

WRITING EXAMPLES: “HORNS OF THE DILEMMA, PLAYER CHOICES”

For this writing sample I will be taking it to **Hometown Massachusetts**, my Lovecraftian-inspired Cosmic Horror setting, and calling back to another of my writing samples where I wrote about **Howard** and **Katie** almost witnessing a ritual sacrifice conducted by her brother **Julian**, who is a high-priest in the Esoteric Order of Dagon.

As a reminder:



Howard is a Human male, working for the Boston Police Force, who moved back to Massachusetts after the disappearance of his parents.



Katie is a Female Human/Deep One Hybrid, and Howard’s love interest, coming from the eminent Marsh family, who govern the town of Innsmouth.



Julian is a Male Human/Deep One Hybrid, brother of Katie, Howard’s best friend, and secretly a high Priest in the Esoteric Order of Dagon.

Dilemma:

“Howard and Katie have descended into the basement of the Marsh Mannor, searching for her brother Julian who was seen some time earlier, with some other people from the town, dragging what appeared to be a person-sized object down into the depths. Together they discover a hidden passage that leads to what appears to be an underground church, dedicated to Dagon, God of the Deep Ones.

As they venture into the underground church, they find Julian and the aforementioned townsfolk praying before an altar where an either dead or unconscious nude woman has been laid out ready for some foul ritual. They remain hidden as the ritual begins, watching as Julian whips the assembled cultists into a frenzy of exultant prayer, all while readying a sacrificial dagger to end the life of their unfortunate captor...”

THE PLAYER CONTROLS HOWARD AND MAKES HIS CHOICES.

Options:

1. **Rationalist:** *“You make the grim decision to leave the kidnapped woman to her gruesome fate. If you tried to save her then you would alert the cult to your presence, and possibly endanger not only your own life, but katie’s too. Unable to get any cell phone reception this far underground, you both retreat from the church with all due haste, ready to call for backup once your phone regains signal, hoping other officers will arrive on the scene quickly.”*
2. **Theist:** *“You make the dangerous call to reveal yourself to Julian and the Cultists in an effort to save the woman on the altar. Your strong sense of morality will not allow you to let an innocent person’s life come to an end, not down here in this unholy place, not like this. You quickly concoct a plan where you will create a distraction, while Katie frees the woman and escapes. Saying a little prayer under your breath you make the risky play.”*
3. **Naturalist:** *“You decide to let the diabolic situation play out as if you weren’t there. If you take any action towards Julian and the Cultists in an attempt to save the kidnapped woman, it will put both yourself and Katie in danger and alert the cult to your presence. You are also forced to quickly find a more suitable hiding place as you hear rapid footfalls from the church entrance.”*

Outcomes:

1. Rationalist:

"Katie is upset at what appears to be a cold-hearted decision to leave the kidnapped woman to die on the sacrificial altar but understands why it has to be done. As you both quietly retreat from the church, you bump into a candelabra, knocking it to the floor with a loud crash and causing the spilled candles to light the nearby curtains on fire. You manage to make it out before the cult sees you, and in a fortunate turn of events the noise and smoke attracts the attention of Julian and the cultists, stopping their ritual as they try to put out the growing flames.

You call for backup once your phone has reception, the police arriving swiftly to search the Marsh Manor basement, finding it empty besides the kidnapped woman... thankfully still alive after the cultists abandoned the ritual due to the fire, realizing they were being observed."

2. Theist:

"Letting your heart get ahead of your head you stand up from your hiding place, calling out to Julian, angrily admonishing his actions, and demanding that he and his cultists turn themselves in and admit their crimes.

Julian, surprised to find you in his secret church, is stunned for a moment at being found out, but quickly regains his composure and commands the cultists to capture you. As they advance on your position with Julian right behind them, spurring them on, you lead them in a frenzied chase around the church, giving Katie the opportunity to sneak around to the altar and grab the unconscious woman, dragging her out as quick as she can.

Once you notice the altar is bare, you make a break for the exit, catching up with Katie and helping her with the woman. You emerge into the manor basement and then out into the grounds, piling into your car and making for the Police Station at high speed."

3. Naturalist:

"You watch as Julian raises his sacrificial dagger high into the air, chanting loudly as he prepares to plunge it down into the chest of the unconscious woman. With an exultant cry he brings the dagger down but stops at the last moment as someone enters the church, the same person you heard when you were forced to change hiding spots.

Julian looks visibly angry at the interruption, but the newcomer hurriedly tells him that a police car has just pulled up to the manor and an officer is asking to speak with him. This news infuriates Julian, who commands the gathered cultists to leave out the back and return home while he deals with the situation.

As the church clears, you thank your lucky stars that you had already pre-radioed ahead to the Police Station, telling them that if they didn't hear from you within 30 minutes, they should send backup. You rush to the altar and with Katie's help you make your way back up into the manor to confront Julian in front of the other police officer, with the kidnapped woman in your arms as evidence of his wrongdoings."