

The Promise Ring

An Adventure for Lost Souls

By Joe Williams & Kathleen Williams

Copyright © 1993, 2007 by Joe Williams

Email me at: freeRPGs@comcast.net

The Promise Ring

Central Character

This adventure requires the central player to be an Arcane Scholar whose cause of death was: "Swallowed unknown elixir to see what would happen." His unfinished business is: "Unable to finish book you just checked out from the library." The other players can take any characters they choose. The central player receives a copy of the following background story.

Background Story

Life always seemed uncomplicated to you. An only child, your mother doted upon you after your father was killed in a hit-and-run accident. Since you barely remember him, the loss was not such a tragedy. Perhaps your mother was a little over protective while you were growing up, but nonetheless, you were happy within the small seaside town of Baycroft.

One day was pretty much like another until just a few months ago when you graduated from Baycroft High School. Your mom cried at your valedictorian speech. That made you proud, since you were a little unsure about the part concerning the aliens from outer space and the lessons we could learn from them. Afterwards, you had a pizza party with your friends. You decided to live a little, so you didn't get home until after midnight, the smell of lemonade and pepperoni still on your breath. Sneaking into the darkened house, you were surprised to hear your mother's soft voice beckoning you from the darkness.

A nearby lamp illuminated your mother and a small ratty cardboard box. "I've never spoken much about your father," she began slowly, "since his life's work always embarrassed me and kept us poor. But after listening to your speech tonight I realize that you are truly his child, and it would be wrong to keep his legacy from you.

"Your father was a brilliant scholar, in his way. His specialty was in the area of urban legends, folklore, and the occult. His problem was that he was just too naive -- he'd believe anything he heard, and that made him the laughingstock of the scientific community.

"Anyway, your father moved us to Baycroft when you were quite young in order to write a book. It had something to do with the history of the area. I really didn't get involved. Unlike his other projects, he kept this one very quiet. He kept saying that this book would open up a whole new epoch in psychic research. I thought he'd gone crazy, so I wrote to some of his old colleagues to try to talk him out of his delusion. Professor Boris Banner, his old history teacher, came to visit, and spent an entire night talking to him in the study about his theories. But Raymond just wouldn't listen to reason. After Banner left, Raymond got worse. He began to make veiled references to a conspiracy and how his life was in danger. He even accused me of working against him!

"When he completed his book, he was so worried that someone would steal it, he insisted the printing be done here in town where he could supervise every detail. It was a small run, only a hundred copies, which he intended to send to his cronies. When the first book came off the press, your father scooped it up and told the printer he would be back in just a few minutes, after he had hidden the book in a safe place. He never returned. On his way back to the printer, he was killed by a hit an run driver."

She sobbed quietly. "They never caught the man who killed your father. Maybe he did have psychic powers, for he was right, I did betray him!"

Bewildered, you asked her what she meant. After a few moments, she went on. "All his life your father was laughed at, and I didn't want you to grow up with that kind of stigma. The same day he died, I had every copy of his book burned, and the plates destroyed. The only copy I couldn't find is the one he hid before he died.

"But who knows? Maybe his life's work was something great, something really important. Now all that is left is this box of notes. I want you to have it."

You opened the musty old box and discovered a bunch of loose papers. Picking up a few you begin to read. It seemed to be written in some sort of code, with a few scribbled notes here and there. Excitement coursed through your veins. Maybe your father did unlock the secrets of the universe! You started pawing through the box a little more frantically, and your hand brushed against something cold and hard. Pulling it toward you, you discovered a small ring set with a crystal. A chain was threaded through it to form a necklace. Noticing your interest, your mother said, "That was your father's. He called it his lucky charm and wore it around his neck. He said it was his inspiration to write the book. I don't know why he liked it so much. It couldn't be very valuable. He bought it for only a few dollars in one of the local antique shops."

You decided to wear the chain to inspire you. Maybe it would help you follow in your father's footsteps.

After a sleepless night, you started your research, but your father's notes made little sense to you. One page listed residents of Baycroft, mostly fishermen, but they had all since passed away. Another listed historical sites in the area. You found yourself spending more time in the Baycroft library than on the sunny beach. You read so much about the occult, mysterious creatures, and other dimensions, that your head began to swim. Miss Gertrude, the librarian was sympathetic. "I used to work with your father," she said in her whispery voice. "And I know what his work meant to him. I'll help you in any way I can."

Weeks went by, and you were no closer to interpreting your father's notes. You decided to try a new tact. You wrote Professor Banner, the last man to talk to your father about his theories. Banner was more than eager to talk to you. He arrived in town the next day, and you told him the story your mother had related. He suggested you try to find the one book that had been spared. Since it hadn't been found at the scene of the accident, your father must have deposited some place safe, and since he had only been gone a few minutes, it must still be in Baycroft.

Professor Banner wasn't able to enlighten you any further on what your father was working on. However, he and your mother hit it off fabulously. He swept her off her feet, and after a whirlwind courtship, married her in the little chapel on the beach. You were a little worried about this sudden romance, but mom seemed happy so you promised to give your new stepfather a fair shake. It was a little weird having a veritable stranger in the house, but you got used to it. Sort of.

In any case, there was little time to worry about your mother, so consumed were you in your search for your father's book. You posted wanted signs on nearly every telephone pole in Baycroft, but to no avail. Finally, just as you were about to give up, Miss Gertrude called. "I found it! Your father must have thought the book would be safest surrounded by other books. It's been in the stacks all these years." In a twinkling, you jumped on your bicycle and pedaled to Baycroft Library. Sure enough it was your father's book: *Mysteries of the Past Explained Today*. Flipping through it, your eyes fell upon this sentence: ". . . and so, the most important secret of the occult world was revealed to me on Peach Tree Island." Suddenly you remembered vacationing on nearby Peach Tree Island with your family when you were quite young. You and your father used to comb the beach looking for . . . what?

Thanking Miss Gertrude, you hurried home, the book clutched to your breast. Your thoughts were far away when Boris interrupted them. "Congratulations!" he boomed heartily. "I see you found your prize. This calls for a celebration. Come into my study, and let me give you a little something." Although you desperately wanted to read the book, you went into the room with Boris. It wouldn't hurt to be nice to the guy.

"I know you are unlike most youngsters, and never indulge in a drink," Boris went on. "But I really would like you to partake in a toast with me. After all, you are eighteen, and legally able to have a drink now and then, hmm?" Boris poured a strange green liquor into two small glasses. He handed one to you, and you noticed the glass seemed very warm to the touch.

"I propose a toast to you and your future," Boris went on, raising his glass. "May you find exactly what your father found." And with that he drank. You looked down at the drink in your hand. What could it hurt? In one gulp you downed the

drink. Instantly, your throat burned and your stomach heaved. As you slumped to the floor, the last thing you saw was Boris ripping open your backpack and extracting your father's book, laughing maniacally all the while.

Possible Vows

In order to return to earth, the central player must make a ghostly vow not to rest until completing a task based on his backstory. Here are some suggestions:

- I will not rest until I find out why Boris killed me.
- I will not rest until I save my mother from Boris.
- I will not rest until I find out the secret of Peach Tree Island.
- I will not rest until I retrieve my father's book.

As part of his gear, the central character has an ectoplasmic copy of the necklace-ring he was wearing at the time of his death. Since the central character knows Baycroft, he should be able to find his way around the town and Peach Tree Island. However, he does not know about the cemetery on Lookout Mountain.

The other characters have been sitting around Limbo, discussing the merits of rap music and watching re-runs of *The Brady Bunch*, when their mentor ushers in the central character. "We have a new guest," the mentor explains. "He's looking for a little help to fulfill a ghostly vow. Any takers?" By the mentor's tone, the other characters know it's in their best interest to agree.

The Banner Residence

The players find themselves in the living room of the central character's home. The sun shines through the cracks in the firmly drawn shades. It's six o'clock, about two hours from sunset, on a very sunny afternoon.

The house is utterly silent. Sheets have been draped across the furniture and the closets are bare. A note to the part-time maid is attached to

the refrigerator. It reads: "Dear Peggy, Mrs. Banner is so distraught over the recent death of her son I've decided to take her away for a few weeks. Please continue your chores and forward our mail to The Windswept House, Peach Tree Island. The number is 555-1313, but please call only in case of emergency. Boris Banner."

The central character's room is mostly intact, but his father's book, notes, and necklace-ring are all missing.

The phone is still in working condition, so if the characters wish to use a supernatural power to call, they may. If the caller is successful, he will contact Boris. Tipping Boris off at this time could prove disastrous, allowing him to prepare for the character's pursuit.

A pile of letters is scattered under the mail slot. The name "Miss Gertrude Pickles" is barely visible in the upper corner of the bottom most letter. To extract and open it, the characters will have to use a supernatural power. Her letter reads:

Dear Mrs. Banner,

I was so sorry to hear about the death in your family. The suicide of your son was a terrible thing, but you cannot blame yourself. When I found a few torn pages from your dear husband's book in the back of a bookcase, I knew your son must have discovered the book I had given him was incomplete. No doubt the strain of learning his long search had been in vain caused him to snap. The pages make no sense to me, but if you'd like them as a lasting remembrance of your dear husband and child, just stop by the library any evening before seven.

Sincerely yours,

Gertrude Pickles, Librarian.

If the characters wish to leave the house, they will have to use their supernatural powers to unlock the doors or pass through a wall. To reach the library before it closes at 7pm, they will have to contend with blistering sunlight outside.

Baycroft Library

Baycroft Library is about 15 blocks from the Banner home. It is a small building run solely by Miss Pickles. If the players manage to arrive before

closing, they may be able to slip in along with a patron. Otherwise, they will have to use their powers to gain entry, and Miss Pickles will not be present to assist them.

A few minutes before 7pm, Miss Pickles announces over the intercom, "The Library is now closing. Thank you." She will lock up and leave unless prevented from doing so by a supernatural power. Miss Pickles keeps the two pages she found from Raymond's book in a filing cabinet inside her tiny office.

The office is guarded by a barghest, who sits atop the filing cabinet. It will attack any ghost who enters the room, or else it will try to steal the pages if they are taken from the filing cabinet. The barghest has been sent by Boris Banners to find the missing pages of the book.

Barghest

Type: Evil entity

Consistency: Incorporeal

Defense: Good

WTL: 18

Skills: Good Strength, Poor Intelligence, Great Alertness

Appearance: A fierce dog standing 3 feet at the shoulder with shaggy black fur, fiery red eyes, and

a set of six inch horns protruding from its forehead.

Personality: Barghests are very hostile towards spirits of all sorts.

Motivation: To track down and drag ghosts to the nether regions.

Combat: Barghests may attack with either their bite or horns, but not both on a single turn. Their bite does (Defense vs. Passable) x 4 damage. Their horns do only (Defense vs. Poor) x 1 damage, but if the victim takes any damage, he will also be paralyzed for (Stamina vs. Poor) x 2 turns. The barghest will then try to clamp his victim in his jaws and teleport to the infernal regions. It takes one complete turn to do this, and if the barghest takes damage during this time it will drop the victim and teleport alone.

Powers: Three times per day, a barghest's howl can summon a hell hound. The hound will attack the barghest's enemies to the death. See the Lost Souls manual for information on hell hounds.

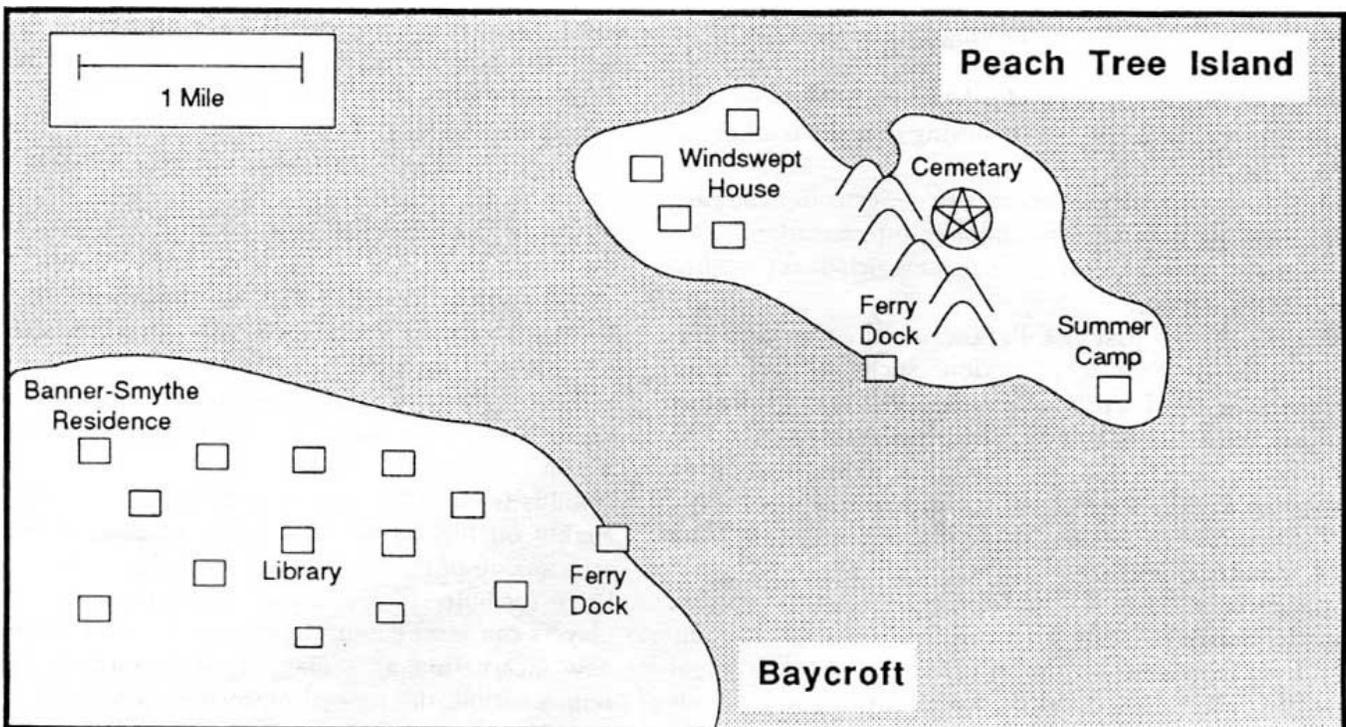
Miss Gertrude Pickles

Type: Good person

Consistency: Solid

Defense: Poor

Skills: Inferior Agility, Poor Strength, Superior Intelligence



Appearance: An older woman wearing her long gray hair in a bun at the back of her neck. She is a little deaf and never speaks above a whisper.

Personality: Helpful and alert. Although Miss Pickles is a little old and slow, she is very aware of her surroundings.

Motivation: To make herself helpful.

Combat: Miss Pickles has a hat pin in her purse, and will use it to inflict (Defense vs. Poor) damage in hand to hand combat. She cannot harm ghosts.

The Torn Pages

Inside the filing cabinet, they find a file marked "Mysteries of the Past Explained Today," and in it are two pages marked: "Chapter 10: The Secret of Peach Tree Island." They read:

"I originally came to Baycroft to study the oral traditions of the seagoing folk. It seemed as though the answer to all my questions could be found in a local legend. Old timers speak of the days when Peach Tree Island was settled by thieves and pirates. They lurked there knowing that ships had to pass close by on their way into the bay, and that the treacherous waters often caused them to sink. These settlers were expert sailors and would go out in their dinghies to meet those who managed to stay afloat. Alas for them, their rescuers would quickly strip them of their goods and leave them to drown.

"One day, a great passenger ship sank in a storm. A beautiful lady was swept ashore and was found by one of the citizens of the island. Looking up into the cutthroat's eyes, the woman must have foreseen her fate for she tried to forestall it: "Good sir, please do not harm me, for I come from a family of wealthy courtiers, and I can promise you riches beyond your dreams if ye spare my life!"

"The pirate might have listened to her, but when she held up her hands to beseech him, he saw a magnificent stone on her finger. Greed overcame him and he sliced her finger off to gain the ring! The woman shrieked and his next move was to cut her throat. It is said that the ghost of this woman still haunts the island, looking in vain for her lost finger and treasured ring.

"When I heard this story, I knew I was close to my goal. I bought a vacation home on Peach Tree Island in order to facilitate my search. I knew the

ring must have been found and lost many times over the centuries, until its significance would be all but forgotten. Finally, I tracked it down to an old woman in Baycroft, who willingly sold it to me for fifty dollars.

"All the pieces began falling into place. Now all I needed to prove my theory was to find the location of the threshold, and the 'Legend of the Raven' which had started me on this quest in England, would be shown to be based on fact. My excitement knew no bounds as I asked Max to ferry me across one more time. If my calculations were correct, the answer would be found at the . . ."

The second page ends here.

The Legend of the Raven

Information on this legend can be found at the library in any number of books on English folklore. It is also mentioned in Raymond's box of notes.

"The Legend of the Raven is the story of a princess who fell in love with a raven. The king disapproved of their relationship, and plotted a way to stop it. One night, the raven said to the princess, 'Your father is coming to imprison me. But we will fool him. Use this key to release me, and together, we will rule the kingdom.' And he gave the princess a silver key.

"Just as the raven had predicted, the king sent his soldiers to lock the raven in a gilt cage. There the raven waited until the princess came one night to free him. She turned the key in the lock and the raven flew out. 'Free, free at last! he cawed.

"But the king was old and wise. He saw the key still in the lock and he threw it into the cage. The raven saw the glitter of silver and, as was his nature, he flew down to pick it up. The door slammed shut behind him, locking him and the key inside, where his key could never do him any good."

Getting to Peach Tree Island

Peach Tree Island is a small vacation resort a few miles out to sea. It can only be reached by boat or ferry. Max Cline has been running the ferry to

Peach Tree Island for nearly 50 years and has developed a reputation for being a crotchety old man who drinks to excess. Max lives in a hovel on the dock. If the players speak within his hearing, Max Cline will answer. If asked why he has this power, Max will say, "Started happening to me right after the war. Had a steel plate put in. I can pick up radio stations too." It will become evident that Max believes that he is listening to the voices of aliens from other worlds rather than ghosts.

If asked about Raymond, Max will begin to reminisce. "Sure, I remember the Professor. He was real interested in my ability to hear voices. Loaned me old copies of Fate Magazine. A real prince of a fellow. It was a shame that he died so soon after his discovery."

If asked about it, Max will only shrug. "I dunno what it was, only it made him real excited. One day he came back from the island and he said, 'Max, I finally figured it out. At exactly three in the afternoon, I went up to the place where the dead can't rest, and you'll never guess what I saw: the answer to all my riddles. Who would have thought that the darkest secret of the afterlife would be found only in the brightest sunshine? But I mustn't tell you any more. My knowledge could easily destroy all life as we know it.' I never did get the rest out of him." Max chuckles. "And they call me nutty."

Max will agree to ferry the players across.

Max Cline the Ferryman

Type: Good person

Consistency: Solid

Defense: Passable

WTL: 20

Skills: Passable Intelligence, Good Strength

Appearance: Crazy old duffer.

Personality: Genial, though a little nutty.

Enjoys chatting with those he ferries to the island, or to the voices in his head.

Motivation: To do his job.

Combat: Max cannot harm ghosts.

Peach Tree Island

Soon after landing on Peach Tree Island, the players will see a vaporous woman dressed in white standing upon the beach. This is the ghost of Lady Mary Sweetchild.

"Kind folk, you are my only chance to find rest. I have been trapped on this island for three centuries. When I was alive, I was falsely accused of witchcraft. The magistrate banished me from my home in England and sent me to the colonies with little more than the clothes on my back. The only valuable I owned was a ring my betrothed had given me. My ship sank in a storm off this tiny island, but I was rescued by a man named Rufus. When I pleaded for mercy, he cruelly cut off my ring finger and left me to die. I shall never rest until the ring is returned to me. It is the only memento I have of my lost love."

If the central player offers her the ring on his necklace, she will exclaim, "Yes, that's it!" She eagerly places it on her finger, and then scowling in apparent disappointment, she takes the ring off and hurls it against the ground. "This is just an ectoplasmic copy of my ring! You must help me find my real ring!"

If it's pointed out that she wouldn't be able to wear a physical ring, she will curse soundly and say, "Just help me find my ring, and I will worry about the rest."

After her conversation with the players, Lady Mary vanishes into a cloud of slowly dispersing mist. "If you find my ring, I shall return to retrieve it," she promises. "Bless you all for your kindness!"

Lady Mary Sweetchild

Type: Evil lost soul

Consistency: Incorporeal

Defense: Good

WTL: 30

Skills: Superior Cunning, Superior Charm, Great Fate, Awesome Occult, Good Intelligence, Good Agility, Poor Dexterity

Appearance: A woman of about 24. She is dressed in the high fashion of the mid seventeenth century. She has an English accent and is missing the ring finger from her right hand.

Personality: Very sweet and ladylike until thwarted. The characters will be lulled into believing that she is a helpful NPC.

Motivation: To retrieve her ring so she can open the gate that keeps her demon lover Malphas imprisoned.

Combat: Lady Mary carries a dagger which does (Defense vs Poor) x 2 damage.

Powers: Compel (Uses = 4): Compels the victim to perform a simple four word action, such as “drop your weapon,” “jump off a bridge,” or whatever. The victim must perform the action for (Intelligence vs Great) turns.

Imprison (Uses = 1): The victim is imprisoned in an inescapable coffin for (Fate vs Good) x 10 minutes.

Darkness (Uses = 4): Inky darkness surrounds Lady Mary for 8 minutes per use.

Hallucination (Uses = 3): The target sees an army of ghostly pirates bursting from the sandy ground. The illusion lasts for (Sanity vs Great) x 3 turns. Only the target sees the hallucination, and the hallucination cannot really harm him.

Reverse Intentions (Uses = 4): The target does the exact opposite of what he intended to do that turn, and will continue to do so for the duration. It lasts for (Intelligence vs Good) turns.

Exploring the Island

As the players explore the island at night, they come to a paved to the small town. There are a line of streetlights here. Moths cluster around the streetlights. The moths cluster around first one streetlight and then the next, swarming so densely the each light dims in turn.

Upon investigating, they find a hunched figure carrying a large sack across his back. The weight of the sack must be tremendous, for the figure stumbles wearily along the path.

This is Rufus, the ghost of the pirate who chopped off Lady Mary’s finger. He cannot stop walking, and must always carry his ectoplasmic sack. If someone tries to take it away from him, he will fight to keep it. “I must carry it forever,” he moans, “to atone for my evil ways.”

If the players ask him about his life, he will sadly elaborate. “In life, I was a pirate, preying upon the unfortunates who wrecked off Peach Tree

Island. One evening, a beautiful woman was swept ashore. I didn’t kill her -- at least, not right away. I was smitten by her beauty! She begged me to keep her safe from the other ruffians in exchange for, well, considerations. So I did. Then she confined in me that she was a witch who had knowledge of the dark arts, and if I helped her, her demon lover would reward me. I didn’t actually believe her, but I did as she asked, for more earthly favors.

“She had me swim out to her sunken ship and find the body of the priest. I brought him ashore, and she drained his blood into a bowl. Then she made me build her a pentagram, while she painted symbols with the priest’s blood. When I was done, she laughed and said she didn’t need me anymore, her demon lover would soon be by her side. She pointed her finger at me and started mumbling an incantation. I didn’t hesitate -- I cut off her finger in one swoop. She shrieked and came for me, so I killed her. I buried her in the graveyard, but kept her ring for my troubles.

“But her half-finished incantation didn’t stop with her death. Within a few days, I also died from a wasting disease that left me looking like this. But that wasn’t the end of the witch’s curse. I found I was fated forevermore to carry my sins upon my back.”

If the players ask Rufus where the pentagram is located, he answers, “Why, that’s easy. It’s right here on the island. It’s on . . .”

Rufus is cut off by a swarm of funeral butterflies that alights on his ectoplasmic body, while another swarm attacks one of the players. He drops his sack in order to battle the butterflies. Rufus will be reincarnated before the players can rescue him. He screams horribly, assumes his new incarnation as a maggot, and vanishes. Upon his reincarnation, the funeral butterflies may continue to attack the players or fly away, at the referee’s discretion. The butterflies were sent by Lady Mary to silence Rufus.

Even after Rufus is reincarnated, the ectoplasmic sack remains behind. If the players peek inside, they discover the sack contains a number of gravestones painted, in old blood, with arcane symbols. The character who first touches the sack will be cursed, his face erupting in open sores. As long as he carries the sack in one hand, the sores will get no worse. But should he set the sack down, the pustules will bubble and he will

lose 1 WTL, plus an additional 1 WTL every 5 minutes until the sack is again in his hand.

The only way to break the curse is to reincarnate Lady Mary. Since she is the one maintaining the sack, when she is reincarnated, the sack will vanish.

Rufus

Type: Neutral lost soul
Consistency: Incorporeal
Defense: Good
WTL: 20

Skills: Good Agility, Great Strength, Poor Intelligence.

Appearance: A seventeenth century pirate. He carries a cutlass and wears a patch over one eye. His skin is decayed and dotted with open sores. His back is bent under the weight of a bulging sack.

Personality: Cunning, rather than clever. Rufus is a bit of a coward.

Motivation: Rufus is still trying to atone for his sins in life.

Combat: Rufus prefers to attack helpless creatures, and will run away if he can, though his sack slows him. He defends himself with his cutlass for (Defense vs. Poor) x 3 damage.

Powers: None.

Funeral Butterflies

Type: Evil creature
Consistency: Unnatural
Defense: Passable
WTL: 20 (for the swarm)

Skills: Good speed

Appearance: Small white butterflies which come out only at night.

Personality: Mindless insect.

Motivation: To reincarnate Rufus by nibbling away his ectoplasmic flesh.

Combat: Funeral butterflies travel in swarms of a hundred. A swarm is only affected by area affect weapons. Killing individuals does little to reduce their numbers. A swarm has 20 WTL For every WTL lost, five butterflies are considered to be slain. The WTL of the swarm determines the damage it is capable of doing:

WTL Damage per turn

1-5 (Stamina vs Inferior) damage.
6-10 (Stamina vs Poor) damage.
11-15 (Stamina vs Passable) damage.
16-20 (Stamina vs Good damage).

Windswept House

This is a small vacation cottage on the far side of the island. It is near the ocean and is well secluded from other houses. Inside, Mrs. Banner is lying in bed, clearly in a stupor. It is apparent that she has been drugged. The living room is strewn with maps of Peach Tree Island, books on the occult and papers full of occult symbols. A tape recorder lies prominently on a desk next to two empty tea cups; a tape labeled "My Struggle to Attain Greatness" is lying in the recorder. If the players use a power to play the tape, they will hear Boris Banner's voice:

". . . Raymond thought to outsmart me by tearing key pages from the book. If they're at the library, my barghest will find them. The wretch may have foiled me for now, but there is one significant passage he missed. It reads: "I have discovered the gate to the afterlife, which was built sometime in the early 1600's. I must keep the secret from people who would misuse it, but I like to muse upon my discovery, so I have a little memento of it at my vacation home. I gaze upon it and laugh at all those poor scientists who will have to eat crow once I've published my book." I must find the clue. I will stop at nothing. After all, the murder of two men was nothing to me . . ."

His voice is interrupted by Mrs. Banner's voice. "Boris, what are you doing? What do you mean, you murdered two men?"

"Let me explain over a drink," Boris replies, oozing charm. And there then tape ends.

Mrs. Banner

If Mrs. Banner is revived from her drug induced stupor, she will relate the following information, provided the players can talk to her without frightening her out of her wits:

"I was such a fool to love that man, and to let me use me so. Now I know what a beast he really is! When I came into the room, he was talking into that recorder he always carries with him. I heard him mention something about murdering two people. He said he could explain, and he was so

calm that I expected him to amuse me with a reasonable explanation. I sat down and sipped the tea he offered me as I listened to his story.

“He told me that when he learned of Raymond’s important discovery, all those years ago, he went mad with jealousy. He couldn’t stand the thought of one of his students achieving greatness in excess of his own, and so he came secretly to Baycroft and ran Raymond down! He didn’t care about learning Raymond’s secrets. He only wanted him out of the way.

“It wasn’t until my son called him to ask about Raymond’s work that Boris again started to dwell on Raymond’s discovery. He decided to let my son continue his research, and then steal it from him when the time was ripe. To gain close access to the boy, Banner courted me. I, the lonely window, was easy prey for the cultured professor! I had no idea of the monster I was allowing into our household.

“By this time, my mind was growing confused and foggy. He must have put something in my drink. I don’t know what would have happened to me if you hadn’t rescued me!”

If asked about where Boris went, she will say, “The last I saw, he was standing by the mantel, looking at one of the pictures. Then I must have passed out.”

The Memento

On the mantelpiece is a picture of Raymond. He is standing next to a small stone grave marker that looks to be over a two hundred years old. He’s smiling broadly, an open can of paint at his feet. The name on the stone reads, in fresh paint, “Here lies Mary Sweetchild. May her secret rest with her.” In the upper corner of the picture is “3:00 p.m.” faintly written in pencil.

In the background, other gravestones are visible, along with a glimpse of the sea, and far beyond is Baycroft on the distant shore. By checking the maps on the living room floor, the players will discover there is an old cemetery atop Lookout mountain. This discovery will come at 2:45 p.m., leaving the players just enough time to reach the cemetery.

Lookout Mountain

This is actually a small ridge running down the center of the Island. A small summer camp is on one side and vacation homes on the other. Campers often ride horses up the trail that leads to the top of the Mountain. There is very little foliage, and during the day, it is quite bright and sunny.

If the characters go to the top of Lookout Mountain, they will see below them an valley overgrown with hardy brush. Among the undergrowth, out of range of any supernatural powers, they see an ancient cemetery where victims of the pirates were buried hundreds of years ago. The wind blows constantly along the valley, blowing the sandy soil from the tops of the graves and causing the grave markers to wiggle as though those buried below were struggling to escape.

The stones in the center of the cemetery are laid out in a pentacle. At three in the afternoon, runes drawn on the pentacles will glow faintly. An Arcane Scholar will recognize it as a gate to the nether regions.

From the ridge, the players see Boris standing outside the pentacle, the ring on his finger glowing brightly in the sunlight. His fist is raised, and the runes shimmer with increased brilliance.

Next to Boris is a cloud of pitch blackness. Inside the cloud is Lady Mary Sweetchild, the witch. Unable to wield the material ring in her incorporeal state, she has enlisted Boris’ aid by promising him unsurpassed greatness heretofore unknown to mortals. She whispers the incantation to open the gate, and as Boris repeats the words in his booming voice, a whirling dimensional gate appears within the pentagram of tombstones.

Boris Banner and Lady Mary will fight the players to keep the gate open. After a few turns, Lady Mary’s demon lover, Malphas will step from the gate. His demonic troops will soon follow him, pouring out of the gate at the rate of one every other turn.

The only way to close the gate is to throw the physical ring (not an ectoplasmic copy) into it. Not only will this permanently close the gate, but it will also suck Malphas and his demonic troops back to the nether regions!

Boris Banner

Type: Evil person.

Consistency: Solid

Defense: Good

WTL: 23

Skills: Passable Agility, Good Strength, Great Intelligence

Appearance: Suave man in early 50's. Tall, with just a touch of gray at the temples. Appealing to women, most men find him a little too arrogant.

Personality: Boris has been involved in the occult for many years. Once a reasonable researcher, he has slowly grown mad over the years.

Motivation: To attain greatness by performing a great work of magic.

Combat & Powers: Boris is wearing a pair of Mystic Glasses which allows him to see (though not touch or hear) ghosts. Lady Mary has enchanted Boris' walking stick, turning it into a magic wand with these powers:

Slow (Uses = 4): The target can only act every other turn for (Agility vs Great) x 2 turns.

Freeze (Uses = 2): The target is paralyzed for (Strength vs Passable) x 2 turns.

Magic Bolt (Uses = 6): Sends a bolt of magical energy at the target, doing (Defense vs Poor) x 3 damage to material or incorporeal beings.

Malphas

Type: Evil entity

Consistency: Dual

Defense: Great

WTL: 50

Skills: Passable Agility, Superior Strength, Superior Charm

Appearance: Normally appears as a eight foot tall knight dressed in black plate mail. A plume of raven's feathers tops his helm, and his shield bears a raven crest. He carries a two-handed sword.

Motivation: To keep the gate open so his demonic troops can enter the physical world.

Personality: Malphas is a notorious liar. His lies will be believed unless (Empathy vs. Great) is achieved. Women are particularly attracted to Malphas. Any female character must roll (Will vs. Great) or fall in love with him.

Combat: His two handed sword does (Defense vs. Great) x 7 damage. Malphas prides himself on his warrior abilities, and would rather fight than use magic.

Notes: If an Aura of Powerlessness power is used on Malphas, he will revert to his true form, that of a giant raven. His armor and sword vanish, reducing his Defense to Great and his damage (from his beak) to (Defense vs. Great) x 2. However, he gains the ability to fly. He can be tricked into assuming his raven form by a beautiful woman who makes a Superior Persuade roll.

As a demon, Malphas can easily see and interact with the living and lost souls. Malphas is not harmed by sunlight, and knows that lost souls are.

Demonic Troops

Type: Evil entity.

Consistency: Dual

Defense: Passable

WTL: 20

Skills: Poor Agility, Good Strength, Poor Intelligence.

Appearance: Squat, troll-like beings that walk with a rolling gait. They have meat hooks for hands and curved fangs that extend past their chins.

Personality: Brutal and violent.

Motivation: They will fight to help Malphas, and to keep the gate open.

Combat: They fight with their claws, doing (Defense vs Passable) x 3 damage. One demon leaps from the gate every other turn. There is a virtually unlimited number of demonic troops.

Rewards

With the destruction of Malphas and the gate, the danger to the world is over. The players receive +1 to +4 karma for accomplishing each ghostly vow. Character do not gain any karma if they did not make a vow. Some sample rewards:

+1 karma for destroying the barghest.

+1 karma for reincarnating Boris Banner.

+2 karma for reincarnating Lady Mary.

The Promise Ring

+4 for closing the gate, thereby banishing Malphas and his demonic troops.

+1 for finding out why Boris killed the central character.

+1 for saving the central character's mother from Boris.

+1 for discovering the "secret" of Peach Tree island.

+1 for retrieving the book of the central character's father.