# UNDER THE DEEP

**UNDER THE DEEP**

*A Call of Cthulhu game for up to 6 Investigators.*

*by Gregor Hutton.*

Eccentric dilettante Leopold Rossiter takes you on a journey to the very depths of the Pacific Ocean, and beyond, aboard a submarine obtained in the aftermath of the Great War. Rossiter seeks wisdom in the depths, that the world would rather keep hidden. Take care, for who knows what lies in all our minds under the deep.

## Who Are The Characters?

**Leopold Rossiter:** Eccentric Dilettante and “Occult” Investigator. Plagued by dreams, he thinks he is on the brink of a great occult discovery. This is almost true!

**Audrey Cadogan:** A journalist with the Cape Ann Courier, invited by Rossiter on the trip as he hopes to impress her. She is actually the ex-wife of Dr Henry Sykes, but he is acting like he has never met her before.

**Thom Black:** An Irish marine brought along as head of the ship’s crew. He is a savvy and resourceful soul troubled by his experiences in the Great War.

**Doctor Henry Sykes:** A doctor, explorer and mathematician. He was formerly married to Audrey Cadogan but does not know this… as he is actually possessed by a creature of unknowable age and intellect. He is poisoning Rossiter’s mind and is directing affairs for the trip. The real Dr Henry Sykes’ mind is currently inside the body of a Great Ape (more on that later).

**Captain John Burton:** The captain of the former U-141, now known as The Scintilla, he is a salty sea dog with many years of experience at sea. He was a borderline alcoholic before meeting his beautiful and intelligent wife in the Middle East

**Zenobia Burton:** The navigator and wife of the captain from Persia. Her family has a long history of oracular ability. She senses something very strange about Dr Sykes.

## What Do They Think Is Going On?

Well, on the surface it all seemed so simple. It is the mid-1920s and Rossiter has purchased a former U-boat to take him to the depths of the Pacific Ocean. He has had the boat modified – while the Navy removed the guns he had the weight added back on as extra-thick steel on the hull. Tests under Captain John Burton and his crew of 20, including the burly marine Thom Black and Burton’s wife Zenobia, have gone well and the boat is now on its way into the depths of the ocean.

The idea is to find a mystical island at the bottom, hidden in a cave, that Rossiter has been dreaming about for months. His doctor is accompanying him on the trip, and has been keeping a close eye on him. Also on board for the trip is a journalist from a New England newspaper, who Rossiter is trying to court romantically.

## What Is Really Going On?

Well… it starts in 1917 with a German Navy trip to the cave. The U-boat of German sailors encounter all manner of weird things, including a Yithian in the body of Great Ape, and are trapped in a strange world as their U-boat is crushed in the trip under the ocean.

5 years later the Yithian has made contact with a Dr Henry Sykes and possesses him. Sykes’ mind is transported into the body of the Ape in the cave… The Yithian, as Sykes, then sets about learning more about modern Earth. Three years later he sets the wheels in motion for the trip to the cave. His aim is to use the cube atop a mountain in the cave to return to his own place/time.

Along for the trip are some interesting characters. Chance, perhaps, would have it that Sykes’ ex-wife, with whom he is very much still in love, has been brought along by Rossiter. The Yithian, of course, does not recognize her as Sykes’ ex-wife.

## Where Does The Game Start?

On board the submarine, and former U-Boat, The Scintilla descending through the deep in the Pacific Ocean. The crew has just met and Audrey is confused that Henry has not acknowledged her.

## What Are The Main Scenes?

Play out scenes that naturally follow from the start. The main scenes are

### Undersea Peril

On the way down have some Sanity checks made as the hull creaks (0/1) and allow for Idea rolls to notice details about other characters.

Test for Operate Heavy Machinery, Navigate and Pilot.
Blown rolls lead to some incidental damage: Dodge rolls or take 1d3 bashing damage as the PCs fall about the cramped U-boat. Also this may lead to the U-boat being low on fuel.

The U-boat will survive all of this and eventually surface in an underground lagoon.

What I’m saying is make the world seem real, and perilous, but get them to the lagoon. Once there show the players the map and it’s up to them where they go next. It is certainly a cave with a strange light source far above. The colours are vivid and the temperature is high. Think pulp!

### The German Menace

The Germans are camped out where there is smoke rising. They are waging war against the Ape and are trying to smoke him out. Formerly he was their enemy as the Yithian, but now his mind is Sykes’.

There are 6 Germans, and they are well trained, but not all sane. 12 HPs each.
 Anything to do with U-boats: 50%
 Rifle: 50%, 1d6+2 damage, loud
 Punch/Dodge/Brawl/etc.: 35%, d3+d4 damage
 Speak English: 25%
If they become aware of the Scintilla and it is left unguarded they may try to leave in it. It would take 3 failed Luck tests by the PCs for this to happen (as the crew fights the Germans). If so, roll every so often and bring the Germans to their attention on a pass. Oh, and they don’t know that the Great War is over.

### The Huge Ape

The forest is dark and lush and green. Think Lost World or tropical rain forest. Detail the birds and sounds, smells, the heat. You will hear the crashing of the ape should you be near it.

Listen rolls at first, and then it will be obvious. Thump the table. Add menace!

He is travelling around through the forest towards the Germans. He will head towards the PCs if they are loud or attract his attention. Describe something King Kong like.

Perhaps they will hide from him. Good idea!

So, as Keeper, think like Sykes but act like an Ape. If he sees Audrey he will attempt to rescue her from the Yithian (i.e. the not-real Sykes) and take her to safety in the forest. Ultimately he will try to get up the mountain to the strange cube.

30 HPs, 2 point hide
 Swipe/Smash 50%, 2d6 damage
 Communicate with Anyone 20%

### The Mountain of Madness

Atop the mountain there is a device that can transport people/things back/forward in time. The Yithian (as Sykes) will want to go here and use the device. If successful the real Sykes will reappear in his own body and the Ape will again be an Ape (and it will want to smash!).

The Yithian will be 30,000 years away and the PCs will be 1d6 thousand years in the past (odds) or future (evens).

### Group Friction and the Environment

Perhaps the players will start arguing and splitting up. Let them explore and find cool stuff. There will be signs around that they are not alone. The Germans have been here for 8 years, there is spare fuel on the crushed U-boat, and the muddy ground has buried sailors in it with simple crosses.

The ape nest is interesting and has a scratched picture on a stone nearby. With an INTx1 roll you think it is Audrey!

## Dreams

If the PCs fall asleep, or are unconscious, at any point then plague them with vivid dreams of a race of triangular beings with pincers here long ago and in the future. Make a real gonzo description and have them learn of the cube on the mountain. Give them d3 HPs back for the dream.

## How Does The Game End?

Possible outcomes…

### Undersea Escape

At some point they may try to flee. A Pilot roll, or Luck at least, is needed to get submerged. Make it rough on the way out if you want, depending on the preparations the PCs have taken. More fuel on board? All the right crew? Germans helping? Then it should be simple. A roll or two, players choices from Operate Heavy Machinery, Pilot and Navigate.

If they are not prepared then they’ll need several (say 2 of each) Operate Heavy Machinery, Pilot and Navigate rolls. For each blown roll take a d6. Roll it. On a 6 they are crushed by the pressure of the deep and never make it to the surface.

### The Sundering of Time

Should the Yithian (as Sykes) get to the mountain he will attempt to use the device. Have him make a test at 40%. If successful the real Sykes will reappear in his own body and the Ape will again be an Ape (and it will want to smash!).

The Yithian will be 30,000 years away and the PCs will be 1d6 thousand years in the past (odds) or future (evens).

If he fails he can try again next round, but the other PCs may be trying to stop him by that point…

Should the Yithian (as Sykes) be killed them the real Sykes will now be in the Yithian’s body a long time ago and the ape will be back to being an angry ape…

### A Fight To The Death

It may be that the Ape or the Germans get them.

## A Good Outcome?

It could be that the real Sykes reconciles with Audrey and the Yithian returns to his own time. If this happens and the PCs flee in the U-boat go easy (have them make a couple of Luck rolls) and hopefully they will see the strange world they are now in. Odds the past, Evens the future.

# Leopold Rossiter

Eccentric Dilettante and “Occult” Investigator. Plagued by dreams, you think you are on the brink of a great occult discovery. This is true! You know it.

You have purchased a former U-boat and you will travel to the very depths of the world for science and glory.

You have seen strange creatures, who look like cones, with pincers like crabs in your dreams. Roll 1d6 – lose that much San and tell everyone at the table about your last vivid dream… (make it up, and use the following words somehow: Cube, Polyp and Blood).

The doctor may be able to help you calm down after that. He has liquor in his bag.

## What you think of the others…

**Audrey Cadogan:** A journalist with the Cape Ann Courier, in Massachusetts. You have invited her on the trip as you hope to impress her. You have been dreaming about her a lot. You first met her years ago at some friend’s party – you can’t remember when or where – and recently you tracked her down and have been courting her.

**Thom Black:** A trusty Irish marine you have brought along as head of the ship’s crew. He is a savvy and resourceful soul.

**Doctor Henry Sykes:** Your doctor who has been treating you, increasingly, for your reaction to your vivid dreams. A trusted friend who is looking after your sometimes fragile state of mind.

**Captain John Burton:** The captain of the former U-141, now known as The Scintilla, he is a salty sea dog with many years of experience at sea. A solid sort.

**Zenobia Burton:** The beautiful wife of the captain. She is Persian and you feel that she is surely “Navigator” only in name. A pretty thing but no more than that.

# Audrey Cadogan

You are a journalist with the Cape Ann Courier in Massachusetts. You have been invited by Rossiter on the trip as he hopes to impress you. You are also the ex-wife of Dr Henry Sykes, who is–horror of horrors–on the trip too as Sykes’ physician. Henry is acting like he has never met you before. You fondly remembered him in your mind but he is cool and distant, like another person since you met him again today, and you are now thinking you were glad you were divorced some years ago – the divorce did go through, damn, if you can remember signing the papers. You are now hoping to get a scoop out of this trip and just get it over with.

**Leopold Rossiter:** Eccentric Dilettante and “Occult” Investigator. He is quirky and not unattractive. He has certainly tried to impress you, but you are sworn off romance after your marriage failed at the end of the Great War.

**Thom Black:** An Irish marine brought along as head of the ship’s crew. He is a savvy and resourceful soul. You sense that he is troubled by his experiences in the Great War.

**Doctor Henry Sykes:** Your former husband. A talented doctor he was greatly affected by the carnage he saw in the Great War. Your marriage fell apart as he started drinking heavily and you have not heard from him in years. And you always thought he still loved you, apparently not.

**Captain John Burton:** The captain of the former U-141, now known as The Scintilla, he is a salty sea dog with many years of experience at sea. You see that he was an alcoholic at some point, the shake in the hand, the wrinkled face, but he is tee-total now.

**Zenobia Burton:** The navigator and wife of the captain from Persia. She is smart and sharp. Perhaps someone that you can confide in?

# Thom Black

You are an Irish marine brought along as head of the ship’s crew. You are a savvy and resourceful soul troubled by your experiences in the Great War.

You have many mental issues related to the War and have vivid dreams of fighting Germans in the jungle. Every time you see a German or Germans test for Sanity (0/1).

**Leopold Rossiter:** Eccentric Dilettante and “Occult” Investigator. A good man who gave you a job when no one else would. You would defend him with your life.

**Audrey Cadogan:** A journalist with the Cape Ann Courier, invited by Rossiter on the trip as he hopes to impress her. A strange sort. Acted weird when she saw the Doctor.

**Doctor Henry Sykes:** Rossiter’s doctor is curious about so much and such a meticulous fellow. He has gained your trust by helping you to come to terms with your mental problems. A good man, and so very, very clever. You think his mind is wasted as just a doctor.

**Captain John Burton:** The captain of the former U-141, now known as The Scintilla. A salty sea dog, tough but fair, with many years of experience at sea. He met his wife in the Middle East and he takes her everywhere with him, which is strange.

**Zenobia Burton:** The navigator and wife of the captain. She is Persian and accompanies him everywhere. They make a strange couple.

# Doctor Henry Sykes

OK. Read carefully.

Dr Henry Sykes is a doctor, explorer and mathematician.

YOU, though, are merely in the body of Henry Sykes. You are a Yithian, a creature of unknowable age and intellect. You have been poisoning Rossiter’s mind and you are directing affairs for the trip.

The real Dr Henry Sykes’ mind was last seen inside the body of a Great Ape.

In 1917 a U-boat of German sailors encountered you while you were in the body of this Great Ape on your *studies*. But these Germans! This was interesting!

So, 5 years later and you made contact with a Dr Henry Sykes and possessed him. Sykes’ mind was transported into the body of the Ape in the cave… he is probably dead by now faced with those Germans. As Sykes, you then set about learning more about modern Earth. Three years later and you set the wheels in motion for this trip to the cave. Your aim is to use a cube atop a mountain in the cave to return to your own place/time.

**Leopold Rossiter:** Eccentric Dilettante and “Occult” Investigator. Plagued by dreams, he thinks he is on the brink of a great occult discovery. This is almost true! A pawn in your plan.

**Audrey Cadogan:** A journalist with the Cape Ann Courier, invited by Rossiter on the trip as he hopes to impress her. She is cold to you.

**Thom Black:** An Irish marine brought along as head of the ship’s crew. He is a savvy and resourceful soul troubled by his experiences in the Great War. You have gained his trust.

**Captain John Burton:** The captain of the former U-141, now known as The Scintilla, he is a salty sea dog with many years of experience at sea. A borderline alcoholic before meeting his beautiful and intelligent wife in the Middle East.

**Zenobia Burton:** The navigator and wife of the captain from Persia. She keeps you at arms’ length.

# Captain John Burton

The captain of the former U-141, now known as The Scintilla, you are a salty sea dog with many years of experience at sea. You were a borderline alcoholic before meeting your beautiful and intelligent wife in the Middle East.

She saved you in so many ways. You would die for her. She is your all.

**Leopold Rossiter:** Eccentric Dilettante and “Occult” Investigator. Plagued by dreams, he thinks he is on the brink of a great occult discovery. This is almost true! He is mad, but a good boss. He does not think much of Zenobia which saddens you.

**Audrey Cadogan:** A journalist with the Cape Ann Courier, invited by Rossiter on the trip as he hopes to impress her. It says a lot that Rossiter is drawn to her.

**Thom Black:** An Irish marine brought along as head of the ship’s crew. He is a savvy and resourceful soul troubled by his experiences in the Great War. A good man to have in a tight spot.

**Doctor Henry Sykes:** A doctor, explorer and mathematician. Always looking after the sometimes fragile Rossiter. A bit too cerebral for your taste.

**Zenobia Burton:** The navigator of the boat and your wife. Her family has, it is said, a long history of oracular ability. She means everything to you and you trust her deeply.

# Zenobia Burton

The navigator and wife of the captain of the boat. You are from Persia, and your family has a long history of oracular ability in it. You sense something *very strange* about Dr Sykes.

John, your husband, means everything to you. You would die for him. He completes you.

**Leopold Rossiter:** Eccentric Dilettante and “Occult” Investigator. Plagued by dreams, he thinks he is on the brink of a great occult discovery. This is almost true!

**Audrey Cadogan:** A journalist with the Cape Ann Courier, invited by Rossiter on the trip as he hopes to impress her. She is very interesting and you would like to get to know her better. She asks awkward questions, and you like this.

**Thom Black:** An Irish marine brought along as head of the ship’s crew. He is a savvy and resourceful soul troubled by his experiences in the Great War. You keep your distance.

**Doctor Henry Sykes:** A doctor, explorer and mathematician. There is something very *off* with him. You think he is clouding Rossiter’s mind, though perhaps his mind is already gone, and he asks all the strangest questions. You are cold to him.

**Captain John Burton:** The captain of the former U-141, now known as The Scintilla, he is a salty sea dog with many years of experience at sea. He was a borderline alcoholic before he met you. You have been married 5 years and it has been the best of times.