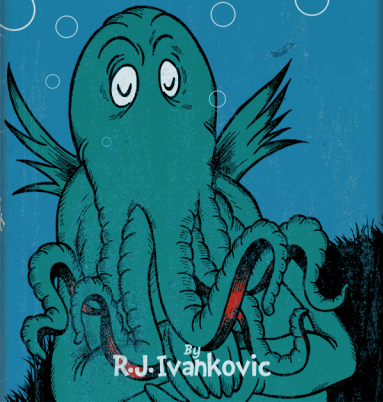


H.P. Lovecraft's

THE CALL OF CTHULHU

FOR
BEGINNING
READERS



By
R.J. Ivanhovic

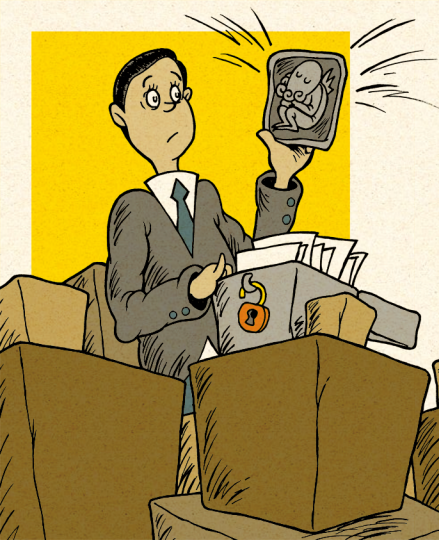
The most merciful thing in the world is, I think,
that the mind is unable to connect and link
all the disparate pieces of things that we know
and thus learn of the horrors that lurk down below.



The professor who died so unfortunately
when a rough looking sailor pushed him carelessly
was my great-uncle George (so my interest was spurred).
In the winter of late '26 this occurred.

The locals whispered that they did not believe
the story that doctors were forced to conceive.
When they could not explain why the old man had died,
"It was just his old heart!" the physicians had cried.

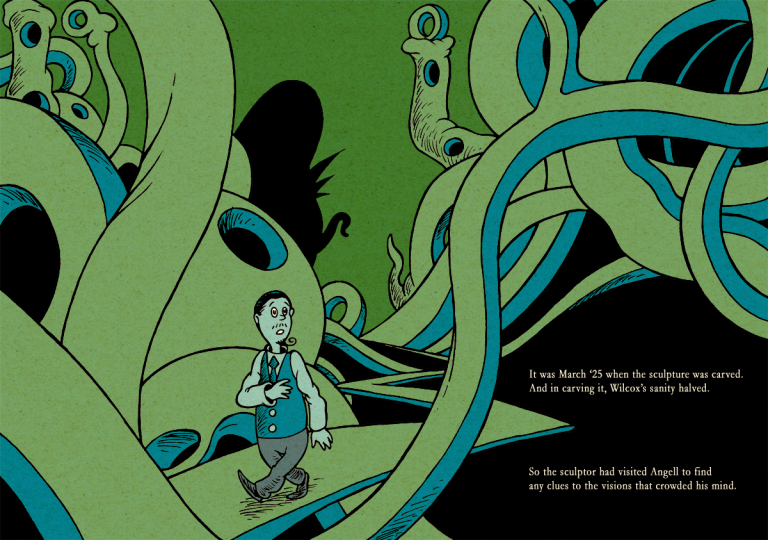




As George Angell's sole heir and his last relative,
I reviewed all the research for which he had lived.
It had fallen to me to clear up his affairs
and I there found a thing to which nothing compares.

On a night when nightmares turned to horror and pain
in the restless slumbers of the weird and insane,
had a sculptor, one Wilcox, carved visions of grief
above mad hieroglyphics all in bas-relief.



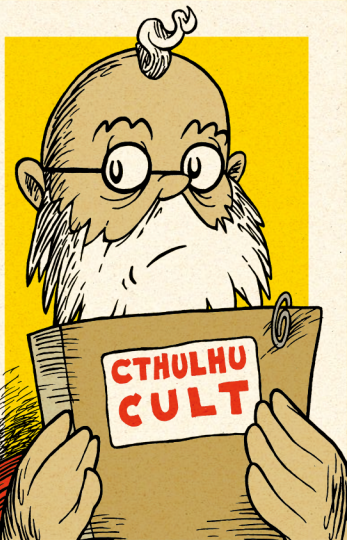


It was March '25 when the sculpture was carved.
And in carving it, Wilcox's sanity halved.

So the sculptor had visited Angell to find
any clues to the visions that crowded his mind.

Although Angell initially had shown some doubt, he had become convinced when he later found out that the words Wilcox heard were *Cthulhu fhtagn*. Then he knew something big was about to then happen.

You see, Angell had once heard those two words before so he took out a key, and he opened the drawer where he kept his most secret of research results in a secret old file marked with CTHULHU CULT.





The professor asked Wilcox to write down his dreams,
and for most of that month he had done that, it seems.

But then Wilcox stopped writing what he'd seen and heard
he had fallen unconscious on March 23rd.

After April the 2nd, no visions occurred.

I imagined that Wilcox's hoax was exposed,
and thus it appeared the strange case could be closed.

I believed that my research had met an impasse.

Then I picked up a file on Inspector Legrasse.

When I read through the pages of file number two,
I learned more than a little of what Angell knew.

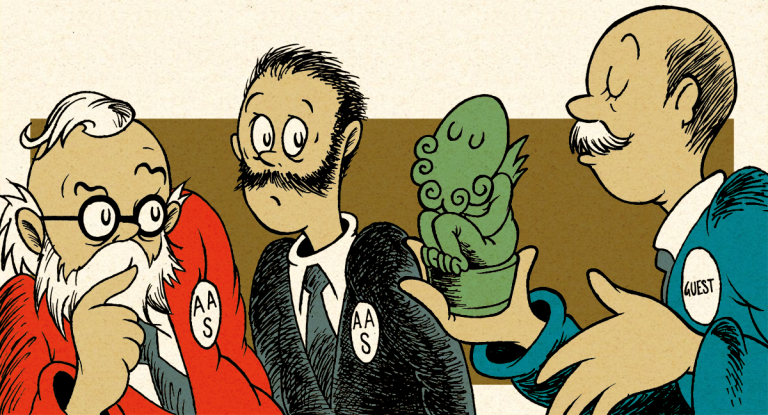
The most recent events had come really quite late
as this tale had begun back in 1908.



Academics, explorers, and other great minds
were discussing their archaeological finds.

When Legrasse had presented a stone statuette,
then with questions from experts Legrasse was beset.

Just one of the members who were there assembled
could think of a thing that the thing there resembled.
A respected old man who had studied Greenland,
and had there seen a similar idol first-hand.



It was in 1860, and out in the snow
the young Webb had encountered some fell Esquimaux.

He phonetically copied their guttural cries
and Legrasse knew them too, to the experts' surprise.

Ph'nglui mglw'nafh
Cthulhu R'lyeh
wgah'nagl fhtagn

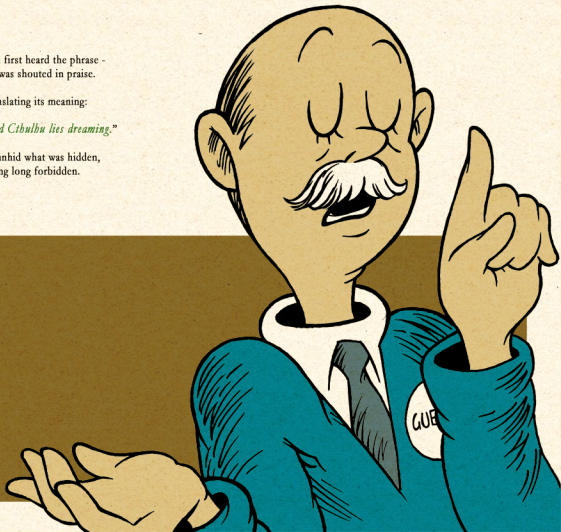


It was only last year that he'd first heard the phrase -
in a dark Southern swamp it was shouted in praise.

The inspector amazed by translating its meaning:

"In his house at R'lyeh, dead Cthulhu lies dreaming."

With these simple words he unhid what was hidden,
and opened the door to a thing long forbidden.





In the swamps there are squatters way out in the trees,
and these squatters were gripped by a growing unease.
There were rumours of men who avoided the light
and who entered their homes in the midst of the night.

The police were informed that these men were around
when some women and children could then not be found.

So twenty men into the dark ventured bravely,
and not one man laughed, no, they all ventured gravely.

Of course, even policemen will freeze where they're stood
when they hear tom-toms beating out deep in the wood.



The policemen kept silent. No one said a word,
though the drums brought to mind all the stories they'd heard
of the paths that explorers neglected to take
that lead into the swamp and then out to a lake.

A dark lake which is home to a polypus thing
to which devils at midnight shout praises and sing.

It is needless to say they'd not followed those trails -
so then let us get back to Legrasse's travails.



When the officers spotted an ominous glare
they could not yet imagine what would be found there.

When they pushed through some branches and into a glade
they had witnessed what madness looks like on parade.

They'd discovered it too late to save the kidnapped,
and on seeing this sight, some policemen had snapped.

When they regained their senses, the law charged ahead.

Then some men were arrested and others shot dead.





When Legrasse got his captives back into the town some had mentioned Great Old Ones that live underground. They'd arrived here on Earth when the stars were just right. Falling out of the sky. Coming in from the night.



Great Cthulhu had led Them from some other place
when the Great Old Ones came from across outer space.

For a time at some humans They'd psychically screamed
up until R'lyeh sank. Now They wait there and dream.



In the *Necronomicon* (though easy to miss)
the mad Arab, Alhazred, had referenced this,
writing:

*That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange aeons even death may yet die.*

Most convicts kept silent, kept their secrets their own,
for some parts of their faith were for their ears alone.
So extracting this knowledge was no easy task.
It was not just as simple as having to ask.

A mestizo named Castro had told them the most.
Of immortal Chinese and undead off the coast.





Of the statements from Castro, one should be most feared:
when the stars in the night sky have rightly appeared
then the Old Ones are able to rise once again.

But the cultists alone are the ones who know when.

The cult's insights are secret so none understand
they will kill and spread chaos across distant lands.

They'll awaken Great Old Ones with terrible prayers,
who will spill from below while our sanity tears.



Legrasse's tale closed not with answers, but questions.

To keep up the silence was someone's suggestion,
and in secret the men there could then correspond.

I convinced myself Angell still might have been conned.





I held on, at that time, to some feelings of doubt.

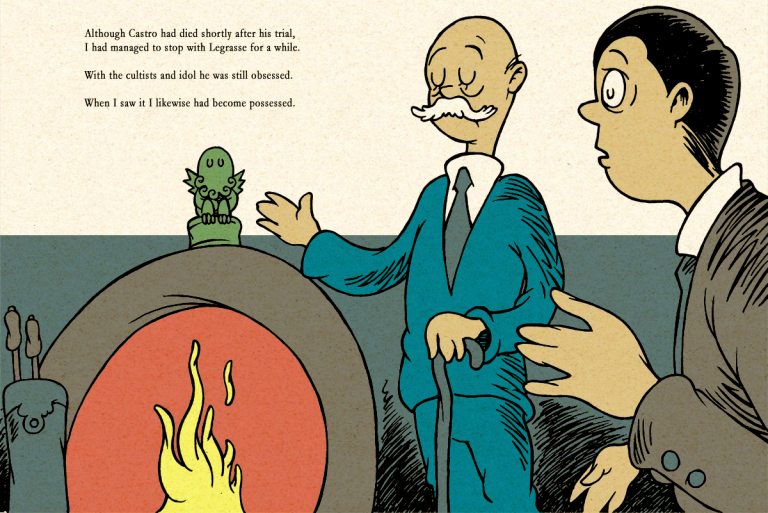
I still wondered if Wilcox had found out about the Professor's strange research and contacts worldwide.

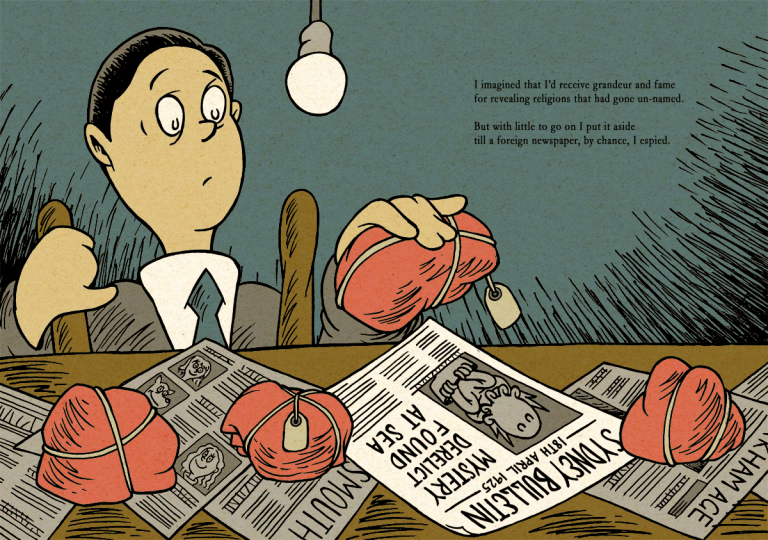
After visiting him, I was sure he'd not lied.

Although Castro had died shortly after his trial,
I had managed to stop with Legrasse for a while.

With the cultists and idol he was still obsessed.

When I saw it I likewise had become possessed.



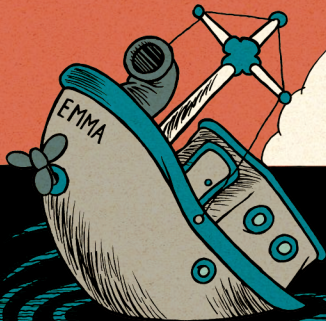


I imagined that I'd receive grandeur and fame
for revealing religions that had gone un-named.

But with little to go on I put it aside
till a foreign newspaper, by chance, I espied.

The old paper recounted the *Emma*'s sad tale:
she'd encountered some storms when from Auckland she'd sailed.

They had then met a ship, which had ordered them back.
When the crew had refused, the *Alert* had attacked.



Though the *Emma* was sunk, still her crew won the battle,
then they sailed into something that left the men rattled.

Only crewman Johansen returned from the sea
with the idol in hand, quite mysteriously.

The part of it all that most piqued my attention
and is, to this day, beyond my comprehension:
the sailors were lost at exactly the time
that young Wilcox's nightmares invaded his mind.

So I sought out Johansen to hear what he'd say,
through New Zealand, Australia, and then through Norway.
But his grief-stricken widow had answered the door.

Poor Johansen had died just a few months before.

Then Johansen's widow gave me his diary.
It described in English what he'd seen out at sea.
He had thus spared his wife. I now wished he'd spared me
from the tale of his sighting strange geometry.



Poor Johansen had written
with unsteady hand
when recording what happened
to he and his band.

They had chanced on a city
that came from the depths.

Though the crew did not know,
I knew it was R'lyeh.



The crew rowed to the shore and the men were amazed
by the mad architecture the ocean had raised.
Through a stinking miasma a staircase there ran,
with its steps not designed for a regular man.

They had then clambered skyward to find souvenirs,
but no treasures worth taking in that place appeared,
so they climbed ever higher to dizzying heights
while their minds were assaulted by abnormal sights.

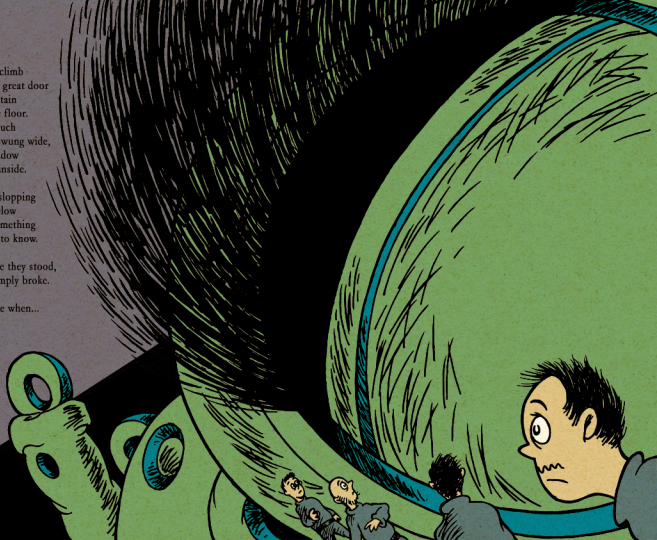


At the top of their climb
they had found a great door
that was not for certain
in the wall or the floor.
At a sailor's light touch
the great portal swung wide,
and a tenebrous shadow
leaked out from inside.

When a nasty, wet, slopping
oozed up from below
they experienced something
man's not meant to know.

Two men died where they stood,
as their minds simply broke.

'Twas a merciful fate when...



...Cthulhu



awoke.

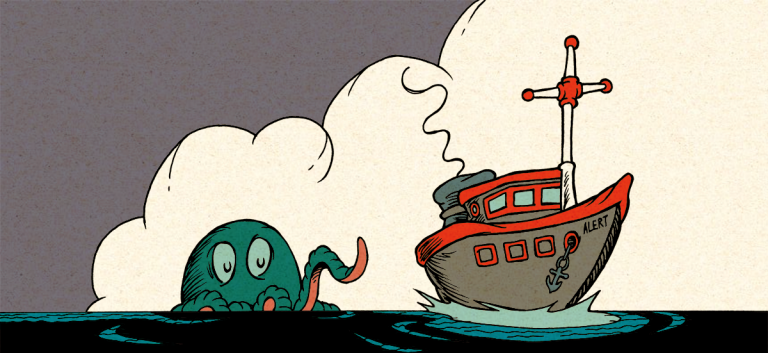
As Cthulhu had paused (but they knew not for what),
so Johansen and Briden got back to the yacht.



That the boiler was boiling had pleased them indeed,
but with limited steam they would sail at half-speed.



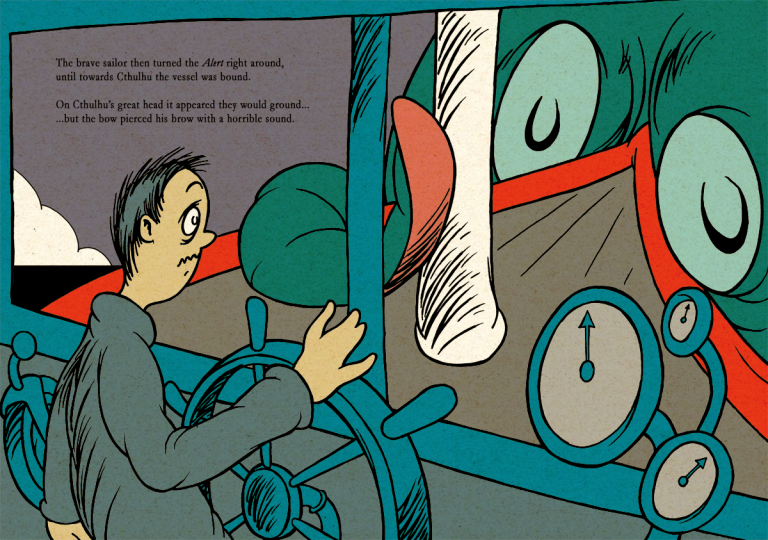
Briden saw great Cthulhu slide into the foam.
This had broken his mind and he did not get home.



Though Johansen had planned to make full steam and flee, it was clear that Cthulhu would catch them at sea.

The brave sailor then turned the *Alert* right around,
until towards Cthulhu the vessel was bound.

On Cthulhu's great head it appeared they would ground...
...but the bow pierced his brow with a horrible sound.

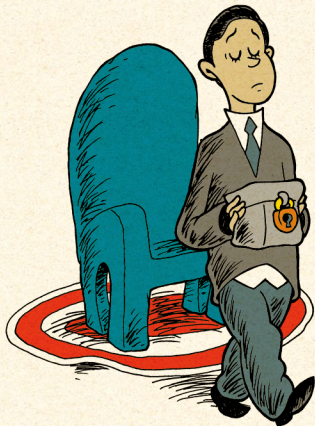




Through Cthulhu's great head the *Alert* had then plowed,
thus releasing an acrid and stinking green cloud.

When Johansen looked back, the foul thing was reforming,
but *Alert* steamed away, with her boiler performing.

Then the sailor had drifted till *Vigilant* called.
His adventure there ended. For now, that was all.



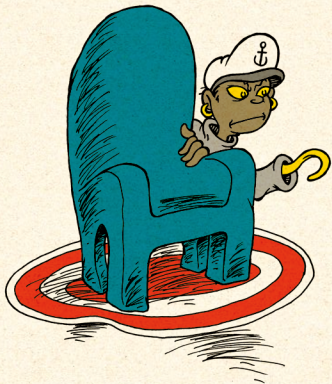
The ship, *Vigilant*, sailed past where R'lyeh should be
but the city had sunk back beneath the deep sea,
and I guess that Cthulhu lies waiting there still,
his existence maintained by the strength of his will.

For Johansen, death ended his mad misery,
and I know, just like Angell, it soon comes for me.
I've discovered too much of what man should not know
and the cultists are out there somewhere spreading woe.

I've uncovered the truth of the strange bas-relief,
and Johansen's account of things beyond belief.
Now I'm packing up all of these things in a box.
The small box that was Angell's that closes and locks.

If you value your life, you will leave it all there,
and with all of my papers, please exercise care.

All these terrible truths, I now beg you: don't share,
for with these cosmic horrors, our psyches can't bear.



(Found Among
the Papers of
the Late Francis
Wayland Thurston,
of Boston)