

Odds and Ends: Volume Two

March 15th, 1919

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March 15th, 1919” is the second installment in the *Odds and Ends* series of web enhancements for *Heaven & Earth*. It is not an adventure in the proper sense, but a springboard for possible adventures. No fleshed out scenario is provided in these pages, and gamemasters are encouraged to personalize the material presented to fit their own games.

At the heart of “March 15th, 1919” is a suicide letter. This letter, presented below, is intended to be a springboard for one or more *Heaven & Earth* investigations. The letter can be a catalyst for an adventure, the explanation behind an adventure, or anything else the GM sees fit. Following the letter, GMs will find three suggestions for using it in their games. Gamemasters may choose from any of the three suggestions or ignore all three, instead incorporating the contents of the letter in a manner of their own creation.

March 15th, 1919

Father McGuire,

I know that what I've done is wrong, so wrong. The hope of heaven is beyond me now, so I'm not even sure why I'm writing this to you. I guess it's partly so that Julie's folks and mine will know some of what happened. Maybe it'll count as a form of confession, for when I'm done.

See, Pa always said that a person is supposed to be accountable for their actions. The army backed him up on this one. No matter what happens, if something goes a way people think it shouldn't, somebody's got to be able to answer up for what happened. They have to explain it and take the punishment that's coming for it.

You know, I dread this letter more than I dread killing myself. I know I've got to do both, but I think the other will be the easier of the two. I learned about killing in the war, so the punishment I can handle. It's the confessing I'm nervous about.

When I got back from Europe, I was just so relieved to be home. I'd written to Julie and she'd written back, but it all seemed so far away. Just seeing her again... God, it was like being born. She smelled so good and sweet, like sunshine, and she was so pretty in that blue dress with those flowers on it. I still wonder what kind of flowers those were.

At the same time though, Father, I was so scared. You see, something happened to me over there. I know, everybody says that war changes a man, but I felt like-God, I don't know what I felt like. Like part of me was dead, the part that smiled and laughed and had fun. And part of me was something else, something that liked the war, and killing men, and the smoke and the fires and-

Well, you get the idea. So here I come back, and there's this big party and my mom is all teary-eyed and laughing, my dad keeps slapping me on the shoulder like he's proud of me, and then... there's Julie. I swear, I could feel her as soon as she entered the room. It was like all the light in the world was right on her, and I couldn't even move.

It's not like it started then, either. At first, things were just fine. I thought we'd maybe still have a real life, just like what we planned. I'd just seal up those dead, twisted parts inside, and she'd never even have to know. We went to parties and dances, and strolls along the garden. I know that she loved me. She told me so, and with that look in her eyes I knew she wasn't lying. That's when I came to see you, a few months back, and we had that talk about marriage. I know you remember, can't be too many people in town who are dying to get married in January, in the middle of a damned blizzard.

Anyway, I really thought things might work out. But then that other guy kept coming around. She kept denying it to the end, and I almost believed her. But it didn't make any difference at that point anyway. That's not why this happened.

The thing was, we had a fight. I'd never raised my voice to her in my life, and I would have been ready to swear I never would. But there I am, using words my dad would have been ashamed to hear, stuff I never would have dreamed could be said until I joined the army. She looked at me like I was crazy, and maybe I was. She said that I was scaring her, that I wasn't the same Joe she knew. And you know, she was right. I knew that even before we had the fight in the first place, but I didn't want to admit it. It's too hard to admit it.

After that, it was never the same. We made up, but it was like she never trusted me again. Suddenly I can't get two words out of her, and she can't relax around me anymore. Always she's looking at me with those eyes, those beautiful blue haunted suspicious eyes. And I can't shake it.

Today, I found her on her way home from town. She'd been to the store, and she had a bottle of aftershave in her bag I just lost it. I started accusing her of going out on me, and worse, and she just stared at me the whole time. When I finally stopped, she told me the engagement was off. Just like that. She turned to leave, and I tried to stop her. At least, I meant to try to stop her. I grabbed for her, grabbed her around the neck... She just dropped like a sack of wet flour.

It took me a minute or so to realize what had just happened. It was the same way in France, too. It'd take a little bit after the fighting stopped to piece together exactly what you'd done while it was going on. It was almost like it wasn't you, but some demon that you watched from behind a window.

I went over to try to pick her up, but she just hung limp. That's when I

realized she wasn't breathing anymore. I went all cold. And then-God help me-I saw what she had in the bag she'd been carrying. That aftermath was packaged with a birthday card. I opened it up, and it was to her father. It was his birthday, and I didn't even know it. I just went crazy over it, and now I'd-

So now you know.

All I can say is that I'm awfully sorry, Father. You'll never know how much. I don't know that Julie's parents will believe me, but it's true. I never meant to hurt her. I love her more than my own life, and I always will.

Maybe it's best this way. Even the best wall has cracks in it eventually, and there's no telling what I might have done down the line. No monster can be caged forever.

Tell my mom and dad I love them. Please.

Joe

GLASYA-LABOLAS

Glasya-Labolos, "Author of Bloodshed and Manslaughter," is one of the ancient and powerful spirits known as the Goetia. For decades, it has plagued Potter's Lake. In 1978 it drove Chuck Johnson to murder (see pages 37, 38, and 77 of the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook) and decades later, it terrorized the community in the form of Luther Cain (see pages 35 and 77 of the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook). In 1919, it attempted to make Joe (the author of the suicide letter) its latest host. Joe had been introduced to killing while fighting overseas and became desensitized to it. Worse, a part of him enjoyed the rush that came with taking a man's life. This was all the opening Glasya-Labolos needed.

The Goetia feed of the human condition and bloodshed is Glasya-Labolos' sustenance. He dined on Joe's murderous instincts, believing it had found an ideal host. Luckily for Potter's Lake, Glasya-Labolos was wrong. Joe's grief and conscience got the better of him, and he wrested control from the spirit. In a final act of contrition, Joe took his own life and Glasya-Labolos' killing spree ended before it even began.

Gamemasters will need to determine exactly how to incorporate this background into the adventure. Here are some suggestions:

1. If the player characters are already investigating Glasya-Labolos, the murder recounted in Joe's suicide letter is another piece of the puzzle. Glasya-Labolos has a history of terror in Potter's Lake stretching back many decades. This can be built to a terrifying crescendo in modern times as PCs realize that the murderous horror they're currently facing is only the latest incarnation in a long line of evil. How Glasya-Labolos' involvement in the letter's murder becomes known, and how the letter or its contents end up in the PCs' grasp will need to be determined. Fate, a magician (such as Sullivan Pierce), a spirit antithetical to Glasya-Labolos, a psychic (such as Annabella Visconti), Meltdown, etc. can all lead the PCs to this information.
2. The GM can have one of the PCs stumble upon the letter

by accident (at the library, the college, concealed in the character's home, etc.). Discovery of the letter might move Glasya-Labolos to action, as the spirit will want its past activities obfuscated as much as possible.

3. A killer is brought to justice. He is clutching the letter in his blood-soaked hands. He is babbling about a demon called Glasya-Labolos that haunts his dreams and drives him to kill.
4. The letter is mailed to one of the PCs or, better still, a copy is mailed to each of them. Someone is trying to get them to investigate this suicide from 1919. Is it someone trying to move them to action against Glasya-Labolos or is there something else at work?

ORCHARD AVENUE

In March of 1919, a young girl was murdered while walking along Orchard Avenue. Julie was returning home from a trip to the store when her jealous and paranoid fiancé confronted her about imagined infidelity. The conflict was short. A few heated words, a twist of the neck, and Julie was dead.

According to local legend, Orchard Avenue is haunted. Some say that on darker spring nights, Julie's ghost wanders the sidewalks, still trying to make her way home. Others claim to see the murder replay itself on that same sidewalk where Julie died, watching in terror as the argument and murder play themselves out before fading from sight. Still others claim that each year, on the 15th of March, you can see Joe's silhouette hanging from the curtain rod in the window of one of the houses on Orchard Street: the house he once called home.

Player characters can be led into this investigation in a variety of ways. In this scenario, the letter is probably the explanation for the event (found during research into the ghost story) rather than the catalyst. More than likely, the PCs will uncover the letter while researching the haunting.

There are many ways this approach can play out.

1. Annabella Visconti (see pages 56 and 57 of the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook) can dispel the haunting.
2. The suicide letter is what binds the ghost(s) to the mortal coil. It is a final grim reminder of the murder. Destroying the letter will end the haunting.
3. There is no resolution. Although the PCs discover the cause of the haunting, there is no apparent way to end it.

FLASHBACK

One of the player characters is gifted with Psychometry (see page 95 of the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook). Somehow, the player comes in contact with the letter. While touching the letter. He or she flashes back to that moment in 1919. The PC has just murdered Julie. The GM can opt to play out the flashback for a bit, allowing the PC to experience life as Joe for a while, including the days afterward that lead up to his suicide. If this is done, the other players should be assigned temporary roles in the decades-old drama. For example, one PC could roleplay Father McGuire, another could roleplay

a friend or relative of Joe's, another could be the police officer investigating the homicide, etc.

After the flashback concludes, the character – with help from the others – will investigate this strange experience. In this scenario, the letter is probably the conclusion of the adventure, an explanation for what has transpired.

This approach to the letter can be used as a bizarre, unsolved interlude in an ongoing series. The PC may come to understand the event he or she has experienced but will never know why it came to him or her. In other words, there is no greater context for what occurred; it simply did. Alternately, the GM can invent a reason why the PC experienced the flashback, something more epic and with greater resonance.

A different approach to this scenario is to have all the PCs experience the flashback as Joe. Once they all get together and compare notes, they will realize they have all experienced the flashback. Was it a waking vision? A message being sent to the characters by a spirit or psychic? Perhaps it is a shared dream inflicted on them by one of the Gifted (see pages 92 and 93 of the *Heaven & Earth* rulebook)? Perhaps they are all psychic? The reason behind this shared psychic moment will need to be determined by the GM.

CONNECTING THE THREE

Adventurous GMs can connect all three scenarios into one. However, caution must be advised. If handled poorly, combining all three approaches can overload the PCs with too much supernatural phenomenon, stretching credibility to the breaking point. Combining all three scenarios is best done with a group of players who have experienced *Heaven & Earth* and the weirdness of Potter's Lake for some time, preferably many story arcs. The more weirdness the PCs have experienced, and the more they comprehend the overarching storyline beneath *Heaven & Earth*, the more feasible this approach becomes.

Although gamemasters can connect these three approaches any way they see fit, here is the easiest way to do so:

1. One or more of the PCs experience the psychometric flashback.
2. The PCs investigate the flashback. This will lead them to the letter and Orchard Avenue, where they will investigate the haunting.
3. The player characters will lay to rest any of the ghosts haunting Orchard Avenue.
4. The PCs will discover, one way or another, that Joe's actions were not entirely his own. This will lead to Glasya-Labolas.

The preceding is merely a brief summary of how to connect the three approaches to using the letter. The vast gaps will need to be filled in using the information scattered throughout "March 15th, 1919" and/or ideas of the GM's own devising.