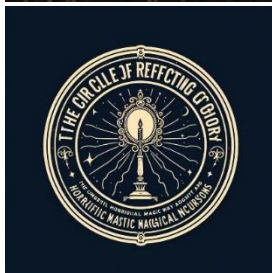


The Circle of Reflecting Glory 006



Being the continuing chronicles of the CRG, as written by Helen Drake, Witch!

For Solo Play – I’m using “Mythic GM Emulator v2” and “The Solo Society” (a small Vaesen Supplement with random tables of Period Horror/Investigation). For this Assignment, I’m playtesting a scenario of my own design called “THEY COME OUT AT NIGHT”

The Circle of Reflecting Glory, its Chapter House in Briar Green, close to the Mara Winfield Botanical Conservatory and my Solo PC – Helen Drake, are described in the first issue of these adventures...



Assignment One “The Predator”

https://aigm.igm4u.com/Circle_of_Reflecting_Glory_solo_001.pdf

https://aigm.igm4u.com/Circle_of_Reflecting_Glory_solo_002.pdf

https://aigm.igm4u.com/Circle_of_Reflecting_Glory_solo_003.pdf



Assignment Two “They Come Out At Night”

https://aigm.igm4u.com/Circle_of_Reflecting_Glory_solo_004.pdf

https://aigm.igm4u.com/Circle_of_Reflecting_Glory_solo_005.pdf

At the end of last issue...

- Helen had discovered...
 - the corpse of a cat had animated as a zombie and run off towards Regent’s Park Street!
 - the Otherworldly Moths are drawn to the streetlamps only in Regent’s Park Street
 - they were being trailed by a young, female OUP Detective (they spotted her and shook her off before leading her back to the Chapter House)
- Meanwhile in the Park...
 - a Park Attendant – Frank Atkins - had encountered the zombie cat and been injured, but had beaten it to “death”
 - PC Atilla Reece had arrived on scene and later brought an OUP Detective – DS Sophrinia Fable to investigate the “zombie” cat corpse.
 - DS Fable had seen Helen with a jar of Moths and a Carriage, had tailed them on-foot, but lost them.

AND NOW...

Assignment Two (Part Three)

Scene Seven – Monday in the Library

Before she and Ted left, Cornelia had told Helen “My Carriage (and Ted) will be staying off the streets for the next few days. You’re going to have to continue on your own with this assignment. You might want to change your...” waving a hand dismissively “.. look. We can’t have the O.U.P. snooping into Circle business. They mean well enough, destroying the things from Beyond and ensuring they don’t come to the attention of the public, but their aims and methods aren’t exactly in-line with ours, and they’re still Periphery and take a dim view of ... vigilante... groups like ours.”

My “Look!”, what the hell does she mean by my “Look!”.

I suppose it does make some sense. That OUP girl probably got a good look at me. I suppose I could wear a different hat and stuff my hair up into it. I might have a coat that isn’t black, or leather, around here somewhere.

“Continue on your own” she says. I’ve been on my own for the last three months!



Helen thawed herself out and got some sleep. It had been about 2am by the time she got back to the Chapter House. By lunchtime she was still muttering to the Moths in the jar but was at least ready to face the world again. The frost still lay over everything outside.

Time to hit the books. Stay in the warm a bit longer.

The Library has books on all manner of strange events and sightings and mad theories about the supernatural from all over the globe. Most of them were utter rubbish, but one bookcase could be slid aside to reveal the good books. Journals from other Circle members and even from other Circles. Let’s see what they say about “Shadows with Claws”, “Maggots and Moths” and “Bad Dreams”.

FOCUS with +1d for the Chapter House Library. If this was a game with GM and Players, I’d only know the red bits.

Stakes: Normal, Expectations: Find something that gives a clue. [maybe hints at “time of night” being significant]. Partial: as above but takes until after sunset. Fail: After Sunset, no info. Critical Success: a previous Circle had seen the zombification process while on a mission into The Beyond and have extra info. It occurs if the Moths emerge while still in a body.

Helen Drake FOCUS	
GILDED	3
Normal	5 1

Helen has 1d for Focus and will spend 1 Intuition Drive for a second dice. Partial Success, and “Consult Arcane Texts” is one of her Illumination Keys.

ILLUMINATION KEYS
Consult Arcane Texts - Y Chapter House
Collect Oddities - Y Maggots & Moths
Act Bizzare - Y handling the cat corpse and following a jar of Moths

When she finally slides back the bookcase to cover the real treasures, it is already dark outside. Gas Streetlamps have been lit by a lamp-lighter.

The writings suggest that the specific Time of night or level of darkness might be significant. The Cat rose as a Zombie almost exactly at nightfall. The Moths seemed active only after Nightfall too. And yet the original Dream had occurred a couple of hours before Dawn.

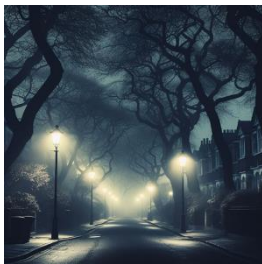
She was too late to be in Regent’s Park Street for sunset, but it might be worth taking a walk down there now anyway and then heading back there in the small hours to see if she could learn any more.

Mythic – Chaos Factor back up to 7 as the Timeline is advancing. Maggots to Moths has just occurred for the Black Cat so there is another zombie cat loose and there are loose Moths fluttering in the streetlamps. Overnight a dog has gone missing from a back garden if Helen had visited during the day she would have heard the owner calling for Bunny. During the hours before dawn, an old lady who lives alone in the Street is due to be killed and left under her garden bushes.

Scene Eight – Alone In The Street – Monday Night

The locker of Prudence Appleby, the Circle’s Doctor, had provided Helen with a very different coat. Blue and red with a high fur collar. Her straggly grey hair was now in a bun under a fur Cossack hat with earflaps. She was sure nobody (especially not that OUP girl if she happened to be staking out the Street) would recognise her.

She couldn’t do much to disguise the jar of moths, though! But at least it was covered in this hat box.



The white light of these fancy new Electric streetlamps was brighter and steadier than the flickering of gas in the nearby streets. Helen supposed it would all be Electric in a few years. She could hear the frantic fluttering of the moths inside the jar, inside the hat box. Interesting... they definitely sensed the light, even when they couldn’t see it.

*Will DS Fable be hiding in bushes? Mythic FATE Check – Very Likely: NO
 Will DS Fable be hiding in one of the houses (in the warm)? Mythic FATE Check – Very Likely:
EXCEPTIONAL NO! I’m going to say she’ll be back in the Street near Dawn and get paralysed by Moths and have an encounter with the Clawed Shadow! Maybe she’s in the Park Attendant’s Hut right now.*

Maybe she should let one of the Moths go, to see what it does? But it looks like all they want to do is flutter around these bloody streetlamps.

SURVEY or SENSE? Helen will always choose SENSE. Stakes: Normal, Expectations: Find something that gives a clue. [maybe the tabby or dog corpse AND spot Moths]. Partial: find a corpse but run into danger [the black cat zombie]. Fail: run into danger [the black cat zombie]

Helen Drake SENSE	
GILDED	2
Normal	3 2 5 6 1

3d for Sense +2d for Extend the Senses (risking 1 Bleed on Partial or Fail) +1d for Bleed Detector and 1d for Moths (maximum of 6d). Full success.

Helen’s magickal senses draw her to one of the gardens, filled with thick privet bushes. Under one of them she finds the tabby cat from her dream. The name “Mr Wiggles” pops back into her head. It is gashed open, just like the ginger. Innards liquefied. A solitary Maggot wriggles about in the gloop.

Helen was better prepared this time. Has the sugar cube tongs with her and carefully drops the wriggling thing into the jar with the Moths, careful to keep them from fluttering free. Mr Wiggles hasn’t animated yet. The Maggot is still a Maggot, but looks pretty bloated. That puts the gestation period to the THIRD night. The Ginger had seemed to have been dead for that long. That means if the thing killed something else between Ginger and Tabby...

Wait a minute... she hadn't let any of her Moths escape... so why were there two of the things fluttering around that streetlamp a few doors further down the street?

I could declare a butterfly net as gear, but I don't think a normal Player would have thought of it. The Moths aren't dangerous just now as it's only about 7pm (sunset was 4pm).

I'll roll a Survey with no special bonuses just to see if Helen becomes aware of the zombie cat before she leaves.

Helen Drake SURVEY	
GILDED	0
Normal	6

How many bloody cats did they have in this Street! There goes another of the buggers – a black one, crossing the street by the Moth's streetlamp and scrambling over a wall. The way it moved looked oddly uncoordinated!

In a moment she was running towards it and into that garden. It slid around the side, down an alley and Helen pursued into the inky blackness. A gas light was on in the kitchen, so the back garden was dimly lit. The cat was heading for a cat-flap in the kitchen door. Helen could see the gaping wound in its side, the hollow, bloody cavity, and the gleam of bones. It spared her a sidelong look with faintly glowing dead eyes!

Can she stop it before it goes inside? MOVE. She could grab a spade, leaning against the wall and try to whack it. Or hit it with her Moth Jar! Or declare a weapon using her last Gear Slot. Stakes: Normal, Expectations: Stop and half kill the cat. Partial: Stop the cat but take 1 Body Fail: the cat enters the house

Helen Drake MOVE	
GILDED	0
Normal	6 4

For my last Gear pick of this Assignment, I'll say I'm carrying the Doctor's fancy sword cane and get +1d (otherwise I'm rolling 2 dice and taking the worst!). Full Success.

GEAR

Upto 3 times during an assignment, when you want an item of Gear you can say that you packed up one of these or something else that is common/cheap and makes narrative sense...

- X Bleed Detector
- X Hand Weapon (Dr Appleby's Fancy Sword Cane)
- X Bleed Containment Vessel

Awkwardly (with one hand still holding the hatbox) shaking loose the blade from Doctor Appleby's sword cane, Helen brings it down on the cat's rear

end, opening a wound in the horrifyingly empty body. It turns its attention on her and its mouth snarls, but no sound comes out. I guess the lack of lungs will do that!

There are distant sounds of alarm from within the house – the clash of steel on the garden path as it sliced through some empty cat parts, I suppose. Better end this quickly.

STRIKE. Stakes: Normal, Expectations: Finish off the cat and escape. Partial: Finish the cat but take 1 Body then need a MOVE to escape Fail: The kitchen door opens and an old lady with a kitchen knife tries to defend her cat!

Helen Drake STRIKE	
GILDED	0
Normal	5

0 Strike, but +1d for the sword-stick. Partial Success

The Damn thing scratched me! But it was dead (properly dead) now. Rattling of a bolt shook Helen into action. Grab the cat and run!

MARKS	
Body:	✓ ■ ■ ■
Brain:	■ ■ ■ ■
Bleed:	✓ ✓ ■
SCARS	
Green, red & yellow veins are visible in the whites of her eyes.	

MOVE with zero dice so roll 2 and take worst. Stakes: Normal, Expectations: Get away unseen. Partial: Get away but seen and Periphery Called Fail: The kitchen door opens and an old lady with a kitchen knife slashes for 1 Body and grabs hold of the cat

Helen Drake MOVE	
GILDED	0
Normal	2 4

Fail!

MARKS											
Body:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Brain:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bleed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The old lady (older than Helen) has one hand on her dead cat and slashes a kitchen knife across Helen's arm.

No roll needed for this but option for the Character – just leave the cat and run (the old lady will call for Periphery but you get away) or keep pulling, cat splits and you get 1 Brain Mark and the old lady is too shocked/horrified to call Periphery. Neither option is great... RUN

Seeing the mad desperation of the woman to hold onto her beloved pet, Helen makes a break for it and is off down the street, waving a swordstick in one hand (its scabbard left behind in the garden) and a hatbox in the other. Prudence won't be happy with me about the scabbard, but at least it has no distinguishing features as its main purpose is to disguise the blade as a normal walking cane.

Mythic – Chaos Factor up to 8 now the Periphery are alerted in the Street.

Scene Nine – A Policeman's Lot is Not a Happy One

Sure that the old lady at No. 42 will have summoned the Periphery, Helen changes her clothes and hat a second time. If only she had a dog she could walk, to get a reason for being in the park in the middle of the night!

Now dressed in ill-fitting dungarees, wellington boots and a heavy fisherman's jumper, with a tartan shawl wrapping her grey hair, she unwittingly manages to look both totally different and yet equally bizarre!

It's an hour or two before dawn when she cautiously approaches the street again, this time crossing Revenant Park. The cold ground is too hard for any more cadavers to float up through the muddy ground as they did during the floods, a few years back. Before that, this place had just been called Regent's Park.

Damn! That OUP woman is standing below one of the streetlamps, looking up.

PC Attila Reece (stream of consciousness)

Sophrinia... DS Fable, has been stood over there in the cold, unmoving for nearly twenty minutes. They make 'em tough in the OUP but it's bloody freezing tonight. She'll catch her death. Those moths ARE pretty though. The way their wings catch the light. They almost sparkle. Maybe I should go over there and ask her if she wants to go for a drink after work? The rumours about the OUP are a bit odd, but she's a fine-looking girl... Huh, who am I kidding... she's a DS and I'm just ... Plod! Don't be stupid Attila... you could at least talk to her. See if she's alright. Alright... here goes...

From the darkness of park, Helen watches a Periphery Constable step out from the front garden of No 42, clapping his gloved hands and with a half stride and half sidle, make his way over to the woman. As he gets close, he stops. Even from this distance she can tell he's opened his mouth to speak and then frozen.

The pools of white light from the lamps don't quite overlap and there is a small patch of deep black shadow between them. In the shadow ahead of the two stationary people, something moves. Some portion of the shadow deepens further, from dark grey to jet black. It detaches and oozes forwards! 12 feet tall, utterly black save for the unearthly reflection of the lamp from its eyes, teeth and jagged claws.



PC Attila Reece (stream of consciousness)

No! No! Not Possible! Oh God, what's it doing. Why can't I move. Noooo!

His eyes are watering, and the tears are beginning to freeze. He can see Sophrinia a few feet from him, head still tilted up to look at the Moths. The fluttering, scintillating, dazzling... paralysing Moths!

The Clawed Shadow reaches down to her, ripping open her trenchcoat and then the sharp claw tears her jumper and dress, revealing a section of her abdomen. The claw slides through the soft flesh and blood begins to ooze out around it. The shadowy talon seems to bulge and the bulge undulates down the length from the knuckle to the tip (hidden inside). When the talon of black shadow withdraws, more blood but swiftly... far too swiftly... the wound coagulates and seals.

The monster turns and moves towards him, closer, closer. A stench of ammonia fills his nostrils and (below the line of his paralysed gaze) it reaches out for him.

Helen is almost as paralysed as the two Periphery officers. What can she do? If she tries to save them, she might get paralysed and ... clawed? So she watches as it fades back into the shadows and seems to fade away completely.

I think I'll require a sort of "Saving Throw" for Helen after witnessing that horror. In answer to a question about "Saving Throws for Composure", in the Candela Discord, I wrote... To me, it seems like Players should be able to narrate how they go about forcing themselves to remain calm. Oddly the "NERVE" Drive sounds most relevant but the Actions under Nerve aren't ideal. To give every character a decent chance, I could imagine MOVE (as mastering your physiological responses to fear), SWAY (as keeping "control" of your emotions) or SENSE (as a sort of meditative practice). This allows an Action from each Drive.

Obviously for Helen, I'd choose to mutter a few meditative mantras and calm my inner turmoil that way.

Stakes: Normal, Expectations: Take 1 Brain but learn something [The thing is a Projection and hasn't yet managed to come fully through the Flare]. Partial: Take 1 Brain learn nothing Fail: Take 1 Brain Mark and any 2 Marks – your choice of Brain, Bleed or Body – any combination. Critical Success: No Marks and learn something. Nb. For Solo play it is a little easier if you let the player choose how they react (in Marks) to this sort of thing. Otherwise, a Solo PC would only last a couple of assignments!

Helen Drake SENSE	
GILDED	5
Normal	3 1 2 4 1

SENSE Rating = 3, + 1 Drive. If she chose to use Extend Your Senses it would be 2 additional dice but DOUBLE Damage.

Let's go for it in the hopes of learning more.

I'm going to burn a Resistance to re-roll just the 3 dice for my Rating.

Helen Drake SENSE	
GILDED	1
Normal	1 5

Terrible! Still only a Partial Success. I desperately want to learn something from this so I'll burn the last Resistance to roll again.

Helen Drake SENSE	
GILDED	6
Normal	1 1

Phew! A Full Success – still 2 Brain Marks and it cost me both my Intuition Resistances. The Gilded result regenerated that spent Intuition...

MARKS			
Body:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Brain: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Bleed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

INTUITION										
Drives Available...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drives Max...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resistances...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Watching that thing had been horrific, but Helen had forced herself to open her inner eye and take it all in. It took almost every ounce of her will to resist the horror, but she realised that the thing was merely a “projection” from the Beyond. It hadn’t yet managed to fully pierce the Flare. **ONLY** a projection!

It’s probably the combination of light and moth wings – that unearthly glittering – that’s paralysing them. So...

After a couple of misses, one of Helen’s stones, smashes the bulb. The noise of the breaking glass is nothing to the PC’s immediate wailing cry as they both slump to the floor. Helen approaches and examines them.

The girl is almost an icicle! How long had she been standing there transfixed? The PC is clutching at his belly and moaning. The girl’s stomach is still showing, bloodstained... so much blood... but the wound is scabbed and scarred as if it was a week old already.

The PC clambers to his feet – white, badly shaken, clutching his own bloodstained stomach.

“We’ve got to get this woman into the warmth. Get a grip man!” Helen’s tone and insistence and the obvious frozen state of DS Fable seemed to get through to him and he helps the stranger get the barely conscious woman into one of the houses.

“Not that one!” snapped Hellen as they crossed towards 42. Fortunately, there was a man from 44 in a dressing gown on the doorstep of his house and he ushered them inside and hurried to stoke up the fire.

In answer to the man’s questions, it seemed that PC Atilla Reece was going to blurt out what had happened, but Helen laid a hand on his arm, looked him in the eye and said, loudly. “An assailant! I saw them running off down the street.” When the homeowner went to another room to fetch brandy, she spoke quietly but firmly to Atilla. “An Assailant is the only explanation that makes any sense and won’t get you branded a lunatic! He stabbed ...?” She found a warrant card in the shivering woman’s pocket “... DS Fable here... and left her lying in the frost waiting for you to cross the road. When you did, he jumped you and stabbed you. Fortunately, he ran off when he saw me coming.”

She could feel DS Fable’s eyes burning into the back of her head. Still too frozen to speak, but the eyes...

SWAY. Stakes: Normal, Expectations: *Convince them to stick with the story.* Partial: *Convince PC Reece but not DS Fable* Fail: *Get Arrested!* Critical Success: *Convince them and they are grateful enough for the rescue to follow you somewhere to have their wounds examined.*

Helen Drake SWAY

GILDED 0

Normal 1 1 1

1d for SWAY I'll add both remaining Cunning Drives for 2 more.

Fail – Get Arrested!

For a moment it looked like she was getting through to them both, but then suddenly there was the cold snap of steel around her wrist, and she was handcuffed to the burly PC. This was what DS Fable's eyes had been trying to communicate!

Mythic – Chaos Factor 9. The situation's really out of control now! I could have spent my one Cunning Resistance to re-roll or my last Circle-Gilded Dice if I'd remembered it, but the three 1s seemed pretty emphatic. This is the sort of crazy outcome in Solo or Co-op games that makes me enjoy "Playing To Find Out".

