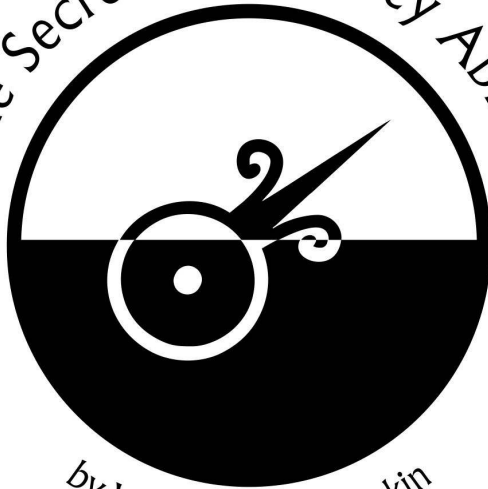


# The Secret of Thurnley Abbey



by William Jeffrey Rankin

“ It stood facing us, completely still, a slight figure in a tattered shroud, yellowed with age. Its head was covered by a hood, but the face was partially visible. Of that, we could see an empty, black eye socket and the grinning visage of a skull. Mixed with horror was a sense of sadness and pity upon seeing the thing. Next to me, Bennett sighed, then spoke in the same voice we'd heard earlier.

"They signed the book in blood. Then, it came," she said.

The Secret of Thurnley Abbey  
The Carnacki Casebook, Case No. 08

**The Secret of Thurnley Abbey (Sample)**  
The Carnacki Casebook, Case No. 08  
by William Jeffrey Rankin

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Carnacki swung the door open, and we shined our lights down the staircase. It was narrow and steep, with well-worn steps covered in moisture and slime. It descended for some time, then opened into an archway.

We descended carefully—the stairs were quite slippery. We stood for a moment in the archway just outside the chamber. The far wall was lost in darkness, but our lights revealed various objects small and large arranged nearby. Along the wall to our left were several large wooden casks, mounted horizontally, some collapsed with age, others appearing fairly solid. To our right was a primitive table, upon which were several clay jars and various implements of wood and metal.

We stepped into the chamber, casting our lights about us and walking carefully to avoid crumbling stone and other debris. In the middle of the far wall was a sort of raised dais or shelf upon which were several smaller casks, clay jars, and other items that had disintegrated with the passage of time. Two stout looking wooden doors were set in the wall on either side of the dais. Our footfalls echoed wetly in the chamber as Carnacki stopped, setting his case upon the floor.

"I'll set up the pentacle here," he whispered, his voice seeming to linger in the tomb-like silence. Taking a piece of chalk, he expertly drew a pentacle sufficiently large for all of us. The Dean watched in fascination as he went about his work.

"On what principle does it function, Mr. Carnacki?" he asked.

"Well, the matter of our prime material plane vibrates at a specific frequency," he explained as he set out the various components in the points and vales of the pentacle. "Matter from other planes vibrates at a different frequency. The pentacle, as I've configured it, will only allow matter of *this* plane to pass through. That of others can be kept out, or in, depending upon the situation." He laid out the valves and, connecting the wires to the battery, switched it on. They warmed gradually in the cool, damp atmosphere, their blue glow lending a spectral aspect to the area within and around the pentacle.

"The pentacle can serve other functions in addition to providing protection," he continued. "I'll perform a ritual that will enable the entity with which we're dealing to manifest more strongly, possibly even enabling it to communicate."

We stepped into the pentacle and Carnacki, standing with eyes closed in the middle, began the ritual. At first, he merely whispered the strange, arcane words. But as he continued, his voice grew in volume and power, and the blue glow from the pentacle increased in response. After several minutes, he grew silent, the last syllables of the ritual echoing in the chamber. The Dean, Bennett, and I faced outward, watching in different directions while Carnacki remained still, his eyes now open, facing the upper point of the pentacle. Bennett crouched down beside me, placing one hand upon the cold stone floor.

"I can feel her," she whispered, "she's close."

It was deathly silent as we slowly trained our lights around the chamber. There was a sharp intake of breath from the Dean.

"She's there," he hissed, "just next to the dais."

I pointed my light to the southwest corner of the room, and started as the specter of the nun came into view. It stood facing us, completely still, a slight figure in a tattered shroud, yellowed with age. Its head was covered by a hood, but the face was partially visible. Of that, we could see an empty, black eye socket and the grinning visage of a skull. Mixed with horror was a sense of sadness and pity upon seeing the thing. Next to me, Bennett sighed, then spoke in the same voice we'd heard earlier.

"They signed the book in blood. Then, it came," she said.

A moment later there echoed through the chamber a long, piercing cry, as of some creature in great pain. I thought it had come from the specter, but it had vanished. Bennett rose, somewhat unsteadily, to her feet.

"Something's coming," she said, "something different."

The strange cry sounded again—it was closer this time—although its source was not yet apparent. It was followed by a deep, heavy thump—as of something of great weight—beating against the door near where the nun had been standing just moments before.

"Something's at the door," said Carnacki, "stay within the pentacle!"