

The House of Ruin

An interactive horror, mystery and adventure game loosely based in the world of Cthulhu. The player is part of a psychic pair that explores curses and supernatural happenings in exchange for money and renown. You must piece together the mystery of what is happening at the Hardy estate.

First you will investigate the town, interrogate the family members, conduct occult rituals and solve riddles for more knowledge. In strange dream sequences, you will explore a dark city made of spires and whispers, and speak to unknowable entities veiled by stars.

Then, once you have uncovered enough dark secrets, face a terrible showdown with an inscrutable entity inside the manor. Multiple endings are available depending on the summation of your decisions, evidence gathered and success passing puzzles.

Chapter One

Narrator: A sprawling English stately home sits beneath a twilight sky. Far from summer, the winds are ice-cold and the surrounding mists damp. Above you, the first ghosts of silver stars coalesce — unfathomable and distant.

Clara: It was a rotten business, what came to pass here. We've got you two now though. Here tends to be our little problem. Whatever unholy things it is you're meant to do. I'm Clara, the Hardy estate's housekeeper. What are your names?

Player: (responds with name)

Cornelius: And I'm Cornelius, an expert in all manner of haunted, cursed and fantastical topics. Pleasure to meet you!

Clara: I can't return the sentiment unfortunately, these are troubled times for us. It's very brave of you to come out here, the way they talk about us in the village you'd think we've been cursed by a witch. Where exactly were you both from again?

Player: (responds with birthplace)

Cornelius: I'm from Massachusetts, USA. A long way from this little British idyll.

Clara: Not here then. Now, is there anything I can inform you about before I leave? It's getting late.

What do you want us to do?

Clara: The Hardy family has asked you to investigate a matter of great sensitivity for them. They have, of course, paid extra for your discretion. The matter concerns the eldest daughter, May, but that's barely the half of it.

What happened?

Clara: I don't want to go into it here without the others to witness. Lets just say it was a rather messy affair, following a string of unfortunate incidents that have plagued us since the master returned. I shan't say anymore.

Tell us more

Clara: Look at you. Think you can force what you want. Give it time. I'm done talking about this.

I won't press

Clara: And well you shouldn't. Respect is a most rare and marvellous currency these days. Best use it.

Tell me about the family?

The Hardys are a reputable family that has lived in this house for generations. The very first notable Walter Hardy made his fortune trading rare artefacts from across distant continents. His great-great-grandson Walter resides here now, with his wife and four children, following an extensive period of travel.

What are the children called?

The two boys, Tom and Jonathan, and two girls, May and Amelia.

Why was he travelling?

Much like his ancestors, Walter has an interest in rare artefacts, both for profit and personal study.

What's the house like?

Truly, a marvel. Walter's great-great-grandfather designed it himself. Although, over the years, some of its more extravagant features have fallen into a state of disrepair.

Why?

Things have been somewhat erratic since Walter came back from abroad last year. The atmosphere in the house has changed, and May's affliction has taken its toll. These vast estates don't maintain themselves, even with the likes of us looking after them.

How are the villagers responding?

Over the years, sentiment towards the Hardys has taken a rather nasty turn. I can't help wondering if some of the stranger incidents could be linked with the locals down the hill. They are not, shall we say, the best of people

Clara: Good. Not as if anything you do will make a jot of difference. There are some things that should be left undisturbed. I'll be on my way.

Cornelius: Wait, Clara, one last thing. Wasn't there mention of a missing member of the Hardy family?

Clara: Yes, young Reginald. He has been away for quite some time now. I don't believe his absence will be relevant to your investigation. He was last seen on the shores by town, near the black sea. We don't speak of him much, anymore. He was a troubled young man. I must admit, I still pray for him — unlike his father.

Cornelius: I see. Thank you Clara!

Cornelius: Well there chum, did you know it's the beginning of the Cat Nights today? The first night of the year that Sirius, the shining Dog Star, hides away. Leaving the astral cats to play! What an evening. Chin up, if it's all a ruse we'll be back to civilization tomorrow.

Narrator: You and Cornelius ready your bags, filled with all manner of supernatural apparatus, trinkets and tools and strange smelling brews. The wind howls behind you as night draws in ever faster.

Chapter Two

Narrator: You and Cornelius are waiting in a grand hall. Distantly, a cast iron fireplace casts long dancing shadows on the ornate walls — which seem to pulse in the heat. Despite the roar of the flames, the mansion is freezing.

Amelia: Oh, you've arrived! I thought I heard the doors croak. I'm Amelia, the one who called you. I'm so glad you've come! Really, I can't express my relief enough. Please, come

into the sitting room, you'll find the atmosphere more pleasing. Father will be down shortly. He's in quite the mood.

Cornelius: I don't want to jump the gun but the air here is positively thrumming with unusual activity, it's electrifying!

Amelia: You feel it too?

Player: Yes

Amelia: I knew it, I'm not being ridiculous. I can feel it!

Player: No

Amelia: Really? Nothing at all? With all your experience? Oh. That's unsettling.

Cornelius: Absolutely. What's been happening here?

Amelia: Well, it's been a few rather untoward things. They keep telling me I'm being ridiculous, that it's all the cold and sadness that's doing it. Not a ghoul or a ghost or a monster. I say something different. I can feel it here, all the time. First, it was the animals. Then, the noises and lights. Most recently, poor May, who has been most unwell. The doctors refuse to tend to her.

Cornelius: Goodness, there's a lot to unpack here.

Amelia: And no time to unravel it. Quick! Ask me something before father comes down. He is in a foul mood.

(player can pick two questions)

Why do the doctors refuse to tend to her?

Amelia: She becomes rather unsightly. Violent. I believe she is in great pain. They say she is in a fit of something, hysteria perhaps. Or maybe the water, but we all seem fine. None of it makes any sense.

What are her symptoms?

Amelia: Oh, the screaming, the muttering, the black-stone stare in her eyes. Flat and lifeless, like something sitting at the bottom of a lake.

Where is she?

Amelia: Oh. We locked her up. For her own safety. It was not long after we found the chickens, or what was left of them.

Do you think this is linked to Reginald?

Amelia: Oh, poor, sweet Reggie. I'm afraid I can't, I don't want to talk about that. I'm sorry. Father says we mustn't. It was years ago, he says. Please, I just want you to help May.

What do you think is wrong with May?

Amelia: I think that something long and old and dark has lurked here. Poised over our family like a phantom. Waiting. Hungry. I saw it when I was little. None of the others believe me. They villagers say father brought something back with him after his travels. But they've not ever been inside here, you see, and father is most upset when I visit them. So I stopped.

(Bang, Bang)

Walter: Amelia! Who are these people? Why are they here? Get out of my house at once!