

Dear Mr. Jason Erik Lundberg of Only Two Cranes Press:

Attached find the finalized "The Strange Case of the Lovecraft Cafe." I hope you will find it to be of your liking. It is, I am proud to say, a true collaboration between the Council of Three (Mr. M. F. Korn, Mr. Des Lewis, and Mr. Jeff VanderMeer), in that we have all had a hand (or a foot) in all parts of it, even if some of us have more pride of ownership in certain pieces than in others.

You will appreciate, I think, how much this project has taken from us as the energy required to prevent the Old Ones from coming through into our universe is exponentially increased when you have actually, as we have, built a portal through words from their worlds to ours. Until well after publication, we will bear the brunt of this psychic assault, so please assure us that you will publish *on time* as I doubt any of us can hold our sections of the pentagram free of tentacular desecration for much longer than is absolutely necessary. We perform this service solely that the truth be known, and for no other reason, for we are, in addition to being the Council of Three, also the "Selfless Three of Eidolon," as spoken of in the seventeenth footnote to the 154th amended abridged *Reader's Digest* edition of the *Necronomicon*.

Let us know if you have any comments or suggestions. And thanks for your interest.

I should note that the quotes at the beginning of each menu section are taken from actual Lovecraft stories or correspondence and thus any spelling idiosyncrasies have been retained.

We have used

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as a divider between fragments to indicate individual menu remnants. These marks should not be reproduced should you decide to graphically enhance the representation, as to do so would be to provide an entry point to the shugguloth, and none of us, frankly, are ready for that eventuality.

Spellings are also somewhat odd in certain places where we wished to capture the ambiance of Lovecraft's stylings for our own unworthy purposes. However, please do interrogate us as to our intent should something be unclear. (Such queries should be routed through me and I will consult with the other two Elders--otherwise you will likely receive missives from all three of us on the same point.)

However, for ease of communication on general matters involving any contracts, liberal heapings of praise or of unadulterated scorn, please email all three of us. Thanks!

Finally, we wondered if, instead of payment, we might each receive extra copies of the anthology when it comes out? We will need to burn as many as possible over our particular corners of the pentagram when the time comes in order to destroy the Gate of Deep Fried Ones.

Sincerely,

The Council of Three, as named in:

the edition of the *Necronomicon* held by the Miskatonic University Library in Arkham, the Widener Library at Harvard, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the British Library (formerly British Museum) in Bloomsbury (London), and the Biblioteca de la Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires; as first referred to ("the Council, They Form Three") from the Latin translation published in 1623 in Toledo by Olaus Wormius (1588-1654). Olaus Wormius' Latin version is itself a translation of the Greek translation by Theodoros Philetas in A.D. 950, which also refers to an omnipotent and wise "Three Council." Of course, it was Philetas who gave it the Greek name *Necronomicon*, properly "Division or Classification of the Dead," though sometimes mistranslated as "Image of the Law of the Dead," and he also is credited with first discovering the workings of the Council of Three. Philetas' translation of the main masterwork of the mad 8th century A.D. Arab seer, poet, and magician admittedly adds some of his own thoughts and ideas, but a reference in the original al-Hazrid tome to "owls, three in number," is thought to, again, refer to Us. However, as an aside, there has long been a misconception of the original Arabic title of Abd al-Hazrid's tome, innocently but misleadingly spread by Lovecraft, who was no Arabist despite his all-around familiarity with many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore. In his "History of the *Necronomicon*," Lovecraft stated that the book as written in the 8th century by al-Hazrid was entitled *Al Azif*, a term Lovecraft had found in Samuel Henley's notes to William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), referring to the "thrice cursed nocturnal buzzing of the council of insects." However, as Henry Armitage (A.M. Miskatonic University, Ph.D. Princeton, Litt.D. Johns Hopkins) and Oliver Lincoln (Hardknox College) have pointed out, the original title of al-Hazrid's book was the *Kitâb al-Azîz*, "Book of the Buzzing Three." Lovecraft had repeated Henley's transliteration misprint. The proper Arabic word for "hum, humming, buzz, buzzing, whizzing, whizz" is *Azîz*, beginning with an alif, according to the *Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 3rd edition, edited by J. Milton Cowan (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1976). The Arabic word 'âzif, beginning with an 'ayin, with which Henley and Lovecraft had confused *azîf*, means "player, musical performer," and is derived from the peculiar verb 'azafa, meaning "to play on a musical instrument, to make music," but also, curiously enough, "to turn away, to become averse, to avoid, shun, abstain, refrain" If Abd al-Hazrid had written a book called *al-'azîf*, it might have meant something like "The Shunned Musician" or else maybe "The Reluctant Performer"! Therefore, the reference in the text to three reluctant performers again refers to Us and Our various intrigues over the past many centuries. Secret We are, and yet Discovered, from time to time...