

Redacted Rituals

By Shane Ivey and Dennis Detwiller, ©2018

I wrote these six rituals for the *Delta Green Handler's Guide*, but we cut them for lack of space. The psychic abilities, for example, would have required a section on the presence of psychic powers in the setting, as well as notes for the Handler on the risks of giving such potent abilities to players (we've provided some notes). It seemed wiser to save them for the PISCES book, which deals with psychic Talents directly (and they will be addressed in more detail there). The "Dreaming Door" ritual raised all kinds of questions about the Dreamlands that we just did not have room to cover in the *Handler's Guide*. And "Bottled Soul," drawn from Lovecraft's "The Strange High House in the Mist," was just too specific and weird.

I encourage you to make up a new *Delta Green* scenario revolving around one of these rituals (some examples are provided). Explore the implications of its use. How does the promise of its unnatural power seduce the operator who attempts it? And in what unintended ways does it warp and worsen the operator's life?

BOTTLED SOUL

Elaborate ritual. Study time: months; 1D20 SAN; +1 Unnatural. Activation: 1 POW, 1D20 SAN. In this terrible form of alchemy, the operator sacrifices a human victim, reduces the victim's body and soul to a thick mist, and imprisons the mist in a sealed container—traditionally, a peculiar bottle with a small, lead pendulum hanging inside from the stopper. The operator pays 1 POW and loses 1D20 SAN, plus the SAN cost of the violence of the sacrifice.

The imprisoned soul may be awakened by addressing it by name. Anyone who has mastered the ritual may communicate with the prisoner by observing the particular vibrations of the pendulum. Others might communicate more simply by, for instance, asking the prisoner to trigger a vibration to say "Yes" or "No." An imprisoned soul has 0 SAN and is permanently insane.

Opening or breaking the bottle releases the soul in a mist or fume that rapidly dissipates. By acting instantly, the operator who bound the soul—or another who knows the ritual and the prisoner's name—may attempt to bind the soul as with a summoned entity. A bound soul may be instructed to take physical form, perform some series of actions, and return to the bottle. A soul that takes physical form manifests in a simulacrum of the body that the soul occupied before death. Often that includes clothing and belongings that the body frequently wore or carried. If an attempted binding fails, the released soul may take physical form long enough to kill the operator and then vanish into mist, never to take shape again.

Operational Seed: Bottled Soul

After discovering an ancient, 18th century sealed jug in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, layabout and general druggie Timothy Grant has transformed himself into a new-age guru, teaching the art he calls "Yian-ho-dao" to his growing bevy of well-to-do

followers. He makes no attempt to hide how he consults the “spirit in the bottle” for answers to what business moves to make next.

DREAMING DOOR

Elaborate ritual. Study time: months; 1D10 SAN; +1 Unnatural. Activation: 4 POW, 4D6 SAN. As found in some transcriptions of the *Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan*, this ritual has the trappings of esoteric Chinese mysticism. Whether the ritual takes effect without such trappings is up to the Handler.

A free-standing Chinese arch must be constructed over four days in classical Taoist style. This requires an appropriate Craft skill at 50% or greater, but the arch may be built by someone other than the operator. During construction, the operator festoons the arch with papers that are marked with characters that appear to be Classical Chinese, but which would baffle any linguist. The operator must also utter a ritual chant that calls upon unnatural powers. The chant is in Old Chinese, a language not fully known today, but mastering the ritual allows the operator to memorize it even without knowing the language. During the arch’s construction, the operator must sleep near it for four nights, sacrificing 1 POW and 1D6 SAN per night. During the fourth night, the Ritual Activation roll tells whether the ritual succeeds. If it does, the arch may serve as a gate to the so-called Dreamlands. Living, physical beings may pass through the gate, at a cost of 4 WP and 1 SAN, and may return at the same costs.

Operational Seed: Dreaming Door

An ancient stone arch has been dug up in Shandong province, China, by a mixed team of international archaeologists. One, Dr. April LaRosa, a Delta Green friendly, disappeared the night that the gate was fully exposed, after sending a cryptic email to her cell-leader in the States about “Leng”. Can Delta Green maneuver in mainland China and locate their expert without running afoul of the Chinese authorities or causing an international incident?

PRECOGNITION

Simple ritual. Study time: days; 1D6 SAN. Activation: 6 WP, 1 SAN. This ritual appears to be an innate psychic power. It may emerge in dreams or meditation and be developed by extensive practice, perhaps under a guru or parapsychologist. The operator meditates for an hour. A glimpse of the future comes as a dream or vision within the next 24 hours, at a cost of 6 WP and 1 SAN. The Handler decides what the operator sees and how accurate it turns out to be. Such visions are notoriously unreliable, often blending into mundane dreams, and sometimes bearing only the faintest resemblance to actual events. An especially disturbing vision may cost further SAN.

Operational Seed: Precognition

The cell is contacted by a trusted friendly in the group, Dr. Trevor Washington, and told that they are in mortal danger. Together, the seer and the cell must unravel a mystery to

prevent catastrophe; or perhaps the seer saw that the group must be sacrificed to prevent some larger, unnatural calamity. Who is to trust and why? Can the future be changed?

PSYCHOMETRY

Simple ritual. Study time: days; 1D6 SAN. Activation: 1 WP and 1D4 SAN. This ritual appears to be an innate psychic power. It may emerge in dreams or meditation and be developed by extensive practice, perhaps under a guru or parapsychologist. After spending a few turns focusing his or her psychic attentions, the operator feels psychic vibrations in a structure or object. Usually these psychic vibrations express powerful emotions experienced nearby, sometimes decades or even centuries in the past. This costs 1 WP and 1D4 SAN, or 1D6 SAN if the emotions are especially traumatic.

Operational Seed: Psychometry

The group is called in to deal with a friendly who has gone temporarily insane, Ezmi Taylor-Grant. Grant has a history with the group as a sometimes-successful psychometrist. Inside her home, they find bizarre, alien writing scratched across a table, as well as a bizarre stylus made of unknown metal recovered, it is claimed, in the Gibson desert of Australia in 1930. What force drives her deranged mind? What did she see when she used her ability?

SECOND SIGHT

Simple ritual. Study time: days; 1D6 SAN. Activation: 1 WP and 1D4 SAN. This ritual appears to be an innate psychic power. It may emerge in dreams or meditation and be developed by extensive practice, perhaps under a guru or parapsychologist. After spending a minute or two focusing his or her psychic attentions, the operator sees into dimensions outside the “real world” visible to human eyes. That costs 1 WP and 1D4 SAN and lasts a few minutes. What the operator sees is up to the Handler and might vary from day to day, but it may include extradimensional entities that cause further SAN loss.

Operational Seed: Second Sight

An Agent is touched on the street by a homeless man who then dies, but not before mentioning “ancient Irem, and the city of pillars”. From that point on, the Agent drifts in and out of the real world and another, normally unseen world that they soon realize is the ancient city of Irem, unknown centuries before. It soon becomes clear they are retracing the steps of the creation of the *Necronomicon* along with its attendant horrors. How to break the chain?

TELEPATHY

Simple ritual. Study time: days; 1D6 SAN. Activation: varies. This ritual appears to be an innate psychic power. It may emerge in dreams or meditation and be developed by

extensive practice, perhaps under a guru or parapsychologist. After spending a turn focusing his or her psychic attentions, the operator can send thoughts to the mind of another for one turn, at a cost of 1 SAN for the operator and 1D8 SAN for the target. This costs 4 WP if the operator touches the target, 8 WP at up to 100 m distance, 12 WP at up to 100 km, or 16 WP for a target anywhere on Earth. The WP and SAN costs are halved (round up) if the target is a relative, a close friend, or another telepath.

Operational Seed: Second Sight

An Agent notices signs hung around their neighborhood. "HAVE YOU HEARD THE FOLLOWING 'IN YOUR HEAD' IN THIS AREA? YAG SATHA KNEEBLOOD SIN? IF SO, EMAIL mindvoices@gmail.com." Does the Agent alert the group, or take up investigation on their own?

"Psychic Powers"

Precognition, Psychometry, Second Sight and Telepathy do not represent some hidden evolved power of the human mind, instead, they are the dim remainders of the influence of the Great Old Ones on all earthly life. After all, the human mind and its attendant, limited sensory organs, issued forth from the biotic froth of the Great Old Ones themselves. There is a connection there, a genetic chain of evidence if you will. Some humans have more access to these abilities than others, but nearly any human can gain access to them, if trained properly.

As such, these abilities are extremely dangerous to employ. There's a reason *real* psychics are often haunted by madness, murder and suicide. It is best to think of these abilities as a door in the mind. A human can choose to open this door, and peer beyond —but in doing so, they are exposed. And often, once opened, the door will not shut.

Opening your mind to external (sometimes *conscious*) unnatural entities in a search for knowledge is the equivalent of switching on a light in a pitch black room filled with slavering monsters. Each use opens the possibility of discovery by some outside force.

Possible side-effects include:

- **POSSESSION:** Upon activation of the power, the Agent blacks out and wakes hours later with no memory of the intervening time (1/1D4 SAN). Something from outside entered and controlled them, perhaps to terrible ends.
- **DETECTION:** Upon activation of the power, the Agent is seen, and sees an unnatural creature from beyond in their mind. Of course, the vision of this horror inflicts SAN on the Agent (and only the Agent).
- **HARASSMENT:** External forces act upon the Agent's life in mundane yet distracting ways. Objects shift slightly, odd noises can be heard at all hours, electronics fail (0/1 SAN). This effect may grow over time to more dramatic such as Detection, Possession or Visions.
- **VISIONS:** Upon activation of the power, the Agent is swept away into internal vistas. They see places, times, *things* that are usually beyond human conception. SAN

losses vary from 0/1 SAN (for a brief view of the ancient city of Irem) to 1D10/1D100 (for a tiny glimpse of the collapse of R'lyeh and the entombment of Cthulhu itself).