

# She Never Slept

Sarah L. Covert



# She Never Slept

Sarah L. Covert's Portfolio

## — Contents —

I	Gaiman Caption Contest	1
II	The Ticket (Comic Book Script Excerpt)	2
III	Night and Dae (Comic Book Sample Script)	7
IV	X-Cross - Dream Quest (CD Review)	15
V	You'n'IT Cards (Collectible Card Game)	20
VI	The Saga of the ITs: Episode One (Story)	21
VII	About the Author	24

# Gaiman captured imaginations, now he seeks to capture souls!



By WILBUR WHATELEY  
Arkham Examiner Staff Writer / Photographer

NEAR MINNEAPOLIS - Neil Gaiman, awarding winning author of fiction for both children and adults, was recently revealed as the embodiment of evil. When tipsters alerted our paper that evil had at last arrived, we were indeed skeptical. It was reported to the Arkham Examiner that Gaiman could be seen wandering around near the edge of the woods summoning creatures abhorrent in nature. When I attempted to reach Gaiman via telephone for questioning, my calls went unreturned so I decided to venture to the last reported location of the famous author, wandering around his garden near the purportedly haunted woods. If I had not seen the preternatural glowing eyes of the supposed author and his beast with my own eyes, I would have surely written this off as a joke. It was a dark and stormy evening when I arrived at the evil one's domain. He must have summoned the ghostly images - that appeared just as spots on the photograph, but in person were much more horrific - in order to deter me from disturbing some ancient rite, from getting too close. The being that was known to be a celebrated author spoke to me in an eerie voice that was not at all his usually charming British accent. The low, rumbling voice told me to run. Readers, I will tell you, I did not hesitate - as much as I wanted to get the story. I can tell you this, do not let the tales he weaves lull you for that is his wish. He will control us all soon if we are not aware. Be warned citizens. True evil was revealed to me that day.

Noted "author" Neil Gaiman identified as evil incarnate as he walked through a field of Will-o'-the-Wisps with his hellhound protector (pictured above).

See EVIL INCARNATE, Page 23

PAGE ONE (three panels)

Panel 1. (Establishing scene - 1/2 page.)

The High Desert at dusk. The air is thick with dust. The ground is dry and cracked, with regional flora (cacti, sage, etc.) There are a few animal carcasses (snake skins, tortoise, or some other small desert creatures). In the center of the image is a long gray building. The building has “rust spots”, which have an unusual crimson tinge to them. The windows are haphazardly boarded up and have a thick layer of desert grit from the dust storms, one of which can be seen approaching in the far distance.

1 CAP: (In some ancient-looking font)

DEEP IN THE HIGH DESERT WHERE NO MAN DARE  
ROAM...

Panel 2. (Zoom on window - 1/4 page.)

There are tiny creature holes in the wood. In a space between the rotting boards a hand has wiped away some dust from the glass, just recently enough to be barely noticed under new layers of dirt.

2 CAP: (Continue font)

... A DARK SECRET LIES...

Panel 3. (Zoom on hole in dust - 1/4 page)

The view inside is partially blurred / obscured by the brown haze. Shadows of humanoid creatures scuttle about to various shadows of machines. In the center of the room there is a Douglas DC-3 passenger plane, fresh off the line and unpainted. The craft is suspended in the air, but from this vantage point we can't see how.

3 CAP: (A more modern looking font)

... HIDDEN FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD.



PAGE TWO (six panels)

Panel 1. (1 of 3 long, horizontal panels panning down)

Close-up of a pilot's crimson hat with black bill, focused on a peculiar gilded ant-like insignia where would normally be found pilot's wings.

Panel 2. (2 of 3 long, horizontal panels panning down)

Close-up on The Pilot's eyes. His irises are the same glossy black as his pupils. The whites of his eyes are closer to the yellow of cigarette-stained teeth. He is winking.

Panel 3. (3 of 3 long, horizontal panels panning down)

Close-up on The Pilot's mouth, a smirk creeping into one corner of his cracked lips.

Panel 4. (Zoom on panel 3 mouth)

The Pilot's lips are parted as he speaks. Bright orange, oddly-shaped teeth are visible.

1 PILOT:

PROCINCTU!

Panel 5. (Close-up of The Pilot's hand grasping a lever)

It is important to note his uniform is always pristine –creases, white gloves, etc.

Panel 6. (Wide ground-view of the plane and surrounding activity)

The shadowy figures scurry quickly away from the unfinished plane as it becomes enveloped by a flickering aura. Three or four groups of the humanoid creatures huddle a safe distance from the plane. There is one straggler frantically looking for a group to stand with.

2 CAP:

The Pilot's crew dispersed following their leader's command. They knew it meant only one thing...

PAGE THREE (six panels)

Panel 1. (Panorama of a typical dark alley in the industrial district of a big, dirty city)

Black, cracked and weathered pavement lines the narrow alley. A smog-covered moon dimly highlights a homeless man leaning against one of the buildings. Walking toward camera is the silhouette of a man carrying a briefcase.

Panel 2. (Close up of the homeless man)

The homeless man is holding himself up with the nearest brick wall. In his wrinkled hand he holds a battered paper cup with the words "Spare Change" crudely scrawled in crayon.

Panel 3. (Briefcase-wielding John Duran walking toward the homeless man)

John strides down the alley with a purpose. As usual a cigarette dangles from the businessman's lips. The homeless man extends his pitiful cup and jingles it loudly.

1 SFX: Jingle-jingle-jingle

2 HOMELESS MAN: Spare some change Mister?

Panel 4. (Tight shot of John's well-manicured hand)

The businessman takes the cigarette from his mouth and presses it firmly between his middle finger thumb, preparing to flick it. He is wearing a gaudy class ring of some sort.

Panel 5. (Wider shot following the flicked cigarette)

The cigarette flies through the air and lands like a guided missile in the homeless man's cup. The cup, containing a few paper bills catches fire quickly.

Panel 6. (Panorama of dark alley as John emerges from the other side)

The homeless man has become engulfed in flames, which emit an eerie light. He is laughing as John's shadow rounds the corner.

3 HOMELESS MAN: Hahahaha, hahahaha, haha ah heeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeelp...

PAGE FOUR (seven panels)

Panel 1. (Establishing shot of John Duran's residence)

This posh building is in stark contrast to the alley, still visible in the far background. There is a uniformed doorman standing by the secure entrance. His hat is crooked, a fact that doesn't escape John's notice.

1 DOORMAN: Good evening Mr. Duran sir, good day fighting crime?

Panel 2. (Mid-view of doorman as John passes by, speaking to him gruffly)

The doorman adjusts his hat with a hurt look on his face.

2 JOHN: I'm not that kind of attorney kid, and straighten your hat.

Panel 3. (Wide-view of a lavishly decorated entrance foyer)

In the entryway are small desk with rows of numbered mailboxes and an elevator. John is pressing the pent-house button while turning the activation key.

Panel 4. (Inside the elevator)

John is not alone. The young attractive woman standing next to him attempts to flirt, but the attorney doesn't give her a second glance.

Panel 5. (Just outside the elevator on John's floor)

He escapes the elevator and heads to his condo. His footsteps fall loudly on the marble floored hallway as he approaches his door; the only door in the hall.

3 SFX: click-clack-click-clack

Panel 6. (Wide shot of John Duran in the entryway of his condo)

To the right is an antique round pedestal table on which sits a phone. The "message" light blinks the number 37. John sends his coat sailing in a perfect trajectory onto a coat rack to the left.

4 SFX: (Answering machine) ... beepbeep...beepbeep...beepbeep...

5 JOHN: Dammit! 37 messages?! You have got to be kidding me...

Panel 7. (Wide shot of John's living room – cool color scheme)

John slumps in a leather recliner, his face tense. There is a massive flat-panel television on the wall. There is a circular coffee table that doubles as a tropical fish aquarium. The machine still blinks.

PAGE 5 (six panels)

Panel 1. (Close-up of answering machine – red hues)

John's ringed hand is holding down the delete button on the answering machine.

Panel 2. (Same action, but zoomed out so we can see John's whole body)

John taps his foot impatiently as he deletes the messages without listening. His fist is clenched and his body is rigid.

1 SFX: (Below foot)

tap – tap – tap

Panel 3. (Close-up of John's foot)

John's very expensive loafers tap furiously as bits of message escape while he deletes.

2 SFX: (Below foot)

tap – tap – tap

3 RANDOM MESSAGES: (Digital-looking font)

Hey John, it's Ruth.....beep..... Mr. Duran, we've  
been..... beep..... Joh... beeeep.... This message is....  
beeeep..... Hey Daddy, it's Kat. – where have you...  
beeeeeeeeeeeep

Panel 4. (Wide-view of John being distracted by a noise at the door)

John is growing more and more frustrated. He stomps to the door as his doorbell rings.

1 SFX: (OP)

Ding Dong

Panel 5. (Over John's shoulder looking at the opened door)

A delivery man with a crooked hat and smile stands in the doorway. His hat has a logo that looks exactly like The Pilot's insignia.

Panel 6. (Reverse view over delivery man's shoulder looking at John)

John stands in the doorway, his tie slightly loose and his face red with anger. He proceeds to yell at the delivery man.

JOHN:

What on earth are you doing here!? Who are you!?  
How did you get into this building!?



PAGE ONE (six panels)

Panel 1

Close-up of a margarita glass on a clear table. It's full of a strange, glowing liquid. The rim of the glass is covered in crusty salt and decorated with a lime. In the background one can vaguely detect the activities of a very crowded nightclub – multi-colored lights strobing, bodies writhing, arms in the air, etc.

1 SFX (THUMPING BASS):                      ThumpaTHUMPathumpabadadadathumpa  
   THUMPathumpa

2 CAP:    “Both knowledge and experience are real... —

Panel 2

Same shot minus the glass, which has been lifted to drink. In the vacant space we can more clearly see the human forms in the background dancing and writhing. The lights are in a different pattern than the previous shot.

3 SFX (THUMPING BASS):                      BadadaTHUMPathumpathumpa

4 CAP:    —But reality has many forms...—

Panel 3.

Same shot – the glass has returned to the table and is empty, lime crushed on the bottom of the glass. The background lights have returned to the same pattern as panel one.

5 SFX (THUMPING BASS):                      BadadaTHUMPathumpathumpa

6 CAP:    —Which seems to cause complexity”



PAGE ONE, CONTINUED

Panel 4

Medium shot of a woman's well-toned midriff. She is wearing a black silk halter top and an extremely short black skirt. There is a tattoo of an Arabian moon & star around her navel and she has a jewel, presumably from a piercing, in the center of her belly button. Her hips are in such a position that there is no doubt she is dancing. We don't see her arms because they are high in the air. (It should be noted her face is not in this scene either) The background is awash with bright colors and the club is crowded with writhing and seething bodies hypnotized by the thumping bass.

7 SFX (THUMPING BASS):

BadadaTHUMPathumpathumpa

8 CAP:

—Lao Tzu, from “Tao te Ching.”—

Panel 5.

Silhouetted side shot of same woman dancing. Her head is thrown way back. In the background the faces of the dancers who have gathered around her are visible. She appears to really be putting on a show, some of the gathered crowd is cheering. Her hair flows freely with a haunting, supernatural grace as she dances.

9 DAE (OP):

“What say you my darlings? “The Night” is still young...”

Panel 6.

Close up of the dancing woman's eye, reflecting back a view of the dance floor. A couple of her long black curls wisp into frame.

10 DAE (OP):

“...Right?”

PAGE TWO (splash page)

Panel 1.

Interior Establishing shot - Stereotypical Miami Beach Nightclub. The club is entirely made of glass – all of the tables and chairs, stairs, railings should be clear. Bright neon lights accent the railings on each level of this multi-tiered hotspot. We have a clear view of our dancer, the raven-haired beauty known as Night. She is on the dance floor, moving like a woman possessed. Clinging almost pathetically at her side is a cowardly looking man named Lo. He is attempting to appear cool in his black net shirt and tight vinyl pants – but the attempt only makes him look more pitiful. He has one arm on Night’s ass and the other waving wildly whooping it up with the crowd. Her arms are still in the air, she seems oblivious to Lo. Behind Lo, standing at the bar’s “pulpit” and holding a megaphone is a beautiful woman of Asian descent. Her auburn hair, with bright blonde streaks, glows unnaturally. She is dressed in a white leather halter and white leather pants, her trademark outfit. Her name is Dae. There is something regal and authoritative about her as she speaks.

1 DAE: “Ladies and Gentlemen... she can out-dance the best of them, present company excluded – of course.”

2 DANCERS “Night! Night! Night! Night! Night!”

3 CAP: —The Celestial, Miami Beach, Florida—

PAGE THREE (six panels)

Panel 1.

Medium close-up of Dae’s face. Her beauty is profound and ageless. She is smiling coyly and in spite of all the lights that surround her, it is clear she emits an unnatural white glow. The megaphone is at her candy red lips.

1 DAE: “Unfortunately my pets, due to the OVERLY TIGHT restrictions applied to our fine establishment by the BITCHES in BLUE, the witching hour is nigh.”

2 CROWD: “AWWWWWWWWWWW!”

Panel 2.

Medium shot of Night folding her arms in disgust. Lo is staring at the gorgeous, but vacant, blonde serving drinks to a corner table. The ditsy waitress is waving with all the subtlety of a slap in the face.

3 DAE: “Don’t pout my children, it is so unbecoming. This should cheer you up. For the next twenty minutes – before we have to crash – the special will be the house drink: The blazin’ hot Super Nova!”

4 SFX (From crowd): (Various wild cheers)

Panel 3.

The majority of the evenings’ patrons rush to the bar in a humorous stampede. People are moving so quickly you can literally see trails of smoke behind them.

5 CAP: — The Glory Days are over. The stories our elders told by the firelight – of the daring adventures of super-powered heroes and dastardly villains – are now considered “yesterday”—

PAGE THREE, CONTINUED

Panel 4.

Dae is spinning two bottles of alcohol in the air with one hand while pouring two more into a tall silver shaker with the other, her eyes never meeting her task. She smiles at the crowd, focusing her gaze on them. The patrons of the club gather around the bar staring, almost spellbound, at Dae as she works her magic.

6 SFX (From shaker):

K-tink nglunk nglunk nglunk

7 CAP:

— In these modern times, those blessed (or is it cursed?) with exceptional biological talents tend to flaunt them openly rather than tuck them away like the heroes of old.—

Panel 5.

Close up shot of Dae's finger tracing the rim of the shaker. It gets hotter and hotter and begins to glow with an eerie supernatural glow, not unlike the glow Dae herself emits.

8 CAP:

— Ever since the President signed that historic – some would say disastrous – Paranormal Declassification Act, those so endowed and less morally-minded have jumped at the chance to show the world what they can do. —

Panel 6.

With the lid now closed, Dae is vigorously – yet effortlessly – shaking the large metal container. She is grinning widely as her white glow begins to intensify, particularly around her hands.

9 DAE:

“OK my lovelies, you know what I want... I want to hear it LOUD and I want to hear it NOW!”

10 CAP:

— It has become a circus... an exhibition of arrogance. The hip, the trendy, the beautiful and the powerful people have been handed yet another opportunity to trample the less fortunate. —

PAGE FOUR (seven panels)

Panel 1.

From behind Dae's glowing form we can see the crowd – arms raised, eyes glazed-over and chanting. Just a few feet away is the tiny, spunky bartender Tempest. She looks up from her duties with an expression of disgust on her face. She has obviously seen this one too many times.

1 TEMPEST (quietly):

“Ugh... Lemmings, all of them...”

2 CROWD:

“Su-per No-VA! Su-per No-VA! Su-per No-VA!  
Su-per No-VA! “

3 CAP:

— And the saddest part of it all is that those bottom-feeders, those mouth-breathers, those “Have-Nots”, want nothing more than to feel the spike of the stiletto heel of the “Haves” stab their self respect over and over and over again. In fact, they beg for it. —

Panel 2.

Close up of Dae who is radiating brightly. She is winking and laughing aloud. Even the inside of her mouth seems to be producing a light source all it's own. She is filling three glasses with her special brew.

4 DAE:

“Gooood boys and girls”

Panel 3.

Dae's light-hearted smile fades in an instant and is replaced with a look of disdain. Her eyes seem empty; she wrinkles her nose and speaks with a more sinister tone, her teeth clenched.

5 DAE:

“Now... BEG ME!”

6 CAPTION:

— It is this dynamic that our young hosts of Miami Beach's hottest nightclub, Night and Dae, lust after. They THRIVE on their control over the masses. They have come to depend on it. —

PAGE FOUR, CONTINUED

Panel 4.

Dae's right hand is dancing playfully over the tops of the three glasses and a pool of white light begins to form in that palm as a result. The liquid in the glasses begins to depress slightly, giving a hint to the concussive force of Dae's light power. Behind her, both Tempest and the blonde waitress shield their eyes in preparation.

7 CROWD (More fervently): "Su-PER No-VA!!! Su-PER No-VA!!! Su-PER No-VA!!!  
Su-PER No-VA!!! Su-PER No-VA!!! "

8 CAP: — Every... Single... Night. —

Panel 5.

The light bubble emanating from Dae's hand EXPLODES VIOLENTLY! The front row of observers is knocked backwards from the shockwave. The glasses in their hands and on their faces shatter, but the three in the bar remain intact. Everyone in the entire club's hair is standing on end.

9 SFX (Shockwave): PHAAASSSHHH!!!!!!

Panel 6.

The crowd around the bar recovers from the initial shock slowly, pale faced and wide-eyed. A brilliant light still lingers over the bar, giving Dae an almost theatrical backlighting. The drinks at the bar are not visible. Behind the crowd, Night is ignoring the display. She is confronting Lo about his wandering eye. Her finger is poking his chest while he winces and shrugs as if he has no idea what the problem is.

10 CROWD: "YEAHHHHHHHHHH!! WOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

11 NIGHT (In the distance): "Lo, dammit... I swear I'm gonna --"

12 LO (In the distance): "Oh, like you never--"

Panel 7.

Dae leans over her "pulpit" and grabs a tall blonde gentleman wearing an open purple shirt and tight black pants and begins making out with him. She is horny and it shows.

13 DAE: "Mmmohmygodyyyyeah:

14 GUY (Startled): "MgImph!"

PAGE FIVE (four panels)

Panel 1.

Close up of guy's ear and Dae's glistening candy red lips.

1 DAE (whisper):

“Today is your lucky day plebe. In twenty minutes we will be in my bedroom and you will know the thrill of being fucked by a celebrity! Do we understand each other?”

Panel 2.

Close up of lucky moron with his very wide eyes fixed firmly on Dae's mighty cleavage. The look of confusion has turned into a dumbfounded, befuddled one.

2 GUY:

“Guh, guh, guh.... uh... oh... oh, ok.”

Panel 3.

Dae returns her attention to her adoring fans while her “pick of the night” slaps his friends high-fives. Most of his friends are women, oddly enough. One of them in particular, a cute little Hindi raver, is looking up at Dae awestruck. In the background, Night flips Lo the finger as she walks away in a perturbed.

3 GIRL (Thinking):

“oh.. my... beautiful Goddess!...”

Panel 4.

Closer shot of Dae as she holds up one of the drinks that was a part of the exhibition. It is crowned with a leaping blue and white flame. She winks her admirer, the Hindi raver, specifically – but addresses the whole crowd.

4 DAE:

“OK, so before the Night's wasted, WHO WANTS ONE?”



"Kadath - The Dream Quest" by XCross • review • five pages  
Written by: Sarah L. Covert ©TheThunderChild.com

"Kadath - The Dream Quest" by XCross

EK Balam Records

\$13.99

Available from:

[cdbaby.com/cd/xcross](http://cdbaby.com/cd/xcross)

[www.apple.com/itunes](http://www.apple.com/itunes)

or:

Ek Balam Records

550 Ritchie Highway, Suite M #204

Severna Park, MD 21146

[EkBalamRecords@gmail.com](mailto:EkBalamRecords@gmail.com)



XCross is a progressive/dark ambient musical duo composed of Al Baldwin and Chris Wikman. They formed XCross due to a shared fascination with progressive, electronic, and ambient music, combined with their love for "weird tales" and all things unusual. This led them to choose the short story "The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath" as the basis for their first concept album.

"The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" is a novella written by Howard Philips Lovecraft. It was completed in 1927 but remained unpublished until 1943, six years after his death.

Lovecraft resources at Wikipedia

# [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lovecraft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lovecraft)

# [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dream\\_cycle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dream_cycle)

# [en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Dream-Quest\\_of\\_Unknown\\_Kadath](http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Dream-Quest_of_Unknown_Kadath)

This is the longest story in what is known as the Dream Cycle and features the protagonist Randolph Carter - a frequently recurring character in Lovecraft's writings. Combining horror and fantasy elements, this story follows Carter through the vast landscape of his wondrous dreams.

Xcross's first album, "Kadath – The Dream Quest" released in May 2007, follows Carter on his journey to find the majestic sunset city.

Reviewers note:

I listened to this CD both on its own, and as an accompaniment to Lovecraft's text. As I break down each track I will describe my thoughts on the music as a stand-alone affair (SA) and as it relates to the story (WS).

1. Intro
2. Dreams of the Marvelous City
3. Seventy Steps to the Cavern of Flame
4. Zoogs in the Woods
5. The Black Gallery
6. The Image of the Gods on Ngranek
7. Pickman and Friends
8. Night-gaunts
9. Kadath in the Cold Waste
10. The Crawling Chaos Nyarlathotep
11. Falling Through Eternity
12. Boston

### **Track 1: Intro :31**

The first track on this concept CD is meant to serve as an introduction into Randolph Carter's dream world. It is a dark and moody synthesizer piece. There is a deep, rumbling spoken- word introduction that perfectly establishes the mood. "Three times Randolph Carter dreamed of the marvelous city, and three times was he snatched away". The voice tells us the journey is now beginning.

#### **SA**

This is a good way to get people in the mood for something eerie and unusual. For those unfamiliar with Lovecraft, or this particular story, it is a nice way to give them a sense of the journey upon which they are about to embark.

#### **WS**

The mood of the music and the voice are terrific in tandem with the opening paragraph of the story.

### **Track 2: Dreams of the Marvelous City 10:16**

A symphonic piece meant to evoke Carter's longing and dreams. This song is comprised mainly of strings, woodwinds and ambient synths that stir dream-like feelings. Later, plucked instruments and choral voices are added to convey darker tones and as the tension in the story builds, so does that of the music as percussion, horns and other instruments are added.

#### **SA**

This song is a great follow-up to the intro. The transition was so smooth I found it easy to lose myself in the story. The music was serenely dreamlike in the beginning, but became appropriately nightmarish toward the end.

#### **WS**

Based on Lovecraft's words ("...fanfare of supernal trumpets and a clash of immortal cymbals...") I was disappointed that said instruments were not featured in this section. This track wasn't bad, it just wasn't the best match for the material. The track length was also quite a bit longer than the part of the story it is meant to mirror.

### **Track 3: Seventy Steps to the Cavern of Flame 4:54**

This is intended to be a transitional piece that shifts Carter within the dreamscape. The track starts with a slamming door and falling footsteps. The music is filled with interesting synthesized, ambient sounds.

#### **SA**

This is another good follow-up. The footsteps explain that I am walking further down the path into the dream world. The melody is haunting and eerie.

#### **WS**

This track is a very good companion to its corresponding part of the text. You truly feel both the fear and the resolve of Randolph Carter.

### **Track 4: Zoogs in the Woods 4:15 - Feature Track.**

An energetic song with plucking instruments and upbeat percussion meant to demonstrate the interaction between Carter and the Zoogs (Zoogs are "furtive and secretive," "flitting small and brown" and they live in the Enchanted Woods, they pass freely between the dream world and ours). There are strange voices interspersed in this track that suggest the presence of the Zoogs.

#### **SA**

It is a good song that I could imagine dancing to in a club. That said it seemed out of place on the album as a whole. For a "featured track" I was expecting something a bit more iconic and representative.

#### **WS**

It didn't match the mood of the rest of the composition. There were effective moments when I really did feel as if I was walking in enchanted woods, but then the music takes off on strange tangents that pulled me right out of the narrative.

### **Track 5: The Black Galley 2:36**

This heavy percussion piece is meant to describe the sinister nature of the Black Galley and its unseen crew.

#### **SA**

This is very up-tempo and intense, and largely unexpected coming out of the previous track.

#### **WS**

This song did not at all convey the emotion necessary for this part of the story. What was missing was an element of fear as well as heightened tension.

### **Track 6: The Image of the Gods on Ngranek 3:08**

Electronic voices and ambient tones combine to create an ominous feeling of impending doom. Sounds of nature are heard as we follow Carter further on dream journey. The song culminates in a cacophony of pipe organs.

#### **SA**

This was a good follow-up to the last track. I felt a visceral reaction to the mounting tension.

#### **WS**

This song works very well with the part of the story it is portraying.

**Track 7: Pickman and Friends 1:59**

An instrumental with unusual tempo changes that guides the listener alongside Carter as he encounters some of the dreamscape's dangerous inhabitants. The distorted guitar-laden melody expresses the danger vividly.

**SA**

The song transition was smooth and the impending danger was palpable.

**WS**

My only real complaint is that this is track (conversely to Track Two) is far too short to be an effective accompaniment to the story.

**Track 8: Night-gaunts 2:31**

Intense, industrial track full of sampled violins that describe Carter's face-to-faceless encounter with the terrible creature known as the Night-gaunt.

**SA**

The protagonist's journey has taken a menacing and frightening turn. The danger is now staring him in the face.

**WS**

I disliked the shrillness of this song. Lovecraft describes the Night-gaunts as making no sound, not even by the flapping of their wings. A better choice might have been to let the sounds of nature around Carter and the creature tell the story.

**Track 9: Kadath in the Cold Waste 9:33**

Moody ambience, synthesized voices and deep droning sounds combine to create the perfect atmosphere for Carter's exploration of the deserted Kadath in the Cold Waste.

**SA**

This track was interesting and spine-tingling. You can almost feel the numbing cold as Carter traverses the Waste.

**WS**

This was an excellent parallel to the story. The sound of howling wind was very evocative.

**Track 10: The Crawling Chaos Nyarlathotep 2:08**

Music with very dark overtones and odd, alien-like chanting that describes Carter's meeting with the Old God Nyarlathotep.

**SA**

This effective, eerie piece makes me feel that I don't want to follow Carter where he is leading me.

**WS**

An interesting choice for the voice of Nyarlathotep, I enjoyed it overall and found it very appropriate to Lovecraft's well-crafted words.

### **Track 11: Falling Through Eternity 8:29**

The song begins with howling wind and quiet ambience, which continues to expand as the story tension builds, later adding percussion and horns when Carter is returned to the waking world.

#### **SA**

This selection works well to define the sense of being wrenched abruptly from a dream.

#### **WS**

The music follows the text very well, conveying the end of Carter’s dream.

### **Track 12: Boston 4:05**

This is a symphonic piece that vaguely mirrors the beginning with strings, woodwinds and that ever-present ambience. It is a good way to encapsulate the album and close out the composition.

#### **SA**

The song length was disappointing. As a closing track I wanted it to be longer and to perhaps touch on previous musical themes one last time. It does however do a fair job of winding things down.

#### **WS**

Much, much too short and I also would have liked to hear some of the sounds of the reality Carter is waking up to face.


### **Liner/Cover**

The CD cover art adequately suggests what you might discover within as you follow Carter to find the majestic sunset city. The liner notes have some details about Lovecraft’s story, song credits, track listings and several photographs of Chris Wikman and Al Baldwin and other miscellaneous dark imagery. It is overall a good package.

### **The Final Analysis**

If you are looking for some creepy background music (especially if you enjoy reveling in darkness), this is a CD to add to your collection. It seems to me that it would be inspirational music to write/draw/paint to. Regarding the album’s symmetry with the actual text, I find it to be a failed experiment but as a loose interpretation of the story I think it was an interesting take and worth a listen. I would recommend this CD to anyone who enjoys Lovecraft, Cosmic Horror, Dark and Ambient music, and perhaps even concept albums.

### Amber-Nae



- Pearly Essence Level symbolized by two brown circles in lower back is: 5
- Fighting Level with one yellow rectangle in the upper back is: 4

**Essence of Darkness**  
**Essence Powers:** Power to fly without a regeneration chamber.

**Race:** Da-Wrog, which is represented by a dark pink ring around the bottom of the IT.

**From:** Elfad

**Title:** 1st officer of the Starship Tara-1

**Color:** Amber-Nae has light orange lining her clothes and has dark blue markings at her feet for Essence of Darkness.

**Story:** Amber-Nae is the 1st Officer of the starship Tara-1. Her race has always worked with and around starships. Some say her studies and time with ships have taken her away from embracing the Essence of Light fully. Some ITs are suspicious of her true nature.

### Emperor Zortine



- Pearly Essence Level symbolized by two brown ovals in lower back is: 9
- Fighting Level with one red trapezoid in the upper back is: 9

**Essence of Darkness**  
**Essence Powers:** Power to communicate with the lawgivers from the Line of 7 Race. He can steal essence of power from another IT.

**Race:** RolyatsX, which is represented by a dark red ring around the bottom of the IT.

**From:** Roanac

**Title:** Emperor

**Color:** Emperor Zortine's clothing has a reddish gray lining with dark blue markings at his feet for Essence of Darkness.

**Story:** Emperor Zortine is the only known ruler of the ITs of the Essence of Darkness. It was Zortine who brought the Essence of Darkness back. He enhances the Darkness so well there is little known about him. His Darkness is overwhelming to most. Those who are of enhance the Light do not like to be in his presence.

### Captain T. Carr



- Pearly Essence Level symbolized by two orange diamonds in lower back is: 6
- Fighting Level with one green diamond in the upper back is: 10

**Essence of Light**  
**Essence Powers:** Power of invincibility in war and the power to create illusions.

**Race:** Paradisein, which is represented by a purple ring around the bottom of the IT.

**From:** Al-Gana

**Title:** Captain

**Color:** Captain T. Carr wears aqua green in his clothing and has bright yellow markings at her feet for Essence of Light.

**Story:** T. Carr is the constant and royal bodyguard and friend of Princess Brenna. She is of the Paradisein race, the most aggressive race of ITs from the Golarian Galaxy. She is very strong and has won many battles. At times, it is said, her Essence makes her invincible.

### Commander Stormy



- Pearly Essence Level symbolized by two purple rectangles in lower back is: 11
- Fighting Level with one green oval in the upper back is: 10

**Essence of Light**  
**Essence Powers:** His powers are evolving, and they are hidden. He has the power to add or subtract one fighting level and one level of Pearly Essence to another IT.

**Race:** The Creator, which is represented by a dark blue ring around the bottom of the IT.

**From:** Zanzer 7

**Title:** Commander

**Color:** Commander Stormy wears blue-lined clothing. He has bright yellow markings at his feet for Essence of Light.

**Story:** Stormy is the Commander of all the forces of ITs of the Essence of Light. He is very skilled and has other ITs in any way that he can. An explorer at heart, he enjoys his time with his co-pilot Princess Brenna, especially when it involves charting the nearby galaxies.



## Enter the Darkness

Let us begin at the beginning. In the long, long ago there was a galaxy known as Golaranac – a great cluster of millions of stars and their planets, wheeling grandly in distant space. Legends say that within Golaranac were two ruling races of ITs, The Creator Race and The Line of Seven.

The many races of ITs on their many home worlds lived in balance and harmony in this time of old. Something Sad occurred that tipped the balance and introduced disharmony. Angered by this discord, The Gods split the Golaranac Galaxy in two, creating the Twin Galaxies of Golar and Roanac. In this way, balance was restored and the ITs became peaceful and harmonious again.

The peace lasted so long that the meanings of words like “war” and “hate” were forgotten. Only two ancient and honored ITs could remember the unsettling events of the long, distant past. The Gods entrusted these ancients to preserve, but also to keep hidden the sad secrets of the Twin Galaxies. Their sworn vow to keep the old truths in silence served the ITs well for many, many millas.

The Chosen ones were:

High Priest Lockmora IV of Hature – Keeper of the Secrets  
and High Priestess Shayla of Os-Naug – The Restless Lady

High Priest Lockmora IV used all of his energy and craft to hold the secrets, and he knew that while his strength lasted he would be able to protect them, but...he had begun to sense weakness overtaking High Priestess Shayla. He could detect cracks in her resolve that flashed briefly, then healed over again but never quite as quickly as they had before. He knew that no secret may be kept forever, for time eventually uncovers all things.

Eventually High Priestess Shayla began to speak openly of her desire to reveal the dark history of the Twin Galaxies to all of the ITs, slowly and carefully, but in the end, completely. High Priest Lockmora IV denied her, believing the time had not yet come, that nothing should be revealed until the great Time of Change that had been long foretold. The Restless Lady pressed harder, becoming ever more eager to debate before all of the ITs the reasons why they should all be made to share the burdens of the past. High Priest Lockmora IV pondered the weakening of High Priestess Shayla, and he grew troubled.

The Bi-Milla SINJA, a grand gathering of representatives of all the varied races of ITs, was fast approaching. Dignitaries, ambassadors and citizens from every distant corner of the Twin Galaxies were beginning to pour into Golar. Ancient Lockmora sensed that the time had come to speak privately, sternly and wisely to Shayla, before she stood in front of the SINJA gathering and spoke irresponsibly. Was it too late?

The SINJA was the governing body for both Golar and Roanac. Two sessions of the SINJA every milla were open to any IT in the Twin Galaxies. It was always a busy time on planet Golar where the SINJA convened. The Bi-Milla meetings were more celebratory than solemn. Magnificent flora was imported and planted nearly everywhere, and colorful balloons of incredible shape, size and design floated above the streets and buildings. Entertainers and performers excited the vast crowds from colorfully decorated pavilions.

High Priest Lockmora IV used his Essence powers to ever so grandly decorate Golar's sprawling capital city Retnick. Retnick was renowned for its beautiful architecture and lush, exotic vegetation. The grass was such a brilliant blue that it glittered. This time of the milla the blowing wind often made it look like the waves of the great Pantana Sea. The glorious fronds seemed to glow under the light of Golar's three moons. The trees, in varying shades of purple, red, and blue, had long, twisting branches that stretched all the way into the clouds. It is said that you can reach the lusterans from the tops of those tall trees. Many a child has dreamed of reaching the skies and touching the glowing Gods themselves. It was an honor to decorate such a city, and Lockmora knew this. He created plants of the most unusual sorts; re-creating the beauties he had encountered on his many long travels. Colorful blossoms spread sweet fragrances throughout Retnick.

Lockmora was always proud of his creations for the Bi-Milla events, and he tried hard to make each Bi-Milla more spectacular than the last. This milla was also the first time he did all the work by himself, using his Essence to make every detail a magnificent work of art. Despite the pride he felt as he worked, his heart was heavy with doubt. His concern about the change in High Priestess Shayla worried him greatly, and dimmed his eyes to the glory of the Bi-Milla celebration.

Lockmora paced back and forth in the docking bay where the ships brought ITs from all the planets. He uneasily waited the arrival of Prince Zortine of Roanac, for he suspected that The Restless Lady herself was aboard Prince Zortine's starship, instead of traveling alone in proper fashion.

The docking bay was busier than it had been at any previous SINJA meeting. It too was decorated for the Bi-Milla, with the flags of each IT race fluttering proudly. Royal banners hung high across the runways, and the ports reserved for specific kingdoms were marked with handsomely painted symbols of their home planets. There were ships of all sizes and styles, from grand starliners for the bigger delegations, to much smaller, private space yachts – some in odd shapes, obviously homemade by their owners, who sailed them proudly.

The bay was packed with ITs docking their ships and meeting friends and family. Royalty and SINJA members were landing as well, to do their duty and also to see friends and family. Lockmora wished he could join in the joyous reunions, but he felt this was not destined to be a happy occasion. The wisdom he had gained over many milla told Lockmora that his confrontation with Shayla would likely not end in harmony. Still, a dim hope flickered in him that things might still end well.

The strikingly impressive royal starship from Roanac arrived. Young Prince Zortine had spent many meklas of his youth making it one of the most magnificent ships in the Twin Galaxies. Jewels of all shapes and sizes glittered on it like the lusterans themselves. On the side of the ship, etched in gold, was Zortine's royal seal along with his name.

As the doors of the starship opened, the first one to glide out was Zortine's longtime friend Andro-nac, who quickly, deftly surveyed his surroundings, making sure that all was well. He was very protective of the Prince. Andro-nac moved quickly, and so smoothly that some said he seemed to appear from thin air, and slipped away again unseen. Even when he was not seen, one must still assume that he was present. Andro-nac was quiet, always watching to see that all was arranged properly for Prince Zortine. Just behind Andro-nac came Jaroot'e and Netarnik, two more of Zortine's close companions.



Jaroot'e could communicate with any life form, which made him invaluable as the Prince's interpreter. (Zortine, it was whispered, liked to travel to distant galaxies in part to show off his splendid ship.) Jaroot'e's ability to communicate freely with other living creatures was a talent he had acquired when he was a very young IT. He remembered being able to talk to his pet loktire, which he often did to the shock of those around him, who considered that to be rather odd behavior. Many ITs found Jaroot'e odd in fact, though they could not pinpoint why.

Netarnik seemed almost out of place in this company. He was a historian in the Golar Hall of Records. He was intelligent, scholarly, and reserved, a friend of Prince Zortine from when they were both very young. Many imagined the Prince kept him close merely because of their youthful friendship. They did not see Netarnik helping the Prince to study, continuing the great interest in history and legend they had shared as children.

After Netarnik and Jaroot'e came the Prince himself. Prince Zortine had always been an ambitious IT who worked hard to win the favor of his father, King Jagine of Roanac. Zortine did not slow down as the crowd in the bay tried to get a glimpse of him. He knew that all eyes would follow him, and he enjoyed making his audience work for a peek. Somewhat surprisingly, in spite of his accomplishments and pride, Zortine had not yet shown his special powers, those unique abilities that every IT is endowed with. The ITs in the Kingdom of Roanac were sure that his Essence powers would be revealed any day, and they waited with some impatience. They knew, however, that no IT ever became aware of its powers before the exactly proper time, and they had to assume that his time had simply not yet come.

Lockmora was not surprised to see High Priestess Shayla gliding next to Prince Zortine. Shayla had become one of Zortine's associates and he feared what this could mean. She and the Prince were conversing in hushed tones. High Priestess Shayla saw Lockmora, but ignored him, paying attention only to the Prince.

Prince Zortine noticed Lockmora waiting for his party, and nodded politely, but did not go to him. He and his friends moved to the side and talked quietly among themselves.

Lockmora realized that he must make the first move toward the confrontation. He went directly to Shayla, and said, with tension in his voice, "We must talk, High Priestess."

## About the Author



Sarah L. Covert is a fiction writer currently living in Portland, Oregon with her adorable cat Misha. In the summer of 2010 she will be moving to North Carolina for some exciting new adventures with her husband. She grew up in a small (mostly rural) town outside of Pittsburgh, where her love for reading and writing science-fiction, strange tales and horror began. She was only 10 years old when she wrote her first scary story. Sarah's interest in the unusual has landed her many fascinating opportunities. In addition to several published poems and articles for online publications, she also created an expansive mythos for an alien culture featured in a sci-fi board game entitled "You 'n' IT". Sarah has even worked in film and television. She was Second Assistant Director for a zombie feature film called "Flesh Of My Flesh". Later, she worked as the Associate Producer of the local public access program "Northwest Artist Spotlight", and has contributed her talents to a smattering of short films. For several years she collaborated with Lurker Films, coordinating the "H.P. Lovecraft Film Festival" and "Zompire: The Undead Film Festival". Now she is here to bring you the latest in Science-Fiction, Strange Tales and Horror - news and reviews!

"Someone once asked what it was that first drew me to horror, science-fiction and strange tales. That's easy - Drive-In Theater Double Features. As a child my family and I would regularly go to the drive-in (back when they were far more prevalent). Usually they would play a "kid friendly" movie as the opener and a more adult movie later in the evening when the kids should have been sleeping. I never slept."

- Sarah L. Covert