

FADE IN:

EXT. - COLLEGE STREET, PROVIDENCE, R.I. - EARLY EVENING

PROVIDENCE, R.I. 1950

A small taxicab pulls up to the entrance of the Lillibridge Hotel. WILLIAM HURLEY taps his fingers on the steering wheel, while listening to the news report. EDMUND FISKE, a tall man in his mid-thirties, walks out of the hotel's lobby and enters the cab. He clutches his briefcase as he sits back in the seat.

HURLEY

Where to?

EDMUND

213 Benefit Street.

Hurley shifts both his taxi and his tongue into high gear. Edmund sits in silence and stares out the window, all the while, clutching his briefcase.

HURLEY

How bout those Giants. Dyou see  
the--

Hurley looks up in his rearview mirror. Edmund stares out the window.

HURLEY (cont'd)

How bout this weather. Supposed to  
be like this all week.

Edmund sits like a statue.

HURLEY (cont'd)

Hey mister, you okay.

Edmund turns from the window and smiles as he nods his head.

HURLEY (cont'd)

Dija hear about the two missing  
cats from the circus?

Edmund shakes his head.

HURLEY (cont'd)

Only in Providence can two gigantic  
cats roam the city. Friggin police  
wouldn't be able to catch a cold if  
trapped in an ice box for a year.

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Hurley pulls up on Benefit Street. Fiske hands him eighty-five cents and leaves the cab with his briefcase.

EXT. - FEDERAL HILL, PROVIDENCE, R.I. - EARLY EVENING

FIFTEEN YEARS EARLIER

On the far horizon, against the countryside's purple slopes rises the spectral hump of Federal Hill. Bristling with huddles roofs and steeples whose remote outlines waver mysteriously, taking fantastic forms as the smoke of the city swirls up and enmeshes them, the church looms blackly against the flaming sky. H.P. LOVECRAFT, a tall, gangly man walks with his young pupil, Edmund Fiske.

EDMUND

I can't believe he is dead. What was he doing there?

LOVECRAFT

Researching.

EDMUND

Researching? He was burnt-to-death.

LOVECRAFT

Well after the lighting storm that night, anything is possible.

Edmund rolls his eyes.

LOVECRAFT (cont'd)

Not to mention the history of the church.

EDMUND

Do you hear what you are saying? He was found in a room in an old church--burnt-to-death.

LOVECRAFT

Like I said, the church had a notorious history for strange things. Men from the town used to gather here--

EDMUND

What exactly is this Starry-Wisdom sect?

The two men stop at the gated entrance to the church.

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LOVECRAFT

From what I could gather from the Miskatonic library, a professor by the name of Bowen from the university charted an expedition to the Giza region in south Egypt.

EDMUND

Another fanatic searching for recognition?

LOVECRAFT

Well in 1844, he claims to have found the final resting place of Nephren-Ka.

EDMUND

But I thought he was a myth. His name was supposedly stricken from all of the writings. His existence is undetermined.

Lovecraft turns his head up and stares at the peak of the silhouetted steeple.

LOVECRAFT

There is always truth in myths. (Beat) Bowen obviously found something of interest because he returned to New England in 1845. Then he purchased the Free-Will Church in the fall of '45.

Edmund looks up at the tallest, windowless steeple. Its ominous shadow in the moonlight makes his body shiver.

LOVECRAFT (cont'd)

Lots of strange disappearances occurred for years. And it was not until the summer of '76, that the authorities closed it down.

EDMUND

Until Robert arrived.

Lovecraft turns towards Edmund. He steps in closer and looks into his eyes.

LOVECRAFT

I offered words of warning. (BEAT) But he was a hysteric, young man. He was too determined.

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Lovecraft eases back and straightens his jacket.

INT. - EDMUND FISKE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

CHICAGO, IL 1936

Edmund Fiske sits at his small desk while talking on the phone. The window allows sufficient light to enter the room and illuminate the otherwise dark room.

EDMUND

Of course I read it.

Edmund shuffles through the pile of papers on his desk and picks up a copy of The Haunter of the Dark by H.P. Lovecraft.

EDMUND (cont'd)

No, Your imagination never ceases to amaze me. Your story--

LOVECRAFT (V.O.)

Robert's story.

EDMUND

What do you mean?

LOVECRAFT (V.O.)

When the police found his body the only other thing in the room was his leather-bound notebook. When I found this out, I offered to look at it, to possibly help them with what it meant. Most interesting.

Edmund pages through the copy of the book.

EDMUND

So you just took the entries and made them into your story.

LOVECRAFT (V.O.)

I sent most of the money back to his family in Milwaukee. (BEAT) But I just added my own details. I felt that Robert would have wanted it this way.

Edmund stands up and walks over to his window.

EDMUND

What was that thing, a Trapezon--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOVECRAFT (V.O.)

Trapezohedron. That's what Robert was referring to in his journal. My guess is that is why Bowen returned from his excavation.

EDMUND

But you said the only thing in the room was the journal. Where is this thing.

LOVECRAFT (V.O.)

A local physician by the name of Dexter--I've gone to him a few times. But it seems he didn't share the coroner's physician's report of electrical shock by lightning.

EDMUND

The room was windowless!

LOVECRAFT (V.O.)

Exactly. His neighbor, an old fisherman said that the doctor charted a boat out to Narragansett Bay that night.

EDMUND

That's strange. You don't suppose--

LOVECRAFT (V.O.)

I'm not sure. After that night, no one saw or heard from him again.(BEAT) I don't want to hold you up.

EDMUND

No, no. I just-- Anyway, congratulations on another success.

LOVECRAFT (V.O.)

Thank you. Will you be here in March?

EDMUND

I'll be there old friend.

Edmund hangs the phone up. He sits back in his chair and looks out the window.

EXT. - SWAN POINT CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

PROVIDENCE, RI, 1937

The sun shines down on the rolling landscape of the cemetery. FATHER MERLUZZO reads a prayer to the only attendant, Edmund Fiske. After he finishes, Father Merluzzo places his hand on Edmund's shoulder and walks away. Edmund stands there and stares at the tombstone, which reads *HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT, AUGUST 20, 1890 - MARCH 13, 1937, I AM PROVIDENCE.*

EXT. - BENEFIT STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Edmund walks slowly down the street. He holds a small piece of paper with 213 written on it. He looks up at the house. The grass, starting to lean over, reaches his knees. The corroded, brass sign on the door reads *DR. AMBROSE DEXTER, M.D.*. Edmund starts walking up the stairs.

OLD MAN (O.S.)

He's gone son.

Edmund jumps and looks over his shoulder.

EDMUND

Excuse me--oh I know.

Tom Jonas, an old man, wearing a fisherman's jacket, stands on his front porch eating an apple.

JONAS

Been gone since he drown the devil.

EXT. - JONAS' FRONT PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Jonas and Edmund sit on the front porch. Edmund clutches his arms as he watches Jonas finish his apple.

JONAS

Yeah I remember. It was the same night as that strange thunderstorm. Dr. Dexter came over in the middle o'midnight. Said he needed my boat.

EDMUND

Did he say for what?

JONAS

He caught the devil.

Edmund sits back in his chair and rubs his chin.

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JONAS (cont'd)

I took him out to Narragansett Bay.  
He paid me twenty smackers.

Jonas throws his apple into his yard.

JONAS (cont'd)

All the way he kept staring at the  
sort of jewel thing. And he was  
mumbling some foreign language.  
'Tweren't French or German or  
Italian. Polish mebbe. But I  
didn't say anything against Dr.  
Dexter. He comes from a fine old  
family. Besides he paid me twenty  
smackers.

EDMUND

Anything else.

JONAS

No, he just seemed glad to get rid  
of it, as I recollect. On the way  
back he told me to keep mum bout  
it. (BEAT) But that was long ago.

EDMUND

Can I ask you a favor. Here is my  
number in Chicago. If you see  
anything, please contact me.

INT. - LOBBY OF EDMUND'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

CHICAGO, IL, 1939

Edmund carries a letter addressed to Dr. Ambrose Dexter. He places it in the out-going mailbox and walks over to his box. He opens it and pulls out his mail. Three of the letters say *PERSON UNKNOWN*. He focuses on the address, *213 Benefit Street*.

INT. - CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

CHICAGO, IL, 1941

The library flows with its usual activity. The librarian sits behind the desk and sorts through some books. Edmund stands next to the huge window that overlooks the city. He reads a newspaper with a huge headline that reads, *UNCLE SAM DECLARES WAR ON JAPAN*.

INT. - EDMUND FISKE'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

CHICAGO, IL, 1944

Edmund enters his apartment and throws a bunch of letter on his desk. The huge pile falls over onto the floor. All of the envelopes say PERSON UNKNOWN. Edmund turns on his radio.

RADIO VOICE

...total U.S. war casualties are  
now reported to have passed the  
500,000 mark...

Edmund walks into his bathroom.

EXT. - CHICAGO NEWSSTAND - EARLY MORNING

CHICAGO, IL 1945

The winds blows Edmund's jacket around as he picks up *The Chicago Tribune*. He looks at the headline and shakes his head. The old man that runs the newsstand walks over.

OLD MAN

Finally going to teach those Japs  
who is in charge here.

EDMUND

Yeah, (hesitantly) yeah.

INT. - CHICAGO LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

CHICAGO, IL 1949

A librarian and Edmund look through a huge pile of newspapers and journals.

LIBRARIAN

This is odd. I thought you said he  
was a doctor. Like in medicine.

EDMUND

He is--

The librarian hands Edmund a journal on Astrophysics. Edmund turns it around and reads the title.

EDMUND (cont'd)

Practical Applications in Military  
Technology?

(CONTINUED)

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LIBRARIAN

Well this helps us more on our search. We've been looking in the wrong places.

EDMUND

But what the hell does the military want with him.

The librarian stands up and grabs a handful of the medical journals.

LIBRARIAN

Let me go put some of these back.

Time passes as Edmund reads the whole journal article. The librarian walks back with a newspaper. She places it in front of Edmund.

LIBRARIAN (cont'd)

We've been at this for months. Amazing how it all comes together.

Edmund skims through an article and stops on certain phrases: Dr. Ambrose Dexter...on a special mission...engaged in...

EDMUND

Confidential Defense Work?

INT. - EDMUND FISKE'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

CHICAGO, IL 1950

Edmund closes the door. He walks over towards his desk and shoves all the returned letters into a wastebasket. His phone rings.

EDMUND

Hello.

JONAS

This is Tom Jonas.

EDMUND

Tom Jonas?

JONAS

From Providence.

Edmund straightens up.

EDMUND

Oh yes, I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONAS

I've been callin all afternoon.  
The lights have been on sense last  
night. And this morning, groceries  
were delivered.

Edmund grabs his wallet and opens it up. He fans through his  
money.

EXT. - BENEFIT STREET - EARLY EVENING

Edmund closes the cab door and walks up to the house. He  
clutches his briefcase handle. Edmund stares up at the  
paneled doorway. The nameplate gleams. From inside, lights  
glow in every room.

Edmund slowly moves his hand to the doorbell. He rings it  
and the door quickly opens. A small, tanned skin man with a  
slight stoop appears.

SMALL MAN

Yes?

EDMUND

Dr. Dexter, please.

SMALL MAN

The doctor is not into callers. He  
is ill.

Edmund looks in the house.

EDMUND

Would you take a message, please?

SMALL MAN

Certainly.

EDMUND

Tell him that Edmund Fiske of  
Chicago wishes to see him at his  
convenience for a few moments. I  
have come all of the way from the  
mid west for this purpose and what  
I have to speak to him about would  
take only a moment or two of his  
time.

SMALL MAN

Wait please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The door slams shut. Edmund stands in the gathering darkness and transfers his briefcase from one hand to the other. After a short while the door rips open again.

SMALL MAN (cont'd)

Mr. Fiske. Are you the gentleman who wrote the letters.

EDMUND

Letters-- Oh yes, I am. I did not know the doctor--

SMALL MAN

Come in.

INT. - DR. DEXTER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Edmund stands in the threshold of the illuminated house. He wipes his forehead as small droplets of sweat form on his brow.

SMALL MAN (cont'd)

Just upstairs, if you please. Dr. Dexter is waiting in the study.

Edmund ascends the stairs and turns to face a doorway.

INT. - DR. DEXTER'S STUDY - EVENING

The room glows with the same radiance as the rest of the house. Next to the fireplace, a tall, thin, immaculately dressed man rises from his chair. His natural grace and elegance of movement conceal his very deep suntan. He holds out his hand.

DEXTER

So you are Edmund Fiske.

His warm and firm handshake compliments his soft, well-modulated, and unmistakably New England accent. Doctor Dexter's smile gleams against his brown background.

DEXTER (cont'd)

Won't you sit down?

Dr. Dexter indicates a chair and slightly bows. Edmund walks over in its direction and glances over at the bookshelves on the opposite side of the room. He hesitates before taking his seat and inspects the books.

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EDMUND

De Vermis Mysteriis, the Liber  
Ivonis and a Latin version of the  
Necronomicon. How did you come--

DEXTER

I found them at the church.

Dr. Dexter sits down in his chair. Two glass cups and a  
bottle of wine sit on a table between the two men.

I thought it was best they don't  
fall into the authorities' hands.

Edmund returns to his seat and holds his briefcase. He  
fumbles with the clasp.

DEXTER (cont'd)

Don't be uneasy. Let us proceed  
without fencing. You are here to  
discover what part I played in the  
affair of your friend's death.

EDMUND

Yes, I had some questions.

Dr. Dexter raises his hand.

DEXTER

Please. I am not well and can only  
give you a few minutes. Let me  
tell you what little I know.

Edmund nods his head.

DEXTER (cont'd)

I met Robert Blake, only once. It  
was the evening during the later  
part of July, 1935. He came to me  
as a patient.

Edmund tilts his head as his mouth slowly opens.

EDMUND

I never knew that.

The candle flickers on the table in front of Dr. Dexter. It  
creates wavy shadows on his tanned skin.

DEXTER

Why should you have. He came to me  
claiming he had insomnia. I  
prescribed a sedative.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DEXTER (cont'd)

That is when he told me of his visit to the church on Federal Hill. I wanted to dismiss his tale as a product of hysteria, but I am a member of one of the oldest families in this area. I know the tale of the Haunter of the Dark. Young Blake had concerns that he was somehow linked to the monstrosity in the church. I tried to reassure him and told him to leave Providence and forget it. I only acted in good faith.

Dr. Dexter reaches forward and offers Edmund a drink. Edmund shakes his hand.

EDMUND

Why did you go?

Dr. Dexter takes a sip.

DEXTER

Wouldn't you have done the same? If it was you he came to, would you not have done the same? I went to the church, found the books and the jewel he was talking about. Then I chartered a boat and dumped the accursed thing in the Bay. Eternally exposed to light.

Edmund looks at the doctor and stares into his eyes. He then shakes his head and continues listening to his story.

DEXTER (cont'd)

I regret my work in recent years has prevented me from communicating with you. I hope this clarifies everything. I can have a written testimony to you by tomorrow.

Dr. Dexter rises, signifying the interview complete. Edmund remains in his seat and shifts his briefcase.

DEXTER (cont'd)

Now if you will excuse me--

EDMUND

In a moment. I would appreciate you answering a few more questions.

DEXTER

Certainly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Dr. Dexter returns to his chair.

EDMUND

Did you by any chance see Lovecraft  
before or during his last illness?

Edmund stares at the doctor. Dr. Dexter's complexion starts  
to fade.

DEXTER

No, I never met the man. I knew of  
his work though.

EDMUND

What caused you to leave Providence  
so abruptly after the Blake affair.

Dr. Dexter shifts his position in the chair. He holds his  
glass next to his face.

DEXTER

My interest in physics superseded  
my interest in medicine. As you  
may or may not know, during the  
past decade, I have been working on  
problems related to nuclear  
fission. Starting tomorrow I'm  
leaving to deliver lectures in  
eastern Universities and certain  
government groups.

EDMUND

Very interesting. By the way have  
you ever met Albert Einstein?

Dr. Dexter leans forward and places the glass on the table.

DEXTER

As a matter of fact, I worked with  
him on--but no matter. Another  
time, you must excuse me.

Dr. Dexter grows impatient. Edmund rises, lifts his  
briefcase in one hand and extinguishes a table lamp with the  
other. Dr. Dexter crosses swiftly and lights it again.

EDMUND

Why are you afraid of the dark,  
Doctor?

DEXTER

I'm not af--(losing composure)  
What makes you think that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

EDMUND

You acted too hastily. You threw the stone in the Bay where it would be surrounded by blackness forever. There the Haunter's power would feed and grow. That's why you left Providence.

DEXTER

I must definitely ask that--

Dr. Dexter waves his hand towards the door. Edmund steps closer.

EDMUND

It came to you but it did not kill you. It used you. You fear dark like it fears being discovered. It merged. You are the Haunter of the Dark.

Edmund steps back as Dr. Dexter leans forward in his chair.

DEXTER

Mr. Fiske, really--

EDMUND

There is no Dr. Dexter. Hasn't been for years. An empty shell possessed by an entity that insinuated itself into the proper circles. Assisting foolish men into their sudden discovery of nuclear fission. How you must have laughed when the first atomic bomb dropped. Now the hydrogen bomb. All new ways to bring about our destruction.

Edmund walks over to the lamp again and stands behind it. Dr. Dexter shifts forward but remains in his seat.

EDMUND (cont'd)

It took me years to discover the clues. Lovecraft wrote his myths, but he knew. I remember something he said once. There is always truth in myths. He knew of your coming. He wrote it down time and again. Blake knew it too, only he had a different fate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

DEXTER

You are a victim. Same as Blake and Lovecraft. Everyone knows that Lovecraft's mythos stories were pure invention.

EDMUND

I thought so, until I found the clues in his poems. That's when it all fit in.

Edmund picks up a copy of one of Lovecraft's poems. He begins reciting the words.

EDMUND (cont'd)

*And at the last from inner Egypt  
came the strange dark One to whom  
the fellahs bowed.*

DEXTER

Nonsense--if you must know, (grabs his skin) this is exposure to radiation in Los Alamos.

Edmund continues the poem.

EDMUND

*That wild beasts followed him and  
licked his hands, soon from the sea  
a noxious birth began; forgotten  
lands with weedy spires of gold;  
the ground was cleft, and mad  
auroras rolled down on the quaking  
citadels of man. Then, crushing  
what he chanced to mould in play,  
the idiot Chaos blew Earth's dust  
away.*

Dr. Dexter grabs his collar and pulls it loose. His skin shines in the light.

DEXTER

Ridiculous. It's not literal. Do wild beasts lick my hands?

Dexter holds out his tan hands.

DEXTER (cont'd)

Earthquakes and auroras? Nonsense. You are suffering from atomic jitters.

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CONTINUED: (6)

EDMUND

He had to hide its meaning. But even then it was too late and they got him.

Edmund walks over to the bookshelf.

DEXTER

They?

Edmund grabs an old book from the shelf. He throws it down on the table and the candle nearly extinguishes.

EDMUND

They from Outside, the ones you serve.

Edmund points at the ancient book

You are their Messenger. You came from inner Egypt. And the fellahs, the workers of Providence who became the Starry-Wisdom sect. The Trapezohedron was thrown into the Bay. Your incarnation in the body of Ambrose Dexter. You taught men destruction. Oh Lovecraft knew. And Blake recognized you too. I guess you will kill me now.

Edmund straightens up. Dr. Dexter leans back in his chair.

All it took were suggestions. I guess man is naive.

DEXTER

Please, control yourself. Let me get you something. Can't you realize this is absurd.

EDMUND

Of course it is absurd. No one ever believed the sect. No one ever took Blake's stories or Lovecraft's or mine for that matter as anything but morbid entertainment. No one sees anything wrong with there scientific investigations in atomic energy.

Edmund reaches into his briefcase again and pulls out a gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

EDMUND (cont'd)  
And that is why I'm going to kill  
you now.

Dr. Dexter jumps up from his chair. He slowly back his way  
towards the door.

DEXTER  
(Trembling) Put the gun down.

EDMUND  
That's all I need to know. Since  
you are in a human body you can be  
destroyed.

Edmund raises the gun and takes aim at the doctor.

EDMUND (cont'd)  
As so I do destroy you--

Edmund's finger moves as Dr. Dexter shuts off the master  
switch.

INT. - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - EVENING

The door slowly opens and Dexter walks out. He peers over  
the banister. His small servant stands at the foot of the  
stairs.

DEXTER  
There has been a regrettable  
accident. Call the police but  
continue packing. We leave tomorrow  
for the lecture tour.

SMALL MAN  
But the police will detain you.

Dexter stands up and walks towards his servant.

DEXTER  
I think not. It's a clear cut  
case. When they arrive, notify me.  
I shall be in the garden.

INT. - HALLWAY - EVENING

Dr. Dexter proceeds down the hall towards the rear exit.

EXT. - GARDEN - EVENING

Dr. Dexter emerges upon the moonlit splendor of the garden. The radiant vista sits behind a wall sectioning it off from the rest of the world. Dr. Dexter stands in the moonlight and its glow mingled with his own aura.

Two silken shadows leap over the wall. They crouch in the coolness of the garden, then slither towards the doctor.

In the moonlight, the shapes of the two black panthers advance, padding purposefully towards him; eyes aglow, jaws slavering and agape.

Dr. Dexter turns away. His face turns in mockery to the moon as the beasts fawn before him and lick his hands.