

The Apotheosis Saga

Episode Eight: **Many Friends**

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Introduction:

1. SND: DRUM INTO THEME UNDER ANNC.

2. ANNC: Bill Wright Jr., a simulations programmer suspiciously transformed into a Hazard Class deity, had defused all but one of Reality Law's lethal threats to his family. The last assassin was making his move. Bill threw himself between the attacker and his mother.

3. SND: IRIS SCREAMS.

4. ANNC: The shot was fired

5. SND: SHOT.

6. ANNC: The bullet misses Bill, and strikes his mother in the skull, he watches as her brains explode out the back of her head.

Scene 1:

7. WWII: (SHOUTING) Mom! No! I'm sorry...
8. KATYA: Bill! You were dreaming! You are awake now, and your mother is safe-you saved her. The threat is over.
9. WWII: Katya? Where am I? What's happened?
10. KATYA: Slow down. It's early morning. You're in a hospital. Bill, you were exhausted. Benny brought you in-
11. WWII: Benny! He's the one who tried to kill my family-why did he-
12. KATYA: He knew you weren't the killer by then! There were two fresh murders since you'd been in your house, watched continuously! But before that, when he set the assassins on your family, he was convinced it was you. He was doing what he had to. It was his job.
13. WWII: Was it his job to like it?
14. KATYA: Shhh. Relax. Rest. You are still injured. Much changed while you were out. Ahriman is-
15. WWII: What do you mean, 'while I was out?'
16. KATYA: Bill, you've been unconscious for two weeks.
17. WWII: Two weeks. And Nyarlathotep?
18. KATYA: You'll have to talk to Detective Benny. He has the latest-
19. WWII: Have more gods been murdered?
20. KATYA: As of yesterday, eleven gods are dead.
21. WWII: What about the -

22. KATYA: There's more-wait. Please.
23. WWII: I'm sorry, it's just-
24. KATYA: I understand. I will try to tell you everything I know as quickly as I can. When you were confined in your house waiting for your trial I was working on decoding a piece of evidence that would likely have proven your innocence. It was a recording of Upawat's murder. Ahriman threatened to expose my business to blackmail me into destroying, or at the least, suppressing that recording. He's up to something, and wants you out of the way.
25. WWII: Ahriman. I'm an idiot! Of course he did. Bastard. He baited me into releasing Nyarlathotep. He was-
26. KATYA: You released it?
27. WWII: I'm almost sure of it. Ahriman must have figured out that my power wasn't restricted to or by worshippers, so I could go back in time, before people were around, and release that thing. Anyway, he convinced me that Nyarlathotep was some sort of original sage who would help me understand my power. I went back, talked to it, decided it was nuts and left. It must have followed me back. Likely Ahriman would have done it himself if he could have. And the first place I went was Upawat's! I should have put this together sooner-I wasn't

thinking straight-as soon as my family was threatened... Well, you saw me.

28. KATYA: There is no fault in that. Some things overwhelm. I understand, believe me. I lost my family when I was young, and was -- am still -- very hurt.

29. WWII: What happened?

30. KATYA: (SAD CHUCKLE) Hereditary encumbrance. My parents made a deal with the Yaga. For ten years of service they would have a rich farm and a long life together. Well, I was born while they worked the Yaga's strange labors. When I was about six, my parents' ten years were done. The Yaga put them back on their farm, but kept me. "Not covered in the contract," she said. I was young, but old enough to understand I'd never see my parents again. When I was about 11, my parents somehow returned. They explained how, but I've long since forgotten. I do remember that my mother, through her tears, said that they had done nothing but look for a way back to me for five years. She wanted very much for me to understand and believe that. Anyway, we almost escaped, but Yaga caught us. The next day I was sold. I never saw or heard from my parents again.

31. WWII: You've looked for them.

32. KATYA: Everywhere. They are nowhere on earth. I suspect they died in some deity's service -- as I would have except that I was able

to blackmail my owner for my freedom. The Law refuses to help, and the Yaga is unfindable.

33. WWII: Wait-she sold you? You were a slave? There's slavery here?

34. KATYA: Slavery is everywhere, my dear. Here it's voluntary or well-hidden, with the authorities carefully elsewhere. It is a trial to learn anything.

35. WWII: But there must be specialists in uncovering hidden.

36. KATYA: Yes.

37. WWII: You!

38. KATYA: Yes.

39. WWII: That's why you-that's your whole-and Ahriman is threatening to expose you.

40. KATYA: Yes. I have worked most of my free life compiling evidence. When I release it, Reality Law will have no sham of ignorance to hide behind. Many deities' slave operations will collapse. But to be maximally effective, I must release as much information as possible all at once to prevent a cover-up, not to mention my assassination. I'm preparing to deliver my information now, but am not yet ready.

41. WWII: But Ahriman is threatening to expose you.

42. KATYA: The risk was the law probing and stopping me before I could release my knowledge. But, Ahriman has no idea what I seek or have. He only knows that I have some illegal resources. And

now that the case has been dropped and the Law wants your help, Ahriman's threats are as dangerous as four pounds of oatmeal. The horrible thing is that Ahriman got his wish. You were distracted and tied up while Nyarlathotep was allowed to grow stronger.

43. WWII: We'll take care of that. Listen, Katya, I don't know how to thank you for everything. Without your help, I couldn't have saved my mom and brother. I'm sorry you got dragged into this mess... but thank you for the risks you've taken. I owe you.
44. KATYA: Bill, if I was dragged into this mess, as you say, it was by my heart, and not against my will. You don't owe me anything. I enjoy helping people. I enjoy helping you. Bill, I've been eager to ask-when you came to me for help, you hastily mentioned a level above this one. There isn't supposed to be a level above this one, but I know you've found it. Tell me about it?
45. WWII: Pretty boring, really. Empty except for some funky fog and a TV. Some sort of quiz show on, trying to distract me. (RISING FROM BED) Well, I think two weeks is rest enough. I'm going to go see what the Law wants from me.
46. KATYA: And I have many things to attend to. Call me when you know more, or I'll speak to you when I have results.
47. WWII: Yes. Katya, about that kiss?
48. KATYA: (LAUGHS, STEPS UP, KISSES HIM) Now go.

49. _____ *SND: KATYA LEAVES.*

50. WWII: Wow, it worked.

Scene Two

51. SND: AMBIANCE: BENNY'S OFFICE. BENNY MELVIN AND

WWII LAUGHTER FADES IN.

52. BENNY: Oh yeah, I gotta confess. Me and the boys was a little nervous when we found out that-

53. MELVIN: You were a hazard class!

54. BENNY: No. Shut up, Melvin. When we found out you had vanished and stopped the assassins. We didn't think we'd have a chance to explain our mistake before you-

55. MELVIN: Ripped our spines our through our chests and used them to bludgeon us to quivering pulps!

56. BENNY: No. Shut up, Melvin. Before you acted on your anger.

57. MELVIN: Quiver, quiver, pulp, pulp.

58. BENNY: We didn't have any time to tell you-or even call off the assassins. As soon as we discovered the second murder, things went nuts. For some reason Loki, Stone Monkey, and Coyote decided it was "Harass the Cops Week." We finally put a stop to that by giving the three of them front-row seats to the floor show at Priapus' place. But in the meantime, two more gods were murdered. So, you have to understand-we wanted to tell you and shut down the threat, but we had-

59. MELVIN: Our whole accounting floor filled with elephant guts!

60. BENNY: No -- I mean, yes, we did -- but that's not what I was going to--
oh, Shut up, Melvin.
61. MELVIN: Lots of guts.
62. BENNY: We had no way to get in touch with you, Bill.
63. MELVIN: Guts everywhere.
64. BENNY: You should've seen this place when the alarm went off. It was
crazy.
65. MELVIN: Have you ever smelled guts? Nauseating!
66. BENNY: So tell me, how did you stop all seven messages from getting
through?
67. MELVIN: Not to mention walking through guts.
68. WWII: I didn't stop any of them.
69. BENNY: But-
70. WWII: I altered them.
71. BENNY: Altered? What do you mean?
72. WWII: I switched the assassin's instructions from 'murder' to
'suicide'. Since they thought the notes were coming directly
from their gods, they obeyed.
73. BENNY: Oooh. The deities we got the assassins from will be upset
when they figure out they lost some faithful.
74. WWII: Sorry to hear that, Benny.
75. BENNY: Yeah. Anyway, Upawat was only the first. Apex has all but shut
down because they're so damn freaked out about

- Nyarlahotep. Eleven gods in two weeks. This is something that--
76. MELVIN: Would make big big headlines if it were down on earth! "Will You be Next?" "Stalker at Large!" "Elephant Guts Galore!"
77. BENNY: No. Shut up, Melvin. Nothing like this has ever happened before, Mister Wright.
78. MELVIN: "Police Can't Stop Killer!"
79. BENNY: I mean, sure, every now and then somegody dukes it out, or even entire pantheons have feuds, but there's never any mystery about whodunit.
80. WWII: I thought Nyarlahotep was doing it.
81. BENNY: That's the thing-no one has seen it-or at least recognized it. The murders fit the texts we have on it-but they are all ancient. To be honest, Mister Wright, most deities believed Nyarlahotep was a-
82. MELVIN: Pumpkin!
83. BENNY: Myth.
84. WWII: I may be able to supply a recording of him killing Upawat. I'll call you when it gets cleaned up. It could help.
85. BENNY: Indeed it might. But we know this-shortly after our killer takes out a deity, all of that god's worshippers go crazy, tearing each other and themselves apart. Until they're all
86. MELVIN: Really really crazy and really really torn apart.

87. BENNY: No. Shut up, Melvin. Until they're all dead. It's like a cancer.
This is where we think you could come in.
88. MELVIN: Handy. Come in right handy. (LAUGHS)
89. BENNY: Shut up, Melvin. We want you to be on call when he -- it --
strikes again.
90. MELVIN: A handy man you'll be!
91. BENNY: We'll tell you the dead god's center of worship.
92. MELVIN: A right-hand god.
93. BENNY: So far he's killing minor deities with small worship areas, but
he's choosing larger ones with each murder.
94. MELVIN: To be perfectly blonest and hunt with you, Bill-mind if I call you
Bill?
95. WWII: Very much.
96. MELVIN: Right. To be dandid and cisdreet, Bill: We of the Law believe
that the entity behind these murders is bad.
97. BENNY: Shut up, Melvin.
98. WWII: Why me? Why don't you choose some other god with more
experience?
99. BENNY: We can't. Look, to start with, we need a-
100. MELVIN: W-4 form filled out, or else the IRS jumps on our asses.
101. BENNY: Melvin... We need a high-power god to deal with this psycho.
You're the only Hazard Class that we trust, and all the
Progenitor Classes are running scared. All of the other gods'

power on earth is limited to their territories: no worshippers in a particular time period, no power on Earth in that time period. You, apparently, are not affected by this law. It seems we need to take Nyarlathotep on earth, because we can't even detect it here.

102. WWII: Okay, I'll do it.
103. BENNY: What? Hang on, I haven't finished trying to convince you. I've got all this moral stuff to pile on you. Why are you agreeing so quickly?
104. WWII: I think I let Nyarlathotep loose.
105. BENNY: (BEAT) I'm listening.
106. MELVIN: That was rude.
107. BENNY: Shut up, Melvin. What do you mean, Mister Wright?
108. WWII: You know how new I am to all this. Ahriman fooled me into going back in time to where Nyarlathotep was.
109. MELVIN: (MOCKING BENNY) I'm listening.
110. WWII: When I returned, it must have followed be back somehow, and Ahriman must have known or suspected it would. He's up to something-
111. MELVIN: Hey, lay off Ahriman. He's a good tipper!
112. BENNY / WWII: Shut up, Melvin.
113. BENNY: Ahriman. It figures. So you actually talked to Nyarlathotep?

114. WWII: Well, I can't call it a real meeting of the minds, but yeah, I spoke with it.
115. BENNY: What did it look like?
116. WWII: I can't tell you, it was entirely dark. It just had this crude and ugly sort of male, voice-or voices, rather.
117. MELVIN: I bet it was hairy-and fat-did it smell? What did it smell like? Pretty bad, right?
118. BENNY: Goodbye, Melvin.

119. SND: SHOTGUN COCKING, FIRING, MELVIN HITS FLOOR, SHOTGUN COCKS AND FIRES AND COCKS AGAIN.

120. WWII: Hm. Don't you think you're a bit hard on your partners?
121. BENNY: Have you noticed the caliber of rookie they send me, Mister Wright? I'm convinced the brass are trying to break me, but I won't crack that easy. I buy my shotgun shells wholesale.
122. WWII: Say, the little fellow was right about the smell. Whew!
123. BENNY: Yeah. Maybe I was too rough with him.
124. WWII: No, no, I think you did the right thing.
125. BENNY: I mean, it's not like he can learn to be any different now.
126. WWII: He wouldn't have learned.
127. SND: WWII GETS UP TO GO. SQUISHY FOOTSTEP.
128. WWII: Ew. Well, consider me on call. I've got to get home.
129. BENNY: Sure thing. Say hi to-oh, that reminds me, something's up with Frido. Here's the shelter's address-they said

130. SND: PAPER PASSED.

131. BENNY: they would only talk to his owner.

132. WWII: Hm. What's the little rascal got himself into, I wonder? See you,
Benny.

133. SND: WWII'S FOOTSTEPS. DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS LEAVE,
OFFICE AMBIANCE FADES.

Scene Three

134. SND: CLINIC AMBIANCE

135. VET: (TO PHONE). They're young, you've got to feed them a couple of quarts of diamonds with each meal. (PAUSE) Yes, it's very expensive, but their tentacles will not grow to full length on plain steak.

136. SND: DOOR OPENS

137. VET: You're welcome. Bye.

138. SND: PHONE ON CRADLE

139. VET: May I help you?

140. WWII: I'm looking for my electrified dog. I'm Bill Wright.

141. VET: Oh. Yes. Please wait in the room down at the end of the hall.

142. SND: SHUFFLING FEET

143. WWII: Down this-

144. VET: Yes, the last door on your left, please.

145. SND: WWII WALKING DOWN HALL, OPENING DOOR, CLOSING DOOR. WAITING ROOM AMBIANCE.

146. WWII: Well, this is an odd side-trip. What's going-

147. SND: KALI'S ENTRANCE 'CHING!' CREAKING LEATHER.

148. WWII: Kali! You surprised me, I'm waiting for-

149. KALI: Me. Will, I'm glad to see you are feeling better -but I have two pieces of bad news. One, Frido is dead.

150. WWII: (BEAT, THEN ACTING CHEERFUL) Really? Well. He was always a nuisance. Couldn't just feed him, no.. had to plug him in and feed him.
151. KALI: You're not fooling me, Will, and I doubt you're fooling yourself, but I'll let it be. The second thing is that it seems Ahriman did it. He nearly kicked Frido's head all the way around. I doubt it was an accident.
152. WWII: Kali. I don't know how to react any more, but I'm not surprised. Ahriman has it in for me.
153. KALI: It's not just you, Will. It's many deities. even me.
154. WWII: You seemed chummy enough when we met.
155. KALI: That was just a setup. He was blackmailing me to keep you occupied while he did something. I'm truly sorry, Will.
156. WWII: How was Ahriman blackmailing you?
157. KALI: I'm an animal lover.
158. WWII: I got that feeling.
159. KALI: Ahriman spotted me with a kitten one day. It would be bad enough if that got out, but if my pantheon learned that I ran an animal clinic and shelter, I would be impeached. The clinic would undoubtedly collapse. And we help a lot of animals...
160. WWII: So what was Ahriman doing while you kept me busy?
161. KALI: I don't know
162. WWII: How can I believe you?

163. KALI: I knew this would come up. Listen close, Will. Ahriman had me and I didn't know you from a Persian rug, so it was of little consequence to my conscience. When we had some time to spend together and you helped me concerning Loki, you mended me and were genuine, I'd decided you weren't like most of us Hazard Classes, and I decided I liked you. I also decided I owed you one. I wasn't going to help you fight your battles, but I wasn't going to get in your way, either. Ahriman only needed you distracted for a short period, and I'd done that. But when I found out about Frido, things changed. He did that to hurt both of us. He was very open about it, else he wouldn't have been seen at all. He knew I'd find out about it, and I'm sure that tickled him. In short, yes, you can trust me. If I find Ahriman first, I'll save some of him for you, love. I only ask for the same consideration. Deal?
164. WWII: Deal.
165. KALI: I really am sorry. And you must know that there was nothing I could do for little Frido. There was nothing anyone could do.
166. WWII: I believe you. But why is it that, on the Level of the Gods, no one could save a little electrified dog.
167. KALI: When a god of Ahriman's magnitude causes death, it's permanent.

168. WWII: I didn't know that. But it doesn't help me to know it either. I'm still confused, and very pissed off.
169. KALI: Yes.
170. WWII: (BEAT) Well. Thanks for not saying anything irritating. I'm headed home. I'm likely going to be headed to earth as soon as Benny gets a target for me, to see what can be done about Nyarlathotep. Can you do me a favor and check up on Katya Solvedenia? She is in Ahriman's path as well.
171. KALI: And yours, from what I see. but, yes. It may be a way to find Ahriman, to be near her.
172. WWII: If you need to get in touch, Detective Benny will know where I'm at when I go. Thanks, Kali.
173. KALI: I'm something in your debt, Will. No need to thank me.
174. WWII: Nope. I don't like it that way. Just check in on Katya and buy me a beer when this is all over. You don't owe me anything, although. considering your strength and number of arms, I could entertain the idea of a massage some time.
175. KALI: Entertainment isn't what it would be, lover, but you'd certainly like it. Good luck.

Scene Four

176. NARR: The call was to Haiti in 1647. But before I ended up there, I skipped off to earth, six months in the past. I stopped by my old office and altered the jobs my worshippers and one-time coworkers Harry and Mo were working on. I was careful to avoid running into myself in the past. In all the movies I'd seen, that was usually a bad thing. So, I set Harry the Healthy onto a database for the medical association that focused on South American diseases, specifically ones that affected sanity, since that's where Nyarlathotep seemed to strike. For Mo, I had to be careful since he always lost himself in his work and sort of became his project. So I set him to programming a CD-ROM about Haitian culture and wildlife. I figured that would be safe enough. Then I shifted back and yanked them from time six months downstream.

177. MO: (IN BACKGROUND) Bill, your immensitude!

178. HARRY: (IN BACKGROUND) I writhe in mystic bliss!

179. NARR: Then I shielded them from shock and blew back to Haiti, 1647 with Harry and Mo in tow.

180. SND: *KERBLAM. AMBIANCE: PIRATE FREEPORT.*

181. WWII: My faithful, we are in Haiti, year 1647. Mo, what is the religion?

182. MO: Sixteen forty-seven? Funny you should ask! I've just completed a CD ROM project about this very place and time-period! Well,

the few surviving Arawak Indians practice their naturalistic rituals, while the slave population have a form of voodoo. It appears we're on the portion of the island controlled by French privateers, who, of course, worship the sea, free enterprise, and "L'amour, toujours l'amour!"

183. WWII: Harry!
184. HARRY: Radiant one?
185. WWII: Madness. What causes it, locally?
186. HARRY: Well, there are several nasty parasites of the rotospora family commonly found in the water, and considering the unconscionably low level of hygiene and nutrition prevailing, I'm shocked this isn't a nation of lip-flipping, hiccuping Napoleons! (LAUGHS)
187. MO: At this point in his life, Napoleon has not yet been born.
188. HARRY: That explains it nicely.
189. WWII: Well, our object here is to find some focus of insanity which will probably be tied to the main local religion.
190. HARRY: Nary a problem, o Great Bill. I shall locate your insanity with but a small number of inquiries. Pardon me, sir? Mr. Pirate?
191. PIRATE: Oui?
192. HARRY: Have you noticed any concentrations of insanity in the local area, good pirate?
193. PIRATE: Je ne comprends pas. Est-ce que tu parles Francais?

194. HARRY: What? I'm sure I can't make it much clearer. (UNDER NARR, SPEAKING LOUDLY, SLOWLY AND CLEARLY:) I said, Have you noticed any concentrations of.
195. NARR: I fixed our brains so we could understand each other.
196. HARRY: .insanity in the local area, good pirate?
197. PIRATE: (LOW CLASS FRENCH ACCENT) Why do you ask?
198. HARRY: Well. There. See, he understands. Bill, why do I ask?
199. WWII: We're trying to capture an inhuman monster who's intending to destroy all intelligence in history and future. When he attacks a person, they eventually go mad as he consumes their soul.
200. PIRATE: Ah. Well, we wish you luck, but we can not help. As you can see, my friends and I are perfectly sane.
201. MO: Your friends?
202. PIRATE: I HAVE MANY FRIENDS!
203. SND: SMALL GLASS OBJECT CRACKING, GEARS MESHING POORLY, ENGINE GRINDING DOWN, SPRING BREAKING, ETC. MO/HARRY/WWII TAKE ONE GIANT STEP BACK AS THEY ALL SAY, IN UNISON, "OOOOOO KAY". PIRATE GROWS IMMEDIATELY QUIETER AS HE'S IN THE DISTANCE. MICROPHONE PERSPECTIVE STAYS WITH THE HEROES.
204. PIRATE: Thirty or forty are stacked in my root cellar alone! None of THEM call me crazy any more!

205. SND: MORE GEARS WEAKING, SPRINGS ETC., BUT FARTHER

OFF WITH PIRATE. MO/HARRY/WWII SAY, "UH-HUNH." AND

TAKE ANOTHER STOP BACK.

206. PIRATE: (VERY FAR OFF) Where are you going?

207. SND: 3 RUNNING FOOTSTEPS AS PIRATE GETS CLOSE

AGAIN. A CARTOONISH 'SPROING' AS HE STOPS IN FRONT

OF THE BOYS.

208. PIRATE: We can work it out. Besides! I want oh so very much to
introduce you to my saber!

209. SND: DRAWING SABRE OUT OF SCABBARD. FOLLOWING

LINES OVERLAP:

210. WWII: Sharp.

211. MO: Hmm.

212. HARRY: Shiny.

213. WWII: Long.

214. HARRY: Very nice, indeed.

215. MO: Yep. I must agree. Absolutely top notch.

216. PIRATE: His name is Gustav.

217. WWII: Of course it is.

218. HARRY: How do you do, Gustav?

219. MO: That's, uh, very fitting!

220. WWII: Gustav's a good name for a saber.

221. SND: MARTIAL ARTS THWIP THWIP

222. PIRATE: Gustav wants some SUGAR!

223. WWII/MO/HAR: (ALA TWIKI) B-D-B-D-B-D O-KAY, Buck!

224. SND: MO/HARRY/WWII HAUL BUTT, FOOTSTEPS AND CHASE
SCENE.

225. HARRY: (WINDED, RUNNING) Say, Bill?

226. WWII: (WINDED, RUNNING) Yes, Harry?

227. HARRY: Perhaps I'm out of line, but you are a god, right?

228. WWII: You're right!

229. SND: THE RUNNING STOPS.

230. NARR: I transformed le nutcase into a pig.

231. SND: NUTCASE TRANSFORMED INTO PIG

232. NARR: And hog-tied him.

233. SND: NUTCASE PIG BEING HOGTIED

234. MO: A pig?

235. WWII: Well, yeah. French. Truffles. Pig. First thing that came to mind,
Mo.

236. MO: Uh, yeah. Me too. Truffles.

237. WWII: Let's get him off the street so we can ask him some questions.

238. HARRY: Over there, in that old shack.

239. WWII: Looks good.

240. SND: HAULING PIG INTO SHACK, PIG OBJECTS.

241. NARR: I created a few chairs, returned our captive to human form.

242. SND: POOF, HITTING CHAIR ETC.

243. PIRATE: Ouch! That stings!
244. NARR: Mo remained standing, Harry and I sat down, facing the hog-tied pirate.
245. PIRATE: Friends don't hog-tie friends. However. It was an interesting perspective-in a pig, everything smells better. Like, truffles.
246. HARRY: Well, my crude, smelly friend, I have just the thing to make you feel all better.
247. SND: *PREPARING OF INJECTION, STUCK IN ARM, PIRATE SCREAMS, THRASHES ABOUT, HARRY IS WORRIED, THE CHAIR FALLS WITH PIRATE IN IT, HITS FLOOR, ALL IS STILL.*
248. WWII: What was it?! You've killed him!
249. HARRY: No! I mean, I don't think. Bill, it's not even a drug! It's a vitamin! Niacin! It's been shown to be effective in temporarily countering schizophrenia, but it's not supposed to be lethal! Oh, no.
(BEGINS WAILING ABOUT THE HYPPOCRATIC OATH AND RESPONSIBILITY TO HEAL, NOT HURT ETC.)
250. MO: Well, maybe you had one of them fatal air bubble thingies in the syringe and you stuck it into his vein and all.
251. HARRY: (WAILS)
252. WWII: Mo. You're not helping. Go see if he's breathing.
253. MO: Well, allrighty, but he looks pretty dead to me.
254. HARRY: (WAILS MORE)

255. MO: Nope. Doornail. No! No no! Wait, he's.
256. HARRY: Yes! YES!?
257. MO: Naw, I was just joshing ya. He's definitely dead.
258. HARRY: (WAILS HOPELESSLY)
259. WWII: Okay, guys. Calm down. We need to regroup.
260. NYOTEP: (MUMBLES FRENCH ACCENT IS GONE) Wright. I will be was now am your Yoda.
261. NARR: I began examining the Pirate's body with energy, in the same way I'd scanned Kali, and started a line of patter to keep the thing busy.
262. WWII: Nyarlathotep. The only thing I can learn from you is how to be a vampiric whacked-out parasitical butt-munch from before the dawn of time. That's not my bag.
263. MO: One for Bill.
264. HARRY: Oh, he's alive, oh, you lovely French pirate, if you weren't hog-tied I'd hug you!
265. WWII: And he'd probably eat you, Harry. The pirate is gone, Nyarlathotep is using his body.
266. HARRY: So I did kill him (WAILS)
267. MO: Shut up, Harry.
268. NYOTEP: Noisy creatures, these. Would were they sentient, I will would consume them.

269. WWII: Hey, you're not sounding like such an idiot when you speak any more, Nyo. What'd you do, eat Dr. Seuss?
270. NYOTEP: I will not did not understand.
271. WWII: I will not, did not, Sam I Am.
272. MO & HA: (BUST UP LAUGHING)
273. NYOTEP: I have will have sounded different because I (PAUSE) did consume men and gods so I did will understand your language. Eat did will know. More and more. I (PAUSE) do absorb the minds quickly.
274. MO & HA: (STOP LAUGHING)
275. WWII: So, you're getting smarter.
276. NYOTEP: No. When I did/will eat, I (PAUSE) have absorb all of the soul's experience. It will have polluted my self with memory and emotion which I then eat. Because you will understand me does/will not mean I will be/am more intelligent. It (PAUSE) will mean that I am will be learning your language.
277. WWII: So why aren't you taking me over now? How do you do it?
278. NYOTEP: You did not stop me. Your questions will be of little use. I will will consume you on the level above. I did consume by talking. That was how I will gain out. When myself and yours do speak, I will will infect your self. As I did have infected your worshippers.

279. NARR: I glanced over at Mo and Harry, who had been silent. They were smiling at Nyarlathotep and had the same nutty glint the French pirate had before he went chasing us around the woods. I quickly put them to sleep and shifted them to my house on the level above.

280. SND: *TURBO BILL DOOR*

281. NARR: It will be has been no matter.

282. WWII: It matters to me, freak. What happens if I kill all the people you've infected while you're down here on Earth?

283. NARR: They are will be dead. I will be (PAUSE) am hungry. I do not stay to talk. Many more meals will must be consumed.

284. SND: *PIRATE WITH ACCENT IS BACK, WE HEAR HIM
BREAKING ROPES AND CHAINS, RUNNING OUT OF HUT
LAUGHING AND SINGING ABOUT FLOWERS, FRIENDSHIP
AND SHARPENED STEEL.*

285. NARR: While examining Nyarlathotep, I'd found the same sort of energy as coursed through Kali, but instead of being iridescent, it was dark and stinking. Instead of being contained and structured in the body, it writhed and stretched in murky spokes outward from the pirate's body. I traced one of those spokes and found only another body of the dense, oily goo, with its own spokes. As he ran off, I probed the pirate again. While he was no longer totally black, there were small stringy

tendons of Nyarlathotep webbed inside his body, knotted in his brain. I returned to my house.

Scene Five

286. SND: AMBIANCE: BILL'S HOUSE, BCR, MO AND HARRY

SNORING.

287. NARR: I checked Harry and Mo out quickly, and sure enough, there were tendrils of Nyarlathotep's madness lacing their brains and coiling down their spines. Somehow, that really hacked me off. I took a moment for thought.

288. WWII: If I just mentally grab that stuff and yank, I'll bet it turns out gruesome and probably fatal. Need a new approach.

289. NARR: I took a more careful inspection. It'd already spread further. A strand reached out from each of my worshippers toward the other. The strand touched, merged, and the stinking goo became suddenly much darker. I reached out and froze it with some cold energy and held it motionless.

290. SND: SNORING STOPS.

291. NARR: It didn't take long before Mo and Harry's faces turned purple. I created an energy hammer with the word 'madnesstacker' stenciled on the handle. Then I created some nails with spiritual and energetic barbs. I nailed that stuff into place as well as I could, then transferred my two friends instantly to the guest room.

292. SND: ORGANIC TEARING MIXED WITH BILL'S TRAVEL

SOUND.

293. NARR: Nyarlathotep's madness hung in the air for a moment, then

294. SND: 'SCHPLOT! SCHLORP-SCHLORP-SCHLORP'

CONTINUING UNDER.

295. NARR: Fell to the floor and began glurping horribly towards me.

296. WWII: Rude!

297. NARR: I allowed my hammer and nails to disappear and created a bottle. I reached down and shoved the goo in.

298. SND: CORK 'POIT!' QUIET 'BLOOP, BLOOP.' GLASS BREAKING,

'SCHLORP-SCHLORP-SCHLORP'

299. NARR: I put it in a really strong bottle.

300. SND: 'POIT.' 'TINK TINK TINK. GRR. TINKTINKTINK. GRR.'

301. NARR: I created a fireplace and heavy, solid marble mantelpiece, onto which I put the bottle.

302. WWII: And stay there.

303. NARR: I let Mo and Harry wake up, and went over to talk to them.

304. SND: DOOR OPEN.

305. MO: Bill! How'd we get here? Last thing I remember, we. No, that's the last thing I don't remember. Uh.

306. HARRY: I feel sick. Sick, malnourished, and misunderstood.

307. WWII: Well, at least you two are back to normal. Nyarlathotep almost got you guys, but you seem OK now.

308. HARRY: Did you get what you were looking for?

309. WWII: I don't know, but I sure got something. I'll have to study it when I get a moment, see if I can learn anything. Hey, thanks for the help, guys.
310. MO: It was our duty, Magnificent One.
311. HARRY: It can't even begin to repay you for fixing my bunions.
312. WWII: Great. See you later, guys.
313. NARR: I returned them to Earth.
314. SND: RETURNING TO EARTH.
315. NARR: I decided to lie down and catch some sleep before my next move.

Scene Six

316. SND: BILL: INHALE AND EXHALE. FADES OUT. BEAT BEAT TV

POPS ON.

317. GOD1: (FROM TV).see anything. I was outside of Priapus's Night Club and she was next to me and then she just started. well, I mean, she turned inside out. No, not like-oh, I can't explain. It was horrifying.

318. NEWSGOD: Aede's... mutilation brings the total of Nyarlathotep's killings to an appalling twenty-three. Twenty-three deities slain and their worshippers mad or dead. Unfortunately, we have no reason to believe this tragic stalking will come to an end. The Reality Police and our finest gods, goddesses and lesser beings have teamed up and given their best to no good end. The beast continues to hunt at random, unhindered by our efforts. Officials know little, but they're sharing it with us. Nyarlathotep attacks invisibly, apparently randomly and as far as we know, irrevocably. I wish there was more we here at Infinity News could tell you, good city. But there is nothing.

319. SND: NEWS THEME.

320. WWII: (WAKING UP) Oh, man. I didn't want a TV before, and I certainly don't want one that comes on by itself now.

321. SND: GETTING OUT OF BED SHUFFLING TOWARDS

TELEVISION.

322. NARR: I reached to shut the television off. As my hand made contact with the set.
323. MURPHY: (THROUGH TV) Bill, don't.
324. WWII: Perfect. It turns itself on and it talks to me.
325. MURPHY: We need to talk, now. Come up.
326. WWII: I am up.
327. MURPHY: No, come up.
328. NARR: I started recognizing the face of the old man. It was he who had been standing next to the large television set on the Level Above the Level of the Gods the last time I was there.
329. WWII: Who are you?
330. MURPHY: Come up.
331. _____ SND: TV GOES TO STATIC.
332. WWII: Damnit!
333. NARR: In anger I shifted up a level. In anger I had forgotten that the energy shift between levels produces massive heat differences.
334. _____ SND: BILL IN FROZEN AGONY.
335. WWII: Ouch.
336. NARR: I raised my internal heat level and looked around for the TV and the old man.
337. MURPHY: Bill.
338. WWII: Don't do that! What is so important?

339. MURPHY: One question at a time. You asked who I was. You should have asked who we are.
340. NARR: He spread his hands to include the large television he was standing next to.
341. MURPHY: My friend is the deity television, and I am Murphy.
342. WWII: The deity television? Well, I guess that makes sense, but why isn't he down a level, roaming around with the other gods?
343. MURPHY: So many worshipped television so quickly that his godhood was generated in unusually short time. This forced him out of the normal realm occupied by the gods into an exterior orbit. Something like the way electrons move around the nucleus of an atom on different shells. At this level, we have little power over the material and mortal world, somewhat more on the Level of the Gods.
344. WWII: Well, that explains him, but what about you? Radio?
345. MURPHY: No. I am Murphy, of Murphy's Law. Which, in its lowest common form, is 'anything that can go wrong, will.' The secret meaning of this is the core of my doctrine of foolproof design. Television and I are the authors of your power. We used our combined strength to change you on Earth-through the Level of the Gods. We had to pick someone in your time period to have the most success. Both Television and I have strong followings where you're from, which let us reach you.

346. WWII: Maybe I didn't want to be reached. I hope you have an extraordinary reason, one that reeks of genius-in fact, it had better be the Grand Poohbah of Reasons.
347. TV: Well, I sense tension.
348. MURPHY: We had the best possible reason, Bill. You are to save us all from Nyarlathotep.
349. WWII: Good work! I hope you kept the receipt, you morons. I haven't done a lick of stopping Nyarlathotep - if you missed it - I let it out! I haven't done a thing right since I became a god!
350. TV: Really.
351. MURPHY: Our plan included Nyarlathotep's premature release.
352. WWII: PLAN? PLAN!? You had a plan and you didn't tell me anything?
353. TV: And spoil the surprise?
354. MURPHY: We couldn't tell you, Bill. We needed to observe you, to see how you adapted to apotheosis. We left the choices up to you, and now present you with the missing information to help you do the right thing.
355. WWII: Wait, wait, wait. You said you wanted Nyarlathotep to be released prematurely? If you know so much about what it is, then why would you want it free-ever?
356. TV: You're not in on the whole picture. Nope.
357. MURPHY: Nyarlathotep is cyclical. He eats and the minds and souls of all intelligent life in a short period of time and then hibernates for

millennia, digesting each thought and memory. When he has done so, his ravenous hunger wakes him and he crashes into our system again. Awakened early, he is not as hungry. His motivation is weaker, which makes him easier to spot, hold, and destroy.

358. WWII: How do you know all this?
359. MURPHY: This level is the remainder of the previous cycle's levels. There were some damaged records which proved to contain a large amount of information. Recordings of the end-times left by the last survivors. The level of their gods was destroyed as Nyarlathotep devoured and worshippers lost faith. All sentience gone, even the beasts went mad, killing each other. This dingy semi-space is all that survived.
360. TV: Cool, huh?
361. WWII: So you knew I'd release Nyarlathotep?
362. MURPHY: No. We gave you power. We chose someone we had reason to believe would be sympathetic and understand the significance of what we are doing. We knew that Ahriman was quietly seeking a way to free Nyarlathotep, and we thought the chaos of your insertion into the playing-fields of the gods would inspire him.
363. TV: We risked, we shot, we scored! You can too, for only nineteen ninety five!

364. MURPHY: You need to stop Nyarlathotep.
365. WWII: What if I say no? What if I just want to crawl back into my old, comfy, non-totipotent life and stay there?
366. MURPHY: Don't forget Nyarlathotep is loose. You would live a few years and be consumed like the rest. We understand if you make that decision, Bill.
367. TV: Yeah we do.
368. MURPHY: You asked for none of this.
369. TV: Me, for one, I'd rather take the chance than be wiped out for sure. Rock the vote, man.
370. WWII: How would I stop it?
371. MURPHY: We don't know. We're not sure he can be stopped.
372. WWII: What?
373. MURPHY: Based on our readings, we think we have a better chance while he is disoriented and not as aggressive. Most cultures never know he's coming until it is too late. We may have opportunity if we act fast. Should Nyarlathotep consume a deity of Hazard or Progenitor Class, with many worshippers, there would be no hope. The power we gave you is defined by your imagination, which is the main reason we chose you. As a computer simulations programmer, you have trained your creative ability to grasp and modify subsets of reality. Now, if you can imagine it clearly and precisely, you can do almost

anything. Before you ask, no. You cannot just imagine Nyarlathotep gone or in chains. He is too massive to fall to such cheap tricks. You must think of something that will destroy or contain him without directly attacking him yourself. That is the bulk of what we have learned. You have no time to waste, Bill.

374. WWII: Okay. How will-oh, yeah. The TV. Okay. Bye.

375. _____ SND: BILL LEAVES.

376. TV: My Murphysque buddy, for the first time... I have hope... NOT!

Scene Seven

377. SND: *BILL'S HOUSE.*

378. AHRIMAN: William. Welcome home.

379. WWII: Ahriman. You're very lucky I'm busy right this minute. I've got several scores to settle with you.

380. AHRIMAN: Oooh. Why wait?

381. SND: *WUBBA WUBBLE.*

382. AHRIMAN: There. Now you can't leave. You're welcome to try, if you doubt me.

383. WWII: I don't doubt you Ahriman, I loathe you.

384. SND: *WUBBADOODLE.*

385. WWII: There. Now you can't leave, either.

386. SND: *DRUM THEME CLOSER*

387.

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