

DARKNESS VISIBLE

By MO HOLKAR

*"No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd onely to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes"*

John Milton, Paradise Lost

WITNESS

Gregory Freeman, would-be writer. Has come to Deacon Fork to re-search his family history, for a planned book. His strength is *stubborn determination*, and his personality trait is a *charming demeanour*.

OTHER CHARACTERS

- ⊙ *Randall Gibbs*, Deacon Fork police chief. An irascible-seeming but good-hearted middle-aged man, fond of drinking and not fond of troublemakers.
- ⊙ *Miss Desiree Lawton*, descendant of the plantation family. A slender, intense woman, treated with respect by the town despite her family's reduced circumstances.
- ⊙ *Joseph Withers*, auto mechanic and smallholder. A tall, taciturn man whose house is a popular gathering-place for the African-American community. Married to Susan Withers.
- ⊙ *Susan Withers*, hairdresser. A cheerful woman who has the reputation of being clever with herbs and healing. Married to Joseph Withers.
- ⊙ *Shell Barnaby*, invalid. A pale face occasionally glimpsed at the windows of the Barnaby house. Rumoured to have been "scared silly" by something she saw in the woods as a child.
- ⊙ *Eric Darge*, farmer and moonshiner. A tough young man who keeps a still in his cowshed and who runs its produce to wherever folks need their whistles wetted. Famed as the fastest driver in the county.

Sculptures clearly show sub-oceanic civilisation.

Clear that the Elder Ones migrated from sea to land over time.

LOCATION AND ERA

The small Alabama town of Deacon Fork, in 1964. Built adjoining a former cotton plantation which has been swallowed by the woods. An inward-looking place, where things stay quiet as long as not too many questions are asked.

- ⊙ *Bellerive*, the former plantation house. Here, before the Civil War, the Lawton family would entertain lavishly while their slaves toiled in the cotton fields. Now a tree-choked ruin.
- ⊙ *Deacon Fork Baptist Church*. A former tabernacle now used almost exclusively by African-Americans. The old church that the whites used was destroyed by lightning storm in 1938, and was not replaced.
- ⊙ *The Hanging Grove*. Place of punishment and execution during the plantation era. Slaves who had transgressed were taken to this clearing in the woods, to suffer a variety of awful fates.
- ⊙ *Hanworth Pond*. A popular fishing spot not far outside of town. Seven teenage children drowned here in a succession of apparently-unrelated incidents during the 1920s.

SPECIAL CARDS

- ⊙ A hostile group
- ⊙ Visions
- ⊙ Sorcery
- ⊙ Specimen
- ⊙ Strange location

Universally closed shutters and absence of any furnishings to the rooms suggests the city may have been deliberately abandoned.

Murals show that creatures keep, slaughter and cook animals.

DARKNESS VISIBLE: SAMPLE CLUES

- ⊙ A snatch of old-timey waltz music, or of a Spiritual song, with no obvious source.
- ⊙ A set of iron fetters found, carefully placed, in front of a doorway.
- ⊙ Unusually vivid dreams of toiling in the fields.
- ⊙ A burning torch planted in the ground during the night. Blood has been dripped around its base.
- ⊙ Someone sickens of a mysterious illness, then makes just as mysterious a recovery.
- ⊙ The woods are maze-like, trees draped eerily in Spanish moss: when you try to pass through them, you emerge in an unexpected and unfamiliar location.
- ⊙ An automobile suddenly stops working. When inspected, engine parts are corroded and perished, as though by extreme age.
- ⊙ Cheap whisky which brings on terrible hallucinations.
- ⊙ An invitation to a cotillion, dated 1860 but seeming freshly printed.
- ⊙ Evidence of an old crime unexpectedly emerges.
- ⊙ Parts of a family history have been systematically concealed.
- ⊙ A conspiracy of silence. Is it simply to preserve order?

Depictions of heating devices and (somewhat comically) warm clothing show change in climate in later years.

Depictions of home life including furniture clearly adapted for their physical construction.