

The Great Old Ones and the Collins Family

By Frank Schildiner

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The television show Dark Shadows presented to viewers a fictionalized account of a family steeped in the world of the occult and the mystical. A more detailed examination of the root cause of the Collins family of Collinsport, Maine presents far deeper connections to the mystic world that often intersects with the Wold Newton Universe.

The Collins family moved to the lands later known as Collinsport in 1690. Isaac Collins moved to an unoccupied area known as Frenchman's Bay and claimed the area, later starting a fishing fleet that formed the basis for the Collins family fortune. His brother, Amadeus Collins, arrived a short time later and became involved in local politics, centering in the Bedford community. Amadeus sat as one of three judges, trying and condemning a warlock named Judah Zachery. This would be the root cause for the Collins family's becoming one of the foremost family's in the world of the occult.

Judah Zachery was a powerful and feared warlock who was the leader of a hidden coven that secretly worshipped the legendary beings known as the Old Ones. Under the guise of Satanic worship, Zachery created a false coven with the intention of using these followers as sacrifices to the Old Ones. But the true coven was smaller and far more dedicated to the true goals.

Who were these followers? Research has revealed Judah Zachery's circle consisted of himself and three other men known as Joseph Curwen, Simon Orne and Edward Hutchinson. Each of these men were unique and powerful practitioners of magic, able to return from death, live without aging and control the minds of others. With the execution of Zachery, Curwen, a handsome and wealthy merchant, assumed control of the coven.

Before we continue on, let us examine each of these men briefly so we understand their connections as they emerge throughout the Collins family history:

Joseph Curwen was a wealthy merchant with connections throughout the world that he would utilize in his life as a servant of the Old Ones. A seductive and good-looking man, he earned much suspicion while residing in Providence, Rhode Island after seducing and marrying a local beauty. His greatest power was the ability to return from the grave after multiple deaths.

Edward Hutchinson was a learned man who may have been the source of the hysteria surrounding the Salem Witch trials. Ageless, his greatest desire was to become an Old World aristocrat. He is known to have been taught necromancy by the infamous Baron

Janos Ferenczy. While residing in Ferenczy Castle, he took to calling himself Lord Ferenczy and Count Petofi and earned the enmity of the Romano Gypsy clan.

Simon Orne was the most learned of this coven, a powerful sorcerer who was also a renowned chemist. His collection of books was legendary and he was one of the founders and first lecturers of the college later known as Miskatonic University. The library still exists as the basis of the rare books collection of the school to this day(1).

Judah Zachery cursed his executioners before his death and a short time later Amadeus Collins and his family died. His fellow coven members then began to observe the growing power of Amadeus Collins brother, Isaac Collins. Realizing this family's wealth and position could be useful in the future, the coven kept an eye on the Collins from that time on. However the Collins family was just going to be a tool for the future, their real work was to open the way for the being known as Yog-Sothoth and his kin.

The first steps came from Orne and Hutchinson. Orne was secretly the father of a daughter named Laura with a woman named Murdoch. An expert on lost cults, Simon Orne discovered that the Old One known as Cthugha was better known as the Egyptian Sun God Ra. Cthugha's high priest/priestess was known as the Phoenix and the Old One granted their representative the powers of fire control and to be reborn like their namesake the Phoenix(2).

Hutchinson also fathered a daughter known as Miranda DuVal, though he barely acknowledged her existence. Miranda was one of the many duped into the false coven of Judah Zachery and later testified against him in his trial before Amadeus Collins. With the death of Zachery, Hutchinson forced DuVal to become a servant of the coven, never acknowledging her as his daughter.

Curwen worked with his compatriots as well but also began to establish connections to the Collinsport community. In 1762 he seduced the most beautiful woman in the vicinity, Naomi Bennett, and used his mystic powers to cause a 13-year-old Joshua Collins to fall madly in love with the 16 year old Bennett. In 1763 Curwen, who gave her some jewels that were later known as the Collins family jewels, impregnated Bennett. Abandoning Bennett, she accepted Joshua Collins suit and later gave birth to Joseph Curwen's son, Barnabas. Curwen would be burnt to death by the townspeople of Providence in 1771, pushing back the coven's plans for a time(3).

In 1784 Laura Murdoch the Phoenix married Jeremiah Collins, the younger brother of Joshua Collins. Though she was close to Barnabas, she died a short time later of a flue epidemic that struck the area. This would not be her first marriage to the Collins family.

In 1791 Joshua Collins was in correspondence with the DuPres family of Martinique. The DuPres's owned several plantations and required a shipping partner to increase their fortune. An ancient noble family, the DuPres clan had foreseen the fall of the monarchy and were well out of the country by the time of the French Revolution.

Hutchinson sailed to the island at that time and he used magic to place the spirit of his deceased daughter Miranda in the household as servant to the daughter and heir to the family, Josette DuPres. Miranda, now known as Angelique Bouchard, was ordered to seduce Barnabas Collins and bear him and heir. In 1792 Barnabas arrived in Martinique and fell madly in love with Josette DuPres, all the while conducting a secret affair with Angelique. Angelique did become pregnant, but used her witchcraft to prevent anyone from remembering the birth of a child.

Why did he choose to place the spirit of Miranda into the body of Angelique? Two reasons. The first, Angelique had some acquaintance with witchcraft by the time Hutchinson examined the DuPres family. Her mother was a slave in Martinique while her father was Josette DuPres's own father, with only Angelique and Josette's aunt Countess DuPres knowing they were actually half-sisters. The second reason was far simpler, Angelique resembled Miranda in a remarkable way(4).

Barnabas Collins was an interesting man by that time. Wealthy and quick to fall in love with beautiful women, he was a person with a true dual nature. Kind to servants like Ben Stokes, he also had a dangerous and vicious streak that appeared whenever he was enraged. Barnabas believed himself to be a romantic figure, but even his loyal servant Ben Stokes once revealed that wasn't a good person even prior to becoming cursed as a vampire.

In 1795 Josette DuPres and her "servant" Angelique arrived in Collinsport where Josette was intending to marry Barnabas. Angelique attempted to re-ignite her affair with Barnabas, but he spurned her in favor of the virginal Josette. Angelique, enraged that the father of her secret child chose another, performed a love spell on Josette and Jeremiah Collins. Josette and Jeremiah eloped and Jeremiah was later killed in a duel with Barnabas. Barnabas, destroyed by Josette's betrayal, married Angelique but planned on leaving her once Josette admitted she still loved him. In a rage, Angelique threatened Josette's life, so Barnabas shot her. Believing herself to be dying, Angelique cursed him and caused a rift to open between Transylvania. Dracula Prime, the real and rarely seen Lord of Vampires, arrived and transformed Barnabas into a soul clone. However the transformation was not complete, the Curwen lineage was too strong to make Barnabas into another lesser form of Dracula. Barnabas was trapped in his coffin by his father in 1796, but would exit it twice thanks to time travel.

In 1797 Joseph Curwen was reborn and took the name Obadiah Marsh as he moved to Innsmouth, Massachusetts(5). Marsh/Curwen was serving Dagon, who was supposedly a servant of the Old One known as Cthulhu, and established a Deep Ones colony in Devil's Reef off Innsmouth. In the 1840's, pretending to be in own son, Curwen took the name Captain Obed Marsh and established the Esoteric Order of Dagon and converted most of the town through hypnosis or violence. Using the Order, Curwen began mating the Innsmouth community with the Deep Ones, causing the rise of hybrid race that flourished until Navy Intelligence destroyed the town and reef in 1928(6). Amusingly enough the leader of the Order and town at the time of Innsmouth's destruction was Curwen/Marsh's grandson, Barnabas Marsh(7). Apparently Curwen liked the name and used it for his

second son. He died in 1878, murdered by one of his children who wished to control the town and Order. He would later return as Evan Hanley, a lawyer employed by the Collins family.

Harriet Bouchard was raised in Europe by Simon Orne, becoming a powerful witch in her own right. In 1809 she moved to Collinsport and married Daniel Collins, a cousin of Joshua who was raised in Collinsport. She gave birth to two sons, Quentin and Gabriel, and taught Quentin witchcraft. Gabriel did not possess the family talent, but was considered a terrifying and harsh individual. In 1830 Daniel Collins discovered his wife was a witch and strangled her, throwing her body off Widow's Hill.

However the family would soon see the return of their first enemy, Judah Zachery. Zachery's head, hidden in the Far East since his execution, was brought back to Collinsport. Using a mystical item called the "Mask of Ba'al", he controlled people in an attempt to reunite his head and body and return to life. The Mask of Ba'al appears to be a Dagonic priest's mask that enabled Zachery to focus his power through servants.

Barnabas, traveling through time, arrived in 1840 and rescued Quentin Collins and assists in destroying Judah Zachery a very short time after he was returned to life. Quentin Collins would leave Collinsport with Daphne Harriage and change their name to Barrington. One of his ancestors, Catherine Madison, would follow the family tradition of witchcraft and come into conflict with the current slayer, Buffy Summers. Quentin's son, Tad Collins, would form a family on the West Coast of what later became California. One of his ancestors would move to the Far East and father a son named Malay Collins. Malay Collins would become an adventurer in his own right(8).

Gabriel Collins would inherit the family wealth after murdering his father Daniel and his oldest son, Edward would marry Laura Murdoch aka Laura Orne in 1883. In 1886 she gave birth to Jamison Collins, but ran away with Edward's younger brother, Quentin Collins in 1896. Quentin Collins was the closest to his family heritage, a lesser practitioner of witchcraft, he seduced and married one Jenny Romano, a gypsy of the Romano clan.

The Romano clan is best known for its conflicts with Edward Hutchinson in Europe. Hutchinson, who usurped the lesser title of the Ferenczy family, was known as Count Petofi, practiced the art of necromancy and undertook human experiments. This weakened Hutchinson's power and his years were spent searching for his missing hand and a means of revenge on the Romano clan.

Jenny Collins gave birth to twin children after Quentin abandoned her for Laura Collins. Jenny went mad and was helped by her sister, Magda Rakosi. The children were raised by another family from that time on. While in Alexandria, Quentin Collins witnessed Laura Collins death as a sacrifice to Ra and would claim she abandoned him during their travels. Sadly Jenny Collins would attack Quentin's lover Beth Chavez and be killed by Quentin. Magda, in her grief, cursed Quentin into becoming a werewolf.

Prior to this time, Barnabas Collins traveled to 1897 from the 1960's using the I Ching. The reason for the time travel was because the ghosts of Quentin Collins and his lover Beth Chavez, were haunting Collinswood and possessing the children that lived in the home, David Collins and Amy Haskell. Angelique returns in 1897 and blackmails Barnabas Collins into marrying her once again. She would assist Barnabas through this period but was unable to assist Quentin in preventing his transformation into a werewolf. Angelique did save the Collins family from Laura the Phoenix in a battle of magic that destroyed part of the home.

Magda, discovering she had a niece and nephew, obtained the hand of Count Petofi, knowing it was a powerful magical item. It proved impossible to control and soon was reunited with its owner Count Petofi aka Edward Hutchinson. Petofi/Hutchinson had, in 1797 been cursed by the Romano gypsy clan with lycanthropy. This was a particularly vicious curse to a follower of the Old Ones since it is later revealed in Dark Shadows that werewolves are the natural enemies of creatures like the half-breeds known as Leviathan. In exchange for his hand, the Romano clan cured Petofi, but the loss of the hand severely weakened his power.

Hutchinson helped Quentin by having a painting done of him by Charles Delaware Tate. Tate was able to imbue the painting of Quentin Collins with a connection to its subject, making Quentin effectively immortal. The reason for Hutchinson's actions was to create an immortal body he could possess and allow the Romano clan to cease seeking his destruction. He nearly succeeded but was killed by fire at Tate's studio.

Quentin, now immortal, would travel the world and lose his memory until 1968 and call himself Grant Douglas. Curwen under the name Hanley, was planning on manipulating the family further was strangled to death by one Garth Blackwood. He would briefly return through the body of his ancestor, Charles Dexter Ward, but was destroyed once again. He returned a short time later under the name Nicholas Blair.

Simon Orne, posing as a butler named Hanscomb, was the next to encounter the Collins family. A young Elizabeth Collins, daughter of Jamison Collins (who's mother was Laura the Phoenix) was seduced by Orne and gave the child up for adoption in New York. This child later was known as Victoria Winters and would meet the Collins family in 1966 when Elizabeth forced her brother Roger to hire her unacknowledged daughter as a governess for Roger's son David. Elizabeth would later marry Paul Stoddard, who was a distant relative of the famous British sea Captain, Lucky Jack Aubrey(9). On the day he was running away from his family he promised a stranger, who was secretly Nicholas Blair/Joseph Curwen, anything in return for wealth. Stoddard, who had just had a violent altercation with Elizabeth, believed he had nothing at the time. Not thinking clearly, Paul Stoddard didn't consider that he had a young daughter, Carolyn, at the time of this promise.

Laura the Phoenix returned at this time and would marry Roger Collins, giving birth to their son David. Yes, Roger Collins married and had a son with his own grandmother.

Laura was killed by Roger, but also returned, intending on burning David to death and making him one of the fire vampires who serve Cthugha but failed again.

In 1966 Barnabas Collins was reawakened by Willie Loomis, who was intending to steal the Collins family jewels. At that time he made an ally in Dr. Julia Hoffman, who would devote her life to curing his curse of vampirism. She briefly cured the disease, but her serum ultimately failed in the end. She would remain his ally until she passed away of natural causes in 1985.

It was then that Nicholas Blair/Joseph Curwen's latest plan came to fruition. Using an ancestor of Dr. Henry Frankenstein, Dr. Eric Lang, Blair had Lang use Barnabas as the catalyst to bring to life Lang's creation, Adam(10). Adam, like the original Frankenstein monster, began as a crazed savage who later learned culture and reasoning. Blair's plan was to create an army of these creatures and went so far as to supply an evil spirit for Eve in the hopes of mating her with Eve. This army would assist in the cult he'd formed since returning to life, the Leviathans. Sadly the plan failed in part because, like many similar brides, Adam repulsed Eve.

The Leviathan cult was a secret coven created by Blair, worshipping the Great Old One known as Yig. Yig often appeared to its worshippers as a serpent or a serpent man, had followers throughout the world(11). One of Blair's earliest converts was Sky Rumson, a millionaire who married Angelique unaware she was a witch.

Curwen had also decided to start another family, picking waitress Maggie Evans to be his latest bride. Angelique, whose powers were removed and was turned into a vampire by Curwen, contacted one Diablos about Curwen's latest interest. Diablos, who was viewed as a man with no visible face in black robes, was the messenger of the Old Ones known as Nyarlthotep(12). Nyarlthotep ordered Curwen to sacrifice Maggie Evans and once failed, was punished by the Old Ones.

Curwen later returned to herald the greatest act of the Leviathan cult, bringing a child of Leviathan into the world. This plan succeeded and child, who grew up to adult age in mere weeks, was known as Jeb Hawkes. Hawkes would later marry Carolyn Stoddard but before he could father a child would be killed by Sky Rumson. Rumson threw Hawkes off Widow Hill before he truly came into his power, another failure for Curwen/Blair and their coven.

The final act of Nicholas Blair to date regarding the Collins family was to seduce and marry Victoria Winters. Though it was reported that Victoria Winters was transported back in time and jumped off Widow's Hill, the details of this transportation to the past and death were confused reports from a vengeful spirit. In truth they were merely a device used by Blair to hide that Victoria was alive and well and married to him in the current century. Fathering twins named Daimon and Susanna, the children would later change their names to Daimon and Satana Hellstrom and are currently devoting their lives to fighting their father's plans. Satana is currently working with a team called "The Witches" while Daimon was last seen in New Orleans fighting a demonic cult(13).

Footnotes:

1. For more on Joseph Curwen, Simon Orne and Edward Hutchinson please see "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" by HP Lovecraft and *Deadspeak* by Brian Lumley
2. Cthugha first appeared in "The Dweller in Darkness" by August Derleth
3. "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" by HP Lovecraft
4. Please see "Angelique's Descent" by Lara Parker for more information regarding Angelique's origins. Miranda DuVal was not referenced until the 1840's storyline and while some have attempted to reconcile this conflict through reincarnation, little evidence exists to support this supposition. Angelique spirit was shown to be controlled by Nicholas Blair, who was able to return her to life as a vampire with apparent ease. Therefore it is likely that after Miranda's death, she was placed in the body of Angelique Bouchard, half-sister of Josette DuPres.
5. Obadiah Marsh appeared in "The Seal of R'lyeh" by August Derleth
6. Obed Marsh was referenced as the founder of the Esoteric Order of Dagon and leader of the community of Innsmouth in "The Shadow over Innsmouth"
7. Barnabas Marsh was referenced as the leader of the community of Innsmouth in "The Shadow over Innsmouth"
8. Malay Collins the "master thief of the east" first appeared in "The Eye of Black A'Wang" by Murray Leinster
9. For more information of Captain Jack "Lucky Jack" Aubrey please see the Aubrey/Maturin series by Patrick O'Brian.
10. Dr. Henry Frankenstein first appeared in the movie "Frankenstein" and returned in "The Bride of Frankenstein"
11. Yig first appeared in "The Curse of Yig" by HP Lovecraft
12. Nyarlthotep first appeared in "Nyarlthotep" by HP Lovecraft
13. For more information of Daimon and Satana Hellstrom please see Marvel Comics "Son of Satan", "Ghost Rider", "Vampire Tales", "Witches", "Hellstorm" "Dr. Strange", "The Defenders" and "Hellstorm:Son of Satan."