

ACT II – FLOATING SCENES

DURING THE ACTION

Floating 1: Dreaming Mouths*
Floating 2: The Notebook Burns
Floating 3: Deterrence*
Floating 4: Sabotage in Flight
Floating 5: Bomb on Board
Floating 6: White Hermit Spiders
Floating 7: Haunted by Mouths*
Floating 8: The Anti-Investigators*
Floating 9: The Shabby Purveyor*
Floating 10: Confrontation with the Dead

* Can be used between sessions / locales.

SOURCES OF STABILITY

SoS Scene 1: Nightmares
SoS Scene 2: Family Troubles
SoS Scene 3: Scent of Nectar
SoS Scene 4: Hey, Nice House
SoS Scene 5: The Price You Pay
SoS Scene 6: Peaceful Moments

SAMPLE CLUES – TRACKING CULT AGENTS

- “I heard them shouting next door in [Spanish/Thai/Maltese], but then things settled down and I thought everything was fine.”
- A matchbook turns up from a restaurant in [Location].
 - **Los Angeles:** A nectar bar that hooks to *LA Node 6: Los Angeles Nectar Trade*.
 - **Bangkok:** Carbine Congee Shop, located behind the East Lake Theater (Daniel Lowman goes there)
 - **Mexico City:** *Node 6: La Paz*
 - **Malta:** Magic Kiosk Restaurant, located next to Majestic Theater (no particular significance)
- Cultist carried a telegram with PC’s name and address on it, sent from a completed Locale to an uncompleted Locale.
- Cultist’s suit was made in [Location].
- Poison used on a Source of Stability can be traced back [Location].

FLOATING 1: DREAMING MOUTHS

(pg. 78)

TOO MANY MOUTHS

- In a Joy Grove exam room with Nurse Bethany Mae Hampton.
- She wears surgical mask and carries a syringe.
- End of the needle is a grouping proboscis ending in a tiny, toothless mouth.
- Drops surgical mask, revealing two mouths; one above the other, smiling like a shark.
- Find themselves suddenly in straitjacket and leg irons as she comes for them.
- *Wake to find a mosquito at work on your arm.*

MOUTHS FOR EYES

- Reliving a recent memory, but those near them begin to turn and stare.
- But they have no eyes. They have mouths where their eyes should be.
- The mouths are forming words (perhaps muted by glass).
- Are they warning you? Pleading to be released? Calling for you? Begging for death?
- Tears begin streaming from the mouths.

SWAMP-MOUTH

- Trudging along through the Georgia swamp / Ethiopian desert / jungles of Bangkok with a friend or fellow investigator.
- Ground opens up in a sudden sinkhole beneath their companion.
- Hole is lined with yellow, human teeth. Dozens and dozens of teeth.
- Friend falls about halfway into the hole. Hole snaps shut like a giant mouth, chewing them in half in three terrible bites.
- A spray of blood. A gurgling scream from the mouth/hole.

GUT-MOUTH

- You hear a voice. Your voice. Wheezing out words in a language you can't understand.
- But it's not coming from your mouth.
- Shirt shifts at your belly, as if being pushed from within.
- Shirt dampens with some sort of moisture.
- Tear away shirt to reveal a wide mouth, tongue probing, cut across your stomach like a gash, oozing pus and blood.
- Yells out alien words in your voice.
- Try to call out for help, but your own mouth is shrinking away to nothing; closing around your tongue, swallowing your teeth with flesh.
- Can't exhale. Can't breathe. Suffocation.

SWALLOWING THE EARTH

- Back home. Fair, almost beautiful weather.
- Ground trembles. Buildings shake and tumble, falling towards you.

- Long yellow fangs lurch out of the earth, climbing not just skyward but closing around you.
- Swallowing the ground. Swallowing the sky. Swallowing you. Swallowing your home into long, wet shadows.
- Down a vulgar hole lined with suckers and barbs, oozing honey and blood.
- You just catch sight of the grinding, churning organ where you're headed, when the mouth shuts tight above you, blocking out the light.

FLOATING 2: THE NOTEBOOK BURNS

(pg. 80)

TRIGGER: At any time when the Investigators have separated *Henslowe's Notebook* from the *Stone Dagger*.

- *GM Background:* The Liar is trying to protect its identity by destroying imagery of the 1924 ritual.

NOTEBOOK BURNS: Book begins to smolder, then explodes in flames. (Becomes illegible in seconds.)

- **Witness:** 3-point Stability test
- **Holding Notebook / Trying to Smother Flames:** 2 damage
- **Occult 1 / Cthulhu Mythos** (Stability 3, Sanity 0): Effects are result of a spell cast against the book. It's possible that Henslowe's renderings were so evocative that they actually created a mystical connection with whatever he was drawing. Destroying the book, however, has most likely severed their connection with it.

FLOATING 3: DETERRENCE

(pg. 135)

DETERRENCE

- Cultists accost the PCs in the rainy parking lot of a foreign airport.
- Cultists storm in a PC's office with rope and blackjacks.
- Cultists jump a PC outside his home when he takes out the garbage.
- Cultists cut off the PCs in traffic, slash their tires, and break their car windows.

AMBUSH: Cultists are just trying to send a message. Probably won't go lethal unless pushed.

- **Sense Trouble** (difficulty 5+)

COMPLICATIONS

- PCs attacked on their home turf might end up needing to deal with local cops. ("Don't try to leave town.") This can lead to *SoS Scene 2: Family Troubles*.

BANGKOK THUGS

BRUTES (x4): Athletics 8, Driving 6, Firearms 5, Health 5, Scuffling 6, Weapons 6

Weapons: -1 (brass knuckles, pipes, knives), +1 (pistol)

3 Things: They spit. They stare. They lick their lips a lot.

BOSS: Athletics 8, Driving 4, Firearms 10, Health 13, Scuffling 7, Weapons 6

Weapons: -1 (brass knuckles, the scenery), +1 (pistol)

3 Things: She spits. Squints when angered. Stretches her punching arm like a pitcher before a baseball game.

LOS ANGELES ZOOT SUITS

TRAMMEL'S MEN: Athletics 4, Firearms 3, Health 4, Scuffling 4, Weapons 3

Alertness Modifier: +1

Weapons: +0 (pistol), -1 (club)

MALTA – HANTZ' KNIFES

HIRED ASSASSINS: Athletics 8, Disguise 4, Firearms 5, Fleeing 8, Health 7, Scuffling 7, Weapons 7

Alertness Modifier: +1 (cunning)

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +0 (dagger)

MEXICO CITY THUGS

THUGS: Athletics 8, Driving 5, Firearms 5, Health 4, Scuffling 5, Sense Trouble 7, Shadowing 5, Stealth 6

Alertness Modifier: +1

Stealth Modifier: +0

Weapon: +0 (revolver)

FLOATING 4: SABOTAGE IN FLIGHT

(pg. 139)

TRIGGER: Cultists identify *Silver Saber* (or similar plane) as the PCs' method of transportation.

SABOTAGE: Select one method of sabotage. Or use them simultaneously to heighten stakes.

- **Sense Trouble** (difficulty 4): To notice that something is wrong just before the shit hits the fan.

PILOT POISONED: Becoming sick or comatose during flight.

- **First Aid 5:** To revive the pilot.
- **Piloting** (difficulty 7, difficulty 4 if Sense Trouble successful): To prevent a crash / regain control of the plane.
 - **Crash:** Everyone onboard suffers +5 damage (+8 if not strapped in)

LANDING GEAR: Damaged so that it won't deploy.

- **Electrical Repair / Mechanical Repair** (difficulty 7): To repressurize the hydraulic lines.
- **Piloting** (difficulty 7): To bring the plane down for a water landing, etc.
 - **Crash:** Everyone onboard suffers +5 damage (+8 if not strapped in)

FUEL LINE: Loosened so that it comes loose during flight.

- **Mechanical Repair** (difficulty 5, if Sense Trouble successful): To fix or reroute the leak before the fuel tanks drain completely.
- **Piloting** (difficulty 7): To bring the plane down for an emergency landing.
 - **Crash:** Everyone onboard suffers +5 damage (+8 if not strapped in)

FLOATING 5: BOMB ON BOARD

(pg. 138)

DISCOVERING THE BOMB: Should be automatically discovered with 3-5 minutes left on the timer.

- Stashed amid their luggage.
- Strapped under a seat.

KEEPING TIME: Each check for dealing with the bomb takes 20-30 seconds.

MOVING THE BOMB: 1-2 successful roles to get it off the plane.

- **Athletics / Explosives** (difficulty 5): On failure, PC can forego the consequences (freezing in place).

DISARMING THE BOMB: 1-2 successful roles to completely disarm it.

- **Explosives** (difficulty 5): On a failure, PC can forgo the consequences (instead of cutting the wire, they back off and steady their hand).

EXPLOSION: See ToC pg. 67 for explosive damage.

- **Plane – Piloting** (difficulty 7): Or plane crashes.
 - **Crash:** Everyone onboard suffers +5 damage (+8 if not strapped in)
- **Boat:** Small or medium boat probably sinks. Larger boat probably doesn't.

FLOATING 6: WHITE HERMIT SPIDERS

(pg. 137)

EIGHT-LEGGED VISITORS: In hotel room, on plane, etc.

- One spider in an individual Investigator's room.
- One spider, followed by additional spiders crawling out of a vent or out of a bag equal to the number of investigators.
- *GM Note:* Spiders could attack the pilot. Or get an innocent ally visiting their rooms.

WHITE HERMIT SPIDER: Half-dollar-sized, semi-translucent.

- **Biology:** Recognize as one of the most lethal breeds of spider on the planet, hailing from the jungles of Southeast Asia. But its fangs are too small to deliver a fatal bite to humans.
- **Biology 1:** *This* white hermit has a deformed mouth, enormous for its species, with huge, needle-like fangs that could easily penetrate human flesh.
 - *GM Background:* They've been infused with Nectar. It's possible one of them might have a mouth growing on its back.

WHITE HERMIT SPIDERS: Athletics 6, Fleeing 8, Health 1, Scuffling 5

Hit Threshold: 5 (tiny)

Stealth Modifier: +3

Weapon: +0 (bite; on successful attack, spider's venom automatically does +0 damage five minutes later)

Stability Loss: +0 unless phobic

Special: Each white hermit has enough venom for two bites (after which it does no damage).

FLOATING 7: HAUNTED BY MOUTHS

(pg. 139)

TRIGGER: Played after destroying a Major Mouth or being dosed with Nectar.

- May be focused on a particular location (in which case it can be escaped) or a particular person (because the Mouth has fixed its attention on them).
- Could be targeted at Source of Stability, with reports of these hauntings being relayed to the investigator.

HAUNTED BY MOUTHS: 3-point Mythos Stability test

- **Wall Mouth:** The wall cracks and the plaster parts, forming a vulgar mouth-like gash of fleshy tissue from which an eyeball emerges and, blinking a hideous membrane, regards you. It drizzles out honey-like drops as it stares.
 - Gash closes, leaving behind a harmless crack in the plaster and a gooey stain.
- **Floor Mouth:** At the spot where two floorboards meet, the wood itself flexes and opens to reveal rows of yellow human teeth and a pair of flabby orange lips. They mouth words at you, and a tongue works behind the teeth to tap out wet sounds.
 - Mouth shuts and vanishes, leaving the floor normal except for a slick and sticky stain.
- **Alien Voice:** From somewhere in the room, you hear a voice reciting alien words, unintelligible except for familiar names slipped in between eldritch syllables. Your name. [Fellow investigator.] Walter Winston. [Source of Stability.] [Locations visited.] Echavarria.
 - **Search:** As you pull back the bookcase, you find a tear in the wallpaper and, for a moment, a fleshy sharktoothed mouth pressing through from the other side of the wall, oozing amber juice from its broken lips. No sooner have you seen it, though, than it recedes and disappears, leaving curled and crusted wallpaper behind.
- **Bed Mouth:** You open your eyes to find your bed wrapping itself around you, closing like a mouth. Fang-like teeth tear through the covers from the mattress below, and some obscene tongue slathers against the bedspread from below, yellow mucus seeping through the cloth.
 - **After Any Action:** The bed slumps back to a mundane state, the covers wet with mucus and pierced in a circle with ragged holes. You're slick with musty slime.

VISIONS: If these are hallucinatory (perhaps because a character's stability/sanity is fraying), there will be no physical evidence left behind.

VISITATIONS: Alternatively, the Thing With a Thousand Mouths may be physically manifesting.

- **Chemistry:** Stains and residues contain traces of Nectar.

MINOR MOUTH ATTACK: As an escalation on visitations, have the manifesting mouths attack the PCs.

FLOATING 8: THE ANTI-INVESTIGATORS

EMPORIUM OF BANGKOK ANTIQUITIES: See Reference sheet in *2.1 Bangkok*.

- Cross paths in Bangkok.
- Sent to follow-up on discovers made by the PCs in other locations.
- Sent by Sirikhan (or in the event of her death) to coordinate hostile activity in other locations. (Might be active agents behind other floating scenes.)
- Active investigations in *2.1.1 Severn Valley* and *2.2.1 Obelisk of Axum*.

ANTI-INVESTIGATORS: See NPC sheets in *2.2.1 Obelisk of Axum*.

TYPICAL HIRED THUGS: Athletics 8, Firearms 3, Health 9, Scuffling 8
Alertness Modifier: +1

TYPICAL HIRED GUNS: Athletics 6, Driving 6, Explosives 2, Firearms 8, Health 8, Scuffling 8,
Weapons 4

Alertness Modifier: +2

Stealth Modifier: +1

FLOATING 9: THE SHABBY PURVEYOR

APPEARANCE: Pasty elderly man with bony fingers in a large, ratty coat.

ROLEPLAYING NOTES:

- Keeps palms against his body, but hands are always in motion.
- Nose is runny.
- Toothy, roguish grin.

ENCOUNTER:

- “Hey... hey there, travelers. I have something for you.”
- Holds open coat. Waterlogged tome under his arm.
- “This is for you. I brought this for you.”
- Offers to sell it for a specific price that reveals knowledge of the Investigator’s past.
 - “The money you got from the Winston girl.”
 - “That watch you got from your grandfather. I’ll trade you.”
 - “Tell me a secret—a true secret.” (Recognizes a lie: “You can’t lie to me!”)
 - “A kiss.” (with a drop of translucent snot dropping from his nose).
- If the offer to sell is refused, he’ll simply thrust the book at them.
 - “He’ll be angry if I don’t give it to you! Just take it. Take it!”
- If they refuse to take it: “To hell with you! To the deepest pit! May you be chewed and swallowed and shat out like the rest! I hope your children die! I hope you piss pus and your mouths shrivel shut. May your hearts turn to coal and your eyes burst! You’ll be lying together in blood and shit in the final days! Your lies will be known! They will bind you to his bosom!”

THE TOME: Nameless and vile, the waterlogged book contains page after page of woodcuts.

- *Prop: The Waterlogged Tome*
- **The Spell:** Is actually a trap. Performing it will only cause the Liar to stir and possibly lock its gaze upon the caster. Immediately trigger *Floating 7: Haunted by Mouths*.
- **Cthulhu Mythos** (3 Stability, 1 Sanity): Identifies the spell as a trap, but carries with it the disturbing realization that the dread purveyor was most likely an incarnation of the Liar From Beyond itself and that the book is something that it *wants* the investigators to possess. Furthermore, it can reach out and find the Investigators (and perhaps their loved ones and families) if it wants.
- **Destroying the Book:**
 - Burning releases a noxious cloud of poison vapor (+0 damage to all within close range) before the book explodes in a burst of bile and Nectar. Creates mystic connection site (trigger *Floating 7: Haunted by Mouths*).
 - Burying cause a Mouth to manifest above it.
 - Dropping it in the sea will cause it to wash up, waterlogged but otherwise (and impossibly) unharmed on some distant shore (possibly when an investigator happens to be standing there).

FLOATING 10: CONFRONTATION WITH THE DEAD

POSSIBLE VISITORS:

- Any character from Act I or Act II
- Source of Stability
- Could be someone the PC didn't know was dead prior to this scene

THE VISITOR: Is waiting for them somewhere. (Sitting in their hotel room. Standing under a street lamp on a rainy night. In the booth they're seated at in a bar. Knocks on their cabin during a stormy sea voyage.)

- 4-point Stability test (7-point test if they knew the visitor well)
- Chilly to the touch, like a traveler in from the cold, but otherwise seems of flesh and blood.
- Casual passersby can see them just fine.
- Leave the room and never seen again. Or vanish in mid-blink.

MESSAGE:

- Core clue to any scene the investigators skipped.
- Bonus information from a spend the investigators didn't make.
- Thematic reinforcement ("I know you lied to me").
- Foreshadow an upcoming location.

EXAMPLES:

- "When you get to Malta, look for him at the hospital. You'll meet him at the hospital."
- "Don't turn on each other in Bangkok. All you might not make it out, but don't turn on each other."
- "Follow the expedition. You have to know what *they* want to know."
- "Ayers knows because he was there. What he knows might even help focus to do the right thing in the final days."

SoS SCENE 1: NIGHTMARES

(pg. 129)

REVELATION: Source is visibly tired and worn down. Bags under the eyes. Yawns hello. Hardly makes eye contact.

- “It’s nothing. I’m just not sleeping well.” (obviously lying)
- **Assess Honesty:** Source is holding back out of fear.

STAKES: Source is reluctant. If PC doesn’t push, they won’t be forthcoming and will eventually cut off contact with the PC (the Source is lost).

- **Reassurance 2:** Allows the PC to keep the Source of Stability until they return from the next locale.
- **Psychoanalysis** (2 hours, difficulty 4 + number of Act II locales visited): Cure Source of the damaging dreams. (“Are you sure you *want* to get rid of these prophetic dreams?”)
- **Hypnosis:** To gain more information about the dreams.
- **Occult / Medicine:** To form an opinion regarding the nature and origin of the dreams (they’re probably not prophetic; they’re just dreams).

NIGHTMARES: Recurring images of the PC in danger... and about the PC putting the Source in danger.

- Eerily reflective of what has already happened to the PCs.
- Suggestive of something that might happen to the PCs (at the locale they’re planning to go to next, for example).
- Dramatic imagery not directly related to the campaign.

EXAMPLES

- **About Bangkok:** “You were in a forest. A dark forest. And you were running. The ground and the underbrush were spattered with blood and with something like honey. You were bleeding, too, from a gash on your arm. And you were chasing a wolf, or something, at first. But then the wolf was chasing you. And you came through the woods all crazed and mad and bloody, and you ran up to me with a knife or a machete in your hands, and you started chopping away at me... and that’s when I wake up.”
- **About Mexico City:** “You and I were on the street in some city, listening to jazz music coming out of open windows. Just walking around. Listening and talking; I don’t know about what. But then a police car drove by and you started to run, so I ran after you. We ended up in this maze of alleys, our shadows huge on the walls, and that’s when you turned on me. You had a shotgun in one hand and a snake in the other. And the snake bit me, over and over, on my arms, and then I think you fired the shotgun right into my stomach... and that’s when I wake up.”
- **Disturbing Imagery:** “I dreamt that you came by [the house/the store/the campus/etc.], all scared and angry, your hat shadowing your face so I could only see your mouth, biting your lips. You came in through the door, which was smeared with bloody handprints, and you came in through the door with your knuckles all bloody and bruised. You were yelling at me to stop, to be careful, to leave you alone. I don’t know why. You just kept yelling, and then you were hitting me and then you had a knife — but not a knife, something bigger — and you hoisted it over your head and were ready to attack me... and that’s when I wake up.”

SoS SCENE 2: FAMILY TROUBLES

(pg. 131)

THE FIGHT:

- Recent absences
- Secrets being kept
- Mysterious bruising
- Nightmares (see *SoS Scene 1: Nightmares*)
- Demand to join the investigation (ruining them as Source)

RESOLUTION: 1 or 2 point spend (Reassurance or Flattery by default)

SoS SCENE 3: SCENT OF NECTAR

(pg. 133)

NECTAR USE: Source is using Nectar.

DETECTING USE:

- Friend expresses concern about changes in behavior.
- **Chemistry / Pharmacy:** Nectar residue or tell-tale signs (orange-tinted fingers, sickeningly sweet smell on the breath, stain on a shirt).
- **Evidence Collection:** Nectar-stained paraphernalia.
- **Assess Honesty:** To notice change in behavior.

OPTION – POISON: Source is being poisoned by the cult and doesn't know they're being doped with Nectar.

- **Chemistry / Evidence Collection:** Notice telltale crust at the bottom of a laced wine bottle.
- **Pharmacy:** Irregularity in the Source's pills (which have been replaced with hardened Nectar).
- **Assess Honesty:** To realize the Source hasn't been using the drugs willingly.

CONFRONTATION:

- **Intimidation / Bargain:** Source admits Nectar use.

RESOLUTION:

- **Bargain 2 / Intimidation 2 / Reassurance 2:** If not, Source cannot be salvaged and will drift away into a drug-induced haze.

SoS SCENE 4: HEY, NICE HOUSE

(pg. 134)

THREAT: As the PCs approach their home / office / favorite bar / or other safe location, figure in a car or across the street speaks up:

- “Hey, nice house. Looks like such a happy home.”
- “That *your* office, mister? That *your* name on the door?”
- “Nice place. That’s Eddy’s Bar isn’t it? Say, how *is* the old man?”
- “Nice house. You ought to have nice strong locks on a house like that.”

CHASE (difficulty 5): If caught, denies everything (and he hasn’t actually done anything) and threatens to call the cops.

- Has no ID.
- High on Nectar.
- **Interrogation 3:** Reveal he got address from his dealer. (If followed up, the dealer’s place looks like nobody has lived there in months.)

MENACING FIGURE: Athletics 8, Driving 8, Fleeing 8, Health 5

Stealth Modifier: +1

SoS SCENE 5: THE PRICE YOU PAY

SOURCE OF STABILITY: Killed by the cult while the investigators weren't home.

- **Told of Death:** 4-point Stability test
- **Discover Body:** 5-point Stability test
- *GM Note:* Probably most effective if the vulnerability of the victim can be traced back to a specific failure. (Not taking previous threats seriously enough. Being lax with personal security. Having their personal documents captured by cultists.)

EXAMPLES: Murder is not subtle.

- Throat cut.
- Shot in the head.
- Found floating fully-clothed in a pool.
- Drowned in sticky and now-crustled Nectar.

SoS SCENE 6: PEACEFUL MOMENTS

(pg. 128)

PEACEFUL MOMENTS: Explore

KEY QUESTIONS

- What's life like when you get back to your house?
- What's your favorite thing to do with [Source]?
- What do they see when they peer through your windows after you come home?

IDYLLIC MOMENTS

- Spouse brings the character some cocoa.
- Child shows off a drawing made in school.
- Neighbor stops to commiserate about sports or the weather.
- Sibling shows up with a bottle of wine for the once-regular card game.
- Old buddies got out for dinner and have their picture taken together.
- Lovers walk hand-in-hand down the lakeshore.