

## MANSIONS OF MADNESS

All around Rita Young the conservatory was ablaze, wood splintered and glass shattered as the mansion was wrenched apart by unseen forces, and dragged room by room into another dimension. How could she have got herself into this mess, she should never have said yes to Joe (Diamond) when he asked for help with his investigation into strange occurrences at the Vanderbilt place.

They had met years ago at the Miskatonic University Library whilst studying strange secret lore, and Rita had accompanied him on many uneventful explorations, but this, this was unlike anything she had ever known.

She remembered entering the mansion, the strange butler, and that beast - that writhing mass of rubbery blackness on the dining table, the crazed Cultists chasing them, the ghost - could that all have been real? But there was much worse to come.

As they wandered dazed through the mansion, bit by bit she and Joe pieced together what was happening, the planetary alignment, the cult, the ritual to open a gateway between this world, and a place she had seen only in fever dreams after late nights poring over ancient tomes at the Miskatonic.

She snapped back to her current nightmare - behind her, Joe was holding off an impossibly huge worm like beast, a mass of fleshy tubes and tendrils held together in an outer skin, and its tentacled partner, a bloated horror of eyes and ravenous mouths, as Rita frantically tried to decipher one last puzzle left by the mysterious cult.

Joe's screams rose and cut off with a sickening crunch and she knew she was left alone, with one last desperate attempt to understand the runes carved into the ground, to close the portal and send the abominations back to where they came.

And suddenly in a moment of clarity the answer came to her, the ancient lore she had studied resurfaced, she translated and knew the meaning of the symbols, and reciting them aloud the unholy beings winked out of reality, leaving a void that collapsed with a deafening silence, and she was left alone amidst the dying flames.