



# AGE OF CTHULHU

## The Lost Expedition

### Volume IX

**SESSION 1 (405) - 05.21.17**

***DRAMATIS PERSONAE***

Max as Keeper of Arcane Lore

Jim as Mr. Basil St. John-Smythe

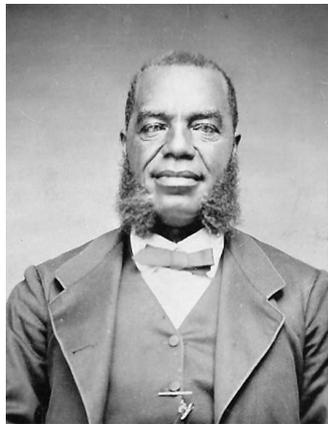
Randall as Tony Savarino

Jonathan as Major William Burnaby-Atkins, Retired British Army

Steve as Hollister Strong, A Southern Farmtographer (raised a farmer, trained as a cartographer)



Major William  
Burnaby-Atkins



Hollister Strong


## **BACKGROUND**

You have been hired by Geoffrey Leeds, the chairman of the Board of Regents for the Field Museum of Natural History to travel to China and deliver a notice of termination to the Norris Expedition and to arrange for the safe return of the personnel on Dr. Norris' team consists of:

A dozen University of Chicago graduate students  
Father William Armell of St. Alphonsus Church  
Ira Goldman, a Professor of Geology at the University of Chicago  
Dr. Ronald Kent, a biologist  
Lynne Robertson, a zoologist/naturalist  
~~John Brown, a cartographer~~ **DEAD - KILLED BY VIPERS**  
Thirty porters from the Chinese liaison

The Field Museum, Chicago, IL

We meet to be debriefed regarding the mission before we leave. Jan. 25, 1924 - The last shipment of fossils reached the Field Museum. Immediate incredulity ensued. That's when we were summoned.

Tensions are high at this point between the US and China regarding the previous removal of fossils and artifacts from China for housing in American museums. In general, the political situation is chaotic. Banditry is rampant as well in inner Mongolia. As the letter states, we are to find and ~~fire~~ let go the previous expedition based on ~~presumed~~, confirmed by the corresponding authorities on the field, fraudulent claims regarding the fossils sent back to the museum.

Inner Mongolia, China - Monday March 3rd, 1924 -

When we arrive in China, we are introduced to Mr. Chin Lee, our official translator and liaison/babysitter. We are loaded up in several touring cars, along with lots of porters/security. Also, 6 horses. (foreshadowing?)

The Gobi Desert -

We encounter immediate sandstorm resistance and have to stop early for the night. The night passes we resume our trek in the morning, bad storm in the night, we have to spend the next day fixing one of the cars...and on like this. One night, we have a plague of snakes and 15 of the porters are bitten, 5 of them perishing. Down to 17 porters. Did I mention the Gobi desert don't play?

Eventually, we make it through the sand and find a ruined camp in a hilly mildly vegetated area. The tents are still standing but ripped and torn. The cars are “ripped apart”, one of them taken apart down to the last bolt, and strewn about the camp. The animals are also slaughtered, and in one case, a horse’s internal organs have been removed and reassembled in exact order nearby, outside the body. Some of the animals are missing. Shocking! We’ve not seen anything like this before. Lots of footprints everywhere.

Surely bandits got ‘em.

## THE SINGING HILLS CAMP



The major notices the tracks of an animal, lined with spikes, going up a hill. There is the arm of a man 30 feet up a cliff face. Tony the lawyer bravely scales the cliff face. He finds...:



The body of John Brown, the cartographer. Also, some deadly vipers hiding under his body. Was he hiding in the cave when he died? We notice Lee’s porters going through the campsite and hurry to keep them from stealing anything. In one of the tents, we notice a plaster cast of something unusual: a tentacle with spikes. The major spies the tracks leading around a hill, some of the rest of us continue searching the tents. The major and Hollister follow the tracks and find a cave, lined with broken columns and boulders. We poke our noses inside briefly. There’s a whistling coming from within. Go to the left!

...back at the camp, Chang Lee is looking hard for something he thinks more important than the missing expedition members. Are there any artifacts here???

Professor St. John-Smythe leaves the campsite in favor of searching the dig site. This is weird too. There’s some sort of Sauropod, in the midst of being uncovered, but there are too many eye sockets and are those the remains of tendrils? This is legit. He quickly grabs his notebook and the tools, and continues the excavation. What a find!

...at the tents again, Tony uncovers a journal.

**December 30, 1923 - Relocated camp to new dig site right at the base of the Singing Hills. The granite platforms are layered in veins of gold, red, black and tan, beautiful and fascinating. We sent Leg and Hip fossils from a small theropod to Peking but the Larger finds have been ferried to Pyongyang to be shipped home.**

**January 2, 1924 - new amazing find. A sauropod with unprecedented features clearly used to help it forage for difficult to reach or difficult to eat plants. Some of the camels were stolen by some of the porters last night. The cowards are fleeing because of the ghost stories they tell about these hills. I've warned the other porters that I plan to shoot thieves should anyone want to consider stealing any more camels.**

**January 5, 1924 - The winds have shifted - and I now know why these are called The Singing Hills. The winds hip through eddies in the rocks like breath through a flute. Kent has discovered a cave not too far from the camp that seems to hum as the wind blows. It sets my teeth to rattling to think we'll check it out for first time tomorrow.**

**January 6, 1924 - All of my previous discoveries pale in comparison to what is inside that cave. The winds play hell with it though and it's damn hard to think straight in there. I've had enough of that damn hum. Father Armell has strengthened my resolve and we are praying for the winds to cease soon. More tomorrow.**

We hide the journal from Lee.

We decide to investigate the body of John Brown before continuing on into the cave. The major goes up the rope and blows the vipers away with his rifle, then investigates the body. Yep, that cartographer died of snake bites. Nothing found on his person. We wrap him in canvas and prepare him for transport home.

It's late afternoon, but we gather the gang (players only) and go into the cave. We find a ramp downward which terminates in a smooth onyx slab (door?) on the face. 30 feet tall! Completely immovable without proper tools. The professor is amazed. An unheard of civilization. The fossils also were legit!

We head back to the camp. The porters have been hard at work. A tasty dinner and expertly erected tents await us. We dispose of the evening as we will.

However, in the middle of the night, we are awakened by **the hum**. We feel it, don't hear it. The professor and Tony, along with Lee and all the porters are walking, zombie-like towards the cave. Hollister and the Major attempt to stop their friends but are unsuccessful. The two of them grab their rifles and follow the crowd. When we get to the Onyx door, it is now glowing white and rippling like water. The zombies continue onward. Hollister and Major Burnaby-Atkins are caught by the sensation and drawn into the door as well. Stomach churning confusion follows. Floating in white. Portals appear at every side-doorways to somewheres-but we drift on. We are in a white glow, tumbling around. A few freakouts happen. Screaming and phobias...Ahhhh!

## **SESSION 2 - 06.04.17**

### ***DRAMATIS PERSONAE***

Max as Keeper of Arcane Lore

Jim as Mr. Basil St. John-Smythe

Randall as Tony Savarino

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Steve as Hollister Strong, A Southern Farmtographer (raised a farmer, trained as a cartographer)

We come out the other side in a cave on the side of a mountain. There are dinosaurs (?) and a golden tower in the valley below.

The air is over-oxygenated (?) and we feel very invigorated. Any skill rolls of a physical nature will get a bonus die as long as we're here.

We notice some non-natural structures poking up through the trees to our left. Is it a village of some sort? We climb down and head towards it. Along the way, we pass what looks like a Stegasaurus with what looks like a bunch of flashing lights on it's back. SAN checks? No big deal. Just a dinosaur.

Another wonder we come across in a clearing: a giant totem carved with alien shapes. Very strange. We hear clicking and popping sounds and are suddenly surrounded by a group of these creatures:





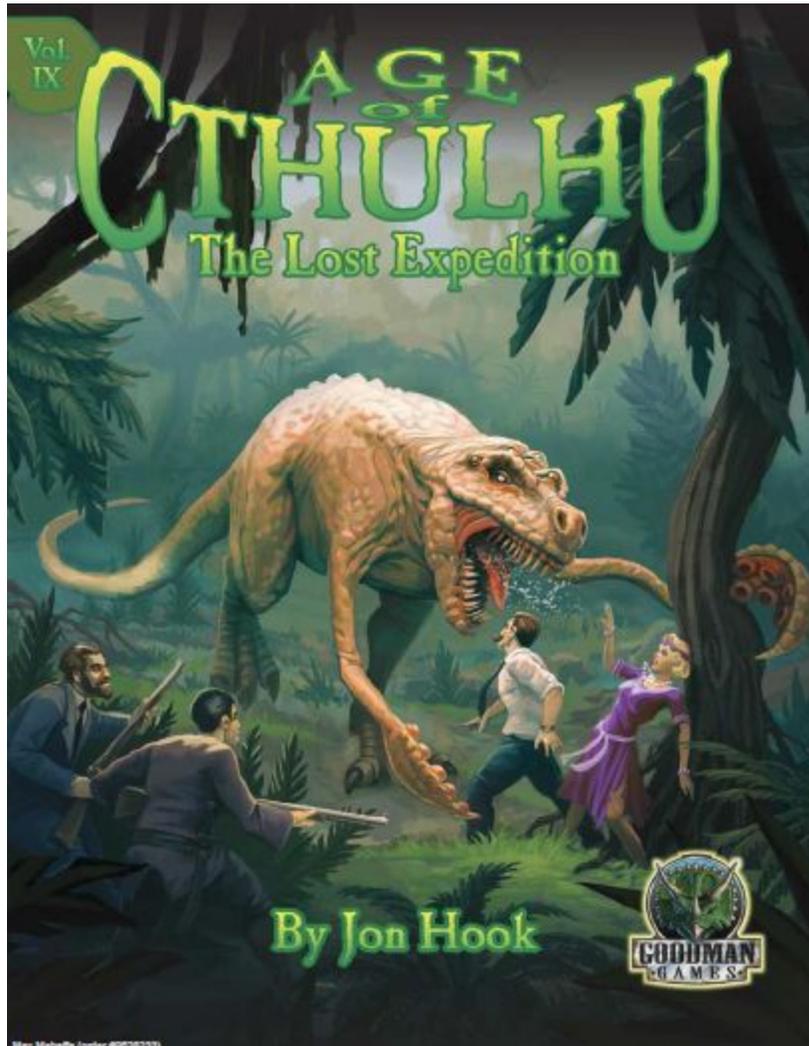
Here's something weird: These things are wearing clothes of some sorts (like traditional native american clothing) and holding spears. They regard us calmly.

Basil attempts to communicate. He speaks English and they...make chicken talk? But Basil seems to successfully communicate that we're lost and confused. Kind of obvious when you think about it. They take us to what appears to be their village. Lots of these chicken things walking around and doing villager-things. BTW, Lee and the 8 surviving porters are still with us. Our chicken guide (From here on out, to be called "Clicky.") drops a hunk of "mostly" cooked mystery meat at our feet and gestures us to wait here a moment. In a few moments, he comes back with a few of what look like village elders of the tribe, wearing colorful robes. Basil acts as our translator, introducing each of us by name. "Have you seen others like us?"

After some negotiation (we give him candy), Clicky agrees to take us to another village where are friends are. We try to leave Chang Lee and the porters here but he refuses. We all head out. Hollister is drawing a map. We have to cross the river by way of a large fallen log and enter the deeper jungle.

Suddenly, we come across some of our missing expedition being eaten by carnivores. Looks like 8 people. The creatures scatter when we approach. These bodies have been here for 3 or 4 weeks. Waitaminute! What's Chang Lee doing with that other corpse? Did he just take something from that body? He sure is mad about it. When confronted, he denies doing it.

Looking up, we notice a "giant T-Rex with large feathery wings flying at us as if it wants to eat us." Run! Oh, and he's got these long arms with four or five tentacles per. He eats a few of the porters as we flee. Clicky and the few other buddies he brought with him flee as well.



After we are able to re-form our group, we stand around panting for a while. Clicky suggests we head to the ziggurat. In the plains, we encounter a tall golden spire in the middle of nowhere. When tapped by hand, it sends a little electric shock through the tapper's hand. When tapped with a rifle, the shock is strong enough to char the shoulder stock. Clicky is no help and we eventually chalk it up as just another strange thing in this strange land.

The major has figured out that days last about 30 hours here and we've been at things for about 8 hours or so.

We finally arrive at the tall, golden ziggurat. It's taken us a few hours to get here. Maybe early afternoon by now. (noonish?) The structure is elaborate, has lots of tiny posts on it making a sort of staircase, and is covered with indecipherable (for now!) bas reliefs.

We ascend the "stairs." Clicky and his kind stay outside while Chang Lee and his porters come with us. At the top, there's a stone "hut" with a shaft disappearing below. Lining the shaft are a lot of these little column things, providing hand and foot holds aplenty. Climbing down looks easy, so we do. The temperature drops by about 15 degrees about halfway down. When we reach the lower part of the shaft, we see this chamber:

There's a large crystal in the center, and black columns spaced about the area. They are inky black onyx. The crystal is gently pulsing with a pink light. The Major rigs up a climbing system using ropes which would allow even a child to safely descend. To prove it, he slides gracefully down, smoking a cigarette the whole way. Basil and Hollister follow....perhaps a little too quickly, and fall on their heads, injuring themselves significantly in the process.

We wake Basil up and prop him up next to the crystal. This is where the coldness is coming from. Also, mist is coming out from the base, covering the floor. Of course, he touches it and can feel it pulsing with energy. The major experimentally touches the black columns...they feel like flesh or meat. Springy.

Professor St. John-Smythe chooses this moment to confront Chang Lee about what he took from the body in the jungle. Hollister hears this and angrily comes over when Lee denies doing it. Hollister is very forthright and a shouting argument ensues. Lee displays a photo of a woman about the right size and says he was taking a personal effect off of one of his porters.

Professor begins investigating the 4 shafts below us, calling for Prof. Norris and the lost expedition as he does so. 3-5 B and C appear to have vegetation down there. E has a large crystal down there, and D has a lot of cables. It's probably going to be easier to get down into B and C because we can climb the vegetation.

The Major ties a rope around his waist and lowers himself down into D, the one with the electrical wires. It's another pyramid-shaped room. There is no way to understand what the cables do. There is a lot of confusing equipment here, with some tanks off to one side and some sort of crystal/organic console. In a pile off to the side, there is a pile of men. The major can't tell their condition from this distance.



The pile of men: 7 porters, 4 graduate students, Dr. Norris, Father Arnell

In the 1st tank:

In the 2nd tank: Professor Goldman and 4 porters. e

The major is able to wake a battered but alive Dr. Norris. “

### **SESSION 3 - 06.11.17**

#### ***DRAMATIS PERSONAE***

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Norris tells us they came through the onyx slab, were attacked by the t-rex, ran, came to the ziggurat ... and then just woke up where we found him. No idea how they got inside or what's going on. Only been two days from his perspective.



Tony tries to work the controls, has a stroke and loses some CON. Basil climbs out and asks our friends for more rope, stays outside to keep watch and look at the reliefs on the ziggurat. The Major cuts a cable. The porters left in the main chamber are attacked by an Elder Thing. The porters in the chamber below attack the Major, Tony, and Hollister. Porters are killed, Tony is greivously injured, the Major manages to make it back to

the main chamber, where he finds that the Elder Thing as activated the pillars and flooded the room with 22 shoggoths. Basil legs it and lives out the rest of his life with the natives.

