

# Take the Force of the Blow

A Call of Cthulhu scenario by Damien Moore and Liz Drake

*From the Melbourne Argus, November 3, 1924...*

<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>HEIRESS MISSING</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">POLICE FEAR KIDNAPPING</p> <hr/> <p>Miss Victoria Hennesley, who disappeared last Saturday evening, is feared by police to be the victim of foul play. Miss Hennesley was last seen leaving her family estate near Ballaraat on horseback during the early afternoon. The alarm was not raised until quite late in the evening, as Miss Hennesley is known for her extended rides. It was initially presumed that Miss Hennesley may have become waylaid due to the inclement weather. However, after several days, it has become clear that any difficulties</p>	<p>Miss Hennesley may have encountered could be more severe than a foundered horse.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POSSIBLE KIDNAPPING</p> <p>Police now fear that Miss Hennesley may have been the victim of foul play. Having recently inherited the family fortune from her late father, it has been suggested that unknown ne'erdo wells may have taken advantage of her sudden affluence and independent nature. Mr John Gallagher, to whom Miss Hennesley is to be married this coming summer, has rushed from Melbourne to help police in their enquiries.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>INMATE ESCAPED</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">ORDERLIES DISCIPLINED</p>	<p>An inmate of Kew Asylum, Mr William Clark, escaped from the hospital grounds late yesterday evening. Mr Clark was asked to assist orderlies in their duties by moving a food delivery vehicle to the rear of the hospital facility where the kitchens are located. Several minutes later, it was realised Mr Clark had left the grounds at the wheel of the vehicle. Police have asked that anyone sighting the truck, which has KEW ASYLUM prominently displayed on its sides, contact their local station directly, but are cautioned not to approach Mr Clark.</p>
--	---	--

Seriousness 3  
Rules Knowledge 1  
Adult Content M

Characterisation 3  
Background Knowledge 1

# Introduction

*That's just part of the deal  
That's the way I feel.  
Put my arms around you,  
I'll stand in front of you  
Take the force of the blow*

## Massive Attack

### Background - Ballarat and Theme

The following Call of Cthulhu scenario was originally written for UniCon 97, and has now been rewritten for Conquest 2004. It is set in the 1920's, in Ballaraat, a large town in north central Victoria.

Strategically located in the Central Highlands Region of Victoria, Ballarat is approximately 110 km north-west of Melbourne, The City of Ballarat lies within a gently undulating section of the midland plains which stretch from Creswick in the north, to Rokewood in the south, and from Lal Lal in the south-east to Pittong in the west.

Ballaraat was built on the discovery of gold, but those times have been and gone, leaving a legacy of magnificent public buildings, but little else. The last of the gold mines closed in 1917, and population started drifting towards Melbourne, following available work. A certain amount of town spirit still exists amongst the successful and they work to keep Ballaraat as a viable town. This informal group make up the 'society' of Ballaraat, and constitute its most visible citizens. The Hennesley's, around whom the scenario is centred, are part of this society set.

Also central to the story is the Chinese-descended population. Although in the RealWorld(tm), most of the Gold-Rush asian population had well left by 1920, for the purposes of this story a high population of Chinese-descended people cluster near the southern edge of town in what is, as usual in these circumstances, called 'Chinatown'.

Part of the story is meant to focus on xenophobia, and how silly it looks especially in the light of the Mythos. The first sessions of the scenario is intended to present to the players the stereotyped close-mouthed asian community and associated strangeness - odd smells, strange food, clothes and customs - as a strong "other" amidst their "normal" town. However, the second session should present the Mythos beasties and behaviour as a much stronger OTHER, highlighting the reality of the situation. Of course, this theme is buried in the story - if the players miss it, then they should still be entertained.

### Background - Plot

The heart of the story is the Chinese sorcerer, Wen Lee. Hundreds of years ago, through his occult study, he discovered a way to make himself nigh immortal, without the help of always dangerous Mythos pantheon. The spell involves a Dorian Gray type of arrangement wherein young maiden must be dedicated to Wen Lee via a lengthy ritual. From that point onwards, Wen Lee does not age - instead, the depredations of age, and even physical damage are inflicted upon the rapidly-less-young woman. The victim ages at twice the normal rate, and any wounds inflicted on the caster are taken by the woman.

70 years ago, a group of Daoist monks, the Brotherhood of the Gentle Wind, who are dedicated to stopping this sort of thing from going on caught up with Wen Lee. He barely escaped and fled with many other Chinese immigrants to Australia, which at that time was experiencing a gold rush. He spent a terrified 6 months with no dedicated woman, and finally settled at Ballaraat, where he renewed his evil tricks. He would only take Chinese girls, primarily because he knew that the white authorities would not followup their disappearances.

Meanwhile, the Brotherhood recently discovered that Wen Lee had not been killed, but had escaped to Australia. They (or their descendants at least) have followed him here, and found his current abode and dedicated woman. On Saturday, they attacked the shack which led to Wen Lee's pocket realm, and despite being driven from the site themselves, successfully killed the woman to whom he was bonded, and partially closed the gate that led to his realm (see **Burnt Shack**).

Wen Lee fled the site in a panic with the aid of his Byakhee servants, and desperately afraid of the first aging that he had suffered for many a year, seized upon the first available victim, which turned out to be the unfortunate Victoria Hennesley. Hennesley, out riding in the lovely spring weather, happened to have reached the road on horseback when Wen Lee drove past. Although he had met Victoria before, it was in his young form, not the old one and she would not recognise him. Wen Lee stopped, and Victoria was polite enough to talk to him briefly - long enough for a combination of Cloud Memory and Wrack to incapacitate her, driving off to a preprepared hideout near the East Ballarat mines.

Shortly afterwards, Ray Archman (see **The Hustler**) rode past and seeing a horse and not being able to find an owner, grabbed the reins and rode off.

## Times and Places

**350 years ago:** Wen Lee perfects his Dorian-Gray spell

**70 years ago:** The Brotherhood of the Gentle Wind attack Wen Lee and believe he is killed. Instead he flees to Australia.

**Autumn 1924:** The Brotherhood become aware through mysterious means that Wen Lee lives.

**Winter 1924:** George Hennesley takes ill. His condition deteriorates throughout the cold season.

**September 10, 1924:** Victoria receives word that her father is dying, and takes ship from London on the 15th.

**October:** Brotherhood arrive in Port Philip area.

**October 4th:** George Hennesley dies.

**October 18th:** Victoria arrives in Melbourne. She briefly meets Gallagher and then travels to Ballarat.

**October 20th:** Memorial service for George Hennesley.

**Sat, November 1st:** Foul weather ends, Hennesley goes riding, Brotherhood attack Wen Lee.

**Mon, November 3rd:** Scenario begins.

The current situation is:

- Victoria Hennesley is being held within some old abandoned mines, to the east of Ballaraat. Wen Lee had prepared this area just for a situation like this. He is currently working to open another gate to his pocket realm, as he believes that the old gate has been destroyed by the Brotherhood.
- The Daoist monks are preparing to try and find Wen Lee again, and this time to destroy him. They realise on Monday that he has grabbed the white woman, after encountering the characters at the apothecary's. They are in a rush to do so before he gains access to his realm again.
- Monday morning, 9:15am. The characters are assembled at the Hennesley house, north of Ballaraat...

# The Hennesley Mansion

**NPCs:** Henrietta O'Reilly, John Gallagher, Edward Cook, Magnus Stuart, Andrew Summers.

The Hennesley mansion is a large home, set amongst well-kept gardens. Some distance from the actual city of Ballaraat, it is a tranquil place. However the numerous police vehicles parked in the semi-circular driveway, and the general feeling of quiet tension leads to an almost funereal sensation.

The characters were led into the parlour as they arrived. Hobson and Manning probably arrived together and know one another, but they've probably only exchanged names at the stage. Wide bay windows looking out across sunlit gardens towards the stables. People are quietly present in nearby rooms, murmuring softly.

The murmuring is broken by a loud argument from a room away. The characters can hear one loud voice, very cultured in tone, in particular - "What do you mean, the best men for the job? I'm not interested in having a bunch of country louts gallumph their way around looking for my fiancée..." There is a response too quiet to make out. "I can not believe this is the best that can - "

Enter **Andrew Summers** and **John Gallagher**. Summers is the Deputy Head of the Victorian Police. He is about 55, with receding grey hair. Gallagher, on the other hand, is maybe 30, and simply looks angry, his faced flushed. Gallagher stomps to the rear of the room, and pours himself a drink. Summers sits down in front of the characters, placing a small case down.

Andrew Summers presents to the characters the following information (feel free to use the box text or sum things up yourself):

- Introduce the characters to one another.
- Introduce John Gallagher, Hennesley's fiance, who wants to be kept up-to-date of progress
- V.H. went riding Saturday AM, as it was the first fine day all week, although windy
- V.H. often went for long rides alone
- V.H. had not returned by Saturday evening
- Local police contacted; search on Sunday (Hobson was aware of this, but only peripherally). (see **Tracking the Horse** for more info).
- Press published story Monday AM
- Pressure from VIPs to treat this as a possible kidnapping, not just a missing persons case
- Photos of V.H. from about a year ago - she is dressed in a society dress and has long hair.
- List of house staff

Other info in this scene:

- Gallagher doesn't have a lot of faith in the PCs
- Gallagher gets a phone call and informs the PCs that "Mevins from Sydney" is coming down by Thursday to handle the case
- Gallagher is basically annoying

"Gentlemen, thank you for your punctuality. I know that you two (Dawson and Manning) have come up here on the railway this morning. Ah, introductions are probably in order - Senior Detective Hobson here is the chief officers at Ballarat, and Detective Warren is his second-in-charge. Detective Senior Sergeant Dawson is one of the premier Bertolligists in Melbourne and his medical knowledge has been of great use to the Force there. Detective Sergeant Manning has only recently joined the force, but he spent many years in Ballaraat as a mines inspector and knows the area like the back of his hand."

"However, I believe you have not had the pleasure". He points to Gallagher. "This is Mr John Gallagher, Miss Hennesley's fiance. He has expressed an interest in ensuring he is kept up to date with what we know, so I have asked him to attend this briefing."

"I'm not sure how much each of you has been told, so I will try and cover the whole situation. Miss Hennesley apparently disappeared on Saturday, while out riding." Gallagher mutters something into the wall, Summers ignores him. "She had expressed an interest in going for an extended ride to shake off the lethargy of being cooped up for the last few days due to the inclement weather."

The weather had been foul all last week, but spring has swung around again, and today is bright and sunny, if windy.

"As a result, no one thought to raise the alarm until very late on the Saturday evening. The local Police were contacted, as Senior Detective Hobson knows, but were unable to discover anything that evening. A search yesterday revealed no sign of Miss Hennesley, and I am afraid that somehow the press managed to discover that she was missing, broadcasting their story all over the papers this morning."

At this point, **Edward Cook**, the butler, enters, and speaks quietly with Gallagher, who leaves. Summers watches him leave and visibly relaxes when he does.

"At this stage, we are not sure of any details. Yesterday, we were treating this case as a missing person, guessing that Miss Hennesley was simply lost. Last night, I was called by the police minister, who is apparently a good friend of Gallagher Snr, and I have been instructed to consider this case a kidnapping."

Summers takes a deep breath "Any questions so far?"

Summers can offer them some photos, about a year old, and some basic information about who is around the house. Once the characters have asked a few questions, Gallagher barges back in. "It might interest you to know that Mevins from Sydney is coming down. He'll be here by Thursday."

The characters will know of Mevins - he has made the papers several times after particularly spectacular raids, etc.

Summers - "Very well. I'm sure these gentlemen will want to get started now, so as to present Mr Mevins with as much information as they can."

Gallagher - "Then I demand to be allowed to be part of the search!"

Summers - "It's, uh, not normal police procedure to allow civilians to become directly involved in an investigation. However, I'm sure that Snr Detective Hobson will keep you informed of anything that he feels you need to know. In the meantime, gentlemen, I have to return to Melbourne - Hobson, you are in charge."

Once Summers has left, Gallagher will try and argue his way into being allowed to join the investigation, all in the name of Victoria needing someone to look out for her, lost lamb that she is now with her father gone. He fundamentally makes a nuisance of himself. It's best if he doesn't succeed, but if the players are particularly weak-willed, feel free to bully them. At the very least, he will lurk as they investigate the house - he might quiz the staff himself and come up with extreme theories of what might be happening ("Cook was running a gambling ring! It's obvious, he has fallen into debt and as a house servant, he would have overheard the discussions Quincy would have had with Victoria, and know that she has come into money - he's kidnapped her!").

Gallagher has a couple of 'confidants' who have come to Ballarat with him - members of the press who will publish whatever seems most annoying to the players.

## Interviewing Gallagher

If the characters think to interview Gallagher, it quickly becomes clear that he doesn't actually know Hennesley very well. They've had some nice times together (never alone) and their families looked favourably on the marriage. This is his second visit to the Hennesley mansion, and to Ballaraat. He definitely feels that anywhere outside the capital is too far in the hinterlands, and that its occupants must obviously be deficient in some sense, else they would have moved to the city.

Gallagher last saw Hennesley when she arrived in Melbourne, 2 weeks ago. Although he has written to her on several occasions since then, she has only written back once. He doesn't recall much other than her being distressed over missing her father's funeral.

## Interviewing the House staff

Possibly a little bit more useful, the house staff consists of **Henrietta O'Reilly** (cook and cleaner), **Edward Cook** (butler, jack of all trades within the house) and **Magnus Stewart** (gardener, stable-boy and jack of all trades outside the house).

*O'Reilly* is about 60 years old, grey hair, chubby face. She has a faint English accent, and is obviously quite upset, weepy and sniffing. O'Reilly is a little bit vague, and tends to get distracted and lose track of the conversation. Sprinkle her speech with "that poor gel"s. O'Reilly has been with Mr Hennesley since the 80's, starting here as a washer-girl for Mrs Hennesley.

She can tell the characters that Hennesley had been restless for the last few days, as the poor weather meant that she couldn't go out too much, although she has been visiting **Benjamin Jenkins**, an old childhood friend. And how he's grown since then. Taking over his family's business. Oh, yes Victoria. She left the house about lunchtime on Saturday, without taking even a bite to eat.

O'Reilly doesn't know where she went, other than it was on horseback, and that she was dressed inappropriately for a woman of her age (ie: sensibly for horse-riding).

*Cook* is only in his forties and is much more together than O'Reilly. He is nominally in charge of the household staff (such that it is), and has been so for the last ten years. Cook is obviously nervous, and just as obviously trying to hide it.

This nervousness has nothing to do with Victoria Hennesley and everything to do with the fact that he runs a two-up game at the mansion every Sunday morning - having the police crawling everywhere yesterday really threw things. (If you feel like it, one of the constables might mention that a couple of suspicious looking characters came in and spoke to Cook yesterday early, then left nervously).

Cook knows about the same as O'Reilly. Miss Hennesley has been at the house for the last two weeks, ever since returning after her father died. She is considering selling the house and moving to Melbourne permanently, at least after she's married (she's not, that would just be the normal thing for a socialite to do). She has spent the last week visiting friends, and friends of her father's and relatives around Ballaraat, as well as spending some time with **Mr Quincy**, the family solicitor.

His opinion of Hennesley is that she is a willful girl, with a wild streak. Young Victoria was fairly well educated, and doted on by Mr Hennesley, as her mother died when she was young.

*Stewart* is a weatherbeaten man, with a distinct Scots accent. He has worked for the Hennesley's only for the last 4 years, and doesn't know Victoria at all. He spoke briefly with her when she left (she saddled the horse herself, and he didn't approve) and believes that she intended to ride north, away from the town. She was on an unfamiliar horse, a white stallion that Mr Hennesley had acquired while she was in Melbourne, but he was a good riding horse. He made sure she was at the very least competent before she left.

## Hennesley's Room

Victoria's room is a strange mix of all the cultures she has visited, most of them Asian, and of a few years neglect mixed with two weeks of solid living. The room is on the second floor, and according to O'Reilly, is "the room she used to have as a gel".

Mundane furnishings include a single bed (neatly made), built-in closets (with a limited variety of clothes compared to normal - Hennesley's main luggage is still to arrive), a dresser-drawer (see below), innumerable shelves (see below) and a locked trunk under the bed.

'Occult' artifacts cover nearly every surface. O'Reilly expresses a dislike for "all those heathen artifacts" but even as a girl, Hennesley was "always after just one more of the terrible things".

The collection includes

- ouija boards of various types, one of which is obviously a favourite, and has been used recently (inverted glass left next to the board).
- Several packs of tarot cards.
- A velvet tablecloth-like object with strange Chinese characters. The cloth is pulled together to make a sack, tied with green ribbon, and contains 9 copper coins, also Chinese.
- A floor-to-ceiling bookshelf, with an extensive, if esoteric library, including many tomes on philosophy, history, mythology and horror (a successful Spot Hidden will reveal a brown paper edition of Crowley's *Book of the Law*). Most of the books are relatively old - the 1870s were a great time to be an occultist, but the Victorian/Edwardian years were not so good. However, the fad is coming back, and so amidst the delicate, dusty books are one or two newer books (all have a certain amount of dust - Hennesley didn't bring any back with her, so they've been here for at least a year). The bookshelf also has a number of small pamphlets from various organisations in Melbourne and Ballarat interested in 'supernatural' things, including a couple from churches and from the Melbourne Theosophical society.
- Chinese silk paintings, hanging scripture-like from the walls
- An obsidian knife from South America, on display
- Various candles, and chalk. Unused, in a drawer.
- A large, coloured, beaded and feathered African mask, about 1m high.
- A green stone mortar and pestle, with traces of a black substance (opium).
- Lots of Egyptian paraphernalia - masks, mummy's hands, etc.

On the dresser-drawers is a small, but prestigious collection of perfumes and such-like. Amongst them are small glass bottles, marked in Chinese. It is almost impossible to tell what the contents are in detail, but they seem to be herbal concoctions, or something similar (a mix of dried leaves and powders). A successful Spot Hidden will reveal a small card hidden side-on amidst the bottles:

Dr Chen Gin-Fan Chinese Doctor and Philosopher  10 Whites Lane
---

A small collection of clothes appropriate for the traveling dilettante is in the wardrobe, and suitcases are stacked neatly atop the wardrobe. There's no sign that anyone has ransacked the room, nor that Hennesley has packed to leave.

The locked trunk can be opened with a key in the dresser (spot hidden) or by prying it open with a pry bar. Inside is a diary, a gramophone player and records and in a box at the bottom, a generous sized, 3 person hooka. A successful pharmacy or law roll will inform the investigators that the faint sweet/spicy aroma clinging to the hooka is burnt opium.

The gramophone is just that - its an expensive and delicate item, so Hennesley was keeping it safe. Her diary starts about six weeks before - basically she began it when she got on the boat in London (it takes about a month to reach Melbourne by steamer). It begins by expressing her concern that she will not reach Australia in time, and how she misses friends in England. About 3 weeks into her trip, word reaches them that her father has died and the entry is quite emotional. There is a short break, and the diary resumes when she lands in Melbourne.

The rest of the document spells out her sadness in not returning to Ballaraat in time to meet with her father before he died, and over the last week boredom with being in Ballaraat in the rainy season, her conversations with Ben, and a mention of meeting Mr Gallagher again.

## Other details

- There seems to be no evidence of a planned absence - Hennesley did not take any bag with her, nor are any of her things here disturbed in a way that would be consistent with packing and leaving.
- She has few known associates in Ballaraat, as she has spent most of the last 12 years in Melbourne (at boarding schools) and then briefly overseas. In the last week she has called upon **Benjamin Jenkins** twice, **David Quincy** (solicitor) once and once upon **Thirza Fisher**, a cousin of a similar age.
- Hennesley Senior's room has not been disturbed much since he died. It has the musty scent of an ill resident clinging to it. Fundamentally he died of old age, however the immediate cause of death was pneumonia.
- Hennesley Senior's study has been much used however. Enquiries will lead to Mr **David Quincy**, the family solicitor. He used the room extensively when sorting out the family fortunes after the tragic death (see **David Quincy** below).

## David Quincy, Solicitor at Large

Characters calling upon the Quincy concern will find themselves waiting for a few moments as David Quincy finishes up his business with a client. In fairly short order, they will be escorted into the plush rooms. Green carpet, brown leather and shelves of books project an impression of quiet competence. Quincy is in his early 40s and is a quiet, unexcitable man.

Quincy can tell them that the Hennesley family fortunes are not exactly booming - a solid portfolio in property, however, means that they are not flagging either. The majority of the family finances are tied up in these properties, some farming, some residential. However, with Mr Hennesley's death, Victoria is the beneficiary of a considerable sum from his life insurance (a similar policy applies to herself). She had asked him to keep as much of that sum as free money as he could for future investments. Quincy discussed these matters primarily at the Hennesley house, but he has the papers here.

For what it's worth, the next of kin is a Donald Hennesley (47yo, married with children), Victoria's second cousin. He lives in southern New South Wales, and received a small sum from the inheritance.

## Benjamin Jenkins

Characters investigating Benjamin Jenkins will find that his house is in the nice area of town. The Jenkins family owns a fair amount of property in the area, mostly as a result of the efforts of Jenkins snr (deceased).

Benjamin Jenkins is, at first glance, a dapper young man of maybe 25. He is in when the characters call on him the first time, after they are greeted by a doorman. Jenkins was aware of Hennesley's disappearance, and has read the morning newspaper and is duly concerned for her safety.

Jenkins and Hennesley have been friends since they were children. There has never been any romantic attachment between them, but they have been close even across continents, writing regularly. Jenkins can tell the characters that he has been talking to Victoria about the loss of her father, about her travels overseas and about their shared passion of philosophy. He knows that she was unsure about her marriage, as part of the incentive was her father's desire to see her happily married before he died.

Jenkins knows about Dr Chen - he in fact gave Victoria the card a week or so ago. He did so after a discussion about Chinese philosophy, specifically spirituality and afterlife. He has known Chen for at least two years.



Jenkins description of her personality is "independent". Hennesley was fully capable of taking care of herself under normal conditions. He also believes that kidnapping might have been the cause of her disappearance, but is concerned that it might have been blundered, and she was killed instead.

He last saw her on the Thursday past - they had tea together at the Calpurnia tea rooms at Lake Wendouree. He went to Melbourne on Friday, and only returned yesterday afternoon.

Jenkins also has a more recent photo of Hennesley than any of the others the characters have yet been able to get. It was taken a week ago, in a picturesque bit of bushland, and she has short hair, and is dressed much less formally than the existing photos. Manning may recognise it as being near the Ballaraat East mines.

(took out him using opium, doesn't work. he can be gay if you like).

## Chasing the Horse

Following Hennesley is not impossible, but is awkward. She knows the area around her home intimately (or used to...) and was in the mood for stretching her legs, intending to ride some distance. More importantly, its kind of dull, and more suited to police minions. Encourage the players to follow up other clues while setting trained trackers.

Trackers began following Hennesley's path Sunday. They have been able to follow the tracks far enough to know the approximate path that Hennesley took, but she turned onto well used roads, and finding an exact path is difficult as they are not sure where she might have turned off.

To find Hennesley's path, have the players make a Track roll (or Spot Hidden at -20%) and then a Ride roll. Success at both will allow them to follow Hennesley's path - it takes time and effort to discern her tracks from all the others in the area, but by brute forcing the problem, it is possible.

From a scenario timing point of view, it can take a variable amount of time - not only do the police and trackers have to find the path, but they will probably have to find the detectives to notify them. This lets you put it whenever in the story, to stop things from flagging.

Hennesley's path follows walking paths and back trails for some distance before finally coming out at the intersections of two dirt roads (she was riding through bush, not along the roads). The ground here is covered with leaf litter, and is still damp. On Saturday, there were some quite marshy patches.

It's here on the verge that the trackers find Hennesley's riding helmet - brownish coloured and having rolled into the brush, Wen Lee missed it after the struggle. Neatly written on the inside is "Hennesley".

Another successful Track roll (or Spot Hidden at -20%) will reveal some of the details of what may have happened. Hennesley's horse appears to have been ridden up to this point, and then stopped. Riding boot prints where Hennesley jumped off are clear near the edge of the road. The horse then meandered about a little before being led, not ridden away by someone else also on horseback.

If you want to lead the players to the shack at this point, they can find tire tracks of about the same age. These tracks come from the northwest and pull over (maybe with soft-shoes next to them), and then head off the same direction.

A successful Spot Hidden will find the location where Hennesley fell to the ground - hand prints and signs of someone being dragged. There's no evidence to say that this was Hennesley. There are also soft shoe marks where Wen Lee half dragged Hennesley to his van.

Ray Archman rode along the minor road of the intersection, and didn't leave much in the way of tracks, other than those mentioned above. (see **The Hustler**).

## Dr Chen or Chasing the Dragon

Dr Chen is in fact Wen Lee. His persona of a Chinese doctor makes him invisible to the whites and a valued member of the Chinese society, a deception that appeals to his sense of superiority. It also lets him spend much of his time studying, without having to work hard for a living.

Wen Lee is more than a little deranged, and it manifests as a sort of fixation - as long as he has someone else bonded to him, he is calm and confident, but if his protection is removed, he becomes frantic and frenzied. Grabbing Hennesley was not the brightest of moves, but now that he has her, Wen Lee is confident that he can re-establish his connection to his pocket realm and to all of his powers. From there, he believes (probably rightly) he can destroy the Brotherhood here and return to his safe life. Part of his delusion is that he thinks that he can avoid the police and other authorities looking for Hennesley with little or no effort.

Dr Chen's appearance depends on whether or not the characters have yet been to the burnt shack - if they have not been there (the more likely option), he is an elderly Chinese man, shuffling from room to room. His clothes seem a little over-large - he is wearing the same sort of plain clothing that the other local inhabitants wear (black pants and shirt/coat). If they mention he is an 'old man' to the right people (ie: local chinese or Benjamin Jenkins), they will assure the characters they have the wrong person.

If they have been to the shack, and Chen is still in his offices for some reason, then he is about 35 and robustly healthy looking. In neither case will he be wearing the ornate robes which he favours when in his pocket realm, and which he was wearing when attacked.

Dr Chen's card indicates his address is in Chinatown, at 10 Whites Lane. Eerie. Whites Lane is a cobbled street at the edge of Chinatown, and one side of the street has residences built in a western style and the other side has been constructed entirely by chinese immigrants. The street should be a firm demarcation between the caucasian and asian worlds.

Dr Chen's residence is on the eastern side of the street. It is clearly signed - both in English and Chinese - stating that Dr Chen is a traditional healer (he has no medical license, so is not able to advertise as a doctor), philosopher and advisor.

The front door opens into a almost western-style waiting room. A small writing desk faces onto the curtains which hide the room from the street, and a small number of comfortable chairs are ready for visitors. The front door triggers a melodic bell, and Chen shows himself shortly afterwards.

The room behind this one has an almost clinical feel to it. Dr Chen uses this for his 'procedures'. A more significant desk, obviously heavily used, rests against the wall. He has odd charts of people with lines leading to certain places, strange drawings of branching lines and strips of Chinese characters. A collection of books marks one wall. A cupboard leading from this room holds a small number of supplies, and a sterilising still for the needles (alcohol based).

The next room is a small residential room - a closet, bed and similar furniture. This room has been used the last few days, but a solid examination (and a successful Psychology roll) will show that its a sham - it does not bear the hall marks of a heavily used room.

Finally a small kitchen, with a stone sink and stove looks out onto a garage/shed which backs onto the alley. Chen has a black delivery van stored in the shed. This in itself is indicative of Chen's wealth. Hidden in the stable is a tattered and burnt robe, with mud on the bottom that corresponds to the location Hennesley was taken from. Wen Lee was wearing this robe when the shack was attacked (see **Burnt Shack**).

Dr Chen speaks very clear English, with a slight accent. He will examine the medicines that they may have found at Hennesley's house, and can tell the characters what is in them (random Chinese herbs, but including juniper), but is not sure what the combination would be for - it would depend on how much she took, when, in what combination, how they have been treated, etc Dr Chen will direct them to the apothecary, Lung Quong, around the corner, and say to say that Dr Chen sent them.

If the characters present him with the silk paintings from Hennesley's rooms, he can tell them they are mostly of local manufacture, and that they are sayings. Philosophical parables and, ah, blessings.

He had met Ms Hennesley once last week. She was given his card by her friend, Mr Jenkins. She was troubled by the death of her father, and he spoke to her for a time about the ephemeral nature of life.

If the characters mention the black-clothed Chinese men, Dr Chen will allude to their being evil men, who terrorise the local community. He will not spell out who they are, for fear of saying something contradictory to what the characters know, but will intimate that they are a Chinese gang.

If they encounter the old Chen, and then return to find the young Chen, he will claim to be a younger relative, and then leave as soon as possible for his East Ballaraat hideaway.

(If they consult the hive mind, or speak to people about Chen, he is somewhat known. Rumour has it his father found a giant nugget and he is living off the parings from it).

## Chinese Apothecary - Lung Quong

By contrast with Dr Chen's rooms, the apothecary's store front is dingy and cluttered. The apothecary is a disheveled Chinese man, about 50 perhaps, wearing a rude leather smock. He has a flustered air about him, and is somewhat skittish.

Also in the shop are several black-clad young Chinese men. Unlike the local residents, their clothing is fine and well cut. One of them is leaning over the counter as the characters enter - although the feeling is immediately of menace, there were no raised voices. The young man straightens up, and looks the characters in the eye - unlike the usual local residents, his bearing is quite confronting. Mr Lung looks back and forth at the police and the young men, then addresses the police. The three men will stand and wait.

Trying to explain things to Mr Lung can take some time. He does not speak very good English. He can tell the characters that the bottles are for "women's problems" and for "calmness of spirit", prescribed for Ms Victoria Hennesley by himself, when she visited him around two weeks ago. If they ask, he will deny that they have opium in them - true.

This information will take some time to get across to the characters. The apothecary is obviously trying to help, but does not possess the English to get across the concepts he wishes to say, and is more than slightly rattled by the presence of the young men.

The young men are Feng Han-wu and two minions from the Brotherhood - they are aware that Wen Lee may require certain hard-to-obtain herbs for his spell-casting and were trying to threaten the information from Lung Quong without actually explaining why. Only Han-wu speaks English, although he will pretend not to. If the characters mention Hennesley's disappearance with enough detail (Saturday afternoon, north of town), he will react briefly with shock - a successful Psychology roll will illuminate his reaction, although he will continue to feign ignorance of English.

When the characters leave, Feng Han-wu will set his two minions to follow them for a time, and see who else they speak to in Chinatown. If the character confront their tails, or make it clear they've been seen, both will fade away. Han-wu, on the other hand, will purchase some of the apocathery's fine products and go to meet his brother.

## Meanwhile, at the station....

If at some time, the characters have returned to the station, a couple of members of the press are lurking about the front and start to press them for answers ("Do you believe Miss Hennesley has been kidnapped?" ,etc). When they finally manage to get inside, a scuffle breaks out at the front desk just as they enter. Its not serious, but the desk sergeant will need some help in breaking up the participants.

### Hustling...

The two brawlers are **Ray Archman**, a 'respectable' horse trader and ex-jockey and **Peter Tighe**, a sucker. Earlier in the day, Tighe bought from Archman a 'black stallion' from Archman. The black later turned out to be shoe polish, and the erstwhile purchaser went looking for Archman. He happened upon him in a store in Main Street, and both were arrested for making a public nuisance.

Tighe is now loudly declaiming Archman as a thief and a swindler. The horse in question is out the front of the station, in Tighe's float. Rubbing vigorously at the blacking causes it to fall away, revealing the white coat underneath.

When pressured, Archman confesses that he found the horse, riderless, wandering near the corner of Back Creek Rd and Martin Rd at about 3pm on Saturday. Consulting with Magnus Stewart, the characters can confirm that it is the horse that Hennesley rode out on the Saturday morning. Hennesley could have easily reached that intersection by 3pm. Investigating the site reveals the same data as above (see "Following the Horse").

## The inestimable Mr Gallagher

Also at the station, lying in wait for Hobson is Gallagher. He is ready to bluster and storm at the characters for their obvious incompetence, and for their pointless, plodding procedures. (eg: why are they following Jenkins, he's a respectable business man from a respectable family, its that Cook fellow they should be looking out for - after all, he won't have a job when Victoria sells the house, so he has a reason to be after her money, etc).

## Kew Lum

True story - at one point an inmate escaped Kew Asylum in a delivery van, fleeing while the orderlies were busy. He scraped the ASY from the side of the van, and lived the high life off the supplies inside the van for several weeks. It was seen, of course, but everyone just thought it was a Chinese grocer. And so we come to our story. In this version of events, the inmate, William Clark, escaped to Ballaraat.

During the course of investigations, the characters should encounter, or notice the van of Kew Lum, skulking from place to place. Ideally they should be following Warren - get the player to make a Spot Hidden roll to realise the van is "following" him, and that it turns off seconds after he noticed it - as the van turns, the bold white lettering of "KEW LUM" should be very clear.

Use your judgment on this - straight after seeing the Fengs for the first time is certainly a worthwhile time, but if the characters spent a fair old amount of time out at the house, then on the way back into town is also worthwhile - it means that the first encounter with the Fengs will be a bit more heightened.

Kew Lum is primarily in the scenario because I think its funny. However, it also serves to provide a sense of menace as the black van seems to follow the characters about. Of course he's not, and he might appear in front of them, disappearing into the seedier parts of town, or going the opposite direction. The grotty windscreen makes it hard to see into the car, but the characters can make out a face staring at them as they pass.

If the players give chase, they can certainly catch Clark/Kew Lum. He's not much of a driver, and having various vegetables come tumbling into the driver's compartment make it harder for him to lose the characters. They should be able to chase him down, at which point he leaps out of the car and tries to run for it.

## End of Session #1

The end of session one is less a climax, and more a cliffhanger. One of the younger policemen, **Alfred Davison**, finds the characters wherever they are - he can be on horseback or on a bike, but he is often given the task of finding people for messages.

He speaks to Hobson primarily. "Sir, I've been sent to find you. They've found her, sir - Miss Hennesley. She's dead."

Cue dramatic music.

## Session #2

Cue flashback, ending with "She's dead."

Actually, she's not, but rumour flies faster than truth, and the police *have* found a body, and it might be Hennesley. The session begins with the players arriving at the...

### Burnt Shack

The shack is accessible via a 50 metre track off the main road, badly maintained, so that the characters must get out and walk. Manning will be able to tell that it was an old miner's shack most likely - in fact, at the bottom of the slope is the gravel bed where men panned for gold, including some rusty pans.

Four police minions are already here - three constables **Thomas Reed**, **Bill Gettys**, **Richard Argus** and senior constable **Arthur North**. Gettys is also a senior volunteer firefighter (which Hobson and Warren will know - the CFA doesn't exist as yet, but Ballaraat had their own volunteer brigade from the 1890's onwards). North is an older man, known for being sensible and solid. He and Argus were driving north when they spotted the burnt shack, and decided to look in. He says that they're not sure who the corpse is, but it is a small body, and it might be a woman.

The shack itself stands about half way up a rise, and from the burnt remains it is apparent that it was a wood leanto with two rooms. In the opinion of Gettys, it was lit externally, probably with petrol or something similar, as the centre is not as badly destroyed as the externals. It was definitely burnt on or since Saturday - there's no sign of rain, and it poured on Friday afternoon. If it was a quick, hot fire, then there wouldn't have been enough smoke in the wind on Saturday to be visible from very far.

#### The corpse

The remains of the shack include a internal doorframe, somewhat askew, and a bisected body. The corpse's head is deformed, as a large beam has fallen and crushed it. The body is badly burnt, charred skin cracked and weeping slowly.

The most salient feature of the corpse however, is the fact that in a line from half way between its hips and abdomen on the right side, down to below the left hip, it has been neatly and precisely cut, clipping ribs on the right and hip bone on the left. Although some internal organs have slid out (and been charred), the skin and bone is more than surgically cut, almost shiny. And there is no lower half anywhere in sight. (SAN loss 1/1d4).

If the players decide to examine the corpse where it lies, presumably Dawson will be involved. More could be told by taking the corpse back to Ballaraat, but a cursory examination (successful Medicine roll) will confirm that the corpse is female. A sub 20 roll will reveal that in places, under heavy clothing or under the front, the skin is asiatic rather than caucasian, and a sub 10 roll will suggest that the remnants of the hip joint are somewhat enlarged - perhaps arthritic. Conversely, a roll greater than 90 will cause several internal organs to loose their final cohesion and slip, still steaming into the powdery ash. SAN loss at your discretion :)

A successful Spot Hidden whilst moving or examining the woman will reveal a gold chain, partially burnt into the skin and partially melted away, held in her left hand, which is clenched tightly shut. Prying this open is an unpleasant task, but reveals a simple oval locket, openable, with a portrait of an Asian woman inside.

Ideally while they are at the hut they won't realise this is **Yei Li-Juan**, Wen Lee's last victim, and not Hennesley at all (but if Dawson makes a good roll, certainly let him know). North has already called for a hearse, which will arrive while the characters are investigating. The constables will carefully move the body into the car, and it can be taken back to Ballaraat.

#### The pocket universe

Above the woman, attached to the doorframe by a copper pin is a small scrap of cloth-like paper, with Chinese characters written on it. It is partly burnt - although the investigators can't tell, its about half burnt. The remnant is about 5 inches long, and charred at the bottom and edges. Some of the characters

written on the strip are discernible in their entirety. If the strip is removed, have all the players make a POW roll (percentile). If they make it, they hear a sound like gentle wind, and a faint tone, like wind chimes. Anyone close to the doorway feels a faint breeze. If they step through the doorframe while the spell is removed (make a Luck roll if they are moving around near the door), they enter Wen Lee's realm.

To an external observer, the space within the door frame from either side becomes smokey and difficult to focus on, and the traveler disappears into the smoke as if it was water. To the traveler, they feel a pulling sensation, and feel dizzy and disoriented (lose 3 magic points each time passing through the gate) briefly. (Dawson: 8, Hobson: 16, Manning: 14, Warren: 12 - if they drop to 0, they pass out).

Wen Lee's realm is a small pocket universe, which he can connect to via a variant Gate spell. The realm itself is not very large - it's a rambling house and a couple of gardens. Anyone wandering through can tell that its very ornate, filled with luxuries, but characters that make an Art or similar roll get a real sense that each room itself is precisely orchestrated.

Rooms of a single colour, rooms of paintings, gardens precisely laid out, game rooms and so on. There is a room which seems to have been used for alchemical pursuits, and in this room is a number of photographic chemicals in commercial bottles. Somewhere in the house is Wen Lee's treasures - gold and gems gallore.

All of the realm is decorated in a traditional Chinese style more than 300 years old, and it is here that Wen Lee keeps all of his belongings. It is also from here that he draws some of his power - when the realm is shut, Wen Lee appears as an old man - when it is open, he appears 35. He also has access to more magic points, stored in various artifacts within the universe.

It is within the Horizon realm that his previous victim, **Yei Li-Juan**, was kept. Wandering through the house will lead the players to what is obviously a female's room - opulent, rich in luxuries.

Moving in or out of the realm

### **Meanwhile, back on Earth...**

Around the outside of where the structure once stood are many footprints, made by soft shoes (Track roll to determine how many or what sort of shoes they are - 10 people or so, and soft shoes, similar to the marks found at Hennesley's disappearance site, but in a number of different sizes).

In the bush away from the shack's clearing are two interesting items. One is a crushed area of bracken, blood-spattered, with small bits of shredded cloth all around it. The other is a path of destruction leading from the shack to the road, about 3 feet off the ground, consisting of broken branches and uprooted trees and away from the drive that leads to the road. The path was caused by the Byakhee carrying Wen Lee to safety, and half way along there is a branch where the byakhee impaled itself, leaving black, foul ichor dripping. (SAN loss 0/1)

## **The Skybourne attack**

This scene will only occur if one of the characters has removed the Daoist spell. Wen Lee will call two byakhee which he had previously summoned, and send them after the spell. If he knows how they part-sealed his realm, he can combat the spell. Unfortunately for the investigators, that's probably where they are.

Driving back to Ballaraat, the road cuts its way through fairly open cleared land. At a distance, cattle graze, but there is very little in the way of signs of people. Still several miles north of the intersection where Hennesley was kidnapped, have the players roll their Spot Hidden.

If they are successful, they notice the byakhee winging their way across a field towards them. At first they will look like crows, drawing attention because of the odd way they are flying. But as they approach it becomes clear that they are demonic black gargoyle like creatures, with heads like horses skulls. (SAN loss 1/1d6).

The byakhee will first tear the soft-top off of the car, and then proceed to try fly-by attacks, concentrating everything on the character with the spell in their possession. On a hit roll of 10% or less, the byakhee hook the jacket or suitcase the spell is in and try and wing it.

The characters have some weapons. The car in which they are traveling has two .303 Lee-Enfield rifles in the boot, and a box of 50 cartridges. They're not loaded, so it will take at least 3 rounds to load up 10 cartridges. However, they also have a tire iron, some tools, any number of pointy sticks on the side of the road, and the car itself.

The byakhee will swoop back and forth over the car, mostly being interested in the spell. If the investigators try and run for it, or are giving them some serious trouble, they may drop a tree or a cow on, or in front of the car from some height - perhaps they are not used to this boring cube root gravity and have trouble judging when to drop things at the players.

The section of road that the characters are currently traveling along is devoid of the usual lines of windbreaking trees along the road one might see in Australian bushland - a lot of the landscape was denuded to provide mine shafts and this is an area where no one has thought to replant.

The characters may be able to defeat the byakhee, but not easily. Tactics such as stopping the car and using it as cover to shoot the approaching beasts, making a break for the cover of trees (a couple of miles further along, or by taking a side road to a copse visible across the open fields) or otherwise being fairly intelligent about the process will be most successful. Making a run for the intersection where Hennesley was kidnapped is, er, courageous, but might work - there are more officers there, and some of them might be armed.

If the players are getting seriously caned, the Brotherhood are on their way to the shack (see below) and can rescue them.

If the byakhee are killed, they dissolve into a black slime with pieces of cartilage in it, and then nothing. The ground on which a byakhee dissolves is sterilised - nothing survives.

If the players abandon the car, leaving the evidence behind, the byakhee will destroy the car in order to get to the spell, then fly off.

If the byakhee manage to snatch the spell, they will cut across fields and such so that the investigators are unable to follow. The best heading they can get is that the creatures are heading vaguely south-southeast (to the East Ballarat mines, if the players happen upon a brilliant plan to follow them - you'll have to wing it from there).

## Where are *they* going?

When the spell is removed from the shack, the Brotherhood become aware that the gate is still open. They will guess incorrectly that it is Wen Lee who has found a way to undo their spell, and head out there immediately. Menacing, persuading or otherwise convincing one of the richer inhabitants of Chinatown, they acquire yet another black delivery van and head for the shack at a break-neck speed (none of them drive very well).

When they encounter the characters is up to you. They may arrive in time to rescue the police from the byakhee, or they may nearly run the shaken investigators off the road as they return from the shack, or if the characters are very brief at the shack, and regroup at the Hennesley house (not inconceivable as it has a phone. And whiskey.), they may see Feng, Feng and co. roar past the house in a van marked with both English and Chinese characters.

In any case, its probable that the characters will give chase, and being better drivers than the Fongs, stand a good chance of catching them. However, the driver will attempt to lose the police, and resist being run off the road. The Brotherhood van is still loaded with vegetables, and a watermelon out the back when the police are close by is certainly going to be tricky for the pursuers.

Depending how efficient the characters are at catching the Fongs determines what their actions will be. If the daoists are close to the shack, they may attempt to pull over suddenly and all run for it, splitting up into the underbrush. If they are within a couple of miles of the shack, but the police are about to catch them, one or two of the brotherhood might attempt to leap from the moving vehicle and escape into the underbrush to get to the shack.

The Brotherhood in the van are armed with various traditional weapons - swords, pole arms and bows - but nothing like guns. They are also well trained in martial arts(tm). They aren't interested in

attacking the police, knowing that it will bring a fairly rapid retribution, but they will try to incapacitate them.

Its probably that the police will be able to arrest the majority of the Brotherhood (including both Feng brothers), although one or two might get away. Unless they were alone when meeting the Fengs, there are other police nearby and the characters are armed. At the very least, they should be able to capture and arrest one of the Fengs.

The Brotherhood will not seriously resist an arrest, but neither will they explain what they were doing, trusting to a lack of evidence to not keep them long. However, investigators bringing supernatural evidence to them will cause much chattering, then potentially an alliance.

## Investigating the body

Taking the body back to Ballaraat for autopsy (possibly performed by Dawson) reveals that the woman is Asiatic and suffered from arthritis quite badly (something discernible at the site with a successful Forensics roll) - definitely not Hennesley. The gold locket is also easily found at this point (see above).

The press will somehow get a hold of this info (possibly through Gallagher bursting in, distraught, trying to find out if its Hennesley, possibly though the characters), reporting the details of the locket in the paper the next morning.

About midday the next day, an elderly Chinese gentleman (**Yei Ma-huan**) appears, claiming that the woman was **Yei Li-juan**, his daughter. His daughter disappeared 20 years ago, and would be about 35 now. This does not mesh with the apparent age of the body.

Some investigation into the police records reveals that Mr Yei did in fact contact police when his daughter disappeared, but the case was not followed up. More research reveals two other similar cases - Chinese girls, usually in the their teens, disappeared when on their own, or away from the community (3 in total)

Of course, this isn't much help directly.

## Brotherhood of the Gentle Wind, or da Fengs.

From the first time they see the Brotherhood, they should be perceived as a somewhat menacing presence, in small groups, talking with various members of the Chinese community. The Brotherhood are as suspicious of the characters as the characters are of them, and will not seek them out directly.

Their mission is to find Wen Lee - they are fairly sure he escaped the confrontation on the Saturday, but think that they have cut him off from much of his power. Unaware that he has captured and bonded Hennesley, they are expecting him to return in a panic to Chinatown, not saunter in calmly.

If confronted, the Brotherhood will be obstinately silent. Only the Feng brothers speak more than a few words of English and they will just look blank at the characters. If they are arrested before the incident with the byakhee, or the characters do not share their knowledge of the demons, members of the Brotherhood will wait patiently.

They are intended to be menacing figures of otherworldly eastern strangeness until the characters are aware of just how alien things can get - after that, even the stilted (to westerners) emotional responses of the Brotherhood should then seem to speak volumes.

Its expected that at some point, the Brotherhood will be pinned in place and the investigators will start asking pointed questions about horse-headed demons, half burnt spells and perhaps hidden chinese houses.

The Brotherhood are committed to protecting humans (even stinky westerners) from the Mythos. To stop the infection from spreading further, they are forced to cooperate with the police - hopefully by enlisting the character's help, they can stop the knowledge from spreading further and wipe out Wen Lee.



Thus, the Feng's will confess to a limited set of facts - a wizard escaped from China 70 years ago and came here. The horsethings are his servants, and he has captured the Hennesley woman to be a sacrifice. They will claim to not know exactly what the sacrifice is for - the knowledge of immortality could be very tempting for the weak of spirit, and its better to not tempt the police.

If the players demonstrate knowledge of the pocket realm, the Brotherhood will tell them that Wen Lee will attempt to access the realm again, and that he will once again be at his full strength if this happens. (They might implicate that the Hennesley woman will be used as a sacrifice to do this - it does remove the possibility that the characters will go back to the realm and wait there for Wen Lee, which is certainly a cunning way to find him).

**"We know where he is, we just don't understand the directions."**

It is assumed that the characters will eventually ask the Fengs a question which is essentially: how do we find him?.

They may have put together various facts by this point and found out that Dr Chen is Wen. The Feng's and the characters may want to turn over his shop/house, but apart from the confirming details, its probably not so helpful. The Fengs will take what looks like personal objects to try and help with their magic, but its not too useful. This activity will draw a fair bit of attention from the locals as well, all clustered around to see what is happening.

More usefully, on Sunday the Brotherhood have performed an I Ching fortune telling ritual to try to find Wen Lee, but they do not understand the information that has been given to them. If (when) they sufficiently trust the investigators, or the question comes up, they may bring them this information, translated into English.

*Wind under mountain  
water hiding metal  
east in west in east*

**Wind under mountain** - the constant whistling sounds the East Ballarat mines make in the winds of spring.

**Water hiding metal** - several mines in the area are flooded - it cuts the search down from hundreds to less than 10.

**East in West in East** - Wen Lee in Australia/Western district in the east. Most of the mines are in the north/west - with the flooded option, it reduces it to 5 mines, only 3 of which are significant.

**But then what?**

The Brotherhood have a spell in a prayer-strip form (a variation of Cast Out Devil) that will break the connection between Hennesley and Wen Lee. It must be applied to the forehead of either Wen Lee (by preference) or Hennesley. If applied to Hennesley, it sunders her from the link permanently, but it leaves Wen Lee able to try and form another link.

If used on Wen Lee, it will break his link to Victoria, and prevent him from making another. The spell will preternaturally stick to his skin and he will not be able to touch it.

However, the Brotherhood do not want to explain this to the police, because it reveals too much about the Dorian-Gray link. At most, if asked, Feng Han-wu will say that they have magic that will stop him from using his magic.

The Brotherhood would still prefer to wipe Wen Lee themselves. If the I Ching is too obscure for the characters to solve entirely (most probable), the Fengs will ask for a personal item of Hennesley's to try and divine her position, explaining that will take time and privacy. Once they have done this, they will go to the mine, and get slaughtered by the shantak on **Carberry's** property, leading him to come to the police the next day.

Alternatives depend on the players:

- They can begin the search of the mines and see if there are signs that someone has entered any of the flooded ones.
- Investigators thank the Fengs then lock them back up.
- Work out which one it is, all go together.

## East Ballaraat Mining Company

The East Ballaraat gold mines finally closed 7 or so years ago, during the Great War. The mines are not as deep as usual, but run underneath quite a large area of landscape. Notably, they are both considerably flooded (the proprietors had to run pumps night and day - in the time since its closed, many tunnels have filled up), and suffer from a constant whistling and moaning sounds when the wind blows strongly enough from the west (normally only in spring).

The characters are well within their rights to try and get some backup in this situation. Hobson can call upon about 15 policemen and sensible equipment for this sort of search. The characters can get hardhats, flashlights (about an hour worth of light per battery), oil lanterns (about 6 hours) and other easily obtainable items.

### Thomas Carberry

Access to the mined area is now across the fields and farm of **Thomas Carberry** - 50-something gruff farmer. He bought the land used to access the mine about 5 years ago. He's more than happy to be helpful to the police. (see **Pear-shaped** as well). He hasn't seen anyone going to or from the mine area for a couple of weeks - a couple of lads were hunting about the place back in August. He has heard the howling from the mine a bit this year - it was real bad on Saturday when it was so windy.

If the Fengs have all been killed, then they are scattered across the field, along with the butchered remains of some of Carberry's cattle. Some of them have been torn in half, others appear to have been eaten. Critically, Feng Biao still has the spell to disable Wen Lee and the players can use it.

In this case, Wen Lee would be most sensible to flee - however, he has already invested 2 magic points into his new gate; and regaining access to his realm will give him the chance to either defeat any other opponents or hide. Overconfident with success over the Feng's, he will assume that he can manage this.

### The Mine itself

The main entrance to the mine is surrounded by the remnants of the support buildings for the business. Abandoned now for years, some of them have broken windows and signs of animal inhabitants. The main entrance is boarded, bolted and chained. There's no sign that anyone has used the entrance any time recently. The police can either cut their way in, or obtain the keys from the local Department of Mines.

However, searching away from the main entrances finds an entrance half a mile away that has been carefully pried open, and then arranged to look as if it was still closed. It is relatively near a fire-access track, and a decent search will find recent tire tracks.

Descending into the mines is an odd experience, even for Manning, who has been away from it for 6 years. The mines are cold and when there's no wind, very, very still. Every surface is damp, water drips constantly from the ceiling, seeping through after the heavy rains of the last two weeks.

Shortly after the characters enter the mines, the wind does start to pick up. Although it doesn't reach full blast moaning, there are subliminal whistles, moans and groans echoing through the whole complex of tunnels. A successful Listen roll means that the character can hear the variety of odd noises, and finds themselves moderately distracted by the ongoing cacophony (-5)

If the characters have called for more police, their voices echo deep within the mines. Lights play eerily upon damp, dark surfaces. Drop your voice as you start to describe this area, as the other voices and the

sunlight fade away, becoming faint shadows of themselves. Now shout "BANGANGANGAngangngng" and watch the players jump.

One of the younger constables fired his weapon at an oozing chunk of mud, thinking it was something odd. Police come running from all corners, only to find it was a false alarm.

As the characters return to their search, re-instill the feeling of descending far into the earth, damp, clammy ground beneath them, occasionally turning an ankle on the cart tracks beneath their footing.

They will follow the tunnels, leading down at a slight gradient. At one point, the tunnel does a 90 degree turn to the left, moves forward 4 meters and then turns right again (following the once alluvial gold veins).

Wen Lee will most likely know that they are coming, unless they have taken extreme precautions to hide their approach. He will have already once again cast the spell to summon the shantak, exhausting the last of his power. He is now extremely desperate - if he can escape the mines with Hennesley, he will be able to recover some of his power and move to another location (especially if the gate to his realm is open at the shack. If he cannot, he will die in a matter of days when Hennesley is killed (Wen Lee does not know the characters possess the spell to break the link).

Wen Lee is waiting in a glory hole (a place when many tunnels come together) which opens up in the sky. The characters will be able to see daylight ahead of them as they approach the glory hole. As they reach the lip of the glory hole, they will be able to see Wen Lee standing near tunnel entrance, and Hennesley on the ground next to him, apparently unconscious. For one brief second, everything will be brilliantly lit - and then it all goes dark as the shantak plunges out of the sky and through the glory hole, heading for the characters (SAN loss 1/1d6).

Wen Lee is counting on the sanity destroying effect of the shantak, combined with its physical attack to delay the characters, and attract sufficient notice from the other police (if any) to distract from his flight with Hennesley.

While the shantak is keeping the characters busy, he will try and lift Hennesley and run down the tunnel immediately behind him. The characters have the choice of trying to attack the shantak and defeat it (haha), or chasing Wen Lee. Although the entrance from which they have emerged is about 15 feet above the floor of the glory hole, they can slip and slide down the wet slope to give chase.

If the character pursue Wen Lee, he will judiciously use his Wrack spell to try and discourage pursuit. However, each time he does this, he must drop Hennesley to do so, so a pair of characters may easily gain upon Wen Lee.

Remaining back in the glory hole is also dangerous. The shantak will continue to attack anyone who remains upright, assuming that anyone on the ground is dead (who said it was smart?). However, more police will arrive, and about one in three of them will be sane enough to shoot at it.

The shantak is able to squeeze itself down tunnels after prey - the sight of a squashed and distorted beast scabbling its way down a human-sized tunnel is probably worth more SAN loss. However, its not very fast when this is going on, so judiciously retreating into the tunnels is another way to defeat it. If the shantak is defeated, its remains crash to the bottom of the glory hole. Over the next hour, they will slowly transmute to rock. Those observing the process get to make another sanity roll (SAN loss 0/1).

If the characters catch Wen Lee and make a successful Fist/Punch roll to press the spell against Wen Lee, the binding spell to Hennesley immediately comes undone (no POW expenditure necessary - it was made when the Daoists created the spell). If you think it suits the current story, it may also disable some of his other spells - he may become old again if young, the shantak may gobble its last morsel and then stop its attacks, flapping off into the sky.

Wen Lee will, at this point, freak out. He will irrationally attack whoever pressed the spell to him, or others around until they immobilise him. Unless he manages to get free, over the next five days he will age rapidly and die. His moods in that time will vary only between comatose and rabid. On several occasions, police will have to stop him starting spells (to summon byakhee, bond to other prisoners, etc) - although they will just believe he's causing a ruckus.

# Epilogue

## What if they don't catch Wen Lee?

If the characters fail to apprehend Wen Lee, then the rest of their lives do not proceed well.

- Hobson never rises beyond the position of Senior Detective, his career suddenly slowing. He is reposted to Bendigo within the year.
- Warren is promoted to Senior Detective within several years, but is killed in a shootout during the Razor Wars.
- Manning returns to his management job in Melbourne, and continues to crawl his way through middle management in the public service.
- Dawson, now aware of the Greater Darkness, continues to try and investigate the world of the Mythos, ending his days screaming in an Asylum
- Hennesley is never found.

## If they do catch Wen Lee?

- Hobson spends several more years in Ballaraat, and then is reassigned to a more senior position in Melbourne. He eventually rises to be a Deputy Head of Victorian Police.
- Warren is promoted to Senior Detective in 1925 and replaces Hobson when he is assigned to Melbourne in 1927.
- Dawson, now aware of the Greater Darkness, continues to try and investigate the world of the Mythos, ending his days screaming in an Asylum. Oh well.
- Manning and Hennesley. . . In the weeks to follow after rescuing young Victoria, Mr Manning spends some time at the Hennesley property, as a guest of the family. Over the next six months, Hennesley calls off her engagement with Gallagher, much to the scandal of the social set. Mr Manning is seen frequently at the Hennesley mansion on the weekends. In September 1925, Victoria Hennesley becomes Mrs Alfred Manning. What a happy ending.

## What happens when it goes Pear-shaped?

Things that could go wrong:

- players can immediately arrest the Fengs for no reason  
There's really no one to immediately stop them doing this. Hobson is the senior police officer in the area, after all. The repercussions will come after the fact - the police can't arrest just anyone and public defense lawyers will insist that the Fengs are released without due cause. If the investigators work out that they are not native, they certainly are illegal immigrants and can maybe get the Brotherhood deported.
- The players miss the spell on the door of the shack.  
Don't let them miss it.
- The players leave it there  
If they move it at all, both Fengs and Wen Lee realise and send byakhee and race there in the car, so there will be something to follow up on.  
If they leave it the hell alone entirely... the Feng's might break into Hennesley's house to get an item of hers to track her with. By doing so they can get a feel for where she is, and head out to the mine. Wen Lee sends the shantak to kill them all. **Carberry** reports 10 dead chinese men in his cattle field, and mentions that between that and all the vermin (who have been fleeing the mines to get away from Wen Lee and byakhee friends), its been a weird week. One of the Brotherhood has the spell to break the link, but in the meantime Wen Lee has reattached to his realm - the players will have to find their way in (gate spell on what seems like a deadend shaft only a couple of feet deep) and fight yon dread sorcerer on his home turf.
- Players don't mention the supernatural to Fengs.  
Rapid fire chinese between prisoners leads one of the Fengs to ask what happened to the roof of the players' car as a prompt.

## Major NPCs

### Wen Lee, aka Chen Gin-Fan

Str 12 Con 15 Size 10 Int 17 Pow 19  
Dex 15 App 13 Edu 19 San 0 (40) HP 11

**Spells:** Bind Life, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Summon/Bind Shantak, Control Rat, Wrack. Wen Lee possesses other spell, but does not have sufficient magic points to cast them when confronted by the characters.

*Wrack:* Match POW vs POW on a resistance table. If the spell succeeds, the victim is seized by intense wracking pains, eyes clouding with blood and skin blistering for 1d3 rounds. (SAN loss 0/1d3)

Wen Lee is over 300 years old. At the core of his personality is his lust for life - he is terrified of dying, and will perform any act, regardless of how base, in order to continue his life. This desire to live is not simple existence - Wen Lee cherishes the beautiful things in life, sunlight and laughter, artwork and beauty.

However, in the Mythos universe, no one gets away with messing with the supernatural without some repercussions. Wen Lee is like a junkie - as long as he has someone bound to him through his Dorian-Gray spell, he is calm and self confident, even if his Realm is unavailable to him. Without that, his time is limited and he panics, and does stupid things - ie kidnapping Victoria Hennesley.

Although he spends much of his public time as a respectable Chinese citizen (Dr Chen Gin-Fan), he covertly spends a considerable amount of time in his pocket universe, from which he draws a considerable amount of power. This realm is attached to the shack (see above). Inside this realm is a wealth of Chinese artifacts. Inside this room, his previous victims have led their short lives surrounded by opulence. (It has to be said that their lives were much richer than they would have been originally, but Wen Lee did not do this for their benefit, but so that they would live longer).

Wen Lee manages to escape notice by hiding out in plain sight. If he was to slink around, then he would be noticed. Instead, in the guise of a friendly, well spoken business man, he can continue his life with no official notice. He is generous to his neighbours, and the Chinese community in general - they will not immediately think of him as a fiend who lives on the lives of others.

Note that Wen Lee draws on Hennesley's hitpoints (12) first, before his own.

### Victoria Hennesley

Str 9 Con 14 Size 9 Int 16 Pow 15  
Dex 15 App 14 Edu 17 San 75 (70) HP 12

Although she does not really appear in the scenario, Victoria Hennesley is central to the story. Hennesley is 24 years old, having been born on New Years' Day in 1900. She is a medium sized, attractive woman, with short blond hair.

Hennesley lived at the house in Ballaraat until she was twelve, when her mother died. She was sent to Camberwell Church of England Girls Grammar school in Melbourne to gain an education, but returned every summer until her matriculation. In the last six years, she has spent some time in Ballaraat, but much time overseas and in Melbourne.

Hennesley is described as an independent woman. She is somewhat willful and headstrong. She also has a major interest in the Occult. She has visited Chen Gin-Fan (Wen Lee) in the last fortnight or so, and spent some time talking with him about Chinese philosophy and occultism.

Hennesley was not in Ballaraat when her father died - she had been overseas when he began the last slide into death, and did not make it back to Ballaraat in time before he passed on. She attended a memorial service slightly over two weeks ago, and has remained in Ballaraat since.

Since her capture, Hennesley has been kept in a state of near unconsciousness. When she is rescued, it will take several weeks before she recovers.

## Brotherhood of the Gentle Wind

Average monk:

Str 14 Con 14 Size 11 Int 11 Pow 10  
Dex 16 App 12 Edu 12 San 50 HP 14

**Skills:** *Fist/Punch 75%, Kick 75%, Grapple 50%, CoolMartialArtsMove 50%, Mythos Lore 10%, Occult 50% (chinese).*

**MartialArts:** *If they roll under 1/2 their skill, double the damage (to reflect martial artsy goodness).*

Selected monks may have higher stats, mosly in Power and Int.

The Monks of the Gentle Wind order are dedicated to preventing the supernatural from devastating the natural in the world. Of course, this being the world of the Mythos, they are not terribly successful, but still they try, having some success against the human agents of the greater darkness.

There are 16 brothers in Ballaraat at this time, but six of them are so wounded as to be out of action. Several of them sport bruises and cuts. Only two of the brotherhood can can speak English - Feng Biao and Feng Han-wu (yes, they are literally brothers). They are in the country simply to find and kill Wen Lee.

They will not voluntarily cooperate with the characters - exposing 'innocents' to the Mythos is against their central tenants of existence, they don't trust them, and the Brotherhood are all young men and somewhat overconfident. Unfortunately, they do not know what Wen Lee looks like, and are forced to skulk around investigating, much like the characters.

To begin with, they should appear as mysterious figures, possibly part of a Chinese gang or something similar - the various wounds that most of them sport speak of a violent nature. They are not exactly open and forthcoming with the rest of the Chinese community either, so there is obvious distrust between the locals and the newcomers also influencing the player's opinions.

As a group, they know some Mythos spells: Find Gate (1 mp, 1d3 SAN, see any gate within visible range), Close Gate, Curse of Darkness (1 POW each, each POW += 10back from whence they came), Cast Out Devil (a variation known to the monks to break the spell cast by Wen Lee. It takes a full day to prepare, and contribution of 10 mp. Because enough of the Brotherhood know the spell, it is 100

## Police minions

The characters have a number of police minions at their disposal. Some of them are mentioned by name in the appropriate places above. They are mostly constables with a couple of sergeants.

**Stats (avg):** *Str 12, Dex 12, Con 13, Size 11, Pow 10, App 10, Edu 9*

**Skills:** *club, Drive, Firearms, Fist/Punch, Grapple, Kick, Law, Persuade, Track.*

**Weapons:** *club / nightstick. 6-shot revolver, rifle or shotgun can be assigned.*

Weapon	Skill	Damage	Range	Shots/Round	"Clip"
.38 Revolver	60%	1d10	15 yards	2	6
Lee Enfield Rifle	40%	2d6 + 4	110 yards	1 / 2	10
Shotgun	50%	2d6/1d6	10/20 yards	1/2	2

## Kew Lum

Kew Lum, as he is named by the side of his van, is in fact Mr William Clark, a man suffering from a slight case of visions who escaped from Kew Asylum late Sunday evening.

Mr Clark, while undeniably bonkers, is not stupid. He scraped the Asy from the side of the van during a brief stop on his way to Ballaraat, and fully intends to spend the next few weeks eating from his grocery supply and lazing about on holiday.

He's not particularly violent.

## Byakhee

Str 18 Con 11 Size 18 Int 10 Pow 10  
Dex 14 App 0 Edu 0 San 0 HP 15

**Weapons:** Claw 35%, damage 2d6.

**Armor:** 2 points of tough hide.

Byakhee are reasonably intelligent and mass about as much as a large man. To the characters, they look much like demons with heads like horses skulls. When they are killed, they dissolve into a black ichorous slime, the bones becoming cartiligenous before disintegrating. The ground on which they dissolve dies - no insects, plants, anything. The decaying body of a Byakhee causes a SAN loss of 0/1.

## Shantak

Str 34 Con 13 Size 50 Int 1 Pow 10  
Dex 10 App 0 Edu 0 San 0 HP 32

**Weapons:** Bite 55%, damage 6d6 + 2

**Armor:** 9-point hide.

Shantaks brood in cavernous holes and their wings are encrusted with rime and nitre. They are noisesome and loathyly, and not very intelligent. The shantak summoned by Wen Lee will fight until it, or Wen Lee, is dead.

## Acknowledgements

- To Oscar Wilde, for "The Portrait of Dorian Gray"
- To Tim "Thanatos" Toner, for "Soul Objects of Desire"
- To Rob Shankly, for suggesting a possible outcome.
- To Cameron Blackwood, Narelle Price, Ken Blakey and Julian Matthews, for beta testing.