



Storybook

PLEASE NOTE THIS IS ONLY A DRAFT

WARDENS

-historical record, by James G Boutilier

At the dawn of Earth's great expansion, one gifted people became the cradle of mankind's cultural awakening – these masters of the elements and psionic energy were called, the Naacal. Legend says the Naacal Elders were so powerful that they themselves caused their continent of Mu to rise from the floor of the Panthalassan Ocean (all that remains of the super-ocean today we call, the Pacific.) After generations of peaceful seclusion, the Naacal Elders had secured their legacy in the creation of a special bloodline with the intention of sharing their knowledge with the rest of humankind.

Although their knowledge was great, the Elders were unaware that their psionic activities had penetrated the dimensional barrier, capturing the attention of an insatiable and terrible pantheon of cosmic entities called, The Great Old Ones. Hidden within the violent depths of space two massive sister stars orbited a chaotic and ancient galaxy called Xoth, ejecting dark energy the Old Ones consumed like nectar. Unfortunately for humanity, one such entity's appetite had outgrown its surroundings - the dementor Cthulhu. Cthulhu had gathered a great host of supernatural shape-shifters known as Starspawn, whose sole purpose was to create insanity and chaos for their master to feed upon on whatever unfortunate world the incomprehensible being had chosen to ravage. Having become compelled by the psionic energy of the Naacal Elders, Cthulhu decided he would consume them and make Mu his own. Though it may take many lifetimes to arrive - one day Cthulhu would feed upon the people of Earth and torment them for millennia to come.

And finally, that dread day came.



WARDENS

Since the entity existed in multiple dimensions, Cthulhu's revelation to humanity manifested only in our dreams as devastating nightmares, but was powerful enough to send good people into madness. Cthulhu wanted the legendary land of Mu for his physical seat of power and with insanity spreading, his Starspawn minions worked unchallenged as they built a great stone city with disturbing eldritch-like architecture and horrible monoliths in his honor. Cthulhu called his unnatural city, R'lyeh.

While Cthulhu reveled in the tormentation of humanity and erected their perverse creations, the Naacal Elders were busy fashioning seven powerful Artifacts, one for each Elder, and imbued them with great power to be used for peace, or in the case of Cthulhu, as weapons of war. Aided by these Artifacts the Naacal managed to contain the greatest impact of Cthulhu and his Starspawn. After a generation of struggle and with madness greatly suppressed, the Naacal Elders' power proved too great for Cthulhu and they succeeded in binding him within a psionically locked sepulcher deep within R'lyeh.

Unfortunately, the effects of the battles between the Elders and Cthulhu's forces, and the impact of such psionic forces unleashed upon the world proved too much for the physical earth to endure. After many volcanic eruptions and land altering earthquakes, the continent of Mu began to sink beneath vengeful tsunamis. Only the strongest of the Naacal managed to escaped before the great wonder that was the Naacal civilization was reclaimed by the power of the Pacific Ocean, and with it the nightmarish influence of a now slumbering Cthulhu and many of his Starspawn.

WARDENS

The Naacal Elders and surviving bloodline sought shelter among the most promising civilizations around the globe. With the Artifacts as constant reminder of their commitment to peace, the Naacal were able to greatly aid humanity's advancement, beginning with the Atlanteans, Egyptians, Mayans, Indians and Asians. Within a few short generations the Elders, along with their Artifacts, were so adored by the societies they helped shape that some began to worship both the Elders and their Artifacts as gods. Cautious to never again allow their manipulation of the elements to wake Cthulhu, and with no desire to be worshipped, the Elders faded into the background and bestowed the Artifacts to their descendants, allowing them to guide humanity's path at a far slower pace.

And so the world continued to spin as societies rose and fell for thousands of years. The mystic Ancient World gave way to the technologically lead Modern Age, while the Naacal's existence became the stuff of legend and conspiracy theories, except amongst secret Asian and Far Eastern societies where the bloodline remained protected and in silence evolved into, The Brotherhood.

Unlike ages past, Naacal's children were no longer born with the privilege of their supernatural gifts, but rather, those who displayed an early aptitude for the mental and martial arts were sequestered away in temples and great houses of study. There they were subjected to decades of intense fighting and mental training until they could both manipulate the elements and their bodies at will, and do so with cautious respect. The most naturally talented and disciplined of these secluded warriors became known as The Wardens – humanity's last hope should a dark shroud like Cthulhu ever again blanket the world.

WARDENS

History had become merely the horror stories now told around campfires, but the legacy of the Great Old Ones on Earth was far from dead. Though Cthulhu slept, the Naacal Elders had made a fatal mistake by withdrawing from the world. Without the power of the Elders holding them back, the loyal Starspawn that had escaped destruction practiced patient influence, slowly seeping into the dreams of the weak minded and deviants, preparing the maddening underbelly of society for Cthulhu's return. As the world dismissed them as just another cult humans had created over the millennia, dangerous organizations of Cthulhu worshippers had entrenched themselves into every civilization the Naacal had once touched, igniting violent civil unrest and expanding Cthulhu's influence.

Then there was the prophecy.

Nearing the end of the Modern Age, a respected Warden from one of the last great Houses of the Brotherhood barely escaped the blood thirsty cult of Cthulhu while in India researching disturbing rumors and clues on ancient scrolls and temples. Now safe he could acknowledge that their greatest fear was true. The Warden had finally found the missing part of a cryptic Naacalean warning - although Cthulhu slept, it would not be permanent. As the story told, if the Dark Stars surrounding Cthulhu's home system ever aligned with our planet, the Great Old Ones would be capable of sending out a psionic call strong enough to awaken the most volatile of their kind from its slumber - Cthulhu would have his revenge on the Naacal and all of humanity.

WARDENS

The Dark Stars were indeed about to align. Cthulhu lay in his crypt absorbing the dark energy the stars granted him. His visions upon the people of Earth were intensifying humanity's degradation and mental distress exponentially. Using the growing madness to fuel his power, Cthulhu had already rejuvenated and expanded the number of Starspawn upon the world and the time was now ripe. It felt as though civilization was about to crack under the unseen strain – until the unseen was revealed.

As predicted, one dark and volatile night when the Dark Stars were at their nearest, Cthulhu released his most ravaging assault thousands of years in the making. All the people of the world shared one dream, one nightmare, one insane delusion – that of an unimaginable creature rising from an oceanic grave as its ever-searching tentacles pierced the minds of every man, woman, child and even beast on Earth. At the same time the natural boundaries of sky, land and ocean came undone as earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis and giant electrical storms all unleashed their world transforming powers.

Within years the Modern Age had crumbled, its technology, science and cultural creativity all swept away under Cthulhu's wrath. Supercomputers and nuclear power fell, paving the way to a new human reality of steam-powered invention and primitive technologies, cobbling together the best of the old world with whatever remnants one could find. The Brotherhood simply had been utterly unprepared for the strength and speed of Cthulhu's revival, or for the number of Starspawn warriors given life by the madness and Dark Star energy Cthulhu had harnessed.



WARDENS

The Brotherhood, led by an army of Wardens, slaughtered Cthulhu's cults in countless numbers, but the Starspawn always corrupted more. Though they had a multitude of victories over the Starspawn themselves, the Brotherhood fell while most Wardens were lost to the maddening corruption in the battle – and once a Warden was corrupted, they and all their psionic power was used at Cthulhu's bidding.

Drained to exhaustion by the magnitude of dark energy now rampant upon the world, the Naacal Elders were overrun – it was simply too late. Though greatly weakened by Cthulhu's constant physical bombardment, the Elders remained the superior intellect. The Elders tricked Cthulhu by using his added power to transfer their consciousness into their Artifacts, the ancient weapons they had brought back to the battle. Although they were now imprisoned, Cthulhu would be unable to kill them or feed upon their remaining power. Upon realizing the treachery, the Starspawn quickly gathered the Artifacts of the Elders, now infused with their psionic personalities, and scattered them throughout the world - far out of the Wardens' reach.

The generations following the Chaos Apocalypse were hard. Cthulhu withdrew his madness ever so slightly in order for humanity to replenish its number enough to sustain his sick appetite. The presence of the Brotherhood faded from society as the few remaining sane Wardens rebuilt their power behind the scenes, with only rare and scattered sightings fighting to keep hope alive.

WARDENS

The title 'WARDENS' is centered within a decorative, metallic-looking frame. The frame has ornate, scroll-like flourishes at the corners and a glowing light source at the bottom center, giving it a three-dimensional appearance. The background of the page is a textured, aged parchment or leather.

The Brotherhood took the much needed time out of Cthulhu's watchful eye to build a secret and formidable army of steam-powered war vehicles for their Wardens, powerful enough to fight the Starspawn and traverse the skies, oceans and lands of an inhospitable world in search for the Naacal Artifacts Cthulhu had hidden.

For the Wardens there remained one hope - free their Elders for a final battle. It would be a desperate race, for when the last Dark Star finally aligned, Cthulhu would fully appear in this dimension and once materialized, swallow the world in complete madness.

The Last Great Battle between the Wardens and Cthulhu has begun.

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Cthulhu

From the binary star system Xoth in the violent depths of transdimensional space prevailed an insatiable and terrible pantheon of cosmic entities known as the Great Old Ones. Among them, one entity, the dementor Cthulhu had gathered a great host of supernatural shapeshifters called Starspawn. Their sole purpose was to create insanity and chaos for their master to feed upon whatever unfortunate world the incomprehensible being had chosen to ravage.

Having been compelled by the psionic power of the Naacal, Cthulhu had become obsessed with Mu and the inhabitants of Earth.

Since the entity existed in multiple dimensions, Cthulhu's revelation to humanity manifested as devastating nightmares, powerful enough to send the strongest minded into madness. Cthulhu desired the legendary land of Mu for his physical seat of power and with insanity spreading, his Starspawn worked unchallenged as they built a cyclopean stone city with eldritch architecture and disturbing monoliths in his honor. This unnatural city was given the name R'lyeh.

Aided by the Artifacts, the Naacal Elders' power proved too great for Cthulhu and they succeeded in binding him within a psionically locked sepulchre deep within R'lyeh. The nightmarish influence of a now slumbering Cthulhu and many of his Starspawn were consumed by the power of the Ocean.

The Galaxy between the two Dark Stars from Cthulhu's home system produced incredible energy, fueling the cosmic entities since the beginning of time. Now aligning with our planet and the stone city where Cthulhu is slumbering, he is able to absorb the psionic power of the Stars, getting stronger every day, slowly rising from the depths.

Now, after waiting for lifetimes, he would finally feed on earth's tormented people for millennia. His desire is to corrupt the last Wardens remaining, while spreading chaos and nightmare on humanity.

WARDENS





Morgana Bellamy

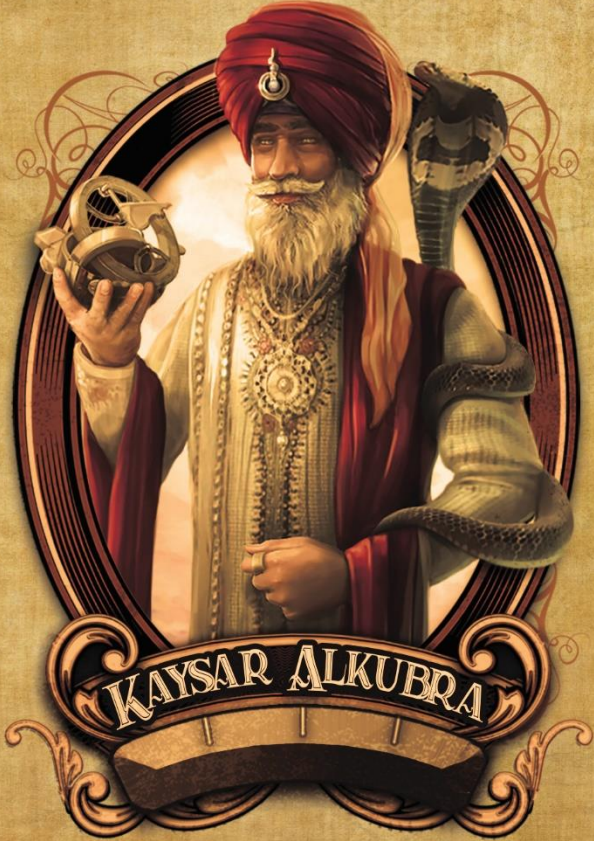
With the Brotherhood's refitting of her powerful steamboats nearing completing, Morgana has rallied her people, prepared their army of ships and is ready to once again set sail and make Cthulhu remember why the name Bellamy is feared wherever water touches the earth.

As ferocious and unpredictable as the seas she sails, Captain Morgana was born and raised with the sole purpose of taking up the mantle of a Sea Warden. Able to navigate its mysterious and deadly pathways since a mere child, and possessing a natural ability to command the loyalty of its formidable creatures, Morgana has grown into an equally unforgiving and unchallenged Champion of the waters she has sworn to defend.

It is no surprise, since her beautiful and capable body courses with the blood memory of a long line of seafaring corsairs and protectors that can trace its ancestry as far back as the Naacal purebloods themselves.

Captain Morgana's gifts are not only found within her blood but also locked inside the ancestral chest she inherited from a long dead ancestor, Captain Sam Bellamy - himself a Warden who fell to insanity in the last Great War with the Starspawns. Hidden within are two of Earth's last great treasures; an ancient chronicle of the Naacal Artifacts and the ritual required to release the Elders from within them, and the only known map of where the Artifacts may be found. It is said the map is drawn on the skin of a Starspawn. The Captain isn't alone on her voyages, as somewhere along the way she garnered the friendship of Rhum, her monkey companion who makes a mess on the battlefield, helping his mistress to rethink her war strategy.

WARDENS



KAYSAR ALKUBRA

WARDENS

Kaysar Alkubra

Kaysar was born into the very noble, royal family of Jaisalmer, Bharata's most revered desert bloodlines. Like his older brother, father and grandfather's father before him, the prince was taken away at birth where he was trained and molded into a most fierce young desert protector.

Hardened by the trials of the Brotherhood and the ravages of the sands, the prince, now a full-pledged Warden, was free to become his brother's Second- Hand during the middle of the Great Madness War that had darkened the skies of Jaisalmer during his seclusion.

By the time Kaysar was allowed to join the battle his brother had become the King of Jaisalmer and leader of the Royal Army – first in battle. The King had many victories on the front lines, but unfortunately it also brought him into closest contact with the Starspawn and their insanity. In short time the King had become Cthulhu's puppet in Bharata, able to use his Royal forces at will.

One night, in a mad fury the King ambushed his brother at the Warden's residence, but the Warden was ready. Kaysar tried every mind power at his command but the King had succumbed to the chaos and could not be reached. Death was his only escape.

The years that followed found a good leader in Kaysar, but the new King grew anxious for battle. One day he woke up, refused the title, and ordering his army to call him by his birthright – Warden Kaysar. Tired of spilling blood in the blinding sand, Kaysar took to the skies, revealing the rebirth of his family's ancient fleet of steam airships. The aerial perspective gave the Warden's Army an advanced tactical advantage over both land and sea.

Kaysar has a secret weapon in his pet companion – a cobra whose venomous bite can kill a Starspawn on impact. Like his zeppelins, Warden Kaysar is fuelled by a steaming rage, but also with a mission of revenge.

WARDENS





Selena Tracy

The technically minded grease-monkey is a wizard with anything built with nuts, bolts and steam – even though she holds no claim to the Warden bloodline. In fact, throughout history, Selena is the only Warden elected by the people and without Naacalean heritage. But if you saw her on the battlefield, you'd never know it.

Fighting for shelter and food scraps on the impoverished, shattered streets of Westralia, Selena grew up a scrawny but driven orphan.

Aided by a keen awareness of her surroundings and an innate knowledge of how things work, she quickly advanced through the ranks of various ruthless gangs, until she caught the attention of the Westralia Brotherhood Remnant.

Over the years, and with the Brotherhood's instruction, Selena became a fierce warrior who earned the people's admiration. Her engineering skills expanded, leading her to create a large army of steam-powered tanks and many robotic wonders. Besides improving their firepower, Selena began taking the lead in many of their battles, assuming the role of Second-Hand fighting alongside her Warden mentor. The Brotherhood's numbers grew as rapidly as Selena's popularity.

One fateful day during a security breach by a riotous Cthulhu cult, Selena's mentor rushed out to crush the attack. Concealed by the maddening crowd, however, awaited a manifested Starspawn. The Warden's screams drew Selena to the battle just in time to watch its tentacle break through his chest. Enraged, Selena retrieved her fallen mentor's weapon and unleashed years of built up anger upon the Starspawn. Those who witnessed the battle and fall of the creature say Selena embodied the Naacal that day.

Selena was elevated by the people and the Brotherhood alike, to the position of Warden first nonblood defender of Westralia. Accompanied by a lucky red panda with an uncanny ability when searching the lands for buried Components, Warden Selena and her tank army stand for the people of Westralia and the world.