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A Canticle of Whispers

Something hunts the agents trapped within a university library.

Briefing

Sperry Caminiti possessed a dangerous text known as The Canticle of Whispers. The agents must locate and secure it.

Campus police at Millbrook University, in Duxbury, Massachusetts, shot and killed Caminiti in the student courtyard after staff reported him wielding a knife.

The book and Caminiti's backpack were not found on the body or at the crime scene. According to the police, he spent an hour inside the library prior to the shooting.

Keeper Notes

Caminiti arrived at the library to meet another member of his cult. While his compatriots were running late, Caminiti gave into temptation and perused the book.

The book has a supernatural defender who is tasked with protecting the ritual and making sure it's used correctly. While the god for whom the temples are sanctified to is long dead, the steward remains vigilant. And now it's awake.

The agents walk through the library doors at 9pm in search of the book.

The Book

The Canticle of Whispers is a Ptolemaic-era vellum codex written in hieratic script. Agents with appropriate skills may learn it's rumored to be written on human skin and contains a ritual meant to sanctify a temple to an unnamed deity.

Researching its history will reveal rumors of the book being ground zero for bad things happening.

An English steam ship in 1799 was found with all hands having vanished, with the book on board. The book was likewise rediscovered in 1887 in a stagecoach near Omaha, the passengers and teamsters missing. Later, the book reappeared in 1972. A ranger station in Yellowstone Park, with staff and a group of hikers disappeared.

If found, the codex is warm to the touch. Its pages of velum look like human skin with faded tattoos. The text comprises instructions, diagrams, and pictographs outlining a ritual. Reading it reveals depictions of the reader in stages of decomposition. SAN 0/1D4.

Occult or unnatural roles will reveal the ritual takes an hour and requires patterns to be drawn in human blood. The ritualist must be the only one alive inside the structure. The place must be perfectly silent, or the Steward of the tome will claim them.

Anyone *without* the above skills will discern an emphasis on silence required to fulfill the needs of the ritual, along with the spilled blood of a sacrificial victim.

If the ritual is executed and there are living people besides the "priest", the Steward will kill them and the ritualist. The Steward then vanishes and the book goes back to sleep.

If the ritual is executed and only the ritualist lives and has followed the instructions, the building is now a temple sanctified to a deceased god and the Steward vanishes, contented.

The codex proves difficult to damage as it's made of skin. Even if the writing is demolished or the pages cut to shreds, the Steward will continue to hunt unless the book is burned. If the codex is destroyed, the Steward will fade until a new codex is written.

Sperry Caminiti

Considered an underling in the cult. The group is hungry for learning spells and rituals and willing to serve any person or being who will teach them the Unnatural. Delta Green wants to learn more about the group.

The Library

First floor: atrium at entrance, front desk where head librarian **Ellen Blackwood** presides. Periodicals, reference section, computer terminals, study areas, library staff offices, and

staff-only sorting area. There's also a break room and a security room (unmanned) with CCTV equipment.

A central staircase and an elevator connect to the three public levels. A back stairway also leads to the roof. The rear fire exit leaves via the garbage and recycling, but has an alarm.

Second floor: books on language, theater, art, religion, humanities, language, philosophy, and music, along with student meeting rooms.

Third floor: history, social sciences, government documents, special collections, archives, maps, rare books, research papers, and grad-school projects.

Basement: stored furniture and tools, including an acetylene torch.

Each floor has bathrooms.

Thoroughly searching the books on each floor will take at least three hours. Halve the time with a successful Search roll.

Clues

Droplets of blood are sprinkled around a sink in the second-floor men's restroom. A faint blood trail leads to the agriculture section.

A folded note waits on a table left by Caminiti. It has the library's old decimal code for where the codex has been hidden.

A book on Mesoamerican botanical practices without its dust jacket has been stuffed into a garbage bin.

The codex hides in a dust jacket belonging to a book on Mesoamerican botanical practices on the second floor.

Sarah Delgado isn't on the work schedule for today. Video shows her arriving an hour after Caminiti. She was running late.

Security video also shows Caminiti going to the second floor.

Events

Sperry Caminiti entered the library four hours before the agents arrive. Book in hand, he performed the first step of the ritual, drawing his own blood and sprinkling it onto the pages. This summoned the Steward. After losing his nerve, Sperry fled and was shot down by the police.

Lights flicker as the agents come in from the cold.

The Steward manifests ten minutes later, having been summoned by Caminiti starting but not completing the ritual. Its first victim is the janitor vacuuming the back stairwell and making too much noise. He can be found stabbed to death with multiple wounds.

The building is now sealed off by the power of the ritual. Doors lead to an invisible field, blocking anyone from leaving (SAN 1/1D6 Unnatural). Phone signals are disrupted.

After ninety minutes, the power goes out. (SAN Helplessness 0/1). The Steward, angry now, begins to hunt.

Marcus Chen goes to a fire exit to vape. When he tries the door, he can't exit, but the alarm sounds. He catches sight of the creature as it becomes briefly visible because of the noise.

Ellen Blackwood, the head librarian, will try to keep everyone calm while confronting the agents if they don't identify themselves as law enforcement.

Sarah Delgado isn't on the work schedule. Video shows her arriving an hour after Caminiti. She was running late. She will likewise search for the book to complete the ritual and will attack any agent who tries to stop her.

NPCs

Head librarian **Ellen Blackwood** saw Sperry Caminiti arrive with his backpack. He went straight for the center stairs. Students left as he was visibly agitated. When she confronted him, he began shouting unintelligibly, which is when she called the police. After the shooting, she sent all undergrads home.

Marcus Chen - Tech Services, tattoos, dresses in black, closing down computers, wary of cops

Sarah Delgado - Circulation Desk, tired grad student listening to world music on earbuds. Caminiti's contact and fellow cultist.

David Pierce – Assistant Librarian. Busy organizing and re-shelving. Old, like civil war old.

The Steward of the Tome

Invisible, it exists between frames of the real world. Once called by the activation of the codex, it manifests to prepare for the rest of the ritual. It requires the ritual to be concluded so it can return to its quiet slumber.

As it waits, it will attack anything making loud noises. After its hunt begins, it grows bolder, targeting anyone alone at first, and then those who dare make too many sounds in its sacred space.

The Steward will need to be appeased, the ritual completed, or its body on this plane destroyed. Only then will the library be free of the barrier.

It can be detected by adjacent shockwaves caused by loud sounds. Distortions on a phone screen or other electronics can likewise sense it.

A faint shimmering outline of a hunchbacked figure holding a sword becomes visible when it attacks.

Seeing the Steward: SAN 1/1D6.

Stats

The other library staff members have average statistics and are non-combatants.

Sarah Delgado STR 12 CON 11 DEX 12 INT 14 POW 11 CHA 10 HP 11 WP 11 SAN 0

SKILLS: Accounting 31%, Alertness 40%, Bureaucracy 50%, Driving 45%, Firearms 60%, HUMINT 60%, Law 50%, Persuasion 60%, Search 40%, Stealth 41%, Unarmed Combat 65%.

ATTACKS: Knife 65%, damage 1D4.

The Steward of the Tome STR 20 CON 11 DEX 17 INT 14 POW 11 CHA 10 HP 45

SKILLS: Alertness 80%, Melee Weapons 60%, Stealth 90%.

ATTACKS: Sword 60%, damage 1D8.

Invisible: The steward is invisible, detectable only by distortions through electronic devices. Loud noises next to it cause its outline to be discernable for one round. Even when seen, it remains a blur and is difficult to target. (-20 to hit on the same turn it's seen, -40 if detected and not seen, otherwise it can't be hit.)

Vulnerable: The Steward is vulnerable to loud sounds. Gunshots, crashing metal, breaking glass, etc. will cause the Steward one damage max per turn. This doesn't require an attack role.