

# 19. The Horror of the Abyss

## Los Anton (Shadow of Texicanna)

As the Amber troops spilled out into the street amid the panicked jazz fans, the angry Club owner – Mickey Blue-eyes – pushed his way through the crowds, shouting at Random and blaming him for the damage and disruption.



As the big man got closer, Benedict stepped between them. He looked haggard and worn out from the Trump evacuation of his soldiers, but something in his face and manner seemed to impress Mickey and made him back off.



A TV screen on the wall that had been showing silent cartoons, suddenly flickered into a News Alert. It showed the city skyline with the scrolling words – "Bizarre Storm looms over Los Anton!". Footage was from a drone or helicopter and showed the slow rise and approach of the "storm" - a 3-mile diameter cloud of darkness with roiling tendrils!



As the thing loomed ever closer, the clear picture turned to static and then failed altogether, lights in the club went out. The sound of sirens and screams could be heard from outside. City-wide PANIC!

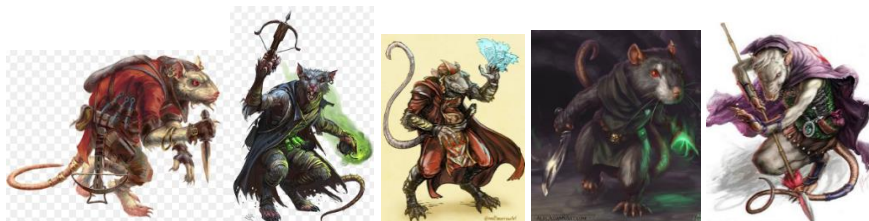
Despite her own exhaustion, Cassie reached for her Trumps but discovered that they weren't cold to the touch! No amount of concentration could cause the image to even flicker.

Random was the only one of them not fatigued, he reluctantly took charge and led them out through a back-stage fire-exit and began trying to Shadow-walk away from the city.

The ability to Shadow-walk seems to be unaffected by the Trump Blocking but is very difficult because the roads and alleys are jammed with terrified people and then police roadblocks.

Behind them they see the vast creature reach down to the building they just left, with tendrils that split and split ever-thinner and ever-longer. When the groping Tendrils touch them, people in the heaving crowds simply vanish.

The tendrils change their effect and begin to materialize rat-men (Aleyn calls them "Skaven" as they seem similar to creatures he's read about in some Shadow Earth role-playing game.... Battle-hammer? Or something similar?)



The cloud swings about and begins to drift after them!

They decide it is a manifestation of The Abyss and must have sensed the Trump Portal and followed it from the Courts of Chaos. It seems to be hunting and is attracted by the use of the Shadow-walking Power.

Benedict, shouts orders to Cassie and Aleyn. "If it's following the Power, we'll split up. Maybe that will allow the King to get away – could give us a 50/50 chance. You two start shadow-walking that way" (points off at an angle that leads them **slightly** nearer to the monstrous shadow). "If we get to

where the cards work again, we can use them to get away.". He orders one of his captains – Capt Crabbe - to take 50 men and accompany them, while he and the rest, stay to protect the King.

Just as they are fading out into a different Shadow, they see a tendril reach for Random. He's busy looking ahead and concentrating on the Shadow-walk. The exhausted Benedict dives to push him out of the way and is struck and vanishes!



Overhead they see four attack helicopters approach the cloud. They fire rocket-propelled missiles towards it but the missile thrusters pack up before they reach it and fall without exploding. As it advances, lights go out and sirens fall silent, and guns cease to operate. The helicopters seem to come out of control and begin to spin. One is swiped by a tendril and vanishes, and the others fall onto the buildings below.

Cassie shadow-walks away with Aleyn, Crabbe and 50 of the Amber troops.

She eventually leads them into a six-lane subway tunnel beneath the river and it seems the Abyssal Horror is more interested in following Random. However, it sends some Skaven to pursue our Heroes. These things are apparently tougher than normal men and they lose several troops who fight a rear-guard action to delay pursuit.

When they emerge has shifted Shadows in a hurry to get a horse farm – arrives in Wyoming at a remote ranch with about 10 horses nearby. They are in Shadow Earth (drawn by it's proximity to Texicanna and Cassie's subconscious)

The Amber troops shot dead (with crossbow bolts) three ranchers who were trying to scare them away from the ranch and the horses with shotguns!



Skaven pursue. 20 of the troops are killed as they withdraw but then Aleyn and Cassie turn the tide of battle.

While Cassie was blasting away at the Skaven Horde with one of the shotguns, Aleyn slew a Skaven Prince (a very competent warrior) and in the Quickening that followed, Aleyn saw snippets of its recent memories – It was created in and by the Abyss only a few hours before and sent out to hunt and slay "The Enemy" – this seemed to be a confused image of the PATTERN itself!



With Capt Crabbe and the surviving 30 troops, they retreated into the Ranch. The Trump cards were cold to the touch again and they decided to contact Fiona.

Fiona looked exhausted too. She had been fighting off an incursion of the Abyss in the Shadow of Trappaz, at the Dworkinarium. She had had to defend The Dworkinarium against a Black Circle from which Logrus Tendrils had emerged. The Tendrils couldn't penetrate the defences of the building and withdrew. Then it started spewing out Skaven. She eventually sallied out and used her magic to close the Black Circle (very exhausting and not something she can repeat without a LONG time to build-up the necessary energies). She brings them through to Trappaz and they leave Crabbe and the others in Wyoming.

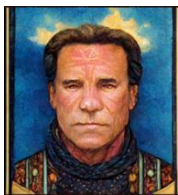


She "cryptically" suggested that THIS SITUATION might be what Cassie was BORN for! Her own Prophecies and Visions were unclear but maybe Cassie should try going to Tir Na'Nogth again.

At Cassie's snort of derision, she grew cold and stressed that however dangerous and cryptic it had seemed, Cassie had been given a vision of a possible future and hints that Caine, Gerard and Julian might become infected with the Rage Virus.

Learning that Benedict was swallowed-up by the Abyssal Tendril, she is shocked and saddened and comments that he may have suffered the same fate as Deidre who was pulled into the Abyss at the end of the Patternfall war – sidelong glance at Cassie!

Aleyn is keen to locate the servant of Setep who Fiona sent to Shadow Earth the day before. She didn't have many details of him beyond a general description – tall, thin human male – about mid forties and mostly bald. She sent him through to an agent of hers called James, in London, England. This was payment as agreed with Setep of House Amon. She hands over a Trump of James.



Gerard is in Amber and has been calling around via Trump to check up on the other family members. They decide to call him and are brought through to Amber Castle where they may finally be able to get some rest.

Attempts to contact Random and Benedict have failed.

Various Golden Circle Shadows have had (and are still suffering from) Black Circle Incursions but nothing of the size of the Abyssal Horror. Skaven are even attacking the borders of Forest of Arden – not in great numbers – Julian's patrols are coping so far.

They report briefly to Queen Vialle who is confident that Random will have survived and may just be maintaining radio silence to protect THEM!

