks out of the scene.

EXT. CURWEN'S PROVIDENCE HOUSE -- LATER
(CHARLES, HANNAH)

We have a LONG SHOT of Curwen's -- now Hannah's -- house. Working men are moving the mantelpiece out of the house to a waiting moving truck in the f.g. Off to one side, Charles is paying Hannah the money for taking the mantel.

INT. CHARLES'S ROOMS -- LATER
(CHARLES, CURWEN, WILLETT)

The mantelpiece has been installed in Charles's apartment in his parents' house. Charles is examining it carefully when the whole picture swings out on hidden hinges.

Charles takes a step back. Revealed to his eyes is a shallow bookcase. There are several ancient tomes that he takes out, various other papers, and several bits of bric-a-brac with a mystical sort of cast.

WILLETT

(V.O.)

It is from the time that Charles brought the mantelpiece and it's horrible portrait into his rooms that his tradition of secrecy started -- as well, many of the psychologists who examined him later believe, marked the beginning of his pathology. I disagree. Never was Charles insane by any standard; the world betrayed him.

Charles takes out one of the books. Cut to a C.U. from Charles's POV looking at the book in his hand. It says "Joseph Curwen his Life and Travells Bet'n ye yeares 1678 and 1687, of Whither He Voyag'd, Where He Stay'd, Whom He Sawe, and What He Learnt."

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(WILLETT)

Back to Willett's sitting room. Willett goes over and pours himself a drink from a cut glass decanter. He takes a drink of the brandy and turns to the perpetually out-of-the-shot people he is speaking to.

WILLETT

From that point on, what happened to Charles is a reconstruction of events. His parents and myself are the real main sources.

(beat)

Until that time, I had more sympathy for Charles. He had many good points. Why were his parents so worried at his studies into the past? He was, after all, studying to be an archaeologist. Was it odd that he should be interested in an admittedly fascinating historical character in his own family? And at no point did his private researches interfere with his schoolwork -- he was still an exemplary student. But, after he brought that painting home, my sympathies started to fall with his parents. While I long knew that Charles's home life was . . . challenged, his parents loved him very much and did not deserve what happened next.

INT. CHARLES'S ROOMS -- DAY

(CHARLES)

We focus on Charles's bookcase. We have Charles fading in to put a book on the shelf, and fading out to fade in, putting another book on the shelf.

We have C.U. of book spines. We cut to a spine that says Hermes Trismogristus. Then we cut to an empty spot where a hand puts up a book: Turba Philosopharum. Then another hand, ghostly but belonging to Charles, puts up a book: Liber Damnatus. Then added, again ghostly and surreal, is Al-Azif.

INT. CHARLES'S WORKSHOP -- NIGHT

(CHARLES)

We see cuts of Charles moving in and out of his workshop. It starts as nothing but a largish, empty room with tables and cabinets. He fades in and out, the room becoming full of all sorts of chemical and alchemical gear, both ancient and modern, including centrifuges, an autoclave and other modern stuff.

We fade out as he has everything assembled and is obviously performing some sort of experiment.

INT. WILLETT'S OFFICE -- DAY
(CHARLES, CURWEN, WILLETT)

The shot opens with Charles sulking in the chair facing Dr. Willett's chair.

CHARLES

This is nonsense, Dr. Willett.

Cut to Dr. Willett, who is looking more professional than he has, before, sitting with a notebook at hand.

WILLETT

You parents don't think so and neither do I. You've been spending huge amounts of money on books . . .

Cut to Charles.

CHARLES

What's the problem with that?

Cut back to Willett.

WILLETT

The problem is that the trust account you're drawing on will not support you for very long at the rate of expense -- and then what?

Cut back to Charles, who fidgets for a moment.

CHARLES

What business is it of yours? Or even of theirs? My finances are my business.

WILLETT

(O.S.)

By the terms of the trust, your parents are allowed to monitor your trust account.

CHARLES

And they told you?

WILLETT

(O.S.)

Yes. They care for you, Charles.

CHARLES

They care for money. They don't know how to show real care. But none of that matters. What matters is that I'm on to something, Dr. Willett, and the worse they can do is kick me out, which would be a mild distraction at most. To my work.

Cut back to Willett.

WILLETT

Your work. You're referring to the experiments you're following out of old books.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Yes.

WILLETT

You still believe that the colonial mindset, the Enlightenment mindset, has kept us from some great and secret knowledge?

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Why not? It has happened before.

Cut back to Charles.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

The Scholastics in the Middle Ages stopped all sorts of progress from being made, just like the Enlightenment, aristocratic ideals made modern medicine impossible.

(beat)

I'm close to deciphering a code of Curwen's and I'm sure that things will be revealed then. I can feel it.

Cut back to Willett

WILLETT

But, Charles, you're not a chemist, you're not a biologist or physicist. Why do you think you're capable of judging these things?

Cut back to Charles.

CHARLES

An education in the hard sciences is a detraction from what I'm learning, Dr. Willett. Education creates presuppositions in a person that are hard to overcome. I doubt someone in the hard sciences could begin to understand why what people like Curwen and Simon Orne were doing is important, or how it could work.

(beat)

I'm free of those encumbrances, mostly, so I can view their work with fresh eyes. And I'm sure once I've laid this groundwork, in an age without the religious hang-ups of the 18th century, that I'll be quickly outdone by hard scientists, by physicists and chemists. But . . . Dr. Willett, I'm not crazy.

WILLETT

(O.S.)

No, I don't think you are crazy. You know you're taking a chance.

CHARLES

(nods)

Yeah, I know I'm taking a chance. I know that if this doesn't work out that I'll actually have to work for a living. But I think I'm on to something great here.

(beat)

The world never is what you think
it's going to be. I've discovered
that.

Cut back to Willett.

WILLETT

(sighing)

Friends of the family have said
they've seen you searching around
graveyards.

Cut back to Charles, who raised an eyebrow. Then he
shrugged, sanguine.

CHARLES

Joseph Curwen was an alchemist.
Everything they wrote was in an
elaborate code . . . and then they
hid it. Ironically, they did this
so they wouldn't be murdered by
small-minded townsfolk who might
confuse any study whatsoever with
magic -- I guess Curwen was dead
on, there. Well, on his headstone
are symbols that will help me break
the code. I actually have the code
and one of Curwen's journals with
me. Do you want to see them?

WILLETT

(O.S.)

Yes.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT showing Charles getting up with a
leather briefcase. He put it on the desk in front of Wil-
lett and opened it. Charles took out a journal and sever-
al sheaves of paper. Willett took the journals.

Cut to Willett's POV, looking at the journal. He opened
it up

CURWEN

(V.O.)

Say'd ye Sabaoth thrice last night
but none appeared. I must hear
more from Mr. H. in Wallachia,
though it is hard reaching him and
exceedingly strange he cannot give
me the use of what he hath so well
used these hundred years. Simon
hath not writ these five weeks, but
I expect soon hearing from him.

(beat)

Ye verse from Liber-Damnatus being
spoke five Roodmasses and four Hal-
low's Eves, I am hopeful ye thing
is breeding outside ye spheres. It
will draw one who is to come if I
can make sure he shall be and he
shall think on past things and look
back through all ye years, against
ye which I must have ready ye salts
or that to make 'em with.

Cut to a POV from the book, looking up at a C.U. of Wil-
lett.

WILLETT

This isn't scientific, Charles.
This is precisely what he got mur-
dered for. Now, I'm not saying
it's right to murder a person be-
cause he's deluded and thinks he's
a sorcerer and alchemist -- but
this refers to the most common me-
dievalist pretensions of the so-
called sorcerers, dabbling in
"black magic."

We cut to Charles, who is standing before Willett's desk.

CHARLES

(coolly)

And you know this from your vast
experience with this sort of thing?

WILLETT

(O.S.)

That's a distortion of what I'm
saying, Charles.

CHARLES

Is it? I don't think so. I don't think you have anything like the experience or education to begin to judge the veracity of Curwen's work.

Dolly the camera around to Willett.

WILLETT

I am a scientist.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

A psychologist.

WILLETT

Yes. Psychologists are the only scientists to have studied magical claims with an open mind.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

You're talking about parapsychology.

WILLETT

Precisely. And you know what psychologists found?

(beat when Charles
doesn't answer)

We found that magic is in the mind. When a sorcerer "casts a spell" it works only because the target of the spell believes it works. But nothing objective happens. Nothing measurable. And the moment a sorcerer uses magic against an unbelieving target, why, the "spell" fails.

We move back around to Charles.

CHARLES

Fascinating, I'm sure, but universes away from what Curwen was doing. The very essence of his work is completely rationalistic and completely measurable. Which I fully intend to prove, Dr. Willett.

Cut to Willett.

WILLETT

What if you fail?

Cut back to Charles, who gives out a massive so.

CHARLES

Then I fail and what of it? You'll all have a couple of laughs at my expense and that'll be it.

Cut to a shot of both of them, Charles standing before the desk and Willett going through the papers.

WILLETT

The cipher is, of course, beyond me. As you've so adroitly noted, I have no experience with this sort of thing.

CHARLES

I tried to get help from the mathematics department both at Brown and then at MIT but so far no one is interested. So I'm doing it the old fashioned way and following the clues he left.

Willett examined a particular piece of paper closely. He looked up at Charles.

WILLETT

What's this?
 (reading from the
 page)
 "To the one coming after"?

CHARLES

Curwen seems to have expected someone to find his notes and follow his clues.
 (laughs)
 He was a very egotistical person.

WILLETT

I gathered.

Willett put down the papers.

WILLETT (CONT'D)

Is there nothing that will convince you to confine yourself to more normal researches?

CHARLES

Nothing.

WILLETT

I'll tell your parents that and I will tell them that while I think you're wrong about where this research is going . . . that your research is essentially scientific in conception.

INT. AIRPORT -- DAY

(EVELYN, THEODORE, WILLETT)

Theodore, Evelyn and Willett are watching a plane leave.

WILLETT

You couldn't stop him. He has his own money and he definitely wanted to go to Europe.

THEODORE

He's obsessed, Marinus.

WILLETT

Yes, but he's obsessed with what? A pseudo-scientific theory he'll outgrow, someday.

EVELYN

It's the occultism. He's walking on cursed ground. The Bible does not look well on witchcraft.

THEODORE

There is that aspect of it, too.

WILLETT

This is Charles. Theodore, Evelyn, you raised a good son. I'm confident that in the course of time he'll come to know the frivolity of his research and settle down and do serious and good work. He won't hurt himself, he won't hurt others -- it isn't in him -- and God forgives.

Willetts ad libs a mumbled good-bye. Theodore shakes his hand and Evelyn gives him a brief embrace. He walks out of the shot.

EXT. WARD HOUSE -- DAY
(CHARLES, WILLETT)

It's snowing outside, to show the passage of some time, and in front of the Ward house there is a moving van. Charles is telling the working men who are carrying things various ad-libs to be careful with his goods. Dr. Willett walks into the shot.

WILLETT

Charles. I heard you were back.

CHARLES

Hello, Dr. Willett. Yeah. I got to the United States a couple of days ago.

WILLETT

You brought a lot back with you from Europe, I see.

CHARLES

It was incredible, Dr. Willett. Really incredible.

WILLETT

Your parents mentioned some of the places you'd been. London, Vienna and then places in Romania.

Cut to C.U. of Charles, turning to face Dr. Willett. For the briefest moment, fear and then anger flash over his face. Then Charles smiles.

CHARLES

Some of the people with whom Curwen associated . . . well, their families keep with the work. In Romania. The Ferenczys. I spent a year there, actually.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT with the two of them.

WILLETT

So your parents said. Getting letters to you as difficult.

CHARLES

Romania is a poor country, and the Ferenczys live in a remote area. There isn't a paved road within a hundred kilometers of their home.

WILLETT

Which is, as I understand it, a castle?

CHARLES

(laughing)

It was very Gothic.

WILLETT

Did you suffer any hardships?

CHARLES

Well, I've never been so cold in my life, but castles aren't precisely designed to hold in heat. I was as comfortable as I could be. It was a small price to pay.

WILLETT

What did you learn.

CHARLES

(sighing)

A great deal.

WILLETT

You're not going to say?

CHARLES

You wouldn't understand, Dr. Willett.

WILLETT

I count myself as a smart man,
Charles.

CHARLES

(laughing)

It's not lack of intelligence, it's
lack of education and perspective.

WILLETT

Perspective? I like to think of
myself as an open-minded person,
Charles.

CHARLES

Everyone likes to think of them-
selves that way. Doesn't mean they
are.

WILLETT

What does that mean?

CHARLES

Dr. Willett! You're clearly a man
of your time and your class.
Please, I implore you, don't insult
me by suggesting otherwise.

WILLETT

(bristling)

That was meant to wound, Charles.

CHARLES

And how many of the things have you
said to me that you've known would
hurt me and said them, anyway?

(beat)

Or is that different?

WILLETT

No, it wasn't.

CHARLES

You've made it clear that you think what I'm doing is futile, and will get nowhere. I don't begrudge you. As a psychologist, you are well aware of the derision that your colleagues have undergone when presenting a new theory or hypothesis. Account your derision of me in much the same way.

WILLETT

There's no derision, Charles. Concern, yes. Derision, no.

CHARLES

(looks at Willett,
shrugs)

As you like it, Dr. Willett. But I've got to get inside to see to my things being set up. Is there anything else?

WILLETT

No.

CHARLES

Good-bye, Dr. Willett.

WILLETT

Good-bye, Charles.

Charles walks out of scene and into the house, along with a couple of working men.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

Willett, still talking to his unseen partner, walks from the bar carrying a drink and sits back down. He looks into the fire. He turns and looks to where the person (people?) he's talking with are off camera, and his eyes are shadowed.

WILLETT

Of course, Charles was right. I was not prepared, not by education, experience or imagination, to accept what he was doing.

(beat)

Unfortunately, in several important ways, neither was Charles.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

Here is when almost everyone agrees he was, at some level, insane. His return from Europe and the things he did.

WILLETT

It was the world! The world betrayed him, and Curwen betrayed him.

(sad laugh)

He was lied to. If one was told, promised, what he was told and promised . . . if one was shown what he was shown . . . it was easy to believe.

INT. THE WARDS' LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT
(EVELYN, THEODORE)

The scene opens with Evelyn Ward sitting in a chair, holding a rosary and silently praying. We move over to Theodore Ward, who is looking up at the ceiling.

The sound resolves. From upstairs is coming a sound, as though uttered by several voices, very faintly, but swelling a bit as the camera moves up to the patterned ceiling, holding there while the inhuman, demonic multi-toned voice chants on and on.

EXT. WARD HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

We start the shot and dolly around the neighborhood. Dogs start barking. One, two, and then legions of dogs. We move back to the house and in the horizon, from the sea, come a rushing mass of clouds. We zoom towards Charles's

rooms, which are all shuddered, and we hear the demonic chanting, again, now louder. Then we shift up to the skies, straight up, and show a mass of clouds churning. Then sheets of lightning white out the shot.

INT. THE WARDS' LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
(CHARLES, EVELYN, THEODORE)

We cut to a shot of Evelyn, who jumps as thunder crashes down around the house. We move over to Theodore as he goes and flings open a drape and looks outside. We cut to his POV and watch a driving downpour outside lit by frequent but now silent flashes of lightning.

We go around to the stairs, still on Theodore's POV, so he's watching both Evelyn with Charles coming down the stairs.

CHARLES
 (smiling darkly,
 victoriously)
 Sorry about that. It won't happen,
 again.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
 (DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

We start with a C.U. of Willett, sitting in his chair and looking half over his shoulder. The fire is in the b.g. and there are lots of dark shadows over his face, especially his eyes.

DRONING VOICE
 (O.S.)
 What did that mean?

WILLETT
 No-one knew. During all this time,
 Charles never rebuffed me. Our re-
 lationship was certainly tense, but
 friendly. I saw him at his apart-
 ment in the house often. I saw
 things.

INT. CHARLES'S ROOMS -- EVENING
 (CURWEN, WILLETT)

We cut to a C.U. of Willett turning a wax figurine of a horrific beastie in his hands. We move up to Willett's face. Willett's face turns. We pull back to see what he's looking at -- it's a cabinet full of all sorts of archaeological bric-a-brac, but all of it is disturbing. Stuff like masks of squid things, stone bas-reliefs of human sacrifices, ceremonial knives still covered with old, dried blood.

Then Willett turns and looks at the picture of Curwen, hanging on the moved mantelpiece. We move over to give a C.U. of the picture, and the scar above Curwen's eye is visible.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
(WILLETT)

We return to the same shot as before, with Willett's darkened face talking with the unseen voices.

WILLETT
There were often scents. Odors.
Some of them were very unpleasant
in an organic waste sort of way.
Most were aromatic, like

EXT. A DESERT -- DAY

Cut to an EXTREME LONG SHOT of a wind-swept erg with, in the shimmering distance, some vast, alien city rising out of the landscape. There are things, unidentifiable from the distance and haze, flapping above and around it.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

We cut back to Willett.

WILLETT
A dream. They were like a dream
caught in a scene of strange
places, strange . . . times.
(nervous laugh)
I am quite convinced that time is
not precisely as linear as we would
like for it to be.

DRONING VOICE
(O.S.)
Tell us more.

WILLETT
Yes, there is more to tell before .
. . .
(beat)
I won't think of that, right now.
There is more to tell.

INT. WARD KITCHEN -- NIGHT
 (CHARLES, EVELYN, THEODORE, WILLETT)

We fade in on a paper on a table, folded over, but a headline is clearly visible as an insert: GRAVE ROBBERS SURPRISED IN NORTH BURIAL GROUND. The light is from a lamp above a kitchen table which illuminates the three people sitting there but casts the rest of the kitchen in the darkest of shadows.

We move up to Willett sitting at the table with the elder Wards. Willett looks tired, as if a creeping exhaustion is setting in.

EVELYN

It was just horrible. At about three A.M. Charles was making the most hideous racket, Dr. Willett.

THEODORE

It's getting pretty bad, Marinus. What can you tell us? What can we do?

WILLETT

Theo, Evey, Charles isn't insane, not legally. He's a brilliant, perhaps slightly manic young man, but I can't even begin to say that he's actually unbalanced.

EVELYN

What about his obsession with the occult.

WILLETT

Evey, it's . . . I'm going to be blunt. If he was obsessed with Jesus Christ, and fell on his knees in prayer ten times a day, you wouldn't care.

THEODORE

That was cruel, Marinus.

WILLETT

Perhaps, Theo, but we both know it's true. But that doesn't matter. From a medical and legal sense, there isn't a lot of difference between an obsessive Christian and whatever occultism that Charles is engaged in. There's no psychological reason, no legal reason, to say that the sort of behavior we encourage towards one source is a sign of insanity when directed towards another source. The truth of it is he's not a threat to himself or others!

EVELYN

He's engaging in black magic!

Theodore leans back, sighing melodramatically and rolling his eyes.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

You go and roll your eyes, Theodore, but this is serious! Why can't anyone else see it?

WILLETT

Evey, I'm a psychologist. A scientist. I'm not going to get into a discussion about whether there's some mystic force in the universe because it's irrelevant. We are not living in a theocracy.

(beat)

Even if he's practicing black magic, he's CHOOSING to practice black magic. It's his right, and it doesn't mean he's either insane or a threat to himself or others. It affects the destination of his immortal soul . . . that's not something I'm qualified to say.

THEODORE

But what can we do?

WILLETT

Have you talked to him about it?

Theodore is about to answer when from above there comes a horrible, multi-throated singsong chanting:

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Per Adonai Eloim, Adonai Jehova,
Adonai Sabaoth, Matraton, Ou Agla
Methon, verbum pythonicum, mysteri-
um salamandrae, cenventus sylvorum,
antra gnomorum, daemonia Coeli God,
Almonsin, Gibor, Jehosua, Evam,
Zariathnatmik, Veni, Veni, Veni.

During the chanting, which will repeat itself continuously, they all look up at the ceiling. The lamp will begin to sway very slightly during the beginning of the chant. There is a terrible basso rumble that makes conversation difficult -- the dialogue will be everyone shouting to be heard above the nightmarish din.

Cut to Evelyn.

EVELYN

You see! You see what we have to
put up with, Marinus!
(she puts her face
in her hands and
puts her head down)
This is black magic.

Cut to Willett, who stands up.

WILLETT

There's got to be some explanation
for this.

Dolly to Theodore, who stands up into the frame.

THEODORE

You understand why we want this to
stop, Marinus! We can't live like
this! This isn't the first time
something like this has happened!
It is destroying my household!

Then Charles voice reaches a terrible, booming crescendo. We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of all three people covering their ears, Willett and Theodore hunkering down as if trying to find a way to escape the sound while Evelyn screams as she covers her ears. The noise is a voice, vast as space:

CHARLES

(O.S. -- alien and
impossible loud
with all sorts of
surreal effects,
but identifiably
Charles)

DIES MISE JESCHET BOENE DOESEF DOU-
VEMA ENITEMAUS.

The whole house shakes, dishes rattling and a few falling off. There is a barking of dogs and dozens of distant car alarms sounding that comes through the incredible, psyche punishing sound. Then the lights go out. We can only see the three people around the table as silhouettes. There is a moment where the voice falls silent. The dogs bark and the alarms still ring. Then:

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(O.S. -- softer,
but with a grating
sound)

Yi-nash-Yog-Sothoth-he-legib-if-
throdag . . . YAH!

Then Charles's voice turns into a scream that turns into a horrible laugh -- but the laugh is clearly two laughs, now, and a voice talks to Charles words that can't be made out as Charles keeps laughing. The lights flicker and come back on, showing Willett, Theodore and Evelyn looking up at the ceiling with mixed fear, curiosity and horror mixed in their faces.

THEODORE

What are we going to do?

WILLETT

Someone is going to have to go up
there.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CHARLES'S ROOMS -- NIGHT
(CHARLES, CURWEN, THEODORE, WILLETT)

Theodore and Willett walk up to the door in a MIDDLE-SHOT. They clearly hear a conversation going on, but it is muffled. One of the voices is Charles's voice, the other is a stronger, more confident voice. As Theodore and Willett get to the door:

CURWEN

(O.S.)

Shhh! -- Write!

Theodore knocks on the door.

THEODORE

Charles? It's me and Dr. Willett.

There is a pause.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Yes, father?

THEODORE

What's going on? Who's in there?

CHARLES

(O.S.)

It's nothing, father.

THEODORE

What was that racket? Open up, son.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

I'm not decent, father.

THEODORE

Open up, anyway!

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Father!

There was a long pause as Theodore tries to think of something to say.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

(O.S.)

Father, I'm conducting a ritual that places me in an altered psychological state. I have been using chanting, melanohypnosis and biofeedback to explore my own consciousness. I'm sorry if I've disturbed you. Dr. Willett, are you there?

WILLETT

Yes, Charles, I am.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

You know there's nothing to this, that it's just a form of harmless mysticism. Haven't I shown you my books? Haven't you see them? There's nothing to harm anyone in anything I do.

Willett looked down for a bit. Then he looked at Theodore and nodded.

WILLETT

He's essentially right.

THEODORE

Marinus! You saw what just happened. The . . . the lights and the dog! The voices!

CHARLES

(O.S. -- laughter)

Father, come on! You know that I don't control Rhode Island power. That was just a coincidence. And the altered voices are used to get into character, if you will. By acting out, it's easier to find the mental state you need to explore yourself.

WILLETT

(nodding, slightly)

There's some truth to it. It's mysticism, to be true, but do we really think that Charles made the lights go out? In the light of day, that assertion seems pretty bizarre.

Theodore makes a sound of disgust and walks off, stomping down the corridor. Willett turns away and then pauses when he hears:

CURWEN

(O.S. -- hissing
softly)
Get ye back to writing.

Then Willett shakes his head and walks away.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

The scene starts with us viewing a C.U. of Willett's hands as they crack ice and put it into a glass. He pours whiskey into the glass. We pan up to a profile of Willett's face. He has a dreamy look.

WILLETT

That's when the change really happened. It wasn't insanity in any normal sense, you see. There was nothing like that. It was something more profound.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)
What do you mean?

WILLETT

(drinks and pours
another glass)

After that night, Charles was furtive, but more active. He started to eat a great deal more but . . . the picture of Curwen on the mantelpiece was gone. He said it crumbled into dust. He laughed about it, which I found odd considering how much he had hitherto seemed to cherish it.

(beat)

I remembered the picture, well. Curwen's cold face and the scar . . .

. . .

(Willett touched
his brow where the
scar was on the
picture)

Here. But it was not that which started the first real pang of fear. It was a news story.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- DAY
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

Willett sits down in the same chair he sits when talking to the droning voice. It's clearly a different time, though, with a bay window open and light streaming in. The scene is cheery and warm.

Willett picks up a newspaper and his brow furrows.

We cut to a C.U. of the newspaper. The caption reads: Ghouls Desecrate Ancient Grave. A tight C.U. on these sentences, cutting from word to word: Ezra Weeden's grave found desecrated. Mystic symbols found etched in stone. And then flash an grainy, newspaper image of a gravestone with a pentacle burned into it.

INT. CHARLES'S ROOMS -- EVENING
(CHARLES, WILLETT)

We cut with Charles with his head down on his desk. Willett walks into the scene from the foreground, his back to us, and sits down. Charles looks up. He looks worn and haggard.

WILLETT

What happened to Weeden's grave,
Charles?

CHARLES

What?

WILLETT

Ezra Weeden's grave was violated,
surely you know. There were mystic
symbols all over the place. It was
a rite. The sort of thing you've
been doing up here for months, now.

Charles closed his eyes and ran his hands through his hair. He looked frazzled, weary, and disgusted.

CHARLES

I didn't do it. I had nothing to
do with it.

Cut to Willett's face as he leaned forward.

WILLETT

I find that hard to believe. There are too many coincidences. A mystic rite, Ezra Weeden who lead the attack against Joseph Curwen -- who is your current obsession.

Cut to Charles.

CHARLES

I didn't do it!

WILLETT

Who did?

CHARLES

Dr. Willett! Things aren't what I thought they'd be.

Cut to Willett who is confused.

WILLETT

What?

CHARLES

Things aren't what I thought they'd be. I want to get out of this mysticism, but once you're in it . . . it's like the mob, I guess. You try to leave by they pull you back in.

WILLETT

Who are you talking about, Charles?

Cut to Charles, who closes his eyes.

CHARLES

No-one. I can't say. It's . . . you shouldn't listen to me.

He opens his eyes.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

But believe me, Dr. Willett . . . I did not violate Weeden's grave. This is out of my hands.

WILLETT

You're not making any sense.

Charles opens his eyes.

CHARLES

No, I'm not. Forgive me. I have to go, there are things I must be setting about.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(CURWEN, WILLETT)

Willett is pacing in front of the fireplace, agitated.

WILLETT

About that time is when Charles introduced his friend, Dr. Allen. Dr. Allen was odd.

Cut to a still of Dr. Allen. Dr. Allen is Joseph Curwen in disguise -- the disguise is a thick black beard, and his hair dyed black and oval sunglasses, the sort an academic or beatnik might wear. The pit above the eye should be visible over the rim of the sunglasses.

Cut back to where we were.

WILLETT (CONT'D)

Allen didn't speak, save very softly and only to Charles. I can't recall anyone liking Allen. He seemed cold, cruel, even though he did nothing. He was helping Charles in his research to revolutionize science or whatever the conceit was by that time. We didn't really talk, anymore, and every time his parents made an appointment for Charles to see me, Charles did not arrive. What could we do? He was an adult, legally, and he had his own money from an inheritance. Well, soon after Charles's association with Dr. Allen, Charles used his parents' "interference" as a pretext to move out of their house, to a bungalow on the Pawtuxet.

EXT. OUTSIDE WARD HOUSE -- DAY
(CHARLES, WILLETT)

LONG SHOT on a moving van with men taking out all sorts of boxes and items from Charles's apartment in his parents' house. Charles is there, ad-libbing exhortations to the workers to be careful. Behind the moving van, Willett drives up in a little MG convertible with the top down. Willett gets out of the car.

We cut to MIDDLE-SHOT of Willett walking up to Ward. Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT with both of them profile, watching one another. Charles has a harried look to his expression.

WILLETT

You're finally cutting the apron strings once and for all, Charles?

CHARLES

Yeah, something like that. I can't impose on my parents, anymore. My mom's nerves are damn near shattered and dad is trying to act macho, but I know he's scared of what I'm doing.

WILLETT

You don't look too good, truth to tell. You look pretty harried, yourself. Are you sure there isn't something you want to --

CHARLES

(angry)

No! For the love of God, Willett! Leave it be! Leave it the hell alone! I DON'T have anything to say. If I DID have something to say, I would have fucking said it by now!

WILLETT

(calm and reconciling)

Charles, I'm your doctor and your friend. I'm not your enemy. No matter how hard you try to fit me into that box, that's not me.

Charles rubs a hand through his hair. He takes a deep breath.

CHARLES

Yeah. I know that.

There is an awkward silence.

WILLETT

You're moving up to the Pawtuxet.

CHARLES

Yeah. I found a good place there.

WILLETT

Nonsense. Your parents told me about it. They said its a filthy hut near a pestilential bog. The neighborhood in that area hasn't been good since before the Second World War. I've heard you're being massively overcharged for it, too.

Another awkward silence.

CHARLES

I like it, anyway.

WILLETT

The plot of land used to belong to Joseph Curwen, didn't it?

Awkward silence.

CHARLES

(softly)

Yeah.

WILLETT

This is obsessive behavior. What do you hope to gain from moving into an overpriced hut on ground that used to belong to Curwen.

CHARLES

Dr. Allen suggested

Cut to a LONG SHOT that shows Willett and Charles, the front of the Wards' house, and Dr. Allen coming out of it.

Cut to a C.U. of Charles face, with Allen coming up behind Charles and whispering something in Charles's ear. Even with the black hair, the beard and the glasses, it should be semi-obvious that the two men look a lot alike.

Cut to the MEDIUM SHOT we were using when Charles and Willett were talking, with Allen now looming behind Charles.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I gotta go, doc. Take care.

Charles moves out of the frame, leaving Willett and Allen looking at each other.

WILLETT

Dr. Allen.

Cut to a C.U. of Allen, who adjusts his oval, wire-rimmed sunglasses, turns and walks away.

EXT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(WILLETT)

Willett is sitting in his large chair, his hands steeped in front of him, looking at the fire with his head down so his eyesockets are pits of blackness as the flames flicker over his face.

WILLETT

Time flew. With Charles out of my sight, he was largely out of my mind. It is so easy to get caught up in your own affairs. So easy to ignore the strangeness there before your eyes! Now, after what I have seen, I do not wonder that our peculiar curiosity, acute in some places and woefully lacking in others, is a defense against the greater wonders and horrors of the world.

(sighs)

Charles and Dr. Allen moved to the Pawtuxet. A year flickered by, like so many others have; the Wards, without Charles there, had a quiet life, again, and that pleased them. Then, without warning, Charles showed up on their doorstep, begging for a place to stay and protection from Dr. Allen. Theodore Ward was a cold husband and a distant father, I know this, but he loves his family. He took Charles in and hired a virtual cadre of bodyguards to protect Charles. Theodore Ward found it very easy to believe that Dr. Allen was a very dangerous man. He was, undoubtedly, right.

EXT. WILLETT'S OFFICE -- DAY
(CHARLES, WILLETT)

We start with a MIDDLE-SHOT of Willett working at his desk. Willett's phone rang and he picked it up.

WILLETT

Hello?

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Dr. Willett?

WILLETT

Charles! It's good to see--

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Can you come over to my father's house? I'm staying here, for a while. I . . . I have something to tell you. You and dad.

WILLETT

Well, I . . . I have several patients to see, today, but I could put them off--

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Oh, Jesus, don't do that. I've already been such a pest to you. God! That I'd listened!

WILLETT

Charles, what is this about?

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Dr. Willett, I'm -- oh, God, I'm so scared. It's Dr. Allen. It's worse than you can believe, it's worse than you can imagine. I . . . I've made a terrible mistake. I should have listened.

(sobs)

I'm so sorry.

WILLETT

Charles, what is this about? I can be over in a few minutes.

CHARLES

(O.S. -- pulling himself together)

No, I'm safe, here. Dad has hired four bodyguards and I learned some. I learned enough to protect myself from Dr. Allen. He can't get to me, not with the guards and my own precautions. How about you come over a . . . after work. I can talk to both you and Dad, then.

(small sob)

I need help and I'm not sure what to do.

WILLETT

I can be there at five-thirty, then.

CHARLES

Thank you, Dr. Willett. I'm sure the three of us can figure out something to do to stop that monster.

Then there is a dial tone and Willett pulls the receiver away from his ear and stares at the phone, curious, before putting it back on its cradle.

EXT. OUTSIDE WARD HOUSE -- EVENING
(BODYGUARD, WILLETT)

We start with a LONG SHOT of Willett walking up the stoop to the Ward house. There are two burly men flanking the door.

WILLETT

I'm here to see Charles. I'm Dr. Willett. I should be expected.

BODYGUARD

Charles isn't in. He left about two hours ago.

WILLETT

I . . . well, it's urgent. Is Theo home?

BODYGUARD

Yes, sir. Hold on, sir.

The bodyguard draws speaks into his radio, incomprehensibly. He gets an answer.

BODYGUARD (CONT'D)

Please, sir, go on in.

The door opens and Willett goes into the house.

INT. THE WARDS' LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
(THEODORE, WILLETT)

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Willett entering, taking off his coat and hat.

THEODORE

(O.S.)

Doctor! Have you seen Charles? He left a voice mail at the office saying he wanted to speak to me after work. It sounded urgent.

WILLETT

No, I haven't. I spoke to him this morning and, yes, he was disturbed at something -- Dr. Allen, specifically -- and said he wanted to talk to us both.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Theodore Ward, who is slumped in a chair.

THEODORE

Charles has been . . . it just gets stranger and stranger. But, the last couple of days, I know I've had my boy back, Marinus. My Charles. Maybe wounded and hurt, but nothing that time and care can't fix.

Willett walks into the frame and takes a seat on the sofa near the chair.

WILLETT

We'll give him that time and care. All he has to do is show up.

Cut to a C.U. of a clock on the mantle. It reads 5:30. Cut to the same clock, reading 9 o'clock. Cut to a HIGH ANGLE LONG SHOT of Theodore and Willett in the living room, waiting, drinking tea.

THEODORE

Where is he, Marinus?

WILLETT

I don't know. I don't know.

Willett gets up.

EXT. OUTSIDE WARD HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS
(BODYGUARD, BODYGUARD #2, WILLETT)

We have a MIDDLE-SHOT of the front door, with the two guards flanking it. The door opens and Willett comes out.

WILLETT

Good. It's still you two.

The bodyguards looked over to Willett.

BODYGUARD

Yes, sir, what can we do for you?

WILLETT

When was the last time you saw Charles?

BODYGUARD

(consulting notes)

He left at 3:12 pm today. That was the last time I saw him.

WILLETT

How about before that.

BODYGUARD

(putting away notes)

The notes say that he came in at 1:43, but the previous guard came on duty and said he was still in the house.

(shrugs)

It happens all the time, sir. People want protection, but they hate being watched. He probably just slipped out.

WILLETT

(brow furrowed)

So, you're saying that according to your notes, Charles didn't leave but he came back? He entered twice without leaving?

BODYGUARD

Yes, sir. Like I said, it happens pretty often.

BODYGUARD #2

He was acting pretty funny when we saw him, too.

The first bodyguard shrugged.

WILLETT

Howso?

BODYGUARD #2

He had a funny voice, not like normal. Like he had a thick accent and was trying to hide it. That's when he was coming in. When he was going out, he didn't say a thing.

BODYGUARD

He smelled like a photo lab, though.

WILLETT

What?

BODYGUARD

He smelled like a photo lab. Like he had been handling chemicals or something.

BODYGUARD #2

More like a . . . pool, maybe? It was a nasty smell.

WILLETT

Thank you.

Willettt closed the door.

EXT. CHARLES'S ROOMS -- MOMENTS LATER
(THEODORE, WILLETT)

The door opens. In the all, backlit, are Willett and Theodore. They both gag and sag as the stink from the room hits them.

WILLETT

(gaspng)

Oh, Charles. There is something wrong.

INT. WILLETT'S OFFICE -- MORNING
(CHARLES, CURWEN, WILLETT)

The phone rings and Willett snatches it up. On the phone is Curwen trying to play at Charles. His voice will be stilted as Curwen tries to adjust to the unfamiliar accent and flow of modern language.

CURWEN

(O.S.)

Hello, Dr. Willett. This is Charles.

WILLETT

Where have you been!

CURWEN

(O.S.)

I am fine. I am sorry I disturbed you and my pa the other day. I am fine. I am back in Pawtuxet.

WILLETT

What is going on here, Charles! You've driven your parents half-mad with worry about you!

CURWEN

(O.S.)

I have spoken to them, doctor. They understand. Everything is fine.

WILLETT

Charles, please, tell me what's going on! What's this about Dr. Allen?

CURWEN

(O.S.)

Dr. Allen is gone. The crisis is past. Everything is fine. Worry not yourself, Dr. Willett. I need not your aid.

Then the phone went to the dial tone and Willett slammed it down.

EXT. PAWTUXET BUNGALOW -- DAY
(CHARLES, WILLETT)

We start with an EXTREME LONG SHOT of the area around the bungalow that Charles bought. It is the same land, of course, that Curwen's old house stood on before it was burned. The shots that show it should be the same angles as before.

Up to the bungalow comes the moving van with Charles's sedan following. "Dr. Allen" gets out of the car when it is stopped.

WILLETT

(V.O.)

The bungalow was worn down and shabby, and every agreed that Dr. Allen had done something to force Charles into buying it. I spent a fair bit of time wondering why.

INT. WILLETT'S OFFICE -- EVENING
(SECRETARY, THEODORE, WILLETT)

Willett is sitting at his desk. We have him in a MEDIUM SHOT, Willett in profile. Evening sunlight streams through the window behind him. His intercom buzzes. He pressed the button.

SECRETARY

(O.S.)

There's a Mr. Ward to see you.

WILLETT

Send him in.

Willett releases the button and stands. Theodore Ward comes in. They shake hands over the desk and Theodore sits down. Theodore has a very grim expression on his face.

WILLETT (CONT'D)

What's going on, Theo?

THEODORE

It's my blasted boy. I . . . I wanted to talk to someone before I . . . I'm thinking of getting him institutionalized.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett, who is shocked.

WILLETT

Theo, you realize that will be hard. Your son, last I knew, was of sound mind. That you disapprove of his research doesn't mean anything, legally.

Cut to a C.U. of Theodore, who has a stern look. Theodore raises an eyebrow and looks straight at his old friend, through the screen.

THEODORE

I wouldn't do this if I had any other choice. But he's changed for the worse since he moved out, again.

WILLETT

(O.S.)

Howso?

THEODORE

Well, Charles is getting money from a trust fund set up by my father specifically for him. But, well, you think I'm old-fashioned, you never met my father. Until Charles is thirty, I have review powers over the fund. I'm not really comfortable with that, so I mostly haven't done anything. But, a week ago, I got a call from the bank that runs the trust, saying that they were worried that someone was forging Charles's signature and pretending to be Charles.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett, who is wearing a curious expression.

WILLETT

Come again, Theo? Why would they think that?

Cut back to Theodore as he explains.

THEODORE

It seems that Charles pretty frequently withdraws fairly large cash sums out of the bank, more than you can get out of an ATM, so he has to write a check and do a face-to-face transaction with the bank. Well, he's been going to the same bank, the one closest to where his bungalow is, for quite some time. He's a regular. About three months ago, though, his signature on the drafts radically changed.

(beat)

So did his personality. He was still Charles, so he got the money, but the sums are fairly large and the strange handwriting is persisting, so they are worried that Charles is being stolen from in some manner or the other. As I'm partly responsible for the account, they contacted me about it. They even showed me the checks -- it is not Charles's handwriting on those checks. I talked to the tellers, too, and they said that around the same time that Charles handwriting changed, he acted differently towards them. Charles has been a flirt for a long time, but when his handwriting changed, well, they said that he became very cold, brusque and demanding. He scared several of them with his rude demands. They also said that he, uh, spoken "funny." I asked how he was acting funny and they told me he spoke like out of a movie set back a long time ago.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett.

WILLETT

I'm playing the devil's advocate here, Theo, but isn't this a matter for law enforcement.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of the two men talking.

THEODORE

I hired a private investigator.

WILLETT

Ah.

THEODORE

The private investigator says that this personality change is quite marked and is interfering with Charles's life in a number of ways. I'm really worried. They don't seem to be talking about my son. Charles is pushing people around, snapping at strangers, not recognizing friends, he has cut himself off from virtually everyone. He has me worried.

WILLETT

Have you tried talking to him about this?

THEODORE

Of course! But he doesn't answer his phone, doesn't answer his email and when I've gone over, well, he has hired someone to stay with him -- this grotesque looking giant that doesn't let me speak to Charles.

WILLETT

You might have a case, then. Because I'm so close to both of you, well, I couldn't help you from the psychological end of things -- you should get other doctors, ones who haven't known you and Charles so long, who can be objective.

THEODORE

(sighing)

I was hoping you'd say something like that. Can you recommend someone.

WILLETT
(getting a sheet
of paper and a pen)
As a matter of fact, I can.
They're very good doctors.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(CURWEN, WILLETT)

Willett is still sitting in the chair looking towards the fire. He shook his head and sighed.

WILLETT
Charles was institutionalized. He was calm, smiling, when it happened. He knew he'd get out, eventually. I could see it in his eyes. He was smug. Arrogant.

FLASHBACK -- Curwen-as-Charles being put into the psychiatric ward van. He is wearing handcuffs. Cut to an extreme C.U. of Curwen as he turns and faces the camera. His face is full of contempt, and the scar above his eye is clearly visible.

Cut back to Willett.

WILLETT (CONT'D)
After all, he was a brilliant man. He concocted a story about how his studies were having a disturbing effect on his mind. That was the story -- he played on every cliché in the book, saying he got involved in Satanic mysticism and was the victim of brainwashing, but he was really much better, now. Everyone swallowed it up. It was precisely what they wanted to hear, after all -- a plausible reason for distress, to explain the derangement of his mind. Save two. Theodore Ward and

myself. The others, they hadn't seen Charles before, they never saw Dr. Allen, they never heard the fractured conversations, smelled the stink of the experiments. They never saw Charles laugh and how when this new "Charles" laughed it was entirely different -- mocking and conceited. They didn't know what they were talking about.

(beat)

We did. And we saw "Charles" was tricking them all. We knew that soon "Charles" would be released and that the mistakes he'd made would not be made again. That if "Charles" was released, something dark would have won.

(beat)

So we followed the footsteps of Ezra Weeden and Captain Whipple, in our way.

EXT. PAWTUXET BUNGALOW -- MORNING
(THEODORE, WILLETT)

Extreme HIGH ANGLE LONG SHOT showing Willett's car pulling up to the bungalow. The two men get out -- Willett and Theodore. They walk to the house.

INT. BUNGALOW LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Focus on the door to the outside opening. The two men, backlit, enter. Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of them looking around the room, in silence.

INT. BUNGALOW LABORATORY -- CONTINUOUS
(THEODORE, WILLETT)

Cut to a laboratory. This one is far less elaborate than the one we've already seen in Charles's quarters. There is a small shelf of books, too. Theodore enters the frame.

THEODORE

Marinus! Come here.

Cut to the door, through which Willett enters. Puzzlement grows on Willett's face.

THEODORE (CONT'D)

(O.S.)

Ridiculous, isn't it?

Cut to the shelf of books and Willett entering the frame to look at them.

WILLETT

Yes. None of these books are older than a decade. Most of them don't even have their spines broken. This, my friend, is a sham.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett looking over his shoulder, and dolly over to a C.U. of Theodore.

THEODORE

Underground, isn't it?

WILLETT

(O.S.)

Probably.

INT. BUNGALOW BASEMENT -- MOMENTS LATER
(THEODORE, WILLETT)

LOW-ANGLE shot on the basement door, from the inside. The door opens and two beams of light lance down into the darkness. Down the stairs come Willett and Theodore. Move with them to follow them down into the neat basement filled with predictable basement clutter as they flash their lights around, searching for something.

Cut to a C.U. of a light shining down on the floor. In the dust that has turned to mud that has encrusted over the years, there are two things worth seeing: the first is a set of gouges, as if by wheels or rails, and the second is a path. The light moves, and we move around with it, until we're looking at a bookcase.

THEODORE

Marinus! Over here.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of the two aged men swinging open the bookcase, which does have rails that made the gouge. Behind it there is a dark hole. Willett moves out of the frame and comes back into it, shining a light into the hole uncovered. There is a space there and a hole down, and a ladder that leads down into the hole.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT showing the faces of the two men. They are apprehensive and frightened in the wan light.

THEODORE (CONT'D)

How much of what we know is true?
How much is superstition? How much
is . . . people without words try-
ing to explain events outside of
experience? Oh, God, Marinus, what
has my son gotten himself into?

WILLETT

I . . . I don't think that Charles
is your son, or the thing that is
in the hospital is Charles.

THEODORE

(looking down;
whispering)
Yes, I guess that is so, isn't it?
My Charles is gone. I . . . should
have been there.

WILLETT

Don't blame yourself. We'll find
out who is to blame and we'll put
an end to it.

INT. BOTTOM OF THE LADDER -- MOMENTS LATER
(THEODORE, WILLETT)

Willett is already at the bottom of the stair. He's got a duffel bag with him, and he's looking around with his flashlight. We cut to his POV and watch as the beam of the flashlight shows a stair leading down. We hear, from above, Theodore getting onto the ladder. Then we hear a crack, and a scream, and the sound of Theodore hitting the ground.

We cut to Willett spinning around and the camera moves around as he kneels next to the fallen Theodore. Theodore is holding his ankle.

Cut to a C.U. of the two men talking to each other, the light from their flashlights creating dim lighting with high contrast.

THEODORE

Damn it!

WILLETT

How is it?

THEODORE

I think I sprained it. I might have broken it. I'm not as young as I used to be.

WILLETT

I'll go get help.

THEODORE

No! Not yet. I'll be fine, here. I'd feel better if you check out what is there. This might be our only chance.

Willett pauses. Then he nods. He moves out of the frame.

INT. UNDERGROUND STAIRCASE -- MOMENTS LATER

From Willett's POV we travel down the staircase cut through the soil and stone of the hill. The staircase is narrow and claustrophobic. The only light is that provided by Willett's flashlight. He gets to flat ground to find an arch through which he goes. We cut to --

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY -- CONTINUOUS
(WILLETT)

Here's the real laboratory. It's got a generator with ventilation to the surface, it's got tables full of alchemical paraphernalia, it's got shelves of ancient books, it has a huge desk with notes piled about. It has everything. This first scene as Willett's light comes into the frame, and then Willett, who is a silhouette created by his light. We cut to the beam of his light falling on the generator and moving over to it. He fiddles with a few switches and turns it on. As sputters into lift and the lights come on.

Cut to a C.U. of the gas gauge on the generator. It's almost empty of fuel.

Cut to a C.U. of Willett sighing and then turning and looking around. He goes to the desk and starts putting notes into the duffel bag he brought.

Cut to a panorama of the laboratory. There is a door. Willett goes through that into --

INT. UNDERGROUND SUMMONING ROOM. -- CONTINUOUS
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

We start with a MEDIUM SHOT on the door and Willett coming into the room. Then we dolly around to take a look at what he is seeing. There are two stacks of cabinets, one on each side of the room. One has a sign labeled "Materia" and the other is labeled "Custodes." Between the two, on the floor, are inscribed two magic circles.

Cut to an OVERHEAD SHOT of the two magic circles. Both are pentacle constrained by double circles -- between the circles are arcane formulae. The circles are scarlet and seem to cast off slightly more light than they absorb. On the circle facing the door, inside the pentagram is a book stand and on that book stand is a book. The second pentagram is a tray with a blue-gray powder in it. Next to the tray is a jar, like on the cabinets.

We cut to a C.U. of Willett, and then to his POV. On the far wall is an inscription. At the top it reads: "Do not call up any that ye cannot put down. / Always have the words ready." Underneath that there are two columns. One column reads "Making" and has underneath it: Y'AI NG'NGAH / YOG-SOTHOTH / H'EE -- L'GEB / F'AI THRONDOG / UAAAH. The other column reads "Unmaking" and underneath it: OGTH-ROD AI'F / GEB'L -- EE'H / YOG-SOTHOTH / 'NGAH'NG AI'Y / ZHRO."

Willettt walks over to the tray and jar. He sifts the powder through his fingers. He picks up the jar. C.U. to the jar, which reads: Materia 240. Cut to Willettt putting the jar down. Cut to a LONG SHOT showing the wall and the two formulae. Willettt walks between them. Cut to Willettt's POV.

WILLETTT

(O.S. -- trying to
read the inscriptions
aloud)

Y'ai . . . what? Ya'i ng'ngah,
Yog-sothoth, h'ee l'geb, f'ai
thronddog, uaaah? That is this?

Cut to a POV from the wall. Behind Willettt there is a cloud of thick gray smoke filling a large space and then sucking it, to take the shape of a man.

Cut to Willettt taking out a notebook and writing down the inscriptions.

Then there is a sucking noise behind Willettt. Cut to a C.U. of the back of Willettt's head. We watch as he turns his head around. His eyes go wide with shock. He turns all the way around.

WILLETTT (CONT'D)

Oh, Lord in Heaven, what have I
done?

DRONING VOICE

(O.S. -- the words
are in Saxon, so
they sound like
gibberish to the
audience)

Who are you? What are you doing?
Ah, you are not Corwinus. Thou art
his enemy, I see.

We cut to a C.U. of a hand -- almost skinless, and perhaps not fully human -- coming out of a thick cloud of smoke, perhaps being part of the smoke, and it takes Willettt's notebook and pen.

Cut to an increasingly man-shaped cloud of smoke swirling-walking out the door of the chamber. This is a horrible, horrible laugh coming from it.

The lights flicker for a moment and we hear the generator stumble, and then pick up so the lights come back on, fully. Then the presence is gone.

We cut to Willett, who is standing there, horror-struck and aghast. We cut to his POV, over his shoulder, angling down. His notebook and pen are there. We watch as Willett picks them up.

We cut to a C.U. of what the "thing" wrote, "Corwinus necandus est. Cadaver aqua fortis dissolvendum, enc aliquid retinendum. Tace ut potes."

WILLETT

(O.S.)

"Curwen must be destroyed. Dissolve his body in acid so nothing remains. Keep your silence." My God, my God.

Cut to Willett putting away the notebook with shaky hands. Then he leaves that room.

INT. UNDERGROUND LABORATORY -- CONTINUOUS

Then he goes out to the lab, hustling in his haste to get out of that place. We follow him as he enters and then leaves the room.

INT. UNDERGROUND HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS
(WILLETT)

We cut to the underground hallway. Willett half stumbles into the frame. We hear a groan, somewhere, a burbling of noise with horrible overtones. He turns his head and we cut to Willett's POV as he looked up the staircase that leads up; there are no lights on the staircase. Then we dolly with his POV as he looks the other way -- there is a corridor reaching off into the distance, every so often lit with a low wattage bulb. Once again the generator almost winds down, but then picks up, returning the lights to their full brightness.

We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Willett, who decides with some trepidation evident. We cut to watch him walk down the corridor which is lit

INT. UNDERGROUND DUNGEON -- MOMENTS LATER
(TERRIBLE VOICE, WILLETT)

This is a broad, low chamber lit very poorly with some lights along the walls. There is a horrible groaning going on, pitiful and dangerous at the same time. Willett walks into the open space a bit and when he puts down his foot he hears a clang.

We cut to his POV as he looks down and sees there are metal grills on the floor with simple bolt latches to keep them closed. There is a piteous moan from below.

We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Willett kneeling down. He opens the latch and with a grunt heaves open the grill. He gets on his hands and knees and looks down.

WILLETT

Hello? Is there anyone in there?

He listens. The piteous noise increases.

TERRIBLE VOICE

(O.S. -- barely
audible over the
other sounds)

Help me, come down, help me.

Willett is afraid. He takes out his flashlight and turns it on. He flashes it down the hole. The beam trembles. There is a terrible scream and a frantic shuffling and scraping.

WILLETT

(whispering)

Oh, Lord in Heaven, have you forsaken the world, then?

Willett slumps forward, sobbing, and the flashlight slips from his hands. Then the lights dim, and Willett looks up, and the generator gives one final sputter and dies. The lights go out.

We cut to Willett's POV as he looks down into the pit. The flashlight is still on. We see a vague silhouette of whatever monstrosity is in the pit -- the suggestion of something human. A horrible gibbering.

TERRIBLE VOICE

(barely audible)

Come to play, play with me, come to play.

There is a crunch and the light goes out, leaving Willett in total darkness.

Terrible voices surround Willett, then, as they increase in volume in the utter darkness. They surround him telling him to come into darkness, to release them, to kill them, help them, join them. Willett screams.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

(WILLETT)

Willett is still sitting in his chair, but his head is to one side, so it is in profile. He is covering his mouth with his fist. He seems very tired.

WILLETT

My mind has erased what happened, after that. The next thing I knew, I was at the top of the stair with Theodore Ward, who was shaking me and telling me to "snap out of it."

(laughs)

He did not see nor hear what I saw or heard. He doesn't understand how lucky he was to have only hurt his ankle. We climbed out of the underground warren and

INT. WARD KITCHEN -- DAY

(THEODORE, WILLETT)

Willett and Theodore Ward sat at the table. The table is piled high with papers that Willett had taken out of the underground laboratory. Each of them has a fairly large pile of papers in front of them, too. Both men are tired, sad and depressed.

THEODORE

I . . . I don't know what to think.

WILLETT

Charles is dead, Theo. Curwen knew he was going to die and set it up so . . . someone, in later years, would bring him back.

There was a long silence.

THEODORE

It is insane.

Another long silence.

WILLETT

What else explains it? The note that thing I brought up wrote, the papers! You've read. He bragged about it to his friends.

THEODORE

The world isn't like this. The world is a sensible place.

WILLETT

(beat)

Yes. But whose sense of it is right? We find this disgusting, blasphemous and evil. It is an affront to all our sensibilities.

THEODORE

Materia, custodes

WILLETT

Material and guards! Think about it -- the grave robbing, both past and present! These . . . men have plundered the tombs of ages looking for wisdom of ancient sorcerers. And they're finding it!

THEODORE

The dungeon for the . . . failures. Just to leave them there?

WILLETT

These men are long past human sensibilities, Theo. How old are they, Curwen and his associates? Curwen looked forty when he came to Providence in 1760! How much older than that is he? My God! What he has seen, what he has pursued!

THEODORE

Charles is dead, then. Replaced by that monster.

WILLETT

Yes.

THEODORE

The world will not believe. Whoever kills Cha -- Curwen will go to prison.

WILLETT

Or a mental ward. The story is unbelievable. But I have a way. Take all of this and take your family away from here. Leave tonight. You have a place in the Catskills, right?

THEODORE

Yes.

WILLETT

Go there. Be seen. Tomorrow you will hear that Charles has escaped and he will not be found. You can rest, then, knowing that what happened to your son will happen to no others.

We cut to a C.U. of Willett's notebook which is open to the notes he made on the formula for "unmaking" copied from Curwen's underground chamber.

INT. HOSPITAL ADMITTING -- NIGHT
(GUARD, NURSE, WILLETT)

Willettt is signing in at the hospital ward. He hands the clipboard he just signed to the nurse. Standing next to Willettt is a guard.

NURSE

Thank you, Dr. Willettt. The guard will take you to Mr. Ward's room.

WILLETTT

You're welcome.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER
(CURWEN, GUARD, WILLETTT)

Willettt and the guard are walking down the corridor.

GUARD

Charles Ward is a weird one. He's nice as you can please, but he talks real weird, like out of an old movie, and he doesn't know anything about anything nowadays. But, boy, when you get him started about history, especially pre-Revolutionary War stuff, he can go off on a tear.

WILLETTT

That doesn't surprise me. Charles has always been fascinated, even obsessed, with history. Add that to the occultism he has been studying, well, while it's not precisely normal for this to happen it is, perhaps, comprehensible.

GUARD

I'm glad I don't have your job, doc. Here we are.

The guard and Willettt stop in front of room 415. The guard knocks and looks it. We cut to the guard's POV and see Curwen as a small desk reading a pile of newspapers and news magazines.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Charles! You've got a visitor. Your shrink, Dr. Willettt.

Curwen looks up, full of cold arrogance, the pit or scar above his eye clearly visible. We cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of the guard unlocking the door with Willett still in the frame.

WILLETT

Can you leave the door unlocked?
I'd hate to disturb you when I
left.

GUARD

Well, it's not normal.

WILLETT

He's not violent, I assure you.
I'll be sure to lock it and sign
out.

GUARD

(shrugging)

Well, this once, sure, what the
hell.

WILLETT

Thanks.

Willett goes in and closes the door. The guard starts to walk away.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
(CURWEN, WILLETT)

We start with Willett's POV, watching Curwen, who is still sitting at the desk.

WILLETT

The man who did your portrait got
the scar right.

CURWEN

So you know it is me, then, aye?

WILLETT

Yes, Joseph. Can I call you that?

CURWEN

Why not. Marinus, is it?

WILLETT

Yes.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT showing both men.

CURWEN

What have ye come for.

WILLETT

To talk a bit. I found what was left of Charles at his parents place. I spent most of today burying his remains. I'll tell his parents, when I see them, where to erect the headstone and have the ceremony.

CURWEN

Ye don't like it that I killed the lad.

(laughs)

I care not for what ye think. Ye know it as well as I. Soon, these doctors will see I am back to normal and I'll get away free.

WILLETT

What was Materia 240?

CURWEN

(nervous)

What?

WILLETT

Materia 240. Who was it?

CURWEN

Ye've been to my chambers?

WILLETT

Oh, yes. And when I was there, I said the words, Joseph. I called it up, but I did not put it down.

CURWEN

(standing, knocking his chair over, scared)

Ye what? Man, do you have any idea what ye've done!

WILLETT

He wrote me a note, in Latin. I can read Latin. He told me to kill you, to dissolve your body in acid so nothing remains.

CURWEN

(snarling)

Ye'll get no chance for that, Doctor Willett! Do ye think that ye know the least way to kill me?

WILLETT

I found your filthy dungeon, too. How many things have you called up since you've returned?

CURWEN

(laughing)

Most of what ye saw was from before. When ye have been brought up, ye are nearly immortal.

WILLETT

Which is what I suspected. It got me to thinking, too. On your wall, there were two formula. One for making and one for

CURWEN

(eyes getting wide)

No!

WILLETT

Unmaking.

CURWEN

Do ye think to best me? Gah! Per
Adonai Eloim, Adonia Jehova, Adonai
Sabaoth --

WILLETT

Ogthrod ai'f, geb'l, ee'h, YOG-
SOTHOTH, 'ngah'ng ai'y. ZHRO.

Cut to a MIDDLE-SHOT of Curwen. He stops speaking and lifts his hand. He watches it crumble into dust, as does the rest of him.

Cut to Willett, standing next to a pile of ash and some clothing. Willett scoops up as much of the blue-gray ash as he can into the hospital clothing. Then he goes over to the window. He opens it. Cut to --

EXT. HOSPITAL -- CONTINUOUS
(WILLETT)

The window opens and we see Willett dump out Curwen's remains into the wind. We watch the wind scatter them. He throws out the clothing, then.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS
(WILLETT)

We watch Willett leave the room.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS
(WILLETT)

We watch Willett close the door and lock it. He walks down the corridor.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER
(GUARD, NURSE)

MIDDLE-SHOT on bed. There is a blue-gray dust. Move over to the window. The window is open and there is a breeze stirring the drapes; the window is barred on the outside. Move around to the door. It's a heavy door with a small

window in it. Freeze there. There is a clunk as the door is unlocked and a nurse comes in pushing a cart. She's accompanied by a guard.

The nurse looks around.

NURSE

Mr. Ward?

The guard pushes by, pulling his baton as he does so. The camera follows him searching the room, quickly. He finds nothing. He pulls his radio handset and speaks into it.

GUARD

Emergency. Code one. Charles Ward is not in room 415. Repeat, Charles Ward has escaped room 415.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT
(DRONING VOICE, WILLETT)

Willett is in the chair, and we are watching the back of the chair. He stands up and turns to face the audience. The fire behind him seems to give him something of a halo.

WILLETT

That is how Charles Ward came to an end, and Joseph Curwen with him.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

I am satisfied with that reckoning. Will you keep this matter silent for all your days?

WILLETT

All of them, those that remain left to me.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S)

Humans are not meant to travel far from the shores of ignorance. To do so imperils them, mind and soul, both individually and collectively. Know this to be true.

WILLETT

What of Curwen's allies, then, that still engage in this . . . blasphemy.

DRONING VOICE

(O.S.)

I will see to them. Curwen was the one who could have stopped me, had you not disposed of him.

There is a whoosh, then, and the voice leaves through a door opening and closing. Willett runs his hands through his hair and sags, looking very old, almost broken.

WILLETT

(whispering)

It will never end, will it? The darkness has parted and I have seen that on the far shores of learning, there is no rest, no peace, only madness neverending.

FADE OUT:

THE END