

MRS.  
BENTLEY'S  
COLORING  
BOOKS

An Unanticipated Encounter  
for Cthulhu Now  
by Badger McInnes

## A Small and Fragile Thing

**T**he investigators have been contacted by Dr. Franklin Braziel, resident of Wile's Lake. Over the phone, Dr. Braziel requests a meeting with the investigators at a place of their choosing, saying only that it is a matter that only people of the character's caliber can handle. At the meeting, Dr. Braziel informs the group that he is friends with, and doctor to, the Jacobson family. Over the past few weeks, Maggie Jacobson's daughter, Sarah, has been struck with a fatiguing illness that no professional can pin down. The girl, once bright and lively, has become listless and gray. Barely able or even willing to eat, the only object that seems to give Sarah any

sort of life is a coloring book that she got from her day care center.

Maggie claims that Sarah's health began to suffer soon after attending the day care center, and she suspects that the coloring book may be the source of her daughter's suffering. Unfortunately, she has no proof to back up her claim, and this has only served to exacerbate her frustration.

Dr. Braziel is deeply worried. He's consulted many of the best doctors in the state, and no one has been able to come up with a diagnosis to what has been troubling Sarah. Moreover, Maggie is close to hysteria, seeing her child wither away before her eyes. At this point, he's willing to try almost anything, and wishes the investigators to check out the day care center, and its owner, Mrs. Janice Bentley. If they agree, he stresses that they must use discretion, Wile's Lake is a small, tightly-knit community, and Mrs. Bentley's supporters are numerous.

This scenario is designed for keepers to use as a brief encounter in a larger adventure or campaign. It is also can be played as a stand as a short, one-off scenario. Because of the nature of this scenario, it is best suited for Cthulhu Now.

## Of Colors and Water

In the small Northern California town of Wile's Lake, Mrs. Janice Bentley runs her day care center "Catching The Rainbow," as she has done for the past four years. The kids under her care range from one to seven years in age, and her class typically ranges from eight to twelve children. Mrs. Bentley is very popular in the community, having a reputation for being incredibly kind and loving toward the children at her center; parents also note an increased amount of discipline and scholastic aptitude in their kids after only a few weeks.

Alas, all is not as it seems in Mrs. Bentley's center. Janice is an avid worshiper of the Great Cthulhu, her family having been part of a cult of Cthulhu worshipers in the coastal town of Half Moon Bay. Janice's family was driven out by the town's community when still just a child (disappearances of the local population's children, and their subsequent mutilation, were revealed to have been committed by the cult's members, including Janice's parents),

and they moved 150 miles north to Wile's Lake, where they could continue their degenerate practices in quiet.

Janice's parents died when she was 15, and left her with a large inheritance, and an obscenely obsessive sense of duty to Cthulhu. Using her inheritance, she set up her day care center, and devised a way to awake Great Cthulhu in a most covert manner.

After about a month or so, once her students get acclimated to her class, she passes out coloring books. To the untrained eye, these books, made by Mrs. Bentley herself, appear perfectly benign, with black and white pictures of bunnies, bright suns peeking through billowy clouds, race cars, dogs, cats, and so on. But hidden within these pages are sigils and signs that, when unknowingly traced or colored in by a child, draws 1 Magic Point {1 temporary CON loss} from the child into the book. Only 1 Magic Point a week can be extracted from the child (a safeguard instilled by Mrs. Bentley to prevent a child from losing too much energy, and thus raising suspicion as to why so many children are getting so sick from her class all the time).

Mrs. Bentley takes great care to monitor each student who uses the *Coloring Book*; when she first introduced copies of it to her kids, she found the book a bit too powerful, and several of her students fell seriously ill at virtually the same time (no cause was pinned down by local doctors, who later attributed the sicknesses to a rare strain of the flu). Since then, the potency of the book has been toned town.

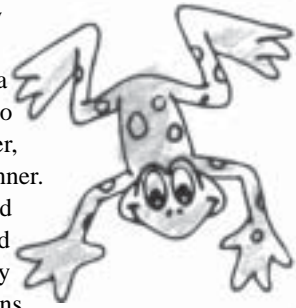
At the end of each day, Mrs. Bentley collects the books from her students, and draws the Magic Points {CON} stored in the coloring books into herself. With these Magic Points, Mrs. Bentley plans on opening a gate to R'lyeh, and awakening the Great Cthulhu himself. Granted, this will take a phenomenal amount of power to achieve. But that's okay, because Mrs. Bentley is a patient woman.

And she has plenty of children to care for.

## A Deadly Draining

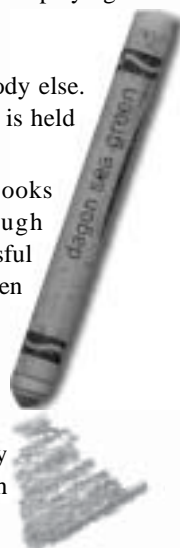
Maggie Jacobson's daughter Sarah has been attending Mrs. Bentley's class for a little over two months, and at first was doing exceedingly well. Sarah has a keen aptitude for art, and when she was introduced to Mrs. Bentley's coloring books, she fell in love with them. So much so, that she stole an extra book from class that was lying around. That was six weeks ago.

Since then, Sarah has been spending more and more time each night, drawing and coloring away, brow furrowed with concentration. And little by little, Sarah's life-force has been slipping away- indeed, she has now deteriorated to the point where she cannot attend class anymore. Maggie has had her daughter examined by some of the best doctors in the county, but no one has been able to deduce what is wrong with the child. Maggie has no money for expensive hospitals, and is nearing her wit's end. Noting Sarah's obsession with the coloring books, she examined the *Coloring Book* two nights ago. She found nothing physically unusual about it, but felt an odd, queasy, pulling sensation when holding it. Having no one else to turn to, she confided in Dr. Braziel, who in turn contacted the investigators.



Probing into the matter should be simple enough for the characters, but they are liable to run into several problems along the way (which can make for some nice role playing on everyone's part):

- This is a small town, where everyone knows everybody else. Slinging wild accusations towards Mrs. Bentley, who is held in high regard in the community, won't go over well.
- Actual physical evidence is scant at best - the books themselves are quite innocent, even on thorough examination. An investigator needs to make a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll to be able to discern the sigils hidden within the artwork.
- Some of the children in her care may be from a family where one of the parents is a policeman, councilperson, or worse. The investigators may find themselves running into powerful resistance from folks who are very protective of their kids...kids who are enamored with Mrs. Bentley.



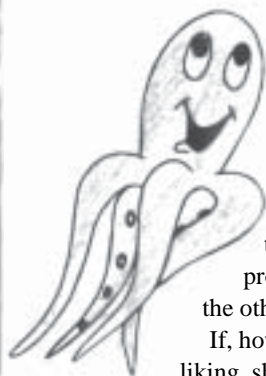
Players may want to question Maggie Jacobson and/or Sarah. At this point, Maggie is a desperate mother, willing to do most anything to save the life of her daughter- play this to the fullest. She has done everything in her power to try a sane, rational approach in order to find out what is causing Sarah's illness. Only because all of her other avenues have been exhausted has she had to resort to accepting the investigator's help.

Sarah herself was once a precocious, spirited child of six, but now appears listless and shrunken, a candle nearly snuffed out. She responds if addressed, but is otherwise quiet. Her skin feels clammy to the touch, and emits a stale, musty odor. Her temperature is a constant 102 degrees, yet she cannot stand to wear anything less than several layers of blankets and clothes. In addition, Sarah appears to be shrinking in size and weight.

If accused, Mrs. Bentley will use her reputation among the community and love of the children she cares for as her defense, rather than nasty spells or groups of thugs. If played correctly, this can be tougher for investigators to crack through than an army of Nightgaunts.

Mrs. Bentley comes across as a very pleasant, intelligent woman in her early 40s. She of course scoffs at the idea that she would want to cause harm to her kids- she loves them all very much, and besides, that would be a tad bad for business, now wouldn't it? She has no problem allowing the investigators to search her classroom, or talk to the other children attending the center.

If, however, she suspects that the investigators are getting too close to her liking, she will use one of her spells, or summon some Deep Ones in order to distract the adventurers while she makes good her escape.



## Keeper Information

**Mrs. Janice Bentley, age 43, Day Care Teacher and worshiper of Cthulhu**

(d20 stats at end of article)

STR 8    CON 12    SIZ 07    INT 16    POW 15  
DEX 10    APP 12    EDU 15    SAN 0    HP 9

**Damage Bonus:** -1D4.

**Skills:** Art 25%, Astronomy 23%, Credit Rating 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 24%, First Aid 40%, Library Use 56%, Listen 65%, Persuade 80%, Psychology 47%, Read Children's Books 78%, Spot Hidden 52%, Wipe Dirty Faces 66%.

**Spells:** Contact Cthulhu, Create Gate, Cloud Memory, Contact Deep One, Implant Fear, Raise Night Fog, Siphon Children's Laughter.



## d20 Stats

**Mrs. Janice Bentley, age 43, Day Care Teacher and worshiper of Cthulhu** (d20 stats)

2<sup>nd</sup>-level; 10 hp; Init +0; AC 12 (+2 Def); Spd 30 ft.; Atk -1 melee (1d3-1, punch); SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, Forgery +5, Knowledge (Astronomy) +5, Knowledge (Children's Books) +7, Knowledge (Psychology) +5, Performance (Art) +2, Research +5, Spot +3, Treat Injury +4.

**Spells:** Siphon Child's Laughter – For this spell to function, the caster (in this case, the child or other person coloring the book) must trace or color in the book for at least 30 minutes; at that time, the

caster must roll a **Fort SV DC 18**, or temporarily lose 1 CON to the Coloring Book. A person can lose no more than 1 CON in a single week.

**Feats:** Deceptive, Educated (Astronomy/Psychology), Trustworthy, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

### “Color As You Like” by Janice Bentley

Coloring book for children one year to seven years

Deep Sea Press, 1998 (local printing, limited to 200 copies a year)

+2% Cthulhu Mythos

0/-1D3 SAN

**Spell:** Siphon Child's Laughter

**Excerpt:** “Sam the Snake loves to play with the frogs that come from the sea! Sam loves all animals that live in the water!”

### New Spell: Siphon Child's Laughter

Using this spell costs no SAN, nor does it need to be “cast” as other spells usually require. Instead, for the spell to work, the “caster” (in this case, the child or other person coloring the book) must trace or color in the book for at least 30 minutes; at that time, the caster must roll at or below **x2 CON**, or lose one Magic Point to the *Coloring Book*. A person can lose no more than 1 Magic Point in a single week.

