

What dread circumstances surround those who hear...

The Signal

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Bermuda, October, 1939

AN EVOCATIVE

ONE-PAGE MILIEU FOR HORROR

STORYTELLING

PLACES / PEOPLE / THINGS

TELL A STORY of intrigue and insanity using the elements on this page. Although it is set in 1930's Bermuda, it's easy to move it to any time and place.

HOOK THE PCS

- The signal from a radio repeater station in the Bermuda islands has fallen silent.
- Flashes of light are seen on the night ocean. No ships are present.
- All correspondence has stopped from a reclusive author. His editor is worried.

HAMILTON, Bermuda's main port of call, is a sleepy town where PCs can re-supply and chat up the locals:

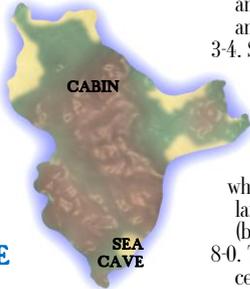
- Martin Zuill, proprietor of an eclectic bookstore, has books on pirates and voodoo but no mythos lore.
- Binjamin Wallace, manager of the Hamilton Hotel, bemoans the sudden drop in tourism.
- Det. Constable Jackson of the C.I.D. is unaware of any suspicious activity related to Hermit Island.
- Caden Stinson pilots a Short S23 flying boat for both private charters and scheduled service.
- Devery Zuntz, owner of St. George's Antiques, bought old coins from McNamee, and sold some curiosities including a China-head doll.

PERSONALITIES suitable for use as PCs or NPCs:

- Cpt. Ellis Broussard of the *Happy Ladd*
- Gib Dunstan, semi-delusional sailor and avid reader of adventure tales
- Lloyd Hobsworth, snobbish lay-about whose family was once rich
- Tallulah St. Clair, Caribbean pearl diver and treasure seeker
- Max Sparringer, British intelligence
- Hensley Wiggans, nosy reporter

HERMIT ISLAND

is a tiny wind-swept isle 17 miles north Bermuda. It has had only one permanent resident for the past year: J.T. McNamee.



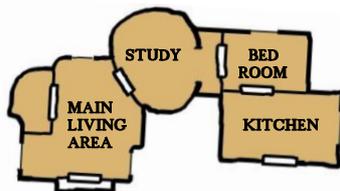
J.T. McNAMEE

(Jessie to locals) is a reclusive author of spy thrillers living in a cabin on Hermit Island.

- Widely assumed to be a man, Jessica found it easier to navigate the male-dominated world of publishing by using her initials.
- Had served as a war correspondent in Spain for three years.
- Operates the radio repeater station on Hermit Island to pass radio signals across the ocean.
- Her most famous stories are *The Heir of Fortuna*, *A Duchess Without Fear*, and *Guardians of the Dark*.

THE CABIN amid a stand of trees on the highest point of Hermit Island is a string of conjoined huts and ramshackle buildings cobbled together from weathered planks. No one is home.

- The island's vegetation and wildlife pervade the cabin. Only two rooms are fully protected from the elements: the study and the radio room above it.



- In the study near a battered Olivetti typewriter on a desk made from an old sea chest are pages from a work in progress by McNamee. They don't make much sense, but appear to involve pirates in space.
- Standing in one corner of the study, facing the wall, is a large China-head doll dressed in English riding clothes.
- Concealed beneath the sand-strewn floorboards of the study is a small safe, inside which are the Wordless Tome, a rolled-up chart, and a small cloth bag with a handful of Spanish doubloons and pieces of eight.
- The radio room is accessible by ladder through an open trapdoor. Its windows look out on the sea in all directions. A Hallicrafters HT-4 radio transceiver and battery rig dominates the room. Next to it are a stack of log books.
- During the night, the transceiver may pick up an odd signal consisting of buzzing and clicking.

THE CHINA DOLL is three feet high and dressed in an English riding outfit. Her chipped alabaster face is locked in an expression of wonder, mouth agape, a far-away look in her unflinching gaze. The PC with the least SAN may hear her speak, though no one else does.

- Possibilities:
- 1-2. She speaks antiquated-phrased riddles about the moon and stars, insects, and the night.
 - 3-4. She is possessed by the intellect of J.T. McNamee, driven irreparably mad by her plight after having unlocked the secrets of the Wordless Tome.
 - 5-7. The magic doll translates whatever is spoken to it into the buzzing language of the Mi-Go, and vice versa (but may not be readily apparent).
 - 8-0. The vengeful spirit of the 17th century pirate Carmella Fiske is trapped within, and seeks to lead PCs to their doom.

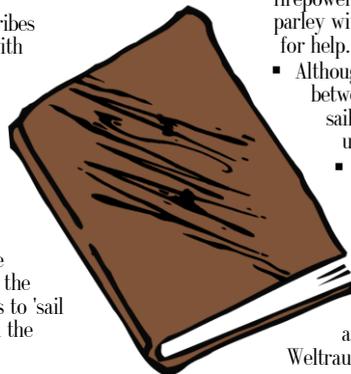


LOG BOOKS show that most of McNamee's radio traffic was mundane, but decrypting a few encoded passages may reveal otherwise:

- The author listened for German radio signals and passed them to the British.
- Weird buzzing signals were received at regular intervals, and the point of origin was curiously indiscernible (because the signals came from directly overhead).
- An encoded passage outlines directions to a hidden sea cave where 'the treasure' was found.

THE WORDLESS TOME is a musty, leather-bound book with a cover marred by long diagonal scratches. The pages inside are blank, except to someone who speaks the name Yansa (view the cover at an angle and you'll see it!)

- Reading the revealed words results in possible SAN loss of 0/1d6 and a corresponding gain in Mythos Lore of 1/1d6.
- The author appears to be a 17th century pirate named Carmella Fiske, who hid her treasure in a sea cave on Hermit Island.
- The text describes interactions with creatures that visited the island 'from the outer darkness'.
- The book devolves into indecipherable madness after the pirate resolves to 'sail the stars' with the beings.



THE CHARTS

are hand-drawn. They may be mundane navigational charts, or perhaps something interesting: 1-3. These sea charts show the most common shipping routes near the island on the way to Britain. 4-7. They form a 'treasure map' of Hermit Island. Following clues on the charts leads to a hidden sea cave. 8-0. They are star charts showing known constellations, but slightly altered as if from a different perspective than the Earth.

THE SIGNAL

received during the night seem like noise but could be intelligent communications. Possibilities: 1-3. The Germans are using a new type of code machine, and breaking the code would be an intelligence coup for the British. 4-7. Mi-Go, intelligent fungi from Yuggoth, communicate on this frequency. Listening to them for too long causes hallucinations, paranoia, and finally catatonia. 8-0. The signal is a voice out of time. A talented operator could modulate the signal into recognizable speech from none other than the ghost of Carmella Fiske haunting the island.

THE SEA CAVE

concealed by a jumble of rocks on the west coast of Hermit Island hides a large dry chamber in its deepest recess. What may be found:

- The decomposing body of J.T. McNamee, her skull opened and bereft of its brain.
- Incomprehensible devices made of metal and glass, incredible to behold, dangerous to investigate.
- A fortune in treasure hidden since the 17th century. Was a curse laid upon it by the pirate-witch?

CARMELLA FISKE

feared female pirate from the late 17th century, preyed on merchant vessels throughout the Atlantic aboard her captured slave ship, the *Sargasso Witch*.

- Legends hint at Fiske's use of voodoo witchcraft to ensure success in raids and loyalty among her crew.
- She identified with the voodoo goddess Yansa.
- Fiske's treasure was never found.

ESCALATE TENSION

half-way through the adventure with the arrival of a landing party from a German U-boat who capture the PCs mode of transport, preventing escape from the island:

- Facing superior numbers and firepower, the PCs must evade capture, parley with the Germans, and/or radio for help.
- Although a state of war exists between Germany and Britain, the sailors have no interest in killing unless forced to do so.
 - The sailors use McNamee's radio transmitter to contact a supply ship to repair a problem with their sub.
 - Perhaps their true mission, known only to Captain Nessel, is to attempt contact with the Weltraumflieger (space-flyers).

CAPTAIN HANS NESSEL

commander of U-56, is a member of the Thule Society, Nazis bent on harnessing occult powers for the Third Reich. His orders are to locate and influence the Fungi from Yuggoth to ally with Germany, or failing that, to capture and return alien technology to Berlin.



BUILD TO A CLIMAX of frantic fear as beings resembling winged crabs descend during the night:

- A mist rolls in from the sea.
- A faint mind-numbing drone (the same signal from the radio) fills the air but from no identifiable direction.
- Fleeting shapes are glimpsed, darting past windows or among the trees.
- Someone off by themselves is whisked away with only a brief shout (or gunshot, if armed).
- Soon enough the creatures show themselves, causing potential SAN loss of 1/1D6. Even so, encounters are brief and tend to result in victims having bursts of electricity coursing through their bodies or having various appendages sliced clean off.
- Capt. Nessel may attempt to communicate with the Mi-Go. As a result, they will remove his head and take it to Yuggoth for further study.
- At this point, fleeing the island amid the chaos is really the best option!

PJ CUNNINGHAM

was the sender of the hideous signal you hold in your hands. If you dare, send a signal of your own to him at ironregime@yahoo.com.

