

ARCANE
Presents

FRIGHTMARE THEATRE

- PODCAST -

“BEYOND THE FIRMAMENT”



An Original Radio Drama

By
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MARCH 4, 2019
ARCANE PRODUCTIONS
Www.FrightmareTheatrePodcast.com

"BEYOND THE FIRMAMENT" CHARACTERS

DR. PICKMAN: Renowned Archeologist and professor at a prestigious Chicago University; on the verge of a world-shattering discovery.

CLIVE: Dr. Pickman's graduate assistant. Young and awestruck by his mentor.

DR. BARKER: Renowned professor of ancient languages working in South America; former colleague of Dr. Pickman.

EUROPEAN

NEWS ANCHOR: BBC/NPR style field reporter.

AMERICAN

NEWS ANCHOR: Evening desk news anchor.

NOTES: *SPECIAL NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION OF CHANT*

"TACH-DA KLUEESH VUELLA DA DULAMEN MWUERACK EN- CATUGALA NACHT MIDIGAN"
(tak-da /kloo-eeshvuella /da-doolamaan-mwerrock /een-katoogalla /nakt-mideegaan)

"ETE CTHULHU SHLEENE THAGUA-NOORS! PH'NGLUI MGLW'NAFH CTHULHU R'LYEH WGAH'NAGL FHTAGN"
(ete/Khlûl'-hloo shleen-thagwa-noors/Ph'nglui-mglw'nahf/Khlûl'-hloo/Rye-lyeh/
wuh-gah-AH-gul/fuh-TA-gun)

FRIGHTMARE THEATRE

PODCAST

"BEYOND THE FIRMAMENT"

FRIGHTMARE THEATRE INTRO

MUSIC 1

"FTP THEME"

(CONTINUE UNDER)

(LET FINISH)

ANNOUNCER:

The hour has grown late and shadows lurk around every corner. A child's mother checks under his bed three times before turning out the light, and yet the boy continues to hear shallow breathing underneath him in the darkness. Across town, a lonely clown walks up and down a residential street, dragging a wet dripping sack and whistling the theme to MASH. And now, loyal listeners... It is time once again, to turn down the lights and turn up the terror. For you are on the verge of leaping into the awe-inspiring precipice known as... FRIGHTMARE THEATRE.

END MUSIC 1

"FTP THEME"

HOST:

Good evening my putrid poochies, and welcome to Frightmare Theatre. I am your ever-eerie host, Doctor Necropolis.

SOUND 1

MUSIC HIT

"OMINOUS ORGAN CHORDS"

We have a hideously hair-raising story for you little boys and ghouls tonight! This grotesque grimoire comes to you straight from the realms of cosmic horror; inspired by the mad prophet, H.P. Lovecraft. And honestly, who doesn't love a juicy Lovecraftian tale, am I right?

AGNES:

(Loud) They're TENTACLES not TAILS!

HOST:

Turn the hearing aids up, Agnes.

AGNES:

(Loud) Lovecraft writes about Cephalopod Gods. Cephalopods have tentacles!

Host:

That's very true Agnes, dear. Now can we—

AGNES:

(Loud) Octopus have BEAKS!

AL: *(OFF) (from booth)* What is happening.

HOST: I think Agnes is broken. Agnes? Agnes, dear, do you smell burning toast?

AGNES: The nineteen-ninety-six TV movie "The Beast", based on Peter Benchley's number one bestseller, was a top ten rated miniseries on TV but failed to grab the same numbers as "Jaws" in the theater, BUT did better than the knockoff movie, "Piranha", directed by Joe Dante, and its sequel, "Piranha II: The Spawning" NOT directed by Joe Dante. Joe Dante DID direct the horror classic "Gremlins", but "Gremlins II: The New Batch", NOT Joe Dante, BUT he DID do "The Howling", NOT the shitty Howling sequels...

HOST: WHAT IS "THE BEAST"?!

AGNES: NOT Joe Dante.

AL: *(OFF) (FROM BOOTH)* That's that giant squid movie from the nineties.

AGNES: Nineteen-ninety-six. Peter Benchley's number one...

HOST: Jesus Christ, she's gone mental. AL! Get, Greg in here!

SOUND 1.2

LOUD BUZZER

(Agnes continues ranting in the background as we hear...)

SOUND 1.3

Step & Drag of Greg's labored footsteps (from hall)

SOUND 1.4

RUSTED STUDIO Vault DOOR OPENS

GREG: Hey, boys and ghouls!

SOUND 1.5

Canned applause w/ Sienfeld-esque music sting

HOST: Greg, that's MY line.

GREG: HEY, GOYS and BOOLS!

HOST: argh. What do you want, Greg?!

GREG: You called me!

HOST: Oh right. Agnes is broken again. Fix her!

GREG: I had a HUNCH it was something like that.

SOUND 1.6**CANNED LAUGHTER**

HOST: Knock it off, Al. Greg, we have a show to do here.

GREG: Not to worry. I have everything I need in my trusty tool belt!

SOUND 1.7**DRILL BUZZES TWICE**

AGNES: ... and according to fans, "In the Mouth of Madness" is widely considered to be the most Lovecraftian film in existence, NOT based on any actual Lovecraft story. Directed by John Carpenter, NOT Joe Dante...

HOST: Please God, Shut her up!

GREG: Oh, it's pronounced *GREG*. Let's see what we have here...

SOUND 1.8**DRILL BUZZ / UNSCREWING METAL LID / Electrical Sparks**

GREG: Oh, here's your problem, right here.

HOST: I can't believe this, we are trying to do a show, and Agnes has octopus on the brain!

GREG: That's exactly right! How'd you guess.

HOST: What?!

SOUND 1.9**Loud suction cup puckers as octopus is pried off**

GREG: 'Dunno how this little guy got in there, but he's out now. She should be right as rain in no time. (**CLOSE**) Hey, little fella. (**BACK**) Awe, can I keep him???

SOUND 1.10**slimy tentacles flailing and smacking**

OCTOPUS: (gargling) arrgghhh the old ones shall be agaiiiinn...

AL: (**OFF**) (*FROM BOOTH*) Wait. What did it just say?

HOST: YES! Fine! Take the damn thing. Just get it out of here! We gotta get back in action here.

AGNES: "Loony Tunes: Back in Action", directed by Joe Dante.

ALL: (sighs)

HOST: Al, I'm dyin' here. Let's spool the story. And before you close her up, Greg, check to see if there's any Gremlins stuck in there too? She's on a loop!

AGNES: "Gremlins", Directed by Joe—

MUSIC 2**FIRMAMENT MUSIC INTRO***(under) (transitions us into)*

AND NOW, boys and ghouls, prepare yourself for the maddening monstrosity that lies... **"Beyond the Firmament"**. (Laughs maniacally.)

END MUSIC 2*FIRMAMENT MUSIC INTRO***(FADE OUT INTO...)***FTP SCRIPT #2****"BEYOND THE FIRMAMENT"****SCENE 1****SOUND 2****LIGHT RAIN BEATS ON WINDOW (FROM OUTSIDE) (under/ Continuous)****SOUND 3****DISTANT THUNDER ROLLS (INTERMITTENT) (under/ Continuous)****SOUND 4****TELEVISION STATIC / MULTIPLE CHANNELS FLIPPED BEFORE LANDING ON...**

AMERICAN NEWS ANCHOR: (D- ON TV) ...and in other news, renowned archeologist, Dr. Philippa Pickman has returned to the Windy City where she and her team have set to work on her latest discovery. We go now to our correspondent; live from the excavation site in the UK.

SOUND 5**D-ON TV: STONG WINDS AND RAIN WITH AMBIENT THUNDER (under)**

EUROPEAN NEWS ANCHOR: (D- ON TV) (*SHOUTING OVER STORM*) Yesterday marked an historic event in the world of science where, on a small uninhabited island off the coast of Scotland, a significant piece of World history may have been unearthed. Despite record storms for the area and other unusually difficult hardships, Dr. Pickman's team may have uncovered one of the oldest examples of early-human written language to date. It has been difficult to gain much insight on this story as the notoriously secretive Pickman has had the relic under lock and key and refuses interviews while traveling back to the states to continue her work on the find. We have heard rumors that she will be making a statement from her base of operations in Chicago later this week. As of this morning, the archeological site has been submerged by rising ocean tides as the unprecedeted sea storms continue to rage throughout much of the UK.

(CONTINUED)

EUROPEAN NEWS ANCHOR: (CONT. *(D- ON TV)* (*SHOUTING OVER STORM*) We have differing reports coming in that several of the excavation team members were reported to have been badly injured during the dig and subsequent evacuation from the small island. They are now being treated at Lady Margaret Hospital in Millport. The nature of their injuries is unclear at this time – *(continues under)*

DR. PICKMAN: *(CLOSE/ OVER TV)* Turn that garbage off, Clive. I am sick of hearing it.

***END SOUND 5**

LOWER D-ON TV: REPORTER/ STORM *(fade out)*

CLIVE: You got a nice shout out, at least. I'd love to be called a "Renowned Archeologist" one day.

DR. PICKMAN: It's far more trouble than it's worth, believe me. Who can live up to that? They care about titles. I care about the work.

CLIVE: It's perfectly natural for the public to be inquisitive as to what we found, Profess –

DR. PICKMAN: Yes, but again they are focusing on the WRONG aspects of the story. With an historical find of this magnitude I hardly think fretting over the hospitalization of, frankly, careless workers –

CLIVE: Professor. Javie was one of those workers. It's horrible what happened to him... to all of them.

DR. PICKMAN: I know, Clive. I'm sorry. That was callous of me. I suppose I'm a bit defensive on the subject.

CLIVE: No, Professor. What could you have done?

DR. PICKMAN: It was my dig. I shouldn't have left them alone that night to guard the site when they were already so terrified; not thinking clearly and irrational. Those damn local superstitions. Had we stayed behind and–

CLIVE: The same could've happened to us if we'd been there that night. Who knows? I only hope at least one makes it through so we may find out what really happened to them. (PAUSE) Jesus. Their eyes; the horror frozen on their faces. Javie's hair had gone stark-white. What do you think could've--

DR. PICKMAN: The storm, perhaps. The dark. Superstitious twits. Their manic hysteria started when we first unearthed the artifact. Immense fear has the power to undo even the strongest willed of us. You remember their wild tales, Clive? So animated.

CLIVE: Yeah. To tell you the truth, Professor, I myself haven't had a decent night's sleep since we unearthed this thing. Those stories the natives told. (*shivers*)

DR. PICKMAN: Now, don't you start in too.

CLIVE: Wait, Professor. The News! They're talking about the storms.

SOUND 6**D-ON TV: EXTREME STATTIC (*throughout broadcast*) (FADE UP)**

AMERICAN NEWS ANCHOR: (*D- ON TV*) And in other news, the national weather service has issued more severe warnings for both the east and west coast this morning as a series of rapidly developing major storm cells have increased in strength over the past week. The storms have already decimated many coastal cities in much of Europe and Africa's eastern border and continue to threaten many more with seemingly no end in sight. Top meteorologists and environmentalists have yet to provide any answers as to the cause of the massive storms or predict their continued path of destruction. We received word that marshal Law has been initiated in a few of these areas but reports are not confirmed. Officials are urging anyone living in one of these potential hot spots, please take cover and heed the warnings of your local weather advisory until further notice.

And from China today more disturbing news, as eighty-nine new cases of crippling birth defects were reported only this morning. Similar occurrences have been reported in recent weeks within multiple countries, prompting many religious officials to —

END SOUND 6*D-ON TV: REPORTER ON TV WITH EXTREME STATTIC (*SNAP OUT*)**

DR. PICKMAN: I asked you to shut that off.

CLIVE: Hey, I was watching that. I have family in Florida.

DR. PICKMAN: I'm sure they're taking cover and will be just fine, Clive. You can call them in the morning, but for now we have work to do.

CLIVE: And Dr. Barker is still down in South America. I can't imagine what the storms are doing there.

DR. PICKMAN: Richard's fine. I heard from him a few hours ago. I sent him the new images of the glyphs to get his take on the possible dialect.

CLIVE: If they're as rare as you say, how much help can he possibly give us with identifying the origin?

DR. PICKMAN: Richard Barker is the finest authority in dead languages living today... and he owes me. If we are to have any hope whatsoever of deciphering and translating these glyphs this century, we'll need him. Now, c'mon and help me get this unwrapped.

SOUND 7**LARGE STONE OBJECT SET ON METAL TABLE****SOUND 8****PLASTIC WRAPPING IS REMOVED****SOUND 9****A LOW HUM REVERBERATES AROUND THE ROOM (continues under)**

DR. PICKMAN: It's so beautiful.

CLIVE: If you say so, Professor. Argh. Heavy as all hell. Jesus, I thought they cleaned this at the site before loading it into the crate.

DR. PICKMAN: They did. But the material is unusually porous and has undoubtedly soaked up much of its... environment over time.

CLIVE: That's a nice way of saying it's a foul, slime-covered, jagged mess that smells like rotting meat. Quite eloquent, Professor. You should've taught marketing.

DR. PICKMAN: (*IN A DAZE*) Yes... well, if you'd spent untold eons trapped beneath rock and clay at the bottom of the sea, waiting to be found... then you would have earned the right to make judgements.

FADE UP: SOUND 9 LOW HUM GROWS IN INTENSITY (continues Louder)*SOUND 10****FAINT WHISPERS: CACOPHONY OF VOICES CHANTING IN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE* (building in intensity until suddenly...)*****END SOUND 10****WHISPERS CHANTING: BUILDING UNTIL*****(snap out)**

CLIVE: Professor? Professor, are you all right?

DR. PICKMAN: What? Of course. Yes. I'm just... it is *magnificent*, isn't it? In all my years I've never seen anything quite like it.

CLIVE: It is something else, I can –

DR. PICKMAN: Truly remarkable that it has survived all these centuries. Almost as if... as if it were *waiting*. Waiting for me to find it; to bring it back into the light.

SOUND 11 ***FAINT WHISPERS: CHANTING IN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE**** ***(under...)***

DR. PICKMAN: (CONTINUED) How fortunate we are, Clive. To be alive at this moment. Serving as harbingers of its ancient message. And soon to speak aloud that which long dead tongues can no longer speak. *Those secrets*, once again carried on the wind like a wet heat to the four corners of the earth.

CLIVE: PROFESSOR, your hand!

END SOUND 11** ***FAINT WHISPERS: CHANTING IN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE* ***(under...)***

SOUND 12 ***GLASS JARS TOPPLE***

(DR. PICKMAN SHRIEKS IN PAIN.)

DR. PICKMAN: How foolish of me. I must have been daydreaming and cut my palm on that jagged edge.

CLIVE: This whole thing is a jagged edge, Professor. And you were *NOT* daydreaming. You didn't even sound like you. I... I think you need to go home for the night. Your hand is bleeding like a stuck pig. We can lock this up and start fresh in the morning.

DR. PICKMAN: NO! No, Clive. I'm just a little tired, but Richard will be calling shortly with his findings and those samples from the lab will be in first thing in the morning. I want to have a nice jumpstart on this before they arrive. You go home. Get some rest. It was a very long and difficult week. But we made it back. We managed to get our new baby home, and all will be well.

SOUND 13 ***RUNNING WATER / TEARING BANDAGE WRAPPER*** ***(under)***

CLIVE: I hope so, Professor. I hope bringing this *thing* here was the right thing to do.

SOUND 14**BOOKS BEING STACKED/PLACED IN BACKPACK. (under)**

DR. PICKMAN: Ah, see now? Not that bad of a mess. Very little blood; a single drop on the table here.

CLIVE: *What?* No. Professor, your hand was gushing all over the carved side of the artifact. I saw it. I *saw*.

MUSIC 3**"STRANGE MUSIC HIT"****(fades under and out)**

CLIVE: That can't be.

DR. PICKMAN: Come now, Clive. Javie's stories have still got you worked up.

CLIVE: No. It isn't... *look*. The glyphs. They... they've moved. They're different. I'm sure of it.

DR. PICKMAN: And now who's the tired one here? (LAUGHS) Get out of here and go to bed. I need you on your "A" game in the morning.

CLIVE: But —

DR. PICKMAN: Clive. There will still be plenty of work in the morning. And you have reports to make up from last week. You need some beauty rest. So get to it, kiddo.

CLIVE: (LOW) Yes. Yes, Professor you are probably right. It's just those stupid stories... the lack of sleep. Nothing to worry about.

SOUND 15**THUNDER CRASH OUTSIDE / RAIN PICKS UP****(under)****SOUND 16****CLIVE SHOES SHUFFLE THEN (OFF) LAB DOOR CREAKS OPEN**

CLIVE: (OFF) Goodnight, Professor. Please. Please don't work too hard on that thing tonight. It's really picking up outside... I'd be more than happy to walk you to the Redline.

DR. PICKMAN: No no no. You go on. This big guy right here has some blood to answer for. (CHUCKLES TO SELF) Goodnight, Clive.

CLIVE: *(OFF)* If you're sure, then. Goodnight, Professor. Take care.

SOUND 17**(OFF) LAB DOOR RATTLES SHUT****SOUND 18****RAIN BEATS HARDER ON WINDOW /INTERMITTENT THUNDER (under)**

DR. PICKMAN: Alright then. Let's have a look shall we?

SOUND 19**DRAWER OPENS / METAL TOOLS PLACED ON TABLE / DRAWER CLOSES****SOUND 20****METAL SCRATCHING STONE ECHOES IN EMPTY ROOM (under)**

DR. PICKMAN: Hm. That's a little... I could have sworn the glyphs were organized horizontally. Let me get this down.

SOUND 21**ELECTRONIC CLICK AND BEEP OF RECORDING DEVICE**

DR. PICKMAN: *(CLOSE)* August 5th 2019. I have successfully transferred the artifact back to the lab and am starting the initial examination of carved runes. Carbon labs are weeks out still and we won't hear back as to the specific mineral composition until morning. It is *strange* however. This dark green coloring and unique texture are like nothing I've encountered in any fossil record. Initial theory could posture that oxidization and partial decay have altered the original organic material and yet... and yet something isn't... *right*. *(PAUSE)* I'll figure it out. Exact dimensions and weight have been logged in the field notes. The artifact was left rough and jagged in much of its overall creation, boasting small smooth angular surfaces amidst dark outcroppings of porous crystalline formations. Every surface is covered with very small deeply-carved glyphs, which upon initial observation at the site of origin, I perceived to organize horizontally. But now surprisingly I note that they are primarily vertical in formation. And yet, looking at this under the light, it is truly a unique and remarkable specimen. There are *impossible* patterns present in this artifact that are not only suggestive of advanced language but of advanced knowledge of symmetry and mathematical formation.

SOUND 22**WHISPERED CHANTING****(Fade in /continue under)**

DR. PICKMAN: *(GASPS)* This is extraordinary. The glyphs themselves follow a bazar symmetry. **(CONTINUED)**

DR. PICKMAN: (CONT.) Yet the varying rough and smooth surfaces also appear to have some semblance of purpose; following their own separate guidelines. I've never... never seen anything quite - (*COUGHS*) Staring at these formations it is easy for one to... to become lost somewhat in the... (*COUGHS*) the sheer complexity. The ancient people who created this were... (*CLEAR THROAT*)

SOUND 23**LOW PULSATING HUM***(Continuous/ under chanting)*

(*CLOSE- LOW*) No. Nooooo. Not... people. (*COUGHS WILDY*) No. NO... p-p-p peep-pooool. (*CHUCKLES*) animALS. Aaan- eeee- MAL. (*GROWLS*) No-thing b-b-b-but cattle. (*SNORTS*) Meat. Meeeaaat. Ca-tha-gua... Plaaaay tings. (*HIDEOUS GRAVELLY LAUGHTER*) **Cathagua!**

AUDIO EFFECT: *(*DR. PICKMAN LAUGHS AS HER VOICE DEEPENS TO A GUTTERAL UNEARTHLY GROWL.*)*

SOUND 24**CLOTH RIPS / GLASS JARS SHATTER.***(under)***SOUND 25****LOW HUM BECOMES TRIBAL DRUM BEAT***(under)*

***FADE UP:SOUND 22 WHISPERED CHANTING** *(Fade up loud /continue under)*

**PICKMAN (altered voice) JOINS IN THE REPETATIVE CHANTING.*

***DR. PICKMAN:** *Tach-DA! KLUEESH VUELLA DA DULAMEN MWUERACK EN-CATUGALA NACHT MIDIGAN- ETE CTHULHU SHLEENE THAGUA-NOORS! PH'NGLUI MGLW'NAFH CTHULHU R'LYEH WGAH'NAGL FHTAGN!!!*

THE CHANTING, DRUMS, AND HER GUTTERAL VOICE ECHO UNTIL...*

SOUND 26**LOUD CRASH OF THUNDER***(long roll out)****END SOUND 22/25****CHANTING /DRUM BEAT***(snap out on cue 26)*

ALL IS QUIET, SAVE FOR THE RAIN BEATING ON THE WINDOW FROM OUTSIDE.

SOUND 27**(OFF) FOOTSTEPS IN THE HALL /DOOR SWINGS OPEN**

CLIVE:

(*OFF*) Hey Professor, I forgot my laptop. Professor? Hello? Jesus, power go out? Can't see shit. Anyone here? (*PAUSE*) I'm just gonna grab my laptop and take a cab. Trains are called on account of the storm. (*CLOSE*) We can split one if you...

SOUND 28**SNEAKERS SLIP ON THE WET FLOOR**

CLIVE: What the f... Oh my god! No. No no no no NO! This can't be happening. My God... PROFESSOR?! Jesus, God. This is a lot of blood. Oh, Jesus. Where the hell is the artifact? PROFESSOR? I'm here! I'm calling for help. Hold on!

SOUND 29**HE DIALS I-PHONE/ BUSY SIGNAL**

CLIVE: NO! Fucking storm. PROFESSOR!!!!

DR. PICKMAN: (OFF) (NO Voice Effect) The prodigal son returns.

CLIVE: Oh! Professor, thank God. Are you... Are you alright? What happened to the lights?

DR. PICKMAN: (OFF) What DID happen to the lights?

CLIVE: um. I'm guessing the storm knocked out the power.

***DR. PICKMAN:** (OFF) What a bright young lad it is.
(*HER VOICE LOWERS TO A HIDEOUS INHUMAN PITCH)
She always considered you her brightest disciple.

CLIVE: Why don't I see if I can get the backup lights working.

***DR. PICKMAN:** (OFF- GETTING CLOSER) Now why would we want to do that? I rather enjoy the dark. (PAUSE) Mankind. (SNORT) Mankind has always been afraid of the dark; of that which cannot be seen or understood. And rightfully so, for you understand so precious little. Better to fear. Better to agonize. Why, you are afraid right now. At this very moment. Terrified.

CLIVE: Professor. It's late. I... I need to get some rest.

***DR. PICKMAN:** *I can smell the fear pouring out of you. I can taste it on the air. Your fear... is... palpable. Delicious. Sweeeeet.*

CLIVE: Where is the artifact, Professor? Did... did something happen?

***DR. PICKMAN:** *So many things are always happening, boy. This tiny universe is a mass of cogs and wheels. Oh, you vermin like to play that you can master the great contraption; but in the end no matter how hard you try, you inevitably wind up gumming up the gears.*